



# Close-Up

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Member Portfolio: Lorna Zaback

B&W Mode in Digital Cameras

Rodeo Photography

Winston Directs Another Shoot

Beginners' Corner: Sorting Them Out

... and more



Moonlit Ride by Bob Gray



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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 November 2016 issue is Oct.5<sup>th</sup> 2016.  
 Editor, Richard James, e-mail to [newsletter@victoriacameraclub.ca](mailto:newsletter@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:

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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.

### Thursday, September 8<sup>th</sup>: Competition Night

Presentation: Introduction to Competitions. The theme for September is "Automobile Detail." The deadline for submission is September 8<sup>th</sup> for prints, 10<sup>th</sup> for digital.

### Thursday, September 15<sup>th</sup>: Presentation Night

"A Photographer's Guide to New Zealand's Great Walks, Geography and Wildlife" by member Trevor Hardy.

### Thursday, September 22<sup>nd</sup>: Members' Night

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

### Thursday, October 6<sup>th</sup>: Competition Night

The September Competition results will be presented with a Judges' review. The theme for October is "Textures/Patterns." The deadline for submission is Oct 6<sup>th</sup>.

### Thursday, September 15<sup>th</sup>: Presentation Night

"Creative Portraiture" by internationally known fine art photographer Von McKnelly.

### Thursday, September 22<sup>nd</sup>: Members' Night

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

## Workshop and Field Trip Highlights

Basic Digital Photography & Basic Lightroom Workshops.

Whale Trip and Moss Street Market Shoot.

**Cover image: Moonlit Ride by Bob Gray.** This shot was taken at the Calgary Stampede in 2015 during a workshop. This was taken at the end of a long day of shooting, but the light was so very interesting that we had to take a few shots. Bob composed his shot, and waited for a suitable group of people to come by at the proper time to capture this image. This was taken with a 12MP GF1, (Micro 4/3 camera) with a 20 mm prime lens at f5, 1/200sec., ISO 400, exp comp of -1.33 stops.

## President's Message

Is it the camera, the photograph or you? The VCC was born in 1944 from the union of the Victoria Photographic Society and the Civil Service Camera Club. The reasons for the choice of "camera" over "photographic" are lost in the past, but I find something about that choice intriguing. Then, there is that final word, "you." Freeman Patterson said, "The camera points both ways. In expressing your subject, you also express yourself." So which word best captures the essence of why you participate in our club?

I have always been fascinated by the camera technologies of the times. It started with my father's vintage fold-out Kodak 120. Personally, I progressed from a basic box camera to 35 mm bodies, to a twin-lens reflex and, finally, to the current age of digital cameras. Retirement, in 1998, brought me face-to-face with the digital revolution. I opted for a Nikon Coolpix 900, with its massive 1.3 megapixels over the 35 mm SLRs then on the market. A digital bridge camera, two DSLRs and, ultimately, three mirrorless micro-four thirds bodies and an assortment of lenses found their way into my den. Yes to cameras!

But what of photographs? Viewing and making images has always been my passion. In the early days, waiting for a delivery by post of one's prints could be excruciating. Nowadays, there is instant gratification. Seeing what one has captured and making something of it is the payoff for all that went before. I would have had no trouble had our club taken on the moniker "photographic."

So what does this have to do with that final word, "you?" What do we shoot and why? That may not be straightforward or obvious. Circumstances, experiences and opportunities all come into play. In the digital age there are essentially no restrictions on the number of images which may be captured. I first took to venturing on foot from home, seeking as I have often said, "rusty objects in back alleys." That spoke to my preference for close-ups and abstracts. Perhaps that says something about me. I'll leave it to you to be the judge of that as you view some of my first-year favourites on my Flickr site at: [www.flickr.com/photos/131347016@N07/albums](http://www.flickr.com/photos/131347016@N07/albums).

That's my story; what is yours? One of the joys of participating in our club is to interact with fellow members and, over time, to learn more of your stories. Will you emphasize your gear, your images or your personal motivations and passions? For me it is about all three elements, melded together into the pursuit of a most positive hobby.

*Garry Schaefer, President.*

*by Meherzad Romer*

“Just stop taking pictures for a minute and try to live in the moment!”

I hear my partner saying that all too often, and it got me to start thinking about how photography is affecting my experience. Was I too focused on getting the perfect shot and not “living in the moment?”

I’m guessing this is a common complaint many of us photography enthusiasts have heard from our friends or loved ones. Why is it that when we see something that is awe inspiring, the first thing we think about is reaching for the camera? I tend to become focused on getting the shot and to that end, I change my experience from enjoying the moment to the experience of photographing it.

As outdoor photographers, most of us tend to take our cameras with us whenever we are headed out of the door. We have also conditioned our brains and trained our eyes to be constantly on the lookout for a scene that is worth photographing. Always on the lookout for our next great shot, we may be jeopardizing the enjoyment of experiencing our outing. We may have a much more enjoyable experience if we were not taking photographs. When I am out taking photographs I am never really immersed in my environment, instead the forefront of my thoughts are always about visualizing possible photographs. It’s as if I am seeing the world with blinders on. Sometimes I leave my camera at home so I don’t distract myself from enjoying my surroundings. Of course that’s when the figurative unicorn walks out from under the figurative rainbow and I am left kicking myself for not bringing my camera!

Perhaps photography isn’t ruining your experience, but instead it’s giving you a different experience than if you were there without your camera. Our experiences are affected by the state of our minds and we could be distracted by any number of things going on in our lives, and perhaps taking photos helps us escape some of those distractions and become more observant of our surroundings. Perhaps without a camera we would be too distracted by our everyday lives to really see the things we would if we had our cameras with us.

One local company is providing a service where you get to enjoy your vacation camera free. For \$350 US you can have a local photographer follow you to two destinations for an hour and discretely take photos of you while you sightsee. This is supposed to free you from

the burden of taking the picture yourself or worse yet, asking a passerby to take a photo with your camera. Would you be able to enjoy your time more if you were not constantly trying to take photos yourself? Would you be able to forget that there is a photographer nearby or would you be too aware and self-conscious to really relax? Would a hired photographer really be able to capture the vision you had for your vacation photos?

So how does one go about experiencing the moment as if they weren’t there taking photographs and also compose and execute taking a good photograph? I started to ask myself how I could find that happy medium between photography and my ability to “live in the moment.”

What I have started doing is keeping my camera in my backpack for the first several minutes when I arrive at my destination. I sit in one place letting my senses experience the moment; I allow my ears to hear the sounds, my eyes to explore the scene, feel the wind on my skin, and breathe the fresh air. If I am in a peaceful environment then I will attempt to meditate for a short period of time which helps me slow down my mind and remove the pressure I have put on myself to take pictures. I find this helps me enjoy my surroundings and I have found that it also enhances my ability to compose better photos. Meditation helps me notice photogenic elements in my surroundings that I may have otherwise overlooked. I am more mindful of the photo I take, focusing on my technique and the composition as well as the camera settings before clicking the shutter button. In this way I have not only improved my photographs, I have also greatly reduced the number of photos I take and also the time required in post-processing them on the computer. The photos that result from such a shoot end up meaning a lot more to me because I remember what it was like to be there.

Next time you are out taking landscape or nature photographs, once you get to your location I suggest keeping your camera packed away and just sit in a spot and take in your surroundings. Then try a meditation technique that is familiar to you for 10-15 minutes before taking out your camera. If you don’t know how to meditate simply close your eyes and focus on your breath going in and out of your lungs as you inhale and exhale. Other thoughts will come to you, and if they do, simply acknowledge that they are important and that you will pay attention to them later, then go back to focusing on your breathing. I hope following this advice will help you make your trips more enjoyable but also create better photos, and ones that are more meaningful to you.



by Peter Reid

A macro (large) photograph means an image close to and up to “life size,” or about 1:4 to 1:1, (.25x to 1x) on the sensor. Micro (small) means a photograph of even smaller objects, enlarged so the image is larger than “life size”, expressed as more than 1:1, 2:1, etc. (1x, 2x etc.). There is an excitement in micro photograph when the photographer sees more than the naked eye can see. I am discussing the technique of hand-holding micro photography, disposing of the tripod which almost every photographer feels is an absolute necessity.



