



During a Formulary workshop, Tom took this image of the small, wooden school building in the foreground, actually a birdhouse sitting on one of the "Standing Stones," with the life-size Formulary classroom building in the background. ©2004 Tom Miller

## The Photographers' Formulary Newsletter



Dedicated to Preserving  
19<sup>th</sup> Century Alternative Processes

October 15, 2004

Vol. 2, No. 1

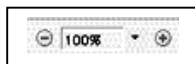
### Items in November Newsletter

- Pinhole Camera Images
- Tintypes in NG Magazine, or Everything Old is New Again
- Next Summer: What Classes would you like to see?
- Traditional Photography: an Alternative Process?
- This House of Sky
- Eddie Adams dies at age 71
- Fall in the Rockies
- Tamarack Quilters visit the Formulary
- Bud's Formulary Newsletter Specials
- "The Self is the Dancer" Exhibition

*Editor's note: All [type](#) in blue and all [images](#) are linked to other sites. Put your pointer on an image or some [blue type](#), and [click](#). You'll find yourself on the way to a new destination!*

*You are using Adobe Acrobat to view this newsletter, but did you know how to make the newsletter larger or smaller? Look at the menu bar at the top of this page for this icon:*

*Use it to enlarge (+) size of the page, and at enlarge or reduce the*



*or to reduce (-) the the same time size of the type.*

### Pinhole Camera images

**Tom Miller of Coon Rapids, Minnesota** was a participant in a recent Formulary workshop. He's been photographing with pinholes since 1996. Tom brought his cameras with him, thirty Whitman Sampler hinged metal tins, each with a pinhole carefully fitted to the inside of the lid. He said having thirty cameras, each loaded with a single sheet of Ilford 2"x 3" sheet

film, is about the same as having a roll of film in a conventional camera.

During the recent [Vestal-Weber workshop](#) in Condon, Montana, Tom took this image of the small, wooden school building in the foreground, actually a birdhouse sitting on one of the "Standing Stones," with the life-size Formulary classroom building in the background. Because no lens is used, rays of light pass through a tiny pinhole and strike the film at the back of the candy tin form the image. Exposures are measured in seconds and minutes, rather than fractions of a second. By their nature, pinhole images tend to be a little "soft" but possess infinite depth of field. This places the birdhouse, around six inches in front of the camera, in an equal plane of focus with the Formulary building more than fifty feet away.

In April 2003, Tom curated the "[MinneAperture Exhibit of Contemporary Pinhole Photography](#)" at the [Minnesota Center for Photography](#) in Minneapolis. In her year-end review of Twin Cities art, Minneapolis Star-Tribune critic Mary Abbe wrote "In a season blessed with more than a dozen fine photography shows, the most memorable was ["MinneAperture"](#) at the Minnesota Center for Photography." Tom is also the coordinating team leader for [Worldwide Pinhole Photography Day](#)

Tom teaches and lectures on pinhole at venues throughout the Twin Cities, including the Minnesota Center for Photography and the [Anoka-Hennepin Adult Community Education](#) system. He spends his spare time quietly photographing and trying not to arouse any suspicions by standing next to tin cans wrapped in electrician's tape.

Though Tom uses electron microscope slides to make *his* pinholes, he doesn't recommend it for people trying to make a pinhole camera for the first time. "It is always best," Tom says, "to learn pinhole using materials that are close at hand. I've had people, including photography teachers, get way too excited about the slides being a magic bullet."



This self-portrait of Tom Miller, titled "Surveilled," was taken with a pinhole camera made from a Whitman's Sampler hinged metal tin. Tom used Ilford 2x3 sheet film, and exposed it for 90 seconds. ©2002 Tom Miller

"For new [pinhole photographers], it is best to start simple and cheap, then get exotic. Also, turning an electron microscope slide into a photo aperture is kinda tricky and not any easier than making a pinhole out of pieces of aluminum cookie sheet."

His reason for using the slides in cameras he provides for use at his workshops and at fundraisers for the Minnesota Center for Photography is,

"To make sure that all thirty candy tin cameras will behave the same, with the same image resolution and exposure times. I made eight of these cameras as a dry run using homemade pinholes out of brass shim stock. This worked pretty well; I didn't notice any variability. On the other hand, I wanted to be absolutely certain that all cameras would use the same exposure times. I also have a set of thirty 5x7 cylinder cameras that I use for make-your-own-pinhole-photo events, for example, an annual fundraiser at the MN Center for Photography. Since the public is spending money on this, the cameras better work predictably!"

To download plans for a simple homemade pinhole camera, [press here](#) . . .

