

VCC



# Close-Up

[VictoriaCameraClub.ca](http://VictoriaCameraClub.ca)

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**Beginners' Corner: What is ISO?**

*"Eyes of a Child" by Robert Barlow*

**Victoria Camera Club**

**March 2020 Volume 73 Number 3**





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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*.

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### CAPA Award-winning Newsletter 2015

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**March 2020**

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

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For additional information: please contact:

Membership: [membership@victoriacameraclub.ca](mailto:membership@victoriacameraclub.ca)

Workshops: [workshops@victoriacameraclub.ca](mailto:workshops@victoriacameraclub.ca)

Field Trips: [fieldtrips@victoriacameraclub.ca](mailto:fieldtrips@victoriacameraclub.ca)

Meetings: [meetings@victoriacameraclub.ca](mailto:meetings@victoriacameraclub.ca)

Website: [webmaster@victoriacameraclub.ca](mailto:webmaster@victoriacameraclub.ca)

Close-Up: [editor@victoriacameraclub.ca](mailto:editor@victoriacameraclub.ca)

President: [president@victoriacameraclub.ca](mailto:president@victoriacameraclub.ca)

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



## Calendar

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

**March 5<sup>th</sup>: Competition Night.** The theme competition is “Up in the Air”. The February competition results will be presented.

**March 12<sup>th</sup>: Presentation Night.** Don Denton will make his presentation on “Don’s Photographic Journey and Importance of Archiving”.

**March 19<sup>th</sup>: Members’ Night.** Presentations of members’ images, field trip slide shows, prints or short technical presentations.

**Workshop Highlights:** Introduction to Lightroom and Photographing Wildflowers.

**Field Trip Highlights:** Gowland Tod Park and Butterfly Gardens.

**Cover Image: “Eyes of a Child”** by Robert Barlow. A group of twenty optometrists and volunteers organized by the Third World Eye Care Society, including Kim Smith and myself, were involved in an eye care project for the poorer residents of the city and surrounding countryside of Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

On a day off from clinic work the entire group was invited to attend the 9<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of Hope for Children Orphanage ([hopeforchildrenethiopia.org](http://hopeforchildrenethiopia.org)). Like most commercial buildings in Ethiopia, the grounds and buildings were behind walls and locked gates. However, once inside, the atmosphere of a clean and orderly organization became apparent. Children and staff appeared healthy and happy, with sounds of laughter echoing throughout the area.

Although the children’s clothes were well worn, they were neither shabby nor soiled. Some children were active and playful, while others were shy, as in the case of the little boy peeking out at the camera in the cover photo. They performed enthusiastically for the invited guests with singing and dancing. At that time, Ethiopia was the fourth poorest country in the world but that poverty was not evident within these walls. It was, and still is, an oasis of humanity.

A good picture tells a story, the smile in the Eyes of a Child is the same in any country, in any culture, anywhere.

## President’s Message

We are now heading into what we hope is spring weather in Victoria although, in the last few years we have been surprised with winter wanting to hang on. We did have our “annual” snowfall already in January so maybe we won’t get any more.

Spring for the Club means there will be more flowers and trees blooming and the grass will start to grow again. There will be spring flower field trips popping up as the flowers are discovered and I know our workshop and field trip committees will have some exciting new topics on the calendar.

One of the things that is a delight and a must to all photographers this time of the year is The Wildlife Photographer of the Year exhibit. Now in its 55<sup>th</sup> year, the exhibit is comprised of images showcasing a global selection of outstanding nature photography. They will be displayed at the Royal BC Museum until March 29<sup>th</sup>. Travelling from London’s Natural History Museum, the exhibition takes viewers on a visual journey around the world bringing the talent and vision of each photographer closer to all who visit. The images evoke a range of emotions but are visually stunning and thought provoking. Definitely a must see.

Around this time of the year the President’s Message in *Close-Up* makes mention of the one thing that makes our Club run, volunteers. Our Club is fortunate to have an excellent group of individuals who work countless hours to make everything in the Club run smoothly. Without them we would not be able to offer everything that we do, but as is the case with many clubs it is often the same group of people who volunteer their time year after year to help keep our Club viable. If you are new to the Club, or a longer-term member, consider joining one of our many committees. It is a great way to get to know other members.

As we think about the AGM some volunteers may be thinking about stepping down from their positions. I encourage all members, especially those who have not volunteered in the past, to think about what you get from the Club and consider giving back by filling a role next year. By becoming an active participant you can have a positive impact through your contribution.

I encourage everyone to get out and photograph our lovely city and the surrounding area. You never know when you might get that award-winning photo!

*Teri VanWell, President*

# Photoshop Techniques

by Kirk Schwartz

Frequency Separation (FS) is a technique for skin re-touching although it also works for taking the wrinkles out of a shirt, smoothing blemishes in a surface or for putting my head in the clouds. It separates details from tones and colours. It is a method of “High-end” skin re-touching. “High-end” means accomplishing your objectives. Mostly, it means making your client (paid or contra) happy. FS is not a magic bullet for beauty, easily done without any effort, the first thing you should think of when photographing fashion and models, or a panacea for your lack of planning or prioritizing your look or objective. Before you start it would be a good idea to watch “Why you should not use Frequency Separation” [youtu.be/0zGZloBA6L0](https://youtu.be/0zGZloBA6L0).



*“Cloud Smudge”*

Then you might want to read this detailed explanation on what Frequency Separation is: [fstoppers.com/post-production/ultimate-guide-frequency-separation-technique-8699](https://fstoppers.com/post-production/ultimate-guide-frequency-separation-technique-8699). So, please ask yourself, “Why am I doing Frequency Separation?”

**Answer 1:** My model/subject has pimples or acne. Sorry, but you will have to fix these imperfections first. You will have to use the healing brush, clone tool or other method before you even start to use frequency separation.

**Answer 2:** I want to clean up my subject’s skin fast and easy. Sorry, this is not fast nor easy. You may have to separate sections of the subject’s skin and imperfections and adjust separately. You will still have to clone, paint, adjust different areas and you will have to use your artistic and aesthetic sensibility. In fact, maybe you don’t need the specific control of frequency separation and your purposes could be more easily accomplished if you understood other methods of skin retouching.

**Answer 3:** I am working toward a career in high-end fashion photography or I am working on a project that re-



*“Head in the Clouds”*

quires the same perfection as high-end fashion photography. I am willing to put in the time, effort and expenditures (see above: Hire a Make Up Artist (MUA) that will advance those objectives). I don’t care about how many hours I will spend to obtain my perfection, or how many other techniques I will have to use to achieve my objectives and goals.

The only good answer is Answer 3. You have decided that you want to make Frequency Separation part of your post-production toolkit! The very first thing that you should think of if you are doing fashion or model photography where skin texture and skin perfection are of the utmost importance is to find a MUA. A good MUA, who contours the model’s skin, who covers blemishes and who understands your objectives, will save you many (maybe hundreds) of hours of Photoshop work. She/He will save you more post-production grief than you can ever imagine, and the MUA will make your subject (model or civilian) happier than you can imagine. The next thing to do is to watch a couple of good tutorials such as: [youtu.be/8ZKe87xPKLw](https://youtu.be/8ZKe87xPKLw) and [youtu.be/jfBfb8\\_vHYo](https://youtu.be/jfBfb8_vHYo).

So, what else is Frequency Separation useful for? Well, in case you forgot to take a steamer or an iron to your high-end fashion photo shoot, it can help you take the wrinkles out of a shirt: [youtu.be/8ZKe87xPKLw](https://youtu.be/8ZKe87xPKLw). It can help you smooth out or eliminate imperfections in textured photo surfaces. In this example, there were blemishes in the sky of the photo from a smudge or droplet on the lens. When printed, the spots became especially obvious. They were somewhat too big and too subtle for spot removal. Frequency Separation was a useful tool for smoothing the colour while retaining the original texture. This also might be a technique that would be useful (but maybe not ethical) in real estate and architectural photography. Or maybe you just want to put your head in the clouds for whatever reason you can come up with.

