

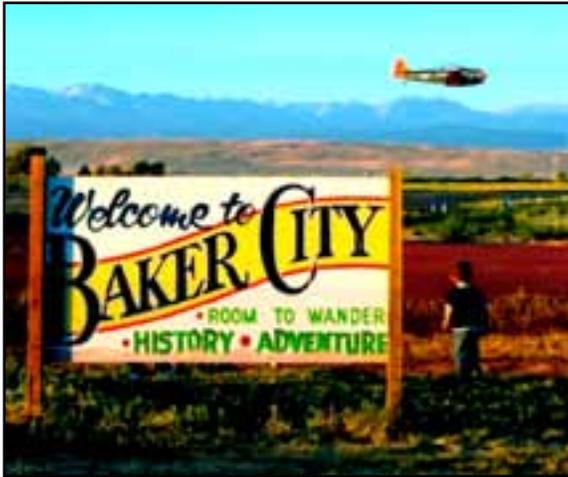
# HERITAGE BULLETIN

# 16

Tips, Ideas & More to Help Preserve Oregon's Heritage

**GOOD PICTURES TELL THE BEST STORY**

MAY 2015



It's true, "a picture is worth a thousand words." Indeed, great photos tell impelling stories; however, storytelling with photographs takes practice and planning. Successful images grab the viewer's attention, creating a desire to learn more or to become involved. Whether your focus is on artifacts or a historic downtown district, good photographs will strengthen *your heritage story*.

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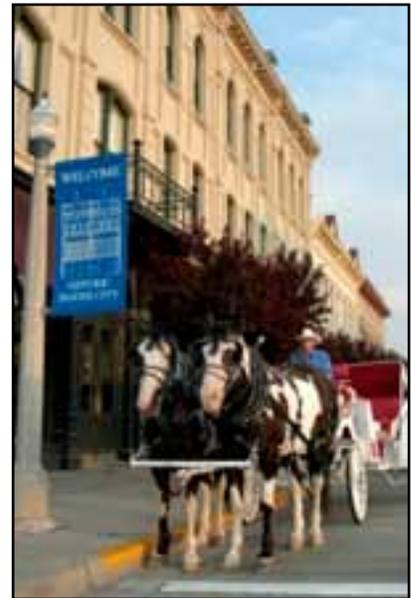
## Starting with the Basics

### Practice, Practice, Practice!

- Technique is more important than equipment;
- Perfect your technique by taking pictures often;
- Take your camera with you and shoot what you see;
- Share the pictures you take.

### Cameras don't have to be expensive or complicated.

- Digital cameras are ideal, but they don't have to be fancy.
  - Manual flash, manual and auto focus and adjustable white balance.
- Phone Cameras are great for instant Internet posting.
- In all cases, let your camera do the work, but tell it what to do.



### Three C's for Great Photos

- **Consider** the story you want to tell.
- **Compose** the photo to tell that story.
- **Click** then click again.
  - Shoot horizontal (landscape mode, like the image on page 1) and vertical (portrait mode, like the image to the right).

## Perfecting Your Technique

### Composition

- Is the subject in focus?
  - Avoid blurred images from camera or subject motion.
- Is the subject *the* focus?
  - Avoid too much background or foreground drawing focus away from the focal point of the photo.
  - Try a different angle to avoid the background.



- Is the angle interesting or different?
- The background can add depth or context.
- Move to get the shot from another angle.



## People and Action

Photos with people are more interesting.



- Try different angles.
- Try isolating details.
- Is there too much in the photo?
  - Avoid too much activity in the frame.
  - Zoom in or out to frame the best photo and eliminate clutter.
  - Include action.

## Timing and Lighting

The best times for natural light are early to mid morning and late afternoon.



- Using a flash lights the foreground and loses the background.
- No flash can create dramatic effect.
- Avoid using the flash when the subject is in front of a light background; it creates shadows.



