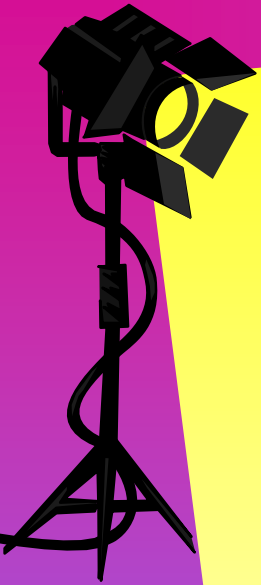


Taking Good Pictures: Part I

Michael J. Glagola
mglagola@cox.net
703-830-6860





Session Goals

To provide an practical understanding of:

- what are the basic elements of a “**GOOD**” picture
- how to obtain a “**GOOD**” Picture

Agenda

- Discussion of what makes a good photograph
- Practical review of the fundamental elements of good photographs
- Summary and final thoughts

Basic Photograph Concepts

- Photography is painting with light
- A picture has two components:
 - Technical Factors
 - Creative Factors
- A controlled combination of these two components creates an image that captures the appearance and emotions the photographer was trying to express
- **What is a *Good Picture*? “I cannot describe it but I know it when I see it!” (Justice Potter Stewart)**

Technical Aspects of Good Photography

- Proper Exposure
- Good Lighting
- Good White/Color Balance
- In-Focus
- Image is Sharp
- Minimal Technology “Flaws” (flare, distortion, ...)

- Technical factors support the creative elements of photography

Creative Aspects of Good Photography

- Subject
 - Background
 - Lighting
 - Composition
 - Perspective
 - Action
-
- The creative elements of a photograph tell “the story” the photographer is capturing

The UNIVERSAL Photographic Constant

- People NOT cameras take pictures
- Cameras are ONLY the tool people use to take pictures
- Good pictures are the result of people controlling how their tools (the camera) work

What is a GOOD Picture?

- A picture that conveys a picture directly and vividly
- A picture I like; that interests me
- A picture I want others to see
- NORMALLY follows certain “rules”
- Sometimes a good photograph breaks all the rules of what is normally considered a good picture

Why Are So Many Pictures BAD?

- Boring
- Confusing
- Technically poor
- The vast majority of bad pictures look alike; most people do not think about the picture they are taking; they just aim center mass, blink, and blast
- If you want people to think you take good pictures, the easiest way is to just **NOT SHOW** the bad ones!

Fundamentals and Suggestions for Good Pictures

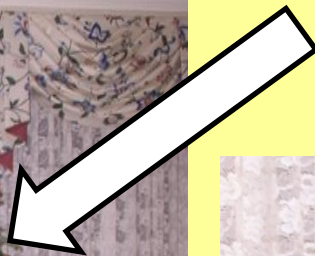
1. Show ONE subject clearly
2. Simply the background
3. Try a different viewpoint
4. Place the subject off center
5. Take charge
6. Watch the light
7. Get closer
8. Take extra pictures
9. Vary your subjects
10. Experiment

#1 - Show ONE Subject Clearly

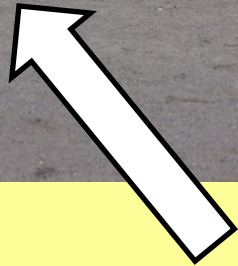
- Understand what is the subject of your picture
- Do not confuse the viewer
- Use objects in the picture to assist the viewer in understanding the subject
- Less is MORE!

#1 - Show ONE Subject Clearly

Dogs too small; tree too large



#1 - Show ONE Subject Clearly



Dogs too small;
no need for bowl
or people



#2 Simply the Background

- Clutter confuses the viewer as to what is the subject of the picture
- Clutter can ruin the subject's appearance
- See the whole picture; not just the subject but the subject AND the background

#2 Simply the Background



What is this a picture of?

Why is there a tree growing out of the back of this dog?



