

Memphis Camera Club Handbook

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1 Introduction

- 1.1** The Memphis Camera Club (MCC) conducts two photographic competitions each month: One for prints and one for digital projection images. **The competition year begins in January and ends in December.** Competition meetings are held the first Thursday of each month at the Longinotti Auditorium, St. Francis Hospital, 5959 Park Ave., Memphis, TN.
- 1.2** Awards are given at each competition to recognize achievement in the photographic arts. There also are annual print and digital competitions with entries comprised of photos from the monthly competitions.

2 General Competition Guidelines

- 2.1** Any member in good standing may enter prints or digital images in the competitions.
- 2.2** Each member may enter a maximum of four photographs per month as prints, digitals or a combination thereof.
- 2.3** There are three exceptions to the maximum entry limit of four;
- 2.3.1** A photo judged to be in the wrong category one month may be re-entered in the correct category the following month. To accommodate that correction, the affected member's maximum is raised to five entries for that month.
- 2.3.2** Photo subjects for the "Assigned" category are designated by the Competition Committee in the print and digital competitions for specific months each year. Those who compete in the "Assigned" category may enter five photographs during the selected months.
- 2.3.3** Judges may not compete during the months they judge. To compensate, they may enter one to four additional images in other months. Judges may not exceed the annual maximum allowed for all members in a competition year.
- 2.4** An image may be entered in competition only once. This limitation includes duplicates shot in camera and exposure brackets of the same image. A different photograph of the same location or subject that is similar – but not identical – to a previously entered photo may be submitted. Such an image must contain substantial differences such as a varied camera position, different lens, or a filter effects.

2.5 There is no age limit on photographs submitted for competition except for assigned subjects.

2.6 Photographs created by relying largely on the work of others may not be submitted in the competitions. For example, this situation may arise in a class or workshop environment in which others arrange the lighting, props or camera settings.

2.7 The following list of digital adjustments are allowed in any category. Any adjustments beyond this list should be entered in the Creative category;

Removal of dust spots, Cropping, Color correction, Overall brightness correction, White balance correction, Flare reduction or removal, Saturation, Recovering shadow and/or highlight detail, including HDR, Resizing, Straightening, Flipping or reversing the image, Contrast control, Burning and dodging, Noise , reduction, Lens distortion corrections, Stitched panoramic, Convert color to monochrome, Toning of monochrome Images, Infrared conversions, Sharpening, overall and selective area, Adding additional blur, Combining photos for exposure or depth of field, Removing small sticks, trash, telephone wires, or other small distractions from photos, adding canvas to the background.

2.8 MCC uses Visual Pursuits software to manage its competitions. Instructions for logging in to Visual Pursuits and entering prints and digitals in the competitions are available in video tutorials located here: <http://bit.ly/2imkbsR>

2.9 Images for the prints and digital competition must be submitted using VisualPursuits by 11:30 PM Monday prior to the Thursday competition.

3 Print Competition Guidelines

3.1 Prints are limited to a maximum of 16 x 20 inches including mount and mat, and a minimum of 5 x 7 inches with a minimum mount size of 8 x 10 inches.

3.2 Prints must be securely mounted to firm backing material such as foam core board or gator board.

3.3 Matted prints are acceptable if the print and mat are securely attached.

3.4 Framed prints are not acceptable.

3.5 Names on the front of the print or mat should be covered.

3.6 Print titles must be five words or less.

3.7 Prints must be labeled on the back with the category, title, name of the maker and an arrow indicating right side up. This labeling may be written on the print, the backing material or on a sheet of paper attached to the back of the print.

3.8 Presentation is a factor. Mats, mounts and prints should be clean, free of finger prints, and well done.

3.9 Images for the digital competition must be submitted using VisualPursuits by 11:30 PM Monday prior to the Thursday competition. Instructions for registering entries for the Print Competitions may be found in Appendix 9.1 of this handbook.

3.10 The print competition consists of the following ten categories;

3.10.1 Nature. Included are wild flora and fauna such as wildlife, plants, and trees. Manmade materials may be depicted but should be contributing elements rather than key subjects of the photograph. Wildlife is defined as any animal not under the care of and/or confined by man. Wild flora are plants, trees, or flowers not cultivated by man.

