

# snap shots

Volume 13 Number 8

April 2008

## *Exploring the Hows and Whys of Collecting Images*

*For April's program, a collector talks about his approach to what he collects*

Gunter Mueller is one of PHSNE's most active collectors of images, and in his program for the April 6 meeting he'll share the story of how his collection got started, and how it grew.



Gunter Mueller

Gunter has drawn on his collection for PHSNE programs before — In September 2005 he presented an historically important collection of hand-colored lantern slides of the Middle East created by the American Colony Photographers, an organization headquartered in Jerusalem.

But even historically unimportant images can be important to a collector, and Mueller's April program will explore the reasons, the hows

and whys of collecting, as well as the whats.

Gunter will talk about how a collection takes on shape and significance based not only on what is in it, but on what the collector brings to it. His reflections are colored by his own interest in researching the items in his collection, and the ways his interests and his collection have interacted to affect each other over time.



The Lee Gallery, Winchester, MA

"Madonna and Two Children," an 1864 albumen print by Julia Margaret Cameron. Collecting historical photographs like this one is an increasingly popular way of exploring the significance of photography, but not the only one. A collection, even of historically unimportant images, can take on significance for what it teaches the collector.

## **Photographica 69 Needs You to Help the Show Go On**

Photographica 69 is coming up on May 3 and 4, and once again show manager John Dockery is looking for volunteers to do everything from setting up the hall on Friday night to helping with the crowds to sharing their passion for their particular interests at the Discovery Tables.

John has set aside four tables for member displays and interaction. He has some time slots already taken for a Cirkut Camera display, for the Stereo NE organi-

zation, and for a display on Lucius Beebe, an early American West photography collector, by the Wakefield Public Library and more are welcome. He's also looking for help with an 11a.m. Saturday lecture and demonstration of high speed strobe photography By Dr. Jim Bales of the Edgerton Strobe Laboratory at MIT. In addition he need people to help set up Friday night,

Continued on Page 4

## Shows and Exhibitions Around New England

*"Facing the Other Half"* at **George Eastman House** presents work by four of the greatest documentary photographers, Lewis Wickes Hine, John Thomson, Dorothea Lange, and Marion Post Wolcott. The exhibition includes Hine's photographic indictments of child labor; the Depression-era landscapes and people of Farm Security Administration photographers Lange and Post Wolcott; and the streets of Victorian London through Thomson's lens. The images will be on view through June 15. (GEH, 900 East Ave., Rochester, NY, 585-271-3361, [www.eastmanhouse.org](http://www.eastmanhouse.org).)

*"Accommodating Nature: The Photographs of Frank Gohlke"* at the **Addison Gallery** presents the large-scale landscape photography of a photographer with strong ties to New England. Gohlke has taught at the Massachusetts College of Art; the Art Institute of Boston at Lesley College; the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; and Harvard, Princeton and Yale. From April 12 to July 13. (Addison Gallery of American Art, Phillips Academy, Andover, MA, 978-749-4015, [www.addisongallery.org](http://www.addisongallery.org).)

*"Pictorial Vision: American and European Photography at the Clark,"* features photographs dating from the 1880s to the 1920s. Among the photographers represented are Peter Henry Emerson, Eduard Steichen, Alvin Langdon Coburn, George Seeley, and Pierre Dubreuil. From April 26 to Aug. 27. (Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, 225 South Street, Williamstown, MA, 413-458-2303, [www.clarkart.edu](http://www.clarkart.edu).)

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### PHSNE Membership

PHSNE membership is \$15 for students, \$30 for individuals, \$36 for a family, and \$40 for foreign membership. Please send checks in U.S. dollars drawn on a U.S. bank or dollar-denominated international money orders for dues payments.

Current members can read their renewal date from the mailing label on snap shots. For example, "2008.12" means your membership expires in December of 2008. Please check your label before sending in your dues.

