

# snap shots

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April 2012

## PHSNE Visits Currier Museum

The April 1<sup>st</sup> PHSNE meeting will be held at the Currier Museum of Art in Manchester, NH, known internationally for its collections of European and American painting, sculpture, and photography.

The day includes a regular PHSNE meeting; for this reason we ask you to enter the museum only through the Beech Street entrance (press security buzzer to left of door). Check in at the registration desk and meet in the Yellow Classroom. The board meeting begins at 11:00 a.m., followed by a lunch break in the café, then the regular meeting at 1:00 p.m. and a guided tour of the exhibit, led by two docents, at 2:30. The room closes at 4:00 p.m., but the museum is open until 5:00 p.m.

The exhibit we will be seeing is *A New Vision: Modernist Photography* featuring 125 works from the Museum's extensive photography collection. The early twentieth century saw new visual styles develop in all the arts that broke with strictly representational modes. Form and composition almost be-



*Tide Pool and Kelp, Brett Weston, c 1980*

came ends in themselves, the subject matter often secondary. Technological advances gave rise to a new view in which a photographic way of seeing stood on its

own, rather than as a variant of painting. These developments were international in scope, and this exhibit includes important works by Americans such as Edward and Brett Weston, Ansel Adams, and Margaret Bourke-White, as well as Europeans Moholy-Nagy and Lotte Jacobi. You can't carry bags through the museum, but if you bring something for the Show and Tell or trading tables, you can safely leave it in the classroom or museum lockers.

See directions to Museum on p. 4. Admission will be free for PHSNE members.

~John Wojtowicz

## Photographica 77 Coming Soon

*Photographica* brings about 500 attendees to each show. It has been called "the best swap-meet, camera museum, and social gathering of photography on the east coast." A complete sellout of all 70 tables is expected. The show will take place at the Americal Center in Wakefield, MA on Saturday, April 14th, 9:00 a.m.- 4:00 p.m. and Sunday, April 15th, 9:00 a.m.- 3:00 p.m.



At least five new dealers will be setting up at this show. PHSNE will again be marketing *Photographica* to local photography stu-

dents, so dealers should bring items of interest to them: basic darkroom equipment (but no enlargers) and working medium and large format film cameras.

An online reviewer of the last show wrote about the amazing cameras that were in the hall and how nice and fair everyone was to him. You can read the entire online review at [oldcamreview.blogspot.com/2011/11/report-on-phisne-photographica-show-76.html](http://oldcamreview.blogspot.com/2011/11/report-on-phisne-photographica-show-76.html).

The way our staff and dealers treat attendees is an important reason that *Photographica* continues to roll on when many other camera shows have folded. Attendees keep coming back and they tell others about our show. Our dealers have set a high bar of knowledge, fairness, and quality. Attendees continue to pay cash for merchandise during the economic recession. The gate hasn't fallen off, and there's been a waiting list of dealers wanting to buy tables.

I again want to thank everyone connected with the show and invite others who would like to join us and become part of something special. Contact me at [john\\_dockery@hotmail.com](mailto:john_dockery@hotmail.com), 781-592-2553.

~John Dockery

## Calling All Stereo Buffs

Check out [stereo.nypl.org/about](http://stereo.nypl.org/about). The first thing you see when you click on this interesting site is an invitation to improve it.

Introducing his remarkable project, Joshua Heineman explains that the Stereogramator is a “tool for transforming historical stereographs from The New York Public Library’s vast collections into shareable 3D web formats.” He describes his early interest in stereo and his accidental discovery of a technique that “approximated the effect of stereo viewing” on a computer. It involves “layering both sides of an old stereograph in Photoshop and displaying the result as an animated gif.”

Heineman launched a project called *Reaching for the Out of Reach* and posted stereographs from the NYPL archives at [cursivebuildings.com](http://cursivebuildings.com). He states there were 70,000 visitors the first month.

After viewing the introduction on the NYPL site, click on Gallery to view the library’s collection.



Henry Dravneek, Inc.

## Collecting Digitals: Time to Start?

To those accustomed to collecting antique cameras, some over 100 years old, the phrase “collectible digitals” probably sounds like an oxymoron. Yet some of the digitals that have come on the scene in very recent years are rapidly becoming obsolete.

