Northern California Council of Camera Clubs
N4C Interclub Competition Rules
Effective: 1/1/2024

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N4C Interclub Competition Rules

The purpose of these rules is to offer a common ground for competition among the member clubs of the Northern California Council of Camera Clubs (N4C).

Part 1: Administrative Rules

This section encompasses administrative rules that apply specifically to the N4C sponsored interclub competitions. Competitors can skip to Part 2 for essential competition rules.

1.1 Rule Changes

1. Rule changes may be made in accordance with the N4C Bylaws.
2. All competition rule changes must be completed and approved by the conclusion of the September monthly N4C meeting to allow time for distribution to club members. Note: N4C January competition entries come from local club competitions as early as October.
3. All changes to competition rules will become effective with the next competition year.
4. In the case of multiple change proposals, the President shall appoint an Editor who shall hold copies of the latest version of all proposals. Once all proposals have been either accepted or rejected, the Editor shall prepare a final version of the proposed Rules including all changes approved by the Board and distribute the final version to all Board Members by September 1st.

1.2 Clarifications

These rules shall in no way interfere with the right of the member clubs to determine the requirements for participation in their club competitions. However, for images submitted to N4C competitions there are certain requirements for titling that must be fulfilled.

1.3 General Rules

1. Interclub competition shall be held in each Competition Division based on a schedule adopted by N4C at its regular December meeting. Changes in the schedule may be made by a 2/3 vote of N4C Board Members present.
2. Monthly interclub competitions shall occur at a time and place determined by N4C or by those people involved in a particular judging.
3. All prints and projected images entered shall be entered according to the competition rules of each club. (See By-Laws, Article XI, Paragraph C). It is the responsibility of each club to submit their images to the N4C competition.
4. One or more judges may be used for interclub competitions and the judge(s) may or may not be an active member of a competing club. If the judge(s) has pictures in the competition, the pictures will be removed and judged in the next regular interclub competition.
5. Judges for interclub competitions should not be selected more than twice per calendar year in each Competition Division in which they are qualified. Interclub competition judges shall be selected from the interclub judges' roster by the Judges Chair. The judge(s) so selected for any interclub competition shall be the sole person(s) to critique Projected Images or Prints and to select winners.

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6. Judges are selected for the interclub judges' roster by a "judge's selection committee," which can be composed of the entire N4C Board acting as a committee of the whole.
7. Titles of all N4C interclub entries shall be read out loud during all judging, except for monthly projected image competitions.

1.4 Monthly Competition Rules

1. The number of awards in a Competition Division and Level is limited to 1/3 of the total number of entries, rounded up, and a maximum of eight (first through fifth and three honorable mentions).

# Entries	Places Awarded	Honorable Mentions (HM)
1 - 3	1st	
4 - 6	1st, 2nd	
7 - 9	1st, 2nd, 3rd	
10 - 12	1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th	
13 – 15	1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th	
16 – 18	1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th	1
19 – 21	1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th	2
22 and above	1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th	3

2. Winners in all Divisions and Levels will be provided recognition in a manner that the N4C Board may from time to time determine.
3. The two best Authentic Wildlife images in the Nature Projected Image Division and the two best Authentic Wildlife images in the Nature Print Division, will receive additional awards. All Nature division entries that are awarded 1-5 place or HM within a format, that are also marked as Authentic wildlife are eligible for Authentic Wildlife awards.
4. *Best of Division* awards are given for each Projected Image and Print division. These are selected from among the first-place winners at each level in that division.
5. One *Image of the Month* is awarded from among all the *Best of Division* Projected Images that month.
6. One *Print of the Month* is awarded from among all the *Best of Division* Prints that month.
7. Any Projected Image or Print which has placed first through fifth or honorable mention in interclub competition may not be reentered in the same Competition Division, i.e., same division and same format.

1.5 Annual Competition Rules

1. Prior to the annual awards banquet, an annual interclub competition in all levels of each division shall be held in the month of January following that month's N4C meeting. All monthly interclub competition winners, first through fifth and the honorable mention, in all levels of each division, are eligible to be entered in the annual competition.
2. Annual awards shall consist of first through fifth place, plus five honorable mentions in each level of each division, provided there are enough entries.

