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**Featuring Randy Kerr and His
Personal Journey in Photography**



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COVER PHOTO

The cover image was taken by Becky Green and was titled, "In My Family's Time." It is a portrait of our featured photographer, Randy Kerr with a clock that belonged to his great grandfather, Jesse Walling, who rode with Sam Houston at the Battle of San Jacinto. Read Randy's fascinating and inspiring story on page 8.

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- June 24 - 27, 2012** TPPA Summer Roundup
Kerrville, TX
- Sept. 28 - Oct. 1, 2012** SWPPA Regional Convention
Las Colinas (Irving), TX

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A WORD FROM WALTER

Walter Eagleton, President TPPA



Opportunities Abound

This has been a challenging year for businesses in general but I have a strong sense that professional photography is very much “alive and kicking.” Another successful Texas School has come and gone and those who attended are already trying out some of the new things they learned. It was an exciting and informative event, thanks to Don Dickson, his trustees, the wranglers and the instructors. Everyone went far beyond the call of duty and we thank them for their dedication and hard work.

Looming just on the horizon is the Summer Roundup in the beautiful Texas Hill Country town of Kerrville. After the tremendous success of last year’s Summer Roundup, the officers and volunteers have worked even harder this year to bring you an even better event this year.

Every speaker at this year’s Roundup is a truly amazing and creative photographer and each one has a business model that has propelled them to the top of the industry. Please take time to peruse the schedule and plan to bring your family for a fantastic getaway. One of the new changes this year will be the Monday outing at Lazy Hills Ranch. This is an event for the entire family as well as a rewarding educational opportunity for you and your business.

The President’s Theme this year is “An International Affair” and should open up many opportunities for print competition. I strongly urge you to enter or volunteer or just spend a little time watching the print

competition. I can assure you that it is the fast track to taking your everyday images to a much higher level. If you would like to volunteer to work in the print room, contact Judy Dumas at 325-642-1880.

But the fun and education doesn’t stop there! The Southwest Professional Photographers Association’s Regional Convention and Trade Show will be held Las Colinas (Irving), Texas, September 28 through October 1. Photographers from at least six states come to this event that features one of the largest trade shows you’ll ever see in this part of the country. Along with this event is the Affiliated Print Competition and Exhibition. This is a terrific learning experience and I strongly urge you to participate. More information on the Convention and Trade Show will be coming soon in the magazine, so be looking for it.

Please keep in mind that the staff and officers of the Texas Professional Photographers Association are always here for you and welcome your feedback or input. Let us know if there is anything we can do to help you succeed in your business, and/or take your photography to the next level.

All the Best,
Walter Eagleton, President
Texas PPA

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SUMMER ROUNDUP

June 24 - 27, 2012 in Kerrville



Randy Kerr



Travis Gugelman



Marion Hughes



Leslie Kitten



Maria Bernal



David & Luke Edmonson



Teri Quance

Join Us in Kerrville!

Exciting things are planned for the TPPA Summer Roundup. The officers and staff of TPPA have been working around the clock to provide you with an experience you'll never forget. There will be plenty of activities for kids, families and spouses as well as plenty of hands-on photographic opportunities for everyone.

There will be a craft room for kids; adult and kids activities away from the resort; as well as evening kids activities. For photographers, there will be one-on-one business coaching sessions; camera bays with the newest equipment; and of course personalized print critiques. There are so many things planned that you will have to go to the Summer Roundup website just to see what they are!

Another change that began last summer was the creation of the Texas Pride trophy. The goal of this is to increase competition among all of the Texas Guilds. Many of the seminar activities will be based around opportunities for each local guild to earn points towards the trophy. The Texas Pride trophy will be awarded to the best/most active guild at the TPPA Summer Roundup and will be based on a point system to make it fair for both small and large guilds. Points will be awarded for a variety of different activities, events, print cases, print scores, attendance and participation as volunteers. The trophy is going to be amazingly impressive and will make the "World Cup" look more like a child's sippy cup, traveling each year to the winning guild.

This year's Summer Roundup will also offer one of the largest group CPP exams ever given! If you are interested in learning more about the CPP program, you can contact Trey Homan for more details.

Don't forget that we have a brand new location for the outing on Monday afternoon. The Lazy Hills Resort promises to be loads of fun as well as an educational outing. So, make plans to bring the whole family to Kerrville this summer and see what everyone is talking about. It's a fabulous way to meet new people while earning points towards the Texas Pride trophy. For more information about this, as well as Print Rules and registration, go to our website at www.TPPA.org.



Randy Kerr's *Personal Journey* In Photography

by
Bill Hedrick

Randy Kerr probably isn't your typical photographer, although he is quite an extraordinary one. He sees the world from a little different vantage point than most people and has a perspective of the world and our profession that some might consider to be somewhat unique. However, he has a deep understanding of light and light quality that many professional photographers today never achieve in a lifetime.

His background in photography goes back to his great-grandfather, Cyrus Kerr, who was a traveling preacher, photographer and fiddle player, who traveled throughout Mississippi, Louisiana and Texas in a covered wagon. "He would set up his tent on the outlying areas of towns and do portraits," says Randy. "He would go to farms and people would bring out their treasured items... a piano, a favorite mule, or whatever.. and my grandfather would include those items in the portrait." It was an example that would carry over into Randy's own career as an adult.

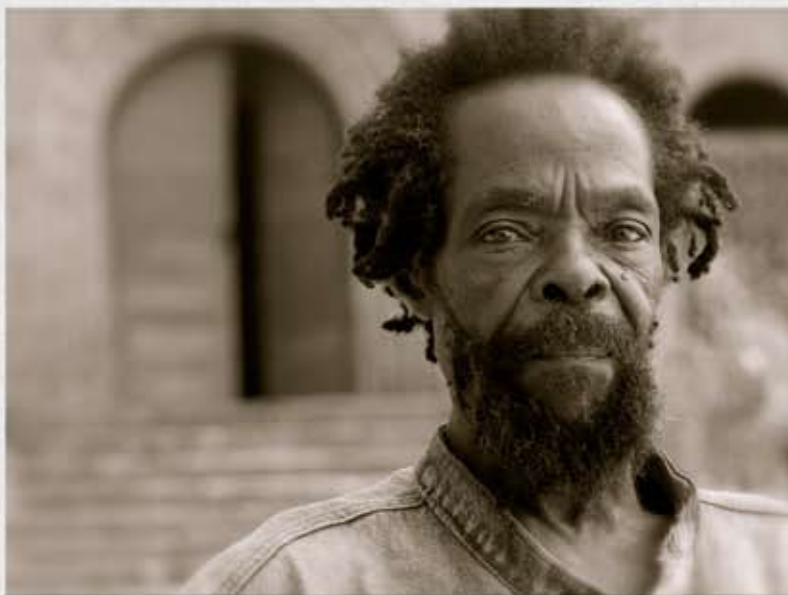
Randy's grandmother taught him some valuable lessons as well. "My grandmother, Artie Kerr, taught me reflectivity as a young boy by pointing at the moon and explaining highlights, shadows and mid-tonal ranges. She also taught me a deeper meaning of the human condition and explained to me that we are all children of the Creator. Everyone is our brother and our sister and, if you separate yourself from other races, you are separating yourself from other members of your human family."

It was with this basic knowledge that Randy Kerr set out to start his own photography business in his hometown of Denton, Texas. His formula for success was simple... if he wasn't busy taking care of his customers, he was marketing. But it was important to Randy that he set himself apart from all of the other photographers in the austin area. "I prefered to stay away from the same locations as the other photographers. Many of the other photographers photographed their clients at Zilker Botanical Gardens so I chose to look for locations not used by everyone else. Finding new locations and ideas forced me to work harder and helped me to become more creative."

When digital photography first appeared, Randy's life took another turn. "Digital technology was in its infancy and many professional photographers were struggling to convert from film to digital. So, instead of standing in line with everyone else, I decided to spend my time working on my lighting skills and personal growth."

