

Hi!

It's time for graduations and vacations. These are 2 big time memory gathering occasions that often disappoint many amateur photographers, so let's plan ahead and see if we can't improve our photos. Graduations are probably more immediate, so let's cover that event first.

The word "photography" comes from ancient Greek and means the study (science) of light. If there is one concept to understand about light is that quantity does not mean quality. We can have a lot of light available, but be lousy for picture taking. You've heard this all before, but the concept is often forgotten during picture taking because we are emotionally part of the subject rather than objective about the process. We have to consider the light!

Many graduations are held outdoors (weather permitting). If you find yourself in the stands or bleachers, do not take a picture using flash. Flashes are small light sources that don't carry over the distance you are from the subject. If you can, try to get a seat with the sun at your back. If you cannot do so, try to avoid positioning yourself looking at the graduates towards the sun. If you are stuck facing the sun, you must compensate for your graduate's face being in the shadow. Here are some ways to compensate.

With point and shoot, compact, automatic type cameras: most have a small icon that represents a "backlit" scene. It usually shows a person's silhouette with a symbol of the sun above it and to the side. By pushing a mode button, set your camera to this position before shooting. Your bright background will be very bright when you get your pictures back, but your graduate (the subject of your picture) will be better exposed. If these instructions don't make sense, come in with your camera and we'll go over it with you. Most automatic cameras turn this feature off when the camera is turned off, so make the settings just before the graduates begin their processional. If your camera shuts down. turn it, turn it back on and reset the control.

If you have an automatic camera which has a manual override (not manual metering)(an example would be a Canon AE-1, Minolta XG-7 or similar camera), you can see in the viewfinder what exposure the camera would automatically use. This exposure will be **wrong** for what you want to do! Hold your hand out in front of you, in line with where the graduate will be. Point your camera towards your open hand so closely that all you see is your hand with no sky in the background. Slightly depress the shutter button until the exposure reads out in the viewfinder and make a mental note of the f/stop and shutter speed. Take the camera down from your eye and manually set the camera to those co-ordinates. When you go to take your pictures, the camera will tell you the exposure is wrong. Don't believe it! Your pictures will be properly exposed. After these pictures are taken, remember to set your camera back to automatic!

If you are using a manual metering camera, take your exposure reading of a flesh tone lit the same as your subject will be lit from your perspective, and use that exposure

setting unless the lighting changes. During shooting, your meter will probably tell you that you are going to overexpose. You won't.

If your ceremony is held indoors, take your pictures normally unless there are windows behind your subjects. If there are windows, use the above instructions. Do not use flash unless you are within about 12 (twelve) feet. Not 50 feet, 12 feet. Not across the auditorium, 12 feet. Try to remember 12 feet. That's about 4 paces, maybe 5. 12 feet.

After the ceremony, most people go outside, unless it is really raining hard. This is probably your first opportunity to photograph your special grad. Don't blow it, use your flash. In some compact, auto everything cameras, you have to set your camera to the force flash position (a lightning bolt is the most common symbol). Turn your camera to take a vertical photograph (this may be a novel idea for some of you) with the flash on top. You are more interested in the people, not the background. Shooting vertically allows you to get closer to the subject and get a bigger image size. You can get the entire body in the picture, not just above the waist and also the family to the side. Remember, USE YOUR FLASH!!!!

Taking better vacation pictures covers a lot of ground. For this month, let's just do a little advance planning. Here are some things to think about:

Where am I going?

Who will I be with?

What should the weather be like (do some research)

How will I travel? Will I take any pictures while en route?

How long will the vacation be? How many days? How many nights?

What photo equipment will I take? How are its batteries?

How will I carry it?

Who will see the pictures I will take?

Will I ever go back to where this vacation will be?

Is there any special occasion that will occur during this vacation?

New product introductions will abound during the summer. In June Pentax will begin shipping their new IQ Zoom 120SW with a zoom range of 28-120mm with date back. What a wonderful travel camera. Minolta will release 2 of 4 new digital cameras including a 5+ megapixel SLR with 28-200 (equivalent) zoom. Nikon will begin shipping 2 new digital cameras by July. Kodak's film packaging is changing: more graphics and smaller print to tell you what's inside. Epson will begin shipments of a new digital camera / computer printer with photo-realistic printing. It will accept Smart Media or Compact Flash cards directly, or via a computer – projected price is under \$300!

We are staffing up to resume evening lectures and workshops on various photographic topics, such as photo 101, lighting, sports photography, etc. Please email us with topics you'd like covered.

As a new feature this month, we are profiling our staff members for you. This month we introduce you to Rob Dunne, our Summit manager. Rob lives in Madison, and is a graduate of Slippery Rock University in Pennsylvania. Rob has worked with us for 8 years in Summit. Rob is an avid scuba diver, and is an advanced underwater photographer, shooting primarily color slides. His underwater pictures can be viewed at www.gti.net/robd/cayman. He has traveled through Ireland, and has created photo essays in these travels, presenting them before different organizations in our area. Many of his Ireland photos are viewed at www.gti.net/robd/ireland. Rob has also been in his own portrait business. Besides working with photography in the store, he also enjoys taking pictures and transforming them digitally in his computer.

Rob is also a volunteer fire fighter in his hometown, for which we are all proud of him. In early 2001, Rob earned his International Certified Photographic Consultant® stature, an achievement which sets him apart from most people in his line of work. Only about 10% of the photographic community can claim this degree!