

RA Photo Club

Report of the Chair for 2013-14

In looking back over this past year, I'm struck once again with the exceptional vibrancy that exists in the Club and the astonishing large number of volunteers who make it all work. The list of individuals deserving of thanks and praise is much too long to list in this report as it would go on for pages. Instead I invite you to visit the following site for the full listing of all the Club's volunteers. I think you will be impressed.

<http://www.raphotoclub.ca/smf/index.php?topic=3447.0>

I would also invite you to read the reports of the Committee chairs for specific details of what has transpired in their areas of responsibility over the past year. The following is a few of the highlights from the past year that I would particularly like to draw to your attention:

- Club membership stands at 294 this year. This is down slightly from last year, however still very impressive. We continue to be one of the largest and best equipped clubs in Canada.
- Our regular Tuesday evening program continued to attract a large member turnout and, judging from the exit polls, the majority of presenters, with a few exceptions, were very well received.
- The Competitions Committee's program drew a large number of member entries and gave evidence once again that the Club continues to be home to a large number of exceptionally gifted photographers.
- The RAPC website underwent a number of further changes and improvements, all designed to make it more informative, attractive and easier to navigate.
- The Education Committee launched several workshops designed to further the photographic education and skills of members.

- In a similar vein, the Feedback Group offered members the opportunity improve their photography through a constructive critique of their work.
- The Studio leadership offered a very extensive series of workshops on a variety of subjects. A quick glance back at the Club calendar for any month cannot fail but to impress one with the large number of weekends showing the workshops that have taken place.
- The Fine Art Group, AV Group, and Tools and Techniques Group all undertook an active program featuring speakers on a variety of subjects related to their area of interest and, in the case of the Fine Art Group, escorted visits to the National Gallery.
- The Nature Group once again led a series of well attended weekend outings.
- The Darkroom and the Digital Resources Groups continued to offer important specialized services to members.
- The Social Committee held a successful Open House and it followed this event with a fun Christmas Party and year-end banquet.
- The Communications Committee continued to support the various activities of the RAPC, both through the website blog and through the creation, publication and distribution of publicity materials.
- Opportunities also continued this year for members to exhibit their work in a gallery setting through joint exhibits held with the Camera Club of Ottawa at the City of Ottawa Archives Gallery and through exhibits the Club organized at the Ottawa Public Library and at the RA's print and digital gallery at the west entrance.
- While the Club laptop suffered several annoying glitches this year, the Technical Services Group has put into play a plan to improve and standardize the procedures and ensure that the operators are fully trained and skilled in its operation. As part of this, guidelines were issued on the only acceptable file formats for use in the computer which, it is anticipated, will eliminate the cause of many of the problems we have had.

- On the administrative side, the Executive finalized three important policies governing the operation of the Studio. It also launched an Opinion Survey to try to get feedback on what Club members liked/didn't like about the Club, what things or activities they'd like to see and the reasons former members left the Club. While the results were inconclusive given the relatively low response rate, it did raise some intriguing questions which the Executive will follow up on in the new year.

In the interests of full disclosure, I think it worth noting that there were also a couple of disappointments this year:

- We were unsuccessful finding a member willing to organize urban outings, with the result that there were none this year. This had been a very popular feature in previous years and I hope we're successful in breathing life back into this group next year.
- Similarly, we were unsuccessful in finding a member willing to organize the Focus Series this year. It had been a signature event of the Club in the past few years and its absence this year deprived members of a unique opportunity to learn from a skilled photographer widely recognized in the industry as a master of the trade. I hope that we're also able next year to get the Focus Series back in operation.

Looking forward, there are a couple of interesting and exciting developments that will be of interest to members:

- The 2014-15 season marks the 75th year that the photo club will have been in existence. This is an important occasion and in order to properly celebrate it, we are planning a glossy publication with photographs, along with a special event in October to mark the occasion. The Executive will keep you informed of developments as planning proceeds.
- The Executive has also agreed to host the Canadian Camera Conference in the last week of June 2017. The CCC is held every second year and the Club hosted two such conferences in the past. Apart from the interesting

and informative speakers and workshops this will entail, the two previous conferences resulted in important revenue for the Club that we've used for capital and other expenses that we otherwise would not have been able to afford. The date of the conference coincides, of course, with the 150th anniversary of Confederation and we expect a large number of photographers will want to be in Ottawa for the conference and the July 1 celebrations.

Finally, this is my final report as Chair of the Club since I will be stepping aside this coming year. It's been an interesting and enjoyable experience. As I mentioned at the beginning, the Club operates only as a result of the huge number of dedicated volunteers that give so willingly of their time to make it a success. While I am reluctant to single out members for special praise, there are four individuals who, during the three years that I have served as Chair, have given an inordinate amount of their time to specific activities of the Club and it would be remiss of me not to acknowledge the roles they have played. I owe each of them a special debt of gratitude:

- Anyone even marginally involved with the Studio is aware of the incredible amount of time and effort that **Richard Whitbread** has devoted to every facet of the Studio's operation. The success the Studio has had over the past few years is primarily due to his inspiration, energy and leadership.
- The Tuesday evening program is what draws most of us to the Club on a regular basis. Identifying presenters from a variety of photographic disciplines has fallen to **Denis Duchesne** for the past several years. It is an incredibly time consuming task that he undertakes for the Club. While opinions will always vary with respect to individual speakers, by and large he continually succeeds in ensuring a high quality evening for members.
- **John Elliott**, as the Club Webmaster, has overseen an incredible transformation of the website over the past few years, giving it an inviting and easy to navigate interface. In addition to this, John undertook an

overhaul of the Competitions software. It's doubtful there is another photo club in Canada that has a more dedicated volunteer webmaster. And if this weren't enough, John also did double duty as Competitions Chair during the past two years.

- The role of Secretary of the Executive Committee is one that's largely unnoticed by the majority of Club members. However, it's crucially important to the smooth functioning of the Committee and of the Club itself. **Barbara Lapointe** has performed these duties for three years I have served as Chair and for some years before that. It's she who ensures the meetings take place, minutes are taken, decisions are recorded and that the list of volunteers is kept current. The Executive Committee (and I) would not have survived without her.

Lastly, I would like to extend my thanks to **Jane Proudfoot, Sharron Mallott** and **Vanessa Normore** of the RA for the support they have provided to the Club over the past year. While most Club members may be unaware of the roles they play, they are important to the day-to-day running of the Club and the facilities to which we have access. We all owe them a vote of thanks.

Bill McCloskey,
May 2014