



FOCAL POINT

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



Sleepy Snowy Owl Posing for Pictures
- Dawn Law

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Note from Our President

Greetings from Elliot

A little club news: the decision about whether the Scavenger Hunt will take place this year in the absence of the Multi Screen Competition is still pending. Stay tuned but perhaps continue to take photos for the ten categories so you don't miss a potential shot!

Cheers! And Happy New Year to all!

Note from the Editors

January. A powerful month. A settling-in month. Named for the Roman god Janus, the god of beginnings, gates, transitions, time, duality, doorways, passages, frames, and endings. (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Janus>). Before being a state deity Janus was the household spirit of doorways. (<https://www.worldhistory.org/Janus/>) Perhaps the spirit of Janus can be an inspiration for our competition theme this month – “Inside the House.”

Consistent with a January theme of beginnings, we want to highlight the history noted on our website. “A small group of people, who took an evening photography course at Assabet Valley Regional Vocational High School with Norm Eggert, decided to form the Assabet Valley Camera Club back in 1985. The group initially met in different member's homes, and they competed with color slides projected on a living room wall.” We want to give a particular shout-out to Dave Reynard, a founding member who welcomed people into his living room in the spirit of sharing a passion.

One of the Newsletter Team’s hopes has been that the members feel as if this is *their* newsletter. As such, we appreciate folks’ responses to Cathy’s monthly requests for ideas and information. Specifically, this month, see Linda Shelales’ contribution to our “Tips” section, complete with examples. Thank you, Linda!

January’s Member Snapshot is Sue Abrahamsen, a member since 1987. Sue has an interesting artistic past and has traveled a lot. Read the interview for some of her recommendations for photography trips, to enjoy some of her photos, and to get to know Sue a little bit if you don’t know her already.

Finally – and again - in the spirit of beginnings, our Zooming In section presents some members’ New Year’s resolutions related to photography. To inspire your photography for practice, for competition or just to enjoy, we have sprinkled quotes through-out. With the denouement from the holiday season, settle in to some mindful time with your camera.

“The two most engaging powers of a photograph are to make new things familiar and familiar things new.” – William Thackeray



***Santa Maria del Ammiraglio Door - Palermo
- Glenn Fund***

January Program

AVCC is pleased to present “A Certain Slant of Light” by Suzanne Révy, January 4, 2023 at 7:30PM. The presentation will be on Zoom. The meeting room opens at 7:00 with a 15 minute social time followed by AVCC business at 7:15. Nonmembers interested in attending as guests should email info@assabetvalleycc.com.

Suzanne Révy

Suzanne Révy is a photographer, writer, and educator who created visual photographic diaries of her sons’ lives, and is currently making photographs in the landscape. She earned a BFA from the Pratt Institute and an MFA from the New Hampshire Institute of Art, and previously worked as photography editor at *U.S. News & World Report* and *Yankee Magazine*.

She has exhibited her work at museums and galleries throughout New England and in New York. Révy is an adjunct professor of photography at Clark University in Worcester, the Associate Editor at the online magazine *What Will You Remember?* and serves on the board of the Photographic Resource Center in Cambridge, MA. She lives with her husband in an empty nest in suburban Boston.