Happy shooting and post-production.

# Flowers in Black and White

by Lorna Zaback

Don't black and white flowers sound like an oxymoron? Most of us are drawn to photograph flowers primarily for their colours, whether intense and dazzling or soft and subtle. Converting an image to black and white can free up the parts of our attention that are attracted by colours so that we can more fully appreciate the less conspicuous, more retiring qualities of our subjects.

I have an extensive collection of flower images and my interest in black and white photography has grown over the past few years. I thought it might be fun to combine these two themes and try something different. Presenting flowers in black and white might encourage me to broaden my focus.



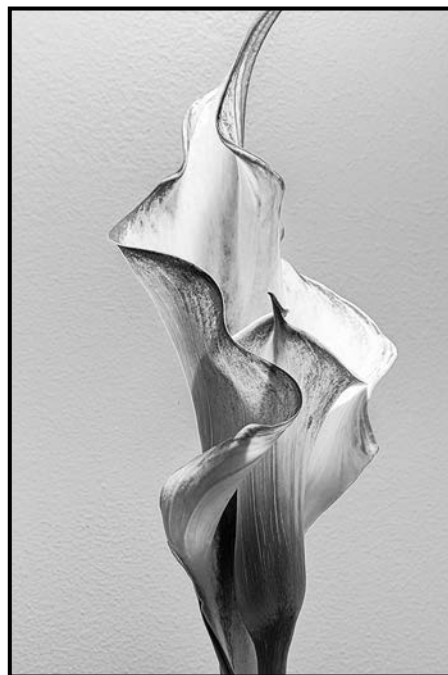
*"Fading Iris"*

I find myself drawn to fading flowers so I thought I would start with this iris. In colour, the petals are a busy palette of vibrant purples, yellows, softer lilacs and pinks set against an ochre background. The textures and the graceful curve of this wilting flower draw my eye in both versions but in the colour image they tend to be overshadowed by the hues. I converted it using a Nik Silver Efex High Dynamic (smooth) preset and then doing some minor exposure, highlights and shadows tweaks in Lightroom (LR). The textures and shapes took centre stage.

Several well-known photographers of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century spent some of their time capturing images of flowers and plants on black and white film. Karl Blossfeldt spent thirty-five years of his photography career photographing nothing but plants. Arranging them

against plain backgrounds, his goal was to highlight the intricate, elegant architectural structure of their natural formations. Blossfeldt's master work, *Art Forms in Nature* (1928), is an intriguing collection of subtly-toned black and white photogravure images now recognized as vital contributions to the history of photography.

Imogen Cunningham once said that her passion for photography emanated from a desire "to acknowledge the sensual and energetic pulse that runs through all of life." She is famous for, among other things, her beautifully-lit, softly-focused close-up images of magnolia blossoms and calla lilies.



*"Calla Lily"*

Inspired by Cunningham's work in particular, I chose this "mutant" calla lily, with its unusual outer petal and graceful clean lines, to attempt a BW conversion. The original image, in vivid yellows, greens and softer magentas, was shot by a sunny window, with an off-camera flash providing light from the opposite side. I did most of the colour post-processing (detail enhancement, white balance and temperature adjustments) in Nik Color Efex Pro. When I took the image back into LR to convert it to BW (which included using an infrared preset), I was surprised by how my perspective of the image was altered. Although my attention was captured by the rich hues in the original colour image, I was pleased to see the monochrome conversion increasingly emphasizing shapes and lines. What surprised me, though, was a subtle change in the light. The quality, but also the direction of the light, seemed to shift. What had been sidelight in the colour image transformed in the monochrome into an ethereal glow that seemed to radiate from above.





*"Wild"*

Although famous for his moody, awe-inspiring images of the Sierra Nevada, Ansel Adams also tried his hand at photographing plants and flowers in their natural environment. As with his landscapes, Adams employed "burning" and "dodging" and other darkroom techniques to manipulate the tonality of his images and allow himself, the artist, to create as opposed to merely recording what his camera "saw". I would never presume to produce work of his quality but when I found this image in my catalogue it reminded me enough of his floral work that I thought I might try to emulate him. In the colour version the flower petals are a creamy yellow framing a riot of brown, thread-like stamens, with everything set against a backdrop of bright green. I first brought out some detail, vibrance and centre highlights in the colour image in Nik Color Efex and then worked on the black and white conversion in LR. Using the brush tool, I increased the exposure, highlights and whites of the flower and darkened the background foliage.

In general, monochrome images tend to be most engaging when composed of strong shapes and clean lines drawing us into a focal point in the image. That being said, I wanted to see if I could also make this busy floral arrangement of late summer blooms work in black and white. In colour, this image is a vibrant display of pink, fuchsia and magenta dahlias in a red glass vase. I had done some basic colour adjustments in LR, slightly elevating the exposure, shadows, whites, clarity and vibrance, increasing the sharpness and luminance smoothing, followed by some detail enhancement in Nik Color Efex Pro. The BW conversion in LR, (increasing the exposure, whites and texture sliders and slightly lowering the highlights) appeared to bring out an almost silvery glow in the foreground dahlia that gave the image a painterly quality. What really drew my attention, however, was the array of



*"The Last of Summer"*

stems in the vase. Although these had been eclipsed by the riot of colour in the original, I felt they added interest in the monochrome.

This last image is not one I would normally choose for a monochrome conversion. However, these daffodils, in full bloom as far as the eye could see, on a wide boulevard between two busy urban roadways in Utrecht, Holland were quite a spectacle. Converting the image to BW in LR, I thought about some of the advice Ed Moniz had given us in his workshop on monochrome. To increase the sense of depth in the now white flowers, I increased the texture, contrast and sharpness with a brush. I darkened some of the tree trunks in the mid-ground and slightly brightened the light area at the centre. The trees suddenly became the focal point with the daffodils, as almost leading lines, drawing my eye towards the light in the distance.



*"Boulevard Daffodils"*

# Internal Competitions

by Leah Gray and Jill Turyk

Although it seems as though the season just began, we are turning our thoughts to our year-end competition. We will collect all the images (digital and prints) that placed 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and Honourable Mention in the Club's internal competitions from September 2019 to March 2020. We will place them into the year-end competition by level and category.

The photographers with images that placed in these competitions will be recognized during our year-end awards night on Thursday, May 7<sup>th</sup>, 2020, by receiving a commemorative ribbon. The "Distinguished Photographer of the Year" awards will also be presented. This is determined by points earned throughout the year. Four points are received for a 1<sup>st</sup>, three for a 2<sup>nd</sup>, two for a 3<sup>rd</sup>, and one for both an Honourable Mention and for being selected for an external competition.

The winning individuals will be recognized by plaques or ribbons and by being moved up to a higher competition level, where applicable. However, you do not have to wait for a distinguished photographer award in order to move into a different competition level. The Internal Competitions Committee will contact members to invite them to move up. Please ask any member of the competitions committee if you are interested in changing your level.

As our competition year draws to a close we continue to look for images for the remaining external competitions. If you haven't had the opportunity to submit an image for selection in these competitions, please consider doing so now. Images already on the website can simply be assigned to a competition. As you consider your images for competitions, you might contemplate getting a few Club members together for a casual image review. Having extra sets of eyes critique your images can be most helpful.

We have been using volunteer member judges to assist in selecting images for external competitions. So far this year, Michael Murchison, Kevin Keliher, Jonathan Adams, Evan Guengerich, Pam Irvine, and Peter Kolbleitner have given their time for this. Their comments and expertise have been invaluable. Thank you.

