

Photography

# Photographic Smorgasbord

November 14, 2018 | Charles T. Low, Photographer

## Versatile photographer's hodge-podge of activities

I have said that I don't do wedding photography (which seems to me like a huge market, by the way, for someone wishing to break into the field). But apart from that, I strive always towards exemplary compositions and a profound collaboration with light. (I do not always succeed, in which case ideally I at least could always learn.)

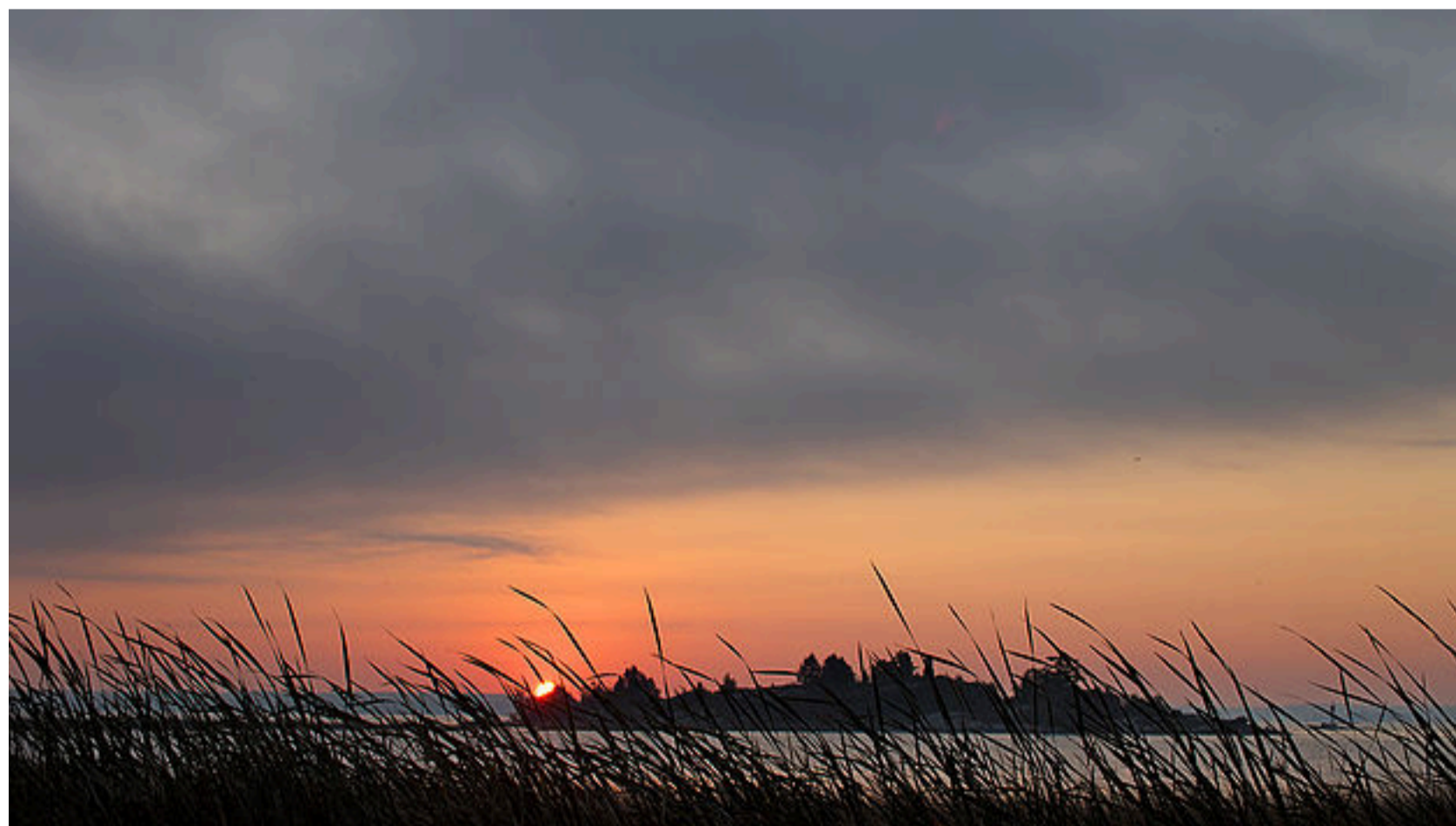


The following might illustrate how that has played out recently.

### BYC Artisans

The Brockville Yacht Club held the first benefit art show for the Sailing School, a wonderful resource which has enriched life in Brockville for many people for many years. I felt so grateful that the organizers asked me to show and sell some fine-art photography prints at the BYC Artisans and Crafters' Show and Sale.

The deal included each of the participants donating one item to a silent auction, and that went very well. Congratulations to whoever now owns this piece!



Artisans packed the Leeward Hall at the BYC on Sunday November 4, which didn't have enough room for all who applied. Public attendance went higher than anticipated, and overall, everyone had a great time!

I said to Brigitte, the main organizer, what about if I also offered free photo-portraits, only suggesting a donation as payment, all proceeds going to the sailing school. She thought it over. She said yes. I adjusted the lighting a few weeks ahead of time on her and John, and this unconventional portrait remains my favourite.

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I did a few more than three portraits each hour for the four-hour show, and that added a little extra to the sailing school's coffers. Each "model" (should I have put that in quotation marks?) received one or two digital image files, sized roughly for a computer-monitor.

The following portraits from that afternoon I also show with permission.



Monochrome vs. colour

November 2018 (1)

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Technical note: all of the lighting for these portraits is "created", the goal being to have that unnoticeable. The contribution from "ambient" light in these is negligible.

