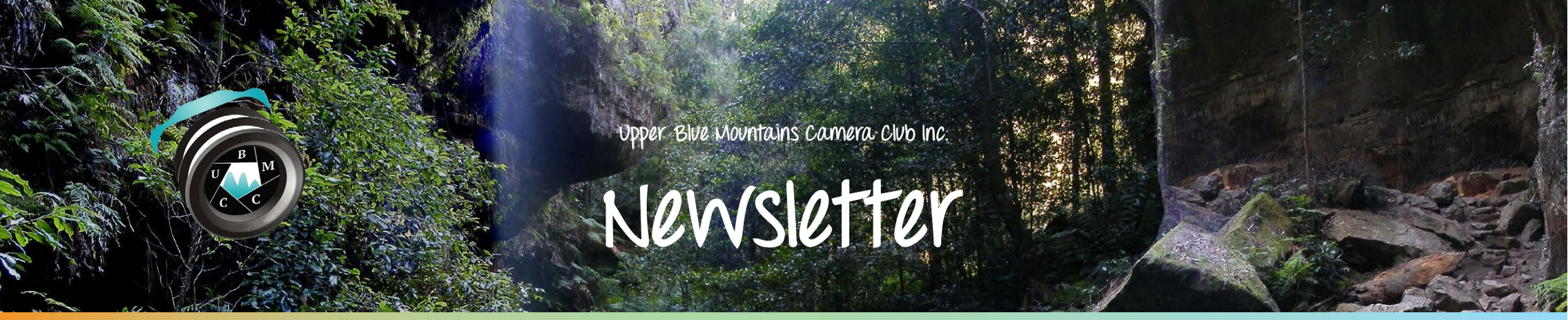


Upper Blue Mountains Camera Club Inc.

Newsletter

Most things in life are moments of pleasure and a lifetime of embarrassment; photography is a moment of embarrassment and a lifetime of pleasure. Tony Benn

The "NIFTY-FIFTY" Challenge FINALE

With only a limited number of shots being allowed and the member photographer to provide a brief dissertation of their expectation and the resulting outcome of their different shots our Nifty Fifty evening could be described as a developmental treasure.

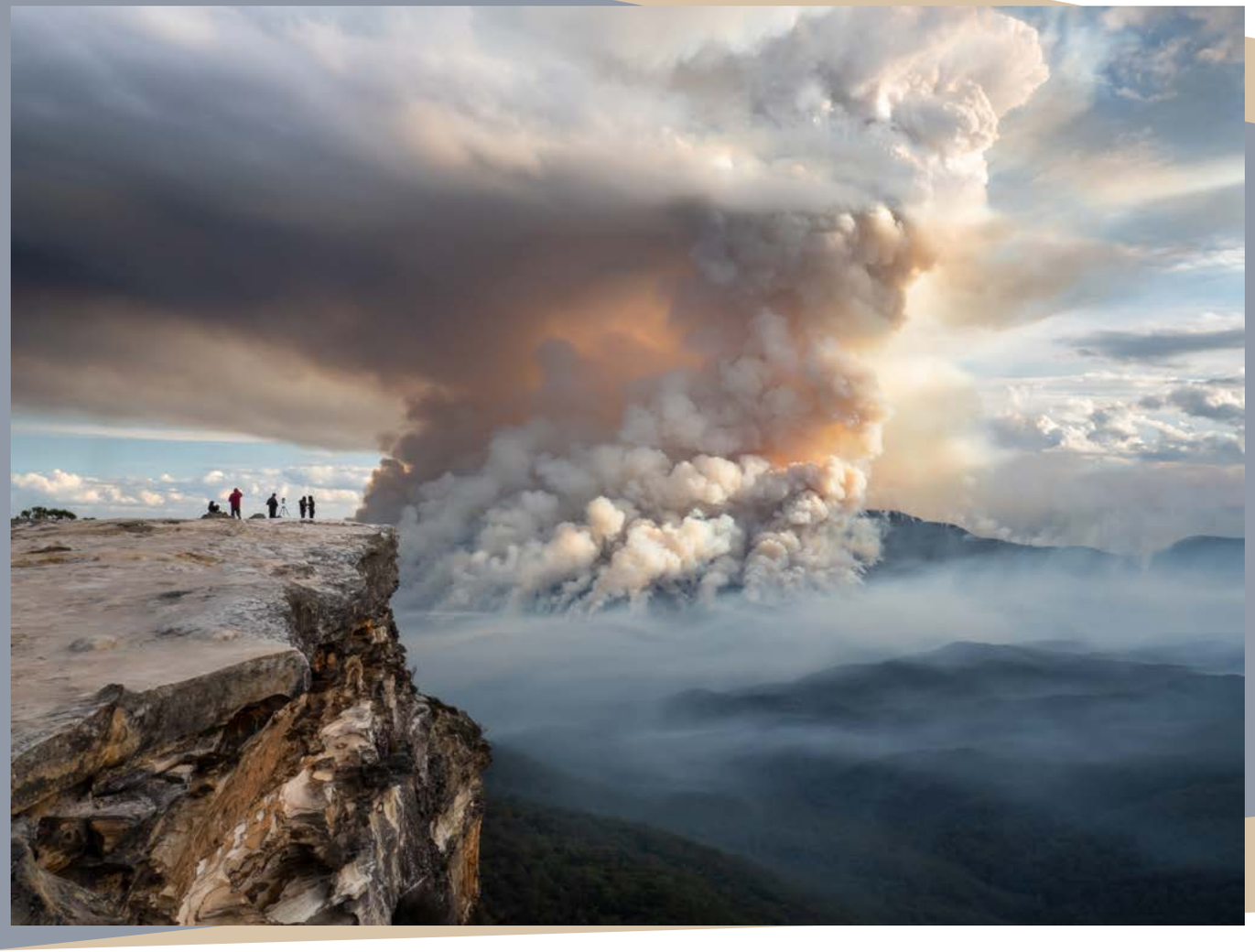
The evening provided the opportunity to reflect on what makes any one image superior in a category . . . is the best creative image the most unusual one, the most altered one or the strongest one.

