



# Close-Up



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## Victoria Camera Club



*Close-Up* is the magazine of the Victoria Camera Club,  
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Mailing address: PO Box 46035, RPO Quadra, Victoria, BC, V8T 5G7.  
Deadline for submissions for the April issue is March 5<sup>th</sup> 2017.  
Editor, Richard James, e-mail to [editor@victoriacameraclub.ca](mailto:editor@victoriacameraclub.ca)  
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](http://victoriacameraclub.ca) where you can also read or download the colour version of *Close-Up*.

For additional information: please contact:

*Membership:* [membership@victoriacameraclub.ca](mailto:membership@victoriacameraclub.ca)  
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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](http://www.victoriacameraclub.ca)) for the latest details of all our workshops, field trips and meetings.

### March 2<sup>nd</sup> 2017: Competition Night

The February competition results will be presented. The theme for March is "Disappearing Technologies." The deadline for submission is March 2<sup>nd</sup>.

### March 9<sup>th</sup> 2017: Presentation Night

Victoria-based professional photographer Doug Clement will describe his approach to night photography and the art of light painting for panoramic and HDR images.

### March 16<sup>th</sup> 2017: Members' Night

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

### Workshop and Field Trip Highlights

Intro/Adv Lightroom, and Creative Imagery workshops.

Christ Church Cathedral and Vancouver Island Brewery field trips.

**Cover Image:** "Shadows in the Snow" by Hilary Goeller. I have recently moved to Victoria from Ontario where we spent many weekends skiing and snowshoeing near Collingwood on Georgian Bay. There are many marvelous trails in all seasons, including the Bruce Trail which runs along the Niagara escarpment from Niagara Falls to Tobermory on the Bruce Peninsula. We were snowshoeing, near Osler Bluff, late one winter afternoon with the sun going down behind the trees, producing these long, distinct shadows. Suddenly we saw the wonderful patterns on the wooded hillside where the deep snow had been blown into these sculpted shapes.

I was just beginning to be interested in photography and how to use a camera, so photography on these trips was all about experimentation, as it still is. There was not really any time to make many adjustments in the very cold weather, so I felt lucky that it turned out so well. Shot with a Nikon D5000 with an 18-200 mm lens, adjustments in post-processing were minimal. This is a modified version of the image that placed 2<sup>nd</sup> in Intermediate Digital Nature in January's competitions.

## President's Message

There is no escaping the fact that we live in a digital age. It is a commonplace that well over a billion images are uploaded to the Internet daily. Even the last of our film-based photographers have succumbed to the tide and adopted digital capture for almost all of their work. Similarly, ubiquitous electronic screens serve up those images when we wish to view them. All fine and good, to a point. Beyond that point, though, lies the tangibility of the print and the permanence of the book. The longevity of digital files remains to be tested. The world's first photo book was produced in 1843 and copies survive to this day.

There is great pleasure to be found between the covers of photography books. A case in point recently came my way quite unexpectedly. My neighbour handed me three hard cover volumes containing a timeless collection of black and white plates from the portfolio of master photographer Fan Ho (1931-2016). I was mesmerized as I savoured the flavour of humanity and geometry captured mostly on the streets of Hong Kong.

Closer to home, fellow Club members have taken advantage of self-publication platforms to transform portions of their work into durable book form. Lloyd Houghton recently displayed a collection of his signature impressionistic images, all enticingly arrayed between the covers. Mike Wooding's inventory of images from the natural world are in the top tier of the genre. His first volume, on the birds of Canada, features 140 pages of what can truly be called fine portraits, each dedicated to bringing out the character and individual worth of its subject.

Possibly fleeting "ones and zeros" vie with the tangible permanency of the book. This may be seen as a challenge to each of us. Would we hope to see at least some of our hard-earned photographic treasures placed on the latter side of the ledger? As a start I would suggest producing some hard copy in the form of prints, either for purely personal enjoyment or, hopefully, for entry into Club competitions. The next step, assembling a set of images into book form, is, perhaps, more daunting. I have yet to take that leap. All of the foregoing, though, pushes, or better, pulls me in that direction. Perhaps it is not too late in the new year to make a resolution aimed at that target.

At the end of the year let's compare notes and see just how many of us have produced prints and, dare I say, a photo book or two.

*Garry Schaefer, President*

by Mark Ammen

Art has a longstanding discussion between an image scene being a representation of a subject as opposed to a scene being developed as an expression. Thankfully representation and expression are not mutually exclusive and both can work together seamlessly. Ultimately, it is the artist's decision about how to interpret a scene that matters. One of many approaches available to photographers is to develop an expressive interpretation of a scene using textures.

In photography there is an anticipation of taking an image on a journey. There are countless ways a photographic capture can be transformed into an exceptional work. Considering the initial capture as a "sketch," the photographer has many options to develop a work.

Tonal adjustments are the primary tool where the dramatic impact of the piece can be directed to create vastly different temperaments. From an ethereal, high key suggestion to a low key film noir rendering, the photographer can shape a story like a cinematographer. This is one tool but there are many others including colour influences, compositing, textures, filters, and cropping. In interpreting an image it can be directed either to a preconceived end point or alternatively, to be explored to discover what the possibilities are.

So, why introduce textures? This can be answered by looking at what textures do to a base image scene. A photograph has a distinct look. It is solid, it depicts subjects, portrays a context, and a quality of light. Simply put, the introduction of texture can break the solidity, alter the context, and transform the mood of the scene. This introduction can be overall or by degree. Adding textures is a mixing of image elements to create new outcomes. It is a form of compositing and can be as subtle as tempering the lighting mood, to rendering an utterly unique, unexpected context.

Textures are nothing more than images of objects and light that are layered over a base image to create a new interpretation by combining the texture with the base image components. These can be of natural or man-made subjects including clouds, walls, peeling paint, water, fabric, stone, text, food, portraits, prior art...whatever catches your imagination. It is good to keep a directory of textures from your captures as a palette from which to further explore your work. You will likely discover favourites that will help you develop your personal style. Additionally, textures can be introduced by filters to find new interpretations of your

work. The key to using textures is to use as little as works and no more.

How a given texture will react with a specific base image is simply a matter of experimentation. Even duplicating a portion of the base image, layering it over the base image, transforming its scale and altering the Blend Mode can create a more powerful work.

Texture can be overwhelming and should be employed with subtlety. Being selective is critical. Transformation, Layer Blending Mode, Masking, and Opacity are the key tools for managing textures to create your own expression. It is a powerful tool to cultivate your imagination.

The addition of textures can fundamentally shift the spatial structure of an image and dramatically strengthen its emotional tone. The exploration of textures is a profoundly creative adventure.

How, where, and how much to use textures is your exploration; there are no rules, so relax and enjoy your creative imagination.



*Only Reflections Remain: In the mountain area a palette knife filter was used to abstract the image then a separate image of clouds was layered with an Overlay Blending Mode to render the mountains less solid. In the water area a separate image of swirled art glass was layered with a Luminosity Blending Mode to give the water more stylized motion dynamics. Both texture applications were used to create an atmosphere that is evocative of Chinese landscape painting.*

by Daniel A. Roy

Those of us who are optimistic believe the following and many stories like it will take place beginning as soon as eight years from now. Scientists will eventually manage to “stack” atoms, and Artificial Intelligence (AI) will become a reality.

In April of 2025, Winston is “awakened” and taught the finer aspects of capturing beautiful digital images and taking all the necessary steps to cultivate them to near perfection in post-processing. Mary Whitmore is among the fortunate few to own one of these capable companions. Each of these AIs will develop their own unique personality depending on their individual experiences. Winston is not robotic, but exists within a tablet-like device.

