

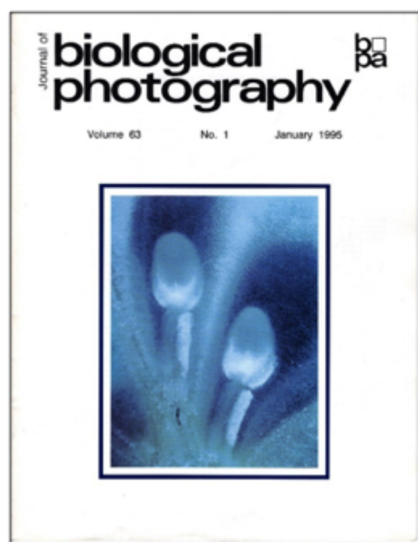
25 Years Ago in the JBPA/JBP

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.

OPEN ACCESS

In 1995, the *Journal of Biological Photography* published four issues. Here, we will provide a look back at all four these issues from *JBP* Volume 63.



Cover of JPB Vol. 63, No. 1, January 1995

JBP Volume 63, Number 1

Dr. Leon LeBeau in, "The Use of Automatic Cameras in Small Biomedical Object Photography," demonstrated how the auto-focus feature is not fool proof. He used a Nikon F-4S and a Nikon N90 with several auto focus lenses for his study.

He found that while the auto-focus did a good job with general photography, using it for macro-photography could produce less than optimal results. Flat and low contrast subjects, a group of objects on a monochrome background, etc., did not give the brain of the camera enough information as to where to focus. Working with

a flash further confused the autofocus function especially with some of his macro systems.

Current camera systems allow the photographer to select the point of focus to the appropriate area. Auto-focus systems have improved over the years, but they still need a photographer who knows how to get professional results. (Figure 1)

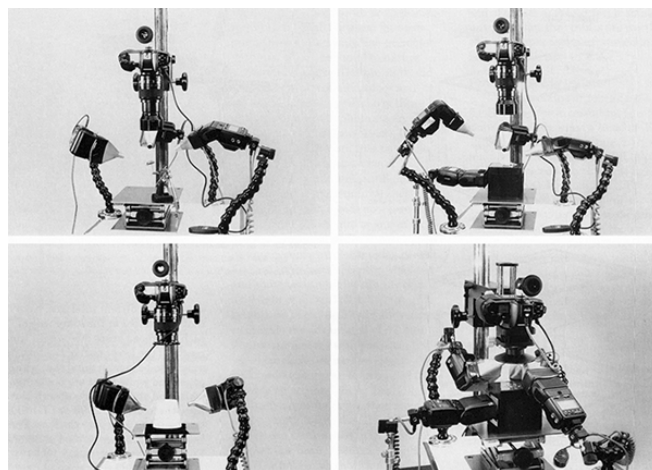


Figure 1. Example of some of the multitude of setup configurations using strobes in macrophotography.

"Pricing Products and Services, Part One: Determination of Production Cost," by Kenneth Michaels is the beginning of a two-part paper on management of a photographic department or a freelance business. Pricing a photograph entails far more than the cost of the paper it is printed on. Factors such as equipment, labor, materials, processing, overhead, education, and operating costs are some of the many factors to be considered.

Michaels includes several charts that are used to determine factors such as hourly rate and billable hours. The numbers included in the publication, when compared to today's rates, seem very low, but the formulas with current rates will work and can still be applied. This information will help to answer a typical question such as, "How much is an 8x10 print?" He suggested that all factors used to establish the total cost of that print need to be accounted for in the price, not just the \$1.00 or so for the piece of paper. (Figure 2)

Michaels' discussion continues in Part 2 of Vol. 63.

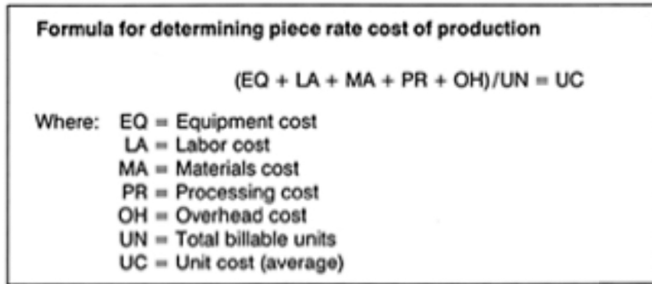


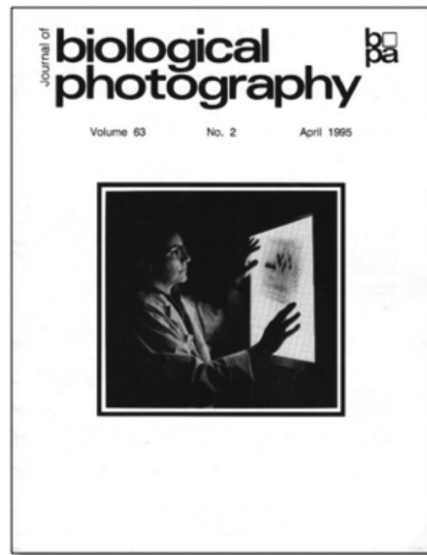
Figure 2. Formula for determining cost per unit.

