



Close-Up

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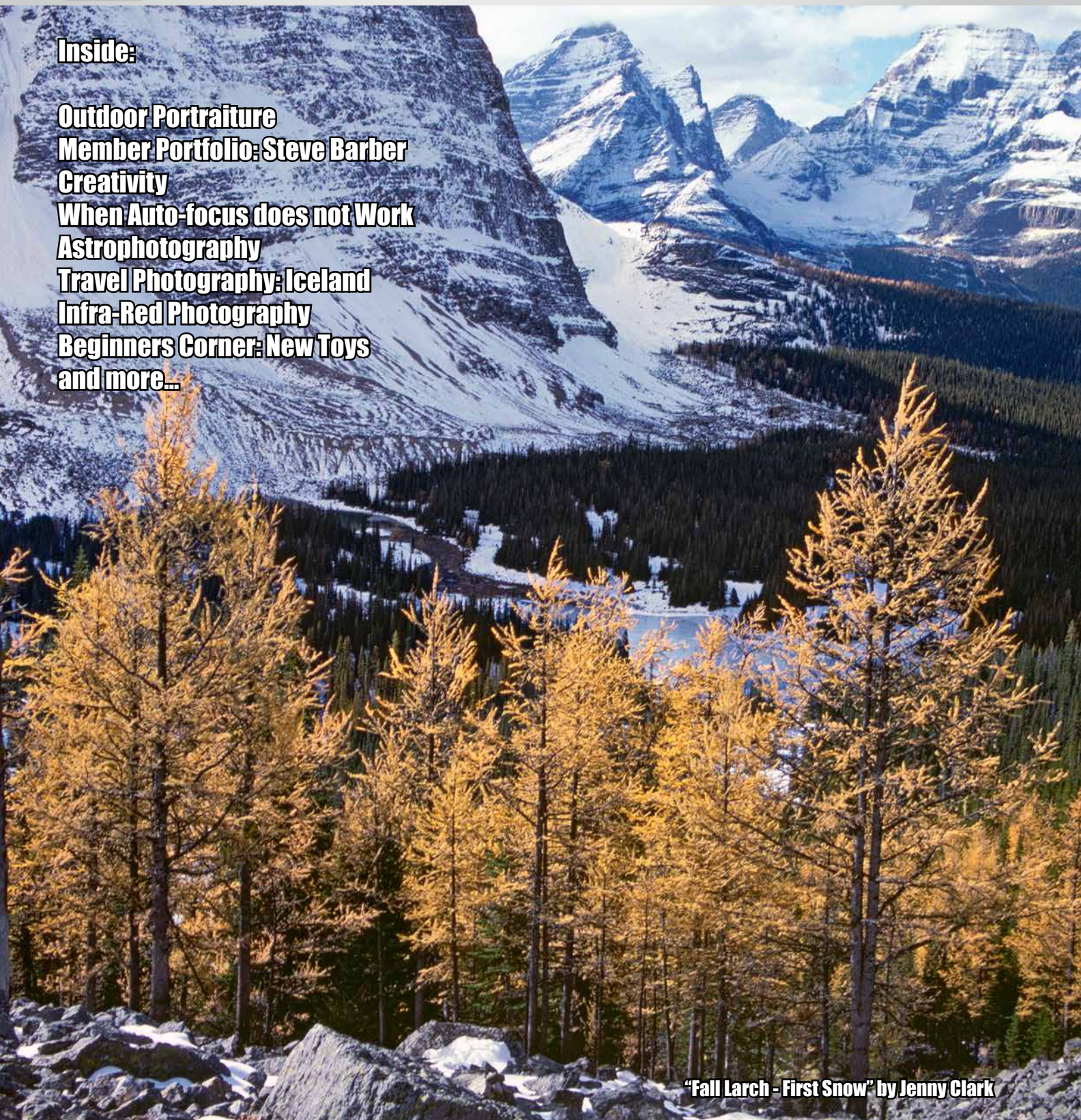
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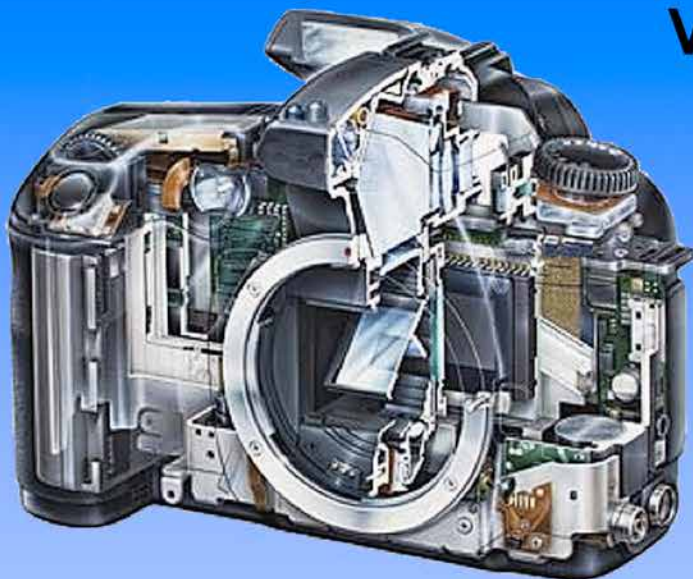
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and more...



"Fall Larch - First Snow" by Jenny Clark



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Victoria Camera Club

Close-Up is the magazine of the Victoria Camera Club,
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 Editor, Richard James, e-mail to newsletter@victoriacameraclub.org
 for submissions or to advertise in *Close-Up*.



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*.

For additional information: please contact:

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

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The Victoria Camera Club is a member club of the Community Arts Council of Greater Victoria (CACGV), Canadian Association for Photographic Arts (CAPA), and the Photographic Society of America (PSA).



Calendar

Our workshop and field trip program is too extensive to list in *Close-Up*. Please go to the calendar page on the website (www.victoriacameraclub.ca) for the latest details of all our workshops, field trips and meetings.

Thursday, Dec 3rd: Christmas Party

Our annual Christmas Party is at Norway House again this year. All members and their guests are invited to this potluck event with many door prizes.

Our Norway House meetings will resume with Competition Night on January 7th, 2016.

External Competition Deadlines: We have several club entry competitions in January, so please get your submissions ready. Please check the calendar for details. January 10th CAPA Altered Reality, January 21st CAPA Theme "Creating Motion in a Still Image," and our annual Eastwood inter-club challenge, and January 27th North Shore Challenge.

Workshop and Field Trip Planning: we are always looking for suggestions from members for events that they want to participate in. Please let off workshop and field trip coordinators know what interests you, and particularly what you would be willing to lead..

Close-Up Material: the editor is always looking for new material for publication in *Close-Up*. We need technical material at all levels, including basic level camera operation and image-editing. Creative material runs the whole gamut of creative challenges including subject matter, technique and visualization. Please email your ideas and we will fit you into an appropriate issue.

Cover image: "Fall Larch - First Snow" by Jenny Clark. This image was taken from Opabin Prospect (elevation 2285 m.) in the Lake O'Hara area of Yoho National Park looking NW across Odayay Plateau along the shoulder of Mt Odayay and into the back of Cathedral Crags. I was using my Olympus Om1, a 135 mm lens and Kodachrome 64 slide film. The larches turn yellow in Yoho in October and there is just time before snow closes the road (in a good year) to spend some time with these glorious trees in this very special spot. Mary Lake can be seen below, already frozen. I worked for Parks Canada as a park interpreter from 1972 to 2007 living in Yoho, Kootenay, Waterton, Elk Island and Jasper National Parks. This shot was taken many years later on a visit to Yoho.

