Millbrae Camera Club

Member Guide
November 2013

Welcome!

The purpose of our club, the Millbrae Camera Club (MCC), is to educate amateur photographers and for them to have a good time where they may learn, practice and share their photography.

Membership is open to anyone wishing to participate in digital image or print competitions, workshops, and/or field trips with the intention of furthering their photographic knowledge and ability. MCC affords excellent opportunities to exchange ideas with other photographers.

There is something interesting happening every first and second Thursday evenings of the month from 7:15 to 9:30 pm.

The following is intended to help you understand the club. If you don't understand something, please feel free to ask. If you have any suggestions, please offer them. The club always needs help; please volunteer if you can. Most important of all, please enjoy club participation and learning about photography!

Why Enter Your Work into Competitions

The differences between images of beginners (Basic level) and images of the Master level indicate that it is possible to become proficient in photography with education, experience, and most of all, sustained effort.

You get out of photography as much as you put into it. The Millbrae Camera Club provides educational opportunities that can supplement your own experience and reading.

Experience comes from actually taking lots of pictures! You must know how to operate your equipment and understand its limitations. When your images appear on the back of your camera, or your computer screen or even come back from the processing laboratory you can examine them for merit and for ideas of what you'd like to do differently next time. The work must come from you, but the club can help you to gain insight.

Competition is but one of the ways to learn. Judges critique images during the competitions. and though judges' comments can be subjective, there is a lot to be learned from the opinions of others.

A strong picture should:
- Be of interest to the average viewer
- Show good technique
- Have composition quality relative to the subject matter

The more images you enter, the more you learn about these specific images. And the more new images you enter, the more comments you can hear about the different types of photographs you have taken. Judges' comments help you to develop your "eye."

In addition, competitions are a yardstick by which you can measure your progress and ability by entering your work--you get an idea of how it compares with the work of others of your skill level.

Participating in competitions also helps you gain recognition and helps you develop confidence in your work.

Quick Overview of Club Competitions

Prints are judged at the first meeting of the month with Digital Images judged at the second meeting.
The club hires an outside judge for the evening. The judge will review the images grouped by the various Divisions (categories) and levels (Basic, Intermediate, Advanced, Masters), make comments about the images and select winners. MCC competitions offer a maximum total of five Awards of Merit (1st through 5th place) and two Honorable Mentions in each group. All entries are published into the monthly Club newsletter.

Club images that have received an Award of Merit or Honorable Mention in the monthly competitions during the previous year are eligible to be judged in our annual competition. Medals are given to makers whose entries place first in each annual division. Second-through fifth-place winners receive ribbons. Plaques are awarded to the makers of the Digital Projected Image and Print of the Year. Annual competition awards are presented at the annual banquet.

New members will typically be placed in the Basic level unless a review of their work by a panel places them into a higher level. New members transferring from another N4C club may join at their previous club's assigned levels after a review of their N4C competitions.

Introduction to Competitions

Please make sure you refer to the definitions section for clarifications as that it what the judges use.

Pictorial

What makes a good pictorial image?

Often, we hear a judge make the statement that a particular image would look nice on their living room wall. By this they mean, the image is so pleasing to their eye, they could look at it for a long-time, or enjoy looking at it again and again. All the rules of photography apply and, if appropriate, can be broken. Good composition, pleasing color palette, interesting subject matter, appropriate sharpness, careful attention to removing distracting elements on the border, etc. Cloning, element removal, filters, are allowed.

Travel

A strong travel image should express the feeling of a time and place, portray a land, its distinctive features or culture in its natural state. There are no geographic limitations. Close-up pictures of people or objects must include distinguishable environments. A strong travel image stands alone without necessarily needing a title - although a title should always be provided.

*Techniques that add to, relocate, replace or remove any element of the original image, except by cropping are not permitted. - w*hat does this part of the Travel Photography rule mean?

Elements in the photograph may NOT be moved, cloned, added, deleted, rearranged or combined. No manipulation or modification is permitted <u>except </u>resizing, cropping, selective lightening or darkening, or restoration of original color of the scene.

All adjustments must appear natural. Conversion to monochrome is allowed.

No special post-processing effect filters can be applied. Any sharpening must appear natural.

Journalism

A strong Journalism picture should:
- Tell an instantly recognizable story; the more impact the better
- Be of interest to the average viewer
- Show good technique, i.e., focus, exposure, and use of light
- Have composition quality relative to the subject matter
- Title must be descriptive and in a journalistic style

Similar to Travel, truth-telling is the key. In Journalism competition, it is the story-telling aspects of a photograph that make or break the winning image.

