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Capture that moment in time

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August 2006

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## July and August meetings

by Dave Blair

The **July meeting** saw a very significant event – the granting of a **Life Membership** to our club for our current President, **Neil Follett**. The award was presented by Joe DeLuca and was warmly endorsed by all. Neil has done a power of work of the club over the years, not always in the spotlight (in fact usually preferring not to be!), but the club continues to thrive, in many ways due to Neil's help. Well done Neil, and thank you very much from the whole club.



Our main event of our July meeting was an interesting show with **Christopher Hillard** showing us his 'minor celebrities' book – a book full of portraits and interviews with a wide variety of people who are the lesser known stars of many of our favourite television shows and other things. He had managed to land interviews with people such as Manuel from *Faulty Towers*, Tim Brooke-Taylor, Humphries from *Yes Minister*, Peter Sallis, the unknown faces behind notables like Bart Simpson, Oscar the Grouch and Big Bird (and even got a feather!) from *Sesame Street*.

One theme kept arising as he told of how he had managed to be granted meetings with these famous people, and that was *perseverance is the #1 quality*. The book was a result of an almost uncontrolled passion for the subject, costing him \$60,000 to produce over several years and many flights around the world (mainly UK and US) and a rather large fax bill.

Other tips passed on through the competition that Chris judged were to keep trying macro work as this was doing well in many comps at present, watch your backgrounds and use white mounts, did you catch that, use white mounts. Yes, white mounts. Gee some of those images would be better off with white mounts. Oh, did I mention the mounts? Yep, white is good, cant go wrong with white...

One other comment I found interesting that I hope others picked up was the positioning of young and old people in portraits. Chris suggested putting young people to the left of centre, facing right as this indicates they have somewhere to go, they are young and 'heading into life'. Older people, he suggested doing the opposite, place subject on the right, looking 'back' towards the left (as we read L to R) to indicate that they have come from somewhere and are looking back to their past. Something to think about – have a look at some of your portrait photos and see if you agree.

A few days later I held a **FastStone/Photoshop workshop** at my house in Healesville. The night went without a hitch, and Trudi and Wendy seemed to enjoy their own private little tutorial, as they were the only ones to turn up. This kept it pretty low key, but made me wonder if there were few people due to the subject (I'm guessing there were more people interested), or whether a week night didn't suit, whether that night in particular didn't suit, or if Healesville was too far to travel... I am happy to do more in future, but please pop suggestions in the suggestion box on club nights (there's a good idea!) and let us know what suits and what you want.

**August meeting** saw well known environmentalist and Channel 7 (ex 9 and ex 10?) weather presenter, **Rob Gell** give us a talk. Rob judged our competition in a slightly different fashion to what

judges usually do (never having judged photography before), but personally I thought it was great to have some new eyes cast over our images. Rob liked to see an off centre subject focus, and particularly liked texture and what he called the 'human-nature interface' – where the natural world bumps into that of people. Unfortunately we didn't have any black and white images (used them all up on the July comp!?), which Rob was obviously keen to see. Rob obviously liked Judy Archer's style as she cleaned up most of the gongs for the evening including 1<sup>st</sup> for all three categories – well done Judy!



Rob's talk was a presentation on the state of the environment, looking at the major issues of global warming (showing graphs of greenhouse gasses and warming patterns, glacial retreat etc), loss of biodiversity (changes in Victoria's forest cover over the last 150 years), the importance, yet total ignoring of 'ecosystem services' being factored into current economic analysis, and in general the running down of our 'natural capital' which we are using up far faster than is can be produced by our natural world – things like major fisheries in rapid decline, high use of non renewable resources (eg 'peak oil' which indicates demand has

out stripped supply since about 1985), and the degradation of land.

Rob pinned much of this down to the exponentially increasing population growth in the world and the increasing consumption of that population. The grossly uneven distribution of this wealth (half the world's population live on less than \$2 per day) provides a massive ethical and social crisis that Rob just touched on, and will increasingly lead to severe poverty and civil unrest as resources become increasingly scarce. Apparently we would only need another 3 earths if everyone in the world lived to the standard of Australians! Just as well NASA is on the job and we are paying people to have babies.

