

Introducing Photographers on Photography Audio CDs!



LENSWORK

Photography and the Creative Process • Articles • Interviews • Portfolios • Fine Art Special Editions

No. 60 Sep - Oct 2005

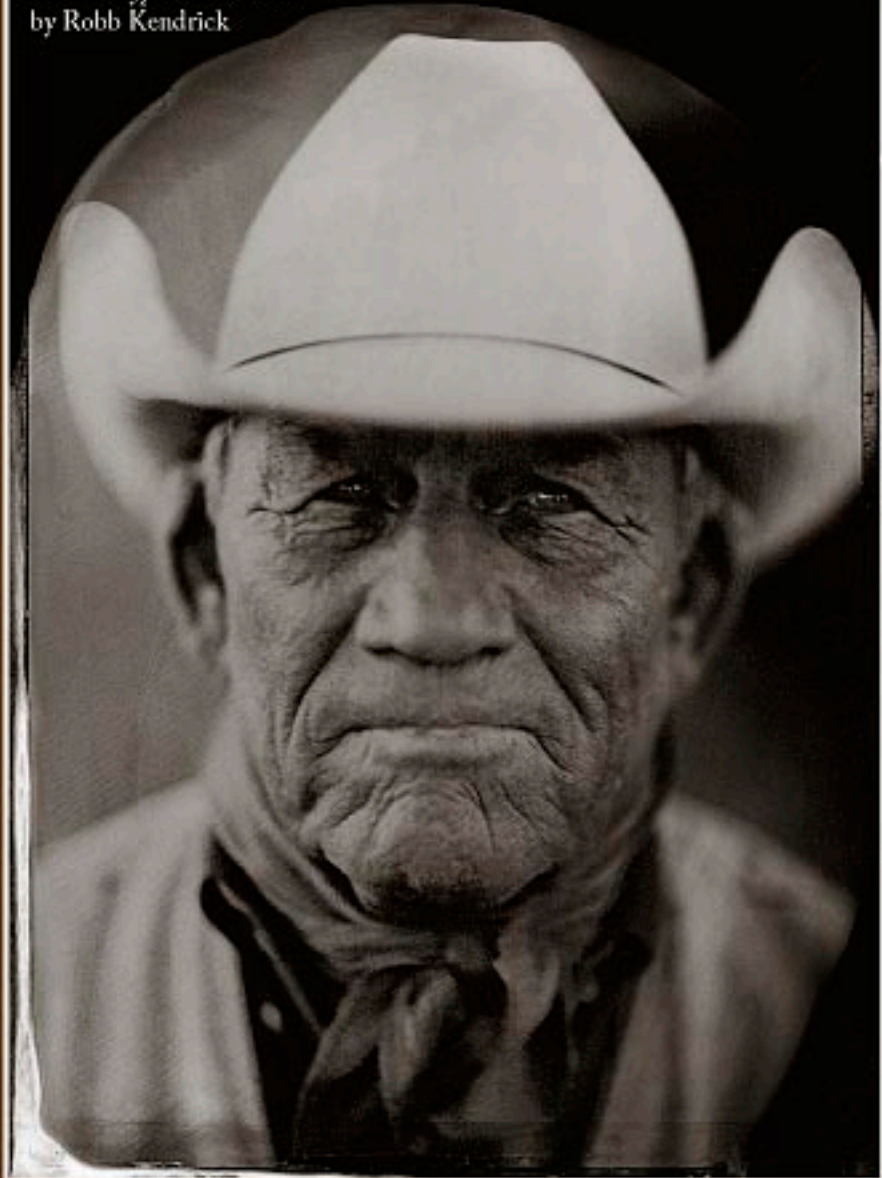
Portfolios
Frances Billes
Robb Kendrick
Radek Skrivanek

Anecdote
Helen Stummer

Article
Brooks Jensen

EndNotes
Bill Jay

Texas Tintypes: Boots O'Neal
by Robb Kendrick



LENSWORK

60
SEP — OCT
2 0 0 5

Photography and the Creative Process
Articles • Interviews • Portfolios

Editors

Brooks Jensen
Maureen Gallagher

In this issue

Article by

Brooks Jensen

Anecdotes

Helen Stummer

Portfolios by

Frances Billes

Robb Kendrick

Radek Skrivanek

EndNotes by **Bill Jay**

© 2005 LENSWORK Publishing
All rights reserved

ISSN #1075-5624

Reproduction either in whole or part without consent of copyright owner is strictly prohibited. Articles reproduced in LensWork with permission of the author or copyright holder.

