

In Camera

The Newsletter of the Hawkesbury Camera Club Inc.

FROM THE CHAIR

"The camera is an instrument that teaches people how to see without a camera." Dorothea Lange

Happy New Year!

Well we have started a new year with dreary weather; however I don't think we should let that get us down! This year we have a few new initiatives taking place within the camera club, which the Committee hopes will bring some vitality back to our meetings and to our view through the lens. We are also bringing back an old favourite with member Show and Tell.

At our first meeting Kerry will be giving each member a Mystery Bag. This is a creative photography project that members can take part in with presentations on the 5th Wednesday meetings, with a prize at the end of the year for the best overall photo. More details will be provided at the meeting – so make sure you come along to check this out!

The 5th Wednesday meetings in Feb, May, August and October will also be our Show and Tell night. We are inviting members to bring along a couple of photos (print only) that they would like to present to the members with an overview of the print and then seek critique/feedback from the members if wanted.

Our presenter for the first meeting of the year is Ben Halcomb. Ben is the owner/manager of 7Chairs, and works in the world of commercial photography with over 25 years of industry experience. Ben is a multi award-winning photographer with the Australian Institute of Professional Photography. He has photographed well over 400 weddings through the years, and has shot just about everything in between. I am sure that this will be a presentation not to miss!

We have some great outings planned and if there is anything that you would like to do, please speak to Jenny so



OFFICE BEARERS

President:	Kim Nemetz 0410 571 107
Vice President:	Marian Paap 0402 116 670
Secretary:	Position vacant
Treasurer:	Ian Cambourne 4577 5148
Comp Manager:	Kerry Harris & Alan Sadleir
Publicity:	Sue Evans
Activities Coordinator	Jenny Aquilina 0410 032 372
Newsletter Editor	Alan Aldrich 9627 4225

COMING UP

February 1	Ben Halcomb
February 8	Digital Group iDVD & Proshow Gold
February 15	Open Competition
February 29	Members presentation, Show & Tell

that we can get it on the calendar. We are also looking at entering the Topshot and Interclub competitions this year as a club – more details will be available soon for these from Kerry and Sue.

Please remember that we no longer have A & B grade, which are now being replaced by Open and Beginners. Competition rules have not changed in that you are still only permitted to enter a maximum of 4 images (maximum of 2 per category). Please find attached the draft by laws for approval at our next meeting (1 Feb 2012), let me know of any concerns with these.

The club is also looking for a new logo and Marian will speak about this more at our first meeting, but please get thinking if you have an idea or image that you think would be appropriate.

Finally it is with great regret that I need to advise the club members that Charles will no longer be Secretary of the club for 2012 due to personal reasons. I would like to thank Charles for all of his effort over the years within this role and I know that I will miss his input into the Committee, but am glad that he is continuing with his photography! Thank you so much Charles.

I am looking forward to a year of great photography, learning new tips and having good times with a great bunch of people! See you all on Wednesday 1 February.

Cheers

Kim Nemetz

COMPETITION NIGHTS

Photographic Evaluation

After the reaction to Mike Smyth's contribution to the November Newsletter various members reacted with their own opinions.

Firstly My Own.

I would like to discuss the purpose of having a Camera Club that fails to address the real needs of its members. In other words why do we come to a camera club?

Some members come for the social aspect and the sharing of stories and memories of days and cameras past and wish to be entertained.

Others come because they have been given or have bought a new camera and wish to learn how to take a photograph.

Then there are those who have graduated from the taking a photograph and now wish to improve on their technique and communicate something more than to simply press the shutter and hope.

All these members have a valid and rightful place in our club. Can we accommodate their perceived needs in one organisation? I leave that question unanswered so that various options can be explored.

The only way we can fulfil the various needs of members is to ask them what they want. For too many years this club and others, and I am guilty of the crime in my periods as president, have forced the "Camera Club Model" onto all members in a one size fits all approach. I look back over the many years I have been involved in the Hawkesbury Camera Club and ask myself what is the difference I have witnessed over that period of time.

The camera club, in its present visage, is much the same as it was circa 1985, only the venue has changed and the name, the club was incorporated about 20 years ago. Any member now would recognise the format if they had joined at any time during that elapsed period.

During that time the nature of the perennial competition has been the most discussed and complained about part of the club's agenda. Surely after this period of time it is time to change. Quite a few changes have been suggested. Two changes in particular will have a significant influence on the nature of "competition".

We now have our guest judges at various levels of competency visit and cast judgement over the range of work assembled. Every entry on display is someone's interpretation of a particular scene, event or person in front of his or her lens. Their opinion is as valid as the "judges".

Let us change the way we interact with the reviewer. The competition

manager can make this request to the judge before he begins, then it is up to us to play our part. The purpose of the act of judging is to offer suggestions and possibly improvements to allow photographers to improve their methods and techniques. However many judges seemingly wander off on a tangent soliloquising on matters irrelevant. Many judges simply state the bleeding obvious instead of extracting the message behind the image. In a lot of cases specific ingredients to the success of the image are not commented on or missed. Maybe the photographers should take the opportunity to ask how image could be improved if the reviewer has missed the point of the image. By this I mean photographic elements like point of focus, depth of field, lighting and printing techniques, all of these combine to make the image "work".

