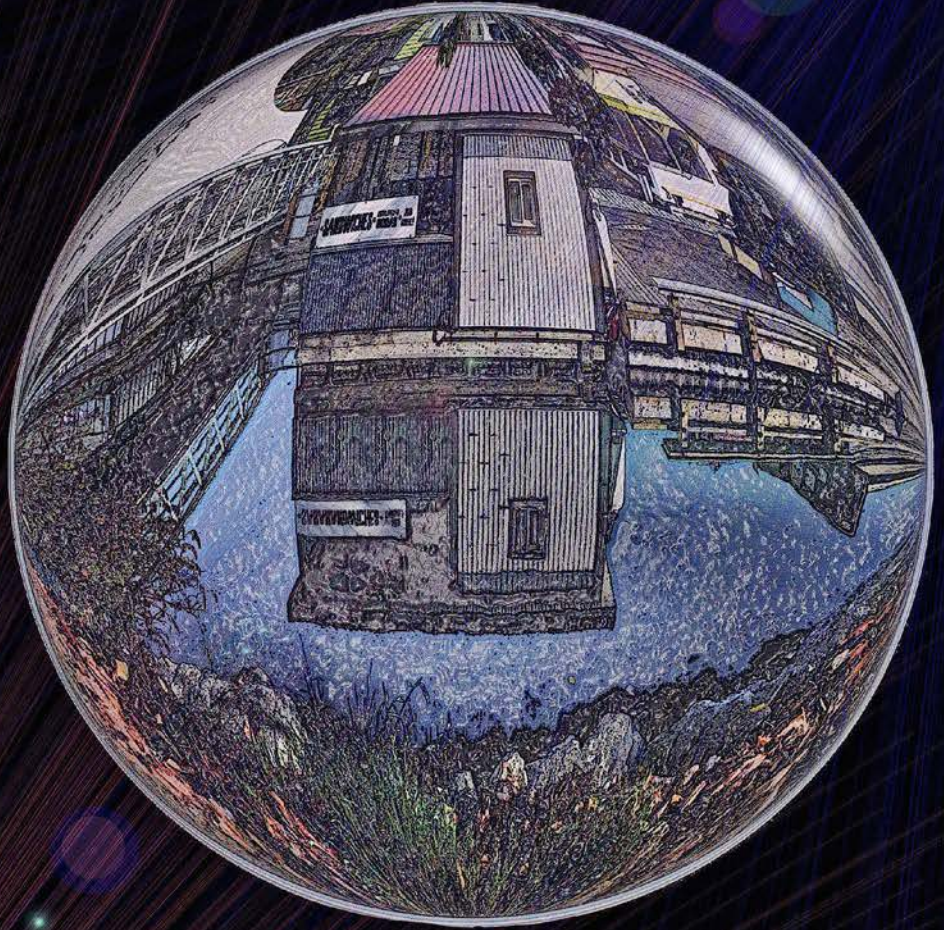




Close-Up



"Fisherman's Wharf" by Pearson Morey

Victoria Camera Club

Mirrorless Cameras Revisited
What I Learned
Basic Camera Settings
Member Portfolios: Kim Smith
and Richard Letourneau
Matrix Metering
Improving Your Landscapes
How I Did It
Photographing Movement
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Victoria Camera Club



“Victoria Harbour Full Moon” by Ian Faris

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*.

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January 2019

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

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



Calendar

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

January 3rd: Competition Night. The theme competition is “Small Wonders.” The deadline for submissions for the January competition is January 3rd. The November competition images will be shown.

January 10th: Presentation Night. Our guest speaker is Beau Partlow who will present “Explore the World of Documentary Photography and the Personal Project”.

January 17th: Members’ Night. Presentation of members’ images, field trip slide shows, prints or short technical topics.

Field Trip Highlights: Butter Church (Duncan), Oak Bay Marina, Steel Wool Spinning and Mary Vine/Twin Falls (Sooke Potholes). **Workshops:** Look for the new schedule on the website.

Cover Image: “Fisherman’s Wharf” by Pearson Morey. We met at Fisherman’s Wharf on an “Alternate Tuesday” shoot in September 2018. However, I find the venue less attractive each year as the access to the jetties where the nice boats are is now locked and there are just too many people in the houseboat area. I wandered around the perimeter looking for the perfect image to shoot. In the end, I wasn’t very happy with the majority of my pictures but I had to post a picture on the Club’s website.

There were a few reflection pictures taken from the fence line by the parking area and I tried to make an interesting picture out of them for the website. I was disappointed with most of my images so I did what I usually do when nothing works for me, I start experimenting and trying out different effects that a lot of the photo editing programs offer. I try this, then try that until a theme begins to take form and then just keep exploring different effects until I like what I see.

In this case, there was a bland photo of a shed reflected in the water. I used the circle and bubble filter in Paint Shop Pro to enhance the image. Then I made a black background to work on, placed the globe and positioned it where I wanted it in the image. The Star Burst effect was added and the light rays were adjusted. Finally, using Photoshop Elements, the Render tool changed the Star Burst into the other-world-like effect.

President’s Message

Happy New Year! The new year means different things to different people. Are you someone who makes resolutions? For me, it means I can start fresh and set some learning goals for my photography. Learning about photography is important to me. Developing my skills as a photographer is even more important.

One of the most important things that one can do in order to grow as an artist is to recognize the importance of finding a direction and setting photographic goals for oneself. Without a direction or goals, all the passion, skill, and creativity you possess will not be enough to help you reach your full potential as a photographer.

The key to finding your direction is to shoot and shoot some more. Don’t limit yourself to one type of photography. Make photographs of anything. You might find that your true passion discovers you where you least expect it. Once you have found your direction you need to set clear goals. Setting goals will keep you focused and motivated to accomplish what you would like to achieve. While setting goals is essential to success, they must also be realistic goals. Examples of realistic goals could be to learn a new technique or getting your work in a local gallery. By simply finding your direction and setting your photography goals you will be able to achieve things you never thought were possible.

We are lucky to be heading into 2019 with the Internet at our fingertips. We have access to so much information that the biggest question becomes, where do we start? How about a photo challenge?

There are many projects out there. Which one you choose to follow depends on how much time you have. The Dogwood Photography 52-Week Challenge from 2018: dogwood.photography/52weekchallenge2018. How about the 365-day challenge from Digital Photography School: digital-photography-school.com/jumpstart-photo-graphy-start-365-project. Or the 365-project to document your life: 365project.org.

Whether the goals you set are designed to facilitate a transition from hobbyist to pro photographer or just to reach the next stage in your journey, the important thing is never stop moving. Always strive to learn something new, set new goals and reach new heights.

I’m not sure what my photography goals will be for this year yet but I do know one thing. I aim to have fun with whatever I do!

Teri VanWell, President

Mirrorless Cameras Revisited

by *Graham Budd*

In September 2016, VCC offered a workshop where the differences between traditional DSLRs and the mirrorless camera were discussed. Despite the new technology, I think most people left unimpressed, still favouring their DSLRs. Although the absence of a mirror and the box to house it made for a more compact, lighter camera with a shorter flange, smaller mount and potentially smaller lenses to match, there was a corresponding offset due in part to auto focus issues and viewfinder blackouts when shooting in burst mode, both common shortcomings of mirrorless cameras a few years ago.

Three years later, the playing field has changed dramatically. The introduction of full frame mirrorless cameras like the Sony A7R III, and now the Nikon Z7 and Canon EOS R, has made buying a DSLR, even one as capable as the venerable Nikon D850, a toss-up.

So, is the king really dead or do DSLRs still have a place in your camera bag? To help you decide let's take a brief look at some features they share, others that are unique and who might prefer one over the other. Although there are many brands and models available for both, I will focus on their generic characteristics.

