



# HCPC In Focus

Newsletter of the Harbour City Photography Club

January 2024



*Taken from the view point at the entrance of Strathcona Park overlooking Buttle Lake by Steve Corscadden*

## Letters to the Editor : Rooney Dumler

There are few items in photography that ignite discussion more than the topic of competition: is it suitable, does it dampen the creative spirit or is it a means of development and growth? Three HCPC members were asked to express their opinion on this topic. We invite you to review their ideas and encourage a Letter to the Editor; be it supportive or a "rebuttal" which may be printed in our next issue. (limit to 250 words) .

We welcome other thoughts and suggestions too as they may give direction to our Board and committees.

Please contact the [Editor](#) with your thoughts and suggestions about competitions.

## **Table of Contents**

Presidents Report, <i>by Sue Nurmi</i> .....	Page 2
Digital Print Competition Photos .....	Page 3
CAPA. What is it & where does it fit in HCPC, <i>by Dave Tyler</i> .....	Page 6
New Member's Perspective <i>by Tracey Maile</i> .....	Page 8
Competition in Photography: Pro <i>by Hermann Werner Schmidt</i> .....	Page 9
Photo Competitions: <i>Con By Bill Saffin</i> .....	Page 10
The Print Challenge : November 21 <i>By Wendy Casey</i> .....	Page 11
Photo Salon 2024 or the "Big Show" <i>by Rooney Dumler</i> .....	Page 15
Karsh: The Art of the portrait, <i>By Steve Corscadden</i> .....	Page 16
Going on an Outing? <i>Here's your checklist by Don Clark</i> .....	Page 18
Pet Photos with Santa, <i>by Rooney Dumler</i> .....	Page 20
An Introduction to Wildlife Photography, <i>by Lynda Stevens</i> .....	Page 21
From where I shoot: Master Road, <i>by Bill Safin</i> .....	Page 25
Quarterly Screed : Infrared Photography, <i>by Nick Zoltay</i> .....	Page 28
Traveling in Austria, <i>By Irene Peinhopf</i> .....	Page 31

## **President's Message**

By Sue Nurmi

I hope everyone has had a very enjoyable Christmas and that Santa has been good to you. Maybe he brought you a few new toys for your photography?

As we start 2024, I am struck by a childhood memory. When I was about 7 years old, I was having a conversation with my friend, and we were figuring out how old we would be in 2000. Once we had it all figured out, we looked at each other and said "Boy, that's old. Do you think we will still be alive?" Well, here I sit at my computer in 2024, still very much alive and looking forward to at least a few more years.

The year 2024 will be a time of change for the club. It's time to pass the reins over to a new board of directors. And I hope you will agree that we are handing over a strong and vibrant club. The current board is committed to giving the new directors and chairs full support to proceed into the future. If you are interested in any of the positions. please contact me or the specific board member to let them know. I can tell you from experience and although it has had its challenges, being a member of this club's board of directors has been one of the most rewarding things I have ever done.

The positions available are, President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer and Membership, as well as many of the chair positions. Please watch for a full job description of each role coming in the next couple of months. The nominations and elections for the new board will take place during our Annual General Meeting on June 4<sup>th</sup>.





**Results of the Digital Print Competition from January 2nd, 2024.**



**The Colour White—First Place—Don Clark—*Serenity***



**The Colour White—Second Place (tie) - Wendy Mazzei—*Ptarmigan Two-Step***



**The Colour White—Second Place (tie) - Maggie Tilley—*Savouring the Moment***



**Nature & Technology—First Place—Geri Reamer—*Petra's Paradox***





**Nature & Technology—Second Place—Ruane Dumler—*Demise of the Family Farm***



**Nature & Technology—Third Place—Ricarda Brusegard—*Forlorn***



## **CAPA**

### **What is it and where does it fit into the Harbour City Photography Club?**

By Dave Tyler. External Competition Chair

The Canadian Association for Photographic Art (CAPA) is a national organization of Canadian Camera clubs and individual members from Canada and around the world who have a common interest in photography. The Association is a non-profit charitable corporation. Member clubs can be found across Canada, all of whom are always eager to welcome new members. We have almost 90 member clubs and over 1,300 individual CAPA members.

Individual members range from amateurs to professionals, many of whom are recognised among the best photographers in Canada. Frequently, CAPA members receive international acclaim through their published photographic work, articles, and their courses. New photographers can quickly build their skills through interaction with other CAPA members, who will share their experience and techniques.

Some of the CAPA Objectives:

- To promote the art and science of photography in all its forms throughout Canada and the world, and to further public interest therein
- To encourage and promote participation by its members in photographic exhibitions, circuits, competitions and like endeavors on regional, national and international level
- To promote the organization and encourage the affiliation of camera clubs, councils and similar groups
- To promote international, national and regional exhibitions of photography
- To compile and disseminate information relating to photography in all its forms for the use and benefit of the individual members and the Association's affiliated or associated groups
- To publish a photographic publication

### **So what does this mean for you as a member of the Harbor City Photo Club?**

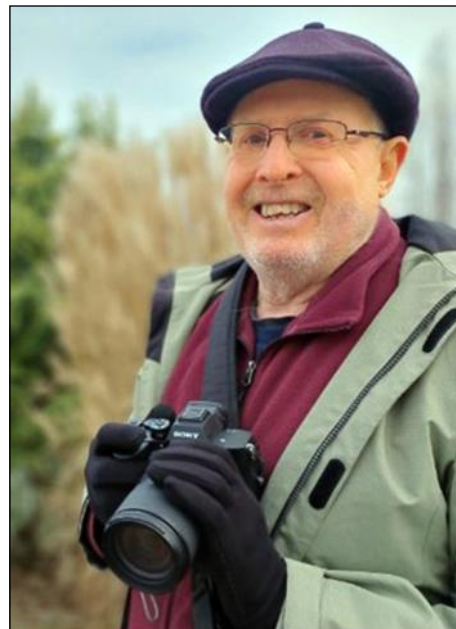
The club is a member of CAPA which enables us to enter the Club competitions.

We have had three so far:

Pacific Zone

Nature

Black & White (Pictures on the right)



Sue Nurmi *"He walks the line"*



Ruane Dumler *"Equestrienne"*

To give you some idea of how many clubs and individuals compete, this is a summary from the most recent **2023 Black & White Competition**:

- 1,036 images were entered
- 291 from 50 clubs
- 745 from 254 Individual CAPA members

To give you an idea how good these photographers are, take a look at the recent winning images:

[Winners - Canadian Association for Photographic Art \(capacanada.ca\)](http://capacanada.ca)

Our club is allowed to enter 5 or 6 images in each competition. All members are invited to submit one photo and from these the final images are selected. You can enter your photos in the Club category, and if selected you will receive the CAPA score for that photo. Scoring is based on 10 points and is adjudicated by trained CAPA judges. Some of our members have received very high scores in previous years.

You can also buy a \$75 individual membership, which allows you to enter your photos in all the individual competitions, as well as to receive their Magazine and attend the monthly online speaker series.

#### So what do you think?

Does CAPA inspire you or scare you? For me, a little of both. There is so much to learn to take and edit a winning photo, that WOW factor.

I hope you all will take part in our club digital and print competitions and as your photography continues to improve, perhaps one day you will be a CAPA winner ! Your next opportunity is the current Artistic competition which is due January 25<sup>th</sup>.



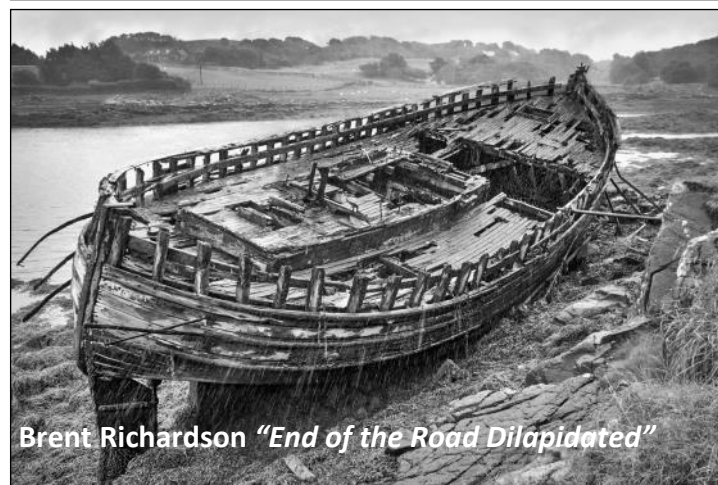
Ricarda Brusegard "Perelman Performing Arts"



Linda McBride "A New Day Landscape"



Denis Dore "Tango Dancers Argentina"



Brent Richardson "End of the Road Dilapidated"

locally owned  
supporting Island artists  
original art & edition prints



*Yellow Bird*  
**ARTS GALLERY**

**NANAIMO'S PREMIER CUSTOM FRAMING  
DESTINATION FOR OVER 30 YEARS**

Country Club Centre 3200 Island Hwy 250.758.2480



## **New Member Perspective – Harbour City Photography Club**

By Tracey Maile

I joined the HCPC in the fall of 2023. I did not know it but the first meeting I attended was an onboarding meeting and the presentation was stunning. “Looking Back, Looking Forward” outlined how things are done in the Club, the breadth of which is difficult to pick-up by word of mouth. The Club’s vision, purpose and mission were all outlined, as well as how communication to members is organized and where information can be found. Speakers, SIGs, and outings were discussed and perhaps most important was the information about the weekly challenges and internal and external competitions. Thanks to the dedication of a few, the Club is busy and active, facilitating skill development in an open and warm environment.



