

TSUNAMI

by Hilary Duffy

When many non-government organizations (NGOs) and governments worldwide were mobilizing to assist after the December 26 earthquake and tsunamis, I received an assignment inquiry from Johnson & Johnson, which proposed that I accompany the CEO and other key directors of MAP (Medical Assistance Programs) International of Georgia to document their assessment journey around the tsunami-affected region. MAP provided \$14 million of emergency medical supplies to Sri Lanka, India, and Indonesia. Johnson & Johnson dispatched disaster relief modules through MAP to aid in treating the victims. Both were to be my clients on this incredible assignment that I eagerly prepared for.

The preparation was hectic—I was given basically one week to prepare after confirmations were made. In addition to being fully geared-up digitally (a request of the client), I needed to apply for rush visas at three consulates, review medical concerns and update vaccines at the Mt. Sinai Travel Clinic, prep equipment, find time to review the daily news and connect with a photographer already in the field, and, most important of all, be completely prepared for any health or equipment malfunction. Adrenaline was on high.

Now a world away in New York, I sip my Aceh coffee each morning, evoking memories of a journey that will never cease to amaze me. After taking three flights to reach Sri Lanka, our journey together started with a 10-hour drive cross-country to the island's east coast. We visited the coastal towns of Batticaloa and Palamuni in Ampara. From Sri Lanka, we continued to India's southeast coast in Tamil Nadu state. We then flew across the Bay of Bengal to the Andaman Islands, with a final move south to Aceh province in Sumatra, Indonesia.

Every day we traveled to new sites and I documented the affected regions, pertinent relief work in action, displaced persons camps and clinics,



encounters, important meetings, and evaluations of future needs. We regularly connected with MAP's local NGO partners and visited the clinics they were running. We visited hospitals in coastal neighborhoods that were destroyed. Assessments

and commitments were made to help rebuild the health infrastructure and stock hospitals or clinics.

We walked through fishing villages that were flattened and met with traumatized fishermen milling around as they clung to the minimal remains of their neighborhoods. We met survivors in the camps. The children greeted us with affection and curiosity, as did their adult caregivers. Adults who spoke English approached us humbly to recount their stories. Stories of tragedy and chaos were told, often with an expressionless gaze—still seeming surreal even to those who lived through it. All of those we met were survivors who experienced individual horrors that saturated their minds and seemed to have numbed them. Most people lost many, if not all, family members as well as their homes and livelihoods. After listening, we often walked away in shock and silence, so difficult were these recountings to truly fathom. The great need for trauma counseling teams was obvious; MAP has committed to facilitate getting such teams in place.

The daily missing persons count per country escalated while we were there; indigenous communities from the remote Nicobar Islands were rescued in the high jungle after six days of desperate waiting, during which they had relied on coconut water for survival. After evacuation and life in a tent camp, many may never be permitted to return. Their smaller islands may be considered unsafe to rebuild on. Fishermen in all countries were waiting to hear the final government proclamation on the new beachside zoning restrictions.

When all seemed completely overwhelming, we flew to Banda Aceh, Indonesia. Two-thirds of the city seemed to have been crushed and then violently scattered in the aggressive aftermath of the tsunami. But an amazing buzz of relief activity was evident in Banda Aceh. Indonesia lost more than 200,000 people in this region. Hundreds of international NGOs, the military, and local Indonesian forces had flooded the city and surrounds to assist. The local airport was swamped; helicopters flew overhead throughout the day. When flying over the region, my blank stare often became tearful and the lump in my throat felt heavier than ever.

This was my first photography assignment that involved visiting areas of such severe devastation while death still lingered in the air. Sheer disbelief overwhelmed us all. I photographed as much as possible and as many people as possible with respect—yet the grief hit me at unpredictable moments. The leaders I was traveling with expressed concern and were certainly going to provide assistance, which was comforting as I photographed

people in grief and recovery. In all the camps, great leaders had emerged and local volunteers came out. Nevertheless, most survivors were undeniably in a state of vast uncertainty with great heartache. Relocation was a huge issue, camp sanitation concerned many, malaria threatened some, children were not back in classes in many cases and had little or no routine.

