



FOCAL POINT

<http://assabetvalleycc.com> - 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.



Thread-waisted Wasps - Lynn Kerner

*"Photography has been my way of bearing witness to the joy I find in seeing the extraordinary in ordinary."
-Harold Feinstein*

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Note from Our President

Hello All,

We closed out 2023-2024 season with a great banquet, awards ceremony, election of officers, and wonderful tribute to founding member Dave Reynard. It was our first banquet since Covid-19 shut everything down in 2020, and Linda Gilberti and Linda Shelales did an amazing job of organizing volunteers to bring food and help set up the Senior Center – it is like they never skipped a beat (or a few years, four to be exact)!! Robyn Saur did a great job organizing the touching tribute to Dave, and for providing the extra food to ensure no one went hungry!

For those that were not in attendance, it was announced that the Executive Committee awarded John Gill Lifetime Member status. John was nominated for this award due to his years of service, the many officer positions he has held in the club, and the committees he has served on for many years and continues to do so. See page 24 for more information about this award. Congratulations John!

As I close out my first term as president, I am truly grateful for the assistance and support that I receive from so many members. Without all of you truly amazing volunteers, many of whom wear multiple hats, the Assabet Valley Camera Club would not be where it is today. We are always looking for assistance, so if you have some free time and talent, and it does not have to be a lot of time, and want to give back to your club please let us know.

I would like to thank Glenn Fund for volunteering his time as treasurer for the club, and the coordinator for the Café 641 image wall space! Thank you for all of your hard work and dedication Glenn! I would also like to thank Pam Meoli for serving as the Secretary for the past few years! Both Glenn and Pam will be missed in these positions!

We welcomed five new members to the club this season. We hope that you are enjoying the club so far and welcome any feedback you have. Let's all spread the word, and see if we can double the number of new members for 2024-2025!

The Program Committee is soliciting suggestions for programs for the upcoming season. If you have ideas for programs you would like to see presented this year, please contact Pam Meoli, Jane Parker, Robyn Saur, or Dawn Law.

I hope everyone has a great summer, takes advantage of the field trips that are offered, and has an opportunity to get out and capture images of the beauty and color the season has to offer!

Again, my sincerest thanks and appreciation to everyone that helps make the Assabet Valley Camera Club what it is today!

Pudge

Note from the Editors

Every worthwhile accomplishment, big or little, has its stages of drudgery and triumph: a beginning, a struggle, and a victory. (Mahatma Gandhi)

Our June issue focuses on goals and accomplishments. We highlight awards for efforts this past year, and share responses to this month's member question, "Do you have plans or learning goals for your photography this summer?" The Tips section provides detailed steps on how to set and accomplish goals, as well as many ideas and links to help you learn new things, and find ways to challenge yourself. Speaking of challenges, your newsletter team decided to put out a little challenge to you all – photographically illustrate a beautiful quote from author Abby Geni. You will find the quote further on.

As for the wrap-up of this past club year, the final meeting (the official Annual Meeting) was held on June 5th. It included our first annual banquet since 2019. Many people contributed to planning, providing food, setting up, and breaking down. Huge thanks go out to Linda Shelales and Linda Gilberti for planning and coordinating such a beautiful and successful event.

The evening included a memorial to Dave Reynard, a founding member. Some of Dave's family and friends joined us for the event. Dave's good friend Robyn Saur, with help from John Gill and Maureen Mathieson, created and presented an exquisite slide show of Dave's photography and trips with the camera club, as well as photos of him with his family. Robyn says, "Dave really enjoyed the photo trips, especially the Albuquerque balloon festival. We went when he turned 50. I had been to all the places and it was fun to reminisce about good times on photo trips! It's a beautiful country and Dave did well capturing it."

The Annual Meeting also included the presentation of various awards, announcements of members who are "graduating" to the next Class, and the election of officers for 2024-2025. See all the results in a special section further on in the newsletter. This year John Gill was given a special honor - Lifetime Member status - for all the hours he has spent and all the roles he has taken on since he joined the club in 2011. Congratulations to all!

Our individual interview is with long-time member and club contributor, Todd Mathieson, our current PSA representative. Additionally, you will find stories and photos from club members who chased around the local area, or traipsed through the woods, searching out the best spots to shoot the Aurora on May 10th, the second time in two months that we were treated to a rare, major sky event.

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Note from the Editors - continued from page 3

For anybody who has caught the astrophotography bug, here is a resource for following planet and sun action to get ready for any sky events: www.space.com. The next photo op is June's full moon, called the Strawberry Moon. See specific astrophotography-related sites for this and other things in "Ideas for Summer Photography Goals" in the Tips section. Additionally, one of our judges and presenters, Silvana Della Camera, published this timelapse of the Aurora, taken in her back yard. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NLOhMoi-8pU>.

No matter what the summer brings you – rest, activities, or some of both, we hope you will find inspiration. Maybe even take a minute and re-read old newsletters for some ideas, tips and possible inspiration. Do not let the drudgery of trying and failing keep you from seeking and reaching that ultimate victory – a shot you love. There will never be a time like now.

"Do not wait; the time will never be 'just right.' Start where you stand, and work with whatever tools you may have at your command, and better tools will be found as you go along." (Napoleon Hill)

Summer Challenge

The Newsletter Team is offering all of you a challenge. Consider the following mesmerizing quote about the ocean that Lynn discovered. It is by Abby Geni from *The Wildlands* in 2018:

The sea was an abstract painting: a band of azure sky above a swatch of indigo water above a ribbon of wet brown sand above a smear of hazel beach...

