



Close-Up



Inside:
Live Theatre
Photography
Creating Images
with Impact
Back Up your Data
- Part 2
Shoots Around
Victoria
Beginners' Corner
Exposure Control
.... and more

Live Theatre Photography:
This image is of actor
James R. Galbraith (Amos
Hart), performing "Mister
Cellophane" from Grande
Prairie Live Theatre's 2010
production of the musical
"CHICAGO." See page 5.

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Short Eared Owl

Photo by Jason Kazuta, 2012

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Victoria Camera Club



Close-Up is the magazine of the Victoria Camera Club,
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 Mailing address: 2642 Quadra Street, PO Box 46035, Victoria, BC, V8T 5G7.
 Deadline for submissions for the May issue is April 5th 2013.
 Editor, Richard James, e-mail to newsletter@victoriacameraclub.org
 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.org where you can also read or download the colour version of *Close-Up*.

For additional information: please contact the appropriate Committee Chair:

- Membership:* membership@victoriacameraclub.org
 - Workshops:* workshops@victoriacameraclub.org
 - Field Trips:* fieldtrips@victoriacameraclub.org
 - Meetings:* meetings@victoriacameraclub.org
 - Website:* webmaster@victoriacameraclub.org
 - Close-Up:* newsletter@victoriacameraclub.org
- or call Lois Burton, Vice-President at 250-652-6940.

What's Inside

Club Calendar.....	4
Editor's Message	4
Live Theatre Photography	5
Creating Images with Impact.....	8
Competitions and Gallery	10
Can I come Along?.....	15
Tech Talk: Backup Your Data, Part 2.....	17
How I Did It.....	18
Shoots Around Victoria	19
Beginners' Corner.....	20
Exposure Control.....	21

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

Thursday, April 4th; Competition Night

Presentation of the results of the March competition and submission of April (annual Competition - see the website for requirements) entries. The theme subject is "Time." One of the judges will review selected images.

Thursday, April 11th; Presentation Night

Our presenter this month is Denise Sturmwind. Denise is a fine art photographer and mixed-media artist who has judged many VCC competitions. She has shown her work in galleries, solo shows, and juried west coast fine art exhibits.

Her topic is "Where's the Camera ?" An adventurous tale from fine art photography to mixed media art. Denise will take us on her travels from 13 years of fine art photography using a manual SLR film camera, tripod, and professional slide film (no digital shooting or manipulation!) to hands-on mixed media artwork.

Denise's new work is whimsical and playful; come share the journey. To view her work, go to www.cedarsong.ca.

Thursday, April 18th; Members' Night

Presentation of members' and field trip slides, prints or short technical topics.

Featured workshops:

Nature and Creative SIGs, Basic Canon and Nikon DSLR workshops.

Featured field trips:

Tuesdays downtown: subjects, are "Depth of Field" and "Being Alive."

Meeting, field trip and workshop visitor policy:

Visitors are welcome to attend any three events in a 30 day period subject to the availability of space and a \$20 per session fee for workshops.

AGM Notice: our Annual General Meeting will be held on Members Night, April 18th. Any motions to be addressed must be included in the agenda and must be submitted to the secretary before April 1st.

President's Message

Few things are as welcome or as longed for as the first signs of spring. After weeks of grey skies, persistent rain and bare branches, it is lovely to see new shoots of foliage and the swelling buds of early flowers. There is a general feeling of freshness in the air, and we can finally see some colour back in the landscape.

Victoria boasts one of the most moderate of Canadian climates. We live in a place where the weather warms early, and we experience the transformation into spring before the rest of Canada, which is still gripped by bone-chilling temperatures and wide-spread snow.

The signs of spring come slowly at first; pussy-willows emerging, birds at the feeder, the buzzing of a bee on a warm day, the singing of birds in the morning and the croaking of frogs at night; but then there is an explosion of life and colour and we know that spring has sprung and once again we rush out to capture it.

Spring is one of my favourite seasons for photography. After a long and dreary winter, the earth comes alive again and makes us feel full of hope and optimism. Spring brings nature back to life and paints it in a burst of colours from pinks, to red, blue, purple, orange, yellow, white and every combination thereof. Spring offers plenty of unique photo opportunities but if you don't go outside every day and photograph, you will miss something.

We are more motivated to get outside and record the changes that are happening and there are an infinite number of subjects to choose from: flowers, mushrooms, birds, insects, water and baby animals. Spring also offers a variety of metaphors and concepts to express: beauty, happiness, growth, wonder, rebirth etc.

Spring means different things to different people but for me it is a time of rebirth, regrowth and renewal; with an opportunity to start something new or try new things.

If you have been stuck in a certain "season" with your photography, now is the time to try something different. Is there an aspect of photography that you have always wanted to try? Spring is the perfect time to step outside your photography comfort zone.

This spring I plan to brush the dust off my camera and get out there to capture the mood, the patterns and the colours that are the essence of spring. What are you planning to do?
Lois Burton, Vice-President

The Show must go On!

by Don Zwicker

Photographing live theatre has a lot in common with shooting sporting events. For both, you have no control of the lighting and less control over the pace of the action you are there to capture.

With live theatre you have the added challenge of maintaining the “mood” of the lighting design, which never seems to consider the poor photographer. At times you have to deal with heavy shadows matched up with quick motion of people or things. On the other end of the spectrum, you have to be prepared for bright spotlights and changing light colours.



Speaking of “mood,” the photographer needs to be aware of the “plot arc” of the performance, and look to capture those dramatic moments that move the plot along.

With all these challenges to consider, the best way to deal with them is with simple preparation. Depending on the scope and budget of the production, I like to start by attending rehearsals or even the auditions if possible. I know this is not always possible, but the idea is to become very familiar with the play so you can anticipate and get those critical dramatic moments. Attending rehearsals has the added benefit of the cast getting comfortable with your presence. That way you’re not distracting to them, resulting in better photo opportunities.

When I set up to shoot a performance, I always let the cast know I will be photographing. By that time, the cast already knows who I am and that I will not get in their way or be using a flash or any other distracting device. Don’t laugh; I have been asked more times than I can count, if I would be using a flash during a performance. If you don’t have the chance to spend

time with the cast prior to your shoot, still have them notified that you will be out there with your camera.

Always get permission from the show’s producer to photograph the performance. Sometimes, depending on the rights obtained by the Production Company or Theatre, there are limitations on any recording of the performance and what the images can be used for. The producer of the show will be the person to talk to about this. It is always best to get your permission and “Model Releases” early in the project to understand any limitations you will be working under, if any.



During rehearsals, the production will work up to running large portions or “acts” of the show non-stop, to get the pacing and flow down. This is a good time to observe the angles and note “moments” you will be working at capturing. It’s not usually worth setting up your camera until the cast is in full costume and the lighting has been set, but getting a good understanding of the show is an important step in getting good images. If possible, plan on shooting the performance more than once, from different angles, stage left, stage right, upper balcony, main floor etc. or even from the wings if you can arrange it. The actors will play to different parts of the audience during a performance and it is rare that any one angle will work all the time.

