



# MINOX MEMO

The Journal Of The [Minox Historical Society](http://Minox Historical Society)

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VOLUME 1, NUMBER 3, SERIES 2

SUMMER / 2002

## MINOX: A TOOL USED BY THE MASTER OF TECHNO-THRILLERS!



**Steve Uhrig****Member Executive Committee**

If Tom Clancy didn't exactly invent the genre now known as the techno-thriller, he certainly has done more than most authors to firmly establish it as a highly successful and popular style of writing. This unknown former insurance salesman came out of nowhere with his stunningly successful debut novel, *The Hunt for Red October*, and has since firmly established himself as an internationally known, and extremely successful author of riveting political techno-thriller novels. *The Hunt for Red October*, *Patriot Games* and *Clear and Present Danger* are just a few of his novels which have been turned into major films, every bit as successful as the novels which spawned them. *The Sum of All Fears* is hitting the theaters as I type this.



One of the hallmarks of a Clancy novel is the absolutely meticulous research he puts into every detail of equipment, procedure and realistic character reactions to a variety of situations. You certainly don't need to be a technophile to enjoy these superbly written adventure novels, but those of you who are will certainly enjoy the added flavor of realism his research gives to his writing. Tom's unique style has established him as a master of the techno-thriller, in every bit the same sense as Stephen King is acknowledged as a master of the modern horror thriller.

Tom and I met professionally through a mutual FBI agent friend, and ended up becoming personal friends. We've spent many pleasant hours discussing and debating the world's problems, and sharing military and law enforcement technology we each have learned through our respective circles. We've impressed each

other with factoids of various pieces of military or law enforcement technology.

I recalled Tom had made an obscure reference to a Minox camera into his first novel, *The Hunt for Red October*. In it, some analysts are examining surveillance photos of a Russian sub when one comments 'Well, these weren't taken with a Minox.' I got the sense that Tom, like many of the public, recognized a Minox as a camera that was used in espionage work, but didn't know much else about it.

For his birthday last year (2001) I presented him with a [Marty Doctor](#)-restored Minox Model B and a full kit of accessories: flash, cases, film, mailers, flash bulbs, tripod, tripod mount, copy stand and even the binocular clamp. What really impressed me more than anything was the fact when he opened the present, he briefly examined the camera before setting it aside. Then, he sat down and opened the owner's manual and began reading it before messing with unfamiliar hardware (RTFM!). Taking the soapbox for a minute as a manufacturer who both publishes tech manuals as well as operates a tech support call center, we don't write these manuals for our health. Now, HERE'S a man after my own heart!

There's a special thrill for me, as a founding member and Director of the Minox Historical Society, in having the privilege to introduce my friend and the master of techno-thrillers to an historical example of technology from an earlier time. This introduction likely has led to a mention of Minox in an upcoming Tom Clancy novel.

The photos for this article were taken in May 2002, when I was visiting Tom for a few days. They were shot on the

**In this Minox Memo**

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second story deck outside his home office; we were lucky our mutual FBI friend also was present so he could be pressed into service to shoot the picture of Tom and I together. The photo of Tom with the Minox to his face was actually taken by me shooting back at him: we were shooting pictures of each other.



While we were 'male bonding' that afternoon, as his wife calls it, Tom asked a few questions about the electronic Minox models. While interested, I've known for a while he greatly prefers the concept of the mechanical Minox models. Of course, his reference is the Minox B and kit of accessories I gave him last year, and his preference probably stems from that.

What's exciting to me is a Minox camera is once again slated to appear in a new Tom Clancy novel. As a result of his receiving the Minox B as a gift, and his growing familiarity with it, he has already written the appearance of a Minox in a forthcoming novel. The novel isn't completed yet, and I'm not allowed to give away any details, but I can tell you to check inside the child's stuffed animal toy! What is incredible is Tom actually seems to be able to think and type almost as fast as his printer can squirt out the pages.

I've had a lot of fun sharing Minox with Tom Clancy and am proud to be the source of his personal Minox. Now it may be showing up more often in his writing. Can't wait to read the book!

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Steve Uhrig, SWS Security  
May 2002, for MHS



## President's Letter

**Peter D. Zimmerman**  
President

The MHS continues to grow in numbers almost weekly, and the founding project of the group, finding, scanning, and preserving Minox ephemera is under way in "pilot scale" led by [SUBMINI-L](#) founder [Larry Feldman](#). We've collected a lot of issues, are making an inventory, and will then have to request members to search their own collections for missing numbers. Larry is looking at a lot of different ways to make the final scans available; some prefer paper, while others would like searchable .pdf files on a CD-R. It's probably not feasible to print out all of the issues on paper, but they will likely fit one or two CD-Rs.

Last issue I hinted (well, more than hinted) that we were working with [Minox GmbH](#) on a major special project for MHS. At the time I wrote that it would be ready for a major rollout in this issue of the MEMO. Well, it isn't. The Executive Committee has seen photos of a prototype, and the best way to sum up our reaction is "**WOW!**" Unfortunately, Minox has asked that we not go into any more details yet. We're looking at mid-August now (July is vacation in Germany), and Minox has major projects much more vital to the survival of the marquee to have ready before [Photokina](#) in the fall.

A few months ago I was in New York City for a few days or R&R, and had the chance to visit with Don and



**Don Thayer**



**ePixel.com** home of Minox Processing Laboratories

Monika Thayer at [MPL](#). The lab is in the middle of major changes, focusing on a shift to digital services: for Minox, for more conventional photography, and for digital cameras as well. Because Don has been a pioneer in building a custom digital lab the effort has been, at times, painful. But the results are certainly going to be worth it for everybody. "Mr. Minox" is a perfectionist, so MHS members will just have to be patient.

Finally, I thought you might like to see a few shots of MPL and the people who bring it to life. And so I took along my Minox 2 MPixel camera and tried a few shots. I'm just learning, so they're not great.

Monika Thayer is as delightful in person as she is on the phone. Don, well Don is the man who keeps Minox going in the USA. The RAID server is compact, of course, since all of digital storage is shrinking. Sorry that the printer isn't shown a bit more clearly. There are some proprietary widgets, and there is a privacy issue if the pictures can be identified.