We are challenging you to create a **photographic interpretation of that quote**, and we will be asking you to submit them so they can be featured in the September Newsletter. We can't wait to see what you come up with!

June - 2022-2023 - Image of the Year Awards

AVCC is pleased to present The Image of the Year Awards. The awards were presented on Wednesday, June 5, 2024 at 7:30 PM during a hybrid meeting which took place at the Hudson Senior Center and on Zoom. Charlie Burke chose award winning images in each class from images submitted for competition in the 2023-2024 club year. He also chose the Best in Class for each class, and from the Best in Class he selected The 2023-2024 AVCC Image of the Year. See the results on the following pages. All Images copyright © of the Makers.

Assabet Valley Camera Club (AVCC) - Image of the Year Awards

The 2023-2024 AVCC Image of the Year is awarded to Robyn Saur for her image “Wood Storks fighting”.



*1st in Class AA Open 2022-2023; Best in Class AA 2023-2024;
AVCC 2023-2024 Image of the Year
Wood Storks fighting - Robyn Saur*

Continued on next page

Class B 2023-2024 Image of the Year - Theme, Nature, and Open



*3rd in Class B - Theme: Things that Fly or Airborne
Fueling up for Take Off - Sheri Craig*



*2nd in Class B - Theme: Creative In or Out of Camera
Swirling Monarch 2 - Mary Coombs*



*1st in Class B - Theme: Things that Fly or Airborne
Dragonfly on Arrow - Pam Meoli*

Continued on next page

2023-2024 Class B Image of the Year Awards - continued from page 6



*2nd in Class B - Nature
Pensive 2 - Mary Coombs*



*3rd in Class B - Nature
Eclipse in totality - Jonathan Bush*



1st in Class B - Nature - Untitled - Paul Loiselle

Continued on next page



*3rd in Class B - Open
Eye to Eye with an American Raptor
- Sheri Craig*



*2nd in Class B - Open
Garden Stake Out
- Sheri Craig*



*1st in Class B - Open
2023-2024 -Best in Class B
Balanced Drop - Mary Coombs*

Continued on next page

Class A 2023-2024 Image of the Year - Theme, Nature, and Open



*3rd in Class A - Theme: Architectural Details
Architectural detail of Brooklyn Bridge
- Catherine Robotis*



*2nd in Class A - Theme: Things that Fly or Airborne
Hunting for Prey - Dawn Law*



*1st in Class A - Theme: Architectural Details
Blue Mosque - Glenn Fund*

Continued on next page

2023-2024 Class A Image of the Year Awards - continued from page 9



*3rd in Class A - Nature
Eurasian coot and chick
- Catherine Robotis*



*2nd in Class A - Nature
Fight for the Dust Bath - Lynn Kerner*



*1st in Class A - Nature
2023-2024 - Best in Class A
Out and About - Catherine Robotis*

Continued on next page

2023-2024 Class A Image of the Year Awards - continued from page 10



*1st in Class A - Open
Cabot 2 - Richard Tranfaglia*



*3rd in Class A - Open
Asher - Lynn Kerner*



2nd in Class A - Open - Jaipur Ravanhatta - Glenn Fund

Continued on next page

Class AA 2023-2024 Image of the Year - Theme, Nature, and Open



*3rd in Class AA - Theme: Creative In or Out of Camera
Rainbow Zebra - Doris Monteiro*



*2nd in Class A - Theme: Architectural Details
Architect Miguel Rosales for the Zakim Bridge
- Darlene Holman*



*1st in Class AA - Theme: Things that Fly or Airborne
Roseate Spoonbill, Orlando Wetlands - Darlene Holman*

Continued on next page



*3rd in Class AA - Nature
Heron with Catfish R1 - John Gill*



*2nd in Class AA - Nature
Crow with Prey - Doris Monteiro*



*1st in Class AA - Nature
Common Loons with Loonlets;
One Sleeping
- Darlene Holman*

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"Circumstances may cause interruptions and delays, but never lose sight of your goal. Prepare yourself in every way you can by increasing your knowledge and adding to your experience, so that you can make the most of opportunity when it occurs." — Mario Andretti

*3rd in Class AA - Open
Munching Grasshopper - John Gill*



*2nd in Class AA - Open
Surfing the Tunnel - Doris Monteiro*

Note: See page 5 to view the 1st in Class AA - Open image. This image, "Wood Storks fighting" by Robyn Saur, also received the Best in Class AA Award and the AVCC 2024 Image of the Year Award.

Looking Ahead - AVCC 2024-2025

Summer may have just begun but our AVCC Board and Committees are already working on programming and competitions for 2024-2025. Meetings will be Hybrid next year. And a reminder - the first program of the year in September is a member summer images slide show. Here are the details from the Program Committee:

- Our first club meeting will be Wednesday, September 4th at 7:00. This will be a hybrid meeting - in person at the Hudson Senior Center, or via Zoom.
- The topic will be a members' presentation on images of "What I Did This Summer". Please notify me via club email or personal email Robyn - Robynlee4@aol.com if you wish to participate. Each member will be limited to 5 minutes to give everyone a chance to present. You can use whatever format you want to present.
- If you are planning on attending in person, please upload your images to a thumb drive so that we can display the images on the screen and Zoom. If you have any questions, or need assistance, please reach out to Robyn.