That's when Randy Kerr did something right out of a Henry David Thoreau novel. At a time when other photographers were investing in the digital revolution, Randy went "primitive" and moved his studio into the woods. "I moved into an army tent and lowered my overhead and raised my prices. I had the time to really think through what it was that I was doing naturally that was getting such great results in my photographs. As an artist, I wanted to understand what was creating the light in my photographs to be so different and I wanted to learn what actually creates quality light," says Randy. "I set out on a journey to further understand the relationship of how earth receives light and to develop a natural process that puts the elements of my craft in an order that creates a healthy shooting habit."

What soon became apparent to Randy was that your camera gear is only one element of good portraiture. What really counts is how you interface with light. "Lighting is everything," he explains. "Most photographers step outside to shoot, hoping they will accomplish great work. Though digital cameras have come a long way, it takes more than a good camera to capture quality light in a photograph. First of all, there must be quality light to capture. There is a predictable pattern of rotation of the earth around the sun and one can develop a plan for light quality. Instead of



fighting with light, I am more apt to step outside when the light is just right. I would much rather put my energy into marketing or personal growth skills than struggling with lighting gear." It was during that time in the woods near Bastrop, Texas, that Randy developed a creative and systematic process called "The Westway Method of Photography."

When others describe their studios in terms of square footage, Randy describes his studio as, "...being located on 15 acres in the Texas Hill Country of the Bastrop forest, about 38 miles from Austin." He has even cleared eleven meadows out of that forest that are now planted with native grasses and wildflowers. "I have a stone archway and a butterfly garden along with other scenes that offer good lighting in diverse times of the day. My office is made with wood I milled myself. It is known as the Bastrop County Project at this time."

Spending time in the woods came naturally to Randy Kerr. In his hometown of Denton, Texas, he began photographing horses, rodeos, cutting horse futurities and stock shows. "We would go to ranches and photograph stallions and brood mares," he recalls. "Eventually, I began photographing weddings and portraits. Next, I starting



doing fashion and commercial photography. So, I guess you could say that I've always had a general practice. I've never considered myself to be specialized. If someone needed a photograph taken, I'd find a way to do it." Then, in 1986, Randy was retained to do a portrait of then Governor Ann Richards. "When that image hit the political scene, my phone started ringing from both Democrats and Republicans."

Randy attributes the success of his

business to several basic items. As his grandfather taught him, he would find out what was important to the customer. Then, he would convey himself as an artist who could deliver exactly what they wanted... not necessarily what he wanted to sell them. "My wedding prices never had titles like 'Platinum' or 'Romance' and I always showed up an hour early just to make sure I was always on time," he says. "The truth is that I have a nervous personality and I want to be sure everything is in order so I can appear to be calm. No kidding!" His personal motto has always been, "There is no better marketing than a pleased customer."

Then, there is the philosophical side of Randy Kerr. He lives his life and operates his business based on The Golden Rule... "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." As he explains, "Some people call it Karma. Some people say it's what you put out into the universe. What I'm saying is that you receive true self esteem in knowing you've spent your day putting the needs of others in front of your own. It unlocks the miracle of giving and receiving."



This fundamental view of human interaction has opened up some unique opportunities for Randy that took him around the world and to Africa. As a media director for the Luebo Partnership at the University Presbyterian Church in Austin, Texas, Randy was part of a team that created a film exposing the needs of villagers of Luebo Congo. "Our goal was to use the film as a fund-raiser to restore a historic Presbyterian Church along with health care, education and nutritional issues in war-torn Congo," says Randy.

Currently, he is scripting a film titled, "Shedding Light on American Hunger," among other projects. "Filmmaking has given me the platform to become a co-mission worker with both ecology and humanitarian issues. It has also fulfilled my personal desire of doing real work toward moving the needle to the greater good while developing content for my classes."

Life is good for Randy. "Today, I put mission work first and let everything else fall into place. I look for stories in the world that need to be told. As a storyteller, there's no greater gift than to be given the opportunity to tell a story for someone who needs a voice. I believe that, when people see that I'm a quality photographer and a benevolent worker, paying jobs will fall into place."

In case you missed it, Randy Kerr, along with his colleague, Doug Box, were instructors for the fifth year in a row at the 2012 Texas School of Professional Photography in Addison, Texas.





The Photographer's GAME PLAN

by
Steve Kozak

Going into the photography business in today's economic climate is certainly a challenge, but for those who jump in without preparation, it is like a professional sports team facing an opponent without a game plan. The result will most likely be a lop-sided victory for the competition and the unprepared team will go home perhaps battered and bruised if not humiliated. Don't let this happen to you!

Establishing yourself as a professional photographer takes conditioning, practice and an investment of time in the preparation and execution of a thorough game plan. If you are considering taking the leap from the stands and getting onto the field, be sure that you are up to the task and ready to face an opposition that is poised and ready to take you down.

As with any sport, success begins with a proper execution of the fundamentals. For photographers, the fundamentals include a proper understanding of exposure, lighting and posing. These are the very foundations of our craft and are the basis for the creation of a quality image.

Cameras take pictures...photographers create images. If you are relying on the automatic features of your camera and eTTL with your flash, you are hoping and guessing and playing a game of "trial and error". Professionals understand and master the tools of the trade. This eliminates insecurity and keeps you from having to look at each and every image on the back of the camera. Confidence is a winning approach!

In baseball, each pitch carries the result of what the pitcher delivers. For the photographer, each image represents the artist's command of the light. Every photographic image begins with the presence of light which can be measured, manipulated or redirected depending on the photographer's ability and skill.

It is this control of the light which keeps a pro producing work at a very high level. Photographers who are not in control of the light will soon find themselves out of the game like a pitcher who can't throw strikes. Demonstrate command of your "pitches".



Once you have mastered the fundamentals, you can begin working on the nuances of the game. This is the stage where an athlete combines training with natural talent to perform at a high level. For photographers, this is where we combine the fundamentals with the art of capturing great images. We develop our vision and use our creativity to produce images that go beyond a simple capture of a person's likeness. We are now capturing images that tell stories and capture personality. We interpret what we see and find unique ways to present our vision.

Can you imagine the results for a team that took the field without a plan for both the defense and offense? It would not be pretty! This is what happens when a photographer goes into business without a business plan. It is not enough to simply take great images, it takes marketing and branding to put your business on the offense and get you moving forward. It will not matter how wonderful your images are if you don't have fans willing to pay for your work.

In today's economy, we can no longer wait for clients to call us when they are ready to have photographs created. Our marketing has to create the need and the desire for clients to own what we offer. Savvy photographers know how to create marketing pieces that appeal to the heart and speak to the emotions. "Buy 1, Get 1 Free" and "half price 8x10's" does not move a client to desire images. We have to show images and tell stories that connect us with our clients. Connect with your fans!

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Know the fundamentals. Establish a game plan for running your business and growing your income. Protect yourself while you are out competing and you are ready for the major leagues of professional photography.

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Unbelievably Incredible!

by
Don Dickson



Wednesday was our showcase day for the Trade Show. Imagine 137 booths with 52 vendors, 37 instructor booths. The most knowledgeable representatives from our industry were right there to answer questions and to demonstrate their products and services, one-on-one. Arlington Camera finished the evening giving away 6 cameras at 9:32 sharp. Again the crowd was almost 1000 photographers, all finding bargains that were only offered at Texas School.

On Thursday, we had the Great Texas Shootout in the park. This was an event you'd have to see to believe with cars, motorcycles, models and plenty of food. Attendees got a chance to utilize what they had learned during the week. Afterwards, they submitted their images from the night for cash prizes and scholarships for Texas School. The winners of this year's Shootout will be announced at the TPPA Summer Roundup in Kerrville in June. Check out TexasSchool.org for information on submitting your images for the competition from the Shootout and be sure you go to TexasSchool.org to view the galleries that were created showcasing the different classes from this year's school.

Friday marks a week of learning and making new friends. The final assembly ended on Friday with more door prizes and the unveiling of the Texas School video, showcasing the work of the video class. It's almost like coming down from the mountain but everyone went home with some great memories and a ton of new knowledge. Then, the school ended with over \$30,000 in door prizes given away, which included \$10,000 in lab credit from BWC Color. Awesome!

