



Wodonga / Albury Camera Club

Results and Comments – March Competition

Meeting Date:	March 11th, 2019	Print Secretary Brian Paatsch 02 6025 2117 brianian@dragnet.com.au
Judge:	Bob Thomas	
Subject:	Night Scene	

Colour Prints – Section 'B' (Red Dot)

1	189	A Bolt from the Blue	12	pts	Place	-
This is a dramatic shot, and earns credit simply for the degree of difficulty in catching lightning. I would have cloned out the bright spot in the sky at the top, and the image as a whole is not very sharp which could perhaps have been overcome by using a tripod or lower ISO.						
2	179	Nat. Film and Sound Archive Canberra	13	pts	Place	2nd Place
This has been handled reasonably well although it would be improved by cropping out everything on the left up to and including the banner. None of that adds to the image and the main part of the image would be much stronger without it. The entrance and the walls adjacent to it are where the real interest lies.						
3	79	Inspired	11	pts	Place	-
Good title for the image. I would like to see the top of the spire rather than chopping it off. Generally this is a good rule of thumb for this type of shot as otherwise the viewer is left craning their necks to see what you've got rid of. The image is unfortunately not very sharp but this applies to many of the images in this competition. I would encourage the use of tripods for night shots, plus a combination of lower ISOs, narrower apertures and longer exposures.						
4	117	Perspective on Time	10	pts	Place	-
A good choice of subject, although it is rather out of focus. Probably using a lower ISO and a tripod would have made this a much sharper image. One of the problems with anything having lettering or numbers is that it makes any lack of sharpness more obvious. The image has a slight tilt, but this could be rectified in software. Converting this image to a portrait orientation would remove some of the blackness, concentrating our attention on the tower.						
5	4	Magic	10	pts	Place	-
A nice scene from a cruise. The water is nicely sharp and inviting. I would have cloned out the reflections of the lights and tried to lessen the rather overblown highlights in the clouds.						
6	54	Night Swirls	14	pts	Place	1st Place
I had some reservation about this as a night shot. I would have seen it more as a creative entry. However, as it has been accepted into the competition I have judged it accordingly. The image is nice and crisp and the patterns are attractive and keep one's attention. It looks equally appealing in a portrait mode and would fall into that much sought after category of "things one would hang on a wall". Overall an appealing image.						

Colour Prints – Section 'A' (Yellow Dot)

1	168	Night Garden	13	pts	Place	Merit
This is a frequently photographed, iconic location. The image looks better when viewed from a short distance as it is a little cluttered when closely examined. Stepping back blends those numerous focal points and the result is a pleasing representation of that familiar theme and place. It balances the various tones quite well.						
2	163	"V" for the Camera	9	pts	Place	-
This is a well captured scene and the lighting has been well handled. Unfortunately, it's more of a record shot than something you would hang on your wall. The girl's face would make a nice image in itself if her surroundings were cropped out. I would have perhaps made her the central feature rather than being just part of a broader scene. The image does tell a story, but it isn't really compelling enough to carry the image forward.						



