

# FOCAL POINT

[Assabet Valley Camera Club](#) - The club meets on the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of each month except July and August. Meetings are hybrid - in person at the Hudson Senior Center, 29 Church St., Hudson and on Zoom. Doors open at 6:30 PM with a 45 minute social time and at 7:15 a brief business meeting. Programs start at 7:30 PM. Are you interested in attending a meeting and/or seeing what the Assabet Valley Camera Club is all about? You are welcome to join as a guest member for 30 days. Just send us an [Email](#) with your name and preferred e-mail address and you will be added to the attendee list for the next 30 days.



*First Frost - Pam Meoli*

*"Laugh as much as you breathe. Love as long as you live." - Rumi*

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## Note from Our President

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Hello All,

This month's President's note is a recap of recent emails I sent to club members with information about the Nominating Committee and the newly chosen topics for next year's competitions.

AVCC election of officers occurs in June at our annual meeting. As you are probably aware, I am not running for reelection as president as I will have served almost 3-1/2 years as president.

Our Nominating Committee, whose job it is to recruit members to run for office, wishes to get an early start in finding a slate of officers for the upcoming season and could use some assistance!

Please consider joining the nominating committee (this does not mean that you will be nominated for an office - hey, it may almost guarantee that you won't be!).

Please reach out to Todd Mathieson, John Gill, or Lynn Kerner if you wish to become a member of this committee.

Also, please consider running for an office or volunteering to help out on one of the committees. The strength of the club relies on the volunteers who give their time and talent to make the club run smoothly as well as making it enjoyable for all!

And, to give you a head start on taking images for next year's competitions, here are the topics selected by vote at the Executive Board meeting on January 26th:

September 16, 2026 Monochrome and Open

October 21, 2026 Nature and Open

November 18, 2026 Things Made by Man and Open

December 16, 2026 Nature and Open

January 20, 2027 Townscape or Cityscape and Open

February 17, 2027 Nature and Open

March 17, 2027 Typically New England and Open

April 21, 2027 Nature and Open

May 19, 2027 After the Rain and Open

We're looking forward to seeing Shawn Carey's program, "Penguin Adventure - Falkland Islands," on Wednesday night. Reminder, Shawn will be presenting in person at the Hudson Senior Center. There will still be a Zoom option for attendance.

Keep the winter gear out - Punxsutawney Phil predicts we have six more weeks of winter. Stay warm!

Pudge

## Note from the Editors

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Note from the Editors  
February, 2026

“Winter sunlight is a warm old soul, spreading love in the bitter cold.”

— Angie Weiland-Crosby

We love February’s light. The brightness of the sun seems to multiply when it bounces off the snow; the light refracts in icy rock crevices, and gives us beautiful blues & aquas; ice-laden branches glitter in the sun like holiday lights. The increasing strength of the sunlight is a counterweight to the bitter and windy cold. We are grateful that the first days of February are forecast to be “balmy,” with temps in the 30s by afternoon. However, if there are any night-sky opportunities, multiple warm layers will still be required.

In our February issue, members’ submissions express “love” (original, yes?). You will see joy, contentment, and nurturing represented in flora, fauna and people. Thank you to those who contributed images. And thanks also to folks who sent in photos from Photo-Ops day on Jan 24th . For those who are not familiar with this get-together, or who have never been, these will give you a good idea of what goes on.

See the brief report from a few of our hardy Night Hawks who ventured out to see the Aurora in the depths of January. Make sure to check out Pam’s Happenings section for ideas of things to do, interesting exhibits to see, and numerous contests to enter. If you see something you’re interested in doing, and want some company, just put together an email to the club with suggested date, time and place.

The team decided there is a lot to say about composition, and we all know that no matter what kind of camera you’re using, if your composition isn’t good, your image will not have the impact you would like it to. So, Cathy has begun a series of monthly Tips and Tricks specifically on composition. The first installment is well worth reading, and perhaps - for some of us - even worth reading multiple times.

As always, kudos to Mary for the layout of the newsletter’s bits and pieces, and for making sure any loose ends are tied up before release.

Stay warm and safe. We close with lines from Robert Frost’s poem, “Afterflakes,” about the sun’s return after a “teeming snow-fall:”

...thick flakes floating at a pause,  
Were but frost knots on an airy gauze,  
With the sun shining through.

Lynn Kerner

## February Program

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AVCC is pleased to present **“Penguin Adventure - Falkland Islands”** by Shawn Carey on Wednesday, February 4, 2026 at 7:30 PM. The meeting is a hybrid format; in person at the Hudson Senior Center, 29 Church St., Hudson, or remote on Zoom (please arrive no later than 7:15).

Note: Shawn Carey will be presenting live at the Hudson Senior Senior.

The Senior Center will open at 6:30 PM for social time. The Zoom meeting room opens at 7:00 PM and the AVCC business meeting starts at 7:15 PM. The program begins at 7:30 PM. Nonmembers interested in attending as guests should email [avcc.digital@hotmail.com](mailto:avcc.digital@hotmail.com).

This program is made possible through the Dave Reynard Memorial Fund.