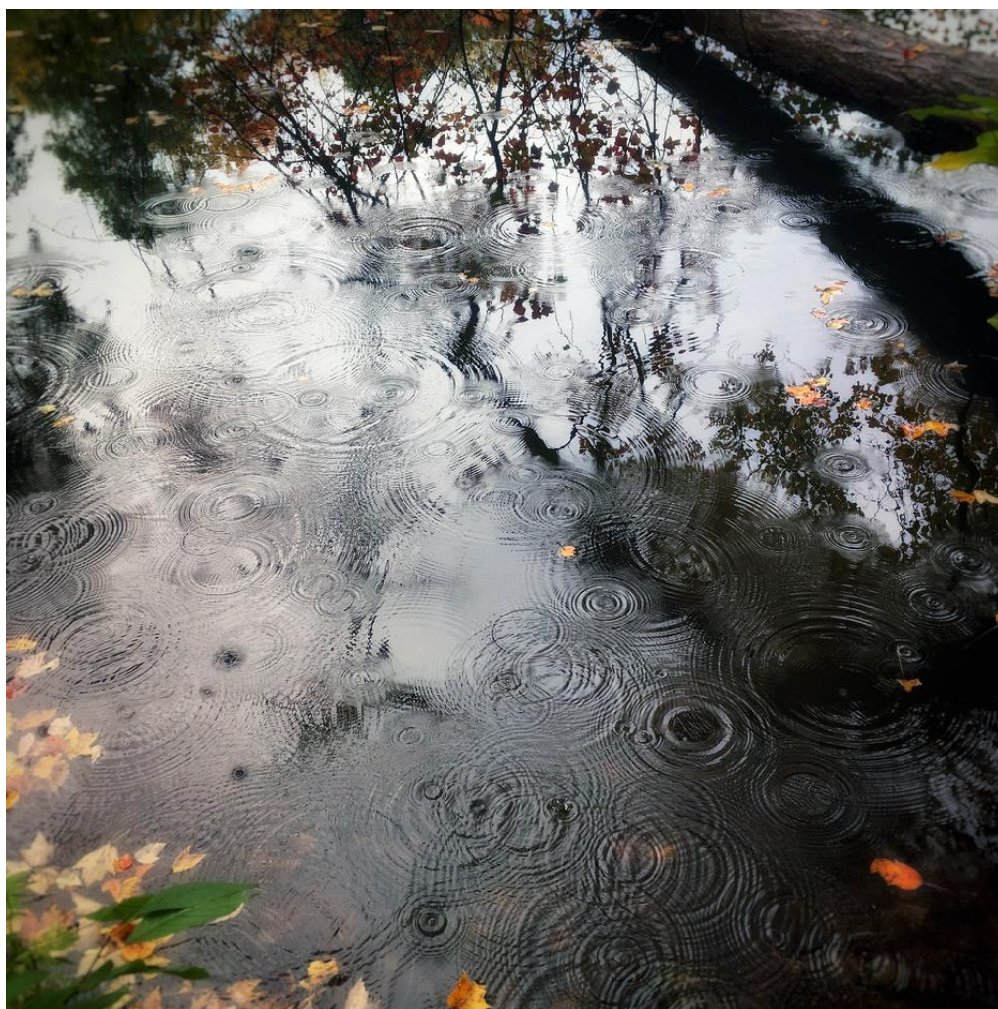


Image Courtesy of Suzanne Révy

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A Certain Slant of Light **Assabet Valley Camera Club Program**

A Certain Slant of Light began as a daily photographic ritual where I employed a mobile phone to keep my eyes open for light as it moved through the day. As a photographer who primarily uses film in a methodical manner, the immediacy, speed and ease of phone photography offered a different avenue for practice and honing my vision on a daily basis. Recently, I have turned my attention to a small pond on our street and am making pictures a few times a week at sunrise to witness seasonal changes in shifting light and weather. I will discuss how using the phone has enhanced my practice in film photography and how my phone pictures have evolved since I began in 2016.



Macone Pond - Courtesy of Suzanne Révy

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Alewife - Image Courtesy of Suzanne Révy



Fog on Fenway - Image Courtesy of Suzanne Révy



Deer in Snow - Alan Mertz

Looking Ahead - AVCC 2022-2023 Program Schedule

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

Program information and presenters' bios will appear in the newsletter preceding the month of the presentation.

* For details about how to participate in the 5/3/23 "What Went into Making My Award -Winning Image" member image program see page 20.

Competitions 2022-2023

Monthly Competitions:

The club holds monthly image competitions including three categories: print, digital and open. The images are judged by a panel of three judges using a scale of 3.0-10. The final score for an image is the total of the three scores. Please note that the Print competition has been suspended for the time being. See the [AVCC webpage](#) for more information about the rules and procedures for monthly competitions as well as the Scavenger Hunt, Multi-Screen, and PSA, and NECCC competitions. Pay particular attention to the rules for [“Nature”](#) submissions.

Schedule of Monthly Competition Category Topics & Submission Dates

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

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

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

PSA and NECCC

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

Member Snapshot

(A getting-to-know-you conversation with a club member about themselves & photography – the history, the passion, the challenges and the fun, lessons learned, and the growing edges).

