



Upper Blue Mountains Camera Club Inc.

Newsletter

"Simplify, simplify, simplify." ~ Henry David Thoreau

"One 'simplify' would have sufficed." ~ Ralph Waldo Emerson

A big thank you this month goes to both Selena and Alan for their presentations. Selena, in her "Nifty Fifty" presentation did not only confine her presentation solely to the 50mm lens but included snippets like how the 50mm matches the same angle of view as the human eye. Selena's presentation also included background information about cameras with a crop sensor which was informative and also interesting. We've covered the features and benefits of the 50mm here in the newsletter and a copy of Selena's presentation will be up-loaded to the web site for your reading. Alan's presentation for the Love of . . . or Loathing of the ubiquitous Tripod covered a myriad of pros and cons, a short synopsis of them are here and as with Selena's presentation Alan's will be posted on the web site for your perusal.

www.upperbluemtnscameraclub.com.au

Alan's tripod mistakes you should remember to avoid

- extending the small leg sections first
- all knobs, legs locks, and levers not tightened well enough
- raising the centre column
- tripod head mounted to the legs improperly or not tightly
- not setting the tripod legs up on a hill properly . . . not level
- failing to mount the tripod insert to the camera correctly . . . too loose or wrong direction
- failure to mount tripod insert and attached camera on the tripod securely
- positioning the tripod legs incorrectly and standing in the wrong position
- carrying the tripod wrong

- The camera strap is now around the neck, preventing any unwanted camera crashes.
- The lens is still facing down but it's on the shoulder so the chances of it falling and hitting the ground are slim.
- Lastly, the tripod legs are out in front of you, where they can be seen. Thus, if moving or turning you can avoid hitting others with it or bumping into things. Plus, the bonus of carrying it this way is that it's much easier on both the arms and back. Just easier and more comfortable, especially if you're walking any distance.



So, admit it, were you guilty of any of these tripod mistakes? If you were, hopefully, you are now aware and have the right tools and information to maximize the correct and efficient use of your tripod as it was intended and you're on your way to taking sharper photos. Can you think of any other tripod mistakes that have been missed? Please share in the comments section below if you do, and if you're brave enough to tell us which, if any, of these you're guilty of committing.

Comments:

Member's Choices

Digital Prints of the Month

JUMP, JACK!

I snapped this little Jumping Spider enjoying the sun in our garden recently. They are such teeny, tiny little things - ranging in size from 3mm to 12mm. Jumping Spiders are in the Salticidae family which includes over 5,800 described species which makes it the largest family of spiders!

They have a lifespan of about 1 year. Some species may live for longer, especially in cold climates where they are dormant for a number of months every year. Jumping Spiders aren't named "jumping" for nothing - they can jump 50 times their own body size! They don't have special leg muscles like grasshoppers to jump. Instead, they propel themselves by suddenly changing the blood flow in their body. They use their jumping ability to catch prey as they don't build a web.

McKinley Moens



Member's Choices

Digital Prints of the Month

"Making Footprints"

I had gone to Stockton Beach in search of the magnificent sand dunes I had heard about.

I wasn't disappointed with the sand dunes, but the weather was something else.

The wind was blowing a gale with intermittent showers and so much airborne sand that it was only possible to shoot in one direction, with the camera pointing down wind.

I wanted to show the size and pristine nature of the sand dunes as well as express the atmosphere of the day.

Technical details

Olympus OM-D, 16mm, f-16, 1/25/s, ISO 200.

Emanuel Conomos



Member's Choice Colour Print of the Month

BROKEN

I took this image during a recent open day, as part of 'Lithglo', at the Lithgow Small Arms Factory, this building was one of many we wandered through on the day, it now overlooks the city, but originally there were several buildings in front of this workshop complex which would have been perfect cover for the vandals who have broken many of the windows in this and other abandoned buildings all despite the constant security patrols.

There were many broken windows, but this one in particular caught my eye because of the weathered frame, the grime on the glass and the shape left by the object that must have come hurtling through the window all set against the city and the wonderful dark clouds in the background.

Shot using my Pentax K-1 with a HD Pentax-D FA28-105 zoom, at F9 1/400, initial post-processing was done in Lightroom, cropped in close to focus on the now shattered glass, a little clarity and contrast, I then applied applied a Trey Ratcliff-Coffee High preset to give it a grungy look, then into Photoshop for some work to bring out the detail in the frame and shattered glass and the job was done.