Rob suggested a few books:

*Plan B* – by Leicester Brown

*Natural Advantage of Nature* by The Natural Edge

*Small is beautiful: Economics as if people mattered* by Fritz Schumacher, originally written in 1973, there is a new version with many contemporary 'green thinkers' who have commented on this original book in a modern context

And one on Biomimicry, which I didn't catch who it was by.

I would also add to this list:

*From Naked Ape to Superspecies* by David Suzuki

*Germes Guns and Steel* by Jarred Diamond,

and of course the original *Silent Spring* by Rachael Carson that started much of the awareness.

I think the evening provided a bit of food for thought for all of us – it certainly is challenging to realise where we are at this point in history and that we are heading into uncharted territory, moving the systems of the earth beyond anything that has occurred in the geological past that we are able to measure, as many of Rob's graphs showed. We now need to work out how we will respond as a local community, as a nation and as part of the broader global community.

**QUOTE:** "Man has lost the capacity to foresee and to forestall. He will end by destroying the earth." Albert Schweitzer in the preface in Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring*.

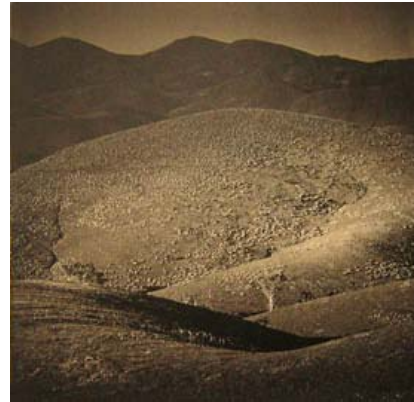
All those with white boarders take a step forward. We had a great range of images for Chris Hillard to look over, and one of the best ranges of black and white we have seen for ages.

**Large colour print**



**Winner: Sean O'Neil**  
 Second: Sean O'Neil  
 Third: Cindy DeLuca  
 Merit: Jason Whittkopp and Sean O'Neil

**Black and white**



**Winner: Richard Hunt**  
 Second: Sean O'Neil  
 Third: Sally Djurovich  
 Merit: Neil Follett

**Slide**



**Winner: Neil Follett**  
 Second: Phillipa Chester  
 Third: Dave Blair  
 Merit: Dave Blair

**Small colour print**



**Winner: Margaret Monk**  
 Second: Kirsten Groves  
 Third: John Turner  
 Merit: Anne Owen and Margaret Monk

*"I've been in love before / Sure weren't nothing like this..."*

*Cruel Sea – The honeymoon is over*

Christopher Hillard got me wondering at our July meeting. What is it that caused him to spend \$60k of his hard earned coin to produce a book on minor celebrities? Why do it? Obviously wasn't financial – he has sold how many?... \$3000 of books now? No, there was something else.

I'm all for perseverance, achieving your goals, stretching your wings, bucking the trend, setting your sights on the moon and hitting the top of the mountain, but what made him chose this as a topic. Celebrities interest all of us in many ways – certainly mags full of celebrities sell very well, despite having just about the worst photographic standards and ethics in the publishing world (blurry shots taken on long lenses of someone's butt – or worse, hanging out at the beach, or over the fence, blown up to the max to see if they might be pregnant against the wishes of the subject being photographed).

It's a pity a book done with the celebrities consent, in tasteful way, quality photography, with thought provoking interviews and that took (I think it was) three years to create will probably sell far less than 1% of total sales for the weekly gossip rag that has none of these qualities – so again I ask why bother.

While it was certainly interesting to see who of these celebrities were really like their characters and who was totally different, I found it interesting that someone was either gratified enough by simply meeting celebrities, the travel (can think of cheaper way of doing that), the idea of making a book or the art involved that they should do such a project. If you want something bad enough....?

