

Close-Up



**HDR or Exposure Stacking
The Joy of Being Creative
Perspectives on Editing Images
2017-18 External Competitions
Member Portfolio: Neil Boyle
Film Renaissance
Three Views on Creativity
Landscape Photography
Beginners' Corner: As the Sun Sets**

"Red-eyed Tree Frog" by Suzanne Huot

Victoria Camera Club

Sept/Oct 2018 Volume 71 Number 7

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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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September/October 2018

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

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What's Inside

Calendar and President's Message.....	4
HDR or Exposure Stacking.....	5
The Joy of Being Creative	6
Perspectives on Editing Images	8
Competition Info	10
2017-18 External Competitions	12
Member Portfolio: Neil Boyle	15
Film Renaissance.....	19
Three Views on Creativity.....	20
How I Did It.....	22
Shoots Around Victoria.....	23
Landscape Photography.....	24
Beginners' Corner: As the Sun Sets.....	26

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.

Sept 6th: Season Opener and Competition Night

The deadline for submissions for the September competition is Sept 6th. The theme competition is "Water." The meeting will include an introduction to our competitions.

Sept 13th: Presentation Night

Our guest speaker is Boomer Jerritt from Courtenay, BC who will present "Polar Adventures: Off the Beaten Path" that illustrates the areas around the Antarctic Peninsula and South Georgia.

Sept 20th: Members' Night

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

Workshop and Field Trip Highlights

Beginners Photoshop and Lightroom workshops. Victoria Classic Boat Festival and Tofino weekend field trips.

Cover Image: "Red-eyed Tree Frog" by Suzanne Huot. This image won the Best Amphibian category in the George Glennie Memorial Nature Salon.

When I first became interested in nature photography, my goal was to concentrate on macro. At that time I was spending winters in Florida and was surprised by the abundance of birds and mammals. For these it was logical to use a longer lens but macro photography was something I still wanted to try.

So, earlier this year, I signed up for a Hummingbird flash and macro workshop in Costa Rica. The macro time was spent photographing all sorts of interesting snakes, insects and various amphibians.

Red-eyed Tree Frogs were a species that I particularly wanted to capture. When we see images of Red-eyed Tree Frogs we are immediately transported to a Costa Rican rain forest. This handsome frog is mainly arboreal spending most of its time hiding in the humid rain forest canopy waiting to ambush moths and other tree dwelling insects. Canon EOS 1D MkIV, Canon 100-400 Lens at f11 with flash.

President's Message

Each time I receive our *Close-Up* magazine, I always feel eager to dive into it immediately. All the wonderfully written articles and the amazing photos taken by our members have no doubt helped to foster your love of photography as it has mine. We are lucky that the judges of the 2018 PSA Newsletter competition seem to agree, as our magazine tied for first place in both the Large Club and the "Best Competition Results" page categories. Congratulations to the 60+ members who contributed to the success of *Close-Up* during 2017 and special thanks to Richard James for being an extraordinary editor for the last 10 years and to the *Close-Up* team for their ongoing work. Without the dutiful work of all of you, *Close-Up* would not have enjoyed such success and interest.

In a Club such as ours, it is you, the volunteers, that keep all the many wheels turning. The diversity of the Club members in skill, knowledge, and experience has been our greatest asset in finding help where it is needed. If you are not already active in the Club, do you think that you might have some time to give back? That way, the time that someone else invested in you can be passed on to other new and passionate members. Leading field trips, workshops, and writing for *Close-Up* are just a few areas that could do with a few more volunteers. Because of the size of our membership, none of these are time consuming undertakings and they are very rewarding. Not only is it a way to meet more of our members, you will also learn more about photography and receive the fulfilment that comes from helping your fellow photographers. Scientific studies show that volunteering correlates with better health, longevity, and personal happiness and fulfillment.

An example of ways you can help is with our field-trips. Leading a field trip can be as simple as arranging to visit a great place you've found for the kind of shots you're into. You don't need to do much more than arrange the day and time with the Field Trip Coordinators and they will do the rest!

At present, we are especially looking for 4-5 Workshop Coordinators to help with the organization of the wonderful workshops that the Club offers members throughout the year. This is a special opportunity to work closely with other volunteers and have an influence in the types of workshops that you would be interested in attending and learning about. So, if you think you'd like to help but are unsure what you'd like to do, send me an email or say hi at a meeting and I'm sure we can find something for you.

Teri VanWell, President

HDR or Exposure Stacking

by Dan Takahashi

Here is a different twist on the dreaded HDR or Exposure Stacking techniques. Every photographer has been in a situation where the scene they are trying to shoot has extreme bright parts and extreme dark parts. Like a waterfall in a dark ravine with white water, or a landscape with dark valleys and a beautiful sunset.

Cameras these days are pretty smart, way smarter than me, but once in a while you have to, in a creative way, go beyond what the camera sensor can record in a single shot.

Exposure stacking, exposure blending, tone mapping, fusion, and high dynamic range (HDR), all mean the same thing, the blending of several pictures of the same subject that go from under exposed to over exposed. It magically takes the best exposed pixels from each shot and blends them together while kicking out the worst exposed pixels. Wow, I haven't a clue how it works, but the results are generally awesome.

With your camera set on aperture priority (or manual, but never shutter priority) and on a tripod or steady object, you let the camera take the first photo at what it thinks the proper settings should be. You set the second exposure time to -1 stop, and the third to +1 stop. It is very important to not move the camera while doing this.

Most cameras have a bracketing setting to do this automatically so you just have to set how many exposures you want and how much exposure difference between each. For example, a scene with an extreme bright to dark ratio may require 5 exposures at shutter speeds of 1 - 2 stops apart.

Basically, all you are doing is shooting a series of exposures of the same scene, each with a different exposure value (shutter speed). This enables the camera to capture a larger lighting range (dynamic range) than the sensor is capable of in one shot.

Processing the images requires some specialized software. There are now a lot of programs that do this. Photomatix is one of the oldest ones, I started with it and continue to use it on a daily basis. It has many options to help you get the image you want. Adobe Photoshop is probably the most commonly used one but is less flexible than Photomatix. Lightroom with Enfuse is also very popular. Aurora is good for more dramatic effects.

OnOne is now in the game and there are others as well. The list keeps growing faster than one can try them.

While landscapes are a common place to start playing with exposure stacking, architecture is also a great avenue to explore.

I have found a niche in the photographic world and tend to shoot bracketed exposures most of the time.

I learned and practiced shooting bracketed exposures with landscapes and nature photography and got the opportunity to shoot some real estate. I applied the same principals and now have a clientele that likes my style and keeps me more than busy. Since I retired 10 years ago, I shoot more now than ever before. I shoot residential and commercial real estate professionally on a daily basis.

"Ghosting" is a problem with moving objects, but the software has now developed to the point that I can shoot bracketed scenes with lots of movement and they come out with perfectly balanced colours and re-aligned moving objects.



"Victoria Harbour"

This photo shows the inner harbour with a float plane, water taxis, small boats and even a moving flag.

The photo was taken on a tripod with a remote trigger. The camera was set to auto-bracket 5 shots, with exposure times 1 stop apart. My daytime images are usually shot at ISO 320, f8, auto white balance, and the shutter on continuous high-speed shooting.

Photomatix is my usual choice for software with the basic default settings and ghost removal set to on.

I hope to have a workshop this coming season to show more about the different software, my process and what is possible and impossible to do with the dreaded HDR or exposure stacking.

The Joy of Being Creative

by Don Piper

There are many ways of being creative with our images; the most common way is through our eyes, then the camera lens. How do we twist, turn, and move the lens while taking the image. Bryan Peterson wrote a whole book *“Learning to See Creatively.”* In it he talks about design, colour and composition in photography. It is an excellent read. This article, however, is about taking multiple images and manipulating them to create another area of creative photography.

The programs that I have used for creative images are Photoshop Elements 13 (PSE), Photoshop CC (PS), Lightroom (LR) and the Topaz plug-in.



“The Lost Dutchman”

This is a very popular image of the Lost Dutchman sculpture “placed” at the base of the Superstition Mountains east of Phoenix, Arizona. The background photo was taken on the night of the Super-moon. The image of the Lost Dutchman was an image taken at the entrance to Apache Junction which is near Phoenix. I cut out the image and placed it on the mountains.