Other benefits of the club include the social rewards of making new friends and learning local knowledge. Being privy to insider information about the local area, great geographical camera spots, spots to capture wildlife, the best cityscapes and unusual or unknown events in the area are also tremendous benefits of belonging to the club. Conversing with members on outings and staying for get-togethers after outings has been a great way to gather local info and make new friends.

Each of us in the photo world either develop or come to it with areas of priority. Mine, I must say, is fun and memory making. It’s not that I don’t care about the technical aspects, I do but have limited tolerance for it. It is the same with post processing – I want to crop, erase the distractions, get my image to the right size and be done. I make pictures as I want to scroll through a curated set of beautiful images and sink into good memories of people, time, and place. The skill and practice to get there is through participation in club activities, including competitions.

My introduction to photography was through a workshop on horticultural photography. I had just acquired an ‘expensive’ \$450 camera from London Drugs and wanted to practice and learn about the camera. Little did I know then that my point and shoot could be both derided by ‘real’ photographers and produce images to compete side by side with them.

Paying attention to club critiques and competitions has honed my skills as a photographer. Numerous judges commenting on and scoring dozens of images provides a roadmap toward exceptional image making. Listening to and being mentored by other photographers has also widened the technical possibilities of the craft; I remember first hearing about light painting and then doing it and being completely submerged into a world of wonder. Memories of writing “I love you” in the night air with a flashlight on the Sunshine Coast and having the words illuminated on the camera display were momentous and poignant as I felt (for the first time) I was communicating in another language. Reviewing mine and other members images has taught me about composition, balance, perspective, how to use light and shadow and the importance of reading competition rules. All good lessons. But more importantly, participating in critiques and competitions has been self-affirming and knowledge-building.



**Fish Hatchery Outing by Tracey Maile**



## **Competition in Photography: Pro**

*Hermann Werner Schmidt*

### **Competition is part of our everyday life.**

Be honest! Competition and judging are an essential part of our lives. So many things around us compete for our attention. And we are judging. Either we want to buy this or the other thing. Sometimes spontaneously and other times after a lot of research. We want to get, in our opinion, our money's worth. Someone else can have a different opinion.

The media, websites, journals, magazines are competing for our time to watch, to read, to engage. And we make judgments because we don't want to read, watch and/or consume everything.

Even selecting our partner is a kind of competition and maybe one of the hardest. Don't you want to select and make your own decision on a lifetime commitment? Do you want to take the first person you meet? Hardly. Just look at the harsh competition that often arises in the animal kingdom.

### **You cannot judge Art! Really?**

Of course we can and we do this all the time, even when not thinking about judging. We like one painting more than the other, we look at one sculpture longer than the other and we invest in one piece of Art that we want to have in our home. This is selecting and judging. A lot of Art is competing to get looked at, liked, and bought. And in Art there are a lot of competitions with different prizes. Even auctions are competitions. One piece of Art is worth many dollars more than another.

### **There is no objective tool to measure and judge Art!**

This is true and this is good. The artist tries to express his or her thoughts, his or her emotions, his or her view of beauty or importance. And this piece of Art is made to be seen or heard. And the audience likes or dislikes the Art, or something in between. But the audience is not a homogeneous mass. People can have very different opinions about Art. That's okay. Otherwise, we would all have the same pieces of Art in our homes. How boring. So, there is a subjective moment in judging Art. This is why, in competitions, we have a few judges. This levels the subjective moment out a little but not completely.

### **Judges know nothing about you, your experience level and why you took the image!**

I read this as an argument against competitions. Why should they care about you more than the image? Do you want an honest answer or be patted on the back? When you take part in a running competition, does a stopwatch care about your experience, the length of your legs? Does a goal line care about why you shoot a ball at all? Or that you have hit the post so often? Next time I'll move the goal line to the side.

### **Competitions dampen creativity!**

Well, it could be. If you must win, you just make the image with the judges in mind and strongly consider how they might rate the image. But follow your own vision and see how far you can get. There is no creativity without interaction. We all get inspired by looking at the works of other artists and listening to comments about Art. Creativity does not come out of nothing. Creativity is a constant process of reevaluating your own work. And feedback in competitions can give an impetus to rethink your own work.

### **Competition produces losers and is demoralizing!**

Whenever there is a ranking, somebody is on top and someone else on the bottom. Just like in real life, we must accept our position in society, how much we earn and/or how healthy we are. There are a lot of statistics about these things, and we can change some with effort if we choose to do so.

Don't you want to know how you stand with your Art, your photography? Even if you are at the bottom, doesn't that inspire you to try for more? Look at what others do and why their photographs have a strong effect. I am not saying you should imitate others but learn from others to be able to express your own vision with more impact. Still, stay with your creative style even if you never win. You will get better and find your audience. And keep in mind that a lot



of great artists have had a hard time being accepted.

Okay, we all know these people who can't lose and who always have to win. They should stay away from competitions and not argue about incompetent judges. I wonder how these people cope in general life. Maybe they create their own world in which they always win.

### **Finally:**

Competitions in our club are a great tool to inspire creativity, give feedback and help us to evaluate our own work. When nobody looks at an image, it might as well not exist at all. But when somebody views an image and then starts an interaction, different kinds of emotions are evoked. How far the emotions go can be seen in the ranking and comments of the judges. It is like being on a sports team where everybody is on a different level, but through cooperation and mutual inspirations we can all strive to get better.

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## **Photo Competitions: Con**

*By Bill Saffin*

The Harbour City Photography Club has long held photo competitions, both digital and print. Members have, in survey after survey, indicated that they want to continue to have these competitions. In spite of this, participation recently has been very low, with not more than a handful or so of entries. In this article I intend to explain my reasons for abstaining from these competitions.

I remember looking at the prints in a competition that was held shortly after I had joined the club. I was a very new photographer, not completely comfortable with my DSLR camera yet, and with no knowledge of "the rules of composition" or "post processing". I didn't even know the meaning of JPEG or raw files.

I saw great photos on display, and I thought that I had a long way to go to even be close to being able to produce images like those. So I began the process of learning about my camera, and a bit about "the rules of composition." It was quite a while before I learned that my camera could capture raw files, and longer still until I learned what to do with them.

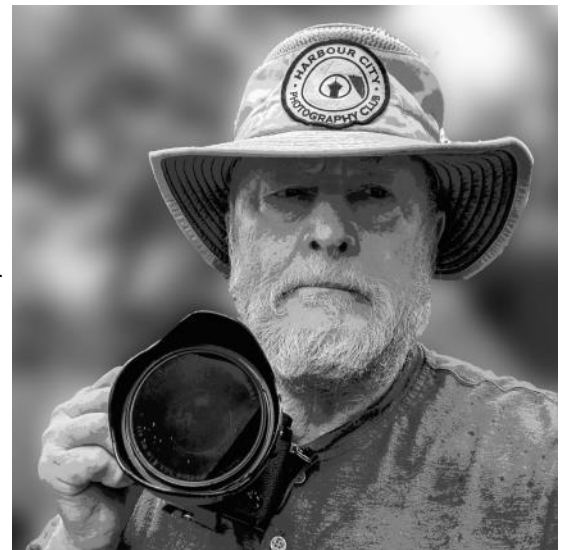
Gradually I began to understand what the various controls in Lightroom (the raw processing software I chose to use) could do to a raw file, and how I could intentionally shape my images. It was a few more years before I learned about the additional processing possibilities that came with Photoshop and other software.

I saw images in competitions, and online that I liked, and I tried to make some of my images resemble those by using what I learned from the Internet and other club members.

I finally entered an image into a club competition and did well, but there had been only a few (less than five) images in that competition, and I still doubted my achievement.

As I saw more competitions in our club (which I decided that I was really not yet worthy of entering) I thought about the criteria being used to judge the images. At a club meeting (on more than one occasion) we had an exercise in evaluating images. We were given a set of criteria and how many points out of the total each criterion was worth.

