

25 Years Ago in the *JBPA*/*JBP*

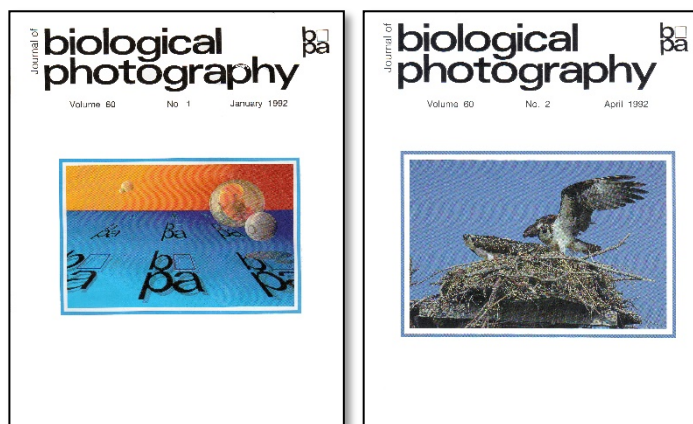
Thomas St. John Merrill, FBPA

In this column, we look back at the content and imagery found in the Journal of the Biological Photographic Association (JBPA), later renamed the Journal of Biological Photography (JBP). This column examines important articles from 25 years ago. In doing so, we gain some insight into those legacy photography techniques of that time.

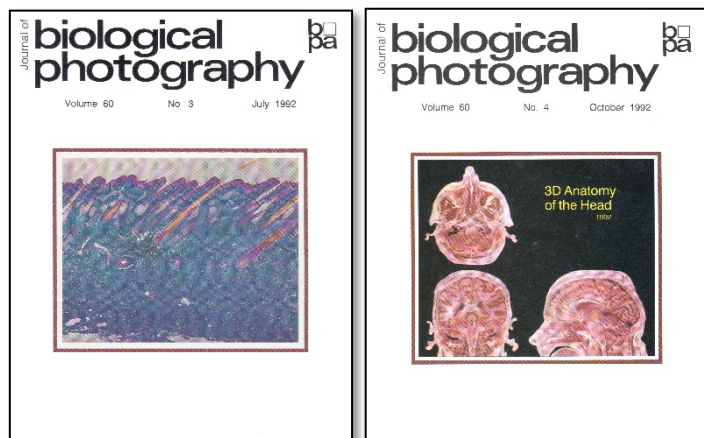
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Twenty-five years ago, in 1992, the Journal of Biological Photography published four issues. Here, we will provide a look back at all four issues from Volume 60.

The cover images of these issues represent only a small part of the much wider scope of biological photography. Issue number 1 shows a graphic illustration by Scott Kilbourne and Russell Dodd, produced using scanned images which were manipulated using Photoshop® 2.0. Number 2 displays an osprey nest in Chesapeake Bay, shot by Norman Barker. The cover of number 3 is a scanned photomicrograph of a section of calf skin. The original image was shot in 1948 by Rodger Lovelace on 8x10 Kodachrome®. The image on the cover of issue number 4 is the work of Victor M. Spitzer and David G. Whitlock, and includes three sections of a human head. Although interesting in itself, notably the images are all of the same specimen. This work is the result of nearly 1,000 0.5mm sections, each photographed and then stacked, providing the viewer with the ability to scan up and down through the specimen, much like an MRI.



Covers of *JBP* Vol. 60, No. 1 and 2, January/April 1992



Covers of *JBP* Vol. 60, No. 3 and 4, July/October 1992

The range of technique and subject matter in these images helps answer the question, “What does a biological photographer do?” These cover images help clarify that the answer is certainly more than the assumed, “Oh, you do x-rays.” The type images produced by biological photographers is infinite, even though we have been known to copy x-rays for publications and lectures.

JBP Volume 60, Numbers 1 and 2

The first two issues of Volume 60 each revisited earlier keynote lectures, both presented by the late Dr. Richard Byrne. In issue number 1, Dr. Byrne’s lecture from BIO-76 in Las Vegas was highlighted and in issue number 2, his lecture from the 50th anniversary meeting held in Boston was discussed. Dr. Byrne was a dynamic speaker and his words of wisdom impressed all those who had the privilege to hear him speak. One of his wise quotes about life, which I always remember is, “Never complain to someone who can’t do something to correct it,” adding that you must be able to recognize what needs to happen in order to consider something corrected. An example is that if you experience poor service in a restaurant, complaining to the person sitting beside you will produce no result, so best to speak to a manager who could make the situation better. I suggest you try it; it works. These lectures from Dr. Byrne are very worthy of a read and re-read.

