



JAMES CRAIG PHOTOGRAPHY

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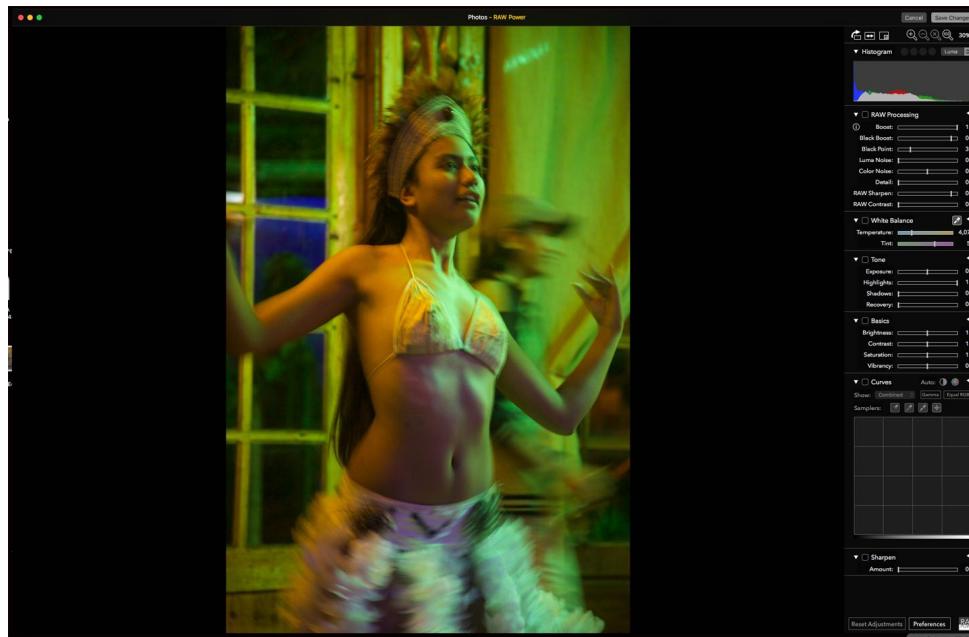
Vivi

Monday, January 9, 2017

...and a new RAW conversion app that ROCKS. Holidays and our trek around the country to visit our kids is over - so I'm back to my "final" review of the Rapanui images for printing. Again, this last trip, while rough in some ways, somehow gave me a revitalized perspective. Where just a few months ago I thought I the mine was running dry, it's like discovering a whole new vein of ore. At the same time i'm experimenting with some new software that might help save some difficult exposures. This is going to be fun.

The image above, **Vivi**, is an example. She's the daughter of a good friend. This evening she was dancing with a small group in a very dark little restaurant. This exposure was taken with an ISO of 1600 in horrible light at 1/10 oof a second, wide open at f-4 – with lots of movement. To add to the difficulties, there was a distracting, blurred guy in the background. This is one time catching movement was more important than freezing the subject.

The biggest problem was "noise". Thats a consequence of too high an ISO for the lighting. I like the image so much that I can deal with the bit of blur where I don't necessarily want it, but the fuzzy/grainy effect from the noise was ruinous on top of that. I'd tried noise reduction before but could not tolerate the additional "smoothing" (blurring). Original exposure below – inside the **RAW Power** window:



Along comes a cool little 3rd party RAW converter. I've tried others but they always seem to combine high price with a geeky interface with a considerable learning curve. And even at that I wasn't happy with the results. The new app is called "**RAW Power**" and is inexpensive / easy to learn and use / works independently or as a plug-in for *Photos* / and manna from heaven when it came to this image.

I used a number of the settings in RAW Power to adjust this image, but the saving grace here were the Luma Noise and Color Noise sliders. Wow, I was able to eliminate just enough of the noise to make the picture work. It looks really good printed to 12x16. The shot was taken in 2007, Vivi now has a little boy. Just got word this weekend that she quit her job at the Post Office but Terry didn't know where she's working now.

OH, gotta mention. While the first version of this app saves back to a JPG when used as a plugin in Photos – it saves to a **16 bit TIFF** when used independently. Yeah baby! During this introduction period the app is \$9.99 at the App Store – best \$10 I've spent in a while.

I worked on this first because I knew it was a real challenge. RAW Power will now be a part of my work flow. There's a very helpful interview video with the designer (an ex-Aperture designer) that explains the settings here:

<https://photoapps.expert/TWiP-Apps-21-RAW-Power#.WHJDJrGZMck>



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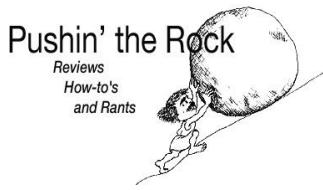
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Home-made Mat Cutting System

Saturday, January 21, 2017

Inexpensive, easy, convenient – *There are a couple of reasons to go this route: money – good mat cutters are expensive, especially if you don't really need to use one all that often; and simplicity – my reason. I have never appreciated the fine craft and utility of an expensive mat cutter. I prefer the direct, simple, accurate, cut-from-the-front approach. And I'm not alone; cruising artists' studios in Maine I ran across a fellow curmudgeon who showed me his similar set-up. Nothing to do with cutting mats is all that simple. But once you get your mind around this one, and its quirks, you just might be a convert. I had a fancy cutter, and eventually gave it away rather than let it sit unused.*



Construction...

Construction is downright easy. A partial sheet of hardwood plywood will serve to cut everything out of. The base of the cutter is 18x35 inches (I lightly sand edges as I go along). If stuck without a table saw, the cuts are so easy and basic, that it shouldn't be a problem to find someone to do them for you. Might cost you a pizza – that's what I charge.

I cut two strips of the same material 12 3/4 inches by 1 7/16 (there's a reason for this) and a smaller piece 1 1/2 by 5/8 inches.

I simply glued one strip along the top edge of the cutter base, aligned to the left, and clamped it for drying. The small piece I glued along the top edge as a guide stop (as seen in the image) and clamped.

When this dried I laid the straight edge against the guide, placing a right angle against the far edge and the guide, clamping the guide in place. Then I moved the right angle down to the bottom for positioning the bottom end piece, glueing and clamping.

In the process I double checked and made sure my distance between the ends was about 32 1/8 inches. This way I can cut "almost" any mat I want.

For super large mats (and I actually have a couple of images calling for these) I simply go through the torture of clamping one end of my guide to the table and being extremely careful how I apply my pressures.

Your Tools...

- **Dexter Mat Cutter** – I'm sure other brands will work fine. Just be sure to make appropriate adjustments to your guide shim. set the blade depth just beyond the mat thickness, cutting very slightly into the under-buffer. Blades are available at Dick Blick or any number of places. Note: blade dull quickly when cutting rag.
- **Guide Shim** – Cutter blades are recessed slightly from the edge. Your shim allows you to make precise cuts. An issue with Dexter Cutters is that the profile has changed slightly, if not immediately detectable, over the years. The blade inset has become almost half that of earlier models – requiring a much narrower "shim." For the latest model, a shim of exactly 1/8 of an inch does fine. My older model was just off 1/4 inch. The pictured shim is a 4.5x1.25 inch piece of mat (I double-stickied two thin pieces together for stiffness). The two arrows indicate the edge I like to use – where I took a pencil side and rounded it in slightly for the way I like to view my light pencil marks.
- a light, sharp, **easily erased pencil** – always use a light touch
- **an eraser that does not leave smudges** – an artist's eraser from an art store is best
- a good, accurate **yardstick** – not difficult, but surprisingly you can find ones that aren't, usually in the accuracy of the starting cut (or placement of the scale). One of my favorite ways to point out discrepancies in supposedly accurate tools for measuring is to take someone to a hardware store, into the area where you find various yardsticks and metal right-angles. They come in all sizes, some of them pretty expensive. Pick up a selection, hold them together and lay one edge down on a counter or table. Then, when you see the slight differences, ask yourself which one is accurate – and why the devil the rest aren't.
- **a good cutting edge**, preferably with a cork backing (easily applied if lacking) and thick enough to prevent a razor knife from jumping up and onto a finger. NOTE: the cutting guide in the picture has a beveled edge – I do NOT use that for cutting, for a couple of reasons. It is not as reliable and stable for guiding the Dexter cutter, and can allow a razor knife to jump the track and hack a finger. I use the flat edge for both operations – as well as occasional glass cutting.
- a nice razor knife.
- a layer of mat or rag between the mat and the board surface

Cutting Mats...

- Outside measurements: while one can, I don't like to use the cutter for outside measurements of my mats. I find it easier to simply measure and cut directly on my table top – covered with self-healing pads (see posting on making a studio work table [HERE](#)).
- Determine your measurements. Some people cut as much as a quarter in from each edge. I prefer an eighth of an inch. Either way: measure your work, subtract that measurement from your mat measurement, cut the result in half. That measurement plus your eighth of an inch will be your measurement in from the edge for your marks.
- Using your yardstick, lightly mark corners to be cut with very small, light angle-marks in pencil. I estimate one direction, place four small marks for guides going the other direction. Then I can measure in the other direction, placing my four corners, gently erasing the original four marks. Caution: mat outside dimensions can be slightly off – do not flip and measure opposite sides separately. Lay our your yardstick and measure in from the two sides.
- Place the mat in the cutter, lining up and placing the cutter into the near corner. Then use the shim to align the far corner, making sure to avoid shift at either end. Voila – make your cut with a sure, steady movement. Repeat for each edge. If your blade was placed accurately, erasures will be almost negligible.



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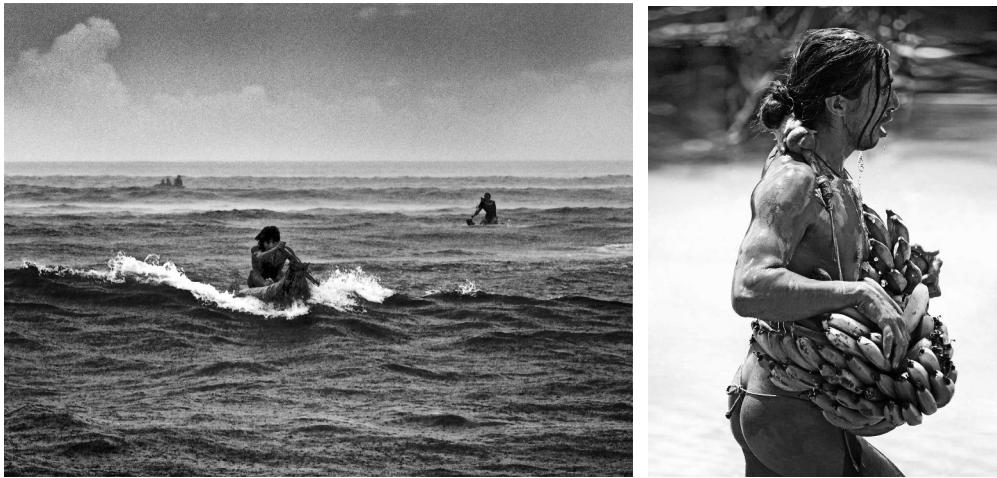
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Rano Raraku Vaka Ama Race

Monday, January 30, 2017

The first leg of the Tapati Rapanui "triathlon" is rowing a reed canoe that one has made oneself across the lake in Rano Raraku, a volcanic crater. If that isn't tiring enough, each contestant will then hang 44 pounds of bananas around his neck and run barefoot completely around the lake, only to then drop the bananas and pick up a reed pora, weighing about the same as the bananas, carry it half way around the lake, and then retrace the path of the opening canoe race swimming and using the reed pora as a floatation device.



There were reeds growing up the side of the lake where they were coming in for their landing, so I shot this through them. Another shot that day, the leader (also the leader here) as he nears the end of the second leg, is the one I call *Banana Run*. The reason I held off on printing this one is that my *Vaka Ama*, taken of the race from out at sea into Hanga Roa in the rain, is one of my favorites, in spite of the fact that it really only works viewed full size. Either one is like a window into the past. Interestingly, while *Vaka Ama*, in my view, works better as a large print, this one seems to work smaller and here. In fact it prints slightly smaller at 12x16 instead of my "normal" 15x20.

SITE UPDATE NOTES

Fix-its – After about forty hours of converting manually-made blog entires to the new automated blogging system, and three more days dealing with a bug in the software where I had the honor of being the one to step on that landmine first, I'm back to finishing up on the Easter Island folio. Never did I imagine I'd wind up with a hundred and fifty or so B&W images/prints from one project.

What next – There's this one today and then, I think, a couple more. After a decade of this project being my primary focus, I'll have to find something new – I'm open to suggestions.

Catalog PDF – At the same time, I'm updating the Exhibit Catalog PDF. This is partly for my own use, I can carry it on my iPad. The images link to the larger view pages on the site. And I post it on the first Easter Island folio page and downloads page to be used for convenient selection of images for exhibit.

Book PDF Expanded – I'll be finishing that up by next month. The original 98 plus about 52 additional images. This will require rounding out short anecdotes for all of them.

Minor issue – As far as the back blog postings, I found that converting the older postings from old iWeb files often eliminated spaces between words in the text. I'm slowly re-reading and fixing that. It doesn't make anything unreadable, but it should still be fixed.

QUICK TIP – Camera Cards

Ran accross some memory-card tips that everyone should take note of. The short of it is that there are a number of things that one should always or never do with memory cards, for example:

Don't erase images while the card is in the camera, don't fill the card completely and don't purchase cheapie off-brand cards. Do format your cards in the camera - not the computer, do this before each new shoot and use a good brand card reader.

The new one for me was the warning about **card readers**. It seems that using cheapo card readers is a major cause of losing images to a fried card. Complete explanations are found here:

<https://petapixel.com/2016/12/07/dos-donts-memory-cards-tips-photographers/>



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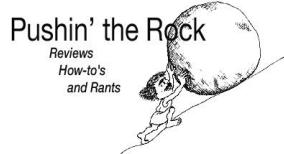
Island Flower and Bee

Monday, February 6, 2017

...for lack of anything else to call it. I shot this with my iPhone as a TIFF. It was windy and I wasn't sure I got it, even after a few tries. In the end two were sharp – surprisingly sharp. I used the other good exposure in a posting from the Island [HERE](#). I then gave it to Helga who was working with someone doing a book of insects on Rapa Nui – color of course. The neat part is that in the enlargement the veins in the bee's wings and even the legs on the two ants are defined.

I've now turned the other shot into a print file – 12.4x15.6. An odd size but the file wouldn't hadle any larger and needed to be as large as possible. That plus all that extra on the sides needed to be cropped. It wasn't an easy conversion, the bright oranges don't play well with B&W conversion from color (rgb or cmyk). I need to run my printer, been a while, so I probably feed my curiosity and actually print this one next week.

OOPS – *tiny text... I was concentrating so much on getting the conversions to the new blog system done properly that I didn't notice that there was a glitch (one of many) in the new system that caused the text size to fail to set properly. Man was it far too small. Anyway, I've now gone back and fixed that, all the way back to 2006. Maybe now I can crawl back out into the world.*



Virtual vs Real Art – A Caution... meh or yay?

(*Not really a rant, but I'll include it in that index anyway.*) I can't repeat this often enough – the internet is no place to view any art medium so as to come to a conclusion that one has anything but a flawed hint of what the original is like. The fact is that JPEG images combined with computer/iPad/phone resolutions and the internet is the *great equalizer* when it comes to depicting art. Not to mention the whole size/scale issue. Good work is belittled while bad is all too often improved immensely.

Of course in today's world much photography, color especially but even some of the "presets" generated moody B&Ws, are designed primarily for internet viewing. Fine art prints from this work can be at first impact striking but fail the test of time. At the same time taking a B&W print file and prepping a reduced resolution, small version for the web obliterates so much – forcing one to introduce artificial contrast, brightness, etc. to approximate the visual effect. Never really works.

Painting is just as tricky. Go see any real art exhibit after viewing the work on line... you will immediately see the problem. The vast majority of the time you will be disappointed, it's so easy to correct so many color, tone and contrast issues with the press of a button – effectively misrepresenting the art. Wow those weak paintings can look impressive. You never want to purchase real art on line unless you know the art and/or artist. Arrive at the gallery or show and you will be glad you made the trip – there is no way that web images can successfully represent the good paintings.

We collect original art, the extent of that effort is evident by my "Other People's Art" section on this site – where the same caution applies. Our collection began long before this site was launched, so there are many, many pieces, especially the larger paintings, that are not represented. We search out exhibits and showings – and never find what we expect upon our visit. It's like a treasure hunt – is it going to be "meh" (mostly) or "yay"? But like a treasure hunt, the thrill is in the hunt and occasional discovery.

Most area artists today are represented in some local members gallery. Art Shows have ceased to be a functional venue for them, one man shows have all but disappeared from the scene. These local group efforts have pretty much become the norm. They may be way overcrowded, mixed with too much crafty stuff and over the top flashy work may be hanging next to more subtle, serious efforts. But spend some time looking around, isolate your view of interesting pieces, it's all just another complication in the hunt for treasure. Just be sure to check some of it out on line first at the gallery's site – you'll see what I mean about not trusting what's represented, and perhaps understand why we get so excited when we add a piece to our collection.



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Birdman

Monday, February 13, 2017

Grabbing that peak-of-the-moment action shot, at night, on a stage sporatically lit with shifting color lights, is quite a challenge. This one tells a story that I feel is needed – it's a Tapati Rapanui 2007 reenactment of the Birdman cult contest where contestants swam out to nearby *motu* (small islands) to retrieve the first Sooty Tern egg of the season. The first man to swim back, climb the cliff to the top of Rano Kau, all with the egg intact, wins.

Admittedly not the sharpest image in the folio, and like a number of the problem images, prints at a maximum of 12x16. The last image for the series, at least planned right now before I update the Catalog PDF and the PDF version of the book,

it was put off for a reason. It's a stage shot at Tapati Rapanui with serious issues even beyond the need to eliminate an ugly microphone stand and heads in the way. Fortunately the heads moved so all I had to do there is evolve four consecutive exposures to the point where bits and pieces along the bottom front could be used to create one good image.

When I get a shot like this to work on, I remember something David Vestal wrote in his *The Craft of Photography* back in the seventies – to the effect that he'd much rather see a b&W image worth shooting, that might have problems or issues, than a perfectly executed picture not worth taking. As it turns out, I like it enough to hang it at home, upstairs where I do hang a couple of my own pieces.

One final issue with this one is the same as I had when I printed the flower and bee shot, dimensions don't match the frames I like to stock. Fortunately they are both printed 12x13 (note I changed the flower/bee proportions – corrected [HERE](#)) so I was able to order two of my *Nielsen 93-50* frames in 18x19.



"SHOOTING IN B&W"

I stumbled on a column on fstppers.com from 2014 titled *Why It's Still Important to Shoot in Balck and White*. The article is worth a read – after all, we no longer have B&W film to put into our cameras. I began with digital shooting RAW in color – there was no other way. The fact that I have no problem simply working as if I have B&W film in the camera helped.

But now I use a little trick – I have my camera programed to shoot RAW+JPEG. At the same time I have the JPEG set for B&W – with viewing, composing and previews in B&W. It's the best of both worlds because when I move the RAW to the computer I get to convert it into B&W in my RAW converter of choice and to suit my needs and tastes.

And it's really nifty that I can do the same thing with my iPhone. Some of the third party camera apps now shoot RAW+JPEG, allowing you to not only view in B&W but to harvest a quick, cool B&W jpeg alongside the RAW file – and like in the larger cameras, both compose and preview the B&W jpeg immediately after the shot. How cool is that?

Evidently rumors about the death of B&W as a separate art form are somewhat exaggerated. Of course, with the above abilities, one can opt to go 100% B&W – provided one is satisfied with just a jpeg result. I'm not, so I'll just have to put up with all those color RAW exposures hanging around my computer. *Curses*.

I would add that even when shooting for color, viewing and composing in B&W can be a big help – color can be a distraction from more important considerations.

Camera Evolution...

Cameras evolve, sometimes so fast one gets whiplash. In fact, they evolve so fast that it has become the norm to have to update the firmware in one's camera occasionally, adding abilities and altering menus.

Photographers have to evolve too (well, not all do). I've been watching the progress of mirrorless cameras for a while now, they are half the price, two thirds the size and **half the weight** of SLRs. That's quite a temptation. These cameras make for a number of changes and adjustments, but that's inevitable.

Anyway, I made my decision and choice. The biggest adjustment for me was abandoning Canon. They were inconsiderate enough to listen to the majority of photographers who want touch-screen controls on the back of their cameras – even the DSLRs! But I'm of the minority who have no interest in this. Otherwise I would have looked seriously at their new M series mirrorless models.

After weeks of trying, checking, researching and general angsting, I'm going with the **Fujifilm X-T2** – and am anxiously awaiting the combination of the eBay auction of my Canon 6D set-up coming to an end and getting my X-T2. At that point I'll hopefully write a quick review here.

The first person I told about this switch, knowing that I've been a Canon-freak for so long, just looked at me in total disbelief.



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Moon over Maunga Tea Tea 2

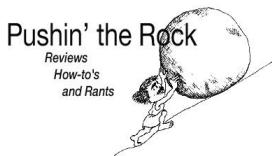
Monday, February 20, 2017

Naturally as I was working up the newer versions of the Catalog and Book PDF files I found one I missed posting here. Oops. Nan likes this and wanted it included. We were setting out for a long, grueling day on Poike. I stopped and braced the camera on a fence post and took this shot. The detail in the 15x20 enlargement makes the moon seem to just hang there. Twenty minutes later I stopped and took Moon over Maunga Tea Tea (1), already in the folio. It was cloudier, more dramatic and interesting in its own right:



These smaller maunga on Poike are made of trachite, a hard white volcanic tuff sometimes used to make smaller moai. The view at the top is growing on me – conveying the challenge of the trek ahead at that point.

The Catalog, that I carry on my iPad, has thumbs linked to larger images on the site, etc. It comes in handy occasionally, especially for selecting an exhibit list. The expanded *The Moon has been Eaten* is almost done, another week maybe.



Holy Shuttershock Batman – it's Fujiman

I was planning on simply making a couple of notes at the bottom of a regular posting about my new camera – Fuji X-T2 – but it deserves a lot more than that. My entire Canon system is gone, *kaput*. The last body and two lenses sold on eBay this week. I'm not going to write a proper review of the camera – there are far too many out there already – I'll provide a couple of links at the bottom for anyone interested. I'll simply list the *real-goods*, the *not-so-bads* and the *one-ugly*. Of course all the top-end cameras do almost anything, and quality is close to universal today. It's all about personal needs and likes.

That being said, there was a lot to learn. Like when we bought a car after thirteen years, and of a different make to boot, everything is different.



The really-goods:

- Half the size and half the weight of the Canon DSLR. At the same time it's larger and heftier than its main competitor the Lumix GH5, which I find just a tad on the small side.
- Feel and handling takes me back to my favorite old camera, my Canon F-1n, **almost like it's what the F-1 would be if it were alive today as the F-16 or F-1nnnnnnnn..**
- Both eyepiece and back panel viewers are to die for – the electronic eyepiece the best of the kind I've used.
- External dials and buttons to access and control most of what is buried in the menus – accessing settings in menus is the bane of photography today.
- Three-way tilt rear view screen will definitely come in handy.
- No freaking touch screen – yay. Nan got a Canon point-n-shoot with a touch-screen and immediately regretted it. I sold it on eBay for her and she got a fantastic **Lumix LX100** that opted out on that. In fact it's so nice that it is good enough for me to use as a back-up until my photography budget allows for something else.
- Fuji knows how to write an instruction manual, Canon should hire them. At the same time it's never enough. Then there are all the videos and write-ups on line to help. Google rules.
- Vibration is way down because it is mirrorless + the lens isn't so heavy that it unbalances the camera accentuating shutter shock + the shutter itself seems to be very dampered + Fuji lens stabilization is awesome. I got razor sharp test shots at 1/4"
- Even with the 3/4 sensor, Fuji's 24 megapixels via its unique randomized-pixel sensor generates files viewed sharper at 100% than 22 megapixel files from my Canon 5D II (I cropped to make the mp equal).

The not-so-bads:

Fuji's unique sensor is to die for, but presents a couple of issues for those who shoot RAW. Of today's RAW converters only one – Iridient Developer at \$99 – is designed to do an optimum job on the files. Not that anyone could tell the difference at anywhere under 100% enlargement. In fact, shy of going for large B&W prints, my tests show the issue to be irrelevant.

Fuji's X-series of cameras has a somewhat smaller list of available lenses than Canon, etc. BUT the ones they have are both enough for me and extremely sharp. The standard zoom is only a 28-85 equivalent, down from my Canon 24-105, but much smaller, quicker, better balanced on the camera and with a wider aperture. Works for me.

Note: 35mm film cameras generated lenses that we all grew familiar with. 50mm was normal, anything lower w/a and anything higher telephoto, all in increments of magnification of 50. So 300 is 6x, etc. One simply has to get used to the fact that Fuji's 3/4 sensor means adding 50% for the equivalent lens focal length... the 18-55 standard lens is therefore the equivalent of a 27-84mm lens for a DSLR with a full size sensor. The 1/2 size sensor on a Lumix GH-5 means doubling the numbers, an 18-55 lens would be the equivalent of a 36-110 lens. Pretty straight forward actually until one puts an adapter on the Fuji or Lumix and mounts a lens labeled for a full frame camera on it. Then you gotta do the math in the opposite direction. Interestingly, well not to everyone, the aperture numbers will also change, making those listed on the lens barrel way off.

The one-ugly:

Well not really "that" ugly. One of the X-T2's function buttons is placed – on the right front of the camera – precisely where I simply cannot-not accidentally press it regularly if I hold the camera the way I want. Cannot, no matter how much I try, hold the camera in a way that lets me leave that button active. Press it and you are in the menu – then you gotta make sure it didn't get charged and get out of there. Awkward – if my hand were slightly larger or smaller, it wouldn't be an issue. Fortunately any function button can simply be switched off. I originally set this one to bring up wifi connectability (they all have that now, use your phone or iPad to run your camera remotely). I don't mind so much going into the menus the hard way for that.

Conclusion:

The **Fujifilm X-T2** is the first camera since my old **Canon F-1n** that makes me feel naked without it in my hands. Everything in between was simply a tool to get a job done. I could like them, appreciate them, be happy with the results, even enjoy working with them. But nothing until now brought me back to that point where the camera felt like an extension of me, like we're linked. I shot film through 2005, using the **F-1** and a **Mamiya M-645** mounted on a tripod for scenics – I did a lot of those. The X-T2 not only gives me the feel and flexibility of my favorite 35mm, it generates files that rival the negatives generated by the medium format camera – the best of both worlds. I'm really enjoying this.

It very well could be the beginning of the end for the hay-day of the DSLR. Mirrorless is finally ready for prime time. I would suggest that if your ultimate goal in shooting is the fine print, especially B&W, then look seriously at the Fujifilm X-T2 or the X-Pro2. If on the other hand this is not a prime consideration, I would check out the Lumix GH5. Either can do either well, this is just my take.

Link to one pros using the Fujifilm X-T2 and/or X-Pro2 systems with his camera set-up:

<http://www.fujixpassion.com/2016/11/24/my-camera-set-up-and-settings-for-fuji-x-cameras/>

Link to a professional photographer who just dumped his DSLR system for Lumix GH-5 system for all of his work:

https://photoapps.expert/moment/swapping-micro-four-thirds-commercial-shoot-convinced-me/19378#.WKmboRiZN_k

P.S. I have one tiny little issue with almost all high end cameras. Even on the iPhone where you have camera apps that shoot both RAW and JPEG, most of these also have the option to save the file as a TIFF. Sure, I wouldn't use it, I prefer RAW for too many reasons to list. BUT a LOT of people might like to have a high quality image that any app can open

without having to trudge through the swamp that RAW can be. JPEGs are a messy compression that's unsuitable for either much in the way of tampering with or printing large. Yet very few of these top-of-the-line cameras have an option to save the file as a TIFF. Why? They certainly try to sell to amateurs who want to spend the money, who would be a heck of a lot better off with TIFFs than JPEGs. They're no larger than RAW files to save to the card. And it certainly would not demand any addition to the technology – phone apps do this. A number of Nikon DSLRs do have this option, why not everyone? Not one mirrorless so far. Strange – I can imagine a scenario where one could need to turn over a printable image file directly from the camera, that isn't in RAW or JPEG.



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If I Didn't Already Know the Year and Season...

Monday, February 27, 2017

First of all this is 2017, not the sixties. Second, it's over 70 degrees in mid February in Havre de Grace – just two of the many ways the world seems turned on its head right now. We were delivering some new pieces to the Gallery and saw this scene in front of the coffee shop across the street. Tam, gallery manager, says they are there a lot. I walked over to ask if they were lost in space and time.

Fortunately I had my iPhone with me and whipped it out. I have a color RAW file along with this, but liked the B&W a lot more (except maybe for the purple shoes on the guy on the left). They said they lived in town – I'm getting the impression that "river city" is becoming a little bit of a hangout for local "hippies". Supposedly the third guy sometimes play the tambourine, I want to be there for that – with my big camera.

(Finally) finished the expanded version of *The Moon has been Eaten* PDF

It's quite "hefty", a 150mb file., grown from 98 to 150 images. It's primarily for my own convenience, I now have this on both my iPhone and iPad Mini, any time I need it. I also have my Tap Forms database, but that's not quite so simple to access and find things in.

I have no problem with posting the PDF here, in fact a number of these are downloaded every month somewhere, by somebody. The images are much better than on line, and they are accompanied by an anecdote. Plus technical information is with the thumbnails in the back. It takes a little effort writing links, but the PDF is interactive and taping one

leads to the full page view.

This chore has been hanging over my head for a while, but no better time than the middle of the winter to tackle jobs that keep you in front of the computer for hours.

Expanded Version (150mb)

See my [Links & Downloads](#) page for all versions: *Expanded, Original and Original in Spanish*.



Plus the Easter Island folio Catalog PDF

This is also available for download on *Links and Downloads*, plus on the first folio page for Easter Island images. It is complete with thumbs – that link to enlargements on the site here (interactive), quick explanations and check boxes. No way a complete Island exhibit can be hung, so this is for making selections.



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Updating Nan's Painting Web Site

Thursday, March 2, 2017

...and a new slide show on the RiverView Gallery site. I try to update the RiverView Gallery web site every few months with a new slide show. The site is my contribution – usually that amounts to posting the Saturday sitting schedule. I took advantage of free time while sitting a couple of weeks ago to do the shooting. *I'll be back to sit this Saturday, March 4 from noon to 6* The slide show doesn't show everything, but gives some idea of what's in the Gallery..

riverviewgallerymd.net

At the same time I did a major update of Nan's site. Now her available paintings are posted in the form of thumbnails that when you click on them they bring up the larger view. With a painter, it's always a question as to how to treat sold paintings – we decided to try taking them off the GALLERY page and put the ones that have become wood puzzles on the puzzle page. If anyone is curious about work that has sold, they can go there. Another change was to remove the page for her 8x10 miniatures. She's just offering them now through the Gallery – they go fast enough that there are never more than a couple available.

nanraigart.com

Above, Nan's latest painting, *Surf Fishing, Bailey Island Maine*. She grabs her own shots wherever we go and then pulls them out when looking for new subject matter. The fisherman was really there.

I also showed up to shoot Havre de Grace's own Mardi Gras Parade this Tuesday night. Well, "It rained on our parade!" I managed to get a couple of interesting shots while breaking in my new camera – perhaps more like the camera breaking me in – and will post them Monday. Not too bad for spending the whole time ducked under an awning on the sidewalk.



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It Rained on Our Parade

Monday, March 6, 2017

I hate it when the weather prediction is spot-on! Havre de Grace likes to hold its own Mardi Gras Parade. Never could figure out why – how often is it good weather the last Tuesday in February? Well, this year was no exception. The weather forecast said that it wouldn't start raining until minutes before the parade was scheduled to begin at 6:30. It didn't, so they didn't cancel or postpone, about half the parade bothering to show up.

Subsequently we had a half-hour parade instead of one hour, in the pouring rain, on a very dark night. There were "many dozens" of us lining the streets ducked under awnings, mostly kids collecting bead necklaces as they washed down the street – tosses never quite reached people hiding from the downpour. I was breaking in my new camera with this outing – ok, more like breaking myself in on my new camera. I spent part of my time diving out into the maelstrom to relay necklaces to kids under the awnings. I did get a few of shots off though. The one at the top is my favorite – this was just before the rain became a torrent. Four more below complete the set from this effort. Sure, if the weather had been a tad better I might have gotten mucho more shots, I'm not sure there would have been as many I really like, or had near as good a time at it.



This little boy was basking in the light coming up from one of the sidewalk lights and reflecting down from his umbrella. The stores behind them were closed, so no extra light at all.



One of the larger groups of paraders were “faeries” promoting a “Faery Festival” coming up in May in neighboring Darlington. This faerie was being lit from a bright store window – the faerie in the background is in the middle of the parade route – totally darkened. At times like this I always consider using flash, and usually decide against it. – keeping it real.



In the last shot, two of the small motorcycle contingent that showed up, you can see what it was like for those coming down the middle of the street. No parade for the faint of heart this one. Check out the man and boy on the other side of the street – we were lucky, there were eight or nine or us undert a store awning – with some light coming from inside. As far as seeing anyone on the floats, etc., the camera picked up more than the eye could see.

These were all shot at ISO 6400 in Fuji RAW. I was holding my breath about them, but came away very, very happy. One big goof I did make was forgetting to move my metering off of spot to average – not smart at night or even when shooting quickly in the street. Oops. If I have any complaints about the Fuji X-T2 it's the life of the battery – the bane of these modern electronic marvels. I always carry a spare, but now I'm considering carrying two or three! Yikes.

Some major site shifting:



[**Havre de Grace Street**](#) – go there to see these four images much larger

- I've added a new folio section for shots I consider **Havre de Grace Street** – and worked up a little logo to put at the top of my go-to column on the left. It's separate for a couple of reasons – we plan to be home most of this year so I will endeavor to venture out for the plethora of happenings in town AND at the same time there is a difference between these and my previous work. I'm still not sure what to do with the results beyond showing them here, on Instagram and Facebook. As far as working up a print file, defining the size, printing, mounting, etc., any decisions will be on hold for now.
- The folio page for these is set up quite differently. It will certainly have to evolve as I get new work, but for now each foray out to the streets will be represented by a grouping – they won't be all that long, only my favorites will be included. This time it came to four Click on one of the thumbs in the grouping and they can be gone through like a slide show, cool. The problem with doing that on Blog postings is that the widgets used to do that don't work on Blog pages, darn.
- Another difference in handling is that instead of simply a posting announcement on [INSTAGRAM](#), I'll post the full results.
- I have a couple of random but I think interesting street shots from past First Fridays – I'll give those a look to see if there's anything worth adding, especially in the Concord Point Coffee sequence. All this with no clue as to where I'm going with this – kinda fun to get out of my comfort zone.

Blog Archive

The Blog was getting bloated with well over 400 postings. This is only a small problem here at home in that it can make for a five to ten minute upload for the simplest of site changes. But for example on the Island, this can mean an hour upload. The reason is that if there is an update to the Blog, communication between my app and the server has to review every

posting to see if it changed. On the other hand, if a non-blog page changes, it reads the Blog index for changes, sees none, and skips all that. SO I wrapped all postings up to the end of 2016 and started a new Blog. This makes no difference to visitors except to create two indexes... the current index is accessed as usual at the bottom of the front page limited list of postings. The previous index is accessed from either the current index at the top or my go-to column of links on the left.

Comments on Blog Posts

Doing a trial run with a "Comments" section at the bottom of Blog postings. I have mixed feelings about this because it has to be policed so closely. I'm using the *FaceBook Comments Plugin* which makes it easy to use. We'll see.....



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First Fridays Flashbacks

Monday, March 13, 2017

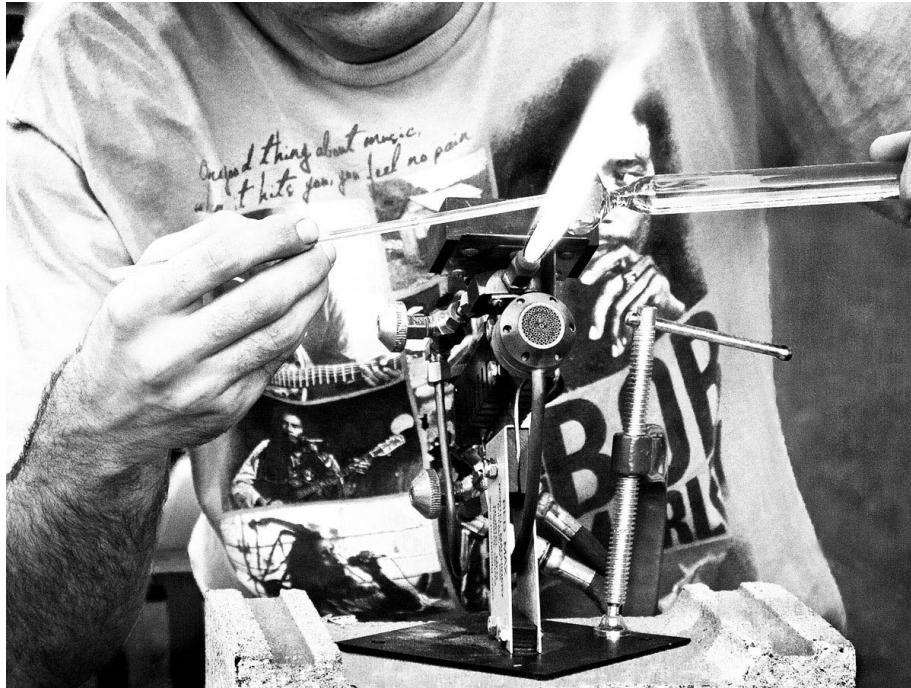
As I await my next foray into the streets of Havre de Grace, work diligently at making the new camera an intuitive extension of self, change my shooting perspective to match my new subject matter, scan event calendars, etc. I thought I'd review any grab shots from the last couple of years that might – quite accidentally it seems – contribute to the series. I found two, both of which I'm posting today.

The image at the top – *Sing it Girl* – is from last year *First Friday* in July. I was getting a shot of a couple of fantastic blues singers who had the location in front of a friend's store. First Friday in Havre de Grace sports a live band, groups, etc. every half-block. It's cool.

The female singer (still trying to look up their name – hopefully I'll run into them this year) noticed that the lady in patriotic garb in the booth across the street was getting into the act and took the microphone over to let her join in. It was a nice moment to catch – even with the complication of a walker in the background "growing" out of the singer's back that was a little tricky to remove.

The image below is from *First Friday* in September 2012. I was taking a couple of shots of two guys outside their glass

shop demonstrating their art when I noticed this guy's shirt. I moved around to the point where Bob Marley's hand is reaching out as if to help. Even managed to catch enough of the face, name, the quote and bits of other pictures on the shirt. It helped that he was standing extremely still, concentrating on his work.



I realize my [Havre de Grace Street](#) page is supposed to be a 2017 thing, but I'm adding these now as "flashbacks".
Larger views than here can be seen there – and as a slide show of everything on the page:



New Folio Posting Format

I set this site up in 2006, almost the stone ages when it comes to what I can do with it. I've been working with a long list of updates / upgrades. The trickiest was the conversion to a real blog format – even if it isn't all that obvious to others. The last chore on my list will be the most evident – I'm changing the way images are shown in the Folios.

At this point (Monday) one folio page is half done – this will combines that page and twenty individual pages into one "LightBox Gallery". Click on any thumbnail and see a much larger view and morph into a manual slide show – *automated slide shows kinda suck*. The new system will:

- Eliminate 20 or more pages on the site for every image index page
- Once the first image is loaded, allow all on the page to be viewed as a slide show
- Provide a much larger, more accurate view of the image

So check it out. I've begun with the oldest first, index [page 1 of the Easter Island folio](#).

It's actually the same system, revised a little, that I am using on the new [Havre de Grace Street](#) postings.

I have no idea how long the conversion will take – it will be one index page at a time, hopefully at least one a week. Only got half done on the first page this trip – but that serves as a great example of the difference. Something of a challenge but long overdue. The one loss in the process – and everything is a trade-off – is in the image titles. Spanish versions and some Rapanui versions of longer titles will be lost, but they are still in the book PDF for anyone interested. I did manage to retain print/frame size info. I would love to have some feedback on all this...



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First of the New Folio Pages Done – Check it Out

Monday, March 20, 2017

I've began updating my **Folio** image pages from the plain format I was forced to set up a decade ago – and kept up simply because I was too busy to tackle the job of upgrading – to something much more up to date and effective. It will be slow going though – if I set a goal of one whole page a week, it will all be converted sometime early this summer at the latest. In the meantime, there will almost always be a page somewhere in transition. Arrrgh, simply too much else to do.

The first page is completely done. That took a week because I started and abandoned two systems before testing out four more and then settling on one of those – felt like my head was going to explode. The winner is a misnomer in my case, something called a **Colorbox Gallery Widget** that I found at <http://everwebcodebox.com>. It's a huge site with lots of widgets for doing almost anything one can imagine on a web site. The surprising thing is that they're not expensive at all – except maybe in the form of angst required to learn to use them.

The finished page is the first page of the Easter Island Folio – Screen Shot above. Works really nice on the iPad and smart-phone too. On the computer rolling over the thumbs brings up a title preview. There was an auto-slideshow but I turned that off – left it on manual.

First Easter Island Folio Page

At the same time I switched the Havre de Grace Street page over to the same system, changing it around a bit to keep each series separate. The biggest benefit to me, other than the fact the images are much larger and better presented, is that the system makes its own thumbnails – cutting me a real break.

Havre de Grace Street

And no, it's not really all that much fun trying to learn and do all this at the same time I'm adjusting to the new camera system.

Oops, an afterthought. All this is really going to mess up links in the Easter Island Image Catalog PDF. I'll just have to let that one go until those pages are all done and then go fix that.



Our Annegarn Peoples Array

It didn't begin as a collection, just sort of turned out that way. We acquired one piece at a time, ending up with the large piece on top this Christmas. I surprised Nan with it. It's actually a wall hanger, but for now it goes with the rest.

The coolest thing was that the figure inside reading a book used to sit on a little wooden bench below. The windowed home came complete with bench but no figure – so we moed her onto the inner bench where she fit perfectly. Hmm, now there's room for one more below, hot darn. *By the way, the tiny painting in there is a Peggy Emmons miniature.*



Maria's work can be found in RiverView Gallery in Havre de Grace and at:

<http://www.mannegarn.com>

Right now there are a few very interesting pieces in the Gallery, check them out.



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First Warm Day in March Stroll into Town

Monday, March 27, 2017

Took another crack at this "Street" type stuff, roaming around looking to see what I can aim the camera at – not the way I'm used to working but I'm getting a little used to it. Walked down the shore first – saw these guys fishing under the RR bridge. OK, not exactly a "street" scene, but still taken from in town. It's part of the scene.

Below is my first grab shot of Bob – I want to get a lot more. Bob's a local retiree who has found fulfillment as the ubiquitous and most dedicated member of the committee that keeps Havre de Grace clean and attractive. Interestingly Hanga Roa on Easter Island similarly has volunteers go into the streets to keep them clean. A day at the Gallery isn't complete without Bob stopping by on his rounds to chat.



Both of these images have – hopefully – are the first of sequences on the topics on my Havre de Grace Street page. **There they can be viewed larger and better.** "Street" – that's that logo on the left above.



Jerry Buczacky

Nan's been looking for something decorative for her garden along the house, something original, unique. We found it at one of the "other" Galleries in town. It's a large ceramic mushroom with some kind of lizard on tip and a very odd creature poking his head out of the window below. Nan put it on the corner right outside her Studio door. Right now it's still winter so it's the only color there. It's by a local artist, Jerry Buczacky. We just hope he's OK with us using it outdoors instead as some kind of indoor decoration. It's stands a little over a foot tall...



Jerry's work can be found in *Arts By the Bay Gallery* in town.

More Progress on getting my folio images updated...

A total of 98 images done to this point – that's the first four folio pages of the Easter Island work and beginning page 5. Each index page sports 20 to 25 images that can be viewed individually or as a slide show (manual). As long as the weather is bad, I make progress on this. Otherwise, not so much. It's worth it though, the images finally convey some idea as to how a print would look. Just click on the link at the left for *Easter Island* under *Folio* – or [HERE](#).



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Morning Havre de Grace Railroad Bridge

Monday, April 3, 2017

And *Folio Image Updates Update • Camera Notes* – I just had to see what my new toy could do. This is a hand-held shot at F22, in poor light. Darned if it didn't work. And I get an easy 18x24 image from it, whew. If it comes across a little muted here because you, like me, don't keep your display set on bright-enough-to-to-kill like some, check it out on the folio page. Larger and bolder, very close to the way it will print. Pity I can't use that kind of widget on the blog. so...

In an effort to skirt around that issue: [Link to folio view](#) – then click on thumbnail for best black background viewing...

OR simply use the link below to see the same view – albeit with plain background...

<http://www.jamescraigphotography.com/folios/harford-county/ewExternalFiles/Havre-de-Grace-RR-Bridge-Morning.jpg>

I'm verging on finishing the folio index pages of **Easter Island** images. Very happy about that – and I also began work on my more local work – the **Harford County** section. That seem appropriate since today I'm adding a new image, the first in a good while. In fact I went ahead and started the set on the third page with the new entry. I'll work on updating the first two pages of Harford County as soon as I finish the Easter Island pages.

This is Page 5 of the Island images – transition from those in the book and those not. Click [HERE](#) to go there:



Camera Notes...

It's a whole new world. Received a notice that a firmware (software that runs things like cameras, etc.) update was available for my new camera – Fuji X-T2 – that adds or expands 24 functions. That brought the instruction manual (they're digital now and go on one's phone or iPad) to 364 pages. A good excuse to go back to it and work through from the beginning, again. These updates are regular occurrences nowadays with these flagship models.

At first I was a little wary of the electronic eyepiece in place of the SLR real-view – no, I only rarely use the viewing screen in the back, just never liked those things. The electronically generated view in the eyepiece is high enough resolution that it simulates a "live" view (unlike those in some lower-end cameras) and at the same time, like the large screen in back, adjusts brightness to the lighting giving you an instant heads-up on exposure (yes, this can be turned off). Something I thought of as a negative that I was willing to accept turned out to be a very handy plus. And I can still get my quick view of the shot(s) because the camera senses when my eye is at the eyepiece – turning the back viewer off and then back on when you lower the camera.

Remember those little hyper-focusing guidelines on the top of SLR lenses? They're gone, replaced by a nifty little solid blue line at the bottom of the viewing screens – now that's progress.

I can't say enough good about this camera, by far the best thing I've ever used. And at this point I've only got the 18–55mm lens (that's 27 to 84 in old 35mm terminology). I have added a couple of extra batteries to my pocket kit though – it can eat a couple on a busy day.

Have I learned it all yet? No, that will take months. And even then there's those little capabilities one might use once or twice a year – but my manual is right there on my phone!



Ain't she pretty?



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Children Swimming Hanga Roa O Tai II

Monday, April 10, 2017

Plus: *Island folio conversion finished – includes this additional Image, by request.* Even though I have thousands of exposures I was thinking that 150 B&W images was enough. But this one isn't "my" fault. Nan was looking over my shoulder and jumped at it saying that she always liked it better than the one that I did. I explained to her that I had selected to do the original *Children Swimming Hanga Roa O Tai* (below) instead of this one because of a couple of rather demanding complications. She immediately challenged me to "fix them". Since I couldn't deny that "if I could" it would make for a cool image, I decided to give it a try.

The boat in the front sported a very large, raised motor that blocked parts of the image above it and completely ruined the shot – the kind of thing the brain dismisses but the camera can't. Even worse, there was, behind the kid on the ropes, another youth with just one shoulder sticking out into view and the black haired top of his head seeming to double the size of the top of kid number one.

It turns out she was right, I could do it, at the cost of about six grueling hours work.



Check out both images for enlarged view in the Island folio section.

The new one is on [Page 7](#), the one just above here on [Page 1](#).

These are both the type of images meant to be viewed as large prints, with multiple points of focus, that one can stand before and imagine viewing the action. They were taken on different days/different years.

It's not that there definitely won't be more additions to the folio, I do have plenty of space on the last page in the series. But with the completion of the conversion to the new folio system, I consider the Easter Island Project, after a decade of work, officially "complete" and am moving on.

Will we be go back to the Island? Hopefully. We know a lot of people there and stay in contact with them. The biggest barrier is the fact that the trip itself is such a rough one. Flying is getting to be even more of a challenge, plane seating is getting more jammed and uncomfortable, and it still takes over 24 hours in three flights to get there or back – with about a 50% record of a missed flight and all the resultant complications. All in all simply not worth doing unless you can stay for a couple of months or more.

About the new folio system...

Instead of 150 (now 151) separate pages for the images, the thumbs on folio index pages now open to larger, better presented images. They even open as a slide show – with a pause button for manual switching. Notice I changed my mind on the opening-as-a-slide-show bit. It can always be turned off and keeps you from having to click on the arrow for each change.

The issue that caused me the most pause in the set-up in this was the almost-black background. Not that it bothers me all that much, but images with large dark areas to one of the edges seemed to want to continue into the background. I tried a white border – yuck. After a number of tests I settled on a 2-pixel line darkened all the way to almost-almost-black, only one notch down. Surprisingly it's enough to indicate a separation when needed.

Next up is the Harford County area Folio – already begun and I'm hoping to announce it finished next Monday. Then onto the next folio, etc. All of this is to not only improve the way the images are shown, it greatly streamlines the site from this end.

I wanna be done with this by mid May, in spite of Spring and the pick up in things to do and things to shoot. Now back to my Camera how-to book.....

But Some of the New Posted Images Look Different...

I've already seen this observation and it's accurate. I think all of the images look closer to the actual print this way, but that's not the complete story. Every printing from a B&W negative or print file will be different – as the artist and his vision evolves. One cannot resist a little tweaking here and there – on occasion a major "improvement". Just as each time a painter paints a particular vase in his or her studio they will see it differently, every time I go to print – or prepare a new print file – I will see it needing something more, a little less, etc. Each print is an original work (unlike color photography and even some B&W where each print is merely a commercially generated copy, more akin to prints of paintings) – and the on-line representations simply reflect my most recent interpretation.

That being said, it has been a good while since I have visited print files from my *negative years* – including many of the Harford County images. I've surprised myself, a couple of times shocked myself, with how differently I now interpret some of these. Many of course are exactly the same. Because once I change my view I've essentially abandoned my older perception, I am always open to replacing any previous printing with an updated version (using same matting, frame, glass, etc.). *I've only ever been taken up on this once, but am always very happy to oblige.*



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Nan

Tuesday, April 18, 2017

In the process of converting my folios to the new system, I finally came to the *Portrait* section, and this shot of Nan from 1978. I can't believe I've never made it the subject of a posting. It's my absolute favorite – I've kept a darkroom-printed copy mounted, matted and propped up (un framed) on the table next to my computer in my

"studio" forever. I can't really explain why I've never formally framed it – something about liking the feel of it being right there, year after year, with no glass. And how can I go wrong with those eyes always on me? I've shown it a couple of times, people have a hard time believing that at this point she had three kids in school. Again, the version in the folio shows up fantastic. My "Brown Eyed Girl".

On the subject of glassed art work – as much as I love B&W photography, I'll admit to something of an issue generally with art that requires being put behind glass (or plexiglass). Watercolors, charcoal sketches, etc. suffer the same problem. There's something of a disconnect there. And printing on canvas isn't the answer – the texture is ruinous. Recently printing on aluminum, where the image is actually fused to the metal, has become a thing – they can be impressive, but somehow it's not the same. It's possible that the super-expensive glass that is impossible to detect would work – but that's prohibitive. Some things one simply has to learn to live with, and cutting glass is just so much fun.....

I'll be printing early next week and will probably, finally, do a copy for framing. The older unframed version will stay right where it is!!

[Link to Folio page with this posted...](#)

Folio Conversion Update...

Bogging down, progress slowing. I got almost done with the Harford County section and ran out of steam – plus too much else to work on. To keep myself interested, I began the other incomplete sections. Not the most organized situation, but heck I ought to be done near the end of May anyway. The process has led to some combining of folios, moving, etc. It has also led to my reviewing a number of negative scans – especially pictures of local artists from the seventies through nineties. And realizing that even if most aren't material for posting here, there should be something I can do with them. Gotta do some thinking on that one.



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First First Friday of the Year

Tuesday, May 9, 2017

First Fridays in Havre de Grace can be a lot of fun, and hold numerous opportunities to shoot. It had poured rain here for two days, ending just a couple of hours before 5 when things come alive on the streets. It remained a little cloudy, but nary a drop fell all the way til things petered out. I'm posting the first batch of "street" shots from it this week and will follow up with the second batch next week – had a lot to do this week-end, including mowing the lawn (right up there on my list of least-favorite things to do). In fact I still haven't gotten to printing my bridge shot from a few weeks ago for the Gallery in town.

First Friday in Havre de Grace is pretty heavy on food and entertainment, though there are a lot of booths lining the street. Bands set up about every half-block, just out of earshot of one another. There are plenty of food trucks and local restaurants sport fence in areas in front – for a reason. If alcohol is served, one has to remain in the enclosure to drink it. I call the second image here:

"I think we're gonna need a bigger corral".



The opening shot is of a Flash Mob performance – **Relay for Life Flash Mob** – in one of the closed off intersections on Washington Street. Evidently they practiced at least a couple of times. What they may have lacked in formal training, they greatly made up for in exuberance. They were all wearing dark purple shirts representing the local Relay for Life fundraising effort of the same week-end. I almost never use the back screen viewer on my X-T2, preferring the eyepiece. But this gave me a chance to tilt the screen down and shoot holding the camera way above my head, still able to compose. Cool.

Two High School Girls raising money for their softball team. This shot cost me \$5. Because of their age I held off remarking on the very odd naming of this particular game referenced on the sign.



Street Chess – one of three public-use chess boards set up in front of a local coffee shop, Concord Point Coffee.



A High School Band group – I could find no circulars or info on the band's name. I would define their sound as at least a little on the hard rock side.



Looking Down Washington Street Towards the River – just to give an idea of the crowd. And since Havre de Grace has no parking meters, one can always find somewhere to park – even if it means a little bit of a walk. On top of that the town has cool public restrooms placed around town – with his, hers and unlabeled doors.



