

HORIZON NEWS #39

IMAGES, THOUGHTS AND NEWS FROM HORIZON PHOTOGRAPHY WORKSHOPS

"Creativity is thinking up new things. Innovation is doing new things."
— Theodore Levitt

PHOTO TEACHING TOOLS

We live in the golden age of photographic instruction. For amateur and professional alike, there is far more instruction readily accessible than at any time in the history of the medium. Consider: photography websites, newsletters, print and online magazines, camera club and meet-up group events, photography workshops. Whatever you want to learn, there are skilled photographers available to guide you and inspire you.



Horizon's latest contribution to this instructional cornucopia is a new blog by Horizon Director Steve Gottlieb. The blog focuses on the subject of "Creating A Photo Book." Steve has published five books with traditional publishers and has self-published others using online printing services. His blog will be a "case study" that focuses on his latest book project. You can watch "in real time" as his book evolves from concept to reality. He'll discuss taking, editing, and captioning his photographs, designing the book, selecting an online printer, and more. His self-published book will hopefully serve as a springboard to secure a traditional publisher. The blog address is: www.horizonworkshops.com/gottliebphotoblog/ Note: Steve will lead a new one-day workshop, "Creating a Photo Book," offered on Aug. 20 & Dec. 4.



While enormous learning resources are available, the best teacher remains real world experience. Students would do well to master appropriate exposure for different situations by bracketing, i.e, taking light and dark exposures as well as "normal" ones. The overwhelming majority of students are satisfied with normal exposures, which is what Program, Aperture and Shutter Priority Modes deliver in typical situations. By failing to bracket, they don't get to see the effect of having an image that's lighter or darker than normal...which often improves the picture.



Nick Poulos is an exception. He brackets all the time, as we observed when looking over his shoulder at a recent workshop. Furthermore, when using a flash Nick also brackets, as seen in these photos. In the first shot, he used no flash to fill in shadows. Result: an image that is too contrasty. His second shot used "normal" flash. Result: the flash was too strong, and the lighting looks too flat and unrealistic. For the third shot, Nick reduced the flash power. Result: the "Goldilocks" effect...juusst right. How much did he reduce the flash? We're mum. You learn by doing.

Announcements

- There will be an **all-Horizon exhibition** in Wilmington, DE in July. ALL HORIZON ALUMNI ARE ELIGIBLE TO SUBMIT WORK FOR THE SHOW. Opening will be July 8th. Call or email us for details.
- Horizon now offers fun team-building workshops for organizations. These can be held at our Chesapeake City location or place of your choosing. See our website for details...and call us for further information.
- We've revised our website, www.horizonworkshops.com. There's a new Horizon History page...and more.
- Horizon's new Administrator, John Lauritsen, offers individual and small group Photoshop instruction at our HQ studio. Contact us for details.

PHOTOGRAPHY & WEB SITES

The photographs on the website of Horizon's sister company, VisionMining (www.visionmining.biz), have a special significance. Beyond simply engaging the eye (as with all websites), they are integral to telling the VisionMining story. Specifically:

- Since VisionMining's mission is to serve as a catalyst to promote creativity and innovation in organizations, we should demonstrate visual creativity with our photos.
- Photography is integral to the VisionMining process — point 'n shoot cameras are our tool — so our images show those cameras in action.
- Our pictures are designed to communicate the feel of our process which seeks to deliver a substantive message in an entertaining way.

Here are the details about two photos we recently added to the site:



For the “Biography” page team shot, we chose an unusual setting for a group portrait, an old barn. Each team member struck a subtly different pose — look at the different shoulder angles. Since uniform backgrounds are banal, one person, Steve Gottlieb, is set apart with a dark background. Using a self-timer, we took about two-dozen shots to get one where everyone's expressions felt right. Compare this shot to team photos on other websites.



For our “Contact” page, we thought that having point 'n shoot cameras flashing simultaneously would be eye-catching as well as informational, since the cameras in our hands are identical to those we use in VisionMining workshops. Moreover, the picture's energy — interactive and fun — is what we seek to produce in our workshops. In post production we used Photoshop to transform the bland white background to

a more vibrant hue. We connected the picture with the contact page's message: “Drop us an email and we'll get back to you in a flash.”

To create this shot, we worked in a dark room which enabled us to use a two-second shutter speed without the small amount of ambient light impacting the image. Those two-seconds gave each person time to hit the shutter button and trigger the flash. To light the three individuals, we used a single on-camera flash, bounced off a reflector *behind* the camera. The camera was on a tripod so we could use the self-timer. As is often the case with unusual photos, this was not technically difficult to produce. Thoughtfully analyzing what is required to produce a special effect often leads to a relatively straightforward solution.