Competition, at least for the low-end digitals, comes from smart phones. For starters, the millions of people who own them usually have their phones with them at all times — no need to carry anything else. With a vast



Amateur digitals; Regelman collection

array of apps, the cameras-in-a-phone can do almost anything a typical digital can do, including a great deal of photoshop type editing. Picture quality from the smartphones is comparable to the low-end digitals and improving rapidly.

Jared Spurbeck posted an article on the Yahoo Contributor Network titled *Why are Digital Cameras Disappearing?*, noting that this only applies to the low end digitals. He cites Kate Dugan, representing Sony, who acknowledged that digital cameras are in “true decline” with sales at Sony down by 20 percent. Sony is determined to withstand the competition from smartphones, believing that “important moments should go to cameras.” Spurbeck also notes that Mike Tomkins of Imaging Resource indicated that Canon’s compact cameras “are starting to tank except in ‘emerging markets.’” Recently, the Eastman Kodak Co., now under Chapter 11 reorganization, announced it will discontinue the manufacture of digital cameras.

Serious photographers still seek high quality digital cameras and are willing to pay for them, but your basic point-and-shoot digitals may not be around for long. You may soon be looking for them at garage sales and flea markets to add to your collections.

If you’re interested in further commentary or technical information, visit [news.yahoo.com/why-digital-cameras-disappearing-173800439.html](http://news.yahoo.com/why-digital-cameras-disappearing-173800439.html).

### PHSNE Membership

PHSNE membership is \$15 for students, \$35 for individuals and institutions, \$40 for a family, and \$45 for foreign membership. Join or renew online at [phsne.org/paypal](http://phsne.org/paypal) or send a check in U.S. dollars, drawn on a U.S. bank or dollar denominated international money order.

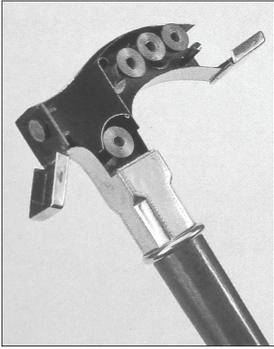
Members should check the expiration date on the *snap shots* mailing label before sending in dues.

Send payments, changes of address, and other contact information, to Joe Walters Jr, PHSNE Membership Chair, P.O. Box 650189, West Newton, MA 02465. (Call: 617-826-9294; email: [membership@phsne.org](mailto:membership@phsne.org); or use the Web form at [phsne.org/contacts](http://phsne.org/contacts)).

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## Detective Cameras Popular Since 1880's

From the earliest days of photography, people have wanted to take photos without being seen by the subjects or witnesses. The motive may be innocent, simply wanting a candid shot or trying to photograph a camera shy relative—or sinister, possibly seeking to capture forbidden images for spy purposes.



Ben Akiba walking-stick camera, 1902

Initially, the large size of film and cameras made such furtive shots all but impossible, but as technology progressed, cameras got smaller, film got faster, and lenses got sharper. Photographers were able to conceal cameras in clever and unusual ways.

The term “detective camera” came into use to describe concealed cameras as well as hand-

held cameras that enabled the photographer to take informal candid pictures. In 1883, E. & H.T. Anthony introduced a detective camera and advertised that “Amateurs and others will find great pleasure and profit in the intelligent use of this apparatus, by which surreptitious negatives can be made without attracting the attention of the curious.”

Longtime PHSNE member Eaton Lothrop, Jr. (1930—2008) described several methods in his *Popular Photography* column (*Time Exposure*, January 1972): “mounting a right angle prism atop the camera, concealing the camera inside a rolled newspaper or in a hollowed-out book, hiding it under the coat, and mounting it inside an uncamera-like box.”

Later methods included concealing the camera in “cane handles, binoculars, photo albums, watches, tool boxes, satchels, and revolvers.” One camera was hidden inside the knot of a necktie.

