

**Q&A with Beth Bauer
Image of the Year Winner 2020-2021**



Beth Bauer is our latest IOY honoree! Her image, “Look Out!!!” captivated our end-of-year judge, Mike Goodman, a photographer and judge who’s won numerous photography awards across the globe. About “Look Out!!!,” he said, “The whole image grabs the viewer with a big WOW.” Mike had the unenviable job of evaluating 221 award-winning images from six 2020-2021 MVCC digital competitions. “After multiple rounds of eliminations, I was left with more than a dozen super images that all could easily have been image of year. At this level, judging comes down to personal connection and emotional response. The subject matter – a great white – was quite unique. The perspective was even more unique (eye level). The moment/timing (mouth open) was compelling. And presenting it in B&W was wonderful.”

Congratulations, Beth! Please tell us about your photo, “Look Out!!!”

This photo of a 15-foot great white shark lunging for dinner was taken in the wild during a cage diving trip 120 miles offshore in the waters of Guadalupe Island, Mexico. My expanding underwater photography skills and learning how to anticipate behaviors of these large animals helped tremendously in achieving this image. Just as important, I felt very protected inside the underwater steel cage swaying in the currents and waves. The ability to balance myself and my equipment in this environment and setting the proper parameters clinched the shot.

Camera and Settings:

Panasonic LX10 in an Ikelite Underwater Housing. Full manual mode - SS 1/500th, F5.6, and ISO 6400, focal length 63mm

What were your thoughts when you found out you won IOY?

I was stunned...and still am. Although, now there is also a mixture of excitement and a great feeling of

accomplishment. In all honesty, there are so many talented photographers in our club that any one of their images could have easily won Image of the Year.

Let's talk about your photography background. How long have you been "doing" photography?

I have always done photography at some level ever since my mother gave me my first Brownie camera when I was quite young. Although well known for my enthusiastic "point and shoot" family and trip photos over the years, it wasn't until recently that my desire to learn more became pronounced. I started educating myself on DSLR camera technology to create enhanced and more detailed underwater images. Having gained more technical knowledge, I am now placing more emphasis on understanding and learning the importance of effective composition in the photographic image. And using those skills not just for underwater photography but on land as well!

What are your favorite subjects to photograph?

Until recently, underwater subjects have been my first priority. Through taking workshops and being open to new situations, my interests have since expanded to also include street and people photography, nature, landscapes and storytelling.

What do you do with your photography?

I enjoy learning as much as possible to help create images that I can connect with. By participating in competitions and workshops, hopefully my images will connect with others as well. I am thinking about, but have not yet participated in, gallery shows or other types of competitions.

What camera(s) do you shoot with? Any favorite lenses?

On land, I use a Nikon D500 camera and enjoy experimenting with the Nikon 200-500mm F5.6 lens for nature photography. For underwater photography, I use a Panasonic LX10 camera with an Ikelite housing and always have my waterproof Olympus TG5 compact camera with me as a backup. I'm thinking about getting a waterproof housing for my Nikon and also using it for underwater photos.

What other club awards have you won in the 2020-2021 season?

My photographs have won multiple first, second and third place awards in the six different club competitions held during the 2020-2021 season. These include awards in the following categories: Portrait/People, Nature, 'Scapes, Storytelling and General. I had been competing in the "B" level photography group during this season and have now "graduated" into the "A" level group starting in the 2021-2022 season.

Let's talk about the club! How long have you been a member of Merrimack Valley Camera Club?

I joined about two years ago and have enjoyed every bit of my membership. I look forward to my continuing club membership.

Why did you become a member?

To increase my knowledge on how to create better images and because I didn't know where to start and needed guidance. I have definitely improved by participating in MVCC seminars, taking classes and workshops, and getting "out there" to practice as much as possible.

How has being part of the club been of value to you?

Being a part of MVCC has been a very positive growth experience. It has led to increased satisfaction with my skill level and created more opportunities to participate in new photography experiences. I have also met new friends which has been great!

What are your favorite things about the club?

My favorite things are the people in the club, the many high-end presentations from local and international professional photographers, learning new skills, and finding new places to photograph. Everyone I have met has been very generous in helping newcomers feel comfortable and in sharing their knowledge and expertise.

What would you say to others who might want to join the club?

The culture of the club is very welcoming and inclusive of all. People are genuinely friendly and helpful. Whether you're a beginner "point and shoot" photographer or someone already familiar with using more advanced camera technology, MVCC will boost your confidence and photographic enjoyment. In addition to having a common interest in photography, learning more, sharing knowledge and having fun while doing so – you also get to meet new people and create new friendships. I am so glad I joined the Merrimack Valley Camera Club!