

# **RULES FOR PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITIONS**

## **Lebanon Camera Club**

**Adopted – 12/7/1982**

**Effective – 1/1/1983**

**Revised – 12/22/2015**

**Effective – 2/2/2016**

**Revised – 10/2/2008**

**Revised – 2/4/2017**

**Effective – 3/22/2017**

**Revised – 10/7/2014**

**Effective – 2/3/2015**

### **GENERAL RULES**

#### **CUSTODY OF WORK**

Competition material is to be submitted to the competition chairperson, or designated committee member, or such other member designated by the presiding club officer.

All print entries may be picked up after the competition.

#### **DEADLINE FOR ENTRY**

Refer to the SUBMISSION sections for print and digital competitions for details. Items entered after the deadline may be rejected.

#### **ENFORCEMENT**

The competition chairperson will enforce the rules and regulations regarding photographic competitions.

#### **PROHIBITED**

Nudes and material of questionable taste are excluded.

Commercial work for which the photographer has or expects to receive compensation is excluded.

#### **RESTRICTIONS**

Entrant must be a member in good standing (dues paid in full).

All work must be photographed by the entrant.

All image components must originate as an element of a photographic image. Graphic elements, such as text or drawn shapes created by image editing software, are not permitted (text can be added via photomontage in divisions where this is allowed—see DISCUSSION section).

Projected photographic backgrounds, such as using an image displayed on an LCD TV or by a digital or slide projector, are permitted. Note that such backgrounds may not appear 'natural' without some image manipulation—this may limit their use in divisions which require the image to appear 'natural'. Any photographic image displayed on or by the device must be photographed by the entrant.

#### **RISK OF ENTRY**

The Club, its officers, members, or any person acting on its behalf, assume no responsibility for loss, theft, damage, or any other peril which may occur to competition or exhibition entries.

Protective coverings such as plastic wrap are allowed, provided other requirements such as size are met.

### **PRINT COMPETITIONS**

#### **LABELING**

Prints must be marked with the title, photographer & division on a label attached to the upper left corner on the back. Labels are available from the competition chairperson.

## LIGHTING

Images will be judged in 5000K light (approximate daylight illumination). High CRI bulbs will be used to ensure good color rendering.

## MOUNTING

Prints must be mounted to a rigid substrate such as mat board, foam board, or cardboard. The mounting may be permanent (adhesive) or temporary (mounting corners). Temporary mounts must be secure, so that the print does not fall out of the mount when handled.

Matting is not required.

Framing is not required.

## RE-ENTRY

Entries which have won in the top 5 in their division may not be re-entered in any other division.

Images which have previously been entered in a digital competition may be entered in a print competition.

## SIZE

Prints can be of any size.

## DIVISIONS

### **Color**

The intent for this division is that images look 'unprocessed', meaning no filters or effects are used which result in an obviously modified image. Inherent lens distortion is considered 'unprocessed', but should not be added as an effect. Vignetting may be added as an effect, but must appear 'natural' (see DISCUSSION section). Adding and removing image elements is permitted, provided that it does not fundamentally alter the nature story or image content. Note that some advanced techniques, such as light painting, may produce images that have an 'unusual' or 'abstract' appearance—this is considered 'unprocessed' if no filters or effects were used to substantially modify the image from the camera (this differs from the digital competition, where there is a specific division for 'creative' images). It may be preferable to enter an image in the **Open** division if there is any possibility of the judges questioning whether the image is 'unprocessed'.

No hand coloring.

Two prints maximum per competition.

### **B&W**

The intent for this division is that images look 'unprocessed', as described above in the **Color** division.

No hand coloring, no selective toning.

Two prints maximum per competition.

### **Open**

Anything that doesn't fall into the **Color** and **B&W** divisions, including images that have been extensively edited—possibly fundamentally altering the image content—or have had filters or effects applied which render the image appearance obviously modified. All image elements must originate as an element of a photograph (see GENERAL RULES section). Textures may be applied to image elements.

