

Camera club Communiqué

December 2019 U3A ACT Australia

The *Camera Club Communiqué* is part of a newsletter sent to members of the “Camera Club” and “PhotoGroup” which are year-long courses run by the University of the Third Age here in Canberra. For privacy reasons, class notices have been omitted from this public version. To contact either class, please email u3acanberracameraclub@gmail.com or u3acanberraphotogroup@gmail.com respectively.

A Floral Treat

Many of us enjoy taking photos of flowers but few of us succeed as well as Japanese photographer, Miyako Koumura. She only started taking photos 9 years ago; before then, she worked at a Tokyo translation agency translating camera manuals.



However, when she got to work on a big project for Ricoh, her interest was piqued and she bought their GRX camera with an M-mount adapter and a Leica 50mm, f-1.4 lens. As she says, “It instantly fascinated me– it was something new that allowed me to be creative.” Her beautiful photos of flowers however, come at the price of some

very early mornings and even sharing the “Golden Hour” with bears.

<https://blog.redrivercatalog.com/2019/08/miyako-koumura-photographing-japans-flowers-for-posterity.html>

5 tips for choosing and using tripod heads

Niall Hampton outlines the things to look for when choosing a tripod head and then suggests how best to use them. There is also a video on the subject.

<https://www.digitalcameraworld.com/tutorials/5-tips-for-choosing-and-using-tripod-heads>



Now for something different.... Smoke photography!

Back in the Olden Days, those of us who smoked took pride in being able to blow smoke rings and clever photographers even managed to record them on film. Chelsea O'Neill at *Picture Perfect* shows how to photograph smoke, not just those rings of the carcinogenic past, but smoke in all its mysterious and

beautiful manifestations. She even tells how to colour it.

<https://www.picturecorrect.com/tips/smoke-photography-photoshop-tutorial/>



Can *Affinity Photo* Replace *Photoshop*?

Rumour has it that Adobe is about to release a version of *Photoshop* for iOS and Android tablets. This will place it in even closer competition with *Affinity Photo* which is already a very able raster graphics editor for tablets and increasingly a creditable alternative on desktops to *Photoshop*. Serif's *Affinity* image editor is not all that dissimilar to *Photoshop* so anyone already familiar with the

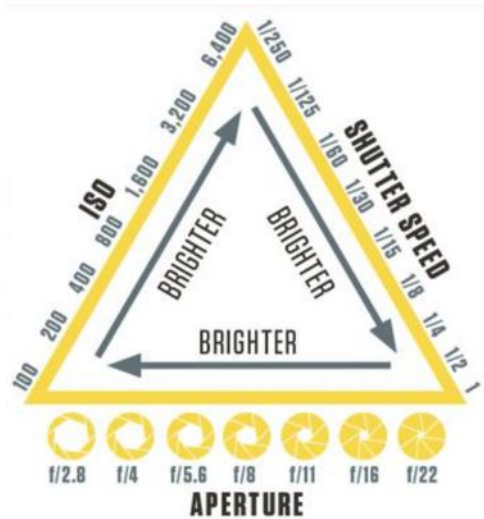
very expensive industry standard program might be tempted to transport across to the US\$50 "no subscription" alternative. That could well be the appeal to those of us unhappy having to pay Adobe on the Never-Never to use their software. Others, not yet initiated into the mysteries of PS might well look to *Affinity* as well as that other contender, *ON1*, as worthy alternatives. Already we know *ON1* is in many ways superior to the older software and *Affinity*, now about to release #4, looks as though it too can outsmart PS on some of its features. For one, it is non-destructive....

<https://www.digitalcameraworld.com/tutorials/can-affinity-photo-replace-photoshop>

Print Your Own Christmas Cards?

If you are one of those people who delight in sending Christmas cards every year around this time then give some thought to printing your own. You can choose what image to have on the front, the kind of greeting you think appropriate and best of all, it is very personal. *Red River*, the US photo

paper supplier who obviously sell the kind of cards suitable for home printing, has a very useful “8 Tips for Printing Cards” article at <https://www.redrivercatalog.com/8-tips-for-greeting-card-printing.html>



Understanding the Exposure Triangle

Written originally for Nikon users by Jason Parnell-Brookes, the article of this name provides a clear understanding of the relationship among shutter speed, aperture and ISO. Such an understanding is of course, fundamental to taking photos if you are to do anything more sophisticated than stay stuck on “Auto”. The article can be found at

<https://www.digitalcameraworld.com/tutorials/understanding-the-exposure-triangle?>

Photographing the Moon

According to Ignacio Alvarez on *Picture Correct*, taking photos of the moon is not as difficult as might be expected nor does it require unusual equipment — although he does recommend a 300mm telephoto lens which



many photographers, including birdwatchers and other Nature buffs probably already have in their kit.

