

Madison PhotoPlus the Photo Summit **e-Photo Newsletter**

NOVEMBER, 2004

It's Hallmark's time of year again - holiday greetings. Many of you have made photo greeting cards before, and here are some hints for better family photos (whether for cards or not).

Look for a simple background. The picture is of the family members, pets, etc. - not the staircase, garage, shrubbery and so forth. Think about whether you would like a horizontal or vertical photo and card. If you are photographing one or 2 people standing up, shooting a vertical makes more sense because they will be larger with less chance of cropping off their heads or feet. Don't be afraid to get close to your subjects so that they dominate the photo. If you are taking pictures of 2 people sitting on a couch, for example, don't stand so far back that you also get the coffee table, and lamps on end tables to distract the viewer. Try getting the people up off the couch and seat one person on a chair with the other standing behind the chair. Turn the camera to shoot a vertical and step towards the subjects to eliminate distractions. (When you shoot a vertical, be sure the flash is not below the lens, which will produce eerie highlights and shadows.)

Pay attention to distracting objects in these pictures, like lamp shades, ashtrays, books and such in the foreground or near a picture's edge.

Many people prefer a holiday or wintry scene for their card. This introduces a lot of greens, reds and whites into the background. If there are people in the picture as well, don't dress them in the same color as the background - make them stand out.

In past e-Photo newsletters we've discussed using flash outdoors; remember to use it if you are within flash range.

Some folks use miniatures to manufacture winter scenes. Using cotton balls and sheeting, model cars, dollhouses, etc. can make almost any foreground festive. Some stunning cards have been

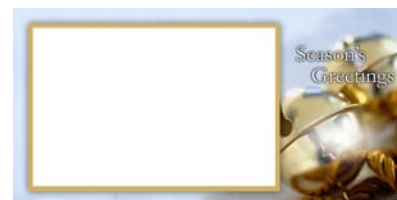
no more than photos of previous years' cards. Good arrangement and lighting are essential to make such a simple set of props.

Greeting cards have also changed through the past few years. For decades, cards had a holiday icon, such as this one



holiday greetings
2004

sitting below or next to the photo. Newer styles such as these have been added to the selection, which can work well with much simpler pictures



(the photo goes into the large, empty area). Even these styles are available in both horizontal and vertical formats to enhance your picture. Start thinking about your cards now. Don't wait for December.

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Digital Photography Q & A

There are some questions we hear frequently, so we know there's some confusion about digital photography. Here are a few we've been asked frequently:

Why can't I download my pictures to my computer? Why can't I hook up my new printer?

Both of these questions have the same answer. The customers involved all owned older PCs that were running Windows 95, which did not support USB connections. Windows 98 was the first Microsoft operating system to support USB. In order to use today's technology with your PC, it must be using one of the following versions of Windows:

- 98 (any version)
- Millennium (ME)
- 2000 (Home or Professional)
- XP (any version)

This does not necessarily mean that you rush out and buy a new computer, but it does mean your operating system is antique.

Why do my images look so great on the back of the camera, yet make terrible prints?

Digital cameras, unlike film cameras, can be set for varying quality images. Many manufacturers set their cameras to a low resolution setting to give the user many, many pictures on a single memory card. This setting gathers less information about the picture than is needed to make a good quality print. The user should go to the camera's menu, and increase the resolution.

There must be something wrong with my camera. It seems to drain my batteries.

No, the fact is that digital cameras are battery

vampires. They just suck up electricity.

I don't know how to use a computer and don't want to learn. Can I still make prints at home if I want to?

Absolutely. There are many printers on the market today that don't require a computer in any way. They can make outstanding quality prints from 4x6 through 8x10 inches. They require no computer knowledge and are as easy to use as a toaster.

Is there a camera that takes both high quality video and still pictures?

Not yet. There are cameras that take excellent still photos and brief color sound video that will play for a few minutes on a computer. There are also camcorders that have a separate memory card for still photos. The still images are designed to be viewed on a monitor or TV, but not printed. (Canon and Sony have introduced printers for these camcorders, but the quality is less than that of the old Kodak Disc cameras.)

How long will digital pictures last?

Different printer technologies make this a tricky question. No one knows for sure. Accelerated testing by independent researchers have found that some printer/ink/paper combinations yield prints that visibly degrade in just a few days, where other combinations now exceed archival qualities as stipulated by the Library of Congress. Dye sublimation prints are expected to last as long as conventional prints. In reality - we'll get back to you on that in 40 or 50 years.

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Thanks for taking the time to read this issue. We certainly hope you found it worthwhile. Happy shooting and remember to hold your camera steady!

Happy Thanksgiving!

Lynne & Jerry

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