

# 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.



*Dues are Due - Lee Arnold*

*"Go to the winter woods: listen there, look, watch, and "the dead months" will give you a subtler secret than any you have yet found in the forest." - William Sharp*

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## Note from Our President

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Hello All,

With the winter season upon us, many of us struggle with what to shoot this time of year as we approach the shortest daylight hours of the year. Around the holidays of November and December, we celebrate the season of light. Festive holiday decorations adorn homes, businesses, and public displays providing ample photo opportunities. Nature may even come through with a little bit of that white four-letter word that begins with “s” stuff to brighten up the surroundings, and if we are lucky, more displays of the Aurora Borealis/Northern Lights.

If you do not like venturing outside in the cold, it is the perfect time of year to experiment indoors with light painting, portraitures, and floral displays, and to watch all those online workshops and classes!

After the holidays, we are planning on having our annual photo ops event, which is generally a Saturday in late January or early February. Members bring in a wide variety of props into the Senior Center and everyone is invited to bring their camera, tripod, and imagination to capture creative images! Many images captured at Photo Ops are entered into club competitions.

I want to thank Linda Shelales and Linda Gilberti for organizing our Holiday Banquet, and club members for providing food, drink, and supplies.

On a sad note, we recently learned of the passing of Charlie Burke. Charlie was a life member of the club, an accomplished photographer, and a competition judge; however, Charlie was best known to us for having the extremely difficult task of choosing the AVCC images of the year, which are awarded in June at our annual Banquet. We will miss him.

In closing, I am thankful and grateful for everything that each and every member of the Assabet Valley Camera Club does to make this a great organization!

Best wishes to you and your families for a safe and Happy Holiday Season and New Year!

Pudge Mauro

*“There is no winter without snow, no spring without sunshine, and no happiness without companions.” – Korean Proverb*

### Note from the Editors

December 2025

Last month we really tried to put some positivity into the bare limbs and branches of November, with our theme of Stick Season, didn't we? But our late October images sometimes had smatterings of gold leaves to enliven the scene. Not completely stick season. By the end of November, however, the light is low, the leaves are all down, and the weather often brings watery-looking or downright grey skies. This stage is set by Paul Simon in his song, "Hazy Shade of Winter":

*Seasons change with the scenery  
Weavin' time in a tapestry  
Won't you stop and remember me?*

*Look around  
Leaves are brown  
And the sky is a hazy shade of winter*

*Look around  
Leaves are brown  
There's a patch of snow on the ground*

With changing seasons we have a changing tapestry, too. Along with the muted greys and tans, there were bold colors visible during the cold, crisp, and clear night of Nov 11th when the Night Hawks chased the latest bright Aurora Borealis. In this issue you will see some of their images and stories of the chase.

While we are in the season of holidays and remembering, we invite you to read the Memoriam of Charlie Burke, long-time judge and friend of AVCC, who passed away on November 14th. Then delve into Glenn Fund's bio, members' favorite photos from 2025, and information on a number of exhibits by fellow AVCC folks. During this time of family and reflection, check out Cathy's Tips for creating your own Photo Memoir. And for outdoor fun, Pam provides information on the challenge to find five recycled wood trolls in Rhode Island, and photo opportunities at various winter wonderlands in Massachusetts, among other things.

If the weather service is right, there's about to be a snowy shade of winter, with snow and ice that may provide sparkles and radiant light. It is the light of love itself, and the radiance of stars above that shepherd us through the dark. May your holiday season radiate joy and love.

## In Memoriam - Charlie Burke

We were saddened to hear that Charlie Burke, long time judge and honorary member of Assabet Valley Camera Club, passed away on November 14th. Members Doris and Tony Monteiro shared their memories of Charlie and his involvement in AVCC and local, regional, national, and international photography clubs and salons.

Following his retirement from the US Army in 1980, Charlie became an avid photographer. He continued to engage in photography in his later years. He would participate in Greater Lynn Photographic Association Model Shoots. This summer Charlie went to Southwick Zoo to take pictures of the animals. While he never spoke about his photographic philosophy, I think that Charlie was a nature photographer at heart. (Doris) After visiting his daughter Susan when she lived in Colorado, he was proud to share the pictures of the local elk found near her home. (Tony)

### **Contributions to AVCC beyond monthly competitions**

Charlie created the software platform on which AVCC members could enter their images via the Internet. This sustained the club for many years before the club went to Visual Pursuits. He also set up software for PSA and numerous other local clubs. For several years, Charlie ran an “image study” group for AVCC members. This was an opportunity to look at other member’s images and provide feedback to the makers. Regarding Image of the Year: Charlie has been AVCC’s only Image of the Year judge since it was started in the 2014-2015 club year.

### **Massachusetts and New England**

Charlie was active in the New England Camera Club Council (NECCC) and received his MNEC in 2009. NECCC recognizes well-deserving individuals for their accomplishments and contributions to the photographic community with the honor of a Master Member (MNEC) status. Our paths would frequently cross with Charlie at the annual summer conference where we would stop and chat with him. Charlie always shared something new that he had learned.

### **National / International Level**

Charlie ran the Glennie Memorial Nature International Salon for a number of years. When Glennie was discontinued, he started, and ran the CamNats Nature International.