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### Biography: Shawn Carey

Shawn Carey (Migration Productions) produces bird and wildlife related multi-media presentations, videos and photo workshops that have been presented all over the United States. Shawn moved from his home in Pennsylvania to Massachusetts in 1986 and started watching birds in 1988. His avid interest in photography was joined with a newfound passion for birding and he began to combine the two in 1991. By 1994, he and good friend Jim Grady started Migration Productions as a way to present their multi- image slide presentations to a live audience.

Migration Productions offers the finest quality bird and wildlife programs with stunning photographs, video, and soundtracks. They feature interviews with many people involved with bird watching and natural history topics. Since 1994, Migration Productions has presented its programs to camera clubs and natural history and birding organizations including Mass Audubon, Eastern Mass Hawk Watch, Hawk Mountain Sanctuary and countless others.

Shawn's photos have been published in the Boston Globe, New York Times, Mass Audubon Sanctuary magazine, Science magazine, Hawk Mountain Sanctuary magazine and many others over the last 20 years. In 1997, he started teaching bird photography workshops (Fundamentals of Bird Photography) for the Massachusetts Audubon and he is an instructor for Summer Fields Schools on Cape Cod for Mass Audubon Wellfleet Bay Wildlife Sanctuary.



*Image Courtesy of Shawn Carey*

Continued on next page

Shawn Carey - continued from page 4

## A Penguin Adventure - Falkland Islands - Program Description

The Falkland Islands are located off the southern coast of Argentina and almost to the tip of Tierra Del Fuego. With one flight a week entering and departing the Falklands, and a total of three days travel each way you have to really want to go there. We're delighted to be hosting Shawn Carey on Wednesday, February 4, to take us there.

The Falklands are a very remote South Atlantic archipelago with two main islands, East and West Falkland, plus an additional 776 smaller islands, most of which are not inhabited. However, several that are host some of the islands' amazing wildlife, including five species of penguins, which on certain islands have thousands of birds during the nesting season.

For bird watchers and wildlife photographers with an interest in the birds found here you can see 63 nesting species including 14 endemic subspecies and two endemic species, the Falkland Steamer Duck and the Cobb's Wren. In addition to the bird life there are also both Southern Elephant Seals and Southern Sealions which can be seen in large numbers on a few islands.

For this program we will explore two locations on Saunders Islands, The Neck, which has three nesting penguin species plus nesting Black-browed Albatross. Then onto The Rookery with its impressive colony of Southern Rockhopper Penguins and a staggering number of Black-browed Albatross. After that we will explore Sealion Island and our first look at Elephant Seals, Sealions and the Killer Whales that prowl the waters looking to feast on them. Next up is Bleaker Island with its beautiful mile long beach where you can watch Gentoo and Magellanic Penguins as they ride the waves onto the sandy shores. Finally, we will end our photographic adventure at Volunteer Point which has the largest nesting King Penguin population in the Falklands.

All of this plus a look at the lodges one can stay at, the food and some of the people you will meet along the way. I will share my advice on traveling to this fantastic location plus many tips to help you plan your own Penguin adventure to the Falkland Islands.



*Image Courtesy of Shawn Carey*

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Shawn Carey - continued from page 5

All images on this page courtesy of Shawn Carey.



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Shawn Carey - continued from page 6



*Falklands\_02 - Shawn Carey*

Shawn Carey is a member of:

Mass. Audubon (Advisory Council)  
Mass Audubon Museum of American Bird Art, Canton, MA (Advisory Board)  
Mass CamNats (Current President)  
Eastern Mass Hawk Watch (Past President and current Vice President)  
Nuttall Ornithological Club (Past Advisory Board)  
Brookline Bird Club (Past council member 7 years)  
Bird Observer Magazine (Board of Directors)  
South Shore Bird Club  
American Birding Association  
Hawk Mountain Sanctuary

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*Breiðamerkurjökull Glacier Island - Glenn Fund*

Date	Program	Presentor
9/3/25	“What I did this Summer” Member Slideshows	AVCC Members
10/1/25	Portraits with Simple Lighting Techniques	Jim DeLuco
11/5/25	Process of Focus Stacking	George Fellner
12/3/25	Creative expression through Coastal Imagery	Steve Koppel
1/7/26	Lost in a Fog	Ed McGuirck
2/4/26	Penguin Adventure - Falkland Islands	Shawn Carey
3/4/26	Intro to Basic Astrophotography	Temu Nana
4/1/26	Refresh your Basic Editing Skills in Photoshop	Hazel Meredith
5/6/26	Infrared Photography	Frank Jansen
6/3/26	Image of the Year Awards	TBD

Link to the club website calendar for all deadline, program, and competition dates: [AVCC Calendar](#)

Or find it on the AVCC website by clicking on “Organization” at the top of the page, then “Club Calendar” in the dropdown list.

## Competitions 2025-2026

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### Monthly Competitions:

The club holds monthly image competitions including two categories: digital theme and open. AVCC Print competitions have been suspended. The digital images are judged by a panel of three judges using a scale of 3.0-10. The final score for an image is the total of the three scores. See the [AVCC webpage](#) for more information about the rules and procedures for monthly competitions as well as the PSA and NECCC competitions. Pay particular attention to the PSA definitions for [“Nature”](#), [Monochrome](#), and [Travel](#) submissions.