It wasn't until some time later, after at such an exercise that I started to question this process. This seemed to me to be the very antithesis of photography as art. Artists (except maybe those who are contracted to produce certain types of images for commercial purposes) produce art for themselves. Shouldn't it be the same for photographers?





I originally started photography because I had the desire to produce some type of art, and I didn't want to get into painting or sculpting, or any of several other artistic endeavours. I didn't know exactly what I wanted my photography to look like, but I thought I would eventually develop my "style." I watched YouTube videos, and read articles on style and vision. However, I did not enter competitions because I still believed that I was not good enough. I hadn't yet come to the realization that if I wanted to develop, or discover, my vision for my art, I had to do what I liked, whether anybody else liked it or not.

It was only quite recently that I really came to believe that doing my art for myself not for others, was the way for me to be happy with photography, and to make real progress. If it didn't matter what other people thought about my images, why should I let them evaluate them? If others evaluated them, telling what they liked or disliked about them, or what worked and didn't work, would I be tempted to change my images according to the feedback I received?

It was through watching Cole Thompson and John Barclay on their YouTube show talk about producing images that fit one's own vision that confirmed for me that I would not participate in competitions. Rather I would work to discover what my vision was, and to make images that I really liked. A series of email discussions with Cole helped me to get moving on finding my vision, and solidifying my determination to avoid photo competitions.

So there you have it - I'm against photo competitions, at least for me. If others want to get this type feedback for their images, and it works for them, then I wish them well. Just don't ask me to compete against them.

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## **The Print Challenge : November 21**

By Wendy Casey

Our most recent print competition was held on November 21 and I'm proud to say that we have the setup down to a science. By the time you arrive, the display racks are up waiting for your masterpiece to be hung and viewed by everyone at the meeting. They are then judged by our member judges. It is fun to see how people interpret the individual categories and how their photograph fits.

Congratulations to go the following members for their captures

### **Hometown Pride**

First Place : Werner Schmidt - Half Timbered House

Second Place : Lisa Gagnon - Dawn Dog Walk

Third Place : Ruane Dumler - Sunrise over Departure Bay

### **Less is More**

First Prize : Maggie Tilley - Sunrise Solitude

Second Place : Werner Schmidt - Gone in a Puff of Wind

Third Place : Sue Nurmi - Prickly

Our next competition is coming up. Keep those eyes peeled for anything that will fit into our 'Curves' or 'Looking into The Camera' categories which will be displayed and judged on January 16<sup>th</sup>.

Our final print competition will be on April 16<sup>th</sup>. Our categories for that exhibit are 'Made of Metal' and 'All Creatures Great and Small'.

If you want to participate but cannot make it to the meetings, please contact me ([merridalehouse@gmail.com](mailto:merridalehouse@gmail.com)) to arrange for drop off before the competition. We'll be happy to take it to the meeting on your behalf.



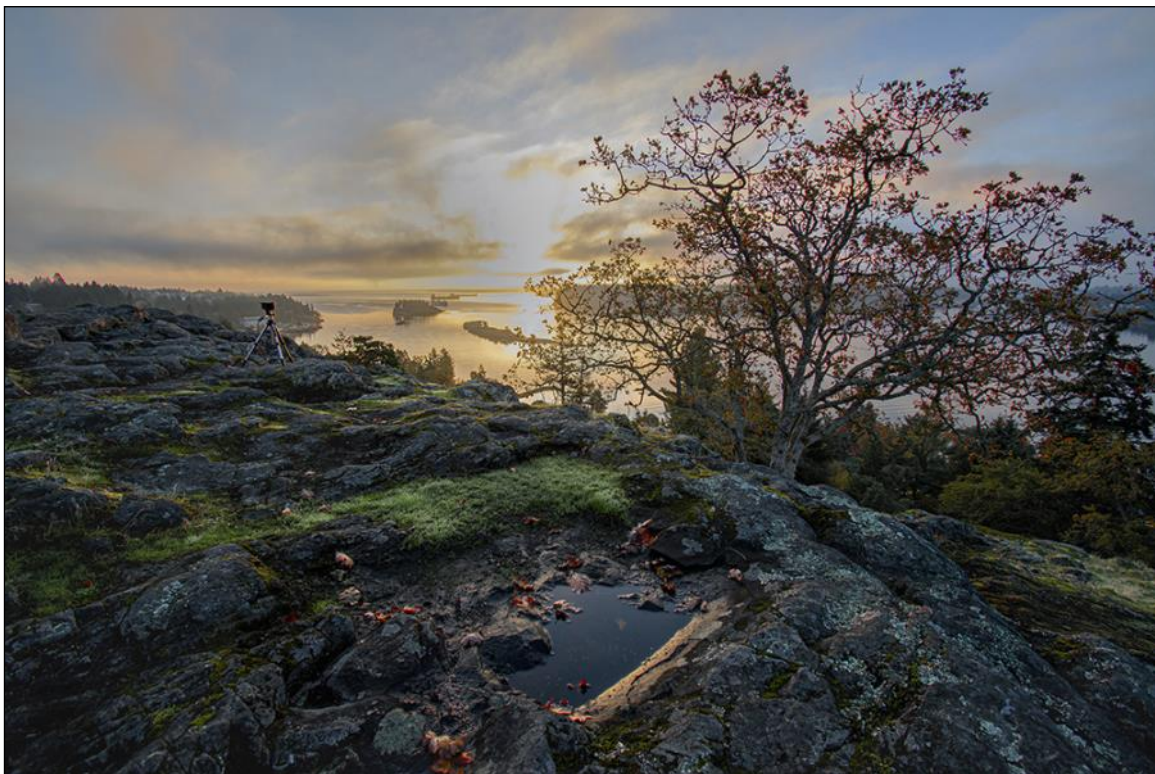


**Hometown Pride—First Place—Werner Schmidt—*Half Timbered Houses***



**Hometown Pride—Second Place—Lisa Gagnon—*Dawn Dog Walk***

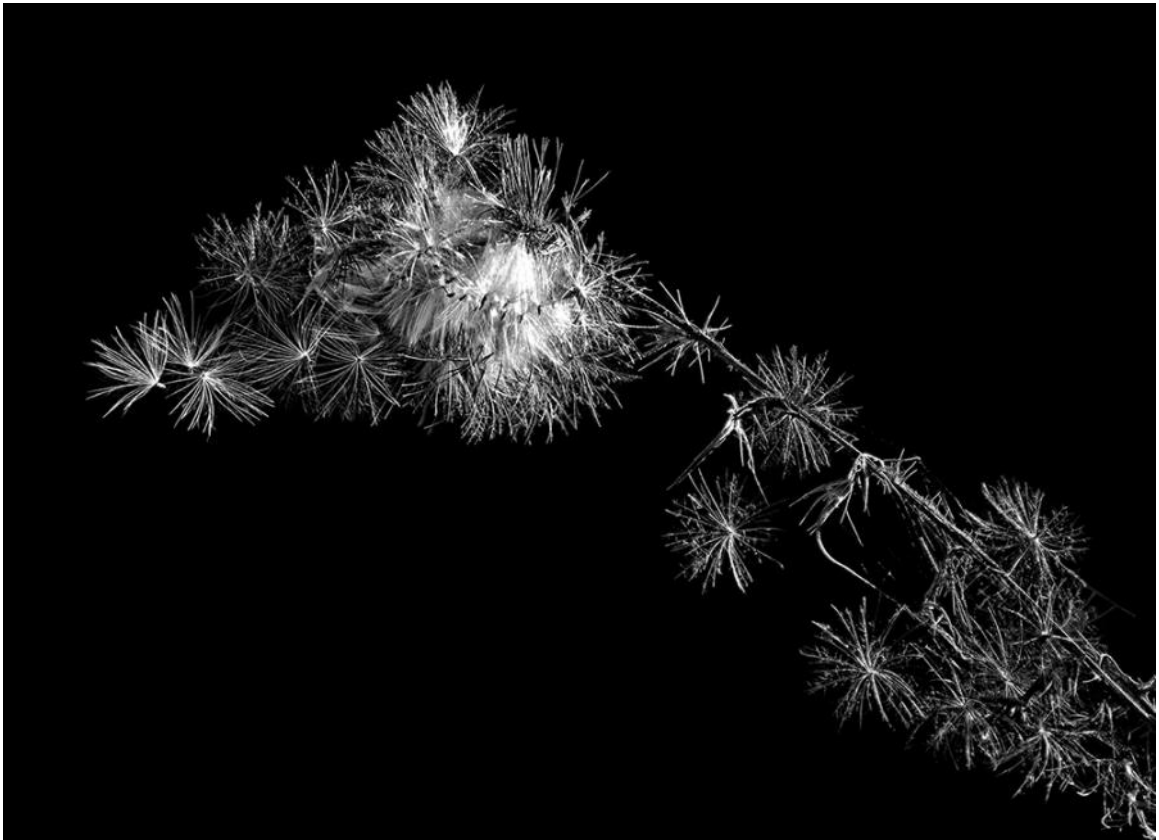




**Hometown Pride—Third Place—Rooney Dumler- *Sunrise over Departure Bay***



**Less is More—First Prize—Maggie Tilley—*Sunrise Solitude***



**Less is More—Second Prize—Hermann Werner Schmidt—*Gone in a Puff of Wind***



**Less is More- Third Place—Sue Nurmi—*Prickly***



## Photo Salon 2024 or THE BIG SHOW

Cowichan Valley Arts Council Gallery  
2687 James St. – Duncan, BC

For years, the Photo Salon has been hosted/organized by the Harbour City Photography Club. It is endorsed by the Canadian Association for Photographic Art (CAPA), the prime photography group in Canada, and follows its competition guidelines. Most of the judges are CAPA trained. The Salon, a print show, showcases the commitment, achievement, and outstanding work of photographers on Vancouver Island. It is open to both club and non-club members.



