

Hello everyone! I hope you are all doing well. I hope you don't mind me sending this little piece of spam about what's been happening with me since retiring that little website called CameraHobby. As some of you receiving this "newsletter" surmised, I could not stay away from writing (about myself, such a narcissist) and decided to jot down some thoughts after some eleven months away from blogging.

No, this does not mean that I plan to resurrect the CameraHobby website or return to the internet with a new site or blog page. The stress of always trying to find things to write about is not something I wish to afflict on myself again. A newsletter sent out once or twice a year is a good place to start and I'd love to hear back from you about what's happening in your life, photographic and otherwise.

Philip Greenspun, the founder of the popular Photo.net site, started off with a personal newsletter. After finding his newsletters to be immensely popular, Greenspun created Photo.net to bring his writing to the masses and allow his readers to check in on his goings-on anytime they want. This, of course, was back in the day when internet access was dial-up and websites probably numbered in the low millions instead of the billions of today. As for me, I'm going in the opposite direction of Greenspun, from online to newsletter.

For those wags who wonder, I still "only" have four children. As I often joke, having a fifth will be the death of me, or at the least, a John Bobbett-like experience, as my wife will act to dispense with any more risk.

Around the time of this year's WWDC conference, wherein Apple underwhelmed the professional world with an insulting refresh of the Mac Pro, a Nikon-using, Machead co-worker and I were joking about what would happen if I bought a Nikon D4. I said the D4's box is not big enough to bury me in. The co-worker countered, not a problem if I were cremated...

That got me thinking about how awesome it would be to gut the insides of a Nikon super telephoto lens to store the ashes. A fitting tribute for a photographer...but what a waste of a perfectly good lens...better make it a Sigma...

I'm still a red tape dispensing bureaucrat in Vancouver. I'm still pretending to try and take courses to improve my professional life, but it's a tough slog for an Arts major to try and understand finance and equations having to do with fixed income valuations and duration among other devilish equations. The damn course is a major reason why I decided to dispense with the websites (CameraHobby retired; NikonLinks sold) last year.

I'll spare you the rest of my boring life and get on with the topics that are of greater interest. You will note that this is a pretty ugly looking newsletter, being done on the quick and cheap instead of having any lavish design. I'll try and enhance the look of future issues.

If, after reading this newsletter, you decide that you've had enough of me, let me know and I'll take your email off of the distribution list. You're welcome to send it to anyone you think may have an interest in it.

Gear porn, or how many mm is that lens?

I recently bought the most expensive lens in my history as a photographer...and, the lens is not branded Nikon or Canon.

Any guesses (some foreshadowing in the introduction of this newsletter)?



It's a Sigma lens...I'll pause a moment and let some jaws gather up from hitting the floor.

It's a Sigma 120-300mm f2.8 lens and a few things attracted me to this lens:

- On paper, looks superb for photographing hockey on both FX and DX format cameras
- Fast, constant aperture throughout its zoom range
- While not an inexpensive lens at \$3,000, it seems to offer excellent value for what it offers and at half the price of a prime 300 f2.8 lens from Nikon or Canon, quite bizarrely low even after discounting that it's a Sigma lens

Obviously, I don't expect this lens to be as good as a Nikon or Canon prime 300 f2.8 lens, but the reviews I've read indicate that it's not so far off either, which again is shocking for how little Sigma charges for the lens. A factor to consider is Sigma's QC and hoping that my sample will be good without misalignment or other issues.

Fortunately, my local dealer stocks this lens and I was able to test the sample before buying it to ensure that it performs as expected. That's the nice part of supporting a local dealer and being able to see and feel a product before committing big bucks. And, I was able to get a nice deal too to soften the financial blow (being a 15 year customer helps).

The big reason for wanting the Sigma 120-300 is for hockey photography. Fall 2012 is when I'll have two boys playing minor hockey, so I want to be able to capture some good memories with a suitable lens to mate with the Canon 5D Mk III.



Oh, did I mention that I've been using the new 5D3 for a couple of months now and it is a nice upgrade over the 5D2 in the areas that interest me. Those are for the AF, which is faster and more capable for action, as well as some design features (placing the depth of field and LiveView buttons where you expect them instead of hidden as with the 5D2) and having a built-in, two-axis level on demand.

However, image quality wise, I'm not so sure that the 5D3 represents much of a leap over the 5D2. Using my usual test subject of currency (to remind myself both of how much I've spent, as well how little I have left) with the Canon 70-200 lens mounted to a tripod, equalized exposure, with mirror-up, cable release and waiting several seconds before releasing the shutter, I see the 5D2 offering a bit more contrast and micro resolution.

I also don't see a huge leap in high ISO quality either, maybe a half-stop improvement. However, I reserve the right to change this opinion once I start using the 5D3 in more demanding, real world environments.



Where the 5D3 does improve over the 5D2 is for more accurate Auto White Balance and exposure, as I've noticed over the years, the 5D2 tended to underexpose by a half stop or so compared to other Canon SLRs I've used.

I've gotten by the last three years using the 5D2 without using all of the features and functions of the camera. To this day, I've never used the camera in LiveView mode, which means nary a video file. With the 5D3, I did use the video mode once just to try it out, but unless doing some really critical focusing, I don't expect to use the 5D3's LiveView mode all that often either.

I'm almost always in Aperture Priority mode with manual adjustment of the ISO and exposure compensation based on the type of shooting I'm doing. For example, for landscapes using a tripod, go into the menu system and set the mirror lock-up function. For hockey, manually set the ISO and exposure compensation. Never really bothered with the built-in convenience features of the camera. That changed with the 5D3.

For the most part, the 5D3 looks and operates just like the 5D2, so there was not much of an adjustment to use the camera immediately. However, since some buttons and controls did change, I sat down one evening and really went over all the button functions to find out what each did and whether they were single function or modal depending on which command dial I turned. I also needed to get a handle on the more complex AF system and how to set it up for hockey photography.

This in turn led me to reacquaint myself with Canon's outstanding Custom Banks. I'm not sure when Canon started offering three banks of custom controls (at least since the 40D, the first Canon D-SLR I really got to know) on its prosumer SLRs, and I've dabbled with it on and off again, but I never really delved into all that the custom banks can do until setting up the 5D3.

