

Happy April one and all!

It's good to be back in the United States after 2 weeks away in Australia and New Zealand. The people, cultures, and scenery were wonderful. Even though all three countries share a common language, the way in which words form meanings is quite different from one another. The same can be true of traditional and digital photography.

The same can be true of how different lenses "see" the same subjects. Most of you have cameras with zoom lenses and some have interchangeable lenses that do not zoom. Even with a point and shoot camera, whether film or digital, all these different lenses capture the same subject matter in different ways.

Every zoom lens has 2 limiting focal lengths. A 35-70mm zoom, for example, has a "wide" limit, and a "tele" limit. The smaller number is always the wide limit, the larger number is always the tele limit. Dividing the larger number by the smaller number defines the ration of a zoom lens: a 35-70 zoom is also a 2:1 ratio zoom (as is a 100-200mm zoom lens). With a 2:1 zoom lens, shooting at the 70mm setting yields a similar picture to one shot with the zoom at 35mm with the camera moved 50% closer to the subject. In these 2 pictures, the subject's size in the photo would be identical, as would the overall exposure.

Yet, there are more subtle differences in how the images appear. The wider angle a lens is, the more curvature there is to the rendering of the subject. The greater the tele end is, the flatter the rendering appears. Pretend we are shooting with a 28-300mm lens (prox. 10.5:1 zoom) A portrait taken at the wide angle (28mm) extreme would yield a bulbous face, with protruding nose, big lips, cauliflower ears and misshapen eyes and mouth. Taking the same shot at the most tele extreme (300mm) would yield a very flat rendition, where the eyes, nose and ears would all appear to be the same distance from the camera. Using a focal length of between 85 and 105mm would yield the same rendering as our eyes see the face. (This is one of the reasons why so many popular point and shoot type cameras have zooms that go from wide angle to either 85 or 105.) Two different people taking the same photo at different zoom focal lengths will therefore get different interpretations of what the subject looked like.

Traditional films and digital images also exhibit different "personalities" in how they render images. Digital cameras tend to be "smarter" than film cameras, and often try to improve pictures that don't always need improvement. Film on the other hand, faithfully records whatever it is exposed to. Both media can be altered in the printing process, but the original recording is usually more faithful with film than digital.

We have reached the point where digital images are sharper (record more information) than film images. There is much more to the final picture, however, than just sharpness. The transition between colors and tones in film images seems easier for our eyes and minds to interpret, where the excess sharpness of digital is beyond our sensory perception. As a comparison, we have a dictionary full of words, but colorful speech uses but a small portion for its vocabulary.

Sometimes all those extra words get in the way of what you want to say, instead of making it easy to understand.

---

We will be holding the next photo workshop in our Better Imaging Photo School series on Wednesday evening, April 28th at Madison PhotoPlus. A notice will be attached along with this newsletter.

---

From time to time we get requests for explanations of depth of field. This is one of the most confusing concepts in photography, and an online source now seems to offer a pretty good discussion without being overwhelming. Try copying this URL into your browser and visiting the site.

<http://luminous-landscape.com/tutorials/understanding-series/dof.shtml>

---

Here are a couple of photos from our recent trip. We hope you enjoy them. See you soon.

Jerry & Lynne



