



Photographica Digest

Western Photographic Historical Society

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www.wphsociety.org

April 2015

President's Zone

R. A. Suomala

At the February, 2015 meeting, one member questioned the validity of the January 1 vote by the members present to amend the bylaws by removing the following:

"Board members may serve (2) consecutive (3) year terms. At least one year must lapse before they may be considered for any board position after serving two terms."

The sense of the members at the February meeting was that the January vote should be voided and the members be permitted to vote again on this issue at the April 2, 2015 meeting. Ballots will be distributed at the meeting.

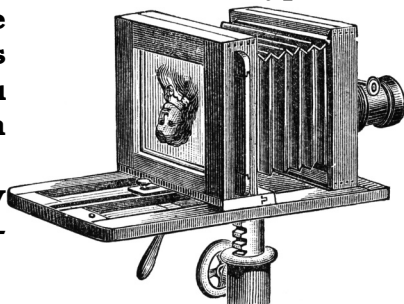
Due to this delay the membership will be asked to elect or reelect board members at the April 2, 2015 meeting instead of the March meeting. Anyone interested in becoming a board member should contact me at 520-399-2796 as soon as possible.

The candidates for board membership are as follows:

Martin Kebschull (incumbent), Imre DePozsgay (incumbent) and Jozef Pacholczyk (incumbent).

Ballots will be distributed to the members present at the April 2, 2015 meeting. Ballots will have spaces for 3 write-in candidates.

As a special feature at the April 12th show Mark Sawyer will be conducting informal wet plate collodion photography demonstrations and discussions. Using a portable darkroom and historic equipment, Mr Sawyer will be making portrait and still life tintypes. You really need to see this. No batteries required and you make your own photographic plates with easily obtained materials.



Notice of Board Meeting

The WPHS Board of Directors 2nd quarter of 2015 meeting will be held on Saturday, April 25th, from Noon to 2PM at:

Bookman's Community Room

1930 E. Grant Road

near intersection of Grant and Campbell

Fewer Megapixels Are Better?

R. A. Suomala

It seems the dust has settled after the storm created by the digital revolution in photography. The Sony A7S has only 12.4 megapixels compared to the Sony A7 with 24.3 megapixels and the Sony A7R with 36.3 megapixels. All of these cameras have full frame size (FX) sensors.

So why has Sony reduced the number of megapixels in the sensor by making the pixels larger (8.4 microns vs 6.0 and 4.9 respectively)?

As you may already know the image information in your digital camera begins as analog information and then is digitized to allow for digital processing. Analog information always contains some random noise unless the temperature of the circuit elements is reduced to absolute zero.

The term "Signal To Noise Ratio" (S/N) is commonly used to describe the effect on the desired image information. The actual physical size of the pixels in the digital camera sensor also affects the S/N Ratio. So Sony elected to put fewer pixels in the same size sensor to increase the S/N Ratio and provide for higher equivalent film speed or ISO. Simply put you can capture images at lower light levels with acceptable noise.

The ISO range for the the Sony a7s is 100-409600 versus both the Sony A7 and Sony A7R at 100-25600. This means that the Sony A7S can produce acceptable images in 1/16 of the light intensity required by the A7 or A7R.

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Film just can't compete with digital when it comes to available low light photography.

However when it comes to high resolution, medium and large format film is still King. Ken Rockwell has done some outstanding work in comparing film vs digital resolution (Ref 1). He concluded that it would require 25 MP to produce the resolution equivalent to the best 35mm color film. It seems that we are already there. Rockwell also concluded that a digital camera regardless of frame size would need about 100 megapixels to simulate medium format film, or 500 megapixels to simulate 4x5" film and 2000 megapixels to simulate 8X10 film.

As a practical matter the eye can resolve less than 300 dpi (dots per inch) at a viewing distance of 12 inches. Magazines are printed at 300 dpi. Fine art printers aim for 720 dpi. Very few people stick their heads closer than 1 foot away from a painting or photograph.

So the higher resolution provided by medium and large format film is really only obvious in viewing gallery sized prints and applications where the viewed image is to be magnified. I shoot with a 10 megapixel camera and if I am careful to fill the frame, my 13X19 prints look as sharp as those printed from 4X5 film. You can only see the difference if you use a magnifier to view the prints.

References:

1. www.kenrockwell.com/tech/mpmyth.htm

AnSCO's Memo

Ron Kuykendall

To set the stage: movies were big business by 1910. There was a ready supply of cut lengths of 35mm film stock as editors cut and pasted scenes to complete a movie. They were eager to sell these relatively short lengths of unexposed film. The 1913 Tourist Multiple was one of the first cameras on the market to use this film source. A 750 frame camera, single frame, landscape, was designed for the wealthy vacationing Americans who would take pictures of wondrous places and strange people, have the film developed upon return, then subject their friends to an evening viewing the projected images. The 1927, Ansco Memo outfit exploded

on the photographic marketplace for \$25.75 in a pre-depression world where the average annual wage was in the \$1300 to \$2900 range. Extremely small for the period (about 2x2.5x4in) – in a world of box and folding cameras using glass plates and large paper-backed rolls of film – the camera was an instant success. The outfit included a case, two rolls of 50 exposure film and a projector: a modified two D cell flashlight with a two element projection lens, a slot for the film, and a wood base with two spring clips to hold the flashlight body horizontal for projection in a dark room. Very similar to toy flashlight projectors I remember as a child projecting images of nursery rhymes on the wall.