I knew enough that I could setup various exposure adjustments and then save those settings into a custom bank. What got me really excited though is discovering that instead of having to manually setup mirror lockup for tripod work, I could save it as a custom bank setting. That is really sweet and I think it essentially does away with Michael Reichmann's long time beef against Canon for a lack of a quick and easy access MLU function. However, Reichmann is usually using a Canon 1D model, so I don't know if the pro-level SLR offers custom banks like the prosumer models (60D, 7D, 5D series). And, if I recall, Reichmann's specific beef may be that he wants a direct access button, such as available with higher-end Nikon SLRs instead of having to access the menu system to engage mirror lockup.

With three custom banks, I setup C3 as my landscape mode, with the lowest ISO, Aperture Priority, and MLU. C2 is my hockey mode with ISO 3200, +1 compensation, Aperture Priority, high speed frame rate and AI Servo mode (equivalent to Nikon's AF-C). C1 I set for JPEG capture, Program Auto, Auto ISO, sRGB color space, etc., for when the camera is used by another person...as with the 5D2 I've been using, the 5D3 is not mine (don't ask, don't tell) and occasionally, the person kindly letting me use it wants to use the cameras in simple-to-use mode.

Another great feature I'm using is the My Menu feature, which allows me to set 6-7 of the most used menu functions in one quick access menu. This allows me to very quickly format memory cards, or bring up MLU for one-offs that don't need the landscape oriented setting of the C3 custom bank. Nikon cameras have similar custom banks and quick menus, but as I've been reading from various reviews, these are not as functional as how Canon provides in its cameras.

As is now increasingly common with higher end SLRs, the 5D3 offers the dual memory card slots. Instead of dual CF or dual SD, the 5D3 offers slots for one CF and one SD. Reading some of the reviews, Canon has not made the SD slot a high-speed one, which limits performance even if you use the fastest SD card. My basic testing confirms that if you have both types of cards inserted in the 5D3 and you set the recording of data to either duplicate one another, or RAW to one and JPEG to the other, you are restricted to the speed of the SD slot. However, if you set the recording mode to overflow, which is record to the CF card first then to the SD card only when the CF card is full, you will be able to shoot as fast as the CF card allows until it is full.

I currently have Sandisk CF cards rated at 60 MB/s and Sandisk SD cards rated at 45 MB/s and there is a huge difference in buffer performance. With the CF card, I can shoot at 6 fps for 20 full sized RAW captures before the camera slows down. With the SD card, I can only get 11 full sized RAW captures before the camera slows down. Shooting continuously for 30 seconds, I can capture over 70 RAW files with the CF card and the buffer clears in 7 seconds. With the SD card, about half the number of RAW files and the buffer takes 17 seconds to clear. I know this is not purely apples-to-apples since the speed of the two cards is different, but the results are consistent with what other reviews have noted about the 5D3's slow SD card slot.

The 5D3 also offers a HDR function in which the camera takes a series of photos, e.g. at normal exposure and plus and minus one stop, to create an in-camera HDR JPEG. Various options are available from natural to very grossly funky HDR, the type that so many people hate due to the cartoon-like look. Although I set the 5D3 for RAW capture, the in-camera HDR file can only be

available as a JPEG, however, the original RAW files are still retained on the card. The 5D3 will auto align the frames in case you want to do HDR without a tripod. I've only played around with the HDR mode a few times, but it does seem pretty decent if you're okay with a quick and dirty in-camera JPEG file.

When I received the 5D3, it was camera only without the accessory vertical grip, which makes portrait oriented shooting and/or using larger lenses so much more comfortable. I knew the grip is new and only for the 5D3, but I wondered if, by chance, the grip for the 5D2 would fit.

Close but no cigar. The 5D2's grip conforms fairly closely to the 5D3 and while not smooth, could have fit if not for a registration pin to the left of the tripod mount screw. The registration pins for the grips are in different locations, so no dice to mate the 5D2's grip with the 5D3. Just as well, since even if it could fit, communication with the camera probably would not have worked well given the updated electronics of the 5D3.

It does irk me why the camera manufacturers insist on creating new, single-camera only accessories with each new model. However, to be fair, the 5D3's grip does offer the multi-controller thumb knob that the 5D2's grip does not have. And, Canon has in the past, designed other cameras to successively use the same vertical grips across generations, such as from the 40D to 50D and Rebel T2i to the T3i.

While the grip didn't work out and I ended up buying my own, I wondered if maybe I could save myself \$200 and use the Kirk L-bracket from the 5D2 combo with the 5D3 combo. Again, no dice, as the design of the grips prevents successful mating with the L-bracket. The 5D2's grip has a slight angle downwards to its base whereas the 5D3's grip is straight up.

All in all, the 5D3 is a very competent, all-purpose camera that, depending on your type of photography, can be a very meaningful upgrade from the 5D2. The biggest downside I found is the increased pricing at CAD \$3,700 compared to \$3,300 when the 5D2 first came out. Today, the 5D2 can be bought for CAD \$2,000 and makes quite a compelling option for an FX format SLR.

Accessory porn...sorry, no edible underwear here

With the 5D3 and new Sigma lens in-house, this meant another pricey round of purchasing accessories to support the new gear. These include an L-bracket and lens plate from RRS, and since I was making the order anyway, I finally gave into my longstanding desire to own the RRS BH-55 ball head, widely regarded as being the best available. At the time of ordering, the L-bracket for the 5D3 was backordered and this gave me a couple of days to mull over my original order and decide if I really need another tripod.

My long-time old faithful is the aluminum Gitzo 1345 with the original gold standard of ball heads, the Arca Swiss B1. However, I also have a Manfrotto 055CXPRO3, which I bought to relieve the person lending me the Canon gear of owning a tripod he really didn't like and didn't want (at the time, I thought it was the least I could do for such a generous person).

For the original owner, the 055CXPRO3 was just too big for the extensive travelling he does. He wanted a very compact and lightweight tripod but he bought the 055CXPRO3 so long ago he could not return it. Since it was in new condition (sitting in his closet for a year) and I always wanted a carbon fibre tripod, I took the opportunity to buy it. Unfortunately, the 055CXPRO3 has a design element that I despise.

The 055CXPRO3 comes with a very long center column and the tripod has the ability to orient this center column horizontally. However, I find this feature to be a gimmick and laugh at the ridiculous idea of horizontally mounting a heavy SLR and lens combo nearly two feet out from the center of the tripod.

Unfortunately, after successfully taking apart the tilting mechanism and looking at a nice round hole that just begs for a flat tripod head plate (aka apex plate) to be mounted, I discovered that Manfrotto offers nothing to allow me to do this.

