

RANGEFINDER

The Missouri Photo Workshop | September 22, 2015 | Volume 67, Issue 3



VIVIAN MEIER, THE PREVIOUSLY UNDISCOVERED CHICAGO PHOTOGRAPHER/NANNY WHOSE IMAGES ARE QUITE SPLENDID.



Mark Freeman examines Ace, as owner Jennifer Zoellner looks on. The vet has tended animals in Perryville for over 20 years. "I don't have a job," he says, "I have a life."

PHOTO BY CHRIS OCCHICONE



Perryville vet Mark Freeman prepares to perform surgery on a dog named Vernon while workshop photographer Chris Occhicone watches closely in the background.

Caring for creatures

“I don’t have a job, I have a life”

Story and photo
by LOUISE HEMMERLÉ

Despite the many experiences photographer Chris Occhicone has had in his life, today was the first time he witnessed a surgery.

Tuesday, Thursday and Friday are surgery-days at the All Creatures Veterinary Clinic in Perryville. First, the veterinarian starts the day with the easiest surgeries before handling the heaviest ones, his assistant says. The day thus began with three neuter surgeries. The animals are kept several hours at the clinic afterwards to make sure that they are properly waking up.

MPW is the second workshop that Chris has attended. On Monday, he was counted among the few photographers who had stories approved by the faculty before the night’s end. His subject, the veterinarian Mark Freeman, is bald

headed, bearded and tattooed; he has the perfect biker’s look. He also owns many guns, but this has nothing to do with the touching tenderness with which he cares for animals. The most difficult for him, Chris says, is when he must euthanize some of the animals. Today, for instance, an abandoned and ill cat whose immune system was completely destroyed had to be put down. “He cries really easily,” Chris says, “which is bad, because I cry very easily too.”

As part of his photographic projects, Chris Occhicone has explored various and numerous parts of the world: “I have visited over 40 countries” he says. Yet, it is the first time that he has stepped foot in Missouri.

Exploring and traveling plays an important role in Chris’ photography: “I want to see the things you are not supposed to see,” he says. As part of his photographic projects, he has notably

traveled to Libya, Ukraine, Poland... However, Chris has also done projects a lot closer to home. His work Fringe, which was screened at the Visa Pour L’image photojournalism festival, focuses on addicts living in encampments in New Jersey.

One step after another, the recognition of his work has helped ground Chris in his photography: “That transition helped me a lot.”

Three years ago, that was not the case. Three years ago, he was working for the family business, a property management firm, and he hated it, Chris says.

He turned his life around when one of his friends, who was terminally ill, forced him to reconsider his choices. As he realized that he needed to change his life, photography presented itself as a self-evident decision: “It is what I had secretly always wanted to do,” Chris says.

Duane Dailey's daily discourse: Astonishing photos astound workshopppers

Off to an astonishing start. The faculty slide shows are "eye openers."

Monday night Kim Komenich took us into a new way of seeing framing and perspective in photographs. Our eyes were opened by analysis of famous photographers' work.

We deal with a two dimensional medium. But, we present a three- dimensional world in new perspective.

The lesson: The photographer controls the frame. The center and all edges are defined by the position taken by the photographer.

After having our eyes opened to perspective, I saw Torsten Kjellstrand's photos with new appreciation.

And, Torsten took us through his learning about closeness. Most beginning photographers stay too far away. Early, he zoomed in on the emotion-telling details of child care. Powerful! By backing off he allowed context begin to edge in.

It was good to see his progress in story telling at Lexington MPW. That allows us to build on what he learned in that long-ago lesson in seeing.

Soon Torsten reached the newspaper in Jasper, Ind., where he earned a POY Photographer of the Year award. There are so many lessons in his photos of bachelor brothers, Irving and Carl.

Multiple photos build an epic story of caring and giving.

Take from that. Learn the words to pitch your story. The idea to tell the story of two old guys living together didn't resonate with the editor.