Sue Abrahamsen

Sue is an 87-years-young, life-long photographer who grew up in Connecticut and who has since traveled to many places in both the US and the world. An early influence was her father who liked nature and took a lot of wildflower photos on hikes and walks. Her sister is an accomplished quilter – definitely an art. Her husband had a good eye and loved nature as well. Even though he took several photography courses in college, it was never a hobby of his. He was Sue's "cheerleader," though, in her own photography, and as they traveled he would point out things to her that could be interesting subjects.

Sue attended the Pratt Institute in NY to obtain a 2-year certificate in Fashion Design. Her husband, whom she met there, was in a 4-year course for Industrial Design. Once Sue graduated, she worked for Simplicity doing drafting, draping and making master patterns. After her husband's graduation he went into the military. His first assignment was in Germany and while there they traveled all over Europe. After two years in Germany they returned to the US and began a family. When the two children were young Sue took in sewing for other people and took night courses in pottery, stained glass, macramé, Jewelry making and quilting. When the children were old enough, Sue went to work for a fabric store doing displays. Over her career she also worked at high-end bridal shops doing alterations. When she retired at age 62 she started her own part-time alterations business and – interesting fact - did the alterations for Maureen Mathieson's sister's wedding dress.



Sue Behind Grass - Image Courtesy of Maureen Mathieson

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Member Snapshot - Sue Abrahamsen - continued from page 8

While not a founding member of AVCC, Sue joined about a year after it started. She heard about it after going to a course at Assabet Valley Regional Technical High School with the same teacher, Norm Eggert,

www.normeggert.photoshelter.com; <https://www.facebook.com/search/top?q=norm%20eggert%20photography>

whose course the founding club members had taken. Sue served as Program Chair in the club for 15 years. She notes that while she misses the in-person meetings, she sees an advantage to Zoom, in that the club can get presenters and judges from all over.



Moon over Saint Michaels - Image Courtesy of Sue Abrahamsen

Sue loves the subject of photography - talking about it and doing it with others. She says the club field trips that went on in the past were very good, with people always being willing to share knowledge, camera settings, etc. In fact, Sue's Zoom background image is Mt. Rainier taken on a camera club trip to WA in 2015. She has traveled extensively for both photography and non-photography trips, traveling 1-2 times per year for photography. Some recent photography trips were to Costa Rica and Iceland. She recommends trips through Joe and Mary Ann McDonald (<https://www.hoothollow.com/index.html>) as well as Mike Milicia (<https://www.michaelmiliciaphotography.com/instruction>)

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Member Snapshot - Sue Abrahamsen - continued from page 9

Sue said the biggest learning shift for her was going from slides to digital. Currently the growing edges for her are learning the many menus and features of her new Olympus mirrorless camera. She likes the camera, in particular the good resolution in the higher ISOs, and the longer shutter speeds that can be used while the camera is handheld. She also likes the live histogram displayed in the viewfinder while shooting. In terms of processing, she wants to try focus stacking.

We discussed taking photos with phones. While Sue doesn't feel she is an expert in that mode, she has taken some that have done "pretty well" in competition. As she said, the most important thing is the "eye of seeing" – the light, details, shadows, highlights, shapes and how they interact with each other (*definition from <https://www.picturecorrect.com/the-eye-of-a-photographer/>*).

Clearly Sue is an artist in many ways and an inspiration in the quality and enthusiasm of her photography.



Mom and Cub Posing by Mountains - Image Courtesy of Sue Abrahamsen



Bluebird looking at me - Image Courtesy of Sue Abrahamsen



Puffin Portrait - Image Courtesy of Sue Abrahamsen - PSA Merit Award



Jaguar resting under tree - Image Courtesy of Sue Abrahamsen

Members' Lens



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

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

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

The Bigger Picture - Happenings in the World of Photography

Many thanks to the following members for their contributions to this month's Newsletter: Cathy Robotis, Lynn Kerner, Mary Coombs, Glenn Fund, Doris Monteiro, Alan Mertz, Sue Abrahamsen, Terry Vachowski, Pam Meoli, Linda Shelales, Charlie Burke, and Elliot Mednick

Zooming Out

On the Wall at Cafe 641

Currently eight club members have images on display for the "Winter and the Holidays" exhibit at Cafe 641 in Hudson. Several members gathered for the meet and greet on December 17 to view the show and catch up before the holidays. Bob Cooke, Cathy Robotis, John Gill, Glenn Fund, Alan Mertz, Robyn Saur, Lynn Kerner, and Elliot Mednick each have an image on the wall. This eclectic collection is a wonderful celebration of the season and will be on display through January 5th.