DSLRs offload the task of focusing the lens to a secondary sensor. This makes them unbeatable if you need fast accurate autofocus on moving subjects like birds or animals. When combined with an optical viewfinder, there is no blackout (think flicker) so you can see what you are tracking at all times. Further, you do not need power to use the viewfinder, making for much longer battery life than a mirrorless option. For these reasons many serious wildlife and sport shooters still choose a DSLR. Professional photographers also like the beating that pro-level DSLRs are capable of taking and the preferred repair and loaner service offered to them, especially at large events such as the Olympics.

When it comes to glass, CanNikon rule with mature systems and a wide selection of high-quality lenses suitable for all types of photography. No matter how specialized the need, they have a solution. Further, when third parties like Sigma, Tamron, Camranger, Lensbaby and others introduce products, they seek compatibility with CanNikon first.

With everything a DSLR offers why would you consider a mirrorless alternative? Once you have carried a mirrorless body and three "mirrorless design" lenses around all day in a small bag with ease, you may never go back.

A lighter tripod and accessories will reduce your load further and make you less conspicuous to capture candid moments. It's also worth considering the tendency for smaller kit to come with us. Big heavy gear all too often stays in the closet.

By far the biggest plus of mirrorless is the EVF (Electronic View Finder). Think of it as seeing live view in your viewfinder but maybe at a much higher resolution. You see what the camera sees in real time so any changes in composition that affect exposure are reflected in the EVF, making "What You See Is What You Get," a reality. Many rear LCD panel features can now be seen in an EVF. Blown highlights are easily identified and image review can be done in the viewfinder without taking the camera away from the eye, eliminating any need to squint while trying to chimp using live view on the back of the camera on a bright day.

The EVF also makes it easy for manufacturers to display in the viewfinder, instead of on the LCD panel, as much or as little information about the camera and its settings as you wish. For example, a live histogram along with levelling and compositional aids can be displayed. For those who have difficulty with precise focus when using a shallow depth of field, Focus Peaking can be turned on to outline everything in focus in a preselected color. This can be particularly useful for use with a macro lens.

The removal of the mirror box also opens up room for additional features such as built-in image stabilization where any lens, including those from third parties, can become stabilized when mounted on the camera. Although the sensor does double duty by taking on the responsibility for focusing and exposure, this is beneficial when shooting video. Smaller bodies, lenses and accessories also reduce manufacturing costs so mirrorless systems have a lower price point than their DSLR counterparts. Flagship cameras from Sony for example are about \$1500 less than a Nikon D850.

There has never been a better time to buy a camera. Canon, Nikon, Sony, Olympus, Fuji and others make fantastic cameras that produce great images. High tech sensors with improved dynamic range and low light performance mean even the lowly smartphone can be an effective tool to create award-winning shots in capable hands.

Choosing a camera today is much like choosing a car. It's more about what you like and can afford, not so much if it will get you there. So take advantage of demo days and "try me" programs and get some hands on time with whatever you are considering. I ended up selling a highly-rated small camera that took great images because I hated the ergonomics. Had I tried the camera first, this would have become immediately apparent.

What I Learned

by *Bobbie Carey*

It seems that I was at the intermediate competition level for years. I felt quite comfortable there and that's where I tried to stay. That required some cunning planning on my part, making sure I didn't have too many entries because each one counted toward an aggregate score.

The real fear was that I could be moved to the next level: advanced! I looked around at the "real" photographers in that group and I was scared half to death. I did eventually, reluctantly, graduate to the higher level and worried about what I might have to change in order to compete at that level to be worthy of that promotion. What was I going to do? What would I have to do? A slow transformation began.



"Leaf"

Here begins my "true confessions". For years I was a pretty lazy photographer; I took many "pictures" and "images". I went out often trying to get really good shots but failed more than succeeded. Someone once said that one successful image out of 100 was good. I managed that often enough to encourage me but they were mostly lucky shots. My failings were many. If I wanted to succeed, some things would have to change.

I had to start at the very beginning. I had read my manuals thoroughly for my first couple of cameras. Then, with each new camera, I became selective and only read what I thought was necessary so I never thoroughly learned what my camera could do or, more accurately, what I could do with my camera. It pains me to admit that I still don't completely know the camera I have had for almost

a year. I know I need to feel far more comfortable with my camera and I must be able to perform some actions more quickly and skillfully: white balance, aperture value, shutter speed, ISO, focus changes and much more. I still sometimes fumble with my camera settings at crucial moments and I often don't have the solutions ready when I run into a problem. This is a basic essential skill.



"Bolt"

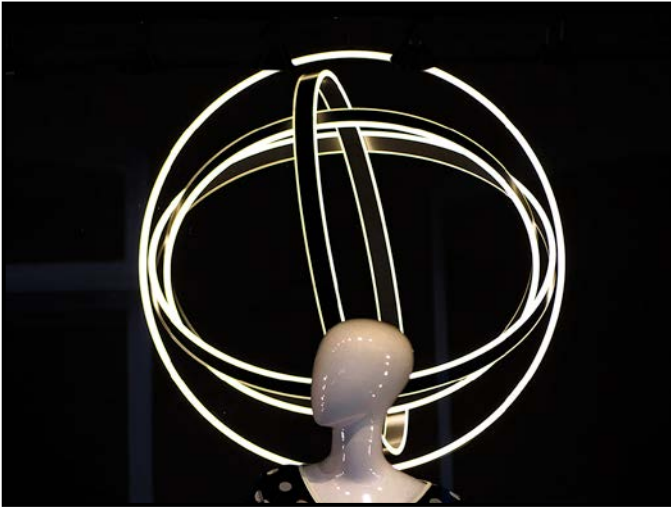
I have, until very recently, shot only in JPEG. I never wanted to admit this to anyone until, at one meeting, one of our successful advanced photographers loudly proclaimed that he never shot in any other mode. I felt vindicated and went on my merry JPEG way.

However, it seemed to me that most good photographers shot in RAW. A few of my photos were good and fared well in competitions but I was generally satisfied with lazy mediocrity until I decided to open my eyes to the light. I learned the advantages of RAW over JPEG and it made sense to me. If I wanted to succeed at post-processing, I needed to work with the whole image. Using RAW allows me to make the changes I want in my image. If I use JPEG, the camera makes the choices for me and I'm left with little room to make adjustments. So, RAW it now is.

Here's another one: I rarely used my tripod. When I did, the improvement in my images was visible. But, I'm a little lazy; it's so much easier and faster to handhold my camera. I'm convinced of the benefits of the tripod but I still fight with myself each time I go on a shoot. If I'm going to succeed, I need the help of my tripod.

Whatsmore, I feel "under-equipped" every time I go out with others and their tripods. I think they look like real photographers and I, well, I look like a tourist. That's not meant to be disparaging because there are many occasions when handheld is the way to go, but there are also tripod moments when handheld simply won't do.

We all know about the rule of thirds. How hard can it be to pay attention to the intersecting lines in the viewfinder?



"Rings"

For me it's easy to ignore them. I am not attentive enough to composing according to the excellent guidelines right there before my eyes. How much better my composition would be if I did pay attention!

It's not unusual for me to return from a shoot with hundreds of photographs. After a weekend in Tofino I think I had crossed the line. I had close to 2000 images to process. How insane is that?

Having spoken to and observed some accomplished Club members I realized that they slow down, take their time and are far more selective than I am. I need to control that itchy shutter finger and calm my mind.

I admire examples of what is referred to as "contemplative" photography (see Neil Boyle's article in the December 2018 *Close-Up*) and its emphasis on really "seeing". I know that I don't take enough time to see when I'm busy clicking, hoping that there are at least a couple of pictures worth keeping and that I can salvage something in post-processing.

