

THE BELLOWS

27th GREAT YEAR

April 27, 2006

Puget Sound Photographic Collector's Society, Inc.

Vol. XXVII, No. 8

WHAT	NEXT REGULAR MEETING OF PSPCS
WHERE	DES MOINES MASONIC TEMPLE 2208 S. 223rd St. (Take Midway exit #149 west off I-5...go to first stop light west of Pacific Hwy. South...Turn right.)
WHEN	Thursday, April 27th 7:00 p.m. till 10: p.m. (doors open about 6:00 p.m.)
WHY	This is our special <u>Show Experience Weekend</u> meeting. After a very short business meeting our guest speaker, <u>Mr. Mike Symons</u> , a noted Nikon collector, will present a power-point discussion of the development of the Nippon Kogaku Company and its famous Nikon cameras.

ITS SHOW EXPERIENCE WEEKEND TIME:

Here we go. It is time for our 26th P.S.P.C.S. last saturday in April Sale, Swap & Show. As we have been able to do for the past several years we begin our Show Experience Weekend with a Special Club meeting, and guest speaker, on the Thursday before the sale.

This is the meeting we urge all of you to attend. Please bring anyone you know who would enjoy hearing our guest speaker. This year we are privileged to have as our special guest speaker Mr. Mike Symons of Victoria, B.C. This just proves that not all our guest speakers need to come from thousands of miles away in order to be a top notch authority in their chosen area of photographic collecting.

In securing the services of Mike Symons we have one of the true experts on the Nippon Kogaku company of Japan; and its famous Nikon cameras. Mike has prepared a very very interesting well done power-point talk for us which several of our Committee members have previewed and reported is just excellent.

Shirley will set out a nice array of nummies etc. and you should find this a most interesting and pleasant evening as we begin our Show Experience Weekend for our 26th Show, Swap & Sale. Please bring any interested friends and attend this special meeting of your special Club.

JOE STORY PASSES:

It is your editors sad duty to report that Club member W. Joe Story passed away, after a rather short illness, on March 31, 2006. Joe, who was born October 2, 1931, retired from Boeing's photo. Shop after over 30 years of doing a job he really enjoyed. With his interest in photography he had been a fine addition to our Club. He volunteered to be on the Club's Show Committee and brought a laugh and a competence to it that everyone will miss. Even as his health failed he found the engery to make the Show door signs he had promised to deliver. Joe was a good Club member and a fine man. He will be missed.

THIS MONTH'S MYSTERY QUESTION:

Answer at end of Newsletter

With thanks to the Western Photographic Historical Society:

What 1938-44 cameras had the first coupled electric eye for automatic exposures settings?

The March meeting of the Puget Sound Photographic Collectors Society came to order at 7:05 p.m. There were 31 members and guests in attendance. The minutes of the February meeting were approved as read. Treasurer Shirley reported about enough money to cover expenses in the bank.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

The Show Committee reported that we have about a hundred and ten tables sold and don't anticipate selling all one hundred and seventy tables that are available. However, by Show time we should have a good number of seller tables loaded with "treasures".

Bob Kelly and Gary Sivertsen bought the hugh amount of cameras late member Ed Frey had stored away for sale in his camera store space. They plan to sell them and the Show Committee has agreeded to give Bob and Gary six free tables in return for 25% of their sales from those tables. Anyone who would like to volunteer to help at these sales tables will get in the Show for free and receive our free food coupons. Bob said most of the collection was user items.

Member, John Berry, volunteered to assist with off loading and parking control and help at the door as needed. (Thanks John!) Also, we have filled all the ticket taker slots for the day. Thank you all.

Bill Kimber reported that 150 press releases were sent and only four were returned. Also, the postcard mailing to past buyers is ready to go on April 18th. Ads are being placed in the Little Nickel, TNT and the Times/P.I. to run the week of the Show.

NEW BUSINESS:

Our next meeting will be our special Show Experience Weekend meeting on April 27th. Mr. Mike Symons will present a fine power point talk on Nikons he has known and loved.

