

RANGEFINDER

The Missouri Photo Workshop // Sept. 23, 2014 // Volume 66 // Issue 3



Local football fans eagerly support the Platte County High School Pirates during their game against the Winnetonka Griffins on Friday night Sept. 19, 2014. (Photo by Alexey Furman)

THE W O N D E R F U L I N C R E D I B L E A M A Z I N G S P E C T A C U L A R FACULTY

SCOTT
RAYMONE
SINES

Favorite f-stop?

- lowest f-stop

If didn't work in photography, what would you do instead?

- I want to own a small grocery with a great deli and that I can deliver.

Favorite photograph?

- "Your Friend" by Russell Lee

Advice for beginning photographers?

- Do it for the enjoyment not for financial reasons, or you'll end up frustrated.

If you were a tree what kind would you be?

- A live oak tree in New Orleans on St. Charles Blvd. across from the Audubon park.



RANDALL
OLSON

Favorite f-stop?

- f/2.8 because nothing ever happens in good light.

If didn't work in photography, what would you do instead?

- I would be a Blues harmonica player.

If you were a tree, what kind would you be?

- I would be a monkey puzzle tree because of its cool structure.



MARYANNE
GOLON

Favorite f-stop?

- F/64 because the whole world is in focus.

Advice to photographers?

- Be in love with photography to the point of abandonment because this career is a bumpy, bouncy, up and down, worthwhile love affair, but you have to be committed.

If you were a tree, what kind would you be?

- Redwood because they're beautiful and majestic.

Favorite f-stop?

- f/5.6 because it's right in the middle.

If didn't work in photography, what would you do instead?

- I would be a linguistic historian because I think language is the cradle of culture.

If you were a tree, what kind would you be?

- Ceiba because it's a huge tree with a huge trunk. I love them because they're spirit trees.

MAGGIE
KATHERINE
STEBER

ALAN
CRAIG
BERNER

Favorite f-stop?

- F-Stop Fitzgerald.

If didn't work in photography, what would you do instead?

- I would be teaching philosophy somewhere.

Advice for beginning photographers?

- Work hard. Hard work is actually fun. If it is successful for you it will be your ticket to the world.

If you were a tree, what kind would you be?

- Dogwood because I love dogs.



RICHARD
FRANKLIN
SHAW

Favorite f-stop?

- f/4.5 it's both aesthetically pleasing and practically balanced.

If didn't work in photography, what would you do instead?

- I would be an international spy because I want to be able to kill people with my thumbs.

Favorite photograph?

- "Moonrise over Hernandez" by Ansel Adams

Advice for beginning photographers?

- Understand the difference between knowledge and wisdom.



MELISSA
KAY
FARLOW

Favorite f-stop?

- f/4 because it's in the middle.

If you didn't work in photography, what would you do instead?

- I would work with horses or in a Japanese garden.

Favorite photograph?

- "Church Cleaning Day" by Dorothea Lange

Advice for beginning photographers?

- You must believe in yourself and have reason.

If you were a tree what kind would you be?

- I would be a Japanese Maple.



LOIS
RAIMONDO

Favorite f-stop?

- f/8.

If didn't work in photography, what would you do instead?

- I would be an anthropologist.

Advice for beginning photographers?

- Develop a specialty knowledge besides photography

If you were a tree what kind would you be?

- A young supple tree with orchids.



ERIKA
AMI
LARSEN

Favorite f-stop?

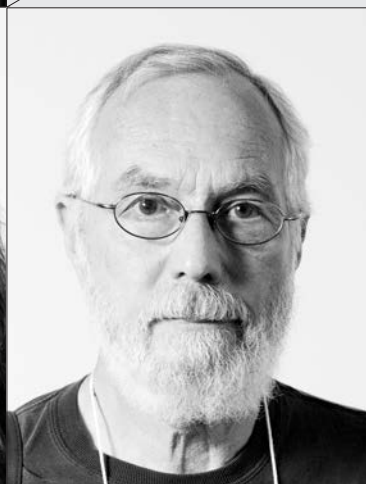
- f/64 because it's really beautiful if there is motion.

