

May, 2007

Virus Strikes! Millions of People Lost!

A spate of customers recently lost all their loved ones stored on their hard drives. Cause of death: internet spread computer virus. Death is immediate, but not necessarily noticeable. All of a sudden your computer runs a script file planted by the virus that corrupts and renames all JPEG files (photos) on your hard drive(s) and they are gone forever.

At some point, people will learn not to store their photos on their computers' hard drives. Please write yours to a CD before it's too late!



MadisonPhotoPlus the Photo Summit **e-Photo Newsletter**

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The Rule of Thirds

The following article was written by Tedric Garrison, and appeared in ezine articles at ezine articles.com. It is being reprinted here in its entirety because it is so important in taking snapshots up to the level of photographs. Just a few seconds of forethought on this basic compositional theory will help every photograph you ever take.

The Rule of Thirds - Raising the Bar of Excellence

The three greatest secrets of all time as far as photography is concerned include: leading lines, the rule of thirds, and framing. This article will only address one of these, but when you master all three of these, your photography will look better than 90% of all the pictures being taken on planet earth.

Centuries ago, Greek artists discovered that the eye tends to focus on certain points in any given image. If you divide your picture into thirds both horizontally and vertically, the points at which those lines intersect are the points where most people focus comfortably. You don't have to draw an arrow, in most cases this is where they will look without any coaching from you or anyone else. This is commonly referred to as the "Rule of Thirds".

By placing your subject (or point of interest) at one of these natural focus points, you have greatly increased the odds that the viewer will indeed be captivated by your work. As you do this more and more; people will notice that for some reason your work seems more interesting than their "Bull's-eye" type snap shot. They won't understand it, but they will be drawn to your work just like a magnet.

The Greeks and Egyptians were great mathematicians. I on the other hand; am not great at math, but I do understand the concept of 1/3rd in from the left or right and 1/3rd up or down. Those who know the formula will argue that it's not exactly 1/3rd, but that's OK. One of the things the rule of thirds does for your image is to give it movement. But wait a minute; you're asking what if my subject isn't moving? That's fine, but it gives your mind somewhere to go with the image. When your subject is dead center, your mind takes one glance and says, "Ok, next." Remember: "It's kind of hard to experience a photograph, if there's nothing left to the imagination."

Even when doing extreme close-ups it is possible to use the rule of thirds. Think of a beautiful models face, what's the first thing you look at? Do you immediately look at the nose? No, I doubt that very much. Usually you either look at the eyes or the lips. Both of these happen to be located where? Both of these heart stopping subjects are located 1/3rd up or 1/3rd down from dead center. Since the nose is usually located dead center; that's why I tend to doubt that it was the first thing that would catch your attention. I'm not saying a person can't have a cute nose, but where it's placed in the picture will determine just how much attention it will get.

Most girls are self conscious about their looks, that's why they tell you to back up. But in reality, that's exactly why you should NOT back up, in fact, you should probably get closer. In a front facing full body shot, what area is approximately 1/3rd up from the bottom of the frame? Usually it ends up being her hips or higher. If a girl is thinking she's fat, you don't want people staring at her waist. Force the viewer to look at her strength's. Draw his attention to her dreamy eyes; or her wonderful smile, not the few extra pounds just above her waist.

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This same concept works for other subjects besides people. Say for example you have a beautiful stream coming down a mountain side. If you shoot horizontally with the stream dead center, most people will miss what you were trying to show. Now in this example, we also do have to consider the idea of leading lines as well. If the stream starts in the upper right third and ends somewhere in the lower left third of the picture, you have still taken advantage of the rule of thirds. This idea of placing objects where people naturally look is either overlooked or not understood by a large portion of amateur photographers. It is in fact one of the great secrets to raising your own bar to the next level of excellence.

Congratulations ...

...to Jerry, who was selected as one of 8 photo shop owners to meet at P.M.A.I. (the international association representing businesses from all areas of photography) last month in Michigan. The discussions centered around how typical amateur photographers are handling the transition from chemical to digital photography. This was quite an honor.

...to Adrienne of our Madison store on her recent wedding. Having just returned from honeymooning on Oahu and Maui, she encloses some pictures from those gala events.

Summer School

The B.I.P.S. summer school workshop listings are attached to this e-mailing. Please note that many programs will be offered more than once.

You'll be seeing lots of new brands, products and services at both our location in the next few weeks. We certainly hope you like them as they make your photography easier and more enjoyable. Keep taking pictures and we all hope to see you soon!

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