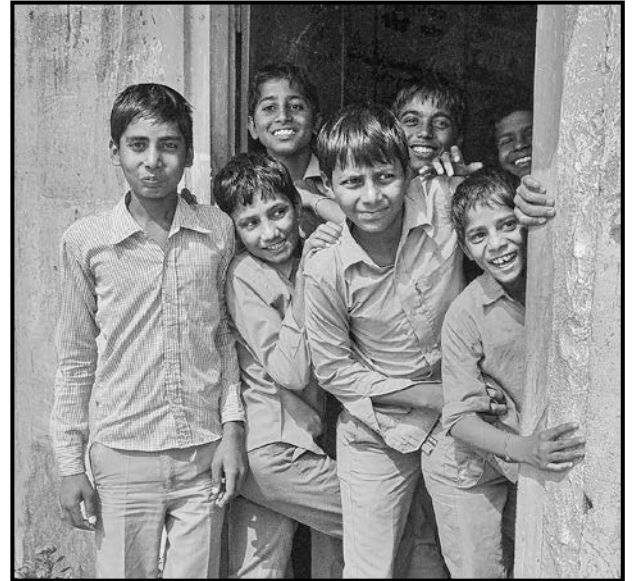
Yes, what about post-processing? I began using Photoshop years ago and use it regularly to the very limit of my knowledge. That limit is reached soon after I begin. I have never taken the time to really learn Photoshop. I have never used layers. (These truthful admissions are getting to be embarrassing.)

The same goes for Lightroom, which I recently adopted and now, always searching for a quick fix, I am learning the ins and outs of Luminar.

Up until recently I was mostly satisfied with what I did with Photoshop minimum but I have been paying close attention to the images produced by those familiar with various applications. The results are often pieces of admirable art. Do I remain satisfied with less?

January 2019

Being "promoted" to the advanced level has definitely been a factor motivating changes I have made to my approach to photography. I stand in awe before some of our member's images and don't strive to ever get to that heavenly level but, couldn't I work a little harder, adopt some good habits, and do better than what I'm doing? Therein lies the challenge. My New Year's resolution is to step up and meet that challenge..



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Basic Camera Settings

by Richard James

Even for experienced photographers it is a good idea to check your basic camera settings to make sure that they are still set at what they should be and if Santa just delivered that nice new camera that you've been waiting months for, it is even more important to do this. Some of these settings are literally "set and forget" because you will always want them there but others you should change when appropriate.

Some settings are dependent on your photographic style, choice of subjects and whether or not you want "best possible quality" versus "it's good enough". Personally, I'm a manual shooter who wants control over how the camera is functioning at all times and I want the best quality images possible, which is what I paid for when I bought the camera. Since menus and control buttons are different on each model of camera, I am going to deal with general descriptions rather than "press this button/menu item". Let's start off with the basic settings that you can set once and forget.

Image quality and size: Always set to the highest quality, size, and, for the most image detail and processing flexibility, save as RAW files. Use uncompressed or lossless-compressed RAW, 14-bit files. Don't be intimidated. Learn how to make significant improvements to your images in post-processing. It really isn't that difficult!

White balance, picture control and colour space: If you are shooting RAW files, white balance and picture control settings are "just data"; they don't change the image. For JPEG files it is important that these be set correctly for each subject and lighting conditions. For RAW files white balance can be "auto", picture control neutral (sharpening "off") and colour space aRGB. For JPEG files white balance and picture control settings should be changed as needed but leave colour space as sRGB.

ISO and noise reduction: Digital noise and dynamic range are directly related to the ISO setting. The best image quality is obtained at the "base" ISO. You should research this and determine what is an acceptable high limit for your normal images. Only go beyond that with caution! For this reason I never use "auto ISO" although you can probably set limits as to how it works. High ISO noise reduction is an in-camera process that attempts to minimize digital noise at higher ISO levels. I set this to "off" as my RAW conversion software is extremely good at noise reduction.

LCD screen and EVF settings: There are a number of options you should set to manage and evaluate your shooting on the fly. Other than the standard "settings" display, you should be able to switch quickly to display the RGB histogram, highlight warning, full-screen view, artificial horizon, grid and exposure meter views, and the focus point used.

Now let's move on to some of the other settings that you may change depending on what you are shooting and leave them set that way until you go on to something quite different.

Focusing mode settings: The first settings are single or continuous auto-focusing, or manual focusing. Single locks on until you release the shutter, continuous follows the subject if it moves. Manual requires you to focus the lens yourself, which really is necessary sometimes. Next is setting how many focus points are used. These range from single point, a small group, or several increasingly larger groups all of which you can move around the image to follow the subject. Then there is "auto area" mode which takes focusing totally out of your hands. Depending on your camera it may choose the closest object, a person's face, or possibly a bird or animal that takes up a large portion of the frame. You can probably guess from what I said initially that I would not use this mode! There are several other focus-related settings which will vary depending on your camera make and model. These might include how long the camera will hold focus on a point as it moves or as an obstruction briefly moves in front of it, and whether face detection is used.

Exposure modes: As I noted above, my choice is simple. I use manual exposure settings. But seriously, you can always use "program" mode (also sometimes referred to as "professional") where the camera chooses everything based on the manufacturer's algorithms for interpreting what the camera sees. However, if you take the time to understand the relationship between shutter speed, aperture and ISO setting you can tailor your settings to those that are most appropriate for the effect you're trying to achieve.

In this article I've covered a few of the most important settings but I strongly recommend that you refer to your camera manual. Even better, spend a few dollars on a well-written book, preferably in PDF format, that really explains, not just what all the settings and buttons do but how they really work in real life. A good book like this would also suggest settings that are appropriate for various situations and may even comment on some of the manufacturer's recommendations that don't really work out in practice.

March Theme: One Colour

by Rea Casey

The March competition theme is “One Colour”. The deadline for entering is Thursday March 7th.

This theme lends itself to photographic opportunities in many genres and has the potential to be one of the most creative themes of the year! Monochromatic colour schemes are some of the most memorable in photography and run the gamut from absence of colour (black and white) through sepia to one colour photographs. They are derived from a single base hue and are extended using its shades, tones and tints. Tints are achieved by adding white and shades are achieved by adding black.

When you create a monochromatic image, be sure to have areas of lightness, shadow and mid-tones, just as you would in a black and white composition. Using one colour removes distraction so that the photographer may concentrate on form and texture. These may be tweaked by using the HSL sliders in Lightroom or Photoshop. Adjust hue to choose an intended colour, saturation to develop the vibrancy of the colour and luminosity to increase the light emitted from the colour.

There are several ways to produce a monochromatic image. The first is to recognize a monochromatic scene in the real world. For example, consider a flock of flamingos, all in shades of red from light pink to rosy red. Another possibility might be a parched savannah in tones of beige, or green leaves in your garden. While the natural world lends itself to monochromatic photography, so might the urban landscape. Consider a blue sky reflected in a bank of windows or the brick wall of a church. Beyond what you find in the outside world, a photographer in the studio could gather together several articles in one hue and, using lighting, create a captivating still life. A bowl of eggs is a typical example but you might also consider a line-up of tin cans or even a slice of orange.

We discourage using coloured overlays in post-production and black and white images in this competition. Monochromatic imagery is all about choosing a colour that elicits a response. There are loads of articles written about the meaning of colours and the psychological/emotional responses that certain colours provide. For example, red is the colour of passion, pink is youthful and green is calming. It is important to be cognisant of colour choice in your monochromatic creation. Working in monochrome colour will test your observational skills and your imagination. Have fun with it!!

Pros and Cons of Competitions

by Pam Irvine

Competitions can be an excellent opportunity to grow as an artist. Entering art 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. Good reasons for entering Club competitions include:

Confidence: Putting yourself in a position where someone judging your work requires a statement of confidence in your creations and even in yourself as an artist. If you are thinking about selling your work or moving towards becoming a professional photographer, then get used to competitions. The real world is very competitive.

Improve your skills: Regularly entering competitions is a powerful way to inspire yourself to continuously try and improve. Photographers can learn and grow from competitions where comments are provided by the judges.

