



New Westminster Photography Club

Shutter Release

April 2007

From the Editor

The saying goes, that “Everyone talks about the weather, but no-one does anything about it”. Well, somebody or something has at last changed the channel. Now it’s officially Spring, and the weather we expected a month ago has finally arrived.

The days are longer and warmer, the birds are back, and flowers are coming into bloom. Cherry trees in my neighbourhood are clouds of pink blossom. If all that isn’t enough to make you dust off your cameras and head for the Great Outdoors, what are you waiting for?

Keeping in tune with this Spring-song, and stirring up interest in picturing the gardens now coming into full colour, we got a lot of technical advice and creative ideas from Leona Isaak, this past week – with an outing to Burnaby’s Century Garden, to try out her suggestions.

Grace’s item in this issue gives a good report on Leona’s talk, for those who missed it.

Then there’s the CAPA outing to the Abbotsford tulip and daffodil fields. Everywhere you look – flowers!

Don’t wait too long; gather up your gear, head for the Great Outdoors, and shoot something floral...!



Easter will soon be here – this dramatic picture, by Shona La Fortune, seems to match the season

Upcoming Program

April 3

If you’re reading this at the meeting, I hope you remembered to bring a couple of prints for the Crescent Beach Club ‘Black and White Challenge’. The rules and regs for this event were in the last Shutter Release, but we are still waiting for the “when and where” of the actual judging evening. Watch for information in the next issue and club website. Guest are encouraged (practically *expected*) to wear black and white clothing, and the generous food tables will be serving goodies coloured - can you guess? – B&W! Be there...it’s always a great evening, and we might just win, this year. Our 5-minute presenter will be Grace D., but she hasn’t told us yet what her subject will be.

April 17

Derek Carlin says he’ll be telling us to “Bring Some Life to Your Stills”, and if your understanding of that mysterious title is as uncertain as mine, and you are curious too, make sure you don’t miss this one. Those who went on the flower-shoot, following Leona’s talk (see Grace’s write-up on her presentation) may each bring one print, slide or digital image from the outing, to show and tell about. David Love will be the 5-minute presenter this time. Subject? TBA, again...

May 1st:

Members Night: By popular request, we are scheduling an opportunity to bring 2 photos (print, digital, or slide), to let other members see what pictures you have been making since last September. (Has it really been that long?) We will critique each other's photos and comment on our own. Any subject, within reason!

Justin will provide a supplies list for next week's Pinhole Camera Workshop.

Outings

Russian Soldiers

Postponed from the January/February schedule.

Saturday April 14th

In the early months of the First World War, the Russian army was large, but very poorly equipped. Soldiers were formed into groups of three, with one rifle and 5 cartridges. When the first soldier fell, the remaining 2 would take up the rifle and continue, until the next fell...

Participants will be put in pairs, issued with one camera, and a list of "targets" to shoot. Work together to spot and shoot, and don't waste your shots! Will challenge the eye, mind and skill of all photographers.

If other outings are planned they will be announced in the club and posted on the website. Keep eyes and ears open for late-breaking info – you might miss something special!

Past Outings

There were two impromptu outings for March, set for Tuesdays between meetings. Seven members attended the first, on March 13, a trip to the Vancouver Art Gallery ("by donation" Tuesday admission price) for the Fred Herzog and "Acting the Part: Photography as Theatre" exhibitions. The following week, which would have been a meeting night except for the Spring Break, was an evening walk through New Westminster. It was a rare clear (but cool) evening and 5 members worked their way from the Skytrain to, up and down 12th Street capturing it, and adjacent streets, in light, dark and transition. Interesting stuff. A bright sliver of a moon made its way into many of the photos as well.

Eight of us explored the gardens at Deer Lake Park on March 31, to try some of the tips from Leona. Another sunny day created some nice backlighting, and there were sufficient blooms to explore macros. The only complaint heard: flowers grow too close to the ground.

Thanks for organizing these, Justin.

Creative Flower Photography

Submitted by Grace Darney

Leona Isaak, FCAPA, of Spirit of the West Photo Ventures, presented an inspiring talk called "Creative Flower Photography" at the well-attended March 27th meeting.

We were entertained with her beautiful slide shows (accompanied by music) – made with the Pro Show Gold program and, as well, given many great tips for taking beautiful, unusual, and awesome flower shots.

