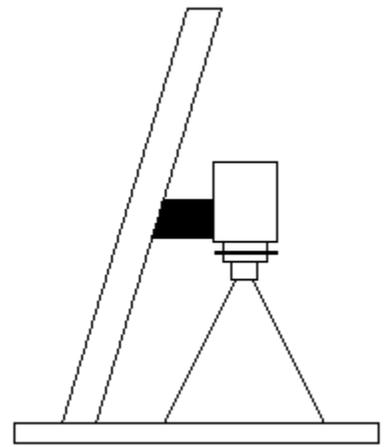


Contact Sheet

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The Fifty-Pound Bike

When my sons were young, they were into bikes, both to do tricks on and then also for long distance riding. As a parent, it was my contention that a bike is a bike, right? “No way, Jose!” to quote one of my sons as he started to list the reasons he needed a new bike with this improvement, that improvement, etc. They wanted a lighter frame, better gear ratio, better brake pads - - and the list goes on and on. So, begrudgingly, the parent in me gets broken down by the constant, “I’ll take good care of it! I won’t get it stolen! My birthday is here is just another three months and this is an early present!” But when I would put the bikes up on the garage ceiling at the end of the summer, **all of the bikes weighed the same fifty pounds.** The old cheap bike was built of really heavy steel, and was therefore, very heavy. The light weight metal bikes were definitely lighter - - **but, you had to have twenty pounds of locks so that the bike wouldn’t get stolen.** No one even bothered with a lock on the cheap bike since they would never be worthy of stealing!

The same analogy applies to photographs. All good photographs take about two hours. If you have some good wildlife photographs, you had to drive

for a couple of hours to get to Yellowstone National Park. Or you had to hike on the trail for a couple of hours to get to where the bears really were. Similar considerations apply to scenic photography. You had to drive several hours to Schwabacher’s Landing to get the reflections early in the morning. Or you went to Craters of the Moon for the spring wildflowers. Hence, the statement that all good photographs take a couple of hours.

But what about still life images? You set your tripod up in front of the vase and take its picture. You are done in a couple of minutes, or are you? We had a still life workshop for our February meeting - - and proved that still life photography is a variation of the fifty pound bike and takes about as long as scenic or wildlife photography. With still life images, you get to choose your background. Do you want black velvet? How about painted muslin? Do we want the background in focus? How much depth of field can we get?

We get to choose the direction of our light. Do we want just one light and emphasize shadows? How do we best define the contours of our 3-D object with our two dimensional image in our viewfinder? Do we want backlight to define the edge contour at the top of the vase?

We have moved all of our lights around, changed the intensity of the various flash units and now have the correct lighting. We take our picture, and then we notice all of these reflections on the vase that just didn't seem to be very important when we were setting up the still life. How do we move the lights - - again, for the forty-fifth time - - to reduce the glare, and yet still get the light from the directions we really wanted to have. Will reflectors help? Will a diffuser soften the light and remove the reflection, but still give us the intensity of light we want?

As you can see from the above discussion, all of a sudden that minute photo of the vase is up to many minutes, or even a couple of hours. At a still life workshop, the advantage that you have is you have a couple of club members moving the lights around for you, adjusting the intensity of the monolights, hand holding the reflectors and diffusers, all while you are behind the camera and seeing the changes to the scene. In your own home, you make an adjustment, go back to your camera - - back again to the right light to increase the intensity - - move the small vase a quarter of an inch to the left to keep it out of the shadow of the first vase - - and the trips back and forth continue.

Digital technology has really helped the still life photographer. In the past you looked through your viewfinder to capture the image - - and then took the picture. You then sent the film to the lab to have it processed. In a couple of days, you look at the image and find this really bright specular reflection. You need to reshoot the image. But your spouse wanted the living room back. You had to put all of the camera gear back in the closet. The vases were put back in the hutch in the dining room

behind the other fifteen dishes you had to move to get it out in the first place. Usually, you say, "Ah heck! That image was good enough for what I wanted. I'll remember to check for that reflection the next time I get everything out - - next winter." And do you remember next year? Probably not!

