

Through The Lens

*A guide to digital photography for computer enthusiasts.
After the click of your camera, you're only half done!*

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Why I am a morning person!

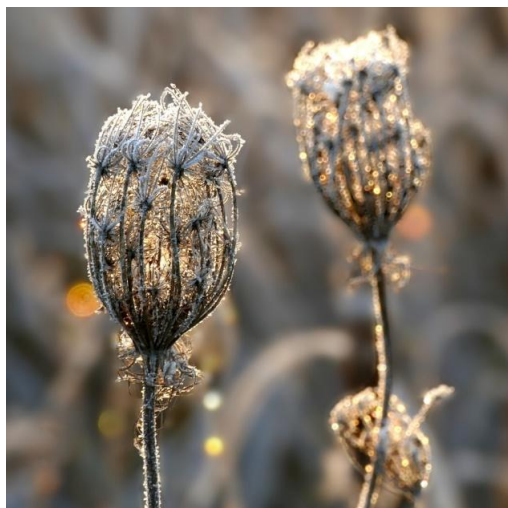
by Lynda Buske

In a previous column, I wrote about taking photographs in the evening or nighttime. (https://opcug.ca/Photography/EveningPhotography_v3.pdf). My personal preference, however, is to shoot in the morning especially during the blue hour before the sun comes up. While not everyone wants to get up that early (often 4am in the summer) there are some definite advantages and photo opportunities that you don't get in the evening.

Technically, many of the tips are similar like compensating for low light by using a tripod, opening aperture wide (small f-stop number), bumping your ISO (sensitivity to light) or perhaps using a cell phone which tends to cope with low light situations well. When my phone is set to "night sight", it takes multiple short exposures and combines the images into a single, appropriately exposed photo.

But this column is going to be about the non-technical advantages of shooting pre-dawn rather than post-sunset (the two blue hours). These tips, however, apply mostly to landscape photography; obviously if you like to shoot the city night life, you are not going to find much going on in the morning. If someone is still partying then, they are probably not worth photographing!

Depending on the time of year, there is a good chance you can catch some interesting frost or mist during the morning blue hour. Both of these are often disappear shortly after dawn when the sun burns off fog or melts frost.





Birds get very active just after dawn. It is not just sheer luck catching migratory geese at dawn. You can hear them getting all excited in the dark and the minute the sun comes up, they take off.



I find the early morning very relaxing. There is less city noise from traffic, especially in the summer when it is way before rush hour. Roads in the evening, regardless of the time of year, are busy both before and after sunset. Parking is a breeze in the morning and there is no competition for my favourite vantage points. If you are lakeside, the reflections are great in the morning before wind and boat traffic ruin them.

I like fewer people around but if you do want a lot of human interest in your photos, then evening might be better. I usually have just enough fishermen, joggers, bikers, or kayakers to add interest, if I want it. However, they seldom get in my way.

As a petite lady, I am nervous when strange men approach me in the evening. I am never sure of their intentions (innocent though they may be) and I end up concentrating more on picking up verbal or physical clues than on my photography. People can be distracting when asking questions about your gear (always the guys) just at a critical moment when I'm trying to shift from blue hour settings to dawn settings. If someone says a few words at 5am I do not feel threatened and conversations are usually short since perhaps neither of us have had a coffee! I could be wrong but I feel most of the baddies are simply not out at that hour.

So that's my pitch. Come join me at dawn...just don't talk!