Tonight at the first showing of MPW67 photos of Perryville

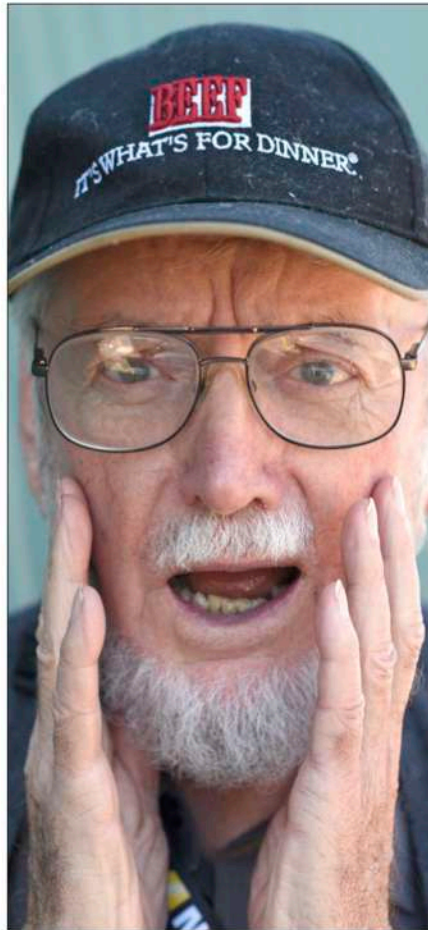


PHOTO BY TANZI PROPST

the workshopppers will use a few concise sentences for each new story presented.

Beforehand, write a couple of

"Your words
must match
the power of
photos."

• Duane Dailey
MPW.67 Co-Director Emeritus

sentences that tell what to anticipate in your photo story. It's a work in progress. As you learn more, you revise your story, reporting in words and photos.

Rehearse your pitch. Then, stand up and project for the group to hear. Use what I call your "Extension voice." Use the public-speaker trick of not talking to those closest to you, the front row, but look to the back row. Talk to them. Project your voice from your belly, not your throat. Exhale heartily. Become William Jennings Bryan, an orator who lived before the invention of microphones. Exude confidence.

Your photos are real. Your words must match the power of photos. MPW provides a safe place to make mistakes and learn. Torsten shared his mistakes. He learned and we learn even now. By seeing other photographers' work we learn. The teaching is multiplied 40 times by sharing.

Kim says we're switching from Rock and Roll to Jazz. I do not expect to see many photographers here doing the Cartier-Bresson Waltz. The lesson: You can move.

Begin by moving your camera a few millimeters to change the whole framing and background. A slight shift hides the lamp in the background to behind the head of your subject. Then we see subject, not bright light.

You, the photographer, are responsible for all in the frame. Move left or right. Move up or down. Move closer or back up, as Kim advises. In time, that becomes second nature. Learn to see what you are seeing. Then, see what the camera sees.

COVERING FERGUSON

How the St. Louis Post-Dispatch told the biggest story in America



A member of the St. Louis County Police tactical team fires tear gas into a crowd of people in response to a series of gunshots fired at the police during demonstrations along W. Florissant Road near the QuikTrip in Ferguson, Mo., on Monday, Aug. 18, 2014

PHOTO BY DAVID CARSON / ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

By MICHAEL CALI

When a young black man was shot in the early days of August 2014, no one could have imagined that it would turn into the story that would define a city. The shooting death of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Mo., sparked unrest the likes of which one would expect to see coming from some distant part of the world, not a suburb of a major American city. When a story of this magnitude drops in your lap, it requires a staff willing to do anything to get it right and that determination led to a Pulitzer Prize in Spot News Photography.

On the vanguard was the Post-Dispatch photo staff, said Laurie

Skrivan, a staff photojournalist with the paper. "We felt we had to baby-sit and lead the coverage. National news was breaking in our backyard and that required a lot of manpower," said Skrivan. Photographers would be working almost around the clock with two photographers on the night shift. Out of a staff of nine, there would be five or six dedicated to covering the unrest and the story behind it in Ferguson. In fact, the running joke was that Ferguson was going to bankrupt the paper because of the amount of resources that were being thrown at it.

However, the paper was a little slow to respond initially. When Brown was shot, the first photographer did not show up until after the body had been removed from the street, which had lain there for

more than four hours. They had no idea the gravity of the events that had just transpired. It was not until someone reached out to the paper on Twitter that they realized what was really happening in that community.

