

Abraham Lake – More Than Just Bubbles

Abraham Lake has become a very popular winter destination in Alberta for Photography enthusiasts. It is most famous for the amazing ice bubbles that are embedded in the ice surface of the lake. This is caused by the release of methane gas from the bottom of the lake as it freezes into the ever-increasing thickness of the ice surface. Then, as this is a working dam, the water level is lowered throughout the winter, and the sheets of ice drop to the slope of the banks below. This creates many interesting foregrounds for sunrises or sunsets around the lake.

Many articles and stories have covered this attraction to the area. Instagram is flooded with incredible images of ice bubbles and impressive mountain scapes. I enjoy going back every year to capture these images as well. Since no two ice bubbles are the same, you could be there for days on end and never get the same shot.

However, there is a lot more to this amazing place if you just look around and use your imagination. That is what brings me back every year. The images that can be created are all around you. Just apply your creativity and you will be amazed with the results.

The photographic journey that you are about to embark on are examples of my work on three recent trips during 2020 to 2021.

Story and photos by Clayton Reitzel

IACC Member

Of course, I will start with a few of the expected shots.



Sunrise at Preacher's Point



Sunset at Windy Point



Crazy Ice Bubbles

The melting and freezing ice can create many images, often resembling something real....



Ice Eagle



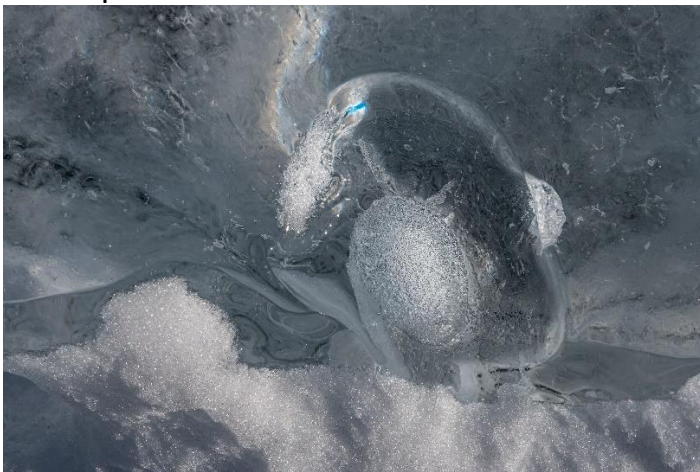
Ice Woodpecker



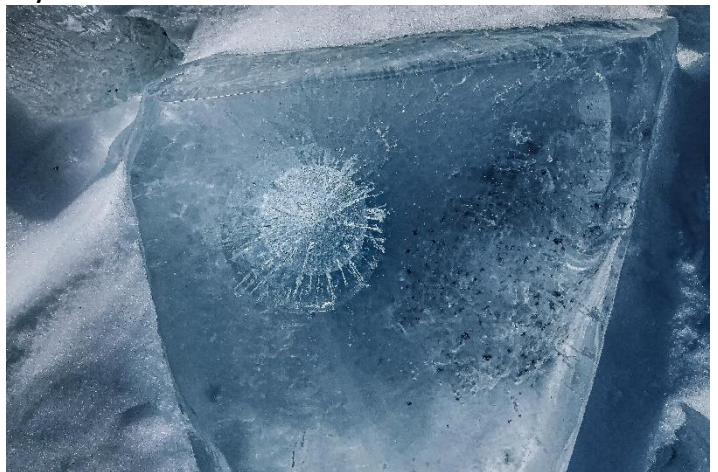
Ice Elephants



Icy Creature

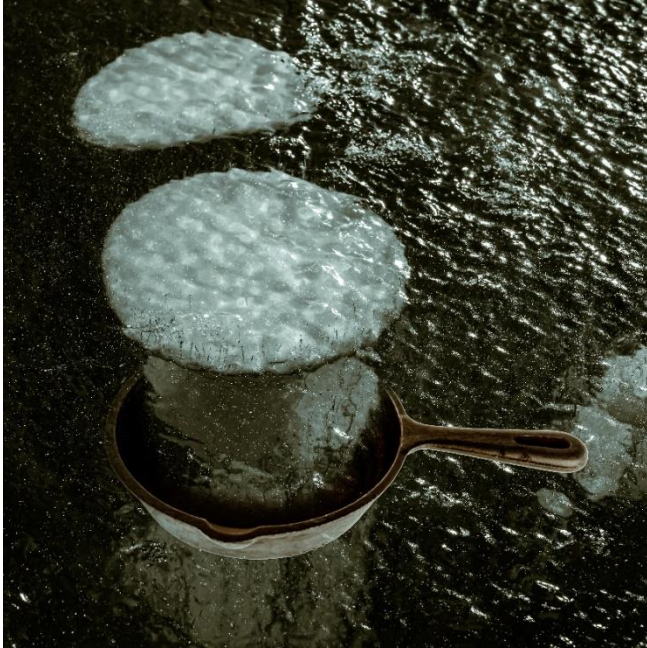


Ice Penguin



Icy Eyeball

And now for something that I created....planning ahead with props to make the creations into reality.



