

## Symposium 2009 – Jamestown New York

### Day 1 Recap

Today we descended on Jamestown New York by plains, trains and automobiles to kick off the 48th Annual Symposium. We were treated to a warm welcome by Bruce and Deborah, which was followed by a Luau in the 100 Acre Lot. Winnie the Pooh was not in attendance.

Jim Dusen held the world premier of the Stickman video. Due to Stickman's extensive travels, he was caught in many compromising situations, and in many cases he was compromised himself. Nothing a little glue and gaffers tape can't fix. We'll try and talk Jim into posting the video, but in the meantime you can catch up on the photos with the following link:

<http://www.upaa.org/stickman.php>

Then we switched modes, and rooms, so that Jim could share his 3D photography with us. He displayed some of the 3D photographs that he has captured through the years. I especially loved the shots from Bryce Canyon and Goblin Valley whose topography seems to be tailor made for this technique.

It was a great start to the week, but now it is time to rest so we can get an early start on the sessions tomorrow.

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### Day 2 Recap

It was an early wake up call for us westerners, but we were excited to get into today's sessions. After a warm welcome from the President of Jamestown Community College, we listened to a presentation from Gray Braasch.

Gary is an environmental photographer who has been shooting a project :

<http://worldviewofglobalwarming.org/> .

He showed some amazing photos that accompany his message of environmental awareness and stewardship. He was shooting Mt. St Helens the day it erupted and he showed photos of the devastation that it caused. Then he showed photos 20 years later taken from the same spots, and you could see how nature was taking back the mountain. One of his main points was that if we get out of the way of nature, it will find its way back and recover. He has a lot of passion for what he shoots, and it makes a big difference in the photography. He also mentioned how attitudes are changing in this country and we are finally waking up to the realities of our impact on the earth. We all can look for ways to improve our own carbon footprint, including replacing our incandescent lights with compact fluorescents. One thing I loved about his presentation was the passion that he has for what he does. Find something that you are passionate about, and shoot it.

John Reid III spoke to us about his experiences as the team photographer for the Cleveland Browns and the Indians. He also shoots DIII stuff, and made the point that its all the same. He approaches it in the same way, knows what he needs and then places himself in the best spot on the field to get the shot. He spent a lot of time talking about backgrounds and how he positions himself to get the cleanest background possible. One example is in football, he shoots a ton from the end zones to keep his backgrounds clean. Follow the light to make a great image when you can. With baseball you need to plan ahead, while with football you can just show up and react. Check his webpage out at:

<http://www.jhr3photography.com/Artist.asp?ArtistID=22928&Akey=A2RTA357>

After John's session, we headed to the judging of the print competition. We had about 250 entries in the 8 categories, and I'm pretty sure that I didn't see any money change hands during the judging, but I can't be sure. There were a lot of great images in every category, which made it a great experience. We'll find out about the winners later in the week.

Will Yurman spoke on slideshows, or as he likes to describe them "time based storytelling". He has been creating these pieces since 2000. He showed some examples of the great visual stories that he creates for his newspaper, which can be seen at his website <http://www.willyurman.com/>

With slide shows, the audio is more important because it drives the story, as photographers we are so attached to the photos that we neglect the audio. "Sound and photos are a wonderful companion- think cereal and milk" Good audio is specific, tells details and emotions. He gave some great tips on equipment and technique, here are some links for the info:

Sound PDF:

[http://www.buffalostate.edu/offices/ir/photography/upaa\\_2009/Sound200...](http://www.buffalostate.edu/offices/ir/photography/upaa_2009/Sound200...)

Soundslides PDF:

[http://www.buffalostate.edu/offices/ir/photography/upaa\\_2009/SoundSli...](http://www.buffalostate.edu/offices/ir/photography/upaa_2009/SoundSli...)

Equipment :

<http://www.willyurman.com/links/>

Gary Harwood capped off the sessions with his presentation on visual storytelling. He talked a lot about the process that he went through on his book project over the course of several years, including all the work involved in taking an idea and bringing it to fruition. He taught us the process that he went through to gain access to a community as an outsider. It was only through patient communication that he was able build a relationship of trust that would lead to the families inviting him into their homes to capture their most intimate family moments. He also believes that we need to perfect our technical and artistic skills, (lighting, composition and timing) so that we can focus on the story and the find the best way to communicate the truth about our subjects. One of my favorite quotes from the presentation was "center your work on capturing depth, intimacy, emotion and humanity". You can learn more about his project "Growing Seasons" at:

<http://www.growingseason.net/>

To cap off the day, we went to the local ballpark for dinner and then shot some action of the local baseball team, The Jamestown Jammers. It was just nice to go to a baseball game and talk with people without an SID calling me on the phone asking "did you get it?" every five minutes. More to come tomorrow.

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### Day 3 Recap

Some of our less sane shooters got up at 5:30 to shoot the Panama Rocks, but I slept in. So we'll skip ahead to something I was actually present for.

