



FOCAL POINT

<http://assabetvalleycc.com> - The club meets on the first and third Wednesdays of each month except July and Aug. Currently meetings are on Zoom and begin at 7:00 PM - Program starts at 7:30 PM. Email us at info@assabetvalleycc.com for more information or if you wish to attend as a guest.



Simple Still Life - Tony Monteiro

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Note from Our President

Greetings from Elliot!

As Elliot recovers he is thinking about the club and the upcoming meetings. He reminds us that the next meeting of Assabet Valley Camera Club is Wednesday, February 1, at 7:00pm. This will be a Zoom-only meeting. Silvana Della Camera will present Color, Contrast, Lighting, and Composition (or, what are you looking at?). Don't forget that February competition images are due a week from Wednesday (February 8th) at 11:59pm. The themes are Open and Nature. On deck for March: Music.

Note from the Editors

To start off, we want to wish Elliot a continued recovery. Elliot, let us know if you'd like any jokes to help you along your way. Just kidding! Health issues are nothing to take lightly and thoughts and prayers go out to you.

This month's Member Snapshot is Pam Meoli. Pam has been a club member for three years. What she shares with us is a deeply personal story. We promise you will want to spend quality time with this piece.

The Tips and Tricks section is all about fog. We've already had some fog, obviously very unusual for January, but we'll see more in the coming weeks and months. Get ready! Take the challenge.

If you didn't get a chance to respond to the quote we sent out, but would like to, please do. Send your reaction to Cathy Robotis. Here's the quote again from Elliot Erwin (a Documentary Photographer): "To me, photography is an art of observation. It's about finding something interesting in an ordinary place. . . I've found it has little to do with the things you see and everything to do with the way you see them."

And finally, for one of the most beautiful and poetic quotes, see below. And see our attempts at providing illustrative images. If any of you want to share some that you feel illustrate this, feel free to send them in.

It's the shortest month, the days are longer, we don't have nine feet of snow (uh, so far...), and it's the month of love. Send one of your favorite creations to someone you love.

*"I wonder if the snow loves the trees and fields, that it kisses them so gently? And then it covers them up snug, you know, with a white quilt; and perhaps it says, 'Go to sleep, darlings, till the summer comes again.'" - Lewis Carroll, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland: Through the Looking-Glass**



*Image Courtesy of
Mary Coombs*



Image Courtesy of Lynn Kerner

January Program

AVCC is pleased to present “Color, Contrast, Lighting, and Composition (or, what are you looking at?)” by Silvana Della Camera on Wednesday, February 1, 2023 at 7:30 PM. The presentation will be on Zoom. The meeting room opens at 7:00 with a 15 minute social time followed by AVCC business at 7:15. Nonmembers interested in attending as guests should email info@assabetvalleycc.com.

Silvana Della Camera

A software engineer by trade, Silvana began her fascination with photography as a very small child. The early fascination turned into a lifelong obsession. Decades later her passion never faltered, but her view of the world evolved. Photographing what the eye can't perceive is what she loves best to capture.

Past President of the Stony Brook Camera Club, she is the recipient of many photography awards. Her images have appeared in Lighthouse Digest, Yankee Magazine, and the Boston Globe, and were featured in Nikon's 100th birthday celebration. She has presented and judged at camera club councils, camera clubs, and art associations throughout the US.



Image Courtesy of Silvana Della Camera

Silvana helps others expand their own photographic vision through her photography workshops, photo walks, photo tours, private instruction, and club presentations on various photography topics including infrared, Milky Way, black & white, nightscapes, deep space photography, and time-lapse. She challenges photographers to consider that there is much more in a scene than what is visible to the human eye and to tap into the power of their cameras to discover it.

To her, life is best summarized by the quote “Life is a banquet and most poor suckers are starving to death.” – from the 1958 film “Auntie Mame”.

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Color, Contrast, Lighting, and Composition (or, what are you looking at?)

