



# CABLE RELEASE

November 1998

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## Editor Notes....

Where did the month go? Being a mother of two children has made my days go by very quickly. The challenge right now is getting this newsletter out in a timely manner to your homes. Thank you very much for those that contributed to the October newsletter. I am looking forward to receiving many more articles from our readers.

The deadline for the newsletter is the third Thursday of the month. Next month it will be November 20th. I will take articles in just about any form including typed ones. You can send them to me using email or the US Postal Service. My email address is swick@erols.com. So, keep them coming!!!

## Slide Meeting....

The slide meeting will be held Thursday, November 5, 1998 at 7:30PM at the Silgo Creek Community Center located just off the Silgo Creek parkway. The subject for November is open. Our good friend Chuck Bress will be doing the judging for this month's competition.

## Print Meeting....

The print meeting will be held Thursday, November 12, 1998 at 7:30PM at the White Oak Library. Mark your calendar because the print meeting has been moved from the third Thursday to the second Thursday this year. This means you will all get a Thanksgiving break. October's subject is open. The judge for the print competition will be Bruce Dale. Bruce was a photographer for National Geographic magazine.

## GWCCC Competition....

The deadline for entering the GWCCC Fall competition is November 5, at the slide meeting. Entry forms are attached and each entry is 50 cents up to \$10.00. Please participate so we can make a good Club showing. For information call Sharon Antonelli at 301 933-4450. Thanks and ENTER!

## Nature Photography Field Trip by Bill Perry....

A trip to two natural areas in southern Maryland is scheduled for Sunday, November 22nd. We will be leaving at 7:30am. We will drive to Prince Frederick (about 60 miles from Silver Spring). We'll spend the morning at Flag Ponds Nature Park and the afternoon at Battle Creek Cypress Swamp Sanctuary. A picnic lunch is recommended. We will eat dinner together at a place to be selected. For details or car-pooling information, call Bill Perry or Edna Knopp.

## Book Signing....

A new book on Barns with more than 200 photographs has been released. The author Heber Bouland will be having a book signing at Woodlawn Manor Mansion, Norwood & Ednor Road Silver Spring on Sunday November 22, at 2 PM.

He will be showing slides and discussing the book "Barns across America". John Telford from Silver Spring Camera Club and James Walker from Bowie Crofton Camera Club have pictures included in the book. If you have any questions please call Heber Bouland at 301 774-6653

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## McCrillis Exhibit: Spring 1999 by Suzanne Izzo...

Our 1998 McCrillis exhibit will open in a few weeks. My thanks to everyone who submitted work. Thanks also to those who have volunteered to help. I hope to see you (and your friends and relations) at the opening reception on November 19, 7-9.

Since our 1998 exhibit isn't up yet, you may be surprised to have an announcement for the 1999 exhibit. However, McCrillis works on a calendar year basis, and our next exhibit is scheduled for April 20 - May 21, 1999. This is probably the most beautiful time of year in the McCrillis Gardens, so the exhibit should receive a lot of visitors.

The theme for the 1999 exhibit will be "Water." This topic includes a broad range of images. In addition to natural bodies of water (oceans, lakes, rivers, etc.), there are man-made reservoirs, swimming pools, and bathtubs. Of course there is also water in motion in waterfalls or geysers. You could even bring in some architecture with dams and mills. If you prefer people pictures, think about water sports (canoeing, swimming, diving, surfing, sailing, etc.). If you like still life, glasses of water can provide interesting reflections. Start thinking about WATER, and I'm sure you will find lots of ideas for images, regardless of your photographic interests. (When I first thought of this theme, I was thinking of the three states of H<sub>2</sub>O: solid (ice), liquid (water), and gas (steam). However, since we have just had "winter" as a theme, I think we should say that the picture must have some liquid water in it or a strong allusion to water, for example, a drinking fountain. Some ice or steam in addition to water is fine.)

I am announcing the exhibit now so that you can begin working. The matted prints will be picked up at the meetings in February. This means that there are only three months to work, but given the fact that we live on the "water planet" and are ourselves mostly composed of water, I know there will be lots of great water pictures in the exhibit in the spring.

