



# Dapto Camera Club Newsletter..

*The teaching Club.*

April, 2017

## Why your digital photos might die before your grandkids see them

Keith Wagstaff

My great-grandfather was Popeye. I discovered that from old photographs my father found in his childhood home.

They were stored with a newspaper article from 1938 describing how Jonathan Wagstaff was inspired to become a Popeye impersonator after winning the title of "Homeliest Man in California" at a male bathing beauty contest in Venice Beach.

These days, it's hard to imagine documents like that being stored in a box. The photos might be kept on a hard drive or posted on Facebook. Instead of a printed article, you might save a link to a story online.

The problem? Hard drives can be unreliable and Internet companies sometimes fail — taking your memories with them.

Hard drives, hard times

"The question of, 'How long does data live on a hard drive?' is a tricky one," Ahmed Amer, an associate professor of computer engineering at Santa Clara University, told TODAY.

Digital family photos should be just fine for a few years. But when you start talking decades — like the 76 years my great-grandfather's photos lasted — things get complicated. Your typical hard drive uses magnets to write information. With older hard drives, that can be a problem.

"Just like a credit card, you don't want to put it next to a magnet, because what you have on the magstripe will be erased," he said.

It's not only magnets that you have to worry about. Heat, a spilled cup of coffee and other environmental factors can degrade the information on a hard drive.

Newer hard drives are less susceptible to those factors, according to Ethan Miller, the Symantec presidential chair in storage and security at the University of California, Santa Cruz. In fact, the data on them should be fine for decades. The actual hard drive, however, will probably break before then.

"A hard drive is a physical device," Miller told NBC News. "Things like the lubricant and bearings will degrade over time." Like a car, it's a good idea to take stored hard drives out for a spin every so often. Stored unused in a closet or attic, the mechanical parts in a hard drive can break down over the course of a year or two. At most, hard drives are built to last around five to seven years, Miller said.

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Free Lessons with Serge Ramelli - <http://photoserge.com/free-lessons/all>

# Are the rules of photography meant to be followed or broken?

By Lewis Lorton, street photographer, photo-editor at lewlortonphoto.com.

Written 27 Jan 2016

Noam Chomsky, the controversial linguist, etc, proposed that if human beings are brought up under relatively normal conditions, then they will always develop language with certain properties.

I think that people have a similar, if less developed, 'vision engine' that allows them, even without any formal training, to understand the hints and clues in pictures they look at. When someone looks at a picture, somewhere in their mind that little vision engine tries to parse out what all the things are in each picture, what their relative importance is and what is the meaning of the picture being shown to them.

## The "RULES" of Photography

Beginners hear two seemingly conflicting axioms about photography. First, "one should use the Guidelines (rules) of photography until you know enough to break them." And then "There are no rules for good photographs, there are only good photographs." said by that avatar of photography, Ansel Adams.



## Well which is it?

Are there Rules or are there 'Guidelines' as people like to say? And these same people go on to say that 'Follow these Rules/Guidelines until you know enough to break them.'

If the 'Rules' (or Guidelines) aren't important because, even if we know them, we can break them, what is important?

I think the 'Rules of Composition', as we think of them, are wrongly constructed because, in an attempt to simplify complicated

issues, they become essentially unrelated pieces of information and don't take into account some important truisms.

A photographer must know how people see and interpret and comprehend images, must use this knowledge to construct images that are meaningful to the viewer. The so-called Rules are really an attempt to codify, in simple sentences, the complex balance of that determines how the human visual engine perceives and interprets photos.

## The Rule at the top

Let's ignore all the simplistic Rules of composition for a moment and look at the issue afresh. There is a hierarchy of real 'Rules' that shouldn't ever be broken.

Alone at the very top of the hierarchy is "Know exactly what you are taking a picture of.'

Every photographer should know what actually caught their eye, the center(s) of interest, what they are attempting to catch on the sensor and then should consciously compose the image around the center(s) of interest. If the photographer doesn't know what he/she is taking a picture of, the viewer won't know either.

