



**“There are always
two people in every
picture:
the photographer
and the viewer.”**

- Ansel Adams

Pixels, Pixels, Pixels

Probably the most common question we are asked by camera shoppers is “How many megapixels does it have?”. The tendency is to simply answer with the number. It’s like the quality of the camera is wholly dependent upon that number, which is far from the truth.

If someone asked you how many pounds of air pressure are in your car’s front tires, would it be reasonable to assume your car’s quality and performance from that number? Of course not. If your toaster heated to 150° and your neighbor’s heated to 165°, would the toast taste any differently? Obviously not.

Megapixel count is hardly any more an indicator of camera quality than any other single specification - unless you are a member of a camera company’s marketing department. Many other factors are considerably better indicators of a camera’s output quality. Among these are:

Is the firmware controlling the camera written specifically for the sensor in use, or is it just an edited version of the firmware from the preceding camera model?

Is the lens being used designed for the sensor size of the camera, or “borrowed” from a different format because

the lens mount was convenient for the manufacturer?

A .JPG (.JPEG) file is an electronically “developed” RAW file. Is the camera’s software written specifically for the camera model in question, or is a more generic version used to lower manufacturing costs?

How good is the lens?

These are not questions camera makers like to answer because it might not make their products look as good as their competitors’ units. As dealers, we usually have no access to personnel working for the brands who would know the answers. Sometimes we can get answers when attending trade shows or seminars - but not often.

Looking at Good Photographs

DJI, the world’s largest producer of amateur drones, has announced the winners of their 2017 photo contest. They can be viewed at https://www.skypixel.com/events/photocontest2017?from=PCWeb-banner_photocontest2017_EN_20180131. The photos are amazing in that they would not have been possible for amateur civilians to take just a couple of years ago.

On a more serious note, this link goes to a video of a drone dive bombing a passenger airliner during its final approach to McCarran airport at Las Vegas: <https://petapixel.com/2018/02/05/drone-pilot-dive-bombs-passenger-jet-video-near-miss-sparks-outrage/>.



Photo Tip: Cold Weather Photography

By now you have probably noticed that today’s cameras are electronic, and that they all run on some kind of battery(ies). Some cameras work at colder temperatures than others, and some batteries work at even colder temperatures.

Cameras not rated as weatherproof (a.k.a. splashproof) using AA or AAA alkaline batteries tend to freeze up at about 30°-32° F. Eveready lithium non-rechargeable cells will work down to about 10° F. Rechargeable NiMH batteries are rated down to -20° F.

Weatherproof cameras, on the other hand, are designed to work at lower temperatures because they are sealed better against the elements. Most take lithium ion or lithium polymer batteries, all of which are rechargeable and can work down to -40° F or C. They cannot, however, be recharged at such low temperatures. The few weatherproof cameras using AA batteries will still get power down to nearly -40°.

Not everyone has cameras that can accept different composition batteries, and have to try and outsmart the cold. Keeping the camera - if small enough - in a pocket will typically keep the batteries functioning longer. Keeping spare batteries in inside pockets and switching them frequently is the best simple approach. As the batteries warm up, they return to their original drain characteristics.

If you camp in cold weather, NEVER WARM BATTERIES IN YOUR CAMPFIRE!

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New Products and Rumors

Both FujiFilm and Olympus have introduced entry level interchangeable lens cameras, the X-A5 and E-PL9 respectively. These models use the same lenses as their bigger brothers, but neither camera offers eye level viewing, making them less recommended for serious photography or videography. Their asset is their small (relative) size and light weight. The picture quality, however, is very good.

FujiFilm has also announced the new XP130 weather-impact-dust-cold proof point and shoot camera. It adds to the features of the XP120 :

- waterproof to 65'
- geotagging
- wireless to PC
- (intentional) double exposure
- electronic built-in level
- video editing.

That's a lot of camera for \$229.99. It begins shipping in late April.

Canon usually updates their point and shoot cameras in late February - early March. The Rebel T6 entry level camera is now the oldest Rebel camera, and should be due for an update very soon.

Nikon has been silent. The same can be said for Sony and Tamron.

The Mindshift division of ThinkTank has brought forth new photo backpacks, daypacks and sling bags. The Rotation 180 daypacks have a novel system for getting to your photo gear without taking the pack off your back. Watch their video at https://youtu.be/V_HlnTpEc1w.

Snap Shots

We are planning our spring classes and photo field trip. If there are any topics or venues you'd like to see covered, please contact Bret or Jerry soon.



March 23-24 are the dates for our Spring 2018 used camera buy back days. If you have items you'd like to sell, this will be your opportunity.



If you enjoyed viewing the photos in last month's issue, there are many photographic galleries in New York City that have excellent collections. Notable are the Witkin Gallery (900 West End Avenue, Manhattan) and the International Center of Photography Museum (250 Bowery, Manhattan).



Take advantage of more hours of cold darkness by doing indoors things, like organizing last year's photographs. Burn them to CDs or DVDs for permanence or back them up with other temporary storage, like hard drives, flash memory, the cloud or whatever your preference is. Clear off all but the hundred or so favorite photos from your phone (you'll be surprised by how much faster it will work again). When you're done with the transferring, delete the now redundant copies from your memory cards and use the again. It's a good idea to reformat them in your camera as part of the the process.

One of the best parts of February in the Northeast is that it's almost over. We'll be back in March with more news.

Take photos - They're Fun!

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