#2 Simply the Background

A good picture if the second person was missing



#2 Simply the Background

Not
Good



Better



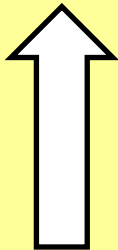
#3 - Try a Different Viewpoint

- Not all pictures work in a horizontal format; try vertical
- Try different camera angles; try taking pictures from close to the ground
- Look for the unusual camera angle
- Try to shoot animals and children at eye level
- Use the background to draw attention to the subject

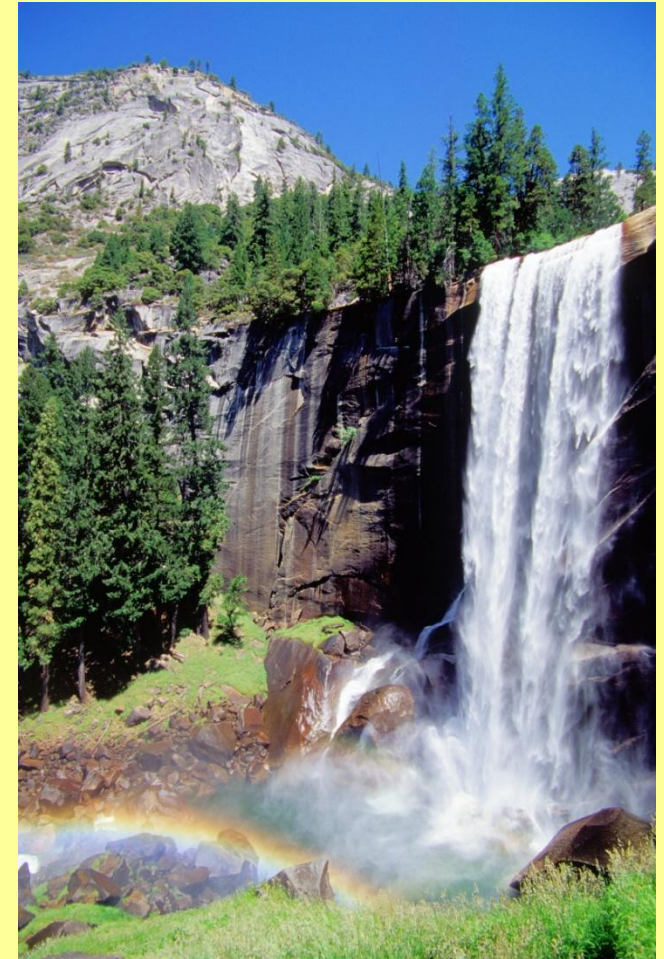
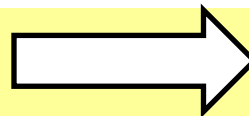
#3 - Try a Different Viewpoint