SHOW & TELL & PROGRAM:

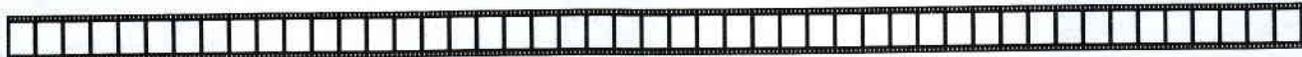
Four members brought some interesting Show and Tell items. (yes, there are still some "treasures" out there to be "liberated"). For the program five members brought examples of their favorite bakelite or early plastic cameras. Bill Kimber had several interesting examples and one which illustrated how easily bakelite could chip...thus making the camera almost worthless. Maxine Nagel, Gene Raddatz and Darrel Womack also showed some nice examples...as did several other members.

AUCTION: DOOR PRIZE:

Six item lots were auctioned off after some spirited bidding which resulted in a total of \$79.00 going to the old owners.

Mike Langley won the door prize.

The meeting adjourned for more selling and nummie munching at 8:05 p.m.



THE BELLOWS Newsletter is published 10 times per year by Puget Sound Photographic Collector's Society, Inc. Information for The Bellows should be sent to Bill Kimber 1413 Weathervane Dr., Tacoma, WA 98466-5712 (253) 564-4046, billkimber@webtv.net

The P.S.P.C.S. internet address is www.pspcs.org

Dues are \$20.00 per year and should be sent to Secretary/Treasurer Shirley Sparrow, 300 Pease Road, Cle Elum, WA 98922 (509) 674-1916, sesparrow9@msn.com P.S.P.C.S. members receive first notification of our 4th Saturday in April yearly show.

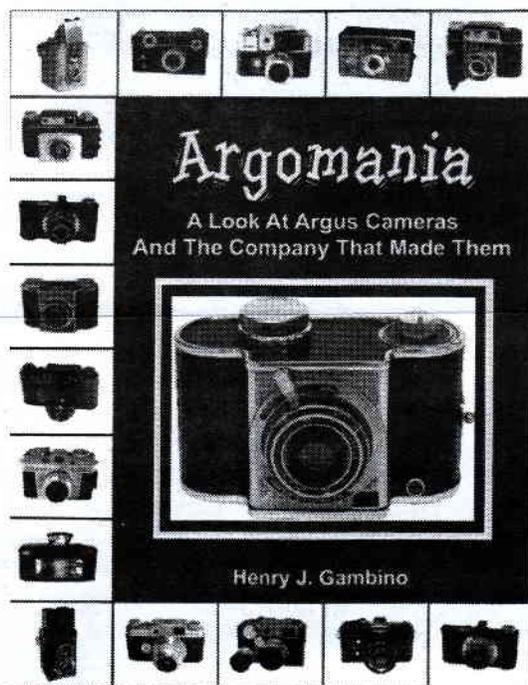
PRESIDENT: DARREL WOMACK (206) 244-6831 DARRELCAM@COMCAST.NET



Argomania: A Look at Argus Cameras and the Company That Made Them

Book Review by Mark O'Brien

My introduction to camera "collecting" began with Argus cameras. As I live in Ann Arbor and appreciate the Argus Camera legacy, to me this book is like sitting down with an old friend. *Argomania* is a profusely-illustrated book on Argus cameras that anyone with an interest in camera history, and especially Argus, will want to own.



Henry J. Gambino, *Argomania: A Look at Argus Cameras and the Company That Made Them*. Doylestown, PA: Aeone Communications, 2005. 222 pp. ISBN # 0-9770507-0-X. Softcover, 8.5 x 11. \$39.95.

Argomania by Henry J. Gambino is organized very logically into chapters with overviews on the Argus corporate history, followed by camera designs, starting with the Argus A series, and ending with the last Chinese imports with the Argus badge. Enlargers, slide projectors, movie projectors and all types of ancillary items sold by Argus are featured. The text is written in an engaging style, and Gambino is to be commended for not turning such a book into a dry catalog of Argus paraphernalia. Argus did not sell its equipment in a vacuum, and the author has placed many of the major items into context with the other photographic equipment available at that time. I do not think anyone will argue against the fact that Argus was probably responsible for the emerging popularity of 35 mm cameras in the United States. Argus cameras were affordable, worked well, were capable of taking crisp images, and were durable.