Short of getting something custom machined, the best I can do is replace the long center column with a short one so that I can at least use the tripod low to the ground.

My annoyance with the tilting center column feature is that it adds a useless two inches of height from the base of the tripod to the head. Add a levelling base and now there's four inches of extra height that makes an already long tripod not very backpack friendly.



Spending a big chunk of money on another tripod isn't right, but this is another tale of I shoulda bought the right tripod from the start and not wasted the money on the 055CXPRO3 (per Thom Hogan's famous advice written many years ago). I bit the bullet and called up RRS to modify my pending order and add the RRS TVC-33S tripod. The nice thing for me is that RRS had stock of the TVC-33S when I called, whereas most of its other models are backordered. *I was initially told that the L-bracket was so backordered that I'd have to wait until mid-August before receiving my order. However, I only had to wait a week after modifying my order.*

RRS offers three series of carbon fibre tripods: 1, 2, and 3, from smallest and lightest to tallest and heaviest with correspondingly larger load capacities. The TVC-33S is obviously from the 3 series with the second 3 indicating the number of leg sections and the S noting that it's a short model.

The general rule of thumb is to buy a tripod taller than you so that you can get proper eye level adjustment on uneven ground, but when humping a backpack and tripod on my back, compactness matters more to me. Since I'm also quite short, the TVC-33S' specs looked ideal to fit my stature when fully extended.

The RRS tripods are getting some very good reviews for being rock solid stable without having to be massive to bear a heavy load. For example, the largest 3 series from RRS offer similar load capacity (over 50 lbs) and stability as Gitzo's 4 series while being priced like (or even less than) Gitzo's 3 series.

When I compared the tube diameter of the TVC-33S to the Manfrotto 055CXPRO3, I found the TVC-33S' smallest leg section is the same size as the 055CXPRO3's largest leg section. There can be little doubt which tripod is more stable.

Gitzo offers many more choices for carbon fibre tripods than RRS, but this is like Apple versus a big PC vendor (Dell or HP). RRS (like Apple) offers a limited, but very well thought out selection of tripods that should be fine for most photographers, from short like me to those 6 feet plus.

Gitzo offers nearly two dozen models in its Systematic line of tripods (with even more carbon fibre tripods in its Traveller and Mountaineer lines). It can be a challenge to figure out what the differences are between all of Gitzo's offerings. Add the higher prices than what RRS charges and the somewhat spotty quality of Gitzo's carbon fibre tripods and it was a pretty easy decision to buy from RRS. To be fair though, Gitzo's aluminum tripods still have an excellent reputation for lasting forever and while I don't expect to be using my old 1345 much now, I don't plan to sell it.

For the BH-55 ball head, I originally ordered the version without a clamp, because I already have the RRS panorama clamp. I figure I shoot two birds with one stone by having a panorama ready ball head package. However, when I called up RRS and discussed my order, the rep demurred at the idea of using the panorama clamp as my everyday clamp.



He advised that the panorama clamp's 360-degree rotatable base makes this clamp less than sturdy under a heavy load that the regular BH-55 clamp would not have a problem with.

The rep strongly advised getting a regular, full BH-55 head on its own and only using the panorama clamp when actually shooting panos. Thus, I ended up modifying my original order to get the BH-55 with the lever clamp.

I was initially concerned with compatibility with non-RRS plates, but the rep advised that the lever clamp has been revised to work with Arca Swiss type plates from all manufacturers.

I ordered from RRS once previously for some panorama accessories and those pieces really impressed me with the quality of machining and finish. Prior to that first RRS order, I had ordered L-brackets and plates from Kirk, which I also find to be excellent for quality and finish.



Gear-sterbation

The RRS pieces I received in late July are all excellent, but in direct comparison to the Kirk products I have, I think both are equally solid. The base of the RRS L-bracket for the 5D3 is more enveloping than the Kirk bracket for the 5D2. Where the Kirk bracket is braced against movement with only a front lip, the RRS bracket wraps around the front and back of the 5D3. However, my Kirk L-bracket for the D2X wraps around both the front and back of the camera, so it all depends on the camera model.

The side of the bracket, where you would mount the camera to the tripod for portrait orientation has some differences too. The Kirk bracket for the 5D2 (and I believe, the 5D3) requires the user to not use the camera's original strap lug. Kirk provides a separate strap lug that screws into the L-bracket. I always found this annoying and it makes it a hassle to remove the L-bracket and the vertical grip from the 5D2 if you want to go back to the original 5D2 form factor.

While the RRS bracket does not interfere with the 5D3's strap lug, there can be some flex due to a small gap between the bracket and the side of the camera. The Kirk brackets do not leave any gap between the bracket and the side of the camera. However, on an overall basis, I prefer the convenience of the RRS bracket in allowing me to quickly strip down the 5D3 to its original size. My preference though, would be for RRS to eliminate the small gap so that the brackets rests beside the camera like the Kirk brackets.

For the lens plate, I found that the RRS plate is not purpose made for the Sigma 120-300 lens. It's actually a multi-purpose plate of a certain length that RRS will recommend for any number of lenses similar in size to the Sigma 120-300.

This lens plate, the MPR-113, has no integral anti-slip lip. It comes with a removable lip that you attach yourself using two small screws. The lip is placed at the heel of the plate, which implies that the lip should be oriented at the rear of the lens' tripod mount foot. However, the way it fits on my Sigma lens is not to my liking so I flipped it to place the lip at the front of the tripod mount, which allows the plate to cover most of the lens' tripod mount foot. I also found the balance on the ball head to be better ahead of the tripod mount's stem.



RRS at least has the good sense to recommend a lens plate almost long enough to fit the Sigma 120-300 lens. At Kirk's website, the recommended lens plate looks a bit short and after some searching, I found that the plate is also recommended for the 70-200 f2.8 lens, which is ridiculous.

The BH-55 ball head is beautifully built, solid and surprisingly, not as heavy as I expected given its size - must be the hollowed out ball. The lever clamp is great, but I just hope that it's up to heavy use like the traditional screw clamps are.

The TVC-33S tripod is awesome. Finally, a high quality, high load capable, three-segment tripod that fits short shrimps like me. Fully extended with the 5D3 mounted to the BH-55, the height was like it was custom just for me. The closed length of the TVC-33S with the BH-55 mounted is the same height as the Manfrotto 055CXPRO without a head. *I always wondered why there can*

be Big & Tall men's clothing stores, but never Short & Dumpy men's clothing stores...I guess the name wouldn't be very enticing even though I'd love to shop at such a store for pants and shirts.