Combining images is a relatively easy procedure. Using Lightroom and Photoshop, choose your background image from Lightroom, right click>Edit in>Adobe Photoshop. A box opens with 3 choices, I use “Edit a copy with Lightroom Adjustments”>Edit. After the image opens in Photoshop you will see in the layers panel that it is called “Background.”

Go back to LR and open the second image in Photoshop, the one you want to place on top of the background. This is the image that you will now work on. In the tool bar to the left, select the quick selection tool, this is the paint brush with the dots around it, fourth from the top. If you hover over it with the cursor, it will say “Quick selection tool,” a circle with a cross in it will appear, drag this on to your second image. As you move it around it will select areas that you want. A line of dashes (marching ants) will outline the part of the image that you want to move.

The quick selection tool will probably select more than you wish to move, so hold down the Alt/Opt key. In the tool selection you will now see a “-” within the circle. Carefully go back over the image and remove the area that you do not want to include. This is the most delicate part of the procedure. You may want to decrease (using the “[” key) the size of your brush so that you are able to “fine-tune” it. Go to the zoom tool near the bottom of the tool bar and zoom in to the magnification that you need for fine work and continue with the quick selection tool, adding or removing the marching ants until you have included everything you want in the image.

When you are happy with your selection, move the cursor to the “Move tool” at the top of the tool bar. It looks like a compass with arrows pointing to the four cardinal points. Select move, then drop the cursor down to the object you want to move and while holding down the cursor, drag the object up to the left and hold it over the greyed out image (the background) hold it for a moment (don’t release the cursor) and your first image will open.

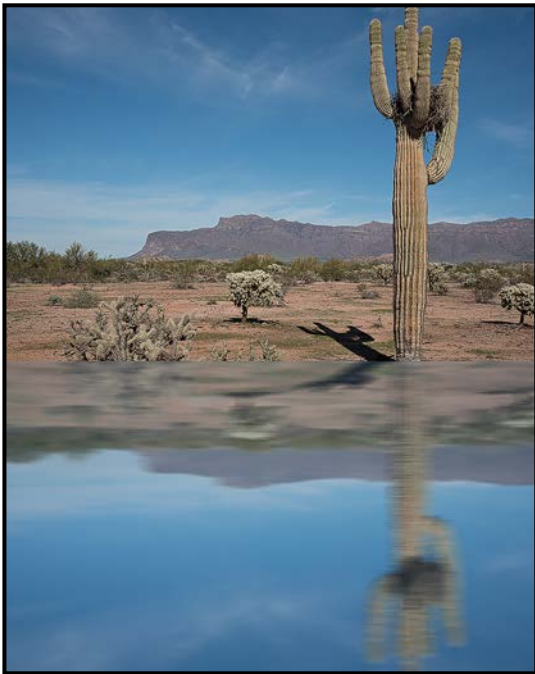
When this window opens drag the cursor down onto the image. A small square icon with a plus in it will appear on top of your first image. Release the cursor and the transferred object will appear on the screen. There will be a sizing box around the image. Shift+drag the corners and this will size the image for you. Place the cursor in the middle of the image and you can move it around to place it wherever you want. Ensure that when you are resizing the image, you retain the proper dimensions. When this is done there will be a check box showing in the upper tool bar. Check this and the transfer will be committed. You still have an opportunity to re-adjust its position later if needed.

When you are satisfied with your image placement and size, go to File >“Save as” where you have a choice of renaming and choosing the type of file. Rename the file so that you don’t overwrite the original image and then chose TIF or PSD, not JPG (you will loose your layers if you do), and click on “Save” to save the file and add it to your Lightroom catalog.



“Navaho Gold”

This is a shot in Antelope Canyon in the Navajo Nation of northern Arizona. I used PSE to create a mirror image. This is a pretty easy process. Opening the image in PSE, I went to Guided control>Photo Play>Reflection>Create Reflections>Add reflection>Fill background>Adjust intensity (I moved this to the right)>Crop tool>Done.



“Superstition Mountains from the Desert”

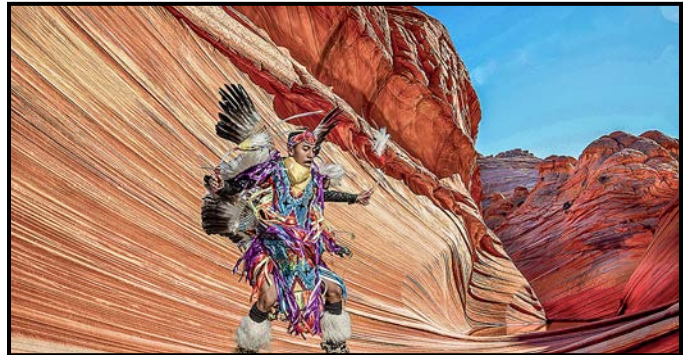
In the Superstition Mountains image I used Elements 13 to create a mirror image. This time I used “water reflection.” The lake looks like a reflection of the sky but it is just the mirror image.

A Model A Ford is parked behind an old Texaco gas pump in “Gammon’s Gulch,” a western town north of Benson, AZ. Many movies have used this setting over the past 50 years and still do so today. I used a plug-in from Topaz to create the optic overlay. There are many plug-ins within Topaz that you can use on you photos.



“Texaco”

This is an image of “The Wave,” a unique rock formation in the Kaibab National Forest in northern Arizona. The hoop dancer was performing at a local Museum event east of Phoenix. I cut him out of the second image, this was a very delicate job and required that I increase the image size and use the quick selection brush very carefully to get the ribbons and feathers to show. The method used was the same as for “The Lost Dutchman” image.



“Yellow Feather Native Hoop Dancer”

We had a vigorous climb into the mountains where we found this cave. There were several energetic young folks who arrived after us. These two girls are doing back flips on the edge of a 150 foot cliff at the mouth of the “Wave Cave.” It was an electrifying experience. I used a Topaz plug-in to create this electrified glow pattern in the image. Topaz is a separate program, a series of filters that can be used with Lightroom and Photoshop.



“Electrified Cliff Girls”

Perspectives on Editing Images

Perspective Correction

by Pearson Morey

In April I participated in a Club event in Chemainus to take pictures of the murals that have made the town famous. The town was full of tourists and locals doing their business, thus finding a clear field of view to capture some of the murals proved to be difficult. It boiled down to taking the best shot possible, but not “the best.” In the first image I was faced with a car in the shot, so I



“Original Photo As Taken”

took the picture at an angle, making it an awkward picture in my mind. I decided to try and be a little creative and rearrange the picture in editing software. I used ACDsee Ultimate 2018 for this. It has a great perspective and levelling tool that I find extremely easy to use. I pulled and pushed the image around to look as if I had taken the picture straight on. The second image is the results of the massaging the image. Then it was just a matter of fiddling with the editing software to coax the shadows, highlights and colours to add to the depth of the image to my liking. When correcting the perspective and levels in my pictures I usually rely on ACDsee 2018 and Corel’s PaintShop Pro 2018 Ultimate.

The ACDsee Photo Studio Ultimate 2018 Perspective Correction tool gives you eight anchor points to enable you to pull and push the image around until you get the perspective that you are looking for. It also provides Distortion and Lens Correction tools. Plus all the other tools to make your editing task easy to perform.



“Photo After Editing and Cropping”



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Colour Adjustments

by Richard James

There are a number of different ways of doing colour adjustments in Photoshop. In this short article I will show you how to get over the problem of banding due to polarization in plain blue skies.

In the Ultra Wide-angle lens article in the July 2018 *Close-Up* I said that the use of polarizing filters when doing landscapes with these lenses was not recommended. This is because you are very likely to have unnatural colour variation across the blue sky as the polarization changes with the light angle from the sun, as in this example.



“Ultra Wide-angle Sky Effect”

However, all is not lost! If you're prepared to do a little work in Photoshop (CC or Elements), or Lightroom, you can fix a lot of these problems to produce an acceptable image. Part of the key is understanding that as you scan around a blue sky, the “blue” changes in both luminosity and saturation. Polarization emphasizes this so the task is to reverse this emphasis without affecting the higher contrast that you got in the sky with the filter, or to change other areas of the image.