*Next posting will be mostly or all on one of the “bands”: **Red Alert**. Mostly the singer, Jet Blaq. I have a shot of her from last year in my Havre de Grace Street section [HERE](#). The only problem is that she is so good, and so entertaining, that one tends to just stand there and watch, forgetting that there is a lot of street to cover elsewhere.*

Site Notes...

Getting there with the conversions to new way of posting my Folios. Started on the last page of the Acadia National Park images. After that, all there will be left is the portraits. When I finish with this maybe I can get to a little sight redesign. And by THEN hopefully **EverWeb** will have fixed a bug in the software (what, software has bugs??) that has me sometimes pulling my hair out. It's still great, and this bug is one that 99.44 percent of people will never run into, and therefore took me a month just to demonstrate it to their staff and get them to promise a fix. Great, highly rated html software.

Camera Notes...

Really happy with the **Fuji X-T2** for this – with the 18-55 lens (27-84 equiv). I had read spreads from a couple of photographers who do this kind of shooting with the 55-200 (84-305 equiv) so tried it first. Hated it. Fast getting a real feel for the camera though, for everything except videos. With the new auto-tracking (5 different settings with more for custom), etc. it's a whole new ball game.

A photographer friend went with us shooting her **Leica D-Lux**. Probably the sweetest pro-level point-and-shoot there is, with an impressive 1.7 lens. Nan's camera is the **Lumix LX100**, the exact same model as the D-Lux with a different name on it. I can use it as a back-up but am looking forward to trying it as a prime under some circumstances. Interesting thing I observed between the the “twin” cameras is that the Firmware is slightly different, occasionally using different symbols, etc. This model is a couple of years old now, but is still so good that there should be some good “used” opportunities out there for picking one up. I highly recommend it.

On the side trying to learn the **LX100** to the level of intuitive use too, BUT there is a slight hang-up: in an industry where instruction manuals are known for their inability to convey how-to clearly, Lumix holds the award for the least comprehensible I have ever seen. Fortunately the camera is intuitive enough where I've figured out the basics – but I'm going to have to take the route on this one designed for the un-savvy camera users who follow video instructions on YouTube (lots for this model). It's that dense. Arrgh.



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Jet Blaq and Red Alert

Monday, May 15, 2017

As I mentioned in the last posting, on First Fridays in Havre de Grace, there are one or two bands on every block. By far our favorite to stop and watch as much as listen to is Red Alert – sponsored by Joseph's Department Store (a very old fashioned, small town place) right across the street from the opening shot. The lead singer in the duet is Jet Blaq, one of the most entertaining, energetic performers I have ever seen. At times she is dressed all in red. The woman can “sing” – anything from blues to pop. Of course I prefer the blues. The hats on these people were brought along for this type of thing – Jet works the crowd and gets her audience involved. More images below:

Getting the show on the "road"...



Taking it to the crowd...



Connecting with the Audience...



Gettin' Down...



At one point Jet had one of her musicians get up and do his Michael Jackson impersonation. He had some moves...



Cliff Giles is another regular. He brings an array of drums and other instruments and invites anyone to have a seat, or stand, and join in. It can get really interesting when they get into complex Turkish rhythms that Cliff seems to understand a heck of a lot more than I can. Here he is with two that joined him. I just missed a couple of kids who were getting up and leaving just as I got there.



Havre de Grace is a unique little town. One of the best ways to see that is to come and join us on the First Friday of every month from May through November (OK, sometimes October if the weather is bad).

Site Notes...

Still working on getting caught up on the site fix-its. At the same time I've had to bring back to life my system for photographing art behind glass for a fellow artist. This will hopefully lead to an updated posting on that. There is a lagging "Other People's Art" item too. Plus the weather is much better. Don't know if I'll ever catch up.



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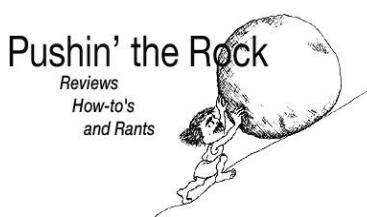
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A Big Giant Raspberry

Monday, May 22, 2017

Again the Question comes up – why B&W. This is a short rant in response to recent "advice" that I might want to work-up for sale some "color" images from my thousands of Easter Island exposures. At the same time a good friend and really fine photographer just informed me that she is seriously considering going over to the "dark side" – color. I understand her frustration.



On the negative side, as a medium B&W:

Can feel like a dying art • is difficult for people to "decorate" with • does not jump up and grab the eye • requires a modicum of sophistication to appreciate • is much more difficult in that a great color exposure is only a starting point and never a good B&W as-is when converted • dooms one to hours of printing angst • reduces the number of successes considerably • is much trickier to prepare for on-line viewing • makes you want to hurt someone the next time

they ask you if you have a particular image in color, or suggests that your sales would increase exponentially if you would switch • there's the modern impression that because so many photographers, especially those using apps, with "presets", are creating B&Ws as a subset of their color work, that that is all it is • It can take ten years of effort to accumulate anything resembling a portfolio of good B&W work – requiring at every stage, tenacity and persistence.

Quite a list and probably not compete..... and hey, the transition to color is temptingly easy, after all initial exposures are made in "color" now (or more accurately RGB). Every B&W photographer I know, and a couple of

them are very, very good, has either tried switching or toyed with the idea.

With over 30,000 exposures from my Easter Island project alone, I do have a lot of great color images. And s a result I have one kick-ass screen-saver for my computer. An appropriate use.

But on the positive side B&W:

- Exposes everything that is hidden behind the mask of "pretty colors" – pretty much rendering that aspect of the image to the status of noise. A good B&W gives someone an opportunity to display an image that goes beyond something they might like out of National Geographic Magazine. Like painting it can say something beyond simply recording what was there.
- On the commercial side, as flooded as the world is with great color images, good B&W prints – relatively rare – can in spite of being on the under side of attention, surpass color in direct sales of hangable art.
- B&W is an art form it itself that says as much about the artist as the subject. It offers infinite opportunities to, like a painter, put one's own vision into each image, eventually evolving a "style". B&W gives one an opportunity to watch oneself evolve as an artist rather than simply in the skills necessary for the initial exposure. B&W photography is a fine-art form as much as painting, requiring the same dedication to the craft of photography as color but with more in artistic input.
- A life of conscious effort looking for and showing the form, geometry, contrast, depth and meaning in a scene behind all the (again) noise of color can be helpful in learning how to dismiss the unessential and focusing in on what's important in the rest of one's life.
- Dedication to B&W photography leaves one free from (or deprives one of – depending on perspective) dependence on the cudos and likes of the masses – and the resultant pressures. Leaving one at liberty to simply do what you want, and screw the rest of the world. The freedom of any practicing but "unsuccessful" artist as apposed to one in the spotlight struggling to fulfill expectations from galleries and the public.
- I would have to add that digital printing makes life a good bit less frustrating for a B&W photographer who, like me, wants complete tweaking control. With the enlarger if I wanted a particular leaf "burnt in" I would outline the leaf on a piece of cardboard, cut it out and add an additional exposure holding that card above the image (blocking the light to the rest) while shaking it slightly to keep the edges slightly blurred. Now I can simply zoom in and use a burning brush. I have images that required up to fourteen separate exposures and a stack of labeled dodging/burning cards to print.

My reply to the recent "advice" that I might want to market color prints is the same as always:

A Big Giant Happy Raspberry.



AND a new little item for our Other People's Art collection: *Dave Hardell*

A new gallery opened up in town next door to **RiverView Gallery** where Nan and I show. It's another member or group gallery. On my first trip in I spotted this little 11 inch tall clock made out of bicycle gears. Just what I was looking for to go in the living room. It fits right in on a recessed shelf along with some small clay pieces, and finally lets me know what time it is without either taking out my phone or walking to the other room. By the way, our kitchen clock is also a work of art from a local artist.

The creator of this piece is by metal sculpturist Dave Hardell. He also has an Etsy Store at: <https://www.etsy.com/people/davehardell>. But it's a lot more fun to venture into the gallery and actually see some of his stuff – and from other artists.



I have a little trick I use to keep items like this powered. Flash units and other battery powered accessories require batteries with close to full power to work properly. After use in these I keep them in a kitchen drawer for just this kind of thing – an otherwise exhausted battery will last a year or more in something like this.



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Rain, Rainbows and Sun

Monday, May 29, 2017

...plus a new exhibit print, site updates and a big deal for Fuji RAW conversion. To be frank I don't really know what I'm going to do with this one. It's a B&W iPhone shot – will stand up to a 12x16 image, where it's most effective. Nan likes it – not one but two rainbows with some pouring rain along with bright sun. I took it last year and posted a color shot taken at the same time. Finally got around to working on the B&W. The original is a TIFF, much better and maleable than a JPG but not as good as the RAW that my camera apps on the iPhone now shoot. Can't wait to experiment with some of those exposures.

Fuji RAW and my new work-flow:

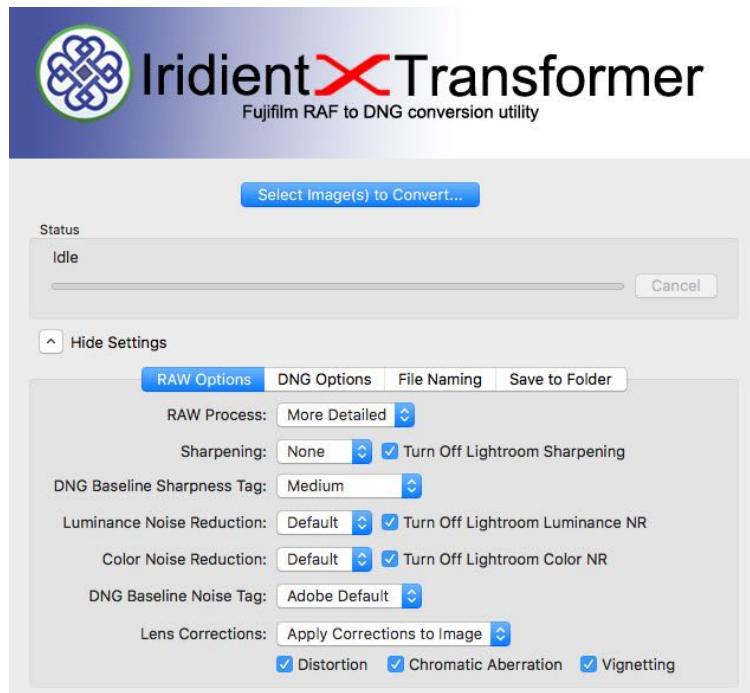
Here's a little something I'm sure very few people will find interesting – a new app from Iridient called **Iridient X-Transformer**. Fuji cameras use a different sensor from the one all other camera manufacturers use. The results can be problematic for RAW format images only because very few RAW converters are set up to handle Fuji RAW files properly – effecting the sharpness ever so slightly. Iridient Developer has until now been the one solution for this – but it is an expensive converter.

Now Iridient has just released X-Transformer, specifically designed to convert Fuji RAW format images to **DNG RAW**, an Adobe RAW format. This works individually or by batch drag and drop. There are even special settings for special circumstances. And it's actually pretty inexpensive, only \$30.

I ran some tests and the results are fantastic. Sure beats paying the high price of the full Developer app, and it means I don't have to continuously navigate its admittedly awkward controls.

The last batch of images from my X-T2 were drag/dropped for conversion on X-Transformer and the results **saved as my originals**. Eliminating the steps I was having to take of saving the Fuji RAW files and then when I wanted to use one, running it through Iridient Developer and then saving it into Photoshop format, then opening it in Photoshop.

All the benefits of Fuji's great sensor with only one additional, easy step. Do I find this a high price to pay for using the finest piece of photography equipment I have ever handled – certainly not. It's a minor inconvenience and a small price to pay to be able to get the mostest and bestest out of my camera.



SITE UPDATES:

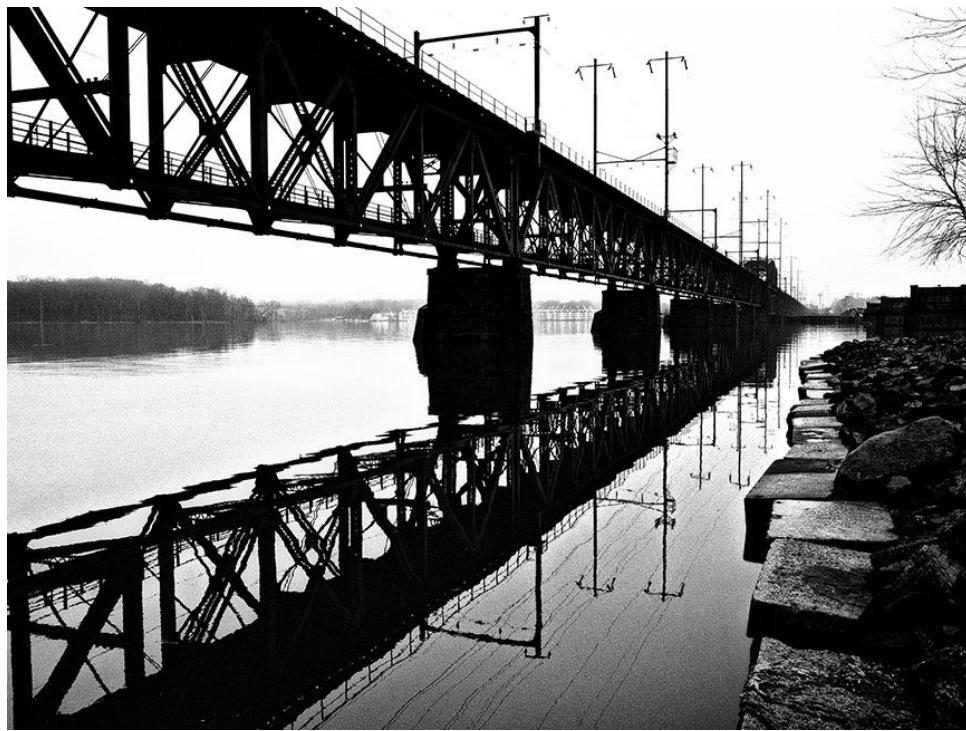
1– **Folio conversions** are finally, finally finished. Instead of a bunch of thumbnails leading to individual pages, everything is on one page. Clicking on the thumbnail array leads to a manually operated slide show of that page's images. This cleans up the site a good deal.

The one exception to this is the **Havre de Grace Street** folio where I need room for a lot more entries. For this reason, each event or section lead-in is only one thumbnail – leading to its own manually-run slide show. But here I added a **Download Arrow** top/right above images. Feel free.

2– I also cleaned up the **links on the left of the home page** to folios, etc. And included a mini-auto slide showing of folio icons at the top.

Old Amtrak RR Bridge Across the Susquehanna at Havre de Grace:

I posted this shot a couple of weeks back but just now finally got around to printing it – it's being mounted and will be in Riverview Gallery this week. This bridge is slated to be replaced, construction to be a 10 year project. That ought to be interesting as it crosses the river from downtown – only a short walk from our house.



I printed the bridge at **14.75x20 on 22x26** but it will easily stand up to a 17.7x24 on 26x32. Of course I can go smaller, but where's the fun in that? This is the first actual exhibit print from my new camera – the Fuji X-T2 that I sold all my Canon equipment to finance. I'm so tickled with it that Nan likes to tease me by singing "Fuji love, isn't it grand" to the tune of the song from **Attack of the Killer Tomatoes** "Puberty Love, isn't it Grand" – the best and most memorable part of one of those movies that are so bad that they're great.

This goes into the [Harford County Folio – page 3](#).

At the same time I'm adding the **Havre de Grace Street** shot of the early morning fishermen in a boat under the same bridge to my **Miniatures** available in the Gallery.



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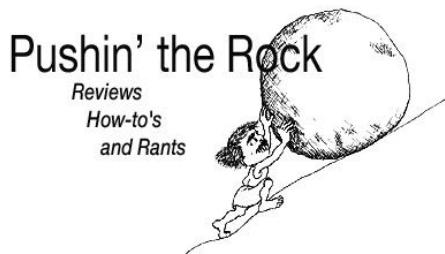


Joelle

Monday, June 5, 2017

Confronted with one of those people who, even though the camera obviously likes them, believe firmly that they are not photogenic and do their darndest to sabotage any pictures. I kept at it, telling the young lady that she probably couldn't look bad if she wanted to. To prove my point I put together this assembly as a birthday gift to her grandfather, a friend and next door neighbor of ours. Man, it was hard to pick my favorite five from the twenty or so that I had – originally I was planning to put four more small images across the top, and then four across the bottom, but soon realized that it would be overkill.

Joelle is a charming 26 year old, and almost the only thing I had to do to the exposures is burn in the corners and add a little contrast. Can't wait to see her reaction – bet I have to print a couple more copies. The shot I'm giving her first is one with her mother.



A FEW TRICKS TO USE IN PHOTOGRAPHING 2D ART

– updated version –

Back when digital wasn't ready for prime time and we had to use negative film for such chores, I developed a system for assembly-line photographing art for our local art organization. Some years my partner in this and I, along with a team of helpers, would be at it all day long – asking only for enough money to do the processing. I posted the basic set-up a good while back – after I had switched to digital.

Part I of this combination update and clarification is called **THE QUICK AND THE DIRTY**. It focuses on using smart-phones and scanner apps.

For **Part II** I switch to the formal with-flash set-up that can be used on all but special problems, even those works already behind glass, to produce print-worthy files.

Part III covers what I do about oil or acrylic paintings that already have the varnish on – the real problem child in the mix.

Part I – THE QUICK AND THE DIRTY

How to get a good-enough-for-almost-anything-but-giclee-print-grade images of one's art work. We all need that good quality quickie occasionally. My method of choice is my trusty iPhone – or any smart phone.

1– Get any "Scanning App" for the phone. the freebies aren't all that good, but most of the others are pretty cheap and work great. My App of choice is **Scanner Pro** – these things also shoot to turn text into PDF using an OCR, so you have to make sure your settings are on image. Their advantage over the camera apps is that:

a) They detect edges and auto crop.

b) They auto-correct for tilt – **both accidental and conscious to eliminate glare**. This one is so counterintuitive to some people that I have more than once had to demonstrate it with extreme tilt to get them to grasp the concept.

2– No, you do not want to use flash.

3– You can set the App to shoot **JPEG** for simple uses like web, sharing or record keeping – but **TIFF** is far preferable if the goal is for a book or anything serious. A few of the apps have this option (JPEG is a destructive compression while TIFF is lossless).

4– Find some even lighting, then set the art work up where it is stable and frame your shot against a contrasting background. I often use a sheet of black mat. Newer phones are so good at adjusting for the color temperature of artificial light that you can usually get away with that – and often best to focus controlled light on a painting that helps eliminates glare.

5– You will see guide-lines appear around the image, sometimes not perfectly – this can be fixed in the next step. If there is glare – simply move off to a slight tilt to eliminate it. Shoot.

6– You will have a temporary image with (usually) blue crop-lines around it. Notice that the tilt has not been corrected yet. Grab the corners of the blue line and move them to the corners of the image if they are a little off. Press to go to the next step.

7– Voila, you have a 12 megapixel or so image of your art work that looks like you shot it straight-on – easily good enough for record keeping, web posting or even including in a book. The image will be stored in your Photos (or other) App. There it can be adjusted as far as brightness, contrast, color balance, etc. – although best fine tuning is done in the computer (or even iPad these days).

8– I send the images to my computer via PhotoSync, but there are a number of ways to do this. *Nan uses this system on her iPad to get pictures of her paintings for me to post on her site* – she shoots those in JPG and sends

*them directly to the records she keeps in a phenomenal app called **Tap Forms**.*

9– To back-up a tad, I'll stress that art work is best photographed before it is framed and especially BEFORE any gloss varnish is applied.

10– Color and/or exposure corrections are usually minimal.

I used essentially this same system – exposing JPG instead of TIFF – to photo-scan many hundreds of old family pictured and turn them into digital records. The big difference there is that one must devise a renaming system for the files that can be used for date-sorting because they all then have the same exposure date so will not auto-sort by year. The admittedly tricky details of that are for another posting.

Part II – PHOTOGRAPHING 2D ART USING FLASH – EVEN BEHIND GLASS

I designed this set-up after spotting, in a magazine article about an art museum exhibit being mounted, a wheeled rig in the background that was obviously being used to photograph the work. I realized immediately that it offered a solution to all of my art photographing problems and, though I couldn't see the complete system, I was able to fill in the gaps and come up with a workable system.

ADVANTAGES AND CAUTIONS

1– **Advantages:** sharp images, excellent color duplication, no glare or reflections from glass, quick and easy, a large number can be done in one session, high resolution camera can be used, no need to work in darkness because some amount of ambient light will not effect the results,

2 – **Cautions:** deep frames should be removed – flash coming in at an angle leaves shadows around the sides. Paintings with gloss varnish will leave a myriad of hot spots. Paintings with extremely thick paint with peaks will leave tiny deep shadows; two things that help some here are a polarizing filter (usually not needed) and shooting RAW – but I've never been happy with the results.

THE SET-UP

1 – **A Picture is worth a whole bunch of words:** this set-up can easily be duplicated. In a spare room upstairs I have a rod running across the center of the room from which to hang the black curtains and a shelf-rack mounted flat against a wall on which to hang the art. Below is my mobile set-up. In this case it's in my wife's painting studio:



2 – **Venue:** as you can see, this can be set up almost anywhere. This room has one huge window at the far end that I somewhat blacked out. The window in the door behind the art, even though it was broad daylight, was not an issue. One can work in enough light to see what one is doing – just turn off overhead lights while shooting.

3 – **Mounting the Art:** artwork should be mounted over a black background. For this I use a single display rack.

That way drape hooks can be used to hang the work. Height of the art work is measured by placing the center of the work at the precise height of the center of the camera lens – easily measured. I place a small piece of masking tape at that point (centered in both directions) on the backdrop. Then I used a couple of pieces of stacked foam core wedged behind the bottom corners to hold the work perfectly flat, since it inevitably hangs out a tad at the top.

For shooting mounted and/or matted work I hang an inexpensive easel attached to the rack for propping the art flat – this can require moving the easel up and down some. Unmounted work can be pinned on a flat board propped on the easel – pictured below in my permanent set-up upstairs. Mounted work can be kept vertical by placing a flat board on the easel and holding the art work up with overlapping edges of push-pins:



4 – The Curtain: this is what eliminates glare, reflections and hot spots. I use a total of three pieces of black cloth about six feet in height and 48" wide (one is behind the art). This way the two curtains in front of the camera can overlap and be clipped together allowing a tight hole around the lens. You can just see a couple of the clamps holding the curtains in place. The two racks in front of the camera in the mobile set-up sport short rack extenders that allow a bar to be run between them.

5 – The Flash: not near as demanding as one might believe. I use two ancient **Vivitar 283** flash units set at an angle of **38 to 40 degrees from the art**. Height is at the established camera and art level. Distance adjusted according to room available and some test shots. Otherwise here is where it gets a tad complicated:

- a) Set flashes on full **manual**.
- b) Mount the second flash on a **slave** firing unit. These are extremely inexpensive.
- c) I used to use a cord running from my camera to the first flash – but that seemed to make for a lot of missfires. Now I use a **Cactus Transceiver model V5 Duo** under the first flash set on receive and one on the camera set on send. Never a missfire since. They're not very expensive either.
- d) If there isn't room enough to pull the flashes back far enough, I have sheets of white cloth I rubber band over the fronts of the flash units to tone down the power.
- e) Flashes are mounted on rather inexpensive, adjustable lighting stands.

6 – The tripod: obvious, but I need to make a special note here. High resolution digital cameras pick up on vibration easily. And modern tripods are pretty light. I've run tests and can verify that holding the camera steady on the tripod while shooting is preferable to stepping away and using a cable-release or remote. Of course you can invest in a heavier tripod and rail system for locking things down, but I find that unnecessary.

7 – The Camera and Lens: naturally my camera of choice for this changes with time. Right now I am using a Fuji

X-T2. It's 24 megapixels and gets superb results. A quality 16x20 result is relatively easy – 18x24 with interpolating at a harmless level.

Distance from art to camera: I find approximately 5-5.5' to be best.

I use my Fuji 55-200 zoom for this (that's 84 to 305 equivalent). That gets me close enough to fill the frame with smaller works and still be able to cover most larger works. For huge works I simply switch to the 18-55 normal lens.

Full **manual exposure** and manual focusing (I have a small spotlight I can turn on for focusing only).

F-stop settings can vary according to need. Artwork is flat so anywhere over 5.6 should be fine – I usually end up on 16.

Shutter speed will be flash-sync speed with mechanical shutter – usually 1/125 or 1/250 second.

ISO can be anywhere from 100 to about 400, again depending on what is needed after exposure tests – 200 is my average.

Framing... careful framing saves a lot of work later. Zoom until two sides of the image are right up against the edges of the viewfinder (I have a 100% viewer so I've had good results actually cropping out the mat on two sides right there in the camera). Sometimes you will find that the art isn't hung perfectly straight or the whole piece isn't as flat to the view as needed. These are easy corrections to make. The result should be a file that only has to be cropped on two sides – and only very slightly or not at all on the other two.

Part III – PROBLEM CHILDREN

Paintings, especially oil, that already have the varnish applied are a serious problem to photograph well. Here are a few tricks that have worked for me in the past.

1– Choose a cloudy day, the cloudier the better. Finding shade might seem like a good idea, but almost always leads to serious color shift. Even with heavy clouds, north light is a good idea. Getting the light evenly on the painting is sometimes tricky.

2– Use a tripod, mostly because you need the art to frame square, shooting from the center, and flat to the camera plane if possible. While distortions can easily be fixed in Photoshop, this is not available to everyone.

3– Use a circular polarizing filter. You can turn it and actually see glare decrease. It's almost always necessary and is usually a cure-all.

4– Shoot RAW if possible, for greater control in the computer if there are still a few problems.

5– As a last resort be willing to shoot at a slight angle and correct the issue in Photoshop, etc. later. This requires a much higher f-stop to keep everything in focus.

6– And then there are what I call the "uglies". These paintings not only have the varnish on, they are painted so heavy that almost any lighting leaves tiny shadows. I've managed these to varying degrees. The best was one of those super rare days where, in the middle of the day, heavy black clouds hung over everything. Lighting was so even that I had no problems.

7– There can still be some residual glare, more like slightly light effects in darker, often solid blackish areas. The trick to solving this is to later brush-burn in those areas (this way the deep shadows don't suffer peripheral damage – sometimes mid-tones, sometimes shadows, sometimes a little of both).

8– Since this isn't flash, expect at least some color correction to be needed.



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Recovery, Pirates and Whats New

Monday, July 3, 2017

Recovering and Posting – I'm recovering enough from my **hernia** operation to sit at the computer at least a little. It was an inguinal hernia – and I opted out of the Oxycodone pain killers afterward. Probably a big mistake. Good darn thing the doctor didn't warn me how bad it would get or I might have chickened out. Eating lots of prunes to keep myself regular. But five days later making great strides back.

So I'm able to post the shot I was ready to put up a couple of weeks ago when I began my whirlwind courtship of all of this torture – doctor visits, referral, surgeon and pre-op instructions, hospital, recovery room and home before the real pain set in. Priceless.

PIRATE FEST

Havre de Grace's annual **Pirate Fest** week-end features a 5K fundraiser for the local canal Lock House Museum, exhibits having anything conceivable to do with pirates on the grounds and plenty of locals dressing their versions of the period.

The 5K

I ran in the 5K with a brand spanking new inguinal hernia – probably not the smartest thing I ever did. The bad news is that it aggravated it enough that I knew I'd better get to the doctor. The good news is that finally, after being an also-ran in high school cross country, running 5Ks, 10Ks and even half marathons for years, I'm coming in first in my age group – over 70. I had my anesthesiologist in stitches telling him about that. Doctor says I can get back at it after three to four weeks – looking forward to the Halloween 5K this year. Weeeeeee.

The featured shot...

I did some shooting in spite of how bad I felt after my not-so-smart run, but admittedly didn't wax all that enthusiastic. The shot above is my favorite – not one of the "pirates" manning the booths, etc., but a local there with his wife. I didn't even get his name – I'll have to print one up and look for him this First Friday event in town. Except for the winning smile and looking bathed, he could probably be pretty convincing. For now I'll just have to call it *Pirate Fest Attendee*.

Here's a couple of shots from the booths, and the fellows manning them – pretty nice in that the "pirate" with the collection of period artifacts actually lets people pick up and get the feel of the items:



SITE UPDATE

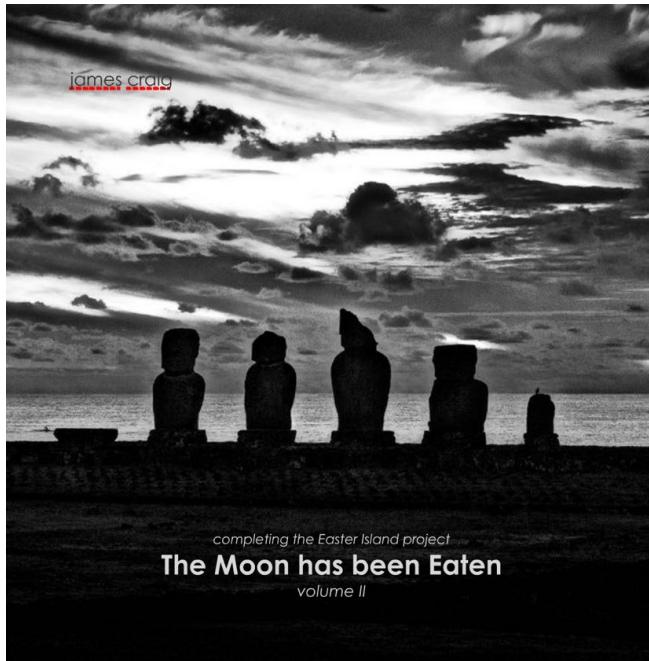
Finally finished the pyramid project that was converting all the blog entries to the new system, then converting folios to image widgets instead of individual pages and in the end deleting over 660 now unused assets so I could call the server to have them delete the entire site so I could replace it – saving over a gig of space. Nothing should look any different to a

visitor, but everything sure works better for me now – the end of 8 months of work.

NEW IN THE WORKS

A new book – sort of...

I'm pulling together, for a sort of addendum book to *The Moon has been Eaten*, the fifty-some images in the Easter Island folio that didn't make the original book that came out in 2012. Many of these are my favorites. This one will be print-to-order digital printing (HD or heavy paperback). It will be 10x10 instead of 10x12 inches. It will contain the same text accompanying images, along with a couple of other new pages, that the expanded PDF version of the book has – or will have. I figure by sometime in August I will order six copies for myself and those who simply must be given a copy. Beyond that, there will be a page here for ordering. Since a good half of the original printing of "The Moon..." remains, I will package both books for the regular price of the second volume. In the screen-shot of the cover, note the spell-correction lines under my name – it's a work in progress.



First tentative paragraph from the introduction:

"Since the printing of The Moon has been Eaten in 2012 I have added a number of images to the 98 in the original Easter Island portfolio. Some were either overlooked at the time or left out for specific reasons. A couple were shot with the iPhone camera and wouldn't hold up to the size goals I set for the project, and a few more were shot on return trips to Easter Island and deliver books, taking advantage of the opportunity to fill in some gaps. In the end, if viewed as an independent entity, it makes for a pretty eclectic collection of B&W images. It is meant as an addendum or supplement to the main volume and completes my B&W portrait of Easter Island."

Prints on Metal...

The only "weakness" I've ever felt in B&W Photography as an art form is the fact that prints do need to be behind glass. There are services now that not only print in permanent dye-transfer on heavy aluminum, but do it via one's uploading a print-ready file that they feed to the printer as-is. Hardly different than printing it oneself – and I'm certain much better than leaving decisions to them. I've zeroed on a printer for my first test run and will be ordering a couple this week. Hopefully I will soon be able to put together a page here that shows some examples and offers anything on the site as ready-to-hang metal prints. Of course **RiverView Gallery** in town will get the first samples. Still working out size-ranges, pricing, etc.



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July First Friday – Street Painting

Sunday, July 9, 2017

...and progress on book. metal prints. We might have been able to spend more time out for First Friday except we had to park so far away and, because of the recent hernia operation, I decided to cut out a little early. As it was, I covered a lot of territory afoot, feeling every step. We did manage to get a good meal at the street cafe set up by the Vinyard Wine Bar, and then took a few shots of a couple of artists working in front of the Gallery where they show [Artists' Emporium](#), next door to to [Riverview Gallery](#) where we both show. Their ability to tune out everything going on around them, including me hovering, and focus on what they were about, was pretty impressive. I just call the two shots Concentration 1 & 2.

Of course I'm adding these to the collection on the Havre de Grace Street page. I expect that as I get up and around more – should be jogging in another two weeks – I'll pick up the pace on my effort to get a good sized collection together this year – maybe for something at the last First Friday in the Fall.



Update... The Moon has been Eaten volume II – completing my Easter Island project

... at this point it looks like this will be the title. Things are moving right along – most of the images are in, along with first drafts of all the text. Next step is to decide which images remain on two-page spreads – text on one, image on the other – and which wind up as combos. Then page order becomes an issue – one that feels like banging one's head against a brick wall.

Finally, after resetting page numbers, it's about a month of rewrite after rewrite until I either get it right or close enough to just give up on the effort.

Again the book will be around a hundred pages, probably softbound to keep the price down and 10x10 inches. As soon as I can estimate the actual cost, I will get word out, charging only that, cost, for anyone wanting a copy. It's being put together as an extension of, addendum to the first volume. And in order to help lower that cost even a little more, I'll be offering anyone who doesn't already have the first volume, both for cost of the second plus \$25 for the first (actually a little under cost). I break down the whole thing on my [The Moon has been Eaten](#) page. A couple of people have already put their names on the list – this should be fun as soon as I get past the torture part. Targeting the end of August.

Books will be numbered but limiting the edition will be indirect. There are 500 of the first volume, half of those sold. So the maximum potential would be the same number – though less likely to be reached. Unlike the first volume, this one is print-to-order. After this pre-order effort, cost will go up some because orders will always be for under 10 copies.

Where I getting the printing done I tell them how many copies I want over 10 and they offer a discount. So, hopefully, every pre-order counts towards getting this price down.

Update... Prints on Metal

This experiment is just getting off the ground. Lots of research has gone into it, but even then there aren't any guarantees. I'll put the first test order in this week – a little later than planned due to pain issues recovering from hernia surgery. Ouch. By the end of this month I should, if I like them, be able to set up a display page and price chart. Not much success in research to find how this actually does with B&W. Far too few examples out there.

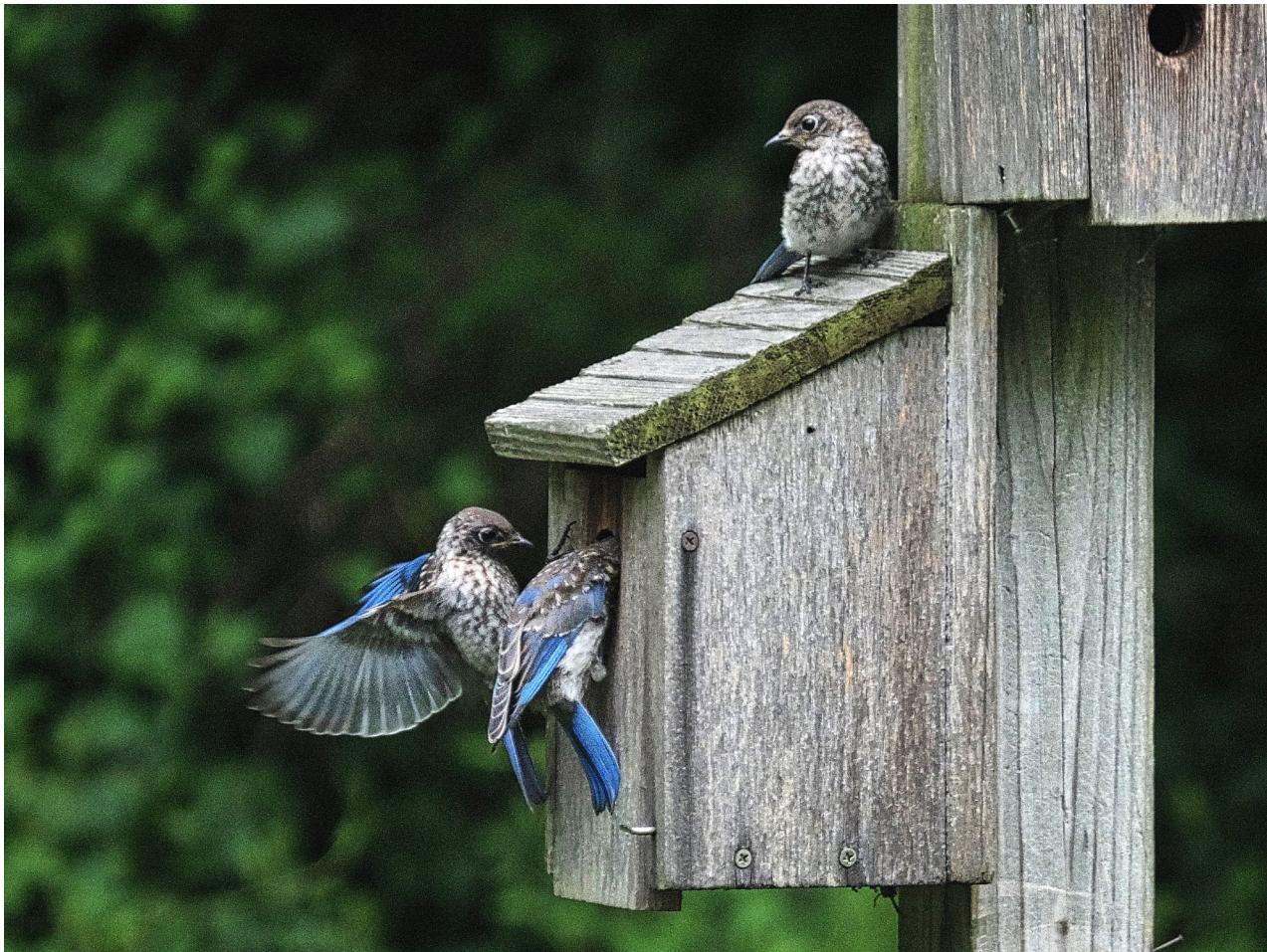


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A Short Bluebirds Tale

Monday, July 31, 2017

or – as we watch a curious family dynamic... One would think from the pictures that the explanation was pretty straightforward... but it's not. We watched as a female bluebird built a nest in our birdhouse and began sitting on her nest. Already very different from what we have seen before. There was no male sitting there luring her to the box, there was no sign of a male at all. At this point we simply assumed that it was something called a "bluebird widow". The other curiosity was that she always, when leaving the nest, made the exact same flight around the front of the house and across two streets.

A couple of days later, as she sat on the nest, these three juveniles showed up and began pestering the heck out of her to feed them. A little while later daddy showed up and eventually lured them back around the house and across the two streets. Aha, a bulb went off!

These two were starting a second nest before the spawn from the first had quite left. They showed up in the morning the next day, not to be seen again after that. The mommy? She's still sitting on her new batch of eggs.

I grabbed these shots through our kitchen window with my lens set on 305mm. One shows mommy and daddy

discussing the situation and another mommy just sitting there showing her frustration at the situation. While they were relentless, she never once gave in. I guess she figured if she ignored them they would eventually go away.





Prints on Metal: I have the first Print on Metal back and hung in RiverView Gallery in town. Quite striking actually. I show it hanging on our wall in the next posting. As a start I'm putting up a price-list page and simply asking anyone interested in any folio print on metal to contact me about size. Permanent dye-transfer prints on aluminum that can be cleaned and don't need glass are not cheap to produce. Then again, there's no added expense for mounting, matting, glassing, framing. Ultimately, an 18x24 Print on Metal can be priced the same as an 18x24 regular print fully mounted and framed (although therefore a good deal larger).

The Moon has been Eaten Volume II: first draft is finished. I need to get away from it for a couple of days and then Nan will help me go back through it with a fine comb. Print-to-order fine-art books are a good deal pricier than offset bulk orders individually. That I can't help. As soon as I find out exactly what the price will be, I'll post it here. I need a half dozen copies for myself – anyone else interested will have to opportunity to order one at cost.



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Rogue Swan at Artists Emporium

Wednesday, August 9, 2017

Tricky shots in very low light of a great little show... **Artists Emporium** is the gallery next door to **RiverView**, the one where Nan and I both exhibit. One of the main differences is that A. E. has enough room to hold musical events regularly, able to seat (and stand) a few dozen people. I saw it as a great opportunity to both enjoy the show and get a handle on extreme low-light shooting, so I offered to give them copies of anything I got – in color that is. B&W conversions are mine. These three shots are from my first foray.

I opened up with a group shot of the troop in their grand closing number. The second shot, below, is a young lady who, though she did a nice job on a couple of other numbers, was unbelievable at her solo blues piece. The third image shows the belly-dancer. Rogue Swan is due to be back in September.

I shot these with my 28-85mm (equivalent) lens. It worked out really well at ISO 3200 – while the shots at ISO 6400 showed a little more noise than I like. Next trip in I think I'll take the little back-up camera with its 24-75mm (equiv) lens for a few grab shots and put the 85-305 (equiv) lens on my X-T2 for the main. The other change will be to simply leave the ISO on 3200 and risk slower shutter speeds – this thing seems to handle down to 1/8 of a second hand held (carefully) pretty handily. Might even use a monopod AND, to counter the problem of switching batteries, I'll probably put the battery

grip on – effectively giving me access to three batteries loaded.

The only issue in doubt is comfortably getting enough height to get above heads a little better. This is fun.

Right now the Rogue Swan web site leaves a lot to be desired as far as information goes. I'll get names for the two individual shots and add them soon. And of course larger versions are on the [Havre de Grace Street](#) page.



Tara Vinson



April Burril

The Moon has been Eaten Volume II: I let the project sit for a little more than a week so that when I got back to it I wouldn't be too close to notice potential issues – back to it and reviewing everything page by page and word by word. Looking forward to a test-order before the end of the month.



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Morris Peerie



Story and Pictures by Caron Sisko

Our Eldest Puts out Her Third Children's Book

Tuesday, August 15, 2017

Caron's first two books – *The Last Flower* and *Slim* – both received awards. I liked both but *Slim* is one of my favorite kids books of all time. This third effort is longer, about fifty pages, and a much more ambitious undertaking – something for young readers to sink their teeth into. Caron does both the writing and illustrations, and for that matter the creation of the

book file to submit to Amazon publishing.

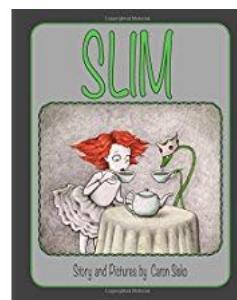
Morris Peerie is softbound, 8x10 inches. It's available on the **Amazon** web site – click on the thumbnails below to go to the book pages. Price is ok if one is ordering one or two, but since we had to get a stack for getting signed and using as gifts this year, it really added up – ouch. To get to the book pages in Amazon, simply click on the links above the book thumbnails below.



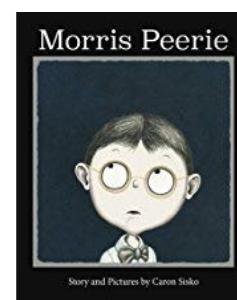
[The Last Flower](#)



[Slim](#)



[Morris Peerie](#)



The Moon has been Eaten Volume II: Working my way through edits and corrections on my own next book. Have to actually print proof pages for that because it is just about impossible to proof and edit on a computer screen. On target to send out a trial order and receive it back by the end of the month. Then I will know a lot more.

Getting around a lot better: Definitely coming back from my hernia operation. Jogged quarter mile, then a half, then three quarters so far – working my way back up by a quarter of a mile every couple of days.



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August First Friday in Havre de Grace

Monday, August 28, 2017

...man, the sax player was good... I'm a little late posting August First Friday – September's is less than a week away. We only had time for a quick run-through – one of those ill planned days. Nan had something for supper going in the crock-pot because we both forgot it was First Friday. Oops. It was something that we couldn't let overcook. September we'll make sure and be able to stay into dark – that ought to be interesting.

One can lose track of how many bands, singers, etc. are scattered across town. Stores, businesses, etc. sponsor a mostly different list of performances every month. My favorite this month was the saxophone player above – Fostina Dixon our of Wilmington Delaware. In her day she played with a number of the old name bands and orchestras. She set up in a little courtyard that serves as access to a wedding shop and sweets shop. There were even a couple of little tables.

I shot for a few minutes, until I knew I had the shot I wanted, and then purchased a CD of her instrumentals, some recognizable tunes, before moving on. As I mentioned, we were on a mission to walk each block and street once. A few more shots and short notes: as always, larger versions are grouped on the [Havre de Grace Street](#) page.

Heavy on individual singers this month, here's a couple we enjoyed:



And there are always a couple of street-painters. Check out the socks on the second one:



I had to hold my camera over my head to get above all the parents and family gathered to watch this group of kids dance. Once it started even that was impossible. They assigned them a spot on a side street that got direct sun in their eyes – not so good:



Before rushing home to our dinner, I took this shot of one of the carvings in one sculptors booth. I did stop to tell him, since he's never been to Easter Island, what it meant to carve a moai with just dips for the eyes (the final carving was not done until the moai was placed on the ahu, allowing coral eyes with obsidian pupils to be installed). I assured him that he had come close enough that it wouldn't be out of place in a shop in the Island. Made us feel right at home:



UPDATES

The Moon has been Eaten Volume II

I've just ordered one printed. Why one? Because inevitably there will be some major oversight that for some reason never showed up with home printings. Besides, this is all about the images and one can't know how they will print until actually seen.

We'll get it at the end of this week. Hopefully, with adjustments made to the file, I'll have a showable display copy. And I'll be able to calculate cost based on ordering maybe a dozen copies (there's a slight discount for multiple orders). Even at that, the cost is likely to be about \$100 each – that's the nature of the large print-to-order digital book beast.

While this is actually more for us and enough others to account for ordering maybe six more, I'll be happy to include orders from anyone who responds to the call – at cost.

The PDFs

Now that the second volume is done, I'm in the process of creating separate PDF files of the two books. That means removing the additions to the original PDF and putting them into the second one. This work too will be done by the end of the week. And again, both will be posted as free downloads.

Next week's posting should signal the end of over a decade of work on the Easter Island project.

Bluebirds – [Link to posting](#)

We're continuing to learn about the Bluebirds. It seems the nest in our little birdhouse had just one egg (or only one hatched). So for a couple of weeks after hatching, the parents were only somewhat busy feeding the lonely thing. Then, suddenly one night, it was gone and the next abandoned. Certainly not the success the pair's previous nest had with three, maybe four juveniles following them around for a week or more. I assume that the new juvenile is now tagging along wherever they go.

I was awfully lucky to have the opportunity to get those shots. Any promise of more fizzled.

Prints on Metal and Acrylic Prints

So much for that grand experiment (for the most part anyway). My observations and conclusions:

1 – **Prints on Metal** (as well as Acrylic prints) have to be printed by other than the artist. I would hardly see myself as creating individual works of art if, half way through the process, I sent the files off to be printed.

2 – Being dye-transfers on aluminum sheeting, they have issues: first, they are lower resolution than what one would want out of a B&W.

3 – And, again because of being dye transfer, shadows are considerably blocked (greatly reduced range of tones). With most B&W images shadow detail is a major element, allowing closer scrutiny to reveal more to the viewer.

4 – I checked out an exhibit by a really good photographer working in color and was impressed with the results – but notably his style is bold. The Prints on Metal were striking, bold, contrasty and very effective especially at a distance. He admitted he was hesitant about trying B&W and we had a good discussion about it, where I pretty much confirmed his worries were justified.

6 – **Acrylic Prints** are face-mounted to the back of a sheet of acrylic (plexiglass). One scratch on the surface and the whole thing, including the art, is useless. At the same time it is considerably more expensive than even the Print on Metal.

5 – In conclusion **NEITHER** will be a major effort or shift on my part. I do have one Print on Metal at the Gallery in town, but will not be making this a regular part of my B&W efforts – in spite of the fact that they are set to become even more of a fad.

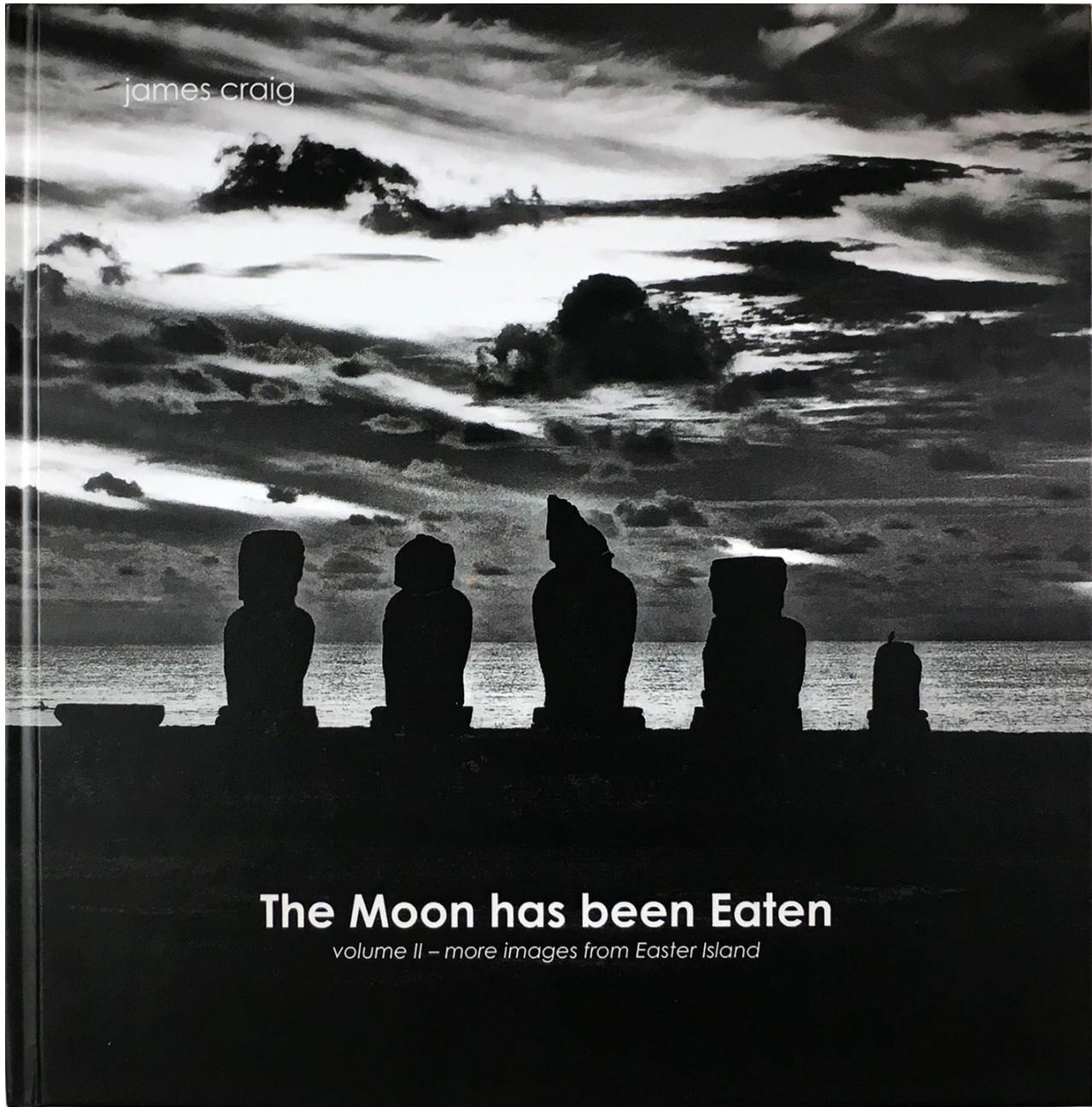


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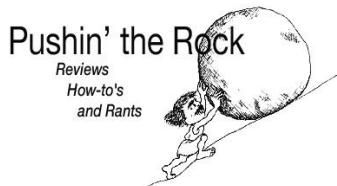


MixBook for B&W Photo Books – a Tale of two Failures

Tuesday, September 12, 2017

I thoroughly expected to be announcing this conclusion to the Easter Island project this week. Instead I'm using the time and space to relate my very unsatisfactory experience with the printer **MixBook**. A year ago the world of photo-books had

one clear winner, at least in the area of good fine-art B&W photography books. MyPublisher in New York not only offered the choices one would want in a photo book, they never failed to amaze me with their results. And the fact that they were only slightly more expensive than many of the outfits competing for one's business, and less expensive than others, helped.



But MyPublisher was bought out by Shutterfly, who to begin with, does not offer the size and format choices that anyone doing a serious photo book would want and need. So I went looking, doing at first something that I have found through experience to be most nonproductive, reading reviews. But what was I to do, other than MyPublisher, I knew nothing about any of these printers.

MixBook

I settled in on MixBook, who seemed to be winning a lot of the review comparisons. Using their on-line software was a little of a nightmare, but I managed, ordering only one book – thank goodness. And I should have taken a hint, from the lack of ability to order a plain linen cover for the hard-bound version (you're stuck with a tacky photo-cover) and no dust-jacket, that they were not looking to serve serious artists.

I received the book in about a week – and immediately called to complain about the **piece of crap I was holding in my hands** – something I have never had to do before, with about a dozen image books ordered. After explaining that about a third of the images were about two stops washed out, I got some rigamarole about their using "auto-enhance" on their images (that right there would scare the hell out of any serious photographer) and that they were willing to reprint the book with that turned off.

Like a dummy I agreed, opting out of simply getting my hundred dollars back. Bad choice. Another week went by and I received the second book – I should have known. This time only half the images were perfect, while most of the rest were about two stops dark – with a strong magenta cast. What the.....?

It was frustrating to have to point out over the phone the inconsistency in the results in the face of their attempts to blame me and my display's balance. These are images that I can bring up on my screen side by side, as many as I want, and they are all perfectly exposed – sort of puts the damper on the problem being on this end since they seem to be able to print a good half of them perfectly.

