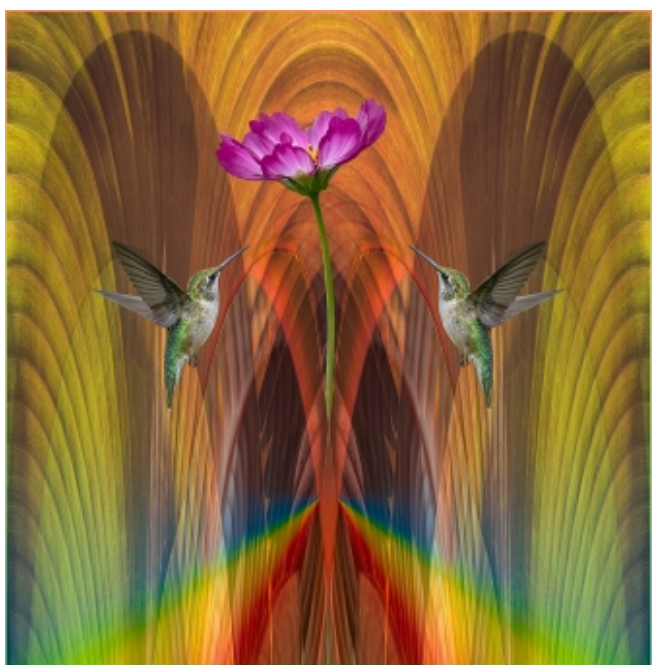




FOCAL POINT

<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.



Natures Elements - Darlene Holman

"Behold, my friends, the spring is come; the earth has gladly received the embraces of the sun, and we shall soon see the results of their love!"

- Sitting Bull

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Note from Our President

Hello All,

Spring is here and soon the club year will come to a close. The last meeting of the season is June 5th and is the annual awards meeting. Pre-COVID, we had a banquet held that same evening. We would like to return to that tradition and we envision a pot-luck style dinner which will also include a tribute to Dave Reynard, a founding member of AVCC, and the annual awards announcements. A team of volunteers are already working on the details. Robyn Saur is planning the tribute to Dave and Linda Shelales and Linda Gilberti are planning the banquet. Please look for emails with more information.

AVCC will turn 40 in 2025! As we approach our 40th anniversary we are looking for ideas to celebrate our 40 years as a club. If there are enough ideas, I would like to organize a committee to move potential ideas forward and begin some initial planning.

There remain opportunities to volunteer as Program Manager and Grant Writer. Remember "Many hands make light work."

Please reach out to me if you want to volunteer for any of these opportunities.

Thank you for your consideration!

The by-law committee is working on updating the club's bylaws as well as to define the committees and their roles in the club. Stay tuned for more information.

Thank you to all the volunteers who work to keep the club vibrant!

Pudge



Wind spinner - Bridget Perch

"Concentrate all your thoughts upon the work at hand. The sun's rays do not burn until brought to a focus." - Alexander Graham Bell

Note from the Editors

“April prepares her green traffic light and the world thinks, ‘Go!’” Christopher Morley’s words speak volumes to us in New England, don’t they? This winter we endured fog, grayness and cool, clingy, wet weather more like the Pacific Northwest than the Northeast. Some of us may have missed the gifts of sparkling whites and silvers in our normal snow and ice. After all that gray the cheerful greens and colors of early spring relax our bodies and put smiles on our faces.

New life always provides lots of opportunities for Nature photos, which is our theme this month. The swan is on her nest at Bruce’s Pond in Hudson, so stay tuned for more cygnets. With luck, they will all manage to evade the snapping turtle this summer.

We are looking forward to the April presentation by Hazel Meredith on “HDR (High Dynamic Range) Imaging – ‘The Natural Look,’” which is sponsored in part by a grant from the Hudson Cultural Council which is supported by the Mass Cultural Council. We will learn how to utilize HDR “to create a ‘natural’ look... while accenting texture and details.” Some of us (ahem) who have an HDR setting in their camera, but no idea how to use it, are very excited.

April is presenting us with a dramatic solar eclipse on April 8th. A group of members are going up to Vermont where there will be totality. We will share some of those experiences next month, but meanwhile, while we are thinking about the sky, we decided to feature some members’ dramatic sky photos along with spring photos. If you’re shooting – or just looking at – the eclipse, please be safe. Even scratches on the eclipse glasses can let in enough dangerous light to affect your eyes.

Ralph Waldo Emerson said, “The sky is the daily bread of the eyes.” Enjoy the feast!



Capturing the sunset - Catherine Robotis

April Program

AVCC is pleased to present HDR (High Dynamic Range) Imaging - "The Natural Look" presented by Hazel Meredith on Wednesday, April 3, 2024 at 7:30 PM. The meeting will be held on Zoom only due to weather considerations. Look for the email from John Mauro with the Zoom link. 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. Non-members interested in attending as guests should email avcc.digital@hotmail.com.



