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# Newsletter from Kim Westerskov

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## Newsletter #82 – January 2020

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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.*



*Surf lifeguards, Bethells Beach*

## 1. WELCOME TO 2020

Welcome the 2020! I hope it's a great year for you, that your deepest wishes gradually unfold, that life is good for you.

And that your photography continues to be the rich and rewarding hobby [or career] that it can be when it all "goes right"

Here's to 2020 "going right". Or even better than right 😊

## 2. THE BEST PHOTOGRAPHER YOU CAN BE

Becoming the best photographer you can be is reasonably simple. I don't say easy or quick, just reasonably simple. At the beginning of each year I remind you [and me] of the nine main points for becoming the best photographer you can be:

1. Take photos – lots of them, often.
2. Learn new stuff – any way that works for you [photo clubs, online, books, workshops, tuition, mentoring ...]
3. Go to new places with your camera.
4. Revisit old places with your camera. Get out there. Often.
5. Have your photos **critiqued** by people whose opinions you respect [and/or by yourself]. Ask "What worked? Why did it work? What didn't work? Why not? What can I learn from these photos?" Next time do better and try new ideas. Write it all down if it helps [I do].
6. **Photograph what you love.** Photograph what especially excites you, that which you are passionate about: your cats or roses or grandkids, birds, waterfalls, the beach, Paris ....
7. Give yourself **a project.** A Goldilocks one - not too easy, not too hard, something achievable and that you will feel good about. It doesn't really matter what it is, as long as it's something that will keep you interested for most of the year. One idea could be what I've done for the last three Christmases now - giving each family member a photo book I'd created, with photos of our family. "Family, Friends & Moments" I call them. You could do something similar. Or it could be on any other topic that interests you.
8. **Do something with your best photos** [other than just enjoying them - which you're allowed to do of course]. Print and frame the best and hang them on your wall. Or print a collection in a book [easy ... via Diamond Photo [NZ], Snapfish [NZ], Blurb, etc], enter a competition, offer good ones to a local newspaper, bring them along to show at a Tuesday night "Photos & Coffee", share them on Facebook or among friends via email, use them to help promote some cause you're passionate about etc. **Get your best photos out there.**
9. Relax, smile, enjoy. We do this for fun, remember.



### 3. KIM TIP – GET CLOSER STILL

Back in Newsletter #78 [you can read it again at <http://kimwesterskov.com/newsletter/> ], we looked at one of the most powerful, yet simple, tips for getting good photos: getting closer.

To recap the main points: So, why get closer to whatever you want to photograph? It's a point that many beginners don't get. They see something interesting, point their camera at it, press the shutter, and hope that they've got a good photo. Without having put any real effort into figuring out "How can I best photograph it?" Often the answer includes getting closer. Getting closer makes the subject shine. It becomes the star. In your closer photo, there is a less distracting background and more subject.

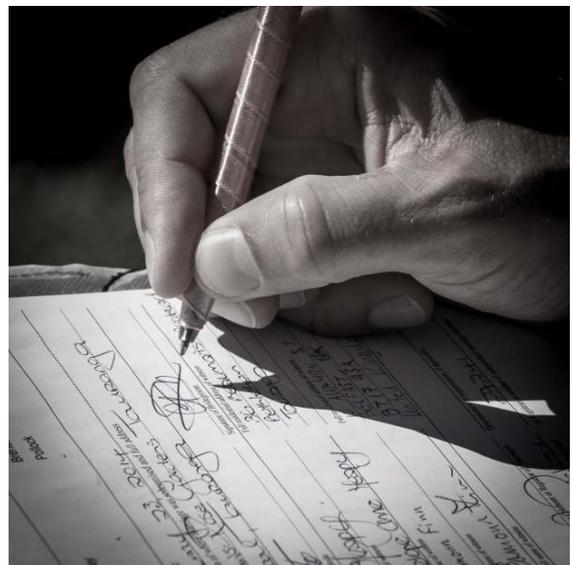
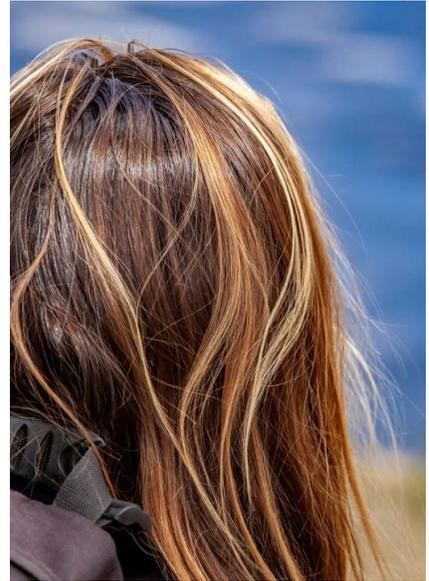
There are three ways of getting closer:

1. Walk/move closer to your subject
2. Use a bigger focal length [your telephoto lens]
3. Crop the photo later in Lightroom, Photoshop or whatever image editing program you use.

For the purpose of this tip, let's divide "close" into "ordinary close" and "very close". The photo of two surf lifeguards on page one is "ordinary close". And then there's "closer still" or "super close".

Sometimes it's a matter of "What is the most important bit of what's in front of me?" In many of the examples here, I first photographed "the whole person" [or people] and then narrowed my focus down to what I felt was most important: the wedding ring being slipped onto a beloved's finger during their wedding ceremony, the handshake, the rope that Brando was working with, the silvereye that Gareth was looking after [it had crashed into the van's windshield and was temporarily stunned], the mouse he found in the Kaimais, and so on.





## 4. COFFEE MAGIC



It was just a cup of coffee, sitting on the kitchen bench in the evening sunlight. It was my last coffee of the day, a bit later [6.30 pm] than my normal “last cup”. Just a plunger coffee. With milk. A bit of foam. Not like a “real flat white from a cafe”.

Just a coffee – or more? I’m a photographer who is always on the lookout for the magic that is in everything and then trying to capture it in my photos. It’s not all that hard, as there is magic everywhere. It’s just a matter of seeing it. “These are the days of miracle and wonder” as Paul Simon wrote. Planet Earth is extraordinarily chock-a-block full of seemingly countless miracles and wonder. There are so many, it’s often hard to know which ones to go after. For me, it used to be Antarctica, penguins, and whales. Nowadays it’s more about the miracles around where I live. Often right where I live.

Until the evening sunlight came in the window it was just another cup of coffee. Then the warm light slanted in, lighting the tiny bubbles. “Ooooh,” I thought. “Where’s my camera?” Easy question: it was on the sofa where I’d put it a few minutes earlier, after taking 200 photos of some magical evening clouds. Not your typical sunset colours, just silver greys in wondrous textures and shapes, with some iridescent [mother of pearl] clouds thrown in.

I put my macro lens on. My photography has found new worlds of wonder to explore since I got that lens – thanks Leigh, who a few years ago lent me hers, starting for me a love affair with macro.

Shooting at an angle yielded some interesting shots, but not magic. However, I’d learned that if I get down low and shoot into the light and wide-open [f2.8], that just small parts of the scene will be in focus [which gives a visual anchor so the viewer has some idea of what they’re looking at] and the rest becomes a magical shimmer of light as the backlit bubbles and coffee surface metamorphose into wild bokeh.

Some 200 photos later I put the camera down and sat down in an armchair with the almost-cold cup of coffee. The magic I knew I’d captured made it taste even sweeter.

## 5. Kim's 2020 PROGRAMME – is there something here for you?

### FEBRUARY

- Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> February – the first “Photos & Coffee” meeting of the year. 7.00 – 10.00pm. Free.
- **Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> February. “Landscapes & Seascapes” photo workshop.** Full day plus follow-up.

### MARCH

- Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> March. “Photos & Coffee” informal meeting. 7.00 – 10.00pm. Free.
- **Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> March. “Close Up Magic” workshop.** Full day plus follow-up.

### APRIL

- Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> April. “Photos & Coffee” informal meeting. 7.00 – 10.00pm. Free.

### MAY

- **Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> May. “Photo Essentials” workshop.** Full day plus follow-up.
- Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> May. “Photos & Coffee” informal meeting. 7.00 – 10.00pm. Free.
- **Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> May. “Slow, smooth & wonderful – long exposures” workshop.** Full day plus follow-up.