3.10.2 Landscape. Included are landscapes, nature images, sunsets, urban landscapes, seascapes, cityscapes and farm scenes. Animals may be depicted but should be contributing elements rather than key subjects of the photograph.

3.10.3 Animals (captive). Captive animals are the central subject of photographs in this category. Animals under the care of man can be included. Examples of animals allowed are pets, zoo animals, farm and domesticated animals.

3.10.4 People. This is the place for studio portraits, candid, color and monochrome. If the main subject of a photo is a person, it belongs in this category.

3.10.5 Living Detail/Still Life. Photographs in this category showcase smaller scenes, small objects, and details of larger objects that may tell a bigger story. Included are flowers, macro photos, table-top sets and similar images.

3.10.6 Creative. An image whose origin is a photograph (or photographs) captured in-camera, then manipulated digitally in image editing software without limitation. If multiple photographs are used, they must all be captured by the entrant. However, any enhancement must be done by the entrant. No image will be eliminated simply because it looks realistic. The creativity may occur in setting up the scene, capturing the image, in post-production or any combination thereof. Your photograph will be judged primarily on originality of concept and/or use of a creative technique/style.

3.10.7 Monochrome. Photographs in this category highlight the beauty – and the challenge – of monochrome photography. Various tones of one color such as gray scale, sepia, cyanotype, selenium, etc. are acceptable. Monochrome images with portions in full color (selective color) should be entered in the Creative category.

Attributes such as shape, form, texture and contrast make the difference between record shots and fine art. All monochrome images except those that qualify for the People and Creative category belong here.

3.10.8 Straight from the Camera. Members are encouraged to submit images from point and shoot cameras or mobile devices such as phones and tablets, though images from all cameras are acceptable in this category. The only in-camera image adjustments permitted are choice of shutter speed, aperture, ISO and white balance. The only other image adjustments or editing permitted is cropping of images and conversion from RAW format in order to produce an image that can be projected or printed. All other editing and enhancements including but not limited to such as lighting adjustments, saturation, cloning, and sharpening or the utilization of creative modes of the camera itself are strictly prohibited, regardless whether they are initiated within the camera or mobile device or done after the image is exported to a computer software program.

3.10.9 Assigned. Each year the Competition Committee designates specific months in which there will be an "Assigned" category in the print and digital competitions. Topics are announced at the beginning of each competition year. MCC members may enter one photograph in the Assigned category – print or digital – in each designated month. Entries must have been made during the current competition year. Upon notice the Competition Committee may waive the date requirement for a special assignment.

3.10.10 Open. Anything that does not fit in other categories.

4 Digital Competition Guidelines

4.1 Images for the digital competition must be submitted using VisualPursuits by 11:30 PM Monday prior to the Thursday competition. Instructions for registering entries for the Digital Competitions may be found in Appendix 9.1 of this handbook.

4.2 Entries must be in JPG format not more than 1920 pixels wide and 1200 pixels tall in the sRGB color space.

4.3 Detailed instructions for preparation of digital images may be found in Appendix No. 2 of this handbook.

4.4 The digital competition is comprised of ten categories of photographs. The definitions of these categories are identical to the definitions of the same categories in the print competition (item 3.10).

- 4.4.1** Nature
- 4.4.2** Landscape
- 4.4.3** Animals (captive)
- 4.4.4** People
- 4.4.5** Living Detail/Still Life
- 4.4.6** Creative

- 4.4.7 Monochrome
- 4.4.8 Straight from the Camera
- 4.4.9 Open
- 4.4.10 Assigned

5 Scoring Criteria

5.1 Entries are scored based on technical quality, composition and impact. Elements of these criteria are explained below with helpful comments to foster improvement.

5.1.1 Technical Quality

Elements	Helpful Comments
Depth of Field.	Use a smaller aperture for more depth of field; larger to blur background.
Over exposure/blown out highlights.	Decrease ISO, change aperture or shutter speed, decrease exposure compensation, use burn tools in post-processing.
Under exposure/lost detail in shadows.	Increase ISO, change aperture or shutter speed, increase exposure compensation, use dodge tools in post-processing.
Lack of sharpness in appropriate places (i.e. eye of subject) or all over.	Use a tripod, and/or post-processing sharpening tool.
Use of light, intensity and color of light appropriate for subject. Not too harsh, too much contrast, overly soft or too flat.	May need auxiliary light or fill flash. Perhaps better taken at sunset or sunrise, not high noon. Meter subject
Printed on appropriate paper with attractive mat that does not distract.	Better paper choice might be matte (often for portraits), glossy e-surface, metallic, true B&W matte.
Color appears natural, balanced, appealing; strikes the mood for subject.	Recommend change of saturation. Perhaps the colors are blank or do not sufficiently reveal the mood of the image. Possibly too warm or too cold.