If didn't work in photography, what would you do instead?

- I would be working in hospice care because it's a time to have really beautiful conversations with people

If you were a tree, what kind would you be?

- A eucalyptus tree because it smells good.



BRIAN
WAYNE
KRATZER

Favorite f-stop?

- f/8 It comes from the phrase "f/8 and be there" that I learned when I was first learning photography.

If didn't work in photography, what would you do instead?

- I would be a lawyer gentleman farmer running for state office in Kansas.

Advice for beginning photographers?

- Slow down and relish your observations.

If you were a tree, what kind would you be?

- Bristlecone pine because the longevity in harsh environments.



MPW ARCHIVE

A LIVING, GROWING ENTITY

By David Rees, Co-Director

The roughly 2700 photographers who have participated in the 66 years of MPW, in addition to making pictures for their individual stories, have contributed to the archive of small town Missouri, creating a collective consciousness unique in the world.

The workshop process – a combination of providing instruction and explaining interpersonal and visual tools for more effective storytelling – has as a byproduct the creation of a set of pictures that sometimes show a slice of time and at other moments an image will transcend the single moment to depict a universal experience.

The images in the early archives are prints that are mounted on exhibition boards. Sometimes these were created at the workshop, with the faculty doing the editing and layout. The boards would then be on display in some public place – a library or bank, perhaps, before they would be sent back to Columbia. In later years Cliff Edom would hire an MU student (and give him one box of paper) to print the whole of the exhibit which was then returned to the town for display. The negatives for the workshops have always been returned to the photographers.

National Geographic, under the leadership of Editor Wilbur E. (Bill) Garrett – (also a long-time MPW faculty member) made 4x5 copy negs of all the pictures up to about 1986. These were used in an article about MPW that appeared in 1987 and also in a book about the workshop – Small Town America – published in 1988.

These photographs have all (almost) been photographed with a digital



Man who just lost his job, MPW 6, Mexico 1954

According to Missouri Photo Workshop lore, a photographer returned to tell his faculty that his story had fallen apart after his subject, a factory worker, was fired. The faculty informed the photographer that his story was just beginning and sent him back to find his subject. Tom Abercrombie returned with this storytelling photo and went on to be the first photographer to win both the Newspaper and Magazine Photographer of the Year Awards in the Pictures of the Year Contest. He died in 2006 after a long career as a writer and photographer at National Geographic.

camera and we have captured as much of the information about the pictures as possible. For some years there is pretty good caption info and we know whose pictures are whose. Some years, unfortunately, there is very little or no information with the photographs. We continue to ingest all of the images into a database that will enable others to have access to the pictures, too. Photographers retain rights to their images, and archive images are used only for promotion of the workshop and for education and research.

Our goal is to have a digital archive that will include the photographs from the exhibits of MPW, listings of the photographers and the faculty who participated, the Rangefinders (yes, there has always been a Rangefinder)

and any other materials that relate to the workshop. One access to this material will be through the website – where we will have 20-30 pictures from the early years, with access to the others made through arrangements at the School of Journalism.

For the last six years we have published books based on the stories, and have provided a copy of the book to each MPW photographer and have sold them in the town of the workshop. Our goals are to continue to do these publications, though the publication might become an eBook.

The archive effort is conducted under the auspices of the Missouri School of Journalism. It is supported by distribution funds from the Missouri Photo Workshop Endowment.

TEETERING ON THE ABYSS

By Duane Dailey, Co-Director Emeritus

After research on location, walking and talking with potential Platte City story subjects, MPW66 workshopers face their fate. Some feel on the brink of falling into a pit. Their sure-footed faculty guides see the start of an ascent of the Matterhorn. Attitude makes the difference.

Monday night the faculty eye openers affirmed photo stories are real. Photos have impact, giving us insights into real lives, real places and real results. Photo reality gives emotional impact.

