Close-Up

VCC

Inside:

"Tim's Workshop" by Don Peterson

Victoria Camera Club

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.org* where you can also read or download the colour version of *Close-Up*.

For additional information: please contact:

Membership: membership@victoriacameraclub.org
Workshops: workshops@victoriacameraclub.org
Field Trips: fieldtrips@victoriacameraclub.org
Meetings: meetings@victoriacameraclub.org
Website: webmaster@victoriacameraclub.org
Close-Up: newsletter@victoriacameraclub.org
or call Lloyd Houghton, President at 250-580-7154.

What's Inside

The Victoria Camera Club is a member club of the Community Arts Council of Greater Victoria (CACGV), 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.

Thursday, Sept. 10th; Competition Night

Our first meeting will feature presentations on our competitions and "How to use the new Website." The Theme for September is "Floral Artistry." The deadline for submission is September 10th.

Thursday, Sept 17th; Presentation Night

Kathryn Amisson will make a presentation "The Eye of a Professional Landscape Painter." She will describe how she visualizes and builds the images that she creates. Kathryn is a professional artist who has become well-known for her landscapes and seascapes.

Thursday, Sept. 24th; Members' Night

Presentation of members' images, field trip slide shows, prints or short technical topics.

Thursday, October 1st; Competition Night

One of our judges will comment on the September competition images. The October theme is "Simplicity" and the deadline October 1st.

Thursday, October 8th; Presentation Night

Well known to members, retired professional photographer Rob Destrube, will make a presentation on "Professional Portraits and Body Photographs."

Thursday, October 15th; Members' Night

Presentation of members' images, field trip slide shows, prints or short technical topics.

Cover image: "Tim's Workshop" by Don Peterson. Bang on Anvil is a machine shop on Hornby Island owned and operated by Tim Biggins. Tim is a long-time resident of the island and is a talented machinist, welder and artist. In 2014 I made a series of images in and around Tim's workshop as part of a longer term project to photograph artists, studios, workshops and other interesting buildings on the island. Nikon D800E, ISO 200, Nikkor 16-35 mm lens at 16 mm, f11, 0.6 sec, on tripod. Post-processed in Lightroom and converted to monochrome in NIK Silver FX Pro.

President's Message

As you start to wind down from being continually on the go throughout the summer, it's time to have a closer look at those images that looked great at first glance and see if your first impressions were correct. It's amazing how many of them seem to deteriorate while they wait for you to get serious about editing them! When you need a break from editing, get some artistic and technical inspiration from *Close-Up.* There's something here for everyone, from those new to serious photography through to the most accomplished enthusiasts. Enjoy.

Congratulations to Wendi Donaldson Laird for some great achievements. While we were aware that she received a PSA Gold Medal for Photojournalism at the 121st Toronto International Salon of Photography for her image "*Rescue at Sea,*" there are some other achievements that we just heard about. Her 2014 entries in international salons accredited by PSA saw her placed 18th in North America (8th in Canada) in the PSA Projected Image Division and 11th in North America (3rd in Canada) in the Pictorial Print Division large colour print categories. This year she also earned the "Associate" designation (AAPS) from the Australian Photographic Society and the "Artiste" (AFIAP) designation from FIAP (Federation Internationale de L'Art Photographique). Well done Wendy.

Another "well done" goes to Ian Crawford for an Award of Excellence for his "*Girlz Welding*" image at this year's Sooke Art Show. Congratulations Ian.

A big thank-you to Steve Jakes and all of his team for a great job at setting up the new website. This has been a huge undertaking that has gone very smoothly due to a lot of planning and hard work behind the scenes.

My printer has been idle for too long. I printed a dozen prints for a book project I'm completing. Handling the prints, and looking closely at them from all angles and distances reminded me how much better prints look than viewing projected or computer screen images. It is difficult to put into words, but it is a different experience to have your printed work to hold and look at. One of our judges recommended that we organize a visit to a print collection and get an experienced curator to show what makes good prints exceptional. This is something that I'm keen to investigate. If this is of interest to you, let me know.

This year's print show will be at the downtown gallery of Art Atelier 546 on Yates Street from 10th to 24th November. This is a great opportunity for members to exhibit their work in a juried show in a high profile gallery.

Lloyd Houghton, President.

by Steve Jakes, Webmaster

Our new website at www.victoriacameraclub.ca has now been launched and is being used by our members.

Overview: The new website replaces the award winning website nurtured by Garry Schaefer for the past seven years. Thank you, Garry, for your tireless dedication to presenting the Club's outstanding Internet image to the public and members.

The new website is based on a made-for-photography-clubs application, "Visual Pursuits," developed by Software Pursuits, Inc. which is being used by numerous clubs through its affiliation with PSA.

Features: The website includes a competition management system with remote judging, judges comments, galleries, forums, calendar with event registration tracking, role-based access for the management of these features, and an integrated email system.

Privacy: Privacy and image protection are set through the requirement for members to login to the website to interact with some features, such as to register for events, and access some forums and other pages that are restricted to members-only. Members' contact information is visible only by the Membership Managers and Administrators, unless the member specifically authorizes other members to see it, and is never visible to the public. Messages do not show other members' email addresses. Images larger than 500x400 pixels are watermarked when displayed to the public. This can be turned off by the image owner for viewing by logged-in members.

Member Profiles: Every member has a profile for contact information, their competition levels, website access roles, membership expiry and other club related information. Members can add, remove, and modify their personal information using the features of "My Account". Under this menu members can change their password, add an avatar (profile picture), put in the address of their personal website, allow other members to see their contact information (this is off by default) and remove the watermarks for logged-in member image viewing.

Competitions: Internal and external competition selections will be managed, judged and displayed through the website. Competition categories are predefined with maximum image size, number of images per member, eligible competition levels and open/closing dates. Images that are larger than the competition size will be automatically resized. Images larger than 4 Mb will be rejected. Members can remove, edit or replace their competition images until the closing date and time. You cannot see other members' entries. You can also generate and print the label for print images.

The judged images will be will be presented as a slideshow for Competition Night. When the competition results are released, they are viewable on the website and include full-size images. Results will normally be open to the public for viewing, however only logged in members will be able to see the judges' comments on images.

Image Galleries: These are arranged in categories: Field Trips, Tuesday Group, SIGs, etc. with individual galleries for events and/or general galleries. Most of the galleries will be viewable by the public. This is the place to show your best images for an event.

Discussion Forums: Discussion forums will figure prominently in the Club's SIG activities. It is important that SIG members subscribe to their forums as this is where notices will be posted and discussion take place. There are forums for the SIGs, the new website, Blue Bridge Group, Buy/Sell, Lightroom, Photoshop and Smartphone Photography. Members can add new topics, comment on existing topics, and show one of their images for discussion. Members can subscribe to forums, and/or individual topics to receive email notification of new messages.

Image Management: Every member has their own image library. All uploaded images go into this library. Images can be uploaded directly into a competition, directly into a gallery or directly into the image library and then be assigned to the competition and/or gallery.

The intent of images in the website is to let people see them. After 60 days the system will automatically delete from the member's image library any images that are not placed in at least one competition or gallery.

Help: There are numerous short videos under the Help menu on the website. In addition, under Documents and Files, there are How-to documents with step-by-step instructions for most of the key activities members will need to do on the website, such as uploading images to competitions and galleries. The webmaster can be reached either by using the "Help/Submit a Support Request" menu or at *webmaster@victoriacameraclub.org*.

Our new website offers many interactive features designed to make it easier for members to share their joy of photography with members and the public.

by Mark Ammen

When we put a camera's viewfinder in front of our eyes, what happens? How we approach a scene is influenced by our intent and is guided by our preference, background and experience, yet it is how we reveal the scene that gives it depth and emotional value. To paraphrase from the book "*What Is Art For*?" We make art to engage our perception and our intellect, to learn, to collaborate, and to make life special. Art is an essential behaviour of being human.

Photographers have inherited not only the last stages of image making represented by the camera obscura, daguerreotype, panchromatic film, and the digital imaging sensor, but from all mark-making practices back to the Palaeolithic era. As a species we have an insatiable desire to convey our experience. Be it charcoal or pixels, if there is a space we will certainly make an image on it.

From the beginning of photography it has been a two-stage process of capture and print. The photographer employs creative decisions at both the initial capture and film or RAW processing phase, and at the final image processing stage. Once an image is captured and processed it is then up to the artist in the darkroom or image processing environment to further determine the best treatment to portray their intent. Primary practices employing exposure, contrast, dodging/burning, and cropping have been the principal tools the photographic artist employs to attain their vision. Ansel Adams's famous comment that the negative is the score and the print is the performance is certainly relevant.

Digital image processing software has dramatically enlivened the two-stage process. Post capture image processing has opened vast opportunities for the artist beyond traditional practices. The image space is now highly flexible, nondestructive, and editing can be readily applied across the whole image or selectively.

