VCC

Close-Up

"Dominance" by Steve Lustig

Victoria Camera Club   **May/June 2018 Volume 71 Number 5**

Victoria Camera Club

Established in 1944, the Victoria Camera Club is a group of people who share the love of photography. We come together to appreciate each other's images, to learn, both from the feedback on our own images and from the images of others, and to exchange tips on how and where to take effective photographs. Our focus is on continuous learning. Our media include both film and digital and our expertise ranges from novice to master.

Events

We hold a number of events including:

- Three meetings a month from September to April (excluding December)
- Field trips
- Workshops
- Special Interest Groups (SIGs)
- Competitions within the Club and externally

Meetings begin at 7:30 PM at Norway House, 1110 Hillside Avenue, Victoria, BC.

Membership

Annual fees include all workshops (except studio shoots and special events), meetings and all field trips unless travel/accommodation is involved. Annual fees are: Individual, $85; Family, $128; Student, $43.

For current event information and locations please go to the website *victoriacameraclub.ca* where you can also read or download the colour version of *Close-Up*.

What's Inside

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)* for the latest details of all our workshops, field trips and meetings.

May 3rd: Competition Night

The Annual Competition results and awards will be presented. This the last Competition Night until September.

Our Norway House Meetings will resume in September. Workshops and Field Trips continue during the summer.

Workshop and Field Trip Highlights

Basic Photoshop and Creative Imagery workshops.

Esquimalt Carnival, Sandcut Creek/Sheringham Lighthouse, Ross Bay Villa and Botanical Beach field trips.

Cover Image: "Dominance" by Steve Lustig. Although I eagerly anticipate the Wildlife Photographer of the Year show each year, and see it multiple times, I am not a wildlife photographer. I have neither the patience nor the desire to spend three days in a blind in a snowstorm on a remote Japanese island, hoping to photograph the mating ritual of two birds.

I do, however, enjoy adventures as well as learning new photography skills and meeting challenges. With that in mind, I spent three days in the Khutzeymateen Provincial Park, the only grizzly bear reserve in Canada. It covers 44,300 hectares on BC's north coast.

Only two companies are licensed to enter the estuary in the reserve and Ocean Light II has been offering tours there for the past 30 years. It's a bit of an adventure to get there as you first must fly from Vancouver to Prince Rupert, spend the night in Prince Rupert, take an early morning taxi to the float plane dock a few miles away, wait for the weather to clear, then get into a four passenger float plane. The 30-minute flight is beautiful, but noisy. The float plane is greeted by a zodiac from the Ocean Light II.

Photographing bears is done from a zodiac, so a tripod is not needed. The primary challenge is "light" more than "reach" since it is often overcast or raining. This photograph was taken with a Fuji xt-2 with a 100-400 mm lens using image stabilization and continuous high speed shooting (183 mm, f/5.6, 1/1400 sec. and ISO 500). Weather sealed cameras and lenses are useful here.

President's Message

The candles on my birthday cakes have been growing ever more dense, like the pixels on the sensors of modern digital cameras. Time to take a quick look back at my first message as VCC president (*Close-Up*, May-June, 2016). A couple of themes were on my mind: What was the underlying nature of the Club and how does one, in the first place, truly "join" such a group? Those questions seem somewhat eternal. While our programs and our membership evolve over time, the flavour of the group and getting to feel comfortable in it may sometimes take a bit longer. It is my hope that efforts to make our Club a welcoming place have borne some fruit. That imperative should always be top of mind.

My principal recommendation, then and now, was to stray off the broad path of Norway House meetings into the by-ways of the many activities in which smaller clusters of our members are involved. In those environments, it is likely to be easier to get to know fellow members and their interests. Those bonds then lend to positive vibes when in the company of the larger group.

For some it will be through learning specific skills in workshops; for others, when participating in field trips or sharing images and techniques at a SIG meeting. My personal favourite has been the pleasure to be found in the enthusiastic pursuits of the Tuesday and Alternate Tuesday groups. We always welcome new participants, as do the other groups that add to the scope of VCC's programs.

But these are only suggestions. I respect that each of you has your own take on a preferred path forward. We may meet only on the broad main route or we may also enjoy your presence just off the beaten path.

"Volunteer!" Now there's a word I have used more than once in the months and years gone by, both to admonish and to celebrate. The word can be a spur to action to meet our collective needs. It can also be used to hoist a toast in tribute to those who have stepped forward to meet those challenges. In the end, I can think of no better way to truly "join" the Club.

As I step back from my current role, I reflect on what a privilege it has been to work with the members of the Board and the program coordinators on behalf of all of you, our members. I'm confident that the incoming team will successfully navigate the challenges ahead and that the Victoria Camera Club will thrive in the years ahead!

Garry Schaefer, President.

Lesser Known LR Plug-ins

by Graham Budd

Although Abobe Lightroom provides a comprehensive post-processing solution for most users, it is not without its short comings However a number of third-party extensions and plug-ins have been created by developers to improve workflow and add efficiencies to the interface.

Well-known products from Topaz, ON1, Skylum, Photomatix and others integrate seamlessly within Lightroom to offer a variety of external processing options. As many photographers are familiar with these products, this short article will instead concentrate on some of my favourite lesser-known but very useful little plug-ins. All are PC and Mac compatible except for CheatSheet.

Open Directly: This plug-in allows the user to open a RAW file located inside a Lightroom (LR) catalogue in another application bypassing the external editor preferences. For example, LR often produces wormy artifacts when processing Fuji RAF files. Ideally a user would like to process the RAW file elsewhere and then re-import it into LR. Using the LR "edit in" command to send the file to an external editor like Iridient results in Lightroom processing the RAW file first and converting it to a TIF prior to export, thus possibly baking in undesirable changes. Using the Open Directly plug-in instead sends the unprocessed RAW file directly to the external editor bypassing Lightroom completely. Once processed it can easily be re-imported to LR. Free to try, $21 US to buy, *photographers-toolbox.com/products/jbeardsworth/opendirectly*.

Backup Cleaner: The introduction of digital files has made Lightroom catalogues of 20,000 or more images commonplace. As many users have set Lightroom to back up on a regular basis hard disks can become cluttered with many large and outdated backups. This little plug-in automatically deletes these files according to the preferences established by the user saving space and keeping the LR backup folder tidy and organized. Free to try, $7.50 US to buy, *lightroom-plugins.com/RemBackup.php*.

OPAL: Have you ever applied a preset in Lightroom only to find the effect a little over the top? Unlike Photoshop, Lightroom does not offer an opacity slider for pre-sets. (The latest update introduced an opacity option for profiles only.) OPAL solves the problem elegantly allowing LR users to dial down the effect by adjusting the opacity. $15 US, *natephotographic.com/opal-opacity-slider-for-lightroom-presets*.

Focus Mask: One of the features I like in Capture One is the focus mask which when activated drops an overlay onto the image showing the areas of sharp focus. This is very helpful when quickly culling images and discarding them based on focus or lack thereof. This little plug-in provides the same functionality to Lightroom. Although it has not been updated in some time and requires at least standard size previews to work, it might be worth trying, especially for less-experienced photographers. Free to try, $10 US to buy, *capturemonkey.com/focusmask*.

LR/Mongrify 2: A must have little plug-in that can embellish your images during the LR export process. Add borders, watermarks and text annotations to your images. The most used feature for me is the ability to precisely control the image dimensions and file size during export. Great little utility. Note that PC users will be promoted to download and install the free app ImageMagick. Free to try, Donation-ware, *photographers-toolbox.com/products/lrmogrify2.php*.

