

the Photographers' Formulary



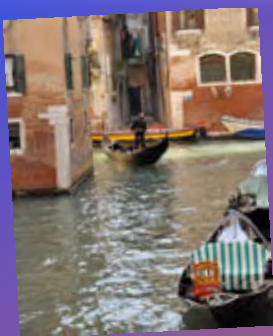
Heat Lightning over Summit Bechtel Reserve

©Russell Harrison

“AND THE HEAVENS OPENED. . .”

Volume 10

Number 10



Gondola Approaching the Light
©Denise Strahm

In this Issue

- “And the Heavens Opened”
- Denise Strahm: Digital Secessionist?
- Notes from our Readers
- Newsletter Specials

“AND THE HEAVENS OPENED. . .”

In July 2013 the Boy Scouts of America held their National Jamboree for the first time at the new Summit Bechtel Reserve outside Mount Hope, West Virginia. The Reserve sits among rugged mountains reminiscent of fierce and fatal battles of the Civil War.

Volunteers from across the nation gathered to staff the Jamboree, providing help and supervision for more than 30,000 Scouts over a ten day period.

Nature had her own plans for the Jamboree. For the first time in years there was rain in July, and plenty of it! Giant loudspeakers and a sophisticated early weather warning system would alert Scouts of fast moving squalls of rain and lightning.

During the third evening of Jamboree the skies darkened and thunder rolled. Rip Van Winkle and the band of bearded men would have had a field day playing Nine Pins, with the crashing and bashing of thunder off the hills surrounding the Jamboree campsites.

Russell Harrison of Richmond, Texas, took this striking photograph as the skies opened and heat lightning streaked across the heavens. In the foreground you see some of the 15,000 tents used to house Scouts and volunteers, against a dazzling background of sheet lightning and thunderheads.

the Photographers' Formulary

Volume 10

Number 10

DENISE STRAHM: DIGITAL SECESSIONIST?

Denise Strahm grew up in an artistic family. Her grandfather had a dark-room in his basement. When Strahm visited, it was a mystery and a treat to visit Grandpa's inner sanctum. Her father, a barber by trade, had many artistic hobbies and worked with woodcarving and sculpture as well as a camera.

Strahm, not unlike many photographers, feels more comfortable behind the camera than in front of it. Though she had a camera as a child it wasn't until high school that she took a class in photography. Her dad bought her a Canon AE1, which she used for years, but since the advent of digital she no longer uses a film camera.

She enjoys photographing as she travels, particularly in Europe. Perhaps it's because buildings in Europe are often much older than any she might find in the USA. Her eye focuses easily on patterns, colors and designs evoking a sense of graphic design.

With a background and training in graphic design, Strahm has a quick eye for arresting compositions. She doesn't agonize over compositions,



Venice Dry Cycle
©Denise Strahm

Editor's Note:

This is an interactive newsletter. To view larger versions of photographs, *please click on the thumbnail* and a larger image will automatically load.

but instead sees colors, shapes and designs wherever she looks. She's happy to photograph from the first light of morning to the dying light of day. Always watching the light, acutely aware of its ever changing quality, Strahm finds a setting such as "*Venice Dry Cycle*", and

sticks with it as the light moves across the scene. This may mean hours at a single location, and hundreds of images from which she winnows all but the most appealing.

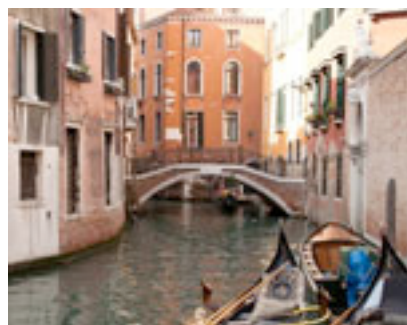
Preferring soft, muted lighting to bright sun or sharp shadows, she looks for ambiguous compositions.