Three faculty shared glimpses of their careers with cameras. In summation Brian Kratzer said “If you didn’t laugh and didn’t cry there’s something wrong with you.”

In “Reflections From a Wide Spot in the Road,” Jim Richardson, story teller from Lindsborg, Kans., showed updated slides known for years at MPW as “Cuba, Kansas.”

Richardson credits seed for this work to MPW. After attending he started on picture stories.

David Rees said Jim’s work is our Doxology

The premier with Jim’s live narration gives fresh digital images of people and places of his home state. The epic started with work-a-day stories filling five-day-a-week photo pages at the Topeka Capital Journal. Self-assigned stories, much like Platte City MPW stories, were blocks for building a bigger project.

Jim said, this is one of four self-assigned works from the Great Plains and Scotland. “It’s not work when it is life.”

Theme of the night was necessity of personal projects.

Randy Olson followed with selects from his National Geographic stories. Listen close. The former MU photo teacher can synthesize, intellectualize and articulate in brief words like no other photographer. He picked top photos from many longer stories from Africa. He pulled the best from story boards, he said. His show provides guidance for reading National Geographic stories.

Randy said he learned from Dennis Dimick, an editor at Geographic and frequent workshoper.

Homework assignments: Read Dimick’s text in

the MPW66 program book. Also read Geographic photos and words each month with new eyes.

How to summarize a wild flower like Maggie Steber? Every photographer should have a project, a personal work, she says. Her 30-year story of her mother was not for publication. We will never see all. But, she used personal photos to get published assignments. “A project gives editors a sense of who you are and how you see.”

Maggie’s final chapter of her mother’s life was utterly powerful, as she documented a woman shifting from prim Mom into Madge, exotic woman. Madge was a woman never known by Maggie. Late-life photos document the change as her mother slipped into years-long dementia toward the final two hours. Emotions shared.

Lois Raimondo reminded: Everyone has a mom, just as every subject you approach has a mom. There are emotional stories in every topic considered this week.

MPW is getting down to the guts of our work. You have two tools, too often unused: Listening and Looking. This is not a test. This is real life, today in Platte City. Use new insights to capture stories. Little stories, like those daily stories from Kansas, build to something powerful.

Jim says, Yes Cuba, Kansas, is a special place. So is Platte City. Photographers must find their own special places. Grab the potential of here and now. It’s so blatantly obvious that we know history but can’t photograph history. Putting the obvious into words gives a fresh take. Our subjects will show us clues of their history. That’s our job, to expose layers from this culture.

Jim Curley set a mood for the evening with a recap of work from Bill Eppridge, long-serving MPW faculty member. Bill documented many powerful stories in a career at LIFE.

No words match the photos in his final story of Bobby Kennedy.

This week, you will learn photo story as taught by masters. Grab ahold, avoid the abyss. Take your skills to new heights.

MPW can change your life when you learn to extract the DNA of photos and words the building blocks. You will top your teachers. Our world needs your insights, let them flourish.



CHATTING WITH JIM

Special guest Jim Richardson who graced us all last night with the debut with an updated version of his show, "Reflections from a Wide Spot in the Road." Today he sat down with Rangefinder Editor Sarah Bell and provided insights into his process for us. It's been edited for brevity.

How did you get into photography?

"I was an amateur photographer as a kid on the farm and my father was an amateur photographer. He bought cameras at pawnshops on his route to Texas. I started printing pictures in the kitchen at night because that was the only place I could make work as a darkroom out in the country.

I went to Kansas State University and was majoring in psychology and got to be a senior and I decided I didn't want to do what a psychologist would do everyday. So second semester, I went and got a job at the student newspaper and that really stuck. I worked for student publications for a year then I got several internships at the *Topeka Capital Journal*. I had no idea what I was wondering into. I was blindly lucky. I stayed on there for ten years."

Where did the inspiration for "A Wide Spot in the Road"?

