

science

LENS

news

THE NEWSLETTER OF SCIENCELENS LTD

VOLUME 3 • NUMBER 2 • JULY 2012

INSIDE:

Feedback from SciFest 2012

The importance of 'fringe visuals'

Win a free photo shoot!

science**lens**.

PHOTOGRAPHING
SCIENCE, INDUSTRY
AND TECHNOLOGY





gerry@sciencelens.co.nz

Hi everyone, and welcome to the latest edition of the Sciencelens newsletter.

This month Sciencelens resident graphic designer Wouna shares some thoughts on the importance of peripheral visual elements, or 'fringe visuals', when designing a science publication, and why it is critical that photographers keep an eye out for the little things when doing a science photo shoot.

We also have a guest contribution from Michelle Harnett, who is currently doing her Masters Degree in Science Communication at the University of Otago – Michelle gives some feedback on the Otago Festival of Science.

Then we have some good news from SCANZ regarding the 2013 SCANZ conference, as well as our regular rundown of science, communication and photography news and events.

And finally, don't miss our latest Sciencelens competition! Simply <Like> the Sciencelens Facebook page (www.facebook.com/sciencelens) and stand a chance to win a free photo shoot – see page 6 for details.

Enjoy the newsletter, and good luck with the competition!

Gerry



Full member



FROM THE
EDITOR



PCST/SCANZ Symposium 2013
DISASTERS
– COMMUNICATING IN THE CRISIS AND AFTERMATH

INTERNATIONAL ACCREDITATION FOR 2013 SCANZ CONFERENCE

SCANZ, through the efforts of its leadership team and Vice President Christine Ross in particular, has recently been successful in securing Symposia accreditation from the global science body, Public Communicators of Science & Technology (PCST), for the 2013 SCANZ annual conference.

With funding assistance from the Ministries of Foreign Affairs & Trade and Science & Innovation and Tourism NZ, Christine attended the recent bi-annual PCST conference in Florence, Italy, and successfully pitched for Symposium status for the next SCANZ conference.

As a result, the 2013 conference will be promoted globally and we can expect a significant number of PCST members from around the world to participate in the New Zealand event.

After consideration of various venues it was decided to host the 2013 PCST/SCANZ Symposium in Christchurch on 21-22 February 2013. February 22 will be the two year anniversary of the devastating Canterbury earthquake. On 23 February, a variety of field trips will be undertaken to science facilities and other sites around the city.

Fittingly, the theme of the Symposium will be "*Disasters – Communicating in the Crisis and Aftermath*". Topics to be covered will include:

- » Risk communication in relation to the threat of disasters
- » Case studies of effective science communication during disasters
- » The perception that we are faced with more natural disasters, extreme weather, earthquake swarms, pandemics, agricultural crisis – what does the science say?
- » The responsibility of scientists – where the law meets scientific evidence
- » Supporting scientists on the frontline when their expertise is needed
- » Communicating science as a disaster is still unfolding
- » The changes in public understanding and expectations of science and communication
- » Science for a sustainable future – communicating to avert disaster

Don't miss this exciting event. For information about the Symposium, visit the SCANZ website, www.scanz.co.nz.

SCIFEST 2012

by Michelle Harnett

At the beginning of July, I took part in New Zealand's only international science festival, SciFest 2012. A real life astronaut talked about her job; my classmate Tom McFadden rapped science raps and the University of Otago threw open its laboratory doors in a huge, interactive expo.

The curious (and the grossed out) got to explore the medical school's Anatomy Museum and handle the plasticised body parts of real dead people. Others, who preferred their dead things to be much older, and well and truly dead, took tours of the Geology Museum to see part of New Zealand's rich fossil history (think giant penguins and dolphins with teeth).

The tour of the Geology Museum included a taste of the vast forces that built and are still shaping our Shaky Isles – earthquake fossils!