Competition topics have been chosen for the year and summer is the perfect time to get a jump start on creating images for the themes as well as nature. See the topics for the monthly competitions on page 16. Competition meetings will be hybrid when possible with a live meeting at the Hudson Senior Center with remote connection available on Zoom.

Congratulations to four members of the club who will be moving up in class:

- Three members are moving from Class B to Class A.

Mary Coombs with 448.6 points

Pam Meoli with 435.3 points

Nick Andruzzi with 428.3 points

- Catherine Robotis is moving from Class A to Class AA with 456.0 points

The 2024 - 2025 AVCC Board was also elected at the June 5th meeting.

The Board Members are:

President: John Mauro

Vice President: Mary Coombs

Secretary: Jim Williams

Treasurer: John Gill

We look forward to seeing you in September!

"And at the end of the day, your feet should be dirty, your hair messy and your eyes sparkling." –Shanti

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

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.

Member Snapshot

Member Snapshot - Todd Mathieson

Todd was born in Springfield, MA and was raised in Worcester. His mother was a social worker and his father worked in sales and also worked for the state. He has a brother, sister, and niece in the Worcester area. Todd's law office is also in Worcester.

As a kid, Todd used the family Kodak Instamatic to take pictures of family events and functions. As a young man, his mother supported his photography by encouraging him to join a camera club. Although he didn't join one until much later, he did own two or three serious film cameras over the years. He never took any photography courses and never did any of his own dark room work.

In 2000 Todd met Maureen at a party given by his best friends, one of whom happened to be a colleague of Maureen's. One of their common interests was photography. Maureen introduced Todd to the DSLR camera, and lent him hers for a trip he took to San Diego. Todd then bought his first DSLR when he went on a camera club outing to a huge trade show in Boston put on by Hunt's Photo and Video.

Todd joined AVCC in 2001. He and Maureen now go on a lot of trips together both for the sheer pleasure of traveling as well as pursuing new images to share with family, friends and fellow competitors. Some of the places they have traveled to were trips with other camera club members: Nova Scotia (twice); the Montreal Balloon Fest (2009); Florida (2010); Washington State.; whale watches; and the Roger Williams and Southwick zoos. They also shoot in National Parks, wildlife refuges, and art museums.



Leopard Gecko - Todd Mathieson

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Member Snapshot - continued from page 17

In 2014 Todd and Maureen were awarded the honor of Master Member of New England Camera Club for their 15-year dedication to setting up and working “Photo-Ops” at NECCC and at AVCC. It is not just a physical set-up, but also includes Todd and Maureen helping photographers learn to shoot black light, still life, and water drops. People’s images from the water-drop set-up have been presented in AVCC competitions from time to time.

Todd describes himself as a “casual, spontaneous” photographer. He is not one to plan a day of shooting. His other hobbies are golf, cooking new things, and reading. His mild competitive streak comes out in golf, where he’ll make a few low-stakes wagers; participating in chili cook-offs; and camera club and other photography competitions. Todd’s “Whitmore Falls” image won third place in a PSA International Salon.



Whitmore Falls - Todd Mathieson

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Member Snapshot - continued from page 18

Todd has participated in local art exhibits such as at the bank in Hudson, the Marlborough Public Library, the Stow Airport, and Café 641. He has had multiple compliments paid to his work: he sold an image of Worcester's Union Station with the moon behind it to the Northborough Frame Shop, where he had taken it to be printed; when he got a B&W photo of Yosemite Valley printed in two different exposures, the shop asked if they could print one for themselves, and hung it in the shop; and he traded his photos of the Kerry Boys, an Irish band, for them to use on their album cover in exchange for a free copy of the album.



Union Station at Night - Todd Mathieson



Long view of Yosemite Valley - Todd Mathieson

Continued on next page

Member snapshot - continued from page 19

Todd has taken on many roles in AVCC: President, Judges Coordinator, PSA Rep. He has led two camera club field trips to Nova Scotia, has presented programs and helped out with competitions through the Competition Committee. He has organized inter-club competitions. He is a judge for other clubs' competitions, which indirectly contributes to AVCC because clubs in the same region trade judges to keep costs down.

Todd's passion for photography, and his commitment to AVCC is obvious, and was publicized in this article about him and Maureen in the Community Advocate in 2021.

<https://www.communityadvocate.com/2021/04/23/hudson-couple-share-passion-for-taking-pictures/>

Thanks, Todd, for all the ways you give to AVCC.

© Lynn Kerner



Ruby Beach Sunset - Todd Mathieson



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, Todd Mathieson, Pam Meoli, John Mauro, Darlene Holman, Jonathan Bush, Bob Cooke, Bridget Perch, Liz Krouse, Robyn Saur, Alan Mertz, Mary Strachen, Rick Beauchamp, Natalie Schiavone, Terry Vachowski, Sheri Craig, John Gill, Sue Abrahamsen.

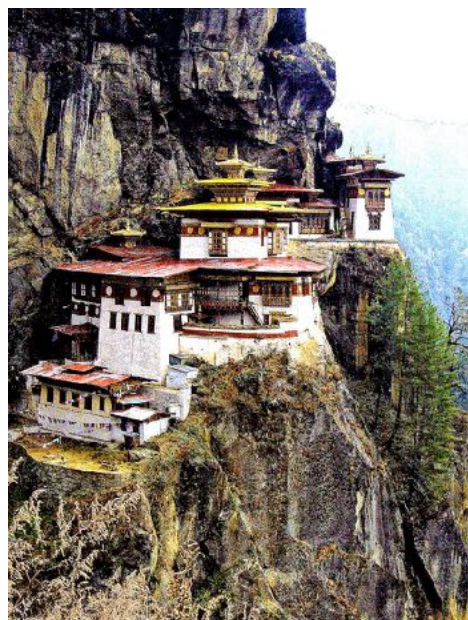
Zooming Out

On the Wall at Cafe 641

This month Cafe 641 will feature the work of Bob Cooke. There will be a Meet and Greet with Bob on Saturday, June 15 from 12 to 1:30 PM. Come enjoy a chat with Bob and some good food!

