



FOCAL POINT

[Assabet Valley Camera Club](#) - The club meets on the first and third 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. Meetings begin at 7:00 PM with a 15 minute social time and at 7:15 a brief business meeting. Programs start at 7:30 PM. Email us at avcc.digital@hotmail.com for more information or if you wish to attend as a guest.



Look Up! Theresa Vachowski

*"The morning had dawned clear and cold, with a crispness that hinted at the end of summer."-
George R.R. Martin*

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Note from Our President

Hello All,

I would like to extend a warm welcome to Angelo Maiuri, Blair Boudreau, and Jennifer Stover to the club! I hope you have a positive experience both learning from club members and programs and sharing your images and knowledge with the group.

As much as Covid and hybrid meetings have tried to put an end to print competitions, NECCC is trying to keep print competitions alive. I sent an email to all members on Monday, September 23 regarding NECCC's upcoming print competition. If you have any interest in competing, please read the info carefully. Note, there are deadlines for submitting the form for competition as well as your image(s).

Fall is now upon us - some (I for one) would argue the second most colorful season of the year (the spring blooms and blossoms technically have a few more colors)! There are countless opportunities to capture beautiful scenes. With the proliferation of social media and "influencers," there has been a tremendous increase in the number of photographer visitors to iconic fall sites. With the increase in visitors comes traffic and everything that comes along with it (litter and property damage to name a few). Some municipalities in the northern New England states will be restricting access to areas in order to control traffic due to traffic snarls and reduce damage to property; here is one example: <https://www.wcax.com/2024/09/16/why-some-vt-roads-with-popular-fall-foliage-views-will-close-tourist-traffic/> I suspect that we will see many more follow suit. It's a good idea to plan before heading out this Fall season, and please remember to be respectful of other's property when looking for and capturing that perfect fall image.

Both Vice President Mary Coombs and I will not be available for the October 2nd program meeting. Our Treasurer/Competition Manager/Judge Manager/Vice President Emeritus/President Emeritus/Key Master/(I know I forgot a few) John Gill will be the Master of Ceremonies for the evening. Unless something drastic changes, the meeting will be hybrid (in person at the Senior Center, and via Zoom).

Speaking of October 2nd, Treasurer John Gill must have your dues in hand by October 2nd, or you will not be able to compete. If you still wish to remain a member, but have a challenge meeting the deadline, please reach out to John Gill or myself.

John Mauro

*"Autumn burned brightly, a running flame through the mountains, a torch flung to the trees."
— Faith Baldwin*

Note from the Editors

Our region is world-renowned for gorgeous fall color. The lower angle of the autumn sun heightens the reds, golds and oranges against the backdrop of the crisp fall sky. Thus, in his 1862 essay, “[Autumnal Tints](#),” published in [The Atlantic](#), Henry David Thoreau wrote, “[October is the month of painted leaves.](#)”

We offer that quote as October’s photo challenge. We loved your submissions for June’s challenge about the sky, water, and sand. It’s such fun to see how each person visualizes these things. You can send your images to the Newsletter Team email group any time through the AVCC website.

In this month’s Member Snapshot we hear from Eric Frere, who you might have met at his Meet ‘n’ Greet at Café 641, or you may see him on Zoom. Eric lives in Plymouth. Enjoy his photos and his story. For this Snapshot we used a slightly different format, but one that includes the same information that we have always included – in Eric’s own voice.

In preparation for all the Nature competitions, our Tips and Tricks section by Cathy focuses on wildlife photography. And Pam has cast the net far and wide to find interesting things for us to do and see this upcoming month.

In this issue, see the write-up from Glenn on a field trip he organized to the Andres Art Institute in NH, and check out information on the Night Hawks – a group of members who enthusiastically chase and shoot all manner of natural phenomena in the night sky.

The temps look to be in the 60s for the first week of October. A wonderful time to be out in the falling leaves. Go out and dance with them.

*“Anyone who thinks fallen leaves are dead has never watched them dancing on a windy day.”
- Shira Tamir*



Silver Lake Trail - Glenn Fund

October 2024 Program

AVCC is pleased to present “Using the techniques of composition to improve your photography” presented by Mike Roman on Wednesday, October 2, 2024 at 7:30 PM.

The meeting is a hybrid format; in person at the the Hudson Senior Center, 29 Church St., Hudson (please arrive no later than 7:15), or remote on Zoom.

The Zoom meeting room opens at 7:00 with a 15 minute social time followed by AVCC business at 7:15. The program begins at 7:30 PM. Nonmembers interested in attending as guests should email avcc.digital@hotmail.com.

Mike Roman

Michael Roman, MNEC, was a long time camera club member starting in 1984 and held just about every club office at one time or another. He has been a judge for many years at the local and regional levels including international salons.

Competing in salons, Michael has earned medals for Female and Child Portraits, Still Life, Nature, Abstract, and various Judge's Choice awards. He has also taught photography, both in camera clubs and at his studio.

An engineer by training, Michael also ran a portrait studio for many years. While he enjoys all types of photography, Michael is best known for his portrait work.

Using the techniques of composition to improve your photography

Photography is a fun pursuit for millions of us. We capture special moments and memories, or maybe just record an interesting scene. For most people, the resulting photo is all they need. Others, however, strive for more. They want to create a compelling image, one that grabs the viewer's attention and doesn't let go. If that sounds like you, or the photographer you'd like to be, learning and understanding the techniques of composition may be the toolkit that you are looking for.

In this program you will learn ...

- ... how to make stronger photos that elicit more positive responses from your viewers
- ... how to simplify your images and get your point across more directly
- ... how to learn to see better pictures before you click the shutter
- ... and how to enjoy photography even more



Up in the Air - Blair Boudreau

Looking Ahead - AVCC 2024-2025 Program Schedule

| Date | Program | Presenter |
|---------|--|------------------|
| 9/4/24 | "What I did this Summer" Member Slideshows | AVCC Members |
| 10/2/24 | Composition | Mike Roman |
| 11/6/24 | Spain and Portugal | Robyn Saur |
| 12/4/24 | Landscape Photography | Meredith Fontana |
| 1/8/25 | Bird Migration | Shawn Carey |
| 2/5/25 | Masks and Layers | Hazel Meredith |
| 3/5/24 | Colors of Spring | Ed McGuirk |
| 4/2/24 | Creative Photography | Joe Pellicone |
| 5/7/24 | B&W Photography | Nancy Ori |
| 6/4/24 | 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.