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3	148	Diwali Festival	10	pts	Place	-
An unusual subject, but at the same time a little obscure. There is some ritual going on here, but to the uninitiated it is not immediately clear what's happening. However, the main drawback here is the overall colour within the image which does not appear to be a realistic representation of the original scene. This apparent colour issue could lie in the printing but is more probably a white balance issue. Not having the digital image to play with this is just an educated guess, but I do think that a WB adjustment would bring a more realistic dimension to the image as the colour palate here does not seem to be accurate.						
4	129	The Parthenon	13	pts	Place	Merit
An excellent shot of the Parthenon at night. Caught at the right time when the sky still has colour, it is crisp and well exposed. I would tend to clone out the small bright light in the middle which is slightly distracting. I experienced the same problem with scaffolding some years ago at the same site, and it will be some time before any of us capture this building free of that scaffolding.						
5	119	Just a Glow	12	pts	Place	-
There is great potential in this image, which has all the makings of a great image. However, as it stands it doesn't quite achieve that potential. The main issue is a lack of information in the bulk of the image. I am confident that there is probably more information in the sky and horizon which could be brought out with a bit of tweaking, but as it stands it's really a tad too dark. The lower right corner is really very nice, but is swamped by the sea of black which dominates the image. There are two ways in which the images could be lifted. Firstly, if that darkness had a little more content, a little more brightness, then the two elements would complement each other. The other alternative would be to crop the image severely to make that lower right corner become the focus of the image. I like the original idea but that expanse of sky is just too dark and dominating.						
6	81	Fireworks over the Lake 4	11	pts	Place	-
A difficult subject, but it is well seen and well captured. I would clone out the two bright spots on the lower LH side which are slightly distracting.						
7	78	11 o'clock	11	pts	Place	-
Certainly, a recognisable night location, and a good choice of subject. It may have benefited from a little cropping to emphasise the main subject. The main change I would make is to straighten the image by rotating it slightly to the right (maybe only 1 degree). It's amazing what a very small tilt can do to an image and this one is just a tad off vertical. Otherwise, well captured although perhaps lacking sufficient interest to make it stand out from the pack.						
8	43	King William Bridge	15	pts	Place	1st Place
This is an excellent image. Crisp and detailed, the image is well balanced and well spotted. The whole image is both interesting and technically well handled.						
9	12	Lighting the Night	10	pts	Place	-
I like the star burst effect on the lights – possibly captured using a filter. Either way it's a nice effect. However the image overall lacks a focal point. It is instead a good backdrop for something more interesting to happen. Introducing something for us to focus on such as a car or a dog or a person would lift this image a lot, but without that element it doesn't provide the viewer with enough.						
10	10	Thunder Struck	14	pts	Place	2nd Place
This image scores well on the degree of difficulty, and captures the lightning really well. Technically very well handled I feel that it could be even better if cropped significantly all the way around. The lightning is such a central focus and so interesting it deserves to be the main actor in this scene without sharing the glory with so much of its surroundings.						



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Monochrome Prints						
1	189	The Summer Moon	10	pts	Place	-
This is an unusual idea and provides a novel approach to a familiar subject. Unfortunately, it lacks sharpness, and without knowing exactly how it was taken it's hard to offer advice. However, working on the assumption that it was a time exposure, there is one subject to avoid which is trees. Tree foliage is constantly moving, and therefore any exposure time sufficient for night-time photography is also going to run the risk of blurred foliage.						
2	179	Conservatorium of Music Albury	11	pts	Place	-
A nice choice of building, particularly with the light-coloured walls. It might have been stronger if the building featured more as the central subject rather than just part of the overall street scene. The building itself has great potential for a night shot, and a closer approach, perhaps featuring its architecture would have strengthened the image significantly. Technically good although it could be sharper.						
3	168	City Walk	13	pts	Place	Merit
A nice choice of subject, well spotted and taken from an interesting angle providing a lead-in to the background. I would have liked to have seen the top of the arch as well. The image is well handled and exposed.						
4	163	Negotiating the Price	13	pts	Place	Merit
This is a nice portrait and even more so because it does not appear to be posed. This type of image benefits from appearing as a snapshot of an event rather than a set-up and the maker has managed this well. The darkened surrounds provide a nice framework and the image is sharp and interesting.						
5	148	Wild Ride	13	pts	Place	Merit
This is a nice departure from the average night shot, and provides an interesting abstract from what might have otherwise been a pretty standard subject. The image is crisp and well balanced and has sufficient appeal to make the viewer come back for more, which after all is one of the key objectives of any photo.						
6	12	Lights on the Bridge	12	pts	Place	-
The composition here is very good with the trees on the left providing a contrast to the bridge. The problem lies in the lack of light and definition in the trees which allows them to be overwhelmed by the brightness of the bridge. There are ways around this – one way might be by merging multiple exposures, each exposed for different parts of the scene. Alternatively, you could light the trees with flash at the same time that you exposed for the bridge. I think this location has great potential if you can manage to balance the exposures more effectively.						
7	119	Starlight Starbright	12	pts	Place	-
The makers of this and another similar image have unfortunately chosen a competition where several entrants have chosen similar subjects! These images are all rather similar yet each is a direct competitor with the others. This particular image is let down by the foreground not playing as prominent a role in the overall composition. If you compare it with similar shots you will find that where there are contrasting elements, images where both elements play their part equally are more visually appealing. This type of shot is a favourite of many photographers, and the choice of trees is also important. In this image, although it has been well handled, it unfortunately has been pipped at the post by another image which presented a better foreground.						
8	117	Albury at Night	11	pts	Place	-
This image has been well handled technically, and is well exposed and presented. The primary issue lies in the "interest factor" as it lacks a central focal point or subject to draw the viewer in. A lone cyclist, a car, a person or even a dog walking down the road would have provided that missing element. As it stands it's a great set, just lacking the main player to appear.						
9	81	Night at Lake Elphinstone	12	pts	Place	-
This is another of several star shots in this competition which are all well-handled. In this case I like the way the stars seem to almost come out of the trees and spread into the heavens. This one is a nice shot, unfortunately competing with other night shots for a place on the podium. If you are able to tweak this image to produce a little more separation between the land and sky, and a bit more contrast it will lift it significantly. A nice image nonetheless.						
10	79	Quiet Night	9	pts	Place	-
The maker has handled the lighting well here, and there is sufficient detail in the image. However, the bottom line in all images lies in the overall interest value, and that's where this one lets itself down. Choice of subject is so very important, and without a central point of interest most images will struggle compared with others which have a dominant and interesting subject.						



