



Close-Up



DSLR Video Tips
Polarizing and Neutral Density Filters
Declutter your Camera Gear
Resizing Images
Member Profile: Doug Ambridge
Using Flash
Photography Close to Home
Beginners' Corner: Room To Play

"Tracks" by Mike Murchison

Victoria Camera Club

December 2018 Volume 71 Number 9

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Victoria Camera Club



“Victoria Harbour Full Moon” by Ian Faris

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 7:30 PM at Norway House, 1110 Hillside Avenue, Victoria, BC.

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, \$85; Family, \$128; Student, \$43.

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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December 2018

Close-Up is the magazine of the Victoria Camera Club.

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For additional information: please contact:

Membership: membership@victoriacameraclub.ca

Workshops: workshops@victoriacameraclub.ca

Field Trips: fieldtrips@victoriacameraclub.ca

Meetings: meetings@victoriacameraclub.ca

Website: webmaster@victoriacameraclub.ca

Close-Up: editor@victoriacameraclub.ca

President: president@victoriacameraclub.ca

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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.

December 6th: Christmas Social Night. Members and guests annual Christmas social evening.

Competition, Presentation and Members' Nights will resume in January 2019.

Field Trip and Workshop Highlights: Lighted Truck Parade, Saturna Island and Butchart Gardens field trips. Image Transformations workshop.

Cover Image: "Tracks" by Mike Murchison. Saskatchewan photographers love the many abandoned buildings that have been left behind as reminders of our past. On this day in March 2016, two friends and I decided to explore some back roads, hopefully to find something interesting to photograph.

Armed with our gear and Google Maps, we headed north from Saskatoon to a small community named Blaine Lake. We didn't have much time before sunset, so we found this farmyard and started the half mile walk in, through thigh-high snow drifts. We were lucky to find this sturdy, miniature barn standing alone in a field, with only the coyote tracks breaking the crust on the snow.

I find simple compositions can be the most powerful, so I used the tracks as a leading line and positioned the barn using the rule of thirds to help move the eye through the image. I was lucky enough that this angle brought the sun into the frame, so I moved to pinch the sun against the side of the barn, helping to create the sun-star.

Finally, I positioned my tripod low, in order to emphasize the tracks. Shooting into the sun requires multiple exposures, which can be blended using HDR software or manually in Photoshop. I set my bracketing to five images at one stop increments, wanting to be sure to have the dynamic range I would need in processing. When setting my exposure, I set my aperture to f16 to help with the depth of field and create the sun star, then set my base exposure so the snow was properly exposed and took the frames.

The exposures for this image were blended using Adobe Lightroom's HDR feature, then the image was processed using a combination of Lightroom, Photoshop and ON1 Effects software.

President's Message

Our annual Christmas celebration is on December 6th. This is a time for us to unwind and mingle with other members whom we have not seen in a while. I am always happy to see the camaraderie that occurs during our gatherings and I look forward to this year's event through the eyes of the president. It is a good time to reflect on the many wonderful memories we have of the past year and celebrate our achievements as a Club, and boy we do have a lot to celebrate.

Our website received a makeover thanks to the wonderfully-talented website crew of Steve Jakes, Richard Letourneau and Greg Blaney. They have made it more user-friendly and it now has more information for us, not to mention the photos of key members helping to attach names to faces. The website also received an honourable mention from PSA in the 2018 Website Competition in the Large Club category. Well done!

Our internal and external competition committees have been hard at work reviewing our submitted images and making sure that everything is in the right place. There have been such wonderful photos submitted and some of them have gone on to win awards in many of the external competitions that we enter. Keep going with them!

Our Field Trip Coordinators have been organizing amazing outings at different places around the city and beyond. Our workshop coordinators have given us plenty to try out with the different techniques that we have learned. Our Nature and Creative SIGs are going strong and provide members with inspiration to try something new.

We almost lost *Close-Up* but with the determination of the expanded team we are able to continue to produce this amazing magazine. The *Close-Up* team members, led by Richard James (Editor), received two 1st place awards in 2018 from PSA in the Newsletter Competition (Large Club category) for the "Best Newsletter" and "Best Competition Results Page". Don't forget that *Close-Up* would not be possible without the members who volunteer to write articles! There is a great deal to be proud of here.

Our Club has so many people who volunteer their time and talent for the betterment of its members and I count myself lucky that I am a part of it.

To you and yours, I wish you Happy Holidays and a Happy New Year.

Teri VanWell, President

DSLR Video Tips

by Giuseppe Buccoliero

This is a follow-up to the January 2017 article on shooting video with DSLRs and focuses on some of the technical issues.

Frame size and frame rate: Most DSLRs have a range of frame sizes and frame rates to choose from. The most common video frame size is 1920 x 1080 pixels, shot at 24 fps (frames per second), 30 fps or, in some cases, 60 fps. For a more cinematic look, 24 fps is the ideal choice but 30 fps and even 60 fps give a smoother look to your video. In your camera go into settings for the Live View/Movie function and choose these values.

Matching shutter speed and frame rate: To get smooth video that looks natural you need to match your shutter speed and frame rate. This translates into a shutter speed of 1/50th sec if shooting at 24 fps, 1/60th sec at 30 fps, and 1/125th sec at 60 fps. In short, the shutter speed is close to 1/(2x frame rate). Because it is very easy to change settings by simply turning dials or buttons you have to pay attention that you don't accidentally change any settings while you're shooting or you'll mess up your clips. You might also need ND filters (see page 6) if there is too much ambient light, especially outdoors, when shooting at a wide aperture to obtain a shallow depth-of-focus.

ISO: Noise is a factor when shooting videos just as it is with still images. Whenever possible, you should shoot at the "base" ISO for your camera. Getting the right exposure in video is much harder than shooting stills. If there's too much light you can't change the shutter speed to decrease it, so use the lowest ISO, ND filters and if you are using studio lights, different size diffusers to reduce the amount of light hitting the subject. If there is not enough light, portable lighting, reflectors and a higher ISO are often necessary. Some cameras perform quite well with an ISO higher than 1000 in video mode.

Manual focusing and follow focus: One important thing you want in your video is consistency, if you use autofocus your camera may reset the focus in a way you don't want. I recommend always using manual focus. You have to re-focus each time your subject(s) change the distance to the camera. On most DSLRs the magnify button on the camera back will enlarge the image and help you to adjust the focus before shooting. For creative results you might want to experiment with follow- or rack-focus techniques. You manually change the focus from one subject to another, at different planes, most

often with a wide aperture set on your lens. This produces an exciting bokeh around the subjects chosen. A low focus unit, available for most cameras, will give you better results, eliminating potential camera shake when using your hand directly on the focus ring.

More settings in your camera: Unlike shooting stills with your DSLR, video is created as a series of images in sequence. As a result, it will be more challenging to make adjustments when editing. I suggest shooting in neutral mode with sharpening and contrast set to minimum and the saturation down a little as well. These setting will give you more latitude for adjustments later and can help reduce the risk of artifacts in your video. You will generally want to shoot in manual mode and avoid automatic settings. The biggest risk using the auto setting on your camera is that the apparent exposure can change in the middle of a clip, even if there is only a minor shift in lighting. Some cameras allow you to adjust aperture while you are shooting, which is quite convenient.

Moiré and rolling shutter effects: Moiré is an unwanted pattern of moving lines that might show up when shooting highly-patterned, usually man-made objects, like fences, patterned clothing, metal grates etc. It is almost impossible to fix it in post-processing so you might have to re-shoot the scene. You can try to prevent the moiré effect by moving the camera angle slightly or changing the distance to the subject. You get the "rolling shutter" effect with fast-moving subjects or when you pan too quickly. Some wobbling or "Jello" effect will appear; this can be avoided by slowing down the panning. Some cameras are more prone to this effect than others.

