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IAPP e-Monitor

The monitor on the rear of a digital camera is a device we use to quickly examine information about our photos. The IAPP e-Monitor was designed to give our membership a quick look at what is going on with the IAPP and with panoramic photography in general. It was originated to give our membership quicker information while they await the release of the PANORAMA.

We welcome any and all articles and photos from IAPP members for inclusion into the IAPP e-Monitor. This is a publication for the IAPP, by the IAPP, and about the IAPP.

The risks and rewards of a commercial shoot.

by Dawn and Bryan Snow

Bryan: Our company has a great client. They are a Fortune 200 company and would be easily recognized by anyone in the country that has not been in a coma for the past eight decades. For this article we will not identify the client because it is not necessary, and you never, ever, complain about doing a job that pays to put food on your table. Besides, this particular job was a great learning experience, we got paid an adequate amount, and it was really fun to do. This client is great and we always look forward to doing work for them so let me emphasize that this was NOT the “Client from Hell” that many photographers work with. In fact, they are the nicest group of people you could ever want to work with.

That being said, a shoot of this importance will always have some problems and this article is designed to alert the readers to what those problems are, how to foresee them in advance and how to cope with those you didn't foresee when they crop up (and believe me, they will crop up).

As I mentioned in last month's article in the e-Monitor “Hired for a Commercial Shoot? That Initial Meeting is Critical”, you should always meet to discuss the shoot in advance. We follow our own advice and Dawn and I met with the Marketing Director and her assistants, and the Art Director, who would be responsible for making sure that what we were shooting and delivering would be exactly

(or as close to) what they were envisioning. The meeting began with the client showing us a photograph of what they were trying to reproduce. The photo was a snapshot taken by a soldier in Afghanistan. It was taken during a sandstorm with a large Air Force C17 on the tarmac with a company of soldiers in line as they prepared to board the plane. The personnel and aircraft were almost a silhouette with the sun weakly shining through the airborne sand. The photo was tiny (about 4 x 6 inches) but the final product that we were to produce was enormous. The final printed piece was to be a mural on an entry wall that would measure six feet high and 16 feet long! The Art Director was very inspired by this small photo and rather worried about the size needed. He figured that he needed a final digital file of, at least, 35Mb in size. I figured that it would be a much larger file than that but Dawn did the “math” and decided that we could achieve the needed size with our current gear. In the past she has designed 3 or 4 mural sized wallpaper from stock photography.

Dawn: I knew that the minimum ppi needed for the manufacturer to do a great job was 85 pixels per inch (ppi). In fact, anything more would have been a waste of bandwidth, both on my file server and at the manufacturer.

During the initial meeting, we discussed at length the size needed and the megapixel camera size. We discussed where we were going to photograph and how we were to recreate this “slice of life” moment in time - A shot taken right before our troops (taken from in the midst of the troops) entered a C17 troop transport aircraft. We discussed just where we were going to get that distinct color of sand found only at sunset in Afghanistan and how to get it to blow through our shots. We discussed silhouetted troops, silhouetted aircraft, and lots of orangey sand colored with a wonderful

orange sunset glow. Truly, a very evocative shot!

One option: fly out to Afghanistan! I am always up for a trip. But, alas. That was not in the budget. So the concept of the sandstorm in the photo was dropped.

Luckily, my client has great relationships with many people on the many military bases that surround San Antonio. So, with the USAF PR department’s help, we gained access to a corner of an airfield on one of the Air Force bases. My client was even promised several dozen soldiers as models (... working with models or real people? That is an entirely different article). I asked once (and again) what was going to happen if we did not get enough personnel to pose in the photograph? I was told once (and again), not to worry, they are calling for volunteers. While I did not show it, I was doubly in doubt. Now I knew for certain that we were not going to have enough people — Problem Number 1!

Bryan: Actually, Problem Number 1 was the fact that we didn’t have a C17 transport for our photograph. The best the Air Force could do was to provide its larger cousin, a C5A transport, instead. I mentioned this to the Art Director and was told that it would be alright. While I knew that most people would not notice the difference, I did. But I acquiesced to the Art Director. After all, it was their nickel.