Monthly Competitions:

The club holds monthly image competitions including two categories: digital theme and open. AVCC Print competitions have been suspended. The 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 | Balloons | Open | 9/11/2024 |
| October | Nature | Open | 10/9/2024 |
| November | Action | Open | 11/13/2024 |
| December | Nature | Open | 12/11/2024 |
| January | The Color Red | Open | 1/15/2025 |
| February | Nature | Open | 2/12/2025 |
| March | Abstract | Open | 3/12/2025 |
| April | Nature | Open | 4/19/2025 |
| May | By or On the water | Open | 5/14/2025 |

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 PJ 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.

2024-2025 NECCC Individual Print Competition

The NECCC Individual Print Competition will be held twice a year hosted at the Greater Lynn Photographic Association (GLPA). This year's competition dates will be Saturday, October 19, 2024 and Saturday, March 29, 2025. For more information go to: [NECCC Print Competition](#)

GETTING TO KNOW YOU: a conversation with... ERIC FRERE

- Tell us a little about your roots and how they influence you. How does creativity come out in you/your family?

I was born and raised in Ottawa, Canada and grew up in a French-speaking home. My mother was a relatively well-known pastelist in Canada so I grew up learning about colors, light, shadows, rule of thirds, etc. I would help her frame and hang her art in galleries and we would look at other pieces in the gallery and discuss them. I never realized how this would affect me as a photographer until later in life. In fact, my wife pointed out that a photo of mine taken in Norway was (unintentionally) very similar to a painting my mother had done. We now have them hanging side-by-side in our home.



Images Courtesy of Eric Frere

- Tell us about when you got started doing photography?

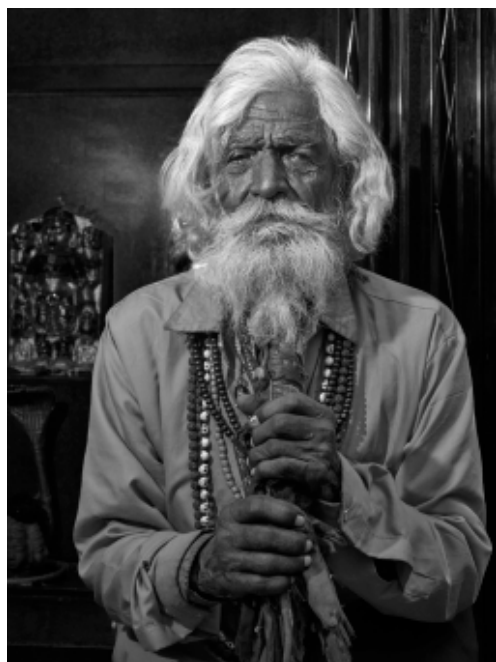
I bought my first SLR when I was a teenager and used to shoot mostly B&W film in my early years. I spent many days and evenings in the high school darkroom learning all about developing film and printing - mostly for the school's newspaper and yearbooks. Then life got in the way of my photography and I didn't really pick it up again until the kids were gone and I retired, which was about six years ago.

- What are the things that you feel influence how you see the world or what you shoot?

I have been a wanderer all my life. My father died at age 42, when I was about 10, and so I just had this idea that I had to go out and live life as much as I could. Growing up with five siblings, my mother didn't have time to coddle us. Whatever we wanted, we had to figure out how to get it on our own. The greatest gift that she ever gave me is never telling me that I couldn't do something. From cycling 1800 miles through Atlantic Canada at the age of 17 to flying a glider to 31,000 feet, not much would stop me from living a full and exciting life. Living and working in Saudi Arabia for three years after I graduated college was one of the best things in my life. It was a huge eye-opener and I quickly grew up, learning about various cultures. Since retiring, I travel as much as I can.

Continued on next page

Member Snapshot - Eric Frere - continued from page 7



Dada - Eric Frere

- Tell us about what subjects you like to shoot, or the type of photography you're drawn to.

As with many photographers, my style and interests have evolved as I keep finding my “photographer self.” When I first got back into photography I was doing landscapes, waterscapes, taking photos more from the point of view of what others would want to look at. These days, I have returned to B&W and my favorite time shooting is when I wander in far-flung neighborhoods, photographing people in their environment. When shooting people, I try not to be opportunistic. If possible, I always ask before I photograph my subjects. My photography is about trying to tell a story. I want to make photos where, when someone looks at it, they ask, “what’s going on here?”, and they bring their own experience to the interpretation. What I do might not be marketable, but I’m doing what I enjoy.

- What are some growing edges for you?

I was always intimidated by photographing people. Five years ago, I had the opportunity to photograph tribal people in Ethiopia. I was in a village there, and saw a young boy playing a string game that I remembered from my childhood. I just went over and sat down and played that with him, then asked - with hand gestures – if I could take his photo. The boy was delighted.

I learned so much and was truly hooked by this experience. Photographing people in their natural habitat is much more than pointing a camera and pressing the shutter. I learned to get to know the person that I want to photograph. We build a rapport and may share stories, food and drink before I ever take my camera out. After a while, I forget that I have my camera. By the time that I take it out, we have built a trust and they are much more relaxed during the shoot.



Image Courtesy of Eric Frere

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Member Snapshot - Eric Frere - continued from page 8

Most of my learning is done “in the field” - just shooting - but I also love to look at the work of Yousuf Karsh (<https://karsh.org/>). In my opinion, he was the greatest portrait photographer that ever lived. He’s like the Ansel Adams of portraiture.

- Tell us about a funny or interesting mistake you’ve made, a challenge you’ve overcome, or experience you’ve had - photography-related or not.

