Close-Up

VictoriaCameraClub.ca
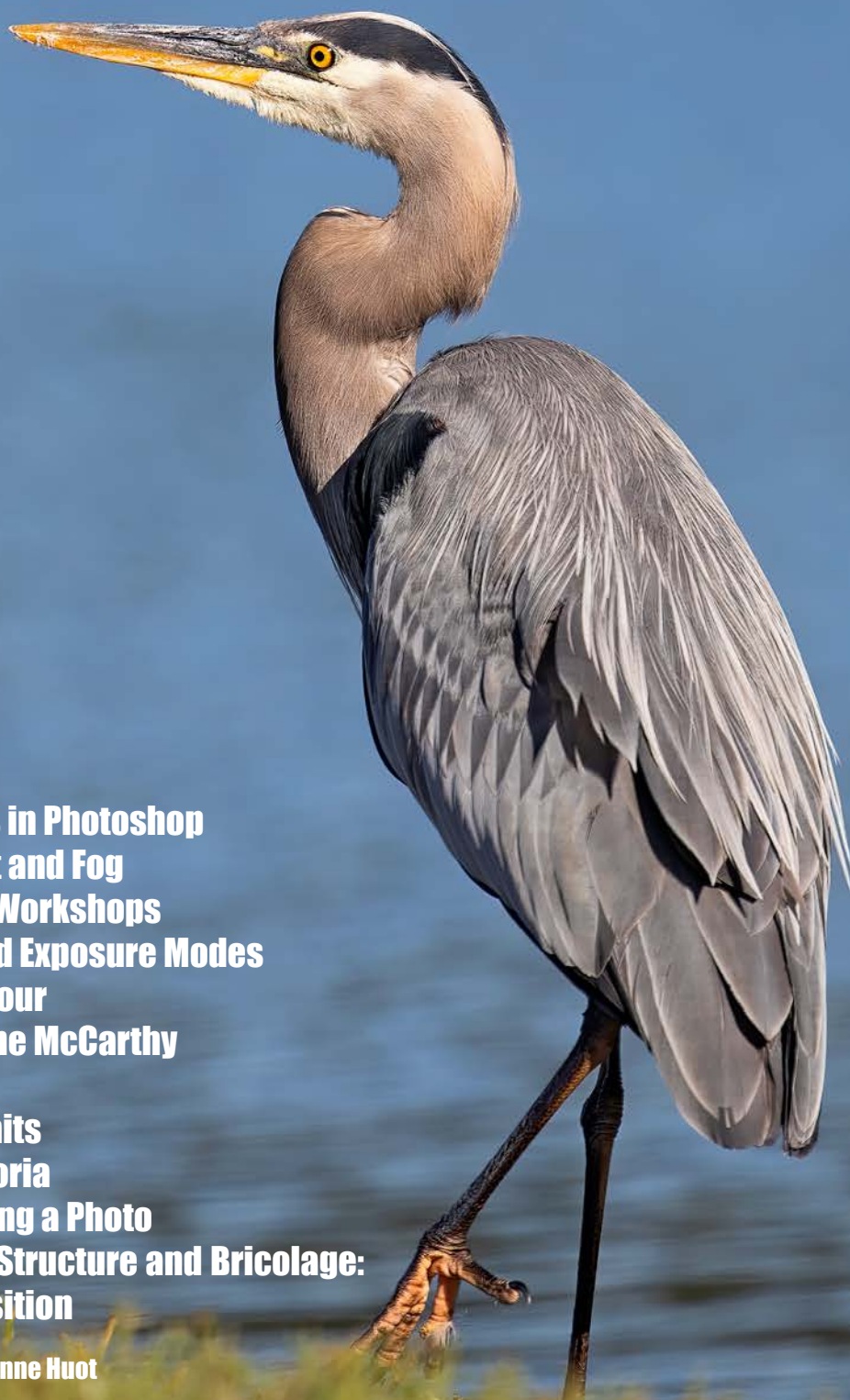
"Great Blue Heron" by Suzanne Huot

Victoria Camera Club

November 2020 Volume 73 Number 8

CONTINUING STUDIES@UVIC

Upcoming 2021 Photography and Visual Arts Courses

Planning is currently underway for our winter and spring community courses. We are pleased to offer the following online, live and interactive photography courses next term (details available on our website beginning in early December):

- Digital Photography: Shifting to Manual
- Documentary Photography: Creating the Personal Project
- iPhone/iPad Artography

We are also offering a limited number of face-to-face visual arts courses with small maximum numbers.

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University of Victoria

"Costa's Hummingbird" by Don Piper

Established in 1944, the Victoria Camera Club is a group of people who share the love of photography. We come together to appreciate each other's images, to learn, both from the feedback on our own images and from the images of others, and to exchange tips on how and where to take effective photographs. Our focus is on continuous learning. Our media include both film and digital and our expertise ranges from novice to master.

Events

We hold a number of events including:

- Three meetings a month from September to April (excluding December)
- Field trips
- Workshops
- Special Interest Groups (SIGs)
- Competitions within the Club and externally

Meetings begin at 7:00 PM, all meetings, workshops and SIG's are currently on-line only.

Membership

Annual fees include all workshops (except studio shoots and special events), meetings and all field trips unless travel/accommodation is involved. Annual fees are: Individual, $70; Family, $107; Student, $36 until Dec 31).

For current event information and locations please go to the website *victoriacameraclub.ca* where you can also read or download the colour version of *Close-Up*.

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2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2016, 2017,
2018, 2019 and 2020

CAPA Award-winning Newsletter 2015

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For additional information: please contact:
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What's Inside

The Victoria Camera Club is a member society of the Victoria Arts Council, Canadian Association for Photographic Arts (CAPA), and the Photographic Society of America (PSA).

Calendar

Our workshop and field trip program is too extensive to list in *Close-Up.* Please go to the calendar page on the website (*www.victoriacameraclub.ca*) for the latest details of all our workshops, field trips and meetings.

All meetings and workshops are on-line only until further notice. Please check the calendar for updates.

November 5th: Competition Night. September competitions results, The theme for November is "Still Life".

November 12th: Presentation Night. Memorable Flavours with Barbara Cameron.

November 19th: Members' Night. Featuring presentations of members' images, field trip slide shows, prints or short technical presentations.

Workshop Highlights: Lines and Curves, The New Nature Photography Visual Rhythm: Simplicity in Chaos,

Field Trip Highlights: Witty's Lagoon, Delta Birds.

Cover Image: "Great Blue Heron" by Suzanne Huot. When photographing at Esquimalt Lagoon one can be pretty sure to come across a graceful and very talented fisher, the Great Blue Heron. This was one of the herons that was not fishing for its breakfast in the lagoon but rather stalking among the grass and logs looking for a different treat. It was most likely a small mouse or vole that commonly live in this type of habitat.

The heron was kind enough to simply stand still on one leg poised and ready to take the next step in his hunt for food. This gave me enough time to capture him in pixels! As it was early in the morning he was in some favourable light. This prevented the white feathers around his head from being overexposed which is often a result when the sun is higher in the sky.

This handsome bird can be found all over North America. According to North American Native traditions the Great Blue Heron brings messages of self-determination and self-reliance as well as an ability to progress. When Native American people on the Northwest coast see a heron as they prepare to go fishing, they take this as a positive sign that they will be successful with a plentiful catch in store for them.

The Great Blue Heron is a prominent bird featured in many Coast Salish Legends and will often be seen on Totem Pole carvings.

President's Message

We have had a few months to adjust to our meetings and workshops being online and I think that we have done a fantastic job. It has even given us new opportunities for the Club to participate in. One opportunity is being a part of the BC Inter-club Speaker Series. Four clubs are organizing a speaker from within Canada starting with VCC hosting Rick Martin in November. The other speakers will be in January, March and May with VCC using our Zoom account (many thanks to CAPA Pacific Zone for funding the Zoom upgrade so clubs on the west coast can participate). The speaker cost will be divided to allow smaller clubs the opportunity to see speakers they wouldn't normally be able to bring to their own club.

I am grateful again this year to be working with an exceptional group on the executive. We also encourage our members to present us with innovative and creative ideas. An example of this is the newly formed Mobile Photography SIG. Thank you Graham Budd for your leadership in this new opportunity. Stay tuned for some more initiatives in the coming months.