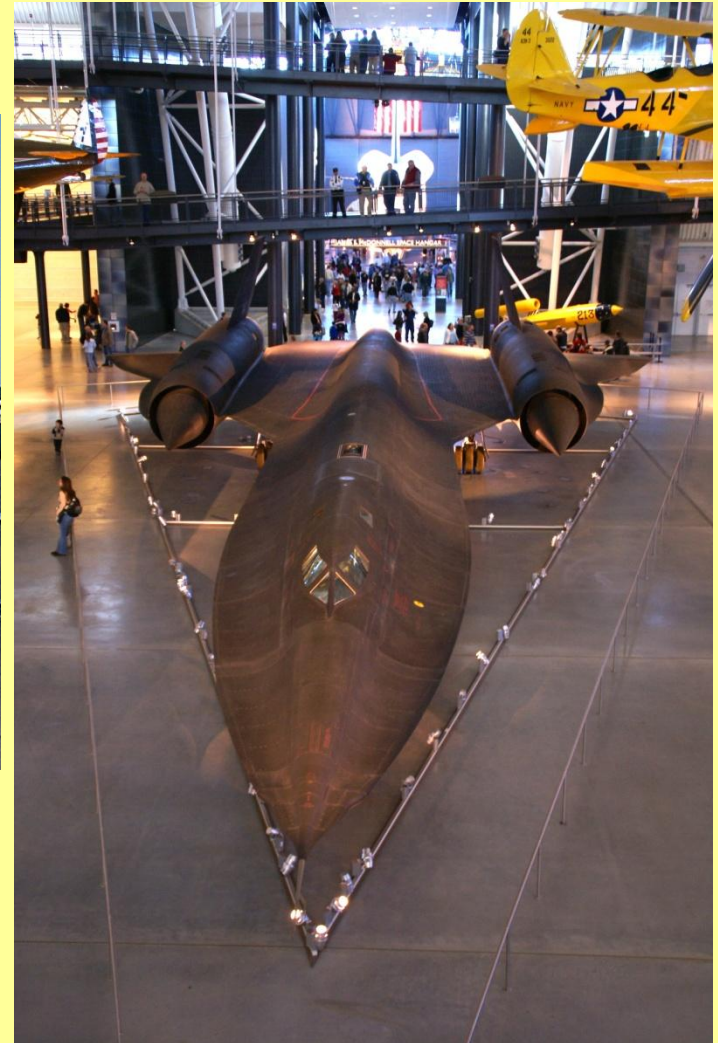
Good



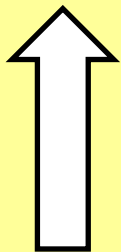
Much Better



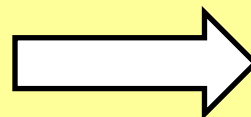
#3 - Try a Different Viewpoint



Usual



Unusual



#3 - Try a Different Viewpoint

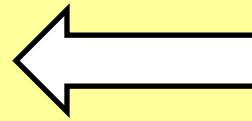


Both unusual

#4 - Place the Subject Off Center

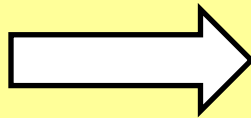
- “Center Mass/Bulls Eye” aiming is for shooting guns NOT pictures
- Don’t let the camera’s autofocus control the image; remember focus lock and shift
- Use the Rule of Thirds
- Use the placement of the subject to help tell the picture’s story