The Day of the Shoot...

Dawn: When working with this client, flexibility is the key. They are the big dog in town. I am lucky to have this contract, and they do make me stretch my craft as well as my patience. But sometimes, I need to remind them that you cannot control mother nature.

The day they scheduled, the day the Air Force lent them the C5 and the troops, was 2 days before the deadline for the mural manufacturer. But I didn’t know that then. They

While I did not show it, I was doubly in doubt.

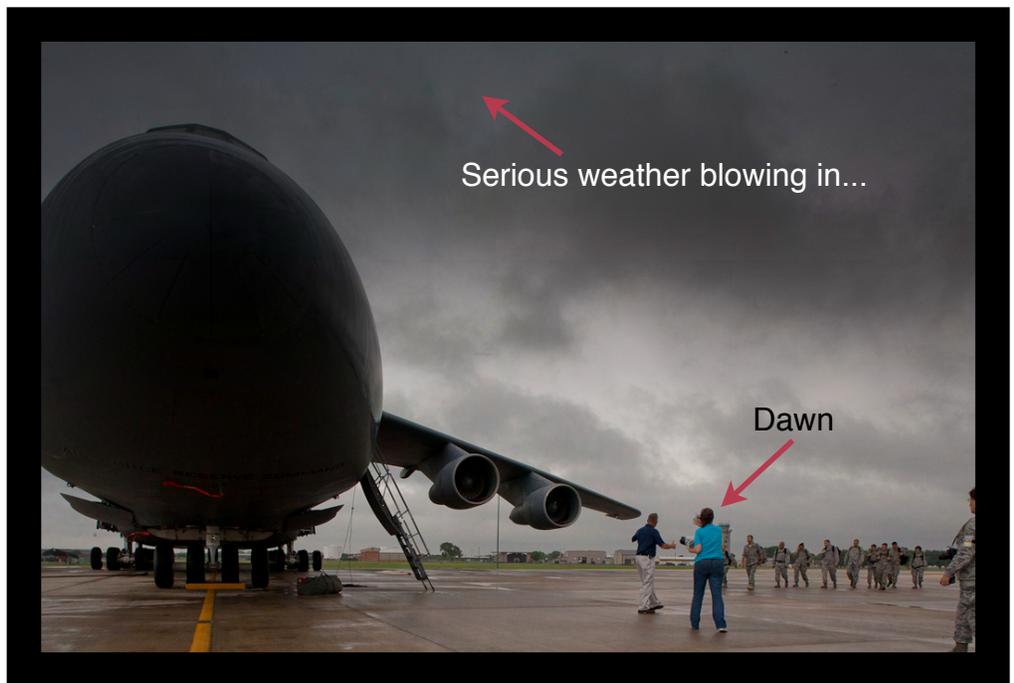
had read my work and studio policies, and my company had worked with them many many times. I was certain that we were on the same page without beating anyone over the head with the timeline - Problem Number 2.

The weather forecast told us to expect wind and heavy cloudy skies for the day of our shoot. The wind was a killer, and the cold front carrying drizzle with it that was expected a day later blew in on this day - Problem Number 3.

Of course, we showed up early at the AFB and the client was late! But we were on their nickel, so, I could've have waited forever. My day rate is my day rate. After we gained access to the base, we drove to the area where we were to shoot. After many introductions and handshakes the bad news came. We only had 10 soldiers instead of 50. Not enough to copy the snapshot, and definitely not enough to simulate a full troop transport.

After discussing this issue and the other problems with Bryan, we decided that we would take some single shots for "background." Single shots of the C5A, troops in various positions and from various angles. We even obtained a truck lift and shot from a higher than normal angle - all in the hopes of trying to get a different view, since the art director's vision wouldn't easily be created with only 10 soldiers. The art director looked at each set up as we shot, and things were looking pretty dismal. He was upset that we couldn't create more troops "in the camera". I gently reminded him that the camera only will record what it sees. Perhaps the PR officer could bring us more warm bodies? The answer was a definite "NO".