EARTHQUAKE FOSSILS

Rapid. Not usually a word associated with geology, a science devoted to rocks. But what about earthquakes? Following the Christchurch quakes and the recent shakes in the North Island, most New Zealanders are hyper aware of the power of two tectonic plates colliding.

A major fault line runs from the Bay of Plenty to Wellington. The Australian plate is winning this one – riding high over the Pacific plate, which is being subducted (driven down). In the South Island, the two plates grind past each other at a rate of around 3 cm a year forming the Alpine Fault, which can be seen from space.



Alpine Fault

The Alpine Fault has ruptured very regularly every 295 years or so, with the last big quake (~8.1) occurring in 1717. Add these together to get 2012!

Photo credit: <http://www.teara.govt.nz/en/geological-exploration/4/5>

As the tectonic plates push against each other, pressure and stress build until something gives and the earth quakes. When plate slips past plate, rock slides against rock. This movement generates tremendous friction, and the friction generates heat, enough heat to melt rock and turn it into lava. When everything stops moving the lava cools and solidifies into a glass-like material, leaving a permanent record or 'fossil' of the earthquake behind. Geologists call the fossil earthquakes pseudotachylite because it looks like basaltic glass or tachylite.

Earthquake fossils are common in the Alpine Fault zone where the Australian and Pacific plates grate and scrape past each other, occasionally providing the necessary conditions for pseudotachylite formation – high speed slip over a distance of more than 20 cm.



Pseudotachylite, aka earthquake fossils

Not every earthquake leaves fossils behind. Geologists at the University of Otago believe pseudotachylites are more likely to be formed by moderate shakes rather than big ones, possibly because the big ones produce too much friction, causing the rocks to shatter rather than melt.

MORE INFORMATION

Anatomy Museum

Members of the public can visit the museum as part of a tour group. Tours can be arranged by contacting Chris Smith, the Museum Curator at museum.curator@anatomy.otago.ac.nz.

Geology Museum

The Geology Museum is open to the public five days a week, from 8.30 am to 5 pm and contains the largest such

Michelle Harnett is studying science communication at the University of Otago.

For **more information** on science communication at Otago, see www.sciencecommunication.info.

To contact Michelle, email her at michelle@disruptednarrative.co.nz or visit www.disruptednarrative.co.nz/wordpress

collection of rocks, minerals and fossils in the South Island. See <http://www.otago.ac.nz/geology/facilities/additional/museum.html> for more information.

SWEATING

THE SMALL STUFF

by Wouna le Roux

As a designer and layout artist, I am often required to produce brochures, reports and articles, related to scientific domains such as biosciences, food technology, environmental sciences, and the like. Now I'm sure anyone who's ever done design in the science and technology space will agree that access to good visual material can be a challenge. If you do get any visuals, there's a good chance it was captured by the scientist himself using a small point and shoot digital camera, with little regard for composition or lighting. If you're lucky and you do get photographs taken by a professional photographer, or at least a scientist with an eye for photography, there's still a chance that the photographer may not be experienced in photographing for corporate scientific publications. You may get some good photographs, but not visuals covering all the angles you require.

BASIC IMAGE REQUIREMENTS

So what makes a science photo shoot useful from a design viewpoint? Well, having sharp, well-lit and clear photographs of the actual scientific subject you're doing the brochure or report on, is an obvious requirement. If you also get some nice people images – flattering portraits of the scientists in action – it's even better; having the luxury of including striking people shots in a publication is always a great plus, as images of people capture attention. Even in a technical context, people enjoy looking at people – this is a psychological truth that has been proven over and over again. Is there perhaps a voyeur hiding in all of us?

At the most basic level, these are your main requirements, and are hopefully the aspects of the

shoot that will be covered by any good professional photographer.

THE VALUE OF 'FRINGE VISUALS'

An added image dimension that can make a huge difference from a design point of view, is if the photographer has the presence of mind to keep an eye out for small fringe visuals; noticing and capturing visual elements that can be used as part of a design to increase the visual appeal of the publication, and to hopefully add some additional visual information.