Although I featured this information in my message this time last year, I believe it should be repeated again, especially as most of us will not travel outside of British Columbia this year due to the pandemic. While researching information for wildlife safety issues I came across a great blog on Discover Vancouver Island: *discovervancouverisland.com/blog/bear-wolf-cougar-safety*. Have a look for some great tips:

- Never come between a mom and her babies
- Never approach them, they need their space
- Do not pack smelly foods
- Use animal-safe garbage and food storage bins
- Do not walk alone at night or in the forest without a bear bell
- Always keep dogs on a leash
- Be prepared for an encounter with bears or cougars
- Prepare your bear spray
- If in a group, stick together to seem larger
- Determine three things: the kind of bear, if it has cubs and if it is protecting a food source
- Speak slowly in a calm tone
- Do not run or turn your back, back away slowly, keep an eye on the animal and allow for a clear exit
- Maintain eye contact if the animal is watching you
- Look as large as possible

We all want to capture amazing photos but remember that we share the forest, and we need to respect the animals and be safe.

Teri VanWell, President

Refining Selections in Photoshop

by Kirk Schwartz

Creating and refining a selection or a mask in Photoshop are not tasks to be undertaken lightly. In last month's article I talked about how Photoshop is making selecting and masking easier with Artificial Intelligence (AI). Still, if we wish to create images and scenes by compositing we are going to have to do some very meticulous work.

So, let's get started with small steps and practical processes. Keep in mind that generating a good selection for your mask is very important. Choose an image with a clean background, good lighting and strong foreground to background separation. That being said, unless you have planned a shoot specifically for your project it is unlikely you will get that "perfect for compositing image".

One of the big limitations of the Subject/Object selection AI is its inability to discriminate between similarly-coloured foregrounds and backgrounds. When AI fails you have to do the tedious work. This may well mean that you will have to use the pen tool to accurately create a path that you then turn into a selection and a mask. Mastering the pen tool to create and refine your selection is really not that difficult and it will make other refinements easier. What it really requires is painstaking manual work. In this video from the PHLEARN channel you can see what it takes to separate a brown gingerbread man (foreground) from the brown table underneath (background): *youtu. be/cFrMKrIMT2s*.

Another caution is that the process of refining your selection is different for the parts of images with complicated edges like hair and trees. You may find that you will have better success with some images by refining the selection in two steps. You can use the subject select, brush and quick select tools to clean up and add or subtract any selection errors then use the Global Refinement tools to clean up those edges. Since the Global Refinement tools interfere with the Refine Edge Brush Tool you will need to output your mask with the Global Refinements in place, then reopen the Select and Mask panel to refine the hair. This all sounds more complicated that it is so this video from Jesús Ramirez at the Photoshop Training Channel will guide you through the process: *youtube.com/watch?v=KyU-qVF4hsjw*.

Hair is a problem without an easy solution. Note that in this image the AI has failed to cleanly select the flyaway strands of the red hair and that there are many other parts of the image that require work. There are

"Simple Image"

many techniques that you can use to make your selection better but in the end you may have to fake some of it. By "fake it" I mean using a custom brush, pencil tool or another to make your image realistic. You may have to learn how to make a custom brush, a skill that will serve you well in other compositing tasks. Jesús Ramirez from the Photoshop Training Channel guides us through this process in the video "Advanced Hair Selection": *youtu.be/qV1DAf5cYXE*.

Other techniques for creating and refining your selection include making a selection using the RGB channels and using the "Blend If" function. Here again Jesús Ramirez from the Photoshop Training Channel guides us through these processes and addresses creating a custom brush to "fake it" in particularly difficult instances in the video "3 Powerful Techniques to Cut Out Trees in Photoshop": *youtube/RGMNQkT8sOM*.

Then, finally, when you have output your mask you still have all the regular Photoshop tools to make it perfect. Remember, when working directly on your mask, white reveals black conceals.

Brooke Shaden is one of my favourite fine-art compositors. She is very open about sharing her processing and work from developing an idea, to photographing the images and assets to the editing process that results in a well-developed professional fine-art work. I would encourage you to take a look at her playlist, "The Shooting and Photoshop Process": *youtube.com/ playlist?list=PL4sI2mN23Vq6cyeZvs0jm9e-ljDrbKEV0* for both learning and inspiration.

Photographing Mist and Fog

by Neil Boyle

Photography when the air isn't clear can produce very attractive effects. The common causes for this lack of clarity include fog, mist, haze, smog, smoke, vog and dust. Clouds, fog and mist are water droplets that have condensed in the air and differ mainly by how far you can see. Haze is the reflection off air pollution and vog results from a nearby volcano releasing particles and sulphur dioxide which react with oxygen, moisture and sunlight. Each of these has a different photographic look and for emotional and aesthetic reasons, we mostly photograph mist and fog (not to forget the gorgeous effects of forest fire smoke on sunsets and sunrises). Mist is thinner than fog and more ethereal and comes and goes more quickly. For simplicity in this article, I will use the word mist to include fog.

"Steptoe Butte, Palouse, WA"

Particles in the air have several effects on photographs. Properly done, the emotional impact can add mood, drama and mystery, or it can be dreamy or melancholy. Mist acts as a giant diffuser and so reduces contrast, colour and saturation, and shadows are much softer. These diffusion effects increase with distance. An element further from the camera appears to be in denser mist; when closer to the camera, the element appears in front of the mist. Haze in the distance in a photograph indicates depth; more mist in the distance increases this effect. Tonal diversity of an image is increased when some elements are closer (higher tonal diversity) and some are further (lower).

The clues to indicate depth in a misty image are reduced, increasing the value of framing, layering, leading lines, perspective, juxtaposing (positioning a subject both in and out of the mist) and a strong foreground. Water droplets often occur in mist (on branches, grass,

spider webs) and are often larger and longer-lasting than droplets from dew, making excellent foreground elements. Shooting towards a light source which is just out of sight will often show rays of light forming leading lines towards a back-lit silhouette. If the light source is in the line of sight, the glow is softened by the mist and the light colour can have a major effect on the mood of the image. If desired, a small aperture can produce a star-burst effect on a visible light source. A dark silhouette against mist without lights mimics shooting against a giant soft box. Smoke makes sunrise and sunset light warmer and redder.

"Mountain View Cemetery, Vancouver, BC"

Mist enhances many genres of photography. Silhouettes requiring a back-lit, dark subject work well and can add a layer of mystery to street photography or simplicity to a wildlife shot. The lower contrast hiding detail and texture and larger areas of white (or negative) space, work well with minimalist photography. Mist lit by moonlight or streetlights enhances night shots and sunrises and sunsets back-light mist beautifully. While a short shutter speed will show the details of the mist, a long exposure shot (anything longer than half a second) softens the mist and may enhance its effect on the image.

Mist occurs when warm moist air meets cool air, which is most common in spring and fall. It is more likely to occur in the evening and last into the next day, before burning off in the sun. We have the lucky situation of living on the coast where warm land air and cool sea air produce more frequent misty days. A good weather app may predict mist, and watch especially for clear, cool nights. Mist looks quite different when shot from outside compared to being in it, and some striking shots have been made looking down on it with elements rising out of the mist.

Compared to the flatter and duller daytime shots of mist, those at night, or in the blue or golden hours,

benefit from the colours of the light. The sun burning through mist can make beautiful shadows and useful leading lines. Early morning shots are statistically most likely to produce the magic combination of light and mist. Daytime misty shots have potential, and the things that make a monochrome shot work also apply.

The gear required for mist photography is similar to that for landscapes. A few prime lenses from wide-angle to short telephoto, or one or two zooms in that range will suffice. There is a risk of condensation on inner lens elements when changing lenses in a moist environment so consider just two lenses on separate bodies. A tripod vastly increases photographic opportunities. A circular polarizing filter can reduce glare from bright light sources and neutral density filters offer longer shutter speeds.

"Trial Island, Oak Bay, BC"

There are some technical aspects to photographing mist and fog. White balance may not work well, shooting RAW will maximize the amount of adjustment available. The denser the mist, the harder it is for auto-focus to work and manual focus may be needed. Cameras tend to under-expose expanses of white (snow, sand, mist) so compensate by over-exposing 1 to 2 stops, or shoot to the right and adjust in post-processing. Don't blow out the highlights.

Depth-of-field is less important in misty images but if the focus is hard to set, decrease the aperture to increase the depth-of-field making it more likely the important elements of the image will have the required sharpness.