Mary enters the den, drops her sports bag on the floor and plunks herself into her plush office chair. “How was your workout?” Winston asks. “Horrible. I ache everywhere.” “Not to worry, Mary, the workouts will become routine in five to six weeks. You will soon thank me for prodding you into going to the gym more regularly.” Mary rolls her eyes. “You’re right, Winston. I just hope I can stick with it that long.” “I’m confident that you can.”



*“Biker Original Image”*

A dozen thumbnail images are displayed on the left side of a large computer screen. They are mostly street-shots, taken on an outing with the Tuesday Group. One image dominates the remainder of the screen. “What are you working on?” “Post-processing. I selected this image as the one to win us top prize in the “Open Street” category.” “Us?” Mary says.

“I thought we were a team,” Winston replies. “Of course we are, Winston. But the Club ...” “I understand,” Winston says. “Some day they will accept me as more than just an appliance.” “I hope so” Mary says, “for your sake. Lawmakers are being pressured into accepting you and

others like you, as sentient beings. It may take them a year or two, but I’m confident a positive decision will ultimately come to pass. Now, back to editing. Show me each and every stage of the procedure from the beginning and explain the process to me slowly. I’m not a robot.”

Winston is using the “Develop” module of “Lightroom 14.” He reverses the steps and the display blinks through a series of noticeable changes until pausing on the original photo. “Let’s begin with the RAW image as it was imported directly from the flash card and into Lightroom, one of the better programs to keep pace with technological advancements. As you can see, the camera’s image sensor recorded the lighting and the colours pretty much as we saw it from behind the camera. However, some of the colours have blended as a result of panning with a slow shutter speed. By the way, I applaud your decision to explore this form of creativity. I’m impressed by the results. There’s always room for improvement, however, your panning technique is spot on. You’re a natural.” “Thank you, Winston.”

“In relation to post-processing,” Winston continues, “each photographer, has their own preferences as to what procedures to follow and in what order. I prefer to begin with the “Highlights” slider, and work my way down. Some photographers suggest that their methodology relates to being more efficient, however, I can do this twenty-four/seven and at a much higher rate of speed than any human, so it has no relevance to my routine. I usually skip “Exposure” altogether, and only move the “Contrast” slider at the very end if it’s required.” Mary appears to be a little glassy-eyed at this point.

Winston moves the “Highlights” slider back and forth, settling on negative 48. “There was bright sunshine that day and our subject was moving through shadow, so we need to reduce the glare from reflective objects. You can also see the Histogram moving away from the right side of the screen, a favourable consequence.” Mary nods. “Next, the ‘Shadows’ slider. We need to add detail to the biker, otherwise the shot would be a simple silhouette.” Winston moves the slider to the right, bringing detail out of the shadows. He ends the movement at plus 86. Mary nods enthusiastically. “Very nice.”

The “Whites” slider is less impressive, but negative 40 shows improvement. The “Blacks” also require a negative setting. Moving down to the “Presence” section, Winston adds a touch of “Clarity” and “Vibrance” but opts to leave the “Saturation” slider at zero. “I also like



using the sliders in the “Tone Curve.” We could make changes by clicking and dragging the line in the graph but I prefer to move the sliders in the “Region” below.” Winston moves each slider in turn, tweaking the high-lights and contrasts. For this image, he had set the “Point Curve” on “Medium Contrast.”

“The changes are subtle,” Mary says, “but each adjustment improves the image.” “The trick,” Winston says, “is to make changes but keep the image appearing natural.” Next, Winston moves to the “Colour” section and the “Hue” slider. It is obvious to Mary that the change impairs the image. Winston returns it to zero and only makes fine adjustments to the “Saturation and Luminance” sliders.



*“Biker Test Image”*

“Split Toning” is of no benefit. The sliders remain in their neutral positions. The same evaluation is made in “Detail” and “Lens Corrections.” However, Winston opts for a slight amount of “Post-Crop Vignetting” in the “Effects” module. “There you have it, Mary. All that remains is to eliminate blemishes with the “Spot Removal” tool. Most of the specks are dust particles, an unavoidable consequence when changing lenses. Others are small objects within the image, which I consider distractions.” Mary watches as Winston efficiently removes the offending defects from the photo.

“So,” Winston asks, “what do you think, Mary? Can we impress the judges?” “Maybe. Not in the Advanced category, but we stand a chance as Intermediates.” “Agreed. Now let’s carry this a little further and explore the idea of rendering the image.” Winston selects the “Library” module, clicks on “Photo” in the toolbar, and scrolls down to “Edit In.” Moving the cursor over this area opens a box. The box displays a large array of editing programs. Winston selects a program and moves through various steps to import the “Biker Blur” image.

Once the image loads, an impressive number of artistic templates display for the choosing. Each style is capable

of being customized further by using individual sliders. This makes the variations almost infinite. Winston scrolls through several styles, allowing time for the program to generate a rendering. This continues until Mary leans in and says, “Stop! That one. I love it!”



*“Biker Final Image”*

Nothing is said for several seconds until Mary sits back into her chair and says, “I want to enter that one. Print it, please.” The Epson Stylus 4000 begins humming softly as it warms the elements within. Mary can barely contain her excitement.

Photos by Mary W Whitmore.



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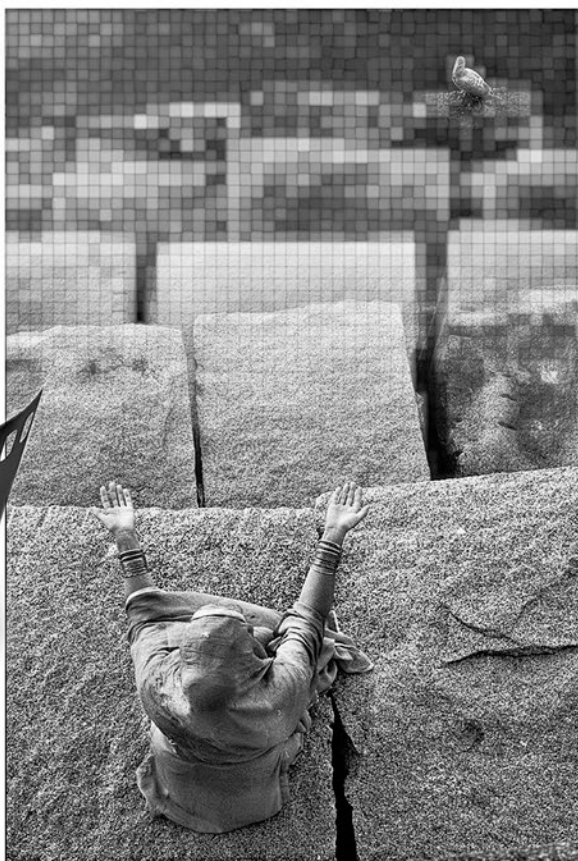
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by Richard James

In this issue I'm going to discuss getting the image sharp in the camera. Recently, I've noticed a few images that, when projected, do not appear to be really sharp. Having a good crisp image "tack sharp" is an important part of photographic skills. Certainly, you may wish to use blurring for effect under certain circumstances but in general the key part of the image "the subject" needs to be tack sharp.

In the days of slides we could always say "the slide popped" in the projector for the occasional not really sharp image. This is no longer the case as adjacent images did not have the issue.

So what's the problem? Depending on the type and degree of un-sharpness there are several causes including lens problems, focusing issues, depth of field, shutter speed and camera movement. Let's deal with these in turn.

**Lens Problems:** All lenses have some degree of minor defect but these generally do not affect overall focus. If you have side-to-side focus variability it is almost certainly a lens problem.