Also in this issue, Barbara Katzenberg, FBPA shares her 1987 interview, "Anne Shiras, FBPA, (1903 - 1994)", one of the founding members of the BPA. At Anne's request, the interview was not published until 1995, after her death. She asked that the interview be put "on the back burner... and wait until an obituary was needed."

Anne recounts her first photographic project, which included producing lantern slides for a doctor's lecture. She purchased a box of glass lantern slide plates and read the instructions on the box. They were of no help. Luckily, she found a person who had experience using the slides and off she went. (Editor's note: making 3 1/4" x 4" slides on glass plates was also my first project as a medical photographic assistant in 1968 at NYC VA MC.)

Anne attended the second BPA meeting in New Haven where she met Louis Schmidt, who taught her very much.

Anne served as Secretary of the BPA for many years and worked on the planning of many annual meetings. Her legacy lives on with her endowment for the Anne Shiras Pioneer Lecture, which features an innovator in the field of photography at annual meetings.



Cover of JPB Vol. 63, No. 2, April 1995

JBPA Volume 63, Number 2

In Vol. 63, number 2 we have the second part of Kenneth Michaels paper on pricing, "Pricing products and services, Part Two; Pricing strategies and policies." He looks again at the many variables to consider when pricing for work. It is a fine balance between price orientated, value orientated, and quality-orientated customers. Value-orientated customers want the lowest costs, i.e. an older used car; quality orientated customers will pay for quality, i.e. a new luxury car, and value orientated customers want a good product at a reasonable price, i.e. a new sedan that will last a long time. All three can be found in any sales environment. (Figure 3) The objective is to produce the best product at the lowest cost. Michaels again shows several formulas using the balance of cost and volume in order to arrive at the best price, per unit produced.

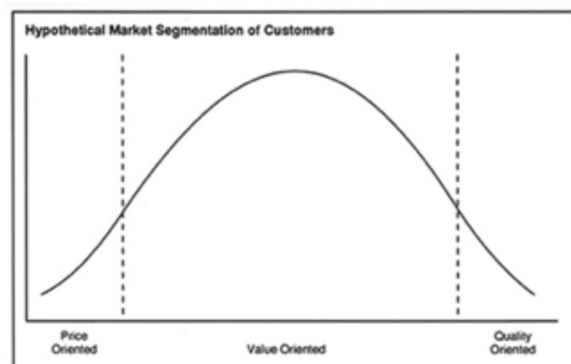


Figure 3. Hypothetical market segmentation of customers

In “Video Coverage of the Surgical Event: Equipment Considerations,” Bryan E. Hardesty illustrates some of the apparitions used in the OR at his institution 25 years ago. They show the major changes taking place in video recording over that time. He shows boom camera mounts over the OR table and a stand where the camera operator laid on a device over the table. Over the 25 years, video cameras have become much smaller. These have ranged from cameras mounted on surgeon’s head lights, or cameras mounted in the ceiling with an operator working the camera’s movements and focus from outside the OR, or a person using a cell phone camera to record the event. A lot of this leaned toward the “good enough” production method. (Figure 4)



Figure 4. Elevated camera platform with photographer lying above the OR table.

“Truth in Imaging,” by Lewis W. Koster is as important now, as it was 25 years ago. In today’s world of cameras everywhere, it is easy to capture an image that may not show what the real fact is. With the current modern image processing software available, high school kids can produce an authentic looking image while combining several unrelated images. A person could be shown water skiing on the moon while shooting down UFOs. In today’s world, it is easy to show the truth, as well as the art, of photo mutilation. It is important for us as scientific professionals to produce true images, not ones simply made to look like whatever it is someone wants to see.

JBPA Volume 63, Number 3

In this issue, Susanne Loomis gave us, “Producing Composites; An Evolution.” Many medical schools request a student composite print, showing all the members of a class or department. In the past, this was a laborious project, which first involved photographing all the people, making matching prints, and then pasting them onto a board. This article describes how she

created a photograph with scanned images, utilizing standardized lighting. They were then dropped into Quark XPress and a logo and text were added. This yielded an “enormous file” - about 17mb., which had to be sent to an outside printer to make the needed 11x14 prints.