President's Message

Recently, I met with one of our more accomplished members, and the discussion included some ideas about activities the Club provides as a means to improve peoples photography. After that discussion, I thought about how the improvement process starts for an individual photo, how do we identify what needs to be improved?

For some of us the process starts when we first see the image; we see things that we're not happy with, something just doesn't look "right." Where might this "right" come from? I think that we get a preconceived picture in our mind, often one that gets there from seeing other photographers work. Then we identify the differences between what's in front of our eyes and what's in our mind.

Entering competitions can also be a way to improve but how might that work? Maybe the judge has a preconceived idea of what good pictures look like. They then do the same as we do. They look at our image and consider what they would have done. They form a picture in their mind of what a good image should look like based on the ideas and guidelines that their experience and training has taught them. Then they play "spot the difference" like we do. The picture they choose as the winner is the one that comes closest to theirs, the one with the least differences. How does that improve our photography?

If the judge's preconceived picture is the same as ours, then their comments will certainly help us to improve. If not, we're almost surely going to be disappointed.

If you know the kind of photos the judge really likes, then submitting images that look like theirs may improve your chances of winning. If you are trying to produce images like theirs, then this will be helpful in improving your work. If not, then all you are doing is winning.

While the process of identifying improvements can be done as an individual, meeting with a group of people you know and trust could accelerate the improvement process. When you know each other well enough, you will all feel comfortable making and receiving suggestions about changes that you might like to try. I would suggest this could be a way to enable participants to improve their photography quicker than solely relying on competitions.

This doesn't have to be an organized activity; you may already be doing this. But if there is an interest in something like this being club-organized, we could consider putting some things in place to encourage it.

Lloyd Houghton, President.

by Richard James

Why am I writing a piece on creativity you may ask, aren't I a "techie?" Well, yes, but that does not mean that we techies have to ignore creativity. In no particular order I will review some concepts that challenge us.

Visualization: "To imagine what the finished image would express before clicking the shutter." (Ansel Adams, 1927.) This is more than just "framing the image," it is considering what the message is in the image and how it might be presented to give this message. Some images are simple, what you see is what you get, but other images require much more care in shooting to ensure that everything fits together well. Even "simple" images require careful consideration of spatial relationships. Do you shoot from above or from below, left or right. Will the lighting give you a better image at a different time of day.

Tone and Colour: You should consider the arrangement of the B&W tones or colours and how they relate to each other in the image. Is this something to be managed in processing, or do you need to change the lighting (studio) or time of day (landscape)? Do you need to add a brightly-coloured object to the scene (remember "Kodachrome Red"), or remove it because it is too distracting?

Framing: Is the 35 mm camera format with a 3:2 aspect ratio the best way of visualizing your image? Why not 4:3, 4:5 (traditional printing), 16:9 (1080p video), or any aspect ratio that places the subject in the optimal position within the frame without clipping the edges or including "empty space" that adds nothing to the image. (See page 9 in the [Sept/Oct 2015 Close-Up](#)). When you are visualizing the image, you may need help with this. I carry a set of small cards with cut-outs of various aspect ratios that I can hold up and see the image with appropriate framing. Use this as a reference in setting up your shots.

Choice of lens: This is not the same as deciding on the aspect ratio, but is another way of looking at framing as well as perspective. Wide-angle lenses expand distance (and may introduce lens distortion if you don't correct it later in processing) while long lenses compress perspective, shortening the apparent separation of objects in the scene.

Choice of Aperture and Shutter Speed: Yes, these do affect creativity. Do you want to isolate the subject against an out-of-focus background? Then use a wide aperture. If you want "everything in focus," then use a small aperture. Similarly with shutter speed. If you want to show motion, use a slower shutter speed (or pan the

shot to blur the background) If you want to freeze motion, then use a faster shutter speed, or flash.

Placing the subject: OK, I am avoiding the "C word," composition. However there are important concepts to consider. Let the subject move or face into the image, not out of the edge. Generally do not crop off parts, like half a hand, but an unnecessary part of a larger object (a cloud) can be cropped if it is not important to the overall image. Avoid breaking the image into halves (horizon in the middle) or placing the main subject centrally (you can move the focus point you know). Others propound the "rule of thirds" (placing the subject at an intersection of lines drawn 1/3 in from the edges), or the Golden Rule (ratio of 1.62 between long and short elements in an image). Remember, rules are there to be broken, if it works.

Lighting: Lighting is critical to an image whether it is a studio shot, a macro image of part of a flower, or a landscape. Lighting defines shape. With very flat lighting (shadowless under an overcast sky) landscapes look flat and lack definition. Too high a contrast (bright sun) may hide important detail in deep shadow. You can manage this with artificial light or time-of-day, or wait for the cloud to move. In closer images small shadows show surface details that are important to the message in the image.

Composite images: In many ways these are the ultimate in creativity. You have complete control over what is in the image. You can add and delete at will, change tones and colours, add textures, change spatial relationships and more. A composite can be as simple as replacing a boring, featureless blue sky, or as complex as you want to make it. Everything that I have noted above applies to composites with one additional consideration. Lighting needs to be consistent: If the main subject is lit from the upper left and slightly in front, then all other components should be or it will likely look unnatural.

In your mind's eye: Does the "standard processing" of your image reflect how you felt about the scene at the moment you captured it? Are the sunset colours flat, the colours in the sandstone much more boring than you remembered? Unless you are trying to document the scene exactly as you saw it (a forensic record), you have absolute liberty to change the processing. This is exactly what the "great masters" of B&W photography did with every image. Ansel Adams and many others changed the exposure, film development, paper contrast, dodged and burned everything to achieve their vision of the scene. Why should you not do this in your digital darkroom? It is way easier (and safer) than the wet darkroom, and you can do it in colour too.

by Judy Bandsmer

Shooting outdoor or environmental portraits is my favourite genre of photography. The incredible beauty of the landscape around Victoria is so inspiring to me, and I find that people, especially non-models, are often more comfortable outdoors than inside a studio.

I have spoken with the City of Victoria Parks Department and they told me that as long as you are not hindering people and aren't causing a disturbance, there is generally no issue with photography in their parks. The one exception is that no professional photography is allowed in Beacon Hill Park without a permit.

It does take some work to find the best places to shoot. I often pull over and walk through parks I come across, with an eye for photographic possibilities. Another easy way is to ask for suggestions from others for their favourite places; I've found incredible locations this way. Sometimes, I pull up Google maps and purposely look for parks with the purpose of exploring them the next time I go to that area of town. Like a lot of photography, you don't find the best places without doing some footwork!



"Maria Curcic Millinery", shot in Latoria Creek Park, discovered while house-sitting and going for a long walk. This was shot using natural light only.

Some Great Locations

My favourite beach locations: One of the best in the area is Island View Beach. It is relatively sandy and long, so you can get beautiful vistas, and it is relatively easy to remove people in the background of your image. The evening light is especially flattering. As well, there are field-like areas, and open walkways among the trees, so you are not limited just to beach scenes. Another rocky shore that I really enjoy is Glencoe Cove. It has beautiful afternoon and evening light, and there are relatively few people there.

My favourite gardens: Government House. Open year round, free admission, and large, so you can find nice light all day. It has fountains, a rose garden with trellises, and covered walkways. There are also sheltered areas in case of rain. Hatley Gardens (Royal Roads University) also has some beautiful areas. There is a paid-admission area with beautiful outdoor structures, a rose garden, and a Japanese garden. Call ahead to ensure you will be able to photograph there, as many weddings are shot here. The rest of the grounds are also beautiful, with many areas including forest, grass, the lagoon, and the outside of Hatley Castle.



"Karl Stobbe", shot outside Hatley Castle. Natural light enhanced with off-camera flash.