3. Annual judges shall select a Projected Image of the Year from among all the first-place winners in the Projected Images Divisions. That includes Pictorial, Monochrome, Nature, Journalism, Travel, and Creative.
4. Annual judges shall select a Print of the Year from among the First-Place winners in each Division. That includes Pictorial (Color), Monochrome, Travel, Nature, Journalism, Creative, and Sequence.
5. Awards will consist of special plaques for the Projected Image of the Year and Print of the Year, smaller plaques for the best image in each division, medals for first place in each level of each division, and certificates for the remaining winners.

Part 2: Competitor and Entry Rules

This section encompasses competitor and entry rules.

2.1 Division Definitions

1. Preamble
    a. Entries in all Divisions shall conform to the following:
        i.   All images submitted for competition in both Print and Projected image formats and in all competition Divisions shall originate as photographs created by the entrant on a light sensitive material or device.
        ii. By virtue of submitting an entry, the photographer certifies that every element of the image is his/her own work. No clip art, digital art, other graphic elements or photographs, other than those made by the entrant, may be used in whole or in part in any portion of the image.
        iii. Images may only be manipulated as noted in individual division definitions. When Divisions allow graphic elements other than photographs to be used in an image, photographic content must still predominate.

2. Pictorial Division

    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.

3. Creative Division
    a. 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.
    b. 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.

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4. Travel Division

    a. A Photo Travel image expresses the characteristic features, culture, or feeling of a land as they are found naturally. There are no geographic limitations. Images from events or activities arranged specifically for photography, or of subjects directed or hired for photography, are not permitted. Close up pictures of people or objects must include features that provide information about the location.

    b. Techniques that add to, relocate, replace, or remove any element of the original image, except by cropping, are not permitted. The only allowable adjustments are removal of dust or digital noise, restoration of the appearance of the original scene, and complete conversion to grayscale. Other derivations, including infrared, are not permitted. All images must look natural. The title should give the location and complement the travel story.

5. Journalism Division

    a. 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 storytelling and/or newsworthy photographs.

    b. Sequences in Journalism are permitted and should show a chronology of events or tell a story.

    c. 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 grayscale is allowed. Good titles are important and should add to the photo story.

6. Nature Division

    a. Nature photography includes all branches of natural history, except anthropology and archeology. Included are all aspects of the physical world, both animate and inanimate, that have not been made or modified by humans. Landscapes, geologic formations, weather phenomena, and extant organisms as the primary subject matter are conforming examples.

    b. Images taken with subjects under controlled conditions, such as zoos, botanical gardens, and aquaria are allowed.

    c. Photographs of human created hybrid plants, cultivated plants, feral animals, domesticated animals, human created hybrid animals and mounted or preserved zoological specimens are not allowed.

    d. Nature images must convey the truth of the scene that was photographed.

        i. No modification that changes the truth of a Nature image is allowed. Images may be cropped but no other technique that removes, adds to, or moves any part of the image is allowed (adding, deleting or moving image pixels). All other adjustments

made must appear natural. Techniques that remove elements added by the camera, such as dust spots, digital noise, lens flare, and film scratches, are allowed.

    ii.   Images of the same subject that are combined in camera or with software by focus stacking or exposure blending (HDR) are allowed. Multiple images with overlapping fields of view that are taken consecutively and combined in camera or with software (image stitching) are allowed.

    iii.   Complete conversion of color images to grayscale monochrome is allowed. Partial conversion, single color toning, and infrared captures or conversions are not allowed.

    iv.   Sequences in Nature are permitted and should show a chronology of events or tell a story.

e.   The most important part of a Nature image is the story it tells. The informative and nature storytelling value of a photograph must be weighed more heavily than its pictorial quality. High technical standards are expected, and the image must look natural. Titles should be factual and descriptive and should enhance the visual nature story shown in the image. Scientific names are encouraged but not required.

f.   Objects created by humans and/or evidence of human activity are allowed in Nature images only when they are a necessary part of the Nature story. This prohibition does not apply to situations where wild animals have been tagged with scientific bands, tags or radio collars; in situations where nature subjects (e.g., barn owls, storks, eagles, etc.) have adapted to an environment modified by humans and these human elements are an integral part of the nature story; or where those human elements are in situations depicting natural forces, like hurricanes or tidal waves.

6.1 Nature Sub-Division: Authentic Wildlife

a.   Authentic Wildlife is defined as one or more extant zoological or botanical organisms free and unrestrained in a natural or adopted habitat.

b.   Wildlife is not limited to animals, birds, and insects. Marine subjects and botanical subjects (including fungi and algae) taken in the wild are suitable wildlife subjects, as are carcasses of extant species.

c.   Landscapes, geologic formations, photographs of zoo or game farm animals, or of any extant zoological or botanical species taken under controlled conditions, are not allowed.