## SSCC Officers & Chairpersons 1998-99

*President: Clarence Carvell... 301-725-0234*  
*Vice-President: Jim Mitchell... 410-997-7235*  
*Secretary: Sonja Kueppers... 301-589-8675*  
*Treasurer: Bob Catlett... 301-585-7163*  
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*Cable Release: Becky Swick... 410-997-4918*  
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*Exhibits: Suzanne Izzo... 202-829-6470*  
*Field Trips: Edna Knopp... 301-721-1789*  
*Historian: Norm Bernache... 301-935-5617*  
*Hospitality: Print meetings... Suzy & Bill Boyle... 301-933-4527*  
*Slide meetings... Elisa Frumento... 301-593-6007*  
*New Members: Jim Mitchell... 410-997-7235*  
*Property: Joel Fassler... 202-829-7899*  
*Mini Portfolios: Clarence Carvell... 301-725-0234*  
*Mini Workshops: Mike Stein... 301-384-5427*

## Workshop Chairs:

*Alternative Processes: Suzanne Izzo... 202-829-6470*  
*Composition and Presentation: Henry Rosenthal... 301-587-2235*  
*Computer Imaging: Stan Klem... 301-622-6640*  
*Critique: Clarence Carvell... 301-725-0234*

## Representatives to Affiliated Organizations

*Council of Maryland Camera Clubs:*  
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*Alex Cummins... 301-929-0640*  
*Frank Toner... 410-997-5813*  
*Greater Washington Council of Camera Clubs:*  
*Sharon Antonelli... 301-933-4450*  
*Henry Friedman... 301-588-1813*  
*Photographic Society of America:*  
*Clarence Carvell... 301-725-0234*

The *Cable Release* is published 10 times a year for the members of the Silver Spring Camera Club (SSCC). All rights are reserved and, no part may be reprinted without written permission. SSCC is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the advancement and enjoyment of photography. We welcome visitors and prospective members. For more information, contact Bill Boyle at 301-933-4527. SSCC is affiliated with the Photographic Society of America, the Greater Washington Council of Camera Clubs, and the Council of Maryland Camera Clubs.



Submissions for the *Cable Release* should be given directly to the Editor, Becky Swick, or mailed to her: 5929 Iron Frame Way, Columbia, MD 21044. Provide IBM PC format disks, email to [swick@erols.com](mailto:swick@erols.com), otherwise typed with no handwritten notations. Phone: 410-997-4918.



## Sudden Inability To Focus A Camera, By Bob Ralph....

My photographer friend who called me a few months ago is a high-powered executive with a stress level generally in the stratosphere. He's what you would call the typical "type A" personality.

His story was a simple one:

He awoke that day with a subtle change in the vision in his right eye. He could not focus his camera manually. With that sys everything looked just the slightest bit gray. It was like looking through a very thin piece of gauze. Colors were a little washed out and the contrast sensitivity was decreased. Most alarming was a distortion in the grid pattern of tiles in his shower stall. None of this would have been apparent had the other eye not been "perfect."

Off to my office we went after dinner.

His right eye visual acuity with the best nearsighted correction was about 20/25. His left eye saw better than 20/20. His right eye missed all of the diagnostic diagrams on my color vision chart, while the left scored one hundred percent. On the Amsler grid, which looks like the bathroom tiles, his left eye saw no distortion, while the right saw wavy lines and a combination of pincushion-barrel distortion. His stereoscopic vision was greatly impaired. The cornea and lens were crystal clear.

I dilated his pupils with drops to facilitate an examination of his retina. At the very least, I had to compare the two maculas.

The macula is the central zone on each retina. At the fovea, which is a tiny depression in the macula, the most acute visual acuity takes place. The fovea is the only part of the retina capable of 20/20 or better vision, so consequently it is necessary for reading and for focusing out cameras. There is an exquisitely regular arrangement of photoreceptor cells at the fovea. It is this ideal spacing of the visual receptor cells that allows us to focus our cameras with precision.

My patient was suffering from the curious syndrome called **central serous retinopathy**, which affects males considerably more frequently than females. For unknown reasons, these (usually type A) individuals develop swelling beneath the visual receptors of the retina. This bulges the

normally concave fovea, distorting vision and causing a decrease in visual acuity, color perception and contrast sensitivity. Even though the loss of acuity is often negligible, it is almost impossible to focus the camera manually.

