



April, 2008

Digital Dark Ages...

There's been a fair amount of hype lately regarding our possible entrance in to new dark ages. Even www.wikipedia.com has an entry for it. The basic idea is that as more and more data is being stored (exclusively) electronically, the greater the odds are that the data will become irretrievable.

Not long ago the following media were commonplace: 8" and 5 1/4" floppy drives, Bernoulli drives, Zip drives, LP records, 8 track tape, Syquest, Smart Media, ad nauseam. Today, try to find a Betamax, VHS deck, turntable, Polavision player, fiche reader, 8mm or 16mm movie projector and so on. A year or 2 from now, expect SCSI computer systems, IDE connections, any and all recording tape, 3 1/2 floppy disks, slide projectors, projection lamps and more will be interesting antiques.

Many recent innovations, CDs, DVDs, IMACs, hard drives, compact flash, (many different) dedicated batteries, will all go the way of Kodak Disc film. If you haven't tried lately, by the way, it is getting VERY difficult to get prints from 126, 110 and disc film negatives.

So, once this data (in our case pictures) has been stored and is no longer accessible where does that leave humanity? In the dark, perhaps. Imagine going to the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C., for example, and sense the awe of looking at a displayed memory chip supposedly holding the Declaration of Independence and the United States Constitution. Supposedly is the key word here, because the technology to retrieve the information from the chip no longer exists.

What to do? What to do? The answer is relatively easy ... make copies designed for Luddites. Paper doesn't last forever, but documents as old as the Dead Sea Scrolls are still readable. They have

survived what our history describes as the Dark Ages.

The photo industry has been concerned with this issue since the digital camera era began. More than 95% of all exposures are being stored on memory cards, hard drives and CDs. (CDs appear to be the longest lived of the three, but need to be updated as technology advances.) Industry estimates are that 3-5% of exposures are printed, and a high percentage of those are not printed on media designed to stand the test of time, forget about being archival.

You've read it here before, you'll read it here in the future ... MAKE PRINTS!

If This don't Take the Cake...

Recently, Mrs. Anfang brought in a picture she had taken of he grandmother's 200th birthday cake. Well, she said it was 200 years, and some things are better left unquestioned. The problem was that

Happ irthday Anamanda
20 ears Young!

was all that was visible. The Guinness people would never accept this. This was an unnecessary job for Photoshop which could have easily been prevented.

The culprit was Mrs. Anfang's camera's flash. It has a fault known as a "hot spot". Many flashes do not evenly illuminate the subject area of a picture. A way to check your camera is to take a photo of a large, blank, flat subject. It is imperative that the camera be perpendicular to the subject plane. Look to see if the center of the picture is brighter or "hotter" than the corners. You'll probably notice that the quantity of light falls off from the center to the extremes.



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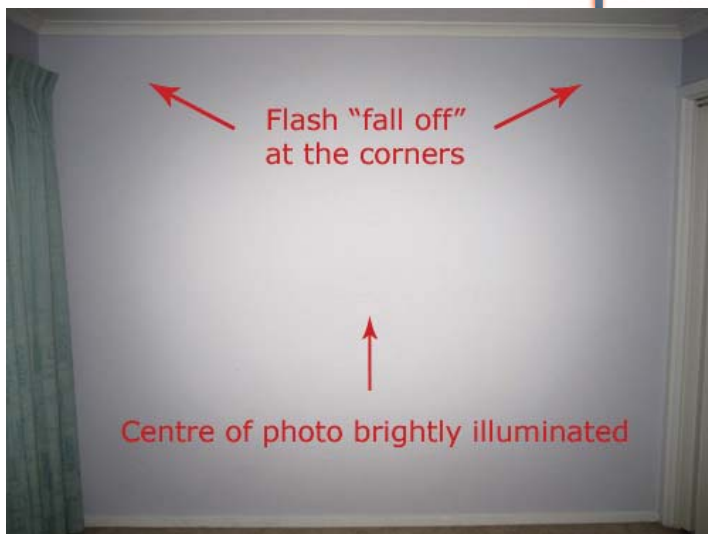


figure 1

Figure 1 illustrates this effect. The closer you are to the subject, the brighter the hot spot is, and in this case the hot spot burned out

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from the frosting. To avoid this, Mrs. Anfang should have turned off her flash and reset the white balance on her camera. This would have solved her problem and also created shadows making the caption stand out even more. Illuminating, no?

Attention Panorama Fans!

Olympus recently introduced the new Stylus 1020 palm sized digital camera. Besides boasting 10 megapixels of definition and a 7X zoom, it has the world's coolest automatic panorama picture func-

tion built in. The photo at the bottom of this page is a compilation of 3 individual pictures. The photographer composes photo #1, and the camera automatically takes images #2 and #3 when the camera is moved to the proper place. There is no guessing or fumbling, and almost impossible to goof up. The camera's software compiles the panorama right before your eyes. It must be seen to be believed. The Olympus 1020 also accepts Micro SD memory cards used in many popular cell phones. Surprisingly, the 1020 costs no more than other comparable cameras.

Camera RAW

Many people have heard the term "RAW file", but have no idea what it means. For the novice, it is a file type which allows the photographer complete control of what the final photo will look like. A photo can be completely reworked without altering the original image. A very, very basic introduction can be viewed at <http://youtube.com/watch?v=XCZCwrcba2U>. The amount of control using RAW format files appears to be unlimited. Not all cameras can record in RAW mode, but all better cameras can. (There is a basic RAW class next week.)

New Software Available

Adobe has finally released Photoshop Elements for MAC version 6.0. We have full versions in stock at both stores. It has taken awhile.



MadisonPhotoPlus
the Photo Summit



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New Web Site

We have launched our new web sites, www.madisonphoto.com and www.photosummit.com. These new sites (aside from housing previous issues of this newsletter) encompass features we were never able to use before. We welcome your comments about this effort, whether positive or negative.

That's it for this newsletter. We hope to see you at one of our B.I.P.S. classes or in one of our stores (even if just to chat awhile). See you next month!

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