We wish to thank all of our students for coming and experiencing Texas School 2012. We want to thank our wonderful instructors who worked so hard and shared so much with their students. It is the passion shared with their students that leaves a lasting impression. Most of all, we want to thank all of our vendors and sponsors for always going above and beyond in supporting the school. We could not do it without them! So, you might as well put Texas School 2013 on your calendar now and plan to attend. Those dates will be April 28 - May 3, 2013.



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Creating Interactive Family Portraits

Instead of Traditional "Looking at the Camera" Images

by
Elizabeth Homan

At the various seminars I have given, I am often asked, "How do you create those interactive portraits? ...How are you getting them to purchase interactive portraiture instead of the traditional, smiling (and looking at the camera) pose? What do you say to the clients to get them to do this so naturally?" Although not every session is exactly alike, there are some basic techniques I've learned over the years that work well for me.

My introduction to interactive portraiture began about 12 years ago when I took a Texas School class taught by Canadian Don MacGregor. It was a "life changing" experience. I had been in the photography business for about four years and was still searching for my own "style."

While studying under Don, I soon realized how valuable family portraits were to my clients, especially when they capture the family in a truly natural way. I immediately went back to my studio and started adding some interactive portraits to each session. At first, I didn't have a lot of samples on my walls to display this interactive style, so clients didn't purchase them. But as soon as I got an image that I thought was a great example, I printed it in 30x40 and displayed it where it could be seen as soon as you walked through the door. As soon as I did that, I started selling them. It was like magic!

Today, I am known for my interactive style and I spend about 40% of each session creating these types of portraits. I have many clients who still want the traditional style, but my clients come to me because they see a difference in my work, even if they don't know what it is they are actually liking about it. I love creating these images and I love seeing



Having a family engaged in an activity that they all enjoy will make their expressions more realistic and they will enjoy the session more.

them grace the walls of my clients' homes. In about 90% of the family portraits displayed in my studio, the subjects are not looking at the camera. Along with the studio displays, I also display interactive images in my marketing pieces and create some of these images for every client.

So, how do I get clients to interact... naturally? It depends on the age of the children. Children under the age of 10 or so are easier to work with. You just have to do something like... picking a leaf off a tree and looking at it, or picking a flower and counting the

petals (or picking off the petals). You can read a book, build a sandcastle, feed the birds or ducks. Those things are pretty easy and universal to do in many situations. Most people still need to be told what to do and are looking for guidance from me. Therefore, I still pose the clients in a way that looks great and flatters the subject. Once that is accomplished, I tell them what they are going to be doing while in that pose.

A good "pre-portrait" consultation is the key to making it all work. During that consultation, I introduce this style to the clients. We talk about things that might have special meaning to that particular family such as reading a favorite book, playing an instrument, playing catch or other kinds of sports, fishing, having a tea party or picnic. Each family is different and that is what makes these types of portraits so interesting to me. I would much rather create a story-telling portrait than, as Don MacGregor says, a "roadmap of the face".

Creating interactive portraits of families with older or adult children can be more challenging. For example, a family with older teenage children or grown children are not usually going to all read a book together or smell a flower together. This is where a family activity will really come



Our studio has now taken interactive portraiture another step and have added them to our “Collector’s Series” portraits. From Easter and Santa portraits to other specials such as Fall Fairies, I now create storytelling images of each session. Not only are clients purchasing wall portraits of these images, they are also purchasing albums that capture all of the images from the session. These sessions are 20-30 minutes long and include both the traditional (looking at the camera) images as well as interactive images. These Collector’s Series portraits also serve as an introduction to our studio for new clients. What better way could you ask to introduce them to my interactive portrait style?

In today’s market, it is extremely important to separate yourself from all of the other photographers in your area. At our studio, we have done this by creating a piece of art for my clients to display on their walls that tells their own story. This is not only fulfilling for myself as a portrait artist, but also as a wife and mother who values the storytelling portraits of my own family.

in handy... perhaps a photograph of them on their ski boat or posed around their swimming pool. Having a family engaged in an activity that they all enjoy will make their expressions more realistic and they will enjoy the session more.

One image I often create is that of the family walking together and holding hands. They feel really silly doing it, but they all start really laughing and the expressions are usually priceless. I also create many images in a session where the subjects are looking at something that is off in the distance. These types of images also sell well because the client can still get a good view of their faces, but they are not staring back at themselves on the wall. This is a good step for the “traditional” client that you are trying to break away from the norm and move into something a little different.



Elizabeth Homan, of San Antonio, is an award-winning portrait artist widely known for her distinctive yet traditional style of portraiture of families and children. She and her husband, Trey, are instructors at the Texas School of Professional Photography.

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In Defense of... A Light Meter

by
Cris Duncan



If it pleases the court, may a case be presented for using a hand-held light meter?

While others have made many advancements in their technology of in-camera meters, TTL and E-TTL metering, I still believe that a hand-held meter is a more reliable method. New technology seems to be slowly removing the relevance of an incident meter with each passing upgrade. I'm not here to discredit or to disprove any of the facts but rather to demonstrate the benefits a hand-held light meter offers photographers and this industry. Facts, and science will be presented and, when all has been brought to the light, you should be able to clearly see the difference in these two meters and how its existence is now more relevant than ever before.

First, it is important to understand the difference in technology between the in-camera meter and the hand-held meter. The meter in your camera is a reflective meter. Reflective meters are very reliable so long as you understand how they work and how to best use the information they provide. An in-camera, reflective meter has only one job. That is to find 18% gray since 18% gray is a middle exposure. Reflective meters want everything to be 18% gray. There is no black and white for them, just shades of gray. On the other hand, a hand-held (or incident) meter isn't content to be in the middle of the pack but rather to be on the side of both black and white and everything in between.

Let us look at the facts of the case. Since a reflective meter is looking for 18% gray, it has a tendency to misread the scene and under-expose or over-expose the image when anything but 18% gray is present. **Figure 1** shows a black, gray and white shirt all placed under the same lighting conditions. I photographed each shirt individually using Aperture priority to demonstrate how the in-camera meter can be fooled. You will notice that the white shirt tends to be under-exposed by two stops because the meter was trying to make it appear 18% gray and inversely the black shirt is over exposed by 2 stops as the camera adds light to make the black 18% gray. The meter worked just like



Figure 1 - (above) A black, gray and white shirt under same lighting conditions, using Aperture Priority. Note that the white shirt is under-exposed and black shirt is over-exposed.



Figure 2 - (right) The same holds true if using a flash employing TTL technology.



Figure 3 - (right) The same shirts under the same lighting using an incident meter reading and using manual mode, each one without changing the camera exposure. Note that the black is black and white is white, exactly what we want.

it was designed. However, it did not provide me with the results I needed. The image with the gray shirt is the only one exposed correctly because the camera did not make any compensation while metering. In **Figure 2** we see that even the most advanced in-camera meters work in this fashion... finding 18% gray. The same holds true if using an on-camera flash or off-camera flash employing TTL technology. If the meter reads light hitting a black or darker area it will tell the flash to increase the output in attempt to obtain a middle exposure, therefore over-exposing the scene and likewise it will instruct the flash to decrease output if the image is more white or high-key resulting in an under-exposed image.

Another disadvantage to an in-camera meter is the ability to measure a flash exposure. Yes, it will try to determine flash exposures while using dedicated units designed for the TTL system of the manufacturer. But, as we have discovered, that method may leave you struggling to have the look you desire. Flash exposure, such as a studio strobe or off-camera flash that is not dedicated to a specific camera or one that is set in a manual mode, cannot be done with the use of an in-camera meter. What does one do then?

backdrops
by whcc



Floor: Martin Red

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Lollipop; Floor: Bruno



Floor: Thomas

Once again, if it pleases the court, I would like to present several items of evidence and will leave it in your hands to decide on the final verdict. The use of an incident meter will insure the photographer of an accurate exposure, no matter the subject matter. I then photographed the same shirts under the same lighting and took an incident meter reading and using manual mode photographed each one without changing my exposure as seen in **Figure-3**. You can see that the black is black and white is white... exactly what we want. A hand-held meter therefore provides a worry-free metering system which, in turn, leads to more time for being creative and shooting and less time guessing and chimping. With an incident meter, the guessing is gone. Equate it to Ronco... “Set it and forget it!”