While trekking through the Mongolian steppes, my friend (and excellent photographer) stalled our SUV while crossing a river. Being from Singapore and not used to this kind of driving, extreme fear came across his face as the SUV started taking water. I looked at him and calmly said, “Richard, we are not dead!” A few hours later, a Syrian falconer came upon us and, using my rusty Arabic, we were able to communicate and he pulled us out of the river. Not only did we make it out of this predicament, we made a friend. The incident gave me some assurance that, politics aside, we have much more in common than differences.

Eric Frere and Lynn Kerner

Subway Series by Eric Frere - Exhibited at Cafe 641 for the month of January, 2024

Artist Statement: Color at the End of the Tunnel

For decades, Boston’s public transit stations have been a hive of activity with more than a million daily trips. The onset of the Covid-19 pandemic brought all of this to a sudden halt. Ridership declined by 90% virtually overnight. Daily life had been transformed, and even the simple act of taking public transit carried a heavy sadness and sense of hopelessness.

When I photographed in and around the Maverick Square T-Station in East Boston, we were reaching a turning point with the pandemic. Administration of vaccines began rolling out. A sense of hope, a glimmer of color at the end of the tunnel, appeared. Hope was slowly being restored.

This photographic series focuses on the gradual transition through the spring months of 2021. I was particularly interested in the parallel timeline of the change of season and the change in people’s disposition as we were slowly returning to a sense of normalcy.

Eric Frere

See the *Color at the End of the Tunnel* images on the next page.

Continued on next page

Color at the End of the Tunnel - Eric Frere



Pawns - Eric Frere



Maverick - Eric Frere



Social Loneliness - Eric Frere



Hope - Eric Frere

Members' Lens



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

Zooming In - A Reflection, Musing, or Experience (travel, how I got that great shot, my favorite photo or place to shoot for example) shared by a member

Tips and Tricks - Members' shared suggestions for the Monthly Theme

The Bigger Picture - Happenings in the World of Photography

Many thanks to the following members for their contributions to this month's Newsletter: Cathy Robotis, Lynn Kerner, Mary Coombs, Jim Williams, Pam Meoli, John Mauro, Eric Frere, Glenn Fund, Bob Cooke, Linda DeStefano Brown, John Houldsworth, Nick Andruzzi, and Darlene Holman.

Zooming Out

On the Wall at Cafe 641

This month Cafe 641 will feature "A Bug's Life", the work of Pam Meoli. A Meet and Greet will be held on Sunday, October 13th from 12:00 - 1:30 pm. We hope to see you there!

In November we will see images by Jim Williams.



Image Courtesy of Palm Meoli

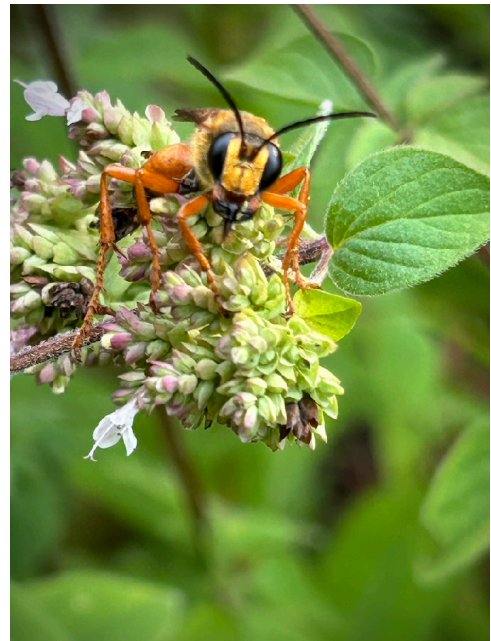


Image Courtesy of Palm Meoli

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Zooming Out - continued from page 11

A note from Pam:

I had the best time with this summer project "A Bug's Eye View". It forced me to look differently and to see the world from a different perspective. Literally on my belly, looking up and looking through. One day it dawned on me that this was a life lesson - that it's good (and healthy) to see different perspectives of life. Aside from the spider web shot - I loved them all. I had family members and friends making suggestions and critiques and commentary.

Come see the exhibit "A Bug's Life" at Cafe 641 during the month of October with the meet and greet scheduled for Sunday, Oct 13 - 12-1:30. Unfortunately I could only pick 10 - so come see my favorites!

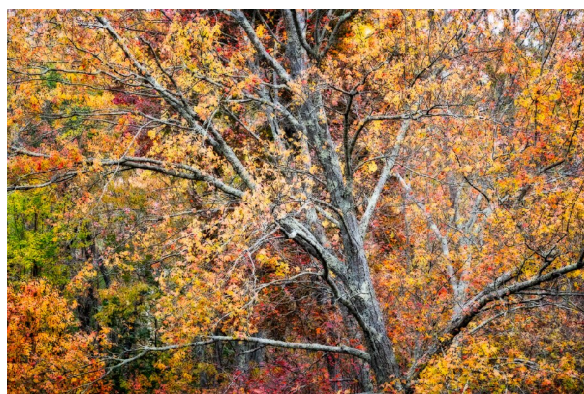
Bob Cooke:

Bob has arranged a photo exhibition (prints) at the Maynard Public Library -- prints go up on February 1, 2025 for one month. There is plenty of room for other entrants. Please contact Bob if interested.

Linda DeStefano Brown: (Congratulations to Linda!)

I have work that will be in a few upcoming exhibits:

- [Plymouth Center for the Arts](#) has chosen one of my pieces for their [57th Annual Juried Art show](#). This exhibit includes all forms of art and will be on display from September 21 - October 20. The piece they chose is one of my infrared images.
- I will have 3 images in the Gateway Camera Club member exhibit at the [Framingham Library, 48 Lexington Street, Framingham](#). These pieces are also from my infrared work. This exhibit will be on display during the month of October.
- Four of my images will be in the [ArtsWayland](#) member exhibit, Savouring Autumn Light, in the Wayland Library, 5 Concord Road, Wayland, from October 7 - November 24.



Gilded Age - Linda DeSefano Brown



*Hugging the Riverbank
- Linda DeStefano Brown*

*"And the sun took a step back, the leaves lulled themselves to sleep and autumn was awakened."
- Raquel Franco*

Zooming In

We asked members to share travel photos, stories, and favorite places to take photos of wildlife. Here are images and notes of adventures shared by some of our members.