My favourite fields: Elk Lake. There are beautiful golden fields as it dries out over the summer. Be warned, in spring the field is a beautiful lush green, but it is very wet, so wear rubber boots. Another favourite with wedding photographers is Summit Park, very close to Norway House. It is a great location with a lot of variety including Garry Oaks, hills, open spaces, grass and rock etc.

My favourite urban location: Around Bastion Square is a fun place to shoot. There are plazas, interesting walls, and lots of shadows to play with. Explore a bit, finding leading lines with the structures and shadows.

A few unique locations: Macaulay Point (formerly Fort Macaulay) in Esquimalt is fascinating. There are remains of bunkers, lookouts, and defensive berms interspersed with beautiful flora, tree groves, and views of the ocean. Another favourite location of mine is Sooke Potholes. It is a bit of a drive, but the park is stunning and large, with lots of water, shallow river areas, beautiful vistas. It involves some hiking, exploring, and climbing about, so go prepared with good footwear and some safety supplies.

When deciding where to shoot portraiture, I consider

these factors. Depending on the purpose of the image, these will take on different priorities:

1. Subject preference: Where does your subject like to be? The beach, field, urban, forest, or doing a hobby? The most difficult setting is forest scenes. The light is low, even on a bright summer day, and is markedly green. Unless you know how to use portable light sources, I would recommend choosing a different area for shooting portraiture.



“Sisters”, shot at Island View Beach, using a portable light source to drown out the natural green light from the trees and to add catchlights.

2. Time of day: Some locations have beautiful morning light, others evening light. If you are shooting in the urban environment, shadows will change markedly hour to hour, so I usually go a location and then look for the best areas in the current light. What works one day may not work another! Don't forget that the sun may “set” a lot earlier than the official sunset if you are in a valley or you have a lot of trees to the west.
3. Season: Fall leaves? In Victoria, not all trees have incredible colours, nor do they all change at the same time. Looking for certain flowers in season? Check ahead of time to make sure they are out and still looking fresh. Beautiful golden fields may be green swamps in spring, and grasses will be different heights, markedly changing your scene.
4. Ocean tides: Beaches look different with the tide at different levels!
5. Likelihood of rain: Government House is an excellent place to shoot if there is a good chance of rain.

There is more than one covered area that works well for portraiture.

6. Clothing considerations: Is the person wearing an outfit that they don't want to get dirty or scratched? I have wrapped a person up with in a blanket as we walked through some bushes so nothing would catch on her dress.
7. Subject mobility: Is the person in a wheelchair, willing and able to hike distances with you, or somewhere in between?
8. What feeling you want to convey: Fashionable, edgy, happy, powerful, ethereal, whimsical, nostalgic, professional, frightening?

The Practical Tips

When shooting in more remote areas, it is important to be prepared. I have an “emergency bag” I bring along with me on location shoots: cell phone, basic first aid supplies, a whistle in case of emergency, small flashlight and extra batteries, some snacks. Then there are photographic considerations: lint remover, mirror, make-up kit (at least powder for shine, for men too), a blanket (to sit on, wrap up, change behind), bug spray, clothing clamps (so they fit better), bobby pins, hair spray, hairbrush, safety pins, scissors, wipes, tissues, props, sewing kit etc. Yes, this all fits into one extra bag! And yes, along with my lighting and camera gear, it does get to be a lot to carry. Thankfully, for more informal shoots, you won't need to carry this much around. I would suggest a mirror, hairspray, bobby pins, and powder as key items.

Lastly, if you can't get out, don't despair. Especially if you use a shallow depth of field, shooting right outside someone's home can be easy. And then it is an easy guarantee that their environment will tell you something about your subject, which is really what a portrait is about.



“Sara”, shot in her front yard, natural light with reflector.



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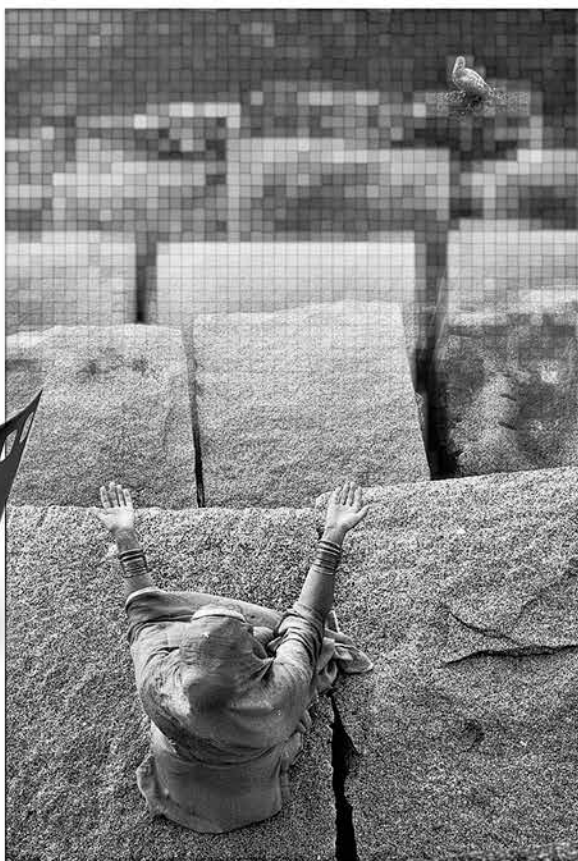
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Bridging Photo Technologies

by Richard James

Does auto-focus always get it right? Unfortunately, not all the time. You can increase your chances of it working if you understand a little bit about how it does it. Since each camera body will operate slightly differently it's a good plan to review your camera's manual to help you understand the different options available to you.

Firstly there are two common methods of auto-focusing: phase detection which is essentially a rangefinder system using a beam splitter and an image analysis system, and, contrast detection which, as its name implies, identifies the focus position with the highest contrast under the focus point. Phase detection is quicker, but contrast detection can be more accurate and is the method used when using live-view mode.

The next consideration is the number of available focusing points and their orientation. The phase detection points are highlighted in the viewfinder. Depending on your camera model they may be oriented either vertically, horizontally or cross-type meaning both combined. Typically, they would cover about 50%, or more, of the sensor area. For contrast detection the whole image area can be covered by the selected focus point. You can move the focus point (in either mode) to place it over the most appropriate part of your image. With some cameras you can select the number of focus points that are used as a group.

Lastly, your camera uses a number of algorithms to help it pick the point that you want to focus on. These may include face detection (that's the human face, not an animal), nearest point, center weighted, and single point.

That's the background, now let's get into the details. The most common problem, if you let the camera do it all, is it picks the wrong point to focus on. By this I mean something is in focus, but it's not the point you want.

This can easily happen if the subject has no clearly defined edges, or conversely, too many. Examples of this would include a small subject in a sea of detail, such as a small bird in a bush, or a more distant whale in the open sea. This type of failure is generally known as "subject failure." You can usually solve this problem by using a more restricted set of focus points and ultimately "single point focus."

You can set your camera to use either a single focus point, a moving area which allows the focus point to

follow a moving subject, or allow the camera to select the focus point itself. It is often this last option that creates the most problems.

If you're using single point focus on a moving subject you need to select the "ideal" position for the subject in the frame and move the focus point to that position. Then ensure you have focus tracking turned on which allows the camera's focusing system to follow the subject as it moves away from that position. As you are framing the shot, the focus point needs to hit the subject you're following (for example the whale).

If your subject is a person where the face is a significant portion of the image then face detection is a useful option.