The results, as judged by their peers were:

1. *"Flaming Bottle Brush" . . . Selena Williams*
2. *"Cozy Fire" . . . Greg Wood*
3. *"Instruction" . . . Rob Skinner*

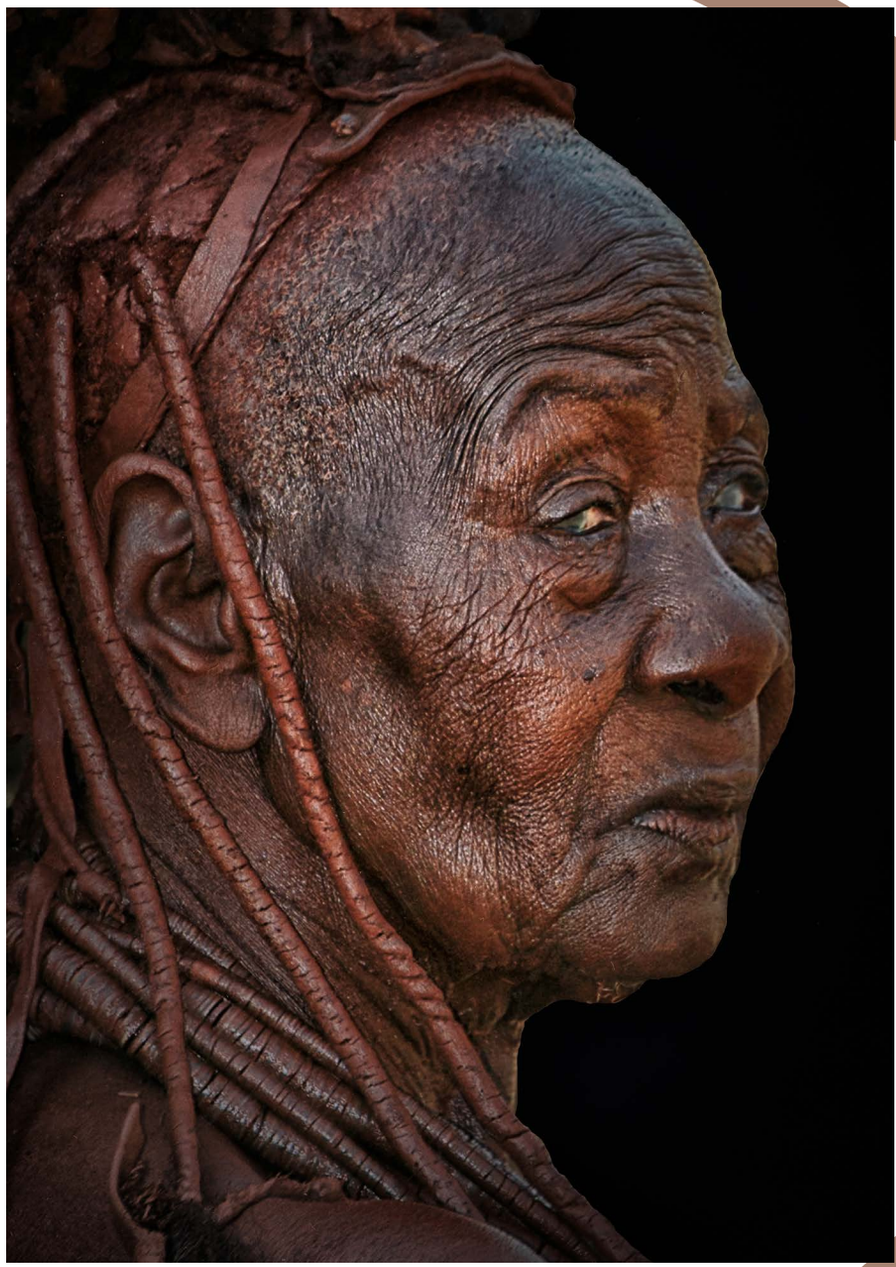
Member's Choice ~ Digital Print of the Month