HDR (High Dynamic Range) Imaging - "The Natural Look"

Hazel Meredith, APSA, HonNEC

Hazel Meredith is an award-winning photographer, teacher, speaker, workshop leader and a highly respected competition judge. In 2007, she began teaching post-processing techniques through local adult education programs, and now teaches at camera clubs and conferences across the U.S. as well as through her own workshops. She also offers her own webinars on various creative post-processing techniques, and has done webinars for Topaz Labs.

She released her first eBook, "Working with Textures & Overlays: Turn Ho-Hum into a Work of Art" in 2015, and the sequel in April 2019. Hazel loves the creative aspect of photography and post-processing, especially the use of textures, overlays and software to create unique images. She enjoys teaching and sharing her techniques to assist other photographers in realizing their own creative visions. In 2017 she and her husband, Dave, founded the "Creative Photography Conference" in New England. The event has begun moving around the country, expanding from its first years in MA.



Image Courtesy of Hazel Meredith

Continued on next page

April Program - "The Natural Look" - continued from page 4

Hazel is actively involved with the photographic community, and has held leadership roles and received honorary distinctions from several organizations. In the Fall of 2020 she was the recipient of the *Ashbrook Award for Digital Imaging Instruction* from the Photographic Society of America. She believes that camera clubs are a great way to share the passion of photography and keep learning and sharing new techniques.

HDR (High Dynamic Range) Imaging – “The Natural Look”

High Dynamic Range – what does that mean? Our eyes can see much more light in a scene than our cameras can capture. The purpose of HDR is to capture the extremes of light that your camera cannot capture in one image (for example, when there are very bright highlights and/or deep shadows where you wish to retain detail). Typical definitions consider it a process of capturing a high dynamic range of light and rendering it in a single image, which consists of putting it through a program that can “tone map” the image – I will be demonstrating with Photomatix, Nik & Aurora.

People often think of HDR images as the highly processed “grunge” look. This seminar will show how to utilize HDR for creating a “natural” look in your final image (even on flowers) while accenting texture and details.



Old Barn - Image Courtesy of Hazel Meredith

www.MeredithImages.com

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*Arched - Image Courtesy of
Hazel Meredith*



REO - Image Courtesy of Hazel Meredith

Hazel Meredith, APSA, HonNEC, has been teaching photographers how to perfect their images and be creative since 2007. She has taught for several adult education programs; at many national and regional photographic conferences; and at camera clubs throughout Connecticut, Massachusetts, New York and beyond. She also offers her own workshops through Meredith Images. She has been an active member and officer for many camera clubs and organizations, and was awarded her APSA from the Photographic Society of America in 2013, and in 2018 received her HonNEC (Honorary Member of the New England Camera Club Council). In 2020 she was presented with the PSA Ashbrook Award for Digital Imaging Instruction. In 2017 she and her husband, Dave, founded the Creative Photography Conference, which is now Virtual. She has written 2 eBooks on "Working with Textures & Overlays: Turn Ho-Hum into a Work of Art". The eBooks as well as her own line of textures are available in her Peacock Studio online store at MeredithImages.com.

This program is supported in part by a grant from the Hudson Cultural Council, a local agency which is supported by the Mass Cultural Council, a state agency.





Evening fishing from jetty - Lynn Kerner

Looking Ahead - AVCC 2023-2024 Program Schedule

Date	Program	Presentor
9/6/23	"What I did this Summer" Member Slideshows	AVCC Members
10/4/23	"Architecture Abstracts"	Angie McGonagle
10/25/23	*Special Program in Honor of Elliot Mednick	Essdras Suarez
11/1/23	"ICM - More than just Pretty"	Silvana Della Camera
12/6/23	Photographing Trees and Forests	Paul Nguyễn
1/3/24	"What were they Thinking?" How images are judged	Todd and Maureen Mathieson
2/7/24	"Flower and Garden Photography"	Irene Sacilotto
3/6/24	"A Murmur in the Trees"	Suzanne Revy
4/3/24	"The Natural Look" HDR Imaging	Hazel Meredith
5/1/24	TBD	TBD
6/5/24	Image of the Year Awards - Dave Reynard Tribute	

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

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

Competitions 2023-2024

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. 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	Print (Details TBD)	Digital	Open	Digital and Open Submission Date
September		Monochrome	Open	9/13/2023
October	Tools	Nature	Open	10/11/2023
November	N/A	Architectural Detail	Open	11/8/2023
December	Still Life	Nature	Open	12/13/2023
January	Open	In the Woods	Open	1/10/2024
February	Entryways	Nature	Open	2/14/2024
March	Nature	Creative (In or out of camera)	Open	3/13/2024
April	Open	Nature	Open	4/10/2024
May	Open	Things that Fly or are Airborne (in honor of Elliot)	Open	5/8/2024

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.

