

June is the greatest photo month of them all!

We've got weddings, graduations, Fathers' Day, finishing off Memorial Day rolls, vacations and so forth. We also encounter a disproportionate number of problems, so let's try to avoid them for 2000.

Remember that your camera is electric (with rare exceptions). Batteries don't last forever, and usually die in the worst possible place, at the worst possible time. Button batteries mainly go bad by age, not how much you've used them. They tend to be between 1.5 – 3.0 volts, and work the light meter (electric eye) in many cameras. They don't **not** run flashes, motors, etc. These should be replaced yearly. Sometimes they still work, although they are leaking battery acid throughout the battery compartment and camera wiring,

More modern cameras use alkaline or lithium batteries. Alkaline batteries (usually AA or AAA) provide moderately long life, and weaken as a sign that they need replacement. AA batteries typically outlast AAA batteries in a similar apparatus. A camera or flash using alkaline batteries will take longer and longer between flashes as batteries weaken. A safe rule of thumb is that when you must wait 30 seconds or longer between flashes, your batteries need replacement. (You may not realize it, but AA lithium batteries are available. They are more expensive than alkaline batteries – about \$2.00 each – but supply 4 to ten times the service life with an extremely long shelf life. Some camera and flash manufacturers do not recommend the use of these batteries in their hardware, but the reps who sell the products all demonstrate their cameras, flashes, etc. using these lithium AAs. Only Eveready offers these batteries. They also work over a greater temperature range and are much lighter in weight.)

Most modern 35mm and Advanced Photo System cameras use either 3 volt or 6 volt lithium batteries. Because of the high electrical drain in these cameras, alkalines just can't do it. They just don't have enough oomph. In many of today's automatic SLR cameras with built in flash, one 6v. lithium can do the same job as 40 AA alkalines. These lithiums are much more expensive than AAs, but are worth it. Some of these are over \$15. Trust that they greatly outperform their value in alkaline batteries. Some cameras, with more powerful, built-in flashes will only yield 2-3 rolls with these batteries, so it's hard to know when the batteries are almost dead. Unfortunately, many cameras give you very little warning that the batteries are almost dead. It is important to carry a spare lithium battery. They weaken in heat, but recover their energy when removed from the heat. Lithium batteries come with a 5 – 10 year shelf life.

From the back of the photo finishing counter, we also see a lot of "off color" pictures: not risqué, but spoiled. A safe rule of thumb is that you can keep film anywhere where you can keep chocolate. If the chocolate melts, your film cooks. In fact, you can cook an egg in a car glove compartment in a matter of minutes on a 90° day. Your film "cooks" in less time. Film storage is difficult in warm and hot weather. Always keep your camera and film as cool as possible. This, by the way, is why we do not accept returns on film. We would never ask you to buy a roll of film that **may have been** heat damaged. We respect you and your pictures more than that. We don't accept film returns to protect you.

While on the topic of temperature, people seem fascinated that photographic items should be black. Black is often a major problem because of the heat it absorbs. Black camera cases might look nice, but they are often ovens. A major aluminum case manufacturer did a study a few years back and found that a black aluminum case left in a car trunk was over 40° hotter inside than the same case with a silver finish. The cases in direct sunlight differed by even more. When looking for your next camera case, strap, etc., look at lighter colors instead of black. Your equipment and film will thank you.

The date of the Nikon Photo Field Trip will be Sunday, September 17. The only location news is that it will neither be a zoo or a nuclear power plant. We are still open to suggestions of venues.

Madison PhotoPlus' new photo contest winners are posted at www.madisonphoto.com. Congratulations to Ed Babbott for his winning photo. Ed has certainly moved from a novice to an accomplished photographer in a relatively short time.

Epson has just announced yet another new inkjet printer, the 2000P, boasting a photo archival quality of 200 years! The printer is due to come out in fall at less than \$1000. More details should be available soon.

During June, Kodak Royal Premier Processing Services is offering a discount on Poster Prints (20" x 30") from 35mm negatives for only \$21.10. These make great, priceless gifts and look fantastic framed and hung. Keep in mind that these cost much less than 16" x 20" prints (\$32.95).

If there are any topics you'd like covered by this newsletter, please let me know. Thank you.

Jerry