



Close-Up



Frank Turner Award
Thoughts on Travel Photography
The Technology Trap
Member Profile: Cindy Stephenson
What Gear Actually Matters?
Paint Filters in Photoshop
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Camera Triggers and Traps
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"Puffin with Iris" by Mike Wooding

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Victoria Camera Club

Close-Up is the magazine of the Victoria Camera Club,
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 Editor, Richard James, e-mail to editor@victoriacameraclub.ca
 for submissions or to advertise in *Close-Up*.



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

Events

We hold a number of events including:

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

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

Membership

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

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

For additional information: please contact:

- Membership:* membership@victoriacameraclub.ca
- Workshops:* workshops@victoriacameraclub.ca
- Field Trips:* fieldtrips@victoriacameraclub.ca
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The Victoria Camera Club is a member club of the Community Arts Council of Greater Victoria (CACGV), Canadian Association for Photographic Arts (CAPA), and the Photographic Society of America (PSA).



Calendar

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

May 4th 2017: Annual Competition Night

The Annual Competition results and awards, and the Frank Turner Award will be presented.

Our Thursday Night meeting program will resume in September. Workshops, SIGs and Field Trips will continue through the Summer. Please see the website for details (www.victoriacameraclub.ca).

Workshop and Field Trip Highlights

Basic Photoshop Workshop

Tuesday field trips: Finnerty Gardens, Songhees Walkway, HCP gardens, Fort Rodd Hill National Park.

Weekend field trips: Botanical Beach, Avatar Grove, Christie Falls and Wildflowers.

Special Event: June 4th "Jelly Bean Rally."

Cover Image: "Puffin with Iris" by Mike Wooding.

In 2014, Club Members Don Peterson, Bryan Kemper and I travelled to Newfoundland to photograph its spectacular scenery, the wonderful people and, for me, the seabirds. Atlantic Puffins, Razorbills, Murres, Kittiwakes and Terns were my primary targets.

As so often happens with first-time visitors, I instantly fell under the spell of this unique and hospitable province, from its geography to its architecture and its inhabitants, both human and avian.

This image is also a love story. On a windswept point on the Bonavista Peninsula, we had the privilege of photographing the Atlantic Puffin under absolutely ideal conditions. This Puffin had picked a Wild Iris and was in the process of taking it to his life-time mate where he would gently deposit it at her feet in an expression of love.

(Ed. This image was one of a set of four entered in the PSA International Exhibition in 2016. This set of images won the Nature Division Digital Diversity Award.)

President's Message

In March, guest speaker, Dion Manastyrski, presented his documentation of change on the Prairies. Afterwards, Wayne Swanson asked how many members present had a prairie background. A surprising or perhaps not such a surprising number of hands went up, which I estimated at over thirty percent. This spring was cool here in Victoria, resulting in the very late emergence of blossoms from their winter's slumber. Connecting these two lines of thought led me to reflect on the relationships between locations, seasons and our photographic pursuits.

How do locations and seasons influence, limit or enhance your photography? My penchant is to shoot outdoors using available light and to get out there in all seasons. That said, I cannot deny that there were times, even months, in my former home city of Winnipeg, when it was simply too cold. Likewise, here in Victoria, it may sometimes simply be too wet and windy, causing me to wimp out. Perhaps I should consider developing an interest in still life, macro and table-top imagery, artificial lighting and related genres, all of which can be practiced indoors. Despite those options, though, I seem to steadfastly stick to themes and genres in which I have long found great pleasure. As a result, my Winnipeg tally shows a decided skew towards summertime shooting. In Victoria the distribution is much more uniform throughout the year. Chalk this one up to Victoria.

But what of the locations? Roaming on foot from home is my favourite way to find those pixel-sized bundles of light. They are most often details found in the urban environment. Nature shots generally have been captured in and around parks and streams, locations offered in almost any city. That said, my move to Victoria came with a significant change and expansion in readily accessible shooting opportunities. Pacific shores, right in the city, with seascapes, wildlife and the human activities associated with marine matters, provide limitless possibilities for the photographer, a whole new slate of offerings ready for the picking. Chalk up another point for Victoria.

Perhaps your photographic muse arises most strongly when you are in travel mode. For me the opposite is true. Opportunities when traveling are not to be overlooked but it is from home base that I most often set out with deliberate intent. Clearly, from a photographic enthusiast's point of view, my wife, Margaret, was right on when she uttered those fateful words, "I think we should move to Victoria!"

Garry Schaefer, President

The Victoria Camera Club’s highest award, the Frank Turner Trophy, shines a spotlight on a member who exemplifies the spirit and commitment of this award through their distinctive service to the club and their demonstrated excellence in the art of photography.



“Great Grey Owl”

This year the Committee is pleased to recognize the outstanding achievements and contributions of Mike Wooding with this most prestigious honour. Mike became involved in nature photography after retiring in 2006. He joined the Victoria Camera Club in September 2008 and since that time he has made consistent contributions and been actively involved in service activities that have been integral to the Club’s operation.

His years of loyal and dedicated service to the Club saw him assuming various roles on the Executive: serving as Membership Chair, Members Night Coordinator, External Competitions Chair and Vice President. He initiated and led the Nature Photographers’ Photo Forum, which evolved into the Nature Special Interest Group. Mike also initiated and led the Novice Image Review activity that supports the development of our novice and intermediate members to achieve their goals.

Mike is an outstanding role model who leads by example. He has led numerous field trips to Beaver Lake Ponds to teach other members the art of photographing dragonflies and also led workshops on bird and dragonfly photography.

In 2013 Mike successfully completed a 140 page book “Nature Photography, A Personal Journey: Volume One, Birds of Canada.” This book is a legacy volume worthy of Mike’s demonstrated and ever-growing capabilities as a nature photographer.

Over the years Mike has shown dedication and leadership and his photographic achievements have earned

the respect and admiration of his peers. The Frank Turner award focuses attention on exemplariness and Mike Wooding exhibits the highest standard of excellence and has demonstrated measurable evidence of his photographic skill through his consistently highly-placed competition images at the Club, and at the external and national competition levels. In 2012 Mike ventured into the world of international photographic competitions and has had several of his images accepted in leading international salons and has won numerous awards.

In 2012 he received the Wildlife Insect Award in the Photographic Society of America (PSA) International Exhibition with “Death on a Lily Pad.” In 2015 four images were accepted for the final round of judging in the BBC/ Natural History Museum (UK) Wildlife Photographer of the Year Competition. “Atlantic Puffin with Wild Iris,” (the cover image for this issue), “Canada Darner,” “Saffron-winged Meadowhawk” and “Pacific Chorus Frog” won him the 2016 PSA International Exhibition Diversity Award. He received a Gold Medal for “Atlantic Puffins Billing,” in the 2016 Saguaro Nature Exhibition. “Atlantic Puffins Courtship” was a bronze medal winner in the 2016 Southern California S4C International Exhibition and he won two Gold medals in the 2017 Smethwick (UK) International Exhibition of Photography for “Emmas’s Dancers” and “Anna’s Hummingbird.”