Clive Townley and Bob Law have graciously volunteered to select our entry for the CAPA Audio Visual competition (due March 6<sup>th</sup>). The CAPA competition "Canada: My Country" is due March 13<sup>th</sup>. April brings our last three rounds of PSA competitions (Open, Nature and Creative) due on April 3<sup>rd</sup>.

# January 2020 Competition Judges

We sincerely thank our external judges for the November Intermediate and Advanced level competitions, Rick Leche, Nancy Ricker, Karen Stoyles, Larry Brietkreutz and Christina Craft. We also extend thanks to our in-house Novice Judges: Pam Irvine, Lorna Zaback, Jill Turyk, Nicci Tyndall and Richard Webber. Images and judges' comments are available at: [victoriacameraclub.ca/Competitions/CompetitionResults.aspx](http://victoriacameraclub.ca/Competitions/CompetitionResults.aspx).

**Rick Leche: Digital Open.** Rick lives in Black Creek, BC and is an avid photographer of anything or everything. Rick is a member of the Comox Valley Photographic Society where he is a mentor in photo editing.

**Nancy Ricker: Theme, Leading Lines.** Nancy has been a member of the North Shore Photographic Society for many years serving as President, Vice-President and Field Trip Coordinator. She has exhibited in various galleries and coffee shops. Her favourite themes are abstracts, textures and tapestries of nature.

**Karen Stoyles: Digital People.** Karen lives in Brantford, ON and is an active member of the Brant Camera Club. Her main interests are wildflowers, macro and creative photography. Karen has been judging for over ten years for camera clubs, local organizations and fairs. You can find some of her images on Flickr.

**Larry Brietkreutz: Digital Altered Reality.** Larry has enjoyed the inspiration and challenge of all types of artistic images, whether created with the camera, software, or brush and paint for over 35 years. He is a Certified CAPA Judge and teaches photography courses for Surrey Recreation. He is currently the Past-President of CAPA.

**Leah Gray and Mike Wooding: Digital Wildlife.** Leah has been photographing for 15 years and has been a member of the VCC for five years. She enjoys shooting wildlife, as well as other photographic genres. Mike has been an active member of the VCC for 12 years. He photographs wildlife and nature exclusively. Both have taken the CAPA judging course and participate in local and international competitions and salons.

**Christina Craft: Advanced Prints.** Christina started FunkyTown Photography in Victoria in 2008. She has won international and Canadian awards primarily as a portrait and wedding photographer. Christina has a master's degree in journalism. At the Western Academy of Photography she won the best overall student award and eventually joined the faculty. Now that the Academy has closed Christina offers her own workshops.



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## Winter/Spring 2020 Photography Courses

### Creating the Personal Archive with Don Denton

If you are a photographer, an artist, a family historian or a collector, you probably have a body of work that needs to be organized and protected. This one-day workshop is an introduction to the world of personal archiving.

Saturday, March 14 from 10 am to 2:30 pm

### Travel and Street Photography Basics with Andrew Kielbowicz

Learn how to: set up your camera for travel photography; use composition rules and lighting for gorgeous natural vistas or cityscapes; capture the true emotion of people you will meet on your journey.

Mondays, March 16, 23, 30; and April 6 and 20 from 6:30 to 8:45 pm and  
Saturday, April 4 from 10:30 am to 12:45 pm

### Natural Light Portraiture Made Easy with Tony Bounsall

Learn how to photograph people on location. If you've wanted to learn the professional secrets to getting a great portrait then this is the class for you!

Friday, May 1 from 7 to 9 pm; and Saturday, May 2 from 9 am to 1 pm

### Image Transfer with Tony Bounsall

Learn a range of techniques to transfer your photographs onto printmaking paper, acrylic skins and other surfaces that can be incorporated into your paintings, collage or mixed media artwork.

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*Advanced People Digital - 1<sup>st</sup>*  
*"Deadpool Getting Ink" by Greg Samborski*

**Judge's comments:** Excellent image with lots for the viewer to absorb. The main subjects are well-placed. The lighting, DOF and technique come together to produce a visual feast.



*Advanced Creative Digital - 1<sup>st</sup>*  
*"Small World" by Doug Neal*

**Judge's comments:** The very unusual perspective and the lens used creates a most striking image. A strong composition with all the elements around the circle well balanced. Reflection inside the circle enhances the overall effect.



*Advanced Open Print - 1<sup>st</sup>*  
*"Cathedral St. Louis des Invalides" by Steve Smith*

**Judge's comments:** Wow! What a gorgeous print! I could look at this forever. I absolutely love that extra twinkle/star burst on one of the buildings just left of the main subject. I love that you chose to do this at twilight. It makes the yellow tungsten lights sing.



*Advanced Nature Print - 1<sup>st</sup>*  
*"Purple Finch on Red Hawthorne" by Mike Wooding*

**Judge's comments:** This one had me at "Hello!" From the colours to the subject, toning, post-processing, composition to, well, everything. This image sings. I love the negative space in this. It frames this beautiful bird perfectly. Wow!





*Advanced Open Digital - 3<sup>rd</sup>*  
*"Male Anna's during the Blue Hour"*  
 by Daniel Rondeau

**Judge's comments:** There is beautiful detail in the feathering and iridescence of the bird. The application of the vignette is effective contrast to the lovely soft light and it aids in drawing attention to the subject. The image is an excellent portrait.



*Advanced Monochrome Print - 2<sup>nd</sup>*  
*"Sitting Pretty"* by Normand Marcotte

**Judge's comments:** First of all, wow, wow, wow! I could look at this forever. What a fantastic subject. Brilliant composition, lovely leading lines. Great toning! I love your choice of metallic printing. I absolutely love this. It's masterful!



*Advanced Theme Digital - 1<sup>st</sup>*  
*"Who Invited You"* by Cindy Stephenson

**Judge's comments:** The interaction between the child and bird is well seen. Light on child's face is very good.



*Advanced Wildlife Digital - 1<sup>st</sup>*  
*"Cheetah Mother's Prize"* by Suzanne Huot

**Judge's comments:** This is a fantastic image of a cheetah providing for her young. The image is sharp, the story is clear, and we can see both faces.





*Intermediate People Digital - 1<sup>st</sup>*  
*"Two Thumbs Up" by Grant Hughes*

**Judge's comments:** A fun image telling a story of urban life. The maker has a lovely arc of faces from the dog to the lady behind the counter. The image is exposed well, good sharpness and placement of subjects throughout.



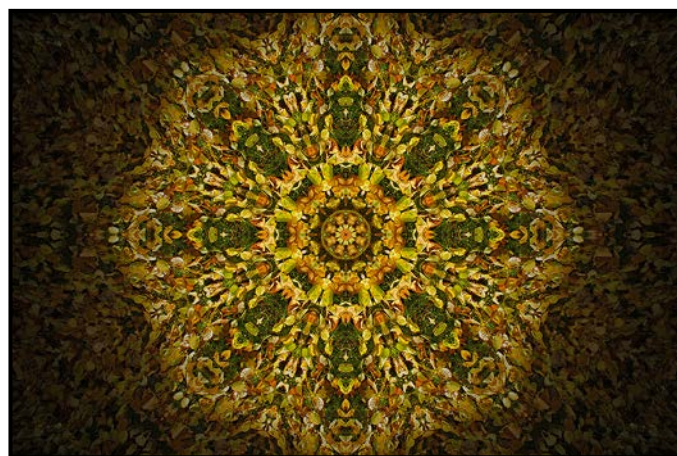
*Intermediate Open Print - 1<sup>st</sup>*  
*"Lavender and Lovely" by Penny Authier*

**Judge's comments:** Excellent exposure and colour balance. Effective use of slightly shallow depth of field makes the foreground flower perfectly focused and sharp while gradually softening the background. The group of three blossoms framed by the delicate foliage on the left makes for a beautiful composition.