Kristen Bartlett Grace spoke to us about becoming green photographers, and how we can create an environmentally friendly campus. There are a lot of simple things that we can do such as turn our computer off every night and over the weekend, and make sure that our cell phone and battery chargers are unplugged when not in use. One good website to get you started is the 10 rules for a green photographer:

<http://bit.ly/102TeG> <<http://bit.ly/102TeG>>

She also talked about the many efforts by the University of Florida to be green, including the mothballing of many of the Universities printed publication, which now can be found online as PDFs. One of the unintended consequences is that her office lost many shooting assignments because of this action, so now she is looking to multimedia projects in order to replace this income. Kristen also shared with us some photos from her personal environmental projects, including a fun shoot in Mexico with hibernating Monarch Butterflies.

Many you know Peter Krogh as the author of "The DAM Book: Digital Asset Management for Photographers":

<http://www.thedambook.com/> <<http://www.thedambook.com/>>

<http://www.peterkrogh.com/>

Peter walked through some of the basic problems facing photographers with digital asset management. The biggies are: We have lots of data, I.T. doesn't know how to handle it so we are in charge, There is no good multiuser software platform that costs less than \$10,000, the ones that cost \$10,000 and up still are not that good. The solutions are: put a system in place that uses the metadata fields in a way that will make your archive accessible and meaningful, stick to the system, find out which piece of software or combination of software will work for your specific needs, make sure you archive multiple copies in multiple mediums (He says he uses a RAID, Blu-Rays, and external hard drive with multiple copies of each), take one of your copies off site and in a safe place you can access in case your main copy goes down in any natural or mechanical disaster, use software or the web to distribute your photos to those that need them.

One of the most important things he said was that it is a good idea to take care of the entire archive yourself, and then make the 2% of images that are actually needed by those you work with available to them via software packages or a web delivery platform such as Photoshelter. A great many shooters spend a lot of time trying to get their entire archive on Portfolio or some other system when there are a very small percentage of their images that will actually be used. He also rates all of his photos with the star system to help separate the archive further. Here is his rating system:

No Star- Not very good

1 Star- The client should consider it

2 Star- Recommended

3 Star- Best of the collection

4 Star- Portfolio Image

This creates an easy way to filter out the images that are not needed for the majority of the clients needs. He recommends you try out Expression Media 2 (the updated Iview). The mac version is included in the Microsoft Office 2008 for Mac Special Media Edition. It has a lot of powerful tools to take advantage of metadata, but the drawback is that it is only for a single user. Peter also talked about the reasons that he believes that we should be using DNG. The best advice I can give is to check out his book, which is now in the second version. If you are in charge of your archive at the University, it is up to you to create a system that will work for not only the next year, but also one that will make your images accessible 20 years from now.

After some heavy lifting with asset management (its like advanced calculus with 1040 tax forms thrown in), we decided to take the afternoon off and shoot some pictures. We went to Chautauqua Lake and spent the day taking photos in the lakeside town. The Nikon Shootout was the focus of the shooting, and we spread out across the area looking for photos that showed the chosen theme of "contrast". It was a picturesque town very friendly residents who were happy to talk to visitors about their unique resort town. We met up for the group photo and boarded a boat for the river cruise and dinner. The boat took us around the lake for 2 hours while we ate and just enjoyed the good company. The boat was by no means safe; you were surrounded by 60 other photographers in a confined space, most of which were desperate to get a contrasty photo of you for the contest. Thankfully we all survived to eat another day.

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#### **Day 4 Recap**

Stephen Marc was our first speaker for the day. He walked us through his life and how he was able to use his camera to experience culture in the culture of Jamaica, Africa, England and his own inner city. He uses wide-angle lenses so he can get in close and experience the story. For him "It is more important to be a part of the experiences and reaction than it is to make the photograph". Stephen started doing montages with a computer in 1992, early in the days of digital editing. Then he started shooting digital and found that it helped him creatively because in a matter of minutes he could insert a photograph into one of his montages. He walked us through his project on the Underground Railroad, complete with some of the amazing stories that came from that experience. He now works on commissions, including pieces displayed here at Jamestown Community College.

<http://herbergercollege.asu.edu/marc/>

Nick Vedros shared how his photography has evolved over the years, and how he has been able to adapt to the changes in the industry. His philosophy is to entertain people with his photographs, and he is able to use humor to capture the attention of the viewer. He said " I enjoy problem solving, I think that is what photographers love about their job". Nick walked us through many of the commercial assignments he has received during the course of his career, and how he solved the many complex problems that they posed. He also believes that with a career such as ours, we need to be having fun. If we are not having fun at our job, we need to look for personal projects to inject that into our lives. He showed us a shoot in New York City that required catering for 100 people, 38 models, rented HMI movie lighting and two policemen who had to stop traffic during rush hour. Next time that I think my shoots are stressful, I'll try and remember that story.

