"The Brolly Strollers" by Scott Laird

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 the appropriate Committee Chair:

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.org)* for the latest details of all our workshops, field trips and meetings.

Our monthly meetings will resume on September 10th and will be on the 2nd, 3rd and 4th Thursdays for September only.

Our workshops and field trips continue during the summer, please see the calendar for current details www.victoriacameraclub.org.

Meeting, field trip and workshop visitor policy: Visitors are welcome to attend any three events in a two-month period subject to the availability of space and a $20 per session fee for workshops.

Featured Field Trips:

July: Gowlland Tod Provincial Park

August: Qualicum Falls and Rathtrevor Beach Provincial Parks

Featured Workshops:

Advanced Photoshop Topics, Basic Lightroom

Basic Camera and Speedlight Operation

Cover image: "The Brolly Strollers" by Scott Laird. This image was part of the Club's entry in the North Shore Photographic Society's "North Shore Challenge" in March 2015 in which the Club won 1st place.

A few years ago, on an overcast day in the fall, I headed over to Ogden Point for a photo opportunity. When I got there, I noticed a wedding shoot in progress on the Breakwater. I quickly parked my car, and set out to take advantage of the opportunity that had presented itself to me. Unfortunately it had just started to rain and the wedding party was beginning to leave the scene. I quickly took several shots and hoped for the best. The figures, backlit against the bright sky, called out for a black and white silhouette shot. In post-processing I used Google/Nik Silver Efex Pro, where I made image adjustments to darken the figures. This effect further defined the clouds and accented the details in the umbrellas.

Canon EOS 5D, Canon EF 70-200 mm f2.8L IS USM lens, 1/1600 sec., f5.6 at 400 ISO.

President's Message

How often have two people, whom you knew were at the same event, tell you what they saw but their stories were so different that you questioned whether they were both there at the same time. Research suggests that they could both have been right: they could both be telling you exactly what they saw and/or heard. The research has shown that people often see what they expect to see. This expectation may exist because of what they know has happened in similar circumstances or surroundings, or with the same people.

Recognition of objects is largely based on our learning to associate shapes with familiar objects. When we see that shape again, and in the absence of any conflicting circumstantial evidence, we interpret what we see to be the object that we have come to associate with that shape.

Similarly with colours. When we are in snow, we see it as white, everyone knows that snow is white. We will express surprise when viewing a correctly-exposed image of a winter scene that has a strange red tinge to the snow, until we notice the red barn that the light was reflected off. How come that we never saw this in the viewfinder? It is because we saw what we were expecting to see, white snow. If we were really seeing, rather than just looking, we would have noticed the colour cast.

So what, you say? It can be similar with objects. How many times has someone drawn your attention to a building on a street that you've been driving on for many years. Despite your eyes sweeping past that building, you had never really seen it. You find it hard to believe that you had never noticed it before but, now that you've seen it, you notice it every time you're on the street.

Serious shooters stop and see, not just look. They will stop and, instead of looking, will take the time to see what is really in front of them. They will see the red-tinged snow. They will notice the traffic lights reflected on a wet road. The unusually coarse texture of the coat a friend is wearing will catch their attention. Serious shooters see what is really there, not what they think should be there, or what they want to be there.

Snap shooters won't look at many of the things that serious shooters see, they will walk right past. Snap shooters look at something, up with their camera, snap, shoot it, and they're off again. So, my question to you is, are you a snap shooter or a serious shooter?

Lloyd Houghton, President.

by Mary Theal

Nature, landscape, action, fine art, fashion, travel, studio, portrait, wedding, macro, night, underwater, and photojournalism are just some of a multiplicity of photographic styles. As photographic artists we choose niches that resonate with us and hone those skills as we strive to perfect an individual style of expression, our artistic vision. However, to expand our creative gifts we need to actively cultivate opportunities that embrace the discomfort we feel when working in new and unfamiliar genres.

Most often I favour assignments that deal with "nouns," relatively stationary "things" like flowers, reflections, or travel landscapes. Not that I don't work a flower; taking hundreds of shots and pushing the image to abstracted soft focus is often my desired end-game. I do spend the time. Georgia O'Keefe's quote "*…we haven't time to really see a flower, and to see takes time… like to have a friend takes time…*" is a favourite of mine. Alternatively, working with reflections in this undulating, dancing, stretching, liquid mirror that surrounds us on Vancouver Island is another wonderful way to spend a serendipitous photographic day. The ocean is, after all, a master trickster begging for our interaction. Landscape photography provides another opportunity for a more static "noun" shooting event. I wish I could be athletic and adventurous like the amazing Paul Nicklen of Nanaimo, World Wildlife Photographer of the Year in 2012. Positioning himself under the Antarctic ice breathing through a snorkel, and with frozen fingers, he instinctively focused on a group of Emperor Penguins charging upwards from the depths to achieve that magnificent winning image! Our niche must suit our temperament and capacities!

Is the alter ego of a "noun" to become a "verb" or for the fine art-oriented photographer to become action-

Getting out in front of the funeral procession.

oriented, even for a day? It follows that the alter ego equivalent to Michael Keaton's "*Birdman*" or Walter White's "*Heisenberg*" in the photographic world would be the extreme action photographers like Nicklen or the "conflict" photojournalists who put themselves in dangerous situations to capture action that can tell a story in one perfect shot. These photojournalists are heroes who actively hunt war/disaster zones and produce pure visual communication of such quality that it transcends the snap-shot to become clear, honest, impartial, story-telling at its finest. Who does not remember the iconic image of "*Tank Man*" taken by Jeff Widener of the Associated Press in Tiananmen Square, in 1989? Still today that image has not been surpassed as a "story" of courage and defiance. It is still banned in China.

The moving sarcophagus: no time for changing lenses.

Some of us are old enough to remember Kent State in 1970; the students were protesting President Nixon's Cambodian campaign when the Ohio Army National Guard opened fire killing four students. That day John Filo took the Pulitzer Prize winning photo of an anguished woman, arms outstretched, kneeling over a body. Her emotion in that image is deep and honest. Professional photojournalists have trained reflexes that respond to split-second opportunities. How was it that they developed a passion for this style of artistic expression?

Sometimes life events help in the discovery of our photographic style. While I was living in Honolulu, David Ulrich, a renowned fine art photographer and author, became my teacher and mentor. He, too, was on the Kent State campus that day attending his photojournalism class and captured many images of his own. David showed us his carefully-preserved negatives and talked about this because it was the day he decided that photojournalism was not going to be his major. This traumatic event caused him to define a new and different vision of himself as an artist.

As Linsey Addario, a "conflict" photographer with the NY Times said, "*The difference between a studio photographer and a photojournalist is the same as the difference between a political cartoonist and an abstract painter; the only thing the two have in common is the blank page.*"

Shooting with cultural sensitivity and respect.

The opportunities created by participating in VCC workshops and other photographic courses are invaluable; they can provide an entrance into that "zone of discomfort." A course with Mike Sroka, a well known "old pro" and former photographer with the Canadian Forces Snowbirds, provided valuable insights. Watching him shoot while on a class assignment "to work like a journalist" and capture the action of a Tartan Parade downtown was seeing a master at work. Mike was able to deftly dance backwards right in front of the parade leaders, dodge and dart neatly from side to side while evaluating the scene to shoot the subject with the best background possible, close in, back off, get out of the way, change camera settings while in action; he never missed a beat! One of my colleagues missed the point of "get out of the way" that day. Crouching down and facing the marchers he forgot the band members would not alter their course so he ended up sprawled on the grass with expensive gear scattered around. Lessons learned for great action shots: jump out in front, practice a lot (moving backwards) and, know when to get out of the way!

So, in my quest to stretch creatively and become more "verb-like" in my form of shooting, I set myself a challenge while in Bali a couple of years ago. Taking beautiful landscape or flower photos in this paradise was all-absorbing and well within my comfort zone, but when I had the chance to witness the cremation ceremony of A. A. Ngurah Yudana, a member of the Balinese Royal Family, I knew I had to get to work. Realizing that this was a relatively rare occurrence and that it was my immense good fortune to be in the right place at the right

time, I set my intent: summon the alter ego and shoot like a confident photojournalist with a story to tell.

