



Better Holiday Photos

A lot of us only get to see some family or friends at holiday times, so the memories our photos evoke need to stand the test of time. Here are a few hints on how to make them better.

- If you are taking a photo of 1 or 2 standing people, turn your camera or phone and shoot a vertically composed photo. You will get more of the people and less of the cluttered background in your shot.

- Many people use their camera's self timer to get into the photo with the other relatives and friends. Often the expressions (especially the photographer's) are unnatural. If your camera is new enough or you're using a smartphone, a wireless shutter release will allow you to take the photo(s) when you think the scene is ready ... not 10-12 seconds later. Taking a second shot immediately after the first often captures more natural expressions.

- Taking a photo lit by holiday lighting is very different from photographing the lighting itself. Photographing a lighted wreath, for example, requires 2 different exposures - 1 for the wreath and 1 for the lights themselves. One way to get this shot is by putting the camera on a tripod and exposing for the lights using a small aperture. Just before the exposure ends, have the camera fire your flash.

Photographing someone or something primarily illuminated by the holiday lights is a different story. Extremely few of the lights are anywhere near 5500K - 6500K daylight. To compensate, take your camera off Auto White Balance (WB) and set it to the icon for Tungsten (incandescent). The color might not be exact, but it should be very close.

- Sugars in the bloodstream are a main cause of photographic red eye when using a flash built into a camera or phone. If your camera does not have a red-eye removal circuit, try one of these techniques:

 - Use a bounce flash aimed at the ceiling, or

 - Shoot using ambient light. You'll need to use a higher ISO and a shutter speed higher than 1/30 sec.

 - Take photos before the sugars are ingested. This usually means earlier in the day, before soda, candy or alcohol is consumed.

- Avoid positioning your subjects in front of a mirror or window. Your camera's flash will be bounced back off the reflective surface.

- If you are recording video, remember that your voice will be recorded, along with your subjects. Use motions to guide people to a location or non-verbal cues to get them to speak. No-one likes to hear, "George, go stand next to your grandmother" on the audio track.

- The biggest hint of all ... Check NOW that your camera, phone or camcorder is working properly. Make sure you have enough free space on your memory card, hard drive or other internal memory (or enough film). Are your batteries fresh if you use replaceable batteries? Are your permanent batteries fully charged? Are your lenses clean? Don't wait until you Holiday is upon you to find out! If you're not sure, bring your gear in and we'll check it out for you at no charge.

Special Event

On December 17, from 10:00 - 3:00 Madison PhotoPlus welcomes John Haggerty from Fujifilm to demonstrate their new



flagship camera - the X-T2. John will also answer any questions you might have regarding any vintage X Series camera. Fuji is surely leading the way in low light photography and highest quality lenses.

You Don't Always Get What You Want

In order to keep prices as low as possible, some camera makers are now selling 2 lens DSLR outfits at fantastic prices. What they're not telling you is that the second lens (typically a telephoto zoom for sports or wildlife) is not image stabilized. The standard 18-55mm zoom is, but the tele is not - and that's the lens that is harder to hold steady. Be an aware consumer - know what you're getting.

According to thecounterfeitreport.com, the number of bogus memory cards is increasing. A little over a year ago, SanDisk and Lexar suffered a high number of counterfeits. It has spread.

In 2012, SanDisk estimated that a good 1/3 of all memory cards bearing its name were counterfeits! Now it is affecting all the major brand names, with many being sold online and by some big box electronics dealers. They may even be aware of it. Even their corporate buyers might not be aware. But it happens. If you see memory cards at a too good to be true



price, assume it's not true. Searching the web finds many of the horror stories of cards becoming corrupted during the initial use.

Scariest yet is that the purchaser of such a card assumes the card is blank. That's a potentially catastrophic assumption. The company which labeled and packaged those cards may well have put malware on them to damage whatever they're put into. You may be turning over your camera's, phone's or computer's previously secure data to identity thieves or worse.

When you get a new memory card, immediately format it in your camera or phone. This isn't foolproof, but most times it will render the malware useless. But, not always...

"I Accept Your Terms"

Ever wonder about what you're agreeing to when you accept the terms of a site like Instagram, Facebook, Flickr, etc. A photographer who is a lawyer recently posted an article on Petapixel.com which describes what happens to your photos (and other things) once you've uploaded them. The article is brief and written in everyday English. Click here to read it: <http://petapixel.com/2016/12/07/lawyer-digs-instagram-terms-use/>.

In a similar vein, Nikon has sent out fliers announcing their annual photo contest. The top prizes are quite generous and the prestige of being a winner is wonderful. Before entering the contest (or any similar contest - Nikon is not the only brand holding such a contest) read about what happens to your photo once it is submitted. Read the "Organizer's Rights" section of the entry material, which is legally binding. The sponsor is given the rights to do basically anything they want with your photo or video without paying

you anything besides the prize...FOR-
EVER! Whether you approve the use or not - you no longer have any voice in what happens. This saves Nikon (in this instance) a fortune when getting great photos for very little money instead of buying the rights each and every time they want to use a professional's photo.

Sometimes signing something without reading it first can be very expensive. In this case, Nikon is not obfuscating by accident.

Upcoming Topics and Events

In our business, winter is the slow time of the year. We use the time for education and planning for the spring and farther into the year.

We'd like your help. If there are topics for newsletter articles you'd like to read about or attending a class about it we'd like to know. If there's a venue you'd like to photograph in or near the Madison - Summit, NJ area, please tell us. We like to do things you're interested in, not what is just easy for us.

Contact any of us in either store, by phone, e-mail or even better ... in person.

This is surely our final issue for 2016. All of us here hope 2016 was a good year for you and your families. At this time of the year when Holidays span nationalities and religions, we wish you all a peaceful and healthy season and beyond - through all of 2017.

Please continue taking photos - they are our legacies. Enjoy sharing and looking at your pictures. They define you!

We look forward to being with you in 2017, starting with our January issue.

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