There are two different styles of macro/micro photography. The first style is a “documentary style” where the photographer attempts to get everything in sharp focus by using small apertures such as f16 or f22. The background can be out of focus. The “abstract style” is much looser, having minimal content in focus, though it is essential to get something in sharp focus. The in-focus area is razor-thin using large apertures such as f1.4, or f2.8. A very delicate, pleasant and creamy rendering of the out-of-focus areas is essential in this type of photography, as is a lack of distractions in the background. Hand-held micro photography can be easily done at these large apertures by pushing the camera to its limits.

The photographed object has to be simple, colourful, and have impact. It is one case where the old adage “90% of photos are taken from too far away” definitely does not apply. The images I have liked taking include flowers (the inside of a single bloom, with focus on the

pistil and stamens), chasing bees and bugs, and water droplets at any time of the year.

### Equipment

For my micro/macro work I use a Pentax DSLR with a 100 mm f2.8 macro lens. But my favourite lens is an old Pentax \$25 screw mount 50 mm f1.4 lens. Used prime lenses like this are readily available. Also, all camera manufacturers make fast 50 mm lenses. It is much easier to do hand-held micro photography with small and light prime lenses than with large and clunky zoom lenses.

There are two other essential pieces of equipment that I use in the world of micro photography, extension tubes and bellows (sources: Kenko, Novaflex, Photodiox, or Camera Traders and others). Several stacked extension tubes, or bellows, move the lens away from the camera body, enabling me to enter the macro world. I always use manual focus, moving the camera to get the right part of the subject in focus. The lens itself does not need any automation. You can use any lens on any body, such as a Nikon lens on a Canon, or a Pentax lens on either. An adapter to fit the lens/tubes/bellows onto the camera may be needed if using a different make of lens than the DSLR. I use a \$20 screw-to-bayonet adapter on my camera body. I have also taken the glass out of a broken 2x tele-extender to convert it into an extension tube.



I have several combinations to get into micro mode, listed in order from favourite to least favourite.

1. A 50 mm lens on a bellows: The rig is light and easy to use. With the lens focused as close as it can with the bellows fully extended, I get 3x magnification.

2. A 50 mm lens on a set of 3 extension tubes (total 50 to 100 mm): I use my "fast 50" lens, or a bayonet AF lens. With the lens extended as much as it can, I get 1.5x magnification.
3. A 100 mm macro lens and a set of 3 extension tubes: With the lens focused to 1:1 I get a 2x magnification. This is #3 not #2 because of the extra weight and reduced manoeuvrability.
4. A 100 mm macro lens by itself, which gives a 1x magnification when focused as close as it will go: A modern macro lens, actually changes focal length at close focus, becoming about a 70 mm lens. Another trick I have used is to add a 1.4/2x tele-extender to my macro lens for extra magnification to 1.4/2x.
5. I have not used the following method but Tom Hauer gave an interesting VCC Members' Night presentation this spring. Using a simple adapter, a lens is reversed and becomes a macro/micro lens. The wider the angle of the lens, the greater the magnification. The front of the lens will be very close to the subject. There is no way to resize or easy way to focus the image. Set the aperture to wide open.
6. You can reverse one prime lens on top of the other. The magnification is the difference between the lens, for example a 50 mm lens on a 200 mm lens is 4x magnification. They make adapters to do this.

### Taking Photographs

When taking my photographs, I set the lens on manual focus with the lens focused as close as possible. I set the aperture wide open, the ISO to 100, and the camera to aperture-priority. On a sunny day my shutter speed is fast enough to hand-hold and keep a sharp image. I find I do not need vibration reduction/image stabilization, which does not seem to me to make much difference at these close distances.

These settings can change with your own experience. I feel it is best to begin at maximum magnification and, when less is needed, change the bellows extension or remove an extension tube segment.

Often I am on my hands and knees. I chase the light. If the light is not where I want it I move somewhere else. I do not use flash. As the subject matter is so small, such as a single bloom, there are masses of other blooms in a very small area which I can photograph instead. I am very close to my subject and often block the light, which causes me to move to another bloom. Often there is an interesting shadow from the pistil or

stamens which improves the photograph and demands extra exploration.

I focus by moving the camera very slightly; I move closer or further away taking at least half-a-dozen images of each chosen subject. The best focus point is elusive, and can only be recognized at full magnification on the computer screen. If the camera is parallel to the plane of a group of stamens, I can get several stamen heads with pollen in focus all at the same time.



As in bird-in-flight photography, the vast majority my of photos are throw outs. In a VCC shoot at Government House gardens, I was the only one tripod-less. Of the more than 917 photos I took, I had 40 keepers, or 1 in 23. Bring spare batteries and an extra memory card.

Taking photos while in live view might be slower than looking through the viewfinder, but is often easier to use when the camera is in an awkward position. I have used both methods successfully.

### Conclusion

I have no clear expectations of what I have actually captured. Once I have discarded all the obvious rejects, I am looking at a lovely set of images in Lightroom. As reading has taught our eyes to look at a photo left to right, sometimes a micro image looks better reversed, or even rotated.

I have made some very successful large enlargements of my micro photographs and have sold some of these prints. A favourite enlargement I have made was taken deep inside dandelion fluff.

If you are learning this technique do not bring a tripod, as it takes time to get the feel of this style of photography. Give this hand-held micro photographic technique a try; you will find it is very rewarding.





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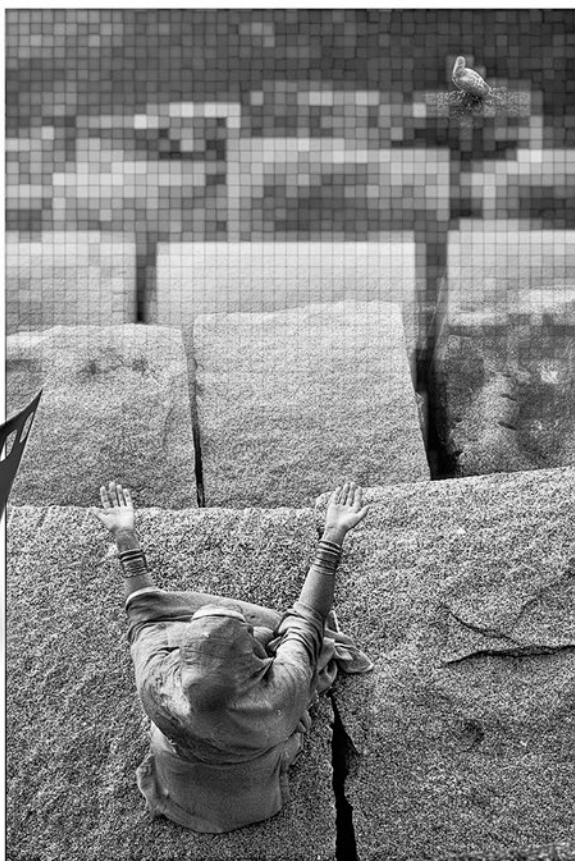
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## Framing and Cropping

by Richard James

What's the difference you may ask. Well, quite a bit really, but they are closely linked. For the purpose of this discussion, I will treat "framing" as how the image components relate to each other and what holds them together. "Cropping" is then how you trim the edges of the "as-shot" image to fit a particular format or aspect ratio. For example, a subject (landscape, building etc.) might be framed by an archway, doorway or window as the outer part of the image. The image may then be cropped to various aspect ratios such as 3:2 (normal 35 mm film), 4:5 (traditional photographic paper), 4:3 (our projector for competitions) or a video format such as 1080p (16:9), either in vertical or horizontal orientation.

When looking at the scene before you, or conceptualizing a studio shot, you also need to consider how the image might be used. Do you want a vertical, horizontal or square image, wide (1080p), more rectangular (4:5), or square. This decision is complex as you may not know how the image will end up being used. A useful strategy is to shoot both vertical and horizontal versions of the image. Consider different crops, rectangular or square and how they may impact the image contents. A useful tool here is a set of cardboard cutouts with 3:2, 4:5, 4:3 and square holes cut in them for previewing the scene.