"Solitary Burn Off"



Anyone who was in the vicinity of Katoomba on the afternoon of the eighth of May, and was outside, couldn't have missed the massive smoke cloud that developed over Mt Solitary.
It started off like a small camp fire at the top, but then, soon developed into what appeared to be an inferno, enveloping all of Mt Solitary, almost to the valley floor.
The relatively calm conditions meant the smoke cloud rose almost vertically for hundreds of meters, giving the impression that it was an erupting volcano.
It was one of the few occasions where I've seen people actually parking their cars on the side of the road and running to the lookout at Lincoln Rock.
It was quite a sight!
The setting sun, later in the afternoon gave the clouds an added fiery look, and the people there added some sense of scale to my image.
I used the edge of the rock to act as a leading line to the people at the end, and on to the fire.
Olympus OM-D, Olympus 12-100mm @ *f*16, 1/15s, ISO 200

Emanuel Conomos



Member's Choice
Colour Print of the Month

"Age with Dignity"

This is a portrait of an elderly Himba woman taken at her remote village in Namibia, a large and sparsely populated country on Africa's south-west coast.

She looked dignified and serene and that is what I tried to capture.

She was comfortable in having her photo taken and returned my smile.

A gracious lady.

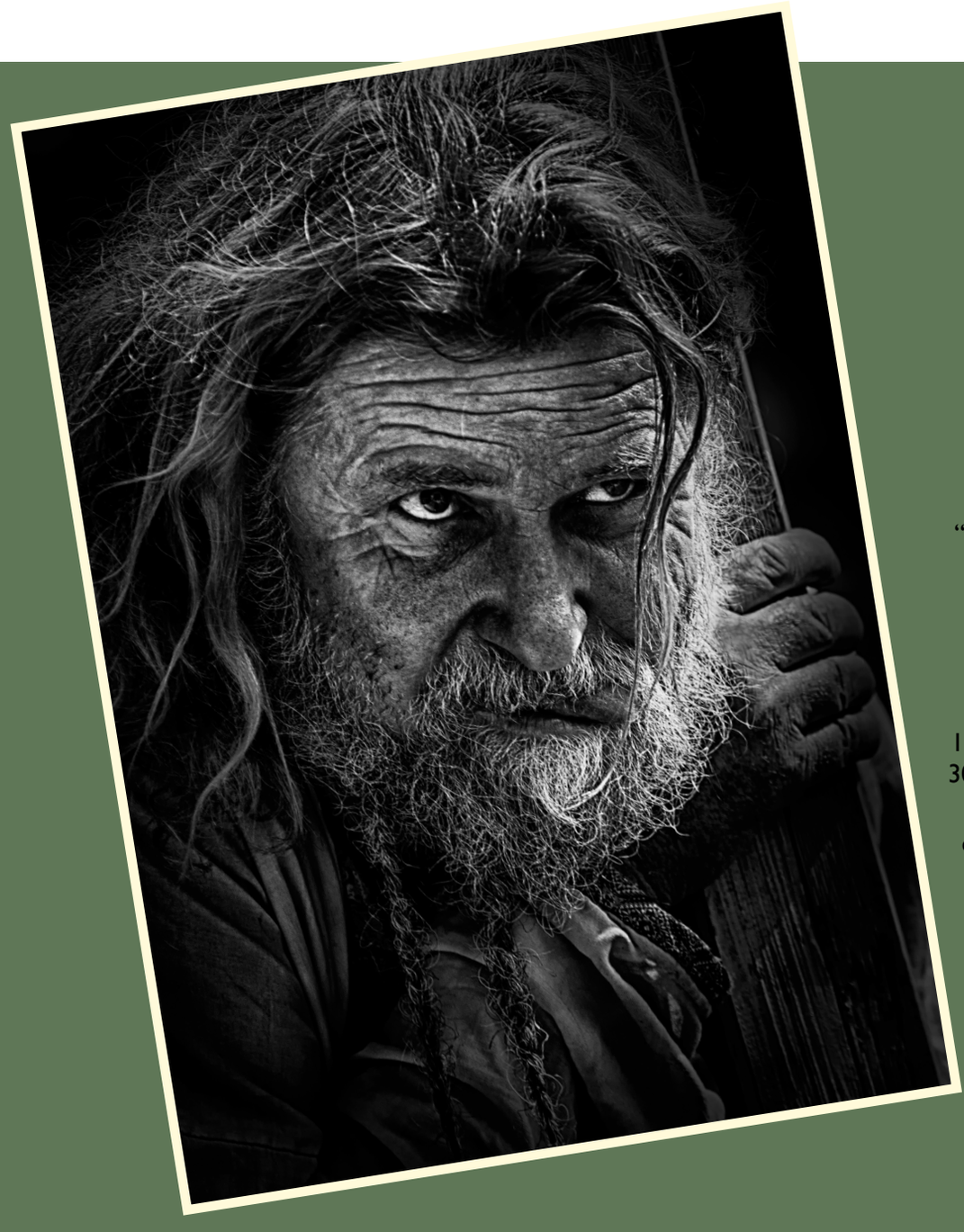
The Himba are indigenous people living in northern Namibia who follow, respect and live according to the traditions of their ancestors.

The women, in particular, use a cream made by pounding the red ochre stone.

The fragments are mixed with butter and slightly heated by means of smoke.

The ochre cream helps to keep the skin moist and clean as well as providing some protection against the sun. Humber women do not use water for washing and take daily smoke baths to maintain personal hygiene.

Harley Rustin



Member's Choice

Monochrome Print of the month

"Hairy Scary"

"Hairy Scary" was an events performer at this year's Ironfest Festival in Lithgow. He was playing up to the crowd in the grandstand when I took this photo of him.

He was pulling faces and was trying to look deranged.

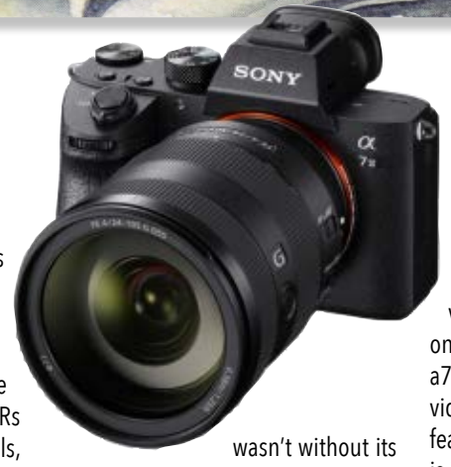
With his long unkempt hair and unruly beard he certainly looked the part!

I used a telephoto lens at a focal length somewhere between 300 and 400mm. I wasn't game to get too close to this lunatic.