NECCC has moved to have individual print competitions rather than interclub print competitions at this time. The NECCC Individual Print Competition will be hosted at the Greater Lynn Photographic Association (GLPA). The categories are B&W (mono) and Color. Competitions will be held on Nov. 4, 2023 and April 6, 2024. More details can be found here: <https://greaterlynnphoto.org/NECCC>.

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

Who's Who - Volunteers in AVCC - Mini Snapshots

You may ask yourself who is doing a certain task in the club or who you might want to contact with a question. We are departing from our usual Member Snapshot interview this month to bring you mini snapshots of some of the club members who lead and volunteer in various capacities to keep AVCC active.



John Mauro - Member since 2019

Role: John serves as President of the club, the Program Committee Chair, and writes grants to help fund club programs.

As President John prepares the agenda and presides over all club board and member meetings, works closely with club directors to direct and create club policies and procedures, communicates club business to the membership, serves as a Website Administrator, and so much more! See the November 2023 issue of the AVCC Focal Point Newsletter to learn more about John.

Favorite things to shoot: Nature and wildlife.



Mary Coombs - Member since 2019

Role: Mary serves as Vice President of the Club and is one of the three AVCC Focal Point Newsletter editors and volunteers where needed such as Hi-Jinx set-up. As Vice President Mary is responsible for assuming the duties of the president when he is unavailable. Her role on the newsletter committee consists of compiling the articles written by the co-editors, selecting and adding images, and formatting the final copy (the body) of each issue.

Favorite things to shoot: Flowers, insects, mushrooms, trees, still life.



Pam Meoli - Member since 2017

Role: Pam serves as the club Secretary and is on the Program Committee. She also volunteers to host special events and helps out where needed. She is one of two readers of the competition scoring results on competition nights.

As Secretary Pam is responsible for keeping the minutes of all club, board, and executive committee meetings and for sending out correspondence as directed by the President. See the February 2023 Issue of the AVCC Focal Point Newsletter to learn more about Pam.

Favorite things to shoot: Her dog Kuchen, sunrises, nature, and recently, street photography.

Continued on next page

Member Snapshot - Who's Who- continued from page 9



Glenn Fund - Member since 2019

Role: Glenn serves as the club Treasurer and the coordinator of the exhibit wall at Cafe 641. As Treasurer Glenn is responsible for collecting dues and other income, maintaining the membership list, paying bills as authorized by the Executive Committee, making quarterly financial reports to the club and an annual report for the Executive Committee to be included in the permanent records of the club. If a member wishes to exhibit their work for a month at Cafe 641 they should contact Glenn to make arrangements.

Favorite things to shoot: Travel! Experiences.



John Gill (Spike) - Member since 2011

Role: John wears many hats in the club. As a past President, Vice President, and Treasurer he provides consultation and support to the current officers. Currently he is the Membership Manager, the Digital Competition Manager, a Key Master (liaison between the Hudson Senior Center and AVCC), a Website Administrator, one of the Equipment Managers, and more. He also supplies High-Jinx set-ups. He is an LRC and PS guru is available to give "how to" tutorials. See the June 2023 issue of the AVCC Focal Point Newsletter to learn more about John.

Favorite things to shoot: Macro, bugs and flowers, and street photography.



Tony Monteiro - Member since 1991 - Master Member NECCC

Role: Tony has filled many roles in the club over the years including President, Treasurer, Competition Manager, Membership, and more. He serves as a resource to current officers and volunteers. Currently Tony is on the By-Law Committee (the rules that govern the club's activities), the Digital Competition Committee (set-up and support) and is a Key Master (liaison between the Hudson Senior center and AVCC). He is also one of the Equipment Managers. Tony received a Lifetime Membership Award from AVCC in the spring of 2022. See the Nov. 2022 issue of the AVCC Focal Point Newsletter to learn more about Tony and Doris (see below).

Favorite things to shoot: Nature, wildlife, models, action.



Doris Monteiro - Member since 1992 - Master Member NECCC

Role: For many years, Doris served as the greeter for AVCC visitors. She was AVCC's voice of competition and served in that capacity at the multi-screen competitions. She has judged at a number of other camera clubs for a reciprocal exchange to provide judges for Assabet's competitions and also served as a judge when AVCC hosted PSA and/or NECCC interclub competitions. Doris has consistently been there to help the club run smoothly. Currently, Doris is on the bylaw committee and serves as publicity chair providing program information to area news outlets as well as for the AVCC Focal Point newsletter and website.

Doris received a Lifetime Membership Award from AVCC in the spring of 2022.

Favorite things to shoot: Nature, wildlife, and action.

Continued on next page

Member Snapshot - Who's Who - continued from page 10



Lynn Kerner - Member since 2019

Role: Lynn is one of the three editors of the AVCC Focal Point Newsletter. She is responsible for interviewing a member each month for the Snapshot section of the newsletter and writing the Snapshot article. She also writes the monthly Note from the Editors and gathers quotes that relate to each issue's theme. Lynn truly creates the soul of the newsletter. She also volunteers to help out with special events.

