



FOCAL POINT

<http://assabetvalleycc.com> - The club meets on the first and third Wednesdays of each month except July and Aug. 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.



*Sunflower at SummitWynds -
Courtesy of Lynn Kerner*

In this Issue:

Note from the President	p 1-2
Note from the Editors	p 3
September Program	p 4
Competition Info	p 5-6
Members' Lens	p 7-20
AVCC Organization	p 21

Note from the President

Hello All,

I hope everyone is enjoying the summer and has been able to get out between the raindrops and capture some cool images! As the summer winds down, the AVCC activity ramps up! Here are a few upcoming highlights:

Note from the President - cont

- Our first club meeting will be Wednesday, September 6th 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 "What I Did This Summer". Please notify me via club email or personal email (jdmaurojr@yahoo.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 myself or John Gill.

- Our first competition will be September 20th and the theme is: Monochrome. Images must be uploaded to Visual Pursuits no later than midnight on Wednesday, September 13th.

- October 4th - the date dues must be paid in order to compete. A renewal form can be found here: <https://www.assabetvalleycc.com/Orgs/3584313/Documents/Admin/New%20Membership%20form.pdf>

I look forward to an exciting season! If you have any questions, suggestions, or concerns, please feel free to reach out to me.

Wishing everyone a safe and happy end to the summer and Labor Day weekend!

John

"You're off to great places! Today is your day! Your mountain is waiting, So get on your way!" - Dr. Seuss



Club President, John Mauro gives a thumbs up to Linda Shelales's images at Cafe 641

Note from the Editors

Welcome back! AVCC's 2023-2024 year officially begins on Sept 6th . For some of us, September feels more like a new beginning than January does. After all, for many years of our lives it was the start of something new. Blank pages in a fresh new notebook, new faces, new challenges, excitement, nervousness, old friends, and strangers who might well become friends. A shift in light, in weather, in routine. Skills already learned become the launching pad for new skills and new experiences. September is getting acquainted, starting back up, feeling our way into new opportunities.

The club experimented a couple times last year with a hybrid format. There were some kinks to be worked out, but the decision has been made to move ahead with hybrid meetings for this coming year.

The first meeting is the annual member "showcase," but don't let that big word stop you! It's an informal presentation of photos that don't have to be competition quality, but do give us all a glimpse into your summer, whether it's in the back yard or thousands of miles away. In a Zoom world, which doesn't allow for that informal way of getting to know each other, it provides a fun space to share life and activities. As of this writing, only a few people have signed up to do this. It's a lot of fun to have a bunch of folks doing it.

Our monthly competition topics jump right off with a theme many of us might not be too familiar with, and might find a bit of a challenge (or should we call it "an opportunity for growth"?) - Monochrome. See the Tips & Tricks section for a lot of great information to get started or to enhance what you already know.

Our Member Spotlight (one-on-one conversation) feature will re-start in the October issue.

Like all organizations, AVCC didn't completely stop during the summer. Our E-Board, committees and individuals prepared for presenters, enhanced the smooth flow of information on the website, and planned the hybrid meetings to name a few tasks. Members organized, assisted with, and participated in exhibits and field trips. See photos from field trips to SummitWynds Butterfly Experience and New England Botanical Garden at Tower Hill in this issue.

The Newsletter Team is excited to be joining everyone for the learning opportunities coming up in the new year. Let's do it!

"September is the other January." - Gretchen Rubin

September 2023 Program

AVCC is pleased to present The Member “What I did this Summer” SlideShow . Participating members have up to 5 minutes to share a slide show of images taken during the summer break. The meeting will take place on Wednesday, September 6 starting at 7:00PM. The official start time of the program is 7:30 PM. This is a hybrid meeting. The in-house meeting will take place in the downstairs meeting room at the Hudson Senior Center, 29 Church St., Hudson, MA. Members attending in person need to bring their slideshow on a thumb drive. Members participating via Zoom need to be prepared to share their presentation on screen.

