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**Newsletter - June 7, 2017**

This week we have two new features: **Photo of the Week** with contributions from readers like you; and **Tech Corner**, which will offer tips and advice about photo hardware such as cameras, lenses, computers and peripherals. We also begin a two-part series on **Backup Strategies**. And we'll recommend two excellent **books** on photography that any of you would be proud to own. We finish with a late breaking story about the Apple's new and very powerful **iMac Pro**. So, sit back, sip some coffee and have a read.

### **Photo of the Week – Donn Roberts**

*The Photo of the Week feature is your chance to share your photographs and get a proactive critique from me. Occasionally, I'll ask some of my pro photographer friends to offer critiques, too. Feel free to submit photographs via email. Please send jpegs at 1080 pixels, quality level of 8-10. -ed.*



La Paz, Bolivia 2002

My student, Donn Roberts, is a very accomplished photographer. For many years, Donn and his wife have traveled to the far corners of the earth, interacting with native cultures and taking thousands of photographs. As you may have read in last week's newsletter, we are now busy collaborating on making books of their trips.

Donn took this week's Photo of the Week in La Paz, Bolivia in 2002 and it shows Donn at his best; unobtrusive with a great eye for the human touch. The balance of this image is perfect with the corner lines of the building providing a focal point for the figure. All the angles and straight lines are counterpoints to the roundness of her hat and the platter of food. The color scheme is very dynamic with the reds of the food platter and the little embroidered flowers of her hat contrasting with the muted blues, greys and taupe. The woman's expression is extraordinary; composed and alive with the obvious need to sell her food while maintaining a worldly dignity.

## **TECH CORNER: Backup Strategies, Part 1:**

*In part 1 of this series, I discuss backups and introduce Darth Raider, my Drobo backup device. Part 2 will continue next week with a discussion about how and why backing up to the cloud has become a really good idea.*

Hard drives fail and it's not if, it's when. You've all heard this and, unfortunately, it's true. All those moving parts are going to wear out, on average in about four years. What you need is some insurance against data loss which is why there are backup plans that will, at the least, protect vital data from joining the ozone layer.

For some time, I've used a backup scheme that protects me both onsite and offsite. Onsite I use a raid array device made by Drobo known here at Casa Roberts as Darth Raider. A raid array consists of multiple hard drives connected in such a way that data is written across more than one of the drives. In effect, data is duplicated across all drives, in my case four 1T (terabyte) drives.

My Darth Raider enclosure has some elegant software built into it (firmware) that takes care of allocating the data and monitoring the health of my drives. When one drive started failing about two years ago, DR's monitor light turned from green to amber which was my cue to hustle down to Fry's and buy a new drive. As instructed, out came the old drive and in went the new and DR never missed a beat. It started formatting and reallocating my data at once. It took almost a day to do its thing but eventually all was well.

That's my onsite backup. I also have offsite backup. Each month, I copy all the data on the Darth Raider drives to an external 4T drive that I keep in my safe deposit box at the bank. The backup to this drive is incremental thanks to a service I use called Crashplan (more on Crashplan in Part 2). This means only new or changed data is added each month which makes backups quick and easy.

By the way, each of my hard drives, both those in my computers (I have both a PC and an iMac) and in Darth are standard high capacity drives known as HDD. They have spinning parts and do in fact wear out eventually. There are several new drives now coming on the market which use flash memory. They're called SSD (solid state drives). These drives are pricey and not available in large capacity yet. But I estimate that they will be the standard in the very near future. In fact, the latest Drobo systems have enclosures for SSD drives. For more about [Drobo, click here](#). And here's a comparison between [HDD and SSD drives](#).



Darth Raider showing the green monitor lights and the blue capacity lights.