It really is that simple. With this tool, you measure the light at various parts of the scene easily and quickly without changing metering modes. This is helpful when you want to ensure that the dynamic range of an image is within the five stop range of usable information. Why is this so important? Can't we just adjust the exposure in Lightroom or Photoshop? Yes and no. Digital sensors have less latitude for error than did film. In order to maintain detail and accurate color throughout your image, your exposure needs to be dead-on. This insures that you will capture what you see and, most importantly, can free you up from spending time at a computer, providing you with more time for making photographs.

Another major benefit to a hand-held meter is the ability to accurately measure flash exposure. When working in the studio with multiple lights, this is a crucial and valuable asset. One will need to know the exact amount of light each strobe is emitting if he/or she wants to build a successful image in less time. Many of the modern handheld meters can now tell you what percent of the overall exposure is being influenced by flash which is a great way to easily add fill flash and balance two light sources when working on location. This feature is just not available with the in-camera meter. So why is that important and what is the



Figure 4 - Most of our clients are not 18% gray. Without a hand-held meter or a solid foundation on how to compensate with your in-camera meter, this could be frustrating.

reason for measuring light hitting the subject and not reflecting off the subject? The answer is simple. Not everything is 18% gray, as seen in **Figure 4** and most of our clients are not 18% gray. A wedding is a perfect example of the contrast between subjects. A bride in her beautiful white gown and the groom in a black tuxedo. Without a hand-held meter or a solid foundation on how to compensate with your in-camera meter, this could very well leave you frustrated searching for the correct exposure.

If you do not have an incident light meter and feel you cannot afford one, you still have options. Start by using a gray card or exposure target. These can be purchased almost anywhere for under \$15 and it is an easy way to begin shooting in manual and nailing your exposure with the first click of the shutter. Another way is to understand how your camera meter will interpret colors. A bright red is close to 18% gray, so is a middle green, like your grass. Blue jeans are very close to 18% gray as well, so you can use your in-camera spot meter and exposure lock to meter off these colors and still get a good exposure. To learn how your camera will react with certain colors, take some images of red, blue, green and so on and study the histogram on your camera. If the spike is in the middle, they will appear 18% gray to your camera. If the histogram is too far left, it is darker. If it is too far to the right, it is lighter.

Like any professional, we can do better, easier and faster work with the correct tools and I believe a case has been presented that a hand-held incident meter is a tool that needs to be in your bag. Happy creating.

Sometimes called the “McGyver of Light,” Cris Duncan M. Cr. Photog. CPP, creates his signature style by redefining traditional and nontraditional lighting techniques. He is a Master Craftsman as well as a Certified Professional Photographer. Since turning pro in 2002, he has photographed presidents, vice-presidents, dignitaries and countless others. Cris has also worked with top companies such as Frito-Lay and Bayer CropScience as well as being honored to shoot numerous weddings, portraits and commercial assignments for great people all over this land. He is the recipient of many awards, including best Bride, Portrait and Album for the state of Texas as well as several images accepted into the prestigious PPA Loan collection. Cris operates CjDuncan Photography in Lubbock, Texas along with his bride, Deanna, and is the founder of “Find Your Focus, Photographic Education.” To see more of Cris’s work visit www.cjduncan.com

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He Invented the Digital Camera Back In 1975!

A Visit with Kodak's Steven Sasson

by
Bill Hedrick

What began as a basic feasibility study in the Kodak Apparatus Division Research Lab would eventually change our lives forever. Back in 1975, a 25 year old engineer named Steve Sasson was approached by his supervisor about a practical alternative method of capturing and displaying still images.

“The entire conversation took place in a hallway and probably didn’t last 60 seconds,” explains Sasson as he recalls the day when his boss, Gareth Lloyd, first presented the idea. “I saw it as, more or less, a ‘filler’ project. We had no budget and few specifications.”

Steve Sasson had been interested in electronics since he was a child. This new concept presented a challenge that he was anxious to tackle. So, for the next year, Sasson and his small team of technicians would build the very first working model of a digital camera. It would use solid state electronics, solid state imagers, and a relatively new sensor known as a charged coupled device (CCD), a revolutionary device that had been developed by Fairchild Semiconductor just two years earlier. The camera would gather optical information and store it on a removable magnetic tape cassette that could be removed and then played back and viewed on a television screen.

It was a different world in 1975. There were no personal computers and much of the technology we take for granted today simply did not exist. Researchers at Texas Instruments had already filed a patent for a similar idea using analog technology but, as far as anyone can tell, such a device was never built. “Although we had few specifications to meet, I knew that an analog device would not be practical and the size of such a device would be enormous,” Steve recalls. “So, the digital was the only way I knew to do it.”



Steven Sasson with his first 0.01 megapixel digital camera, the size of a toaster; that produced a black and white image in 23 seconds back in 1975.

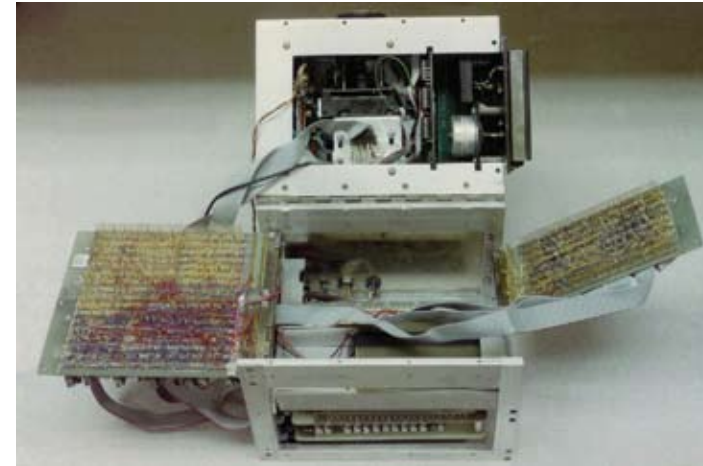
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It is interesting to note that, during that year of research and development, Sasson and his team never viewed an image from the device. What they were viewing consisted of test patterns from oscilloscopes and other electronic instruments.

Sasson knew he needed certain components to build this new “filmless” camera. “The actual lens was an 8mm Kodak movie lens *borrowed* from a junk bin,” he explains. “On the side of the portable contraption was a portable digital cassette instrumentation recorder. There was an analog-to-digital converter that was borrowed from a digital voltmeter application, and several dozen digital and analog circuits wired together on a half dozen circuit boards. The image area consisted of a highly temperamental CCD and it was all powered by 16 nickel cadmium batteries.”

The camera would capture the image using the CCD imager and digitize the image and store it on a standard cassette tape. That process would take about 23 seconds. Next, there had to be a means of playing back the image. “The playback device incorporated a cassette reader and a custom built frame store. The frame store received the data and interpolated the 100 line captured image to 400 lines and generated a standard video signal that could be viewed on a TV screen,” says Sasson.

The “portable” camera itself was about the size of a toaster and weighed in at a little over 8 pounds. The black-and-white image was captured at a resolution of 0.01 megapixels (10K). Not only did it take 23 seconds to record the image onto the cassette, it took another 23 seconds to download the image to the playback system for viewing.



The “portable” camera itself, showing the components, as seen in Sasson’s original report to Kodak.

However, the day finally came when it was time to take the very first photograph. “I called in a lab assistant named Joy Marshall and took a head and shoulder shot of her,” he explains. But that first black and white image was far from impressive. “Her hair was a silhouette and her face was a blur of static,” he recalls. After some minor adjustments, the image was restored.

It was time to demonstrate the new device to an internal audience at Kodak in 1976. Sasson laughs as he recalls the “insensitive” title he chose for the demonstration title... “Film-Less Photography.” Sasson would photograph one person and lecture for the 23 seconds it took to record the image and move on to another person. When the first image appeared on the TV screen, the questions began pouring in.

“Someone wanted to know why anyone would want to view an image on a TV screen. Another asked about storing these images and there were other questions about what an electronic photo album would look like. But the big question was about when such a system would be available to the consumer,” says Sasson.

That was a difficult question to answer 36 years ago, according to Sasson. In short, the technology necessary for making this a viable option to film just wasn’t there in 1976. “We knew that the future of the digital camera would be based on the evolution of the computer itself,” he explains. Nevertheless, Kodak saw it as a wave of the future and began quietly, but intensively, researching the concept. “It’s funny to look back on this project and realize that we really weren’t thinking of this as the world’s first digital camera, but rather a distant possibility.”