2022-2023 Program scheduled to date:

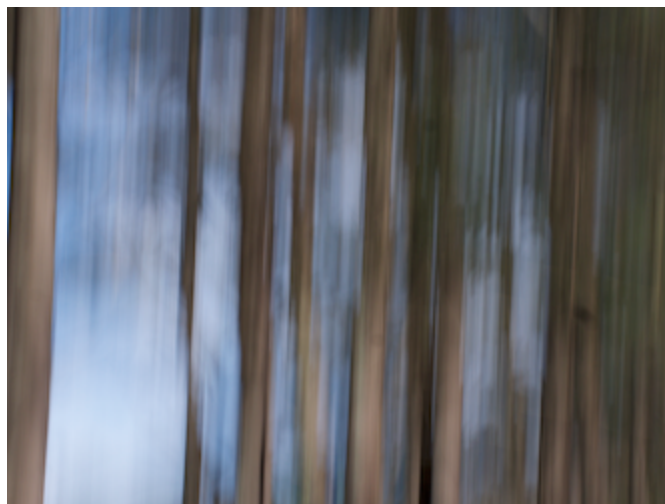
The 2023-2024 program is partially finalized. Here are scheduled programs to look forward to:

October - “Architecture Abstracts” presented by Angie McMonigal

December - “Ultimate Landscapes - Photographing Trees and Forests” presented by Paul Nguyen

March - “A Murmur in the Trees” presented by Suzanne Revy

As additional programs are finalized they will be posted on the AVCC website [Calendar](#) page.



Into the Woods - Mary Coombs

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 rules for [“Nature”](#) 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		Architectural Detail	Open	11/8/2023
December	Still Life	Nature	Open	12/13/2023
January		In the Woods	Open	1/10/2024
February	Entryways	Nature	Open	2/14/2024
March		Creative (In or out of camera)	Open	3/13/2024
April		Nature	Open	4/10/2024
May		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. PSA Rep - Robyn Saur; NECCC rep - Todd Mathieson.

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 are on the next page.

FYI: PSA Nature Guidelines for Borders: any border added (to a Nature image) must be a single border of, gray, or white, no greater than 3-5 pixels in width.

Looking Ahead - AVCC 2023-2024

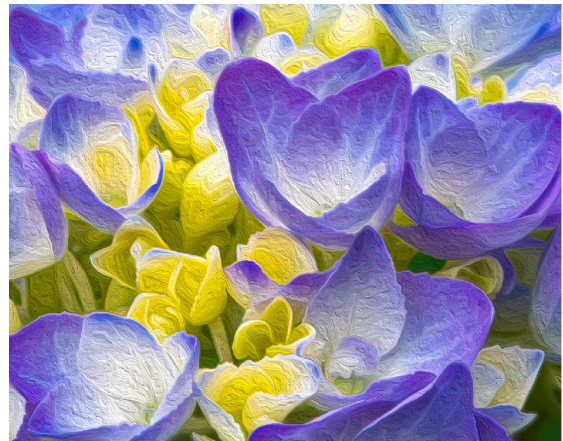
During the final club meeting of the 2022-2023 year the members voted to resume Print Competitions in 2023-2024. The following themes were decided upon: Oct – Tools; Dec – Still Life; Feb – Entryways.

Details about how these competitions will take place is being finalized. Look for further information via email and the next issue of the newsletter.

Also, print competitions are being resumed by NECCC. The 2023-2024 NECCC Individual Print Competitions will be held at the Greater Lynn Photographic Association clubhouse. Doris Monteiro shared the four documents that describe the competition general information, schedule, rules, and guidelines in an email to club members on July 31. For those considering participation in these competitions the related documents can also be found here: [NECCC Individual Print Competitions](#)



*Robyn and "Captain Woody" - Image
Courtesy of Robyn Saur*



*Hydrangea Bloom close up
- Image Courtesy of John Gill*



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, John Mauro, Robyn Saur, Darlene Holman, Sue Abrahamsen, Jim Williams, Rick Beauchamp, Dave Simpson, and John Gill.