Channelling a combination of past mentors and experiences, I knew preparation would be key for a successful shoot and began to plan a strategy:

- Pack lightly. I chose only one lens, my Canon 24-105 mm L for its overall flexibility. I needed to be comfortable for a long, hot day.
- Go early and "spend the time."
- Maximize chances of staying with the action by choosing a camera setting that has sufficient depth of field and enough speed to prevent blur. Working quickly on the move is not my strength and I did not want to miss the action by fumbling with settings.
- Be aware of backgrounds. No editing beyond the basics of levels/curves, minor cropping or colour management etc.. Photojournalistic rules: no swapping out the sky for another prettier one. Keep it honest and pose nothing.
- Do not be timid, but do not offend in any way.
- Get out in front of the action (with confidence)! Do not shoot from the sidelines, but be aware of when to back off and get out of the way!
- Visualize myself as a successful photojournalist on assignment!
- Tell the story and enjoy the discomfort of working in an unpractised genre!

Becoming "uncomfortable" requires a certain level of confidence, but as David Ulrich concludes in his book *The Widening Stream, The Seven Stages of Creativity,* "*Where we find fear, where we feel the most inadequate, is where the energy lies, where the great potential hides.*" We need to continually embrace challenge and face the ensuing fear in order to grow as photographers. This is where we will find our true creative potential!

Ending the story... RIP.

Tim's Workshop

by Don Peterson

Hornby Island is known for the diversity of its landscapes, the richness of its nature and the vibrancy of its community. In July 2014 I set out to photograph "Bang on Anvil" a metal-working shop owned by my friend, Tim Biggins.

The workshop building was constructed in the early 70s with "zero budget" and almost entirely from materials found on the beaches or at the recycle centre. The larger pieces of equipment such as his metal lathe and drill press were sourced from out-of-business machine shops and date back to the late 1800s. Inside and outside, the shop is chock full of salvaged steel and iron and old machinery. All this added up to rich fodder for the lens of a black and white photographer!

A significant challenge was the very low light level and the need to capture a great deal of detail. Close quarters meant using my widest lens, a small aperture for a wide depth of field and a low ISO to maximize dynamic range. A long exposure was needed especially for interior scenes. This image, which features the central bay of the workshop, is a single image, not HDR.

Nikon D800E, ISO 200, Nikkor 16-35 mm lens at 16 mm and f11, shutter 0.6 sec, on a tripod. Minor adjustments were made in Lightroom (lens correction; highlight and shadow sliders) before exporting to NIK Silver Efex Pro to convert the image to monochrome.

Into the Mist

by Normand Marcotte

I took this photo on the East coast of Vancouver Island at a Lodge near Ladysmith. It was raining but the glow along the horizon caught my eye. I thought that the scene would make a great Black and White print. The ramp orientation provided perfect portrait framing.

I shot this image hand-held with a Canon EOS 6D. The 24-105 mm f4L IS USM lens was set at 24 mm. The camera settings were: ISO 400, aperture f11, shutter speed 1/50 sec. I focused about one third of the way into the scene.

All post-processing was done exclusively in Lightroom. I converted the RAW file to Black and White and adjusted the horizon. Keeping a vertical 11" x 14" print format, I cropped the nearest part of the ramp (which was out of focus), and a bit of the sky while keeping the horizontal dock along the upper horizontal line at a rule of thirds grid. I removed small floating debris as I wanted the water surface to be as "smooth" as possible. Then, I added a graduated filter over the sky, I wanted the "greyness" of the clouds to match the tones of the water. In order to highlight the glow along the horizon line and to make the island darker, I used a local adjustment brush to increase highlights, clarity, and contrast and to reduce sharpness. Finally I reduced the luminance and noise and sharpened the image (specifically the ramp and dock edges).

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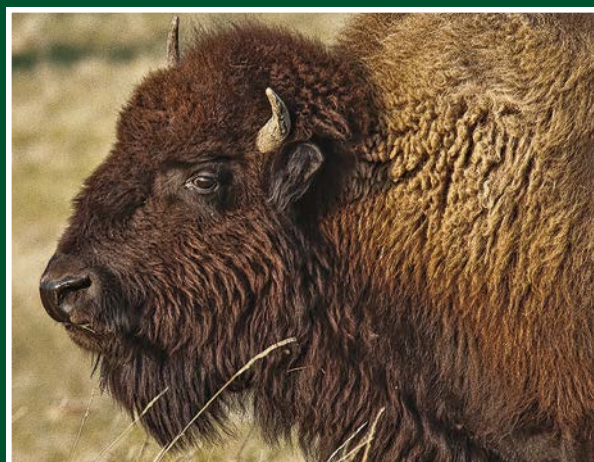
The Nickel Guy © Ralph Durham

For more information visit the PSA website: http://www.psa-photo.org

by Cim MacDonald

In my photography classes I am often asked, what is "Fine Art Photography" and "How can I take those kinds of pictures?" I went on-line to see what kind of description Wikipedia might give and found the description below. In response to How To, I have offered some suggestions to experiment with to see what type of image depicts who you are.

> Artistic photography is a frequently used but somewhat vague term. The idea underlying it is that the maker of a given image has aimed at something more than a merely realistic rendering of the subject and has attempted to convey a personal impression.
>
> In 1961 Dr. S.D. Jouhar founded the Photographic Fine Art Association, their definition of fine art was "creating images that evoke emotion by a photographic process in which one's mind and imagination are freely but competently exercised."
>
> Photography that is done as fine art attempts to express the artist's perceptions and emotions rather than one that is produced in response to a commercial commission or journalism. Often the images are for sale or display. It can also be called decor photography, photo decor or wall decor.
>
> Alfred Stieglitz's photograph "The Steerage (1907)" was an early work considered by many historians to be artistic modernism and the most important photograph ever made. Stieglitz was notable for introducing fine art photography into museum collections. He was married to the painter, Georgia O'Keefe.

The following is my interpretation of how the relationship of line affects an emotional response. The original concept is taken from a very old fine art book one of my painting students had. Unfortunately I only copied some of the pages but not the name of the book or the author.

In my view, emotional response is tied in with the dominant lines and colour of a photograph. For example undulating horizontal lines such as in a scene with rolling hills conveys peace and calm. Oblique and jagged lines convey agitation and conflict. Circles: immensity or eternity, ovals, femininity, sensuousness, and grace. Squares and rectangles can be dignity, stability or strength. Further to consider as "decor art," where would you hang a peaceful scene vs. one with conflict? Perhaps soothing work in a bedroom and more active in a family room.

"Rigging": I was one of the photographers for the Tall Ships when they came to Victoria in 2008. At one point I looked up and was taken by the feeling of power the wonderful lines and shapes gave me.

The next element to consider is colour or Black and White. Many many colours versus a few, which colours make you feel active and which subdued. Generally the more pastel the colour the more calming effect it will have, bright and bold colours will excite the senses. Often I convert a picture to Black and White as it helps me to evaluate the type of response it might offer before I go back to colour.

Sometimes I print in Black and White and use paint, pencils, pastels, etc. to add colour and texture. The other possibility for the addition of colour is when my coloured print lacks a little punch.

I suggest looking at many forms of art by going to art galleries and shows. I recently made a trip to Vancouver to look at art work in several of the Granville Street galleries. To my surprise, there were lots of photographic images being shown and sold.

Last but not least, with all the talk about lines and colour, does your picture tell a story or is it an abstract where lines and colour produce something that triggers the senses?

My suggestions are a starting point: other elements that come into play are texture, shape and value. If you are interested in learning more, a book called, "*Art Fundamentals, Theory and Practice,*" published by Brown and Benchmark, may be helpful. It is used at universities in the study of fine art.

"*Once light was just a visual experience now it illuminates my senses*"

Competition Themes

Floral Artistry: September

Flowers can be the essence of nature, art, and simplicity. We invite you to capture flowers from an artistic point of view. This could include arrangements of flowers, single flowers in an artistic fashion, or images of flowers in their natural setting but with an artistic attitude.

Background: You don't have to have a background in your image. Use a flash and a high shutter speed to il-luminate the flower and the background will be black.

Add water: If you want a rain-drenched or dew-covered flower, use a water spritzer to add a few drops of water to bring your image to life. A good bokeh effect can be created using a shallow depth of field with out-of-focus points of light (water droplets) in the background.

Painting with light: Try shooting at night or inside in a dark room. You will need a tripod and a flashlight. Using a very slow shutter speed, paint the parts of the flower with the light for an interesting effect.