CheatSheet: One of the most effective ways of speeding up workflow in post-processing is to learn application shortcuts. Enter CheatSheet, a handy little Mac utility. Holding down the command key for a little longer than normal brings up a list of keyboard shortcuts for the open application. Works with LR, PS and many others. Freeware, Mac only, *mediaatelier.com/CheatSheet*,

Installing Lightroom Plug-ins: The easiest way to install a Lightroom Plug-in is to start by downloading the files (often compressed in a ZIP file) then extracting them into a folder on your computer's hard drive. The files may need to be in their own folder, see the installation instructions. If you use the same parent folder for all your plug-ins, you will know exactly where to go each time.

In Lightroom, open the Plug-in Manager (File > Plug-in Manager) and click the Add button in the bottom left-hand corner. Go to the folder where the plug-in is saved, select it and click the Add Plug-in button. If you get a message asking you to update your Catalog, then click the Update button. From this point on the process may vary, so check the installation instructions that come with the plug-in you have added to finish the installation and set-up.

LR Plug-in Resources: There are many other great plug-ins available for both LR and PS. Here are a few good sites to get you started.

photographers-toolbox.com/index.php
regex.info/blog/lightroom-goodies
lightroom-plugins.com/index.php

Frank Turner Award 2018:
Pam Irvine

The Frank Turner Award was first presented in 1988. The idea was conceived by Diana Lockyer who suggested it as a way to commemorate the contributions made by Frank Turner (Vice President in 1970, and President in 1971 and 1972) during the many years of his membership in the Victoria Camera Club. Over and above the enthusiasm he developed within the Club he engendered much good will and involvement throughout our own province and in Washington and Oregon. Meetings, cooperative outings and competitions were very popular with all concerned. The memories of his service to the Club, his warm friendship and the valued instruction he provided are embodied in this special service award.

The trophy is Frank Turner's gilded Pentax camera mounted on an oak base. It was designed by Past President Bill Rea. Each year it is awarded to a Club member to recognize their significant and lasting contributions to the Club. At the annual banquet in May, 1988 it was very fitting that the first award was presented by Frank Turner's wife, Ellen. Now in its third decade, this most prestigious award celebrates and honours his memory and his notable commitment to the Club.

The selection of the winner of the trophy is traditionally made by the last three winners independently from the executive of the Club. This year's committee consists of Lois Burton, Mike Wooding and Dan and Gail Takahashi. The award criteria are not written in stone, but rather are left to the discretion of the selectors. However the winners are always accomplished members who have made a significant contribution to the Club over an extended period of time. This year's committee was unanimous in its decision and is proud to name Pam Irvine as this year's recipient of the Frank Turner Award.

Pam has been a vibrant member of the Victoria Camera Club since January 2010 and since that time has shown tremendous depth in her contributions, volunteering consistently and for many positions within the Club. Her enthusiasm and dedication to serve the Victoria Camera Club has been remarkable.

The foundation of any organization is rooted in its core of volunteers. Pam has demonstrated a genuine interest in voluntary committee work and has held many positions within the Club including Secretary, Membership Chair, President, Vice-President, Director at Large and Competition Chair.

Pam's first role in the Club was as Secretary. In this role she ensured that meetings were effectively organized and minutes kept, maintained accurate Club records and ensured that the Club met all of the legal requirements of a non-profit society. She then moved on to serve as Membership Chair, acting as the main point of contact for any enquiries relating to new and existing Club membership, managed annual membership dues, created name tags for members, and maintained the membership list.

In her role as President, Pam was the principal leader and spokesperson for the Club, taking overall responsibility for the Club's direction and administration. She understood the needs and complexities of managing such a vibrant and focused camera Club and brought a dynamic level of leadership to her position.

Pam was involved in a variety of activities which allowed the Club to expand its reach and foster closer relationships with community organizations. She shared her photographic expertise with the youth of our community by participating in a Scout Rally with a photographic theme and participated in a presentation at Berwick House to some of the seniors of our community. For several years she organized the Club's fall scavenger hunt.

Pam continues with numerous activities to support the development of our novice members. She participates in the novice image review, acts as a novice judge in competitions and presents the Basic Photography workshop which provides an educational, hands-on learning opportunity for members new to photography.

Because of our very intensive competition program, the role of Competition Chair is one of the most demanding jobs in our Club. This did not stop Pam from taking this most important responsibility under her wing as Director-at-Large. In addition to overseeing all of the Club's competitions, the Competition Chair is responsible for establishing rules, criteria and guidelines for monthly competitions, ensuring that appropriate judges are enlisted, and for maintaining competition results.

Pam has also been instrumental in handling the hosting of Canadian Association for Photographic Art (CAPA) competitions where hundreds of images from CAPA Clubs and individuals across the country are submitted. As a member of CAPA it is the Club's responsibility to do our fair share of hosting CAPA national competitions. Pam willingly took on the tremendous amount of work that this job entails.

Pam, we honour your valuable contributions and thank you for your generous commitment of time, support and inspiration. You are truly deserving of this honour.

Spinning Steel Wool

by Teri VanWell

My first introduction to spinning steel wool was from a Club member last fall. I saw her amazing photos, on Facebook, of what looked like sparks flying everywhere and wondered how that was possible? What does one do to create such symmetry and chaos all at once? Given the generosity of the photographic community, online and locally, I knew I could turn to them to find out the answers.

"Spinning on Hornby Island"

I was fortunate to join some fellow Club members in December who planned an evening of spinning and light painting. We met up at Island View Beach before sunset to get the lay of the land and plan our shoot. It was great that our shoot happened to coincide with a full moon and a very low tide. This created some drama in the sky and also allowed us to use the pools of water to have reflections in our photographs. We spent the next four hours spinning and twirling, and when it was all done, I had captured some pretty amazing photographs, learned a ton, and caught the bug that is steel wool spinning.

When you are looking for a place to spin steel wool it is important that the area be clear of anything that might catch on fire. When you are spinning you will be sending burning metal fibres everywhere which could ignite something if you are not careful, so have a fire extinguisher ready. You can also risk burning yourself, so protective glasses, gloves, and clothing are important. Unfortunately, there have been a few famous landmarks that have been burned to the ground by some careless photographers so please take this advice seriously!

To spin steel wool you will need to build your spinning apparatus. You start with a metal whisk to hold the steel wool. The whisk is attached to the end of a chain or rope, I use a skipping rope. You can easily adjust the spin wider or smaller depending on where you hold the rope. The steel wool should be superfine, grade '00' or finer, as this burns better than the coarse kind. Once the wool is stuffed into the whisk you will need to use a lighter to ignite it and then start spinning! The airflow from spinning will cause the fibres to burn up quickly and the sparks will fly off. The harder you spin the further the sparks will go.

"Your Equipment"

Your camera gear is simple. You will need your camera, a wide-angle lens, a tripod and a remote trigger. These photos require a long exposure so you will need a tripod, and a wide-angle lens to capture all of the flying sparks. The settings can be different depending on what you are looking for but a good starting point is ISO 100, f5-8 and your shutter set to bulb. You can go anywhere from 10 sec to 30 sec. Don't forget your flashlight or headlamp to see what you are doing between shots, but turned off while shooting or spinning.

The fun thing about spinning steel wool is you get to experiment. Some images will just have steel wool while others will add different versions of light painting. The way you spin the wool can provide you with a different look as well. On a recent field trip to Witty's Lagoon our spinner had LED lights attached to the rope for some more colour. We also had someone with a light sabre that created a light pattern during the spin. The possibilities are endless! So grab a friend and get out there and spin!