So now it’s the time for you to shoot the show. This will most likely be one of the final dress rehearsals. The production should have all the lights, costumes and set pieces in place and will try to do a “run through.”

You should have a good idea of the angles you will shoot from and the light you have to work with. For best results you will want to use a camera body with good high ISO characteristics, a tripod with a panning “Ball Head” and a remote release. If you have the ability, use a quiet mode on your camera to reduce the sound of the “click” as you shoot. There are accessories you can get that “muffle” the sound of your shutter actuation if that is a job requirement. You may not notice the sound, but the actors and anyone in the audience will.

Your lens choice will be important and may change depending on the show, but it’s always best to hedge your bets by using the fastest glass you can find. It’s more likely you will be dealing with low lighting rather than too much light. If the show requires using more than one lens, use a second body with a lens mounted rather than attempt to change lenses on the fly.

Available light is always an issue in terms of your selection of aperture and shutter speed. Expect the lighting conditions to change dramatically (no pun intended) during the performance. The ISO setting on your camera is another important thing to consider. Some newer camera bodies have amazing high ISO abilities, and any noise that may result from using high a ISO can be minimized in post-processing if required.

The things to watch out for as you change settings during the performance are minimum shutter speeds to prevent motion blur of the actors and, with a shallow depth of field, make sure the subjects you are interested in are in focus. Your point of focus during the show will move all over as you compose the images. The actors often move around on stage, and who you want as the



point of interest will change with the plot of the show.

Did I mention that it will be dark when you are adjusting all the controls on your camera? You can’t ask for a re-shoot or yell; “Cut! Can you do that again please?”

The secret to live theatre photography is to be prepared and be familiar with the action on stage. Know your camera and its controls well enough to make changes quickly in the dark. Have lots of spare formatted memory cards and extra batteries within quick access. The show will move along whether you are keeping up or not.

Simple basic things to consider for sure but, during the heat of battle (in the dark), you wouldn’t have much time to decide on things. You need to work out as many details and contingencies as possible ahead of time, and then shoot your plan.

Try to enjoy the experience and expect to get some great images!





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by Richard James

There are images, and then there are images that really grab your attention. The first requirement, that cannot be fixed in processing, is a good composition. However, that is not the focus of this article. Instead, I'm going to focus on some of the processing steps that can turn a good composition into an image that will really grab your attention.

Remember that all images are processed, whether you were Ansel Adams or Edward Weston producing handcrafted images in your darkroom where you change the exposure time, film development, printing and development times, burning and dodging, and many other tricks or, whether you do it in the darkroom residing in your computer is both immaterial and irrelevant. Even "in-camera" images have been processed according to the rules set up in the camera software and adjusted by your settings for the JPEG files produced by the camera. Raw files produced by the camera are not modified by these settings.

First, a word about software. This article assumes you are using Lightroom (or Aperture), Photoshop or Photoshop Elements, proprietary editing software produced by your camera manufacturer (either the free version or the more sophisticated, full-featured, product), or other equivalent software that gives you good control over the image. In addition to these packages, you might also choose to use alternative RAW conversion software such as DxO Optics Pro, or Capture One Pro instead of Adobe Camera Raw (ACR) which is used by both Photoshop and Lightroom. The following discussion is not software specific; the steps apply to almost all software packages.

Let us digress a moment from the technical steps and look at some significant differences between Lightroom/Aperture and Photoshop. Lightroom and Aperture use "non-destructive editing" where all the changes are stored in a database and applied to a final "output image." Photoshop on the other hand makes specific changes within the file that are saved as a part of each image.

If you only work in Photoshop on the "background" image, then your changes are essentially not reversible. However, Photoshop has a key feature known as layers. You can make many of the adjustments on "adjustment layers" which can be changed, added or deleted at will. Saving the file with the layers intact allows you to resume editing later at the point where

you left off, and you can modify your prior work. If there isn't an adjustment layer for the change you want to make, then you simply make a copy of the underlying layer and modify that.

In addition to overall changes, you can make changes to specific parts of the image using layer masks in Photoshop, or the adjustment brush in Lightroom/Aperture.

Where do we start? There are a number of key steps to processing images that deal with the overall look of the image, and then there are additional steps modifying components within the image. Firstly, the steps that change the overall look of the image are:

- Set the black-and-white points and mid-tones (levels)
- Adjust the overall luminosity (exposure)
- Set the appropriate colour balance
- Adjust the overall contrast (curves)
- Straightening, perspective, and lens corrections
- Convert to black-and-white if that is your objective

Wherever possible, these global adjustments should be done in the RAW conversion stage. It is at this stage that the image is converted from sensor data to a bit mapped image where each pixel represents one of all possible colours. These changes are then done concurrently with minimum degradation of the image which can happen with some changes to bit mapped images (especially straightening, perspective and lens corrections). The output from the raw conversion should be saved as a 16-bit image in either TIF or PSD formats and never JPEG as that format is designed to throw away data in producing smaller file size. Retaining the maximum amount of data throughout the processing of an image ensures the highest quality end product.

After we have adjusted the overall look, we can then focus in on the details, and this is where things become a little trickier but most important. You notice that I mentioned "layers and masks" and the "adjustment brush" just now; there was a reason, which is that they are key to making local adjustments. Using these tools you can make local adjustments to almost any parameter in any part of the image without affecting the rest of it. Describing how they work is something that is best covered in a workshop rather than a short article such as this. I suggest you watch our workshop calendar for a layers and masks workshop.



Waterhole Bench - Before Adjustment

Local adjustments are often used to either emphasise or deemphasise components of the image by changing their relative brightness, contrast or colour. Perhaps one of the more complex examples of this is in converting a colour image to black-and-white where some of the colours have closely matched greyscale values. By locally changing the greyscale value of individual colour ranges you can produce a separation in tone that replicates the way that the brain would interpret different colours which have the same grey tone value.

The image "Waterhole Bench" has some local adjustments made that are shown in figure 1. The RAW conversion was done in DxO Optics Pro which produced the background layer. One of the features I use extensively is "DxO lighting" which provides pixel by pixel contrast enhancement, which reveals detail without increasing noise. In this image the sky required both a levels and curves adjustment, which are the next two layers up and are masked (in black) to protect the foreground.

The next layer, "DOP Easy-D," is another detail-revealing step produced by a plug-in that I also use extensively. The next layer up, Levels 2, is a levels adjustment applied to the foreground which brings in the highlights and increases saturation in the midtones. The top layer "Colour Balance 1" adjusts the sky to increase the emphasis of the sunset tones on the clouds. Look at the before and after versions of the image and see how the changes impacted the overall result. The original (top left) is clearly "flatter" than the final image.