Send payments, changes of address, and other contact information, to: Adrian Levesque, 4 Sugar Hill Drive, Nashua, NH 03063, or e-mail [ALevesque2@comcast.net](mailto:ALevesque2@comcast.net). Be sure to include the word "PHSNE" in the subject line.

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### *A Remembrance of Jack Naylor*

The catalog for Jack Naylor's auction at Guernsey's in New York City last October was a lavish publication that showcased many of the more exotic pieces in his collection. Arlan Ettinger of Guernsey's donated a case of the catalogs to PHSNE, and before his death Jack signed them, an event documented in the photograph above. Most were sold at the February Members Auction, but a handful are still available for \$50 each, including shipping. If you would like to acquire a copy contact auction manager Lew Regelman at 781-642-7867 or [regelzoo@mail.com](mailto:regelzoo@mail.com).

### Bernard Slepak

Bernard Slepak, 85, of Highland Park, IL, died Feb. 16. He was a long-time member of PHSNE whose wide interests included the history of photography and Civil War history. He operated an advertising and sales-promotion business, History House. He was also the co-inventor of a soil moisture indicator for use with cultivated plants.

He and his wife, the late Ruth Slepak, had three children. The family has established a memorial, the Bernard and Ruth Slepak Memorial Fund, Chicago Botanic Garden, 1000 Lake Cook Road, Glencoe, IL 60022.

## A Stand-Out Camera Started an Outstanding Career



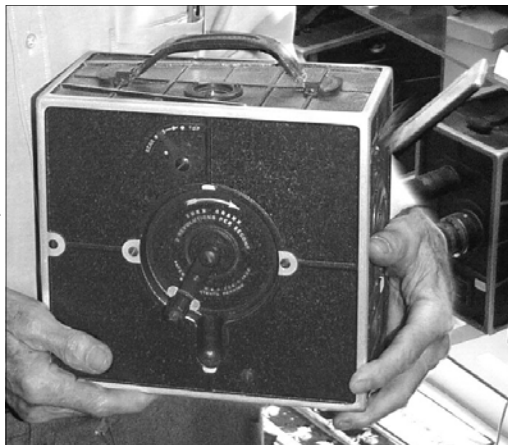
Photos courtesy of Ira Current

Ira Current at the viewfinder of his 16mm Ciné Kodak, above, and one of the young daredevils gunning his soapbox racer down the hill captured in Ira's first film, "Four Wheels," right.

Ira's camera was not just Kodak's first amateur movie camera, it was the first 16mm camera in the world. Kodak introduced the film format along with the camera in 1923. By the time Ira bought his camera in 1929, 16mm had become a major success for Kodak, PHSNe's Alan Kattelle writes in his book, *Home Movies*.

The hand-cranked Ciné Kodak (the one below is from Alan Kattelle's collection) became the "Model A" only after the fact, when Kodak introduced a spring-driven Model B in 1925. And Ira got a bargain: The Ciné Kodak was initially sold only with a projector, tripod, and screen for \$335 (a princely sum that would be more than \$4,000 in current dollars).

The Ciné Kodak was a daylight-loader: the 100-foot rolls of 16mm film came with paper heads and tails.



Alan Kattelle Collection, Photo by David DeJean

In 1929, the year he graduated from Colorado Springs High School, PHSNE member Ira Current bought a camera – a Ciné Kodak, the very first amateur movie camera Kodak offered. He bought it from the place where he worked, Stewart Brothers, a Kodak dealer and commercial photographer in Colorado Springs that held a concession photographing visitors as they rode the tram to top of nearby Pike's Peak.

Ira paid \$25 for his "Model A" 16mm camera, plus another \$25 for the tripod. "With it I shot over 200,000 feet of film until the format ended a few years ago," he recalled recently. "My first movie was 'Four Wheels,' a film about soap box racers coasting down a windy path cut in a nearby hill." The film stock cost him a week's pay – about \$5 each for two 100-foot rolls.