Most cases of central serous retinopathy resolve spontaneously in a few weeks to several months, but an occasional patient is left with a persistent visual disability or has a recurrence at a later date. Rarely, laser treatment of the retina will stop the leakage of fluid under the retina from small vessels, but it doesn't prevent the patient from having recurrences.

## GETTING SERIOUS The One Hundred Prints Project By Brook Jensen...

"There is that little corner in the basement that could work." Or, "The extra bathroom could be converted easily enough." They are such simple thoughts that function as precursors to building one's own darkroom. But the path they tempt one to walk down is longer and more treacherous than one might guess.

For example, the minute you have your own darkroom, all of your friends and neighbors now perceive you as a photographer. At parties you will no longer be introduced as "John Doe-he works for XYZ Company." You will now be introduced as "John Doe- he's a photographer." As Ted Orland has joked, suddenly will be invited on a regular basis to photograph a friend's wedding. For free. "Bring your camera," will become code for "You're not invited because we enjoy your personality and desire your companionship, but rather because we'd like someone to record this event and we've volunteered you involuntarily."

All of this can be endured or creatively avoided - all except one deadly question. "Let me see some of your work." I used to dread that question; I hated that question. It forced me to confront the (capital P) Problem of (capital C) Completion. It's frankly embarrassing to be introduced as a photographer when you know in your heart you have not produced enough photographs to spit at. And there is so little satisfaction to be gained by showing someone our negatives, your contact sheets, your test strips, and your unmounted, un-spot-toned, roughly printed work prints.

"I'm not quite done with this one."

"I'm not sure that this one says exactly what I mean."



"This is still a work-in-progress."

"The next time I print this one I'm going to make the following changes..."

"Now if you could just imagine that this part was printed just a little darker, and this part was printed a little lighter, and that thing in the background wasn't there, this thing was sharply focused, and that the edges were cropped a little differently, and that it was mounted and framed, you'd know exactly what I'm working towards."

I hated that question. Pretty soon you find yourself being introduced as "John Doe - the friend I've known for a long time." You know it's an introduction that they've chosen out of kindness because what they really wanted to say was "- a guy who pretends to be a photographer, but hasn't done anything for years and years and years and we all have doubts as to whether or not he's capable, serious, talented, or worthy of continued existence on the planet." You know the moment of truth has arrived. It's time to produce, or sell the darkroom equipment and convert the basement into a ping-pong rec-room.

The reason I can write about this so convincingly is because, quite honestly, I've lived it. For the first fifteen years I was involved with photography I was not a photographer. I was, in reality, merely a dabbler, a dilettante, at best a student of photography. I tested, learned, practiced, attended workshops, printed and then reprinted the same image over and over again, and struggled desperately to figure out what the hell the Zone System was all about. In all of this work, intense as it was, I didn't really create a single print that I would proudly show today. And, so, when someone asked to see my work, I blanched, shuffled my feet and talked about how close I was to understanding D-log-E curves and the circle of confusion.

It's not that I had never produced any work. But the work I had produced was, well, let's say eclectic. If I had been asked to exhibit a show, I would have shown several different styles, on at least a dozen different papers, with four or five different matte boards, a dozen different matting techniques and - in short - a hodgepodge of work that would have been more convincing if it had been produced by twenty or more photographers.

I've discussed this dilemma with a number of photographers and discovered that I'm not alone. In fact,

I'd say this is the rule rather than the exception in work I see at photography workshops. Luckily, I stumbled onto a way out.

My moment of truth came in 1989 when I had some extended time off - a period of about six weeks - in which I had the opportunity to contemplate an extended darkroom project. I had recently been asked (again) to show some of my work and (again) begged off. I thought about this for a while, and then decided it was time to put up or shut up. I decided to spend six weeks engaged in what I called The 100 Prints Project. The project was founded in the faith that after 15 years of taking pictures certainly in all of my boxes of negatives there had to be 100 negatives worth printing as completed, finished, exhibitable artwork. The objective was to print, tone, spot, matte and finish 100 prints that would become my core work. If anyone asked to "see my work," I'd be ready. It seemed like a simple, straight - forward objective with a precisely definable goal and time frame. I did not see the true benefit of dedicating myself to this project - until it was over.

Here are a few of my observations and the lessons I learned.