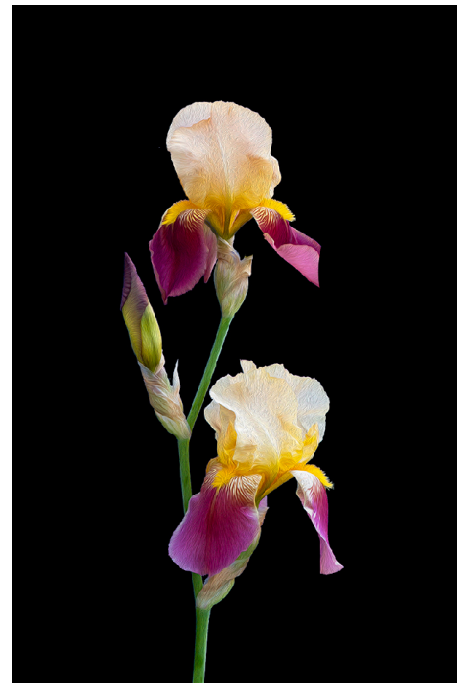
Zooming Out

On the Wall at Cafe 641

September's featured member at Cafe 641 is John Gill. A Meet and Greet will be held on Saturday, September 9 from 12:00 - 1:30. Be sure to check it out!



Feathers - Image Courtesy of John Gill



Bearded Iris # 4 - Image Courtesy of John Gill

Continued on next page

Zooming Out - continued from page 7

On the Wall!

Several club members displayed works this summer in various venues - here are some highlights!

Cafe 641:

This summer we saw images from Robyn Saur in July and Linda Shelales in August.



Images by Linda Shelales at Cafe 641



Image Courtesy of Robyn Saur



Image Courtesy of Robyn Saur

"Happily we bask in this warm September sun, which illuminates all creatures." - Henry David Thoreau



Image Courtesy of Robyn Saur

Continued on next page

Zooming Out - On the Wall - cont from page 8

Alan Mertz at the Acton Senior Center:

Alan held a show at the Acton Senior Center for the months of July and August. He filled the length of two halls with an eclectic mix of creative, bird, flower, and nature images. It was an impressive display! Photos by Mary Coombs



Images by Alan Mertz on the wall at the Acton Senior Center

Linda DeStafano Brown had works in two exhibitions this summer. Two of her pieces were accepted for the 87th Regional Exhibition at the Fitchburg Art Museum which ended August 28, and she exhibited work in the July Members Only Exhibit with ArtsWayland. Congratulations, Linda! We do not have images of these exhibits but to see examples of Linda's creative images go to her Artist Member Gallery page on the [Arts Wayland](#) website.

Continued on next page

Zooming Out - On the Wall - cont from page 9

Assabet Valley Camera Club at the Maynard Public Library:

Several members of the club submitted images to the show arranged by Bob Cooke at the Maynard Public Library for the months of August and September. Participating members are Bob Cooke, Linda DeStefano Brown, John Gill, Sue Abrahamsen, Maureen Mathieson, Todd Mathieson, Lynn Kerner, Mary Coombs, and Glenn Fund. Many thanks to Bob Cooke, for arranging the show, John Gill for assisting, and to Jim Williams and Todd Mathieson, for doing the bulk of the installation. Check it out!

Photos by Mary Coombs - For information and hours: [Maynard Public Library](#)



Bob Cooke in the Roosevelt Room - Maynard Public Library



Jim Williams working on the installation



Todd Mathieson, Jim Williams, and Bob Cooke - a job well done!

"Be willing to be a beginner every single morning." - Meister Eckhart

Continued on next page

Zooming In

Member Share:

Two club meetups happened this summer thanks to Darlene Holman who encouraged members to meet on August 19th at the SummitWynds Butterfly Experience and to John Gill who arranged a meetup on Thursday evening, August 24 at Tower Hill. Below are some images attending members shared of these events. All images are the property of the makers.