The period we are living in now is a particularly important phase in photographic history that will profoundly influence the future of image making. Since the art world's traditional expectations are, thus far, not dictating to photography we have an open canvas in which to explore. Photography is certainly seen as fine art, but with a long history of rapid change photography continues to bewilder the art world, thankfully, leaving us to our own devices. This period is most similar to Impressionism where a convergence of new brushes, tube paints, and portability allowed a dramatic shift in how artists rendered what was expressed. This is where technology triggered exploration by artists in search of what made life special. The outcome influenced both the style and content of fine art forever. We are at a similar threshold today.

Digital imaging is both re-exploring the photographic sensibility of the past and image making of the future. This imaging workflow has given photographers an enormous and expanding palette from which to work. We are no longer limited to what the camera sees as we now possess post-capture tools to composite, paint, and re-contextualize a work. The imaging space has become a vast area in which to discover and combine image temperaments from countless sources. The photographer can work with the creative palettes of painters, printmakers, and mixed media artists. This is an enormous transformation in visual art. So the question is, how do we proceed?

"Traces of a Dream" Photography and Monotype

Painters proceed from a blank space to which they selectively bring in line and tone to compose their expression. Photographers work with an existing, complex scene and select frame, light, focus, and timing to compose their expression. Photographers work to select order out of chaos.

It may be that radical simplification of the image by cropping, selective focus or tonal assimilation of photographic complexity will focus the intent of the artist. Possibly adding new linear or tonal elements will unify the image.

These could be both analog and digital sources where they are all brought together in the image editing software imaging space. In-camera effects could be blended with other photos, textures, painting, and drawings. Merging compositions shot in sequence with different light qualities could build a dramatic work. Gestural elements could heighten the emotional impact of the work. The possibilities are endless, when working across the whole image, or discretely using masks, so we need to proceed with an open imagination.

As photographers we tend to hunt with our view finder. From there we have to respond to that framing and consider how we want to render it. True, we can use time to move clouds, or select when the sun spotlights the subject just so. It is an artist's task to learn how to render light.

"Edge of Time" Photography

So, what of the subject? Aren't we rendering a thing or event? Yes, but in art the subject is frequently less important than the temperament of the expression. The thing that moves people deeply is drama. It is not the mountain, but the drama of the light over and around the mountain that is commanding.

In a 1983 interview Ansel Adams stated "*None of my images are realistic in terms of values …the original exposure is much softer than the print. To get a certain vitality I let some tones go very deep …an intentional manipulation of value.*" Adams's techniques are legendary, but it was his approach as an artist that is truly valuable.

By way of the viewfinder and our experience the initial image capture is the inspiration and the primary driver in any work. By way of the screen in the post processing image space we can extend our imagination to create drama and mystery from that inspiration. It may only need tonal adjustments to convey the impact of the work. In other instances the work may respond like a painting with additions and reworks, dead ends

and revelations. Being sometimes lost is a natural part of any journey of discovery.

The creative process is not a fixed sequence of techniques, but a flow of our preferences, experience and discovery. With the tools of a medium available at a reasonably instinctive level the artist can pursue the inspiration of the work, the expression. Techniques can be learned, but expression must be discovered.

Art is a means by which the inner workings of the mind and streams of consciousness become materialized. The strength of an artwork is not derived from the tools, techniques, nor even the scene, but in the perception of the artist. The resulting artwork should be not so much an image, as an encounter.

Photographers, like all artists, need inspiration from a broad array of creative work. Certainly nature inspires, but experiencing how others have responded to life in whatever medium can be revealing and inspiring. After all, we make art because we are story tellers.

"Spanish Dance" Photography Triptych

As we are in the midst of a revolution in art where photo-imaging is key it behooves us to be informed and active as we are on the forefront of visual story telling. Photograph, exhibit, collaborate, and self-publish. Engage your experience and vision to create an expression that makes life extraordinary.

When we put the viewfinder and the image processing space in front of our eyes we have the opportunity to visualize like all artists: with a blank canvass. This is to change our perception from the certainty of image capture and representation to the exploration of a space and the discovery of an expression.

Art is not what you do; it's a style of living.

Do you need Shadows?

by Richard James

Shadows in images are an essential way of showing surface texture and thus details in an image. Virtually every image needs shadows; the question is, how to control them. There is one key exception to this rule, if you are copying documents, you generally do not want to show the texture of the surface, so you do not want shadows. This is achieved with very flat lighting.

So, for virtually every other image you need to be able to control the shadows. If you're shooting a landscape, can you wait for a different time of day, or wait until the cloud moves to provide you an overcast sky rather than "harsh noonday light?"

What is an "ideal" shadow? Unless you are using shadows for effect as part of the graphic composition, then generally you want minimal shadows that are not so dark that they hide detail in the shadow area yet clearly show the surface texture. The positioning of the shadow is also important, it needs to show the detail in a natural manner. With multiple light sources (even the sun plus a reflector) make sure that you don't generate multiple shadows which again would look unnatural.

Depending on the scale of the image, landscape, portrait, macro image etc. you may have several choices. You can minimize a shadow by manipulating exposure, changing the lighting by using reflectors or flash, use HDR techniques (yes, they can look natural!) or deal with it in processing. You can also create shadows to hide unwanted parts of the image such as a messy background. All of these have advantages and disadvantages.

Here are some options:

- Use a reflector or fill flash. Adjust the shadow illumination so it is one to three stops below the highlight parts of the image.
- Place the background in shadow and light the subject normally with the ambient light, or with a reflector or flash, if necessary.
- Use flash to light the subject, set the shutter speed to the sync speed (usually 1/250th sec) then use a small aperture to underexpose the background.
- If it's a landscape you may have to use HDR techniques to minimize the total range yet retain a natural look.

So remember to look after the shadows.

Crop your images!

by Richard James

Does the viewfinder of your camera exactly replicate your interpretation of the scene in front of you? Remember that the image format that many of us use is based on 35 mm film with a 3:2 aspect ratio. Other cameras may use 4:3, 4:5, square etc. Digital projectors and monitors are now moving towards a 16:9 format (1920 x 1080 pixels). There is nothing magic about any of these ratios. 35 mm film is an original movie film format with the image placed lengthwise instead of across the film. The movie format was 22 x 16 mm which allowed for a soundtrack. This became 24 x 36 mm for still film use, our common 3:2 aspect ratio.

Traditional (darkroom) printing was based on 8 x 10 (4:5) sheet paper. Digital printing is often based on 8.5 x 11 or 11 x 17 paper formats (which do not have the same aspect ratio).

You can now see that none of these aspect ratios really match DSLR or other film and digital camera formats. Now that we've got this out of the way, we need to think about how you want to frame the image.

Many people would say that ideally the subject needs to be surrounded by the minimum amount of background to set the context. This implies that the image format (aspect ratio) should be the same as the main subject in the image. Is this 11:17 or even 16:9? The answer is almost certainly very rarely or never.

What is the minimum amount of background to set the context for a subject? Some might argue it's the width of an arbitrary "standard" border, others might say you have to consider what is in the background. Ultimately, it's going to be a combination of this with other considerations.

Some of these other considerations would include:

- How does the image content frame the main subject within your crop?
- It's generally not a good idea to have slivers of objects, or their ends croped off (hands etc.).
- Include objects that set the scene. This is often critical in wildlife photography to show the subject's environment as part of the story of the image.
- Make sure verticals are vertical, especially along the edges of the image.

So, get the framing as close to right in the camera, then go ahead and crop your image.

November Competition Theme

by Pam Irvine, Competitions Chair

Silhouettes convey a sense of drama and mystery. Your subject is in front of a light source and you set your exposure to leave your main subject very dark or black.

Choose a Strong Subject

Almost any object can be a silhouette. Choose something with a strong and recognizable shape that will be interesting enough in its two dimensional form to hold the interest of those viewing your image. If there is more than one shape or object in the image, try to keep them separated. If you are silhouetting a tree and a person don't have the person stand in front of the tree. If they are leaning on it then leave a noticeable gap or they will merge into one shape and confuse your viewers.

Frame your image

Set up your shot with your subject in front of a bright background. You should avoid clutter in the background that may distract from the silhouette of your main subject. Set your focus on the main subject so that the edges are sharp. The sun right above the horizon at sunset causes the sky to be at its brightest and most colourful for a greater contrast between your subject and the sky.

Setting exposure

This style of photography can be tricky to do on automatic because your camera will want to expose for the main subject. Turn off your flash and try manual mode.

Most cameras set the exposure in auto mode when you push your shutter half way down (at the same time as focusing). You can set your camera to the "spot" or "centre-weighted" metering modes. Then point the focus mark at the brightest part of your picture and press the shutter halfway down (don't let go). Now move your camera back to frame your shot and finish taking the shot. This means you can tell your camera exactly which bit of the bright background you want it to set the exposure on.

Remember that there is no specific formula for making a great silhouette. It takes practice, experimentation, and maybe even a little luck to capture a truly spectacular silhouette image.

Deadline for the "Silhouette" competition is Thursday, November 5th.