It may seem irrational to be so excited by a tripod and ball head, but this takes me back to when I bought my first high quality set of sticks in the Gitzo 1345 and the Arca Swiss B1. Speaking of the Gitzo 1345, it does seem incongruous that a lightweight, carbon fibre tripod can be more stable than a heavier aluminum tripod, but I'm not going to debate the hundreds of photographers who have migrated to carbon fibre the past decade.

After being very suitably impressed with the TVC-33S tripod, I looked more closely at the smaller tripods from RRS. I find it quite curious that the smaller tripods are just as, if not more expensive than the TVC-33S.

Looking at the TVC-24, this looks quite promising as a travel tripod. Collapsed, it stands 18 inches tall, so about 20 inches with a ball head mounted. The short collapsed height is possible thanks to having four leg sections instead of three. At full height, it's nearly the same as the TVC-33S, which means that it's nearly a perfect match for my height. However, the TVC-24 is actually more expensive than the TVC-33S. I don't get that, because you'd think that the TVC-33S uses more carbon fibre than the smaller diameter TVC-24, but maybe not.

While I'd love to have a TVC-24 too, spending another \$900 on a tripod ain't gonna happen.

Other accessories needed and bought are a protective filter and a replacement lens cap for the Sigma lens. Unlike Nikon, which includes a hardened, protective front element to its super telephoto lenses, the Sigma front element is, as far as I know, not hardened and is an integral part of the lens design. It's a 105mm size front element and such filters don't come cheap.

Unfortunately, the Sigma lens does not have a rear filter drawer to allow the use of smaller and cheaper polarizers. *I'm going to have think really hard about spending big bucks on a 105mm sized polarizer.*

I found a B+W multi-coated UV filter selling for over \$300 at Toronto-based Vistek and gagged. I found the same filter selling for under \$200 at B&H, so you can guess where I placed the order. I also ordered a LensCoat Hoodie cover for the Sigma lens to replace the less than secure original cap.

I'll also get a LensCoat protective cover for the Sigma lens down the road (waterproof neoprene cover that protects against dings and scratches on the body of the lens). The only reason why I didn't immediately order is that B&H did not have stock of the black colored version. Although, I was raised in a good, old redneck town, I'm going to try and resist the urge to get a lens cover in one of the camo finishes.



It had been a long while since I ordered anything from B&H and I was pleased with how easy B&H now makes ordering from Canada. Ordering gear from the US can be fraught with unexpected costs depending on the shipping.

Many in Canada have been burned by the courier company, UPS, and its extortionate brokerage fees to broker a package across the border. When possible, I always have US shipments sent by US Postal Service to keep the S&H reasonable.

Rant mode on

Whichever shipper chosen, courier or USPS, I still have to pay taxes to the federal and provincial governments, which irks me since they offers no services back to me related to my cross-border shopping. Many times, the items I want are not available in Canada and it's galling having to pay taxes for no good reason.

B&H now offers to collect the appropriate amount of taxes up front so that when delivered (by a Canadian courier company, no less), there is no collection of money at the door. I'm not saving any money of course, but it's just very convenient so that my parents, accepting my package for me, don't have to be hassled about any costs. In fact, this convenience from B&H could be very dangerous to my pocketbook.

When I finished modifying my RRS order, the rep recommended shipment by UPS and I asked if there were no other option. The rep replied that USPS is actually more expensive (really?) and when I mentioned the UPS brokerage fees, the rep said, there's a way around that. When the package has been picked up by UPS, I can call UPS to prepay the taxes, which will avoid a bond fee (note the difference between brokerage and bond fees, as they are not the same).

Looking further into just what it is UPS is charging for, I found out that UPS (and I assume other couriers too) must pay the taxes on the shipment to Canada Border Services before the package will be released for delivery. UPS pays this cost on the receiver's behalf and then collects at the door to recover this upfront cost, however, UPS charges a fee for "lending" you this money - this is the bond fee. If the delivery is by UPS Standard, the bond fee is 2.7% of the value of the shipment. If the delivery is by one of the more expensive delivery options, the bond fee is \$10.

Most people won't know this and probably go with the cheapest UPS Standard method, thinking that they're going to save money on the S&H. They then get bitten by being charged 2.7%. Also, depending on the delivery option from UPS, there can be other fees to broker the package across the border.

If you choose the cheapest UPS Standard delivery, UPS charges a scaling brokerage fee also based on the value of the shipment. Based on my RRS order, this fee would have been another \$91 on top of what UPS is already charging to deliver the package. However, if you choose one of UPS' premium delivery methods, UPS will broker the package "for free."

There's no such thing as free (something either has a value or it doesn't and if it doesn't, it means someone has already paid for it) and UPS makes sure it collects a good fee no matter what to deliver packages cross the border.

Having to pay almost \$100 S&H to deliver a package weighing less than 10 lbs is already ridiculous and offensive and I didn't need it to be delivered overnight. So, when the RRS rep advised me to call UPS immediately after receiving a tracking number to prepay the taxes and save on the bond fee, I did so, erroneously thinking that I'd be charged the 2.7% amount, which would have added another \$43 to the cost.

After receiving the email notice from UPS, I called and it took a while to sort out what I wanted to do with the rep. While I don't think I got routed to India (I suspect New Brunswick because of a slight French accent and knowing that New Brunswick has lured a great many Canadian call centers to the province), the UPS rep was not knowledgeable about prepaying the bond fee.

First she tells me that since UPS is going to broker the shipment across the border, there will be a \$91 fee. I asked if that's in addition to the taxes and she says yes. Then I asked if my shipping method didn't already include brokerage service at no extra cost? Oh, why yes, your shipping method does include brokerage so the \$91 does not apply. Gee, thanks.

Then I asked about the bond fee and she gets confused, because she says the only fee she sees applicable in addition to the taxes is a \$4.50 COD fee. She suggests that maybe I should call

Canada Border Services to discuss the bond fee. I then advised her about UPS' own posted information about charging a 2.7% bond fee and how customers can avoid this fee by prepaying the taxes payable.

She puts me on hold for a couple of minutes. She comes back and then asks me to hold on for another minute or two while she clarifies the bond fee. Finally, she clears up that the 2.7% rate is only charged for UPS Standard delivery. Since my delivery is one of the premium methods, my bond fee is \$10 and prepayment of taxes does not do away with that fee.

