Gaithersburg Camera Club
Rules for Competition
Effective September 2019

I. Introduction

One of the club's goals is to motivate members to sharpen their skills by learning from the competitive experience. The club conducts internal monthly competitions from September through May, with the exception of December, that are generally judged by a skilled outside photographer. The club's annual internal competition is held in early June and is also judged by a skilled outside photographer. Points awarded during these internal competitions are accumulated and used for advancement within the various divisions and for the determination of the photographer-of-the-year awards in the advanced classes. Additionally, points can be earned in certain exhibits and competitions that are sanctioned by the club and from published images. These outside points, along with the internal points, will be accumulated and count towards individual merit awards.

II. Definitions

A. **Class**: A class comprises entries of the same photographic medium: monochrome prints, color prints, and digital projection.

B. **Competition Year**: The start of the competition year is the day following the annual competition. The day of the annual competition marks the end of the competition year.

C. **Division**: Within each class, members are divided into groups according to the number of internal points accumulated. These groups are called divisions: novice, intermediate, and advanced.

D. **End-of-Year Subtotal**: Prior to the annual competition, the scores from the monthly club competitions and other sanctioned competitions and exhibits of the current competition year shall be totaled to give end-of-year subtotals. These subtotals will be used to determine awards to be given during the annual competition.

E. **Internal Points**: These are points awarded during the monthly and annual club competitions.

F. **Outside Points**: These are points awarded for participation in GCC exhibits and club-sanctioned competitions and for the publication of images.

III. General Rules – shall apply to monthly and annual club competitions

A. Entries

1. There shall be **three classes** of entries as defined:

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a. **Monochrome Prints**: the print must be monochrome, a single color. Most commonly this means "black and white," but any print consisting of varying tones of the same color is acceptable. Hand-colored prints are excluded. Toning, dodging, burning-in and other techniques traditionally associated with monochrome printing will be allowed. Digital images, whether taken by digital camera, processed onto CD or scanned, and/or manipulated with computer software, will be allowed, and can be printed by inkjet or other printers designed for printing digital images.

b. **Color Prints**: Any print, including, at the competitor's option, monochrome prints using conventional darkroom techniques, will be allowed. Digital images, whether taken by digital camera, processed onto CD or scanned, and/or manipulated with computer software, will be allowed, and can be printed by inkjet or other printers designed for printing digital images.

c. **Digital Projection**: Any digital image file, originating from a digital camera or from scanned film or print which can be sent as an email attachment in a form that can be projected by the club's digital projector (JPEG, with dimensions not to exceed either 1920 pixels in width or 1200 pixels in height) shall be allowed. Note that the resulting file size will typically fall between 1MB and 3 MB. Entries may include color or monochrome images, with or without manipulation by computer software. Computer art is excluded.

2. Any member in good standing (i.e., who has paid the competition year's dues) may submit entries.

3. A member who enters a competition is expected to attend the corresponding meeting as the educational value of hearing the judge's comments is a primary reason for and benefit of competing.

a. It is understood that extenuating circumstances may occasionally prevent a competitor from attending a meeting. Such absences, however, should be the exception rather than the rule. Those whose work or school obligations preclude their attendance or who are traveling are exempt from competition meeting attendance.

b. The competitor is responsible for arranging for the delivery and return of any prints to/from a competition meeting at which he/she is not present. The club takes no responsibility for any prints left unclaimed at a competition meeting.

4. Print entries may be processed commercially or printed by the competitor.

5. Prints shall be securely mounted on paper-based backing board (e.g., mat board) or foam board (foam-core not more than ¼ inch thick). Framed, gallery wrapped, metal, and standout prints or any other mounting that is cumbersome to handle or that could damage other prints are prohibited. Over mats are optional but encouraged to achieve the best presentation of the image. If an over mat is used, it shall be white, ivory, gray, or black and shall be securely fastened to the backing board top and bottom.

