



American Society of Media Photographers  
North Carolina  
Smarter. Stronger. Together.

A REVIEW OF ASSISTANT BOOTCAMP, April 2016

By Co-president, Michael Mauney

I could just say ...a good time was had by all... but major congratulations are in order to Chip for bringing off a very relaxed AND informative AND entertaining day for the student attendees and all of us despite beginning in a downpour. Trent in particular is to be noted for his creative approach to Snacks & Drinks: a pour-over-coffee and cheese & bread bar, followed by a deli luncheon of selected meats, cheeses, and veggie trays that drew crowds of discerning photographers throughout the event. MM added peanut butter & jelly sandwiches and peanuts galore.

The first two presenters, Joe Levine and Bob Leverone, played nicely off each other, being exact opposites. Joe, the organized to the nth degree food photographer- self-described as anal- took that description to new heights with his photographic depiction of his studio procedures, lighting virtuosity, and NASA-like filing system for each and every shot he has ever made, and wowed us with his energy and hilarious personality. Joe later did an amazingly simple and effective lighting demo with his Profoto gear.

Bob topped him by just being Bob, speaking off the cuff while a steady stream of his vastly entertaining sports action shots and sports personality portraits showed in the background, which he never even glanced at, leaving us more in the dark than ever just how in hell he does it. There was obviously a lot of exacting technique, which we could only guess at since Bob, when pressed offered only brief explanations of how many strobes, cameras & what lenses, etc., were involved in his lighting and weirdly wonderful compositions. When a student's question forced him to describe scaling the heights of the Georgia Dome rafters and catwalks to sync his strobes to his cameras, I got lost just trying to calculate his gaffer tape bill. We may never know how he does it. I just wait patiently to see more.

The last presenters were RCC alumnus Steven McBride, with his friend and assistant, Adam Pinnell, who did a tag team presentation of Steven's beautiful outdoor landscape and corporate photography. I know Steven as my neighbor, but his clients know him as the globe-trotting photographer who always brings home the goods, be it from Caribbean resorts, China, Montana, or Madison County. His assistants know him as the soft-driving perfectionist who will take his entire studio with him if that what it takes to get the photograph. At least that's what Adam hinted at, being shown at one point tossing a small boy into a swimming pool until the laughing photographer got the perfect splashes.

Adam, who seems to have spent major time in the gym since I saw him last and appeared to be able to one-arm press Stephen with his multiple Canon lenses without breaking a sweat, then did a short stint on being a digital tech, or dit, as I'm told it is called now. This pleased the student photographers greatly when they learned how much more dits can charge than regular gear-toting assistants. Adam later did a great dit demo on a laptop for everyone.

Michael Mauney, Co-president  
828-645-3700 phone  
828-231-0708 mobile

Trent McDevitt, Co-President  
310- 651-7446 mobile



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In closing, Steven impressed us all in describing spending his first six years out of college as an assistant before striking out on his own and following his love of the outdoors to his successful career as a location photographer. He even appears in some of his most beautiful sunsets. Does Steven have the world's best self-timer, or does Adam do this? Our thanks to Steven and Adam for their time and for getting up at 4:00 am to drive down from Asheville.

Also in attendance were Board members Brian Bookwalter and JK Shearon who did whatever needed to be done to make things work smoothly and answered any and all questions from the 34 students who represented four different schools- RCC, ASU, UNCC, and McDowell Tech. JK was observed making his usual copious notes. Let us know if we help you in some future event you're planning, JK.

Our thanks especially to Jay Capers, always the perfect host, and Dhanraj Emanuel, who makes you happy just to talk to him, for allowing us to conduct one more of our ASMP-NC events in their marvelous photography facility at Randolph Community College.

Again, way to go Chip.

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