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Newsletter from Kim Westerskov

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Newsletter #61 – November 2017

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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.



Alana and Terehi-maaria

1. THE "BIG FOUR" - THINGS THAT HOLD PHOTOGRAPHERS BACK

Teaching photographers over the last 10 years, I've come to realize that there are four main things holding many photographers back. Maybe most amateur photographers are being held back by one or more of this "Big Four". Some of these took me a long time to figure out, because good digital cameras and/or good artistic vision in some photographers "papered over the cracks" – the good photos that were sometimes achieved by these photographers often hid significant flaws in understanding or technique. So if these photographers had better understanding or better technique, would they not achieve so much more in their photography, and enjoy their photography so much more? [the answer begins with "Y"]. I'll discuss the first three in this newsletter and the fourth in the next newsletter.

1. CAMERA KNOWLEDGE

The problem: Many photographers simply don't know their cameras very well. They know where "Auto" is, and not too much more.

The solution: This can be fixed easily - read the camera manual, watch video tutorials on the web, read books & magazines, have private tuition or tuition from knowledgeable friends, chat to Kim or other photographers, go to workshops, practise [yes, practise!] etc.

2. PHOTOGRAPHIC KNOWLEDGE

The problem: Many photographers don't know the basics of photography. They point the camera, press the shutter, and hope. Depth of field remains a mystery. So does the relationship between aperture, shutter speed and film speed [ISO] and many other things.

The solution: This too can be fixed reasonable easily – watch video tutorials on the web, read books & magazines, have private tuition or tuition from knowledgeable friends, go to workshops, come to Kim's Photos and Coffee nights etc.



3. COMMITMENT – EFFORT

The problem: Many photographers don't put in much effort. They're driving along, see something nice, jam on the brakes, hop out, point the camera in the general direction of "something nice", "click" once, and hop back in the car. They hope they have got a good photo, but haven't done much to ensure [or deserve] it.

The solution. Easy – put in more time, more effort, more thinking about your photography. "The harder I work, the luckier I get" is a truism in photography too.

4. [SEE NEXT NEWSLETTER]

2. SUMMERTIME. CHRISTMAS. HOLIDAYS.

We're now in November and for most of us that's somewhere near the start of that mad rush towards Christmas and New Year and summer holidays. A big part of "the problem" is the long list of "things to do" before Christmas. Good luck with your "to do" list. I used to get caught up in the rush like everybody else but in recent years I figured that a gentler approach worked much better, and if everything on the "to do before Christmas" list wasn't ticked off, then so be it.

The next newsletter will be in January, and will include the programme for 2018. There's just one more workshop I'll be running this year, and two more "Photos & coffee" evenings. Then that's "it" as far as the formal programme for 2017 goes. Thanks for being a subscriber and reader of this newsletter. It is much appreciated. If there's any subjects you'd like me to address in next year's newsletters, I'd love to hear from you. So too if you have any good ideas for new workshops.

I'll be around over November, December and January, so if there's anything I can help you with, please get in touch. As many of you know, I'm approachable and available: just phone or email. Troubleshooting [whatever you're worried about, photographically], private tuition, mentoring, assignments, Photoshopping – I'm happy to offer these even over the summer months. I trust the next few months go well for you, and I'll catch up with you again in January 2018 😊 **Take care. Take good photos. Enjoy.**

3. "BIRDS A PLENTY" PHOTO COMPETITION WINNERS



Overall Winner_Chris Helliwell_Kingfisher

For two years now I've had the honour of judging the Birds A Plenty Photographic Competition. The prizegiving was held on 13 October 2017 at the Whakatāne I-Site. There were speeches, nice finger food, an air of expectation, and then the presentations. The overall winner received \$500 in real hard cash, while First, Second, and Third in each category receive \$200, \$150, and \$100 respectively. The three categories were:

1. Birds of Whakatane Harbour
2. Wild birds anywhere in New Zealand
3. New Zealand birds photographed by young photographer - up to 18 years old

This year the competition in the open section was fierce, and I had a lot of trouble separating the top three or four. Any of them could have won. <https://www.facebook.com/BirdsAplentyPhotoCompetition/>