There are generally two ways that you can set up how auto-focus is triggered in your camera: when you press the shutter release, or, using what is commonly known as "back-button focusing," meaning that focusing occurs when you press one of the programmable buttons on the back of the camera (often labeled "auto-focus lock"). Shutter release focusing is a two-step process. You can hold the shutter release part-way down and the camera will focus, then hold the release there and recompose the image, or simply press the shutter release all the way down and the camera will focus and then open the shutter. Back button focusing it is definitely a two-step process, you press the button to focus, then press the shutter release which does not change the focus point. Back button focusing works well with Live View and static subjects, but is more difficult to use when shooting flying birds!

How do you know if the subject under the focus point is in focus? You probably have a focus confirmation light in the viewfinder, often with an arrow on either side of it. When this is on you are in focus, if one arrow shows then you need to move the focus in the direction of the arrow. But if both arrows are flashing then the camera is unable to determine the correct focus point and is likely "hunting," moving the focus point backwards and forwards. This is especially useful with manual focusing as it is difficult to judge what is in focus in the viewfinder screen.

Another feature you may wish to use is the ability to select whether the shutter release will fire if the image is in focus or not. Unfortunately, you may miss a few shots if you set it to "in focus" only. You may achieve acceptable focus within the depth of field, or, by the time the shutter would have been released, the target would actually be in focus due to the very slight time lag between pressing the shutter release, the auto-focus system operating and the shutter releasing.

February Competition Theme

by Pam Irvine, Competitions Chair

The theme for February is "Framing with a Natural Frame." This is a technique where objects within the image form a border or part of a border around your subject. These frames can be literally natural, such as a tree branch, the mouth of a cave or a rock arch; or it can be man-made, such as a doorway, a bridge or the slats in a fence.

An in-focus frame can be a strong foreground which can give the image a sense of depth. Natural frames should have a distinct shape and be easily separated from the rest of the image. The size of the frame in relationship to the size of the image is important. Do not leave much space between the edge of the image and the natural frame and/or the natural frame and the scene within.

Trees and Branches: Autumn leaves are a natural and colourful way to frame your scene. Look for trees that have branching arms and canopies of leaves, and use them to frame other objects or even other trees.

Knotholes: These natural flaws in old wood can frame an interesting subject. It can make an interesting vignette.

Doorways: Can make a good natural frame. For example, you might photograph a person or landmark while looking through a doorway. This can also serve to stop motion by "capturing" the subject within the natural frame.

Arches and Columns: Architectural images will almost always contain natural frames, and they are often in beautiful settings. Seek out archways and see if you can use them to frame something striking in the distance.

Windows: Make a beautiful frame for a subject shot either from the front or the back. It can give the viewer a sense of intrigue, the subject seems confined within the frame.

Frost: Makes beautiful patterns on glass, creating a "window within a window." You can get a similar effect with fog by wiping some off and shooting through the clear spot.

Obstacles: When photographing people, look out for narrow gaps between trees or other obstacles that your subjects may have to navigate. Playgrounds with tunnels or climbing structures also work.

Now create your style of natural frames, using all the things available. The hardest part is seeing these natural frames. They are there. The deadline for February's competition is February 4th, 2016.

October 2015 Competition Judges

We extend our sincere thanks to the judges for the October Intermediate and Advanced competitions: Wes Bergen, Gilles Vezina, Gregg Eligh and Robert Laramee. We would also like to thank our in-house Novice Judges for this month: Willie Waddell, Steve Lustig, Caspar Davis, Suzanne Huot and Judy Taylor. All the Club judges have taken the CAPA judging course. All images and judges' comments are available at: victoriacameraclub.ca/vcccompetitions.

Wes Bergen: (Nature and Open Digital) has been a keen amateur photographer for almost 45 years working in B&W and colour prints and slides using medium/large format as well as 35 mm film and digital cameras. A member of the Lions Gate Camera Club for over 44 years Wes has held many positions including President. He is also a member of CAPA. He has won numerous awards in international competitions, and has sold many of his images. Wes has taught Photoshop courses for about 10 years. He has written columns in Lions Gate Camera Club's *Photolog* and in CAPA's *Canadian Camera* magazine. He is a frequent judge for camera clubs.

Gilles Vezina: (Theme) As a photographer based in Gatineau, PQ, he has the opportunity to explore the beauty of the Ottawa region, both in Quebec and Ontario. He considers photography as a very versatile form of artistic expression, it allows him to find beauty wherever it is. It is a passion for him and nothing makes him happier than to share this passion. www.vezinaphoto.ca

Gregg Eligh: (Prints) Greg has worked as a professional photographer 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. Greg instructed at the former Western Academy of Photography and now at Camosun College and gives workshops at locations such as Photographers at Painters (Lodge). Greg is also a respected photographic judge and a good friend of the Victoria Camera Club. www.elighphoto.com

Robert Laramee: (Creative) As an active member of the RA Photo Club and Club de photographie Polarisé de l'Outaouais, Robert runs workshops and judges competitions. He also teaches photography on a part-time basis for the City of Ottawa and at Académie des retraités de l'Outaouais. Robert is a true practitioner of both digital and analog photography from small to large format. www.theprintcollective.ca/laramee.htm

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Advanced Monochrome Print - 1st
"Long Beach Vista" by Gordon Griffiths

Judge's comments: You have captured a beautiful tonal range and lovely light. Rich print with excellent focus. Have you added those little figures in the mid-frame? The light is definitely what gives this impact.



Advanced Digital Creative - 1st
"The Thing" by Ed Moniz

Judge's comments: Conveys a good story, good use of colours. Beautiful composition here, opposing a single fragile warm colour leaf to the very strong root system, served by beautiful light. The multiple planes give the image a lot of depth. Very well done.



Advanced Digital Open - 1st
"Havana" by Barbara Burns

Judge's comments: Exquisite lighting, beautiful flowing lines, excellent tonal range and contrast. The pose and expression on the model is delightful. A beautifully simple background with some detail, yet no distractions. The model is placed quite centrally in the frame, but that's not a problem as she has sufficient space to the left of her. Bravo!



Advanced Digital Nature - 1st
"Golden Ears Good Morning" by Carrie Cole

Judge's comments: Exquisite colour, mood and impact. Exposure is perfect and there is detail even in the mountains in spite of the atmospheric haze. The rocks in the foreground are a great addition to the scene



Advanced Nature Print - 2nd

“Red Breasted Merganser” by Lois Burton

Judge's comments: Very nicely done! Well framed and composed. Your flash fill is effective and subtle enough to not be obvious, as it always should be.



Advanced Digital Theme - 2nd

“Open Water” by Rob Raymond

Judge's comments: Good use of colours. Beautiful image, good composition, nice details and overall impact.



Advanced Open Print - 2nd

“Tarpon Explosion” by Clive Townley

Judge's comments: This shot fascinates me. I've been studying the angle and how you did this. You have introduced a vision and image that create a new experience and very well exposed.



Intermediate Digital Creative - 1st

“Lavender Swirl” by Steve Barber

Judge's comments: Good use of colours, the combination of colours and the dynamic spiral effect make this a very strong photo. The centre of the spiral is well positioned.



Intermediate Open Print - HM
"Missing Light Bulb" by Normand Marcotte

Judge's comments: Interesting composition and a creative eye. The light and shadow play is key here, it adds depth.