A panel of judges first adjudicates the **digital entries** and, if accepted, the photographers **print their images** in preparation for hanging and final judging by a second panel of judges. In the past, there have been awards for the three top place winners in each of three categories plus an overall Best in Show and 'Peoples' Choice'.

In the past, we were able to host the show locally, but due to a dearth of suitable venues in Nanaimo, we chose to move the show to the lovely [CVAC gallery](#). They have been most gracious about supporting an Island-wide photography show. As well, they have a staff that can help with some of the responsibilities; promotion, hanging, reception, and coordination.

### Why Enter the Salon?

1. It's cool! It's fun. It's something fresh for the wall at home.
2. The Salon promotes the art of photography in our community.
3. The Salon may offer self-improvement through a critical look at one's own photography.
4. It is one of the very few shows where Island photographers can promote their work.

### Dates to Remember

Detailed information will follow in coming months. However, "save the dates".

- March 1 – June 12<sup>th</sup> Digital submissions will open.
- June 28<sup>th</sup> Photographers will be advised as to whether submissions. accepted or not. (100 are chosen)
- June 28<sup>th</sup> – August 2 Prepare prints for hanging.
- Fri. Aug. 9<sup>th</sup> Opening Night reception and Awards.
- Aug 10 – Aug 20 The Salon is open to the public.

As we begin to ramp up for Salon 2024, we are looking for members who are interested in helping. Please contact Rooney Dumler, [rooney2u@gmail.com](mailto:rooney2u@gmail.com) too, if you have any questions.



## **Karsh: The Art of the Portrait**

A book review by Steve Corscadden

*"Within every man and woman a secret is hidden, and as a photographer it is my task to reveal it if I can. The revelation, if it comes at all, will come in a small fraction of a second with an unconscious gesture, a gleam of the eye, a brief lifting of the mask that all humans wear to conceal their innermost selves from the world."*

Yousef Karsh



In 1989, the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of photography, Yousuf Karsh made a generous gift of almost 100 of his best-known photographs to the National Gallery of Canada. Approximately half of this gift, along with works from the collections of the artist, the Gallery, and the National Archives of Canada, comprise the book "Karsh: The Art of the Portrait".

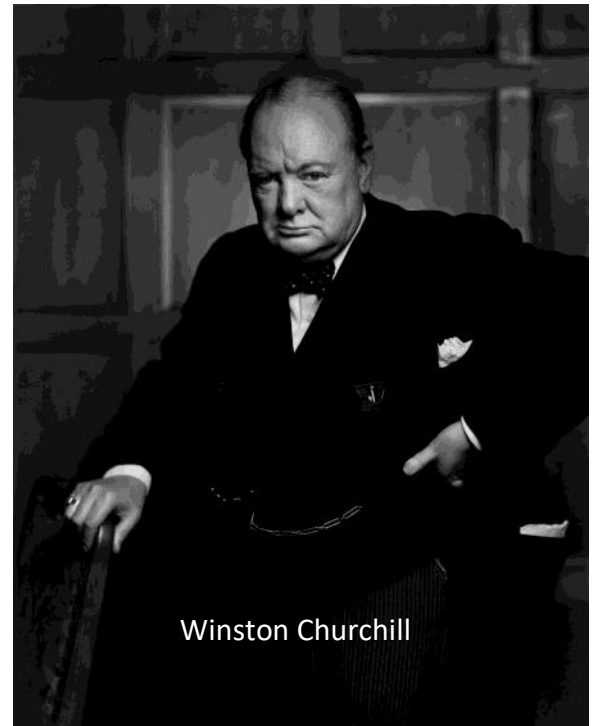
A great many personalities from the cultural, scientific, and political milieus that shaped the twentieth century have been immortalized on film by internationally renowned photographer Yousuf Karsh. These portraits, where shadows play with dramatic light, bear witness to a century, but above all, to the photographer's humanistic vision. The human aspect, exchanges between the photographer and his subject and the revelation of his or her personality via photography are at the core of his practice.

Karsh grew up in Turkish Armenia in a modest environment and in difficult political conditions. He immigrated to Canada in 1924 at the age of sixteen where he lived with his uncle, a photographer, in Sherbrooke, Quebec. He went to school there and worked for his uncle who in return trained him in photography. At his uncle's recommendation, in 1928 he apprenticed in the Boston studio of photographer John Garo who taught him to see his subject in terms of light, shadow, and form. These three elements would become key in Karsh's practice. His entire career he favoured dramatic lighting in which light is the photographer's favourite device. In 1932 he settled in Ottawa where he opened his photography studio. He became friends with certain Canadian politicians which allowed him to meet and photograph several political personalities of the time.

At age thirty-three he immortalized Sir Winston Churchill. This portrait is surely Karsh's best-known photograph and the one most reproduced in history. The back lighting that shapes the face accentuates the famous politician's expression while conferring upon him strength, power, and intelligence.

Throughout his prolific career, Karsh published more than ten books combining photographs and personal annotations. In 1989, the National Gallery of Canada organized a large retrospective of his work. A two-time recipient of the Order of Canada for lifetime achievement, he is also the only Canadian to appear on the list of one hundred names in the International Who's Who. His works are found in several collections throughout the world.

His camera of choice was large format: 8 by 10 with an interchangeable 4 by 5 backs. The developers were to his own formulae because that is what he learned from his early years with George Nakash and John Garo – no Kodak packages. For negatives, he used special chemicals that allowed a faint green light to reveal the deepening densities so he could judge each one individually. For prints, he had two developers, "hard" and "soft", and sometimes both would be used on the same photograph – one to bathe the print, and the other to be applied in specific areas with a piece of cotton.

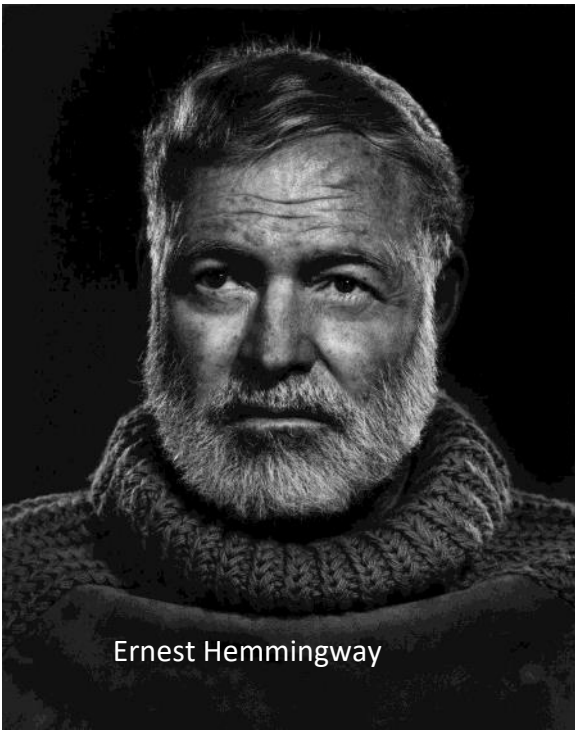


Winston Churchill



Princess Elizabeth





Ernest Hemingway

He preferred tungsten lights because he could see the results playing across the faces of his subjects, and they were less disruptive than the flash of strobes. He would always set up the lights and camera in the same way, so he knew instinctually where everything was. It was like an artist who places paints in the same order on his palette to concentrate fully on the canvas. Yousuf would then adjust as the sitting progressed – sometimes minor, sometimes major, but never the same.

He worked with one assistant when traveling or in the studio so as not to break the concentration with his subject - no entourage for hair, make-up, or styling. He was in charge, no matter his subject, and he chose the locations and set-ups.