Rob Skinner



Member's Choice Monochrome Print of the Month

“Davy”

This pic was one of the results of going to the Lithgow ‘Ironfest’. Well worth the effort as there are so many opportunities for photography, from action shots to portraits and everything else in between.

This guy was dressed like Davy Crockett and was just wandering around looking to be photographed.

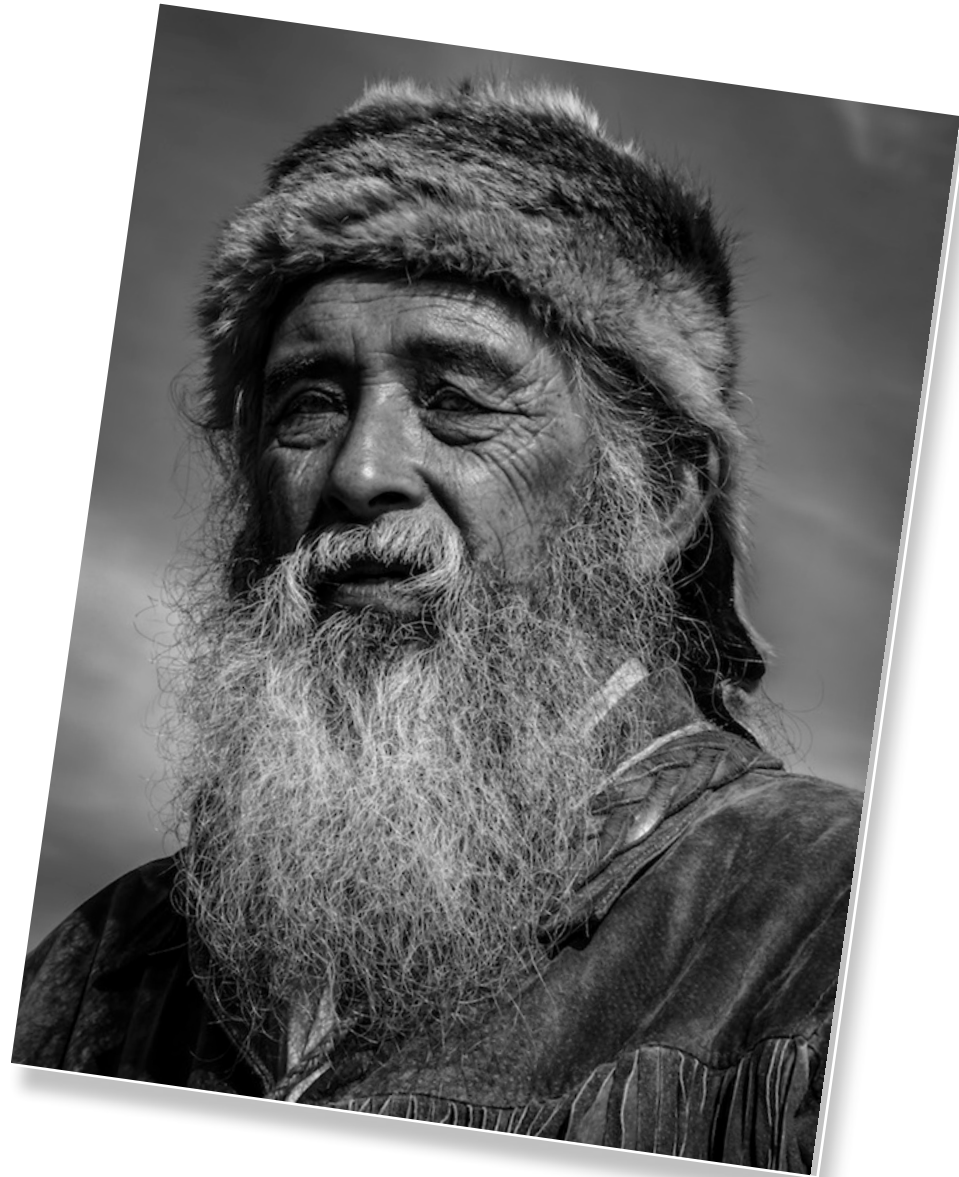
It was midday with harsh sunshine, not the best conditions, but by getting down low, I was able to lose all the unwanted background and try to minimise harsh shadows.

Technical details –

Olympus OM-D,
55mm, f-10, 320/s, ISO 200.

Printed by Ray Douglas.

Emanuel Conomos



Why you should have a 'Nifty Fifty'



Canon EF 50mm f1.8 II



Nikkor 50mm f1.8

Here's what usually happens: You're in the camera shop, and you're wondering which one you should go for. Even the salesperson can't give you a straight answer to your question – 'Which lens I should buy?'