My first decision was a practical one: I was not going to use any of this time to photograph. Ansel Adams once said that a photographer was doing well if he produced ten decent photographs a year. Having been involved in photography for fifteen years, I calculated that I could be inefficient by a factor of one - third and still have a hundred prints just waiting to be completed.

#### Lesson #1 - Organization

I turned to my negative files to begin the process files to begin the process of selecting the negatives I would print. Here, before I even began, was my first lesson. I had rolls and rolls, of undeveloped film, and old shoe boxes piled up with negatives poorly stored and not even contact printed. I didn't even know what I had! I quickly realized that, just like almost any other aspect of life, organization is the first step to success. I spent a week (and more than a few bucks with Light Impressions) just filing negatives, making contact prints and organizing so I could see what I had to work with. It was a lesson well learned. I now keep my negatives files orderly and contact print every roll immediately after developing it. It's perhaps a simplistic truth, but if you can't find a negative that you are looking for, it's going to be tough to make a decent print of it.



### Lesson #2 - Hit ratio

Because I wanted to print 100 finished prints in the project, I decided to begin by selecting 150 good-looking negatives by inspecting contact sheets and file prints. I estimated that I might abandon as much as one third of the negatives because, upon attempting to print them, I would discover they were simply unprintable to the quality I wanted. I was right, with the exception that I overestimated my success rate. Toward the end of the six weeks, I ended up having to dig into my negative files a little deeper to come up with the 100 negatives to finish the project.

The biggest lesson I learned here was one that affected my photographing more than my printing. It is this: film is cheap. After spending the time and money to get somewhere to photograph; after lugging all that equipment over hill and dale; after coming home, developing the film and making the contact print, it's stupid to lose an image because you didn't bracket the exposure, because the wind blew at the wrong moment, because you should have used f/32 instead of f/16, or because a stupid piece of fuzz caught at the film plane inside of your camera. In other words, it's folly to make one exposure in the field and count on it to excel all the way through the process of making a fine print. If it's worth making one exposure, it's worth making a few, a bracketed exposure or two and a back up. If the subject is not worth this much film, move on.

I also learned it's a good idea to check the image again after the exposures are made, just in case you've accidentally moved the focus, kicked the tripod leg or vignettted the corners with the lens hood.

### Lesson #3 - Style

I started printing by grabbing a negative at random and diving in. Of course, the very first act after placing the negative in the enlarger demanded a decision. How high do I crank the enlarger head, i.e., how big should I make the print? This decision was quickly followed by a multitude of others: What paper should I use? What is the right paper color? What is the right matte board? What is the right mounting technique? What is the right presentation style?

After making just a few prints I realized I was headed down a path that would result in 100 prints on a variety of papers in an assortment of sizes on different matte boards with different mounting techniques. Again. Such an assortment does not create a body of work one can be proud of. By not standardizing a bit, I found it was so easy

to get quickly bogged down in a plethora of decisions that diverted my attention from the true task at hand - making a print that looked like it fit in an exhibition.

By limiting my choices to one print size (with some variations for cropping), one paper (in my case, Ilford Multi-grade Fiber base), one toning technique, one brand of matte board, and one style of presentation, I found myself able to side-step the sticky-wicket of having to make these decisions individually over and over again, print after print.

Admittedly, this is unfairly restrictive for the accomplished, experienced, and masterful photographer. But that was not the nature of this project. This project was one that I engaged in at a time in my career when such a decisions were overwhelming. One of my early teachers advised that I should stick with one film and one developer combination, and learn it well rather than bounce from film to film, developer to developer, enlarging paper to enlarging paper. He was right. It doesn't seem like it should be so, but it is. I know of not one accomplished photographer who advocates a scattered approach to craft as the best means by which to learn photography.

### Lesson #4 - Print for a purpose

One of the problems I quickly discovered was the challenge of printing for a purpose. When one goes into the darkroom with the idea of simply making a print questions such as size, toning, finishing, etc. are all decisions at whim. As I mentioned above, carried on with repetition, you will eventually have an eclectic body of work that doesn't hang together with a sense of polished completion. In order to print with a purpose, one has to decide what the eventual use of the print will be before one starts printing. If the print is intended as a stand-alone presentation above the fireplace, a certain set of printing disciplines are invoked. If the print is intended to be part of a portfolio, then a different set of printing decisions are demanded. In essence, I learned that if you don't have a purpose in mind before you start printing then each of the decisions about how to print are overwhelmingly unanswerable.