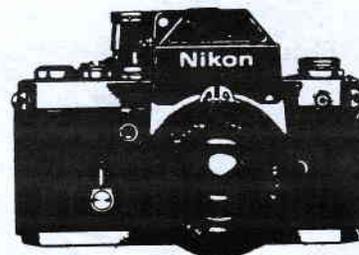
Compare the offerings of Argus against other US-made 35mm cameras, and there is no doubt that the company was the main competitor for Kodak's camera business. Argus grew phenomenally and became one of the leading employers in Ann Arbor, and the war years of WWII certainly were good for the company. Argus' eventual demise as a manufacturer is a tale that is all too familiar today, and Gambino's narrative on those

circumstances is a good read. He reveals Argus' miscues and corporate gaffes, and it's incredible to see how a company with over 20 million dollars in sales in 1956 could be virtually non-existent within a few years.

What I enjoyed most about *Argomania* is that the various camera designs are well-documented and innovative (or sometimes not)-features are discussed. Argus incorporated many design changes in a series of similar cameras, resulting in fun and sometimes exasperation for Argus collectors. I think Gambino has done a good job of delineating the different design changes within various models. I cannot say that I found any egregious errors about the cameras in the book – I am not an expert on all things Argus, even though I know more about them than the average person. The only error that I know of is the statement that the cameras from the Don Wallace collection in the Argus Museum were there because Wallace once worked for Argus. Wallace never worked for Argus. However, he did sell the museum much of his collection.

If you want to read about one of the major players in the U.S. photography industry, *Argomania* is a must-read. If you are interested in only the cameras and accessories, this book will enlighten and provide the reader with a lot of very useful information. The photographs are excellent and they supplement the text very well. Michiganders and Ann Arborites should be proud that a company such as Argus was based here. It's certainly a bittersweet tale, but we have one thing all of the other now-extinct camera companies do NOT have – a museum devoted to Argus. Now, we also have a book devoted specifically to Argus as well. This book certainly belongs on the shelf of anyone who collects cameras, photographica, or likes to read about the ups and downs of the U.S. manufacturing industry. You can order the book from Aeone Communications, 73 Old Dublin Pike 181, Suite 10, Doylestown, PA 18901. Email: percy@tradenet.net.

Editor's Note: MiPHS charter members George and Gene O'Neal devoted many hours to cataloging and organizing the Argus Museum, and arranged for several MiPHS events there.



President's Notes

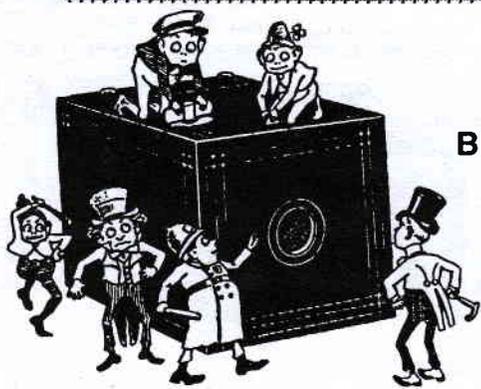
I am sorry I missed the January and February meetings but I have been away working in Malaysia and Russia. In a very cold St Petersburg I visited a used camera store and bought a consignment Kiev 4 for C\$24. Although based on the pre-war Contax cameras the Soviets managed to make that amazing "roll-door" shutter work reliably, and mine appears good at all speeds although I doubt the marked 1/1000 second. The 40 year old meter, like most Soviet era selenium meters, has survived and is surprisingly accurate.

The next Saturday I took a ride on the metro out to the suburbs and a large flea market. There were many poor people and most items were laid out on the snow. After brushing the snow off, I picked up a Fed 3 with a mis-tensioned focal plane shutter for \$6. I am going to use this as an inexpensive test bed to disassemble and adjust. The curtains and tapes are in good order.

