New Westminster Photography Club
Shutter Release

January 2008

People at Work Theme Gallery Winner

Clear as Glass
by Lou Misshula

OUR MEMBERS - My Favourite Photography
## Seasons in my Backyard   by Joan Greaves

I don't have to go by plane, or car, or Skytrain, or ship to take my favourite pictures, I just have to open my back door and go outside. It isn't a large yard, but each season brings new images to capture.

While working in the kitchen I might glance out of the window to see a rare bird such as a Snipe or a Hawk or just a Northern Flicker, Dark Eyed Juncos, Starlings, Goldfinches and even Robins and Sparrows. So my work in the kitchen doesn't get done and I will go on a photo shoot in my backyard. I may, or may not have time to set up my tripod. I use the Macro of my 80 -320 lens of my Pentax MZ-7 and I take slides. Some times I use a doubler or Extension Tubes if I have time to set up my tripod.

Each season brings new flowers to my backyard as well. In the Spring there are blossoms, daffodils and tulips; in the Summer there is a variety of annuals and perennials, such as roses and dahlias. If I'm lucky, I can also capture a busy bee in the flowers. When Fall comes there are asters and "mums" as well as coloured leaves. And in Winter there are images to take of frosty leaves and snow-covered left-over flowers.

So you see I don't have to go far to capture my favourite pictures.
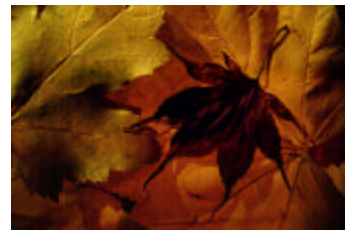
Education Corner
Crop or Not –
Evaluation Guidelines
by Shona LaFortune

A frequent comment made by evaluators is to "crop" or to "clone out". On the surface, this is usually good advice, especially with respect to obvious visual distractions, but not always….

You should always try to avoid making suggestions that impact on the photographer's intention. Make an effort to understand what the photographer is trying to tell you. Often our view of photographs is biased by our own shooting style. If you like to shoot tight graphics, you might feel that some background details are not necessary, but the photographer may be trying to show something on context rather than creating the quasi-abstract you may prefer.

A good guideline is that if the background does not contribute to the story, it should be unobtrusive. Floral close-ups often need a background free of distractions, but a person on a city bench may well need some context.

"Improving" composition is another reason cropping is often recommended. Inexperienced photographers sometimes focus on their subject in the centre of the frame and then fail to recompose to move the subject to a more interesting or balanced off-centre position. But experienced photographers sometimes choose to put their subject in the centre. Before you blindly follow the "rule of thirds", ask yourself whether it works or whether you might just have a bias against centred subjects. Similarly, the central horizon "rule" has been successfully broken by many famous artists/photographers through history, so before pulling out that stale rule-book, ask yourself whether the horizon line is really that important in that particular image. Sometimes a "mirror image" works

best with a central horizon, as can a photograph that is trying to create a feeling of strength or stability.

That tree on the right-hand side? Does it pull your eye from the main subject? Is it supposed to, i.e. is it part of the story? Ask yourself questions like that before you suggest removing something.

What about the car in the background of the rose garden? Quick, clone it out. But wait, perhaps the photographer wanted to show the roses growing in the urban setting. Where these statements are made by the photographer, they should be made to look deliberate, not like a mistake.

Photographs that appear to be set up, or studio shots, come with them a higher expectation of perfection, since the photographer had everything under control. In that case, you should expect that everything in the photograph is there for a reason, and if they don't appear to belong, you should comment.

Documentary or photo-journalism photographs often have backgrounds or "distractions" that add to the story. Often they can't be easily removed without altering the truth of the image.

These suggestions work both in evaluation of the work of others and for your own work. Don't be too quick to crop out elements that might add to the viewer's understanding of your non-verbal communication.

Upcoming Programs

Jan 22 – North Shore Challenge Selection

At this meeting we will be selecting 10 digital image entries for the 2008 North Shore Challenge. The subject is **open** and for a **horizontal images**, set pixels dimensions **width to 1024 pixels.** For a **vertical or square image**, set pixels dimensions **height to 768**. The maximum image size that will be projected is 1024 X 768 pixels (native XGA). Each member should bring in up to **4 images** to be considered.