“You have to understand that Kodak had certain standards to maintain in image reproduction. In 1976, the image produced by this new camera was comparable to 110 film, but not as good,” says Sasson. For Kodak to produce a system for the public that would meet their specifications and standards, technology would have to advance beyond what it was at that time.

In his technical report on the project, Sasson stated, “The practical implementation of this system requires that a significant amount of progress be made in the areas of charged coupled device (CCD) image sensors, digital memory, integrated circuits and microcomputer technology. The most significant needs are as follows: higher resolution, broader spectral response and increased dynamic range.”

The report goes on to talk about the “camera of the future” by stating, “The camera described in this report represents a first attempt at demonstrating a photographic system which may, with improvements in technology,



The “playback” system converted the data to a standard video signal that could be viewed on a television screen.

substantially impact the way pictures will be taken in the future. A future camera for the consumer may be envisioned as a small device capable of taking color pictures under very low light conditions. The pictures will be stored in a magnetic medium on a nonvolatile solid state memory which will be removable from the camera for playback... The picture, existing in electronic form, could be sent over conventional communications channels with little or no modification.”

Obviously, Kodak was headed in the right direction and had firm understanding of existing technology as well as future developments in technology. As to the question of “when” this technology would replace film capture, Sasson himself predicted about “15 to 20 years.” But, in reality, Kodak was working on this new system and improving upon it as new technology became available. As early as 1991, the Space Shuttle was using a digital camera developed by Kodak. But it would be another ten years before Kodak would begin selling mass-market digital cameras. In the meantime, Kodak was busy obtaining hundreds of patents on digital imaging technology. Practically all digital cameras today rely on these patented inventions.

Steve Sasson kept that prototype camera for the next 30 years as he moved throughout the company, mostly as a reminder of this “fun” project. But, outside of the patent that was granted on the concept in 1978, there was no public disclosure until 2001. Today, the world’s first digital camera sits in a museum at the Kodak facility in Rochester, New York. It’s inventor, Steven Sasson, has now retired from Kodak.

Since those pioneering days at Kodak Research Lab, technology has come a long, long way. Today we have personal computers, the internet with high speed connections, and in-house printing systems. The world of film capture is somewhat reminiscent of the “good old days” to many of us. Technology is advancing faster than anyone ever imagined and we go about our lives taking it all for granted. Although Steven Sasson and his small team of technicians at Kodak never set out to “change the world,” they obviously did just that.

I want to gratefully acknowledge Kodak for granting me this interview with Steven Sasson. Kodak has been a long-time supporter of Texas PPA and professional photographers throughout the world.

Bill Hedrick, Editor



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School Pictures

An Eye-Opening Experience

by
Steve Kozak

When my daughter, Shannon, had her senior pictures taken for the yearbook a few years ago, she asked me to go with her. It was an unusual request, coming from her, because she has always been a confident and independant young lady and I was actually flattered that she would ask.

Now, I am the epitome of a “professional” photographer and I was kind of looking forward to the laughs that I might get out of watching the school photographer labor over the long lines and goofy jokes that they use to get kids to do something other than smirk. I was looking forward to their reaction when I would tell them that we only wanted yearbook photos because I am a photographer (not like I have not heard that a million times myself!).

When we arrived at the school, the photographer had his studio sign prominently displayed. I knew of the company but had never actually met the photographer. I imagined meeting him and feeling thankful that I did not have his job!

Shannon and I walked together into the cafeteria and suddenly I was in shock. There was no crowd and I could not believe my eyes. There were no less than five complete studio set-ups with three of them having easy access to multiple backgrounds. Every studio station had large softboxes, hairlights, fill lights, and high-end digital cameras complete with Pocket Wizards to control the specific set up. Two of the stations were using green screen technology.

There were laptop computers at every camera with the images immediately downloaded for instant viewing, a laptop at check in, two computers for retouching and adding backgrounds to the green screen, a photographer at every studio, two staff at the retouching computers, a staff person checking kids in and a staff person to help the kids select and dress in the caps and gowns and tuxes and drapes.

I visited with the check-in lady and, when we told her we were there for yearbook only, she smiled politely and helped us check in. There was no grumbling because we were not upgrading the session, no sour looks, and no pressure to upgrade. She treated Shannon and me like we were the most important clients they had all day. So did the dresser and the two photographers Shannon saw for her yearbook photos. The lady at check-in commented on my “Photographic Adventure” tee shirt and asked about my workshops and told me how great it must be that I was a professional photographer! We chatted about 15 minutes. She was quite personable and pleasant.

Shannon had her photos taken and the photographers called me over to select my favorite and I have to tell you, the images were great! Three other kids came in while I was there and they, too, were treated like royalty - even though two of them were only getting yearbook photos as well. I could not help but think as I was standing there in awe of the great backgrounds, the top notch equipment and the efficiency of the staff how school photos have changed.

Senior pictures are tough enough to do when all of the photos are taken in the studio... and these folks made me ashamed at my workflow and sometimes my lack of enthusiasm with my clients. These folks have invested in the business to offer the latest technology and a huge variety to their clients and deliver a flawless experience.

Maybe, I’m wrong.. but when you say “school pictures,” you don’t think that you are going to be in the middle of a high energy photo session. I don’t know what the studio did to pre-market their sessions to the kids or if the kids did not pay attention, but the bottom line is, I learned another valuable lesson which I learned probably 30 years ago - **SELL THE EXPERIENCE!!** Watching that staff at work made me want to join them in the fun of taking photographs. It made me want to be photographed. It made me realize that I was the one who had been “schooled.”

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Historic Regency Bridge on the Little Colorado River in Concho Valley, Texas.

Alton Watson and the Swinging Bridge



Alton Watson is the owner of the White Wolf Trading Post at the foot of the Regency Bridge in Regency, Texas.

The view from the Regency Bridge is spectacular and worth an afternoon drive in itself. But, on the north side of the bridge was an unexpected treasure... the White Wolf Trading Post and Alton Watson. I wanted a shot of the bridge from the river below but the surrounding land was private property with "posted" signs everywhere except for one open gate. On it were some faded signs mentioning barbecue, a trading post, and something about a movie being filmed there. Although another sign on the same gate said "private property," we decided it was worth the gamble.

As we pulled up to the White Wolf Trading Post, a man emerged from the mobile home next door, followed by no less than a half dozen big dogs. We were relieved to see him carrying a guitar instead of a shotgun and he greeted us with a smile and a hand-shake and then sat down under the shade and began singing and playing his weathered guitar and telling us his story.

Alton is a song-writer and musician with a long history of playing in country-western bands throughout Texas. In the 1990's, he moved to Regency and established his trading post. Surely, it was meant to be another Luckenbach but things sometimes don't always work out like you plan them. Nowadays, it is a

Regency, Texas, isn't much more than a stop in the road in the Concho Valley area along the Little Colorado River. The old country store with its antique gas pumps is long gone and only a few homes, some cattle, and some of the most colorful wildflowers you'll ever see are all that remain along the narrow gravel road.

But, to get to Regency, you'll need to cross one of the last remaining suspension bridges in the State of Texas. It's only one lane and rises nearly 90 feet above the river below. It is higher in the middle and locals know to stop before crossing the bridge, roll down their window, and listen to hear if anyone else has entered the bridge from the other side before proceeding. The sound of another vehicle crossing the wooden floor of the bridge is unmistakable.

gathering place where song-writers and musicians meet on the third Saturday of each month to "jam." During the rest of the month, Alton is more than happy to sit down and visit with anyone who wanders by. So, what about the movie?

As it turns out, a full-length motion picture was filmed right on this site in 1999. It was called "World Without Waves," a somewhat graphic story about a man in New York City who moved to this remote Texas site to escape his strange allergy to electric current. He takes up residence in an old school bus, chops down the only power line into the area with an ax, falls in love with a local girl, and the story takes off from there (you can find a movie trailer on Youtube). Alton even has a part in the movie and contributed to the sound track. You can purchase a CD of his music right there at the White Wolf Trading Post.