Competition and Fear of Rejection

by Pam Irvine, Competitions Chair

I recently attended the CAPA (Canadian Association for Photographic Art) Photo Expo held in Vancouver over the August 1st long weekend. A conference like this is a good way to revive the creative juices and pick up some new ideas and tips to improve your photographic skills and vision. The theme of photography as art came up over and over again. The focus of most of the speakers was on the artistic qualities of photography and how best to use techniques to achieve an image that evokes an emotional response in the viewer.

One session was an inspirational talk by professional photographer Joel Grimes. He asked the audience "*Is photography a technical or creative process, and which plays the most important role?*" Do we want to be technicians or artists? He passionately believes that photography is an art form and photographers can be artists. He pointed out that a technical instrument never makes a creative decision and that a correct exposure for an image can only be determined by the artist.

He discussed, at length, one of our greatest fears, the fear of rejection. Being swayed by the opinions of others can be certain death to the artistic process.

There are many members in our Club who never show their work. Some have been working on their photographic skills for many years and I am sure they have created some beautiful images. Is it the fear of rejection that keeps some of us from sharing our work with others?

The VCC is dedicated to creating a safe place to share your images. You are surrounded by people with the same passion for photography who understand the need to master the technical skills. You will not find a better place to get constructive feedback, instruction and encouragement. We are here to help you improve your skills so that you can fulfill your artistic ambitions. Competitions are just one way to share your work with others. Put your best work out there and you will be pleasantly surprised by how much your work is appreciated by members of the Club. It doesn't matter if the judge didn't like it, if the image spoke to you then I am sure it will speak to others and there is a real joy in experiencing that moment of shared appreciation for a work of art.

Identify what is holding you back, accept the worst-case scenario and you will realize you don't need to be afraid. You are an artist and your work is worth sharing.

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Put a roll of 120 B&W film into an old box camera, compose through a dim right-angle viewfinder, slide the shutter lever to a soft audible click, finish off the roll and, finally, mail it in for developing and printing. A week or more later anxiously open the package and view the results. Magic was in the air for a pre-teen growing up in rural Alberta in 1950!

Fast forward to today. Put a state-or-the-art mirrorless compact system camera up to one's eye. View the image in a high resolution electronic viewfinder (EVF), complete with applied exposure compensation, warnings of over or under exposed elements, and the impact of any filters applied, either digital or physical. All of that before the shutter button is pressed. After the shoot, onward to one's digital darkroom and home printer to finish off the job. True magic!

There were stops along the way. University brought some play with a Rolleicord two-and-a-quarter square twin-lens-reflex camera and some wet darkroom experiments. Then, during child-rearing and career-focused years, the inevitable use of 35 mm rangefinders and all-in-ones to shoot family and travel photos. Throw in a Polaroid for some instant results and you arrive at retirement in 1998 and the arrival of the digital photography revolution. That coincided with my plunge into photography as my principal hobby and passion. Full participation in the Manitoba Camera Club cemented the experience.

When digicams crossed the one-megapixel barrier at a price below five-thousand dollars, I trekked across the border to the USA to purchase a Nikon Coolpix 900, just prior to its release in Winnipeg. A neat swivel body and a good macro capability offered some interesting options. Then, in 2001, it was onward to an Olympus E-10 all-in-one featuring a split-prism optical viewfinder plus live-view on the rear LCD, a forerunner of many modern designs. As to subject matter, I was open to whatever struck my fancy as I set out on foot from home on the west side of Winnipeg. Rusty objects in back alleys, hard abstracts and found art spotted in unlikely places. Bring it on!

In 2005, Margaret and I uprooted ourselves from our prairie environment and relocated to the decidedly different environs of Victoria and our ocean shores. The Victoria Camera Club became my new photographer's home. Technology was leaping forward. My path took me to Olympus flagship DSLRs, from the early E-1 to the E-5. When Olympus exited the DSLR market in favour of new mirrorless technology, the E-M1, with its hy-

brid autofocus system, became my way forward. I was able to continue using my collection of excellent lenses plus new ones designed for the mirrorless system.

It was a joy to prowl the streets, alleys and parks of Winnipeg, camera at the ready. Many spots became familiar and were often revisited. On one such occasion, the peak of a community church was seen against a background of cirrus clouds, fanning out in an almost symbolic way. What better than clouds for a retired meteorologist. The print still hangs on our living room wall.

"Peak"
Olympus E-10, 9 mm, f5.6, 1/250th sec, ISO 80.

Early on I developed an attraction to close-ups and abstracts based on found objects. In this case, a small corner of a City of Winnipeg bridge construction sign had been treated to some red paint drippings. Perfect as an almost gory reminder of that prairie metropolis as we departed for the West Coast.

"Winnipeg"
Olympus E-10, 20 mm, f5.6, 1/50th sec, ISO 80.

There is no doubt that living on Pacific shores brings one close to many natural wonders. An adventure tour on a sailing ketch into the islands and channels of the Alaska panhandle brought us into close proximity to three large rings of bubble-feeding humpback whales. It was a magical moment when this group surfaced and blew in unison, all perfectly caught in rays of the sinking sun.

"Humpback Whales Blow"
Olympus E-1, ZD 40-150 mm f3.5-4.5
at 128 mm, f5.6, 1/3200th sec, ISO 180.

The EVF in my current mirrorless camera has proven itself to be an ideal tool to judge the exposure required to get the desired effect when shooting backlit subjects. The curled frond was captured during an evening shoot with the VCC Nature SIG in Beacon Hill Park.

"Curled in Evening Light"
Olympus E-M1, ZD 50-200 mm f2.8-3.5 at
108 mm, f6.3, 1/200th sec, ISO 500, -1.0 ev.

Cellphone cameras are ubiquitous. On my trip to Australia, on a cruise with Holland America, I had only my iPhone for photography. My DSLR was in the shop and, in any case, my trip had other primary objectives. That said, over a thousand images were processed and saved. Among them was this wildlife shot taken at the Koala sanctuary in Brisbane.

"Lizard on Rock"
iPhone 4. CameraPlus App.

It was unexpected when 25 Pacific Brown Pelicans arrived in Victoria Harbour in December, 2012. Even more so when a juvenile straggler stayed behind when the flock left. This one was spotted down on the docks in front of our fourth floor condo. At Margaret's urging, I got dressed and hurried out in the near freezing temperature for some shots. It was a lucky break when the pelican gaped in this photogenic pose.

"Juvenile Brown Pelican"
Olympus E-5, ZD 50-200 mm f2.8-3.5
at 158 mm, f5.6, 1/400th sec, ISO 200.

Thanks to the Victoria Camera Club and its many field trips, I have discovered many excellent venues for photography in and around the city. My favourite insect photo came from just such an excursion, this time to the Victoria Butterfly Gardens.

"Monarch Butterfly"
Olympus E-1, ZD 14-54 mm, f2.8-3.5
*at 54 mm, f4, 1/125th sec, ISO 100.*

Camera club field trips often take one into downtown Victoria. Sometimes the subject is seen through storefront windows, as was the case with this abstract, converted to B&W. The original was the coloured design on the sides of a cylindrical lighting fixture, lit for the evening.

"Swimming in the Light"
Olympus E-1, ZD 14-54 mm, f2.8-3.5
at 54 mm, f3.5, 1/320th sec, ISO 800.

The Seven Sisters waterfall in the world-heritage Geiranger Fjord in Norway is the most photographed scene in the country. No matter, this one is mine! Up at five thirty, out on the deck of Holland America's "Ryndaam," facing a finger numbing flow of cold air coming off the highlands as the ship carefully made its way up the narrow fjord. This was among the highlights of a memorable cruise to the most northerly tip of Europe.
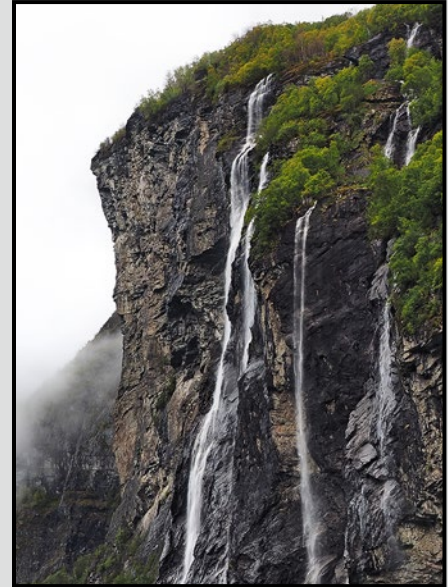
"Seven Sisters Waterfall"
Olympus E-M1, M.Zuiko 12-40 mm,
f2.8 at 34 mm, f4, 1/80th sec, ISO 200.