**Focusing Issues:** Do you always use "release mode" for shutter release? If this is the case then you can expect the occasional missed focus issue. "Focus-mode" ensures that the shutter is released only if the image is in focus. Most digital cameras have a number of ways of setting up the focus including: single/continuous focus and manual focus, the number and pattern of focus points to be used, and options for setting focus tracking. In some cameras different focusing technology is used for viewfinder and live view focusing with live view generally being the more accurate method. There is also the question of using the shutter release button versus "back button focusing" using a separate focus button on the body.

Shooting moving objects (birds in flight, vehicles etc.) is more challenging. Setting the right focus tracking option is very important for this.

Single-point focus should always give you the point under the focusing mark correctly focused, for example the eyes of a person or animal. A small group allows the camera to find what it thinks you are aiming at within a small area which is movable around the sensor. On the other hand using all available focusing points is a much broader guess at what really is your subject and is more prone to failure. Be aware of "subject failure" where the

auto-focus system fails to focus because of an attribute of the subject. The focus points may be either vertical, horizontal or "cross type" in other words both horizontal and vertical sensors at the same point. If the pattern of the subject is parallel to the focus point orientation failure is almost certain. So be careful to use the right type of focus point for the subject. This can be determined by referring to the camera manual.

**Depth-of-field:** The key point of the subject is in focus but areas in front of, or behind, are not. This problem is a function of the aperture for any given lens. The wider the aperture (smaller f-stop number) the smaller is the depth of field and vice versa. So, if you want a large depth of field you have to use a smaller aperture. However, do not go too small as you run the risk of diffraction around the edges of the small aperture reducing the resolution. Apertures of f8-11 are often considered as an optimal balance between depth-of-field and diffraction.

**Shutter speed:** There are two issues here. Can you hold the camera steady enough and is the subject moving? Traditionally with full-frame cameras, a shutter speed of 1/focal length was considered to be a "safe" shutter speed for hand-holding. So for a 400 mm lens, 1/400 sec. would be the longest shutter speed you would want to use. Vibration reduction technology gives you anything from 2 to 4 stops lower as an usable shutter speed. This is only considering camera shake, not subject movement. If the subject is moving you have two options: pan so the subject is crisp with a blurred background, or, use a high enough shutter speed to freeze the movement. For example, a bird flying at 15 kph 15 m from you would require a shutter speed of 1/2000 sec. with a 400 mm lens if it is flying across the camera axis. If it is flying towards or away from you it would only require 1/200 sec.

**Camera movement:** Unless you want to deliberately blur the image with camera movement, the best way of solving this problem is to use a tripod. Additional steps include using mirror lock-up to avoid vibration from the mirror flipping up, and a wireless or cable shutter release. Unless your lens has a "tripod mode" for vibration reduction then that function should be turned off when used on a tripod. An additional advantage of using a tripod is the ability to spend more time on image composition.

If you've dealt with all these issues successfully, you should have a tack sharp image. Finally, there is really no way to "fix" an image that is not sharp when captured. Some software attempts to do this by identifying edges and increasing contrast across them but this is not real image data and is prone to errors.

## Composition Matters

by Pam Irvine

You may be the most technically proficient photographer in the world but if you do not pay attention to the composition of your images, you are not going to create powerful images that viewers react to. Viewers, and especially judges, do notice the composition of an image. The small details do matter.

We were lucky to have two judges in the January competition (Neil le Nobel and Jesse Hlady) who gave long detailed critiques on the images they judged, including some good points about the importance of the composition of the image.

The image “Rosario Beach” (Natural World, see page 14) has rocks in the water at sunset. Neil said “The photo has been well composed such that each of the foreground elements have room to breathe... none are touching! Good balance between the foreground elements on the right offset by the background hills on the left. The single cloud in the top right helps with the balance, by filling an otherwise empty space.”

In “Super Moon Over the Superstitions” (Natural World), Neil commented on the placement of the subjects in the image. “A nice composition with the mountain appearing to cradle the moon and this subject matter been placed in the upper right third of the frame.”

Jesse Hlady gave us food for thought with his comments about composition. “When selecting your compositions you want to make sure your choices are clear. Are you centering your point of interest? Are you applying the rule of thirds? Are you using leading lines, or none of the above. If you are close but not quite there with your choice, the composition can feel like a mistake to your viewer.”

“Deciding what your key subject matter is while shooting is a challenging skill to develop but will help with eliminating seemingly interesting elements that will end up competing with, distracting from or clouding the story you are trying to tell.”

There was more than one image in January’s competition where a judge commented on a horizon that was not level. Even if you do not like post-processing, you need to ensure your horizon is level and verticals vertical, all editing software has tools to help you achieve this.

## January 2017 Competition Judges

We extend our sincere thanks to the judges for the January Intermediate and Advanced competitions: Neil le Nobel, Gilles Vezina, Anna Lamarche and Jesse Hlady. We would also like to thank our in-house Novice Judges: Caspar Davis, Suzanne Huot, Steve Lustig, and Normand Marcotte. Also thanks to Anne McCarthy, Ed Moniz and Martin Wright who judged the Novice and Intermediate Prints. All images and judges’ comments are available at: [victoriacameraclub.ca/Competitions/CompetitionResults.aspx](http://victoriacameraclub.ca/Competitions/CompetitionResults.aspx).

**Neil le Nobel (Wildlife and Natural World):** Neil has enjoyed photography for more than thirty years. He spent his working life as a geologist for an international mining company that sent him to many places around the globe. Neil is currently a member of the Richmond Photo Club and the Canadian Association for Photographic Art (CAPA). He is the past Competitions Chair for the Club and a former Field Trips Coordinator for CAPA, Pacific Zone. He shoots with both Canon and Nikon equipment. Neil has an interest in portrait photography but also enjoys macro, location and nature photography. He has won awards for photos submitted to club sponsored and CAPA competitions. Neil is a certified CAPA judge. [www.neillenobel.com](http://www.neillenobel.com)

**Gilles Vezina (Open and Creative):** As a photographer based in Gatineau, PQ, he has the opportunity to explore the beauty of the Ottawa region, both on the Quebec and Ontario sides. He considers photography is a very versatile form of artistic expression. Photography allows him to find beauty wherever it is. Photography is a passion for him and nothing makes him happier than to share this passion. [gillesvezina@me.com](mailto:gillesvezina@me.com)

**Jesse Hlady (Advanced Prints):** Jesse Hlady is one of Canada’s leading wedding, portrait and event photographers and we are lucky to have him here in Victoria. Jesse has given presentations at our club on portrait photography and occasionally judges for us when his busy schedule permits. [jessehlady.com](http://jessehlady.com)

**Anna Lamarche (Theme):** Anna is a photographer in Kingsville, ON, and seeks to capture the unusual and interesting aspects of everyday life. In 2009, Anna co-founded “Shooters Photography Club”, a club with about 80 members in Kingsville. The club’s emphasis is on sharing and participation and many events are held throughout the year to bring about a feeling of camaraderie, fun and learning. [shootersphotographyclub.com](http://shootersphotographyclub.com)



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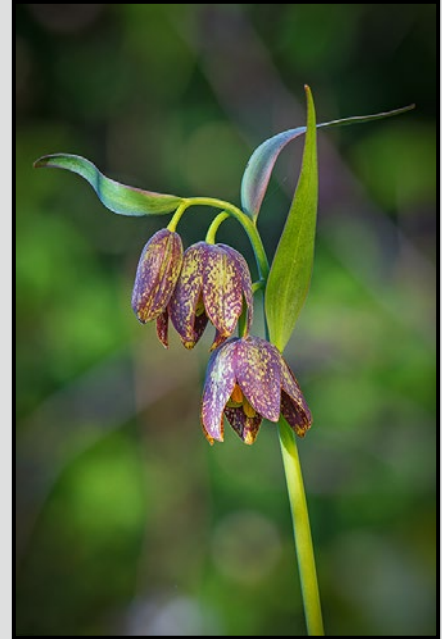
*Advanced Monochrome Print - 1<sup>st</sup>*  
*"The Cannery Loft" by Normand Marcotte*

Judge's comments: Overall this is a very successful image, great use of light and shadow, and tonal range.



