

January 2015

Each New Years most people and organizations make promises or chart a direction for the year. For several years now I have personally chosen to stay away from personal resolutions. My life is quite comfortable and while I have chosen to try and work out at least three times a week, my weight, at the moment, has stabilized and again, I am happy with my weight and physical condition. We won't discuss my mental condition. I guess I am as happy as if I am in my right mind.

Last year we showed a few lighting methods and actually demoed a few that we hope have and will help some of our members. This year we are going to talk about workflow BEFORE the shutter is pressed. It appears that a larger number of members need to develop a good pre-shot routine. In other words, what do some of us do before we press the shutter? That will or should be one of the main photography subjects of 2015 at ATX. We are not going to get into which camera system is better or easier to use. That debate between Canon and Nikon is pretty much over. Why? When you start to get into one or the other, the amount you spend on just lenses dictates which road you are going to take. At the moment Lynette and I have a large investment in Canon glass. To change now would be ludicrous. Would we ever get our investment in glass back if we chose to change? No way. Would Michael Pliskin or George deLoach ever get their investment in glass if they were to switch to Canon? Never! Yet each of us respect the other's opinions and we all create superior images with our cameras... because we all know that **good photography starts with the five or six inches between our ears.**

Whether we are using the DSLR of our choice or a good point and shoot, it's what we do before the shutter is pressed that counts. And that is where we are going to spend a good portion of our presentation time this year. Let me give you a real world example.

Several years ago Lynette and I were at Acadia National Park in Maine. During the first few days I kept running into the same couple with the husband

taking typical "mug" shots of his wife, standing square to the camera, squinting from the sun in her eyes and looking at the camera. One day the husband asked me if I would take their picture. I obliged and before I shot the first picture with their nice point and shoot camera, I turned to his wife and asked: "How would you like to lose fifteen pounds in fifteen seconds before I take this picture?" I had come to know her name and for about a millisecond she hesitated then stated "YES!" I showed her and her husband how she should position her feet and her body. I showed him how to stand as though he liked her and not as though he was about to have a police mug shot taken. I then jumped up on a picnic bench to take their picture in what they saw as new perspective. A few hours later I saw them again and this time I got much lower because many boat masts were in the background and I wanted nothing coming out of their heads. The open sky is great background. All the while I was explaining what I was doing by "*Looking all the way through the picture before I pressed the shutter*". A day or two later I saw them again and the husband came up to me and asked me; "*What did you do to my camera? My pictures are so much better!*" I explained that he was now a better photographer and was applying the some of the lessons he had just learned. And yes, he was also using the camera's flash to fill-in the shadows making his wife "pop" from the background, just by using the flash as a fill-in and posing his wife and he was instructing passers-by where to take their picture from.

And that is what we are hoping to do with the some of the meetings this year: Help everyone become better photographers and actually enjoy taking pictures.

To that end we start this meeting with [Michael Pliskin](#) showing us some of his pre-shot routine and explaining it in as much detail as possible. We do not expect Michael to tell us everything as some things are his own personal trade secrets and frankly, it has taken Michael a long time to become the professional photographer he is today. Will he and I still kid each other about our choice of cameras? Of course, much like the rivalry

between our high school sports teams of Arlington and Newburgh, New York. Today Newburgh leads with more murders and Poughkeepsie has a terrific walking bridge high over the Hudson River that is a great place to take pictures of the fall colors.

Later this year we will be bringing Steven Johnson to talk about landscape photography and a couple of other friends of ATX to talk about their photography craft before they press the shutter. Try and show up even if you think you know everything about photography. I still attend many photography talks as there is ALWAYS something I can pick up to improve my own photography. Besides, if enough of you show up throughout the year, we will have more raffle prizes next December. You all like raffle prizes, don't you?

Does all of this above mean we are going to devote every meeting to the art of photography? *Good grief, no!* Lynette and I are planning several other subjects, including one about solving the mystery of back-up. Backing up your data on your computer on another hard drive, not just your own computer. I don't know how many of you have had a hard drive fail with all of your data. I have, Lynette, luckily, has not had a major failure. Matter-of-fact I JUST had a failure of one older secondary back-up drive in an external drive called the G-Safe. Was it a disaster? No, because it was the second back-up of my main computer. At this moment one of my initial back-ups is transferring data from the other to the newer 1 TB drive. Yes, I have multiple back-ups, just in case something like this happens. When Lynette and I travel, we take one copy of my main computers, without images and one copy of my images that I put in a location out of the house. Then I take another disk with my images and put it in a safety deposit box at the bank. Lynette does the same along with other items. Some may call it being anal, I prefer to think of it as being smart and careful. Think about how much of a disaster it would be if all of the images were on one computer and the house and computer were lost. Years worth of images, many years of travel images lost, some images irreplaceable as some of these places do not exist any more. How many images do you have that are truly irreplaceable?

Yes, the raffle prize at this meeting is an external hard drive. G-Tech, of course.

In the meantime I think Lynette has truly lost her mind. She is busy gathering many items to be sold on the tables at drastically reduced prices. Let me give you just a few examples. One of the items is an [Epson P2000](#) Multimedia Storage Viewer. Yes it has a hard drive of only 40 GB, yet it can hold a lot of data and it transfers data at a USB 2 speed. It can't take data from CF cards or SD. It has a 3.8" inch viewing screen. We carried this around the world as third back-up device. The real gem is the [Digital Foci Picture Porter PPR 35](#) 500 GB, another item that should have enough miles to qualify for a trip to Europe. Here is the machine that we used to back up everything we shot on a complete trip. You just plug in your media, such as a CF or SD/HC, mini SD and any number of other flash memory cards. These are available used from Amazon for \$199. ATX price will be a lot less! A [Digital Foci Photo Safe II](#) (160GB) that does not have a viewing screen yet is quite reliable and we also used it as a second back-up for daily images. Why are we putting these on the tables? We now use three G-Tech bus powered hard drives 1 TB models that can hold all of our images from almost any trip, including videos we have shot. The real surprise? How about a [Wacom Intuos 4](#) that if you are in the market for a digital pen tablet, here it is. We have not put prices on these items here. They are slightly used by us and some of you know we both (*and especially Lynette*) keep our equipment in pristine condition. Prices will be posted on the bag containing these items. **But wait, there is more!** Much more. As I stated above, I think my better half has lost her mind. She is bringing in Ink Jet Papers, lots of them and A LOT MORE ITEMS! You have to bring cash or checks as these prices are not to be believed and when these items are gone, you will not see items with prices like these again.

We meet Saturday, January 17, 2015 at the [Weingart Senior Center](#). The doors to the meeting will open at our normal time of 8:45 AM. As I stated earlier, allow a little bit of time as the route to get the Senior Center is mildly tricky. However once you get here, you will probably never forget the "trick" to getting here. Yes, the coffee will be ready.

Regards and God Bless,

Rick Redfern

714.840.4737