In issue number 2, Scott Kilbourne and Russell Dodd’s article, “A primer on digital imaging-post production for still photography: part 3,” goes into great detail outlining the steps needed to produce a slide that combines both an image and text. Numerous steps and several software programs were used to initially optimize the image; insert it into the slide; and finally add the text. Today, grammar school-age children can produce similar slides using a cell phone or tablet and PowerPoint®.

James C. Ver Hauge's "Graphic design for desktop publishing, part 2" shows that good layouts can endure over time. Balance, placement of graphics, flow, type fonts, etc. are key layout rules and recommendations that are every bit as applicable and important today as they were 25 years ago.

Norman J. Barker and Donald W. Merritt gives us some insight into their five-year project to photograph osprey (*Pandion haliaetus carolinensis*) in the wilds of Chesapeake Bay in their article, "Photographing the osprey in Chesapeake Bay region". Over 1,500 pairs of osprey were reported in the region in 1986. Their series of challenges began with obtaining permission to get close to these federally protected birds. The nests are a large collection of sticks, built up over several years and usually located high up in a tree, a utility pole, navigation aids, etc. Remote cameras or long lenses were needed so as to not stress the adults and the chicks. Ospreys will defend the nests if people get too close, and some of the photographers on this assignment were seriously wounded by their sharp talons.

Also in issue number 2, Dale Kennedy showed photos of a low-cost vibration damping platform for photomicrography, which uses a granite slab and foam hemispheres. Yet another example of the ingenuity of the bio-photographer.

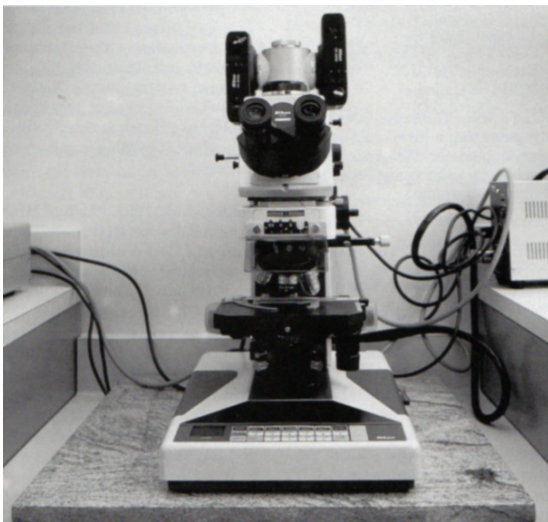


Figure 1. Vibration damping platform using granite slab.

In reviewing issue number 2, an announcement for "The 23rd Annual Biomedical Photography Workshop" in Rochester, NY certainly brought back memories. This weeklong workshop has added to the skills of over 1,000 photographers, myself included.

A photograph by Robert Rearick, appearing in issue number 2, shows another example photographic ingenuity in the article, "How to photograph a pediatric heart transplant surgeon and 18

of his young post-op patients." This photograph has been seen all over the world, including a copy given to Mikhail Gorbachev, former and last leader of the Soviet Union, when he visited Loma Linda Medical Center.



Figure 2. Photograph of 18 patients and doctor

JBP Volume 60, Number 3

Patricia Hilton Wilbur was known for always writing about the latest hot topics, as we see in her article in this issue, "Copyright - Some ethical considerations."

Copyright is found in the United States Constitution, Article I, Section 8, Clause 8, which states, "...To promote the Progress of Science and useful Arts, by securing for limited Times to Authors and Inventors the exclusive Right to their respective Writings and Discoveries..."

As with most laws, there are numerous ways to interpret the meanings and these twenty-seven words are no exception. There are departments of the U. S. Government, many lawyers, and several books written in an attempt to explain and understand how to best interpret. What we have found is that it simply comes down to the ethics of the person copying the original. In 1787, the founding fathers thought it was important enough to include in our Constitution, and should be just as important today.

JBP Volume 60, Number 4

In issue number 4, Scott W. Stalcup's paper, "Understanding computer viruses," gives us an early history into the world of computer viruses. In his time, 25 years ago, computer viruses were something new and were being spread on floppy disks used in more than one computer. He lists twenty-five of the most common viruses found in 1992. Interestingly, despite all the advancements in technology, some of his recommendations to control viruses still apply. These include: backup; never use pirated software; never execute unrecognized software, etc. These precautions are still considered to be good practices today.

As much as things change, many things never change. We must learn from the past to avoid the same problems in the future.

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Tom Merrill, an Army Medic, and Viet Nam veteran has been a biological photographer since 1968. Amongst his many professional honors are both a Fellowship in the BPA and Emeritus Membership. He lives in Southern California with his wife of 50 years, Marie.

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