Opportunity To Evaluate Your Own Work: When entering a competition, you are forced to evaluate your work in an objective manner. It shows you how you've developed as time passes and how you are improving.

Social Growth: You have some great work to share. Viewing competitions or an art exhibit gives you a chance to grow and realize what you really believe about art.

It's important to not focus on what score you didn't get but to appreciate what you did get. Think of entering competitions as a stepping-stone to building your artistic talents.

It is great if you're a winner but winning every competition, especially in a Club like ours, can lead to complacency. This is why we have multiple levels and move members up when they start winning consistently at a level. Shooting for awards can hinder your creative development.

The greatest fear of the Competitions Committee is that some members might stop creating altogether because they did not get an award. As Neil deGrasse Tyson has said, “Curious that we spend more time congratulating people who have succeeded than encouraging those who have not.” I hope our Club takes a balanced approach to acknowledging the work of the very skilled and that of the learning photographers. It is our goal to encourage and support those photographers who want to learn and improve. If you have any comments or suggestions on how we might improve our programs at the Club, please email any member of the executive or me at pam.irvine@shaw.ca.



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Member Portfolio: Kim Smith

Like so many members of our Club, my interest in photography started early. In 1981 I married and moved to Saudi Arabia. We considered ourselves so fortunate to be part of ATCO Saudi Arabia, an exciting, dynamic company in the exotic Middle East when, really, we lived in a 10x20 foot trailer in a small compound out in the middle of the desert! This was a major culture shock as I had been very independent and self-sufficient. Now I was thrown into an environment where I couldn't work or drive a car, was expected to cook, clean, play bridge, mahjong and tennis and, while outside the compound, be covered from head to toe in 100°F temperatures! A Minolta camera and lenses were immediately acquired and the tiny bedroom quickly doubled as a darkroom. I don't recall too many keepers from those days except one of my sister-in-law and nephew. In catching this moment, where Gabe smugly has his Mom in the palm of his hand, with the window light haloing them both, I realized that photography had my heart.



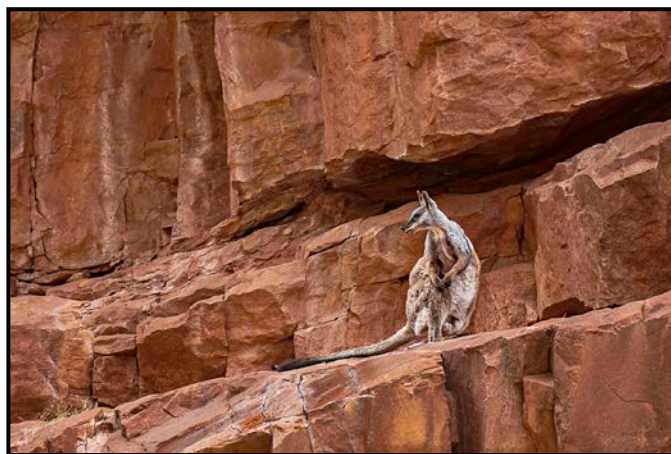
"Gabe and CJ"

Life has a way of postponing dreams so we'll flash forward 30+ years. While talking about retirement, people would ask me what would I do with myself as they couldn't visualize me not working. Funny, I couldn't wait! Biking, hiking, gardening, kayaking, travel and, of course, photography would fill my days. Photography had, however, changed a bit! Where would I get updated information? One night my book club met at Bobbie Carey's house and while marveling at the beautiful images on the walls, I noticed Bobbie had taken them all. She was a photographer and I didn't know it! Bobbie took me under her wing and insisted I

come to a Camera Club meeting. I couldn't believe what I saw on the screen. Mike Wooding's owl coming towards me will be forever ingrained in my mind!

I bought a Panasonic bridge camera, joined the Club in February 2016 and started shooting. The Club encourages everyone to enter competitions but I couldn't possibly do that. When I returned from my retirement trip to Australia that December, I felt it was time for some feedback on my images.

Bobbie was right there to help me, "Saturate it a bit more," she'd say. "What is saturation?" I'd say. This is the result of my first competition in January 2017, first place in the Novice Nature category.



"On Guard"

Getting over the hurdle of a first completion is like a first kiss. That wasn't so bad, let's do it some more!

The next season was a whirlwind of workshops. I was now in the "sponge" stage. I could take a Photoshop course two or three more times and that's not because there is anything lacking in Lois Burton's teaching skills! The Hornby Island field trip in March 2017, led by Don Peterson, really introduced me to Club members, so many laughs over a glass of wine at the end of the day with like-minded photographers. I also discovered more of what I didn't know, leading to more VCC classes!

A trip to Tofino that fall taught me a few lessons. I was originally very disappointed with the results. I must have taken 200 images of this bear at the fish hatchery only to discover my shutter speed was too slow or the ISO too high. I was too excited while in the moment. After leaving the images for a while, I was less emotionally tied and able to play with them a bit more, giving me the image below. It was an important "Ahhhha!" moment in drilling down and getting creative. Nevertheless, the raw beauty of natural locations, such as Tofino, inspire me to learn and be aware of the finer details of natural light and shadows to maximize the overall visual impact.



“Momma”

January 2017 found me researching cameras, narrowing the field to a mirrorless system. Once again, members came to my rescue, offering information about the products that worked for them. My final decision was the Fuji X-T2. Camera manuals make great bedtime reading!

A VCC photography trip was planned to the Palouse in June 2018. Jack Lien certainly provides value in his photo tours with the ultimate nighttime photo shoot in his back pasture. My take-home here was to do one workshop or photo tour per year.



“Palouse Milky Way”

In September 2018 I was again intimidated about submitting images as I had been moved up to the Intermediate level. Sometimes you just have to jump into the deep end!

I had taken a quick photo of a flute player in Chinatown earlier in the year. Later, while housecleaning photos, (not the house, who has time for that?), I cropped it, cropped it some more (thank you Image Review people!) and arrived at this final result.



“The Flute Player”



“His Hands”

Fall 2018 presented me with a trip to Ireland with two VCC members, Jill and Judy. I joined them in Belfast for two weeks to tour the northern-most regions of the Wild Atlantic Way. From driving on the wrong side of the road from the wrong side of the car, to toasting our daily adventures at the end of the day in a pub over a pint of Guinness, it was definitely an adventure! So many images come to mind to share: rams fighting in the middle of the road, rainbows over fields of sheep, driving rains while photographing Downpatrick Head from a cliff top, rambling over the cliffs of Kilkee, climbing the cliffs of Slieve League. Did I mention cliffs?



"Melmore Head Shoreline"

I am finding myself fascinated with Cattle Point, one of Canada's two Urban Sky Parks. Stepping away from the light, finding your footing by flashlight, composing your subject in the blanket of darkness creates an entirely different shooting experience.

One day, I had an epiphany. I might be better at post-processing than actual photography. In order to develop my photographic skills a few people highly recommended a Freeman Patterson workshop. Next September will see me in St. Martin, New Brunswick with not only Freeman, but André Gallant as well!

I love the giving nature of this Club. I've received assistance from many members through field trips, workshops, image reviews, "learn your camera" sessions and the competition judges. All of you are amazing. You all know who you are. Thank you, from the bottom of my heart. It's been an incredible journey of discovery so far.

My final thought. I feel as though I've started a journey across Canada. I've left Victoria on the ferry and have just arrived at Tsawwassen. There is a long, but wonderfully, scenic road ahead of me and, I have the Victoria Camera Club as my Northern Star.



"Nightfall at Cattle Point "



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Member Portfolio: Richard Letourneau

My interest in photography and cameras began in my childhood. One day, while looking for something in my Grandmother's "Devil's Hole", a small storage area built over the stairs in my Grandfather's den, I found a Brownie #2 Box roll film camera.

Subsequent discussions about the camera and its use soon brought out family photo albums with black pages, and small black photo corner holders. They were the type you could lick to affix photos to pages. Several of the originals had fallen off with time, while the remaining corners held firm on others.