Sound: Most built-in microphones on DSLRs are not adequate for quality sound. I suggest the Sennheiser shotgun mic on a boom pole connected to a portable audio recorder like Zoom or Tascam units with audio cables. A second choice would be a Rode Video Mic Pro attached on the hot shoe and connected to the camera or to a portable audio recorder. Be careful with a mic connected to the camera as it might pick up noises from the camera. For interviews and documentaries, Lavalier microphone systems are often used; again watch for noises produced by the mic rubbing the fabric of the shirt/jacket of the speaker.

Lighting: Although lighting for video is more complex than it is for still photography the fundamentals are the same, so experiment as you go.

Final thoughts: Since exploring the world of motion pictures gives me much enjoyment, I encourage you to give it a try and hope you have fun and are surprised by the results.

Polarizing and Neutral Density Filters

by Deb Thurlbeck

A camera filter is a piece of glass that is designed to sit in front of your lens. The purpose of a filter is either to protect your lens from damage or to create a modified visual effect. Filters range from clear glass, to coloured, to those that distort the image.

A polarizing filter is designed to polarize the light. Considering light as a wave, unpolarized light has waves moving at different rotations. Polarization restricts this to those waves traveling in one narrow band of rotation. Shiny objects tend to polarize the light they reflect. The filter is set in a dual filter ring, or filter holder, that fits onto your lens. The outer ring rotates while the inner ring is stationary. When you look through the viewfinder you can see the effect as you rotate the filter. The glare is diminished. Without the glare you are able to capture the natural colours and details of your scene. Digital cameras require a circular polarizer.



Polarizing Filter

A polarizer can intensify colour and contrast in the sky and help draw out textural variety and depth or help saturate colours like blue skies and rainbows. Your filter, used early in the morning when dew is present or after rain, can help to saturate the colours and cut down on reflections and glare. In this photo I am holding a polarizer to the sky. This photo shows how light and texture differ compared to not using the filter. Polarizing filters also reduce glare from foliage and mushrooms that may not seem very reflective to our eye, but is emphasized in the camera.

A neutral density (ND) filter is a grey piece of glass that is placed in front of the lens. When designed properly it doesn't change the colour of the scene; it simply lets less light into the camera. What makes a graduated neutral density filter special is that it's a filter that goes from light

to dark across the filter. This helps photographers work with scenes of extreme exposure differences.

If you are photographing a landscape where the sky is much brighter than the land beneath it, you would have to expose either for the sky or for the land. With a graduated neutral density filter, you can use the darker part of the filter over the sky so that you can expose for both the sky and the land. This works if used properly and with practice, as well as with a spot of luck.

These filters are available in different shapes. Round filters screw onto the front of your lens and square or rectangular filters fit into a filter holder that is attached to the front of your lens. They are also available in different strengths with both hard and soft gradients.

If you want to shoot silk-like moving water or waterfalls, in addition to a good ND filter, you must have a sturdy tripod and a cable/remote release as any camera movement will destroy the image. Use a small aperture (large f-stop number) then add your polarizing filter, adjust the filter and watch how the reflections change. In daylight conditions a neutral density filter will block out some of the light. The darker the filter, the slower the shutter speed you will be able to use. A slower shutter speed is what is needed for those cottony, dreamy waterfalls.



Water over the Rocks

In this photo of water over the rocks, I used an 8-stop ND filter, ISO 100, f18 and an exposure time of 20 seconds. Getting the "right blur" is a matter of trial and error with the exposure time. The goal is to blur the water without over-exposing your image while keeping the rocks in focus.

If you are hesitant about adding these filters to your camera bag or haven't brought them out recently, I hope this article inspires you to use them on an upcoming shoot. Experiment with Polarizers and ND filters to create visually rich and beautiful photos.

Declutter your Camera Gear

by Steve Smith

Let's start with a photo of all the camera gear that you would like to travel with.



Sadly, in this puny 21st century, no company makes a camera bag large enough to take all your gear. Even if they did, our underachieving airlines would fail to load your carry-on bag into their woefully undersized flying machines. How dare they? Who do they think they are? Faced with dismal reality, what is the photographic traveller to do? Mother nature and eons of evolution come to the rescue. One can harness the awesome power of the human mind. It's a no-brainer.

Ask yourself, "What kind of images do I want from my trip?" Perhaps you are going on an African photo safari, a boat cruise, a long train ride, or a dip into some foreign culture.

Whether you are after wildlife, landscape, people, architectural or grand event images, the guiding principle is this: your photographic objectives determine your gear. Gear is: camera bodies, lenses, memory cards, dustbags, dry bags, rain sleeve, spare batteries, battery charger, tripod, image backup device, filters, warm socks, good underwear, and a US\$100 bill.

Put the \$100 bill in a safe place. Now open and empty your camera bag and place it before you at a convenient height. Then clean it out with a soft moist cloth.

Camera Bodies: How will you feel if you drop your camera in a lake on the second day? Could you bear the anguish of watching Myrtle from Mississauga capture award-winning images from that thrilling cheetah hunt while you gamely take snappies with your phone camera? Maybe a second camera body is a good choice.

Or if you own just one camera body and do not want the expense of a second, then stick with the one and nurture

it like a first-born child. On the other hand, if your trip is a motorbike tour of every tavern in Hamilton then maybe one camera body is just fine.

Lenses: Here we need to focus. Every one of your lenses will be singing its siren song. "Take me, take all of me and I will overwhelm your visual senses." Look them directly in the lens aperture and declare. "Is that right?" For that wildlife safari start with one long lens and one zoom lens that will handle landscapes and street scenes. For the cultural tour leave the long lens at home. Start with two lenses that cover a focal length range of 20 - 200 mm.

Dust bag, dry bag, rain sleeve: Dust in your camera and lens is a show stopper. Go down to Mountain Equipment Co-Op, buy a light bag that they sell for storing sleeping bags in. When photographing in dusty places keep this bag over your lens and camera. Only remove or loosen it for taking shots. If your trip includes frequent floating then take a big waterproof dry-bag to protect your camera and lens and another for accessories. For any trip pack a rain sleeve.

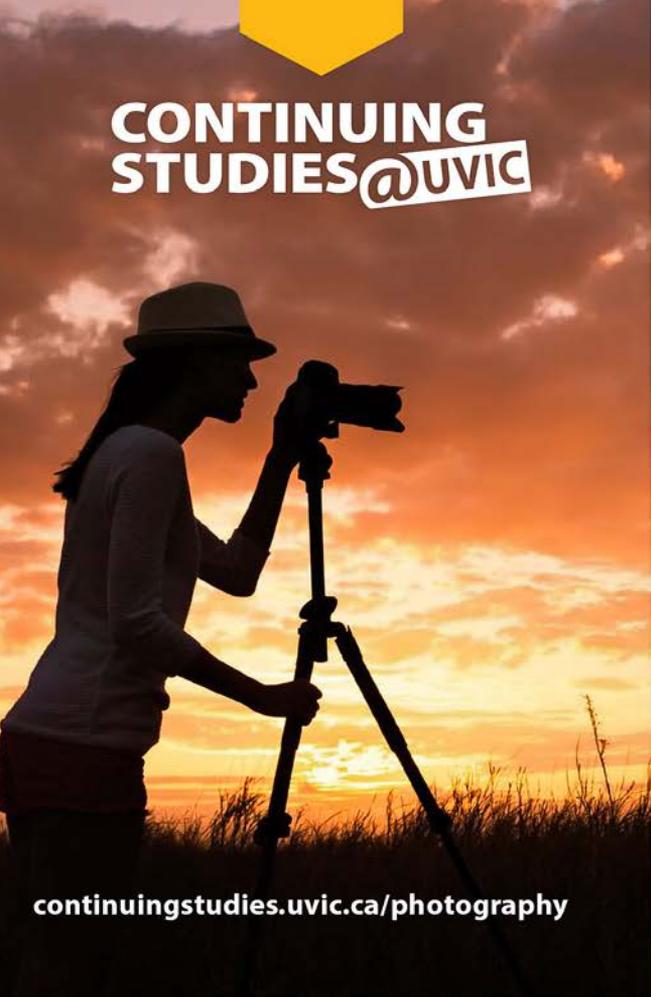
Memory cards, batteries, battery charger, backup device: Calculate how many images you expect to take. Say 700 images per day for ten days with a RAW file size of 30MB, that's 7000 images and 210,000 MB of card space (210 gigabytes). That's four 64 gigabyte cards. Are you going to back up and erase your cards or keep using new cards once each is filled? Are you taking a laptop computer and a portable hard drive? Once again, visualize your anguish level when images are lost. What is the minimum level of security that you can accept? Take enough.

