



Edmonton, AB, Canada

# imagery

April 2015  
Volume 39:07

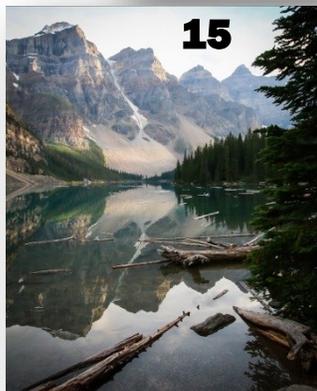
"Family Heirloom" © Linda Treleaven (Open Print, Second Place)



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## April 2015



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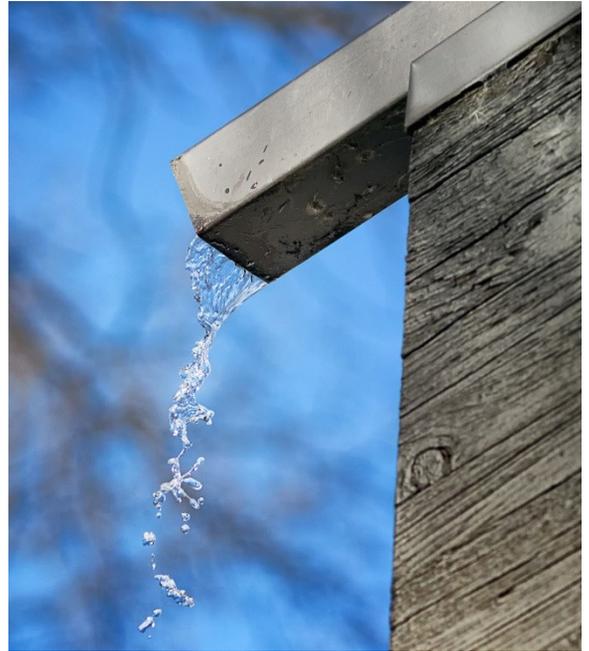
# President's Message

## Spring is not only a Season by David Aldana, President

According to my calendar, Spring has arrived and I can see it for the longer and warmer days. But "Spring" is not only a season; it is also a verb that implies rising, moving, growing, leaping and acting. It is also a state of mind. I couldn't agree more with one definition I found, "to be released from a constrained position," and who doesn't feel like that after a long, cold winter? Although I personally love winter photography, I have to admit that some days the weather has gotten the best of me and I welcome spring with open arms and many photographic plans and projects.

In April, the Club will have its official 40th birthday party. One way to commemorate this event is by recounting the achievements our group has harvested through all these years. But another, maybe more important way to celebrate, is to reflect in the future—in how we can further improve the Club and in how each and every member can individually contribute. If you are planning to attend the April 9th celebration, enjoy the stories and anecdotes that will be told by current and past members, but also keep an eye on the future and all the interesting and exciting challenges that lie ahead.

Remember that all members are vital to the Club, and think of ways you can help shape the next few years and have a positive impact on how IACC will look like when it celebrates the 50th Anniversary in a few more years. And once you reflect on that idea, if you feel you are actually in a "constrained position" regarding your involvement with the Club, I invite you to "spring" into action (pun totally intended).



"Trickle" © Vincent Morban



"Signs of Spring" © Barbara Morban

During 2005 to 2010, the Club reached over 100 members for the first time, the web bringing in many young and vibrant photographers to a Club that had been quietly aging. Edmonton lost its only camera repair shop and, in 2009, gained VISTEK. Our webmaster pleaded for members to submit photographs so he could create a gallery for members on the website. This was new and exciting, but scary for those of us not really up on our computer wizardry.

We were still having slides in our competitions, but the entries were becoming fewer and fewer. In October, there was a new option to pre-register prints and slides for competition to lighten the load for the Competitions Chair. The maximum entries for each category went down from 3 to 2 and, in 2009, it became mandatory to pre-register all entries. Looking at the names of those who entered and won competitions over the many years, we consistently saw Sheila Holzer, Carol Rusinek and Derald Lobay.

The first digitized newsletter happened in the summer of 2008 and, since then, copies are posted our website (just go to Newsletter and go back as far as that date). The fees went up in 2008 to \$50 per year. The Club had a group Exhibit at the Royal Alexander Hospital from October to December. That same year we moved locations to our present location at Pleasantview Community Hall. In the fall of 2008, we did a special project with Edmonton Archives called, "THEN and NOW." About 40 members chose one photograph from the archives and then shot the same location in 2008. There was an opening night celebration of the photographs hung side-by-side, with many members present in the new Archives building.

Presidents during those years were Jim Gaa, Miriam Stanisavljevic, Ray von der Woning and Scott Henderson. Editors of *Imagery* were Robyn Short, Richard Perron, Kathy Newfeld, Rae Emogene and Fred Rushworth. All the other positions on the Board were filled with long-term hard workers who helped IACC be such a vibrant Club for such a long time.

