

Palette Page

A Monthly Newsletter from APAG

Issue N° 4 -April, 2007

President's Message by D. John McCarthy

Every month our www.apag.net web site gets better. Our latest addition is the forum. I encourage all of you to register and start using it as a way to exchange ideas and to ask and answer questions from fellow members and in time from others who drop in to use the site. We have also made some other changes to the site.

IPAS School

APAG's PPA Affiliate school International Photographic Artists School, IPAS, held classes in Indianapolis IN April 1-4. As many of you know the school has struggled to find an audience over the years. Originally started by APAG to be an artists school, but this year the school had to cancel a couple of classes this year including a Painter class! The old format just wasn't working

Another problem the school had was that it failed to use it's allotment of hotel rooms and threatened with either paying for the unused rooms the board was forced to sign a contract for another year, but the vote was taken only on the condition that the school associate itself with the Professional Photographers of Indiana. This is the only way that the board felt that they could survive.

The board and PPI realized that they were started by APAG and still had an outstanding loan so they also voted to pay off the remaining balance on the non interest loan that was made to start IPAS.

I contacted PPA to find out if the school could be taken over by IPP and Al Hopper felt that it could be accomplished with a letter from APAG. Since this is the only way that APAG could get the log repaid we really didn't have to many options as the alternative would be no school at all.

I am still waiting to hear from the new IPAS director and IPP to get the final details about the new arrangement and what affiliation, if any, that APAG will still have with the school, but it is appears that they would prefer to have none, but I'll keep you all posted.

--- D. John McCarthy



Super Monday Instructors Needed

Sign Up By May 11 to Host a November Program

The deadline to show what you know as a Super Monday Instructor is approaching! Volunteer to share your knowledge at one of PPA's most successful education initiatives. Proceeds from Super Monday support PPA's education programs, and instructors earn two speaking merits toward a PPA degree. The deadline to apply is Friday, May 11. Visit <http://events.ppa.com> for complete details.

Photography Associations Announce Support of New Intellectual Property Rights Act

Professional Photographers of America (PPA) announced support of *The Intellectual Property Rights Enforcement Act*, S. 522, which was introduced into the Senate recently by Senator Evan Bayh (D-IN) and Senator George Voinovich (R-OH), and co-sponsored by Senator Thad Cochran (R-MS) and Senator Judd Gregg (R-NH) in a letter to Senator Bayh. PPA is joined by its partner organizations, the Society for Sports & Event Photographers (SEP), Commercial Photographers International (CPI) and the Student Photographic Society (SPS), representing over 30,000 professional photographers across the U.S.

"Protecting copyrights is fundamental to our members, and we are pleased to support this

important bill that treats intellectual theft with the seriousness it demands," stated PPA President Jack Reznicki.

The legislation would establish an Intellectual Property Enforcement Network (IPEN) to replace the looser, interagency approach currently responsible for coordinating IP enforcement efforts. Under the proposed legislation, federal agencies would coordinate and share information to aid each other in identifying, tracking, arresting and prosecuting IP criminals.

Professional photographers are often the smallest of small businesses despite being some of the largest producers of copyrighted materials. Because of this, copyright infringement has a great impact on photographers' business success.

"Even a few copyright infringements can deal a significant blow to a photographer's livelihood. But using federal courts to enforce their rights is often too expensive," stated PPA CEO David Trust. He added, "We applaud and welcome a more active role from the Federal Government in helping our members secure their constitutional rights."

Running Your Business

Creative people like to be creative, but if you work for yourself, you also have to be a business person as well. The good news is that today you can use the same computer you use to do your Painter and Photoshop on to run some really great business software.

There are lots of programs out there to help you run your business, but one that I like is Quickbooks Pro, from Intuit.

Quickbooks Pro comes from the same company that makes Quicken for personal finances. But, it is tailored for your business.



This is a program that will allow you to do most of the book keeping and accounting you need to do in a small business as well as generate the financial documents you'll need to do your taxes and for your business plan. It will track your inventory, create professional looking invoices with your logo on them, do payroll, and has a lot of other invaluable features to help you run your business more professionally.

The ability to generate a balance sheet and income statements with the click of a mouse are invaluable at tax time or if you ever need to go to a bank or someone with your business plan for a loan.

While there are some tailored made programs for photography studios like Granite Bear or SuccessWare they may not be ideally suited for you business. Because Quickbooks is the No. 1 financial software program it is also something that your professional accountant will be familiar with and be able to work with.

As good as Quickbooks is, it does have a learning curve. If you are already a Quicken user or have been using Quicken for your business you'll find that the transition to Quickbooks may be a little easier for you. You can even import your records from Quicken into Quickbooks to make the transition all the easier.

One suggestion I would like to make about using Quickbooks is that you keep on top of things. It is easy to just let the bills pile up, but you'll find that if you keep on top of things it is a lot easier than trying to enter a pile of information into your computer at the end of the month.

When you set up Quickbooks you may want to consider using the accrual method of accounting. Most small photo businesses and even some photography software programs like SuccessWare use the cash method, but you'll find that it is just as easy to use the accrual method with Quickbooks since the software does all the work for you.

