



Group *f*/5.6

c/o Ron Hammond
17164 NE 5th Place
Bellevue WA 98008
425.746.0165 email: ronfstop@mindspring.com

Where did Group *f*/5.6 come from and how does it work?

History:

The group sputtered into existence in March 1996. A very few people (that, by the way, are still active in the group) met and, after a few iterations, came up with goals for the group. With some evolution, these goals are still current. Following each is my assessment (in italics) of how we are doing.

Organization:

We had no intention of forming yet another camera club. We specifically did not want to have officers, elections, business meetings, standing committees, or competitions. We decided that monthly meetings would be a good place to start. One of the few rules is an edict against hardware talk during the meetings. Discussions of cameras, film, digital vs. film, etc. are ruthlessly suppressed until after the general meeting.

We hold the monthly meetings at East Shore Unitarian Church because it is easy. It is a relatively central location and two of the founding members are East Shore members and could facilitate our doing so. East Shore is very open to this kind of community outreach so it was not a hard sell. We pay a nominal sum (\$600 per year) to reimburse East Shore for the use of their facilities. East Shore is also home to a well-known local gallery, the oldest commercial gallery on the east side – more of that later.

Things get done by ad hoc subgroups. Someone has a good idea. Enough people are interested to make the idea viable. The originator becomes czar of that idea and spearheads it through.

By some quirk of fate, I became the group's immoderator – sort of keeping the meetings on track and general chief of stuff. If anybody else wants that position, please say so.

Exchange of information (aka: networking):

- shows seen or coming up
- books seen or read
- workshops attended or coming up
- competitions and show opportunities
- equipment, process, material experience
- WWW and Internet stuff

We have met nearly every month since March 1996. Our email newsletter has also appeared nearly every month since then. I doubt that any regular attendee or reader will quibble about the amount of information we have exchanged.

Mutual encouragement:

- discussion of work in progress
- spur of group to keep us working
- group participation in shows
- badger each other to hustle for individual shows
- establish our own gallery space

A small group, formed specifically to give those interested more time for review of new work, has met every other Monday for more than three years. Paul Butzi is the UberOberst of that group. A second such small group meets first and third Wednesday. David Simons is the UberOberst of that group. These groups are currently closed to new members but as soon as we have enough interested people (and yet another volunteer UberOberst) we will spawn another such group.

We have a drop-in work review meeting at East Shore Unitarian Church on the second Wednesday of each month (with a summer vacation in July and August). Ken Kaufmann is the Grand WorkMeister.

We have had many group shows. Several of our members have had individual shows and we have been well represented in juried competitions.

We have completed three group portfolios and another is in progress. Third portfolio "Water Above and Below" was the first show in the just-remodeled East Shore Gallery. A second showing of "Water Above and Below" (Katrina Kruse, czarina) will be at Kirkland Gallery in January. Fourth portfolio "Seeing Seattle" (Ron Hammond and Joe Budne, co-czars) will be at Issaquah Gallery in February.

We established a small, permanent gallery space in the administration building at East Shore in mid 1999. We paid for improving the lighting and painted the walls. Scott Peirce is the Grand GalleryMeister. When we opened that gallery, our agreement with East Shore was:

- *We curate and hang the shows,*
- *East Shore Gallery handles sales (at 30% commission)*
- *East Shore Gallery is the uncontested umpire in case of dispute about 'unacceptable' subject matter*

Response to the gallery has been overwhelmingly positive and we have every reason to believe that we are a permanent fixture. The gallery has just been expanded to give us about additional gallery space (at no cost to us).

In the fall of 1999 we sponsored a three-lecture series "Photography as Art" in conjunction with a photography show at the East Shore Gallery. It was very well attended and very well received. We will have another such series as soon as a czar declares him or herself.

Road trips:

- *First Thursday, Second Thursday*
- *Local shows*
- *Shooting trips*

Informal groups (even more informal than the main group) attend the local openings and take shooting trips

Size of group:

A large enough group – maybe 10 to 20 – such that a reasonable number will materialize for a given meeting.

We now have 45 names on the email list but several are inactive. Monthly meeting attendance is usually over 20 – large enough that we face a question as to whether our ostentatiously informal un-organization is still serving us. Attendance at the second-Wednesday work review is highly variable, typically 4 or 5. The small groups are both steady at 8 members.