Coming up in July will be the work of Dave Morin followed by Eric Frere in August and John Mauro in September. If you are interested in hanging an exhibit please contact Jim Williams.

"Discipline is the bridge between goals and accomplishment." — Jim Rohn



Tiger's Nest - Bob Cooke

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Zooming Out - continued from page 21

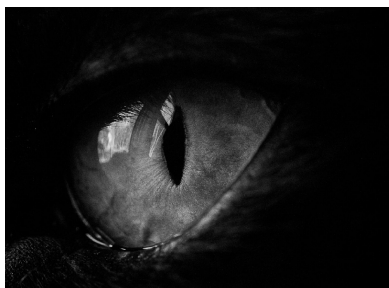
News from our members:

Liz Krouse:

Liz earned a Merit Award from the [Black&White Magazine](#) 2024 Portfolio Contest. Her work appears in a two page spread in the August 2024 Special Edition Issue #167. Congratulations Liz!



*Murphy, Northborough, MA
- Liz Krouse*



*Cat's Eye, Northborough, MA
- Liz Krouse*



*A Long Winters Nap, Northborough, MA
Liz Krouse-*

Bridget Perch:

I am having a photo show for the month of June at a place called Booklover's Gourmet
72 E Main St, Webster, MA 01570

I will be doing a "meet the artist" on Saturday, June 29 from 2-4.

Let me know if you have any questions.

Alan Mertz:

I am having a show of about 40 photos at the Acton Senior Center (30 Sudbury Rd., Acton, 978-929-6652) from June 17th to July 30th. If you want something to do and are in the area, please stop by then let me know what you liked/disliked. Thanks.

Robyn Saur:

[Hudson Valley Hot-Air Balloon Festival](#)

Location: Tymor Park in Union Vale, NY

When: August 30-Sept 1, 2024

Cost: \$13.95 - \$37.95 per person

What's Happening: tethered hot air balloon rides,
fireworks on Saturday evening, 5 launches between
Friday evening and Sunday evening

[US Northeast Hot-Air Balloon Festivals](#)



*Sheri with Friend at Butterfly Place
- Mary Coombs*

Upcoming field trips:

June 21 - SummitWynds - Lavender Days 3-9 PM

Check out the events page on the website and keep a look out for emails for information about additional field trips.

Continued on next page

Zooming Out - continued from page 22

Member Recognitions:

Congratulations are in order to those in the club who distinguished themselves in the annual competitions and to those who have won PSA awards and NECCC awards.

AVCC Trifecta winners!

- Special congratulations to Darlene Holman in Class AA for a total competition score of 500.8 points and for earning the highest scores in all three competition categories Class AA!
- Congratulations also to Mary Coombs for earning the highest scores in all three competition categories for Class B!

Both Darlene and Mary received a new award certificate named in honor of Dave Reynard:
The Dave Reynard “Clean Sweep” Award

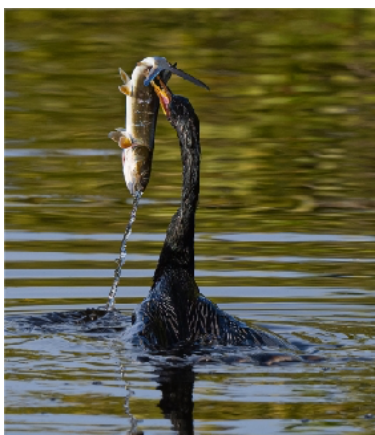
To see all scores and winners in Class AA, A, and B go to the AVCC website/Competitions/Digital Summary

PSA - Members earning recognition in Round 3 of the 2024 PSA Interclub Competitions: To see all PSA Interclub results click this link: [PSA](#)

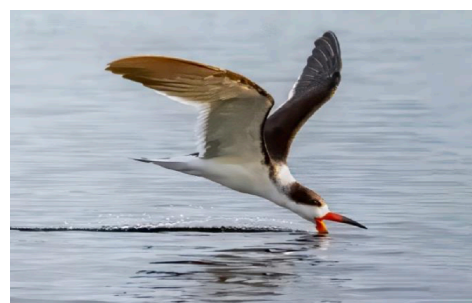
- Darlene Holman earned a Merit Award in the PID Color Competition, Group C for her image “Eastern Tiger Swallowtail on Pink Zinnia”.
- Mary Coombs earned a Merit Award in the PID Color Competition, Group C for her image “Pink Dahlia Detail”.
- Darlene Holman earned an Honorable Mention in the Nature Competition, Group C for her image “Grizzly Bear and Eagle Feeding on Salmon”.

NECCC - Members earning recognition in the 2024 NECCC Spring Digital Interclub Competitions: To see all NECCC Interclub results click this link: [NECCC](#)

- Sue Abrahamsen earned an Honor Award in Class A Color Category for her Image “Black Skimmer Skimming”.



Anhinga with Fish
- John Gill



Black Skimmer Skimming
- Sue Abrahamsen

- John Gill earned an Honor Award in Class A Nature Category for his image “Anhinga with Fish”.