The technique used is to add HSL (Hue-Saturation-Luminosity) and exposure adjustments that are only applied to change specific blue parts of the sky. Note that multiple changes to the same, or overlapping, areas may be required.

In Photoshop you would use adjustment layers and put them in a new layer group so that you can turn them all on and off at the same time to better judge their total effect. The masks are generated either as luminosity masks, or, simply by painting white onto a black mask at a low opacity, around 20 – 25%, to reveal only the specific areas you want to change. Edge feathering may also be required to give smooth transitions.

In Lightroom however you would use the adjustment brush to brush in the changes having selected the appropriate HSL or exposure values.

Whether doing this in Photoshop or Lightroom you will have to make successive small changes in each of the layers (brushed areas) to get the effect that you want.

In this example I deliberately set the lens to 14 mm and shot to maximize the amount of polarization on one side of the image. After applying the changes the result looks reasonably normal.



“Ultra Wide-angle Sky Corrected”



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October Theme: People at an Event

by Richard Letourneau

The October Theme is People at an Event. We are very fortunate indeed to live in an area that hosts so many public events. Here is a quote from Tourism Victoria: "With over 100 annual festivals, countless exciting events, and diverse artistic, cultural and ethnic communities, not to mention superb scenery and ideal weather, Victoria is a centre of celebration year-round." The summer has been filled with opportunities to photograph festivals, performers, parades, costumes, equipment, athletes, musicians, attendees, and so much more!

We want to see your unique views of the people at these events. Did you capture someone's 'wow face' at the Canada Day fireworks? Perhaps you were interested in some of the special patriotic make-up or costumes worn by attendees? Were you helping to celebrate First Nations heritage at the Aboriginal Cultural Festival? Or did you attend the always colourful Victoria Pride Parade?

People attend events like the Symphony Splash, Victoria's Largest Little Airshow, and the Tour de Victoria, Don't overlook recurring events like Street Markets, where you will find lots of people looking for fresh produce, or choosing unique objets d'art from assorted artisans. Your family and/or friends may have planned a special picnic or other event. As you can see, the opportunities to capture photographs of 'People at an Event' are endless. Share your fun photos.

In general "Street photography" images do not require a model release but be mindful and respectful when on public property. Parent/Guardian of minors permission is not required if the image was taken in a public place or at a public event. However, it is recommended that permission be sought out if at all possible. Note: just because a property is open to the public doesn't necessarily make it public property.

As it can be challenging capturing people at a public event, the article "7 Tips for Photographing People at Public Events" provides valuable reminders (thephoblographer.com/2013/10/22/7-tips-photographing-people-public-events). For example, being aware of the environment and the background behind your subject, as well as the quality of light. Choice of lens is equally important. Will you make a close-up image of an interesting face or will you include some of the environment to contribute context to your story telling? You may wish to take advantage of depth of field to blur the background. Try to capture something unique. Have fun and happy shooting!

November Theme: Urban Wildlife

by Jill Turyk

The November Theme is Urban Wildlife. Like the monthly Wildlife category, the subject of urban wildlife does not include pets or domesticated animals. Unlike the Wildlife category, a significant showing of the hand of man is mandatory in these shots. Clear evidence of the hand of man is needed in order to show the environment in which the wildlife lives.

Urban wildlife is wildlife that has adapted its lifestyle to take advantage of human elements for their basic needs such as food and shelter. For example, it may be more suitably represented by a flock of birds nesting in a wall than by a squirrel living in an oak tree in the back yard.

The description of the Urban Wildlife category in the BBC/Natural History Museum Wildlife Photographer of the Year competition is "Focusing on nature's occupation or cohabitation in a human dominated environment, whether capturing the magic of the commonplace or the surprise of the unexpected or normally unseen." Images with impact will be those that show the impact that the human environment has on wildlife, whether positive or negative. Images with less impact will be those taken in green space similar to their own wild environment.

The BBC Wildlife Magazine's newsletter, *Discover Wildlife*, has this to say about urban wildlife photography: "Wildlife photography can be just as exciting in the city as anywhere else. Now that foxes, badgers, peregrine falcons and even otters have adjusted to urban habitats, we have better opportunities for photography than ever before. Plus urban wildlife is much more accessible and is often habituated to people.

Urban photography provides a great platform for creative backgrounds. Images of animals in front of recognizable buildings or cityscapes are striking, but even a postbox, bus stop, road sign and other familiar street furniture can help people to connect with a picture, placing an unusual animal in a familiar environment tells more of a story. Buildings and other man-made structures are also good for experimenting with composition."

In summary, rather than capturing the hummingbird at the feeder, why not get out in the early morning or late at night and get the raccoon at your grape arbour after dark. Whether the scene is downtown or in urban green space, our goal is to capture images of the impact on our urban wildlife living in an environment made by man.

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2017-18 External Competitions

by Mike Wooding

During the 2017-18 club year, the Club entered a record nineteen External Competitions, including nine from the Canadian Association for Photographic Art (CAPA), seven from the Photographic Society of America (PSA), plus the Lion's Gate Celebration of Nature, the North Shore Challenge, and the George Glennie Memorial Nature Salon.

In thirteen of these competitions, we came in at least fourth, while placing first in five. This exceptional result is a testament to the quality of images that were submitted by many Club members. Here are some of the highlights.

This was the first time in decades that the Club entered PSA Interclub competitions. We had no idea of what to expect, other than we knew that the competition would be very stiff. The Nature Comp comprised three rounds. At year end, we placed 2nd in our group and 3rd out of 72 clubs overall. The Open Comp comprised four rounds. The final result was that we placed 1st in our Group of 38 and 2nd out of 130 clubs overall. This year we plan to add the Creative Comp and, given the Club's strength in this area, we are optimistic for good results.

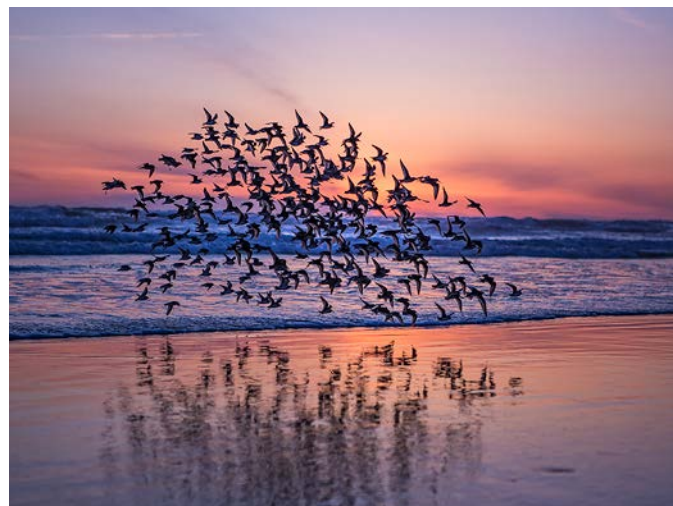
Although our record in CAPA competitions was less than stellar, we did have a few successes. We took 3rd place for the Bronze medal in the Fall Print competition, and gained a 4th place Honourable Mention in the Digital Fine Art Competition. Our best result was winning the Gold medal in the CAPA Pacific Zone Print Challenge.

Historically we have done well in the Lion's Gate Celebration of Nature, and last year was no exception. After placing 1st in 2016, we had a high goal, and thanks to some excellent submissions, we pulled off a 2nd place finish. The highlight was Suzanne Huot winning Best in Show!

Another perennial favourite is the North Shore Challenge, which we won in 2015. This year we tied for 4th place, and three of our members, Hilary Goeller, Margarita Huang and Leah Gray received Honourable Mentions.

This was our second year to enter the George Glennie Memorial Nature Salon in the US, competing with 45 other clubs. This year we focused on winning the Diversity Award, and were not disappointed.

Eleven other images by Club members received individual awards. For details and all of our submitted images, please visit the Club website. at victoriacameraclub.ca/d/b8f6936a-8f4c-43eb-b7b7-4cd677264863.