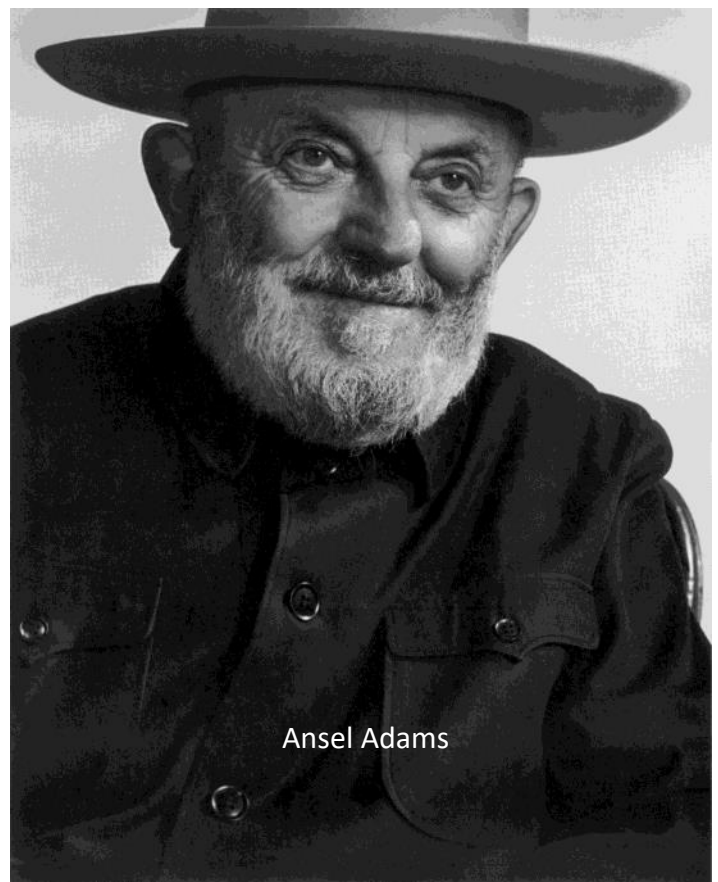
Once the lighting and composition were to his satisfaction, he would leave the camera with the shutter release innocently in his hand and engage his subject, ready to squeeze the bulb, capture a moment of truth, and share it with us.

All of Karsh's images were done at a time when film was the only medium. Today most of use digital cameras where we talk about sensor size and a full frame digital camera sensor is 36 by 24mm. There are a variety of sensor sizes for medium format cameras that range from 43.8 by 32.9mm to 53.7 by 40.2mm. By comparison the 8 by 10 inch film negative is 203.2 by 245 mm in size. With Karsh's mastery of lighting and the very large negative it is no wonder his images are so good.

I am extremely impressed with the quality of his very large body of work presented in this book. It is impossible to include very much of his work so I have selected portraits of people most of us will recognize. I confess that I mostly shoot in color, but I prefer back and white for portraits. There is no doubt in my mind that Karsh's photos would not have the visual impact they have if they were done in color.



Nelson Mandela



Ansel Adams

**Yousef Karsh**  
**1908 to 2002**



## **GOING ON AN OUTING?** **HERE'S YOUR CHECKLIST**

By Don Clark

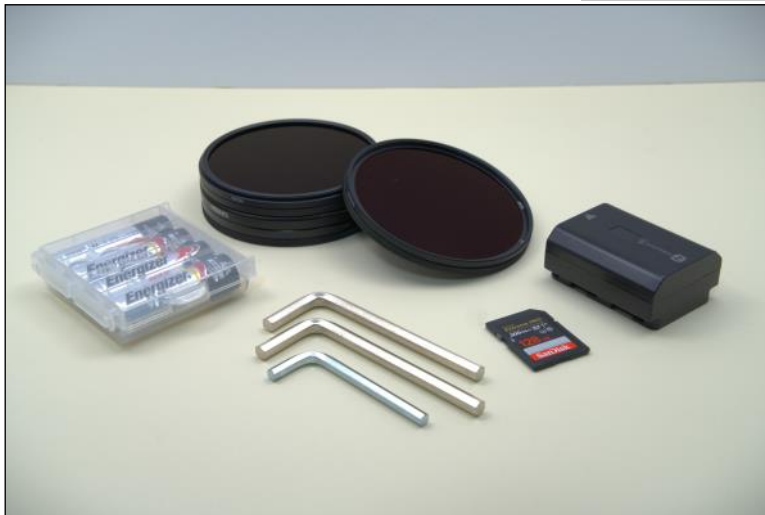
What do you bring on a photo outing?

Well, that really depends on what kind of outing it is and what you are planning to photograph. I confess I struggle with what to bring, especially to a location that I have never been before. But the great things about trips to new places is to find out if you would like to go back. However, there are a few items that you might want to bring no matter what kind of outing it is.



### **Basic equipment:**

- It might sound ridiculous but don't forget your camera. I have done that once, but it turned into a very pleasant walk.
- Which lens to bring? A long lens is not great in a confined space but if you are going to an open area, it might be just what you need.
- A tripod is a must for long exposures and a handy item in low light locations.
- often bring a flash but I very seldom use it. I still carry one, just in case.



### **Essential items.**

- Spare, fully charged, camera battery.
- Spare SD card with plenty of storage remaining.
- Spare batteries for your flash and flashlight.
- ND & polarizing filters.
- Allen keys.

### **Miscellaneous items.**

- A small spray bottle for adding water drops.
- A small flashlight can really illuminate a closeup subject.
- A kneeling pad can come in handy to get low shots.
- Camera shutter release or you can use the self timer.
- Lens cleaning material.





### Health & safety items.

- A good multitool can really come in handy.
- A water bottle and snack are a welcome treat.
- A small First Aid Kit, because you never know.
- A whistle & compass, help is on the way.
- A cell phone and hopefully you have cell service.

### Weather or not.

- Poncho or rain jacket, both have their own advantages.
- Rain covers for your camera, it never hurts.
- Microfiber cloth, for you and your equipment.
- Remember the backpacker's rule, "dress in layers".
- Good hiking boots, always a must



### How to carry all this stuff.

- A backpack is great if you plan to carry a lot of gear because it's well balanced and protected.
- A shoulder bag can work better in an urban setting.
- A belt or fanny pack is great for a short trip where you know what you will need.
- And a camera strap for those outings where you want to enjoy nature but might just see something worth shooting.

You may find it handy to have a checklist or even better build small packs for each group of items. I normally repack for each outing. But I always bring stuff I don't use and forget to bring some things I need. That's called Murphy's Law.

Whatever you decide to bring, get out there and enjoy the great outings our club has to offer. Hope to see you all next time.



Music Store Outing -Wade Longmore—Cello



Music Store Outing -Wade Longmore—Pick Guard Detail



## Pet Photos with Santa

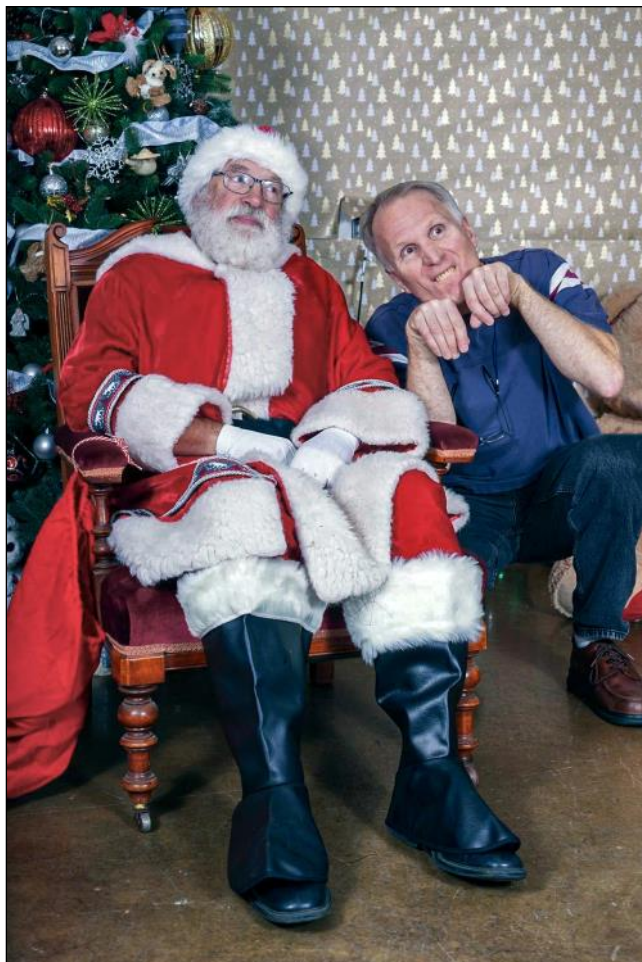
By Rooney Dumler



Kudos to the fur-friendly members who volunteered their time to support *Pet Photos with Santa* and the SPCA. The 'photo-elves' contributed their time over three Sundays; Dec 3, Dec 10<sup>th</sup>, and Dec 17 to capture some fun shots

of Santa, with dogs, cats, a few bunnies, and even a Dragon Eared Lizard. Many of our subjects were as well dressed as Santa. I'm happy to report that everyone and everything survived the venture. The proceeds, almost \$3000.00, will go to the SPCA.

