

## A word about photographs

*Amateur Radio* receives many excellent articles for publication. Unfortunately very few of the accompanying photographs approach the description of excellent; the great majority are unpublishable or nearly so.

This is a great pity. An otherwise excellent article is reduced in 'reader entertainment' because photographs that could complement the text, and add to reader interest, are unprintable, or of such poor quality that their value to the article is, negative.

So, in an effort to explain what makes a 'good' photograph, from a publishing point of view, here are a few, very simple, requirements.

- The photo can be either black and white or colour. These days, with modern processing software, colour is generally preferred.
- The photo *must* be in focus. Seems a somewhat obvious, thing to say, but to an amateur photographer, this is quite a difficult feat to accomplish.
- The photo *must* have excellent contrast, with no obvious flaws, i.e., no obvious fading, or glare, and good colour contrast between individual components of the scene.
- Think about the composition of the shot before you press the shutter release button. Are the key features arranged appropriately (or viewed from the best angle) so that the overall photo looks "pleasing to the eye".

Watch for some common pitfalls:

- Beware of foregrounds - sharp focus may be on a wine glass, or the back of someone's head, when the desired subject is blurry. Using flash when shooting groups at tables often causes tablecloths and faces in foreground to flare, while wanted detail furthest from camera is in darkness.
- Beware of backgrounds. Flash against a light coloured wall creates an unattractive dark shadow. When used against a dark empty background, subjects may lose their definition. Beware of 'busy' background patterns that steal focus – e.g. curtains, paisley wallpaper, or in the case of antenna shots, dappled trees or bright sky.
- Photos are better if there is plenty of other light around. The flash should not be the only source of strong light.
- White shirts flare – take care.
- Action photos are more interesting than grip 'n' grin photos. Beware of the "Bumfest". People's faces are more interesting than their backs.
- Technical photos: Don't use flash. The best light is obtained outdoors at noon on a cloudy bright summer day! Replicate this as closely as possible. Use a flat light blue background.

If you can achieve these attributes, you will have a good, publishable photo – and your article will benefit enormously.

Seems simple! Well, it is obviously not – a good, professional tip is to take as many photos as you can, in as high a resolution as you can; in that way a few will indeed be of excellent standard. These are the ones we want for publication.

Many photographers now use digital cameras instead of film. DO NOT print the photos and send us the hard copy – send us the electronic photo file in as high a resolution as possible.

Most email systems will cope with a total email size of around 10 MB, so individual images can be up to around 5 or 6 MB. If in doubt, download the high resolution image to your PC, use your image software to save a copy of the file in a smaller size and send that to us.

Images around 500 kB to 1 MB for a postcard size image are adequate for use inside the magazine. Images less than 100 kB are almost useless for reproduction. We print at 300 dpi and such images print very small.

If we want an image for the cover or inside back cover, we can contact you requesting a higher resolution (larger file size) version of the image.

Of course, you can always burn all the high resolution images to CD and post them in to us.

So, take your time, take more shots than you need, and send the excellent ones in with your article. Our readers *will* be happy. And, as the author, so will be you.

Cheers,

Peter VK3KAI, on behalf of the entire production team.