6. The maximum size for prints is 16x22 inches, including the mount. No size restrictions apply to panoramic images. There is no minimum size. However, to be competitive, it is highly recommended that images (not including any over mat or border) be at least 8 X 10 inches in size or of similar dimensions yielding the same image area (e.g., 7 ¼ X 11, 6 ¾ X 12, 5 X 16, or 9 X 9 inches).

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7. Entries shall be marked as indicated:

a. Monochrome and Color Prints: the entry's title, competitor's name, class of entry and division shall appear on the back of the entry. The division is required so that it will be possible to separate entries for novice, intermediate, and advanced competitions. A directional arrow shall indicate the top edge of the print.

b. Digital Projection: Image files shall follow a standard hyphenated naming convention that includes the division, title of the image, and competitor's first & last name. The required format is Div-Title with spaces-FirstName space LastName.jpg, where "Div" is the competitor's division, abbreviated as "Nov" for novice, "Int" for intermediate, and "Adv" for advanced. For example: Adv-Yellow Spring Flowers-John Smith.jpg (note that there should not be any hyphens within the image title portion of the file name, nor between the first and last name).

B. Advanced, Intermediate, and Novice Divisions

1. Competitions shall be split into advanced, intermediate, and novice divisions for the three classes of competition: monochrome prints, color prints, and digital projection. A member shall not submit entries to more than one division of the same class at the same time.

a. **Advanced Division**: Advanced division competitions within a class are limited to those who meet the advanced division criterion: Those members who have accumulated 120 or more internal award points in that class, or new members who declare themselves (by notifying the Awards Chairperson) as advanced based on their experience level. Once a member has competed in the advanced division of a class, he/she shall not submit entries to the novice or intermediate divisions of that class unless there are insufficient entries in a given month requiring divisions to be combined (see paragraph IV A.9.).

b. **Intermediate Division**: Intermediate division competitions within a class are limited to those who meet the intermediate division criterion: Those members who have accumulated 40 or more but fewer than 120 internal award points in that class, or new members who declare themselves (by notifying the Awards Chairperson) as intermediate based on their experience level. Once a member has competed in the intermediate division of a class, he/she shall not submit entries to the

novice division of that class unless there are insufficient entries in a given month requiring divisions to be combined (see paragraph IV A.9.).

c. **Novice Division**: Novice division competitions within a class are limited to those who meet the novice division criterion: Those members who have accumulated fewer than 40 internal award points in that class.

2. Although the Awards Chairperson tracks points awarded, it is the responsibility of each member to maintain his/her own score sheet and to update this sheet as necessary following each monthly competition in order to verify the point tracking and to determine whether he/she meets the novice, intermediate or advanced criteria.

3. The division criteria are applied separately for each class unless or until, by declaration or accumulation of points, a member is eligible to compete in the intermediate or advanced divisions of more than one class. If this is the case, the novice/intermediate member who attains intermediate in a second class shall compete in the intermediate divisions for all classes. Similarly, the novice/intermediate/advanced member who attains advanced in a second class shall compete in the advanced divisions for all classes of competition. For example, a member may be advanced in digital projection competitions and novice or intermediate in monochrome print competitions, but once the member is advanced in a second class, that member shall compete in the advanced divisions for all classes.

C. Themes

Some monthly club competitions shall have themes, which will be announced in the monthly newsletter and on the website. It is the responsibility of competitors to be aware of the themes and to submit images that reflect this awareness. The Awards, Digital, and Prints Chairpersons, those assisting with competitions in their absence, and the competition judge may request the withdrawal of any entry that does not reflect the stated theme of the competition.

D. Judging

1. Entries will be judged according to such characteristics as impact, composition, technical excellence, and how well they portray the announced theme.

2. The Program Chairperson will designate the judge.

3. There shall be no comments to the judge during the judging.

4. The judge's decision is final.

IV. Monthly Competitions – The General Rules stated above shall apply in addition to those below:

A. Entries

1. The general rule governing all competition entries, whether print or digital projection, is that they must in their entirety:

a. be the original work of the competitor.

b. be of photographic origin.

c. have been captured within 24 months of the competition month.