Besides having instant access to the finished image (just like having a very expensive Polaroid back on your 35 mm camera), many of the screens also show you where highlights are blown out, where you chose the wrong type of light and the color balance is wrong, and numerous other errors that never were seen until the negative was returned from the lab. To get better at still life imagery in the past, you had to keep meticulous notes - - how far away each light was, the angle of the light, the setting on the monolights or umbrellas, the exact distance the vase was from the camera, all of the settings on the camera - - and the list goes on. Even if we kept these exact notations in a notebook, we often misplaced that book by the next time we got all of our gear out again.

Still life workshops have always been some of our most fun club activities and we have never finished on time. This is a good thing. We're having fun with our cameras, watching how other photographers think and position lights, trying out different techniques, and learning about light and how a camera captures that elusive image. Usually, we only do the workshop once a year, but maybe we need to try them more often. Thanks for sharing your techniques with us!

Club Notes

We have several people who are willing to be club officers for next

year, but we still need someone for vice president since there will be times when the president will not be at the meeting. Please volunteer at this next meeting so we can publish a list of officers for 2009!

We also need to thank Farr's Jewelry for the use of the digital projector at the last Advancement Program.

Field Trips

They actually had some snow at the Dog Races in the Ashton area this year. We hope to see some good images from those who went to the event. Remember, you get extra points in the Advancement Program for images done on a club field trip. Thanks, Chris, for getting us to the correct areas to get the best images.

I missed the last Advancement meeting and have not been able to find out about the next field trip. The Internet site will continue to keep you abreast of the latest trip information.

Advancement Program

The theme of the Advancement Program for March is: **Photographer's Choice**. Please bring three of your best images, slides, digital image files and join us at 1900 Grandview in the Conference Room at 7:30 p.m. on March 19. The remaining themes for this year are (alternate months are Photographer's Choice):

April: Humor

June: Hands

August: Interiors

October: Numbers/Letters

December: Lights

Dues are due! \$25 per year for the entire family. Thank you.

There has still not been a definitive listing of the images that will be going to the corridor in the hospital. We will try to cement those images together so that we can give the hospital group about fifty images for them to select from at this month's meeting.

Many thanks to last year's officers. Chris did a good job and is to be commended for his efforts. Thanks, Shannon and Doug for being the secretary and treasurer. Melvin gave us a good variety for the field trips. He will also be helping with this year's selections; but he needs your input. All of you have favorite places that you like to go in this region. Share your knowledge with us. Tell us where those special images are. Let Melvin know when the best time to go that that area.

Personal Note

Last week I went to Las Vegas to see my son (couple of basketball games with the grandkids playing figured in a *little* bit.) One day Marty and I went to Death Valley because we remembered some of the images we had seen in Ansel Adams' book. I had images of the 20-mule team Borax wagon rolling across massive sand dunes, John Wayne riding by, and severe thirst even with full water bottles. The sand dunes we found were much smaller than those we have in St. Anthony. There was a monotony to the vegetation with smaller sagebrush

than on our desert. Very few junipers and pines with almost no cacti noted. I really like our desert in this region for photography better now.

So maybe the grass (and shrubbery) is greener on this side of the fence!

Monthly Meeting

Date: March 5, 2009

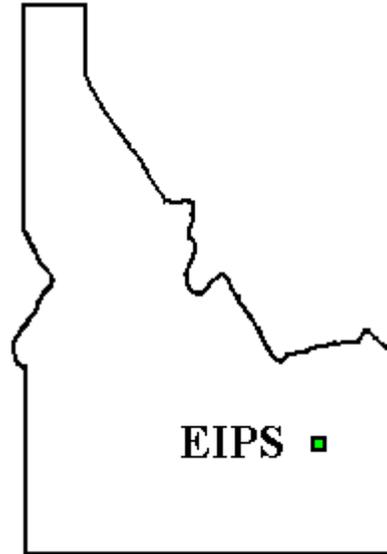
Time: 7:30 p.m.

Location: 1900 Grandview Ave. Conference Room

Program:

Ray Thomas had an exciting trip to Africa. He is going to share some of his experiences and photographs with us at this month's meeting of EIPS.

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Graffiti

EIPS is a group of amateur and professional photographers who have joined together to further the art and craft of photography. Please join us and expand your horizons. Sharing knowledge makes all participants better at their craft. We meet on the first Thursday of each month for our educational lecture. Then the third Thursday is our Advancement Program where we share some of the images we have done. We meet at 7:30 p.m. in the 1900 Grandview Ave conference room. We all become better photographers!

