

# In Camera

*The Newsletter of the Hawkesbury Camera Club Inc.*

**FROM THE CHAIR**

After visiting the World Press Photo last year I didn't want to miss seeing 2009's exhibition. I managed to attend it on the second last day of viewing at the State Library of NSW.

The rooms were just as crowded as the previous year, and the images just as confronting. I read the captions that explained the story of each image and learned about many trouble spots in the world. Human suffering is sometimes the result of natural disasters, other times at the hands of other humans. Amongst the images of suffering were pictures that captured the spirit of human striving and endurance in sport. There weren't many images that showed normal everyday life, they were somehow drowned out by the intensity of the images of pain and suffering. There were images from the 'trouble spots' in the world, revealing to the viewer what the camera captured. This is photojournalism. We get to see what life is like in other places than our own mostly comfortable world. Many of the images were large as life, literally and figuratively, making them even more engaging.

Looking into the rubble of the aftermath of the Chinese earthquake where people are still living, or the neighbourhood of a village where terrorists have left people dead in the street are juxtaposed against the faces of Olympic sportsmen in the midst of their endurance or at the moment of victory. There were some quiet and humorous images of a park in different seasons with people engaged in ordinary life; others telling the story of different cultures such as life in Romania where elaborate and meticulously crafted kitchens and lounge rooms are never used, residents rather cooking their food outdoors with others. Not so different to our BBQ tradition perhaps.

The exhibition gave a lot of opportunity for reflection,



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**June 2009**

- June 3:** Lecture – Architecture by Jim Crew
- June 13:** Night Shoot at Darling Harbour.
- June 17:** Competition – Open
- June 19,20,21:** Ebenezer Church Bicentenary
- June 27,20,29:** APPA Exhibition Darling Harbour

wonderment, sadness, and gratitude. Amongst the confrontation of many of the images there was little thought of "I wonder how the photographer got that effect", and no thought of "he must have done that in Photoshop". I have heard the photojournalists' motto of setting the fstop and shutter speed, and just BE THERE. There would be little time to think about camera settings when the action is happening. Courage is the main ingredient though some may say it is voyeurism when human suffering is captured at such raw moments. There must also be empathy for human beings in their suffering, what else would motivate a person to go to those places with a camera to tell the stories that the rest of the world would not otherwise hear about or see. The immediacy of the images told more than 1000 words.

I decided to forego the opportunity to purchase the catalogue. I bought the catalogue last year and though the images are different, the theme hasn't changed. They tell the story of life on earth from many perspectives. Some of the images will remain in my memory, others I would like to forget. I am left with an impression of the exhibition that it is worth seeing each year in order to see second hand, what is happening in other parts of the world. Trouble and conflict will never disappear, and neither will the ability of the human spirit to endure. Photography is one way to communicate this. I am thinking of renaming the exhibition World Depress Photo.

Josephine Blue

**MEMBERS MAIL**

**Dale Irving** sent this very useful website for those who want to know where you can and cannot photograph in this modern enlightened time.

[www.4020.net/unposed/photorights.shtml](http://www.4020.net/unposed/photorights.shtml)

He also mentioned its 26 pages of information.

Peter Burford supplied this gem:

**Forced Sale** New, Still in original boxes , D300 Nikon DSLR with 18-135 DX Zoom lens. Battery, charger and info books \$2,500.00 Ring Ruth on 45 885970 or see Pete Burford at the Club.

A view on digital photography.

Set up, compose, select correct white balance, click, test view, try to imagine how it looked on film, bracket two stops, click, transfer to computer, spend ages choosing filters and fiddling, get fed up or wished you had paid more attention at Camera Club, save, print and wish you had spent more time taking the image in the first place than messing with it!

(Tongue in cheek.)

**Jackie Nowland** sent this travel request:

I, myself, and me (and my camera of course) would like to take a trip out to Mungo / Menindee in Spring for about 7 days, staying at the shearers quarters. Is there anyone who would like to share this trip and the photographic delights out there? Silvertown is a maybe as well. Lets hear from you if you are interested and I will forward more particulars, costs, etc

### CAMERA CLUB OUTING

Charles has advised that there will be no formal Wednesday Group outing This month as there is so many club activities already, however if you have the time join us at the Richmond Club on Wednesday the 24<sup>th</sup> for lunch at about noon.