Photography is much more than pointing your camera at a scene and tripping the shutter. Weighing the assorted components within the frame of the viewfinder is important as it impacts the resulting image, and subsequently the viewer. Unlike painters who begin their art with a clean canvas, photographers begin with a canvas fully loaded. Recognizing how to evaluate and isolate the various graphical elements from this filled canvas enables the photographer to create an impactful, visual story.



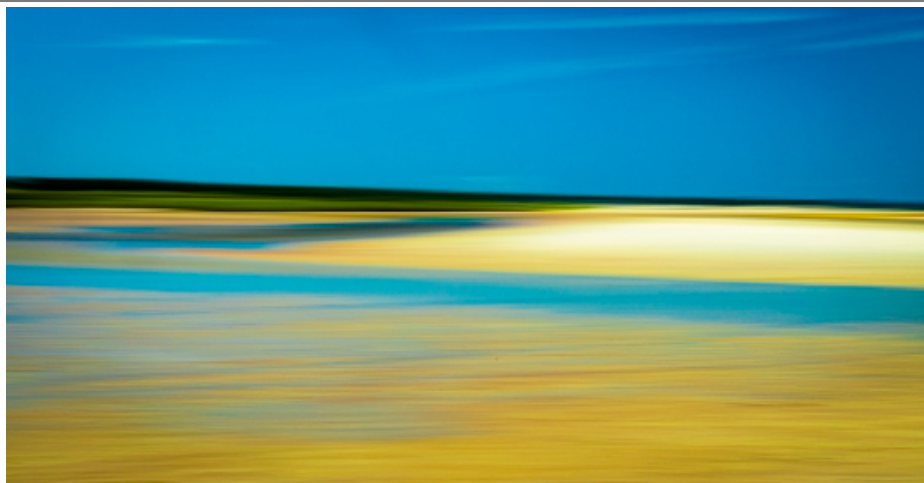
Image Courtesy of Silvana Della Camera

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Images Courtesy of Silvana Della Camera





Rock Harbor Pan 1 - Richard Tranfaglia

Looking Ahead - AVCC 2022-2023 Program Schedule

DATE	PROGRAM	PRESENTER
9/7/22	Member Showcase	AVCC Members
10/5/22	Photographing Birds	Jim DeLuco
11/2/22	Salute to NECCC Photographers	Barbara Rozavsky, HonNEC
12/7/22	Tips for New England Winter Landscape Photography	David Long
1/4/23	Certain Slant of Light	Suzanne Revy
2/1/23	Color, Contrast, Lighting, and Composition	Silvana Della Camera
3/1/23	Creativity with your Smart Phone	Hazel Meredith
4/5/23	NONE - Scavenger Hunt	N/A
5/3/23	What Went into Making My Award-Winning Image	Members TBD

Program information and presenters' biographies will appear in the newsletter for the month of the presentation.

Competitions 2022-2023

Monthly Competitions:

The club holds monthly image competitions including three categories: print, digital and open. 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. Please note that the Print competition has been suspended for the time being. See the [AVCC webpage](#) for more information about the rules and procedures for monthly competitions as well as the Scavenger Hunt, Multi-Screen, and PSA, and NECCC competitions. Pay particular attention to the rules for [“Nature”](#) submissions.

Schedule of Monthly Competition Category Topics & Submission Dates

Month	Print (suspended until further notice)	Digital	Open	Digital and Open Submission Date
September	Open	Garden/Flora/Fauna	Open	9/14/2022
October	City/Nat'l Parks	Nature	Open	10/12/2022
November	Nature	Old	Open	11/9/2022
December	Minimalism	Nature	Open	12/14/2022
January	Open	Inside the House	Open	1/11/2023
February	Nighttime	Nature	Open	2/8/2023
March	Nature	Music	Open	3/8/2023
*April	10 Scavenger Hunt Images for April 5 meeting			3/15/2023
April	Open	Nature	Open	4/12/2023
May	Open	Sports	Open	5/10/2023

Annual 2023 Scavenger Hunt & Multi-Screen 10 Competition Topics (note - the 2023 Multi-Screen Competition will not occur this year - this does not affect the Scavenger Hunt)

Backyard/Parks/Gardens Flora & Fauna	National, State & City Parks
Inside the House.	Music/Musical Performance/instruments
Old	Minimalism
Night time Blue Hour to Blue Hour	Emotion/Feelings
Sports	Compositional element(s)

PSA and NECCC

Selections made by the club representatives to the organization - Individual entries can be made. Placeholder entries may be submitted on the AVCC website under Submit Images to a Competition.