If the image might be used in media that includes text, consider also the need to place text over it (think *Close-Up* cover) and the aspect ratio required. This might be 8.5" x 11", or square (*Close-Up* cover). This really needs a space that is free from important detail for the text. In this context, "think loose" don't crop too tightly in-camera. To give an editor flexibility, shoot several variations in position, viewing angle and cropping.

Remember, there is nothing "magic" about the 3:2 aspect ratio of 35 mm film or FX/DX sensors, it is simply an old movie film format on its side (24 mm x 16 mm) giving a 36 mm x 24 mm image area. There is nothing magic about video formats such as 16:9 either. The best format is the one that fits the image content.

What is important though is to make the best use of the space in the image to maximize its impact without "dead space" with no important detail, but not cropped so tightly that the important contents are "crammed in." In this context it is important to leave room for the subject, if a person or animal/bird etc., to "look into" the image with space in front of it.

## Useful Accessories

by Richard James

Here is a miscellany of bits and pieces that are useful to have around.

Now that summer is nearly over, do you have a "rain-coat" for your camera? There are professional models available from several manufacturers, but there is always the plastic bag solution. Take a clear plastic bag, cut a hole in the end and secure it around the lens hood with an elastic band. Then access the controls from the open end.

A plastic sheet (building vapour-barrier material) or closed-cell foam mat (Ensolite etc.) is useful for keeping dry when kneeling or lying down to shoot flowers, mushrooms, or birds on the ground or in the water.

Your slightly older-model camera does not have an artificial horizon built in. A two-axis spirit level solves that problem and aids you in getting the horizon truly level (even though it may not look level because it is receding across the frame...) and buildings vertical.

A red flashlight or headlamp is preferable when shooting at night, as it does not impact your night vision as much as white light does.

Small reflectors made from white card or covered with aluminum foil can throw sunlight or flash lighting under subjects such as mushrooms or flowers and open up the shadows. They can also be used to backlight subjects such as spider webs.

Translucent white acrylic sheet lit from behind can create a pure white background and backlight the subject at the same time.

When doing macro photography it is useful to have a set of clean-up tools to remove "foreign objects" from the subject. I carry a couple of small artists' paintbrushes, tweezers and a small needle.

Do you wish you had "nice dewy mornings" every time you shoot flowers? The solution is a small spray bottle of water. The finer the spray, the smaller the droplets will be.

Do you need coloured gels for you flash units? Clear plastic exercise book covers make good substitutes unless you are trying to match specific colours.



## Photographing Raw Food

by Pam Irvine

The Theme for the November competition is “Raw Food.” This is a great subject for a rainy day indoor shooting session. Search for “photographing fruit” online to see some imaginative examples of photographing food.

Figure out what fruit or vegetables (or other raw food) you are drawn to and then pick the freshest subjects. You will probably be photographing close up so even the tiniest flaws will show up. To make vegetables glisten, brush them with a little olive oil, or mist a salad with water. It will make them look fresher.

Pick a feature that you like. Is it the texture or the colour or the shape? Or something else? Find a way to focus the viewer’s attention on that feature.

Making the food the star is often a matter of carefully selecting a single large, diffused light source. Light skimming across it from slightly in front makes a salad look crisp, fresh, and more appealing to the eye.

Try different angles of view when shooting your food items such as from directly overhead, tilted, shooting into the edge of the plate or table, and so on. Get creative and try to show it in a different way than most people would see it. Get in as close as you can. Fill the frame with the food, so the viewer can almost taste it.

Choose a setting that enhances, but doesn’t distract from your food. Pick a simple, plain background or tablecloth. Before you start shooting, make sure there is no distracting clutter in the background (stray people, silverware, whatever). Using a wider aperture (smaller f-stop number) to blur the background may help.

Think about harmony in colour and shape. Add unexpected elements that break repetition.

Any props holding the food must be absolutely 100% pristine, clean, flaw free. When you shoot close up, like most food requires, any imperfections will show up. Be careful and meticulous (try using tweezers) because even the smallest misplaced crumb can divert the viewer’s attention from the subject.

Paying attention to lighting, background, camera angles, composition, exposure, and “wardrobe” can produce great portraits, but it can also produce mouth-watering results when carefully applied to food.

## Competition: What’s In It For Me?

I recently visited the Sooke Fine Art Show and saw many stunning pieces, including some great photography by our own club members. I know that we have some great images hiding on our members’ computers that could/should be shared with the whole art community.

Entering competitions can be a strong start in proving to yourself that you can be serious about your art. It shows that you are willing to put effort into it, and the harder you work at it, the better your photography will be. Competitions encourage us to strive higher and to reach outside of our comfort zones. This is why we try to come up with imaginative themes for our monthly competitions. Gallery director Angela DiBell says, “Participating in an art competition takes courage and is an act of faith and belief in one’s own talent and strengths. Anyone who simply enters the competition is a winner.”

There are many reasons to enter both the club competitions and external competitions:

**Sharing:** You can share your interests with other club members. Many discussions will start with someone commenting on an image seen in competition, not about the quality of the work but rather the subject.

**Confidence:** Winning breeds confidence. But putting yourself in a position where someone is judging your work requires a statement of confidence in your work and even in yourself as a photographer. Regularly entering competitions is a powerful way to inspire yourself to continuously try and improve.

**Evaluate your work:** You can get experience in viewing your photography as a body of work and practice considering your photos from an “outside” perspective.

**Support the local arts community:** I like to support the local clubs and art scene. If we don’t support them it is possible that some of these shows could disappear and diminish the presence of art in the area.

But what about the fear of rejection? What if a judge doesn’t like my work? Every judge is different; what one doesn’t like, the next may love. If we don’t enter competitions out of fear of rejection, then we will never know the “Pleasure of Success.” As artists, we do deserve that. An art teacher once said, “Remember, you are not in competition with others, you are in competition with only yourself and the last drawing, painting or photograph you did.”



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We are a team. Most couples think this way, but for my husband Bob and me, as photographers, we truly are. Our skills have progressed quickly over the years, as we rely on each other's vision and knowledge. He drives me to see more, and I scope out the technical details.

I began my journey into photography several years ago by shooting my two sons' football games. Not being terribly experienced with the sport, it was easier to follow the game behind a camera. Unfortunately, the digital cameras at the time weren't really up to the task, but Bob surprised me with a DSLR that first year. I soon became the official team photographer and carried on with that role for several years. I can still line up 40 boys in 10 minutes flat for team photos.

When Bob was diagnosed with cancer over 12 years ago, he could no longer participate in the numerous sports that he had enjoyed. He continued coaching football, and eventually, at my urging, picked up a camera too (I made the mistake of offering to share my lenses with him).

"Living in the moment" while studying a photographic subject lets you forget the past and future. One cannot worry about chemotherapy, or mortality when you are focused on capturing an image. It's the perfect blend of technical and artistic skills. Photography soon took centre stage in our lives and became our passion. We planned many trips around treatments, and lived life as it came, often deciding on a trip at the last minute. Eventually the boys moved on from football, but not before we had the joy of photographing several University football games.

Over the years, we have taken a few courses, gone on photo tours and very recently joined the Victoria Camera Club. Each experience has brought a little more finesse to our photography. We try to get out and shoot every day, although that often works into every couple of days, unless we're touring somewhere. We also shoot a great variety of subjects; there isn't much that we haven't tried. Bob's favourite subject is Sports. Something that moves quickly and requires a fast focus and fast decisions is Bob's forte. Last year we had the opportunity to shoot at the Calgary Stampede. The fast action was exciting, but there were also lots of opportunities for different styles of shots.

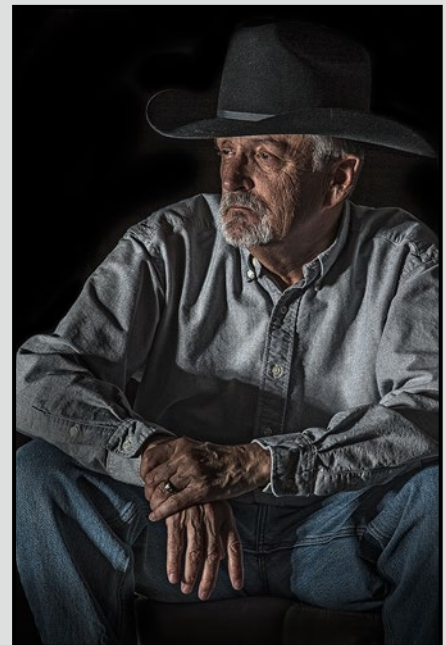
I enjoy many types of photography including Macro, Architectural, Event, Nature, Commercial, and Portrait as well as Sports photography. We both enjoy Wildlife photography together. Bob also has a knack of finding

the unusual. Just when you think you've seen everything a location has to offer, you see him zooming in on something that you've just walked on by.