Relatively early on in the newspaper career, we were all under the influence of the social documentarians like W. Eugene Smith, David Douglas Duncan, and Cartier-Bresson, and I wanted to do something like that. But closer to home. Something that was available to me and coming from rural Kansas. I wanted pictures that had more staying power or about subjects that were more universally important than the daily news. So that led me first into photographing



the quirky oddities of rural towns.

I was going to do a book on rural Kansas and at the same time I wanted to include a section on small town high school life, and that turned into a project of its own. I spent four years photographing high school life and that became "High School: U.S.A." in 1979. When I did that book I really saw the power of the personal stories that developed out of photography.

I settled down photographically in Cuba to see if the stories would develop, and they did. It was a rich place. I did not know exactly what I was after, but they schooled me on what was important there. After awhile I sort of gave up the idea that I was doing something journalistic or documentary in the classic sense of the word. It became something else. This never fit any definition niche. You couldn't say this was the smallest town or the poorest people or any kind of journalistic cubby whole for it to go in the news. So I kinda had to give up the idea that there will ever be true news here and embrace the longitudinal study, as psychologists would call it, of looking at it over time and simply making it about: everyday life, what people find valuable, how they create meaning, the value of community, and what it is that people do to create community. And that was the great lesson to me.

We have this idea that town and *community* are interchangeable words, but they're not. This became the focus of the story. As journalists we look for unique. I didn't want unique, I wanted everyday.

What is your favorite color?

Well, I don't know. When I was a kid it was always red. I always tell photographers, "For God sakes, get a red picture or two in your story." I guess that reflects intensity.

What was your first camera?

First camera was an Agfa folding camera. I could do lightning pictures with it. I did pictures through binoculars and telescopes.

What tips do you have for photographing a small town?

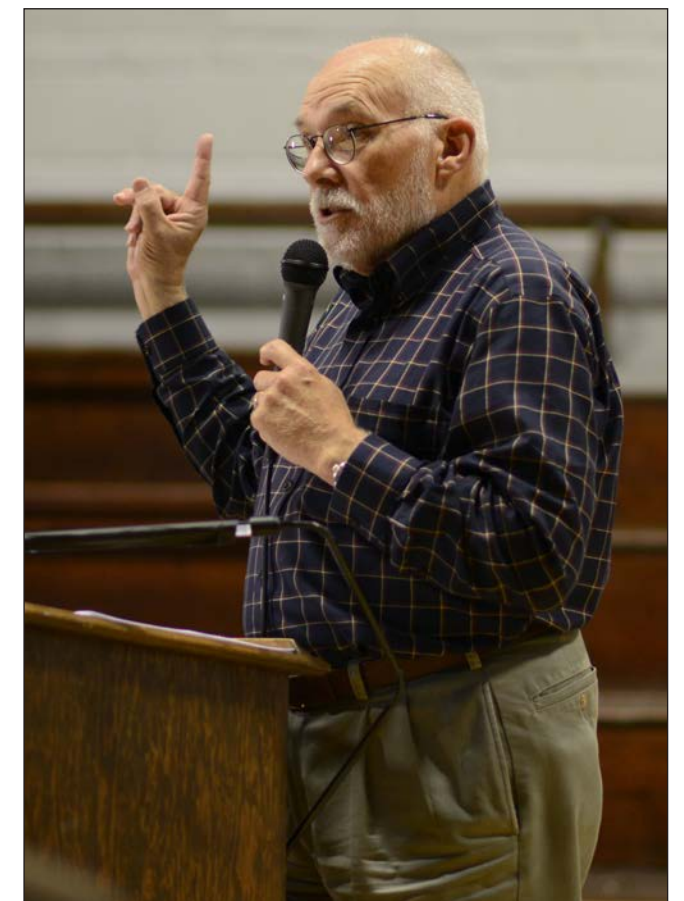
I think that the essential thing is don't evaluate the town on your existing structure of meaning. By that I mean, people from urban areas tend to come into small towns and they look around for the things they know. And when they don't find them they assume nothing is happening. What's very

difficult to look for are the things you don't know.