*Advanced Digital Wildlife - 2<sup>nd</sup>*  
*"Northern Harrier" by Steve Smith*

Judge's comments: A beautiful warm evening? Sidelight accentuating the detail in the log and feathers. No loss of detail in the whites. Both eyes visible. Good angled composition in the frame with an excellent subdued background. Shadow detail on the log has been brought out. Very nice.



*Advanced Digital Natural World - 1<sup>st</sup>*  
*"Chocolate Lily, Flora Islet" by Don Peterson*

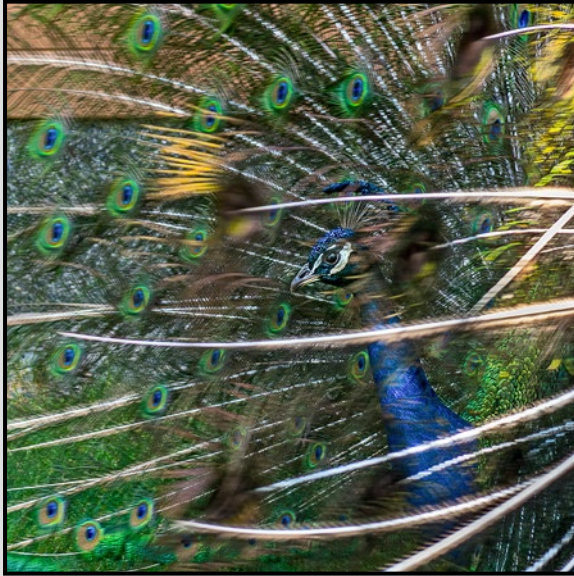
Judge's comments: Good composition, great focus/de-focus and nice light with tack sharp details for the lily. Good that the stem is not right in the corner.



*Advanced Digital Open - 1<sup>st</sup>*  
*"First Out Of The Turn" by Gordon Griffiths*

Judge's comments: This is superb panning of a fast action shot!.





*Advanced Nature Print - 1<sup>st</sup>*  
*"Peacock" by Ian Crawford*

Judge's comments: Fantastic image. Much like a sunset in Victoria this is a very common subject matter so it is difficult to wow people. You have managed to capture a unique composition with beautiful light.



*Advanced Digital Theme - 1<sup>st</sup>*  
*"Looking Hopeful" by Lorna Zaback*

Judge's comments: Great colour of roiling sky and water. Lots of depth to this shot. Great exposure and colours.



*Advanced Open Print - 2<sup>nd</sup>*

*"Architectural Vancouver" by Joseph Finkleman*

Judge's comments: I absolutely loved this image at first glance, the true beauty of the reflections and the abstract nature of the glass. The image is well composed.



*Advanced Digital Creative - 1<sup>st</sup>*  
*"Dance of Butterflies" by Barbara Burns*

Judge's comments: Beautiful composite, composition and blending is just right. Light and suggestion of beach and waves is very well done. The model's posture is beautiful as well.



*Advanced Monochrome Print - 2<sup>nd</sup>*  
*"Cable Car, San Francisco" by Steve Barber*

Judge's comments: I love how much is going on in this image, so much to look at and so much intriguing information yet you have managed to position what is arguably the most prominent point of interest almost perfectly, the woman who does not look too impressed with her photo being taken. Utilizing the rule of thirds allows the eye to rest comfortably on her expression.



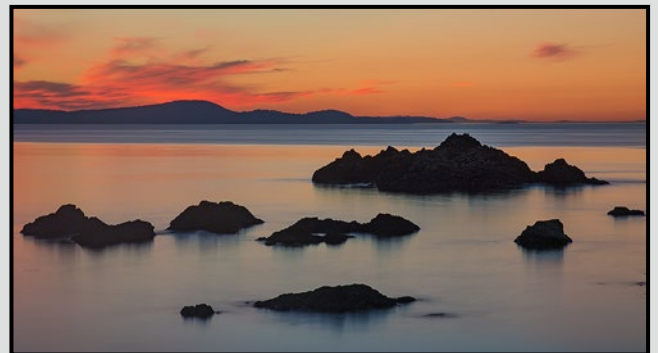
*Intermediate Digital Theme - 1<sup>st</sup>*  
*"Fiery Evening in Venice" by Rea Casey*

Judge's comments: This is a great lightning shot. Good details, exposure and composition.



*Intermediate Digital Creative - 1<sup>st</sup>*  
*"Reflecting in Hawaii" by Anne McCarthy*

Judge's comments: Well done, an invitation to explore every area of the image, interesting colour palette.



*Intermediate Digital Natural World - 1<sup>st</sup>*  
*"Rosario Beach" by Cindy Stephenson*

Judge's comments: The photographer has paid proper attention to the apparent horizon by placing it one third from the top. The photo has been well composed such that each of the foreground elements have room 'to breathe,' none are touching!. Good balance between the foreground elements on the right offset by the background hills on the left. The single cloud in the top right helps with the balance, by filling an otherwise empty space. Lovely tones in the background of this long exposure image.





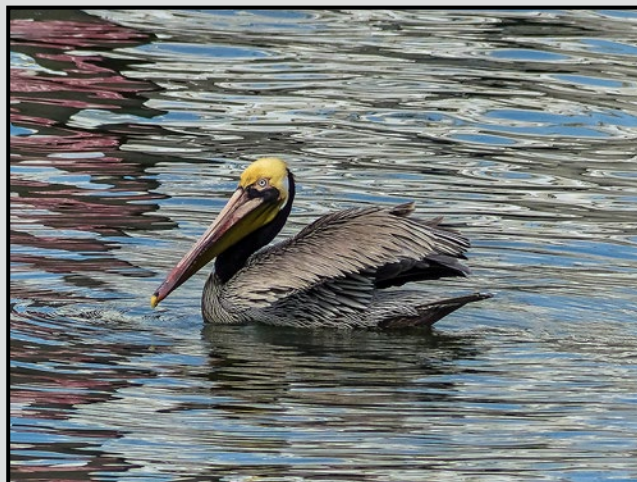
*Intermediate Digital Open - 1<sup>st</sup>*  
*"Plastic Reflections" by Gordon Greeniaus*

Judge's comments: An image with strong abstract qualities and pleasing colours. Vertical and horizontal lines add to the composition.



*Novice Digital Theme - 1<sup>st</sup>*  
*"Silver Storm Surfer" by Nigel Bailey*

Judge's comments: This is a very nice shot. Good composition, colours, and depth of field. Even the centered horizon works well here. The celebrating surfer is a great touch. There is certainly good surf and although the weather is hardly foul, there is certainly some wind.



*Intermediate Digital Wildlife - 1<sup>st</sup>*  
*"Pelican on the Bay" by Nicci Tyndall*

Judge's comments: The texture on texture is quite lovely. The crisp detail and mid tones of the Pelican makes it jump from the canvas of lighter blue water. The red reflections are a nice touch. The yellow serves to keep your eye on the subject.



*Novice Digital Open - 1<sup>st</sup>*  
*"Mother and Son" by Jill Turyk*

Judge's comments: Lovely light, excellent exposure. The black and white treatment works well. Great capture of loving emotion.





*Novice Digital Wildlife - 1<sup>st</sup>*  
*"On Guard" by Kim Smith*

Judge's comments: This is a very pleasing composition, with great colours and all of the lines flowing in the direction of the marsupial's gaze. It is sharp throughout. This is a very nice image.



