

HORIZON NEWS #51

IMAGES, THOUGHTS AND NEWS FROM HORIZON PHOTOGRAPHY WORKSHOPS

*The life of the creative man is led, directed and controlled by boredom.
Avoiding boredom is one of our most important purposes.*

Susan Sontag

Student Photos Up Close



Top: **Rhoda Levine**
(Models: Ray Hull & Montana Triceratops)
Top Right: **Marty Becker**
Lower Right: **Sherman Levine**

The 2 x 3 image format began with 35mm film and carried over to most digital sensors. As photographers, we've learned to apply those ratios to capture what we see. Apart from the obvious fact that the world wasn't meant to be seen in some universal format, don't you get bored seeing ninety-five percent of all images displayed in this same format? This is not to say that square format is better...or panoramic or oval or circular or whatever. It's just that creative eyes crave variety and freshness. But since cameras are designed for 2 x 3, all too many of us get stuck in a 2 x 3 rut. Why not crop out some pixels—there are plenty to spare—and change format?

In planning this year's Western Adventure (in late April), we dipped back into student images from prior trips and took the liberty of altering some images from 2 x 3 to 2 x 4.5 ratio. (The photographers might have elected to do this themselves after the workshop.) The more rectangular format not only adds variety, in many cases it strengthens images by eliminating material that is incidental, redundant, distracting or static.

So...before you press the shutter, compose some pictures that avoid the 2 x 3 ratio; your eyes will savor the change.





Bill Daniel



Wayne Cranston

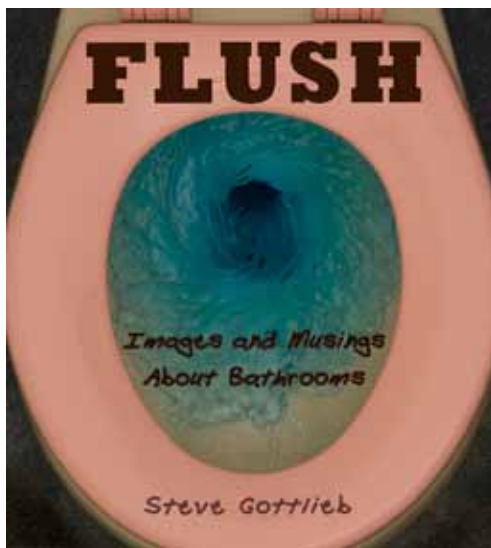


John Blank

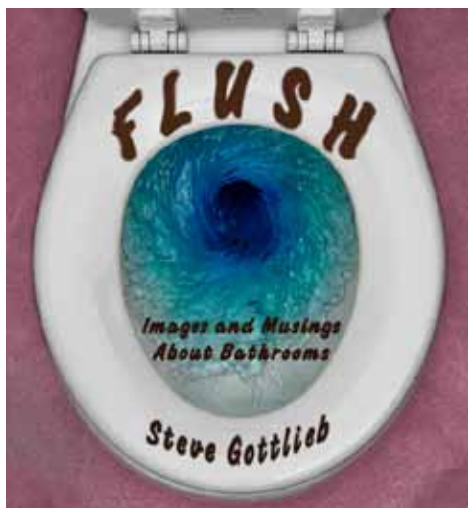
Anatomy of a Book Cover



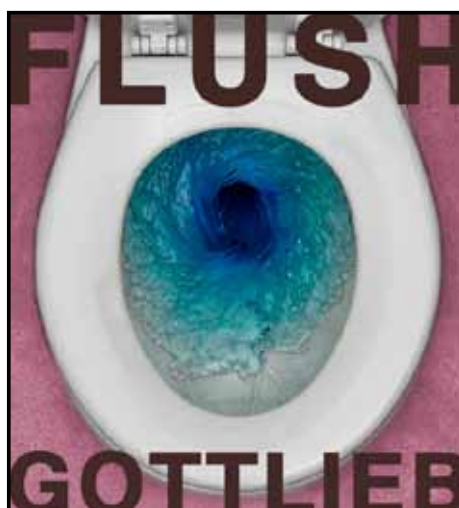
Initial Effort. Pro: Easy to “read” image; comfortable space for type. Con: Outhouses don’t flush; given there are many published outhouse books, this would seem derivative.