Mike, in recognition of your dedicated and outstanding service to Victoria Camera Club and for your personal commitments and contributions, we honour you as this year’s recipient of the Frank Turner Award.



“Steller’s Jay”

by Lorna Zaback

In my early 20s, I dreamed about being a travel photographer, getting paid by Gourmet magazine to spend a week photographing and writing about Tuscan vineyards, or being contracted by the Sunday Times to do a photo essay on the Sonoran Desert.

Those fantasies may have been short lived, but now here I am, retired with a small but adequate pension and a flexible schedule. I no longer strive to be a sought-after travel photographer. I now have time to travel (quite often, actually), I take photographs and I am happy. I do, however, in an attempt to hone my skills, get the most out of my travel experiences and bring home some decent images, attend the occasional travel photography workshop, look for instructional videos online, and heed most of the excellent advice I get from photographer friends who are seasoned travellers.

First and foremost, "Take your camera with you everywhere (along with a spare battery). You never know when that "lucky shot" is going to present itself." With this in mind, I lugged my DSLR around Istanbul in September of 2014 and had amassed a considerable collection of images featuring mosques (inside and out), bazaars and spice shops, outdoor tea and smoking cafes, and the city's many culinary delights. What I really wanted, however, were a few people or street shots, evidence of Istanbul's dynamic and culturally diverse ambiance. Then, in the afternoon, as we were window-shopping along Istiklal Cadde, I turned to look behind me and witnessed this scene. Grabbing my camera (so glad it was hanging over my shoulder), without giving much thought to framing, depth of field or the rule of thirds, I took the shot. Although the final image has undergone some basic post-processing, what I initially saw on the LCD pleased me, balanced composition,



"Hitching a Ride, Istanbul"

rich colour, "live action," and a little humour, the quintessential lucky shot. And lucky it was, for a mere 10 seconds later, the tram stopped, the passengers disembarked, this little guy jumped down from his perch and was gone.

"Get comfortable with shooting hand-held; tripods and travel often don't mix." This image is from a trip we took to Holland in January of 2015. We were driving on our way to Abcoude for coffee when these magnificent trees caught my attention. Hand-held is one thing, shooting from a moving vehicle is something else entirely, but we were late to meet friends and there wasn't really any place to pull over so, thankful to be in the passenger seat, I went for it. The trees were coming at us fast, but I cranked up my ISO, taking several shots at a variety of focal lengths and apertures and...imagine my surprise! I tried a few different crops in post-processing, but liked this one best, emphasizing as it does the height of the trees and the laciness of their bare branches. I loved the sense of them looming out of the fog and the formality of the planting, combined with the straightness of the road, leading our gaze toward the distant horizon.



"Avenue of Trees, Abcoude, Holland"

"Be original, try for a fresh perspective, especially in those popular tourist destinations." I felt fortunate to be able to spend 10 days in Paris, in April 2016. Paris is probably one of the most photographed cities on the planet. Millions of breath-taking images of the city's many iconic attractions, the Eiffel Tower, Notre Dame, I.M. Pei's pyramid at the Louvre, exist on Google, Instagram, 500px, and other web sites. Given this piece of advice, though, I was determined to return home with at least a few unique Paris photographs. On this particular morning, we had breakfasted at Cafe de Flores,

the celebrated hangout of Gertrude Stein, Ernest Hemingway and their friends, before heading out to walk the streets of Saint-Germain-des-Pres. I did manage several acceptable shots of the cafe's vine-covered exterior (to prove we were there) and a few of our crusty croissants and rich cafe-au-lait when they arrived, but this image, a little chaotic, a bit quirky, remains one of my personal favourites commemorating my visit to the "City of Love".



"Cafe de Flores, Paris"

Finally, "Don't agonize over those foiled opportunities. There is always another, perhaps better, one out there." We have all experienced being in the right place at the wrong time (I am looking across an Alberta valley at a stunning winter landscape, but it is cold and windy and the noon day sun is glaring off the snow into my eyes), or the wrong place at the right time (I could have sworn the Amsterdam Tulip Festival was to be in front of the Royal Palace). A carefully-planned field trip can deliver disappointing results (it is pouring rain the day you are at Machu Picchu) or, on the other hand, those that are unexpectedly gratifying. We were visiting a friend in Saskatoon last September and on Saturday morning our friend took us to the vast, bustling Saskatoon Farmers' Market. Farmers' markets can be a photographer's delight, alive with sensory stimulation of all kinds but on this occasion, as I strolled around, everything I shot looked dull and uninteresting. I just couldn't capture the sense of industry and camaraderie that surrounded me in what I thought was a pleasing composition. But then there were these leeks. I might not have gotten my "market" photos that day but I ended up, following a bit of lens correction and some hue and saturation adjustments, with an image I like much better.

In spite of feeling a certain sense of urgency when I travel (What if I never get to this place again and have I missed the shot of a lifetime?), I have learned many lessons over



"Leeks, Saskatoon Farmers' Market"

the years, the most meaningful being that I am doing this for me. I don't have to feel torn between documenting our travels to entertain friends, and trying to capture images with more stand-alone, artistic potential. I have become comfortable with the fact that my photographs, travel or otherwise, do not have to be competition-worthy, or fine-art quality and I am not meeting a deadline for Westworld. I can shoot what catches my eye, even if no one else would look twice at it. What I would like is to be able to look back on my images in months or years to come and think, "Wow, that was a fun trip!"



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Bridging Photo Technologies

by Richard James

The article "What Gear Really Matters?" on page 19 leads you from here to the buying decision.

Last month I discussed "The Creative Box." This month I will talk about the technology trap, a never-ending chase to something that might be bigger or better but will definitely cost more.

Technology is advancing at an ever-increasing pace (Moore's law). Do you need to keep on the leading edge? The fundamental question is, "Do you really need the latest iteration or is what you already have more than adequate for what you are doing?"

For the camera body, the major items are the sensor, metering and focusing. If the next iteration makes a really significant improvement that is appropriate to your work in one or more of these, then the answer may be yes.

First, the sensor. A 25 megapixel sensor, either on a full frame or a crop sensor camera, has dimensions of approximately 6000 x 4000 pixels. Without cropping or up-resing, you can make a 13" x 20" print from this (at 300 ppi). The usual print size for our competitions is 11" x 17" so you can crop 15% into the frame and still get a 300 ppi print. If you want a 4:5 ratio image (the traditional photography format) then you can crop 35% into the frame for an 11" x 13.5" image. Are you likely to exceed this? Do most of your images end up resized for projection (1400 pixels wide) or use on the web? If the answer to these two questions is no and yes respectively then why do you need a higher resolution sensor?

There are certainly other considerations. A larger pixel-count sensor will allow you to do more cropping, which is always useful if you shoot wildlife. Remember, you are never close enough! The image quality, primarily noise, high ISO capability, and dynamic range (ratio of brightest to darkest usable illumination) will probably be better with a new sensor. If you rarely shoot images with a high dynamic range, or in low light conditions, is this important?

