

Looking through the camera lens

Photo Society shares love of photography, advice on taking better pictures

SUZANNE RENT

The Dartmouth Photo Society got its start from frustrations with commutes. Diane Slaunwhite was a member of the Sackville Photography Club for almost 15 years, but she lives in Dartmouth and the drive across Magazine Hill was long and tiring. So, Slaunwhite started the Dartmouth club in December 2012.

Slaunwhite searched for locations in Dartmouth that could offer some space. She got three people to help her, one of whom is still with the club. They started with 20 members off the bat and have about 40 now.

"It really went from there," Slaunwhite says. "I'm amazed at how it's taken off. Everyone who is involved now is so energetic and gung-ho to make it a success."

Slaunwhite served as president for five years. Paul Turbitt now holds that role. Slaunwhite has taken photos for about 35 years and was inspired by her father, who was an artist. She did some semi-professional work, including shooting weddings and portraits.

At the meetings, which take place twice a month, members bring in speakers who talk about various topics on photography and members present slideshows of their work.

The club also does fieldtrips, which Slaunwhite organizes. This fall, the group went to the Fortress of Louisbourg in Cape Breton, where they got exclusive access to the fortress, taking photos of spots off-limits to tourists.

"We went in there without anyone else being in there," Slaunwhite says. "We got some really cool shots in there." They also explored the town and surrounding areas, taking photos of autumn foliage.

Some of the fieldtrips are opportunities to share advice. During one trip to the Oaklawn Farm Zoo in Aylesford, the group took photos of the animals, with tips from one member who has expertise in wildlife photography.

"He taught us how to shoot the cages so we could make the cages disappear," Slaunwhite says.

On another assignment, the bride of one of the members asked several members to take photos of her wedding. Slaunwhite, who has experience photographing weddings, shared her



Getting up close and personal with a bullfrog. **PAUL TURBITT**

advice to the others. The bride, meanwhile, got a portfolio of various shots from different perspectives. She donated money to the club.

Darlene Matheson has been with the club since the beginning. Like Slaunwhite, she was a member of the Sackville Photography Club and lives in Cole Harbour. She says she loves the camaraderie, the chance to learn new tricks, such as the settings on her camera, and taking part in competitions.

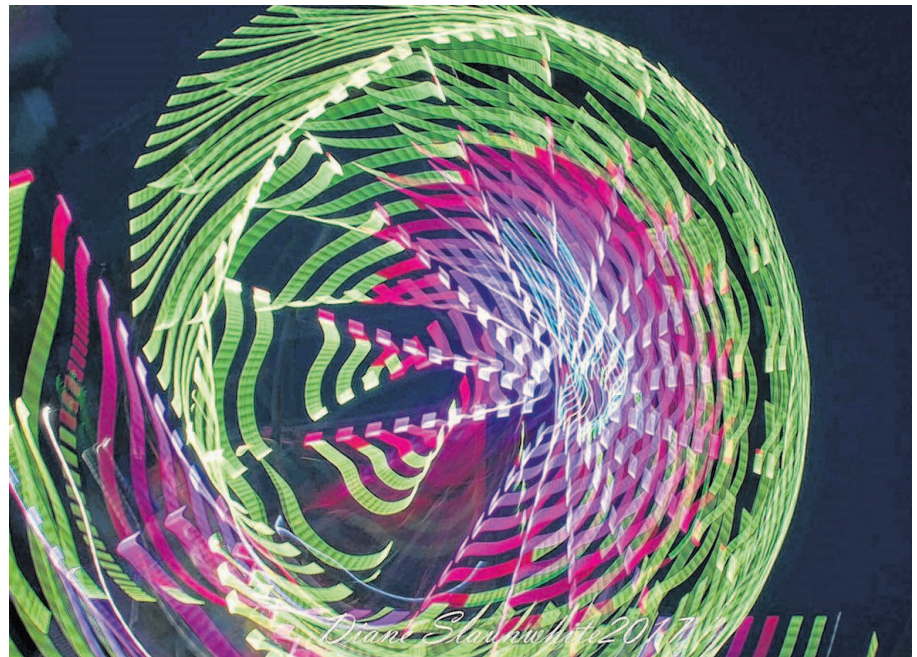
"I'm not looking to become a professional photographer," Matheson says. "Just to make my pictures better, more interesting and to share with others so they can enjoy them."

Slaunwhite says she thinks photographers see the world differently and learn to capture those images in photos.

"A lot of our members have pictures that are mind-blowing," Slaunwhite says. "You're always asking them, 'What made you think of doing that?'"

The club also gets advice online, in particular from National Geographic, which shares its expertise on its website.

Membership to the club is \$25 a year and there's a \$5 discount for



A colourful ferris wheel in motion. **DIANE SLAUNWHITE**

families. Prospective members can sign up and pay online. Members also receive a discount at some photography stores for

supplies and equipment.

"We've had a lot of fun just building the club," Slaunwhite says. "It's just rewarding when

people come up and say they are glad we started this club. It's really good to help people learn this skill."