Charlie competed in international salons and judged internationally.

He received many awards for his work in PSA.

He was Executive Vice-President of the Photographic Society of America (PSA) between 2011 to 2015 and between 2015-2017 served as President of PSA

- 2011-15 Charlie Burke, FPSA, EPSA
- 2015-17 Charles Burke, FPSA, EPSA

As President of the PSA Charlie’s leadership was instrumental in promoting the art and science of photography, with the PSA membership reaching over 60 countries.

From the Editors:

When presenting the AVCC Image of the Year Awards Charlie encouraged members to participate in global competitions as a means to learn more about photography and ultimately, with diligence, improve one’s own. He graciously offered his support to AVCC members wishing to do so.

Thank you Charlie for all that you have given to AVCC and to photographers around the world.

## December Program

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AVCC is pleased to present “**Creative Expression Through Coastal Imagery**” by Steve Koppel on Wednesday, December 3, 2025 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).

The Senior Center will open at 6:00 PM for our annual Holiday Banquet. 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).

### Steve Koppel

Prior to taking up photography, Steve spent 20 years as a Senior Partner and business consultant with Accenture, leaving in 2002 to volunteer with non-profit organizations to help maximize their social impact. Steve is a Trustee at the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute and has served in numerous volunteer strategy roles at other Boston-area healthcare organizations. Locally, Steven is the Board President of The Association to Preserve Cape Cod, and serves on the board of the Aquacultural Research Corporation.

A graduate of Brown University, Steve is the founder of the EDI Institute, a non-profit that promotes healing and resilience for patients and caregivers through imagery created on mobile devices. Steve’s TEDx talk on Expressive Digital Imagery (EDI) can be viewed [HERE](#). Steve is a frequent speaker at conferences and camera clubs, and conducts retreats on Cape Cod focused on imagery as a form of self-expression with an emphasis on the overall photographic experience. Steve’s photography is on the walls of several Boston area hospitals and businesses, including Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, Massachusetts General Hospital, and The Flatley Company.

Steve and his wife Paula reside in Brewster on Cape Cod. Their two grown children, David and Katie, live and work in the Boston area.

“I have been told that many of my images look like paintings. I take this as a gracious compliment. Any such paintings are inspired by the beauty that Nature puts before me, and then made visible by my camera in ways our eyes often can’t see. I explore creative techniques in the field making water, sand, and light appear to “move” across my prints. The camera becomes an extension of my senses, allowing expressions beyond what is possible through words. I have designed EXPRESSIONS Gallery to embody much of what I am passionate about, and hope to bring lasting joy and gratitude to all who visit.” - Steve Koppel



*Seaside Ballet - Steve Koppel*

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Steve Koppel - continued from page 5

## Creative Expression Through Coastal Imagery Program

In this presentation Steve will share how he combines slow shutter speeds and intentional camera movement to make stunning seascapes. He will demonstrate his techniques for capturing ethereal images and share his processing secrets. These techniques can be applied to a variety of water scapes including rivers, streams, and waterfalls.



*Tidal Mirror - Steve Koppel*



*Waterfall - Steve Koppel*

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*Heavenly Waters - Steve Koppel*



*Golden Shores - Steve Koppel*

To learn more about Steve Koppel visit his website: [Expressions Gallery](#)

Steve Koppel's ***“Creative Expression through Coastal Imagery”*** is supported in part by a grant from the Hudson Cultural Council, a local agency which is supported by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency.





*Fifteen and one half mailboxes - Todd Mathieson*

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 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	Charlie Burke

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](#)

## Member Snapshot

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### Glenn Fund

Glenn grew up in Oceanside on LI, New York. His big hobby was surfing, which he did year-round. He also enjoyed building and launching model rockets, sometimes with an egg payload, to see if he could bring it back safely. Most of the time he succeeded 😊

Glenn's dad was a professional photographer with a studio on Lexington Avenue in NYC. During his early years, Glenn remembers his dad developing his own black and white negatives at home, and printing them using the enlarger in the basement shop area.

Glenn did not get seriously involved in photography until he began work at Polaroid in Waltham, initially as a Chemical Engineer involved with the manufacture of the chemicals that went into the film, and later as the Manager of End User Computing.

When the Polaroid SX-70 was introduced in the early 1970's, the company would hold company-wide employee photo contests to stimulate interest in their new photo technology. Glenn was lucky enough to be a finalist in a number of these photo competitions, and very much enjoyed the studio gala and reception that had all of the winner's photos framed and presented for all to see. He was now hooked on photography.

#### Stick Season - Glenn Fund



*South Acton Road - Stow - Glenn Fund*



*Stow Garden- Stow - Glenn Fund*

Continued on next page

## Member Snapshot - Glenn Fund - continued from page 10

Glenn is now retired. He and his wife, Maida, love to travel and are fortunate enough to have experienced some wonderful adventures. He lists Southern Africa, Alaska, Australia/New Zealand, Iceland and Corsica/Sardinia aboard the tall ship Sea Cloud among his favorites... so far. Next stop, Patagonia in February.

One of Glenn's favorite sayings is, "if I don't have a photo of it, I didn't see it."

