



THE

# LAST FRAME

October 2006

St. Albert Photo Club's Monthly Newsletter

## Burch Photographics



Darcy Cooper co-owner of Burch Photographics ponders a question from a club member.

Sooner or later, if you are fairly knowledgeable about the mechanics of camera operation, you will be asked to photograph someone or take photographs at a relative's wedding.

Who knows, you may actually

find that you enjoy photographing people; and if you are lucky, you get paid for your work.

You stand a better chance of making money photographing people and people during special occasions than if you were to exclu-

sively photograph landscape and nature scenes.

Darcy Cooper, co owner of Burch Photographics in Sherwood Park, Alberta, was the featured guest speaker for October.

Darcy and his wife, Wynna,

NOVEMBER  
GUEST SPEAKER  
Paul Thurlin

NOVEMBER  
COMPETITION  
"Leaf/Leaves"

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website

DECEMBER  
COMPETITION  
None

DECEMBER  
GUEST SPEAKER  
Paul Skoczylas



operate a full photographic studio including on-site digital imaging and printing services.

**Shooting Preferences**

Darcy graduated from NAIT's Photographic Technology program in 1990 and he photographed primarily with a Mamiya 645 PRO TL medium format system, concentrating on the more casual and posed images.

His wife, Wynna, also a graduate from NAIT's program the following year, photographed with a Canon 35mm EOS system.

Her specialty was capturing the more spontaneous, "photojournalistic" moments.

In 2003, they chose to go digital. Since they already had invested in Canon's EOS lenses, it made sense to stick with the Canon system.

Today, Darcy spends less time photographing, preferring to run their business, while Wynna handles most of the photography and wedding album design.

**Business Objectives**

Their business is weddings and portraiture, booking about 40 to 45

weddings per year.

Supplementing this is baby, family and executive portraiture.

About 90% of their work is through referrals.

When consulting with clients, they want to maintain a friendly, easy-going attitude.

Darcy also employs two full-time employees and three part-time employees.

All studio duties are segregated. They find the one-on-one time spent with their clients is extremely beneficial.

When a client calls their studio and is only asking about pricing, then the client is not really interested in the art Burch Photographics creates.

When such a client does call, Darcy tries to keep them on the other end of the telephone, asking them a series of questions instead of just quoting a price.

He tries to deflect the money issue. He first needs to find out if the client is looking for a portrait or wedding coverage.

He then pre-qualifies the client (for example, is he available on the specific date the client has



Darcy Cooper and club member Tracey Guzak role play on a phone call to the studio.

requested).

If the client does not pre-qualify or Darcy cannot schedule the client, he could recommend another photographer.

Other photographers are not their competition! Their competition is from caterers, DJs, and florists; all are vying to maximize their share of that "wedding pie".

**A Few Words On Digital Versus Film**

When Burch Photographics was film-based, the cost of running their studio was less than when they went digital.

Going digital means you subscribe to obsolescence.

Lenses and some other accessories can be used

from one generation of cameras to another, but the constant upgrading of cameras (first a Canon D60, then a 10D, now a 20D), digital projectors, computers, monitors, and computer hard drives constantly draws from the Studio's capital.

All images are captured as RAW files.

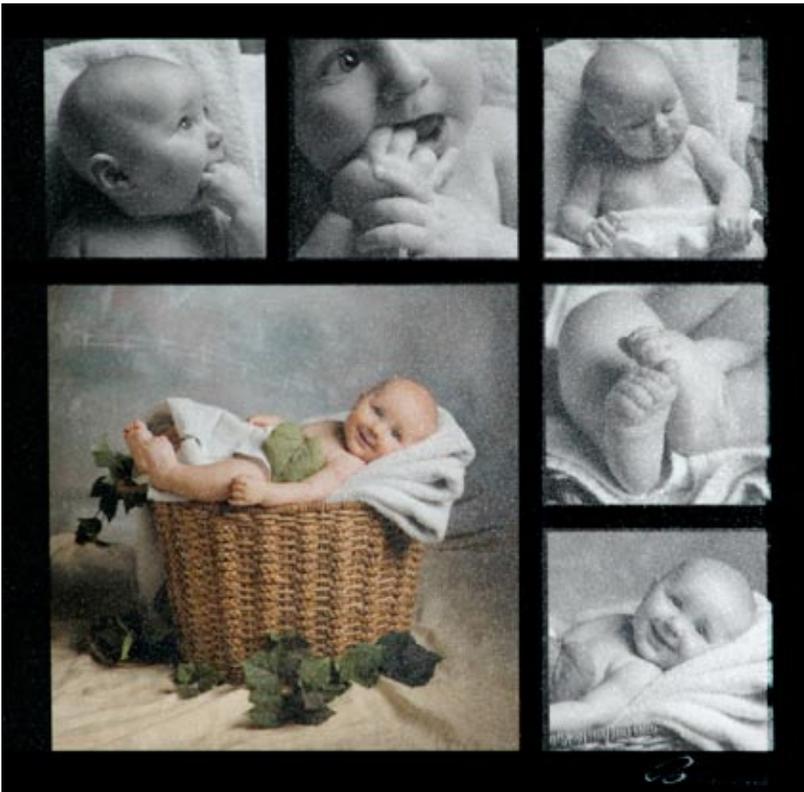
This is the only way they can yield 60" wall portraits from an APS-C digital SLR.