The answer is – buy a 'Nifty Fifty' and here is why... not only because Selena, our presenter on the night, who extolled the virtues and values of the 'Nifty Fifty' lens said so, but they're...

Reasonably cheap: When you're going to buy a lens the first thing you ask is its price and as you know, anything with a photography tag doesn't come cheap! But, fortunately, 50mm is cheap; you can get one for around \$100. While there are various versions of 50mm lenses available here, we're talking about the 'Nifty Fifty' – the nickname of the entry-level 50mm lens – 50mm f1.8.

Professional quality: The next thing you want from a lens is good image quality. 50mm lens is a prime lens. Prime lenses are fixed focal length lenses. They give very good quality images. For its price, the quality 50mm lens gives matches a professional lens. Since it is a prime lens, you will experience the 'actual' or capture sharpness. A 50mm lens makes tack sharp images, especially for its price. The

colour rendition a 50mm lens gives you is way better than that of a kit lens.

It's compact and light weight: You don't want to feel that you can't take your camera out because it's heavy. You want it compact. That's another reason you should buy a 50mm. Since there are only fewer elements inside a 50mm lens, they are lighter than other primes.

It's a 'normal' or 'standard lens': Don't let the words normal standard mislead you. By normal it means perspective rendered by the 50mm matches the human eye. So it gives a natural look to the images. Why this is important? It is useful, especially for beginners, because you won't feel that you are looking through a lens.

It's a fast lens: Fast lenses are those which have *f*-numbers f2.8 or lower. They are so called because it allows you to use faster shutter speeds since wide apertures let more light in the camera. Kit lenses are opened up to 3.5 – 5.6 range. At 55mm, the widest aperture you can use is f5.6. But in a 50mm f1.8 lens, you can open up to f1.8. That's a 3 stop difference, or 6 times more than the amount of light a kit lens can let inside a camera. So the advantage is obvious – it helps you in shooting in low light conditions.

You don't need to increase the ISO, which creates noise, as when you use a kit lens, while shooting in low light situations. You can use faster shutter speed in low light situations, thus, taking blurry free images. 50mm comes with various wide apertures – f1.8, f1.4, f2, and even f0.95!

It's a versatile lens: If you are looking for a 'Any situation' / all-rounder lens, 50mm is what you want. With 50mm you can take... Portraits; Street Photographs because its field of view matches the human eye. So you can shoot what you see with your eyes and the images look natural:

Landscapes: Why not? You don't have to use wide-angle focal lengths for landscapes every time. Try some with a 50mm, too.

Thus, 50mm is a walk-around lens; you can go out with just a 50mm and come back with a variety of shots.

It gives you great bokeh that everybody loves: The bokeh is incredible. Apart from letting more light into the camera, wide apertures create a shallow depth of field and who doesn't love the out of focus circles and blur background in their photographs?

In summary, the 50mm lens is a low light lens; gives tack sharp images; a walk-around lens and a versatile lens.

One of the greatest benefits digital photography has over film is the ability it provides to check an image's exposure at capture, when you can do something about it! As photographers, we rely so much on our eyes that it's sometimes difficult to accept that they're not always right. We take a picture, look at it on the LCD, and decide whether or not it's perfect without even considering that there might be a better way. But where exposure is concerned, there is indeed a better way. That's because every picture you click, whether raw or jpeg, and especially raw, contains more shadow and highlight information than the jpeg that appears on your camera's LCD preview screen can reveal. Fortunately, our digital cameras give us a tool that tells us about that missing exposure information . . . the histogram.

Histogram explained

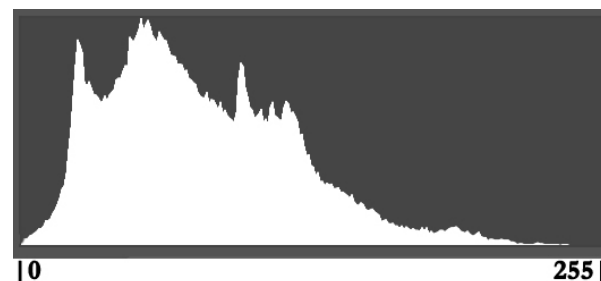
A histogram is a graph of the tones in an image and is really quite simple, simple enough to be read and interpreted in the blink of an eye. And not only is your histogram easy to read, it's really the most reliable source of exposure feedback. When an image is captured on a digital sensor, the camera's "brain" samples each photosite, the individual pixels in the megapixel number used to measure sensor resolution, determining a brightness value that ranges from 0=black to 255=white. Every brightness value from 1 to 254 is a shade of gray – the higher a photosite's number, the brighter its tone. Armed with the brightness values for each photosite in the image, the camera is ready to build the image's histogram. The horizontal axis of the histogram has 256 discrete columns, 0-255, one for each possible brightness value, with the 0=black column on the far left, and the 255=white column on the far right. They don't display as individual columns because they're crammed so close together.