When he does landscape and travel photography, he tries to get something that is a little different. One of the pictures that Glenn has fond memories of occurred while tendering into port at Huahine, French Polynesia. He noticed a kayaker following into shore in the boat's wake. The only way he was going to get the shot was through the back window. So, he opened the window, hung his body half out of the boat, and there it was. Click, he had his picture. The real picture would be if someone had taken a picture of Glenn at that moment. It is one of his three favorite pictures that have been included in this article.



### ***Huahine Kayaker***

*Hanging out of the rear window of the tender into the dockside port of Huahine, French Polynesia, I was able to get an unobstructed view of the focused effort of this kayaker, determined to stay in our wake, and enjoy the ride all the way from our moored ship in the harbor, into shore. - Glenn Fund*

As outlined in last month's newsletter, Glenn enjoys participating in online photo contests to maintain his photography skills and to meet fellow photographers from around the world. He mentions that he has met several of them in person during his travels. Throughout each day, you will see Glenn entering and following through on each of these photography platforms. Glenn says that the contest topics are quite varied and make him think about what to enter. Sometimes, he states, that he needs to go out and take new, on topic pictures. Contests can last from several hours to several weeks, and might include from one through four unique pictures. On the GuruShots platform, there is even a team option, where groups of up to 20 persons from anywhere in the world, collectively play against other up to 20 person teams.

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## Zooming In - - continued from page 11

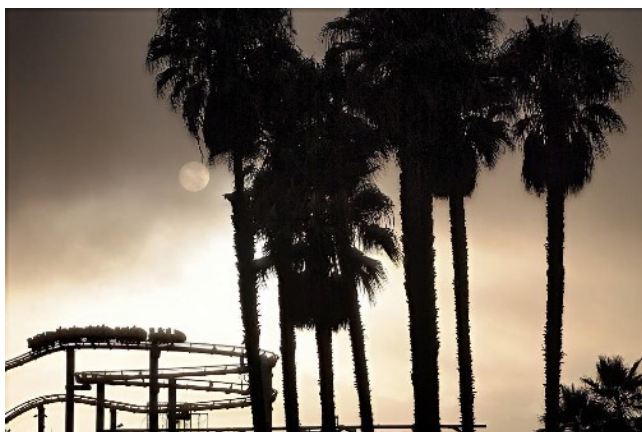
Glenn likes to have his photographs around him. His house is like a photo gallery of all of his adventures. Glenn and Maida's bedroom alone has a cathedral ceiling with the spacious walls now sporting twenty-five 12"x18" or 12"x12" framed travel pictures around the room's perimeter. There are many more and varied pictures hanging throughout the other rooms in the house.

When asked how he found out about AVCC Glenn recalls that his wife at one point said, "Don't you want to meet real photography people versus those you met online?" So he looked around and found AVCC and has been a member since 2019. Glenn has served as Treasurer, coordinated the Café 641 displays and has been active in organizing field trips.



### **Palau de la Musica Skylight**

*The standard tour of the magnificent Palau de la Musica concert hall in Barcelona, took place mostly from the Orchestra, where the stage and most of the artwork could be most clearly viewed. I was determined to get a close-up and three-dimensional perspective of the magnificent, natural lit, stained-glass skylight. I was able to make my way up the front row of the mezzanine, and was then able to reach out over the railing to take, what I believe is the best view of the skylight, which was now directly in front of me. - Glenn Fund*



### **Santa Monica Pier in the Fog**

*While watching my daughter doing slacklining at Muscle Beach in Santa Monica, a very thick fog suddenly rolled in from the water. It made the late afternoon sunlight transform into a dark and gloomy scene. Across the way, was the Santa Monica Pier. I was able to capture a striking silhouette image of the roller coaster at its apex, with the cloud-hidden sun right above it. - Glenn Fund*

Reminder: Glenn described several fun competitions in the November '25 issue of the newsletter.

## Members' Lens



**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 December exhibit at Cafe 641 features the work of Rick Beauchamp. A Meet and Greet will be held on Saturday, December 6 from noon to 1:30 PM.

Linda Gilberti will be the featured artist in January.

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



*Members enjoying the company, images, and food at Lou's Meet and Greet at Cafe 641, November 1st  
- Jim Williams*



*Scituate Lighthouse with Fullmoon -  
Rick Beauchamp*

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*Thanks to Darlene Holman for organizing the purchase of new AVCC shirts! Pictured are some members at the November 19 meeting wearing their new - and in some cases older - versions of our club apparel! If interested in ordering a shirt contact Darlene via club email before December 4.*

### **From our Members:**

#### **From Ann DeCristofaro:**

I belonged to AVCC for 13 years but left for the last several years to care for a family member. I have recently rejoined and am amazed by all the new people!

I have turned my old studio into a classroom now for mentoring and classes. All of my classes can be tailored to the student - since I limit the attendance to 3 at a time. So the classes can vary in topic and in length depending on the student, their previous experience, and interests.

A class for a "newbie" could (and should) be very different from that class with someone who has a lot of previous background.

