

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

John Szendy – Copiague High School Class of 1979
(Photography)

John Szendy graduated from Copiague High School and completed the Western Suffolk BOCES two-year photography program in 1979. As a high school student, John was interested in art and liked the creativity of set building, studio design and working with his hands. Insecure in his artistic abilities John pursued his second love, photography. A self-admitted goof, John credits both Noel Chisolm; retired photography teacher, and the photography curriculum itself in setting him in the right direction towards a career.

Beyond just snapping photos of friends, John worked with sophisticated equipment as well as shot and developed film in a quality photography laboratory. An advertisement in the *New York Times* and a professional portfolio got John started in the industry the day after his high school graduation!

Working as an assistant and delivery boy, John learned the business in a studio that worked with companies such as Entenmann's, J. C. Penney and Bulova. From there, John accepted a position as a junior photographer at another New York City studio. After two years he was calling the shots as the studio manager and falling in love with the sales manager, whom he later married. Together, the newlyweds blended their talents and started Color Track Incorporated as well as a family.

Their business thrived because of their innovative concept of "one-stop shopping". John and his wife would handle all the advertising needs of their customers by providing designing, photographing and printing services. After a few years, John was approached by a Chicago-based studio that had just landed an account with Sears. He decided to form a partnership with CGP or Color Graphic Press Incorporated and is now responsible for shooting the monthly *Craftsman Club* catalog distributed by Sears and Kmart Corporation. Like Color Track Incorporated beforehand, CGP provides "one-stop shopping" services and supports local businesses by functioning as an art, web design, photography and printing agency.

John believes his education at Western Suffolk BOCES was life-changing and allowed him to focus and build on a talent he did not know he had. Photography has enabled him to own and operate two studios, one in Manhattan and one in Chicago as well as own two homes, one on Long Island and one in Vermont. As a firm believer in the value of vocational education, John's daughter, a high school senior, is currently enrolled in Western Suffolk BOCES' Veterinary Technician program. John and his family are grateful for the quality education he received at Western Suffolk BOCES.