Until next Memo, good Minoxing,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Peter D. Zimmerman".

MHS



**Minox film printer**



**Monika Thayer**

## The Maus That Roared

**D. Scott Young**

**Secretary / Treasurer**

Decades after the arrest of East German spy Gunter Guillaume in 1974, most people have forgotten him, but for a brief period in time he, and his Minox subminiature camera, figured prominently in a scandal that brought down the West German government of Willy Brandt and changed the course of European history.

Willy Brandt was elected Chancellor of West Germany in October of 1969. Not even a month later Gunter Guillaume was hired as one of three personal aides to Brandt on the basis of a personal recommendation of labor leader Georg Leber. As simply as that, the East German security apparatus known as the "Stasi" had secured an espionage coup of monumental proportions: The placement of a dedicated spy at the elbow of a head of state. Markus Wolf, the man who engineered the operation, considers it both his greatest triumph and most disastrous mistake.



**Gunter Guillaume**

It is interesting to speculate on exactly which model of Minox camera Guillaume had when he reached the part of his spy career which called for one, but in all the digging I've done on the subject I've found not a single reference to the specific model.

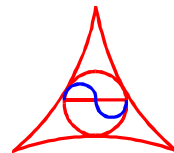
His establishment as a spy went back as far as the mid 1950's. His camera would have been issued to him by the East German Stasi, and I strongly suspect it came from stocks of Model IIIs cameras on hand, or possibly from Model B's that would have been firmly established by that time.

On the other hand, He was assigned as an aide to Willy Brandt in 1969, the same year the Model C was introduced, he could have potentially used it until his arrest in 1974.

The "art" of document copy work under time and security constraints doesn't lend itself to extensive course work on photographic technique and precision metering. I

believe he would have been taught the minimal essentials of exposure control using a Minox issued with relatively high speed and high contrast film suited for document copy, making the presence of an exposure meter on a camera such as the Model B a rather minor point. If he used a C, he more than likely would have used it in a manual mode, setting a tried and true shutter speed based on memorized settings for a variety of lighting situations.

The economic situation in East Germany argues against him using a C. What is not commonly appreciated is the fact that by the late '60's and 70's, the East German state was dangerously close to bankruptcy, to the point where "sales" of East Germans were being made to West German churches and relief organizations. This allowed the West to free some of the refugees caught on the other side of the Berlin wall, and gave the East some very badly needed cash. This means model C Minox cameras would have been prohibitively expensive for wide spread purchase and issue by the Stasi, as well as having rather limited manual exposure control and



**"In God we trust. All others we monitor."**

### **SWS Security**

**International purveyors of well cared for modern and vintage Minox equipment.**

Share my love for Minox submini cameras. Visit my webpage, read snippets of history from the world of Minox, read up on the history and characteristics of the various models, learn what cameras and accessories might be the best for your interest, and review cameras and related items for sale.

This is my hobby, not my livelihood, so expect to be treated differently than those who must make a profit on dealing in Minoxes. I buy and sell Minox items, highest prices paid for items in excellent condition. Nearly all cameras for sale have been Cleaned, Lubricated and Adjusted (CLA) by a trained and experienced serviceman. Everything guaranteed, trades accepted.

Transactions worldwide by an experienced and reputable collector. Numerous references from my Minox friends can be reviewed on the webpage.

**SWS Security, Maryland (USA)**

[Steve@swssec.com](mailto:Steve@swssec.com)

<http://www.swssec.com/minox.html>

Telephone +1+410-879-4035

Fax +1+410-836-1190

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**Thousand Oaks, CA, 91360-5224 USA**

being substantially bigger in physical size, to boot.

Guillaume and his wife Christel established themselves in Frankfurt with their son, Pierre. Gunter picked up some extra, practical experience in photography during this time by moonlighting as a freelance photographer in addition to running the copy shop his wife and he had established by then. Christel began the first espionage work by getting a job as the office manager for Willy Birkelbach, a heavyweight in the Social Democratic Party (SPD) with access to NATO documents related to strategy and nuclear contingency planning.

It's not clear to me if Christel actually photographed the documents or smuggled them home for Gunter to photograph before returning them. Whichever, Gunter passed the information on via microfilm rolled up in empty cigar tubes. This was accomplished in his mother-in-law's tobacco shop, a very convenient cover arrangement.

When Guillaume became Brandt's personal aide he had access to untold volumes of highly classified information, including secrets of other NATO member countries and policy documents of the highest level. One of his more

valuable contributions to East German knowledge of West German plans was the revelation that Brandt's startling new policy "Ostpolitik" (engagement with East Germany) was, in fact, genuine and not a political subterfuge. It was this information that allowed the East German government to act with confidence in regard to this policy. This actively changed the tone of the relationship between the two governments in some regards, to the point where the GDR worked to assist Brandt with his political goals without his knowledge.

Gunter worked his Minox hard, photographing massive amounts of material which made their way to the Stasi. During this time, he was blissfully ignorant of the fact that the seeds of his exposure had been planted as far back as 1957, in routine radio messages from his controller to him. The Stasi were very punctual about transmitting birthday and New Years greetings to their agents in the field for morale purposes. The Guillames even received a congratulatory notice from their controller on the birth of their son. The messages had been recorded and were the subject of analysis spanning years. Although the Stasi changed this system and the encoding method used in 1959, it was already too late for Guillaume. Years later, lucky connections were made when counterintelligence officials began to compare notes, and Gunter was eventually unmasked.

More startling today is the fact that the evidence of his espionage was actually known for several years before the arrest was finally made on 29 April, 1974. The scandal rocked not just Germany but became shocking, headline news around the world.

Willy Brandt, one of West Germany's most popular chancellors ever, resigned and his government collapsed just 10 days later.

Gunter Guillaume was sentenced to 13 years in prison, his wife, Christel, to 9. He died of a stroke at 68, in Eggersdorf, Germany in 1995. Neither Christel, or his son Pierre attended the funeral. Among the few who did was his second wife, Elke. Also there was Markus Wolf, the man who masterminded the original operation.