Two prints maximum per competition.

## SUBMISSION

Print titles shall be emailed at least 2 days prior to the date of the competition, or at the competition chairperson's discretion. Email titles to: [lebanoncompetition@gmail.com](mailto:lebanoncompetition@gmail.com)

Indicate how many prints you are submitting in each division, and for which month. Make sure you receive a confirmation that your titles were received—if not, contact the competition chairperson.

Prints should be brought to the meeting location at the normal meeting time.

# DIGITAL COMPETITIONS

## COLOR SPACE

The club projector is calibrated to display images using the sRGB color space. Using this color space will result in the best color reproduction. Our current competition software does NOT perform color space conversion, so use of a different color space will result in unpredictable color shifts.

## FILE FORMAT

Images must be in common JPEG file format (8 bits per color, for a total of 24 bits per pixel). It is recommended that image compression be kept to a minimum (ideally zero compression or “highest quality”). Image files must use the .JPG extension.

## RE-ENTRY

Entries which have won in the top 5 in their division may not be re-entered in any other division, except Assigned Subject.

Assigned Subject division work which has won in the top 5 may be re-entered in other divisions, but may not be re-entered in the Assigned Subject division.

Images which have previously been entered in a print competition may be entered in a digital competition.

## SIZE

Maximum image size is **1400 (w) x 1050 (h)** pixels, regardless of orientation:

Portrait – height cannot be more than 1050 pixels.

Landscape – width cannot be more than 1400 pixels.

## BORDER

Competition images are displayed with a black background. Judges may not be able to determine the extents of an entry if it has a black background, which can affect the composition score. Therefore, a border is permitted on images with black backgrounds. If a border is used, it should be 4 pixels wide and the RGB value must be (56,56,56). The border should be created **after** the image is resized to the proper size. The border must **not** extend beyond the specified competition image size (thus the border will occupy the outermost 4 pixels of the image). Contact the competition chairperson if you are unsure how to create a border.

## NUMBER OF ENTRIES

A maximum of 5 entries are allowed, with no more than two entries in any division (it is permissible to enter two images in two different divisions, one image in another division, and zero images in the remaining division).

## DIVISIONS

### **Nature**

Includes almost anything in the outdoors, except that nothing man made may be included such as fences, tools, implements, power lines, domestic animals, buildings, vases, formal arrangements of flowers or trees, etc. Any image which includes the ‘hand of man’ may be disqualified during the competition.

Permitted and included, are landscape scenes, natural rock arrangements, trees, streams, ocean or seashore scenes, wild game, birds, snakes, lizards, snails, turtles, fish in their natural waters, frogs, moths, spiders, insects, fruits & any flower.

The intent for this division is that images look ‘natural’, meaning no filters or effects are used which result in an ‘unrealistic’ looking image. Inherent lens distortion is considered ‘natural’, but should not be added as an effect. Vignetting may be added as an effect, but must appear ‘natural’ (see DISCUSSION section). Adding and removing image elements is permitted, provided that it does not fundamentally alter the nature story or image content. Judges will be very strict in enforcing ‘natural’ appearance.

### **Pictorial**

This division includes any picture not within the scope of a nature photo.

Scenic photos, such as landscapes, ocean seashore scenes, and close-up studies of nature are not considered pictorial unless the hand of man is included.

Formal arrangements of flowers, a garden or tabletop photograph, a still life, etc., are examples of pictorial images.

The intent for this division is that images look 'natural', meaning no filters or effects are used which result in an 'unrealistic' looking image. Adding and removing image elements is permitted if the result looks 'natural'.

### **Assigned Subject**

Examples: color red, action, comedy. Topics for the next year are selected at the December meeting. Suggestions are submitted by members and picked randomly.