***Tintypes in NG Magazine, or Everything Old is New Again***  
*National Geographic* magazine has long been famous for its photography. For all of us who combed its pages as kids, *National Geographic* meant crystal clear black and white images of faraway places and half-clad humans.

Over the years color crept in, and places no longer seemed so faraway in this shrinking world of ours.

The December 2004 issue arrived in this week's mail, and with it an article about Elko, Nevada. Hardly faraway by today's standards, Elko is a piece of the Old West hanging on by a frayed leather halter and a well-worn saddle on an aging horse.

The images are all in tintype, the first *National Geographic* article ever to contain them as part of an article shot on assignment. Shot with the precision for which *National Geographic* is famous, the images evoke the Old West in the same way those in the movie, *Cold Mountain*, created the ambience of America's Civil War.

How NGS photographer Robb Kendrick created the images is explained in a separate piece, and Internet addresses to additional helpful information are included.

Ian Doyle, Formulary instructor and resident expert in the "wet plate collodion" processes, teaches *Tintype* each summer in his workshop, "*Ambrotypes, Ferrotypes and Daguerreotypes*." If you think you might be interested in learning these processes, and the special techniques to produce these one of a kind images, then plan now to sign up for Ian's workshop. Now's the time to block out that two weeks of vacation time you've been hoarding, but never got around to taking. Contact us at [Formulary@blackfoot.net](mailto:Formulary@blackfoot.net), and we'll send you workshop information. Download the March 2004 issue of this newsletter to read about the *Cold Mountain* images, and about Ian's class.

#### ***Next summer: What Classes would you like to see?***

We need your help. Each fall we begin scheduling classes for the next summer. We would like to hear from you: what classes would you like to see offered? Some classes we offer every summer. But we know there are many more classes we could offer if we knew there was sufficient interest in them.



"The Mississippi River" has more than 30 locks between its headwaters in Wisconsin and its mouth at the Gulf of Mexico. The locks are used to regulate the river's flow, and to maintain sufficient depth for millions of tons of cargo transported up and down the river each year. ©2002 Tom Miller

For example, during a recent workshop this summer Tom Miller showed work produced from a series of pinhole cameras made from Whitman's Sampler metal boxes. Of course, almost any container, properly sealed, can be converted to a pinhole camera. These have ranged from bell peppers to Bekins moving boxes. One camera obscura, (really just an oversize pinhole camera) was a light-tight tent, sent up in a public sidewalk, so people could walk inside and experience being inside the image-maker.

Another workshop participant makes books. These are from original prints, carefully mounted on heavy paper stock, then bound into a volume. One of a kind, or one of many, these books make an important contribution to our photographic record.

If you would like to see classes like this offered, and if you have ideas for other classes, please write to us at [Formulary@blackfoot.net](mailto:Formulary@blackfoot.net). You can also write to our newsletter editor, Anthony Mournian. His email address is:

Mournian@sandiego.edu. We will be glad to hear your suggestions.

### ***Traditional Photography: an Alternative Process?***

With the rapid onslaught of Digital Imaging on the making of photographs, have we already seen traditional photography become an alternative process?

**Ilford** is in trouble. Deep in debt, Ilford is selling off its UK paper operation. Not a good sign for those of us who rely on Ilford as the source of some of the finest photographic paper on the market. **Kodak** has drastically cut back on the size of its workforce, a reflection of the drop in sales of film, and of Kodak's inability to keep pace with the shifting demands of the marketplace. **Polaroid** has filed for bankruptcy protection, reduced its workforce and cut back on its operations.

All three manufacturers remain heavyweights in the photography industry, but will probably continue to see the erosion of their markets for paper and film. And these firms are probably not the only ones feeling the pain.

Has traditional photography been relegated to the backbench by digital imaging tools that seem to leap forward by the day in their ability to capture and reproduce images? Are we on the way to a film less as well as a paperless society?

**Dan Burkholder** is leading the charge to make high quality images from digital files. He can use a film-based negative, or he can use a digital file, then manipulate them as he sees necessary or desirable, and produce a high-quality print.

Not everyone agrees with Dan or his disciples, but that shouldn't keep us from recognizing his work as legitimate, and as one of the next phases of photography. Since Louis Daguerre and Henry Fox Talbot faced off at the very beginnings of photography in the 1840s we have seen change after change in the way images are captured and reproduced. Many of our "alternative processes" are simply a reflection of those changes.

So, as we move firmly into the Digital Age, let us welcome "traditional film-based photography" to the ranks of the Alternative Processes.