"Steel Wool Spinning" by Steve Lustig

Tech Tips

by Richard James

How long do long exposures need to be? If the objective is to use a long exposure to blur anything that's moving how do we determine how long the exposure needs to be? There's a couple of guidelines I use:

For waves: The minimum to completely blur a wave is the time it takes for the wave to run up the beach. So what I do is time it from the point that it breaks until it reaches its high point on the beach. Then it is really a question of how many multiples of that time do you need to get the degree of smoothness that you want. If you want really smooth water then the answer is "several". If you simply want to show some degree of movement in the wave then the time required is a lot shorter and would typically be a few multiples of the "normal" shutter speed that you would use.

For clouds: Here you generally need to use a much longer time, often several minutes or more, to really show blur in clouds. Of course, it depends on how fast the clouds are moving and the degree of streaking that you want to get in the sky.

Other: There are other moving objects that you might wish to blur like long grass, leaves on trees etc. In this case you generally want to retain some detail in the leaves so you'd be looking at a few multiples of the normal shutter speed that you would use.

Long exposures generally need a neutral density filter to get the shutter speed slow enough, and often an external timer (usually built into a remote release) as your camera's timer will probably only go to 30 seconds.

Neutral density filters: These come in various strengths. The ones I use most are 3X, 6X and 10X strengths. When using neutral density filters you want to keep the aperture the same, as it controls depth of field, and vary the shutter speed to get the effect you want. If necessary, you can change the ISO to get the exposure right at the shutter speed and aperture combination that you need.

Polarizing filters: When do you want to use them? Many photographers view polarizing filters as simply a way to darken the blue sky and get more contrast with clouds. That's one use but there are others. For example, many plants are highly reflective, our eyes really don't notice it but camera sensors do. So using a polarizing filter can often reduce unwanted glare from leaves and flower petals.

Another use of polarizing filters is to reduce or remove unwanted reflections in glass (windows) or from water. Using a polarizing filter on water allows the camera to see what is underneath the surface much better, thus adding interest to the image

Whether shooting the sky, water or plants, the filter needs to be rotated to provide an appropriate degree of control. My technique is to rotate the filter until it has passed what I feel is the right point then back-up to where I wanted to be. If you've used polarizing filters a lot you know that a set of filter wrenches is really useful when the threads jam on the lens. Another option is a wide rubber band.

One situation where you want to be really careful when using polarizing filters is when you're shooting the sky with a wide-angle lens. What happens is that the polarizing effect varies between the sides and the middle of the scene. This is because the light is most strongly polarized at 90° to the sun and minimally polarized directly towards or away from it. The result is part of the sky is darker or lighter than you intended and it just doesn't look right.

Rather than buy filters for every different lens size you have, buy a set for the largest lens that you will use them on and then use step down rings to mount them on smaller lenses.

Lens hood: Do you always use your lens hood? Well, they're not cosmetic, to be used only when you feel like it. The primary function is to minimize the amount of oblique light hitting the front of the lens and causing unwanted hazing or reflections. Another good reason for using one is that, if you happen to knock your lens against a solid object, it's likely the lens hood will pop off before the camera is damaged. It's cheaper to replace the damaged lens hood than a damaged lens.

Sometimes the lens hood supplied with the lens is not adequate to eliminate internal reflections if you're shooting at a very shallow angle to the sun. By this I mean the sun is not in the frame but it is close to the edge. Under these circumstances you often get unwanted internal reflections from the lens elements due to the "not quite in the frame" light from the sun or another bright source.

The solution here is to use your hand, a wide-brimmed hat or a piece of card to provide additional shade on the lens element without having the object in the frame. It's easiest to do this if you use a remote release and can stand to the side of the camera and see where the shadow is actually falling. What you want to see is that the shadow just covers the far edge of the lens. When

you do this, or any time your eye isn't behind the viewfinder such as when using Liveview, remember to close the viewfinder shutter if your camera has one.

Getting really low to the ground: Is the best way to shoot animals, birds or flowers at their "eye level". Do you have a tripod that doesn't fold flat, or one that doesn't have a removable centre column? You may have heard of the "frying pan base." This is an old frying pan with a hole drilled in the middle and a $\frac{1}{4}$" or $\frac{3}{8}$" bolt inserted to hold your ball or gimbal tripod head really close to the ground. Another option is a 30 cm square piece of plywood with a bolt inserted through the middle. You can do the same thing on a smaller scale to mount flashes on the ground.

Another way to get low is to use camera rails (from suppliers like Really Right Stuff, Kirk etc.) and clamps to support your camera below the tripod head level. Although this is more flexible height-wise, you may run into conflict with your tripod legs.

If you're getting this low to the ground you won't be able to see through your camera's viewfinder. The options are a right-angle viewer attachment, a flip-up Liveview screen or to connect your camera to a tablet, which can also be used to control the camera for focusing and adjusting camera settings.

Competition Themes for 2018 – 19

by Pam Irvine

When trying to decide what themes to pick for the next season, the competitions committee tries to find subjects that members will enjoy shooting and that will stretch their photographic skills. It has been suggested by some judges that our Club does not do many "people" photos so the comps committee is going to have one theme per year that includes people.

We strongly encourage members to get out and shoot new images for the themes rather than simply mine your image library for something that might fit. The goal is to challenge yourself to think outside the box and let your creative side show. Summer is the perfect time to work on the themes.

September: Water. We encourage you to create something other than a water landscape from the photographer's library. Suggestions include: water drops, rainbows in a sprinkler, shooting an item through or submerged in water, rain, reflections in wet pavement. The possibilities are endless.

October: People at an Event. An image portraying people at an event, not the event itself. Try to catch the emotions of the crowd or individuals at the event. A great subject to work on over the summer with all the festivals and special events in town.

November: Urban Wildlife. The image must show obvious, significant urban environment details along with the wildlife. There are many wild creatures living among us such as squirrels, deer, coyote, birds, even raccoons at the legislature buildings.

January: Small Wonders. Close-ups of small things. A macro lens or special equipment is not necessary.

February: Tradition. This could include one of the many cultural and religious traditions in our area as well as personal traditions.

March: One Colour. An image predominantly in one colour. Examples such as a black cat against a black wall or a white egg on a white plate. This theme could give you a real workout on exposure. The image could be a monochrome of any colour but make sure the subject suits the colour.

So, set yourself up to create these images over the summer, don't wait until the last minute!

March 2018 Competition Judges

We extend our sincere thanks to the external judges for the March Intermediate and Advanced competitions: Wes Bergen, Glenn Bloodworth, Francois Cleroux and Arnold Lim. We would also like to thank our in-house Novice Judges: Normand Marcotte, Martin Wright, Steve Lustig, Anne McCarthy, and Lorna Zaback. All images and judges' comments are available at: *victoriacamera-club.ca/Competitions/CompetitionResults.aspx*.

Wes Bergen: Wildlife and Natural World. Wes has been a member of the Lions Gate Camera Club for over 44 years and has held many executive positions including two terms as President. He has been a member of CAPA for almost as long and is a CAPA certified judge. He has taught Photoshop courses at school board continuing education departments for 10 years and written columns on digital photography and Photoshop for Lions Gate Camera Club's *Photolog* and CAPA's *Canadian Camera* magazine. He is a frequent judge and presents workshops at local photography clubs and seminars.

Glenn Bloodworth: Open. Glenn is an active member of the RA Photo Club in Ottawa where he is the leader of the Fine Art group. Glenn is a CAPA Certified judge, a member of the National Association of Photoshop Professionals and Chairman of the Board of Directors of the School of Photographic Arts in Ottawa. Glenn's visual art is thematically guided by David Thoreau's observation "It's not what you look at that matters, it's what you see." *glennbloodworth.com*

Francois Cleroux: Altered Reality and Theme. Francois was introduced to photography early and, during high school, photographed for the Province and Vancouver Sun newspapers. He lives in Delta and is a CAPA certified judge and a past-president of the Delta Photo Club. He has done volunteer work for a variety of wildlife organizations. "Through hard work, the study of nature and the study of art and photography, we can tune our minds to the creative process, to better capture and present our world as we, photographers, see it." *www.eyesonphoto.com*.