### Schedule of Monthly Competition Category Topics & Submission Dates

Month	Digital Theme	Open	Digital Theme and Open Submission Date
September	Monochrome	Open	9/10/2025
October	Nature	Open	10/8/2025
November	Mailbox(es)	Open	11/12/2025
December	Nature	Open	12/10/2025
January	Leaf/Leaves	Open	1/14/2026
February	Nature	Open	2/11/2026
March	Landscapes	Open	3/11/2026
April	Nature	Open	4/8/2026
May	Portrait(s)	Open	5/13/2026

### PSA and NECCC Digital Interclub Competitions

Image selections to the PSA & NECCC Interclub Competitions are made by the representatives to each organization. Individual entries can also be made to PSA competitions if you are a member. Our PSA representative is Todd Mathieson; our NECCC representative is Robyn Saur.

FYI: PSA Guidelines for Borders: Not recommended for Nature but if any border is added to a Nature, Travel or Photo Journalism image it must be a small border of a neutral color (gray tones). There are no border restrictions in the PID Color or Monochrome Division.

### 2025-2026 NECCC Individual Print Competition

The NECCC Individual Print Competition will be held on October 18, 2025 and March 28, 2026 hosted at the Greater Lynn Photographic Association (GLPA). For information about the print competitions go to the NECCC website and go to competitions in the pull down menu. [NECCC](#)

## Members' Lens



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**Zooming Out** - Members and AVCC in the greater photographic community - member exhibits, competitions, meetups, field trip opportunities, workshops, etc.

**Zooming In** - Reflections, Musings, or Experiences (travel, how I got that great shot, my favorite photo or place to shoot for example) shared by members.

**Tips and Tricks** - Curated Suggestions for the Monthly Theme.

**The Bigger Picture** - Happenings in the World of Photography

## Zooming Out

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### On the Wall at Cafe 641

The January exhibit at Cafe 641 features a collection of favorite NASA Astronaut images assembled by Dan Barstow. Dan manages the Archive of Astronaut Photographs of Earth. The archive contains 7.5 million images! In addition Dan volunteers with the The Association of Space Explorers - the professional organization of flown astronauts from around the world. He is the Director of Earth Music Theater - check it out! <https://www.earthmusictheater.org>

## Astronaut Photos of Earth

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*"The first day, we looked for our countries.  
The second day, we saw our continents.  
The third day, we were aware of only one Earth."*

*Astronaut Sultan Bin-Salam*

There will be a Meet and Greet with Dan on Saturday, February 21 from 12:00 to 1:30 PM at Cafe 641. Come see the fabulous views of Earth from space!

The exhibit in March will feature the work of Ronni Silver.

If you are interested in displaying your work at Cafe 641 contact Jim Williams through the AVCC website.

*"Good technique is invisible." - Ron Rosenstock*

Zooming Out - continued from page 10

### **From our Members:**

#### **Congratulations to Darlene Holman**

Thanks to longtime Grafton residents Donna and Ted Williams for their sponsorship of “Nature at Her Best,” a new award for Small Stones Festival of the Arts. Donna worked for the Mass Audubon's Broad Meadow Brook Wildlife Sanctuary for 22 years and volunteered on many Grafton conservation projects/committees and the Blackstone Valley Watershed Association. Forbes Magazine called Ted, one of the foremost environmental writers in America. Darlene Holman won the ribbon and cash award for her photograph, Great Blue Herons Mating Rituals.

[smallstonesfestival.org](http://smallstonesfestival.org)  
[Small Stones2026 - gallery](#)



*Great Blue Herons Mating Rituals  
- Darlene Holman*

#### **Night Hawks**

##### **From Jim Williams**

Darlene and I went to the Ross Dam in Berlin at 6:30 on Jan 19th and stayed until 8 or so. There was a slight reddish tinge that the camera saw but that was it. Vishnu was at the Wachusett Reservoir and saw a light purple. The forecast was not very accurate time wise. Apparently, there was color in the early hours of the morning. Online comments were that the display was not as brilliant as the November one. Maybe the next opportunity will be better.

*Lynn's comment:* It was 27 degrees with a 5-10mph wind. These folks are SERIOUS.

#### **Bugs and Blooms**

##### **From Mary Coombs**

For those members who have joined the Bugs and Blooms group now is the time to start paying attention to the many opportunities available in the next several months to visit flower shows (the Orchid Show at Tower Hill for example), conservatories, and tulip and daffodil days. Pam has suggested many places to visit in last month's Focal Point as well as in this issue. A special happening is the **Camellia Days** that takes place in the 1804 Camellia House at the Lyman Estate Greenhouses in Waltham. Tuesdays - Saturdays, February 24 - March 24, 2026 - 9:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

For more information: <https://my.historicnewengland.org/23206/camellia-days>

#### **Exhibit**

##### **From Linda Gilberti**

Linda has her travel images of Vietnam and Burma on display at the Maynard Public library for the months of February and March. For hours see [Maynard Public Library](#).