These changes, with the exception of DxO Optics and the DOP Easy-D plug-in, can be done in Lightroom with care using the adjustment brush. The DxO Optics

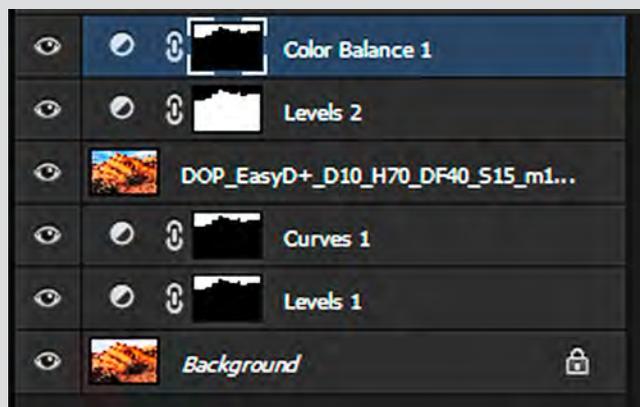


Figure 1 Adjustment Layers

Raw conversion can be included in a Lightroom-based workflow by doing the conversion and then synchronising the catalogue to include the output file.

Due to the nature of digital images, all require some degree of sharpening. When done appropriately, you cannot see sharpening artifacts (such as halos) but the image is rendered more clearly on a screen or print.

Sharpening is another somewhat complex subject that is best dealt with in a workshop. In a nutshell, sharpening is dependent on both the image content, whether there is a lot of fine detail or broad areas with little detail, and the output medium for the image, a monitor or projector requires different sharpening to an ink-jet print which is again different to offset printing such as used for *Close-Up*.

An important step in the processing of any image is the production of the "Master Image" which has all your changes except final cropping and sharpening which are dependent on how you wish to present the image.



Waterhole Bench - After Adjustment

Printing Your Images

by Gita McCormick

There is a certain amount of stress involved when you start thinking about submitting a print. How do I proceed? How much will it cost? I don't have a printer that is good enough. What about mats? Where do I start?

Submitting a print does not have to be expensive. Walmart charges about \$5 for an 11"x14" print. Check prices online as they may be on sale. Costco is \$3 for 11"x14". Both produce great results. There is no service included in these prices as you would get with Prism or ArtBox or other print houses. But if you are just jumping in, this is a good way to start.

Start by exporting your image from your preferred (post-production) program. The physical size is not as important as the resolution, 300 dpi. I generally export the size I have specified during editing. I tend to end up with a file size 5-6 MB. Both uploaders can handle 5 MB, but once in a while you can get away with 6 MB.

To check my image before making the final print, I go to the store and use their kiosks. I order a 4x6 "proof" (\$.20). The trick here is to print to the one hour service. That way your "proof" comes out on the same printer that will produce your larger print regardless of 8x11, 11x14 or the size you choose.

It does take an hour or so. But, you can see what you are getting. I take my proof home and further process my picture if required. If I am happy with the results, I simply pop my thumb-drive back into the kiosk and order the print in the correct output size I want. This is why you want to take in your big file size.

My experiences with both Walmart and Costco vary. If you get a print you simply don't like, they will not charge you and they shred them, which is good so you don't end up with six copies of a print you hate. Walmart produces much nicer monochromes. They are brighter and whiter. Costco is better for images with browns, reds, yellows and oranges.

For mounting, mats can be purchased at Opus for about \$4 for the back and \$4 for the top that is cut. This is for 16"x20" mats. You can also get a better price at Artbox if you buy in bulk. That way you can get more colours of mats or different sizes. Remember that if you use "standard" sizes, you only need 2 sets of mats for our competitions.

February 2013 Competition Judges

We would like to thank our February Competition judges: Sheena Star Graham, Pierre Gauthier, and Wes Bergen plus our three Novice category judges, Mike Wooding, Don Peterson and Doug McLean.

Sheena Star Graham (Victoria - Prints) is a Portrait Photographer who creates Whimsical, Fairy Tale Portraiture through the use of props: vintage and custom handmade, wardrobe and a pinch of fairy dust.

She has been operating under the name OctoberDay Photography for the last three years. Sheena started in Black and White film photography through Portland Community College and several years later attended Western Academy of Photography in Victoria, where she further developed her style.

Sheena is a freelance photographer for Monday Magazine and has judged their annual photo contest. Currently she has a few series on the go and a Fairy Tale book in the works.

Pierre Gauthier (Gatineau, PQ - Open and Nature) is a member of the judges panel for The RA Photo Club and is also a certified CAPA judge.

Pierre has been judging for 15 years at other local camera clubs in the Ottawa area and has judged in a similar format for the Welland Camera club for the last three years. He has been coordinator of the RAPC Nature Group for the last 19 years.

Wes Bergen (Vancouver - Creative and Theme) has been keenly involved in photography for about 40 years and has been a member of the Lions Gate Camera Club and CAPA (NAPA) for almost as long.

He has worked with all formats of film from 35mm to 4"x5" in both B&W and colour, prints and slides.

His love of photography coupled with his interest in computers gave him the impetus to get into digital imaging about 7 years ago, and for the past year he has devoted his photography entirely to that medium.

Wes has been teaching Photoshop courses at continuing education venues for the past 4 years and writes digital imaging articles for the Lions Gate Camera Club, Photolog and for CAPA's Canadian Camera magazine.



*Advanced Monochrome Print - 2nd
“The Storm Watchers” by Clive Townley*

Judge’s comments: Subject matter is very pleasing to the eye. I like the contrast, the exposure is good.



*Advanced Digital Open- 1st “Olympics”
by John Lockyer*

Judge’s comments: The drama in the sky is equal to the splendour of the mountain scene. Great tonal range and use of tonal contrasts in the foreground, middle and background. Congratulations!



*Advanced Open Print - 2nd “Blue Moon Rising”
by Hanna Cowpe*

Judge’s comments: Love the texture, lines and circle. Interesting subject matter.



*Advanced Digital Theme - 1st “Night Falls”
by Willie Waddell*

Judge’s comments: Beautiful lighting, texture and tonality on the buildings! Just enough light in the sky to separate the buildings on the right side.



*Intermediate Monochrome Print - 1st “The Wall”
by Gita McCormick*

Judge's comments: Brightness and contrast good. Different textures are nice, from the top, wall and ground. Framing is very good, three triangles. The angle of the photo very pleasing.



*Intermediate Digital Nature “Sandhill Cranes”
by Jonathan Adams*

Judge's comments: Excellent composition, direction and quality of light gives superb detail in the feathers. Background bokeh is very complimentary to the subject. Congratulations!



*Intermediate Nature Print - 1st “Grandpa Rules”
by Nicci Tyndall*

Judge's comments: Overall color balance and tone are good. Nice texture in the image. Background being soft helps bring the eye to the monkey.