The Axioms that follow from the Rule at the Top

Below that most important Rule are three axioms that govern making successful images.

Everything in the frame must have a purpose

Important things should be in important places

Elements that add to the image should be maximized and elements that detract from the image should be minimized.

The main rule and the three axioms that descend from it comprise my entire philosophy for making images.

Number 2) is where most new photographers get stuck and, in response, they cling to a simplistic Rule of Thirds. Viewers of photos try to understand the photo and, subconsciously, they use hints from position, brightness and focus.

Objects that are bright and in focus draw the eye.

Objects that are in the center with lots of room around them, draw the eye but also strongly imply symmetry. (No, I don't know why but they do.)

Are there Rules or are there Guidelines' as people like to say?

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## Photo Outings.

Bundanoon Highland Gathering Festival - Bundanoon - 1st of April.

Enjoy a street parade with marching pipe bands, Clan Societies, children's decorated floats, The Tartan Warriors: Bundanoon Stones of Manhood, Mary Kiani: Scottish Singer, String Loaded Fiddle Band: Bob MacInnes and Friends: Fiddler performing in the Fiddlers Tent, Scottish Highland and Country Dancing, 120 specialty crafts, souvenirs and food stalls.



Bass Point Reserve - Shellharbour

Bass Point Reserve is a 72 hectare coastal jewel, located just south of Shellharbour Village and contains one of the few littoral rainforest areas in the Illawarra. The reserve is recognized as one of the most important archaeological sites on the NSW coast and is listed on the Australian Heritage Commission register. You will always be able to find something to photograph here.



Wings Over Illawarra 2017 [6th and 7th May]

Relive the past with a spectacular display of classic warbirds and amazing vintage aircraft of yesteryear. Be



inspired by the Australian Defense Force as they present the best Australia has to offer. Loud, fast jets and formation flying will delight and provide you with an unforgettable experience as they perform breath-taking maneuvers above the beautiful Illawarra. Don't miss heart stopping aerial antics, flying displays, fantastic static displays, classic cars and motorbikes, a free Kid's Zone presented by McDonalds Illawarra, souvenirs and simulators - there is no better way to spend an unforgettable day with family and friends!

**Vivid** The world's largest festival of light, music and

**Vivid Sydney**, one of the most spectacular light shows in the world, is set to impress again when it returns to Sydney for 23 nights from Friday 26 May to Saturday 17 June 2017.



Illawarra Light Railway Museum - Albion Park

The whole family will love cheering and waving from the steam train as it travels past the station and navigates its way through the quiet bushland setting in Albion Park. The museum also has tram and miniature train rides that let the children experience a piece of history that was enjoyed at fairgrounds by their parents and grandparents alike.



**A great chance to take some great photos.**

## From page 1..... Why your digital photos might die

Another option is saving documents on a CD or Blu-ray Disc, preferably in a cool, dry area. (Anyone who has left a favorite CD on their dashboard knows why). But those break down over time as well.

Burning a CD or DVD involves heating up a layer of dye with a laser. As it does with photographs and clothing, dye on a DVD fades, causing those cherished photos to degrade.

"There are plenty of CDs and DVDs that were burned 10 to 15 years ago that are already bad," Miller said.

The tech, it is a-changin'

"A lot of people, when they think of data storage, they think, 'Will it survive?'" Amer said. "That's really just a small part of it."

Hard drives are vulnerable. So are CDs. But even if you carefully store your data on a disc that can withstand time, there is the chance that, in five years, nobody will be able to access that data.

"If I gave you a LaserDisc today and told you there was a lot of cool stuff on it, what would you do?" Miller said.

It was only 20 years ago that people could go to the store and buy a LaserDisc player. These days, you can pretty much only find them on eBay. Floppy discs, VHS tapes and eight-track cartridges are just a few examples of other defunct technologies. Chances are that the computer cables you used 15 years ago don't work with hard drives today.

Ultimately, Amer said, rapidly evolving technology could pose a bigger threat to your data than a failing hard drive.