*Intermediate Wildlife Digital - 1<sup>st</sup>*  
*"Reflections: A Lincoln Sparrow at the Pond"*  
*by Alec Lee*

**Judge's comments:** This is a wonderful image of the sparrow, delightfully reflected in the water. The image is sharp, clear and well exposed. The aspect of eye level connects the viewer with the bird. The colours of the bird and its surroundings are complementary.



*Intermediate Creative Digital - 1<sup>st</sup>*  
*"Leaf Kaleidoscope" by Blair Ross*

**Judge's comments:** Strong abstract that shows a creative vision and good post-processing skills. Composition displays circular symmetry that begins in the bright centre and fades to the edges.





*Intermediate Theme Digital - 2<sup>nd</sup>*  
*"Flying the Flag" by Martin Lennick*

**Judge's comments:** Very simple with the bold lines of the plane wings effective in drawing attention to the airline's symbol on its reflective wing.



*Intermediate Open Digital - 1<sup>st</sup>*  
*"Shades of Brown and Orange" by Anne McCarthy*

**Judge's comments:** The image has beautiful colour balance between the dog, fence and wall. The dog allows the viewer to wonder what caught its attention. The textures of the dog's hair and the wall are interesting in contrast. A great study in colour and texture



*Novice People Digital - 2<sup>nd</sup>*  
*"Sweet Shyness" by Wendy Clay*

**Judge's comments:** You have captured lovely tones in this image. The main subject is appropriately sharp and her facial expression and posture support your title and draw our interest. Well done.



*Novice Open Digital - 2<sup>nd</sup>*  
*"Fairyland" by Robert Barlow*

**Judge's comments:** Good sense of timing as soft side-cast lighting really helps to emphasize exquisite details in the subject. We can see the strength that light has played in this image.





*Novice Wildlife Nature - 1<sup>st</sup>*  
*"Babyphant" by Leigh Lennick*

**Judge's comments:** Beautiful composition of mother elephants protecting a very newborn calf. The angle of the shot draws the viewer into the subject. While the crop is tight, it works. Well done on a very lucky shot.




*Novice Open Print - HM*  
*"Amazing Formation" by Sylvan Burnside*

**Judge's comments:** A well-exposed image with good detail, good depth of field and interesting foreground, middle ground and background. Technically well done.



*Novice Theme Digital - 2<sup>nd</sup> (Tie)*  
*"V" by Gwen Long*

**Judge's comments:** The creative use of window reflection keeps this image interesting. Black and white was a good choice, keeping it clear and tidy, emphasizing the lines. The image is sharp and clear. The lines lead the viewer up to the top of the building and beyond, creating a wonderful experience.



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## Member Profile: Daniel Rondeau

When people ask me to describe my journey as a photographer, I answer that when I was still a teenager, I owned a Minolta manual SLR and several lenses, and that eventually “life happened”, but that I am now back investing much time and effort honing my skills.

Then and now, my primary interests in photography go hand-in-hand with my outdoor pursuits. In 1985 I carried all my gear on a four-thousand-kilometre bicycle journey with a high school friend from Anchorage, Alaska to Walsh, Saskatchewan.



*“Cycling Buddy. Alaska Highway, Yukon”*

In the late 80s and early 90s, I travelled West from Quebec fairly regularly either on holiday or to work in National Parks.

Last summer I lugged my Nikon D850, a heavy 24-70 mm lens, a small tripod, filters and extra batteries through the West Coast Trail. This was my fifth time on the trail, and I have also cycled the length of the UK and Scandinavia.

“Life happened” is my shorthand for going back to graduate school, raising two wonderful children and building my academic career. Although I devoted little time to photography as an art form during those twenty years, it was not entirely lost time.

The focus on my family gave me an opportunity to branch off into casual portraiture. As I was fortunate to travel extensively with my family, I soon began to take portraits against interesting textural backgrounds, always filling the entire frame. In the image below, my son, Noah, stands against one of a dozen Greek columns in Vienna, Austria.

In others, old wooden, metal, stone or natural backgrounds document for us the location of the image. I like



*“Lines and Listlessness”*

to think of these images as travel pictures infused with a bit of artistic flair, or as portraits with a travel essence, where the whole frame contributes to the story. I am now re-processing and assembling roughly a hundred of them into a Blurb book.

As my children are on the verge of independence, I have returned to my first passions for wildlife, nature and a little astrophotography yet, one of the reasons I enter competitions is to explore subjects outside my comfort zone. The image of the BC Legislature Buildings is a prime example. Of all subjects, architecture is most foreign to my photographic experience. The January theme got me searching for leading lines, with a result that I like.

Competitions and social media posts also help me understand what others like. My galleries can be seen on Facebook and Instagram at [photo.rondeau](https://www.facebook.com/photo.rondeau).



*“On the Territory of the Lekwungen People”*

# Photographing Surfing

by Robert Benn

The sun had already set and I was wandering through the tourist shops and street stands of Kapaa town on the island of Kauai, HI. I made my way into a side-street gallery which was selling small prints of various island artists. It was here that I first saw the paintings of Roy Tabora.

The waves back-lit by moonlight, sunsets and sunrises on tropical palm-encrusted coves immediately spoke to me. It was from that point forward that I was forever obsessed with waves. How could I capture them to make them appear close to the artwork I saw painted by Roy Tabora.

There are two types of surf photography I use in my pursuit of the perfect wave photograph: in-water photography and shore photography. In-water photography is by far the most challenging type of photography I have undertaken. There are several moving parts to getting a good clean image in water.



*"Green Dream"*

Depending on what the water temperature is where I'm shooting and, given that I live in the Pacific Northwest, it usually starts with making sure I have my wet-suit ready to go. That means wrapping myself in a piece of 0.8 mm head-to-toe neoprene.

The next step is to adjust my camera settings for the conditions I may be shooting in for the next two hours. Once I set these I won't be able to go back and change them. The settings are also going to depend on what type of lens I am using and the type of shot I am going after.

I may use a 16-35 mm f4, a 11-16 mm f2.8, or a 70-200 mm f4 lens. If I can, I try to keep a minimum shutter speed of 1/1000<sup>th</sup> second to freeze the action. I manually set

the ISO range between 100-800. This can change depending on the lighting and time of day but I really don't want to go above 1000 ISO as I don't like dealing with noise. If the light is limited, I will sometimes drop my shutter speed to 1/640<sup>th</sup> second. While not ideal it can still produce and I'd rather be able to keep my ISO low.



*"Silk Spinning"*

I mainly shoot in shutter priority mode. Next I need to complete a thorough check of my camera housing. I use an Aquatech water housing. It uses a shutter release cable inside the housing, fed from a pistol trigger I can hold to release the shutter.

There are two types of lens ports on the camera housing: dry and wet. If you go above a 50 mm lens, it's going to be a dry port. This is due to autofocus systems that usually will not focus accurately through a film of water above 50 mm. To deal with this there are a few different methods. Some like to buff candle wax into their lens ports which helps to bead water off, and some bring a little squeegee to wipe the water off. I've found both are hit and miss.

I've missed a lot of shots because of water spots and blurred focus because of water film on the port. Wet ports rely on the water film coating the entire lens port and not beading. The most foolproof way I've found to create a binding film is saliva. Licking and coating your port in saliva keeps a binding film of water on it. I've produced some of my best shots this way.

