



Livermore Valley Camera Club

COMPETITION GUIDELINES

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Understanding N4C Competitions

The Livermore Valley Camera Club (LVCC) is a member of a regional collective of 16 Greater Bay Area camera clubs known as the Northern California Council of Camera Clubs (N4C), www.n4c.org. 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/competitions/.

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 six to ten digital images to the club's membership chairperson at membership@livermorevalleycameraclub.com. If you need help on resizing images to send via email, please ask a club officer. Prints can be presented for evaluation by special request.

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:

Printed Images

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

Projected Images

Pictorial (P)
 Monochrome (M)
 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/definitions/. 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 Printed Image Pictorial Monochrome Intermediate. New members are typically placed in the various levels by submitting sample images to the Placement Committee after they join. Previous club experience or photo experience is taken in account. Printed and Projected levels with their abbreviations are as follows: Basic (B), Intermediate (I), Advanced (A) and Masters (M). Note that not all Printed Image divisions have all levels; below is the list of Printed Image divisions and their associated levels:

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Printed Image Division	Printed Image 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 LVCC 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 by the LVCC to meet N4C guidelines for competition:

- A member may enter any division, but only in member's own level.
- Entries are limited to one print per division per weekly competition.
- Entries are limited to one projected image per division per weekly 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 image previously entered into N4C print or digital competition 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 and printed images placing 1st, 2nd and 3rd 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 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 to winning images based on their position for our monthly and N4C competitions. Our Placement Committee meets annually and uses point scores in a statically model to determine advancement. Points are awarded in the following manner:

Place	Points	
	LVCC Level	N4C Level
First	4	5
Second	3	4
Third	2	3
Fourth	N/A	2
5th & HM	N/A	1
Best Image	+1	+1

Printed Image Competition

For any print submitted to the club for competition must be mounted in some fashion; either flush to a mat or foam core board, or framed with mat board. The N4C *Interclub Competition Rules* document states "*Entries in all print divisions and competition levels (including Panoramic print entries) shall be mounted such that the entry is self-supporting (e.g. 2-or 4-ply mount board, foam core board, styrene, or other semi-rigid material excluding metal and acrylic).*"

The print should be securely assembled, so parts of the mounted print will not separate. The minimum outside measurement for any print mat is 11x14 inches; and the maximum is 16x20 inches; with a maximum thickness of 5/16 inch. The print itself, inside the mat, may be any size.

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)

There is no mandated label, but all information on the label **MUST BE PRINTED**, machine printed, not hand printed. Prints with labels containing handwritten information may be disqualified. It is highly recommended that members print the label generated when submitting an image to competition using LVCC's Photo Club Services web site discussed below.

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.

Projected Image Competition

The maximum size for an image is 1920 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 as digital files via the Photo Club Services 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

Submissions to both print and projected competition must be done through LVCC's Photo Club Services (PCS) website (<http://lvcc.photoclubservices.com>). A digital file of your image—even

in the Printed Image category—must be uploaded to the website prior to the meeting where it will be judged. The deadline for doing so is midnight on the night before the meeting.

Preparing a Digital File for Competition

Digital images must be no larger than 1920 pixels wide and 1200 pixels high. It is highly recommended that one of the images dimensions is equal (or is very close) to one of these dimensions without exceeding the maximum second dimension.

The following steps apply to Adobe Photoshop CS2 through CS6 and probably to current CC versions. 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 1920 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 1920.
4. Select the sRGB Color Space (*Edit>Convert to Profile*).
 - From the pulldown menu in Destination Space select “sRGB IEC61966–2.1.”
5. Save the file as a JPEG (*File>Save As*)
 - Select a JPEG quality of 12.
6. Submit the image via the PCS website by midnight of the day before the meeting where it will be entered into competition.

Using the Photo Club Services Website to Submit Your Image

To submit images, both printed and projected images, into competition, go to LVCC's Photo Club Services (PCS) website at <http://lvcc.photoclubservices.com>. As part of your club application, you should have created a login name and password for this site. If for some reason you do not have one or it does not work, please contact the club's webmaster, webmaster@livermorevalleycameraclub.com.

1. Go to <http://lvcc.photoclubservices.com>
2. Log on with your username and password.
3. Select the *Competitions* menu.
4. Select the action *Submit Images to a Competition*.
5. Click on the **Select** button for the correct competition date and category. A page titled *Submit Images to a Competition* will load. It contains links to several how-to videos which you may wish to view.
6. At the bottom of the page click on the **Upload Image into the Competition** button. There is also the possibility to submit previously uploaded images from your Image Library, which may be useful at a later time.
7. At the bottom of the page click the **Select** button. A popup window will prompt you for an image to upload. Select your chosen image on your computer to upload.
8. At the bottom right of the page, click the **Save Images and Proceed to Edit Page** button.

9. On the next page, fill in the required information, including title.
 - A. For all Divisions, titles may be no more than 200 characters in length.
 - B. Titles must not contain any of the characters ~ \ / : " ? | < >
 - C. Whatever is in the Title box will become the title displayed during competition. Do not include the file name.
 - D. The Author's Image Id is not required. It can be use to identify the image later in your image library, if you wish.
10. Click on the **Save any changes and return to the original page** button to complete the submission.
11. On the bottom of the next page verify all the information is correct. There are also buttons to edit image data, replace the image, delete the image from competition and also delete the image from your image library.
12. Also on this page is the **Print Labels for Print Submissions** button, which will take you the mechanism to print a Print label.
 - A. Labels are formatted to print on 3-1/3in x 4in Avery 5164/8164/8464 labels. There are six labels per sheet. It is also possible to print labels on plain paper (or better yet photo paper) and glue the label to the back of the mounted print. The Avery labels are a lot easier.
 - B. Enter the appropriate values in the *Starting Label Column* and *Starting Label Row* fields depending on the labels left on the sheet.
 - C. Click the **Generate Report** button.
 - D. A preview page will come up. Click the **Print icon** (the last icon). Depending on the browser you use, you may be able to save the generated PDF or open it in Adobe Acrobat from which you can print the label.
 - E. Do some test with plain paper. The label printing procedure can be repeated as often as you wish. Some experimentation may be require on you part.
13. That's it; wait for the meeting and see what the judge has to say.

Note that the Photo Club Services 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.

Competition Schedule

The current LVCC competition schedule can be downloaded from the PCS web site at <https://lvcc.photoclubservices.com/Club/Downloads.aspx> under the *Competition Information* category. Always check the club calendar and announcements as holidays may cause actual competition dates to change.

For all projected-image and printed-image categories, the top three places are submitted to N4C for interclub competition. Prints will be returned two months after original submission. Monthly N4C judging is held at various locations. N4C judging sessions are open to guests. Please contact the N4C Representative for more information on attending the N4C judging.