2. Entries may be digitally manipulated via use of any readily available image editing software including any filters or plug-ins contained therein. Examples of such applications include but are not limited to Photoshop, Photoshop Elements, Aperture, PaintShop Pro and OnOne Software, Nik Software and Topaz Labs products.

3. All competition images, and all components or layers in a montage or composite image (including but not limited to added textures or replaced backgrounds or skies):

a. must be photographs taken by the competitor using a camera (or scans therefrom).
   i. The only exception is the addition of a border consisting of a single thin black, white or gray line.

b. must have been captured within 24 months of the first day of the competition month.
   i. On occasion, the Board of Directors may announce a competition for which this time limit is waived or modified.

Specifically, the following examples are <u>not eligible</u> for competition:

- An image in which any part was created or customized by someone other than the competitor.
- An image in which any part was originally photographed prior to the allowed date range for the competition (within 24 months of the competition month, unless communicated otherwise by the Board of Directors).
- An image containing elements not of photographic origin including clip art, added text, borders, lines or shapes, with one exception: a border consisting of one thin line colored black, white, or gray may surround the entire image.
- An image in which any part is a scan of anything other than the competitor's own print or film.

4. Entries become ineligible for monthly competitions as follows:

a. The entry previously received an award (1st, 2nd or 3rd place or Honorable Mention) in a GCC monthly or annual competition; or

b. The entry has the same significant creative content (i.e., is derived from the same or similar image capture) as any other print, or digital projection file exposed or digitally created by the competitor that has previously won an award in a GCC monthly or annual competition; or

c. The entry or others having the same significant creative content (i.e., are derived from the same or similar image capture) has/have been entered in three previous GCC competitions (monthly or annual).

5. Receiving an award in a non-GCC competition does not restrict an eligible image from entry in a monthly GCC competition.

6. The number of entries permitted in a monthly competition is limited as follows.

a. Members who are intermediate or novice in all classes shall submit no more than a total of four entries for each monthly competition. Of these four entries, no more than two entries shall be submitted for a single class of competition.

b. Members who are advanced in all classes shall submit no more than a total of three entries for each monthly competition. Of these three entries, no more than one shall be submitted for the Digital Projection class of competition, and no more than two entries shall be submitted for either of the print classes of competition.

c. Members who are advanced in one class only may submit a total of four entries. However, if they are advanced in digital, they are limited to one digital entry.

7. A member may not submit multiple entries having the same significant creative content at a given competition meeting whether in the same or different class. For example, submitting the same image as a digital projection entry and as a print in the same competition meeting is prohibited; similarly, submitting color and monochrome or horizontal and vertical renditions of the same image in the same competition meeting is prohibited. (This restriction permits the club to advise judges not to reject similar images solely on the basis that they were likely by the same maker.)

8. Competitors shall pre-register their entries for each monthly competition.

a. Competitors shall pre-register color prints and monochrome prints via the print entry submission form on the club's website by midnight of the Wednesday before the monthly competition.

b. Competitors shall email image files for the Digital Projection class to the Digital Coordinator by midnight of the Wednesday before the monthly competition. Each image file shall be sent as an attachment to the email. The email shall include the competitor's full name, the division of competition (advanced, intermediate, or novice) and the title(s) of the image file(s) being submitted. Note that three division-specific club mailboxes have been set up to receive the digital entries and it is important for the member to send his/her entries to the correct mailbox based on division.

9. If fewer than three entries are submitted in a single division and class, there will be no monthly competition for that division and class. Each competitor will have the option to submit his/her entry in the next higher division of the class for that month (or lower division if no higher division exists for the class that month). If a competitor chooses to compete in a different division of that class, he/she will not be required to change divisions for future competitions as a result of such circumstances.

B. Competition Awards

1. The number of entries shall determine the number of awards in each division of each class:

Number of Entries	Number of Awards
1 or 2	No Competition
3	One award -- at the discretion of the judge the award may be either a 1st, 2nd, 3rd place, Honorable Mention or None.
4 – 6	1st and 2nd place
7 – 9	1st, 2nd and 3rd place
10 or more	1st, 2nd and 3rd place plus "x" Honorable Mentions where "x" = enough Honorable Mention awards to make the total number of awards given in that division of that class equal to one third of the entries in that class, rounded up to the next whole number. For example, 31 entries = 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 8 Honorable Mentions for a total of 11 awards.

