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# Newsletter from Kim Westerskov

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## Newsletter #75 –April 2019

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*This newsletter goes out to many photographers in New Zealand and overseas - and to anybody who asks to go onto the mailing list. If you know anybody who would like to be on the mailing list, please get them to email me. It's free and they can unsubscribe at any time, of course.*



Sara, two years old next week, Tauranga, Muslim

## 1. PEOPLE PHOTOGRAPHY - IT'S ALL ABOUT CAPTURING "THE SPECIAL MOMENTS"

With people photos, it's all about "the special moments". Life is an ongoing series of moments, each blending imperceptibly into the next. Your job as a photographer is to capture the best ones, the ones I call "the special moments". The ones that make you say "Yes!!" almost out loud. The ones that make you smile. The ones that make other people smile too.

So are there any "secrets" for capturing them? Not really, just obvious things like being ready, working quickly and – perhaps most importantly having empathy – connecting with the people you're photographing, whether they are family or friends – or people you've never met before who live in a distant country.

Your mission statement from today onwards: "Capture as many 'special moments' as you can, especially those of family and friends". You'll be glad you did. So will they.

## 2. SOME "SPECIAL MOMENTS"

Let's start with this photo of Sara [at right]. It isn't really a "special moment". It's a pretty good moment, but it's not a particularly special one. The special moment came several minutes later and is the photo on the previous page.

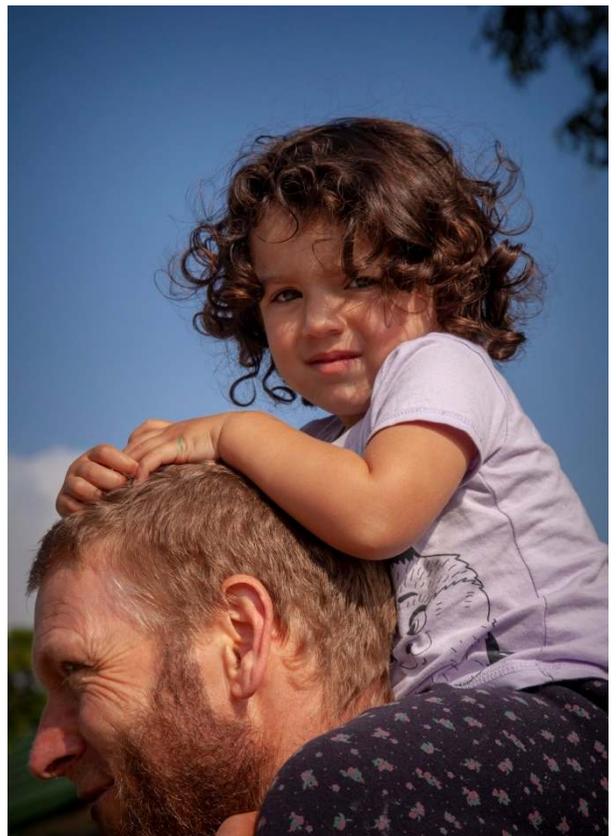
Andy [Sara's father] and I were standing outside the Tauranga mosque eight days after the Christchurch shootings. The previous day there had been 600 or more people there, including armed police, a strange sight for most of us. The following day there was just Andy's family and me standing outside the fence, looking at the flowers and messages, and pondering about it all. I'd never met Andy [a Muslim] before, but we chatted for a while.

Sometime later: "Andy, your daughter looks great up on your shoulders. Can I take her photo? Give me your email address and I'll send it to you". "Sure" said Andy.

The photo at the right was taken then. Sara was guarded, suspicious of this man she'd never seen before [me]. Quite understandable.