*PSA Interclub Open Award of Merit
"Sunset Flight" by Lois Burton*

Photographers comments: As I watched a flock of sandpipers working the shoreline at sunset, I thought that it would make a well-composed image if I could capture them silhouetted against the colours of the setting sun and to also capture the mirrored reflection of their flight pattern in the wet sand. Adjustments were made to reduce shadows and increase contrast, the exposure was reduced slightly for a more dramatic effect and a tint was added to enhance the overall colour. Canon 5D Mark III, 24–70 mm lens, ISO 800, focal length 70 mm, 1/3200 second at f2.8.



*PSA Interclub Open Best of Show, Glennie Merit Award
"Pixie by Starlight" by Jonathan Adams*

Photographers comments: Pixie by Starlight was taken in early September in the Badlands State Park east of Bend, Oregon. It was one of over 500 exposures taken for a time-lapse sequence, and I selected it for processing as it also captured a meteorite falling in the frame. I had not noticed the small sprite-shaped twig near the middle of the frame until after I had processed the image, but once seen it becomes the main focal point. Fellow club member Don Peterson, who is much more imaginative than I, suggested the title for the competition entry.



*PSA Interclub Nature Honourable Mention
"Lion Flushing Guinea Fowl" by Steve Smith*

Photographers comments: Soft early morning light touched the floor of the Ngorongoro Crater in Tanzania as we watched a pride of lions take the last meat from a buffalo kill. The pride moved away from the kill into the grassy crater floor and happened upon a small flock of guinea fowl. Apparently chasing guinea fowl is very amusing to a lion. This shot captured an adult lioness flushing a guinea fowl into flight from the grass.



*PSA Nature Award of Merit
"Grizzlies on the Tundra" by James Kissinger*

Photographers comments: I think this image is a once in my life-time photograph. It was taken on the Dempster Highway in early September about 454 kilometers from Klondike Junction, Yukon. We spent over two weeks driving up and down between Wright Pass Summit and Eagle Plains. When we started the colour of the tundra was basically green and then quickly changed to glorious colours for a brief time, maybe a week or so. We had the pleasure of the company of this Mother and her cub for three days. At one point they were feeding on part of a caribou. They were very comfortable with us and I think the Mother had a heart of gold towards her cub.



*PSA Interclub Open Honour Award
"Fiery Attitude" by Gail Takahashi*

Photographers comments: This image of Matthew Cluff, a former dancer with Ballet Victoria, was taken at a studio shoot. Matthew was body-painted by the talented Kristen Grant. The smoke swirling around Matthew is a photo of incense smoke taken at a Lighting SIG demonstration several years ago. The smoke in the original image was green so using a Hue/Saturation layer I converted it to red. I then used a layer mask to blend the smoke around Matthew.



*PSA Nature Honourable Mention
"Aerial Combat on the Chilkat" by Evan Guengerich*

Photographers comments: Last November, I spent a week on the Chilkat River in Alaska photographing eagles. A few days of snowfall provided beautiful conditions and the eagles at times seemed to enjoy skirmishing as much as feeding on the abundant salmon. I shot with a Nikon D500 to maximize reach and a Sigma 500 mm f4 lens on a Jobu gimbal head. Although achieving high shutter speeds and adequate depth of field with a reasonable ISO was a challenge, maintaining the physical dexterity to track the action while standing in -5 to -20 degree temperatures for hours at a time was more difficult.



*PSA Digital Open and North Shore Challenge
Honourable Mention
“Snow Shadows” by Hilary Goeller*

Photographers comments: This image was taken while snowshoeing at Devil’s Glen near Collingwood, Ontario. It was a bitterly cold day, so it was hard to take the gloves off, but as we came to this patch of trees with the late afternoon sun making such beautiful long shadows, we had to stop and admire the scene and take photos. The DSLR was a new camera for me so I feel I was lucky to get the shot.



*Pacific Zone Print Challenge Honourable Mention
“Finn Slough - A Historical Community”
by Richard Webber*

Photographers comments: Finn Slough, located at the end of No. 4 Road in Richmond, is the oldest fishing community in BC. This historic fishing community was originally established by Finnish settlers in the late 1800s. Finn Slough consists of floating homes, houses on stilts and retired fishing boats. I captured this image with a Panasonic Lumix G3 camera converted for IR photography using a “Super Colour” IR filter. For more information about the incredible world of IR photography check out LifePixel’s website at lifepixel.com.



*CAPA Fine Art - CAPA Merit Award
“The Moment” by Dan Takahashi*

Photographer’s comments: I am currently involved with Ballet Victoria as their Dance Art Photography Facilitator. This photo of principal ballerina Andrea Robyn Bayne, and Luke Thompson was taken in the studio of Ballet Victoria in the late afternoon with light streaming through the beautiful arched window. Taken with a Nikon D850, 24-120 mm lens, 1/250 sec., f4, and ISO 3200. This captured the moment of emotion, motion of dance, composition and light. Perfect!



*CAPA Four Nations Competition
“Ghostly Crosswalk” by Normand Marcotte*

Photographer’s comments: This composite image is based on three photos taken within a few seconds of each other in Tokyo, Japan, while pedestrians were crossing the street. The images were merged together in Photoshop Elements 14. I used Lightroom 6 to add a slight vignette and increase the “ghostly” effect of the blended pedestrians with a local brush adjustment to reduce saturation, clarity and contrast. Images shot with a Canon EOS 6D and 17-40 mm lens.

Member Portfolio: Neil Boyle

I started taking pictures with a Kodak Brownie when I was six. I used all the major and many minor makes of cameras, shot film for forty years, and quit photography in 2000. The kids left home, the dog died, we moved from Calgary to Victoria, digital came along, and I took up the craft again. This time I learned it properly, getting instant feedback on a camera LCD screen, taking courses and reading books. I joined the Victoria Camera Club in 2007, where I learned more from competition judges than I had from everything else.

I've found a few photographic truths (with a small t). The camera and the gear don't matter, the image matters. The gear may make it easier or allow a few special effects, but many of the best images come from the simplest cameras. You have to know your gear well enough to use it in the dark. You need to know what makes a good image. You can practice shooting what other people shoot, learn other's techniques, study other's styles, but in the end, you have to take your own images and do it your way. And all images benefit from post-processing.

I also learned that I like a few photography genres and have no interest in others. I have a style, although I would be hard-pressed to describe it beyond a few generalizations. I strive to make my images generate the same feelings in my audience that I had when I first saw the subject of the image. I modify my images in LR and PS, but I strive for subtlety. I also like to make images that appear in a form not seen in the natural world, B&W, long exposure (LE), macro, night. Many of my images come from my love of travelling. People are always interesting subjects, especially doing what motivates them. I like Miksang images, and will write a column about this obscure branch of photography for a future issue of *Close-Up*.



"A Grain Truck Leaving the Palouse"

The Palouse is a farming area in eastern Washington, and the main crop is wheat. Before it matures, the landscape is green, and once ripe, golden. Jack Lien, a local photographer, has shown off his part of the world to many Club members, and his workshops are justifiably well attended. This is sunset in July, seen from Steptoe Butte, a 400-million-year old volcanic quartzite "island" that rises 300 metres above the rolling hills that give texture to an image when cross-lit by a low sun. The focus of the image is a grain truck hauling a full load to market.

This image required timing to place the truck correctly in the image, to get the dust kicked up by a single truck (before it was muddled by following trucks), and to capture the golden light before sunset. Gear: Nikon D800e, 70-200 mm lens at 200 mm, tripod. Settings: f8, 1/15 sec, ISO 200.



"Skogafoss, Iceland"

Iceland is an island made almost entirely of black volcanic rock, and it has a lot of magnificent waterfalls, amongst many other photographically wonderful geological marvels. This shot was designed to show the size and power without showing the entire falls.

I tried longer exposures to blur the falling water, but a short exposure seemed to produce a better picture. The human figure, included to show scale, was modelling for someone else, so I took advantage of his presence. Gear: Nikon D800e, 70-200 mm lens at 120 mm, tripod. Settings: f2.8, 1/1000 sec, ISO 800.

Brock Fenton is one of Canada's premier bat experts who photographs bats all over the world. I've been fortunate to accompany him on several trips. At the La-



“Pygmy Fruit-eating Bat, Derminura phaeotis, Belize”

manai Outpost Lodge in Belize, researchers gather each spring to study the more than 50 species of local bats. This female Pygmy Fruit-eating Bat, captured unharmed in a mist net, was photographed in a make-shift studio.