- White balance
  - Different light sources can change the color of your photo:
    - Incandescent = Orange
    - Halogen = Blue
    - Florescent = Green
  - Adjust the white balance setting on your camera (usually WB or AWB).

- Shadows
  - Try different times of day to avoid shadow distraction or to use shadow to create a dramatic effect.
- Windows
  - Windows are transparent when the light from behind is brighter; Windows are reflective when the light in front is brighter.
  - Reflection can be distracting and shift focus.
  - If the outside is brighter shoot from inside.
  - Shooting from a different angle adds transparency and depth.
  - Reflect light at right angles.
  - Reflection can also add depth and drama.



## Avoiding Obstacles

- Signs
  - They're everywhere and tough to avoid
  - Keep the good signs, avoid the distracting ones.
- Utility poles and power lines
  - They are always in the worst possible place for photos.
  - Creativity is required to avoid them.



## Tips for Good Building Photos

- Narrow the focus to what is special.
- Focus on details.
- Try different angles to highlight the architecture.
- Shooting at different times of day can show the architecture and hide blemishes.
- Show active maintenance work.

## When to Take Pictures

- Take “before” pictures.
- Take pictures during an event, activity or restoration work.
- Take “after” pictures from the same angle as the “before” pictures.
- Avoid “Sunday morning at the museum” shots without people.
- Show cumulative change.
- Show change in vitality.

## Making the Ordinary Extraordinary

- Way finding or interpretive signs: adding people changes signs from static to active and exciting.
- Show interaction with public art.
- If it lights up, show it lit.
- Share what is unique or common every day.
- Capture the nature of events. What makes them unique?
- Show people, animals or objects that make your downtown interesting.



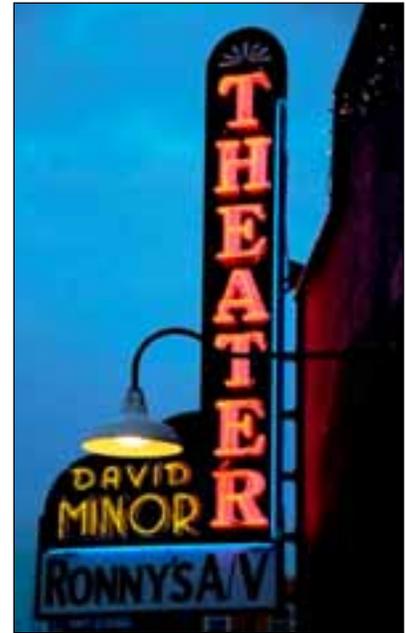
## Minor Fixes

- Use auto correct brightness and color, but be aware that it may not correct the way you want it to.
- Rotate horizontally and vertically or by a degree or two.
- Crop unwanted clutter along edges.
- Practice taking better photos so you will need to edit them less.

## Making Your Photos Work

Create awareness about your organization, its activities and events by making your images publicly accessible.

- Use a high resolution, online archive such as Flickr.com to post images. A basic account is free.
- Add tags, descriptions and mapping to all photos.
- Optimize engagement and response.



## Sharing Photos

- Share with groups, partners and the media.
- Illustrate your blog and your website.
- Attach them to news releases.
- Provide them to chambers of commerce, visitors convention bureaus and realtors.
- Give them to Main Street programs, tourism and film offices.
- Share them with the National Trust and Main Street Center, state and local preservation groups.
- Share your photos with businesses for use as interesting additions to their websites and brochures.
- Encourage hotels and event organizers to feature your photos in their marketing materials.

## Sharing on Social Media

- Snapshots are okay.
- Tag partners, volunteers, etc.
- Create albums of activities and events.
- Include photos with posts.
- ALWAYS add a photo when creating an event.
- Share your photos on partners' walls (i.e., thanks to sponsor XYZ for supporting this great event).
- Always include a description with a link.



*Concept and images courtesy of Timothy Bishop.*

