

# snap shots

Volume 14 Number 3

November 2008

## November Program Rolls Out Rollfilm

The challenge: shoot hard-to-find film in old hard-to-find cameras —

Result: a program that proves everything old is new again

You can't buy rollfilm at the drugstore anymore — no 620, no 120, no 127, certainly no 828 or 116. And good luck finding an American-made camera that will shoot what you can find (which is most likely to be 120).

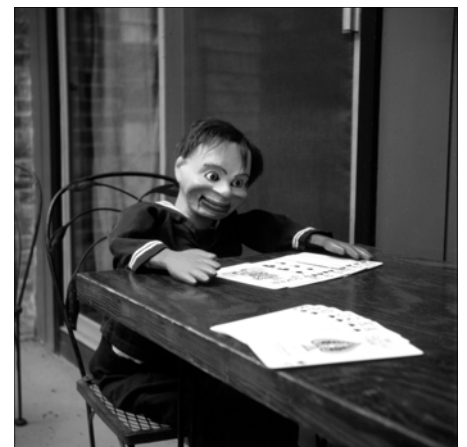
That was the challenge that produced the program for the November 2 meeting at Waltham High School: photographs made with American-manufactured rollfilm cameras. Several PHSNE members have risen to the challenge, and the results make an interesting program.

In some ways, the Rollfilm Challenge reverses the American 35mm Challenge of two years ago. For that show the film and processing were easy to come by, but American-made 35mm cameras are relatively rare. For rollfilm, the cameras are plentiful, but it's the film and processing that are rare — and rapidly becoming even scarcer. Creativity had to be the order of the day. Solutions included respooling 120 film onto 620 reels, and a few members had specialized equipment they could fall back on — like John Wojtowicz's 2 1/4-by-3 1/4 Crown Graphic with a rollfilm adapter back.

*Rollfilm*  
SHOOTOUT



Images from the upcoming November program: Ralph Johnston shot his Charles River view from MIT (top) with a 127 Spartus Vest Pocket Folder. Ralph Damon used a Kodak Brownie 2 folding camera (one of the few 120 Kodaks) to capture the Royall house in Medford (left); Paul Nisula shot the antique steam engine with an Ansco Titan 120 folder. Al Holmy used a Ciroflex to shoot the card-playing ventriloquist's dummy.



## Shows and Exhibitions Around New England

"*Augustus Frederick Sherman: Ellis Island Portraits, 1905-1920*" at the **National Heritage Museum** in Lexington, MA, brings together for the first time a collection of striking photographs taken between 1905 and 1920 by Augustus Frederick Sherman, a clerk with the Immigration Division at Ellis Island. Sherman was an accomplished amateur photographer and his position enabled him to take portraits of more than 200 families, groups, and individuals while they were being detained either for medical reasons or for further interrogation.

More than 280 of Sherman's photographs have been located in the collections of Ellis Island and the New York Public Library, though they have rarely been shown. Similarly, the man who made them lived his life out of view: Augustus Frederick Sherman was chief clerk at Ellis Island from 1906 to 1921, when he was promoted to private secretary to the Commissioner, a position he held until 1925. Little is known about the rest of his life. Through April 26, 2009. (National Heritage Museum, 33 Marrett Rd. Lexington, MA, 781-861-6559, [www.monh.org](http://www.monh.org).)

"*New York, N. Why?: Photographs by Rudy Burckhardt, 1937-1940*," at New York's **Metropolitan Museum of Art**. In the late 1930s, Rudy Burckhardt—then a recent émigré to America from Switzerland—created what are today considered to be some of the greatest photographs of New York ever made. This exhibition will

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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, "Dec 2008" 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 Joe Walters Jr, PHSNE Membership Chair, P.O. Box 650189, West Newton, MA 02465 (phone: 617-694-5594; email: [membership@phsne.net](mailto:membership@phsne.net), or use the Web form at [www.phsne.net/contacts](http://www.phsne.net/contacts)).