*Novice Digital Natural World - 2<sup>nd</sup>*  
*"The Colours of Zion" by Deb Thurlbeck*

Judge's comments: This is a nice diagonal composition, colours, and sky.

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Preparing a profile has given me the opportunity to look at why I find the art of photography so engaging and yes, a bit compulsive. Walking with a friend around a golf course the other day, I realized that I was continually framing up images of the landscape, people and birds. Panos, macros, picture-in-picture, it is an unconscious habit. Rather than being distracting, it allows me to derive even more pleasure from my surroundings. Evocative sunlight, alluring shadows and infinite shades of colour create enchanting playgrounds for my imagination.

I won my first black and white camera at a carnival when I was twelve and I got hooked. For most of my life I used inexpensive point-and-shoot cameras which resulted in typically fun, candid family shots and a few decent landscapes. They were okay, but being an optimistic perfectionist (and apparently not a realist) I kept trying even though I wasn't overly impressed with the results.



*"Kaily's Passions"*

It wasn't until I got my first DSLR eleven years ago and spent months learning everything I could about the camera, (f-stops, lenses, ISO settings, etc.) that I really started to understand and appreciate what went into a good photograph. I joined a digital group that would meet and review whatever prints were brought. Having my work critiqued was important to my learning but just as significant was having to form opinions and comment on the other members' works. I also joined the executive of the Peterborough (ON) Photographic Society which was the perfect opportunity for learning and feeling like I belonged to the world of photographers. (Illusions are inexpensive and can be rewarding.)

At the time there were no free photographic websites so I worked with a web designer and created [Oceans & Above.com](http://Oceans & Above.com). The learning curve steepened when orders started coming in and I quickly realized how much I didn't know about the printing process.

Joining the Victoria Camera Club was beneficial on many levels. I have never come across a club that is so involved and diverse. Again, joining the executive afforded me the opportunity to meet and work with some of the extraordinary members who make up this club. I took every workshop and outing I could and started making life-long friends.

The competitions were an incentive to get out and shoot and the workshops helped with processing and management of images. For me, one of the most important facets of the competitions was gleaned from the judges' comments: on the whole, photography is subjective. What I considered stunning might be dismissed as passable and vice versa. It was with this new perspective that I started looking at images with an eye to how they pleased or spoke to me, not what someone else might think.

Photography is an opportunity to share, not just my work, but to share in the travels and highlights of my fellow shooters. Rich images of places and animals, as well as the narrative that they represent are my opportunity to travel extensively and vicariously.

At present, one of my favourite things to do is create montages in which I try to capture events or stories or celebrate an occasion. Instead of twenty pictures, I endeavour to express my thoughts and feelings in a single image. The best comment was from my four-year old granddaughter when she saw herself astride a turtle. "Wow, I don't remember doing that!"

So many decades after taking my first picture, I can still hear my mother giving me only one piece of photographic advice. Watch your background! As I process another batch of images, apparently I still need to work on that.



*"Teaghan and the Turtle"*



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by John Roberts

One thing I have always loved is black and white photography. There is just something to be said about how it looks. Be it a portrait, landscape, architecture, or pretty much anything else you can think of photographing, black and white photography all has this look that, to me, just makes the images pop. But it does take a little bit of know-how to get a great B&W image because there are certain situations where two colours may look the same tone of grey in B&W. A red rose for instance, with its green stem appear to be an almost identical tone of grey in B&W. So if you take a colour image and just desaturate, it can look odd.

In the September 2016 issue I wrote about using software like Google/NIK Silver FX Pro to create a B&W image from your colour image. Today I want to talk about previsualizing the scene and doing what it takes in camera to up that game for better B&W photography.

Now to achieve this you will need to get out there and practice a bit but I feel that you are all up to the task.

Many digital cameras nowadays have a monochrome mode but often they also have some colour filter modes that you can select, such as Red, Yellow, Green and Blue. This does not create an overall tone of those colours over your B&W image but it will affect certain colours in predictable ways. I would set the camera to RAW + JPEG, so that the JPEG is your B&W image, and you will still have the colour image with the RAW.



Going back to that red rose with the green stem, if you use a red filter mode on your camera in the monochrome, the red rose will whiten, while the green stem will darken. Alternatively, if you use the green filter mode, the stem will whiten, and the rose will darken, all depending on the look you are going for.

You are at the “Colour Run” (5k race), and for some reason you want to photograph it in B&W. The Neon Yellow and Neon Green colour powder they are using almost appears as the same grey, unless you use a Blue filter to make them look different from each other.

But how do you previsualize that? When I photograph people, yellow or orange are my most used filters. I carry with me a pair of yellow sunglasses that I bought at Mountain Equipment Co-op (MEC). I just put them on and they show me what the filter will do and I pick my filter from there. If the yellow does not have quite a strong enough effect for me, I know that orange will be OK.



Back when I started to learn about B&W photography, there was only film. So playing with what each colour did to the scene involved pulling out each filter, holding it in front of my eye and seeing what worked best for that situation. Otherwise it meant wasting several frames of film before seeing what the results looked like afterwards. But today, with the digital filters built into the camera, it takes no time at all to switch between them and you can see the effect that works best for your image right there on the screen. If B&W is something you enjoy doing, then taking a photo with each colour filter mode for a portrait, a landscape or street scene you come across might not be a bad idea so that you can use them as a reference at a later date.

But once you have done that for a while, it will become second nature. Eventually, you will just be able to see a scene in front of you, and know that you will require X colour filter for this situation, because of the Y and Z colours that are in your scene.

To help you see the effect that colour filters do for your B&W images, I have included some samples. They are in colour in the digital version of *Close-Up*.

I hope this helps. Please contact me at [jrphotography-bc@mac.com](mailto:jrphotography-bc@mac.com) if you have any questions about this article or ideas that you would like me to talk about in future issues.

by David Axford

**Introduction:** Diving or snorkeling allows you to come very close to being able to detach from the world and all its issues. At first, you likely feel self-conscious with all your attention focused on breathing underwater and thinking about how unnatural it is. Some people do not pass this point and diving becomes an item to remove from their life “to do” list. For others, it becomes a place of retreat, introspection and discovery.

I started to take photographs underwater using a disposable film camera with an underwater casing. The quality was terrible but it allowed me to reflect on the dive long afterwards. This was in the early days of my diving experience. I was not good at the skills necessary either to dive or take photographs, let alone to take photographs while diving.

I agreed to write this article with some hesitation. I am not an expert underwater photographer. I have, however, learned a few things that might be of some value if you want to give underwater photography a try.

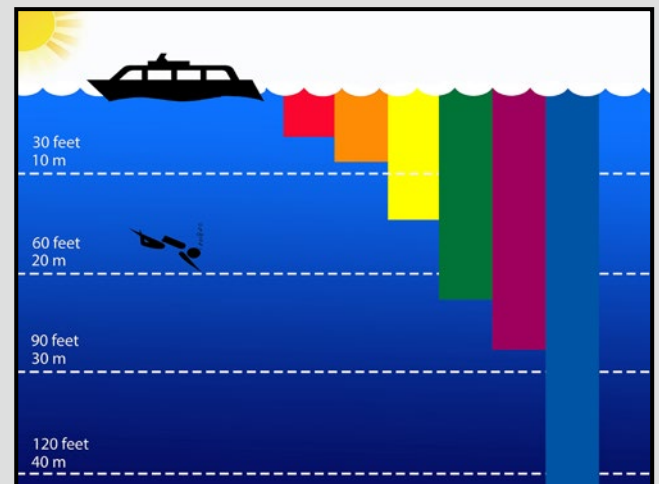
There are some great resources for underwater (UW) photography available on the Web. There is, however, so much information that it might be confusing to someone new to UW photography. This article will focus on what I believe are the three most important considerations when doing UW photography. These are: diving skills, colour and backscatter.