My website link that describes each of the classes can be found here: [Ann Dee Classes](#)

Currently, these are the classes that I am offering:

- Lightroom Bootcamp - in the cloud - Lightroom Everywhere
- Lightroom Beginner to Advanced Masking Techniques
- Lightroom Mobile - Lightroom on your iPhone or Android phone
- Taking and Processing Infrared Photographs
- Digitizing film slides and negatives using your DSLR

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

I have four images on display at the Pompositticut Community Center, 509 Great Rd, Stow as part of a small works exhibit and sale by SAGA (Stow Area Guild of Artists) members. Hours are Monday through Friday from 8:30 AM to 3:30 PM. SAGA will also be holding a Holiday Artisans Fair on Saturday, December 13 from 10 AM to 4PM and on Sunday, December 14 from noon to 4 PM. For more information see [stow-artists.org](http://stow-artists.org).

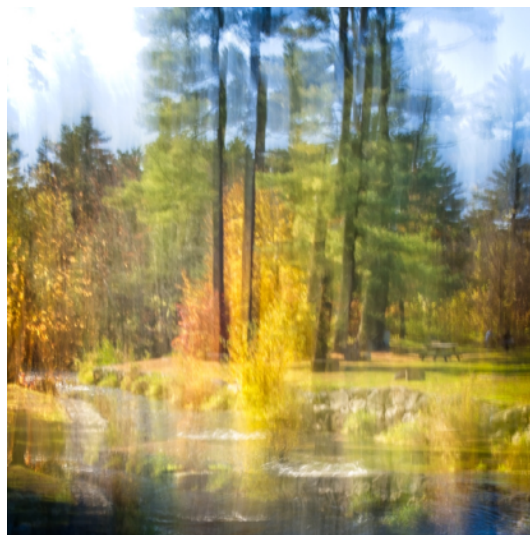
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Zooming Out - continued from page 14

**From Linda DeStefano Brown:**

I will have 5 images at the ArtsWayland Gallery, 35 Andrew Avenue, Wayland during the month of December. Check their website for gallery times at <https://artswayland.com/pages/weekly-gallery-schedule>

As you know, my work is about ideas, feelings, memories, and thoughts. It is about our life and how we think about our place on earth, our relationships, our interactions with others and with nature. The image is a catalyst for you to delve into your own existence: your past, your present, your future, what you think about. While we may have similar experiences, each is unique to every one of us. *A Day to Picnic* is about the feeling of freedom to find a place just to sit and think about whatever is in our minds, unfettered by the cacophony that sometimes invades our lives. *Out of the Darkness* is also about the feeling of freedom one has when light starts to shine on our way forward, from the unknown or the anxiety of feeling helpless to the awakening that a better day is upon us.



*A Day to Picnic*  
- Linda DeStefano Brown



*Out of the Darkness* - Linda DeStefano Brown

*Keeping Up* is a hope that women will soon overtake and burst through the glass ceiling.



*Keeping Up*  
- Linda DeStefano Brown

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Zooming Out - continued from page 15

Linda DeStefano Brown Exhibit continued:

***Taking the Lead*** is that moment when a woman does take over and works together with others to get the job done.



*Taking the Lead - Linda DeStefano Brown*

***When We Were Here*** unearths thoughts of the past when two sat together enjoying each other's company. We get a pleasant feeling as the memory takes hold.



*When We Were Here - Linda DeStefano Brown*

*"We do not remember days, we remember moments." - Cesare Pavese (Italian poet)*

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## Night Hawks:

Aurora Borealis Event  
November 11, 2025

Contributors: Jim Williams, Darlene Holman, Vishnu Thalanki, Lynn Kerner

Jim: I was aware of the sun's activity but hadn't followed the forecasts closely. At 5:30 or so, I happened to look at my app, Aurora Pro, to check the forecast. It was forecast to be a Kp of 7.33 at 10 PM. I was immediately excited at the prospect of capturing it that night. I emailed the Night Hawks to say I'd be at Ross Dam by 7:30 and asked who wanted to join. I heard back from several people, saying that they could not go, not surprisingly because it was very short notice and cold and windy. Darlene and Lynn, the stalwarts, decided to go. Darlene said that she would meet me there with Lynn coming a little later.

I made a quick supper and left to be there at 8. Darlene and I walked in a little after 8, a short but challenging walk to the top of the dam. We had looked again at the numbers on Aurora Pro during that period and saw higher values than either of us had seen earlier, much higher in fact. The solar wind speed was high, but the P/cc (protons per cubic centimeter) was outrageous at 60+. I had never seen it higher than 20. The Bz (direction of sun's magnetic field towards earth, crucial for seeing an aurora) was very negative, and the Bt (total strength of the interplanetary magnetic field) was higher than I had ever seen also.

I had set up the camera at home by attaching the remote shutter button and adjusting the manual settings, the white balance to 4200K, ISO to 3200, shutter to 2 seconds and aperture wide open. I took the first image as soon as I could set the camera on the tripod and frame the shot. It was the one Darlene named the "Green Spaceship". That ended up being the best capture I made, although I continued to take several hundred after that. It was cold and very windy, and we were getting colder as time went on, so we left at 9:30. I received a text from Vishnu sometime after I got home asking if we were still out. I called him back and gave him the update. He said he didn't know if he was going to go out or not. He ended up going out to the Wachusett Reservoir getting some great shots that he turned into a very nice video. We are all looking forward to the next time!