The final alteration to the way our club conducts the competition is do away with the awards. After what is more important than knowing how your photograph is received and communicates your intentions.

I know this is somewhat radical but it gets the judgement back to what is needed by the photographer an evaluation of the photograph. In some ways this takes the subjective element out of the equation.

The process may take longer than we now allow but surely a further limitation on entries per member with a better outcome is worth it.

The adoption of this approach to evaluating photographs will enable those who come to be entertained to continue to do so with the further provision of debatable material as to which particular is better because of criteria x or y.

Those that come to learn will have that benefit as they too can interact with the evaluator and be guided or otherwise by the critique.

Similarly those that seek to upgrade their skills will have that opportunity as under the present arrangements. I contend that a true art, as those of us that class photography this way, is not a sport or race so should not be judged in that vein.

In short I agree with Mike Smyth that this sort of change is inevitable and indeed necessary and hopefully make the Hawkesbury Camera Club a more viable entity once more. (AA)

What a breath of fresh air!

Wow – Mike Smyth has hit the nail on the head. Competitions, with their associated rules, were relevant last century. They support an inbuilt system which restricts photographers and locks them into taking images to a formulae (I know of people, not necessarily in our club, who find out who the judge will be and take photos to that judge's liking so optimizing chances of gaining 'points').

Mike clearly enunciates how competitions inhibit our photographic thinking and creativity. As he says, "The model for camera clubs has a lot going for it, it is really only the format of competitions that has outlived its usefulness."

I for one have very little interest in competitions, but would love to participate in an "Evaluation" night – perhaps our club could consider slowly introducing this concept now and again in lieu of a competition night.

Paul (Hulbert)

Wow! What a confronting newsletter.

Is it likely that HCC will support or adopt the philosophy of Mike Smyth and his group.. I wish I had been able to attend the October comp.

I have only been involved with HCC for 2 years now and have found myself in some difficulty from time to time with the sparse information conveyed to members (particularly this year) I recognise the difficulties of losing our beloved president and that other issues were engaging other committee members, but the organisation seemed to be lacking in purpose.

So, Kim, are we to see a big change of direction. If the committee believes that is the way to go, can it be done by way of full discussion with the membership, and with formal resolutions put forward, at the appropriate time, to place any changes on record.

Personally, I find the philosophy of Mike Smyth and other like-minded compatriots including Des Crawley, to be invigorating, challenging and exciting. I also find it scary that, people like me who have a deficit of creative juices available, will not make the grade. Nevertheless I would much rather take up their challenge than maintain the mediocrity that seems to come from the present system.

We have some exceptional photographers in our club. I would be very surprised and dismayed if they too were not willing to accept the challenge.

I guess it means a big change in the way we structure competitions and the A & B grade system etc. I can see it will take some imaginative thinking to restructure the way we do things in HCC.

You have my support for change.
Regards

Doug Carberry

Well put.

I personally was thinking about taking a 12-month break from entering comps & just concentrate on improving my images as outlined by Mike. After listening to both Mike & Di McKenzie, throw in Des and also yourself & I find myself not interested in comps at all anymore. I will still attend those nights, but no longer feel the urge to "compete" anymore. I prefer the thought of having my work "evaluated" by people who have knowledge rather than judges who, as you know so well, just use the same old key phrases all the time.

Ian

Jo's Musings.

The Nature of Photography

It is troubling to see the membership of Hawkesbury Camera Club decline and many people are asking questions as to the reason. After much thought and discussion with various members, I would like to offer my considered opinion and ramblings.

Photography hasn't stopped changing since it was first invented as a way of creating images, and at each point of change, some people embrace the challenge of "the new" while others stay in what they know, have mastered already and enjoy. Digital imaging seems to have brought the biggest changes and caused the biggest rifts. And I think it has also changed the nature of photography.

Some years ago during a lecture at Camera Club by Prof Des Crawley I asked the learned professor, who was describing various techniques for image making that seemed to depart from the capturing of an image "When does it stop being a photograph?" "The answer was simple: "When it stops being about light." In my years at uni, studying Fine Arts, there were endless discussions about "what is

art?" "The most succinct definition that I have kept with me was "Art is whatever you can get away with". I guess it feeds my cynicism but it has held true in helping me understand and appreciate art in its various forms. Photography is defined by one ingredient; whereas art is open ended in its definition. For it to be about light, perhaps some photographers have gone further than the initial mandate, and are now creating what I would call Digital Art Images rather than photographs. Photography can now perhaps be included under the umbrella of art as "whatever you can get away with."

Since photography first began, it has rivalled the traditional art making technique of painting, and the boundaries are becoming more and more blurred as time goes on. It always seems ironic to me that when a painter achieves a remarkable likeness to reality in a portrait, landscape or still life, that people marvel at the work saying "That's amazing, it looks just like a photograph!" "Photo-realism is lauded as the pinnacle of achievement in some art circles.