**Diving Skills:** Whether diving or snorkeling, you first need to master your buoyancy and finning skills. I have watched many “vacation divers” with anything from a GoPro to a DSLR with strobes cause significant damage to corals and sponges. Why is buoyancy difficult when taking photos? What comes to mind is that on land, you tend to hold your breath when you’re about to push the shutter button. Unfortunately, this will typically cause you to float upwards, often without impact but other times you might find yourself bumping into another diver who was a metre or more above you or you find that you rise into a few coral or sponge branches. The other big challenge is ensuring that you know where your fins are. Significant damage can be done by not knowing this. On top of the damage that you might do, there is also the potential for kicking up silt making it impossible for the next person to take a photo or even to see the “creature” of interest. This is probably not a good way to make friends.

Another diving skill that is often overlooked is patience. Many people dive a few times a year and while you re-

member many of the skills quickly, becoming proficient takes time. Patience is the skill that may be the most difficult to regain. Going slowly and looking for the smaller interesting creatures usually results in a much longer dive with better photographic opportunities than chasing a large fish only to get a not-so-great photo of their tail.

**Colour:** Colour is dramatically affected underwater and the deeper you go the more it is impacted. What may be surprising to some is that what you observe underwater will not be the same as what you see in your photos. Why is this? It turns out that the brain compensates for the loss of colour underwater. The result is that you can still see colours underwater but you will notice that the colours dim and a blue cast (in warm waters, or green cast in cold waters) increases the deeper you go or the further away your object of attention is.

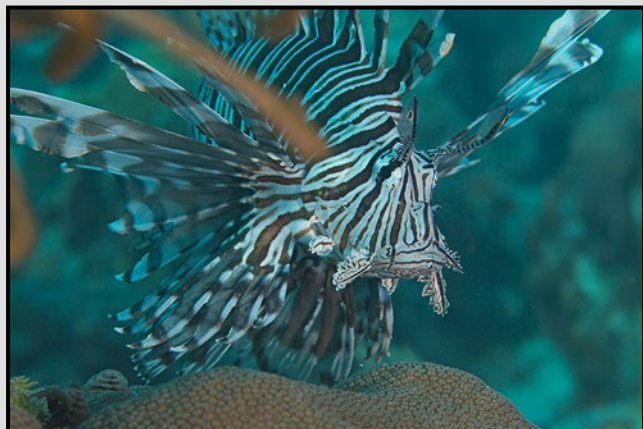


*Colour Drop off at Depth and/or Distance*

This image (from [scubadiverlife.com](http://scubadiverlife.com)) shows the colour drop-off as a function of depth. It is important to note that it is not just colour which drops off with depth. The total amount of light drops off and clarity decreases as well. Other things such as turbidity, time of day and surface conditions will further reduce these distances.

Can this be corrected in-camera? Many, especially those shooting with a GoPro, use colour filters although you will need different shades of filter dependent on depth and distance. This will help give you better colours but will do nothing to provide you with better exposure. You really need an exposure of no less than 1/125 sec to compensate for your movement and that of your subject. There are only two ways to get bright and full colour underwater photos: add light via a powerful flashlight or strobe or take your photos within 3 m of the surface. In most places, but not all, taking photos within 3 m of the surface is better nearest to low tide.





*Loss of Colour at Depth*

This photo was taken at approximately 5 m below surface and at a distance of 2 m. Even though strobes were used, you can see the bluish cast and loss of red.



*Colour with Flash and Minor Lightroom Adjustments*

As you can see from this photo there is an increase in both clarity and in the red/orange colours bringing out the true colour of the Lionfish. This photo was taken approximately 50 cm from the subject.

Lightroom or Photoshop can be used effectively to improve both the colours and clarity in your photo.

**Backscatter:** Not only does water reduce colour and sharpness but it may be full of silt, sand, plankton, etc. Using strobes will greatly improve the colour and sharpness of your photos, but it introduces another challenge, that is backscatter caused by the light from your strobes reflecting off matter in the water. The next image provides a good example of backscatter.

How do you avoid or eliminate backscatter? You cannot eliminate all backscatter but you can greatly reduce it. First try to reduce the amount of material in the water. Try to stay down-current of the subject since a



*Backscatter from Strobes*

lot of backscatter is caused by your own, or your diving party's, activity. So again, use good buoyancy and finning techniques and ensure that everyone in your party keeps a reasonable distance from one another.

The other way to reduce backscatter is via shooting techniques. These include shooting close to your subject. Ideally you should try to be less than 1 m from your subject. Don't shoot into "the blue." Try to have a busy background such as corals, sponges etc. behind your subject. This hides the backscatter.

The correct positioning of your strobes is very important. Using more than one strobe and having them well spaced, 60 cm or more apart, and pointing slightly outwards will help to greatly reduce backscatter.

Finally, one can use Photoshop to remove backscatter during post-processing. I have used this method and have found that it is easier to reduce backscatter when taking the photo. I think that you will find that you get better results as well.

To get great underwater photos remember the following:

1. Practice your diving skills
2. Keep close to your subject
3. Shoot against a darker, busy background
4. If you are using strobes have them well spaced
5. Use Lightroom or Photoshop for colour and clarity correction
6. Use Photoshop to improve backscatter (not recommended).
7. Use web resources such as [uwphotographyguide.com](http://uwphotographyguide.com) to get additional information on underwater photography.

## The Allure of an Old Truck

by Cindy Stephenson

I attended a five-day workshop on Whidbey Island, WA, with Tony Sweet and Susan Milestone through the Pacific Northwest School of Art in August 2016. Tony is a strong advocate of getting up early and catching the first light. I came to appreciate that light changes more slowly in the morning and you have more time to react to these changes than when shooting at dusk.

This old milk truck had obviously seen better days. For a photographer, however, beauty is in the eye of the beholder. We had permission from a local farmer to photograph on his property early one morning and this abandoned and rusted out milk truck caught my attention at the far edge of the farmer's field.

I fell in love with the curved lines of the truck and in the images I took I tried to emphasize that. In terms of exposure, I set my aperture at f8 for maximum sharpness and, although I didn't need a tripod, I prefer to use one along with Live View, especially for a subject like this. It tends to slow you down and I think you come up with a better composition.

In post-processing my goal was to whiten the whites and darken the darks. That meant slightly increasing the exposure and contrast sliders in Lightroom's Develop module. Exposure controls the overall brightness of a photo and the contrast slider makes the brightest parts of the image brighter and the darkest parts of the image darker.

Nikon D610 (full frame), 24-120 mm lens, ISO 200, 1/125 second at f8. (2<sup>nd</sup> place Open Intermediate Digital October 2017.)



## Bald Eagle Portrait

by Ray Douthwaite

I have taken snapshots most of my life, as most people do. I became more "serious" as I carried and maintained equipment for my wife, Josée Ménard, who is a serious photographer. Then, we joined the Victoria Camera Club in September and I was inspired to take the plunge and attempt to become a Photographer!



I had learned some things from being out with Josée. When Pam Irvine offered the Basic Digital Photography workshop, I knew it was time to move forward. So, with my new knowledge and my personal "coach," I started using Josée's old travel camera, a Lumix DMC FZ200, and started learning how it worked. I took lots of photographs around my neighbourhood trying the effect of different settings.

Next came a field trip to the Raptor Centre in Duncan. It felt like my first "assignment!" Using the Lumix saved me having to decide which lens to use. I just had to focus on all the basics that I had learnt from Pam and Josée: bracketing, composition, etc. I took lots of images and was excited to view them in Lightroom.

This image was taken at an aperture of f2.8, a shutter speed of 1/60 sec., ISO 100 and focal length of 108 mm.