Many thanks to the SPCA contact, Katie Heagle and members Ken Wilson, Steve Poschner, Don Clark, Thelma Harvey, Tracy Maile, Rooney Dumler, Errolyne Myhers, and Sue Nurmi.



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## **An Introduction to Wildlife Photography**

by Lynda Stevens

Wildlife photography is one of the more taxing types of photography. The challenges include trying to photograph subjects that are often moving and unpredictable, having no control over the lighting situation, and dealing with distracting elements such as branches and leaves. Most animals and birds are aware of sudden sounds or movements and wind can be a major factor in insect photography. When you can “get the shot”, despite these challenges, it is tremendously satisfying.



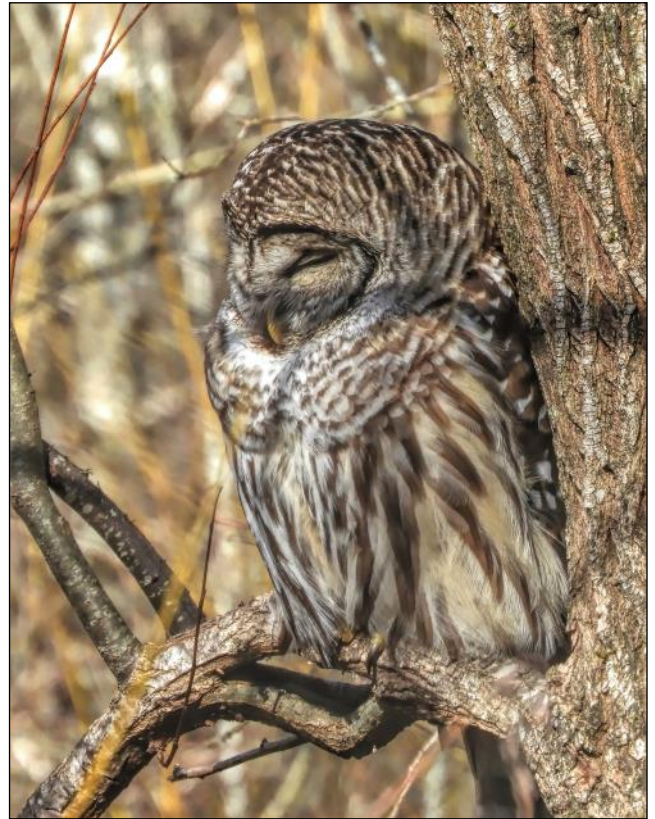
When people ask me to give them tips on wildlife photography, they usually want to know the best camera settings to use. Settings and gear are important, but wildlife photographers need patience and perseverance to quietly wait for the right moment. Capturing action shots involves more effort and patience compared to photographing subjects that are stationary. Take the time to observe and learn the habits and behaviours of your subjects. For example, preening birds stay in one place for a few minutes which gives you the chance to get several shots, berry bushes attract birds such as waxwings and finches, and herons haunt the edges of marshes and ponds. Birds will often defecate just before taking off so watching for that behaviour allows you to get your camera ready for a flight shot. I have counted in seconds how long a bee spends at a flower so that I can predict when it will lift off and move to the next flower. Birds, animals and insects will often ignore you when they are feeding so watch for these opportunities. Being observant will increase your chances of capturing the moment.

Someone said that the better a naturalist you are, the better a wildlife photographer you will be. All the technical knowledge in the world means nothing if you cannot put your subjects at ease. Most wild creatures become alert the moment that they see or hear you. If you approach too quickly your subject will be alarmed and will fly or run away. However, if you slow down or stop moving and wait patiently, they will often get used to your presence and continue doing whatever they were doing. Different types of wildlife have different tolerance levels for human interaction and the same is true for many insects.





Barred owls can often be seen roosting in plain sight during the day and will often let you get quite close. Grab a few shots from a distance, then slowly move a few feet closer, take some more shots, move closer and so on. You will have more success photographing wildlife if they feel safe, but you rarely get really close, so a telephoto lens is essential. Occasionally, you might be lucky enough to meet what I've heard called a YASJ - a young and stupid juvenile. Inexperienced birds can be quite curious and will often let you get closer than you would expect. I have often had young birds, such as this raven, come close to check me out. Insects are usually more tolerant of your presence and will often allow you to get very close and get some macro shots.



I also want to briefly emphasize the ethics of wildlife photography. If your subject appears agitated, you are probably too close and it is best to back off. Also, the practice of using cell phones to play bird calls and manipulate the bird to come closer is frowned on, as this interferes with their natural habits. In the case of nesting birds, never approach the nest too closely as this will distress the bird and may even cause them to abandon the nest permanently.

Much of wildlife photography is made up of split-second decisions made in the field, and there is not one camera setting that works in all situations. It's best to experiment by taking lots of images, analyzing them, and in this way find out what works with the settings for your camera. Here are some tips to get you started.

1) Use a high shutter speed, 1/1000 or higher, and as low an ISO as possible. This is not a problem on sunny days but can be a challenge in low light. If your subject is sitting still, you can often use a lower shutter speed but wildlife is unpredictable and may move at any time.

2) Use a telephoto lens with a variable range such as 100-400mm or 150-600mm as this gives you more flexibility than a fixed range. Use of a 1.4x teleconverter will increase that range.

3) Close ups of insects can be taken with a telephoto lens or by a variety of other techniques such as a dedicated macro lens, the use of extension tubes or a reversing ring. There is a great deal more information on this topic online.





4) Always use Continuous Focus and burst mode since taking multiple shots increases your chances of getting images that are sharp. Burst mode also increases your chances of capturing wildlife in interesting positions as they feed and groom. When using “burst” mode make sure that your camera has a big enough buffer to handle multiple images quickly. It is also beneficial to have a high-speed memory card.

5) If your subject is too far away for a good close-up then consider doing a shot showing the subject in its habitat. These can often be unique since, through the habitat, the viewer sees the time of day, mood, or weather conditions, and places them at the scene.

6) Soft, early morning light is the best for bird photography, and it is also the time when birds are more actively feeding. Insects, however, are more active as the day warms up. The bright sunlight can present some challenges but it also allows you to use a fast shutter speed. Knowing how to use your Exposure Compensation setting is vital for adjusting to changing light situations.

7) It is always nice when you can photograph your subject against a clean background but often this is not possible. Sometimes you can change your angle but many times your subject will not stay put long enough for you to do this. Choosing a wide aperture to throw the background out of focus can help compensate for distracting backgrounds. At other times you can try to incorporate the distracting elements into your image and call it a habitat shot.

8) Try to photograph birds and animals on their eye level. If your subject is on the ground try to get down low, even down on one knee, if you can do this slowly and quietly.

9) The most interesting and challenging part of wildlife photography, no matter your level of experience, is capturing action shots such as birds in flight. For flight shots, increase your shutter speed to at least 1/1600 or higher, if the light allows. Small birds are generally more erratic in their flight and are more difficult to track. Large birds, such as geese, are often slower moving and easier to track but others, such as hawks, can be fast and unpredictable. If your camera has focus tracking this is a big help for keeping the creature in focus as it flies or runs across your field of view. The same principles for photographing birds in flight are used for



flying insects such as bumblebees except that now your subject is smaller and harder to track.

With waterfowl, learning about their landing and take-off patterns will increase your chance of success. They will land and take off into the wind so positioning yourself correctly can improve your chances. If one bird in a large flock takes off it is likely that the others will follow.

Always focus on the eye of the bird or animal- if the eye is in focus, it doesn't matter if some other parts of the



subject are not. You could also try focusing on the head or whatever other part will provide better contrast for the camera's auto focus system.

10) To get started in wildlife photography practice with common subjects such as geese, mallards, herons, gulls, robins, and squirrels. These will allow you to hone your skills before attempting more difficult subjects. Develop some tracking skills by photographing them when they are feeding, preening, or moving around on the ground. Some of our local marshes are good places to practice bird photography since the birds are often more tolerant of people.



In summary, the key to improving your wildlife photography is to spend a lot of time in the field and don't be afraid to experiment. Take lots of photos and be prepared for many out of focus or just plain bad shots. Every bad shot is one shot closer to a good one and the more mistakes that you make the more you will learn. Lastly, remember to have fun and take the time to appreciate all the amazing creatures with whom we share this planet.