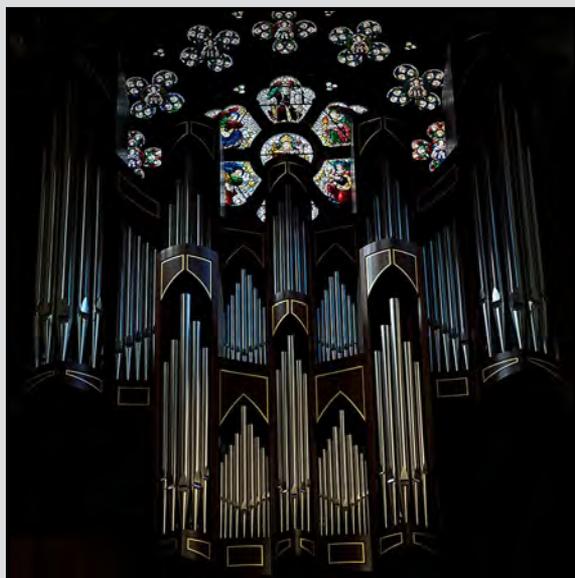
*Intermediate Digital Creative - 1st “Despair”
by Lloyd Houghton*

Judge's comments: Excellent use of blur! Only enough detail remaining to convey the image's message via the subject's posture. The diagonal “raindrops” add to the mood. The bright areas are very well placed.



Novice Digital Nature - 1st "American Mink"
by David McLean

Judge's comments: The photographer has done many things right in this image. Firstly the image was taken from a low angle. Secondly, the mink and the rock it is posed on is in sharp focus with lots of detail showing in the fur, which also speaks to the excellent exposure. The alert pose is interesting and the raised foot really adds.



Novice Digital Open - 1st "Cathedral "Pipes"
by Joe Worobec

Judge's comments: The pipe organ is the grandest of musical instruments. The photographer has captured the instrument's essence with ranks of shining silver pipes arrayed in the soaring vault of a cathedral beneath glowing leaded glass. The photographer has done an excellent job by overcoming the technical challenges of shooting an expansive indoor space with only limited ambient light. Exposure and focus are excellent.



Novice Digital Theme - 1st "Saint Peter Across the Tiber"
by Bob Schelle

Judge's comments: This beautiful photograph captures the scene with rich colours, sharp focus in the bridge and dome and low light sensor blur of the shadowed trees and wall area. The overcast sky adds to the mood, illuminated by the soft city artificial lighting. Leading lines from the road and bridge to the dome, strengthen the composition. This 2 second exposure used a solid base to reduce movement. A very impressive and technically expert shot. Wow.



Novice Open Print "Riveted"
by Andrew Kerr

Judge's comments: The intensity of this Golden Eagle's gaze is beautifully accented by the clarity and sharpness of the image. The feather texture and catch light in the bird's eye are strong compositional elements. Added strengths are complimentary blurred background and colour.

Spring Print Show

April 16 - 28, 2013



Photo Courtesy of Margarita Huang

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Back Up Your Data: Part 2

by Paul Ross and Richard James

The Mac has a built-in backup program, TimeMachine, that is really easy to set up and use. Connect it to an external drive and select that drive as the backup device, and it will automatically backup hourly, daily or weekly. Backups come in handy if you accidentally delete a file or want a version of a file from a couple of weeks ago.

The Mac also has a backup hard drive called TimeCapsule. This integrates with TimeMachine and is also a WiFi router. We currently back up 3 Mac's linked wirelessly to a 2 TB TimeCapsule. We also have an old 1TB TimeCapsule that we use for off-site back ups (it also serves as our back up when we are on the road). Once a month we get the 1TB TimeCapsule and point TimeMachine to it so we have multiple back ups.

When my hard drive crashed, the last back up was done about 1:00 am that morning. I had a new hard drive installed, brought the computer home and installed the Operating System (OS). After it was done there was a message that said "I have detected a TimeCapsule with back ups, do you wish to restore from one of the back ups?" I chose the last back up and it restored my computer to where it was at 1:00 am that morning. I was up and running by 5:00 pm for the cost of a new hard drive.

We use the TimeMachine/TimeCapsule for operating system and document back ups. Now that I have more than 50,000 images, I have a separate system for storing and backing up my pictures and I exclude my pictures from the TimeMachine back ups.

I have 3 external drives (I have a laptop so I don't have extra drive bays to work with). The drives are Working (2x1TB mirrored), Vault 1 (1TB) and Vault 2 (2TB).

I use Apple's Aperture as my photo management system. After a shoot the images are stored on my laptop hard drive and as part of the download process I have Aperture set up to back up the originals to Vault 1 (these are the original raw files). Aperture also has a back up process so I back up each of my libraries to Vault 2 on a monthly basis. I store this drive off-site. My "Working" drive has the libraries from previous years.

LightRoom and Aperture Back ups

If you work with Lightroom or Aperture, there are some specific considerations that you need to understand that

impact how you back up your images and most importantly, the Lightroom catalogue and Aperture's library.

These are critical to all the work you do. "Managed files" in Aperture are stored with, and backed up with, the Library. This is not the case for Aperture's "referenced files" or Lightroom. The catalogue/library stores a vast amount of information about your files including details of all the edits you have ever done on the images in the catalogue. If you lose these, or they become corrupted, then you have lost all this work. It is thus critical that you back them up, preferably every time you edit images, to an independent hard drive.

In Lightroom's catalogue settings, there is an option to back up the catalogue. If you are going to use this way of backing it up, be aware that the default location is on the C drive, which you never want to use for back ups as, if your operating system crashes, you will lose them. You can reset the location to a different hard drive by following the instructions in the Lightroom help files, search for "back up Lightroom catalog." In Aperture, with managed files, back up is started by clicking on the red "Back up" button.

I back up my catalogue/library automatically every night together with my other "work" files. This means I always have not only the current version but last nights and the previous nights available.

Except with Aperture's "managed files," backing up the catalogue/library does not back up the images. You must manually back up your edited photos, previews, sidecar files, slide shows, web galleries, and exported photos. You need to do this using the back up processes that are discussed above and in last month's article.

Connections - Speed and other factors

If you travel a lot, having a rugged portable back up hard drive is a good idea. Portable hard drives use laptop type disks and are built to take a few bumps. External desktop hard drives are not built to take the bumps that can happen when you are travelling.

The connection speed is important; USB 2 (480 Mb/s), FireWire 800 (800 Mbps), and ExpressCard 34 Slots are legacy devices. However, ExpressCard gives you the ability to add a higher speed device. On a new computer you need either USB3 (5 GB/s), eSATA3 (6 GB/s) or Thunderbolt (10 GB/s) connections. Desktops offer the flexibility of adding a card to add faster connections.



Victoria Camera Club

The Lions Gate Camera Club in Vancouver has hosted its "Celebration of Nature Photography" Competition for the last several years. Held in the fall, this competition draws entries from approximately 20 Clubs from across British Columbia and the Yukon.

Each Club submits a total of 10 images (one per photographer) on behalf of its members under the categories "Birds", "Mammals" and "General Nature". Three judges view all the images and award scores out of 10 points; judges' scores are summed and then aggregated for the 10 images.

All VCC members are invited to submit images for selection to this and other external competitions that the club enters. The Competitions Committee then selects entries based on the competitions' focus and to show the wide range of subjects that our members shoot.