From Bob Cooke:

I've got tons of great wildlife images, mostly in BIG prints. If anyone wants travel ideas, I'm game. South Pole, North pole, both US coasts, Alaska, Scandinavia, and much much more. All in big prints, including in the Arctic regions, and especially so in and around the South Pole.

From Pam Meoli:

Yellowstone National Park - a photographer's dream. You hear about it and see pictures about it but to be there in person is hard to describe.

I knew we would seek and see the animals of the park. We saw them all - except the wolves. They are typically in a particular area - which we went to but had no luck.

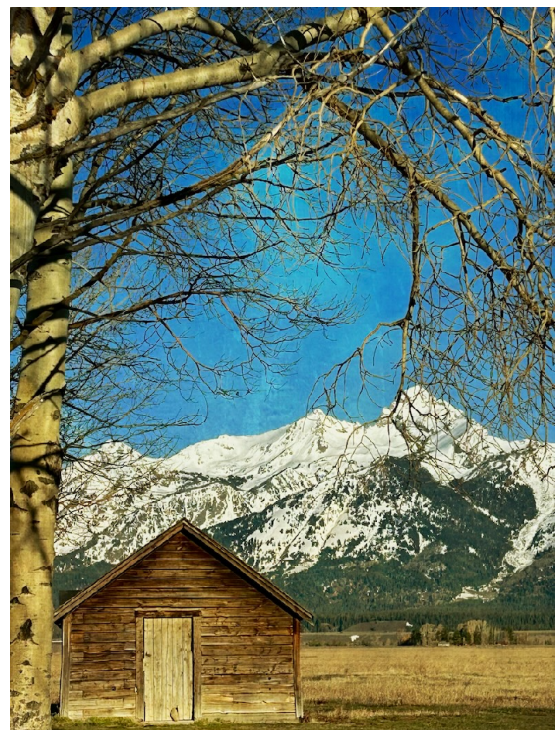
Nonetheless - it was incredible. The first time I saw the Bison, my heart just about beat out of my chest. So huge and massive and natural. We went in spring which was the best time to go. Not many people at all - no traffic jams, babies born- animals are still used to roaming freer from winter and not being scared away by the tourists, so we were really lucky.

Here are a few of my favorites - I have a lot! Stocked up on my competition nature shots!

Images on this page courtesy of Pam Meoli



Seeing Bison for the first time - so exciting!



A spot that Ansel Adams photographed called "Morman Row" - Pam Meoli

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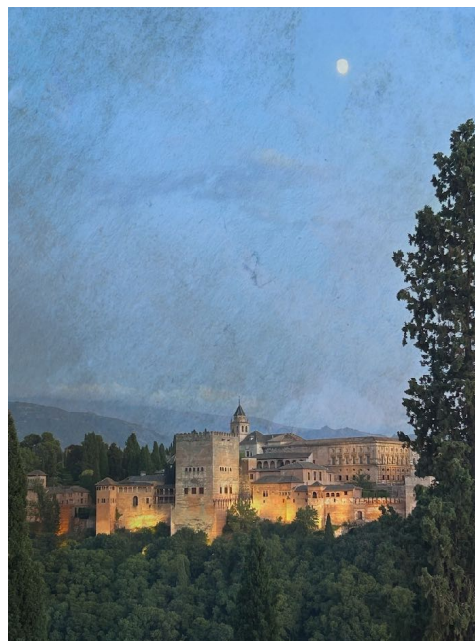
Zooming In - continued from page 13

From Pam Meoli:

A wonderful, charming trip to Spain - I'm not a "city" girl so it was good to get to see city life in Spain on this trip. Made me appreciate the sites, the sounds, the people, the architecture and of course the food. Spain to me equals cappuccinos, croissants, Sangria and Tapas! What else is there? Oh yeah - sights!



*The iron work, the orange trees...
Barcelona - Pam Meoli*



Alhambra in Granada - Pam Meoli



*Beautiful tilework of Seville
- Pam Meoli*



Image Courtesy of Pam Meoli

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From John Houldsworth:

A great place to photograph wildlife is the Kruger National Park in South Africa which I was fortunate to visit earlier this year. For safety reasons all visitors must be transported by armed guards in suitably modified jeeps (see the photo with the exposed animal spotter on the left raised seat). Traveling along the endless maze of paths in the park you don't know what wild animals you might find around the next corner. Here are a few images of wild animals which crossed our path, remembering that we are the intruders in their space: Sleeping rhino, mother and baby elephant, zebra crossing our path, male lion dozing in the sun, water buffalo staring at the intruders, and giraffe taking a drink. Due to the bumpy paths and confined space on the jeep, I was using the very lightweight, compact Canon R7 mirrorless camera with a 18-150 mm zoom lens in tandem with a Samsung S22 Ultra Smartphone which also provided GPS metadata for the R7. This was a great combination kit for safari travel compared to my old heavy full frame DSLR camera kit! Additionally, my best tip is to use a camera wrist strap (Peak Design is a great choice) rather than the conventional neck strap for total camera security, ease of carrying and availability for instant shooting (my R7 + zoom weighed just 2lbs). Finally, I attached my lens cap to the camera body with an elastic cord so I couldn't lose it when traveling on bumpy/dusty dirt tracks.



Armed Guard - John Houldsworth



*Peak Design Camera Strap
- John Houldsworth*



*Mother and Baby Elephant
- John Houldsworth*



Zebra Crossing our Path - John Houldsworth

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Male Lion Dozing in the Sun
-John Houldsworth



Water Buffalo Staring at Intruders
- John Houldsworth



Sleeping Rhino - John Houldsworth



Cable Car View - John Houldsworth



Giraffe taking a Drink
- John Houldsworth



Cape Town Signpost - John Houldsworth

More Zooming In

Field Trips

Glenn Fund organized a field trip to the Andres Art Institute (<https://andresinstitute.org/>) in Brookline, NH on September 24th.