TRY ONE – THUMBNAIL PAGE

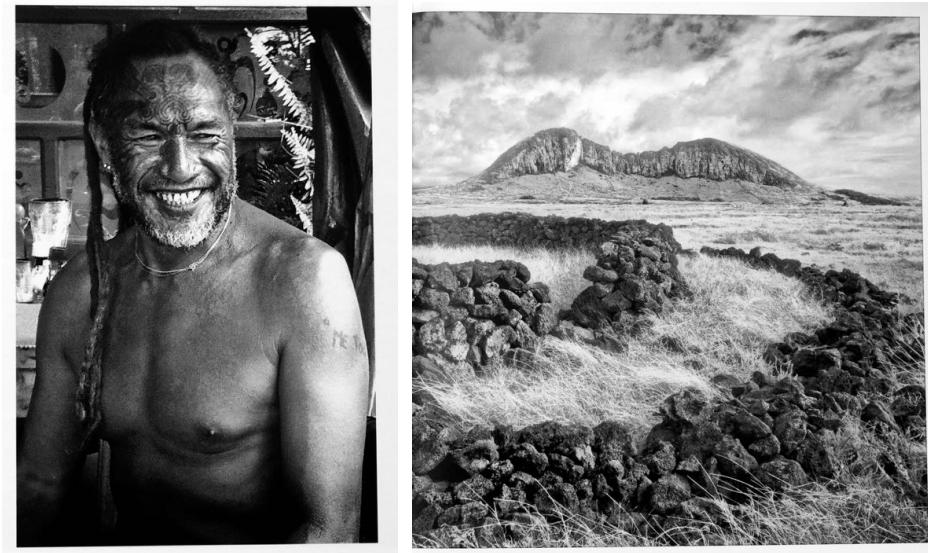
I thought I'd start with a comparison of thumbnail pages from the two attempts. In the first book, below, all three thumbnail pages were well within acceptable bounds:



This is enough, if viewed before the rest of the book, to give one almost complete confidence in success.

TRY ONE – IMAGES

In the first attempt, a full **29 of the 53 images were, to varying degrees, washed ou**, some ridiculously so. The remaining 24 either matched their thumbnails or were lighter but within acceptable bounds. This immediately seemed odd to me because **the way their software worked I had to access, on line, the exact same image files for both the thumbnail and corresponding larger image**. How could the printing differ to that degree? Here are two examples – one that printed the same as the thumbnail and one that printed washed out.



Maori Boatman on the left printed just like the thumbnail above – **Manavai and Rano Raraku** on the right (along with 28 others) washed out and unacceptable , unlike its thumbnail.

TRY TWO – THUMBNAIL PAGE

The first thing I looked out when I got their second attempt was the first thumbnail page in the back. Oops. Wow were they dark, making me wonder if all they did was print the book darker, much darker:

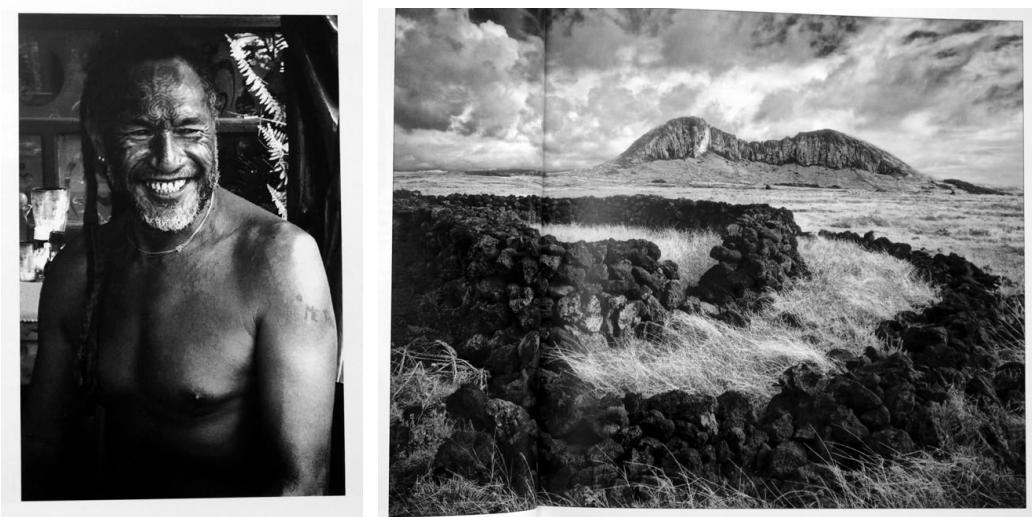


Here the thumbnails are uniformly dark – although some images will always tolerate that better than others.

TRY TWO – IMAGES

This time 44 of the images were, though running dark, within acceptable bounds, proving that the images were printing considerably lighter than the thumbnails (for the most part). Still, **8 of the images mirrored their thumbnail counterparts and were way, way too dark**. In fact they were so dark as to sport a distinct magenta cast or cyan cast (wow, one would at least expect consistency in this flaw)

In summarizing the results I have to record an isolated anomaly that tends to prove a complete inconsistency in their inking – one image that printed perfectly, matching its thumbnail in the first try, printed so much lighter in the second try that it was a tad lighter than the image in the first try – amongst all other images being darker than in the first printing.



Maori Boatman on the left, again, printed just like its thumbnail above – making the image **completely unacceptable** (along with 7 others).

Manavai and Rano Raraku on the right (along with a full 43 others) printed lighter than their thumbnails and were, to varying degrees acceptable (this one slightly dark but within bounds).

QUESTIONS:

Any Photo Book printer that has this little control over their ink, and/or any printer that has this shoddy level of quality control, should NOT even attempt fine-art B&W printing. Carefully created files serve no purpose with them:

- 1– What excuse is there for these differences when they used the same files to create the thumbnails as the larger images?
- 2– How does turning off "auto-enhance" translate to simply darkening by a couple of stops (exclusive of otherwise lack of control over the printer).
- 3– How can they explain away such irregularities in the differences between the books – especially the one image lighter in the second try?
- 4– How did these books get out the door?

By the way, after the first try I was given a choice between getting my money back or letting them try again – I chose the wrong door. Looks like my \$100 is gone – I'm certainly not going to be able to use either one of these things – unless I can find ever need to cut out some of the better pages for some sort of display use.

I have now sent the book file off to Bay Photo Books. Can I hold my breath for ten days?

OH – I forgot, at least the iPad configured, interactive PDF versions of both Volume I and Volume II are [HERE !!](#)

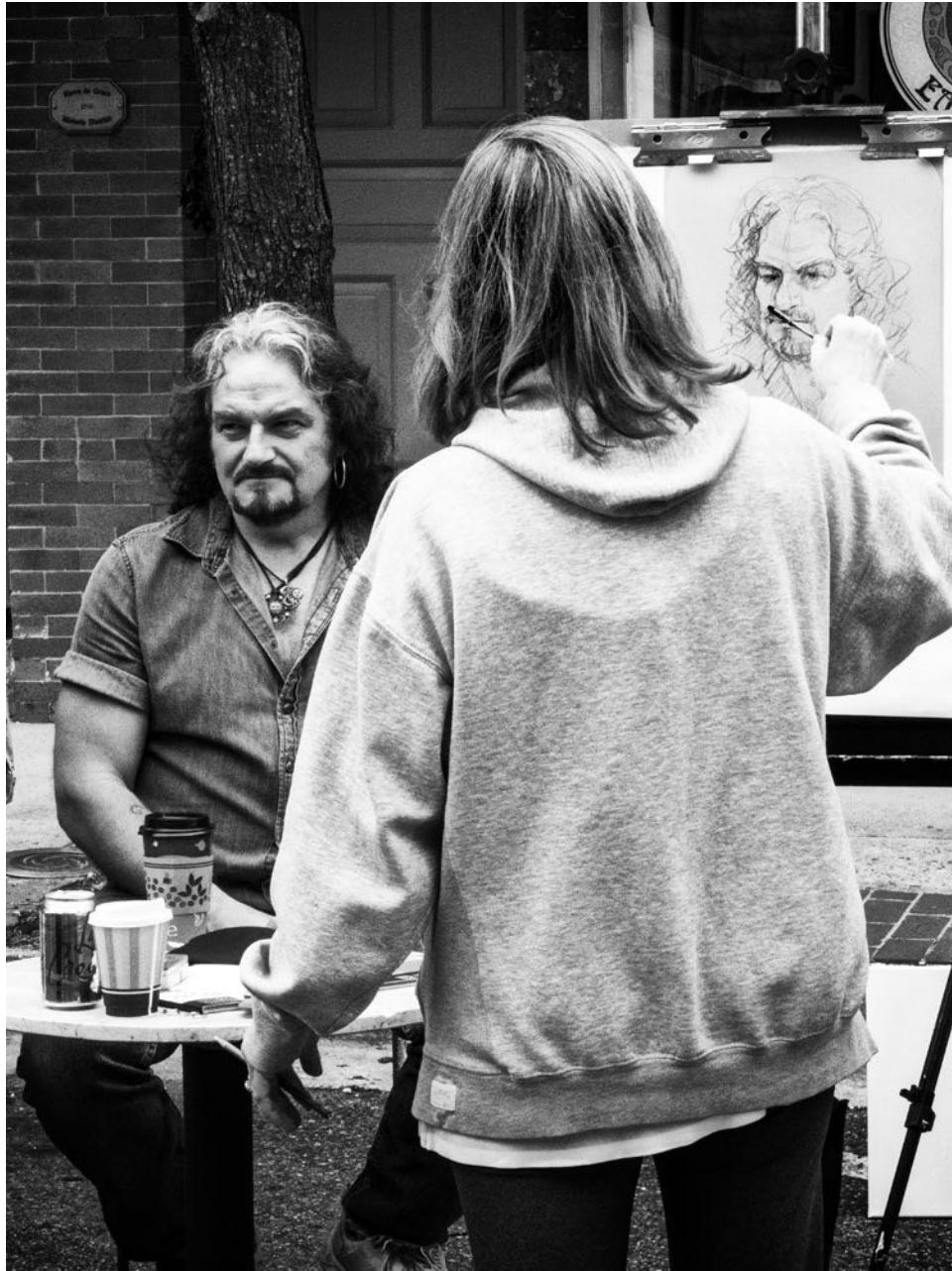


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September First Friday in Havre de Grace

Thursday, September 14, 2017

On First Friday in Havre de Grace, the three main blocks in town are closed off to traffic, along with a number of side streets for one block. Lots to see and do, lots more to eat. My into picture shows one of the "street" artists doing a sketch of "Jimmyo" in front of the Gallery (Artists Emporium) he runs in town, right next door to RiverView where we both show our work. He's an interesting character, and I couldn't resist observing that the artist somehow managed to make him look sweet and innocent.



Down the street in the next block I was happy to see that Fostina Dixon was back – picture below. This time we had time to take seats at one of the little tables set up and enjoy the show. She played her Sax of course, and later some Soprano Sax for variety. I took a lot of pictures – trying out my new Vertical Battrery Grip for my Fuji. It was fun. Fostina and her little group (absent First Friday) will be the intro act Friday September 20 at the new Opera House here in Havre de Grace. We already have tickets.



As always, there were a few street painters. Here's one that attracted the attention of a kid, being shown how she could paint from a picture on her iPad:



And here's a shot of a young lady in the local Maritime Museum's booth demonstrating a pedal-powered lathe. Cool. Someone should say something to her about wearing protective goggles though.



Cliff Giles, local musician, for the second time this year set up drums for anyone and everyone to play, join along with him, etc. He's got plenty of room on the triangle area where the blocked off street meets another one blocked off and one still in use. I'll have to make sure and post the closeup on his Facebook...



Last but not least, a before, during and after sequence: The Vintage Cafe held a Milkshake Drinking Contest. My first thought was: how? Their milkshakes are to die for, but overly thick, made with lots of real ice cream and next to impossible to drink. Lot of using multiple straws for spooning. I like the vanilla with a touch of malt – fantastic. Four volunteers lined up and started off. Then the judge holding up the winner's hand. I just hope first prize wasn't a free milkshake.



Here they are at about the half-way point. The young fellow second from the right looks to be well ahead, but don't be fooled. Right after I took this shot, he bolted up and over to the curb to throw up and be out of the match. Putting it down just a tad too fast I guess.





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Zipper Spider and Notes

Monday, October 2, 2017

I do realize that I call this a site/blog for my B&W photography. But, like with the bluebird shots a couple of weeks back, I occasionally aim my camera at something that needs to be seen in color. This is Nan's new pet Garden or Zipper Spider. She's a tad on the large size – this shot is full frame, uncropped, shot with my new iPhone 8. At full resolution it is awesomely sharp. The new iPhone camera has an F1.8 aperture, so shoots in lower light. And there are plenty of third party camera apps out there that give you complete control over shutter speed, ISO and even what format your images come in. Some even shoot RAW. The only real drawback is that the iPhone camera does not have an adjustable aperture – 1.8 (or 2.2 on an older model) is what you get, period. There is no way to increase the depth of field by closing down and shooting slower. Hence no way to get absolutely everything on this spider in focus. But then what do I want, it's a freaking phone, and a heck of a lot of fun to shoot.

"More Images from Easter Island"

I am impatiently awaiting delivery of my book order from Bay Photo. At which time I will introduce the book and post my Review: **Bay Photo vs MixBook vs MyPublisher (now defunct)**. I realize that I've already pretty much trashed results from MixBook, but I feel it only fair to do a direct comparison. Soon...

Camera Notes

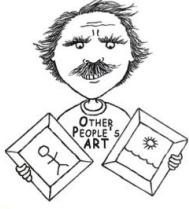
1– Check out my new spot-shutter-release. They screw into the cable release mount in the shutter release, and assist in holding down vibrations while shooting. Red buttons are in right now but I saw the little "moko" as they are called in Rapanui, or lizard, on it and went a more subtle route. My "moko-button release". Also thinking about getting an extension tube for the occasional macro shot with the X-T2 (*below*):



2– also When I updated my iPhone to the new IOS, I lost six of my dozen camera apps – including one of my favorites. They simply opted not to update them for the new IOS. Bummer. I replaced by go-to app with my **Camera+** app, a really nice one cam app shoots RAW plus JPG and has a nifty way to do close-ups that lets you lock focus all the way in and then just move the phone into place. Cool. Then I picked up on a couple of new apps that I haven't had a chance to try out yet – one, **Cortex Cam**, does one thing only. It enables very low light shooting by shooting anywhere from 6 to 100 exposures and then combining them to bring out a well-lit picture. Even moving the phone/camera a little doesn't hurt because it will work to line up the various images perfectly. I really can't wait to try this baby out!

A week of trauma

I won't bother to bore everyone with our Comcast / ATT horror stories – it seems everyone has one. Suffice it to say getting the new iPhone, getting my old number transferred, then getting the land line number transferred from Comcast to that phone, then switching ATT services to keep the bill down, then reducing Comcast services to get the bill down, took over a week. With getting things backwards, reversing that, both outfits lying to us about what was available and what not, working our way up the chain of command and more, we emerged exhausted but with lower totals than before. Our only complaint is that we lost the TCM channel that we occasionally watched and picked up six HBO channels that we have no use for – all for less money. What a racket. We're just glad that's over.



And why not one or two Other Peoples Art notes

We stopped in to see Paul Lyon, a local potter – he's had a lightning disaster with his computer. While there Nan picked up this little ceramic Acorn Necklace with a hand-woven chain. Em Paul's daughter and assistant, is making these and I'm sure they will really take off when she gets them up on their Etsy store. This design looks a lit like an acorn, others are saggar-fired and come in various fall colors. We got a second one for a present, and have since had a couple of people ask how to get them. They will be \$35 on the Etsy Store – which tends to go up once a month with a goodly number of pieces and then almost always empties within hours, a couple of days at the most: [LyonClay Etsy Store](#). To follow progress of upcoming postings on the store, follow Paul along with 78 + thousand others on [Instagram](#).



The second image is an updated view of our Annegarn figures collection. Our latest piece, the long-legged beach lady. Maria shows in RiverView Gallery here in Havre de Grace and some pieces can be seen on her site: <http://0063fca.netsolhost.com>. This collection is far from all our Annegarn pieces, without even trying, she grew to be one of the three or four artists we wound up collecting. But this does cover the miniature figures.

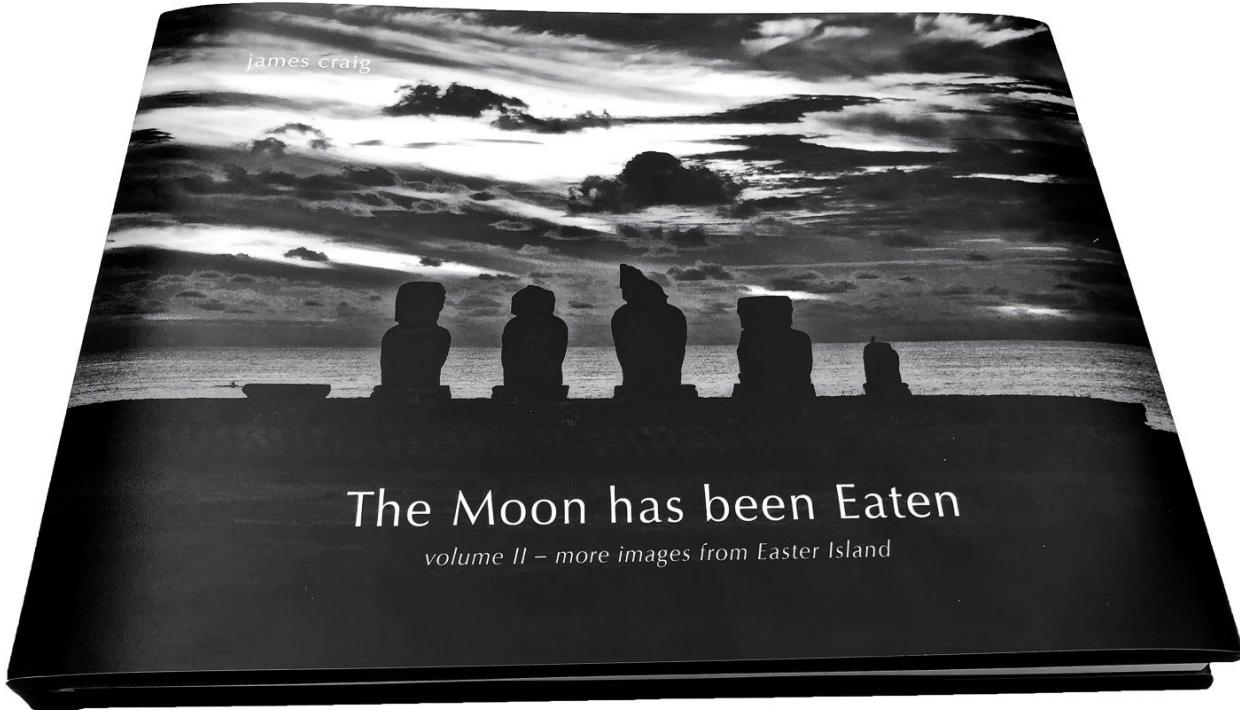


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The Moon has been Eaten Volume II – More Images from Easter Island

Monday, October 9, 2017

...from **BayPhoto Books** comes a work of art. I am using Bay Photo Books for the ultimate in quality photo-book printing, for which the word "book" is something of a misnomer. They are high resolution fine art B&W prints done straight from my print files, with the same pigmented inks that I use on my display prints, on a double sided version of the same paper I print on, and then hard bound in embossed black linen. Even the jacket is quality printed and coated for protection.

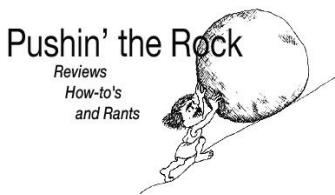
Nan says: "It's tempting to ask people to wear white cotton gloves to handle the thing".

if one wants to get a book of fine art photography printed, especially B&W, there are now only two ways to go – low end and high end. The low end will cost about a hundred bucks for dye-printing, lousy quality control, rampant inconsistency – a final product that is barely fit for a family vacation momento. The high end will cost \$150 to \$175 for the same 8.5X11 book – except that the quality will be astounding, printing will be consistent, ink will be pigmented, paper will be top drawer, binding will be heavy duty – it will be a very desirable work of art (assuming that the print files submitted are "ready for prime time").

I now have three copies of *The Moon has been Eaten, Volume II – More Images from Easter Island*. Every image as if I printed it myself here in my studio. One of these will go out to each of the two Islander friends the book is very gratefully dedicated to – and one goes to Nan. At a cost of \$170 each, I'll have to order more if and when they are ordered. See the [BOOK'S](#) page for details.

It's not as if even \$100 to get a fine art book printed isn't already high – there's no pricing break involved for ordering hundreds at one shot – but relatively, \$70 more isn't much considering what you get is so beautiful. *The only caution I would add here is that the photographer or artist ordering (or putting together the image files) has to both know what they are doing and understand the materials being used by the printer. Not for the faint of heart.*

Below is the detailed, long version of my observations, comparing results from **BayPhoto Books**, **MixBook** and the now defunct **MyPublisher** for anyone who is interested:



REVIEW: Bay Photo Books vs MixBook vs MyPublisher (now defunct)

The Long Version

Since I wound up posting a rather harsh review of my negative experience with **MixBook** books, I thought I should follow up with a look at the results from **Bay Photo Books**, using comparison notes. As I stated in my assessment of MixBook, I come from years of good experiences with **MyPublisher** books. So that this doesn't wind up as a long, involved read-me, I'll put everything in list form according to category:

Speed of Ordering:

MixBook wins hands down here, I had my first attempt in less than a week. **MyPublisher** always took seven or eight days, while **Bay Photo Books** can take a couple of days more. Then, after all the time it takes to put a book together, a few extra days makes little difference – especially if it looks like that time might involve something in the way of quality control.

Convenience setting up the book:

MyPublisher was by far the best here, with their own on-computer software. I never had any problems being as exacting as I wanted. But again, they're gone.

MixBook is an on-line app that is frustrating to use. Precise custom alignments require sizing the page on the screen and holding a ruler up to it. Actually not all that difficult, but surely they can do better than that.

Bay Photo Books' on-line Java App is a total nightmare **IF** you opt to use it to compose your book. **BUT** if you use their template in Photoshop or InDesign it's a simple matter of dragging the exported pages, with all text and images arranged, into the book in the app. In fact, almost any layout app that can accept high resolution images and then export a page as a 300dpi high end jpeg can be adapted to do the job.

Price:

MixBook prices are in line with **MyPublisher**, about where one would want them. List price is high but MixBook follows the lead of most of these printers and has monthly forty to fifty percent off sales.

Bay Photo Books actually posts slightly lower list prices, but don't bother looking for a sale. That makes **the same book that would be \$100 from MixBook a whopping \$170 from Bay Photo**.

I have to add a rather strong criticism of BayPhoto Books here – their order form, compared to anything with a semblance of sanity, is confusing, convoluted and frustrating. I'm now very familiar with it and still cannot seem to be able to send in an order without having to call later to make a correction. Even on this book reorder, which should have been simple, I noticed a couple of days later that ordering two copies of the same book did not mean I was ordering two dust jackets. When I called to correct this I asked the young lady on the phone if she realized how insanely confusing their order form was – a Java app of all things. She just laughed admitted that they were well aware of the situation.

Getting down to the fine points:

Help: There are so many variables in getting a photo book printed that it can be important to be able to talk directly to someone, especially the first time. Here **Bay Photo Books** is the only printer I know of that is there for you at that level – to the extent where, if necessary, you can even let their graphics guy take over your mouse and keyboard over the web and show you what to do.

Feel / Heft / size: while the **MixBook** book was slightly thinner, at a half inch, than it would have been from **MyPublisher**, the **Bay Photo** book came in 50% thicker at three quarters of an inch. At the same time it weighs at least that much more. And Bay Photo Books measurements are calculated the old fashioned way (like MyPublisher) based on the size of the pages. An 8.5x11 book therefore is considerably larger when closed. MixBook is giving you the outside dimensions of the closed book with jacket, making the pages considerably smaller.

Dust Jacket: None with MixBook. While Bay Photo does offer the new image-printed hard binding popular for

family books, they still offer dust jackets over classic covers. And it is very heavy, about as indestructible as one can get.

Cover: There are so many cover options with **Bay Photo**, but as far as I'm concerned, the only one worth mentioning is the heavy, plain **linen** book cover. Heck, it even comes in any color imaginable (black, always black here). And yes, one can have the title, etc. embossed on the front. My only complaint here with Bay Photo Books is that there is no embossing offered on the spine. Then again, if the jacket is on, it's not needed. Classy, quality binding there.

Pages: Mixbook uses a similar paper to that used by MyPublisher, actually pretty nice – heavy enough yet still flexible. But **Bay Photo** uses paper equal in quality to what I print on for my originals here at home. It's a little heavier and stiffer, but paper is almost as important as ink and workmanship in producing a quality image. Their standard paper, as is, is phenomenal.

Ink: **Bay Photo Books** prints at double the resolution of MixBook – I got suspicious and took out my trusty 10X loupe and checked it out. That makes a big difference in sharpness, contrast and overall effect. And the inks are different. **MixBook** obviously uses dye inks, which **MyPublisher** used with higher resolution and quality control to die for. Bay Photo Books can get blacks and mid-tones rarely seen in a book because they use pigmented inks – the same inks I use for my own printing.

B&W: yes, this is a category, or maybe more like a very difficult to realize target. Digital fine-art B&W printing can be done two ways, using three black inks or using those three inks plus a touch of light magenta and light cyan. A printer like this, because they pretty much can't be resetting printer preferences between books, is pretty much stuck doing B&W books the second way. I opt for this myself at home for a number of reasons, though it requires me to work a little harder to keep a noticeable magenta or cyan tint out of the final product. Because of this, expect all B&W photos to come with a slight tint in photo books. With **MixBook** this tint tended to be magenta and far too evident on a number of the images (oddly a couple broke the pattern and looked Cyan). Old **MyPublisher** B&Ws had a slight magenta tint, to a degree that you never noticed it unless they were looked at next to a true B&W. **Bay Photo Books** B&Ws have a slight cyan tint that is so undetectable that one has to lay an image next to a true B&W to tell. On their site they hold that this has a "smoothing" effect on the B&W – probably true. The result is a bound collection of original prints.

Bay Photo Books obviously prints for viewing in good strong light. Take it outdoors or shine a bright light on it, and the images are striking and perfect. No light can wash them out, but nothing is blocked. View the images in dim light and they don't look blocked – there's simply an urge with some images to move into a brighter light in order to look into the shadows – where one is rewarded with detail because of the high resolution. Take one of my MyPublisher books outside in bright light and watch it come close to washing out. It's a judgement call. Admittedly there were two images out of 53 that I decided to brighten very slightly for printing subsequent volumes from Bay Photo after the first volume – on the rest I "dodged the highlights" a mere 10%, Nan assuring me that she could not see any difference whatsoever (but happy for me that I could). The big advantage with print-to-order digital books is that fine tuning or micro-tweaking is always an option.

Conclusions:

I'm not going to look for a cheaper way to go – You get what you pay for. **Bay Photo** will give me the top in quality for small-edition fine-art books. I'll have my own copy. Beyond that, I'll post the information on them and order one if anyone wants one. This will be an extremely limited edition. See my "[Books](#)" page for prices and details.

*p.s. All this leaves my very large, comprehensive first volume of **The Moon has been Eaten** as my one and only offset printed book. Digital books have a page limit of about 120 – that would rule that path out. While tritone B&W offset printing isn't all that much different in quality from lower resolution digital printing, neither can measure up to the, admittedly more expensive, digital printing.*



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Anatomy of a Rock Shoot – Wind Up Toy at the Havre de Grace Opera House (Part I)

Saturday, November 4, 2017

I was excited to be asked to shoot a rock performance at our Havre de Grace Opera House. It's a newly restored nineteenth century venue that seats around 275 pretty comfortably. The group: **Wind Up Toy**, a local Alice Cooper tribute group that, to be frank, puts on the best and most enjoyable show I've seen in a long time. Unfortunately Nan wasn't able to come along, but certainly will make me take her to their next show, if and when we can find one. I highly recommend it.

Wind Up Toy gives as much of a visual performance as a musical event – both excellent. It is so colorful, especially with the swirling colored lights, that I was almost tempted to add a little color to this posting. But the color in the show, as great as it was because it was constantly shifting, actually made for not the best color stills – in one case I wound up with an otherwise perfect image except for the extremely green face on my subject. So, I'll stick to B&W.

First a few of the images – and a link to the rest – and then my shoot-notes. Then at the bottom from the concert. I hope someone finds them interesting.







Shoot Notes:

Venue: There was no balcony area to get into. And the two side aisles offered not-so-great angles. I started on the right side but soon took advantage of a short gap in the performance to move back behind the seats.

Camera and Lens: I was using my new Fuji X-T2 mirrorless with the battery grip attached. That makes it bulkier, but three batteries are definitely better than one in a situation like this. I would up using slightly less than two of them up.

My lens was the **Fuji 55-200 f3.5-4.8** (85-305 equivalent) zoom. *I would REALLY have appreciated having at least a 2.8 aperture, but without the ability to move around much, I needed the zoom.*

Settings: This was a little of a learning experience. It was a no-brainer to lock the lens wide open. But I spent the evening setting my ISO between 1600 and 12800 as needed when I don't think I had to – often winding up with shutter speeds a little faster than needed. The lighting shifted so fast and often from low to high.

It would be best in a situation like this to, still shooting wide open, lock the shutter speed on between 1/125 and 1/200 of a second and set the ISO on automatic. That way a lot more exposures will fall in the ISO 1600 or lower range and lose their graininess. I can always use the shutter speed fine tuning wheel to make minor corrections.

Equipment complaint: The only complaint I have is that the lens is tricky to lock into one f-stop – it's too easy to brush while zooming the lens. It took me a while to train myself to hold and zoom with a different grip than I would normally use. *OK, not a big complaint, and it's a product of the fact that the lens is otherwise smaller, lighter and more functional than others in that zoom range. Everything's a trade-off.*

Surprise Ending: I was pretty much done shooting and decided to do a quick switch to video and shoot some short clips during the finale and encore. I put them together and it's actually kind of fun, especially the ending clip. Know, I know, I should have gotten the one whole number, but I began late.

The biggest surprise was how effective the lens stabalization was. Wow, I was hand holding this at 200mm (305mm equivalent).



Here I put together a few clips from the finale and encore...



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Anatomy of a Rock Shoot – Wind Up Toy at the Havre de Grace Opera House (Part II)

Wednesday, November 8, 2017

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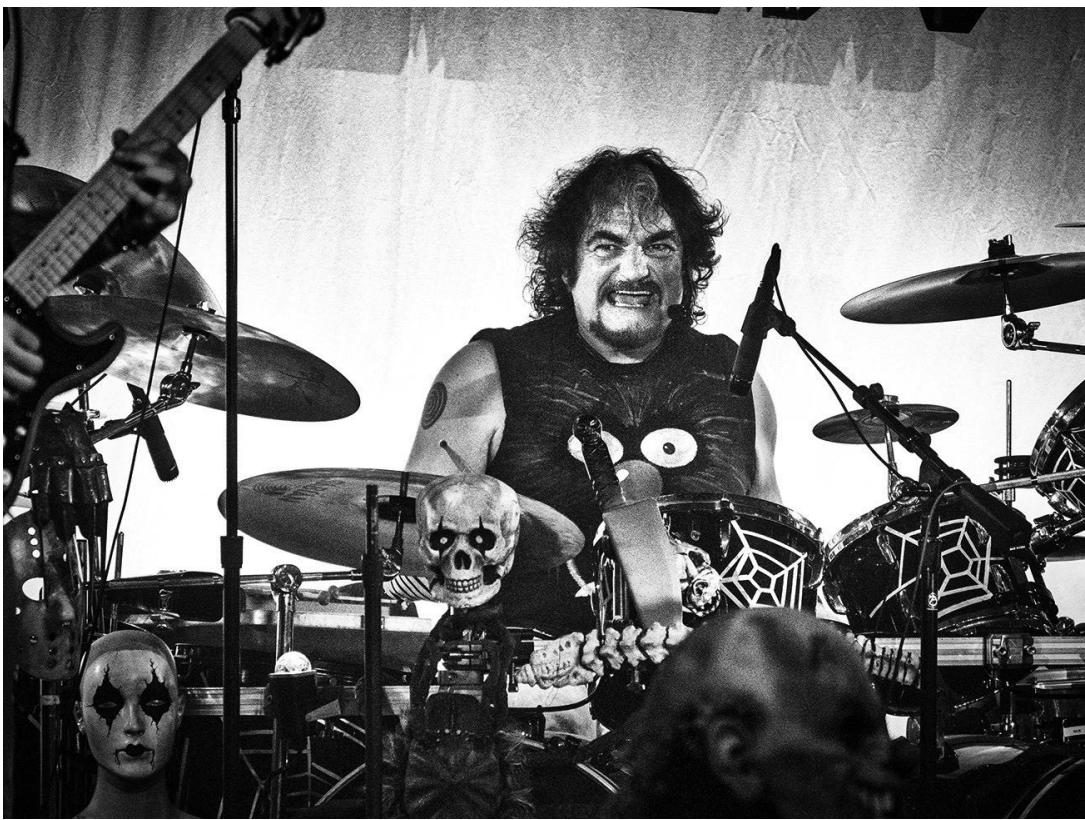
This concert was so appropriate for Halloween, if quite tricky to photograph with the swirling, shifting colored lights. In this scene, the lead singer's head is being deposited in the bucket below – looks pretty real too. Nothing to worry about though, he's back for the next number. Here are the rest of the images that I've turned into B&W. For once it's easy to fend off enquiries into seeing them in color – things like red background and green faces are difficult to fix effectively. Only a few work out, one being the guillotine scene – I gave a copy of that to JimmyO (the drummer), maybe they can use it. Before the rest of the images, a short note:

My solution to "flashy" stage lighting: after little playing around with the camera settings I came up with this set-up:

- Lock the aperture on wide-open
- Set the ISO on AUTO
- Lock the Shutter Speed on 1/250 of a second AND use the wheel right by my thumb to fine tune it between 1/160 and 1/400 of a second – a range of 2/3 stop over and under – as I shoot.

This should greatly increase the percentage of usable shots when the stage lighting is swirling and the lighting haphazardly shifting as much as four to five stops. At the same time, it will hold the ISO down where it isn't needed. Crazy. Of course with relatively steady stage lighting one can simply lock in an aperture, ISO and shutter speed, varying that by the 2/3 stop up and down with the thumb wheel. Not so Crazy Man, I love this camera...









As you can see from the images and the video, Wind Up Toy is an intense performance. And perfect for Halloween. I'm looking forward to them being back next year so I can take Nan – and hopefully be asked to photograph it again so I can use my new work-flow for this insane kind of lighting. Now all I have to do is get this series into my [Havre de Grace Street](#) section as a slide show.

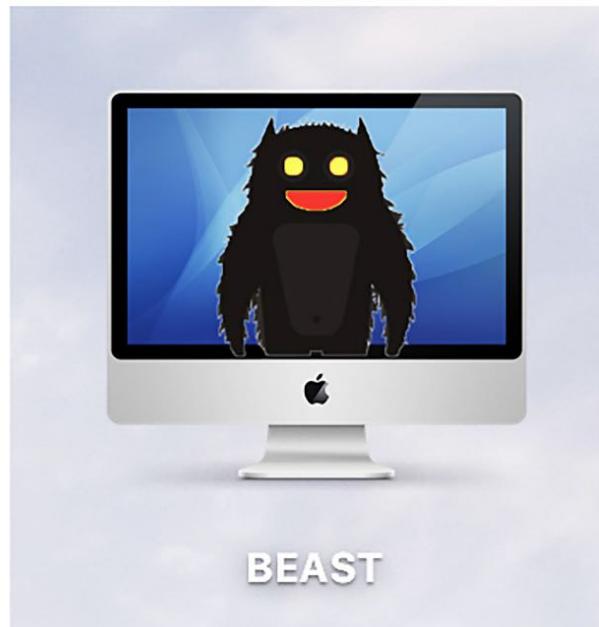
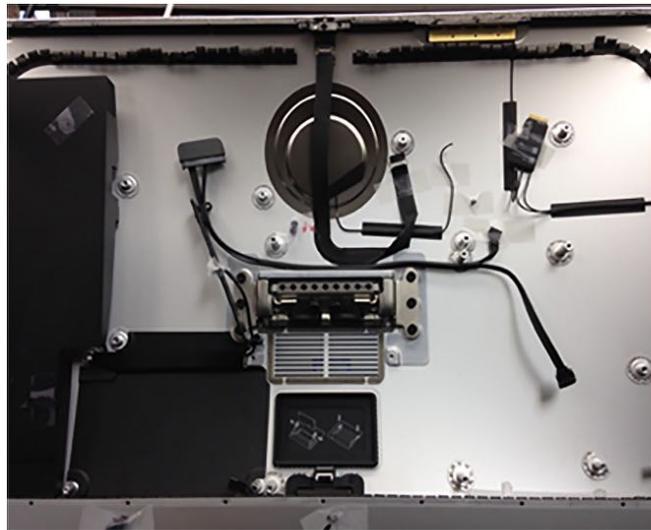
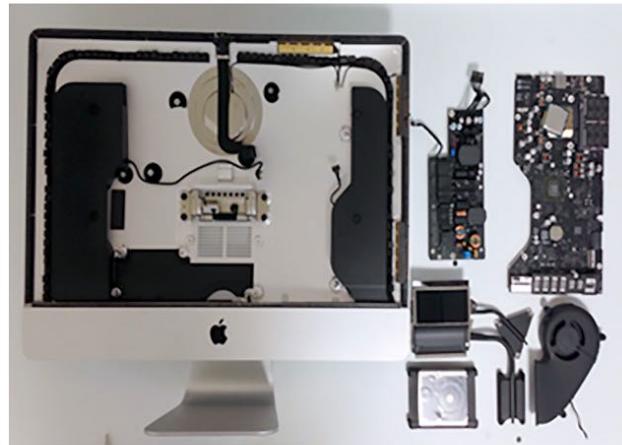


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From Just a Power-House to BEAST

Monday, November 13, 2017

and "There and Back Again" with the old iMac. There was about a month between postings recently – a couple of (minor, major, exasperating, fun) computer issues contributed to that. the short version is that both hard drives in my 27", 3TB Fusion Drive iMac needed replacing – the SATA totally shot and the SSD giving warnings. This isn't common, but considering the use I put a machine to, combined with my amazingly good luck in the past with hard drives lasting seemingly forever, I was long overdue for this.

The New iMac

First I ordered a new machine – from the Apple Refurb store (for those who don't know about this look for the word "Refurbished" in very small print near the bottom of Apple's home page. You can get hundreds off along with full warranty, and I wouldn't buy any other way). It's another 27" iMac, 3TB Fusion, 32 gigs RAM, Radeon Pro 580 Video Card, 5K display and 4.2 i7 processor – it's a beast. AND almost \$600 reduced, with full warranty. Cool. The only caution here is that if you see something you want, act fast. The best deals are usually one-offs, and can disappear while you're trying to make a decision.

Of course it took almost a week to salvage everything from the damaged HD on the older iMac, backup drive and on-line backups (last resort because it is definitely the slow way), and get everything up and running again.

Naturally, I had to construct a new icon to replace the standard HD icon on the home screen – an iMac screen sporting a little beastie – naming the HD "Beast" Hey, it's things like this that put a smile on one's face after a week of trauma.

Above: three images showing the process on the old iMac (below) and, or course, my "Beast" icon for the new machine.

The Old iMac – *the other trauma*

I then ordered two new drives for the "dead" 2012, downloaded a couple of instruction videos and proceeded to take it apart – to the point where the iMac was an empty shell sitting face up on my work table, parts and screws strewn in an orderly fashion around the room. 57 steps apart and another 57 steps back together. Lots of coffee went down, and Nan stood by to lend a hand in operations that required three.

The first complication hit after I got everything back together and went to boot up – nothing but three beeps. I looked this up and this means "bad RAM". I soon determined that at least one of two 8 gig RAMS (they work in pairs) had gone bad in the process. Fortunately I had gotten them from OWC and they had a lifetime warranty. I'm up and running on two 4 giggers while awaiting delivery of the replacement eighthers – which will take the thing back to 24 gigs.

I do not recommend this procedure to either the faint of heart or anyone not prepared to handle complications. My solution to potential "complications" is to get my replacement parts from OWC on line – this gives me access to the best telephone tech help, from the most Mac knowledgeable people I have found. This time was no exception. After the RAM issue was cleared up, I found that the system restore set-up didn't want to "find" the hard drives properly. This would be necessary if I were to, as planned, set the SSD drive for the system & apps. and the SATA drive for everything else. So I called tech help.

Tech help said that this inexplicably occurs with some machines. and that the solution is to go into the Unix code hidden under the Mac OS and restore the Fusion Drive system – that's where the two drives come up and function as one drive. The machine comes this way out of the box, so it's definitely acceptable, if not preferable. That meant a good half hour of typing Unix code dictated to me over the phone. Not really a lot of fun. I could have gotten the code on line, but since I already had the techie on the phone, and it was free, I kept the guy on there until I was up and running.

I'm now configuring it for our oldest girl who can sure use it – hers is about the same age, but smaller, much-much slower and not tripped-out at all. This one, with two new, faster hard drives, 3.4 i7 processor, great Video card for 2012, etc. pretty much rocks now. She'll have all that room, along with 24 gigs of ram and a speed gain over her machine of about 10X.

I would fix Caron up with a cool icon for her "new" iMac if I thought she would get as much of a kick out of it as I do. But, while she does write children's books, she doesn't really retain an eight year old's (Nan's assessment) urge to play with her toys that I have.

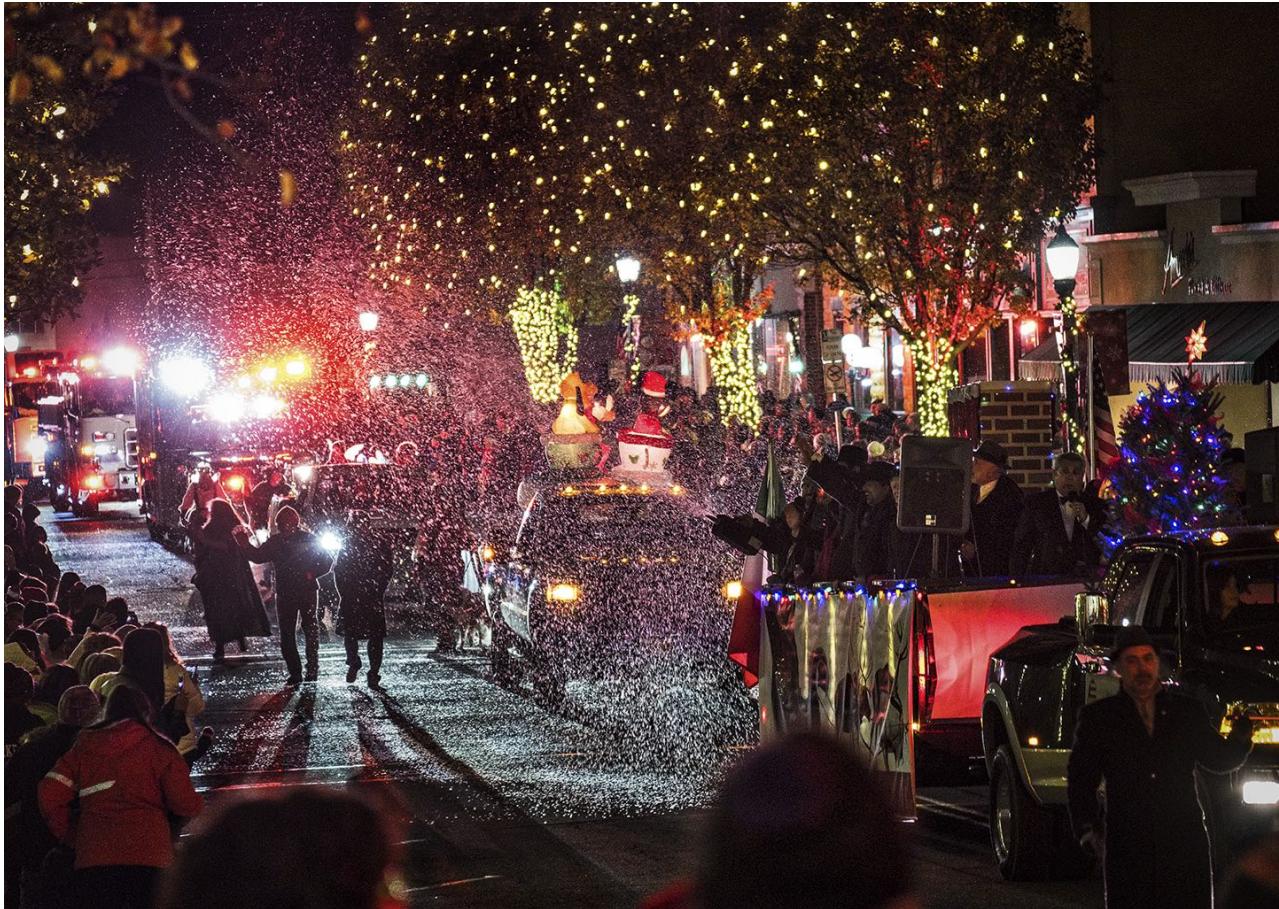


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Havre de Grace Christmas Parade and Rogue Swan Christmas Video

Monday, December 4, 2017

I'm putting off for a couple of days working on my new B&Ws. So, in tune with the season, here are a couple of color exposures of the Havre de Grace Christmas Parade – we do seem to like our night parades – and video of one of the numbers from Rogue Swan Christmas performance at the Artists Emporium Gallery in town. Both the shot above – looking down Washington Street at the parade – and the one below – I'm sure the Christmas angel but looking more like a Christmas fairy of some kind to me – will be converted and among my B&Ws from 2017.



That was one heck of a crowd at the parade, we had to park a half mile away – and since we live maybe 3/4 of a mile away, we could have walked. We didn't stick around for the town tree lighting, I figured we can walk back up and see it without having to fight off a couple of thousands kids some other evening. Besides, the streets are very well decorated this year and I'm anxious to take some shots.

Rogue Swan is a very eclectic local music and performance group that regularly gives free performances in the **Artists Emporium** in Havre de Grace (next door to RiverView Gallery where Nan and I exhibit. I set up an interesting little experiment to get a video of the entire Christmas show:

- iPhone 8 with the **MoviePro** app. set on HD. Mounted in one of those cheap phone clamps that come off their tiny tripod and screw into the top of a larger tripod.
- Also attached to this was the **Mic** that I usually use for video on my camera, connected via an adapter.
- On top of that I have a **MoviePro Remote** app. on my iPad Mini that let me control the iPhone remotely. That way no shaking, and MoviePro allows zoom and pause commands.



The results, as you can see from the video above were pretty good. Next time I'll try 4K, mainly so zooming won't reduce resolution so much. Oh, and since I was at the same time shooting stills, you might see an occasional jiggle caused by me hitting the tripod with the lens – oops.

I'm giving the hour of videos to Rogue Swan, along with my gratitude for the great show and the opportunity to practice my set up on them. Granted, my camera and zoom lens would have done a better job, but I simply don't like not having it for potential B&W work. I should have also tried Nan's **LX-100** to see what the sound would be like. Lots to experiment with here

NOW, back to work on the B&Ws from both of these events.



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First Snow – Snow Walkers

Monday, December 11, 2017

First snow of the year – I Gallery sat until 6, by which time it stopped snowing. But it started up again after we got home and ate – so I grabbed the camera and went back out into the cold and wet. I caught a couple of shots of people cautiously making their way across a very slippery Washington Street. I like the blurry snow against the dark sky:



On my way back to the house I took a quick shot of Havre de Grace's life-size (evidently he was a rather small man) statue of Lafayette that graces the entrance to the main part of town. At different times of year and holidays one never knows how he will be "dressed". Here some kind soul gave him a scarf to wear. He could even have looked a lot like this at Valley Forge.



Again, check these out in the Havre de Grace Street section where they appear a little larger...



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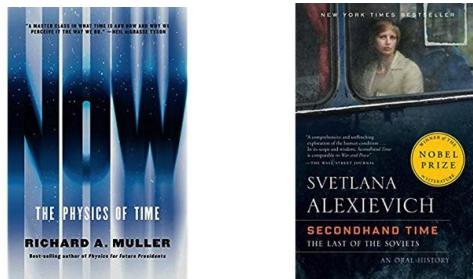
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The Elusive DeRanosaurus

Friday, December 15, 2017

Just for Fun – Stalking the Elusive DeRanosaurus. We attended Dave's Open House the other day and on the way out I snapped this shot with my iPhone of this fellow standing at the edge of the woods. Notice how well he blends in with the winter foliage. Just one of the many reasons to bite the bullet and attend one of the two DeRan Open Houses each year. Add to that, Roxanne always puts out quite a spread of snacks, cookies and coffee. I always post the dates and times here leading up to one.



BOOKS on my reader...

I read a lot throughout the year, keeps me sane. Non-fiction to fiction ratio is about five to one. The one fun thing about that is that I can read two to four books at one time, just so it's only one fiction work. I wasn't going to bother posting this year's list, but I just finished two so worthy of mention that I can't possibly pick between them for the best of the year:

Now - The Physics of Time by Richard Muller

The best damn book on physics, astrophysics and relativity I have ever attempted to read. I make no claim to have understood every word – heaven forbid. But I emerged comprehending so much more than when I started, in spite of the fact that I also ended up finding so much more that I don't really grasp. A page turner, exciting, awe inspiring. This is the one to get discussions going where in the end everyone simply throws their hands up and heads for the wine bottle. The Physics of time is wrapped up in the question of what is space, gravity, the age and expansion of the universe, relativity – a lot is explained / explored in a very understandable way. With so many new observations and discoveries over the last few years, this is one book to catch one up to where we just might fit in in the universe. The only disappointment is that, in the last chapter, it sort of puts the kabosh on fantasies of time travel. And in spite of the fact that I emerged from reading this with more questions than going in, I feel like the guy hanging from a cliff by his fingernails who managed to get his fingers over the ledge all the way to the second knuckles. Beautiful book.

Secondhand Time by Svetlana Alexievich

A Belarusian investigative journalist who writes in Russian – Nobel Prize in Literature. Yes, her non-fiction is that good, important, gripping, depressing, enlightening, enthralling and human. I can't even begin to find words to describe how important this work is. The author spent years gathering interviews on the times between the fall of the Soviet Union and the present. Instead of asking questions, she lets her subjects talk, even rant. Then she brilliantly strings the results together to tell her story. Yes, it's long, but I could not put it down. There is a lot of information there, explanations, understanding of the Nature of the beast and its demise. But at the same time there is so much one learns about human nature – to the point of understanding better some in our own country who expose a world of not only hate, but one where only the very few thrive. A must if one wants to understand not only what even "good" people are capable of but what people can endure and survive. I wish to God I could force so many people that I know to read this. I emerged from this one with, on the one hand a lot more understanding of how people can rationalize being inhuman to one another (and maybe even a bit more sympathy for what they end up doing to themselves in the process), but far less of a willingness to tolerate hate and evil on any level.



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Holly Jolly Christmas – Duke Thompson and JimmyO

Tuesday, December 19, 2017

Just a quick posting to get these two shots uploaded. Nan and I had tickets to the Christmas show by Duke Thompson and Friends at the Opera House – and I was encouraged to sit behind the seats and take some pictures. I used my Fujinon 55-200 zoom (85-300 equivalent) and got a couple shots that I like, especially these two. The second one, below, is of JimmyO at his drums. Hard to imagine anyone who looks more like a drummer. Oh, and Duke, please forgive me for “eliminating” the little red crabs decorating your pants – it added a lot to the atmosphere but nothing to the shot here.





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Rogue Swan Portraits

Friday, January 5, 2018

While shooting the video of the Rogue Swan Christmas performance in December I grabbed my trusty Fuji and zoomed in for a few close-ups. The intro picture is April Burril, also known as *Chain Saw Sally* (hard to see that when she's singing sweet Christmas songs). I liked these as a fun assembly. Hope she does – if the picture she posted dressed up all Christmassy holding a chain saw with the caption: *meet me under the mistletoe* is any kind of warning.

I'm posting the images below before I get names – will add them as soon as Jimmy-O gets back to me on that. This, hopefully, finishes up my Havre de Grace Street collection for 2017. A lot more in there than I anticipated, while at the same time less in the way of actual "street" shots and so much more in the way of performances. They're all a tad larger and punchier on the Street page where each grouping is a sort of manual slide show – plus they are downloadable. Anyway, check it out: [Havre de Grace Street](#).

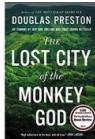
UPDATE – Top to bottom below: **Katie Gordon & James Watkins**



The final image below is another grouping, I like so many of this very expressive young lady that it was rough getting it down to just five from the twelve I originally selected... And for some reason I enjoy putting these groupings together: **Marion Jackson**



Book Note:



The Lost City of the Monkey God by Douglas Preston – a photographer accompanying an archaeological expedition into the jungles of Honduras. Generates lot of respect for what archaeologists have to face in the field. And find out why sane people do NOT want to go there. I found myself passing this around for others to read passages about snakes, insect borne diseases and much more, including threats from drug cartels and tomb robbers. I got this one for Christmas and couldn't put it down.