John Gill - The Man of Many Hats



John Gill - Recipient of the AVCC Lifetime Member Award

Congratulations to John Gill for receiving the AVCC Lifetime Member Award by unanimous vote at the May 22, 2024 Executive Committee Meeting. John is most deserving of this award due to his years of service to the club and the many officer positions he has held in the club as well as the committees he has served on for many years and continues to do so.

John's Past Positions and Current Club Activities:

- Vice President - 2016 - part of 2017
- President - 2017 - 2021
- Treasurer - 2021 - 2023, 2024-2025
- Competition Manager - (judge procurement, getting images to judges, posting results, award certificates) for many years!
- Key Master/Equipment management/meeting set-up
- Hi-Jinx set-up
- Education - mini-tutorials
- Reciprocal Judge
- Web Administrator
- Annual Results and Ribbons
- And more...

Thank you John!

Zooming In

We asked members to share their aurora images and stories. Included are some stories from our intrepid club members and a sampling of the images we received. We are sorry we could not include all of them!



Image Courtesy of John Mauro



Taken with my iPhone - Natalie Schiavone



Image Courtesy of Natalie Schiavone



*Image Courtesy of Mary Strachan
From Edinburgh, Scotland*



Just came from Florida and this is my northern light. lol...would have loved to have seen them - Robyn

Continued on next page

Zooming In - Aurora Images - continued from page 25

From Jonathan Bush

Back on Friday, May 10th, shortly before getting ready to go to bed, my wife said “isn’t tonight one of the nights when the Northern Lights are supposed to be most visible?” I realized that it was indeed (not knowing how I had lost track of this timely information) and decided to step out the front door and check the skies to see, not with my eyes but with the help of my iPhone, some beautiful and unusual colors, mostly pink and magenta, appearing in the sky between the openings of the trees surrounding our house. I could immediately feel the tingling of goosebumps. At that moment I knew that going to bed was no longer an immediate priority. I grabbed my camera backpack and tripod, got into my car, and for the next 3 hours drove around Berlin, Boylston, and Clinton in search of some interesting foregrounds with a good northerly exposure. Although I got a few images I liked, I felt that this one was the best, titled “No Trespassing.”

I still find it amazing what current cameras can “see” at 12:30 a.m. on a moon-less night!

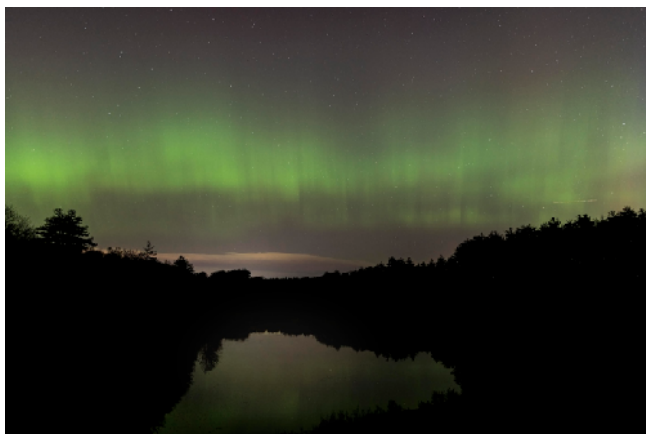
What was also interesting about this night was how communal it felt. There were a lot more people than I expected wandering around in the dark, as I was, with cameras and smart phones in search of a good location to capture this event that is so rare in this area. However, it sounds like we *may* get another chance in June! [June Solar Storms?](#)



Image Courtesy of Jonathan Bush

From Rick Beauchamp (with Jim Williams)

I went out on May 11 at 1:30 Am to the location I included (Ross dam in Berlin) and met Jim Williams. We were lucky to capture some images when we got there as time went on the cloud cover to the north came in. You can see some plane light streaks in some of the images.



Image, Aurora 1-1 : settings ISO 500, 24MM,
F2.8, 8.2 sec.
- Rick Beauchamp



Image Courtesy of Jim Williams

Continued on next page

From Lynn Kerner

My Aurora Borealis-chase:

On May 10th the Northern Lights were visible here, a rare occurrence. I wanted to go out and shoot, figuring it was perhaps a once-in-a-lifetime experience to have them right here. I knew that fellow members Rick and Jim were going to go to a trail near a pond in Berlin after midnight, when the clouds were supposed to clear out. I had been sick, and wasn't sure I was going to get myself together to go out that late. I told them I'd let them know if I was going, but I fell asleep. I woke up with a start at 12:30 a.m. and, after getting my gear together, and my settings set, I headed out. I couldn't reach them, but their cars were at the trailhead. I started down the rocky, dark trail that I had never been on before. I only got about 50 feet in before I turned around, worried about being on my own in the woods at 1 a.m. and possibly meeting a coyote. I didn't even know how far in Rick and Jim were. I was disappointed, figuring I was going to miss it, but decided to try Cordelia's Farmstand in Berlin before going home. I couldn't believe I could see some strange colors in the sky there! But the farmstand's spotlights were killing the dark. So I drove onwards to the top of Sawyer Hill Rd. in Berlin, and was rewarded with a beautiful view of the Aurora. Other people were pulled over, too. I got home at 3 a.m., only to realize that the Lights could be seen in between the trees behind my own house!