On the trip home my digital camera was stolen — I suspect while going through one of the two security checks in Russia where I was manually searched while my bag sat some distance away at the end of the x-ray conveyor. Fortunately I had downloaded all the pictures earlier that day. The camera, like all my "user" photo gear is covered under a "no deductible" rider on my house insurance. Reporting the loss was straightforward and a cheque for the full value came in the mail. There is an annoying catch, particularly as this is my first claim in 25 years with the company. I lose my no-claims bonus for three years — a total of about a third of the claim. The insurance agent suggested I drop such riders as another claim would put my policy under review and I could be dropped by the Toronto underwriter. She said it was better to self-insure for items worth only a few hundred dollars; i.e. we are happy to sell you insurance but don't make any claims!

The 500 plus historic cameras in my collection are not separately insured but have been catalogued and photographed (in groups), and are covered under the house policy. I often wonder if I have a break-in what would be taken, certainly not everything, which must have a cumulative weight in the order of half a tonne, and how would the thief know the valuable cameras from the innumerable \$20 ones? Then again, some of my most interesting and favoured cameras are in the \$20 group

The IDCC group has been discussing how best to tag cameras in a collection. Sticky tags are out and paper and string tags or painted museum style acquisition numbers favoured. I take a much easier route and use the camera serial number. The cameras are tabulated in an Excel



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spreadsheet on the computer under maker, and those without serial numbers are so few they do not create a problem. (I used to use a database program but the cost and complexities outweighed any benefits)

Replacing the stolen camera was high on my agenda. The old Pentax was long discontinued and nary a one was available used on eBay. An internet search showed no current camera with the same features—5MP sensor and 5x optical zoom with optical viewfinder. I spent a day going around the various Vancouver photo stores including the large electronic retailers. Nothing, in fact the lack of stock at the old-line photo stores seemed ominous although it is model change season. For example, Future Shop had more than twice the number of consumer level cameras on display than Lens and Shutter.

In the end a "no-commission" salesman at BestBuy told me that they were selling off a discontinued Canon Powershot on their web site. It only had a 4x zoom but excellent reviews (plus I've handled one owned by a friend). It duly arrived via Canada Post five days later. My first digital cost over \$1,000 six years ago, the stolen Pentax over \$500 two years ago. Now for well under \$200 I have a competent camera with full manual controls (including focussing, white balance and flash output). An advantage is the use of AA batteries and fortunately my old memory cards fit as this Canon came without even a small capacity card. The flash zooms with the lens, extending the range at telephoto to almost twenty feet, a good case of more for less. The newer digital cameras are much more user friendly and, with starter digital cameras just dropping under \$100, film is now relegated to the die-hards and the disposables.

April's Popular Photography has interesting articles on tintypes, daguerreotypes and pinhole cameras and their modern practitioners, Truly a labour of love.

What 1938-44 cameras had the first coupled electric eye for automatic exposure settings?

Answer: The Super Kodak Six-20. It takes 2 1/4 X 3 1/4 images on 620 film. This clamshell design has an f3.5 lens and eight-speed shutter. The value of this camera continues to increase. Current prices range from \$1700-2400. Those in attendance at our March meeting should know who designed this beautiful camera.

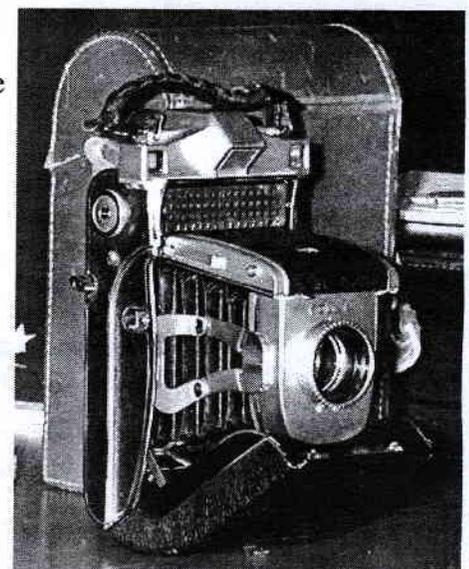


Photo courtesy <http://phsc.ca/Show_Tell_2001/Text_Files/Bill_Kantymir.html>