Blue Gate, Carlsbad, California
©Denise Strahm

A favored city for photography is Venice, with its boat traffic and multi-hued canals. Buildings lining the canals are often centuries old, with a crusty, sometimes ramshackle quality. Strahm finds this particularly appealing. She combines the colorful but aged buildings with shimmering watery highways of Venice and produces photographs confusing to the eye, leaving the viewer wondering, “*Is this really a photograph?*” More than one visitor to her gallery has remarked, “*This can’t be a photograph. Look at that water!*”

You’ll seldom find a person in Strahm’s photographs. While she does not consider herself as a landscape photographer, most buildings in her work are devoid of human presence. While there may be lines of bright, freshly washed clothes hanging from



Canal View, Venice, Italy
©Denise Strahm

ancient balconies, you’ll seldom see the person who hung them out to dry.

Because older European cities are aged, and because their tenants tend to accept their buildings as they are, there’s less caulking, patching and painting than we seem to demand in the United States. The buildings achieve a timeless quality, though it’s obvious to even the most unpracticed eye the buildings are often on their last legs. With architectural elements no longer used because of the time and expense required to produce them, and with fewer artisans with the talents to craft them, European cities are holdovers from another age.



Mission Still Life, San Juan Capistrano
©Denise Strahm

Because Strahm does not view herself as a “landscape” photographer, she mentally “crops” most of her photographs, narrowing the scene to form images highly graphic in nature. She looks for shapes and lines with color, knowing they may not be what a “regular” person might choose, but for things with a graphic quality. It’s not uncommon for her to frame an image cutting off a portion of an object, such as the bench in “*Mission Still Life II, San Juan Capistrano*,” knowing the viewer’s mind will complete the image, even as the viewer might say, “*Look, she cut off the bench!*”



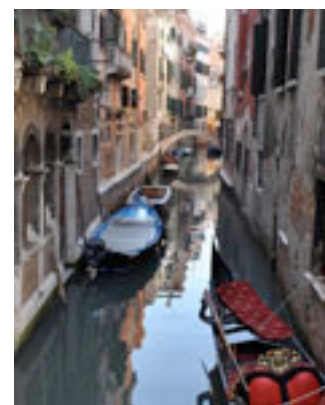
Pastel, Burano, Italy
©Denise Strahm

As a photographer, Strahm is largely self taught. She works alone, feeling she would be too “tied down” to work alongside another person. While it might be interesting to see how others do their work, Strahm would rather simply observe them rather than trying to work alongside.

Long before the Common Era, (BCE,) when early man lived in caves and survived by hunting and gathering, our ancestors scratched on walls or used bits of charcoal to draw pictures preserving events in their lives, or animals in their surroundings.

For many centuries the ability to capture and permanently preserve an image was the Holy Grail of art.

Finally, in 1826, Albert Niépce, using bitumen of Judea, or asphalt, produced the first permanent image which might rightfully be called a photograph. The original



Narrow Canal, Venice, Italy
©Denise Strahm



Ranchos, North Park, San Diego
©Denise Strahm

‘first photograph,’ “*View from the Window at Le Gras*” now rests in the archives of the University of Texas at Austin.

Niépce soon joined forces with a younger man, Louis Daguerre. They worked together for about three years when Niépce withdrew from the partnership because of ill health.

In August 1839 Daguerre announced the achievement of his stunningly successful daguerreotype process in which he was able to capture and preserve images in exceptional detail. Using a light sensitive polished surface coated with silver oxide as the medium, Daguerre was able to capture a permanent image of an object or a person.

The daguerreotype process had its drawbacks, however. It required a minutes long exposure and it could not be reproduced. Each daguerreotype was “one off.” They were fragile and easily damaged. The development process required the use of mercury vapor, well

known for its toxic quality, and probably the source of the term, “*Mad as a Hatter*.” Hatters used mercury in their craft, and were thought to go crazy after repeated exposure to the mercury vapors.

Still, while the daguerreotype became extremely popular, especially in Europe, it was eventually shunted off to the side by the competing Calotype process invented at very nearly the same time by Henry Fox Talbot of England. Talbot’s Calotype process involved a sensitized medium, usually “salted” paper, which pro-



Vernazza Hiking Steps, Venice, Italy
©Denise Strahm

duced not a positive image like the daguerreotype, but a negative image.