Parts are more interesting than the whole: Look for interesting parts of the flower. Only show a small part of the flower; perhaps only a petal or part of a petal, the sta-men, or some other part of the flower. Abstract images of this nature evoke a sense of mystery and curiosity.

Flawed flowers: Carcasses of flowers can present you with wonderful subject matter. While the perfect flower is the one you'll probably be drawn to first, sometimes the more interesting shot is the "ugly duckling."

Post-Processing: The best aspect of photography is the freedom to create not just what you see, but also what you feel in an image. That flower may be colourful, but perhaps you would prefer a black and white or se-lectively coloured image. The raw image is just a starting point, a kind of canvas for your work of art.

The entry deadline is Thursday, September 10th.

Simplicity: October

Any subject could be used as a subject for this theme. Composition becomes critical when creating an image with visual simplicity. You can strengthen your image by selecting simple backgrounds, avoiding unrelated sub-jects, and moving in close. If you want to make your im-age even more dynamic, place it off center in your frame.

The entry deadline is Thursday, October 1st.

2014-15 Annual Competition Judges

We extend our sincere thanks to the three fine judges that had the unenviable job of choosing the winning images from our year-end competition: Rick Shapka, Gregg Eligh and Tracey Harper. The results of this and all other club competitions can be viewed on our website at: *victoriacameraclub.org/vcccompetitions*.

Rick Shapka: Rick is a photographer who travels to photograph places, events, people and animals. In addition, he has a keen interest in creating abstract images both in, and out of the camera. Rick is cur-rently the President of the Canadian Association for Photographic Arts (CAPA), on the Board of the North Shore Photographic Society and is a CAPA certified judge. *rickshapka.smugmug.com*.

Greg Eligh: Greg has worked as a professional photog-rapher for 35 years in Vancouver, Toronto and Victoria in the commercial and corporate area. His images have been featured in magazines, corporate reports, books, advertising and more. His career has taken him to exot-ic locations including the Caribbean, oil rigs in Hudson's Bay and office towers in downtown Toronto! Greg has instructed at the former Western Academy of Photog-raphy and Camosun College and gives workshops at locations such as Photographers at Painters (Lodge).

Greg also operates Eligh Photographs which provides location scouting, casting, organizes model styling, set and prop construction etc., both locally and abroad. Greg is also a respected photographic judge and a good friend of the Victoria Camera Club. *www.elighphoto.com*.

Tracey Harper: From North America to Africa her career has spanned the globe. She is recognized by her peers as being one of the best photographers in Canada. Tracey has owned "It's You Photography" since 2000 but has recently transformed it into "Fusion Artistry."

In 2008 she was selected by the Professional Photog-raphers of Canada (PPOC) as the National Photo-graphic Artist of the Year. Tracey is recognized as an International Photographic Speaker and Judge. She has received a Fellowship from PPOC (BC) and her Masters of Photographic Arts (MPA) from PPOC. Additionally she has been named the BC Photograph-er of the Year and National Portrait Artist of the Year. She has also won the Kodak Gallery Award, Nikon Excellence Award, various Gold Medals as well as numerous Judge's Choice awards from Canada and the UK. *fusionartistry.com.*

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Advanced Monochrome Print - 1ˢᵗ
"Corn Field Before the Storm" by Doug McLean

Shot late afternoon in August near Port McNicoll, Georgian Bay, Ontario. A gathering thunderstorm added interest to the sky and broke the corn stalk pattern. Minor post processing enhanced the contrast and textures.

Advanced Digital Nature - 1ˢᵗ
"Four-spotted Skimmer" by Hanna Cowpe

I found this four-spotted skimmer low in the reeds at the edge of the pond. This is where dragonfly nymphs shed their exoskeleton so they are not spotted by birds during this vulnerable time. With the morning sun glowing through the stems and back-lighting the dragonfly, the fine detail of the new wings was highlighted.

Advanced Digital Open - 2ⁿᵈ
"Droplets on New Growth" by Garry Schaefer

Taken at Beacon Hill Park during an early evening Nature SIG shoot on the theme "Backlit." The garden's sprinkler system had provided the droplets. My Olympus E-M1's EVF and in-body anti-shake proved effective to set exposure compensation (-1.0 EV) and to capture the shot hand-held.

Advanced Digital Creative - 1ˢᵗ
"What Trickery is This" by Lee-Anne Stack

Cemetery, night time, a wonderfully creative model (and a couple of layers in Photoshop) are the ingredients for this image. The model was painted with a flashlight. Settings: ISO 1250, shutter 8 sec, exposure manual, f22, Nikon D3S.

Advanced Open Print - 1ˢᵗ
"Gate One" by Don Peterson

My flight from Vancouver harbour was delayed due to fog. The light was fantastic and this image unfolded in front of me, people descending stairs backlit by the glow of the winter sun rising through the fog, it reminded me of a Sci-Fi movie set. Fuji X-E1, 18 mm, ISO 400. Post-processing in Google/NIK Silver Efex Pro.

Advanced Nature Print - 1ˢᵗ
"Crested Caracara" by Mike Wooding

Taken at Laguna Seca Ranch in the Rio Grande Valley of southern Texas. The Crested Caracara is native to Central and South America, but reaches into the southern US and is a member of the falcon family. Nikon D700, Nikkor 500 mm f4 VR II, f7.1, 1/2500 sec, ISO 800.

Advanced Digital Theme - 2ⁿᵈ
"Barrel Racer" by Elaine Freedman

Rodeo is one of my favourite subjects for shooting. I am an official photographer for the Medicine Hat Stampede and Exhibition. The "Barrel Racer" image was shot at 1/30 sec shutter speed and panned to show the speed of the racer as she completed the barrels and heads for the finish line in this timed event.

Intermediate Digital Creative - 1ˢᵗ
"Drifting" by Nicci Tyndall

My shot was taken one evening in Beacon Hill Park. It was my first time trying to shoot bubbles and capture a reflection inside. This bubble landed on the pond and instead of disappearing it began to float. I changed it into black and white but left a little colour in the centre.

Intermediate Open Print - 1ˢᵗ
"Under the Bridge" by Bobbie Carey

The photo was taken on a warm day in late September in Edmonton, under a bridge that crosses the North Saskatchewan River. The river seemed to beautifully absorb all the surrounding colours and the piers, in turn, reflected the water. Panasonic Lumix DMC FZ200, at 30 mm, ISO 100, 1/250, f4.0.

Intermediate Nature Print - 2ⁿᵈ
"Balanced Rock" by Jonathan Adams

This photo of Balanced Rock in Arches National Park, Utah, was taken in early May 2014 on a moonless night at 2:00 in the morning. The camera settings were 25 mm f2.8, with a 20 second exposure. The rock was light painted with a regular incandescent Maglite from off to the right of the camera.

Intermediate Monochrome Print - 2ⁿᵈ
"Sweet Shop" by Normand Marcotte

This image was taken during a trip to Kaui. I noticed the weeds growing across the front of this shop and realized that the windows were actually painted plywood. I thought it would make a great Black and White photo because of the shadows and texture. All post-processing was done in Lightroom 4. ISO 200, 1/125 sec., f8 on a Canon 30d.

Intermediate Digital Open - 2ⁿᵈ
"Orchid Bud on Paper" by Lorna Zaback

I was fascinated by the intricate texture of his tiny orchid bud and the translucence of its stem. Placing it on a sheet of hand made paper, I took a few shots. This was my favourite, side light from the window highlighting every small crevice and creating subtle shadows.

Fall Photography Courses

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- **iPhone/iPad ARTography**
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Check for more courses – on our website in July!

Our students say:

"All of it was amazing – a great learning experience. Instructor was enthusiastic and supportive. Everything was relevant. Well worth every bit of money and my time!" –AN

"Loved this course. It provided the technical details that I was missing. My photographs have already improved 100%. I am looking forward to the next level and, of course, taking more courses at Camosun." –SW

"One of the better courses I've taken in a lifetime of taking courses!" –IM

"Loved this! I haven't stopped playing with the apps since 1st class." –CD

Information? 250-370-4565 or sofbus@camosun.ca

Registration begins in July at camosun.ca/ce or 250-370-3550 (PRESS 2)

Pick up our fall printed calendar after August 1

Intermediate Digital Nature - 1ˢᵗ
"Spider Hatch on Grape" by Ian Crawford

The web of life is all around us. The fruits and vegetables we eat are visited by thousands of insects, spiders and single cell animals before we get to clean and process them. The "ick" factor of these spiders on the emerging grapes has its own beauty if you look.