Bryan: We wanted to shoot tethered to the laptop but, with the drizzle coming down



and Dawn shooting with the "Big" camera (Canon 5D Mark II - 21.1Mp) and me shooting with the "Small" camera (Canon 5D - 12.8Mp) we decided that it was easier (and safer for the gear) to just set up the laptop in the back of my Jeep. And, with the tailgate raised to keep the rain off, allow the Art Director to take the CF card from each camera and examine the RAW shots shortly after they were taken (Note: If you have never used RainSleeves for your camera/lens combination please buy them and put them in your camera case).

Dawn: We started talking about shooting a pan with the camera on the Panoramic Adaptor and shooting the C5A from a low POV (point of view) in the left-most frame and move the 10 troops from frame to frame, left to right, leaving the one in the "back" of the line (in each frame) to become the one in the "front" of the line (in the next frame). Thus, creating more people! As we were executing this tricky maneuver, the weather was rapidly turning nasty: high winds and, directly to the northwest, threatening black clouds were bearing down very quickly.

We felt we needed one more set of frames from a more normal POV. And so, as the weather turned from windy, damp and chilly to down right dangerous: we maneuvered those

volunteer troops across the tarmac, under the wing of the C5A.

Things were not perfect. Not by a long shot (pun intended). But it is what it is. As a

photographer hired to help recreate a snapshot, but not responsible for the venue or the models, I felt we did our best. This client has a legacy of service to military personnel, and this image was to convey the dangers, the pitfalls and the sacrifices made by these troops. I think, with the limited troop models and the weather blowing in, we captured just that!

With the images in the can...

The shoot took place on a Tuesday. My studio policies state clearly I have a 3 day turn around to deliver the PROOF images. Remember Problem Number 2?

On Wednesday morning, I did deliver PROOF images (to maintain my reputation for good customer service as I knew my art director was a nervous wreck). We didn't hear anything from them until I received a phone call at 5:00 PM on Wednesday. I paraphrase the call: "Oh, and I need the finished file by Friday, and I have some cross processing to do to the file you send me. Can you deliver a finished mural file (using the pan frames with the moving troops) by tomorrow morning?" Wow. Did I mention that other photographers in the city would kill to have this contract? I should have said no.

So, I put together the last two pans, and after working all night, delivered the panoramic files to the client on Thursday at 10:00 AM. The final image was to be processed darker per AD: for dramatic effect and to keep the viewer from noticing that each soldier had a twin or triplet in the line. At 2:00 PM, I received another call stating they thought the files were too small. I tried to explain to them that the manufacturer they were using only needed 85 ppi, but the art director wanted 300 ppi. Did I mention they are



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a gold level client? So, I went back to the drawing board and did the math again. To increase the file size to the size they requested, the only way I could do that was to run the single pan files through Genuine Fractals Blow Up application. So, I delivered that file to them by 5:00 PM on Thursday. On Friday morning, I received an email from the art director complaining about some artifacts introduced in the Blow Up application.

Remember, he was looking at the pixel level whereas a viewer was not going to be any closer than 5 feet! So, I took the file back, and retouched each artifact he complained about. I returned the file by 1:00 PM.

We made the deadline without charging a rush, but here is the kicker! The art director took the rest of the afternoon off and was not there to receive the file. Hurrah for email time stamps! So much for meeting his deadline.



Hassles & risks aside, we think it turned out nice!

As with everything you do, you learn as you go.

Here are our lessons learned:

1. Big enough isn't big enough
2. If there is any question about file size, rent a larger camera
3. Don't count on the weather
4. Do the math, and show it to the client
5. Don't count on volunteers
6. Read Studio policies and talk about actual needed date

For many of you reading this, I can hear you thinking: boy, didn't they know better?

In my defense, even though I have been shooting commercially for many, many years, it was in a staff position & I have never had to think about charging a rush charge or actually saying "No" to a client. Since this job, rush charges are standard (if they need for me to rush the final product) and saying "No" to a client, is now much easier to do.

Remember — hassles are nature's way of forcing you to learn.

How to Submit Articles to the e-Monitor

This is your organization. And your newsletter. If the subject matter isn't what you want to read about, then send in the perfect (to you) article. If the organization is making a turn that you do not agree with, step in. We welcome all volunteers.