Tripod and filters: The minimum for filters is one polarizing filter for each lens. Talk to yourself persuasively about why you should not take a tripod. If you can't, then persuade yourself to take a light travel tripod. Personally I am uncomfortable without those extra legs.

Packing: Place one camera body, two lenses, protective bag(s), memory cards, batteries, filters in your camera bag. If there is some space remaining, add another body and one small lens. That's it for your camera bag.

Pack your battery charger and laptop/backup storage, socks and underwear in your carry-on. The \$US100 bill is in its safe place. Pack your tripod in your suitcase.

Now you're done, er, wait, your bag is too small? Throw out everything and start again or go buy a bigger bag that you can still slide by the malevolent eye of Sardine Airlines International.



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Resizing Images

by Richard James

At some point in their lives almost all images need resizing for presentation in different media. It is important to do this at the right stage in the image preparation process. The best approach is to do all your image-editing on “full-size” files and crop and resize only when you know the specific uses for the image. This was discussed in the March and April 2016 issues of *Close-Up*.

If you use Lightroom for editing the workflow is slightly different than if you are using Photoshop or another editor rather than doing all your editing in Lightroom. Lightroom references the original file and maintains a database of instructions to edit it and display it on your screen. From there you must create an image file in order to produce a file you can send to somebody else or do further editing on in Photoshop.

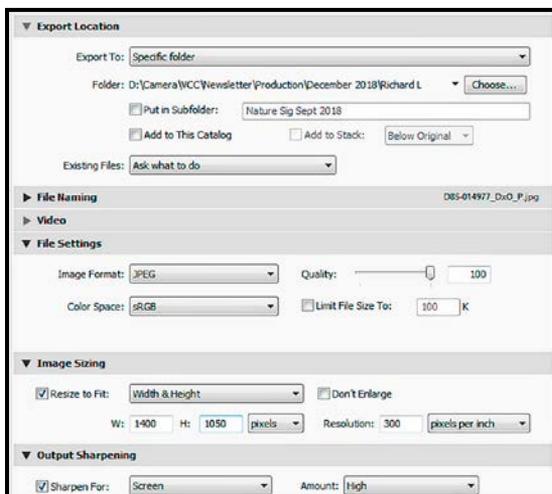
Whether you’re using Lightroom or Photoshop your final edited file becomes a “master file” from which you produce the various sizes and resolutions required for output. From this point you crop, resize and, finally, sharpen for the appropriate output and save each step as a separate identifiable file. That allows you to easily backtrack and change things later if you need to.

For images to be displayed on-screen, the critical information is the horizontal and vertical pixel dimensions. Resolution is meaningless for these images. For images to be printed the critical information is the physical dimensions of the image (inches/centimetres) and the resolution. Different printer brands recommend different resolutions, either 300 ppi (Canon) or 360 ppi (Epson), the “native resolutions” of the printer. Do not confuse this with the print head resolution in ink dots per inch (dpi) which is much higher.

To produce your final “ready-to-use” image from Lightroom you need to go to the export dialogue (File/Export), select the destination and then the appropriate parameters which are:

- For projected images: format (JPEG), colour space (sRGB), image size (1400 x 1050 pixels for VCC competitions), sharpening (screen, high or standard).
- For printing: format (TIF or PSD), image size (the print dimensions in inches), resolution (appropriate for your printer, see above), plus output sharpening (glossy/matte).
- For submitting a “full-size” image for *Close-Up*: the image format would be “original” if it has been processed outside of Lightroom, or “TIF” if it has only been processed in Lightroom, and sharpening would be none. This is critical as the two editions of *Close-Up* (print and web) require different sharpening and I can extract more information from a full-size image than I can from a smaller image.

If you are printing directly from Lightroom then you can set the sizing, resolution and sharpening in the print module without exporting the file, if you wish. However, I do all my final image prep in Photoshop including resizing and sharpening. I then bring the image into the Lightroom print module and print it without further resizing or sharpening.



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February Theme: Tradition

by Judy Plummer

The theme for the February competition is "Tradition". Tradition is defined as the transmission of customs and beliefs from generation to generation. A tradition could reflect something cultural, religious or personal.

The goal is to convey your chosen tradition in a photograph. Preparation could start by writing down the tradition that you want to convey. If it is your own family tradition, consider what is truly meaningful about this tradition to you. Ask yourself "What about this moment is important to me?" and then, "Why is it important?" If you are the observer of a tradition you may find the most intimate way of exploring the tradition by asking the above questions.

As in all photography we are always considering how to make our photographs most interesting. We want the result to be animated in capturing the moment but, more than a moment in time, we want the photograph to evoke a story. Think of this theme as being a short story. Do you want to have more than one person in the photo or is there just a suggestion of a person? Look for beautiful light and use a flash if necessary. Think of the angle you want to shoot from to tell your story. Low angles can make exciting events look exciting.

Is the photograph going to be a personal holiday tradition such as decorating the tree, a public event such as participating in the Christmas Parade or being at a regular scheduled concert? It could be a festive meal, part of the creation of the meal or generations singing around a campfire.

When making plans for your entry in this category think about the small details that are included in your photo. Take control of the entire frame. Is something left out that needs to be there or should you be removing a portion of the shot? The real story lives in the elements surrounding the action. What is the emotion the image creates? Think about the emotions that will be part of your photo not just the people and their faces, but what is the body language of the subjects. Go on-line and find photos similar to what you want to create, then make a plan.

Post-production is your choice in the theme category, so you can be as creative as you choose.

The deadline for entering the February competition is Thursday February 7th, 2019.

October 2018 Competition Judges

We extend our sincere thanks to the external judges for the October Intermediate and Advanced competitions: Rick Leche, Pierre Gautier, Robert Laramee and Gregg Eligh. We would also like to thank our in-house Novice Judges: Normand Marcotte, Martin Wright, Steve Lustig, Anne McCarthy, Caspar Davis, Suzanne Huot and Lorna Zaback. All images and judges' comments are available at: victoriacameraclub.ca/Competitions/CompetitionResults.aspx.

Rick Leche: Wildlife and Natural World. Rick currently lives in Black Creek, BC. He is an avid photographer of anything or everything. Rick loves to travel and capture the world. He never leaves home without his Canon gear. He is a member of the Langley Camera Club and was recognized as the top image maker for 2012-2013 by his peers in the Club. Rick is a CAPA certified judge. ricklechephotographer.zenfolio.com

Pierre Gauthier: Altered Reality. Pierre is a long-time and active member of the RA Photo Club in Ottawa. "The proper evaluation of an image is to find the qualities of the various components of an image and to discern how they work together as an expressive and significant whole."