I finish with my favourite treat, to come across something commonplace, yet unexpected, just begging to be photographed. The orange, looking to be in its prime, was spotted atop a trash container overlooking Victoria's inner harbour. Opening up the aperture for a shallow depth of field was just the ticket.
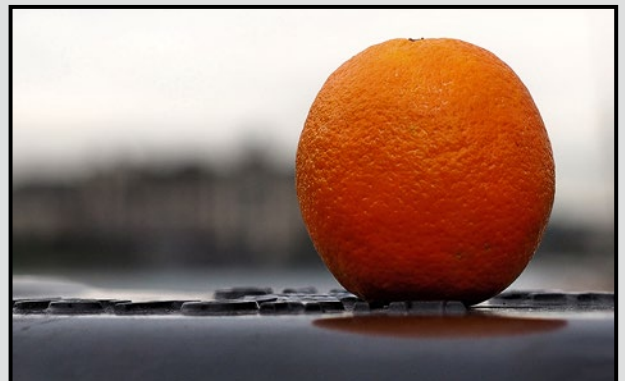
"Orange"
Olympus E-M1, M.Zuiko 12-40 mm, f2.8
at 40 mm, f2.8, 1/1600th sec, ISO 200.

Fall Photography Courses

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Photography Level 1 – *Intro with Mitch Stringer* **DAYTIME & EVENING**	Sep 21, 23, or 29
Photography Level 2 – *Intermediate with Mitch Stringer*	Sep 21
Photography Level 3 – *Advanced dSLR with Mitch Stringer* NEW	Oct 1

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iPhone/iPad – **Taking Great Photos** *with Tony Bounsall*	Sep 26, or Oct 14
iPhone/iPad ARTography *with Tony Bounsall*	Nov 14
iPhone – **Taking Great Business Photos** *with Tony Bounsall* NEW	Nov 18

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Portrait Photography *with Jesse Hlady* **DAYTIME & EVENING**	Oct 26
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Like many VCC members my interest in photography goes back to my teenage years. My first 35 mm SLR, a Russian Zenit B, had the persona of a Soviet farm tractor but was a great camera to learn photography with. Being a totally manual camera one needed to understand the basic relationships between ISO, shutter speed and aperture to produce a properly exposed and focused photograph. A few years later I was able to upgrade to a Nikon Nikkormat Ftn and a spectacular 50 mm f1.4 lens. It was love at first click! I was soon shooting regularly and developing my own B&W film and prints in a home darkroom. I've been a Nikon fan ever since.

While attending UBC I volunteered as a photographer with the "Ubyssey" campus newspaper. This position included a "press pass" and access to a full commercial darkroom including all the necessary supplies such as film, chemicals and paper! The Ubyssey printed one issue per week so there was a regular stream of photo assignments that were challenging and fun, especially when one of my images made the front page! All this was a mixed blessing as photography tended to take priority over some of my academics!

While I briefly considered pursuing photography as a job I settled on a career in fisheries management. Photography continued as an interest but slowly faded as a priority with a growing family and job responsibilities for several decades. Thirty years passed but in 2008 I bought my first DSLR, a Nikon D70s, and joined the Victoria Camera Club. I recall the very shaky nerves when I entered monthly competitions but as time went on I realized that participating regularly provided the discipline and the feedback I needed to grow and improve. Being in the Club also provided a constant source of inspiration from the many excellent photographers here. Joining the VCC was the best decision I could have made as my photography skills have definitely improved over the years.

I can honestly say that photography has changed how I look at the world. It has increased my powers of observation and has taken me to places near and far that otherwise would have gone unnoticed and unappreciated. It has also allowed me to study, in great detail, subjects that interest me.

They say that every photograph is really just a reflection of the photographer and I suppose this is true in my case. What follows is a selection of images that hopefully reflects something about who I am.


"Oyster Lease" Hornby Island, circa 1970, Nikkormat FTN, 50 mm.

Prior to the 1960's, life on Hornby Island was all about fishing, farming and logging. This oyster farmer's home on the shore of Fords Cove is long gone but the photograph gives us a glimpse into a life in a bygone era. Historic buildings and other old structures continue to be a photographic interest today.

"Gogo on Guitar" Victoria, 2014,
Fuji XE-1, 35 mm, f5.6, 1/250th sec, ISO 200.

David Gogo is one of the finest electric guitar players in the country. At an outdoor concert last year the Nanaimo musician's playing was so impressive that I had to make my way to the front of the stage to try to capture him in action. At times it pays to throw caution to the wind, forget all the people that may be watching you, and concentrate on capturing a good image! Hint: when attending a concert take your best compact camera as there are often restrictions on "professional" camera equipment.
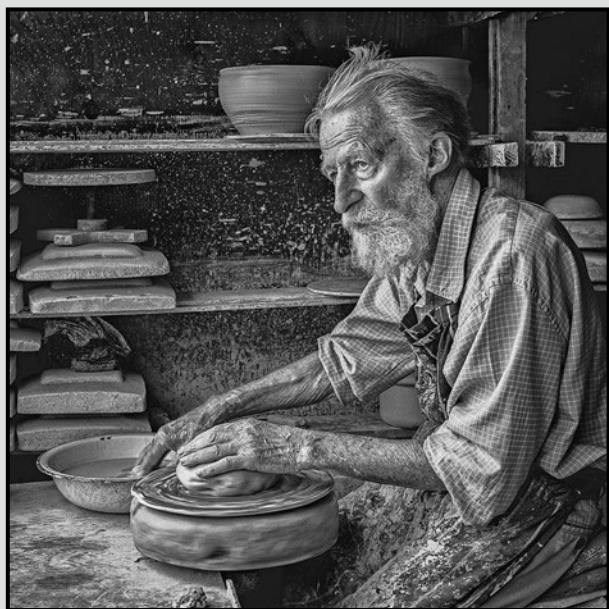
"The Old Master" Hornby Island 2015,
*Nikon D800E, 44 mm, f5.6,*
1/80th sec, ISO 500.

One of my on-going projects is to photograph the studios and workshops of artisans on Hornby Island. Heinz Laffin has been making pots on Hornby for the past 57 years and at age 89 is still going strong. I spent several sessions alone in his studio and have a collection of workshop images, but my last two sessions focused on portraits of the artist using natural light from his north-facing windows.

"Rufous Hummingbird" Hornby Island 2015,
Nikon D800E, 300 mm, f5.0, 1/3200th sec, ISO 640, Flash.

Bird photography is a particular interest and I have been fortunate to be mentored by the Club's amazing Mike Wooding in this pursuit. Capturing birds in flight is technically and artistically challenging for the photographer and perhaps hummingbirds are the most challenging of all. Many of the best hummingbird photos are captured on set-ups that use four or more flash units but I wanted to see what could be done with just one.
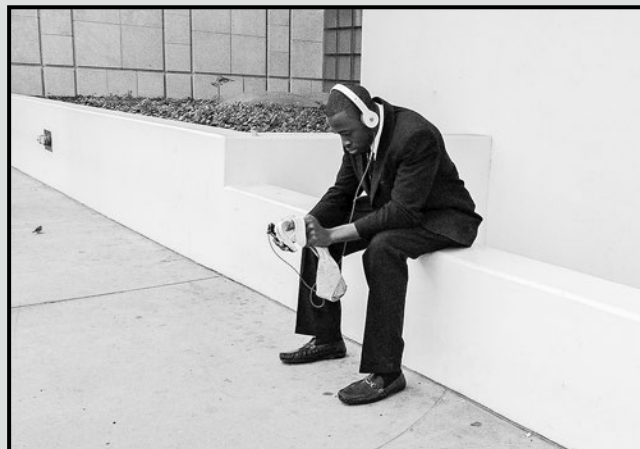
"New York" New York 2010,
Panasonic LX-3, 24 mm, f3.2, 1/800th sec, ISO 400.

Street photography is one of my passions as it often reveals something unexpected in the mundane everyday life. This photo was taken outside the Museum of Modern Art in New York City.

"The Surfer" Mexico 2014,
Nikon D700, 600 mm, f5.6, 1/5000th sec, ISO 500.

Sports and action photography is challenging but with practice and luck you can capture dramatic images of athletes as they perform.

A rocky point parallels the surf break at Lo de Marcos, Mexico and provides a great platform for photographing surfers. This young man demonstrated exceptional skill riding the waves and the colours in his clothing and board also complemented the hues in the water and the sky! My camera settings were aimed at allowing a high shutter speed to freeze the motion.

"Ghost Car" Secret Place 2015,
I-Phone 5s, 29 mm, f2.2, 1/30ᵗʰ sec, ISO 100.

A two-hour drive and a 30-minute boat trip followed by a hike through the forest brought us to the secret location of the "ghost cars." The landowner did not want pictures taken with "those fancy cameras" so I had to make do with my I-phone. The best camera is always the one you have with you!

"Weeping Willow" Victoria 2014,
D800E, 200 mm, f4.5, 1/13ᵗʰ sec, ISO 50.

I enjoyed CAPA's Andre Gallant workshop for VCC members in Victoria in 2014. Andre impressed me with his simple and artistic approach to creating beautiful photographs from everyday objects and scenes. As part of the day he shared his techniques with camera movement in order to create interesting images. This image of a weeping willow overhanging a pond in Beacon Hill Park was one of my favourites.

