

NBCC Judges Guidelines for PRINT & ELECTRONIC Monthly Competition with Assignment

(Updated: October 2016)

Current guidelines are available on the internet. Be sure to use the correct version:

- [Print & Electronic Competition with Assignment](#)
- [Open Electronic Competition](#)
- [Open Print Competition](#)

Our meeting begins at 7:30pm with Club committee announcements. The judge is introduced around 7:40pm and may take 10 minutes to tell us a little about his/her background, photographic philosophy and criteria for judging images. There is a break between halves of competition and we must adjourn by 10:00pm.

This competition has a specific assignment (or theme), announced at least a year in advance and provided to the judges. The assignments are chosen specifically to stimulate creative efforts and to broaden members' skills and gain experience in various photographic techniques and genres. To encourage member commitment to assignments and to ensure fairness, we ask that you consider objectively whether each image truly complies with the assignment. **Please do not award any entries which are not fully compliant with the assignment as specified, even if they are outstanding photographs.** Non-compliant images, perhaps culled from a member's existing image library, do not cultivate skills and experience as the club intended. Awarding such images discourages other members from making the necessary efforts and building their skills in the future.

The electronic entries will usually be e-mailed to the judge for review prior to competition night. This optional process helps to speed the evening along, and may let you formulate a succinct critique in advance. Remember that images often look different when projected on our screen, and that's the only place that counts. So please save your award decisions until competition night.

Before the meeting begins, prints are displayed on tables and you are encouraged to preview them for critique purposes.

A monthly competition (with a specific assignment) may draw 100 to 150 entries, organized into five competitive categories and one non-competitive (not necessarily in this sequence):

- Prints: Intermediate and Advanced
- Electronic Images: Novice, Intermediate, and Advanced
- Members Showcase (non-competitive, see description below).

Each competition begins with a **critique round**. The judge makes brief, constructive comments for each image, summarizing only the most important qualities (strengths and weaknesses) and any important improvements needed. For example: compliance with the assignment, emotional response, artistry, and technical considerations. Judges are encouraged to be open to a wide range of photographic expression.

Many members feel this critique is the most valuable learning process in the camera club experience. NBCC particularly appreciates judges who share their photographic expertise by offering specific feedback and actionable advice for each image.

However, to finish a large number of entries on time, the comments must be fairly quick and succinct. Competition leaders will assist the judge in keeping to an appropriate pace in order to finish on time.

The critique round is followed by several **elimination rounds**. One third of the images receive awards, while two thirds are eventually eliminated. The judge rules each image “in” or “out,” and rounds continue until enough entries are eliminated. At the end of each elimination round (but never in the middle), the competition team will announce the number of images still to be eliminated.

Club members understand that selection of winners is subjective, and we appreciate judges who are consistent and decisive. Because all images have received a critique before the elimination rounds, the judge need not justify or explain any “out” decisions unless there is plenty of time and some important insight to be added.

After eliminations, the judge **finalizes selections** for 1st, 2nd and 3rd place, with the remaining winners receiving Honorable Mentions. Then all winning images are displayed while the photographers' names and titles are announced. Winners of 1st, 2nd and 3rd place images may make a brief comment about the making of their image so that others may learn.

Members Showcase. The Members Showcase category is noncompetitive: the judge gives a critique but there are no elimination rounds or awards. Monthly assignments and date restrictions are waived. Members of all capability levels are eligible. Unlike competitive categories, the judge may ask a question or invite a brief comment from a Showcase participant (time permitting).

Some specifics about our competitions and rules:

- Black & white images are judged together with color images.
- Manipulation (e.g., Photoshop) is neither prohibited nor required.
- Scanning is only allowed for the member's photographic print or film.
- Picture elements not of photographic origin are not permitted (other than a thin black, white or gray line surrounding the entire image). Text, lines, shapes and objects may not be added unless they have been photographed by the competitor.
- Closely similar images may not be entered by a member during a monthly competition. Thus, you should assume that any closely similar images were actually made by different members on the same field trip, workshop, etc. Members rarely coordinate what they will enter, so seeing a similar entry might be a surprise to them too.
- Please resist the natural tendency to select only one winner among a set of related images (e.g., two irises). We simply want you to pick the very best images from the group you are judging.
- For fairness during judging, audience members are not allowed to talk aloud until the winners are announced. Judging is a lonely task, but the competition team (only) will respond to any questions you may have.

Thank you for sharing your time and talent with North Bethesda Camera Club.