SummitWynds Farm in Holden, MA - featuring a wildflower meadow, painted lady butterflies, bicycles and benches amongst flowers, horses, a sunflower lane, fields, and a gorgeous view of the Monadnock Range. It was a bit windy that day so capturing images of butterflies and thin stemmed flowers proved challenging!



Wildflowers - John Gill



*John and Sue at SummitWynds
- Darlene Holman*

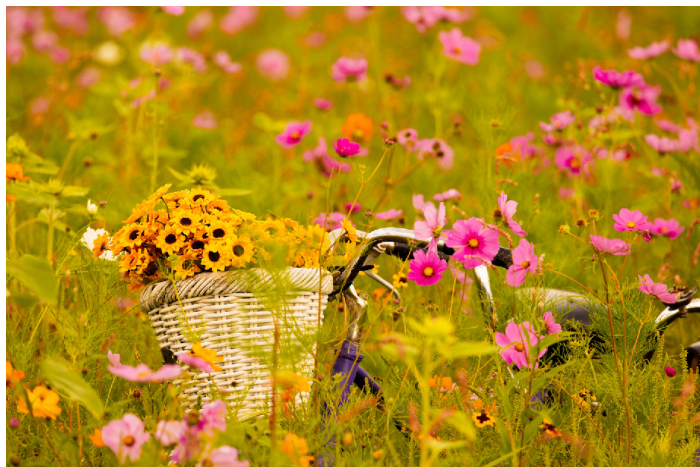


*Lynn taking a cell shot
- Mary Coombs*

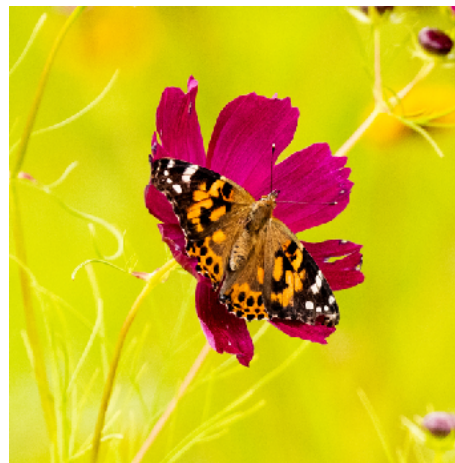


Darlene and Liz at SummitWynds - Sue Abrahamsen

Continued on next page



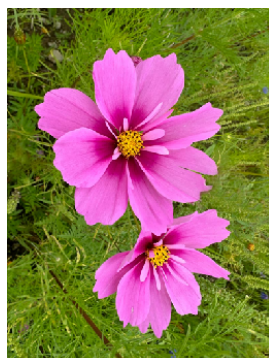
In the Wildflower Field - Jim Williams



Painted Lady - Jim Williams



Sue - John Gill



*Cosmos
- Sue Abrahamsen*



Sunflower Bud - Lynn Kerner



Wildflower Bench - Sue Abrahamsen

"September is dressing herself in showy dahlias and splendid marigolds and starry zinnias."

— Oliver Wendell Holmes

Continued on next page



SummitWynd Farm Horses - Darlene Holman



Blue Eye - Darlene Holman



While taking photos along the sunflower path Lynn Kerner and Mary Coombs met Tom Carroll who is the newly elected president of the Nashoba Valley Camera Club. We enjoyed sharing information about our clubs, lenses, cameras, and taking photos together. Pictured are Mary and Tom - image by Lynn Kerner, and Mary, Lynn, and Tom - image taken by new friends we met along the path.