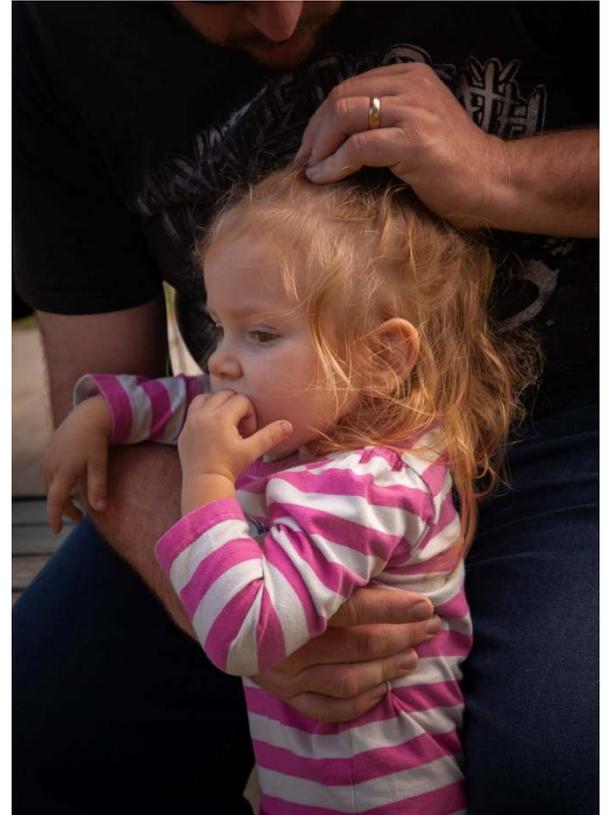
Andy and I chatted some more. The next time I looked at Sara something had changed. There was now a connection between us. Trust. Warmth. Magic. I lifted my camera and quickly pressed the shutter several times, while the magic was fresh. See the photo of the special moment, the magic, on the previous page.

It would have been so easy to miss this moment, but I didn't. Do I miss other "special moments"? Of course, we all do. Well, I imagine I do, as we generally don't know what we missed. The thing is to miss as



few as possible. And there are special moments all around us. It's our job to notice them, to enjoy them, and – for us photographers – to capture some of them.

A big part of capturing special moments is simply being ready. If you're using a cellphone, being ready may just mean having it in your hand, "on" and in camera mode. I have a dSLR so in my case there's a longer list: camera in hand, power on, the right lens attached [24-105mm lens], focal length set appropriately for what might happen next [105mm in this case], ISO set according to the circumstances [ISO 500 here, though anywhere between 200-800 would have been fine], Aperture set at f9 for reasonable depth of field [which in Aperture Priority mode gave me a shutter speed of 1/500 second], Autofocus on, Image Stabilizer on, Motor Drive on, and so on. Ready. Ready [in this case] for Sara.



Here's two more special moments. The moment in the above photo happened so quickly I only just got it. I was at a family picnic at a local park, standing around, probably chatting about this and that – as you do at family picnics. A young niece came past in the arms of her father. Almost instinctively I raised my camera and fired off just one shot.

The settings were pretty much the same as for the Sara photos, with an ISO of 640 and aperture of f9 giving me [in Aperture Priority] a shutter speed of 1/1000 second, fast enough to freeze the motion of a rapidly-disappearing niece.

Another special moment [photo at right] happened so quickly I didn't even know I had it until I looked at my photos after the party. We'd celebrated our daughter Anne's birthday at The Whipped Baker café in Tauranga's Historic Village, taking over the back room for a few hours. I took hundreds of photos – the speeches, Anne holding baby Louie, photos of the whole



room filled with the people who are important in Anne's life, anything and everything [some of us photographers are like that - we photograph not quite "anything and everything" but sometimes pretty close to it]. Anne's friend Alana walked back into the room holding her daughter Terehi-maaria, smiled briefly at me, and kept walking. This photo definitely captures a very special moment. What it doesn't show [and which doesn't matter because it's irrelevant to the moment] is that we were in a crowded café with many people, and more than a buzz of noise. By good luck [or was I being clever? Hard to know] there just happened to be nothing much behind Alana, just light-coloured empty walls and a member of the public in the other room [I left her in the photo, but made her less conspicuous in Photoshop].

Special moments don't happen just among family and friends, of course, they can happen anywhere, anytime: at the beach, on the street, and even at crowded public events. These two photos were taken at the 150 year Commemoration of the Battle of Gate Pa here in Tauranga. The photos capture two very different aspects of this event. The power and raw energy of the challenging haka was captured at distance with my 300mm lens plus a 1.4x converter, giving me an effective focal length of 420mm. This let me concentrate just on the warriors, allowing me to exclude every single bit of background. A good deal of the power of this photo comes from this exclusion of everything but the warriors. In situations like this I take many photos on motor drive and choose the best moment later on.