With small apertures watch for star-bursts around bright lights. Shutter speed dictates the appearance of the mist, with faster speeds showing details and slower emphasizing creaminess, sometimes making the mist appear denser. Since the aperture and shutter speed are chosen for good photographic reasons that leaves only ISO to affect exposure. A picture with low contrast can handle the increased noise of a higher ISO value very well.

A problem easily missed in the excitement of a potentially beautiful shot is condensation on the lens. This worsens as the mist gets denser (the humidity rises) and is worse on a lens that is colder than the air. It can be minimized, but not eliminated, by warming the lens to the ambient temperature, leaving the camera and lens in a sealed plastic bag outside until it warms up. Remember to check that you have a lens cloth available.

"Juan de Fuca Strait"

Mist is made up of continually-changing subtle variations in tone and texture. These beautiful, delicate aspects can easily be lost by too much manipulation. Remember, a misty image is flat and that means that the blacks and whites in the histogram are not used and so the histogram looks bunched in the middle. If you increase the blacks and whites to use the whole histogram the misty effect disappears. Of course, if you have exposed to the right or over-exposed the histogram will be bunched at the right. If there is a dark silhouette in the image there will be blacks in the histogram. Remember, a silhouette doesn't need to be black just darker than its surroundings.

A common workflow starts by setting the black point, not quite at the left side of the histogram, to make the darks look realistic (darker if there is a silhouette), and the white point not quite at the right, to make the highlights in the image close to white. Then play with the shadows and mid-tones, gently, until the image has just enough "pop". For more control use levels and curves to manipulate these. Once these are set, the contrast, clarity, sharpness and dehaze can be explored for their general effects on the image followed by saturation/vibrance.

These effects can also be applied locally as nearer elements may need more of these effects. Be careful to maintain the loss of colour, contrast and tonal range as elements are further away.

It is fall, we are on the coast, we may still have wood smoke colouring our sunsets and we all have the gear. Time to make use of the next coastal mist.

External Presenter Workshops

by Jim Fowler

One of the benefits of Covid-19 is that world-renowned photographers, rather than sitting at home in isolation, are taking advantage of technology and making their experience and enthusiasm available to a wider audience. The Workshop Committee has teamed up with other clubs to bring three presenters in the month of November who in "normal" times would be simply too expensive for the Club to try to bring to Victoria. Zoom makes this possible.

On November 2nd, Adam Gibbs will present "Simplicity in Chaos". His interest in the outdoors began in England when he joined Scouting. After moving to Canada he started rock-climbing and para-gliding. Adam completed the Langara College's "Professional Photography" two-year diploma program and then became the principal photographer for Cornwall Publishing, publishers of Gardens West, Gardens East and Gardens Central. His published work includes over 200 covers, as well as work in Planet Earth (BBC), Nature's Best, Outdoor Photographer, BC Magazine, and Outdoor Photography Canada magazines.

Adam doesn't go outside in order to take photographs. Rather, he loves to be outside and he considers photography an extension of his outdoor experience. He is drawn by the outdoors.

You may have seen Adam's famous "Fairy Bonsai" picture of the young tree growing out of a stump in Fairy Lake near Port Renfrew, or his "Lonely Doug" photo of a standing Douglas Fir in a clear-cut. Adam has photographed extensively in B.C. and around the world.

His presentation will emphasize light and composition. Light is critical to photography and we must learn what to look for. Composition is a way of guiding where the viewer looks in the photograph to ensure they see the most important elements. Those who enjoy both nature and landscape photography, and those who appreciate the importance of light and composition will likely particularly enjoy this presentation.

On November 23rd, Richard Martin will present "Visual Rhythm: Lines and Curves." He has also photographed all over the world. Richard describes his photography as a "celebration of the visual world". He says, "It originates straight from the heart, honest and direct, inspired by colour, texture and light I make photographs to express feelings surrounding my experiences, searching for visual equivalents to those feelings." A native of Kingston, Ontario, his subjects include people, architecture, street photography and nature. He has published eBooks and guides on a wide variety of subjects, see *richardmartinphoto.com/subscribe* for availability. He has offered workshops and tours around the world. He uses a wide variety of techniques from ICM, macro, long exposure and "Phoneography".

This particular workshop will explore lines and curves, the impact they have and the variations they present depending on shape, length, and interaction with light and colour. Richard starts with a strong sense of composition but he seeks to evoke an emotional response from the viewer. With an emphasis on shape and pattern you will find Richard's work both stimulating and inspiring. Line is an important concept in composition and Richard will explore it in great detail.

Lastly, on November 30th, Lisa Langell will present, "The New Nature Photography". A trained psychologist with a strong background in educational psychology, resource training and design, Lisa brings a unique perspective to photographing nature and wildlife. Most wildlife photographers, she says, still think in terms of coffee table books and calendars for their photography. Lisa wants her photos to have a strength and simplicity of design that will encourage people to incorporate her images as appropriate design elements for home and office.

Lisa is very interested in the ongoing evolution of photography from its origins as an accurate record to evolving artistic expression. Her new nature photographs have emphasized natural light, white backgrounds and motion blur. Artistic design predominates over biological record. She believes that, "Great photography shouldn't just document what you saw, it should capture how you experienced the moment."

To understand the difference between "classic" wildlife photography and the new, artistic wildlife photography, imagine a photographer waiting hours with a long lens, hoping to capture that perfect moment when the perfect heron flings its prey into swallowing position, and then look on the internet to see how many perfect heron images there are, and ask, "Does the world need another great blue heron image?" Instead, think about the end point. Imagine an environment in which the occupant of a home or office wants something to add interest in a way that matches the environment of the bedroom, office, kitchen or whatever room you care to imagine. Consider that a magazine, while prestigious, may be gone in a month, but a decorated home is lived in year after year.

Check the Club calendar for these and other workshops and be sure to make a note of registration opening dates.

Tech Tips: Focus and Exposure Modes

by Richard James

Your camera probably has several settings controlling which autofocus points are used. Since this function (and its name) is very specific to the camera model I'm going to talk about the settings in a general way.

Focus mode: In general there are at least three focusing modes: manual, continuous autofocus and single-point autofocus. The difference between continuous and single-point is that with continuous autofocus the camera tracks a moving object with the shutter partially depressed but with single-point autofocus it will lock on the subject and stay focused at that distance. So, if you're shooting flying birds you want to use continuous autofocus to properly track the moving subject.

Focus area modes: This is where you pick the point in the image that you want to focus on. Choices may include single-point, various combinations of points moving out from the centre of the frame, a group setting and a tracking focus setting. Single-point focus is simple, you move the focusing mark in the viewfinder over the part of the image that you want to focus on and that's it.

How the others behave is camera dependent. You can move the groups around to where you want them and place the middle sensor of the group over the part of the image that you want to focus on.

If your camera supports dynamic focusing then the camera may select one of the other focus points in the group to follow the subject. In this way you can set a narrow (maybe nine-point) or a wider group up to all sensors.

There is another "group" setting that behaves rather differently. This is a small group that you can position anywhere in the image. The camera will automatically focus on what it thinks you want within this box. Depending on the camera this may be "closest object" within the box which makes this ideal for shooting moving subjects with clear contrast with the background (flying birds).

Some cameras support focus tracking which uses colour or facial identification. Information is used about the subject area under the selected focus point and if it moves it gets tracked using any of the other focus points.

Focus sensor types: Two types of focus sensors are used in cameras. Line sensors work with either horizontal or vertical contrast while cross sensors work with both directions simultaniously. Which of these applies to each focus point is manufacturer dependent.

Your camera probably has several settings controlling exposure metering. These would include spot, highlight-weighted, centre-weighted and matrix/evaluative.

Spot metering: Spot is simple, it measures the luminance of the subject underneath the selected focus point. This may be manually selected or selected by the camera depending on the focus area mode that you choose.

Highlight-weighted: This means the camera attempts to avoid blown highlights at the expense of darker areas so it works well for bright subjects against a dark background.

Centre-weighted: This concentrates on what is in the "middle" of the image which might be a face in a portrait or back-lit subjects in bright light such as snow or sand.

Matrix/evaluative metering: This is the most sophisticated mode where the exposure data is compared to a database of images with various luminance patterns and a "correct exposure" for that pattern.