Arnold Lim: Advanced Prints. Arnold is a staff photographer with Black Press in Victoria. He has a diploma in Photojournalism and has shot for various media including Sports Illustrated, the BBC, the Globe & Mail and many more. He was a Photography Manager for the Vancouver 2010 Olympic Games, the 2015 Pan Am Games in Toronto and the 2018 Olympics in Korea. Arnold was also a teacher at the Western Academy of Photography until it closed in 2014. *www.arnoldlimvisuals.com*.

Advanced Digital Natural World - 3rd
"Crooked River, Oregon" by Jonathan Adams

Judge's comments: Dramatically lit night time shot! The long exposure in the water produces a mysterious effect.

Advanced Monochrome Print - 2nd
"Wires" by Richard James

Judge's comments: Contrary to what some might say, I actually like the "grain" in the clouds here. The layering of the image with the depth of the building is really nice, and this is a "photographers find." An untraditional street photography image that not everyone would have shot. Doing so from the same level makes it even more interesting. I quite like this image.

Advanced Digital Theme - 1st
"Camargue Guardian" by Leah Gray

Judge's comments: This image has many things going for it. The image is sharp and clear and very well exposed. The side-lighting highlighting the mane and the tip of the tail adds the elusive little extra many photos are missing. The composition is excellent, and the choice of depth-of-field is excellent creating separation with the background. The background alone is excellent as we do not see houses or barns. The raised stick also adds to this image and adds to the story of this character with the brightly patterned shirt. This is a great environmental portrait.

Advanced Digital Open - 1st
"Triplets" by Bobbie Carey

Judge's comments: A strong technical and organizational composition with pronounced use of curves, shapes and lines, and an appealing play on hue combinations. Effective juxtaposition of the flower petals' texture and shapes with the backgrounds texture and "circular" nature.

Advanced Nature Print - 1ˢᵗ
"Mallard Duck (female) Having a Stretch"
by Jacqui James

Judge's comments: This image made me smile. While it didn't have some of the elements found in traditional bird photography like a blown out background and high compression, I really like the fun of this image. This is a nice slice-of-life capture.
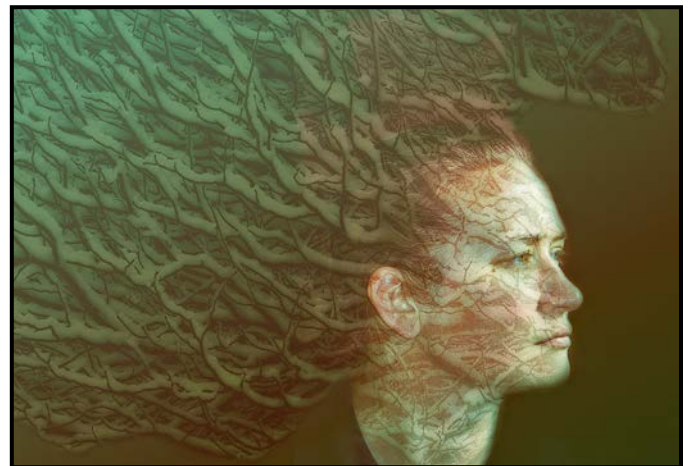

Advanced Open Print - 1ˢᵗ
"Lydia's Door" by Ian Crawford

Judge's comments: This is quite nice, I like the composition and the textures. Well done.

Advanced Digital Wildlife - 2ⁿᵈ
"Rattlesnake" by Mars Romer

Judge's comments: An amazing capture! I wouldn't want to be any nearer when you took this. The shallow depth of field works very well here, as the business end of the snake is perfectly sharp, and the background is not distracting.

Advanced Altered Reality - 1ˢᵗ
"Into the Wind" by Lorna Zaback

Judge's comments: We see these double exposures all the time, but usually done in B&W or Monochrome. They are often done with silhouetted trees and branches. Here the colour palette and the colour harmony are superb. This double exposure works exceptionally well and gives us a different look as the whites are not clear sky spaces between branches but rather snow covered branches that include tonal variations and texture. The face of the character within the image is always important and here the face works very well. The eyes and colour of the eyes also work well. The double exposure components look like tattoos or henna. Well done.

Intermediate Altered Reality - 1st
"Moonlit Mirror" by Vanessa MacDonald

Judge's comments: We are seeing more and more of these light painting images. They are always fascinating when done well. Photographers like Eric Pare have set very high standards for these images. These images are not about the light and the technology or technique but about all the components working well together. It is important having the right person with the right shape and pose in front of the tube lights that are spun or weaved well all in a great setting. We have seen desert images with incredible starlit skies and wet salt flats with incredible reflections. Here, the dramatic skies along with the reflection and the monochromatic nature of this image all work well together.

Intermediate Digital Open - 1st
"The Art Gallery of Ontario Stair" by Hilary Goeller

Judge's comments: Very compelling, strong lines and curves and shapes, a highly effective mix of hues. That spiral really draws the viewers' eyes and keeps them focused on the centre. Well thought out composition reinforced by the photographer's excellent employment of technical (colour, light, exposure, sharpness, etc.) and organizational (space, composition, lack of distractions' etc.) considerations.

Intermediate Digital Wildlife - 2nd
"Great Horned Owl" by David Cox

Judge's comments: Great capture of this owl in final landing configuration. Excellent lighting and exposure, with detail in every highlight and shadow. The branch in the image is a necessary part of the image, and does not detract.

Intermediate Digital Natural World - 2nd
"Dawn has Broken on the Serengeti" by Nicci Tyndall

Judge's comments: A very dramatic scene. Beautifully sharp where it needs to be in the trees and the midground ridges. Very nicely composed trees, sun and hills.

Intermediate Digital Theme - 2nd
"Strudelmeister" by Robert Forbes

Judge's comments: A great "Environmental Portrait." Great exposure with nice use of lighting. Adequately sharp where it needs to be, on the subject's face and torso. The hands are blurred a little from subject movement. Great natural colour palate with natural looking whites. The lighting is a little flat which adds to the mood of this image. The composition is very sound with the subject placed just off center. The slight off kilter nature of this image which was done to accommodate the right-side crop choice adds a 'natural' less formal mood to this image. From an Environmental Portrait perspective, we have a subject at 'work', we quickly can decipher they are a 'chef' and 'all' the surrounding space is part of the chef's/baker's environment. Perfect!

Intermediate Open Print - 2nd
"Napping in Beacon Hill Park" by Kathleen Carrigan

Judge's comments: This shot is well composed, focused and exposed.

Novice Digital Open - 1st
"Rustic Row" by Ian Clay

Judge's comments: Black and white was an excellent choice to bring out the detail of the decaying cars. Well composed, exposed and processed.

Novice Digital Theme - 1st (tie)
"Baker Laura" by Sharon Moysey

Judge's comments: This is really well done with terrific lighting on her face and background. Beautifully done to capture the detail of the face and writing on her jacket along with the blur hand movement. We hope you are giving her a copy.