Conversely, when a photographer manages to create an image that looks like a painting, viewers will be heard to say "What a wonderful photograph, it looks just like a painting!" It's as if the ultimate of each medium is to achieve the effect of the other. When we ask judges to judge our photographs in Camera Club competitions they come with preconceived ideals of a "good photograph" according to certain criteria, likes and dislikes. It's as if there is one way to achieve a particular style of photograph, which is "the best image", often without reference to the photographer's intention. Its meaning or significance is sometimes lost on the judge who is usually only commenting briefly on it anyway. An image with instant impact will fare better than one that requires quiet reflection and time to be appreciated and understood.

With digital photography, the photographer can turn any photographic image into the effect of any artistic medium: line drawing, charcoal, pastel, watercolour, oil paint – all effects are available with the click of a mouse. The boundary between art and photography is further blurred with this facility. The outcomes are devoid of the skill of an artist, since it's all done with the skill of a computer operator in a programme designed for that purpose, rather than using art materials directly onto a canvas or paper. It is digital art and as

photography, seems to have lost its initial mission about light. I entered a photo I took in Monet's Garden in a recent competition and the judge suggested I convert my image in Photoshop to the style of a Monet painting. If I wanted to do that, I would use real art materials to enjoy the satisfaction of producing an artwork, not just an effect at the click of a mouse.

As an artist I will often record a scene with a camera in order to remember it, to refer to when working on a painting at a later date. When I was studying art at TAFE I was amazed that my drawing teacher could tell if someone in the class, against his instructions, used a photograph as the basis for their drawing homework. He could identify features in a drawing of a scene because of the distortions that occur from the lens of a camera. Over time, and after studying photography in depth, I too can often recognise when a painting or drawing is done from a photograph. It's a good party trick! I think most Camera Club members could do the same when looking at paintings, whether zoom lens or wide angle were used, what depth of field is present due to the f-stop, or what blurring from a slow shutter speed. The artist will often just paint from a photo, incorporating the camera's particular rendition of reality. I have sometimes wondered how much an image can be changed in the computer before it stops being a photograph and crosses the border into Digital Art.

I would prefer to call some images Digital Art, and wonder if I could enter some of my paintings, which began as my photos, into the Camera Club Competitions, having used a real paintbrush and art materials rather than a computer programme to obtain the final image. Obviously the boundaries are very blurry. When I began my TAFE course in Fine Art in the 1990s it included a module about photography. I talked to the Head Teacher about why photography was necessary in a Fine Art Course. He said that different art media overlap with each other and the skills in one area such as drawing or painting contribute to other areas such as sculpture, and that photography often helps the artist learn about composition, and vice versa. There is truth in that statement. To learn about good composition, as it applies to photography or art, it is good to look at lots of images in each medium. Learn from others.

Back to Camera Club: I think we need to find and define what it is that is

common to all of us and what gives us photographic joy. What is the basic ingredient that brought us together to join the club in the first place? The answer is that we love taking photographs. That is where the common link lies. After that, the photographers' purposes are as varied as each photographer. The list of purposes is endless...

- 1) Take or create the photo, and view it on a computer screen
- 2) Take a photograph and print it directly from the computer to a printer
- 3) Take or create the photo, then download it to a computer and fiddle with it, then print it or view it electronically
- 4) Take or create the photo, then download it to a computer and give it intensive treatment in a software programme
- 5) Take or create the photo, print it and cut and paste it into collage/ 3D effects with paper
- 6) Take or create the photo, use it as a basis for another art form such as painting or etching
- 7) Take or create the photo, use it as part of an audio visual presentation
- 8) Take or create a photo to accompany a written text
- 9) Take or create photos of family/events/special occasions, to share with others
- 10) Take or create photos as a way to generate income
- 11) Take or create a photo for sale or commission work

The problem in Camera Club is how varied are the purposes of our photography. Currently it seems to be narrowly defined by competitions and what the Official Judges award as worthy of the awarding of a "point" in a competition. Everyone who enters a competition does so with the hope of receiving some recognition for their work, and awaits the pearls of wisdom from the judge's brief comments. Sometimes the praise is dispensed and the Merit, Credit or Acceptance still somehow eludes the final distribution of awards. Hopefully everyone goes home having learned

something about photography that will help them in their own work. Sometimes the disappointment means people don't come back.

Samuel Franklin calls a book I read in recent years and have referred to in several newsletter musings, *The Psychology of Happiness*. One thing I particularly recall from the book is the notion of Happiness as being influenced by a person feeling competent in their chosen field. So if someone comes along to Camera Club Competitions with their images ready to be critiqued, and gets no real commendation, they may go home discouraged and disappointed. If the member hasn't been in Camera Club for very long, and hasn't formed any real connection with other members, there is very little that will make them want to come along to meetings. It is really those who have formed friendships already and are happy to just enjoy the social side of the meetings who continue to come along even if they don't enter into the competitions. I have lost my desire to enter competitions, as have many other Camera Club members. So what is left for Camera Club to achieve without competitions?

Since it is the taking of photographs that is so enjoyable to all members, perhaps we should emphasise that as a common activity, and instead of having judges judge according to their own prejudices and likes, perhaps "show and tell" events or an exhibition would be better ways to share our results among our fellow members, or even the public. Our community projects such as the Garden Competition Photography, Photos for Children and the Stepping On project, show that our photos are top quality and certainly appreciated in the wider community. Other projects have included the Sister City Association with Kyotamba Japan, with a print exchange project and the Historical Society Archive project about Educational Institutions in the Hawkesbury.