A conversion to black and white was needed to bring out detail and create the sense of derangement of the occasion.

Harley Rustin

What's next?



Advancements in Imaging Technology

We've come a long way since Daguerreotype, but if anything, the process of capturing images is beginning to advance faster since the advent of the digital revolution.

Looking back, it's easy to see shifts in the industry by examining when previous standards were superseded, such as when film became an everyday item, thanks to Kodak, or when Eggleston proved that colour was a viable artistic medium.

Nowadays, we don't have as significant change as film to digital, but we do have a few significant shifts happening as we speak – namely the introduction of mirrorless as an alternative, or improvement, to the DSLR.

The accessibility of larger and larger format sensors, and massive improvements to image sensor technology, each of which has the potential to change the way photographers will capture images in the near future.

Mirrorless v DSLR

Since film versus digital, it seems that photographers have been looking for the next big argument. Well, they definitively have a confrontation brewing with the advent of mirrorless cameras. DSLRs are the standard for professionals, and consumers who wanted to move up to a "serious" camera always want that big-deal camera with interchangeable lenses. But, with the more recent development become even more murkier. Cameras like Sony's Alpha a9 even target previous SLR strongholds with a shopping list of features that should make other manufacturers nervous.

If we were to start this debate, we should talk about size. SLRs were the king of the show for a long time because of the quality and control afforded by their larger bodies. Then smartphones showed up. There was no real reason for the everyday individual to carry around a large camera for snap shots, and, with the phone they could instantly post photos to Facebook or Instagram. Point-and-shoots were even less of an improvement, but mirrorless stepped in at a perfect moment with a smaller form factor and a top-notch IQ. This wasn't without its drawbacks, however, as they brought their own quirks to the equation, including the electronic viewfinder. Love 'em or hate 'em, EVFs are here to stay, and they have received some stunning upgrades over the past few years to satisfy OVF holdouts like myself. Blackout free shooting, more true-to-life representation of your final image, and outstanding clarity and colours certainly help, as well.

Mirrorless' claim to fame is, of course, the elimination of the mirror that made SLRs what they are, and they are on the path to eliminate another camera part – the mechanical shutter. The electronic shutter isn't a new thing, but pro-calibre performance on a full frame seemed a little way off. The Sony a9 finally delivered, with a 20-fps continuous shooting speed, 693-point AF system and 24mp resolution. Finally, a perfectly silent tool for capturing fast action and sports . . . move aside DSLRs.

That isn't all mirrorless has done. They also boast the best hybrid video options currently available on the market with the GH5 and the a7S II, capable of an impressive 4K video recording with professional features, such as long gammas. This is indicative of another trend towards specialisation. Even DSLRs are getting in the mix, with various models that help fulfil the needs of certain individuals. It foretells a greater diversification of camera lines, so that different types photographers will be able to get the tools they need to capture even more stunning photographs.

Sensors get a major boost

At the heart of these current innovations is the sensor, which makes sense because it is the heart of the camera and image-taking process. We have Foveon, X-trans, Bayer and probably even more in development. Each of these offers unique advantages, but they all want to change how we capture image data and create our photographs. There are even some monochrome options on the market. Essentially, while these designs may be unique, most sensor development has focussed on adding more pixels, improving low-light performance, and boosting speed.

If we were to look back for a second, it's easy to see that major changes coincided with innovations directly related to the capture of the medium, wet plate to film, black-and-white to colour, film to digital. We are really waiting for the next big thing in photosensitive technology. This might be something as simple as a curved sensor, or could be a breakthrough in computational imaging, such as the ideas being championed by the Light L16.

Smartphones are already stepping up their game by using multiple sensors and lenses to create enhanced images (e.g. the iPhone's Portrait Model, and with 360 degree and VR becoming common, it makes sense that we are heading in that direction. Imaging systems will become smaller, more technologically advanced, capture more information, and rely on either artificial intelligence or the user to determine how to use this data. Imagine pulling out a camera as thin as your phone that can create images on par with the latest DSLRs, and it offers settings for switching lenses instead of having to carry a pack with extra lenses in it.

Last Frame . . . "Heads Up!"

So what would you have if you had three apples and four oranges in one hand and three oranges in the other hand?
Why very large hands of course!