

Camera Club News

Letter From The President

Hello All

Apologies for the relative lateness of this newsletter. Late summer and early spring has proved a fruitful time for activities, both related to photography and not, that have competed for the editor's time!

Toward the end of February we mounted our "Digital Camera 101" workshop for the Wairarapa public.

20 members of the public registered, and the workshop was run by a small group of us: Bruce Levy, Kevin Morgan, Dave Ferguson, Nik Player, and myself. It meant we had a "teaching ratio" of 1:4 so we were able to deal with a lot of the registrants' questions. One of the interesting, and occasionally difficult, aspects of the workshop was that, apart from 3 Canon 1100D DSLRs, all the bridge and point and shoot cameras were completely different makes and models. No two menus or button arrangements were the same. To make matters even more interesting what people wanted more than anything else was "What do these buttons do?" "How do I make it do?"

As far as we could tell the event was a success. All the participants said 'nice things' at the end and most reported that they had learned something they hadn't known. That was the aim! Additionally, a number of the attendees expressed interest in joining the club so we have high hopes of a boost in membership!

We need to acknowledge the support of the Wairarapa REAP in this venture. REAP not only provided the hall free of charge, they also arranged and paid for the radio and newspaper advertising. REAP Director, Peter McNeur, explained that our objective in running the course is quite consistent with their community education objectives and therefore it was a good fit. Nevertheless, I believe the club owes Peter and his colleagues at the REAP a hearty thank you!

Until next time. Happy shooting.

Tim

Club Information

To learn more about photography, to share your skills and experience or simply to enjoy photographic time with like-minded people, come to a meeting or contact us at

info@wairarapacameraclub.org

Meetings start at 7:30 pm on the first Tuesday of every month from February to November, at the Education Centre next to Parkview Motors in Dixon Street, Masterton.

WCC, PO BOX 502, Masterton

www.wairarapacameraclub.org



Competition: Doors, Windows, Stairways

The March competition was judged by local photographer, Geoff Walker. Geoff commented (and this shows in the results) that the quality of the projected images was slightly below that of the prints — he was surprised as he felt this was a turn around from previous competitions.

Geoff used the new judging format and commented that he had found it helpful. The results are spelled out here in detail so that the photographers can see the criteria against which their entry was marked down. Hopefully, looking again at our entries and considering the judge's analysis will help us think about how to improve in those areas in future. The aim is to improve our photography!

Congratulations to Carolyn, whose amazing image (*"Watch your step"*), of the doorway to almost certain death, was a very deserved winner.

Following the judging, Geoff gave an enthusiastic talk about, and showed images from, his trip to Northern Uganda. Almost all of the photographs, in line with the tenor of his presentation, told of people he'd met and interacted with. Among the images were some stunning photographs. Geoff hopes that these lovely people can be supported to develop in their own way, and not be subsumed by Western style 'development' with all the problems it brings to poorer communities. Amen to that.

Projected Image Entry		Impact	Com-position	Subject	Tech-nique	Presen-tation	TOTAL
		0 to 4	0 to 3	0 to 2	0 to 2		(up to 11)
Kevin Morgan	<i>Dunedin Station</i>	2	2	2	1		7
Kevin Morgan	<i>Larnoch Castle</i>	2	2	1	1		6
Kay Halligan	<i>Ocean View</i>	2	2	1	1		6
Bruce Levy	<i>A Little Aged</i>	1	1	2	2		6
Bruce Levy	<i>Brisbane International Airport</i>	2	1	2	1		6
Tim McMahon	<i>Wet Day At The Beach</i>	3	2	2	1		8
Martin Connelly	<i>Electric Power Board</i>	3	2	2	2		9
Martin Connelly	<i>Near Napier</i>	3	2	2	2		9
Carolyn Smith	<i>Doorway To New Beginnings</i>	2	2	2	1		7
Carolyn Smith	<i>The Green Door</i>	2	2	2	1		7
Jazell Wilkie	<i>Eyes Of The Wooden Door</i>	2	1	2	1		6
Print Entry						0 or 1	(up to 12)
Les Wong	<i>Express Way</i>	2	2	2	2	0	8
Les Wong	<i>Unusual</i>	3	3	2	2	0	10
Sid Hayes	<i>And So To Bed</i>	2	2	2	2	0	8
Carolyn Smith	<i>Follow The Stairs to My Door</i>	3	2	2	1	1	9
Carolyn Smith	<i>Watch Your Step</i>	4	3	2	2	1	12
Richard Lambert	<i>Twilight Church</i>	2	1	1	1	1	6
Richard Lambert	<i>Stairway To Heaven</i>	3	2	2	2	1	10
Tim McMahon	<i>Where Are You</i>	3	2	1	2	1	9
Tim McMahon	<i>Entry Free</i>	3	2	2	2	1	10

A selection of the judge's favoured images:

