



Competition Guidelines

The Mayslake Photography and Nature Study Club usually holds image competitions four times a year, once each quarter. The Club year runs from May thru April. Competitions are coordinated by the Competition Chairperson who can be reached via email at ronald.szymczak@sbcglobal.net.

The Club's competitions have a two-fold purpose: to increase members' knowledge of nature by observing and recording things they have found, and to increase members' photographic skills. The ideal nature image shows a significant aspect of natural history combined with good photography.

It is assumed that images or prints submitted for Competition can be selected for use in the CACCA Inter-Club Competitions unless the maker excludes them by notifying the Competition Chairperson or CACCA representative.

CATEGORIES

1. The two image categories are Digital and Prints.
2. Members may submit no more than 3 images per category for each competition.
3. Make-ups are permitted with the approval of the Competition Chairperson, usually in cases where the member was unable to submit images in a previous competition because he/she was acting as judge in competition.

CLASSES

1. Images are submitted in classes determined prior to the first competition each year by the Competition Chairperson.
 - a. Prints - Class A and B. Members who have not submitted prints in previous competitions are in Class B.
 - b. Digital - Class A, B and C. Members who have not submitted digital images in previous competitions are in Class C. New members with previous camera club competition experience may elect to compete in Digital Class B by request to the Competition Chairperson. Currently, Class B and C are combined to have enough participants.
2. Movement in classes is determined by the Competition Chairperson and is based upon the previous year(s) competition results.
3. Questions regarding competition classes should be referred to the Competition Chairperson.

IMAGE CONTENT

1. General
 - a. The main subject of the image must relate to some aspect of nature.
 - b. It is the responsibility of the photographer to ensure that labeling and identification in an image are correctly presented.

Competition Guidelines

- c. Post-processing is permitted. Photographers are expected to ensure that the adjustments made enhance the presentation without changing the major content. Therefore, no elements should be added. Discretion should be used in applying cropping, cloning, spot removal, saturation as well as other techniques, such as HDR, plug-ins, etc.
- d. Color images may be converted to black and white. Infrared images are allowed.
2. Plants
 - a. All plants are eligible. Cut flowers and flower arrangements are not eligible.
 - b. Planters, plant supports and other man-made elements, etc. should not be visible in the image.
 - c. Artificial backgrounds that are manually applied in the field are not allowed. Also, adding an artificial background via software is not allowed. Darkening backgrounds in post processing is permitted.
3. Animals, Birds, and other critters, etc.
 - a. Domestic animals, pets and livestock are not eligible and should not be included in an image.
 - b. Other animals, birds, etc. are eligible, including those in zoos and preserves. Cages, bars, and other restraints should not be visible. Banding or other tracking devices may be visible.
4. Man-made structures can be included in the image as long as they are part of the natural habitat of an animal/bird or if their presence does not detract from the nature subject. In all cases, man-made structures must not be a main element in the image. Images may not include people.
5. Adherence to the content guidelines is the responsibility of the photographer. The Competition Chairman may disqualify an image not meeting the guidelines.

PAPERWORK

1. An Image Commentary Card must be completed for each digital or print submission. The Card is available in the Competition section of the Club website.
2. Members should make an effort to identify the plant, animal, bird, etc. in the image. In addition to using on-line and printed field guides, members can seek identification assistance from fellow members. Commentary (50 words or less) in addition to identification is optional if the member feels that the commentary will add to the interest/understanding of the image. Commentaries will be read during the scoring of the image and are dependent on time and the number of images in competition.
3. Image Identification Cards are brought in on competition night. If you will not be at the competition meeting, submit your Image Identification Cards via email to the Competition Chairman (ronald.szymczak@sbcglobal.net) before the competition date.

Competition Guidelines

PREPARING IMAGES FOR COMPETITION

1. Digital Images

- a. Any image that received honors in the print competition cannot be entered in the digital image competition either in the same monthly competition or future competitions.
- b. Images should be in .jpg format and meet the following requirements:
 - i. Size
 1. Maximum width is 1400 pixels including borders.
 2. Maximum height is 1050 pixels including borders.
 3. A border can be used but the border should not exceed 5 pixels and the overall image size with a border must meet the sizing requirement above.
 4. Detailed instructions for preparing digital images are on the Club website.
 5. Images exceeding the sizing requirements cannot be accepted for competition because portions of the image will be cut off the projection screen.
 - ii. File Names
 1. The template for each image file name is as follows: MSL-LLLL#####-C#-Title.jpg
 - a. MSL = Mayslake Club Identifier
 - b. LLLL = the first four letters of your last name
 - c. F = your first initial
 - d. ##### = the last four digits of your phone number
 - e. C = the class level you are assigned to for competition - A, B or C. Members new to competition should use Class C.
 - f. # = the number of your entry - 1, 2 or 3
 - g. Title = the title of your image. The title is limited to 32 characters. Letters of the alphabet (upper and lower case), spaces, underscores, and numbers are all ok. No other characters are allowed in the title.
 - h. Example - MSL-smitj1234-A1-Nice Picture.jpg (Note that hyphens are used to separate each section. Please do not use any other symbol to separate sections of the filename.)
 2. Images must be submitted by the end of the day on the Sunday one week prior the Competition date. Example: If the competition is on Monday September 15, the images must be submitted by Sunday September 7.
 3. Images are submitted via email to competitionmlnpc@gmail.com. Commentary cards for each image are brought in on competition night or may be emailed to the Competition Chairperson if you cannot attend the meeting.