The “studio” set-up involved multiple flashes, a camera trap to trigger the flashes as she flew through a light beam, and a release chamber where the exit forced her to fly in our desired direction. The studio is a tent, making it easy to recapture her for several more images. She was released where she was captured, before she got too tired and after a meal of banana and mango. Gear: Nikon D800e, 24-70 mm lens at 24 mm, tripod, remote release, light beam camera trap, 5 Nikon SB900 flashes. Settings: f13, ISO 800, flashes at 1/64th power to shorten the flash duration. Technique: shutter opened before releasing the bat and closed after the flashes are triggered.



“North Head Lighthouse, Cape Disappointment, WA”

A landscape shot of an iconic lighthouse on a very grey, cloudy day, producing a very flat image. For the composition, the beach and waves served as the foreground, but to make the background pop, the clouds needed darkening and the contrast bumped up with the clarity slider in Lightroom. The contrast between the dark volcanic basalt rocks and the pale surf and sky worked well in

B&W, but the dark rocks needed significant work in Nik Silver Effects Pro to bring out the details. Gear: Nikon D800e, 70-200 mm lens at 112 mm. Settings: f11, 1/60 sec, ISO 100.



“New York City skyline, from the east side of the Brooklyn Bridge”

Careful positioning to place the pilings below the buildings and to separate as many as possible. It was shot during the dawn golden hour, long enough after dawn to get some detail in the pilings. Some experimentation showed that a long exposure of one minute was enough to soften the water.

In Lightroom, I used the graduated filter on the top of the image to increase the temperature (to give the golden glow to the buildings in the rising sun) and a second on the water to reduce the temperature and make the water more blue. Gear: Nikon D800e, 24-70 mm lens at 31 mm, tripod, remote release, Neutral Density filter (ND 6 stop). Settings: f19, 60 sec, ISO 200.



“Mosquito Larvae”

A garbage can full of standing water, home to hundreds of immature mosquitoes, larvae and pupae. This first stage, known as a wiggler, about half a centimetre long, did well in a small aquarium filled with very clean water (to reduce flash reflection from debris in the water).

Lit by flashes behind, to the sides and from below, with a neutral background to provide just enough bokeh to make the creature stand out, and shot with a macro lens on extension tubes. Post-processing to remove water spots and some minor distractions. Gear: Nikon D800e, f2.8 105 mm macro lens, tripod, 4 flashes. Settings: f16, 1/60 sec, ISO 100.



“White Sands National Monument, New Mexico”

In the heart of the Tularosa Basin in southern New Mexico are gypsum dunes, a very white crystal that forms an uneven surface when it settles out in the wind. It is so white that there is almost no colour in a daytime shot. Colour comes in the golden or the blue hours - an hour before or after sunset and sunrise.

A blade of grass, bent just enough to touch the ground and moved by the wind, will carve a smooth arc. This image is very reminiscent of Miksang, a form of contemplative photography.

Gear: Nikon D800e, 24-70 mm lens at 56 mm, tripod. Settings: f9.5, 1/500 sec, ISO 200. Technique: the tripod and remote release were primarily to allow repeated minor adjustments to get the perfect composition. The sand crystals are very white, and the camera light meter exposes them at 18% grey, so to show the correct whiteness in the image, I increased the exposure by 2 stops.

Portraits are shots of people, often showing enough environment to tell a story about the person. Donique, who I only met very briefly, talked about depression, and agreed to let me photograph her. I asked her to choose her pose, and she opted to show off her tattoo of the serotonin molecule. Gear: Nikon D800e, 24-70 mm lens at 58 mm. Settings: f3.3, 1/180 sec, ISO 200.



“Donique, showing off her serotonin tattoo”

Photographing the female figure is much harder than one would expect, and requires a good knowledge of posing and lighting. A great model, like Emilee, knows what poses look good.

This mirrored image was inspired by an old shot from Helmut Newton. Emilee played about with several poses before we made this one work. It was shot with a wide aperture to blur the mirror image. Thanks to Gregg Eligh for the lighting advice and the workshop. Gear: Nikon D800e, 50 mm lens, studio lights/umbrella. Settings: f2, 1/125 sec, ISO 100.



“Emilee in a Gregg Eligh Workshop”

I've made it to this point in my photography with a lot of help from many people. So thanks to those who taught me, teachers, mentors, judges and those who teach by example. And thanks to the *Close-Up* editors and proof-readers who have made my efforts to pass on this teaching a little more readable.

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Film Renaissance

by Matt Speight

When I was asked to write for *Close-Up*, it was on the premise that I would write about what's new and exciting in the photographic world, the latest and the greatest so-to-speak. I never thought I would be writing about film. Guess what? It's back. There have been some exciting new developments, (pun intended), in the world of film.

I thought the whole film resurgence was a hipster thing only, and surely, it wasn't going to last. But the demographic of those using film has now expanded beyond your hipster. Even seasoned professional photographers are returning to visit their first love, may it be a cassette of Tri-X or Portra 400. So, let me go over what's new in film and what has survived in this digital camera world.

Kodak and Fuji never died, (contrary to what many people think). Kodak still makes a good range of black and white film including T-Max and a range of fine grain films with my personal favourite being Tri-X. It's an older emulsion film so it is too grainy for my taste in 35 mm but has beautiful tonality and grain when shot in medium format.

Kodak still churns out consumer-level colour film like Kodak Max and other professional films like Portra and Ektar. Such is the growing demand for film that Kodak has committed to bringing back their Ektachrome slide film which should be available later this fall.

I will say this, nothing photographically is more enjoyable than looking at a great image on a slide, through a good quality loupe. If you haven't shot slides, it's an exercise worth venturing into.

Fuji, unlike Kodak, never stopped making slide film and continues to make Velvia, known for its super fine grain and punchy colours. They also make Provia slide film for when you want a more realistic representation of your subject. Like Kodak, they still make amateur films like Superia and pro films like 400H and NPS160.

However, Fuji's black and white film, Neopan has just been discontinued because it was losing money. But hang on. Isn't there supposed to be a resurgence of film shooters? Well, to be honest Fuji, was never a big player in the black and white photography world and was always well behind Kodak and Ilford.

Ilford is the grand master of black and white film, and after a rough time when digital took off, it is now back on track and doing well. They have one of the largest selections of

black and white film available, including the Delta series, which uses a similar technology to Kodak's T-max films, giving you a fine grain for the speed of the film. Shooting Ilford's HP5 and FP4, is almost a right of passage of students learning the art of the black and white process. It's an older technology like Tri-X but more forgiving of over or under exposure which is an asset to those learning. They make the fastest ISO rated film with the Delta 3200.

Remember Rollei, the camera manufacturer that went bankrupt? The name is now being applied to some interesting new black and white films and older rebranded Agfa films.

What's new is that they have taken aerial surveillance films and put them into 35 mm cassettes for us to enjoy. These films are more sensitive to infrared. When used with a red filter your skies are a deeper black and foliage takes on a lighter dream-like look. For me this film lends itself to some great portraits giving the skin a brighter, glowing, unblemished look.

Bergger is a French film manufacturer. They have developed a new Pancro 400 black and white film with 2 different silver emulsions, one with Silver Iodide and the other with Silver Bromide. This gives the film a finer grain, low contrast and a very wide latitude.

If you are looking for a higher contrast film, try the new Japan Camera Hunter brand, Street Pan film. It's a re-born surveillance film originally used in traffic cameras. It has higher grain level and contrast which lends itself, as the name suggests, to street photography.

Cinestill Film is a company selling ISO 800 tungsten and ISO 50 daylight colour film. This film is new to still photography but has been used in the movie industry for years by many of the top directors. The film is compatible with the standard colour C-41 processing. To do this, they had to remove the black Remjet anti-halation layer. Removing this layer can cause halos or glowing in strong highlights. To some, this just adds to the experience of using the film. The film has a good grain for the speed and the colours have a nice retro feel.

Film is very much alive and offering a better selection today than when I used my first roll of film over 30 years ago. Perhaps, it's time to dust off your film camera, or acquire one, and give it a try. If you've never tried film before, it may give you a whole new, old way of connecting to photography.

Now I wonder if there's a Photoshop plug-in or perhaps I could create my own action to duplicate the effect of that Cinestill 800 film?