His songs are "old country." Alton grew up listening to Hank Williams and that generation and his own music remains true to that era. He sings of a man "standing on a swinging bridge in Texas" when his sweetheart tells him she is leaving. He sings about "the day they laid my grandpa in his grave" and how people came from Austin to Dallas because of his reputation for making some of the finest "Blue Texas Rain" moonshine that was "as clear as a summer's breeze... slides down with ease."

He sings of love and war and taxes and all of those things that affect our daily lives but in a down-home fashion that makes you want to pull up a chair and listen and put life on hold for awhile. Then, as if on cue, a group of deer ran across the dirt driveway just yards away as he strummed the final chords. Alton smiled and said, "They usually stand at the fence and listen to me."

One has to stop and wonder why Regency, Texas, never gained the fame and fortune that was afforded to its sister community of Luckenbach. Perhaps all it needed was a hit song by Willie or Waylon. But then you have to also wonder if Alton prefers everything just the way it is... living a simple life doing just what he wants to do while the world around him is in chaos.

So, if you decide to check it out, you can find the Regency Bridge about 20 miles northwest of San Saba, Texas. Take Highway 16 out of town and turn west on FM 500 and follow it until you come to County Road 433. Turn right there and go about another mile or so and you'll cross the historic Regency Bridge. The White Wolf Trading Post is just on the other side.



The Concho Valley country roads display some of the most colorful wildflowers you can imagine. See for yourself.



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An Introduction to Balance

by
John Murray M.Photos, CR, BBA

Certain principles govern the universe, one of which is balance in nature. By examining nature’s balance and applying it to all art forms one can learn much about photography. Simple, unwritten principles that exist in nature govern the well-balanced mind. In Pictorial Composition & The Critical Judgment of Pictures, Henry Poore states, “Take from nature the principles of balance, and you deprive it of harmony; take it from harmony and you have chaos.” Poore later adds, “without composition, there can be no picture; that the composition of pictorial units into a whole is the picture.”

The sunflower is an excellent example of balance in nature. Important elements that form the design of the flower are arranged in a magnificent way. To the naked eye, a field of sunflowers is strewn across the landscape in no particular form. Although the field’s beauty is striking in golden colors and harmonious color/scene appeal, the flowers appear completely random with their branches and twigs shooting in every direction imaginable. On the contrary, to the trained student of art observing that same field, there is a delineated rhythm with each twig and stock pointing upward toward the sun. The individual sunflowers face the warm summer sun to bask in its illumination. Upon closer inspection, each sunflower has common characteristics: circular centers, stars gathered around a radius, and petals gathered around the center. Each petal contains the same opacity of yellow and a subdivision of three lines forming seven lines of definition.

There is a certain rhythm in nature that replicates the Law of Harmonious Proportions. For example, the eyes of a person are five-eight’s the distance between the chin and the top of the head. The belly button, the source of a mother’s life giving sustenance through umbilical chord, too is five-eight’s



To the naked eye, a field of sunflowers is strewn across the landscape in no particular form. But, to the trained student of art observing that same field, there is a delineated rhythm with each twig and stock pointing upward toward the sun.

the distance between the top of the head and the bottom of the feet. If one was to cut a tree down, then the rings of the tree can be observed in orbit around the center in this five-eight’s relationship. The orbit of planets around the sun also has this five-eighths ring around the sun where the further winter equinox orbit is five-eighths the overall orbit and the shorter orbit is its inverse of three-eighths orbit.

The philosophies of Pisa which form the Fibonacci (his nickname) numbers (1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 13, 21, 34, 55, 89, and etc.) are age old scientific thought about the application of this “Law of Harmonious Proportions.” Leonardo of Pisa (c. 1170 – c. 1250) explored these numbers extensively and the Greek letter Phi is named for his mathematical nickname. The continual occurring curves in nature can be related to this same rhythm. A grid can be downloaded from the internet, which is called Phi-Matrix, that can be applied on top of photographic files for viewing this rhythm in compositional placements for the subject of a photograph.

Balance must be created to have an appealing image. Rhythm in the flow of observation is crucial to the images appeal. Rhythm is the repetition of weights and measures arranged in the image to give a pleasing array of design to the overall piece. Rhythm is essential in all forms of art: music has its time, oratory has its cadence, writing has its thesis verses anti-thesis, painting has its motion against anti-motion. In photography, balance is achieved with the observation of the image’s elements in a circular flow.

This phenomenon is referred to as “circular observation” or the “oval spiral.” The arrangement of light, color, and line (composition) must entice the viewer by focusing the eye inward, not repelling it outward. Albert Handell writes in Intuitive Composition, “...an integral sense of balance is achieved through the sense of simplicity and the harmonious placement of the elements of composition—shapes, forms, colors, etc.—into an integrated visual whole.” Light controls the image by its contrast, direction, and character statement. Color has a constraining effect with its polarity and harmony. The line compels the viewer with its placement of the subject and overall shape appeal. When



Upon closer inspection, each sunflower has common characteristics: circular centers, stars gathered around a radius, and petals gathered around the center.

A large advertisement for Denny Manufacturing. The main image shows a woman with long red hair holding a large black umbrella on a road at sunset. The text "Denny" is in a pink circle, and "MANUFACTURING" is in large white letters. Below it, "BACKDROPS | PROPS | LIGHTING | ACCESSORIES" and "THEY WILL BLOW YOU AWAY" are written. At the bottom, "CP7129 • THE ROAD" and "FROM OUR NEW HDR LINE OF FREEDOM CLOTH® BACKDROPS. SEE MORE AT WWW.DENNYMFG.COM" are displayed, along with the phone number "800.844.5616" and social media icons for Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Pinterest. Three smaller images of the woman in different poses are shown at the bottom.

these elements are displayed properly, the piece contains balance and holds the attention of others.

The mind requires a certain balance in any art form to maintain interest in continued viewing of a photograph. The concept of “Balance of the Steelyard” is a philosophical approach I often compare to visualize the balance in the scene. This philosophy envisioned as elements and shapes of a photograph as an adult and a child on a tetter-totter at the playground. Where must the adult sit on one side of the center fulcrum and where must the child sit on the other end to keep the tetter-totter in balance so that no one spends all there time up in the air? Simply placing a subject in a scene at the intersection of thirds, or the saddle, or the Golden Mean must be dictated by the other balancing elements and secondary subjects in the scene to avoid a negatively contrived



Placing a subject in a scene at the intersection of thirds, or the saddle, or the Golden Mean must be dictated by the other balancing elements and secondary subjects in the scene to avoid a negatively contrived sensation



sensation while viewing the print thus becoming over simplification and short-cutting the brains enjoyment of the piece.

I have resigned myself to a lifetime of art as a student, attacking the discipline of its knowledge and progressive thought with veracity, strength, and courage. I deeply admit that “the more I know, the more I know I don’t know” and “there is nothing new under the sun” are the conclusions to knowledge acquisition and practice for my next photograph. From this humble estate, I’m poised to learn more and grow in communication of each photograph’s ability to make a statement. I accept these philosophies with grace.

Grace, now that’s a subject I’ve searched to express as a composition in a photograph. To express grace in a photograph requires I know what it is and analyze how to apply it. Even after nearly four decades of exploration in this beautiful word, I believe grace is the joyful and willful condescension of a greater to a lesser (and I’m very willing to be in the position of the lesser) to enable the lesser to serve another for the honor and glory of God. Even in this Hebrew word of “Khan,” which means favor, beauty, or grace, there is a natural rhythm observed in the diagonal sloping from top right corner to bottom left corner that best represents the word grace as a compositional design for a photograph. Place within that diagonal movement an s curve, c curve, oval, Hogarth curve, or circle the image radiates this word grace. Progressive Revelation principle, a hermeneutical study principle, shows the end of grace (how I treat my fellow man) is related to finding favor in the beginning and develops in a way that lets me understand more as I go between the two applications of grace.

It is my hope that this introduction is both entertaining and stimulating to the mind as we explore this inexhaustible subject of balance. Here are some rules that I try to rely as a measuring stick of my own photograph’s balance.



Some Rules of Balance

Taken from Henry R. Poore, A.N.A.