### JUNE

- Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> June. “Photos & Coffee” informal meeting. 7.00 – 10.00pm. Free.
- **Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> June. “Great people photos” workshop.** Portraits, kids, families, candid, travel, events, weddings. Full day plus follow-up

### JULY

- Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> July. “Photos & Coffee” informal meeting. 7.00 – 10.00pm. Free.
- **Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> July. “Photo Impressionism & Photo Art” workshop.** Full day plus follow-up.

### AUGUST

- Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> August. “Photos & Coffee” informal meeting. 7.00 – 10.00pm. Free.
- **Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> August. “Zap, Zing, Wow! & Creativity” photo workshop.** Full day plus follow-up.

### SEPTEMBER

- Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> September. “Photos & Coffee” informal meeting. 7.00 – 10.00pm. Free.
- **Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> September. “Composition & Light” photo workshop.** Full day plus follow-up.

### OCTOBER

- Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> October. “Photos & Coffee” informal meeting. 7.00 – 10.00pm. Free.
- **Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> October. “Even more exciting new techniques” photo workshop.** Full day plus follow-up.

### NOVEMBER

- **Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> November. “Good photos, great photos – anytime, anywhere” photo workshop.** Full day plus follow-up.
- Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> November. “Photos & Coffee” informal meeting. 7.00 – 10.00pm. Free.

### DECEMBER

- Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> December. “Photos & Coffee” informal meeting. 7.00 – 10.00pm. Free.

One day workshops 9.00 am – 5.00 pm

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

- **One day workshops:** \$295 – or \$245 for Early Birds if you register by 10 days before the workshop. Fulltime students with ID \$145.



## 6. FIVE QUESTIONS - BEFORE YOU PRESS THE SHUTTER

- **Best place?** Are you standing [or kneeling or lying] in the best place? More to the right? Or left? Closer? Around the back?
- **Best time/moment?** Is right now the best time? Or will it look better in a few minutes? Some other time?
- **Best lens/focal length?** What focal length will give you the best photo? Telephoto to isolate the subject from the background? Wide-angle for a “lots happening” storytelling photo? Somewhere in between telephoto and wide-angle?
- **Best composition?** Perhaps start with a traditional composition e.g. “rule of thirds”, and then try different compositions. Often there is no “best” or “right” composition. Try several compositions if the subject and moment are good.
- **Best camera settings?** Best exposure mode? If it’s all happening fast, it’s best to just grab the photo, even just in “Auto” mode. If you have enough time, have a think about your settings. I shoot in Aperture Priority over 90% of the time – so I get correct exposures even when I’m in a hurry. Also – what about exposure compensation, focus mode, etc?



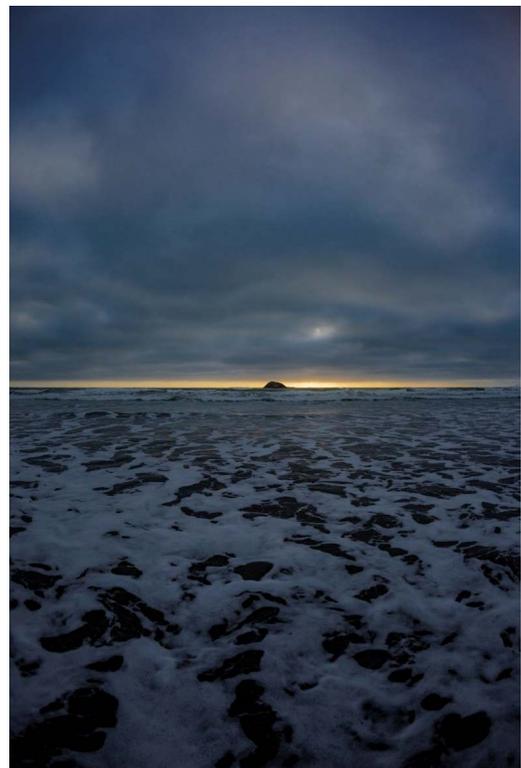
## 7. LANDSCAPES & SEASCAPES WORKSHOP – Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> February

Aaaah, landscapes! There's not many of us who don't photograph landscapes some of the time – or most of the time. On a good day, we'll come back with some photos we're reasonably happy with. Occasionally very happy. But on other days [far too many] there's nothing we took that approaches the specialness of what was in front of us when the shutter clicked. Something got lost in the translation. The landscape you were standing in front of looked great – which is why you took the photo[s]. Unfortunately, gremlins from a parallel universe got into your memory card and by the time you looked at the photos on your computer, they didn't look anywhere near as good as you hoped, and expected.