Some of my other images were too close or so far back that I did not capture the detail in the feathers. I had to change my position a few times to catch the angle that gave the light reflection from the eye.

I was scared to submit my Bald Eagle Portrait but I am glad that I did (1<sup>st</sup> place Open Int/Novice Print Oct 2017).



## Tuesday Shoots

by Daniel A. Roy

Spring is in the air and Daylight Saving Time will give us an extra hour of evening sunlight. To those of us who prefer to sleep late, the days will appear longer. For club members who have been hibernating or spending time in warmer climates, maybe now is the time to join the Tuesday Shooters for a few hours of fun at interesting locations or at shoots focused on challenging themes.

**March 7<sup>th</sup>: Christ Church Cathedral.** Located downtown at the corner of Burdett Avenue and Quadra Street, the Cathedral was built in the Gothic style of the thirteenth century and is one of Canada's largest churches. Initial stages of construction began in the early 1900s, but it was not completed to its present glory until 1991. A tripod will be a definite asset for both interior and exterior shooting. Be sure to pack a wide-angle lens. For this, you may require a maximum degree of lens correction in post processing.

**March 14<sup>th</sup>: Through the eyes of...** Raising the camera to eye level and snapping a shot isn't always the best vantage point or perspective when shooting certain subjects. When photographing a child, a good practice is to get down to their level. The same goes for a dog or a cat. It may be a little hard on the knees, but the results are always worth a degree of discomfort. However, don't rule out high angle shots. This perspective has resulted in many award-winning images. So, shoot high or low, but above all, be creative.

**March 21<sup>st</sup>: Millstream Miniature Llamas.** The farm is located at 355 Atkins Road in Langford. We will be guided around the farm to meet the herd and to hear why the llamas are so special. We will begin the tour at 10 am. A \$10 fee is required. Be sure to include a portrait lens in your camera bag (generally in the 80 – 110 mm range).

**March 28<sup>th</sup>: Lost Sock Syndrome.** Have you ever lost a sock and had no clue as to where it ended up? Here's your chance to search for other lost items. We have all seen a glove or shoe in the oddest of places. What other lost objects can we find which are missing their mates? Maybe you'll even find your lost sock. You just never know.

Check out the Club calendar for details related to each field trip and be sure to register.

## Weekend Shoots

by Teri VanWell

The Field Trip team needs someone to join us to help organize and coordinate the Club's field trip program. The work is shared amongst the team members. To find out what is involved please email Teri at [fieldtrips@victoriacameraclub.ca](mailto:fieldtrips@victoriacameraclub.ca).

We are working on two field trips that for the month of March. Spring flower field trips will also start coming up. Please check the calendar for details.

**Vancouver Island Brewery:** Vancouver Island Brewery will allow us to photograph the bottling assembly line from a catwalk above the floor. From this perspective we will have an opportunity to photograph industrial workers and a moving assembly line. There are also opportunities to shoot the vat room and the tanking facility. We may also be able to photograph on the floor at break time. As this is an indoor shoot, lighting may be tricky. Participants may want to bring along a couple of lenses to try on this field trip. The field trip will end with a tasting of Vancouver Island Brewery's products. There will be a small charge for the beer tasting.

**Neon Signs:** Last year there was an evening field trip to downtown to photograph neon signs. When you really look you discover there are quite a few. The field trip committee will be doing this trip again in early March.



*Beer Line-Up by Teri VanWell*

by Hanna Cowpe

As a long time avid gardener photographing flowers has been, at times, an all consuming preoccupation. During a long, wet and windy West Coast winter, it gives solace to direct our minds to the coming days of Spring. And with those longer warmer days will come the first hints of the Spring bulbs and wild flowers we all know so well. When photographic subjects are also incorporated in a hobby such as gardening, it adds another dimension to both activities as it increases awareness of all aspects of the subject, such as the environment the flowers grow in, how they behave in changing light and temperature conditions and the stages they pass through. These all provide a vast array of possibilities for photographing flowers and the more we observe them the more we see.

There can be many different goals in capturing flowers with a camera but this never needs to be just a boring representation. We can always concentrate on the specific characteristics and details of the flower even if it is for identification purposes such as a botanical guide or educational information. Paying attention to the most suitable light to accentuate the most attractive aspects of the plant will make it more than just a pictorial record. A flower photograph should always create a connection between the subject and the viewer and hopefully evoke positive emotion. It can bring pleasure in the same way as the gift of a floral bouquet given on a special occasion, a stroll in a park, or coming across a drift of wild flowers in a woodland.

Flower photography can bring its challenges and sometimes it may take great patience to capture the light that best displays the subject's features. Some flowers are very complex with many layers of detail in shapes, colours, texture and markings. Spending time among



*"Wallflower"*



*"Bluebells"*

flowers increases awareness of these details and can intensify enjoyment of them. I like to approach my flower photography with an attempt to display the complexity of natural design. With the light behind the plant features such as veins will be illuminated, or textures such as pollen, hairs, or the downiness of petals and leaves are highlighted, adding another dimension. Capturing an insect within displays the symbiotic relationship with plants and enhances our knowledge of both. Close-up or macro lenses, or extension tubes, can produce captivating results.

Macro flower photography can be very rewarding and can be done with precision or a more free-hand style. Moving in close can reveal details that go unnoticed by the casual viewer. With a macro lens the photographer can concentrate on the smallest detail and separate it from the rest. Hand holding the camera and using manual focus makes it easier to move closer or further away and locate the specific point of detail you wish to capture. It also enables the photographer to assume a variety of positions that are more comfortable. Some photographers prefer to use a tripod, which may provide more stability for the camera but can be more cumbersome and less freeing and you may be paying with a sore neck or back the following day. My priority is to always be comfortable while shooting so it is an enjoyable experience. One of the benefits of flower photography in your own garden is the opportunity to assume whatever position gives you best access to the subject without getting amused looks from onlookers.

There are occasions when a particular flower captures our attention and isolating it within its location can highlight its simplicity and elegance. Making it stand out amongst surrounding plants can be achieved by having it in focus while the rest is outside the field of



focus as seen in the Wallflower and Bluebell images. With the background blurred but colours of other plants still apparent, an impression of the general environment is maintained and creates a scenic image. Similarly a group of flowers of one type may be played off against each other with an ethereal effect to elicit a mood of lightness and peace such as I have attempted in the Shasta Daisy image.



*“Elusive Shasta Daisy”*

Scenic floral landscapes are also fun to shoot and many parks and public spaces have wonderful displays of cultivated or wild flowers. You may need to decide whether or not you wish to include people in your scenes as they may intrude onto your shooting location. A well placed human can add interest and dimension particularly if there is a path through a wood or field through which they are travelling. This can connect with the viewer to imagine themselves in the location or to evoke memories.

Light conditions can play a major role: too much bright light or high sun can create a great deal of glare where detail and colour are lost and can reduce the tranquillity of the scene. Lightly overcast weather helps to saturate colours and reduce heavily shaded areas of the subject.

If it is windy, trying an impressionistic approach can avoid frustration. Set your camera to a longer shutter speed and the wind’s movement will bring interesting results. Impressionist images can also be achieved through more deliberate action such as panning and other camera movement. This is strictly an experimental exercise so you can become comfortable with which movements produce the kind of effect you’re seeking. Sometimes I simply want to convey a peaceful landscape view with subtle colours and soft textures, achieved with soft light. Or perhaps one can portray the movement of flowers with a light sway of the camera as in the Iris image. Other images can be abstract with more defined shapes and

colour or tonal contrast. This type of subject can provide more opportunities for the viewer to interpret the effect with their imagination.



