

snap shots

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Photography That's Cosmic: Harvard's DASCH Project

*From Daguerre to Digitizing the Sky,
George Champine brings astrophotography
To earth for the January 6 meeting*

Harvard University's DASCH project will eventually do just what its name says: provide Digital Access to a Sky Century. Harvard has the resources, a century's worth of telescope images, some 500,000 of them collected from observatories around the world — glass plates, daguerreotypes dating from 1849, wet collodion plate images primarily from the 1870s, and early stereoscopic and spectral plates.

But digitizing the collection needed technology. To complete the project on a reasonable schedule and budget, the DASCH project had to develop the world's fastest (by a factor of 50x) and most accurate (by 10x) digitizer.



Dr. George Champine

PHSNE member George Champine is a volunteer working on the DASCH project (he's photographed 80,000 pages of notes on the plates). As a physicist and computer scientist now retired from a career with companies including DEC, Exxon, and Sperry Univac, George will be the perfect guide for a tour of

the history of astrophotography and its transition from analog to digital for PHSNE's January 6 meeting at Waltham High School. (He's also preparing an article for *The Journal* on DASCH.) For more on the DASCH project, read The New York Times article at <http://preview.tinyurl.com/2uvb38>.)

A Letter to PHSNE from Our President-Elect, Marti Jones

PHSNE stands for the Photographic Historical Society of New England, but our organization is comprised of members from all around the world. It's this expansive membership that makes PHSNE such a great organization, and it's my goal to ensure that the activities and publications sponsored by PHSNE involve more members in more ways.

Meetings. Every member has the opportunity to attend the free monthly meetings which are usually held at Waltham High School on the first Sunday of every month (except summers). These meetings are not only social, but are true learning experiences, with speakers dedicated to sharing their knowledge of photographic processes, equipment, and the history of the medium.

Collecting. PHSNE sponsors two Photographica trade shows a year. Many photographic trade shows are failing while ours is still viable. We continue to attract pho-



Marti Jones

tographic dealers in collectible cameras, photographic images, and new and used cameras. It's a wonderful opportunity to learn about photographic history and find a treasure or two! See www.phsne.org for updated information.

Auction. Each February we devote our meeting to a members auction. You can "consign" up to six items, and have the chance to buy something for yourself. The auction is an all volunteer effort by members and any member is welcome to come and join us. If you are looking for a day of fun, come to a PHSNE auction! We always need volunteers!

Publications. Each month, PHSNE publishes *snap shots*, a newsletter which contains a number of interesting articles and information about our organization. *snap shots* benefits from volunteer help all the way from writing articles to working as a group to prepare the mailings. Can you help us out? Do you have an article you wish to submit?

The Journal publishes quality articles about photographic history. The *Journal* editors work hard to ensure

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Exhibits and Shows in The New England Area

While photography is usually thought of as a very specific medium, two exhibitions look at efforts to generalize the subjects of photographs by treating them as types.

At Boston's **Museum of Fine Arts**, "*Contemporary Outlook: German Photography*" (through February 10) looks at the legacy of Germany's "New Objectivity" movement of the 1920s and '30s. The New Objectivity aimed not just to record the exact appearance of objects, but to classify the subject, whether person or image of a building, as representative of a generalized "type." The key figures in the current New Objectivity, Bernd and Hilla Becher, since 1959 have photographed the built environment (most famously, German industrial structures) in a very clinical manner. (MFA, 465 Huntington Avenue, Boston, MA, phone 617-267-9300, www.mfa.org.)

"*A Good Type: Tourism and Science in Early Japanese Photographs*" at Harvard's **Peabody Museum** through April 30 explores typology in a another way: its 68 Japanese hand-colored prints, produced for the tourist trade in the Meiji era (1868 – 1912), were transformed from souvenirs to "type" photographs housed in a museum of anthropology. The exhibition explores this process of transformation using material from the Peabody's archive. Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology (Peabody Museum, 11 Divinity Avenue, Cambridge, MA, 617-496-1027, www.peabody.harvard.edu.)

PHSNE Membership

New members — Suzanne Adams, Lexington, MA; Suzanne and Jared Huizenga, Worcester, MA; Paul Piazza, Rochester, NY.