Novice Digital Wildlife - 2nd
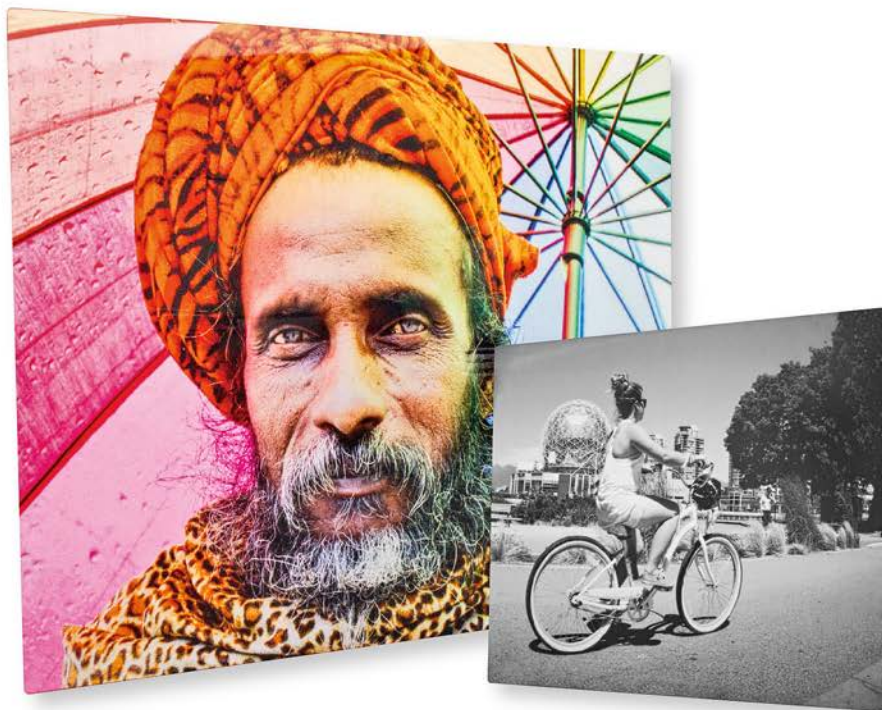*"Heron at Beacon Hill Park" by Penny Authier*

Judge's comments: Oh what lovely feathers on the Heron's back.

Novice Digital Natural World - 1st
"Before the Rain" by Kim Smith

Judge's comments: What an interesting shot with good composition. Nice sensitivity to a complex weather event.

Member Profile: John Scratchley

My interest in photography began on my tenth Christmas when I found a Brownie "Hawkeye" under the tree. It was my first camera and came with a roll of film and some magical flash-bulbs. From that point on I loved taking photographs. Soon after school, however, I joined the navy and for ten years I don't think I took a single image. This was truly a lost opportunity for me to record different countries and cultures visited while aboard ships

The camera came back into my life when I became a civilian. Most of those old photographs were of family and vacations taken using inexpensive SLRs and an early Polaroid camera. What really tweaked my interest was underwater photography. In the late 1980s I bought a Nikonos V underwater camera with strobe lights. This was my passion for a few years and I have boxes of slides from such places as Bonaire, Fiji, Thailand and more.

Along the way our son developed an interest in photography and introduced me to digital cameras. I still have that camera, a 2.1 megapixel Canon Power Shot S100. Since then there have been a few upgrades as cameras have improved. I currently use a Nikon D500 with a D7000 as backup. The D500 has all of the 'bells and whistles' I need in my quest for my next best photograph.

My interests are varied when it comes to a choice of subjects. Landscapes, street photography and black and whites are my favourites. As I am married to an avid gardener and horticulturist, macro photography has also become another interest. I use HDR quite often and try to keep subjects looking realistic and not over saturated or with excessive contrast, as is sometimes the case.

Before taking any photograph I like to walk around my subject and look at it from many different angles, all of

"Two Coffees to Go"

which will give me different perspectives. I then try to "see" in my mind what that final image is going to look like. This is particularly true for black and white photography images.

I use three different programmes to develop my images depending on the subject. The first, of course, is always Adobe Lightroom 6 as a file management tool. From there on I use either Luminar 2018 or Affinity Photo. Both these excellent tools can be used as plug-ins to Lightroom or as 'stand-alone' programs. These two tools work very well with both Mac and PC users.

As my wife and I enjoy walking and hiking, I usually take along my camera because one never knows when a potential masterpiece will present itself. The landscape will vary depending on the season and there will always be something of interest that is a little different from the last time.

Photography is very subjective and the end result differs in the way people view a photograph. I feel it is important to give my photos a title which provides the viewer a clue as to what I was trying to achieve when I snapped the shutter. It can also tell a story.

There are many great landscape photographs out there but I often try to include a person or some other creature for added interest. I like to place the subject to the left or right side of the frame so as not to take away from the actual scene itself. Fortunately, my wife has a great eye for pointing out potential subjects that I often miss when we are out and about on our travels.

Since joining VCC I have become involved in the Tuesday Group Outings and find it is a great way to visit or re-visit interesting sites. In addition to getting to know other Club members over a pub lunch, it is a great way to pick up some valuable tips on the different techniques and ideas used by others.

"Remnants at Whiffen Spit"

Lens Developments

by Matt Speight

Something interesting is happening with cameras that should make us rethink our attitudes towards our beloved older lenses in our camera bag. Some of our older, expensive glass is no longer up to the task of getting the best out of the new crop of high megapixel cameras.

When digital cameras first made their way onto the market, manufacturers were still designing their lenses just as before and really had no idea about the problems they would encounter. They soon found out that a sensor is different from film. Firstly, a sensor is highly reflective; the image can bounce back from the rear element of the lens onto the sensor usually causing image ghosting. That never happened with film. To fix this, extra anti-reflective coatings were added to new lenses to eliminate the problem and some older lenses in production were retrofitted with an improved rear element.

Secondly, certain lenses were losing edge sharpness and suffering from chromatic aberrations and vignetting when placed on a digital camera, whereas they had been fine, optically, on film cameras. The effect was much more prevalent on wide-angle lenses because light needed to travel at a straighter angle to make it through the various layers of a pixel to the photosite. With the light refracting, distortion would occur.

With a bit of research and some rethinking of lens design, camera manufacturers released version II lenses in their pro-series glass which improved things. But now, several years later, we are at a point again where another rethink and some more research is being done by the manufacturers.

Canon, Nikon and Sony now have camera bodies in the 40-50 megapixel mark and have plans to surpass that in the future. There is a caveat to designing such cameras. As a manufacturer, do you have the lenses to get the best out of these cameras? Sigma were the first to realize the potential of redesigning their lenses for the new crop of higher megapixel cameras with their Art Series lenses. Incorporating LD (low dispersion) glass and larger aspherical elements were two of the technologies used by Sigma to obtain this next level of performance. Sigma's lens quality is now beating what the established camera manufacturers have to offer. They have been catching up.

Canon redesigned several lenses to match their new camera's ability to capture amazing detail. These lenses incorporate innovations like Air Sphere Coatings, double surface glass moulds and sub-wavelength coatings. The pinnacle of Canon's latest innovation would be their BR lens element which includes both convex and concave surfaces.

Sony, has designed their new G Master series with the intent of future-proofing the lenses for the higher megapixel cameras to come. They are designed to a minimum level of 50 lines per millimetre (lpm). Most glass you buy today will range from 10-30 lpm. Like Canon, Sony is doing this by rethinking lens design, resulting in new element types like the XA (extreme aspherical element), and using improved ED (extra low dispersion) glass in their designs.

Nikon has stepped up their game with HRI (high refractive index glass), Super ED glass, Nano Crystal coatings, and Fluorine coatings (repels dirt and moisture) on their new lenses that can't take front filters like the 600 mm f4.

Another step forward in lens technology has been the ability to upgrade its firmware. At its basic level, firmware upgrading of the lens can keep compatibility issues at bay. These upgrades are done by connecting the camera to a computer.

