

Cameraderie

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SPOTLIGHT on our MEMBERS

As our members are our club's most important assets, the Cameraderie will feature one member in each issue. We hope you'll enjoy meeting the member here and be sure to say Hi when you see her/him at the club's activities or around town.

Catching up with Don Hill

By **Mike Bray**

Easily one of the most popular members of our camera club is Don Hill. Don has been a member of the club since 2001, served on our board of directors for 5 or 6 years, taught many classes, and oversaw the transition of our club's lab from a film to a digital one. Don has been one of our club's top photographers for years and the "go-to" guy for personal instruction in Photoshop.

I caught up with Don recently and spoke to him about his personal past and his history with the club. In his typical way, Don made the beginning of the dialog easy for me: he handed me his resume containing all the highlights I needed to know about his background.

Don is a native Californian. Giving insight to his roots he told me, "I was born in San Diego in 1932 when the population was only 432,000. It was a wonderful time to be young and living in southern California." Don enlisted in the Navy in 1951 and served during the Korean War as an aviation electrician. Don explained, "It was in the Navy that I was first exposed to photography. The guy with an office across from mine was the air group photographer." Through this connection and influence Don developed an interest in all things related to photography, from the processing in the darkroom, the functions of a film camera, to the aerial photography that revealed the effectiveness of the ordinance used on enemy positions.

After his Navy service, Don worked primarily with large defense contractors located in Southern California. First up was General Dynamics Convair in San Diego where Don's work involved design and logistics. A firmwide downsizing led to a welcome opportunity for a short interlude to experience, in Don's words, "life as a beach bum." Don stayed busy with part-time jobs,



worked out with two mile swims in La Jolla Cove, and took a few night courses, including a few in photography. Utopia didn't last forever, and so Don finished his work career with a 20-year stint at Hughes Aircraft. Don's description of his work at Hughes was "'Packaging Engineering Design Department.' It entailed such design challenges as moving missiles from one location to another and working out harness and skid configurations to enable the Air Force to drop military tanks out of the back of flying cargo planes!

It was also at Hughes that Don met his wife Leta. He explained, "I was on a temporary assignment in the building where she worked. She was really stunning, so I made up some excuse and went over and talked to her. Two years later, we were married."

Don Hill

— continued

Both Don and Leta loved golf. Don stated, "It was golf that brought me to Leisure World. Moving here saved us lots of money in green fees because Leta and I were playing so much golf in those days." Soon Don's interest in photography resurfaced and in 2001, Don joined the camera club.

Don's camera when he joined the club was an Argus C3. This 35mm rangefinder film camera soon broke, and Don decided to try one of the new digital cameras for a replacement. Like most of us, Don took classes from Kara Patterson, mastered Apple's Macintosh computer and iPhoto. Don produced the first digital slide show presented to the club! Don related that he was known as the "Mission Impossible" instructor for digital slide shows using Mac and the Ken Burns effect.

Don has photographed a variety of subjects and claims no particular venue is his favorite. I asked Don whether he enjoyed the technical side of

photography and post processing or the actual pursuit of taking photos. Don answered, "I was about 50/50 on the two. I really loved to teach most of all". Don spent many hours in the lab, supported Fred Granger in making the transition to a full digital lab and continued to teach Photoshop. He served as a lab supervisor from 2003 to 2014. Don started several multi-subject workshops, helped set up the photo studio, and performed duties as 2nd vice president of our club. Don was an easy choice for the Lydia Savedoff award in 2010. The club is indebted to Don for his many contributions.

Due to his wife Leta's failing health, Don has played the role of her primary caregiver. This diminished Don's time for participating in club activities. Last year Don gave up his role as a lab supervisor. Don is now getting a bit more help with Leta's care. I asked Don what his goals were for the future, provided the help at home works out favorably. "I'd like to get back to teaching. Ideally, I'd like to travel a bit and participate in other club activities. Who knows? Never say never."



Photography by Don Hill

Of Interest...

- ◆ ["Josef Koudelka: Nationality Doubtful" exhibit, the Getty Center, now through March 22, 2015; getty.edu](#)
- ◆ ["Light, Paper, Process: Reinventing Photography" exhibit, Getty Center, April 14 - September 6, 2015; getty.edu](#)