Glenn, Darlene, Paul Andres, and Sheri at the Andres Art Institute



"Debate" sculpted by Thomas Kus - Czech Republic - Image by Darlene Holman



*"Conscious" sculpted by Isadore Batu
Siharulidze - Republic of Georgia
-Image by Darlene Holman*

From Glenn:

Sheri, Darlene and I went. It was super. We even met the founder and owner, Paul Andres on the trails. We took pictures and talked a bit. We also viewed an artist sculpting a new piece of art that will soon be placed on the mountain. There are now 100 pieces (and growing) of art to be viewed. We spent about 3 hours and did not get to see more than half of the pieces. Plenty of good hiking exercise though.

Andres is hosting a photo contest for their 2025 calendar. Entries close on October 15th. <https://andresinstitute.org/photo-contest/>

"Autumn, it carries more gold in its hand than all the other seasons." — Jim Bishop

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Night Hawks

Did you know...

- There is a group of members that Jim Williams has dubbed the “Night Hawks” who go out to shoot the night sky.
- So far members of the group - singly or with others - have gone out to shoot the Aurora, the Milky Way, September’s Harvest moon - a so-called “super-moon,” the partial lunar eclipse, and the nighttime Boston skyline.
- Recent adventures by one or more members were to a dam in Berlin, Mt. Wachusett, Clinton Dam, Cambridge and Arlington, Sebago Lake, ME, Rhode Island (a workshop by Silvana Della Camera), and VT.
- Members share information on events, gear, useful night sky apps and websites, and camaraderie!
- A bright, rare comet is expected at the end of September into Oct. Here’s an article submitted by Darlene on photographing **Comet C/2023 A3 Tsuchinshan–ATLAS** that may grace our skies in late Sept through most of October. <https://www.skyatnightmagazine.com/advice/how-photograph-comet-c-2023-a3-tsuchinshan-atlas>
- Jim Williams sent out an all-member email about a month ago about the group. If you want to be kept up-to-date, please email Jim through the AVCC website.

Here are some images shared by the Night Hawks crew!



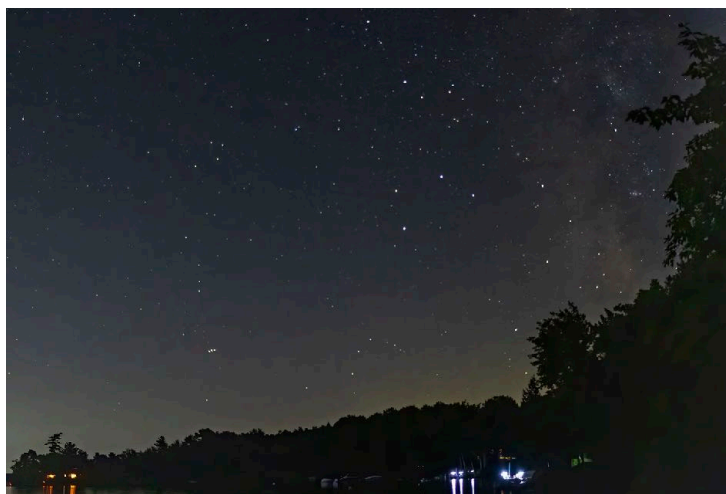
Comet Neowise 2020 - Nick Andruzzi

“We also have Comet C/2023 A3 (Tsuchinshan-ATLAS) approaching very soon. This comet has great potential of being a very bright one at the end of September and into October. This may rival the brightness of Comet Neowise in 2020!”

Silvana Della Camera

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Zooming In - Night Hawks - continued from page 18

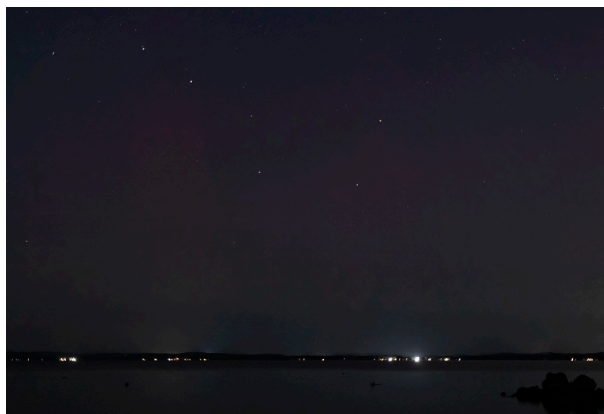


Milky Way over Emerald Point - Lynn Kerner

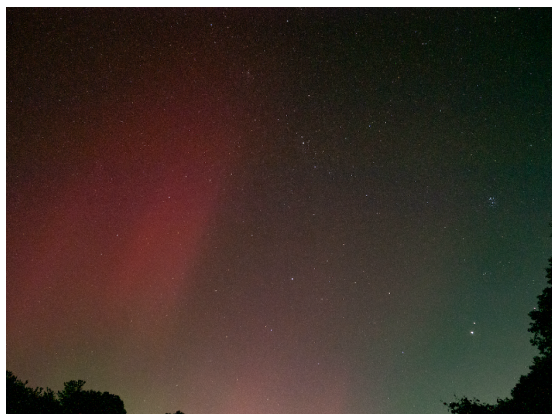
Risky Business!

"Taken on the southern end of Frye Island in Sebago Lake, ME. I took a big risk to get this perspective, as I had to stand on slanted rocks that led right down into the water. Good thing I had a sturdy tripod and had scoped out the area in the daylight. Not the angle I wanted, but I would've had to be IN the water to get it."

Lynn Kerner



Dipper in Pink - Lynn Kerner



Aurora over the Garden - Mary Coombs

Links to some relevant Silvana Della Camera posts:

- [Moon Photography](#)
- [How to Photograph the Aurora](#)

Silvana is running a Plan It Pro workshop on October 26, 2024 - click here for the info: [Plan It](#)

"There's as many atoms in a single molecule of your DNA as there are stars in the typical galaxy. We are, each of us, a little universe." - Neil deGrasse Tyson

Tips and Tricks - October's Theme: Photographing Wildlife

Tips for Wildlife Photography

The colorful season of Autumn is upon us. Some welcome respite from the heat and humidity of summer, while others mourn the end of those long, blissful days of warmth. For some, it is a time to turn inward and prepare for the darker months. For others, it is a time to celebrate Nature. We can all agree that Autumn in New England is a spectacular season, full of color and the bounties of the harvest. It is also a great time to get outdoors for wildlife photography, and with proper research and planning, that perfect wildlife image may be just a click (or 100!) away. We have put together some helpful tips to encourage you to pick up your camera and get out to the great outdoors to capture the majesty of the wildlife that share this beautiful world with us.