In his book which is no longer in print, Pictorial Composition & The Critical Judgment of Pictures, thirteenth edition, revised, G.P. Putnam’s Sons New York and London, The Knickerbockers Press, pages 29 and 30.



1. Every picture is a collection of units or items.
2. Every unit has a given value.
3. The value of a unit depends on its attraction; its attraction varies as to its placement.
4. An isolated unit near the edge has frequently more attraction than at the center.
5. Every part of the picture space has some attraction.
6. Space having no detail may possess attraction by gradation and by association.
7. A unit of attraction in an otherwise empty space has more weight through isolation than the same when placed with other units.
8. A black unit on white or a white on black has more attraction than the same on gray.
9. The value of a black or white unit is proportioned to the size of space contrasting with it.
10. A unit in the foreground may have less weight than a like one in the distance.
11. Two or more associated units may be reckoned as one and their united center is the point on which they balance with others.
12. There is balance of Line, of Mass, of Light and Dark, of Measure, which is secured upon a scale of attraction which each possesses.
13. The placement of the important item or subject has little to do with the balance scheme of a picture. This is the starting point, and balance is a consideration beyond this.
14. In every composition the eye should cross the central division at least once.

John Murray is a second generation photographer from Irving, Texas, and is owner of Photography by Murray. John is a Master-Craftsman and long-time member of TPPA and contributor to the Texas Professional Photographer. He was also featured in the Feb/March 2009 issue of the Texas Professional Photographer.



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GUILD & SUPPLIER NEWS

Dallas News

by Carsten von Hedemann
Photos by Edward Holmberg

The Dallas PPA guild had another informative monthly meeting in March with Richard Sturdevant who continued with part three of our series on "How to Enter Print Competition." Again, there was a large participation in competition with over 20 entries. We also had several vendors demonstrating their products and services in the reception area for the benefit of our members. Throughout the evening, vendors presented several members with door prizes. Finally, several of our Master Photographers and judges offered a critique of the competition prints.

The Dallas PPA guild provides a warm and friendly atmosphere with plenty of networking and educational benefits for our members. One of the primary educational benefits provided to our members as well as other photographers from around the State of Texas is the Little Red Schoolhouse. It gives us a chance to improve our skills and is hosted by Dallas PPA. The 2012 Little Red Schoolhouse will be held August 10 through 12. More details will follow soon but we guarantee it will be an event you'll not want to miss. This year's event will be held in the Dallas metro area and will be over the weekend to allow our fellow photographers to participate. We can't wait to see you.

In April, Dallas PPA hosted Frank Salas from Orange County,



March Print Competition Winners: Hoang Vu, Yosef Yetimgeta, David Edmonson, Ed Swan, Kathy Ames, Lucy Hoffstedder, Britney Oswald, Paul Ernest, and Luke Edmonson



April Print Competition Winners: Yosef Yetimgeta, Al Hernandez, Paul Ernest, Shannon Hawk, David Edmonson, Penny Clark, Hung Vu, Kathy Ames, and Luke Edmonson, Trophy Winner.

California. Frank had us on our feet as he shared "How to WOW Your Clients with the New Lightroom 4." He also demonstrated some of the adjustments and techniques he uses for image enhancement. Frank also presented an amazing tutorial, showing us how to boost our images with amazing colors and rich blacks in our black and white images.

Once again, we had over 20 entries in our monthly print competition and several vendors in attendance to demonstrate their products and services and to present some fantastic door prizes to those in attendance. Members were also treated to a print critique by mentors and Master Photographers who attended the meeting and we want to thank them for sharing their time and expertise.

San Antonio News

by John Vega & Jeanne Luna

San Antonio had the opportunity to host Mark McCall for our March meeting. He shared with us a valuable business lesson and the benefits of PPA membership and the protection they can provide. We appreciate Mark taking the time to also show us some of his winning prints, and how to use Photoshop to help us accomplish higher merits during competition.

San Antonio had another great showing on our print competition, with over 10 prints this month. Our winners were: Jorge Velazco with "La Sposa," first place; Dane Miller with "The Red Shoes," second place; and Randy Pollard with "Mirror, Mirror," third place. Our Members Choice Award was presented to Dane Miller for "The Red Shoes." In our album competition, Laura Pollard took first place with "Jenny and Kevin."

For our April meeting, we were fortunate to have Christi and Melinda Reddehase as our guest speakers. If you were considering starting or refining your baby portrait program, Christi and Melinda have so much to share. They talked about what worked and what did not work for them. When their clients sign up for their baby program, the clients receive all kinds of benefits, including a coupon book. However, there are some rules. Melinda and Christi also talked about marketing, advertising, and the benefits of Social Media in different areas. They've also built a beautiful studio. Thank you, Melinda and Christi, for a wonderful program.



March Winners: Randy Pollard, Dane Miller, Laura Pollard and Jorge Velazco.

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GUILD & SUPPLIER NEWS

San Antonio's April competition winners in the print category were: Dane Miller with "Gate of No Return," first place; Fonzie Munoz with "Angels in the Sky," second place; and Craig Werner with "Amazing Day at the Zoo" in third place. The album category winner was Caitlin Hudnall with "Martha & Andrew" and the Members Choice winner was Craig Werner with "Amazing Day at the Zoo."

Heart of Texas News

by Tom Sergent

The Heart of Texas Professional Photographers Guild met at the Klassy Glass in downtown Waco for our monthly meeting on March 13th. Our guest speaker Suzy Roberts-Fulton of Tricoast Photography presented a wonderful and informative program on Senior photography. Suzy calls her program "from shooting to selling" and she covered all of those aspects and more. Suzy has taken Tricoast's senior program from nearly non-existent to a vibrant, active program which averages over \$1,500 per client! All of this in a town with a population of about 25,000! Suzy shared her sales expertise, shooting and lighting tips and finished it off with some photoshop demonstrations - it was a great program.

Our monthly imaging competition featured several new entrants and lots of competition. It was won by Jill Heubbert with Heather Hitt finishing second and Rhonda Williams third.

The guest speaker at the April Heart of Texas Professional Photographer's Guild meeting was long-time Waco photographer Don Castello. Don has been a fixture on the Waco photography scene for a number of years and is a very talented



Jill Heubbert, Heather Hitt and Rhonda Williams



April image competition winners: Cecy Ayala, Rhonda Williams and Billy Lauderdale

photographer. Don is a graduate of the Brooks Institute of photography in California and of Baylor University. Don owned a local Waco studio and he worked on various Baylor publications as well as for the Waco Tribune Herald. Although he is semi-retired, he still shoots assignments (as recently as capturing images of Brittney Griner and the Lady Bears on their way to a National title). Don shared some of his stories about Baylor events and some of the inventions he has made over the years to solve various photography problems and challenges. He capped off the evening with a slide show of some of his wonderful travel photography from around the world as well as nature and wildlife images. Our image competition winners were: Rhonda Williams, first place; Billy Lauderdale, second place; and Cecy Ayala, third place. Our President also announced that our Guild will be presenting a guild members show at the local Arboretum in July.

Houston News

by Kim Hartz

In April, the Professional Photographers Guild of Houston welcomed our guest speaker, Nick Tsakiris, "The Lightroom Dude," for a half day meeting to delve into all that you can accomplish with Lightroom 3. Some of the topics covered included how to use Photoshop and Bridge to work with Lightroom and using adjustment brushes to replicate what you can do in Photoshop. There was also a special look into Lightroom 4 and it's amazing new features! Workflow is always an important topic to tackle, and Nick's tips and tricks for utilizing Lightroom will definitely help to streamline your workflow and to help save time.

Print competition winners for April were Sherry Piche with "Mr. and the Little Mrs."; Kim Hartz with "Strike a Pose"; and Leslie Cervantes with "Moppet." Piche won first while Hartz and Cervantes tied for second place.