7. Sequence Division

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

2.2 Definitions

The following definitions are to be used in conjunction with 2.1 Division Definitions and applied per the N4C Competition Table in section 2.3 General Rules-Competition.

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1. Format Definition
There are two competition formats used. Projected Images, which are digital files, and matted or mounted Prints. See Entry Rules below for specific details.

2. Level Definition
Levels are a measure of competitor proficiency and past competition results. Competition entries for a division are judged and awarded at each level, so competitors compete at similar skill levels. Each competitor has a separate level for each division. Levels are set by the competitor's member-club for each division. There can be up to a maximum of four Competitor/entry levels per division, Basic, Intermediate, Advanced, Masters.

3. Competition Definition
A Competition consists of one style of photography or Division, one of the two Formats, and from one to four Levels of entries. Entries at each Level are judged and awarded independently. See General Rules for details.

4. Monochrome and Color Definition
   a. Monochrome Images
      A Monochrome image refers to an image in tones of a single color. Grayscale is a specific subset of monochrome using tones of black and white. Besides grayscale, other examples of monochrome include for example, sepia images, which display tones from light tan to dark brown, and cyanotype images (blueprints).
   b. Color Images
      A Color image is any image that does not meet the definition of monochrome.

5. Compound Image Definition
   a. A Compound Image is two or more images displayed within a frame, either superimposed or adjacent. One title is given for the entire compound image. A compound image will be viewed, critiqued, and evaluated as a single image. For prints, a "frame" is a single mount or mat. For projected images a frame is a single image file.
   b. A print which includes two or more images in a division that allows compound images but not sequences should be judged and critiqued as a compound image.

6. Sequence Definition
   a. A Sequence is two or more logically connected images constituting a single entry. The images in a sequence are viewed sequentially and should work together to communicate a message in a way no individual image would. Beyond its own merits, each individual image should contribute to the sequence as a whole.
   b. For prints, a Sequence is two or more images in a single mount or mat. For projected images, each image is in a separate file. 2.3 General Rules - Competition

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2.3 General Rules - Competition
Competitions will consist of the following allowed divisions/subdivisions, formats, levels, and acceptable image types.

N4C Competition Table					
Competition (Division – Format)	**Levels**	**Color Allowed**	**Monochrome (M) or Grayscale (G) Allowed**	**Sequences Allowed**	**Compound Images Allowed**
Pictorial (Color) - Prints	B, I, A, M	Yes	No	No	Yes
Pictorial (Monochrome) - Prints	B, I, A, M	No	M	No	Yes
Nature - Prints Subdivision: Authentic Wildlife	B, A	Yes	G	Yes	No
Creative - Prints	B, A	Yes	M	No	Yes
Travel - Prints	B, A	Yes	G	No	No
Journalism - Prints	B, A	Yes	G	Yes	No
Sequence - Prints	B, A	Yes	M	Yes	No
Pictorial - Projected Images	B, I, A, M	Yes	M	No	Yes
Pictorial (Monochrome) - Projected Images	B, I, A, M	No	M	No	Yes
Nature - Projected Images Subdivision: Authentic Wildlife	B, I, A, M	Yes	G	2-4 images	No
Creative - Projected Images	B, I, A, M	Yes	M	No	Yes
Travel - Projected Images	B, I, A, M	Yes	G	No	No
Journalism - Projected Images	B, I, A, M	Yes	G	2-4 images	No

2.4 Entry Rules – General
1. The Projected Image or Print Chair may disqualify any Projected Image or Print not conforming to these rules.
2. The N4C does not make any special accommodations for Projected Images or Prints disqualified by N4C. It is solely the responsibility of the member club to resolve if or how the N4C disqualified Projected Image or Print will be resubmitted to an N4C competition.
3. Each member club entering Prints and/or Projected Images in a monthly interclub competition will be eligible to enter a maximum of three Prints and three Projected Images in each competition level in all divisions.
4. All Prints and Projected Images entered in interclub competition must have titles. Competitors should not use the same title more than once. The use of the phrase "Untitled" (or variations thereof, such as "Untitled #2") as a title is not allowed.
5. The title of any entry must be 200 characters or fewer, including spaces.
6. It is prohibited to use line formatting/control characters such as Carriage Return (CR), Line Feed (LF), New Line (NL), or TAB in titles.