Aurora on Sawyer Hill - Lynn Kerner



Aurora with Big Dipper - Lynn Kerner

"Dancing lights, awaken the dreamer within." - Anon

Tips and Tricks - June's Theme: Setting Photography Goals

Tips for Setting Photography Goals

Setting Photography Goals

As this 2023-2024 Assabet Valley Camera Club year draws to a close, we celebrate a year of compelling photography, shared experiences, and meaningful moments along the flourishing path of our artistic journey. We have learned from a variety of interesting programs and from each other. We have learned from the critiques of our esteemed judges. If we were to take those “First day of school” and “Last day of school” photos that families often do for their children in September and June, we might not see that we are taller or more ‘grown up’ - in fact, some of us may be half an inch shorter. We might not see any changes, but we have changed. We have expanded our minds and developed new skills, leaving us with much to celebrate. June is a wonderful time of the year to revisit our accomplishments as we wind down to bask in the rejuvenating summer sun. It’s also a great time to plan for the upcoming 2024-2025 Camera Club season and set goals for continued growth and advancement.

Brainstorming

So, what have you accomplished over the past year in photography? What went well for you? What would you have liked to have done better? What are potential areas of growth for you in the upcoming year? Do you have any priorities - what do you think you might want to work on first? Take the time to think, and write things down; ideas tend to take on a life of their own when you write them down.

“You miss 100% of the shots you don’t take.” — Wayne Gretzky

Set goals that are **SMART**: *Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Time-bound*.

Specific: What exactly do you hope to accomplish? Do you want to achieve higher scores on competition night, for example? Do you want to learn a new skill? Macro, perhaps? Do you want to take better Nature photographs? Do you want to get away from relying on Auto Mode? Do you want to do something with your photographs? Maybe start a business selling them, make greeting cards from them, or turn them into gifts? Whatever your goal may be, write it down. Take the time to do some research and think about what you might need to do to accomplish your goals. Document all the steps you will need to take on your path to success.

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Measurable: Make sure that you have a measurable outcome. You might say that you want to take better Nature Photographs, but how will you measure that? Maybe you averaged 8.0 on competition night for your Nature photographs. Maybe your goal might be to have an average score of 8.3 next year. If you want to start a business with your photography, maybe you could set a goal to have a website up and running by 1/1/25 or that you will find one gift shop to sell some of your photo cards by 12/1/24. When you plan your goals, make them a little challenging, and don't be afraid to step outside of your zone of comfort.

Attainable: Are your goals realistic? No matter how talented you are, it's not likely that you will score a 10 with every Nature photograph, but you might well be able to bump your average score from 8.0 to 8.3 with careful planning and improvement of your technique. You might not be able to have a showing of your images at the MFA in Boston, but you may be well able to have them displayed at your local library.

Relevant: Look at the big picture. Are your goals relevant? Do they move you in the direction of your overall ambition? If you really want to be a better Nature photographer or start a business, your goals should be a blueprint to help you move towards those goals.

Achievable: Can your goals be accomplished? If you are trying without success, maybe you need to reassess your goals and re-examine your strategy to achieve them. Remember: **Setbacks are not failures**. Setbacks tell us that our plans may not be effective. We learn and grow from our setbacks. We are fortunate enough to be in the shared company of many talented photographers. Do any fellow members have similar goals to yours? Maybe you can work together to help each other and/or share strategies. Are any of our fellow members experts at what you are trying to achieve? Try reaching out to them for assistance. Another important point to remember is that **if you are trying something new, it takes about a month for it to become habitual**. If your goal is to shoot a certain number of photos every day, you may have to push yourself at the beginning, but after about a month, it will become part of your daily routine.

Time-bound: Putting a time-frame on your goals will help you form benchmarks to assess your progress. If you want to have a website up and running by 1/1/25, you can't sit down to do it on 12/31/24. You need to set dates to accomplish the various steps of the process so you are ready for the big day. If you want to take better Nature photographs, you probably don't want to be out by a frozen pond in February, camera in hand, hoping that the ducks will do something interesting for the Nature submission that is due by midnight (as this writer has done in the past). A better goal might be to have 4-5 competition-worthy Nature shots by the first meeting in September, which will give you the entire summer to look for compelling Nature shots without worrying about camera shake from your shivering hands.

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Ideas for summer photography goals

Now that we are all thinking about ways to grow through the summer, here are a few ideas. Whatever you decide to do, we hope you enjoy your summer, and we can't wait to see you all back again in September. And in the words of our own Bob Cooke, "Keep clicking!"

- Do you want to make the jump from Auto to Manual? Here is a link you might find helpful: <https://www.thephoblographer.com/2019/06/25/this-cheat-sheet-will-help-you-learn-manual-photography-better/>
- Do you want to try Time Lapse Photography? Here is a link recommended by John Mauro. The article was written by Silvana Della Camera: <https://silvanadellacamera.com/how-to-create-a-timelapse/>
- Are you thinking more in philosophical terms and trying to find your artistic voice? Here may be a place to start: <https://mastinlabs.com/blogs/photoism/finding-your-creative-voice>.
- Do you want to try a photography challenge? Check out Jonathan Bush's interesting idea listed below. Photography challenges are a great way to refine your skills and open your eyes to what is around you. There are many photo challenges on the internet that you can participate in. You may find this link helpful: <https://shotkit.com/photo-challenge-ideas/>.
- Do you want to improve your composition? Many in the AVCC have known or worked with Norm Eggert. He has recommended Bryan Peterson's book: *Understanding Composition: Field Guide*. If you have it on your bookshelf, you might want to revisit it to see if there was anything you missed the first time around. You might consider investing in a book, doing some internet research, or perusing the photography resources at your local library or book shop. Here is an online site on composition: <https://petapixel.com/photography-composition-techniques/>.
- Do you want to improve your Nature Photography? Now is the time to visit Bruce's Pond and the local wildlife refuges. Opportunities await you. There is always safety in numbers, so consider inviting a friend.
- Are you a macro enthusiast? Here is a site you might find interesting: https://www.shutterstock.com/blog/macro-photos-surprising-tips?gad_source=1&gclid=CjwKCAjwgpCzBhBhEiwAOSQWQaovpu6ETgzWh902ChCRI7pLDmtwPHF3hogDYOT4Y3Ps4vnJhD8NYBoCuikQAvD_BwE



