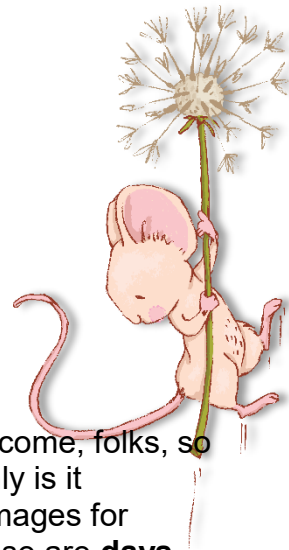




May 2017

Shutter Release



Editor's Desk (Shona LaFortune – editor@nwphoto.org)

Can you believe we're nearly at the end of our season?? There's lots of activity still to come, folks, so carry those cameras and check the deadlines. **May 14** seems to come up a lot. Not only is it Mother's Day, but the due date for the theme entries for "Geometric Shapes" and our images for consideration for our July gallery show. So if you've been ignoring the calendar . . . these are **days** away. You know what to do. Um, after panicking of course.

No May issue would be complete without a reminder of our upcoming Annual General Meeting and **elections**. Many of your executive have been doing a fantastic job holding down some major positions, and we know that some of you are ready to move up to a little more challenge. Newer members are always welcome, as the Executive works together as a team, and every volunteer Executive member can get the help they need. So please consider taking on a position! Don't wait for election night! – if there is something you are interested in, contact our pres. (Karen - president@nwphoto.org) to let her know you are thinking/interested so she doesn't have sleepless nights seeking nominees. We are so fortunate that we have talented photographers who are also good at many other things, whether it be organization, finances, people . . . and we know there are more of you out there!

Upcoming Meetings (program@nwphoto.org)

May 23 is our **AGM**. Following the reports and elections, some of our members will give "short and snappy" talks on their areas of expertise or passion – a good chance to pick up some tips and inspiration.

June 6 is our wind-up Pot Luck. Set-up, if you can help, is 5:30. Otherwise, please arrive with your food for sharing at 6:00, allowing a little time to mingle before we eat at 6:30. Of course guests are always welcome so feel free to bring a spouse, friend, parent or all of the above. We will follow the dinner with some entertainment by our members – more in the photography line than singing and dancing, but you never know.

Upcoming Outings (outings@nwphoto.org)

May 21 – Day Trip to Bowen Island where we will meet up with members of the Bowen Island Photo Club. They will show us around, so this is a great opportunity to get “insider” viewpoints.

It is essential that you email outings@nwphoto.org to confirm attendance.

We are departing on the 10:05 ferry leaving Horseshoe Bay so allow yourself plenty of time to drive or take transit. **Please make carpooling arrangements at a meeting well ahead of time.** If you use transit, you don't want to be stranded on the other side without a ride. Return ferry is planned for 3:10 PM but you may also catch the 12:45. The ferry costs \$12.35 for walk-on. If you carpool, please chip in for the vehicle and ferry costs. **Please refer to the website for further details and information.**

June 24 - Squamish Docks and Shannon Falls. We'll start photography at the falls – fantastic at any time of day/year, then move to the Stawamus Chief, downtown for lunch and finish at the Squamish Docks and surrounding areas. As with the Bowen Island trip, **please make your carpool arrangements ahead of time.** As well, please let outings@nwphoto.org know you plan to attend. Meet at the concession stand/info booth **by 10 AM.** (If you are driving, this means leaving New West by 8:30 or so to allow for traffic, driving, parking and assembly.)

Visitors are always welcome to attend any outing; you do not need to be a member.

Themes (themes@nwphoto.org)

The latest theme opened on May 1, and it has potential to be a fun challenge. **Be Your Self(ie): Creative Self Portraits**, closes on June 18, but don't leave this one for the last minute. I was a little concerned about possible biases in judging, if people know whose photo it was. . . So I asked Barb, our theme coordinator and she said, “I am hoping that people will disguise themselves in some of the samples. In fact, I toyed with calling it “your hidden selfie”. Note that the rules do say that you can use any kind of manipulation (well, in fact pretty much none of our themes prohibit that) so this is a chance to really have some fun with these. And remember, a self-portrait can be a cell phone “selfie” or a more traditional approach with a tripod and self-timer. I can't wait to see the results and guess who you are . . . Have fun!

Geometric Shapes, “circle, square, oval, pyramid, hexagon . . . “ Make one the subject of your photo” **closes May 14.** It's not as easy to comb the archives for these, so maybe a nice walk in the sun? Just a few days left!



Theme Results

Here are the top 10 of our recently closed theme “Arts and Crafts”.

Title	Photographer	Placing (score)
Making a Garden Planter	Michael D.	1 st (49 pts)
Attention to Detail	Debi N.	2 nd (43 pts)
Glass Blowing	Kathy H.	3 rd (41 pts)
Warp, Shuttle, & Weft	Geoffrey G.	4 th
Soldering a Silver Ring	Michael D.	5 th
Street Artist	Peter Eisenbock	6 th /7 th (tie)
Maritimers Wreath	Karen J.	6 th /7 th (tie)
Shaping Stones	Michael D.	8 th
Reflecting on the Reflection	Bruce F.	9 th
The Art of the Hermes Glove	Debi N.	10 th



Shaping Stones © Michael D.



Glass Blowing © Kathy H.

Honest Comments (Shona LaFortune)

In our club, our experience in taking photos and in commenting on them ranges from beginner to advanced. Just like photography, even beginners come up with stunning images, and beginner “commenters” certainly have valid things to say.