Continued on next page

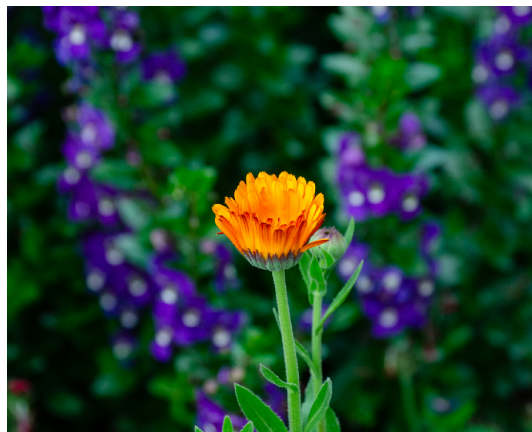
Zooming Out - Member Share - continued from page 13

New England Botanic Garden at Tower Hill:

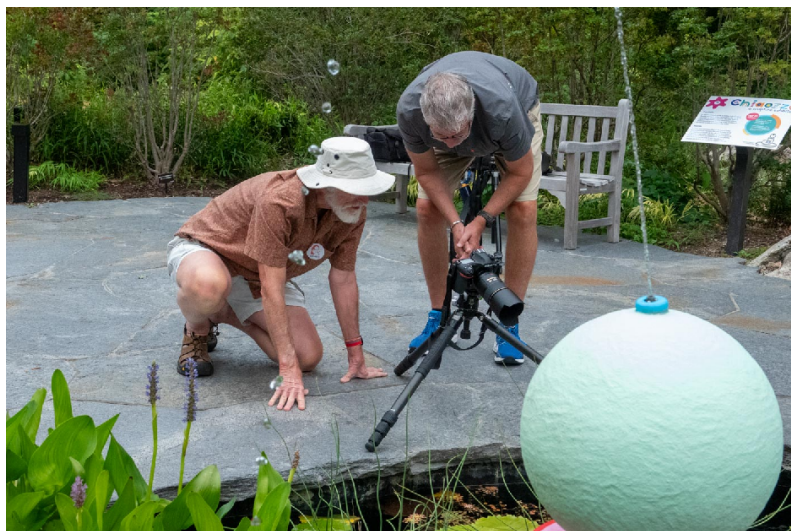
Here are some images shared by club members who gathered at Tower Hill on Thursday, August 24. Present were John Gill, Sue Abrahamsen, Rick Beauchamp, and new club member David Simpson!



