

VIEWFINDER



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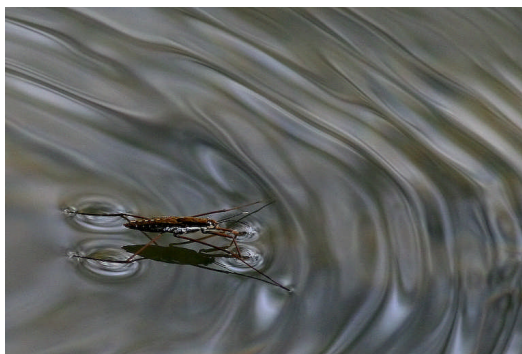


Image of the Month

“Waterbug”

© Bob Hawkins

Competition Results: NATURE

Congratulations to all the winners! – All winning images can be viewed on the ECC web site

Intermediate:		Entries: 110	Accepted: 108	Average: 21.6
GOLD	Bob Hawkins	Waterbug		
SILVER	Bob Hawkins	Cedar Waxwing		
HM	Kent Wilson	Heron and Anhinga		
HM	Kent Wilson	Loon		
HM	Kent Wilson	Let Me Tell You		
HM	Kent Wilson	Thirsty		
HM	Sandra Hawkins	Sanderling with Minnow		
HM	Kas Stone	Life on the Labrador Coastal Barrens		
HM	Susan Campisi	Gull on Pier 19		
HM	Terry Ross Poulton	Great Egret 3		
HM	Judy Pucher	Balloon Fish in Coral		

Superset:		Entries: 44	Accepted: 44	Average: 22.6
GOLD	Joe Vitale	Goldfinch		
SILVER	Maggie Sale	Survivor		
HM	Carm Griffin	Tower of Silence		
HM	Darcy Rector	Sally Lightfoot Crab		
HM	Judy Griffin	Crane Feeding		
HM	Julian Sale	Rocky Mountain Wildflower		
HM	Nikola Bilic	Bee		
HM	Maggie Sale	Rock and Reeds		

Judges: Tony Florio

Wayne Johnson

Carolyn King

MEMBER'S SHOW**The Best of Costa Rica***By Dawna Brown**Review by Judy Griffin*

Our member show, "The Best of Costa Rica", was presented by Dawna Brown, a former long-time member of the Islington Camera Club. Dawna embraces film as her medium and her show was two-projector with narration. She enjoys travelling and loves cats as seen in her many feline shots; whether real or wall art, cushion covers, or woodcarving!

Dawna began with a synopsis of the country, acquainting us with its independence, its government, demographics, agriculture and exports, then took us on a journey through the many wonders of Costa Rica. Her maps were helpful, and her itinerary narration gave us good information about places visited, natural phenomena, the culture and people. Her images documented her trip with hotel and travel shots, interesting sights enroute, of course cats (!), and beautiful landscapes.

The audience was taken on a visit to two active volcanoes in the Los Angeles Cloud Forest and watched members of the group enjoy gliding through the forest top by ropes and pulleys. We cruised along rivers and canals enjoying the animal and bird life. Monkeys, sloth, toucan, caiman and crocs were in evidence. Banana and coffee plantations were of interest with their workings and bounty of harvest. We visited the beautiful beach at Punta Leona, the city of San Jose and its National Theatre dating from 1890. It is a marvellous sight with an opulent and magnificent interior. Dawna's show also included shots of the countryside, quaint village churches, the famous painted oxcarts, symbols of Costa Rican folklore, samples of typical art and handicrafts of the country, and the people of Costa Rica.

Dawna's humour and wealth of information, along with her interesting images captured the beauty of the country on her visit. Judy Griffin opened the floor for questions to Dawna and thanked her for sharing her experience in this intriguing and beautiful country.

TIP – By Julian Sale

If you want to have fun adding some cool effects, borders, text, etc to your images, there is a new website at www.picnik.com which provides a web based **photo editor** with a difference. Many of the effects are free. Enjoy.

