

Southern California was very nice, with great picture taking conditions. Cloudy mornings by the ocean, bright, cloudless skies through mid afternoon, with puffy clouds through sunset. It was super. While we were at Dana Point, we saw many new items and want to share some of them with you now.

More than a few of you own Pentax efina T cameras. Very soon, we will have a 3.3 megapixel digital version of the same camera. It will also shoot digital movies. Yes, it's the same shirt pocket size. Konica also showed their new Digital Revio camera with similar features, at about the same size. It should be in our stores next week. We are also expecting the new Sima Image Bank – a 3.2 Gigabyte storage device for downloading and storing your images from SmartMedia or CompactFlash.

We had lengthy meetings about online photo sharing and archiving. As most of you have read, most of the Photo storage sites on the web are now history. www.zing.com, once the largest, abruptly ceased operations in June. Ofoto, one of the best managed sites, is now a division of Eastman Kodak. Kodak is also a leading shareholder in several other sites, and is in partnership with AOL to control other online activities. Millions of people have had hundreds of millions of pictures lost when Zing went bust. When they were at the top of the heap, they stressed the safety of your pictures - which nothing would ever happen to them. When the funding wasn't there anymore, that safety net was no longer in their business plan. We hope none of those memories were yours.

As a group of experienced photo specialists, we have learned lessons from these harsh realities. Along with about 800 other stores, we too will embark on an internet sharing site. This network of dealers will have redundant servers over the entire country with uploaded images in storage. If one of the dealers goes offline for any reason, your images will still be on the internet, supported by the other 800+ sites. The web page you will have been using will look different, but all your images will be there, safe and sound. This network should be up and running by Labor Day, but it might be a few weeks later.

We have received many inquiries regarding ebay, etc, and are offering you a new service – taking digital pictures of your sale items, and supplying them to you on a floppy diskette. Just bring your item in, and we will take the picture and you can leave with it in a few minutes. This service is due to begin August 13th.

We saw some people trying to take pictures while we were away, and saw them doomed to failure. Here are some of their failures - don't repeat them. One person was taking a picture of her children at Legoland. She had both of them line up in front of a fence, where she towered over them and took a picture of them looking up at her. They were squinting, and the background was the sidewalk and the bottom of a wrought iron fence. How to improve this? Easy! Stand the children in front of a background that illustrates where you are. Squat down to bring the camera level even with their eye level. Frame your picture to

include the children (not dead centered) and the background. Turn on your flash and take the picture. Then take another one in case something is imperfect with the first one.

One person was standing in the surf with their new digital camcorder. The second biggest mistake they'll make is bringing it home. Their third will be telling the repairman that it was never at the beach. Their next mistake might be getting it repaired. We saw lots of other soon to be malfunctioning cameras on the beach, laying on a towel but covered with sand and salt. Friends, unless you have a class 5 weatherproof camera, don't take your camera to the beach or on a small boat. Buy a One Time Use Camera instead. They are expendable and take better pictures than you might think.

We have had a great deal of trouble finding a venue for a Nikon photo field trip this year. As a consequence, we regret to announce that we have cancelled this year's trip. We are working with Nikon to hold a special workshop with live models for later in the year, and will keep you posted. We apologize to those of you who were hoping to attend the trip. In fact, we are currently searching for a site to hold our photo classes. If you have any ideas, please let us know.

This month's employee profile is Rob Brodo, Madison PhotoPlus manager. Rob was graduated from Seton Hall University as a Communications / Film / Photography major. Rob had his own studio for several years, from which he freelanced. He managed the Camera 1 chain of stores for several years before he joined our staff 7 years ago. In addition to his managerial responsibilities, Rob does the lion's share of our digital restorations. He is our "Adobe Photoshop maven". Rob's 22 years of photo experience enables him to know how to due everything (with few exceptions) to help you – regardless of your photographic situation.

If you are interested, you can read this month's photo tip along with many others on our websites, www.madisonphoto.com and www.photosummit.com. Enjoy the rest of the summer, and we'll be back with more in September.

Jerry and Lynne