Email (secretary@panoramicrossociation.org) your article as a document, with notations within your article where you want your photographs to appear. Please do not place your photographs within your document as this will compress the images too much. Please send them as separate files: tiffs or jpegs; 300 dpi and not larger than 7 inches on the long side. The deadline to submit articles is the 15th of the previous month you wish the article to appear.

What to take on a Photographic Road Trip, Or Just how big is your vehicle?

Some people take photographic road trips every month. Some, a few times a year. Some only get to get out and photograph every 18 months or so when the IAPP has its convention and they have an excuse to go. Regardless of how often you get to “get out” there is always the question of what to take on your trip, or the question really becomes “How much to take on the trip.”

“No matter how far you are going on your trip it’s a basic fact that whatever equipment you don’t take, you will need at some time before you get home” (Snow’s Photographic Law #1). I usually obey the following rules when I intend to go out and shoot - if it is a day-long shoot, I concentrate on a single type of target and only take the required equipment to get it “in the can”. If I am going on vacation or to a photo-convention, I take everything short of the kitchen sink (and in the old days when I would develop film I would’ve taken that too). This causes some conflict with my wife because she insists on bringing extra stuff, like food and clothes that take up space in our vehicle which otherwise would be delegated to photo gear.

One way we have compromised is to equip our vehicle with a Thule cargo carrier. It rides atop our Jeep, and we keep the majority of the clothing in it. By the way, if you use one of these external cargo carriers ALWAYS place your clothes (and any other stuff) in extra large ziplock bags, or wrap the clothes in plastic lawn & garden bags making sure to seal the opening to keep water from entering. Don’t believe the waterproof claims made by the maker... This lesson was learned the hard way!

The space inside the Jeep is divided between the food, the electric cooler, and the

photo gear. It goes without saying that your photo gear should never ride in these cargo carriers unless they are

heavily insured or if you want to upgrade to new equipment. ;)

All of my photo gear, including all of my digital cameras, lenses, tripods, and all of my medium format film gear will fit in the cargo area behind the rear seats of the Jeep. Its a tight fit, but they will fit. I usually keep my backpack with my basic digital gear on the rear seat just in case there is that “gotta stop” shot that I just

happen to come across and need to capture. The electric cooler also shares the back seat so we can have cold snacks and sandwiches on the

... my wife starts asking if I really need to take two medium format cameras and all of their lenses.

road. Film rolls are placed in doubled ziplock bags and reside in the cooler as well.

When we camp, the tent will fit in the Thule with our clothes. However, I have to locate a place in the back seat to hold the Coleman Stove, our portable kitchen, & perhaps our tent heater and numerous cylinders of propane. Things are now starting to get packed around my wife's feet in the passenger side. On long trips this doesn't make for comfortable riding. This is the time when my wife starts

asking if I really need to take two medium format cameras and all of their lenses. This is also about the time when we begin talking about leaving the camping gear at home and finding out which Hampton Inns are closest to where we are going.

Traveling to Gatlinburg by car enabled me to take a lot of gear, but this was the first time I deliberately left some of my medium format gear at home. The amazing thing was I didn't miss it. I didn't use it nor did I want to. I enjoy my medium format but

I can do much more with today's digital equipment; and when you add the ability to stitch digital images, stack HDR images, and have access to unlimited depth of field with Helicon Focus, I don't think I will be using anything else from now on. However, I don't plan on ditching the medium format any time soon. Who knows, if I get a few well paying jobs soon, I might just shift to a medium format digital system. Then I just may have a few less cases to pack in the car. (Probably not.) —grin—

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Super 70 Roundshot camera and 120 to 220 jig

by Will Landon

The Super 70 Roundshot camera has two film magazines. One for fifteen feet of 70mm film, and a second one for 220 film. This camera is exceptionally steady and smooth and free of banding. It handles Hasselblad lenses up to 500 mm, and has two converters, the first converts a 500 mm lens to 700 mm, and the other one converts the 500 mm lens to 1000 mm.