Neutral grey: Exposure meters are calibrated so that a "middle grey" subject (18% reflectance) will give an exposure that is about 2½ stops below saturation. So, if you are using the single-point or centre-weighted metering modes the camera will set the exposure so that this tone reproduces as 18% grey.

If you are using matrix/evaluative metering it will set the average to this value. Think about this carefully. If the focus point is in the brightest part of the image then it is going to be under exposed, and vice versa if it is in a darker part. Highlight- or centre-weighting and matrix/evaluative metering generally overcome this problem.

Exposure compensation: This allows you to adjust exposure by a fixed amount for each frame until you reset it to zero. If you look at the histogram and the highlight warning for the image and you decide that the auto-exposure selected is not what you want you can use this quick way to adjust it.

Shutter and flash exposure compensation are separate controls. It's quite easy to get into conflicting situations unless you adjust shutter settings on the camera and the flash settings on the flash units. Exposure compensation is problematic with matrix/evaluative metering unless you are shooting on a tripod as even minor changes in framing can change the selected exposure.

Finally, there's lots to learn about these controls and since they are different for each camera brand and model you really need to review the manual or better, a good in-depth book explaining how it really works.

January Theme: Group of Seven

by Sharon Moysey

Merriam-Webster defines homage as "something that shows respect or attests to the worth or influence of another". Let's celebrate our collective Canadian artistic heritage with images inspired by the Group of Seven.

The Group of Seven artists were the most recognized of their day, even influencing Victoria's own Emily Carr. Although she was not a member, she enjoyed their support and was welcomed into their ranks. One hundred years later, their work is arguably the most identifiable genre of Canadian art.
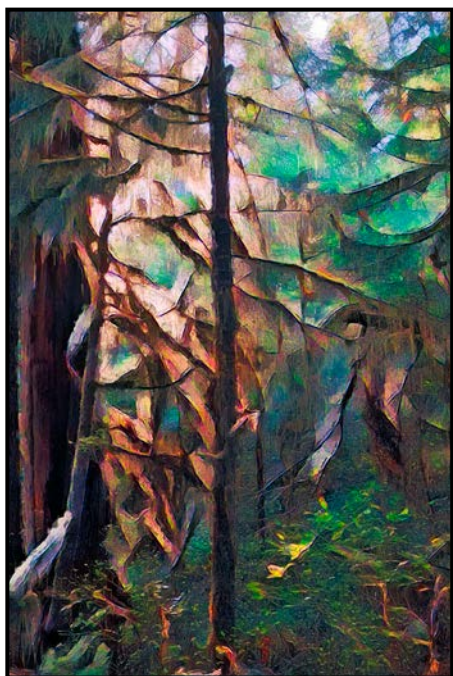
"Emily's Forest" by Richard James

They used bright colours and bold patterns to depict the great Canadian outdoors. Later works were less representational moving to simpler and nearly monochromatic forms. You can view some of their paintings here: *groupofsevenart.com*.

You can use any technique or post-processing so you can fashion your image in whatever creative manner you choose. It's a good excuse to visit your favourite landscape spot, while channelling your inner A. Y. Jackson.

Lawren Harris said, "No man can roam or inhabit the Canadian North without it affecting him, and the artist, because of his constant habit of awareness and his discipline in expression, is perhaps more understanding of its moods and spirit than others are". I expect you'd agree that this applies equally to photographers!

September Competition Judges

We sincerely thank our external judges for the September Intermediate and Advanced level competitions, Bill Buchanan, Rick Leche, Dan Jones, Gregg Eligh, Michael Breakey and Ed Moniz. We also extend thanks to our in-house judges of all the novice competitions and intermediate prints: Pam Irvine, Lorna Zaback, Leah Gray, Nicci Tyndall and Richard Webber. Images and judges' comments are available at: *victoriacameraclub. ca/Competitions/CompetitionResults.aspx.*

Bill Buchanan: Nature. Bill has been involved in photography almost his entire life. His passion for teaching it has been fostered by being chairman of the Photo Guild of Detroit's Annual Photographic Seminar. Among his considerable accomplishments, in 2012 Bill received the Stanley B. Ashbrook, Jr. Memorial Award for his contributions to digital photography and PSA.

Rick Leche: Open. Rick currently lives in Black Creek, BC and is an avid photographer of anything or everything. He never leaves home without his Canon gear whether it is traveling around the world or around the Comox Valley.

Dan Jones: Theme, Play. Dan has been a member of the Camera Club of Ottawa for 23 years and has achieved the level of Master Photographer. As a part time professional photographer his work includes stock photo fine-art prints, and he enjoys judging for a variety of photo clubs.

Gregg Eligh: People. Gregg is a good friend to the Club and is well known around the Club for his judging over the years and his interesting workshops. He currently teaches continuing education photography courses at Camosun College. Gregg has worked across North America and the Caribbean doing corporate, editorial, catalogue and advertising photography.

Michael Breakey: Altered Reality. Michael is a professional photographer based in Kelowna. His passion is landscape and available light portraiture. Michael has presented numerous workshops, specializing in Photoshop and Lightroom. He is currently the Director of Education for CAPA, which includes overseeing the judging course.

Ed Moniz: Prints. Ed has formally studied black and white darkroom printing and black and white photography and completed a one-year mentorship program with George DeWolfe. He was a member of the Professional Photographers of Canada and earned an Accreditation in Night Photography and a designation as "Craftsman of Photographic Arts". Ed is a former member of the Victoria Camera Club.
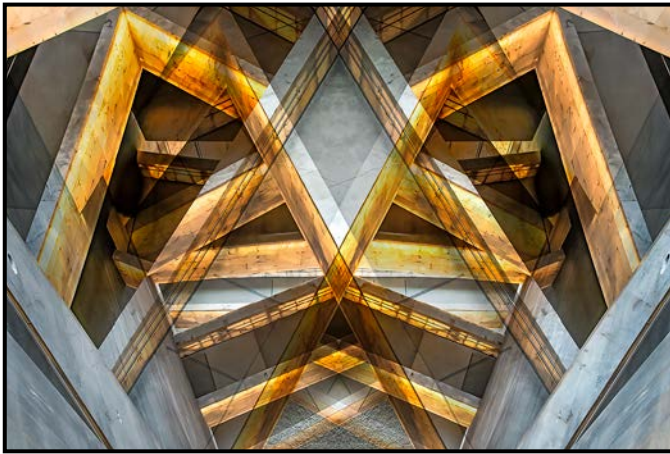
Advanced Altered Reality - 1ˢᵗ
"Museum of Human Rights" by Steve Barber

Judge's Comments: This is a well done mirror image. Light, colour, balance, all go toward producing an interesting image. The eye travels around seeing a number of shapes and characters. Good cropping giving a strong composition.

Advanced Open - 1ˢᵗ
"Quiet Sunset" by Leah Gray

Judge's Comments: I love the image, the crop, the colour palette and the overall dreaminess it creates, extremely well seen and captured! The image conveys a good story and instills an emotional reaction. Well done!

Advanced Nature - 1ˢᵗ
"Lioness on the Move" by Kathryn Delaney

Judge's Comments: I thought this was a powerful image capturing the intensity of the lion. You can sense that she's stalking prey. The lighting is superb and the shading on the grasses enhances the image impact.

Advanced People - 1ˢᵗ
"Curious" by Peter Koelbleitner

Judge's Comments: Lovely expression and light. Good use of the situation and location. A nice shot.

Advanced Theme - 1st
"Perfect Timing for a Stormtrooper Selfie"
by Daniel Rondeau

Judge's Comments: Kudos to the photographer for coming up with a creative and unique concept that strongly captures the play theme. The smoke, tire blur and rugged terrain add wonderful elements of realism to this toy story. The dark environment around the colourful toy really focuses the viewer's attention on the main subject. Congratulations to the photographer for a well conceived and crafted image and a first place finish.