Gregg Eligh: Advanced Prints. Gregg is a good friend to the Club and well known around the Club for his judging over the years, and for his interesting workshops. Gregg has worked across North America and the Caribbean doing corporate, editorial, catalogue and advertising photography. Gregg's work can also be seen in several gallery shows every year. gregg@elighphoto.com

Robert Laramee: Open and Theme. Robert studied photography with the School of Modern Photography. He joined the RA Camera Club (Ottawa) in 1975 and was a member for nine years. During that time, he managed the club darkroom for several years. Moving to a new house to raise a family put photography on hold for nearly twenty years. Robert rejoined the RA Photo Club in 2002. Retirement gave him more time to devote to photography and he started studying at the School of the Photographic Arts Ottawa in 2006, where he completed a Part Time Studies Certificate in Analog Photography in 2009. He has taught digital photography for the City of Ottawa and currently teaches at Académie des retraités de l'Outaouais. He also runs workshops and recently started private coaching and mentoring. As a photographer, he shoots landscapes and architecture; in the studio, he does tabletop photography and portraiture. He became a CAPA certified judge in March 2016.



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Advanced Altered Reality Digital - 1st
“Spray Point Sunrise, Hornby Island, BC”
by Richard James

Judge’s comments: Exhilarating colour pallet and brushwork make this image undulate to a rhythm that is unique and mesmerizing. A very satisfying vision.



Advanced Open Digital - 1st
“Sail Past” by Richard Letourneau

Judge’s comments: Technically perfect. Beautiful light which gives volume to the sails. The placement of the boat, of the horizon and of the mountain tops are all in balance. The subject is interesting. A great photograph which deserves to be printed very large.



Advanced Wildlife Digital - 1st
“Turkey Vulture” by Mark van Arragon

Judge’s comments: Stunning, superb, breathtaking and many more adjectives apply to this image. It is tack-sharp, it tells the story of a Turkey Vulture soaring in the skies in search of its next meal. The colour pallet and lighting are exceptional. The soft ominous background supports without distraction. Well seen, well captured and beautifully presented. Thank you!



Advanced Natural World - 2nd
“Sossusvlei Dune Study #2” by Steve Lustig

Judge’s comments: What a perspective! Outstanding viewpoint of this scene. Looks hot and effectively so. Great lines, the perspective provided by the long lens works very well. Thank you so much



Advanced Theme Digital - 1st
“Concentration” by Carole Valkenier

Judge’s comments: Excellent technique; great colour contrast between the blue and yellow. The motion blur and especially the emotion visible in the girl’s face make this a great photo. Congratulations.



Advanced Monochrome Print - 1st
“Sand Sculpture” by Michael Murchison

Judge’s comments: Excellent greyscale and contrast. The lighting is exactly correct for texture and form. Very good depth-of-focus. The static subject almost implies the motion of waves.



Advanced Nature Print - 3rd
“Bald Eagle Pair Resting” by Suzanne Huot

Judge’s comments: Clean, clear background frames your ‘heros’.



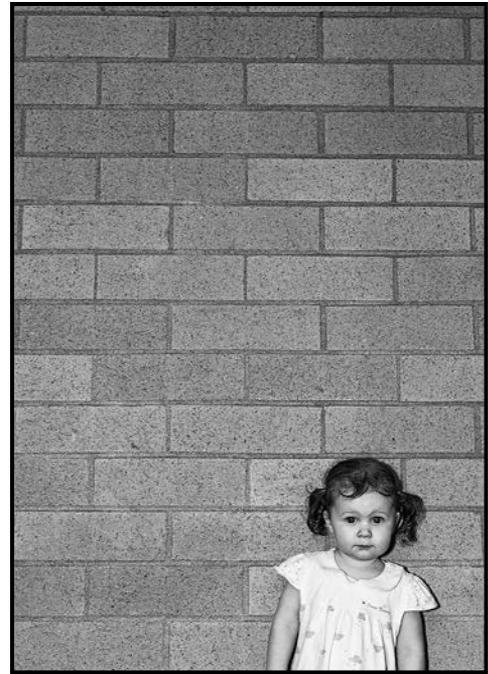
Advanced Open Print - 1st
“Evening in Kyuquot” by Lorna Zaback

Judge’s comments: A richly designed and executed scene with depth, strong lighting, good composition and ‘atmosphere’.



Intermediate Theme - 2nd
"Sourdough Rendezvous - Bucking-up Wood"
 by Rea Casey

Judge's comments: Technically excellent. Good choice of shutter speed, just slow enough to show the motion blur. The tight crop, with people closing the image at both ends, is a big plus. Colour could have been a distraction. Very well done.



Intermediate Digital Open - 1st
"Almost Two" by Grant Hughes

Judge's comments: A very strong image. Excellent technique, no distractions. The little girl occupies a small portion of the photo but our eyes are immediately drawn to her. The slant of her shoulders and her expression make us wonder how she feels. It might be worth correcting the perspective, a very minor point.



Intermediate Creative Digital - 1st
"Primordial Egret" by Tim Agoston

Judge's comments: The realistic Heron in this primordial space is appropriately suspended and wary of landing. He is truly frozen and suspended in a primordial space. The combined realism and altered reality communicate a palpable feeling.



Intermediate Wildlife Digital - 1st
"Stalking" by Kathleen Carrigan

Judge's comments: Lovely, ethereal mood captured in this photo. Great use of vignette and depth-of-field to focus on the Great Blue Heron. The letterbox crop really works to the makers credit and choice, Great overall photo, really appreciate you including it in this review Thank you!



Intermediate Natural World - 1st
"Waiting for Winter" by Lorna Shaw

Judge's comments: I love the high key lighting here. And the composition, frame filling, unbalanced and alluring! Great depth-of-field and sharpness without being distracting. This image exemplifies the feeling of autumn; it is a good feeling and thank you for capturing that feeling!



Novice Open Digital - 1st
"This Man's Best Friend" by Penny Authier

Judge's comments: An eye catching image of a quiet moment between the cat and person. The lighting, focus (on the cat's eyes) and exposure all contribute to an engaging image.



Intermediate/Novice Open Print - 1st (Tie)
"Flute Player" by Kim Smith

Judge's comments: This image gives us a sense of age and experience and also hints at injury. This adds to the sense of perseverance. Very sharp and great exposure for rich black background. A wonderful black and white study. Nothing to quibble about.



Novice Wildlife - 1st
"On the Wing" by Sharon Moysey

Judge's comments: This shot really makes us see the muscle in the shoulders and wings and the effort of this lift off. The composition and placement of the eagle in the upper right corner with the wings extending into the rest of the frame creates an image with great impact. The background is appropriately blurry with focus on the face and talons.