Currently MAP is using my images in many presentations to individual and corporate donors and web and print publications. Johnson & Johnson also



All Photos © Hilary Duffy

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TO HIDDEN WORLDS BY KAYAK AND CANOE

by Theresa Campbell

I've always had a passion for the water: swimming, sailing, snorkeling, any activity that would get me in or on the water.

When I discovered kayaking it opened up a whole new world for my two passions: water life and photography. Paddling alone and silently allows me to feel closer to the water and its life.

Paddling takes me to many places with low water and tight winding trails only accessible by kayak or canoe. Paddling the rivers and bays in Florida, through and under mangroves, I see manatees, alligators, and other wildlife in their natural habitat. I love going into these hidden worlds. I never know what I'll find when paddling or when a photo opportunity will arise, so I stay alert and have my camera ready at all times. On a trip on the Loxahatchee River, which winds through Jupiter, Florida, I was happy to get a shot of a baby alligator on the bank. Aware that the mother must be close by, perhaps even under my boat, I made it quick—both for my safety and so the animals don't feel threatened.

Gliding out of a mangrove tunnel in Sarasota Bay, I came upon a flock of cormorants resting on a sandbar. They spotted me and were very still for a few seconds, deciding on fight or flight. I moved very slowly and quietly and was able to get within 10 feet to take a couple of pictures before they flew away.

When kayaking in Florida I'm not too concerned about the boat drifting off course. If I wind up under a mangrove branch or on a sandbar, I can push the boat off using my paddle.

Kayaking on the Hudson River in New York is another story. The currents are very strong and the river is wide, with nothing to block the wind. A



paddler can very easily get pinned against one of the many piers. This has not happened to me, but I have seen it and am very cautious. The water can also get very choppy. In these conditions I do not photograph. Another concern is the many power boats, ferries, and big cruise ships that ply the river. Stay clear! You need to know the rules of the water when kayaking in the city. Since September 11 security is very tight and kayakers have gotten tickets for violating security zones—being too close to the Statue of Liberty, for example.

A few swim races are staged on the river each summer and I volunteer along with some other kayakers to guide the swimmers along the course. The races are usually planned during slack tide and I am able to take some nice pictures with minimum worry about losing control of my boat.

Photographing from a kayak presents a unique set of challenges. It's not like shooting on solid land. The boat is always moving with either the wind or the current so you have to take the pictures fast. I keep the camera in a kayakers' dry bag secured to the boat and close to my lap. I paddle into position, lift the camera out of the bag, and take the picture.

I use an inexpensive 2 mp Fuji auto-focus digital camera that is fine for publishing to the web. I only photograph on days when the wind is relatively calm. I'm careful not to let water drip on the camera from the paddle after maneuvering the boat, and I bring along a disposable waterproof camera as a backup. • PWP •

*Theresa Campbell specializes in outdoor and waterlife photography
<http://www.canoe-world.org>*

All Photos © Theresa Campbell

DIGITAL FOR THE TRAVEL AND OUTDOOR PHOTOGRAPHER



Rick Sammon

A PWP Workshop Given by Rick Sammon

by Barbara Nelson

“Cameras don’t take pictures—people do.”

Your photos start in your mind: film or digital, still or video, doesn’t matter. In picturing a person or place, you are also picturing a part of yourself. Take the time to see differently so you

can compose and make pictures from your unique viewpoint.

To capture the essence of an individual or group, you must respect them and get them to like you; you have only seconds to make the connection that will produce memorable portraits. Look them in the eye, get on their level, and always have the eyes in focus. In the digital darkroom, use the dodge tool to brighten the whites of the eyes and enlarge the pupils.

Cardinal Rule Number Two (or One): Always strive for the very best image possible. Not every picture can be fixed in Photoshop and most of us want to save time in the digital darkroom. Observe the scene’s contrast range and reduce or compress it to get a good exposure.

(A digital image sensor can record about 3 stops, negative film 5 stops, slide film 3 stops vs. the human eye at 11 stops.) Also consider all the elements involved in making a sharp picture.

We discussed using a digital camera’s controls to get the creative image. Digital cameras don’t all “think alike.” Low-end cameras have shutter lag and slow image-writing speeds. Higher-end cameras have the advantage of speed as well as pixel and sensor size, ability to shoot RAW, more white balance options, more ISO settings, and, with each new model, more options. Memory cards also differ. Some manufacturers, including SanDisk and Lexar, offer high-end compact Flash cards that record digital files faster (as much as 16x faster).