Lothrop co-authored a book about detective cameras, *The Unseen Eye* with fellow PHSNE member Michel Auer (1978; out of print), and there is a chap-

ter on the subject in Auer’s *The Illustrated History of the Camera From 1839 to the present* (1975) and in *Ultimate Spy* by H. Keith Melton (Second Edition,



Binoca opera glass camera, Japan, 1950, 16 mm

2002). Another excellent source of information is *Spy Camera, A Century of Detective and Subminiature Cameras* by PHSNE member Michael Pritchard and Douglas St. Denny (1993).

Concealing cameras in hats was particularly popular. A hat camera by Leandre ‘Marco’ Mendoza was introduced in 1884 and available in a Paris hat shop in 1885. The *Chapeau Photographique*, manufactured by J. de Neck (Belgium) sighted through the front of the hat and was activated by pulling a string hanging from the brim. A German version made by Herr Luders required that the user hold the hat in front of him. ~Cameras and photos from Naylor Collection



Pocket watch camera

### Change in Membership Year Starting Sept 1<sup>st</sup> And a Special 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Bonus

The PHSNE Board has voted to start the membership year on September 1<sup>st</sup> of each year. This new start date is congruent with PHSNE activities—meetings, publication of *snap shots*, *Photographica* Shows, and day trips. The new membership year will start on September 1, 2012. Dues are unchanged.

To celebrate the April 2013 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of PHSNE, the Board voted to provide all members in good standing for the calendar year 2012 a special 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Membership that runs from January 1, 2012 through August 31, 2013 (20 months) at current one year dues. Members in good standing will see their expiration date, as shown on mailing labels, reflect this change for mailings after April, 2012.

Be sure to renew your 2012 membership in a timely manner to receive the special 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Membership!  
~Joe Walters, Membership Chair

## Is this the Future of Photography?



Lytro has begun selling a new camera that doesn't look or function like anything else on the market today. According to *lytro.com*, "Unlike a conventional camera that captures a single plane of light, the Lytro camera captures the entire light field, which is all the light traveling in every direction in every point in space."

This enables you to "focus after the fact." Just click on any part of the image, and you can refocus any time. There's no need for auto-focus, and therefore no shutter delay. Photos are more vivid than images taken with conventional cameras.

Cameras are priced at \$400 for an 8 gigabyte model with a capacity of 350 photos and \$500 for a 16 gigabyte model with a 750 photo capacity.

JP Mangalindan reviewed the camera for *Writer-Reporter*, October 19, 2011. He said the "cylinder-like shape certainly makes a statement and differentiates it from many other point and shooters already out there. The combination of cool aluminum and silicone is pleasant to hold, and navigating around the combination of physical buttons and touchscreen is pretty easy. [Lytro Founder Ren] Ng was also quick to push the instant shutter ability, and indeed, there was little lag between shots. As for the photos of themselves, refocusing, at least through the Lytro's touchscreen, was a breeze."

### PHSNE Meetings

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

### Upcoming meetings:

**May 6**—Sabine Ocker, Cyanotypes

**June 3**—Bud Miggely, Weird and Wonderful cameras

Driving Directions: Currier Museum, 150 Ash St., Manchester, N.H., 603-669-6144.

\* I-293, Exit 6-Amoskeag Bridge, bear right; cross bridge (stay in left lane) following signs for Route 3/Business District to Elm St. At traffic light, cross Elm and go 0.4 mile to Beech St. Turn right onto Beech. The Currier will be 0.5 mile on your left.

\* I-93, Exit 8-Wellington Rd./Bridge St. Bear right at the end of the ramp, which becomes Bridge St. Go 1.5 miles to Ash St. (after third full traffic light). Turn right onto Ash. The Currier will be 0.25 mile on your left. To park on Beech Street (which is one way) continue past the Currier to Prospect St., make a left, then another left onto Beech.

The Currier parking lot is located in front of the main entrance on Prospect St. You may walk down the sidewalk on Beech Street which will bring you directly to the Beech Street entrance. If you require a shorter distance to walk, the most convenient parking for early arrivals is on-street parking around the perimeter of the museum.

### PHSNE Online

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

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

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Photographic Historical Society of New England  
Next Meeting: Sunday, April 1, 2012  
Currier Museum of Art, Manchester, NH