Using a Calotype paper negative, positive image copies could be made in quantity. It is to Talbot we owe what is commonly viewed as the modern process of film based photography.

Talbot’s process, like the daguerreotype, had its shortcomings. It was not easily done, and required serious dedication to the craft to produce quality images in quantity.

Over the next half century photography underwent numerous changes with consistent advancement in shortened exposure times and increasing quality. George Eastman opened up photography to the masses when he began pro-



Hope - Ramona, California
©Denise Strahm

ducing photographic film in rolls, and cameras simple enough for the man on the street.

Eastman’s company, Kodak, took off when he sold a camera and film which could be mailed to Kodak for processing, with the film, camera and positive images returned to the photographer by return mail.

Now anyone could take a photograph, and the process became all too common. So much so that it resulted in “true” or “pure” photographers such as Alfred Stieglitz and Edward Steichen, among others, forming the *Photo Secessionist* movement in an attempt to turn photography into “art.”

While “color” photography was possible during the early years of the 20th century, the *Autochrome* process was expensive and required long exposures, limiting its usefulness. Color, then, was not a major concern of the Photo Secessionists. But a look of something other than the increasingly literal black and white recording of a scene or person was a concern, and it was to that aspect of photography the Seces-



Reflection Pond, Balboa Park, San Diego
©Denise Strahm



Poorbox, Mission San Juan Capistrano
©Denise Strahm



Arches, Mission San Juan Capistrano
©Denise Strahm

sionists reacted. After all, it seemed then, as it does now with the advent of Digital photography, that anyone could become a photographer.

The Secessionists went to some pains to make photographs look more like paintings, and to give their images a feel of something more than a simple record of a scene, or a portrait something more than a faithful recording of the image of a person.

In the late 1990s art and photography again collided, and for much the same reason: everyone could take a digital image and everyone again began calling themselves a photographer.

It was about this time Strahm, trained in graphic design, decided to try her hand at photography. Armed with an Olympus point and shoot digital camera she began to photograph scenes and images which appealed to her sense of design.



Ponte Vecchio Glow, Italy
©Denise Strahm

She worried less about literal images than making a photograph which was closer to expressing a sense of quiet and peace. Then, as now, it was important to Strahm to find shape, color and design in her images, and less important to record an image faithful in every detail.

As a result Strahm developed a style which confuses the eye, akin to *trompe l'oeil*.

More than one visitor to her studio in San Diego's Spanish Village artist's colony has wondered aloud, "*Are these paintings or photographs?*"

This pleases Strahm because she works hard to achieve exactly that effect. She has a Nikon D90 with a single lens, saying she has no need



Gentle Touch, Mission San Juan Capistrano
©Denise Strahm

to haul around extra cameras and additional lenses. It doesn't bother her to have an image be less than crisp in detail. In fact, she works to find the subject, the light and the camera angle which will cause the viewer to wonder.

Among Strahm's favorite places to photograph are the California missions, and the cities of Vernazza and Venice in Italy. Color abounds in both places, a crucial element in Strahm's photographs. Lines and shapes are everywhere, and both locales exude a sense of



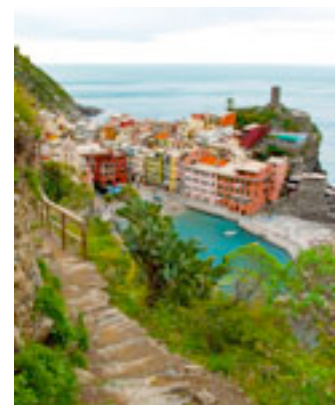
Layers of Laundry
©Denise Strahm

age in time worn buildings and architectural elements.

With her artist husband, Paul, Strahm visited and photographed every mission in the California chain while preparing for a show titled "*Exploring the California Missions.*" Paul, a *plein air* painter, has always encouraged Denise's photography endeavors.

