

Madison PhotoPlus the Photo Summit **e-Photo Newsletter**

SEPTEMBER, 2005

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Elephant Goes Into a Bar... ...not exactly, but

Customer comes into the store and says "I want a copy negative from my old picture here. I don't want a scan and digital print. I want an old fashioned photograph. I don't like the way digital prints look. I've looked everywhere and even the professional labs in the city do it digitally."

"Well", we say, "that's because the equipment and products to do it the way you want it done really don't exist any more. When the equipment to do the shooting broke, there weren't any more repair parts to do the repairs. The films used for the copy cameras aren't made any more because of lack of sales. The printing machines and enlargers used to make the prints have either been modified to make digital prints or are sitting in disrepair. We can no longer find, much less supply the latest thing in 1933 technology."

Although we suspect that she understands, the customer still walks out angrily in a huff.

O.K. Grasshopper Goes Into a Bar...

Person comes into the store with a CD, sits down at a Photo Teller, views and orders a couple of hundred prints. When picking up the prints a few minutes later, complains that they are green, have bad color, aren't sharp, and seem dull, lifeless. The prints are refused and the customer leaves in a huff.

So, we do some research. The customer was in the store twice before, over a year ago. There is no record of anyone by that surname getting a camera from us.

A few hours later, we call the customer at home to find out how we could do better, if other prints from this CD had been made elsewhere and were more satisfactory, and so on. In conversation, we asked what camera was used to take the pictures. Through the wires, we hear, "Dear, what kind of digital camera do we have?" Not sure, "but it's a good one". We ask what resolution it was set for. We hear silence. We ask if these are the first prints made from the camera. "No", we are told. We suggest that the customer come in with the camera and memory card so that we can correctly set the camera up for them to get better pictures. Haven't seen them yet.

... Here's the Punchline!

Many people don't know what to expect from digital photography. In use, there is very little difference between a digital compact camera and a 35mm compact camera. The results are almost indistinguishable. As with 35mm photography, digital cameras do an outstanding job of evaluating typical picture taking situations and yielding excellent prints. As was discussed in earlier newsletters, different cameras using automatic white balance yield different visual colors.

Many digital camera owners pick up their new cameras and start taking pictures right out of the box, without checking how the camera is initially set. Many cameras come set at low resolution and or high compression either of which will yield typically unsatisfactory prints (although they'll look great on the computer monitor). We usually catch the blame when the photographer gets these bad prints, even though we know we're not the culprits. We also know that these folks didn't buy their cameras from a service oriented store, but a mass merchant or online dealer. This, of course also affects new scanner and printer users. Remember that if the manufacturers don't lie - even just a little bit - they won't

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sell as much product. They just need your money - no matter how they get it. Rest assured that the quality IS there, regardless of a bad experience or the experience of a friend or neighbor. It's like driving a new car or cooking in a new oven: the results will be the same, but getting there is a little different.

Better Sports Photos

The single, best, most important, mandatory secret to taking better sports pictures is FREE! Forget who the players are. If you think of your son or daughter playing you will be too emotionally involved in their aspect of the sport. You must detach yourself from being a parent. The score is not important to the picture. If you are cheering or yelling you cannot hold a camera steadily. No one can! Consider the action or inaction on the field, court or rink. Avoid taking pictures when your favorite player is way down at the other end of the venue because his or her image size will be too small.

The next requisite is to hold the camera rock steady. With all the action there is a lot of vibration in the stands, or even on the sidelines. Use a tripod or monopod to help you take sharp photos. A tripod will also allow you to pan the camera to follow the action while keeping the camera level. A tripod or monopod is essential for consistently good sports photos.

Be sure you start out using fresh batteries, especially if your camera requires a specific rechargeable battery. Experience teaches that batteries will always fail at the most critical moments. Have as many backup batteries as possible.

If you are shooting digital, you must allow time for the camera to write the files (pictures) to your memory card. Not all cameras do this especially quickly, especially when dealing with 5 or higher megapixel cameras. You may want to reduce some

overall resolution to permit faster write times. This is something never encountered with film cameras, but is part of the digital experience.

If you are shooting .jpg files in your digital cameras, fight the urge to look at a picture again and again until you've burned a CD. Remember that each and every time you open and close a .jpg file the image will be rewritten and lose some quality. Be strong after you've taken the picture - delay that gratification to keep the image quality you paid for.

If you're shooting film, remember to invest in the best quality processing, not the fastest or least expensive. The images you've taken will be appreciated more as time marches on. The few extra cents you might pay today will all be forgotten when you look at the picture 10 years from now.

Better Imaging Photo School (B.I.P.S.)

Our next evening workshop will be a repeat of our basic digital camera session. This is the most requested program, so we're doing it again. In October we will do compact digital cameras and in November, digital SLR cameras. See the enclosed notice for more information.

Katrina

Our hearts are heavy with the devastation caused by the hurricane. While it is impossible to really understand the horror of Katrina's aftermath without actually living through it, we ache inside when thinking of all the disrupted lives. It amazes us to have heard so many survivors grieve that their photos are gone forever. These people have lost so much, including family members, pets and homes, yet they verbally talk of their family photos. It is truly incredible.

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We welcome Adrienne to our staff in Madison. She hails from the Flint, Michigan area and is a graduate of the College for Creative Studies in Detroit. Her knowledge in film and digital picture making is impressing the rest of the staff. Please say "hello" the next time in.

It's time to start thinking about your holiday cards. Think about how personal it is to send or receive a photo. Plan those pictures now to avoid the rush in December. Enjoy the autumn, and keep taking pictures.

We also wish Andy luck as he relocate in Wales, where he and his new family will enjoy life in the Britain.

Madison PhotoPlus

40 Main St., Madison, NJ 07940
v. 973-966-2900; f. 973-377-1458
www.madisonphoto.com

Rob, Eric, Sybil, Marie, Erin, Steve, Adrienne &
Jerry

the Photo Summit

383 Springfield Ave., Summit, NJ 07901
v. 908-273-7427; f. 908-277-0218
www.photosummit.com

Mick, John & John, Steve & Lynne

**Confused about digital?
Don't be!**

B.I.P.S.

The Better Imaging Photo School

Madison PhotoPlus and the Photo Summit are proud to continue our series of photographic workshops and field trips to instruct the beginner and inspire the more advanced photo-grapher.

Our next workshop, scheduled for **October 19th**, is geared towards basic digital photography with point-and-shoot cameras. Topics will include camera handling, icons, downloading, CD burning, archiving, printing, e-mailing pictures and other digital camera concerns.

The cost of the workshop will be \$30,
payable in advance not later than 2 days before the session.*

It will be held at Madison PhotoPlus in Madison, and will start at 7:00pm. Seating is limited. Refreshments will be served.



*Failure to attend will result in loss of payment. No refunds will be available.