

WAIKANAE CAMERA CLUB INC

Volume 27, Issue 2 NEWSLETTER March 2003



Relic from the days of whaling – Kapiti Island

Topic of the Month

Each month, space permitting, we intend to present a topic of relevance to club members. Some topics will be associated with club activities. Others will cover aspects of the science and art of photography. The latter are aimed at providing a better understanding, helping newcomers to the hobby, and possibly encouraging people to widen their horizons and try something new.

Some items seem to generate a lot of heat, such as this month's topic – "Photo Evaluation".

In cases like this, it is the task of the newsletter editor to make sure that all sides of the argument are fairly presented. There are occasions when an open discussion can help to defuse a "smouldering" situation, and lead to a real improvement in the way we operate. As usual, we will do our best to include written contributions on these topics in our monthly newsletter.

Results from the February Club Competition —Top Marks Only

Set Subject — “Recent”

Judging by Club Panel: Bill Harris (Slides), Clive Baker (Prints)

Colour Prints:

Grade A

Peter Ellis	“River Run”	9
Jenny Cochran	“St Peter’s in the Round”	8
Rex Morgan	“Mirror Image”	8

Monochrome Prints:

Jenny Cochran	“The Final Stages”	7
Hugh Scott	“Cherry Leaf”	7
Hugh Scott	“Radiating Leaves”	7

Slides:

Jenny Cochran	“The Flower of Passion”	7
Jenny Cochran	“Stop Get Ready”	7
Cedric Harris	“Rose Red”	7
Hugh Scott	“A Daisy Medley	7
Scott Stevenson	“Brit Style”	7

Member’s Choice:

Rex Morgan “Mirror Image”

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A big thank you Clive and Bill for judging. They had put a lot of thought into considering our images.

Thank you also to the Club members who submitted their recent photos. Next topic of Seascape, Landscape, Cityscape leaves plenty of scope. Please note that up to three images will be permitted in future for each category (colour prints, monochrome prints and slides). Do make a special effort for the April competition!

Jenny C.

FAUX PAS

Your newsletter editor is in danger of making the monthly *faux pas* award into a permanent fixture. It already has a place of honour on my computer desk. In last month’s newsletter, I mentioned (thank you Karyn!) that this month was the time for the “Photojournalism and Portraiture” entries, having taken this information from an early (annotated) draft of the programme. These entries are, of course, due in May, and my apologies to those who may have already prepared them for the 11 March. At least you now have plenty of time in hand!

CLUB NEWS

Membership Subscriptions

Just a gentle reminder to those who have not yet paid this year's club subscription. It is now due and our Treasurer will be waiting with bated breath at the next meeting. (Does anyone know what "bated" means?).

Library Display Board

Further negotiations with the staff of Paraparaumu library have resulted in an indefinite loan of one of the library display boards. It is not anticipated that the board will be needed in the near future, so we do not need to purchase or make our own.

The board is free-standing with three panels, and will easily accommodate the six pictures that we usually display after each monthly competition.

We also had a very nice letter from the library thanking us for our participation by displaying our work at the new library opening ceremony.

Our other displays continue as usual at the Waikanae library, and the member's choice can be seen in the window of Bright's Photo Labs.

This Month

Look out for three events this month. The first meeting on March 11 is the Workshop hosted by Simon Forsyth and Rex Morgan

entitled "Fill flash and creative flash".

This is followed on March 14 (Friday) by the Night Photography Field Trip to Wellington. Contact Hugh Scott (04 904 6433) for details. We had an interesting and eventful trip last year (ask Simon!).

On March 25, there will be a demonstration workshop evening covering multiple activities. I am not sure what "multiple activities" means, but since we meet in a church hall it is unlikely to be too licentious!

Tea Roster

Just to remind you, the rosters for the next three meetings are:

	Milk	Biscuits
March 11:	Neville Lewers	Christine Fallon
March 25:	Pauline Hakkens	Scott Stevenson
April 8:	John Gibbs	Alan Thompson

Some Definitions

The following definitions have been prepared by Hugh Scott to assist those entering the Photojournalism and Portraiture competition in May.

Photo Journalism

What is it?

"Photo Journalism is devoted to recording current events or situations to preserve them for the future. News, features, man and man's environment, human interest....all are included."

(PJ Division of Photographic Society)

"Photo-Journalism is a photo that tells a story with only a title to tie it together. It needs to be a human interest story depicting real-life activities.... It must not be contrived or indicate that it has been contrived." *(Raleigh Emerson: PSNZ Help Sheet No. 1)*

"What sets photo journalism apart is that it deals with current events."
(Ron Fitzwilliam: PSNZ Help Sheet No. 2)

Just a Few Factors to Consider

- Prepare your camera before hand. Pre-focus if you're using a

manual camera. Then you will be able to take your first shot as fast as possible. After that you can concentrate on getting the best shot possible of the event.