#4 - Place the Subject Off Center

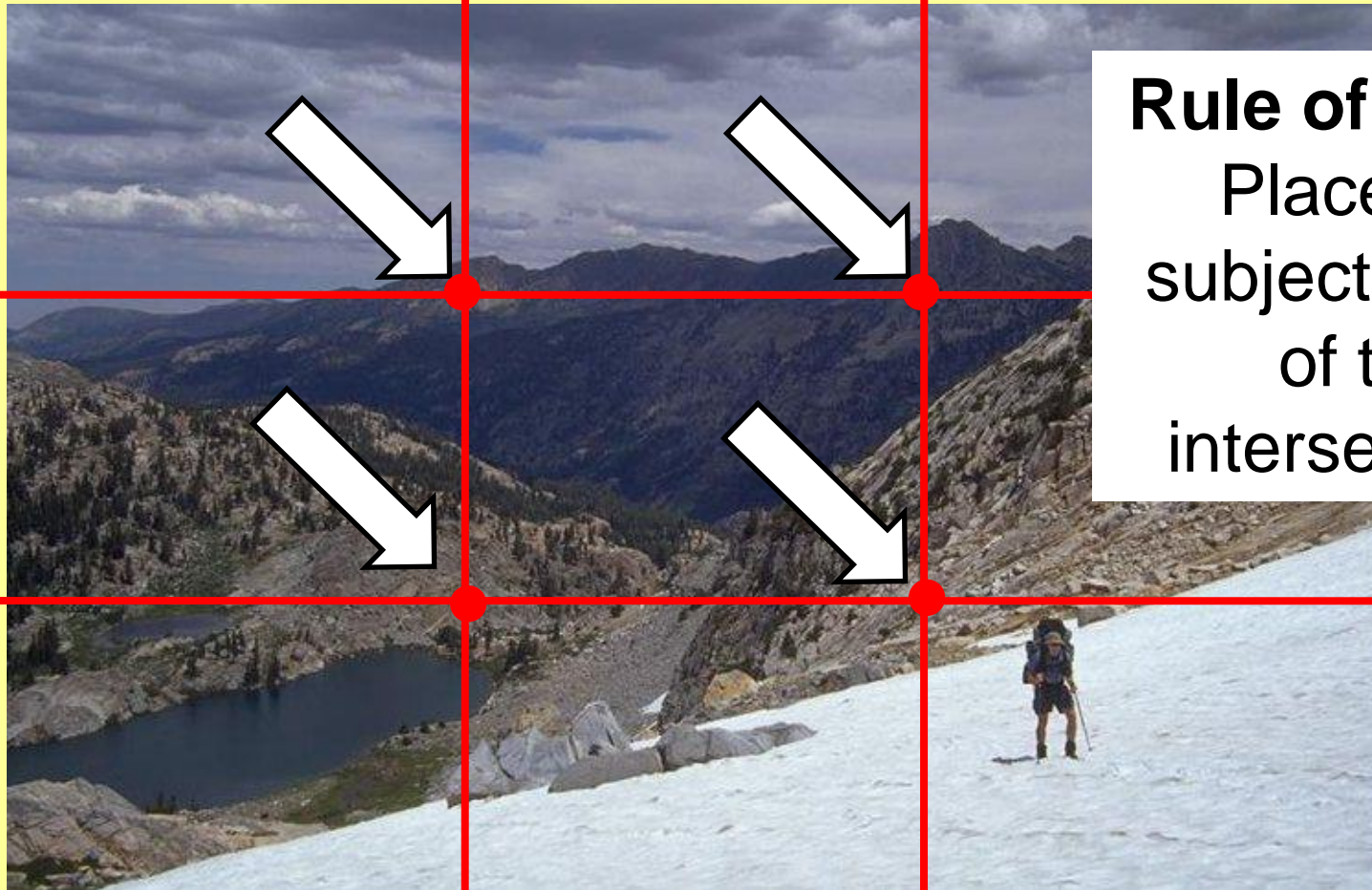


Boring
No context

Better

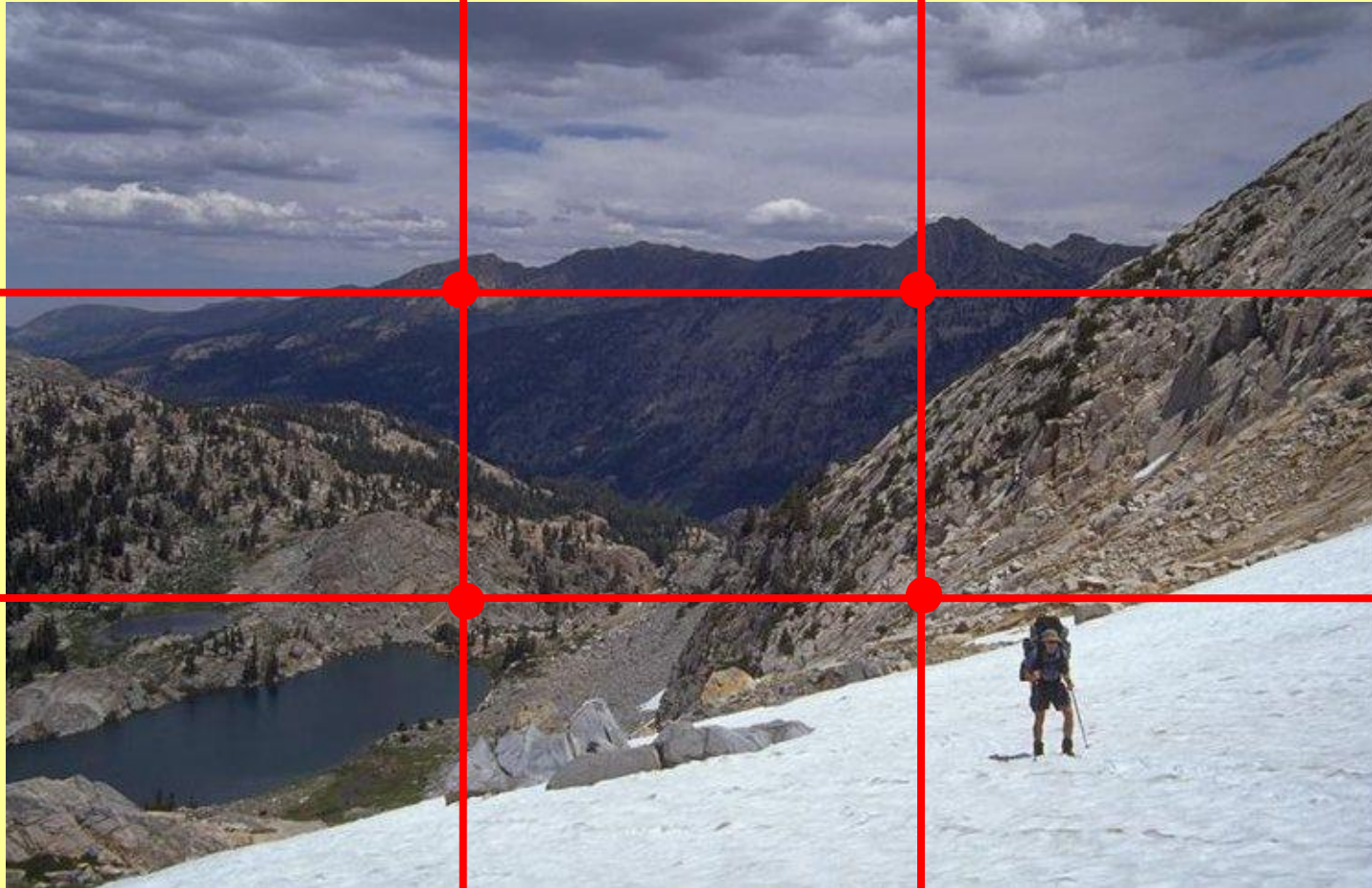


#4 - Place the Subject Off Center

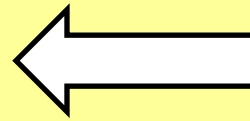


Rule of Thirds
Place the subject at one of the intersections

#4 - Place the Subject Off Center



#4 - Place the Subject Off Center



Boring
little context



Better 

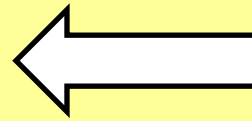
#5 - Take charge

- Do not be afraid to take control; not all good pictures are “as is”
- Think about how you can change the scene to improve the picture
- Plan ahead for the photographic conditions you want
- Be prepared for opportunity; do not react to it
- Luck doesn't exist! photographic “luck” is opportunity combined with preparation

#5 - Take charge



The “usual”
children’s pose;
BOORING



Something different
and more interesting



#5 - Take charge



Sunset light for
glowing color

Early morning for
shadows and
calm water



#6 - Watch the Light

- Photography is all about light