Views expressed in editorial copy are not necessarily those of LensWork Publishing or its advertisers. All letters addressed to LensWork or its editor are assumed to be intended for publication unless specifically requested otherwise.

Printed in Canada

LENSWORK Publishing

909 Third Street
Anacortes, WA 98221-1502

USA Voice Toll Free
1-800-659-2130

USA FAX Toll Free
1-800-866-7459

Voice (360) 588-1343
FAX (503) 905-6111

E-mail editor@lenswork.com
Web site at www.lenswork.com

SEP - OCT 2005
LENSWORK #60

LensWork (ISSN 1075-5624) is published six times annually (in odd numbered months) by LensWork Publishing, 909 Third St, Anacortes, WA 98221-1502. Subscriptions are available within the United States for \$29 for 4-issues, \$39 for 6-issues, or \$75 for 12-issues. Canada and Mexico subscription rates are \$39 for 4-issues, \$53 for 6-issues, or \$105 for 12-issues. Overseas subscription rates are \$49 for 4-issues, \$69 for 6-issues, or \$135 for 12-issues. Periodicals Postage Paid at Anacortes, Washington and at additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to LensWork Publishing, 909 Third St, Anacortes, WA 98221-1502.

Cover Image by Robb Kendrick
Boots O'Neal, 6666 Ranch
from *Texas Tintypes*

— ■ TABLE OF CONTENTS ■ —

9

Editor's Comment

Introducing Anecdotes, A New Feature

Photography is about *life*, and that means there are stories to tell. In this issue we introduce *Anecdotes* – a new feature that will allow us to share the experiences that shape us as people, and improve us as photographers.

13

Portfolio: Radek Skrivanek
Aral Tengizi: Story of a Dying Sea



32

Helen Stummer

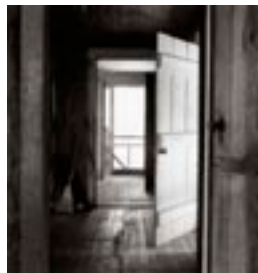
Anecdotes: Courage & The Camera

This is the debut story for this new feature. For nearly 30 years Stummer has worked in the toughest neighborhoods in New York City and Newark. Her story is one of courage and caring that can encourage us all.

37

Portfolio : Frances Billes

Transitions



52

Brooks Jensen

Some Unvarnished Truths About Book Publishing

If you've ever considered publishing a book of your photographs, this article provides lots of nitty-gritty industry information to ensure that you "Go in eyes wide open."

65

Portfolio : Robb Kendrick

Texas Tintypes



88

EndNotes by Bill Jay

EDITOR'S COMMENTS



Anecdote: A short personal account of an incident or event

In this issue of *LensWork* we are introducing a new feature called *Anecdotes*. [Page 32.] Over the past twelve years we've had the vicarious pleasure of working with a remarkable and varied mix of photographers whose experiences are much deeper than they are given to tell in a short text about themselves or their work. But we have found a wealth of stories that speak to the stuff of life, and more to the heart – to each of us as photographers. Our willingness – perhaps *need* – to experience life on a different level than others is the very reason that the camera is our creative tool; it's an interactive art tool that allows us to have all kinds of experiences while making our art. This is why we include in our Mission Statement (which appears at the front of each issue) the belief that “photography is, or can be, a way of life” and that our hope is to help our readers on their creative path “through an exchange of ideas, insight, personal experience...”

