

My post-retirement life by Steve Ricketts

Here's my story...

Many people look forward to retirement, and to use the time to pursue other interests. For some, it's to relax and enjoy life, to travel. For others, it's embarking on a second career, getting engaged in other activities such as volunteering, or to pursue a hobby. For people with a scientific background, it's surprising to see so many MSC retirees involved in the arts; e.g. painting, photography, wood working, quilting. Perhaps it's finding peace in doing something completely different?

For me, retirement has been about volunteering (I coach competitive youth soccer), staying up to date with aviation meteorology, and photography

My Dad was involved in photography well into his 90s, and he willed me his camera. I gave it a try. And I was hooked. There's both an artistic and scientific side to photography... composing an image, where and when to be to get a great angle; e.g. a moonrise. It's been an enjoyable pastime.

I'm mostly self-taught; i.e. I have no formal training in photography or in art. In fact, I'm not exactly artistic. If anything, I'm the opposite. I can't paint, draw, or play an instrument, and let's not even talk about singing. I'm a scientist by education and work, and I take a very scientific and logical approach to photography. I have learned a great deal by joining a local camera club, by reading books by photographers, by traveling with other photographers and seeing what they do, and by taking photos. Lots of photos.

I mostly do landscape photography but I also enjoy experimenting with weather (storms, aurora, noctilucent clouds), portraiture, urban photography, and the blur created by intentional camera movement. I am constantly looking for images that capture a special moment.

Over the past year, I have found myself drawn to doing black & white photography as I like how it draws the viewer's attention to the contrast and texture in landscapes. I often use a telephoto lens and zoom in on a small area to capture lines and curves; it's very much a desire for minimalism.

I use Adobe Lightroom for all my image processing, and Nik's Silver Efex Pro for black-and white conversion. I try to minimize the amount of editing that I do; while today's software allows for powerful manipulation to create a wonderful image, I prefer to challenge myself to be in the right place and at the right time to capture the image that I have in mind.

While the Alberta Rockies are home to a lot of spectacular scenery, there is a lot of beauty in the Alberta prairies too, and I find myself increasingly drawn to shooting the landscape in and around my home in Sherwood Park, especially in Strathcona, Lamont, Minburn and Two Hills Counties. That is, rather than take the viewer on a journey to marvel at the grandeur of the Rockies, I prefer to take them on a journey around my backyard to enjoy the subtlety of the Prairies.

And of course, I enjoy shooting storm clouds, but I also enjoy capturing atmospheric phenomena... aurora, rainbows, noctilucent clouds, light pillars.

I have had prints shown in exhibits and shows. I also use my photography for volunteer efforts; e.g. participating in Help Portrait, shooting fundraising events,

Overall, photography has given me a lot of satisfaction, and sense of accomplishment. In that sense, it's much like my career in the MSC.

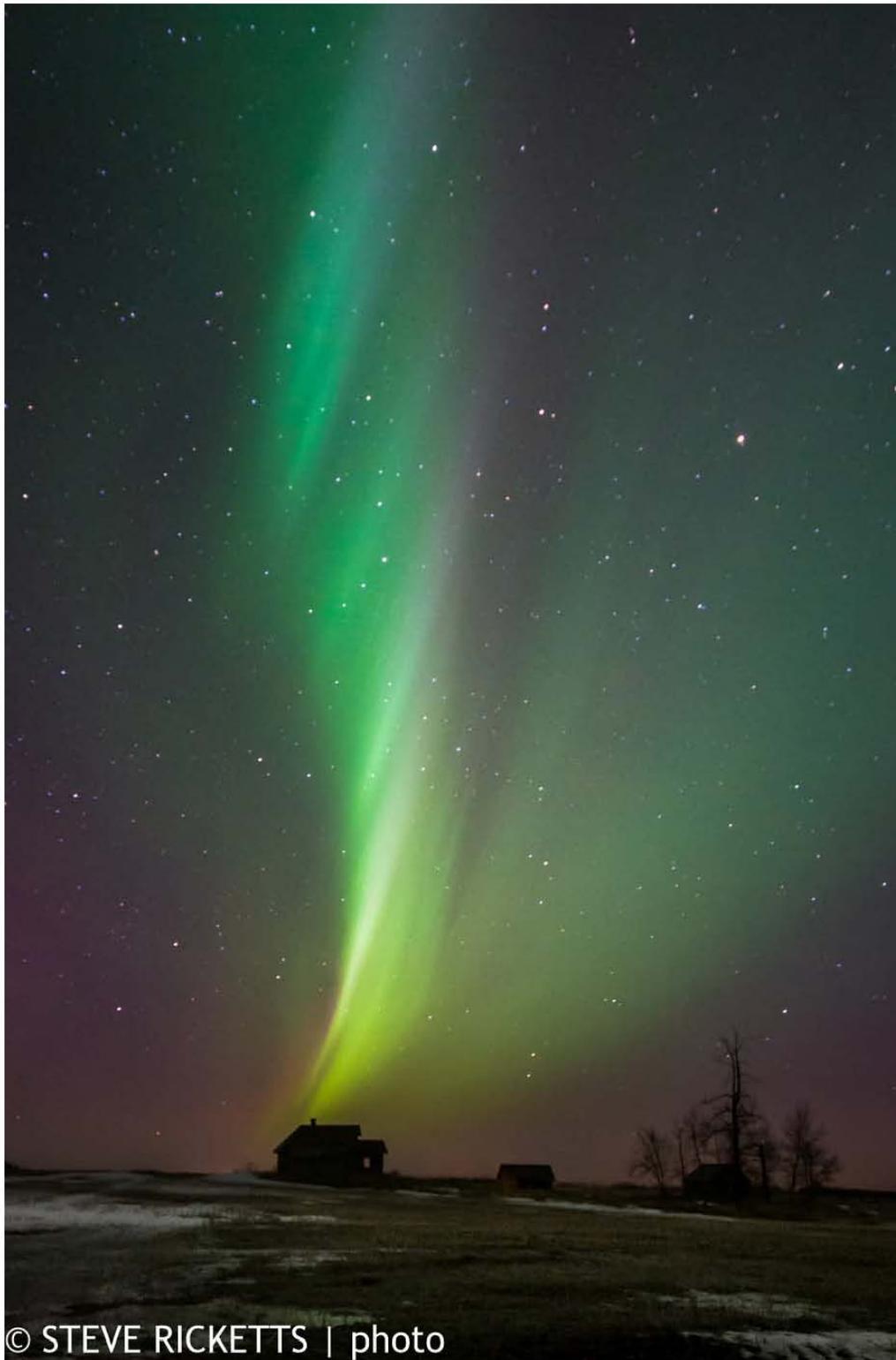
I've attached some examples of my work, and you can visit my website at www.stevericketts.ca

I look forward to reading others' stories.

..steve



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