Consider as You Visualize

ISO: A high ISO setting in a digital camera creates “noise,” which affects how sharp a picture looks. (See Ardith Bondi’s article on page 22 to understand noise and image sensors.) The new Photoshop

upgrades have a tool to take out some noise. Noise Ninja is another program that reduces or takes out noise.

White Balance: This function tells the camera that the final image must accurately reproduce the whites; this will help all the other colors in the same scene reproduce correctly. Use Auto sparingly except indoors with mixed lighting.

Program: Having complete control with manual settings is most desirable, however, when “walking around,” you may choose to have the camera on Program for unexpected opportunities. Otherwise, use aperture priority if you want the background sharp; use shutter priority if you want to blur the background. Use exposure compensation to bracket and make sure there are no overexposed areas. Digital does not have wide latitude. Blown out images usually are not fixable.

Fill Flash. For more creative lighting effects, take the flash off the camera, using a bracket with coil sync cord. Watch out for highlights and start by dialing down minus 1, depending on how far away the subject is. Learn how to use diffusers, bouncers (Lumi Quest), and flash extenders to control the amount and direction of light. In-camera flashes will blow out the subject unless you can dial it down.

JPEG vs. RAW: This decision depends on end use and exposure range of the scene; RAW retains the most variation in tones. Many professionals now shoot mostly in RAW as the new Adobe plug-in will open RAW in all the latest cameras. (Note: save the old plug-in as five years from now the “latest” may not open your old files.)

Lens: A regular lens on a digital SLR has a magnification of 1.3.

Thus, a 100mm lens becomes a 130mm lens. However, the aperture of the lens does not actually change and can result in a “flat” image; to get depth of field, set your aperture one stop smaller.

Picture Resolution (image quality): Always use the highest resolution, otherwise prints may look pixilated.

When discussing digital photography, we must include Photoshop and printing. Sammon offered some hints and tips about Photoshop. A PWP seminar on Photoshop and some of the new plug-ins is planned for the fall. • PWP •

Rick Sammon, a New York State-based photographer, writes travel photography features for the Associated Press, has published some 23 books and interactive CDs, and teaches workshops for the Maine Workshop plus other groups and schools. A schedule of his workshops and an offering of his books and CDs for purchase may be found on his website www.ricksammon.com.



SOLO TRAVEL AND PHOTOGRAPHY

by Susan Rosenberg

At age five in Asbury Park, New Jersey, I took my first solo journey, peddling my tricycle around the block, defying parental rules. The consequences didn't daunt me. I have since ventured through 46 countries at least once, no matter what.

I love to explore new places in unconventional ways: three-week excursion across Eurasia on the Trans-Siberian railroad, 10-hour ride atop a train roof in Ecuador, and public train en route to Denali National Park, Alaska, that hit a rock slide with Prince Albert of Monaco aboard.

As a lone, intrepid, independent woman, the thrill of adventure and making photographs outweighs my vulnerable 4'10" stature and the cumbersome hauling of 30 pounds of camera equipment and film wherever I go. Nothing is predictable. One July afternoon, despite the 100°F heat and the jagged, uneven steps of the Great Wall of China, the teenage guide took charge of my camera bag and served as assistant. In Alaska, the trapper family that I stayed with took me by boat to a remote island where I cavorted among sea lions for an entire afternoon. Alone in Costa Rica, tripod in hand, I trudged along an eight-mile path in a rain forest and discovered snakes, asleep, in the tree limbs just above my head. The riches of each experience and the pictorial rewards are well worth whatever potential risks.

An alternative trip was a voluntary one. I joined an anthropological Earthwatch expedition and used my cameras to document a Russian village that had been ravaged during World War II.

I feel lucky to have a gift for seeing—the inner excitement when I sense what would make a good photograph. Whether it's a backlit pack of Bactrian camels on the Mongolian steppe, a reflection of Christo's Gates in a lake uptown, a 1,000-year-old monsterlike tree hovering off a cliff above Yosemite, or the face of a teenage student in a Chinese classroom, once the shooting begins, I step into a world of my own.