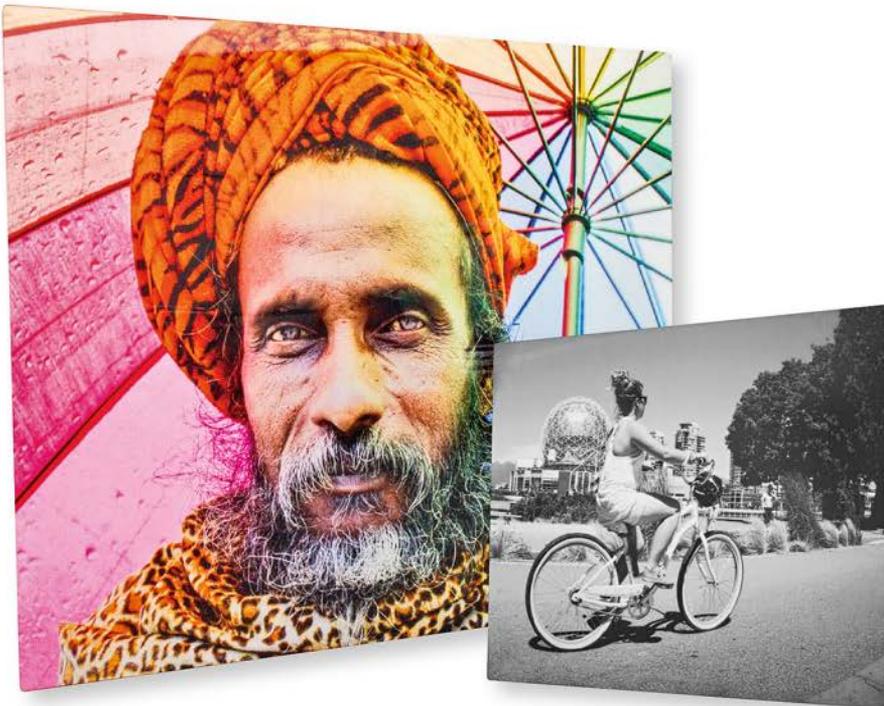
Novice Natural World - 1st
"Todd Creek" by Peter Amundsen

Judge's comments: This is a lovely shot with the glow of leaves. Well exposed and sharp.



Novice Theme - 2nd
"Focused" by Terri Kott

Judge's comments: Both subject and the execution are focused. Good composition and angle of shot to exclude other people around and nice catch light in the eyes. Well done.



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Member Profile: Doug Ambridge

I have always been an avid photographer. In the early years I worked with film. My first 35 mm single lens reflex camera was a Canon AE-1. My first and only “formal” training was at a local college where I was introduced to composition, depth of field, aperture, light, ISO, etc. all those things you need to know to become a good photographer.

We also got to develop and print our own images. I gradually learned to do my own black and white developing using a canister and black bag. Very rudimentary but it worked for me. I began taking all kinds of photographs, writing down the settings for each shot so I would know what I did right (or wrong).



“Holly Leaf”

My main subjects for a time were family events, new additions especially! I was even asked to photograph a friend’s wedding. It was a successful shoot! However I vowed, never again, too much pressure to get it right the first time as they only planned on one wedding day!

My first digital camera was a small Fuji. I think maybe with a five-megapixel sensor! I used this for a few years and then along came the urge to travel. For a few years, while travelling, I used a variety of point-and-shoot cameras and currently own a Panasonic Lumix which I find is great for travel as it is small, has a decent zoom and shoots RAW!

My current camera while not travelling is the mirrorless Olympus OM-D EM-1. Prior to that I was using a Canon 60D. This was a big change as I had to rid myself of everything associated with the Canon. I am still acquiring lenses and am currently in the market for a decent ND (neutral density) filter.

Over the years I have taken a lot of photos and have an extensive library now that we are in the digital age. It wasn’t until I retired, however, that I decided to take it up as a full time hobby.

I enjoy photographing nature, although I don’t consider myself a “Nature” photographer. I don’t have the patience to wait for the perfect shot. Mostly I photograph anything of the floral variety as flowers tend to stay still and the timing is a non-issue. I also love the early morning hours for sunrises and water reflections. My current passion is macro photography and the art of monochromatic images, especially architecture.

In 2011 I was in Ontario visiting a friend of mine. He belonged to a camera club and was taking full advantage of what it had to offer, becoming a successful fine-art photographer as a result. I decided that perhaps I should look into what Victoria had to offer as I had not thought about joining a camera club. A friend of mine here told me to call his friend Jack Copland who is a member of the Victoria Camera Club. So I did and the rest is history. I joined the Club in 2012 and have been a regular with the Tuesday group ever since.

I credit the Tuesday groups for helping me become a better photographer. There is a different theme every shoot so one has to be ready for anything. Plus there is the added advantage of the social aspect as we gather for lunch after the shoot to discuss our exploits. Soon I was approached to join the Competition Committee. I happily accepted and for approximately three years I was a member of this great committee. If you want to get some experience and advice this is one committee that you should join.

The best photographic advice I have ever received: “Keep shooting. Practice makes perfect and good composition should be your number one goal!”



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Using Flash

by Matt Speight

Recently, a customer commented that he never uses a flash. His full frame DSLR was so good in low light that he felt he never needed it. That's when I had a flashback to my uncle's 70th birthday party. Uncle Charlie is a popular guy and there were a couple of hundred people in attendance in the village hall, in deepest, darkest Devon, UK. With the festivity in full swing, Uncle Charlie gave me his full frame DSLR and told me to go take some pictures. I asked where his flash was. He gave me a smile and said, "It's a full frame. You'll be fine. You don't need a flash." This was of course, nonsense, as it was a dim hall with people dancing merrily, so my shutter speed needed some brevity to capture the action. I took a few photos and realized it was futile even at the higher ISO settings. At this point, I switched to my high-end compact camera which had a flash and I got some great photos. So, I thought I would write about the often-forgotten external flashgun and the technology within it, using the latest and greatest from Canon. The 470EX-AI is at the pinnacle of flash design.

So, what makes this flash the latest and greatest? The 470 EX-AI has the ability to auto bounce. Those of you who have used bounce flash know of its benefits. Bouncing the flash off a ceiling, or a wall, spreads the light over a larger area. This produces a more natural light with shadows that are a lot less harsh and reduces the glare on your subject.

The 470 EX-AI works out the optimal angle for the flash head by doing a pre-flash at the subject and then at the ceiling. It considers these two distances, calculating the optimal flash exposure and bounce angle. The flash will then, automatically, like magic, swivel into the correct position, and you're shooting like a pro. If you flip the camera vertically, you just need to half tap the camera shutter twice and the flash will automatically adjust the bounce angle for your vertical orientation. If you change to a different location, like a room with a taller ceiling, then by pressing the AI Bounce button, the 470 EX-AI flash will do its pre-flashes and adjust the bounce angle accordingly. The maximum height of a ceiling for the auto bounce feature to work, is seven metres.

Some of you may be thinking, "I am an experienced flash photographer. I don't need this new fan-dangled technology". Well, the auto intelligent bounce can help you as well. The 470 EX-AI has a semi-automated mode where you set the bounce angle yourself and then it memorizes the angle with the set button.

If you change your composition the flash head adjusts automatically to compensate. As in Auto mode, you need to half press the shutter button twice. I think this feature is awesome. The 470 EX-AI allows you to stay in the zone and focus on your subject and not get distracted by figuring out your bounce angle again. Anyone who shoots weddings or other busy events will really appreciate this.

Now let me cover some of the other features the 470 EX-AI has. Most of these features can be found on other higher-end flashes but I'm not sure if people are aware of them. AF assist beam is one such feature. When you're shooting in darker or lower contrast situations and the camera is struggling or can't achieve focus, the flash helps the camera autofocus by emitting an infrared beam towards the subject. It can then calculate the focus by how quickly the beam comes back. If your auto focus point is towards the edge of the frame, the flash will then switch to a series of pre-flashes to help the camera focus.

The flash head will also auto zoom. The flash head of the 470 EX-AI is communicating with the camera for the focal distance that you are shooting at and adjusts accordingly. It has a zoom range of 24-105 mm.

The advantage of a zoom head is that it gives the flash more effective power at the longer focal distances, which is where you need it most. It changes the flash from a wider dispersion to a narrow, more focused beam of light. It no longer illuminates what's outside of your frame and keeps the flash to what you're photographing. The 470 EX-AI also has a wide-angle diffusion panel that flips out, which will cover extreme wide-angle lenses up to 14 mm.