2. Print Images

- a. Any image that received honors in the digital image competition cannot be entered in the print competition either in the same monthly competition or future competitions.
- b. Prints must be mounted on an 11x14 inch mat board. Mat boards are available for purchase at Club meetings.
- c. Print images should be no larger than 11x14 and no smaller than 7x10.

Competition Guidelines

- d. Prints may have a thin border. A border is optional.
- e. All images must have a label attached to the back of the mat board in the upper left corner. Labels are available at Club meetings with the mat boards.
- f. It is recommended that all print images be submitted in a plastic sleeve to avoid damage during handling. Plastic sleeves are also available for purchase at Club meetings. Put your name on the plastic sleeve so it will be returned to you with your print.
- g. Print images and the accompanying Commentary Cards can be dropped off prior to the competition at the Mayslake office during their business hours or brought in on competition night.

JUDGING

1. Entries are judged by a panel of three judges - consisting of members and non-members.
2. Entries are scored from 5 to 9 points by each judge. The image score is the total of points from the three judges.
3. At least one judge shall provide a critique on all print and digital images.

HONORS

1. Approximately 1/3 of the entries will be selected for Honors.
2. Honors entries are selected from the highest scoring images in each category class.
3. Honors are split between Awards and Honorable Mentions based upon an in/out vote of the judges on the entries.

YEAR-END HONORS

1. Individual honors
 - a. In order to be eligible for year-end honors, a member must submit a minimum of 8 nine images in a category class, ~~or two-thirds of possible entries.~~
 - b. An average category class score for each participant is determined by dividing the sum of the scores for images submitted by the number of images submitted. The lowest score will be eliminated when determining the average score, resulting in one less entry for the calculation.
 - c. The members with the two highest average scores in each class for each category will receive awards at the annual Members' Night.
 - d. All print and digital images receiving Awards in Club competition are eligible for Image of the Year.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR EXTERNAL COMPETITIONS

The Club may enter external club competitions or Club members may enter external individual competitions where there are more specific definitions of a "nature image." Photographers should be aware that there are various definitions of what constitutes a nature image. In order for an image to be eligible for entry in any of these external

Competition Guidelines

competitions, it is the responsibility of the photographer to confirm that the image meets the competition requirements. If the photographer is unable to make that confirmation, the image should not be submitted for those competitions.

Chicago Area Camera Club Association (CACCA)

1. For images entered in inter-club competition at CACCA, Mayslake Club competition images are entered in the general print and digital image categories. No nature rules are applied.
2. CACCA does have individual nature competitions where the Photographic Society of America's (PSA) nature photography definition is used. Individuals entering images in these individual nature CACCA competitions should be aware of the PSA criteria below.

Photographic Society of America (PSA)

Photographers should be familiar with this definition as it is used by many organizations in setting criteria for images in nature competition categories.

All images used in PSA Nature Division competitions and PSA-recognized Exhibitions must meet the PSA Nature Definition of Nature Photography as follows:

Nature photography 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 material and to certify as to its honest presentation. The **story telling** value of a photograph **must** be weighed more than the pictorial quality while maintaining high technical quality. Human elements shall not be present, except where those human elements enhance the nature story. The presence of scientific bands, scientific tags or radio collars on wild animals is permissible. Photographs of artificially produced hybrid plants or animals, mounted specimens, or obviously set arrangements, are ineligible, as is any form of manipulation that alters the truth of the photographic statement. No techniques that add to, relocate, replace, or remove pictorial elements except by cropping are permitted. Techniques that enhance the presentation of the photograph without changing the nature story or the pictorial content are permitted. All adjustments must appear natural. Color images may be converted to grayscale monochrome. Infrared images are not allowed.

All images used in PSA Nature Division competitions and PSA-recognized Exhibitions for Wildlife images must meet the above definition as well as the PSA Definition for Nature Wildlife Photography as follows:

Authentic wildlife is defined as one or more organisms living free and unrestrained in a natural or adopted habitat. Therefore, landscapes, photographs of zoo or game farm animals, or any living subject taken under controlled conditions are not eligible for Wildlife competitions. Authentic wildlife is not limited to uncontrolled zoological subjects. Land and marine botanical subjects in the wild (including fungi and algae) are also eligible subjects, as are animal carcasses.

Note: Wildlife images may be entered in Open Sections of Nature International Exhibitions. Images that do not have living organisms as the primary subject matter or images taken with the subjects in controlled conditions, such as zoos, game farms, botanical gardens or setups may be entered in Open Sections, but may not be entered in Wildlife Sections. Insects, marine subjects, and botanical subjects taken in the field are suitable wildlife subjects. Wildlife subjects are not limited to animals or birds.

<http://www.psa-photo.org/index.php?nature-nature-definition>