5.1.2 Composition

Elements	Helpful Comments
Center of interest	Remove competing elements, crop away clutter.
Filling the frame	Too much negative space - crop in camera or in post-production. Use a longer lens. Zoom in.
Rule of thirds	Subject would be best if not centered and instead placed along lines of a rule of thirds grid.
Symmetry or patterns	Can help generate very eye-catching compositions especially if the artist breaks the symmetry or pattern creating tension and a focal point to the scene.
Leading lines	Should pull the viewer toward the subject, taking the eye on a journey through the image. Or do lines lead the viewer away and out of the photo?
Horizon lines	Straight and not centered.
Framing	Frame the central element with secondary elements such as trees or archways to direct viewer's eye to point of interest. Watch for merging with image borders.
Control background	Too many distractions, uncomplimentary elements diminish impact. Use wider aperture, smaller f/stop to blur background. Move around for better background.
Depth	In landscapes, can be created by objects in foreground, middle ground and background.

Perspective lines in architecture	Vertical lines that do not converge (parallel). Use tilt-shift lenses or post-processing tools.
Balance	Subject is weighted too far to one side without benefit of another element to balance it. Leave space in front of an animal or bird; give them "room to move".
Cropping	To decrease busy background. To improve balance or symmetry and especially to direct viewer's eye to the subject of the image.

5.1.3 Impact

Wow Factor	Flop Factor
The photo provokes an emotional response.	Lacks emotion. No sadness or happiness.
The colors are impressive	Lacks color
Creativity	Lacks creativity
Extraordinary	Ordinary
Exciting	Lacks excitement
Tells a story	Lacks insight
Intriguing	Does not have a message or meaning
Fresh and interesting	
Makes a statement	
Taken from an interesting viewpoint	

6 Judging Procedures

- 6.1** Judging the monthly print and digital competitions is done by a panel of three judges that are MCC members in good standing and have completed the approved training.
- 6.2** Members and guests may not react audibly to the images, judging or scoring.
- 6.3** The chairman of the Competition Committee will assign judges for each competition on a rotating basis.
- 6.4** The competition moderator shall call for a critique of approximately every tenth image or one per category. One judge shall provide the lead critique. This duty shall be rotated among the three judges at each monthly competition. Other judges shall limit their comments to suggestions or observations that clearly provide substantive additions to the lead critique. These supplementary comments shall be extremely brief, such as two to three sentences.
- 6.5** Prior to the start of each monthly competition, a member of the Competition Committee shall brief the judges on the critiquing process, emphasizing the need for brevity and to avoid redundancy.
- 6.6** Prior to the start of each monthly competition, a member of the Competition Committee shall remind members that critiquing of images is intended to provide an insight on how judges perceived the image and tips on how to improve it. Critiquing is an option for members. Before competition begins, members may inform the competition check-in staff whether they want their images critiqued.
- 6.7** Any image that scores a combined total of 18 or less will automatically receive a critique. The critique should inform the photographer and audience what elements would make a stronger image.
- 6.8** The judges may “challenge” an image, prior to scoring if they consider it to be in the wrong category. The challenge will stand if agreed to by two judges. The challenged image will be eligible for re-entry in the proper category in the succeeding competition.
- 6.9** The judges may “challenge” any entry, before scoring, which does not meet the criteria for entry. The challenge will stand if agreed to by two judges. The challenged entry will be eligible for re-entry when the entry criteria are met.

6.10 Scoring will automatically be “challenged” if there is a difference of three points between the scores of two judges. Each judge will announce his/her score followed by a critique. The judges will then rescore, and the final score will stand.

6.11 In the event of a judging or classification conflict, the decision of the Chairman of the Competition Committee is final.

6.12 Judges will not see any work entered until judging begins. Previewing of prints or digital images is prohibited.

6.13 To foster confidentiality of judges' scores, judges shall rotate the scoring pads as judging begins for each competition category. Judges are not required to state their scores during competition except to resolve a challenge.