### ***This House of Sky* by Ivan Doig**

If you haven't been to Montana, this book will give you lots of reasons to visit. Ivan Doig was born in 1939, hardly the stuff of ancient history. After Ivan's mother died of asthma when Ivan was only six years old. His father raised him in another time and another space.

Why do I mention *This House of Sky*? Because what Doig knows of his mother he knows from photographs taken of her and by her with an old Brownie camera. She tried to capture every memory with her Brownie, carefully putting them into albums. When she did she created a history of her life and times for her son to draw on much later as he became one of the finest writers of the Northwest.

Descriptions from the albums of 2x3 contacts taken on old 127 Kodak film give us rare glimpses of rural life in Montana during the 1930's.

Doig describes a hard life of growing up the only child of a young widower in rural Montana beyond our imaginings. You ought to read it.

### ***Eddie Adams: Death of an Icon***

**Eddie Adams** lived many more lives in the same number of years than the rest of us. Photographer of presidents, correspondent in more than thirty wars, and world traveler many times over, Adams lived every moment.

His most famous photograph, the one that won a Pulitzer, is not one of beauty, but of war. Attracted by the sounds of gunfire in central Saigon, Adams and a film crew rushed to the scene. Adams captured the moment of death in the summary execution of a Viet Cong captain as an army officer shot him in the head. While perhaps his most famous, the photograph was not Adams' favorite. He felt he had captured a moment in a brutal war, and that the shame and ignominy the photograph brought



A stand of Tamaracks glows in the afternoon sun. As fall weather turns colder, the Tamaracks turn from green to golden. Sherry Maloughney took this photograph for us near her home. ©2004

on the army officer was undeserved.

Adams died last month at the age of 71. His efforts as a photographer will be long remembered.

### ***Fall in the Rockies***

Have you ever flown across the Rockies in late September or early October? Maybe you looked out the window to see patches of gold, fiery red or blazing yellow marching across the mountainside. As the days grow shorter and the sun heads south for the winter, the nights grow longer and colder. Trees that drop their needles or leaves sense this change and begin to shut down for the long winter months.

Their leaves and needles change color because as the trees' circulation draws inward, the leaves and needles no longer have the sunlight or sap necessary to sustain them. They change color because of the lack of chlorophyll, turning bright shades of red, yellow and orange. It's a festival of color, and all free. Within weeks the leaves and needles drop. In your own yard they become a nuisance to be raked, but in the forest

they drop to the ground and begin to rot, forming the base of new growth. If you would like to know more about why the leaves turn red, and why they fall? [press here. . .](#)

### ***Tamarack Quilters visit the Formulary***

Twelve Quilters of the Tamarack came to spend the night at **Standing Stones B Inn B**. Every light in the house was on as they worked through the night, their sewing machines humming in the biggest Formulary classroom. More than thirty women from up and down the Swan Valley joined the lucky twelve during daylight hours as they hurried to finish quilts as gifts for the holiday or as sale items for craft fairs.

The lucky ladies feasted on Lynn's wonderful meals, and vowed to come back next spring to enjoy another night and a day of companionship and quilting. Who knows, maybe there was some gossip, too!



More than 30 ***Quiltmakers of the Tamarack*** came to stay at the B Inn B and to work in the main classroom of the Formulary. Lynn caught the spirit of the event in this image. ©2004



The ***Quiltmakers of the Tamarack*** said, "What a feed!" ©2004 Lynn Wilson  
***The Self is the Dancer***

If you have a chance, don't miss "***The Self is the Dancer***," the current exhibition at **Gold Street Studios** in Collingwood, Victoria, Australia. The exhibition, by Faye Boyes, opened October 6, and runs through October 30.



"***The Self is the Dancer***," by Faye Boyes ©2004

### ***As We Begin Our Second Year***

With the November issue we mark the beginning of our second year of the Photographers' Formulary newsletter. It's been a struggle learning how to control the many secrets of Microsoft Word, and to figure out how to make the most efficient use of **Adobe Acrobat** so that the file size we send to you isn't overwhelming.

Thank you for your comments and suggestions. Thanks to all who have allowed us to use their images, with nothing more than a promise of a few minutes of fame and a photo credit. And thanks to Bud and Lynn Wilson who make it all possible.

### ***Now for the Fine Print***

If you decide you no longer wish to receive the monthly newsletter, please give us a call at 1800-0922-5255, or send us an email at [Formulary@Blackfoot.net](mailto:Formulary@Blackfoot.net)

Write to us at: ***Photographers' Formulary***  
***PO Box 950, 7079 Hwy 83 N***  
***Condon, MT 59826-0950***