Favorite things to shoot: landscapes, sunsets, silhouettes and nature. She is starting to get interested in photographing people in action.



Cathy Robotis - Member since 2016

Role: Cathy is one of the three editors of the AVCC Focal Point Newsletter. She is responsible for researching and writing up the Tips and Tricks section for each issue. She also looks for exhibits, classes, workshops, competitions, and items that may be of interest to members. In addition, Cathy invites members to submit items of interest, answers to questions, and images to include in the newsletter. She brings member spirit to the newsletter!

Favorite things to shoot: Landscapes, seascapes, cityscapes, and moody scenes.



Maureen Mathieson - Member since 1994 - Master Member NECCC

Role: Maureen is a past President of AVCC, and currently the print competition manager, and the archivist of the club's history. She and Todd (see below) are instrumental in making the annual Hi-Jinx day happen with their water-drop apparatus, black light, and back lighting stations, their additional equipment, and institutional knowledge. If you are interested in how the club functioned in the days of film (and beyond) just ask Maureen! Maureen and Todd are also AVCC reciprocating competition judges. See the October 2023 issue of the AVCC Focal Point Newsletter to learn more about Maureen.

Favorite things to shoot: Butterflies, nature, travel, National Parks.



Todd Mathieson - Member since 2000 - Master Member NECCC

Role: Todd is a past President, served on the Competition Committee, led field trips, and was a Judge's Coordinator for AVCC. Currently Todd serves as the PSA rep for the club. He is responsible for submitting images on the club's behalf to the PSA interclub digital image competitions. Also, being experienced competition judges, Todd and Maureen have prepared and given presentations to AVCC members about what judges look for when judging competition entries. They are also a good resource for planning field trips! Todd will be the featured club member in next month's AVCC Focal Point.

Favorite things to shoot: National Parks, travel, nature, lighthouses.

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Member Snapshot - Who's Who - continued from page 11



Robyn Saur - Member since 1991

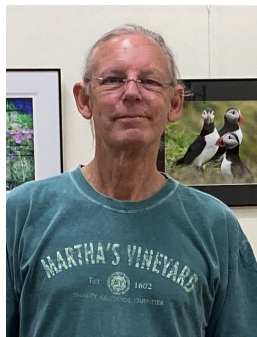
Role: Robyn has served as President and has been on several volunteer committees in AVCC. She also arranged several memorable tours for club members over the years. The first Hi-Jinx days were held at her home. Currently she is the NECCC Rep for AVCC - responsible for submitting images on the club's behalf to the NECCC interclub image competitions. See the December 2023 issue of the AVCC Focal Point to learn more about Robyn. Favorite things to shoot: Sunsets by the beach, flowers, and birds.



Jane Parker - Member since 2016

Role: Jane is a member of the Program Committee. The Program committee is responsible for identifying topics of interest to the club members and engaging speakers to present at the monthly program meetings. Jane reads the presenter's bio at the start of each program. Jane also volunteers to help with special events such as the Memorial to Elliot. See the March 2024 issue of the AVCC Focal Point Newsletter to learn more about Jane.

Favorite things to shoot: Her dog Chase and other pets, the emotion emanating from compelling inanimate objects.



Jim Williams - Member since 2021

Role: Jim is the Chair of the FieldTrip/Outings Committee. He is responsible for maintaining the Field Trip Ideas list and uploading information about field trips to the Events page on the website so that members can register for a trip or outing. He also volunteers to lead field trips such as the Eclipse trip. He also volunteers for activity and exhibit set-ups and lends his considerable handyman skills and his time when needed for set-up and repairs.

Favorite things to shoot: Wildlife, nature, skies, family.



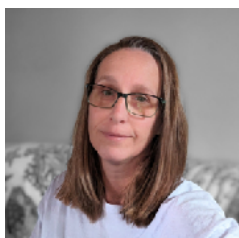
Linda Shelales - Member since 2006

Role: For many years (14!) Linda was the club secretary. Currently she is on the Field Trip/Outings Committee. She also volunteers for Hospitality related positions involving the coordination of refreshments and set-up for special events such as the Memorial for Elliot and the end of the year Tribute to Dave/pot-luck Awards Banquet. See the March 2023 issue of the AVCC Focal Point Newsletter to learn more about Linda.

Favorite things to shoot: BUTTERFLIES & bees, bugs, blue herons, FLOWERS!

Continued on next page

Member Snapshot - Who's Who - continued from page 12



Bridget Perch - Member since 2021

Role: Competition Committee - When Bridget joined the club she jumped right into the volunteer role of reading competition results (judges scores, total score, title, request for critique, and awards) during competition meetings. See the April 2023 issue of the AVCC Focal Point Newsletter to learn more about Bridget.

Favorite things to shoot: Nature and lighthouses (a true passion).



