

Through The Lens

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

OPCUG



*Users helping users
for over 40 years*

Organizing your photos – Part 1

by Lynda Buske

In the next two newsletter articles, I plan to provide some suggestions for organizing your photos in a PC environment (Part 1) and then showing you ways you can search on your photos without re-naming or tagging (Part 2).

In the PC environment, the easiest way to keep your image files organized is by creating file folders within the **Pictures** folder using **File Explorer**. Your system will automatically have a **Pictures** folder so you just have to create some sub-folders to suit your needs. Simply click on **Home/New folder** (or click on the icon on the top row) to create and name a new folder. I recommend you start by creating a folder called **Originals** and another called **Work Area**. (See Figure 1).

If using a camera app to download photos from your camera, it may automatically save your images in the root of the **Pictures** folder, perhaps also creating subfolders with year, month and day. You can either cut and paste these into your **Originals** folder or download your images directly from the SD card to the **Originals** folder.

I find having just the year, month and day is not enough information when I'm looking for a particular image months later. For sure the date is important but I also add on a descriptor such **Judy's birthday** or **Sunflowers**. I shoot hundreds of images at the Ottawa river each year so **Ottawa River** even with the date is not going to cut it. Instead, I will at least label the folder with the river location such as **Shefford** or **Blair**. (See Figure1)

Once I have my images downloaded into folders within **Originals**, I immediately copy them all into the **Work Area** folder. I do no culling or editing from the **Originals** folder because it can be hard to tell which are the shots you want to keep forever until you start editing them, checking exposure levels, cropping etc. If you are really tight for space, you can cull some later but keep in mind that a solid-state terabyte drive can be bought for \$100-\$150 and a terabyte drive can be found for less than \$100. One terabyte drive can hold 100,000 10MB images!

Within the **Work Area** folder and sub-folders, I create even more for folders various reasons such as selections for Facebook. (See Figure 1). Because I take so many photos, I may have 100 folders build up in just one year. After about 6 months, I prefer to take some of the files & folders from the **Work Area** and save them by topic. So, the dozen folders I amassed in 2024 shooting the Ottawa river, will now be put into a topic folder **Ottawa**. Within that I have **Ottawa River** with specific sub-folders for the locations I shoot the most often such as **Blair kayaks**, **Blair river ice**, **Blair foggy dawn**, etc. (See Figure 2)

This is just my personal system and it may not work for you. I do, however, recommend that everyone protect their out-of-camera images in an **Originals** folder. From there, the naming conventions and number of sub-folders within the **Work area** are up to you. My rule of thumb is that I should be able to find a 3-year-old image within about 5 minutes!

Figure 1

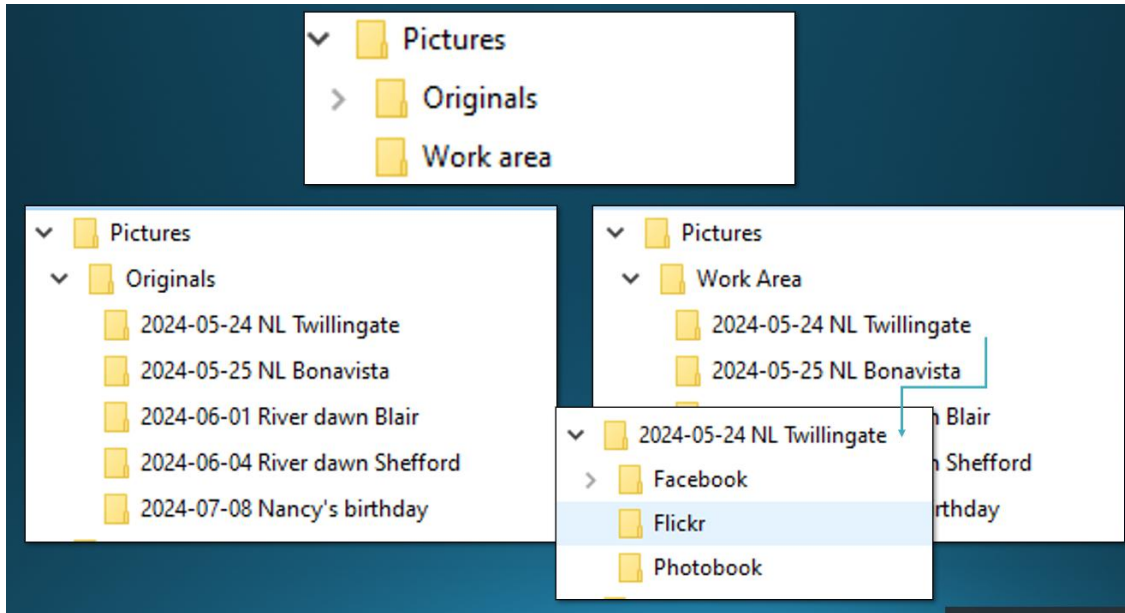


Figure 2