Wolf is of two minds regarding the ultimate historic interpretation of this incredible espionage story. As a foreign intelligence operation, it stands unquestionably as one of his greatest successes. As a foreign policy operation intended to further the interests of his country, it failed miserably and the GDR lost one of the greatest friends it ever had on the other side of The Wall.

 MHS

## The Negative as the Score

Don Krehbiel

[Editor's note: This is the first of several articles by Don Krehbiel a man who is generally regarded as one of the masters in use of the Minox. He has agreed to share with us some of his ponderings on photography. It is only by doing such pondering, by the way, that one becomes as good at photography as Don is.

In this vein, the editor happily answers Don's final question: "Everything."]

In 1979, a small group spent an afternoon in a Yosemite darkroom watching Alan Ross make a 16x20 inch print from an Ansel Adams negative. The afternoon ended with a sink full of "Ansel Adams Prints", only the last of which met Alan's standard of excellence. All of them met mine!

I have since been troubled with two questions. How did Alan Ross know WHAT he wanted? And, how did he know WHEN he had it? I understood the darkroom technique, the HOW - it was thoroughly described in AA's "The Print." What I didn't understand was everything else.

Some years later in front of a tarpaper shack in Rhyolite, Stuart Scofield, maestro of Mono Basin Photographics, asked why the tripod was placed exactly where it was. A lively discussion ensued, examining vision, exploration, isolation, perspective, tonality, what had initially triggered our interest in the subject. While avoiding any reference to equipment, it evolved into an examination of how we knew WHEN the tripod had been precisely placed.

The two events were suddenly linked when I realized that Ansel Adams' characterization of the negative as the SCORE, and the print as a PERFORMANCE clearly identified each as artistically separate events. In the first example we had Fürtwangler conducting Beethoven, and in the second, Mozart on composing. The WHAT, HOW, and WHEN of each endeavor could now be examined both in isolation and in relation to the other. We had isolated six topics for discussion, each distinct but linked.

The third event, the 1995 marriage of Photoshop and the Epson Stylus Color Printer, gave new life to the debate about the place of new technology in "photography." Suddenly the HOW had changed, or at least could change. Longevity was still an issue and the use of a loupe certainly put the lie to the notion that anything had

changed. But change was in the air and question of what and how much certainly loomed.

Perhaps Ansel Adams had given us the bridge. Abandon the terms "negative" and "transparency" and think of the result of the camera/film interaction as a "source", a score or script, from which a final production or performance could emerge.

Whether the textbook was Ansel Adams' The Negative and The Print, or a Photoshop manual, WHAT do I want, and WHEN have I got it, remain creative and visionary and independent of equipment and materials. With dramatic changes in the HOW of both composing and conducting, the journey from WHAT to "GOTIT" becomes all the more important, and that clearly is ART, not technology.

Being able to individually address the WHAT, HOW and WHEN, both in the field while composing, and in the studio when performing, is gradually releasing me from the constraints of 19th Century optics and alchemy. But is it "photography" if the process is not based on that medieval technology? And what does this all have to do with the Minox?



## Product Announcements

**John Watson**  
Vice President

Minox is moving forward in several ways. They are announcing two new items: a new "classic camera" series Hasselblad SWC, and a new more advanced digital camera, the MINOX DC 3211.

### Minox Classic Camera Hasselblad SWC (#60505)

"Two years after the presentation of the Classic Camera Leica IIIIf, we have extended our range of miniaturized classics, with a highlight of the medium format system: The MINOX Classic Camera Hasselblad SWC."

With a suggested retail of \$439, you should be able to find it on the street for around \$399. If you already own a Hassey, you will definitely want to add this to your collection.

In conjunction with this introduction a yet to be seen display case for your classic cameras is being

introduced at a list price of \$49 (#99601). Expect street prices of about \$40.



### MINOX DC 3211 (#60602)

Minox says "This camera has a resolution of 3.2 megapixel and 3x optical zoom. Like its predecessors, this camera is easy to handle and meets the expectations of the ambitious digital photographer, due to its excellent technical specifications."

Minox has had some success with their entry-level digital cameras, even gaining praises in many reviews when taken in that context. This new addition moves them into a different field and puts them squarely in the hunt for your digital dollars.

While not the highest resolution camera on the market, 3.2 megapixels are more than adequate for the vast majority of digital shooters, and the addition of a 3x optical zoom is a vast improvement over the limited digital zoom on the DC 3211's predecessors.

The down side? Well, your dealer can order you one right now, but expect to wait a while. It will be at least mid-August before the first models arrive. Fortunately Photokina in September will put a bit of pressure on to make sure the shelves are stocked as fast as possible.

The next six months to a year should be quite interesting for those who follow the activities of Minox. Several projects are being hinted at, but the lid is being kept on tight. As information becomes available, you will read it here first.

MHS

## Alternative Repair Services

Charles Trentelman  
Editor in Chief

Let's face it: Six months is too long to wait to get a camera fixed.

And yet, if you send it to the one repair facility everyone wants to use, Don Goldberg's highly acclaimed DAG Repair, that's what you may have to do. Don is good about rush jobs and emergencies, but for a simple repair, that's what it takes. He is snowed under and, by one report, even discouraging new work.

This is not Don's fault. He is extremely ethical, extremely good, and as a result has become the darling of Leica and Minox users worldwide. In their love they have deluged him with work. Doing official Minox USA warranty work has only made the situation worse.

Fortunately, there is nothing magic about Minox cameras. They are high performance machines with their quality built-in. Most just need cleaning and replacement of a few simple parts -- rubber shutter brakes on older models, for example, or busted shutter blades. It's not black magic. There are other shops, highly qualified, with repair technicians who service Minox alongside Leica, Rollei and others.

The editors have done a survey and found the following shops. We've even used a few of them. Before you add to Don's frustration, give them a call. If you know of any others, let us know and we'll add them to the list. Keep in mind that all prices are estimates or "typical" charges, and parts are always extra. No ethical repairman will tell you what a repair will cost, for sure, until he has the camera in hand.

By giving these people work you are encouraging them to keep repairing Minox cameras. This helps everyone, even Don. A repairman with nothing to fix is a repairman looking for another job. A dozen repairmen all fixing cameras, and returning them in good time, is better than one poor guy going nuts and contemplating early retirement.