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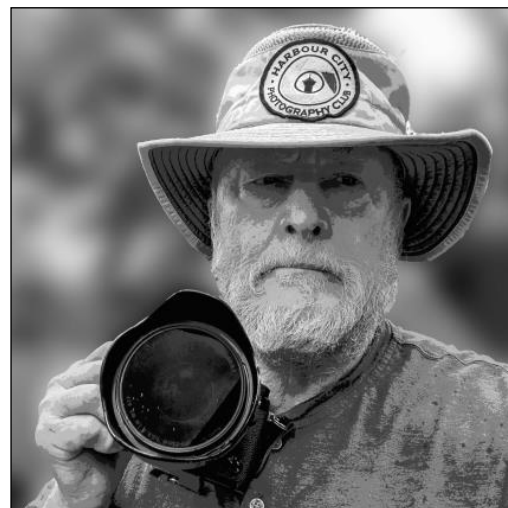
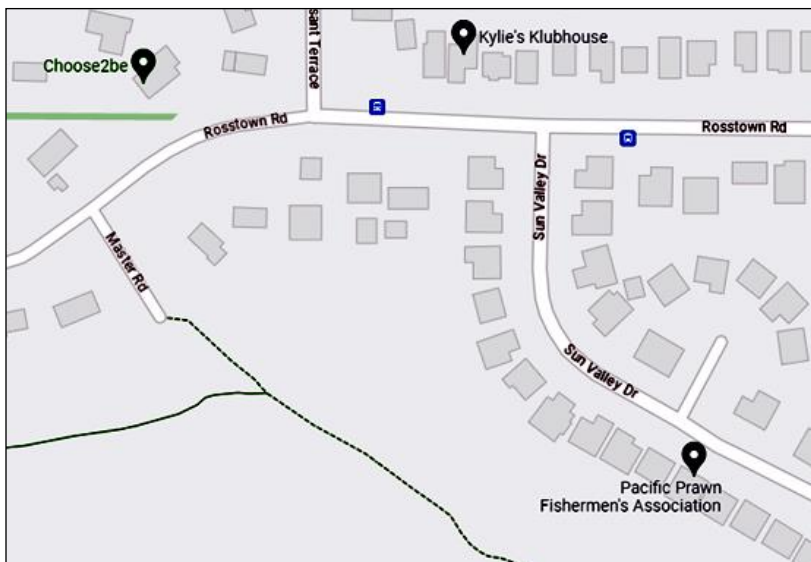


## **From Where I Shoot: Master Road**

By Bill Saffin

### **Where is it?**

Master Road is a very short road (only about 100 meters in length) off Rosstown Road, but the main attraction is a large network of trails starting right from the end of Master Road.



### **What's available to shoot**

I have walked and ridden bicycles on these trails for over thirty years, and you'd think that there was nothing new to see or photograph, but changes happen all the time. The change of seasons, of course, always offers something new - different flowers and lighting. But there are changes of a more permanent nature, such as trees falling, sometimes blocking a certain view, or opening up a new one. Occasionally a very interesting tree will fall, and if you haven't captured it, it's too late. Because of the large number of possible paths for any given walk, there is always something new to see. There is no possibility for large landscapes, but small, intimate, landscapes are plentiful. Just keep your eyes open, along with your mind.

There is not a lot of wildlife here, but a few eagles hunt here sometimes, so be watchful if you are accompanied by small dogs. Also, there are several areas where large groups of snails can be found in the spring. You'll find them on the ground (not all that interesting) and climbing many plants but don't expect them to be easy to find. These provide lots of interesting possibilities.

Many different types of plants, flowering and otherwise, flourish during the year. As you walk the various paths, the plant scenery changes from day to day. You'll find moss covering rock surfaces most of the year, though it can turn from green to brown with severe drought. Many colours of wildflowers break up the green of grass and trees.

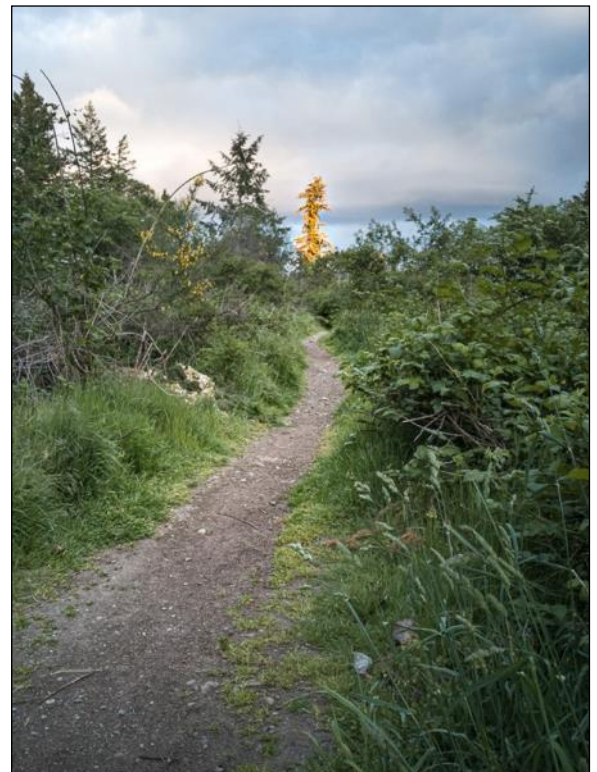






Speaking of trees, many of the Arbutus trees throughout the area acquire a gorgeous red colour during the summer, and provide a spectacular display following autumn showers. Several of the conifers turn a magnificent gold colour at sunset and provide a marvellous contrast to the otherwise rather monotone foliage.

This is a very flat area, with easy walking everywhere, unless you choose to go down to the marsh area near Coal Tyee School. Even then, the hills are not terribly difficult. The stream which feeds the marsh usually has a very low flow, so you probably won't get any interesting water photos from that, but the marsh itself is a different story. There are reflection shots available, and ducks and swans swim in the marsh for a few weeks in the spring.





### Pros

Large variety of plant life, changing with the seasons

Sunsets and sunrises can cast beautiful light on Arbutus and conifer trees

Large area, with a variety of trails, relatively flat for easy walking

### Cons

Not much in the way of wildlife, nor vast landscapes

During the summer several of the interesting paths can become overgrown with wild roses and blackberries, making passage difficult or impossible, unless you carry pruning shears to clear your way

### Summary

This is a very accessible area, with ever-changing photographic possibilities. It's physically easy, with lots of different combinations of routes for a walk, or bicycle ride, and always lots of photographic possibilities. I still walk this area regularly, continuing to see new things, even after more than thirty years



Music Store Outing -Brent Richardson—*Johnny*



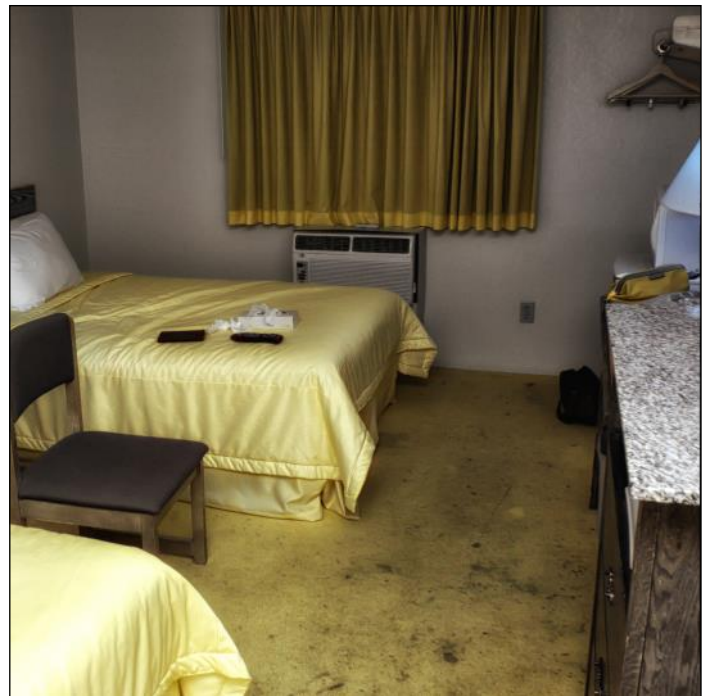
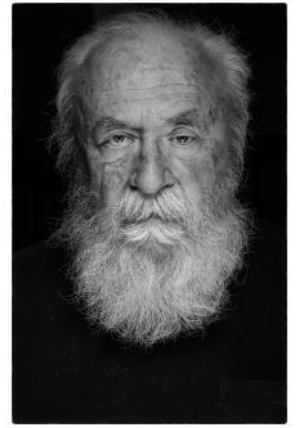
Garden Works Outing—Don Clark—*In Bloom*



## **Quarterly Screed : Infrared Photography**

By Nick Zoltay

There are photographs to be had of our everyday world that will show it in a way that we cannot see because of a shortcoming of our vision; our eyes are blind to infrared. Our cameras, however, are not and by using these devices, we can see our amazing environment anew. For example, once upon a time, after delivering my wife Vicki to her annual quilting retreat on Quadra Island, I found myself driving back to Nanaimo after dark and in rain. Unable to see well enough to drive, I pulled into a Campbell River fleabag. It was a very long night. Bored, my thoughts turned to infrared flash photography. I suspected that electronic flash spewed forth a very generous amount of infrared radiation but only an experiment would decide the matter. Later, after I had returned home, uploaded my shots and was able to view them on the big screen, I realised that there were two lessons to be absorbed. The first was that electronic flash is indeed generous in the near infrared wavelengths. The second was that it might not be wise to ponder too closely what one exposes oneself to whilst staying at a fleabag. Consider the rug. I had been walking around barefoot and now, of course, I cannot unsee it. Happily, I had not imaged the bedsheets.