The initial protests on Saturday and Sunday took place without the national and international media swarming, which meant that the Post-Dispatch was at the tip of the spear. On the weekends at the Post-Dispatch, the photo department is heavily understaffed, according to Skrivan. This led to photographers like David Carson going out and covering the protests on his own time.

While much of the national and international media were concentrating on the street violence at night, the Post-Dispatch thought that there was more to the story. Photographers like Laurie Skrivan took it upon themselves to go into the community and try to understand better the environment that was spawning such anger and contempt. Skrivan would make it a point to talk to people that other photographers just shot and moved on. She developed relationships that allowed her to get an angle that some of the bigger media was lacking.

Doing that was not easy though. Post-Dispatch photographers would don bulletproof vests and helmets because there was nightly gunfire and flying objects. Skrivan recounted a story of a young photographer who was put in a headlock by a group of protesters demanding he delete his cards. "It was like a port of entry. I could be ten people away from you and having a completely different experience," she said, "If they liked you, they would let you hang around more."

The coverage of Ferguson continues even today, more than a year later. The people of St. Louis have grown tired of news from Ferguson but there are still stories to be told. The Post-Dispatch used the lessons they learned in their initial coverage to shape the types of stories they look for. Now, they are more open to stories about race or discrimination and report more aggressively, Skrivan said.



LEFT • Friends covered Tory Russell in milk to subdue the effects of pepper-spray.

BELOW • Sunny Ford holds her hands up during a rally in Clayton, Mo., on Tuesday, Aug. 12, 2014.

PHOTOS BY LAURIE SKRIVAN ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH



All in all, the coverage of Ferguson by the Post-Dispatch was undeniably great but it is not over. "We all must have had some sort of post-traumatic stress," said Skrivan. The events that defined a city also defined the photographers that covered it and their coverage changed the way that the world looked at St. Louis and America as a whole.

MPW.67

Perryville, MO
September 19-25, 2015

Today,
ten staff advisors from this year's
workshop are featured.

Tomorrow, Rangefinder features this year's
workshop staff team.

**Torsten
Kjellstrand**
University of
Oregon

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"You are very
anxious about
what you do, but
you want it to be
the right kind of
anxiety. Be
anxious about
pushing yourself,
not about failing."



Sarah Voisin
Washington Post

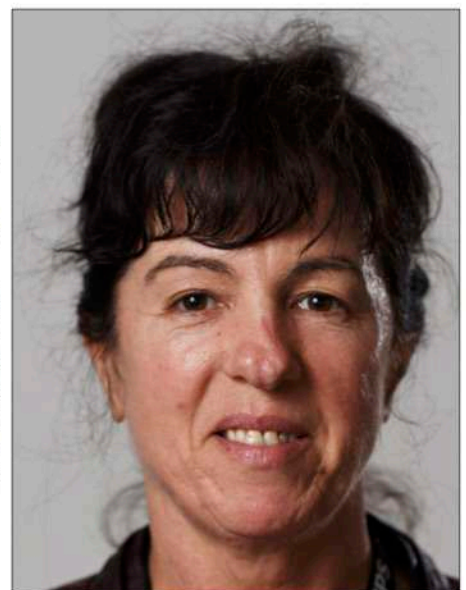
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"Choose a story
where you are
documenting
moments within
the people."

Beth Nakamura
The Oregonian

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"Try to relinquish
control and not
so much impose
yourself on the
situation, but
let the situation
change you."



Peggy Peattie
San Diego
Union-Tribune

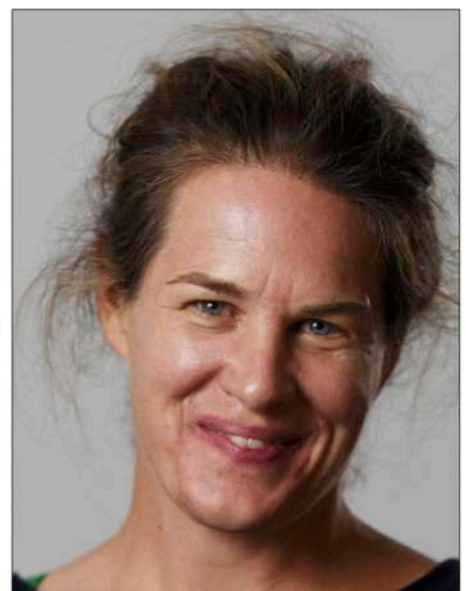
peggy.peattie@uniontrib.com

"So often we
feel like we
have to explain
ourselves to our
subjects, but
they have already
accepted you as
a photographer.
Don't feel like it is
something
you need to
apologize for, for
being a
photographer."