2. The awards shall be allocated points as follows:

Place	Points
1st	10
2nd	7
3rd	5
Honorable Mention	3
Non-placed Entry	1

V. Annual Competitions

An Annual (i.e., end-of-year) Competition shall coincide with the annual awards banquet, the last meeting of the competition year. This competition is pre-judged with the results being announced at the banquet. The objective of this competition is for members to enter what they consider to be their best work of the year. For this reason, the Annual Competition will be "open," with no designated theme. Entries shall be submitted in the division of the member at year's end. Furthermore, all entry rules applicable to the monthly competitions as stated in section IV.A apply to the annual competition as well, with the following exceptions:

A. Entries

1. Members shall submit no more than a total of six entries. Of these six entries, no more than two entries shall be submitted for a single class of competition.

2. Images that were eligible during any month of the competition year are eligible for the Annual Competition. Thus, an image that was captured within 24 months of the previous September 1st is eligible for the Annual Competition. The only exception to this time restriction is that any images entered in a

monthly competition for which the time limit was waived or modified are eligible for the Annual Competition regardless of when they were captured.

3. Images that won an award in a monthly GCC competition during the current competition year are eligible for the Annual Competition. (Images that won an award in a previous competition year are not eligible.)

4. Images that were submitted in one class of competition during any of the monthly competitions may be submitted in another class of competition in the annual competition as long as all other rule requirements are met (e.g., an entry previously submitted in the digital projection class during the regular competition year may be submitted in the color print class for the annual competition).

5. Procedures and/or deadlines for pre-registering entries for the Annual Competition may vary. Members will receive special instructions for submitting end-of-year entries.

B. Competition Awards

1. The number of entries shall determine the number of awards in each division of each class:

Number of Entries	Number of Awards
1 or 2	No Competition
3	One Award -- at the discretion of the judge the award may be either a 1st, 2nd, 3rd place, Honorable Mention or None.
4 – 6	1st and 2nd place
7 – 9	1st, 2nd and 3rd place
10 or more	1st, 2nd, and 3rd place plus "x" Honorable Mentions where "x" = enough Honorable Mention awards to make the total number of awards given in that division of that class equal to one third of the entries in that class, rounded up to the next whole number. For example, 31 entries = 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 8 Honorable Mentions for a total of 11 awards.

2. The awards shall be allocated points as follows:

Place	Points
Best in Show	15
1st	12
2nd	9
3rd	7
Honorable Mention	5
Non-placed entry	1

Note that the Best in Show award shall be selected from all the first-place winners from each division of each class. The Best in Show entry will be awarded 3 additional points for a total of 15 points (12 + 3).

3. Points awarded during the Annual Competition shall be added to the end-of-year subtotal. The result shall be carried forward to the next competition year.

C. Special Awards

1. An **Image of the Year award** shall be given to the first-place entry of each division in each class of the Annual Competition as follows:

a. Print of the Year (classes: Monochrome and Color)
- Novice
- Intermediate
- Advanced
- Unlimited, if divisions are combined

b. Digital Projection Image of the Year
- Novice
- Intermediate
- Advanced
- Unlimited, if divisions are combined

2. **Photographer of the Year awards** shall be given to those members who are in the Advanced division as of January 1 of the competition year and who have accumulated the most points from the monthly and annual GCC Club competitions in the competition year as follows:

a. Photographer of the Year – Monochrome Prints
b. Photographer of the Year – Color Prints
c. Photographer of the Year – Digital Projection

3. **A Rookie of the Year award** may be awarded to a new member who, in the opinion of the Board of Directors, has shown the most improvement in the current competition year.

