

## MY PHOTOGRAPHY LIFE PHOTO-ED Part 7

### PHOTO-ED

I wanted to combine my writing with photography. My thoughts turned to self-publishing. I wanted to write about photography. I was getting all kinds of ideas in my head, but first I had to start the business. In Minnesota before you can open a bank account with a fictitious name for a business you need to contact the secretary of state to give them the name to research. They will search the state for the name. If the name is not being used in the state of Minnesota, then they give you the okay. This takes about 2 weeks. After the account is open you must publish your new business name in two legal journals, which you pay to place the ads. I opened PHOTO-ED in 1995 and got business cards and stationery printed.

PHOTO-ED  
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Minneapolis, MN 55408

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A Photographic Publisher Lonnie Paulson/Owner

I had four products in mind: 1. 4x5" Pin-hole Camera Plans, 2. A photo newsletter for 1-hour photo-labs, 3. A photographic math manual, 4. A basic photography series. The first product I came out with for PHOTO-ED was a newsletter for 1-hour photo labs. I would write a four-page newsletter for photo labs. The first three pages would feature an article of interest to the photo consumer. On the back page the lab would print their own advertising message. The photo retailer would offer these small newsletters as a free take-home when a customer comes in to pick up their photos. The first sample newsletter I wrote was on photographic composition. These newsletters would be sold to photo labs in quantities. Every three months I would come out with a new newsletter.

During PHOTO-ED, I bought a used Nikon F2 with a Tamron 80-210mm  $f/3.8$ - $f/4$  zoom lens and later I bought a new Tamron 28-70mm  $f/3.5$ - $f/4.5$  zoom from National Camera and a Nikkor 55mm  $f/3.5$  macro lens and a Nikkor 50mm  $f/2$  lens and I bought a Nikkormat FTN camera to be used as a backup. Here is the Nikon F2 camera pictured to the left. The Nikkor 50mm  $f/2$  lens is attached. I found an old magazine ad for my Tamron 80-210mm

$f/3.8$ - $f/4$  zoom lens as you can see on the right. You will see the Tamron 28-70mm  $f/3.5$ - $f/4.5$  zoom lens on the next page along with the Nikkor 55mm  $f/3.5$  macro lens. I also bought a new Sekonic analog light meter and I still own it. I took a recent photo of it for my photo equipment inventory. You can see that meter on the next page. I also bought a Vivitar 283 flash, some filters, and other accessories along with a good camera bag. I no longer use the Vivitar 283 flashes, but I might still have some. I also bought a Manfrotto tripod. I still have the tripod. It is a very sturdy tripod and I have taken a recent photo





Tamron 28-70mm f/3.5-f/4.5 zoom

of that for my photo equipment inventory. If you look at the tripod photo you will see that it was photographed in Arizona and not Minnesota. This camera equipment would help me with the photography for PHOTO-ED. The choice of lenses would give me a standard kit for use. At this time, I would do a lot of artsy photography to show my future clients what they could do as a photographer. A lot of this photography would be in my basic photography series.



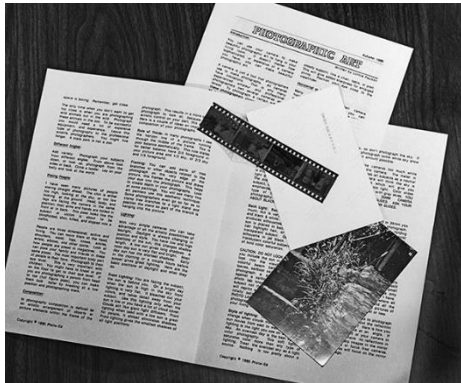
Nikor 55mm f/3.5 macro

### Photo Newsletter



I started to market this product by sending out press releases to photographic trade magazines and newsletters. I had gotten some of my press releases published in various photo trade newsletters. I even got a phone call from a lady who owned a photo lab in California. She wanted to know if anyone else had tried this product. That was my first big mistake. I should have tested this newsletter locally offering it free for one month to various labs in the Twin City area. If it worked, I could have used testimonials from satisfied customers to sell this newsletter to photo labs. I got very few responses, and those responses did not result in a sale. On the left side is the photo that I sent along with the

press release for the newsletter. I abandoned this project.