Advanced Nature Print - 1st
"Osprey - Here's Lunch" by Richard James

Judge's Comments: Great timing on this image, good story telling, well done.
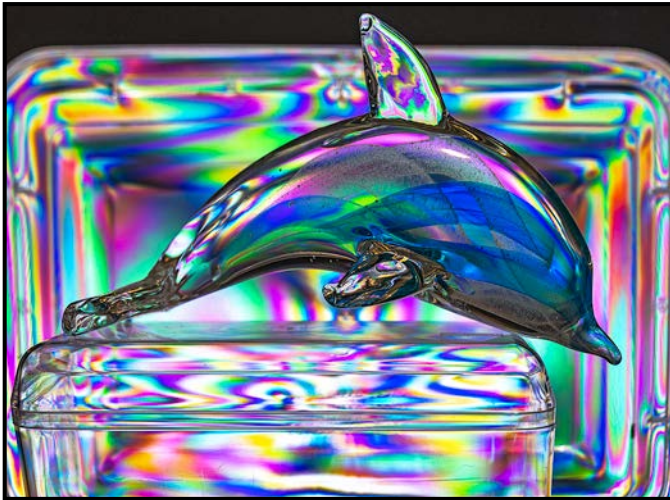

Advanced Monochrome Print - 1st
"The Shop Keeper" by Tim Agoston

Judge's Comments: This image has good detail and tonal range.

Advanced Open Print - 1st
"Yachts Aplenty" by Garry Schaefer

Judge's Comments: Where's Waldo, nice image. The boats are the story and they are handled well.

Intermediate Altered Reality - 1ˢᵗ
"Dolphin Days" by Don Piper

Judge's Comments: A good use of lighting and the refractive properties of light to render the dolphin and the background into a kaleidoscope of colours not necessarily visible under normal viewing conditions. The fact that the dorsal fin of the dolphin breaks the plane of the background helps to give separation.

Intermediate Open - 1ˢᵗ
"Port Fairy Lighthouse" by Jackye Mills

Judge's Comments: A beautiful dreamy image. The HDR type of developing creates an interesting palette. A good story, good use of colours and light. The original treatment instills an emotional reaction. Thank you for sharing.

Intermediate Nature - 2ⁿᵈ
"Fall Splendour" by Gwen Long

Judge's Comments: The placement of the waterfall and the fall colours add to the overall impact of this image. The soft, overcast lighting also adds to the overall mood and feeling of the scene.

Intermediate People - 3ʳᵈ
"The TV Stare" by Teri VanWell

Judge's Comments: A cherubic face, lovely lighting. Good, tight crop with no distractions. Don't tell me it's only the TV that inspired this innocent expression.

Intermediate Theme - 2ⁿᵈ
"Water Ball Fun" by Wendy Clay

Judge's Comments: The brilliant complementary colours and strong triangular shapes really draw the viewer's eye into the image. The use of a watery texture gives a painterly feel to the photo and adds an element of mystery to the scene. Congratulations to the photographer for a well-crafted image.

Novice Open Print - 2ⁿᵈ
"The City in a Time of Pandemic, No.10"
by Robert Paterson

Judge's Comments: This image captures the emptiness of what should be a busy harbour on a sunny day. Strong primary square shapes ground the image and the repetition of the circles (tires) adds visual interest. Good exposure gives strong rich colours.

Intermediate Open Print - 1ˢᵗ
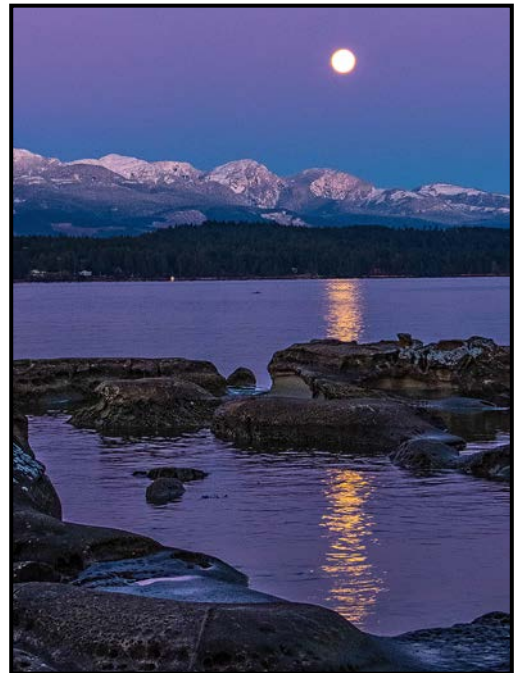*"Golden-crowned Sparrow" by John Clarke*

Judge's Comments: This non-breeding adult is beautifully captured, there is detail in every feather. The diagonal angle of the body with the head turned back is a classic pose. The catchlight in the eye adds life to the image and the softly coloured blurred background compliments the bird nicely.

Novice Open - 1ˢᵗ
"Early Morning Blues" by Rilla Ballantyne

Judge's Comments: You have caught a wonderful time of day with the lovely blue and purple hues in this image creating a calm and restful feeling as if all is right with the world. Pleasing placement of the moon off-centre and its reflection draws us past the rocks and into the image. Good shadow detail adds to the interest. A pleasing sense of composition. The foreground elements add interest and help to create depth in the image.

Novice People - 2ⁿᵈ
"Patiently Waiting at the Food Bank" by Joanne Couch

Judge's Comments: This is a lovely, heart-tugging group portrait. Appropriately sharp focus on the girls in front of a softer, unobtrusive backdrop focuses our gaze on the subjects. You have skillfully taken advantage of the light to enhance their soft skin tones and to bring out the bright hues in their clothing. Great job capturing the trio just at this moment with one of them looking away and the little girl on the right looking so shy. Composition is good. Well done!

Novice Nature - 1ˢᵗ
"Rhesus Macaque at Pashupatinath Temple, Kathmandu" by Merna Forster

Judge's Comments: Compelling sharpness in the eyes, the snout and the facial whiskers but soft elsewhere. Beautiful catchlight in the eyes. The expression has us wondering what it is pondering. Lovely background bokeh with just enough soft light to separate the subject from what is behind it.

Novice Theme - 1ˢᵗ
"Uphill Battle" by Maureen Reid

Judge's Comments: A great motion blur/stop/panning action capture shot in nice warm light. The heavy blur in the background and on the spokes of the bike, the soft focus on the boy's feet and hands all tell a story, he is riding fast! His facial expression shows intense concentration (also part of the story). He is well placed (just slightly off-centre in the frame) allowing him some space to ride into. You have achieved good sharpness and detail on his T-shirt and shorts.

What is it about Colour

by Lorna Zaback

Most of us are familiar with the colour wheel and guidelines or "rules" around colour in photography, even if only intuitively, for example, warm vs. cool: Warm colours (reds, oranges, yellows) jump out at viewers, attracting attention. They can create a sense of excitement or a feeling of, well, warmth in an image. Cool colours (greens, blues, violets) tend to be more soothing and calmer. An intense, highly saturated "pop" of colour, in an otherwise monochromatic composition can work to draw the viewer into and around the frame, holding their interest. Effective use of colour can change a technically and compositionally well-handled image into something stunning and evocative.

The qualities of colour include hue, saturation (desaturating a hue will produce a softer pastel), and value (brightness or darkness). Experimenting with these three properties in post-processing (try the Saturation and Luminance sliders in HSL) can produce an array of possibilities.

Colour can elicit emotion. There is a plethora of information available on the internet about the impact of various hues on the human psyche. In pure form (100% saturation) we tend to associate reds with passion or excitement, yellows with optimism, blues with sadness (we even talk about feeling "blue"), and violet with tranquility. Altering the saturation or value of a colour in an image can reshape our emotional response.

Nature and Wildlife photographers are constrained when it comes to depicting colour in images, particularly for competition. Since post-processing in these genres is limited, makers must rely on the play of light or the effect of weather phenomena on natural hues to communicate a message or a feeling.

For others the options are open. We have a myriad of post-processing programs (and now, many in-camera adjustments) at our disposal allowing us freedom to create and to say what we want.

Setting the Mood: In the summer of 2019, I was at Butchart Gardens photographing blue poppies. I took shots from various angles, but the blossoms facing away from my lens turned out to be my favourites. To me, the natural electric blue of the petals with contrasting bright yellow centres infused the finished images with a happy, upbeat energy. In the reverse shot, I wanted to evoke a sense of sadness or desolation. With this goal in mind,

I made adjustments in Lightroom to the hue, saturation and luminance. I also darkened the exposure and perimeter vignette.

"Facing away"

Telling a Story: A few years ago I was looking for a photo to send to a friend, hoping to offer her comfort and encouragement as she battled a serious illness. I had photographed this handsome Sandhill Crane at Reifel Migratory Bird Sanctuary and thought his pose, head turned upward, majestic wings stretched towards the sky, suggested hopefulness, even optimism. But the subtle blend of creamy greys in the feathers, however beautiful they appear in nature, gave the image a rather uninspired feel.