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7. Projected Images and the front of Prints submitted for competition must be free of any maker identifying information that would be seen during the competition. This includes copyright information, watermarks, logos, maker's name, image title, or date.

8. Any image entered in any competition sponsored by the N4C shall be entered exclusively at the risk of the exhibitor and neither the 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. It shall be the responsibility of each member club to inform its members of this condition to participate in N4C activities.

2.5 Entry Rules - Projected Images

1. Images must be in JPEG format.
2. Images should be scaled to fit within a maximum of 1920 pixels horizontal and 1200 pixels vertical.
3. Sequence entries shall follow the sequence titling format.
   <Main Sequence Title > [<Number in Sequence >] <Optional Sub Title >
4. The image number in sequences shall be between square brackets.
   Example: Skateboard Champion [3] Turning somersault

2.6 Entry Rules - Prints

1. Print Material
   All images must be printed on paper. Images printed directly on metal or plastic, or other materials likely to cause damage to other prints, are not allowed.

2. Print Mounting & Matting
   a. A print submitted for competition must be matted or mounted so that it is self-supporting.
   b. The mounting or matting must be mat board (made for example of ~~e.g.~~ alpha cellulose, cotton, or wood pulp), foam core, gator board or similar material. Metal, plastic, dibond, or other material likely to cause damage to other prints is not allowed.
   c. Minimum outside measurement is 11×14 inches including matting or mounting board.
   d. Maximum outside measurement is 16×20 inches including matting or mounting board.
   e. Maximum thickness of the print and board and matting is 5/16 inch.
   f. The print itself, inside the mat, may be any size.
   g. Prints that are mounted or matted must be securely assembled or they will be rejected.
   h. The print should not be framed or enclosed in a protective envelope.

3. Print Club Competition Label
   a. Prints entered into competition must have a computer printed label affixed to the back of the print with the following information: title, maker's name, club name, division code, competition level, competition date, and a small picture of the print. See Figure 1 below; 1a and 1b are valid Club Competition label examples and 1c is invalid.
   b. The print label division code must be one of the following (letters) corresponding to the division name, (P)ictorial Color, Pictorial (M)onochrome, (N)ature, (T)ravel, (J)ournalism, (C)reative, (S)equence.

c. The print label level must be one of the following (letters) corresponding to the level name, (B)asic, (I)ntermediate, (A)dvanced, (M)asters.

d. Print labeling must include the division code, a hyphen "-", and valid level for the division. For example, a Pictorial image at the Master level would be labeled "P-M". Nature Sub-Division Authentic Wildlife Prints requires an additional (WILD) note.

e. [Editor's note: For clubs that use Photo Club Services (A.K.A. Visual Pursuits) to set up competitions, when defining a Competition Type, the "Type Code" must be set to the letter in parenthesis. For example, the Type Code for Pictorial Color Prints is "P". This will cause the appropriate Division to be indicated in the yellow box on the print label.]

f. The label must be placed on the back of each entry in the upper left-hand corner such that the correct orientation of the print is easily determined. See Figures 2a and b below for an example of the correct label placement. All labels from previous competitions (if the backing is being reused) must either be removed, covered over, or clearly marked over so as not to be mistaken as the current label.

g. (*Exception to computer printed label. If a hand-written label is necessary, it must be legible to the hosting club or it will be disqualified. In this case a small image is not required.*)

h. Valid and invalid club competition label examples are shown in Figure 1 below.

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Figure 1. Club Competition Labels		
1a) Valid example from Visual Pursuits		1b) Valid example designed by club
1c) Invalid Club Competition Label		1d) N4C Interclub Competition Label (from N4C web site)

4. <u>Print N4C Interclub Competition Label</u>

Any print submitted to a monthly N4C Interclub Competition shall have their club's N4C Interclub Competition Label (see Figure 1d) affixed below or to the right and in the same orientation as the Club's Print Competition Label. See Figure 2 below for an example of correct label placement.

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Figure 2. Correct Label Placement of Competition and Club Labels	
2a) Matted Print Front View	2b) Matted Print Rear View showing label placement

3.0 Supplementary Information

Helpful information about competing and clarifying the rules can be found on the N4C website https://N4C.photoclubservices.com.

1. Please do not login to access this information, it is not necessary
2. Select menu [Organization] > [Documents and Files to Download]
3. Expand item [4.0 Interclub Competition and Judging]
4. For information relevant to competing
   a. Expand item [4.8 Commentary and Clarification of Competition Rules and Division Definitions]
   b. Expand item [4.G Instructional Material for Club Members]