PHSNE membership is \$15 for students (a new membership level), \$30 for an individual, \$36 for a family, and \$40 for foreign membership. Please send checks in U.S. dollars drawn on a U.S. bank or dollar-denominated international money orders for dues payments.

Current members can read their renewal date from the mailing label on *snap shots*. For example, "2007.12" means your membership expires in December of 2007. Please check your membership label before sending in your dues.

Send payments, changes of address, and other contact information, to: Adrian Levesque, 4 Sugar Hill Drive, Nashua, NH 03063, or e-mail ALevesque@aol.com.

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Jesseca Ferguson

"Entomology," a pinhole photograph by PHSNE member Jesseca Ferguson, who will be a presenter at the f295 Symposium..

Lensless Photography Meeting Scheduled for Pittsburgh in May

The f295 Symposium on Lensless, Alternative and Adaptive Photographic Processes is scheduled for Pittsburgh, PA from May 29 to June 1, 2008. The event features lectures, round-table discussions, workshops, and exhibitions to explore ways artists are using and making photographic images that are alternatives to conventional image-making, such as using pinhole cameras, and using printing technologies such as calotype and salt prints.

Speakers include three artists from the Boston area: PHSNE member Jesseca Ferguson, Laura Blacklow and Alan Greene. Jesseca will be delivering a talk entitled "Museum of Memory: The View through a Pinhole" and will lead a workshop entitled "Planning, Organizing, and Staging a Successful Exhibition." Laura Blacklow, a featured speaker at the 2007 f295 Symposium, will lead a bookmaking workshop. Alan Greene, also a 2007 featured speaker, will offer workshops that explore two unique 19th-Century processes: "Calotype Paper Negatives (Dry Process)" and "Developed-Out Salt-Printing."

More information on the program and special symposium accommodations can be found on the symposium website: <http://www.f295.org/symposium2008>.

Jack Naylor, World-Class Collector and PHSNE Stalwart, Dies at 88

Thurman "Jack" Naylor, who served PHSNE in a variety of roles spanning most of the organization's first three decades, died Nov. 26, at age 88.

Jack was a relentless collector who built, sold, and rebuilt one of the world's largest private photographic collections, which he housed in his Chestnut Hill, MA, home.

He delighted in sharing his collection, conducting tours for individual visitors and, with his wife Enid, throwing the house open for events after Photographica shows and special occasions like PHSNE's 30th birthday meeting in September 2002.

Jack was a PHSNE stalwart. He was the organization's secretary for many years, he managed three Photographica shows, and he presented programs and edited the organization's early newsletter, *Photo-Nostalgia*, and *The Journal*, often drawing on his own collection for material and stories.

Jack Naylor knew his way around a story, Henry Weisenburger remembers. "He could spin a story on a show-and-tell like anything. He was a difficult act to follow, and he always had exotic equipment to show."

One of the stories involved a Leica Luxus, one of the rarest Leicas. About 95 were made in the early 1930s, plated in gold and covered with red lizard. Jack had a Luxus, of course, but he also had a story. His Luxus had been hidden in Dresden during World War II. Put into a tin can and stuffed into a chimney, it survived the fire-bombing and the Cold War and came to Jack after its owner recovered it, unharmed, following the reunion of East and West Germany.

He Built His Collection Along With Business Interests

Jack collected friends the way he collected cameras. He frequently recounted his service as a pilot in World War II, when he first met Life photographer Margaret Bourke-White. He settled in Boston in the 1960s and became CEO of Standard-Thomson, a maker of temperature-controlled valves and thermostats. In the years following, he established connections with MIT that led to relationships with Edwin Land, founder of Polaroid, and Harold Edgerton, who invented the electronic flash.

He built his photographic collection in tandem with his business interests that took him on frequent trips around the world.



At an auction of items from his collection in New York City in October, Jack Naylor sat with PHSNE President-Elect Marti Jones (in the background) and other long-time friends and colleagues.

