



THE

# LAST FRAME

March 2004

St. Albert Photo Club's Monthly Newsletter

## Art Composition Design

As a change from the usual venue of the St. Albert Inn, the St. Albert Photo Club met at Bellrose Composite High School for the March 10th meeting. Our featured guest speaker was Lawrence Kenakin and we met in his classroom where he teaches art to students from grades 9 through 12.

Lawrence is an artist and not a photographer, but he does take photographs and has a definite future interest in digital photography.

The walls of his classroom are decorated with examples of the work of previous and current students.

The themes displayed vary from contemporary movies and popular music to that of fairies and the occult.

Lawrence talked about creating photographic art and, in particular, photo-



Art teacher, Lawrence Kenakin, surrounded by some of his student's art work.

graphic collages.

This can be accomplished with either artwork or photographs.

The first step in creating a collage is to take several picture elements and create a schematic drawing.

This is actually how many commercial photographers begin their creations; by actually placing

a their schematic drawing on the ground glass of their view camera.

Once you have your schematic drawing completed, you then refine it.

Before you begin your schematic drawing, however, you should consider the following four elements:

### (1) Size

Large, medium, and

small images should cover at least two-thirds of the total image area, the "positive space".

Size prominence will have a big impact on the final result as larger components become dominant and smaller elements play more of a supportive role.

### (2) Connections

Connections refer to how the images are laid out and

APRIL GUEST  
SPEAKER  
Bill Brennan

APRIL  
COMPETITION  
Tranquillity

TECH  
TIPS  
Positioning

MAY GUEST  
SPEAKER  
TBA

MAY  
COMPETITION  
Night Photos



how they may relate to one another. Connections may be direct, such as touching or overlapping, or indirect, such as a gaze or an implied line.

**(3) Shading**

Shading refers to a balance of dark, medium, and light tones. Dark tones create an illusion of depth whereas light tones come forward. Medium tones provide an area of transition from one element to another.

**(4) Setting**

A background that complements your picture elements but does not compete with them gives your creation an illusion of depth. Backgrounds with a cool colour accent when set against picture elements of a warm tone adds a colour tension as warm colours advance and

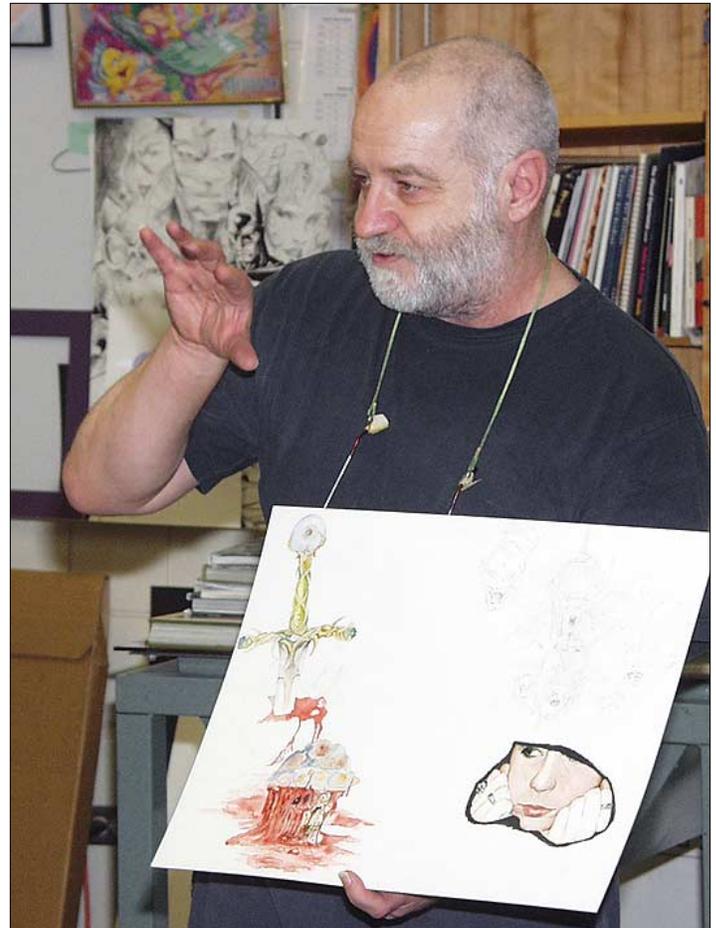
the cool background colour recedes.

