



Livermore Valley Camera Club

COMPETITION GUIDELINES

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Understanding N4C Competitions

The Livermore Valley Camera Club is a member of a regional collective of 14 Greater Bay Area camera clubs known as N4C (Northern California Council of Camera Clubs). As such, the club competition is based primarily on the guidelines set up by N4C. Therefore, the Livermore Valley Camera Club adheres to the standards set forth by N4C for rules of competition and judging. For more information, go to the N4C website, www.n4c.org.

The club's semi-monthly meetings focus on competitions critiqued by outside judges where members compete against other members of similar abilities. Competitions at all camera clubs are intended to be healthy, fun, and a means to improve one's photography. Members should use the competition as a motivational tool to improve their own work. Points are kept for the purposes of grouping photographers with similar abilities and experiences together. It is also a measure of a member's participation level in the club.

In order to enter images in competition, a new member's skill level must be determined by the club officers. To help us do that, email three digital images to club's membership chairperson at membership@livermorevalleycameraclub.com. If you need help on resizing images to send via email, please ask a club officer. You may also bring three prints to a meeting for evaluation.

The top images in each level are forwarded to N4C. At N4C, the LVCC images are judged against the winning entries from other clubs, and results are reported in the monthly N4C newsletter. Winning N4C entries are eligible for the end-of-year competition, and are presented at the annual N4C banquet.

Regardless of how you may feel about competition and points, we encourage your participation! Sharing our photos is at the heart of what Camera Clubs are all about!

The following information has been condensed from the club by-laws. This is intended to be a quick reference for new and existing members. While these rules may seem complex at first, really the best way to understand them is to come to a meeting and see how it all works. Our members will help you, and answer any of your questions.

Competition Divisions

The club adheres to the standards and guidelines set forth by N4C for competition divisions. The Livermore Valley Camera Club participates in the following divisions:

Prints

Pictorial Color (P)
 Pictorial Monochrome (M)
 Nature (N)
 Creative (C)
 Travel (T)
 Journalism (J)
 Sequence (S)

Projected Images

Pictorial (P)
 Nature (N)
 Creative (C)
 Travel (T)
 Journalism (J)

For complete information on N4C divisions and their definitions, please see the N4C website: www.n4c.org. Following the guidelines on the N4C website improves the chances that your images will do well in competition both at the club level and the N4C level.

Note that for all divisions, image titles are read during judging. Therefore the title is an important aspect in understanding the image or story that is presented to the viewer. Nature titles should be concise and include the Latin name if possible. Be as specific as possible: Include activity, behavior, etc. When the whole subject is not shown, you may use "Portrait of ...".

Authentic Wildlife Sub-Division for Projected Images

Any winning projected image from the Livermore Valley Camera Club may also be eligible for the Wildlife competition when it is moved on to N4C competition. At N4C interclub competitions there is also a sub-division for nature projected images called "Authentic Wildlife." This is generally defined as one or more animals living free and unrestrained in a natural or adopted habitat. Therefore, photographs of zoo or game-farm animals are not eligible.

Authentic Wildlife projected images should be designated as such when entering them into competition. This is done with a checkbox on the *PhotoClubServices* entry form.

Competition Levels

Within each division there are group levels. Each "level" signifies photographers of similar abilities. Each member competes in a division in the group corresponding to the level he/she has achieved in that division. For example, it is possible for a member to compete in Projected Image Pictorial Advanced, and compete in Monochrome Prints Intermediate. New members are typically placed in the "B" or basic levels by default. However, members with previous club experience or photo experience can be placed in higher levels by the executive committee. If you're a new member, please talk with a club officer if you're not sure what level you should be competing in.

Prints *

Basic (B)
 Intermediate (I)
 Advanced (A)
 Masters (M)

Projected Images

Basic (B)
 Intermediate (I)
 Advanced (A)
 Masters (M)

* Only Pictorial Monochrome and Color Prints have all four levels.