This, by the way, one of the core services offered by ctLow Photography (i.e. moi), reminds me that Christmas is coming. Give someone a portrait of yourself. Give some loved ones a gift of a portrait of themselves. Make customized holiday greeting cards, coffee mugs, canvas prints - you name it.

Anyway, I had a blast doing that, enjoyed the interactions, brief though they were, with many friends, including some new ones.

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## Haliburton

Next, I spent a few days in Haliburton County, just visiting with family, but family who gladly supports my photographic imperative, so ...

... we relaxed. We tried to get some extra sleep (vacation-sleep!). We had great meals in places big

and small. We drove around in our fun cars.

And I made some photographs.

The Autumnal colour change this year has verged toward the yellow and golds, less towards the reds, and apparently this has something to do with the recent weather, but I know nothing more about it than that.

So finding images which said "Autumn" made me work harder than usual.



The photographs above and below resulted from a walk up the [Dorset Scenic Lookout Tower](#) - cold and windy (i.e. the tower shook) that day (and not for those with a fear of heights!), but good for stretching the photographic muscles.





I find it interesting that the background and foreground resemble each other this much. Usually that wouldn't work, compositionally, shallow depth-of-field to isolate the foreground notwithstanding. And yet I like it, and it has pleased viewers. By chance, I glanced at it from across the room with my glasses off, and then all I saw was a riot of colour, anchored by stark, black, vertical lines - quite different from what my conscious mind sees, but I am also quite sure a reason why this image appeals. I'm going to say, without any justification for doing so, that I saw that subliminally at the

## City Hall/Victoria Avenue

Here's my life when *not* travelling: I still want to make photographs. Often for me this means getting up before sunrise - easier as we get closer to the Winter solstice - and seeing what new scenes I can think of in or around Brockville. I have lived here long enough that I find this paradoxically difficult.

So one morning last week, I simply headed out (again) towards the downtown, perhaps going to end up at Blockhouse Island, and just took a different route. That found me at the north end of Victoria Avenue, where it ends at Pearl Street. The road rises, heading south from there, and this scene greeted me.



The rest of City Hall sits below that tower somewhere. Telephoto compression in effect.

How could I have lived here for this long without noticing that?

I spent some time photographing the City Hall tower, ruing that I didn't have wet streets against a blue sky - am I really asking too much? - working with what I had.

As I worked, a resident emerging from his house asked me what I was doing. Photographers get this - sometimes curious, sometimes suspicious - so I explained about finding a new vantage for City Hall, and - as often happens - this elicited no reaction. He drove off.

Then a garbage truck plodded down the road, I thought, oh well, it will be gone in a minute, just wait it out. The cheerful worker also asked me what I was doing, and seemed intrigued when I explained. Then I realized that if you can't photograph the thing you love, then love the thing you photograph.



These were both slower exposures, on a tripod so something in each image at least is sharp, showing some movement of the worker and the vehicle. Is the movement good? Well, I'm showing it, so I think it's good!

I have since had an interesting social media [conversation](#) about these photographs with the photography historian, [Paul Matte](#), who has recently released [Open Aperture](#), the first of a planned two-book series, and whom I had heard speak engagingly, the previous evening, at the [Merrickville Photography Collective](#) meeting.

His book, by the way, was ringingly endorsed at the meeting by Brockville's own photographer emeritus, [Gordon Beck](#).

However, as the various images of the City Hall Tower and the garbage truck were generating some profound analysis (by Matte more than by me), I had to admit that the one I preferred simply had the brightest lights. (Oh look: sparkles!) Realizing that, I went back to the original image and applied a "Glowing Edges" filter to it, taking me back to the days of black-light Elvis posters.



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Check out the many other images in my [art-portfolio](#), and consider getting a print - any size, any presentation.

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## Sara Wilkinson

You may recall a blog about [Performance Photography](#). This time, I returned to my roots at [Richard's Coffeehouse](#), where a young singer with Brockville connections had included us on her first tour.

First, however, her old friend and local City Councillor [Leigh Bursey](#) opened for her, and that went well. He has a long background in music, but said that other matters of late had distracted him from that, and it felt good getting back to it.





Leigh Bursey in performance

But then Sara: what a singer! The skill and control with which she sang simply amazed the audience, and accompanying herself with a quiet guitar, it was her voice which filled the room. She also simply exhibited joy and happiness, an engaging personality, and it felt good to be there. People just smiled.



You wouldn't believe the work I went to and the lighting setup I constructed just to get this shot, all the while attempting to remain invisible to the audience.

Add a comment...



Watch in future for Sara Wilkinson. I have a feeling that we will be hearing more from her.

## Niche: versatility

And that I hope represents some of the versatility towards which I aim in my photography. In marketing terms, some people think it preferable to have a focus, a niche. Others suggest not hemming oneself in; remain open to possibilities and opportunities.



The one thing missing from my recent photography is cars. I like photographing cars, in spite of - or because - that they present more challenges than many non-photographers realize (and because I like them).

In general, I like to photograph. Period. I look for compelling compositions. I think about the light. I release the shutter.

## While you're here ...

Remember that I make photographs and that I sell photographs.

Almost everything which you see on this web site is for sale. Prices at the time of writing, for example, for an 11x14" fine-art print with a generous white border would start at about \$50, and you can go up or down from there. Check the rates page. More importantly, check out my gallery.

Book a portrait-sitting - the right frequency with which to commission formal portraits is a bit more often.

Remember also to leave a comment, or to contact me. Note that on the main blog page you can sign up for new-blog notifications. I am very careful and respectful with your privacy.

Thank you so much for reading.



**Charles T. Low  
Photographer**



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Paul Matte Merrickville Photography Collective MAG Richard's Coffeeshouse Sara Wilkinson  
Leigh Bursey