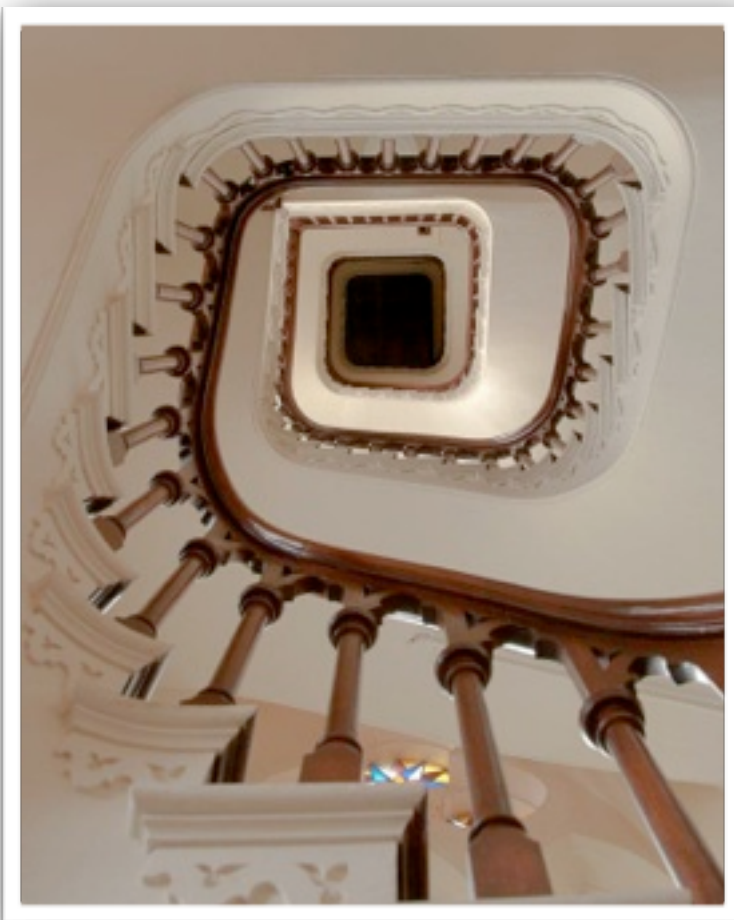


Watch your step
by Carolyn Smith
WINNER!



Electric Power Board
by Martin Connelly

Stairway to Heaven
by Richard Lambert



Near Napier
by Martin Connelly

Have You Ever Wondered About ? ...

Straightening Verticals

Thanks to Martin Connelly for the following contribution.

“One of Geoff’s comments was that he thought some images had perspective faults. Because the images were all architectural shots our eyes expect to see certain things – such as vertical lines on the walls of buildings and windows that have parallel sides. Even small variations away from the vertical or parallel send our brains a “not quite right” message.

“One way to fix this problem is to have a tripod with a built in spirit level(s) that tell us if the camera itself is horizontal. There are also gadgets that fit on the hotshoe of a camera that do the same thing. But those sorts of things can be a bit of a pain if you are (as I often am) just sauntering around with a camera in a bag.

“There are also ways of using your computer’s software to adjust an image’s perspective. Some are good, some are even easy to use. One programme that I think does a pretty good job is called PTLens (<http://epaperpress.com/ptlens/index.html>). It’s fairly simple to use and it can fix some problems other than distorted perspective. It’s free to download and use for up to 10 times, after that it costs US \$25. (Which is still a bit of a pain but much less than buying photoshop or some other programmes that claim to fix perspective problems, which cost more and do a less useful job).

“Here is a before – after example using PTLens



“As you can see the walls are now vertical, and things that should be straight up and down, are. There is a price to pay though — there is less of the building in the image. Some people might say that the original was OK and did not need changing. They may be correct and in my own view, if the distortion is large enough then our eyes don't mind too much — they realise that the building is deliberately out of kilter and think this is what the photographer intended. I think the problem arises when there is only a small amount of distortion because then we look at the image and think the photographer was trying to ‘get it right’ and failed.



“There is some free software that I am aware of called Perspectiveimagecorrection (<http://sourceforge.net/projects/perspectiveimg/>) which is good for photos that were taken “front on” and need straightening up and made ‘four square’.”

I would add to Martin’s comments that, if you already have Photoshop or Lightroom, then you have some tools for perspective correction built in. Whether they are as good, or as easy to use, as PTLens is an open question.

If you want to correct verticals (or even horizontals) then software solutions like these are the way to go. Getting your camera perfectly horizontal, as Martin suggests, really only works if you can position yourself exactly halfway up the building you’re trying to shoot. That’s seldom practical. Even then you’ll get a narrow top *and* a narrow bottom if you’re so close to the building that the distance from the lens to the top (and bottom) of the building is significantly greater than the distance to your focal point in the middle of the building.

The other approach is to use a special ‘tilt-shift’ lens. A tilt-shift lens can be ‘bent’ so that the plane of the lens is no longer parallel to the plane of the sensor. If you were photographing an ‘ordinary’ scene with such a lens, it would *introduce* a vertical distortion. But used to photograph a building from ground level, such as in Martin’s example, its built in distortion can be used to *counteract* the perspective distortion in the view, without having to sacrifice edge detail as we do with the software. Architectural photographers (like the ones who photograph the advertisements in “House and Garden”) often use these lenses. However, given that the least expensive tilt-shift lens that I can identify costs in excess of \$US1,000 — most are \$US2,000+ — that’s unlikely to be the solution for those of us who may photograph one or two buildings each year!

Thanks to those who came to the workshop on preparing images for print that we held last month.

Next week’s workshop (March 19) is on ‘Composition’.

Often the difference between a stunning representation of an idea and an ordinary one, is simply the way the photographer frames the shot, and the way (s)he crops and/or arranges to emphasise or de-emphasise elements within it. Sometimes this can be wholly achieved at the time of taking the photograph but more often than not some ‘computer work’ can be brought to bear.

We’ll discuss these ideas at the workshop.

Next Month’s competition

Don’t forget next month’s competition: Water. Entries must be in by 5pm Wednesday *before* Easter