And the Chase is On! - Nick Andruzzi

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- Are flowers your passion? Tower Hill and other beautiful gardens are in bloom. The lotus pit in Framingham will soon be full of flowers and insects; look for email updates from your fellow members who kindly spread the word when the time is right and sometimes organize meetups there. Here is a website on flower photography that might inspire you: <https://visualwilderness.com/fieldwork/flower-photography-tips-for-capturing-stunning-photos>.
- Do you want to go on an organized photo walk? Check out the Hunt's schedule: <https://edu.huntsphoto.com/photo-walks/>.
- Do you want to participate in group outings with members of the club? There are a few being organized by fellow members, so keep your eyes peeled for emails and updates. If you have an idea for an outing, reach out to fellow members to see if you can organize something.
- Do you want to work on your post-processing skills? If you use Lightroom or Elements, there are plenty of tutorials on the internet to help you with problems or learning specific techniques. You can also check out this site with helpful strategies for post-processing: <https://photographylife.com/post-processing-rules>.
- Are you interested in working on Astrophotography? Here is a website for you: <https://www.photographytalk.com/astrophotography-tips-for-beginners>. Here is another about the June full moon: <https://www.space.com/36992-june-full-moon.html> and one with an article and calendar of moon events, including eclipses: <https://www.spac.com/16830-full-moon-calendar.html>.
- Do you want to get a jump on Abstract Photography ahead of the next competition season? Start your research here: <https://www.adorama.com/alc/abstract-photography-for-beginners-9-tips-for-capturing-stunning-abstract-images/>.
- Do you want to set a goal of entering a photo competition outside of the club? Terry Vachowski suggested this competition from Mass Audubon: <https://www.massaudubon.org/programs-events/photo-contest>. Another photo competition idea is the Massachusetts Agriculture Calendar Contest. At least 2 of our members have had photos featured in their calendar in past years. <https://www.mass.gov/doc/photo-contest-entry-details-and-form/download>. Others are also listed below.

Sources: myclickmagazine.com; Digital-photography-school.com; williambeem.com; the click community.com; thephoblographer.com; shutter stock.com; outdoorphotoacademy.com; photofocus.com.



*Impromptu Meet-up at Bruce's Pond
Darlene, Lynn, Jim, and Cathy looking
for swan shots
-Mary Coombs*

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Summer Photography Goals

We asked our members the following question: Do you have plans or learning goals for your photography this summer? Here is what they shared:

Terry Vachowski: My only goal for photography is to learn how to edit raw files on my phone.

Pam Meoli: My photography goals are the same as they were last summer - in fact, the same as the summer before also! To stock up on Nature photos! When I first joined club in 2017 I thought I'd have "nature in the bag" as they say. WRONG! With my first submission getting disqualified because they were "hybrid tulips", I didn't even know that was a thing! Fast forward.....still trying to get that Nature category down. I used to be a huge Macro photographer but my style has changed over the years as I've learned and grown, so I'm going to try more vistas and non macro.

Jonathan Bush: For my summer photography goals, I simply want to shoot more and do a few 1-prime-lens-all-day challenges (where I shoot with, for example, a 35mm lens all day in a single location, like Boston).

Natalie Schiavone: As for summer goals... I'd like to work more on some macro shots and maybe some landscape. I'm excited to have a little more free time to enjoy photography this summer. I also really need to get organized and delete the old photos to that are just taking up space!

Robyn Saur: I am going to try doing some night photography, beach scapes and hopefully go to the balloon festival.

Bridget Perch: My goal this summer is to work on nighttime photography. I would like to get pictures with the stars and maybe even get some northern lights if that is possible.

Lynn Kerner: Goals: 1. Master my "new" camera; 2. Learn Lightroom, especially masking; 3. Try more astrophotography.

Cathy Robotis: Goals! I am all about goals! Sometimes, they are accomplished; more often, they remain in the clouds. We recently moved up to Maine, so this is a time of change and chaos. When I get out from under the boxes, I want to get out with my camera and do some exploring in my new surroundings. I want to force myself to work with the tripod more and use more purposeful camera settings, which will be really challenging for this Kodak Instamatic girl who is living in a DSLR world.

Mary Strachan: No plans for this summer, but August 2025 we are booked on a cruise up the coast of Norway. We'll explore up to the Arctic Circle. It's more of an adventure cruise rather than a luxury one. They even have photography equipment and lessons on board!

*"If a goal is worth having, it's worth blocking out the time in your day-to-day life necessary to achieve it."
— Jill Koenig*

The Bigger Picture

Upcoming Photography Workshops and Programs

American Graphics Institute, Boston, MA

- They offer courses on studio lighting, lighting and composition, beginner/intermediate photography, Photoshop Lightroom, real estate photography, and SmartPhone/iPhone photography.
- For more information: agitraining.com.