The Victoria Camera Club has been steadily rising through the ranks in the Celebration of Nature Photography Competition. In 2010 we placed 10th with 214 points; in 2011 we placed 6th with 181 points; and this year, 2012, we placed 2nd with 238.9 points.

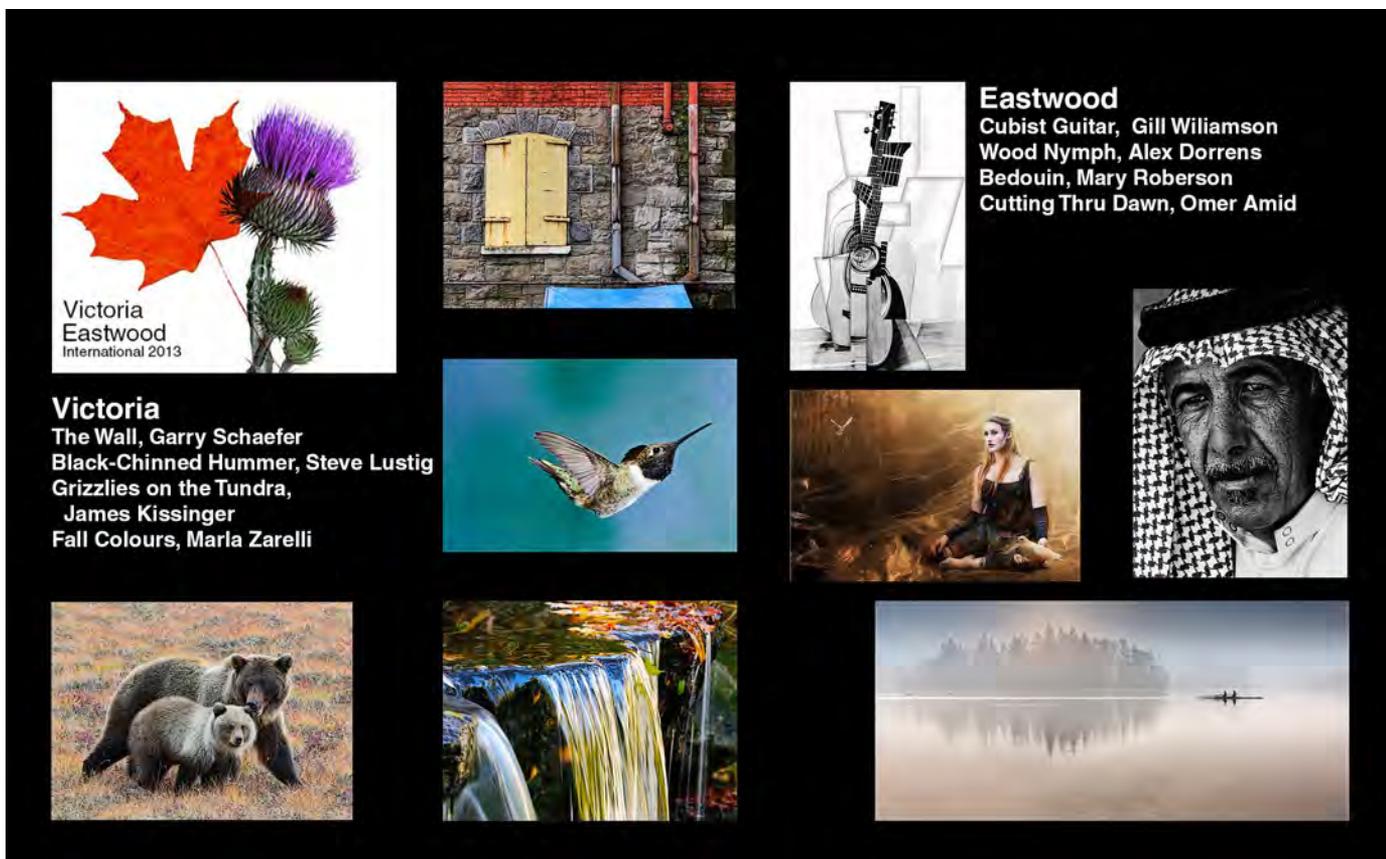
Ken Meadows' image "Ripple Shadows" (centre right above) took Honourable Mention in the "General Nature" Category with 29.5 points.

The Victoria Camera Club's entries in the Celebration of Nature Photography Competition may be viewed on the Club website under [Image Galleries: External Comps: Galleries](#).

Nature photography has long been a traditional strong suit for the VCC. This strength is evident in the club's continued success in this type of competition; the many fine examples of images of flora, fauna and scenic landscapes on display on the Club website and presented during Members' Nights; and the growing interest in Workshops and the Nature Photography SIG.

So take advantage of these resources, and in the coming spring and summer months, shoot your best ever nature image, be it locally or while travelling to other locales. I know the VCC can win the Celebration of Nature Photography. 2013 will be our year!

Ian Faris, VCC Competitions Committee



Victoria
Eastwood
International 2013

Victoria

The Wall, Garry Schaefer
Black-Chinned Hummer, Steve Lustig
Grizzlies on the Tundra,
James Kissinger
Fall Colours, Marla Zarelli

Eastwood

Cubist Guitar, Gill Williamson
Wood Nymph, Alex Dorrens
Bedouin, Mary Roberson
Cutting Thru Dawn, Omer Amid

The Victoria Camera Club (VCC) has faced off against the Eastwood Photographic Society (EPS, Glasgow, Scotland) for the last seven years running a friendly international inter-club competition. This inter-club rivalry had its inaugural year in 2007 thanks to the initiative of Douglas Bain, a photographer with one foot in Canada and the other in Scotland. The competition has been closely contested since that time with each Club winning the Aggregate three times and this year's duel ending in a tie.

The format of the competition has changed little since its inception. Each club submits 20 images (one image per photographer) on behalf of its members. The combined 40 images, identified only by an identifier number and the image title, are then judged by two judges: one selected by the EPS in Scotland and the other by the VCC in Victoria. This year's judges were Andrew Stark (EPS) and Greg Eligh (VCC). The judges were tasked with writing constructive comments and scoring each image out of 20 points. The results were then swapped, individual image and Club Aggregate scores tallied, and photographers' and Club names re-associated with the images. Top-scoring images were awarded First, Second, Third and Honourable Mention placings.

Starting with the 2012 Competition, two separate competitions were held: a Novice Section and an Advanced Section each comprised of 20 images.

This year's results: Victoria Camera Club took First Place in the Novice Section and Eastwood Photographic Society took First Place in the Advanced Section. The overall combined result was a tie. The First Place image in the Novice Section was "The Grind" by Chelsea Smyth (VCC). Three images tied for First Place in the Advanced Section: "Cutting through Dawn" by Omer Amid (EPS), "Scalloped Sand" by David Hendry (EPS) and "Great Blue Heron" by Hanna Cowpe (VCC).

All the images, judges' scores and comments may be viewed on the Club website under [Image Galleries: External Comps](#). There are also links to the 2009 Competition on the VCC website and the 2007 and 2008 Competitions on Douglas Bain's blog.