I'm in a time warp. I cling to two Leica SLR bodies, 10 interchangeable lenses, and a polarizing filter. I carry 60 to 80 rolls of Fuji chrome, out of their boxes, in a plastic baggie that I keep with me in my kidney-shaped shoulder bag. I insist on hand inspection at all airports, except Russia where I was told, "No film [to go through the X-ray machine], no plane."



Far away from home for weeks at a time, I find myself combating lonely moments. Actively looking for images is what sustains me, whether the light presents nature, people, or things. The cameras become steadfast friends. • PWP •

Susan Rosenberg presents slide/lecture programs to schools and libraries about the countries she visits. She has developed the seminar Solo Travel for Women to encourage women to follow their dreams when there isn't someone at the ready to share it with.



Recommended Websites: ShawGuides (<http://www.shawguides.com/>): photography and other interesting educational workshops and programs. Journeywoman – The Premier Travel Resource for Women (<http://www.journeywoman.com/>). Earthwatch Institute (<http://earthwatch.org>)

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All Photos © Susan Rosenberg

PAINT AND TOILET SEATS—OUR ADVENTURE IN CUBA

by Patricia Gilman and Maddi Ring

Our plans were to visit Cuba in April 2004 but the summer 2003 government announcement that travel to this beautiful Caribbean island was to be more closely scrutinized prompted us to change the departure to November 2003. Our search for a licensed cultural exchange program with a planned itinerary that included Cuba beyond Havana bore fruit when we found a two-week program that did just that; we signed up, began the paperwork, got our cash for spending money (no credit cards, ATMs, or travelers checks would work), and packed our bags.

We were off!! Check-in at JFK included more steps than usual, close inspection of paperwork, luggage weigh in with carry-on, very careful security, and a U.S. Customs interview.

Arriving in Havana in the late afternoon, we were met at the airport and taken by bus to our hotel. The age of the building was evident—it was probably a grand hotel in the 1930s and '40s. Its location, right in the center of Havana Viejo (old Havana), allowed us to set off that evening and in the morning before breakfast for our first photo shoots.

First impressions—Havana is a very lively city with streams of apparently happy, though poor, people out and about. Shops, restaurants, and bars were open and, our good fortune, an annual festival was being celebrated at the waterfront. Crowds of multigenerational Cuban families were celebrating and the air was alive. The city is beautiful but tired looking. But the glory of a city filled with wonderful architecture strikes the visitor everywhere—balconies, railings, and doorways all complete with amazing detail. The fabulous Caribbean pastel colors that had been a fresh decades ago were evident. The state of disrepair that began in the late 1950s dominates now. For residents, Havana is a once-glorious city now shabby; for photographers, Havana is a fabulous array of faded colors, peeling paint, wonderful textures, exciting old architecture, and interesting people to be captured on film or card.

The automobiles! The rumors are all true. Havana and cities across the island are speckled with the humming, belching, and growling of 1940s and 1950s U.S. cars in all states of repair and disrepair: a spiffy Pontiac from the early '50s, proudly parked in front of one of the hotels; a firebombed-looking Cadillac; a very old Chevy or Oldsmobile belching smoke as it crawled along a boulevard; and a completely restored 1959 fire-engine-red Impala convertible. Images of chrome, long-forgotten designs in metal, and the lounging owners were a visual treat.

Cuba, the 15th-largest island in the world, is a poor country. With 11 million people (2.2 million in Havana) inhabiting its 780-mile length, Cuba measures 120 miles across at its widest. Sighted by Columbus in 1492, it shares a colonized past with the rest of the New World. In 1902, the U.S. military took the reins of governance, ultimately settling for a long-term lease on Guantanamo. Later in the century, Batista took



Photos © Maddi Ring

control and created a two-class society; in 1959, Fidel Castro and Che Guevara led a revolution, overthrowing Batista and installing a Communist government. The collapse of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s cut Cuba off from all its external monetary support. Today, Cuba, a Communist dictatorship with an aging Castro at the helm, is alienated from its neighbor, the United States (90 miles away). The 50-year-old revolution is still very much alive, Fidel is popular, and the population seems content—a mystery considering the poverty. Most are quite poor but everyone is housed, clothed, fed, educated, and has free health care. The arts are encouraged: art, dance, and music abound.