**Putting it all Together**

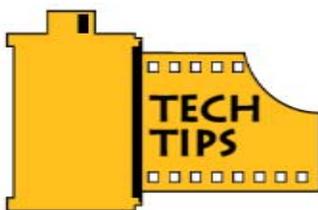
In your final collage you want to tell a story through your composition, through the arrangement of your images. Thus you must prioritize the elements of your final creation at the outset. The layout should define how you get your viewer to focus attention on what you want to convey. Balance the images the way you want. For example, subjects may be created along one diagonal and shadows used along another.

**Digital to the Rescue**

Creating photographic art is made much simpler with current computer technology, software programs, and the current variety of printing papers. Scanners, photocopiers,



ease of resizing and color correction performed on a color computer monitor make creating artwork much quicker than ever before.



**Fill in with flash**

If your family is standing in a shadow and the scenery behind them is in sunlight, turn on the flash to balance out the scene.

This also reduces harsh shadows on their faces.



**Include people for scale**

The cliff may not look all that big, especially in a photo, until you put a person next to it. In some scenes, including a person adds a sense of awe by showing the sheer size of your subject.

<p>St. Albert Photo Club</p> <hr/> <p>Vol:3 Issue:5 PUBLISHED MONTHLY September - June</p>	<p><u>PRESIDENT</u> Derald Lobay</p>	<p><u>SECRETARY</u> Rhonda Klaszus</p> <p><u>TREASURER</u> Allen Skoreyko</p>	<p><u>PROGRAMME DIRECTOR'S</u> Derald Lobay Doug Poon</p>	<p><u>CLUB CONTACT</u> Doug Poon (780) 973-7035 dougpoon@shaw.ca</p>
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# Improve Your Photography

By **Eric Hagedorn**

So you want to “improve” your photography do you?

You want people to spend time looking at your photos and making positive comments and you want to get more enjoyment out of the time spent using your camera.

There are many ways that this can be achieved. When you as a photographer make a photo you employ four basic procedures: determining exposure, focusing, framing (or composition) and timing.

When you as a viewer look at a photo you judge the quality of the photo by three criteria: technical quality, composition and impact. To improve (or change in any way) any of the three criteria, you must change any or all of the basic procedures.

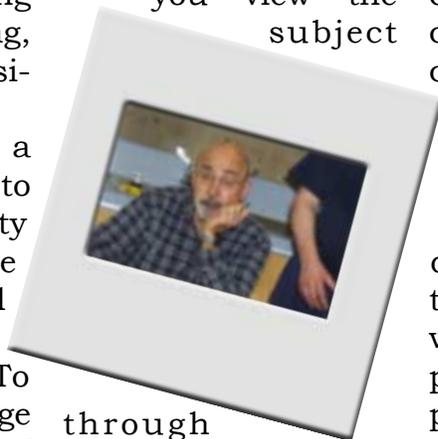
Determining (a) the weaknesses that exist in your photo making technique, (b) what type of photographer you are or (c) who you are making photos for will give you clues about the photographic procedures that must be changed.

First of all let's look at the basic procedures for making a photo.

Determining exposure and focusing are activities where you control the components of the camera in your hand.

Changing the exposure or focus will change the photo produced.

Framing or composition is a mental and visual activity that you do when you view the subject



through the view finder on your camera.

Changing the composition will change the photo produced. Timing is a mental activity.

You decide exactly when to release the shutter.

Changing the time when you release the shutter will change the photo produced.

Let's see how each procedure affects the photo produced.

Determining exposure and focusing are the procedures that determine the technical quality of a photograph.

For now let's define a “high quality image” as one where clarity and resolution (sharp focus, fine grain and good exposure) are maximized.

Depending on the equipment you have at your disposal, (camera functions, lenses, filters etc.) exposure and focus can become a fairly complex procedure.

You must be aware of all the things that your equipment will do during the photo taking process and what results will be provided by each piece of equipment or each setting.

How many times have you looked at a roll of newly developed film only to decide that you were doing something terribly wrong because the pictures are out of focus or what you thought were important elements were cut in half or objects that you thought would not be in the picture all of a sudden are there?

These problems can be the result of not realizing just what limitations are placed on your work by the equipment you are using and therefore working outside those limits.

These problems can be solved in two ways, reading all manuals and information available about each piece of equipment in your camera bag and lots of practice.

Your manual should go with you any time you set out on a photo shoot and should be referred to frequently while you are making changes to the settings on your camera.

When you feel that all aspects of the operation of all pieces of equipment are second nature to you then you can set the manuals aside.

In order to determine exactly what your equipment will do you may have to shoot a roll or two of film just to compare the results from the different settings.

When you have mastered all procedures needed to operate your equipment, they become creative tools to aid

you in your photographic work.