The most important suggestion that I would like to make is that you back up your work on a separate hard drive or CD. I used Quickbooks for the APAG books and when I lost a hard drive i was able to quickly recover the records from the back up copy.

Speaking of records don't forget to keep copies of your bills for the IRS even though you have recorded them in Quickbooks.

Quickbooks is useful at tax time if you use another popular Intuit program TurboTax. TurboTax can download all the information it needs directly from Quickbooks, but you have to methodically set up all the accounts in your ledger in advance as you set the program up. If IRS changes any of the forms, and it often does, you have to go back in and change everything on Quickbooks.

Another feature Quickbooks has is that you can download your bank and other records directly into Quickbooks. But, for some reason it uses a different kind of file than Quicken does. I have a problem with one of my banks because although it offers me the ability to download my statements in the Quicken format it doesn't for Quickbooks. Most commercial banks will offer both, but you need to check your on line account.



One of the things I like the most is that Quickbooks is available in a Macintosh version. You can even share your mac generated files with a PC user now. This is an important feature if you use an accountant who probably is using a PC instead of a Mac.

There are some good training tutorials that come with the program and there are also lots of professionals who are trained to teach Quickbooks. You can get more information about this product at:

<http://quickbooks.intuit.com/>

Financial Statements:

There are three basic financial statements you should have for your business as part of your business plan and you'll need when you try to obtain financing for your company.

1. The Balance Sheet
2. The Income Statement
3. Summary of Cash Flows

The Balance Sheet

The balance sheet is a snapshot in time of your company's financial positions that shows your assets, liabilities, and net worth. You generally only need to make a balance sheet at the end of your fiscal year.

If you don't use Quickbooks the formula is:

$$\text{assets} = \text{liabilities} + \text{owners equity}$$

The Income Statement

This financial statement is also know as a "profit and loss" or P&L (that is what Quickbooks calls it), or statement of revenue and expenses.

This is a very useful report card of how your business is doing over a period of time and will tell you your net profit over that period.

Statement of Cash Flows

This statement shows you the *cash* generated during the period you are looking at and generally splits it out to show you where the cash came from e.g., operating activities or sales, investing, etc. This is an important statement if you elect to use the accrual basis of accounting because it shows the cash that has actually been reported.

Under the cash basis of accounting you record the income when you receive the cash and the expense when you pay, but under accrual accounting you record the revenue when you make the sale and the expense when you buy, but not necessarily pay for something.

There are many good web sites that can help bring you up to speed on your basic accounting skills. Just use Google to find them. Here is just one: <http://www.accountingcoach.com>

Art Appreciation

When I worked for Fujifilm I attended hundreds of local, state, national, and even international photo conventions. A common theme among the top lecturers was that they would visit art museums in the various cities that they would go to for assignment, vacation, or where they were giving programs.

Last week I had the chance to visit one of the worlds great art collection in Paris at the Louvre. Anticipating the trip to Paris, when my little boy's 5th grade teacher gave the class an assignment to read a biography and do a report I suggested that he write about someone I knew he already was interested in, Leonardo da Vinci (because he had already read a book called Leonardo's Horse by Jean Fritz. You can see a reproduction of the horse in Milan)

For many visitors to the Louve this is there first and maybe only stop. They rush through the galleries and go directly to the painting, file by, and check it off their list before moving on

to the Eiffel Tower or Bateaux-Mouches.

I won't lie, we also made a bee line to see the great painting, but then spent the rest of the afternoon trying to get a glimpse of some of the great art on display. I once took a class at the Worcester Mass Art Museum with Arthur Rainville and he taught us some techniques that are helpful when you visit an art museum that I practiced with my little boy.

One welcome suggestion is to find a work that catches your eye and then just spend five to fifteen minutes looking at it and only it. This is a welcome exercise when there is a place to sit down in front of it after being on your feet for hours.

Another great technique is to play a little game. My wife, son, and I sat in front of some painting and then we would take turns asking the other to find something, e.g. a red scarf. This is a great way to really look at a painting and if you are traveling with a child makes it a lot more fun for them. You can do a variation of the game by including more paintings or even an entire gallery in your search.

Photographs are not allowed in many of the galleries in the Louvre for a lot of reasons including intellectual property rights and preservation, the constant exposure to the flash can damage the paintings over time. But, there is a sign telling the visitors that the images are available on the web!

Of course there is not substitute for going to Paris and actually seeing the paintings. I'll never forget my reaction to seeing the John Singer Sargent exhibit at the National Gallery in Washington DC and how beautiful the portraits were compared to the photos and prints I had seen in books. Interestingly my reaction to viewing the Mona Lisa behind a rope and bullet proof glass was almost the opposite.

But the ability to view the collection on line is a great way to plan your trip or to follow up and read about some of the art that you saw.

If you want to make your own arm chair visit to the Louvre go to their official web site at:

<http://www.louvre.fr>



APAG
568 Main St.
Wilbraham MA 01095

First Last
Work Street
Work City Work State Work ZIP