Which Club will come out on top next year? I don't know, but I do know it is guaranteed to be close!

Ian Faris, VCC Competitions Committee

Lost Faith

by Richard Webber

HDR photography is fascinating because there are endless possibilities that can surprise you as happened with my image of the Butter Church that was built in 1870 at Comiakén Hill, Cowichan Bay.



The number of shots you should take for a good HDR depends on the scene. This image was shot with a Nikon D7000, at ISO 100, f16, aperture priority, auto bracketing set to 3 frames with a 2 stop difference between each shot.

I often take several sequences and adjust my EV settings to ensure the subject's tonal range is correctly captured. Post-processing the images was done using Lightroom 4.3, Nik HDR Efex Pro 2, and Topaz Adjust 5.

The Nik "B&W - Realistic" preset was selected as a starting point after which I manually adjusted the Tone Compression and Method Strength sliders to increase the dynamic range of the image. Under HDR Method, I selected strong depth, accentuated detail and deep drama options. Shadows, highlights and contrast were adjusted to enhance the subject's drama, textures and tonality.

It is essential when making any adjustments to keep an eye on your histogram. The differential lighting effect was created using control points and the Graduated Filter option. Specific adjustments included changing: upper tonality by -0.3 stops, lower tonality by +0.02 stops and vertical shift to 49%.

The image was then cropped, and fine tuning adjustments were made using the local adjustment brush, graduated filter and luminance controls in Lightroom. Image toning was done by using Lightroom's b&w orange filter preset which added a sense of heightened drama to the image.

Contemplating Prometheus

by Jonathan Adams

For this image I wanted to give the illusion of an unplugged broken light bulb with a burning filament illuminating the subject.

The glass on an incandescent bulb can be carefully broken by heating the top of the globe with a butane torch, followed by running the surface on some ice cubes. After the glass has cracked, the broken fragments can be removed without damaging the filament.

The model was illuminated by a studio flash, positioned to cast light from the same apparent direction as the bulb she would be holding. I took two exposures, one with her hand holding a bare intact bulb, the other without to prevent the hand casting a shadow. Using a black backdrop and black top allowed the frames to be blended in Photoshop using a layer mask. The exposure for these frames was 1/250s, f11, ISO 100. The colour temperature was adjusted to mimic a yellow cast from the bulb.

For the third exposure of the burning bulb, the model held a broken bulb screwed into a plain black light socket connected to a switch in the same position as before. By bracketing exposures on a trial bulb, the correct shutter speed using the same f-stop and ISO was found to be 1/60s. With all other lights turned off and the camera in high speed shutter mode, three correctly exposed shots were obtained before the filament burned out. The best one was then copied onto the composite exposure as a separate layer in Photoshop, and using blending and a layer mask, the final composite image was developed.



April Tuesday Shoots

by Caspar Davis

For April 5th, the Tuesday shoot theme will be Depth of Field (DoF). As usual, you can interpret this however you want, so long as DoF plays an important role in the composition. Close-up or macro shots with the lens wide open are one possibility, but wide angle shots that are sharp from front to back also qualify as long as the image shows that you have thought about DoF in choosing the subject, the gear and the settings.

As you decide what equipment and settings to use, you will want to keep these factors in mind:

- The wider the aperture, the shallower the depth of field. Wide open at f2.8 or even f5.6, you will have a relatively shallow DoF; stopping down to f16 or f22 will greatly increase it.
- Lenses with short focal lengths have much greater DoF than long lenses. Fish-eyes and wide angle lenses shorter than 20mm typically give images that are sharp throughout, while telephotos give a shallow DoF.
- The smaller the sensor, the greater the depth of field. Point-and-shoot cameras with small sensors tend to have greater DoF, while full frame cameras with large sensors tend to restrict the depth of field, forcing you to pay more attention to focal length, f-stop, and accurate focus.

So pay attention to the effect you want to create as you plan your shots. You might want to bring a point and shoot in addition to an SLR if you have both.

By April 19th, we will be fully into Spring. The world will be wide awake after slowing down for the winter and our theme will be "Being Alive." Look around and find anything that sings with life: flowers, children, tourists, boats, birds... the city should be bustling with life and this is a chance to capture it.

Hopefully the sun will be shining and the harbour teeming with activity, but if it's showery you will have to find other ways of showing things waking up around you.

We are truly blessed to live in a place with a busy harbour just a few steps from downtown, a good choice of green spaces not much farther away (with too many flowers to count), and places where ducks, herons, eagles, deer, raccoons and otters are going about their business right amongst us. This is a chance to enjoy it all, and to share your vision with others.

Weekend Shoots

by Donna Robertson

Thank you to Jane Taylor for her fine coordinating of field trips this past year. Your two new coordinators are Dave McLean and Donna Robertson. We are not coordinating the Tuesday downtown trips (this will be done by the Tuesday Group) but any others, which will be mostly on weekends.

So far we are just in the planning stages. Here are some possible ideas for field trips. I want to look into doing a dirt-biking shoot. For spring we could do some wild flowers photography, maybe at Thetis Lake, and garden photography, maybe at Abkhazi or Finnerty gardens. In July we could look into doing the lavender farm again.

On May 1, Morris Dancers dress up and dance around a May-pole at dawn, or would you like to shoot other colourfully costumed dancers, maybe Ukrainian dancers?

The petting zoo shoot we did one year was fun and worth another try. We could do another night or twilight shoot, maybe Mt. Tolmie would be good. The bird photographers amongst us must have ideas about where to shoot birds, Esquimalt Lagoon in the fall for example?

Would people like to shoot at a Llama farm? A daffodil farm? Does anyone know a good orchard that we might be able to shoot when the trees are in bloom?

Please let us know what ideas you might have. We will sometimes be wanting people to be the contact person for a field trip, to email those who are interested in a trip to let them know if it has to be cancelled because of weather. However you can come up with ideas without having to lead the trip.



Soft or Sharp

by Nancy MacNab

Some photographs are admired for their great depth of field, how everything in the photo looks sharp, from the point closest to you to the point that is furthest away. Other photographs garner oohs and aahs because of the soft blur and blending of colours that leaves only a razor-thin slice of the image in sharp focus. How do you create these images? What is the controlling factor?

Three elements control your camera's exposure: ISO, aperture and shutter speed. ISO controls how sensitive your sensor (or film) is, aperture decides the size of the opening through which light passes to hit the sensor, and shutter speed dictates how long the aperture will remain open. If you want to allow the same amount of light to hit the sensor, then when you change one of the three elements, you must change another to compensate.

Using a wide aperture (f2, f4, f 5.6) will give you a fast shutter speed, while using a slow shutter speed to blur the motion is best accomplished with a small aperture of f16 or f22. If you are shooting wide open (f2, f4) and still can't get a fast enough shutter speed to freeze the motion, then you will need to increase your camera's ISO.