Novice Digital Nature - 2ⁿᵈ
"Studious Costa Rica Iguana" by Ken Johnston

Shot at Selva Verde Lodge in Costa Rica while on a tour with Greg Basco using my Canon 1D-X and 100-400 mm USM II lens at 400 mm, f5.6, 1/400 sec, ISO 1600.

Intermediate Digital Theme - 1ˢᵗ
"First Serve" by Doug Ambridge

This image was taken while attending the BNP Paribas Open in Indian Wells, CA. Monica Niculescu vs. Serena Williams, March 2015. I used my Canon Power Shot SX280 HS. Taken at 1/25 sec, 6.8, ISO 400 with 20x Zoom. No Tripod was used. There was some post-processing in Lightroom 5.

Novice Digital Open - 1ˢᵗ
"Life is Tough" by Peter Koelbleitner

This image was taken in October 2014 at a local market in New Delhi. I thought that this face reflected the daily hardship encountered by a large part of the population. The yellow turban identifies this man as a Sikh and reflects the close tie of the majority of Indians to their religion and caste.

Novice Print - 2ⁿᵈ
"Waiting for a Ride" by Merlyn Maleschuk

This image was taken at Seaside Oregon. The day before the beach and swing were alive with activity. I went back early the next morning to capture the contrast of a calm peaceful day about to begin. I used a long exposure to eliminate any other early risers. Nikon D90, 50 mm lens, f11, 282 sec, ISO 200.

Novice Digital Theme - 1ˢᵗ
"Colin Evans' Boat" by Steve Smith

This shot was taken from the high cliffs of Bardsey Island off the end of the Lleyn Peninsula, North Wales. Colin Evans is a lobster fisherman and boat tour operator. He designed and built the boat in the photo. Bardsey Island is famous for its sea bird colonies.

The Frank Turner Trophy is the most prestigious award given by the VCC. This award was created to honour Frank Turner, a long-time member of the club. Frank Turner was an accomplished photographer who won many awards for his art, but he was also an important and vital member of this club. He served on the executive of the Club in several positions including President over a number of years and also taught and shared his passion and talent for photography selflessly with other members. When he passed away, his Pentax camera was made into the trophy that honours both him and his remarkable contributions to the club.

The selection committee, the last three recipients of this award, had little difficulty agreeing on this year's recipients, Gail and Dan Takahashi.

Gail joined the Victoria Camera Club in 2008. At the second club meeting that she attended she asked if she could do anything to help. She was taken to the kitchen to help with the refreshments and is still making the coffee. In her second season with the club Gail and Dan met on one of the club field trips (thank you Richard James) and Dan began helping in the kitchen. In 2012 they were married. They enjoy doing the refreshments as it gives them a chance to say hello to everyone as they get their coffee. Gail estimates that she has made 12,075 cups of

Reflections of Angela (Gail). This image was taken during a location shoot as part of a course with Gregg Eligh. The technique was using speedlights and dragging the shutter.

coffee/tea, served 24,150 cookies and Dan has washed 12,075 cups over the last seven years. Whew!

Gail said that she can honestly say that when she joined the club she didn't know what an f-stop was. She began entering the club competitions the second year and found out that she has a very competitive spirit. She has been entering competitions for the last six years starting in novice, working her way through intermediate and is now among the top-ranking advanced photographers in digital imagery.

Gail enters prints in our Club print shows. In September 2014 she had five prints hanging in The Bay Centre Gallery as part of the Ballet Victoria display.

For the past three years she has been one of the co-ordinators of the Creative SIG. For those that haven't been to one of the meetings yet, members bring in some images and share with the group the techniques and inspiration used to achieve the image. By diving into Photoshop it enabled her to expand her imagination and creativity.

Gail does not want to become complacent so she continually challenges herself to try different forms of photography. From the abstract photography that she started with, to nature/landscape, creative and now to dancers and people.

Afternoon on the Pier (Gail). This image is a long exposure taken at the Sidney Pier.

Dan's photography started back in the age of film, in the 1960s, with a Minolta SRT 101 in California. Throughout those years, he dabbled with a few weddings, art projects in Laguna Beach, CA, and industrial photographs in Los Angeles. Not taking it too seriously, he dropped away until the age of Digital came into its own.

He joined the Nikonians world-wide club and signed up for quite a few week-long workshops. He was learning from professionals and honed into landscapes and HDR. He took early retirement, bought a motor-home and Jeep and traveled. Photography became a passion.

The beauty of Vancouver Island brought Dan here and some health issues helped keep him here.

Snowy Owl (Dan). This Snowy Owl was shot at Boundary Bay (Delta, BC). Nikon D800, 80-400 mm lens. I was in the right place as another photographer behind the Owl spooked it into flight towards me.

Dan joined the VCC in 2010 and immersed himself into everything the club had to offer. It was very active and he wanted to absorb everything. As Gail said, it was on a field trip that they met, fell head over heels in love and got married.

Dan now tries to give back to others in the Club by leading some workshops and assisting in others. He has passed on some knowledge in HDR, Long Exposure, Night Exposure, Beginners 101, and freely offers advice when asked.

He is currently the longest-serving member of the Competition Committee and has seen three, going on four different web servers to accommodate the competition photo uploads. Organizing the annual year-end judging and show is challenging and rewarding.

Dan has shown and sold his work in the Sooke and Sidney Fine Art Shows. His work has been in most of the VCC print shows, the Greater Victoria Arts Council show in the Bay Centre and The Ballet Victoria Art Gallery in the Bay Center.

He also shoots professional Real Estate photographs for ReMax, DFH, and Newport Realty.

Dan has been learning and pushing himself into any and all the diversities of photography, birds, landscapes, macro, waterfalls, sunsets, portraits, nudes, still life and creative.

For the past year they have both been part of the organizing committee for the Lighting SIG. Being part of the committee has been a great learning experience in setting up lighting equipment, working with models and most importantly working with light. Barbara Burns and Scott Laird have been very generous in sharing their knowledge with them.

Dan and Gail have also been involved in the Ballet Victoria Arts Program for the past year. A group of photographers are invited into the ballet studio to photograph the dancers during their rehearsals and ended with photographing the technical dress rehearsal in the theatre. In February 2015, Ballet Victoria asked Dan and Gail to take over (from Herman Surkis) as the organizers of the program for them. They were thrilled and honoured. It's been a great learning experience to capture the art of dance as well as being able to lead other photographers through this learning process. It's been a very fulfilling experience to help the arts community in Victoria.

In March they participated in the Figure Photography workshop put on by Gregg Eligh for the Victoria Camera Club. Photographing the human form intrigued them so much they are currently taking Gregg's course "*Faces, Fashion and Figures*" at Camosun College.

By being involved in the Creative SIG, the Lighting SIG, the Competition Committee, Workshops, and Refreshments they are trying to give back to the Club some of what the Club has given to them over the years.

Victoria February Sunset (Dan). This image of Gail and Dan was taken at Clover Point at sunset on a beautiful evening. Nikon D800, 24-120 mm lens on a tripod with a remote shutter release. HDR, 5 bracketed shots processed in Photomatix.

by Judy Bandsmer

"*I'm half an hour late, I'll come back tomorrow.*" (Claude Monet, to his friend Ambroise Vollard.)

Probably all photographers have uttered this phrase at one time. We all know the pain of losing the perfect light. However, it seems odd that this brilliant painter felt such a need to be at the right place at the right time. Couldn't he just paint from memory, from imagination?

Impressionism was an artistic movement concerned with capturing moments and the overall impression of a scene. Because the acceptable, "real" artists of the late 1800s painted realistically detailed and idealized images, the "Impressionists," with their big brush strokes, surreal colours, and everyday subjects, were primarily seen as being less accomplished charlatans.

Photography, like the establishment back then, suffers from a similar restriction to capturing detail and reality. How can we photograph impressions rather than snapshots? "*I want to paint the air in which the bridge, the house and the boat are to be found, the beauty of the air around them, and that is nothing less than the impossible*" (Claude Monet).

All of these images, these experiments, show me trying to meet the challenge of capturing impressions with my camera. No artistic filters are applied to these in post-processing. Here are a few of the results.


For Sale

I bought a clear polystyrene sheet which I cut into different sections. One section I hit with a hammer to make many very small fractures. I didn't think it was working until I got home and looked at the photos. I love the painterly texture this created, perfect for this experienced and lonely house.