Feb 5 - A Pair of Shorts

In this meeting we launch two new series. In the future they will typically be 15 to 20 minutes in length focusing on a single topic. You will often see them as a "warm up act" for our main speakers at a meeting.

These series will be designed to follow our ideals of "a little something for everyone" over the course of the year -- tidbits for both beginners and more experienced photographers.

Beyond the Green Square by Derek Carlin

Derek will launch this series aimed at photographers who are getting started and are still a bit unsure of themselves when it comes to taking control of their camera.

The thrust of this series will be taking your camera off automatic (the "Green Square" on many Canon models).

Tonight's first session will start at the beginning. "Taking Control" -- a quick concentrated look at the basics of exposure, and how each of the basic controls of your camera affects the final image and understanding just what all those automatic modes are doing.

Future shorts will cover basic compositional "rules", case studies of tricky subject matter and all those things the older members sometimes take for granted and forget that the rest of us haven't learned it all yet! Learning these topics also helps you to understand the comments and critiques given to your photos when they are reviewed at the club or in competition (if a judge tells you to "open up a half stop", do you know what settings you can change to do this? --- there's more than one way!)

The Outer Limits by Shona LaFortune

Shona will be leading a second series, for those photographers who are looking to try new techniques.

The focus (pardon the pun) of this series will be "altering reality" in a variety of ways with an emphasis on better expressing the "art" aspect of your photography.

This first session, by way of introduction with examples will show various in-camera, on-camera and PS techniques to alter reality.

Remembering Past Programs
Wes Bergen: How to Improve Your Images
by Grace Darney

In November, we had a guest speaker – Wes Bergen. He is a member of the Lions Gate Photo Club and writes a regular column in the Canadian Camera magazine on Photoshop techniques.

Wes gave his opinion on film versus digital cameras:
- You can get far more results using digital cameras than you ever could in a darkroom.
- Film gives a better quality image, but this is temporary -- in his opinion, in about 10 years there will be no difference between the two.

He made other comments, including:
- Judges notice when a photo has been cropped, they notice the tone and colour, but seem to take composition for granted.
- Use the Lasso tool to move an item in one photo over to a second photo.
- Use the perspective box to straighten converging verticals.

Adjusting Tones and Colours - Check your histogram for the tonal value of all pixels; don't use the Brightness/Contrast command in the Image/Adjustments menu to change tonal value– however, if you do use it, watch the histogram -- you'll notice ALL the pixels changing. You might not want to change all the pixels in your whole photo, instead, use Levels. Move the slider over to meet the edge of the displayed pixels at the white end of the histogram, and move the slider over to meet the edge of the pixels at the black end of the histogram.

Another suggestion was to do the histogram check right in your camera and make sure you haven't blown out one side or the other.

**Magic Wand -** Keep clicking it until it outlines the area you want.

Feathering and Lassoing - When you need to make selections, use the Lasso tool but then Feather it to blend the edges. You can click Select > Feather > Adj > Levels or set the feathering with the Feather box. He prefers using the Feather function after modifying a photo, as each tool has its own Feather box option -- he finds it easier to feather them all at the same time.

Anti Alias - Leave Anti Alias on (it's the default setting anyway); you use it to blend the edges of text with the background.

Layers - Use Layers to make adjustment layers as it's the best way to work on different areas of the same photo.

Painting With Light - Use the Paintbrush Tool on the Mask layer. To make an area lighter, paint with White; to make it darker, paint with Black.

Hue/Saturation - You can use this menu command (in Image > Adjustments) to make more vibrant colours in an image, but be careful you don't over-saturate. You can check the histogram and if you see bunching at either end, back it off.
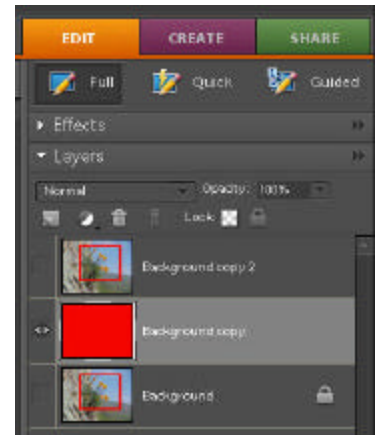
Work in RGB - Wes always works in RGB as his print shop advises not to switch to CMYK.