"Old Truck" Kamloops 2015,
D800E, 38 mm, f6.3, 1/200ᵗʰ sec, ISO 500.

I was driving through the grasslands to Kamloops at dusk in a rainstorm. This area features beautiful barren rolling hills and many abandoned homesteads. This old farm truck stood fender deep in the weeds and the setting sun and rain provided the wonderful light for this image.

"Orcas" Hornby Island 2015,
D800E, 420 mm, f8.0, 1/2500ᵗʰ sec, ISO 500.

Two days after my last day in the office (I retired) I was standing on the tip of St. John's Point on Hornby Island in the late afternoon with my camera and telephoto on the tripod, waiting for something to happen. Suddenly an Orca breached in the distance! I couldn't believe my luck and over the next few minutes the pod moved past me in small groups a few hundred meters away. This image that includes three orcas (two adults and a very new baby), three eagles and three oyster catchers and the peak of Mount Baker in the distance was my favourite on the day.

Recently retired, I am looking forward to using my newly-found freedom to pursue photography to a degree not experienced since my early days with a camera. While I expect that nature, sports, street, landscape and portraiture will continue as areas of interest I also intend to pursue new ideas and approaches to allow my photography to evolve.

by Barbara Burns

A strong interest in photographing people has developed in the Club. Many of our members have participated in Fine Art Model Photography workshops, in the Ballet Victoria Ballet Art Program, and some have held their own studio shoots. In September we will hold a studio shoot with professional dancers who are very experienced before the camera. It is timely to discuss some of the technical challenges and tips for success when photographing dancers and other people in action. There are many different approaches to shooting dancers, each with unique challenges and advantages. I would like to acknowledge the expertise of my friend and fellow VCC member, Scott Laird, whose deep understanding of artificial lighting contributed to several of the images presented below.

Lovely images can be achieved by shooting out-of-doors using only ambient light. Early morning or late afternoon offer the best light. Failing that, a bright overcast day or open shade produce good images as well. A reflector can be used to highlight the main point of focus and a fill flash to reduce harsh shadows produced by direct sunlight. To freeze the dancer in motion, a shutter speed over 1/200 sec is a minimum.

This image was captured in the late afternoon in a Victoria park on a bright day with high clouds using only ambient light and no modifiers. As there was sufficient light, the camera was set to 1/500 sec, f4.5, ISO 100. I shot in manual exposure mode with partial metering. The lens used was my "go to" 24-70 mm, f.2.8L USM.


"Bethany in the Park"

Moving from the simple to the complex, there are numerous "one-flash" set-ups that produce some wonderful and surprisingly varied looks. A lot depends on the modifiers used and the positioning of the flash. The image below was shot with one light immediately above the dancers. A softbox or a beauty dish work equally well. The beauty dish, unless "socked", will produce a harder light which accentuates the musculature of the dancers. Because flash is being used, you can use a low ISO, the sync shutter speed of your camera and a reasonably high aperture. Camera settings were 1/160 sec, f8, ISO 100, I used my 24-70 mm, f2.8L lens, and my white balance was set on "Flash."

"Up Next"

The next image was also shot with one light, a beauty dish set at waist level very close to the dancer and point-
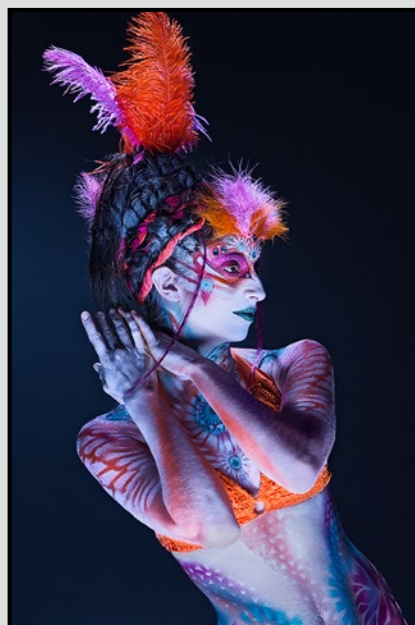
"Mysterious"

ing upwards on a horizontal plane. This added a mysterious and slightly alien tone that complemented the body paint. Camera settings were 1/160 sec, f11, ISO 100 with my 24-70 f2.8 L lens. The interesting twist for this image was setting the camera white balance for "incandescent" or "fluorescent" to give an offbeat colour effect.

Next are some more complex lighting situations intended to capture movement and a few special effects. Generally these set-ups use three to five flashes: a main or "key" light, a fill light and a "hair" or overhead light, and sometimes lighting for the background or for emphasis. A relatively simple but effective arrangement uses two side (key) lights and a hair or front fill light. Side lighting is a useful way of emphasizing the strong muscles and graceful lines that dancers exemplify so well. The side lights can be placed at an angle behind the dancer and when the hair or front light is turned off, lovely rim lighting is produced. The image below was shot with this simple three light set-up. The side lights were positioned about ten feet on either side of the dancer and were equipped with large (86") PLMs with diffusion socks to produce a wide soft light that wrapped around the dancer and eliminated harsh shadows. A hair light was positioned on a

boom above and slightly to the front of the dancer with an octagonal softbox. I find that this "big" light set-up is largely "no fail" when photographing fast-moving dancers as there is little likelihood that they will leap outside of the light. This image was shot on a black backdrop so there was no need for background lights. Camera settings were 1/160 sec, f10, ISO 100, and my favourite 24-70 mm lens. The light also helped to highlight the beautiful body paint that would have been obscured by lower key lighting.

"Airborne"

However, if you want a white background, use a white seamless paper backdrop and place two more lights with reflectors on either side of the backdrop. The flashes should be set two stops higher than the main lighting in order to "burn out" the highlighted background.

In the next image I wanted to use coloured gels to complement the fabric the dancer was working with. It is a basic three-flash set-up with the key light above and to the right of the dancer, and a lower fill light on the left, both modified with a medium softbox. A third light was directly behind the dancer with a red-gelled reflector. Smoke was added to enhance the red toning.

"Selina in Red"

This lighting required experimentation and many images had to be discarded as the dancer often moved away from the gelled light, leaving it to shine directly at the camera. However, when it worked, it was exactly what I had hoped for. Camera settings were 1/160 sec, f11, ISO 100 and I used my 24-70 mm lens.

No discussion of photographing dancers would be complete without considering shooting at a performance or dress rehearsal. This is, no doubt, the most challenging situation for the photographer. First, there is a lot of very fast movement ranging across the stage, many quickly interacting subjects, key "not-to-be-missed" climactic moments and absolutely no control over the subjects or lighting. Sports photographers work under similar conditions.

The second challenge is the very wide tonal range and colour of most stage lighting. There are often bright,

intensely coloured spotlights on the principal dancers while the rest of the stage is dark. The dancers move in and out of the bright and dark areas of the scene very rapidly and the colour of the various stage lights changes moment to moment. At the same time, the lighting is never powerful enough to freeze the action. White balance, motion blur, shallow depth of field and exposure issues must all be overcome. I generally shoot in this situation using my camera's auto focus with the back button setting. I keep my shutter speed over 1/400 if possible and ISO between 2400 to 8000. I use my 70-200 mm f2.8L lens and even at f2.8 it is very sharp. I shoot in automatic white balance and colour correct in Photoshop. Of course at ISO 8000 noise is a serious problem, so in post processing I use the noise reduction feature in Adobe Camera RAW which usually gives me good results. The image below was shot under these conditions and at the settings described.

"Frozen"

The third challenge is that so often after overcoming all the other obstacles to produce a really good photographic image, one discovers that it is a "very bad" image from a dance perspective. Hands and feet, arms and legs, necks and whole body "lines" must be just so, particularly in the world of ballet. It requires great sensitivity and forbearance on the part of the photographer to trash "the perfect photographic image" because it will embarrass the professional dancer if it is published (always get permission to use each image). The only cure is to learn as much as possible about the subject and to keep practicing. Not so very different from nature photography, is it?

Why not join the Lighting SIG (subscribe to the forum on the website) and learn how to do these and other lighting setups with speedlights and modifiers.

Today we take as many photos every two minutes as in the entire 19th century.

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Photographer as Artist, Artist as Photographer
What elevates a photograph into a work of art? Explore this enduring question in your quest to grow, artistically and stylistically, as a photographer and artist.
Instructor: Gerry Schallie
Tuesdays, Sept 29 – Dec 1: 7 to 9 pm
$170 plus GST

Photography Plus: Improving Your Photography Skills Covers the basics of camera use and composition and how to improve the photographs you take. Explore techniques through creative exercises
Instructor: Don Denton
Wednesdays, Oct 7 – Dec 2: 6:30 to 9 pm
$170 plus GST

Travel Photography A Four–part series (History; Architecture; Cultures and Landscapes; and Storytelling). Tips, techniques and the latest innovations, plus a look at how cultural sensitivity factors into storytelling through photography.
Instructor: Chris Mundigler
Sept 17 and 24; Oct 1 and 8
$75 plus GST (or $21 plus GST for one session)

Visit **LearningThatShapes.ca/photography** for registration details or call **250-721-7797** for more information.

by John Roberts

This is something that I know a lot about, and I mean a lot. I have been using flash for many years now, and have even taught on this subject. There are so many little things you can do to change the look of your flash photography. One of the best compliments I have ever received was when someone who claims to hate using a flash, told me a photo I was showing them was lovely. When I told them it had been created with flash, they said that you would never know it was.