We first went west to Pinar Del Rio, where we visited an elementary school filled with eager, uniformed children and murals of Fidel and Che on the outside of two buildings. We also visited a commune that grows and packages coffee. In the town of Trinidad we spent time on the beach and did some snorkeling, but the real treat was a visit into town in the evening. The streets were filled with local people out for a drink and some music. We had an opportunity for wonderful night photography and four of us dined at a *paradore*, a licensed home restaurant limited to 12 seats. We had a wonderful, unbelievably inexpensive, dinner in a family's home while we chatted with them as best we could in Spanish.

As we moved through the towns of Cienfuegos, Santa Clara, Camaguey, Bayamos, and Santiago de Cuba, our days were filled with cultural richness and interaction with arts, education, and health care groups. We met town leaders, saw performances in dance, piano, violin, etc. at a specialized high school, attended a concert of Afro-Cuban music, and were invited to several performances of *son* (indigenous Cuban music). A small combo (complete with their own CDs for sale) was at virtually every lunch and dinner and every town featured evening performances at every cantina. More wonderful architecture, street vendors, horse-drawn carriages, and truck-bus vehicles (oddly shaped and called *camels* in Havana) that fit right into our lenses. We can't forget the *cococabs*, a bright yellow plastic bubble top, seating for two, and a driver in front on a scooter. To cap our trip, we spent Thanksgiving at a local Cuban baseball game. Needless to say,

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ONE-USE CAMERAS

by Monica Barnes

Inspiration struck during an Epson Print Academy. On screen was a demonstration of how to mimic '30s glamour shots with digital photography. Apart from a pretty model, a slinky dress, an elaborate lighting setup and a bearskin rug, the process involved an advanced knowledge of color theory, conversion to gray scale, and the separate balancing of color channels. After about 15 minutes of PhotoShop manipulations, the instructor produced a reasonable simulacrum of a black-and-white film-based photo.

This got me thinking about simpler ways of doing things. What, I wondered, could one accomplish with the cheapest and most basic cameras—with Holgas, pinholes, and those disposable boxes in the hands of every other tourist? I decided to explore. Now, I am sharing some of my results with one-use cameras.

A one-use or disposable camera is, essentially, a roll of 35mm consumer print film within a cheap housing, including a lens, shutter, advance mechanism, and maybe a flash. Therefore, the first principle in mastering one-use photography is to think carefully about the film available in this format and to pick one you like. Generally, the cameras (made by all the major film manufacturers—Fuji, Kodak, Ilford, Agfa, Konica, and generic suppliers) are loaded with ISO 400 or 800 color negative film, or with black-and-white film. Because shutter speed (about 100/sec) and aperture (about f8) cannot be controlled, the commercial distribution of one-use cameras had to await the development of films with exceptionally wide exposure latitudes. Any exposure within about two f stop equivalents of the optimal one will produce acceptable results if well printed. Information on the films in these cameras can be found on the companies' websites and on the camera packets themselves.

Processing is of the utmost importance for good results. Films are developed in the standard manner but are often over- or underexposed. Problems can be minimized by using cameras loaded with ISO 400 film on bright days and ISO 800 film on cloudy days. The flashes

built into most of these cameras work well indoors within a 5–10 foot range, and most models allow the use of fill-in flash.

The flash range also overlaps with the range of reasonably sharp focus. Unlike most lenses, which are sharpest at infinity, those of one-use cameras are best at about 6–8 feet. Manufacturers assume that these devices will be used for tourist snapshots or to record parties. If a human subject stands at the fence of the World Trade Center site and the photographer stands at a comfortable distance to get a full-figure shot, the subject will be in focus while the large hole behind her will be in soft focus.