The same lens combination allowed me to capture a private moment between the then Governor General and a local kuia. It looks fine in colour, but better in black and white. More timeless. Definitely another "special moment".

### 3. "TRAVEL PHOTOGRAPHY – YOUR NEXT BIG TRIP" Workshop - Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> April – half day

Don't come back from your next trip disappointed with your photos. In this half-day workshop, I'll cover pretty much everything you need to know to come back with great photos. I'll cover:

- Planning your trip
- What's in your camera bag?
- Photographing strangers. Ask permission or not?
- Best approaches for street photography. Equipment. Techniques. To observe or engage?
- The travel photographer's Code of Ethics
- By yourself or with a group?
- Dealing with crowds & weather.
- Where tripods are forbidden
- Low light photography: dawn, dusk, night, interiors - with & without a tripod
- Flash or no flash?
- Tips for getting the most out of every situation: "Kim's 5 photos from anywhere"
- Dealing with heat, dust, cold, wind, rain. Kim's cheap and nearly-instant camera weatherproofing
- Should you wait for better light/weather/crowds - or not?
- Landscapes, cities, wildlife, people
- Snaps, or good photos, or both?
- Backing up
- Keeping yourself safe. Keeping your photo safe.
- Legal issues, copyright, and ethics
- Once you are home. What to do with your photos.

Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> April. 9.00am – 1.00pm.

Venue: Kim's workshop studio at 18 Greerton Road, Gate Pa, Tauranga

Cost: Full course fee [which includes tuition, hand-out, Vivienne's yummy morning tea] **\$115**. Fulltime students with ID **\$65**.

Lion cubs photo: Vicki Ostler  
Louvre Pyramid [far right]: Brett Williams  
Beefeater: Conrad Kuriger



## 4. "EXCITING NEW PHOTO TECHNIQUES"

Workshop - Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> May

Is your photography in a bit of a rut? Would you like to create some new and different "Wow!" photos? Would you like some clever new ideas to get "Honours" at your camera club? Want to try some new techniques? Want to lift your photography to a new level?

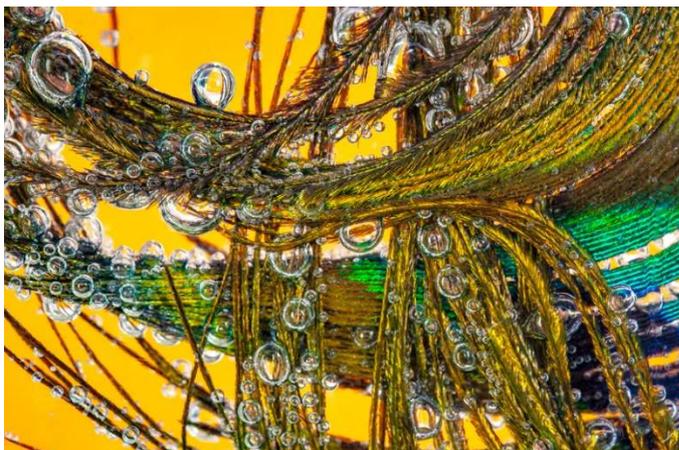
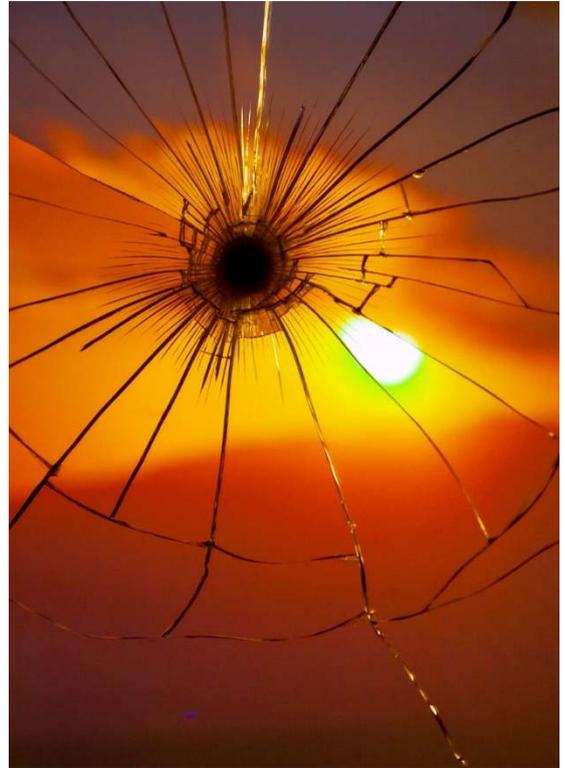
If you answered "yes" to any of these questions, then this is the workshop I've designed for you. In fact, I've been working on it for the last two years: researching &, looking for new "Wow!" ideas that you might like. And then experimenting, testing the ideas and their potential for a workshop.