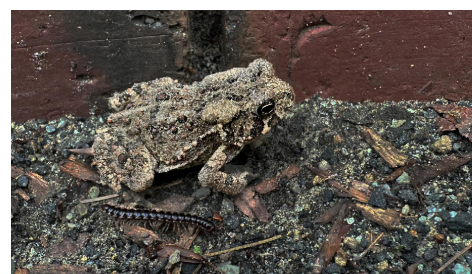
Dogwood Tree - David Simpson



Marigold - David Simpson

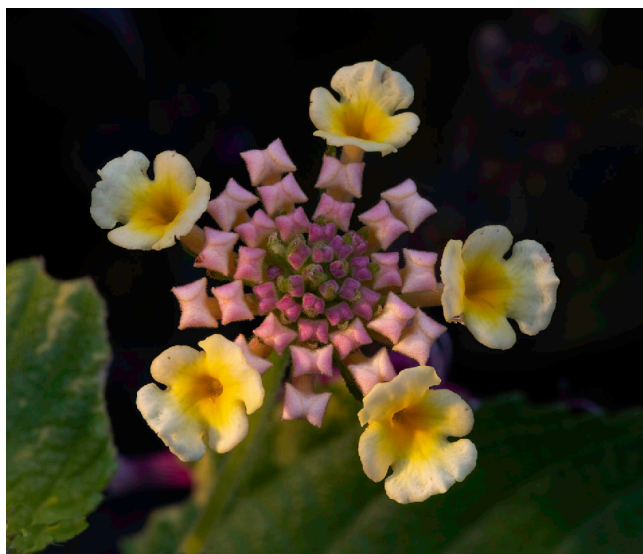


John and Rick - Sue Abrahamsen



*Tower Hill Toad
- Sue Abrahamsen*

Continued on next page



Picture I - Rick Beauchamp



Bell Tree Dahlia - Sue Abrahamsen



Picture II - Rick Beauchamp



Picture III - Rick Beauchamp

Tips and Tricks - September's Theme: Monochrome

Monochrome Photography

As we gear up for another competitive year at the AVCC, we find ourselves faced with this month's challenge of creating a competition-worthy monochrome image. You may ask yourself what exactly constitutes monochrome photography? Translated from Greek, monochrome literally means one color. While all black and white photographs are considered monochrome, monochrome photos do not have to be exclusively black and white; for example, sepia or cyan images are also monochrome. Monochrome photography allows us to tell our story and express emotion through the artistic use of light, shadows, texture, and contrast. You may find that some of your color images work very well when converted to monochrome, but to achieve more dramatic and interesting monochromatic images, you should consider training your eye to visualize your surroundings in monochrome, as this will help you identify interesting scenes and elements as you create impactful monochrome images. How exactly can you do this? Simply look around yourself, paying close attention to visual patterns, rough textures, and plays on light and shadow. Look for interesting shapes and gradations in tone, and imagine them all in one color. Look for contrast. Some cameras allow you to shoot in B&W or B&W preview mode; if your camera offers this function, experiment with it to get a feel for the world around you as seen through a monochromatic lens. Here are some additional tips to help you create meaningful images in monochrome:

Setting the scene

- Look for scenes with high contrast, such as a portrait against a shaded background or dark hills against a bright sky. Look for contrast between light and dark, and look for a wide range of monochromatic shades.
- Stronger contrast portrays greater strength and character in an image.
- Look for scenes with textural complexity and visual patterns of shadow and light. Look for interesting lines and shapes.
- If you are working on street photography, monitor your light sources, and use elements such as headlights, street lights, neon signs, and the sun to create a spectrum of various monochromatic shades.



*That Lil Ol'Band from Texas
- Liz Krouse*

Continued on next page

Tips for Monochrome Photography - continued from page 16

- Prioritize subject placement. Make sure the subject has the right amount of emphasis. Try to isolate the subject by pulling it closer so the light will impart different shades. Maximize subject separation; strive for compositions where the subject is in sharp contrast to the background.
- Long exposures are also interesting in monochrome; they can be used to show movement.
- Silhouettes make a powerful statement in monochrome. Look for a strong light source to place your subject against.
- Consider working with the Chiaroscuro lighting effect, a dramatic lighting technique that works very well with portraits, still life, food photography, and fine art photography.

Chiaroscuro effect

- This effect balances high-contrast (light/dark) light and shade to give the appearance of depth, creating an enhanced or more dramatic effect.
- It involves strategic placement of light sources and careful blending of tones.
- Although this effect is often associated with professional studio lighting, you can also achieve it by using natural light or simple artificial light sources.
- Chiaroscuro portraits generally have black or dark backgrounds.
- You can consider having your subject try different facial expressions to express emotion, or you can work with different angles to add interest (for example, looking to the side).
- Working with window light: Take your photos in a room where the window is the only source of light; this helps create high contrast.
- Small artificial sources of light in a darkened room would include items such as a candle or small lighting device.
- With this technique, it is important to light the subject horizontally, because this will allow you to work with different gradients in post-processing. If you light the subject directly, you can't create fading highlights and shadows.



Acadian Blossom v2
- Richard Tranfaglia



Come Sit With Me - Liz Krouse

Continued on next page

Camera settings for Monochrome Photography

- Shoot in RAW.
- Use an aperture around f/8-f/11 and as low of an ISO as you can manage; you generally want sharp, consistent focus and minimal digital noise.
- You may also consider using a slow shutter speed to capture movement.
- Put your White Balance on Auto.
- Consider using a polarizing filter. This will help reduce reflections and darken skies (without affecting the clouds).
- Consider using graduated neutral density (GND) or neutral density (ND) filters. The GND filter will darken the sky but not the land in a landscape photo. The ND filter reduces the amount of light coming through the lens, allowing longer exposures in bright light to capture movement rather than freezing it. Remember to use your tripod when working with longer exposures.
- Consider underexposing your photo. While we typically avoid dark shadows in color photography, when shooting monochrome photos, the darkness can add an air of atmosphere and mystery and make the viewer wonder what is hidden in the shadows.
- If you are working with silhouettes, expose for the background in a scene where your subject is in front of a strong light source; this will underexpose your subject, creating a silhouette.

