

Contact Sheet

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Photographer's Nightmare - Storage

We love taking our pictures. And now with our digital cameras we have instant gratification. Therefore, we like what we did and we want to take even more images. But, Uncle Joe wants a copy of that picture you took of his prize winning trout about five years ago - - or was that ten years ago. Maybe it was when you were fishing on Henry's Lake - - no, maybe it was on Palisades. And he needs the image yesterday since they want to put it in the family newsletter that goes out today. Uncle Joe will take credit for his fish, but you'll get the credit for failure if the picture isn't in the letter. Granted, this is a forced scenario, but if you have been in the club for any time at all, you know that the local magazines are "working on a deadline" and need the picture **"immediately!"** even though the story has been in production for three months.

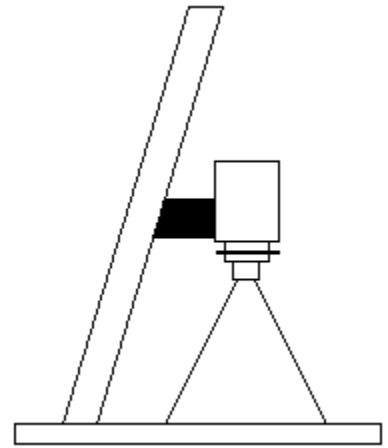
And we photographers are a pleasant lot. We like to share our images with our friends and it is really neat to have some of our work published, even if there isn't any compensation other than the pat on the back for your good image. So, we go to where we store our negatives/ images and start to look. Well, they are not in that book/box of prints/drawer of photos, etc. Where is that image? Now compound that problem with having file after file of slides, color negatives, B&W

images, digital files, and I hope

you are getting the picture of supreme frustration. We have all uttered these words: "This is the winter that I am going to organize my photographs!" And we look at the disorganized pile of images and put it off for another year.

There is no one universal storage system that will satisfy all photographers! If there were, we would all be organized from day one! Personally, I have been through three different systems in my forty years of taking pictures - - and every one of them worked well for what I wanted out of my photography **at that time**. My first 20 years were exclusively Kodachrome 25 slides all put into reels. Anytime we went on trips to different areas on medical conventions, the slides were put in TRIP reels. Any pictures of the kids went into my J/K reels (Jeff/Karl) and then trips around town, to Yellowstone, or any place close went into my PEOPLE/PLACES reels. I had a notebook that was called *Timelines* that I just wrote down where I took each roll of film. This system is the ultimate in simplicity and worked very well for my first twenty years of photography.

The problems started when I joined this crazy camera club (EIPS) about 20 years ago. I saw some B&W prints and said, "Hey! That looks like fun!" - - and I set up a darkroom. Then my wife picked a camera and started to take pictures also - - and she made it even more difficult since she wanted the



print on the same night I processed the negatives. I started making prints and had no idea which print went to which negative. Not a good situation but part of the learning curve. Therefore, I started putting the negatives in a sheet and making a contact sheet. The sheet had a number, each row was assigned a number, and each negative in the row had a number. I put an M in front for Marty's images and a J for mine. M0105-35 meant Marty's 105th sheet of negatives, third row down, fifth image to the right on that row. And things were good again. I continued with the *Timelines* book to integrate this new photography into my world.

Color negatives and color darkroom came along and MB0305 was Marty's B&W 305th sheet, MC0306 was Marty's color negative sheet 306, and MS0307 could be Marty's slide sheet. To keep track of where these images were taken, I created a 5 row across, 7 row down sheet with boxes that I would write in each box where that picture was taken. On the top of the contact sheet would be Yellowstone June 1997, MB0422 for Marty's B&W images. Buffalo would be written in the boxes where they were, Old Faithful in those boxes, etc. and I was able to keep track of all of our negatives relatively easily - until someone wanted a specific item (cars on the streets at night in IF, baby buffalo, etc.). Since I thought I would be doing more photography when I retired and would have to give the customer the images they wanted, I knew I needed a computer based search engine. Along came my excursion into Microsoft Access.