Three Views on Creativity

Garry Schaefer

The title of this article offers a bit of a mine-field to ponder. What, exactly, does “creative” mean, in the context of a photograph? In the array of VCC competition categories, the former “Creative” category has morphed into “Altered Reality,” something not seen directly through the viewfinder. Such images are most often arrived at through the vigorous use of post-processing. Another approach, championed by Lloyd Houghton, is the deliberate use of camera motion to produce an abstract, hopefully artistic result. At the end of May I enjoyed Lloyd’s most recent workshop to explore those techniques and, shortly after, a field trip to put them into practice. Our excursion took place in downtown Victoria, on the waterfront and through the Chinatown area.

I have chosen the image “In Dragon Alley” as an example, based on one of the techniques taught by Lloyd. Given the presence of daylight and the shutter speeds required, manual exposure control and the use of something to block the intensity of the incoming light are necessary to avoid a total burn out of the image. My starting point was to affix two stacked 3-stop neutral density

filters to the 12-40 mm f2.8 Pro lens on my Olympus OM-D E-M1. Experimentation resulted in the choice of a ½ second exposure. To achieve the desired exposure, the lens was set to f14 at ISO 400. The image was captured during a vertical sweep of the scene. Back home, a final tweak using my chosen photo editing software and, voila, another abstract “masterpiece” was born!



“In Dragon Alley”

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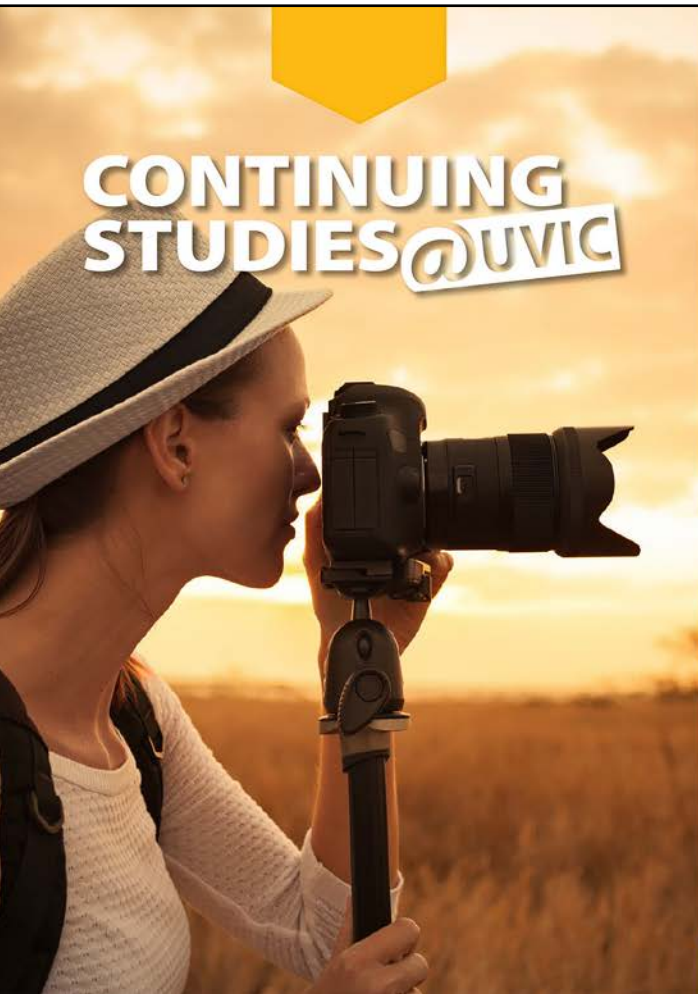
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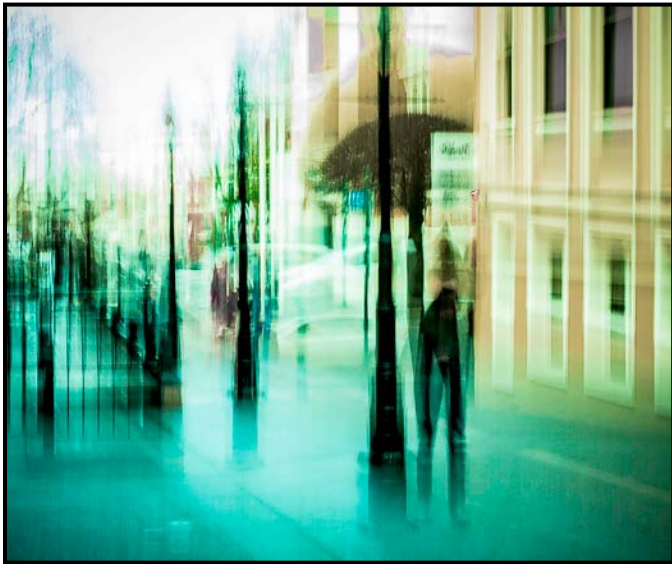


Doug Ambridge

My interest in creative photography started when I attended my first Thursday night meeting of the Victoria Camera Club. I was blown away by what some members were doing creatively. Then I signed up for a workshop put on by Lloyd Houghton. Lloyd is very good at Creative Photography and a patient instructor. He instilled in me the idea that photography is more than simply taking pictures, it is an art form.

If you have not been out to a Tuesday shoot and are able to attend, i.e. not working, then I highly recommend that you do so. I have found it to be great for expanding your mind and encouraging you to look for the unusual. It is wonderful to see what you can come up with when you are forced to think out of your comfort zone.

It is amazing what you can do in half a second! “Passers By” was taken while on one of our Tuesday shoots. The theme of the day was “Zoom, Blur and Special Effects.”



“Passers By”

On this day I was doing some zooming out while shooting until I decided to just stop where I was and attempt to blur my next image. This image was taken outside of the Garrick’s Head pub.

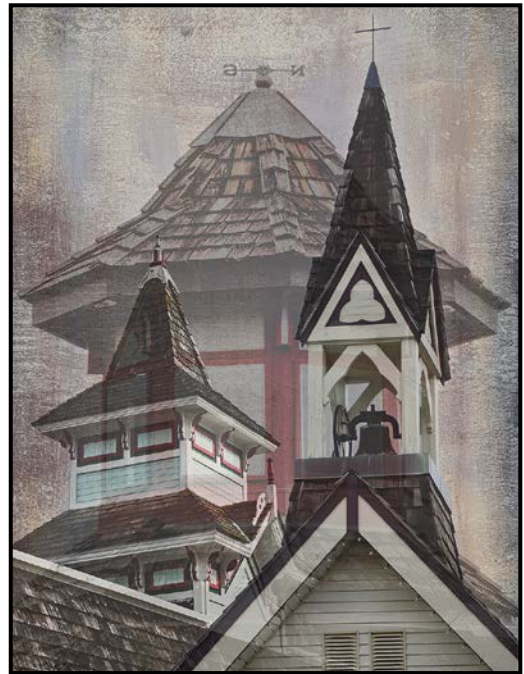
I reminded myself of what Lloyd had taught us and decided this would be a good location. I waited until I had only one person walking towards me. I was using my Olympus OM-D E-M1 with the 12-40 mm Pro Lens. I used f22, with ISO 400, at a half a second and just a light shake of the camera with the shutter release.

In post-production I used Lightroom to convert from RAW and did a little touch up with contrast and clarity. The finished product is what you see here.

Penny Coddling

When the Alternative Tuesday group went to Chemainus in April 2018, I expected to see the famous murals of the town but I was surprised to see so many buildings including churches, offices, barber shops and homes with steeples or high towers topped with spires or weather vanes.

I was intrigued and photographed many examples. Unfortunately the sky was the whitish grey that is sometimes called donkey-belly sky, which meant that making something of my steeple images would be a challenge. In addition, I often look for textures to use in photo editing. Some of the Chemainus murals are painted on rough surfaces with prominent brush strokes so their details provide excellent potential textures and backgrounds.



“Steeple Composite”

I used my Olympus OM-D E-M1 with a 12-100 mm f4 lens to make a collection of tower images as well as textural details from the town’s murals. In post-processing I decided that a composite of the steeples would convey my impression that the skyline was filled with towers. To avoid the bland, colourless sky, I used a detail of the brush strokes in one of the murals as the background.