Dancing Pampas

I melted another section of the polystyrene sheet with a small butane torch in small areas, some areas more, some less. I love this modifier. It distorts the image sinuously, and often over-saturates colors. This image is straight from the camera.
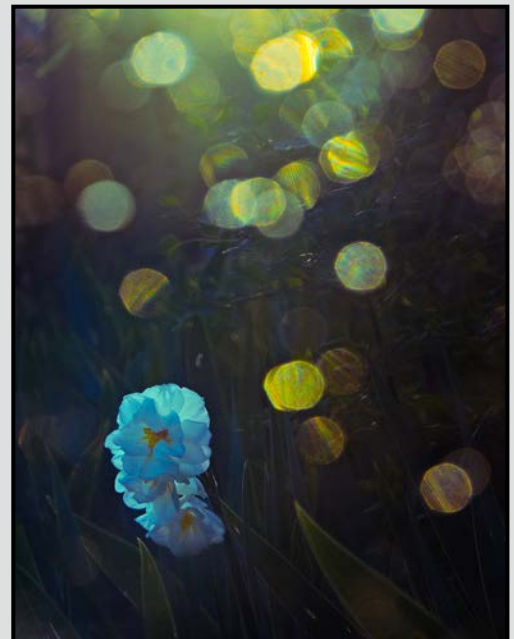

Last Light

Shot into the sunset, I held a clear acrylic clipboard sprayed with a fine mist of water in direct sunlight, angling it to throw a haze into the camera lens. Blue/yellow colour enhancement done in post-processing.

Impression Through a Pinhole: Tulips

I had shot many images with water on my clipboard, and I was getting bored with the "same old" round bokeh. So, I cut a black piece of construction paper the size of my lens, then I cut out a crescent-shaped hole between 1-2 cm long. I secured this to the front of the lens. When shot through the "misted" clipboard, the small hole distorts the flow of the light around the edges, and the bokeh is now shaped somewhat like a half-moon.
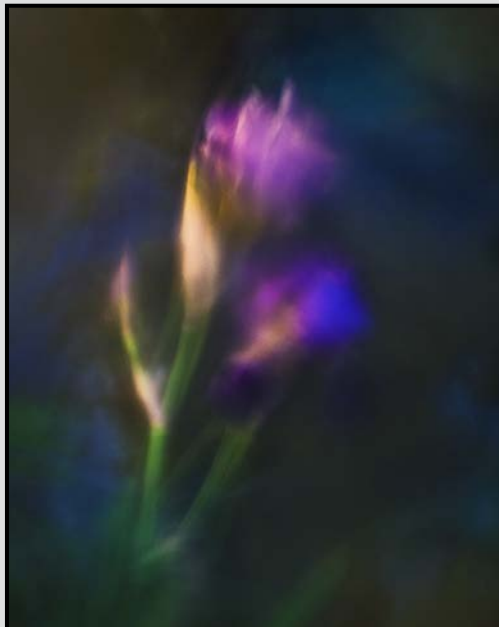
Iris

My favourite clipboard was used again, but this time with dabs and smears of hand sanitizer (clear gel). As it dried it became less opaque, eventually leaving a light film on the board. When freshly wet, however, it creates beautiful, soft, translucent distortions, perfect to capture the softness and delicacy of flowers in sunset light.

Picking a Pepper

Photographing the everyday life: shot at a local Red Barn Market, a man in blue reaches for a pepper. I used my clipboard again, and this was shot through a dried film on the board (see Iris image). I also sprayed on some water, which wasn't catching any light this time, for added texture.

Monet remarked that, "*For me, a landscape does not exist in its own right, since its appearance changes at every moment; but its surroundings bring it to life, the air and the light, which vary continually…*" This explains why he acted like a photographer, exploring, chasing the light, even losing canvases because he got caught by the tide, all by trying to be in the right place at the right time.

Monet's creations inspire me. He took a technique conventionally about detail and realism and made it his own. I still have more "distortion techniques" I want to try, but in the meantime, I hope these experiments that I have shown inspire you to find novel ways of capturing impressions, helping you tell a story of what you see: in the air, in the light, and in the landscape.

"*Non, mes amis, impressionism is not charlatanry, nor a formula, nor a school. I should say rather it is the bold resolve to throw all those things overboard.*" (Joaquin Sorolla)

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

But does every picture really tell a story?

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

Long Telephoto Lenses

by John Roberts

Everyone who takes photos of birds knows the plight of needing a lens that gets you closer without actually getting closer, while at the same time not wishing to remortgage the house in order to purchase one. And until recently, that is pretty much what you had to do unless you were willing to compromise on the image quality for the convenience of a large-range zoom lens.

Last year, Tamron brought out a new contender, the SP 150-600 mm Di VC USD. With this lens Tamron has set the bar higher than other lenses in its range could even reach, and the reviews have spoken quite highly of it.

Not to be outdone, Sigma brought out not only one competitor, but two lenses with the same range as this Tamron. These are the Sigma Contemporary 150-600 mm DG OS HSM, and their flagship model, the Sigma Sport 150-600 mm DG OS HSM. I know, I know, the naming of cameras and lenses nowadays is like they are picking names while eating alphabet soup.

Today I am going to discuss the differences between these three lenses, for those of you who are interested in knowing more about them.

If you remember, in the last issue I talked about the differences between 7 and 9 aperture blades. Well all three of these lenses feature the rounded 9 aperture blades, to give the out-of-focus blur a smoother look for foreground and background blur.

All three lenses feature their version of the high speed motor for autofocus, as well as image stabilization, even if it is called something different by each manufacturer.

The lenses that most of us will be interested in, will be either the Tamron or the Sigma Contemporary. They are the most reasonably priced of the three lenses. Both share the same filter size, 95 mm, and both are approximately the same weight. The Tamron comes in at 1.95 kg and the Sigma Contemporary is 1.93 kg. Holding both the Tamron and the Contemporary, I can barely tell that the Sigma is a little lighter.

Both have the twist style zoom, not the old push pull style. I held them both face down and walked around with them for a few minutes. I did this because I wanted to test if they would creep (zoom out). I am pleased to report that neither crept out. Even if I put the lens already zoomed out slightly, they did not move while walking around. To make sure that never happens, there is a lock at the 150 mm end of the zoom range.

One thing I noticed almost right away, was that the Tamron has a much nicer and wider manual focus ring compared to the Sigma Contemporary, which is thin, and not as well textured. That said, I like the focus limiter on the Contemporary over the Tamron, They have also added a selector for close-up focusing, which is kind of cool.

The Contemporary also has some custom mode switches available. To set them you will need the optional dock, but you can program in some additional features into the lens to make things a bit easier for you, and your shooting style. With the optional dock, you also have the ability to update the firmware and tweak the autofocus to fine tune it for your preferences; this is really handy for those cameras that do not have the AF fine tune built in, like the higher-end cameras have.

I do like the Tamron's tripod foot over the Sigma Contemporary. It works better as a handle to carry the lens and camera with, by a whole finger! With the Sigma Contemporary, I can hold the lens by the tripod mount with only two fingers, with the Tamron I can hold it with three, which just leaves me feeling more secure about how the lens holds, as well as distributing the weight better while carrying it this way. While I can say I understand why manufacturers have gone with the smaller tripod foot, I personally miss the feel of the ones where your whole hand can fit and hold it nice and solid.

Now, the Sigma Sport, differs from the other two quite dramatically. First off the Sport uses an even rarer 105 mm filter, and also weighs in at a whopping 2.86 kg. While not quite double the weight, there are a couple of reasons for this weight difference: the build construction is substantially better, with its metal lens barrel and hood, and weather sealing. Yes, I did say weather sealing, so there is now a long lens that will have that weather sealing on it to match the higher end camera bodies with their weather seals. This lens costs substantially more than the other two, but that would be handy.

The Sigma Sport does have a bigger tripod foot, so you can use your whole hand to hold it, and with a camera it would weigh in well over 3 kg, I am not surprised that they have used the bigger tripod foot.