### Circles of Confusion

My next project was the photographic math book. This was the most successful project that I ever did in PHOTO-ED. I remember taking a photographic math course in photography school. I had never seen a book on photographic math, so this would probably work publishing it on-demand as a small booklet. I gathered up past notes that I had taken down on

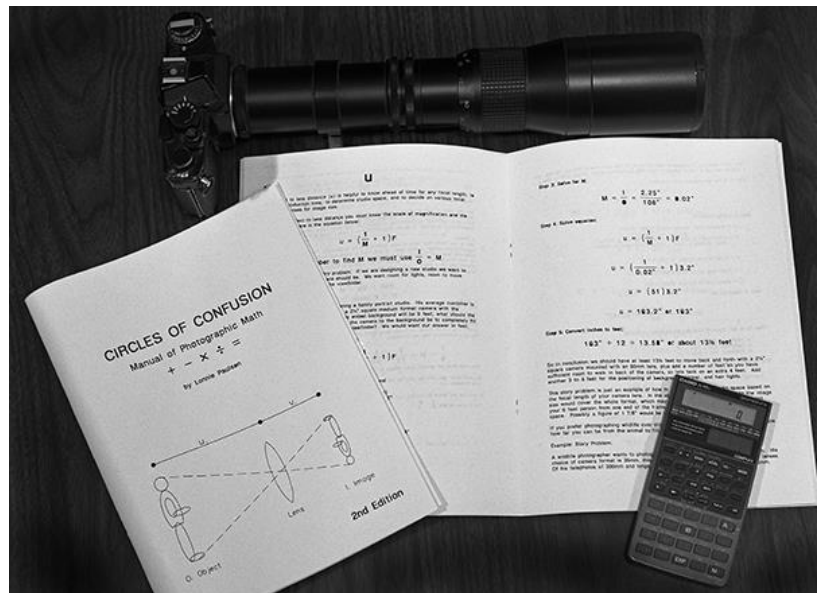


photographic mathematical formulas. I found other photographic math formulas; most of this material was published as an appendix in books. I read some books I found at the library on math to refresh my knowledge. I also talked with people who knew quite a bit about math that could help me. Pat Tuzinski, a geo-chemist, and good Christian friend of mine helped me with the harder math.

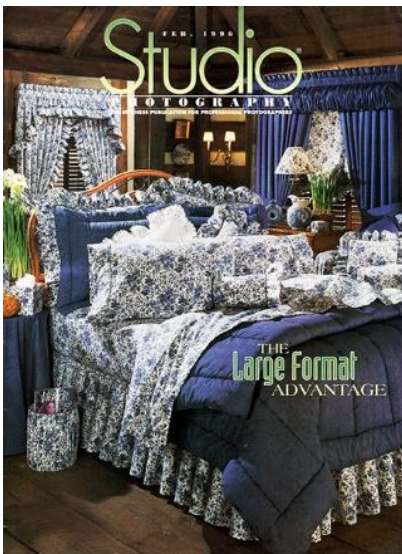
The name of this photographic manual would be *Circles of Confusion* which was an optical phenomenon. Let me define the optical phenomenon which we call circles of confusion. It's all about optics whether you are using a camera lens, telescope, binoculars etc. When we look at a subject through a lens we focus on a subject and sometimes the background may not be in focus. If our background is way out of focus, we will see dots or disks of light imaged from the lens. These out of focus disks we call circles of confusion.

In making this booklet I typed everything up on my word processor and the machine also had mathematical symbols. Everything would be printed in black ink. For illustrations I used clip art and a draftsman friend of mine drew some illustrations. I would cut and paste this all together on a card table. Everything was laid out on 11x17" paper, which when printed would be folded, and saddle stitched together forming an 8 ½ x11" booklet. Depending on how many orders I got I would print up to 10 copies at a time. I would use Kinkos to print the booklets for me. Later I wanted to add more to the book, so I came up with a second edition. I copyrighted the book but did not register any ISBN number. I still had requests from libraries for the purchase of the book. They would always buy two copies.

I promoted *Circles of Confusion* by sending out press releases with a black-and-white 8x10" print of the booklet. Those releases were sent out to photography magazines. At that time there were many photography magazines. The releases went to both consumer photography magazines and trade journals. I sent to every photography magazine that I could find in the United States. I did not send anything to the fine art photography magazines, because I don't think they accepted commercial ads. Here is a list



of the magazines that gave me a written review from my release: *Shutterbug*, *Photo District News (PDN)*, *Rangefinder*, *Petersen's Photographic*, *Photo Techniques*, *Studio Photography*, *Camera Arts*, and *Professional Photographer*.



When the reader reads my review, he could check a number on an enclosed postcard and then the magazine would send me leads from their magazine in the form of shipping labels from interested readers. For example, on the bottom of the label it would read "As Seen in *Studio Photography*." I would then send out literature about the booklet and interested readers would send me a check in an enclosed envelope and I would send that buyer a book.