6.14 The judges may discuss any image among themselves, for any reason, as part of the judging process.

6.15 The title of the image will be read prior to the scoring. The maker's name will be announced only for high scoring images and category winners.

6.16 The Competition Committee shall maintain scoring totals for each MCC member that participates in the print and digital competitions.

7 Display Winning Photographs

7.1 Winning images are eligible for display in the "Competition Awards" section of the MCC website. Included are images that receive a score of 24 or above, or those that win or tie in its category regardless of score.

7.2 The Competition Committee will transmit the photos meeting the above criteria to the webmaster for posting.

8 Annual Competition Awards

8.1 An annual photographic competition is held each year after completion of the monthly competitions. Judges are selected from outside MCC. Photographs eligible for entry in the annual competition are those that were entered in that year's monthly print and digital competitions. For the annual competition, they select winners in the 18 print and digital competition categories and may also select photos of special merit.

8.2 Winners receive ribbons, pin medals and plaques for their achievements during the year and winning images in the annual competitions.

- 8.3** A ribbon is awarded to each individual that achieves a perfect score of 27 during MCC's monthly competitions in each competition year. Recipients receive one "Perfect Score" ribbon regardless of the number of perfect scores they attain during the year.
- 8.4** Pin Medals are awarded to the artists for photographs judged best in each of MCC's 12 regular competition categories. [Assigned category images are placed into the 12 regular competition categories. They are not judged as a distinct category and the artists choose which of the 12 categories best suits their image(s).]
- 8.5** Plaques are awarded for special achievement. MCC competition rules mandate that three must be awarded each year:
- 8.5.1** Print of the Year
 - 8.5.2** Digital Image of the Year
 - 8.5.3** Photographer of the Year
 - 8.5.4** People's Choice of the Year
- 8.6** Photographer of the Year criteria: From the monthly competitions, the top 20 scoring images from each member are totaled. An image is awarded an additional 2 points for Print of the Month or Digital Image of the Month. The club member with the highest point total is named Photographer of the Year.
- 8.7** The People's Choice Photograph may be selected by attendees of the MCC Annual Awards Dinner. Each competition entry is projected on a screen accompanied by a number. Dinner attendees vote in writing for the photograph they consider best. The artist responsible for the photograph that garners the most votes receives the award.
- 8.8** In addition, the Competition Committee may create additional achievement awards and select which additional awards shall be given in a competition year. This work is done by a subcommittee of the Competition Committee called "The Awards Committee." It shall be comprised of seven MCC members including the chair person(s) of the Competition Committee and others appointed by them.
- 8.9** At the option of The Awards Committee, these additional achievement awards may include:
- 8.9.1** The Achievement Award
 - 8.9.2** Most Improved Photographer of the Year

8.9.3 Inspirational Photographer of the Year

8.9.4 Carl Nilson Lifetime Achievement Award

8.10 The Achievement Award may be given to the photographer who receives the greatest number of points during MCC's monthly competitions in the competition year.

8.11 The Three achievement awards will be selected from nominations forwarded to the MCC Executive Board from the Competition Committee. The Executive Board may choose from the forwarded nominations or make their own nomination. The Competition Committee each year shall widely publicize these awards and their criteria in advance of the MCC Open Period to generate nominations from the MCC membership.

8.11.1 The Most Improved Photographer of the Year goes to the MCC member whose work best demonstrates substantial improvement in photographic fundamentals, composition and overall impact.

8.11.2 The Inspirational Photographer of the Year is given to the competitive photographer whose work most inspires others.

8.11.3 The Carl Nilson Lifetime Achievement Award is given to the MCC member who has shown a dedication to the club over the course of time. For example, past recipients held leadership roles, substantially improved the reputation of MCC, created out-reach programs that supported the mission of the club, and volunteered in significant ways to enhance the quality of programs available to members. The recipient of this award is granted a free lifetime camera club membership.

9 **Appendices**

9.1 **Submitting Competition Images**

All images, print or digital, are submitted for competition on the VisualPursuits (VP) website (<https://mcc.visualpursuits.com>). Access to VP requires a userid/password separate from the useid/password combination used at the memphiscamerclub.com website.

To obtain a login to VP visit the website by going to <http://memphiscameraclub.com> click on the “Competition” menu at the top and select “Submit Image” from the drop-down menu. A video tutorial on signing up is available here: <http://bit.ly/2o6QKus>.