Member Snapshot

Pam Meoli

Photography for the greater good

To steal a famous line, “these are a few of Pam’s favorite things” – the color purple, dragonflies and her dog. For those who saw the annual Member Slide Show in Sept, you might recall Pam’s contribution entitled Just a Girl and her Dog. It was composed of images of her 6-year-old Cairn Terrier (like Toto from The Wizard of Oz) named Kuchen (pronounced “Koukin”) which means “cake” in German. Pam lived in Germany for 5 years; so, when she found Kuchen through a wonderful breeder, she decided to keep the name. Now she describes her as “my little cupcake.”

Pam took photography courses in college and was the photographer for the yearbook. She wandered around campus barefoot so often her nickname was “Granola.” Of course, at the time, it was all film photography and when digital came in, it felt like “cheating” to Pam, until her eldest son offered to buy her a camera! That changed everything! Other than Kuchen, her favorite is nature photography. She explains that “nature is [her] church” and that she feels closest to God when she is out amongst the beauty of our surroundings.

Pam likes to try many different things. She has taken advantage of a lot of Groupons for activities like a hot air balloon ride, taking a ride in a Cessna, flying a helicopter, horseback riding, and glass blowing to mention a few. So as a result of putting the slideshow together, she came up with the idea of writing, illustrating and publishing a children’s picture book titled Just a Girl and her Dog based on her life and activities with Kuchen. She says, “I’m doing it backwards, though - putting in the words after the illustrations rather than the other way around.” She’s turned her photos into illustrations using an app on her phone called “Prisma”.

September 2022 proved to be traumatic. Pam’s sister Maria, aged 63, was suddenly diagnosed with terminal cancer. Pam and Maria were very close. Maria was extremely brave through this battle, and very private. Her main focus from February 2022 on, was her son’s wedding in October. Maria pushed forward with all that she had planned, including a party at her home in Southborough for over 100 people. One thing she wanted to do as a gift was learn to play a song on the piano for her son and his bride-to-be. She hired the same piano teacher as she had for the kids (she also has a daughter, age 25) and learned enough piano to play Chicago’s 1970s hit “Colour My World.” Maria held off her treatment to attend the wedding in Plum Island over Columbus Day weekend, where she and her daughter, Lauren, sang the song.



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Member Snapshot - Pam Meoli - continued from page 8

Between Maria's diagnosis and her passing a mere two months later, she continued to plan and organize her son's wedding party plans - until things turned for the worst. Just one day after the party at her home, she was in and out of the hospital until the end. But one of the last things Maria said to Pam in the hospital was "I did it, I pulled it off!"



People do different things in their grief, searching for ways to go on and to heal. One thing Pam did was to get a tattoo in honor of her sister – “an angel on my shoulder that is looking out for me. It makes me feel closer to Maria.”



Another thing she did was to take her friend's suggestion to journal as part of her grief journey. This was something Pam had never done before, not even in a diary as a teen. She found a beautiful blue (Maria's favorite color) notebook with a dragonfly on it – it was perfect! She decided to not only write down ideas and thoughts for the book but to use it to write love letters to her dear sister.



Along with all the dog photos, Pam decided she wanted to sprinkle images of dragonflies throughout her book – images that are stylized from the dragonflies on the sympathy cards she received.

The dedication will say “This book is dedicated to my beautiful sister Maria who colours our world with love.”

Pam's intention was never to do the book for money. What started out to be a personal challenge ends up being a source of strength, comfort, love, and memory. She wanted to do something with the proceeds that would help others. There is a local non-profit based in Hudson, MA called “Tend To You” (www.tendtoyou.org). They deliver care packages of local, organic, small business products to people going through cancer treatment as well as their caregivers. Pam already donates photo cards to them, which are used for messages in the outgoing care boxes. This was the perfect idea, then! Have the proceeds go there!