The assigned subject should be main focus of the image. Judges may deduct points if they feel the image is not relevant to the assigned subject. For example, if the assigned subject is 'Cars' then an image with a blurry car in the background and no other car-related content may have points deducted.

This division has no restrictions other than that all image elements must originate as an element of a photograph (see the GENERAL RULES section). All image manipulations are permitted including photomontage, art filters, and multiple exposures. Textures may be applied to image elements.

### **Creative**

This is the division for contemporary or experimental work. These will include, but not be limited to, derived images, ultra-high contrast, black light, bas-relief, solarization, photomontage, multiple exposures, light painting, trick lenses & filters, and other ways to alter the image to produce a new abstract effect. Although subject to interpretation, members are encouraged to enter their most challenging work using new techniques, subjects, or media. Generally concentration on form and color rather than detail in the image will help you succeed. All image elements must originate as an element of a photograph (see GENERAL RULES section). Textures may be applied to image elements.

## **SUBMISSION**

Digital images shall be emailed at least 2 days prior to the date of the competition, or at the competition chairperson's discretion. Email images to: [lebanoncompetition@gmail.com](mailto:lebanoncompetition@gmail.com)

Indicate how many images you are sending and for which month. Make sure you receive a confirmation that your images were received—if not, contact the competition chairperson.

### FILE NAMING OF DIGITAL ENTRIES:

For the first entry submitted by Frank Lorah entitled "The Catch" in the **Pictorial** division, the file would be named

LCC-LORAF-A1-THE\_CATCH.JPG

LCC (Lebanon Camera Club)-

FIRST FOUR LETTERS OF LAST NAME + FIRST LETTER OF FIRST NAME-

A = **Pictorial**

B = **Nature**

C = **Assigned Subject**

D = **Creative**

1 = First image in division

2 = Second image in division

IMAGE TITLE (Maximum of 36 characters)

***MUST USE THE - (hyphen) BETWEEN EACH PART OF THE FILE NAME***

***MUST USE THE \_ (underline) BETWEEN WORDS IN THE IMAGE TILE (i.e. THE\_CATCH)***

***MUST USE THE .JPG EXTENSION***

## SPECIAL COMPETITIONS

May be held at the discretion of the competition committee. Subjects and techniques involved vary and may require special rules.

Examples include collages, hand colored prints, multiple prints on the same mount, panoramas, high dynamic range (HDR) images, and tryptichs.

The competition committee will decide and announce specific criteria for each competition.

The special rules must be published in the newsletter when the competition is scheduled.

## JUDGING

### GENERAL

Each division is shown and judged without preview.

Judges decisions are final for that competition. If an error in judging is discovered, the work may be re-entered at a later date.

Talking is prohibited during competition. Judges are not to discuss entries under consideration. Judges may request a rules clarification from the competition chairperson.

Ties will not be broken. In the event of a tie, duplicate awards will be given.

Placing work (1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, HM, HM) will be shown at the end of the competition.

After a digital competition all entries will be shown for open critique, if time permits. Entrants may withdraw work they do not want critiqued.

### SCORING

**Criteria** (see DISCUSSION section for details on the scoring criteria)

1. Impact and appeal
2. Composition
3. Technical quality

#### **Three Judge System – old scoring hardware**

Judging is conducted by a panel of three judges selected by the competition chairperson. No judge may have entries in the competition.

Judges will assign a single score from 0-9 as the aggregate image score, comprised of scores of 0-3 for each of the three criteria (maximum total score = 27).

#### **Three Judge System – new scoring hardware**

Judging is conducted by a panel of three judges selected by the competition chairperson. No judge may have entries in the competition.

Each of the criteria will be judged separately, with subtotals calculated by the scoring hardware. Judges will assign a score from 0-9 for each of the three criteria. The subtotals will be summed by the scoring hardware to produce a total score (maximum total score = 81).

#### **Four Judge System – new scoring hardware**

Judging is conducted by a panel of four judges selected by the competition chairperson. Judges may have entries in the competition.