So, the RRS rep was wrong with his information (he may have been thinking about the 2.7% rate charged for UPS Standard delivery). However, prepaying the taxes is still fine since it relieves my parents the hassle of having to pay upon delivery. And, hey, I save \$4.50.

Unfortunately, I couldn't prepay anything on that first call to UPS. I was too quick and after reading my email notice more closely, it was merely a notice that UPS has received a request to pick up a package from RRS. Until UPS actually picks up the package (happened later that evening) it won't accept any prepayment, so please call back the next morning. Big sigh.

I called back the next morning and gave the rep my credit card number to prepay the \$201 in taxes and brokerage fee. The rep advised that she's sent out a message to the distribution center so that the driver will know to not collect any money when delivering my package. The story should end there, but it doesn't.

Turns out UPS is actually very fast when you use its premium shipping method and delivery was made the same morning I called to prepay the taxes, which is a day earlier than I had expected. When I arrived back home from work, I asked my father if he had to pay any money, and yes, he did, some \$200 worth. Many choice swear words went through my head, but I'll spare you the details of how I described UPS as a bunch of f'ing incompetent bozzos working for an f'ed up, brown as excrement, company.

Thankfully, my father didn't pay cash and instead gave the driver his credit card number. I called UPS and politely explained the situation and asked if they could please not double charge the \$201. The rep replied that she'd send another message to the distribution center to not charge my father's card... let's just say that I'm not holding my breath.

Infrared

On another, more pleasant track, after returning the loaner, infrared converted Nikon D7000 back to LifePixel, I decided to send them my Canon Rebel T2i and have it converted to infrared capture (no deals here, I paid regular price). *Interestingly, when I received the instructions for how to ship the T2i to LifePixel across the border, the company made it clear NOT to use a courier company and to just use regular post so that USPS would deliver to them. Courier deliveries are rejected, so no doubt that LifePixel has also been burnt by courier charges to broker across the border.*

I went with the standard filter conversion and universal focus calibration since the T2i has LiveView for focusing. Universal focus calibration and LiveView dispenses with the need to worry about manual focus accuracy or having to calibrate the camera's focusing with a specific lens.

The only concern with using LiveView for focusing is having to properly see the rear LCD when shooting outdoors. In bright light, you're very close to shooting blind if the sun is behind you. You really need an enclosing loupe, such as from Hoodman to properly use LiveView outdoors.

Hoodman offers a package, which adds a crane-like contraption that mounts to the camera's hot shoe to set the loupe against the LCD. This allows you to use the camera as traditionally as possible with such a contraption mounted, instead of having to hold the camera with the right hand and the loupe with the left hand.



The Hoodman kit comes at a cost though at some \$250, which I hated but resigned myself to if I wanted to be able to see properly when using the infrared converted T2i. Luckily, I was so offended by the regular price that I procrastinated from buying long enough that the Hoodman kit eventually went on sale at London Drugs for a \$100 off.

Speaking of Hoodman, some other useful accessories available are LCD screen protectors and large eyecups. Although Canon uses hardened glass for the LCDs on its SLRs, I scratched the LCD on the 5D2, so lesson

learned and earlier this year I bought 3-inch protectors for the 5D2 and the Rebel T2i. Yes, I know, the 5D2's screen is already scratched, but no need to do anymore damage.



With that 5D2 lesson, my B&H order also included the new 3.5-inch screen protector for the 5D3's larger LCD, as well as an eyecup. The nice thing about the Hoodman screen protectors is that they go on with a minimum of fuss unlike the protectors for iPhones and iPads wherein dozens of bubbles appear and it takes a long and very patient time to try and squeeze and/or rub the bubbles out. You just need to make sure that the protector is slightly smaller than the LCD to adhere completely and properly to the screen.

When a camera is converted for infrared capture, WB becomes a tricky thing. You need to use a custom WB and then use the camera company's own RAW processing software to convert a RAW file to TIFF or JPEG. After processing, Photoshop can be used for editing the file, e.g. from color infrared to B&W infrared using a blue and red channel swapping technique to allow for proper tonal adjustments.

With the loaner D7000, I had absolutely no luck in getting the D7000 to set a custom WB using everything from grey sidewalks to proper white or grey cards. I was able to finagle some acceptable looking infrared photos via NikonView and Photoshop, but out of camera, they were not like the samples seen on the LifePixel website. LifePixel advised me that Nikon SLRs can be hit and miss with custom WB, but there are no problems with Canon or Panasonic cameras.

When I tried setting a custom WB with the T2i, I was very pleasantly surprised to see on the camera's LCD, exactly the kind of color infrared look I expected, i.e., they looked like the samples on LifePixel's website.

Wither Nikon?

As of this writing, I've not used the 5D3 or Sigma lens much for any real action. This will have to wait until the fall when hockey season starts.

The Sigma 120-300 is a fair sized lens and appears borderline for being able to handhold the combined weight when mounted to the 5D3. The lens' zoom ring is quite stiff, so it might be tricky to fluidly follow a moving figure and reframe simultaneously, which I often did using the Canon or Nikon 70-200 lenses.

I'll work with a monopod to see how that works out but can't discount that I may have to get a gimbal setup down the road; probably a Wimberley Sidekick.



It would seem that with all this talk about Canon gear, I've abandoned Nikon. Prior to finally deciding to buy the Sigma lens, I was going back and forth between that and the D800 (same cost).

The D800 has some appeal as a dual-purpose camera. FX at 36 MP and DX at 15 MP, which with a 70-200 lens, gets me the same reach as the 5D3 and the Sigma with a whole lot less weight. Unfortunately, I don't have a Nikon 70-200 lens anymore in my Nikon kit and that meant having to budget for another \$2000.

Now, if I were rich like my buddy Rob in LA, who drops this kind of loose change out of his pockets while sitting on the couch, I'd be all over a Nikon D4 and Nikon 200-400 lens, but that just won't work...unless I really do want my ashes to be stored in the D4's box. *Coroner's report: deceased appears to have suffered blunt force trauma to the head from a large diameter, cylindrical object. Police report: deceased was found in his home with a Nikon 200-400 lens stuck to his head...there was difficulty in prying a Nikon D4 camera from his cold, dead hands.*

When looked at in total, I actually spent more money on the Sigma lens, RRS and B&H orders than what a D800 and 70-200 costs. However, I wouldn't have some key pieces such as the RRS tripod and ball head. However, I think I'd be happy either way and I'm not counting out a Nikon SLR from my future. Looking in my Nikon cabinet, I still have nine lenses and an assortment of accessories ready to be deployed.