Images in this article courtesy of Pam Meoli

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The book is still in progress and Pam hopes to get it out for publishing by the end of the winter. It will be sold on Amazon and don't worry – the club will be informed!
A sneak peek of the cover.....

In the end, Pam feels that she has found a way of healing, of using her photography, her experience, her observations, and her emotions for the greater good.



Image Courtesy of Pam Meoli



Sunrise over Essex - Pam Meoli



Baby Bunnies - Pam Meoli



Jewel Weed - Pam Meoli

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

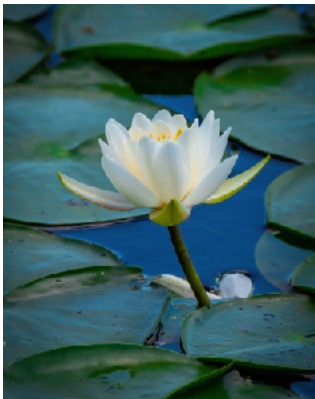
The Bigger Picture - Happenings in the World of Photography

Many thanks to the following members for their contributions to this month's Newsletter: Cathy Robotis, Lynn Kerner, Mary Coombs, Pam Meoli, John Mauro, and Elliot Mednick

Zooming Out

On the Wall at Cafe 641

This month's featured member at Cafe 641 is John Mauro. Installation will happen on Wednesday, February 1st. Be sure to check it out! Look for an email about a potential meet and greet. Next up at cafe 641 in March is Mary Coombs followed by Todd and Maureen Mathieson in April.



Pond Lily - John Mauro



*Holiday Season at the Old Stone Church
- John Mauro*

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Music and Photography

Next month's theme is music and to get you thinking about that here are two award winning images from past AVCC club competitions featuring musicians in concert. Reminder, you don't need to photograph a concert to fulfill the category!

WBUR recently posted information about a photography exhibit featuring Bob Dylan at the Boch Center Wang Theater in the Folk Americana Roots Hall of Fame (FARHOF):

Don't Think Twice: The Daniel Kramer Photographs of Bob Dylan, 1964-65

<https://www.folkamericanarootshalloffame.org/dont-think-twice>

A visit to FARHOF will yield more than photos of Bob Dylan, as there are several exhibits and perhaps some photo opportunities! Reservations are required and you need to schedule a tour - dates and times are limited. The cost is \$23 for adults and \$15 for children age 5-15. Go to the link above for more information. If you go please consider reviewing the exhibit for the newsletter.



Tesla in Concert - Liz Krouse



Garnet Rogers - Glenn Fund

Excerpt from an interview of Troy Paiva (Light Painting Photographer) by Andy Frazer - Night Photography Blog - August 25, 2011

"I played piano as a kid, guitar in high school, and upright bass for 12 years before giving up playing music for photography. I'm still a very active listener, and anyone who's taken a road trip with me knows that I have pretty eclectic musical taste. I'm especially fond of world music, free jazz, and [krautrock](#). The soundtrack to a photography road trip puts you in a certain state of mind. The best shooting is a lot like the best playing: you create a space for something interesting to happen by being present at a certain time and space with your instrument or camera. Thinking gets turned off for a while and intuition takes over. That's when the magic happens." - Troy Paiva

Zooming In

Quote of the Month:

We asked our members to consider this quote by Elliot Erwin (a Documentary Photographer) and share any insights they might have:

"To me, photography is an art of observation. It's about finding something interesting in an ordinary place. . . I've found it has little to do with the things you see and everything to do with the way you see them." - Elliot Erwin

Here are our responses:

Cathy Robotis: One of my goals this year is to learn to “see” more of what is around me, and to that end, I have challenged myself to find or create one interesting scene every day and take a photo of it (with my cell phone). The more I search, the more I see. The more I see, the more I contemplate the world around me.

