

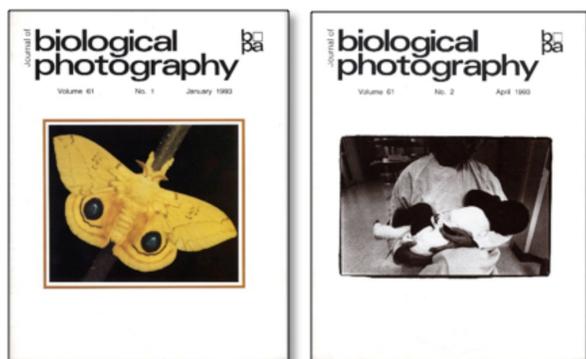
## 25 Years Ago in the JBPA/JBP

Thomas St. John Merrill, FBPA

*In this column, we look back at the content and imagery found in the Journal of the Biological Photographic Association (JBPA), later renamed the Journal of Biological Photography (JBP). This column examines important articles from 25 years ago. In doing so, we gain some insight into those legacy photography techniques of that time.*

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Twenty-five years ago, in 1993, the Journal of Biological Photography published four issues. Here, we will provide a look back at all four issues from Volume 61.



Covers of *JBP* Vol. 61, No. 1 and 2, January/April 1993

### **JBP Volume 61, Number 1**

“Computer-generated black-and-white tone/line negatives on color reversal film,” by Carol Asimow Gray and Eugene McDermott provides a detailed look into producing projection slides that contain text, positive images, negative images and/or line images... projection slides were the main product of many departments 25 years ago.

Today the computer has taken over. Programs such as

PowerPoint® makes production much easier and faster. A speaker can get data over his smart phone, insert the information into his slides and update his presentation, while waiting for the speaker before him to finish answering questions.

The obituary of H. Lou Gibson, RBP, FBPA, Hon. FPSA written by Thomas P Hurtgen and “H. Lou Gibson: A life in photography,” by Martin Scott is a tribute to one of the keystones of early bio photography. Gibson was known for his excellence in photography and the sharing of his knowledge through the BPA. He served as president, and most of the other offices and committees of BPA on both an international level and at the chapter level.

Gibson’s photograph of a disarticulated human skull is a classic. It has been copied many times but never duplicated even in this world of digital imaging (Figure 1).



Figure 1. Disarticulated human skull, by H. Lou Gibson.

Gibson even had an article “Seeing and telling,” published in this journal in 1993, a year after his death in 1992. It was based on his lecture at a regional BPA

meeting on May 9, 1992. He gave the lecture with an undiagnosed collapsed lung. He was a real trooper.

## JBP Volume 61, Number 2

David Teplica, Clinical Faculty in the Section of Plastic & Reconstructive Surgery at the University of Chicago, presented “Disease prevention and the biomedical image,” showing the powerful effect that an image can have on society. He shared the historic detail, published by Jacob Riis, that tried to raise awareness of the social and medical plight of the underprivileged in New York’s crowded tenements in the 1880’s. It wasn’t until he could capture the conditions, using a camera and the newly discovered “blitzlichtpulver” (flash powder), that he could bring real attention to the harsh conditions and start the cleanup in the area (Figure 2).



Figure 2. Photograph of child laborers in 1906.

Many have followed this important example and to this today, images remain a key part of raising public awareness in the face of harsh conditions and public need.

A national program, The Children’s Burn Awareness Program, followed Riis’s lead to draw attention to the problems of pediatric burns, their prevention and treatment. This type of information is still used in public awareness campaigns.

In the Technote section of Volume 61, Issue 2, Jim Beals presented “Photographic enhancement of (PVDF) western blots using ultraviolet radiation.” He shared

how recording the bands of these gels can be challenging to any photographer. Beals demonstrated the procedure using a Kodak 18A filter on the lens, a strobe without UV coating, and Kodak Technical Pan film to record the images of the bands (Figure 3).