### LIBRARIAN'S MUSINGS

#### The 35mm Handbook

By Michael Freeman

I nearly didn't do a review on this book, as there is so much in it that I just wanted to keep reading and learning.

You can dive into this book for just about anything you want to know about taking pictures with your SLR/DSLR. For instance: People at Work; panning; slow shutter speed; still life; food & cooking; fashion; architecture; underwater; landscape; wildlife; camera handling; lenses; what to discuss when you are offered a photographic job; and the list goes on and on.

The sections about film will interest the film users and the digital users can just skip these. This book is not only an invaluable reference for every photographer but it is also an inspiration to take the best possible pictures.

### PORTRAIT PHOTOGRAPHY

Paul Hulbert (Librarian)

### PHYSICAL LIKENESS & CHARACTER MAKE A GOOD PORTRAIT

Just about anyone who can aim a camera can make a portrait. It goes without saying that some do it better than others. Top portrait photographers do it all the time, reliably producing outstanding portraits with just about every subject they photograph. Why is that? What do they know and what do they do that makes their portraits special? The answer to both these questions is "quite a bit," because there are lots to know about a lot of things in order to produce a great portrait.

Can you learn what they know, and do what they do? We don't see any reason why not, and the best way to start is by learning the basics and taking it one step at a time. You may not have the studio, the equipment and the technical resources that the best portrait photographers have, but you can still produce excellent portraits by following their basic techniques and by understanding what makes a good portrait.

### WHAT IS A PORTRAIT?

A portrait is defined as a likeness of a person, especially of the person's face. Simply that. But, the word in general use has deeper connotations. A

photographic portrait is understood to be a good quality image that not only captures a person's physical likeness on film or on a digital camera's sensor, but also something of the person's character, generally in a manner that is attractive and pleasing to the subject.

### CHARACTER REVELATION

A good portrait will contain at least one element that reveals the subject's personality, attitude, unique mannerisms or any of the other features or traits that form the individual nature of the person. It will tell us something about the subject. You may have heard someone remark that a particular photographer "really captured" their father or child, for example, in a picture. They are referring in part to the image being a true physical likeness, but what they are really saying is that the image also reveals a significant, identifiable part of the subject's character. The portrait photographer who has never previously met the subject therefore has quite a challenge.

### HOW DO YOU DISCOVER CHARACTER TRAITS?

We all reveal our feelings and attitudes differently. Some of us may show our individual character with immediate transparency, while others may be more difficult to "read" at first. The portrait photographer must become proficient at studying people whom he or she doesn't know in order to capture their essence. This means watching for signals in a subject's mannerism, reactions, expressions, body language and so on, and then judging how best to have the subject's character revealed for the camera.

This takes skill and an understanding of human nature. It almost always requires engaging the subject in conversation, and quickly finding a suitable topic that will grab her or his interest and evoke a reaction. Find common ground or a topic of particular interest to your subject, which can be a hobby, the latest news, a mutual acquaintance, or any number of topics. Building a rapport with the subject is important, whether a three-year-old child or a ninety-five-year old statesman, because it

makes the subject more at ease in your presence, and therefore more relaxed and natural-looking for the lens. You should take all possible steps to put a subject at ease in order for her or him to appear natural.

### WHEN TO BEGIN TAKING PICTURES

Sometimes your best picture is your first picture, and sometimes it's the last exposure you make. If the subject is in position, relatively comfortable and you are ready to shoot, there is usually no reason not to begin right away.

Often just getting started is enough to cause a subject to settle down if they are uneasy or tense. You have to use your best judgement in every case. No portrait session should be rushed, but there is no sense taking up your subject's time in idle chatter while you could be making exposures.

There is also no reason for your conversation to cease just because you have started shooting. If the session seems to be going well, tell your subject; it may provide added confidence that will show in their expression. Drawing a subject out by having them talk while you are taking pictures will often result in interesting and revealing expressions.

An age-old technique to make a subject relax in front of the camera was to take 30 or so shots and then put a film in the camera. However the judgement is yours the more self-confident a subject is the sooner you settle down to work.

Subjects do not have to smile to make a good portrait. A serious or thoughtful expression can often be more revealing of character, and a better portrait.

### OTHER POINTERS

There are many components to a good portrait, but the main component is control by the photographer. You must be in charge and must be looked upon by your

subject as being competent and knowledgeable if your subject is to have any confidence in you.