All files are fully enhanced and fully retouched.

**Marketing**

Following are some suggestions you may want to consider in marketing your own wedding and portrait photography.

<p>St. Albert Photo Club Vol:6 Issue:2 PUBLISHED MONTHLY September - June</p>	<p><u>PRESIDENT</u> Derald Lobay</p>	<p><u>SECRETARY</u> and <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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One of the features of Burch Photographics is the lifecycle of your child where they will photograph your child over the years, culminating in 4 plaque mount prints (one sample above).

(1). Logo Prints. These are enlargements or collages of your photography displayed in a professional looking frame.

Your business logo is proudly displayed on the print mat. It should not, however, interfere, intrude or compete with your image.

(2). Flower shops, bridal shops, and medical clinics are all venues you should try to display samples of your finished products.

Darcy found success in displaying 30" x 40" wall portraits in Sherwood Park's Health Unit.

However, to replace the previous photographer's work, Darcy had to invest over \$3000 printing and framing 30 wall portraits.

Be prepared to con-

stantly replace your work.

(3). Bridal Party Gift Certificates.

Every member of the bridal party receives one 5x7 complimentary portrait session.

This can be written off as an advertising expense.

(4). Referral Program.

If a bride refers one client, she receives one complimentary 5x7.

You can also combine two referrals and then receive an 8x10 print instead.

Three referrals will net you one 11x14 print.

(5). Thank You Cards. Appreciate your clients by thanking them for their business but DO NOT ask them for more business.

(6). Silent Auction Donations. Ask for the

auction-bidding sheet.

You can then contact all bidders and then offer them copies of your donation.

## Weddings And Portraiture

Almost every wedding they book is photographed outdoors, with only one or two conducted in their studio.

All booked weddings, however, must be accompanied with a second location in case inclement weather moves in.

Always remember, "the client is the boss", but when photographing weddings, even if a third party is paying the bill, you must satisfy the bride.

In an average wedding package, costing perhaps \$4000, the client would receive about \$1800 worth of product.

## Wall Portraits

Wall portraits are sized by the length of the photograph's longest edge and typically involve a three-step process.

First there is the initial consultation, where details of the portrait session are often discussed.

The second part involves the actual photographic session.

The final step involves

a viewing session in the client's house.

They are projected onto the client's wall, usually where the portrait will be displayed.

When you project images in your client's home, try to show them one size larger than what you really want to sell them.

Two factors affect sizing of wall portrait:

(1) What is the image of? Is it a photograph of a bride and groom, possibly just a couple, or is it a large group portrait.

(2) Baby Portrait. If the face is large, the final sizing does not have to be as large if it is a group portrait.

Placing wall portraits above a bed, dresser, or sofa, usually means a larger portrait size.

If your client is not sure how large he/she wants the portrait, one trick is to have your client hold the measuring end of a measuring tape.

You hold the other. Have the client unravel the measuring tape; this way he/she actually sees how large the portrait should be.

Following some of the above advice and seeing how Darcy and Wynna found success in this rewarding but highly competitive field, may help you find your own photographic services in demand one day.

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CLUB MEMBERS WINNING MONTHLY PICTURES



1st Place Print - Al Popil



Top, 2nd Place Print - Mark Williams



Left, 3rd Place Print - Derald Lobay



Far left, 1st Place Slide - Derald Lobay

Above, 2nd Place Slide - Derald Lobay

Left, 3rd Place Slide - Derald Lobay