

Polk County Camera Club

Newsletter

Nov-Dec



Photo by © R.Munguía Model: Lizzy Mendenhall.

“Ready for Christmas”

Photos can make awesome Christmas gifts, highly appreciated by relatives and friends. Inside we'll give you some good ideas on how to make this holiday season a special one.

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Welcome to the Polk County Camera Club

Nov-Dec

Swiss Trip Text & Photos ©Bonnie Shedd

Doug and I recently did a whirlwind trip to Switzerland. We really left to escape Hurricane Ivan only to return to Hurricane Jeanne! However, this seven day journey to this tiny, tidy country was filled with magnificent scenery, wonderful cheese fondue and outstanding on-time public transportation. Switzerland has not joined the EU and most likely will continue their independence. The Swiss citizens enjoy a very high standard of living and although the money exchange was favorable to our American dollar, we found it is a very expensive country to visit. As I said, "Come to Switzerland and watch your money evaporate!".



View from our Hotel in Gimmelwald.
©Bonnie Shedd

Our journey began in Zurich, with the only sightseeing done between the plane and the train. A two hour train ride through some wonderful scenery brought us to

Interlaken, which was our base of operations for the next three days.

We are big Rick Steves fans and the next two days were spent in the tiny town of Gimmelwald, which is perched on the side of a mountain and accessible only by cable car! Our hotel was one of the "memorable experiences" of the trip. From our second floor balcony, we had a spectacular view of three of the major alpine peaks in the Berner Oberland region.

Lucerne is certainly worth a longer visit than the afternoon and night we had allotted for our visit. It is a very cosmopolitan city with some really interesting points of interest. A very old covered footbridge and the "Lion Monument" are must sees.

Our United States gateway city was Washington, DC



Flower boxes decorate every window
©Bonnie Shedd

(Dulles Airport), and when we left Zurich our flight was escorted from the boarding gate to the runway by a Swiss armored personnel carrier! Doug shot some great video footage of the POLIZE vehicle as it traveled alongside our plane. We were not quite sure just what they thought they might be preventing, but ours was the only flight that received this special escort service! We finally decided that the extra security was in place because our U.S. destination was D.C.

On previous trips, the laptop computer has gone along to act as a storage device for our digital images. This time

we took a small (3 1/2" X 5 1/2") device called an X-Drive Pro. Its small size and whopping amount of memory (40 gig) worked really well. We carried it with us in our camera gear and uploaded our digital cards when they were full. This is a "sweet" piece of electronic equipment that has slots which enables it to read any type of digital card. You insert a card, press "copy", and it transfers your images. Your card can now be reformatted and is ready for more pictures.



Main Street in Gimmelwald
©Bonnie Shedd

If you would like more information about this device contact Reinier or Doug. -bs

Congratulations Bonnie for your recent awards!

On the Cover

Lizzy Mendehall in Santas Outfit. Lizzy is a local model interested in fashion, casuals, sport and swimwear. If you need a model for your photography, contact her at: lrdarla@aol.com

Unique Christmas Photos

Text & Photos ©R.Munguia

This year, let's be more creative. Instead of sending chocolates, send them wrapped with pictures of your loved ones. There are so many creative ways to use photos for Christmas, from simple photos pasted on tree decorations to full framed photographs to hang on the wall. Occasionally, we personalize our own Christmas cards for each member of the family. With the advanced printing technology and the softwares available, customization is an easy alternative for the computer whiz.

Our Christmas cards vary from single family shots to pictures of our pets or even a table top setup. Having different options allow you to select the best choice for that particular friend or family. Everybody in our family and closest friends know about our large collection of birds, so they know right away as soon as they open the envelope and they find one



For this image I shot the hat using a white background and the bird in a separate shot. Then I combined them using Photoshop

Thanks to the advanced technology of Photoshop and other imaging softwares, a lot of neat effects can be created. For our bird photo, I shot the hat separate in a white background, then the bird in the blue speckled backdrop. Using Photoshop, I isolated the hat in a separate transparent layer then applied a little distortion and rotation to fit the bird's head. But, pets are only one of many other subjects that can be used for your Christmas cards.

Many cities prepare elaborated ornaments and displays for the holi-

day season. Take this opportunity to grab some nice images that can be used in your creative designs, set some type in Photoshop and mail it to your relatives and friends. Happy Holidays!-RMC



By the end of October many cities start putting up their Christmas ornaments. This is a great opportunity for Christmas photos.
©R.Munguia

of our birds in the postcard. Using pets can be a creative way of expressing the Christmas spirit. A table top setup with few Christmas ornaments and maybe a picture of the family can make a memorable gift.

Digital or Traditional - An Amateur Photographer's Dilemma

Text & Photos ©Paulette Dalton

For most of us, investing in a professional digital camera is a major decision that can be quite expensive.

This is especially true if, like me, you have already invested money in traditional camera equipment; lens and filters are not cheap. After becoming more serious and wanting greater control over my photographs, I had a difficult choice. Should I invest in an in-home dark room or should I climb aboard the digital bandwagon.