I spent many enjoyable afternoons hearing stories about their black and white images that showed the family farm, family members, special events, and even short trips to the Rocky Mountains of Alberta. It was so nice to hear the memories and experience the emotions attached to those photographs.

Probably when I was around 12 I began using my parents' Brownie Model 2 and later an upgraded Brownie Hawkeye with the flash built-in! As time went on, more cameras were introduced into the household and I paid no particular attention to those brands or how the technology was evolving. I do remember receiving a small point-and-shoot camera for a birthday, possibly a Kodak Instamatic that utilized a flashcube which would rotate four times until the entire cube had been consumed.

I also remember my father being proud of a new Polaroid camera. After the popular black-and-white prints came peel-apart colour prints and then non-peel colour prints in 1972. If I bought film for the Polaroid I too could use his camera. What joy I felt.

As an adult, with a full-time job, I treated myself to a Minolta 35 mm Single-Lens Reflex and I succumbed very quickly to what is known as "GAS" among photographers, "Gear Acquisition Syndrome".

If I had known back then that I would need information for an article in 2018, I might have paid more attention! Suffice to say, I bought and sold or donated several Polaroid cameras, SLRs, smaller point-and-shoot cameras and DSLR cameras.

Now let's pick up this story when I moved to Victoria in 2011. I had been retired since 2005, and purely on a whim to try something new, I sold my condo in Calgary and relocated to Victoria. I have never made a more satisfying decision.

January 2019



"Luscious in Pink"

My long-time interest in photography was wildly awakened as I soon realized I was living in a photographer's paradise here on Vancouver Island. At the time I owned a Canon PowerShot G2 which I used on the Auto setting.

In May 2012 a Black Press photographer told me his camera of choice for portability and ease of use was the Panasonic ZS20. I listened carefully and found myself at Kerrisdale Cameras the next day to make a purchase. I did enjoy it for some time, however, it did not have RAW capability.

In the fall of 2012 I signed up for an introductory DSLR course offered by the Westshore Parks and Recreation Centre as I was becoming more passionate about my new-found hobby. I decided to upgrade from my PowerShot G2 to a Canon Rebel T5i to take the course which started in January. I was anxious to learn about all of those dials on top of the new camera!



"Perfect Harmony"

After completing the “Intro to DSLR” course, I was anxious to get out and start practicing my newly acquired knowledge. I loved exploring Victoria and environs and shot everything for the next couple of years.

I took Mitch Stringer’s Intermediate Photography course in the fall of 2014 and treated myself to a Canon 70D at Christmas that year. I joined the Victoria Camera Club in May the following year and purchased my current Canon 7D Mark II.

So, now that I’m into my fourth year with VCC people frequently ask me what is my favourite thing to photograph. I still identify as a rookie and continue to shoot whatever makes me happy. I really don’t feel the need to identify a niche, at least at this point in my life.

I became quite excited about composite photography when I took an introductory class from Von McKnelly that necessitated delving into the unknown, to me, world of Photoshop. Since that time I have spent numerous hours watching YouTube videos, attending additional classes and workshops, and simply experimenting on my own.

I’ve had moderate success in Altered Reality Competitions within the Club and really love the opportunity to experiment and play. This would be one of my earlier and most fun composites to create. I can guarantee that the out-takes were rather spectacular!



“Careful of that Step”

I’ve also enjoyed experimenting with my different lenses, doing close-up photography with the 100 mm macro, shooting landscapes with the 24-70 mm, close-ups of

birds and animals with the 70-200 mm, or zooming into the moon with the 600 mm.



“Saker Falcon”

Of late, I’ve been trying my hand at birding and even though the shot, “Saker Falcon”, was taken at The Raptors in Duncan, I do get to frequently see birds at Esquimalt Lagoon Migratory Bird Sanctuary, Swan Lake, and King’s Pond, among other locations.



“Let Them Eat Crow”

One afternoon, while I was walking through the forested area near the tall totem pole at Beacon Hill Park, I was fortunate to capture a mother Barred Owl feeding her Owlet. They were high up in the tree but by stepping further back I was able to capture the action with my 200 mm lens. Lighting was also an issue as the mother was in dappled sunlight while the baby was more in the shade on the tree branch.

During the Canada 150 celebrations in 2017 VCC, in cooperation with London Drugs, mounted a print show at Tillicum Mall. I was elated when a couple of my prints were selected for the show and even more delighted when I achieved a sale of "Waves at Sandcut Beach".



"Waves at Sandcut Beach"

I am very passionate about my photography hobby and have benefited greatly from the helpfulness and guidance of many VCC members. My advice to newcomers to the hobby or to the Club is to get out with your camera and shoot, often! Also, participate in field trips and workshops. I try to get out several times a week and like to challenge myself by deliberately using different lenses, for example, one day I may use macro and another, a zoom lens.



"Storybook Window to Secret Garden"

My goals for the year ahead are to develop my astrophotography skills and to enhance and refine proficiencies used in creative work. Club member, Barbara Burns, inspired me when she spoke at the Creative Spe-



"Purple Dreams"

cial Interest Group in November 2018. This image was the *Close-Up* cover for July/August 2017.

I captured the image below on a VCC field trip at a small lake near the Yellow Point Lodge. I couldn't resist capturing those inquisitive eyes.



"Happy Being Green"

I am a retired Nuclear Medicine Technologist, Administrative Support Consultant, and American Sign Language user. I believe in life-long learning and serving the communities in which I live. I have served as Chairman of the Board on several not-for-profits in Alberta and British Columbia and am an active community volunteer. It is my honour to be part of VCC's Internal Competition Committee as well as the Web Administration Team.

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Matrix Metering

by Matt Speight

I remember our instructor in my early photography classes showing us how to meter properly using a hand-held ambient-light meter with both reflected and incident light readings. He explained how incident readings, (you point the meter at the light source not at your subject), were always better than reflected. An incident reading is not going to be thrown off like a reflected reading would be by a dark or very light subject giving the wrong exposure information. Using a grey card (neutral colour, 18% reflectance) for a reflected reading would improve accuracy, like that of an incident reading, but it is not always practical. I must say that I always hated using a hand-held light meter. I found the whole process awkward, time consuming and certainly not intuitive to the creative process.

I moved on to using the meter in my Minolta X700 camera which used centre-weighted metering. We were still instructed that, if possible, take one exposure reading from a grey card and one from the whole scene as we took images for our many assignments. This taught me how the camera often got the exposure wrong when compared to the grey card reading. I learned to compensate for the inadequate reflective metering system in this camera.

Centre-weighted metering works by reading the light from the scene with an 80% bias towards the “centre” of the subject and 20% from the rest of the frame. This is great if your subject is in the centre, which isn’t always the case. So a fair percentage of shots are exposed poorly if we use these settings, or shoot in auto-exposure mode.

Thankfully, camera manufactures have striven to improve how their cameras read the reflected light coming from the scene. Rumour has it that Olympus first came up with the idea of splitting the metered area into more than two segments and then sold the technology to Nikon. Nikon developed this multi-segmented metering idea, even delaying its use until it was perfected, so it didn’t make it into the Nikon FE. Nikon’s FA camera was the first to have a truly sophisticated metering system which they called Automatic Multi-Pattern Metering or AMP for short. It worked by dividing the scene into five segments. This was obviously awesome because it was better than the two-segmented centre-weighted metering. Nikon then got very clever and took that idea to the next level.

Now let me go off on tangent here. The FA came out in 1983. This was the age when personal computers with

microchip technology were making their way into the average household. The Commodore 64 and Sinclair Spectrum sold by the millions. Nikon had the idea of putting a microchip into the FA camera to analyze the reflected light in its new five-segmented meter. It had a four-bit computer that Nikon programmed after analyzing over 100,000 images. The chip was programmed to not be tricked by overly-dark or bright areas, like an off-centre, dimly-lit subject in front of a bright background, such as a sunset. Canon, realizing this was a good thing, followed suit with their version called Evaluative Metering as did Pentax with their Multi-pattern Metering. All the manufacturers now have their own version of Nikon’s sophisticated metering system.