Knowing the technical details of one-use cameras helps the photographer work within her limitations and produce reasonably good results. Close-ups are not possible, but some one-use cameras have special features that are very expensive in equipment of higher quality. These may tempt even serious photographers to experiment with disposables now and then. Some are built into inexpensive waterproof plastic housings, making them suitable for the beach, or even for taking underwater photos in a pool or while snorkeling. Some one-use cameras take panoramas. Digital scans on CD are included in the price of some models. Recently, one-use zoom cameras have been introduced. The cheapness of these devices makes them candidates for lens damaging artistic effects, such as starbursts produced by scratching the lens and very soft focus created by coating the lens with petroleum jelly. The cameras are quite unimposing and allow shy subjects to relax. Security guards do not object to them. And, they are available practically everywhere.

After experimenting with one-use cameras for about a year, I realized that I was tackling some of the same subjects I liked to photograph with classic SLRs and from a similar point of view. The photos accompanying this article are paired for comparison. I took "Mr. Stephan in His Kitchen" with a Kodak one-use, while I used a classic Nikon FE for "Walter Alva with Ancient Gold Artifact." In both portraits I aimed to capture atmosphere—steam for Mr. Stephan and a famous archaeologist emerging from darkness in the case of Walter Alva. I shot the graffiti-covered Mercer Street door with a handheld Fuji one-use and the White Street door with the Nikon FE, using a tripod. The FE also caught reflections in a San Francisco window, while a Kodak one-use was employed in a similar shot in New York.

Having explored one-use cameras, I'm not ready to sell my classic Nikons, my automatic point-and-shoots, or my digital devices. However, if I find myself without a camera, it's good to know that the nearest drug store or supermarket can supply a useful emergency tool.

• PWP •



HOW TO MINIMIZE DIGITAL NOISE

by Ardith Bondi

Photographers are familiar with grain, but its digital cousin, noise, presents some new challenges. At a low level, noise isn't really bothersome, but at higher levels, chromatic and amorphous artifacts are visible as blotches or spots that diminish the quality of a photo.

As noise is a defect inherent in the digital system, it is always present to a greater or lesser degree. However, several factors affect the amount visible in a photograph and should be considered in choosing a digital camera for a particular use and in choosing the settings on a given camera for a particular situation. These factors are not totally dissimilar to a film camera, but they are functions of the pixels rather than of the silver-halide grains in film.

How Noise Happens

Pixels (picture elements) are the tiny electron sensors that make up the larger sensor (e.g., the CCD, CMOS, or other digital sensor) in the camera, which take the place of film and respond to light when the shutter opens. Any one pixel has a specific, unchangeable light sensitivity; an electrical charge builds up on a pixel in proportion to the amount of light that hits it. In addition, the electrical charge on a pixel is influenced by the vagaries of random electrical activity of the camera as well as heat. This alteration of the pixel signal by anything other than the light coming from the desired subject can result in the visual artifacts we call noise.

Most of the stray electrical noise has been minimized by the manufacturer, although it cannot be eliminated. Heat artifacts can be minimized by keeping the camera from getting too hot. Leaving the camera in a hot car or running it without interruption can heat the camera, which can increase the noise in a photo. In general, noise is more problematic in low light situations or when photographing a dark subject.

A larger number of pixels, usually megapixels or millions of pixels, on the camera sensor plate will increase the amount of information recorded by the camera and therefore the resolution of a picture. A photo with a greater number of pixels can be enlarged more and retain more detail than a camera with fewer pixels.

When purchasing a digital camera, consider not only the number of pixels, but also the size of the sensor that comprises them. The more pixels contained on a given size CCD, the smaller they will have to be to fit. The inverse is also true—fewer pixels on the same size CCD will result in larger pixels.

Large pixels are more sensitive to light than small pixels. To achieve a similar sensitivity to light in a small pixel, the signal coming from it must be electronically amplified. As the gain (or amplification) is raised, both the light signal and the noise on the pixel are amplified.

ISO level is the indicator of light sensitivity of the sensor in a camera. For sensors made up of larger or of smaller pixels to achieve the same ISO level, more amplification is necessary for the sensor with smaller pixels. This amplification results in greater noise.

Minimizing Noise in a Camera

Clearly, in choosing a digital camera, the factors that need to be considered are resolution, light sensitivity, and the amount of noise that will show up on a photo. All cameras will produce better photos at lower ISO settings when good light is available no matter how many megapixels they have. However, at lower light levels and when higher ISO settings are required, a small camera with a smaller sensor will show less noise with fewer (and therefore larger) megapixels. Resolution may be reduced, but if higher resolution and more light sensitivity are required, a bigger camera with a bigger sensor should be used.