Living on a cloud

For many, a good solution is the cloud. Facebook has a team of professionals ensuring that the servers storing your photos are kept in tip-top shape. Their business depends on it, after all. They are a lot safer there than on DVDs in a box in your closet.

There are a lot of other options for people who want to store their photos online, including Dropbox, Google Drive and Flickr. While disk drives and computer cables might change, it's a good bet that the Internet will be around in 50 years.

That doesn't mean your data is safe. Remember Friendster? Kodak Gallery? Yeah, you aren't getting your photos back from them anytime soon. And transferring information from a dying website to a new one isn't always easy. If you store your photos online, make sure to check those sites often.

Cloud services that charge for online storage are usually a good bet, Miller said, because they can just charge more if costs go up,

instead of discontinuing a free product that is no longer profitable.

Doing things the old way

There are some radical solutions that the next generation might use to make sure their memories last hundreds of years. In New Mexico, Norsam Technologies etches data onto nickel plates on a microscopic scale — almost like creating incredibly tiny, dense music records. It's called Rosetta-HD.

It might be cool, but there is no telling whether it will catch on. Right now, technology doesn't have an easy solution for long-term storage. Digitally storing photos is no guarantee that your grandchildren or even your children will be able to look at them.

As for photos of my great-grandfather, my family keeps them on a hard drive, cloud service and in a good, old-fashioned box. Apparently, that is the smart thing to do.

"Going with a diversity of approaches is really the way to go," Miller said. "It sounds really weird as a computer scientist saying this, but if they're photos you really, really want your grandchildren to see, print them out."

Keith Wagstaff writes about technology for NBC News. He previously covered technology for TIME's Techland and wrote about politics as a staff writer at TheWeek.com. You can follow him on Twitter at @kwagstaff and reach him by email at: Keith.Wagstaff@nbcuni.com

<http://www.today.com/money/why-your-digital-photos-might-die-your-grandkids-see-them-1D80395921>



**"A lot of people, when they think of data storage, they think, 'Will it survive?'"**



# Straighten a Crooked Photo with GIMP

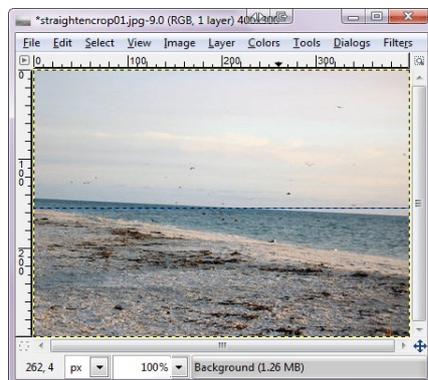
We've probably all taken pictures when the camera wasn't perfectly level, resulting in a skewed horizon line or a crooked object. It's very easy to correct and straighten a crooked photo using the rotate tool in GIMP.

Whenever you have an image with a skewed horizon, you must lose something from the edges of the photo to fix it. The sides of the image must be cropped to make up for the slanting of the photo from rotation. You always have to crop a photo when you rotate, so it makes sense to rotate and crop in one step with the rotate tool.

Feel free to save the practice image here, then open it in GIMP so you can follow along. I'm using GIMP 2.4.3 for this tutorial. It should work for other versions up to [GIMP 2.8](#) as well.

Don't assume your camera's battery is fully charged - make sure it is.

## Place a Guideline

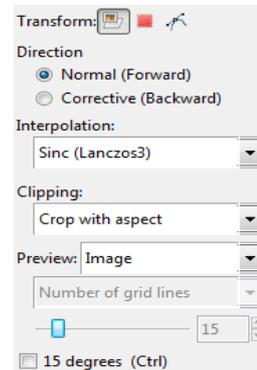


© Sue Chastain

With the photo open in GIMP, move your cursor to the ruler at the top of the document window. Click and drag down to put a guideline on the image. Place the guideline so it intersects with the horizon in your photo. This doesn't necessarily have to be the actual horizon line as it is here in

the practice photo – use anything that you know should be horizontal, such as a roofline or a sidewalk.

