

Happy Spring!

While attending the PMA convention and trade show last month, a startling statistic was announced: Only about 3% of all digital pictures exposed made it onto paper. When you consider that many of these are still taken at weddings, graduations, etc., there are long reaching ramifications. The generation now embracing digital photography may be the first in over a century not to leave a family legacy behind. You realize how important pictures are of your forebears, as well as the memories they evoke even if you don't recognize all the people in the pictures. Make prints. Whether you make them yourself, have us make them for you, or do it some other way, make prints. Nothing communicates what's on your mind or in your heart better than your photographic print being viewed.

Frequently while behind the counter we hear the question, "How will this look if I make an 8x10?". Here's how to tell. Different print sizes are designed to be viewed at different distances. A 4x6" print (approx.) is designed to be hand held, viewed from about 12-18" away. A 5x7" print looks the same (as far as sharpness, contrast, granularity, etc.) from arm's length. An 8x10" enlargement viewed from about 5' away looks the same. A poster print, from 10'-15' away also looks the same. This is because the prints are differing in perspective, not quality.

When an image is enlarged, everything that is part of it is enlarged. Every imperfection, every little scratch or dust fleck, every hair, every reflection, everything. We see people pick up their enlargements and look at them under a magnifying glass. That's not what enlargements are for: they are for viewing from greater distances than regular prints. If you go to an art museum and view a painted canvas that measures 4' x 20', you don't stand 3 feet away and look at each brushstroke. You step back to view the entirety from 15 or more. When you go to a movie theater, you sit further away than when you watch TV at home, don't you? The same thing is true with photographic enlargements. If it looks good as a 4x6 from 1 foot away, it will look just as good as a 20x30 will from 10 feet away.

There's a second concept to keep in mind when making enlargements; not all photo sizes are the same shape. There is only one shaped square, but there are many different shaped rectangles. A 4x6 rectangle is a very different shape than a 4x12 rectangle. The following are all standard photo sizes: 4x6, 5x7, 8x10, 8x12, 11x14, 12x18, 16x20, 20x24, and 20x30. Of these, only 4x6, 8x12, 12x18 and 20x30 are the same shape. 8x10 and 16x20 are also the same proportional shape as one another. These are American sizes – metric sizes are different. Why aren't all the enlargement sizes the same proportions? Funny you should ask!

35mm film has been the dominant film size in amateur photography for nearly 50 years. Its film shape (24x36mm, or a 2x3 ratio) is the most used shape in today's

photography. Some larger film sizes share the 2x3 proportions. Many sizes, especially older sizes, do not. In larger format photography, the dominant proportion is 4x5 (obviously squarer than 2x3 [4x6]). 4x5 enlarges directly to 8x10 and 16x20. In older days, only 4x5 negatives and larger had the quality to be enlarged to 8x10 or bigger. That proportion made up 95+% of all enlargements, and with it came frames, albums, etc. Only within the last 40 years or so did 35mm film improve to the point where equal size enlargements could be made with little quality sacrifice. At that time, the established enlargement size was 4x5 proportioned, so only that area of a 4x6 proportioned negative is printed. The other 4x1 part of the negative just goes beyond the edge of the paper and is not seen. (The part of the original 4x6 shaped negative which is printed on a 4x5 shaped piece of paper is referred to as a "cropped" image.) Hence, when one shape negative or slide is printed to another shape piece of paper, some image is lost.

Let's expand on this idea. Digital cameras are inconsistent in the shape of their images. Some achieve the same 2x3 proportions of a 35mm negative. Many do not. There is no standard shape as in film based photography. In the US, TV and computer monitors use roughly the same proportions, which are very different from the 2x3 standard of film. The new TV system coming in (HDTV) is a 16x9 proportion format (horizontal only) which matches nothing else (in still images). When you buy or rent a DVD, it is often in this new format, which is why it doesn't fill your TV monitor like regular broadcasts do.

In short, what you see in your camera's viewfinder is not necessarily what you get as the final output.

The Photo Summit has just ordered a new machine which will make photo prints directly from your memory cards. You can correct for red-eye, crop, or manipulate your image (if you want to) and get the print in seconds. The unit will be able to make several hundred prints per hour, so you'll have the convenience of waiting for your prints if you so desire. It is due to be installed prior to May 1st.

If you are interested in genealogy, check out <http://www.ancientfaces.com/>, a web site with contributed old photos looking to be claimed by their families. It's quite fascinating to go through.

We have been advised that a member of our staff will be moving west after the spring, leaving a position unfilled. If you or someone you know might be interested in applying for this position, please contact either Mick at **The Photo Summit** (908-273-7427), or Rob at **Madison PhotoPlus** (973-966-2900) for additional information.

While there is little we can do to directly support our soldiers from where we are, we choose to support those who have been left behind. If you have a family

member or close friend who is serving us all as part of our conflict with Iraq and would like an extra photo of him or her during these trying times, please bring your print, negative, slide, whatever (so long as it is not copywritten) and we will make additional prints for you free of charge. We know the value a photographic print has, and the comfort it can bring. We hope for a swift resolution to this conflict, and the safe return of all those involved. No matter what our opinion of the politics behind the war, we all want everyone we know to be safe and sound.

Lynne & Jerry