Using Photoshop, I created the background layer from two copies of the mural detail with different orientations and opacities, combined with a photo filter to create the softness and colour desired. Each steeple image was placed on a separate layer with a mask to select only that steeple. I adjusted the opacity of the layers to create depth in the stack of the steeples while keeping each one translucent to emphasize the imaginary quality of the image.

How I Did It:

Fisgard Lighthouse

by Teri VanWell

In August 2017 Fort Rodd Hill National Historic Park kept its doors open until midnight for the first time to allow guests to mingle around the park and lighthouse at night. It was a chance to escape the city lights and photograph the stars. Victoria Camera Club partnered with the park to help fellow photographers learn about astrophotography.

Unfortunately British Columbia was very dry and plagued with forest fires. The result being the island was shrouded in smoke that turned the sun a deep red and blocked the stars at night. Astrophotography was not going to happen, so we did what all good photographers do, looked around for something else to take pictures of, the most obvious choice being Fisgard Lighthouse.

A group of us set up on the beach just below the lighthouse so we had all the structures in view. With the lighthouse lit up, it made for a good composition. I decided to bracket my photographs to gather as much information as I could. During the second photo we did some light painting on the wooden boat in front of the boathouse. I used my Nikon D610 at 24 mm, ISO 1000, 1, 3, 5 sec at f11.

For post-processing I combined the bracketed photos using Photomatrix Pro 6 to create the HDR photo and then imported it into Lightroom. After fixing the horizon, cropping the photo and converting it to black and white, I played around with the other settings before settling on the LR preset Dragan. This preset created the drama and contrast that I liked. As an intermediate photographer and novice in Lightroom and Photoshop it is nice to have presets to see where a photo can go. My family liked the photo so much that we now have it hanging in our family room for everyone to enjoy.



Butter Church Fire Circle

by Vanessa MacDonald

There are lots of new trends and techniques emerging in the Light Painting genre and one that I have been especially drawn to is the creative use of fire in long exposures. I have experimented with fire staffs a few times and can share some general pointers on how to create circular fire halos behind a model.

This can be a really great element to add to any kind of portrait work. It can be done in combination the rear-curtain sync flash method if you would like your model to be more illuminated. Silhouettes look great too and this is probably the least complicated approach when first exploring the technique.



I have used a simple DIY method to make my own fire staff using a few cheap supplies: an old plain white cotton t-shirt wrapped around a 1.5 meter wood dowel and secured with thin wire or staples. I pour BBQ lighter fluid onto the staff when I'm ready to start the shoot. You can also use an aluminum rod for the staff, the fire won't burn through it after a few minutes and it can be reused. I recommend checking out Zach Alan Photography on YouTube at [youtube.com/channel/UCiZaEogj-PAB-uqw4l1Bftw](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCiZaEogj-PAB-uqw4l1Bftw) for some instructional videos on making and using fire staffs for light painting.

This image was made at the "Butter Church" near Duncan, BC. For camera settings I go with f8, ISO 100 and set the shutter to Bulb mode. Wider apertures than this may result in the fire halo looking blown out. The blue hour is the ideal time frame for a fire shoot as you can capture a scenic background. Your exposures will range from 1-3 seconds each, just as long as it takes to do a full circular rotation with the fire staff. If you are shooting in near or total darkness, then lighting up your background may be necessary, or, take a separate longer exposure shot for the landscape and then blending it together with your fire halo shot.

Tuesday Shoots

by John Scratchley

Fall is a magical time on Vancouver Island and a wonderful time to capture the changing mood of the season.

September 4th: HCP Gardens. The gardens at the Horticulture Centre of the Pacific offer a vast variety of flowers, plants and shrubs. It is a great place for macro and landscape photography. If you like colour or black and white photography, there are abundant choices awaiting you. Bring a tripod. There is an entry fee. Members of the garden get in free. Registration is required.

September 11th: Movement. Capturing and creating movement in a still photo is a challenge for every photographer. Use movement this week to tell your story.

September 18th: Fisherman's Wharf. This is a very busy spot at this time of year with fish boats, float planes, changing landscape, funky float homes and people. Seasonal bird life and harbour seals can often be seen here.

September 25th: Urban Wildlife. There are a lot of creatures living amongst us such as squirrels, deer, coyotes, birds and even raccoons at the Legislative Building. This is the November competition theme, see page 10.

October 2nd: Macauley Point. This offers excellent views of the Juan de Fuca Strait and the Olympic Peninsula. Explore the military installations dating back to 1878. These were still in use during the Second World War and offer some great challenges.

October 9th: The Hands of Time Sculptures. Download the map and capture some of these iconic sculptures. victoria.ca/assets/Departments/Parks~Rec~Culture/Culture/Documents/150_art_legacy_brochure_web.pdf.

October 16th: Goldstream Provincial Park. Catch the changing of the season and the colours of autumn with vistas for both landscape and close up enthusiasts. Ancient fir, Big-leaf Maple trees and interesting undergrowth abound. Perhaps the salmon will have begun their fight up-stream to their spawning grounds.

October 23rd: Rule of Thirds. The rule of thirds is the first compositional rule most photographers learn. Compose your photos with this in mind.

Some events require registration and a fee may apply. Please check the Club calendar for details related to each field trip.

September/October 2018

Weekend Shoots

by Vanessa MacDonald and Teri VanWell

We are currently looking for volunteers to lead some of our fall field trips. It is an easy role that involves meeting attendees on the day of the trip, checking attendance and guiding everyone to the location. Providing photographic instruction to participants is not required as people usually like to do their own thing but is something you can offer. We will take care of posting the event in the calendar and emailing information to Club members. If you have an idea for a field trip, we would love to hear your ideas and we can schedule it for you.

September 2nd: Victoria Classic Boat Festival. This will be an inter-club meet-up with the Sequim Camera Club of Washington! Come out for a day of photography at the Classic Boat show, starting at 10:30 am with the boat parade at the Ogden Point Breakwater. We will lunch at The Breakwater Café and Bistro and then move to the inner harbour for the afternoon. Attractions will include tall ships, World War 2 vessels, Classic fishing boats, a traditional Salish canoe and much more.

September 8th: Whiffin Spit at Night. A local photographer, Murray Sharrat, will be lending his night photography experience to VCC in leading a field trip to Whiffin Spit in Sooke to photograph the night skies. This is an opportunity to play with some light painting as well as capture the Milky Way. This field trip is weather and cloud dependant, so registration is necessary.

October 20th: Goldstream Provincial Park. It's that time of the year when the deciduous trees in the park turn every shade of golden yellow and orange. Lots to see and photograph, including Big-leaf Maple, 600 year old Douglas Firs and Cedars, flowy sections of river, Niagara Falls, the Goldstream Estuary, Bald eagles and much more.

Fall Colours: There are some amazing pockets of vivid colour around Victoria during the fall. We will plan trips in October to several different locations to make the most of the photographic opportunities. Locations may include Hatley Park and Charlie's Trail, and Beacon Hill Park. Keep an eye out on the calendar for these field trips.

If you have any questions about field trips or would like to volunteer to lead a field trip, please get in touch with us at fieldtrips@victoriacameraclub.ca. We are always open to field trip suggestions and are looking for new group leaders to add to our volunteer roster. The more volunteers we have the more events we can schedule.

Landscape Photography

by Mars Romer

Zion National Park is located in Utah, and if travelling from Las Vegas it's a scenic three hour drive. Las Vegas is a great place for launching trips to parks in the United States. There are several state and national parks within driving distance, including Zion which is where I found myself for five nights on one Canadian Thanksgiving weekend.



"View from Observation Point at Sunset"

Zion National Park is part of the Grand Staircase, a series of rock layers that form the steps of a conceptual staircase. The steps begin at their lowest in the Grand Canyon, continue through Zion, and reach their highest point in Bryce Canyon. Zion's lowest elevation is 1100 metres, the highest being 2,700 metres. These steps have been created by millions of years of tectonic movements and erosion. Carved by the Virgin River in Zion, it reveals red and yellow Navajo Sandstone, which makes it a great place to do some landscape photography.