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Photograph © Estate of Yousuf Karsh, courtesy MFA

One of Yousuf Karsh's classic portraits, this image of Audrey Hepburn is included in "Karsh 100: A Biography in Images" at Boston's Museum of Fine Arts through next January 19. Karsh, who studied in Boston, gave a major gift of his work to the MFA before his death in 2002.

present in its entirety a unique album (acquired by the Museum in 1972) of 67 now-classic images of street furniture, outdoor advertising, and pedestrians, selected and sequenced by Burckhardt in 1940. Through January 4, 2009. (MMA, 1000 5th Avenue at 82nd Street, New York, 212-535-7710, [www.metmuseum.org](http://www.metmuseum.org).)

### Help Wanted: snap shots Editor Needed

After three-plus years David DeJean is retiring as editor of this newsletter, and PHSNE is looking for a replacement.

The snap shots editor works with the publications committee to set editorial direction, creates its contents, and coordinates the printing and mailing of the publication, working with the printer and PHSNE volunteers.

The job description calls for writing and editing and photography skills, as well as desktop-publishing and photo-editing experience, and above all, an interest in photography and a commitment to PHSNE.

If you are interested in helping out with snap shots, please contact PHSNE President Marti Jones, [marti0727@comcast.net](mailto:marti0727@comcast.net), or Ruth Thomasian, chairperson of the publications committee, [archives@projectsave.org](mailto:archives@projectsave.org).

## Eaton Lothrop: Photo History's Friendly Giant

Teacher. Author. Photo-historian. Collector. Lecturer. Scholar. There are many words that can describe Eaton Lothrop, but the one I feel describes him best is friend. I think he would also say that was the most important one. On Sept. 21, the world of collecting lost a good friend.

This past July 29 Eaton called to say he had been diagnosed with pancreatic cancer. I was lost. Eaton was a fixture at my table every show that PHSNE had. He never hesitated to answer any questions having to do with cameras or their history. He was a great man and a real friend to PHSNE and other organizations around the world.

His latest passion was collecting street cameras, and PHSNE was fortunate enough to have Eaton speak about them at the May 2007 meeting — just the most recent of his several appearances at PHSNE's podium.

Thank you, Eaton, for all you taught me and others. You will be missed.  
— Marti Jones

Way back in the 1960s, when many folks were first taken with the thought of camera collecting, Eaton was already one of the most knowledgeable in the world. His "Photographic Collectors' Newsletter" (1968) was the world's first periodical on the subject, and he was also the first president of the Photographic Historical Society of America, a national group that lasted for many years.

Beaumont Newhall saw the potential for a book on the George Eastman House Camera Collection and turned to Eaton Lothrop to write it. His *A Century of Cameras* (1973) is still a favorite among all those many camera books that followed.

He wrote Time Exposure, a regular feature in *Popular Photography* magazine for many years. When the Spira

family wanted to produce a major 'coffee-table' class book on the incomparable collection formed by the late S. Fred Spira, it was Eaton who researched and wrote the major

Eaton was honored as a PHSNE Life Member at the society's tenth-anniversary banquet in 1984, along with MIT's Dr. Harold Edgerton and British photo historian and curator Brian W. Coe.