In Photoshop, as I experimented with several filters and some hue and saturation adjustments, this extreme colour palette began to emerge. The soft green felt soothing while the deep reds and magentas hinted at strength and courage, reinforcing the message I wanted to send her.

"Winged Dancer"

Member Profile: Anne McCarthy

Chasing lack of perfection. The second-year section on photography in my BFA at Queens gave me the chance to use a camera and twenty-four hour darkroom access. My standing Friday night date, one that lasted past midnight, then took place in the red-light section of the studio. It was entrancing so I took advice from the instructor and became the proud owner of an Olympus OMD-1, the first of the small SLRs and a single 100 mm lens. I was obnoxiously proud of it. I still have them both in some vague hope that they will regain their value. Apparently, gold appreciates. Cameras, like boats, not so much.

"Me"

The "Me" image is a double exposure using a self-portrait from the 1970s and my 2019 self. I took a photo of a large positive created for contact printing to combine with my current self.

The camera remained a key piece of equipment throughout the BFA as I gained access to larger darkrooms, a print shop and instruction in non-silver photographic processes such as gum bichromate. The results were combined with paint, photocopies and whatever got in my way (seriously, I put a clothing tag into one picture) to make collages, or paintings over cyanotype transfers.

The "Sweven" image was created by photocopying a section of a large contact print positive onto paper where it could be combined with colour and line. Luckily Kang did not mind being transformed into a bald man. He is now Dr. Jan teaching and practicing medicine.

"Sweven"

The camera came back out again when my daughter was small, and then one day, I smacked her hard in the head as it swung down from my shoulder. Soon after the camera was replaced by an inexpensive digital Olympus point-and-shoot camera. Auto focus! What a concept. Any collages were simply made with tape and scissors and images incorporated into painting.

Retirement gave me more time to regain creativity making the Victoria Camera Club a great jumping off point. I've used the time with the Club to first learn how to use Lightroom effectively and now, just this year, I moved from Gimp freeware to Photoshop.

My taste hasn't changed much. As much as I admire technical perfection and photographs that reveal every detail, my inclination is to modify, to add the human touch as much as possible. I want some mystery in my photos, something to bring me back to wondering what and why.

When I do indulge in a physical print, I get The Print Lab to place the image in a single sheet of rag paper. Occasionally that is augmented by water colour or coloured pencils to further add the human fingerprint. You may notice my emphasis on the borders of my images, something that helps to compensate for the lack of a mat. I like to know where my edges lie.

I'm so happy to be part of this Camera Club. It is group with diverse interests, open minds and generosity. I take delight in seeing our members balanced landscapes or an eagle caught lifting off with a fish along with the altered options. A perfect place to learn and share.

Colour Balance

by Roger Botting

Recently I was reviewing a Facebook post where a person asked about a photo that they had posted. It was off colour. Too yellow. I suggested that they use a neutral grey card to establish a better colour balance. Back in the days when I printed colour negatives one of the hardest things was to figure out what the client really wanted for colour. My photos were easy, I knew what I wanted and when shooting in non-standard lighting I knew how to get close to better colours. However, other people's photos were often all over the place in lighting and exposure and what a joy that was. Underexposed or poorly processed film often had blue shadows and aged film could be all over the place.

Fortunately, digital is so much easier to colour-correct but why go to the trouble of correction when it doesn't take a lot of effort to shoot it better. Automatic white balance (AWB) does a pretty good job but it can be fooled. AWB works by the camera analyzing the image and trying to add or subtract colours to correct to what the camera has been programmed to think is a good colour rendition. These corrections are baked into the JPEG image but are noted "as shot" in the RAW file.

Tweaking the RAW file can often get a better colour rendition. Add a bit of blue or a little less yellow and you might do better but there are easier and more accurate ways to get better colour. This is all based upon the idea that you want more accurate colour. Artistic colour? You are on your own.

For years, the Kodak Neutral Grey Card R-27 has been the standard. Using a neutral grey card for metering and colour balance is all you really need to do. Place your card at the subject in the same lighting condition that you are working with, set your exposure using manual exposure in the camera. Take your exposure reading off the card, take a photo of the card, and when you open up your RAW image in Photoshop or Lightroom and use the White Balance Selector tool (W) and most of your troubles will have gone away.

You should, if you are only shooting JPEGs, manually set the white balance in your camera. Read your camera's instruction manual. The only problem with manually setting the colour balance in your camera is the need to reset it when changing locations or if the lighting changes. Perhaps there will be a different colour of light. I just leave mine on AWB and correct after the fact. Are there better ways of doing this?

WhiBal is a set of plastic cards. Unlike the Kodak paper-based card, they are quite durable, waterproof, and easy to clean. Michael has a good description on using his products. The descriptions desperately need updating but all the basic information is there *(michaeltapesdesign. com/whibal.html)* .

The Expodisc has been around since the 1980s. It is essentially a diffusion disk that fits over your camera lens. You stand where your subject is, point the camera (with an expodisc attached to your lens) towards where you will be taking the photo from and set your exposure and colour balance. Set manual exposure and take a photo. That way you have a grey reference photo (*expodisc.com)*.

One upside to this method is that any dust spots on your sensor will be easier to see. Hmm? Sensor cleaning time or create a dust map for your retouching? I have heard of people using Pringle can lids or similar to do this same task. Try it.

These tools will get you really close to colour perfection but for the perfectionist there are more tools. Much like colour film of old and new, the sensor in your camera doesn't capture absolutely accurate colour. Some colours might be recorded as brighter or darker than others or sometimes colours that were not there will contaminate the actual colours.

Calibrating your photos isn't hard and is a great way to make all your cameras give similar results. There are two ways to do this, calibrate the camera or calibrate the scene. Either way requires a calibration target and the matching software. Datacolor *datacolor.com/ photography-design* and X-Rite *xritephoto.com/getcolorchecker* are two sources of colour calibration tools.

Calibrating the camera is a clunky way of doing things and it still requires you to use a grey card to get the correct colour. The better way is to photograph your colour calibration card at the site of your subject. Set the exposure, best on manual, then take a photo of the colour calibration card using the same lighting as that for your subject.

Back at your computer open the calibration software and it will create a custom profile for your camera for this lighting situation. This is a great way to match your cameras so that they look alike. A quick video to show you how to do this is at: *youtube.com/watch?v=rkgVZ9LWDt8&t=300s*.

The next time you take photos, be lazy. Get your colour balance right before you take the prize winner.

Creative Self-Portraits

by Richard Letourneau

I am often asked, "How do you dream up these things?" Or, "I couldn't do something like that because I'm just not creative." Admittedly, each creative project does take time and there will likely be a lot of bloopers along the way. However, in the end, I find the process quite enjoyable and dare I say, fun! You might too!

My journey into creative photography began in 2016, when I took my first compositing workshop given by Von McKneely, a professional photographer, formerly of Victoria and now residing in Salmon Arm.

During that first introductory workshop I was a bit overwhelmed when I walked into the workshop space. I saw a backdrop set up with a few studio lights, diffusers, several reflectors, a table with some individual household items (e.g., vase, flowers, ornate dishes), and a stool for a model.

There were only four people participating in the workshop. We took turns getting our shots under Von's tutelage, then sat down, each with our own laptops, and began the process of learning to extract something from one photo and place it into another photo.

I loved the idea of being able to do something so "magical" but was worried that I'd never acquire the skills for the multiple steps involved!

When you try your hand at newly-developed skills it may seem very laborious and time consuming, but I have found that I excelled in close, detailed work. It took a lot of practice, time and many attempts to be able to extract an element seamlessly and with confidence.

To this day I feel a deep sense of gratitude to Von McKnelly for introducing me to the extraction and compositing techniques I learned and offer him my thanks for his instruction and mentorship.

Von is extraordinarily ingenious and creative, producing works of art that I could never imagine. He, unknowingly, has pushed me forward to freely experiment and create my own art.

I try to produce images that reflect what I've learned from him but using my own personality and vision. I started very simply, using myself as the model and then compositing four images into one, as seen in the Tod Inlet image.

"Richard at Tod Inlet"

From there it was only a matter of time for me to further examine possibilities open to me.

I signed up for an online course, Photo Artistry, with Sebastian Michaels, who says, "If you are challenging yourself, you are growing as an artist."