*“Iris Impression”*

It’s easy to be lost for hours in this pastime and practice will bring more satisfying results. All manner of camera movement from vertical, horizontal, circular, wavy, or any combination of these with zooming will create a different effect with every single frame. The speed of your camera movement will also alter the effect. Working through a range of apertures on the same spot will create more variety, particularly in texture. It is very liberating not to be tied to sharp focus or restricted by windy conditions. Re-viewing your results will provide surprise and enjoyment.

When all circumstances fight against you and you’re longing to enjoy some flower photography then take a look in the supermarket and buy yourself a nice bouquet or a single stem. Find a quiet location indoors with good light, avoiding direct sunlight (skylights work well) and place your flowers in a vase. Unlike shooting outdoors you’ll have the freedom to turn your subject to any orientation. Install some background of plain or patterned fabric or cardboard, use a reflector and just experiment to see what shows the flower in its best light and position.

There are many flowers which seem to have a personality such as tulips and poppies and their seed-heads, or others with a single bloom on a long stem. They appear to take on a human quality in appearance, either singly or in groups and can produce a portrait-like image. Experimenting with positions and groupings can be fun. Or be daring and shoot through textured glass or gauze and create abstract images. Let your imagination and creativity produce something that makes you smile. So, set up your tripod and shoot away, and most of all, enjoy yourself.

## Planning and Preparation - Part 1

by Josée Ménard

This month I am taking you on the photographic excursion of a lifetime to the Galapagos. Whether you are planning a field trip, a photography holiday or a unique trip, the steps undertaken should be the same. With regards to your equipment, many factors come into play. Think of your subjects. How do you wish to capture them? Think of how the location will dictate your needs and requirements. Planning, research and preparation are key components to your success.

Every photographer prepares. For equipment, some use checklists, some prefer mental lists. They also clean and reorganize their equipment each time as an efficient time-saving discipline. If you own one camera and one lens that is a great start. Your next task should be to collect what you need to keep your tools of the trade clean and protected. The more you photograph, the more you will develop a sense of what you need and want.

For a Galapagos trip, top wildlife photographers favour having two cameras and three lenses. Two cameras, in case one fails or has an ocean mishap. I have seen it. In terms of lenses, most prefer a wide-angle, a 24-70 mm, and a 100-400 mm. Each manufacturer has its own range close to these. Some other brands such as Sigma are great quality for the price. Rentals are a possibility for special trips or to test out a lens you are thinking of purchasing. Adapt your equipment to your trip and image goals. For example for a street photography shoot, most choose a compact camera and lens. For landscape effect, a wide-angle might be chosen. It can be overwhelming, yet it can be simple.

You may wish to bring it all, but is this practical? No matter the location or season, ensure you can carry and safely reach your equipment. The Galapagos trip uses at-sea anchoring with dry or wet landings by zodiac. Once ashore, be ready to photograph. In planning, think of and try out possible situations. You will hear chatter about owning many bags. It's true as some trips require more or less equipment. For this trip, I used a fail-proof system using LowePro Street and Field bags. You can secure individual lens pouches on a belt; a small one carries the cleaning kit and spares. Everything is stowed in a dry bag. Each camera has its own light dry bag clipped to a CottonCarrier vest. On land, the camera anchors to the vest. It does not bounce as you hike and quickly releases to capture Blue-footed Boobies.

A variety of bags are available to fit many situations. Many bags are available second hand.

With your essential equipment decided upon, it is time for key accessories: filters, cards, batteries, caps, tele-extenders, flash, tripods and plates, sandbag, towel, diffuser, computer, external drive, cleaning supplies, straps, etc. If you do not have all of these yet, no worries. They are great ideas for family gifts.

Your location and objectives will help you plan filters. For this trip, the intense sun and varied island arrival times demand polarizing filters. The unforgiving lava requires that you have spares. Different image effects may need others such as neutral density filters. Knowing that hundreds of images per day will be taken, bring spare cards. For day trips, I always include polarizers in case of weather changes and two cards. This time, the tripod stays home due to short group stops. For other trips a tripod or monopod can ensure a crisp shot. On windy days, a sandbag can stabilize them. Lens caps disappear like pens on a desk, carry spare caps to protect your valuable glass. For the Galapagos, the flash can stay home. For lighter travel, use reflectors, or headlamps.

Last but not least, cleaning. Every trip should include an air-blower, a double ended LensPen (brush, carbon sponge) and sensor cleaning tools. Your shirt is a no-no. Before each set of photos, I clean as needed. It's amazing what lands on your lens. At the end of the day, clean and store, or repack. Ensure batteries are charged, cards are downloaded and reformatted along with a back-up on your portable hard drive.

Enjoy your trip to the fabulous Galapagos!



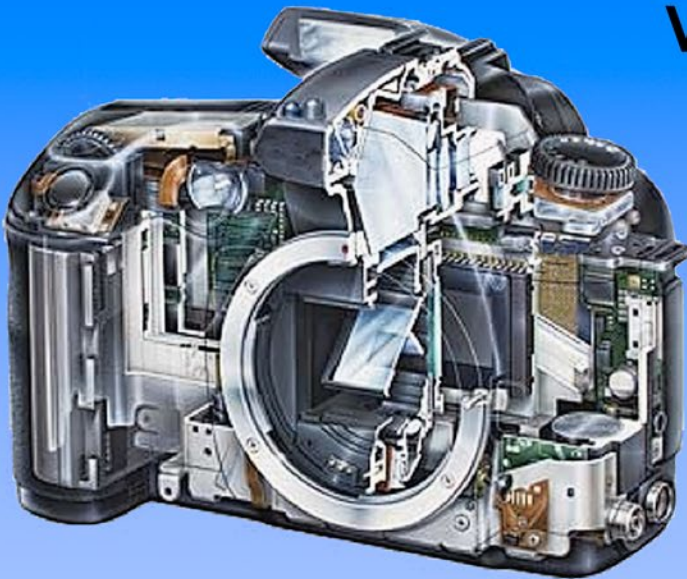
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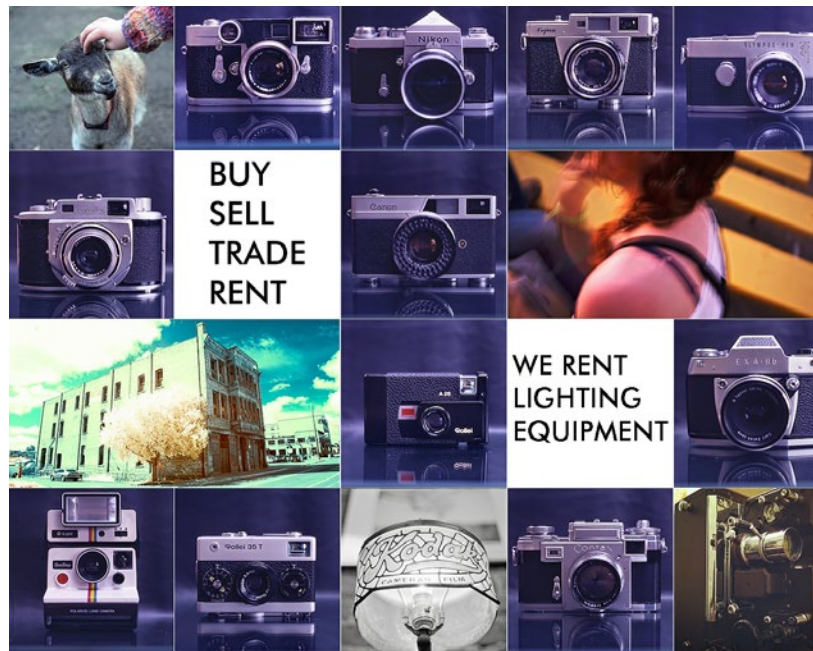
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