



Victoria Camera Club President's Message from James Dies

April 27, 2023

*"If you aren't moving **forward**, you are moving **backward**. There is no **standing still**."* Anon

I am honored to be your new, incoming president and I want to acknowledge the leadership and hard work of our outgoing president, Danielle Labonte. She guided us through many changes that were needed in our club. Thank-you, Danielle.

I want to welcome to our Board of Directors two new members, Rilla Ballantyne and Dennis Crabtree—they will do a great job for us—and I want to thank Ian Ferris, Jason Frank, Bob Law, and Margaret McNay for staying on to serve the club. The importance of your work in overseeing various club activities and aspects of club business and keeping it all running smoothly cannot be overstated.

Our world is changing, and the club needs to adapt to some of these changes if we are to remain relevant. We, the board, have already taken three steps to address those issues—three steps which put our club ahead of the curve.

One big step was to create a club blog called [close-up digital](#). I want to thank Roger Botting for the huge effort he put into building this blog. We are unique among clubs in North America in creating this blog. It has been a huge success and we have already seen some very interesting blog contributions written by a number of club members.

Secondly, we instituted this year flexible meeting formats. We held some meetings in person at Norway House or at Camosun College; we held some meetings by Zoom; and we held some hybrid meetings which some members attended in person and others attended by Zoom. Many members have been missing the social aspects of our meetings, however, and the Board is going to have to talk further about how we will satisfy the desire of some members for in-person activities and the preference of other members for virtual meetings. We will continue to monitor members' input and our concerns for the future of the Club and adjust accordingly.

A third innovation this past year is the creation of an Aerial Photography SIG. As far as I know, we are the only club in North America with an Aerial Photography group. It helps to put us ahead of the curve.

The Board has already set two new goals for the club for the first year of my two-year term.

For the past few years our membership has remained constant at around 250 members although we are constantly getting 4 or 5 new members every month. At the same time, however, we lose about the same number who do not renew their memberships. This situation is not tenable in the long run—it means we are shrinking relative to the growing population in Victoria. Our goal, as the executive, is to find answers to two questions: Why are people not renewing their memberships? And how do we attract more people to join and stay? In particular, we might think about making a special effort to attract newer, younger photographers to the club. It would be wonderful to have their fresh ideas and enthusiasm. New members are the key to our future.

A second issue we must address this year is our members' level of involvement in club activities—particularly involvement in in-person get-togethers at our Norway House meetings and at other events. Our club is a social club and one of the major reasons most of us joined. Even as concerns about the pandemic have waned, however, attendance at in-person get-togethers has not recovered. In-person get-togethers give us all a chance to meet our fellow members, share knowledge, and network. It's a chance to get to know and become friends with people who share our passion, and a chance to have a lot of fun. We must look for ways to bring people back together again at the same time as trying to satisfy those who prefer to meet virtually. It is important for the club in many ways.

I want to thank all the committee chairs and their teams who worked very hard last year. The 15 chairs are the backbone of this club; your work is important; our club would not be the same without you. Our challenge now as a club is that some of you are leaving your positions and we need other club members to come forward and fill those strategic roles—another reason why building our membership base is so important.

Another group of important people I want to thank are the leaders of the various SIGs. Their work provides flavor to the club as they introduce different views and themes to enhance our photographic activities.

Lastly but by no means least I want to thank our website team. Greg Blaney, Douglas Layden, Lori Moilanen, and Richard Letourneau, your work in keeping the website current to reflect what is happening in the club is of vital importance to everyone inside and outside the club. You also put in tremendous effort and time to get [close-up digital](#) integrated into the club. I, and everyone involved in this very difficult task, owe you a huge thank-you.

I am excited for the opportunity to serve my fellow club members as your new President. I look forward to meeting all of you someday personally and to talk with you about our club and your interests. I believe we have the skills in this club to keep us the number one club among the over 40 clubs in BC—and we *should* be number one. I would like to see our club in a leadership position in BC and beyond.

Thank-you!

As we move forward, I welcome any comments or concerns you may have. My door will always be open.

James Dies – President – Victoria Camera Club president@victoriacameraclub.ca

Photo Credit: James Dies “*Outrunning the Storm – A*”