*"Industrial" by Leah Gray*

This is a shot that was a team effort. The "theme" for the club that month was "industrial." As we were traveling through Hinton from Jasper, we ran across this great scene with billowing steam against dark skies. After exploring the various roads in the area, we determined that the best shot to be had was from the bridge, where there wasn't anywhere to pull over. Bob drove slowly along, as I shot this out of the truck window. Although it was a collaborative shot, I pressed the release, so it was MY shot!



*"Lost" by Leah Gray*

When we get bored, we shoot each other. This was a shot that Bob graciously posed for. I used a single Speedlight, and shot it in our hallway opening, where the light bounces off the walls. I am fortunate that he has an interesting and expressive face, and follows directions well.



*"Wild Card" by Leah Gray*

I was looking for something a little different than the usual "cowboy" shot. This is the type of shot that you have to act quickly on, get your focus nailed and hope that you have caught the moment. The backgrounds are always problematic, as you are generally shooting from a distance and it can be difficult to get separation through selective focus. I've darkened and desaturated the background a little in this image.



*"Let it Ride" by Bob Gray*

This photo was taken just after an eight second ride, and the pick-up man is coming in to get the cowboy. I find it interesting that although the horses look similar, they have very different jobs. I'm not sure which is easier, a full day of work, or eight seconds? To photograph this action, one needs to focus, and shoot quickly, all the while looking for a story. Bob and I had very little room to move around, and shot shoulder to shoulder at the rail with several other photographers. Access to this event was difficult.



*"With or Without You" by Bob Gray*

This was shot in Alaska. The stillness of the woman sitting is juxtaposed to all of the people milling around behind her. The piece is named "With or Without You" because, as usual, Bob could see a story in the chaos, where I found it too distracting, and passed on by.



*"Family Affair" by Bob Gray*

This was shot at the Calgary Stampede in 2015. We were given an assignment (workshop by William Allard, National Geographic) to shoot a "story." No cropping was allowed. This was one of the photos in Bob's presentation. Bill gave us some interesting insights to photography, along with some great stories, and lots of material to shoot over the two days we were there. This was a workshop that we originally booked with the sole purpose of gaining access to the Stampede Events. With the expertise of William Allard, the experience brought our photography up another "level." His critiques were well worth the price.





*"Hanging Out: Great Blue Heron" by Bob Gray*

We are always cruising by Esquimalt Lagoon, to see if there is anything happening photography-wise. Sometimes we stop for few minutes, and sometimes a little longer. This is Bob's shot of the "usual" bird-life there.



*"Kacao" by Leah Gray*

I've always loved horses, and own two older mares. Generally I never get an opportunity to photograph them, as I am usually laden down with halters and brushes. After participating in a studio shoot with the club, I had the idea of trying to photograph my mares with lights. I left the two mares loose in the barn with the doors closed, so it was fairly dark. Bob became my portable flash stand (holding the flash and Pocket Wizard wireless trigger) and danced down the barn aisle after each horse. Every

time a mare would move, the position of the flash had to move too. I had to try to capture each moment quickly before it disappeared. This was a real team effort! This is my 28 year old mare Kacao. She has a lovely chiseled face, and I was even able to get her ears pricked up.



*"Tulip" by Leah Gray*

Although I've always loved flowers, I look for ones that are also unusual, and more interesting to photograph. I can both enjoy them and use them as subjects. This tulip was shot at my kitchen table as I experimented with lighting of the petals. We shot a series of flowers to thank the nurses at the Cancer Clinic as real flowers are often too scented for the hospital (and photographs last longer!).



*"Maya" by Bob Gray*

This was a Deer Hound that we saw frequently on our walks. She is so beautiful and unusual, that one can't resist taking her photo. My photos were mostly of her wrapping herself around our legs and getting too close to shoot, but Bob managed to get down on her level and take this haunting profile.

Bob Gray passed away with his family at his side on August 4<sup>th</sup> after a courageous 12-year battle with cancer. He will be missed by his family, friends and club members. His memory will live on in his images.

I picked up my first camera as a young teenager and immediately fell in love with taking pictures. After working in film for a number of years, developing my own black and white prints in a makeshift bathroom dark-room, I took an extended break to make a “real” living and to raise my daughter.

It wasn't until I got my first DSLR in 2010 that I began to think of myself as a serious photographer. It felt as if I had suddenly rediscovered the passion of my youth, only now in the context of digital photography with its many more possibilities and challenges.

The past few years for me have been filled with experimentation, as I strive to find my “artistic voice.” Over time, I have drawn inspiration from photographers such as Henri Cartier-Bresson, Imogen Cunningham, Lillian Bassman, Edward Weston and Ernst Haas, from the work of artists (Georgia O'Keeffe, Mary Pratt and Emily Carr, to name a few), as well as from the many talented photographers I have met at workshops and through photography clubs in both Nanaimo and Victoria.

For me, photography is not only about attempting to create beautiful and inspiring images, it is also a journey of discovery. Roaming Vancouver Island's beautiful natural environment, Victoria's downtown streets full of whimsical nooks and crannies, Nanaimo's quaint inner harbour (and other locations in Canada, the USA and Europe in my travels), I have spent as much time as I could photographing landscapes, street scenes, various and sundry flora, fauna and found objects.

I often find myself seeing the world through the lens of a camera, my attention being caught by a delicately unfurling flower or a misty sunrise over distant hills. However, while I will always appreciate and endeavour to capture the beauty of the world around me with my Nikon, I often feel moved to go further, using some of these photographic images as the foundation for creating works of art that I hope convey the richness of colour, texture, and movement I am striving for.

Most of my composite work is created by importing images and textures into Photoshop CC. Once there, I experiment with layering, perhaps duplicating, inverting or “transforming” these, using various blend modes, some select filters, and adjustments to hue, saturation, brightness and exposure levels until I am reasonably happy with the result.

I am by no means a software expert but for anyone interested, there is a lot out there (in print and online) that

offers not only technical instruction and support, but also encouragement and inspiration. Approaching digital art with a sense of adventure, a desire to play and explore can, I have found, produce some surprising and gratifying results!



*“Life on the Edge”*

This image is of Ronda, a small town in southwestern Spain. These buildings are perched on the edge of a very deep gorge, el Tajo, (only the top one-third of it can be seen in the photograph) which separates the old city from its more modern sections. I loved this photograph as it was, but thought that overlaying it with a texture might enhance the drama and the ancient feel of the scene as I experienced it.



*“Pas de Deux #2”*

Initially, I layered a texture over this photo of a calla lily (there are actually two versions of the same flower taken from different angles and blended together) with the intention of softening the image. But as I continued to work on it in Photoshop, experimenting with some selective masking and a few other adjustments (saturation, hue, 90 degree rotation), what began to emerge was a more abstract piece. I was reminded of dancers, delicate, muted colours forming a background to the stronger, more vibrant shapes and lines that flowed intertwining through the centre.



Applying textures is just one way to enhance an image, making it more “artistic,” but there is a vast array of adjustments, filters, gradients, as well as opacity and blending options in Photoshop and ON1 software to experiment with. Nik and Lightroom also offer some interesting filters and presets. I often find myself moving between programs, occasionally ending up with a “happy accident.”

On the Road to Vleuten was taken through the front windshield of a car moving along a narrow country road in Holland. The morning light was rather dreary that day and the original image was a bland palette of greys. As I applied a gradient filter and made some hue and vibrance adjustments, this slightly eerie, emotionally evocative version materialized.