Metering and auto-focusing are key aspects of creating a technically good image. Newer cameras improve both with better metering algorithms and auto-focus detection. For exposure we now have very intelligent systems that compare the lighting on the subject, as projected through the lens, to a database of appropriate exposures in order to calculate something close to the optimal exposure for the scene. Multiple metering modes vary from a single spot to an integrated reading over the whole image, and

can also use face detection and give priority to that part of the subject for exposure. But does that work with birds?

Similarly with auto-focusing, we now have over 150 focusing sensors spread across most of the image. The algorithms and options give you detailed control over how the camera detects the desired focus point, single-point, groups of varying sizes, closest object etc. The tracking of fast moving objects such as flying birds has also improved considerably, but if you shoot mainly studio setups, how important is this?

Now on to the second part of the camera, the lenses. Really though, lenses are more important than the body! As John Roberts says in his article on page 19, "... the camera... is a box that captures the image." The lens is the element that forms the image and is the primary determinant of the technical quality of the image.

Modern lenses are extremely complex. Multiple groups of elements move relative to each other to zoom and focus the lens. There are really two reasons to buy a new lens for your camera: you need an additional focal length prime lens, or zoom lens range, or a lens is released that has superior optical quality to one you already have.

Dealing with focal length first, is it a convenience (with a different zoom you don't have to move so far to frame the image correctly). Or is it a real need that you cannot get close enough to shoot the wildlife safely or far enough away to include everything you want to show in the landscape? Remember that a different focal length lens will give you a different perspective of the subject. Standing still and zooming may not be the best solution. At the wide end of the lens range remember that you will get a higher resolution image by shooting it as a panorama rather than using a wide angle lens. At the long end though, there is really nothing short of using a tele-converter or heavy cropping of your image to give the impression of being closer. Both of these solutions give a lower quality result than a longer focal length lens.

Unless you have a low quality lens and want to upgrade it to a significantly better equivalent lens, changes in lens performance are going to be marginal and may not be noticeable in your real-life images. The changes that you would look for would be a larger maximum aperture, better resolution and less lens aberration. Remember also that the higher the zoom range (ratio between the shortest and longest focal length), the more difficult it is to design, and the more costly to produce a lens with high quality across the focal length range and across the width of the image.

External Competitions Results

by Pam Irvine

The Victoria Camera Club has entered a number of external competitions over the past few months. We want to thank the many members who submitted their work for consideration and inclusion in the Club entries.

CAPA Spring Portrait Club Competition: the North Shore Photography Society won with 134 points. The Victoria Camera Club came in 9th with a score of 125.5 points. Thank you to Lois Burton, Steve Barber, Suzanne Knowler, Richard Letourneau, Steven Ban and Scott Laird for contributing images for our Club's entry.

CAPA Club Wildlife Competition: the St. Catharines's Photographic Club won with 142.5 points against 21 other Canadian clubs. Only half a point separated the first, second and third place winners so it was a tough competition. The Victoria Camera Club won an Honourable Mention with a score of 139 (only 3.5 point from 1st place). Thanks to Neil Boyle, Meherzad Romer, James Kissinger, Suzanne Huot, Ken Johnstone and Peter Koelbleitner for contributing images for our Club's submission.

CAPA Spring Club Open Competition: the Lion's Gate Camera Club won the Open Competition with 145.5 points. The Victoria Camera Club tied for fourth and an Honourable Mention with 136.5 points. Thanks to Lois Burton, Tony Knowler, Peter Koelbleitner, Scott Laird, Steve Barber and Lorna Zaback for contributing their images to our Club's submission.

The external competitions committee of Mike Wooding, Don Peterson, Doug McLean, Gita McCormick and Jonathan Adams have done a great job this year putting together the Club entries for the many external competitions we enter. We need your best images submitted for consideration if we are to put together a strong entry on behalf of the Club.

If you are uncomfortable with entering your images in our internal monthly competitions, please consider submitting your images for consideration for the external competitions. By submitting your best, you help the Club maintain its reputation of being one of the finest clubs in Canada. We know it is the best and we need to let the rest of the country know it. We have some incredible photographers among our members and we are proud to show you off to the rest of Canada.

March 2017 Competition Judges

We extend our sincere thanks to the judges for the March Intermediate and Advanced competitions: Carolyn Angus, Glenn Bloodworth, Hazel Breikreutz and Judy Higham. We would also like to thank our in-house Digital Novice Judges: Caspar Davis and Normand Marcotte. Also thanks to Leah Gray, Ann McCarthy, and Martin Wright who judged the Novice and Intermediate Prints this month. All images and judges' comments are available at: victoriacameraclub.ca/Competitions/CompetitionResults.aspx.

Hazel Breikreutz (Creative): Hazel is a member of the Crescent Beach Photography Club in South Surrey and a CAPA certified judge. She has won awards for both her photographic art as well as her paintings. Hazel enjoys sharing her experience, ideas and inspiration by teaching courses and workshops.

Carolyn Angus (Wildlife and Natural World): Carolyn's professional career started with freelancing for the Montreal Gazette's travel section. She studied lighting for portrait photography in New York. She does her best to apply these concepts to outdoor portrait lighting. Carolyn now finds great pleasure in helping others achieve their own personal photographic vision through constructive judging. Carolyn is a CAPA certified judge. www.carolynangusphotography.com

Glenn Bloodworth (Open): Glenn is an active member of the RA Photo Club in Ottawa, and leads the Fine Art group. He is a CAPA Certified judge, a member of the National Association of Photoshop Professionals and Chairman of the Board of Directors, School of Photographic Arts in Ottawa. Glen is a founding member of Studio Zone V, a diverse group who are passionate about photography and "the art of seeing." His visual art is thematically guided by David Thoreau's observation "It's not what you look at that matters, it's what you see." www.glennbloodworth.com

Judy Higham (Theme and Advanced Prints): Judy has been photographing seriously since the late 1990s and has been a CAPA judge since 2006. She has a traditional Black and White wet darkroom and enjoys portraiture, macro, wildlife and abstracts. She is also an American Orchid Society Awards photographer for five BC orchid societies. Judy and her husband Ed started the "Darkroom Group" of Coquitlam in 2009, a CAPA club with 17 members. They focus on analogue photography and alternative photography methods from the 1800s.

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Advanced Monochrome Print - 1st
 “Bonnie and Clyde Truck” by Jacqui James

Judge’s comments: Attention to detail and depth of the image, the subdued background behind the window as well as the contrasted background above and beside the window contribute to the success of this image. Slightly darkened edges of the bullet holes is a good technique. A wow image for monochrome.



Advanced Digital Wildlife - 1st
 “Harrier Hawk at Boundary Bay” by Leah Gray

Judge’s comments: The side lighting gives shape to the bird. There is excellent detail in the feathers and the feet. The shallow depth of field leaves the focus totally on the subject. The following eye contact is definitely riveting. A beautiful capture.



