



SEPTEMBER, 2008

The Politics of Photography

The major party political conventions have ended and campaigning has begun in earnest. The days of "clean" campaigns are certainly over (if they ever existed at all). As photographic and video software has improved, so has unscrupulous pictorial manipulation. The old adage "The camera never lies" is barely true any more, but a lot goes on between "click" and the finished picture or video scene.

During the mid 20th century it was possible to include or exclude a person from a photo, make the subject seem taller, younger or clean shaven. Today this is literally child's play. We take for granted photo alterations such as red eye correction, fill flash and multiple exposures. Inexpensive amateur cameras today can automatically find faces in a scene, wait for a smile, check that there are no eye blinks and then take the photo. The user merely points it.

The real creativity (manipulation) used to occur in the darkroom - now it happens in the computer. At one time a very sophisticated computer was needed, but not any more. The software used to cost millions and then thousands of dollars - now it is less than \$100. Using this software previously took years to learn, now with built in tutorials and improved user friendliness it takes somewhere between hours and weeks.

Photographs of Sarah Palin have already been circulating wearing very suggestive clothing while on the job. Is the picture truthful? Probably not, but few will ever know for certain. Most viewers would probably judge the authenticity of the picture according to their own preconceived notions. A not too close examination of the following 2 photos finds that these were doctored. In the b/w image, look at the bad pasting of the head upon the neck. Very obvious retouching. The color photo is more

subtle. An enlarged section of the full shot shows clumsy cropping along the arm. The viewer will never know who's head was on who's body with



who's clothing with whatever was in the background. Instead of a blank background, a different scene could easily have been inserted to Mrs. Palin in either a positive or negative situation. Either way, the casual viewer's opinion could have been changed as easily as the background.



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These two photos were easy to spot as phony, but many are not. The electorate will be shown many false images, both still and video, and expected to accept them as absolute truth. Please examine these visual messages and reach your own conclusions, but don't necessarily accept them at face value no matter who (or which party) presents them.

Image Stabilization Redux

Returning to a previous topic, new developments in image stabilization need some clarification. Having a stabilized camera and or lens does not mean that blurry pictures will won't happen.

The best typical image reduction systems tend to give the photographer the apparent steadiness of an increase of 2 to 3 shutter speeds. This means that, as an example, a lighting situation calls for a shutter speed of 1 second for proper exposure. Engaging the image stabilization feature allows you to hand hold that 1 second exposure as if you were holding steady for 1/8 second. No one can hold a camera steadily for a full second, and rare is the person who can for 1/8 second.

Camera buyers sometimes express the misconception that image stabilization allows them to successfully take sharp hand held pictures regardless of lighting, focal length, subject speed and camera shake. Sounds too good to be true, doesn't it? Don't believe it. It is not true. Image stabilization is an aid, not an answer.

Snap Shots

Madison PhotoPlus boasts 3 new faces. Joy has a combination of photo, computer and eBay experience and returns to Madison after growing up here. Vincent has worked in photography for more than 15 years, including owning his own photo lab in Bergen County. Phil recently was graduated from the University of Hartford and is somewhat new to photography and learning quickly. These new staff additions allow Madison PhotoPlus (as well as the Photo Summit) to continue to stay ahead of the curve as photography evolves. It is important that you receive the products, services, and expertise you've come to expect from us.

B.I.P.S. began classes right after labor day and are in full swing for the fall. A schedule is attached. Tickets are available at either store or online at www.madisonphoto.com or www.photosummit.com.

Taking you into the light!



MadisonPhotoPlus
the Photo Summit



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The photo below was taken with a new Olympus Stylus 1020 camera with an all new method of making panoramic photos in the camera. It is ridiculously simple. This picture was taken in low light from Jerry's home. It was hand held (with one hand) absolutely no care was taken to "do it right". Basically, the camera took the picture itself.

Thanks for inviting us into your day. Enjoy making your photos, and we hope to see you soon.



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