Category 1_1st Prize_Mandy Hague_Oystercatcher Pair



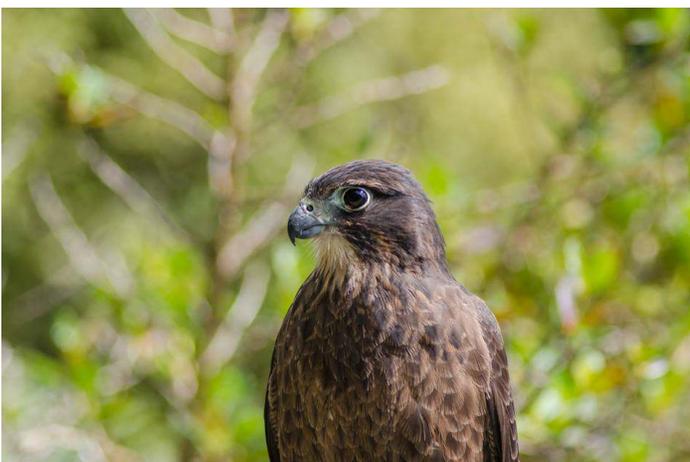
Category 1_2nd Prize_Jeanette Nee_Red-billed Gulls



Category 2_1st Prize_Jeanette Nee_Swamp Hawk



Category 2_2nd Prize_Tony Whitehead_Oystercatchers

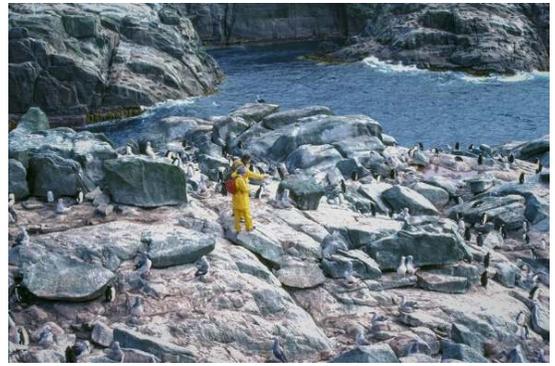


Category 3_1st Prize_George Hobson_NZ Falcon



Category 3_2nd Prize_Jazmin Paget-Knebel_Sunset Silhouette

4. FROM KIM'S FIELD DIARIES – SUBANTARCTIC BOUNTY ISLANDS – part 2



- 4 March – Antipodes Islands – marine biology & dive, 3 films, passage to Bounty Islands
- 5 March – Arrived at Bounty Islands – too rough to land, 1 film
- 6 March – Bounty Islands – too rough to land, 2 films
- 7 March – Bounty Islands – some scientists ashore [not me], 2 films, passage back to Antipodes Islands
- 8 March – Antipodes Islands – marine biology and dive, 6 films, passage back to Bounty Islands
- 9 March – Bounty Islands – calm, ashore for 3 hours, yee-hah!!!!, back to Monowai, dive
- 10 March – Bounty Islands – too rough to dive, Monowai soundings all day [current hydrographic chart of Bounty Islands are the result of this visit]
- 11 March – passage back to mainland

The good ship Monowai [the RNZN's hydrographic vessel] was scheduled to spend five days at the Bounty Islands, the most remote and least visited of New Zealand's subantarctic islands [there's no safe anchorages or easy landing sites]. That sounded good on paper. The reality was different: for four of those five days we wallowed in the ocean swells around the islands, waiting for the wind and swell to drop.

I ended up with just three hours ashore, and a single dive. But what a marvellous three hours. Those bare granite rocks are home to large numbers of albatrosses, penguins, prions, shags and fur seals. Scientists do their best when they can get there [not often] but accurate numbers are hard to come by. There's at least 30,000 – 40,000 pairs of the Salvin's albatrosses, possibly more [a 1978 scientific party estimated 76,000 pairs]. The erect-crested penguins suffered a sharp decline between 1978 [estimated 115,000 pairs] and 1997 [28,000 pairs], mirroring similar declines in penguin numbers at Campbell Island. We're unsure why.