Advanced Digital Natural World - 2nd
 “Rain Drops” by Gordon Griffiths

Judge’s comments: The use of refractory light in this image is magical. The bokeh contributes strongly to the design and alludes to a misty background. The singular in-focus water droplet eventually catches the viewer’s eye where it comes to rest. This photographer has beautifully directed my visual journey.



Advanced Digital Open - 1st
 “Vancouver” by Joseph Finkleman

Judge’s comments: Effective “abstract” sense to the reflections, commendably framed by the angle of the shot to the windows resulting in a strong outline of each reflection with the added touch of impact made greater via the curved horizontals. Well done!



Advanced Nature Print - 2nd
“On a Mission” by Josée Ménard

Judge’s comments: Good technique by using a fast enough shutter speed to stop the action. The bird is sharp, good detail throughout. A nice composition.



Advanced Digital Creative - 1st
“Savannah Cathedral Inside and Out”
by Harold Hildred

Judge’s comments: Gorgeous colour and line movement in this image. Very ethereal and grand. Amazing light creating a myriad of shapes and colours radiating joyfully. Well chosen overriding arches adding grandeur and mystery. Well done!



Advanced Open Print - 1st
“Loch Awe” by Richard Webber

Judge’s comments: Excellent colour rendition for this image that was photographed at a beautiful time of day. Excellent detail in the foreground and the waterfall above. Well done.



Advanced Digital Theme - 1st
“From Moon to Museum” by Doug McLean

Judge’s comments: Excellent set-up, reflections etc. Objects well placed in the frame. It is a good idea to photograph at the same level as your subjects, almost table height. Great job!



*Intermediate/Novice Open Print - 2nd
"Calen and the Jellyfish" by John Clarke*

Judge's comments: From across a room this image might appear to be a floating jellyfish beside a silhouette. As you move closer the detail on the edge of the face adds further dimension and emotional impact.



*Intermediate Digital Natural World - 2nd
"Cactus Flower" by Don Piper*

Judge's comments: This image instills a soft emotional response. The original treatment of the subject seemingly transforms it into a water colour. The background highlights are cleverly kept slightly darker than the flower's centre which is after all where the artist wants to direct our eye. The noise is acceptable as it is part of the mood.



*Intermediate Digital Theme - 1st
"No.2-C Autographic Kodak Jr" by Blair Ross*

Judge's comments: Wonderful representation of the camera. Focus/sharpening on lens is well done. When I look at the camera, I wonder why the front (bottom) of the case is not sharp, a good technique to de-focus. An excellent image.



*Intermediate Digital Open - 1st
"Into the Mist" by Hilary Goeller*

Judge's comments: Light and fog/mist are used very effectively to evoke an ethereal sense. Positioning of the hiker on the left is nicely balanced by size, lighting, and the line "strength" of the tree roots on the right.



Intermediate Digital Creative - 2nd
"Dreamer" by Gerry Thompson

Judge's comments: Very tactile image, one wants to touch and actually feel the surface. Hard and soft surfaces meet. Very balanced image with the focal point placed in the centre. Layering of images allows very creative touches to appear.



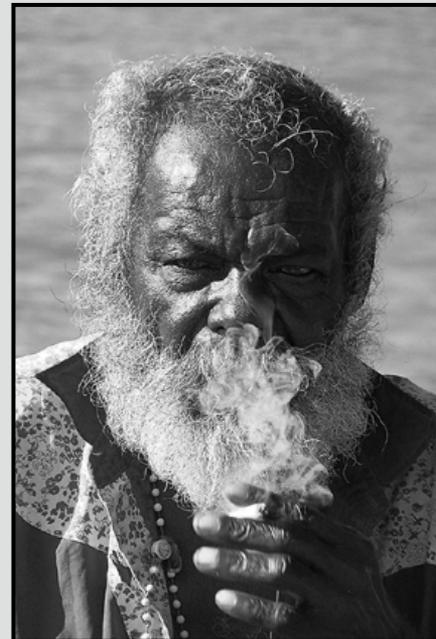
Novice Digital Natural World - 1st
"Mojave Desert" by Sharon Moysey

Judge's comments: The dramatic cactus in the foreground is tack sharp. Sharp from front to back, an interesting composition, good colour, interesting sky adds to the image.



Intermediate Digital Wildlife - 2nd
"The Pose" by Jim Metzger

Judge's comments: Incredible visual impact both in colour and design.



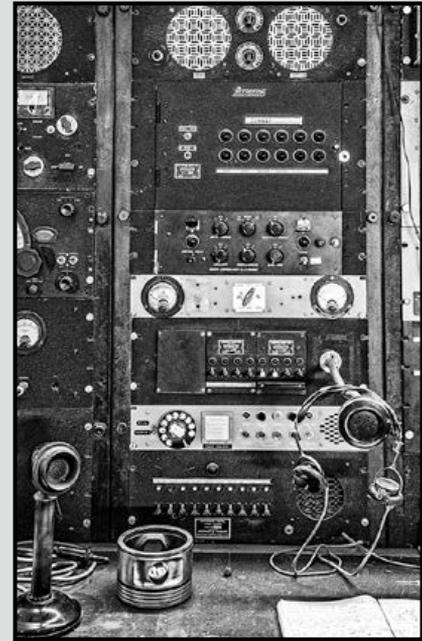
Novice Digital Open - 1st
"Homeless Holey in Bequia" by Laurie McDonald

Judge's comments: A compelling portrait with great dynamic range, perfectly exposed. The cigarette smoke adds life to the picture. The image is tack sharp except for the hand, which may be blurred by motion, and is not a major distraction. Good composition and crop. A nice image.



*Novice Digital Wildlife - 1st
"The Hunter" by Kim Smith*

Judge's comments: Beautiful composition and perfect exposure. The background is unobtrusive yet has enough detail to establish a sense of place. The juvenile Red-tailed Hawk perch is full of interesting diagonals leading to the bird, and has great textures.



*Novice Digital Theme - 2nd
"Ancient Call Centre" by Peter Amundsen*

Judge's comments: A nice crisp black and white image that fits the theme well.



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CONTINUING STUDIES



My Dad was an avid photographer and he encouraged my interest in photography from a very young age. He was an active member in the Kingston, ON, and Burnaby, BC, camera clubs, had his own darkroom, and did his own printing. So I come by my interest in photography honestly. He introduced me to Freeman Patterson, and I have memories of us going to see him in Victoria, North Vancouver and at UBC.

While I have always been interested in photography, it took a back seat for many years to my career and time spent raising my family. Photography was limited to vacations and recording family events with my trusty Canon AE-1.



“Sun Seeker”

Things picked up in 2007 when I inherited my Dad’s Nikon D70. I also had a bit more time and energy to pursue my interest and took Mitch Stringer’s beginner level photography course at Camosun College. I highly recommend his course to anyone wanting to get serious about photography. Mitch is an excellent teacher and you’ll come away with a full grasp of what it means to shoot in manual mode, the advantages of doing so, and how surprisingly easy it is.