It might be useful to think of the photojournalist as a reporter with, instead of a notebook and pen, a camera in hand. The objective is to seek out the story, not to create it or make it up. The primary concern is to make story-telling or newsworthy photographs, or both. The photographs, in general, should show a high degree of spontaneity rather than direction and control by the photographer.

Journalism may include documentary, advertising, spot news, sports, human interest, humorous images or images that portray contemporary ways of life. The human-interest image is a spontaneous moment captured forever by the eye of the camera. Look at newspaper or news magazine photographs and their titles to get a good idea of what makes a good journalism submission.

The stronger the story element, the better the chance for success in competition. In the competition the title is read as the image is viewed to aid the viewers and judge in interpreting the story the photographer is attempting to convey. Good titles, therefore, are important and should add to the photo story.

Besides the obvious subject matter, such as disasters, destruction, and sports, the human condition offers unlimited potential for journalistic pictures.

Nature

Nature photography has similar rules as Travel.

No manipulation or modification of Nature images is permitted except resizing, cropping, selective lightening or darkening, and restoration of original color of the scene. Combining multiple images to achieve High Dynamic Range (HDR) is acceptable but no special effect post-processing filters can be applied. Any sharpening must appear natural. No elements may be moved, cloned, added, deleted, rearranged or combined. Horizontal flipping (equivalent to reversing the image) is an acceptable modification.

Nature images are sometimes rejected when there is evidence of the 'hand of man' present in the photograph.

Creative

Creative photography is where anything goes from a starting point of a photographic image. Use your imagination. Start with your photographic image(s) and apply filters, composite multiple-images, and/or manipulate to become whatever creative/artistic/designer image you wish.

Creative images are sometimes rejected because there is not enough manipulation.

Sequence

A Sequence Print is a single print with multiple images that show a relationship, generally, though not necessarily, across a time domain. MCC does not currently accept sequence in projected image competitions.

MCC's Affiliations

N4C

Millbrae Camera Club (MCC) is affiliated with the Northern California Council of Camera Clubs (N4C). N4C consists of about a dozen amateur photography clubs located across the San Francisco Bay Area.

N4C collects annual dues from its member clubs. Club delegates attend N4C meetings, represent their clubs, submit winning club images to monthly N4C competitions, distribute publications and notices of activities that may be attended.

N4C awards monthly certificates to monthly winning images, publishes a monthly e-letter containing lists and images of winning images and puts on an annual luncheon where annual competition winners are awarded plaques, medals, and ribbons.

Additionally, N4C bestows honors upon persons who have contributed valuable services to their own clubs as well as to N4C. One example of an Honors "titles" is the title, "Associate."

MCC's Participation in N4C

MCC's delegate to N4C submits up to a maximum of 3 winning prints and digital images per division and level selected from entries in MCC competitions by the judge(s) at our monthly competitions. An N4C judge then judges them alongside the best 3 images submitted by each of the other N4C clubs for that month.   N4C awards are issued from 1st Place through 5th Place plus one Honorable Mention. Winning images are awarded certificates to makers. Winning prints have awards affixed to the back and are eligible for N4C's annual print competition. All prints are returned to the club after the N4C judging, usually the following month.

FotoClave

FotoClave will next be held in November 2014. FotoClave is a conference of juried competitions, various photographic presentations and lectures (how-tos, travel shows, etc.).

FotoClave locations, dates, and other information are announced at MCC's regular meetings.

Clubs submit their members' best images and prints for a competition in each of that year's divisions and levels. MCC members submit projected images and prints to the club's N4C delegate for the FotoClave competition. However, since competitions are juried, not all submitted images might be accepted.

MCC Definitions - By Division

All divisions are open to all members, from beginner to masters. If you have a good photograph, but are not sure which category it belongs in, enter it into the Pictorial division. Then, if a judge or competent critic indicates the image really belongs in one of the other divisions, e.g., Travel, Journalism, Creative, or Nature, following the guidelines of Rule #6 below, re-enter it into the more appropriate division for a future competition.

Millbrae Camera Club uses the same division definitions as those for N4C so that winning MCC images automatically align and qualify for submission into the best of the best monthly competitions held by N4C. However, MCC does not accept sequence submissions into Projected Image competitions. This also means that multiple/composited images are not allowed in Travel, Nature or Journalism divisions.