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Zooming Out - continued from page 11

## Photo Ops

Here are some images of folks who braved the cold to come out to Photo Ops Day on January 24 and images they took at some of the stations. Many thanks to members who brought set-ups, lighting, interesting objects, and snacks for the day, especially Maureen and Todd Mathieson and John Gill.



*Lunch time! - John Mauro*



*Maureen & Jim - John Mauro*



*Sue arranging flowers  
- Mary Coombs*



*John & Charlotte Camera Talk  
- John Mauro*



*Angelo at the Raindrop  
Station - John Mauro*



*John Mauro "Pudge"  
- Mary Coombs*



*Glenn at Photo Ops  
- Mary Coombs*

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Zooming Out - Photo Ops - continued from page 12

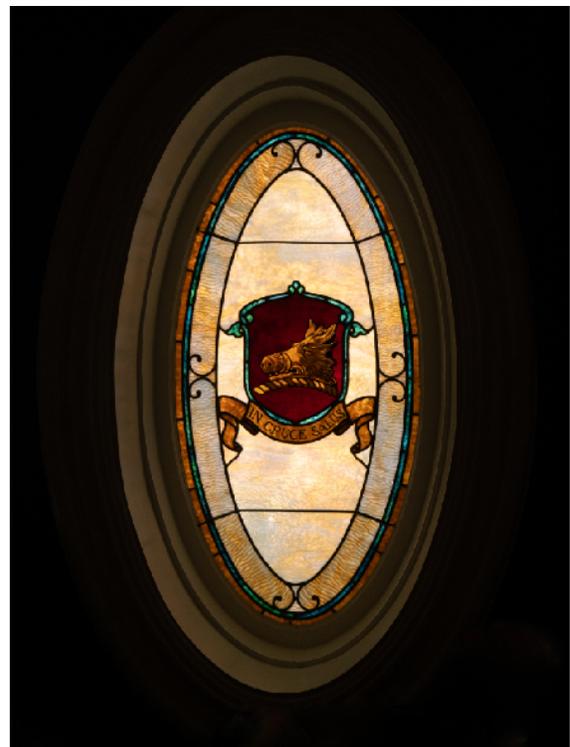
Images from various stations at Photo Ops - courtesy of Glenn Fund



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Zooming Out - Photo Ops - continued from page 13

Images from various stations at Photo Ops - courtesy of Mary Coombs (with thanks to Ann DeCristofaro for her lighting tutorial!)



## Zooming In

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For the month of Love we asked members to submit images that represent love. Here are the many heartwarming submissions!



*A Child's Love - Peter Stultz*

I don't usually pull out pictures of my family unless asked, but your request for photos expressing love immediately brought to mind this one of my granddaughter hugging her mother. The joy in her face when her mother picked her up truly expresses the tight bond between them. - Peter

A mother consoles her two exhausted children who don't want to leave the beach. - Nick



*Image Courtesy of Nick Andruzzi*

*"The best thing to hold onto in life is each other." — Audrey Hepburn*

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Zooming In -Love - continued from page 15

“Here are some pics for newsletter of Love... So many choices when you have grandchildren!!” Robyn  
All images on this page courtesy of Robyn Saur



*“You are my sun, my moon, and all my stars.”  
– E.E. Cummings*

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Zooming In - Love - continued from page 16

“This is like an introspective scavenger hunt. - Fun!” - Linda Shelales



*Bedtime snack with daddy - Linda Shelales*



*Still Life Romance - Linda Shelales*

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*Nothing says love like flowers! - Alann Mertz*



*Lily Love - Paul Loiselle*



*Love - Mary Coombs*

For the last few years I have made a flat lay valentine "card" using dried flowers from my garden to send via email to my extended family. This is Valentine 2025. - Mary

*"If I had a flower for every time I thought of you... I could walk through my garden forever."  
— Alfred Tennyson*

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*Kanga and Roo - Pam Meoli*

I chose this image for Feb Love because I think Nature is amazing when one thinks of mothers and babies. The baby kangaroo (Joey) stays in the mothers pouch for approx. 9 months before starting to leave the pouch for small periods of time. It is typically fed by it's mother for about 18 months! - Pam



*It Takes two - Lou Snitkoff*



*Robin 3 - Pam Meoli*

*"The devotion of animal mothers proves that love is woven into the very fabric of life." – Jennifer Skiff*

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*Puppy Love - Cathy Robotis*

My son and his (soon-to-be) wife adopted Olive (a rescue puppy) last year. This was her first taste of a New York winter; she was bundled up (and still shivering) as we did some last minute Christmas shopping in 2024. She is much loved and has added immense joy to their lives. - Cathy