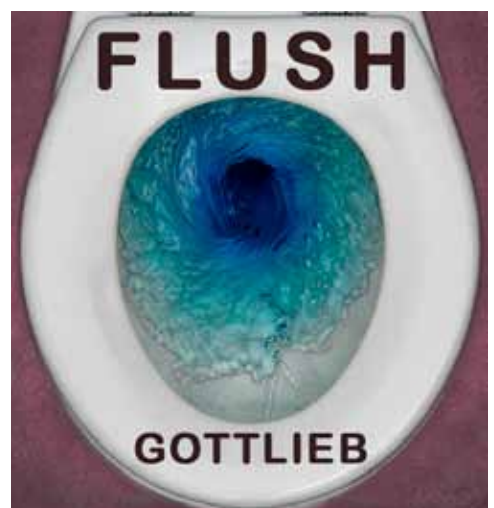
Pro: Image reinforces book title; pleasing, contrasting colors. Con: Subtitle hard to read & distracts from the swirl; seat color competes with flush; crop feels too constricted.



Pro: White seat adds more punch to type and swirl; pink rug is eye-candy. Con: Font self-consciously cute and hard to read; looser crop produces too much distracting pink background.



Pro: Large font good for small books like this; deleting subtitle adds impact to swirl. Photographer’s first name not important to buyers (probably last name, too.) Con: Not that easy to read; big font overwhelms swirl.



Pro: Title very easy to read; rounded font compatible with toilet seat curves. Darker background keeps eye on seat and title. Con: Type slightly top-heavy. Today, I’m liking this...tomorrow, who knows.

For a photo book to sell, its cover must grab people’s eyeballs. It must also generate curiosity about what’s inside. And when the book is opened, the contents should vibrate well with the cover. If the cover fails in these objectives, sales are likely to be—pardon the pun—in the toilet.

I have designed my five previous photography books and am now working on number six. Designing a book, especially the cover, is a labor of love. As a visual person, I find the design process as thrilling as the photography process. (Learning the basics of InDesign, the design program everyone uses, isn’t terribly onerous; it’s related to Photoshop, both Adobe products.) Beyond the creative satisfaction, producing your own design can really help your book since many publishers can’t afford thoughtful, quality design work. I don’t feel as sure-footed in design as in photography, which means I labor mightily, plus I get lots of input—especially from my son, Jason, a gifted, professional graphic designer. Of course, if and when I secure a publisher, my design efforts might be rejected—he who pays the printer has the final say. But in that case, I’ve had some fun and the satisfaction of giving it my best shot.

Cover design is an evolutionary process for me; my ideas change frequently over time. Here, then, is just some of that evolution (chronologically, counter-clockwise from top), accompanied by my thoughts. This cover might well go through further iterations before publication.

Even if you never expect to publish a book, you’ll benefit from sharpening your design sense. For one thing, design awareness can improve your image composition. For another, you can apply your design knowledge to producing title slides for your “slide shows” and to creating covers (and interiors) of “books” you make using on-line printers.

Upcoming Workshops

In Chesapeake City Unless Otherwise Indicated

Mar. 16: Adobe Lightroom
Mar. 23—24: Flash Magic
Mar. 30: Flash Magic (for DC Camera Clubs & Meetup Groups)
Apr. 20—21: Washington DC: Icons with a Creative Eye (DC)
Apr. 27: The Creative i: Shooting with the iPhone
Apr. 29 — May 5: 2013 California Dreaming (Southeastern CA & NV)
May 3—5: Chesapeake City thru National Geographic Eyes
May 4: Central Park in Season (NYC)
May 11: The Spirit of Manhattan (NYC)
May 25—27: Creative Vision (3 Day)
June 1: Adobe Lightroom
June 2: Photoshop Elements
June 22—23: Canon Experience
July 13: The Creative “i”: Shooting with the iPhone
July 19: Camera Basics
July 20-21: Creative Vision: 2 Day
July 27: Glamour & Beauty
Sept. 14-15: Real People, Real Places
Sept. 28-29: Flash Magic: Indoors & Outside
Oct.5: Adobe Lightroom
Oct. 6: Photoshop Elements
Oct. 11: Camera Basics
Oct. 12-13: Creative Vision: 2 Day
Oct. 19-20: Washington DC: Icons w/ a Creative Eye
Oct. 25-27: Chesapeake City thru Nat Geo Eyes

END FRAME

The **Horizon Photography Summit** on Feb. 23-24 is now a fond memory. Participants found it a fun and learning experience; we instructors enjoyed sharing our knowledge. Top: Nikon Legend **Lou Jones** teaching “Advanced Flash”; Bottom: Glamour Master **Joe Edelman** leads a hands-on shoot. We’ll post a few highlights on Facebook.

Mark your 2014 calendar:

Horizon Summit: March 1 & 2

Same location (Univ. of Del/Wilmington Campus), same basic class format, many outstanding new instructors and classes.

www.horizonworkshops.com/summit

(Photos: John Lauritsen)