Her favorite among the missions is San Juan Capistrano. Red brick archways along arcades fronting long rectangular mission quarters draped with colorful displays of vines and shrubs of roses and Bougainvillea provide accents to aged wooden benches worn smooth by generations of visitors resting for a moment amidst the hustle and bustle of the world outside the mission walls.

Half a world away Venice and Vernazza provide their own dis-



Vernazza View, Italy
©Denise Strahm

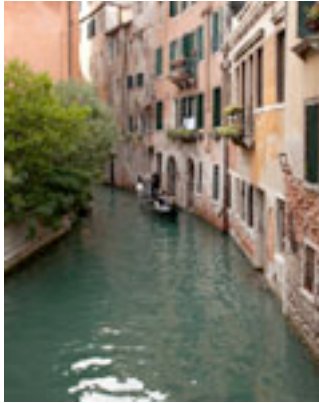


Pink Window, Mission San Juan Capistrano
©Denise Strahm

plays of antiquity of an aging nation. Narrow canals of water deeply colored by bordering buildings, highlighted by Everyman's laundry hanging from balconies and clotheslines high above, provide candy for the eye and fodder for the thoughtful photographer.

It's no wonder, then, that Strahm can hit the ground running at dawn and stay out shooting until after sundown. While Strahm is not above shooting a richly colored scene such as "*Reflections of Rome*," she prefers to find what she terms "quaint" settings with an atmosphere of peace and quiet.

Whether in California or Italy, Spain, France, England or Ireland, expect Strahm to be on the lookout for quaint, quiet and peaceful. Not a bad thing in these troubled times.



Green Canal, Venice
©Denise Strahm



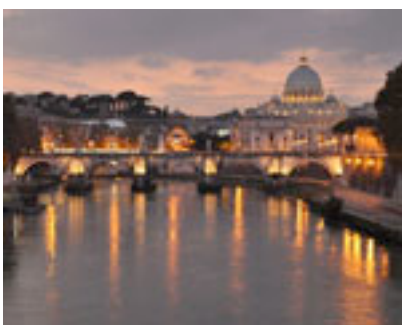
Cordoba Columns, Spain
©Denise Strahm



Crayola Stairs, Morocco
©Denise Strahm



After-Harvest - Montepulciano
©Denise Strahm



Rome, Italy
©Denise Strahm



Vernazza at Night
©Denise Strahm

ONCE IN A WHILE WE STRIKE A CHORD

You may recall the story about our belated friend and combat helmet photographer, Carl Gwartney, who passed away in April. The story provoked more than a few comments and notes to the editor. While we normally do not publish those notes and letters, we would like to share the stories of two photographers who, though much younger than Carl's 92 years, do have the insight of greater age and experience than most of us.

Here's a note we received from Howard Barron of Vicksburg, Mississippi:

Hey, Buddy, I really enjoyed your write up about Carl Gwartney. While I was not a glider pilot, I started out with a Brownie box that I paid \$7.95 for in 1950. I got a Kodak plastic ribbon film tank and developed negatives with it. I used Kodak TriChemPacks, which was a pint size of universal developer, short stop, and hypo. My first darkroom was blankets over the windows and small kitchen dishes for trays. If you remember, Tim Rudman called trays "dishes".

I used a Clorox bottle and a 15 watt bulb for a safelight. The bottom of the amber bottle was removed by tying a piece of string around the bottle near the bottom, soaking the string with lighter fluid and lighting it. The flame would heat that area of the bottle and when plunged into a bucket of cold water, the bottom of the bottle would break off where the string had been. The [electrical] cord could then be fed down through the neck and the light fixture attached. The bottle was reassembled using friction tape for a binder.

My first contact prints were not that good, but I was bitten by the bug and had the itch. I got better. When I went into the Air Force, I found an unused darkroom in the hobby shop and got supplies from the base photo lab. The rest is history. I guess one could say, "Where there is a will, there is a way". When I tell people I've been a photographer for 63 years, they look at me with wonder. It's been fun.