The 470 EX-AI, being a modern flash has TTL (through the lens) metering, which means the flash is using data from the camera's TTL metering to help work out the correct amount of flash for your subject. It also has an intelligent slave option, allowing the flash to be off the camera, with the TTL metering still functioning. You will however, need a compatible camera or a master flash on the camera to trigger the 470 EX-AI remotely. While being used as a slave the 470 EX-AI is not a master flash and cannot control other Canon flashes.

The customer with his full-frame camera ended up being apprehensive about flash, which is why he felt it was unnecessary. With the newer flash technology it's easier to get professional looking results with a minimum learning curve and the customer left the store feeling enlightened. Oh, I will be sending Uncle Charlie a new flash for his next birthday!

Miksang Photography

by Neil Boyle

I like Miksang photography or, rather, I like the images that practitioners of this genre produce. It's a small but growing field and we will be seeing more of it. I tried to get some formal training in it once, but not enough people enrolled to justify bringing the instructor to Victoria. There are workshops across the continent, so I will eventually follow that path. What I know of this branch of photography comes from reading, and from examples on the web. And, what I've tried to produce. So if I get it wrong, forgive me, and maybe write a better piece than this one.



"Bamboo Shoot"

First, the technical stuff. Miksang is a Tibetan word that roughly translates into English as "good eye", or "pure eye". It is based on the Dharma art teachings of Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche, a Buddhist meditation master who took up photography in the 1950s. It was further developed by two of his followers, Michael Wood and Andy Karr.

While Miksang comes from principles of meditation one does not need to meditate, or even know how, in order to make a Miksang image. One does need to be able to relax, to let go of preconceived ideas of what makes a "good" photo, to open the mind to what is around one. The photographer then expresses that perception with a camera. In modern photography schools, workshops and camera clubs, we are taught how our gear works (the mechanics of making an image) as a basis for learning what makes a properly exposed photograph. Then we learn composition guidelines, to look for shapes and patterns, leading lines, curves (both C and S), to do the mundane (keep the horizon horizontal) and the esoteric (long-exposure, focus stacking). Rules, recipes, guide-

lines. Lots of them. And then there is the feedback from the masters, the teachers and competition judges, on how to better follow the guidelines.



"Cherry Blossom"

Miksang photography branches off of this path somewhere after one learns how to make a correctly-exposed photograph. There are no rules, no guidelines and very few who will tell you how to make your image look "more" Miksang. Instead, Miksang teaching tries for the fundamental. "How do we express our perceptions exactly as we see them?" The exercise of this craft is more in the preparation of the mind, one's outlook, one's perception of the world, than it is in making a photo. The goal is to perceive the image without the limitations of formal teaching, without the constrictions of guidelines and rules, and to translate that perception into a photograph. To put it simply, "Be in the moment, and record it."



"Writing-on-Stone Provincial Park"

There are three stages to this process. The first involves letting go of all the thinking processes of perception and moving to only seeing, seeing things as they are. This is not easy, not quick, and requires patience and perhaps guidance. The second is to maintain this state of mind without distraction, to appreciate what you are seeing, but not to analyze it. And, finally, in the third stage, to make a photograph that captures what you have clearly seen.

Miksang followers often describe their own way of seeing and making images as Contemplative Photography.

They relax and appreciate their surroundings, contemplating what they see, allowing their minds to see it fully, and then they capture the essence of the perception.

It is, of course, more complicated than that. There are a number of people who are willing to guide interested photographers down this road and they have put up quite comprehensive websites, including examples of contemplative images (e.g. miksang.com). There are discussions of these images, of the exact meaning of Miksang and how to achieve it. If you look long enough, you will come to understand the difference between a constructed, posed image and one made by just seeing.



“Jai Lin Peng’s Garden”

How do you know if you’ve succeeded in this method of seeing and recording? If your image really is “Miksang”? Ah, the big question. And one that has produced conflicting essays on the many Miksang sites.

My interpretation is that there is no “Miksang” look, style or technique. Perhaps there is a “Miksang way”, a path to an image. There is attention to simplicity, colour, texture, light, and space. There is a “flash of perception” in which the maker of the image was able to put aside all the rules and examples of photography and actually see what was in front of him/her.

Sometimes, this is obvious in the image, and sometimes it takes a while to show. An age-old test for the quality of an image applies here. Print the image, hang it in a space where it will be frequently seen, and over time, the quality of the image will become apparent. If, after some significant time, it still looks fresh, contem-

plative and clear of rules and guidelines, and sits well with your inner art critic (not your inner photo critic), then it is a good eye image, a contemplative image, a Miksang image.

Miksang, like most areas of photography, definitely improves with practice. Seeing without restrictions takes practice and turning what you see into a printed image definitely takes work. The more you do, the more you contemplate what you have done, the more Miksang makes sense.



“Hare Bell”

You do not need someone else to judge or criticize your image to decide if it is Miksang. If it fits, if it sits well with you, if it shows what you saw (and not what you were supposed to see), then you have succeeded in expressing the concept.

And if others can see in your image what you actually saw, unencumbered, in the real world, then truly, you have made a Miksang image.



“Tomato”

How I Did It

Blurred Rowers

by Kevin Kelhier

I took this photo during an October 2017 workshop led by Lloyd Houghton. Earlier that week we had looked at the creative effects that could be achieved through camera motion/slow shutter speeds. One of the field venues was Victoria's Upper Harbour (by the Canoe Club) during a rowing regatta. It was a late morning shoot and the looming weather system left us all a bit uncertain. After a bit of a warm up I finally got into using camera shake in earnest. This was also when it started to rain in earnest. Regardless, we all forged ahead with enthusiasm.

For this image I used a slow shutter speed and moved my camera slightly to the right and up. I initially did some editing in Lightroom pumping up the contrast and using the Adjustment Brush (saturation, 60 clarity, 99).

Then in Photoshop I removed the rowers and did some darkening of the image with the Burn tool. Then I printed this image using a colour photocopier at Staples.

Next I transferred the print by hand onto a layer of dry-wall compound using Oil of Wintergreen and a burnishing tool. This caused the image to appear quite distressed and textured.

I then photographed the transferred image and blended it with the original regatta photo in PS. One of the more interesting post-processing results occurred when I made the image smaller by resizing it while the aspect ratio was unconstrained. It stacked parts of the boating paraphernalia (orange) and the building behind (blue) and also increased the concave shape of the protruding boat's hull. I like the final more painterly result. Canon 6D with an EF 24-105 mm f4L IS USM lens, RAW Capture, ISO 200, f22, 0.4 sec.



Smoke gets in your Skies

by Penny Authier

This photo was an accident. Hearing how amazing the Victoria Day fireworks were we decided that a spot at the Delta Hotel would be a good place to get an unobstructed view. Being new to Victoria, we believed that the launch site would be located at the Parliament Buildings. Apparently, I had skipped over the “scout your location” portion of the directions for shooting fireworks.



Arriving early, I set up my tripod and checked my camera settings. About ten metres to my right, the actual launch area for the fireworks was also being set up. I didn't really consider the problems I would encounter until the first burst was sent skyward. Instead of a beautifully proportioned display what we got was lots of smoke and laser-fast balls of colour.

I tried taking some shots in manual mode. No matter what adjustments I made, the photos were terrible. Panic was starting to set in. I was getting nothing but blur. Time for Plan B. I flipped into sport mode, which put my Canon T6s into AI Servo with continuous shooting. I turned as far as possible and pointed my camera up at the sky. When I heard the “poof” sounds emanate from the launch cannon, I pressed the shutter button and held firm, panning slowly from right to left. I was reminded of a class I had taken with Mitch Stringer, who would often joke about the “Spray and Pray” method of shooting.