4. **Merit awards** shall be given to those members who have accumulated a specified number of points in any one class. These points may be accumulated via either the GCC monthly/annual Club competitions (inside points) or through participation in Club-Sanctioned Competitions and exhibits or by having images published as described in section VI (outside points). The number of points accumulated for a given class shall be the total of both the internal and outside points in that class carried forward from the previous competition year added to the end-of-year subtotals for both internal and outside points in that class for the current competition year.

Merit Award	Points per Class
Bronze	100
Silver	200
Gold	400

5. **Special Merit awards** shall be given to those members who have accumulated a specified numbers of points in all classes combined. These points may be accumulated in either the GCC monthly/annual Club competitions or Club-Sanctioned Competitions, exhibits, and publications listed in section VI. The number of points shall be the total points for all classes (including the old slide class), both internal and outside, carried forward from the previous competition year added to the end-of-year subtotals for both internal and outside points in all classes for the current competition year.

Special Merit Award	Total Points
Master	600
Grand Master	800

VI. Other Events

Additional competition points may be earned toward merit awards through participation in Club exhibits or non-Club competitions that are sanctioned by the Club or through the publication of images in a commercial or educational publication. Such points do not influence the division one competes in (i.e., whether one is Novice, Intermediate, or Advanced).

A. GCC Exhibits

1. From time to time, the club will arrange a public exhibit of members' photographs. The rules for participating in these events will be published prior to the event.

2. Each entry exhibited shall be awarded 3 points unless otherwise stated in the published rules. Members need not take any action to have these points recorded as the Exhibits Chairperson shall provide a list of exhibitors to the Awards Chairperson.

B. Club-Sanctioned Competitions

1. Club-Sanctioned Competitions are those annual competitions or juried exhibits that have been approved by the Board of Directors as having demonstrated a high standard regarding the quality of entries and the judging/selection process. GCC members are encouraged to participate in these events which will typically be publicized in *The Cable Release* or on the GCC website or via a Blast announcement. See the current list of Club-Sanctioned Competitions on the *Points for Non-Club Competitions* page under the *Competitions* tab of the Club website.

Members may nominate and request that the Board review and approve other outside competitions as a Club-Sanctioned Competition. Likewise, members may request that the Board consider removing a Club-Sanctioned Competition from the approved list. The ***CLUB-SANCTIONED COMPETITION NOMINATION and ELIMINATION FORM*** should be used to submit such requests to the Board. This form may be found on the *Points for Non-Club Competition/Publication* page under the *Competitions* tab of the Club website.

2. Participating members will be awarded points for Club-sanctioned competitions as follows:

a. Regional competitions

Place	Points
Best in Show	15
1st	10
2nd	7
3rd	5
Additional place awards, Honorable Mention, or Acceptance	3
Non-placed or Not competition Accepted	1, with a maximum of five (5) entries per

b. International competitions

Place	Points
Best in Show	15
1st	12
2nd	9
3rd	7
Additional place awards, Honorable Mention, or Acceptance	5
Non-placed or Not Accepted	1, with a maximum of five (5) entries per competition

3. Participating members whose images appear in a competition's printed commercially available publication (excluding the Web) shall be awarded an additional 5 points for each such entry. For example, an entry that is awarded 3rd place in an international competition and is also published in a printed magazine format that announces the competition results shall be awarded a total of 12 points (7 for 3rd place plus 5 for publication). Note that this means the maximum points awarded for a single competition entry is 20 (15 for Best in Show plus 5 for publication).

C. **Published Documents** -- Members whose images appear in a printed, circulated, commercial or educational publication, excluding the Web and award announcements, shall be awarded 12 points per publication, regardless of the number of images contained therein. The class of the original image (print or digital) will be the GCC class in which the points will be recorded for accumulation of GCC points.

D. **Point Submission –** Points earned during the competition year for participation in Club-Sanctioned Competitions and/or published images must be submitted to the Awards Chairperson at or prior to the last monthly competition meeting of the competition year to ensure consideration for year-end awards. Use the ***POINTS SUBMISSION FORM*** to submit points for these events. This form may be found on the *Points for Non-Club Competition/Publication* page under the *Competitions* tab of the Club website.

Corrected April 20. 2022