

Camera club Communiqué

March 2020 U3A ACT Australia

The U3A Camera Club *Communiqué* is part of a newsletter sent to members of "The Camera Club", which is a year-long course run by the University of the Third Age in Canberra, ACT. For privacy reasons, class notices have been omitted from this public version. The U3A Camera Club can be contacted at u3acanberracameraclub@gmail.com

Focus Merging with *Affinity Photo*

A photo processor which is gaining respect is Affinity Photo. In this post by James Paterson on *Digital Camera World*, there is an excellent video and article on photo-merging using this program. Even if you are not interested in *Affinity Photo*, it is still worth watching the video because it shows just how focus stacking/merging works.

<https://www.digitalcameraworld.com/tutorials/how-to-focus-merge-with-affinity-photo>

How to Resize Images without Losing Quality

These days, images can be quite large, too large for some of the social media photographers like to use. However, sometimes they are not quite big enough. In the past, photographers have always been advised that it was OK to *downsize* but that *upsizing* was not really recommended because it meant the program doing the adjustment had to invent new pixels to fill the space. The article at <https://iso.500px.com/pixels-to-inches-resize-image-quality-photoshop/> very clearly describes how to go about re-sizing in *Photoshop* but because it also defines what many of the terms mean and what the various operations do, it is also recommended for people who use other programs. It is worth noting that while *upsizing* can be done reasonably successfully, ON1 is reputed to do this better.



Microsoft Going Solar?

The people at *Techradar* who have their ear to the ground and pass on the news about recent and even likely advances in technology are now saying that *Microsoft Surface Pro 8* is probably going to be solar powered. A patent detected by

the snoops at *Techradar* suggests the new computer will have a cover into which is built a solar panel which, like roof-top solar in our homes, will recharge the battery, not when exposed to daylight but also, remarkably, if exposed to artificial light (although presumably, if placed close enough). It is also believed that this will be an optional extra although it would probably be worth the money because you would only rarely have to worry about recharging the battery when out and about.

<https://www.techradar.com/au/news/the-microsoft-surface-pro-8-could-be-solar-powered?>

The Importance of Knowing Photography

The rest of this heading on *Picture Correct* reads “It’s not enough to know your camera”. Ignacio Alvarez, writing at *Picture Correct*, argues that just learning how your camera works does not make one a photographer. He says it is important to learn the basics of photography first and not just keep on upgrading to the most recent release of your camera thinking that this will make you a better photographer. So, what is it we must first master? Alvarez lists the following:



1. *How to use the camera in “M” mode. (“M” stands for Manual mode.)*
2. *What are shutter speeds? How do you change them in your own camera? How do they affect a photograph?*
3. *What are the apertures of the lens? How to change them in your own camera? How do they affect a photograph?*
4. *What is the light meter? (All cameras have one), and how do you use it?*
5. *Never use anything on the “auto” mode in your camera.*
6. *What is the ISO? How does it affect a photograph? Learn to never use an ISO higher than 400. Think about this: in the past, when any photographer was using 200 ASA film in the camera, or any other film, and wanted to photograph a very specific subject, they did not change the ASA to a higher number. Photographers simply learned how to use the film they had in the camera without changing the film. That’s what photographers do.*
7. *How to focus in a way that your photos are always sharp!*
8. *Always record your images in RAW and not jpg. You need to know what raw files are and why they are the best format to use for all photographs. When you only record jpg files, the camera gets rid of*

approximately 50% of the data that forms the image so the files are smaller. And, the files aren't safe. They keep deteriorating every time you open them or do anything with them.

Alvarez also says very wisely: *Sometimes in my classes, I have to help my students to reset the camera to factory standards. Why? Because they have played with the settings on the menu, and after changing something, most people don't put it back. Before too long the camera is not working properly. How this happens is simple. Some people will read an article about how changing something on the camera menu will get better photos, so they go ahead and try it. Later they read something else and they change it again, and by the time they actually go out and take a photo, they have no idea what they did. If by chance they get a better photo, they have no idea what worked, which change actually helped. If you ever change something on your camera, try it immediately and if you don't see any change, or it changes way too much, simply put the setting back the way it was.*

<https://www.picturecorrect.com/tips/why-its-important-to-know-photography/>

Cloud Photography Tips

The iconic photographer Alfred Stieglitz, who took the first Modernist photo, *The Steerage*, was also a life-long photographer of clouds. It was from his studies of clouds that he evolved his theory of "Equivalents" which has laid the groundwork for much of contemporary thinking about how photography works and its role in modern society. Clouds are a bit like



those ink-blot tests, the Rorschach, in that given free rein to your imagination, you can see all sorts of things in them and that is what inspires us to photograph them.