In the last two years the world of flash photography has grown by leaps and bounds, with the introduction of so many new light modifiers, and other tools to help you get the look you want. It has really been an overwhelming couple of years for me.

Wireless Flash has been something in particular that has been of interest for me for some time now. There have been some really interesting products that have come to market such as the built-in wireless triggering systems, or the radio triggers, so I will go into some of what you may want to know to help you decide which is best for you.

The manufacturers' built-in wireless systems have the benefit of giving you "Through-The-Lens" metering (TTL), achieved by the camera and flash talking to one another in a series of low-powered flashes in such fast sequence that it just looked like a long flash to our eyes. The camera sends out a flash that tells the off-camera flashes to send out a test fire. The camera sees this test fire, sends out another series of commands to make changes and the flash goes off at the desired power setting as the camera takes the photo. This is all done in less time than it takes to blink. This TTL system allows you to control the flashes and change their power settings all (from where you stand behind the camera) with a few clicks of the menu, either in-camera or on your commander unit/flash.

A few words of warning for built-in TTL systems. First, they are a line-of-sight systems, which means that the red IR window on the flash must be facing towards the camera and see the commander flash. This is why most off-camera flashes have the ability to swivel the flash head so you can aim the red window on the flash. Nikon has them on the right side, Canon on the front. Check where yours is placed to help you get the best results.

Another limitation of the line-of-sight system is that it uses infrared light, so the flash goes off, emits an infrared signature that the receiver sees. This means that, in the heat of summer, the range will be reduced from the ambient infrared radiation, and if you are on pavement during a heatwave, it is reduced even further. Under ideal circumstances you can get about a 10 meter range using the pop up flash, a bit more if you are using a top of the line flash or dedicated commander unit.

TTL systems also use quite a lot of camera battery power if you are using the pop-up flash to act as the commander unit. (Please refer to your camera manual to see if your camera is capable of being set up as a commander unit.) This is why I prefer to use the dedicated commander unit, or the higher end flashes that have the commander mode built in. This way is a lot more camera-battery friendly.

This is where the TTL Radio Triggers like the Pocket Wizards, Phottix and Radio Poppers come in. They sit on top of the camera and in some cases, act as the commander unit. Depending on the brand/model they can work in conjunction with a commander mounted on top of the trigger, or may only be capable of firing a pre-set flash (trigger only). The unit transmits the flash signal over radio to achieve the same function as the commander unit would with the line-of-sight receiver. This allows you, as the photographer, to put these flashes further away than you can with the line-of-sight system, and, also, to put the flashes into places you would not have been able to previously, like behind a wall or in the next room.

These radio TTL systems still allow you to control the flash output like the line-of-sight system and are not subject to the reduced range during high heat. Most radio triggers have a range usually starting at the 100-foot range and the high-end Pocket Wizards have a range closer to250 meters. Why would you need that sort of range? I am sure you will think of something, but it is nice to have the option there.

There are benefits to going with the TTL radio triggers if you are using off-camera flash a lot, but if you are only using it here and there, then just continuing to use the built-in line-of-sight system would be fine as long as you understand the short-comings and can work within those.

If you have any questions about off-camera flash photography, please feel free to contact me and ask your questions. *jrphotographybc@icloud.com*

by Jim Gardner

In the Palouse in southeast Washington, my primary objective was to photograph landscapes. There, I found much more in the photographic landscape than I had supposed. In writing about it, my objective is to provide reminders to myself and pass on a few suggestions to others. My profession as an earth scientist and experience with documentary photography biases my vision of landscapes and the remarks that follow. Photography that accurately documents landscapes sometimes makes nice pictures but rarely does it make great photographs, as judged by present standards and tastes, though it may be possible in the Palouse. There, the landscape presents opportunities to convey a continuum from vastness to detail and, with careful attention to composition and light, create a sense of process or dynamism from what appears to be static.

Three elements of the Palouse landscape appealed to my photographic sense: the great expanse of wind-drifted silt hills, the remodelling of that surface by more than a century of agriculture, and the huge, ever-changing sky. These elements come to visual life in early-morning and late-afternoon/evening sunlight. While the hills may be of great interest to the geologist, the surface patterns, textured details and varied colors produced by cultivation and crops create a landscape of greater photographic interest.

This is not nature photography in the strictest sense. The Palouse is an industrial landscape markedly altered by human activity. Moreover, it is a landscape punctuated by towns, structures, machinery, vehicles, signage, etc. Many are artifacts of the past that expand the photographic possibilities as objects in landscape or as subjects to be explored in detail.

Timing and location are very important in accessing the landscape. Time of day has been mentioned. Seasons of the year present differing possibilities. Our visit, in mid-June of a dry, early growth year, displayed crops mostly advanced toward maturity and beyond blossom season. They, together with fallowed fields, displayed a patchwork of colors, differences in texture, and detail left by cultivation and seeding patterns. All seasons in the Palouse provide some worthwhile opportunities.

Finding the right spot is critical for an appreciation of the Palouse landscape. Steptoe Butte provides some of the most accessible and popular vantage points. However, there are many others, some on private property,

"Palouse vista from Steptoe Butte"

which provide excellent and more intimate connections with subject matter. As we found on the Club's field trip, a local photographic guide opened opportunities that otherwise might be unavailable or missed.

The Palouse offers opportunities at a variety of scales. At a vista scale, the scene can be muddled and confusing to the eye. With the basic guidelines of composition in mind, scanning the scene through the eye of a camera presents possibilities for coherence. I found that by using the wide-angle option on my Olympus EM-5, and by focusing on patterns of light and shadow, fluid lines emerged that led the eye into the scene and created great depth. Sometimes, cloud patterns accentuated the depth and distance by providing lines to a vanishing point at the horizon. Also, with a large depth of field, the detail of ploughing and planting patterns in the mid-ground and foreground may be used to accentuate the sense of depth and distance. I used a UV filter throughout, and often a polarizing filter when
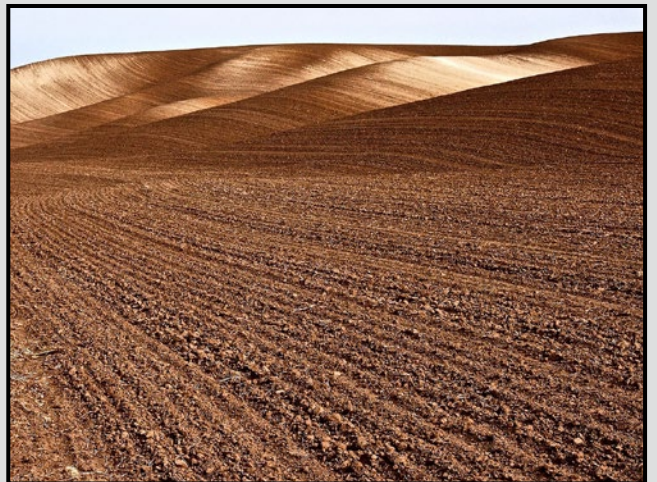
"Marking time with Palouse fallow"

shooting at this scale. Personally, because of the rapid scanning I was doing, I found handhold shooting at a higher shutter speed most convenient.

At medium and close scales, coherent patterns emerge through the marriage of underlying topography, ploughing and planting patterns, textures and colors, and light and shadow. At this scale, I found a long lens (Panasonic Lumix 100 to 300 mm) on the Olympus useful and would recommend a similar lens as a must for Palouse landscape shooting.

The topography is such that one may find meandering lines of light and/or shadow that draw the eye into the scene. Farmsteads and the roads leading to them can provide leading lines with focal points that add perspective and interest. Field boundaries, fence lines, stream and drainage channels and lines of trees, all present in the Palouse landscape, can serve the same purpose. Ploughing furrows and planting lines that follow the contours of the numerous hill slopes produce regularly spaced lines that flow and diminish towards imagined vanishing points, enhancing perspective and conveying a sense of process or dynamism. In some instances the ploughing and planting has been done on the slope fall line that, although not a good soil conservation practice, does produce interesting lines that roll over the tops of successive hills giving perspective and a "roller coaster" effect to the photograph. Careful attention to cultivation detail in the immediate foreground can enhance and provide obvious leading lines.

"At home in the fields"

Farmsteads, barns, machinery and implements, vehicles, signs, etc. are present in great variety. Some locations are well known, accessible and sometimes crowded with photographers. In these circumstances and with the abundance of weathered surfaces and

historical detail, close-up work is a sensible and rewarding option. Again, being part of an organized and guided group opened less accessible locations with subjects for close-up work.