JUDGING – PRINTS #1

Intermediate Gold

*"Sunset on the Empire State" By Hairuo Dai*

Superset Gold

*"Courtyard Doorway" by Carm Griffin***PRESENTATION****Arctic Saga***By Robert Shechter*

With 30 years experience working as a photographer, combined with 25 years as a lecturer in the Ontario Community College system, ROBERT SHECHTER produces a range of corporate literature and postcards as well as travel photography through his company, Robert Photo Enterprises.

Robert and his travel writer wife Myriam Shechter, who is doing the research, have been travelling with their cameras and notebooks from Greenland to Spain, from Iceland to Russia, and most places in between, sharing their impressions and experiences through slide shows and lectures.

Robert is teaching Travel Photography classes at Toronto Image Works, the Royal Ontario Museum, and other venues.

Robert has produced shows - no mere travelogues, but rich in local history, architecture and culture - on behalf of Tourist Boards, Camera Clubs, and Social Clubs, such as the Granite Club, Donalda, Toronto Cricket Skating and Curling Club.

His work has appeared in The Toronto Star, The Globe and Mail, Toronto Life Magazine, The Chicago Tribune, and other publications.

Robert Shechter

Review by Diane Sawatzky

Robert's presentation took us on an enchanting journey through the incredible, pristine world of the Arctic, a remote paradise



rarely visited by anyone but the Inuit. The presentation included a rich detailing of the various 19th century explorers of the Northwest Passage, taking us from Russia to Iceland, Greenland, Newfoundland and finally to Nunavut.

Robert's images truly captured the beauty and majesty that is the Arctic landscape—tundra covered in lichens, cliffs covered with millions of birds, belugas, polar bears munching on lunch, the incredible variety of light conditions like fog, grey skies, 24 hours of sunshine in summer, beautiful sunrises and sunsets, enormous glaciers and icebergs some of which were used as landing strips for birds, water with colours that rival the Caribbean. We were also introduced to people who have made the Arctic their home.



It was a thoroughly entertaining evening rich in history, shown with beautiful photography and accompanied with a delightful sense of humour.



Review by Brian Miller

This detailed travel photography presentation combined Robert's photos, additional historical photos, exploration history, current tour maps, drawings, and extensive narrative by Robert, which was written by Robert's wife. On their travels, he carries cameras loaded with slide film, and she carries a notebook. The main region being presented was the Arctic (any place north of the Arctic Circle). Arctic geography, history, and society were presented. Areas included Norway, Greenland, and Nunavut, during various periods, from the time of the Vikings, through the 19th century, and up to the present.

His presentation started with Norway, followed by Greenland and Nunavut. He gave an explanation,



using maps, of the first Viking explorations of Greenland. His presentation moved up to the present with his photos of the cities of western Greenland, and the land of eastern Greenland. For Nunavut, where the tragic Franklin expedition occurred in the 19th century, descriptions of this expedition were given, using maps, historical photos, and Robert's slides. The most interesting slides, to me, were the ones of the Inuit residents. Robert described how talking with your subject makes for a better portrait. One of his portraits, of an Inuit lady with her child in a sling on her back, reminded me of a photo published in National Geographic magazine.

Review by George Iantorno

It was a good show. Very informative and well presented. He is a very knowledgeable Arctic photographer.

NEW MEMBERS

We have 33 new members so far this season – a new record for our club. A special welcome to all!