This means you must be prepared in advance, not fumbling with film when the subject is ready to be photographed. It means you must be confident in yourself and exude that confidence throughout the session, and must be relaxed yourself if you expect your subject to become relaxed.

Keep in mind that it is the person who is emphasized in a portrait - not his or her surroundings. Viewers of the portrait should see more than just a recognisable photograph of someone. The picture must contain mood, show personality and character, allowing the viewer to draw conclusions about the person in the portrait.

Remember there are no set rules for portraiture but use the tips as a basis for your starting point; you are the artist with the camera just as much as the artist with a canvas and palette.

### REMINDER

**Darling Harbour** Our next weekend outing will be on Saturday 13th June and we will descend upon an unsuspecting Darling Harbour & Sydney City, in the late afternoon or early evening for a "Night Shoot".

Bring your camera, tripod, cable release, camera instruction manual, creative mind and warm clothing. Past night shoots have proven successful without exception and these locations always produce great images.

Ian has now arranged for permission to photograph for the club so now that means you can use a tripod or what ever else you think you may need.

Details relating to times will be notified closer to the night.

**COMING UP**

**July 1:** Interclub Competition - Blacktown vs The Hills vs Hawkesbury

**July 15:** Competition black & white / monochrome photography.

**July 29:** Technical Night  
Digital Colour Space

## **Seeing in Black & White – Ray Finneran**

Lecture Paper # 102

The expressive monochrome print is not just a colourless image.

### **Monochrome Image:**

Photograph the light not the subject.

Subjects that are more interpretative rather than depictive tend to be better subjects

Tonality and form are very important elements.

The quality of light is extremely important. Lighting must suit subject.

The essence of most fine prints comes from the tonal separation of the mid tones.

The image does not need high contrast with solid blacks and bright whites to be expressive.

Most subjects can be photographed successfully in monochrome.

### **CRAFT**

The art of seeing a composition in black and white is a skill that must be acquired if the photographer is going to be able to pre-visualise how a subject will appear in the final print.

The essence of good monochrome photography comes from the ability of the photographer to read the light, not the wavelength (colour) but the intensity of the reflected light. Most photographers working in colour tend to be attracted by the object not the light.

We need to see light at the light meter (built in or separate) does, not as different colours but as a range of reflected illuminated values that will produce a range of tones (shades of grey) in the final print. Remember your light meter is essentially colour blind indicating only the intensity of the light values reflected from the various surfaces of the subject.

Three separate red green and blue objects under the same illumination will give a reflected light reading of approximately the same value and therefore will appear in a mono print as similar shades of grey, showing little contrast. The same objects photographed in colour look quite stunning, due to the significant colour contrast.

Colour is very good at masking faults, many images that win awards would fail with the colour removed. Colour can be very convenient photography, often not as light dependant as is evident with the amount of colour captured during mid-day hours.

There are several techniques that we can use to increase our ability to read light:

1. Simply stare at the scene long enough, concentrating only on the level of brightness of the light reflected from the components of the composition. Now attempt to translate those values into shades of grey, varying from black through white.

2. Use the camera light meter or a separate unit and record the readings from the various elements of a composition. Consider these values as tones noting the difference in exposure stops.
3. Study quality monochrome images at exhibitions and relate the various tones recorded to the reflected light as seen by the photographer.
4. Use the mono function on your digital camera to simply view the scene when captured in B&W. This can be made more effective by using a tripod and cloth hood.
5. A study of the zone system of exposure.

In order to produce quality monochrome work you need to have a greater understanding of the limitations of tools you use for your photography than is required to produce the average colour image. You must know how many exposure stops your camera can handle before highlights block up or you lose shadow detail, this is the allowable subject brightness range. You also need to determine how your printer outputs mono work; a colour cast can really hurt an expressive subject.

#### **Improving your B&W photography:**

Consider the value of a tripod.

Go out thinking in B&W

Study the tones in the subject. Sit in the landscape.

Visit quality monochrome exhibitions.

Marry the subject brightness range with the capabilities of your equipment.

Look for the quiet light.

Think more, shoot less.

***In order to improve your photographic skills it is vital that you question. Without self-criticism, self-analysis and self-appraisal, your ability will never grow.***

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