## Set Rotate Tool Options



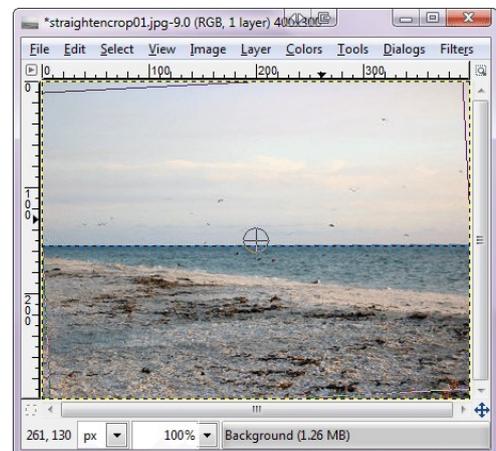
Select the [rotate tool](#) from the tools. Set its options to match what I've shown here.

## Rotate the Image

Your layer will rotate when you click and drag in the image with the rotate tool. Rotate the layer so the horizon in your photo lines up with the guideline you placed earlier.

## Continued from page Finalize the Rotation

The rotate dialog will appear as soon as you move the layer. Click "Rotate" to complete the operation when you're



satisfied with your positioning. You'll be able to see how much of the edges were lost due to the rotation after you do this.

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# Let's Get You Taking Better HDR Images.

Believe me, no one wants their photos to look just...weird and distasteful. Which is what so many HDR images look like, but not all, thankfully.

Since most people know that HDR is nothing new, it's important to lay out what the foundations of HDR photography are and to understand what definitely hasn't changed.

Brought to you this week by Art of HDR, [ <http://www.shutterevolve.com/hdr-photomatix-tutorial/> ]we're going to just expose the fundamentals of what HDR photography is and some awesome free tips too!

## Let's not hang about...

HDR imaging is a process where the photographer takes multiple exposures of the same image with different exposure values (a range of bracketed images) and blends them together.

Most of the time, it is three exposures (one underexposed, one correctly exposed and one overexposed) or five exposures (two underexposed, one correctly exposed and two overexposed). These are then merged using software to create the final photograph.

## Why HDR Imaging?

The word HDR - High Dynamic Range, itself is self-explanatory. In order to get that greater dynamic (exposure) range of light and colors, very close to what the photographer or the human eye sees, one goes for the HDR technique. Make sense?

Sometimes HDR images can be recreated if one shoots RAW on a camera with a (very) good sensor - technology is getting there, but we're not seeing perfect HDR images SOOC just yet...

More often than not, this attempt fails (even with a long exposure) and the single exposure shot lacks the whole dynamic range of light and colors; shadows may be very underexposed or highlights may be completely blown out!

This is when HDR comes in handy and when processed properly, an HDR image should have shadows exposed correctly, mid tones and correctly exposed highlights.



## Do Not forget to Take the Tripod!

Carrying your tripod is not just an option, but a necessity when it comes to HDR imaging since you will be taking a few shots of the same frame with different exposures and combining them.

The slightest of camera movements can cause ghosting or blurry areas in the image.

Although software these days is clever enough to compensate for these movements (somewhat), getting it right in the first place will always be the best practice. You also may lose out on part of the images when handheld shots are merged/aligned.

It's also worth noting, shots with a longer shutter speed will without a doubt definitely require a tripod - no discussion there, anyway.

You don't want to miss out on a moment that you wished to save, do you; just because you did not carry your tripod?

## What Camera Settings to Use?

As a rule, always aim to shoot RAW - whether it is for HDR or otherwise.

Use the same aperture values for all the shots in the series. Matrix evaluation metering will be the best for landscapes and internal architecture images - these are the types of images that are most commonly considered for HDR.

Shoot in steps of 2 EV if you are doing three brackets (-2, 0, +2) or 1 EV step if you are doing five brackets (-2, -1, 0, +1, +2).

Do not wait for too long between shots of the same scene, especially if it is a sunrise, sunset or there are moving clouds, winds or other moving elements.