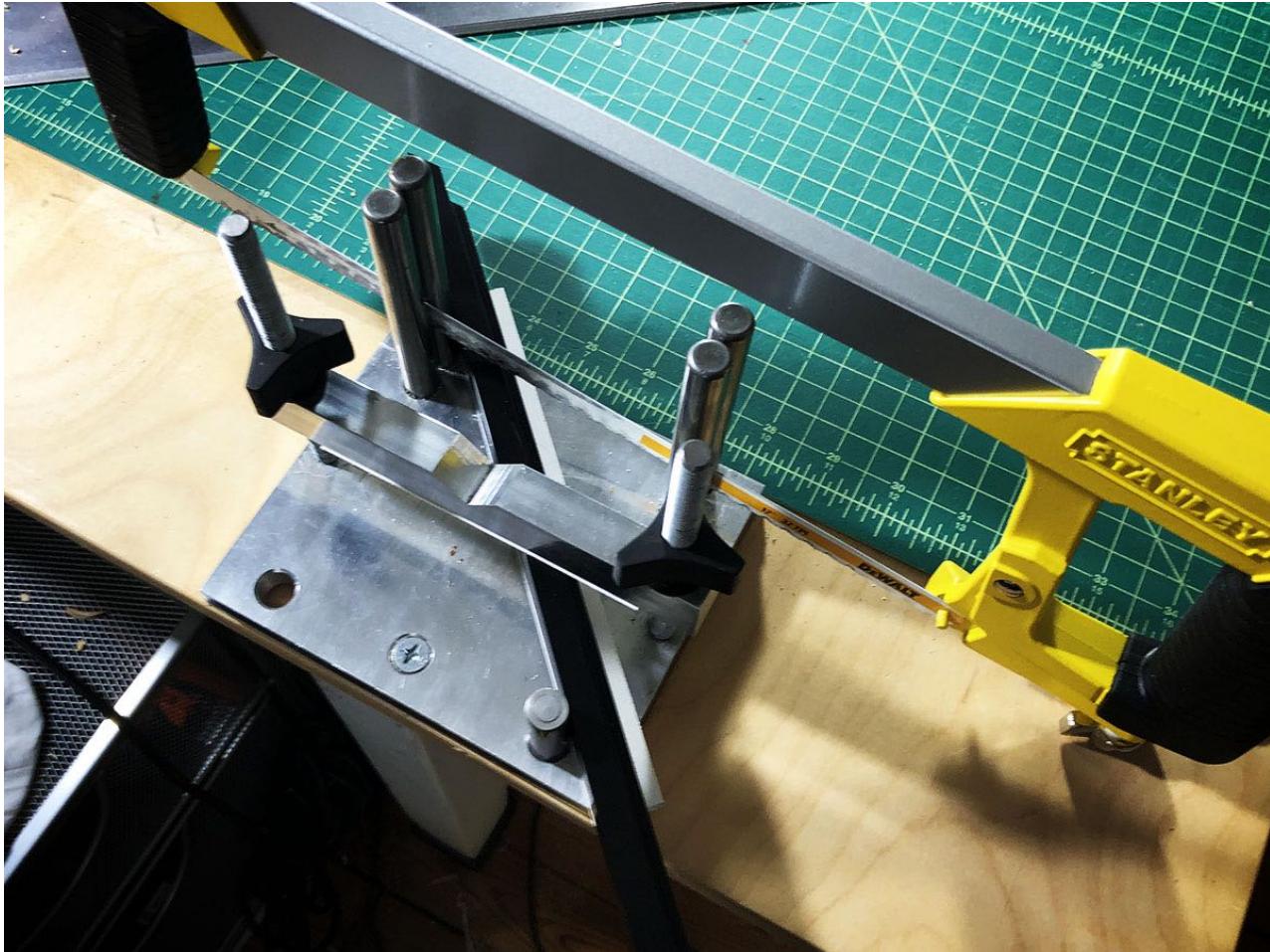


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Cutting Down Aluminum Frames

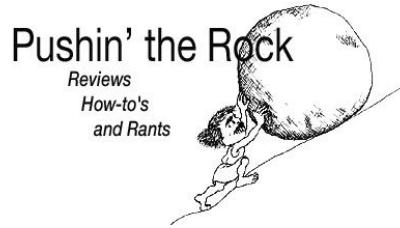
Monday, January 15, 2018

This is a combination **How-To** and **Review** of the solution to a tricky problem. Over the years I have occasionally run into the issue of not having the right size aluminum frame for an image. All I would have to do is cut down existing frame lengths to accomplish this, BUT:

- a) Aluminum frames are expensive and slow to get. The only way to get the price down is to order them on line in enough quantity to get free shipping. But even that isn't enough. So one has to wait for a good 15 to 20% off sale – which comes along once or twice a year, and stock up. A 16X20 frame – in my style of choice Nielsen N93-50 – lists on line for \$32.76 not counting shipping. If all you want is one frame, this can be close to 50 bucks. By buying in bulk, at the right time of the year, I can get that down to about \$28 with free shipping.
- b) Cutting lengths with a power saw requires a good saw, a carbide tooth blade, some skill and a little daring-do. I say that because I used to do it that way – until the blade kicked out a cut piece of frame, it bounced off the cinderblock wall, penetrated a can of WD-40 and sent it careening around the basement. That could have been my head – I never went there again.

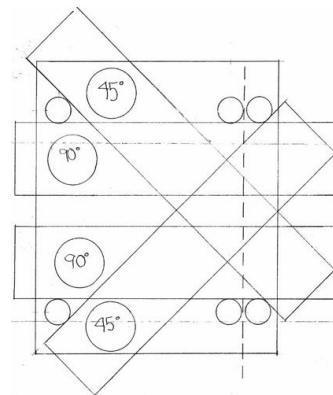
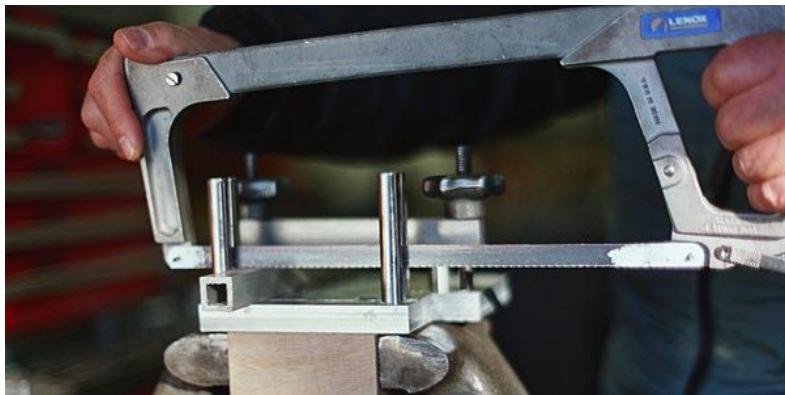
c) If you Google the problem, one finds all kinds of advice, none of it good.

So I recently decided that I wasn't going to give up without a fight – and eventually after many searches came up with an outfit that sells the jig pictured here. They designed it themselves and sell it to anyone who will plunk down 60 bucks – easily paying for itself with the first couple of frame cut-downs.



What I found: **Model 534 Hacksaw Mitre Box - \$60.00 plus \$13.45 shipping for US**

Where: <http://www.waynegoldmanengineering.com/Model-534-Mitre.html>



My Set-Up:

1– Unmounted the jug from the wood blocks (designed for clamping the jig into a vise) and mounted it to my work table in my studio – on top of about 1/2 inch 5x6 panel to give me room for the hack saw handle. *This means taking it down when not in use so I can use the table for other things, but, again, the need only crops up occasionally.*

2– Used double-sticky tape to place a thin strip of rag board on the bottom of the clamp. *This to prevent any scratching or denting of aluminum frames. I was surprised to find that the stainless steel guide posts don't leave any marks on the flat outside edge of the frame.*

3– I also cut a strip of rag mat to place under the frame bottom for a little extra give at the bottom of the cut.

4– I immediately realized that while there was a groove in the jig pictured that would allow one to finish the cut, mine had no such groove. Then again, the base is a thick slab of aluminum, so the saw blade should make its own groove over time. *If I decide I don't like this, I can always cut a square of masonite and drill the appropriate holes to make it work there.*

5– Per guidelines I purchased a good hack saw and quality 32tpi blades.

6– My test cut was on a scratched length of frame that I had lying around. The intro image is my set-up with a length of frame in position.

7– **Cut takes about one minute with a good blade and is almost burr free** – a perfect fit. *A little patience and a softer touch might take two minutes. Measuring for the cut isn't all that difficult.*

8– *I have a mini hand-held vac thingie for the studio that takes care of any aluminum dust.*

9– *If I have any concern it's that the two mounting bolts might not be stable enough – even with my mounting wing-nuts very tight I got a little shifting of the jig that compromised the smoothness of my cutting stroke (did not effect the cut). I'll be adding a C-clamp top/left where a third bolt would have helped.*

MISSION ACCOMPLISHED



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Flattening Roll-paper Prints

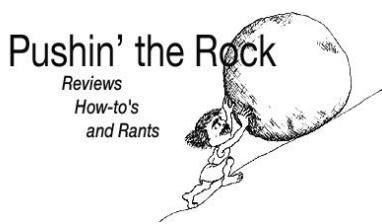
Monday, February 5, 2018

A simple trick using an empty paper roller. I had a couple things I wanted to include in this posting, but no new image – hey, it's early February in Maryland, and it's flu season, everyone's in hiding. So I posted a January iPhone shot of the \$6000.00 hole in our side yard. Over the holidays the sewage draining system from our 97 year old house broke down, surprise. Thus this seven foot deep hole leading from the house to edge of the road where a new "clean-out" had to be installed.

Naturally there was no indication of exactly where along the roadside the pipes were located. Fortunately our neighbor was able to tell the plumbers approximately where to start with the backhoe. When they got to the house end they found that it began by going left instead of straight or right – it seems originally it led to the main street. Then when that had to be rerouted, they just cut in a way across the yard with what had to come to more than 90 degrees in turns – that was over 30 years ago. Oh no, that wasn't designed to fail was it.

Away, we now have a whole new system, yay. And we don't have to worry about what to do with all that unused money laying around – if that's a silver lining.

Now to the reason for the posting:



Flattening Roll-paper Prints – A simple trick using an empty paper roller

A little trick I use that just might help someone: I print with pigmented inks on an Epson 7800 – that's a 24 inch wide roll-paper printer. BUT roll-paper prints have a slight to drastic curl to them, depending on whether it's from the outside or inside of the roll, that can prevent hinge mounting them instead of having to resort to expensive mounting even on small pieces. While larger

prints are at risk of expansion and bulges due to temperature and humidity changes, this isn't really an issue with smaller prints, so solving this dilemma is important.

The question is whether to give up and purchase precut, boxed stock for these and avoid using the roll, or find a way to flatten the dang things. I've come up with a quick, easy and effective procedure for any roll-paper print **9.5 inches or less in the roll direction**. *Anything larger I'm willing to pay to be mounted.*

Simply, after waiting a short time so the print can be handled a little, reverse curl it just enough to slide it in the end of an empty 3 inch diameter roll-paper spool. *OK, I guess a shipping tube would work too, and one could easily use a 4 inch plastic plumbing tube for slightly larger prints.* The ends almost meet, leaving no overlap to threaten the image. And one will fit in each end so two can be done at a time. **Leave it 12 to 24 hours depending on how close to the end of the roll the paper came off of** (gets quite curly near the end). Then slide it out and, protecting the image with a sheet of paper, place a layer of mat board over it and place this under a heavy book for **another 12 to 24 hours minimum** again depending on the part of the roll the print came off of..

Voila – a print that shows no sign of wanting to curl when hinge mounted and matted, it remains perfectly flat. I use this method for my 8.25x11 prints – printed on roll-paper and cut down to 9x12 (I get two side-by-side off the printer).

Changes to the Site

Home Page and Folios...

I've also cleaned up the Home Page, hopefully making it easier to navigate. The projects I'm presently working on, Havre de Grace Street and At the Opera House, have been treated to a new way of showing the images. And I've added a New Work section to include images from **Current Projects** that actually make it to Print form.

About the images page...

I've simplified mat and frame sizing. This makes for a lot less confusing price structure. Included is a new, slightly smaller size option with a very economical but nice non-metal 11x14 frame on 8.25x11 images. At the same time I am able to hinge-mount them, keeping the price down to \$75.00 at the Gallery. Nan likes them a lot.

I'm presently putting a number of these together with Havre de Grace Street shots for a special showing at the Gallery. Anyone in town who finds themselves featured in one of these gets \$40.00 off at purchase (hey, I gotta cover materials). This could be fun. First I have to get about 20 of these printed and framed up.



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My Favorite Twenty One Havre de Grace Street Images from 2017

Monday, February 19, 2018

Plus some notes on tools of the trade and a couple of lessons learned... My 2017 [Havre de Grace Street](#) series is now printed up as 8.25x11s and framed 11x14. I selected twenty-one of them (including a couple from [At the Opera House](#)) and was able to frame them a little more reasonably than usual because I scored a discount on the 11x14 frames – that doesn't happen that often. The shot above includes thumbnails of all 21 images – I'll need a small poster so I put this file together (sorry, thumb links don't work from the blog entries). These are just my favorites, there are more in the series here in the Street and Opera House sections. Anyone wants any of those done up, the terms are the same. I'll be figuring out this week where I'm going to hang them in town, with a poster explaining that if one finds themselves "featured" in one of the images, it's theirs for 80% off the posted price (which should be around \$75) or free without the frame. I stress the word "featured" simply because there are a couple of crowd scenes – you can see where I'm going with that one. *Not in this series are scenes without recognizable people – see those printed larger and in RiverView Gallery.*

I'll be figuring out this week where I'm going to hang them in town, with a poster explaining that if one finds themselves "featured" in one of the images, it's theirs for 80% off the posted price (which should be around \$75) or free without the frame. I stress the word "featured" simply because there are a couple of crowd scenes – you can see where I'm going with that one. *Not in this series are scenes without recognizable people – see those printed larger and in RiverView Gallery.*



Still gotta work out how all this will be handled. Soon. And hopefully 2018 will prove even more fruitful as I recover from my decade of working on the Easter Island project and get into something new here.

Vacuum Dry Mount Press HGP 260:

The last really good and reliable place to get my work dry mounted will close at the end of March. That left me having to decide between two ugly choices, a 500T-X hoist plate press that weighs almost 300 pounds and measures 24x30 inches and a 32x40 inch vacuum press that weighs half that. Price is about the same for a used press, anywhere from 10 to 20 percent of the original price because framing shops are closing at a fast rate. The problem was finding one within driving range – on the east coast they seem to be grabbed up quickly while they lay in wait for a buyer in Nebraska, Texas, Michigan, etc. So I decided to take whichever one was gettable.

I scored the larger but lighter, a measely 160 pounds, vacuum press, in beautiful condition. I pick it up sometime before the end of March – it's awkward however and I'll have to take someone with me, along with one of those strap sling things, to help load it into my wagon.

I have to do two things first. One – have a 220 outlet installed in my storage room (the only place I have for it) – fortunately the dryer is already located right down the same wall so the routing should be easy. And two – I need a sturdy table to set it on, which I will work on getting on the cheap.

Every piece I sell will help pay for this thing to the tune of (other than the 8.25 on 11x14 works which are hinge mounted) on the average \$15 each. Since I figure this will cost me in the end about \$600, that's 40 pieces – I had better get busy.



Birthday-wish Lens:

One of the cool things happening in the world of cameras and photography today is the resurgence of the utility of old film-camera lenses. They are often useless on digital SLRs because of the way they have to be constructed. But mirrorless cameras don't have that limitation. OK, it will be something of a toy, but I have my eye on Canon 500mm f8 mirror lens mounted via a \$20 adapter on my Fuji – it will instantly turn into a 750mm beast, wow. The only loss will be autofocus – which is no big deal. These things are running \$250 to 300 used but in good condition on eBay right now. If I get one great shot out of it, it will make it all worth while.

The only reason I'll pass on the Nikon version of this lens is focusing direction. Canon lenses, like Fuji, focus right to infinity while Nikon reverses this. After decades of shooting one way, to switch would simply screw with my head too much. I've always thought that this difference could be one of the reasons Canon and Nikon people are so averse to switching.

A Couple of Lessons Learned:

1- I have a habit of leaving my camera battery chargers plugged in – it's just handier that way. I just had one go bad after about 8 months – on checking I found out these things have only a 90 day warranty so I probably contributed to its demise. Oops. Oh well, this is one item where the third party substitutes are as good if not better than the name brand, and can be had for a third the cost.

2- Re: my notes from the last posting – **on uncurling prints made on roll paper**. I've revised my notes to read:

"after waiting a short time so the print can be handled a little, reverse curl it just enough to slide it in the end of an empty 3 inch diameter roll-paper spool. *OK, I guess a shipping tube would work too, and one could easily use a 4 inch plastic plumbing tube for slightly larger prints.* The ends almost meet, leaving no overlap to threaten the image. And one will fit in each end so two can be done at a time. **Leave it 12 to 24 hours – depending on how close to the end of the roll the paper came off of** (gets quite curly near the end). Then slide it out and, protecting the image with a sheet of paper, place a layer of mat board over it and place this under a heavy book for **another 12 to 24 hours minimum**, again dependent on the part of the roll the print came off of..."

This reflects the fact that I am almost right up to the tight end of a printer roll and at the same time got anxious and tried to cut my timing back a little – to not-so-good results. Now those four images are back under a stack of books.



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Do You See Yourself 2017



Local B&W Photographer Jim Craig spent 2017 pointing his camera at participants in some of the town's events. This is a special printing of some of his favorites, in a special size and framing for this showing during ***March at Concord Point Coffee.***

**If you see yourself featured in any way in one of the images,
it's yours for \$20 (to cover materials – price includes sales tax).**

Regular sized and framed work can be found/ordered across the street at RiverView Gallery.

***Contact the artist to reserve yours – or have another printed in case more than
one is needed – and make arrangements for delivery/pickup.***

See more of the *Havre de Grace Street* and *At the Opera House* series images, along with my Blog, folios, books and Easter Island work at:

jamescraigphotography.com

Contact the artist through the web site or at jcraig4357@gmail.com
include name /image title / connection to image and email or text#
you will be contacted when it is available for pick-up

Do You See Yourself 2017

Monday, February 26, 2018

Most of the information is in the view of the exhibit poster above. On or about March 1, and lasting for the month, I'll be setting these up in **Concord Point Coffee** in town, directly across the street from **RiverView Gallery** where I

show my work. This is a special printing of my favorites from Havre de Grace Street and At the Opera House 2017, a slightly smaller size size and in kind-of cool frames I managed to get at a huge discount. These are for sharing with the community – Concord Point is not taking a percentage and all I am asking for is the \$20 framing cost (sales tax included).

Simply contact me as directed at the bottom of the poster, include: **name, connection to the image, contact information (email or text#)** and I will contact you when your copy can be picked up – at the end of the showing or possibly earlier if multiples of an image are going out or if there is a need.

I had a lot of fun putting this together and Carl at Concord Point is looking forward to sharing them. As always my regularly sized and framed work can be seen or ordered across the street at RiverView.

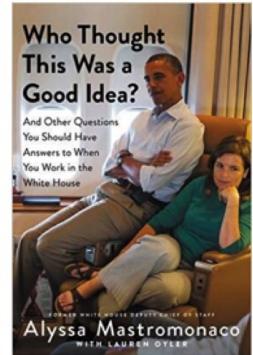
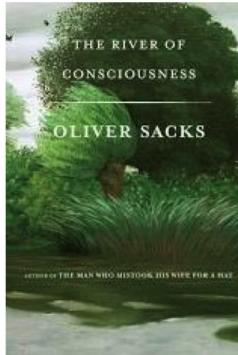
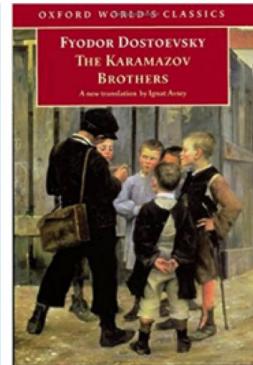
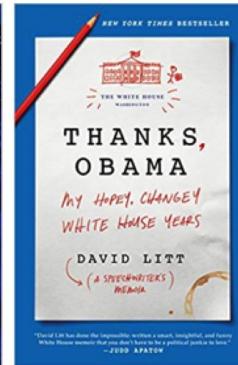
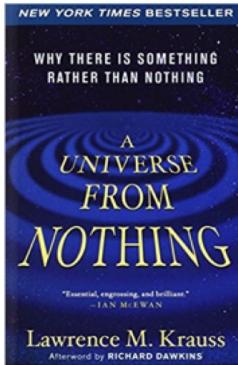
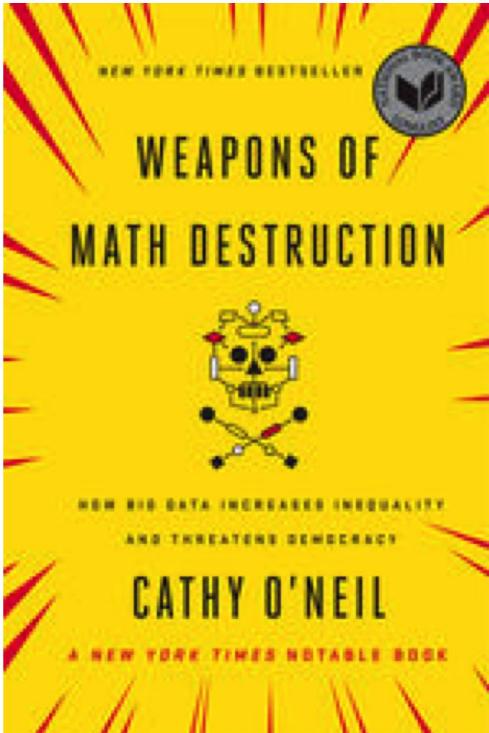
For this showing, if there are any images not posted from Havre de Grace Street or At the Opera House that you want posted, let me know.....


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ARRRRGH!!! • AAAAH!!! • E. I. SCREEN SAVER • RECENT READS

Monday, March 19, 2018

ARRRRGH!!! – I have a selection of my Havre de Grace Street shots on display at a local coffee shop, across from the Gallery. Along with the framed images I hung a framed POSTER explaining that they were on sale to anyone who is interested for the cost of the frame – and since I got these at a discount just for this showing, that price is only \$20. So, if you see yourself you can have it on the cheap. I thought that this was a cool, fun idea.

Well, it has gotten back to me, in the form of complaints that there are no prices on the images AND offers to put price tags on them, that NOBODY READS.

My first offer was to put a very large sign over the exhibit that says something like: For Those Who Won't Read the Poster – Everything is \$20. When I was informed that this would just "alienate" people, I asked if that isn't what I tend to do best. I just have too little patience for this kind of thing.

In the end, I left it up to a friend to do "whatever" she "wants" to solve the problem, while I went home to bang my head against the kitchen table.

AAAAAAH!!!

Nan found me a Canon 500mm F8, FD mount mirror lens in E+ condition on eBay and ordered it for my Birthday. Weeeeeee!. That will be a 750mm on my Fuji. All I needed to get was a \$23 adapter. Sure, it will be manual focus, but wow, this will be something to play with this summer. Old film camera lenses, and some of them are phenomenal pieces of glass, work wonders when attached to a mirrorless camera via an adapter – lots of pointers on line. The same isn't true in most cases for digital DSLRs – due to the location of the mirror in front of the sensor.



One small sacrifice does need to be made – after mounting the lens you have to go into the menu and set the camera on "Shoot W/O Lens – odd phrasing but who cares. Until this is done the shutter will not fire. Everything except focus and auto-aperture works great. This thing turned out to be in mint condition, as advertised. Cool. Now, can I hold my breath for 8 weeks?

EASTER ISLAND SCREEN SAVER

I just had a request for my Island Screen Saver from 2012 – for Windows 7. That jarred me into realizing that blog entry links from that far back for downloads just "might" not be working – duh. And it's not tricky because screen savers are essentially just a folder full of the right size images now. The one issue is that computer screens are so much larger and higher resolution now.

The images are 1600 X 2560, pretty good for 2012. I tried them on my 2880 X 5120 machine and, well, they come up more than a little a little lacking. **I'm re-posting the folder on my Downloads page anyway in case they are large enough for anyone.**

Mayve I'll get an opportunity while working on my upcoming Easter Island talks to do this up right (yes, yes, yes, in color), and use it with Rapanui music added as a run-in before the talk, hmmmm.

GOOD INSTRUCTION VIDEOS FOR IMOVIE AND FINAL CUT PRO *from David Cox*

I just noticed these two free videos on YouTube and downloaded them via **MacX YouTube Downloader** (also a free app) – or they can be watched right on YouTube. They are clear and easy to follow. iMovie is free so that makes that video that much more of a benefit – I did not realize how much more they are building into iMovie these days. It is amazing how much one can improve one's videos simply by watching this and running videos through it before showing them to anyone, withoug having to be a geek. Check it out. iMovie 2018 class:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fc6H881T0_k

As far as the Final Cut video – some amazing tips: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NPbBDs67aCY>

RECENT READS – *all on a reader of course...*

Just finished reading a number of books – I tend to enjoy reading anywhere from two to four at a time as long as no more than one is fiction. It actually helps rather than hinders getting into them all. Nice weather should slow this down a bit. I list these in spite of the fact that from my experience, people simply do not read (any more), often unless it's tripe-fiction.

Weapons of Math Destruction by Cathy O'Neil

I put this one first becaues it is by far the more important volume in this grouping – and that's saying a lot because I learned so much from all of these, especielly **A Universe from Nothing** and **Thanks Obama: Why: My Hopey, Changey White House Years**. In fact the first three here should be required reading for anyone who wants to have a clue as to what the hell is going on out there. This book is a warning to all as to how our lives, just in the last few years, have come to be governed by an industry of statistics, and the resultant destruction. The financial crisis, adverising, college ranking, justice, job searching, insurance, etc. All are effected. If nothing else, it helps to know what we are up against, and have enough information to avoid swallowing the kool-aid.

A Universe From Nothing: Why: Why There Is Something Rather Than Nothing by Lawrence M Krauss

Wow, this was a great book to read shortly after *Now: The Physics of Time* by Richard Muller. While Krauss hardly touches on the "time" aspect of the picture, it helped to have something of a grasp on that part going in. The latest advances in astronomy and physics are somewhat counterintuitive and tricky to grasp but exciting. Kraus pointedly avoids calling the probable dark-energy nature of empty space as the "ether" as some others do, possibly because this would bring too many preconceptions into the discussion. I love the exercise of redefining what "nothing" is. Instead of simply recommending *A Universe from Nothing*, I strongly push the two books as a one-two punch introduction to what the heck just might be going on, and some discussion of the ultimate (for now) question of what about "before" the Big Bang.

Thanks Obama: Why: My Hopey, Changey White House Years (a speechwriter's memoir) by David Litt

The second in a series of books I have on my list about the Obama years from the inside. This one is from the perspective of one of the more minor speech writers. You find out what a speechwriter really does, how and why. Very instructive – so many speeches are given by so many in the administration and the administration needs to not only keep tabs on what everyone is officially saying, they need a staff to handle what is essentially an advanced editiong job so everyone isn't spending 100% of their time writing their speeches. I could not put this one

down – beside, Litt was the source of a number of jokes that eventually made their way into Obama speeches so he can be funny.

***The Karamozov Brothers* by Dostoevsky**

Note the reversal of the "traditional" word order for English Translations. This was a long time coming for me, especially as someone who has read and loved everything else Dostoevsky wrote. My first effort came when I was much younger, getting about a quarter of the way through the, then pretty standard, Garnett translation and having to quit to avoid catatonia – the same response from me as when I first tried to read Dante's *Purgatorio* and *Paradiso*, the second two parts to The Divine Comedy, in the old stilted translations.

With the experience behind me of finding a translation of Dante (Birk and Sanders) that not only allowed me to enjoy and finish those two volumes but increased considerably what I got out of *Inferno*, I subsequently looked for a different translation of *The Brothers*.

First I settled on the highly touted Pevear and Volokhonsky translation, what a blow to my hopes. I got about a third way through and again, in an act of self defense, quit. Recently I tried again, this time with the Oxford Classics Avsey translation – it was the Dante thing all over again, a great experience.

That being said, and in spite of the fact that the work is obviously Dostoyevski's grand effort to collect all of his questions and observations about life, love, hate, God and family into one volume, it's hardly my favorite. Perhaps that's simply because most of those grand, unanswerable issues don't really reverberate with me that much – having come to the conclusion a long time ago that in the end too much concentration on coming up with answers to the "big" questions leads people and groups of people into believing that they have found the answers, usually with dangerous consequences. That all too often great evil is hatched from seeds planted with expectations of nothing but good. A simple philosophy of "fiat justitia ruat caelum" keeps me from a lot of self-inflicted stress (essentially not bothering oneself with complicated worries about what is best or most wanted, just keep to what's the right thing to do and let the shit (or skies) fall where it may).

Anyway, this is a great, great translation, the translator making the point in his short introduction that wording of the title into English that is correctly non-formal signals the path he took in translation.

***The River of Consciousness* by Oliver Sacks**

Sacks' last book, and one I enjoyed immensely. Like with many of his previous works, Sacks brings seemingly disparate themes/chapters together to form a whole that makes his point. Not a long read, but like adding a little piece to the jigsaw puzzle that is life that brings part of the image into focus.

***The Magpie Murders* by Anthony Horowitz**

Not bad, not bad at all. The odd construction actually helped keep me interested. The type of murder mystery one recommends to friends – only slightly demanding but lots of fun, layered and a little surprising. When I was younger I read a number of British murder mysteries – but this is the one genre I've actually found where they often make for better TV dramas (when they stick to the books) than reads. Especially so when, like with the presently airing *Strike* series, the author is involved with the production. Magpie strikes me as an exception to that observation. I'm highly recommending it to Nan to put on her iPad.

***Who Thought This Was a Good Idea: And Other Questions You Should Have Answers to When You Work in the White House* by Alyssa Mastromonaco**

A very personal, honest, even self-deprecating account from the White House Deputy Chief of Staff under Obama. Targeting young women who might aspire to a career in politics – as anything but the candidate – it is, sometimes brutally, frank. This is the kind of read from which one gets a picture of the real people behind the projected images we usually see. The one negative to reading this is that I now miss this great bunch of people, especially Obama, even more than before. Great timing for this book too, one can't resist overlaying what one sees here with what one knows is happening in the White House today and get a sinking feeling in one's gut.



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Something Close to My Heart: old ArtQuest T-Shirts

Sunday, April 8, 2018

Plus: Camera Remote Apps for the Phone • How-to Books for Digital Cameras • Camera Cards are not Created Equal • and Another Great Book Read. While I work on my first set of images from the Spring launch of happenings here in town, I find I have a number of things I want to address before I get busy actually taking pictures again. **The image above came about because I stumbled on two friends talking about our old ArtQuest event t-shirts.** It seems all of our memories were a little rusty as to what went when and where. To settle it I laid my treasured collection out on the bed and photographed them in order.

The last seven I designed by converting work from local artists. If I do say so myself, we had some nice shirts – shirts that we still catch people wearing. **Sales of these shirts financed adding free tent cover for artists without their own tents to an already free-to-enter art show.** No small deal. Solving the t-shirt ordering problem was interesting – it seems that if you poll people as to their favorite color for a t-shirt like this, you find that any one color will satisfy only a few people, and no one else. But we also found that the "natural" cotton color, sort of a light beige and nobody's favorite, was one that almost everyone would accept as a second choice. Add to that an effort to find designs that were at the same time interesting AND acceptable to men, women and children alike – voila, a shirt that actually sold. Of course we never completely solved the unsolvable... exactly how many of each size to order.

The first 5 shirts lost money for the committee – the second (an atrocity) being the result of a contest and committee vote – we never did that again. The other four simply sported the event logo at the time and shirt colors determined by vote. In the face of a vote to discontinue doing shirts altogether, I asked for one more shot.

The sixth through 12th were designed by yours truly using art from area artists – Number six (Zebra Kick) and the whole front row were converted over from **Dave DeRan** folk-art paintings (we bought the original Zebra Kick painting from him). Number seven (counting across from top left) was very painstakingly converted over from a painting by **Marcia Gayle Snee** – celebrating 30,000 years of art at the turn of the century (I love that one and keep meaning to ask her if she still has the original). The last, number 8 here was taken from a painting in the youth-art tent the year before – the artist: a very young fifth grade at the time, **Andrea Corbin**. The Zebra Kick shirt was redone in 2004 when we moved the show to Aberdeen, adding in a small number of light green shirts.

FUN with CAMERA REMOTE CONTROL APPS:

other camera remote apps will certainly work similarly

Fuji X-T2 – I installed the free app(s) on both my iPhone and iPad Mini. Set-up was easy, belying the instructions in the manual that made it look more confusing than it was. Come on folks, how about a simple step-by-step? What should have taken me two minutes took ten. After the initial set-up, access is easy. Looking forward to using this on the X-T2 with the 500mm (750mm equiv) mirror lens this summer.

Lumix LX100 – This is Nan's very nice little camera, I use it as a backup or quick-draw cam. The set-up instructions for the Remote Control apps were a complete debacle, understandable since, from my experience, nobody writes a more convoluted, useless, incomprehensible instruction manual than Panasonic, with the possible exception of Canon. I had to use a 3rd party guide. At one process you are actually supposed to aim your phone camera at the screen on the back of the camera to "reas" a bar code – it did not work. So I did the alternative, type in a password (these remotes actually initiate a wifi address from the camera). After about 15 minutes of back and forth, got it. I want to use this in April to make a 4K video of a performance – the one negative being that the camera has a 15 minute limit on any one video – necessitating a regular start/restart. AND I had better have a load of batteries on hand.

These remote apps are definitely worth the trauma of setting up – and the Remote Apps show what is in the viewfinder, focus, zoom, touch-screen focus, change settings, etc. It's a better way to do tripod shots where heavy use is involved. Heck, I already use a remote app on my iPad to operate MoviePro on the iPhone (really cool). I've got all of these nailed now, so if anyone wants me to give them a step-by-step on any of these, just let me know.

Camera Card Purgatory: no, they are not all created equal

OK, that's nice to know, I gurss. So far I've han no issues whatsoever with my Fuji using 95 MB/sec (MegaBits per second) write-rate cards. These things are expensive enough, running pretty much at best \$40 for a 64 gig card from a reliable manufacturer. Come to find out, there are two operations on my Fuji that are simply not available if one is not using the new 300 MB/s cards – at three times the speed and three times the cost. Arrrrgh.

My X-T2, like most high resolution cameras, will hang trying to shoot 4K videos on the cards I have. Not that I have a use for that as yet, but I should be prepared. The other shoe to fall is that the high expense cards, are pretty much required for the 11 fps (frames per second) high speed burst shooting. Again, not something I find much use for – preferring the 4 fps I get with the slower setting. But ordering the card I must – kicking and screaming all the way. *Don't think for a minute that these things are universally a go-to. Most cameras still cannot use them at all, Nan's (and my backup) included.*

CAMERA HOW-TO BOOKS – a help or not?

almost every camera out there has a third party how-to book or two

These things vary greatly as how much they are actually needed and how good they really are. I recently went back the the instruction manual for Nan's **Lumix LX100** – a candidate for the crappiest and worst thought out assemblage of so called instructions I have seen yet. You have a better chance of figuring it all out by playing with the camera – problem is that that way you are bound to miss things. Checking out a number of books, I purchased:

Photographer's Guide to the Panasonic Lumix LX100 by Alexander White (*I'll bet he had to resort to drink after translating their manual into something that can be comprehended*).

It was, to say the least enlightening. I picked up so much that I had missed that I immediately took a chance and got one for my main camera:

Fujifilm X-T2 X-Pert Tips by Rico Pfirstinger

I'm kinda glad I did. Not that the Fuji manual is "that" bad, but ithis book goes into so much more than the technical "how-to" that I wound up changing a couple of my default settings. Besides, ANY trip back into the menus on these

new, very complex cameras, is a big help in absorbing that world into one's brain.

and OH NOS, ANOTHER GREAT BOOK READ

Steven Pinker, one of the best and more prolific science writers of the last couple of decades, has written a volume that manages to break from his usual "more focused" works (Nan would never touch them) and gives us something to balance the scale of what is going on in the world today. While this book targets a more general audience than most of the others, Pinker doesn't dumb down his rhetoric – in other words one might have to "think" a little while reading. Then again, that's just what this work is all about, thinking rather than simply reacting.

Bill Gates calls Enlightenment Now his "new favorite book of all time". Though I think it is important, even great, it does somewhat in the mode of "preaching to the choir". Those who need to read this book won't – and in spite of the temptation, it would do no good to beat them over the head with it. I'm not saying that the "choir" doesn't need to read it, this book works best at addressing where the left might also be getting things wrong – by simply putting issues into perspective with facts we never see because everyone is too busy bombarding us with "news", which pretty much restricts itself to the negative side of things.



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First Shots from the First First-Friday of the Year

Tuesday, April 10, 2018

Hushdown in front of the Easter Bunny's Bridal Shop and Oh Bunny Me... This Friday was a complete surprise to me – past years saw May as the beginning of the event. And hey, April can be quite iffy as far as weather goes. Boy did they/we get lucky – it was the nicest day in a month – a one shot deal because Saturday was back to cold, wet and windy. We went up and I roamed around a bit taking some pictures, some of them below. The crowd was huge – again, the first really nice day and evening in a month.

At seven thirty we settled down to watch a street performance by Hushdown (facebook.com/thehushdown). They are going to be in concert at the Opera House in August – we WILL be there (turns out Jimmyo is their drummer – *he gets around*). We liked it so much we didn't get up until nine when the mini-concert ended. Yes, at this time of year it was fast getting dark, and no the lighting, though adequate for viewing, was hardly encouraging for taking pictures. Nevertheless, I persisted – shooting over 500 images, of which a handful are pretty good. The image at the top is actually my favorite – **it was shot at ISO 12800**. And even at that I was shooting at 1/25 of a second with an 85mm equivalent lens, mostly at f4, pretty shallow depth of field. The illumination that was there complicated things by constantly changing up from blue, to red, to yellow, etc. One of those situations where you set the camera to shoot three to five frames a second for as long as you hold the shutter down while you cross your toes as to the changing availability of light and movement by the subject. But hey, the music was pretty awesome.

I remember when with shooting film one had to use ISO 125 with Plus-x to get a fine-grain shot. Shooting Tri-X and pushing it to a measly 800 would give you the kind of grain I get now shooting at 12800 – quite an improvement. One of the best things about First Fridays is that it forces me to learn to handle drastic changes in lighting more efficiently, especially as dark sets in. Sure, this one won't blow up gigantic, but I can get a very nice 12X16 inch print out of it. Then a couple of shots taken from the courtyard holding the performance – **still a lot of exposures to sort through from this shoot** – then Oh Bunny Me finishing my race:

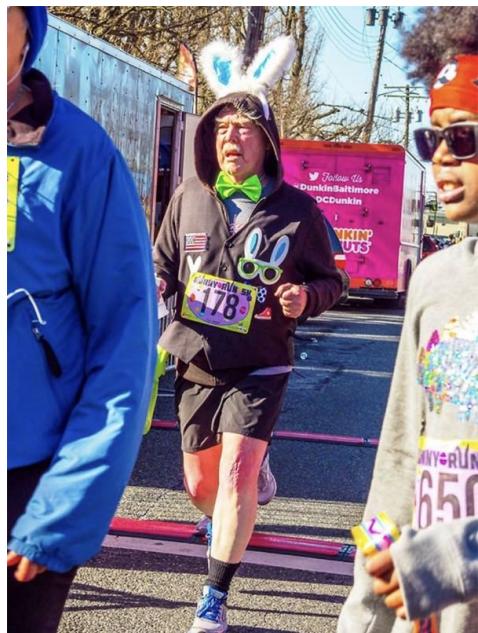
Nobody told me but it sure looks like the Easter Bunny is preparing to tie the knot. During a short break in the performances in "The Courtyard on First Friday, I glanced to the side and saw this. I love the shadows on the back wall:



Did not know what to make of it until I peeked around the corner and saw this... Bride of the Easter Bunny? then again, it is Havre de Grace, you might see anything.



and C'est moi...



...crossing the finish line at this year's "Bunny Run" 5K in neighboring Aberdeen. Pretty cold out. I look like death warmed over here, not sure why. I did finish first over 70 again – just myself and five women in the category. With about 500 runners, many in some sort of costume, it was a fun race. My outfit – thank heaven you can't see the huge flopping bunny tail here, was put together by two "supposedly" friends here in town who didn't give me much choice in the matter (Bunny Worthington and Tam stickler). If you know either one of them, you know how limited my choices were.

My time for the 5K – using the excuse that I've only exercised indoors for about four months now and hate heavy breathing very cold air (it was in the thirties), it was a very slow a little over 38 minutes. The Pirate Run is in the Summer and then Fall when there are three: Turkey Trot, Cats and Bats Halloween Run and the Reindeer Run. Should give me plenty of time to get up to snuff.

I'll wait a couple of days and post a second batch from the evening – and then possibly a third. Hmm, guess I also have to create a separate page pretty soon for 2018 Havre de Grace Street shots. Hopefully along with the second batch...



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More Images from First Friday – Kids, Dogs and Performers

Thursday, April 12, 2018

The shot above shows "daddy keeping an eye on the kid(s)" as they romp in the little bounce house always set up on one of the side streets. Center of town is blocked off to traffic for First Friday – for three main drag blocks and a number of the side streets within. The "bounce house" sits just off one of the main intersections, right across from that bastion of iniquity – the funnel cake stand. First Friday in Havre de Grace has become quite popular, the crowds amazing. The primary attractions seem to be the food and a half dozen or so performing bands, individuals, etc. spaced throughout. Some of the major restaurants have roped-in seating areas where they can serve wine and beer. Getting a seat? Well, in the middle hours that can be iffy! I would like to see a little more art in booths lining parts of the street, but we live in an area where very little attention is paid to it.*et*

First Friday May 4 – Do You See Yourself 2017 comes to the Street

It looks like May 4, First Friday in May I'll be setting up in front of RiverView Gallery – across from Concord Point Coffee – with my "**Do You See Yourself**" collection from **Street and Opera House 2017**. I need to give more people in town an opportunity to get copies of thiers or themselves for free (\$15 if left in the frame). I enjoy doing

that. But since I want to be able to roam around and shoot, I'll be arranging for someone to show with me – they can handle any takers.

Some people just know how to look cool. Below that's Peter D Green of Havre de Grace here (local Cultural Arts Board Director took the time to give me the name, thanks) sitting drums for one of the many performers. I had to wait a while for him to exit the groove he was in and open his eyes – I had to be quick though.



Here's **Marion Jackson of Rogue Swan**. She's taking a break from skating the streets and handing out flyers for their **Vaudeville Cabaret** performance at the Opera House April 21. We'll be there!



A passer-by offers a very large dog a sip of water...



None of the grownups sitting in the circle Cliff Giles sets up for one and all to come and drum were near as cute as this kid. She was set up on the bench off to the side and concentrating on her own drumming.



And there are still a couple more images to work up from last Friday – something for this week-end or Monday.



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Final Images from our First First Friday of 2018

Monday, April 16, 2018

I saved two of my personal favorites for last. So called "street Photography" is something new to me, never having even considered it. Then on Easter Island, in order to complete my "portrait", I found myself including some of just that. Something I still find awkward. Maybe this is because I know photographers personally who have a much better eye for it – coupled with a lack of my own reticence when it comes to interacting with the subjects in lieu of trying to remain anonymous at all times. I'll have to just do as I did on the Island and build enough of a connection to the town that we now live in for that not to be so much of an issue.

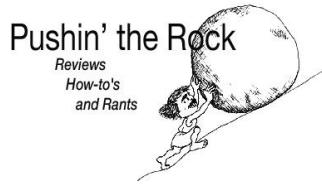
The first, above, began as a grab shot, in poor light, of Duke Thompson, local musician, conductor and piano instructor, having joined Cliff Giles in his drum circle outside Concord Point Coffee. But there was something about the older fellow on the drum next to him combined with the very odd effect of the face-balloon behind Duke that caught my eye. Three awkwardly associated elements that fascinated me. The expression on the Duke's face and the slightly blurred movement of his fellow drummer only add to the effect for me.

The second, below, is a scene that always strikes me – two people deep in quiet conversation in the midst of the

"madding" crowd. The street was bustling with events, a rock group playing loudly right out of sight on the right, walkers behind them and within a couple of feet in front, constantly. Any shots I took that showed this just didn't seem to work, but I like this catch without anyone else for the seeming isolation. I also like the geometry of the scene.



I am posting my latest "Pushin' the Rock" Rant" as a separate page, not here on the blog, so it can go directly to the Rants index. It's long with lots of words and figures. And since in general "poeple don't read", why bother. If you are interested in checking it out, click on the title below or go to the Rants link on the home page.



Link: [ART ARTITHMETIC 101](#)

Nan's reaction, though she couldn't agree more:

"Oh Lord, Another Soapbox Rant"



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A Couple of Rehearsal Shots from Upcoming Rogue Swan's Vaudeville Cabaret at the Opera House

Wednesday, April 18, 2018

After over a week of very severe bronchitis, feeling stronger but with a voice box barely working, I ventured out to take some shots at one of Rogue Swan's rehearsals for their **Vaudeville Cabaret** at the **Opera House** this **Saturday, April 21**. I've seen them perform before, primarily holiday freebie type stuff. But this is different, wow. We're glad we have our tickets with our favorite seats picked out – near the back is actually good in the Opera House, it only holds a tad over 200 and everyone gets a good seat. And, I'll be mostly standing behind all this with my trusty Fuji and stabilized telephoto, trying to catch prime moments. Without the rehearsal, I would miss a lot, what with all the unexpected action that is included.

Nan didn't go with me because she wants to see it fresh – I did tell her to keep her eye out for what I call the "*he had it coming*" number, funny and wonderful. Maybe the group can find some use for the pictures I took at rehearsal, I'll give them the full-size color jpegs. Me, all I want is the RAW versions and any B&Ws I glean out of them.

Above, Katy Gordon, director and cast member, moves off to the side to watch and think. Just watching her work is exhausting. I picked a couple of my faves and worked up B&Ws. Not sure yet if any other exposures will be added later – this is one of those cases where I want to run images by them first for approval:

April Monique Burril, L.H. James (aka James Watkins) and Josh Hutchinson



Below: April Monique Burrill and Jessie Gordon rehearsing "He had it coming..."

A Couple of Rehearsal Shots from Upcoming Rogue Swan's Vaudeville Cabaret at the Opera House





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The Frustrated Bluebird Suitor – First Test on My Birthday Lens

Sunday, April 22, 2018

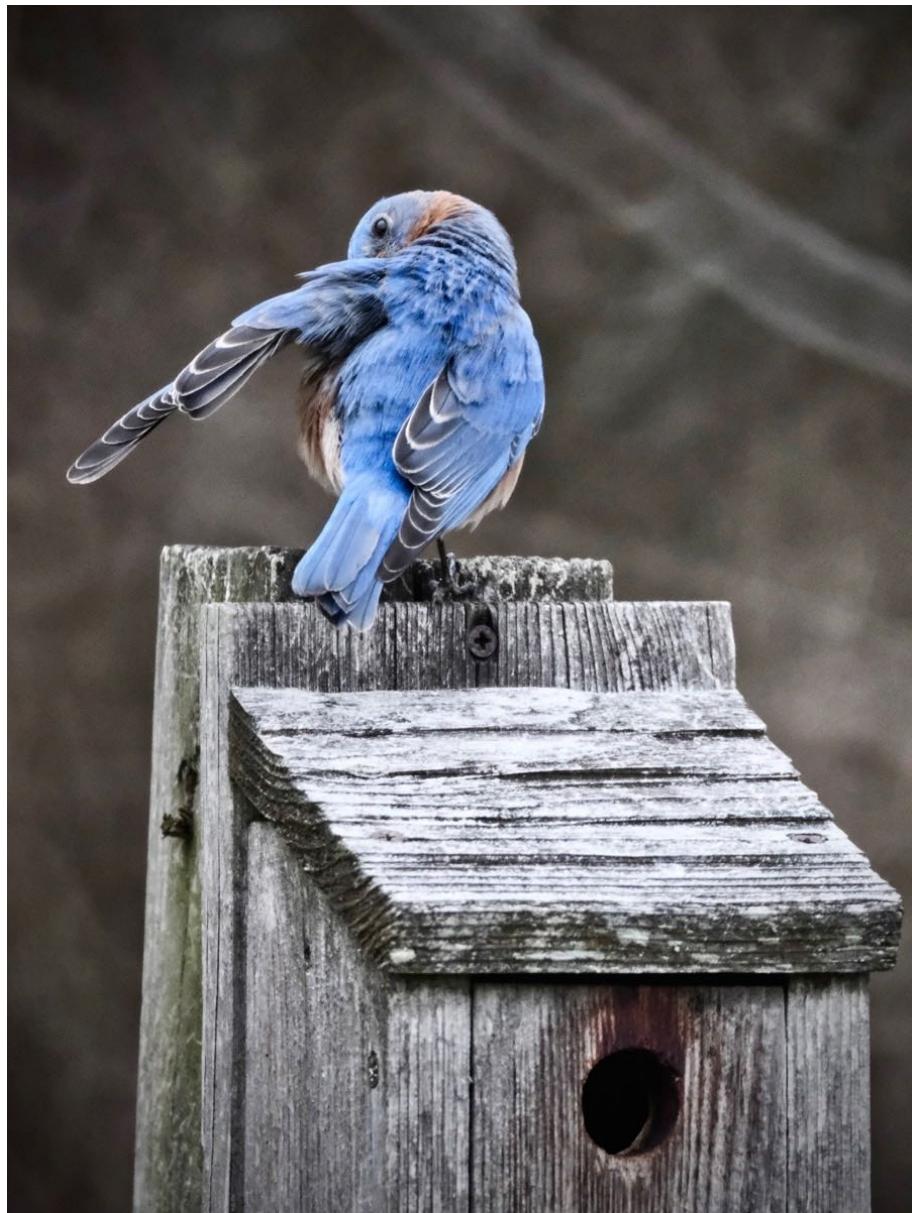
OK, it's not B&W, so shoot me – and it's not my birthday yet, so shoot me again. But a male bluebird decided to perch atop our little birdhouse and try to entice a female. It didn't work, or he simply gave up to easily, I don't know. A female did show up at one point, take a quick peak inside and abruptly leave, never to return. Poor fellow. This went on for a couple of days. It gave me an opportunity, and excuse, to convince Nan to let me run some tests on the lens. It's a **decades old, mint condition, I-swear-it was-never-even-used, Canon 500mm, f8 mirror lens**. Mounted with an adapter on my Fuji X-T2 it makes for a cool 750mm, wow. Sure could use a stabilizer with that thing!

With converted lenses, everything works on my Fuji except auto-focus (there was no such thing when it was made) and auto aperture – well, I shoot aperture-preferred anyway, so that's not a problem. Manual focus on a mirrorless system is NOT like that on an SLR – press a button and the viewfinder zooms to a very close blow up of the center of the image and something called focus peaking, putting a red, white or red line around anything in focus, makes it quite quick and easy. And since I'm used to using my left hand for zooming anyway, on a prime lens it can be busy focusing.

Anyway, below are more shots of our romantically frustrated bluebird. They were taken through a pane of glass in the kitchen door, so I imagine the lens doing a small notch sharper because of that. Plus I was hand holding the thing – not the smartest move in the world. I got to thinking later:

1- Duh, get the tripod out... 2- Duh, use a remote release... 3- Duh, activate electronic shutter... 4- Duh, try opening the darn door...





The main difference between the results here and my Fuji 300mm equivalent lens (last year's bluebird sequence [here](#)) is that those exposures had to be monster-cropped, these not-so because it gets me more than twice as close.

There will be another "test" of my birthday lens. Seeing these flawed but passable results, I thoroughly expect to see some amazingly sharp results. The electronic shutter, by the way, means the mechanical shutter is not used, rather the sensor makes the exposure by sweeping across in the designated time. This can cause issues photographing moving subjects, but otherwise one is not handicapped by either potential camera vibration or even sound.

So I'm glad I made this first, unthought out effort. Do I think I can wait for my birthday to try again – not. These shots aren't perfect, but they were fun. Oh, and the birdhouse – we have what looks like a pair of house sparrows nesting in there now – go figure!



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Two Images of April from Rogue Swan's Vaudeville Cabaret

Wednesday, April 25, 2018

ALSO: Fuji X-T2 Battery Grip – More than Advertised and 4K Video with the Lumix LX100 – Not so Great –

The image above and the color version below, along with a second, are the only two images out of over fifteen hundred exposures – half of which I kept – that I have worked on so far from the event. Obviously April Monique is a belly-dancer. This was one of Nan's favorite parts of the show – she picked these two out of the sequence of shots. That's April's husband, Jimmyo, on the drums behind her. Don't be fooled by his expression, that's his drumming-concentration-scowl. Even though I prefer working in B&W, I'm going to do these two as color prints for them, after I remove that distracting mic stand behind her in the second one (forgot to save it in the color stage that way so I have to do it all over again, curses one more thing on my list). I really love her face in that one (I have a version with Jimmyo removed too, but I like it better with him on the edge):

be almost as much fun as shooting on Easter Island where we spent a total of three years between 2006 and 2016.



Side note: See these colors – the darn lights change constantly. Fun but tricky at times...

Fuji X-T2 Battery Grip – better than advertised

Ever try to find out if a piece of equipment will do something that you think it should but are afraid to try for fear of messing something up. The Fuji Vertical Battery Grip for my X-T2 adds a second and third battery, adding power and extending shooting time dramatically. It comes with a direct AC charger that lets you charge its two batteries while on the camera. It seems I'm not the only one searching the internet to see if the camera will run direct off AC through the grip instead of getting one of those wifly (but cheap) set-ups that run into the camera battery compartment. Surprise – I found conflicting answers. I'm beginning to think far too many people answering tech questions on line simply give their opinion of how they think it probably is, as fact.

Finally I broke down and tried it. Wow, not only does the charging turn off and let the camera run off AC plugged into an outlet when the camera is turned on – it even works with NO batteries in camera or grip. I'm super pumped over that one – one is locked into one spot – but there are situations, like at the Opera House.....



I've got a lot of work to do with this batch of images, but I'm almost two weeks behind on everything after being down the first half the month with that nasty cold that's going around, to the point where I almost couldn't remember where my brain was. Anyway, hopefully lots of B&Ws. *I'm finding that shooting in Havre de Grace can*

4K Video with the Lumix LX100 – Not so Great

My second grand experiment did not turn out so well. A number of photographers on line touted the abilities of Nan's little LX100 to do 4K video. So, for the Rogue Swan performance I set it up on a tripod, hooked it up to AC thru the battery compartment, and let it shoot video during the performance. I had mixed results – the good, the bad and the ugly of it:

GOOD...

- The camera zoomed to 75mm equiv. just framed the stage, cool.
- It shot quality 4K video, visually.
- With the AC connection none of the battery overheating that can come with 4K

BAD...

- It only shoots 15 minute 4K video before quitting – one has to watch this and immediately press the red button to start it up again.
- If it's dark it can be difficult to locate that darn red button.

UGLY...