Thus, small point-and-shoot cameras are better for smaller prints and don't need to have such high numbers of megapixels. If they do have a large number of megapixels, they are best used at the lowest ISO settings to avoid large amounts of noise. To produce photos with less noise at high ISO settings or in lower light situations, use cameras with bigger CCDs. In my experience, the Nikon CoolPix 8400, a "point and shoot" with 8 megapixels, produces good photos at low ISO settings and a lot of noise in the higher ISO range. In contrast, the Nikon D70, a digital SLR with 6.1 megapixels but a much bigger CCD, has much less noise in an

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PAINT AND TOILET SEATS—OUR ADVENTURE IN CUBA

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throughout the two weeks we each shot hundreds of images.

So what, you ask, does any of this have to do with paint and toilet seats? After only three days of traveling with our group, and after several mojitos (yum!), we decided that when diplomatic relations are restored between the United States and Cuba, we should all invest in paint and toilet seats. With the state of disrepair of the buildings and the conditions of the facilities, Cubans should be buying lots of both. • PWP •



Photos © Patricia Gilman

HOW TO MINIMIZE DIGITAL NOISE

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even wider ISO range.

Two other cases where noise becomes important are enlarging or cropping a picture and lightening a dark portion of a photo. When printing a high-resolution photo on smaller paper, several adjacent pixels in the photo are averaged to become one pixel on the print, averaging out some of the noise. When the picture is enlarged so that one camera pixel is one print pixel, the noise becomes more apparent. Lightening a dark portion of a picture is equivalent to increasing the effective ISO for that portion of the picture, amplifying the noise along with the light and making the noise stand out more.

Longer exposures also contain more noise. As noise occurrence is relatively constant, with a longer exposure, more noise is recorded. Some higher-end cameras have software added to help reduce noise at higher ISO settings. Special settings in some cameras will reduce noise at very slow shutter speeds but take a relatively long time to record the shots.

Reducing Noise in Prints

If noise cannot be avoided, avail yourself of a number of programs available for reducing its appearance in the final photo. These programs can be run as stand-alones or as plug-ins to Photoshop. An ideal noise reduction program should be able to distinguish real photo information from the noise. One program favored by professionals is Noise Ninja,

available at www.picturecode.com. Another such program, Neat Image, is available at www.neatimage.com. Both of these programs are available for Windows and Mac OS X. Note that each makes available noise profiles for specific cameras. Photoshop can be used for noise reduction, using various filters in LAB mode (see Eismann, Duggan, and Grey, 2004, 584–586). If the noise reduction is not selective enough, sharp edges tend to be smoothed too much.

Sometimes noise, or graininess, is desirable in a photo for effect. A more satisfying grainy image is produced by first eliminating problematic digital noise and then using the “add noise” filter in Photoshop to add a controlled amount of grain to the picture. • PWP •

A primary reference for this article was Real World Digital Photography, 2nd ed., by Katrin Eismann, Seán Duggan, and Tim Grey (Peachpit Press, 2004). I highly recommend this book for clear answers to many digital photography questions.

The other major resource was Joe Melhado, an electronics engineer, who generously shared his clear understanding of pixels and how they work, and took time to review this article.

Ardith Bondi is a flutist and photographer (and former pharmacologist) who prefers photographing wildlife, but includes other interesting subjects that cross her path in the process. Although using an assortment of Nikon cameras, her current favorite is the D70 dSLR.

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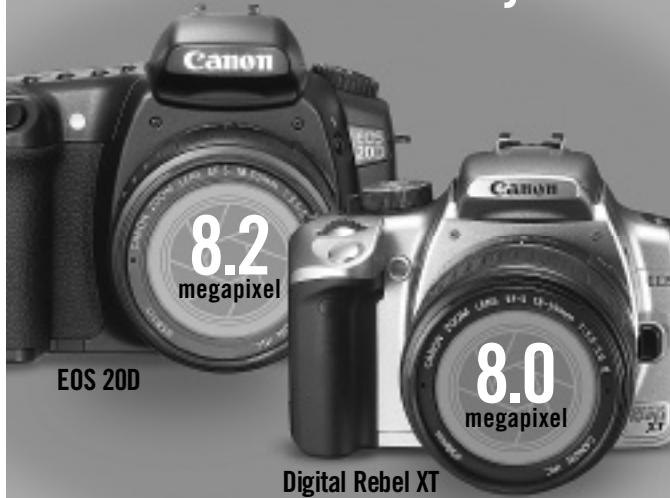
plans to publish the images in annual and internal publications. • PWP •

