

MY PHOTOGRAPHY LIFE Back to School Part 6

4427 Wentworth Avenue

It was in the fall of 1989 that I moved into the Wentworth



house. It was a very good neighborhood. *Modern Photography Magazine* ceased publishing during that year. Nikon introduced a new flagship camera known as the F4 which was one of the first professional type cameras that had autofocus. I knew Kelvin who lived here at the Wentworth



house, and he was going to a different church. There were many changes in our church and eventually in the 1990s I started going to a different church. One of the first things I did when I moved into my new place was to sell my broken-down car for \$50. I would use the bus line. I still lived in the Minneapolis metro area and the buses usually ran well in the metro area.

I was thinking of going back to school to take sales & marketing. I thought it would help my photography. Another reason for going back to school was so I could get a better job. I was tired of working for industrial type jobs through the temp agencies. One time I worked for a couple of years in a window factory.

Selling the Mamiya C220 Camera

Since I no longer was going to do portrait and wedding photography, I thought I might as well sell my Mamiya C220. I put an ad in the Minneapolis paper under photographic equipment for sale. I listed the price at \$400 for the camera with a Mamiya 180mm f/4.5 lens. My landlord who also lived there looked at my camera and said that it looked like an old piece of junk. I would be lucky to get \$100 for it, he told me. I knew that any photographer who knew what this camera was would give me a fair price. The first person that inquired about my camera bought it. I remember showing it to him on the dining room table and my landlord was there to watch the sale. I thought it was funny. My landlord looked in complete amazement when that photographer handed me four crisp hundred-dollar bills for that camera. The photographer told me he was looking for this camera and was glad he found it.



Landlord: Dale Christianson



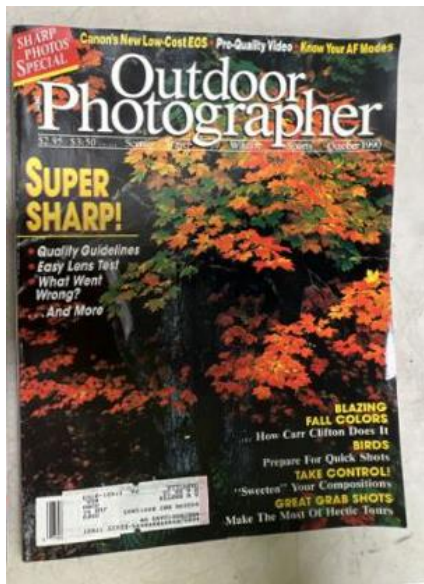
Minnesota School of Business



In 1990 I decided to go back to school. I wanted to take something that I could get a good job in when I finish and something that would help me in photography. Most people are self-employed in photography, so I decided to enroll in a business course. I found a school downtown in Minneapolis on the bus line. The school was Minnesota School of Business, a private school. I was signed up for sales and marketing. This would be a two-year course and I would get a certificate upon

graduation. I got grants and loans to go to school and I found a part time job at Kmart on Lake Street. I would spend the next two years in serious study.

I put photography on hold. I don't know why, but at this time I sold my 35mm camera kit with the three lenses, filters, and accessories. I guess I had some ambivalence about sticking with



photography. After all I felt photography was not too kind to me. While working at Kmart I bought a cheap point and shoot plastic camera to take some photos around the school. But my interest in photography began to tease me when I started to see the magazine *Outdoor Photographer* on the newsstands. I would read this magazine along with my schoolbooks.

I liked school. I had many accounting classes. I had an accounting class every quarter which was more advanced and studied managerial or cost accounting. We had a math class which I enjoyed. It was a long time ago that I had math in school, I managed to get an "A" in math. I would get an "A" in business law, and I hated law, but I read the book and passed the tests. We had an intro to business and a marketing class where we had to plan our own product and tell what forms we

would use in marketing. This one teacher I had for human relations and retail buying was Ms. Shaw, her brother was the famed nature photographer, John Shaw who has written many books on nature photography and articles for *Outdoor Photographer*. I would show my teacher some articles that her brother wrote for *Outdoor Photographer*. John Shaw lived in North Carolina. Ms. Shaw gave me his address, so I wrote to him and attended a seminar in Minneapolis that he had.