This is where the anecdote becomes a valuable learning tool. As “the quiet editor” at *LensWork* you won't see my name on opinion pieces – although I'm told I have plenty of them! Instead, I work very closely with the photographers in

organizing their features in the magazine. In addition to portfolio selection, one of my roles as an editor is to write the biographies and introductions that accompany each feature. It is one of the great joys of my job, and allows my naturally curious self to delve into the motivations of other creative lives. I am as interested in the life-choices and experiences of a photographer as I am in their artwork. In fact, there have been occasions where the story is more compelling to me than the images – but the work takes on a different aura when seen through the experiences had by the photographer. Because photography is about *life*.

I can safely say that I've seen *thousands* of carefully crafted bios and intros over the last twelve years. Many photographers have been educated to write a resume that focuses on formal education, and then introduce the work as a project that was somehow created in an “art” environment – devoid of outside experiences encountered along the way. It's as if I'm being permitted to see the destination, but I'm not being allowed to enjoy the interesting sights along the way. It really isn't until Mizz Nozey *LensWork* Editor starts

asking questions that the storytelling emerges. It's a bit like peeling an orange and finding the fruit; there is hidden inside a new richness to enjoy.

For example, cameras open doors; they can be a *passport* to experiences.

Such a door opened for me the Summer of 2001, after we relocated that year to a building that faced a boatyard in Anacortes, Washington. It was amazing to watch welders convert pieces of steel of all sizes and shapes into a finished boat that actually floated. The industrial scale and oversized creativity was too much; I just *had* to photograph it. As a woman, I was intimidated – but the owner gave me one-time permission to photograph inside the yard. That privilege was soon extended, and then open-ended. Eventually, he just told me to keep my hardhat and instructed me (kiddingly) to stay out from under the cranes. In short, I could come and go from the construction yard as I pleased. My camera had served as my passport, but it was my genuine curiosity in boat-building that gave me passage. Without my camera (and my curiosity) I would have remained an outsider.

On a much different note, I'm reminded of the story of Ion Zupcu and his wife, Rodica (*LensWork* #38, Nov-Dec, 2001). I was profoundly impressed with their story of courage and commitment. With

the decision to leave his homeland in Romania to pursue photography in New York, Ion and his wife lived apart for seven years while he drove taxi, learned English, and worked to build a photography business. He established a new home in America while she stayed with their daughter in then-Communist Romania. After years of separation, they could finally unite in their new home, in their new land, with their new lives. The photographic resume that Ion provided us gave no hint of such a powerful story. But that's my role as editor: to bring parts of "real life" to the more traditional information that is the focus of the typical *curriculum vitae*. I not only have great admiration for Ion and Rodica, but my sense of gratitude for the freedoms in my own life has deepened. For them, photography as passport was a more *literal* interpretation.

Cameras – no, I should say *photography* – can be not only a passport, but a kick-in-the-rear, a gift, a consolation, a ticket, a lesson, an excuse, a calling card, a teacher, a nurse, a mentor, a muse, a coach, and (I speak from personal experience here) a cupid. These are only some of the roles that photography has played in the stories we've heard from photographers over the years. In fact, every photographer I've spoken with has related, at one point or another in the conversation, how some experience in photography has enriched their life in a way that has nothing to

do with photography. These experiences embolden us, touch us, deepen our understanding, elevate us, and oftentimes make us (in my opinion) better people.

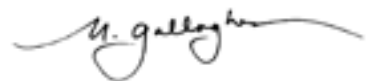
In this issue we are opening *Anecdotes* with a story of courage by Helen Stummer. We first published Helen's work in *LensWork* #21 (May-June 1998). Since then, Helen has continued to photograph in some of the most impoverished neighborhoods in New York City and Newark, NJ – but the time spent there has slowly built lasting relationships with the residents of these tough neighborhoods. She is clearly interested in their lives and is not seeking “grab-shots.” Helen's story and life experience – as a woman working alone in a tough neighborhood – can inspire all of us to be courageous in our photographic lives. In addition to courage, however, Helen is caring – and it's clear that the people she has come to know through her work are important to her.