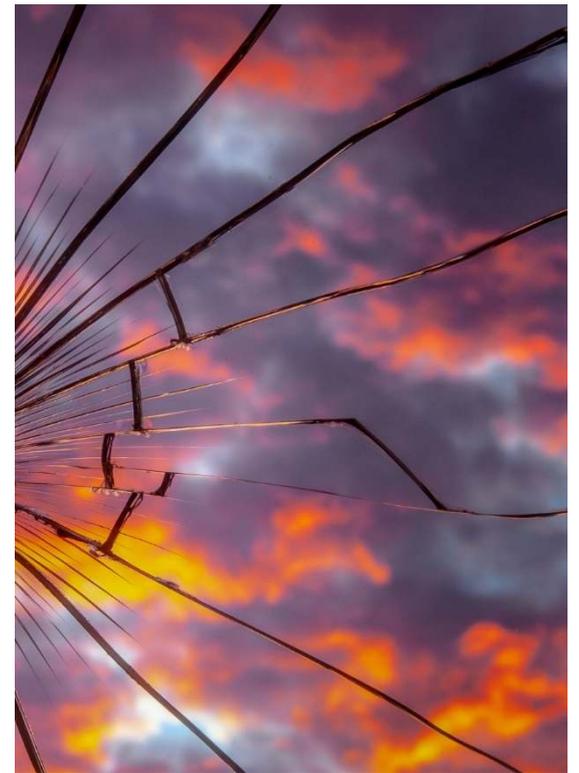
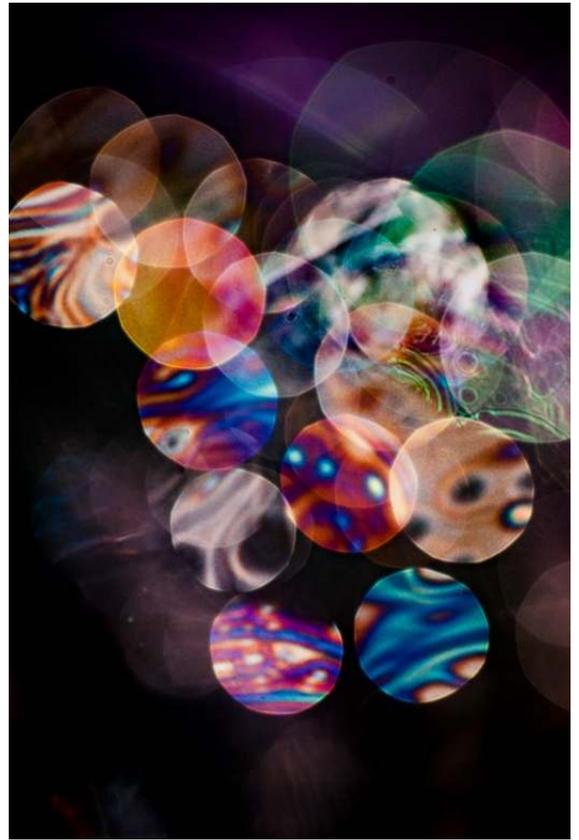
We'll explore the exciting possibilities of using mirrors [broken and unbroken], crystal glass balls, soap bubbles, effervescence, and many more ideas. All you need to do is bring yourself and your camera. I've already prepared the broken mirrors [not as easy as it sounds] and gathered together the other stuff we'll need: the crystal glass balls [flown in from USA], a variety of mirrors [from local op shops and emporiums], special soap for bubbles [also flown in from USA], effervescence [from my local supermarket], feathers [from Jeanette] and more.