Sources: Masterclass.com, Adobe.com, Alphauniverse.com, Improvephotography.com, Studiobinder.com, Imaginated.com, Adorama.com, Iceland-photo-tours.com, Colesclassroom.com, Shotkit.com, Expertphotography.com, Imageexplorers.com.

Repeat suggestion from Pam Meoli:

The Bridge of Flowers in Shelbourne Falls, MA is an amazing place to visit. Put it on your list! However, they are taking the bridge apart next year after over 100 years in order to redo it. So, if you've ever wanted to go or are looking for a great day trip, go sooner rather than later - just my suggestion.



I agree! Two images from the Bridge of Flowers taken August 22. - Mary Coombs

The Bigger Picture

Photography exhibits in and around Massachusetts

Griffin Museum of Photography

- [Nine Conversations](#)
- The Griffin @ Lafayette City Center Passageway
- 2 Ave de Lafayette, Downtown Crossing, Boston
- Through 9/25/23

VanDernoot Gallery at Lesley University, Cambridge, MA

- [EXPOSURE 2023](#): 27th annual PRC Juried Members Exhibition, 8/5/23-9/17/23.

Mass MoCA, North Adams, MA

- Elle Perez: Intimacies
- Carrie Schneider: Sphinx, through September 2023.
- Nicholas Whitman: North Adams' Abandoned Sprague Electric Company Factory.



Pink and White - John Gill

Upcoming photography contests:

Mass Audubon Picture This

- Entries accepted from 7/1/23-9/30/23.
- They are looking for digital photographs of people in nature, as well as photos that highlight the beauty and diversity of Massachusetts wildlife, plant life, and landscapes.
- Photos must have been taken in Massachusetts or at the Mass Audubon Wildlife Camp in Rindge, NH.
- Up to 10 entries per person.
- Cash prizes.
- Contact: massaudubon.org/programs-events/photo-contest

2023 Guest Photo Contest at Backroads

- You can submit a maximum of 25 digital photos showing your backroads trip.
- Deadline: 12/31/23.
- There are cash prizes.
- Contact: backroads.com photo contest

Yesterday's Island Photo Contest

- They are accepting photos of Nantucket.

"National parks and reserves are an integral aspect of intelligent use of natural resources. It is the course of wisdom to set aside an ample portion of our natural resources as national parks and reserves, thus ensuring that future generations may know the majesty of the earth as we know it today."

— John F. Kennedy

Continued on next page

Upcoming Classes, Courses, Seminars, and Outings:

Hunts Photo Education and Photo Walks (edu.huntsphoto.com)

- Hunts Photo Walk: Morning in the North End. 9/9/23, 8-11 am, \$89.99.
- Hunts Photo Workshop: Cameras and Drones at Kaaterskill Falls (in the Catskill Mountains). 9/16/23, 3-7 pm, \$249.99.
- Recognizing and Photographing Shore Birds. Plum Island, 9/17/23, 8-11 am, \$109.99.
- Beginner Photography in the Field. Roger Williams Park, Providence, RI, 9/23/23, 10 am-2 pm, \$99.99.