Once I've got my wet suit on, my camera settings ready, and double checked my camera housing seal it's time for the most challenging part of shooting in-water, the physical part. If you are going to enter the water you must study and understand where you are shooting, the currents, reefs, boulders underneath, and water temperature. Oh, and for your safety, always go with a buddy who is watching you from the shore, just in case you run into problems in the water.





*"Dragon Slayer"*

It's important that you feel comfortable in the water, can swim strongly, know how to duck overhead waves and how to navigate a rip current. You need to do all this while you try to frame your photographs correctly and position yourself in the water so that the waves go over your head, not crash in front of you.

There is a sweet spot in a crashing wave. It's down low, just before it starts cresting. If you sit in it, and hit it right, it's like a knife through butter. If you time it incorrectly, a lot can go wrong. You could get pulled up and over the fall of the wave and the wave could crash in front of you pushing you into the crash zone with a roar of white water or, worse, it could come down straight on you pounding you into the bottom. Through trial and error and the right research of your location, you find out what works best for you.



*"Jurassic Park"*

The second type of wave photography I do is onshore. From here I am safely perched on a cliff-side, in a tree, or on the very edge of the beach where it meets

the water. From here I always shoot with my camera mounted on a tripod. When shooting from shore I shoot with a 100-400 mm f4 lens. I use the same settings as for in-water work. If there is enough light, I can add a 1.4x teleconverter if necessary.

If I'm shooting a surfer, I use two separate approaches. Sometimes I try to capture the entire scene incorporating the background, the wave, and the surfer. Other times I try to focus directly on the surfer and their interaction with the wave so I get as tight as I can with the surfer, to illustrate that moment when the surfer is pulling off a turn and the effect it has on both himself and the wave.

There are also times when I want to capture just an empty wave on its own and how it interacts with its landscape. I want to capture the grand backdrops and the moment the wave begins to barrel.

Through all these different image possibilities the key is the light. The cliché rings true. I want the magic hours. I want to catch the light behind the wave, shining through the thin veil of spray as it bends into a wave revealing the spectrums that the water and landscape have to offer.

The coast from Victoria to Port Renfrew is littered with wave and surf breaks, and areas with massive waves. They are awe inspiring, humbling, and addicting.

If you are ever thinking of pursuing in-wave photography, ensure you are 100% confident and educated about what you are doing. The winter waves on the west coast of Vancouver Island are not something to be trifled with. They are cold, heavy, and carry a punch. They are also some of the most beautiful waves I have ever seen. I've caught a few waves that closely approach the vision I have of them in my mind and I also continue to emulate the artwork of Roy Tabora.



*"Last Light"*

# Astrophotography Basics

by Mars Romer

Prior to the 20<sup>th</sup> century astrophotography was mainly focused on taking photos of celestial objects using very powerful lenses and specialized equipment to collect scientific data. Since then, advanced sensor technology has made it possible to take better and better quality wide-angle photographs of the night sky and make stunning images that include the Milky Way and the Northern Lights. This article covers the basics of wide-angle night sky photography for those new to it.

**Preparation:** Before venturing out it is important to be familiar with handling your camera in the dark. Knowing where the controls are on your camera will save you lots of time and make your shooting experience much more enjoyable.

Learning about focusing at night is also important. Most cameras' autofocus can't work at night and you are mostly shooting wide open, which means your depth of focus is shallow. Use a phone app such as True DOF to find the hyperfocal distance of your lens at its widest aperture so that you can compose your photos strategically so the important elements are in focus. If your lens has focal distance markers, use them to set the correct focus. In the absence of these markers you can have an assistant walk to the distance at which you want to set your focus (your hyperfocal distance) and have them illuminate something there that you can focus on or, get them to



*"Milky Way over Desolation Sound, BC"*

shine a light at your lens, and focus on this. If autofocus doesn't work, then use live view and magnify the display to where the light is and manually focus your lens.

**Gear:** Equipment for night sky photography can be as simple as a camera that takes long exposure photos, a wide-angle lens, and a tripod. Beyond this basic set-up you can opt for other luxuries like a shutter remote, intervalometer, flashlight, extra batteries, hand-warmers, relevant mobile phone apps. A headlamp with a red light (red won't affect your night vision) will make your night easier. A sensor that can handle long exposures without introducing too much "noise" is important for good quality photos. You can try using the "long exposure noise reduction" setting on your camera but, this doubles your time for each shot, so I mostly avoid using it. I also don't use the "high ISO Noise Reduction" setting as it is for JPEGs and it doesn't have any affect on the RAW image.



*"Milky Way, Tofino, BC"*

**Milky Way Photography:** Our planet is in the Milky Way galaxy and it is visible to us as a wide bright band of light in the night sky. You can get a picture of the Milky Way at any time of the year, however, the galactic core of the Milky Way, the brightest and most colourful part, is best photographed in the Northern Hemisphere from May to July. You can use mobile apps such as Photopills or SkyView Lite, to plan for the right conditions such as moon phase and Milky Way position. Pick a spot where urban light pollution is the lowest using a light pollution map like [djllorenz.github.io/astronomy/lp2006/overlay/dark.html](https://djllorenz.github.io/astronomy/lp2006/overlay/dark.html).

**Star Trail Photography:** Star trail photography shows the movement of the stars across the night sky as our





*“Star Trails, Texas”*

planet spins on its axis. The North Star (Polaris) is the only star in the Northern Hemisphere that stays relatively in the same spot all night. All the other stars appear to revolve around it.

A long exposure of several hours would show a circular pattern of the stars around Polaris, however, an exposure of several hours would also introduce a lot of noise into your photo. Most photographers take several shorter exposure photographs (approx 15-30 seconds) using the intervalometer that some cameras have or an external one that is attached to the camera and controls the shutter. After the shoot you can use software such as StarTrails (free) from [startrails.de](http://startrails.de) that will blend all the photos to produce the final star trail photo.



*“Star Trails, Joshua Tree National Park, CA”*

**Aurora Borealis Photography:** Possibly the most challenging of the night sky photographs is the northern lights. It is difficult to predict their date, time, and location. Use this site: [aurora-service.eu/aurora-forecast](http://aurora-service.eu/aurora-forecast) to research the nightly probability, intensity, and location of the aurora borealis around the world. Sometimes the northern lights can seem a bit dull to the naked eye but a long exposure of 30 seconds or more can result in colours more vivid than the eye can see.

**March 2020**

**Landscape Photography Under a Full Moon:** While a long lens can be used to take photos of the rising full moon, you can also point the camera in the opposite direction and take stunning photos of the landscape that is lit up by the moon’s light and, yet, has the dark starry skies.

It’s best to do this in areas with no urban lights as they can overpower the moonlit landscape. Approach this type of photography as you do sunset photos. However, adjust the settings to take longer exposures if you want to incorporate car light-trails into your shots.



*“Moonlit Arch Rock, Valley of Fire State Park, NV”*

**Post-Processing:** Like many photographers I shoot in RAW format so that I have the ability to edit in a larger colour space with more native information. While every photo requires its own custom editing, I generally start in Adobe Lightroom by using lens correction, setting the colour temperature to 3600, and tint to +30. Next, I reduce the black point a bit to make the sky darker and then I slightly increase the vibrance and saturation.

If I am editing a Milky Way photo, I add a radial filter and centre it over the galactic core and increase the brightness, contrast and saturation.



*“Moonlit Car Trails, Zion National Park, UT ”*

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# VCC's 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

The Victoria Camera Club is celebrating its 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary during our 2019–20 season. The Club was formed in 1944 by the merging of the Victoria Photographic Society and the Civil Service Camera Club (one of the first camera clubs in BC). From those small beginnings the Club has grown to be one of the largest and most active camera clubs in Canada with over 260 members. The Club is a member of three arts and photography organizations, the Victoria Arts Council (VAC), the Canadian Association for Photographic Art (CAPA) and the Photographic Society of America (PSA).