Alvarez’ own photo reveals the Moon as we who live Down Under don’t see it unless we go star-gazing in the Northern Hemisphere.

<https://www.picturecorrect.com/tips/photographing-the-moon/>

Tips for Choosing and Using Macro Lenses

Buying a good macro lens can be an expensive business so you need to choose wisely. Niall Hampton on *Digital Camera World* outlines 5 tips for choosing and using them in the pursuit of images of small objects, bugs and other creepy-crawlies. Theoretically, getting in close and — well, maybe not personal — with the smaller inhabitants of the Earth or making close-up copies of tiny treasures and similar things should not be too difficult but in practice it takes some skills and other considerations not normally part



of photography. The problems most often encountered at 1:1 magnification or thereabouts are that there is very little Depth of Field and any camera movement is magnified many times so camera shake is your ever-present enemy.

Furthermore, if the subject is alive, if it can move it probably will so you have to be quick; outdoors, flowers and other objects are likely to move if there is any breeze around; and just to add to the difficulties, getting sufficient light from the best direction can also be a problem... However, all those difficulties are at worst challenges for which there are well-established solutions. Stabilization in both camera and lens these days is so good that often hand-held macro photographs are possible and, of course, a tripod is always a practical answer... but note that most tripods are too tall if you want to get in close to things near the ground: those “gorilla” tripods or models designed for close-up table-top or macro are a wise investment if this is to be your *genre* of choice.

<https://www.digitalcameraworld.com/tutorials/5-tips-for-choosing-and-using-macro-lenses>

Also of interest,

- <https://www.adorama.com/alc/top-10-macro-photography-tips>
- <https://www.picturecorrect.com/tips/macro-photography-equipment-guide-and-tips/>
- <https://www.thephoblographer.com/2019/05/13/how-to-light-your-macro-photos-and-get-sharper-images/>

Photos Overlooked for 35 Years



In 1983, Peter E. Randall spent a summer photographing people and places at Hampton Beach in New Hampshire — and then forgot the images he had carefully collected. Here, in this article published by *Red River* the US photo paper suppliers, he shows some of the images he re-

discovered after 35 years. They make a charming collection of pictures documenting a time gone by for all of us, even if we are not Americans, and reminding us that photographs of every-day experiences in our own back yards are often the most memorable.

<https://blog.redrivercatalog.com/2019/05/photos-overlooked-for-35-years-found.html>

Practice Makes Perfect

This post by Wayne Turner, a self-confessed passionate photographer from South Africa is by way of a pep-talk to those amateur photographers who don't get out and take photos often enough... He also gives some exercises which might inspire everyone to get out and practising, practising, practising...

<https://www.picturecorrect.com/tips/practice-makes-perfect-and-gets-better-photos/>



Flying these holidays?

If you are going someplace by air in the weeks ahead, you might be tempted to take photos from the air. All too often, when we do, they are not as spectacular as we had hoped. Darren Flanagan on *Picture Correct* gives some helpful hints how to maximise the chances of a successful outcome. Among

the problems he lists are: putting the camera lens up against the window hoping to cut down on reflections (but it also transferred all the plane vibrations to the camera producing camera shake); waiting too long to take your shots (plane windows fog or ice up after some time flying so get in early); and allowing the camera autofocus to get confused when shooting through glass (use manual focus).

<https://www.picturecorrect.com/tips/tips-for-taking-photos-from-an-airplane/>

5 Key Concepts from Annie Leibovitz's MasterClass



Annie Leibovitz is one of the most influential photographers of the late 20th – early 21st Century. She has photographed everyone famous from John Lennon to Sean Connery and was the first woman to be named chief

photographer at "Rolling Stone". So, what she has to say is worth hearing: here, Sean Lewis for *SLR Lounge* offers a précis of what the great woman had to say in her one and only MasterClass.