Laurie Skrivan
St. Louis
Post-Dispatch

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"You want a
visual reaction.
Really respond to
what someone
is saying or what
they are doing"





Dennis Dimick
The National
Geographic

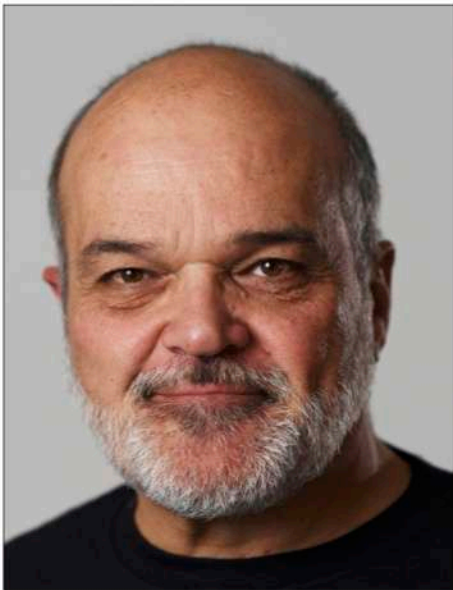
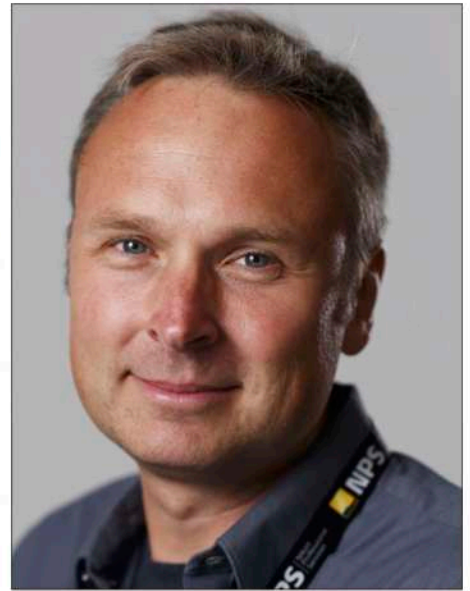
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“What are the various activities of their lives that will allow you to portray their life as it unfolds? Find those.”

Brian Kratzer
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of Missouri

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“How close can you take that picture? Get closer as you get more comfortable. Getting in so close it’s wacky... that’s good.”



Kim Komenich
San Francisco
University

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“Don’t become overwhelmed with your job. Focus on your subject. Everyone can get a picture of “Alisha.” You want to get a picture of her “Alishaness.”

Bill Marr
Formerly National
Geographic

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“Look for those gems that happen to exist in a larger piece.”



Mary Vignoles
Freelance
Picture Editor

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“Let go of the idea that you could fail and just try. Success only comes from trying.”

“Photographers need to think more about what it is they stand for and what it is they are trying to achieve with their work to be able to stand out. What it is that you are trying to do will differentiate you from other people...”

Dennis Dimick
The National Geographic

Social Media: Moving Photojournalism Along the Ladder of Professionalism



@beckharlan



@mophotoworkshop



@partimecyclops

By JESSI DODGE

Technology's rapid development has changed the face of both media and photography vastly throughout the past several decades creating opportunity to share images made both with past and prospective clientele as well as friends and potential employers.

Dennis Dimick, Executive Environmental Editor at The National Geographic, emphasized the power of social media on one's career. "If you are a photographer not taking advantage of the power of these networks — whether its Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, or Tumblr — it is at your peril that you are not leveraging those things."

Kim Komenich, an assistant professor at San Francisco State University, furthered the seemingly growing expectation of social media usage in saying, "If you look at all the ways companies are leveraging social media, it is only a logical extension that photographers, by themselves with their own work, use it."

Social media, as Dimick says, "is the place to be if you want to be seen."



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