Twenty-five years later, most of this process can easily be accomplished on a desktop computer and a desktop printer. (Figure 5)



Figure 5. Example of a typical photo-composite of a class of medical students.

Kenneth Michaels returns, bringing us another paper in JPB Vol. 63, Number 3, “Effective Meetings for an Empowering Work Environment.” This paper delves into how to run an effective meeting using 5 rules: Agenda, Preparation, Punctuality, Style and Follow Through. By using these rules, meetings can be productive, establish set goals, and provide feedback.



Cover of JPB Vol. 63, No. 3, July 1995

JBP Volume 63, Number 4

As the first paper in *JBP* Vol. 63, number 4, Will Renner and C. Allen Schaffer have introduced, "Dan Patton Named 1995 Louis Schmidt Laureate." (Figure 6)

Dan received this prestigious award for a lifetime of dedication to the bioimaging world and willingness to pass it forward. He was always full of life at annual meetings and there was always great anticipation by all to see what his presentation would be, 12 projectors, 15 projectors, or ... projectors with sound and special effects. His show was always a treat to watch but discovering what went into the production and how it was done was the real learning event.

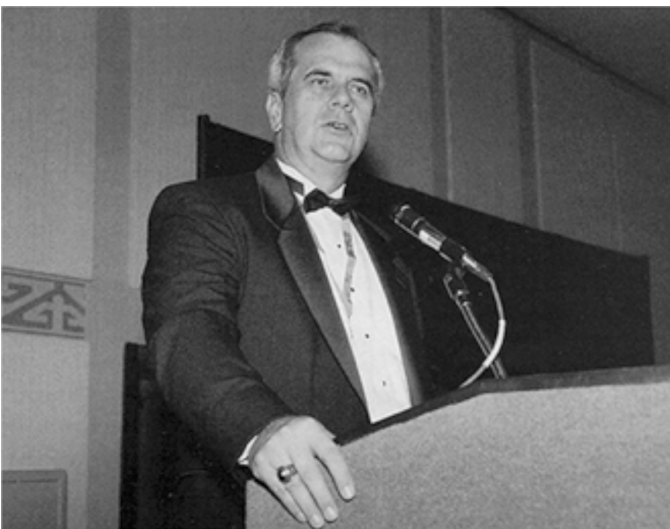
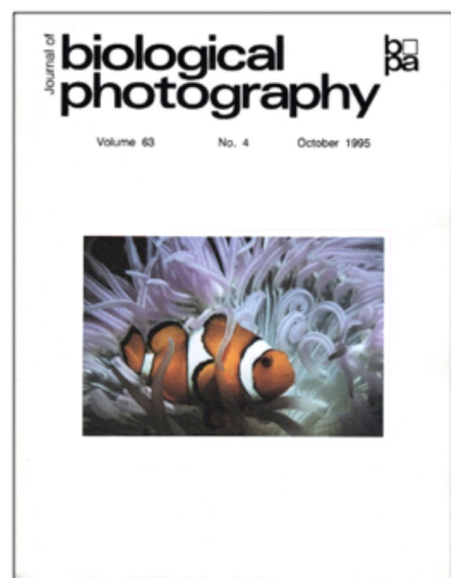


Figure 6. Dan Patton, RBP, FBPA: the 1995 Louis Schmidt Laureate



Cover of *JBP* Vol. 63, No. 4, October 1995

Michael Morris presents, "Photography in the Operating Room a Primer: Part 1 - The environment and Equipment." The environment of the OR is unique and some of the older camera stands are also very unique. Morris shows apparatus used for 5x7 view cameras used in 1894. Others included a stand where the photographer would lay in a prone position over the surgical table while shooting downward. Many things have changed in 25 years as equipment for the OR has gotten smaller and far easier to handle within the space. A trip to the OR must be well planned out to ensure that all the necessary equipment is handy and in working order. The patient and the surgeon will certainly not wait for you to get a missing ... anything.

"Kodachrome - A Brief History and Introduction to the Film and Process," by William H. Young goes into the 60-year history of Kodachrome® film which was first introduced by Kodak in 1915. The film was unique as a color reversal product. It was a simple film with a very complex process. Kodak performed most of the processing in several company labs across the country. The K-14 process had to be tightly controlled. (Figure 7)

Like all good things, Kodachrome® was discontinued in 2009, and film processing for it ended in December 2010.



Figure 7. 1937 Kodak advertisement for Kodachrome® film.

Thomas St. John Merrill, FBPA tsmerrill13@gmail.com

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, and numerous salon awards for his photography. He lives in Southern California with his wife of 52 years, Marie.

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