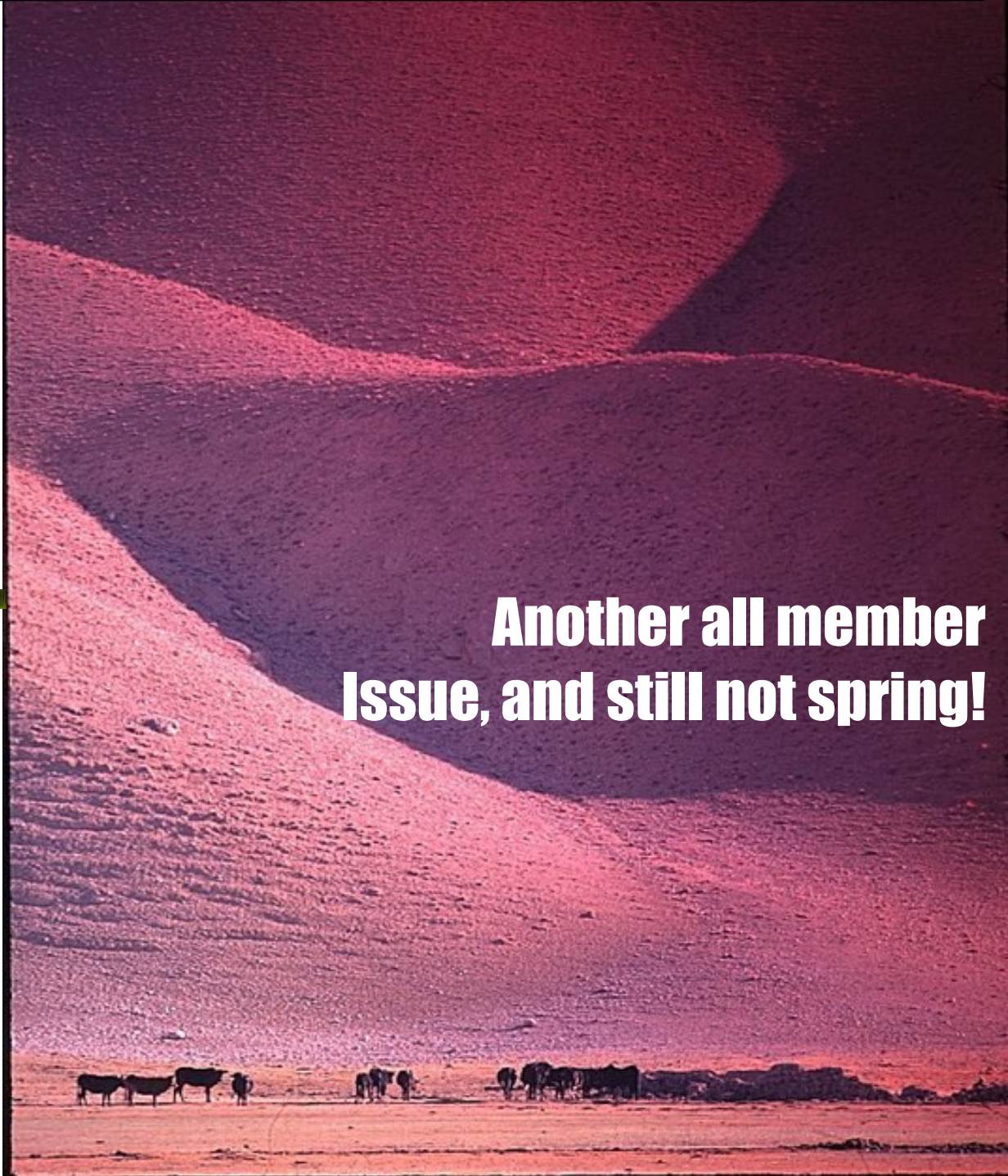


# The Focal



# Point

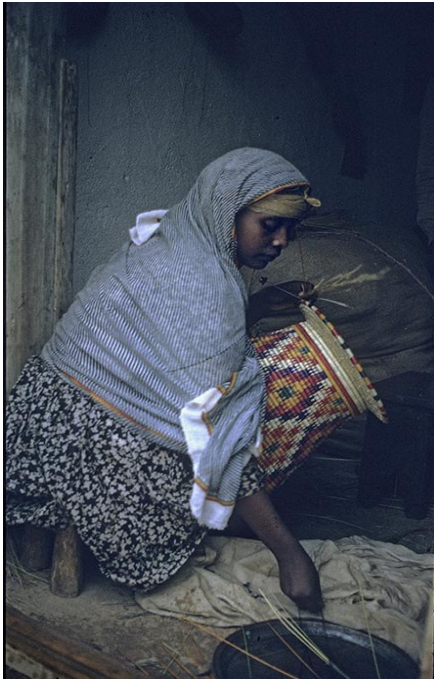
**Another all member  
Issue, and still not spring!**



### ...ABOUT OUR COVER (EDITOR'S NOTE)

This is an image your Editor specifically requested for the cover to draw attention to Kay Muldoon-Ibriham's co-featured article this month.. This (the cover) is the Caspian region of Northern Iran —*ED*

## The 'Me' Camera



Camels, pedestrians, and men on bicycles grudgingly moved out of our way as we slowly negotiated the crowded noisy street through Khandahar in southwestern Afghanistan. The visual impact was phenomenal, and I pulled out my 'me' camera and started shooting from the window, careful that no one saw me taking their picture. Four women dressed in purda were window-shopping at a jewelry store. Click! I think got them, but I wouldn't know for sure until my film was processed. Click, Click, a man selling birds in cages, passengers climbing onto the roof of a bus, a leather tanner's shop with hides piled in front, a small fruit and vegetable market busy with shoppers, I didn't want the road to end. The driver was glad when we finally got through town. My photography made him nervous. Soon we arrived at my destination, an agriculture cooperative financed by the World Bank with staff from USAID. My job, to shoot a picture story of this successful cotton growers' co-op. I put away the 'me' camera and pulled out my other two cameras, one with slide film

and one with b&w film. Every shot I took with these cameras would go to the World Bank's Office of Public Information to be edited and used in their upcoming publication, Profiles of Development.

My freelance photojournalism work took me to Asia, Africa, the Middle East, and Latin America. It was a dream job full of wonderful challenging experiences and countless wonderful people. I even met my husband while on assignment. I entered this profession when there were few women in it and many international development organizations, NGOs, and companies that wanted high quality photographs and picture stories of their successful work in developing countries. Being a