

Happy New Year!

For a change of pace, here are some of the most asked questions (and the answers) we heard during 2002:

“Why don’t I get negatives from my digital camera?”

Because there is no film. You only get negatives when you use film.

“Why isn’t my expensive 35mm camera worth more in trade? I paid a lot of money for it.”

Because values change. Since the arrival of ebay (and similar sites), the prices for used equipment have plummeted. Add to that many people have held onto manual focus cameras and lenses way longer than was wise for a resale point of view. People spend much more for a car than a camera, but feel the camera should hold its value longer. As foreign manufacturers look for ways to cut costs and stimulate sales, they manufacture fewer repair parts over a shorter period of time. The value of a manufactured product decreases with the supply of repair parts (if the goal is to use the item). Technological changes have also left older manual, mechanical products as less desirable. All of these causes affect the resale value, and therefore the trade-in value of used cameras, lenses, etc.

“Why don’t my reprints match the original prints?” The originals are SO much better.”

This is one of the most difficult situations we face. Very often the reprints are far superior to the originals for any number of reasons, but the average person considers the first print he or she sees as “correct”. It may really be too light, dark, yellow, blue, contrasty, flat or whatever, but it is viewed as “correct”. If the reprint doesn’t match it, the reprint is deemed to be wrong. All too often we are faced with asking the printer to take back a great print because a particular customer wants (and happily accepts) an inferior photo.

“What’s wrong with my digital camera? I put new batteries in it and they’re dead already.”

The only thing wrong is the expectation that the batteries will last longer. The people who design these electrical vampires don’t care – they don’t have to pay for batteries. The engineers who develop these products are concerned that the items are capable of being devised, designed and manufactured. While it is important that these items really work in any desirable fashion, it is not necessarily their major concern. That they can be created and constructed to work (at least theoretically) is often most important. What powers them is a minor concern. The marketing departments’ jobs are to make them desirable despite whatever faults they may have. At this point in time, your camera is working properly if it is going through batteries quickly!

“I like my picture as a 4x6. Why do they change it when I get a 5x7?”

The aspect ratio (proportions) of the prints' dimensions is quite different. A 4x6 print is the same shape as a 35mm negative. The next enlargement size up that has the same proportions is 8x12 (8=2x4; 12=2x6). A 5x7 print has different proportions. (To keep the proportions the same, the print would have to measure 5X7 ½.). All 8x10 prints from 35mm are also cropped for the same reason.

“Can you get rid of the date on my picture for me?”

Yes we can crop it out on an enlargement (5x7 or larger), but cropping is not available on 4x6 inch prints. We can remove it by scanning the image into a computer and removing it that way, but a 4x6” print would be a little pricey. Try dating the first picture on each roll, or the first picture of an event – then turn the date feature off.

“How do I get prints from my digital camera?”

The same way you've been getting prints all along – bring in your memory card just like it was a roll of film and wait for pictures or make them at home on a 6 color photographic quality inkjet printer. HINT: burn your images to a CD and bring that in for prints. If there is any kind of accident, your original will not be lost.

“Can I get a camera that will be a camcorder and a still camera?”

Yes, you can, but the 2 different functions will have different qualities. A still image shot on a camcorder is shot at VERY low resolution. It is designed to look good on a monitor or TV. It is not designed to be printed (regardless of what the advertisements say). Many still digital cameras can shoot movies for several seconds, at extremely low resolution, primarily for e-mail applications. If there were a camera that could do both jobs well, why would any other exist?

Perhaps some of these questions have answers you'd wondered about, but never asked. If you have others, please don't be afraid to ask them. Also, please write in if there is a topic you'd like to see covered in this e-newsletter. Meanwhile, have a happy and healthy 2003, and we look forward serving you and your family in the future.

Lynne & Jerry