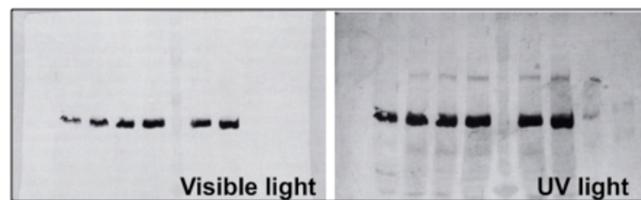
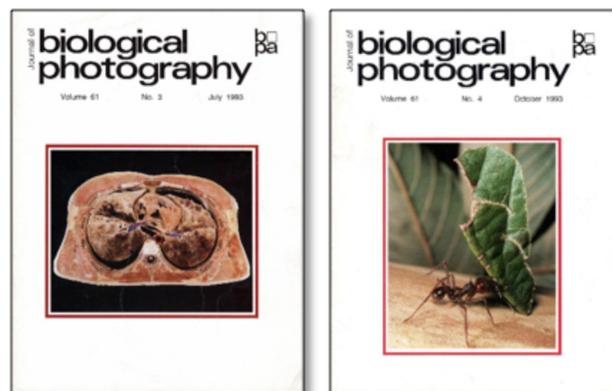


Figure 3. Bands photographed with both visible light and UV

“100,000 slides later: A four-year history of producing computer-generated slides,” by Samuel Giannavola and Kenneth V. Michaels chronicles the beginning of a computer-generated slide service at the University of Arkansas. It was in the early days of computer slides. This service became a good revenue source for the department. In 1988 they charged \$3.00 per slide with a 24-hour delivery, while other service bureaus in the area were charging more than \$10.00 per slide.

In case anyone ever asks, Giannavola estimated that a stack of 100,000 slides would be, “as tall as a 40-story building.”



Covers of *JBP* Vol. 61, No. 3 and 4, July/October 1993

## JBP Volume 61, Number 3

“Building a biomedical photography business: Financial Considerations,” by Michael Paulson, details the many facets of running a personal biomedical photography business. As with any small business, there are many

advantages and disadvantages. He states that when the hospital he was working at was eliminating the photography service, he formed Paulson Photo/Graphic Communications Inc. He soon learned many new skills; bookkeeping, financing, establishing prices, purchasing, payroll...and of course, taxes. Things that a hospital or university-based photographer most likely had very little knowledge of.

I personally ran an independent service for more than 10 years. The photography side of the business was the easy part. One has to keep detailed records of every part of the business. It is far more than just producing a product and billing a client. There are many advantages to running one's own business, and many down sides too. One just needs to have the advantages offset the down side.

“Environmental issues and the biophotographer,” by Jeffrey A. Sobel gave us a glimpse into reducing waste products. He writes of the 3 R's - Reduce, Replace, and Recycle. A table shows over a dozen materials used in packaging of film.

#### **JBP Volume 61, Number 4**

“A. Robin Williams Named 1993 Louis Schmidt Laureate.” Nick Graver, Martin Scott and Peter Hansell presented a multi-page introduction of the 1993 Schmidt Laureate, Andrew Robin Williams, PhD, DGPPH, FISTC, FRMS, FRPS, FIMI, FBIPP, FBPA. With such a prestigious collection of degrees and awards it is an honor to have him as a Schmidt Laureate, and a friend. His unique personality, wealth of biophotography knowledge and the ability to share it with others makes him a true asset to the BPA/BCA.

“The invisible image – A tutorial on photography with invisible radiation, Part 1: Introduction and reflected ultraviolet techniques,” by A. Robin Williams and Gigi F. Williams is an in-depth monograph into the use of UV photography, with cited references dating back to 1927. Williams demonstrates the differences in an orchid flower photographed with both visible light and UV (Figure 4).

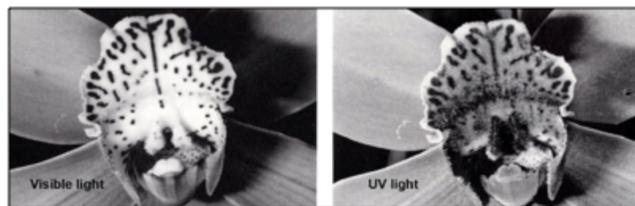


Figure 4. Orchid photographed with both visible and UV light.

The Williams and Williams paper lists the many filters that can be used for different results. It also discusses how UV light can be used in medical applications, showing changes in skin pigmentation differently (Figure 5). There are numerous applications in many biomedical disciplines that can benefit from UV photography.



Figure 5. Skin pigmentation photographed with both visible and UV light.

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#### **Author**

Tom Merrill, a US Army Medic, and Viet Nam veteran has been a biological photographer and member of BPA/BCA since 1968. He has been honored with both a Fellowship in the BPA and Emeritus Membership. He lives in Southern California with his wife of 51 years, Marie.

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