I could just sell all the good pieces and recover a nice bit of change, but I'm loathe to do that, because that damned Scotsman, Murphy, was an optimist. The day I sell my 14-24 and 24-70 lenses is when Nikon will come out with the killer SLR that gives me all that I want at a price I can afford. But, truth be told, the 5D3 is pretty darn close to all that I want from a camera. I could do with more frame rate speed and better high ISO quality, but let's not get too greedy given what I didn't pay to be able to use it.

If Canon decides to produce a D800 equivalent (rumors of a high MP model called the 3D have been bouncing around), then I would have to seriously consider a complete switch. For a few years now I've felt that a two SLR-kit is ideal with one a speed camera and the other a high resolution model. This can now be done with Nikon if I were to seek out a new old stock D700 (or clean used unit) and add the D800. Rather ironic that when Nikon finally gives me what I want, I'm no longer interested. However, as I said, this is not the end...

...leading up to a milestone photo shoot for my workplace, I thought about doing a time lapse video for the making of the photo. Since I'm going to use the 5D2 to take the photo, my first thought was to use the 5D3 to do the time lapse photography, but I'd need to buy an accessory intervalometer (interval timer remote). Looking at the price of the appropriate Canon remote in Canada left a bad taste in my mouth, especially compared to what B&H charges (over \$100 less).

I looked at some other third party remotes for even less money and was about to place the order with B&H when during my research on time lapse photography, I came across something that put a full stop to that plan. Some Nikon SLRs have an intervalometer built in...I glanced over at my

D2X and then dug out the manual (actually, I downloaded it because I couldn't find the damn thing). And, on page 122, instructions on how to set the D2X's interval timer. Sweet!

I did some test shoots first to make sure it would work out okay on the camera side and then I had to figure out how to create the video. On the camera side, the built-in interval timer is not as flexible as I had hoped, because Nikon limits the number of frames to 999 and does not offer an end time option, e.g. to set the number of hours or the minutes instead of only frames. 999 frames rendered at 24 frames per second results in a mere 41 second video (24 fps is the standard for cinema film quality).

To create a time lapse video, most people use Apple's Quicktime Pro, but for my first videos, I downloaded some free Lightroom templates from Pixiq to use Lightroom's Slideshow module to render and export a 720p MP4 video file. The MP4 file can then be edited in a video editor such as Adobe Premiere, Apple Final Cut Pro, or in my case, iMovie on my MacBook Pro. The Lightroom templates have a maximum video resolution of 720p, whereas Quicktime Pro can render a 1080p video file. Since I didn't want to limit myself, I did end up buying a license for Quicktime Pro to be able to create 1080p videos.

While the D2X provides immediate gratification for very short video files (or, multiple short video files to create a longer video), it's obviously not ideal for longer videos. Thinking ahead to when I'll want to try night time videos, the D2X's poor high ISO quality will be another limiting factor.

With the Canon 5D3 being my current go-to camera, it is more convenient to use the 5D2 as the interval timer camera, using the same set of lenses rather than having to also carry a Nikon kit based around the D2X on the occasions that I think I'll want to do some time lapse photography. As such, I'm going to order an interval timer remote from B&H to use with the Canon cameras. The one I have in mind is made by Vello and uses the more convenient to find and use AAA batteries instead of button cells like the Canon remote uses. The Vello unit I want is a wired remote like the Canon remote, but the Vello, without any batteries, can do double duty as a basic wired remote to release the shutter.

Some other useful accessories for time lapse photos is an ND filter, but not the usual 2 or 3 stop filter. I'm talking about 10 stops, like the square 4x4 inch Lee Big Stopper. This kind of filter will allow photographing moving water in daylight at the right shutter speed to get the silky flow.

Eventually, if I get really big into doing time lapse videos, a motorized panning base will allow for more creative videos. I already have my eye on a Meade DS2000 telescope panning head that can be adapted to hold a camera - check out [Ross Ching](#) and his Eclectic 2.0 and 3.0 time lapse videos that makes extensive use of the Meade panning head (and also the cool use of a tilt/shift lens in Eclectic 3.0).

One consideration about time lapse photography is the sheer number of photos taken, which will put big mileage on the camera's shutter. For my first two videos, the D2X took 1600 frames over 1.5 hours. That's about what I might shoot for an almost full-day wedding, but over 2-3 cameras.

While I'm not too fussed about putting the mileage on my old D2X, which is still very low in shutter actuations, I'm not so sure I want to fire that many frames on the 5D2 or 5D3, which technically don't belong to me.

I'm thinking about picking up another Canon SLR dedicated for time lapse photography, which will be convenient to share lenses and accessories with the other Canon SLRs. Ideally, another 5D2, but a 7D is also a good consideration to give me speed and the extra 1.6x focal length factor for regular shooting. More realistically, if I do buy another Canon camera, it will likely be a cheap Rebel SLR. A lighter camera also has the benefit of being easier for the Meade DS2000 panning head to support.

Another option is to get a digicam with an electronic shutter, so as to completely do away with the wear and tear of a mechanical shutter. The new Panasonic FZ200 looks intriguing with a 25-600mm equivalent lens that's f2.8 throughout its massive zoom range! The downside: no wider angle view than 25mm and will there be a third-party interval timer available for it, since Panasonic doesn't offer such an accessory.

Photo Bites

One day, while walking to an eatery for lunch, I passed by a tourist carrying what looked like a Canon camera and lens combo. Or, at least I thought it was a Canon from a distance based on the light coloring of the lens barrel. Getting closer, I realized that the lens was not white like Canon, but a matte silver finish and the camera was a Sony NEX model.

The combo was ridiculous with such a tiny camera body and a huge lens mounted to it. If you're going to walk around with a largish lens then why not just get a real SLR and do away with the questionable ergonomics of a NEX camera.

Speaking of Sony, gotta give kudos to the company for coming out with a high-end digicam (RX100) that finally gives serious photographers a long desired camera: a truly shirt pocketable, go anywhere camera with a decent sensor size, high resolution, modest spec'ed lens and RAW capture. (Oleg, maybe this is finally the one for you)

The only thing not to like about the new RX100 is the high-ish price, but here's hoping Sony does gangbusters with it to prompt the other majors to do something similar at more competitive prices. I still like the Panasonic GF1, but unless I'm wearing a winter coat (and it depends on which winter coat I'm wearing) the GF1 is not that pocket friendly.