For any group to be healthy, it needs to strike a balance between being inward looking, using the gifts and talents and willingness of members to build up the group, and outward looking to the community in which it exists, serving in whatever ways are appropriate. Maybe we should look for some more community projects that we can use our photographic skills for, to help others. That way we can satisfy the needs of the group who love to take photos, and have a purpose for what we do, which promotes

happiness. It's a win/win equation, balancing the inward and the outward activities of the club.

One suggestion would be to run the photos of the Garden Competition at a Camera Club night, in order for us to see the beautiful gardens we each visit, and commend the considerable effort that we each go to in taking the photos. The Garden Comp night doesn't show many of the photos, only the prize-winners, so many photos go unseen and unappreciated by the members. Another activity would be excursions to places of interest, or the old idea of Photo Rally and subsequent Show and Tell. We have a photograph album at The Club for members to add their photos for others to see. The programme needs to be widened to enhance our photo taking activities, not the awarding of points and trophies, which pertain only to the latest fashionable style of image that not everyone wants to or is capable of achieving. Viva la Difference! We all love taking photos, let's concentrate on that and enjoy the friendships that are formed as we get to know and enjoy each other's company with the common purpose of taking photos.

Josephine Blue

Jo's Thoughts on Trivia & Life

I'd like to report that the Camera Club end of year dinner, 2012, was a very enjoyable experience. Richmond Club provided a delicious dinner, and the setting was beautifully presented for our members with table decorations and furniture stylishly arranged. Along with the enjoyable company, we were treated to the traditional Trivia Quiz, which is always a lot of fun thanks to the obscure knowledge required by Alan's questions. It's amazing that within each group there was enough knowledge for some questions to be answered. The Peacock Trophy Award was once again handed to the winning team to take care of this prestigious statue for the year.

On a recent short holiday to Manly, my husband and I were drawn into a Trivia Quiz in the hotel precincts where we were staying. I must admit that it was more like a school test than the fun filled evening we enjoy with the Camera Club night. Although it was high-tech, with computer enhanced and assisted questions with graphics and text displayed on a large screen, the atmosphere was nothing like the evenings we enjoy. Nothing like the jovial atmosphere of some members always being right or misguided, and others knowing how to make any question into a topic for much

amusement, seeing the funny side of the facts or fiction.

On the same holiday I took my old film camera, and two rolls of film which had been in the fridge for a long time. It took a while to re-acclimatize myself to film technology. First of all I wasn't able to look on the back of the camera to check whether it was a good shot or not and if I got the exposure right. It's funny how that has become an almost automatic reflex now when taking photos. Which means that it is vitally important to first check that every setting on the camera is exactly what you want to spend the frame on. No second chance to get it right after noticing that something is wrong in the image unless wasting a film frame is ok. So, needed to check ISO, though the camera selects the correct DX, the metering, is it set to Matrix, Centre Weighted or Spot? Is exposure compensation altered for high or low key subject? Is it manual or auto focus? So many things to consider before pressing the shutter. I have yet to see whether the photos are ok or not when I get the film processed. I did enjoy re-discovering multiple exposures on the same frame, a feature that isn't on my Nikon D70, but is something I looked for when updating my digital camera. Yet to see if the exposure was correct, I'm looking forward to the results, a kind of self test to see whether I have lost all that skill and know-how from the not too distant past.

A highlight of the Christmas vacation is the chance to see the Wildlife Photography of the Year exhibition at the Australian Museum. I went with a friend and wasn't disappointed with the opportunity to view so many beautiful images of wildlife. I didn't see any images from film cameras this year, a trend that began slowly a few years ago, most images being from film technology, now I think they are all digital. I can recommend anyone, photographer or not, to go and see this excellent collection of images.

On the same day we also went to the Picasso Exhibition at the Art Gallery of NSW, just up the road from the Museum. Another world entirely, the artist was not aspiring to anything like realism, well, not once he'd mastered the technique of rendering human form in pencil and paint. Led to abstraction and experimentation, the artist went on a personal journey that paralleled his life of relationships and history. I can't say that I appreciated or admired all his work, but it was very educational, and enjoyable to see so much of one

artist's work in one exhibition, many of the images not otherwise available for viewing in books. I enjoyed seeing some old favourites as well, and appreciating the scale of them. That is something that is not truly appreciated in a book or publication.

Best wishes to Camera Club members, for 2012, I hope to see you at meetings and outings during the year.

Josephine

Book Review February 2012

Remote & Wild - Seeking the unknown Australia- by Richard & Carolyn Green

A couple of years ago I attended an excellent talk by photographer Richard Green at the Hawkesbury Regional Gallery at the opening of his very popular photography exhibition. Along with other members of Camera Club who were present, we decided to purchase the book he had published so that everyone in Camera Club could enjoy it. Although pricey, it is an inspirational book, which I thought, might need a tracking device on it so we know where it is at all times. It recently came into my possession after several members had enjoyed it.