A friend recommended I join the VCC and I did so in 2010. However I still shot strictly jpegs, and had no knowledge of post-processing techniques, nor why you would want to do so. All in good time! I now teach Lightroom, own a full frame DSLR and recently acquired a top-of-the-line extra tall carbon fibre tripod.

I’ve met many good friends through photography. It has also enabled me to spend time outdoors, often on my own in out-of-the-way places. This is time I treasure. For example, lying prone on the far reaches of a sandbar off Witty’s Lagoon, a warm sea breeze in the air and waves gently lapping the sandbar. I kept one eye on the tide that is coming in, and with the other, keenly

observed a small group of Marbled Godwits, a bird not commonly found in this area.

Photo workshops are a great way to meet other photographers and improve your skills. As a retirement gift, I attended a one-week workshop with Freeman Patterson and Andre Gallant in New Brunswick. That was two years ago, and several of us regularly keep in touch, sharing our work. Freeman emphasized the importance of visual design. If you understand design principles, and apply these to your image, Freeman espoused that people will respond positively and you’ll be more successful in telling your story. For example, go beyond labels and consider the major components of your image as shapes and how you have placed them within the frame.

I received more good advice during a recent one-week workshop in Death Valley with Guy Tal and Michael Gordon. Guy urged us to stop chasing after trophy images and try making images that are more personal and that say something about you. Many photographers, myself included, enjoy going to memorable places and capturing iconic images. While you’re there though, take the time to also capture images that are uniquely yours. For me, these have more meaning.

One last piece of advice I heard at a Club meeting on competition night. The judge was providing feedback on some of the photos he’d judged in the past month: Anyone can take an ordinary photo of an extraordinary thing; the key is to be able to take an extraordinary photo of something ordinary. This resonated with me and is something I aspire to.

I am currently delving more deeply into visual design and the psychology behind what makes a particular image work. That and learning more about post-processing techniques will keep me busy for a while and of course, getting out regularly with my camera so I have an image to post each week to an online photo challenge group I am in.



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by John Roberts

The article “*The Technology Trap*” on page 9 covers some of the background to this topic.

Recently there have been a lot of posts and videos by photographers telling you “*Why Gear Doesn’t Matter*” (by Ted Forbes, on the Art of Photography) or the polar opposite “*Why Gear Matters*” (by Marc Falzon on Analog Process). While I have watched both of these and agreed with both of them on some points, there are still some things in my mind that were either overlooked, or not explained quite right for my liking, and that is what I want to talk about.

Those of you who know me well, know that I think of the camera itself as a nice shiny box onto which one mounts lenses and records the image. Ultimately it is just that, a box that records images. Owning the latest and greatest is not my mission in life. Yes, the right camera can make all the difference in the world to your images, but the right camera for me may not be the right camera for you.

So, choosing the right camera can be a long task, and when identifying your needs, you should be 100% honest with yourself as you make up your list. That part is important. Being completely honest with yourself is key to this whole endeavour.

I do not recommend that you go out and buy a top of the line sports camera and a matching 300 mm f2.8 lens just because your kid/niece/nephew started peewee hockey. Sure, if you really want to buy all that, there are a couple of stores locally that would be very happy to help you spend your money on it; but do you need that kind of performance for peewee level hockey? And remember, be honest here, do you need to spend \$12k on camera gear for peewee level sports? More than likely not.

David duChemin, a Victoria-based local and world-renowned travel photographer, recently wrote a post about what I am discussing here. He says “*Get the camera that feels right,*” and for years now, when someone has asked me, if they go should with Canon or Nikon, I have answered with, “Get the one that feels good in your hand, and make sure you can understand the menu layout.” As long as your camera feels good in your grasp, that is not too big, or too small, for your hand, and the menu makes some sense to you, the battle is half over, so go ahead and get that camera!

The second half of the battle, and the more important

half in my opinion, is choosing your lenses. The camera, as I previously mentioned, is just the dark box that records the image. The lens is what makes the image! So you should put more thought into choosing them than into choosing a new camera.

When choosing a lens I also like to consider things such as whether or not you are using a crop sensor camera and, if so, will you be upgrading to a full-frame camera in the future. Even if that answer is only a remote possibility, I think that everyone should at least have one or two forward compatible lenses in their set-up because when you do make that move, it helps to already have a lens or two for the full-frame sensor camera so that you are ready to go, instead of spending many hundreds of dollars more than you were expecting to spend.

I once had someone in the store looking for a high-end Canon body, with the entry level 18-55 mm lens for it so they could stay within a certain budget. In the end, I talked them into buying an entry-level body, with the higher end 17-40 mm f4 L lens instead. The lens gave them a similar zoom range to the one they asked for in the first place but also gave them much higher image quality. For what they were doing they did not need the higher-end body, so the entry-level camera was more than adequate for their needs, and kept them within their budget. That person came back months later, and told me that they were extremely happy with the images they were getting and that it was the perfect set-up for them.

To me, all this shows that the lens is far more important than the camera body, so where possible, spending more on a good lens rather than updating the camera body should be a priority.

The moral of all of this is, in order to spend your money wisely, spend more on the lenses where possible and put less emphasis on the camera body as the more important part. Because, as we have discussed here, the camera, while part of the equation for creating your images, is not the be-all and end-all of your system. After all, a good camera will last you quite a few years but a good lens should last you a lifetime.

Where possible, use the equipment that you have already in your bag, and learn to use it to the maximum of your abilities then push the envelope of your abilities some more, and start over.

Hope that helps. If you have any questions, feel free to email me jrphotographybc@icloud.com

by Craig Harris

This article is about the use of Filters and associated Artistic Effects found in Elements, Adobe's least-cost image editing software. Discussion is limited to two of the available 15 filters. Photographic imagery begins the process leading from documentary record to artistic interpretation, a complementary theme in this article.

The last time I was in a darkroom was the summer of 1977 when finishing my fine arts degree. Until 2007, I was a film guy. Digital colour photography has completely refreshed my relationship with "photography" enabling art and documentary expressions to merge. In 2007, I purchased my first digital camera for \$250, a 10 mp Nikon P5000. Shortly after returning from Italy and Greece, I splurged \$100 on Elements 6 to begin exploring for gold in the digital gravel. It was an excellent choice, and Elements 14 is now installed. I am a 30-year computer user comfortable without the Organizer function and use file naming conventions to record the trail of changes. The images used here are from my recent Club slide show and were all captured using the P5000. They represent early forays into the digital domain.



"Street Facade near Arles Coliseum" Fresco Brush

I now see each photo as a set of "digital paints" as well as a canvas. Paint brushes can be made as small as a pixel, and as large as the original. Every command in the quiver becomes a "brush" when used for the purpose. The matrix of permutations and combinations is statistically staggering. I generally begin with whole image modifications before introducing detail changes.

