



March, 2008

And the winner is...

According to Popular Photography (March, 2008) magazine's editor Mike McNamara, Digital photo quality has surpassed that of film on ISO speeds up to 800. Illustrations are offered to support his case. This is not laboratory hokus pokus, but everyday picture taking using popularly priced SLR cameras and lenses in the real world. Why then would camera manufacturers continue to make film cameras?

In 3 simple words the answer is "None. They don't". Although film cameras continue to be available (and will be for some time), they haven't been manufactured for a few years by any major maker. Stockpiles of inventory are becoming depleted, with only digital cameras as replacements. Canon, Olympus and Pentax have sold off their small remaining inventories. Nikon claims to still have some of an elite model in stock, as does Leica. This inventory could be due to government contracts requiring their availability until some fixed date in the future.

Qualified repair personnel are becoming fewer and farther apart for servicing film cameras. Used bodies are abundant for scavenging parts (many in like new condition) as new parts for film cameras are becoming harder and harder to find. It's hard to blame a manufacturer to make parts for a camera discontinued a decade or so ago. The times they are a changin'.

And a loss is...

When any family has a child whose photo looks like the ones below. This child suffers from retinoblastoma, a rare eye cancer found in children typically under the age of 5.



This leukocoria (white hue) indicates the cancer which accounts for approximately 3% of pediatric cancers, affecting close to 1 in 15,000 live births according to documents on file with Photo Marketing Association International (www.pmai.org) based in Jackson, Michigan).

Madison PhotoPlus and the Photo Summit were made aware of this when we received a letter from the Pezzente family from Toronto, Ontario. Their son Leo is facing life threatening cancers, but may well be on the road to a normal life because his parents consulted a pediatric ophthalmologist after noticing the unusual reflections of their son in snapshots.



We certainly wish them well through this difficult experience. We present this information in the hope that no reader ever encounters this event, but is informed should it happen.



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We Ain't Seen Nothing Yet? Department

There's a lot to be learned on the internet. Many companies are creating amazing software and firmware for photography. One such company is Refocus Imaging, Inc. in Mountain View, California (www.refocusimaging.com). This new technology allows photographers to change where the camera focused in a scene - after the picture has been taken - without the use of any other equipment!

Content Aware Image Resizing



Another development (no pun intended) is being demonstrated on YouTube at

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qadw0BRKeMk>

This technology is coming via Mitsubishi Electric Research Labs in Japan. Content Aware Image Resizing looks like both the greatest thing and most dangerous thing to visually hit humanity. The examples shown during this movie are all still photographs ... imagine when this can be done with videotape! Mind-blowing, isn't it?

Time Marches On ...

Too many of our customers have been coming in with 95% perfectly working, beautiful looking compact digital cameras. The 5% that isn't working is the cracked LCD panel on the camera's back. In each and every instance, the owner either had no case or had a case but didn't use it. The cameras weren't dropped or really mishandled, but were kept in pockets with keys, coins and other hard items.

This has been mentioned several times before, but once this happens, the camera is gone. For not understood sentimental reasons (occasionally a camera is only a few weeks old), owners sometimes fix a camera for close to or more than what they paid for it in the first place. Not only is this like paying \$500 for a \$250 camera, but it is completely avoidable!

That's about it for March. The Spring class schedule will be available soon, and we will send it to you. Happy St. Patrick's Day, Easter and vernal equinox!

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