



President's Message

What Are You Shooting For?

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There are many ways you can take that question. Why do we shoot with our camera? It has been interesting to study this question. Viewing many of our member's works and understanding photographers in general helps me understand them as a person. So let me give some possible answers to the question "What are you shooting for?".

One of the most common answers would be "I love photography". But if that was a true statement then why does the person not just search stock photography sites and purchase some great works of photography. The true answer may be that the photographer loves taking pictures. But then again why does the photographer love to take photographs. I believe the answers are much deeper and personal for each one of us.

To understand the question is to begin to know the photographer. I believe that some photographers get great joy in capturing that special moment in time; some love the fact that they can create something that is beautiful. There are some photographers that strive for greatness because of the social support that the picture provides. There is nothing wrong with having our egos stroked now and then and photography can provide that social acceptance. There are still other photographers who enjoy the interaction with people or nature.

Now I am no physiologist and this may seem like a deep subject to tackle. But again my statement that if you know the photographer you know his/her pictures and the reverse is also true. If you study a photographer's works you start to understand and know the photographer. This is true in other forms of art as well.

Photographers rarely like their own work and continue to strive to obtain the quality of other great photographers. If you ask many photographers if they think their work is great most will say no. But if others like the photographer's works then it continues to support the photographer's drive to continue their craft.

So why do we shoot photos? Another reason is for profit. Some photographers use their craft to support themselves and their families. Improving their craft simply equates to more profit. Capturing that moment simply means that shot will sell.

I have said recently that there are two types of photographers. One type is a photographer that goes out and finds the great shot. The other type sees the shot in his/her mind and then goes out and tries to create the shot. Both are equally successful but the latter can be a bit more frustrating.

So what type of photos do you shoot? If you are shooting for a client or for an assignment then the type of photos you shoot are somewhat defined. If you are shooting for family or friends then your mission is to please them. But if you are shooting for competition then your shot has to have broad appeal and something with impact. Shooting for competition is far different than other types of photography. It has little to do with a shot you like and everything to do with knowing who you are shooting for.

Now I will try to answer the question "What am I shooting for?" I first shoot for me unless it is for competition or a client. My photo blog <http://mikesphotography.my-expressions.com> are works that I personally like. Some I have used in competition since I feel they would appeal to the audience and would do well in judging. However, if I shoot for a client then I focus on what I believe the client would want. My style may change and I constantly keep in mind what I think the client wants and what the client would be happy with.

A good example of this would be a wedding. You may take a few shots of something you would like but most of the work comes from a pre-defined shot list and I try to compose the best shot possible from each item on the list. Most of my photography is about creating an image that stirs emotion in others, something that others may enjoy as much as I enjoyed creating the image. I also appreciate the fact that others like my work. It strokes my ego and makes me feel good. But one of the biggest reasons I shoot pictures is because of the interaction with people. There are few things that one can do other than photography that has the ability to bring you into a stranger's life and become intimately involved even if it is for a brief time. That connection produces the great shot that speaks to me and hopefully others as well.

Now the question is "What are you shooting for?"

Michael Adkins

President