Old barns were of particular interest to me and they presented interesting challenges. Most are unused and as is characteristic of the Palouse, every square meter is cultivated, leaving many barns isolated in relatively uninteresting immediate surroundings. Not trespassing limits one's ability to do close-up work and to create depth and perspective at a larger scale. Use of a long lens helps with the former. A careful search for leading lines provided by ploughing and planting furrows, fences and old roads in the foreground and in the background, helps with the latter, especially in medium- to low-angle sunlight.

"There were better days"

Finally, photography in the Palouse can be accompanied by significant physical challenges. Joining an appropriate, organized event on the first visit is helpful in preparing for these challenges. Be prepared for heat, cold, wind and dust, sometimes all in one day! And, be prepared for the day to be long, especially in the weeks around the summer solstice, with very early starts and late-evening or night finishes, interrupted by a mid-day down time.

My bias is to know something about what I am photographing and that too requires some preparation. The abundant photographic opportunities in the Palouse are the product of its geological and land use history. In these and in photographic terms, it is unique in North America. So much so, that there are multitudes of print and online resources. Accessing some of these may aid your photographic exploration of this magnificent region.

"Young Bride"

by Barbara Burns

The main image was taken in a studio with a lovely young Japanese ballet dancer, Keika. I used a high-key lighting setup consisting of two white foam core "V-flats" and a white wall and ceiling. I used my Canon 5D MkIII camera and a 100 mm f2.8 Canon portrait lens at 1/160 sec, f2.8 and ISO 100.

The image seemed both exotic and mysterious. Was she happy, or sad and frightened on this wedding day? Why?

I started by removing blemishes, shadows and stray hairs, softening the skin and adjusting the white balance. I used Curves and Levels adjustment layers to give rich tones without sacrificing the soft, high key delicacy of Keika's skin and features.

Next, I added texture images from my textures library. First, an image of daisies to enhance the delicate feminine quality of the image. I adjusted the blend mode and opacity until I had the floral quality I was looking for. A layer mask ensured the effect did not obscure Keika's exotic features.

I then used an image of white, floral paper to suggest the lace of a bridal gown and veil. The last layer was an image of white confetti-like dots. I varied the blend modes and opacity and used a mask to keep the patterning from overwhelming the image's delicacy and subtlety and to emphasize the face.


Beach Pebble at Sunset

by Mark Van Arragon

Vancouver Island in February is overflowing with photographic adventures waiting to be experienced. One particularly fine day in mid-February, a fellow Camera Club member and I spent a fascinating afternoon making pictures of waterfalls, mosses, lichens, rocks, plants, and a varied assortment of other camera-worthy subjects, all above 600 metres elevation on the south side of the island. As dusk approached, the first glimmering of a colourful sunset began to light up the clouds. We hopped back in the trusty truck, and raced pell-mell down the winding logging roads to get to the coast.

After a quick scramble down the trail to China Beach, we emerged onto the sand, breathless and awestruck. The tide was receding quickly, and the glorious colours of the Pacific sunset were reflected vividly on the flat, wet beach sand.

After a few minutes of snapping away at the gorgeous sky, I took a minute to catch my breath and look around. The pristine glowing surface of the beach was interrupted by a few small pebbles clinging stubbornly in place against the tidal ebb. One such pebble caught my eye. About the size of a small egg, it cast a beautifully symmetrical reflection on the wet sand.

The shot I wanted had to be at beach level to capture the stunning reflected glory of the sunset on the wet beach behind the pebble. Luckily I was wearing waterproof clothing. I laid down on the beach, and took several shots of the pebble silhouetted against the sunset. I liked this particular shot, and had to do minimal post-processing in Lightroom to get the result I wanted. Nikon 610, Nikon 105 mm Micro, 1/250 sec at f3.2, ISO 100.
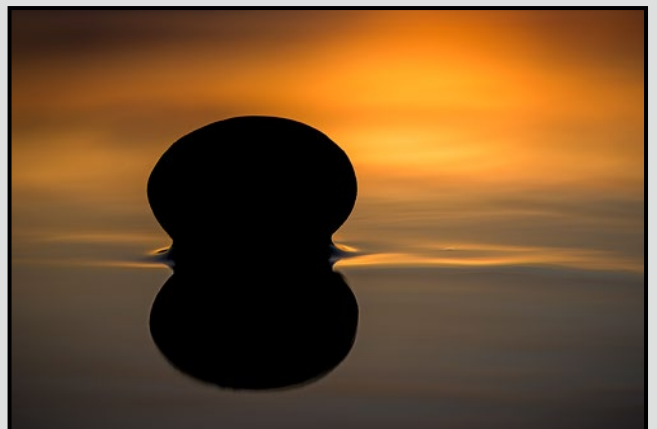
Tuesday Shoots

by Wayne Swanson

September 8th: Simplicity

We ease into the fall with simplicity. Think in terms of a strong center of interest with minimal distraction. The negative space should enhance your subject by eliminating clutter. In an urban setting, avoiding background detail may seem impossible, but change your angle of view to isolate your subject. Perhaps shoot upwards to use the sky as background. Move in close to capture just some highlights. Play around with where you place the subject within the frame to create an impact strong enough to attract a competition judge's attention. Remember, Simplicity is the theme for the October competition and you want to win. Or, maybe you just want to wow your friends.

September 22nd: The World is Getting Smaller

Have you ever taken a small toy on a holiday to place in your trip photos for the benefit of a child back home? Perhaps not, but you know the concept. Bring a small toy or figurine that you can use to pose around Victoria. You will definitely be getting up close with your figurine in as many unusual locations as possible. Be creative and don't just place it in the expected spots. Try to put a smile on your benefactor's face.

October 13th: Dots/Dashes/Diagonals

This is our version of D-Day or maybe it is just the great 3D quest. Whatever you want to call this shoot, just look around for these common symbols. They may be placed on signs, displayed in windows or used on manhole covers. You may have to look carefully in unusual spots to see them, but where ever you find them, shoot them.

October 27th: Silhouette

Another "prepare for the competition" session, or, if you prefer, "play with backlighting" time. For those into entering competitions, you will be able to enter your best shot into the November theme section. The trick here is to set your exposure on a strong background light, making your foreground subject dark and featureless. To do this, you might want to use manual mode to get a sharp focus on your subject. Make sure the outline that you create has an impact on your audience.

Weekend Shoots

by Steve Smith

Artful Neon: September 12th

Neon signs were introduced to the world by Georges Claude at the Paris Motor Show in 1910 and experienced enormous popularity in North America from the 1920s through to the 1960s. After that period, their application declined and now they are a rare sight in our cities. They have inspired photographers for many years through their quirky artistry, night time ambiance and historical value.

You are invited to a night prowl to some of the most popular places in Victoria to find examples of this nearly extinct art form. We will meet at the most likely place to find neon signs, Victoria's Chinatown. At that point we may form small groups which could move on to some of the more far-flung signs around town: The Odeon Theatre, Pluto's and The Helm's Inn. A list of neon sign locations and map will be provided at the field trip.

Whale Watching: September 19th and 26th

Whale-watching tours have been very popular for Victoria Camera Club members in past years and this year is no exception. The six hour trip, operated by Sidney Whale Watching, takes photographers to the marine park at Race Rocks (weather and sea conditions permitting). You may sight Orcas, Humpback and Grey Whales, Porpoises, Seals and Sea Lions. Sea birds are plentiful at this time of year and on the way back, adventurers will view the seabird rookery at Mandarte Island.

October Field Trips

Please visit the calendar for information on October field trips and updates.

Field Trips in General

Field Trips are organized by our coordinators, Steve Smith and Rea Casey. We are working under a mandate to provide an opportunity for members to take photos in the company of others; to discover new locations and improve their techniques. We design our trips so that photographers from all ability levels will find value in coming out.

Please let us know if you have a field trip idea. We are at most meetings and we are available by email through the website. (*fieldtrips@victoriacameraclub.org*).

by Neil Boyle

Photographers have always liked shooting buildings. The first permanent photograph ever was of buildings ("*View from the Window at Le Gras*" by Nicéphore Niépce, circa 1826), making architecture the oldest of all photographic categories. In addition to what you might expect to be the subject material, building exteriors and interiors, a few other subjects have sneaked under the term architectural photography: bridges, ruins, sculptures, fountains, large walls, stairways, and details of all these things. The term could also include any large structure made by people.

The Victoria Camera Club has always had members interested in architectural photography. The first known archaeological record of this interest is an uncredited article on cross-lighting in architectural shots, carbon-dated to the March 1947 *Close-Up* (available from the editor). More recently, we have had presenters (Rick Hulbert, John Taylor, Gavin Hardcastle, Googling them will teach you a lot about this subject), competition themes, and an excellent *Close-Up* article (Nov 2013) by Richard Webber, well worth your time.

