



October, 2000

Panoram

Of the
Oakland Camera Club

Member of the
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 Camera Clubs

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Medium Format Stereo Photography



Sputnik camera with viewer and accessories

There is little doubt that medium format stereo photography is growing in popularity. It is getting big. Well, medium big anyway. According to Paul Talbot, the moderator of the Medium Format Stereo list serve, the number of members on the list has more than doubled in less than a year.

Why is there increased interest in medium format stereo? The main reason, as they say RESOLUTION! The film area is much larger and the detail available when viewed in a slide viewer is astonishing. Most people react with "WOW!" even

if they are familiar with stereo photography. Another reason could be the ready availability of Sputnik cameras on the Internet. The Sputnik can easily be purchased for about \$100 on eBay, making the jump into medium format stereo very affordable.

These Russian made cameras were originally made in 1957

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SaturnSlide™ Medium Format Stereo Viewer from Rocky Mountain Memories

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at the Leningradskoje Optiko-Mechanitschskoje Objedinjenije (LOMO) factory. The camera is made of shiny black Bakelite plastic. It is a reflex viewfinder stereo camera that uses 120 roll film to produce six 6x6cm stereo pairs per roll.

Unfortunately the Sputnik has many limitations and flaws. The typical Sputnik will suffer from light leaks, lens flare, and internal reflections. It is also common for the focus and shutter speeds to be off. Sam Smith (<http://www.stereoscopy.com/cameras/hack-sputnik.html>) has recommended a number of modifications for the typical Sputnik.

The internal reflections are caused by the shiny black plastic body. Many users, including John Bercovitz, have installed internal light baffles to reduce reflection and increase contrast. A simpler but less effective solution is to simply paint the inner surfaces with flat black paint or glue flocking paper on the shiny surface. A good solution for lens flare is to add lens shades. The lens shades that come with the FED Stereo camera are a perfect fit for the Sputnik as well.

I bought a Sputnik directly from Russia through eBay. My Sputnik did show some light leakage around the latch where the “barn doors” close, but it is not much of a problem. I couldn’t see any evidence of internal reflection, but I painted the interior with flat black paint. My camera did have a major problem however, the two lenses were far from synchronized for focus (more on that later).

Of course the Sputnik is not the only way to take medium format stereo, you can synchronize two regular medium format cameras

or use a slide bar to make stereo pairs. What do you do with your film after you shoot? Unlike the Realist format, you have very few options for viewers, and there has never been a stereoscopic medium format stereo projector. If you want to see your slides you can either free view them, which takes only a little practice, or you can make yourself a medium format stereo slide viewer. Medium format stereo enthusiasts have displayed a great deal of creativity in designing their own viewers. Examples can be seen at Robert Thorpe’s web pages (<http://www.skep.com/3D/gallery.htm>). It is not too difficult to make a viewer if you have a matched pair of achromat lenses with a diameter of about 40mm and a focal length of 75 to 95mm.

If you are not so handy with do-it-yourself projects then you have a few alternatives, one is a good but very expensive viewer from Japan (about \$700), then there is the King Inn Medium Format 3D Viewer. The viewer is made of black plastic and comes with florescent tube internal lighting and a power adapter. The lenses are 34 mm diameter and 83mm focal length. They are not achromats lenses so they may not be the highest quality. The viewer costs \$125 plus \$5 for shipping. They are available from The Quellen Company (Q-VU) PO BOX 55, Holtville, CA 92250 Phone: (760) 356-1138

Finally there is the SaturnSlide (™) Medium Format Stereo Slide Viewer Kit from Rocky Mountain Memories (<http://www.rmm3d.com/viewers/satslide.html>) It is an easy to assemble kit that produces a mahogany viewer. The price ranges from \$140 to \$215 depending on the quality of lenses you chose. There is also a light box attachment available for an additional \$90. If you prefer projection over slide viewers then you



SaturnSlide™ Medium Format Stereo Viewer with Light attachment

face a more serious challenge. Although viewers claim that MF slides are far superior to 35mm stereo, there are no medium format stereo projectors. Nonetheless we were treated to a medium format stereo slide show at this years Northern California regional meeting of the National

Stereoscopic Association when Franklin Flocks used two old TDC mono projectors to project MF stereo slides in separate mounts.

-Harold

Adjusting Focus on the Sputnik

When I shot my first roll with the Sputnik I discovered that the two lenses were not focusing together. One lens seemed right, but the other was way off. What to do? I sent a message to Medium Format 3D Photography list [MF3D.Forum@lists.unh.edu] and received helpful replies.

One from Brenda Nowlan was just what I needed. She described a procedure that should work with any camera and doesn't require an expensive collimator. First you get a piece of frosted glass or acrylic with fine lines drawn on it to give you something to focus upon. Affix this viewing surface to the film plane, precisely where the film would be when exposed. Next you set the shutter of your Sputnik on the bulb setting so it will stay open, set the aperture wide open, and set the focus at infinity. Use a locking cable release to open the shutters. Place the camera on a light box to illuminate the film plane. Loosen the three tiny retaining screws that hold the geared housing of the lens. Remove the outer geared housing that couples the Sputnik lenses.

Now the good part— take an SLR with a lens of equal or

longer focal length and set the focus on the SLR at infinity. Sight through the SLR looking directly down at the lens of the Sputnik. Carefully rotate the Sputnik lens until the viewing surface under the lens becomes perfectly clear and in focus as you look through the viewfinder of the SLR. Now the Sputnik lens is focused at infinity. Reattach the outer geared lens holder. Repeat for the other lens.