Preparing for your shoot

- Start at home. Look for pigeons, squirrels, and deer right in your own backyard. Familiarize yourself with the workings of your camera so you can make easy adjustments in the heat of the moment.
- Before exploring a new location, make sure you do your homework. You should know where you are going and have a plan. You will likely be heading out very early in the morning.
- Do research about the area you will be visiting to determine what kind of wildlife you may encounter. You can then further refine your research to study the behaviors of the wildlife likely to cross your path. You want to be able to understand and anticipate their habits and behaviors.
- Pack extra batteries, especially in colder weather, which may drain your batteries quicker. Make sure your lenses are clean. If you end up capturing that perfect shot, you don't want it ruined by smudges on the lens.
- Dress properly, in layers, and wear proper footwear. You want to anticipate possible changes in weather. Make sure you have sunscreen and bug spray.
- If you are heading into more remote areas, make sure your cell phone is fully charged and that people know where you will be. Go with a friend whenever possible for safety.
- If you are going out during hunting season, take appropriate precautions.
- In terms of equipment, a telephoto lens (prime or zoom) is ideal.
- Consider using a bean bag to stabilize your camera, particularly in areas where a tripod or monopod might not be ideal.
- Consider using a hunter's blind and/or wearing camo clothing to blend in with the environment. You may have better success when photographing from behind a bush or a tree.
- If the situation permits, try to photograph while sitting in your parked car because you will be less likely to scare animals away. If you are at a wildlife refuge, you may find that there are driving loops that provide access to animals while allowing you to sit in your car, photographing from your open window.
- Make sure you back up your images so you don't lose anything.



Squirrel braving the April storm - Bridget Perch

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Setting the scene

- Remember that patience and persistence are keys to success. You may have to sit and wait for that decisive moment to happen, and there is no guarantee that it will happen on any given day.
- Lighting is very important. Early morning (golden hour) is best for wildlife photography. Evening (golden hour) is also good. Most animals are more active early and later in the day. Deer often emerge during the golden hour. Songbirds are most active at dawn. Carnivores are mostly nocturnal, so if you are planning to photograph them, make sure you are familiar with photographing in low light.
- Birds are best captured in moderate light, and many will have a favorite perch that they may return to.
- If you are forced to shoot in the midday hours, consider shooting in B&W.
- Overcast days work best for large, antlered animals because you won't have shadows from their antlers. However, blank skies (white/gray) behind an animal may be boring. In that case, change your position when possible to ensure a more pleasing background.
- Photographing animals while it is gently raining or after a rain storm may reveal more details in their fur.
- If you are photographing in an area with water, try to plan for days where the water will be still. The water will be a more pleasing color and free of a lot of contrast. Calm water in early morning light is optimal. Avoid windy days. Remember that the sky, the surroundings, and the wind may affect the appearance of water. Foggy days can be challenging.
- Your goal is to show the animal in its natural environment. You also want to tell a story. As you come across a wildlife scene, ask yourself the following questions: Is the head elevated or is the animal feeding? Is the animal walking or running? If so, are the paws/hooves visible? Is the animal hunting or interactive? Is the animal interacting with its young? Is there anything humorous to be captured? Answering some of these questions will help shape the story you are trying to tell.
- You want to try to capture action, as well as the subtleties of movement. Is there a paw raised off the ground to show the animal is on the move? If a bird is leaning forward on a perch, this is a sign it is about to take off, and it will take off in the direction where it is looking.
- Look for expressions, but avoid capturing signs of stress (unless that is part of your story, as in the case of animals fighting with each other). Are the eyes open and wider than normal? Are the ears bending forward? Is the head lower than normal? These are signs of stress.
- Whenever possible, you should photograph animals at eye level. You want to avoid photographing from a low or high angle. You should be prepared to crouch down or even sit on the ground when necessary (if it is safe to do so).



Puffin Out For a Stroll - Glenn Fund

Continued on next page

Tips for Photographing Wildlife - continued from page 21

Camera settings

- Check your settings ahead of time! In the excitement of the moment, failure to ensure that your settings are correct may ruin a perfect image.
- A long lens (200-400 mm) is ideal.



*Gorilla Snacking
- Doris Monteiro*

- Shoot in RAW.
- Your goal is a mid-range ISO (400-800) when possible. Consider working with auto ISO so you have one less thing to worry about in a fast-paced situation.
- Many wildlife photographers use Aperture Priority mode or Manual mode. Some recommend that Manual mode with auto ISO yields the best results. Others swear by Aperture mode. If you are shooting in Aperture Priority mode, you might find it difficult to use auto ISO because auto ISO might render shutter speeds that are not fast enough. You may prefer to adjust the ISO when shooting in Aperture mode to help achieve your desired shutter speed. Some prefer Shutter Priority mode for wildlife photography, but many say this mode is challenging, especially in low light situations, where you run a higher risk of underexposure.
- Avoid shooting in Auto mode because it is not ideal for fast action. If your camera has a “sports” mode, it might work well. However, this will result in adjustments of the aperture, which may cause more or less focus than you would like.
- Autofocus is recommended. Many of the newer cameras have a

feature for animal eye focus, and when engaged, it directs your camera to identify and focus specifically on the animal's eye. You may want to check if your camera has this feature, and you may be pleasantly surprised (as this writer was) to learn something new about your camera.

- If you are shooting in autofocus, use Single Point Focus (AF-S) for posed subjects. For moving animals, use Continuous AF (AF-C).
- In terms of Aperture, if an animal is in profile, f/4-f/5.6 should yield reasonably sharp images. If an animal has a long snout or beak and is looking directly into the camera, you may need an aperture of f/11-f/13 to get the entire animal's face in focus.
- For wildlife photography, you will need shutter speeds of at least 1/250. 1/500 or faster is better. If an animal is running, you will need 1/1000 or faster. If a bird is flying, you will need 1/1250 or faster; you will need a faster shutter speed if they are flying towards you than if they are flying parallel to you.