Mary Coombs: I have begun to keep the phrase “put your camera in front of something interesting” (Troy Paiva) in my head as I walk along the trails where I take most of my pictures. My challenge is that I find so much that is interesting - to me. That old tree may not have the same appeal to anyone else viewing it as a photograph. So now the work becomes how to convey the way I see things through my images.



What does the Cat See - Jane Parker

Tips and Tricks - February's Theme: Shooting in Fog

Tips for Fog Photography

"I like the muted sounds, the shroud of grey, and the silence that comes with fog." - Om Malik

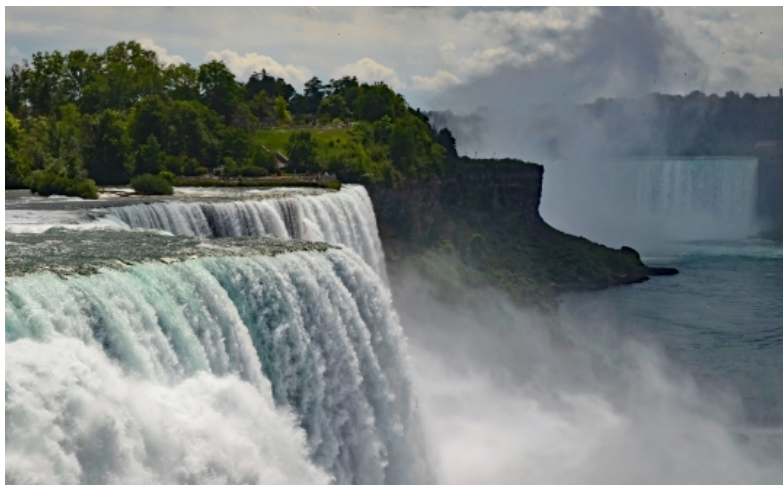
New England is known for its changing seasons, which present many exciting opportunities to capture the mystery and atmospheric vibe associated with fog. Here are some tips for taking photos in foggy conditions:

Preparing for the photo session

- Bring a tripod: This will allow you to use a lower ISO to reduce noise and grain.
- Bring a lens cloth to clean your lens in case of condensation on the front element of the lens.
- Make sure you have the best lens for the scene. A wide angle lens will make the fog look thinner. If you plan to use a telephoto lens, this will work better in scenes where there is a lighter, misty fog.
- The best time to shoot is very early in the morning (before sunrise) and sometimes later (after sunset).
- Pockets of light through the fog after sunrise can result in haunting, mysterious, and breathtaking images.
- Position yourself so that light comes from behind the fog.

Camera settings

- Shoot in RAW.
- Shoot in manual mode and plan to focus manually. Fog reduces contrast and scatters light, in effect causing a low light scene, which will make it difficult to focus well with autofocus.
- Consider using exposure compensation of +1 (you can experiment up to +2).
- Keep your ISO as low as possible to avoid grain.
- Consider using an aperture of f/5.6.
- If you want the fog to appear silky and smooth, shoot at a slower shutter speed (but not slower than 1 second). Use a faster shutter speed if you want a sharper image or if you want to freeze the fog.
- Be careful with longer exposures because this can make the fog lose its shape and make the photo look flat.



Water Power - Cathy Robotis

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Tips for Fog Photography - continued from page 15

Setting the scene

- Look for a sharp focal point. You can use a tree, fence, or structure as a subject.
- Make use of shapes and silhouettes. Silhouettes add eeriness, melancholy, and mystery.
- Reduce your distance from the subject to create depth. It is difficult to create depth, so get as close to your subject as you can. Simple fog shots can appear flat, washed out, and shallow.
- Avoid a longer focal length in dense fog.
- To create depth, layer the fog between foreground elements and the background.
- You can use fog to reduce clutter in the background.
- If shooting at night, use artificial light sources to illuminate the scene (street lamps, neon signs, traffic lights).
- Make use of negative space.
- Try to rise above the fog. For example, find a vantage point that overlooks a foggy scene.

Sources: Iceland-photo-tours.com; Splento.com; Expertphotography.com, digital-photo-secrets.com.