Monthly competitions open for submissions on VP the first Friday of the month and stay open until the Monday before the first Thursday of the month. Video instructions on how to use VP to submit an image is available here: <http://bit.ly/2o6QKus>.

On the competition night bring prints to the meeting and check them in at least 15 minutes before the start of competition. If you have any questions about our competition send an email to competition@memphiscameraclub.com.

9.2 Preparing Digital Images

Preparing photographs for digital projection is in some ways akin to preparing them for print. Experimentation usually fosters improved results. For example, each type of photo paper is different and may require adjustments to photo editing parameters such as brightness levels or sharpening. Similarly, factors such as the choice of projector, projector settings and placement of the screen affect the appearance of projected images.

MCC members responsible for equipment setup prior to the competitions endeavor to be consistent with best available projector settings and screen placement. Nonetheless, members are encouraged to experiment and adjust their photo editing to attain the desired results over time. For example, some members have concluded that darkening most images and fine-tuning vibrance and saturation settings leads to better-looking images on screen.

As a first step toward improved images, calibrate your display screen. Without calibration, your screen may display inaccurate brightness, contrast and colors leading to garish or blown out images when projected. With calibration, it is more likely that your projected images will be close in appearance to the finished images on your personal screen. Calibration devices widely available at reasonable prices include Datacolor's Spyder4 Express or Spyder4 Pro and X-Rite's ColorMunki or i1 Display Pro.

For MCC digital competitions, images must be JPEGs in the sRGB color space with a maximum size not more than 1920 pixels wide and 1200 pixels tall. To get the maximum resolution it is best to set one side to 1200 pixels and let the other side vary. For a landscape oriented image set the short side to 1200 pixels and for a portrait oriented image set the long side to 1200 pixels. There is no single best way to edit and resize images. Some members have found the following steps to be effective. These instructions are for Photoshop CS6. Alternate software such as other versions of Photoshop, Photoshop Elements and Aperture provide similar editing and sizing tools.

9.2.1 Process your images for competition using your usual photo-editing preferences. Duplicate the images and place them in a separate "competition" folder.

9.2.2 As an option, members may place their name, copyright and other pertinent info in the metadata that accompanies each image. (Do not enter text on the face of the image.) In CS6, go to the Menu Bar at top of the screen and click "File" then "File Info..." Fill out the pop-up box as desired.

9.2.3 Edit the competition images for digital projection. Some members have found that darkening their images a bit and making slight increases in saturation and vibrance improves the results.

9.2.4 In CS6, go to the Layers Panel at right of your screen, click the drop-down box at far top right (see the small downward arrow) and click “Flatten Image.”

9.2.5 Go to the Menu Bar at top of the screen. Click Edit. From the drop-down box, choose “Convert to Profile . . .” From the second drop-down box, choose sRGB IEC61966-2.1.

9.2.6 Photoshop includes an automated process to resize photos for a projector. Select the “File” -> “Automate” -> “Fit Image” menus. In the dialog box place the dimensions of the club’s projector width = 1920 pixels, height = 1200 pixels. Click “OK” and the photo will be resized respecting it’s original aspect ratio.

9.2.7 Return to the Menu Bar, click “Image” then “Mode” and “8 Bits/Channel.”

9.2.8 Some photographers apply additional sharpening for digital projection. Proceed with caution.

9.2.9 On the Menu Bar, click “File” and then “Save for Web and Devices.” Click “Save” in the pop-up box and select the folder of choice.

10 **Club Operations**

The MCC Executive Committee comprises seven members: President, vice president, secretary, treasurer, two at-large members and the chair of the Competition Committee. Standing committees of the organization are: Exhibitions, field trips, keepsakes, membership, newsletter, nominating, program and social.

MCC meets four times each month in the Longinotti Auditorium, St. Francis Hospital, 5959 Park Ave., Memphis, TN.

7 p.m., 1st Thursday, Competition

7 p.m., 2nd Thursday, Digital Class

7 p.m., 3rd Thursday, Program and Business Meeting (Except December)

7 pm, 4th Thursday, Photography Class

Annual Dues are \$30 per individual; \$40 for a dual membership. Additional MCC operational guidelines may be found in club bylaws located under “club documents” here: <http://bit.ly/2amboVz>