Ira was intent on a career in photography. After a couple of years working in the Stewart Brothers photofinishing department and a chemistry degree from the University of Colorado, he went east to work for Agfa Ansco in Binghamton, NY, in 1934. He served in the Navy during World War II, then went back to Ansco, where he worked until 1972, when he joined the faculty of the Rochester Institute of Technology. He taught courses in Materials and Processes of Photography and Color Printing Theory, and chaired the Professional Photography Department for several years before retiring in 1980. He is a co-author of *Materials and Processes of Photography* and over the years wrote several books, including *Photography Color Printing: Theory and Practice*, *Electric Eye Movie Manual*, and *How to Process Color Films at Home*. He also held several patents.

After he retired from RIT he continued in photography, with one-man shows and participation in exhibits and salons. He has sent his archive of papers, negatives and prints to the University of Colorado. But one thing didn't make the trip – the Model A. It got away from him years ago, he said, and he wishes he had it back.



## Write for PHSNE's Journal

The editors of PHSNE's *New England Journal of Photographic History*, Ruth Thomasian (words) and Adrian Levesque (photographs) are looking for articles, and you could be a published author. Please be in touch with the editors of *The Journal* about contributing articles that reveal your special interests, knowledge, and expertise in photo history, whether it be very serious, full of fun, or somewhere in between. Contact Ruth Thomasian (617-923-4542 or 4563, or e-mail archives@projectsave.org) or Adrian Levesque (603-889-4056, e-mail ALevesque2@comcast.net). When emailing, please put "PHSNE Journal" in the subject line.

## Photographica 69 Needs Your Help

Continued from Page 1

May 2, at 6:30. It's not all heavy lifting — there are packets of information to assemble and badges to prepare (and there will be a thank-you ice cream social afterwards at the Jordan's Furniture IMAX movie complex).

On Saturday morning several volunteers are needed at 7 a.m. to help check dealers in and get them to their tables. More people will be needed throughout Saturday and Sunday to take tickets, count money and guard doors, as well as help visitors and dealers alike.

"Even if you can help just long enough to let another volunteer have lunch or take a break it will be helpful," he said.

You can – and should – contact John at 781-592-2553 or by email at john\_dockery@hotmail.com.

## PHSNE Meetings

Meetings are usually held on the first Sunday of each month, September to June, at 1:30 p.m. at Waltham High School, preceded by a mini trade fair at 12:30 and an open meeting of the PHSNE board at 11:00 a.m. Upcoming meetings and events:

**May 3-4** — Photographica 69 (no meeting)

**June 1** — Annual Field Trip: JFK Library

**Sept. 27-28** — Photographica 70 in Wakefield

### Directions

Waltham High School is at 617 Lexington St., Waltham, MA. The high school is at the top of the hill, behind other school buildings.

**From I-95 (Route 128) Northbound:** Take Exit 27 and follow Totten Pond Rd. 1.2 miles east until it dead-ends into Lexington St. Turn left and go .5 miles north. Turn right into the school complex.

**From I-95 (Route 128) Southbound:** Take Exit 28, Trapelo Rd., east 1.3 miles to Lexington St. Turn right and go south .8 miles to school complex on the left.

**From Boston/Cambridge:** Take Rte. 2 west to Exit 54B, then Lexington St. south 1.7 miles to school complex on the left.

**From Lincoln and West:** Take Route 2 east to Exit 53, Concord Ave. Go east 1 mile, then right onto Lexington St. and 1.3 miles south to school complex on the left.

## PHSNE Online

PHSNE's Web site is online at [www.phsne.org](http://www.phsne.org). Ralph Johnston is the Webmaster.

Join the PHSNE Forum online discussion: sign up and log in at [www.phsne.net/forum](http://www.phsne.net/forum), moderated by Joe Walters. For an archive of back issues of *snap shots* and meeting presentations, visit [www.phsne.net/pubs](http://www.phsne.net/pubs).

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Photographic Historical Society of New England  
Next Meeting: Sunday, April 6:  
"Gunter Mueller on Collecting Images"



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