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11	78	Darth Vader Plays	10	pts	Place	-
<p>This is a fun shot and captures the evening's activity well. Whether it holds sufficient interest or not is the question so perhaps this is more of a record shot than one which captivates the viewer. It is hard to translate the excitement and emotion of an event into a still photo and perhaps the maker might have been better to concentrate on one individual. When you are at an event there are so many additional sensory inputs – the sounds, the music, the laughter etc, and when you distil the experience into a single photo you must try to compensate for the fact that your audience does not experience any of those original elements. Try to capture an expression, a close-up or some unique characteristic that would pique the interest of someone who was not actually there.</p>						
12	43	Victoria Fountain	15	pts	Place	1st Place
<p>This image stands out for a number of reasons. Firstly, it is crisp, sharp and clearly illustrative of the main subject. Secondly, it takes the enemy of night photography (i.e. movement) and capitalises on that movement by making it a feature. Had you simply taken the shot, you might have just ended up with a blurred photo. However, by controlling that exposure you have made a feature of the water's motion, and done so in a very interesting way. This is an image that ticks all the boxes.</p>						
13	10	Celestial Skeletons	14	pts	Place	2nd Place
<p>In a field of night shots this one stands out. The three elements we look for (foreground, middle and background) are all well-handled and provide depth to the image. The three elements are all exposed very nicely so that none are lost or allowed to merge with the others. This combination provides us with a nicely balanced and pleasing image where all elements play a role and we are treated to a very nice image overall.</p>						