Raw was not widely available when I started. I still use jpg files. Rather than fret about "lossy" files and the like, I attempt to turn this on its head, using limitations to achieve results. Not crafting a "direct" representation of the subject based on the best available equipment and software means adding changes in careful ways. Moving sliders, compounding, combining, refining, blending, none of this requires layers. These interventions are quite like being in the darkroom cooking up a print, just with a room full of toys and crayons. The modifications

to the recipes are deliberately intended to work with and without limits to discover new results. There is not much difference in actively working with a digital file to achieve the best result for a straight photograph, whether landscape, portrait or natural subject. I just prefer to go down a deconstructive/reconstructive pathway.

It can take me months to reach a final result. Along the way I can file images for future work. I use layers sparingly. Each image chosen requires assessment of artistic potential. This requires playing in the "sandbox" of possibility, contemplating the effects of the sliders and settings. Sometimes this is fruitful, other times not. It can be tedious. Weeks can pass before restarting work on an image. Each journey into "what if" reveals new results. Learning is continuous and applies itself to revisiting old material in a new way.

Like a standard photograph, images selected for artistic development undergo simple software enhancements: cropping, sharpening, "blodge" removal (covers a lot), simple noise reduction, colour and light and contrast changes to bring clarity and a little pop to the image. The final "composition" benefits from the strengths of the original where layout, colour and light are the starting points.

The first image analyzed is a simple modification of a Renaissance palazzo next to the Ponte Vecchio Bridge in the centre of Florence. I took the original in mid-October in late afternoon light using the landscape settings of the Nikon P5000.

For this image, I chose the "Artistic" menu function "Fresco" for effects. Sliders to vary "Brush Size," "Brush De-



"Lavoro" Fresco Brush (Original left, modified right)

tail” and “Texture” appear on screen. For Brush Size I selected #2 of 10 to retain architectural detail in concert with Brush Detail #10 of 10. Providing #3 of 3 for maximum available Texture gave a more aged appearance in keeping with the image’s Renaissance setting.

Frescoes were commonly used in the interiors of medieval buildings. After applying the effect to the image there was a deeper association between the setting and the painting technique. The painterly fresco effect enhances the genteel run-down character of the building, and pushes into a deeper sense of history. Colour is conveyed through warm tones of ochre and sienna, appropriate for the Mediterranean climate. I then played with the “Adjust Colour” commands under the “Enhance” function to add some reds and browns for greater visual interest. There is also a light touch of humour in the awning letters “Obiettivo Lavoro”, literally translated it means labour objective, vernacular for hiring office. While this building, and many like it in Europe, looks like it could use a labour objective, if they were all “renovated” we would lose their historical fabric and worse, visual interest.

The second image analyzed is another simple modification of a photo I took of the hillside east of the centre of Florence. The central focal point of the image is the Abbey of San Miniato and its campanile or bell tower. The original was taken in mid-October late afternoon light using the landscape setting of the P5000.



“San Miniato Hill” Dry Brush

After viewing the available artistic interventions, I chose to apply the “Artistic” menu function “Dry Brush.” Sliders to vary Brush Size, Brush Detail, and Texture appear on the controls screen. I selected brush size #3 of 10 to provide edge melding. This gives more expression to the varying light and colours of the composition rather than to the details of the landscape elements, and the result is gently impressionistic. The temperature of the light harmonizes the colours of the Italian setting. Since the pixel density of the image is relatively low my use

of this effect eliminates a lot of detail loss. It both adds content to the image and integrates the edges. Adding content this way also supports maximizing an enlargement outcome, something I always consider due to my art and architecture education and experience.

Despite the reduction in detail created by the #3 brush size I chose to increase the Brush Detail to #9 of 10. This enables definition of the colour blobs and rationalizes the image. It also provides greater capacity for enlargement of the image as it adds further digital density to the image. Finally, I left the “Texture” control at its lowest setting because doing so made the image more coherent and allowed the colour “blobs” greater power in the image, a goal for me to support the warmth of the local light. I made an effort to intensify and warm the colours after applying the “Dry Brush” artistic filter.



“Bleached Roots, Denman Island” Dry Brush

Elements has come a long way from Version 6 to 14, evolving the Help function and automating some layers, effects, and graphics meta-commands. While the software works for photographers who want to improve the quality of their work, each function supports artistic effect if you start with that in mind. It works both ways.

My evolved and evolving rules for use of Artistic Filters: don’t use just one although that may be sufficient. Filters can be used sequentially in two ways: repeat use of one filter (can be subtle or overt) or by playing with combinations. Experiment and don’t let one filter override the use of others (a single artistic command applied to a host of pictures can indicate obsession at the expense of art). Fragments and artifacts are expressions of the building blocks of digital imagery so let them be part of the outcome if they add value. Start with the whole and work to the details. Cropping and changing aspect ratios work if used either sparingly or with abandon.

Becoming Yellow

by John Clarke

In the dark of winter 2015, I decided to try my hand at some creative photography. I had seen some excellent tabletop photography from club members, and had taken a tabletop photography workshop presented by Richard James, so I wanted explore this creative photography myself.

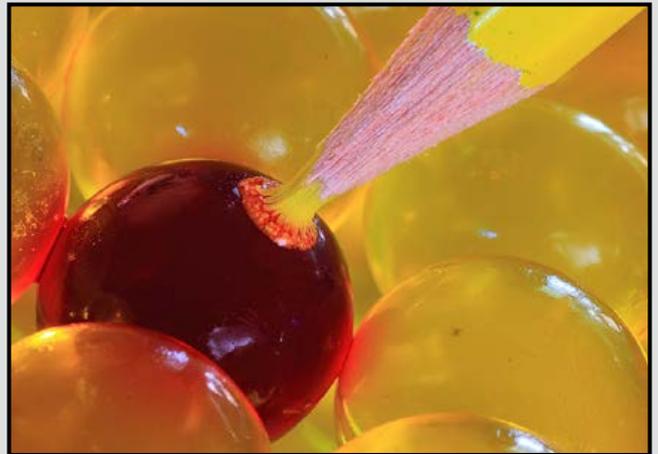
I purchased some pencil crayons, flowerpot gel beads and various shades of food colouring. I wasn't sure what I was going to do with my new supplies, but I was game to give anything a try.

After hydrating the gel beads, I coloured some red and yellow, and also left some uncoloured. While playing around with my new props, I noticed that the pencil crayons melted somewhat when they got wet. That gave me an idea.

I placed all of the yellow balls in a clear baking pan and then placed one red ball in the middle. Using elastic bands, I fixed a yellow pencil crayon to the handle of

my small tripod. Then I slowly positioned the tip of the yellow pencil crayon to the edge of the red ball. I then waited several hours until the tip of the pencil crayon started to melt onto the red ball.

I positioned my camera so the small tripod was not in view. I tried large and small apertures, short and long exposures, keeping my ISO at 100. The final image was shot with my Canon T3i and Tamron 16 - 200 mm lens at 90 mm, ISO 100, at f22 for 5 seconds.