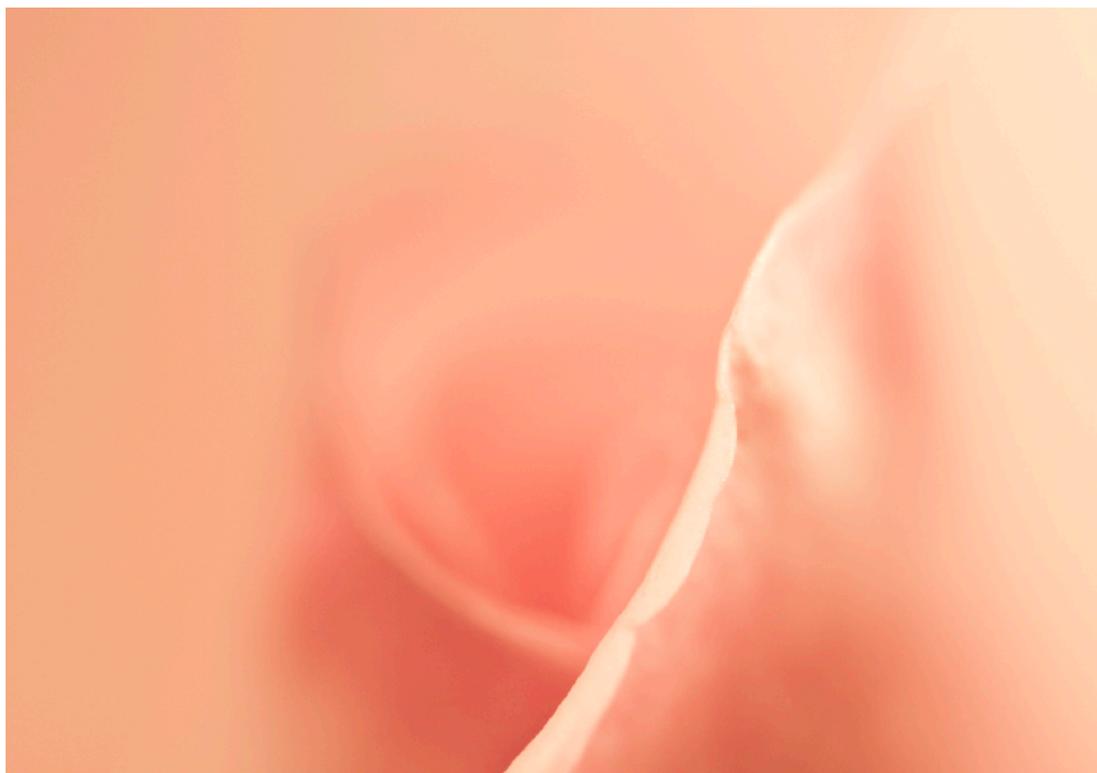
I chose this GHO image taken at the Gateway CC Wingmasters 2025 event. I picked it based on the heart shape in the tree and that fact we all love owls. Maybe this will strike up new interest in our Wingmasters events, which are scheduled for October 17th. There are still a few open slots. - Darlene



*GHO Wingmasters Heart  
- Darlene Holman*

*"The love for all living creatures is the most notable attribute of man." — Charles Darwin*

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*Love is a Rose - Lou Snitkoff*

*"Love is a canvas furnished by nature and embroidered by imagination." — Voltaire*

### Tips for Composition - Part 1

What makes a great photographic image? We all have our own ideas about that, and we are all drawn to certain genres and styles. Certain images speak to us. Gifted photographers use compositional skills to weave a visual tale, conjure emotions, and lead us to higher realms of thought. Composition in photography creates structure, building a pathway for the viewer's eye to travel around an image, experiencing the story we are hoping to convey. It allows us to take a 2-dimensional medium and make it feel almost 3-dimensional. From placement of the elements within the frame to considerations such as tonality, color, and texture, composition is a very broad and involved topic that cannot be tackled in one sitting. We are hoping to explore composition over the next few months, starting with broader brush strokes and working our way to the more refined intricacies. This month we will start with an overview and review some of the compositional arrangements commonly used. We will also consider the concept of balance in photography. We have included links for additional information and visual examples. In the upcoming newsletters, we will continue to explore composition, as we delve into lines, shapes, patterns, textures, angles, layering, colors, and positive versus negative space.

*"Learn to see, rather than look. See the unusual." - Art Whitton*

#### Overview

- Your composition is the structure of your photograph - how the elements are arranged. It's important to intentionally consider and plan your composition.
- Think about what you are photographing. What is your subject? Are you telling a story? Will you provoke an emotional response? Keep it simple. Nothing in your photo should take away from your emotional message. For example, if you are capturing the beauty of a landscape, make sure there are no power lines in the frame to detract from that beauty.
- You want your viewer's eye to flow around the photo and stay within the frame. If the eye is drawn away, you've lost the viewer. A good composition will utilize elements such as leading lines, shapes, and patterns to lead the eye all over image, finally coming to rest on your focal point. However, there may also be occasions where you use leading lines to flow through the image and beyond. Think of a photograph of a person walking along a path that enters from the left lower corner of the frame and winds its way to the right upper corner, where it exits. In that case, you might be telling the story of a philosophical journey that will continue into the future and beyond the moment in time captured in the image.
- When planning your photo, you can change your composition by moving your position forward or back. You can move left or right. You can zoom in or zoom out. You can try different lenses.