EDIB Competition

1	189	After the Storm	10	pts	Place	-
<p>Interesting car light trails provide a bit of colour here. The other elements are interesting but a better spot might have been chosen where the power lines were not included. The short focal length has produced a lot of distortion in the image and perhaps a longer focal length might have eliminated that aspect. If this was not taken on a tripod, it should have been as the sharpness leaves a little to be desired. Interesting composition, but needs a little more experimentation to bring out the best at this location.</p>						
2	179	Weir Wall Albury	15	pts	Place	1st Place
<p>Like this one a lot. It is an interesting composition with a lot to keep the viewer involved. The pathway leads us into the image as do the lights. It has an air of intrigue about it, almost like a scene from a spy movie. Perhaps a longer exposure with a lower ISO might have given it less noise, but that's something you could try on another occasion. A nice image.</p>						
3	173	The City at Night	14	pts	Place	2nd Place
<p>I like the time of evening you have chosen. Later would have rendered the sky more lifeless and the grass too dark. This is a nice compromise. You've chosen a good spot without too much clutter and the grass provides a welcome break from the hustle and bustle of the city buildings. A good choice of ISO (100) which produces much cleaner images than the higher ranges. The only change I would suggest is cropping the image as there is a reasonable amount that we could do without. Cropping off all around the perimeter to eliminate that extraneous part of the image makes it much better and focuses the eye on the main elements.</p>						
4	167	Shadows in the Night	11	pts	Place	-
<p>You've chosen an interesting subject, and the lighting has been handled well. The main issue lies in composition, which is sometimes something we overlook. Although the sculpture is interesting, it is overcome by its surroundings. Not much you can do about where it is, but you will find better vantage points by moving yourself around the object. If necessary, you can always replace the background if your processing skills reach that far. If not, try to move around the sculpture, looking at it from different vantage points. Try high, try low, but try a vantage point that excludes as much of the surrounding clutter as possible. Failing that, try a really shallow depth of field so that the surroundings disappear. Composition is really important, and finding that right spot to take your photo is an important skill to cultivate.</p>						
5	79	Eleven ten to Lilydale	12	pts	Place	-
<p>The railing here provides a great leading line into the images and the exposure is well handled and captures the scene well. It lacks a central focal point, and could perhaps do with something striking to engage the viewer. Hard to find I know, but the key to every good photograph is to engage your audience. That means finding a subject that makes them want to come back for more.</p>						



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6	29	Fantasy Crossing	13	pts	Place	Merit
<p>I must confess I have no idea what this is, but it's a fine example of whatever that is! Looking rather like a version of the Sydney harbour bridge, it is quite striking. The time lapse has worked well on an extended exposure, and no doubt you were as surprised with the outcome as your viewers will be. This type of shot is always a little random in that you don't quite know what you'll end up with. In this case it's interesting and one of those images that you'll either hate or like. My only advise would be to keep experimenting because this is an interesting and unpredictable avenue to explore.</p>						

7	116	Majestic Magyar	11	pts	Place	-
<p>If this was taken from onboard a ship of some sort, then it has an increased level of difficulty. It may have been taken from the opposite shore. It's a fine building and a good choice of subject. The noise in the image is a problem, and I would probably suggest that you get rid of the sky and replace it with pure black the overall problem is one of sharpness, and for most of the image you are stuck with that no matter what. Shooting at high ISO on a slow shutter is generally a recipe for less than optimum shots. Overseas locations are usually a "one off" chance so re-visiting it to try other techniques isn't generally an option. However, if you are faced with a similar problem in the future, try to steady the camera somehow and try to balance the shutter speed and ISO according to your situation at the time. Sometimes you have to accept that a record shot is the best you can hope for.</p>						

8	59	Opera House in Flight	11	pts	Place	-
<p>This is an amazing sight, but a difficult one to capture. Your enemy here is sharpness, or lack of it. You can't really do justice to an opportunity like this without a tripod or without a seriously good camera. Your shutter speed of 1/13 is just too slow especially at an ISO of 1600. I am assuming you did not use a tripod, and if that's the case then you really need a faster shutter speed for hand held photos. The composition is fine, but based on those settings you were really behind the 8 ball in this type of situation. Next time, try to find some way of stabilising the camera so that you can get away with that slower shutter speed.</p>						

EDIA Competition

1	12	Dean Street	11	pts	Place	-
<p>I like the perspective on this one which is quite unusual. It certainly leads one's eye into the image. It has been handled well and captures a moment in the life of the street. It has sufficient interest to make the viewer linger a bit more, exploring the various activities and places that are laid out beneath the viewer's eye. Although it has no central focal point, the complexity works in this image whereas another similar image might just be cluttered.</p>						

2	168	Rain	10	pts	Place	-
<p>I like the sea of umbrellas, although I'm not sure that it might not have been better in colour. On the one hand, greyscale suits rain, but on the other hand I think this needs an injection of colour to lift it a bit and to provide more interest. The swirly effect doesn't help, and if this was added afterwards it might be better without that effect. Certainly, there is potential here, and it might be worth re-visiting the original image and trying different processing techniques.</p>						