January's show will feature works by Jack Casey (non AVCC) and will be installed on January 6. John Mauro will have images on display for the month of February. Mary Coombs will have images on display for the month of March followed by Maureen and Todd Mathieson in April.



**Maureen and Lynn at
Cafe 641**

"The eye should learn to listen before it looks"
- Robert Frank

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PSA Interclub Competition

Congratulations to Sue Abrahamsen (Nature) and Darlene Holman (Open - Color), for earning Merit Awards and to and Lynn Kerner (Travel) for earning an Honorable Mention in the November PSA Interclub Competition!



*Eastern Black swallowtail on Cardinal Flower -
Darlene Holman - PSA Merit Award*

International Exhibitions

At our last club meeting on December 21, Charlie Burke posed a question. He asked us what we did with our images after competitions. Most who answered said they put them in a file. Charlie went on to encourage us to enter international competitions as a way to keep those photos fresh and to challenge ourselves to improve.

Here are some suggestions from Charlie for entering international competitions:

- Enter PSA approved competitions - here is a link to a searchable listing of approved international exhibitions: <https://listings.psaems.org>
- Some exhibitions have fees and you will want to determine the cost by section - often a competition will have 4-8 sections available to enter with up to 4 images per section
- Check to see if there is a reduced price for entering multiple images or sections
- Check to see if there is a lower Early Bird price for entering all the sections; the downside of this is that it takes a long time (over 30 days) to get a result
- Charlie holds his entry costs to \$1 an image - if it's more he doesn't enter

Members of PSA can earn recognitions once they have reached certain achievement levels.

Some of Charlie's favorite exhibitions are in India, Sri Lanka, Singapore, China, Thailand, and Vietnam

Zooming In

New Year's Resolutions

In the spirit of the New Year we asked our members to share any photography-related New Year's Resolutions they may be making for 2023. Here are our responses:

Sue Abrahamsen: Learn more about the possibilities available on my camera, bird tracking and photo stacking to name a few.

Pam Meoli: My New Years Resolution regarding photography would be to take more pictures next spring and summer so I can stock up on Nature images through the winter months.

Cathy Robotis: I always say that I am "in search of focus," and I mean that both literally and figuratively. To that end, I hope to develop more technical skills and learn more about my camera (beyond basic pointing and shooting). If I succeed and improve my work, I would consider trying to do something with my photos (greeting cards, wood mounts, etc) and possibly start my own website (another set of skills needed for that feat!).

Terry Vachowski: I don't normally make resolutions, but I really want to learn to get comfortable with manual mode on my camera next year. It's usually too much of a struggle to bother, so I stay in Aperture or Speed modes.

Mary Coombs: I have many but a goal to shoot sharper images is paramount. I also hope to learn to use LR and PS as well as Topaz AI. And, I guess most of all, I'd like to find my photographic voice.

Lynn Kerner: Complete the online Photoshop course I bought about a year ago!

We wish everyone a wonderful New Year, full of health, light, happiness, and adventure.



Pot of Gold - John McKinney

"January was a two-faced month, jangling like jester's bells, crackling like snow crust, pure as any beginning, grim as an old man, mysteriously familiar yet unknown, like a word one can almost but not quite define." —Patricia Highsmith

Tips and Tricks - January's Theme: Indoor Photography

Tips for Indoor Photography

Preparing the scene

- Consider every room, and look for the beauty in the room. Look for items that may seem insignificant but may add substance to your image (for example, plants).
- Pets make great subjects for indoor photography.
- Look at your windows at different times of the day to see what type of light comes through.
- Use natural light whenever possible, but if you will need an artificial light source, try using a lamp, torch, or phone screen. Remember that you can bounce light off of the ceiling if needed, but only if the ceiling is white. Remember that electric lights may cause shadows and may contrast with natural light. You may find that you need to use a flash for fill light when there are a lot of shadows. You may need to increase the ISO to allow you to have a shutter speed fast enough to avoid camera shake (especially if you don't have access to a tripod).
- A sheet of paper taped to the window can create a light box effect.
- For indoor night photography, consider shooting next to a well lit doorway (shooting from the darkness into the light).
- White walls make a great backdrop for indoor portraits. You can use a tablecloth behind a subject to create a subtle background, or you can place a baby on a plain white sheet. The white will provide a light-catching backdrop.
- Windows are great for indoor photography. Place your subject 1-2 feet from the window. Place your subject behind a window to create beautiful reflections. Place your subject in front of the window to create a soft, backlit look. You can even use a window as your subject (for example, stained glass windows).
- You can use foil to lighten your subject's features if you don't have a reflector.

