

## Faces and Places Snap Snap Snap

When I was a child my father had a Kodak folding Hawkeye camera that he'd take out on occasions such as birthdays and family gatherings to snap photos. Whenever he finished a roll of film he'd take it to a shop to be developed. A roll of film might be completely used on one occasion but that was rare. More often months would go by until the roll was completely used and sent off to be developed. The photos were all black and white. If color film was even available in those years Dad never used it.

I was fascinated by the camera and occasionally I was allowed to push the lever that activated the shutter to take a photo. It seemed like magic to me. When the developed photos came back I, of course, wanted to see the one that I had snapped. "My photo".

Eventually my parents bought a Kodak Brownie camera for my brother and me to use. It still required film but even though by then color film had become available, black and white film was probably less expensive so that's what we used.

With access to that camera I could choose to snap photos whenever my folks would splurge by giving me a roll of film. My mother was none too pleased when she became the subject of my photography; hanging laundry on the clothes line and such.

In my senior year of college I applied to join the Peace Corps. When I was accepted into a training program and it became a possibility that I'd actually become a Volunteer in service overseas I obtained a better camera for photographing my adventures. That 35mm single lens reflex Konica had far more capability to capture what my eyes saw than my earlier camera had. It too was a film camera. Digital photography was still nonexistent. But color film had become reasonably priced and it became my film of choice. Mostly I used slide film.

My Peace Corps training took place right here in Dummerston (July into October, 1964). Summer and fall in Vermont. What a wonderful time and place for snapping pictures.

My two year Peace Corps assignment was in Afghanistan. Exotic, colorful, wondrous. A terrific place for photography!

I am not a real "photographer". I have never taken a photography course and I haven't a clue about F-stops, depth of field and all that technical stuff. I simply aim my camera and snap what is interesting to me. I take photos for my own enjoyment and the memories they bring back to me as I occasionally look through them.

With the advent of digital photography you and I are able to take great photos. Excellent cameras are embedded in the mobile devices that most of us carry around. One just has to aim and snap and the geni inside these devices can instantaneously produce incredible images, automatically focusing and adjusting for light and whatever else is seemingly necessary to make

terrific images. In case the photo isn't quite right there are simple tools built in so that photos can be adjusted in many ways after the picture has been snapped. We have all become "photographers".

Over the years I have traveled to many places, always keeping a camera with me. Snap, snap, snap, snap. The result is hundreds, even thousands of photos.

This show is a sampling of some of those photos.

Choosing a very limited number of photos for this exhibit was an overwhelming problem for me. I can't judge "my photos" objectively. Memories are associated with each picture making each one a "favorite". It's easy for me to ignore the fact that some of my favorites are out of focus, off-kilter, or just plain uninteresting to other folk.

As a result of this quandary I asked Joshua Farr, the Executive Director of the Vermont Center for Photography (VCP) in Brattleboro, to guide me in settling on a "focus" for the exhibit and to help narrow down the many photos I considered for this exhibit. The photos were also printed by VCP. Thank you Josh!

If you are interested in photography and aren't aware of VCP and its many activities you ought to visit its beautiful gallery, studios, library, used equipment shop and offices just above Hatch Space on High Street in downtown Brattleboro (entrance on Green Street).

Another local institution of great importance to photography is The Insight Photography Project at 183 Main St (down the alleyway at #3). Insight's goal is teaching youth to use photography for self-expression, personal development and cultural engagement. Its activities include classes, internships, exhibitions and contests. Insight is amazing!

Thank you to the Dummerston Historical Society for the honor of presenting this exhibit. I hope that you, the visitor, will find the photos to be at least a little bit interesting. Now go out and snap, snap, snap.