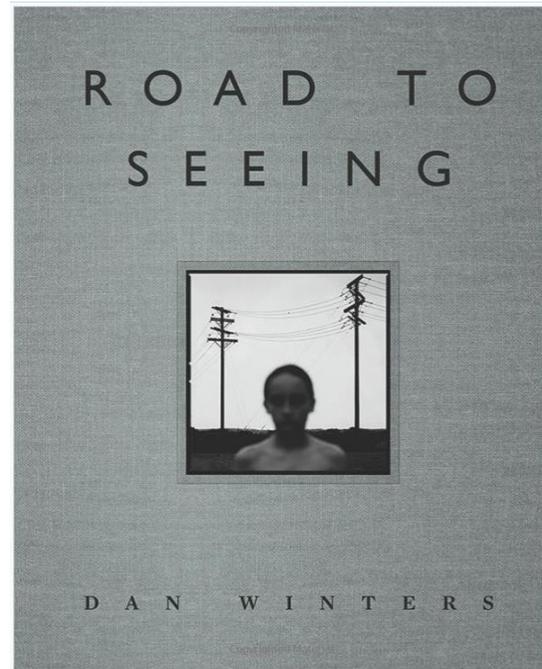
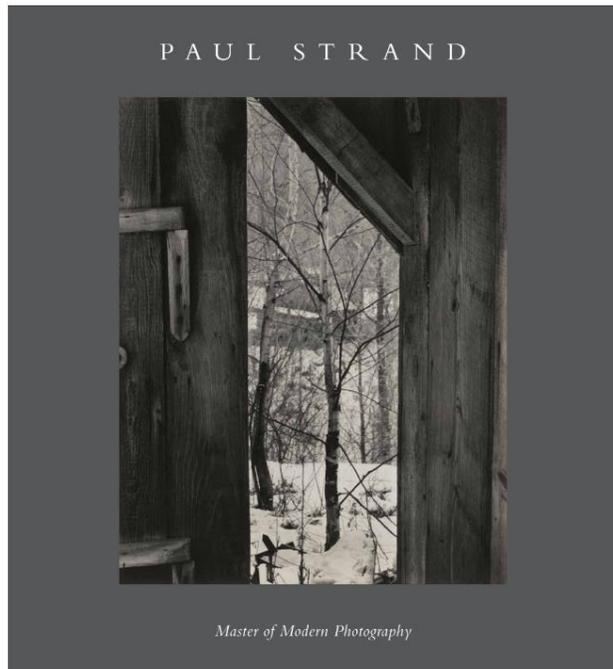
It's all well and good that there's hardware for backups but you also need software to make it all happen. There are many apps that will get the job done and none is more effective, at least for Mac users, than Apple's built-in app, Time Machine. Time Machine works seamlessly in the background quietly backing up all your data to a designated external drive connected to the Mac.

In the PC world, there are several great apps that perform backup tasks in much the same manner. Microsoft has an app called File History built into Windows 10 and it's pretty good though not as user friendly as Time Machine.

For my needs, Time Machine won't backup to the Drobo. This is due to Apple's OS (operating system) not recognizing PC networks. So instead I use [Crashplan](#)'s free app to backup both my iMac and my PC to Darth Raider. Crashplan has a default schedule that works for me and since it's working in the background I never notice it.

That's the current backup plan and while it may seem a little kludgy, it works to keep my images safe and secure. But as you'll see in Part 2, there's a new plan afoot. More on that next week.

## Books: Recommended Reading:



The best book(s) on photography I ever read was *The Daybooks of Edward Weston*, a two-volume set that the late Nancy Newhall edited for Aperture. They are long out of print but I see them occasionally on eBay and Amazon. Weston is one of my gods who along with Strand, Adams and Penn represents a high watermark of photographic excellence. To a man, they were all committed to the idea of photography as art and were masters of photographic technique.

Recently I acquired two new books that I admire a great deal and should provide you with hours of fascinating reading. The first is *Paul Strand: Master of Modern Photography* published by Yale University Press in 2015 and now being sold under a special arrangement with [The Online Photographer](#). Use the discount code YTOP2 to get it for \$39.

The second is Dan Winters' *Road to Seeing* from New Riders/Peachpit. It's on [Amazon](#).

Both books showcase not only some of the authors' outstanding images but also depict in their separate ways what the life of a photographer is all about. Winters relates his stories with a lot of how-to which is reminiscent of [Ansel Adams Examples: The Making of 40 Photographs](#). He has a clear voice and his descriptions of the process of photographing the great and near-great are captivating.

I know Paul Strand's images intimately having seen at least twenty exhibitions of his work over the years. He tended to print on the dark side to compensate for the elaborate and harsh lighting of early exhibition halls. So, it's a revelation to see the bright, lively prints produced by Yale in this handsome edition. Strand carried his liberalism on both sleeves, which alone is worth my admiration, but his photographs are loaded with the weight of eternal beauty often set in the harshest possible cultural conditions.

## New Gear: the iMac Pro



You're going to need a 2<sup>nd</sup> mortgage to buy one of these, Apple's newest and greatest, the [iMac Pro](#). Aimed specifically at photographers and graphic designers, this is a powerhouse of computational speed. It's just been released today, so there aren't any reviews yet but based on the specs, it sounds ideal. Now the problem becomes, do I get the new Fuji GFX, the Sony A9, the Hasselblad XiD, some new lenses...or a fancy new iMac? What to do, what to do...

That's it for this week. See you next time with the latest doings and musings.

*Jonny*