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And his promotional flair drew attention to his collection as it grew —Russian spy cameras, reproductions of Daguerre's first commercial camera, and more — in magazine and newspaper stories about the collection. In 1988 he announced that he had sold his collection. He made a deal that sent 9,000 items to Japan to form the nucleus of a photography museum there. But it turned out there was a lot he hadn't sold, as well. And he went right on collecting and guiding an ever-increasing number of visitors through his basement museum.

Along the way, he devoted his time and energy not only to PHSNE, but to other photographic efforts and organizations. He helped establish the Photographic Resource Center at Boston College. His friendship with photographer/mountaineer Brad

Washburn, director of Boston's Science Museum, led to service as a director of that institution. He was also a long-time director of George Eastman House in Rochester, NY, and worked successfully to keep the Eastman collection in Rochester rather than see it donated to the Smithsonian.

He Helped Popularize Photographic Collecting

"He was the backbone of PHSNE for 20 years," said Matt Isenburg, who was PHSNE's first vice-president and a world-class collector in his own right. "I'd even say Jack *was* PHSNE during that time."

He did a lot of good for collecting, said Matt. "He interested more people in photographic history than anybody else."

In recent years Jack had been trying to sell his collection again, and as age and illness caught him up he gave up trying to find a single buyer and instead scheduled a series of auctions, which began in October in New York City. It turned out to be his last hurrah, said Matt, and it was fitting finale: "When he came into that auction house he got a standing ovation, and he deserved that."

Jack is survived by his second wife, Enid, three daughters from his first marriage, including Jeanne Mahoney, herself a former PHSNE member, four stepchildren, a sister, and 18 grandchildren.

— David DeJean

President's Letter

Continued from Page 1

that this publication is of top quality. *The Journal* comes to members as part of their yearly dues. The editors are always looking for interesting articles: if you have an idea, contact Adrian Levesque or Ruth Thomasian today!

Communications. Stay in touch with PHSNE through its Web site, www.phsne.org, and its discussion forum at www.phsne.net. These efforts need volunteer support, too, and your help and participation will be appreciated.

Lastly, I want to thank the members who do regularly volunteer to help with PHSNE programs. We need more volunteers in order to preserve our organization and its programs. Please email me at marti0727@comcast.net or call me at 603-860-7411 should you want further information on how you can help PHSNE continue with its mission of preserving the history of photography. I look forward to seeing you and many new members in coming months!

-- Marti Jones

PHSNE Adds Student Membership

At the December directors meeting the PHSNE board voted to establish a student membership category, open to anyone with a valid student ID. The \$15 annual membership is intended as an incentive to encourage younger people pursuing photography studies or hobbies to become active members.

Other categories of membership remain unchanged. For more information see the "PHSNE Membership" box on Page 2.

PHSNE Meetings

Meetings are usually held on the first Sunday of each month September to June at 1:30 p.m. at Waltham High School, preceded by a mini trade fair at 12:30 and an open meeting of the PHSNE board at 11:00 a.m.

Future meetings:

Feb. 3 — Annual Members Auction

Mar. 2 — Boston Public Library

Apr. 6 — Gunter Mueller on Collecting Images

Directions

Waltham High School is at 617 Lexington St., Waltham, MA. The high school is at the top of the hill, behind other school buildings.

From I-95 (Route 128) Northbound: Take Exit 27 and follow Totten Pond Rd. 1.2 miles east until it dead-ends into Lexington St. Turn left and go .5 miles north. Turn right into the school complex.

From I-95 (Route 128) Southbound: Take Exit 28, Trapelo Rd., east 1.3 miles to Lexington St. Turn right and go south .8 miles to school complex on the left.

From Boston/Cambridge: Take Rte. 2 west to Exit 54B, then Lexington St. south 1.7 miles to school complex on the left.

From Lincoln and West: Take Route 2 east to Exit 53, Concord Ave. Go east 1 mile, then right onto Lexington St. and 1.3 miles south to school complex on the left.

PHSNE Online

PHSNE's Web site is online at www.phsne.org. Ralph Johnston is the Webmaster. Join the PHSNE Forum online discussion, moderated by Joe Walters. Sign up and log in at www.phsne.net/forum.

FIRST CLASS MAIL
Address Service
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Photographic Historical Society of New England
Next Meeting: Sunday, January 6
"Astrophotography and Harvard's DASCH"

PHSNE
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