By deciding that my purpose for this printing project was having one hundred similarly matted and finished works to show, I defined a look that I was able then to execute consistently. Individual decisions could be made in the context of the overall project.

Learning this lesson alone made the 100 Print Project worth the effort. Now, other than file prints and work prints, I don't even begin a darkroom session until I have thought



through the purpose for the print and the context in which it will be seen. A somewhat simplistic example of this thought process is that Paul Strand defined the type of light his prints were supposed to be viewed in before he began printing. He would make prints for specific gallery lighting conditions, often dictating what the lighting conditions would be where he could. Said another way, it is difficult to know which route to take when the destination is unknown.

#### **Lesson #5 - Learning to see**

As it turned out, I printed 121 finished prints but ended up with only 103 finished pieces of work in the final cut. It seems silly that I didn't anticipate it, but after I finished the first 50 or so prints, my admiration for the first dozen started to deteriorate. The more I printed, the more I learned how to print. To be more accurate, the more I printed, the more I developed the ability to see what was on the paper. Some of the early prints I either reprinted or threw out.

Fred Picker talks about an exercise that he did as a beginning photographer that involved printing 100 some-odd continuous tone patches in an attempt to create as many steps between black and white as he possibly could. He talks about some grays being harmonious with one another; some tones being sweet, and some discordant; some tones being "right" and some tones being "off". I had no idea what he was talking about until I engaged in my 100 Prints Project and found, to my amazement, that my ability to see black and white tones improved dramatically as I worked my way through the 100 prints. I am convinced that had I not undertaken this project I would have never learned how to print black and white.

#### **Lesson #5 - The value of experience**

Repetition is a virtue. Repetition is a virtue. If it is for athletes and musicians, why wouldn't it be for photographers? The 100 Print Project taught me lots of little things that might have taken years to learn. I learned things like: Sandstone is very difficult to print well; slightly filtered sunlight looks better than direct sun; a small beautiful print is better than a big ugly one; the most important part of designing your darkroom is the light you choose to view and judge wet prints and test-strips; it's possible to give up on a negative too early; it's more likely you will continue to work with a bad negative far too long; spot-toning is a distant second-best solution; meticulous negative cleaning is better, Durst makes spectacularly functional enlargers; Saunders makes the best four bladed easels; the list could go on almost indefinitely.

#### **Lesson #6 - Working through "the compulsories"**

But of all these small lessons, the most important and most unexpected was that I was not nearly as interested in photographing certain subject matter as I thought I was. It is easy to start off as a photographer, photographing what one thinks one is supposed to photograph rather than what one is truly internally inspired to photograph. Printing 100 prints of subject about which one only has limited passion is a good way to cure oneself of compulsories.

#### **Lesson #7 - Format**

The word photographer should be a verb. A painter is one who paints. A photographer is one who photographs. But to stop at that comparison is too simplistic. Once a painter has painted, he or she is, for all intents and purposes, done. Oh, maybe a frame needs to be added, but beyond that the final brush stroke is the end of the painter's act. Nothing could be further from the truth for the photographer. Clicking the shutter - that is, the act of actually taking the photograph - is not even enough to be a decent beginning. Somewhere along the line someone needs to develop the film, print it, tone it, matte it, and then frame it.

In my 100 Prints Project one of the oddest revelations was that even that assumption was subject to question. Who says the ultimate destination for a photograph is the matte board, frame and wall? The farther I got into the project the more I found myself printing images that began to be personal and less and less copies of the old masters. The more I worked on these personal images the more I got in touch with my own intentions and subconscious visions for my own work.

I started questioning how some of the images I loved were going to look on the wall. The more I thought about it the more I realized that a considerable amount of my vision had nothing to do with wall art décor and this led me to consider alternatives that I had never needed to consider before. It was in the midst of the 100 Print Project that I found myself thinking about publications, portfolios, artist's books, keepsakes, bookmarks, tanzaku (a Japanese form of paper wind poem that hangs in trees), and small, intimate prints.