Back in the day, infrared photography could be a bit of a nuisance. While I found the photographs interesting and otherworldly, I also found that with film the process had too many challenges and especially with 35mm, insufficient reward. Digital has, however, caused me not only to withdraw my complaints but also to greatly increase my enthusiasm. Infrared photography had now become relatively easy, and I find the results fascinating: black skies, glowing vegetation, hints of alien worlds and hidden dimensions.

Using a digital camera that had been converted to record infrared is almost as easy as using a digital camera to record the visible. One caveat is that being blind to these wavelengths, we must take the picture first and then inspect the scene later. I found, however, that although I cannot predict with certainty what the result will be, by now I am able, with an educated guess, to previsualize with a modicum of confidence. For example, I am reasonably confident of getting decent shots if I go out at high noon on a sunny day.

As you might suspect, there are a few technical details to contend with. Life Pixel at <https://www.lifepixel.com/> is a very good source for information and they know far more about the subject than I. A quick overview is, nevertheless, in order. While some work better than others, almost any digital camera can be converted to shoot infrared, ultraviolet, or even both. This is because digital sensors are inherently sensitive to wavelengths from ultraviolet to the visible to

the near infrared. Conversion basically consists of the removal of and/or the addition of appropriate filters thus controlling the wavelengths that reach the sensor. In the case of infrared, the cut-out filter that is normally attached to it is removed and replaced with an infrared band-pass. With ultraviolet, there is nothing to remove just an ultraviolet band-pass filter to add. A band-pass filter is one that allows only a specific range of wavelengths though and filters out the rest. With infrared there is a variety of these to choose from allowing different infrared-spectrum wavelengths though to create different effects. They also offer a “full spectrum” conversion. This allows all frequencies from near ultraviolet to near infrared to get through. While this option might seem to be the most versatile in that you can use the camera for either UV or IR, you must now use an appropriate filter over the lens and that can slow things down considerably. You can also use an unconverted camera with an R72 filter attached in front of the lens but that option slows things down even more; you must now use a tripod and then focus and compose before you put the filter on for the inevitable very, very long exposure.

About ten years ago, I had Life Pixel convert an already-elderly Nikon D-40. It was a spare; I had not used it in years. The D-40, while a decent little camera, would not have been the best choice for conversion had I not already had it on hand. For one thing, the custom white balance that is required for infrared use can not be properly set on the D-40—the files are far too red straight from the camera no matter how you set it— and for another, it has no live view. White balance of the raw file from the D-40 must be adjusted during processing using software other than either Photoshop or Lightroom. These two “gold standards” leave in far too







much red. I use Nikon Capture NX-D (it was free) and then export to Photoshop.

Focusing is another concern to be dealt with in that infrared focuses on a different plane than visible and lenses intended for “normal” photography must be calibrated. Old manual lenses have marks such as red dots or lines that indicate the necessary focus shift. Modern lenses lack these marks. Live view can help and using a mirrorless camera can help even more. Zoom lenses are usually calibrated at their widest setting. I sent my D-40 in with my 18-55mm kit lens and although I usually use it at its widest, I have not experienced too many problems with focus at other settings. Stopping down, of course, helps. My usual sunny day exposure is 1/250 @ f-8 with an ISO of 200.

Here is another link that you might find helpful: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Infrared\\_photography](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Infrared_photography). Note that thermal imaging requires specialized equipment that can record in the far infrared. An “ordinary” camera cannot be converted to record in that part of the spectrum. Not having much interest in ultraviolet photography, I have not done enough research to be able to offer competent advice.



Garden works Outing -Sue Nurmi—*Faces* Gardenworks



Garden Works Outing—Ruane Dumler—*Sea Star*



## **Traveling in Austria**

By Irene Peinhopf

I'm not a world traveler, or a travel photographer, but I have learned one important lesson when it comes to taking photos while on the road: I give myself grace. What does that mean? I came back with 1700+ photos from my fall trip to Austria. When I finished processing, I had 135 that I thought were "good," less than 10%. I was a landscape photographer confronted with castles and other architecture, out of my element and overwhelmed.

The shots I was getting weren't up to par, weren't the sort of *interesting* perspectives I strive for in my work. I walked through Riegersburg castle and couldn't get a good shot of the most beautiful room I've ever seen. It was awful. I wasn't enjoying the moment, and I realized I had to change my perspective. I was on vacation. I needed to relax.

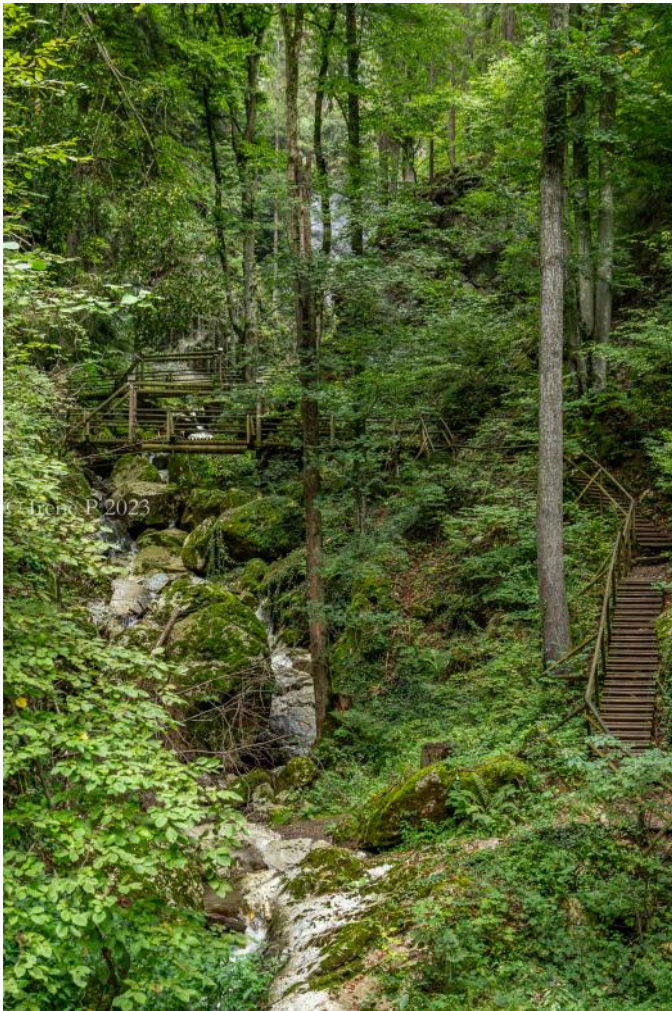


**The White Room**

With that in mind I began to find my way to grace. I let go of the need to take "artistic" photos. I started to shoot for fun, to drink in the scenery through my camera. Whenever frustration set in, I gave myself a reminder that I was taking snapshots, that I didn't need to make art. It was liberating.

My practical advice for exploring Austria is to alternate between taking in some of the incredible landscapes (get to a *Klamm* if you can, it's like being inside a fairy tale) and visiting castles and cities. Every castle has its own exhibits, but I recommend Riegersburg, not only is it picturesque, but it also has a bird of prey flight show held on the grounds. As for gear, I shot everything except the bird of prey show on my 24-105mm. I would recommend bringing a tripod or monopod - almost all of the castles and museums allow non-flash photography, but some of the rooms are quite dark (the Landeszeughaus in Graz had the coolest weapons and terrible light). And I hope you embrace the idea of *grace* in your photography, wherever your travels might lead you.





**Kesselfallklamm**



**Landeszeughaus**



**Riegersburg**

We are always looking for articles from members on a variety of topics including your photographs from your travels. Tell us about the places you visited, what camera and lens choices you made and why you made those choices. Tell us what drew to the images you captured of how did you capture them. Did your choice of camera and lens workout as you hoped.? Would you make the same camera and lens choices again?

Please contact the [Newsletter Editor](#) if you would like to write an article on this or any topic that interests you.