<https://www.slrlounge.com/5-key-concepts-from-annie-leibovitzs-masterclass-on-the-art-of-the-photo/>

World's Smallest Camera is Size of a Grain of Sand

A camera which measures 0.65 x 0.65 x 1.158mm has just made it into the Guinness Book of Records. Called the OmniVision OV6948 it is a specialist medical camera capable of being inserted into veins so that surgeons can get a better view to aid diagnosis and carry out operations. It has a resolution of 40k pixels producing a colour RGM colour image. It also can capture up to 30fps and has a 120° super-wide angle view with a DOF of 3-30mm. Rather than recycle the tiny machine, the California-based engineers have designed it to be disposable — it would be difficult to sterilize after being in each patient's body.

<https://www.digitalcameraworld.com/news/worlds-smallest-camera-is-size-of-a-grain-of-sand>



Focus Bracketing & Focus Stacking

This is a subject which requires much more introduction than there is space here in *Communiqué* and indeed, in 2020 one of the Camera Club/PhotoGroup Studio Days will be devoted to the theory and practice

of focus stacking. Meanwhile, this introduction at *Digital Camera World* will give members a taste of things to come and maybe inspire some experimentation over the holiday season.

Note however, that most cameras require a special little machine called a *Rail* to carry out focus stacking EXCEPT for Olympus cameras OMD EM1 (marks i, ii, and iX) and OMD-EM5ii and iii. These cameras, provided they are coupled with one of the Olympus PRO lenses will automatically do both focus stacking (up to 8 exposures) and focus bracketing (unlimited exposures). The exposures are processed automatically in the camera or of course, can be processed in either *Photoshop* or in a dedicated focus stacker program such as *Helicon* (<https://www.heliconsoft.com/heliconsoft-products/helicon-focus/>) or *Zerene* (<https://zerenesystems.com/cms/stacker>).

If you have a Canon EOS RP or Canon EOS 90D your camera will also do focus bracketing, but you will have to composite the final image in external

software. These Canons also require pairing with particular lenses, — e.g., Canon RF 35mm f/1.8 lens.



Cognisys Stackshot, the class leader in focus stacking apparatus

If you don't own one of the cameras listed above (check, because new releases may well enable focus bracketing) then you will need a small machine called a *Focus Stacking Rail*. An excellent round-up of

rails available can be found at <http://extreme-macro.co.uk/extremist/buying-a-focus-stacking-rail/>

The article from *Digital Camera World*, can be found at <https://www.digitalcameraworld.com/tutorials/focus-bracketing-and-focus-stacking-master-your-cameras-built-in-macro-modes>

Focus stacking, although allowing photographers to extend DOF to whatever extent they wish, also presents some aesthetic problems. All too easily, an image which is pin-point sharp from corner to corner can look unnatural or inauthentic. Focus-stacked photos of plants, for example, can end up looking more like botanical paintings than actual photographs. It is almost as though we, as connoisseurs of photographic art expect some limits to DOF — a bit of bokeh, if you wish!

The gorgeous frog above is a focus-stacked image from <https://www.dpreview.com/articles/5717972844/focus-stacking-in-macro-photography> which is also worth reading.



Butterfly & Insect Photography

Although scientists warn that insect populations are dwindling thanks to climate change and the use of insecticides in agriculture, we are still lucky enough to have lots of the tiny creatures left to photograph and best of all, they

can be found everywhere in our own gardens.

Sunny Shrestha on *Picture Correct* gives a synopsis of a video tutorial by British photographer Ross Hodinott on photographing insects and of course, butterflies. As he says, they are not only tiny but also skittish so they usually present challenges when it comes to capturing them with a camera. His tutorial talks the reader through dealing with some of those problems at <https://www.picturecorrect.com/tips/butterfly-insect-photography-tutorial/> Incidentally, Hodinott's photos used to illustrate the video are truly inspiring.

How to Improve Your Camera Battery Life

Spencer Cox at *Photography Life* is truly a photographic guru: his articles are always not only technically excellent but most readable. In this article he suggests how we can extend our battery life (or perhaps more correctly, the battery charge).

<https://photographylife.com/how-to-improve-camera-battery-life>

Bob Hay
Presenter