Names of some of the new people involved were Richard Wear, Sieg Koslowski, Zbigniew Gortel, Ray Rasmussen, and Art Cegielski. Also, Carol Rusinek and Sheila Holzer, quietly organized events and gathered people for outings and workshops.

Some of those outings were amazing: The Citadel, Government House, Maligne Canyon Ice Walk, Orchids at Muttart, Churches of Lamont County and Con Boland's studio. We began going to Aldon's Auto Salvage Yard and to do downtown 'Reflections.' We went to Holes Greenhouse, Rainbow Valley and Whitemud Creek, the Silver Skate Festival and the John Janzen Nature Center. We had a quad race shoot and dog sled races, a harvest outing, and a barn shoot.

The workshops were equally varied and fascinating. We had our first Photoshop workshop. Our editor at the time wrote, "Photoshop is only a tool and NOT a replacement for good composition and metering techniques." (Hmmm, this still remains true I would say.) Jim Ainslie gave his first Flatbed scanner workshop; Gerry Wirun did summer portraits; Marc Cherniwchan gave several workshops on printing BIG prints; Darwin Mulligan did studio portrait and engagement portrait workshops; Zbigniew Gortel did matting; Carol Rusinek gave many Black Light workshops; Robert Goerzen did a portrait workshop; and Muffy Mathewson gave a slideshow-making workshop, as well as her "Flowers Under Water" workshop.

Carol organized participation in World Photography Day (August 19, 2008) in Hawrelak Park. Carol also organized several summer activities for IACC photographers. During these years, five Honorary Members were named: Leotta Cummins, Max Wilke, Gerry Harris, Steve Sutphen and Sheila Holzer. All most deserved! New names were popping up with competition wins— Bob Royer, Quincey Deters and Vincent Eyben.

In the summer of 2010, several members of the Club joined Fred Rushworth to photograph the Rona MS Bike Run from Edmonton to Camrose—a two-day event with a slideshow of the riders on the evening of the first day. Now that's a challenge! Way to give back Images Alberta Camera Club members!



# Events Calendar: Something for Everyone

Please visit the [IACC website](#) for the most up-to-date information

## April 2015

- **April 9 (Thursday 7:30 p.m.)**  
*Social Event:* Celebrating Club's 40th Anniversary.  
Cake, appetizers, memories ...
- **April 18 (Saturday 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.)**  
*Outing:* Orchid Fair, Enjoy Centre, St. Albert
- **April 23 (Thursday 7:00 p.m.) PLEASE NOTE TIME CHANGE!**  
*IACC Annual Competition.* President's Challenge  
Theme: Seduction

## May 2015

- **May 1–30: IACC Member's Choice Exhibit at Jake's Framing & Gallery. 10441-123 Street, Edmonton**
- **May 14 (Thursday 7:30 p.m.)**  
*Guest Speaker:* NAIT Scholarship Winner (2014–2015)  
*Member Showcase:* Ronald Ross  
*Election:* Election of 2015–2017 Board of Directors
- **May 16 (Saturday TBD)**  
*Outing:* Year-end Picnic and Scavenger Hunt
- **May 28 (Thursday 6:30 p.m.) PLEASE NOTE TIME CHANGE!**  
*Year-End Potluck and Annual Competition Results*

IACC Annual Competition: Submissions are due Sunday, April 12, 2015 at 8:00 p.m.

Categories are:

- ◆ New Member of the Year
- ◆ Nature (flora, fauna and landscape)
- ◆ Outings
- ◆ Workshops
- ◆ Humour
- ◆ Clive Mathewson: A humorous, light-hearted presentation accompanied by either a verbal or musical component. A digital presentation should be about 3 minutes long. A print presentation must be a minimum of 10 and maximum of 20 images.
- ◆ President's Challenge: Theme: Seduction

Please visit the [website](#) (IACC Annual Competition Reference Chart) for more details.

## Volunteers Needed for 2015–2017

There will be a few positions coming up in May 2015. If you are interested in a two-year commitment to the Board of Directors, **please contact Steve Ricketts**, current Vice-President. He would be pleased to discuss the opportunities with you. A few positions that will be vacant in May 2015 are:

- Membership Chair (Standing Committee)
- Newsletter Editor (Standing Committee)
- Treasurer (Executive)
- Workshop Chair (Standing Committee)
- President (Executive).

## Election Day! Thursday, May 14, 2015 meeting!

Images Alberta Camera Club  
**40th Anniversary (1975–2015)**

58 photographs by 40 IACC members will be on display at **Jake's Framing & Gallery** from May 1 to 30, 2015.

(Hours: Monday to Saturday from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.).