*“On the Road to Vleuten”*



*“Spring on Beacon Hill”*

This shot, taken in the Garry Oak meadow in Beacon Hill Park, I think takes on a surreal quality, having been “solarized” with a Nik filter and stretched a bit vertically

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(using “image transform” in Photoshop) to emphasize the willowy delicacy of the leafless trees.



*“Three of Pears”*

I often use several layers of texture, filters and/or adjustments (it’s all trial and error, really) to give a particular “look” to a creative piece. I layered this texture (the tile floor in the lobby of a Vancouver hotel where I was staying) and pattern (a Photoshop shape) over a simple still life of pears shot on my work table. Increasing exposure and decreasing sharpness on the pears, I think, helped achieve an ethereal quality and give an “old masters” feel to the end result.



*“Winged Dancer”*

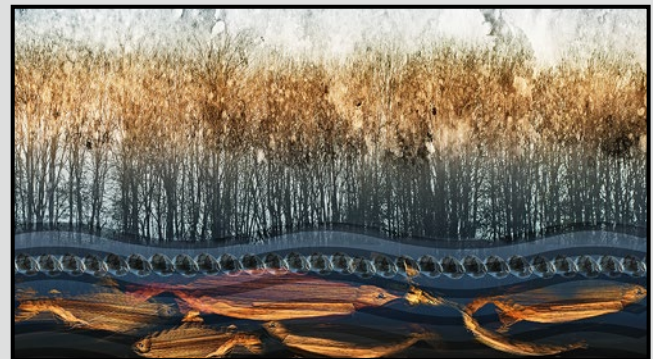
I happened to catch this Sandhill crane (at the Reifel Migratory Bird Sanctuary in Ladner) on a graceful upswing as he was drying his plumage. Although I tried out a series of adjustments and blend modes, this version, with the highly saturated magentas and oranges of his feathers complementing a softer green canvas,

was the one I liked best. I am still not completely sure about the leaf motif (upholstery fabric), but I wanted the final piece to have a light, airy feel and so have kept it.



*“Heart of Stone”*

I have sometimes used composite work to tell a story. I created Heart of Stone, a tribute to the complexity of human relationships, for a small Valentine’s Day show I participated in. Even a stone-cold heart may be harbouring something precious within it. The (duplicated) heart is a Christmas ornament, the “Celtic” triangle a small pewter box and the spiral in the middle is etched onto a small glass bead. The background is a rough concrete wall I photographed on one of my walks.



*“Undermined”*

I try to avoid the use of other people’s artwork in my creative pieces but, in this case, I made an exception. I had shot several photographs of the carved cedar salmon on Renaat Marchand’s beautiful “Ocean Fence” at Sooke Harbour House. I decided to incorporate these into what I thought might be a visual metaphor for the pressure humans exert on our shared environment and the need for stewardship. Undermined was the result and is a work in progress.



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by John Roberts

For many years now, (2000 up to a few years ago) the built-in Black and White modes in digital cameras have been pretty laughable as far as image quality went. Sure, your images were in tones of black and white, but the image quality was lacking contrast, and just seemed more like 10-shades of grey. This was very much like the look you got from the old C41 B&W film that you could develop in a colour lab; your images were B&W-ish... but unlike real B&W film, it lacked the feel and life you could get with the real deal.



However in the last few years digital cameras have improved markedly in the built in B&W mode. So much so, that someone like me, who actually likes using B&W film quite a bit, would actually start to use the mode more regularly. While some companies like Fuji give you some really good modes like the ACROS film simulation mode that is in their latest cameras; many others still just give you some basic settings, boost the contrast and sharpness a bit. Some even allow you to add the effect of using a colour filter (red, yellow, green, etc), which can help improve the quality of your B&W image, and give you a look closer to what you are trying to achieve.

However, many of them are still not perfect; in my opinion at least. Go ahead, call me old fashioned, and a luddite if you wish, (and while we are at it, get off my lawn) but I just want a digital camera that will give me the Ilford Pan-F+ contrast, or the texture/grain of Kodak Tri-X when developed in Rodinol. Is that too much to ask for?

And while yes, there are still just a few specific cameras, that are designed for B&W photography only, such as the Leica M Monochromes, they are just outlandishly priced, so not many people can afford them. But now that someone has created a B&W only digital camera,

it is only a matter of time before someone else does too which might put it into the realm of reasonably priced.

Which leads me to the next topic for this article; while some of you may know about some software tricks to make some decent B&W images, there are some of you who may not. One of my friends has been pretty good about building actions for Photoshop/Lightroom, and sure, some of them turn out quite well, but have not really come close enough for my taste.

A number of years ago, I came across some software called NIK Silver FX Pro, which is third party software that pretty much allows you to simulate many of the B&W films out there. Now this gives the closest to the look of B&W that I like. As many different B&W films are out there, this can give you the look for almost all of them. And when I first found it, I used the free 30-day trial. But it was something like \$US 200 to purchase the program, which seemed a little high for me, for something that was so niche and would only be used for something so specific. Then a few years ago, you could bundle a few of their programs together, all for a little more reasonable \$US 150.



Earlier this year, Google bought NIK, and recently, they have made the whole NIK system, completely free for everyone. Which is completely mind-blowingly amazing!

Not only do they have Silver FX Pro, they have six other amazing programs that they have added to their system, like Color FX Pro, HDR Pro, Analog FX Pro and others. You can have all of them today, for FREE! All you need to do is go to [www.google.com/nikcollection](http://www.google.com/nikcollection) and start exploring B&W images. So I highly recommend you go download them, right now.

Please contact me if you have any questions about this article at [jrphotographybc@mac.com](mailto:jrphotographybc@mac.com).



by Elaine Freedman

Five years ago the Medicine Hat Exhibition and Stampede Company asked the Medicine Hat Photography Club if they could provide a few volunteers to photograph the rodeo and chuck wagon racing events. I was very happy to volunteer. There are many other events for the volunteers to photograph, the parade, queen competition, midway events, night shows etc. but my favourite are the rodeo events. I especially like shooting the bull riding, bareback and saddle bronc riding and the women's barrel racing.



*"Chuckwagon Racer"*

I started going to the chuck wagon races and rodeo when I moved to Medicine Hat from Vancouver over 30 years ago. Chuck wagon racing is a separate event in Medicine Hat and is not held in conjunction with the rodeo as it is with the Calgary Stampede. The volunteer photographers are given an all-access pass and give the Stampede Company a selection of their best shots. Of course we also shoot for ourselves although we are not allowed to sell the photographs. For the chuck wagon races the Stampede Company want an action shot of each wagon to give to the sponsors. As the races take place over several days there are opportunities to get some good shots of the wagons in the afternoon and evening light.

When shooting any sporting event it is very important to understand what the rules are, where the participants are going to be and what kind of lighting conditions you can expect. Chuck wagon racing is pretty straight forward with the three participating wagons going around the barrels, outriders throwing a small barrel into the back of the wagon, then mounting their horses and following closely behind the wagons as they come over the finish line. Penalties are given for knocking down the barrels and having the outriders too far behind the wagons when they

cross the finish line. I like to be in the infield and use my 500 mm lens with a 1.4x teleconverter on a tripod so that I can shoot the wagons going around the barrels and also photograph the wagons and riders as they come across the finish line.

The rodeo is more complicated as there are a series of events which follow each other in the same order. It is important to know where to be to get the best shot and move before the next event starts. The bareback, saddle bronc and steer rider events have the animals coming out of the chutes with the riders staying on for eight seconds. Pickup men help the riders off the horses and bull fighters divert the bull's attention in order to let the rider escape over the fences after coming off the bull. I like to shoot with my 28 - 300 mm lens, either aperture priority at f5.6 or shutter priority at 1/1000 or higher to freeze the action. Other events follow such as team roping, tie down roping, steer wrestling and women's barrel racing and you have to move and anticipate where the action takes place. Again I like to use my 28-300 mm lens in order to zoom from wide angle to telephoto. I also like to go up in the stands and use my 500 mm lens with a teleconverter for close up shots of the rough stock events, isolating the cowboys and just the top part of the horses or bulls. After the ladies round the barrels in their event they race to the finish line. Great shots can be made by panning these speeding riders.