In order to review the book I began by reading the text by Mrs Green who was the author's companion on his journeys to all the wild places they went to photograph. I must admit it seemed to be a bit tedious in the blow-by-blow description of family members and friends along the way. The details provided by Richard about the technical aspects of his photography were a bit more interesting.

After absorbing the text I carefully opened the pages to view the amazing photographs of Australia's wild places. The real stand out feature of the book is that some pages could be opened even further than the two-page spread, becoming almost a metre in expanse. Remembering the stunning images projected onto the screen at the presentation, the book is definitely something to enjoy on a smaller scale at home.

However, it didn't seem enough to just turn the pages, there was so much to absorb in each image. The photographs are compelling and spectacular and draw the viewer into the scene, almost as if one is there, sharing the moment looking out from a perfect, and at times precarious, vantage point. Although not all the senses can be evoked by a photograph when leafing through a

book, they certainly are filled with enough information to evoke a sense of awe in the viewer. Taking the time to imagine oneself in the scene, it is almost possible to hear the sound of rushing water, crashing waves, or rustling leaves. The large prints hanging on the wall in the gallery were spectacular and invited the viewer to enjoy the view, as if standing on a rock, at the top of a cliff, along a bushy track, or on a deserted sandy beach. One of the images, in the Snowy Mountains, almost created a chill in the air. It made me think of it anyway.

So when enjoying the book I decided to leave the pages open, spreading the 3 pages out on the lounge, for a day or more at a time. In the morning before I left for work each day, I would stand in front of the image for a few minutes, absorbing it, to remember it during the day, and imagine being in the scene, looking at it rather than the feeling like I was looking at the pages of a book. It became a morning ritual, almost a meditation, as I came to enjoy the book for more than being a book. That way I could truly appreciate each image, one by one, over a period of time.

Not everyone has the means to live the life of Richard Green, and his dedication to creating images of the Australian landscape is second to none. He has the technical skill and equipment, along with the months of outback travel followed by computer work at home to process the images. He takes multiple shots to create panoramas, bracketed for capturing highlight and shadow detail, involving many hours of work for each image.

Richard has written in the end page an exhortation to "now go get busy", but really, his work would not be easily copied or aspired to, even if just because of the lack of funds to fund a lifestyle to equal his. So we are left with the images in the book to enjoy. As well as having the name Richard Green, the colour green comes to mind in terms of people's response to his work, lifestyle and images he creates!

The book will be available at the first meeting of 2012 for any member of Camera Club to borrow.

Josephine Blue
(Camera Club librarian)

**Hawkesbury Camera Club
2012 Programme**

Date	Night	Details
1 February	Presentation	Ben Halcomb - 7 Chairs
8 February	Digital	iDVD, iMovie, Proshow Gold
15 February	Competition - Open	Judge - TBC
29 February	Member Presentation Mystery Bag – creative challenge Show and Tell	Presentation – Jennefer Aquilina Challenge item 1 – Marbles Club Member Critique of general photos
7 March	Presentation	Guest Presenter - TBC
14 March	Digital	Digital manipulation
21 March	Competition – A Long Time Ago	Judge - TBC
4 April	Presentation	Luciano Vranich - Conceptual Photography
11 April	Digital	Digital manipulation
18 April	Competition – Land, Sea, City Scapes	Judge – Ben Halcomb - 7 Chairs
2 May	Presentation	Guest Presenter - TBC
9 May	Digital	Digital manipulation
16 May	Competition - Conceptual	Judge – Len Brown
30 May	Member Presentation Mystery Bag – creative challenge Show and Tell	Presentation – Doug Carberry Challenge item 2 & 3 – Feathers & Coloured Sticks Club Member Critique of general photos
6 June	Presentation	Guest Presenter - TBC
13 June	Digital	Digital manipulation
20 June	Competition – Up Close and Personal	Judge - TBC
4 July	Presentation	John Hughes - Portraiture
11 July	Digital	Digital manipulation
18 July	Competition – Just Rocks	Judge - TBC
1 August	Presentation	Guest Presenter - TBC
8 August	Digital	Digital manipulation
15 August	Geoff Pfister Memorial Annual Portraiture Award	Judge - John Hughes
29 August	Member Presentation Mystery Bag – creative challenge Show and Tell	Presentation – Paul Hulbert Challenge items 3 & 4 – Blue Raffia cord & Glow Sticks Club Member Critique of general photos
5 September	Presentation	Guest Presenter - TBC
12 September	Digital	Digital manipulation
19 September	Competition - Triptych - Floral	Judge - TBC
3 October	AGM Member Presentation	Annual General Meeting TBC
10 October	Digital	Digital manipulation
17 October	Competition – Open	Judge – Rod Murphy
18 October	Garden Presentation Night	TBC
31 October	Members Presentation Mystery Bag – creative challenge Show and Tell	Presentation – Sue Evans Judging of Mystery Bag – Challenge Finalists Club Member Critique of general photos
7 November	Competition - Children's Ward Photo	Guest Judges – local school children
14 November	Digital	Digital manipulation
21 November	Competition – End of Year	Judge - TBC
30 November	End of Year Dinner & Trivia	

Hawkesbury Camera Club

By Laws

(as at 1 Nov 2011)

Article 1: Fees

Section 1:

The annual membership fee of the club shall be \$20.00

Section 2:

The annual membership payable to the club shall be reviewed at the Annual General Meeting.