- Am I working from the best viewpoint?
- Will the background be appropriate? Will it add to the picture or detract from it?
- Will the picture convey the story by itself or does it rely on my memory of the event?
- Can I anticipate the action and so choose the decisive moment?
- Be alert for facial expressions and body language.

Hugh Scott

NEW ZEALAND EXHIBITIONS

PSNZ Annual Convention

The PSNZ National Convention ("Photastic") this year is being held at Blenheim, from 23 – 27 April.

Judging from the brochure, this should be a great opportunity to learn from the experts, and to enjoy a varied selection of field trips.

The lectures are given by internationally recognized speakers, including David Williams, David Oliver and Dr Peter Harper, and the subjects range from nature

photography, people, landscapes through to the impact of digital technology.

For those who like to get into the field, there are visits to famous houses and wineries, with an afternoon wine trail, a morning trip to Cape Campbell Lighthouse, and a full-day cruise through the beautiful Mahau and Pelorous sounds.

Contact: Julie Holmes, Ph/Fax: 03 578 9535. email: jubar@xtra.co.nz

TOPIC OF THE MONTH

“Photo Evaluation”

Being a relative newcomer to the Club, I had no idea of the depth of feeling that I would stir up by raising this topic in a casual enquiry. The subject relates particularly to the judging of competitions, but also to any appraisal of a photo by an “expert”.

Some of us are used to “safer” subjects such as engineering or mathematics, where the answers tend to be much more clear cut and less able to be questioned. Looking at a photo can certainly stir the emotions, but people respond differently to the same picture. Setting a “standard” for judging must therefore always be difficult if not impossible.

Most people agree that the competitions are a vital part of the club activities, and that the opportunity to have one’s work appraised by an experienced person is a major reason for belonging to the club in the first place. The real worth is probably not so much in the marks given, or in the competition placing, but in the judge’s comments and suggestions for improvement.

My rather naïve researches among our club members led to several reprints in which well-known judges put their views on this problem. These range from prescriptive methods of evaluation with rules that could be stated almost as a computer algorithm, to methods that rely much more on “artistic” feelings.

One of the more interesting “rule based” proposals (Tony Patti, PSA Journal, Nov 1990) goes so far as to present his conclusions in the form of a flow chart, more commonly associated with computer programming. The marking process could be “standardized” by deducting marks if the picture did not fully satisfy three main criteria; *subject interest, composition and technique*. Under those headings, the user would trace a path through the chart, deducting marks according to the path chosen. This type of approach probably has merit for new and inexperienced judges.

Other judges favour a more intuitive approach, with a short-list of criteria to look for in a “good” photo. One of our visiting judges, Stella Daniells, has recorded a set of notes which I reproduce here:

- Technical quality – exposure, focus, depth of field etc.
- Composition
- Use of light
- Communication with the viewer
 - initial visual impact
 - does it go deeper than this?
 - does it engage the viewer?

- emotionally
 - did it invoke an emotional response?
 - how did it make me feel?
- intellectually
 - did it get me thinking?
 - does it intrigue?
 - does it make me ask what it means?
 - or at least what it is?
- Innovation
- Presentation

Most of these topics come under the original headings of *subject interest*, *composition and technique*, and this seems to be a common theme among the judges who discussed their criteria at our Club meetings in the last year.

At our last February meeting, one of our panel judges, Clive Baker, gave a good overview of his evaluation criteria before launching into the evaluation of the competition prints. This is probably all we should ask of those who endeavour to give marks to our prized artworks. If more prescriptive rules were mandatory, the whole judging process could be done by a computer, and most judges would probably not bother to make themselves available.

Mostly we owe a big debt of gratitude to those who “volunteer” to be judges. The process can be very time consuming and difficult. For those of us at the receiving end, however, the evaluation can really help us to improve our photographic skills both technically and artistically. Looking back over my first year in the Club, I feel that I have gained a lot from the competitions, in the ability to take better pictures, and to make a more “objective” judgment of them.

What are your opinions? Anything that is not libelous or too long will be published in forthcoming Newsletters.

Editor

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The Last Word

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A computer textbook on a software language seems an unlikely place for humour. However, while idly leafing through an ancient textbook the other day, I came across this limerick at the head of a chapter entitled “Input and Output”.

*There was a young lady from Thrace
Whose corsets grew too tight to lace
Her mother said “Nelly, there’s more in your belly
Than ever went in through your face”!*

With apologies to Edward Lear!



Thanks to Robyn Cotton for the cartoon

Waikanae Camera Club Competitions:		Entry Form	
Photographer's Name:	Grade:	(Colour Prints)	
	Grade:	(Slides)	
Set Subject:	Grade:	(Monochrome)	
	Date:		
Titles of Photographs Entered	Type*	Set/Open Subject	
* Colour print, Monochrome print or Slide		(Maximum of 3 per type)	

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