These tips included knowing that flower photography is composed of 20% preparation (getting the right equipment), 50% observation, 25% skill & technique, and 5% pure luck (being in the right place at the right time, with the right equipment).

She reminded us that the camera is but a tool for the mind that has already captured an image.

Leona uses the following tools:

- Waxed paper (makes for an inexpensive diffuser).

- Her elbows (for a tripod when doing “belly” photography).
 - Closeup filters (to lose sharpness in those lovely soft photos of hers).
 - White umbrella (diffuser).
 - Reflectors (gold on one side, silver on the other to give light to one spot or area).
 - Teleconverter to get slightly less sharpness and light.
 - 90mm macro and 200mm macro lenses with filters.
- And suggested the following:
- Know your equipment.
 - Use manual focus only.
 - Learn to “see”: observing not only what’s around but also what’s in your viewfinder.
 - Include “critters” in your shots.
 - Take more than one shot and take shots from various angles (above, to the side, at ground level, from underneath).
 - Carefully remove distracting elements (but leave the daffodils growing at the foot of the tree!)
 - Take fragments, isolate a single bloom, or make one part of the bloom soft, the rest sharp.
 - Venture out after a rain.
 - Be bold and experiment with colour, shapes, abstracts, lines.
 - Get down on your belly and shoot through grasses.

When using a diffuser (translucent white material like a white umbrella, white fabric, or even waxed paper), Leona mentioned that we should watch for odd highlighting in the background (easily seen with you can correct this in Photoshop, but she says why not avoid them in the first place.) Because a diffuser simulates an overcast day, it’s great to use on a bright day to reduce contrast and get even lighting.

Leona uses a reflector to bounce light back onto a subject – this is great when you want to increase or decrease contrast. Use the silver side of the reflector for soft highlights and the gold side for brighter, warmer tones. (By the way, as demonstrated by Leona, coffee bag interiors make cheap reflectors, and they’re a good size for getting in near to small flowers.)

Leona’s main message was to shoot for yourself, not for judges. She suggested to immediately get the shot that caught your eye (the “grab” shot), then look at the image again to see what the next shots will be: check the light source (should you take the shot using front light, side light, back light, or spot light); decide what is important (colour/shape/shadow); set your camera to minimum focus and leave it there (move the camera towards and away from the subject without changing the focus); set the aperture to F2.8 (or to the smallest opening your lens has); use the depth of field preview button (if your camera offers that feature); look at the background (simple, not busy). Above all, experiment and work the shot – take over-all shots, then closeups, then do an abstract of a line, or take a photo of one colour against a background of the same or a contrasting colour; or simply get in so tight there is no background.

Check out Leona’s website: www.fotolady.bc.ca, attend her workshops about creating slideshows using Pro Show Gold, sign up for her photography trips (past trips have been BC cattle drives, the Palouse, & Yellowstone in the Winter), attend the Abbotsford Photo Arts Club’s annual October event to hear her speak, but above all – get that shutter button clicking. a digital camera).

Thailand as a Photographer’s Paradise

Dave Emery

Last month I had the opportunity to travel to Thailand with a friend attending a conference in Bangkok. Thailand is certainly one of the top travel, and thus photo, destinations in the world and I found out exactly why.

I had a chance to spend time in **Phuket**, Thailand’s largest island. It is located well south of Bangkok and is often called the “pearl of the south”. This layback island has almost completely recovered from the 2004 tsunami. While staying in a quiet seaside resort, I had a chance to do some

scuba diving which was world class. I enjoyed diving on a wreck, having a close encounter with a poisonous (but non-threatening) sea snake and seeing many species of tropical fish and colorful corals.

From there we went to **Bangkok**, the country's capital, where I was able to take great tours each day with a private, knowledgeable guide. Bangkok, founded in 1782 by the first monarch of the present Chakri dynasty, is now home to over 10 million people. It is Thailand's spiritual, cultural, diplomatic, commercial and educational center. The Grand Palace, now open to the public and no longer the residence of the beloved Thai King, was a breath-taking site to visit and photograph.

