



photography
Monte Nagler

Photojournalist catches essence of an event

Photographs, especially news photos, have a tremendous impact on our everyday lives. We tend to take our newspapers and weekly magazines for granted, but strip them of photographs, and their visual impact would be sorely reduced.

Throughout history, photographs have greatly affected our lives. Abraham Lincoln, for example, attributed his first election as president to wide circulation of a Matthew Brady portrait dispelling rumors that he was a rough backwoodsman.

Joe Rosenthal's World War II flag-raising on Iwo Jima was the inspiration for a high bronze statue in Washington, the only such monument ever constructed from a photograph. Many photos from Vietnam had such strong visual impact that they helped stir up the anti-war movement that changed society.

BEING A photojournalist demands a special knack.

A writer uses words, phrases, sentences and ultimately stories to convey ideas and observations. A photographer, on the other hand, has a visual language at his disposal to share what he observes.

But you don't have to be employed by a newspaper or wire service to be a photojournalist. Pulitzer Prizes have been awarded to amateurs who just "happened on the scene" at the right moment. Furthermore, recording the events of a happening in your own family or community are really of a photojournalistic nature.

A photojournalist, and you as well, must rise above being a mere snaphooter. A photojournalist must develop an instinctive insight, a sensitivity to news events and the ability to communicate through his photography.

His pictures should be direct and straightforward. They may show tragedy, happiness or emotion. They should capture the essence of an event and translate it into human terms that the viewer will appreciate.

ANTICIPATION is a key ingredient to good photojournalism. Be prepared by having your camera loaded at all times.

Past film is usually called for. Whether it's the town parade, the local football game or your child's birthday party, pre-determine your exposure and have your camera set so that your concentration can be directed towards catching the action. Try to develop an awareness of the unexpected, an instinctive reaction to enable you to capture action at its peak.

Don't overlook picture stories or photo sequences either. These consist of a series of photographs relating to a significant event or happening in narrative form. A photo essay, as it is sometimes called, can convey an entire story or idea.

"1981, Monte Nagler. His photographs continue on exhibit in the summer group show in Halsted Gallery, Birmingham. The gallery, which is at 560 N. Woodward, can be phoned at 644-5284 for further information.



A high point at last year's Republican National Convention was Ronald Reagan's welcoming former President Gerald Ford to the podium; vice presidential nominee George Bush is at left. Monte Nagler used a 400 mm telephoto to snap this photojournalistic scene from the audience — not the press gallery.

Thursday, August 6, 1981

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