Cruising - John Gill

Continued on next page

Tips for Photographing Wildlife - continued from page 22

- When photographing, take several shots (burst) so you can later choose which image is best.
- For photographing moving animals, consider panning: Ideally you should have a stable tripod, but if not, rotate your torso in sync with the moving animal while holding your camera with your arms tucked tightly at your side. Panning with a slower shutter speed will allow you to capture the motion blur around the moving animal. For moving animals, a shutter speed of 1/30 is recommended (this may be adjusted, depending on how fast they are moving). For birds, try 1/160.
- If you are hand-holding your camera, don't forget to turn on Image Stabilization, as this will reduce camera shake. If you are using a tripod, however, make sure Image Stabilization is turned off.
- In terms of metering, for wildlife photography, matrix metering or evaluative metering generally works best. For portraits, consider spot metering.
- Don't forget to check your histograms! Some recommend slightly exposing to the right (ETTR), where your exposure histogram is slightly right of center. Be careful not to blow out the highlights, though! The thinking behind this is that it's easier to bring out the details in a *slightly* overexposed image than an underexposed image, which will result in increased noise. See: [Expose to the Right](#)
- If your camera allows, consider saving your successful settings so they are easily accessed in a fast-paced photo session.

Compositional considerations

- According to Kevin Pepper, "Anything that does not make the shot better makes it worse."
- Your photos should tell a story. Make sure your subject has room to move in the frame.
- Make sure you follow the Rule of Thirds.
- Leave space between important elements so they don't merge.
- Avoid tangencies such as branches that appear to emanate from the head of your subject.
- Do not cut off body parts unless it is intentional. Pay attention to feet and paws!
- It's most important to have the eyes sharp and in focus. You also want to have a glint of light. When an animal makes eye contact with you, a connection forms, and this connection will also be felt by your viewers.
- In wildlife photography, the environment is an important part of the story. Ask yourself how the environment helps or hurts your image. Are there obstacles present? Do you want to include elements of the environment to help tell your story? Is the environment so busy that it takes away from your subject?
- Some say that empty space is the enemy of good wildlife photos. However, others believe you can use negative space to your advantage, especially if you want to emphasize your primary subject and reduce distractions.
- If the lighting is good on the subject but not on the background, consider doing a portrait. If the background compliments the subject, include it. Try to take both and decide afterwards.
- If you are planning to submit your wildlife photographs to Nature competitions, please be mindful of the specific rules for Nature Photography, especially those involving photo manipulation and hand-of-man.

Sources

Photographylife.com; rei.com; naturettl.com; kevinpepperphotography.com; nationalgeographic.com; secretatlast.com; fs.usda.gov; [wildernessshots.com](#); backcountryjourneys.com

Index of Tips and Tricks

Looking for tips about a certain topic in photography?

Before heading to Google check out this Index of Tips and Tricks listed by AVCC Focal Point issue. Cathy Robotis has curated information from many websites and sources each month to help members make decisions about how to shoot for a specific theme. You may find what you are looking for in a Tips and Tricks article. To access the issue containing the desired Tips go to the AVCC website and click on the Focal Point Newsletters tab.

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Did you know... Two Steps to Success

In Bryan Peterson's *Understanding Composition: Field Guide*, he recommends that **once you have filled the frame with your subject, you should walk two steps closer**. He feels that "if every shooter made it a point to get in so close so that the main subject(s) was touching the edges of the frame, compositional success would increase tenfold." Do you agree? Give it a try and see what you think!

Did you know...

There are many places in the local region to photograph wildlife. Darlene Holman suggests these favorite places:

- Assabett Valley Wildlife Refuge
- Salisbury Beach State Reservation
- Parker River Wildlife Refuge
- Great Meadows Nat'l Park
- Mount Auburn Cemetery
- Blue Hills Reservation
- Boston Public Garden
- Chain Bridge & Deer Island, Amesbury
- Mass Audubon Museum of American Bird Art Bird Blind
- Mass Audubon Daniel Webster Wildlife Sanctuary
- Mass Audubon Wellfleet Bay Wildlife Sanctuary
- Jenny Grist Mill Pond, Plymouth
- Nelson Park, Plymouth
- South Beach or North Monomoy, Chatham
- Chatham Fish Pier
- Pilgrim Heights, Truro
- Beech Forest, Provincetown
- Provincetown Harbor

The Bigger Picture

Upcoming Photography Workshops and Classes

Worcester Photography Group

More information including prices go to
worcesterphotographygroup.com

- [Beginner's Photography Class](#) - Sat 09 Nov - Near Downtown Worcester - 10am - 3 Hours
- [The City at Night](#) - Sat 30 Nov - Boston Worcester Turnpike - 5pm - 2 Hours

Other Nearby Photography Groups

- [Hartford Photography Group - Beginner's Photography Class](#) - Sat 05 Oct - Route 16, Colchester - 10am - 3 Hours
- [Providence Photography Group - Shooting in Manual Mode Class](#) - Sat 12 Oct
Bristol - 10am - 3 Hours
- Hartford Photography Group - [Using Light & Shadow in Photography](#) - Sat 19 Oct - Downtown Hartford - 10am - 2 Hours
- Providence Photography Group - [Composition in Photography](#) - Sat 02 Nov - Bristol - 10am - 2 Hours
- Hartford Photography Group - [Street Photography](#) - Sat 02 Nov - Downtown Hartford - 12pm - 2 Hours
- Hartford Photography Group - [Motion Blur](#) - Sat 16 Nov - Downtown Hartford - 7pm - 2 Hours
- Providence Photography Group - [Gear Essentials for Photography](#) - Sat 07 Dec - Bristol - 10am - 3 Hours
- Providence Photography Group - [Flower Photography Class](#) - Sat 28 Dec - Bristol - 10am - 3 Hours



Hoverfly on Daylily - John Gill

Hazel Meredith

- Hazel is offering an in-person workshop on Sunday Mar 9, 2025, at the senior center.
- The content will be Photoshop training. You can bring your laptop and work along as Hazel gives instructions. She will also solicit images from attendees in advance that can be worked on during the workshop.
- We also plan on holding the workshop on Zoom for those who cannot travel to the senior center.
- The workshop will be 3-4 hours and the cost is \$69. If interested contact John Gill.