*Morning Mist on a Leaf  
- Paul Loiselle*

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## Tips for Composition - continued from page 22

- Ask yourself how you can make your subject stand out. Are there distractions that take away from the main subject? Remove unnecessary elements either in the field or in post-processing.
- Remember that the **Rule of Odds** states that an image is more visually appealing when there is an odd number of subjects.
- Give your subject(s) breathing space; give them room to move, and make sure there is room between them. Giving subjects room to stand on their own sends a strong, cohesive message. If your subject is human or an animal, make sure they are looking into the frame instead of out of it, as that will lead the viewer's eye out of your image.
- Don't overwhelm viewers with too much information (unless that is your goal) because it will be chaotic. Keep your background uncomplicated when possible (unless it adds to your story). You may want to use your background to give some context; in this case, ensure that it is not fully blurred but still allows the subject to stand out.
- Consider framing your image with natural or manmade elements (overhanging tree branches, brick walls, windows, arches, etc). This will add a sense of depth.
- Evaluate your image and ask yourself if your subject is focused. Is it properly exposed? Is there a sense of unity and harmony? Do all parts of the composition feel like they belong together? Look around the edges of the frame to make sure there are no stray branches, body parts, or elements that may lead the viewer's eye out of the frame. Eliminate any distractions in the background that you may have missed when taking the photograph.
- Consider converting your image to monochrome, as this is very effective in simplifying your composition by focusing on textures, light, shadows, and shapes.



*Portrait of a starling  
- Catherine Robotis*

### Vertical versus Horizontal Frames

- When deciding on whether to create a vertical or horizontal image, consider the movement of the eye. Think about how the viewer's eye will react to the scene. In a vertical image, the viewer's eye will move from top to bottom. In a horizontal image, the eye will move from left to right.
- Left-to-Right Rule:** This rule states that because we read from left to right, your subject(s) should move from left to right in the frame. However, this does not allow for the fact that some cultures actually read right to left.
- With **vertical images**, the eye moves from top to bottom, emphasizing size, shapes, and lines. They convey a sense of strength and may even show tension. Vertical images work well with portraits, architecture photos, and lifestyle images.
- With **horizontal images**, the eye moves left to right. This is very effective in nature shots to aid in storytelling. It may add to the sense of vastness, calmness, and serenity of landscape images. It helps to show scale. It is ideal for street photography or scenes with a lot of subjects. It also helps to convey a sense of dynamism in sports photos.

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### **Rule of Thirds**

- The Rule of Thirds divides the frame into 9 equal rectangles, with 3 vertical and 3 horizontal lines.
- Important elements of the scene are placed along the lines or where they intersect. Studies show that people's eyes tend to go to one of those intersection points first, rather than the center of the image.
- The Rule of Thirds is very versatile and a great compositional technique to master, as you will learn to place elements in positions that facilitate balance and encourage the eye to drift around naturally.

### **Rule of Fourths (Quarters)**

- The Rule of Fourths (Quarters) divides the frame into 16 equal parts, using 4 vertical and 4 horizontal lines.
- It allows subjects to be placed closer to the outer edges.
- This compositional style offers a unique sense of stability and balance and is ideal for photos capturing vastness and a wide expanse. It can result in dynamic, interesting images.

### **Center Composition (Hinomaru)**

- This is a compositional style that is best used in moderation because once the eye moves to the center, it is not likely to move to other areas in the frame.
- In Center Composition, the subject is in the center. The subject should take up the entire photo (or most of it); you don't want anything distracting in the background.
- Round subjects work exceptionally well. It also works well with close-ups, using a shallow depth of field, with a blurred background. It is effective for portraits and architectural shots.
- A center composition is well suited for square-shaped images.
- If you are creating a symmetrical, centered image, it is important to ensure that both sides of the image are in fact symmetrical. If the sides don't match, the viewer will sense that something is wrong or off with the image.

### **Diagonal Composition**

- A diagonal composition uses slanted lines to direct the viewer's eye across the frame (usually corner to corner). Subjects are often placed on the diagonal line. This compositional style conveys a sense of movement and creates a sense of depth.



*Leapin' Lizards - Blair Boudreau*

### **Split Photo Composition**

- "A split composition is a simple and powerful composition where the subject is placed in two equal sections, either vertically or horizontally. It is often used in landscape photography. Images of seascapes, mountains, rivers, and cityscapes all benefit from this composition style. By focusing on a horizontal or vertical line, a simple yet powerful impression is created." (tamron-americas.com)
- "It can also be used to emphasize the contrast between the inside and outside of a boundary, such as the contrast between indoors and outdoors." (tamron-americas.com)

Continued on next page



*Fuzzy Drops*  
- Mimi Boudreau

### Triangular Composition

- In a triangular composition, the subject is placed on vertices or sides of a triangle.
- This compositional style offers a sense of balance, and it works well for landscapes and portraits.

