

Choose camera for planned use

by Joe Sloan
Battalion Reporter

After six months of saving John finally has enough money to buy a 35mm camera. He goes to a local store only to discover that dozens of types of cameras are available. He quickly becomes frustrated and doesn't know what to do.

The first thing a beginning photographer should do when looking for a 35mm camera is to determine his photography goals, said Howard Eilers, associate professor of communications at Texas A&M.

Eilers, who teaches photojournalism, said different cameras are made for different needs, and potential photographers will be overwhelmed with the choices if he doesn't know what he intends to do with his photography.

Rangefinders and single lens reflexes are the two types of 35mm cameras.

The rangefinder type is easier to carry and generally quicker to use, but the SLR is more versatile, Al LeNoir, president of Focus Photo and Camera Inc., said.

SLRs have features such as interchangeable lenses, exposure control, and accessories, while the rangefinder usually has a fixed lens and totally automatic exposure, he said.

If the buyer wants a compact camera to take snapshots with, the rangefinder is his best choice, LeNoir said, but many buyers will want the more capable SLR camera.

There also are two types of SLR cameras.

The first group includes automatic cameras which set the exposure controls for the user. These cameras are generally electronic and, while they are simple to operate, are complicated internally.

The other includes manual

cameras. These cameras are generally mechanical and more sturdy, but do not control for exposure.

Confused? Here are some arguments for and against the beginner buying either type of camera:

Manual cameras help the beginner understand photography. Virtually all professional photographers use manual cameras, Eilers said.

While automatic cameras do some of the work for the photographer, many of them are difficult to use manually, and some cannot be used manually at all. If the user wants to manipulate the exposure, it becomes difficult or impossible, he said.

A beginner should talk to someone who knows about photography equipment, Eilers said. This will help the beginner understand the differences between automatic and manual cameras, Eilers said.

Where to buy the camera is almost as important as the type of camera bought, he said.

A beginning photographer should go to a reputable camera store where his questions will be answered, Eilers said.

Mail order houses can save the buyer money, but many people complain about the way the houses conduct business, both Eilers and LeNoir said.

LeNoir said many mail order firms sell unwarranted equipment and will not take responsibility for broken products. The buyer also should not expect to receive batteries or carrying straps sometimes included in manufacturers' boxes. Instead, mail order firms sell these separately.

And, Eilers said, it is not unusual for an order to take several months to be received.

Once the beginner photographer has bought his camera, he has many options on how to

learn to use it.

A good camera store will help the beginner learn how to use his new camera, LeNoir said.

Eilers said today's cameras are built to be easy to understand,

and the problems encountered are likely to be composition and approaches to photography.

A photo club is a good way for a beginner to learn, since these organizations are composed of

people with the same interests as the beginning photographer, Eilers said. And they were all beginners once, and have learned to solve the problems beginners may experience, Eilers said.



Finish it yourself and save

by Kathy O'Connell
Battalion Reporter

Renting an apartment for the first time may be exciting, but there's always one big problem—how do you furnish it without putting yourself in debt for the next ten years?

Student apartment-dwellers face several options — ranging from costing big bucks to costing virtually nothing — when they decide how to furnish their apartment.

The first option is to rent an apartment that is already furnished. This is usually the easiest solution, but it's certainly not the cheapest.

A furnished apartment usually costs about \$50 more than unfurnished, and there's no guarantee that the upholstery will be pleasing to the eyes of the beholder. Besides, furnished apartments are usually the first ones leased, so they're

harder to come by.

Another option is to rent furniture, but this too can be expensive. Renting just the basics, such as a bed, dresser, kitchen table and chairs and sofa, can run as high as \$100 a month.

Probably the best option is to hunt flea markets or rummage around in the attic or garage for pieces of furniture that need refinishing. All it takes to make an old piece of furniture look new is time and a little elbow grease.

It's usually not too difficult to find an iron bed in a junk yard in need of a shiny coat of paint or a desk that needs refinishing.

There are several how-to booklets available that give step-by-step instructions on how to rejuvenate furniture. Many helpful and inexpensive books on furniture refinishing are usually avail-

able at the local bookstore or grocery store.

"Furniture Finishing and Refinishing," one of the Sunset Books, identifies types of woods and types of stains that are best for refinishing. It also gives instructions on how to finish and refinish all kinds of furniture.

If you can't find an old piece of furniture in need of a new look, how about investing in unfinished furniture?

Again, this can be expensive, but the satisfaction of knowing that you did it by yourself may be worth the cost.

Robbie Fletcher, co-owner of the Tin Barn, which sells unfinished furniture, said quite a few students want to buy raw wood furniture and finish it themselves. She said the more popular pieces are desks, book shelves, stereo entertainment centers and rocking chairs.

Fletcher said they also sell the stains for the furniture and will instruct the buyer on how to apply the finish. "It's really very easy to do," she said.

"One thing that amazes me," Fletcher said, "is that young people are looking for solid wood furniture instead of particle board. Most other people don't seem to know the difference, but maybe the young people have had more experience with it falling apart or have learned that if a screw comes out it can't be tightened."

"Even though it's more expensive, in the long run solid wood furniture is much better than particle board."

Prices of desks at the Tin Barn range from \$69.95 for a basic desk to \$450.00 for an oak roll-top desk. However, she said, most students prefer to stick to a smaller desk, because there usually isn't enough room in an apartment for something as large as a roll-top desk.