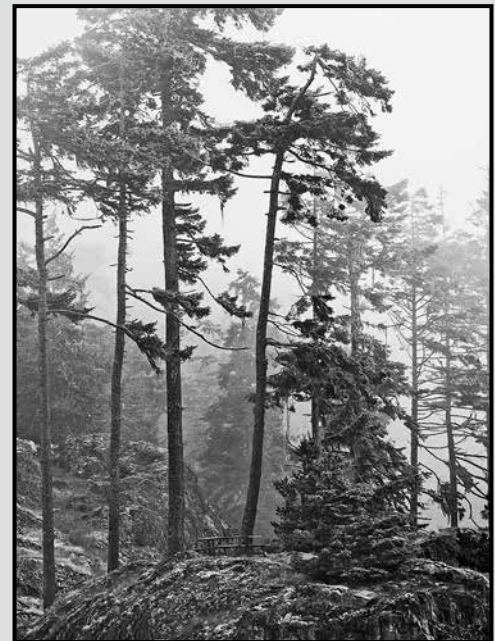
Intermediate Digital Nature - 2nd
"Bald Eagle" by Meherzad Romer

Judge's comments: A dynamic action shot of a diving eagle. Composition is well handled, with the bird's placement leaving it lots of room to dive. Lighting is good, with detail shown in all areas of the eagle. The background is very good, with natural colours and nice mottled clouds.



Intermediate Nature Print - 1st
"Grizzly Portrait" by Ken Johnston

Judge's comments: A very strong "portrait" of the bear which implies that he is active and his attention gives him energy in this image. Well framed and cropped to encourage drama. This is how big mammals should be photographed.



Intermediate Monochrome Print - 1st
"Picnic in the Mist" by Gita McCormick

Judge's comments: Beautiful study of space and depth. A wonderful print with an excellent tonal range. Very nicely composed. Did you add noise/texture or shoot this with a high ISO?



Intermediate Digital Open - 1st
"Dahlia" by Lorna Zaback

Judge's comments: Exposure and focus are excellent, the depth of field includes all important areas of the image. The lighting is fairly flat, which is perfect for the subject. There is detail everywhere, but enough light to provide modelling on the petals, and shading to separate them. The colours are muted but pleasing. The composition is central, which suits this symmetrical subject, and cropping of petals has been done tastefully.



Intermediate Digital Theme - 1st
"Freshly Plowed" by Cindy Stephenson

Judge's comments: Good use of colours, interesting composition, and the two strong diagonals and good level of details across the image. The purpose is well achieved.



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Novice Digital Nature - 2nd
"Barred Owl" by Doug Cronk

Judge's comments: Beautifully composed in it's natural setting. The sharp focus highlights eyes. Well done.



Novice Digital Open - 1st
"Seemed Like a Good Idea at the Time"
by Rea Casey

Judge's comments: Conveys a good story, with good use of colours. Great elements in this image, well focused and properly exposed with strong diagonal lines, good composition placing the climber on the vastness of the rock adds drama to the scene. Very well done.



Novice Digital Theme - 1st
"Dividing Line" by Ross McPhee

Judge's comments: Conveys a good story and use of colors, This image exemplifies the theme "simplicity." Beautiful colors, sharp, well composed while breaking a few of the rules, thirds and diagonals! A sharp eye captured this, very well done!



Novice Open Print - 1st
"BFF's" by Mark van Arragon

Judge's comments: Conveys a good story, and makes good use of colours. A compelling capture of these two friends, a nice composition with a strong diagonal line, good focus and exposure. Well done.

I likely inherited my love of photography from my dad, a university professor with a passion for travel which he documented with slides taken with his dependable Pentax Spotmatic. In my early adult years, my parents bought me a Nikon Nikkormat FTN and I was off and running. I have stuck with Nikon cameras my whole life, working my way through a Nikon FE, an F90X and now a D300.



"Yellowjacket"

Growing up in Winnipeg imprinted a love of the prairies and I explored the photographic possibilities endlessly. In Manitoba the horizontal landscape, fabulous skies, and sharp light were an abundant source of inspiration. I shot colour slides exclusively as I loved the magic of bright colours on a big screen in a darkened room. Later I discovered the delights of slide shows, combining similar images with music, especially using two slide projectors and a dissolve unit.

I came westward in 1972 to pursue a Masters degree in Architecture at the University of Calgary. I was captivated with the new landscape, enthralled with the beauty of the rolling foothills leading to the majesty of the Rocky Mountains. Upon graduation, I began my career as a heritage planner in Winnipeg. One of the delightful aspects of the job was photographing the rich details of Winnipeg's superb collection of historic architecture. Zooming in with a telephoto lens on the magnificent cornices at the top of terra-cotta clad high-rise buildings was an excellent way of educating the citizens on the value of the city's heritage buildings. Even today, I continue to seek out architecture as a source of pattern and design for stirring images.

In 1986 I was enticed westward again to join the City of Victoria as its Senior Heritage Planner. I was able to continue my passion for photographing historic architecture, despite the constant demands of meetings,

reports and the other daily requirements of a government bureaucracy.

Much of my early inspiration was from the books and lectures of Freeman Patterson, but I later came across the work of Richard Martin through his articles in Photo Life magazine. He has been a marvellous source of inspiration especially during two photo tours to Venice and Morocco, where he encouraged me to explore new techniques and ways of seeing. He also taught me the value of travelling light. I was amazed to see the beautiful images he created in Venice with his Nikon camera and one Tamrom zoom lens. Up to that point I was always lugging a big heavy pack with extra lenses which can really slow you down!

I joined the Victoria Camera Club in the mid 1990's and have learned a prodigious amount from fellow Club members and excellent guest speakers over the years. Digital photography has opened a whole new world to explore. With slides you only had one chance to get the image right, but now many mistakes can be corrected in the digital darkroom of Lightroom. In the past few years I have enjoyed experimenting with time exposures at night and delving into the world of macro photography. I have also loved developing slide shows using Pro-Show Gold which is so easy compared to struggling to synchronize music and slides in the analog days. Good images are all around us. As Freeman Patterson wrote, it's just a matter of mastering the "art of seeing."



"Venice 1980"

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by John Roberts

We all tend to do most of our photography during the daylight hours, but lately some of my friends have been doing a lot of this genre of photography, and other people have recently asked for more information on how to do this.

What I am going to talk about today, is what is known as Fixed Position Astrophotography, meaning that you and your camera will not be moving during the exposure. While I should not need to remind you that the earth is moving at quite a fast rate, I thought I would get that fact out of the way right from the start because inevitably, you will find that if your exposure has gone on for long enough, you will see movement in the stars which will give you star trails, rather than a fixed sky.

So let's talk about what you will need to do astrophotography: your camera with a wide angle lens, the wider the better, (we will discuss this more in depth shortly), a solid tripod, and a remote release would be beneficial as well. Some good photo gloves would also be a good thing to have as it gets cold at night.

First things first put your lens on manual focus, and leave it there. Having it on auto-focus will do no good in the dark. There is nothing for it to focus on, so set it to manual and set it to infinity, and leave it there.

So, now back to your lens selection. As I mentioned, the wider you can get, the better, because the focal length you use will also help determine the shutter speed you can get away with without showing movement. Also, the longer the exposure, the more the lower magnitude (dimmer) stars will be visible.

So, for reference, with a 50 mm lens, the maximum shutter speed which you can use is only 10 seconds. (I am speaking in Full Frame focal lengths, so for crop sensors, you will have to adjust accordingly.) A 28 mm lens will give you the capability of 17 seconds.

The most popular lens for many astrophotographers is the 14 mm focal length, which will allow you to get a shutter speed of up to 35 seconds. The fixed 14 mm focal length would be ideal, but if it is in a zoom lens, you will be more than happy with the results. However, there is one thing to keep in mind with a zoom lens: you may not get aperture you are ideally looking for. There are many super wide fixed lenses

To get technical for a moment, you can work out what

your shutter speed should be with the lens you are using. It is 500 divided by the focal length you are using, so with that 14 mm lens, $500/14 = 35.7$ seconds, or 35 seconds. I always round down to play it on the safe side to prevent movement. A friend of mine actually rounds down a second or two to really make sure there is no movement.