It was about this time I joined the Polk County Camera Club, and, as I



This beautiful grasshopper was captured using the Canon D300 and a Sigma 105mm Macro.

©Paulette Dalton

receipt of chemicals into a machine and not caring what the outcome is. With digital, the possibilities are endless. Taking great pictures is now a smooth system from start to finish, all done by me. If a picture is slightly underexposed, I can correct it. If I need a photo cropped, I can do it exactly like I want it. I'm sure you get the idea -- like I said, the possibilities are endless.

For me, going digital made sense. I was lucky in that I could use my SLR equipment, but even if I could not, I would now still go digital. If you are currently trying to decide on which method to use, I would recommend talking to different photographers to weigh the pros and cons for your situation. There are many reasons to use digital. Like me, I think you will find digital is right for you.-PD



The Sandollar details were captured using the Canon D300 and a Sigma 105mm Macro.

©Paulette Dalton

have said before, I am glad I did. I was able to talk to many photographers of varying backgrounds using both digital and film. Through these conversations, I learned the pros and cons of both methods. Then, on my outings with Reinier, I became convinced digital was right for me. When Reinier showed me a picture he had just taken, I immediately saw

the benefits digital could offer. If I went digital, I would no longer have to wait to see whether or not my picture was set up correctly. I could get instant feedback and adjust my technique accordingly - perfect for an amateur like me.

Now I had to decide on the camera I wanted. I did not want to give up on film altogether, and I also wanted to get the most from my SLR investment. Here, for once, I was lucky. Canon came out with the 300 D, and believe it or not, all of my Rebel EOS lens and accessories would work with it. That was the final and deciding factor, I bought the camera.

I have been mostly digital ever since, and I haven't looked back. The system is easy to use, and I have complete and total control over my photos. I am no longer at the mercy of someone pouring a predetermined

Things to consider

by R. Munguia

Just because you went digital, doesn't mean you have to sell the film equipment. Before you do this, I'll give you few examples of why I kept my film gear. As long as you can afford both systems, keep them.

I was going on a 2-day canoe trip down the Peace River, and wanted to take pictures of our expedition from the canoe. Instead of risking the expensive digital camera, I took my old faithful film body with my favorite film. When shooting landscapes for big enlargements, nothing compares to the quality of a good scan from transparency film. The file size from the scan surpasses that of the digital camera.

The digital transition could be easy for more advanced photographers, but proves to be a nightmare for those starting and those with no computer skills. Now with all this said, you make your

Shooting for Food

Text & Photos ©R.Munguia

Have you ever wondered if there's such a thing as working for food? Well, we all do in one way or the other, but when it comes to food photography, it's for real.

There's no better way of creating art while keeping your belly full. In the last year or so, I had the opportunity to shoot food photos for various companies including local restaurants.

Obviously the trick here is to make the food look better than it is, and in many occasions even fake some of the ingredients.

Yes, you heard right! When shooting coffee or hot chocolate and you want to have a little foam or bubbles on the surface, we add a little dishwashing soap to the hot chocolate. You just have to be careful not to drink it after the shoot. Working with ice cream can be a painful job with no time to spare. To avoid the ice cream from

melting, we simply replace the ice cream with mashed potatoes. With color dyes, we can make any color, and adding other ingredients we can simulate any flavor, like Pistachio or Pralines & Cream.



Even the simplest meal can be turned into fine dining just by using the right props and proper styling.
©R.Munguia

mirrors to create a more intense light that can be focused in a specific area of the plate.

One of the objectives in this type of photography is to enhance the product and glorify its existence. For a simple and boring product such as a hot dog, I knew something neat needed to be done in order to make this shoot effective. As I was walking back inside the building after shooting some exterior "picnic shots", I realized the shadows on the floor as I walked. Bingo! By placing the dish on the texturized floor, I could use it as a background and with a little touch of color from the orange peppers, the shot became more interesting. This particular shot required no light setup, and it was simple and spontaneous.



To simulate window light coming through a window, I used a halogen lamp with a softbox on the right side, while filling the foreground with a flash from the left.

I'm the food stylist for most of my food photography. When I setup a plate, I want to make sure that can be eaten, by just looking at it. For this, I like to set a mood. Shooting the food alone, doesn't do any good. The whole table needs to be setup to create a realistic feeling. Usually using props like flowers, wine bottles and other table utensils, help to send the message across.

When it comes to the lighting, I prefer using a combination of "sunlight" and flash. For the lasagna shot, I used a halogen light from the right hand side to simulate sunlight coming through a window. Knowing that the color temperature on these lights are lower than daylight, I decided to use a flash to fill-in the shadow areas to the left while helping to color correct the otherwise yellowish cast produced by the halogen light.

In many cases, I use from 1 to 5 or even more tiny light reflectors made of aluminum foil glued to cardboard. Occasionally I use small

One of the things I like about food photography, is that I usually get to eat it at the end of the shoot. Next time you cook a nice dinner, shoot it first! It's a tasty way of learning composition and how to create effective photos that attract the viewer. RMC



Reflectors were used to create random highlights on the shadow area of this dish. ©R.Munguia