Article 2: Competitions – Point Scoring

Section 1: General Rules

- a. There will be an open grade competition for all financial members.
- b. There will be a beginner's grade competition open to members for the first 12 months of their membership (being one financial year) titled "Members under 12 months". New members can elect to enter directly into the Open category upon joining.
- c. All prints must be suitably mounted. No framed or un-matted prints will be accepted.
- d. There may be Set Subjects or Open Competitions.
- e. An image may be submitted into one Open competition and one Set Subject competition per year only.
- f. An image that has received a merit award cannot be entered into another point scoring competition during the year. It can be entered into the print/digital image of the year competition.
- g. 2 entries per category are allowed with a maximum of 4 entries.
- h. Members are encouraged to submit new original work for competitions.
- i. Images in each category of a competition are awarded:
 - a. Four points if awarded a Merit
 - b. Three points if awarded a Credit
 - c. Two points if awarded an Acceptance

Section 2: Categories

There will be 5 categories per Open and Members under 12 Months competitions

- a. **Small Prints (including Panorama)**
 - a. Minimum 10x15cm (4"x6") to maximum 15x22.5cm (6"x9") prints with a maximum 5cm border.
 - b. Mount size maximum is 25x33cm (10"x13")
 - c. Panoramic maximum image size is 10cmx30cm (4"x12")
 - d. Panoramic mount size maximum is 20cmx40cm (8"x16")
 - e. FCC rules:
 - i. The mount is restricted to a maximum of 500 sq cms (80 sq inches) ie 10x15cm (4"x6") print with 5cm (2") border. [20x25cm = 500sq cms, 8"x10" = 80 sq inches]

- ii. The maximum print size is determined by surface area and not by configuration
 - iii. The maximum surface area of a print to be 300sq cms (48 sq inches) ie 15x20cm (6"x8") print
 - iv. Panorama prints to be a maximum surface area of 10 x 30cm (4"x12") with a maximum mount size of 15x35cm (6"x14")
- b. Colour Prints**
 - a. Minimum image size 20x25cm (8"x10")
 - b. Mount size maximum is 40x50cm (16"x20")
- c. Monochrome Prints**
 - a. Minimum image size 20x25cm (8"x10")
 - b. FCC rules: as per Colour Prints
 - c. Note: any photograph containing shades of only one colour. If toning is carried out, it must be over the total photograph – partial toning and or the addition of one extra colour are not acceptable as a monochrome print.
- d. Colour Projected**
 - a. All projected images must be provided on a USB stick.
 - b. Jpeg file with an image size of 300dpi preferred.
 - c. Each image should be clearly titled: 1 (your name) (month), 2 (your name) (month). EG: 1kimnfeb.jpg
- e. Monochrome Projected** (as per Colour Projected)

Section 3: Point Scoring Competition Trophies

- a. Points are accumulated throughout the year.
- b. At the end of the year, a trophy/prize will be awarded to the photographer who has accumulated the most points overall.
- c. At the end of the year, a trophy/prize will be awarded to the photographer who has the top points score in each category of both Open and Members under 12 Months categories.
- d. In the case of tied scores, a count back of merits and credits will be used to determine the winner.
- e. Medallions will be awarded as follows
 - a. Bronze at 50 points,
 - b. Silver at 100 points,
 - c. Gold at 200 points and for each successive 200 points.
- f. Points are accumulated indefinitely and continuously whilst a member remains financial.

Article 3: Print/Projected Image of the Year Photographic Awards

- a. At the end of the year, a trophy/prize will be awarded to the winner and runner-up in each category.
- b. Only photographs that have been submitted into competitions or presentation nights during the year are eligible for this competition.
- c. New images cannot be entered into this competition.
- d. Each member may enter 2 images per category with a maximum of 4 images.
- e. Allowable image sizes are the same as point scoring competitions, refer to Article 2, Section 2
- f. No framed prints will be accepted.



A Step-By-Step Guide to Shooting Your First Product Photograph

Even though this article is based on a product shoot, you can use this as the guide for a home studio set-up. This type of photography is stock photography and is perfect for showcasing an item in order to sell it on Ebay. The most basic form of product photography is an object in front of a white or solid coloured seamless background. This is often utilised in retail catalogues when they want to display their products without distractions. These are sometimes called cut-outs because it's easy to cut out and insert into another image.

Many photographers can successfully shoot product photographs at home with little trouble. Ideally, you would have at least three or four lights to work with, but it *is* possible to do it with just two.

You will need

- At least two good light sources, more the better
- A 18% gray card (optional)
- A clean, bright white poster paper or similar
- A light box (optional)
- Translucent paper – white tissue paper, tracing paper, wax paper, or white umbrellas
- A table or workspace
- Image editing program such as Photoshop, Lightroom or Gimp
-

Lights, Camera... Action

In this shoot we use only a pair of flashes. While it could, as described below, use lamps or other light sources, I prefer my flashes because they are easy to reposition and are fairly powerful.