The definition for each MCC Competition Division begins with the same Preamble:

Division Definition Preamble

The following holds for all Competition Divisions:
MCC and the Northern California Council of Camera Clubs subscribe to the Ethics Statement of the Photographic Society of America (PSA). Consistent with that Ethics Statement, all images submitted for competition in both Print and Projected Image mediums, and in all Competition Divisions, shall originate as photographs by the entrant on photographic emulsion or acquired digitally.

By virtue of submitting an entry, the photographer certifies the work as his/her own. No clip art, digital art or photographs other than those made by the entrant may be used in whole or in part in any portion of the image. Images may only be manipulated as noted in individual division definitions. When graphic elements other than photographs created by the entrant are used in an image, photographic content must still predominate.

Note: N4C judge their competitions on a monitor rather than a projector so it is important that members use the standard resolution, a maximum of 1600 pixels in width and 1200 pixels in height, so that judges can better determine whether the focus is sharp.

Division Definition - Pictorial (P)

Pictorial photography is the use of the photographic medium as an art form. The emphasis is on interest, visual impact, composition, and technical excellence. Images in the Pictorial division are not confined to any particular subject, type, or style of photography. Pictorial images may be manipulated in the darkroom, on the computer or in the camera in a manner consistent with the standards stated in the preamble to these definitions.

The term Pictorial includes both color and monochrome images. However, an image that qualifies for submission to Pictorial Monochrome *cannot be submitted* into the Pictorial Color competition.

A monochrome image refers to an image that is comprised of one color plus the color of the background/paper. Thus, it could be in black and white (grayscale) but it could also

comprise tones of a single color. For example, sepia images display tones from light tan to dark brown, or cyanotype images (blue tones) are also monochrome.

Division Definition - Travel (T)

Travel entries must express the feeling of a time and place, portray a land, its distinctive features or culture in its natural state. There are no geographic limitations. Close-up pictures of people or objects must include distinguishable environments.

Techniques that add to, relocate, replace or remove any element of the original image, except by cropping are not permitted. All adjustments must appear natural. Conversion to monochrome is allowed.

The title should give the location and complement the travel story. All Travel images must be consistent with the standards stated in the preamble to these definitions.

Division Definition - Journalism (J)

Journalism entries shall consist of pictures with informative content and emotional impact, including human interest, documentary and spot news. The journalistic value of the photograph shall be considered over pictorial quality. In the interest of credibility, photographs which misrepresent the truth, such as manipulation of the image, or situations which are set up for the purpose of photography, are unacceptable in Journalism competition. The primary concern is to make story-telling and/or newsworthy photographs.

Techniques that add to, relocate, replace or remove any element of the original image, except by cropping are not permitted. All adjustments must appear natural. Conversion to monochrome is allowed.

In competition the title is read when showing the image. Good titles are important and should add to the photo-story - please include the location of the subject in the title. *All Journalism images must be consistent with the standards stated in the preamble to these definitions.*

Division Definition - Nature (N)

The Nature Division is restricted to the use of the photographic process to depict observations from all branches of natural history except anthropology and archeology in such a fashion that a well-informed person will be able to identify the subject matter and certify as to its honest presentation. The informative or nature value of the photograph must be weighed more than the pictorial quality.

Human elements may be present only where those human elements add to the viewers understanding of the nature subject's behavior and/or habitat. This habitat may be natural or adopted. The presence of scientific bands on wild animals is acceptable.

Photographs of artificially produced hybrid plants or animals (any plant or animal that has its appearance changed by breeding and selection by man (domesticated), mounted specimens, or obviously set arrangements), are ineligible, as is any form of manipulation that alters the truth of the photographic statement.

Techniques that add to, relocate, replace or remove any element of the original image, except by cropping are not permitted. All adjustments must appear natural. Conversion to monochrome is allowed.

In Nature competition the title should be factual and descriptive. Scientific names are encouraged but are not required. The title should identify the subject, using only proper and descriptive names.

- "Thundering Waterfall Creates Rainbow and Spray" is better than, "Victoria Falls." The Nature title may include the Latin scientific name(s) - there are various sources for Latin names - one of the best is a dictionary.
- If part of a subject is shown the title should state, for example:"Male Musk Ox (Ovibos Moschatus), Showing Head and Shoulders."

All Nature images must be consistent with the standards stated in the preamble to these definitions.

Combining multiple images to achieve High Dynamic Range (HDR) is acceptable but no post-processing special effect filters can be applied.