Ever see ice bubbles that look like pancakes?



I couldn't resist – with a little help from Photoshop



Lens balls can make for very interesting photos.



Adding a little water to a depression makes a cool reflection



Adding a little light after dark can make for very dramatic images.



Adding people to images can create some fun images...



Thanks for your help with these Grace!



Of course, the making of the shots can be quite interesting. It can involve getting into awkward positions and tight spaces. But you have to be careful because you know that at some time these ice caves will collapse.



It can sometimes be all about your perspective....



Using a selfie stick to get in tight....



...to get this.



Bruce going in for a closer look.



Mt. Michener through two tipped ice ledges.



Mt. Michener through a pile of rocks.

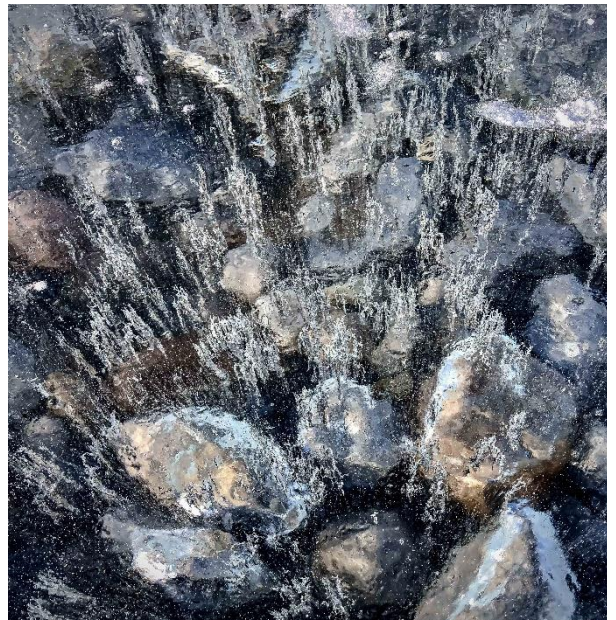


The "stumps" make an awesome foreground.

Black & White images always create some interesting drama...



Now for some icy abstracts...



You can't visit the area without some wildlife sightings...



Don't forget your ice cleats and other safety items...



Carol can't decide which footwear is the best, so why not one of each she says?



These two tourists didn't believe ice cleats were required and were kindly escorted off the ice by Bruce.



A good set of winter tires and a 4-wheel drive vehicle are a very good idea as you never know what might blow in.



Standing on tilted ice can be very challenging. Ice cleats certainly help, but spikes on the tripod make a lot of sense too!

You are there anyway, so why not take a few side trips...