Note that not all Print divisions have all levels; below is the list of Print divisions and their associated levels:

Print Division

Print Division Levels

Pictorial Color	B, I, A M
Pictorial Monochrome	B, I, A, M
Nature	B, A
Creative	B, A
Travel	B, A
Journalism	B, A,
Sequence	One level

Competition Rules and Judging

Competitions at all Livermore Valley Camera Club and N4C meetings are critiqued by an impartial outside judge. Judges are experienced photographers and/or are involved in photography in some professional manner: photographer, teacher, business owner, etc. The judges perform two functions at club meetings. The first is to evaluate images on their technical qualities, visual impact, and compliance with N4C rules and to award places for the competition. The other purpose, hopefully more meaningful, is not only to critique, but also to teach and share their knowledge of photography, in an effort to improve the photography of all who attend. When entering competitions, it is VERY important to keep in mind that the opinion of the judge is just that, an opinion. A judge may not like your particular image on a given night, but rest assured that a different judge on a different night might think it's a wonderful image. Some judges are very critical, while others are very constructive and instructive. Don't let negative comments from a judge discourage you. Take it as an opportunity to improve your photography.

The following rules have been established to meet N4C guidelines for competition:

- A member may enter any division, but only in member's own level.
- Limit two prints per division per monthly competition.
- Limit two projected images per division per monthly competition.
- No print or digital image can be entered more than three times within its division in monthly competition without significant changes via cropping, sharpening, etc.
- No previously qualified N4C print or digital image will be eligible for subsequent entry in regular monthly competition (except for Club Annual or Inter-club competitions).
- Prints must be properly labeled (see below).
- Projected images and prints taken from the highest places in monthly competitions will be sent to N4C for judging, unless member chooses not to submit to N4C.
- Entries sent to N4C can only be from paid-up members.

For more complete information on N4C competition rules, please see the N4C website: www.n4c.org.

Points are awarded in all divisions, and are accumulated and tracked for the purposes of advancing members to higher levels. However, the club's Placement Committee can advance a member to a higher level when appropriate. Accumulating points is also an indication of a member's active participation in the club. Points are awarded per division at our monthly and N4C competitions in the following manner:

First Place	5 Points
Second Place	4 Points
Third Place	3 Points
Fourth Place	2 Points
Honorable Mention	1 Point
All Other Club Entries	1 Point

Print Competition

For any print submitted to the club for competition, it is not required, but highly recommended, that it be matted in some fashion; either flush to foam core (gator board) or framed with mat board. The print should be secured, so it is not loose. The minimum outside measurement for any print mat is 11x14 inches; and the maximum is 16x20 inches; with a maximum thickness of 1/4 inch. The print itself, inside the mat, may be any size. Unmounted prints as small as 8x10 can also be submitted.

Prints entered in competition must also have a label affixed to the back of the print, in the upper-left corner, with the following information:

- Title
- Maker's Name
- Club Name
- Division (see above)
- Level (see above)

The following is an example of the label used for the Color Pictorial competition; all the competition labels required for submission are available at the meetings.

LIVERMORE VALLEY CAMERA CLUB	
COLOR PICTORIAL	CO/
CIRCLE ONE B I A M	
MAKER: _____	
TITLE: _____	
DATE: _____	

Note that the maker's name may not appear on the front of the print because judges do not want to know who made the print so they can be impartial. Also, the print should not be framed.

You must use the *PhotoClubServices* website (<http://lvcc.photoclubservices.com>) to submit a digital version of your image—even in the Print category—prior to the meeting where it will be judged. The deadline for doing so is midnight on the night before the meeting.

Projected Image Competition

The maximum size for an image is 1600 pixels wide by 1200 pixels high. While an image can have smaller pixel dimensions, the website will scale down images with larger pixel dimensions to the maximum allowed dimensions. The image should be saved as a JPEG with an sRGB (sRGBIEC61966-2.1) color space.

Similar to prints, projected images must be submitted via the *PhotoClubServices* website (<http://lvcc.photoclubservices.com>) before midnight on the day before the competition. Instructions and tutorials for using the PCS website can be found on the site.

Submitting Images for Competition

Preparing a Digital File for Competition

These steps apply to Photoshop CS4. You may need to modify them if you're using another program.