I like to camp at my destinations as it allows me to be connected to nature; hotels can sometimes become too comfortable and campsites tend to be much closer to the landscapes I want to photograph. I use a small one person tent, it encourages me to spend most of my time outdoors, the tent becomes only a place to sleep in, and uncomfortable enough that I am up before dawn and making the most of the morning golden hour. I didn't have accommodations booked prior to arriving in Zion as it was a last minute trip. The main campground close to the park's main entrance was full but I managed to find a site in the park about 45 min away and 1200 metres higher in elevation. This made for some cold nights which meant I had to be mindful of the effect the cold temperature would have on shortening my cameras battery life.

Cars are not allowed on the Zion Canyon Scenic Drive during the busy season, though there are free shuttle

buses from the main entrance to all the trail heads and other points of interest. Unfortunately the buses start running at 7am and end at 7pm, making shooting during the golden and blue hours almost impossible so more than once I opted to walk a few kilometres back to the park entrance after the last shuttle had departed.



"Navajo Sandstone Cliffs"

There is one small corner of the park on the southeast side that allows cars to drive through. As I took this route, it wound its way up switchback roads higher and higher for a 300 metre gain in elevation. Then the road passed through a 1.6 km tunnel which ends at the beginning of a popular trail head, Observation Point. After a moderately difficult 30 minute hike the trail ended at a large lookout where I was treated to majestic views of the mountains in Zion. It was the middle of the day so I decided to come back closer to sunset. I returned a little early to set up for the sunset as Zion gets a lot of visitors and getting a clear shot can sometimes mean being right on the edge of the cliff, not something I was too keen on doing with the 300 metre drop-off. I was treated to an excellent sunset and I was able to take a decent photo there.

Another part of the park that I was excited to visit is known as the Narrows. It is a spectacular canyon with 600 metre walls carved by the Virgin River over millions of years. It's over 25 km long, and walking it actually means wading in it. The entire canyon can be traversed in a multi-day hike from one end to the other; however most people only do a small section of the river and turn around when the water gets too deep. Wading through the canyon can be challenging as the river rocks make the ground uneven and unstable, and the sections with fast flowing water can double the challenge.

I was waist deep in water in a couple of places and I had to protect my camera gear by holding it over my head and wading very carefully. Luckily there was no rain in the forecast during my visit; flash floods have drowned visitors caught in the sudden surge of water.

As the canyon wound around corners, the angle of the sunlight effected the way the walls and the water looked. It added colour to the water and dramatic shapes to the



“Flowing River and Boulder in Narrows Canyon”

canyon walls in some places, and where the sunlight was absent it made the water appear dark and the walls monochromatic and flat. I could have spent many days exploring the canyon at different times of the day to experience the interplay of light and shadows as the sun moved around. Though packing lighter gear would have been better for some of the areas with tricky footwork, I found that having a tripod here was useful due to the longer shutter speeds needed in the dark areas.

I happened to be in the park during a full moon night. This made the sky too bright to attempt shots of the Milky Way, so I decided to make the most of it by shooting moonlit landscapes, and I was pleasantly surprised by the results.

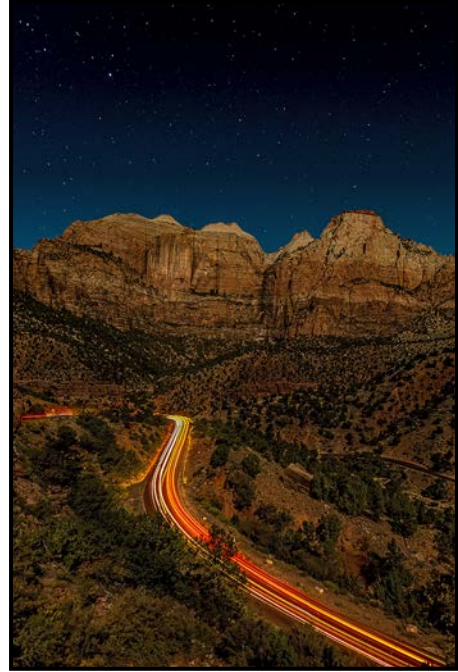
The absence of street lights and civilization meant that there was very little light pollution, making it possible to use long exposures without any blown highlights or other distracting lights. After exploring different parts of the park in the darkness, I decided to return to the top of the switchbacks in the southeast corner of the park for the last couple of hours of my night.

I wanted to capture the car light-trails against the landscape and the stars, but the park becomes deserted at night and I waited a long time for vehicles to pass by. After a few trial shots, and a couple of hours of standing around I started to question the likelihood of making this work, just then a couple of cars came up the switchbacks, perfect for getting the shot I wanted!

The full moon meant that I could walk around without needing a flashlight. I really got to appreciate the land-

scape in a different way, without other visitors. It’s quiet, serene, and I had the whole place to myself.

I got to experience the park in a way that is impossible during the day, I felt much more connected to the landscape, and it’s the closest I could have felt to how the first people would have when they walked the land here, long before all us tourists inundated the place.



“Night Time Landscapes and Car Trails”

On one of my last days I accessed the northwest part of the park by using the Kolob Canyon entrance 65 kilometres north of Zion Canyon itself. This area is not anywhere as busy as the main entrance. Here I found hikes to arches, rivers, caves, and other viewpoints. I only had time to do one of those hikes and chose the Kolob Canyon lookout trail.

I stayed and waited for the sunset. Again, waiting for the right light was worth it, and when the sun was at its lowest on the horizon, the mountains of the Kolob Canyons turned to an unreal red colour. I will have to return again someday, as there is much more to left to explore in this extraordinary park.



“Sunset at Kolob Canyons”

Beginners' Corner: As the Sun Sets

by Josée Ménard

My hope for the Beginner's Corner articles has been to inspire you as a photographer. As you know, all comes in good time, so persevere. In fact, there are no wrong turns in photography. Keep on experimenting and learning from mistakes and successes. There are always new horizons ahead. That is the fun part about photography.

One of my favourite natural elements is the sun. Sunsets seem a fitting topic as summer comes to a close. You can often find me outside patiently capturing the changing colours in the sky. After the sun sets, the sky often shows its true colours. Linger to capture the best of the evening.

Be it a sunrise, a sunset, or the stars and moon all can be lost without good planning since conditions change continuously as we orbit. From that point of view, sort out the location, the position of the sun setting for the time of year, the golden and blue hours, the clouds in the sky on your shooting days, and the potential weather.

To make life easier, many Apps have been developed to provide information about the movements of the sun, moon, stars and planets. With gigabytes of data, your desired shoot location will most likely be included.

Of course at a cost, you can purchase software to help you such as: The Photographer's Ephemeris (photoephemeris.com), The Photographers Transit (photoephemeris.com/tpt), PlanIt! (yingwentech.com), or for less cost Helios - Magic Hour Calculator (conradi.si/portfolio/helios). They would be an asset in your pocket.

From a more certain point of view, scout the location to help your mind compose the image. Which elements will

you position in the different planes of your composition? Where will you place the horizon line? Will you position the sun classically in the middle, hide it, or offset it? Will there be silhouettes? Do they add to the emotional impact? Are there reflections? How will you lead the viewer's eye and maintain interest? The two images included in this article show how you do not need the sun in your image and how the palm silhouettes frame the sunset.



"Maui Beach Sunset"

Ready?, arrive well ahead of time to take your position and set up your tripod. Protect your equipment from blowing sand or soil and stabilize the tripod with a weight bag that hangs on that purposeless looking hook under the head.

Turn Image Stabilization/Vibration Reduction off when shooting on a tripod. Don't forget your long focal-length zoom for composition flexibility. Use a cable release for your shutter to eliminate movement due to pressing the shutter button. If you do not have one, your self-timer will do just fine.

Adjust the settings of your camera. In the menu (for JPGs only), Picture Styles Standard setting may subdue the sunset colours. Change it to Vivid to give an in-camera boost to the colours. Also in the menu, depending on the day and the warmth effect you wish for the colours in the highlights and shadows, adjust your White Balance to Cloudy or Shade to warm the colours from the Daylight setting. Finally (sorry JPEG fans), this is a good time to switch to RAW as it will increase your colour adjustment range in post-production. Did I suggest some post-production? Yes, it is valuable. What a good invention.

Don't forget to dress in layers. Stay longer than you planned, it will be worth your while. Enjoy the post-sun-down colours that magically appear in the sky. Get set, go and have fun.



"Maui Palm Sunset"

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