- Be alert for conditions that can fool the camera's light meter and auto white balance
- Look for unusual lighting
- Use morning and evening light for dramatic lighting
- Mid-day light is bland and one dimensional
- Watch the shadows and highlights and adjust as needed
- Use flash to fill shadows

#6 - Watch the Light



Mid-day sunlight is washed out and one-dimensional

#6 - Watch the Light



Storm adds color and shadows

#6 - Watch the Light

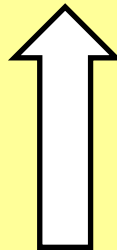


Morning light adds color and shadows

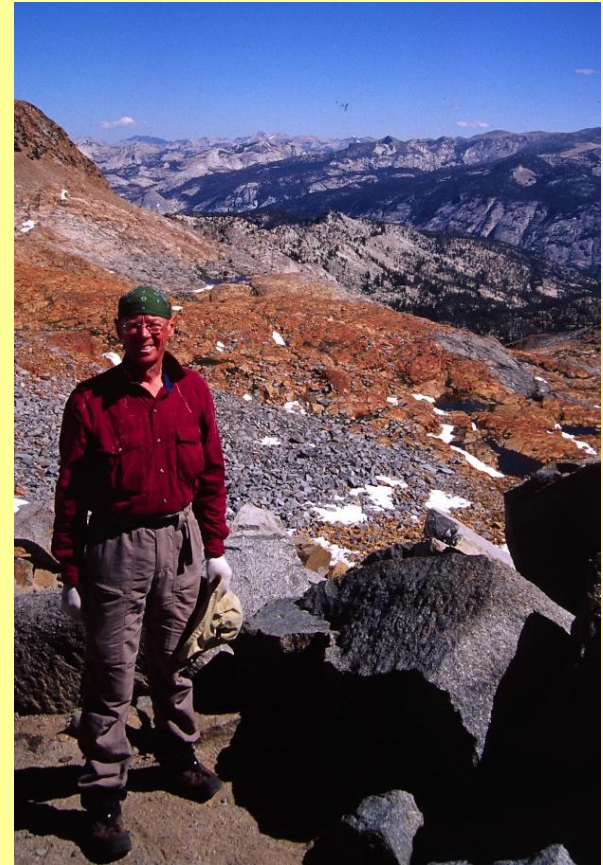
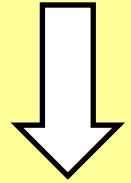
#6 - Watch the Light



If only the face was
not hidden in shadow



Better



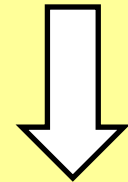
#7 - Get Closer

- Consider the size of the subject in relation to the background
- Even fixed focal length lens cameras have a “telephoto setting” (its called move closer)
- “Digital Zoom” is not the same as a zoom lens
- Know how close your camera will focus
- Always try to “get closer”

