

Profile for  
April 2021



Sibley Camera  
Club Addendum

Photography is a tool to express ourselves in many unique ways and the mind set responsible for this is as unique as each member of the club. I would like to thank Russell Malm for sharing some of his time with us as we get a glimpse of how he sees the world.

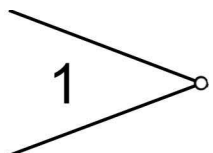
### **Malcolm Mcelvaney – How did you initially get into photography?**

Russell Malm - My first memory of using a camera was in 1st or 2nd grade (69 or 70). We lived across from the school. My class went to my house to watch one of the Apollo rockets lift off. I remember using my grandfather's old Kodak Brownie Hawkeye to photograph my class watching the liftoff. Not quite astro-photography, but it got me started. I used the Brownie for a few years, taking some really horrible photos. The Brownie was completely innocent. Lighting confounded me even more then than it does now. I still have that Hawkeye, and it also started me in collecting vintage cameras years later.

My next camera arrived when I was in High School. One year for Christmas my parents gave me a Yashica SLR, they bought at Gene Smith Studio in Raymondville, Texas. Mr. Smith was THE photographer and camera store in Willacy County, and for a few years he was my source for all camera supplies, film developing and pointers. The occasional "nice photo" from Mr. Smith went a long way in building my confidence and enthusiasm for photography.

I've always loved sport, so naturally most of my early photography was of high school and college sporting events and also candid photography. Sports photography and candid photography are basically the same thing; catching people when they aren't expecting a photo. I loved the challenge of capturing that perfect sports moment or that perfect expression from someone in a real life moment, and the thrill when it actually worked.

**I would be curious to know how many cameras you have collected but I also notice you posted some bird photographs on the group page. Did you exchange hard to get shots in sports for even more elusive subjects like birds?**





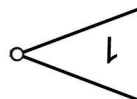
Much to my wife's dismay I have 300+ vintage from cameras of all different types in my collection. They range in size from the tiny Sakura Petal to a Graflex Speed Graphic. At first I just collected them because of my fascination with cameras. But a couple years ago I was drawn back to using film and started using the cameras in my collection. My goal is to shoot at least one roll of film with each, but at my current rate, I'll be approaching 200 by the time I finish. Before switching to digital, I had only shot with 35mm SLRs since graduating from the Brownie. Learning to use rangefinders and medium format film cameras has been an interesting challenge.

You are correct about my progression from sports photography. I still enjoy that on the rare

occasion I get to do it, but my current favorites are wildlife and macro subjects, particularly insects. Most of my wildlife photography is birds, simply because they are the most plentiful and easiest to find. The challenge for me is to capture them in flight or in the case of birds of prey, when they are hunting or have already caught their prey. One of my goals has been to photograph Grizzly Bears in the wild. I was finally able to accomplish that a couple years ago at Katmai National Park in Alaska. Mountain lions have still eluded me, but maybe I should be thankful for that.

The main challenge with insect macro photography isn't finding them, but getting the little buggers to stay still long enough. Some people accomplish this by putting them in the freezer or refrigerator beforehand. This doesn't appeal to me because it defeats the challenge. I'm terrified of black widow spiders and wasps, but getting up close with a macro lens is exciting. Probably also stupid, but still exciting.

**What advice would give someone trying to learn more about photography?**



First, learn all of the various fundamental rules of photography. Things like the rule of thirds, leading lines, framing, etc. After you have learned and practiced them, think of them as a guide, not a rule. Find what you like and don't worry about what other people like. No one would ever suggest using expired film in a film camera, but some of the most interesting photographers out there use expired film.

Second, forget all about using the program mode on your camera. Shoot in manual mode, or at least manually choose the shutter speed and aperture, and let the camera choose the ISO. You will learn much more about your camera and photography, and in particular you will learn about how different apertures work. Shooting in manual mode can be very intimidating at first. But just like anything, the more you do it the more you feel comfortable with it.

Finally, don't worry about the brand. Its nice to be able to purchase the top of the line equipment, but the photographer makes the photos not the equipment. Ansel Adams would have created unbelievable photos with any camera, but how many of us could have done what he did with his camera? Not I. Like many, I suffer from G.A.S. (Gear Acquisition Syndrome), but it hasn't made me a better photographer. Shooting in manual mode has. Google "pro photographer cheap camera" and see what can be accomplished without expensive equipment.

### **Do you share your work online? If so, where can it be found?**

One of these days I'll choose a good photo hosting site. For now I have quite a few on Instagram [Instagram.com/russwm/](https://www.instagram.com/russwm/)

**Bonus image – This was to good not to share. Thank you for sending so many images to include.**