Also, please come **join us** at the **Exhibit Opening** on **Saturday, May 2, 2015** from **7:00 to 9:00 p.m.** (Wine and Cheese is included).

**Everyone is welcome.**

10441–123 Street Edmonton, AB



## Member Showcase: Clayton Reitzel: Humble Humanity in Nicaragua

By Roxy Hastings, IACC Member

On March 12, 2015, Images Alberta Camera Club was treated to two amazing presentations by two outstanding photographers—one a pro, and one an enthusiast, who could easily be a pro.



Clayton Reitzel © David Aldana

Curtis Comeau wowed us with his incredible advertising photography, but concluded with a series of travel images that were clearly dear to his creative heart. Curtis ended by answering his own rhetorical question, 'how could he shoot scenes that had been shot a hundred thousand times and still be unique?' His answer, he always includes people. Because each person is unique, they make each shot unique.

As if right on cue, up stepped our own Clayton Reitzel, who proceeded to entrance us with a short presentation showcasing a slice of lives lived with humble humanity in Nicaragua.

I have to admit that I became so quickly engrossed that I forgot I was supposed to be writing this article and didn't wake up to the fact for about five minutes or so. I even had to write Clayton and ask him for the title of his talk because I had neglected to write it down!

I do remember Clayton saying his passion was photographing people, showing where and how they lived. To this end, he had travelled to Nicaragua on a photo tour run by Darlene Hildebrandt, but the tour was far more than just photography. The participants had to give back to the community that they had the privilege of photographing by helping paint a community centre, teaching, and serving food to an impoverished neighbourhood. Not only was this a fine humanitarian effort, it also helped immerse them into the community, gaining trust and thus making opportunities for powerful photographic works. Who cannot love the concept?

Clayton had also told me that he loves to photograph architecture, which should not be surprising given that he is a professional engineer. This seems to have spilled over into street photography too, although birds and animals are not neglected, and he says he is willing to give just about any genre a go.

Clayton treated us to a presentation that I can only sum up in one word: HAUNTING.

For my write up, Clayton supplied me with images that I think nicely abstract his presentation.

### Pretty in Pastels

Clayton started out on an architectural note, giving us a sense of the place where people lived. What struck me right away was just how clean this city was, it looks much cleaner than most North American or European cities that I have seen. I love the soft pastel colours, with their subdued earthy hues. The image has a strong leading line that draws me right through the town square, inviting me to eat up every detail. He even managed to capture a motorcyclist, thus fulfilling the need for people to make a great travel image. Clayton was off to a good start.



© Clayton Reitzel

*Continued on next page ...*



### Reach Up

However, “Reach Up” quickly showed that Clayton was not going to be technically bound, as he showed us that other elements, such as strong angles and dramatic leading lines, can give a travel image punch (even without people). The complementary colours of yellow and blue give the image a classic look that finely supports the traditional architectural style. Great composition.



© Clayton Reitzel

### Polaroid

This was such a heartwarming shot. One of the trip participants had what was truly a stroke of genius and brought a Polaroid camera. I didn't know that you could still get film for those puppies! One of my feelings of guilt shooting people on trips is that you can show them images as you take them, but you often cannot give them the image. And I know from experience shooting in remote eastern Turkey that taking pictures with a DSLR can attract a lot of attention. What a great concept to be able to take pictures of kids, give them the picture and then have the image develop before their eyes. Totally magical! And here you can see that the spell worked. I love how the boy is looking at the girl's picture, strongly connecting the two characters. A lovely bokeh lifts the kids from their background. Careful, those smiles are contagious!



© Clayton Reitzel



© Clayton Reitzel

### Priceless Smile

Is this an OXFAM or UNESCO worthy image or what? Seriously, this shot deserves some high level publication. Clayton told us that one of the things that struck him about Nicaragua was how happy the people were, despite their often impoverished condition. To make good on his claim, he served up his favourite image and I can see why – it's the type of image that can't help but make you smile. You can sense the poverty, but her hope and happiness is just bursting forth – and if you don't feel it then you're probably not breathing either! Technically gorgeous, with a sharp focus on her big dark eyes which are on a rule-of-thirds line, and then quickly fading out to a soft focus to really make this beautiful child pop from her environment. This needs to be somebody's poster child.

*Continued on next page ...*



© Clayton Reitzel

### Steam

Steam could be just be two big steaming pots of soup on the stove, if it were not for the inclusion of someone's hand stirring the pot. This is a cunning example of using Curtis Comeau's concept of putting people into the picture. It turns a mundane moment into something universally human. The fact that you cannot see who is stirring the pot means that it could be anyone stirring the pot, even you. It gives this shot a universal appeal.

On top of that, we know that this was a soup kitchen, run by a local restaurant, and that Clayton and his fellow travellers were serving the soup that day, under trying conditions. (Not everyone could be fed.)

