

April was supposed to be the rainy month, not August! Few people want to take outdoor photos in the rain, but for those who do; the results can be exceptionally rewarding. On rainy days skies are often dark or varying shades of gray, but are rarely blank and empty. The brightness of the sky is much closer to the brightness of the foreground and backgrounds than in clear weather. The contrast is lower, so colors can more saturated than on sunny days. In short, your pictures will be more the way you see the scene when you shoot in cloudy, rainy conditions.

It should seem obvious that keeping your camera dry is a big concern, but not difficult to overcome. Clear plastic bags and rubber bands can work well. If you have a compact point and shoot camera, remember to stretch the plastic tightly over the flash, and cut an opening for the lens. As modern cameras get larger computer chips inside them, they become more susceptible to moisture damage, and rainwater getting on the chip can permanently ruin your camera.

When looking at pictures shot during or just after a rainstorm, there is usually a blue tint to color pictures. This is because the clouds are absorbing more reddish light, with more blue remaining visible. Placing a #81A or 81B filter over your camera's lens will bring the color balance back to normal. Even if the sun comes out, the amount of water (which you already know photographs as blue) in the atmosphere will still make your subjects appear bluish. Using the same filters mentioned above will do the trick.

Using your flash will also get rid of the bluish tint, but only within flash range. Your flash won't reach into landscape range, so don't use it for that application. Using ISO 400 or 800 speed films should allow the camera to be hand held, but even with those films, use flash if you have a person or pet in the foreground. Even a floral foreground will be improved by flash.

August is also get ready for school month. If you have a true "first day of schooler", you'll want plenty of pictures to share the day with relatives. Whether you shoot film or digital, be certain to use flash. You'll probably have to set your automatic camera to forced flash (lightning bolt) position so that it will fire in daylight. If you take digital, remember to "dumb down" your images to 640x480 before you e-mail them. Try not to dress your child in yellow, because it will blend too closely with the school bus. Although the picture getting on the bus is usually taken, a better picture opportunity is shooting into the bus's doorway when your child is starting down the steps. The expressions are stronger after the ride home than leaving home in the morning.

Many of you will be equipping your child (or grandchild) with a camera at the start of the school year. Keep in mind that cameras get dropped, stolen, left behind, lent, borrowed, liquid damaged etc. during the day. For most children, one time use cameras are the best bet. Select the flash cameras to ensure better pictures and teach your child how to make sure the flash goes off. If you'd like, bring your child (any age) in when you purchase your cameras from us. We'll be happy to teach them how to use the flash cameras. Children will often take instructions more readily from a stranger than from a parent.

If your older child is going to be taking a photo course, he or she must have a manual metered, fully adjustable camera. When purchased new, these cameras begin at less than \$200. Used cameras of this type start at around \$50-75.

Both our stores welcome additional new employees. **The Photo Summit** welcomes Dave Maulbeck, a local resident. Dave has both a photographic and a theatrical background, and can explain things well. **Madison PhotoPlus** welcomes Joe Noel and John Thoma. Joe has a photographic degree from the School of Visual Arts in New York City, and will help put together a syllabus for our photo workshop schedule. John was previously the lead Customer Service representative for Eastman Kodak's Royal Premier Service, stationed in Fairlawn, NJ. All three represent our continued commitment to bringing you the epitome of customer service and assistance.

Lynne, Mick, Rob and Jerry recently returned from a week of workshops and seminars about the latest technology, equipment and techniques in photography today. There will certainly be some products and services coming later this year that we think are rather amazing. More about that next month.

While in Portland, Oregon for the series, this is one of the photos we returned with. By the way, the weather in the normally rainy Portland was sunny, temperatures in the high 80s – low 90s most days, low humidity, and gentle breezes. We apologize if we were in any way responsible for bringing their stereotyped weather back here.

Lynne & Jerry