{Continued on page 10}

# MINOX

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## North America:

### Essex Camera Service

100 Amor Ave.  
Carlstadt, NJ 07072

Phone: (201)-933-7272  
Fax: (201)-933-7647  
Email: [essexcam@cybernex.net](mailto:essexcam@cybernex.net)  
Web: [www.essexcamera.com](http://www.essexcamera.com)

Essex camera has been listed as an "old reliable" on the Sub Club web site for some time, and several members have commented on their good work and courteous service. They will do CLA and repair work on both the 35mm cameras and the 8 x 11 subminiature cameras, subject to the availability of any replacement parts that might be needed. The average turn around time for a CLA is under two weeks, with a price ranging from \$70 - \$140 for an 8 x 11 camera, and \$80 - \$120 for a 35mm model; bear in mind that these are estimated prices only, and are subject to change if the technician opens the camera and finds that it might need repair. They will always notify you first if that is the case. Essex would like you to know that they repair all kinds of photographic equipment. Contact Ian Lee.

### Now Camera Repair

11204 W. 77th St.  
Shawnee, KS 66214-1462  
Phone: (913) 248-9155  
Email: [cmcd@jfirewaterarts.com](mailto:cmcd@jfirewaterarts.com) or  
[cmcd@cameramedic.com](mailto:cmcd@cameramedic.com)  
Web: <http://www.cameramedic.com> or  
<http://www.jfirewaterarts.com/won/cmtp.html>

"We do repair Minox cameras.

"As you're probably all too aware, there aren't many parts for the older cameras around any longer. With the exception of critically machined / complex parts, we repair or fabricate many parts which are NLA.

"Unlike many shops which seem to get quite "fat" by flat rating repair charges, WE DON'T. We take each camera or problem on it's own merits / demerits, time, parts needed, and base our estimates on these factors.

Consequently, it isn't possible to give you a \$\$ estimate, or average. Whether old or new, the cost of repair could literally be any where from \$10.00 ~??? depending on what actually is involved.

"Our average turnaround time, depending on the work load of course, is 3~14 working days from time of estimate approval.

"Estimates are FREE, no repairs are undertaken without your approval via email [cmcd@cameramedic.com](mailto:cmcd@cameramedic.com)

### Cameraquest.com

Steve Gandy  
1336 Moorpark road  
P.O. Box 184  
Thousand Oaks, CA 91360-5224  
Phone: (818) 879-1968  
Email: [stephen@cameraquest.com](mailto:stephen@cameraquest.com)  
Web: [www.cameraquest.com](http://www.cameraquest.com)

Steve farms the equipment out to repairmen who are highly qualified, factory trained. He advertises a return time of one month, but that is a worst-case scenario. More typically it is 10 days or less.

Minox 9 mm camera overhauls \$175, 35mm cameras \$100, parts extra.

Steve also offers service on classic 35 mm rangefinder cameras. The editor can testify that he returned a Leica IIIIf in like-new working condition and turned it around in a week.

His web site is also a treasure-trove of information on just about every classic 35mm camera ever made, a massive reference source.

### Advance Camera

118 Columbus Avenue  
San Francisco, CA 94133  
Phone: (415) 772-9025  
Fax: (415) 772-9024  
Email: [dubinsky@yahoo.com](mailto:dubinsky@yahoo.com)  
Web: <http://www.camerarepair-sf.com>

"We continue to both service and repair all models of Minox cameras. A basic cleaning, lubrication and adjustment averages \$85-\$90 with a turn around time of 7-10 days. We offer free estimates on all repairs. Obviously damaged and inoperable cameras can take a little bit longer to repair, but we try and keep the wait under two weeks. Our services are by no means limited to the Minox. We have expertise in repairing Rollics, Leicas, Hasselblads and other high end cameras."

Contact Jacob Dubinsky.

**Strauss Photo-Technical Services, Inc.**

1240 Mount Olivet Road N.E.

Washington, D.C. 20022

Phone: (202) 529-3200

Fax: (202) 526-6465

Email: [SteveSPTS@aol.com](mailto:SteveSPTS@aol.com)Web: [www.SPTS.com](http://www.SPTS.com)

Hours: Monday - Friday: 9:00-5:00, Saturday 10-2

Strauss Photo-Technical Services, Inc., does CLA and repair work on 35mm Minox cameras only; they do no work on the 8 x 11 subminiature cameras. The average turn around time for a CLA is 10 days, with an average cost of \$90.00.

**Icamera**

1444 Franklin St., Oakland CA 94612

Phone: (510) 763-4226

Fax: (510) 763-4227

Email: [Oakland@icamera.com](mailto:Oakland@icamera.com)

also

**International Camera**

9 N. Wabash, Chicago, IL 60602

Phone: (312) 630-1017

Fax: (312) 630-1019

Email: [Support@icamera.com](mailto:Support@icamera.com)

Web:

<http://www.icamera.com/items/MenuPages/RepairFAQ.htm>

Icamera appears to be the California facility, while International Camera appears to be the Chicago, IL facility of the same organization. We have not received a response to our inquiry regarding the services they currently offer, but their web site does indicate that they handle Minox cameras. Give them a call.

**Canada:****Kindermann (Canada) Inc.**

Attn.: Gerry Smith - Service Department

361 Steelcase Road West, Unit #3

Markham, ON L3R 3V8

Phone: (905) 940-9262 or (905) 479-0167

Fax: (905) 479-9755

Email: [kindrman@istar.ca](mailto:kindrman@istar.ca) or[info@kindermann.ca](mailto:info@kindermann.ca)

"We still service Minox cameras and perform repair work on broken ones (all 35mm and 8x11mm types except "AF". The average turn-around time is 7-10 days, while average CLE costs \$95.00 US. We have been servicing Minox since the '50's and employ factory-trained technicians."

**Brighthouse Camera Repair**

#131-6151 Westminster Highway,

Richmond, BC, Canada,

V7C 4V4

Email: [info@brighthouse.com](mailto:info@brighthouse.com)Web: <http://www.brighthouse.com/pages/fulldir2.html>

Brighthouse can provide CLA service as needed to bring a Minox camera to "like new" condition. They will also do repair work on broken Minox cameras, and this includes both the 8 x 11 models and the full range of 35mm cameras (but please, note that they have no forks for the 35mm models). The average price for a CLA ranges from \$65 to \$95 (Canadian dollars), with an average 3 to 4 day turn around time after a free estimate is given. Brighthouse would like you to know that they did the warranty work for Minox in Canada for 10 years.