If you don't have flashes or speedlights, incandescent lights, florescent bulbs or tubes, whatever you have handy, are all suitable. If possible, purchase a number of same-brand, same wattage bulbs. The bulbs' hues can vary from brand to brand, and while your eyes may not detect the slight difference, your camera can. Lamps, especially the type with bendy arms, are great for this sort of product photography.

There is another light option: daylight. Preferably a nice, overcast day. However, daylight's intensity can be unpredictable, depending on the weather and the time of the day. Relying on daylight isn't always feasible, and if you're limited to shooting in the evenings when it gets dark early the colour temperature may vary as the sun sets. This is where artificial light comes in handy – it's a consistent, steady light source that give you the confidence that the light levels will not change from one moment to the next.

Whichever light source you opt for, use multiples of the *same* light sources is because it can be difficult to compensate for mixed lights. For example, florescent bulbs tend to emit green- or orange-tinted light. Most incandescents cast a yellowish hue. And tungsten is orange.

While it is possible to compensate for the mixed tint in-camera or in the post-processing, it is easier, especially if you're just starting to explore this genre of photography, to use a consistent light source because it's one less step to futz with. Don't forget to use a manual white balance setting that's appropriate for your light source.

Gray Card

An 18% gray card is very handy for fine-tuning the white balance, especially important when you're photographing something with a white background. Colour casts from your lights or even the light reflecting off your object will be apparent on the white backdrop.

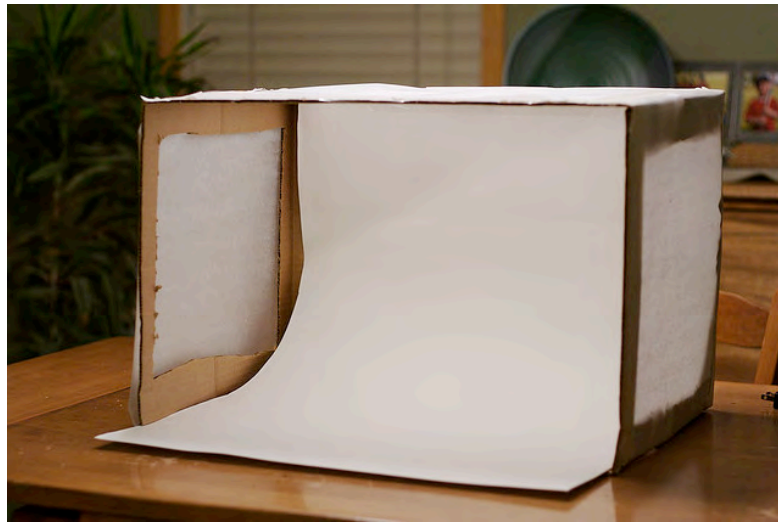
Most dSLRs now have a customisable WB setting. If yours does, photograph the card and it will help you determine the proper white balance. For further details on how, check your camera's manual.

If your camera does not have customizable WB setting, you can still use this card to determine and alter the white balance in post-processing.

Your camera doesn't have this custom feature or you lack an 18% gray card? After you've set your table up, set the WB to whichever light mode you're using, take a few photographs of the white poster paper and fine-tune the WB the best you can.

The Set-up

There are a number of different ways you can set up your table. You can purchase one or make your own DIY lightbox or light tent.



Or go the lazy way out and tape your poster up to a wall.

Getting the Lights Right

Even lighting is important. One of the main requirements of this type of product photography is that it's easy to cut out the object; and in

order to do so, it's important that the outlines of the object are crisp and clear and the shadow on the backdrop is minimal.

The Object Du Jour

For this exercise, chose a toy that's not reflective (reflective objects present other difficulties so we'll keep this simple). Suspended the toy on strings for a couple reasons. First, because of the limited number of light sources available, this will help minimize the shadow underneath it. Second, the backdrop wasn't large enough for this object. When the toy was on the "ground," the edge of the backdrop intersected with its feet. While that wasn't a huge issue – it's easily fixed in Photoshop, certainly – I prefer to rely on post-processing as little as possible. The strings are more easily cloned out and it will be less destructive to the image quality to repair in the post-process stage.

Single Light

With only one light placed at about three o'clock (with the dragon in centre of the clock), it casts too strong of a shadow. It makes no difference how it is placed it; there is a crisp shadow.



When an umbrella is placed in between the flash and the toy, it helps soften the shadow. However, both the body of this toy and the left side of the backdrop are in shadow, it needs some light from the left side.



Note: If you're using a DIY lightbox and feel that the shadow is too strong, add a layer of your translucent paper one at a time until it's soft enough.

Two lights

This is with no umbrellas to diffuse the light; the right light is still at three o'clock, the left at about eight o'clock, and now we have two harsh shadows. Unacceptable.



With umbrellas – better. Depending on your goal in this project, this might be good enough. I feel this can be further improved upon, however.

Repositioning Lights

The left light is moved so it's slightly above and left of the object. The right light has been repositioned so it is aimed more downward, at the surface below the toy; the white surface bounces some light back up underneath the toy. A small white reflector was also added on the left just behind the toy, directly opposite the right

flash; this bounces some fill light onto the rear of the toy. (Note for the DIY-ers: A white poster paper or wall can be used to similar effect.)