Sigma has gone one step further with their USB dock. The dock is used in conjunction with their software which allows you much more control. You can calibrate the lens to your camera, getting rid of any back or front focus issues. You can also personalize certain parameters of the lens like the manual focus ring sensitivity. With their "Sport" line of lenses you can even set the focus limit, AF speed, and customize the optical stabilization and manual focus override.

Tamron have recently released their dock. While the options are not quite as extensive as Sigma's it is encouraging to see another company allowing us the ability to get the most out of their glass through customization and fine tuning the optics.

If you have one, or are thinking of buying a new high megapixel camera, it might be time to have a good look in your camera bag to see if your lenses will measure up to the new arrival that will be nestling up with them.

I do wonder if some of this older glass is as sharp as we once thought it was, and though we may be attached to our beloved older lenses, they may now only be good enough for our older cameras. We'd be doing a new 40+ megapixel camera an injustice by putting outdated glass on it. It's time for a fresh start with the new and so awesomely-improved lenses.

Seascapes

by Jonathan Andrews

For this article a "Seascape" is anything that involves the sea. What follows is simply a personal approach to the subject, one that has evolved over time.

So what is there about a seascape that isn't attractive? A visit to the seashore can be exhilarating. In the fresh air, you become aware that water in a seascape has life of its own, separating land from sky. You become absorbed in everything that's happening, for example, the weather, time of day, state of the tide, clouds which may be full of character, and that's just to begin with.

Image #1 - 21 mm EF lens at f11, 1/420 sec. and 200 ISO

The foreground may contain rocks and pools. The mid-ground may consist of the sea itself, with its surface and texture, and the clouds, existent or non-existent, low and brooding or high and wispy. Mountains will be in the background, whether in mainland BC or the US. To the mix, include the occasional seabird, watercraft and maybe the odd human or two, and you have a scene that is changing constantly, creating never-to-be-repeated patterns. Add the time of day, especially at sunset and sunrise, and you have a completely absorbing experience, even without a camera.

What happens if you do have a camera? Trying to capture even a fraction of that activity can be quite overwhelming. For example, at Rathtrevor Beach, the scene changes rapidly, creating a different vision each second. The birds weave and turn in flocks across the sky, becoming more energized as the sun begins to appear over the mountains. The seals are barking, not so far away. The tide is out yet is just starting to tiptoe in. Something is constantly happening, all of the time and everywhere.

The solution? Relax, and tune into the environment. Be aware of all that is changing, especially the sea creeping in, threatening to surround you and your tripod (it is early in the morning)! In creating the final image, there are two quite separate roles involved: the Photographer and the Editor. The Photographer is the one who goes out early in the morning bristling with equipment and senses on full alert (especially in mid-winter). The Editor sits at home, waiting to see what the Photographer brings back.

The reason for the two roles is a practical one. With all of the tools and options available today, it can be too much to do everything at once, especially if you want to relax, be at one with the environment, and enjoy the experience.
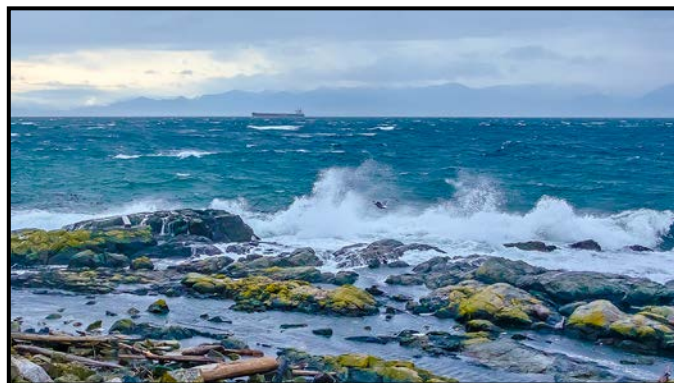

Image #2 - 35 mm EF lens at f11, 1/400 sec, and 1600 ISO

The Photographer is the one faced with all of the questions that have to be answered correctly, usually all at the same time. What to include, what to leave out? What's to be in the foreground, middle ground, and background. Which lens to use, and why? How much definition is needed? How much light is there? Are there any striking colours? What is the focal point? What can be different about this photograph? Why should anyone take a second look, even a first? How can it best be framed? How much action is there? Is it best to freeze or blur? What texture can be captured, in the best light? Is it best to wait? What patterns can be used to direct the attention to the focal point? Is there an opportunity for any visual humour? What is interesting in the frame and how can it be accentuated? What tension can be created? How can the components be balanced? And so on.

A few of these questions can be left to the Editor, such as how to frame or accentuate specific elements in the image but most, especially sharpness and the right kind of light, have to be handled by the Photographer. Primes are preferable but zoom lenses, although heavier, can provide flexibility.

All of the images in this article were taken at Clover Point. The lenses of choice were 21 and 35 mm EF lenses. The inclusive nature of the wider-angle primes, in addition to the opportunity for better quality images, is better for these type of seascapes, especially when there are rocks and pools in the foreground. A practical consider-

ation is that both lenses are small, light, and weather-proofed. If it is raining, as it was in images #2 and #3, it is possible to protect the camera with one's hand by holding it backwards. Shutter speeds between 1/400 and 1/750 sec. meant that it was possible to freeze the waves enough, but not too much. Of course, ISO speeds may have to be raised to accommodate this, especially if optimum aperture settings of f8-11 are to be achieved.

The choice of lens can be helped, if necessary, by using tools such as the *Mark II Artist's Viewfinder* (iOS) or *PlanIt!* (Android and iOS). These apps can be used to frame a scene for all lenses and can capture the image to record the framing choices for that image to be decided later.

Although it gives more work to the Editor, the Photographer can, when in doubt, take a sequence of images or use burst shooting or bracketing, especially for never to be repeated opportunities. Saving the images as RAW files is essential; although the images may look dull and lifeless at first, it allows the Editor to be more creative.

One question that cannot be answered by the Editor is whether to use a tripod. The Photographer may develop a love-hate relationship with a tripod. It is heavy (as prescribed by all of those who know about these things), it can be difficult to carry and, therefore, unless you are actually using it, a complete pain. Yet, when reviewing a selection of photographs, the clearest ones are likely to be the ones where a tripod has been used. Yes, image stabilization, body or lens, is always improving, but the tripod itself does have the best stabilizing effect, not just on the camera.

Image #3 - 35 mm EF lens at f8, 1/750sec. and 1600 ISO

The Editor, when faced with many images, has to eliminate many "non-keepers", as quickly as possible. The solution is a "2-second test". (It may have been the "5-second test" once but times change.) The Editor may have many images to sift through but this can be done quickly and efficiently with a "2-second" approach. In examining each image for 2 seconds the Editor decides whether the image has a striking quality, one that distinguishes it from

the others. The Editor's first pass in Lightroom is to flag all those that do not meet this test.

Naturally there are variations in what initial workflow to use in Lightroom but, by taking time to flag those images that do not meet the "2-second test" and going back to check them again before deleting them in a block, you are avoiding the possibility of making an unfortunate mistake.

The next pass is to take a second look at those images before deleting them altogether. This may seem Draconian but, it is necessary to avoid thousands of images building up, likely never to be looked at again. The third pass is to identify any image that has potential. The fourth pass consists of any cropping, maybe to 16:9, and adjusting the sliders for such values as exposure, contrast, brightness, shadows, and so on. After determining the combination of settings to suit the Editor's eye these settings are then copied and pasted to similar images. The fifth pass and onwards are to identify those keepers that can be considered the best and most interesting.

The final decision whether to use colour or B&W would be best made by the Editor, the Photographer having captured all of the images in colour. Generally speaking, if an image contains vibrant colours, contributing that to the overall effect of the image, it stays in colour. If not, a copy is made, and the DXO Silver Efex Pro (formerly NIK/Google) plug-in shows what can be achieved in black and white.