Despite millions of photosites to sample, the camera builds a new histogram for each image instantly, quickly adding each photosite's brightness value to its corresponding column on

the histogram, the more photosites of a particular brightness value, the higher its corresponding column will spike.

Reading a histogram

The picture that displays on your camera's LCD is great for checking the composition, but the range of tones you can see in your LCD preview image varies with many factors, such as the camera's LCD brightness setting and the amount of ambient light striking the LCD. Most important, because there's more information captured than the LCD preview can show even in ideal conditions, you'll never know how much recoverable data exists in the extreme shadows and highlights relying on the LCD preview.



Simple Histogram: The shadows are on the left and the highlights are on the right; the far left (0) is absolute black, and the far right (255) absolute white.

It's human nature to try to expose a scene so the camera's LCD image looks good, but an extreme dynamic range image that looks good on the LCD will likely have unusable highlights or shadows. Contrary as that may sound, exposing an image enough to reveal detail in the darkest shadows brightens the entire scene, not just the shadows, likely pushing the image's highlights to unrecoverable levels. Making an image dark enough on the LCD to salvage bright highlights darkens the entire scene, all but ensuring that the darkest shadows to be too black. In fact, a properly exposed extreme dynamic range scene, a scene with both bright highlights and dark shadows, such as a sunrise or sunset, will look awful on the LCD . . .

dark shadows and bright highlights. The histogram provides the only reliable representation of the tones you captured. There's no such thing as a "perfect" histogram shape. Rather, the histogram's shape is determined by the distribution of light in the scene, while the left/right distribution, whether the graph is skewed to the left or right, is a function of the amount of exposure you've chosen to give your image. The histogram graph's height is irrelevant—information that appears cut off at the top of the histogram just means the graph isn't tall enough to display all the photosites possessing that tone or range of tones.

When checking an image's histogram for exposure, your primary concern should be to ensure that the none of the tone data is cut off on the left, lost shadows, or right, lost highlights. If your histogram appears cut-off on the left side, shadow detail is so dark that it registers as black. Conversely, if your histogram appears cut off on the right side, highlight detail is so bright that it registers as white.

Managing a histogram

In a perfect world, when you see your histogram cut off on the left, everything cut off on the left is detail-less black, you simply increase the exposure until the histogram shifts right (brighter) far enough that no shadow data is cut off. And if you see your histogram is cut off on the right, you decrease the exposure until the histogram shifts left (darker) enough that no highlight detail is cut off. Problem solved!

But many scenes contain a broader range of light, from the darkest shadows to the brightest highlights, than the camera can handle. In these scenes you can blend multiple exposures that cover the entire range of tones, apply a graduated neutral density filter that will moderate the sky. When those options aren't available or practical, I usually save the highlights and sacrifice the shadows.

While the general goal is to ensure that none of the tone data is cut off on the left or right side of the histogram, the exposure you choose for a scene is ultimately a creative choice that isn't bound to the way the scene looks to your eye.



Your 50mm TASK

Using a “normal” fixed focal length only, - (50mm for full frame, 35mm or 25mm - if you have a crop sensor camera).

Take up to three images. These can be of any subject.

Don't crop the images!

Then transfer your images after resizing the pixel dimensions, (1024x768) in the normal manner to ubmcc.dpi@gmail.com

In the subject line, please identify the images as “Nifty 50 images”

The images you take related to this task will be shown at our next Info night on 18th July.

“Just watched this movie and linked it to the newsletter.

Great story and wonderfully told. Have a look yourself sometime and let's know what you think.”

<http://findingvivianmaier.com>



Finding Vivian Maier is the critically acclaimed documentary about a mysterious nanny, who secretly took over 100,000 photographs that were hidden in storage lockers and, discovered decades later, is now among the 20th century's greatest photographers. Directed by John Maloof and Charlie Siskel, Maier's strange and riveting life and art are revealed through never before seen photographs, films, and interviews with dozens who thought they knew her.