Attractive fulmar prions preened and nuzzled each other in endearing displays. Unable to dig burrows into granite rock, the prions nest in crevices and small caves.

With a total world population of about 500-600 birds, the Bounty Islands shag is one of the world's rarest shags, or cormorants as they are called in other parts of the world. It's strange to think of a bird having no other home in the wide, wide world than a cluster of tiny windswept rocks in the middle of nowhere.

Before 2004 we thought there were no land plants at all on the Bounty Islands, except for lichens and green algae on a few sheltered vertical rock faces. Then in 2004 Cook's scurvy grass was found on the two highest islands in the group. 14 plants in total.

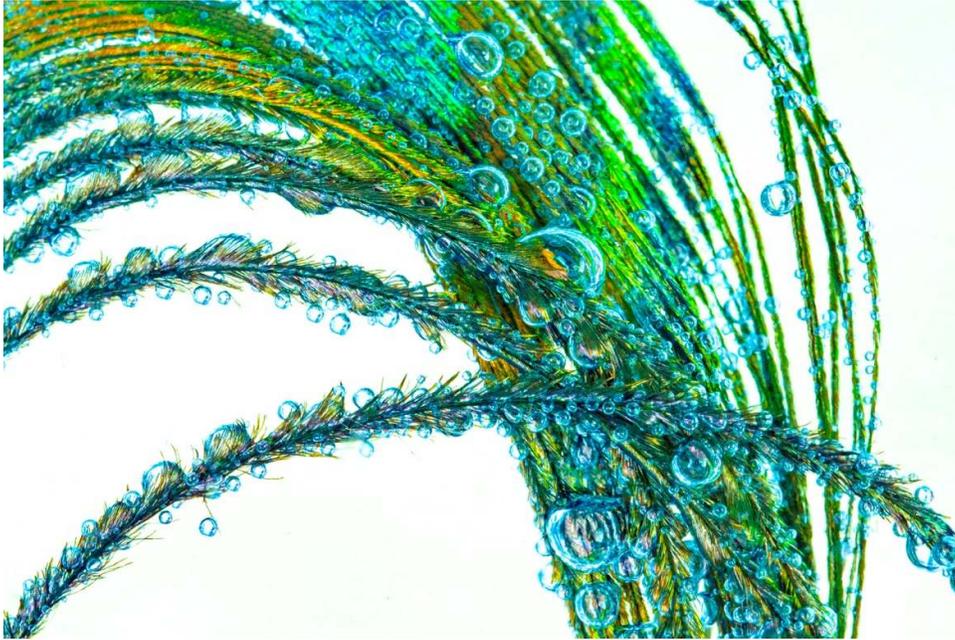
The rock is granite, 180 million years old, and in most places covered by a polished film of hard guano. This surface is amazingly slippery. Standard footwear for our visit was woollen socks over our standard footwear, a technique found effective by scientists in previous years. Even so, we have to move more slowly and carefully.