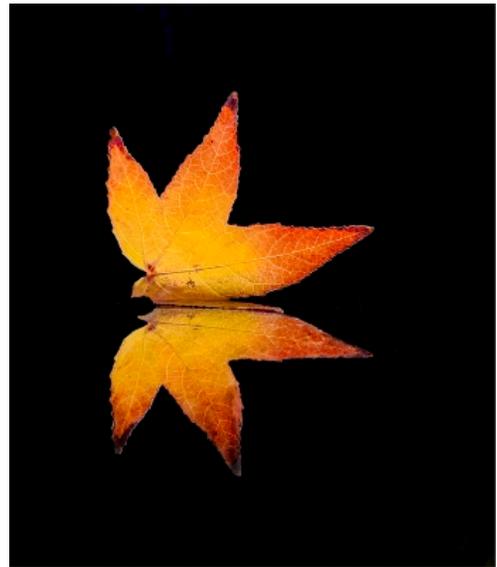
For an overview on compositional styles with examples, please visit this site: <https://tamron-americas.com/blog/photo-composition-beginners-guide/>.

For more information and examples about the Rule of Thirds and Rule of Fourths, please check out this link: <https://snapshot-compositions-part-1-rule-of-thirds-rule-of-quarters>.

For more information and examples of Center Composition and Diagonal Composition, please have a look: <https://snapshot-compositions-part-2centre-composition-diagonal-composition>.

### Balance

- A balanced image is one where the viewer's eye is drawn through the image equally, without resting too heavily on one part. This is a stylistic choice. There are instances where you may actually prefer to create an imbalanced image.
- When considering how well balanced an image is, consider how much attention each element attracts. Consider the sizes of elements, shapes, and colors. Consider lines and textures. Ask yourself does it feel right? Is it heavier on one side? If so, is that your goal?
- Symmetric images are balanced and convey a sense of calmness and peace. Both sides of the image hold equal weight. This is also known as **Formal Balance**.
- Asymmetric images may be *imbalanced*, resulting in a dramatic, tense, or dynamic scene.
- Asymmetric images may also be balanced. **Informal Balance** (asymmetrical balance) can be creatively achieved by arranging your composition in such a way that utilizes visual weight, tonality, and color to balance your scene. For example, if you are using the Rule of Thirds, you may choose to have your main subject in the foreground (along one of the imaginary lines), balanced by another less important subject in the background (along the other imaginary line).



*Looking Back on Autumn*  
- Jane Parker

## Zooming In - Love - continued from page 25

- **Tonal Balance** can be achieved by balancing the contrast between light and dark areas of your image. Shadows “weigh more” in photography, so you will need to have more highlights than shadows for your image to be balanced.
- **Color Balance** is another important consideration. Brighter colors are visually heavier than neutral colors. A pop of a bright color (like red) can be used to balance a scene that might be too heavy on one side.
- In an image, people, animals, eyes, bright objects, and saturated objects carry more visual weight; you should consider this as you evaluate the balance of your image. Faces and eyes draw the most attention.

For more information on *balancing your photographs*, please visit this helpful guide by the New York Film Academy: <https://www.nyfa.edu/student-resources/five-kinds-photography-balance-you-need-to-understand/>.

### Sources

Annastump.wordpress.com; improvephotography.com; katebackdrop.com; artwhitton.com; photographylife.com; annrichmanart.com; thoughtco.com; phlearn.com; medium.com; capturelandscapes.com; nyip.edu; tamron-americas.com; petapixel.com; snapshot.asia.canon; nyfa.edu; photographytoolkit.com.



*Lotus Pit Beauty - Tony Monteiro*



*Water Lily at Tower Hill - John Gill*

## The Bigger Picture

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### **Happenings:**

#### **New England Botanic Garden**

<https://nebg.org/>

*“Elevated”* - An Orchid Exhibition

Feb 7 – Mar 22

*“Orchids After Dark”* (21+)

Fridays & Saturdays, Feb 13 - March 14, 6-8 PM

#### **Blackstone Valley Art Association**

A great variety of art/photography workshops  
(many are free)

<https://bvaa.org/author/bvaaadmin>

#### **Smith College**

(Northampton) – Garden Grounds & Arboretum

Spring Bulb Show –March 7 -22

<https://garden.smith.edu/explore/flower-shows/spring-bulb-show>

\*Even beyond the bulb show, the outdoor gardens and 127-acre arboretum are open year-round for free — perfect for spring walks and plant watching as blossoms emerge outdoors.

#### **Museum of Fine Arts (Boston)**

<https://www.mfa.org>

*Faces in the Crowd: Street Photography*

A broad survey of street photography spanning decades. Explores the evolving techniques photographers have used to record the human experience as it has played out in populous urban spaces  
Now through Jul. 13

*Framing Nature: Gardens and Imagination*

A plot of land, a relaxing retreat, a formal landscape, a place of constant labor: gardens can carry a range of associations, especially in the world of art. *Framing Nature: Gardens and Imagination* brings together art from across the MFA’s global collection to explore striking similarities and differences across time and place.

March 15-June 28

*Divine Color: Hindu Prints from Modern Bengal*

Vivid prints of divinities are part of daily life for Hindus in India and around the world, used for worship in homes, factories, and offices, as well as for adornment on cars, calendars, computers, and shop counters. The art world has historically overlooked these images, often called “calendar art,” because they are inexpensive and mass produced. But they have a rich and fascinating history in and influence on Indian art, religion, and society.