- Sound coming thru the mic might satisfy some but I think pretty much sucks – and the camera has no external mic connection.
- The final "ugly" is on me. This set-up should have been better supervised – I was so busy shooting stills that a couple of times I failed to notice that the 15 minutes were up. And then when the card was full at intermission, I got in a hurry and put in a card formatted from my camera, and partially full – it ran out suddenly 20 minutes later. Next time:

- I'll set a camera up that will take my external mic (even if I have to borrow one), still plug into AC
- Keep the cards separate (duh).
- Make sure it will do 30 minutes or more video
- Ask Nan to keep an eye on that (oh, and give her a remote set-up so she doesn't have to look for that stupid red button in the dark).
- One last change – if I'm shooting stills anyway, there's no reason to shoot 4K – kick that down to HD and save room on cards and computer later.



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The April Monique Poster

Tuesday, May 1, 2018

A quick posting while I'm busy with other stuff – and playing with my new adapted lens. This is only the third time I've created an 18x24 color "poster" of a performer, but it worked out great the first two (both of them on Easter Island) and it was a lot of fun. I don't know what happened to Roberto's because he passed in a tragic accident, but Mokomae's hangs on the door to his studio (he's a dancer, carver, artist and did both of our tattoos). This time I did April Monique, local belly dancer in the Vaudeville Cabaret performance at the Opera House. I caught her formal pose just before she began the veil dance – by far my favorite shot of the performance. Nan was definitely the inspiration behind this. There were a few hurdles to clear – but that's where all the fun lies:

- While it did begin life as 24 megapixels, it was exposed at 1/250, F4.2, at about 200mm equiv. and ISO 12800, ouch. Add half the image was cropped off, I had my doubts going in.
- Then there was that tall microphone standing right behind her that had to come out.
- April's husband was on the drums on the left – a tiny bit of a challenge to convince him to leave the picture. In my B&W of this I left him in – my last posting along with the original, [HERE](#) – because it makes the image tell a story. As a color poster, not so much.
- A slightly tricky little bit of interpolation was also involved, obviously.
- Add in a little judicious smoothing to undo some of the trauma caused by stretching the image so far.
- All with the added benefit that the color inks in my printer so seldom get used that the jets desperately needed a workout. Cool.

The result – a nice 18x24 poster.

I just hope April and her husband like it as much as I do _ gotta find a way to get it to them. Below, a look back at my other two posters:



When I finished, I asked Nan: can I get back to my B&Ws now? Then she hit me.

Another Foray into Adapted Lenses:

My sister-in-law gave me a couple of old Canon cameras with lenses from the film days – these things are ancient. One of the lenses however, an old **breach-mount Canon 50mm f1.8**, while a little beat up on the outside, is freaking smooth and pristine as far as operation, glass, etc. – not a hint of dust or mold in there. That's what's really

important and pretty rare – I could care less about outside wear. So I put it on an adapter for my X-T2 and have a sweet little **76mm portrait lens**. Again, with an adapter one has to focus manually, but that's certainly not a problem. Not sure when I'm going to get a chance to try it out, possibly this First-Friday evening in town, after dark sets in a little. *New toy, new toy, new toy!*



Checking it out was like Christmas (the other lens, a much newer version of the same lens, while looking better on the outside, had terrible issues inside – she said she would take that one to the beach a lot). The search is on out there for these old film camera lenses because they work wonderfully with adapters on the new mirrorless cameras. But the only realistic way to get them is by searching because the prices on eBay are climbing out of sight. An old Sears brand 55mm f1.4 screw-mount lens, not that long ago a \$5 to \$10 item, suddenly can bring \$80 if both clean and clear. Who knew that my old Canon FD lenses that I sold off over a decade ago would gain so much in value and actually be usable.



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First Friday in May

Friday, May 18, 2018

First Friday in May • havredegracestreet.com and Easter Island Journal PDF • As is obvious from my Havre de Grace Street page, I've gotten behind on posting local excursions – been busy. Here we are half way through the month and I'm just now posting May First Friday images – the work from Rogue Swan's Vaudeville Cabaret performance at the Opera House in April is running even more behind – but some fun stuff coming there.

Most of the shots this time are vertical, so I made the night shot of Concord Point Coffee the intro image. Once again, shot at ISO 12800, it still has pretty good detail. The one thing I'm noticing about shooting a lot of First Fridays is that I wind up with a lot of similar shots. There is a lot of variety from one month to another, but some really cool stuff repeats more often. So I wind up taking maybe 300 exposures and using six. Then again, my average for the Easter Island project wasn't all that much different.

Some text with the images below – then a couple of notes on site changes that kept me busy and some reflections on and changes to my Easter Island Talk/Slide/Video Presentation:



These there were busy chasing ants. As I swung around to take their picture the little girl caught me...



The little girl on the left, Aloha, was trucking done the street with her mother trying to keep up. The girl on the right was getting her face painted. Kids seem to enjoy First Fridays as much as the adults.



On the left a lady checking out some hand-made jewelry. I liked her face and she graciously let me take her picture. The couple on the right were oblivious to me and anyone else as they did their own version of "Dancing in the Streets" to the music of Jett Blaq and Red Alert.

Internal site changes: havredegracestreet.com and [Easter Island Journal PDF](#)

1- Notice at the top of the page havredegracestreet.com is listed as a second url under jamescraigphotography.com. This formalizes that this is a project I am planning to work on and expand. Both urls work to get to the site, each under its own name.

2- The blog archive link at the bottom of the recent postings list on the home page leads to an [index of postings dating back to January 2017](#). At the top of the page are two links, the one on the right takes you to the index of postings from late 2012 through 2016 – separating out this block of postings makes it much easier on this end to upload changes and blog postings, and helps the site work faster. On the left at the top is a link leading to just the Easter Island Journal – that's all blog postings 2006 through late 2012 including copies of whatever related postings appeared through 2017 – all in the form of a large PDF file. It's about 150mb, so I plan of reposting it soon to be a direct download as well as opening as a PDF as it is now (turning web pages into PDFs and joining these together is actually pretty simple).

While the original reason for this was for us to have it as a record (*our private copy will also include scans of over four hundred pages of Nan's handwritten Island notes that I am just beginning to include – gonna take a while*). Creating the PDF has the added benefit of allowing me to remove the first seven years of postings from the blog completely, that really helped trim down the size of the site.

My Easter Island Project Talk/Slide/Video Presentation

Recently I took my Easter Island project slide program down to about a fifth its size and then added a few video clips so it could be shown to a small group that was totally non-photographer. I've done the program for photography clubs before, having over twice the time allotment but with no videos (probably a mistake). This time I learned a lot that had never occurred to me – first and foremost, go big on the video clips placed to lead up to critical B&Ws. I seem to have a difficult time imagining that everyone isn't as focused on the B&Ws and the stories behind each image, including the technical aspects, as I am. Go figure. It was a small group so I was able to give each couple a signed book – all in all it was fun and instructive.

Nan remarked afterwards that she occasionally worried because as soon as a B&W went up on screen I would perk up and make it obvious I wanted to digress into the story behind it and the evolution of the image. Gotta

control that a little better. Anyway, not sure I really want to do this very often, especially to small non-photographer groups – mainly because of time restrictions combined with the scope of the project, and lack of interest by many in getting into B&W in depth. Photography group meetings have time allotment issues too – they usually give more but then there are all the questions, discussions. And the color focused photographers lose interest pretty fast in B&W discussion.

So I'm thinking of working up the presentation that I would really like to give – and find a venue for it. It would be in two parts, with a short intermission where I could answer some questions, show our Rapanui carving collection off (hopefully in cases), deal with books, etc. This first part would be an extended version of the recent presentation. After break, while concentrating more on B&W images, I would go into much more detail about the project, the Island, the actual photography, printing, etc. – accepting questions at any point. This way people who zone out on that kind of thing would be free to leave mid-way. If done locally, I would also have a good number of books to give out according to some formula I haven't come up with as yet.

I'll be talking to one possible venue here in town next week, and there is a very amenable non-profit in Aberdeen that I've worked with before that I'm sure would sponsor it and help find a venue if that doesn't work out. I'm not really "into" this kind of thing so, who knows, this might be just a one-shot deal. Dealing with people in large groups is kind of a stretch for a couple of people who were very content living in the woods with no neighbors for forty years and have no issue with living on a small island in the middle of the Pacific with few to no amenities.

Picturing the audience naked doesn't work for me, I have to imagine them as a captive audience that has no choice but to be there and it's my job to keep them all awake. – the only way I can keep myself from taking the conversation into directions that my mind would really prefer to go, along with one or two others if I'm lucky, with the rest dozing off.



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Upcoming Easter Island Presentation – Hand-Made Easter Island Candle for Mother's Day and Catching a Moment

Thursday, May 24, 2018

Just a quick little posting while I work up some images from Rogue's Swans Vaudeville Cabaret. The subject of Easster Island came up a couple of times recently. First – our youngest sent Nan a Mother's Day present made by her youngest, Aaron – above. It's candle with Ahu Vai Moana Uri (thats: Ahu Dark Blue Waters) built into it, at sunset. It's about four inches tall and is one of those things where the inside is of a lower burning wax so the outside can be used later to put short candles, etc. in.

The second – below – was just a quick flash. Nan and Tamara at the Gallery in town watch(ed) *Once Upon a Time* for seven years. In the next-to-last episode, the first half of a two-part series ender, the camera rolled quickly over an old scrapbook. Nan missed it the first time so I clicked back to it – it was very quick. Here's a screen shot

of the video frame – showing a Tongariki postcard from Easter Island. I've always seen the postcard views as very misleading, what with each one of these *moai* being six to seven times the height of a person. In a total of three years, we spent a lot of time with these guys – *I hope they miss us as much as we miss them.*



ANNOUNCING : *The Moon has been Eaten* – at the Opera House

It looks like I will be giving the looooong version of my Easter Island Project talk/slides-video show, giving away books, etc. at the Opera House on or about Tuesday, August 28. I guess a Tuesday isn't all that bad, after all, it's not really a day that most people have anything scheduled. It will be held in the main theater – original planning being to seat up to a hundred in the back seats with me in the cleared middle area, and the screen on the stage. I can't imagine getting more people, and can't say it wouldn't be nice, but having to use the stage would be a bit of a frustration.



This will be something of a benefit for the Opera House, our way of donating. Tickets will be \$10 – all of which goes to support the Opera House – with ticket holders getting a signed copy of my *The Moon has been Eaten*. We're working on having glass cases downstairs to show our extensive Rapanui carving collection, and I still have to check to see if I can hang some of my favorite framed images from the project downstairs too.

I'll be busy for a couple of months getting the word out and, this time, expanding rather than shrinking the program. I try to make it interesting and fun – and this time I'd like the after-break time for answering questions – some of which I will try to get in advance. More information to come. After three years on the Island and 30 to 40 thousand exposures, the only problem is actually what not to include. And, arrrrgh, I just know I'm going to wind up getting a couple of new B&Ws out of the process – something I hardly need at this point (I have one in mind already). Hmm, that gives me an idea – a ticket number drawn for a framed (20x24) print to be selected by the winner from the showing downstairs. Wow, this is fun!



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Rogue Swan's Vaudeville Cabaret at the Opera House – finally

Tuesday, May 29, 2018

Hey, I not only got busy and had a few issues to handle, there are so many nice shots from this performance that it was a major effort to go through them all. In the end I sort of copped out – flagging anything that tempted me and calling Nan in to make the final selection. The opening shot is part of the final curtain bow – to a standing ovation from a full house. Performance shooting is a lot of fun, if pretty challenging as far as low light and fast movement, but in the end is a special challenge for B&W – after all, it's photographing an art form that involves color, in monochrome. Which doesn't dampen my interest whatsoever – I'm just glad to have the color exposures in case anyone needs them.

Since I shoot RAW, I was able to give Rogue Swan full size jpeg's of everything, along with free reign to use them as they wish. I started working this way on the Island – at the end of every trip leaving copies of the images with the lady who puts out a wonderful little freebie magazine there. It was great fun seeing them used for everything from backgrounds to covers. It was even more amazing how many shooting opportunities along with unexpected access came my way as a result.

I should probably start putting any event results on a USB stick for the Opera House to review in case they want any for their own uses – problem is there that if they want everything they had better have some way to organize a load like that. As long as I have the RAW files for my B&W work, I'm a happy camper. Life, photography and coffee are meant to be enjoyed, although not always in that order.

Back to the images – which are also posted, of course, in the [Havre de Grace Street](#) section, along with the two shots of April Monique posted immediately after the event – with some of my favorite moments. Titles, etc. with the images on the Street page:





Ah heck, I'll put April back in again – one of the highlights of the show:





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Unified Jazz Ensemble at the Opera House

Monday, June 4, 2018

Plus – *Update on my Upcoming O.H. Presentation / Site Fix-Its / On B&W.* As everyone (sometimes I joking refer to everyone as both of them) probably knows by now Havre de Grace Street refers to anything going on in and around Havre de Grace, including at the Opera House when I can get access. This posting will only be up a couple of days before the next, so it will just have a couple of quick shots from the Cultural Arts Board sponsored Jazz demonstration at the Opera House during the First Friday celebrations. The performance launches a month-long series of cultural events at libraries around the County. For imformation and schedule go to the [Artists in the Library page at CulturalArtsBoard.org](#).

The image above is a group shot of the **Unified Jazz Ensemble**. If they are any indication of the quality of the series of events, they will be well worth checking out. these guys were good – if not outlandishly photogenic. Two more shots below and then some important notes on my own upcoming Opera House presentation, some site fix-its and a short rant that comes to mind about B&W photography.

The First Friday images should go up Wednesday morning.



Opra House Presentation Update: (open info but primarily for a couple of people offering suggestions, ideas and feedback)

I hope to make regular updates on progress, additions, etc. here as this thing evolves. Nan and I have attended far too many of these things to be willing to let it fit into the normal mold. As a starting point, I'm taking a pointer from watching Rogue Swan events at the Opera House – *whatever I can do to make it fun and interesting for me might just do the same for those attending*. Some of my ideas:

- Open with a rousing piece of Rapanui music playing to a fast paced color slide show (more like a screen-saver) so everyone gets an opening look at the island and its people.
- Introducing some of the B&W images with related video clips.
- At least one instance of B&W sequence that tells a story made into a video with Ken Burns effect (this will be very cool).
- Still planning to distribute the books during break and drawing for the framed print near the end, maybe. People keep telling me that this would be a mistake – I'll be taking more feedback on that one.
- Want to work in a Short video of Nan's 13 island paintings (again, Ken Burns effect on stills) somewhere – maybe going into break.
- Really want to work in Roberto Pakomio's one music video, maybe as a final item after I'm done and before lights come up – it has a very memorable "farewell" after the body of the video ends.

– A triptych of triptychs, *sort of* – *I just couldn't resist calling it that. While thinking about how to introduce some things into my presentation, I searched back in some of the stage performances from the Island – none of them for the "tourists" (we generally avoided those, partly because they tend to be big, formal extravaganzas attended by nothing but tourists, but also because they are pretty expensive to get into). What I came up with was a series of three or four part sequences that make either framed triptychs or, more to the point here, sets of individual slides designed to click through quickly, back and forth in both directions for effect. (Again, if I'm having fun maybe everyone else will too. As soon as the talk is over I'll figure out just how to post them on the blog).*

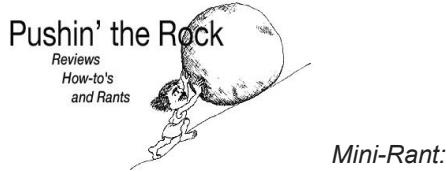
There I go again, finding ways to expand an already extensive body of work from the Island.

- And oh, if anyone has something they want me to address, please let me know.

A Double OOPS and Fix-Its:

I was very grateful to have It pointed out to me that my [Harford County](#) folio was incomplete, a full 20 images short. Somehow this winter when I did some site work the old second page got deleted without me updating it to a new one. It's fixed now, by simply adding the images to the present page – consolidating things even more. I've also now done the same thing with the [Acadia](#) page. Again, I really appreciate it when someone notifies me about a problem or discrepancy on the site (including spelling – my nemesis when typing on a computer).

At the same time I was informed that my "Contact me..." link was sending people to a non-existing email address. It seems that last month when I was making header changes I copy-pasted the email address in the link without the first letter of the address. So naturally no emails were getting through. Bummer. *Fixed it.*



Mini-Rant:

Color photography feeds the emotions

B&W is food for mind and soul.

Recently the subject of "why B&W" came up again, over the phone or something, and at home in the kitchen I blurted out to Nan: "**Maybe I should have stepped in it and blurted out that in photography color feeds the senses and emotions while B&W is food for the brain and soul**". Nan pointed out that I had better write that down as a starting point before I forgot it – duh, by the time I found a pen, I had to ask her for part of it back. Arrrrgh.

I believe I can defend the statement, if simplifying it a tad. Put another way, stripped of the fickle, and only marginally based in reality, narrow band of the color spectrum that is visible to the human eye, we are left with and confronted by so much that is constrained and concealed underneath – shadow, tone, light, expression, texture, line and geometry, perspective, detail, meaning, etc. What emerges is whatever statement that the image itself might make, along with that of the photographer who made the complex choices needed to render his take on the

scene (often requiring a series of images to decipher). The word "style" comes to mind, but that is only one factor.

B&W photography begins as an abstraction of reality and lends itself to becoming a conveyance of how the artist sees the world.

This is not to denigrate color photography as a fine craft, or the skills necessary to do it well. Besides, it's where all the money is. But a B&W photographer does what *he* (in my case) does for the same reason an artist works in charcoal, watercolor, oil, stone, wood, etc. B&W photography, like other mediums, begins as an abstraction of reality and lends itself to becoming a conveyance of how the artist sees the world. And like the other art mediums, is a lifetime learning process, evolving, changing. The fact that it begins by picking up a camera is irrelevant.

Back when photographers had to choose between color and B&W film, fewer people questioned the medium as a true art form. But with the advent of digital photography, in spite of the fact that shooting RAW RGB gives the B&W photographer more control over the conversion process, it seems to have created the impression that B&W is somehow a subset of color. Well, it can be, especially for the myriad photographers who simply select a B&W preset. With some of us the monochrome image is what is visualized from the git-go – it's a matter of perspective. In the best way possible, it's not about pretty pictures.

If only camera manufacturers would offer the option of a much-sharper-without-those-darn-color-filter-layers over the sensor anyway, good camera, with a B&W only sensor, that doesn't cost as much as your car. There is an outfit now that actually converts camera bodies – I'll consider that as soon as the GfX is on the list and I have the money (as if either one of those is going to happen).



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First Friday in June 2018

Wednesday, June 6, 2018

I didn't get up, down and around the streets as much as usual – I'm sure a familiar story to some – I wound up stuck wearing the wrong shoes and about an hour in my feet were killing me. Put a damper on my usual pace. Then at 7 we had to (got to) take a break for an hour for the performance at the Opera House (last posting here). The picture at the top is the lead singer and guitarist from [Dirty Deal Blues Band](#), one of the five or six groups set up in the streets this Month. Actually they were really surprisingly good. At first I didn't think I had gotten anything usable, until I played with the image a bit, OK more than a bit.

Next, a couple of the musicians joining the ever popular, sort of "come and drum with me" circle with Cliff Giles outside Concord Point Coffee.



The young lady below was playing street chess. Not sure about this one, keeping everything else still while catching her in motion playing "Bishop to A6".



The young lady below had a little booth selling her hand-made jewelry, at this point standing in the direct sun – ouch. I took this while sitting on the opposite curb, giving my feet a break. I liked her face and the way it was framed by the shades in the window behind her. Then I promised her a copy next First Friday. Nan wanted one of her bracelets but it kept falling off her wrist – so next month she'll be picking up one like it "youth" sized for her.



A grab-shot walking with the crowd...

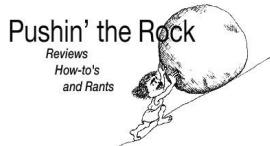
I'm already looking forward to First Friday in July – with different shoes on!!

OH, I should mention, since we've now tried them all, **the best street burgers on First Fridays are from Coakley's Pub** on St. John's Street!

Havre de Grace Street page changes:

I was so busy that I didn't notice that the Havre de Grace Street page is fast becoming almost unmanageable on this end. So I set how nineteen or twenty events to be on the first page and have everything else slide off to a page two, three, etc. New postings are added at the top so this should be easy to navigate.

More and more subjects/targets are picking up their mounted prints – that's a good thing.



Another Short Rant: I just don't understand...

...performers, paid performers at that, who dress like they are unrelated attendees at a neighborhood BBQ. You might find them performing in a street event or the local Opera House, it seems to make no difference. I'm not suggesting that bands, groups, ensembles, etc. go back to the days of matching and/or fancy costumes. But some little thing to catch the eye, make the group visually memorable and make for good pictures that will be shared on line – you know, promotion – anything along those lines would be preferable to yard-sale lounge wear. Heck, it could be as simple as jeans and matching shirts, anything. Individual unique look wear would be cool. But bermuda shorts and T-shirts, what?

Along with this the jazz ensemble images in my last posting had some awkward positioning going on. Granted, the base player was magnificent, but he spent 90% of the concert with his face placed directly behind the mic on his side of the stage – obviously the comfort of the audience in viewing wasn't a consideration at set-up. I'm sure an adjustment could have been made. At the same time, the trumpet player stood so that the drummer was at almost all times hidden behind him for much of the audience – we were seated almost dead center, back row and I had to get up and roam behind the seats to get clear views of both these guys.



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Pirate Fest 2018

Tuesday, June 26, 2018

With *Opera House Talk Update and Recent Reads*. This year's Pirate Fest, a kid-friendly fund raiser for the local Lock House (the beginning of the old canal from Havre de Grace upriver), was a couple of steps up from the past couple of years. It even sported a "captive" mermaid – posing in what looked like a large aquarium. I took a few shots of one of the pirates firing the small canon array – some pretty loud booms. This one I gave a little bit of an old film look – with the exception that it really comes to life printed large. The use of a fog filter (erased over everything but the background) along with burning in the corners and adding some medium level grain, finished it off nicely.

We have a nephew and niece who were planning to come, but the event was postponed a day – good thing because Saturday really sucked. But the family had to be somewhere else Sunday and they missed it – I'll print up a small one of these for them – they're used to me just doing B&W – it should make them double anxious to go next year. There were pirates walking around all day to pose for pictures with the kids, a blacksmith, display of pirate artifacts, pirates sitting around a table gambling and planning, swordfight instructions and even realistic looking rubber-band pistols the kids could duel with. Of course entertainment was around back, where there was

also a costume contest – and food could be purchased. We shared a big bowl of some sort of carribian jerk chicken concoction that was both desicious and so hot it had my ears itching for an hour afterwards – yes, I will get that again.



Above is a typical pirates-posing-with-kids that I took from off to the side. Finally below, this young lady was playing the fiddle for a singer - Holy moley could she play. I was shooting at 1/680 of a second and you can still see some movement, she was really gettin-down. See the hair – there was no wind on that porch at all. I assumed, wrongfully, that I would be able to get the name of the duo on line. I'll have to add that in here, and a link to their site or Facebook page if and when I can find the information.



UPDATE

My upcoming Easter Island Project Program at the Opera House – New Stuff

The one major frustration that is emerging is the question of posting new images here on the Blog. I asked Nan, hoping she might think I was all wet being reticent, but she said "What the heck's the matter with you – if it comes out of prep for the presentation, it has to be held back at least until then"..... along with some more questioning of my sanity. That's OK, but certainly not fun right now.

So obviously, I'm coming up with some new gleanings from my over 30K exposures on the Island. In my determination to make this more interesting than most of this kind of thing, I'm concentrating on having fun with some images, along with including amore that say something about the Rapanui as a people – hoping that the enjoyment is contagious. Sorry though, not much in the way of previews.

Recent Reads

I post these not as book reviews or reports, those can be found anywhere and everywhere. They are simply lists of books I found worth reading and possibly why.

***The World As It Is, A Memoir of the Obama White House* by Ben Rhodes**

By far the best, most enlightening of the many books that have come out from inside the Obama administration. Appropriately titled, and written. Oddly I haven't been able to find a review of this book that gives any indication that it was actually read beforehand – much more a confirmation rather than an endictment of the content. I've read, I believe, all of these that have come out so far, and this is, as the title states, a straight-forward, must-read description of the "world as it is". I have SO many people I would like to somehow force into reading this.

***The Cookoo's Calling* by Robert Galbraith (aka J. K. Rawling)**

Picked this up out of curiosity, not expecting to even be tempted to finish it – especially since we have the TV "**Strike**" series version of these books. But just as in the **Harry Potter** series, the writing is kind of addictive. I can't think of an author since Dickens who can create so many memorable characters, bringing them to life and actually making them part of our world and culture. The Strike series , though, is more in the tradition of great British murder mystery writers like Agatha Christie – with the addition of Rawlings very visual writing style. And again, it brings Dickens to mind. I have the next two (digital) to go, and the fourth comes out later this year. I don't get to (or want to) read all that much fiction compared to non-fiction – I wind up putting most of it down and never going back. I hate wasting my time.

***A Higher Loyalty, Truth Lies and Leadership* by James Comey**

Not completely sure why I finished this, maybe I wanted to make sure I gave the guy a chance to finish his say. While I don.t believe Comey was straying from the truth as far as what actually happened, at least as he sees it, he pretty much convinced me that what he did with his releases about Hillary's emails was, in assuming that nothing could prevent her from winning the election, doing his damnedest to position himself in the best possible light after the election. It was, and is, all about him. Do I recommend it? Not really, The book is only important in addressing any feelings that he is either conspiratorily evil or somehow a victim. No, he's just someone who actually thinks of himself as a good person who at the same time sees the world as revolving around him – hampering any ability to determine the right course of action under oh so many circumstances.

***The Secret History of the Mongol Queens* by Jack Weatherford**

A tad on the dry side, but good histories often are. At the same time, there is a lot here. I learned a lot about Mongol culture, and finally came to understand how these plains tribesmen managed to conquer so much of the world. Bring out the long suppressed history of the Mongol queens does strike a cord today in that it proves beyond a shadow of a doubt that the women were just as capable as the men – but it also establishes that they, ultimately, were no better or worse, benevolent or evil. Very detailed and enlightening read, drawing on centuries of family records. Well worth the effort.

Sex at Dawn – How We Mate, Why We Stray and What it Means for Modern Relationships by Christopher Ryan and Cacilda Jetha

Something of a disappointment. About a third of the way through, I began skimming (I'm pretty good at that) to see if the tone changed any – not. That's not to say that there isn't any good information in there, or useful observations, or even help handling some of the situations some of us get ourselves into. My issue is with their, ok almost universally held, ideas about what they see as inevitable changes within marriage and long relationships. I assume that if one has experienced the shifts that they talk about, it can be a reassurance that it is normal and maybe can even help to find a solution. But I couldn't find myself in there at all. We've been married over fifty years, raised three kids, been through whatever the world threw at us and, in spite of growing in our roles, have never quite lost that sense of boyfriend and girlfriend / you and me against the world / grateful and excited to be living together. While I've seldom been accused of being normal, I can't be that far off course. It was a pretty thorough skim through the final two thirds, but couldn't bring myself to do any more. And by the way, what the hell is a "modern" relationship – wouldn't that only be relevant when a couple lets outside influences have something to say about how they see and interact with one another? From my own pretty extensive reading of history, there have always been couples who, in their relationship, pretty much ignored whatever the heck the social pressures, judgements, taboos, allowances, etc. were rife at the time. I'll shut up now, except for one more note: the older one gets the more of a challenge "sex at dawn" becomes to finish – gotta give the body time to wake up.

Waiting for me: Barracoon, The Scourge of the Swastika, Are We Smart Enough to Know How Smart Animals Are? and Silkworm (second Galbraith book)..... And I'm checking through the PBS 100 novels reading list to see if I missed



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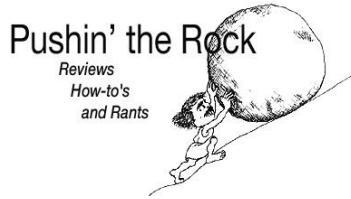
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A Visit to the Les Picker B&W Exhibit

Tuesday, July 3, 2018

and a small addition to our Other People's Art collection. Wow, it's been a while since I've been able to go see an exhibit of B&W photography, OK – monochrome to [Les Picker](#), the photographer in this case. The showing is in town at the [Artists Emporium](#) until the 27th. The image at the top shows his sign and a few of his large images – wildlife photography by a National Geographic photographer, only in B&W. Striking and impressive. But, I would recommend paying close attention to the array of his scenics on the opposite wall – I could well imagine looking for a place to hang any one of that group.



I've done a few wildlife B&Ws myself (if you consider things like a closeup of a bee on a flower wildlife), and have mixed feelings about them. Wondering if I appreciate them so much – as with the wildlife shots in this exhibit – primarily because of my own focus on and love for B&W (along with I confess something of a disdain for color as an art form). Sort of like a lot of authors appreciating writers that bore most of us (a writers' writer), or artists appreciating painters the rest of us just don't understand (a painters' painter). Would I like them so much otherwise, I'm still working on that one. But I am sure about the views on the left wall. Both groupings are worth a visit to the Gallery – and be sure to pick up one of the little freebie momento prints laid out.

For anyone interested in a slightly more technical side, Les is a fellow Fuji mirrorless convert. While I've moved from medium format film to Canon SLRs and then to the X-T2 mirrorless, he's recently adopted Fuji's new medium format camera, the G-FX, my camera's big 50 megapixel brother. Again, I highly recommend a trip into town to see the show – and while there, take a look-see next door at some of the work in the Gallery Nan and I are in next door – **RiverView**. And for that matter, don't miss the **Arts by the Bay Gallery** on the next block. There's some nice stuff in there too (just no B&W photography).



For my Other People's Art section: **Maria Annegarn piece...**

One of our favorite fellow artists in RiverView Gallery was unable to sit her turn at the Gallery this last Saturday so I filled it. Not a totally unselfish act because in return we got to choose one of her pieces to take home – and fortunately the date coincided with the reception for Les Picker, above – and the boss gave me permission to leave a little early to attend. Win, win!



Nan selected the piece above, she'd been eying it for a while and knew exactly what she wanted to do with it (Nan added the little springs). It's just six inches tall. Annegarn's work is fascinatingly original, one sees nothing quite like it anywhere. Visit my [Other People's Art](#) section, brouse around and see just how many pieces of hers we've collected. My personal favorites are on a special display rack – posting [HERE](#). Her work can be found in **RiverView Gallery** in town. See her web site for contact information: <https://www.mannegarn.com>

Opera House Presentation Update – as the outline evolves, I'll change it here...

I finally have some solid information as to times, etc. I will kick things off at seven with a four minute color slide show - pretty fast moving - to give everyone a feel for the Island today. Then there will be a slide / video show with commentary (sorry about that). At about 8:30 there will be a 15 minute break for getting a beer, coffee, glass of wine, book distribution, etc. Hang onto your tickets because when you pick up your book, tickets will be placed in a jar for drawing near the end - winner can choose any framed original image off the wall downstairs.

The after-break, much shorter session will include a short summary of my approach to B&W as an art form, notes on pulling off a project like this, examples of the unique problems that came up with solutions, questions and answers, etc.



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The Moon has been Eaten

Announcing Opera House Presentation and Olives Baby, Olives

Thursday, July 5, 2018

This is my way of donating to the Opera House – a phenomenal addition to our community that brings so much in the way of culture, entertainment, and variety, at very reasonable prices to our town. So, **get your tickets, pick up your free book, enjoy a presentation that I am working hard to make both enlightening and fun, see some of our collection of original Rapanui carvings, and take a chance in a drawing for a choice from the half dozen or more framed Easter Island prints on the wall in the reception room** – the image above, **Dancing at the Coronation of the Queen**, will be one of them, along with **Tongariki from the Sea** from the book jacket.

Again, all monies go the the Opera House – if you haven't been there yet, check out upcoming events at OHHdg.org. In fact, get your tickets for this while your are there. (If for some reason you can't make it, don't worry, save your ticket(s) and I will make arrangements to leave your book for pick-up at RiverView Gallery in town – gotta be there for the drawing though). This will be the invitation postcard. I found a good deal on 4.25x6 glossy cards so decided to contribute a little to promoting the event. The back of the card shows below. Notice I'm using the same image for the card that graces the banner at the top of my home page here – it's a personal favorite.

Tickets \$10 – ticket holders get a free signed copy of my book:

The Moon has been Eaten

– All monies go to support the Opera House –

Subject: my three year project originally titled
Images from a Year on Easter Island
told in Slides / Videos / Talk / etc.

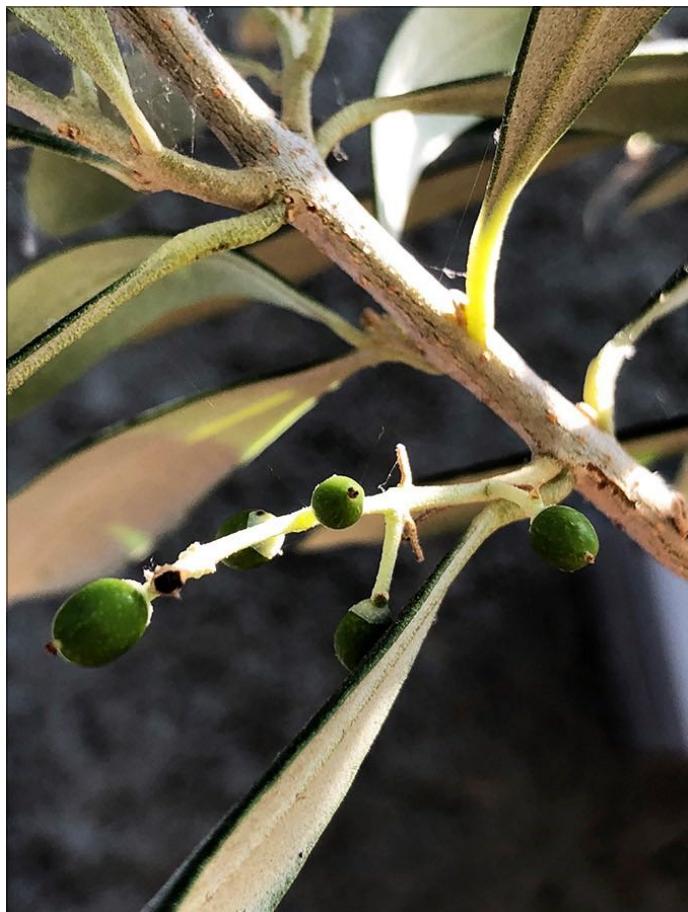
I will be exhibiting some fine art prints from the project on one wall downstairs, along with original island carvings from our collection. There will also be a drawing for winner's choice from framed images.

Tickets available on the Opera House web site:
<https://ohhdg.org>

For updates see Blog postings @
jamescraigphotography.com

Note: I get in trouble sometimes for saying "Opera House" in the presence of the Director when the proper wording is "The Cultural Center at the Opera House". Sorry, but by the time you get the whole thing out, people lose track of what you are taking about and are already moving on. They insisted I correct it on the front of the postcard though – I'm a baaaaaaad boy!

Olives Baby, Olives



Four years ago, on a whim, I picked up one of those baby olive trees at Home Depot, along with a couple of tomato and pepper plants for our patio pots. Of course we bring "Olive" it in from the cold in the winter. We're grooming it for a Banzai, it stands a healthy three feet or so now and will soon need its second serious trimming. This year it is rewarding us with a couple of dozen of these little things – olives. Nan says she's actually planning on harvesting them to age in brine according to some formula she found on line. Now how cool is that!!



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First Friday in July – Part I, Cliff Giles' Drum Circle

Monday, July 9, 2018

It was tempting to stay right there the whole evening – it was a really good session at Cliff Giles' drum circle. It's held every First Friday now, almost dead-center for all the activities. Cliff brings the drums and a plethora of miscellaneous, unique and odd percussion instruments. He's also attracted a cast of regulars with some amazing talent, some there for the duration. The mixture of trained talent and enthusiastic public is contagious. The number of chairs seems to have increased and this time they had to move the bin full of washboards and gongs and things I've never heard of off to the edge because visitors are finding themselves inspired to dance to the beat – and it's all becoming video-worthy. It will probably have to be a standard move now. I've included at the bottom a short video to give something of the atmosphere.

This gathering began in front of a little shop in the middle of the next block with the earliest First Fridays – with maybe a few interested kids joining in. It has evolved to be such a big attraction – anyone and everyone is invited to participate or watch – that we've met people who haven't bothered to see any of the rest that's going on. And there's a lot.

I decided to divide this First Friday into two postings so I can use more of the drumming images. Next posting will concentrate on interesting faces – especially kids. Of course that makes for more that I have to print out and mat for my freebie-bin. Hopefully I can have them available for the last First Friday of the year – October – and figure out some way to get the word out – so far that part has been hit and miss.

Hmm. Plan B: October First Friday on a small table with a little sign near the drumming group, the one place everyone stops at least for a little while. I'll have to talk to Carl at Concord Point Coffee right there to see what I can arrange. Pretty sure that here there would be no need for supervision – just a short "if you see yourself or yours, take it". I'll try to make sure everything from this years Fridays plus a couple of leftovers from last year are in there.

At the top, the youngest drummer. This kid joined in just before the Governor showed up with his entourage, which made it frustratingly tricky to get a shot. Evidently a total concentration stare. Off on the edge, alone with daddy just off to the left keeping the crowd from moving in, while everyone was looking at the Governor, oblivious. My favorite shot of the day.

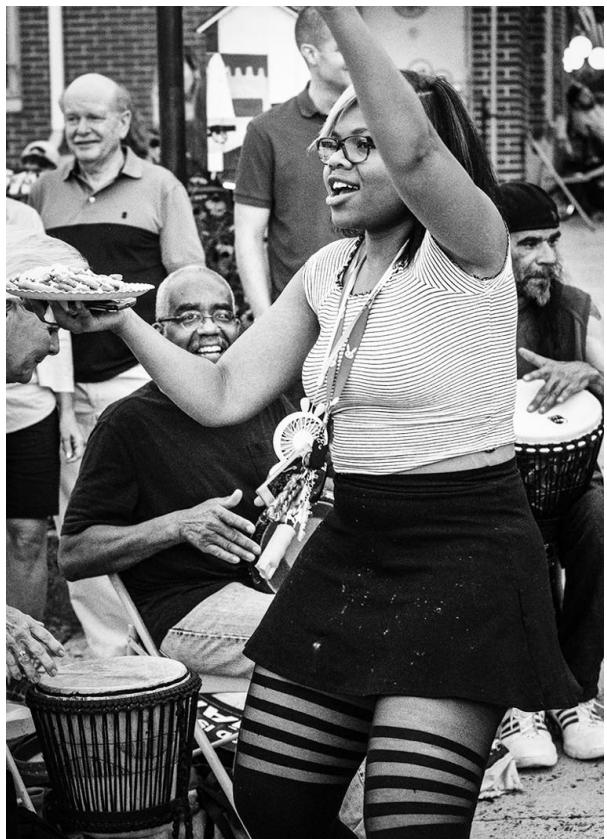
At one point she was completely blocked and I spun the camera around and snapped the first shot below – the Guv proving he has about as much rhythm as I do. When later asked if I got my shot of our distinguished visitor, I responded: "Yes, as an afterthought. I was concentrating on the very determined little girl in the Beatles shirt". Of course no-one knew what I was talking about. I hope she and her daddy see this so they can pick up the print in October..



The fellow playing the washboard is Harford's own concert pianist Duke Thompson. The addition of sounds like this adds immeasurably to the sound coming out of the circle. Duke seems to be thoroughly enjoying himself. Below I paired two girls with strikingly pretty faces taking a try at the drums – all the drummers I know are guys and none of them look like this.



The young lady on the left below danced like she's done some belly-dancing. She actually put on a good show. The girl on the right danced through with a funnel-cake in her hand, stopping in the center to do a few good moves – and yes, that's powdered sugar all over her skirt.



The shot below shows Cliff giving pointers to one of thee drummers. There's usually a free drum somewhere, if not there's a cowbell, washboard or whatever in the instrument bin.



Below is a link to a little video clip I took with the iPhone using the MoviePro app, trying out the zoom effect. I had to cut part out because someone realized the equipment box wasn't going to work in the center any more and had to bend over in front of me to remove it – would not have been kind to leave that in. *As always the images are larger on their [Havre de Grace Street Page...](#)*

First Friday in Havre de Grace is becoming quite a thing. Maybe next time I'll lug in a tripod and set it up with the phone for video so I'm free to shoot my B&W. *Hmm... Nan might even like to run the zoom remotely from her phone. Just gotta figure out how to approach her – or set the remote up on my iPad Mini and find a volunteer.*

Cliff Giles Drum Circle

SITE NOTE: I've streamlined the Havre de Grace section back down to one page – 2018 postings as they happen and previous entries gathered into appropriate groups below.



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First Friday in July – Part II

Friday, July 13, 2018

First Friday in Havre de Grace has come into its own. And surprisingly it has become a great place to take the kids for an evening out. I'm always making new discoveries – while some simply land repeatedly on one section of one street (like Cliff's Drum Circle) and stay there, missing an awful lot but then again not missing some of the action there. It's a little of a quandary. The evening officially ends at 9:30 – just about dark except for earlier in the year when that comes well after dark and people are setting up lights.

I'm seeing so many interesting people that I'm considering including non-candids into what I'm doing – shots more in the line of what they call "street portraits". You ask people if you can take their picture and then you do a quick head shot with them looking at the camera. Might work pretty good in B&W.

That could mean switching lenses a couple of times during the evening – and carrying the second one in a small bag of some kind, but I do like to work light. Or worse/better as the case may be, carrying a second camera around my neck with the other lens on it. Hmm. OR, in order to keep it light, do the "street portraits" with the iPhone. Best to angst a bit over this stuff beforehand rather than suffer and sweat through improper preparation.

That brings me to note that I now have a second Fuji body, a little **X-T20** – the little brother to my **X-T2**. I picked it up used, but in really nice condition. I've been working without a backup or second camera (other than Nan's point-and-shoot) since I sold my Canon equipment and went Fuji mirrorless. I'll be able to do videos along with the stills now without having to resort to the iPhone (although it does a great job). So many toys and so little time!

The image above is a group shot of Sharon and the Edge, one of the bands that seem to rotate in the prime spot opposite Joseph's Department Store on Washington Street. Note the huge fan blowing right on Sharon – the

evening started out pretty darn hot. We like to check out the bands and figure out what kind of affair they would be best for – Sharon and the Edge – they would be our choice for any event with dancing that required a live band and singer you could listen to all evening.

Below, a couple of grab shots of kids in the street. The little boy's mother stood listening to Sharon and the Edge while her boy blew off a lot of energy, sometimes to the music. The little girl was just on the other side of the street polishing off what we always got our kids at outdoor events, a hot dog. First Friday is both kid and adult friendly – a rare combination.



Below – another one of my shots of a giant chess game outside Concord Point Coffee. I like this series a lot.



Next a sneak side-portrait – the statuesque profile was just too great to miss. Nan said I should ask her for a pose but I knew I was getting what I wanted as a candid.



Last, for maybe a touch of humor, a great example of what it's like manning an event booth at a point when nothing is happening there, but you can't leave and join in the fun elsewhere. Been there, I understand.



*Looks like there will be a whole lot of 8x11 on 11x14 freebies to print this summer if I want to put them out there
First Friday in October...*

Upcoming Opera House Presentation

The postcards are here already, ready for August distribution around town – I just wonder if First Friday in August will be a little too early to start that. I did get the event on the Harford Photography Group Calendar and contacted the Baltimore Camera Club (haven't heard back yet). It sure would be nice if a little more interest can be generated in B&W photography as an art from around here.

SITE NOTES:

- After a couple of complaints that my Havre de Grace Street section was "tricky" to find, I added an entry back into the links bar under the banner – and added a tiny arrow to the logo-link on the left. Actually I appreciate any feedback like that.
- I make it easy to quickly access the main body of the most recent blog entry by making the intro picture a link, along with the little "More" in the text and the top entry in "Recent Postings". Just sayin'.



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Mini-me and the Beast

Wednesday, July 18, 2018

Last year when I sold off my Canon equipment and went all mirrorless, switching to Fuji, I was stuck for a full year without a decent backup camera - or second body for those special needs. This posting is a little break to do a quick review of my solution to that problem and post more information on my upcoming program on Easter Island at the Opera House.

*I'll preface my review with a short defense of my rather exuberant review. When I shed my actually pretty awesome Canon equipment and switched to Fuji, I found myself picking up my camera much more often, carrying it around when I didn't need it, never putting it away in the bag and occasionally actually fondling it. Photography is fun again, **more fun than it has been since my last film camera**. At first I expected that I was alone in this, but have since learned that this is not an uncommon response to the Fuji system.*



FUJI X-T20 Quick Review

(Review ranking: a sigh of relief, two chuckles and three fist pumps)

I finally managed to adopt us a little used Fuji X-T20 to serve as a second camera body, backup and something for Nan to shoot. This is really going to be an asset - pictured above is my beast and the new/used mini-me. I've had it just 48 hours at this point and have a number of observations - most of them GOOD. Above, the X-T20 has the 18-55 (27-84 equiv.) zoom on it while the X-T2 sports the considerably larger 55-200 (84-305 equiv.

- 1- Half the size and weight of my X-T2. I've ordered a little grip to bulk it up a tad.
- 2- Does the more important 90% of what the X-T2 does at half the price.
- 3- Takes the same lenses, batteries, cards, etc. as the X-T2
- 4- Has the same 24 megapixel sensor, a tilt view screen plus eyepiece (and even a little built-in flash), shoots 4K video and has a couple of neat things that are missing on my X-T2 - like a super-auto switch that overrides more user-controlling settings.
- 5- But the big plus for this thing is in design and menus. It's like Fuji decided to do something better than anyone I've found - make one of these modern, very complex machines that is **easy to comprehend and at the same time efficient, quick and FUN to use**. Everything is laid out logically - sort of like the difference between using a Windows computer vs an iPad. And it doesn't hurt that it has become so popular that there are many, many videos on YouTube demonstrating how various photographers use it. Among the best are [HERE](#) by Omar Gonzalez. Sure, the beast can be just as intuitive and FUN to use, but is much larger, heavier and includes some rather sophisticated capabilities.
- 6- Naturally a couple of things are lost in the process. It only holds one battery, one SD card and lacks a few of the odder functions (most of which most people have never heard of). Slightly smaller rear screen and eyepiece viewer also - duh, the whole thing is "smallish".

Conclusions: Sweetest backup/second body camera I have ever possessed. Plus Nan actually likes it and uses it - and she's like Mikey, very very difficult to please - it has to be intuitive for her to want to bother. An added benefit is that when I don't feel like carrying the beast, I'm perfectly comfortable toting this very capable little thing. GO FUJI!

While I rarely recommend a particular brand camera (they're all good now), and almost never a particular model, I would push for anyone looking to get a good camera, who is at all frustrated with and intimidated by the complexity, to at least find one of these to play with. It could be life-changing. Again, the big selling point is the Fuji dedication to being user-friendly instead of catering to photography geeks – although some of us do prefer the intuitive. There's no excuse for the basics being as tricky to navigate as the rarely used settings.

When I try to help someone understand their camera and get into their manual, **the norm seems to be:**

Ok so that's how you do that on this thing. I hope the heck I can explain that so them, let alone remember it for next time. Let me read that again to make sure I got it right.

On the X-T20 I find that my response to be:

Aha, so that's all there is to it, that makes sense. Explaining it is easy and there's no issue remembering how. That's refreshing.

Side notes:

1- I do like the ISO dial on top of my X-T2, right there for me to tweak, I'm a big total-control guy. The X-T20 lacks this dial and the setting is in the menus. BUT I reprogrammed the function wheel right by my thumb to bring up the selection with a quick press, I can then spin the dial to set and then shoot. Turns out it's actually quicker that way than reaching for the dial with the other hand on the beast. *Go figure.*

2- My only real frustration with the X-T20 arises because there's no way I can program function buttons to match on the two cameras. In order to make the needed menus quick and easy to access requires a totally different set-up. I tried, I really did - BUMMER. Getting used to that is gong to take a little time - for now, every time I pick one up I run through the buttons to refresh my memory.

3- On my wish list is something I seem to need on these new smaller zoom lenses: there are times when one simply wants to shoot with the lens wide open but at the same time be using Aperture Priority mode. Ususally this is easy but if doing a lot of shooting, zooming, etc. one can accidentally throw off the aperture setting without noticing it – especially when working fast and letting one's zoom-hand shift the setting. A quick-lock switch or setting for the aperture ring would be really nice. *Are you listening Fuji?*

Update - Opera House Presentation Tuesday August 28

Been spreading the word on my Opera House presentation/benefit. I'm really anxious that this succeeds in raising some money for this phenomenal addition to our community - funds we certainly can't otherwise afford to donate. I've already begun handing out postcards to people I might not see again before late August. The goal is to get up to 100 people there (\$1K for the Opera House), seating people in the back half of the theater area so I can present from the open area in the middle.



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I use a new Easter Island image to Expand a Little on YouTube photographer Jamie Windsor's 9 Quick Tips for BETTER BLACK & WHITE Photos

Friday, July 20, 2018

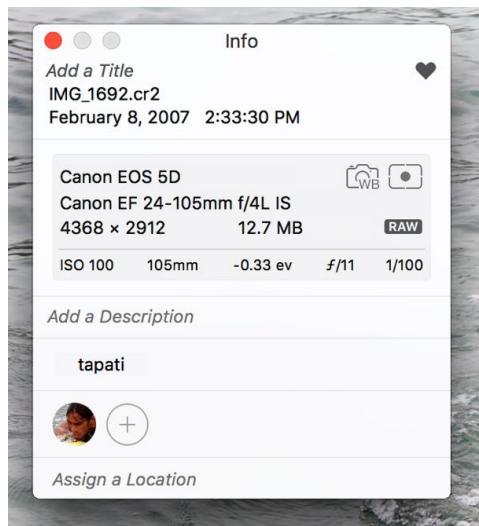
*At first I wasn't sure whether this was a good choice to illustrate a posting where I'm featuring a YouTube video someone posted with tips for shooting B&W – where the first and most important tip is to shoot with B&W in mind from the get-go. I had to come up with some kind of image to go along with it, so I just pulled the file out of the NEW TRIES folder on my desktop (more along the lines of *I'm-not-really-sure-but-maybe-eventually* images) and went to work – It's always got anywhere from one or two to a bunch of files in there that are sort of perking in the back of my mind – most are eventually simply removed – this one worked.

Blog posted B&W images appear larger and on black background in the folio section – this one is [HERE](#).

At first I expected it to be difficult to explain just how I shot this differently because I was "thinking" B&W. It helps that in the original RAW exposure, containing the full range of colors, it didn't come across a fraction as effective –

yes, even with this kind of shot, I'm thinking B&W while I'm shooting. This is pretty much a straight shot, a little cropping, enhancing the shadows in both the foreground and background some, bringing out the mid-tone contrast a little, burning in the corners, etc.

This fellow is competing in the ocean *pora* race in Tapati Rapanui, two weeks of cultural competitions in February. He's running first here, using the *pora* or reed bundle as a floatation device – they boat the contestants out to sea almost out of sight and have them race back to shore. I was precariously perched on some rocks with the waves washing over my feet as he rounded the point into the little cove where they were to finis.



So – what might I have done differently in the camera because I was shooting B&W:

Those settings might raise a few eyebrows with some. And if I'd had a little more time I might have revised them a little, but not enough to matter. On shots like this my primary concern is shutter speed – but not simply in the stop-action sense. It was very bright out but I wanted something along the lines of the seemingly risky 1/100 of a second shutter speed – it's a chance I'm willing to take, holding the shutter button down for multiple shots, in order to catch a peak moment where just the right parts are sharp while allowing movement to show in others – generally somewhere between 1/30 and 1/125 depending on the action. Granted, lot of sharp but otherwise mediocre shots are passed by this way, usually in favor of totally blurry and screwed attempts, but when it works it can be quite effective.

One can tell by looking at exposures on both sides of this series that I quickly spun the ISO down and aperture up to where I could get my shutter speed. The extra depth of field helps here with B&W, where with color it could actually be a negative.

This is just one example of how one might find oneself thinking differently while exposing with B&W in mind, admittedly different from and trickier to define than those listed below. I'm actually even a tad more focused than simply thinking B&W – all pretty much subconsciously at this point – something more akin to visualizing how what I'm viewing will look as a 15x20, 18x24 or larger fine print (12x16 with the iPhone). That comes with a lot of experience printing one's own work. Pay close attention to the video's other 8 tips too. At the end I make a suggestion that might help some.

9 Quick Tips for BETTER BLACK & WHITE Photos from YouTube photographer Jamie Windsor – with one additional note from me:



I follow this guy on YouTube – part of keeping up with what's going on in the photography world. Recently I checked out some of his older stuff and found this and thought I'd share it for anyone who is interested in a perspective on B&W photography. Jamie Windsor is right – B&W is an altogether different beast. I'll pretty much let the video stand as it is, with one small addition. The tips are a great beginning and listed pretty much in order of importance:

Jamie Windsor's channel address: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCxCFQfO05RinX6x_r5VVuiA

I'm totally glad he made it his number one point to shoot with B&W in mind from the very start. Otherwise B&W becomes a subset of color, an afterthought, and a stand-alone B&W portfolio will hardly emerge from the process. I do have one pointer though. **For those who were never forced, via knowing they had monochrome film in the camera, to adapt to looking at the color world and "seeing" it in B&W, there is a little trick that might help you get there:**

Tip # 10 – I would just make it an expansion of #1 but prefer to use this to return the reader to what is by far the most important point/tip:

At least temporarily until used to the mindset, set the camera up to take RAW+JPG – then **program the JPG to a B&W film effect**. The result will be (in most cameras) that you will be forced to view and compose in B&W. For this I would use a pretty contrasty monochrome setting so that you aren't viewing flat. Your RAW file will still be in RGB (color). One oddity is that the RAW file, which has a tiny jpg thumbnail in it, may be showing a B&W icon until after the first time it is opened on the computer.