Your ISO setting is something that no matter who you talk to, you will get a different answer. Some say to set as low as ISO 400, and some others say ramp it up as high as you are willing to go. The more you ramp it up, the more of those lower magnitude stars will show. Real world: many people I know will start around the ISO 1600 mark and will lower or raise it, depending on the quality of clear sky you are dealing with and ambient sky light pollution. The closer to the city you are, the more ambient light pollution you will see so this will be something you are going to have to play with, depending on external conditions.

There are some great spots not too far out of town that give you very low light pollution, for example, Island View Beach.

Aperture is another thing that is highly subjective. F5.6-f8 is the most recommended when you do a quick search online, but again, in the real world, I seem to find that f2.8-f4 seems to be the most popular setting for me and for friends who do astrophotography. Aperture is something you will play with, to tune in your exposure while on location. If you do ramp up your ISO, then you will be able to go to a higher f-stop but I would not recommend going higher than f8 as you may start to get into the world of light diffraction within the lens for many lenses.

Once you have found your sweet spot for aperture on the lens you prefer, I would stick with that shutter speed/lens/aperture combination. The only setting you have left to vary will be your ISO value. Dialling in your settings to be more consistent will give you consistent results and I do not know about you, but consistency is my friend and makes me happy.

And there you have it. I hope this has been helpful, and I hope to hear that you are getting good results. I was very pleased recently to have my first feedback email from someone who tried one of the suggestions of a trick I have written about here.

So as always, if you have anything you need clarification on, or would just like to share your success, you can reach me at jrphotographybc@icloud.com.

by Neil Boyle

Why would you go to Iceland to photograph stuff? What stuff is there to photograph?

The weather is lousy. The Gulf Stream warms the south of the island as it flows east, and the Iceland and Greenland ocean currents from the Arctic cool the north side. The result is a lot of rain (10-15 days per month), and very frequent weather changes, so a lot of rainbows. You get the most amazing cloud patterns, and we all know that bad weather equals good photos (Mostly, well, sometimes). Summer temperatures are rarely above 22°C (average max 13°C in July. I needed a down jacket much of the month), although winters aren't bad (average min -3C).

There's a lot of dark. The sun is only up for an hour or so in mid-December but that means good astrophotography (if it's cloudless, which does happen), northern lights, and in the summer, there's only an hour or so of dark. So the golden hour is really 3-4 hours all year long!

The island is all volcanoes, many active, and there's an eruption about every three years, some can mess up your travel plans. (Can you say Eyafjallajökull?) It is more complicated, the island lies on a major rift between the Eurasian and the North American plates. That's right, the island is splitting apart, and that leaks lava. Consequently there's an awful lot of grey-black basalt in the background of your photos. Fortunately, it often makes hexagonal columns (think the Giant's Causeway in Ireland) and it gets covered in attractive moss, rivers, waterfalls and glaciers.

There are a lot of waterfalls. Any place name ending in *foss* means a big one. If you like shooting these, put something (someone) in for scale, try long-exposure, look for rainbows, keep your gear dry. Remember to be creative. Your audience will get bored after the twenty-fifth



"Gulfoss"

waterfall. Gullfoss has a good love story attached to it. For variation, try frozen waterfalls in the winter.

There are some very big glaciers in Iceland, that you can check on any map. Particularly photogenic is Snaefellsjökull, the starting point of Jules Verne's story, "*Journey to the Centre of the Earth*." Located at the western end of the Snaefellsness peninsula on the west side of Iceland, it makes a great backdrop from all sides, and one can take a commercial 4-wheel drive tour to the top.

On the south-east coast, Jokulsarlon is a glacier that comes down to a lagoon, and drops many photogenic icebergs and bergy bits into it, often under an evil sky punctuated with fluorescent god rays. At the downstream end of the lagoon, the icebergs are washed out to sea, and wash ashore north and south onto a black basalt sand beach. Sometimes you have to sweep the photographers and tourists aside to shoot these, so use the golden (three) hours, and come early or late. In the winter, some tours can take you into the ice caves formed by the summer rivers under the glaciers. Magical images to be made there! Shoot those glaciers soon. They are suffering from Global Warming Syndrome.



"Jokulsarlon, Bergy Bits in Surf"

So what happens when you add water to hot lava? Geothermal phenomena, steam vents, bubbling mud pots, strange crystalline patterns in the surrounding stones, banding in the surrounding hills. Hot springs and hot pools (instead of the Blue Lagoon consider a much better hot pool at Myvatn not far from Akureyri in the north but both are photogenic.) Near Myvatn is Krafla, very geothermally active, with many photo opportunities.

Iceland is one of the three places in the world where you can see geysers (the others are Yellowstone and New Zealand). They are the result of water meeting hot lava underground. The most photogenic one is at Geyser. The original geysers wore out, but nearby Stokkur,

which blows 18 m into the air, about every 8-10 minutes, is very reliable. Come early to avoid the tourists.

Not much big vegetation. Before people tried (with limited success) to introduce a forestry industry, the tallest plants were 10-13 metre tall shrubs. The ground is all volcanic rock, which produces very fertile soil, but other factors make it hard for trees to grow so there are not a lot of trees to shoot. But there are a lot of farms, in large verdant fields, against volcanoes and glaciers, under amazing skies. Oh, and lupins, an invasive introduced plant that has gone nuts. Fortunately, mostly along roads, in summer they can make an entire landscape blue.

Hardly any mammals to photograph. Arctic foxes, the main mammalian predator, are rare, and most of the rest, they eat (mice, rats, rabbits). There are, apparently mink, reindeer and polar bears (very rare). In the sea are whales, dolphins, seals, and walrus. You need a whale-watching trip to see them. There are some very good trips out of Husavik, in the north. Almost every farm has some Icelandic horses, so they are easy to find and different from non-Icelandic horses, very friendly and curious, and very photogenic.



"Icelandic Horses"

But the real prize for nature photography goes to the birds. You can get close enough to a flying Arctic Tern to photograph its nose hairs with a wide-angle lens. There's a nesting colony at Jokulsarlon Lagoon, and in late June or early July, the chicks suffer from an overdose of cute. Since there isn't much vegetation to get in the way, most birds stand out and you can waste a lot of time getting the perch and the bokeh right. Atlantic Puffins can be approached on the Westman Islands in the south, or the hills south of Vik, a town on the south coast east of the islands. Do it soon, they just got upgraded on the Red List to "vulnerable." Any good birding



"Arctic Tern"

trip would expect to see over 75 species, and you could photograph most of them.

There are not a lot of people to get in your photos. The population is the same as Victoria, about 300,000, with about 120,000 in Reykjavik (Good for street photography and architecture). The next biggest town, Akureyri, is about 17,000 (OK for street photos). OK, there are more people than that, Iceland went from 15,000 tourists/year twenty years ago to over a million this year. The Icelanders are almost all Lutheran, so there are a lot of attractive Lutheran churches worth photographing.

Landscapes literally abound everywhere. Bring a wide-angle lens and a tripod. Rent a car. Go to the Reykjanes peninsula in the southwest, the Snaefellsness peninsula in the west, the northwestern fjords, the entire south coast, at least as far as Vik, north to Akureyri, Husavik and Myvatn. If you've time, do the circle road around the island. Do side trips, especially to the sea. Stop frequently, and carefully, the roads are narrow and the shoulders are narrower. Make good use of the golden hours, the skies and the backgrounds. The coasts are full of opportunities, but if you can get a 4-wheel drive, go inland into the highlands, where little grows, the landscape is stark, and the most fabulous images are waiting to be made.