The Zeiss two X doubler is exceptionally sharp, with no noticeable degradation. My camera also has three nodal point bars, the longest being one meter. The shortest one can be adjusted for close ups for 250 mm lens or less. The longer bars are for the 350 mm lens and the 500 mm lens. The camera is slid along the bar until it reaches the image focal length readout for "A", the distance of focus to the prime subject. There are lead insert counter balances for the nodal point bar to achieve a balance of the camera for smoother rotation. The camera came with a 220 film back. There is a limited selection of emulsions in 220 films. The greatest diversity of film emulsions is found in 120 size films. It is also easier to process the 31 inches of 120 size film, especially if you are processing black and white films. Konica made the best pictorial and finest grained infra red film.

In the Pacific Northwest often scenes would have large stands of evergreen trees. These trees would be rendered with a lighter rendering that was very pleasing in a winter scenic, and did not overdo towards en



excessive white spectrum. There was still a good haze penetration with the Konica film. Unfortunately the film only came in a 120 size. This meant if I wanted to use it, I had to convert a 120 size film to a 220 configuration.

I decided to build a jig to convert 120 to a 220 film configuration by making the leader into a trailer at the end of a roll, and by removing the rest of the paper backing and re-splicing it to become a long leader. This conversion was easy to re-calibrate in the Super Roundshot camera, and made daylight loading a safe operation due to the very long "leader" that was now made available.

Mamiya made a manually functioning "S" curve back that was ideal to re-make into a jig that could facilitate the removing and re-splicing of the 120 film while maintaining alignment for smooth spooling. Image 2 (next page) illustrates the modified film back by cutting off the feed chamber and inserting a one inch splicing patten for the splicing tape. Through trial and error the number of degrees to advance the film for any given lens was

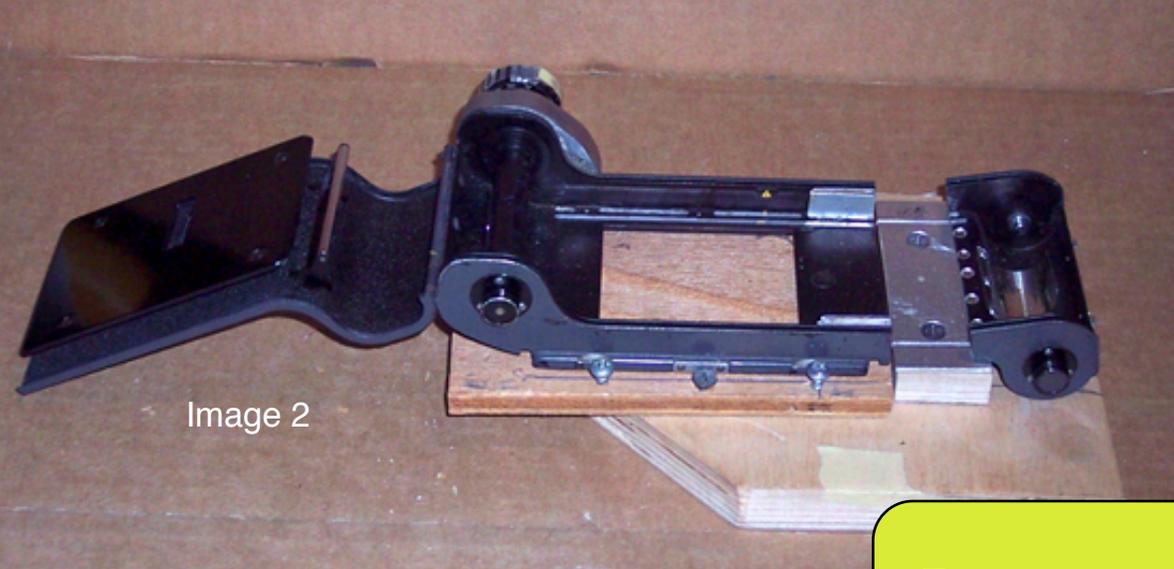


Image 2

determined and posted to a control card that always remains in the cameras case.