### Green Child

I can see why Priceless Smile (page 7) would be Clayton's favourite image; who could not feel good about life just to look at her? However, my favourite image is one that I honestly could not stand to have hanging in my house, although I can recall few photos that I have seen in any gallery, anywhere, that deliver such a visceral hit. I could not stand to have Green Child in my house because it chokes me up and brings a mist to my eyes whenever I see it. It just tears me up, but like a moth to a flame, I am inescapably drawn to it. Indeed, it is hard to objectively write about it. This hungry little girl waiting in line, staring upwards as if into the heavens, praying that she will be fed with such a look of anguish and faint hope on her face. I can almost hear her raspy whisper, "Please, I'm so hungry. Please feed me." Tenderly embraced by an older brother, one hand hugging her shoulder, the other gently clutching her forearm, his lips slightly parted as if to calmly reassure her, "It's ok, little sister, I know we'll make it, we'll be fed." Or maybe he's just softly singing to comfort her. Either way, his calm demeanor is a beautiful foil to her evident anguish; as if he's trying to play the man, and he's doing a damn fine job of it too. This picture was also a great foil to Clayton's entire presentation and was so singularly strong that it totally balanced all the other beautiful images of happy and joyful children that he had managed to capture.



© Clayton Reitzel

# CAPA 2015 Conference



*Exploring Photography  
Sea to Sky*

**AUGUST 1-3, 2015**

**CAPA PHOTO EXPO** *Education Motivation Inspiration*

**Internationally Renowned Speakers**

**Competitions**

**Photo Tours**

**Interactive Workshops**

- Portraiture
- Impressionism
- Architecture
- Mobile Photography
- Creative Vision
- Marketing
- Long Exposure
- Travel
- Lighting
- ...and more!

© Brenda Tharp

**Online registration opens January 5, 2015**  
(Discounts available for CAPA members and for early bird registration)

Visit our website for more information: **CAPAPHOTOEXPO.CA**

This year's Canadian Association for Photographic Arts (CAPA) Photo Expo in Vancouver features Brenda Tharp and Joel Grimes as the keynote speakers. Brenda Tharp is a landscape and travel photographer, while Joel Grimes works more in advertising and portrait photography. There will be several field trips, including trips to Victoria and Tofino, Aerial Photography, a trip to a fishing village, a model shoot and much more. In total, there will be 30 presentations and workshops by 11 photographers exploring diverse areas of photography. © Robert Royer, IACC Social Chair



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## Guest Speaker: Curtis Comeau

### International Commercial and Editorial Photographer

By Heather Kuchma, IACC Program Chair

What a coincidence as the Club celebrates its 40th anniversary this spring, that our guest speaker for March, Curtis Comeau, international commercial and editorial photographer, recently celebrated his receipt of *Avenue Magazine's* Top 40 Under 40 award. Not only did he receive recognition for his contribution to the photography trade in Edmonton and the community, but also for the feature, including the cover image of the November issue.



Curtis's dynamic and high energy presentation was, due to time constraints, way too short, so we will have to see if we can invite him back for a longer presentation in the future as he does have a lot of valuable information and insights to share. In his presentation, he mentioned he felt his success in the industry is based on a few key principles—he delivers, he is fast (respects everyone's time), he owns the necessary gear and he knows how to use it to his advantage, and most importantly he is able to adapt to any situation (for some of us this would translate into keeping up the calm, cool and collected façade even when everything else is spiraling out of control). He also emphasized the importance of being prepared for the shoot, not just in terms of equipment but knowing as much information about the subject(s) and all the other relevant variables in advance. I would also suggest that his continued success (beyond his exceptional abilities) is because of his humility; he recognizes his success is shared with the contributions of the individuals and teams involved either behind the scenes and/or during the shoot.



© Curtis Comeau

Even as he walked through the Hollywood shoot with Keltie Knight for *Avenue Magazine*, he commented on the fact that, yes, he snapped the pictures but it took an entire crew to make it happen—art director, make-up artist, hair stylist, his associate Kevin, and the list goes on and on.

On the topic of travel photography, Curtis mentioned one way to make a photograph different from what has been shot a 100 million times before at the iconic locations is to consider adding a human element, as this a factor that can never be exactly recreated. And when shooting on assignment, make sure your information is accurate; for example, if you are saying this is a photograph of a typical worker riding his bike to the factory in China, ensure that this is the case and that the individual is not a manager or owner of that factory.

To conclude the presentation Curtis walked through his basic kit and made sure to flag the life saving 8mb compact flash card (also known as, the 'OH SH\*\*!' Always there in Reserve flash card).

To see some of Curtis's more recent, and very local, work be sure to pick-up a copy or go online to view the March/April issue of *The Tomato*, featuring the 3rd annual top 100 best things to eat and drink in Edmonton, and the March issue of *Avenue Magazine*, the annual best restaurants issue. Or visit his website at <http://www.curtiscomeau.com> or follow him at <https://instagram.com/curtiscomeauphoto/>.