Contact Ken at:

**Vancam Services**

1666 West 8th Avenue,

Vancouver, B.C.,

Canada, V6J 1V4

Phone: 604-736-4113

Email: [info@vancam.com](mailto:info@vancam.com)Web: <http://www.vancam.com>**England:****MS Hobbies** (in Leicester)Email: [ms.hobbies@virgin.net](mailto:ms.hobbies@virgin.net)Web: <http://mshobbies.com> or<http://freespace.virgin.net/ms.hobbies>

Phone: 01264 737709 mainly evenings

Fax: 01264 737499

"To this day I have mainly aimed at providing a maintenance service for MS Hobbies customers who have cherished cameras they want to preserve. Since I operate as a hobby in my spare time there is a limit to the amount of work I can process, but saying that I have not had to turn any work away so far.

"I can provide service for 8x11 and 35mm, however I would not like to use the words 'like new' as there certain items which are not serviceable with out replacement. I would always try and maintain the cameras as original.

"I will attempt to repair all cameras from Riga's to TLX and the full range of 35mm Minox, including making replacement parts if necessary.

"As I do this as a hobby, the turn round time can vary depending of many factors including the number of cameras arriving. But tends to be a weekend to a couple of weeks. The cost of a CLA depends on the time taken but on average £25 - £75 plus postage"

#### Camera Repairs and Restoration

5 Downview, 751 Dunstable Road  
LUTON LU4 OHP  
UK

Phone / Fax: 01582-570395

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Web: <http://www.angelfire.com/biz/Leica/page2.html>

"At this moment in time my workload is such that I cannot accept any work till the end of 2002 for Minox sub-miniature or Minox 35 series cameras. My main business is with Leica R M and screwthread camera which I trained on in Wetzlar & Solms as well as Minox when it was based in Geissen W.Germany . I would be able to answer questions later on in the year when it is less busy."

## Japan:

#### Kanto Camera Service Co., Ltd.

1-49, Tsutsumine, Kawasaki-ku  
Kawasaki-shi, Kanagawa  
JAPAN 210-0026

Web: <http://www.kanto-cs.co.jp/shuuri/ippan/index.html>

Email: [info@kanto-cs.co.jp](mailto:info@kanto-cs.co.jp)

If you live in Japan, Kanto Camera Service Company, Ltd. can do wonders with your Minox. See the article "Word from Japan" in this issue for details.

Please note that if you do not live in Japan, Kanto Camera Service prefers not to accept Minox work from outside the country due to issues with language and shipping to and from foreign addresses.



## Word from Japan...

**D. Scott Young**

**Secretary / Treasurer**

In helping with some of the research for the article on Minox service facilities in this issue, I was fortunate to enter into email correspondence with Takeshi Uryu, of [Kanto Camera Service Company, Ltd.](#), of Japan. What emerged from this correspondence was some very interesting news for Minox owners, as well as owners of a variety of other cameras and photographic equipment.

Kanto Camera Service Company does do clean, lubrication and adjustment service, as well as repair on the full range of Minox cameras, including the 35mm models. Limitations on the extent of repair service they can offer for a particular camera is dependent upon the availability of parts, and the extent of the damage to the individual camera. They also do repair and service on a wide range of classic cameras, including Nikon, Canon, Leica, Rollei and Zeiss.

This is good news for Minox owners in Japan; however, if you live outside of Japan, you should use a Japanese representative to work on your behalf with the company: they do not want to take repair or service work from outside of the country due to issues with language, insurance, taxation, customs, etc. Therefore, a potential foreign customer should contact a friend in Japan, and mail the camera to them with clear instructions on what work they wish to have performed.

Kanto Camera Service Company is apparently well known to Japanese enthusiasts of Minox cameras there. They have, on their own, developed several specialized solutions to unique problems in response to demand from photographic enthusiasts, and Mr. Uryu was kind enough to share some of them with us.



**The V27 PX adapter replaces the discontinued PX-27 cells.**

One of solutions is the V27PX battery adapter sleeve for cameras requiring the now impossible to find PX27 battery. Kanto Camera Service Company has developed 2 different types, a voltage regulating and a non-regulating type of sleeve that which allows you to place 4 SR-43 or V386 button cell batteries (or their equivalent) into the sleeve, which is then inserted into the Minox

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camera (or any other camera that needs it). Of the two types, they recommend that Minox users purchase the non-regulating type of adapter (the voltage regulating type has a very cleverly designed regulation circuit imbedded right into the adapter itself, good for life).

Photographers in need of PX625 or PX13 batteries will be glad to know that Kanto also makes the MR-9 battery adapter (using a single S76 button cell), complete with a voltage regulating circuit imbedded in the adapter. They are justifiably proud of the fact that they've sold over 300,000 of these very high quality adapters in Japan, and are hoping that as word of its availability spreads in America, more photographers will find it to be an extremely useful solution to the nagging problem of where to find these discontinued batteries.



MR-50 and MR-52 models have also been developed by this unique camera service facility to meet the needs of photographers needing other types of batteries. The very nice feature of all of these adapters is that they are a one time purchase for the photographer: only the batteries in the adapter are disposed of when they die out, the adapter is retained for reuse over and over.

**Replace PX625 and PX13 cells with the MR-9 adapter.**

Another critical design feature of these adapters is the fact that they require absolutely no modification of any equipment in order to be used: they drop in exactly like the original battery they replace.

C.R.I.S. Camera Services is the American distributor of these highly useful products from Japan, and has shown them at several trade shows. C.R.I.S. Camera Services also carries the HM-4N battery adapter which allows you to use a PX28 and E544 battery to replace discontinued PX32 battery. You can purchase them directly from their web site at <http://www.criscam.com/mba.htm>.