The lighting is now more even throughout. It's not perfect, but much better.



The shadow is nearly gone and if necessary, it can be dodged out easily without affecting the quality too much in the post-processing stage. Having played with a few other positions (not shown) of the lights, it's been determined that this is the best placement for this object. If this toy was reflective, however, a different arrangement would be chosen and the umbrellas replaced with sheets of translucent paper.

Multiple Lights

As noted before, multiple lights are ideal. As you can see in all of the images, the backdrop isn't stark white – this is in part due to the paper itself, and in part because there is not a third light solely for illuminating the backdrop. In most cases a grey background is acceptable but

to the purist the colour should be corrected.

An option to correct this would be to place a third light above, with barn doors to control the light spread, aimed at the backdrop for a brighter white background. The addition of a fourth would minimise the shadow below the toy even further. That is if you have access to multiple lights.



Choosing the Aperture

If you're photographing an object with the intent of selling it to a stock company as a cut-out, you may want close down your aperture in order to maintain a crisp outline of the object.

In this example, which was shot at f4, this is unusable. This toy is already fuzzy as is and probably too difficult for a graphic designer to cut out neatly.

At f8, it's passable

At f18, it's much better. The edges are still soft, but that's more due to the nature of the toy itself.

This is still life; a fast shutter speed isn't necessary. Lower it as much as you need to in order to get a good exposure, and use a remote or the self timer to avoid camera shake. Do take note that, at this aperture, the background's inherent flaws – for example, creases in the paper backdrop – may stand out too much. If you're doing this for fun or to sell an item of yours, the DOF isn't that crucial. Choose an aperture that appeals to you the best.

In the end, the image was photographed at: f18, ISO 200, shutter speed 1/30th of a second.



Final Image

Now the final image has been selected, all that is necessary is to clone out the strings and give the image a slight boost to the saturation, on that issues remember all cameras produce differing images so you're the sole arbiter on this issue. Voila.

Now I have to give the toy back to my dog!



Final Tips

- Marketing-wise: consider leaving some space on either above, left or right; ad agencies, magazines and other buyers of stock images like room for text.
- Staging is important. Clean whatever item you're photographing – dusty or dirty objects aren't particularly attractive. In the dragon's case, it was tossed in the wash before photographing it.

The Pros and Cons of Shooting RAW

by Christopher O'Donnell

You've probably heard of the term "shooting RAW" or "RAW format" – in fact, there's a Facebook page dedicated solely to the celebration of this great tool of digital photography. You may be aware that it's preferable to shoot in this format – but do you know why? And are you aware of the potential drawbacks of shooting RAW? Read on to get a firm grasp on what RAW can do for you.

Why to Shoot RAW

RAW format is the closest thing you can get to a negative in the digital world – in fact, a RAW file is often referred to as a digital negative. Basically a RAW file is all the data of your image captured by your sensor in an unprocessed, lossless format – no compression, no saturation increase, etc.

This is quite different from a JPG since RAW files are not what you call a "developed" photo. This is why they're called digital negatives in the first place since negatives can't be used as photos, but they hold all the necessary information in order to create a photo.

When to Use RAW

As mentioned above, RAW files give you the most information possible – this means that any editing you do in your RAW editor will have minimal damage as opposed to editing your image in Photoshop. While you can do a plethora of different edits in RAW, the most beneficial (for me anyways) is the ability to adjust your exposure with very little difference in quality when compared to an actual image taken at a different exposure. Typically, you can reduce or increase your exposure by 2 full stops with a RAW file, giving you a bit of leeway to work with when you're shooting under difficult lighting situations.



This is also a great way to recover small blown highlights or blocked shadows (over or underexposed areas of your image) – such as distracting reflections or overexposed skin tones – where your entire image is exposed well, but one or two distracting elements may need to be adjusted.

When Not to Use RAW

While the versatility of

RAW format is great for photographers who want a broad base to edit with, it's not for those who do little to no adjustments in post process. A drawback to RAW is that the file size is much larger than the JPG counterpart, which can fill up a memory card rather quickly.

If you shoot in high-volume – for example, sports photographers – and never see a need to adjust your images drastically, then RAW format is not for you.

Also note that if you're doing a time-lapse video, shooting in RAW format is not the best idea. Depending on the length of your video, you may be shooting over 500 images. It's not just the enormous file size that's a problem, but you need to think of your post process workflow. RAW images need to be converted to a different format so that you can print and display – much like a negative being developed into a photo. Doing that to so many images is labour intensive and will take a while to process.

I almost exclusively shoot in RAW, but I'm a landscape photographer so my workflow is different. If I were a sports photographer who needs fast image processing time and more storage, I'd probably switch to JPG format for most shoots. However, those who shoot concerts are presented with very difficult lighting situations, which makes RAW a welcomed option to help adjust exposure as needed.

Ideally, it'd be fantastic to shoot everything in RAW format as it is one of the best tools photographers have, but other factors come into play and the versatility of shooting JPG can easily outweigh the benefits of RAW.