# What is Street Photography? by Vincent Morban, IACC Treasurer

## What is Street photography?

Discussion of street photography brings to mind images of people in public places. Good street photography goes beyond that—it features the human condition within public places. It does not necessitate the presence of a street or even the urban environment. It often focuses on emotions displayed or documents people’s behaviour in public places.

Street photography includes fine art photography, social documentary photography and photojournalism. Photojournalism is held to higher ethical standards imposed by the need for timeliness, objectivity, accuracy and narrative.

Command over photographic equipment and technique is important, as street photographers face the challenges of shooting on the move (so less equipment is better). Serendipity often plays a role in choice of subject matter. Terrain can be unfamiliar and people can be unpredictable.

Successful street photographers can pick good locations (where people interact), find ways to get close to their subjects, find juxtaposition, anticipate human behaviour, and find interesting perspectives. Street photographers are always ready to take a photograph, smile often, are respectful, know how to tell a story, know how to blend in, and learn to disregard what other people think.

### Some tips:

- Black and white is often where it’s at with street photography.
- What’s going on behind your subject can sometimes ‘make’ the shot.
- Street photography is not a formal medium. Look out for ‘surprising’ subject matter and composition, perspective and colour.
- Breaking the ‘rules of photography’ can lead to great shots.
- The street is a place of movement – capture it.



“Guys” © Vincent Morban



“Just Can’t Wait” © Vincent Morban



“Occupy Wall Street” © Vincent Morban



“Undercover Police” © Vincent Morban

# Look Down, Way Down the Grand Canyon

By Vincent Morban, IACC Member

First the safety talk ... When you are shooting the Grand Canyon, or at least part of it, you must remember some basics. If you drop something don't go after it; Don't grab shrubs for support because they will not hold; That big boulder you are putting your weight against may move; Beware of loose gravel; Keep to the wall side ... you get the idea.

## Rewind. Isn't this a photography newsletter?

My wife, Barbara, two friends and I hired a local guide/professional photographer (Adam Schallau) to help us find the best location for a sunset, night and sunrise shoot. We were given hands-on instruction on camera techniques, lens selection and composition while on site. We were pleased to be taken to sites that were basically tourist free.

My camera is an OM-D EM-1 with the Oly 12-40 f2.8 and OLY 75mm f1.8 lenses; and Barbara's camera is an OM-D EM-5 with a Pany 14-42mm f3.5-5.6. The following are some things we learned.

For day photography:

- The sky is bright and the canyon is dark. Use grad filters to even out the tonal ranges.
- Start by shooting wide in the early hours. You get the best shapes and interesting contrast.
- Shoot longer later in the day to pick out details.
- Watch the weather. The sky and clouds are ever changing. The colour of the canyon changes constantly.
- Use the tripod!!! And keep your hands off it while shooting (my bad habit). The winds in the canyon can cause the tripod to shake, so a heavier tripod is a good idea, or get someone to block the wind for you.
- Use the delayed release or a remote release.
- Many people use a rule of thumb, which states that you should focus roughly 1/3 of the way into your scene in order to achieve maximum sharpness throughout (if desired).

- Shoot right and process left. Huh? That means keep your eye on the histogram and push it to the right. Do not push the histogram over the edge. When shooting in RAW the images look washed out but when processed properly result in images with greater detail. Don't fear because basically what looks bad in the camera looks good when properly processed.

For night photography:

- The rule or 500 (500/focal length of lens) is a rule of thumb for calculating maximum exposure times before star trails begin to appear. This is due to the earth's rotation.
- The maximum exposure times will decrease proportionately as sensor size decreases.
- A wide angle lens with a very "fast" aperture, meaning the number under the "f" is small, will help you to pick up as much light as possible in the shortest amount of time.
- Higher ISOs reduce exposure times, at the cost of noise.
- Keeping in mind the rule of 500 for OM-D, I used the Live Time/Live Bulb feature, picked my ISO (100-200 to reduce noise), set my focus point, brought up the histogram and watched the image appear on the screen. In Live View, I watched the histogram move to the right and when the histogram stopped moving the image was complete. Time permitting, leaving the image exposing longer seems to capture more detail.

It was a great photo shoot (see photos on the next page), and one that we will remember for a long time. We would recommend Adam Schallau to anyone who is off to see the Grand Canyon.