#### **Conclusion**

It is not an original observation that practice makes perfect or that experience is the greatest teacher. The problem with this homily is that it's not true-at least not as true as it could be. The cold hard fact is that practice does not make perfect. Rather, it is the practice of perfection



that makes it perfect. Many beginning photographers have spent a considerable number of years tinkering and dabbling and pooping around in the darkroom. And I was among them. It was only when I dedicated myself to produce 100 perfect prints - or as least prints as perfect as I could make them - that I really made progress in my photographic skills. But it was more than that. Yes, I learned a great deal about craft, but I also learned some valuable lessons about my photographic eye, interests, and other insights that I would never predicted as benefits I would know as the result of the 100 Print Project.

My 100 Print Project was, in retrospect, one of the turning points in my photographic career. Had I never engaged in this project I'm convinced that my photography would today be significantly hampered. It was such a powerful turning point in my career I've made this project a recommendation to a number of students in my workshops.

After it was all done, the net results of my project was 103 finished, matted, exhibitable prints, a major leap forward in craft skills, and an insight into a whole new direction I could take my photographic artwork. That's not a bad harvest for a guy who was essentially trying to avoid embarrassment.

We would like to thank Brooks Jensen very much for permission to reproduce his article for the Cable Release. He contributes articles to LensWork Quarterly. If you are interested in more articles like this the address is: LensWork Quarterly, PO Box 22007, Portland, OR 97269-2007. U.S. toll free 1-800-659-2130.

### October 1, 1998 Slide Competition, Judge: Andrew Duggan....

#### Novice

1st	Bob Catlett	Slea Head
2nd	Chuck Lee	Prairie Dog
3rd	Marvin Danziger	Bird Portrait
HM	Dan Higgins	Larva

#### Advanced

1st	Bernice Easter	Chincoteague Sunset
2nd	Chas. Hundertmark	Fox Tongue
3rd	Chris Heil	In the Pink
HM	John Osgood	Come to my Arms...
HM	Sharon Antonelli	Imature Heron

The Joyce Bayley Award went to Bernice Easter for her Chincoteague Sunset

### October 8, 1998 Print Competition, Judge: Robert Madden....

Novice Mono Prints - only 1 entry (competed with Advanced)

#### Advanced Mono Prints

1st	Chuck Bress	Swan #2
2nd	Mary McCoy	Brookside Garden Flower
3rd	Charles Hundertmark	Licking Good
HM	Mary McCoy	Back View
HM	Suzanne Izzo	The Black Hole
HM	Clarence Carvell	Hog Camp Creek

#### Novice Color Prints

1st	Rhoda Steiner	Ocotillo
2nd	Alex Cummins	Gorilla
3rd	Alex Cummins	Pulpit

#### Advanced Color Prints

1st	Harald Hoiland	Horsetail Reeds
2nd	Chuck Bress	Green Leaves on Rocks & Fungus
3rd	Clarence Carvell	Milkweed
HM	Harald Hoiland	Mud Patterns Paria River
HM	Mary McCoy	Sunflower
HM	Chuck Bress	4 Corners Canyon 61

### FUN(D) FEST '98....

Penn Camera is sponsoring this event to benefit the Washington Center for Photography. There will be an auction of photographic equipment as well as Restaurant and entertainment packages, and other stuff too.

Date: Saturday, November 7, 1998

Time: 4:30 PM to 8 PM

Place: PENN CAMERA  
506 7th Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C.

For more information: 202 737-0406

### Free to good home....

Materials & plans to build a sturdy copy stand (Have 6 sets). If you are interested please contact Fred Schirmmacher at 202 726-5089.

Cable Release  
Silver Spring Camera Club  
P.O. Box 2375  
Wheaton, Maryland 20902-0461  
Member of...



99/76

Anne Lewis  
12914 Allerton Lane  
Silver Spring, Md. 20904

Silver Spring Camera Club Membership Form - 1998-1999

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Spouse \_\_\_\_\_ Regular \$30  
Address \_\_\_\_\_ Spouse \$20  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Student \$20  
Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Make checks payable to the Silver Spring Camera Club and give or mail to Treasurer, Bob Catlett, 8710 Geren Road, Silver Spring, Maryland 20901, (301)585-7163. Note: Dues cover the club year from September through May. After January 31, dues for the remainder of the year for new members are \$20.00, dues for spouses and students remain at \$20.00.