

PHOTO TIPS

Think beyond a snapshot by Curtis Billue

What is this?

- ◆ A short presentation on how to enhance your basic skills using simple techniques and preparations to achieve a better photo.

What this is not.

- ◆ This presentation is not an explanation of how cameras and lenses work, best equipment available, advanced flash techniques, or elements of art and composition.

KEEP THE GOAL IN MIND

- ◆ What's the goal of the picture?
 - I want to show Kiwanians working in a soup kitchen. I want people to come to our festival. I want to recruit new members to come to our meeting. I want a photo to use on a brochure about our club.
- ◆ What are you trying to communicate?
 - What are you trying to say? My club is fun place to be so you should join our club. This festival is great for kids and families. Or are you saying we have member that looks grumpy or Kiwanians cook food.

BE PREPARED

- ◆ Do you know your camera?
 - What are the strengths and weaknesses of your

current camera? Is it bad/blurry/blown out in low light? Does my lens or camera have a variable lens (means the amount of light it lets in changes with how far I'm zoomed in)?

- nice beginning tips when starting digital photography
<https://digital-photography-school.com/digital-camera-modes/>
- ◆ Is your camera ready for action?
 - Camera have charged or new batteries? Lens clean? Is it working properly? Do you have a formatted or clean memory card?
- ◆ Imagine what you are going to see.
 - What's the activity? size of the room? lighting situation? What picture opportunities can you imagine?
- ◆ Are the subjects prepared and know what you want from them?
 - Photo release forms
 - Do you have banners, signs, shirts with Kiwanis logos?
- ◆ Be on the look out for portrait and action opportunities that support your goal.

GET CLOSE TO SUBJECT

- ◆ Fill the frame
 - two ways, zoom in or move your feet. Best if you move your feet.
- ◆ No digital zooming
 - Let's talk about the difference between optical zoom and digital zoom.
 - Optical zoom is the lens moving on your camera to

increase the magnification of the image on the sensor.

- Digital zoom crops the picture and artificially enlarges the photo which degrades the picture into pixellated soft pictures.
- Try and avoid digital zooming.
- ◆ Vary your shots – Easy as 1, 2, 3.
- 1 wide, 2 medium, 3 close (extreme closeup for detail like hands).
- wide shot establishes the room or space, shows action of large group
- medium shot waist up, medium close chest to head,
- closeup of person's head or hands doing something. Think capturing people's expressions and details of what they are doing.
- extreme closeup eyes, hands more in storytelling and movies.

ALL ABOUT THE LIGHT

- ◆ Seek out nice light
- big windows or doorways to outside are the best. If taking portraits bring the subjects to the light.
- ◆ Put yourself between subject and light source
- ◆ Flash only when poor lighting conditions and can't move to better light
- one piece of equipment I would recommend is a good flash if your camera can use an external flash.
- (for advanced users, bounce flash off ceiling, or off-camera flash or high iso for certain cameras)
- ◆ WB – White balancing is important

- auto, will sometimes get it wrong, tungsten setting or florescent, part of knowing your camera settings
- what do you do in mixed lighting conditions?
- getting your flash
- ◆ Look for reflecting light
- off of large white or neutral surfaces like walls

CONNECTING WITH SUBJECTS

- ◆ Avoid backs and butts, if everyone has their back turned to you, harder to connect with other people, eye contact
- ◆ If your subject looks too stiff, talk to them, make a joke, point out the obvious like “OK, get uncomfortably close to each other” or “don’t worry, this lens will take 5 pounds off of you.” Make sure to keep camera to eye when saying something light hearted. Most of the time someone in the group will make another joke off of yours, and everyone will laugh and relax and then you will have a good photo opportunity
- ◆ Sometimes just making eye contact and then pointing at your camera like you are asking permission makes nice portrait opportunities. If they say yes, walk up close to fill the frame and take a photo. Don’t rush it, but don’t take too long.
- ◆ Avoid chimping if you can. Too much of it leads to exasperated looks or fake smiles from posing for so long. Also breaks that connection between you and subject.

MIND YOUR BACKGROUND - SIMPLE AND CLEAN

- ◆ have subject stand away from the background if

- possible
- ◆ watch out for busy, distracting backgrounds that take away focus from subjects
 - ◆ Be careful with background shapes and lines that go through people's heads, necks, waist, ankles, wrists.

MINIMAL POST PROCESSING

- ◆ Small amounts of sharpening, smoothing or image adjustments are fine
- ◆ Avoid squashing picture to fit a different photo dimension, better to crop
- ◆ Avoid extreme photo filters or super saturation to make a bad or boring photo more dynamic.

PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE

- ◆ Don't get too obsessed with acquiring more and more gear. Work with what you have until you've pushed it to your limits and then assess what you need to add to take your photos to the next level.
- ◆ Practice doing the types of pictures you want to become good at doing. If it is portraits, then do as many portraits as you can in all kinds of lighting conditions. What works? What doesn't. If it is low light event work, then does your camera/lens combination allow you to be successful? What would make it work better? Flash? Off camera flash? Flash bracket? Better camera sensor? Tripod? Monopod?
- ◆ Just don't delete bad shots. Review them first. It's a good practice to review all of your shots, good and bad, and look at the settings of your camera with some kind of photo program. If the shot is blurry then

ask why. Was the shutter speed too low? Was there quick movement from the subject? Was there enough light?