



F o c a l P o i n t

January 2010



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Photo by Steve Harmon



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FROM YOUR EDITOR:

What would the winter issue be without winter shots? So, behold the beautiful snowy shots & accompanying article by Arthur Ransom. And some gorgeous “ice” photos by Annette Conniff. You’ll also find some shots of chilled BCC members by Steve Harmon (See cover) . How we suffer to get that picture!

And so as not to feel left out in the cold (sorry), for you indoor types, Jeffrey Wolk presents an article on his “views as a photographer on [his] newly discovered world of knife making.” And Gordon Risk contributes a listing of Movies with a Photography Theme.

Hope your New Year is a great one...! Enjoy!

Thanks to Steve Harmon, Arthur Ransom, Gordon Risk, Rebecca Rothey, Annette Conniff, Jeff Wolk & Tony Sweet for their contributions this month. They are very much appreciated!

BCC Gets Out



Photo by Steve Harmon



F o c a l P o i n t

Winter Trees

Winter Trees

By Arthur Ransom

While others are bringing in the firewood, or making other preparations for the onset of a heavy snow storm I am the one making wavy lines on the I-83 as I head out to my favorite, pre-reselected spots to take photographs of trees in the snow. This is a time that I wait for all year and when it comes, I drop everything and go. This is camera time.





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Winter Trees (cont.)

And so it is that on these few and far between occasions each winter I find myself weaving along the I-83 as the snow falls heavily around me, totally unfocused on the driving but instead conjuring up images in my mind. Is this what they call pre-visualization, or is it some mild form of Adult ADHD? The weather forecasters had been warning us for a week before the last big snow storm, and so I was well prepared. Apparently it caught the city by surprise though. During the one hour that it took me to drive from my house in Mount Washington in Baltimore to Worthington Valley (a trip that would normally take 15 minutes or so) I saw only one snow plough. It was clearing a path through a Dunkin Donuts parking lot - in hot pursuit were three police cars... Safe in the knowledge that Dunkin Donuts would be well protected for another day I carried on with my little dance towards Schawan Road. It was worth it.





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Winter Trees (cont.)



Like most landscape photographers, I have my favorite trees. I seek them out whenever I am running around doing errands or when the weather is milder. I make mental notes about their location and think about how the scene will look under varying weather conditions. Shooting in the snow is a magical time. Falling snow creates a white canvas that allows me to photograph subject matter without any otherwise distracting elements. It provides a rare opportunity to isolate and emphasize subject matter. I can “paint” my subjects into an environment that exists for only a fraction of time.



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Winter Trees (cont.)



The moral of the story: (a) never stop looking for potential subjects, (b) work your subjects under varying weather conditions, and (c) if you ever need a snow plough or the police on a snow day, don't call the city - call your nearest Dunkin Donuts.....

These images were all taken at Loch Raven, Worthington Valley and Druid Hill Park.

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The World of Knife Making

About my encounter with some of the artist I have come to know recently, and my views as a photographer on my newly discover world of knife making.

By Jeffrey Wolk

A year ago, I met Ted Merchant, knife maker, a member of The Knifemakers Guild, a long time member and former president to the Chesapeake Knife Club, and the promoter for the Chesapeake Knife Show. He introduced me to a world I did not know existed, a world of craftsmen who continue to work in the tradition of fine knife-making. As a professional photographer and imaging specialist, I became interested in the challenges of accurately representing these exquisite works of art.

Ted invited me to join him at the Blade Show in Atlanta in late May. There we met Zaza Revishvili, a well-known Knife Artist, who suggested the idea of creating portfolios of images of knives to send to embassies in Washington, D. C and for promotion at the Chesapeake Knife Show. Thus began an adventure in finding the most effective way to capture the beauty and intricacy of hand-made knives.





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The world of Knife Making (cont.)



I set about creating the portfolio of images. Working with Ted, I developed techniques to bring out the essence of the knives, which is quite challenging given knives varying reflective surfaces. My lighting highlights the detail work and sets the knives against backgrounds that compliment their artistry.

The project took five months to complete. Each knife had to be brought to life in its own way. Some required the blades to be toned down, so that the detail would be revealed. Others needed directed lighting in order to bring up the shadow detail. While I was photographing the knives, Ted found the appropriate contact at each embassy and worked with me to assemble the portfolio for them.



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The World of Knife Making (cont.)

Ted then invited me to participate in the 23rd Annual Chesapeake Knife Show, held in Baltimore, MD on December 13, 2009. On the afternoon before the show began, I taught a class to help attendees learn how to photograph their knives. I demonstrated some of the lighting techniques I had developed and showed simple ways to enhance images in Photoshop.

That evening, during the hospitality reception, Ted introduced me to many of the craftsmen whose knives I had photographed as well as some of the purveyors. I appreciated their compliments about my images and enjoyed meeting the artists whose work I had admired for so many months.





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The World of Knife Making (cont.)



The next day, while the show was underway, I photographed knives for several of the artists, producing finished prints while they waited. I was impressed by the size of the show, having no prior knowledge of the degree of interest there is in these objects. There were 100 plus booths of makers, suppliers, and purveyors from across the US and Canada. Despite terrible weather, hundreds of attendees came from neighboring states as well as New York, New Jersey, Ohio and elsewhere.



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The World of Knife Making (cont.)

During the VIP hour prior to the opening, I had the opportunity to visit makers booths and to introduce myself to those I had not yet met. Seeing the extraordinary work at the show inspired me to even more pursue my mission of using my skills to assist these artists. I will continue to work with Ted to find ways to showcase and help reveal the value of these finely crafted knives.



All Photos by Jeffery Wolk



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Movies with Photographic Themes

Movies with Photographic Themes

By Gordon Risk

Rear Window Jimmy Stuart, Grace Kelly, Raymond Burr (1954) The classic Hitchcock movie.