I'll admit to a little duality on my part here. I'm a viewfinder user so raaaaarely use the LCD screen for viewing. I'm used to "seeing" in B&W without any assistance through a viewfinder. But the B&W film effect trick does keep the LCD screen image from looking like a color two-dimensional representation of the scene, throwing that off a little when I'm forced to use it for composing and shooting. It's important to be able to visualize in B&W so I program one of my function buttons to quickly bring up the menu selection for film emulation in those rare cases (the iPhone does the same thing with the 645 Pro MKIII camera app, saving both a RAW and B&W jpg).

* Update – Opera House Presentation Tuesday August 28

Been spreading the word on my Opera House presentation/benefit. I'm really anxious that this succeeds in raising some money for this phenomenal addition to our community – funds we certainly can't otherwise afford to donate. I've already begun handing out postcards to people I might not see again before late August. The goal is to get up to 100 people there (\$1K for the Opera House), seating people in the back half of the theater area so I can present from the open area in the middle.

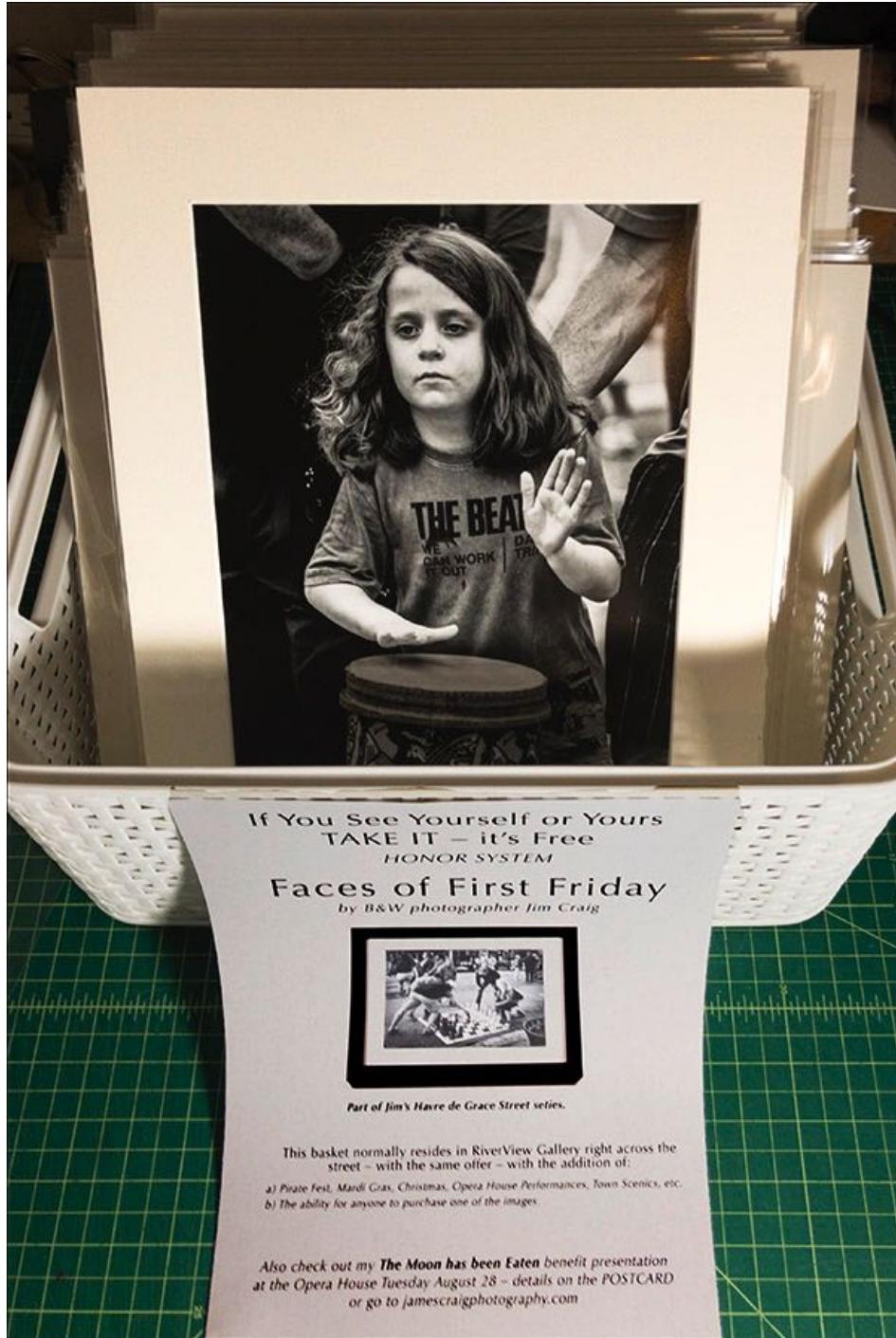


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This First Friday and my "Freebie" Box of First Fridays Images

Thursday, August 2, 2018

Page 1 of 2

First Friday in August I'm going to be trying a little experiment – in spite of the fact that I'll be quite busy. Along with wanting to cruise the streets a couple of times just to keep an eye on what is going on, I will need to spend some quality time at both **Cliff Giles' Drum Circle** and **The Hushdown** in the middle of the next block, in **The Courtyard**.

IF YOU SEE YOURSELF OR YOURS
IT'S FREE – TAKE IT

The experiment involves putting a selection of freebie First Friday images, mounted and matted, out for pick-up by anyone who "sees themselves or theirs" – **on the honor system**. I'll be placing the little leaf-thru box on at the bench facing Washington Street next to the Drum Circle – that's near Concord Point Coffee – this ought to be interesting. **So if you are in town First Friday – and you should be – stop by and see if you have been caught with my camera.**

Many of these are one-offs so won't be reprinted. If this works out, I'll try to make it a regular thing, or at least occasional. This outing **includes First Fridays through July – yes, I'm all caught up**. In between I'll keep the little leaf-thru crate in **RiverView Gallery** in town – where I'll be able to accomodate anyone else wanting a copy by pricing them very reasonably at \$35 – *I can do this only because the prints are small enough to hinge-mount instead of going for expensive dry-mounting.*

Alongside the basket I'll leave a stack of the postcard invitations to my Opera House Benefit program (see below).

LOOKS LIKE THE WEATHER WILL NOT COOPERATE – KEEPING AN EYE ON IT. DON'T KNOW IF THIS FIRST FRIDAY WILL BE A BLOW-OUT OR SIMPLY DIMINISHED. IF ANYTHING AT ALL IS GOING ON, I'LL TRY TO PUT THE BOX SOMEWHERE CLOSE TO THE DESIGNATED LOCATION.

Oooooooooooooops – **First Friday in August CANCELLED**. Bummer. *In the meantime I'll combine the First Friday images with those from other recent events and put them in RiverView Gallery in town – where those seeing themselves or theirs can take them for free – and others can make a purchase..*

....

The evening after, Saturday, there will be a repeat performance by **Rogue Swan at Artists Emporium** across from Concord Coffee and next door to RiverView. I'll be shooting a few pictures for them, hoping for one or two good B&Ws.

Then Sunday will see **Wind Up Toy** ([see 2017 at the Opera House here](#)) performing at the 10th annual **Ride for the Animals** at the American Legion in Dundalk. It's not happening in Havre de Grace, but there are a lot of Havredegracians in that group, so maybe I can find a way to work that into the project, or something like that.

THE MOON HAS BEEN EATEN – AT THE OPERA HOUSE

This will create a very busy August, working on the images along with the promotion for my own Opera House event. I'll mostly be fine-tuning the talk itself, images, video clips, etc. Friday I will also begin distributing postcards promoting the event – remember, ten bucks to benefit the Opera House and a free copy of **The Moon has been Eaten**. **Come, enjoy the presentation, get your copy of the book, get a chance on a full-size framed Easter Island image and help me show some support and appreciation for the Opera House and all it brings to Havre de Grace.**

Again, tickets are [HERE...](#) while tickets will be available at the door, getting tickets on line both gives me an idea how many books to haul to the event that day, and gives anyone who at the last minute can't make it a ticket to redeem for a book later (at RiverView Gallery in town).



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Suddenly Seymour – Rogue Swan's Tara Vin

Monday, August 6, 2018

OK, I admit to a little prejudice here. But we all have song favorites so I have a right to my choices. We attended this weekend's performance in town of **Rogue Swan** a little worried that we would be hearing familiar material – but I was shooting some pictures for them so at least I'd be busy. Boy was I wrong. Not only was the performance very good, this young lady, Tara Vin, left it all on the stage a couple of times. First, singing one of my favorite songs of all time – *Suddenly Seymour*. She sang it as part of a duet. This is the shot I like most from the song. She's particularly convincing and takes you with her when she sings.

Today's two shots weren't easily processed. I was shooting an 85-300mm zoom with no flash, in relatively dim lighting. At the same time I had to crop the you-know-what out of them to get the close-ups because I didn't shoot either one as close-up as I should have. And the dark red wall behind them was interrupted with squares of bright light – I wasn't going to leave those in there. There was enough work on the background on these two to keep me busy for now.

The second shot is from and reflects the second great song Tara sang – surprising that a show that moved smoothly between romantic to rollicking fun took such a serious turn while she sang *Strange Fruit*. But God it was great, and through the image you can feel the lyrics. Of course it doesn't hurt that the camera does seem to like this young lady, even more than last year. She's still in college but between last season's performances and this summer she seems to have lost some of that teen-age look.



Tara's not getting her copies of these until she signs ours – for when she's famous.

I'll have a few more images from this Rogue Swan performance, a couple of them fun, later in the week – they've been doing these at The Artists Emporium free by the way. After these two songs, I just couldn't resist matching them up to images from their performance right away (I'll try and post a duet shot from the *Suddenly Seymour* performance in with the others).

2 Comments



Add a comment...



Lee Alban

Nice shots. That's not "noise," that's TEXTURE! What was the ISO you used?

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · 3w

Katie Gordon

Thank you for coming out to support Rogue!!!!

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · 3w



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Two More from Rogue Swan last Weekend

Thursday, August 9, 2018

It can be risky catching a woman unawares with a camera, even if you like the result – they may not. April (*Burrl, Monique, whatever – I can't keep track with these show people*) was sitting on a stool, out of the already too low light waiting for her cue. I liked her expression so I grabbed it. ISO 10,000 at 1/60 a second at 200mm (305 equivalent), not promising stats. On top of that I had to crop the heck out of it – which probably is a plus because the graininess helps give the result something of a charcoal sketch effect. I hope she likes it – I love the expression. I've noticed it before and have been keeping an eye out for it. Maximum print size though is the 8.25x11 that it will be in the display at RiverView – it's one of those B&Ws that have to be seen in print form to appreciate the tone and texture of it. If she doesn't pick her freebie up I'll know she's not amused – I'm so anxious to print it, I'll probably get to it for as early as next week.

Below is another risky shot of a woman to post – Katy Gordon being, well, Katy Gordon. She seems to be pretty much the driving force behind Rogue Swan, and probably anything else she's involved in. I've been trying to catch her in one of her quirky moments – and was quick enough to grab this. I could tell something was coming so I focused on her face and held the shutter down for seven or eight shots, knowing immediately when I realized what I caught that I would print it. Again, one never knows how a woman will respond so between these two shots I just might be risking life and limb.



Have I mentioned lately that I really appreciate being able to photograph Rogue Swan events? Not sure where I'm going yet with my Havre de Grace Street series – which includes performances I can wrangle invites to shoot – but I'm enjoying it, meeting a lot of wonderful people and building up quite a portfolio. The more I get out, the more people I meet, catch and observe. I prefer to center around events, both in and out of performances, considering it fair game. Otherwise I try to be very cautious and respectful of privacy in shooting people under more everyday circumstances. *Darn, B&W is fun!*

The Moon has been Eaten at the Opera House August 28

Spending much of my time working on this now, and getting out the word. One Island note: we have an invite to spend the greater part of next May and June on the Island. In spite of a lot of serious problems being faced there right now, it looks like some progress is being made. This month initiates the Rapanui's ability to limit all visitors to 30 days – including mainland Chilanos. That, along with the new inability for visitors to just show up without a registered place to stay have become necessary steps. Islanders have been keeping us up to date and we've been hoping for the best. We won't have any problems beyond having to have people vouch for our service to the Island. Hmm, taking along a few extra copies of the book might help show our appreciation.



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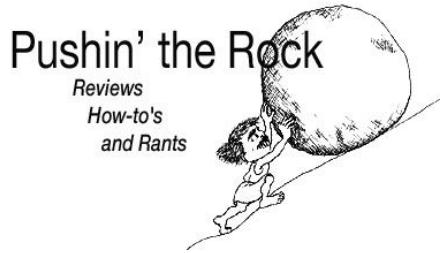
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I Update My 2013 Column on Out-Gassing of Art Work Behind Glass

Saturday, August 11, 2018

Or – the evil that lurks undetected on the inside of the glass on your art work... I've updated my 2013 How-To on Out-gassing to include some notes on our recent foray into cleaning our collection of art from other artists. Some of these pieces we've had for twenty five years or so. The reason for the update is that we found that ALL art out-gasses – it's just a matter of how much and how fast – even small watercolors. In fact one particularly heavily painted large watercolor and a couple of feather paintings were by far the worst culprits. We are so glad we did this.

In photography the black inks are likely to create issues quicker than other colors. I minimalise this as much as possible but still want people to be aware of the issue. Even works where we couldn't spot any whatsoever gained clarity after the inside of the glass was cleaned. Here's the updated posting:



Outgassing... what is it, prevention, fix-it

An issue that needs discussion, in spite of the fact that, in the end, it is only a minor frustration and does no real harm or damage. I can't count the number of artists who advise to "just don't go there" – shut up and refrain from calling attention to the issue.

Now, does that sound like me? The long answer is below, the short of it: just clean the inside of the glass at some point down the road.

Spotting Outgassing...

The overall effect is that your prized art work begins to lose its luster. Contrast is reduced, so is clarity. **Duh, there's a film on the inside of the glass.** The way to spot it – if it's really bad – is to shine a light on the art and then view from a sharp angle. You will be able to see both the film on the glass and the slight shadow cast from the partially blocked light. It often creates a pattern matching the darker areas of the work. Then again, after a certain amount of time, just assume that it is there.

What is It...

Most art mediums, as they age, give off gasses. Some more than others. Modern *giclee* print inks, especially the archival kind that contain solid pigment. They release these gasses much more slowly, at a hard to predict pace depending on environment. While all inks contribute, nothing seems to come up to the level of the blackest of the three black inks – and I work exclusively in B&W. Long before I could find discussions on the internet about the subject, I was scratching my head and experimenting, looking for a preventative – as above, the cure is easy.

Solution...

If outgassing occurs, it is easily remedied. Simply remove the work from the frame long enough to clean the inside surface of the glass. You will be amazed at how much better your prized work of art looks.

Our Experience...

Recently we decided that it was time to tackle those pieces in our considerable collection of local art that are sealed behind glass – anywhere from five to twenty five years old. A little daunting in that most artists seal the backs with brown paper. Arrgh. Our conclusion at the end: **ALL art work Outgasses**, it's just a matter of degree. Even when you can't detect it, cleaning the inside surface of the glass improves the clarity and contrast of the original work.

A couple of works stood out. While watercolors, on the whole, presented less of an issue, one particular large piece was one of the worst culprits – *Pears* by Nancy Welsh. It's one of our favorite paintings and hangs in the kitchen. Wow, after about fifteen years the film was very heavy. The painting took on considerable new life with the cleaning. All of our Laura Swallwell feather-paintings were really bad – something we had not really noticed at all. All of this happened so slowly over the years that we never noticed it – the work simply ceased to seem quite as striking, something that can be easily attributed to some loss of appreciation. This thankfully proved not to be the case.

Of course, none of these were all that easily taken apart and reassembled. *Oh well.*

Prevention...

... ah, there's the rub. Especially since outgassing can occur in stages, as well as be aggravated by environmental factors. Trapped glycol gasses seem to have a mind of their own as to when they will escape and find a new home attached to the inside surface of your glass. I divide the potential for outgassing into three stages: short, medium and long term vulnerability. The eternal optimist, I am aggressive in my handling of this issue.

Short term outgassing...

Vulnerable art here would be photography, collages, heavy watercolors, etc. It can show up anytime within a month, depending on temperature, humidity and how long it sat around before being locked up behind glass. It's very easy, if not a little of a pain in the proverbial neck, and not always doable, to prevent short-term outgassing. Finished work should simply not be framed immediately. It is advised that, if you must frame immediately, that you place sheets of paper over your art to draw out the gasses – and wait at least 48 hours. I like to do this for about a week, then air out the work for another week or more before putting behind glass – the longer the better.

Medium and long term outgassing...

What I call medium term outgassing can wait as long as two years to show up. I've had the same prints that showed evidence of "short term" gasses, where the glass was cleaned, have to be taken apart again after a couple of years. This was before I, or anyone else, knew there was a problem. No matter how many precautions you take, some gasses remain trapped that can leak out. This is why I maximize my chances with extra precautions in the beginning. I have many a framed image that showed no detectable outgassing whatsoever over a five or six year period – at least to the eye. At the same time the image looked better once the glass was cleaned.

Longterm outgassing is an issue with all art behind glass, whatever the medium. It's simply a matter of motivating oneself enough to tackle the job – especially if, like us, your home is loaded with not only one's own pieces stacked in the studio, but walls full of collected works from other artists.

I realize that some people are either not equipped to do this kind of artwork cleaning or just not oriented that way. I'm very happy to quickly do this on any of my pieces, and sometimes even pieces by other artists. It's not difficult at all if you do this kind of thing all the time.



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From the Street Looking In

Monday, August 13, 2018

...artist Pamela Wilde painting artist Jonathan West. Walking through town, without my camera, of course, I spotted area artist Jonathan West getting his portrait painted by portraitist Pamela Wilde in the window of the Artists Emporium. So I whipped out my trusty iPhone, launched **Camera+2**, one of my go-to camera apps because it shoots RAW, and snapped off a few exposures – interrupted by having to take Jonathan's phone and shoot a couple for him.

I had a hard time selecting an image to work on, but settled on this one in spite of the fact that others showed a better reflection of the photographer (me), adding another dimension to the shot. I liked it but it just didn't have the geometry.

Pamela has been working on this series for a few months now – I'll have to keep my eyes open and consider my own iPhone series of the process. Ideas come and go, but this one just might stay. iPhone RAW images, if you take a little care with them, can be "adjusted" to a considerable extent and print well up to 12x16 (if there's any cropping this might require a little interpolation, but not enough to be degenerative). This one – full frame, no

cropping.

The 8.125x11 matted 11x14 will be in the display at RiverView – maybe – by the end of the week, or month...

Due to our recent experience cleaning decades of pieces in our collection of art by other artists – I HAVE UPDATED MY 2013 COLUMN ON OUTGASSING OF ARTWORK BEHIND GLASS and placed it as a separate blog entry preceding this one, and changed the How-to link to reflect the change: [Out-Gassing of Art Work Behind Glass](#)

2 Comments

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Pamela Lofgren Wilde

Thank you James for capturing this moment in time. I'm blessed to come into your view finder.

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Jonathan West

Nice seeing you Jim. God works in amazing ways.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · 2w



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Group Shot from Last Week's Rogue Swan Performance

Thursday, August 16, 2018

I finally got around to posting a group shot of the whole Rogue Swan troop singing the final number from their recent performance in town. It's also added into the [Havre de Grace Street](#) set from this event. The complication was that it comes from two exposures. All but the left hand two were in one – then I cropped off the one on the left, laid it over the right side and erased the un-needed areas where they overlapped. Voila, one image. Granted, it would have been better if I had simply zoomed out a little – hindsight is so wasted here though.

A tad busy right now setting up my presentation at the Opera House on the 28th. See the home page for information...



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The Weather Complimented the Show – Torturous, while not a complete washout

Monday, August 20, 2018

I hesitated to post our latest little Other People's Art acquisition because I knew that I couldn't resist adding a couple of related observations that are sure to tick-off some people – OK to be honest, I enjoy that part a lot more than I dislike having to face the proverbial music afterwards. Most local artists would agree with me about the drastic decline of our so called art shows – heck, try to find any willing to go there any more. But they tend to vehemently deny any responsibility for it – "it's just the end of the outdoor art show" is something of a mantra. Never mind that elsewhere in the country there are shows that thrive, albeit more along the lines of our old ArtQuest event – something pretty much impossible locally for a number of reasons, some of them involving the nature of the artists themselves.

Anyway, we decided Saturday morning after our weekly foray to the Havre de Grace farmers' market, to run up to the annual, always-on-the-worst-weekend-o- the-year *Havre de Grace Art Show*. How this thing can keep going downhill without disappearing into a puff of smoke, totally escapes me. I won't even, beyond mentioning it in a state of total confusion, go any further into asking how and why exhibits selling honey, olive oil and other staples of the farmers market helped fill spaces at the event? Arrrgh.

Overall the show complimented the weather, or vice versa – torturous. As was the early morning music provided, totally inappropriately religiously oriented. We didn't stick around to hear the interjected political rants of past years from this bunch. Is it really a thing to subject people in public to to this and call it entertainment? Please.

Then there's the proliferation of booths selling honey, olive oil and other commercial products. Juried for what? Enough money to pay for a booth? But that's not the end of the commercialism, even though one would think that after all these years the people who run this thing would care enough to be able to spot the huge influx of fake artists exhibits. I spotted at least six that were obvious and another half dozen that bear checking. These are commercial efforts that supply the art and hire representatives to sit in the booth and claim to be the artist. I would place bets on these making up at least ten at this show this year. I would be asking for ID or, at least, checking exhibit lists at other events up and down the coast on the same weekend for duplications. Then again, I really don't believe the show cares.

If I had to be there judging photography, I would first have to resist the temptation to run down the hill and drown myself in the Bay. And a question, what the heck does bringing in two, yes two, "photography" exhibits that show work printed from public-domain image files from over a hundred years ago say? These printable files are downloadable from archive sites. How is printing them art? The fact that one of them hand-tints the images hardly makes it original "art". So if either one of these, or both, falls into the fake artist category, it hardly matters.

But there's always a silver lining, no matter how dark the cloud. Usually we can count on there at least being a few good potters – but even that medium is pretty much failing to be represented well here. We did run across a college student showing her clay work for the very first time. While I wouldn't give it rave reviews – she had no grand effort piece to tempt real pottery lovers – we both saw something in what she did have. Sort of reminded us of the early work of some of the better potters we have collected pieces from. I love the challenge of trying to spot talent right at the beginning – and have been right a couple of times.

We purchased the piece above, a really nice little "open work" bowl, about ten inches across. To be fair, the bottom isn't sanded properly, but we have early *Lyon Clay* pieces with the same issue. It's all part of the learning process. Below I took a quick iPhone shot of her exhibit – lucky kid had the best breeze in the park, elsewhere it could get really bad.



Piece by Emily Norris – her first showing, she used images from here to begin her Instagram postings. Talk about just getting started. But hey, she's a potter. It should take her about a week to have more followers than I do with B&W photography. She can be found at [instagram.com/norrisceramics](https://www.instagram.com/norrisceramics).

So, young lady with promise, go for it. Just make sure that you watch and study other artists, not just potters – misdirection is easier to spot in those involved in a different medium, and learn from their mistakes.

A few things I have learned over the years:

- Artists, photographers and potters have one thing in common in that there are far too many forces trying to steer one away from whatever course best brings one's art to the point where it is not only well executed but has something to say worth saying. A wrong or self-defeating path taken can be hard to impossible to retrace.
- Educators tend to over influence style to the point where it can take years to undo the damage. Resist. At the same time, find a really good potter and offer to help in the studio with the mundane chores for a time – it will be invaluable.
- Commercial forces tempt the artist into doing what they think (often mistakingly) will sell.
- An insecure need for approval from other artists can stop some in their tracks.
- And (maybe worst of all) undeserved success can be the worst teacher of all.
- Money is the measure of nothing but itself, certainly not real value.
- Awards and prizes are at best subjective to the point of hilarity and at worst meaningless.
- Praise, kudos and, heaven help us all, positive reinforcement are useless and misleading.
- Criticism is the one thing you can trust – If it is misplaced, it still forces a self-review that reinforces one's faith in one's ability – otherwise it is very simply how we learn. Learn to relish it.
- If you love art you will appreciate and acquire the work of others and not paper your own cage with just your own work.
- You'll find a lot of artists and fine craftspersons who develop a speel or load of bull crap to spout to potential customers. True, it might at times help make sales. But it's a trap. As others begin to see the artist as the fraud he or she is projecting, the artist begins to become that fraud, falling for his own line. It's an insidious trap – avoid it like the plague. It can be fun to watch this in others though.
- And, last but not least, we all make bad pieces – once you are sure, avoid the temptation to sell it off cheaply, destroy it, don't let anything reduce the overall quality of your work. Most artists we know, including ourselves, would gladly buy back some of our early work in order to burn it.

1 Comment

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Pamela Lofgren Wilde

Thank you for the words of wisdom. It is an important reminder that art should come from a combination of education, intellect and hopefully have some deeper meaning to this thing we call life. I'm not quite sure how beer can crabs fill this ideal.

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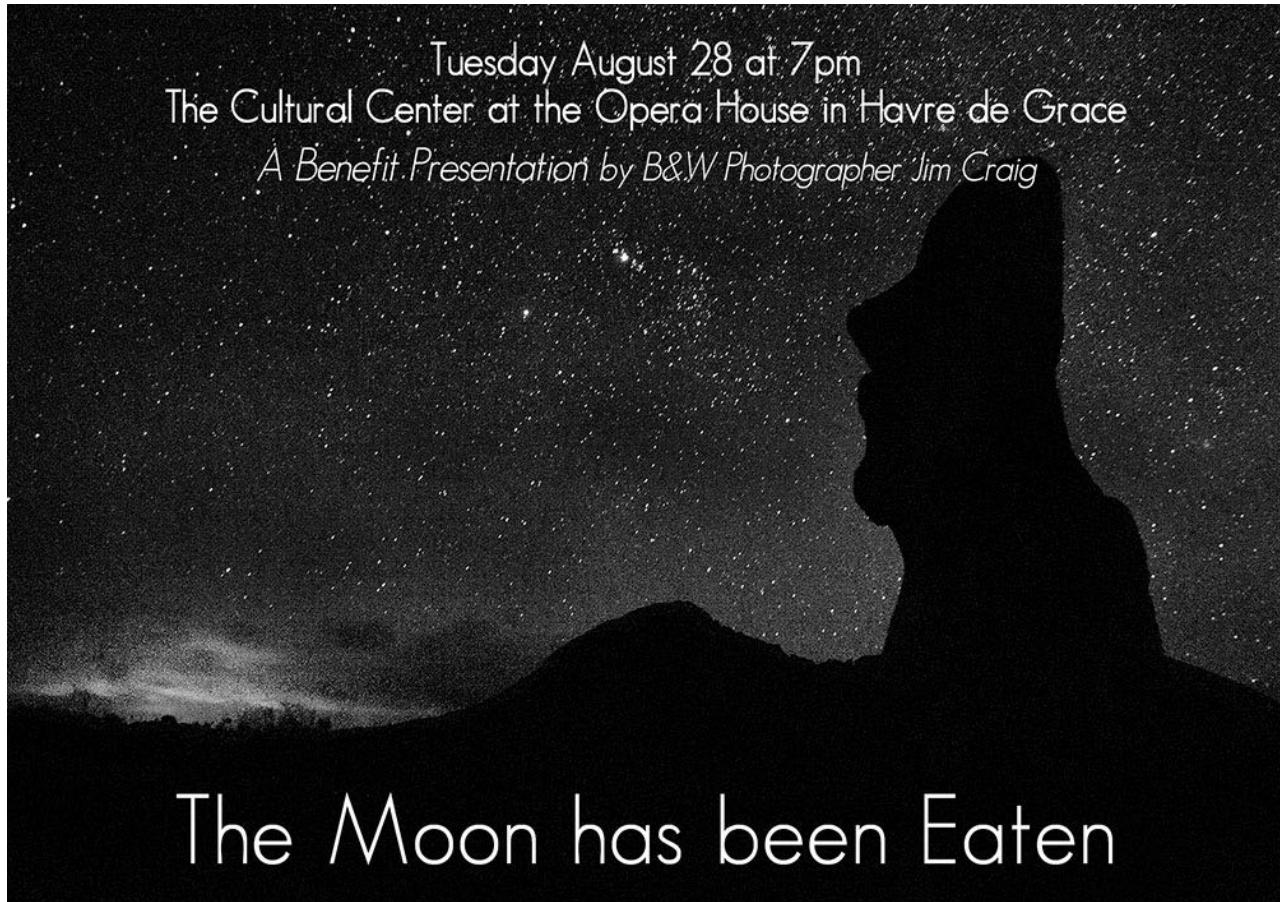
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Reflections on Portraits Behind Windows and a reminder: my upcoming presentation at the Opera House

Friday, August 24, 2018

One unexpected development in my Havre de Grace Street series is its branching out into a number of sub-sets or series. I knew First Friday might stand alone – but that's just the beginning. Within First Friday is a developing body of work at Cliff Giles' Drum Circle – and that will probably only expand. It's all looking like I'll have to find some innovative way to reorganize and categorize posted groupings.

Then there are the local Rogue Swan performances, many of them free to the public. That collection is growing. As is anything I've gotten from being allowed in at the Opera House. The list is growing. And now I've begun a series of iPhone shots – only speculating that I will continue this with the iPhone, but it looks good for noe – looking in the window at Pam Wilde painting her series of Havre de Grace portraits. I posted the first one last week and am adding five more here.

I'm enjoying this series, even if it is a tad demanding. Fortunately I live about two minutes away – it's just that I have to watch the schedule on her site and catch them in the act between 1 and 4. Unfortunately (or fortunately) I missed the first half of the year of anywhere from one to four a week.

Even on this I find I prefer the B&W – heck I'm the guy who shot all of, at least my part of them, my family shots in B&W as the kids were growing up. They appear along with Nan's color snapshots in a HB family book I put together for everyone – the one book I'm proudest of. And the B&Ws? The backbone of the book – phenomenal.

Before this posting's images – a reminder about my presentation at the Opera House Tuesday:

Tickets \$10 – ticket holders get a free signed copy of my book:

The Moon has been Eaten

– All monies go to support the Opera House –

Subject: my three year project originally titled
Images from a Year on Easter Island
told in Slides / Videos / Talk / etc.

I will be exhibiting some fine art prints from the project on one wall downstairs, along with original island carvings from our collection. There will also be a drawing for winner's choice from framed images.

Tickets available on the Opera House web site:
<https://ohhdg.org>

For updates see Blog postings @
jamescraigphotography.com

Reflections on Portraits Behind Windows and Street series to multiple sub-series:

The first shot is perhaps my favorite of this batch – so far, though that's a tough call. Reflections were more intense than usual that day so I took advantage of that and maneuvered so he was sort of sitting in the car. Sure a polarizer would "help" eliminate reflections, but their interaction with the subject is the point here. The subject is a John Casner.



Then, below, Paul Ishak:



Last but certainly not least is a pair on **Jeanette Saurs** – I like both for different reasons and am putting off deciding on one to see what others think. The first one highlights the subject well and shows my reflection without any real view of the painting. The second one paints the subject's face on the car in the background, shows the painting and makes her look like something of a ghost in the street. There is actually a third good one in this series that just might surface – a side view featuring the hat, a great expression and a lot less in the way of reflections.

Sometimes it's not an easy decision, especially in B&W.





1 Comment

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Add a comment...



Pamela Lofgren Wilde

James you are amazing and thank you.

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Notes on my Presentation at the Opera House

Friday, August 31, 2018

I copied the intro image from the Opera House web site – <https://hdgoperahouse.org/gallery/> – I hope that was OK with them. They have a Gallery section where their photographer puts up images celebrating events held there. This is me as I got to the point in the presentation where the slide of the B&W image that lends its title to the book is projected – *The Moon has been Eaten*. It's a shot of the moon in lunar eclipse from Easter Island. Why it came out blue in this exposure is beyond me, but I'm not going to mess with that, here it actually adds something. The stars are showing in the image, not so much here. Note the "upside down" moon – this is the southern hemisphere so that's how they see it.

I want to thank everyone who attended my ***The Moon has been Eaten*** presentation at the Havre de Grace Opera House this Tuesday. One never knows how things like this are going to work out as far as attendance – the director, Rebecca Jessup who was extremely helpful, estimated that for this kind of thing we might expect between thirty and forty, so I donated fifty books. But we did better than that and ran out. Fortunately I knew enough people there to do a little confiscating of books that could be replaced the following day and use them – but a quick moment of panic there.

So it was a nice crowd, allowing me to set myself up in the mid-way aisle and seat everyone in the back half of the room, controlling the screen remotely. It was really great to see everyone and, again, we are grateful to everyone for attending.

I had a lot of fun and everyone else seemed to enjoy it too. While I was preparing for this, gathering together images, cutting video clips, etc. I Googled around for pointers on line that might help make my Power-Point/Keynote presentation more interesting. But I kept finding some of the worst advice I've ever heard – maybe that's why most of these things we attend can be so dull. Then, attending a local Rogue Swan performance, I picked up on something something. The more fun they were having, the more fun the audience had. So I simply decided to do whatever was fun for me and hope for the best.

Am I anxious to repeat this – not really. I accomplished what I set out to: make a satisfactory contribution to our home town's Opera House, re-introduce myself to the local art community after a decade of essentially being absent due to the demands of the project, and finally bring some kind of closure to an endeavour that encompassed more than a decade of our lives. Time to concentrate on my new project – **Havre de Grace Street**.

Clarence and Ruth Vaughn won the raffle drawing and selected **Moai on a Starry Night** from the exhibit – it's an 18x24 framed 26x32. The only thing that was missing was the traditional girl in a skimpy outfit to draw the ticket.

I should probably add that this was, by popular demand, the non-techy version of my presentation. I had to unmercifully bite my tongue throughout in order to avoid segues into deep well discussions about individual B&W prints. As one sculptor put it afterwards, "it was 50 of us and maybe two of them, it's a good thing you didn't go there". Besides, there's probably a whole semester's worth of discussion material there, considerably more than a couple of hours.

Thanks again everyone...

Affinity Publisher – Yeah Baby

Affinity Publisher is out in Beta. I feel like I've been waiting for this forever, and it looks like it was well worth the wait. Adobe (ouch) is reasonable with their subscription fee for Photoshop – \$10 a month. But if you need even one of their other 14 or so apps (like InDesign) you have to pay the \$50 a month for ALL of them. NOT a user friendly policy. I needed InDesign – until now.

Affinity Publisher, free for now in Beta, comes close enough to InDesign to work for me. Full of bugs, you bet, all Beta apps are. But InDesign, watch out. You were a Quark killer in your day, and now primarily because of your insidious subscription policies, Affinity Publisher promises to be an InDesign killer. Price will almost definitely be the same \$49 as all Affinity apps – to actually OWN it. Again, yeah baby. New toy, new toy, new toy.



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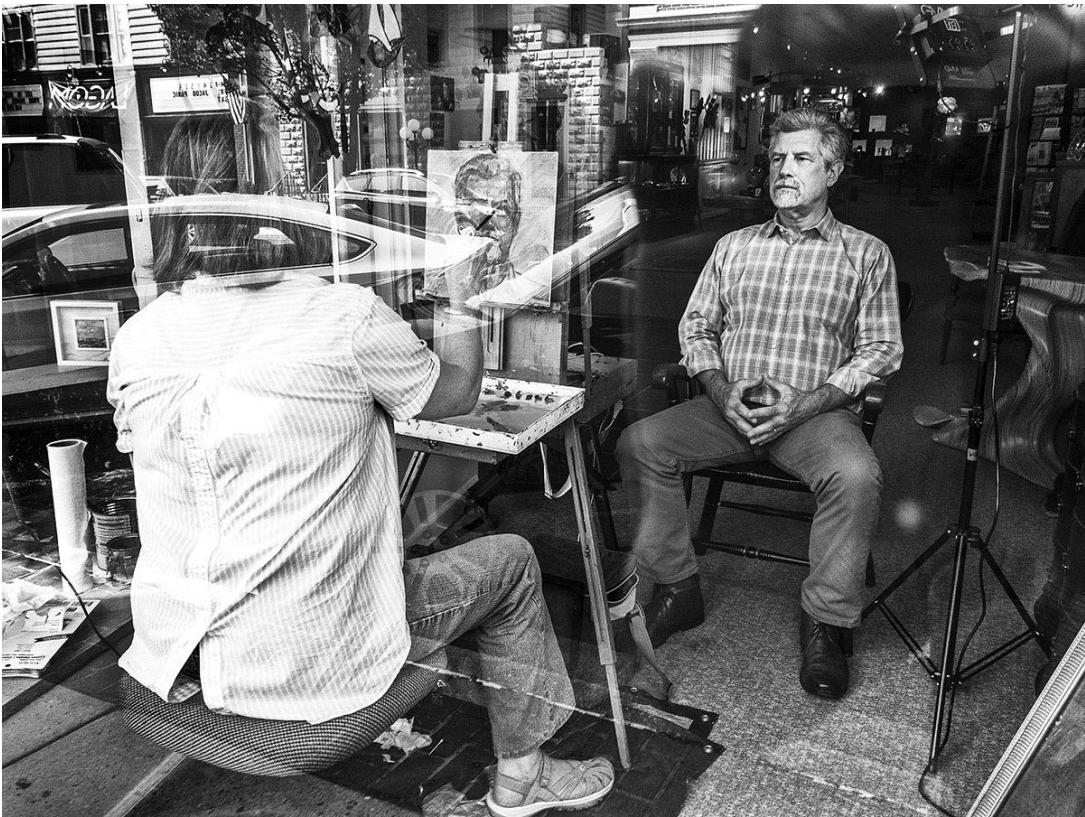


Three More from the Wilde Portrait Project

Monday, September 3, 2018

Art projects are fun to watch evolve. Pam Wilde's portraits-in-the-window project in town here is no exception. I began shooting my B&W series of these as an iPhone project – thinking of trying both the iPhone and regular camera on the next one. Still not sure what I hope to do with the collection short of showing all of them in my Havre de Grace Street series. There people are free to download them, albeit in rather low resolution.

I put Pete Botesma sitting for his portrait at the top here because I like the reflections of three passerbies all glancing in the window at what is going on. Below, finally someone else that I know – Jim McFarland from the Community College.



And finally – Karen Holt poses while Pam reacts to me monkeying around outside the window. This is a huge collection of portraits she's accumulating, I can't wait for the full exhibit sometime early next year. I'm not sure about the terms or how it all works, but she has a web site with sitting schedule and available dates – she usually does these from one to 4 in the afternoon, in the window of Artists Emporium in Havre de Grace. There's convenient buttons for scheduling your own sitting.. Web address:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/20f054faeaa2ea5fd0-model>



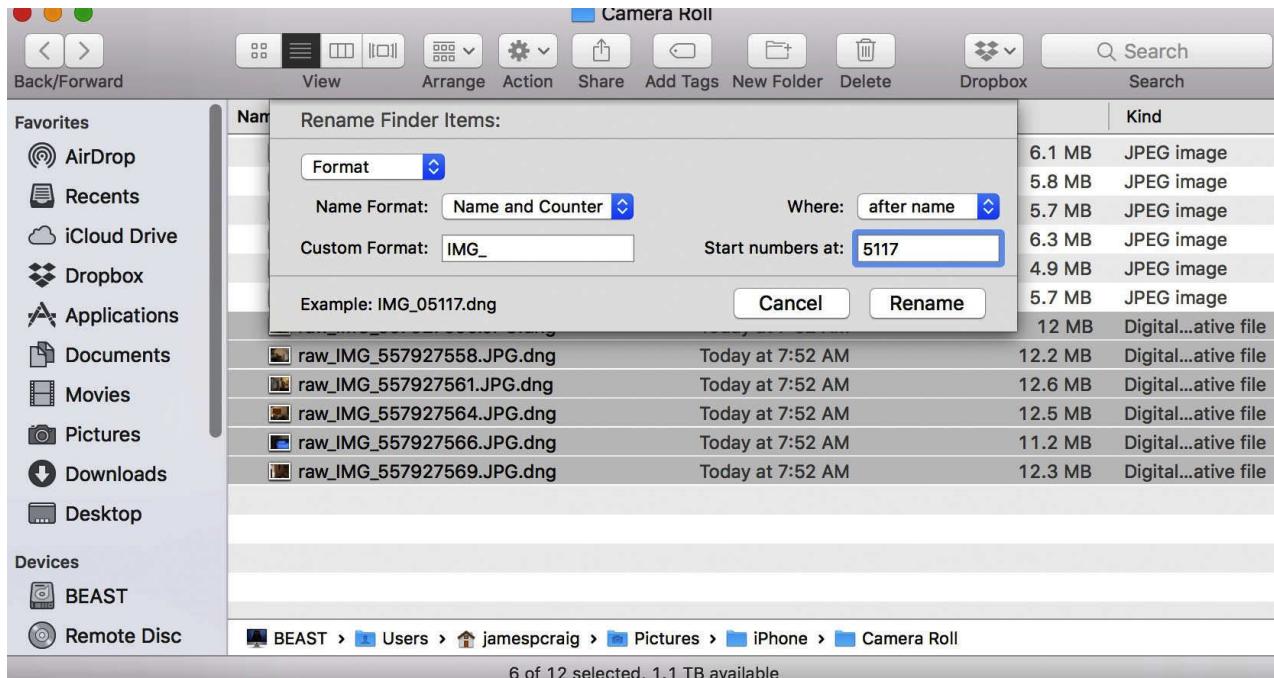
Anyone who wants to help me talk Nan into sitting for her portrait, please chime in. I'm having a rought time there.

This Friday is First Friday again. Since the August event was cancelled, I'm going to try very hard to be there. I have minor surgery on Tuesday, something that just might effect walking, so I may have to do a quick look around and grab a seat at Cliff Giles' drum circle and shoot that all evening. Then again, I seldom let a little thing like pain stop me. When queried about my preference for pain killer – I replied that I use the lay on the couch and whine system. Works for me.



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Quick Fix for iPhone Image Numbering when Shooting RAW + JPEG

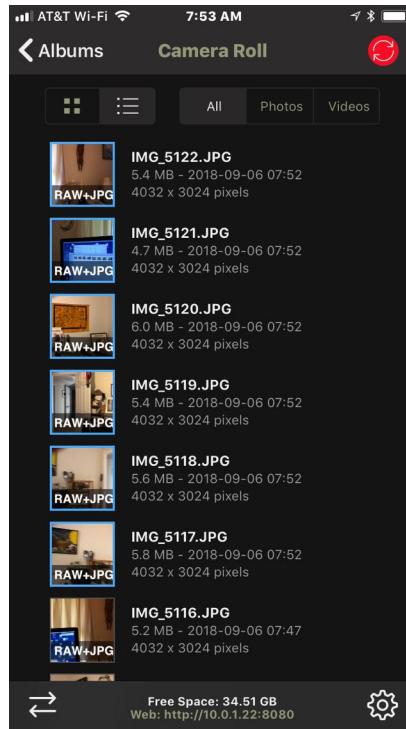
Friday, September 7, 2018

Tuesday I underwent an epididymectomy, from issues that began when I had the mumps at the age of 40. Not exactly a major operation but I spent Wednesday in and out of ice packs. Thursday I'm actually walking normally. In my advanced state of boredom I began contemplating what to do about a little work-flow problem involving shooting RAW in the iPhone. I like the **Camera + 2** app for this. You end up with a neatly stacked RAW+JPG file in Photos. So far so good. But when you open PhotoSync and send these to the computer you see very nice sequentially numbered jpeg along with RAW files (.dng) looking like they do in the screen shot above – what the heck?

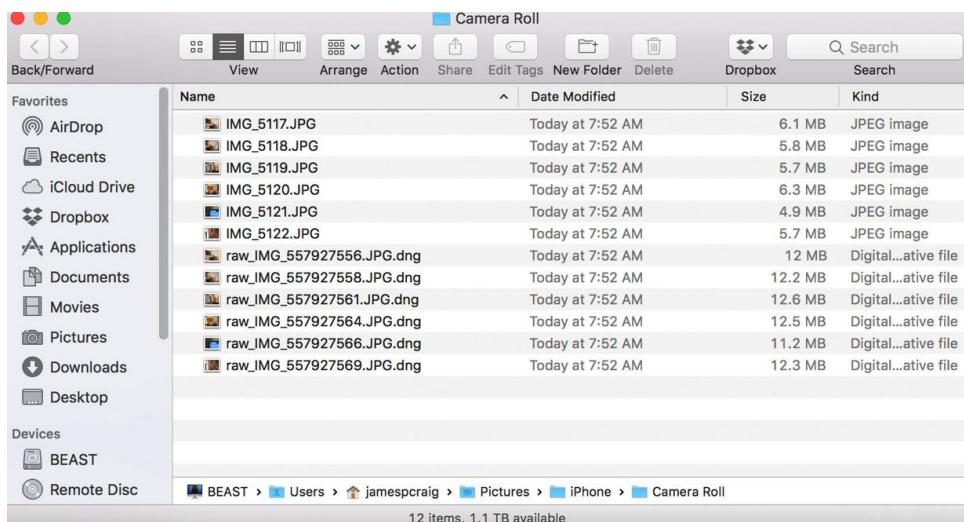
Well, just try and link these files together in Photos on the Mac or any other image referencing application. But just a little head scratching – not nearly enough to use up as many hours as I was trying to kill – I came up with a quick work-flow solution. So, in case anyone is interested, or has found the same issue, here it is, and it's actually pretty simple:

1– In the Camera+ 2 preferences make sure that **Save combined JPEG + RAW** is checked. The alternative, **Save separate JPEG and RAW DNG** yields file numbers even trickier to fix – with JPEGS having all even or odd file numbers and DNG the opposite.

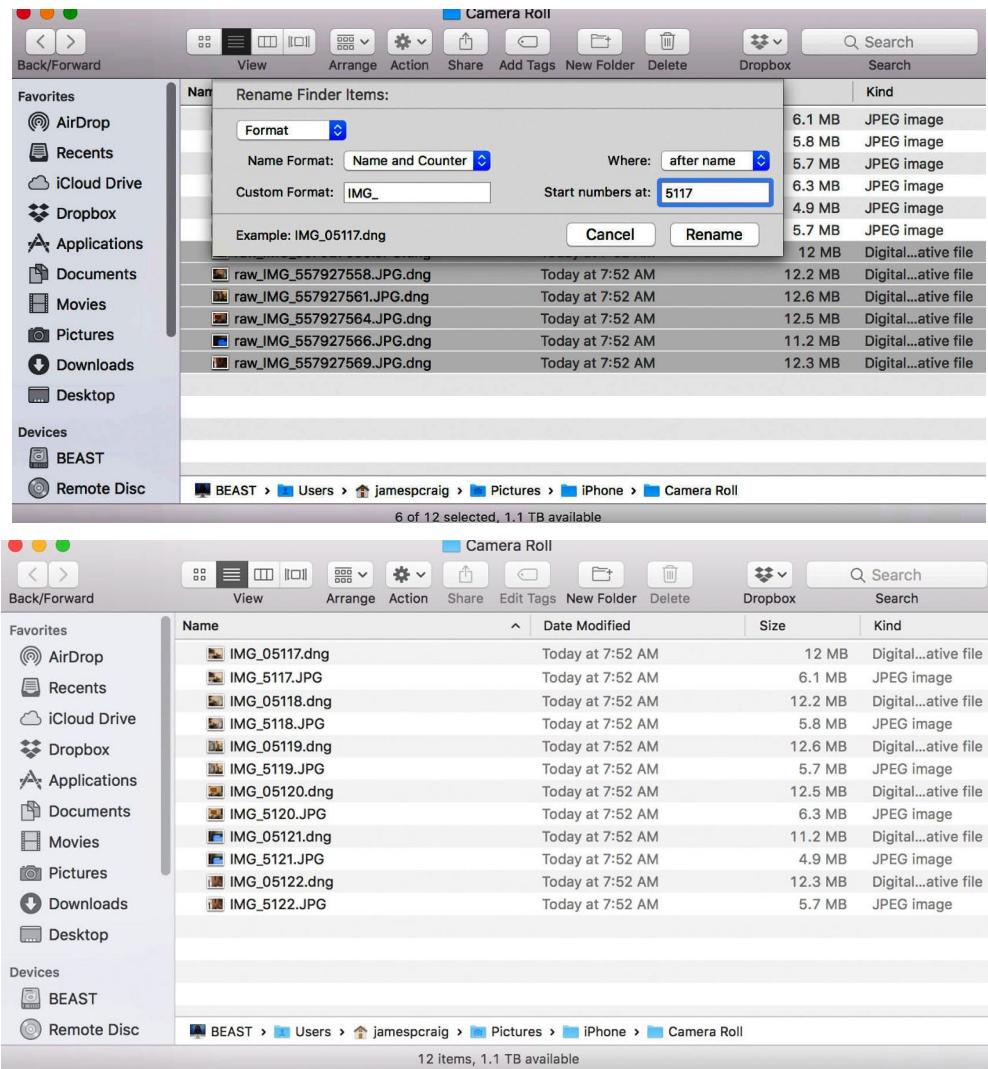
2– **PhotoSync** references the images on the iPhone in Photos. This is how you will see them – neatly stacked. Select and send these to the computer.



3– Right there in the import folder on the computer, I batch select the files with the DNG ending. Right-click on them and select **Rename** the six files selected.

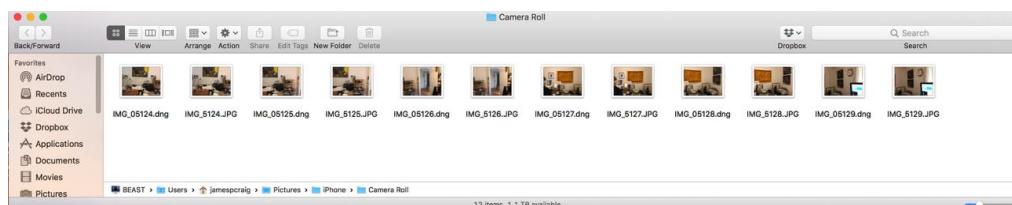


4– In the Rename dialog box I set it up as shown (simply substitute appropriately), press rename, and voila – everything is as it should be, and always is when coming from regular camera. The JPEGs and RAWs from the same shot have the same file number.

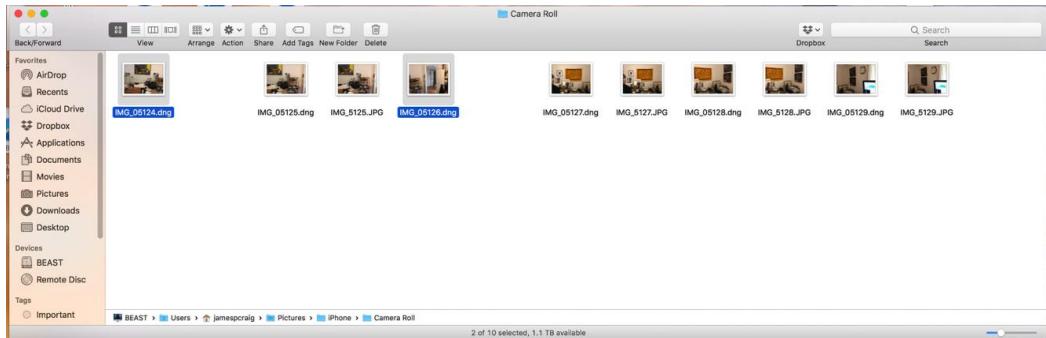


THEN (optional)

5– At this point I like to eliminate bad shots, junk, etc. before I store the images to be referenced. Who wants to use up twice as much space as necessary especially with large RAW files. I go into Icon view and make sure images are paired and in sequential order. Then I return to List view and select the JPEG files – here simply click on "kind" to group them, select and drag/drop on the "**Preview**" icon in the dock. They will open in **Preview** - show the icons at the left so you can give your exposures a quick look.



6– There I delete any exposures not worth holding onto. When done I close Preview and go back to my folder where they have also been deleted. There the matching-number RAW files can be easily identified and deleted. With large batches of images where this might involve some searching, after deleting from Preview, I revert to icon view in the original folder. That way there is a blank space where the deleted JPEG files were – the RAW file right next to that space can then be deleted. Hold the Command key down and select just the files to be deleted. I've gone through hundreds at a time this way.



7– Now I simply create a new folder, label it appropriately, transfer the remaining image pairs and store that folder in its appropriate place before referencing it in Photos – I use Photos for storage and referencing of original exposures only. Since I work in B&W I export the RAW file when I want to work on it and then keep any resulting print files elsewhere.

If I've been at all confusing on this, just contact me and I'll clarify.

New Site Banner

Hopefully you've noticed my new site banner. It took a little work to come up with something that slim that worked from my new **Havre de Grace Street** work. I wanted to make the banner image better fit what I'm presently working on. And I've already had one feedback saying "it's about time".



Fuji X-T3 is out and I WILL have one by Christmas

With all the new mirrorless cameras coming out this Fall, even from Nikon and Canon, I was prepared to not be impressed. Nikon and Canon did not change my mind but Fuji's new X-T3, an updated version of my X-T2 did. Here's why I will have one:

1- NO IBS (In-body stabilization). Thank you Fuji. The only use I see for IBS is shooting videos with a lens that doesn't have in-lens stabilization. Otherwise it's just an unstable sensor.

2- Two stops better low light photography when it comes to noise because of BSI (back-side illuminated sensor). *This is a biggie.*

3- No need for the battery grip in order to access advanced power functions. What this means is that, unlike the X-T2 I'll be able to leave the battery grip off for some shoots. *Cool.*

4- Radically faster face/eye recognition with auto-focus. This was already good in the X-T2 but all cameras have issues with this in low light. *This could be a game changer.*

5- OK, it has that darn touch screen, but it can be turned off. *Meh.*

6- 11 frames a second with mechanical shutter and 30 frames with electronic. *Wow.*

7- A body price of \$1500. This might seem high, but in the world of advanced cameras this is a steal. Fuji is going to sell the crap out of these. One of the best built, most capable cameras ever, from a company that listens to its customers and keeps your firmware regularly updated with new functions.

8- 4K video at 60fps really boosts video options.

9- Maxed out focus-peaking for manually focusing converted lenses in bright light. *Nice*.

10- Like most Fuji cameras, comes in both black and silver-top. I prefer the black, but it's nice to have a choice.

