

Rangefinder

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mpw

The Missouri Photo Workshop



OPEN ARMS

Trenton welcomes 65th Missouri Photo Workshop

By Duane Dailey, Co-Director Emeritus
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Trenton is your laboratory for a week. Experiment with new ways of telling stories.

Enter Trenton, Mo., with an open mind and an inquiring eye. Your challenge: Show us this town as it truly exists. This week you will learn to apply documentary photojournalism in your reporting.

That means you must not taint Trenton with preconceptions of what a small town should look like. Don't bring your notions of how small town folks engage with one another.

Your job: Observe and report how it is; not how you think it should be.

Of course, you can't rid yourself of previous experiences. Those influence how you see. But, be aware of what you bring. Strive to be open.

Most of all, you must be honest in reporting what you see here, this week. It won't be like any town you know. Look for differences. Learn to recognize those differences.

Collectively, gather photographs that give insights across the social, demographic and economic levels of this one town in Missouri in 2013.

That requires serious local investigation before you decide on a story. At your first meeting with your faculty, they will ask what you have seen and learned. What intrigued you about this place, these people? Start your research now. Know the town, before you decide on a story to represent the town.

Don't bring a story idea here; unless you have done serious research before arrival.



Your challenge will be to find an interesting situation that represents some aspect of Trenton and nearby farmscape. Stories can be dynamic or quiet and sublime.

You can hypothesize about what you'll find. But, test that hypothesis against reality. Trust your eyes. Don't be fooled by your own mind. Look deeply. Talk with an enquiring mind to many sources. Don't assume. Don't jump to conclusions. You're a reporter with a camera seeking facts.

This is a workshop in honest reporting. It is not make believe. It's not nostalgic wishful thinking. You have a real job to do.

Together we will snip a week of history out of Trenton. Let us do it well, with honest observations of life. Keep in mind all social, political and economic changes happening nationally. How are those dynamics reflected locally?

If you bring fresh eyes, you will astound us -- and the people of Trenton. Seek truth with a camera. It's not easy. Subjects can fool you. In fact, they will! Worse, you can fool yourself.

I look forward to seeing this town as you and your camera report it. I hope to see photos that make me gasp. Make me laugh. Or, touch my heart. There will be gritty, beautiful, and emotional moments to capture. Be ready. Learn from



mpw.47 / Vickie Joette

every moment.

This week, we will advance the art and craft of photojournalism. We can redefine it. It happens.

It will be intense. It will be utterly exhausting. But, don't forget to enjoy and share your joy. Be willing to change. If you leave unchanged, making photos as you did before, we will have failed you.

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The Photographer

Although it was nearly 20 years ago, Geoff Hansen vividly remembers his week at MPW 47 in Trenton, Missouri in 1995. A staff photographer at the Valley News in White River Junction, Vermont, Hansen was one of 48 photographers from all corners of the U.S. who were beating the bushes looking for stories in this northwest Missouri community.

“The story I found was about David Schafer and Alice Dobbs, a young couple who were running a small farm with sheep, beef cattle, chickens and pigs,” Hansen says.

“Doing that particular story did spark an interest to continue exploring facets of small-scale agriculture. I’ve worked on several books about raising livestock and food, and spent a year with a local farm here in Vermont. It’s a body of work I’m incredibly proud of,” he says.

“The knowledge I gained from the Missouri Workshop is still put into use every day in my job as photo editor at the Valley News, where I have worked since 1989. We do a photo page every week and I encourage photographers to write a story summary that I bring into our weekly budget meeting. How I photo edit those stories, and for other sections of the newspaper, is from what I learned at the 1995 MPW.”



Geoff Hansen vividly remembers making this photo. “Alice was rushing to get some of their chickens under shelter as a storm was approaching,” Hansen says. “It seemed like such high drama at the time!”

The Subject

The week made quite an impression on Hansen, and he still puts in use the lessons he learned there. But the week also left an indelible impression on his subjects. David Schafer and Alice Dobbs had moved to the Trenton area from Denver a few years before to make a life on David’s grandfather’s farm. They were among the first wave of farmers in the 1970s and 80s to seek a more sustainable approach to agriculture.

“So much was going on in our life at that exact moment,” recalls David Schafer. “The height of chickens on pasture, including a sick one Alice is escorting to a sick pen, our first pastured pig harvest where we didn’t have a clue how to load them on a trailer and a sad Alice being consoled by a visiting college friend of mine as we later unload them at the butcher. Then the KC Newshawk helicopter landing in our pasture to pick me up and see the corporate hog installations as we had planned a big rally opposing Premium Standard Farms. All these captured eloquently through Geoff’s lens. It was truly a magical convergence.

“I haven’t seen those photos in a decade; that they are etched in my memory speaks of the power of the media and of Geoff’s talent.” (For more photos from Geoff’s story see the MPW website.)

- Interviews and story by Jim Curley

thanks to our friends

for their most excellent support of the Missouri Photo Workshop

- Nikon Professional Services - represented at this workshop by Kristine Bosworth and Brien Aho - for their educational grant and loan of cameras and expertise and their longterm support of the Workshop
- The Missouri Press Association Foundation for educational grant and cooperative newspapers across Missouri
- The Missouri School of Journalism for faculty and student and equipment support
- Camera Bits for the licensing of Photo Mechanic
- B&H Photo & Video for providing inks and paper and loan of printers for the exhibit
- Think Tank Photo for giftables to all of us and state-of-the-art bags for faculty and award winners
- Apple for the loan of a MacMini server
- Wendell Lenhart and the Trenton Republican-Times for their enthusiasm and tireless efforts to help MPW
- The City of Trenton and Grundy County for the loan of the Rock Barn as the MPW headquarters
- The Trenton Chamber of Commerce, the City of Trenton and the Trenton Republican-Times for our opening dinner
- Suddenlink Communications for the internet connection



Stock Barn and Pavillion – Trenton MO

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This unique octagonal 2 story livestock barn and pavilion on the Grundy County Agriculture Fair site was built by the WPA in 1938. It is also known as the Rock Barn.

<http://livingnewdeal.berkeley.edu/projects/stock-barn-and-pavillion-trenton-mo/>

da social media thing

LIKE ON FACEBOOK

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WEATHER FORECAST


TODAY

 74° / 50°

MONDAY

 76° / 53°

TUESDAY

 79° / 57°

RANGEFINDER STAFF

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SHELBY FEISTNER AND

RANDY COX

“The Workshop makes you think,” [said] photojournalist and editor Declan Haun, “You get thrown into an arena in a small Missouri town with all sorts of new people, new situations, and new experiences Everyone knows what you are doing or not doing. So you have to think fast. Think while you’re standing up. And moving around, eating, and brushing your teeth. Think while you’re hungry, mad and frustrated. Think while they’re looking at you. You! That’s why the place works. You have to work and you have to think, or else you have to find some mighty large excuses. And then you’re on your own again, and not quite the same as you were before.” - from *Truth Needs No Ally* by Howard Chapnick