*"Barrel Racer"*

Going behind the chutes offers opportunities to shoot the cowboys warming up and interacting. They often sit on their saddles on the ground and practice or you can get shots of them taping their boots on or twirling their ropes. They all stretch and are very conditioned athletes these days. Rodeo is very competitive but the cowboys and cowgirls are very helpful and supportive of each other and they are one big family as they travel from one event to the other. They often lend each other

gear or horses and give each other rides to the next venue. As Medicine Hat is on the official rodeo circuit we get all the top participants who are looking to get enough points to go to the National Rodeo finals in Las Vegas. We also have lots of small local rodeos in our area and they are great to get shots of younger and less experienced riders. The smaller venues allow you to get really close to the action.



*“Steer Wrestler”*

Here are a few tips for getting better images from your rodeo and chuck wagon racing photography:

1. Conditions are not ideal, especially the lighting. You can't use a flash so you have to have fast lenses and many photographers shoot with more than one camera. The lighting situations for indoor rodeos are even worse and you have to find the best lit spots in the arena to shoot from. Get to the venue early and find spots to shoot from where the lighting is best.
2. Outdoor rodeos can be very dusty so make sure you can clean your lenses and be careful changing them. It is usually hot in the middle of the day so dress accordingly, wear a hat and have lots of sunscreen and water on hand. Shadows are always a problem so wait until the riders are in the open before shooting.
3. Talk to other photographers who are shooting the event and learn from them. You also have to know that the professional rodeo photographers and press photographers have priority and their choice of spots to shoot from.
4. Learn the rules and scoring of the events and who the top performers are. It is fun to score the riders yourself before the official score is given to see if

you can judge their performances. With the bare-back, saddle bronc and bull riding events, the riders must stay on for eight seconds. Half the score is for the animal and half for the rider. Not only are there champion riders but also champion animals and top performing bucking horses and bulls that also go to the National Rodeo finals and are named top rodeo animal of the year. Barrel racing, steer wrestling, tie down roping and team roping are all timed events with the winner completing in the shortest time and with penalties deducted from those times. Cowboys like to be photographed when their form is perfect but catching a cowboy who has been thrown and is in mid-air, or one on the ground, makes for great photo-journalism.

5. Enjoy yourself; these events are really fun and exciting and you are surrounded by warm and friendly people. Rodeo started on ranches when cowboys got together and decided to show each other the skills that were needed to run a ranch. Professional rodeo developed over the years from these home grown roots. Most of the rodeo participants are from farming and ranching families and many of them travel with their families during the professional rodeo season. Cash prizes from rodeo often go into their farm and ranch operations.

My husband and I sponsored a chuck wagon for the Medicine Hat races one year. The driver asked me if I would like to come down and watch him practice in the afternoon before the races and see the horses. After checking out the horses he asked me if I would like to sit in the wagon and we went to the track. I was sitting in the back of the wagon when he blew the air-horn and the horses ran full speed around the track. My driver got a great kick out of this and apparently he does it to every sponsor. It certainly was a surprisingly thrilling ride.



*“Back Exit”*



## Early Rider

*by Doug Ambridge*

This image was taken during one of our Tuesday morning shoots. The theme for the next competition was Silhouette so we used this as our theme.

The day started out cloudy; however it soon turned sunny so off we went. I walked down the street desperately looking for just the right image. I had already taken some which I thought would “do.” At first the bicycle shot had no appeal but then I thought that if I lowered the camera to street level perhaps I could get the silhouette effect I was looking for. I set my camera to manual with a shutter speed of 1/8000 sec., ISO 200 at f2.8. I had my Olympus OM-D E-M1 camera that day with the M. Zuiko 12-40 mm Pro lens.

In Lightroom 6, I tweaked the contrast a little and did some cropping. In his critique the judge suggested a little tighter crop to get rid of the half-post. It’s amazing what you don’t see sometimes, he even mentioned the piece of litter by the front wheel! I didn’t catch that either. Neither were apparently serious enough to distract from the overall image. This is why it is important to enter our competitions; you can learn so much.

After looking at the image I decided there was not a lot of colour, what if I converted it to black and white? Well the result is in; the image just came to life!

My first intent was to enter it in the Monochrome Print category or the Theme category. By the time I made up my mind it was too late to get a decent print processed so I ended up entering it into the Digital Open category.



## Ancient Bristlecone Pine

*by Jonathan Adams*

This image was taken in late August 2015 in the Ancient Bristlecone Pine Forest in the Eastern Sierra Nevada mountains in California. Bristlecone Pines are the oldest non-clonal organisms on the planet, with the oldest known living specimen over 5000 years of age.



This is a stacked image of 257 exposures; all were 30 sec. at ISO 1600, f2.8 14 mm focal length using a Canon 5DIII camera with an adapted Nikon 14-24 mm lens. I first captured the foreground using a Maglite flashlight to light paint the tree for ~10 sec. It takes some trial and error to get the foreground properly and evenly exposed. Once I was happy with my foreground exposures, I started exposing my star trails.

I used an intervalometer to take continuous 30 sec. exposures for just over two hours. When shooting star trails it is important to turn off the “High ISO noise reduction” feature in the camera, otherwise instead of smooth circles the result will be arcs of dots. Do not use “Auto White Balance,” as the colour of the stars may change over the series of exposures!

There are many ways to stack images, including some automated programs such as Starstax. I used Photoshop, with each image as a separate layer in a single file. By selecting all of the layers and setting the blend mode to “lighten,” all of the brightest elements (stars) will show through. Airplane trails and occasional headlights from passing cars can be removed using the eraser tool from an individual layer without affecting the final image. Finally, combine the foreground image and the flattened star trail layers using the “lighten” blend mode to get the final image.

## Tuesday Shoots

by Daniel A. Roy

It is suggested that we arrive at the Bay Centre Food Court at 10 am. Of late, I've noticed a change. As I ride the escalator to the top floor at approximately 9:55, and crest the floor-line, I see a greater number of photographers already seated at our tables. This could be a reflection on the fact that it's summer, but I think it may be more; it's the enjoyment of spending more time with good people who share a common interest.

I always look forward to the Tuesday trips. I enjoy the smiles, the laughter and the abundant words of wisdom and encouragement passed amongst us. Enthusiasm abounds as we finish our coffees and gather our gear. A luncheon location has been set and we make our way to the streets in search of subjects to capture and share with the community.

**Contrast: September 13<sup>th</sup>.** Contrast is the theme for the first "Tuesday Shoot" in September. B&W, yellow & blue, light & shadow, etc., are the clues, but the theme is entirely open to each participant's interpretation. Why not, old and new, tall and short, big and small, hot and cold, stressed and relaxed, weak and strong, etc.? There will be no demerit marks for stretching the boundaries. A medium focal length will most likely be the lens of choice for this project, but it wouldn't surprise me to see long and wide shots, and even a macro or two.

**Textures & Patterns: September 27<sup>th</sup>.** Textures and Patterns highlight the second trip for September. This is also the club's October Competition theme. Lighting will be a key issue here. Hopefully, the sun will shine on us that day, providing a balance of light and shadow. It might be a good idea to take a few snaps before 10 am when the sun is at a lower angle. (This is within the rules, as there are no rules.)

**Earworms or Stuck Song Syndrome: October 11<sup>th</sup>.** Theme: take pictures of something that reminds you of the lyrics from a song and have members guess the tune, e.g. "Blue Suede Shoes" but I'm thinking more along the line of "Old MacDonald Had A Farm" (Just to torment someone who guesses correctly.)

**Raw Food: October 25<sup>th</sup>.** This is also the competition theme for November (see page 10). No clues or hints needed for this one. Grocery stores displaying fruits and vegetables outside will be the ideal destination.

## Weekend Shoots

by Teri VanWell

**Whale Watching: September 10<sup>th</sup>.** Whale watching has been very popular for Victoria Camera Club members in the past. This six-hour trip, operated by Sidney Whale Watching, takes us to the marine park at Race Rocks (weather and sea conditions permitting). You may see Orcas, Humpback and Grey Whales, Porpoises, Seals and Sea Lions. Sea birds are plentiful at this time of the year and on the way back we will view the rookery at Mandarte Island. This is hand-held long-lens photography in challenging conditions. A steady hand and waterproof gear are desirable. Anticipation, luck and shooting in burst mode are keys to success.