All of the images were taken at the same place illustrating how much variety of scenery one can find in seascapes, even when taken in the same location and especially when using a variety of perspectives enabled by different lenses.

Image #4 - 21 mm EF lens at f14, 1/125 sec. and 200 ISO

There's no doubt, seascapes can be very rewarding. To capture just a part of them is the challenge but one that can be met by creating an effective partnership between Photographer and Editor and simply tuning in.

How I Did It

BC Winter

by Neil Boyle

The inspiration for this image came from Michael Kenna's work (*www.michaelkenna.net*), a British photographer known for B&W landscapes in ethereal light, often long exposures. I found this scene east of Osoyoos in January, on a dull, grey, snowy day. There were a lot of complicating elements to avoid (power wires, buildings, road, vehicles) and the only place to shoot was on a hill and a deep, snow-filled ditch prevented me from getting closer to the fence to shoot over it.

The camera's meter tried for an 18% grey snow so I over-exposed by three f-stops, shooting to the right of the histogram. I shot many aspects of the scene. To get the image I wanted I used the full scene with the fence in the foreground. Since the Nikon D810 has a large sensor, it tolerates cropping very well.

In Lightroom I changed the exposure to make the snow white without blowing it out and extended the blacks enough to make the trees actually black. A little clarity increased the contrast, and I moved the white balance only enough towards the blue to emphasize the wintery look of the snow. The sky on the sides of the image had darkened so I used the graduated filter to reverse this. The snow in the fields wasn't very deep, so a lot of dead plants showed through, and I used the spot removal tool to reduce this making the field look snowier than it was.

The grass in the foreground overlapped the trees and the field I wanted in the image so, in Photoshop, I cloned the brown grass stalks out and cropped the image to a panorama of the row of trees. I used a sharpening tool in Photoshop as the options are better than in Lightroom.

Fizzy Orange

by Teri VanWell

In September 2017 I attended a Bryan Peterson workshop put on by the Club that was based on his book "Learning to See Creatively." Some of what I learned was to look at things from different angles and, also, to get in closer. I went out afterwards and purchased a few of his other books including "Understanding Close-Up Photography." This photo is based on one of his indoor setups from this book.

I started out with a side table in the family room placed beside the sliding doors. The day was partly cloudy so when I was shooting I had to wait for the clouds to pass for the direct sunlight to shine in. I took a slice of a blood orange and clamped it to the side of a clear glass and added some club soda to it.

In the background I set up a piece of paper with a picture of grass on it. I knew that since the depth of field is so shallow with close-ups the background I was using would suggest that this image might have been made outdoors. With each shot I took I added a pinch of salt to create the fizzing in the club soda for movement and more bubbles on the orange slice.

I used my Nikon D610 with a 105 mm macro lens set up on a tripod. I had my camera set at ISO 100, f5.1 at ½ second. I played around with different settings while shooting in aperture priority and these setting achieved the look I was going for. I set out to create drama and the sense of movement on the orange. I wanted lots of bubbles attached to the orange slice and also some movement in the background. I ended up taking 27 shots before I got "the one."

In post-processing I used Lightroom to play around with the basics, including the removal of dust spots, bringing down the highlights, bumping up the shadows, and a bit of dehazing. The image as not cropped. "Fizzy Orange" placed 1st in the March Novice Print competition.

Tuesday Shoots

by John Scratchley

Join the Tuesday Group photographers for interesting challenges and destinations.

May 1: Sooke Potholes. This area is part of why B.C. is referred to as 'super natural'. Massive polished boulders, pools, waterfalls and small tributaries created during the last ice age make this area a must for photographers.

May 8: Cultural Diversity. Canada takes pride in calling itself a cultural mosaic where people from around the world retain their cultural uniqueness from all walks of life. Capture subjects that celebrate these different cultures and backgrounds.

May 15: The Raptors. Just north of Duncan is the centre for a caring group of knowledgeable biologists and raptor enthusiasts dedicated to the conservation of birds of prey. Learn about the essential role raptors play in our natural habitat and capture some great photographs.

May 22: Out of Place. The challenge is to find a subject that is totally out of sync with its surroundings. Once you have discovered it, capture it.

June 5: Willows Beach, Cattle Point and Uplands Park. The sweeping shoreline of Willows Beach always has something to offer the photographer. Explore Uplands Park with its Garry Oak meadows and wild flora and grasses. Cattle Point offers wonderful seascapes and seasonal shore-birds can often be seen in the area.

June 12: Shoot the Shooters. There are all kinds of photographers. Study them taking photos and engaging their subjects. Note the equipment they use to get the final image.

June 19: Beacon Hill Park. This is Victoria's "showpiece park" covering a vast area of land. Formal gardens and natural settings are scattered throughout the park. This is a good spot to grab some "people shots" as well as some of our feathered friends.

June 26: Friendly Shoot Out. Theme: Everyone brings three topics and chooses one for the day at random. If yours isn't chosen on that day it could be on one of the summer shoots.

Some events require registration and a fee may apply. Please check the Club calendar for details related to each field trip.

Weekend Shoots

by Vanessa MacDonald and Teri VanWell

If anyone has anywhere they would like to visit that we may not know about or maybe something they can introduce (like the steel wool spinning we recently did) please let us know at *fieldtrips@victoriacameraclub.ca*. We are always looking for new ideas. We are currently in the planning stages of more field trips but here are a few that we currently have available for May and June:

May 5th: Salt Spring Island. The day starts on the 9 am ferry from Swartz Bay to the Island. We will explore Ruckle Provincial Park in the morning, truly a nature lovers' paradise with spectacular coastal and pastoral scenery. From the park we will head over to Ganges to have lunch and then you can either explore the town (we will be there on market day) or head over to Burgoyne Bay Provincial Park. This field trip is being led by Salt Spring Island resident, Simon Henson.

May 12th: Esquimalt Carnival. This will be a spectacular opportunity for golden hour and night photography. Prepare to be dazzled by colourful lights, tents, concessions stands, games and all the classic carnival rides. Get creative with your long exposures, with the spinning rides leaving streaks of colour across a lively carnival scene or try to capture fleeting action and a multitude of carnival curiosities. This event will coincide with the popular Buccaneer Days in Esquimalt.

May 19th: Sandcut Waterfall and Sheringham Lighthouse. Spending a full day at these two places will not be enough! Located between French Beach and Jordan River, Sandcut Beach and the waterfall are something to see, especially at low tide. Afterwards, we will head to Sheringham Lighthouse located in Shirley. It is a beautiful historic structure built in 1912 and is not to be missed. Your field trip leader is Bob Law.

May 27th: Ross Bay Villa Historic House Museum. Originally the home of Francis J. Roscoe, a Victoria area merchant in the late 1800's, the villa was preserved and restored to its 1865-1879 appearance. We have a special invitation to photograph the inside of this home as well as the gardens. Nick Russell is your trip leader.

June 17th: Botanical Beach. If you have not had the chance to visit Botanical Beach near Port Renfrew then this field trip is not to be missed. Low tide at the beach is spectacular as so many things are revealed. This is one of those times when there are so many different scenes to take photos of that you'll need to bring all of your lenses.

Why I Choose Film

by Karl Schoepp

I choose to shoot with film for a number of reasons. My primary motivation for this decision is that I truly love the process of creating chemical-based imagery. I also love analogue cameras, and really enjoy that every step of my film photography is tangible.

Digital photography clearly has advanced over the recent years to become a very viable, mainstream and attractive option. A digital camera in the right hands can produce stunning images.