So there you have a quick look at the three new kids on the block for long lenses, that you will not have to remortgage your house to buy one.

by Leah Gray, VCC Assistant Webmaster

A website is a location on the Internet that maintains one or more pages on the World Wide Web. The first website was created in 1991. Since that time, websites have continued to evolve and change. Today they may include multi-media, e-commerce, blogs, forums, games, news, social media and other complex services.
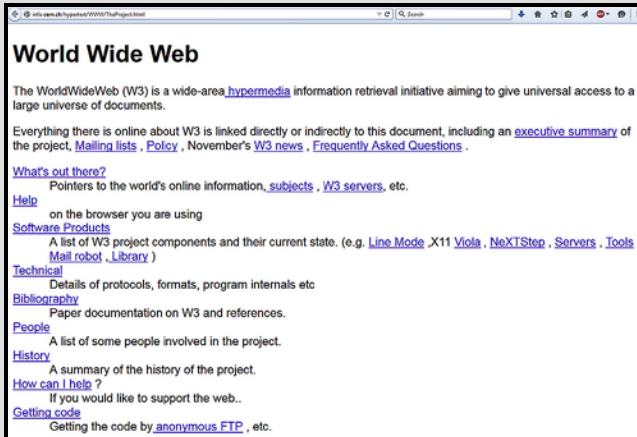
The first website ever published, info.cern.ch/hyper-text/WWW/TheProject.html.

Often the first priority of a new business is to get a website up and running, showing your potential clients that you are a legitimate business. It can be a simple on-line business card, or a more extensive interactive website.

Analysis: A good place to start, when building a website, is to analyze your needs. Are you a photographer who wants to show your work to family and friends? Do you want to sell images, or perhaps advertise services such as studio sessions or workshops? Perhaps you just want to share your ideas and exchange information. Start by answering a few questions. What is your purpose? Who is your audience? What is your marketing plan? Where are you going? Your website should fill your needs and evolve as those needs change. There are many solutions available today depending upon your needs. Let's look at the most common routes.

Domain: Now that you know your needs, let's get into some technical details. You will need a Domain Name. This is the address that is typed into a web browser to find your website. A new business should check to see if a suitable domain name is available before committing to naming their company. A domain should be short, easy to remember, and easy to spell. Today there are many more choices besides a .com, .ca or .org. Extensions like .lawyer, .realtor and .expert as well as many more are now available. For photographers, ex-

tensions such as .photography, .photos and .camera may be of interest.

Keep your Domain Name simple, and easy to remember. This will be the name you'll want to market, so try not to use abbreviations. You can also register several domains and point them to the same website.

There are a large number of registrars who can register your Domain for you. Registering a .ca domain, is generally done by a Canadian Registrar. You should pick a company that has been around, and will not suddenly go out of business, leaving your domain unusable for a period of time. Domains can also be purchased from their previous owners, but this can get costly.

Web Host: The next order of business is to find a host for your website. There are many considerations when picking a host. Web space, file access, bandwidth, backups, control panels, email and pricing are all factors to consider. Again, pick a reputable company who will give you support if you have questions. You also want to be careful that your Host does not have questionable websites on a shared server, as this could affect your website. Check customer reviews. Many Hosts will also provide a free domain for the first year if you sign up with them, or add a year onto your domain registration.

Now that you've picked the perfect Domain Name, analyzed your needs and picked a Host, you'll need to build your website. There are various ways to build a website these days. Many Hosts provide free site-builders.

Website Design: You can build a site with HTML (Hyper-text markup language) using Notepad on any computer, but there are easier ways to proceed. Content Management Systems such as Wordpress, Drupal, and Joomla make building and maintaining website content a much easier task. Of the three, Wordpress is generally the easiest to work with. There are free templates to use, or you can purchase one. Your Host should be able to load Wordpress onto the server for you.

It is always a good idea to load a business card and contact information onto your server space while you are working on your website.

There is a lot of information on-line about what constitutes a good website. It should be credible, current, functional, well-written, friendly, intuitive, easily found and multi-platform friendly, meaning that the website will look good and will function equally well on a tablet, smart phone, or a large desktop monitor. You should

consider navigation, colours, fonts and what material is needed "above the fold" and below. What is the first thing you see on your website?

Your site should load quickly, and grab your viewer's attention. Be clear about what your site is about and keep viewers interested in your content. In 1994, a high percentage of viewers didn't scroll down a page. Today, viewers are much more knowledgeable, but also more demanding. They scan quickly and move on. The key is to design for these users, but also provide more in-depth information when needed. You need material that stands out from the crowd, but keep to conventions for navigation, links, menus etc., as users are familiar with these.

Graphics and Photographs: As we all know, an image is worth a thousand words. All photographs, graphics and videos should be optimized to the smallest possible file size while keeping their visual integrity. They should be in .jpg, .gif or .png depending upon the graphic. Photographs can be protected with a "no right click" script, but ultimately, anything on the Internet can be downloaded, or a screenshot taken. This is a challenge for photographers.

Long banner-type photos are in demand for websites.

Search Engine Optimization: There is a lot of information available to help you get your site optimized (highly rated) on search engines. There are also companies that will do this for you. Generally if you have a well put together site optimized for your viewers and have labeled your photographs and graphics properly, you won't have any problems.

If you use methods deemed deceptive by the search engines, you may be penalized. For instance using black text on a black background to increase the frequency of a particular word on a page is considered misleading and you may be removed from the rankings. In general, having a good accessible (to handicapped or visually-impaired viewers) site viewable from various devices that is current and relevant will be rewarded.

Social Media: These days it's hard to not hear about Social Media and how influential it can be. Top sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, LinkedIn, Pinterest and Flickr can give you a good web presence. You

should have a Social Media plan, and devote some time to it. Pick a couple of sites that interest you, learn the etiquette, and concentrate on those. Feeds from these sites should be linked to your website to invite viewers back for more information, where you can control the content. Social Media can almost replace a website, but not quite.

Final Details: Now that you have your domain name, designed and optimized your site, and are ready to launch, you'll want to look after a few more details.

Gather some statistics to keep track of where your viewers are going, and what they like. Google Analytics is a good place to start, and Google generally rewards sites that use this service.

Have your website analyzed. There are various websites that will analyze your website for problems. Does your site function well with different browsers, smartphones and tablets? For example, Flash will not run on an iPad.

Keep your site up-to-date. A blog or news page on your website will keep your site current, keep your customers informed, and keep the search engines happy with lots of current and interesting words that are searched for.

Alternatives: Now that you know what's involved in getting your own website together. Let's look at a few alternatives. Services like Squarespace, Weebly, and Wix will do everything for you, but generally you'll pay more for these services. They include a domain, but you'll want to make sure you own the domain yourself. You can always rebuild a website, but it's difficult to start with a new domain, especially if you've devoted time and resources to marketing the old domain.

Another alternative for photographers is to look at sites like Smugmug, PhotoShelter, Zenfolio etc. You can create a portfolio of your work and make your images available for purchase. Many photographers incorporate one of these sites into their own website. Another alternative is to use a program similar to the Club's new website (Visual Pursuits). This is a service set up to solve problems for specific needs and content. There are other services catering to specific markets.

Websites have evolved tremendously over the past few years, and continue to do so. Going through the process of developing a website should help one shape and define their business plans and goals.

There is a website terminology page on Leah's website at *spirithills.ca/website-terminology/.*

by Doug Ambridge

It all starts with you, the members. After all the entries have been received the committee reviews all images to ensure that they comply with the guidelines. We ensure that all prints are accompanied by a digital image. If we have questions why an image was submitted in one category instead of another we contact the photographer. This happens mostly in Nature where the "Hand of Man" rule needs to be clarified at times.

The committee arranges for print and digital judges in the Intermediate and Advanced levels. This is the most difficult task as most professional photographers are very busy and to take the time to judge for us is most appreciated. For the Novice level we have an in-house group of judges, your peers, to evaluate the images. This sub-committee of four members are certified to judge photography. The group normally consists of Paul Ross, Willie Waddell, Suzanne Huot and Pam Irvine. We deliver the prints to the print judges. Digital images are judged from the website images.

Once all images have been judged we edit the judges' comments ensuring there are no spelling or grammatical errors. The images are then "coded" to include the name of each photographer (not visible to the judges), the category it belongs to, the score, and a keyword for sorting the images. The scoring is especially important for our Year-End Aggregate Awards. An Excel spreadsheet is used to keep track of the scoring in all categories.

Our most important meeting takes place before the fall meetings begin. We review the competition rules and determine what, if any, changes need to be made. In another meeting we decide on the themes for the coming year. All of this has to be done with enough lead-time to enable the *Close-Up* team time to include these in coming issues. For the Themes we try to arrange workshops or articles in *Close-Up* in advance to help members understand them and to compete more efficiently.