**Raptors in Flight: September 25<sup>th</sup>.** Raptors have awed humans for thousands of years so it's easy to understand why. Their ferocity, beauty, power, intelligence, and ability to live high above our heads captivates our imagination and triggers curiosity. Join us at Pacific Northwest Raptors in Duncan for the flying demonstrations that showcase the superlative skill of raptors followed by exploration of the facility. For this shoot you will be close to the birds so a really long lens is not necessary. Make sure your AF system is set to "follow-focus" moving subjects and practice panning to follow your subject in flight.

**Moss St. Market: October 8<sup>th</sup>.** Every Saturday 90+ vendors offer farm-fresh, sustainable, local products at the outdoor Moss St. Market. While enjoying the live local music you may find some interesting subjects to photograph. It's all about the food for November's Theme competition (see page 10). But also don't forget the "people shots" in the crowds. A wide-ish to moderate telephoto lens should work well here.

Please see the calendar for information on other October field trips and updates.

### Field Trips in General

Coordinators work under a mandate to provide an opportunity for members to take photos in the company of others, to discover new locations and to improve their techniques. Trips are designed so that photographers from all ability levels will find value in coming out. We are currently looking for another coordinator to assist in organizing these fun trips. Please let us know if you have a field trip idea or you'd like to help out. The email address is [fieldtrips@victoriacameraclub.ca](mailto:fieldtrips@victoriacameraclub.ca).



by Daniel A. Roy

"The Singularity Is Near," written by Ray Kurzweil, suggests that a computer's intelligence will surpass that of a human by 2025. Other futurists are less optimistic and predict that it won't happen for an additional twenty-five years. But, it will happen, and that technology will be applied to photography.

Most photographers that I've spoken to expressed their displeasure at giving even an ounce of control to an "Artificial Intelligence" (AI). They feel as though they would forfeit any claim to personal creativity. However, how important is it to say you created the elusive five-star image? Why not hang a gallery quality photograph on your wall and be satisfied with saying, you helped create that image.

I believe we will eventually yield to most technological advancements and come to the conclusion that we can't compete with an AI that can deliver near perfection on a daily basis. Maybe it is a reflection on our ever-evolving world. And as we pass the torch, the younger generation will welcome the opportunity to admire a growing collection of pristine images captured in their presence.

Let's go with Kurzweil's prediction of 2025 as a release date and prepare to meet and converse with an AI. I doubt if the AI will be contained within a robotic body. Another ten years will pass before we reach that level of sophistication. It will most likely "live" in a Mac or a PC, probably on a desktop computer to begin with. But let's go all out and assume it will fit inside a tablet.

Since this is a photographic magazine, we will proceed with the story, as it might apply to a typical day on a photo shoot. Wouldn't it be nice to have an expert assist you with the set-up and settings required to capture the perfect image?

The photographer and owner of the AI is Mary. She pulls her vehicle into the lot and parks. Mary is ten minutes late, not unusual since she purchased her AI. His name is Winston. No, she didn't pick the name, he did.

Mary exits her vehicle and hurries to join the other members of the group who are waiting patiently. She sees more than one person look at their watch. Her AI is contained within a specially designed front-pack, like a baby's pouch. After grabbing her camera and a spare battery, Mary begins to close the hatch of her SUV. "Wait," Winston says, "we'll need more lenses."

Mary sighs and slings a medium-sized camera bag over her shoulder. Again, she reaches for the hatch. "And a tripod, the big one. You've been a little unsteady lately and I want to use a slower shutter speed for a series of shots I have in mind. You're going to love them. Oh, no. I don't see the Gimbal Head. Please tell me you didn't forget the Gimbal Head."

Mary rummages through the cargo hold and pulls out a large Gimbal Head. She efficiently attaches it to the tripod. She adjusts the strap of her camera bag and hefts the tripod from the vehicle. "Anything else, Winston?" "Yes. A reflector. Maybe you should bring the big one and the smaller one. We might be able to use both for one particular shot I have on the agenda. This is so exciting, I can hardly contain myself."

Mary closes the tailgate and then struggles to pick up all her gear. "You should hire an assistant, Mary. That's a lot of gear for one person to carry." "Not going to happen, Winston. We've been through this before." "Fine. Then may I suggest going to the gym more than once a week? It wouldn't hurt you to shed a few pounds. You also need to build more strength and stamina. And don't worry; I'll be right there, coaching you. It will be fun."

Mary rolls her eyes. "I saw that," Winston says. "I was merely looking up at the sky," Mary says. "It looks like it could rain." "I wasn't born yesterday, Mary. I know that gesture all too well. Sometimes you act like a spoiled six-year-old. Besides, I already told you that it wasn't going to rain today. Have I ever been wrong?" Mary shakes her head and sighs as she walks toward the group of happy shutterbugs.

No one has any extra gear. They all look comfortable with their petite point and shoot cameras, equipped with compact and light-weight zoom lenses. "Good morning everyone," Winston says, cheerfully. The entire group responds with a potpourri of positive greetings. Mary forces a smile. "I hope you don't mind that I brought Winston along."

"Not at all," says Jennifer, the field trip leader. "You're a novice and an AI can easily guide you through the basics." "More than the basics," Winston adds. Robert steps forward and offers to carry Mary's tripod. "Let me give you a hand with that." "No, thank you," says Winston. "Mary must learn to handle all the gear by herself. Besides, we plan to photograph a remote area of the park and I doubt anyone else will want to traverse the terrain, it's quite rugged." Mary sighs and readjusts her grip.

“Okay,” says Jennifer, “let’s break into groups of two or three and we will meet back here in four hours.” The photo-bugs happily select their partners and disperse in a variety of directions. Mary hefts the tripod onto her shoulder and awaits instructions. “Turn south-south-west,” Winston, says, “and we will find the beginning of the trail. It’s 452 meters in that direction.”

Following instructions from Winston, Mary is eventually aligned to the proper compass bearing. “Are you sure we need to go all that way? Can’t we just follow some of the others?” “We’ve talked about this, Mary. Creating perfection isn’t ever easy. Just quit complaining, follow my lead, and we will be the envy of every member of the camera club.” Mary takes in a deep breath and begins the trek.

Forty minutes later, Mary fights her way through the brush and comes to a clearing. The view is breathtaking. Mary sucks for air and wipes sweat from her brow. “Didn’t I tell you so?” Winston says. Mary begins to unload their gear. “No, we’re not quite there yet. Another hundred meters and a slight climb, then we arrive.”

Mary appears to be more than a little miffed. “You never mentioned a climb would be required.” “You didn’t ask. And I told you in the beginning, excellence requires a degree of sacrifice.” Mary takes another deep breath and continues along a deer trail in the centre of a steep slope. About thirty meters along, Mary stops dead in her tracks and points. “Is that what I think it is?” she asks. “Bear scat,” Winston replies. “Black bear, not very big, two, maybe three days old. Nothing to worry about. You did bring the pepper spray, didn’t you?” Mary hadn’t.

After a minute or two of gentle prodding and twenty minutes of climbing, Mary lies on her back, sucking air. She isn’t listening to Winston’s familiar words of encouragement. “You can do it. You can overcome any challenge. Take one step at a time. If it were easy, everyone would do it. Someday is today. Pick yourself up, dust yourself off, and...” “Enough, Winston! I’m not a machine. Give me a minute’s rest.” “All you need to do is rehydrate. That will lift your spirits.”

Mary groans as she wrestles back to her feet. She takes a quick swig from her water bottle and then picks up the tripod and begins the set up. “That’s it,” Winston says. “Baby steps. One foot in front of the other, or in this case, extend one leg at a time.” Mary stifles a smile. “Okay. Okay. I’m doing it. Let me set everything up and don’t interrupt me until I say so, or make a mistake.” “Fine,” Winston says. “I’ll clam up. I won’t interfere. Just be quick about it. I like the way the light is hitting the

water. It won’t last.” Mary rolls her eyes and hastens the set-up. Winston bites his tongue.