This workshop is about correcting that - de-gremlinizing your landscape photos and showing you how to get the good gremlins [from a different parallel universe] to help make your landscape photos "POP!". Translating the "Wow" you felt standing in front of a good landscape into a "Wow" photo. Techniques, approaches, tips, tricks.

Landscape is a big topic and there's many ways of approaching it, so we'll be covering a lot of ground. Topics covered will include: Grand [Classic] Landscapes and Intimate Landscapes and:

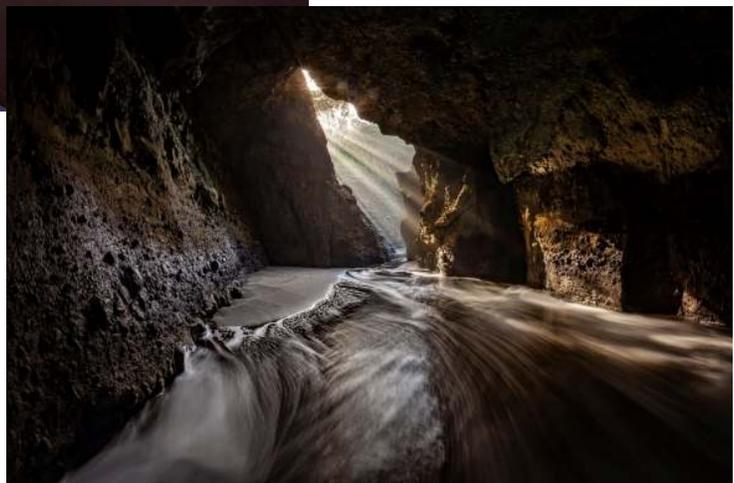
- Why landscapes are both easy and hard at the same time - and what to do about it
- Extractive landscapes
- Dynamic landscapes and quiet landscapes
- Figures in the landscape
- Common landscape problems – and their solutions
- Technical stuff AND creative stuff
- Common mistakes
- Clouds, weather, light
- Time of day, sunrise/sunset, "golden hour", blue hour"
- Stars & night photography
- Getting your composition right. The importance of foregrounds
- Forests, hills, mountains, waterfalls, geothermal areas
- Water: waterfalls, rivers, lakes, estuaries
- Seashores
- Dealing with scruffy foregrounds, "blah" backgrounds & boring skies
- Lens choice: wide-angle vs normal vs telephoto



- Your gear: camera, lenses, tripods, filters, etc.
- Colour or black and white?
- Depth of field. Hyperfocal distance explained and made simple
- Choosing the best camera modes and settings
- Some good places to go
- Post-processing – polishing your photos so they look great.

It's a huge and very rewarding subject. One of the best that photography has to offer. Care to join me?

Cost: The full course fee [which includes tuition, hand-outs, Vivienne's yummy catering, assignment, and follow-up] is **\$295**, dropping to **\$245** for Early Birds if you register by 12<sup>th</sup> February. Students with ID \$145





## 8. 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 are 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 4<sup>th</sup> February**, starting at 7.00 pm. 18 Greerton Road, Gate Pa, Tauranga.

## 9. PRIVATE TUITION

Yes, like you I'm usually busy doing "other stuff" too, but I can nearly always fit private tuition in, and I am happy to do so. \$75 per 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.

**MENTORING:** "Mentoring by Kim" is much more than just teaching, though teaching is very much part of it. It's me walking next to you [figuratively, and at times literally], helping, inspiring, sorting out problems, passing on ideas that will help you become the photographer you'd really like to be, the best photographer you can be. More in the next newsletter [this one is already long enough] or contact Kim.

## 10. PHOTOGRAPHING ARTWORKS, PHOTOSHOPPING, PHOTO RESTORATION

As well as teaching photography and mentoring a number of photographers, I also offer photo restoration, Photoshopping, and "Photographing your Artworks" services. \$50 per hour [we get a lot done each hour].

## 11. INVITATION TO 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.

## 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 of nature photography worldwide.
- 18 books published [international distributions] – written and photographed by Kim.