Nikon has continued to develop their in-camera metering to a level far above anyone else. AMP was developed into the more advanced, 3D Colour Matrix Metering. This advanced meter can be found in the newest high-end Nikons, like the D850/500/5 and the mirrorless Z6. It now divides the scene into 180,000 segments, giving the camera a much better idea of the scene’s lighting. Most meters work in luminosity only and can be tricked by excessive amounts of one colour in the scene, giving the camera the wrong reading. No longer as this meter also considers the colour of the scene. With all this information at its disposal the camera then references a database from over 30,000 images to aid in making the correct exposure.

There are of course, other types of metering. Most advanced and pro-level cameras will have spot metering alongside weighted-average and matrix metering. As the name suggests, spot metering measures from just a small area, a few degrees wide. Shooting a bride in a white wedding dress would be a good use of spot metering. It allows you to select the bride’s face and set the exposure accordingly.

The most recent addition to our metering choices is highlight-weighted metering. This can be found on a select few high-end cameras. This mode will keep your highlights from over exposing and you’ll be able to see the detail in your bride’s wedding dress. This mode is particularly useful if you have a spot-lit subject like our bride, on the dance floor, who still wants you to capture all the intricate stitch-work of the dress.

Nikon’s matrix metering is the latest and greatest way for a camera to set exposure. All the manufactures have their equivalent versions that are a huge advancement on simple centre-weighted metering. I know a few photographers who still swear by centre-weighted metering. It’s what they are used too and they know how to get around its inaccuracies.

Improving Your Landscapes

by Mike Murchison

For me, the art of the landscape is often as much about the process as it is about the final image. It is the act of creation and the connection to the world around me that has kept the camera in my hands. Hopefully, sharing my shooting process with you will help to improve your images.

Shoot with Purpose

Arrive Early: It's not always possible but, when it is, get to your location with enough time so that you are not rushed into shooting. Arriving early allows you to explore the location but, more importantly, feel it. Exploring without my camera in hand helps me formulate ideas and see things I may miss if rushed.

Identify your subject: Take the time to think about what you are shooting. I would argue that every photograph has a subject which is why it is important to think about what your subject is. However, don't get caught up on the idea that the subject has to be an object in the frame. We should expand our definition of subject to include texture, colour, mood, shape or even metaphor. Thinking beyond the objects in the scene will give you more room to create.



"My subject was texture, Stokksnes, Iceland"

Visualize: It's often easy to overlook this and start shooting immediately after you identify a scene. I encourage you to take the time to visualize what your final image will look like before you actually press the shutter. Thinking about all aspects of your images before you take them will help you create a strong mental snapshot of the moment of capture. This in turn will help you recreate what you were feeling when you are processing the image.

Slow Down: Slowing yourself down will usually lead to more thoughtful images. I don't know a photographer



"Visualized from the car, Two Jack Lake, Banff National NP"

who doesn't make mistakes. I am sure that everyone has opened a file on their computer and found an error which could have been avoided if we had slowed ourselves down. One of the best ways to slow yourself down is to develop a routine. I start my routine with composition and visualization. Once I am comfortable with my composition, I think about technical aspects like ISO, aperture and shutter speed. I then decide if I may need to blend exposures, stack focus, or stack shutter speeds to produce the image in my mind.



"Simplifying the scene, Reynisfjara, Iceland"

Simplify: The world around is full of beauty and amazing images to be created but you should resist the urge to try to get it all in one shot. My opinion is that simpler is often better in photography. Most art forms are defined by what the artist adds to the image but photography is an art of exclusion. What we choose to eliminate from our composition defines our final image. Try to think about which elements in your viewfinder are not enhancing your image and recompose to remove them if possible. In photography, less is often more.

Understand Visual Language: Most photographers start their journey without an understanding of visual language. I believe it is very important that, as visual artists, we should have at least a rudimentary understanding of the

words we use to examine and understand our images. Take some time to understand how tone, colour, shape, line and texture work together to tell your story. Think about these concepts when you are looking at any visual art form and when you are examining your own work (both the successes and failures). The more you use the language, the more fluent you will become in using it.



“Inside a wider view, Nugget Point, New Zealand”

Explore Your Subject: Once you have gone through the whole process, do it again. Think about other ways you can shoot the subject you identified. You could consider changing perspective, changing focal length, or focusing on a detail in the scene. Our first instincts aren't always our best. When you take time exploring your subject, you can often capture the essence of the scene a little better. You can explore a subject on different days, in different conditions, as well. If you find a composition you love, but the light isn't supporting it, consider returning another time and trying again. It can be valuable to keep a location journal and write your ideas down for future visits. Persistence pays off in photography.

Process with Purpose

Most photographers I know prefer to be out with their camera as opposed to sitting in front of a computer. It's easy these days to get your image into software and hit a preset button and be done, but I feel that processing is as important to your images as the time in the field. When you sit down at the computer here are a few tips to help achieve your visualization.

Shoot RAW: A Camera RAW file is the digital negative that will give you the most latitude when processing. RAW files provide much more colour and tonal data than a JPEG file. More data means you have more to work with in post-processing and can prevent or mitigate problems such as colour banding and shadow noise.

Learn Your Tools: There are many viable options for processing software. Whichever you choose, I would

recommend you let your processing skills grow with your photography. If you are just starting your journey, there is no need to jump into advanced Photoshop techniques. Learn how to do basic adjustments first and understand how the tools affect your image, then add more advanced techniques as you need them to reach your goals.

Use Local Adjustment Tools: Local adjustment tools are processing tools that allow you to alter specific areas of your image. The possibilities of local adjustments are endless as you can adjust light, colour, texture, tone, contrast and colour temperature to tell your story and guide the viewer around your final image. All processing software packages have local adjustment options.

In Lightroom there are brushes and gradient tools, in Photoshop you can use layers, masking and selections. Whichever software you use, you will improve your images when you unlock the power of local processing.



“Local enhancements, Goldstream Provincial Park”

Let it rest: When you are finished processing your image, let it sit for a couple of days before declaring it done. As you gradually adjust your image your brain adapts and normalizes what it sees. I find it best to put the image away for a few days then come back to it and look at it with fresh eyes. You will likely find yourself making a few final adjustments to the image at this point.

The secret to creating better landscape images lies in the ability to translate the world in front of you into a meaningful image that tells your story to the viewer. A successful image gives insight into both the location it was taken and the photographer taking it.

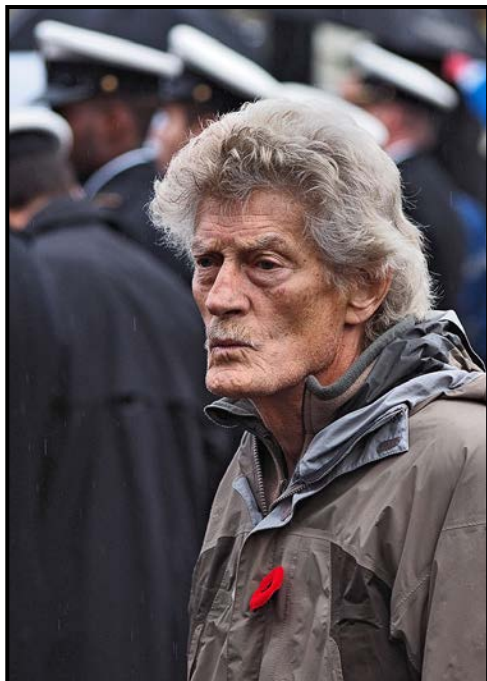
Hopefully, some of the ideas shared in this article help you dive deeper into landscapes to find your story. When you are out in the world looking for compositions, enjoy the process and absorb your surroundings. If you allow it, the landscape will unfold before you and offer you more than just a photograph.