*Image Courtesy of Jim Williams*

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## Zooming Out - Night Hawks - continued from page 17



*Here is one of my favorites from last evening (November 11). I don't remember getting any yellow during last year's October Aurora. - Darlene*

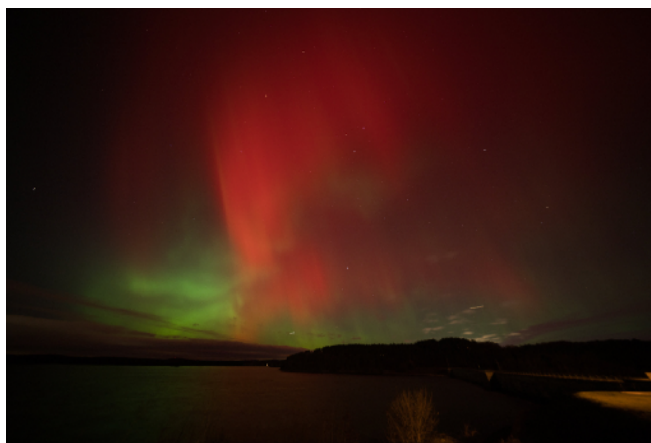
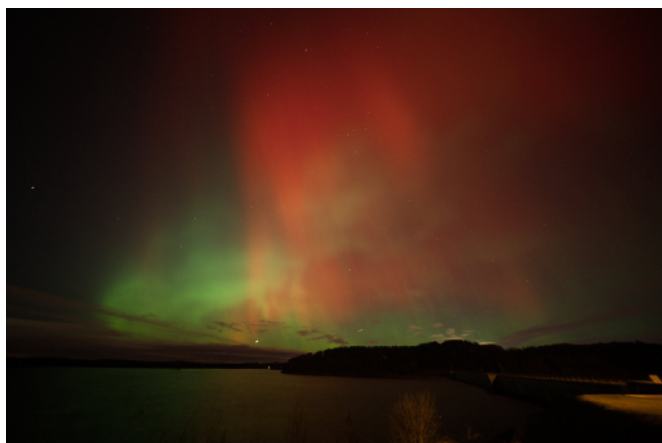
*Aurora Yellow 8 - Darlene Holman*

Vishnu: I received the Aurora alert while driving back from NJ through CT. I stopped near a pond, but heavy cloud cover prevented me from seeing anything. After reaching home around 9 PM, I texted Jim to check if the aurora was still visible. At that time, the Kp index was around 7, and the forecast wasn't promising, so I decided to make coffee before going to bed.

Immediately after that, I got another alert indicating the Kp index had jumped to 8.33, so I headed to Wachusett Reservoir Dam.

When I set up my camera, I spotted a small green glow on the horizon. The auroral activity suddenly picked up just to the left of my camera's view. I rotated the camera towards the dancing aurora and began capturing using my in-camera interval shooting mode. The aurora remained active for about 30 minutes, and I packed up around midnight.

I was so lucky to be able to capture the Aurora. Looking forward to the next auroral activity.



*Images Courtesy of Vishnu Thalanki*

## Zooming In

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In this season of light and reflection we asked our members to share their favorite photo from 2025. Enjoy the beautiful and meaningful images they shared!



*Eagle Shadows - Darlene Holman*

*This is one of my favorite photos from a July trip to the Discovery Islands, British Columbia attending a Mark Smith Photography workshop called Eagle Feeding Frenzy. "Hundreds of eagles raining down from above in a massive feeding frenzy! It is unlike anything I have ever experienced. A non-stop adrenaline-fueled ride where eagles come from practically every direction and snatch fish from the surface of the water at speeds of up to 50 M.P.H." - Darlene*

*"You will find something more in woods than in books. Trees and stones will teach you that which you can never learn from masters." - Saint Bernard*



*Grand Tetons Schwabacher Landing Nat. - Maureen Mathieson*

*For 5 years, my rallying cry has been "Yellowstone in 2025!" Well, Todd and I went in Sept. I did not realize how close Grand Teton NP was or how easy it is to get around. Yellowstone was delightful, but something about sitting here at Schwabacher's Landing in GTNP with the mountains, the clear water and a gentle wind just epitomized all that is good in nature. Out of 1000 images, including bear cubs, this is my favorite. - Maureen*

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Castle - Pam Meoli

*It's my favorite photo because it's the castle in Tuscany that our son got married at in September. There were 38 friends and family there for 3 days. It was a magical weekend and memory. - Pam*



Still Life with Pumpkin - Mary Coombs

*This is a favorite because I enjoyed the process of creating the image so much. The flowers are from my and a friend's garden and the style was inspired by Rachel Ruysch - the first female to be given the status of Master Painter in the 1700's in the Netherlands. - Mary*



Gaggle - Lou Snitkoff

*I chose this image for 3 reasons: we live just a "stone's throw" from the Assabet River, so it's hyperlocal; I'm a sucker for Fall foliage; and the migrating geese add another element of nature. Thanks! - Lou*

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*Photo taken at Longwood Gardens this past September. I liked it because of its vibrant colors and luminescence, like it is on fire.*  
- Alan

20250918-Flowers-4304 - Alan Mertz

*This isn't the best, just my favorite. We were at a festival in Northborough and these critters suddenly spotted a comfort dog. They were just so fascinated!* - Terry



Image Courtesy of Terry Vachowski



*It's difficult to choose a favorite, but here's one from my trip to Scandinavia last summer.*  
- Peter