Worcester Center for Crafts (worcestercraftcenter.org)

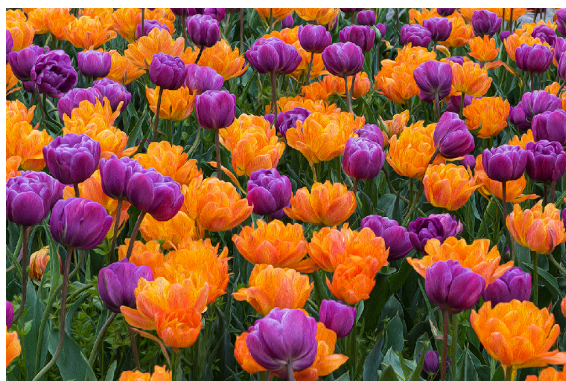
- Intro to Digital Photography: 9/12/23-10/17/23, Tuesdays from 6:30-9:30 pm, \$240.
- Intro to Darkroom Photography: 9/14/23-10/19/23, Thursdays from 6:30-9:30 pm, \$250.
- Creating Meaningful Photographs: 2-day workshop, 10/7/23-10/8/23, 9:30 am-4:30 pm, \$240.
- Intro to Digital Photography: 10/24/23-12/5/23, Tuesdays from 6:30-9:30 pm, \$240.
- Intro to Darkroom Photography: 10/24/23-12/5/23, Thursdays from 6:30-9:30 pm, \$250.

Worcester State University (ed2go.com)

- Photography Suite: Bundle of 72 course hours, \$335.
- Discover Digital Photography: 24 course hours over 6 weeks, \$115.
- Mastering your Digital SLR or Mirrorless Camera: 24 course hours over 6 weeks, \$115.
- Secrets of Better Photography: 24 course hours over 6 weeks, \$125.
- Photographing Nature with your Digital Camera: 24 course hours over 6 weeks, \$115.
- Photographing People with your Digital Camera: 24 course hours over 6 weeks, \$115.
- Intro to Lightroom Classic CC, 24 course hours over 6 weeks, \$129.
- Photoshop Elements for the Digital Photographer, 24 course hours over 6 weeks, \$129.

Assabet Community Education (assabetace.org)

- Digital Photography I: 9/18/23-10/23/23, Mondays from 5:30-7 pm, \$189.
- Digital Photography II: 10/30/23-11/27/23, Mondays from 5:30-7 pm, \$189.
- Macro/Closeup Photography: 10/30/23-11/6/23, Mondays from 5:30-7 pm, \$65.
- Smartphone Photography: 10/2/23-10/23/23, Mondays from 7:30-9 pm, \$75.
- Waterfalls and Covered Bridges Workshop: 10/12/23-10/19/23, Thursdays from 6-8 pm, \$89.



Tower Hill Tulips - John Gill



AVCC is a member of the following organizations:

NECCC



PSA

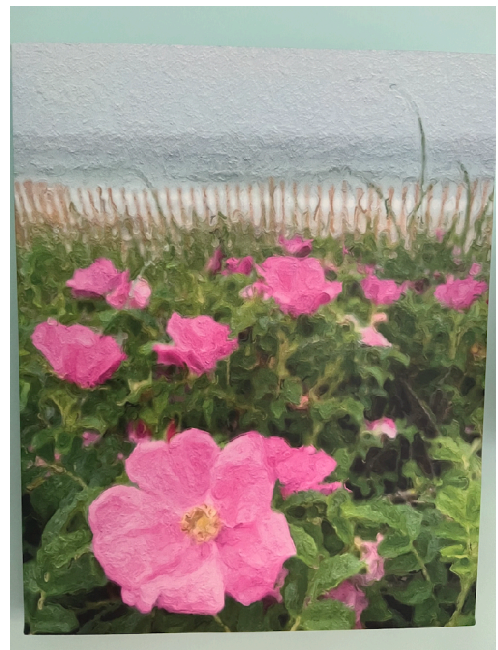


AVCC website:

<https://www.assabetvalleycc.com>

2023-2024 Executive Board Members:

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



*On the wall at Cafe 641 - Image
Courtesy of Robyn Saur*

Editors' Note:

Many(!) club members work behind the scenes in various capacities to make the club run smoothly, to engage with the greater community, to reach out to prospective members, to communicate about our organization through the Facebook page, the AVCC website, the Focal Point Newsletter, and provide opportunities for competition, fun, learning, and camaraderie.

To see (most) of the volunteer positions and members please refer to your 2023-2024 Member packet. Consider volunteering!