Division Definition - Authentic Wildlife (W)

Authentic Wildlife is defined as one or more organisms in the animal kingdom living free and unrestrained in a natural or adopted habitat. Therefore, photographs of zoo or game farm animals are not eligible. Authentic Wildlife applies to Projected Images ONLY.

Captive birds, even if free-flying on occasion are not eligible.

Division Definition - Creative

Creative photography is producing an image through the use of imaginative skill or originality of thought including the altering of reality. No image should be eliminated from competition simply because it looks realistic, provided it shows originality of concept.

Creative images may include modifications in the darkroom, on the computer, or in the camera, as well as unusual points of view, imaginative use of subject matter or lighting, or any other presentation that begins with the maker's photograph or a collection of photographs.

All Creative images must be consistent with the standards stated in the preamble to these definitions.

In Creative image competition, the title is read when showing the image.

Division Definition - Sequence (S)

A sequence consists of two or more related images. A Sequence print must have all images printed on the same sheet of paper or matted in the same mat.

All Sequence prints must be consistent with the standards stated in the preamble to these definitions.

MCC does not support sequence submissions in Projected Image competitions.

Rules Common to all MCC Competitions

1. MCC competition year begins in December and concludes in November. There will be no competitions in December.

2. Each maker will be assigned to a level into each division he or she wishes to compete. These levels are used for scoring points toward year-end totals and awards. Levels are:

    > B - Basic
    > I - Intermediate
    > A - Advanced
    > M - Masters

3. If a maker participates in a division for a monthly competition then he or she must submit at least one new image (unless the special division only allows for one image) alongside any image submitted previously.

4. The fundamental idea is for you to submit new work rather than simply re-submitting previous (winning) images! An image must be substantially different from one previously entered during the previous two months of competitions. For example, if an image is submitted in January, that image, or an image that is substantially the same, may not be entered again until at least April. An image is considered substantially the same if all you have done is: a) create a monochrome version of the image, b) taken it from the same vantage point only a few seconds later, c) performed some minor cropping, or some highlight/shadow adjustments.

5. **An image that is substantially the same may be submitted no more than 3 times in total across any combination of divisions or media**.

6. An image that has won 2 awards (Honorable Mention and/or Award of Merit) across any combination of divisions or media may not be submitted a third time.

7. There will be an Image of the Month award for each division in each medium.

8. Competition awards and scoring, per entry, will be as follows:

Entering	=	1 point for entering
Honorable Mention (HM)	=	2 points (entering + 1 for HM)
Award of Merit (AM)	=	3 points (entering + 2 for AM)
Image of the Month	=	4 points (entering + 2 for AM + 1 for POM)

9. Total number of awards per level and division is approximately ½ of the number of entries, rounded down:

Total # images submitted	# AMs	# HMs	Total # Awards
3	1	0	1
4 or 5	1	1	2
6 or 7	2	1	3
8 or 9	2	2	4
10 or 11	3	2	5
12 or 13	3	3	6

etc.

10. **Images must be submitted to the MCC website by the 10 p.m. deadline on the Wednesday before competition.** Competitions may not yet be 'Frozen' however submissions cannot be guaranteed after this 10pm deadline.

11. There must be no less than 3 images and 2 makers to have a competition in a level. If the group of entries or makers is too small, that level will be combined with the next higher level, if one exists, otherwise next lower. Any points earned will go to the maker in his or her regularly assigned level.

12. Up to three (3) winning images from each division/level may be submitted from MCC to N4C. If there are less than 3 winning entries within a division then, at the discretion of the judge, further image(s) may be forwarded to N4C for consideration, even if not an MCC award winner.

13. Any print entered in any competition sponsored by MCC, including those sent to N4C or FotoClave, shall be entered exclusively at the risk of the exhibitor and neither MCC, nor N4C, nor any of its officers or representatives shall be under any liability whatsoever for damage to, or loss of, any image while in their custody.

14. Changes to the above rules can be proposed at any time during the year by the club members to the MCC Board. The Board needs to ratify any changes. Changes will be announced in the newsletter.

Rules Specific to MCC Digital Image Competitions

1. Projected image competitions will be held on the 2nd Thursday of each month commencing at 7:15 p.m.

2. A maker may enter a maximum of 2 Pictorial images, and one image into each of the special projected divisions per month, unless the website notifies of any changes during the competition upload.