I use Ilfasol 3 as a developer at 79 degrees, for ten minutes, for film exposed at one fifteenth of a second at f22 with a #29 filter gel. These values apply to the Super Camera, which has real shutter speeds that are 50% of the input shutter speed. Therefore on cameras with accurate shutter speeds, the one fifteenth shutter speed would be set.

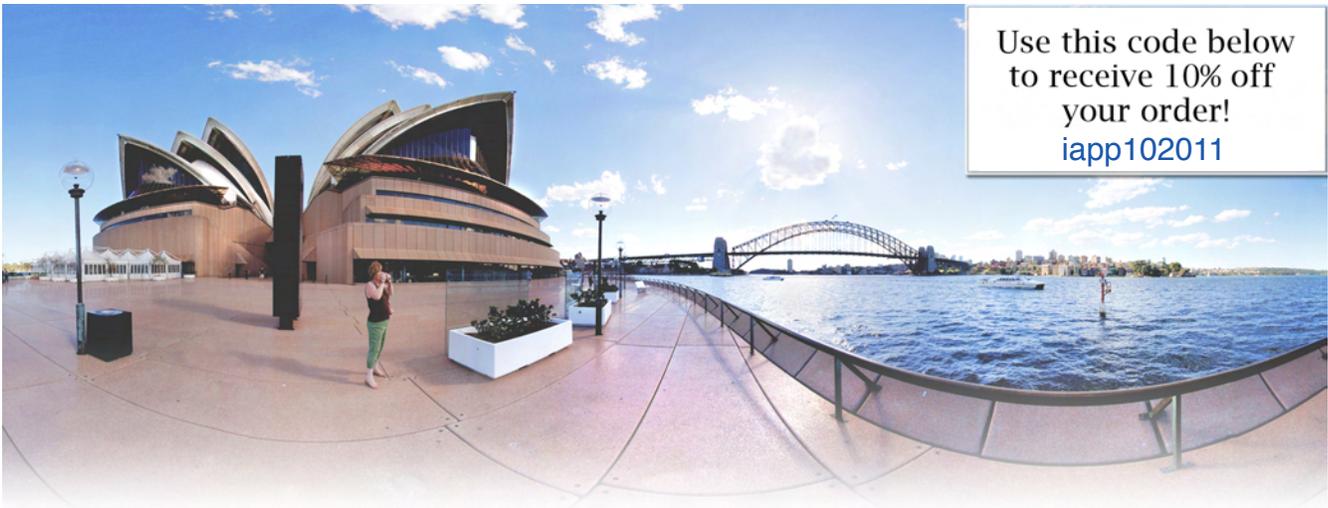
The Ilfasol developer stock deteriorates very rapidly. When first opened mix one ounce of developer to 14 ounces of water, and run a first appearance test at the 77 degree temperature. This is done as follows:

1. Use any black-and-white printing paper, cut a three to four inch strip. Lay it on the floor under a ceiling light 60 watt light bulb.
2. Lay a large paper clip on the paper, and turn the ceiling light on for eight seconds.
3. With a strong red safe light above the developer tray, develop the paper strip.
4. Note the time it takes to notice the first appearance of a shadow gram starts to show. On Ilfasol it is usually 65 seconds for me.
5. If you run the same test several weeks later, the first appearance will be longer than 65 seconds. Increase the amount of developer concentration for a subsequent test until you reach the calibrated first appearance time

Requests realized

For many years I have had requests for a poster of the Central Cascades mountains. I never could find a location that gave me an unobstructed view. Then I had a call from a mountaineer who had found such a location and asked me if I would like to photograph. "You bet." On the first cold and clear day in February at the construction site high on a hill above the city of Snohomish, I grabbed the Super camera and the 220 back which was pre-loaded with Konica Infra red film, and decided that the 500 mm lens would be perfect. On site I found I had forgotten the adapter that fastened that camera to the heavy 18 pound tripod. Still doable, but Pat had to hold the base of the camera to the tripod. It worked, the picture was very sharp, and a poster was made. We donated a one by 15 foot mural mounted by a panoramic window in the schools cafeteria. The mountain pan was folded into three rows, which made it easier for buyers to handle framing.

Shown on next page



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