A professional trade journal by the name of *Studio Photography* gave me the most leads at one time. A writer freelancing with PDN which was a trade journal that went to mostly professional commercial and advertising photographers called me up and interviewed me for a small article review that he wrote. This brought in sales too. I remember I had a commercial photographer call me from Minneapolis who saw my write up in PDN and he said he wanted to stop over and get the copy of *Circles of Confusion*

directly from me. I told him I was just working out of my home, but he didn't mind he came over

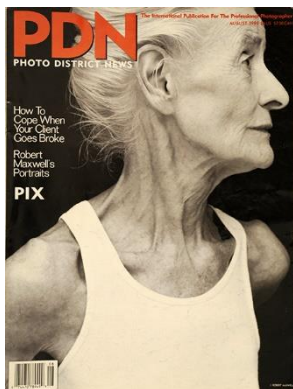
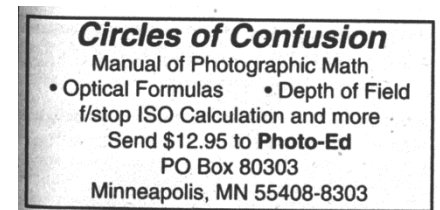


and we talked photography for a while. I had a mother call me from Minnetonka, MN and said her daughter was going to attend photography school in New York and she wanted to give her this book as a gift. Another mother called me from Texas and told me her son wanted this book for his birthday present.

The senior editor of a new photo magazine which was called, *Camera Arts* interviewed me over the phone. He gave me a full-page review which he printed on the last page of the magazine. It also had the black-and-white photo of the book that I would send out to the magazines. *Petersen's Photographic* magazine would publish my release several times which added to my sales. When *Petersen's Photographic* would do a special issue on photographic accessories they would include my release. I was also featured in their special annual issues. This magazine was probably one of the more popular magazines that I was in. I made some foreign sales and I think most of them came through *Petersen's*

*Photographic*. A few of the foreign sales I had were from Italy, France, Indonesia, Saudi Arabia, Canada, and the Cayman Islands.

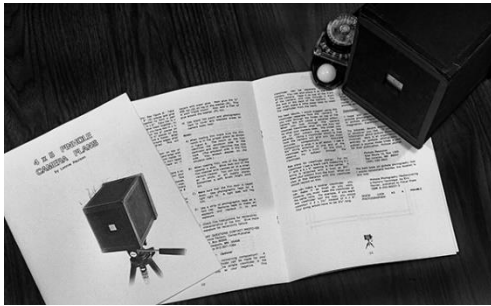
I sold *Circles of Confusion* in just about every state of the United States. I sold the most in California and Massachusetts. I also used direct mail to advertise *Circles of Confusion*. I had established a sizable mailing list; I sent out sales letters. I did a few classified ads, but they cost more than the revenue generated. I put a small display ad in *Shutterbug* magazine. Their rates were quite low. Later I had an idea to sell these booklets in quantity to photography schools. I put a mailing list together of all photography schools in the United States. I designed the mailing, but never followed up on it. Soon after I designed the mailing I terminated PHOTO-ED. I have sold over 200 copies of *Circles of Confusion*.



Sometimes the world is smaller than you think. When my review was published in PDN I saw a profile article in PDN about one of my classmates from photography school. Joel Sheagren was being profiled about his work with panoramic photography. I called him up, he had a studio downtown in Minneapolis. He did advertising photography mostly on-location. So, we got together. I did some part time work at his studio. This was around the year 1996 and he showed me Photoshop. Although at that time he preferred to shoot with film, he would scan his film and work with the digital files with Photoshop. That is when I started to get interested in digital photography.

Before this meeting with Joel, I figured digital photography was a fad that would fade out.

### The 4x5" Pinhole Camera Plans



I built a 4x5" Pinhole camera out of foam core, brass, photographic tape, and white glue. I wrote a small booklet with the plans. I also made my own viewfinder. The pinhole was 0.018" in diameter which I drilled from a hobby drill in a piece of brass. This gave me an aperture of f/360 and the camera was of a focal length of 6.5 inches. This focal length gave a normal perspective on a 4x5"



sheet of film. I also wrote in this booklet about the history of the pinhole camera along with full illustrated plans. In this book I added a black-and-white screened half tone photograph that now could be produced in a new printing machine that Kinkos had called DocuTech. It was a new technology that could print a continuous black-and-white photograph with full black, gray, and white tones on paper with this sophisticated office printer. It produced a half-tone screened image.

I promoted this book in the same way I promoted the math booklet. I sent out press releases to all the photo magazines. I don't remember any magazines using my release. I wrote a sales letter and did a mailing which was not successful either. I put a classified ad in



**Minneapolis, MN Skyline**  
**4x5" 6.5" focal length camera f/360**  
**Kodak 4x5" film T-max 100 Exposure 5 to 6 seconds**

*Shutterbug* and in *Midwest Photo Shopper*. I made a few sales, but not much. One photographer from Edina, Minnesota that bought my book asked me if he could sell several of them on commission at a Photo Swap meet in the Twin City area. I gave him ten booklets. He didn't sell any. So, this product did not sell. I still have this camera and have used it some. I don't shoot 4x5" sheet film anymore. Boxes of 4x5" film are just too expensive now days. Since I like color I made this color pinhole photo as you see on the left.



