

Hands On— Photography **PART 1**



Article and Photos
by Sue Sykes



Welcome to a new section in *Canadian Scrapbooker* magazine! I'm excited to be a part of this new feature as we make our technical information more interactive for you, our readers.

In each of the next seven issues, we will discuss the basics of photography, including exposure (shutter speed), aperture, lighting, composition, and subject. Then, (and here's the exciting part) on the eighth of each month, I will post an assignment on the *Canadian Scrapbooker* website with respect to the latest article. You are invited to share your completed assignments in our online gallery—each assignment completed and uploaded earns you a chance to win a prize package from our sponsor. Watch for your first assignment on our website, www.canadianscrapbooker.ca, starting September 2009.

In this issue, we will focus on one of the more important aspects of photography: exposure. While the term "exposure" can be used when talking about a combination of f/stops, shutter speed, and ISO ratings, we will use the term in reference to shutter speed. Shutter speed plays a very important part when taking photographs. Not only does it control the light that enters the shutter, it can also be used to stop action or give the illusion of movement.

Have you ever tried to capture a toddler's movement with your camera? It's like trying to capture a hummingbird's wings in motion. Using a very fast shutter speed (1/500 or faster), you can freeze time for a moment and capture the subject in that short time frame. This is ideal for fast-moving subjects, such as sports figures, race cars, running water, and yes, toddlers! Assignment #1 will pertain to this technique.

Alternatively, a long exposure can be used at nighttime with great effect. Everyone has taken at least one photo at night or in a dark room where the

on-camera flash has lit up the subject of the photo and left the surrounding area in dark shadow. Using a slower shutter speed—such as 1/2 second or longer—instead of the flash, you can provide background detail in your photos that may otherwise have been lost in the shadows of the flash. This is perfect for photos where you would like to capture the landscape behind your subject.

Long exposures can also be used to capture your subject when in very low light, provided that they are still. I wanted to capture my daughter's sleep habits, as she often ends up in very unusual positions! Using a standard setting for low light, I was unable to capture anything in the faint light coming from her closet. As well, my camera automatically chose a very high ISO reading of 1600, resulting in a lot of noise in my photo. (See Figure 1.)

Instead, using my tripod, I set my shutter speed to 2.5 seconds, which gave me the results I wanted (see Figure 2.)

Let's Get Technical



Figure 1: Taken with Nikon D70, 50mm f/1.8 lens, f1.8, 1/60, no flash.

Figure 2: Taken with Nikon D70, 50mm f/1.8 lens, f1.8, 2.5s, no flash



Figure 3: Taken with Nikon D70, 18-70mm f/3.5-4.5 lens, f3.8, 1.6s, no flash.

In October 2009, assignment #2 will challenge you to slow down and click.

Not only does a longer exposure allow enough light into the camera to capture a dark scene, but it also provides some very interesting effects in scenes that contain lights, such as traffic scenes, fireworks, and sparklers or flashlights! Having the shutter open for a longer period allows a phenomenon called "light writing" or "light graffiti" to occur. This is where the background stays constant, but moving lights create beautiful patterns or lines, as in Figure 3.

We will explore this technique in assignment #3, which will be posted on our blog in November 2009.

In the Winter 2009/10 issue, we will tackle the next major component of photographic basics—aperture. I look forward to seeing the results of your assignments in our gallery. Be sure to keep watching our website for more news about our Hands On photography section.