Little things like lab equipment (test tubes, petri dishes), bits of interesting machinery, extreme close-ups, etc. can all be used very well as design elements when doing a layout to profile a scientist and his/her work. Especially if these are well photographed, using interesting angles, playing with shallow depth of field, and so on.

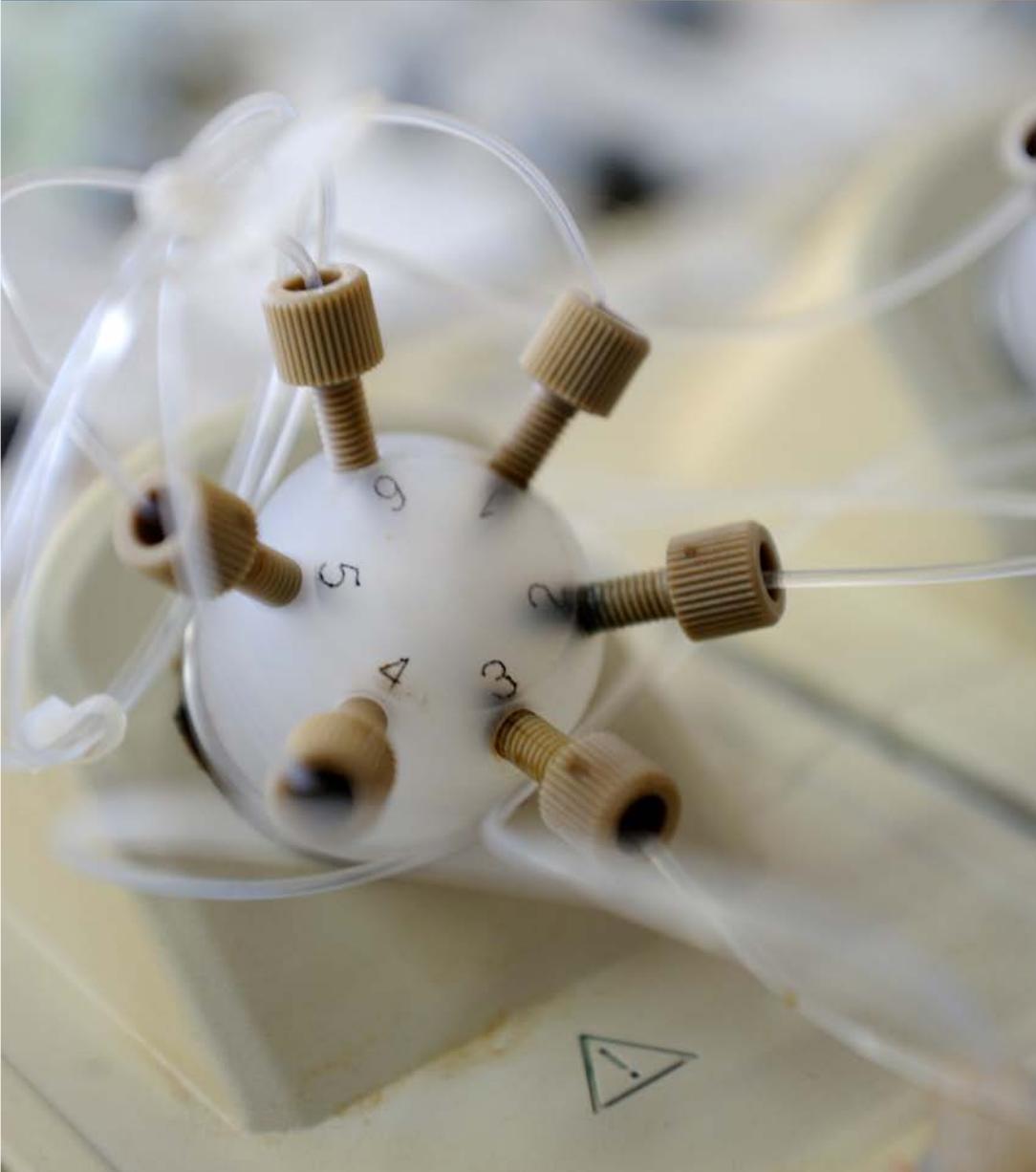
A NOTE TO PHOTOGRAPHERS

Photographers – do you make a point of following up on your assignments, to see how your images were used by the client?

