

Let's Talk Digital—Part III

Continued from May Issue

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(Since the presentation of the Digital Program last fall, I have received many e-mails and calls from SANP members with questions that may be of interest to everyone. Here are some of those questions and my answers. LP)

I want to get a new printer but am confused by all the claims out there by the various manufacturers. What do you recommend?

Personally I prefer the Epson line. I have three printers on line all the time... an Epson 1280, an Epson 1200, and an Epson 2000P. They are each used for different reasons. I use the 1200 for routine letters and correspondence. I use the 1280 for most photographic prints and the 2000P for the archival (200 year) prints. The answer to your question is it depends! It depends on three things: (1) cost of a print; (2) how long do you want it to last; and (3) what are you going to print and how large.

Let me take them one at a time. I figured the cost of a single 8.5 X 11 photographic print on each printer as follows: on the 1200 about \$1.00 each; on the 1280 about \$2 each; and on the 2000P about \$5-6 each. The big difference is in the ink and the paper you have to use with the 2000P versus the others. Typically, I can get about 35 8.5X11 prints from an ink cartridge on each of the printers. The cartridges cost about \$30 for the 2000P color and another \$28 for the black; for the 1280 the color cartridge, it is about \$24 and the black about \$15; and for the 1200 the color, it's about \$22 and the black about \$15. Paper for the 2000P runs about \$1 per 8.5X11 sheet and about ½ that for the other two printers.

Next, the archival qualities. The prints from the: (1) 1200 last 1-2 years depending upon the paper used; (2) 1280 about 25 years; and (3) 2000P about 200 years depending upon the paper used.

Lastly, on the use and size print. If all you are going to print is 8X11 then you can go with a smaller printer such as the Epson 890 or 780 for example. However, if you want the larger prints such as 11 X 14 or 13 X 19 you will need the larger printers such as the 1270 or 1280's. Incidentally, the 1270 is a great printer and you can get those now for about \$200. It was replaced by the 1280 but basically the only difference is in the print nozzle size which for our purposes really isn't that important.

So you see, the choice is yours.

OK with the Epson, but what about HP, Lexmark, or the other printers on the market?

They are probably good also. I haven't used them and can't comment on their properties. I just like the Epson printers because they were designed for photo printing and in my opinion, give the best results.

I am using a digital camera but there seems to be a lag time from the time I push the shutter release until the picture is taken. How can I overcome that delay?

Yes many digital cameras run through a white balance calibration each time the shutter is fired based upon the scene being recorded. Here is a suggestion that works for me: Just put the autofocus mark in your viewfinder over your subject, depress the shutter **HALF** way down and **HOLD IT**. The camera runs through the white balance and other calibration program, then waits for you to finish the shutter push. By developing a habit of automatically prefocusing first, then waiting for the right moment to make the photo, you will minimize the lag time.

My digital camera really eats batteries. Any suggestions of how I reduce that drain?

Three things to keep in mind: (1) use RECHARGEABLE batteries; (2) have at least two (2) sets of batteries with you fully charged at all times; and (3) keep spare non-rechargeable lithium batteries in your bag if your camera will handle them. They last about 5 times as long as alkalines or standard rechargeables, are lightweight, are better than other batteries in cold conditions and definitely offer peace of mind. One last consideration: look into external, rechargeable power packs. They are small, yet mighty, and plug into your camera's DC in port. You'll get about 10 times or more duration over rechargeable batteries or AAs.

Do you have any suggestions about some good websites for us to check out?

Of course! The best website for wildlife photographers by far is that of **Moose Peterson** at **www.moose395.net**. This is a great web site. (Incidentally, his newsletter is well worth the money also!)

Another good one for photo contests is **www.photoalley.com**. They have prizes (\$1,000 for Grand Prize!). Their current contest is on Pets. The site accepts only online entries. This is a commercial store but has good information and critiques on photos.

If you are looking for critiques for your work, **www.naturephotographers.net** is another online photo magazine with a Reader's Forum site dedicated to Image Critiques and Galleries. Get comments on your photos (or feel free to make some). There is always a large number of photos in several categories. No prizes, but good information throughout the site. A very good site for nature photographers.

Another interesting site is **www.wildlifewatcher.com**. Although not geared to photographers, it is a great site if you are looking for someplace new to photograph or trying to find locations for a specific species. I use this site a lot to locate various wildlife that I want to photograph.

There are many others, but these will keep you busy until next time.