

Message from the President

December 2016

December provides a brief hiatus from the hurly-burly of our ongoing club activities. A time to reflect upon how our year has been going so far and an opportunity to look ahead to the New Year looming just over the horizon. Each of you will have your own expectations, needs and desires. Has the VCC been meeting, rising above or falling below those thresholds?

From my perspective, things have gelled quite well during the fall session. All of our main programs have delivered full schedules which have been generally positively received. Yes, there have been a few glitches along the way. Our volunteers will continue to address operational issues as they arise. Most impressive, to me, though, has been the way in which members from across the spectrum, including some who are very new to the club, have offered both leadership and support to make it all happen. It continues to be a reality that the club thrives as long as members embrace that degree of participation. It is equally true that each of us gains much, on a personal level, through our full engagement with our fellow members.

One area that we all may want to reflect upon is that of the future of prints in our competitions. The number of entries has dropped this year at the advanced level and has been low at the combined novice and intermediate level. Does this reflect larger trends in society which favour quick digital access over more permanent 'slow' approaches? Do cost, convenience, knowledge or skills come into play? As suggested at a recent meeting, could specific workshops, mentoring or other approaches help to overcome some of the obstacles? Another barrier, which may also play a part in limited participation in novice level competitions in general, hinges upon a member's degree of confidence. This brings to mind my own experience with the whole process. My first print entries, in 1998, were 8×10 inches in size from a 1.3 mega-pixel digicam. Daunting, and I didn't do too well with those. But I did receive valuable feedback and gradually upped my game. Placements may be nice but the real payoff is in receiving feedback and the impetus to reach for your own goals!

My best wishes go out to you and yours, whatever your particular form of worship or celebration during these weeks surrounding the winter solstice. A familiar "Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!" to all. To those who enrich our community from diverse faiths and cultures, I'd be pleased if you would interpret those sentiments in terms more directly meaningful and personal.

Garry Schaefer, President