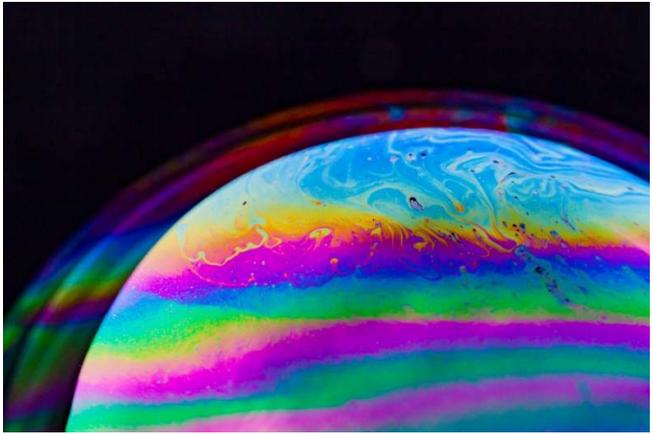
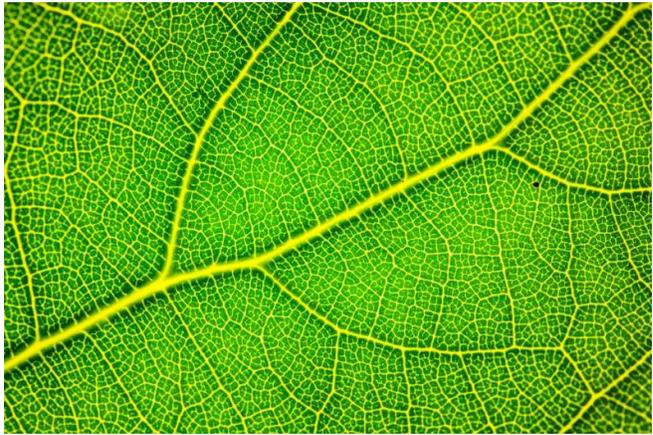
Almost everywhere you walk on the Bounty Islands, you are walking through some bird's home. Most just complain vocally, but the albatross chicks have a particularly unappetizing [but very effective] way of letting you know their feelings. If you startle or upset them they vomit their stomach contents over you, an evil-smelling brew of partly-digested seafood. They can fire this mess with unfortunate accuracy and have a range of two metres. As their nests are closer together than that, you move through Albatross City at your own risk – and slowly. It's wall-to-wall noise and smell. Nature at its rawest and richest. Wonderful! For me, it doesn't get any better than this.

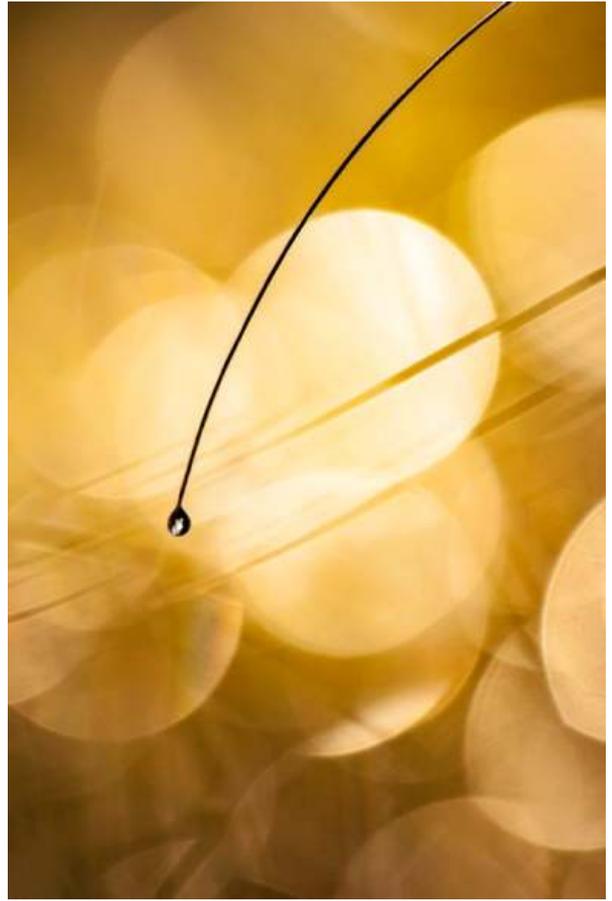


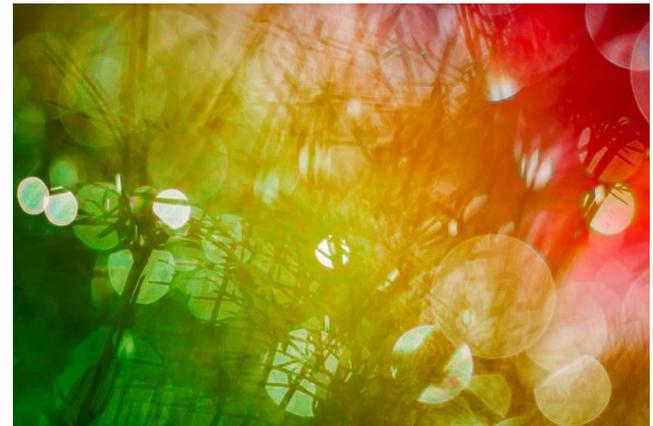
5. "CLOSE UP PHOTOGRAPHY – WITH OR WITHOUT A MACRO LENS" workshop
Saturday 18 November

Intimate Encounters with our world - finding magic, creating magic.