Ever read the Fake Chuck Westfall blog? It's pretty hilarious and defines fanboyism for Canon users. The guy's been dissing the Nikon D800 left, right and center while proclaiming the Canon 5D3 as the best camera in the world. The vitriol expressed against DxO for proclaiming the D800's sensor as being the best is amusing.

Unfortunately, the blog recently jumped the shark when it had to call upon a review from a certain San Diego-based photographer to support its contention that the 5D3 is better than the D800.

Really?! The guy in San Diego, who's next reviewed camera always seems to end up being the best in the world? Who uses the 5D3 in JPEG mode and throws away more than 70% of the resolution? Come on Fonzie, say it ain't so!

Having run websites with a small eye towards trying to make some money from them, I can relate to people trying to make a buck or two from their websites. As much as I hate seeing websites cluttered with ads and affiliate banners, I understand and cannot criticize too much. It's a shame, because a lot of times, site performance to load up in a reader's browser takes a hit having to wait for all the affiliate or social media banners to show up.

That said, I get cheesed off when I see sites literally beg for money from readers. It's one thing to encourage people to shop at an affiliate, but it's another to just outright beg for money with a donate button. The most crass example is the aforementioned photographer from San Diego (the Chuck Norris of photography), who never fails to annoy me whenever I see his name.

On the topic of the D800, why is everyone and their dog doing comparison reviews or commentary on the 5D3 versus the D800? Sure, they're both top notch prosumer cameras from the big two leading brands, but I don't see the two as being direct competitors, which makes the comparison reviews suspect. Just as it was never apples-to-apples to compare the D700 against the 5D2, so it is with the D800 and 5D3 reversing the roles.

For better or for worse, the D800 is all about the medium format-like resolution available at a real world price. Pushing 36 MPs through the camera at 4 fps is a pretty Herculean task. Meanwhile, the 5D3 "only" has to push 22 MP at its maximum 6 fps.

While I'd support the idea that the 5D3 is a better all around camera for handling a variety of photo tasks, some of the key specs of the 5D3 are merely in the "good enough" category. And, remember, good is the enemy of perfect:

- 22 MP is not class leading like 36 MP
 - 6 fps while decent, is hardly blistering like available from the pro SLRs or even Canon's top DX model, the 7D
 - Build quality is solid, but again, not bombproof like the true pro SLRs
 - High ISO does not approach the class leading D4
-

The last half of July saw two significant Canadian-based websites go on hiatus, one long term, and the other, hopefully, short term. Rob Galbraith will now become a photography instructor at an Alberta college, which no doubt will provide him with a stable income after many years of

freelancing and consulting. Michael Reichmann of the Luminous Landscape is recovering from cancer surgery and we're pulling for him to recover fully and get back to what he loves doing.

So, Canon finally got game and introduced its own CSC or EVIL with the EOS-M. At first glance, there's some solid specs, such as the 18 MP resolution, APS-C sized sensor, 4 fps speed and a 22mm f2 prime lens, which is the equivalent of the classic 35mm lens for FX.

Digging further, we see that the EOS-M is actually a stripped down version of the popular Digital Rebel series; in this case, the Rebel T4i. That 18 MP sensor has now been warmed over six models of Canon cameras:

- Rebel T2i, T3i, and T4i
- 60D and 7D
- EOS-M

While I do applaud Canon for using a large, APS-C sized sensor, four things immediately stick out at me without diving into all the specs of the camera:

1. No viewfinder and no ability to add an EVF, although the hot shoe will allow mounting an accessory optical viewfinder, but who would or wants to do a kludge like that?
2. Only two lenses and no roadmap to show the user where Canon is going with the EOS-M format
3. Won't be available until October, which seems like a long lead-in time before distributing the camera to the market. This implies that Canon's tired of seeing its users migrate to other systems and wants to slow that trickle
4. USD \$800 for the camera and the 22mm lens? What the f...?

Once upon a time, I paid a premium for the Panasonic GF1 and its 20mm lens. However, I'm past that time where I'll pay a premium to be the first kid on the block with the new toy du jour (as some early adopters of the D800 are now ruefully cursing the left AF point issue). Even so, I still like what the GF1 is about even if its image quality at high ISOs gets a too crispy crunchy for my liking. And, the GF1, from a UI perspective, is a lot more camera than the EOS-M.

Canon seems to be taking some cues from Nikon, which is, create something that won't take too much away from SLR sales and oriented for consumer users. Maybe I'm judging too much by the cover and maybe the touch screen UI will actually be a great way to control the camera, but the EOS-M smacks far too much of catering to the digicam upgrade crowd instead of catering to more serious photographers. And, why does stripping away features and capabilities result in a premium price? Because it's smaller and more compact? Because Canon and Nikon think they can get away with it?

If I'm going to spend \$800 on another CSC/EVIL, I'd just as soon buy the Panasonic GX1 for less money, or for similar money, with some lenses that will be a helluva lot more useful than a 22mm prime and another crappy 18-55 kit zoom lens. To paraphrase Bill Gates, if you give it to

me, I'll shit on it...okay, okay, I wouldn't really look a gift horse in the mouth, but for \$800, the EOS-M is already looking like an old, flea-bitten nag ready for the rendering plant and is an easy pass.

At least Nikon produced two versions of the 1 series, as well as adding in some good features (fast AF, mondo buffer size, and interval timer) along with more than two freaking lenses to start the show. While the V1 is still a little questionable for whether it really caters to more demanding users, it was at least an acknowledgement by Nikon that not everyone would be thrilled with the J1. Offering two models also allows Nikon greater pricing flexibility that Canon does not enjoy with just one model. Canon should have copied Nikon more and introduce two models catering to consumers and enthusiasts.

Three-four years ago, we'd probably all be singing Canon's praises with the EOS-M. Unfortunately, too much time has gone by and there are too many other, more capable cameras available. If you have \$800, it's not a huge stretch to move up to the Olympus OM-D, which is looking like the real thing in the EVIL world. Lastly, while all Canon seems to have done is take the T4i base and then started cutting, some of the other brands have developed wholly new cameras from scratch (Panasonic, Olympus, Sony, Nikon, Fuji).