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For more information visit the PSA Website:
<http://www.psa-photo.org>

Tuesday Shoots

by Daniel A. Roy

The early bird catches the worm, but thankfully, we don't start at the crack of dawn. Join the Tuesday shooters at 10 am and talk "shop" over a coffee before dispersing on a search for images prompted by a theme or location.

May 2nd: Finnerty Gardens. The gardens contain over 4,000 different trees and shrubs. These and many companion plants are displayed on the 6½-acre site at the southwest corner of the UVic Campus.

May 9th: Welcome to Victoria. Come on out and take your best "Tourist-Like" photographs of our beautiful city. Can you capture an image worthy of a Post Card?

May 16th: Songhees Walkway. This paved three kilometre walkway stretches from the Ocean Pointe Resort to Sailor's Cove Marina in Esquimalt. We will begin and end our adventure at Spinnakers Gastro Brewpub.

May 23rd: Perspective From High Up. Locate elevated platforms and capture unique images revealed from these vantage points. Pans and blurs may be a great way to make your images stand out from the crowd.

June 6th: Horticulture Centre of the Pacific. Visit a Zen Garden, a Bonsai Garden and learn about "Raised Bed" gardening. This educational center is a must see.

June 13th: Something That Inspires You. This may well be the most "open" theme ever created for our Tuesday Group adventures. As individuals, we all have different views on life, and this is why there will be a vast array of images submitted following the shoot. Join us for this boundless exercise and let us know what inspires you.

June 20th: Fort Rodd Hill National Park. Come and celebrate Canada's 150th Birthday, at one of our national historic sites, free admission all year.

June 27th: Friendly Shoot Out. Time to submit a theme created by you. Write down three photo-shoot themes, each on a separate piece of paper. These will be added to a hat and one will be drawn for this day's shoot. All other ideas will be considered for future shoots.

Check out the club calendar for details related to each field trip.

Weekend Shoots

by Teri VanWell

There are several field trips being planned for May and June. Please check the calendar for further information and be on the look-out for email updates.

May 20th: Christie Falls: Bush Creek forms three small but very photogenic waterfalls in a forest of Douglas Fir. The lower falls are a cascade shrouded by forest. The middle falls carry the most water and are quite open. A rope allows you to scramble to the top of the middle falls where the water tumbles through a cleft in the rocks before plunging over the rim of the falls. This is a great opportunity to practice long exposures of moving water. A wide-angle lens helps to capture the falls at close range.

June 3rd: Avatar Grove: Located near Port Renfrew, Avatar Grove was discovered in 2009 within the traditional territory of the Pacheedaht First Nation and in 2012 was declared off limits to logging. There are two trails to choose from. The Upper Grove is a steady climb to reach "Canada's Gnarliest Tree" and passes by numerous giant red cedar trees. The Lower Grove's Loop Trail has a more gentle terrain with huge burly red cedars and large Douglas fir trees along the way.

June 17th: Botanical Beach: When the tide at Botanical Beach is very low another rarely seen world opens up for the photographer. In the inter-tidal zone you will explore tide pools teeming with life, snails, chitons, anemones, sea urchins, and starfish. As you walk along the sandstone shelf you will find ridges of shale and quartz jutting up through the sandstone.

This trip will also be of interest to creative photographers searching for interesting backgrounds and B & W photographers who are hoping to capture abstract images. Bring along wide angle, macro and long lenses, as there are a nearly infinite number of possibilities for image capture on this trip. A polarizing filter will be especially helpful if you wish to try to capture images through water and in the pools. Bring a tripod for long exposures of breaking waves and close up shots.

Aboriginal Cultural Festival: This is not an organized field trip. The Aboriginal Cultural Festival will be held June 16th - 18th. There are great opportunities to capture colourful costumes and striking dance moves and poses. It also provides challenges in the way of crowds and variable ambient lighting.

by Neil Boyle

We've all seen the pictures, amazing shots of things that require impossible reflexes or timing, caught at just the perfect moment. Rare wild beasts, fruit exploding as projectiles go through them, balloons full of water bursting, droplets falling into rebounding droplets, lightning bolts, wine splashing into a glass (or out of it), dropped cups full of coffee shattering into pieces.

Chances are these images weren't the result of a lucky, well-timed shutter release, but rather involved planning, preparation, time, rehearsals, and a bit of kit called a camera trigger. A trigger is a gadget that will release a camera shutter, or trigger a flash, when something happens. The number of things that can set off a trigger continues to grow, and companies compete to add more options to their gadgets. Currently, events that can set off a trigger include lightning strikes (day or night), a GPS receiver reaching some point, a laser beam touching a sensor is interrupted, a sound occurs, an intervalometer reaches some point in time, an infrared beam is broken (active infrared, AIR), a motion is detected (passive infrared, PIR), or even your smart phone detects vibration. These toys used to be the property of geeks with electronics skills, but now amazingly versatile triggers are available for less than the cost of a cheap lens (and up to several thousand dollars).

There are two techniques. The camera shutter is triggered, with a bit of a delay, and the trigger companies brag about how short their delay is (this is important, because a lot of animals can move very quickly, or the second lightning strike, the one you are photographing, happens very soon after the first). For events in complete darkness, the shutter can be left open and a flash can be triggered with a much shorter delay than triggering the shutter.



"Artibeus jamaicensis, Mexican Fruit Bat"

Camera traps are a subset of triggers designed to photograph animals in their natural habitat without an attending photographer. They are usually triggered by PIR, although more specific trigger mechanisms can be used.



"Nyctiellus lepidus, Gervais's Funnel-eared Bat"

Scientists have been using them for many decades, with the first ones requiring burning magnesium for light and sounding like small cannons. Real improvements started with the arrival of digital cameras and the use of flashes. Advances include infrared flashes that animals don't detect, and the use of video that increased the amount of information gathered to include behaviour.

There are many commercial varieties, ranging from the Canadian Tire cheapie to armoured versions (bears and elephants are famous for destroying camera traps) to mobile versions (one company sells a radio-controlled, covered vehicle which mounts a DSLR and controls the tilt of the lens. This has resulted in previously unattainable close-up shots of animals). The natural extension of this is the camera on a drone.

Most camera traps are set, left and checked regularly, often less than once a week. Scientific results using these devices have shown previously unknown behaviours (i.e., civets hitching rides on the backs of rhinos). The quality of the image is in proportion to what the device costs and, in the last few years, has become quite good (12 megapixel images, HD video). The price rises with weather-proofing (ok, why aren't they all water-tight?), and batteries can be an issue.

Dr. Brock Fenton, one of the fathers of Canadian bat research, uses a sophisticated camera trigger system to photograph bats in flight in a pitch-black cave. His system uses up to 8 light beams positioned on a metal bar, covering an area up to a metre square, controlled from a central black box. When any one of the beams is interrupted, a flash is triggered, and it triggers up to 4 other slaved flashes. Five flashes allow controlled lighting on all surfaces of the bats and can show as much

or as little of the nearby environment as desired. There is another advantage to using so many flashes: it allows reduced power. Bats fly very quickly and the duration of a full flash is long enough to cause blurring of a moving bat. Reducing the power of a flash shortens its duration and somewhere around 1/64th power works well to freeze the bat. Intensity of the light on the bat is controlled by the distance of the flash from the light beams. Given that the bats' wingspans are a fraction of the light trap area and that cameras are placed to hopefully have a bat fill much of the frame, many images will be of partial bats, and are usually unusable.