Anne McArthur	Sandra Hawkins
Bev Donaldson	Sema Toprak
Bob Hawkins	Susan Ambrose
Carol B. Jones	Tatiana Koubrak
Christine Leclair	Wilfred Lee
Corinne Sellars	Yolanda Pighin
Dan Caldaron	Barbara Simpson
Dave Perry	Dolores Sullivan
George Iantorno	Stephanie Stewart
Hairuo Dai	Helga DiSante
Ian Donaldson	Mark Kannegiesser
Jean W. Walker	Michael Cormier
Jim Kurck	Oleg Koubrak
Joan Perry	Paul Ambrose
Josh McSweeney	Paulette Melancon
Kenneth J. Harry	Sait Toprak
Larry Llewellyn	

OUTING – CDN ABORIGINAL FESTIVAL

Report by Kas Stone

Miserable weather (the first winter storm of the season) kept all but three brave ECC members from attending the Canadian Aboriginal Festival at the Rogers Centre on Sunday December 2nd. But the three who did attend (four, actually, but the fourth arrived so late that we never did find each other!) were treated to a spectacular display of Native drumming and dancing. The dancers' dress provided us with a bonanza of photographic opportunities – some dancers in “contemporary” regalia in vibrant shades of all the primary, secondary and tertiary colours imaginable, and others in “traditional” clothing trimmed with fur and beads that gave a subtler effect – and many wonderful faces, from infants-in-arms to ageing elders.

The subdued lighting in the Rogers Centre and the dancers' constant movement posed serious photographic challenges which kept us busy adjusting F-stops, shutter speeds and ISO settings to capture our subjects without undue noise or motion-blur! A buffalo-burger, Indian tacos and a glass of cider helped to wash away any frustrations, and a tour of the Native craft market brought us home with some unique souvenirs and Christmas gifts. For those who missed this fantastic outing, be sure to mark next year's Pow-Wow on your calendar now – it's always the last weekend in November.

Review by Judy Pucher

I just wanted to let you know what a great time I had at the Canadian Aboriginal Festival with Kas and Rick on Sunday, December 2! Unfortunately, we had quite the winter storm the night before that continued into the next day, otherwise I'm sure it would have been much better attended.

First we strolled through 'The Market' which featured a wide variety of arts and crafts as well as music and various information booths. For lunch we enjoyed some of the traditional food that was offered, which included buffalo burgers and native style tacos and apple cider.



But the biggest highlight, of course, was the Pow Wow. What a spectacular display of colour as the hundreds of dancers from all over North America in full regalia paraded into the Dance Circle during the Grand Entry! After that, the dance competitions with live drum singing groups began.

Kas and Rick, my experienced guides, motioned that it was now OK to enter inside the roped off area and we actually ended up with front row seats! (albeit kneeling on the floor). I would never have thought that I would be able to get this close and have such an unobstructed view! Nevertheless, the shooting conditions were somewhat difficult because the light was low and the movement was fast (I was using 1600 ISO most of the time). So, I for one, ended up with quite a

few blurry (and grainy) shots but I thought I'd send you a couple of the better ones, just to give you taste of what it was



all about. *Editor:* See collage of images at the end of the Viewfinder for additional images from all.

MEMBER'S SHOW

By *Nikola Bilic*

Review by *Kas Stone*

Sandwiched between the salon of winning images from last week's Nature competition and the image critique for the upcoming Architecture and Special competitions, December 3rd's installment of the ECC Member's Show was presented by Nikola Bilic. And *what* a show it was!

Nikola offered us four ProShow Gold presentations of his recent work. Two of the shows were travelogues – one from Havana, Cuba in 2006, and the other from Quebec City during the SAQ New France Festival in 2007. Blending street scenes, closeups of more intimate subjects, fascinating vehicles of all sorts, and people (candid shots of people in local settings, and portraits of performers in costume), Nikola gave us an exciting taste of life in the two cities.

His other two shows were more thematic in nature. *Flowers* showed us a collection of common flora (like tulips, roses and daisies) in a decidedly uncommon way – some of the images captured from the worm's-eye perspective of the ground, others mirrored by stunning reflections, and others represented frozen in windblown motion. Nikola's use of depth of field to accentuate his floral subjects while throwing the background into pleasing obscurity was masterful, and his eye for detail and simplicity of composition was remarkable.