Norwegian Mountain Village - Peter Stultz

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Cobh IRE DN - John Mauro

*This image of the "Deck of Cards" houses with St. Coleman's Cathedral and Cork Harbour in the background was taken in Cobh, County Cork, Ireland on our trip in July 2025. The Deck of Cards houses is a row of colorful residential houses along West View. They're lined up side by side on a hill, and they get their nickname because they resemble a deck of cards stacked up to make the shape of a house. Locals even joke that if the bottom fell, they'd all come tumbling down! To obtain this view, we had to enter private property (where the house was being renovated). The owner of the property graciously set up an overview area and has a sign that asked for donations, which we naturally obliged! - Pudge*



Eye to Eye - Lynn Kerner

*My first grandbaby, Malakai Elliot, at 3 months - Lynn*



Griffith Observatory, Los Angeles 2 - Cathy Robotis

*On a whim, our son drove us up to the Griffith Observatory on our last night in LA in May. We felt a gentle, warm breeze as we gazed over the skyline, and we felt like we were on top of the world. - Cathy*

Continued on next page



*The Reverent Observer - Linda Shelales*

*This was taken at the Old Stone Church in Boylston. My hubby, pausing to take in the view, bathed in golden light, as though he's in partnership with the sun, both reflecting the sanctity of this site. He's 'edging, & I bet AI could 'finish him off for me,' as I've done in my old family photos, but I LIKE the effect of him bursting into the scene, like the sun! - Linda*



*Image Courtesy of Bill MacMunn*

*I chose this photo as it is a beautiful sunset at our favorite beach in Curaçao!*

### Tips for Creating a Photo Memoir

December is here, along with the lights, warmth, and festivities of the holiday season. We will soon be taking stock of 2025 and setting goals and making plans for the New Year. As you ponder novel and exciting experiences for 2026, have you ever considered writing your memoir? According to [breatheand reboot.com](https://breatheand reboot.com), a memoir is an “intentional journey through your life story, combining meaningful photographs with personal narratives to reveal the deeper themes and turning points of your life.” Writing a memoir allows you to tell your story with great artistic freedom. You can process life transitions, while reflecting on your past and planning for the future. It allows you to share your thoughts and insights with those you love and provides a vehicle for those in future generations who may seek to visit the past. Your memoir can be a written narrative with added photographs emphasizing meaningful moments. You can create a photo memoir showcasing a collection of images with details and brief stories to go along with them. Your memoir can chronicle your life from birth, or it can focus on a specific, narrow time period. It can be centered on your life experiences, your family, your work, or your photography. It doesn't have to be a one-off; your story may unfold over several unique volumes. You can even create an annual photo book with images and reflections from each year. Your voice, vision, and perspective will always have great value, not only to those who love you, but also as a fiber in the great fabric of society, and writing a memoir helps cultivate your legacy. So, now that we've convinced you to at least *think* about it, here are some tips to help should you decide to embark on that journey of self revelation.

#### Planning your memoir

- You should first choose your theme. Do you want to tell your life story or your family history in narrative form? Do you prefer to create a book of photos with brief stories to accompany them? Do you want to showcase your artistic endeavors in photography? The possibilities are endless.
- Once you have chosen your theme, make a list of anecdotes or brief narratives to help you form your outline.
- Using your outline, break down your workload into small, achievable goals. For example, you may decide to work on 1 or 2 photographs per week or to write 500 words at each sitting. If your goal is measurable and reasonable, you will be less likely to become overwhelmed and give up.

#### Creating a Photo Memoir

- If you want your memoir to be centered around photos instead of a written narrative, you should start by going through your images. It will likely be difficult to choose from the many that you have, but your chosen theme will guide you.
- A typical memoir contains 20-30 photos, but the range may be from 10 to 40, or more. It can be whatever you want it to be, but take care not to overwhelm your audience. Patti Smith's “A Book of Days” has 365 photos, one for each day of the year with a short story to go along with each image.
- When going through your photos, look for images that contain unique people or facial expressions. Look for photos that show how people lived at the time of the photo. Candid or action shots are often more engaging. Avoid busy photos.

Continued on next page

## Tips for Creating a Photo Memoir - continued from page 24

### Creating a Narrative Memoir

- If you want to write your story first (and think about adding photos later), just start writing, and let your thoughts flow. Don't pressure yourself. Write truthfully. Put your personality into it. How do the events you are describing affect your life today? What have you learned? How have you grown?
- As your written work takes shape, remember that your opening line will set the tone for the entire memoir. It should be attention grabbing. You could start off with something funny or a dramatic moment. You want to engage the reader and then build trust.
- Once you have completed your story, leave it alone for a couple of weeks before returning to it with fresh eyes to reexamine and edit it.
- If you plan to add photos after you have done your writing, skim the manuscript and highlight places in the text that would be enhanced by an image.
- When you are ready, ask a trusted friend or family member to read your work to make sure it makes sense and flows properly.

