

HORIZON NEWS #14

NEWS, THOUGHTS AND IMAGES FROM HORIZON PHOTOGRAPHY WORKSHOPS

A camera is an instrument for intensified seeing.
Andreas Feininger

STUDENT PHOTOS: CLOSE-UP



Photos: Dan Gaertner (top); Jackie Bruno

Perhaps the most famous image taken by our Travel Workshop photographer Bob Madden during his illustrious career was one of a private plane tumbling end over end during a disastrous landing. The shot was impossible to stage...and seemingly impossible to get. "I keep my camera handy and I'm ready to use it," he explained modestly. Most of us will never get such a miraculous photo, but "keeping the camera handy and being ready to use it" can yield great results for all of us. Dan Gaertner was ready when a dog walked, head down, through Bethel Church cemetery. It reminded us of a poignant scene in a 1940s movie, "Lassie Come Home," where Lassie kept vigil in a cemetery where her master was buried. Here, the dog's body language has that feel. Right place, right time, camera ready.

A very different example: Jackie Bruno's shot of fellow students Christine Ruhnke and Michael Lawrence. Jackie positioned, then interacted with, her "models" (who were sitting on a log), alert to capturing a fleeting moment of animation. By normal standards of composition, this shot is "off." Way off-center, for one thing; for another, one head is substantially outside the frame. Such compositional "imperfections" affirm the spontaneity of the moment; the viewer has the sense that the shot was purely candid.

Serendipity and spontaneity are two of the photographer's greatest allies. You just must have the camera handy, and be familiar with it so you can act quickly.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. The Annual Horizon Summit on May 4-6 is now posted on our website, including the registration page.
2. Horizon now offers a Guest House for its students. A three minute walk from our Franklin Hall headquarters, this 1890s house has five bedrooms (all with shared bathrooms). Rooms are \$70-\$85/night and can be reserved by calling us (it will be posted on our website in two weeks).
3. Horizon's updated schedule, including dates for our new Wedding and Canon Workshops, is now posted on our Course page; a PDF calendar for 2007 can be printed.
4. Steve Gottlieb is inaugurating an entirely new one-day workshop on the subject of **enhancing creativity in the business**. This class is NOT about improving photographic skills, though cameras are used as a workshop tool. A "beta-test" workshop limited to 12 participants will be held on May 19th from 9:00 AM to 6:00 PM. Cost is \$75/person for the entire day.

QUICK TIPS: COLLABORATION

One of still photography's qualities that most people find appealing is that it is something we do completely ourselves. The person who clicks the shutter takes all the credit. But it's not always so. For example, Horizon Director Steve Gottlieb once received an award for "Advertising Photograph of the Year" for the region covering New York City to Washington, D.C. and was proud of the award. However, if you had seen the art director's illustrated rendering (or "comp") that was used to inspire his photo—and how close his photo mimicked the AD's idea—you would undoubtedly conclude that it was that art director, more than Steve, who deserved the award. So before taking all the credit for a photo—and since we believe modesty is often a virtuous (and accurate) perspective on oneself, it's also worth remembering that every portrait is, to a greater or lesser degree, a collaboration between photographer and subject... and also that in landscape photos the collaborator is the landscape itself, although of course the photographer makes the choice as to how to "see" it. (We overheard a judge at a photo competition remark about one striking photo: "Yes, it's a beautiful image, but EVERY photo taken in Antelope Canyon is beautiful.") Which brings us to Michael Lawrence's portrait of student Christine Ruhnke (who also appears on the prior page). Michael posed her in perfect light, the instructor moved the rainbow gloves to her face, and Christine peered through her fingers with an inviting grin and a twinkle in her eye. A thoroughly successful three-way collaboration, yes?



Photo: Michael Lawrence

END FRAME



We've taken dozens of students to an abandoned saw mill near Chesapeake City. We are continually struck by two things: first, students always discover objects that no one has seen before and second, they continually see familiar objects in unfamiliar ways. Michael Shive's shot of this window frame caught our eye in both respects: we hadn't seen the frame before, but if we had we would never have thought of shooting it this way. A window frame within a picture frame...with shoes added; the image has a haunting quality, though you may not be able to say why. This is the kind of thing the brilliant French surrealist painter Rene Magritte might have done if he'd been a photographer and had visited our sawmill.