Mary turns the camera on, removes the lens-cap and adjusts the controls. She tweaks the angle of view and waits for Winston to pipe in. Several seconds go by. “Well?” she says. “Well what?” replies Winston. Mary places her hands on her hips. “I’m waiting for your input.” “You asked me,” Winston says, “not to say anything until you made an error. So far, you’ve made none. You selected the correct lens and filter, you’ve levelled the horizon, and you have composed the scene properly using the “rule of thirds.” You also selected a low ISO and, after some deliberation and the fact that there is a degree of haze, chose “cloudy” as your white balance setting. And, as we have talked about before, you checked to see that we are shooting RAW. I applaud all of your decisions.”

“Thank you, Winston. However, this is where I need your help. What’s next?” If Winston could smile, he would. “Switch to “Manual” and use the remote to make any further adjustments, I don’t want the camera to move. Adjust your aperture to f16. Next, set the shutter speed to 1/80<sup>th</sup> of a second.” Mary makes the changes to the settings. “Next, select manual focus and adjust the ring until that big rock jutting out of the water is tack sharp.”

Mary is in tune with her equipment and her surroundings. The view is remarkable and she is in the zone. She focuses, utilizing the Liveview magnifier to its full advantage. Once satisfied, she taps on the remote, tripping the shutter. “Well?” she says. “What do you think?” “Good, but we can do better. Adjust the Exposure Compensation decreasing it by half a stop. Open it up to f11 and change the shutter speed to 1/250<sup>th</sup> sec. to bring the meter back to “zero.” Mary complies and snaps another shot. “Nice.” Winston says, after viewing the results. “The Histogram is in near perfect balance. I’m happy. However, I would like to try a little HDR. But we’re going manual on this one. Five separate images will suffice for our purposes. Reset the Exposure Compensation to zero and the only thing we’ll change on each exposure is the shutter speed. Never change the aperture when shooting High Dynamic Range.” Mary knew that. She merely nods.

The return to the parking lot was mostly uneventful. An opportunity to shoot a pileated woodpecker presented itself, but by the time Mary switched lenses, it was gone. A second camera body fitted with a 70 - 300 mm zoom lens would have been nice to have along, Winston thought, but he knew that would be asking a lot. Maybe that extra time at the gym will give her the strength.



## Sorting Them Out

by Nancy MacNab

When you want to find a specific photograph, that fantastic one you took last spring that you want to enter in the club's competition, how quickly can you find it? Do you have multiple copies saved in a variety of locations? Do the various copies of the same photo have different names? Or does the same name with a different number on the end apply to completely different photos?

Photographers will talk about their various filing systems, but what they are really referring to is their retrieval system. Filing is easy; the real question is whether you can find what you want without spending 42 hours going through 8000 photos to do it.

There is no single method of filing that works for everyone. You need to think about how you mentally categorize your photos. When you think of a specific photo, do you first think of the date or season in which you took it, or do you think of the location, or the subject? This will be a good start for organizing.

Another factor will be the categories: should you have a few broad categories and then various subcategories within each, or is it easier to have more detailed categories and no subcategories, so you don't have to open the category folders to get to the subcategories? This will result in a longer list, but all of the possibilities are visible immediately.



Just how detailed should you get? How obsessive-compulsive are you when it comes to organizing? This is very much a personal decision. Which folder will house that photo of a pink rose: gardens, flowers, summer, June, rose, pink flower, pink rose, Rosa 'Gertrude Jekyll', or something else? Will it be in a sub-folder within a folder?

Part of your answer will lie in which software you are using. Another factor will be the consistent use of keywords, if your software uses them. If so, many of the words in the above list could be used as keywords for the photograph and it could be housed in a more generally-named folder.

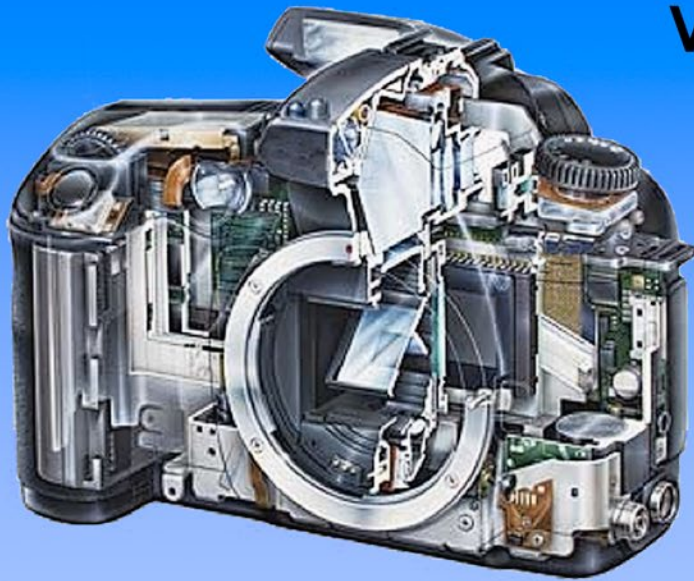
When you start to download your photos from a card, another thing you will need to decide is whether you want to download everything at once, duds included, and then weed out and delete the worst offenders (you know the ones I mean, out of focus shots of your feet or the interior of your camera bag, unwanted motion blur that puts the critter just slightly out of focus, etc). The alternative is to take the time at the start to only download the potentially usable ones, which increases the time required when downloading (especially if you are adding keywords at the same time), but reduces the number of unusable and unwanted photos on your hard drive.

If you are using software that allows you to give your photos keywords, do make good use of this feature. It makes it much easier to track down a specific photo, so be sure to use every word you can think of that you might possibly use to search for it later.

Setting a routine to follow when you download your photos will help ensure you have a pretty good idea where you will find a specific image the next time you are looking for one. If you want to change that routine or sorting method, it is strongly recommended that you take a "from this day forward" approach to it and gradually incorporate photos taken previously into the new method as you need them. Otherwise, if you start by trying to re-sort all of the photos you've already taken, you will spend an inordinate amount of time at this task and probably end up giving it up part way through, creating an even worse muddle.

Not only do you need to consider the original image "As shot", but also how you can find any derivatives (edits) of that image. The best way to do this is to give every original image a unique number, and include that number in the filename of all derivatives of that image. All derivatives should also include the same keywords as the original, plus anything specific to the image, e.g. "B&W" if it is a monochrome image. A good way to do this is to use the camera-assigned frame number prefixed with 2 extra digits when that number passes 9999.

Now that you have some ideas for how to sort your photo retrieval system, how will you organize yours?



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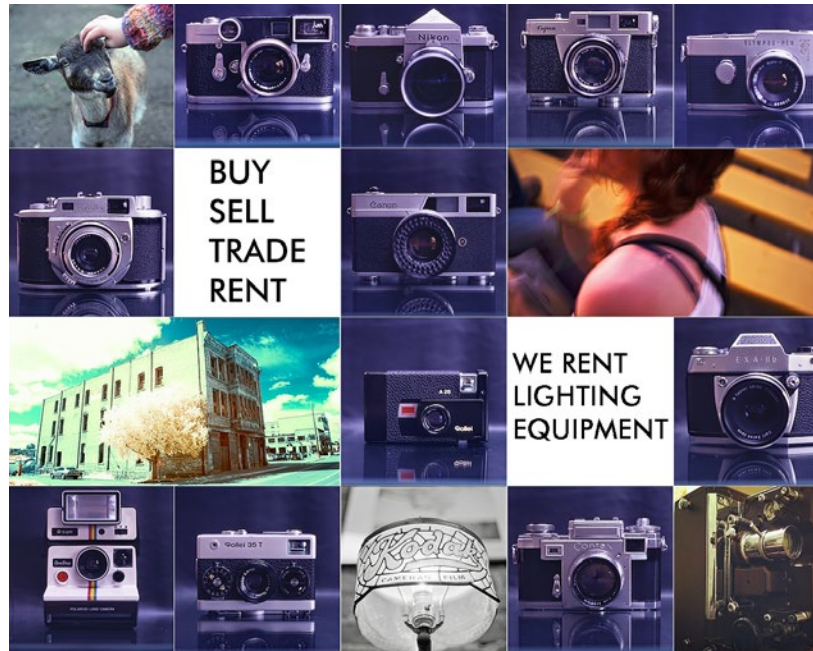
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