RAW - You will have a wider tonal range if you shoot your photos in RAW. Use the Raw Converter to increase exposure in a dark photo, as it can reveal detail in shadows that were not visible beforehand.

Saturation / Contrast / Sharpness - Adjust these in your camera. If you have already sharpened the shot in the camera, you can undo it in Photoshop.

Classes - Wes teaches photography classes at King George Secondary School.

Upcoming Outings

Almost at Sea   Jan 20, 2008

Subjects: We will visit the Vancouver Maritime Museum to extract from this treasury of west coast maritime history photographs ranging from representational to interpretive


to abstract.

Logistics: The Museum opens at noon so we'll aim to meet there then. Transit is the recommended option. Skytrain to Main St. station and catch the False Creek ferries (take in the water views with an optional stop at Granville Island) or use transit the whole way, again with the option to stop at Granville Island. We can discuss preferences at the first January meeting.

Admission rates are $8 for adults with a web coupon (link coming but we'll bring some), less for seniors.

Tripods are OK (as long as they are not left unattended) but NO FLASH inside.
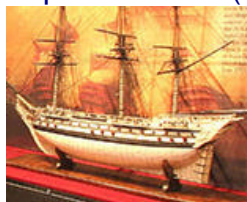
Details: Our outings are usually Saturdays, but for this Sunday, and one day in March, the museum is offering tours of the engine room of the St. Roch, an area usually off-limits to the public. They also have "Treasures from the Vault", an exhibit of artifacts usually not on display. (As you may know, this museum, like many others, has a serious shortage of exhibit area)

The museum has exhibits inside and out. and the nearby Vanier Park, Vancouver Museum and Planetarium, also offer options for "people on the beach" shots, skyline views, public art, architecture and so on.

More details TBA (check the website)

Upcoming Outings (continued)

Studio Shoot   Feb 23, 2008

Subjects: This will be a great indoor photo opportunity. Mark your calendars and look for more details to follow.

Upcoming Events

Burnaby Photographic Society's 12th Annual Showcase

When: January 26th, 2008

Where: Shadbolt Centre for the Arts, 6450 Deer Lake Avenue, Burnaby

Burnaby Photographic Society's 12th annual Showcase (Digital Presentations and Print Exhibit) will be held on January 26th, 2008, from 7 - 10:30 PM at the Shadbolt Centre for the Arts, 6450 Deer Lake Avenue, Burnaby. Doors open at 6:30pm.

The Prints will be on display during the week of January 20 - 26, 2008.

Tickets are $13.

To order tickets or for more info please contact Keith:

- Email: kgriffiths@telus.net
- Phone: 604-524-0947

2006-07 Executive Committee

President: Jason Hollister
VP: Keith Griffiths
Treasurer: Tasha Robinson
Programs: Peter Ellis
Refreshment Coordinator: Grace Darney

Competitions: Fred &Joan Greaves
Website: Derek Carlin
Outings: Justin Ball, Shona LaFortune
Newsletter: Dave Emery
Special Events: Agnia Love

Night Shots Theme Gallery Winner

Walking alone
by Shona LaFortune

Club Key Contacts

You can reach Jason Hollister at info@nwphoto.org or 604-518-8005, Dave Emery (Editor) at editor@nwphoto.org or 604-517-6654; and Justin Ball/Shona LaFortune (Outings) at outings@nwphoto.org. Any of us will be happy to provide you contact information for the person you are looking for, if we can.

Projector Fund Update

The Club Executive Committee set a goal for us to raise funds to purchase our own digital projector. Right now we borrow a projector from the office of one of our members. Our fund balance is at **$294.25** thanks to the generosity of our members. We will make a "projector fund update" a regular section in the Shutter Release and on our website (www.nwphoto.org).

Club Website www.nwphoto.org