Many of you will really enjoy this workshop I think. When I ran it last year I got very enthusiastic comments afterwards. One of the photographers, Hazel Ellis, took the techniques she'd learned, found some flowering Cosmos [just like we'd been photographing in Viv's garden here], added a Monarch butterfly caterpillar, and the resulting photo earned her a Highly Commended in the world's largest and most prestigious plant and flower photo competition, the **International Garden Photographer of the Year** - run by Kew Gardens in London. Hazel's photo is here <https://igpoty.com/competition-entries/cewb-12341274/> Hazel told me recently: "If it wasn't for that workshop I would never have been crawling around inside the plants in my garden trying out all the things I learned with you".

A whole new world opens up for you when you & your camera get up close and personal with the world we live in. I've been exploring both documentary ["real"] and creative [artistic/impressionist] close-up photography for some time now. On November 18 I'll run the second "Close Up Photography" workshop. The good news – as well as the fact that it's rewarding and fun - is that you don't need to own a special "macro lens". For most readers, you already have lenses that can get close enough to enter the wonderful and exciting world of close up.

The workshop will first of all introduce you to the principles of close up photography – and to the technical stuff. Then we'll get on to finding magic and creating magic. **All of the accompanying photos were taken here on our property [where Anne and Gareth and Viv and I live], all within 20 metres of where you will be sitting – and photographing - in the workshop studio.** I will take you, step by step, through how I got these photos [and more] - and then in the afternoon it will be hands on. Cameras in hand, we will find magic and we will create magic. You will go home inspired and with your head buzzing with ideas and techniques. It should be a lot of fun.

"What level is this workshop for?" Any level. All levels.

Saturday 18 November 9.00am – 5.00pm plus assignment and follow-up evening 2-3 weeks later for assignment evaluation [at a time that suits everyone]. The follow-up can be by email.

Cost: Full course fee [which includes tuition, hand-outs, Vivienne’s yummy catering, assignment and follow-up] **\$295** - or **\$245** for Early Birds if you register before 10 November. Fulltime students with ID **\$150**.

6. LEARNING LIGHTROOM

Adobe’s LIGHTROOM is the world’s premier tool for organising photos and making them look good. It was designed from the ground up by Adobe just for photographers and for the few [for most photographers] things it can’t do, it hands on to its big brother Photoshop, also from Adobe. The two of them together are unbeatable, and you get both [full versions of Lightroom and Photoshop] for just \$16 a month [at current exchange rates with Australia] with an Adobe Photoshop Lightroom CC subscription. That’s less than \$200 a year – possibly the best value in photography. Before Lightroom existed there was just Photoshop and photographers like me used to pay \$1,500 or so just to get Photoshop. And then \$800 or so a few years later for the next version. Lucky that all photographers were rich back then 😊. The monthly subscription also gives you unlimited access to 24/7 support which I’ve needed a couple of times and found excellent.

The only real problems with Lightroom or Photoshop is learning enough about them to get them working efficiently for you. Both are “deep” programs, though Lightroom is the more intuitive of the two.

Here’s two good ways to get up and running in Lightroom.

1. I teach Lightroom, mostly in private tuition [I was teaching a photographer earlier today]. I can help you get up and running. See “Coaching, Private Tuition” later in this newsletter for costs.
2. David Harradine’s new video series. For many years David [an Australian] would come to New Zealand and run seminars on Photoshop and digital photography workflows. I would make the 6-hour return journey from Tauranga to Auckland just to attend David’s seminars. They were very good. David is a fully qualified Adobe teacher and is good at simplifying complicated processes. As well as getting comprehensive handouts [books almost], I would take pages and pages of notes and then spend the evening writing these out properly while I could still read my handwriting and remember much of what David had said.