Hunt's Photo, Melrose, MA

- They offer photo walks, photo adventures, and classes.
- Upcoming in-person and online courses include: Beginner photo series, Lightroom, Photographing migratory and songbirds (online), and Landscape photography..
- For more information: www.edu.huntsphoto.com. <https://edu.huntsphoto.com/calendar/>

Boston Photography Workshops

- They offer online and in-person classes on a variety of topics, including: Digital Cameras I & II, Better Composition/Photowalk, Organizing Photos, Night Photography, Food Photography, Portraiture, and Lightroom Classic.
- For further information: bostonphotographyworkshops.com.

Worcester State University

- They offer many interesting courses, such as: Discover Digital Photography, Mastering your Digital SLR or Mirrorless Camera, Secrets of Better Photography, Photographing Nature with your Digital Camera, Photographing People with your Digital Camera, Intro to Lightroom Classic CC, and Photoshop Elements for the Digital Photographer.
- Classes are typically 24 course hours over 6 weeks, and prices range from \$115-\$335.
- Further information: ed2go.com.

Assabet After Dark

- They offer a variety of in-person and online photography classes.
- The Fall Catalog is available on the website, and you can register for classes
- https://assabetace.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/2024_Fall_ACE-Catalog5.28-2.pdf

Middlesex Community College

- They offer a Digital Photography Certificate Program which includes courses such as Digital Photography I, Digital Photography II, The Business of Photography, and Adobe Photoshop Creative Cloud.
- Contact: middlesex.mass.edu.

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Photography Exhibits

Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, MA

- The Howard Greenberg Collection (ongoing).

Panopticon Gallery in Boston, MA

- Alex Joseph Hansen: Glacier: Bradford Washburn's Mountain Photography Meets Contemporary Counterpart, 5/1/24-7/30/24.

Worcester Art Museum in Worcester, MA

- New Terrain: 21st Century Landscape Photography, 4/6/24-7/7/24.

Griffin Museum in Winchester, MA

- Our Town 2024/Vision(ary), 6/7/24-9/27/24.
- Vision(ary)/Portraits of Cultures, Communities, and Environments, 6/7/24-9/27/24.

Robert Klein Gallery in Boston, MA

- Sage Sohler: Passing Time, 5/2/24-6/21/24

Photography Competitions

Vienna International Photo Awards 2024

- Deadline: 6/15/24.
- Prizes include an exhibition at VIE Photo in September 2024 in Vienna. Winners also receive the VIEPA photo book.
- Contact: www.viepa.org

National Landscape Photography Awards

- Deadline: 7/31/24.
- Category: Landscape Nature.
- Cash prizes.
- Contact: nationallandscapeawards.com

The Comedy Wildlife Photography Award

- Deadline: 7/14/24.
- Category: Single category.
- Free entry.
- Contact: comedywildlifephoto.com

2024 Black and White Award from The Independent Photographer

- Deadline: 6/30/24
- Category: Black & White.
- This is an international exhibition.
- Cash prizes.
- Entry fee: \$15/1 image; \$30/3 images; \$40/6 images.
- Contact: independent-photo.com



Brown Pelican in Flight - Tony Monteiro

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URBAN Photo Awards 2024

- Deadline: 6/16/24.
- Categories: Streets, People, Spaces, Creative.
- This is part of the Trieste Photo Days Festival.
- Entry fee: 15 euro/1st image; 9 euro/subsequent image(s).
- Contact: urbanphotoawards.com

International Garden Photographer of the Year

- Deadline: 10/31/24.
- Cash prizes.
- Categories include: The Beauty of Plants, Abstract Views, Beautiful Gardens, and more.
- Contact: igpoty.com

Mass Audubon Picture This Photo Contest

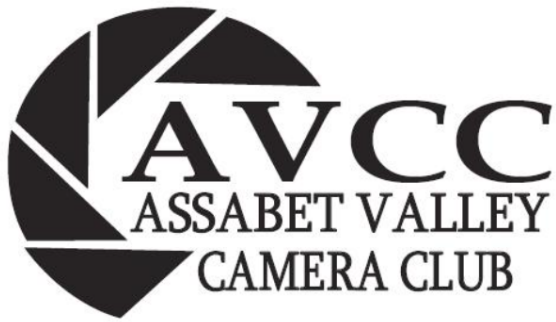
- Submissions accepted 6/1/24-9/30/24.
- They are accepting digital photographs of people in nature, as well as those that highlight the beauty and diversity of Massachusetts wildlife, plant life, and landscapes.
- Photographs have to have been taken in Massachusetts or at their Wildwood Camp in Rindge, NH.
- They will accept up to 10 photos.
- There are cash prizes.
- <https://www.massaudubon.org/programs-events/photo-contest>

Massachusetts Agriculture Calendar 2024 Photo Contest

- Deadline: 7/1/24.
- They are looking for photos that depict aspects of Massachusetts agriculture or horticulture, with a higher preference given towards photos taken on a farm.
- Photos have to have been taken within the past 3 years.
- Up to 5 photos per contestant.
- <https://www.mass.gov/doc/photo-contest-entry-details-and-form/download>



Catching Rays!! - Eric Frere



AVCC is a member of the following organizations:

NECCC



PSA



AVCC website:

<https://www.assabetvalleycc.com>

2024-2025 Executive Board Members:

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



*Iris on the Assabet River
- Theresa Vachowski*

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 2023-2024 Member packet.