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Grand Canyon (continued)



Two photographs on this page © Vincent Morban



## COMPETITION WINNERS: March 2015 The Alberta Advantage Digital



*Congratulations*



Top: "Working Hands" © Karen Albert, First Place

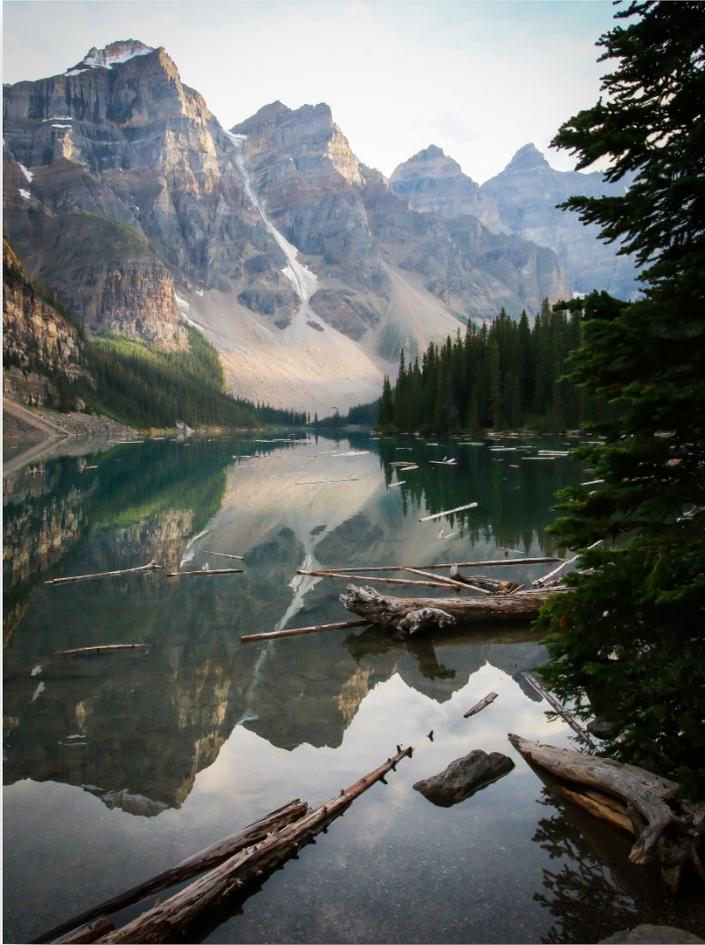
Middle left: "Cowboys in Training"  
© Susanne Pawliuk, Second Place

Middle Right: "Mixed Farming"  
© Calvin Binnema, Second Place

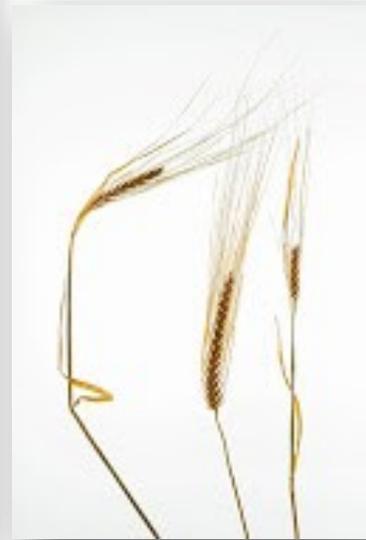
Bottom: "Remember to Breathe"  
© Quincey Deters, Third Place



**COMPETITION WINNERS: MARCH 2015**  
**The Alberta Advantage *Unlimited Print***



“Mountains Majestic” © Terri Ross, First Place



“Alberta Wheat” © Quincey Deters, Third Place



“Love the Land” © Karen Albert, Second Place

*Congratulations*



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## COMPETITION WINNERS: MARCH 2015

### The Alberta Advantage *Limited Colour Print*



"Reap What You Sow"  
© Karen Albert, First Place



"Summer Storm"  
© Wendy Royer, Second Place



"Tranquility in Jasper"  
© Clayton Reitzel, Third Place

*Congratulations*



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## COMPETITION WINNERS: MARCH 2015

### The Alberta Advantage *Unlimited Black and White Print*



"Relaxing at Banff Springs" © Clayton Reitzel, First Place



"Big Industry" © Kirby Price, Second Place



"The Rocky Mountains" © Quincey Deters, Third Place

*Congratulations*

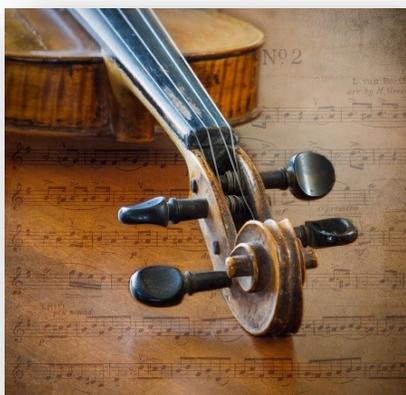


**COMPETITION WINNERS: MARCH 2015**  
**OPEN Unlimited Print**



*Congratulations*

“Winter Hoarfrost” © Steve Ricketts, First Place



“Family Heirloom”  
© Linda Treleaven, Second Place  
(See front cover of this issue)