Best is to use the Auto Exposure Bracketing function as it helps to take pictures quickly without having to touch the camera.

## Fine-Tune the Settings in Your Software

Once you've captured the images and merged them together using the tool of your choice, make sure that you fine-tune the settings to create a powerful image.

One piece of simple advice would be this:

Don't just apply a preset and be done with it.

For example, work with the strength, luminosity and gamma sliders as they can have a huge effect on your images. Do NOT apply the same settings to all images as each image requires its own settings to look better.

Continued on next page,

Continued from page 5

Do not pull the sliders to the extreme, especially the saturation slider. Instead, drag them around the mid-areas focussing one two or three main features making a good photo look better.

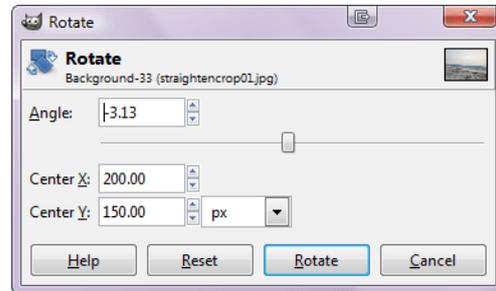
## 8 QUICK TIPS

1. For any type of photography, always shoot RAW whenever possible.
2. Try different perspectives. Take advantage of clouds and thunderstorms to create amazing patterns in the sky using HDR process.
3. Make sure that images are perfectly aligned and the best blending option used. Use the masking tool to your advantage and benefit to mask out problematic areas and replace the same area with similar areas from a better image, most probably the normal exposure one.
4. Always recreate the original image. Keep the shadows, highlights and mid-tones the same way as it was when you saw it. For example, if the sky was bright in the original image, keep it bright when processing the HDR, applying the same rule to mid tones and shadows. This makes the image look realistic.
5. As far as possible, try and shoot images that have still elements in them. Avoid anything that has a rapid movement.
6. HDR works well with scenes that have a higher contrast between the darks and the lights.
7. Experiment and play around with photographing and post-processing. Create your own style, but make sure that it is realistic (unless a surrealistic image is your style).
8. Try your best to use the lowest ISO possible to eliminate any noise.

So, what did you think? Plenty of tips there to get you started churning out some fantastic HDR images of your own!



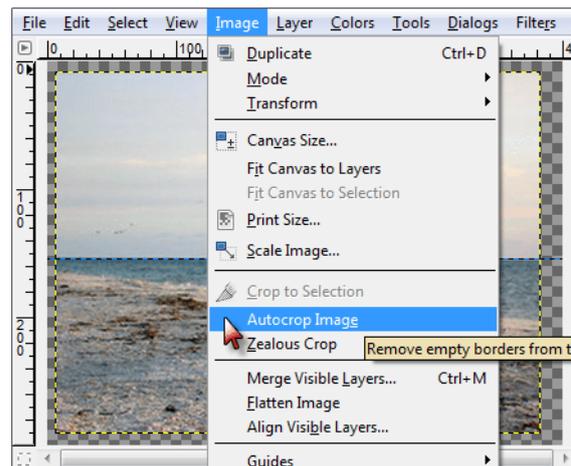
## Autocrop and Remove Guides



<https://www.thoughtco.com/straighten-a-crooked-photo-with-gimp-1701639>

### Download GIMP.

<http://download.gimp.org/pub/gimp/v2.8/windows/gimp-2.8.18-setup.exe>



## rules of photography .... continued from page 2.

it means understanding how people's visual engines interpret the qualities of an image

Objects on the very edge or cropped off seem less important. Thus, by default, objects that are neither on the edge, not in the center, seem important and well placed to most viewers - this would place them on the Thirds.

Successful composition doesn't mean adhering to all the traditional Rules, it means understanding how people's visual engines interpret the qualities of an image and using that knowledge to manage the impact of the picture.

<https://www.quora.com/Are-the-rules-of-photography-meant-to-be-followed-or-broken>



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