David contacted me last week about his new Lightroom training video series, and offering readers of this newsletter a discount. On his website there’s over 8 hours of Lightroom video training spread over 4 sessions. The full 8 hours costs \$295 [Aussie dollars], about NZD325 at current exchange rates. With the AUD100 discount David is offering, that comes down to AUD 195 or NZD215 at today’s rates. I’ve looked through these videos and they are definitely good.

To access this offer, go to <https://davidharradine.uscreen.io> and click on any of the four Lightroom sessions, then click BUY. Here you will have the option to choose the complete bundle of sessions. Once you arrive at the payment section enter the discount coupon “Kim Westerskov” to receive the \$100 discount.

7. PROGRAMME FOR REST OF 2017

NOVEMBER

- Tuesday 7th November. “Photos & Coffee” informal meeting. 7.00 – 10.00pm. Free.

- **Saturday 18 November. “Close-up Magic – with or without a macro lens” workshop.** Full day.

DECEMBER

- Tuesday 5th December. “Photos & Coffee” informal meeting. 7.00 – 10.00pm. Free.

Full day workshops 9.00am – 5.00pm

COST: Course fee **include tuition, detailed hand-outs & yummy catering, plus assignment and follow-up evenings** for full day workshops.

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

8. PROFESSIONAL PHOTO CRITIQUES

“It’s really hard getting honest critiques about my photos. I can get “Likes” or smiley faces on social media easily enough, but that doesn’t help me get any better”.

If that sounds like you, here’s two good ideas:

1. Come along to one of our “Photos & Coffee” evenings on the first Tuesday of every month. You’ll get real – but at the same time positive – feedback. Free [always a good price point].
2. If you’d like more in-depth critiquing of your photos, then that is one of the services I offer [it’s been offered on my website for some years now]. It’s at your level, so it will never be too technical for you. In my own photography, I’m usually asking myself “What’s the simplest way I can achieve the photos I’m after?” I’m definitely not into making things any more technical than they need to be.

“**Photo Critiques by Kim**” can either be in person or via email. Photo critiquing is often a significant part of private tuition, and so you have the choice of private tuition [see below] or the standalone “Photo Critiques by Kim” service. As an experienced judge of many photo competitions [including four years judging the New Zealand Geographic Photographer of the Year competition] this service can be very useful for photographers wishing to enter photo competitions. Or if you’re wondering about submitting photos to a publisher or a potential client. Or even if you simply want to “get better”.

You’ll receive either a verbal assessment [if you visit me at my studio] or a written assessment [if it’s by email]. Or it can be by phone if you wish. My in-depth critique will include suggestions for shooting and photo-editing technique improvements that will help you take your photography to the next level.

Prices:

5 photos: \$70

10 photos: \$125

15 photos: \$175

Interested? Email me at kimworkshops@gmail.com or ring 07-578-5138.

9. QUOTE OF THE MONTH

“Taking an image, freezing a moment,
reveals how rich reality truly is.”

— Anonymous

10. MENTORING

It's wonderful to see photographers I've helped getting better and better, to see them enjoying their photography more, to see them creating amazing photos, to see their professional photography businesses running better, to see them running successful exhibitions, to see their work selling, and seeing them doing well – often very well - in photo competitions [including prestigious ones]. If you're interested, just phone or email me and we'll make it work for you. I'm flexible.

"Best mentor ever: Kim Westerskov" said professional photographer Derek Morrison
<http://www.boxoflight.com/?report=322#report>

11. PHOTOGRAPHING ARTWORKS, PHOTOSHOPPING, PHOTO RESTORATION

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

12. 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.

13. KIM'S PHOTOS & COFFEE EVENINGS

We meet on the first Tuesday of each month [except January], chat informally 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.** These evenings are always fun and friendly. 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 news ideas and tips.** Bring photos if you wish, but there's no obligation to bring any. If you're reading this, then you're very welcome! The next one is on Tuesday 7th November, starting 7.00pm. 18 Greerton Road, Tauranga.

14. COACHING, 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.

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