



## more about me the photographer's faqs

### **how did you get your start in photography**

well...I really didn't find photography, I think it actually 'found' me (I'm a nurse by trade). Because of my love of photography, my dad gave me an old Pentax ME Super SLR and a couple of lenses he had picked up from the pawn shop-yes, the pawn shop (this was in '98 or'99). I actually had to call Pentax and find the instruction manual for the camera. Believe it or not, I was able to purchase it and the original copyright date on that little book is 1980. I began reading lots of books, magazines and really anything I could read to learn more about the subject. The first book I read was *Learn Photography in a Weekend* by Michael Langford. This book literally covers the basics. I really didn't know anything about photography. ☺

It was shortly after reading and learning a little bit, I photographed a friend's daughter (outdoors at my home) and the pictures really turned out great. I think she ordered at least a kazillion pictures for about \$75. ☺ Once my family and friends learned of my new 'hobby' they started calling on me for different favors. I went to a local high school (where a relative works) and took the pictures for the football team and their cheerleaders. I didn't even use the Pentax camera for that job; I borrowed an automatic camera from a friend. Using the money I profited from that job, I bought my first real SLR automatic camera: a Canon Elan 2E. I chose this camera specifically because it had an eye focus control that I thought was the coolest thing. (I'm a gadget nut).

Another close friend of the family later approached me about photographing her daughter's wedding. Panic city! I didn't even own a flash. As part of the payment, they bought me the flash I needed to do the job. Although I didn't take any pj style pictures, only formals, the pictures actually turned out pretty good! I continued reading more books, studying other photographers work, talking to other photographers and registering with different forums on the internet to continue to learn everything I could.

Three websites later, a growing and successful business that I dearly love, I'm not sure how many weddings to date, and going digital in 2003, the rest as they say "is history".

### **what's in your bag**

Currently in my Lowepro Computer Trekker AW Plus bag, I have the 30D, 20D and the 10D. I have a 550ex flash and a 580ex flash. I use the 50 1.8, the 85 1.8, and the 16-35 2.8L lenses. I've also just added the 17-55 2.8 and the 100 2.8 macro to my repertoire. I also have Gary Fong's lightsphere, a stroboframe, a couple of Pocket Wizards and other things like flash cards, batteries, cords, etc.

### **how far have you traveled to photograph a wedding**

Because we live wayyy out in the country, we travel to almost every wedding we photograph. We have traveled as far as Chattanooga, TN; Blakely, GA; Natchez and Tupelo, MS; Destin, FL and lots of places in between.



page 2

more about me/the photographer's faqs

### **do you use flash**

Although I do use flash often, the idea is to use it wisely. I bounce my flash everywhere and almost always shoot my flash turned down a bit...depending on the situation (sometimes the exposure requires the flash to be dialed up some). My goal is to work with the ambient light *and* flash to create the most natural looking image possible. A lot of times I don't use flash at all; I may strictly use the available light. And from time to time as I need to, I also use additional lighting on a light stand to light the reception area.

### **how do your brides find you**

Two ways: word of mouth and internet advertising. I'm currently listed on theknot and wedj.com. I'm a member of the WPJA (Wedding Photojournalist Association) and the PPA (Professional Photographers of America). I've also had weddings listed as Featured Weddings in ALABAMA WEDDINGS Magazine.

### **how many weddings do you shoot per year**

I don't have a maximum number of wedding commissions each year; although I don't accept any bookings for the month of July (that's our family vacation time). I average approximately 20-25 weddings per year.

### **did you attend a photography school**

No. Everything I've learned has been self taught.

### **what is your workflow**

I shoot all RAW. I've just recently made the switch and I LOVE IT. I strongly recommend shooting raw for a couple of reasons: the control over my images in post production is worth it all and secondly, it has saved me tons of time with post production editing. ☺ I use Photoshop for all my editing and I use the Kevin Kubota actions for most every wedding (along with a few others of my favorites). I do 100 % of editing and before I'm finished, I have looked at each and every image many, many times!

### **who designed your website**

I purchased the basic template from Bludomain and I customized it totally to my liking. This is actually my third site; my first two websites I designed from the ground up using a web building software. Then, via info from other photographers and reading up on the net, found a host for my site.

### **who designs your albums**

Right now: me. I've designed all albums to date. My album printing company choices are Vision Art and Zookbinders.



page 3

## more about me/the photographer's faqs

### **what labs do you use**

I use Miller's, WHCC and ProLab Express for all reprints and I host my own proofing site using Photocart.

### **what is your favorite software**

I use Quickbooks to manage the financial side of the business, along with Quickbooks Customer Manager to keep track of all my clients, and of course, Photoshop CS3 and Lightroom.

### **do you use assistants**

Only my husband; he's the best, cheap help I've found. ☺

### **who designed your amazing logo**

I'm so proud of my logo. A former bride, now living in Minneapolis, designed it for me. She is such a sweet person and I loved working with her!

### **what advice can you give to aspiring photographers**

\*Read ALOT! I still do.

\*Work with what you have (for now). It doesn't take the fanciest equipment; all you really need is a camera and some available light to start learning.

\*Remember that owning a business is just that: owning a *business*. Taking pictures is not all there is to it. You MUST learn about the business side of it before you start your business. Visiting [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov) is a good place to start.

\*You must also be confident in your own ability and actually know what you're doing. Photographing a wedding is HUGE! This is the most important day in someone's life. Once again, it's more than 'just being able to take some good pictures'.

\*Set your goals and never give up!