Reviewing this photo later, I thought that the smoke trails with their different colours were interesting. When I joined the Club last year, I started attending the Novice Image Reviews. I decided to take this picture in to see what feedback I would receive. Following some of the suggestions given, I used my limited knowledge of Lightroom to open some of the shadows up and saturate the colours. I also used the straightening tool to get a sharper diagonal.

I had been using song titles for some of my entries and came up with Smoke Gets in Your Skies. Canon T6s, 18 mm at f5.6, 1/30th sec. ISO 800.

Tuesday Shoots

by Jim Fowler

As the days grow shorter, and the weather turns wetter make sure your camera doesn't get lonely. The small group of regular attendees at the Tuesday shoots is always ready to share their photographic experience. Attendees post photos in the web gallery afterward. See what others saw. Compare your photos. Be stimulated and amazed.

December 4th: Victoria Butterfly Garden and Insectarium. Escape from the cold and wet outdoors and come and visit the birds, butterflies and insects in this warm and humid tropical environment. Leave your coat on the rack provided; it is very warm inside. Keep your camera warm before you arrive. Cold cameras will coat instantly with condensation, although "lens driers" are provided. I like a 200-300 mm lens here. These insects are small, although there are also fish, turtles, a macaw and flamingos. Tripods and flash are okay, as long as you are respectful of other visitors. Try to catch a shot of the Blue Morpho butterfly with his wings open! A special group rate is available if there are ten or more of us. See the Club calendar for details.

December 11th: Tradition. Tradition is a custom or belief that has existed for a long time, passing from generation to generation. Tradition could include one of the many cultural or religious traditions in our area, as well as personal traditions, from food, to language, clothing, or customs. This is the VCC Competition Theme for February so don't pass up opportunities this holiday season. (See page 10.)

December 18th: Esquimalt Lagoon. This world-famous location is visited by a wide variety of bird species and birders from all over the world come to see them. Managed by Canada Wildlife, it is a migratory bird sanctuary. The sanctuary website lists 16 key bird species but unusual visitors are frequent. Bring your best "birder" lens, the longer the better. In case you're not keen on birds, don't forget the many driftwood sculptures on the beach side and there are always ships just offshore.

December 25th: Merry Christmas! No Tuesday shoot.

Some events require registration and a fee or donation may be requested. Please check the Club calendar for details related to each field trip. Some destinations require a minimum number for special arrangements. The group leaders count on the registration record to reserve a lunch table, so please register.

December 2018

Weekend Shoots

by Vanessa MacDonald

December 1st: Lighted Truck Parade and Christmas in the Inner Harbour. Join us for a fun Christmas-themed night photography field trip. The lighted trucks will be parked at Ogden Point before the parade begins, so this can be a good opportunity to capture them while they are standing still with blue hour lighting. The parade starts at 5:45pm at Dallas Road. After that we propose moving to a second location in front of the Empress Hotel. This area is favoured among local photographers for capturing the trucks coming down the street in a line. There is usually an hour available before the trucks arrive at the harbour, which we can use for scouting and also getting some Christmas-themed shots of the Inner Harbour.

December 10th: The Magic of Christmas at the Butchart Gardens. Time to get into the holiday spirit! The enchanting holiday light displays at the Butchart Gardens will take your breath away and you'll have the chance to fill up your memory card with the most magical night photos you've ever taken. Other points of interest at the Gardens will include a Festive Brass Band and Traditional Carolers, the skating rink, indoor carousel, and Twelve Days of Christmas displays. We have set aside time for socializing and warm drinks in the main café prior to getting started with photography.

If you have any questions, please contact the coordinators, Gita and Vanessa at fieldtrips@victoriacamearclub.ca. See the calendar to register and for more details.



Photography Close to Home

by Richard Letourneau

When I first moved to Victoria seven years ago I fell in love with its natural beauty. However, I did not know my way around and used a GPS in my car for the first three months. Then one day I thought, "How lost can you get? You live on an island!" So I tossed the GPS aside and started exploring and discovering the many wonders of island living and the splendour it has to offer.

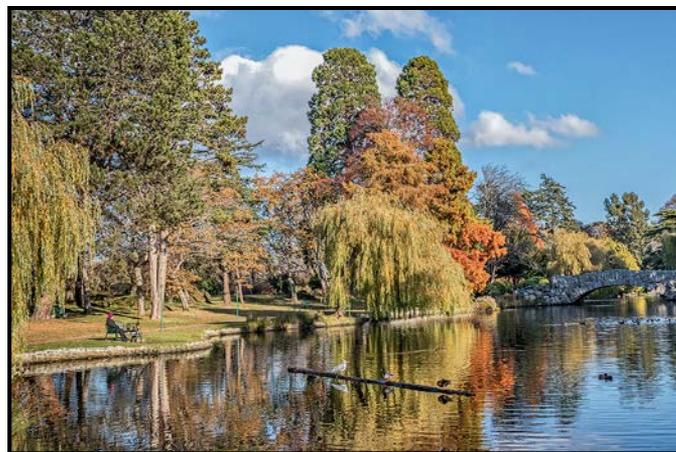
In December 2013, I enrolled in an introductory photography class at West Shore Parks and Recreation. After learning about the advantages of shooting RAW, I replaced my Panasonic Lumix (DMC-ZS20) with a Canon 70D. In the fall of 2014, I enrolled in an Intermediate Photography class at Camosun College. On the recommendation of instructor Mitch Stringer, I joined the Victoria Camera Club the following year and upgraded to my present Canon 7D Mark II.

I have the equipment and the accompanying gear, so where will I shoot? Everywhere! And the good news is, I don't have to travel to other exotic locales to produce magnificent images. And neither do you. This article may be helpful to new members, to new residents in the area, or may serve as a reminder to locals not to overlook nearby surroundings, as settings for photographs. It is not intended to be a definitive list but rather indicative of potential photography locales.

Living in Victoria provides easy access to many varied environments. For example, there are lakes, streams, beaches, waterfalls, parks and gardens, all less than 20 minutes from my home, in View Royal. I visit Goldstream Provincial Park to see Little Niagara Falls, old growth forest, the salmon run, eagles, or even a bear. Goldstream Campground, has a smaller waterfall.

I frequent Gorge Park for its lovely Japanese Garden; Macaulay Point with views of rock climbers and downtown; Ogden Point and Saxe Point Park for seascapes, floral gardens and views of the mountains in Olympic National Park. The view from Gonzales Park is also unparalleled. Another lovely green space is St. Ann's Academy, a National Historic Site. The waterfront sites at Fort Rodd Hill and Fisgard Lighthouse are extremely photogenic, especially with the scenic backdrop of the Olympic Mountains. This coast artillery fort has much to explore.

One well-known local park is Beacon Hill Park, where I spend hours watching the nesting herons, strolling the



"Beacon Hill Park"

pathways, gazing at peacocks or the children's zoo animals, listening to bandstand performances, admiring the early spring crocus and daffodils, or looking for baby barred owls, near the large totem pole.

I'd be remiss if I didn't mention Francis King Regional Park, since it's almost in my backyard. The hiking trails are well marked and it is particularly worth a visit in the spring because of the wildflowers on Shooting Star Trail. Signage explains the three layers of the forest: herb layer, shrub layer and canopy layer. You can see Douglas Firs up to 500 years old, Red Cedars, Arbutus and Sword Ferns, which thrive in the clearings. Birders also frequent this area.