The camera itself was a finely crafted rectangular box with metal working parts. With an optical finder on top and a bail handle, the box was initially shellacked wood. After the first year, good quality leather was used. Recessed in the front of the camera was the shutter/lens unit, in mine a Wallensak Deltax 25-50-100 with a Cine- Velostigmat 6.3. Ansco also used Ilex and B&L in offerings from meniscus to Tessar with appropriately matched shutters. The shutter units were held in place by a single screw, allowing easy upgrades. The genius was in the film transport-based on movie camera mechanism, there were a pair of claws that engaged sprocket holes on both side of the film stock, pulling down one movie frame at a time. The photographer just moved a spring loaded knob on the back down to advance to the next frame. The camera was vertical, the frame horizontal, giving a landscape format. Use as portrait format was not planned- the camera was not designed to be used horizontally and



the lenses did not usually focus closer than about 6 feet. Portrait photography in its close-up form was not common until sometime later – possibly because the combination of simpler lenses and grainy ortho film might not lend to flattering close-ups.

The film itself came in small wooded cubes with about 2 inches of film protruding from a slot. The film cartridge was placed in the upper cavity-two inches of film was pulled out across the aperture and inserted into the empty lower cartridge. The back was closed and the film advance knob was depressed two times. The system allowed 50 pictures, accounted for by a film counter on the front coupled to the shutter-there was no multiple exposure protection.

Memo cameras were frequently sold in kits. Mine contained a metal box like projector with a 100w lamp (no cooling system and no reflector) on a wood base with no elevation, but it works fine at short projection distances. Ansco provided an extensive line of accessories, darkroom items and films and papers for projection enlargements of the 35mm frame. A 4x5 image superior to rollfilm box and folding camera contact prints of the day was possible.

As impressive was the impact of Ansco's Memo cassette, the original wood cassettes were soon replaced by metal cubes. After selling tens of thousands of the Memo cameras (including the long lived Boy Scout versions), the Memos disappeared before WWII. Agfa-Ansco's 1939 full frame Memo series of cameras returned to the quick loading cassette. The folding bed Memo "pocket camera", with a change to a lever film advance system became the fabulous Karat series of 1941 to 1957. After the first series, Agfa relented and converted to the 135 cassette system. Agfa, with most European camera manufacturers, returned to the Memo/Rapid system in 1964 to compete with Kodak's Instamatic. The rapid system ended in 1969.

Ansco's adoption of the movie frame size (named half-frame) was adopted by the Japanese manufacturers in the 60's with a flood of sophisticated half-frame truly pocket cameras. The film era closed with Kodaks Advantix film system that used single frames end to end on narrower than 35mm stock.

Ansco's Memo system established a 35mm film market that would last until the end of film photography.

**The WPHS is now accepting Consignment or
Donations for our upcoming
April 12, 2015 Camera Show.**

Please contact

Imre de Pozsgay

775-287-9538

idepozsgay@hotmail.com

www.wphsociety.org

Western Photographic Historical Society

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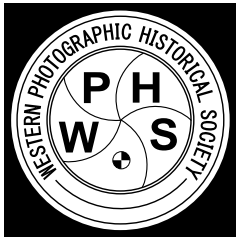
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Board Members

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Mark Sawyer.....Vice-President
Jozef Pacholczyk.....Secretary
Martin Kebschull.....Treasurer
Imre de Pozsgay.....Consignments
Matt Cook
Candee de Pozsgay
Ed Jackson
Brian Nemetz.....*Photographica Digest* Editor
Jerry O'Neill.....Ex Officio

Committee Members

Jerry Day.....Student Support
Clayton Wilson.....Setup
Mark Sawyer.....Education
Ron Kuykendall.....Donations



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UPCOMING EVENTS AND EXHIBITS

- Apr 2nd Some of the meeting will be devoted to WPHS business. Voting to approve or disapprove the proposed bylaw change and election of board members. Members who have something to share will be able to use the time available once the above mentioned business is completed.
- Apr 12th WPHS Spring Camera Show and Sale. See details at www.wphsociety.org
- May 7th The May meeting will feature a presentation by Raechel Running, a published photographer for over twenty-five years, Running's work has been internationally recognized. She exhibits her fine art and enjoys teaching visual literacy. She is currently an artist in residence living bi-nationally between Northern Arizona and Northern Mexico. See more at raechelrunning.com and superstitionreview.asu.edu/issue1/art/raechelrunning

MONTHLY MEETINGS

Next WPHS Meeting April 2nd

Join us on the first Thursday of every month at the Pima County Medical Society Building located at 5199 E. Farness Drive, Tucson. Take Grant to Rosemont (turn South), then turn East on Farness Drive to 5199 on the left.

Consignment and member camera sales, show and tell and a brief lecture are featured every month meetings run from 6:00 PM to 9:00 PM.

All are welcome!

WPHS is a non-profit
501(c)3 organization