The clubs merged to provide enough resources to run an annual PSA sanctioned print salon in Victoria. The first salon was held in 1942 by the Victoria Photographic Society and continued from 1945 until 1966 under the auspices of the Victoria Camera Club. At the final salon in 1966 a total of 648 prints and 2099 colour slides were submitted. By 1946 the club was running regular field trips and the first issue of *Close-Up* was published in 1946.

The Club participates in national and international competitions and salons and supports an extensive internal competition program. It is also one of the few clubs that still publishes a printed magazine or newsletter which, together with a vibrant website, is a major means of communication with members and the public. Both the magazine and website are consistent award winners in the PSA competitions for club publications.

*Close-Up*, the Club's magazine, is published nine times a year with 28 or 32 pages per issue, with approximately half printed in colour. All material in *Close-Up* is written by members, averaging over 50 authors per year.

The website provides a timely way for presenting Club information and news. Content includes, information on meetings, schedules, guest speakers, workshops, field trips, print shows, publications, as well as competition results, member discussion forums and image galleries. Over 100 feature galleries were hosted in the 2018-2019 year. The Club also supports social media including Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Flickr.

Our Field Trips program offers a range of opportunities for Club members to go out on weekdays and weekends to shoot with other photographers. This is intended to encourage members to practice and improve their skills, try new things, and connect with others while doing what they love. Members have the chance to exchange tips, talk shop and just get out and have some fun. The program endeavours to cater to as many different genres

of photography as possible, from nature and wildlife to night photography, architecture, sports, and macro, with a good variety of locations, both local and further afield. There is also the occasional special access opportunity to locations not open to the public or outside of public access times. In addition to local trips, weekend trips to Tofino and Hornby Island are organized every year.

The Club's Workshop and Special Interest Group (SIG) program is provided to broaden members' photographic knowledge, camera skills and post-processing ability. There are currently two active SIGs, Nature and Creative that meet monthly through most of the year. The workshop program covers a range of topics from the basic elements of photography to advanced techniques in both shooting and post-processing. Topics include basic camera operation, composition, macro, wildlife, wildflowers, architecture, flash, portraiture, street photography, creating slide shows, creative, night photography, pets, black and white photography, and post-processing software. Workshops are presented by VCC members and, on occasion, professional photographers.

We have been successful in keeping the field trip, workshop and SIG programs going strong, due in large part to the strong spirit of volunteering within the Club.

The Club enters several external competitions and shows each year. In some of these, members may also enter as individuals. In addition to these external competitions, the Club has an extensive internal competition program with 19 categories in three levels monthly for six months followed by an annual competition for "the best of the best" submitted during the year. Most months more than 200 digital images and prints are submitted.

Three formal meetings are held each month from September to April, with approximately 80 to 100 members attending. Competition Night is when the previous month's competition images are shown. Presentation Night provides the opportunity for a formal presentation by an invited guest, often a professional photographer or artist, and Members' Night has members share their personal projects or give short technical presentations.

The Club mounts an annual Print Show, lasting two to three weeks, showcasing members' work to the public. This grew out of the former presentation, "Photographers in Action", a one-night event presenting members work in a slide-show format.

Each year, members volunteer their time to lead events and services. This contributes a great deal to the success of the Club. Currently over 60 members volunteer their time to organize and manage our events and services.

## How I Did It

### Walking Through a Sliding Door

by Deb Thurlbeck

It's Tuesday, so it's time to meet with like-minded photographers at the Bay Center. Although we meet twice a month in downtown Victoria and walk the same streets, we have a different theme each time. Today's theme is "Take a Look through Doors and Windows".

The challenge is to interpret the theme in our own way and find different or eye-catching scenes in a very familiar area and post them on the Club's Gallery Page. Following the shoot, I find it very interesting to scroll through each week's gallery to view the diversity of photos taken by our group.



I went to the Atrium building downtown as it usually provides interesting opportunities. I found a spot positioning myself to catch people to be framed in the doorway walking in from the street. I didn't have to wait long before I captured this photo.

After the day's shoot, I reviewed my photos and selected my choices to post. I liked the composition in "Walking Through a Sliding Door" so I bought the photo into Lightroom to process it. After some tweaking including straightening as the photo was taken handheld, I exported it into NIK Color Efex to add some filters. I wanted to bring out the details and textures in the wood bench, floor and foliage so I used Detail Extractor. Then added Contrast and Brilliance/Warmth to bring out the colors. With each filter, I adjusted the sliders to get the effects that I was trying to achieve, but I was also mindful of over-processing. This is where all the fun and creativity happen, taking an ordinary scene and transforming the photo into finished art.

## Around We Go

by Don Piper

Once again, the Camera Club came up with another great field trip. This time Rilla Ballantyne organized "The Magic of Christmas" at Butchart Gardens. It takes the crew at Butchart almost three months to install all the lights for this beautiful display. We arrived just before dusk, got ourselves set-up, then headed out into the gardens at dark.



I have always loved the "blur" effect and have been with Club members in the past when we have used "motion blur" as the technique. Moving the camera up and down or from side to side at different speeds creates lovely images. Also rotating the zoom lens in or out creates spectacular "burst" effects.

This image was created by rotating my Nikon Z7 in a short circular motion about 20 degrees in both directions as the shutter is released. My settings for this shot were: 0.5 sec at f11 with an ISO of 640. I used my regular 24-70 mm, f4 lens at 34 mm.

During daylight hours this would be more difficult as it is harder to slow the shutter down enough make the movement before the shutter closes, however, at night I was able to get more movement happening. It took me many shots to get the timing and release right. I set my shutter release delay to two seconds then started the movement before the shutter opened. This created a smoother motion prior to release.

During the day a Neutral Density filter like a ND4 (0.6) 2-stop or a ND8 (0.9) 3-stop filter would give you more time with the shutter open, thus more movement can be shown.

So, I would encourage you to leave the tripod in the car and get out there and shake that camera around.



# Shoots Around Victoria

## Playing at Playfair Park

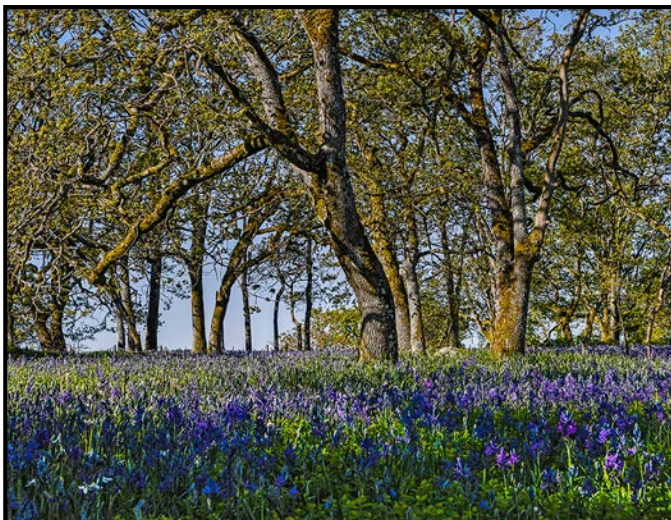
by Lorna Shaw

Spring and flowers are hands-down my best season! In Victoria that seems to start particularly early, with snowdrops in January. From then until June, there is an impressive lineup of white fawn lilies, shooting stars, camas, and rhododendrons, my favourites. All of these lovelies can be found in my own garden but for true splendour and unlimited photographic opportunities I head to Playfair Park. This park has had the love and toil of volunteers since 1956. It's showing that love now!

This small Saanich gem can be reached from three directions, two of which have plenty of parking. The main parking lot at 1198 Rock Street is just off Quadra Street. At first glance, the wide-open grassy area makes it appear like a family dog park with a kid's playground. For those not in the know, that's fine by me as it keeps it a locals' treasure.