woman often helped me get assignments in cultural situations that men would have difficulty photographing. Being a short woman helped me get out in front of all those big men when photographing events such as a meetings of African heads of state in Ethiopia. My first assignment was in Ecuador in 1968, and my last was in Haiti in 2000. I only worked full time in the late '60's and early '70's. Afterwards, because of the many contacts I had made, I could pick the odd job whenever I wanted, and on each assignment I brought along my 'me' camera. It was a Nikon F2, the sturdy workhorse of those days. It traveled around the world in a 20 pound custom made bag with two other camera bodies, five or six lenses, a backup Luna-Pro meter, a couple of filters, and as much film as I could afford. I never took a tripod, and seldom used the strobe unit I carried just in case. Many of these images brought in the odd paycheck over the years as stock photos with a





photography agency in London.

Favorite assignments include a UNESCO story of renovation work on beautiful 18<sup>th</sup> century villas in Isfahan, Iran, and a family story for the Encyclopaedia Britannica Education Corporation of nomads living in the Moroccan desert. Perhaps my favorite assignment was an in-depth road story in Ethiopia. The World Bank helped finance over a thousand miles of secondary roads to service rural communities. Farmers and artisans who previously had little or no access to markets could now transport their produce to towns to sell. Travel along the roads meant business for small shops. Public transportation could bring the sick to rural hospitals. Children could get to schools. The benefits were endless, as were the photographic opportunities, and my driver never minded stopping when I saw a great shot. Another unforgettable road story, supported by the UN's Food for Work program, took me to Lesotho where women were constructing a road with picks and shovels. They sang rhythmic songs as they worked, swinging their picks in unison, some with babies strapped on their backs. They smiled as I took their pictures. The world was going to take notice of them.