After studying photography and working as a news and travel photographer in Costa Rica, Hilary Duffy moved to New York to attend the International Center of Photography's PJ/Documentary photography program. Since 2001 she has been based in New York as a freelance photographer and photo educator in youth programs.

In 2001 she was chosen as an ICPJ & J Photojournalism fellow to document the NGOs that Johnson & Johnson's Worldwide Contributions supports in the U.S.-Mexico border city of Juarez. In 2004, she was again contracted to document J & J's community efforts with NGOs in Mumbi, India, and Hanoi, Vietnam.

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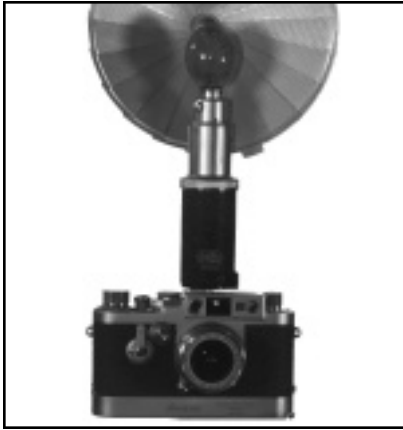
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Welcome Newest PWP Members

Esther Babb, NYC

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Donna Cotennec

Sandra Davis, Burlington, NJ

Rossi Ferraiolo, Malverne, NY

Karen Hudson, Menlo Park, Ca

Susan Kunz, NYC

Betsy Pinover, NYC

Susan Price

Jody Watkins, NYC

Bik Wong, NYC

Patricia Yancovitz



Calendar

May 2005

*Wednesday, May 4, 2005

An Evening with Stock: a panel of leading stock agencies, including Workbook Stock, IPN Stock and Wire Image Stock, talk about today's market and what sells.

Tuesday, May 10

Second annual PWP Gala

May 19-25

PWP members exhibit the Handmade Print, Past and Present, Cork Gallery, lower lobby of Avery Fischer Hall in Lincoln Center. Exhibition hours daily 10 am to 10 pm. Opening reception to meet the artists Sunday, May 21, 10 am to 10 pm.

Seminar:

Web Site Design by Alan Dorow of SiteWelder, Monday, May 16

June 2005

*Wednesday, June 1

Slide show featuring PWP members' work.

*PWP monthly meetings will be held in a new location, and on a new day, starting September 2005. New location: Pratt Institute, 144 West 14th Street (Room 213); \$10 non-members at the door.

June 2005

June 2 - September 23

PWP Members Exhibit

Giving Form to Performance

Pfizer, 150 E. 42nd St. Concourse Level

Monday - Thursday: 9 - 5; Friday 9 - 2.

By appointment only:

Ms. Sathure 212-733-0889 for visitors pass.

June 5-August 7

PWP Members Exhibit

The Secret Garden - A Women's View

The Steinhardt Conservatory Gallery,

Brooklyn Botanic Garden.

Open daily 10 am - 5:30 pm.

Opening reception to meet the artists

Sunday, June 5, 1 - 3 pm in the gallery.

Note:

July and August: vacation.

No meetings are scheduled.

Programs are subject to change. To verify times and dates, additional details and new announcements, visit www.pwponline.org.

September 2005

Thursday, September 8

Members meeting. Details to be announced.

Seminars and Workshops:

Photoshop seminar. Details to be announced.

Photographing at Night. Details to be announced.

October 2005

Thursday, October 6

Members meeting. Details to be announced.

Seminars and Workshops:

Lighting Workshop.

Details to be announced.

November 2005

Thursday, November 3

Members Meeting. Details to be announced.

Seminars and Workshops:

The Art of Nature Photography.

Details to be announced.

December 2005

Thursday, December 3

Members Meeting. Details to be announced.

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