Here are three useful references to study:

Ebook: Forever Light: the Landscape Photographer's Guide to Iceland: ianplantdreamscapes.myshopify.com/products/forever-light.html (\$15US, worth it).

Ebook: Photo Guide to Iceland icelandontheweb.com/assets/Photo-guide-to-Iceland_4732592.pdf (free).

Field Guides (birding tours): fieldguides.smugmug.com/SHOWS/Europe-Africa/Iceland-2015/i-tPHRGxJ.

Dancing Aspens

by Gordon Griffiths.

This image was taken on a photography trip to southern Utah in early November. We had been to Zion National Park and then Cedar Breaks National Monument to shoot the red sandstone hoodoos with fresh snow on them at sunset. On our way back to Zion after sunset, we saw this Aspen grove by the highway. What made it unique was that the Aspens were growing in black lava. We scrambled over the lava to try and capture the scene. A word of caution, it is very slippery and as sharp as coral.

It was quite dark, the sun having set. We set up our tripods and kept shooting until we were taking 20 to 25 sec. exposures and really couldn't see what we were doing.

My favourite photo was one of the first images taken. The contrast between the rock and the trees was compelling. Also, the trees were quite spindly and many were not growing straight vertically. This gave an illusion of movement accentuated by the thin wispy branches.

The image was processed in Photoshop. Adjustments were made in both levels and contrast. It was converted to monochrome in Google/Nik Silver Efex2. A few minor contrast adjustments were made to the photo and a small amount of sharpening was added.

Canon 1D Mark III, lens 70-200 mm at 200 mm, Gitzo tripod with Arca Swiss Ball Head, aperture f16, shutter speed 1/6 second.



Chairbacks

by Jim Metzger

I have combined my love of graphics and abstracts in this image. I was a Draftsman for over 30 years so seeing graphically comes naturally to me and a large part is seeing the image within the image. I extract a section of an image so that the viewer has to invest his or her imagination in it.



The image was taken at 9:00am in the morning at The Horticulture Centre of the Pacific with a Panasonic GX7 4/3 camera, and a 14-42 mm lens at 17 mm. The exposure setting was on Intelligent Auto, which gave f9, 1/640 sec, and ISO 200. The camera was hand-held tilted downwards above my head. In the past 20 years the only images that I have taken with a tripod were night shots at a carnival. I just ensure that I have a high enough shutter speed so that I can hand-hold.

In Lightroom I did a little processing and a slight cropping. It then went into Topaz Glow for an insane amount of change. Turning the background black allows the chairs to "pop" out and float in the frame, and the distracting background is eliminated. While increasing the levels to get the black background, the blues and ambers appeared and enhanced the chairs.

Topaz Glow has 6 lighting choices and 72 main effects with each effect having 72 variables. I have no trouble making 3 or 4 images each with a completely different look and feel. Some images benefit from the slightest change while with others, the sky is the limit.

I believe that everything is photographable and take pictures of everything from septic tanks to signs, to flowers and people. My objective is to make something unique in my images.

Tuesday Shoots

by Wayne Swanson

December 8: Wild Colours and Decorations

This topic offsets short days and cloudy skies. We want to make the dreary bright with shots of colourful objects and Christmas decorations. Get beyond the lights on the trees by looking for displays of colourful kitchenware, dazzling fashions or of vibrant smart phone cases. Capture images of glittery trinkets that surround us at this time of year. But most of all, have fun.

Fun Shoot Leads to Competition Photos

Do you think the Tuesday shoots are only for fun? Think again. They are a fertile source of images for competitions where some of the themes align with the competition theme. With this in mind, Garry Schaefer, reviewed his competition entries to assess how this applied in his case.

“Lines of Time,” based on a theme of aged, abandoned, or discarded subjects gained an HM in October, 2013. An image of the patterns of brick, pipes, windows and paint on a heritage building resulted in an HM for “The Wall” in September, 2012. “Going Shopping”, focused on a woman and her daughter, arose from a theme of tourists in action and achieved an HM in November, 2011.

Most meaningful to Garry was one in which a Tuesday group member, our beloved Brenda Jacques (now deceased), was caught in full pursuit of her passion, camera in hand. The image “Searching for a Mural” won an HM in March, 2012.



“Searching for a Mural”

Weekend Shoots

by Steve Smith and Rea Casey

December 5: Lighted Truck Parade

The Parade and Food Drive is an annual charity event that collects donated food items. It is an opportunity for photographers to practice shooting moving objects and nighttime photography with coloured lights as the subject. The event begins at Ogden Point at 5:45 pm and proceeds along Dallas Road, wends its way through Oak Bay Village and then through downtown on its way to Western Speedway.

Field Trips: Behind the Scenes

Field trips do not fall to Earth, fully formed, in good working order with a free lunch attached. Field trips must be developed by our field trip coordinators. “How does that development process work?” you say. If you are sitting comfortably then we shall begin to tell you.

Ideas for field trips come from suggestions by Club members; from previous field trips and from our own little grey cells. Members’ suggestions take precedence because we want to supply trips that meet your needs. We take these ideas and find ways to make them feasible. That means researching each possible trip.

Exploring ideas for a field trip includes the following steps. Firstly discovering possible locations in and around Victoria. Then we find out whom to approach for access. This includes meeting with the contact and seeing if the location offers opportunities for all photography skill levels. If it proves to be feasible we need to know when we might visit, any safety rules, how many can be accommodated, if there are special equipment needs etc. Once this is done we schedule the field trip and create a write-up on the Club web site. Even so for every field trip there remains the possibility of postponement or cancellation. Accordingly we cross our fingers.

We are pleased to see an increased attendance for field trips. In particular it is very satisfying to see more new members come out on our field trips.

For 2016 we are investigating: horses, urban architecture, a shipyard, a brewery, practice at panning birds in flight, Steveston riverfront, Saltspring Island, church interiors, waterfalls, Botanical Beach, light painting, Western Speedway and others.

by Graham Budd and Richard Webber

A Guide to Digital Infrared Photography - Part 1

In our digital age photography allows us to combine both technical and artistic elements to express our creativity with limitless possibilities. This is particularly true when working with digital infrared (IR). IR photography offers photographers of all abilities and budgets the opportunity to explore a new world, the world of the unseen. Why? Because it's digital! Unlike the days of film, we are able to experiment over and over; the learning curve is much less steep. The only limitation is our imagination. In the digital darkroom we are able to push the boundaries of traditional photography, to create images that are seemingly from another world, more artistic than what was captured by the camera.

What is IR Photography?

Infrared is invisible radiation rather than visible light. We will refer to it as infrared light in order to describe what a digital camera records during the process of infrared photography. Traditional photography uses visible light that we see as different colours/wavelengths of light measured in nanometres (nm), to create photographic images on digital sensors or film. The infrared light spectrum begins at 700 nm and extends to wavelengths of 1 mm. Though this band is invisible to the human eye, it has some of the same properties as visible light; it can be focused, reflected and polarized. In infrared photography we are only concerned about IR wavelengths between 700 and 1000 nms, that part of the radiation spectrum closest to visible red.

Digital cameras can be adapted to record the effects of the near-infrared range to produce beautiful etheral images that could not be captured any other way. From a photographic perspective, the world is cap-



"Providence Farm"

tivating in an entirely different way. Many subjects reflect or absorb IR differently to visible light. Foliage and skies look especially good in IR, when captured in direct sunlight, blue skies will turn very dark, while leaves, grass, plants and crops come out white.



"The River Runs Through It"

Infrared images, particularly black and white, exhibit surprising tone shifts and starkness qualities. In an IR image, the contrast range between the sky and clouds is often quite wide. As well, infrared images have a subtle diffused glow about them that adds to the overall dreamy effect. Of note, skin tones take on an ethereal appearance that is very attractive for wedding photographers and for fine art nude photography. IR photography can look similar to timeless black-and-white photography, yet there is something enchantingly unique about it.