Darlene Holman - Member since 2016

Role: Darlene is a behind the scenes volunteer. She is one of the Website Content Managers - she is able to manage menus, downloads, and galleries on the website as needed. Currently she updates the monthly competition winners' galleries. Darlene also organizes field trips and fosters camaraderie! Favorite things to shoot: Wildlife and nature, creative.



Sheri Craig - Member since February 2024

Role: Field Trips/Outings Committee - Sheri hit the ground running when she joined the club. She volunteered for the Field Trips/Outings Committee and is the leader for two field trips in the works. She continues to look for opportunities to bring club members together.

Favorite things to shoot: Flowers, birds, butterflies, wildlife, landscape, architecture, travel, events, and most things beautiful.



Linda Gilberti - Member since 2005

Role: Hospitality - For many years Linda served as the refreshment coordinator for the meetings and banquets until COVID put her out of business. She now volunteers with the planning and coordination of our special events such as the end of year banquet. Linda is an avid traveller (ask her how many countries she has visited!) and enjoys travel photography.

Shout Outs:

There are current AVCC members who have devoted time and expertise to the club in years past. Though they do not currently hold a given position they helped shape the club to what it is today. Look for more details about volunteers and their roles in future issues of the newsletter.

Sue Abrahamsen - for many years Sue was the sole Program Person! Helps with Hi-jinx set-up.

David Morin - Past Vice President, Fund Raising/Raffle manager, all around help when needed.

Bob Cooke - Past Vice President, Hospitality greeter, and Voice for keeping Print Competition alive!



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, Doris Monteiro, Tony Monteiro, Pam Meoli, John Mauro, Linda Shelales, Darlene Holman, Glenn Fund, Sheri Craig, Jane Parker, Bob Cooke, Jonathan Bush, John Gill, Paul Loiselle, Jim Williams, Sue Abrahamsen, Maureen Mathieson.

Zooming Out

On the Wall at Cafe 641

This month Cafe 641 will feature the work of Dawn Law.

Upcoming in May will be the work of an artist, Melba Juez-Perrone (non- AVCC).

In April we will see images by AVCC member Bob Cooke.



Ocean Wave - Dawn Law



Make Way for Cygnets - Dawn Law

Continued on next page

Zooming Out - continued from page 14

News and recommendations from our members:

From Pam Meoli:

My favorite local place to get a sunset is Sawyerhill Rd in Berlin. We even bring a pizza dinner and wine and make it an event sometimes. It's so beautiful up there.



From Jonathan Bush (new member!):

As photographers we are always looking for good light and most of us think about shooting during the golden hour, but to make sure that I'm not limited to shooting early in the day or late in the day, I find that shooting landscapes (especially with a sky with nice puffy clouds) with an infrared camera (or filter) opens up a lot of options in the middle of the day for me.



Image Courtesy of Jonathan Bush

"Look at the sky; remind yourself of the cosmos. Seek vastness at every opportunity in order to see the smallness of yourself." - Matt Haig

Continued on next page

Zooming Out - from our members- continued from page 15

From Jim Williams:

Here are two webinars about preparing for the eclipse:

- Silvana had an excellent webinar that can be seen at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_Jk_jptUyVo&t=3715s
- GBH ZOOM WEBINAR FRIDAY, APRIL 5, 2024, 12:00PM-1:00PM ET

Prepare yourself for an awe-inspiring celestial event as the moon moves between the Earth and Sun, casting its shadow on our planet in a rare solar eclipse on Monday, April 8. GBH will be joined by astrophysicist Grant Tremblay where he will delve into the science behind this phenomenon, discuss safe viewing techniques, and the history behind this stellar moment. <https://www.wgbh.org/events/ask-the-expert-uncovering-the-eclipse>

Images below - Jim, Lynn, Mary, and new member Paul Loiselle met to practice shooting the sun with solar filters (sadly it was a cloudy day - though all was not lost)!



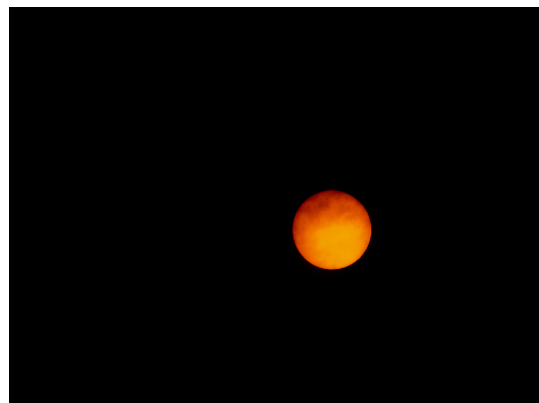
Image Courtesy of Paul Loiselle



Image Courtesy of Paul Loiselle



*The sun and clouds - Jim Williams
(Baader film filter - white)*



*Sun shot with Thousand Oaks Solarlite
filter (yellow/orange) - Mary Coombs*

Zooming In

This month members were asked to share images of spring and skies. Enjoy.

Spring has Sprung!