Kantos Camera Service Company, Ltd. can be contacted at:

Kanto Camera Service Co., Ltd.  
1-49, Tsutsumine, Kawasaki-ku  
Kawasaki-shi, Kanagawa  
JAPAN 210-0026

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Email: [info@kanto-cs.co.jp](mailto:info@kanto-cs.co.jp)



## The Daily Minox 35's

Ernest Murphy

For years I've been a big fan of the Minox 35s. They're a lot like the earliest Leicas: pocketable, guess-focus 35mm cameras with a high-quality fixed lens. In some regards, though, the Minox have the early Leicas beat: They're a lot smaller and lighter and they have automated exposure. In the last 22 years, I've bought, used and sold lots of cameras, mostly SLRs and Leicas, but the one camera I've never gotten rid of is my 35GL.

And unlike a lot of point 'n' shoots, its exposure system is good enough for transparencies.

The Minox 35s, though, have a few quirks.

The 35mm focal length makes them ideal shooters at medium and long distances but tricky to use at the closest distances of around three feet, given the lack of a rangefinder. At close range, it pays to close down the aperture as much as possible, to maximize depth of field even though that means sacrificing shutter speed. And



unless you can measure distance carefully for those hand-held close shots, take several exposures to maximize your chances of getting a sharp picture.

As with Minox subminis, most of the time I use the camera's depth-of-field marks to set the focus at the hyperfocal distance for whatever aperture I've chosen for given light conditions (you pick the aperture, the camera picks the shutter speed).

My standard shooting practice is to make one quick exposure with the focus pre-set, then a second one with the lens refocused for actual subject distance. That means guessing the distance, but that's an easily acquired skill and a 35mm lens gives you latitude for error, especially if you have enough light to stop it down a few stops. Users of Minox subminis may have experience with this, but estimating distance may be something new for those accustomed to more modern cameras.

Some Minox 35s have a 2X switch, which doubles exposure for backlighted subjects. Users of models lacking the switch learn to double the exposure by partly blocking a metering window with a fingertip. When I tried it, I found a blurry fingertip in my pictures. Less-clumsy shooters, or those with smaller fingertips, may have better luck. You can also override the automatic



exposure feature by adjusting the ISO dial on the bottom of the camera.

The Minox 35's front element gets little or no flare protection from the surrounding plastic ring, so the optional sunshade should be used whenever possible even though it's awkward to open the front flap and attach it. Many Minox 35 shooters hold the camera upside down, when shooting in bright overhead sun so the front flap itself can act as a shade. That works very well.



Besides eliminating flare, the lens shade tends to give you more accurate exposures in bright light, since the metering windows are out there with the front element of the lens.

Hanging a Minox 35 around your neck, with the front flap dropped so you can shoot quickly, presents a problem: Opening the flap is what turns on the metering system and electronic shutter. Keeping it that way can wear down the battery.

The trick is to open the flap all the way, which pulls the lens into shooting position, then to close it just a fraction of an inch. That shuts off the electronics, and you can instantly extend the flap fully to shoot. If I have the camera around my neck, open, I always have

the lens shade in place. The shade keeps me from closing the flap more than the tiny amount needed to shut off the juice.

Like many folks, I dislike the so-called everready cases made for 35mm cameras, but I make an exception for the Minox 35. There are no strap lugs on the camera itself, and you can't hang one around your neck unless it's in a case, which has strap lugs. The leather case's top and front flap, held in place by a snap, is easily removed. I threw away the stiff plastic neck strap that came with the case and replaced it with a length of black bootlace, with the leather lens shade case permanently threaded on it. It's quite comfortable because the camera only weighs about six ounces.

One of the greatest advantages of these little 35s is the way they look. If you want a camera that makes you look like a professional shooter, this isn't it.

To most people, a Minox 35 looks like a plastic toy, but that makes it an ideal street shooter. For some reason, complete strangers don't seem to be intimidated when they see a cheesy little camera like their grandmother uses being pointed at them. The rather cludgy ratcheting noise of the film advance lever (two-stroke, like an early M3 Leica, but not anywhere as smooth) can reinforce



that perception. The shutter itself is very quiet - more so than a Leica, more so than a Minox submini.

The Minox 35s work well with the Minox collapsible tripod, by the way. The EL and GL models require a small attachment screwed onto the shutter release



Large format, soft cover, 193pp, illustrated b&w

### Minox - Marvel in Miniature By D. Scott Young

The first new book on Minox cameras in years, this delightful exploration of Walter Zapp's most enduring design triumph, the Minox 8 x 11 camera, shatters forever the myth of the Minox as solely a spy camera. A comprehensive history of the inventor, his cameras and the Minox camera are nicely set against the backdrop of world events, with comparative views of other subminiature cameras to clearly illustrate the place the Minox occupied in history, as well as its impact. Covering every model of Minox subminiature camera and most accessories through to the year 2000, this book will be an invaluable reference to both researcher and collector alike.

A personal interview and correspondence with the inventor himself, as well as reproductions of articles and letters written by Zapp provide the reader with a unique insight into his design philosophy, his motivation and his reaction to his camera earning an international reputation as one of the premier tools of the espionage trade.

New and experienced users of these cameras will relish the user's guide, complete with camera and accessory operating instructions and a primer on beginning photography aimed at new shooters. Every facet of photography, particularly Minox photography, from film selection and loading to darkroom processing and printing is clearly introduced.

The most reasonably priced Minox book to come along in years, **Minox - Marvel in Miniature** can be ordered directly from the publisher for US \$15.00, via the Internet at [www.1stbooks.com](http://www.1stbooks.com). It can be purchased in any fine book store such as [Barnes & Noble](#), [Waldenbooks](#), [B. Dalton](#) and others; simply inquire at the counter if it is not on the shelf. International orders can be handled by Petra Keller at [www.camerabooks.com](http://www.camerabooks.com).

ISBN 1-58721-068-1 Released June, 2000

button if you want to use the tripod's cable release. These two earliest models also lack a built-in self-timer, although you may be able to find one that screws over the shutter release. The shutter release is tripped by the slightest pressure, and so when I carry my 35 open in shooting position, I usually advance the film only before a shot, not after it, unless stealth is required, since the film advance is the only (relatively) noisy part of the camera.

