



Photo Credit: Bill Cubitt

President's Message #4

Photography—a word derived from the Greek terms phos (light) and graphe (writing or drawing)—is, by definition, a means of “writing with light.”

Photography and writing seem to be the antithesis of each other, but they have an inherent relationship. In fact, they need each other.

Photography is a visual medium in which no words, or very few words, are needed—the image explains itself. Writing is the exact opposite. It uses narrative to tell a story and create an image or idea in your mind.

One of the things that strikes me about our blog is that some of our photographers are also excellent writers. I think the inherent relationship is that they are both very creative artforms; if people are creative in one area, they are often creative in multiple areas. I have read some amazing articles written by our members on the blog.

Pål Henrik Ekern writes:

The written word helps provide a context, giving viewers an indication of direction. This helps to open up the works, allowing us to 'read' the photos and understand what it is the photographer is saying. As a photographer, one needs to be very aware of how to use a text. It gives the viewer an idea of how a project is intended to be perceived. Photography is an open medium, and text can help set the parameters for a story told through pictures.

Photography and writing, however, go much deeper than simply explaining to your audience what you are shooting. They both use grammar, for example. With writing its nouns, verbs, punctuation, and sentence structure. In photography, it's knowing your controls—shutter, aperture, depth of field, and how your camera takes a photo.

Every author has a style—a unique voice they add to their work. Each author has their own way of adding life to their words. Each has a unique tone or style to create a pleasing rhythmic to the prose they use.

Each photographer also has a unique tone or style. We've all seen our friends' photos at Norway House during our Members' Nights and know immediately whose photos they are even before we hear the name. Their stylistic choices might be about colors, composition, or lighting choices, but we know their style. They add life and beauty to their photos through their stylistic quirks.

Writers and photographers both tell stories, but in different ways. Writers must tell a story that has a special something. Something that draws the reader in. Something that lifts the words off the page. It starts with planning the setting and scene, getting the story in the mind before writing a single word.

Photographers do the same thing. They see the image before they take it. They plan it out and see the story beforehand. They take photos from every angle and use different lighting. And just like writers they must edit, edit, edit until they are happy.

What I like about the blog the club has created is it will satisfy that creative urge we all have as photographers and unleash the writing potential some of us have. The blog has no bounds. Submit as many photos and videos as you like and write as much as you want. Unleash your creative spirit.

I think some of you want to submit photos to the blog but are daunted by the thought of writing a narrative. I strongly urge our photographers who have not written before to sit down one day with a blank Word document and start writing; I suspect you will surprise yourself. Before long the words just appear on the page like magic. Our skilled blog team will help you with your narrative so it will read well. We will give you guidance and support. And I suggest any serious photographer read [Writing about Photography](#), published by Duke University.

My challenge to the membership is to find your favorite photo and write an essay about it. Tell us why you like it, what is unique about it, and what you did to capture it. Use [Writing about Photography](#) as a guide starting on page 2 and answer some of those 35 or so questions about your photograph. It will be a tremendous help to making you a better photographer, and a writer! Copy those pages and keep them with you.

You do not have to be an advanced photographer in the club to make contributions to the blog. Contributions are welcome from new and novice members as well. It will add an extra satisfying dimension to your art. Give it a try and you might surprise yourself. Nobody will judge you. I am looking forward to what you are going to post on the blog.

If you have any questions or concerns about our club, my door is always open.

James Dies – President – Victoria Camera club.

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