### What do you do with old printed images?

- You can create digital files of your images using a smartphone app, a dedicated scanner, or a professional scanning service.
- PicScanner, Google Photo Scan, and Photomyme are apps that can help you scan images using your phone. When scanning, avoid sunlight, and beware of glare. Keep your phone or camera as close to your photo as possible. Beware of dust, scratches, or specks in your final product.
- Images scanned using a dedicated scanner usually turn out better than images uploaded with a smartphone app.
- Typically, you want to maintain your images at 300 dpi; if an image has less than 200 dpi, it may not print as clearly. Enlarging your images will also degrade them.
- When scanning old images, scan them at an even higher resolution (600-800 dpi), as this will help you maintain image quality.
- If you have old slides, there is a smartphone app called Slidescan which converts slides to digital images.
- If you and other family members have collections of images that are of interest to all of you, invite everyone to scan their images, and then you can all share your images through Dropbox.



*Postoffice Box - Nick Andruzzi*

*"A photograph keeps a moment from running away." - Unknown*

Continued on next page

### Putting it all together

- There are many online publishing companies to choose from should you decide to go that route. Many offer templates to help you put it all together. Examples of such publishers include Modern Memoirs ([modernmemoirs.com](http://modernmemoirs.com)), Small Batch Books ([smallbatchbooks.com](http://smallbatchbooks.com)), Palmetto Publishing ([palmettopublishing.com](http://palmettopublishing.com)) and My Stories Matter ([mystoriesmatter.com](http://mystoriesmatter.com)).
- If your memoir will be centered on photos with added text, you can create it using one of the POD (Print on Demand) platforms such as Mixbook, VistaPrint, Shutterfly, Snapfish, MILK Books, Printique, Artifact Uprising, MPix, and Blurb.
- Choose a cover design or image that captures the essence of your memoir. It may be colorful. It may be somber. It may be simple or evocative. It's all up to you and what you hope to convey.
- As you prepare your manuscript, experiment with font sizes and styles for your text. Choose a readable font, and maintain consistency. You should only use a maximum of two different fonts: one for your headings and one for your text/body.
- If you create a narrative memoir, you may choose to insert photos throughout your text, or you may choose to have a gallery of photos in the beginning, middle, and/or end. If you choose to insert them throughout the text, know that it may be difficult to get them perfectly aligned where you want them.
- You should consider the aesthetic alignment between your book design and contents. If you are writing a more straightforward life story, you may want to show your photos with a simple border. If you have a humorous component to your memoir, you may choose to have your photos at angles and/or photos that bleed off the page. It's recommended that you stick to one style and that your style reflects the overall mood of your memoir. For example, angled photos with colorful borders would not work well with a sad story.
- You may choose to enlarge photos with more impact and shrink those with less.
- Captions are important to tell your readers who is in the photo, where it was taken, the event, and the year. If there is a group of photos together, you can create one caption describing each of the photos.
- If you are including photos taken by a professional photographer, credit the photographer. If you have obtained permission to use certain photographs, you should note this on the copyright page. For example: "Photos used with permission of the family." If you have any concerns over using images or copyright issues, check with an attorney.
- When you are ready to print your manuscript, you should export it in a print ready format (pdf).
- Print a copy of your finished work before publication to make sure your images are clean, clear, and large enough.
- When self-publishing with POD companies, note that color books will be more expensive than B&W. Each order may be produced on a different printer at a different location, so there may be variability in colors from one book to the next.

### Sources

48hrbooks.com; thememoirnetwork.com; biographersguild.com; breatheandboot.com; clickclackwriting.com; photomemoirs.co; clearsightbooks.com; kindlepreneur.com; palmettopublishing.com; schoolofphotography.com; foreverstudios.com; artifactuprising.com; mystoriesmatter.com.

## The Bigger Picture

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### **Happenings**

\*Have you heard about the Trolls that have invaded Rhode Island?

There are 5 massive recycled wood trolls designed by Thomas Dambo which are throughout the entire Ocean State — with the promise of two more trolls in 2026.

<https://fun107.com/every-dambo-troll-location-rhode-island/>

\*If you're looking to use your night photography skills you might want to check this out:

Winter Wonderland at Southwick Zoo

This beloved festive tradition, perfect for family and friends, is set to shine brighter than ever before, featuring over 4 million illuminated lights and dazzling displays that will transform the Zoo into a winter wonderland. With larger-than-life dazzling displays, the event promises to leave visitors in awe. From enchanting polar bear displays to the shimmering lights around every corner, this experience is a must-see for everyone!

Tickets required - <https://southwickszoo.com/winter-wonderland/>

\*[Merry on Cherry](#) - Holiday lighting extraordinaire! The most lights and coordinated music you've ever seen on an individual property. Cherry Street, Hudson.

\*They may be small, but local businesses bring our community to life in a big way.

[The Snowport Holiday Market](#) Presented by Constant Contact features 125+ makers, more food than ever before, custom cocktail bars, festive decor, live music, and more. Enjoy complimentary wi-fi at The Holiday Market powered by Xfinity.

\*Celebrate the arts and shop local at the 14th annual [Sudbury Art Association Holiday Market](#) at 39 Union Ave, 2nd floor, Sudbury. SAA is a Sudbury organization which sponsors activities designed to promote the arts. Open every day thru December 23. Our hours are 10 am – 6 pm. Thursday until 8 pm.

\*[Boston Central](#) - check out this comprehensive calendar of events (winter, holiday, entertainment, etc.) in Boston and surrounding areas.