Try to contact your client to get copies of the publications where your images were used. Or at least look at their website – your images may be used to illustrate web articles, or there may be electronic versions of their publications available online, containing your images.

You may be surprised to find that what you considered to be key images were not used at all, while the

SWEATING THE SMALL STUFF (CONTINUED)

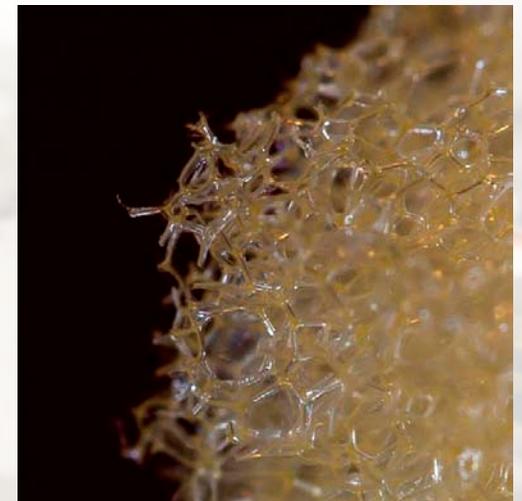


designer went to great effort to use some peripheral elements in your photos, because it highlighted an important feature or, as is often the case, it worked to achieve a specific visual effect. Also look at their other publications – see what visuals they used from other photographers.

In addition to helping you take more relevant pictures in future, it may give you some insights into your clients' preferences – whether they like conservative, formal images, or perhaps prefer a more informal, arty approach. This might also differ from one publication to the next, depending on who their target audience is.

IN SUMMARY

While a photographer might be given a certain brief which doesn't spell out all the bits and bobs, it is good practice to cover all your basis. Do sweat the small stuff – for the sake of a better outcome, a better end-result.



NEWS SNIPPETS

UPCOMING CONFERENCES

- » **Fifth International Albatross and Petrel Conference**, 13-17 August, Wellington
- » **Romeo Bragato Conference**, 22-24 August, Blenheim
- » **12th international conference for Agricultural Biotechnology**, 2-6 September, Rotorua
- » **2012 Oceania CACS conference**, 10-12 September 2012, Wellington
- » **New Zealand Applied Neurosciences Conference**, 14-16 September, Auckland
- » **Chemeca 2012**, 23-26 September, Wellington
- » **Water NZ Annual Conference & Expo**, 26-28 September, Rotorua

SONY WORLD PHOTOGRAPHY AWARDS

Entries for the 2013 Sony World Photography competition is now open. The entries, which opened on 1 June 2012, will be open until 4 January 2013.

The competition contains a number of categories, catering for professional and amateur photographers. This is a prestigious international competition, with prize money of \$25000 (professional category) and \$5000 (amateur category) as well as other great incentives.

More information is available on the competition website, www.worldphoto.org/competitions.

WORLD OPEN OF PHOTOGRAPHY

'The Open', a \$50 000 worldwide search for great photographers, connects artists to a global audience.

From undiscovered photographers to emerging artists to seasoned professionals, everyone is welcome to be a part of The Open. It exists to discover – and rediscover – the most inspiring photographers of our generation. It is for any photographer who wants to open the door to worldwide exposure, connections and opportunity.

For more information about the competition, visit the website at www.theworldopen.com.