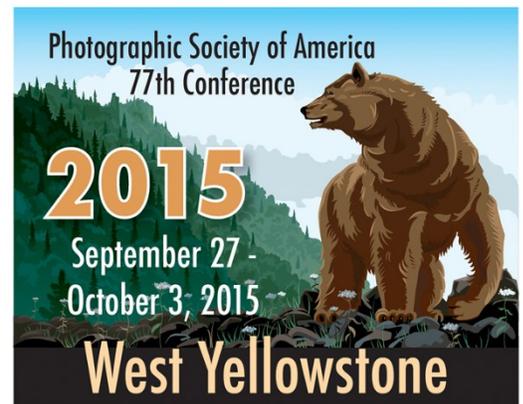
“Still Lived In” © Wendy Royer, Third Place



## PSA 2015 CONFERENCE: Register NOW!



"One of the most enjoyable activities of PSA is the week-long Annual Conference. The Annual Conference is held in September or October in a different location each year. During the Annual Conference registrants can participate in photo tours, classes, workshops, and photo shoots. There is an Opening Meeting of the Society with award presentations, an extensive Print Exhibition, a variety of programs, featured speakers in the evenings, social events, a vendor area with product demonstrations, numerous photographic activities, and a Banquet on the last evening. The Conference is a great way to meet people, have a personal encounter with someone whose photography is known, and renew longtime acquaintances." © [PSA website](#)



### EXAMPLES OF 2015 PROGRAM TOPICS

- Concept to Execution—The Photographic Journey
- New Zealand: An Eight Week Round Trip
- Wildlife: Get it Right the First Time
- In Pursuit of Wildlife, Favorite Spots in the US
- Big Cats of Africa (and How to Shoot)
- Wildlife Photography in the Mid-Atlantic States
- Infrared Photography in the Digital Age
- Polar Bears of Churchill
- Photo Story
- How to Make your First Photo Book and Enter Pictorial Print Division Book Competitions
- Using the Computer—3D Tips, Tricks and Techniques
- My Journey from Nature to Culture
- Photojournalism: Human Interest is Everywhere
- Capturing Motion in Photojournalism

### SOME 2015 WORKSHOP TOPICS

- Macro Photography
- Editing Video in Photoshop
- Sunrise, Landscape and Wildlife Workshop Tour

### 2015 PHOTO TOURS

- Oxford Bend
- Yellowstone Canyon
- West Thumb and Hayden Valley
- Old Faithful/Midway Geyser Basin
- Mammoth Hot Springs

### 2015 FEATURED SPEAKERS

- Rick Cloran
- Mike Moats
- Art Wolfe
- Roman Kurywczak
- Bryan Peterson
- Tim Grey

PSA Conference registration begins April 1, 2015. Book your hotel soon because rooms are filling up quickly.

Read Bill Stuart's article, "Tours Aplenty for 2015 PSA Conference." *PSA Journal*, February 2015, pp. 30–33, 81 (2). [www.psa-photo.org](http://www.psa-photo.org) (requires membership login)



# How to Choose a Macro Lens

By Ronald Ross, IACC Special Interest Group Coordinator

One of the main questions people ask when they want to start doing close-up photography is, “what equipment do I need?” There are lots of options for getting “up close and personal” with your subject, including relatively inexpensive options, such as close-up filters and extension tubes. They are a good way of trying close-up, but if you are going to get serious about it, you will probably want a dedicated “macro lens.” All of the major camera manufacturers and aftermarket companies make high quality macro lenses. (Caveat: Read lots of reviews of any lens you are thinking of buying).

Any serious macro lens will be a prime (single focal length). Some zoom lenses are sold as “macro” but in most cases are limited to 1:5 to 1:3 reproduction ratio. These won't really provide you with enough magnification, as you will want 1:1 or 1:2 reproduction ratio. Macro zooms also have other drawbacks for serious close-up work. They are okay if all you want is the occasional frame-filling flower, or are worried about weight for your travel kit.

There are two design features you should look for right away when considering a macro lens. For a start, a good macro lens will be made using **extra-low dispersion glass** to minimize chromatic aberration. The closer you focus, the worse this becomes. The lens design should also include a **flat field focal plane**. With this, the focal plane is truly parallel to the sensor. Most lenses produce a slight curve. It's hard to detect if you are shooting at longer distances (over ~40-50cm), but can become painfully obvious in close-ups.

These features mean that a serious macro lens will tend to be expensive compared to another prime of the same focal length and aperture. On the other hand, a good macro lens is usually very good for other uses. A few archaic designs don't actually focus to infinity, which limits their usefulness.

All of the other important features to look for in a macro lens have to deal with depth of field. Both technically and artistically, close-up photography is dominated by shallow depth of field. For practical purposes, depth is determined by four things: sensor size, aperture, focal length, and focal distance.