The aperture controls how much of your photograph will be in focus, from the point nearest to you to the point furthest away. The area in sharp focus is referred to as depth of field. A small number (f2, f4, referred to as shooting wide open) will give you a shallow depth of field (only items on a very narrow plane are in focus), while a large number (f16, f22) will result in having most of the photograph sharp with great depth of field.

A good point to remember when focusing your lens is that the area that will be sharp extends from approximately one-third in front of the focal point to two-thirds behind it. A basic maxim in photography is that if you want to maximize your depth of field, you should use a small aperture (f22, f32) and focus one-third of the way into the scene.

Make friends with your aperture control. Spend time with it, shooting the same image from the same place while changing only the aperture and letting the shutter speed vary as necessary. Take a series of photos ranging from your widest aperture to your smallest aperture. Compare the resulting photos to see how the amount of the photo that is in focus changes. Repeat the series with other subjects and study the results.

An oft-forgotten element in depth of field is your distance from your subject. A macro photo taken from 8 cm at f4 might have a depth of field of perhaps 2 mm while a photo at f4 with your subject 1 meter away may result in a depth of field of approximately 20 cm. Take a series of photos of the same subject at the same wide aperture from different distances to see how the depth of field varies.

Your choice of lens can also influence the resulting depth of field. A wide-angle lens will generally give you a greater amount in focus at the same aperture and the same distance from the subject than a telephoto lens will. Try it and see!

You can check to see how much of your photo will be in focus before you click the shutter by using the depth-of-field preview button while looking through the viewfinder. Until you click the shutter, your lens is automatically kept at its widest aperture. When you press the button, the aperture shuts down to the size you have set. By using your DOF preview button, the aperture will shut down to the requested size and will allow you to check what will be in focus.

The other way of checking the depth of field prior to actually taking the picture is to use Live Preview. Some cameras may let you enlarge a portion of the image to confirm that it is in focus; other cameras (Sony/Pentax) have "focus peaking", which displays a coloured line along the edges that are sharp. Both are convenient methods of helping you check the focus prior to taking the photo.

Controlling your depth of field can be a great way to get rid of messy or ugly backgrounds – just shoot wide-open (or at least with a wider aperture), and the background will fade away in a beautiful blur! But do watch out for light objects that will end up as a distracting bright area in the background.

Careful focusing and a wider aperture can also help to eliminate the distraction of chain-link fencing, or bits of grass or small twigs that are right in front of your camera – use a wide aperture and carefully focus the lens so these elements are out of focus.

As always, the key to learning about aperture and its effect on depth of field is to practice, practice, and practice some more. So go take some series of photos and compare the resulting photos. This will let you master the use of aperture and take control of the depth of field. Happy shooting!

by John Coenraads

Aperture, shutter speed and ISO (sensor sensitivity) form the holy triad by which a photographer controls exposure. But, although aperture and shutter speed do in fact control the number of photons (light particles) reaching the sensor, ISO does not. ISO is a measure of the amplification applied to the electrical signal generated by the photons that strike the sensor. We can restore the triad by including one factor that is often overlooked and does affect the photon numbers, namely the use of filters. So, our new triad now controls the actual exposure while ISO adjusts the effective exposure which, together, I'll now just refer to as exposure.

The Exposure Rectangle I

The four numbers that control exposure are plotted in figure 1 using arrows pointing in four different directions. Each is calibrated in stops. Although each change of one stop corresponds to a factor of two change in the exposure, the numeric steps are different. The scales in one stop increments are:

- Shutter speed: 1/500, 1/250, 1/125, 1/60, 1/30, 1/15 sec, etc.
- Aperture: 22, 16, 11, 8, 5.6, 4, 2.8, 2, 1.4
- ISO: 100, 200, 400, 800, 1600, etc.
- Filter: -5, -4, -3, -2, -1, 0

It is important that a photographer becomes familiar with these sequences.

I've plotted the points for a fairly typical shooting situation (f/11, 1/125 sec, ISO 400): a hand-held shot of shoreline rocks in the foreground and an island in the background, at twilight with a polarizer (-2 stops) removing the shiny glare from the smooth rocks. A rectangle drawn through these points can now be used to help visualize the exposure. The scales along each of the four directions have been ordered so that a shift of one stop outward from the centre along any one of them results in an exposure increase of one stop. Thus under bright light conditions the rectangle will be small (high shutter speed, small aperture, low ISO). As light levels decrease, the rectangle will need to be expanded to maintain the correct exposure (slower shutter speed, larger aperture, and/or higher ISO).

After taking the shot, let's imagine that the photographer waits another 15 minutes before taking the next shot. By now the ambient light has decreased by, say, two stops, meaning that the exposure settings have to be adjusted to compensate. Several options are open to the

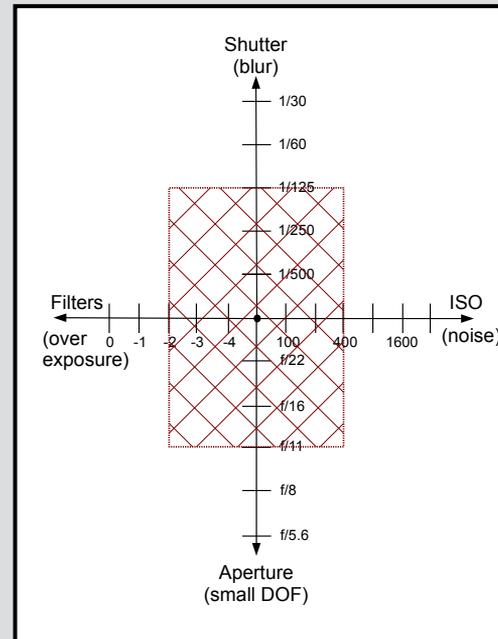


Figure 1: The exposure rectangle resulting from the plotting of the four numbers that control exposure.

photographer but each will have undesired side effects:

1. Lower the shutter speed from 1/125 s to 1/30 s. This may well result in motion blur from camera shake. Taking multiple shots will increase the chances that one will be sufficiently sharp. Better yet, make the trip back to the car and get the tripod.
2. Remove the (two stop) polarizing filter. But if the glare off the rocks is objectionable, this is not a good choice since no filter in Photoshop can recover the detail lost in the glare.
3. Open the aperture from f/11 to f5.6. The reduced depth of field will make it difficult to keep both the foreground and background in focus simultaneously.
4. Increase the ISO setting from 400 to 1600. This is likely to result in visible noise in the dark shadow areas.
5. "Fix it in editing." Take the shot as is, i.e. underexposed, and use the "Exposure" slider in ACR/Lightroom or in an "exposure" adjustment layer in Photoshop to "increase" the exposure. This should give a result similar to that in 4) – more noise and lower dynamic range.
6. Of course, it is in making decisions such as this that a photographer's technical expertise is tested. The wise photographer will likely settle for a compromise by using some combination of adjustments such as a decrease in shutter speed from 1/125 s to 1/60 s combined with an increase in aperture from f/11 to f/8 to achieve the two stop change.