An amazing photograph is not so much defined by the medium or equipment. Rather it is the photographer's eye that creates the image. Film photography has always felt more natural for me personally as I feel that being able to see the image immediately with digital leads to complacency and short cuts.

I began my journey into film photography, as a pre-teen, with disposable 35 mm point and shoot cameras. In my early teens, I purchased a 35 mm Nikon FM SLR and a Bolex H-16s 16 mm cine camera.

In 2007, I entered the digital age with the Nikon D80 and D40. I really liked these cameras at the time but was never really happy with the results, nor did I enjoy the experience as much as shooting film with analogue cameras.

I currently own a 35 mm Canon FTB, two Pentax 6x7 cm medium format cameras, a 120 Holga, and a 4x5" Crown Graphic. The Crown Graphic is my newest camera, as I have just ventured into 4x5" large format photography.

I shoot primarily with the Pentax 6x7s for the combination of large negative size and ease of use. I have a variety of

"Battle of the Bands" (Nikon FM)

lenses (primes only) for each of the cameras, and typically find myself shooting with a normal or wide-angle lens in each format. None of the cameras I own have auto-focus, auto-exposure, or aperture/shutter priority modes.

"St Pancras Station, London, UK" (6x7)

I tend to almost exclusively shoot black-and-white film while occasionally shooting colour negative or slide film. My black-and-white film is processed at home. I print medium format black-and-white in my makeshift home darkroom and take colour negative and slide film to be processed or printed by Prism Imaging. I convert my negatives and slides to JPG or TIF formats with my Epson V600 scanner.

In my opinion, just about anyone can process their own black-and-white film in any format at home with little difficulty. Sure the chemicals smell, but you can easily process film anywhere with running water and a sink. Laundry rooms, garages, and bathrooms make excellent makeshift film processing rooms/darkrooms.

Modern digital photographers may have a misconception that film is expensive and a hassle to shoot. I would argue that the opposite is true, especially for 35 mm film. One can purchase a functioning camera, nice lens, and a roll of film for less than $100. For medium and large formats you can get started for around $400-$500 for a camera and one lens. Camera Traders, Prism Imaging, online retailers, and London Drugs still offer a huge variety of 35 mm, 120, and 4x5" film available for purchase.

If you are new to film, I would suggest that you should stick to 35 mm as medium and large format are not for beginners. Film photography is often cheaper to get into than digital photography because the affordability of camera bodies, older (often better than newer) lenses, fair film and chemical costs, and the fact that there is lot of film photography gear not being used anymore. Who

would have imagined that you could own a whole film camera system for less than the price of an entry level digital body or mid-range lens?

Film photography generally slows you down. It forces you to think in detail about your exposure, ISO (sometimes you only have one choice), composition (due to film costs), depth-of-field choices, and precision focusing.

Photographers truly have a chance to connect with their work and be part of the entire process of image creation. There is no computer typically involved in film photography (except perhaps autofocus and exposure), which means that there is a pure connection between the photographer and the art.

Not having a computer involved also improves the skills and knowledge of the photographer. Large format photographer, Craig Sheaks, compares digital to film with the analogy of a road trip. Digital is like a Tesla electric car and film maybe a classic car or horse. While travelling to the same destination with the Tesla you may travel more comfortably, faster and simpler; while the classic car or horse will take you at a slower pace and really open up your mind to new techniques, feelings, and ideas that you may have missed previously.

"Film-Noir Shoot" (6x7)

I really like the contrast, true blacks, and fantastic colours that film can provide. In a recent film-noir shoot that I collaborated in with other Club members, I was able to capture wonderful blacks and great contrast with little to no post-processing. The film I used was Kodak Tri-X (ISO 400, 120 size). I shot the image above hand-held on my Pentax 6x7 medium format camera with a 105 mm f2.4 lens, at f4 and 1/125th of a second.

Large format film cameras really enable a number of thrilling possibilities and, furthermore, cameras and lenses of this format are now very affordable. These cameras are not for the faint of heart, however, as they require many skills not associated with other formats.

Large format photography can offer the photographer camera perspective moments (tilts, shifts, rises, swings, macro, etc), incredibly high resolution, incredibly high exposure latitude, and photographic joy.

What makes large format cameras unique (and difficult to use) is that each individual sheet of film must be loaded by hand in a film holder in a darkroom (no safe-light) or changing bag for shooting and processing. This can be quite the learning curve even for everyday 35 mm or medium format shooters.

"My Dog Gimli" (6x7)

Another feature of large format film cameras that is difficult to adapt to is composition and focusing which is upside down and backwards when projected on the camera's ground glass. At first, this may be a challenge to get used to but it actually helps you to create much stronger, more level and more symmetric compositions. When shooting in this manner, the photographer typically would also use a dark cloth to cover the ground glass for viewing and focusing. Large format film photography has been traditionally used to create wonderful portraits and landscapes. For portraits, the shot is first composed on the ground glass under the dark cloth, a film holder is inserted, and the subject is then posed in a face-to-face interaction with the photographer. This creates amazing photographs, as the photographer is able to give the subject better direction, and furthermore allows the subject to feel more comfortable when working with the photographer.

Beginners' Corner

The Art of Reflections

by Josée Ménard

All is not what it seems. Reflections can be breathtaking to the viewer's eye. They can also have the ability to turn reality into an illusion or just enough of a blur to visually spike the interest of the viewer. The photographer can choose to capture perfect reality or to creatively push the imagination. Stunning and clever reflections are not as easily achieved as they may appear to be. Let's explore key foundation points through a few favourite reflections.

To start exploring this magical world, you need to awaken your photographer's eye to the secondary element that will help you to create a reflection featuring a simple subject, your main element. A shiny or reflective surface will assist you at no extra cost. Well, maybe some hot coffee to keep you warm and awake for the wee morning hours or for the blue hour shot. On the natural side of things; water, ponds, puddles, ice, lakes, ocean waves, or even an animal's eye await you. On the human side; floors, stone or marble walls, mirrors, doorknobs, cars, glass, glasses, store fronts, or even eyewear will do. Whichever you choose, it can be naturally presented or staged. It all depends on your likes, abilities, and the possibilities you envision.

The storefront's glass of "Vienna's Reflection" allowed me to use the designer's modern transparent chair as the secondary element, to capture the reflection of the historic buildings located diagonally across the square. Compositionally distracting reflections were eliminated by varying the camera's angle to the glass. The chair's arms and posts lead the viewer into the image while the transposed buildings are framed by the backrest. Its curved shape creatively influences the reflection just enough to reveal the buildings. One could begin an artful discussion of modernism embracing history. Technically, considering the building distance, the glass, and the clear resin, the selected aperture allowed the main and the secondary elements to be focused as evenly as possible up to an acceptable residual blur for a reflection.

Water is a world favourite for reflections. Pristine, still water without any glare offers an array of colours to saturate, clear visuals to blur should the wind start rising, or shapes to create with mountainous landscapes. Scale, symmetry, and the rule of thirds are welcome.

"Early Evening At Fontainebleau" does just that. Taken at the blue hour, the warm colours of the setting sun saturate the scene darkening the trees and skies just enough to reveal a realistic reflection. The calm waters transport us to the lone reader dressed in complementary colours. Post-production-wise, the top plane crop with more clues of trees above the lone reader reveal the right side up while the water, the secondary element, reflects the main subject, the sky. If you dare to, increase the crop to turn the world even more upside down.

"Early Evening Read at Fontainebleau"

Take time during the coming month to look for locations where you may find reflective surfaces of choice along with a main element reflected in them. Next month, I will visually play with the elements before me to wow the story.

"Vienna Reflection"