Working with some parts of the image out of focus means re-defining a "high quality image" to one where clarity and resolution are what you want them to be.

Once you have mastered the techniques available to you the next step (composing the photograph) can be done without worrying about whether or not your camera will do the things that you want to be done.

You will know what the results will be.

The next step in the photographic process is the composing of the photo (creating order out of chaos).

**C o m p o s i t i o n**, whether it is from behind a camera or in front of a painter's easel uses a set of guidelines to allow the artist to organize the elements that are desired in the finished product.

These guidelines, called the rules, principles or laws of composition are quite brief, quite few in number and are in no way hard and fast restricting guidelines.

They are meant to be broken if you the photographer feel that it is in the best inter-

est of the photo you desire to make.

These rules include the following:

There should only be one center of interest in the photo.



Be aware of and use the rule of thirds when composing your photo.

Set up lines and movements to guide the viewer's eyes into the frame rather than out of it.

Shoot to keep very white or bright or very dark spots out of the image.

Choose colors to suit the mood you wish to convey.

Horizontal lines are peaceful, vertical lines and diagonal lines are dynamic and curved lines are peaceful and give a sense of depth to the photo.

The image should be balanced from side to side or from top to bottom

Each reason for taking a picture comes with its own set of guidelines and with use you will become

confident in your ability to know when and how best to ignore or change them.

Framing is inherent in the composing of the photo itself.

Framing refers to what you include in the picture by where you place the borders and is the most crucial aspect of the composition of the picture.

Framing depends on three factors: camera position, camera direction and angle of view.

Camera position involves the height of the camera and the angle of the film plane to the subject.

Camera direction determines the side of the subject to be photographed and the angle of the light striking the subject.

Angle of view is governed solely by the focal length of the lens being used and determines the amount of the real world and therefore the number of elements that can be included in the frame.

**C o m p o s i t i o n** becomes more difficult as the focal length decreases because the angle of view increases and more information must be managed in the frame.

It is useful to think of framing as a whittling down process whereby you remove unwanted material until you reach what you decide is the best composition.

Framing will greatly influence your composition and organization of space.

Concentrate on framing at the time of exposure.

Don't rely on cropping later since cropping and enlarging could change the depth of field of the exposure.



Remember that most viewfinders frame an image slightly smaller than what is actually recorded on the film. This property sometimes allows unwanted elements to sneak into the image.

Working with different compositions for the same subject becomes an exciting task if you let yourself go and keep shooting.

The fourth procedure in the picture making process is that of timing.

When you release the shutter ultimately determines the type or quality of light that will reach the film.

Timing also determines exactly how each element in the image will appear in the photo.

This is what determines the overall impact that the image will have on the viewer.



This part of the photo is the most difficult to work with since there are no “rules”, “guidelines” or “manuals” to help you decide what might be either right or wrong with the final product.

In order to change the impact you will have to change any of the four basic procedures..

Since the impact of a photo is a very subjective concept, what you are really trying to do is reach the view-

ers with your work.

To do this you have to present the subject in such a way that other people will know instantly what you are trying to say.

Once the camera is set and in place the only way to change the impact is to change the light.

Filters, flash or the time of day are the means available to do this.

The elements in the picture will trigger the same memories or experiences in the mind of the viewer as were triggered in your own mind.

Some photographers will take several shots of the chosen subject from different angles, different times of the day, even at different seasons.

This gives many possibilities from which to choose.

Remember to shoot to please yourself first.

If you like or enjoy something there will likely be a good photo in it for you.

Determine what you like about the scene and eliminate the rest.

When you are happy with your work you can work on pleasing others who will view the image.

If when you look at

one of your photos and can not remember why you took it or even what it was meant to say then you can conclude that it is not a very good photo and probably should not have been taken in the first place.

Looking at one of your own photos with a critical an analytical eye is one of the most difficult parts of photography.

The visual clutter that ruins most photographs usually isn't perceived until the image is processed and judged apart from the real experience.

You don't particularly care to hear negative criticism about your work from someone else but it is even more difficult to provide any negative comments yourself.

Most people, once they have taken a photo are content to look at and enjoy the picture as it is.

It takes considerable practice to be able to look at your own work and break it down into its various components and say this is not right or that should have been changed.

You must know what you were trying to do in the first place and what you did to

achieve your goal.

Take lots of notes so that you can refer back to them. Know what each part of your equipment will do and what the results should look like.

Then develop a system of looking at your work and analyzing what you see.

This will change and probably improve the quality of the photographs that you make.