In future issues, we'll invite other photographers to share their anecdotes of how photography has changed or influenced their lives. There are so many we look forward to sharing in more depth. In retrospect, I loved the story of Don Normark's *Chavez Ravine* (*LensWork* #58) which underscored that timing is everything – even if it takes 50 years; Linda Butler's unyielding stick-to-it-ness in her travels to China on eight occasions to photo-

graph for her book *Yangtze Remembered: The River Beneath The Lake* (*LensWork* #56), and struggles in seeing the book to completion; then there is Cosmin Bumbutz (*LensWork* #50) who gave up a job transporting dynamite into copper mines in Romania in order to pursue his interest in photography. His life hooked a 90 degree turn on the encouragement of another photographer. And on and on...

The stories we've heard are as varied as the photographers themselves, but they are all inspiring and motivational. If we didn't have our cameras and curiosity – or care deeply about our subjects – we would miss being woven into the fabric of others' lives, and our own lives would be greatly diminished. I'm impressed that life would lose its salt – there would be little flavor.

For many of us, if we never did anything more than make photographs and experience the attendant adventures, it would be enough. We are fortunate that Life has spoken to our creative and curious spirits – that we have been called out to engage with the world in a way that enriches our lives – and hopefully the lives of those with whom our lives as photographers intersect. There is much to learn and appreciate through our shared experiences, and we look forward to bringing those stories to you in *Anecdotes*.



ARAL TENGIZI

Story of a Dying Sea



by

R. Radek

Radek Skrivanek

Bow of abandoned vessel "Gagarin"



Life Boat, Dzambul Harbor

TRANSITIONS



by

Frances Billes

Frances Billes



SOME UNVARNISHED TRUTHS ABOUT BOOK PUBLISHING

by

Brooks Jensen

Everybody wants to be published. It's a universal seduction to dream about a book of your photographs, a monograph, a record of your artistic work. I say this without qualification, and glibly, because I've always wanted that myself. If you are one of those who have never had such desires consider yourself lucky. Consider yourself intelligent.

Shortly after I started photographing and became interested in publishing a book of my work, I realized I knew nothing about book publishing. I always assumed there were people who knew everything about book publishing and, could I but talk to them, I'd find out exactly how to do it successfully, profitably, with ease and confidence. I wished I could corner them and ask them all the inner secrets that remain so hidden to those of us outside the publishing world. Instead, I became a publisher.

Now, as a result of my dozen years of experience as a publisher, I know a lot more about book publishing than I used to – not *everything*, but at least *more*. Some days I wish I didn't. It's a bleak picture. It's one that I've shared with countless photographers who have excitedly approached me about their great vision for their photography book. I've candidly explained the hard truths about book publishing – at least as I see them. Some have withdrawn from the precipice of disaster. Some have published with success. In either case I've found their gratitude genuine. It seems only natural, then, to write about it here in *LensWork*, to open the book, so to speak, about the nature of book publishing. If you've ever thought about publishing a book of your photographs, this article is for you.

TEXAS TINTYPES



by

Robb Kendrick



WILL HUMPHREYS, GUITAR RANCH

Will has been around ranching all his life. Went to school for it as well. Got a B.S. in Range Management and a B.S. in Animal Science from Texas Tech. "What I learned in school, I'd experience in day-to-day work, but school gave me some specifics." He says the satisfaction of accomplishing hard work and doing it right makes you proud. "It'll make you sleep well at night. One of the great joys about Will's job is getting to work with his father. "I learn things from my father every day. He's a great inspiration. We work 16,000 acres together, and the open space keeps a man's head clear."

The contents of this computer media are copyrighted materials

Please note that this computer file has been sold as a consumer product for the private non-commercial use of the purchaser only. Its contents are copyrighted in its entirety and may not be duplicated by any means for use other than the original purchaser. Each article, portfolio and photographic image is copyrighted by the author or photographer and may not be duplicated for any purpose or by any means without their consent.

© 2005 LensWork Publishing

LensWork Publishing
909 Third Street
Anacortes, WA 98221-1502 U.S.A.

USA TOLL FREE 1-800-659-2130

Voice 360-588-1343 FAX 503-905-6111

Email editor@lenswork.com

Visit our World Wide Web site at:

<http://www.lenswork.com>

including the *LensWork* On-line Index,
the latest information about offerings from LensWork Publishing.