Club member Linda Shelales uses many of these tips when photographing friends and babies and shared some of her images and set-ups as examples:



Carolyn - Image Courtesy of Linda Shelales

The photo of my friend, taken at the local winery, was lit by a wonderful soft light as she faced the window to my right on a bright cloudy day. Soft light is flattering as we age!



Mikey - Linda Shelales

Mikey at age 2-3 months (when they just lay there for you!) placed on a sheet or plain background, next to a large window in bright midday light, to my right.

Tips continued on next page

Working with Natural Light

- Natural light is your friend, but beware of shooting in low light.
- “NOISE LURKS IN THE SHADOWS,” so when you raise the exposure in post-processing, you will have more noise (livesnaplove.com).
- Light looks warm at sunrise, cool at midday, and warm at sunset.
- Midday light works well indoors; try putting your subject in front of a window with a sheer curtain drawn.
- The golden hour provides diffused light.
- Soft light adds a soft glow, and it is very flattering for portrait photography.
- By combining twilight and artificial light, you can create mysterious silhouettes.
- Harsh light offers a dramatic, moody look.
- On cloudy days, the light may change as you are shooting your photos.



*Exploring the Stoa of Attalos
- Catherine Robotis*

White balance Settings

- **Auto** will do an OK job.
- **Daylight** is good for indoor portraits, or for when you want cooler colors.
- **Cloudy** provides a warmer look and warms up the colors.
- **Tungsten** should be used when there are incandescent bulbs in the scene.
- **Fluorescent** will counteract a lot of blues.
- **Shade** makes photos appear warmer than the Cloudy setting.

Now that you're ready to take your indoor photos...

- Shoot in RAW.
- Use a tripod.
- Keep your ISO as low as possible (100 or 200, if you can manage it, but you may need to increase it significantly to attain a shutter speed fast enough to avoid camera shake, especially if you don't have a tripod).
- Shoot in manual mode or aperture mode.
- Use lower aperture numbers whenever possible because this will let more light in.
- Use f/11 for wider shots.
- f/5.6 or f/6.3 will help keep the face in focus in portrait shots.
- Consider using HDR.
- Shoot with both eyes open (most of us close one eye when looking into the viewfinder).



Come Sit With Me - Liz Krouse

The Bigger Picture

Upcoming Photo Competitions (with links)

[earth.org](#) Global Wildlife and Natural World Competition 2023

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

[Sony World Photography Awards 2023](#)

- Deadline 1/13/23.
- Free Competition - Cash Prizes.
- Professional (5-10 images) or Open (single images).
- Many topics, including Cityscapes, Conceptual, Culture, Macro/micro, Nature, Photojournalism, Sports and Travel (see the site for even more potential topics).

[Belfast Photo Festival 2023](#)

- Deadline 2/3/23.
- Free to enter - Cash prizes for winners.
- Topic: Open.

[‘Smile World’ International Photography Award](#)

- Deadline 1/15/23.
- Cash prizes.
- This competition focuses on professionalism and humanity.
- Themes: Landscape, Nature, Documentary, and Portrait.

Environmental Photography Award

- Sponsored by the Prince Albert II of Monaco Foundation and hosted by [photocrowd.com](#).
- Deadline 1/15/23

[Sonic Imagery](#) - Groton Hill Music Center - last chance!

- Deadline 1/3/23 - this is a wonderful opportunity!

Photo Exhibits

Griffin Museum in Winchester, MA

- Winter Solstice: various artists (until 1/8/23).
- Alyssa Minahan: an end and a beginning (until 1/8/23).
- Sarah Schorr: The Color of Water (until 1/8/23).
- Becky Behar: Illuminating the archive - call & response (until 1/23/23).
- My Favorite Things/Still Life: various artists at the Lafayette City Center Passageway (until 3/12/23).