Foggy winter morning - Richard Beauchamp

March's Theme: Music - Please submit contributions to Cathy Robotis

The Bigger Picture

Photography Exhibits

deCordova Sculpture Park and Museum, Lincoln, MA

- New Formations: A mix of contemporary and vintage images celebrating leaping, jumping, and twisting through space.
- Through 3/13/23.

Rose Art Museum, Waltham, MA

- Lyle Ashton Harris: Our First and Last Love.
- 2/9/23-7/2/23.
- This exhibit consists of photos and bits of ephemera, placed on Ghanaian textiles, telling the story of the artist's life.



*Blue Dasher Dragonfly on White Lily
- Darlene Holman*

Isabella Stuart Gardner Museum, Boston, MA

- Fellow Wanderer: Isabella's Travel Albums.
- 2/16/23-5/21/23.
- This exhibit consists of a selection of pages from 9 of Isabella Stuart Gardner's travel journals, spanning the 1860s -1890s, when she traveled through Europe, Asia, South America, and the Middle East. The journals contain photographs, pressed botanical samples, notes, and watercolor sketches.

Griffin Museum of Photography, Winchester, MA

- Judy Black & Bjorn Sterri: Family Album (1/12/23-2/26/23).
- James Lustenader: Point/Counterpoint (1/12/23-2/26/23).
- Bonnie Newman: First Light (12/29/22-3/5/23).
- Marsha Guggenheim: Without a Map (3/2/23-4/16/23).
- Parker Thompson: Intimacies Long Lost: Selections from the Always Been Collection (1/12/23-2/26/23).

Cafe 641, Hudson - AVCC Member show that changes monthly - February - photographs by John Mauro

Upcoming Photography Workshops and Programs

NECCC - You be the Judge Miniseries - February 24, 7-8 PM (2nd of 3 part series)

- Making competitive Nature Images - go to <https://group.neccc.org/judge/> for info and registration.
- Note: I attended the first of this miniseries and found it very informative and well presented - you do not need to have attended the first part to register for 2nd - Mary Coombs

Worcester Art Museum, Worcester, MA

- Intro to Digital Photography: 3/2/23-4/6/23 and 2/26/23-4/2/23; \$185.

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The Bigger Picture - continued from page 17

C1M Academy, Amherst, NH

- Their website contains a listing of foundations courses, professional courses, and mastery courses, covering a variety of topics. They also list free digital photography webinars.

Assabet After Dark Program

- Digital Photography I (3/6/23-4/3/23, \$189).
- Digital Photography II (4/24/23-5/22/23, \$189).
- Smartphone Photography (5/16/23-5/23/23, \$75).
- Wildlife Photography Workshop with Steve McGrath (4/27/23-5/3/23, \$89).
- Cape Cod Lighthouse Photography Workshop with Steve McGrath (5/31/23-6/6/23, \$89)

Worcester State University, Worcester, MA

- Discover Digital Photography (6-week course, start dates 2/15/23 and 3/25/23, \$115).