Jan 31-May 31



*Oak Leaf After the Rain* - Mary Coombs

Continued on next page

Happenings - continued from page 27

**Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum (Boston)**

<https://www.gardnermuseum.org/calendar/exhibition/persona-photography-and-re-imagined-self>

*Persona: Photography and the Re-Imagined Self*

• A major photography show featuring around 80 works exploring identity and self-portraiture, including historic and contemporary pieces.

Feb. 19 – May 10

**Photo Contests:**

**Arts League of Lowell**

Theme is “Close to Home”

(Deadline is Feb. 21<sup>st</sup>)

<https://www.artsleagueoflowell.org/gallery/showentry/Home2026/>

What does it mean to be close to home? Is it a physical place? Is it a warm feeling that comes over you when you think of being close to home? Maybe you have a wider vision of “home”, such as the town you live in, or even the state, or the country. Show the juror your photographic vision of being “close to home.”

**National Wildlife Photo Contest**

(Deadline is March 22)

[https://photocontest.nwf.org/?utm\\_source=NWF&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=Open2](https://photocontest.nwf.org/?utm_source=NWF&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Open2)

Now in its 55th year, this prestigious contest celebrates wildlife, habitats and the natural world, with an emphasis on conservation and ethical photography honoring the well-being of animals in the wild. Modest entry fees support the National Wildlife Federation’s conservation mission, and your photos inspire millions of members and supporters to care about wildlife and to act on its behalf.

**The Mass Arts Center**

(Deadline is Feb. 20)

<https://massartscenter.org/2026-call-for-art-for-photography-exhibition>

The Annual Juried Photography Exhibition is now seeking submissions. This exhibit will represent photography, exclusively, in a variety of subject matter, style and perspectives. Photos will be primarily judged on visual impact, composition, technical skill and clarity.

Exhibition Dates: Thursday, March 19 – Sunday, May 10

**Falmouth Art Center**

<https://www.smarterentry.com/CallsForEntry/falmouth>

**Juror – Art Vaughan**

Where: Hermann Gallery, Falmouth, MA

What: Open juried exhibition for photographers; all styles welcome.

Submissions: Now through March 5 (online upload).

Exhibition: May 1–31



*Gold Leaf - Doris Monteiro*

Photo Contests - continued from page 28

**Farm Credit East – *Agricultural Views* Calendar Contest**

<https://www.farmcrediteast.com/Calendar>

Now open for the 2027 calendar — submissions accepted through July 31

Focus on **farming, forestry, fishing, country life, and seasonal rural scenes** in *New England*, New York, or New Jersey.

Multiple photos allowed; selected photos win \$100 or smaller cash prizes.

**Facebook Photo Contest**

<https://www.life-framer.com/competitions/#2>

This month turn your attention to the bonds that shape our lives. Relationships in all their forms – romantic, familial, platonic, intergenerational, interspecies. The quiet connections and the complicated ones. The ties we choose and those we inherit. How we care for one another, rely on one another, misunderstand, comfort, grow and change together.

**Note from Mary Coombs:**

I visited the Small Stones Festival of the Arts exhibit on February 1 to see Darlene Holman and Peter Stultz’s framed works on the wall. This was a juried competition and the photographs, paintings, and other works were stunning. Having gotten away from print competition in the club I think we have lost touch with how an image becomes complete when printed and framed (Silvana talks about this). That being said I encourage folks to participate in print competitions that have exhibitions of the winning entries. See the competitions on page 28. Also, there is a NECCC print competition coming up in March hosted by Greater Lynn Photographic Association. [NECCC Print Competition](#) Think about it! Or, rather than compete, take advantage of the opportunities to exhibit your work (think Cafe 641!).



*Leaves in a Puddle - Liz Krouse*



AVCC is a member of the following organizations:

NECCC



PSA



AVCC website:

<https://www.assabetvalleycameraclub.com>

2025-2026 Executive Board Members:

- President: John Mauro
- Vice President: Mary Coombs
- Secretary: Neil Swinton
- Treasurer: Jim Williams



*Palace of Culture and Science -  
Warsaw - Paul Loiselle*

Editors' Note:

Many(!) club members work behind the scenes in various capacities to make the club run smoothly, to engage with the greater community, to reach out to prospective members, to communicate about our organization through the Facebook page, the AVCC website, the Focal Point Newsletter, the Action Unlimited, and provide opportunities for competition, exhibitions, fun, learning, and camaraderie. To see (most) of the volunteer positions and members please refer to your Member packet.

Many thanks to the following members for their contributions to this month's Newsletter: Cathy Robotis, Lynn Kerner, Mary Coombs, Pam Meoli, Jim Williams, Darlene Holman, John Mauro, Lou Snitkoff, Alan Mertz, Doris Monteiro, Tony Monteiro, Robyn Saur, Nick Andruzzi, Glenn Fund, Linda Shelales, Peter Stultz, Nick Andruzzi, Paul Loiselle, John Gill.