The larger your sensor, the shallower your depth of field (all other things being equal). The larger your aperture (smaller the number), the less depth of field you have. The longer the focal length of your lens, the less depth of field you have. And, very importantly for close-up, the closer you get, the less depth of field you have. I can't quantify it here, as different combinations of lens, distance, aperture, and sensor will give you different results.

The problem of shallow depth of field leads to several features being desirable in a macro lens. The first of these is that the lens should have the ability to **stop down** as far as possible, to give you as much depth of field as possible when you need it (and you will). Most true macro lenses stop down to  $f22$  or smaller (larger number=smaller hole). Many lenses, macro or otherwise, are thought to start to lose image quality at their smallest stops, but having  $f32$  means you should be able to safely use  $f16$  or  $f22$ . (Note: concern about lack of sharpness at small f-stops may be overblown – try it with your own equipment and see if you can detect a difference).

Because depth of field becomes shallower as you get closer, most macro lenses are less concerned with maximum aperture. Most macro photography is done on a tripod, so long shutter speeds are not a problem. At the same time, manufacturers do not want to make the lens useless for other forms of photography, or make the viewfinder too dark, so most macro lenses have maximum apertures from  $f2$  to  $f4$ . Finally, on the subject of aperture, the lens should have **rounded aperture (diaphragm) blades**, or a large number of blades, to produce more pleasing rounded out of focus highlights (bokeh).



*Continued on next page ...*



Shallow depth of field leads to another important feature of macro lenses: **manual focus**. A good macro lens will have a focus ring that is *less sensitive* than a normal prime or zoom lens. In other words, you have to turn it further to move the focal plane the same amount. This gives you more precise control. In most photography, some error in focus is acceptable; even wide open, the depth of field covers it up. For macro, the margin of error is much, much thinner. You have to decide on the precise point you want to be in the sharpest focus, and set it yourself. Autofocus may choose a different point than you would, and a difference of even a millimeter can be enough to ruin a shot. Touch-screen focus using live view can get around this, but with a small screen, such as the one on the back of your camera, the width of your finger may introduce unacceptable error. If you are remote controlling the camera via a tablet or large smartphone, you can probably get away with it with some practice.

After you ensure a lens has all of the features that I just described, you are still not done. You have an important decision left to make: **focal length**. For Nikon full frame (24 by 36mm sensor) cameras, for example, the following macro lenses are available: 40mm, 45mm, 50mm, 55mm, 60mm, 85mm, 90mm, 100mm, 105mm, and 200mm. Aside from some variations caused by aftermarket manufacturers looking to be different, why all the choice, and do you need them all?

Macro photographers choose the focal length of their macro lenses based in large part on what they are shooting. For example, live insects can be spooked if you get too close. Insect photographers therefore tend to choose longer lenses. The 40mm lens requires you to be about 3cm from your subject to get a 1:1 reproduction ratio, while the 200 mm lens achieves the same 1:1 at 48cm. However, the price of a longer lens is inevitably size, weight, maximum aperture, and often price. If you are interested in a particular subject matter, talk to other Club members with similar interests or look at Internet blogs and magazine articles (be aware that some of these are sponsored, or have odd ideas).

Choice of focal length is also about personal vision and preference. Different focal lengths provide different 'looks.' Wide angle lenses include more background, and provide greater inherent depth of field. Narrow angle (more telephoto) lenses restrict the background,



and have shallower depth of field for the same aperture. You are the only one who can make this choice.

So, do you have to break the bank to do this close-up stuff? Not really. If you are interested in a particular subject matter, you will probably only want one macro lens. Even serious close-up photographers often only have one dedicated macro lens. For example, I have a 45mm f2.8 (90mm FF/E). It covers 80% percentage of my close-up photography. I supplement it with a 14-140mm zoom (28-280 FF/E), which I use at 80-100mm (160-200 FF/E) with an extension tube, and a 30mm (60mm FF/E) prime, also used with an extension tube. Neither is ideal, but on my budget they are good enough.

## Executive 2014—2015

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**DEADLINE** for the **MAY** edition is **May 1, 2015**.

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**CLUB MEETINGS:** Held at 7:30 p.m. on the 2nd and 4th Thursday of every month from September to May (except in December: 2nd Thursday only). Location: Pleasantview Community Hall: 10860–57 Avenue, Edmonton, AB. Visitors are welcome to attend two meetings to determine if they wish to join the Club. You must be a member to attend outings and workshops and/or to participate in competitions and special interest groups.

**NEW MAILING ADDRESS:** Images Alberta Camera Club PO Box 29015, Pleasantview PO, Edmonton, AB T6H 5Z6

**WEBSITE ADDRESS:** <http://www.imagesalberta.ca/>