**Autumn Leaves (cropped)**  
**4x5" 6.5" focal length camera f/360**  
**Kodak 4x5" film Portra 160VC**

### **Basic Photography Series**

My biggest project was my basic photography series which I started working on as soon as I opened PHOTO-ED. It was to include four books along with 35mm duplicate slides that could be studied in a slide projector. Since this was in the 1990s this basic photography series was on film photography only. The first two books were about black-and-white photography, because black-and-white was less technical. The last two were dedicated to color photography. The first book of the series was called *Black-and-White Photography with Daylight and Available Light*. Book two was called *Black-and-White Photography with Flash and Tungsten lighting*. Book three was called *Color Photography with Daylight and Flash*. Book four was called *Color Photography with Tungsten and Mixed Light Sources*. I would always be writing on something in these books which I had in four large binders. I even wrote an extensive chapter in the first book on the history of photography. I would use a lot of clip art to lay out some illustrations. I never finished the books; it was too overwhelming. I had other projects I was working on with PHOTO-ED and I had to do everything including advertising, marketing, and administrative tasks, and I worked a full-time job not related to photography. Also, in the early 2000s digital photography started to come into view.

### **The End of PHOTO-ED**

By the year 2000 film photography was starting to disappear and digital photography was being born. In the year 2000 I was thinking of getting a website, because everything was going on-line. The magazines would not use my release anymore. They only used press releases from vendors that had a website. If you did not have a website by the beginning of the millennium you weren't considered a serious business. I really did not know anything about digital photography and if I was going to keep PHOTO-ED, I would have to build a website and learn digital photography. By this time, I did have a computer so I could go on-line with AOL. At that time digital photography was very popular in the consumer market—cheap point and shoot digital cameras.

Digital photography was making a slow appearance in the professional and serious hobbyist market. Professionals were paying \$10,000 to \$50,000 for cameras that were able to photograph digital images. Only large production facilities could afford such cameras, but they saved money because film was expensive. Large newspapers would buy a digital Nikon/Kodak camera for about \$10,000. Finally, Canon came up with a full frame digital camera that many pros were starting to buy or rent. The cost to own it was \$8,000. My friend Joel Sheagren rented this camera for a few jobs at this time since some of his clients wanted digital photography. Because of the explosion of digital photography, I would have to make too many changes to keep PHOTO-ED, so I closed the account.

### **Cinematography**

During PHOTO-ED I got interested in film making. It all started when I was on a lunch break while working at a telemarketing firm, and a new employee, Steve Kagan, saw me reading a science fiction book. He came over to my table and we talked about science fiction. Then he



said something about how he was looking for a science fiction theme in one of his movies he was going to produce. Well, that caught my attention. I had to ask him about this movie he was talking about producing.

Steve told me he was a former comedian and had decided to start movie script writing. I asked him, how does one go about that. He told me about film grants and said that he took courses in film making at a place in St. Paul called *MAAC*. I recognized that place used to be called *Film in the Cities*. Now it is called *MAAC*. Steve told me I should join him, that I would look great for one of his characters in his movie. He told me he had a cinematographer that was going to shoot the film for him. Steve and I became friends, and I decided that I wanted to get into filmmaking.

Steve was planning on a big photo shoot. His film was called *Film Want-to-Be's*. Steve told me to meet him in St. Paul at *MAAC*. I didn't have a car at the time, so he said his cousin would be picking me up and he would also be in the movie. Steve's cousin was Louis Garelick who picked me up. The crew at the photo shoot consisted of Chris who was the cinematographer, Louis & Joseph Garelick, Angelia who was a friend of Steve, and other actors. We helped with both acting and production. We would be shooting this film for a while.



*MAAC* had facilities for both still and motion picture photographers. I would also use the darkroom there for my still photography. *MAAC* was on a major bus line in St. Paul, so it was easy to get to. I also decided to take a basic course in motion picture. Steve Westerland was an independent filmmaker, teacher, and director of *MAAC*. Steve Westerland taught all the basics of shooting a 16mm film, editing, and making the final print for distribution. During the class I bought a 16mm Bell & Howell camera from Steve Kagan. I only shot one roll of 16mm film. I gave Steve Kagan the film; he said he could use it for his

movie. I wanted to produce a small independent film myself. I had some ideas, but making a movie was so expensive. Film was expensive, processing was expensive, and making the final print as a movie was very expensive. I never did it. A person could get a film grant, but before you could get a grant you had to have some film footage that showed you could make a film. Eventually I sold my 16mm movie camera because it cost too much money to make a movie. I sold the camera to a film teacher at *Minneapolis Film & Video* for \$100 which is at NE Minneapolis.

## **The End of Part 7 PHOTO-ED**