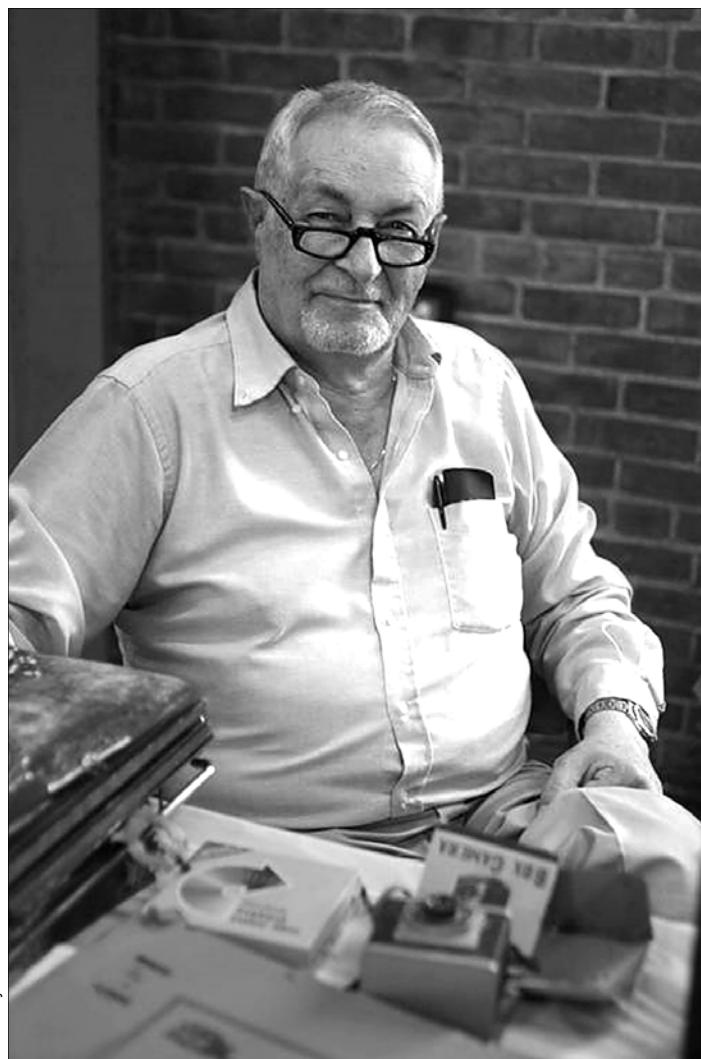


Photo by Ruud Hoff

Eaton Lothrop at his table at PHSNE's Photographica last year.

part of the book, *The History of Photography as Seen Through the Spira Collection* (2001).

Putting his fantastic knowledge to work, he collected some of the rarest and certainly most charming items along the way, and was as delighted with some small accessory of unusual nature as he was with discovering the only-known or best example of a great rarity.

— N. M. Graver, *TPHS, Rochester*

Eaton really was a teacher. He had that wonderful ability to communicate, to teach, not only in his career — he was a science teacher — but in everything he did. I learned about him through what he wrote in *Popular Photography* long before I met him. His Q-and-A column was so casual, but so informative.

He knew so much, yet he gave you that sense that there are no dumb questions. You'd see him at his table at a Photographica show with somebody who'd brought in a busted Brownie, and Eaton would spend as much time with it as a rare Leica. He loved photography, LOVED it, and he was such a good guy.

## Photographica 70 a Sell-Out Success: Shows 71 and 72 Are On the Schedule

Photographica 70 was a success. About 500 people passed through the doors of the Americal Center in Wakefield, MA, and dealers at the sold-out event reported better than average sales. The 2009 Photographicas have been scheduled in the same venue: show 71 on April 25 and 26, 2009, and show 72 on Oct. 24 and 25. More than half the dealer space for next April's show has already been sold. If you are interesting in becoming a dealer at this show and have not signed up yet, please do so ASAP.

Photographica 72 will also likely sell out because it is scheduled for the weekend after the Triennial Photo Symposium in Rochester, NY. I expect many collectors, photo historians and international dealers will remain in the northeast to attend both events. There is a possibility that there will also be an auction of selected items at one or both of these forthcoming Photographica shows.

There are some changes in the works for Photographica as we move forward. We are planning to offer several seminars throughout the day at Photographica. The goal of these seminars is to give PHSNE members a chance to educate the public, recruit new members and increase the number of people who attend Photographica. If you know of a speaker or a topic you would like to see at the show, please contact me with your suggestions.

I want to thank the dealers for their continued support. I also want to thank the PHSNE members whose work and drive continue to make this event possible. Without their efforts, PHSNE would not be the active organization it is.

— *John Dockery, Show Manager*

### 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.

**Dec. 7** — Reflections on Jack Naylor

**Jan. 4** — Member Programs

**Feb. 1** — Annual Members Auction

### 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, November 2:  
"Rollfilm Shootout"

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