1. Open the file in Photoshop
2. Flatten the image, if it has layers (*Layer>Flatten Image*)

3. Resize the image for projection (*Image>Image Size*)
 - Be sure Resample Image is checked.
 - For a landscape orientation: Enter 1600 for the **width** in the Pixel Dimensions boxes; the height should be less than 1200
 - For a portrait orientation: Enter 1200 for the **height** in the Pixel Dimensions boxes; the width should be less than 1600.
4. Select the sRGB Color Space (*Edit>Convert to Profile*).
 - From the pulldown menu in Destination Space select “sRGB IEC61966–2.1.”
5. Sharpen the image if you want using the “Unsharp Mask” (*Filters>Sharpen*).
(For moderate sharpening, try these settings: Amount—225; Radius—.5; Threshold—0.)
6. Save the file as a JPEG (*File>Save As*)
 - Select a JPEG quality of 8 or above.
7. Submit the image via the PCS website by midnight of the day before the meeting where it will be entered into competition.

Using the PhotoClubServices Website to Submit Your Image

Please use the *PhotoClubServices* (PCS) website at <http://lvcc.photoclubservices.com> for entering digital images, both for the print and projected image competitions. If you do not have a login name and password for this site, please contact the club’s webmaster, webmaster@livermorevalleycameraclub.com.

1. Log on with your username and password.
2. Select the "Competitions" menu.
3. Select the action "Submit Images to a Competition."
4. Click on the "Select" button for the correct competition date and category.
5. Click on the "Upload or Catalog an Image into the Competition" button.
6. Use the "Select" button to select an image on your computer to upload.
7. Fill in all the information, including title.
 - For all Divisions, titles may be no more than 200 characters in length.
 - They must not contain any of the characters ~ \ / : " ? | < >
 - Do not leave ".jpg" at the end of the title, as this is a part of the filename and not the title.
8. Click on the "Add This Image" to upload the image for competition.
9. Verify all the information is correct.
10. That's it; wait for the meeting and see what the judge has to say.

Note that the *PhotoClubServices* website offers spell check. You should take advantage of that, but be aware that it will not catch exotic place names that might be incorporated in Travel or Nature titles, and certainly not Latin name misspellings.

For more information and directions on how to prepare an image for club competition, watch the Training Videos here: <http://lvcc.photoclubservices.com/Help/Help.aspx>

Competition Schedule

Always check the club calendar and announcements as holidays may cause actual competition dates to change.

Month	Jan.		Feb.		March		April		May		June		July		August		Sept.		Oct.		Nov.	
Monday Meeting	1 st	3rd	1 st	3rd	1 st	3rd	1 st	3rd	1 st	3rd	1 st	3rd	1 st	3rd	1 st	3rd	1 st	3rd	1 st	3rd	1 st	3rd
Prints																						
Pictorial Color		√		√		√		√		√		√		√		√		√		√		√
Pict. Monochrome		√		√		√		√		√		√		√		√		√		√		√
Nature	√						√						√						√			
Sequence	√						√						√						√			
Travel			√						√						√							√
Creative			√						√						√							√
Journalism					√						√						√					√
Projected Image																						
Pictorial		√		√		√		√		√		√		√		√		√		√		√
Creative			√				√				√			√				√			√	
Nature			√				√				√			√				√			√	
Travel	√				√				√				√				√				√	
Journalism	√				√				√				√				√				√	

(1st = first meeting, first Monday of the month, 3rd = second meeting, third Monday of the month)

For all projected-image categories, Pictorial prints, and Monochrome prints, the top three places are submitted to N4C for interclub competition. For the special print categories (e.g., Nature, Sequence, Travel, Creative, Journalism), the first two places are submitted to N4C. Prints will be returned two months after original submission. Monthly N4C projected-image judging is held at the home of the N4C Electronic Image Coordinator on the third Saturday of the month, while print judging is held at the home of the N4C Print Chairman. Both N4C judging sessions are open to guests. Please contact the N4C Representative for more information on attending the N4C judging.