Since I had used a database in my office practice to keep track of the incredible number of variations of hard and gas permeable lenses along with our

inventory of multiple brands of soft lenses, I felt this would be an easy transition. Only flat databases were available when I used the computer for my contact lenses - - and this worked fine for the purpose I needed at the time. But in researching databases, I found that a relational database meant that you didn't have to enter the same data in a couple of different areas since the computer would keep track of this for you. BUT, you had to be a lot more careful in how you set the database up from the beginning. I used Access because I felt it should work with the other Microsoft software on my computer. I entered the 80,000 negatives, slides we had accumulated by that time in a fairly short time (I can enter about 5000 images in a weekend, and I am not a fast typist.) I use this database to keep track of the prints I have made, the sheets of mat board, the types of frames we have, the prints that we have entered in shows or have shown in the Advancement Program - - all things that were not possible before having the information in the computer.

My database has fourteen items that I have listed on each of my negatives, but most of these are filled in as a default setting before you enter any data. My first column (Negative Number) will have MC1105- as the default setting. When I enter 11 for row one, first negative, the database will automatically enter all of the default information I have told it to do - the default settings for the other 13 rows. For example, Fujicolor 400 will be entered in the type of film row and speed of film row, date taken will be the same on all rows, etc. So with 70 keystrokes, I can have 490 data entry slots filled (about 3900 keystrokes). But computers are truly garbage in, garbage out

vehicles if you are not careful. Once I have the contact sheet information entered in the computer, I then have to go back and change some of the information (my default setting is that **all** images are landscape and if it is portrait instead, I click on a box to remove the checkmark the computer placed on the box.) I will then usually have to type in what type of image was taken in that column of the datasheet since my default setting was to leave that column blank. I have a comments column also so I can add any other information that I think will help me find this negative again. Sometimes I will write “**to do**” in this slot if it is an image that I didn’t try to enlarge when I first processed the roll of film. By searching for **to do**, the computer will then list all of these images together so I can find them quickly.

Each person will have their own special needs to keep track of in their images. I implore you to get started on your storage problems **now** because time and new photos added will only compound your dilemma. If anyone wants more info on the systems I have tried, I will gladly show you where I am at present.

Our Show Sponsors

Without them we would not be able to attract such a good group of photographs. Thanks to the following sponsors, and please support them with your patronage:

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Johnny Carino’s
The Firehouse Grill
Inkley’s
Great Harvest Bread

Club Notes

Special thanks to Farr’s Jewelry for the use of the digital projector at the last Advancement Program. We learned a lot!

Advancement Program

The theme of the Advancement Program for November is: **Color Explosion**. Please bring three of your best images, slides, digital image files and join us at 1900 Grandview in the Conference Room at 7:30 p.m. on December 20. It is amazing how all of our photography improves as we share these images with one another.

Newsletter Costs

We need as many current e-mail addresses as possible since we would like to try this route of reaching our membership in the near future. This would allow us to keep our dues rates the same for the coming year.

Monthly Meeting

Date: Dec. 6, 2007

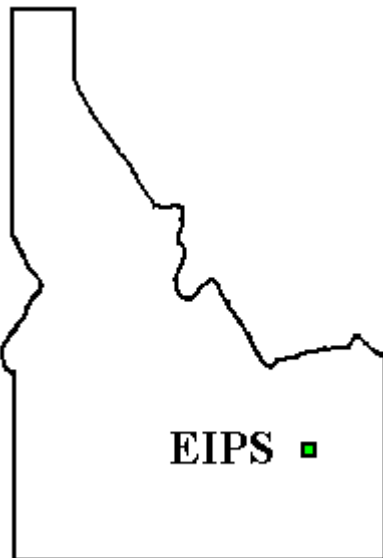
Time: 7:30 p.m.

**Location: 1900 Grandview
Ave. Conference Room**

Program:

We have to change some of our bylaws and rules and regulations so that we can retain our status as a non profit organization. We need you input. Please come and give YOUR direction to YOUR club. Elections also this night!

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Membership Info:
Web address: www.eips.net



Graffiti

EIPS is a group of amateur and professional photographers who have joined together to further the art and craft of photography. Please join us and expand your horizons. Sharing knowledge makes all participants better at their craft. We meet on the first Thursday of each month for our educational lecture. Then the third Thursday is our Advancement Program where we share some of the images we have done. We meet at 7:30 p.m. in the 1900 Grandview Ave conference room. We all become better photographers!

We need your input on where you want to have field trips and what type of programs you would like to have in the upcoming year. Happy Holidays to everyone!