This is probably the most pampered and spectacular Garry Oak meadow in the city. The season can start early in March and go into April, even May, depending on the weather. The prime time lasts about seven to ten days and it is best to get photos just before its peak. Once some of the blooms start dying off it's not as pretty.

Park a little further in from the main lot and start walking along the outermost trail of the Garry Oak meadow. You probably won't get far before wanting to pull out your camera and tripod (a must for this park) but consider doing a walkabout first. I often visit several times



*"Camas Meadow"*

each spring, with different bloom times, different lenses and at various times of the day. Morning is my preferred time. Take your 'pic' from macro for beautiful close-ups, 70-200 mm, and wide-angle lens shots to attempt to catch the full picture. I'm still working on using three to five bracketed shots of various exposures for HDR images, then merging them in Lightroom.

The Camas meadow image shows one such bracketed shot. It's the result of four photos with shutter speeds of 1/1250<sup>th</sup>, 1/640<sup>th</sup>, 1/320<sup>th</sup> and 1/160<sup>th</sup> second taken at ISO 800, f11, 70 mm lens on a Nikon D750.



*"White Fawn Lily"*

White fawn lilies are lovely flowers I've always found incredibly hard to capture. Last May, with Michael Murchison's words of wisdom, I was able to shoot my best-yet white fawn lily! This image was taken using a 105 mm macro lens on a tripod, at f7 and ISO 800, making it possible to boost the shutter speed to 1/800<sup>th</sup> second. This freezes the action enough to get a large portion of the flower in focus. I thought getting a macro lens would be enough, but no, there seems to always be a bit of a breeze for outdoor spring flowers. I'm learning to use a faster shutter speed to get what I want, or to use flash, something else I've been experimenting with.

I can't talk about Playfair Park without mentioning the rhododendrons. From early April to mid-June, there is a plethora of different varieties of rhodos on the south side of the park, some over 50 years old. Stroll along the winding paths to look at and smell them, before choosing a few to photograph. Blue bells, trilliums, pink snowdrops and more are nestled beneath the rhodos. In the morning, with dew and the right light, this park is my idea of perfection.

I am thankful for the many dedicated volunteers and the District of Saanich for making Playfair Park a flower photographer's dream. I encourage you to check it out this spring. Maybe I'll see you there.

# Ten Photography Tips

by Jill Turyk

I was asked to write about ten photography tips that I wish I had known about ten years ago. I have selected a broad range so that photographers of all experience levels may find something that they can put to use.

## The Basics

1. **Take Courses:** I am a fortunate person to have had a wide variety of courses available to me and the time to take them. Both in-class and online education have been of benefit to me. Apart from learning the technical aspects of photography, they have shown me that there are different ways of doing things, and that there may not be only one right way. This has given me confidence to break those technical “rules” after having learned them and to put my own signature on my images.
2. **Practice, Practice, Practice:** This comes under different names, such as “get out there!”, “you gotta go out shooting”, etc. This seems somewhat obvious, however, I know of many people who continually take courses and read about photography, but never put the things they learn into practice. Courses really pay off more when you take the time to experiment with the specific things that you have been taught. Get the most out of your education by driving those facts home.
3. **Think Before You Shoot:** I have had opportunities to shoot with advanced and professional photographers. When the vehicle stops, the less experienced photographers are out the door, into the trunk, grabbing every piece of equipment they brought. Up go the tripods, on go the cameras, then, “Click, Click, Click!”. Meanwhile, those more experienced photographers are looking around, watching the light, listening for wildlife, and planning their shoots. Eventually they find their preferred set-up locations. By then they know what they want to do. They pull out the appropriate lens, set up their cameras deliberately and, above all, do so successfully. The others have filled their cards with many copies of the same shot. The pros saw their shot in their mind’s eye first, and then set about to create it.
4. **Know What You Are Trying to Say:** This follows nicely on the heels of number 3. What are you trying to say, convey, demonstrate, and show your viewer? What is the point of the image? If you do not know that before you shoot, you will likely end up with simple snapshots.

## Things That Have Saved Me Grief

5. **Safety First:** My filter saved my lens. I don’t want to dwell on the embarrassing details, but it was a foolish act by me and I am very thankful to have had the filter on at the time. I also recommend diligent use of the neck strap, regular tightening of the tripod plate into the camera or lens, and reflective tape on the lower part of your tripod legs for night shoots.
6. **Leave the Doors Open:** Here is another one I learned the hard way. When I remove a battery or memory card from my camera, I leave the access door open. That way when I pick up my camera next, I notice that something is missing. I admit to the time I got out in the field only to find no card in the camera and no extras on me. That was a very long time ago and I needed to do it only once.
7. **Reset:** Put your settings back to your personal default before you put the camera away. In my case this is mirror down, ISO 100, f8 with Auto Focus and Image Stabilization on. Not only will this shorten your next prep time, but, also, you will be ready with a quick response to spontaneous and fleeting photo opportunities in between.

## Out of the Comfort Zone

8. **Try Different Genres:** We tend to get comfortable with one or two genres. Landscapes, portraits, wildlife, whichever it is, it becomes second nature. It takes courage to cross boundaries and try different kinds of photography, but it provides learning experiences that can be applied everywhere. I have tried many genres and my current challenge is wildlife. I have learned a lot about my camera and photography in the process. I feel like a novice again. It is at once both frustrating and gratifying.
9. **Shoot with a Variety of People:** Many of us go out shooting with the same photographers, or alone, most of the time. While this has its advantages, such as familiarity, similar expectations and likely similar experience levels, getting out with a variety of people has its own advantages. You will have an opportunity to see different types of equipment, see different styles of shooting and experience different locations. All photographers have something to teach others.
10. **Enter Competitions:** I saved the best of my ten tips until last. Competing is a great way to improve the quality of your photography. It gives you a reason to put out the best product that you can, it gives you feedback on your work and it allows insight into where you stand among your peers. It has certainly improved my photography in the past couple of years.



# The “Look” of Images

by Richard James

Much is said about the “look” of artwork. This may refer to a particular artistic style or technique, or some inherent visual feature of the material. On page 6 in this issue there is an article on flower images in black and white. These images were all produced from digital files that leads use into a comparison of the “look” of digital images versus that of traditional silver-based printed images. Film images have grain, digital images have noise. While often considered similar, these are very different features of the image. In film, grain is randomly sized, spaced and oriented particles of metallic silver and is the image. High-speed film was inherently more grainy meaning larger grains due to the larger particles of silver required to produce a higher-speed film.

Digital images have two types of noise, pattern and random. The noise is both a variation in the recorded luminosity as well as the colour of the pixel. Some noise is inherent in electronic recording (as with “static” in music recordings) and is dependent on sensor parameters and temperature (a higher temperature of the sensor means that more noise is generated). The other source of noise is due to the electronic amplification required to “increase the ISO rating”. This does not make the sensor any more receptive to low levels of light but amplifies the signal that has been generated together with the associated electronic noise. Digital noise is visible as coloured or brighter specs within the image.

If you go back and look at prints made from film, you will see that they have a particular look that is in part dependent on the grain. In digital photography you can emulate the grain patterns for some specific films using software such as the NIK suite of programs and some image editors. There is nothing wrong with noise in digital images as long as it’s not excessive. A totally noiseless image may just not look right. Your image editing software should have functions dealing with noise suppression but be aware that it is probably suppressing some useful detail as well so use with care. With current sensor technology noise suppression is really only needed at ISO settings that are significantly higher than the “base ISO”.