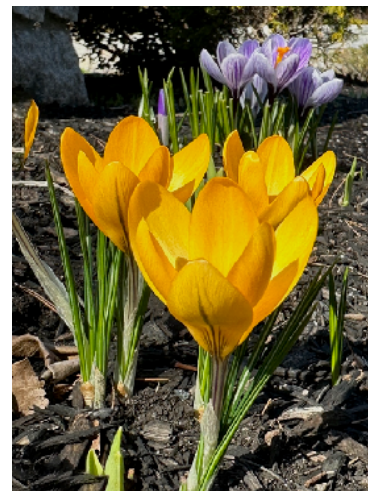
Image Courtesy of John Mauro



Waiting for the sun - Cathy Robotis



Image Courtesy of John Mauro



*Image Courtesy of
Sue Abrahamsen*

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Image Courtesy of Sue Abrahamsen



Spring Crocus - Sheri Craig



Spring -Mallard - Sheri Craig



Crocus 1 - Mary Coombs

*"I thank you God for this most amazing day, for the leaping greenly
spirits of trees, and for the blue dream of sky and for everything which is
natural, which is infinite, which is yes." - e. e. cummings*

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Look to the Sky



Image courtesy of Cathy Robotis



Stow Rainbow - Mary Coombs



Mt Wachusett at Sunset - Jim Quinn

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The gathering gloom - Catherine Robotis

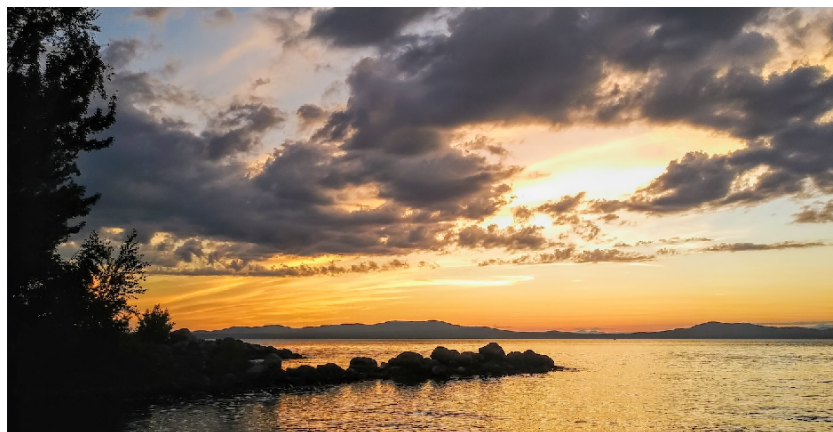


Image Courtesy of Jonathan Bush



Image Courtesy of Jonathan Bush

"Our passionate preoccupation with the sky, the stars, and a God somewhere in outer space is a homing impulse. We are drawn back to where we came from." - Eric Hoffer



Drama in the skies - Lynn Kerner

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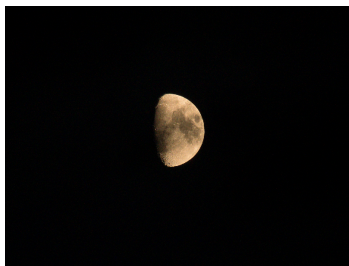


Skaket Beach ICM - Richard Tranfaglia

*"You cannot look up at the night sky on the Planet Earth and not wonder what it's like to be up there amongst the stars. And I always look up at the moon and see it as the single most romantic place within the cosmos."
- Tom Hanks*



Painted Nauset Light image - John Mauro



*Moon Craters
- Mary Coombs*



Highland Light - Neil Swinton

Tips and Tricks - April's Theme: Photographing the Sky

Tips for Photographing the Sky

LOOK! Up in the sky! It's a BIRD! It's a PLANE! It's SUPERMAN! Well... in reality, when someone tells you to look up in the sky, you're probably not going to spot Superman, though you may well see a flock of birds returning from their winter migration, dramatic skies, a beautiful sunrise or sunset, the moon, stars, constellations, or if you are really lucky, maybe even the upcoming eclipse. Skies form the backdrop of some of the most important snapshots of our lives, and they may make, break, or define an image. If you're out photographing the stunning colors of a beautiful sunset or the danger and drama of an incoming storm, planning ahead and fine tuning your camera settings can result in some very compelling images. We have put together some helpful tips to consider for when you are out photographing the sky, when the sky frames your subject, or so you can be ready just in case Superman suddenly does fly in to save the day. If you are planning to photograph the eclipse, please refer back to our comprehensive article in the March Newsletter so you are prepared. Wishing everyone a spring season full of new beginnings, joy, and adventure.