Another way of changing your photography is to first of all determine what type of photographer you are at this point in time.

Each type of photography usually demands a different set of procedures to provide successful photos..

There are several different classification systems for pigeon-holing your style of photography available today and each one has its own merits.

I will present one that classifies your creative style.

The system I will use was developed by the late Galen Rowell many years ago and allows a photographer to determine what type of creativity he or she uses.

If you use this

system you may find that different photos that you have taken would be placed in different categories but it will make you think about how you go about taking pictures.

How you move around in this system will depend on how you are able to change your creative skills in the world of taking pictures.

The classification system has four parts to it and goes like this:

### **Stage one**

The simplest type of photography.

Point the camera at an object and press the shutter release.

The camera does everything for you. The only thinking you have to do is recognize that here is a subject worth photographing.

Today's cameras are sophisticated enough that it is possible to obtain technically perfect photos just by releasing the shutter.

### **Stage two**

A pre-visualized image. You discover a scene to shoot.

You then decide what should be in the photo and how it will look on film and then decide what has to be done to get the scene on film.

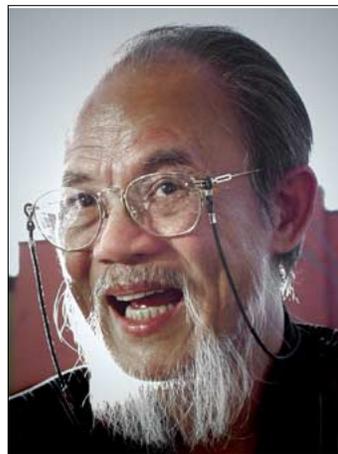
You realize that the scene will not look the same on film as it does to your eye.

You set the functions of the camera to your requirements.

Then you take the picture.

### **Stage three**

A pre-synchronized image. A scene is conceptualized when a suitable subject is found.



You use your experience and technical knowledge to conceptualize something other than what is there now.

This might involve a different angle, waiting for better or different light or finding another subject to fit the image or message you have in mind.

### **Stage four**

This is the highest conceptual level. A message for an image is formed in your mind.

You then search for something in the real world to fit the image within the limits of

the equipment you have available.

### **Stage five?**

In today's society, a fifth stage could be added.

With the advent of computer technology, any photo from any of the four stages can be transformed into a new image that bears little or no resemblance to what was seen in the real world.

The artist has a message in his mind and manipulates an existing image or images to present this message.

A third way you can change yourself as a photographer is to decide who you are making photos for.

Earlier on I suggested that you should make photos to please yourself.

Once you have reached this plateau you will want to reach other viewers.

This is where observation and research become necessary.

If you wish to target a certain audience then it becomes important to know exactly what that audience will respond to favorably.

Since no two people view a scene in the same way you must approach a given subject in such a way that

others will respond in the same way.

The editor of a magazine will want different treatment of a scene than will the judge of a competition.

Viewers must draw from a similar set of experiences in order to respond to a scene in the same way that you did.

No matter what you do to "improve" your photography you will simply be "changing" the way that you take pictures.

This means that you will be changing the way that you see the world around you.

You will not change much if you take pictures one at a time.

Take a picture and put the camera away for another day will not change your style of photography.

Take pictures without having film in the camera.

Take pictures in your mind without having a camera in your hand.

Take pictures with a film in the camera and then examine the results critically.

Notice how other people respond to your work.

Just like any other skill photography takes practice.

Above all "Enjoy"!

# THE LAST FRAME

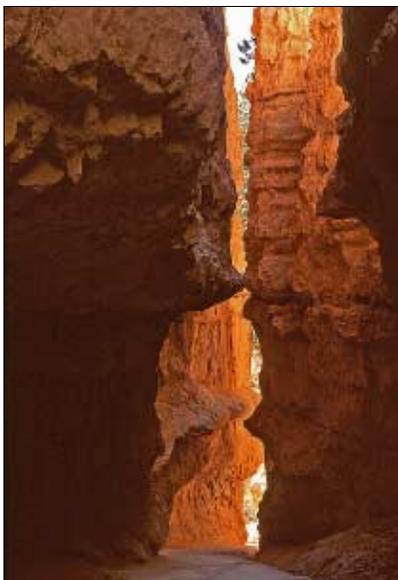
CLUB MEMBERS WINNING MONTHLY PICTURES



First place slide - Seig Koslowski



1st place print - Allen Skoreyko



2nd place slide - Derald Lobay  
Left, third place slide - Derald Lobay



2nd place print - Allen Skoreyko



3rd place print - Allen Skoreyko