In this post, James Newton talks about his experience of shooting clouds. Two things he recommends is first, a tripod so there is no camera

shake; and second, try using filters, particularly a polarising filter.

<https://www.picturecorrect.com/tips/cloud-photography-tips/>



How to Set Up a Simple Photography Studio

Back in analogue days, many of us were proficient in temporarily converting the family bathroom or laundry into a darkroom. This necessarily inconvenienced others so imagine how much more

complicated it would make family life if one wanted to set up a studio at home. However, according to Aussie photographer, Steve Rutherford it need not be all that inconvenient, especially if you can use portable equipment. There are two videos attached to this post as well as some text setting out the basic equipment a home studio might need.

<https://www.picturecorrect.com/tips/how-to-setup-a-simple-photography-studio/>

How to Use the Lightroom Panorama Tool

This article is a quick reference on how to use the Panorama Photomerge option in the Develop Module of *Lightroom*. Trevor Dayley from *slrlounge* also gives three tips to anyone making panoramas:

1. Lock or switch focus to manual;
2. Provide overlap and leave extra room in the frame; and
3. Merge RAW, process AFTER.

<https://www.slrlounge.com/lightroom-panorama-tool-2/>

<https://www.slrlounge.com/lightroom-panorama-tool/>

The Best Film Scanners in 2020

Ben Andrews on *Digital Camera World* writes: *The best film scanners let you digitise your favorite analog photos without sacrificing quality and without taking hours and hours of work. There are lots of film scanners on the market, but they designed for a wide range of users and expectations, so this guide will help you find the perfect scanner for your needs.*

<https://www.digitalcameraworld.com/buying-guides/the-best-film-scanners?>

What is a Prime Lens?

Once upon a time all lenses were prime. Then along came the zoom lens and everyone gave up walking to frame their subject. Instead, they stood in one place and let the zoom the rest. Prime lenses, however, are still around

and there are some very good ones too which give sharper resolution, are lighter to carry, smaller to store or wear on the camera and usually, cheaper than a comparable zoom because they have fewer pieces of expensive glass in their barrel. Of course, you can still get the same photo as you would using a zoom but to do so, you would have to move around – maybe stepping backwards a bit, going sideways.... In fact, this is not just good exercise, it usually means you search out a better composition.

<https://www.digitalcameraworld.com/tutorials/what-is-a-prime-lens?>

Why Shoot in Manual Mode

Andy Lim at *Picture Correct* says that: *When it comes to consistency, manual exposure mode is the best mode among the various exposure modes.* He adds that he also uses *Aperture Priority* also, but then goes on to demonstrate that even this versatile mode can lead to problems in exposure.

<https://www.picturecorrect.com/tips/why-i-shoot-in-manual-mode/>

Is Editing Your Images Cheating?

There are purists among us who don't like any kind of after-work on an image, some regarding it as cheating. Indeed, there are even some exhibitions and competitions which won't allow any post-processing (sometimes excluding cropping). Sunny Shresthra, who often posts of *Picture Correct* reports photographer Sean Tucker who said *"Since the dawn of photography, photographers have been editing their images right from the beginning."* And that was so: back in darkroom days we all dodged and burned specific regions of our prints when the paper was under the enlarger or even massaged sections during that magical moment when the image was emerging in the developer.... It seems that the relative ease of editing/post-processing now in the digital age has prompted those purists to contend that we are making images by methods other than by camera alone.