How I Did It

Remembering

by Garry Schaefer

It was November 11, 2011. As the morning rainfall eased I set out in damp, overcast conditions to cover the Remembrance Day ceremonies at the downtown cenotaph. I had mounted a long tele-zoom lens to my Olympus E-5 DSLR, with the objective of being able to focus on individuals from a discrete distance. The last thing I wanted to do was to intrude on the private reflections of either the veterans or the civilian participants on this sombre occasion. I was rewarded with a good number of opportunities to capture the moods of those officiating, including veterans, and the onlookers, ranging from parents with young children to aging members of the public, most likely with personal recollections of the sacrifices and sufferings of war.



Under the prevailing dim lighting, I set the lens wide open in aperture priority and enabled auto-ISO, limited to a maximum of 1600. These settings allowed me to shoot hand-held while moving freely about the venue. I used AF and centre-weighted AE to obtain best results on the faces of interest. Settings for “Remembering” included: Olympus DZ ED 70-300 mm f4.3 lens at 120 mm (full-frame equivalent 240 mm), 1/250th sec, ISO 640. Consistent with my reputation, this was shot in best quality JPEG mode. It required almost no post-processing, except for minor crops from the top and the right hand sides to remove slight distractions and a tweak, using curves, to add a touch of contrast to the mid-tones.

Living in Duckweed

by Daniel Rondeau

On an overcast day in late August I was on the dock near the Swan Lake Nature House at mid-morning when I heard “It’s a snake!” I swiftly moved over and took an initial shot standing up to inspect the scene, then quickly lay down flat on the dock to be almost level with the snake’s head.



What I most wanted to control in the shot was the depth of field. The carpet of duckweed in front of the snake is crawling with water fleas and I wanted a sharp area sufficiently deep to capture some of them. At f9.5 I also got a sharp capture of the duckweed rising from the surface onto the snake’s neck.

But at f9.5, out of focus duckweed with black fleas is noisy. To mitigate some of it, I dropped the speed to 1/350th sec. to lower the ISO (to 360). The shutter speed is low for a 600 mm hand-held shot but the foot of my lens was resting on the dock and it worked.

When I dropped to the ground I caused a bit of commotion on the dock. Within a couple of minutes, everyone was around me looking at the snake. It got spooked and quickly disappeared.

Aside from the usual workflow to develop the RAW file (whites, darks, curve, contrast, sharpness, etc.), post-production focused on three areas: colour vibrance, further isolating the area in focus from the foreground and background, and cropping.

Colours in RAW files are quite flat so I pushed up the vibrance and luminosity of the green channel. To focus the eye of the viewer on the sharp area, I did maximum noise removal, reduced clarity and dropped the contrast and sharpness in the background and foreground.

I then spent a lot of time finding a good crop. The version reproduced here was my first competition entry. I have since revisited it and I think that a little more space above the snake’s head is preferable!

Tuesday Shoots

by Jim Fowler

The shortest day may be behind us but spring is still a long way off. The small group of regular attendees at the Tuesday shoots is always ready to share their photographic experience. Lunch discussions afterward are always lively. Learn how a member took that shot you admired last time. Find out how another likes their new mirrorless camera.

January 8th: The letter “A”. If plan “A” doesn’t work, stay cool; the alphabet has 25 more letters. Find letters in our environment. Find them on a storefront, in advertising or in our natural environment. Be creative, or even challenge yourself to spell your name or a word.

January 15th: Oak Bay Marina. Look for shore birds around the breakwater and Marina. There is usually some wind, which means flying birds. A resident harbour seal waits for fishers to return. Catch the boat reflections if the waters are still. The dock area is open to visitors. Follow the shore and look for small craft in the harbour. More shore birds await along the shore outcrops: Yellowlegs, Killdeer and Black turnstones. Lunch at the Penny Farthing Pub in Oak Bay at noon.



January 22nd: Time to share. Everyone should bring a small item to feature in a series of photographs. This could be any article from your home, nothing valuable, but let’s have some fun. It might be something that we can pose and feature in our photos or maybe something that lurks in the background. We will exchange these at coffee and return them to their owners at lunch.

Some events require registration and a fee or donation may be requested. Please check the Club calendar for details related to each field trip. Some destinations require a minimum number for special arrangements. The group leaders count on the registration record to reserve a lunch table, so please register.

January 2019

Weekend Shoots

by Vanessa MacDonald

I would like to extend our appreciation to the trip leaders who have hosted some pretty amazing field trips in 2018; Suzanne Huot, Richard James, Don Peterson, Andrée Fredette, Teri VanWell, Karl Schoepp, Bob Law, John Clarke, Neil Boyle, Dan Takahashi, Gail Takahashi, Gita McCormick, Jacqui Ferguson, Gordon Lee and Simon Henson. It was a real pleasure to see our members out enjoying themselves and the fantastic images they captured. It would not have been possible without you!

January 5th: Stone Butter Church, Light Painting and Night Photography. We have arranged with the Cowichan Band to access the Stone Butter Church for the evening. We will arrive well before dusk to scout our compositions with the main focus being blue hour and night photography. We will offer special techniques like light painting and use of speedlights to light the inside and outside of the church. This field trip coincides with a new moon so if the skies are clear, astrophotography and star trails shots may be possible. Additional trips may be offered in the Spring.

Saanich Butterfly Gardens (date TBA). Take a break from the dreary winter weather and transport yourself into a tropical paradise. Details will be on the website.

January 18th: Witty’s Lagoon, Steel Wool Spinning. Here’s a chance to photograph some fun pyrotechnics down at the beach! We’ve planned this night photography and light painting trip during a low tide to make the most of the beautiful exposed rippling sand and tide pools at Witty’s Lagoon. Winter is the only time of year when the tides retreat at night and the tide pools can provide excellent mirror-like reflecting surfaces that add interest to steel wool spinning shots. The low tide occurs at 7:15 pm and if the sky is clear, the near-full moon may provide some additional lighting.

January 26th: Sooke Potholes and Mary Vine Falls. Join us for an exploration of the amazing waterfalls and sections of river in Sooke Potholes Park during peak flow. The first stop will be a spectacular hidden attraction, the multi-tiered Mary Vine Falls. It can be reached via a 15-minute hike along a rugged forest trail. After Mary Vine we will check out the Sooke River canyon, potholes and rapids along the Riverside Trail. Picnic lunch near the rapids, then people can explore on their own.

If you have any further questions, please contact Vanessa and Gita at fieldtrips@victoriacameraclub.ca

Photographing Movement

by Daniel A Roy

Movement was one of the September 2018 themes for the Tuesday Shooters. In order to capture a feeling of motion (not including methods available in post-processing), the photographer requires a moving subject, a moving camera, or both. Our challenge on that day was to use a moving subject to tell a story.



“Porsche 356, a Car Enthusiast’s Dream Machine”

There are two schools of thought for capturing blurred action: panning, or having a stationary camera set up to capture a subject as it passes through the field of view. The tripod method requires a suitable background (properly framed and composed) and good timing.

Several images may have to be taken to get the right shutter speed, aperture, and placement of the subject within the frame. For this shoot, I selected manual settings, experimenting with different shutter speeds and a fixed aperture of f16. I frequently “chimped” to see the results and made shutter speed adjustments as required. Because the day was mostly sunny, I used a low ISO setting.



“Casual Rider in Red”

When an object is moving at a rapid speed the impression of movement can still be attained with a high shut-

ter speed. Two examples would be an image showing a baseball just released from a pitcher’s hand and an arrow sent downrange by an archer.

Although the ball or arrow may be perfectly sharp, and frozen in time, the impression of movement will still be conveyed to the viewer. In the case of the arrow (travelling at more than twice the speed of a baseball), an extremely high shutter speed would be required.



“Why is That Camera Pointed At Me?”