There's a lot more, the list is seemingly endless, but these were the main improvements that have me all tingly. The only question I have is whether to keep my X-T2 as backup or sell it. AND, do I really want the battery grip.



Affinity Publisher Beta – some early observations

OK, I realize that relatively very few people actually use these complex publishing applications. They function sort of like a combination of word processors and web authoring tools on steroids. But there's a new kid on the block and it actually makes an attempt to be intuitive to work with. Personally I find it simpler and more direct to use than *Microsoft Word* (but that's not saying much). I mentioned a couple of postings ago that Affinity has brought out this competitor to *Adobe's InDesign*. I was hoping that it was at least close, considering the subscription fee for adobe Creative Suite. I've now watched the first batch of instruction videos and played around with it some:

1- Right off the bat, as complex as this type of app has to be, *Publisher* is much more intuitive to learn and use than *InDesign*. This was a big surprise. While even after years of use I often find myself having to Google how-to's when needing to do something that I don't do regularly. With Publisher I find that very often I can actually figure it out from the tools layout.

2- Many operations that are involved chores in *InDesign* are simplified here. Perhaps less in the way of keyboard shortcuts and right-click menus, but that's not an issue for those of us who don't use *InDesign* all day at work.

3- While Publisher does not as yet open your *InDesign* files, that is coming over the next few months. In the meantime, you can simply export to PDF from ID with full size images and open the PDF to a completely formatted document in Publisher.

4- A number of functions are either grayed out right now, not implemented yet, or on a waiting list. This IS the FIRST of many Beta versions and to be expected. Pretty darn good for a first beta release (and free for now).

5- I like the fact that one has the option to place images immediately within the document instead of referencing them – much quicker, easier and slicker for those small projects.

6- Publisher is stable and presented no running issues. And Affinity seeks and responds to comments, feedback and requests (not exactly an Adobe strong point).

I'm sold. While Publisher is not yet an *InDesign* killer that will replace it for some top-tier professionals, it holds the promise of chipping away at the professional market as users request and get features. I'm reminded of *Apple's Final Cut Pro* first release and how far it has come. I just wish I had another book to work up right now. In the meantime I can see what I can do in the way of converting my *The Moon has been Eaten* and other book files over. Until now, the only choices as far as publishing apps were the extremely costly and not user friendly (nightmare) *Quark*, a relatively great if still not intuitive *InDesign* – but with a horrid subscription contract, *Microsoft Word* (which can be time-consuming cajoled to doing almost anything if you can figure it out), or one of the few rather limited and somewhat childish low cost options. *Affinity Publisher*, over the next few months, will fix that.

With *PDF Expert* to replace *Acrobat*, and *Publisher* instead of *InDesign*, I will be down to using nothing from Adobe except for *Photoshop*. While I also have *Affinity Photo*, I still prefer *Photoshop* – primarily because so much of my B&W work is done using the many options in the *PhotoKit* plugin. And that ain't gonna change soon.

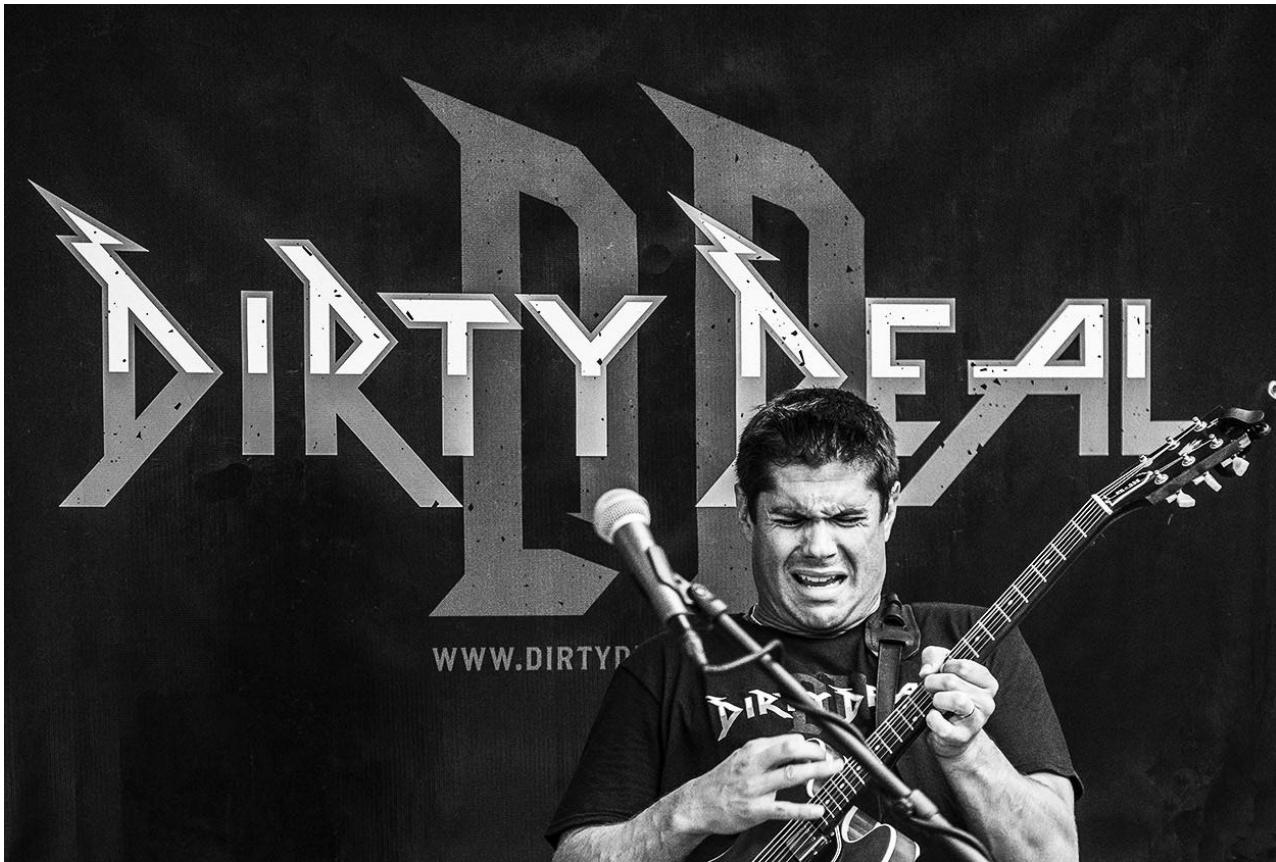


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First Friday in September

Monday, September 10, 2018

I managed to spend a little time shooting First Friday, albeit not without a good deal of "discomfort". Surgery just three days before proved a bit too much – especially in the heat and humidity. Swelling soon became unbearable and I had to head home to the ice packs over the seven stitches in my testicle (from removing some complications from having the mumps, of all stupid things to get as an adult, a while back). Nan tried her best to pull me out even earlier, but I wanted to feel like I got something out of the event. After all, the previous month's First Friday had to be cancelled because of rain. Friday they actually predicted rain so a number of the restaurants declined to set up their outside eateries – a real shame because, of course, the rain didn't start until long after the event was over. Crowd was perhaps a little on the light side early on, but was really picking up about the time I was limping to the car. October will be the last one this year – and I'll be back in top form for booking it through the streets at breakneck pace with my camera – finishing up my 2018 coverage of First Friday in Havre de Grace.

The image at the top is a shot I had to for. This is the second time Dirty Deal played First Friday this year (there's a band or performer every block). This time they had their banner behind them and I stood there waiting for the lead guitarist and singer – Joe Casamento – to assume the right expression, in the right position. A lot of fun trying to get it. After about a hundred shots I hit paydirt. Fired off two quick ones, catching the right hand just slightly blurred. I knew I had it. Their sound is sort of a rock blues – really great. A Delaware band I think.

The young artist below sets up every month on Washington Street to draw caricatures, always a popular stop.

Here she had just finished setting up her booth and was dancing to the street music when she spotted me aiming my camera at her. I managed caught her reaction.



Below, another band's lead singer. Much easier to get decent shots when they dress for the occasion like this. Often it's almost not worth trying – I do like shooting performers. And April Burril perched at the kids' table outside our local art supply (and more) store managed by her husband, coloring – and evidently enjoying herself thoroughly.



Outside RiverView Gallery where they exhibit, Emily Lyon and Nicolai Dressel teaming up to sell their hand-made items.



Last, a couple of kids on drums. Cliff Giles's drum circle has become one of the biggest attractions of First Friday, and kids are encouraged to take part. The young lady preferred to stake out a drum on the fringes, playing along in her own little world. The little boy got into the middle and proceeded to take turns playing on everyone's drum. They were both cool to watch.



Again, all the images can be found a little larger in the appropriate First Friday event in the Havre de Grace Street section... I'm really looking forward to First Friday in October – by when I'll once more be able to haunt the streets at my normal breakneck pace.



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Two more from the iPhone series on Wilde Portraits

Thursday, September 13, 2018

Now that I'm moving around like something close to my normal third or fourth gear, and Nan has signalled my recovery by ceasing to wait on me, I'm anxious to get back to work. This posting offers up two more of Pam Wilde painting portraits in the window of Artists Emporium downtown Havre de Grace. It's a year-long project, anywhere from one to four a week, the results of which will be in a major showing at the gallery sometime in March.

My series is more than a little bit speculative. There won't be more than a couple of dozen, the perspective and compositions are similar, they are shot with the iPhone, etc. At this point it's just for fun. While I do shoot kids of First Friday joining the Drum Circle or otherwise participating in the festivities, I'm avoiding it in this series unless invited. The image at the top is also a self portrait along with being part of the series – I hit a day where the lighting allowed for my reflection to be relatively sharp. The subject of the painting is Carol Zimmerman.

In the image below Mary Ann Lisanti seems to be posing for a relatively serious portrait – actually my favorite kind. These rainy days seem to be creating clearer, more defined reflections – my hand holding the iPhone is clearly visible.



Again, they have been added to the [Havre de Grace Street](#) page where they can be viewed a little larger – and are downloadable.

My Take on All the Recent Mirrorless Camera Announcements

Lots out there right now and, between the brand name fan boys and the shills who get a kickback from sales they initiate from their sites, it can be tricky to sift down to what's important. Especially when that is so subjective. All these cameras can produce great results today – so test/example images produced by professionals and reviewers are worse than useless. And all cameras have to make trade-offs, that is certain functions and capabilities are sacrificed in favor of others. Heck, it's like buying a car – it's very personal.

I did not expect to be adopting the APS-C Fuji mirrorless system, switching from my Canon full-frame DSLRs. But the minute the camera came into my hands almost two years ago, I fell in love with photography all over again. Fuji's new entry, the X-T3 is a major upgrade of my beloved X-T2. Normally I wouldn't consider making the move at this point – but they've introduced a back-illuminated sensor that is designed to reduce low-light, high ISO noise by two stops. That's TWO STOPS, wow.

I do a lot of low-light, high ISO work. My X-T2 pretty much shows no detectable noise at ISO 1600, a small amount (very fixable) at 3200, some more difficult but often manageable noise at 6400, and even 12800 is occasionally usable. This will bring those numbers down between one and two notches. That is just freaking awesome. The rest of the camera improvements are simply the icing on that cake – and there is a lot of icing (except for the addition of touch screen – I can simply turn that crap off). And, again, thank you Fuji for NOT putting an in-body stabilizer in there – I'm one of a growing minority who absolutely hate it, preferring to use a stabilized lens when the need arises..

So yes, I will be upgrading this Fall – the only question being whether I'll have to part with the X-T2 that has served me so well.



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My Havre de Grace Street and More from Wilde Portraits

Sep 18, 2018

Continuing with the iPhone shots of the **Wilde Portrait Sessions** lets gives me something to work on while I'm recuperating from my surgery – very little hiking required to park the car and walk a few yards, carrying naught but an iPhone. Besides, it's a kind of fun series to work on. The image at the top is from Sunday, the one below from Monday – that should be it for a few days anyway. I'll add them to the [Havre de Grace Street](#) slide show on the project – beginning next week I'll have to start a second grouping, no more room for posting links below the thumbnail.

Above, **Robyn Sousa**. There was a particularly large, slanted windshield on the car parked out front that leaves Ms. Sousa's head emerging from its reflection. Notice I like to show up around mid-sitting, with the sketch pretty advanced but before too much actual painting is done.

Below, Carol Temple. I like the way my hand provides a sort of framed, darkish background for her. As always, the images in the Street slide shows are a little larger and more striking looking. I don't know the woman, but she has a great face.



Again, the images are always a little larger and more strikingly presented in the [**Havre de Grace Street**](#) section. As the Street section grows, and I come closer to figuring out just what I'm hoping to do with it, I'm sure I'll be forced to make some structural changes on the page – that's always fun (not). I'm looking forward to some time in January for that chore – not much going on then.



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Continuing to Catch some of the Wilde Window Portraits

Sep 26, 2018

The good news for me is that the doctor says I'm coming back nicely from the surgery and I'll be back to jogging by October 1. Good thing, I have a 5K Halloween and don't want it to be a complete embarrassment. I should also be ready to hang in there for the duration this upcoming First Friday – last one of the year. If the weather holds, and after one skipped followed by one iffy, it ought to really rock.

The image at the top is this Sunday's *Wilde Window Portrait* (WWP). Kirk Smith posing. Hard to believe that standing almost in the same position yields such a variety of effects. Sure the subject changes, but so does the lighting, amount of reflection, position of cars parked in the street, etc. In this shot, one car looks like it's parked right up next to Pam while she paints. And Mr. Smith's head rises straight out of the roof.

Monday's portrait session, below, is Dodi Gregory. This one came out quite busy, including a walk-by near the center. One oddity that I've noticed is how few people walking by have any inclination to stop and watch an artist painting a portrait right there in the window, less than three feet from their faces. What would explain that? At first I thought that they are simply focused and not noticing, but I've been observing and have come to the conclusion

that this isn't usually the case. I mean, my gosh, this isn't something one sees every day. What is it about the ones that do stop, if only for a few moments? I don't know. All I do know is that there is something about the fact that the vast majority never break their stride that confuses, and even bothers, me.



At first I was going to begin another Icon/Album on the *Havre de Grace Street* page with this posting. Instead, I decided to keep adding entries to the existing show – until and if I hit the maximum. What this forced me to do is pass on posting a long version of the links to related postings below the album – and resort to just posting dates. I do keep this thing up to date – so the whole series (sort of a subset of my Street series) can be accessed at once. Again – [Havre de Grace Street](#).



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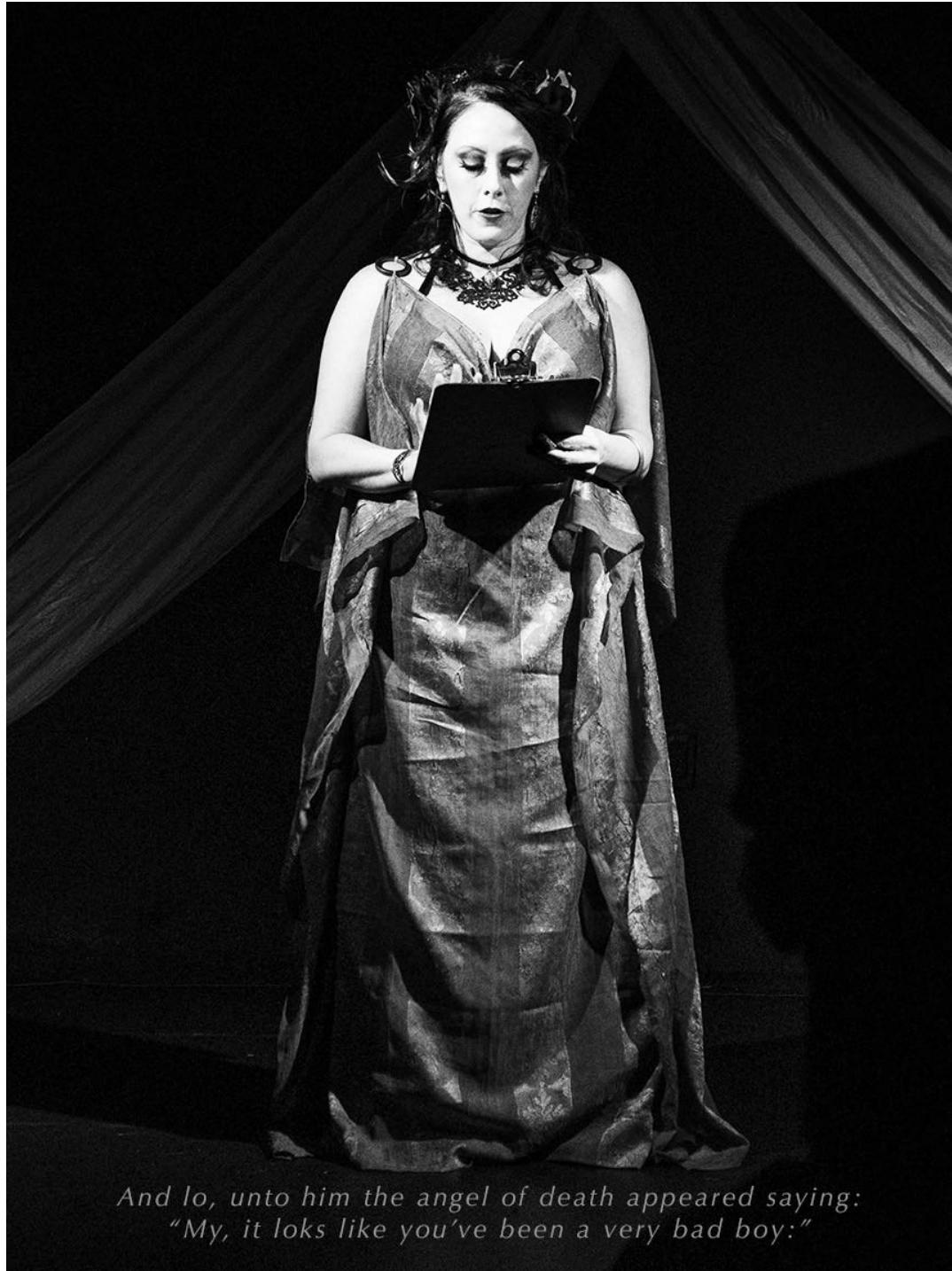
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*And lo, unto him the angel of death appeared saying:
"My, it looks like you've been a very bad boy:"*

Moonshine Hafla – Just the first three. With the lighting these are not easy.

Oct 2, 2018

Page 1 of 3

The rest of my images from Saturday night's *Moonshine Hafla* at the Opera House will have to wait a couple of days. But I thought I'd post the first half. The title of the image at the top is something that flashed before my slightly demented mind at the time – probably inspired by the lighting in the room we were in, they call it the black box. Anyway, I actually made it a part of the image here – sort of like a small poster. It's April Monique (April Burril) announcing the upcoming show.

And lo, unto him the angel of death appeared saying...

"My, it looks like you've been a very bad boy..."

I'll take an opportunity to whine a little bit about stage lighting. As a photographer I can handle converting to monochrome from almost any combination of colored lights – except the blue. Even then some of the effect can be overcome unless it is ALL BLUE or just the light on the face blue. It dominates, neutralizes, it sucks. Try to convert or even adjust, you get a strong solarization effect – isn't that precious. At the same time it likes to give the illusion of things being out of focus. Anyway, I got that off my chest. Keeps me from chewing my nails.

I gave April's husband a color version of the intro image here. Not too big because the other issue in the black-box was that I was forced to shoot everything between ISO 6400 and ISO 12800. Tends to limit how large you can go. Surprisingly, with my Fuji X-T3 the results aren't as problematic as I feared – not that I look forward to going there again. I'm just no longer quite as panicky at the thought.

Below, the next two shots that I came to – the first is the first dancer that came on. Somehow at the time I missed the fact that, with her eyes covered, there were eyeballs in the palms of her hands. Guess I was too busy shooting – that sort of explains the dance. Cool. I know I need to get names here – I'll work on that before I finish these up so I can add them in the Havre de Grace street slide show.



Finally, a shot of April giving her not so tempting come hither look in her dance. Maybe the fact that halloween is approaching influenced the themes here.



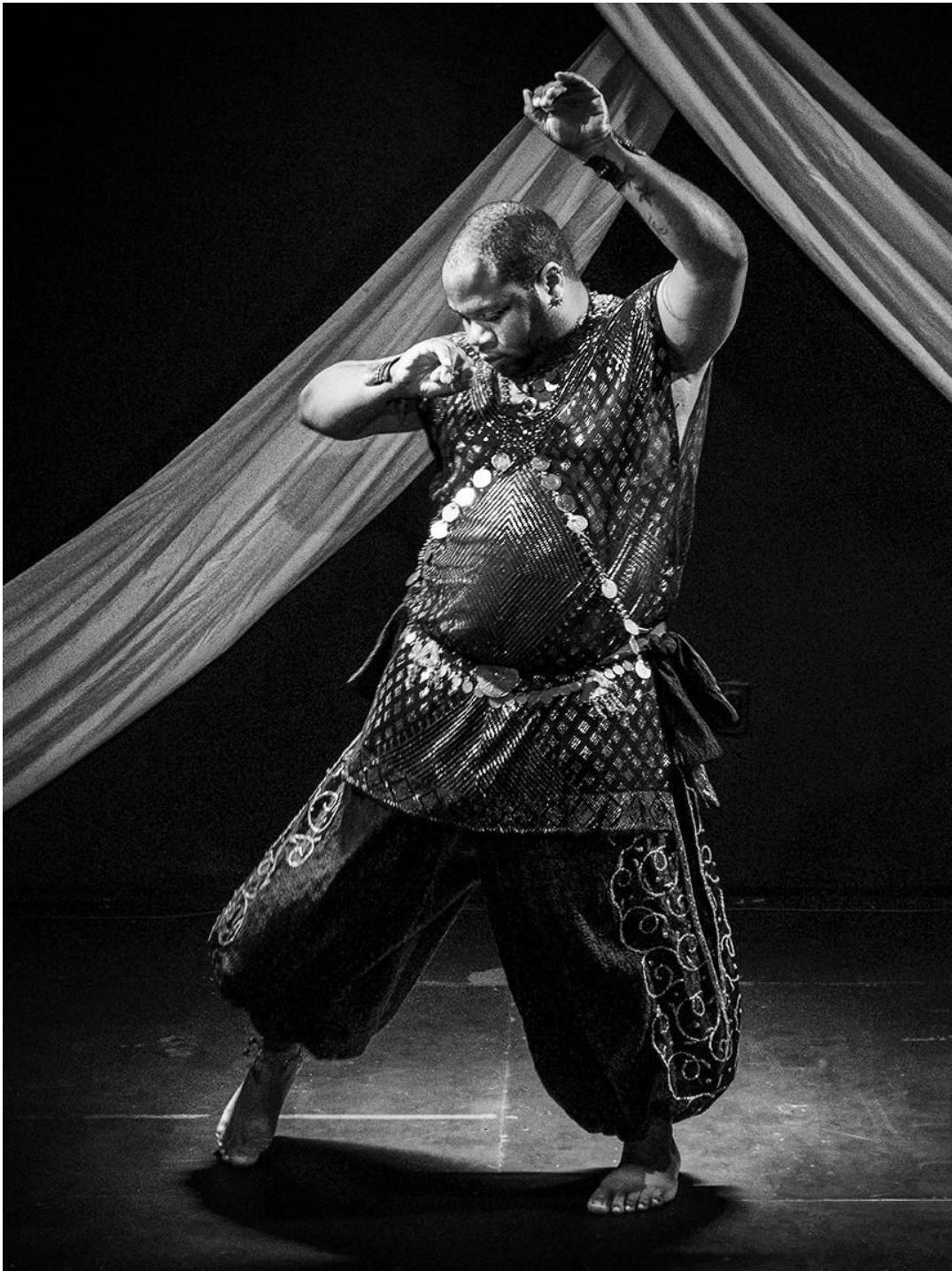


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More Moonshine Hafla

Oct 4, 2018

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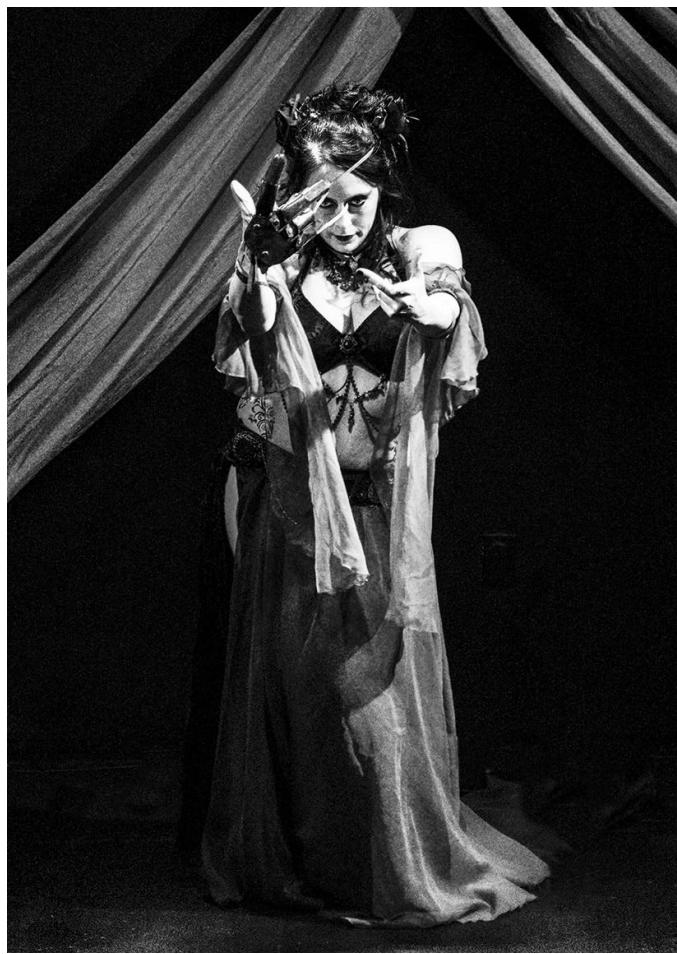
The rest of a very tricky story. OK, the results aren't all "that" bad – but when you shoot 500 shots and, after deleting the total failures, wind up with a 110 to work with, well.... the shoot was a tad problematic. And add to that the fact that part of the 110 comes from me setting the camera for multi-shooting. I like 5 to 6 frames a second (the camera will go to 11 with the mechanical shutter and a full 30fps with the electronic shutter). That way I get, depending on the action, two to five from which to select. Slight differences in expression, position and, especially at the Opera House, lighting, can be important. It was a small room, and even standing about a foot and a half off the floor, vantage was pretty poor. So I have to apologize for not getting everyone who danced. Anyone in a group who didn't at some point cross dead center got missed. Nan says to stop whining and just post the pictures – *but it did help a little to whine.*

The opening shot here is of the one male belly dancer. We've seen this before so it wasn't a surprise. This guy made it look quite masculine – I had two or three shots I really liked and had a difficult time choosing. Nan says he looked like the genie that came out of the bottle. When I get the names I'll have to try and get the color files to him.

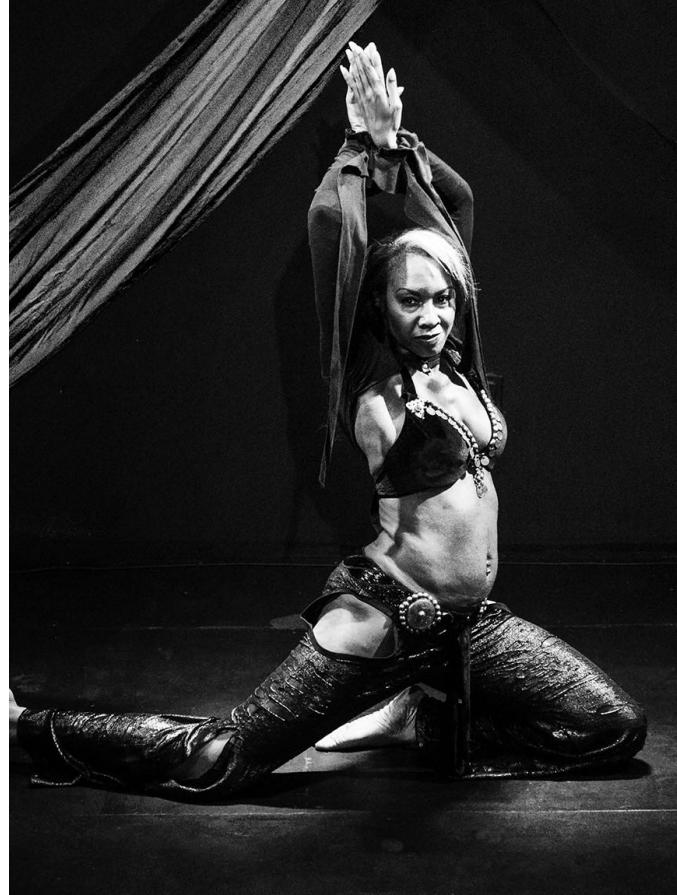
Below is what I believe they call a veil dance, sorry if I'm wrong about that. Here if you look close the camera picked up the cord controlling the veils – something I could not see during the performance.



Then April again, another shot of her deadly come-hither look. Something too cool about that sequence.



And the tall young lady here moved from this pose to a back bend almost to the floor. I'll just say that she knew how to move.



I've initiated efforts to get names but, so far, to no avail. I'll add them later to the Havre de Grace Street album. Last, but not least, and in the spirit of the time of year, is the image below. After the dance there were comments like "The eyes have it", etc. Very effective in the dark room with black walls – if insanely difficult to capture. Again the name should appear in the **Street** album soon.



This series, as usual, appears along with those from the first posting as one of the slide show albums on the [Havre de Grace Street](#) page, where they are a little larger and on a black background. I'll have to admit that I did not expect the Street page to fill up to this degree so fast. This winter I'll have to come up with something of a reorganization/simplification plan. I put links to the original postings where the images appeared below the album thumbnail. As far as taking the images to print – even my small versions that are in RiverView Gallery free to the subject, that comes a little later when I have the time.

As always, anyone sees themselves or a family member, just contact me here and I'll get an 8x11 on 11x14 made up for them.



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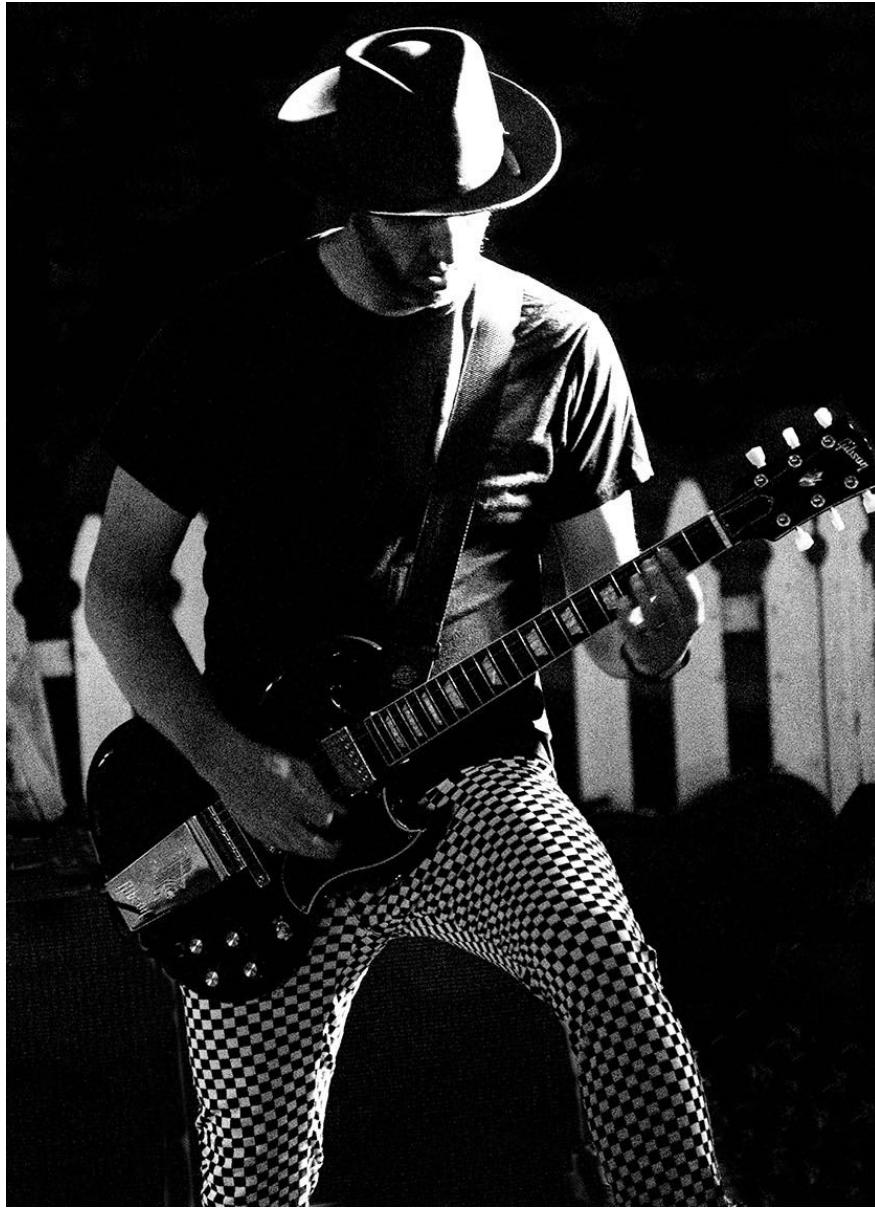
First Friday in October

Oct 8, 2018

Page 1 of 2

Just a couple of shots this time around. August First Friday cancelled, September reduced to a minimum and now October at about half-strength. Even the Drum Circle stayed home. With as much rain as we've had this year, it's a wonder that so many First Fridays were able to go forward. I grabbed the shot above while sipping coffee outside Java By The Bay. This little girl's parents were trying to go into The Art Room where JimmyO has been showing a number of Halloween paintings. But she had other ideas – the sidewalk light was more than enough for her. When they tried to leave, asking her where she would like to go next, she simply pointed back to the light.

The shot below is Shane Grimm on Guitar in the band [Everwatt](#). It was getting dark and I liked the harsh lighting. Maybe I cheated a little in eliminating glimpses of a light building and a tree behind him. – leaving the picket fence. Again, the second trip out in a row, I found myself shooting at extremely high ISO – this time at only 6400 (for both of these). The results from these two shoots remind me of what I used to get from Tri-X film pushed to ISO 800.



As always, check out the [Havre de Grace Street](#) page for the album, where they are nicely presented and are even downloadable,

We probably could have hung around a little longer, but we had tickets for **Mama Mia** at the Opera House up the street. All I can say is WOW. One of the most fun evenings we've had this summer. Entertaining and funny. At one point I laughed so hard I pounded a bruise into my right leg. Then, at the end, the whole ensemble gathered to sing, and dance, some of the better musical numbers from the show.

So, trust me, get to this show. The first five performances were sold out. Next weekend, Friday seems to have about four tickets left at this point – a few more are available after that. [Opera House Ticket Sales](#).

Katy, you are the queen!



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Two More Wilde Action Shots

Oct 11, 2018

When there is a series of shots, it's always a question as to which one to feature on the top of the blog. This one was a no-brainer – that is one cool hat, lady. And her name isn't far behind: *Paula Casagrande* – ironically she probably lives in a small house. I just love the pose and expression. The second shot, below, is *Lori Gengenbach*. Slight shift in composition here, I had to put them in the bottom right, but it does show a little more of the street on the left. And the expressions match wonderfully.



X-T3 Notes

I recently moved to shooting the new Fuji X-T3. I love my X-T2 but needed a second camera (the X-T20 is Nan's) and the additional capabilities are simply awesome: eleven frames a second mechanical shutter, back-side illuminated sensor, improved face recognition focusing and tracking, etc. But I ran into something of a frustration.

While I've never had any issues shooting 4K or five to eight frames a second using **95MBs SD cards** in the X-T2, the X-T3 is a faster beast and demands more, especially during heavy shooting. The other evening I clicked off over 500 exposures in an hour and a half – pushing the camera to its limits caused a little of a backup on writing the results to the cards (another issue being that this slows down even more as the card approaches full). The X-T3 is not only ready for but only lives up to its potential using the new – and ridiculously expensive – **300MBs SD cards**. The darn things are over a hundred bucks for a 64MB card – and the dang camera holds two of them. To complicate things, both eBay and Amazon have gained a reputation for selling fake cards that don't come near working at the level of the authentic brands – scams are everywhere these days. That means paying list price somewhere like B&H.

I now have just the two, and all is well – and fast. If I get to where I fill them up and have to finish up the shoot with the slower cards, I'll have to remember to let up on the gas a little. I've yet to get to put this camera through its paces in anything but atrociously low lighting, and at reasonable ISO settings.

Two Great Re-Reads

Two books I read at the beginning of the year have found their way back onto my iPad Mini: **NOW – The Physics of Time** by Richard Muller and **A Universe from Nothing** by Lawrence Krauss. Between the two of them they pretty much cover what they've figured out about the universe and existence over the last century, at least what I can grasp of it. Of course, the more we know, the more we know that we don't know. That can be a little frustrating for some but I love the feeling of barely hanging in there. A second, perhaps even more careful read, is definitely called for. Which one do I recommend to read first – *A Universe from Nothing*, definitely. The books begin at roughly the same points and diverge greatly in focus.



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Stalking Wilde-life in Havre de Grace –The iPhone series continues...

Oct 15, 2018

A two-fer this time – I'm really enjoying this. In the shot above, both Pam and her subject, *Mycki Ebel*, have just noticed that I was outside the window and turned to look at me. That was quick and easy – and adds a little variety to the series. I don't know what prompted me to start playing around with the posting titles for these – maybe it was the expression in this shot. Another idea this shot gave me was to replace the thumbnail for the album on the [Havre de Grace Street](#) page with the center portion of this shot. After all, I have to be allowed a little fun.

Below is *Carol Hooper* posing. She sports a relaxed, if perhaps a little bored, pose while her early-stage portrait peeks out from the back side window of the SUV reflected in the window. Of course one can always find neat little touches – like Pam's seat floating in air.



It occurs to me that I could make a slide show out of these and offer to let Pam play it at her showing next year – wish to heck I had started at the beginning. As it is, pretty soon these will overflow into a second album – they only hold a couple of dozen images each, max.

Reads Notes...

Fished my second reading of ***A Universe from Nothing*** by Lawrence k. Krauss. The second time went much smoother – maybe not quicker because I was reading very carefully. And I feel like I managed to hang in there a little better – convincing my self that I have something of a grasp on the principles, if not a great deal of the science behind them. **The Afterward**, by Richard Dawkins, brings home the importance of this work in adding a piece to the impossible puzzle-picture of the universe/world we inhabit.

Now I'm back to re-familiarizing myself with ***NOW, The Physics of Time*** by Richard A. Muller. Admittedly, the first time around, I had a very tenuous hold on the *Now*. Hence taking it on again second. Good times – but after this I think I'll relax with something a little less demanding.



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Both of Him Want to Know What the Heck I'm Up To

Oct 17, 2018

This is *John Zimmerman*, both of him giving me the evil eye while I frame my shot. I hope it's not too impolite to speculate how his expression would come across in a house-of-mirrors. Pam Wilde's series of portraits painted in the window of ***The Artists Emporium*** in town continues. When I can, I cruise by and click off a couple of shots.

Below is another gentleman, *Charlie Vasilakis*. Says he knows Mr. Zimmerman, didn't say anything when I mentioned the "stare". Here he looks like he could have a ghost sitting on his lap (obviously someone walking by and stopping to look in the window at art in process).



Third Party iPhone Camera Apps Caution:

I use the Camera+ 2 camera app for my iPhone shooting. It gives me RAW+jpeg exposures, giving me a lot of control over the image when converting to B&W. **One caution about these third party camera apps:** leaving more than one of them "open" at a time – accessing the iPhone's camera, can lead to focusing issues. Especially if you are using manual focusing – what you see might be in focus but this can fail to translate to the camera. Ergo - out of focus images. This one caught me off-guard big time. I was running tests between two camera apps and their manual focus functions – every shot in the , if I do say so myself, well thought out procedure, ended up way out of focus. Eventually I thought of completely closing off one camera before testing the other (in the process realizing I have a habit of leaving fifteen to twenty apps open most of the time anyway – I'm a bad boy). Voila, no more manual focusing issues. Since when you install third party camera apps, they all ask for permission to access the iPhone's camera, they must establish the link when they are opened – confusing the heck out of the poor thing regarding some functions if two are open. Interesting.



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Window Clicking Again

Oct 23, 2018

It's getting to that time of year where between a lot going on for all of us, the weather and not as much going on in town, the Havre de Grace Street images slow down a bit. If it weren't for Pam Wilde's marathon portrait series – which will run into next year, my posting would already be cut in half. It's nice having this mini-project, a fun iPhone series, to work on. And I'm getting a jump on my winter site changes and updates. There's a note on some of those along with a little bit of a trip back into the subject of B&W film photography, and a wishful thinking note about my looking for old (ancient to some of you) film camera lenses.

In the shot above, is that someone inside talking to Jason Robertson as he poses for his portrait, or is it a reflection in the window – or maybe the spirit world attempting to make contact? Hard to tell. The image below Shows Heather Braue looking a lot less at ease while she sits for hers – and people walking by and stopping to stare probably doesn't help (not mention me standing there pointing my iPhone camera at her). I don't blame her one bit – ain't gettin' me in that chair.



Again, all of these go onto the Havre de Grace Street page into the Wilde Window Portrait album, where they come in a little larger.

SITE CHANGES

1– Partly for my own convenience records and partly to streamline the site I placed all pre 2017 postings in PDFs – as they were posted. They can be accessed from the top of the Blog Archives page – link at the bottom of the Home Page. Two files – one labeled **Easter Island Journal** includes Easter Island related postings from 2006 into 2017. The second is all blog postings from 2013 through 2016.

2– Havre de Grace Street page has been simplified a bit. In order to be able to keep to one page into the new year, I've begun grouping events sort of as I go along. Oh, and I made the page background match that in the albums, just for fun.

A couple of notes on B&W FILM

A local guy I recently met is interested in shooting film – sort of like it would have been to want to do tintypes when I got started with "modern" film cameras. Instead of setting myself up to drag all of that expertise from where it is buried in the back of my brain, I found him a copy of the best book guideline ever written on the subject – for \$1 hardbound. Hey, he can buy me a coffee. No better way to begin to look at photography, especially digital B&W, as an art form than to learn the craft of B&W film.

The Craft of Photography by Dacid Vestal. It pretty much covers everything he will need to learn, up to but not including what to do about scanning the negatives. There I can fill in the gaps. As anxious as he is to cop out and send his negatives out to be developed, I'm trying to impress upon him that this is simply not an option – one needs to have as much control over this stage as over the camera end. The results always suck, ruining any potential the negatives may have initially possessed. He'll realize this when he reads the book.

My advice would be to pick up a good used 120 film, medium format camera, along with maybe three lenses. Easy to find – five years ago one could grab these for practically nothing – now prices are on their way back up.

Ouch. Pentax 6x7 is likely the best option – large negative, sturdily enough built to withstand how old it must be, and fun to use. The biggest drawback here is, while 35mm film loads into development reels very easy, 120 and 220 film requires an acquired amount of dexterity if one wants to avoid kinking the film (solved by taking an old roll and practicing over and over in the light until one feels comfortable enough to go there in the dark).

I wouldn't bother with 35mm film – the results just can't compete with digital. The 6x7 120 negative is more than four times the size of the 35mm – make that more than four and a half times if the 35mm is cropped to the same proportions. Then again, 35mm film cameras can be so much fun – why not add that in. A complete Canon F-1 system (by far my personal favorite), with an array of lenses, can be gotten for less than the second lens you might be contemplating for your digital camera.

A darkroom isn't really a need – a closet or bathroom with all light leaks plugged will do, unless one wants to use a changing bag (been there, hated them but when working with film necessary to have on hand (film can get jammed in a camera)).

Film Camera Lenses

One of the beauties of mirrorless digital cameras is that, with a cheap adapter, they can use those decades old manually focusing 35mm film camera lenses. Now, most are still pretty useless, but there are gems out there, and uses for them. Sure, they won't auto-focus, but my Fuji for example has great focus-peaking – a combination of putting colored lines around whatever is in focus and zooming in to assist. Really speeds things up. So – I would be glad to hear from anyone having some of these laying around (the attached camera bodies continue to be useless). Note: they have a tendency to accumulate mold spots inside in the elements over the years, rendering them useless. I have found a great 30 year old Canon 500mm F-8 mirror lens in mint condition, and wouldn't mind trying out a 50mm 1.2 or 1.4, an 85mm 1.8, or heck, any of a number of combinations. Just saying.

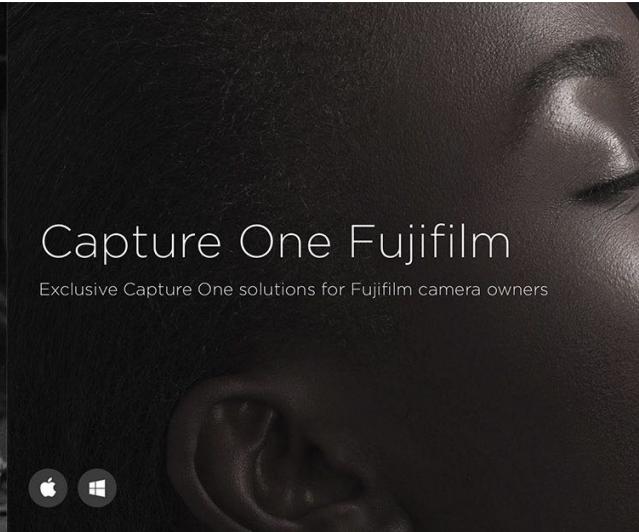
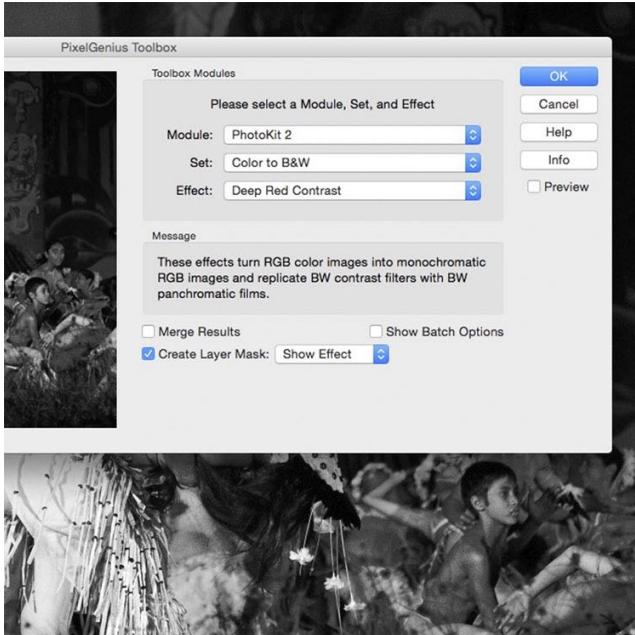


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Capture One Express Fujifilm

Two FANTASTIC new FREEWARE opportunities for B&W photographers and/or Fuji camera users

Oct 26, 2018

I have to make a posting out of this, in spite of the fact that it applies to so few of you. The first one, **PhotoKit**, doesn't really effect me – I paid \$50 each for the darn things long ago and one would have to pry them out of my cold dead hands to get them away from me. The second, **Capture One Fujifilm**, has immediately become an essential part of my workflow. Details below.

Christmas in October for anyone interested in serious B&W Photography

PhotoKit plugins are now Free...

Pixel Genius – <http://pixelgenius.com> – is making their **PhotoKit** plugin freeware, along with **PhotoKit Sharpener** and **PhotoKit Color**. I use the plugins extensively. In fact I do about 90% of my work in Photoshop through PhotoKit. The first two are arguably the best plugins out there. The third, Color, might be useful to someone, I haven't a clue.

The advantage of PhotoKit is that it works from an analog/darkroom perspective. I wouldn't use anything else for B&W. It virtually brings Photoshop into the darkroom (or vice versa). All three filters are now free, downloadable from the link above. Installation instructions included.

I doubt very much if I reach many potential users, but this is not an opportunity to be missed. These plugins have been stable in Photoshop since CS2, and still are in CC-2018. Who knows how long this will last.

PhotoKit – the biggest reason I won't even consider leaving Photoshop.



Hark, another present unde the tree... Fuji-dedicated version of Capture One now Free

CAPTURE ONE has released a freeware version designed specifically for Fuji RAW. Wow. Sure, it's not the full Pro version of the app – which can be had for life with a one-time payment of \$200, but it is a comprehensive RAW converter AND is fully functional as an image cataloguer. I'm in the process of trying it out right now – especially since I presently have to run my Fuji RAW files through Iridient X-Transformer before putting them in Photoshop, which SUCKS at Fuji RAW conversion.

<https://www.phaseone.com/en/Capture-One/Capture-One-Fujifilm.aspx>

For someone who is primarily a color photographer, using Fuji, this would be a very, very tempting proposition. For my B&W I was reserving judgement.

FOR MY B&W

Past workflow – I export the Fuji RAW file from my Photos catalog and drag/drop it on Iridient X-Transformer. Out pops a dng RAW (Adobe RAW) and I then open that in Photoshop RAW converter. There I convert to B&W and make a number of adjustments. From there I work in Photoshop, primarily using PhotoKit plugins.

Potential workflow using Capture One Fuji – This thing does everything that it does right in RAW. That would eliminate the transformer step, and Capture One does a great job of converting Fuji RAW. From there however I would export as a TIFF and open that in Photoshop in order to use my PhotoKit.

Converting from Fuji RAW to Adobe RAW vs opening Fuji RAW in *Capture One* then exporting it as (lossless) TIFF and opening that in Photoshop. There's the choice. This seemed to call for some extensive and exacting tests. I like my present workflow, and like the results. But from first look, I liked working on the RAW file in Capture One, using very similar controls, over working in Adobe RAW converter in Photoshop.

WOW – Extensive testing be hanged – one test image was enough. **RAF RAW conversion in Capture One Fujifilm results are as much better than converting to an Adobe RAW first (in Iridient X-Transformer) as that conversion process is to simply opening the file in Adobe RAW.** I find this astounding, and enough of a difference to warrant going back to scratch reworking some files as I move along. **Hark – my NEW workflow.** Exporting from Capture One Fujifilm to TIFF does no damage whatsoever – and goes Adobe RAW one better insaving the image as a 16 bit RGB, avoiding having to get it out of Grayscale.

UPDATE:

I'll just have to rethink the above. Adobe, whose RAW converter up to now did such an inferior job on converting Fuji RAW, has just been updated. I noticed considerable changes to the app, beyond simply adding new cameras to the list, so I ran some tests. Finally – **pre-conversion in X-Transformer is no longer needed.** In fact, results are actually slightly better than if taking that extra step. I'll still play around with Capture One conversion, but hey, the whole point is fixing the workflow and eliminating time-wasting steps. It's about time Adobe.



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Two From the iPhone Series that I Really Like

Oct 29, 2018

Well, it IS Halloween. At first I was going to select an image from this set where Rebecca Jessop – "Executive Director" of our town's Opera House – wasn't laughing. But between the fact that she hardly needs the help of a photographer to look good and has a great laugh, I decided to use my favorite shot. Here Pam decided to surprise me and pulled out the mask, Rebecca reacted.

I like the angle Kathy Lating, below, is holding for her pose on this one, the tilt reflected in the progressing portrait. I also like the way it's only the head that comes through completely, again like in the portrait. I'll admit that I'm not sure what I think about Pam's Halloween socks – for some reason they come through loud and clear. I'm beginning to think that if anyone wants to really find out what she's all about, all they have to do is go through her sock drawer.

Below my 2018 Cats & Bats Halloween 5K T-shirt and medallion – it was cold, raining and windy. They let you pick up your T-shirt before the race, but hand you your medallion as you cross the finish line. This was my slowest 5K time in my life – ouch, just over 40 minutes for the first time ever. Of course, I couldn't train because I've been

recovering from an operation – and I got so sore at the surgery site about half way through that I started fantasizing about an ice pack – that I had to keep my stride very short. But darn-it, I wanted my cool medallion.



Below is a picture of my Cats & Bats Haunted 5K T-shirt and medallion. It was cold, raining and windy– but you can't get the medallion without crossing the finish line. My slowest 5K ever, just over 40 minutes. Haven't been able to keep in shape since surgery about seven weeks ago, just now getting back. In fact about half way through the race I started fantasizing about an ice pack to keep the pain down. Looking forward to the Thanksgiving Turkey Trot to redeem myself. Great shirt, and it's cotton – I hang the medallions on my studio door so they rattle when someone goes by.





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"You Want a Walnetto?" or Tyrone Gets the Girl in the End

Oct 31, 2018

Page 1 of 2

Nan didn't want me convert this to B&W, so I'm posting both – the color version is below. Maybe, just maybe someone out there can see why, when the kids were growing up, I shot the vast majority of our family pictures in B&W. In the end it made for one heck of a great hardboiund book covering our first fifty years together. There's a very old post on that book, but perhaps it's time to promote B&W again with a new posting about it.

We attended a Halloween 20th wedding anniversary party at friends who got married on Halloween, in costume. A lot of the people there were "show people" so the costumes were phenomenal. The one that got to me the most though was their teenage daughter who utilized her clown costume, with very spooky face, extremely effectively simply by seeming to always be there off to the side staring at you. Damn spooky.

Nan was a very cute witch – I kept telling her I wanted her to wear the outfit to bed that night, but when we got home I was far too gone to remember that. My own costume forced me to constantly explain it – maybe three people there were old enough to remember **Tyrone** on *Laugh In* on TV (I special ordered some Walnetto's, but hey, if they don't get the joke, they're wasted). If you're curious – look him up on **YouTube**, a whole slew of the skits are right [HERE](#). The only other character that occurred to me was **Professor Irwin Corey** – [HERE](#) but he's always talking and probably even fewer people would remember him. Again – plenty of his skits on YouTube. *Notice I'm wearing my old-and-decrepit expression – I also drove Nan nuts walking with a shuffle.*

We didn't take any pictures, and were yelled at for that afterwards. Maybe it's because I'm a photographer, but I'm very reticent about going into someone else's home and pulling a camera out – it just seems invasive and it never occurs to me unless asked. A couple of people drive us nuts texting into the night for pictures – ding, ding, ding. And then, come Monday, we were "forced" to don our costumes again and go into town to show Tamara at RiverView Gallery, otherwise she wasn't going to let up on the torture. She shot this with the phone – thank you Tam, I think.