This workshop will be very different from my other workshops. We'll spend some time looking at a variety of good and great new ideas and techniques for you, and then - much earlier in the day than usual - **I'll set up the equipment and you'll bring out your cameras and get photographing.** You'll go home with your memory card full of exciting new photos. Promise!

**Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> May. 9.00am – 5.00pm.**

**Cost:** Full course fee [which includes tuition, hand-outs & Vivienne's yummy catering **\$295** - or **\$245** for Early Birds [if you register by 8<sup>th</sup> May]. Fulltime students with ID **\$145**.





Have a good look at the photos on these three pages: I'll be showing you how to each of these was achieved, and how they can be achieved by you.





## 5. 2019 PROGRAMME

### APRIL

- **Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> April. "Travel" workshop.** Half day.

### MAY

- **Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> May. "Photos & Coffee" informal meeting.** 7.00 – 10.00pm. Free.
- **Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> May. "New Photo Techniques" workshop.** Full day plus follow-up.

### JUNE

- **Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> June. "Photos & Coffee" informal meeting.** 7.00 – 10.00pm. Free.
- **Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> June. "Photo Essentials" workshop.** Full day plus follow-up.

### JULY

- **Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> July. "Photos & Coffee" informal meeting.** 7.00 – 10.00pm. Free.
- **Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> July. "Photo Impressionism" workshop.** Full day plus follow-up.

### AUGUST

- **Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> August. "Photos & Coffee" informal meeting.** 7.00 – 10.00pm. Free.
- **Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> August. "Black & White" photo workshop.** Full day plus follow-up.

### SEPTEMBER

- **Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> September. "Photos & Coffee" informal meeting.** 7.00 – 10.00pm. Free.
- **Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> September. "People" workshop.** Portraits, kids, families, candid, travel, events, weddings. Full day plus follow-up.

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### OCTOBER

- **Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> October. "Photos & Coffee" informal meeting.** 7.00 – 10.00pm. Free.
- **Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> October. "Good photos, great photos – anytime, anywhere" workshop.** Full day plus follow-up.

### NOVEMBER

- **Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> November. "Photos & Coffee" informal meeting.** 7.00 – 10.00pm. Free.

### DECEMBER

- **Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> December. "Photos & Coffee" informal meeting.** 7.00 – 10.00pm. Free.

Half-day workshops 9.00am – 1.00pm

Full day workshops 9.00am – 5.00pm

**COST:** Course fees include tuition, detailed hand-outs, yummy catering, plus [for most full-day workshops] an assignment and follow-up evening.

- **Half day workshops:** \$135 – or \$115 for Early Birds if you register by 10 days before the workshop. Fulltime students with ID \$70.
- **One day workshops:** \$295 – or \$245 for Early Birds if you register by 10 days before the workshop. Fulltime students with ID \$150.

## 6. KIM'S PHOTOS & COFFEE EVENINGS

We meet on the first Tuesday of each month [except January], chat about photography, and view some of the recent photos we've taken. It's **free [no charge], supper is served**, and there's no obligation of any kind. **Please email me if you'd like to come** [it's not a big room so I need to keep an eye on numbers]. These evenings are always fun and friendly - there's usually many smiles and laughs. It's a great way of meeting up with like-minded people, **being inspired by the creativity of our group of photographers, and coming away with new ideas and tips**. There's a wide range of interests and abilities – so you're very unlikely to feel out of your depth. Bring photos if you wish, but there's no obligation to. Some people do, some don't. The next one is on Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> May. starting 7.00pm. 18 Greerton Road, Gate Pa, Tauranga.

## 7. "MENTORING MY KIM"

Mentoring individual photographers to the best of my ability is time-intensive, so I'm only able to mentor a few photographers at any one time.