A blurred image not only captures motion but it can also convey mood. A cyclist wearing a dress or a suit tells a totally different story than a cyclist wearing a colourful team jersey does. Even the style of bike influences the viewer’s impression of the image. Another example of contrast in mood would be a pedestrian walking with an umbrella held directly over their head and a person holding the umbrella at a sharp angle to deflect the rain on a blustery day.



“BC Flag Flapping in the Breeze”

Tack sharp images of flowers, landscapes, and architecture can produce wonderful images, but there are many factors to take into account to achieve a high standard of quality: time of day, time of year, weather conditions, and the type of lens used, just to mention a few.

On the other hand, a blurred image of a moving object can be captured at just about any time of day or year. However, bright sunlight may force you to search for subjects in the shadows. A neutral density (ND) filter would help to reduce the shutter speed when shooting in bright sunlight (see page 6 in the December 2018 *Close-Up*).



“Seagull in a Hurry”

A complete list of subjects and places to capture motion would be lengthy but a few examples might be: planes, trains, and automobiles (yes, I placed them in that order on purpose), machinery, bikes, skateboards, skateboard parks, dogs, dog parks, fairgrounds, playgrounds (be sure to get parental/guardian permission when photographing children), dancers, pedestrians, joggers, and athletes in action at various sporting venues.

Then there are natural subjects such as ocean shorelines, waterfalls, rivers and streams, heavy rainfall or snowfall, birds, cats, various other animals, and star-trails. Did you know that the Earth (measured near the equator) spins at 1,600 km/hour?



“Jogger on the Empress Hotel Causeway”

Another example of expressing movement with a tack-sharp subject and background might be a jet fighter suspended in flight with full afterburners and vapour roiling

off the wings and fuselage. A trip to the Abbotsford Airshow next summer is on my wish list.

Assuming that you are using the optimum ISO to suit the available lighting, the choice of shutter speed is mostly dependent on how quickly the subject is moving, the distance between the camera and the subject, and the amount of movement you wish to portray.

Through experimentation I have found that a longer lens (70-200 mm) produced better results when panning. Low light conditions are more conducive to achieving the desired results (or a ND filter).



“A Blue Heron Executing a Perfect Soft Landing”

Blurred images are captivating. I often pause for a minute or more when viewing this type of image; there seems to be a story waiting to be told. Or, more likely, the story has been told and it takes more than a few moments to interpret it completely.

Upon viewing several websites related to the subject, my eyes have been opened to a much wider range of ideas to capture the impression of movement. The web-search produced several hundred motion-blur images, and the more movement photos I saw, the more intrigued I became.

I plan to invest more time in exploring this creative form of photography. Like any other endeavour, proficiency comes with practice. The Tuesday Shoot “Movement” exercise has given me the confidence to pursue this in depth. A little research, more than a few pages of notes, a list of locations to shoot, maybe a Neutral Density filter, and who knows? I may capture enough images for a slide presentation. Only time will tell.

To view some excellent images by fellow club members from the Tuesday group’s “Movement Shoot”, on the VCC website, go to the Galleries/Featured Galleries/2018-19 Featured Galleries page. Then, go to Tuesday Group/Movement page.

Beginners' Corner: Daring to be Off-kilter

by Josée Ménard

January is a time when we aim to set things right yet the title points us in the opposite direction daring us to be off-kilter. And why not? Other words that come to mind are, off-balance, crazy, erratic. Merriam-Webster would agree, however, it also suggests synonyms such as curious, remarkable, and offbeat. It even includes words related to off-kilter: extraordinary, fantastic, rare, unique, uncustomary, noticeable, striking, and outstanding amongst others.

Reading this list energizes us to achieve the best we can but, hang on, didn't we start talking about daring to be on the weird side of things? Well, yes and no. Daring to be unconventional can lead us to be rare, unique and noticeable enough that our images grow to be striking and outstanding. In practice, at least, more so than last year's images.

How can you begin your off-kilter journey? During field trips plan to stop and study the landscape ahead of you, find what stands out, what catches your eye. If it catches your interest and you start thinking of an idea, go for it as you may be onto something good. Play with it in your mind. Move about, zoom in and out. Do you need to include all of it in your image?

Push yourself to be a bit off-the-wall. Look at what is in your viewfinder or make a frame with your fingers. Scan and ask yourself what is more striking? As you develop your sense of composition, you will be able to analyze and identify the key elements within the scene that you are observing. Seek to heighten curiosity and catch the eye in uniqueness.

One of my favourite assignments is to give myself a grid to explore for a good length of time. Stroll around observing its light, its shadows, its winds, its characters, as well as its habits. Let's not forget getting to know how the meteorological elements vary with the time of day. Walk back and forth, sit, and stand, blending into the environment one could say. If you are happy with an image that you have just taken, that may be it. On the other hand, if you are thinking of reworking the image or finding a different angle, trust your instinct as this indicates that your time here is not yet done.

Observing while on holidays or at home can become a relaxing favourite such as when I discovered the sun-down ritual in the image 'The Sunset Club'. Just imagine



"The Sunset Club - Original"

the camera angles or the storyline. A jewel in the rough. Creativity abounds. What is so captivating? How much to include? What to and what not to reveal to the viewer?

I was fortunate to realize that I was at the right place, at sundown time. My family was kind enough to oblige me in my passion and agree to return to the same area early enough to scout my best position. On-site limits restricted my range of shooting options. Untimely beach passers-by walking near the row of sunset enthusiasts in their chairs unsuccessfully tested natural patience skills as light and hue conditions changed by the second.



"The Sunset Club - Second Shot"

Not all was lost. Luckily, one admirer lifted her arm pointing to the distance. Ah! It adds to the storyline enigma. It would have been perfect with her arm fully isolated. That is all right, someone else appears to have binoculars in hand. Happy, this is all for tonight's sunset. We shall see which image to select during post-production.

The other side of the coin in this journey is to take a look at other photographers' work. It is time for inspiration and to awaken your creativity. If you are planning to venture to a specific destination, give yourself time to take a look at images of that area. Spontaneity is good. Planning can bring luck too.

Have fun with what stands before you as creativity awakens. Keep safe in your craziness.

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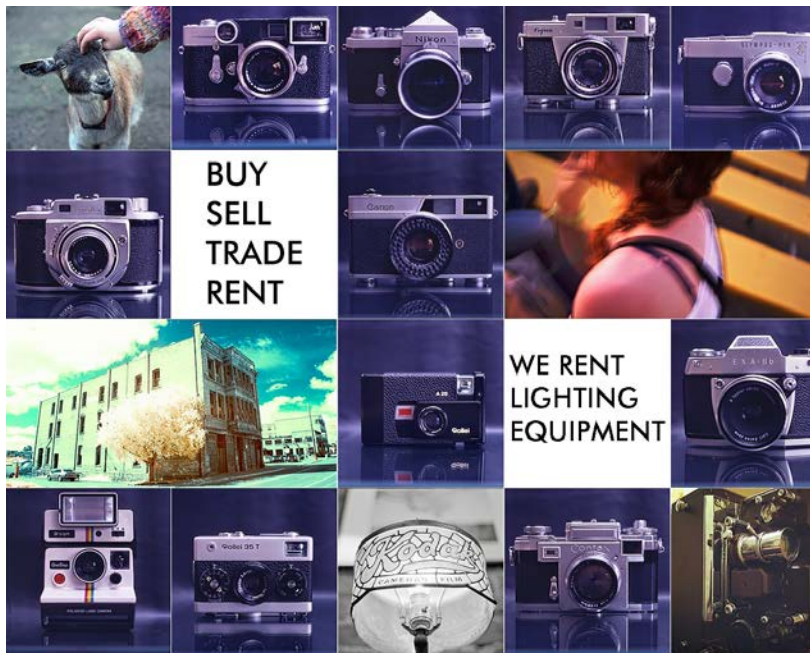
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