Planning Ahead

- Apps such as Photographer's Ephemeris, Skygazer 4.5, Stellarium, and PhotoPills will help you plan your sky photography in terms of lighting conditions and considering tidbits such as when and where celestial bodies may be viewed.
- June to September are the best months to photograph the Milky Way in our hemisphere. It is vertical until August.
- If you want to capture the moon, check for the phase of the moon and the direction of the moonrise.
- If you want to capture the stars, they are best seen 4 days before and 4 days after the new moon.
- If you want to capture the full moon, dusk is the best time.
- If you want to capture dramatic daytime skies, pay attention to the weather. Approaching storms and departing storms may present some interesting scenes.
- Best times for sky photography: Sunrise and sunset, Nautical twilight (when the sun is 6-12 degrees below the horizon; you can still see the horizon, but sky is dark enough for stars), and Astronomical twilight (when the sun is 12-18 degrees below the horizon; some celestial bodies will be revealed).



Steele Farm Moon at Dusk - Mary Coombs

Continued on next page

Tips for Sky Photography - continued from page 22

Setting the scene

- Make sure you and your camera are prepared for the weather conditions. If it is stormy, you may find yourself (and your expensive equipment) standing in the rain. If it is very cold, your camera battery may not last as long as normal.
- Make sure you have a sturdy tripod for night photography or for any photography involving slower shutter speeds.
- Remember to bring the appropriate filters. A circular polarizing filter (CPL) will make the skies bluer and will make clouds pop. A neutral density (ND) filter will help manage water reflections and glare. It will also allow you to use longer shutter speeds on bright days. A graduated ND filter is ideal when you have a horizon line and what is above it is too light while what is below it is too dark.
- Shoot in RAW.
- In terms of composing your image, follow the rule of thirds. If you are shooting a sky scene with a landscape, and the theme of the image involves the sky, put the horizon line 1/3 from the bottom of the image. For sky photos, look for potential anchor points like a flock of birds or a plane.
- Pay attention to the histogram to make sure your exposure is correct for the scene you are attempting to capture.
- Experiment with angles and perspectives. Try shooting from a lying down position (if the terrain permits and your knees cooperate).
- Look for unusual phenomena or cloud formations.
- Wide angle lenses (such as 23 mm) work best for landscape images; lenses ranging from 400-800 mm work well when photographing the moon.



Pemaquid Coast Sunrise - Richard Tranfaglia

Continued on next page

Tips for Sky Photography - continued from page 23

Photographing the Night Sky

- If you are interested in shooting the moon, the crescent moon is considered the easiest to capture.
- As previously mentioned, dusk is the best time to photograph a full moon.
- Best settings for photographing the moon: Aperture f/11 to f/16, Shutter Speed 1/100 (adjust between 1/60-1/125), ISO 100, manual focus.
- For White Balance when photographing the moon, consider using the Tungsten setting. Or you can leave it in auto mode and make adjustments in post-processing.
- Use the auto noise reduction option in the camera sparingly, because this drains the battery.
- If you are photographing the stars, shoot in manual mode with the widest aperture. Shutter speed recommendations vary, but should be at least 10 seconds (more likely 20-30 seconds).
- The longer your shutter speed, the more light patterns you will capture. A shutter speed of 15-30 seconds should allow you to capture crisp stars.
- To capture star trails, you may need a substantially longer shutter speed, so make sure you have extra batteries on hand.
- ISO recommendations for photographing the stars also vary (800-3200). Remember, the higher the ISO, the more noise/grain you will find in your image. You can manage the noise in post-processing.
- Setting your WB to Daylight will permit you to capture the stars true to color.
- You can use an LED headlamp or light to illuminate the scene or to do light painting.



Cabot1a - Richard Tranfaglia



Lunar Eclipse - Lynn Kerner

"I have seen the movement of the sinews of the sky, And the blood coursing in the veins of the moon." - Muhammad Iqbal

Continued on next page

Tips for Sky Photography - continued from page 24

Photographing the Daytime Sky

- If the sky is bright, remember to use the appropriate filter.
- To prevent overexposure, you can also lower your exposure compensation.
- Use a wide angle lens.
- A bright sky with puffy clouds reflected in a pool of water is compelling.
- If you are photographing subjects in addition to the sky, keep the sun at a 90-180 degree angle away from the camera so your subjects will be properly exposed.
- You may also consider slightly underexposing your subjects to maintain detail in the sky. This can then be adjusted in post-processing.
- Consider bracketing (automatic exposure bracketing or manual bracketing) and combining the images in post-processing.
- If you want to capture moving clouds, set your shutter speed to 10 seconds; make sure to use a tripod. You should use the lowest ISO possible and a small aperture (f/8-f/11 or even f/18-f/22). You should use an ND filter so the sky won't be blown out.
- Crepuscular rays are rays of sunlight that shine through gaps of clouds. They are best seen close to sunset. To capture them, spot meter for one of the rays and then capture the image using an aperture of about f/8.
- If you are capturing a storm, wait and watch. Set your shutter speed for 5-20 seconds to capture the movement and energy of the storm.
- If you are capturing the sunset/sunrise, and the scene is static, you can set your camera to Aperture Mode. Your ISO should be low. If you set your aperture to f/11-f/16, the camera will choose the appropriate shutter speed. Make sure you use a tripod. If your scene has movement (clouds, trees, water), you should try shooting manually with a shutter speed no faster than 1/4 second. If you have moving clouds, a shutter speed of 1-2 seconds might work well.
- If you are capturing the sunset or sunrise, "Daylight" is typically used for the WB setting. If you want the colors orangey with some blues, set the WB to Auto, Cloudy, or Shade. If you want the orange sky to appear purple, try setting the WB to Fluorescent. If you want deeper colors, try setting the WB to Tungsten.