A few of the skills I learned during his course included advanced layer-effects, custom brushes, blending, stacking images, and how to work non-destructively by converting a layer to a Smart Object.

I also learned about controlling second-guessing, self-doubt and being too self-critical. And not giving up on a piece too soon. Be free to play that is often when the magic happens.

My cousin, Craig Letourneau, a professional photographer and photography teacher at a high school in Nanaimo, had posted a photo of his hands in front of his face on his Facebook page.

That was all it took for me to want to try something similar and "Hands Up!" was created. All it took was a couple of shots, me sitting in a chair and then me holding my hands above my head.

Some basic Photoshop techniques were used, extraction, layering, masking and the use of one of my homemade overlays which I blended into the background. A judge commented, "Disturbing!", but still awarded it a 1st place finish in this altered reality piece.

Being confined to my home in the early stages of the global pandemic I had plenty of time to think and plan what I could create. I ultimately came up with the idea of using a party theme.

To capture a scene like "Quarantine Party" I needed a consistent light source so I positioned myself behind a

"Hands Up"

table angled toward a large window in my family room, to take advantage of the bright daylight. I needed "people", wardrobe and lots of props, right down to a lampshade! I used what I had in my home.

Details are important. Notice the Coke being poured into a glass held by another person? That type of interaction creates a feeling of realness and adds to the overall notion of fun. The colourful shirts, hats, décor and props all draw the viewer's gaze into the scene.

"Quarantine Party"

By far the most challenging project I created was "Watch That Step". At first I thought I might do something like levitation with a model and furniture flying about the room. Then I considered having someone walk through a kitchen carrying a plate of food and perhaps a coffee and tripping over an obstacle, spilling food and drink and seeing the person fall to the floor. I considered how I could photograph the coffee spill but I dropped the idea when I envisioned extracting multiple drops of coffee.

"Watch That Step"

The tripping and falling idea still intrigued me so that's how I came up with the idea of using the stairs in my home as the starting image. From there, the ideas just came flooding into my head. Including the type of props that I could use. I knew I had a cane, my comfy house slippers, and a plate of cookies.

I set up a tripod in my guest room, set a ten-second delay on the camera, ran and threw myself onto a pile of pillows on the bed, multiple times until I got a picture of me in an acceptable position, with all arms and legs visible. It was hard work and I was sweating profusely.

I tilted a plate of cookies on a pillow and took a shot. I unwound paper clips and stuck them in the end of individual cookies that I held in one hand and took shots of them. A shot of a slipper and a cane were all I needed to complete my starter images. It was then a matter of taking all of the elements and combining them into the finished product which received a CAPA Merit Award.

I enjoy the sense of accomplishment from imagining and developing a concept and following it through to fruition. For me, it is satisfying, fulfilling and enjoyable.

As the days become shorter and it gets darker earlier, I look forward to having more time to reflect and to imagine some new creations. Perhaps I'll have a lavish cocktail party, a sumptuous feast, a musical recital or even a "celebration" of fall cleaning. Whatever it may be, rest assured, the only invited guest will be me!

How I Did It

Grinder

by Ian Crawford

I love taking pictures of working people and have been doing so since 1972. When the opportunity presents, I am happy to grab my camera.

Judy is a highly-skilled metalworker with decades of experience. This picture shows her forming a piece of mild steel held in a vice with a high-speed angle grinder fitted with a cut-off wheel. This is an unstaged photograph. To take this kind of shot a photographer needs to follow industrial safety practices. Personal safety gear includes safety goggles, hearing protectors, fireproof clothing, leather gloves and safety boots. Judy is also wearing a respirator mask and face shield (in case the high-speed cutting disk shatters). The camera lens was protected with a UV filter but I did not find any damage to my equipment after the shoot.

I set the handheld Canon 5D3 at 1/60th second to capture the spark display. Judy was almost motionless as she worked. The aperture was set at f11 at ISO 400. The lens was set to around 75 mm so I could stand clear of the plane of rotation of the cutting disk. I took several shots as the spark patterns were varied.

In post-production I worked in Lightroom 4, picking the image with the most interesting spark pattern. I made a slight crop and adjusted the levels for wide tone values. I darkened and lowered the clarity to minimize clutter on the left bench area and lightened Judy's face.

I look forward to taking a picture of my dentist working on my teeth if she will let me but I am not quite sure how that will work.

"Grinder"

Starry Skies

by Graham Budd

Twice a month I head out with another photographer to shoot images around a theme. We chose "Perspective" and wanting to be a little more creative, I attached an 8 mm fisheye lens to my Fuji camera and began looking for compositions to take advantage of the natural distortion of this lens. I soon came across this building at the end of the pier.

"Starry Night"

The fisheye lens works best with strong leading lines shot from, or just above, eye level or things become too circular for my taste. The composition uses the distortion to frame the building with the light post on one side and the mirrored shape of the stair railing on the other. Although I liked the result, the image was captured under contrasty, harsh afternoon light so I had to look for alternatives.

I then thought about converting the image to a night scene beginning with turning on the light on the lamppost. From there, I applied several localized colour corrections to balance out the hard light and better reflect the yellow cast of the streetlight.

In Photoshop I used selections, Fill Layers and Blend Modes to accomplish this. I also used some cloning to remove a bright red alarm sign and then exporting the result to Topaz Impression. This is where I played with various effects to find a starting point for the Starry Night look. A few final tweaks in Photoshop and the image was finished.

Shoots Around Victoria

Esquimalt Lagoon

by Suzanne Huot

Esquimalt Lagoon, one of the most important bird feeding areas in this region, is a federally-designated migratory bird sanctuary. Large flocks of seabirds, shorebirds and waterfowl can be found here all year. The eelgrass beds are the perfect habitat to hide small fish and clams, invertebrates, crustaceans, and worms, all of which are very important to the diet of the many different species. These include small shorebirds such as Sandpipers, Dunlin, Killdeer and Turnstones as well as many eelgrass-loving ducks such as Northern Pintails and Widgeons.

Small fish feed mergansers, ducks, and grebes. Clams and crabs are food for the Goldeneye and Bufflehead ducks. Larger fish like flounders and larger crabs are the main menu for Otters. Fish are also food for Bald Eagles and the summertime Osprey visitors. The multitude of Great Blue Herons that live around the lagoon area offer photographic opportunities whether they are fishing or in flight.

The best time to photograph is at first light when warm golden light appears. At that time winds can be lighter, with a chance that beautiful heron and duck reflections can be captured. Time your arrival for a low tide that exposes more food for your subjects. The falling tide near the bridge exposes the muddy sand and gravel bars bringing the gulls that start diving for large clams. Another photo op: The gull flies up and drops the clam to the ground from a good height. After a couple of drops the shell is broken and the tasty meat exposed. There are even more photo ops when other gulls start aerial dogfights trying to pirate away each other's prize.

When the sandbars dry up the attractive Black Oystercatchers look for their favourite food of mussels and limpets. The oystercatchers, with their bright red highly-adapted beaks, can then force the shells open. Keep an eye open for unusual gull and tern visitors as well as unusual shorebirds that visit briefly. The lagoon is one of the best places to try your skills at capturing ducks in flight. Bring some duck food or raw oats to attract them. Even the resident Trumpeter Swan will fly in as word quickly gets around that there is free food. If you want to get some really intimate duck shots, nose to beak, I would suggest you bring your yoga mat and waterproof trousers to help keep you dry when lying down in the mud to get that perfect eye-level shot.

"Pintail in Flight"

The bushes behind the gravel path often hide a good selection of songbirds such as Red-winged Blackbirds and several sparrow species. The grassy areas may hide Killdeer and the odd rarity such as Snow Bunting, Western Meadowlark and others. Follow the shore all the way to the end and you will find good places to photograph ducks and geese swimming by. Find a nice comfortable log to sit on, then enjoy and observe. The more you observe and understand your subject the more it will improve your chances of getting a very special image. Do not let the cold and frosty mornings deter you from visiting. This can be the perfect time for unusual images of ducks landing and walking on ice. One of my favourite images is of a River Otter with a large flounder in his mouth popping out of the ice and making a perfect mirror image of the scene.

Lastly, in the late afternoon don't forget to check out the ocean side as you may find rafts of Surf Scoters, various grebes, mergansers and sometimes even loons.

"River Otter on Ice"

Taking Versus Making a Photo

by Steve Lustig

My objective, like many camera club members, is to "get it right in-camera". I prefer to be out making images rather than spending my time sitting in front of my computer. My preference to minimize post-processing also reflects my modest post-processing skills.