Brooklyn Rain - Richard Tranfaglia

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The Bigger Picture - Continued from page 17

Cafe 641, Hudson - AVCC Member show that changes monthly - December/January - group exhibit - photographs by 8 AVCC members ending 1/5/23 followed by works by Jack Casey (non AVCC)



Sunset at Turner's Beach - Bridget Perch

Upcoming Photography Workshops and Programs

Meetup - Photography instruction and workshops offered by Tom and Lisa Cuchara (NECCC 2022 75th Annual Conference Co-Chairs - Past presenters and frequent judges for AVCC competitions)

Here's what John Gill had to say about Meetup: You can sign up to receive notifications of their upcoming photo workshops. They go to some interesting locations. I recently attended one and they are extremely attentive to helping you get the most out of it. [Photography with Lisa and Tom \(Hamden, CT\) | Meetup](#)

Mass Audubon will have a free class for beginning photographers on 1/14/23. To participate, you need to register ahead of time. [Winter Nature Photography: Intro to DSLR Photography \(massaudubon.org\)](#)

Assabet After Dark Program

- Digital Photography I (3/6/23-4/3/23, \$189).
- Digital Photography II (4/24/23-5/22/23, \$189).
- Smartphone Photography (5/16/23-5/23/23, \$75).
- Wildlife Photography Workshop (4/27/23-5/3/23, \$89).

Worcester State University

- Discover Digital Photography (6-week course, start dates 1/18/23, 2/15/23, and 3/15/23, \$115).

Florida Birds Workshop - from 4/16/23-4/21/23 in St. Augustine with Mollie Isaacs. She also offers webinars and online programs. You can visit her site at www.awakethelight.com. Alan Mertz is going!

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Photography Resources

- Digital Photography School and Photographing Your Life are online sites that offer excellent advice on Bokeh Photography, a fun and creative use of light

Sources

Adobe.com, Expertphotography.com, digital-photography-school.com, picturecorrect.com, masterclass.com, livesnaplove.com

Websites of Interest:

Audubon winners

<https://slideshows.massaudubon.org/Photography>

Dave Poole: <https://www.fws.gov/story/why-i-took-these-shots-9>

National Wildlife Refuges Nature Photography Stories Collection

<https://www.fws.gov/library/collections/photography>

PSA - Competition Results (click on Round One for 2023) - The PSA site has a lot to offer and exploring it on a rainy day is a fun endeavor!

And just for fun:

Did you know that January 18 is Winnie the Pooh Day? What home would be complete without Pooh on the bookshelf?

A home without books is a body without soul. - Cicero



Derry City Lights - Lynn Kerner

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

Calling all members!

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

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

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

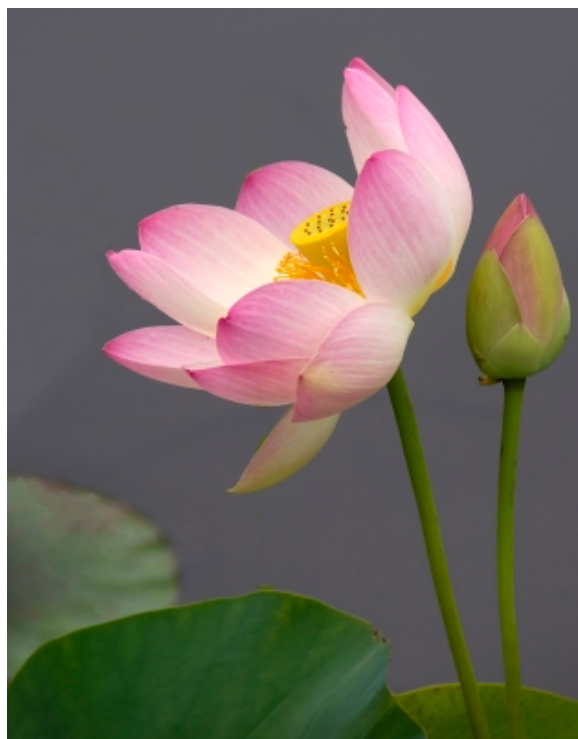
Items that may be of interest to other club members when sharing what went into making the image are:

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

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

Editor’s Note:

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



Lonely Lotus - Linda Shelales



AVCC is a member of the following organizations:

NECCC



PSA



AVCC website:

<https://www.assabetvalleycc.com>

2022-2023 Executive Board Members:

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



Mockingbird with Porcelain Berry 2
- John Gill

Editors' Note:

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

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