When I preformed this focus adjustment I used a piece of slide film that I had already exposed in the Sputnik as the surface on the focal plane and I think it worked better than using a piece of frosted glass or acrylic. My result was that the lenses are very close to synchronization in their focus. However, I used a 50mm lens with my SLR, so the lenses may not be perfectly in focus. I also repeated the adjustment on the reflex viewfinder lens and set the distance indicator. It may not be entirely accurate but the slides that I took at Burning Man turned out quite nice!

-Harold

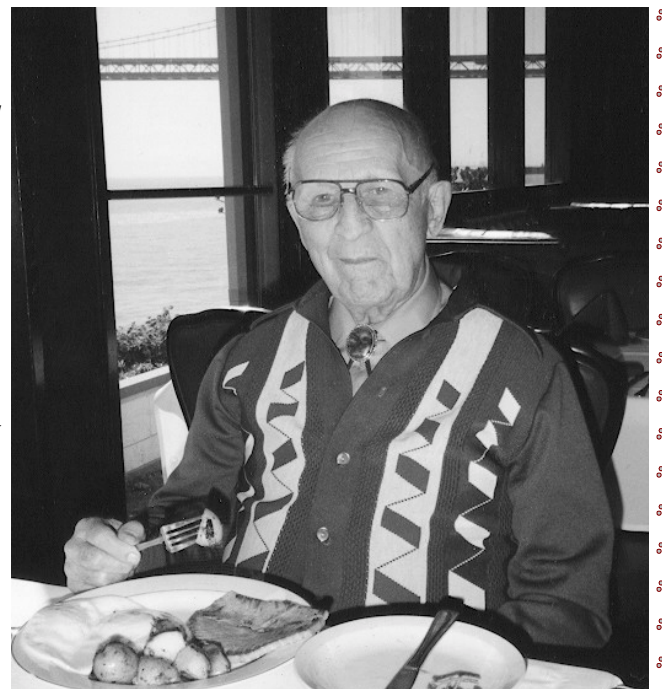
Earl W. Henry May 17, 1907—September 11, 2000

Earl attended the Stereo Division meeting of the Oakland Camera Club on September 5, 2000. His slides didn't place in the competition that day, but that was unusual. His slides usually placed well. Earl and his stereo slides were a favorite of my youngest son, Julian. We will miss him very much.

On September 11th Earl sat for dinner with his regular table mates. After dinner, he went to his room in the assisted living facility at Baywood Court to prepare for a shower. When the assistant came to his room to help him with his shower, he was found on his bed having already made his departure.

Memorial services will be held on Saturday, October 21st at 2 pm in the community room at Baywood Court, 21966 Dolores Street, near Grove Way, Castro Valley, CA. Front desk phone: (510) 733-2102.

Rev. Gordon Schaeffer and Dr. Margaret Nolan will officiate





Meetings:

Oakland Camera Club Stereo Division meets on the first Tuesday of every month except December.

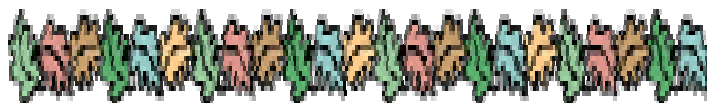
Our meetings are held at the Salem Lutheran Home, 2361 East 29th Street, Oakland California, at 7:30 pm. The Salem Lutheran Home has installed a security gate. Don't be alarmed. Just press 001 on the number pad and tell them you are with the Oakland Camera Club. There is ample parking available in a lot below the main building, take the first right turn after you enter the gate.

OUR WEB ADDRESS

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The OCC Calendar

IMPORTANT EVENTS

Tuesday, November 14th– Larry Kilburn will judge our cumulated monthly stereo winners for the Annual Awards. The judging will take place at the Salem Lutheran Home. Watch for the list of monthly winners in next month's Panorama.

Tuesday, December 5th— No meeting.

Saturday, December 9th at 11:30 am— Annual Awards & Installation Luncheon at Francesco's in Oakland.

Stereo Division

The Stereo Division will meet again on the first Tuesday of the month– October 3rd, at 7:30 pm at the Salem Lutheran Home. Our program for the evening will include our regular competition in stereo slides and cards, and a special competition with the topic of *double exposures*. Please bring three slides for the regular competition and three double exposures for the special competition..

Jim Sherwin will comment on and judge our stereo slides and prints at the October 3rd meeting. Jim is serving as President of the Millbrae Camera Club. His interests in Black and White and color slides developed in 1950. He began

printing monochrome in 1952 while a member of the China Lake (CA) Camera club. His current interests are in Pictorial, Nature, Travel, and Macro Photography. He believes judging is to evaluate and instruct

September stereo slide competition results:

Group A

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|---|-----------------|
| 1st <i>Pavement Ends</i> | Oleg Vorobyoff |
| 2nd <i>Nature Monument at Monument Valley</i> | Harold Hatfield |
| 3rd <i>Come Closer</i> | John Bonwell |

Group B

- | | |
|--|-----------------|
| 1st <i>The Big Guy Pulls on the Cables</i> | Chris Cavigioli |
| 2nd <i>Two Times</i> | Harold Baize |
| 3rd <i>Green Leaves</i> | Jim Johnston |
| HM <i>Desert Child</i> | Harold Baize |

Slide/Print Division

The next Slide/Print meeting will be October 12th at the home of the Jim Callahan, please call to reserve your space. The November 9th meeting will be at Bob Baker's home.