



HISTORY OF THE TURNER VALLEY OILFIELDS

CAMERA CLUB (TVOCC)

(Submitted by Sheila Giles-Smith, August 2026)

The Turner Valley Oilfields Camera Club began on June 14, 1963, and membership was \$2.00!! At that time, it was an independent club in the community. Around the year 2000 it became a club under the umbrella of the Sheep Creek Arts Council (SCAC). Meetings were held twice a month in the Turner Valley Elementary School. Today, meetings are held on the last Tuesday of the month in the SCAC building.

Some of the early (known) members of the club included Peggy Orr, June Danforth, Nora Andrews, Edith Nitschke, Lorraine Sandau, Shirley Mundell, Keith Giles, Ralph Osborne, Alice Lockhart, Sam Lockhart, Bud Evans, to name a few. The club has between 25-30 members each year. There are members who join from the local communities as well as from Okotoks and Calgary.

At one time there were two competition banquets, each Spring and Fall. Local businesses originally sponsored a trophy for the various categories, with the winner's names engraved on a plaque. Such categories included Landscape, Portraiture, Table Top, Plants, Animals, Nature, Alberta Heritage, Wild Animals, Humour, Action and Novice. Ted Dawson (Ted Dawson Photography) from High River was the competition judge for 42 years.

When the Oilfields General Hospital was established in 1984, the club was approached from the Administration to display photos from the club members throughout the hallways. Photos were canvas wrapped images measuring four feet by four feet. It was a great way to share the members work with the general community.

The club has evolved over the past 63 years! All members would have originally been photographing with film. Around 2008 to 2010 the world of digital became much more popular and the switch to the new format gradually took hold. It was hard for some to make the change, while others embraced it. Now we are navigating the world of 'Artificial Intelligence' and all the benefits (and hindrances) that it brings!

There are currently five 'Lifetime Members' within the club. Peggy Orr (who passed away January 2020 at the age of 106!); Nola Middleton (who passed away November 2017); Bern Dayment (member since 1979); Sheila Smith (member since 2006); and Ted Dawson (who was our annual competition judge from 1979 to 2021).

Today there is one Annual Banquet and Competition held in early May. The venue has switched over the years from the Black Diamond Gospel Church, the Turner Valley Golf Course, the Griffith's Centre and the Turner Valley Legion. There are typically eight categories for members

to enter, some which change each year. The 'Best of Show' photograph is matted and framed by the club and displayed on the SCAC 'Camera Club Wall'. There are currently three to four years on display at a time. When a photo is ready to be taken down it is gifted to the original photographer. We have rotated judges in recent years to offer differing judge perspectives.

The TVOCC has sponsored the Photography Department at the Priddis & Millarville Fair over many recent years. Many of the club members also volunteer for this event. We are getting more involved with some of the local community groups such as the Town of Diamond Valley and the Foothills Lions Club, who are looking for selections of photographs from sponsored events.

The monthly meeting format consists of general business, with a 20–30 minute presentation from either a club member, or an outside presenter. Subjects vary from different technical aspects to general creative experiences in the field of photography. Monthly themes are peer judged and printed for 'the wall' and rotated through. This offers other members of the Arts Council to see what the Camera Club has been photographing and keeps the selection fresh!

A great website has been developed by Bob Jackson, our residence 'Tech Guy'! Bob keeps the information up to date and offers a view of all the monthly and annual submissions.

<https://www.tvocc.org>

Our members bring a wide range of photographic skills and interests, from beginners to more advanced. Everyone is welcome. We developed a motto a few years ago "Encourage Learning Through Positive and Constructive Support". We strive to help all members broaden their knowledge and improve their photographic skills.