For florals I visit Government House, Finnerty Garden, Abkhazi Garden, Playfair Park, the Horticultural Centre of the Pacific, or Butchart Gardens. Also, Victoria Butterfly Gardens is like a tropical rain forest with flowers. Since moving to Victoria, I have been an Annual Pass holder at Butchart Gardens, as it affords me the opportunity of visiting as often as I like, year round. As the seasons change, so does the landscape. I particularly



"Finnerty Gardens at UVic"

enjoy the transformations in the Mediterranean, Sunken, Rose, Italian and Japanese Gardens, and of course, the “Twelve Days of Christmas” lighting display is part of the annual celebrations at the Gardens.

I enjoy the hike at Swan Lake Christmas Hill Nature Sanctuary. It is described as “a wild oasis in the heart of the urban landscape”. It features two distinct ecosystems: the beautiful marshland of Swan Lake and the rocky oak-forested highlands of Christmas Hill. There is a floating boardwalk across the Lake. The summit of Christmas Hill sits at 109 meters above sea level and rewards you with a spectacular view of the city. In the spring a sea of wildflowers surrounds you as you walk through the endangered Garry Oak meadow.



“Charlie’s Trail at Royal Roads”

Another perennial favourite of mine is the Esquimalt Lagoon Migratory Bird Sanctuary and Royal Roads University lands. There I find herons, shorebirds, gulls, eagles, Fisgard Lighthouse, crashing surf with the occasional surfer, sunsets, gardens, a castle and much more. Charlie’s Trail runs alongside Colwood Creek. A walk through the vast forested grounds surrounding Hatley Castle at Royal Roads University offers the epitome of forest bathing, taking in the forest atmosphere while viewing native plants, ancient trees, waterfalls, and wildlife. King’s Pond, near Cedar Hill Golf Course, has a variety of waterfowl, including Wood Ducks.

For marine outlooks I appreciate my time at the Chinese Cemetery, Kitty Islet, Clover Point, Dallas Road, the Breakwater, Oak Bay Marina, Fisherman’s Wharf, Mount Douglas, Mount Tolmie, Cattle Point, and Willows Beach, as well as Island View Beach, especially for views of Mount Baker or perhaps the aurora borealis. Thetis, Beaver, and Elk Lakes are nearby and have beaches, walking trails and pleasant panoramas.

Downtown Victoria is filled with hidden treasures. Our Chinatown, the oldest in Canada, and Fan Tan Alley, the narrowest street in Canada. Also, Dragon Alley and

Trounce Alley are unique. Simply strolling through back alleys in Old Town will reveal hidden surprises, like intricate graffiti, ivy-covered buildings, and eye-catching street art. Not only does James Bay have Ogden Point and the cruise ship terminal but also many colourful homes and tree-lined streets. Ross Bay Cemetery is a superb example of a Victorian-era burial ground with unusual trees and amazing grave monuments. There appears to be a resident herd of deer, always present on each of my visits.

The Inner Harbour may be photographed from many vantage points and there is always something of interest. The Parliament Buildings, home to the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia, together with the stately Empress Hotel, are but two of the city’s architectural icons.

Victoria hosts many festivals and parades and many of those happen in the city core. Downtown affords opportunities to experience crowds, events, displays, activities, shopping, food, sea-going vessels of all types, seaplanes, ferries, First Nation artisans, musical performances, buskers, museums, water taxis, hanging baskets, sight-seeing tours, whale watching, carriage or pedicab rides and more! Visit during the day and then again in the evening, and you’ll see a world filled with colour, reflection, lights, and movement.

Remember that the Camera Club offers participants chances to get out with other members whether on Tuesday or Alternate Tuesday shoots, or by participating in Field Trips.

I am happy to live in the Capital Regional District and grateful to enjoy many hours discovering local spots to explore and photograph. I encourage you to not overlook what so many of us take for granted. Go outdoors, use your “photographer’s eye” and you will be gratified at what you’ll discover right in your own backyard, this City that we call home.



“Pintail Pair at Esquimalt Lagoon”

Beginners' Corner: Room To Play

by Josée Ménard

This month's article addresses the habit photographers have of giving themselves at least an extra 10% of capture space in their image to ensure having some room to make composition adjustments during post-production. This may be to level a possible misalignment or to reposition the compositional frame a bit to better invite the eye of the viewer into the image. Having some room to play in your image allows you to relax knowing you gave yourself a safety blanket.

This simple yet effective tip expands the notion that what you see in the viewfinder will be what you get in the end by zooming out a desired amount or by taking a step back before capturing your photograph.

Before you know it, this new habit will become second nature. On the other hand, at times, you may not wish to give yourself this cushion as it could bring an undesired element into the frame such as a distracting feature or bright spots. Double check all your composition elements and click!

This image, "Child's Play", provides a perfect example of leaving room to crop. As I walked with my grandchildren towards a mosaic mural in a Hawaiian community park, my photographic eye spontaneously composed this image in my mind.



"Child's Play - 1"

The turquoise background, with the warm-toned directional lines helped guide the eye along the colourful broken tiles while the mirror pieces interject a new reflective element into the artist's imaginative mural.

As I created the story, I wished to include some of her reflection. By playing tiles together, I perfectly captured her infectious smile. Happy, we left.

In post-production, having the extra cushion allowed me to resolve a few distractions in version 1 such as the patterned tile in the top left corner and tile edges on the left side. By cropping, I can also bring the main subject, her face reflecting, more in evidence.

As the eye scans the image, the directional lines invite the eye in from the edges as well as guide it towards the tiles arranged in a gentle curve fashion. We discover the child mesmerized within the play of tiles.



"Child's Play - 2"

The second and third versions illustrate how important it is to know when to stop cropping. With practice, an inner sense develops.

The second image shows that trying to crop out the small white tile in the bottom left corner as well as the top one, is too much. Some of the energy gets lost. The eye loses interest and guidance.

Back to the drawing board, include the bottom small white tile and re-balance the image until the eye is pleased emphasizing the Fibonacci spiral shape.

As they say, less is more. In this case, the final photo shows that less taken off is a more successful image.



"Child's Play - 3"

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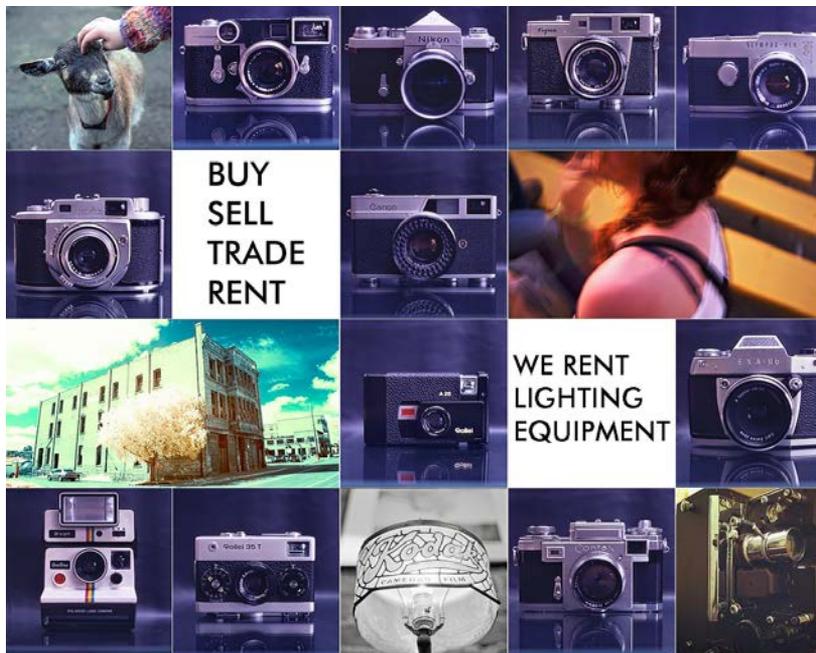
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