When loading film, it's a good idea to use the technique beloved by Leica shooters: As you begin to advance a new roll, gently turn the folding rewind crank a few turns until resistance is felt. That all but guarantees that the camera's rather shallow sprocket teeth engage the film's perforations properly. I usually give the film advance lever two full strokes (one frame's worth) before replacing the camera's back to assure myself that the sprockets are engaging the film properly.

Why use a Minox 35? If you're a subminiature shooter, it can be your ultra-portable "large format" camera. Film quality has improved by leaps and bounds in the last decade. The same color print film that has given the Minox subminis a new lease on life, for example, Fuji Realia (Minox sells it for subminis as Color Pro 100), displays amazing resolution when put behind the extremely sharp lens of a Minox 35. Others swear by Kodak Gold 100. A Minox 35 is bigger and heavier than a submini, but for a 35mm camera with top-quality optics, it's tiny, light, and made to go everywhere you go.



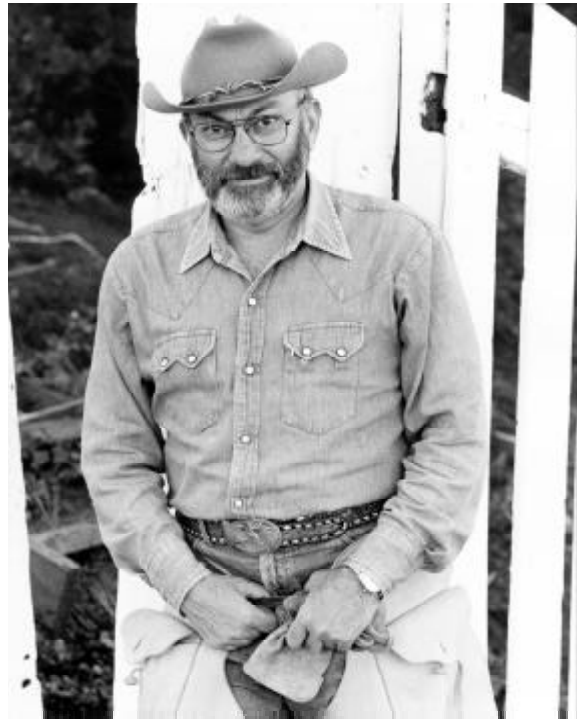
## Memories of a Master

William Meriwether

I first learned about Irv Feher's live Minox demonstrations in 1970 from [The Minox Manual](#) by Joseph D. Cooper, Chilton Book Company, p. 183.

The description was intriguing:

"The procedures which follow are based on the experience of Mr. Irwin Feher, a Minox representative who has put on dramatic demonstrations in camera stores throughout the United States in which he takes pictures, develops them in a few minutes, and makes prints in a portable darkroom, with all operations except printmaking carried out in daylight. The results with the slow ASA 12 Agepe film are spectacular."



Irv Feher in 1975

In 1972 I learned that Irv was coming to Ossens' Camera Store in Denver to give a live demonstration. I gathered up the best work and went down town to introduce myself and apply for a job. He liked the 11 X 14 prints and granted that I would perhaps make a satisfactory assistant but it would take a year at least to convince management. Two years later I was hired to assist Irv with his Minox road show.

We would fly into a city on Wednesday afternoons and set up shop in a camera store. This consisted of building the red Plexiglas darkroom with enlarger. It had black sleeves on the door for access to the enlarger and a stabilization processor. Test shots were taken with Minox B's and immediately developed in Minox tanks with Townco Monobath Developer. The processed film was dipped in an alcohol solution, wiped down, hung in a PVC tube and force dried with a hair dryer. The negatives were then placed in the enlarger and damp 5 X 7 prints from the stabilization processor would fall out onto the counter top every 30 seconds as the negatives were moved through the enlarger. Once everything was operating properly we would retire to the local Holiday Inn.

Breakfast was usually about 7 a.m. and Irv would be full of advice for the three-day performance that lay ahead. He was a dynamo of pent-up power. In the early 1970's he was in his mid 50's, of medium height and balding but

with tremendous physical strength, endurance and commanding presence. His manner of speaking was rapid, compelling and almost curt. You knew precisely what was expected of you and it was obvious that excuses for lack of attention would be met with severe salty verbalizations.

One of my first demos was at a large camera store in Detroit. All of the other camera company's representatives were set up around the show room, each with a small crowd of potential customers. I had just exposed a roll of film while hawking the little Minox to about two-dozen people. I accomplished this with the conviction and projection of a big top circus barker.

Then I fell silent as I developed the film, concentrating on time, temperature and agitation like a good tech-rep should. **WRONG!**

At that instant the Minolta rep came over and peeled off several from my crowd. Irv exploded into the arena like a rabid rodeo bull. He gripped my shoulder and bellowed out for all to hear "YOU SON OF A BITCH! DON'T YOU EVER LET ANOTHER SALESMAN TAKE YOUR CUSTOMERS AWAY! YOU KEEP TALKING!"

Irv was very helpful that way... always forthcoming with witty advice.

One of the more amusing routines that Irv loved to perform and I loved to observe would occur when a young professional photographer with a black Nikon over his shoulder would step up to the counter and challenge Irv to a shoot out. Well, you can't imagine how hysterically funny these sideshows became.

Irv had a long rapid-fire sequence of very tricky demonstration shots including close ups, shooting through tubes, bounce fill flash, telephoto, etc. The young pro's eyes would get as big as umbrellas as he slowly realized that this was no annual report. Rather, this was an old fashioned Wild West Annie Oakley blast 'em out of the saddle turkey shoot! They would fluster with their camera for three or four shots and then sprint for the street like a startled coyote.

Irv loved to work out west. He said the people were more friendly. He always traveled with his Stetson, Tony Lama boots and handmade leather chaps just in case a wild bronc needed bustin'.

We were working together at a camera store in Dallas when Irv noticed that I was working in street shoes. He made some gender references to my choice of foot wear and then instructed me that the customer standing before us owned the largest Cowboy Clothing store in all



**William Meriwether in 1975**

of Texas and that I was about to get my gender problem put right once and for all. So we took off for Fort Worth in a long black Lincoln for an enormous barbecue lunch and a cowboy boot buying binge. I bought a pair of rough out, high heeled, pinched up, pointy toed torture trotters and Irv got himself a new rolled brim Stetson. We must have looked a fright, a New York cowboy of Jewish extraction accompanied by a gimpy gaunt brown bearded hippie in street clothes with new booties. I hobbled around in exquisite agony for the rest of the week while Irv grinned with fatherly approval.