Then how do you find the things you don't know about?

That's the hard part. How do you get from not knowing to knowing? For instance people think that in small towns, the pace of life is slower. It's not. Usually what happens is they move from a city into a small town. Within six months they have been tapped for six different organizations and a year later they are drowning; they can't keep up. When they want to slow down they move to a suburb, they move to a city and they just get a job. Life in a small town is more complex.

Cities tend to be organized economically. Small towns tend to be organized socially. In a small town,



At left, Jim's photo of Mrs. Krasny comes from his Kansas show. He describes it as his favorite. Above, Jim prefaces his show before he performed it live on Monday night. (Photo by Loren Elliott)

any newcomers, you would rather have somebody who could do a little plumbing or sheetrock than a poet. Poets and photographers are pretty damn worthless. Someone who can fix your bathroom is golden. If you could start to evaluate life and human needs on those grounds, you take a lot of the obscure profundity out of a whole lot of stuff.

TECH STORIES: THE PRINT CREW

By Zach Baker

For this year's workshop the printing crew consists of one undergraduate and two graduate students from the University of Missouri – Abby Connolly, Hannah Baldwin and Leah Beane. Leah has helped with printing at a previous workshop while it's the first time for both Abby and Hannah on the printing crew. It's their collective job to tone and print the best photos from each photographer's story and find a balance of cropping, toning and color correction. The exhibition at the end of the week features 400+ photos and Abby noted, "generally we print 8-10 photos per photographer." Many of the viewers at the exhibition do not fully understand the vital process of editing done by the crew throughout the week to create such powerful images.

When it comes to toning a photo each crew member has her/his own unique process, but generally they use similar techniques to achieve the same great look for printing. While editing Hannah says, "I start with the part of the picture that is the most important" and she uses photoshop's polygon lasso tool to make local corrections. She makes these smaller individual corrections first because she believes the technique produces better results than just adjusting the levels of the photograph. Abby has her own twist on the process and remarks, "My process depends on the photo, but usually I straighten the image first." She then adjusts the levels



Crew members Abby Connolly (left) and Hannah Baldwin (right) prepare some prints Tuesday from the photographer's takes. (Photo by Loren Elliott)

settings, followed by color correction and adding a white border to the photo. The white frame includes the photographer's details at the bottom and allows the image to stand out from the paper. Although the crew members use slightly different techniques for their editing process, the end result is equally amazing. The next important step for the crew is to turn their digital corrections into a tangible print.

The process begins by calibrating the monitors for color correction and establishing a connection to the printers. After changing the print settings for an image the crew loads the 11x17 high quality luster photo paper into the printer and watches the beautiful results slowly emerge. After printing the image, the crew places the photo under a daylight-balanced light box which Hannah uses for, "looking at the prints under accurate light to make sure the colors are correct and the toning is right." After any adjustments they can sit back admire their editing

in combination with the photographer's work.

The editing and printing processes come with their own difficulties and the crew must overcome these challenges to produce the best prints. The printers say they struggle with images containing mixed lighting and strong fluorescent light. Hannah notes, "Color balance is a very difficult thing to correct" so she appreciates when the photographer uses the correct white balance in the original shot because it saves time and difficulty when editing. The printing process

provides its own challenges and Abby describes the hardest part as, "Getting what comes out of the printer to be the same as on the computer."

The crew enjoys printing because the final prints look truly stunning and high quality prints allow the color in the image to really stand out. Another reward for their hard work is the experience they acquire from observing the work from great photographers. Hannah states, "I think it's really good to look at work from photographers who are still learning." She thinks observing the work of photographers who are constantly improving helps her better understand the process. Hannah also states, "I love toning pictures and how much detail work it is." The crew's passion for photos helps them work through the challenges and produce the best final results. Without their help, the workshop would be lacking a component which makes images and storytelling so beautiful and impactful.

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