Here's hoping that the EOS-M is just the start and that Canon has something more capable in the wings (as well as more than two stinkin' lenses). The EOS-M could have hooked me in if it was more than a glorified point and shoot with a big sensor. I've been using Canon regularly the last four years with a small, but growing collection of lenses and accessories available for the three cameras I have on hand. The EOS-M should have been a slam dunk to get users like me to buy, but right now, only the big time Canon fanboys are excited (and defensive).

After five years of studying and surveying the market, is this the best that Canon can do?

There's a lot of talk about cell phones taking over the digicam market. That cameras included in cell phones are "good enough" for the masses preferring to carry one device instead of multiple, single-use only devices. That the young, hip crowd don't want photos to print, but instead prefer a quick and convenient way to upload cell phone camera photos to their Facebook page.

As much as we, the serious and passionate photographers, can dismiss most digicams as being inferior to our he-man SLR rigs, most digicam photos are preferable to the crap produced by cell phones. It's a sad state of affairs to see consumer photography sink to the lowest common denominator with the iPhone being the standard bearer.

I use an iPhone 4 and I love it after being rather dismissive of earlier iPhones in general compared to my work phone Blackberry. After regular use, I find that I can type fairly quickly using the iPhone's screen, but I'm still more accurate with the Blackberry's real keyboard.

What I don't like from either phone is the built-in camera. One, the form factor is bad for getting any stability. Two, the response time makes digicams feel like SLRs. Three, and most important, the image quality sucks for anything away from sunlight.

Late in July, early in the morning, as I was walking through my backyard to access the back alley for the start of my walk to the bus stop, I noticed a great looking morning scene. The sun was just peaking over Burnaby Mountain and being filtered through a neighbour's tree. There was a faint fog in the air, which combined with the tree-filtered sunlight to create a star-like pattern of God beams.

I looked at it, admired it and wished I had a camera with me (yes, I know, I know). Then I realized that I do have a camera with me in the iPhone. Took it out and tried to take some pictures, but nothing turned out when I reviewed the photos later on. The God beams were too delicate to be rendered properly by the iPhone's camera.

Any one of the Canon SLRs I use would have had a good chance of nailing the shot in my usual aperture priority mode. I could also easily dial in minus compensation and bracket the shots to ensure that I captured the God beams. Even the Panasonic GF1 would have been a far superior camera than trying to do something with the iPhone.

After reading the above bite-sized vignette, you might wonder why I didn't have the GF1 with me in my bag, ready for exactly like what I described: serendipitous moments. Well, I realized that I have a lot of cameras, but all of them are at home. A whole lotta good that does me when I spend so much time in downtown Vancouver, at work. I decided that I need to have a small photo kit with me at work, but went back and forth about what "small" meant.

The Canon kit stays at home, since it's my main gear. That leaves the Nikon D2X, which obviously is not small, or the Panasonic GF1 (my Panasonic GH-1 is now my wife's camera). Despite the large size of the D2X, I did think about building a workplace kit around it using prime lenses. I have the Sigma 30mm, Nikon 50mm and 85mm, so that covers me from normal to moderate telephoto. I'm just missing some wider angle primes or maybe a wide-angle DX format zoom lens (the highly regarded Sigma 8-16mm comes to mind).

The other option is to finally build out the M4/3 kit like I've been wanting to do for a long time. Add in a 14mm Panasonic prime for a 28mm equivalent lens and either the Olympus 45mm short telephoto or the Panasonic 45-200mm zoom.

I'm not sure which way I'm going to with this as there are advantages to both. The Panasonic being small and unobtrusive with everything fitting into a modestly sized shoulder bag. The D2X with its built-in interval timer allows me to do more time-lapse videos.

My employer is celebrating its 25th anniversary this year. One of the senior executives came up with the idea to take a mass, group photo of the 250 or so employees. For some strange reason, my name came up as the person to take the photo and I was asked if I would be willing to take the photo during our annual meeting of all staff in the spring.

One co-worker was enthused about the project and discussed some of the ideas that the executives had come up with to take a photo of so many people. One was to line everyone up single file, shoulder to shoulder, in a big U-shape. I'd take segment photos of the huge U and then stitch the segments in Photoshop.

Trying to keep my poker face, I wondered what in the world would they do with such a photo? In panorama terms, it probably would have amounted to something like a 0.5x20 inch photo. I suggested that we try some other ideas. I gave them some options, one rent enough risers to create steps to accommodate the 200-plus people for a straight-on photo. Two, rent a scissor lift to lift me high in the air and take the photo from above, which provides the benefit of everyone flat on the ground and looking up to the camera.

A logistical problem with the photo though is that this was supposed to be indoors in a large hotel ballroom. A ballroom that has very low light levels and is otherwise a cave, e.g. ISO 3200, f2.8 at 1/30 to 1/60. I need light and I need depth of field. I could light to a certain degree with my 600 w/s mono lights, but really need more. Renting more lights, the scissor lift and other things would cost circa \$500, which I don't think went over well.

I was asked to look into using the nearby Vancouver Art Gallery, which would be much more cost effective (free). The Art Gallery is a classic Roman/Greco building with a nearly two-story set of stairs at its backside that faces a plaza large enough to accommodate 200-plus people. We have a plan!

Alas, the first scheduled day in April rained heavily forcing a cancellation. I rescheduled and booked the Art Gallery again with the City of Vancouver, but ended up having to reschedule multiple times over the course of spring and summer. We had meeting conflicts, missing executive staff, and we got rained out again, twice - the damn eastern side of North America stole the west coast's normally mild spring weather. We went from an original April shoot to having to reschedule so many times that it won't be until August that we can finally hit the right combination of staff availability and good weather. Even then, we still won't have 250 people in the photo due to summer vacations.

I plan to take the photo with the Canon 5D2 instead of the 5D3, because onOne Software has not updated its camera control iPhone app to support the 5D3. With the 5D2 mounted on my brand spanking new RRS tripod, I'm going to connect the camera via USB to my MacBook Pro running the onOne Camera Control server software needed to remotely control the camera. I'll create an ad hoc network between the MacBook and my iPhone and put the camera in LiveView mode so that I can see the shot while also being in it (I've tested all this out a few times).

As I'm going to do a time lapse video of the moment, I'll use the Manfrotto tripod to support the D2X, which will record 999 frames at 1 frame every 3 or 4 seconds. I also plan to video record the event with my Panasonic GF1 mounted to a tabletop tripod so that I can have some more options when I edit and produce the final video file.

Until next time friends, have fun and enjoy the light!

Edwin