Sources

Visualwilderness.com; store.bandccamera.com; astronomy.com; shotkit.com; adobe.com; Nikon.com; myclickmagazine.com; camerareviews.com; topazlab.com; adorama.com; focus.picfair.com; wilderness.org; masterclass.com

"Look at the sky. We are not alone. The whole universe is friendly to us and conspires only to give the best to those who dream and work." A. P. J. Abdul Kalam

Continued on next page

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: agittraining.com.

Hunt's Photo, Melrose, MA

- They offer photo walks, photo adventures, and classes.
- 4/6/24: Beginner Photography in the Field at Roger Williams Park, Providence, RI, 10 am to 2 pm.
- 4/7/24: Hunt's Photo Walk on Plum Island, 7 am to 10 am: Recognizing and Photographing Shore Birds.
- 4/20/24: Long Exposure Photography with Thibault Roland, 10 am to 2 pm.
- 4/21/24: Infrared Photography with Thibault Roland, 10 am to 2 pm.
- 4/27/24: Toy (and Lego) Photography Workshop in Waltham, 10 am to 2 pm.
- 4/28/24: Hunt's Photo Walk: Recognizing and Photographing Birds at Odiorne Point State Park in Rye, NH, 8 am to 11 am.
- For more information: www.edu.huntsphoto.com.

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.



Rainbow Zebra - Doris Monteiro

The Bigger Picture - continued from page 26

Assabet After Dark

- Spring photography courses include Cape Cod Lighthouse Photography, Digital Photography I, Digital Photography II, Macro/Close-up Photography, SmartPhone Photography, and Wildlife Photography.
- Classes are taught by Steve McGrath
- For more information: assabetace.org (look for their Spring 2024 Course Catalog).

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

National Park Photography Expeditions

- They have upcoming Master Classes in Photography at Olympic National Park, Roosevelt National Park, and Badlands National Park.
- Contact: nppemasterclass.com.

Worcester Center for Crafts

- Intro to Digital Photography II (4/9/24, 6:30-9:30 pm) and Intro to Digital Photography I (5/21/24-6/25/24, Tuesdays 6:30-9:30 pm).
- Contact: Worcestercraftcenter.org

Photography Exhibits

Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, MA

The Howard Greenberg Collection (ongoing).

Leica Gallery in Boston, MA

Jamie Johnson & John Day: The Travellers and The Troubles, 2/2/24-4/20/24.

Panopticon Gallery in Boston, MA

First Look 2024: Annual Juried Showcase, 2/15/24-4/30/24.

Worcester Art Museum in Worcester, MA

- New Terrain: 21st Century Landscape Photography, 4/6/24-7/7/24.
- Elegant Alien by Claudio Eshun, 11/8/23-5/5/24.
- Weaving Photographs with Sarah Sense (talk), 4/21/24 2-3 pm.



*Eye to Eye with an American Raptor
- Sheri Craig*

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The Bigger Picture - Continued from Page 27

Griffin Museum in Winchester, MA

- Alejandro Cartagena, Muriel Hasten, Alejandro Luperca: Huellas de Existencia/Traces of Existence, 4/6/24-6/9/24.
- Rodrigo Valenzuela: Nuevas Tierras/New Lands, 4/6/24-6/9/24.
- Ileana Doble Hernandez: Una Mexicana in Gringolandia, 4/6/24-6/9/24.

Robert Klein Gallery in Boston, MA

- Olivia Parker: Persephone's Graffiti, 3/21/24-5/4/24.
- Zohar Dashti: Disappearing Nature, 3/21/24-5/4/24.

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

International Photography Awards (IPA)

- Deadline 5/31/24.
- Entry fee: \$30.
- Cash Prizes
- Categories include: Aerial, Architecture, B&W, Cityscapes, Conceptual, Sports, Travel, Photojournalism, Fashion, Self-portrait, Abstract, Digital Art.
- Contact: www.photoawards.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



Guarding the Garden
- Linda DeStefano Brown



AVCC is a member of the following organizations:

NECCC



PSA



AVCC website:

<https://www.assabetvalleycc.com>

2023-2024 Executive Board Members:

- President: John Mauro
- Vice President: Mary Coombs
- Secretary: Pam Meoli
- Treasurer: Glenn Fund



School's Out Forever - Eric Frere

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. Also see pages 9-13 of this issue of AVCC Focal Point. Consider volunteering!