#7 - Get Closer



Closer



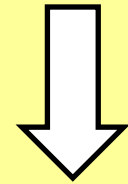
Close



#7 - Get Closer



Closer



Close



#8 – Take Extra Pictures

- Bracket the exposure to help get a “good” exposure
- Its easier to take an extra picture than to recreate the picture at a later date
- Do NOT assume the picture is “perfect”; take extra pictures as insurance and to improve the chances that you got the image you wanted

#8 – Take Extra Pictures



If the only picture you took was the last one, would you be happy?

#9 - Vary Your Subjects

- Do not always take the same pictures
- Do not always take the same subjects
- Give yourself assignments of new picture/subject combinations in order to learn to photograph them
- Try something new even when taking pictures of what you do well
- Improving your skills will improve even those pictures you shoot well!

#10 – Experiment

- Not every picture is a work of art
- Break the “rules”
- Do not get in a rut; try to do things differently
- Set goals, take notes and use the data capture capability of digital cameras to review your work and make improvements
- Practice DOES NOT make perfect. Practice, critical analysis, and corrective action makes perfect
- Photography is a skill; a skill is KNOWLEDGE reinforced with EXPERIENCE

#9 – Vary your Subjects & #10 - Experiment

Using dogs to
learn how to
photograph
action and
animals



Fundamentals and Suggestions for Good Pictures

1. Show ONE subject clearly
2. Simply the background
3. Try a different viewpoint
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Summary

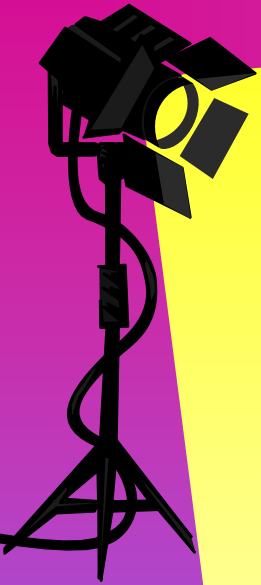
- Cameras are tools and the resulting pictures are only as good as the user of the tool
- The “rules and tips” are GUIDELINES to avoid the usual ‘bulls-eye’ and mug-shot format so common to most bad pictures
- Sorting your pictures and not showing the bad ones will help you learn how to take better pictures and make everyone think that all your pictures are good

Reference Material

- Kodak has absolutely great reference material on-line
- Go to www.kodak.com and in the search box type “top ten tips for great pictures”
- The first link will take you to a html presentation and the second will take you to a flash presentation
- The html presentation has links to more detailed information should you wish to go into more depth on a given topic
- The link to the html presentation is:
http://www.kodak.com/eknec/PageQuerier.jhtml?pq-locale=en_US&pq-path=10032#wg02_1_title_1

Final Thoughts

- If you do not like the picture, its doubtful anyone else will
- A technically good picture with awful composition is a bad picture and a technically bad picture with good composition is a bad picture. You **MUST** do both well to get a good picture!
- Learn how your digital camera works so that its features do not prevent you from getting a good picture
- Most pictures are boring; make yours unusual so that they get the viewer's attention
- Its easy to throw away the extra picture you took but did not turn out. You do not have the picture you did not take
- Good Photography is like the question, "how do you get to Carnegie Hall? Practice, Practice, Practice!"



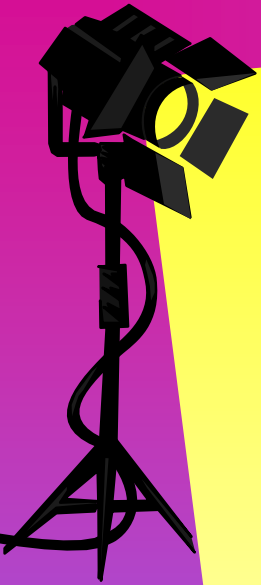
**Questions, Comments, or
Suggestions?**

Contact Information:

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Schedule

(2nd Saturday of every Month)

Date	Description
7-14-07	Digital Camera Picture Taking (how to get a good digital image)
8-11-07	Digital Camera Picture Taking Part II (more how to get a good digital image)
9-8-07	TBD

NEW Series

10-13-07 Photoshop Fundamentals by Ed Bunyan