The last time I worked with Irv was in the mid 70's. We were the guests of a very successful dealer near the French Quarter in New Orleans. The demo was typical with good crowds and sales. Friday night, however, was unforgettably atypical. Everyone including employees and old customers were summoned to the dealers home after closing at about 8 p.m. An enormous dining room table was entirely covered with newspapers and each end were buttressed with tubs of iced beer. Kinky scenarios punctuated my naive bewilderment. Then huge heaps of cooked crawdads were piled on the table and everyone set-to like ravens at a landfill. No sterling silver mind you, just greasy fingers. It was a bacchanalian southern hospitality feast-fest. Saturday was a drag!

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Times began to get tough for the company and for Irv. Our employer, Berkey Marketing in Woodside New York, fell on hard times as camera companies put in place their own distribution networks. Irv's demonstrations were eliminated and the Minox had to sell itself once again.

The Minox has always been a bit expensive. As a consequence Irv was usually demonstrating the camera's many capabilities to professional people who acquired their Minox as an investment in, and as an example of, top-notch engineering. They often purchased accessories like tripods, binocular clamps, flash units etc., and they could be depended upon to show their prints when Irv returned to town.

Where is Irv Feher today? Rumors are hard to come by but sightings have been reported in both Montana and Idaho. It would be great if Irv could be enticed, or coerced, into providing us with just one more extravagantly choreographed Minox shoot out! I'll get some new boots and fire up the bar be.

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## Tech Tips

**D. Scott Young**

Secretary / Treasurer

**D**epth of Field (DOF) is simply the zone of sharpness in front of and behind the actual subject that is being focused on when taking a photograph. As an example, if you focused on a person at 6' away from you, you might find in the resulting photograph that not only is the person sharply in focus but everything 2 feet in front of them and up to 4 feet behind them is also sharply in focus (these numbers were simply made up for this example).

Many people never worry about DOF. Some, however, employ it creatively by manipulating the f-stop settings on their camera's lens.

Opening the lens diaphragm wide open gives you a very, very shallow DOF zone, while closing down to the smallest aperture gives you the most extended zone of sharp focus that lens is capable of.

Creative use of DOF includes the somewhat traditional informal portrait of a person outdoors, where a large aperture is used to deliberately throw the background out of focus, drawing the eye's attention to the sharply focused person. Another commonly seen application of DOF is shooting a long line of subjects (runners in a race strung out along the track, a long line of railway cars, etc.) where all of them from front to back seem to be in sharp focus: the photographer used a much smaller aperture to achieve this effect.

Users of 35mm Minox cameras have the ability to change their lens openings, giving them creative control over depth of field in their photographs.

Users of adjustable focus Minox 8 x 11 cameras also have a surprising degree of creative control over depth of field even though the cameras use fixed aperture lenses (F/5.6 on the EC and ECX models, F/3.5 on the others). The secret for them lies in using the engraved DOF markings on the focusing knob, and placing themselves at the proper distance from the subject to exercise creative control over DOF.

{Continued on page 20}

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### The "Snapshot Setting"

A great example of DOF in use on Minox 8 x 11 cameras is in using what has come to be known as the "snapshot setting." If you look on the camera body, just outside the focusing knob you see a small, curved line engraved with a small dot showing in the middle of the line. This is the DOF bracket and shows you the zone of sharp focus when you set focus at a particular distance with the focus knob by lining up the selected distance the small dot.

Between the 6-foot and Infinity setting (the number "8" laying on its side represents Infinity) on the focus knob is a red dot that indicates a distance of 12 feet. If you set the focus to 12feet and examine the DOF bracket, you see that the arms of the bracket extend from 6 feet to Infinity. Your camera is now set to show everything from 6 feet to Infinity as being in sharp focus. This is called the "snapshot setting" because it makes for very quick and convenient photography, particularly in fast breaking situations when you haven't time to fiddle with focus.

To employ DOF creatively with the 8 x 11 cameras, use the DOF bracket to determine what your sharp focus zone will be. Now, move the zone of focus closer or further from your subject by physically moving yourself. As an example, set the focus on your camera to 6 feet distance so the depth of field will be 4 feet to 11 feet. If you're photographing a person and move in closer to where they are positioned 4 feet from the camera, the background (up to 11 feet behind the subject) will be in focus in the resulting photograph.

Conversely, if you move 11 feet away then they will be sharply focused in the photograph while everything in the background will be thrown out of focus.

You can create shallower zones of focus by setting closer distances on your camera, i.e., setting focus at 3 feet on the camera gives you a relatively narrow zone of focus beginning at 2 feet, 5 inches and extending to 3 feet 9 inches. Placing a subject within this zone will throw more of the foreground and background out of focus. Remember that closer focusing distances give shallower zones of sharp focus, while longer distances give deeper zones of sharp focus.

Depth of field, and thoughtful use of it when taking photographs, is a valuable creative tool that will do much to enhance the quality of your pictures. Explore it today!

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### What Is It?

John Watson

Vice President



This little oddity was designed prior to the model U flash. At the time the B/C flash unit was introduced for the series A cameras, it was one of the smallest and most elegant solutions for a flash gun available. This created a demand for an adapter to allow it to be used on other cameras.

As you can tell in the photo, the one end is designed to take the B/C flash unit, with grooves to lock it on more securely. On the opposite end is a standard male cold shoe interface. Centered in the cold shoe face is a metal sleeve with a standard quarter inch thread to mount on a tripod. Between these two mounts, most camera configurations could be accommodated.

The flash was synchronized with the shutter via a standard polarized flash cable connected from the camera to the two slots shown on the side.

Made of Bakelite and metal, it is gray in color. Occasionally you will be fortunate enough to find one in its original gold box with black printing on it marked "Flash Adapter Shoe".

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**Minox Memo**

The Journal Of the Minox Historical  
Society  
Vol. 1, No. 3, Series 2

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