MANHIRE PRIZE FOR CREATIVE SCIENCE WRITING

Entries are now open for the Manhire Prize for Creative Science Writing, and closes on 5 October 2012.

The inspiration this year is *'the Transit of Venus – one day in 1769 the future of Aotearoa arrived quite unexpectedly, from the East, and in a form undreamt of. Just as it had some six centuries before. What future is on the horizon now?'*

Entries from 1 000 – 2 500 words in the fiction or creative non-fiction categories are sought by 5 October 2012.

For more information, visit: www.royalsociety.org.nz/programmes/competitions/manhire-prize/2012-information/.

LANDCORP AGRICULTURAL COMMUNICATOR OF THE YEAR

Congratulations to Steve Wyn-Harris, a Hawke's Bay farmer who has become a strong commentator on farming, the farming industry and agricultural sciences, for being selected as winner of the 2012 Agricultural Communicator of the Year award. In addition to being an active farmer, he is a broadcaster with his own local radio show and is a regular on the national Farming Show. He is a long-standing columnist, and has been contributing weekly columns for many years, well over 660 so far, and currently appears in The NZ Farmers Weekly.

'EXERCISE IS MEDICINE' LECTURE SERIES, JULY - AUGUST, AUCKLAND

The University of Auckland presents the 2012 Vice-Chancellor's Lecture Series with four lectures in July and August.

Physical inactivity is one of the greatest health problems of the 21st century. Although research indicates benefits from exercise in disease prevention and treatment, compliance is poor. These lectures by scientists, an epidemiologist, and physicians will enlighten and engage the issues that confront physical inactivity when 'Exercise is Medicine'.

The first lecture is entitled 'Take a Walk: Exercise, Aging and Cognition' and will be presented by Professor Arthur Kramer, University of Illinois on 31 July.

Visit www.ses.auckland.ac.nz for more information.

MORE ABOUT SCIENCELENS

To find out more about Sciencelens, and the things that make us tick, follow us on **Facebook** (<http://www.facebook.com/sciencelens>) and **Twitter** (<http://twitter.com/gerrylerox>), and don't forget to keep an eye on our **blog** (<http://sciencelens.wordpress.com>).

WIN A FREE PHOTO SHOOT!

<Like>
and
win!

Are you in the market for some photography? Well, you may just be in luck! Whether you need photos of your latest science project, your kid's birthday party or your pedigree persian cat, simply <Like> Sciencelens on Facebook before the end of Sunday, 19 August 2012, and you'll be in line to win a free hour-long photo shoot. Go to: www.facebook.com/sciencelens

Everyone who already likes Sciencelens on Facebook – your names will automatically go into the draw.

COMPETITION TERMS AND CONDITIONS:

- » The competition is open to anyone working or residing in New Zealand.
- » The competition closes at 12pm on Sunday, 19 August 2012 (NZ time), and the winner will be drawn from all new and current Sciencelens Facebook <Likes> on Monday, 20 August 2012.
- » This competition entitles the winner to a 1-hour free photo shoot - this can be used as a stand-alone shoot, or as a 1-hour discount on a larger shoot.
- » Free travel is included for shoots within a 100km radius from Palmerston North. Beyond this, travel will be charged according to NZAA vehicle travel rates.
(If the shoot can be arranged to align with other shoots, travel costs may be waived.)
- » Times and dates for the photo shoot is subject to availability.

sciencelens
PHOTOGRAPHING SCIENCE, INDUSTRY AND TECHNOLOGY

Editor – Gerry le Roux

Contributors – Michelle Harnett, Wouna le Roux

Design & layout – Wouna le Roux

CONTACT US

PO Box 20037 • Palmerston North • 4471

Phone: 06 3566 377

Mobile: 027 510 5177

Email: gerry@sciencelens.co.nz

www.sciencelens.co.nz

Disclaimer: Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information contained in this newsletter. We accept no responsibility for any errors.

Copyright © Sciencelens Ltd