Sometimes, however, images require more care and attention. Perhaps the dynamic range is so great that HDR or exposure blending using layers in Photoshop is required. Maybe there is a need to stack images using focus stacking to ensure that the image is sharp from front to back.

If a scene calls for a vertical or horizontal panorama, then stitching and distortion correction is needed using Adobe Lightroom, Photoshop or PTGui. If the image doesn't reflect what you want to say, then it may also need more processing to tell the story or reflect what you actually felt at the moment of capturing the image.

Long-exposure photography presents its own challenges to "getting it right in-camera". When shooting long-exposure images you first frame the scene; determine the aperture you want to use for depth-of-field, then measure the exposure duration required (e.g. 1/30th second). If you put a 10-stop neutral density (ND) filter over the lens, you can then use an app such as LE Calculator (for iOS at *lecalc.680labs.com*), or Exposure Calculator (for Android at *play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com. quicosoft.exposurecalculator.app*), etc. and it tells you that you now require an exposure of 30 seconds.

However, there are a few impediments to simply getting it right in camera using this approach. First, the longer the exposure, the more likely it is that the light conditions have changed (darker or brighter) as a result of cloud cover, wave action, etc. which makes it necessary to correct the exposure in post-processing.

Second, although ND filters are labeled as being 3-stop, 6-stop or 10-stop, etc., they may actually have a different value. It is useful to know how much your ND filter actually reduces the light. If you are using a variable ND filter, the odds of needing to correct the exposure in post-processing are greater.

Lastly, you may want to alter the scene by emphasizing certain aspects of the image. For example, you may want to darken the sky using a graduated filter, or lighten the waves with an adjustment brush, or add texture to

the rocks. Dodging and burning a black and white image is all part of making an image rather than taking one.

In June, I joined Dave Hutchison and three other photographers for a workshop on long-exposure photography at Mystic Beach (with social distancing of course). This aptly named beach is about 75 km from Victoria by road and requires a 2 km hike on a well-maintained trail from the parking lot through an ancient forest. Mystic Beach is part of the spectacular Juan de Fuca Marine Trail. Following the shoot, I had a Zoom session with Dave to discuss processing options for my images. I learned two important lessons that I applied to this image and will use in the future: (1) the "trick" that makes masking and adjusting part of an image in Lightroom easier; and (2) the ability to paint-in Silver Efex Pro (or Color Efex Pro) effects into only the area of an image that you target.

"Original Raw Image"

The original RAW image is shown above. Processing began in Adobe Lightroom where I keep my library of images, categorized by year, shoot, and keywords.

It is evident that the exposure used, despite being calculated using an ND app, under-exposed the image. Careful inspection of the image also found five sensor

"Image after Basic Adjustments"

spots, in both the sky and the water. It is best to remove spots early in processing rather than letting them get "baked in" to the image. In addition, the image needed adjustments to exposure (+1 stop), contrast, shadows, white point, black point and clarity. This is the image after some basic adjustments. It is improved, but far from the finished product that I wanted.

In Lightroom, you can create a "mask" for the entire image, erase areas where you don't want the effect, and allow the desired changes to take place everywhere else. The term "mask" is used differently in Lightroom than it is in Photoshop. For example, when you create a mask in Lightroom, the red area looks like a mask when "mask overlay" is checked but, unlike in Photoshop, where a mask is an area where an effect is not applied, in Lightroom it is the opposite effect. In Lightroom, the "mask" shows a red area where the effect will be applied. The effect is not applied where you erase the mask. Basically, you are applying an effect to the entire image, and then erasing the effect away where you do not want it applied.

One "trick" for doing this more easily is to change the size of the image from "fit" to 1:8 ratio. This shrinks the image on the screen and allows you to use the adjustment brush to cover the entire image. Using a mask overlay (auto mask on) and a very large circle, cover the entire image. If I click on the sky, it and similar tones will turn red. If I then click on the lower part of the image, the whole image will be covered in red.

Next, choose the adjustments you want; in this case, I lowered the colour temperature and exposure, increased the contrast, lowered the highlights and blacks, and slightly increased the whites. Using a smaller brush, I then erased the mask everywhere except on the sky. This insured that the edits would only apply to the sky.

I used a new mask for the water, increasing dehaze, exposure, contrast and reducing highlights and blacks, then erased with a smaller brush the mask over the sky and rocks. This resulted in the edits being applied only to the water. Then I added a bit of sharpening and sent the image to Topaz Denoise to remove noise, sharpen and recover detail.

I have often sent an image to Silver Efex Pro from Lightroom. However, if you send the image to Photoshop first, you have the ability to select where in the image the changes from Silver Efex Pro will be applied.

The procedure is this: first select the image in Lightroom and go to "edit in" and select Photoshop with Lightroom adjustments. In this case, while in Photoshop, I used im-

"Image after Silver Efex Pro"

age, adjustments, levels, options, enhance monochromatic contrast, then clicked OK and Save. Then I clicked on filter, Nik Collection, and Silver Efex Pro.

The image is now open in Silver Efex Pro. I chose the 000 Neutral preset with an orange filter, clicked on "brush" and the image went back to Photoshop. There, I painted the effect only into the areas where it was wanted, in the sky. After painting the effect in, it is essential to hit "apply" and then "save", both of which are in the brush box.

For the rest of the image, I went back to filter, Nik Collection, Silver Efex Pro and this time I chose the 020 Fine Art (high key) preset with image borders turned off. Clicking on the brush again, the image went back to Photoshop where I painted in the effect to the entire image except for the sky, then clicked apply and save. The layers in Photoshop are then flattened, saved and exit back to Lightroom. The image above shows the photo at about that point.

"Final Image"

The final image emerged after a bit of dodging and burning to make sure the transition from the sky to water was adequate. Overall, the image I made was much more satisfying that the image I took.

Beginner's Corner: Structure and Bricolage: A Guide to Composition

by Joseph Finkleman

A bricoleur is someone who assembles something with the materials at hand. Bricolage is apropos to photography because unlike drawing, where we can rearrange or even make stuff up, in photography we work with reality. (For this article I am going to pretend that compositing and severe retouching do not exist.)

How do we compose an image with the materials (the image structures) at hand? The first rule is to clearly identify what we want to say, without which there is no clear story in our "writing with light." (Photographos is Greek for writing with light). This is the foundation for everything we are going to do. The second related rule, simple yet difficult to achieve, is to identify the strongest way we can tell this story.

"Dancer"

The materials at hand are: (1) the subject, person, place or thing, (2) light, (3) usually context/setting (photographs where the context is removed, often referred to as abstract images, still follow all the suggestions of composition), and (4) the precise moment.

No matter what the exposure time, this "Photographer's Moment" is a discrete timed moment and the choice of its duration is a compositional element. In short: subject, light, setting, and time are the materials with which we work.

The subject tells a story which needs several elements to be successful. One element is a human truth. Everyday moments or objects can be very powerful if we reveal their significance.

In terms of cropping or editing, does the specific element add power to the story, is it neutral, or does it subtract power? If it adds power, keep it. If it does not add power, or worse, subtracts power from the story, crop it or better, do not include it in the image in the first place. This last is a compositional problem best attended to directly, before we release the shutter.

Knowing what the story is and refining that story are so important. One way to strengthen the story is to isolate it from the setting. One suggestion, especially for beginners, is to physically walk one third of the distance closer to the subject before you release the shutter. This is sometimes impossible; in that case, lengthen your lens. Zoom lenses have a lot of versatility in helping you isolate your subject. Shoot as tightly as you can.

Another powerful tool (except for close-ups and landscapes) is selective focus. I am a proponent of a strongly controlled depth-of-field. I usually shoot either at f4 or f5.6, depending on the lens and the subject. I like a distinct subject area in focus, with the background strongly out-of-focus. This is one of the most powerful tools of composition you can use; it adds power to what is in focus and draws the eye to that plane of focus. As an added bonus f4 and f5.6 are usually the sharpest apertures of your lens.

Achieving the illusion of "sharpness" is accomplished by three things. The first is the aperture, described above. The second is to always use good hand-held or tripod technique to ensure that there is no motion blur in your image. This is the number one killer of optimal "sharpness" and I see it quite frequently. The third way, using light, will be discussed in the next issue.

"Mosque"