Ayutthaya, to the north of Bangkok, is one of Thailand's historical and majestic highlights. Serving as the Thai capital for 417 years (1350-1767), it was once glorified as one of the biggest cities in Southeast Asia. I think this was my favorite photo destination. Nearby we were able to visit **Bangpa-In**, the beautiful royal Summer Royal Palace, followed by a 3 hour river cruise back to Bangkok.

There are 40,000 **Buddhist temples** in Thailand. Even though these are sacred places of worship, many of them allow subtle and respectful photography. If so, these are amazing places for photo opportunities and spiritual awakening.

Bangkok, sometimes known as the "Venice of Asia," is dominated by the Chao Phraya river and numerous canals. No trip is complete without a cruise in one of the famous long-tailed "James Bond" boats with the noisy truck-engines strapped to the back. The floating vegetable markets on the canals are also great places for colorful photos.

I found the Thai people very friendly, and now know why Thailand is also called "The Land of Smiles". Each of the places I visited provided opportunities for making colorful images and reinforcing my fond memories of an amazing Asian destination. You can see many of my best images on my website: www.daemery.com.



More April events

Our entries have already been sent in, and our hopes are high that we will do well this year, so all that's left to do is go along to the Richmond Community Centre, 7560, Minoru Gate, where the Richmond Photo Club will be hosting the BC Print Challenge, on April 22nd. Judging starts at 1:00 pm. There is a \$5 charge for admission (proceeds to CAPA) – refreshments served at intermission.

CAPA Field Trip to photograph the Tulips - update

By Allen Barga, CAPA District Representative - BC Lower Mainland

Due to the wet and cool spring we are having, tulips will be late blooming this year. The CAPA Field trip to view the growing fields is scheduled for Sunday, April 15th. Tulips are just starting to come out of the ground and we are told the best time to see them this spring will be the third Sunday in April.

We took a field trip today to see the fields and speak to the growers who confirmed this will be the best time to make the trip. The majority of photo club members we spoke to asked for a trip to see Canadian growing fields, so this will be a trip to the tulip and daffodil fields in Canada, just East of Abbotsford B.C. near the corner of Marion Road and # 4 Road.

We have arranged to tour daffodil fields at the Van Noort Bulb Company on the South Parallel Road, just off Hwy # 1. This is a bulb growing operation so they do not harvest the flowers for sale. This means the flowers will be at bloom longer than if they went to market. This grower also has large fields of multi-varietal daffodils to photograph.

We will also go to the tulip fields at Flora Farms, at 39171 # 4 Road, also just off of the South Parallel Road, just two farms away from the Van Noort operation.

To organize the group, we will all meet at the Rest Stop on the South Parallel Road at exit 99. As soon as you exit you will see the rest stop on the right hand side of South Parallel road, just beside the Sumas River. Be there by 10:00 a.m. and we will split into two groups, one to go to the tulip fields first, and the other group to go to the daffodil fields. If we have only a small group, we will all go together to both sites.

As a standby plan, in the event that we have sufficient time left over after the flower fields, those who wish to extend the trip will drive to the Great Blue Heron Reserve in Chilliwack just a bit down the road.

For further information on this trip, please send email to a23297@shaw.ca or call 604-270-1137. On the day of the trip, contact me by cell at 778-549-2546. Also, please remember to check the CAPAPAC website at <http://www.capapac.org/> for updates on this trip as well as other scheduled field trips.

The Swap Meet

With the Vancouver Camera show & Swap Meet only a few weeks away (Sunday, April 15) make a note on your calendar to come to the Cameron Rec Centre, 9523 Cameron, Burnaby – by the Lougheed Mall. (10am – 4pm, admission \$5 : ‘early bird’, at 9am, \$15)

There will be thousands of items of interesting ‘photo stuff’, so check it out – you may find exactly the equipment you’ve been looking for, at bargain prices. Remember to drop by and say ‘hi’ to Shona and Peter, who have rented a table, to dispose of some of Betty McVea’s photo gear.

Club key contacts

You can reach Dave Emery (President) at dave@nwphoto.org or 604-517-6654 ; Grace Darney (Program) at (program@nwphoto.org, or 604-463-7363; Justin Ball (Outings) at outings@nwphoto.org, Tasha Robinson (Treasurer) at treasurer@nwphoto.org., and Peter Ellis (Editor) at peter@nwphoto.org Any of us will be happy to provide you with contact information for the person you are looking for, if we can.