3. Submission of images to the MCC website by 10pm on the Wednesday before competition is required.

4. Images must be no larger than 1600 x 1200 dpi, nor larger than 800k in size, when submitting to the website.

Rules Specific to MCC Print Competitions

1. Print image competitions will be held on the 1st Thursday of each month and shall commence at 7:15 p.m.

2. A maker may enter a maximum of two Prints into each division per competition, unless notified by the website of any restrictions while entering print images.

3. At the very minimum, print titles must be entered into the club website. A small .jpg that contains the words, "Image Not Available" may be used in the event you do not have a digital file to upload to the website.

4. **Prints must be physically present and checked off by 7:15pm on the night of competition**.

5. Winning prints should not be taken home at the end of the competition. They are needed for record-keeping purposes and may be selected for inter-club (N4C) competitions.

6. Any print that has been re-matted must have a sticker indicating the print's history on re-entry. The old sticker must be removed from the original backing and placed on the new backing or a new sticker must be affixed to the new backing containing the history copied from the old sticker.

7. The minimum size for any printed image must be 6" x 4".

8. Mat sizes must be between 11" x 14" up to a maximum of 16" x 20" and a maximum total thickness of 5/16".

9. Un-matted prints must have an external paper size of 8" x 10" to a maximum paper size of 16" x 20".
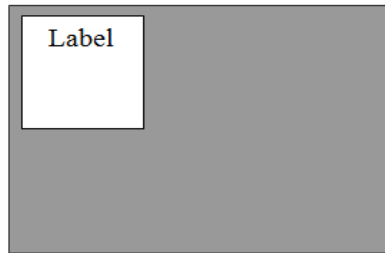
The print must have a completed sticker on the back of the print oriented in the top left hand corner.

# The Print Label: Completing and Affixing

Once you have entered the title (and uploaded the image) onto the MCC website, the label information can be printed from the website on to standard Avery Style 5163 or 8163 or equivalent blank labels. Place the label generated by the MCC club website on the back of the print in the upper left corner.
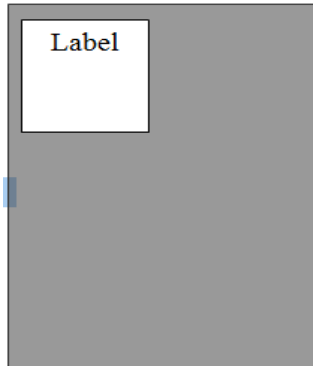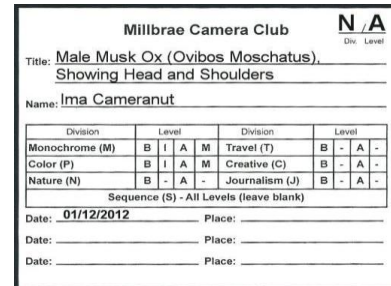

Rear of Portrait Print   Rear of Landscape Print
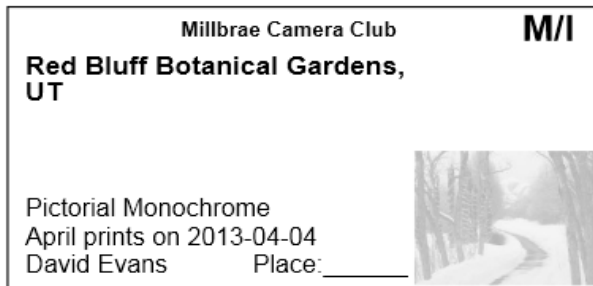
Example: New Label as generated by MCC website

Old (acceptable to use   until stock is depleted)

It is difficult, and sometimes impossible, to process prints for the MCC, and N4C competitions when the information listed on the print sticker is illegible, incomplete, or inaccurate. Please be aware that MCC and N4C sometimes will disqualify a print if the sticker information is illegible, incomplete, inaccurate or inconsistent with the title submitted via the website (or sign-up sheet).

Manually Generated Print Label

If you must make a manual Print label, it should contain the following:
1. Title, descriptive enough to properly orient the viewer - see division definitions for further details - this must match the title entered via the MCC website
2. Maker's Name
3. Within the label at the TOP RIGHT on the Division / Level line, please indicate with:
    i. Division (Category) code: Monochrome (M), Color (P), Nature (N), Creative (C), Travel (T), Journalism (J), or Sequence (S)
    ii. Maker Level code: (B, I, A or M) or for special categories (B or A)
4. Date of the MCC competition entered

Please note: A correct and accurate title will sometimes make a Winner!