I saw the world at a time when there was a lot of hope and trust and idealism. When I think of some of the places I covered, Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Yemen, Sudan, and I look at my pictures of how they were then and see on TV how they look now and how our government sees them, I feel very sad. Where has all that good will gone?



## ACTION PHOTOGRAPHY

By Jim Eichelman

One of my passions and reasons for an increased interest in photography is capturing sports action. After years as a fan, I started taking my camera to capture keepsakes and souvenirs of the events. I have been fortunate to attend a number of historical events and have years of one of a kind memories. It is very challenging to capture the action and harder to capture the emotion of the sport.

Methods used to capture action are applicable in other areas of photography. In many cases you want to freeze the action; high ISO, fast shutter speed and the ability to make multiple images quickly is required. In auto racing, a pit stop (above) entails 7 crew members changing 4 tires and adding 22 gallons of fuel in less than 14 seconds; in baseball a breaking bat can be captured (see next page). The fast shutter speed is also necessary because the images must be taken handheld as one cannot use a tripod or monopod in seats at professional sporting events. The fast shutter speed also allows multiple images to be taken quickly. .



Today, most cameras have a “sport mode” which allows multiple images to be taken without releasing the shutter release. Additionally, to get “up close” from seats a fairly long lens is needed. Most times I am using my Tamron 80 – 300 mm zoom (nearly a 450 mm equivalent on my Nikon D70). To blur action and show speed, a slower ISO and slower shutter speed are used. No only can this be used to show a pitcher’s arm action but also softens the rapids in a flowing river.

Since I am photographing auto racing from my seats which are protected by a heavy fence, I do not want the fence in the images. By using a very small aperture, I can blur or nearly remove the fence and capture the main subject. This principle can also be used in capturing a close up image of a wine bottle or flower so the background can be blurred. The downside of this technique is the very small margin of error in focusing, so you have to be very accurate. With this small margin of error in focusing, I manually focus on the correct subject.

Another technique to capture action is to focus on a spot and “wait” for the action to come into the frame. Here is where knowledge of what is going to happen comes into play. For instance, to capture the action of a double play in baseball pre-focus on second base and wait for a ground ball. This same method can be used waiting for just the right light in a landscape scenario.



(Left)  
Crews frantically  
signaling their drivers  
through the roar of  
engines and plumes  
of exhaust smoke.  
Image made through  
the fence.

(Right) Note the  
bat breaking and  
the flight of the ball.  
The art of pre-focusing!



## *A Winter Forest Brings Interest to Images in The Dead of Winter*

**T**he Forest is always welcoming, even in the dead of winter it beckons me to enter.

With the monochromatic color of fallen leaves covering the forest floor, and the subtle color differences of the tree trunks, juxtaposed the landscape of gentle hills and valleys, the forest is nature's temptress whose call I can not resist in winter.

When I go into a forest I observe the way the trees have arranged themselves against each other.. their relationship, will you, of form and spatial difference..the way the light is shaping the roundness of their trunks, their colors and textures, the way the hillsides embrace them, and then I move around them, determining how I want to see that relationship placed in the image...

In this image I tried to minimize the clutter of the branches and fallen matter so that the final image boiled down the subject matter in such a way so as to convey the strength of the forest into trunks and background...with some texture..simplified...into an impression..that conveys my vision of this forest in winter.

When I create images like this, I begin by setting my camera on the lowest F-stop possible...f16-f32 such that my exposure is at least 1.6 seconds or more. Often I employ a polarizer to cut the light in order to achieve this slow shutter speed. I usually use my 70-210 lens so that I have the option of selecting my subjects.

Then I move the camera up and down while looking through the view finder to determine just how much movement I will need to include or exclude in the image, before creating my first exposure.



Once I have done that, I then begin making exposures, checking my LCD screen to see what corrections I need to make in order to get the image I have in mind.

The camera is my instrument for conveying the forest in all it's winter glory and it tells the story of a little time there within, on a gray winter day.

Many photographers find trees amazing subjects in all their primal glory. For the air they clean that we breath...for their constancy of dormancy and growth, I celebrate trees!

*Karen Messick*