Artistic style and technique are sometimes closely interwoven and used to express content. For example, the well-known Vancouver street photographer, Fred Herzog, made many of his images early or late in the day with low lighting angles. Combine this with the era in which much of his work was done, the 1950s to 70s, and you see his view of the streetscape as it was

then, which is very different to what it is now. As an example many of his streetscapes show receding lines of storefront banners above the sidewalk. What do we see now? We don’t see the protruding banners. The business signage now is generally flat on the face of the building, giving a totally different impression of the same street with less of a sense of perspective through the diminishing sizes and overlap of the signs.

Another combination of artistic style and technique is exhibited by the “Group f/64” which evolved in Southern California in the 1930s and included photographers such as Ansell Adams and Edward Weston. They espoused sharply-focused and carefully framed images differentiating their work from the then popular “pictorialist” style where images were more manipulated to express the makers viewpoint. Much of this work was done in black and white using 8x10” view cameras although some, including Ansell Adams, also used 35 mm Kodachrome film. The look of these images is quite distinctive, a large depth of field due to the small lens aperture generally used and well-graded grey scales from dark shadows with detail to white highlights and detail throughout the tonal range.

Intrinsic in the “look” of images is lighting. Whether it is from the old masters such as Rembrandt (sidelight, with a highlight on the shadow side of the face to the side of the nose) or early/late in the day low-angle landscape lighting. Lighting is critical to your images. Most subjects look flat and uninteresting in uniform, non-directional lighting with no shadows. On the other hand, we can now deal much more easily with high dynamic range images using digital cameras than we ever could with film. We have much greater flexibility in editing our images to show the scene as we imagine it rather than as purely a documentary record of it.

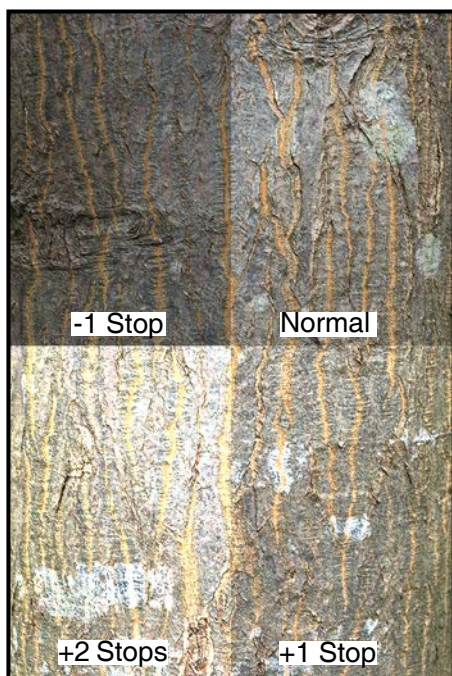
It is well known that classic photographers such as Ansell Adams manipulated their images to achieve the effect that they wanted to show. It started with the exposure and continued in developing of the negative and was followed by techniques such as dodging and burning in printing the images to ensure that the final product had the desired detail throughout the tonal range. Today, with camera sensors capable of recording a much wider range of luminosity than film ever did, and the powerful editing techniques available to us, we can more than emulate these techniques. Because they were individually-printed, each image made from a film negative had at least subtle differences in the way they were printed. With digital imaging we now have the ability to produce identical copies and to present them in different media, print, projected on the screen, or displayed on a computer monitor.

# Beginners' Corner: What is ISO?

by Josée Ménard

With aperture and shutter speed covered, this month's article on ISO now completes the exposure triangle of our Exposure Series. The acronym ISO comes from the International Organization for Standardization. The former ASA and DIN speed ratings were replaced by the ISO designation. The well-known ASA values such as 100, 400, and so on, continued to be used. So, what is a photographer to do with these numbers? How does one decide between 100 and 1000? Does it really matter?

Well, ISO does matter when aiming for correct exposure and image quality. ISO values represent a sensitivity setting for the camera sensor. Thanks to the diameter of the lens iris, which is the selected aperture, and to the length of time the shutter will be open, the camera sensor will receive light to be recorded by the pixels. This creates a correctly exposed image ready for viewing on the LCD screen. Should one of the triangle components (aperture, shutter speed, and ISO setting) not be properly set, their interdependent relationship will be unbalanced. Underexposure, overexposure, or a nagging "nearly there" will most likely result.



*"ISO Comparison"*

Where do you start? It is time to plan your image. Think of the lighting you wish to have. Once on site, you will need to adjust to the light that you have to work with. Think of your equipment; the lens type, tripod, hand-held, etc. Think of the scene and subject. Is there motion to freeze? What do you wish to achieve? Trust all of

what you have learned. Start by setting the aperture, then the shutter speed. Next, set the ISO as close as you can to the base value for your camera. This value is specific to your camera and has been set by the manufacturer, such as 64, 100 or 200. This will give the best quality image and the least noise.

Why is this setting an issue? Noise is the trade-off for using a higher ISO setting. The higher the ISO setting, the more noise is visible. (See page 25, paras 2-3 for some background.) The good with the bad you can say. On the other side of the coin, when you maintain a constant aperture and shutter speed, each doubling of the ISO value doubles the brightness.



*"ISO Flexibility"*

With a higher ISO, more aperture and shutter speed combinations are now possible in low light or in hand-held camera situations, as well as indoors and at sporting events. As you can see above, raising the ISO setting a bit allows for a good exposure at the desired aperture and shutter speed combination.

Plan a practice session to test your camera's noise levels as you change ISO values. Evaluate when you start to see noticeable noise. Some say it looks similar to speckles, not so smooth anymore. Using the same scene, keep the aperture fixed and adjust the shutter speed for correct exposure while increasing the ISO with each image. Upload your images checking for noise. Make a note of the maximum ISO not requiring too much post-production noise reduction. Reducing noise can easily be overdone. In the field, ISO decisions will be easier.

Deepen your understanding of the interrelationship between aperture, shutter speed and ISO. Before you know it, you will be making intuitive decisions about which of the three components to adjust.

Take time as well to understand how your post-processing software reduces noise. What are the tools? What is the process? What is too much? What is too little?



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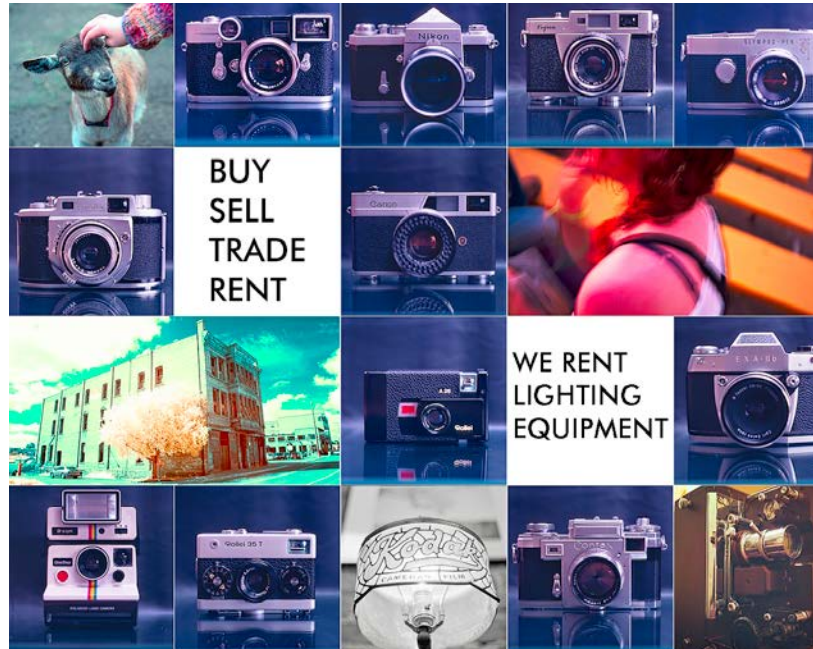


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