A big part of being part of a club like ours is helping and encouraging each other. When that comes to comments, many of us hesitate. But commenting can be hugely helpful to our own photography. As we critically examine the work of others, we may well learn to be conscious of different aspects of photography. This is especially true when finding something positive about an image you don't really like, and finding something that could be improved on or changed on an image you really do like.

Sometimes hesitation to comment is a matter of not really knowing what to say. And, regrettably, some members are a little over-sensitive, reacting to comments without perhaps realizing that the commenter may be new to this. It's easy to understand – when we create something we love, it's hard to have people “criticize” it. I'm sure most, if not all of us know something of the “do unto others” philosophy that can make the world a much more pleasant place. Comments are a great place to exercise that! You can be kind but still make critical and helpful comments.

So here are a few lighthearted, but serious guidelines for commenting. For those of you newer to the club, I was one of the original creators of the Canadian Association for Photographic Arts' "Fit to Judge" and "Learn to Judge" evaluator training course, huge parts of which are still being taught today.

When we appreciate a piece of art, we frequently think "I like this". However, in the field of comments/critique, that really means you are talking about **yourself**, not the image. People appreciate that you like their work, but please go on to say **why**. I like this **because** it invokes a mood of (x). I like this because it makes a strong social statement. I like this because the muted colours do this ... Then if you just take out "I like this because" you have a good comment . . . "The image makes a strong social statement . . . "

You will notice that we divide our comments into "strengths" and "what can be improved" (the 2nd box is optional but unless you think the image would score a 10 out of 10, there is usually something you could say). Every image has something going for it. Find it. Composition, mood, colour, technical aspects (e.g. "brings out the texture", "unusual angle makes us think", "moody lighting", etc.)

Do try, however, to avoid **too** many superlatives. Although we're thrilled when we get those, "stunning", "beautiful", "nice" and oh yes, the kiss of death "interesting" words in the comments, they aren't that helpful unless they are followed by – you guessed it "**because**". The light is stunning **because** it creates a mysterious mood/brings out the details/creates a contrast between/etc. Saying the perspective/angle/subject is "interesting" is **sometimes** another way to say that you don't really know what to say. Trust me, we've all been there. On the other hand, sometimes the image truly **is** interesting, but ... there's that "because" again . . . (e.g. it shows an aspect of this process I didn't know about, reveals the back of something I didn't even know existed, brings out colours I've never noticed . . .)

What can be improved? This is a place to suggest cropping out things that don't add to the "story" or mood, point out distractions or conflicts, and so on. These are the hardest to write. You know how it is some days, your brain is thinking "hmmm" and you have to write "interesting use of . . . " This is where tact, diplomacy and most of all, consideration for your fellow photographers really come into play. We all want to improve our photography and, as I said earlier, we don't always recognize our own faults because we are so happy with how the photograph turned out that we didn't see . . . but unless this is an instant prize-winner, what would make you say "Wow!!" instead of "hmmm"?

So really think about your comments. And this is important, before you say anything, consider carefully the photographer's **intent**. Was it to capture the beauty of a flower or sunset, or make a social statement about litter (in which case "crop out the garbage" might not be an appropriate comment!) Would the image be stronger without the (x) on the edge of the frame? Could it use a bit more saturation or contrast **or** is the subject intended to be soft and delicate? Are there two conflicting subjects in the frame? (You might then say exactly that, and suggest that there are really two strong images here).

Having said all that, you do not need to give every photograph a full analysis. It's perfectly acceptable to make a comment about one aspect. Do note that our fields require something in the "strength" category, so that's a good place to start.

And I've said this before, some people feel that photographers/artists shouldn't have thin skin, and to some extent, that's true. Your fellow members are genuinely trying to be helpful, and you have to

maybe face up to the idea that if they didn't "get" it, perhaps your message wasn't as clear as you thought. At the same time, there is no place for nastiness or cruelty, which really should go without saying.

So let's see more comments on our themes and gallery images. Both sides benefit!

(Special thanks to Nancy Matheson for assistance with this article).

Photo Ops and Deadlines

If it seems that everything is coming up at once, you may be right. Get these on your calendar so you won't forget a vital deadline, or an interesting photo opportunity:

May 2 – 22 – The Chung Ai club members' annual photo exhibition is on at the Moat Gallery at the Vancouver downtown library, free and open during library hours. Worth a look if you're in the city; it's always interesting to see what other clubs are doing.

May 13: Fraser Valley Invitational, Clayton Heights Secondary School, 7003-188 Street, Surrey. Tickets from the club in advance (\$18) or at the door (\$20). Doors open at 6:30.

May 14: DEADLINE EXTENDED (from April 16), for entries for consideration for our Queens Park Gallery exhibit. Theme is "This City, Our Way: New West through the lens". Earlier is better, folks!

May 14: Also, entries close for the theme "Geometric Shapes".

May 21: Club outing **Day Trip to Bowen Island**.

May 26: Last date for entries for Manitoba's Red River Exhibition photo contest. Digital projected and print categories; small cash prizes. <http://www.redriverex.com/photo-contest/>

June 24: Club outing to Squamish.

June 28 – 30: Camera Canada Conference 2017 in our nation's capital. Ottawa will be putting on a show for our 150th anniversary, so if you're interested, don't wait to register, especially for accommodation. www.ccc2017.ca.

July 1: Canada Day. . . and our exhibit opens at The Gallery at Queen's Park.

July 5: Official opening reception for our gallery exhibit. 6:00 – 8:00 PM

www.nwphoto.org or find us on Facebook or Twitter!

Spring graphics by Lisa Glatz, licenced by Design Cuts, UK.