### **Workshops**

\*Worcester Photography Group

They run local classes / photo walks. [worcesterphotographygroup.com](http://worcesterphotographygroup.com)

Basics of Portrait Photography — Saturday, Dec 6, 10 am–2 pm.

[worcesterphotographygroup.com](http://worcesterphotographygroup.com)

Winter Portraits Photography - Saturday, Dec 20, 10 am–2 pm, with Minas Garabedian.

[bostonphotographygroup.com](http://bostonphotographygroup.com)

Cost is \$49 each

\*Worcester Center for Crafts

They offer ongoing / seasonal photography classes.

For winter 2026, they list courses including Introduction to Digital Photography, Intro to Darkroom Photography, and a Lighting Studio workshop.

[Worcester Center for Crafts](#)

Continued on next page

Happenings - continued from page 27

### **Photo Exhibits**

FAM – Fitchburg Art Museum - Tara Sellios - Ask Now the Beasts

<https://fitchburgartmuseum.org/tara-sellios-ask-now-the-beasts>

Tara Sellios is a Boston-based artist whose monumental photographs highlight the beauty of the grotesque. Sellios creates still life vignettes from organic materials including animal bones, insect specimens, and dried flowers. She considers the cyclical nature of Earth, intertwining symbols of death and references to life with the beauty of decay.

Dec 3 – May 2026

Leica Gallery Boston - Maria Guțu - Homeland

<https://leicagalleryboston.com/exhibitions/>

Homeland, featuring the work of photographer Maria Guțu.

A series of black-and-white photographs, which explore life in the Republic of Moldova.

Through a dreamlike visual language, Homeland reveals the quiet resilience of a country marked by economic hardship, high unemployment, and emigration.

Ends Jan 4, 2026

### **Photo Contests**

The Provincetown Independent Photo Contest

<https://provincetownindependent.org/photo-contest>

All are welcome: residents & visitors, amateurs & professionals. Share your view of the Outer Cape and see your work recognized in a special Winter-Spring 2025-2026 publication.

Free to enter

Deadline Dec. 31

[Envision Kindness - Our World is Kind '25 Photography Contest](#)

Over the last six contests, the Our World is Kind Photography Contest has generated over 12,000 submissions from 2000+ photographers in more than 150 countries. These moving images have inspired kindness, love, gratitude, and joy in tens of thousands of global viewers.

Free to enter - there are cash prizes with matching prize money given to the winner's photography club.

Deadline is December 15, 2025. For information, rules, and terms click here:

[Envision Kindness](#)



*Snoopy's Air Mail Box - Tony Monteiro*

## NECCC Competition Fall '25 Results:

### NECCC Fall 2025-26 Digital Interclub Competition

The Fall 2025-26 Digital Interclub competition, hosted by the Greater Lynn Photographic Association, was held on Saturday, November 22, 2025. A total of thirty-seven clubs competed in all with 15 clubs in Class A, 9 clubs in Class B, and 13 clubs that are mixed - competing in both Class A and Class B. In Color, we had 27 from Class A and 10 from Class B, in Nature we had 20 from Class A and 17 from Class B, and in Monochrome we had 16 in Class A and 20 in Class B (with one club abstaining).

AVCC is in Class A for Color and Nature and in Class B for Monochrome.

To see all the NECC Fall '25 Digital Interclub Competition results click here: [NECCC Fall'25](#)

Robyn Saur is the AVCC rep to NECCC and is responsible for submitting competition images for the AVCC. Thank you Robyn for sharing these results. And congratulations to our competing members!

Open

A	MA Assabet Valley	C	round1	Boudreau	Blair	Young Girl in bonnet	12
A	MA Assabet Valley	C	round2	Parker	Jane	Unusual Flower in Bouquet	11
A	MA Assabet Valley	C	round3	Boudreau	Mimi	Crankset	10
A	MA Assabet Valley	C	round4	Saur	Robyn	Bee on Yellow flower	12
Nature A	A MA Assabet Valley	N	round1	Boudreau	Blair	Bringing home the bacon	11
A	MA Assabet Valley	N	round2	Holman	Darlene	Bald Eagles fighting	12
A	MA Assabet Valley	N	round3	Gill	John	Ambush Bug Posing	13
A	MA Assabet Valley	N	round4	Kerner	Lynn	Hummingbird Love	11
MONOCHROME B	MA Assabet Valley	M	round1	Boudreau	Blair	Shut up and Eat	12
B	MA Assabet Valley	M	round2	Robotis	Catherine	Dog Day afternoon	12
B	MA Assabet Valley	M	round3	Parker	Jane	Carolina Beach Wader	11
B	MA Assabet Valley	M	round4	Snitkoff	Louis	Albany Rural Cemetery	10

*"There's no such thing as bad weather, only inappropriate clothing." – Billy Connolly*



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

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, Vishnu Thalanki, Darlene Holman, John Mauro, Ann DeCristofaro, Linda DeStefano Brown, Lou Snitkoff, Doris Monteiro, Tony Monteiro, Robyn Saur, John Houldsworth, Glenn Fund, Terry Vachowski, Maureen Mathieson, Linda Shelales, and Bill MacMunn.



*Marina Beach - Nov 2025  
- Lynn Kerner*