But perhaps (and undoubtedly Nikola would agree) his finest show was his last – *Still Images*, a collection of his commercially successful stock photos, brilliantly set to the music *Money* by Pink Floyd. With subjects as unlikely and disconnected as strawberries, golf balls, milk drops, stethoscopes, eggs, pencils, blueberries, wrenches, drinking straws and wine bottles, Nikola gave us a glimpse of both his artistry and his practicality in the photographic realm. Following the show, he answered members' questions about his techniques, equipment and involvement in the stock photo business. He also promised to treat us to a how-to session during one of the upcoming digital demonstration evenings – something which (despite Nikola's concern about his language capability) I'm sure we are all looking forward to tremendously!

CAPA – FIRST ROUND RESULTS

Report by *Carm Griffin*

Nature: ECC - 4-way tie for 8th place out of 19 clubs. No awards!

Pictorial: ECC - 3-way tie for 8th place out of 21 clubs.

Judy Griffin won an Honour Award for her image titled CUBAN MAN.

Editor's note: Congratulations to Judy.

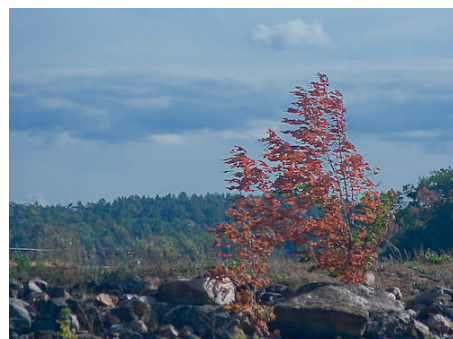
IMPROVING SKIES IN PHOTOSHOP, part 1

By *Don Poulton*

For years, those of us who entered color slide competitions always heard the comment "The sky is bald." Digital photography has changed this, and we can now render our images in a manner much more like what we see with our eyes. A few years ago, I presented several methods for improving skies to the club, and since then, I have been working more on this subject and would like to offer the following procedures. These work in either Photoshop or Photoshop Elements, and can likely be adapted to other image editing programs.



Before



After

First, you should be aware when you're at the scene that the sky is much brighter than the other areas of your image. Take meter readings if you're unsure. Then, perform either or both of the following:

1. Set your camera to use the RAW format. This captures a larger range of tonal variations than using JPEG.
2. Take two exposures, one metered for the foreground and the other for the sky. Be sure you use a tripod; this will assist you considerably in putting the images together later.

Back at the computer, use the following steps to create an image with a pleasing sky:

1. If you have used RAW, open the image in Adobe Camera Raw or another converter supplied by the camera manufacturer. Adjust the settings to obtain a good range of tonalities in the foreground, and save the results. Then decrease the exposure settings by 1 to 2 stops so that the sky is a reasonable brightness without blown-out highlights, and save the results with a different file name.
2. In Photoshop, open both RAW conversions or both JPEG exposures if you took two exposures at the site.
3. From the lighter image, press Ctrl+A and then Ctrl+C to select and copy this image. Go to the darker image and press Ctrl+V to paste it on top of this image. You now have two layers in the same file, with the lighter one on top.
4. If you took two exposures at the scene, you need to ensure that they are exactly registered over each other. Enlarge a portion of the scene and view both images by clicking the eye icon for the top layer in the Layers palette on and off. If necessary, use the arrow keys to nudge to top image exactly over the bottom one. This step is not necessary if you've done two conversions from a single RAW image.
5. You should be working on the top (lighter) image. Use the magic wand tool to select the pale sky, and use other selection tools such as the lasso to add or remove areas as needed so that the sky is completely selected but nothing else is selected.
6. To soften the selection edges, click Select > Modify > Expand, enter a value of 1 pixel, and click OK. Then click Select > Feather, enter a value of 1 or 2 pixels, and click OK. Then click Select > Inverse so that everything but the sky is selected.
7. In the Layers palette, select the "Add layer mask" icon (the third one from the left, with a white circle on a dark gray background). This masks the pale sky out so that the darker sky from the lower image becomes visible. You will see a layer mask in the Layers palette with white on the foreground and black in the sky. Remember that white reveals and black conceals; therefore, the white (foreground) areas in the top layer remain visible while the black (sky) areas in this layer are hidden so that the darker sky beneath shows through.
8. This is almost your final image, but if you zoom in on the horizon, you will likely notice banding or other irregularities, especially where details such as tree branches and leaves break the horizon. To improve the appearance of these areas, use the Gaussian Blur tool on the layer mask (ensure that the mask shows a selection border around it in the layers palette before selecting Filter > Blur > Gaussian Blur). Blur the entire mask with a small radius (2 or 3 pixels) to improve hard lines such as roofs of buildings. Then use the lasso to select areas such as tree branches and repeat the Gaussian blur with a larger radius. You can observe the effect by zooming in on a small part of your image. If you use too great a blur, you will see a "halo" around the affected parts of the image. Toggle the blur on and off with the Preview check box in the Gaussian Blur dialog box (or afterwards in the History palette) to observe the effect.
9. You might need to partially hide foreground areas (such as water that reflects the bright sky) that are too bright in the light image. You can do so by painting black on the layer mask with an opacity of 25 to 50 percent. Observe the effect on the entire image of a zoomed-in portion, or on the layer mask by holding down Alt and clicking on the mask in the Layers palette. This procedure renders such areas to a brightness darker than that of the original light (foreground) image but darker than that of the dark (sky) image.