Under Fire Nick Nolte, Gene Hackman (1983) Photographer and journalist in the Civil War of Nicaragua.

Blow Up David Hemmings, Vanessa Redgrave (1966) A murder mystery that the photographs get involved in.

Harrisons Flowers Andy McDowell (2000) A woman searches for her husband with photographers in war torn Bosnia.

Salvadore James Wood (1986) A journalist, down on his luck in the U.S., drives to El Salvador to chronicle the event of the 1980 military dictatorship

Bridges of Madison Co. Clint Eastwood, Meryl Streep (1995) A photographer falls for a local woman while on assignment to shoot covered bridges.

Margaret Bourke-White (1989) Farrah Fawcett plays Bourke-White in this made for TV biography.

Pecker (1998) A John Waters movie about a young photographer in Hampden.

Public Eye (1992) Joe Pesci plays the well-known news photographer of the forties, The Great Bernzini.

Governess (1998) Minnie Driver plays a governess to a family in the 1800s while having an affair with the husband and discovering photography.

Photographing Fairies Toby Stephens, Ben Kingsley (1997) A man follows a story about children seeing fairies and tries to photograph them.

The Killing Fields (1984) The true story of Dith Pahn, now a photographer with the New York Times, when he was trapped in Cambodia. Dramatic.

War Photographer (2001) Documentary about photo-journalist James Nachtwey, considered by many the greatest war photographer ever.

One Hour Photo (2002) Robin Williams fantasized about, then obsesses over being part of a family whose pictures he develops at his mini lab.

FUR (2006) Nicole Kidman. Advertised as an imaginary portrait of Diane Arbus' life before she was famous.



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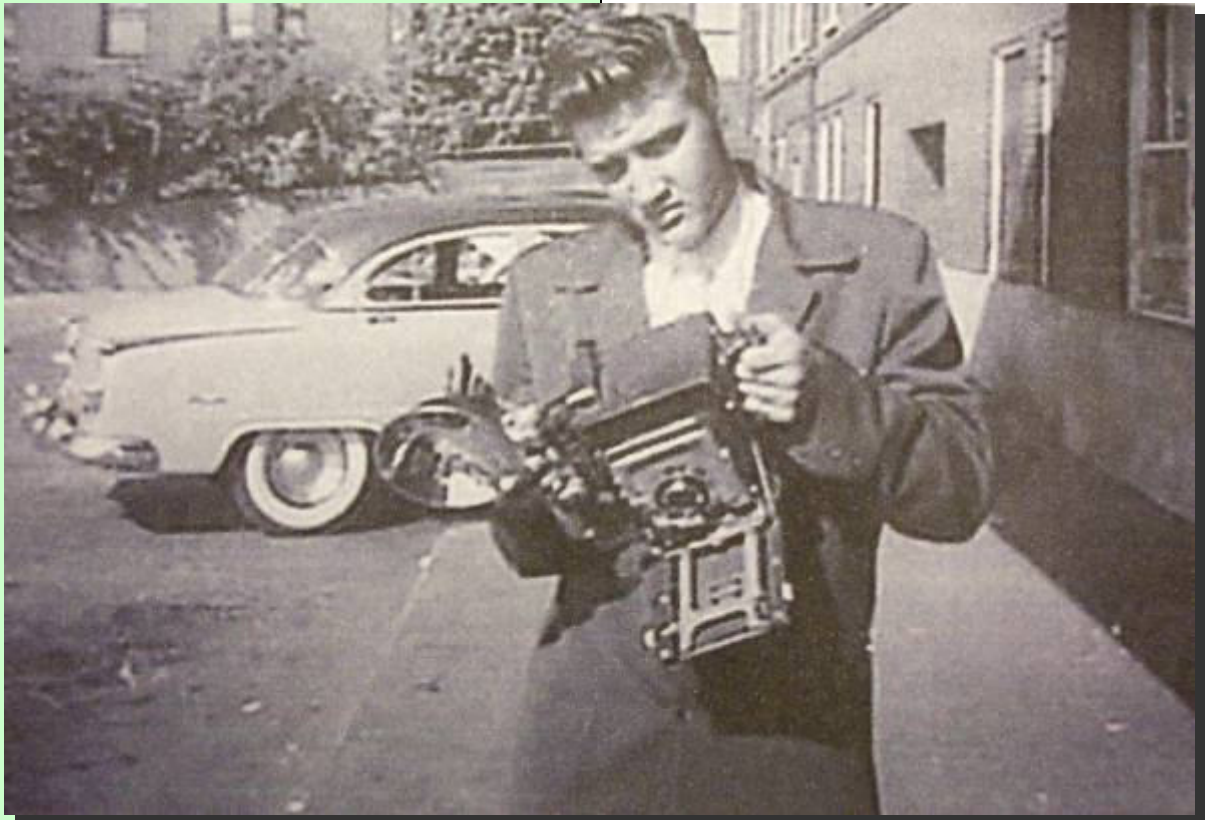
Movies with Photographic Themes (cont.)

The Devil Came on Horseback (2007)

Documentary chronicling the genocide in Darfur photographed by former Marine Captain Brian Steidle.

The Photographer (2000) Reg Rogers playing a down-on-his luck photographer finds himself in a comedic mystery.

Girl with a Pearl Earring (2003) Scarlett Johansson and Colin Firth star in this beautifully made movie with only a small reference to a camera obscura. Worth seeing as a period piece.



Portrait of a famous photographer from the '50s



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Winter's Domain



Fey Domain

by

Annette
Conniff



F o c a l P o i n t

Winter's Domain



Icy Golden

by

Annette Conniff



F o c a l P o i n t

Parting Shot



Photo by Tony Sweet