Automating Exposure

In practice, we may set our camera to make the final decision on exposure, but even this requires some forethought on the part of the photographer.

The use of filters is not under the camera's control so the photographer must decide whether to use filters or not to reduce glare (with a polarizer) or to extend an exposure by 2 to 10 stops (with a neutral density filter) to turn a waterfall silky smooth. The remaining three parameters can be placed under camera control or set manually. If depth of field is not critical, shutter priority (change aperture) may be used thus allowing the camera to range through the f-stops as needed. On the other hand, if one is shooting using a tripod so that camera shake is not a worry, aperture priority (change shutter speed) would be the mode of choice. A final option is to put the camera on auto ISO. At the most recent APAC seminar, I heard one professional photographer describe how he uses auto ISO to rapidly shoot images in changing lighting conditions having manually preset the shutter speed and aperture to achieve the desired stop motion and depth of field.

An exposure rectangle is of course a completely abstract entity, but I like to visualize it as a net with which to catch photons. When the fishing is poor (low light), the net is expanded to catch more photons.

Exposure Rectangle II

So far no mention has been made of the possibility of using flash to add to the exposure. Including that in our model would require going into three dimensions and the exposure rectangle would become an exposure box. To keep things simple, let's look at this in two dimensions by omitting ISO and filters. As shown in figure 2, there are two ways to adjust flash: flash output and flash-to-subject distance. The two scales, in stops and in order of increasing exposure are:

- Flash Output: 1/32, 1/16, 1/8, 1/4, 1/2, 1x power
- Subject to Flash Distance: 8 m, 5.6 m, 4 m, 2.8 m, 2 m, 1.4 m, 1m

The "ugly" numbers, 1.4, 2.8, 5.6 appear in the distance scale because when the distance from flash to subject is doubled, the available light is spread over four times as much area. Hence the need to insert these "in between" steps if we wish each step to be one stop.

Several options are open to the photographer:

1. Aperture adjustments will operate as usual to

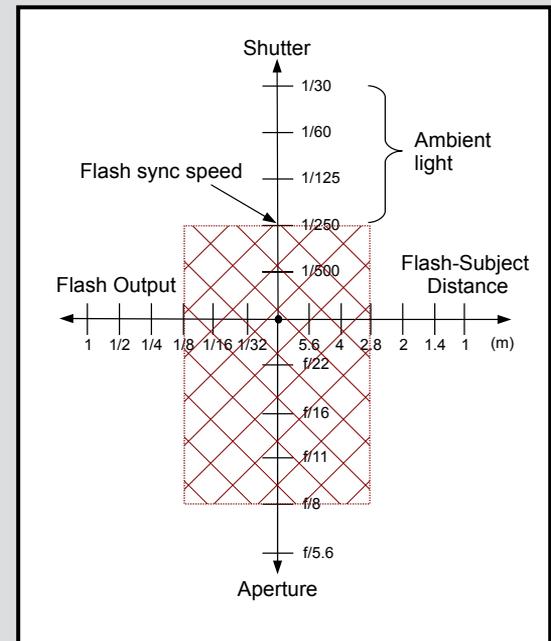


Figure 2: Exposure Rectangle II incorporating the use of flash.

control both depth of field and the amount of light entering the camera.

2. Shutter speed adjustments require special consideration. Normally, when using flash, the shutter speed is set to flash sync speed, typically 1/250 s. A slower shutter speed may be used without affecting the contribution of the flash if one wishes to include more ambient light. A higher shutter speed may only be used if the flash is capable of "high speed flash." Actually this involves slowing the flash down by spreading the single flash pulse (normally one millisecond or less) over a series of smaller pulses.
3. Flash output is specified as a fraction of the maximum flash pulse possible. It may be set manually or operated by the camera using TTL (through the lens) measurements.
4. Flash-to-subject distance is under direct control of the photographer and is easily adjusted if the flash is removed from the camera and operated remotely.
5. We can concentrate more light on the subject by focusing the flash beam. Modern flashes do this automatically to match the focal length of the lens being used. A "Better Beamer" may be used with particularly long lenses.

Next time you are out on a shoot, consider using the concept of an exposure rectangle to provide the framework on which to hang all that one needs to remember about exposure.

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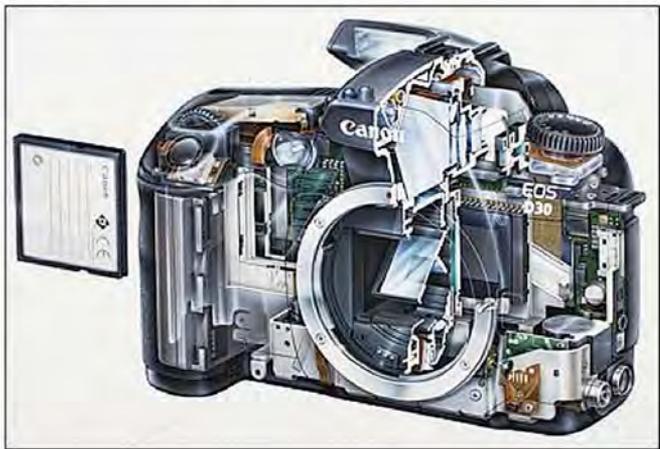


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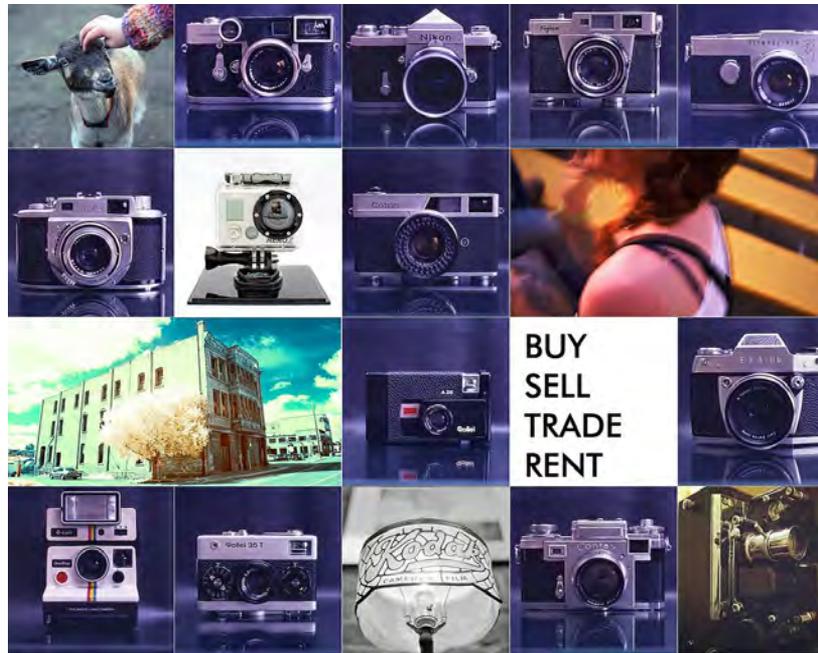
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