<http://www.vedros.com/>

David X. Tejada taught us how he uses small strobes in his corporate and location photography. He has a great eye for environmental portraits, and the ability to create the perfect photo to show off a location. He shared "I don't wait for things to happen, I go and create them". He uses mostly Nikon SB-800's, Pocket Wizards, Radiopoppers, scissor clamps, Justin clamps and nasty clamps in his location kit. He also modifies the light with grids, barn doors, morris mini slaves and gels. When he is traveling to a location, he also brings t-shirts, jackets and other clothing for the workers who are in outdoor environments. This helps clean up the photo, and ensures that the color the model is wearing is complimentary to the setting. He has one of the most informative blogs in photography, which can be found at:

<http://www.davidtejada.blogspot.com/>

Mark Philbrick and I shared some of the reasons why we love our big lights. We talked about our belief that photographers should create the dream assignments that they want to shoot. I spoke about some of the equipment that we use to shoot outdoor portraits and sports features, including our generator and battery packs. We walked the audience through a recent shoot that we completed of our football team on the Bonneville Salt Flats, and how we dealt with the usual challenges that come with pulling off a large photo shoot.

Doug Levere works at the University of Buffalo as a part time photographer, but he comes from a commercial background. He said "I'm the guy who makes something out of nothing". It is a great attitude for a photographer to have, to be the problem solver. Most of us have a lot of trouble shooting in labs and illustrating research because all the work is now done on computers. His solution is to use a projector to throw an image on a screen or back wall, and then light the subject with a gridded softbox and a grid for hair or fill light. He usually shoots with his camera on a tripod and a shutter speed of 1/5 second, f/4 to f/5.6 at 100 ISO. This is a great technique to learn for those hard to illustrate situations.

After a lot of inspiring sessions, we drove out to the Peek'n Peak Ski Resort for dinner and a sunset shoot. Dinner was great, but we had a storm move in with lightning, making it impossible to ride the chair lifts to the top of the mountain. Nonetheless we had an enjoyable evening full of food and good company.

We're coming into the home stretch. Tomorrow we have 2 panel discussions, a Spitfire Photo presentation and the always-entertaining Joe McNally.

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## Day 5 Recap

The morning started off with a lively panel session on ethics. Talking about ethics with such a diverse group is always an interesting endeavor. One issue that was discussed was a news image vs. an illustration, and maybe the best advice is that if it is an illustration, make sure it says so in the metadata. This is a really personal issue and I think that everybody needs to decide where the line is for them because ultimately it is their personal integrity that is at stake. Many universities lack an official policy on ethics relating to photography. One thing that Mark Philbrick brought up was that fact that BYU had an official written down policy that explains how we treat photos; whether they be news, portraits or anything else. The value of having it written down is that you have protection from the supervisor/designer/etc who tries to force you to do something you are not comfortable with. It was a valuable discussion and we should continue to discuss on the listserve and at future symposiums.

Then we reset the table and had a discussion on social media. Mark McBride of the library at Buffalo State joined Doug Levere and Mark Cariveau to discuss how we can use Twitter, Facebook and all the others to advance the work of the University. What is happening in Iran right now shows the power of social media in the hands of the people. In the discussion we found that most Universities are using these social media sites, but they still fear them and are not sure how to get the most out of them. Mark Cariveau spoke of his PR Director who is ahead of the curve in University involvement in social media at Elgin Community College, her website is at: <http://prsarahevans.com/> One recommendation from Mark McBride was to have an employee rather than students be in charge of updates and management of said sites because your social site will be looked at as an official representation of the University. Some institutions also use Facebook to recruit students for photo shoots.

After lunch everybody was excited to hear the always-entertaining Joe McNally. Joe shared his history with photography with us, including all of the struggles that come along with a career in

this field. A few of my favorite quotes from the day: "As a photographer you have to make uncertainty your friend" "Your career should be a nonstop conversation with this phenomenon we call light" "I'm an assignment photographer, you give me a problem and I'll try and solve it for you" "Tenacity has to be with you all the time when you are in the field" and finally when asked if we will get out of the scrum of shooting and retire "I'm much more interested in the pursuit of photographs than the pursuit of a savings account". Joe talked about how a great number of his photos happened because he fought for the chance to shoot them. He spent almost half an hour answering our questions and when asked about the problems with day rates for editorial photography he said that he thought that while the war was lost, we can still fight and win the battles on an individual basis. He believes that we need to hold our ground on the licensing our images vs signing away our rights. We just need to find good clients, and then educate them. He used the analogy of a hotel room; when you pay for a hotel room for one night, do you own the room? That is how we need to treat our clients, they are paying for the right to use the images for a specified period of time. Please check out his blog at: <http://portfolio.joemcnally.com/> <<http://portfolio.joemcnally.com/>> and I also recommend that you check out his two books on lighting: The Hot Shoe Diaries and The Moment It Clicks.

Joe was the perfect way to end the week. The lineup of speakers was incredible, and we will be better photographers for it. Kudos to Bruce and Deb for a job well done, hopefully they can now catch up on their sleep now that we are going to be heading for the hills. Everybody should start working on their bosses and travel budgets now to make sure that they can come to Michigan next year.

Jaren Wilkey , Manager, BYU Photo