After Tam took this shot, I wondered over next door to get my shot of Pam Wilde and her newest victim/subject. I have the voice down pretty good so I walked in and offered them a Walnetto. Outside I talked Nan into standing so that her face and hat were reflected in the window in the shot. – to be posted soon. A little work to do there because I filled up the Album on the Street page to its maximum and need to create a second Album for the series.



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So – What About My New Fuji X-T3

Nov 5, 2018

FUJI X-T3 REVIEW NOTES – I add my 37 cents worth to a pretty thorough on-line review: I was recently sent a link to a thorough test and review of the new Fuji X-T3 – a camera I have been using for a little less than a month now. They gave it a **gold star** and rated it as one of the best cameras on the market today, succeeding in giving a pretty thorough review. One should, read the whole thing – it's actually a lot more thorough than any review I would be able to do. Please read the entire review – much better than any of the video reviews I've seen.

<https://www.dpreview.com/reviews/fujifilm-x-t3>

BUT, the problem is, and it is a big one, that the very short list of **pros and cons** that constitutes the **Conclusion**, is **grossly incomplete, misleading, just plain wrong and inexplicable**. I won't even give their list of likes, it oddly says little that's useful considering all the praise in the review itself. Don't they realize how few people will actually read the entire review, opting instead to be lazy and scan the conclusions? So straight to their concluding *Don't Likes*. – which are *very odd, to say the least*.

Their Conclusion "Don't Likes"

- **Slightly higher noise levels at very high ISOs than its predecessor**

This one is just interesting in its simplification. I've done extensive tests. First, I find LESS noise at ISO 6400 than in the X-T2. Granted, a tiny bit more at ISO 12800 BUT accompanied by better detail and separation in the mid-tones, possibly a trade-off? Then there's the fact that this is pretty much a firmware issue and can be addressed (if it even should be). Looking at my comparison shots, I overall prefer the low-light exposures from the X-T3. Of course, all their tests were color and mine B&W. Not sure if that means anything.

- **"60p and 50p video taken from slightly cropped region of sensor"**

Kind of pickyune in that this is less of a crop than in almost all other cameras, most do much more cropping here.

- **"Some lenses can't take full advantage of X-T3's AF speeds"**

Humorous in being a flat statement with no reason for it and no explanation. ALL camera lens systems have lens models designed with older, slower auto focus mechanisms. Duh. NO new camera, no matter what brand and how fast, can make those lenses focus any faster than the mechanism allows. Give me a break. Why make this complaint specific to any one camera – better yet, why bother bringing it up.

- **"Very quick to drop to a slower, darker preview mode (presumably to save battery) in default mode"**

Misleading if still "true". Here I possibly fault Fuji's terminology. They term their modes as Energy Saving and Boost – leaving Energy Saver as default (evidently a big mistake with these guys). So just throw the damn switch and keep it thrown – rocket science. Nothing here to not like, it's a great OPTION, so it's a plus (except for the slightly odd terminology).

- **"A tripod or gimbal is needed to get the best of the camera's video"**

This one is just stupid. Of course a camera body w/o IBIS should use a tripod when shooting video UNLESS using a lens with its own stabilization – which I do. I do not like IBIS (In Body Stabilization) for a lot of reasons, so I get the lenses that have it. Their conclusion here seems to demand IBIS without mentioning it and the numerous negatives that come with it – including crappy ergonomics due to the extra body thickness and a still "floating" sensor when not using the IBIS. You want the Fuji to have IBIS? Get the X-H1.

- **"No way to quickly toggle Face Detection"**

"No way"???? How about simply freaking selecting one of the 8 programmable buttons and two wheels to give split-second access. I use the button on the right front of the body for this. That option is clearly listed in the body of their own review. Quickly and instantly toggle yourself silly.

- **"No non-face subject tracking in video"**

This statement confused me because I hadn't seen this issue at all. So I looked it up in the manual. *Page 150 covers "Face/Eye Detection Setting" for video – a very nice new touch over the X-T2. The previous couple of pages cover video "Tracking Sensitivity" settings (the menu in the camera is pretty cool). The menus show a clear option – the same option as in stills – to select "Face Off/Eye Off" – regardless of your "non-face" tracking settings, which remain on when face-detection is turned off. Then I went on line and found examples of subject tracking in video – without faces. So, yeah, I'm still confused – it certainly doesn't stay on for me.* Interestingly in the comments readers were discussing the X-T3s video tracking as if this statement had never been made. It's **off** by default.

An inexplicable set of *Dont Likes*, especially considering the *almost-comprehensive and very positive review*. If **someone were to read only this section, they would see a complete misrepresentation of what is inside**. Assuming that most readers would read the whole review is delusional. I would really like to know the rationale behind this list. Lesson: read and watch ALL camera reviews with a bag of salt strapped to your derriere.

Not-So-Obvious PLUSSES – my favorites, there are many, many others (check out the link above)

- a) The battery grip comes with a long AC connector that doubles as a battery charger and AC power grabber when the camera is turned on while plugged in. This can be a wow of a handy thing to have – *think tripod 4K videos using the remote app in your iPhone without worrying about batteries*. And when using the battery grip normally, those batteries get used up first, leaving the battery in the camera for last.
- b) The diopter correction on the X-T3 extends the range from the X-T2. I wear reading glasses and the X-T2 only got me 95% to perfect, the X-T3 goes beyond my needs. Definitely a plus.
- c) Almost ALL old film camera lenses, with the help of a cheap \$20 adapter, will work flawlessly on these Fuji's – that means almost all features. Aperture settings will be manual (that's my way of working anyway) and of course auto-focus is out, but between focus peaking and push-wheel focus assist, this is super easy and fast. Check eBay, suddenly lenses that were worth twenty bucks a few years ago are worth hundreds. You CAN get an adapter for those modern DSLR lenses, keeping autofocus, etc., but it costs over \$300 – not too bad an idea if you have a lot of newer Nikon or Canon lenses.
- d) Setting the shutter speed on the top dial is complimented by the front wheel that will let you fine tune that by the speeds between the set speed and the next setting up and down. Very sweet fine tuner for us Aperture Preferred people.
- e) Built like a hockey-puck and designed with enough external controls to rarely have to go into the menus. When I want I can use it exactly like my old film Canon F-1, or I can go all modern techy. Call it retro if you will, this is a return to the fun of shooting.
- f) I almost forgot – a lot of camera manufacturers put out instruction manuals that are essentially useless gibberish, hence all those very helpful videos on YouTube. Canon and Panasonic are two fine upstanding examples of this school of confusion. Fuji manuals are clear and understandable. Also, far different than say Sony for in-camera menus, Fuji's are logically arranged. A couple of big comforts.

FRUSTRATIONS – I do like to whine, and everyone wants an expensive camera designed specially and specifically for him or her, don't they?

- 1- Don't think for a minute that you're going to be able to use those old third party battery replacements like in all previous Fuji cameras. It simply tells you to get those darn things out of there – even the battery grip, \$++. Not really a negative, just a frustration.
- 2 - Sure, you can use older 95mb SD cards, but don't count on pushing the camera to its new limits. It's simply too fast – 11 frames a second will back up on writing to cards. Two of the new 64mb 300mb ultra cards cost me \$235. Wow. Not a negative, just a forced move into the future.
- 3 - It now has touch screen, yucky yuck. And even though you can (and this is not mentioned in the review) turn it off on parts of the screen so your nose doesn't effect anything while looking through the viewfinder, I simply turn it off completely.
- 4 - Fuji does regular firmware updates, adding capabilities – a good thing. My X-T2 has had four major ones – adding a total of 20-30 new tricks to the system. Cool. BUT – each time they only give you a Manual supplement. So - on my iPad mini I have **FIVE X-T2 pdf manual files** I have to keep track of. A bit frustrating.
- 5 - Fuji RAW is a breed apart from all other RAW formats (from a totally different designed sensor). And Adobe does a SUCKY job at conversion – losing critical sharpness and increasing noise. I use **Iridient X-Transformer** to convert Fuji RAW to Adobe RAW. Better, but it's only an extra step because Adobe can't get their crap together.

UPDATE: Capture One, who does an exponentially superior job of converting Fuji RAW has just made their new **Capture One Fujifilm Express app. FREE**. Me thinks about possibly changing my pre-Photoshop work flow a little. Luminar also does a great job.

UPDATE-2: Adobe RAW converter just updated to include new camera models – including the X-T3. I noticed some considerable redesign of the app – easy to spot with Adobe because whenever they make major changes they wind up moving commands one has gotten used to the placement of. So I decided to run some tests between my Fuji RAW files converted to Adobe RAW using my X-Transformer and simply dropping them in Photoshop. Suddenly, instead of the Transformed images being the better, files skipping that extra step edged them out (a considerable improvement from the old Adobe RAW converter). I may still play around with Capture One, out of curiosity, but it's no longer a major frustration.

Finally Fuji RAW shooters are free of a major frustration...

- 6 - See that tiny little booger sized screw-in button on the left-front of the camera on the Conclusion page of the review? That tiny piece of plastic covers the flash-sync plug. Where does one put that damn thing when it's out? I have lint bigger than that in my pockets. And try putting it back in with cold fingers, not going to happen. What I do

is hold it on the tip of a finger, tilt the camera, press it in place and turn the camera to get it started. For the uncoordinated – get someone else to do it. Lots of people on line looking for replacements. I'm waiting for a six-pack. Without it, there goes the highly touted water sealing.

7- Here's one: for some reason Fuji does not like the word "video" when referring to, um, **video**. Search for anything to do with video in the manual and see nothing useful whatsoever come up, then use the word "movie" – that she blows! Took me a while to figure this one out (they don't like the word "Fuji" either – insisting that it's "Fujifilm". But nobody listens).

8- Lets not forget placing the lens release over on the right side – makes it *much more awkward* to change lenses while the camera is hanging at your side. You have to pick it up and turn it towards you to get it off comfortably, then let it hang back at your side to put the new lens on – you know, so you can see to align the red dot.

9- Anyone with a hand very slightly smaller than mine, or larger, would not have one frustration I experience with the vertical shutter release on the battery grip. If I suddenly switch to horizontal shooting without turning the vertical grip off, the bottom of my palm can press the shutter on the grip half way, interfering with my shooting horizontal. I simply have to learn to heft more with my left hand under the lens – automatic with my go-to 55-200 but not so automatic with a shorter lenses, in my case anyway.

- **ME:** *This is the best damn camera, is almost every way, that I have ever owned. I love using it. There are enough people out there saying this right now that I don't have to go there as far as the standard plusses. So I'll simply add a couple that I can't find mentioned anywhere and then my few frustrations – that's where all the fun is anyway:*



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Two Wilde Things

Nov 5, 2018

This is **Elaine Hirsch** getting her portrait painted by Pam Wilde – almost right on the sidewalk in the window of The Artists Emporium in town. Because of timing, I had to take the shot in-costume, dressed as Tyrone from the old Laugh-In. Ms. Hirsch was very charming about it, gracefully accepting the offered Walnetto and eating it.

Afterwards, as I took the shot, I included a passing witch, *ok - it's actually Nan*, outside on the sidewalk watching. As this series progresses, and I'm having to expand to two albums on the Street page, I'm beginning to appreciated the combination of so many consistent and similar elements in the shots combined with subtle differences. The subject is always unique, changes in lighting – in spite of the fact that it's pretty much always early afternoon – bring changes in the reflections. Then there is the variety of parked car patterns, not to mention the slowly changing time of year and Pam's taking to dressing warmer.

Below is the twenty-fifth of these that I've captured – **April Ishak**. This fills the first Album. I'll have to set up a second Album for next week, as I really want to keep up with this series as much as possible – in spite of the holiday season and all of its time demands.



Pam began this project in March, slated to last a full year. I will capture as many of these as I can (I didn't start until mid-summer). That should easily fill one more album of 25. All together they should, at the very least, make for an interesting slide show. I'll probably wait until then to go through them to see what else might be done with them. This would be absolutely impossible to do on the iPhone if there weren't camera apps that shoot RAW. Amazing. *I'm still trying to piece together just why my good camera, with lens set at the same equivalent focal length and aperture, fails to "see" quite what the iPhone sees in these.*

The [Havre de Grace Street](#) series, which includes this not so small sequence, is a work in progress. I'm still not sure where it is going either – sort of like with the Easter Island project, I was three years in before I began planning the book. **As always see the Street page Albums for larger, black backgrounded, downloadable images.**

The town did something of a November First Friday with a few participating stores featuring an artist at work – there are a couple of images, I'll get them up soon.



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A Wilde Selfie

Nov 7, 2018

Pam Wilde is becoming a fixture downtown – By the end of January she will have completed well over a hundred portraits over the period of a year. Two to four days a week she and her vidtem occupy the sidewalk window area of The Artists Emporium on Washington Street. There are still a few vacancies – the registration site is here:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/20f054faeaa2ea5fd0-model>

When I went into town (about two minutes for me) to catch her latest, this is what I found. Turns out Pam was "stood up" two days in a row – so she decided to work on a self portrait. That was cool to watch a little bit of. If you want to catch it, just show up between one and four Fridays through Monday – or check the site link above to see who is sitting that day.

This is also the first entry in my second album of these (each is limited to 25). Good one to begin with, as I needed something appropriate to use for the album thumbnail.

Again, these are larger, on black background and are downloadable in thier albums on the [Havre de Grace Street](#) page.

*I'm working on the few images I gleaned from **First Friday** in November. Evidently they're trying something new for this far into colder weather – maybe a half dozen artists were sponsored to demonstrate in store windows. I wanted to, if nothing else, cover the event.*



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First Friday in November – Different Strokes

Nov 9, 2018

Page 1 of 3

This was an odd one. Far to late in the year for the street event, so they sponsored artists to demonstrate or perform in store windows. Friday is a huge dining out evening in Havre de Grace, so there is at least some foot traffic – just try to get a parking space where you don't have to walk a few blocks.

Again with the lighting – or lack thereof. But I managed – I think. Another bunch of images shot at ISO 6400. This is getting to be a thing or something. Oh well, I'm getting a lot of practice at it. It was dark out – especially as the fall clock adjustment hadn't quite come around.

At this point I only know one of the artists – but I do remember where they were demonstrating. I'll list that here along with the image and put them in their own album on the [**Havre de Grace Street**](#) page (where they are larger, on a black background and downloadable). I'll add names there as soon as I can get them.

The image at the top is a young lady playing the harp in the sidewalk window of **Edel's Bridal Boutique** in town. This was shot with a normal lens through the glass, from the sidewalk – as I shielded my camera from the rain. The rest of the images, below, are labeled:



On the left, working on a painting that Nan thinks is a horse's eyeball with people reflected. Me – I got nothin'. He was one of two artists working in **The Artists Emporium** gallery. On the right Jimmyo Burril is painting a Fall scene in **The Art Room**, where he is the manager.



One can see from the lighting that the artists may have had almost as much trouble working as I did. On the left is the second artist in The Artists Emporium. On the right, again in a sidewalk window, a young lady working under one of the lamps in **Jo Retro** – a store specializing in decor from the fifties, sixties and seventies (and some earlier).



Another gallery in town, **Arts By the Bay** offered a little better lighting for their artist – if a little less drama for my camera. I look at these shots and, especially since I'm married to a painter, I'm amazed at the various ways they attack a canvas. Fascinating.



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A Pair of Wilde-ings – as exile to the storage room looms

Nov 12, 2018

For two of these shot on consecutive days, I found these results interesting. It was about the same time of day, and lighting seemed similar, but the difference in reflections in the glass is striking. In the shot above **Chip Paradis** poses with a good part of the gallery (*The Artists Emporium*) as a background. In the image below, **Thomas Ebel** is framed primarily by the opposite side of Washington Street.



Again see the album on the [Havre de Grace Street](#) page for larger, on black background, downloadable versions of these. Pam (Pamela Wilde, the artist painting this series) informed me that after the next portrait – next posting – she would be moving to the storage room in the back for the holidays – making way for Christmas decor. She'll return to the window in January for her last month.

At the risk of ticking some people off – a talent I seem to have – and in the tradition of my old friend and hero the late Mary Woodward, who didn't believe in avoiding stepping in it , I have a couple of observations:

1 – Stores, galleries, places of business benefit tremendously from demonstrations in their window areas, to the degree that it is traditional to PAY for that service – except of course with artists who often are asked to either pay for the privilege or do it for free. And a window "display" like this that becomes an ever evolving community happening, is priceless. *This will be lost for the entire Christmas season.*

2 – Stores and especially art galleries, all too often empty, benefit from live bodies being visible to passer-byes, raising considerably the odds they will opt to come in. *Expect a downclick in walk-ins.*

3 – Decorating the window for Christmas, while in the community spirit, hardly attracts customers as freaking everyone will be doing just that. *Hey, having an artist working in costume should be worth a bonus next to everyone else's comparatively lame efforts.*

4 – When subjects signed up for getting their portraits painted in this period, they did so with the understanding that they were taking part, as previous subjects, in this innovative project. Now they will be shuffled off to a very dreary, isolated storage area. This includes both our **Mayor** and the head of the **County Cultural Arts Board**. *Is this starting to make a little less sense?*

I've wracked my fairly experienced brain and can't seem to come up with one positive, for anyone, to this move. On the other hand there are some pretty solid negatives. Just sayin'.

My suggestion would be to simply and gracefully arrange to set up and hold sittings during the Christmas season at various locations up and down Washington Street. It's pretty much a gimmie that a number of establishments would be glad to oblige – and I'm thinking that the Mayor, Coordinator of the Cultural Arts Board and others might be grateful.



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Final Sidewalk Wilde Thing before Planned Sequestering

Nov 15, 2018

I saved the last one of these – at least until January when Pam Wilde will be re-allowed to continue her series of portraits in the front window of Artists Emporium – for using at the head of some notes I've gathered together on shooting a serious B&W series with the iPhone. I addressed the issue of the move out of the window in the last posting [HERE](#), so I'll refrain from adding to my list of how many ways this move is kind of silly.

Pam's latest "victim" above is **Irmgarde Brown**. She has been added to the project album on the [Havre de Grace Street](#) page where they appear larger, on black background and are downloadable. I figured this was a good time to assess the whole process, and at the same time see if I could come up with any improvements to what I have been doing.

Notes on shooting a serious B&W series with the iPhone

1– Hand-held vs Monopod

I've been hand-holding these, not using my **monopod** out of fear of introducing the added reflection. This proved kind of dumb, lazy or both. I set up for this shot by unscrewing the iPhone clamp from one of those little cheapie table tripods for smart phones and mounting it atop my monopod. As you can see, at least at the angle I'm shooting, reflection of the monopod isn't an issue. Without it, especially now in the cold wind, I was getting too high a percentage of lost shots.

This turned out to be a big improvement, eliminating a lot of steadyng and bracing.

2– Shutter Speed

Most of the exposures in this series, aiming indoors like this, were made at **1/15 to 1/30 second shutter speed**. Smart phone camera sensors, as good as they are, are awfully small and crowded for 12 megapixels. This makes for a lot of "noise" at high ISO settings. So in order to keep the quality of the image up, I hold the shutter speed down as much as possible.

3– Camera App

I use a camera app called **Camera+ 2** that allows for complete manual control while saving both a RAW file and a JPEG. It even lets you zoom in to check on focus. The only complication is that the RAW files have a completely different file name from the JPEGs (seems to be something of a universal with these third party camera apps).

Immediately upon zipping the files over to the computer with PhotoSync, I put them in list view / order the RAWs and JPEGs separate / select the RAW files and right-click-rename / and then simply begin the renaming with the number of the first of the JPEG files. Voila – matching file names.

4– Shutter

I set the camera to expose when the finger is lifted off the button instead of when it is tapped. It's in the menu. Much better for stability.

From my experience though this can cause issues if you hand the phone to someone else to take a shot for you. Even if you explain, they never seem to get it, reflexively tapping the button and actually increasing any shake effect because the shutter doesn't fire until the back end of the tap. You have to get used to positioning your finger on the button and then gently lifting.

5– F-stop and Depth of Field

With the iPhone I am "stuck" shooting wide open at F1.8. Not only does the 28mm equivalent wide angle help increase how much of the image is in focus, but depth of field is increased considerably from what it would be with a larger camera and equivalent lens because of the small size of the sensor. I help that along by allowing for the fact that added depth of field always extends one third in front of the focus point and two thirds behind. Autofocusing on the portrait on the easel usually suffices here – although I have been taking the opportunity to throw in some manual focus work so I'll be ready when I need it.

6– Custom Settings

I avoid any film emulating settings, even though they only effect the JPEGs, making no difference whatsoever in the RAW file. This is personal choice. I tried setting the JPEG for B&W a few times – it didn't seem to be any real help – I find I prefer visualizing in B&W to actually seeing it in B&W on the screen. The color film emulations have the same effect on me – I like seeing the full, flatter, duller potential on the viewing screen.

7– Flash

Flash is turned off by default on my phone camera.

8– The Files

The iPhone shoots generic Adobe RAW. That means almost any RAW converter does a good job on conversion. Before putting the exposures into my cataloging program for review, I like to do a quick-review in My **Preview** app. There I delete any obvious rejections, saving a considerable amount of space on the hard drive.

*I'm after B&W, so after RAW conversion I do most of my work on the image using my **PhotoKit** plugins in Photoshop. Rather than add functionality, PhotoKit plugins utilize the power of Photoshop to accomplish complex digital tasks with an analog approach – much like in the darkroom.*



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OOPS – BANNED!

Nov 20, 2018

The shot above is, to the best of my knowledge, the only one I will be able to add to this iPhone B&W series from the storage room at **Artists Emporium**. Here **Nettie Owens** poses amid stored art – actually kind of a cool backdrop. If nothing else, it's great to be able to include one of these that breaks the pattern. I'll pick back up again in January when I can shoot from the sidewalk – I don't believe I can be **banned** from that.

Yes, I have been let to know that my posting on the subject – [HERE](#) – was not appreciated by management and that I am "no longer welcome" in the gallery (where I have made purchases by the way) as a result of expressing an opinion. Not to mention all the ways the Emporium has been promoted by my photographing events on the site and providing color images for **free**. A full 40% of my postings this calendar year mention The Artists Emporium in a positive light – with pictures.

In my defense I would note that I made no negative comments about the gallery itself or anyone associated with it, and I did not speculate as to motives behind the move in question (I even avoid that privately). All I did was express an opinion about possible ramifications of a relatively minor decision that frustrated my own little project, an opinion that anyone is free to agree or disagree with.

I also deny that I came “into someone else’s house and s%&t on the floor”. Although the reference is very visual, and kind of amusing. As far as generating a *very low opinion of my character (my edited and much nicer way to phrase it)*, I can only say that this observation came across more as one-sided effort to move the discussion into a contest of personal attacks – not something I’m interested in, in either direction. As far as worrying about what someone might think about something I say or do – I try, to the frustration of some, to follow the principle, as much as possible, of: *fiat justitia ruat caelum (in a non-legal context)*.

I’ll try to pick back up with this project in January, if simply because I’m enjoying it. I’ll also have to figure out how to extend my standard offer with my [**Havre de Grace Street**](#) series of free mounted and matted copies of these to any subject who wants it.

I’ll conclude by saying that I am certainly not angry or surprised, just a tad disappointed. One of the reasons I avoid as much as possible getting formally involved in anything in this area again is an inexplicable (to me) lack of the small-town New England relishing and enjoyment of disagreement I am used to, in favor of a culture of taking every little thing as a personal affront. And because I’ll never get used to so much being said behind people’s backs that is never uttered to their faces. Maybe (only just maybe) I try a little too hard to make sure people know what I am thinking. Then again, overreaction can be both amusing and telling.

Hey, I wonder what would happen if I signed up to have my portrait painted in January – heaven help me but I’m not sure I can resist it now. Nan has been trying to talk me into it anyway. Why am I enjoying this so much.



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The Window Goes Wilde Again

Nov 26, 2018

As Washington Street Windows Go All In this Year for Christmas.....She's baaaaack in the *Artists Emporium* window on Washington Street. Havre de Grace is *Wilde* once more. Friday's window-torture victim was **Catherine Stewart**. And the setting is all Christmassy. I love the stuffed animal in the tree on the right. The only problem today was getting Ms. Stewart to stop laughing at being photographed – another in the vast range of responses from grumpy stares to hilarity. I just kept at it until I got what I wanted.

This one, because of the Christmas decor is even more of a jigsaw image than most. And to add to that a passer-by cast just the right shadow to make the subject pop out like a cut-out pasted on a picture. Again, see it larger, on black background and downloadable on the [Street](#) page.

While I'm really only interested in the B&W, there are occasions where the color is at least interesting. So – why not post one shot right after this as an extra – as just a taste of the cool Christmas windows emerging this year in town; just a few doors down is an empty store whose windows were decorated by The Art Room shop on the next block. Here's the color:



I don't imagine I deserve any credit for the return of *Wilde* windows in Havre de Grace. After all I was banned from the gallery as a result of my notes here on the subject. And I've heard back from others that were somewhat more vociferous than myself – who must have gotten through. Or perhaps the Grinch simply had a change of heart.

Anyway, this weekend we needed an upscale piece of pottery for a major Christmas present and were limited to cruising **RiverView** and **Arts by the Bay** around the corner. Whenever possible we do art for Christmas presents – which takes a lot of thought and effort. We really liked some of the choices in **Arts by the Bay** right now but settled on a very nice piece from **RiverView**, by a new (just joined) artist **Carolyn Blazeck** who trims her gorgeous pots with woven pine needles around the rim (*I can't show it in my Other People's Art section for obvious reasons*). Check her out [HERE](#) (*I just added her page to the RiverView site and this stuff is nice*).

Interesting Note...I was wondering about duplicating my iPhone shots with my regular cameras so I decided to check on some equivalencies. If my calculations are right, the the iPhone 8 camera gives me an equivalent set-up (on a full frame or 35mm camera which is the standard point of reference) of a **28mm lens set at f-13** instead of the much smaller focal length and f-1.8 aperture of the iPhone's lens – all due to of the much smaller sensor size. I knew there was a gain in depth of field but hesitated to believe that it was this much. A little easier to calculate is that with my Fuji X-lenses, to get to the same equivalencies, I would use an **18mm lens setting at approximately F-10** to get the exact same effect. Fun stuff.

UPDATE: yes, I am aware that sensor size doesn't directly effect Depth of Field. It's actually FOV or Field of View that does that here. BUT the formula remains essentially the same.



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Two in the Window

Nov 29, 2018

Today I have the next two Wilde portrait sittings in the wondow of Artists Emporium, complete with Washington Street reflections. Above is **Isobel Jessell**. She was a quite animated sitter, so I decided to make use of it and catch her making a point. While this just makes some people look awkward, Ms. Jessell holds up to it just fine. Her portrait is still in the early sketch stage.

For the second shot, below, I took a more direct shot of **Pam Spelker** minimizing the reflections on the right. This one is a little further along. For B&W, somewhere in the sketch stage is my preferred way to catch the session. Again – these are larger, on black background and downloadable on my [Havre de Grace Street](#) page...



This year the town is doing a First Friday in December, with the tree lighting combined with a number of other events in the street. Here's hoping for at least a warmish and dryish evening on December 7. I'll be out there with my camera(s). There should be a color shot or two for that one.



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Local Troupe Rogue Swan and HCC Actors Guild's Who's Afraid of Virginia Wolf

Dec 5, 2018

Rogue Swan asked me to do a video of their performance of ***Who's Afraid of Virginia Wolf*** at the **Black Box Theater** at H.C.C.. I jumped at it, having already purchased tickets and anxious to put my new Fuji X-T3 through its video hoops – and of course hoping for a couple of great B&Ws. My Havre de Grace Street project is limited, obviously, to home-town happenings – but as in all of life, there are always gray areas. This is one of those. Rogue Swan is a force in and blessing to Havre de Grace and Harford Community College serves the entire County. So I have no problem stepping out into the penumbra for this one. B&Ws have their own album on the [Street](#) page.

Who's Afraid of Virginai Wolf is not an evening of simple entertainment – it's a play where the measure of the performance is how much one's guts have been wrenched in the viewing. It helps to have seen it before, so one can step back a little once in a while and enjoy individual performances. With me, the better it is the less likely I am to want to see it again soon.

Shooting Stills alongside the Video Set-up / Electronic Shutter Test

I was a little worried that the mic on the X-T3 would pick up my X-T2 shutter clicks – they are pretty quiet but I hesitated to risk it, standing there right alongside. I decided that this was an opportunity to put the **electronic shutter** to the test. I turned off the artificial shutter sound effect and relied on viewer blackout to let me know that the shots were actually being taken.

This brings up a curious point – with the X-T3 eliminating this blackout, how the heck would I know with the new camera, without the sound, that a shot was taken unless I turn on the instant replay on the back screen – which I prefer to turn off.

Conclusion: Often when shooting stage action with slow shutter speeds, there is a little hand or arm movement blur. I like the effect in my B&Ws, at least when using the mechanical shutter. It seems that this effect is exaggerated considerably while using the electronic shutter – not the same pleasing effect. Something to watch out for.

I was quite busy with the video – what with being perched atop a step-ladder and all – but I managed to fire off a few stills. Here are some that I liked. I gave Rogue Swan the color stills along with the video.

Alan Herlinger is George • Catherine Stalcup Herlinger is Martha

Jacob Paul Johnson is Nick • Tara Nicole Vinson is Honey







Images are larger, on black background and downloadable in their album on the [Havre de Grace Street](#) page.

Shoot Notes...

One individual wants me to outline my set-up for this, so I'm including it here. I'm hardly an expert on shooting video, especially with the mirrorless. But combining my experience, a little research and a couple of new ideas I had, this is it.

Hopefully one or two others will be interested – better yet if someone has suggestions as to how I could improve on my set-up, preferably without much expense.

SET-UP

- Fuji X-T3 with battery grip plugged into AC – fortunately there was an outlet handy.
- Perched on tripod mounted atop a handy table – about nine feet above the floor to get above the heads of audience. I worked from a small step ladder.
- Lens was the Fuji 18-55 Zoom set at F-4, zoom adjusted to include the entire set. The HCC Black Box Theater is small so the focal length used was close to 35mm (around 50mm equivalent).
- 4K - 1/60 second - 29.97
- W/B on Auto / H265 and Long GOP to keep the file size down / Film simulation on ETERNA / all other settings either off or on zero. *Now that I have this as a guide, I can play around with suggestions on a number of other settings.*
- Lens Image Stabalizer turned off.

OUTPUT

- Camera output each half-hour to five separate files – which joined seamlessly in the computer. This left one one-second gap at the half hour mark where I awaited the termination and immediately reinitiated recording.

Instead of waiting, I know now to keep a sharp eye out in the final minute of the half hour for a short break in action/audio and stop/start within about half a second. Here's where the darn shutter release cable would have really come in handy – it seems Fuji changed the darn connector from the T2 to the T3 and never listed it on the list of changes – so I was stuck holding a useless remote in my hand. Precious.

- Sound outputted needing a little volume boost, not much. External Mic adjustment in the camera was 2.5dB – 3dB would have been more like it. Melamount external mic.

There were points in the play where speech got very low – this could be improved (if needed) in the video by going back in, selecting short stretches of audio and boosting the settings – then re-exporting.

- No exposure corrections needed on Acts Two and Three, where I set the Exposure compensation dial to a full stop underexposed – after Act One came out a tad over. This I corrected in the computer. Even at that, white shirts and ultra-white faces still bleach out a little.
 - Final files were reduced to HD and given to Rogue Swan on a USB stick. They look pretty good. I tried writing the three hours to a DVE, but the resolution proved unsatisfactory.
 - Three hours, almost non-stop, 4K in the X-T3 has to be something of a limit. The camera was getting kind of hot to the touch at the end.
-



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More Wilde Christmas at Artists Emporium and the Blog hits a milestone

Dec 7, 2018

I catch as many of these as I can – fortunately we live very close and they occur at a handy time of day. I'll admit to getting a little tired of seeing that darn bear on the tree on the right edge – a workaround seems in order on that. Christmas decor makes a nice change, but it reduces what I can do with the reflections somewhat. It's a busy time of year so I'm running a tad behind on posting these. The sitting at the top is Alexandra Tomarchio (we have a granddaughter named Alexandra who I immediately nicknamed "Drini" – and much to the parents' chagrin, it stuck).

Below is Pat Robbins with Pam working up the starting sketch. As always, these also appear on the [Havre de Grace Street](#) page in the album for the series.



811 unique visitors in November...

At the height of the **Easter Island** project the site/blog hit 1000 unique visitors some months. But that was a subject that interested people pretty much all over the globe. Subsequently that number dropped to around 300 on a pretty regular basis, gradually increasing as I've developed my new **Havre de Grace Street** project. This November sported **811 unique visitors** – that's separate individuals visiting over the time period, eliminating all robots, hits, repeat visits, etc. And those visited over 3,500 times. And now by far the greatest part of these visits are from the U.S. (I can't pin it down any further than that but assume that it's pretty much local traffic). That wasn't the case with the Easter Island postings where the bulk was actually outside the States.

I'm surprised, and gratified. While the nature of my present project isn't producing much in the way of large marketable prints, it does seem to be telling a story. I began on Easter Island as I did this one, with no defined plans as to what I would do with the images – and that evolved into quite the portfolio. So I've been where I am now before – I'll just let this thing evolve and take on a life of its own, taking me where it will.

So, thanks to everyone. I do get comments and suggestions every once in a while – though rarely in the comments section at the bottom of the page, but rather as emails. I welcome all, especially those offering names that I sometimes miss, and those that make corrections to something I've said (usually a failure of oversimplification of something technical). I sometimes wonder if I should simply eliminate the comment section on the blog itself.



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HCC Student Pottery Sale – Other People's Art

Dec 9, 2018

I haven't made one of my Other People's Art posts in a while – there's a long running section here on the blog for the posts though – [HERE](#). Recently we attended the latest Harford Community College Pottery Sale. We really look forward to these, never failing to find a couple of gems. And the prices – wow. The tricky part was finding someone to give us the names of the potters. We treasure the pieces in our art collection, no mater where they come from. The piece at the top, by **Lynn Klara**, is about seven inches tall – it is gorgeous. I immediately walked over and grabbed it, carrying it around until we zeroed in on the lidded jar below – a little over six inches tall. The artist is **Catherine Jones**.



'Tis the season – as nice as the jar above is, it's to be part of a Christmas present. When possible, we give art. Nan has her own plans for the bowl at the top. H.C.C does these sales sporadically, often skipping years. We hope they are back to stay. And maybe next time or year I'll have enough advance notice to announce it here – it's a lot of fun, as well as opportunity to pick up a Christmas gift.



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First Friday in December and Christmas Parade

Dec 11, 2018

I'm not sure what it is about our local ove affair with after-dark, winter goings on in town. But I guess I'm getting used to it because we spent friday evening – First Friday in December out at the Christmas Parade and Street thingie. There were even artists' booths out there – holy overcoat Batman, manning a booth under those conditions is NOT something I would consider. Kudos for the stamina.

I took a few shots, although lighting on large segments of the Parade was horrible. The shot at the top is my favorite – showing pretty much the brightest area of the streets thaat were blocked off. This was taken pre-Parade. You can get a good taste of how many thousands were out there from the crowd shot below.

There were plenty of people with good cameras shooting, and a drone buzzing overhead. So I'm sure there are a raft of great color shots circulating out there, as well as videos. When you're shooting for B&W, you wind up with far fewer usables, but occasionally that one good one. And often one doesn't know which that is for days or even weeks (*I've been a year on that*). This short series has its own album on the [Havre de Grace Street](#) page where they are larger, on black background and are downloadable. *Also, as mention on that page, if anyone sees themselves and wants an 8x11 mounted and matted version simply contact me – I provide those for free. I'll see how fast I can do the shot above for Carl at Concord Point Coffee.*

The rest of the images below:



Again – all larger on Havre de Grace Street Page.





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Nan Wants an Image Added – and a color version included

Dec 14, 2018

Here I was, hard at work running some tests for the notes below on RAW conversion, and Nan comes into the room wanting to see the color exposures for the B&Ws in my last posting. A few minutes later she "informed" me that it's Christmas and that I "need" to at least post a shot I had passed on, of Santa and Mrs. Claus, and then include one "in full Christmas color". It was so dark that the JPG looked horrid, but on examining the RAW I figured I could squeeze some blood out of that stone. It will work at the 8x11 size I use for the **Street** versions – but that's about all for this one.

At top is the B&W, of course. Had to push the camera to its limits to get this one, so it's pretty grainy. The color version is below. Because Nan wanted this posted on Facebook, I put both in the announcement. The B&W has been added to the album in the [Havre de Grace Street](#) page.



RAW Conversion from Fuji-X Exposures Update

RAW conversion comparisons are an ongoing issue from all cameras and systems. The more obvious issue is the need for settings for any new camera to be updated in any software – every camera is different and one simply needs to wait until they are added. For example my new XT3: a lot of my third party software offered up updates adding in this model immediately, Adobe took almost two weeks and Apple, very frustratingly took a month. Not that I use the Apple system conversion for final work on a file, but it sure helps to be able to open the RAW file in Photos or even Preview just to check it out. Thank you Apple, finally.

Then there is the ever ongoing battle for the best RAW conversion, with the most control over the results. Some software has actually carried this to the extreme of doing everything right there in RAW – while not really necessary, this is probably the future. They've all gotten so good that it is fast becoming, like with choosing a camera, more of a choice of personal comfort.

Lastly there is the slightly complicated issue of Fuji-X file RAW conversion. Fuji sensors, whether front or back-side illuminated, are a different animal. Everyone else uses a basic sensor configuration designed by Kodak, while Fuji designed their own. Without going into the differences, a lot of software has been slow in adapting to Fuji-X files – the results simply a fraction on the unsharp side, to be honest small enough to be irrelevant for all but the most exacting uses. Fuji people have had to, for best results, put up with using a separate piece of software just for conversion – or take the route I took, Iridient X-Transformer for pre-conversion to an Adobe RAW format.

After a number of tests, this is the situation as of right now – Adobe conversions are now as good as those preconverted in Iridient – yay. And Adobe's settings allow a good deal of control. This is a very recent development, within the last few weeks. However – Apple system conversion, and that done by any software that uses the system's tools for this, though better than it was – and great now in Photos and Preview for filing, organizing, cataloging, etc. – is still not quite up to par. Zoom in to 100% on comparison files treated the same way, and there is still a slight, though admittedly pretty much correctable, sharpness issue. *Tests for this, to be accurate, have to be run straight, with all adjustments set on zero.*



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Yes, that's Jessica Cleaver – Cultural Arts Board Coordinator

Dec 15, 2018

I've enjoyed this series, and it seems a goodly number of locals have enjoyed it too – over 800 last month on the Blog, I have no idea how many on Facebook. It's a shame I couldn't have started it earlier than half way through. And it's a lot of fun showing what the iPhone camera can do shooting RAW and processing as B&W. There aren't all that many portraits to left to come and it's the holiday season, with a lot else going on. So I'm not sure how many more I can fit it. I had to do the one above – **Jessica Cleaver**, Coordinator of the local Cultural Arts Board – on the way home from oral surgery with a mouth full of stitches. So if my expression was sort of stiff and frozen, there was a good reason – I had to talk through my teeth for the rest of the day. Nan said I was crazy not to go straight home to the couch, but I just said – "but it's Jessica, we know her". I don't do pain-killers so I was in pretty bad shape.

I love the rather serious look on Jessica's face in the portrait – a great contrast to her almost ever-present smile.

My mini-project following this portrait project is still kind of fun and interesting – and it might (oops) also have been fun to be able to see the accumulated results at the end. As far as my series, It will remain as a pair of albums on

my [**Havre de Grace Street**](#) page and, I'm sure, provide a few gems for printing up and putting in my freebie-to-subject box at RiverView Gallery. **Of course, all anyone has to do is contact me to get their freebie printed up at any time.**

Nan has been pressuring me from the beginning to get my own portrait done at the very end – we're big on collecting art work by local artists and this **would have been** a great addition – and would have made for a great posting here in my **Other Peoples Art** section. But, as something of a disappointment, it looks like this won't happen either. I made an inquiry about making other arrangements other than in The Emporium (*still banned there for expressing an opinion in print – rather judiciously ([here](#)) I thought, rather than joining the cacophony of gossip badmouthing it behind the Gallery's back*). Heck, I would have no need to have mine shown in the final show. But I was turned down on that unless, conceding that I somehow committed some sort of unforgivable dastardly deed, I went begging for forgiveness(*Naaaaah, where's the fun in that?*). *I should probably note here: I don't anger, don't hold grudges, just try to do my judicious best regarding everyone. Nan, however, is a different story, especially when it comes to her "pooh" – she covers both of those categories more than enough for the both of us. Just Sayin'. It's all good!*

Adapted "ancient" lenses... X-T2 with Olympus 50mm F-1.4 and adapter



I use the word "ancient" here thinking I'm being funny. To me these old film-camera SLR lenses are only thirty to forty years old – to much younger photographers they seem ancient. They don't work on modern digital SLRs because of the placement of the mirror. But, with a cheap \$20 adapter they work on the new mirrorless cameras – except you have to focus manually. But even that is better – push button zoom to 100% for fine tuning focus along with focus peaking (heavy color lines around what is in focus) makes that a snap. Oh, and if shooting in automatic, it has to be aperture preferred – OK by me.

A while back I was given an old Canon 50mm f-1.8. Recently I was given an old Olympus 50mm f-1.4. And now I have finally gotten my adapter for the Olympus. These make very nice little 75mm equivalent portrait lenses for my Fuji. As the family comes around for Christmas – finally we have a year where we are NOT the prime travelers – I'll turn myself into a pest and walk around testing these two lenses out (one on the X-T2 and the other on the X-T3).

Then, whichever one I decide not to keep (*I'm sure they are both great – the decision will be more based on the "feel" of using the lens. If not that, then I'll stick with the 1.4*), I'll include with the X-T20 I'll be selling in January – as a nice little bonus. I already have someone expressing interest.



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One of My Favorite Expressions – on both Subject and Portrait

Dec 19, 2018

I think "oops" is beginning to be a regular thing with me. Somehow this one got skipped over. What with Christmas shopping, oral surgery, Christmas stuff, getting myself up for the Reindeer Run coming up Saturday, Christmas family arrangements, missed cracks at window sittings and life, a few things got jumbled. Above is **Amber Woods**, shot back on December 7. I really liked the expression on this exposure, along with the way the reflections left her isolated as if there were no window in front of her. I can't wait to review all of these and come up with a selection to print – this one being a no-brainer.

Again: in the Album on the [Havre de Grace Street](#) page – larger, on back background and downloadable...

(along with the promise to print a mounted, matted miniature – 8x11 On 11x14 – free on request for the subject)

A very short posting today – not only a lot to do, but I still have two of these I haven't been able to get to processing as yet. Hopefully I'll catch up Saturday (after catching another posing Friday) after the Reindeer Run and a trip to Bel Air to pick up our Beichlers Bread order for the upcoming month, and then an afternoon with Nan making our special recipe oatmeal raisin cookies for Christmas. After all that, sitting at the computer for a couple of hours will be a welcome break.

And I'm reading three books right now that I'm getting back to when I can (as long as only one is fiction, I often work through more than that). The only negative is that there is so little time right now to play with my cameras.

Looking forward to the 28th when we're taking four other family members with us to see Die Hard at the Opera House!

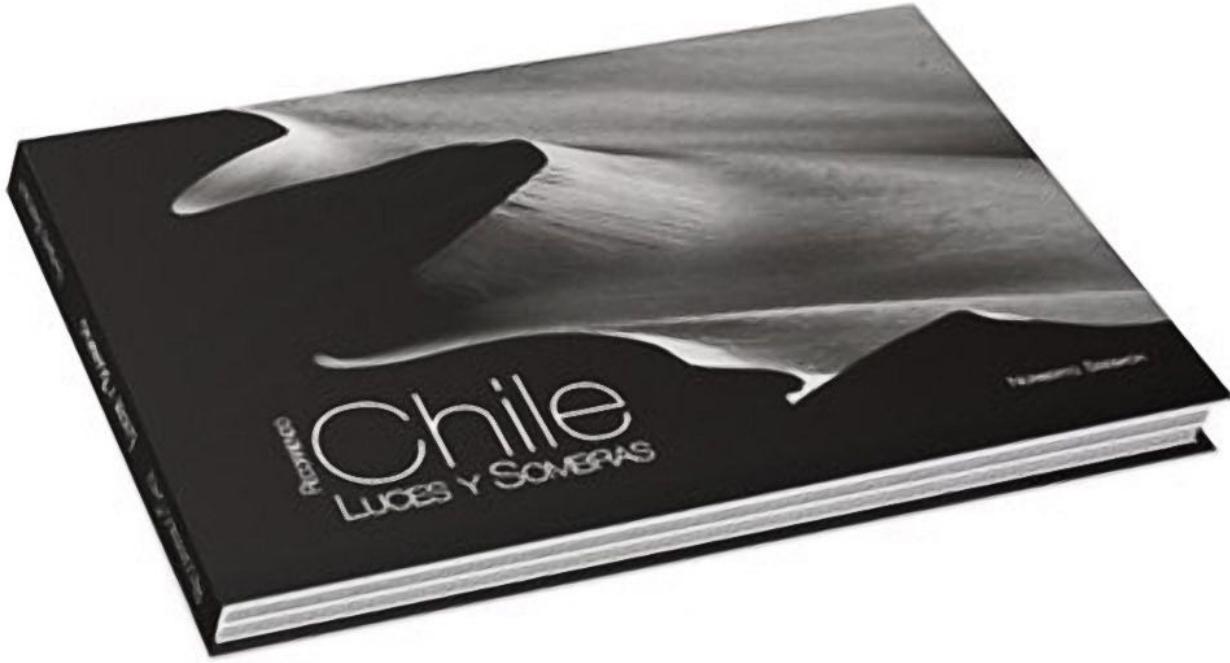


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Norberto Seebach – Tribute to a Fine Photographer and Good Man

Dec 21, 2018

We met Norberto Seebach in 2006, not long after arriving on Easter Island for what we planned as a year-long project. In October we were able to do him a big favor – he lost his place to stay during his last week on the Island at the same time we were to fly home for my emergency operation. We handed him the key to our cabana – rented for the entire year – and told him to just give the key to Terry when he left. When we returned in January, a copy of his latest book was waiting for us.

Norberto was a regular visitor to Easter Island, never failing to include an image from there in one of his books and/or calendars. Visit airport gift shops in Chile or the States – as well as elsewhere I'm sure – and find a variety of his coffee-table books. All with the highest quality printing. We crossed paths twice more during our stays. Unfortunately we were never able to accept his standing invitation to visit them on the mainland.

Terry on the Island just informed us that Norbert has passed – a victim of cancer. He is missed. In spite of being a very successful photographer, Norberto was quiet, humble and just plain nice. Yes, he worked exclusively in color, or so I thought, but he appreciated B&W.

His style was interesting, especially for the grand scenics that were his forte. What "oomph" he lacked in his personal mannerisms he made up for in his work. I imagine starting with a high-quality HDR image and then punching it up to a hit-you-in-the-face level. The one book of his that we have that I enjoy the most depicts his transition from film to digital – a struggle I was undergoing at the same time.

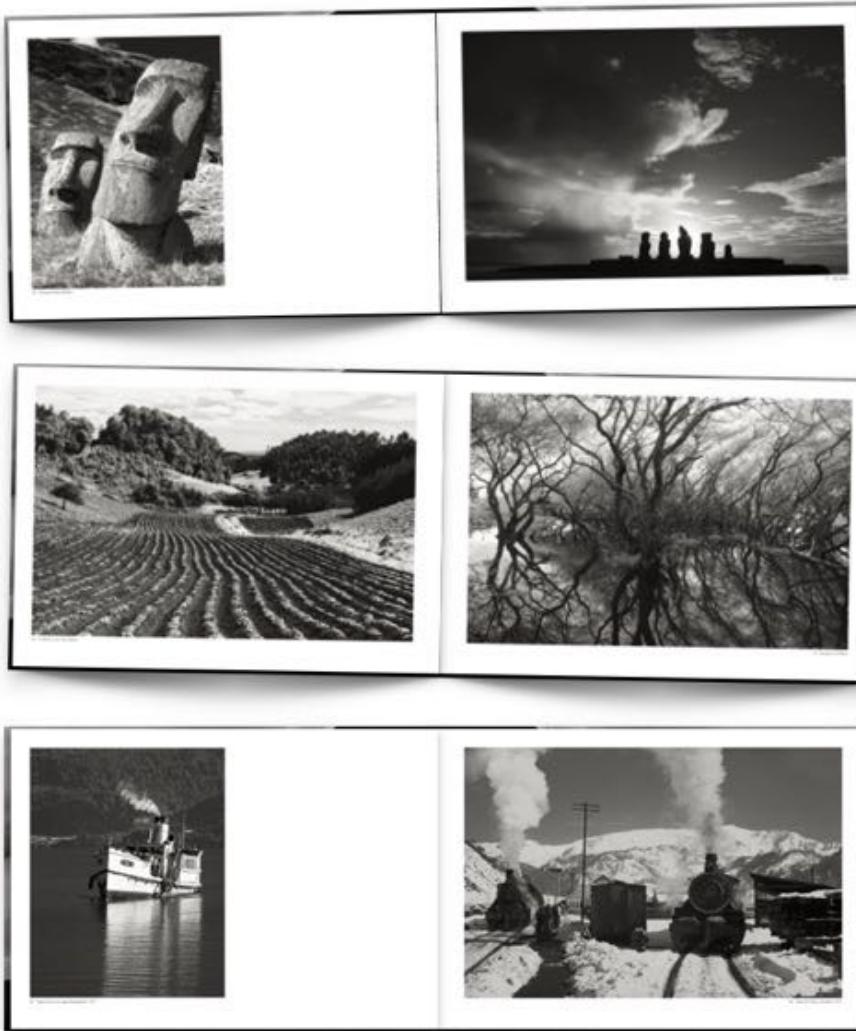
As I was putting my own book together, I noticed that in his I could, if I looked really close, discern which images were originally exposed on film, and which digitally. OK, maybe a less trained eye couldn't see this, but, especially

with naked B&W where this difference would be exaggerated, I knew I needed to avoid it somehow. It sent me back to the computer to experiment with different ways to add grain to an image – looking for the one that would render the digital and film images in my book indistinguishable.

Norberto was never what one would call a professional photographer – he was a math professor who took his photography to heights, traveling the length of Chile to create his very successful books and calendars. Chile is unique, stretching from Patagonia on the icy tip of South America to the dry, hot deserts bordering Peru in the north. One of the more entertaining things to watch on Chilean TV is the weather, watching a little cartoon character bounce from north to south ticking off the dropping temperatures and changing climate – making a side-step in the middle to and back from Easter Island, a five hour plane ride into the Pacific. This makes for a tremendous amount of extremely varied landscapes. Norberto took full advantage of this.

We just received his 2019 calendar in the mail this week – adding a very sad note to his passing. He always included image notes in both books and calendars, in the back in Spanish, English and German (there's a large German population in southern Chile) – the inspiration for the format used in my books on the Island. One interesting thing about the calendars, like all we have seen in Chile, is that the week, unlike ours, begins with *Lunes* (Monday) and ends with *domingo* (Sunday).

While writing this I went to Norberto's web site – here: <http://www.recorriendochile.cl/en/Welcome.html> – lo and behold he had just put out a new book – *RECORRIENDO CHILE LUCES Y SOMBRAS*, **this one in B&W**. It's massive, with a 145 images, spanning most of his photographic career. Unfortunately they aren't available anywhere in the States. So I immediately contacted Terry on the Island to get us a copy. Hence the image at the top celebrating Norberto's life and his final, wonderful work – it's just so disappointing that I can't email him how pumped I am about this. All this is, very oddly, depressing and exciting at the same time.



Terry got back to us immediately – here's the more interesting part of her reply, referencing her efforts to get us

there for a couple of months this coming Spring:

"I beat you to it. I already asked Angie to get you a copy -- and, of course, one for me, too.
I'm not going to count on it coming to the Island either.

Now we'll have to study about how to get it to you. Postage will kill me/you. So I guess you'll have to come to get it."

Norberto is one more in our lengthening list of very dear people on or connected to the Island that are no longer with us. Between losses due to accidents, tragedy, age and disease, combined with some complicated issues the Island is facing right now, we are having a difficult time facing the idea of returning. We'll be making a decision in January.



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Playing Catch-up with two more in the iPhone Series

Dec 27, 2018

I'll finish up the year with these two followed by a posting of one more I have and the Mayor getting his portrait painted in the window Friday. That one by January first. It's interesting seeing the different ways people pose, expressions, what they do with their feet, etc. Good contrast between these two. Above is Jerry Nappi, who's wife will be in the next posting. I especially like the lamppost in the back of Pam's head. The young fellow below is Riley Paukovits. here you can see more into the Gallery.



Again, these have been added to the Album on the [Havre de Grace Street](#) page, where they come up larger, on black background and are downloadable.

ON B&W PHOTOGRAPHY, a short note...

I recently gave a copy of what I consider the best book on B&W film photography to a friend who's considering giving it a try – besides the fact that I consider the idea almost certifiable – David Vestal's *The Craft of Photography*. But the book also has a lot of photographic wisdoms within that still resonate today. He cautions adherents to B&W that it takes a good ten years or more to build up a portfolio worthy of showing – that I can confirm from experience. He also warns that color obscures both flaws in an image that B&W exposes and potential B&W greatness – thus one of the quirks of digital RAW, making it essential to, when in doubt, do a quick conversion to monochrome before making any final decisions on which exposure to use. And with B&W, one's successes – ar perhaps more aptly "keepers" will be far rarer than with color.

I'm very grateful for my years of experience with B&W film, it was phenomenal training for digital B&W, providing a perspective that would have been much more elusive and difficult to arrive at otherwise. A negative is akin to a slab of marble to a sculptor, a starting point. The same thing with a RAW exposure – the image is in there somewhere. One simply has to coax it out, bit by bit, with the same fear of going a step too far and having to start again from scratch. And style isn't something applied, it evolves naturally.