3	163	Signs of Change	12	pts	Place	-
<p>This is a great study of the high rise living that we find in some cities. It illustrates quite nicely the multi-story existence of city dwellers and has been captured well with nice sharpness. Not a lot I would change in the way this has been taken.</p>						

4	161	Showtime	11	pts	Place	-
<p>Nice shot of a Ferris wheel, and capitalises on our favourite colour as well. The blown-out lighting on the right-hand side is a problem, as our eyes are drawn to that immediately. I would suggest cloning something over that as it is far too bright to find any detail – there won't be any detail left to recover. Removing that bright spot would greatly improve the image.</p>						

5	148	Dancin' in the City	11	pts	Place	-
<p>A great action shot, caught at the right moment. I'm not sure that it wouldn't be even better if cropped more tightly. There is an awful lot of dead space in the image, especially in the top half and to the left. You need to</p>						



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keep enough to provided context, but you could easily crop out quite a lot from the top and side to end up with a far stronger image.							
6	129	From Above	13	pts	Place	Merit	
Must have used a very tall tripod for this one! I once took a daylight helicopter tour and the view was very similar, so well done for taking the time out from your flight to get this shot. It's nice and crisp, and the overall balance has been well handled. I might have increased the saturation in the sky to bring out the red, but apart from that it is an interesting bird's eye view.							
7	119	City Lights	13	pts	Place	Merit	
I like this one a lot, although it does cry out for a bit of cropping. Both of those lights on the left hand side are very distracting, and an easy fix is simply to crop them out. Once you've done that you are no longer drawn to that side at the expense of the main picture. The colours are great and the distant shore compliments the overall effect.							
8	81	El Chalten at Dawn	12	pts	Place	-	
One of the places I shall never see, although it's an iconic view. I like this image but would like it even more if the lower half was a little lighter. There is a wealth of information there which can easily be brought out in software using a graduated filter, creating a more even balance between the brightness of the mountains and the darkness of the foreground. As it stands the difference between the two is too great, and restoring the balance is an easy and effective "fix". I would also suggest that a lower ISO and a tripod would have produced a sharper image.							
9	78	Road Closed	10	pts	Place	-	
A complicated mix of cables, workmen and machinery, and you have handled the lighting well. I'm not sure that the overall scene is sufficiently interesting to maintain the viewer's interest. A close-up of the workers, or perhaps a more detailed look at what they were doing might have produced more interest, but as it stands there isn't a single point of focus. I'm a bit of an enthusiast for poking my nose into building sites, but that experience doesn't always translate into an interesting image as I have found with my own construction photos!							
10	10	Mountain Milky Way and Meteors	13	pts	Place	Merit	
I do like a good star photo, and this is an impressive example. Although the couple of shooting stars are interesting, in a photo like this I find them a bit distracting. I'd probably clone them out simply because they draw the eye to them rather than letting you absorb the enormity of space. They remind me of scratches on negatives or slides (for those of you who remember those things). Here, however, I just find them distracting. I'd also consider making the bottom mountains a total silhouette given that there isn't much detail to be extracted. Darkening those mountains would improve the overall image.							
11	146	Flinders Rangers	14	pts	Place	2nd Place	
This is fabulous and I love the whole "outer space" feel it gives to the viewer. It is nicely exposed without blowing out highlights and the gentle curve of the galaxy is really impressive. I couldn't recommend anything to improve this except maybe a slight increase in saturation.							
12	43	St Francis Xavier's Cathedral	15	pts	Place	1st Place	
This one is really nice except for one annoyance. It would have been so much nicer if the photographer had just taken one step to the left! That space between the trees is just crying out to be filled by the spires, and it would have finished the image off so well. That's not to say it's not really nice as it is, it's just that it could have been that much better. One thing about this image which differs from many in this competition is that it is sharp, and this is because the maker has chosen a low ISO (100) rather than trying to use a high ISO to overcome the lack of light. 8 seconds at 100 ISO has produced a far crisper image than would have been the case if he/she had opted for a higher ISO. Critical comments aside, this image is delightful. It is crisp, interesting, well processed and a really nice representation of an impressive building.							