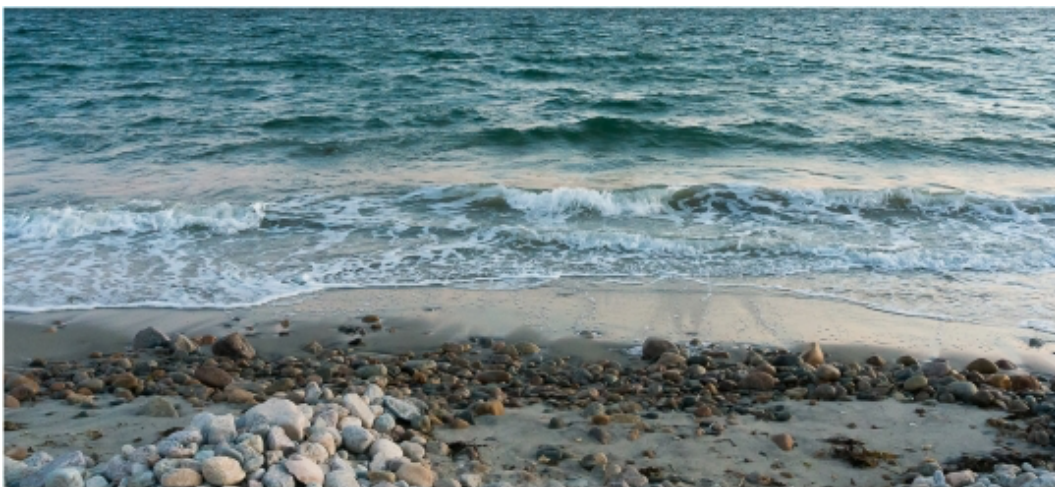
Upcoming Photography Competitions

earth.org Global Wildlife and Natural World Competition 2023

- Deadline 4/28/23 - Free to enter.
- There are 4 total cash prizes.
- Subjects include Wildlife in Peril 2023, Human Impacts on the Environment 2023, Climate Action 2023, and Overall Best Environmental Photo 2022.

Audubon's 2023 Photography Awards Contest

- Open to admissions 1/11/23-3/1/23 - You can submit multiple entries depicting birdlife.
- Divisions for entry include: Professional, Amateur, Youth, Plants for Birds, Videos.
- Please visit audubon.org for more details about this competition.



Ocean's Edge - Theresa Vachowski

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Events and Outings

New England Botanic Garden at Tower Hill in Boylston, MA

- Allure, An Orchid Exhibition.
- 2/11/23-3/19/23.

Ipswich Audubon Wildlife Sanctuary, Topsfield, MA

- Enjoy 12 miles of trails meandering through forests, meadows, wetlands, drumlin, and esker.
- There are opportunities to hand feed birds at the sanctuary, so remember to bring some bird seed.



Pam Meoli Feeding a Friend

19 Carter, Berlin, MA (Mentioned by members at our last meeting)

- Community Center providing programs, community activities, art exhibits, **music**, and more
- Irish Session Nights - Wednesdays from 7-10 PM come to play or listen - \$5
- To see Events Calendar and Information go to: <https://19carter.org>

Books of Interest

A Book of Days, by Patti Smith

If you enjoy the work of Patti Smith (musician, author, photographer), you might find her latest book very appealing. She has a collection of 366 images (in black and white) with notations, one for each day of the year (plus February 29th), which she describes as “366 ways to say hello.”



Sashay along the Bay - Dawn Law

“What Went into Making My Award-Winning Image?”

Calling all members!

The AVCC Program Committee is planning the May 2023 program as a member-driven program called “What Went into Making My Award-Winning Image?” and we need your help!

How many times during competition do we see an image and think “WOW, that is an amazing image, I wonder what went into making that image?” Now is our chance to find out!

Do you have an image that scored well in competition that you want to share the secrets on how you captured and edited the image for competition? If so, we are looking for volunteers from all three classes (AA, A, and B) to share their secrets!

Items that may be of interest to other club members when sharing what went into making the image are:

- Searching for the visual image in my mind
- Scoping out photo location
- Equipment set-up
- Why you chose the composition (light angle, background, etc.)
- Camera settings (f-stop, shutter speed, ISO, lens size, etc.)
- Image view pre- and post-processing
- Post-processing software and editing used

Please reach out to John Mauro, Program Committee Chairman if you are willing to participate!

Editor’s Note:

To date John is still looking for volunteers for this exciting program opportunity! There are so many beautiful and compelling images submitted for competition - please consider sharing your “secrets” with the club!



Pollinator at Work - John Gill



AVCC is a member of the following organizations:

NECCC



PSA



AVCC website:

<https://www.assabetvalleycc.com>

2022-2023 Executive Board Members:

- President: Elliot Mednick
- Vice President: John Mauro
- Secretary: Pam Meoli
- Treasurer: John Gill



Espresso Yourself - Lynn Kerner

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, and provide opportunities for competition, fun, learning, and camaraderie.

To see (most) of the volunteer positions and members please refer to your 2022-2023 Member packet. Consider volunteering!