Although you cannot detect IR light in your surroundings, you can learn to envision its behaviour and effects in your mind's eye, to help you create surreal photographs that utilize its marvellous qualities. This philosophical approach is embodied in a famous quote from Wynn Bullock, a famous American photographer dedicated to creating innovative images that reflected his deeply philosophical nature, *"Mysteries lie all around us, even in the most familiar things, waiting only to be perceived"*.

Infrared photography has the power to transform seemingly mundane visual experiences into images that are truly enchanting. Ordinary scenes you might never think of photographing can take on a remarkable look in infrared, something that you would have possibly never imagined. From personal experience we can state that digital IR is fun and a highly addictive photographic pursuit.

The Advantages of Shooting in IR

Frequently, images that might appear boring or un-

interesting when shot in visible light take on a dynamic and creative look when seen from an IR perspective. Trees, vegetation, skin tones, skies, bodies of water and cityscapes each take on a unique IR look not reproducible in Photoshop or other software.

Forget The Golden Hour: Unlike traditional landscapes that benefit from the warm soft light typically found around sunrise and sunset, IR shooters look for harsh high-contrast light like that found around noon on hot, sunny summer days. So when traditional photographers are doing something else, you can keep shooting in perfect IR conditions, although be prepared for some sideways glances from the gallery.

Fine Art: IR images, particularly those shot in B&W, take on a high contrast look suitable for selecting subjects that would benefit from being presented and processed as fine art. Blue skies turn black and contrast beautifully with the diffuse white glow of vegetation.

Creative Opportunities: IR photography expands the imagination as the eye cannot see what the camera is recording until after the fact. Each element in a scene has its own IR footprint which can be manipulated by the experienced photographer to create visually diverse and unique images. The creative process can be expanded further by choosing filters that allow some visible light through providing the photographer with many blending options at capture and in post processing.

Wide Variety of Options: You can use IR filters or have the sensor converted to IR. Do you have an older DSLR or P&S camera that you don't use any more but is otherwise in good working condition? Consider extending its life by having it converted for use as a dedicated IR camera. If you select the option of having a camera converted, companies like Life Pixels (lifepixel.com) offer as many as 7 different filter options, each of which produces a distinctive look not attainable using "screw-on filters and further expanding creative possibilities.

Unexpected Surprises: When was the last time you reviewed your images from a shoot and found yourself totally surprised at what you saw? With IR, some results are predictable but many are not, so reviewing your files and the many different ways that they can be processed, frequently becomes a voyage of discovery.

The Challenges of IR

Specialized Equipment: For a digital camera to record in the IR spectrum, the Bayer filter installed by the

manufacturer needs to be replaced by one allowing IR light to pass through. This conversion is typically done at a cost by specialists and is not reversible. A less expensive alternative involves buying "screw-on filters for use on a non-converted camera.

Screw-on Filters: Dark IR filters make through-the-lens composition with a DSLR problematic requiring the use of a tripod to compose the scene before adding the filter. The resulting long exposure time makes hand-holding impractical and can create problems if some elements move during exposure. A workaround would be to select a fixed focal length camera with a viewfinder that bypasses through-the-lens composition such as a Rangefinder.

Steep Learning Curve: Developing a sense for what subjects are suitable for IR takes some practice however it is the post processing of images that represents the greatest challenge for most beginners. Lightroom is unable to properly adjust for the extreme white balance required for IR without creating and using custom camera profiles. Images incorporating colour frequently must undergo a channel swap using Photoshop. Although neither of these is difficult to do, it takes a little time to learn the process which can be streamlined with the use of Photoshop actions.

Lens Must Be Matched to the Camera: The IR spectrum does not focus at quite the same point as visible light so in the case of an interchangeable lens camera, a specific lens should be calibrated for correct focus at the time of conversion.

More Gear: another camera and/or filters to tote around adding weight, bulk and dollars.

In a future issue of *Close-Up* we will discuss the different ways of capturing and processing infrared images. So stay tuned.



"The Eye of the Storm"

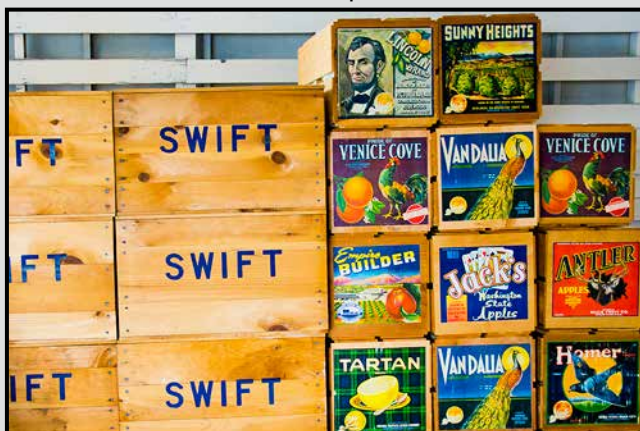
New Toys

by Nancy MacNab

We have all done it, bought that new piece of fancy gear, used it maybe once or twice, and then set it aside “until we really need it.” However, when you “really need it” is the time you also really need to know how to use it, so you can do so without having to stop and think about what you are doing. Putting aside your new toy is not the best way to get to know your camera gear.

The only way to develop that instinctive feel for your camera is to use it regularly and review the results. If you are fortunate enough to get a new lens or camera or other piece of photography equipment this Christmas, or anytime, then make time to try it out. For cameras and lenses, test each of the three aspects of exposure separately.

With your camera on a tripod, take a series of shots of the same scene while changing the aperture from widest to smallest (f2.8, ... f22, etc), changing the shutter speed to give the same exposure to each frame. You don't need to use every aperture as the difference between them can be too small to matter. You can compare each image in the series to see how that lens and camera combination renders depth of field, what the out-of-focus areas look like and that the exposure is consistent.



“Crates and Boxes”

If you are testing a new lens, choose a subject that includes a number of vertical and horizontal lines (such as a set of shelves or a brick wall) and ensure that the camera sensor is parallel to the subject. When reviewing your images, you can check for any distortion.

Next find a scene with steady movement in it, flowing water or walking people make good subjects. You can check the shutter speeds to see how sharp or how

much motion blur is displayed. Put your camera on the tripod and take a series of shots of the same scene while changing your shutter speed (1/2000 sec, 1/1000 sec, etc), while changing the aperture enough to give the same exposure to each frame. Then you can compare each image in the series to see how that lens and camera combination freezes motion, or shows a degree of motion blur and that the exposure is consistent.

This exercise is a good way to practice photographing motion in general, in preparation for more challenging subjects, such as sports or children and pets playing.



“For Sale”

If you are testing a new camera, the third aspect of exposure to check is the ISO. Again, put your camera on a tripod and photograph the same scene while only changing the ISO and either the aperture or shutter speed. Choose a scene with dark areas where you can look for noise, as well as sudden changes from light to dark, as fringing along those borders can appear. This way you will know what your maximum ISO is for excellent results, as well as the maximum for acceptable or usable results and that the exposure is consistent.

If your new toy is a flash, then try all of the various settings and at different distances from the subject. Then you will know when you need to use full power or partial power, direct or bounced, or whatever other options you have available.

A new tripod should be tested for sturdiness, height and the angles at which you can set the legs. If you can rotate the center column, then check out that feature, too.

Have fun with your new toy and make friends with it. That way it will be there for you, a familiar item with known quirks rather than a mere acquaintance, when you head off on holiday or try for that once-in-a-lifetime shot.



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