“Pteronotus parnellii, Parnell’s Mustached Bat”

The first step, in daylight, is to scout suitable caves that show evidence of bat use (fresh guano, roosting bats) and where the bats exit through a small opening, deep enough in the cave to be dark. Even good evidence doesn't guarantee many bats, but decades of studying their behaviour increases the success rate. As bats leave their roost about dusk for their evening meal the setup needs to be in place and all photographers still and quiet before this. The cave opening is an entrance and exit for the bats, so many of the images will be the useless “butt” shot, and it is not unusual for a bat to trigger the flashes, detect the photographers and turn flying back through the beams, giving a double exposure, coming and going.

In a controlled environment, the setup is elegant but complex. In a dusty, dark cave, carpeted with years of bat guano, with a low ceiling, operating by head lamp, The setup takes longer, at least an hour. The light beams must be precisely placed, connected to the control box, and tested. Stands that aren't in the image are needed to support five flashes, two above, two below, and one on the face of the (hopefully) approaching bat. Up to six cameras, aimed at different areas in the light trap zone, operated by up to 4 people, are placed, and manual-

ly focused on the plane of the light beams. The manual settings are f11-16, ISO 400-1600, With a shutter speed of “bulb,” and a manual release. Once all the kit is in place, tested several times, cursed at, repositioned, tested again, dust blown off lenses, and everyone has an acceptably comfortable seat, the headlights go out, shutters are opened, and we wait in the dark for a bat to fly through a beam and trigger the flashes. If it's a real catch (not triggered by an insect or the tip of a bat's wing as it flies outside the light trap area), each camera is checked to make sure the image is in focus and the lights go out again. The ritual of open the shutter, flash, close the shutter and repeat goes on for about 10 Minutes. We then review the images for placement of the cameras (are we shooting where the bats are flying?) and the flashes (are the bats well-lit? any hot spots?), and appropriate adjustments are made. Back to the ritual (open shutter, flash, close shutter, repeat) until the evening exit of bats is over (45 minutes to 2 hours).

During that time, in a good cave with lots of bats, most photographers record about 400 shots, of which about 60 are good (the bat is in focus, completely in the frame, facing the camera), and maybe 10 are great (a good pose, expression, something interesting). Cameras with bigger sensors allow more cropping, and more success with multiple bats in the image.

Using camera triggers, like most photographic techniques, requires knowledge of the equipment and experience, and the more one uses them, the more one knows all the things that can go wrong and how to fix them. It's worth the investment in money, time and expertise. Some of the shots will be great, and there is often no other way to get them.



“Pteronotus parnellii, Parnell’s Mustached Bat”

Don't Stop Until You're Proud

by *Josée Ménard*

... and even then, keep on! It is not my saying but I like it. You may have seen it, as I have, on a bulletin board at the CDI College in Victoria. Keep on learning. Keep on developing your photographic eye. Keep on discovering your camera. Keep on discovering new angles about your favourite subject. Keep on becoming a better photographer and, even then, don't stop. Be proud of every step you take forward. Now, how do you get there? One step at a time.

Spring is here, summer is approaching. Take time, as we will in this article, to take a few steps forward. Here are a few ideas.

Let's start technically. Your camera should fit you like a glove or as close as can be. What does this mean? How natural do the buttons, dials, hand-grip, screens, menus, etc. feel to you? Are you lost or frustrated? Are your fingers fumbling about at a loss? If so, explore different cameras. Spring is a great opportunity for new camera models to appear on the market or for trade-ins to become available. If all feels natural, get to know your dials and menus in order to be ready for action. You may have heard that you should be able to find the correct dial with your eyes closed. In practice this is very true as your eyes will be on your subject in the viewfinder. In the comfort of your chair on the balcony or in your garden, rest, close your eyes and have fun finding your dials. Muscle memory is a great thing. The more you know your camera, the easier it is in the field.

With regard to the field, let's discover new angles on your favourite subjects. This is not just getting low to the ground or a bit more to the right. By this, I mean take a step forward towards seeing your favourite subject in a new light: your landscape in the morning fog, in a minimalist composition, as a reflection, or at the blue hour, your wildlife in a new natural behaviour that you have not yet explored. Enjoy the early sunrise. What are your birds, trees, people, garden, landscape up to? How different can your photography be?

Back home again from the field, it is time to import your images into your favourite software or database. If you are like most of us, you are supposed to have a limited number of main keywords so as to not get lost in the digital world. Most photographic post-production software favours a keyword system to help you find your photographs amongst the thousands in your library. Out

of all the advice floating about, I would follow Lightroom's twelve or so keyword system. Within this, think of it as an ancestral tree: from grandparent to parent to child. Think of what your collection of photos contains. Then, go big to small or you could say, general to precise. For example: Travel-wise, think of Europe, markets, flowers. Three keywords, done. If you want to search in a more detailed fashion, look into the metadata for the trip in May 201... at the Amsterdam flower market.

Personally, some favourite keywords include: nature, wildlife, botanical, landscape, human, street, architecture, Europe, Canada, BC etc. Because submitting images to competition is one of my channels for growth as a photographer, my keywords include: human, portfolio, competition. In addition, because some photos stay personal, I include: family, celebrations, friends, etc. From there it is easy to find a "nature" image, with "human" features in it, worthy of my "portfolio" or for "competition." Because of the keyword "human" I know it will not fit the wildlife category for the possible competitions I may wish to enter. On the other hand, with the keywords "family," "celebration," "Europe" and "France," I can now find the reunion photos with my French relatives at the family farm in France. Now those are not the ones of my husband's "England" relatives who are in "Europe." Ah, ha! I can also find my "friends" from "Europe" photos if I wish. Yikes, these keywords can grow wild. If you can limit yourself, life will be easier as your collection grows.

Having put the camera aside for a minute, soak in the natural vitamin D in your garden chair and think of the wonderful collection of photos you have. What twelve words would suit your images. Silly and stressful you may think but no, stop, chill and those twelve words will soon come to your mind after a snooze or two. During the rainy days that will come our way, go through your images in your collection and clean up your keywords.

Keywords sorted, what is next? Get ready for this fall. Dare. What's the worst that could happen? A low mark. Been there, done that. It is not as bad as you think. These comments are a great way to "Keep on becoming a better photographer." So, go back to your camera, go back to your favourite subject, and to your keywords. Of course, we are not considering image editing at the moment but as best as it may be, what do you imagine submitting in September? May this be your aim for this Fall as a Novice competitor.

Look forward to seeing your submissions. May the courage be with you.

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