...
[You] can imagine the excitement of a 16 year old boy who just discovered black magic. There was no one else I knew who did their own but a professional photographer in the next town. I got a pamphlet from Kodak about developing and printing one's own film and went after it.

Film was fifty cents a roll then. Walgreens sold a knockoff for 3/\$1.00. I kept most of my prints and when I went into the Air Force in 1954, I had quite an album, which I left at my parents. They moved a couple times and when I was discharged I looked for the album, but it was nowhere to be found - lost in the moves. I wish today I had it.

I do have some negatives that go into 1956 and I've kept most everything from then on. I could guess that I have thousands of negatives and about that many prints. I've used the drugstore to develop and print for me when I could not do it for myself. I still have the passion, just not the strength to follow it like I used to. But, it has been a wonderful hobby and I've met many interesting people with my camera, including you.

By the way, Tony, I still have that little Brownie Box camera, which is now at least 63 years old.

Note: Howard bought that camera when he was sixteen. Add sixty-three and you can understand Howard is just this side of being an octogenarian!

Here's a note I received from Dr. Henry Go of Courtland, California:

Anthony, I have read your delightful newsletters all these years and have never written to say I am thankful you keep alive this medium. I am 79 and used to develop stuff in [the] bathtub as a kid. This was a very poignant and wonderful story about Carl Gwartney. These were the days before computers, before ball pens and hula hoops. Before then even. 900 images is a treasure and wonder if they will be put together in a book for purchase. I never knew about the marriage exclusion and I read a lot about this epoch.

...
My dream is still to do my one great signature image, like *Moonrise Over Hernandez*. Or the raising of the flag over Iwo Jima. Until that epiphany moment I don't feel my life is complete. I may have come close once. We pursue those images all of us, the ideal moment. Sometimes by accident, and seldom by just holding down the button and doing a burst like the pixelators do.

Thanks for keeping alive this most American of technologies. We are not a cult. Yet.

Carl's story has provoked more than one trip down Memory Lane.

...Check out this short video on YouTube:

<http://youtu.be/iohDwueH9Yw>

It's a two minute "trailer" about Carl Gwartney made for a video editing class. There is no feature length version.

the Photographers' Formula

S E P T E M B E R 2 0 1 3

Specials for the darkroom. All items *limited to stock on hand*

NEWSLETTER SPECIALS

PHOTOGRAPHERS FORMULARY GRADE 2 EMULSION



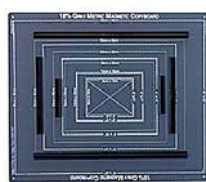
Cat. No.: 07-0186
250ml size
Regular \$50.00
30% off: \$35.00!
Promo Code: A0186



Cat. No.: 07-0187
1000 ml size
Regular \$165.00
30% off: \$107.25!
Promo Code: A0187

<http://stores.photoformulary.com/-strse-994/PHOTOGRAPHERS-FORMULARY--GRADE/Deta il.bok>

This fixed grade black & white emulsion is a light sensitive, silver chlorobromide emulsion which can be applied to various supports such as glass, ceramics, art paper, fabrics and plastics. It must not be coated directly on to metal, because this would adversely affect the photo-chemical properties of the emulsion. The emulsion corresponds in sensitivity and contrast to Kentmere Kenthene grade 2 paper.



MAGNETIC EASELS

Cat. #: 14-0241
Regular \$24.95
35% off: \$16.22!
Promo Code: A0241

This convenient Delta copy board holds copy perfectly flat with its supplied magnetic strips. Features two 8" and two 10" magnetic strips that are fully adjustable. Prevents hot spots, eliminates the need for tape or tacks, and will not damage original copy. Grid helps position copy for repeatable work. Made of 20-gauge steel with epoxy finish. Can be mounted on a wall or placed flat on a copy stand or enlarger. Can also be used as an enlarging easel. Limited to stock on hand.