Each of the criteria will be judged separately, with subtotals calculated by the scoring hardware. Judges will assign a score from 1-9 for each of the three criteria. The lowest score will be dropped for each of the criteria. A judge **must** enter a '0' (zero) for each of the three criteria if their image is being judged (this ensures their scores are the ones being dropped). The subtotals will be summed by the scoring hardware to produce a total score (maximum total score = 81).

Points may be deducted if a judge feels the entry is inappropriate for the division.

Points may be deducted if a judge feel the entry does not appear 'natural' in the **Nature** and **Pictorial** digital divisions, and the **Color** and **B&W** print divisions.

## DISQUALIFICATION

A digital image submitted to the **Nature** digital division will be disqualified if it contains the ‘hand of man’.

A print submitted to the **Color** or **B&W** print divisions will be disqualified if it contains any use of filters or effects beyond what is permitted in that division.

Any judge may raise objections to the competition chairperson, who will rule whether the image is disqualified.

## DISCUSSION

### FILTERS & EFFECTS

For the purposes of this document, a ‘filter’ is an optical device placed in the light path to affect the quality or intensity of light that reaches the light sensing medium (film, enlarging paper, or digital sensor). An ‘effect’ is a software manipulation of a digital image, sometimes used to mimic the result of using an actual filter when the image was taken. Image editors often use the term ‘adjustment’ to refer to certain low-level manipulations such as brightness and saturation, and the term ‘effect’ to refer to more complex manipulations—in this document all software manipulations are referred to as ‘effects’. As described below, some filters are uniformly applied across the image, but are intended to affect selected parts of the image more than others. For our purposes, these filters are considered to be uniform. However, effects which only modify selected areas of the image are considered to be non-uniform.

Uniform filters and effects are applied to the entire image at the same intensity. Examples of uniform filters include non-graduated neutral density filters, color compensating filters, and soft focus filters. Polarizing filters are considered uniform, however when used with wide angle lenses the polarizing effect may not be consistent across the entire image. Enhancing filters are uniformly applied across the image, but have selective effects on specific colors (usually increasing the apparent color saturation of reddish objects such as fall leaves). Despite their selective end product, enhancing filters are considered uniform. Examples of uniform effects are brightness, contrast, and saturation adjustments.

Non-uniform filters and effects are applied to selected parts of the image, or do not affect all areas of the image with the same intensity due to the filter construction. An example of a non-uniform filter is the graduated neutral density (GND) filter. This filter is usually square and it is clear at one edge while the the opposite edge has the rated ND value. The transition zone can be relatively large (soft edge) or small (hard edge). Various ND values are available. The main use of the filter is in landscape photography in order to reduce the exposure value of the sky, which reduces the dynamic range of the image (preventing overexposure of the sky). Examples of non-uniform effects are selective brightness effects (levels or histogram adjustment), distortion-introducing effects, and solarization.

Due to the tradition of using GND filters in landscape photography, these non-uniform filters will be allowed in all divisions and subdivisions (both print and digital). While the GND filter and effect are permitted, a poor implementation—such as an obvious transition zone—may cause judges to deduct points from their score.

### HIGH DYNAMIC RANGE PHOTOGRAPHY

High dynamic range photography (HDR) is a technique where multiple images captured using different exposure values are combined into a single image. The intent is to overcome the limited dynamic range of some digital sensors, which may not be able to capture the entire dynamic range of a scene in a single image (especially a high contrast outdoor scene, which often results in an overexposed sky). Initially, HDR software was only available as standalone programs, but it is now built in to many image editors and also some cameras. The quality of the HDR process can vary greatly—some images look normal and others may look very unnatural. The key is how the software compresses the extended dynamic range into the available dynamic range of a normal image, and how much control the user has over the process. Standalone HDR programs offer a wide range of control, while an in-camera effect may offer very little.