On an unrelated issue, you will see an article that appeared in The Age about tripod terrorists. Thought you may all be interested in one of the issues relating to us photographers.

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**Thanks to Derek Jones of *Breen Printing* for printing our club's newsletter.  
Breen Printing – for your printing needs 11 Hunter Street, Healesville 59625177**

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## Letter asking for help – Wanted a photographer!

Neil Follett received the following letter, **if anyone can help, please call Michael directly.**

As we discussed on the phone the other night I am writing to you because I'm looking for a photographer to take some photos of an upcoming comedy show at the Upper Yarra Arts Centre in Warburton. In return for taking pictures of our show I could offer the photographer free tickets for himself/herself and any family/friends they may want to bring with them. We're also happy for the photographer to use these photos in a portfolio to get other work, and would be able to write them a letter of recommendation if they wanted one.

The show's called "The Big Time Comedy Show" and will be held at the Upper Yarra Arts centre, Main Street Warburton, on **Friday the 1st of September**. The photographer will be expected to be there from 7:45pm until the show finishes (approximately 10:00pm). This should be a very easy job, as the photographer will be spending most of their time watching the show and taking the odd photo.

We have no specific artistic requirements and the Photographer will be free to take shots in any way they want. All we ask is that you send us a copy of them on CD after the event. Please let your photographers know about this, and ask any interested photographers to contact me via email (MCHotline@yahoo.com.au) or phone (03 5966 6341).

Attached is a media release for some more info, but if you have any problems, questions, or require more information please don't hesitate to get in touch.

Yours faithfully,

Michael Connell  
MCHotline@yahoo.com.au  
(03) 5966 6341

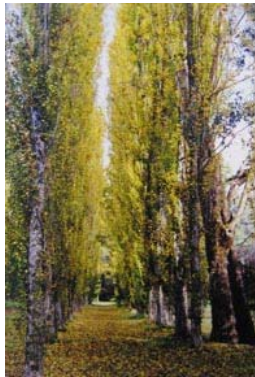
Judy scooped the pools – obviously shoots in a style that Rob found pleasing to his eye. Leading lines is a good thing to keep in mind when you shoot, and can be very subtle or quite obvious – either way, it is a technique that often works well. Good work everyone!

**Large colour print****Winner: Judy Archer**

Second: Margaret Monk

Third: Judy Archer

Merit: Cindy DeLuca

**Small print****Judy Archer**

Margaret Monk

Kirsten Groves

Sandra Goss

**Black and white****Judy Archer**

Neil Follett

Judy Archer

Dave Blair

**Article in The Age – Southbank photography****by Alan Atwood**

So Southgate does not want those nosey tourists poking around taking happy snaps, muses Alan Atwood.

YESTERDAY I shamelessly snooped on Southgate. I spied one couple canoodling in front of the shops; another lingering over coffee. I made careful note of logistical details: location; main access points; how to get into the 24-hour undercover car park. (All that space beneath the buildings! Imagine the possibilities ...)

No, I wasn't planning a terrorist attack. Just checking out the official Southgate website. This underlined the absurdity of the attempted ban on photography in the self-styled "arts and leisure precinct". I say "attempted" because it will never work. Even the Prime Minister has described it as "over the top", while the Victorian Attorney-General has reminded Southgate management that it's a tourist complex, not a military site.

Apart from the legal niceties raised by Southgate's no-snapping policy, symbolised by signs showing a camera with a red line through it, the issue betrays management's ignorance of the nature of photography. Evidently the catalyst for the ban was, according to one official, "a couple of incidents of tourists taking photos of obscure things ... It was just the facades of buildings, things that would be of no interest to put in a photo album."

Oh really? Since when do property managers decide what is, or isn't, worth photographing? An ability to perceive beauty, or just an interesting shape or design, in obscure things is a hallmark of great photographers ever since the medium was developed in the 19th century. Max Dupain, probably Australia's most illustrious photographer, took wonderful pictures of industrial pipes, stair rails, old

wooden posts, rusted fittings on piers, and girders. None of these are the sort of things Southgate thinks suitable for a photo album.