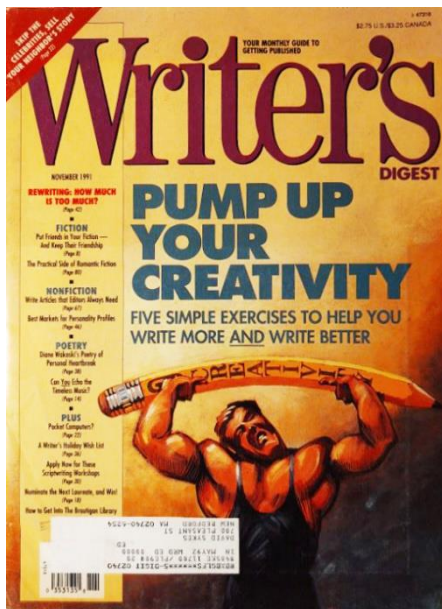


Ms Shaw



We were introduced to computers. I had never used a computer before this. We used the computer for typing class, making spreadsheets, and there was some other accounting software we used. We learned Word Perfect and Lotus 1-2-3. We had a computer class that taught us how computers work. We used 5 ¼" floppy disks. We

had two drives, one for booting and the other for the software. This was new to me, and I enjoyed working with computers. The teacher above with the computers was my typing teacher. I wanted you to see the old technology of the early 1990s.



At this time, I discovered an interest in writing. We had to write papers on certain subjects. I liked the research. The teachers showed us how to use the library for research. We would use trade magazines for contemporary business trends, books, and newspapers. I liked putting the article together and could also include my own editorial views. Besides writing for class, I started writing an article on the pinhole camera for myself. I would have my English teacher edit it. She challenged me on the word, “diffraction” she had never heard of the word before. I told her that is how the pinhole camera works. She told me the next day she looked it up in the dictionary and said that I was right. I would start to buy writing magazines on the newsstand like *Writer's Digest* and *The Writer*.

In the same building that the Minnesota School of Business was in there was a modeling school there. I remember the teacher who taught modeling there was Sara Rogers who I photographed when I

was doing photography for Olivia the fashion designer. Sara was a professional model then. She was listed in various agencies. I got a chance to talk to Sara at school.

When I was working at Kmart, I worked as a cashier, and in the home improvement department and in electronics which included cameras. I have two photography stories to tell when I was working in the camera department. Here is the first story. There was this lady that came in complaining about the camera she just bought. She said it wasn't working. She said she was trying to photograph the snow at night. She used her built in flash on her camera. She showed me the photos. I looked at the negatives. She wanted to know why she got these images and not snow. She pointed the camera straight down towards the ground which had highly reflective white snow which acted as a light source. I explained to her that these photos are of the interior of her camera. They clearly show the shutter blade. I told her she pointed the camera with flash at the White reflective snow and the snow was acting as a reflector from the flash and bouncing the light inside the camera. She asked me if she needed a better camera to take snow pictures. I told her the same thing would happen to you if you used a \$2000 camera. The snow could be lit from the side which would work. She bounced the flash right inside her camera by doing this.

Here is the second story. One night the store manager came to me with these two guys who had a classic 35mm Nikon F2. These two wanted to know how to open the film compartment to load the film. I showed them how to open the film compartment and load the film; it was exciting to be able to hold this classic camera in my hands. Later in the future I will buy this camera.

In the last quarter of school, we were working on our resume. Everyone has an appointment with the job counselor at the school. My interview with the counselor did not go well. I thought in taking this course of study I would directly enter some career path for sales and marketing. I

really didn't know what I got myself into. Here I spent all this money that I didn't have, which took me decades to pay off. I did learn a lot, but the response of my counselor shocked me. I asked since I would be graduating what type of a job could I get and what pay? She looked at me as though she was clueless. She said, "Well, what is it you want to do?" I asked her what job am I qualified to do? She told me that was for me to decide. The jobs that were available were all entry level jobs. I told her I had entry level jobs before I went to school here. I would enter the marketplace just how I left it, working at a low-income job. I learned from the job counselor that the title "sales and marketing" was very ambiguous. It really didn't mean anything. All businesses use sales and marketing. Well, this would be a good education for someone who wanted to start a business. I did want to get back in the photography business, but I could not afford to do that right now.

After graduating from Minnesota School of Business

In the spring of 1992, I graduated with a diploma in the program of Business Administration: Sales and Marketing. The fact that I graduated from a business school helped get me a job working in an office. At least I didn't have to do industrial work which was sometimes a dirty job and boring. I signed up at various temporary job agencies to find me office work. I usually had good luck getting employment. My desire was to someday start a part time business and be able to work it full time.

The Writing Course

Since I now had more time, I could fulfill my interest in writing. The first thing I did was buy a word processor. I knew that I would not need a computer right now. I bought a Canon Star 60. I paid \$425 for it at Office Max. I started reading books about writing and subscribed to writing magazines and I joined a writer's book club and a science fiction book club. One day while reading *Writer's Digest*, magazine I saw an ad about being trained as a Christian writer. Since I was a Christian, I thought that might be for me. I sent a letter asking for more information. I enrolled in the course. It cost me \$750. The name of the school was the *Christian Writers Guild*. I would hand in assignments when I finished them, and the teacher would grade them. I could even call the teacher on the phone if I had questions. I wrote both nonfiction and fiction. I also wrote a short story of the science fiction genre. It had a Christian background to it. This education in writing would help me in my next photographic adventure.



The End of Part 6 Back to School