Dependent as we are on our cameras and no matter how much we love them, they are only part of a long process of creating a fine art print. Back in the early days of photography, there was a belief that the camera, because it was a machine obeying the laws of physics ("the pencil of Nature" was one Victorian flowery phrase), produced perfect facsimiles of whatever it was pointed at when the photographer released the shutter. "The camera never lies" is a cliché as old as photography itself, but we all know that it can be manipulated to "lie" even if only by being positioned in a different place, pointed at another angle, or set to different shutter speeds

or apertures... That is all part of the program for making the picture by the camera+photographer team...

Essentially, a camera is no more than a tool in the hands of the photographer which these days allows us to be far more creative than photographers could be in the past because “digital” makes it a whole lot easier to create images less tied to reality and more fanciful or even surreal if we so wish. However, there are some circumstances in which the later manipulation of an image is definitely cheating: for example, it is unthinkable that a photojournalist would alter an image beyond maybe some cropping and other simple amendments which do not distort the event being reported; similarly, forensic photographers whose work is admissible in courts of law must ensure their photos are “undoctored”.
<https://www.picturecorrect.com/tips/is-editing-your-images-cheating/?>

What Makes Some Photos Better than Others?

As Edward Johnson says in this post, “Art is so subjective there is no correct answer to this question”. So, he goes on to suggest a few features of images he describes as “great” (although arguably a less effusive adjective might be



“good”). He suggests things like Lines, Shape, Pattern, Contrast, Colour, and “the Moment”. Although he has difficulty saying what this last implies, it probably refers to Henri Cartier-Bresson’s famous “le moment just” or “the decisive

moment”. Johnson says simply for him, *this means that you captured a small piece of time, which tells a story that you don’t need to explain with words.*

<https://www.picturecorrect.com/tips/what-makes-some-photographs-better-than-others/>

This new year seems to be not only the Year of the Rat but for Composition – most of the on-line resources, especially *Picture Correct*, have had a plethora of posts on this subject. Another is Autumn Lockwood’s “Photo Composition Basics” at

<https://www.picturecorrect.com/tips/photo-composition-basics-what-you-need-to-learn/>

Closely related with a few other “tips” thrown in is Graham Wadding’s

“10 Tips for How to Take Better Photos” at <https://www.picturecorrect.com/tips/10-tips-for-how-to-take-better-photos/>

Wayne Turner, a Cape Town radio producer and presenter who writes occasionally for *Picture Correct*, has added yet another composition on Composition, this time expertly dealing with patterns: <https://www.picturecorrect.com/tips/tips-for-using-patterns-in-photography/>

Turner also contributes “Top 10 Composition Tips in Photography” at <https://www.picturecorrect.com/tips/top-10-composition-tips-in-photography/>



Finally, Terrence Starkey, also on *Picture Correct*, adds “The Golden Ratio Applied to Photographic Composition”. Although there were no photographers back then, the *Golden Ratio* (a.k.a. *Golden Mean* or *Divine Proportion*) was a hot topic among

philosophers around 300 BC. These days photographers do talk about it as an alternative to the so-called “Rule of Thirds” but few seem to get around to using it. That is perhaps because it might seem rather too complicated or even mysterious... Starkey writes about how to apply this ancient aesthetic to photos at:

<https://www.picturecorrect.com/tips/the-golden-ratio-applied-to-photographic-composition/>

Illustration Series Depicts Superheroes' Bathroom Habits

Lastly, although it has nothing to do with photography except it comes to us courtesy of *Red River*, the big US photo printing paper company, is this collection of super-heroes as you have never seen them before. As Kerrie Hughes (for Red River) says: *There's no denying the illustrative skill here from Huddleston [the artist], but what makes the series stand out is the level of attention to detail and humour weaved in.*

Each character's personality traits have been explored just the right amount (these images are safe for work, thankfully), and put to good use. Just a glimpse of Wolverine's claws while he's sitting on the toilet was enough to



make us shudder (imagine those slipping out at the wrong moment, yeesh), but that reaction quickly turned to laughter when we noticed the Deadpool-themed pants. Genius. Speaking of Deadpool, we weren't surprised to see the anti-hero engrossed in Playboy while doing his business, and the unicorn plushie has made us love him all the more. Batman, it seems, prefers to

spend this private time flicking through an issue of Wonder Woman. Never going to happen, Caped Crusader.

<https://www.creativebloq.com/inspiration/bathroom-heroes>

Bob Hay
Presenter