Heading west on David Thompson Highway



Cline Canyon Trail



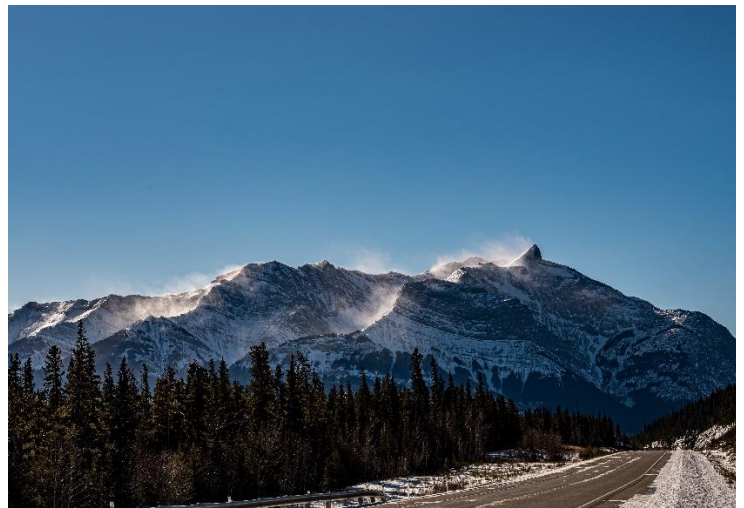
Owen Creek Trail & Falls



Glacier at Columbia Icefields

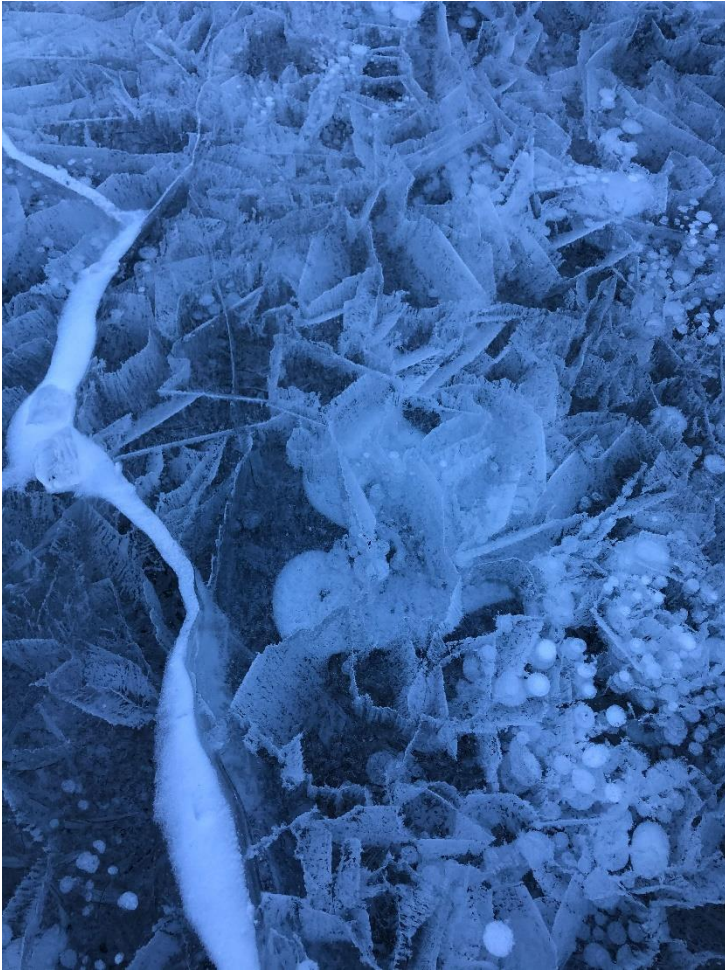


Pit stop on Hwy 93 Northbound

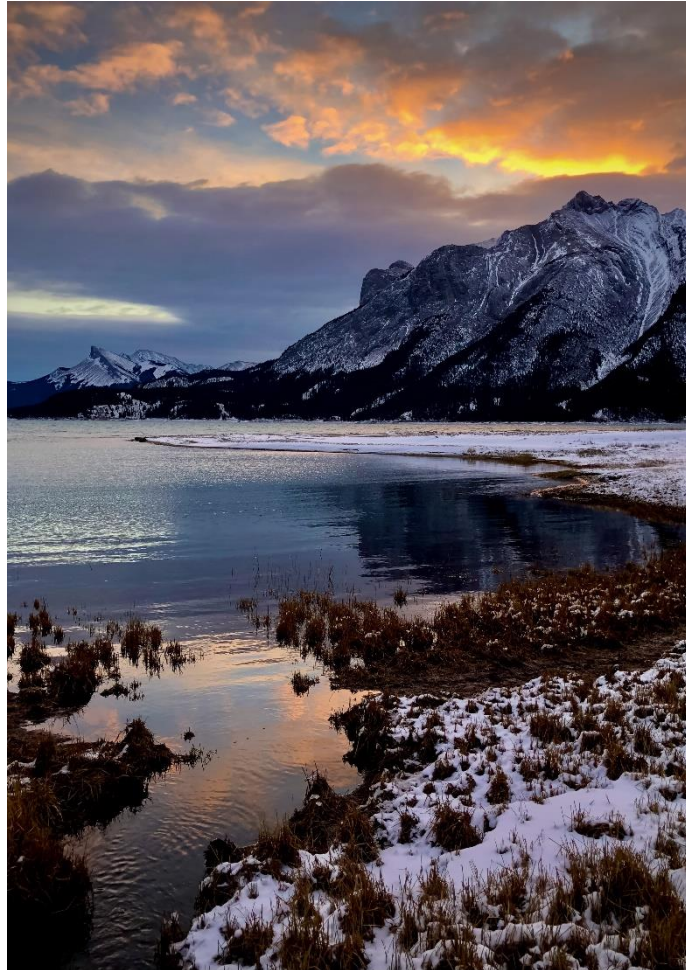


Wind blown mountain peaks everywhere.

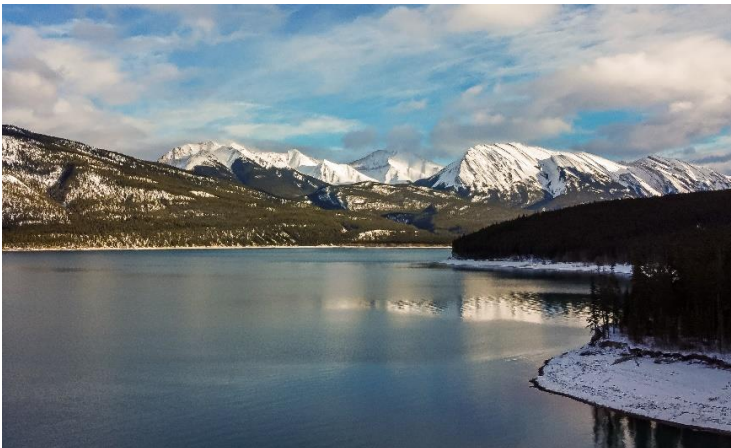
And a few parting shots....



The bubbles....



The sunrises....



Drone shot of the vistas



Sun lit peaks

I hope you enjoyed the trip. Hopefully, you have been inspired to visit the area if you haven't already done so, and maybe you have picked up a few ideas for interesting images for your next adventure to Abraham Lake.

Special thanks to my models: Grace Borun, Bruce Smith, and foot model Carol Rusinek.