Continued on next page

The Bigger Picture - Workshops and Classes - continued from page 26

Workshop Offerings through Mass Audubon at the Museum of American Bird Art in Canton

Take Control of your Digital Photos: Adobe Lightroom Workshop with Shawn Carey

Saturday November 9, 2024

- <https://www.massaudubon.org/programs/maba-education-center/93335-take-control-of-your-digital-photos-adobe-lightroom-workshop-with-shawn-carey>
- Bird Photography Master Class with Shawn Carey & Mike Milicia
Saturday November 16, 2024
- <https://www.massaudubon.org/programs/maba-education-center/93682-bird-photography-master-class>

Hunt's Photo, Melrose, MA

- They offer photo walks, photo adventures, and classes.
- <https://edu.huntsphoto.com>

Silvana Della Camera

- See her website for her many upcoming workshops and more:
- [Silvana Della Camera](#)



Local Happenings (Think Photo Ops!)

Newport, Rhode Island

- The Great Elephant Migration
- <https://www.discovernewport.org/blog/post/the-great-elephant-migration/>

Pollen Fill Up - Sheri Craig

NEBG at Tower Hill

- Tower Hill has some great things going on this fall – here are a few wonderful photo ops - if you have a membership you'd be crazy not to visit. <https://nebg.org>
- Aerial Art (Flora in Flight) by Patrick Shearn of Poetic Kinetics (ends October 31)
- Enchanted Forest, Nature-Inspired Fairy Houses by Sally J. Smith (ends October 31)

Old Frog Pond Farm and Studio, Harvard, MA

- “Around the Pond and Through the Woods” - now through October 14
- Self-guided tours around the pond and through the woods to view fifty-four sculptures. Open Wednesdays through Sundays from 11:00 - 4:00 pm. Admission \$10 for adults, \$8 for seniors, and \$5 for children.
- oldfrogpondfarm.com

Continued on next page

The Bigger Picture - continued from page 27

Photography Exhibitions

The Griffin Museum of Photography

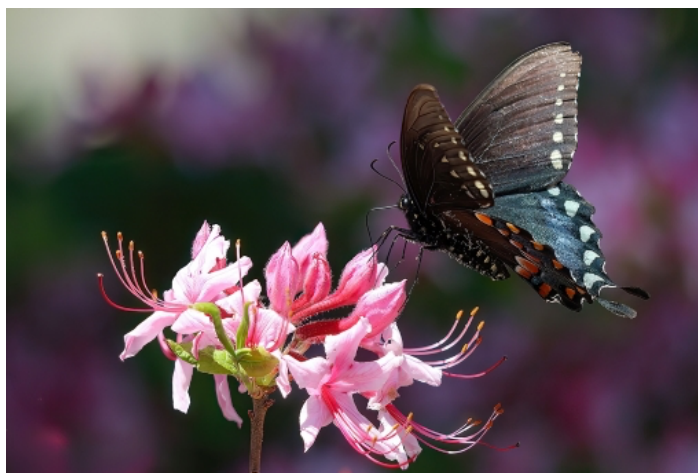
- Artificial Intelligence : Disinformation in a Post Truth World
Josh Azzarella, Rashed Haq, Haley Lohn, Andrea Orejarena & Caleb Stein and Phillip Toledano
September 6 – October 27, 2024
- https://griffinmuseum.org/show/ai_posttruth/

Blithewold Manor

- “Inspired Moments: Visions of the Newport Photo Guild”
- Blithewold Manor-Gardens-Arboretum- Bristol, RI
- Ranked by Yankee Magazine as one of the five best public gardens in New England, Blithewold, formerly home to the Van Wickles family, is a 45-room English-style manor filled with family heirlooms, framed by a series of lovely gardens and arboretum on Narragansett Bay. Blithewold’s mission is to preserve New England’s finest garden estate through excellence in horticulture and historic preservation.
- Visit website for info and more offerings: www.blithewold.org

MFA - Boston

- “The Meadow”
- In 1996 artist Barbara Bosworth began photographing a meadow in Carlisle, Ma. Returning regularly over the next 15 years, she used a large-format camera to capture images of the land at different times of day and in all seasons. Through the resulting series of photos, called The Meadow, Bosworth carries on a long-standing tradition of New England artists, poets, and naturalists who have chronicled the passage of time and traces of human presence in beautiful yet quietly unspectacular landscapes.
- MFA- Boston - [Barbara Bosworth](#)



Black Swallowtail on Azalea - Lynn Kerner

Continued on next page

Photography Competitions

Smithsonian Magazine

- Lots of categories including a competition for New England photography. Check it out.
- [Smithsonian Photo Contest 2024](#)
- <https://photocontest.smithsonianmag.com/photocontest/tags/new-england/>
- <https://photocontest.smithsonianmag.com/photocontest/rules/>

Sony World Photography Awards

- Open competition closes 3 January 2025
- Entry fee: Free
- Prizes A total prize fund of \$30,000 (USD) plus Sony digital imaging equipment, exhibition & more
- The Sony World Photography Awards spans four different photography competitions – one for professional photographers, another accessible to all, and Youth and Student competitions. They are all free to enter, and there are lots of different categories to choose from. Each year, the winning entries are displayed in a major exhibition at London's Somerset House
- Website www.worldphoto.org

The Nature Photography Contest

- Competition closes November 15, 2024
- Entry fee: 10 euros per photo
- Cash prizes & a tree planted for each participant
- 10 categories (includes macro, nightworld, birds, plantlife, landscape, underwater, environmental impact, sharing the planet,
- <https://thenaturephotocontest.com/>



Balloon, Inside view - Sue Abrahamsen



AVCC is a member of the following organizations:

NECCC



PSA



AVCC website:

<https://avcc.visualpursuits.com>

2023-2024 Executive Board Members:

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



Up and Down - Tony Monteiro

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.