Houston Print Winners: Sherry Piche, Kim Hartz and Leslie Cervantes

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Brazos Valley News

by Kathy Norwood

The March speaker for the Brazos Valley PPA guild was Suzy Roberts Fulton who spoke on “Senior Sessions-From Shooting to Selling.” Her program was fast-paced and lively and wonderfully honest. Suzy shared tips that she had learned from her own experiences with



March winners: Kathy Norwood, Robert Norwood, and Melanie Hall with March speaker Suzy Roberts Fulton.

photographing seniors and how they have successfully taken a business that was just existing to a thriving enterprise. From social media marketing, customer loyalty and providing an awesome product that stands out in the industry today, Suzy utilizes a variety of means for success. She also shared her knowledge of Photoshop, gave helpful hints on posing and lighting and wowed us with her contagious humor.

Our competition winners for the month of March included Melanie Hall who took first place, Robert Norwood who took second place



Daniela Weaver, Brazos Valley Vice President, with speaker Nick Tsakiris, and Melanie Hall and her winning print.

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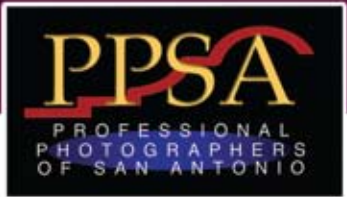
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and Kathy Norwood with third place. Our meetings are on the second Monday of the month at the College Station Conference Center and we are always open to having visitors or new members.

April is a month that ushers in the Spring season. Texas is really beautiful this time of the year with bluebonnets and wildflowers growing everywhere. Along with spring flowers, we have enjoyed some really great guest speakers for our guild. This month we hosted "The Lightroom Dude," Nick Tsakiris, from League City, Texas. Not only is Nick the leading guru on Lightroom, he's also a really funny guy. With the new release of Lightroom 4 and it's amazing capabilities, Nick was able to help us understand more of the functionality of the Develop Module and the main differences between LR3 and LR4. For those of us who are a little more "geeky," Nick demonstrated how the "Map" feature provides a means of setting the GPS point in our digital negatives. Nick also introduced us to the "Book" feature of LR4.

Melanie Hall was the only print competition entrant and had a beautiful image.

For photographers living in the Brazos Valley area, we want to invite you to our meetings at the College Station Conference Center on George Bush Drive. If you would like more information, please contact our President, Kathy Norwood, at kathy@knorwoodportraiture.com or Daniela Weaver at danielaweaver@verizon.net.

Texoma News

by Kelly DeLong

The Texoma Guild hosted Leslie Ann Kitten of Savant Photography in Lubbock for our March meeting. Leslie is a 2001 graduate of Texas Tech University, majoring in Interior Design. She also received a Master's degree in Agricultural Communications Specializing in Photography. She began Savant Photography while earning her Master's degree after being asked to photograph a wedding. Since then, Leslie has focused on growing her business and now serves Lubbock and surrounding areas, but she has also been asked to travel throughout the nation.

Leslie's program, "The Hidden Gems," addressed five places to find repeat business with residual income. Savant Photography has doubled gross sales every year and has achieved a 41% profit margin in 2011. This is, in part, because Leslie makes a point of marketing to clients that are not highly marketed to or represented by other local photographers. Business and marketing, unfortunately, are not always top priorities for portrait photographers. But that does not make them any less important than great lighting and posing. Leslie's secret to success is her amazing ability to meld photographic artistry with an acute business sense. She shared many of her marketing tools with us and gave us a long list of ways to improve our profit margin.

In April, the Texoma Guild met in Quanah at Kelly DeLong's studio and hosted Sherry Adkins, a fine-art photographer from Amarillo, Texas. Sherry has an AAS degree in Photography from Amarillo College and

has her work displayed in several galleries in the North Texas area. She was also spotlighted in the March 2011 issue of Color magazine with her image "Made in New Mexico" featured on the cover.

Sherry uses an eclectic selection of overlays and effects in Photoshop to create amazing and unusual works of art. As with most artists, her "steps" are different with each project and sometimes are a bit difficult to reproduce. Despite the fact that our meeting was cut short due to bad weather, Sherry had time to give us several new tools we can incorporate into our art projects, as well as some of our portrait photography. We are hoping to have Sherry return for another program in the near future.

South Plains News

by Deanna Duncan

In April, the South Plains Professional Photographer's Association hosted our very own Kathy Drake Dabbs with her new program "10,000 Ways Not to Run a Business." With over 16 years of experience running a full service studio, Kathy has seen peaks and valleys and shared with us how she climbed out of the valleys to have a profitable, stable business. Kathy whet everyone's appetite for more when she opened with, "When we first did SMS we discovered our Cost of Goods Sold (COGS) was almost 50%. We are now less than 19%." By placing customer service first (and truly valuing people) Kathy was able to place her studio as a top performing studio. Members laughed, cried and left encouraged with tips they could use to expand their own business.

March brought a true treat to the SPPPA. Globe trotting past PPA President, Don Dickson, joined Cris Duncan in presenting a program on "Loan Images." Using images provided by PPA from their Loan Collection, the duo discussed print competition and then analyzed the images. Members and guests walked through the 12 Elements with



The SPPPA hosted a "Bond Night" complete with casino tables, prizes and a "Bond Car." Members came dressed as villains, Bond Girls and 007 himself.

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each of the images. From high key to low key, from single subject to groups, everyone saw that there are no “formulas” for merits. Even so, well executed images from any style can exhibit the 12 Elements. Don encouraged everyone to begin participating in print competition. There were a lot of questions about “digital versus print” entries and Don went through the brief history (including percentages of merits) with each medium. He explained that they truly are equal. There is not a competitive advantage to either as far as meriting. This program was in preparation for the SPPPA’s Annual Print Competition in May.

Austin News

by Sue Ellen Pesl

Lewis and Carol Kincheloe presented a great program to kick off Spring for Austin PPA members and guests. “A Recipe for Success,” by the Kincheloe’s, delved into all aspects of portrait photography. From marketing,



March winners: Maria Bernal, John Rogers, and Charles Quinn.

creating the buzz in town, to pricing for profit, Lewis and Carol revealed their secrets on location lighting and selling new custom products to their clients. Lewis and Carol own and operate Positive Image

Photography, a full-time studio in Georgetown, Texas, just minutes from Austin. Lewis has been president of Austin PPA as well as Texas PPA. To see more about the Kincheloes and their studio, visit: www.posimage.net.

Austin PPA is so proud of our Austin PPA Photographer of the Year 2009-2011, Maria Bernal, for being featured in and landing the cover of March’s Professional Photographer Magazine. Way to go, Maria!

March’s print winners were: Maria Bernal, first place; John Rogers, second place; and Charles Quinn, third place.

In April, we held our annual Print Mentors Meeting. This meeting is a great way for our members and guests to learn from our expert panel judges about their photographic work. With an emphasis on print competition, we not only learned what PPA judges are looking for but also steps we can take to improve our daily client work. Our judges included; Lewis Kincheloe, Carrell Grigsby and Maria Bernal. Lewis is a Certified Professional Photographer, a PPA Master Photographer and he holds a Photographic Craftsman degree. Carrell received her PPA Master of Photography in 2009. Rounding out our panel was Maria, who is Austin PPA’s Photographer of the Year 2009, 2010 and 2011. Maria also gave us a brief presentation on the “12 Elements of a Merit Image.” All

of our judges are all speakers and travel around the country sharing their wealth of information with others. A big “thank you” to all our judges for taking time from their businesses to educate and better our member’s knowledge of print competition.

April’s monthly print winners were; Maria Bernal, first place; Stephanie Sharif, second place; and John Rogers, third place.

For more information about Austin PPA’s upcoming events, please visit our Events link at: www.austinpapa.com.



April winners: Maria Bernal, Stephanie Sharif, and John Rogers.

Fort Worth News

by Keith Evans

Our April meeting had Frank Salas, Master Photographer, from California talk about marketing with Lightroom 4 and CS5. He also touched a bit on the social media and how it can market for you.

Print competition winners in the Wedding category included: Keith Evans, first place; Richard Dalton, second place; and Rhonda Brunson, third place. Illustrative winners were; Phyllis Kuykendall, first place; Steve Cantrell, second place; and Jane Rendell, third place. Portrait winners were: Brad Barton, first place; Janette Wallace and Victoria Kemp tied for second place; and Steve Burma, third place. Our Members Choice Award went to Jane Rendell.

Anyone wishing to speak at the Fort Worth Meeting should contact Richard Dalton thru our website: www.forthworthppa.org.



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