"Mentoring by Kim" is for serious photographers who want to get better, much better, to make more compelling images, and who realize that great photography is not something that you can spend a few hours on and "have it sorted" by 7 pm tonight.

How good do you have to be to be mentored? It absolutely doesn't matter, truly. I'm just as happy mentoring keen beginners who know nothing much more than where the "Auto" button is as I am mentoring successful professionals. The kind of camera and lenses you have don't matter either. All that matters is that you are keen and willing to put in some effort learning and trying. It's a journey, and for that reason "Mentoring by Kim" is for a minimum of 6 months. After that, you can choose to finish or to carry on.

So what happens during that time? Whatever is needed to make you a better - and happier - photographer. "Mentoring" is the ongoing process of inspiring, advising, guiding, teaching, critiquing ... whatever is needed for your ongoing development as a photographer. It's one-on-one, so it's different for each person. One day it may be about equipment or Photoshop, next week it may be "I just want my photos to have more 'Wow' in them", the following month it may be about exhibitions or "Should I go pro?"



Do you need to live in Tauranga or travel to Tauranga for mentoring? No. Face-to-face time every now and then is great, but most mentoring can be done by email or over the phone [or Skype]. One photographer I've mentored for some years lives in Dunedin and although we're in contact often, I see him only once every few years. Another photographer lives an hour's drive from Tauranga and comes over for a full day with me once every month or so. Between visits, we're regularly in contact, often daily. For a very reasonable \$450 per month you get access to me pretty much whenever you want, daily if need be. But most importantly, it's whatever works best for you. I take the mentoring seriously and I'm there for you. I want you to succeed.



If you don't need the full mentoring program, a second option is "Mentoring Lite". For \$225 per month, you get a "light" version of the mentoring program.



Here's what two of the photographers I've been mentoring have said:

**Pam Thomson [Te Awamutu]:** "I have been mentored by Kim for about 5 months now, and have wanted to do it for a couple of years. I wish I had done it sooner. Kim is a wonderful Mentor, gives great encouragement, and has so much knowledge to share... He gives very honest, thoughtful, critique. The Mentoring is led by you".



**Derek Morrison [Dunedin], 2018 New Zealand Geographic Photographer of the Year:** "Kim is, without doubt, one of the best – he is proactive, really knows his stuff and genuinely drills into the creative process, pain and dreams... I wanted a raw and unfiltered appraisal of where I was at and where I wanted to go. I got that with Kim". Was there any connection between the mentoring and your NZ Geographic Photographer of the Year win? "Of course".

Photos of Kim by Tony Whitehead, James Frankham, Malcolm Macfarlane. & I'm afraid I don't remember who took the photo at McLaren Falls.



## 8. QUOTE OF THE MONTH

“A thing that you see in my pictures is that I was not afraid to fall in love with these people.”

Annie Leibovitz

## 9. INVITATION TO ALL CAMERA CLUBS & GROUPS

If your club or group might be interested in hosting one of my presentations - or workshops - or “Field Trip • Photo Critique” days, please get in touch.

## 10. PRIVATE TUITION

Yes, like you I’m usually busy doing “other stuff” too, but I can nearly always fit private tuition in, and am very happy to do so. First 2 hours: \$80 per hour, after that \$70 per hour. If you come again, it’s \$70 per hour right from the first hour. Think not just about cost, but “value” – it’s one-on-one with an experienced photographer and teacher and we cover a lot each hour. Bring a friend if you wish - no extra charge.

Or – for just the cost of a full-day workshop [with Early Bird discount] - \$245 – you get my full attention - one-on-one - for 4 hours. This can be out in the field or at my studio, looking at your photos on my computer, going over your camera functions, looking into specific techniques, or all of the above and more – whatever you want to do. I’m here for you. For only \$475 I’m yours for the whole day.

## ABOUT KIM

- **Passionate about photography and passionate about inspiring, guiding, and supporting photographers.**
- Over 30 years as a professional photographer and teaching photography for 12 years now
- Five First Prizes in the BBC “Wildlife Photographer of the Year” competition, the Olympics/Oscars of nature photography worldwide.
- 18 books published [international distributions] – written and photographed by Kim.