I would like you to meet your committee for next year. Our new chair is Pam Irvine. Her team is: Doug Ambridge, Richard Webber, Dan Takahashi, Marla Zarelli, and Don Peterson. Don is responsible for our external competitions and he is ably assisted by Doug McLean, Mike Wooding and Gita McCormick.

If you are looking for an exciting volunteer position in the club you should consider joining our committee. We are always looking for extra help.
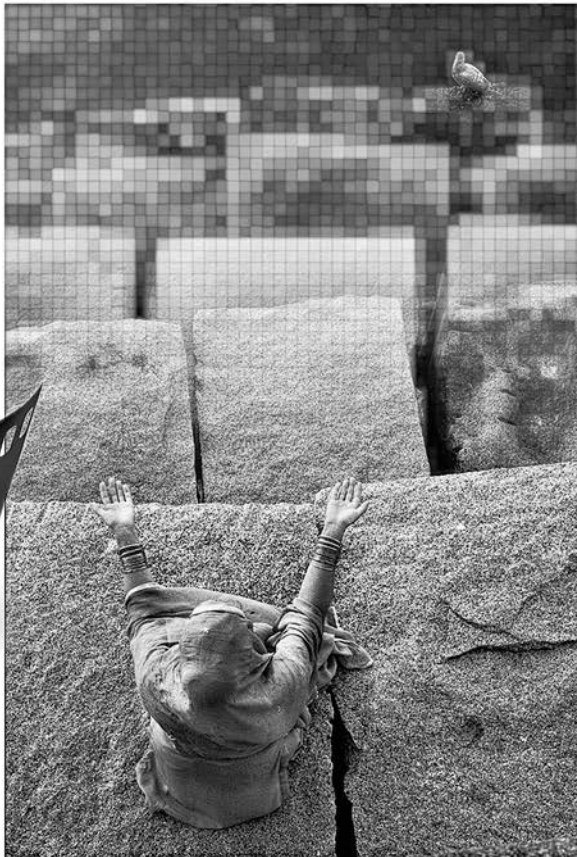
Tuesday Shoots

by Wayne Swanson

It's summertime and the living is easy, even for the Tuesday shooters. Rather than opt for themed shoots for the summer, we will just shoot what comes easily on our usual Tuesday outings. Instead of giving you the run-down on upcoming shoots, some of the shooters will tell you why they enjoy it. Perhaps Steve Jakes says it best: "*Nothing says you're retired like the Tuesday morning photo shoot, a gathering of like-minded and dedicated folks who, over a steaming hot cuppa, exchange more how-to tips, post-processing tricks and gear advice than you can find in a gaggle of Google searches.*"

Don't get the impression it is just an old man's club. Penny Codding notes three advantages "*that have nothing to do with age: the themes push me to be more creative and imaginative, the frequent meetings of the group encourage me to practice using my cameras more, and I really enjoy the camaraderie of the group, a source of fun and information.*"

Doug Ambridge adds, "*My photography has improved because the Tuesday themes get me to think outside the box and use my imagination.*"

Jack Copland, who started the Tuesday shoots a few years back, enjoys being able to review and compare images posted on the website following a photo shoot.

Garry Schafer sums it up this way, "*Great camraderie and a sense of fun both during and after the shoot.*"

If you are free on July 14th, 28th, or August 11th, 28th, come and join us for the Tuesday shoots.

Jack Copland and Gordon Simpson roam Downtown Victoria in search of the perfect image.

Weekend Shoots

by Steve Smith

July: Gowlland Tod Provincial Park

This park preserves a large part of the Gowlland Range green space, and the shoreline and uplands of Tod Inlet. The Gowlland Range is an area of rich bio-diversity, with over 150 animal and plant species. The protected area preserves a rare, dry coastal Douglas fir habitat that features grassy meadows, rocky knolls and old-growth forest.

The park offers many small scale rock, water and tree-scapes as well as landscape photo opportunities. If required, instruction will be available on how to take landscape photographs where both the foreground and background are in focus.

We will meet at the Mackenzie Bight parking area off Ross-Durrance Road. The Mackenzie Bight trailhead leads to well maintained medium difficulty trails through mature forest and along the water. A good pair of hiking boots is essential. Pack a water bottle and some snacks. Plan to stay 2-4 hours in the park.

August: Qualicum Falls and Rathtrevor Beach Provincial Parks

A summer day's field trip to the Parksville area. At the Qualicum Falls Provincial Park impressive waterfalls cascade down a rocky gorge in a beautiful forest setting bordered by steep mountain peaks. This park is one of the most beautiful parks on central Vancouver Island. A number of walking trails are available in and around the park, offering picturesque views of the river and providing access to the upper and lower falls. This is a great opportunity to photograph moving water with slow shutter speeds, showing the interplay of light on water and tree forms.

At low tide the ocean recedes almost a kilometre on Rathtrevor Beach, providing a great opportunity to wander over the sand and explore the shoreline. When the tide rolls in over the sun-baked sand, the warmed water forms intricate patterns for the barefoot photographer to walk through and photograph. One objective of this beach field trip will be to photograph: "light," "in a row," "webbed," "spiral," "silhouette," "water shapes," "sand shapes," "leaves," "wood," "people" and "something strange."

Please see the *website* for other field trips this summer.

by Daniel A. Roy

Artificial Intelligence, we've all heard or read about it. Some say, "We won't see it anytime soon, certainly not in our lifetime." But most people are unaware of the Singularity, and even if they are cognisant of the concept, they tend to dismiss it as pure fantasy. According to Ray Kurzweil, "*[the Singularity is] a future period during which the pace of technological change will be so rapid, its impact so deep, that human life will be irreversibly transformed.*" Ray Kurzweil wrote those words more than ten years ago in his book, "*The Singularity Is Near.*" Believe it or not, we are on the cusp of that interval of time. Like it or not, artificial intelligence (AI) is on the horizon and in our haste to satisfy our appetite for technological advancement, our foot is pressing down on the accelerator.

True, the birth of the first sophisticated AI may still be several years away, but a recent breakthrough has given technicians a stable platform to turn science fiction into reality. There are several projects underway that will utilize basic levels of artificial intelligence to enhance everyday tools. One of those tools being developed is a genuine point-and-shoot camera. This extraordinary device will be on the shelves in two years. The designer, Alfred Stringer, a Vancouver Island resident, says, "There are no manual settings; all considerations will be selected by the camera's brain."

Point-and-shoot cameras have been on the market since the introduction of the Kodak Brownie in February 1900 and the resulting images were suitable for the average user when documenting everyday events or capturing shots of friends and family. However, one hundred and fifteen years of development has increased the ease-of-use and the quality of the images, especially over the past ten years. And now, brace yourself for a tremendous leap in technology that will revolutionize the photographic industry.

The price will be much too high for the average user, but professional photographers and serious photo enthusiasts are salivating at the opportunity of owning this incredible device. The camera will eliminate critical decisions in all the fundamental requirements to produce an image. All the photographer has to do, is: get the camera to the shooting location, set it up on its custom-made tripod, and press the actuation button. The camera's AI will do the rest. Precise exposures, balanced lighting, and tack sharp images will be the result, unless soft focus or a blurred image might present a more artful effect.

The camera will boast a 96-megapixel medium format CCD sensor and have an ISO range from 50-256,000. The kit lens will be an amazing 14-300 mm f3.5-5.6. The versatility and quality furnished by this optical masterpiece will make it the go-to lens for the majority of your shots. However, a variety of prime lenses will be available for working in a studio, shooting close-ups, capturing distant subjects, or attaining a certain look or style. The AI will know what lenses are available and prompt you to change lenses when it deems necessary. The lenses available at launch time will be: 14 mm f2.8, 30 mm f1.4, 50 mm f1.4, 105 mm f4.0 Macro, and a 300 mm f4.5. A 600 mm f4.6 is in development and will be available one year after the initial release of the camera.

The following considerations influenced the camera's development:

White Balance and Metering: Presumably, your camera has an auto WB setting, but it is not likely spot-on every time. However Stringer's new camera is guaranteed to be one-hundred-percent accurate one hundred percent of the time. How is this possible, since there is no actual metering system installed? Stringer isn't exactly sure, but it's the AI that is analyzing the available light. He discovered this during the development stages while trying to marry a light metering system with the AI. During a test, Stringer realized the resulting image was totally accurate despite the fact that he forgot to switch on the meter. Stringer says that the AI sees the available light, analyzes it, and makes adjustments based on the information received and compares that to its internal database. It does this all in less than a millisecond.