At the basic level, architectural photography is record keeping: technically correct photographs of a building or structure. Aside from the technical aspects common to all photographs (exposure, sharpness, composition, B&W or colour, etc.), there are some aspects specific to architecture. The vertical lines of the structure need to be vertical and parallel to control the perspective. A small aperture is required for maximum depth of field. The lens must be wide enough to include the entire structure, if that is required. Some landscaping may need to be included to demonstrate the environment For example, an old barn may require the inclusion of a field to give it context. And, of course, all of these rules can be bent to the breaking point.

This genre of photography has its own long list of possible gear, but one essential is a sturdy tripod. This allows the use of the optimum low ISO, to produce a desirable low noise level.

An architecture photograph needn't be attractive, especially if it is of something inherently unpleasant (i.e., a concentration camp), or where no effort was made to make the structure interesting/attractive. For example some business structures such as a supermarket or a parking garage, strip malls, apartment buildings etc. Some of these less than attractive structures have interesting details or unusual perspectives, but even those without redeeming features are sometimes photographed.

The appeal or aesthetic value of the image can be significantly enhanced in many ways. An obvious component of composition is simplicity, or a reduced number of elements. For example, a single farm building may work better than a shot of the entire farm, or simplicity can be used to give the feeling of age and stateliness to an old building. Modern structures, or those in busy areas, can tolerate more going on in the image as long as the subject draws the eye by using leading lines, blurring or darkening the background, lightening and sharpening the subject, increased contrast in B&W images, etc. Tighter cropping works better with modern or unusual architecture. Your message is always stronger if the subject can be isolated.

Once you have chosen the composition, lighting plays a large role. For exteriors, the golden light of sunset and sunrise can work miracles. This is even further enhanced if the positioning of the camera can use this light as cross-lighting to bring out the textures and finer details and to give a 3-dimensional feel. Even in the unfriendly light of the middle of the day, cross-lighting can give interesting depth to an otherwise flat image.

There are other appealing lights: the blue light of dusk, a silhouette against a sunrise or sunset, night images lit by artificial lights such as the distorting yellow of sodium, the cold green of fluorescent, the warm yellow of tungsten, that all add their piece to the personality of a building. This works best if the lighting is all of one type; mixed lighting can be very difficult to deal with. Night shots can be lit by the moon or exterior building/grounds lights. The changing electronic light of large signs or TV screens gives big city downtown areas a

"Skytrain Bridge, New Westminster/Delta"

unique look (think Times Square). A lighting trick long used by those trying to sell a house, when shooting the exterior of a building at dusk, is to turn on all the interior lights, it gives the home a warm, lived-in look.

Lighting the rooms of a building for interior shots is done differently. Rarely is there enough ambient light to light all the nooks and corners, and it is hard to control. But the smaller scale allows most of the devices we use to manipulate light, strobes, reflectors, umbrellas, diffusers, etc.

Weather matters, and it provides huge opportunities. The same bridge, maybe Golden Gate or Lion's Gate, lit through dappled cloud, in mist, partly buried in fog, with a thunderhead cloud behind it, in the midst of a snow storm or driving rain, will produce dramatically different images. It will change the composition needs, and the lighting. Very often, the worse the weather, the better the photographic opportunities.

How much environment to include? Only enough to make the necessary statement. This may include: clear blue sky, clouds, stars, astronomical phenomena (i.e. the milky way or moon). It may be artificial such as gardens, other buildings, vehicles, or natural. The environment may be a major statement, a storm or the ocean, or may need to be cropped out entirely.

The whole enchilada? Sometimes the entire structure needs to be in the photograph. A wide, or a very wide angle lens may be enough to make the whole image when the camera is levelled to ensure vertical lines, but this includes too much foreground. In many modern sensors there are enough pixels to ensure adequate detail in an image when the lower portion of the picture is sacrificed. But sometimes a wide angle lens isn't enough. There are times when you can step back until it is, or you can make do with several shots to create a panorama. Sometimes you need specialized gear. The oldest solution is a view camera which allows the lens to be tilted and shifted. Or you can buy a modern (expensive) tilt/shift lens for a DSLR. Or you can be creative, tilt the camera up, and accept the resulting tilted buildings. Or, finally, you can use Photoshop to correct the tilted buildings.

Or just a part? Often a portion of a structure tells enough of the story. One of the two Golden Gate Bridge towers is all that is needed to identify the structure. Variations on this theme include shooting from further away with a telephoto lens to compress the image and its environ-

"Vancouver Public Library"

ment, or shooting from closer will include a broader swath of background. There are increased opportunities for imaginative cropping by using different lenses.

Or even less, just details. Almost all structures have numerous photogenic details. Patterns, shapes, textures, and the myriad of small elements of a structure are often the architect's gifts to photographers. Doors, windows, roofs, stairs, balconies, railings, chimneys, fences, beams and so on, can show much of the personality of a building. Even the pattern of rivets on a sheet of steel siding or the cables on a bridge can make an impressive image.

A necessary part is the human aspect. People in the image give warmth, perspective, dynamism, movement, and context, and can significantly increase the appeal of the image, as may animals. Ideally, the image is about the structure, so don't let these elements dominate.

The touches that make the image beautiful or artistic might include reflections in windows and water, exaggeration of perspective, dramatic backgrounds, HDR, symmetry, the dynamism/movement implied by the blurred water or clouds in long-exposure images, movement of lights at night. And don't forget the improvements and magic made possible by post-processing in Photoshop, or Lightroom, Capture One or the Google/ Nik plug-in suite or…

[*To be continued in a future issue.*]

Autumn Photography

by Nancy MacNab

Autumn arrives, bringing cooler weather and shorter days. The onset of fall gives you two photographic goals: capturing the fall colours and activities, and reviewing and reflecting on your results to date. Now is the time to start planning your next photographic challenges.

Shorter days mean getting up in time for sunrise no longer requires setting the alarm clock for 5 a.m. Rather, you can actually sleep until a somewhat more civilized hour, although I'll admit that the night owls among us don't consider any time prior to 10 or 11 as "civilized." The disadvantage is that it makes it difficult or impossible to fit in a dawn photography session before heading off to work.

Earlier sunsets result in late dinners if you want to catch the best light, so take some snacks with you. Both sunrise and sunset will require a long exposure to capture the colours, so a sturdy tripod is essential if you want to use a slow ISO for the best quality image possible.

The triumvirate of exposure consists of ISO, shutter speed and aperture to control the sensitivity of the pixels (ISO), the length of time the shutter is open to let light through (shutter speed) and the size of the opening through which the light passes (aperture). The total quantity of light is the same, so the difference is whether it is allowed to trickle through a small aperture for a long time (e.g. f22 for 5 seconds), or quickly flood through a large opening (e.g. f4 for 1/250 second).

Aperture determines how much of the image, from front to back, is going to be in focus. A large aperture at the f4 end of the scale will result in only a narrow sliver of sharpness, while a small aperture at the f16 – f32 end of your lens should allow most of the image to be sharp.

Your shutter speed determines how motion will appear in your image. When you are photographing animals or birds in flight, waterfalls, racing cars or anything else that is moving, your shutter speed should be your first concern. Depending on the speed at which your subject is moving, a fast shutter speed of 1/500 second or faster will freeze the motion while a slow shutter speed will blur it.

The ISO helps control how sensitive your sensor is to light, which controls how much noise appears in your image. A lower ISO is more sensitive and less noisy than a higher ISO.

When making your decisions regarding exposure, first decide which is more important to control: the appearance of motion or the depth of field in focus.

If the former, set your shutter speed first and then the aperture. If the latter, choose your aperture first and then decide on the shutter speed. If you cannot gain a fast enough (or slow enough) shutter speed, you will need to change your ISO.

When setting the second value, check the overall image to see if it is composed mainly of light tones, dark tones, or mid-tones. Your camera is programmed to bring the overall image to a mid-tone of 18% grey. If the image is mainly light coloured, your camera will try to darken it by under-exposing. You will need to over-expose from what the camera suggests. Not doing so results in grey snow and dark, under-exposed images.

If your image is composed mainly of dark tones, your camera will want to lighten it by over-exposing, turning your black dog into a grey one. To maintain the dark tones, you will need to under-expose from the settings your camera suggests.

If you shoot everything on automatic, then spend this fall and winter learning to use the aperture-priority, shutter-priority, and manual modes. This allows you to refine your choices when taking photographs so the settings are your choice rather than your camera's.

Review your images from the summer and see if the same error is found in many of them. Play "what is wrong with this picture?" Then find out how to fix that error and start practicing until it is no longer a problem. This is a great way to improve your photography.

This is also a good time to make sure you really learn about your equipment, so you know exactly what it can do and how it operates. This lets you shoot instinctively without having to think through each step. Knowing exactly which lens you need and which aperture or shutter speed will give you the effect you want helps to let you focus on the result rather than the equipment.

Start taking some of the workshops offered by the club. Talk to other members if something is puzzling you. You should also join the appropriate forum on the website and discuss it there. Participate in field trips for opportunities to get some hands-on experience. You will usually find someone who can help you with your camera there.