Facades of buildings? Certainly. Dupain was fascinated by these — their shapes and shadows and contrasting forms. His best-known work includes studies of walls in both Australia and France, home to one of the most influential photographers of them all — Henri Cartier-Bresson. He liked a staircase, too. Facades of buildings, also — in France, Spain, Germany, China, anywhere he could find them. Even better if there were ordinary people going about their business in the vicinity.

The likes of Dupain and Cartier-Bresson had to get by without cameras in their mobile phones. I suspect that this is something else the Southgate people haven't fully appreciated: every second person can be a photographer these days.

There's a geographical problem here, too. Close to Southgate — on the other side of City Road, in fact — is the Photography Studies College, a lively place with hundreds of students. I'm one of them. A mantra of PSC teachers is to look at the world around us, *really* look at it, and be ready to capture moments that matter to us. We're taught to take photography seriously, but also not to be dopes about it. Which is why I backed down a little while back when a Sunday market-stall holder — yes, at Southgate — made it clear to me, somewhat aggressively, that he didn't want a picture taken either of himself or his goods.

I was tempted to argue the toss (or mutter something rude about counterfeit goods), but a) it was going to be a so-so picture and b) I don't have a Mark Latham-like yen to cause controversy over a camera. So I walked away. But it did prompt me to do some reading about the rights of photographers. It seems that, generally speaking, it's not against Australian law to take pictures of people in public places without their permission. On private land, however, which includes shopping centres and markets, photographers may have a problem if an owner wants to enforce a rule.

But how are they going to do this — and why? The anti-terrorism excuse is plain silly, with so much information readily accessible. It's overkill, too. With Melbourne trying to sell itself as a vibrant place to live in and visit, a tourist precinct like Southgate should be welcoming visitors, not making them feel like threats to society.

I started a new semester at the PSC last night. To inspire myself before heading off, I flipped through a book of photos from *National Geographic*. It quotes a modern photographer, Joel Sartore, as saying a great picture has three components: nice light, good composition and something "jumping out" of the scene. The best shots, he adds, "are the ones that seem impossible, that simply can't be done". I doubt he had Southgate in mind, but I'm sure Sartore wouldn't let a silly sign with a red line through a camera stop him.

**Alan Attwood is a Melbourne writer.** Article copied from The Age website, [www.theage.com.au](http://www.theage.com.au)

Online Odyssey

by Dave Blair

Yay! Here it is, at long last... **our own website!**

Look up old newsletters (tech tips, profiles etc), find out what is coming up, look at a few pics from trips (any donations most welcome – email them to me and I will up them up). The new site is at:

[www.freewebs.com/yrps/](http://www.freewebs.com/yrps/)

So check it out!

# Cindy's Territory

**Next meeting** was originally going to be an interclub trip to Ringwood as we did last year, however it has been called off, so we will have our own meeting as normal at Coldstream. We could say it will be a 'mystery' evening, which given we will probably decide what is going to happen at the next committee meeting is probably not far off the mark!

**Comp subject is Landscape/seascape.**

## WELCOME

To our newest members Richard Hunt and Adrian Jones.

## Exhibition

Dan Buckle photography exhibition at Yerring.  
Station in Matt's Bar. 5<sup>th</sup> Aug – 2<sup>nd</sup> October, admission free opening hours 10am – 5pm weekdays, 10am – 6pm weekends.

## OCTOBER TRIP

14<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> October remainder of payments due at our September meeting, Total cost of trip \$180, same as last year. An updated itinerary was handed out at the August meeting, so anyone who missed out, see Cindy. Start thinking about the dress up theme for the Saturday night which is MARITIME...

**Lilydale Show** is on again this year, and we are running the photography comp again. We will be calling for volunteers to help sort and hang images, be there on the day. Entries being accepted on 28/29 October (some help needed), and the show is 18/19 November (more help needed!). More details closer to the date. Helping does not preclude you from entering!

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