HDR photography is permitted in all divisions. However, certain divisions require that the image appear ‘natural’, and some HDR images may not meet this standard. It is up to the judges to determine whether an image appears ‘natural’ or not, and to deduct points appropriately.

## PHOTOMONTAGE

Photomontage is the process and the result of making a composite photograph by cutting and joining two or more photographs into a new image. Although this is most easily done with digital images using image editing software (referred to as ‘compositing’ or ‘photoshopping’), it can also be done using film negatives and enlargers (refer to the work of Jerry Uelsmann).

Photomontage is often used to create surreal images—images which contain optical illusions or impossible situations. However, it is possible to employ the technique such that the resulting image appears ‘natural’—for example, by adding grass to a **Nature** image to cover up a man-made object. Note that in many camera clubs photomontage or cloning image elements in a **Nature** image would not be permitted. In our competitions ‘natural’ photomontage is acceptable in all divisions. Its use is limited in the **Nature** division, where the nature story or fundamental image content may **not** be altered—therefore it is restricted to background manipulation. ‘Unnatural’ photomontage is permitted in the **Assigned Subject** and **Creative** divisions.

## VIGNETTING

Vignetting is a reduction of an image's brightness at the periphery compared to the image center. This effect is normally the result of using a fast lens at a large aperture (low F-number), which results in the lens not evenly illuminating the sensor. It is technically considered a lens aberration, however the effect often enhances the image by focusing the eye on the central subject. If the image is not cropped, the effect will be symmetrical about the image center for a normal lens (a tilt-shift lens can cause asymmetrical vignetting). Vignetting can also be introduced as an effect in an image editor, where the location of the center of the effect can be controlled.

Vignetting is a non-uniform effect, since the image brightness is reduced more in the corners and edges than in the center. However, lens vignetting is unavoidable when using certain lenses and cannot be prohibited from any division, even though the effect may appear ‘unnatural’ compared to human vision. The vignetting effect is permitted in all divisions, but an ‘unnatural’ implementation may cause judges to deduct points from their score if the division requires images to look ‘natural’.

## SCORING CRITERIA

**Impact and appeal** – Impact is the first impression of the image. Images that make a strong first impression (“wow factor”) should get higher scores. Appeal is the lasting impression the image generates: does the image maintain your interest? Images with high appeal can depict beautiful scenes, be fascinating for the amount of detail or complex activity present in the image, and/or employ symbolism or hidden meanings. This criterion is the most subjective, although judges must strive to be as objective as possible (judges should not let personal preferences influence their score).

**Composition** – Composition is the arrangement of image elements in the scene. Good composition draws the eye into the image, and may provide a path for the eye to follow as the image is evaluated. It should also reinforce the subject matter or image theme. Common mistakes are: poorly placed background object (object appears to be coming out of a person's head), cutting off the subject, subject too small, empty foreground, 'busy' background, and colors/brightness too similar (subject is difficult to distinguish from the background). Many guidelines exist for composition, such as: the Rule of Thirds, use of Leading Lines, use of Diagonal Lines, Lead Room (extra space in the direction the subject is moving or facing), and the Rule of Odds (odd numbers of subjects are more appealing). Guidelines are often useful for image evaluation, however they should not be interpreted as strict rules—experienced photographers may intentionally violate composition guidelines to produce a desired effect.

**Technical Quality** – Technical quality is a measure of how well the image concept was executed. Items under consideration include: exposure (underexposed or overexposed?), noise, focus (is the plane of focus in the correct location?), depth of field (too much or not enough DOF?), aberrations (distracting chromatic aberration, distortion, coma, lens flare, etc.), white balance, and camera tilt. Technical quality is the least subjective criterion, but judges must decide if potential issues are intentional or not. For example, excessive noise is generally considered a fault, but some photographers introduce it intentionally to present a “gritty” quality to the image (reminiscent of high ISO film photography).