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Catherine Pfau and her photography – something she loves to do!

Photographs are said to be wonderful memorabilia because they capture moments in time that are often too fleeting. Bolton, Massachusetts's photographer Catherine Pfau agrees. She is an expert in pregnancy and newborn photography.

Pfau has taken such images of an expecting mother dressed in a white dress; a father carefully holding his infant in his arms; a baby contently resting in a construction hat; and a different newborn asleep on a soft white blanket.

All of these situations are only temporary when you consider the short time span of a newborn before he or she grows into a toddler, Pfau said in a late February 2015 interview with *Wilderness House Literary Review*. But they are moments saved throughout the years of that newborn's life and perhaps beyond when the infant is photographed.

To Pfau, each photograph of each individual person, whether it is a pregnancy, a newborn, a parent with an infant, and/or family photograph, is different. "A lot of the time I have the same lighting, but it's always different because the people are different. And they like different things. I use different color wraps, different color blankets for the babies. So it's all really different, a lot of it is what the parents would really like.



"We go according to the colors in their house, what they might want for a portrait on the wall, or what colors the Mom would like. And it depends if you're outside. I do a lot of outside work and inside," she explained.

Pfau also uses props that either the parents contribute to the photo shoot or that she has in stock at her studio in Westford, Massachusetts. Usually the prop brought in by the parents "has a special meaning to them and their family, so I try to work that [prop into the session]," she said.

An interesting prop that Pfau has worked with includes a construction hat belonging to a father who is an ironworker. They also had a kerchief with Iron Worker's Local 7 on it and these two items were worked into the session. The baby was placed into the construction hat.

Another creative prop were some snowshoes that a mother requested Pfau to use in the photo session. The snowshoes once belonged to the mother's grandfather, or the newborn's great-grandfather. "They were the old-fashioned snowshoes that looked like big tennis racquets. The



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baby has the same middle name as the great-grandfather, so there was a connection there,” Pfau recalled.

Pfau and the mother placed the baby on the snowshoes to take pictures that will be enjoyed by the family. “I like to include something meaningful and the parents like that, too!” she smiled.

It is often a challenge to get the newborns ready for the photo session. “I like to get them to sleep. That’s a big challenge sometimes. It can take a long time. The session takes a few hours because the mothers have to feed them. They don’t have to be asleep really, as long as they are not screaming. So we try to get them happy and sleepy,” she said. Pfau first became seriously involved with photography in year 2000, prior to that she always

enjoyed family and travel photography. She decided to join online classes and a camera club. “I became obsessed with photography, and it was a lot of fun. I joined a camera club in Framingham, and it was nice because I met a lot of other photographers. It was very enjoyable. We went out and did things together and did different shoots,” Pfau recalled.

She did this activity for several years and even entered some photography competitions. She did well in the competitions and learned quite a bit about photography. She enjoyed the art of photography so much that she became interested in the field of professional photography. It took a while to decide which genre of photography to pursue.

“I would do events. I did headshots. I did landscape. And I did architecture. I thought I would do everything,” Pfau said.

In the meantime, Pfau put a call out to the triathlon team that she was on to see if anyone would like their photographs done. She wanted to gain experience. A friend hired Pfau to take pictures of her new granddaughter. The situation worked out well.

“Every few months I would go and take pictures of this little baby. And I loved it! It was so much fun,” she said. “It was really amazing to see the progression of this little girl. I just loved it. So I just kept doing it.”

Pfau realized that she would like to specialize in pregnancy and newborns through the photography sessions with her friend’s granddaughter as well as through taking photos of her own six grandchildren. She



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explained that she finds so much beauty and joy in this time of life and is able to share that with clients through her digital images.

She recommended that parents take pictures of pregnancy at 28 to 34 weeks. The best time to photograph a newborn is between one or two weeks after delivery. Other important first year marks are the smiling stage at around three months, the sitting stage which can occur sometime around six months, and then the standing stage which is closer to one year. There is so much development in the first year of life that Pfau wants to make sure to document it all.

The equipment that Pfau uses are a Canon DSLR camera; portable Alien Bees lighting; and, as mentioned earlier, props ranging from dresses to newborn hats to soft, fluffy blankets. She likes to take pictures in color, sometimes changing the hues to black and white through Adobe Photoshop. She uses Adobe Lightroom as a photo file organizer.

Like many communication industries, such as journalism, photography is in constant flux. Pfau isn't certain where the digital photography business is headed, but she does have some insights. She thinks that video is "coming into its own" and that "now everyone has an iPhone, has a digital camera. So it's hard for people to realize the importance of hiring a professional photographer because everybody takes pictures. But when you take [photos] with your iPhone, which are fun and quick, and then compare them to a professional photographer's work, you will notice a huge difference. Which ones would you want for your family legacy?" she wondered.

As for words of advice to aspiring photographers, Pfau suggested, "Take the time to learn it well. And for me that would be a never-ending process. But there are a lot of ways to learn and practice. Enjoy it! To me, it's just something that I love to do!"