10. When finished, perform any other desired image manipulations and save the file as a PSD file. Flatten the image, sharpen it, and save the final result as a JPG file. Retaining the PSD enables you to work further with the layers later if you wish.

In a future Viewfinder, I'll show you how you can enhance sky details such as clouds in an overcast sky.

By Don Poulton

CHRISTMAS SOCIAL

Report by Judy Griffin

The Christmas Social evening was good fun, good fellowship, and good food. Once again the tables at the back were bountiful with all sorts of goodies. Members brought a great variety of savoury and sweet delights to tempt us. Special thanks to Marta, Brian Miller, and Ellen & Kent Wilson who made up the kitchen crew, and all those who volunteered their help.

Thanks to Elaine Murdoch for running a special draw which raised \$183.00 and was split three ways. One portion went to the winner, Rita Tracey, another portion to the Toronto Star Santa Claus Fund, and the third to the club.

We had an excellent group of Trios entries which were judged by Dave Perry, Don Dawson, and Joe Vitale. Thanks to Diane for organizing the slides and digital entries. As we have had some problems with the digital scoring system, Diane had numbered cards for the judges to hold up, but the glitch was now lack of lighting to read them, so it was back to each judge calling out their score. It was all in good fun and we enjoyed the entries. Diane handed out chocolate prizes to the winners, Dario di Sante, Elio Pighin, Kas Stone got HMs, Sandra Hawkins got Runner-up, and Bob Hawkins took the Top.

As well thanks to Mike Fanjoy, Brian Quan, Nikola and Joe Vitale for their work on the technical side of things.

Kas & Rick were clicking away, as well as Brian Quan, and Darcy was sporting his newest camera, letting members try it out. So photos of all of us enjoying the evening will no doubt appear - probably one with me inhaling a delicious chocolate brownie and not looking the least bit guilty!

By the time the party wound down, we had made great inroads on the food and beverages, so all in all it was a great evening of fun and socializing.

Congratulations to Bob Hawkins for his winning Trios.



OTHER NEWS / TIPS

1. *Judy Griffin.* I have spoken to the manager at Curry's Art Supply store at Cawthra and the Queensway, and ECC members will receive a 10% discount on regular priced goods if they show their ECC membership card. Sale items are exempt.
2. Our next meeting is Mon Jan 7th 2008 featuring:
Presentation: Alberta Highlands - Bob Walling, *Birds Around Us* - Tarik Erbas, Trillium PC