Aperture: This setting is almost always in question. What f-stop is the best for the shot? Do you want maximum depth of field or do you want to isolate a portion of the subject? The AI will analyze the scene and make decisions based on the extensive amount of data stored in its brain during the manufacturing process. Precise apertures will not be required. The metadata provided will not likely read f8.0, for example; it will more likely read: f8.0052 or something near that (plus or minus). There is no mechanical iris. The AI will open or close an optical-electromagnetic diaphragm to any increment it desires. The choices are virtually limitless. No shooting scenario has been left out; the camera always knows what aperture, or fraction to select.

Shutter Speed: Whether an exposure of several hours is required, or a snippet of time as quick as 1/10,000 of a second, this camera has it all covered. And to top this off, there is no shutter button, only a start button with

which to begin the process. The camera knows when to trip the shutter. If something or someone is moving in the scene, the camera's eye will track the subject and snap the shot at the most opportune time.

ISO: A lower ISO is always preferable when lighting conditions are ideal, but extremely high settings are available to the AI. As mentioned earlier, any ISO from 50 to 256,000 can be utilized. Noise reducing software is built-in to minimize loss in image quality at high ISO values. Stringer has financial ties with the company that is developing this component and promises to use the very latest advancement.

Light: The camera can identify and utilize every known source of light to its best advantage. Whether it is as delicate as the biological illumination generated by a glow-worm or as intense as the light emitted by an arc welder, the camera will balance the exposure perfectly.

Shadow: A built-in flash will fill shadows if the AI determines that it is necessary. The selected intensity of the flash will provide the scene with just the right amount of light, from a fraction of a lumen to the full capacity of its two flashes. In addition to the in-camera flashes, a remote flash and high-quality lightweight tripod comes with the starter kit.

Focus: The camera uses a combination of phase and contrast detection sensors to obtain initial focus. This method acquires spot-on focus, but it is the AI that has the last say, fine-tuning the focal plane with exacting standards. Stringer had considered utilizing the latest in "light field" technology but says that the AI's ability the use focus in conjunction with aperture and shutter speed is the key to obtaining world-class images.

Filters: A vast assortment of filter settings will be accessible to the AI, and it will always select the best one to complement the subject and lighting. The hassle of installing individual screw-on filters will become a thing of the past. This multi-filter is built in. There is only one filter element combined with each lens's complex set of optics. This patented product is a marvel in itself. The secret to its versatility is an elaborate combination of transparent materials and the degree of electrical charge applied to the component.

Photographic Techniques: The AI has been shown photographs taken by past and present masters. It has scanned tens of thousands of these images, and it knows how to replicate each and every one. With every shot taken, the camera will experiment and produce images with a unique style of its own. If the results are too abstract for the owner, he or she can instruct the AI to tone down its enthusiasm. Or, this selection can be done in post-production. However, one can spend hours deliberating over nearly a hundred variations of each capture.

Portraiture and Glamour Photography: Subject posing is mostly in the hands of the photographer, but Stringer says that the next-generation AI (an additional two years away) will be able to verbalize posing directions. The photographer will only have to position the lights in accordance with the AI's direction.

This next generation camera will not require the owner to trade in, but only to upgrade the AI. The AI's developing personality won't change, just its own abilities to become even more artistically creative.

The camera's AI will do most of the thinking for you. It will even anticipate your vision as you point the lens at a particular scene. It knows the time of day and year and will utilize the existing light, shadow, colour hue, contrast, etc., to its full advantage. The camera will even suggest you wait for a later time with the intention of possibly capturing a masterpiece during the golden hour. If required, the AI will also direct you to move left or right, or back or forth, in order to optimize composition or improve on lighting angle. These instructions will appear on the LCD screen.

If the resulting image is not your cup of tea, alternates can be selected in post-production. Companion software will be available (at additional cost) to allow the user a degree of control over the final image. However, anything other than a subtle change might hurt the camera's feelings. The suggestion that the AI has feelings leads to the question: "Who owns credit for each image that is created?"

Of course, many photographers will cringe at the idea of losing control over the discipline. But as time passes, and they see what the new camera can fabricate on their behalf, they will most likely submit to the AI's mastery of the art, allowing the camera carte blanche.

Stringer says that in less than ten years, future models will acknowledge verbal commands and respond in kind. In ten years beyond that, the AI may become a constant companion, as it will be sentient. And in ten years beyond that, the AI will possess total mobility, and it may or may not ask you to accompany it on a photo shoot.

Summer Fun

by Nancy MacNab

Are you ready to have fun in the sun this summer? Don't forget your camera! You can have fun with your photography, too. Here are some ideas to get you started.

If you use a zoom lens, try zooming in or out as you take the photo to get a neat streaking effect. You'll need to use your smallest aperture (the f16 to f32 end of the lens) in order to get your longest shutter speed so you can see the effect. If you have a polarizer, put that on too, as it will increase the time the shutter is open.

Take a number of photos as the results will vary depending on how quickly you zoom. Also, do you get a different result if you zoom in than if you zoom out? What happens if you zoom in short bursts: zoom, pause, zoom, pause, zoom? Or you can pause before starting your zoom. Each method will produce different results, so experiment to see which you like best. You can also try twisting the camera as you zoom to add a spiral effect. Warning: the effect may be different for each subject, so try multiple shots.

While your lens is on the move, leave the length of the lens alone and just move the whole camera. Again, you'll want a small aperture to get a long shutter speed so you have time to carry out the movement. If your subject has strong lines in one direction (e.g. trees will give you vertical lines), then move your camera in the same direction. It only takes a small movement to give you the effect.

Get creative! As well as the obvious directions of vertically and horizontally, you can try moving the camera in circles, jumping up and down, wavy lines, even whirling the camera on its strap.

Of course, it doesn't have to be the camera that's moving. You can keep the camera still and let your subject move. A tripod, a slow shutter speed and moving water makes for the silky effect you see in some photos (you may need a neutral density filter for this). Ripples or footprints in the sand are also classic beach shots.

Double exposures, or multiple exposures, can be done either in camera or on the computer. You will need to check your camera's manual to see if yours can do it or not. If you can, then this is another opportunity to play with different effects. If not, then you'll have to wait until you are using your computer to combine different images into one in Photoshop or Photoshop Elements. There are lots of options here.
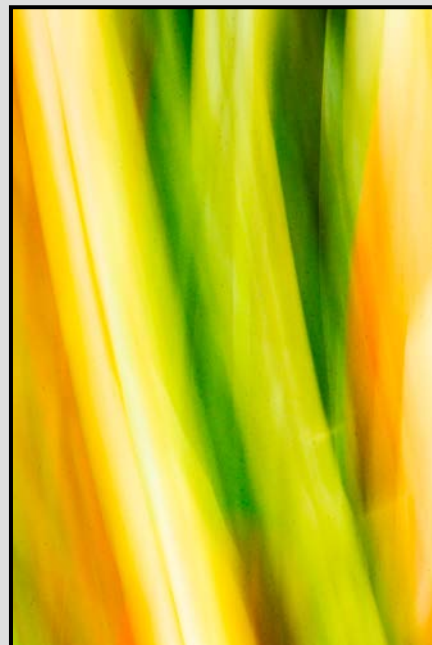
You can use a wide-angle lens and get close to your victim to get some caricatures for portraits. Because wide-angle lenses emphasize whatever is closest and seem to expand the distance between objects, noses become a very prominent element to the photograph, while ears seem to be very far away (use with care!).

Another way to add an unexpected element is to shoot through something. Crinkled plastic, a lace curtain, flowers too close to get in focus (as long as you have something further away in focus), or something smeared with Vaseline will all give you different, and interesting, effects. (*See also page 20 in this issue.*)

Have you ever photographed a ghost? There are a couple of ways of doing this. A long shutter speed while you (or your subject) walks through the scene can result in a ghostly image, depending on the shutter speed and your speed. Another way is to take a spare lens cap and cut out one side of it, leaving the rim so it will stay on the lens. Then you take two photographs, first exposing one side of the lens and then the other, either as a double exposure or as two separate photos that you can combine in Photoshop or Photoshop Elements.

These are some ideas of how you can play with your camera this summer. I hope we'll see some of the results on the website and when our meetings start again in September.