<http://stores.photoformulary.com/-strse-824/Magnetic-Copy-Board/Detail.bok>



Cat. No.: 14-0237
4-in-1 8x10 Magnetic Easel
Regular \$39.95
35% off: \$25.97!
Promo Code: A0237



Cat. No.: 14-0239
16x20 Magnetic Easel
Regular \$44.95
35% off: \$29.22!
Promo Code: A0239

The easel has perfectly aligned masks positioned for 1/4" margins. No adjustments needed. Magnetic latching locks instantly, keeping paper secure. Special focusing base. All steel construction. Rubber feet prevent slipping. Accommodates four most used paper sizes: 8x10", 5x7", 3.5x5" and 2.5x3.25".

The larger easel 11x14, is made from steel and powder-coated in matte black paint. It's the perfect beginner easel: simple in design, construction, use and it's durable. With this easel, and a bit of practice, you can achieve perfect, borderless prints. Or you can center the exposure on the paper, resulting in a bordered print. The patented angles of the Delta retainer bars assure precision registration of each sheet of paper. The top easel bar is gently sloped and the left edge is flat to allow sliding of the paper in and out with ease. The non-skid bottom prevents the easel from slipping out of position. Each easel comes with three magnets: a 4, 8 and 10. Use one, two or three magnets to hold your paper in place.

<http://stores.photoformulary.com/-strse-820/Pre mier-4-dsh-1-Magnetic-Easel/Detail.bok>

STORAGE TANK



Cat. No.: 14-0507

Regular \$28.95

35% off: \$18.82!

Promo Code: A0507

<http://stores.photoformulary.com/-strse-900/Storage-Tanks/Detail.bok>

Storage of larger volume chemicals is made easy with this extra heavy-duty translucent polyethylene containers. Rigid with easy viewing of liquid levels. All containers come with a fast flow faucet.

SPOTTING BRUSHES



Cat. No.: 09-0400 Sable

1000ml size

Regular \$5.50

30% off: \$3.58!

Promo Code: A0400



Cat. No.: 09-0402 Sable

Regular \$5.50

30% off: \$3.58!

Promo Code: A0402



Cat. No.: 09-0403 Sable

Regular \$5.50

30% off: \$3.58!

Promo Code: A0403

The Delta 1 Kolinsky Sable Retouch/Spotting Brush has 100% pure red sable hair for retouching and spotting. The fibers are mounted in seamless aluminum ferrules.

<http://stores.photoformulary.com/-strse-938/Delta-0-Sable-Brush/Detail.bok>

FLAT BRUSHES



Cat. No.: 09-0404

Creative Mark 1 Flat Brush

Regular \$5.50

30% off: \$3.58!

Promo Code: A0404

The Creative Mark #1 Flat Brush features Pro Stroke Premium White Bristles and are superbly hand crafted out of the finest quality pure white Chungking bristle hair. The inward natural curve of bristle hair provides a springy response, making painting a pleasure. Natural flagged tips hold color extremely well for long and full paint strokes. The hair is hand-tied, placed in seamless nickel plated brass ferrules and glued and crimped onto balanced matte black long wood handles with distinctive silver dipped ends.

<http://stores.photoformulary.com/-strse-938/Delta-0-Sable-Brush/Detail.bok>

Formulary Substitute for Kodak D-19 Now Available in Larger Volume Kit Form



Need a larger volume kit substitute for Kodak's D-19 high contrast developer? The Formulary has one ready for you.

Kodak recently announced it will no longer manufacture its famous and highly useful Tech Pan film. D-19 Developer was used to process Tech Pan, and as supplies of Tech Pan begin to run out there's some question of D-19's future availability.

Years ago Kodak published the formula for D-19 as a convenience for customers who might want to modify its standard developer. The Photographers' Formulary has since made one liter kits using a similar formula.

Now you can buy four-liter kits of the Formulary's substitute for D-19. This will enable you to mix up four liters of the Formulary's D-19 substitute in a single operation. No more having to go back to the well, one liter at a time.

So if you need a developer with higher than normal contrast and speed, higher than average graininess, but with high capacity while being clean and fast acting, then the Formulary's substitute may be just what you have been searching for.

[Download the Formulary's D-19 substitute PDF information sheet here. . .](#)