



# Arundel Camera Club

# Guide for Judges

This guide is to help you understand how the competition will operate and the kinds of feedback we are seeking from judges. It is a learning experience for members, and so we are hopeful to let each photographer walk away from each contest, having learned both from feedback on their own work but also by listening to the feedback on the photographs submitted by other club members.

Digital contests are hybrid (held both in-person and virtually) and will be broadcast to FaceBook Live. Please connect or arrive no later than 6:45PM and no earlier than 6:30PM so that we can go over the contest mechanics with you.

Print contests are held in person at the Severna Park Baptist Church (506 Benfield Rd, Severna Park, MD 21146). Please arrive by 6:45PM so we can review the contest procedures with you. The Club broadcast print contest meetings on Facebook Live.

The contest chairman will provide you with their cell phone number in case you need to contact us. Please provide a cell phone number to the contest chairman so we can reach you if there are last minute changes in the venue, timing, or schedule.

## Contest Mechanics

**Typically, there are 2 separate small competitions**, one for novice and one for unlimited. The difference between unlimited and novice is the number of points accumulated by the club member. In general, unlimited club members are more experienced and accomplished.

### **Each contest has three rounds as follows:**

- Round 1      Review - Quick run-through of all images and titles.
- Round 2      Feedback - Go through the images again, one-by-one providing feedback. Start to remove images that are not going to advance to the placement round.
- Round 3      Placement Round – Down select and assign 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and honorable mentions. We assign honorable mentions equivalent to 10% of the number of entries.

## Contest Themes

Contests will either be open or have a theme. For open contests, anything goes; any subject matter or style is acceptable. For themed contests, the contest chairman will send you a description of the theme. Please read over the theme definition before the contest night. On the contest night, the contest chairman will read the definition of the theme before the contests starts. You are the final arbiter of if an image meets the theme or not. Images that do not meet the theme should be given constructive feedback but should not be awarded a ribbon.

## Digital Contests

Digital entries are submitted electronically via the club website by members, sized to 2048 pixels on the longest side. They are numbered and coded according to a predetermined system to assure the judge is not aware of the name of the photographer. Each photograph is named by the photographer, which will be read to you at the beginning of the competition. The judge will be sent the images, usually no more than one day in advance of the contest. If you fail to receive a copy of the images, please contact the contest chairman.

**Download the digital images** to your own computer, but please do not distribute or copy the files since they are the property of the respective photographers who created them. Import the images into a photo viewer that makes it easy to delete or filter 'out' images as you down select to the winning images.

**Please review the images in advance** of the contest, so you can get an overall idea of the range and quality of the images you are receiving. Please check to make sure the images are of the quality that you can make decisions during the judging. If you have any issues, please reach out to the contest chairman.

**Calibrate your computer monitor** to be assured of having the best image quality possible during the contests.

**Please use the digital images we sent you via email** vs. the images digitally broadcast over the internet during the contest. The digital images broadcast over the internet may suffer due to bandwidth or other transmission issues. In fact, the broadcast usually lags by up to 30 seconds.

**The images will be numbered for easy reference** during the contest. Please reference the image by number during in/out and placement rounds.

**Please do not study metadata nor "pixel-peep."** The online digital contest is our best way of replicating the in-person digital contests we have run in the past. For the in-person contests, the judge would sit near a screen to see a projected image clearly, and provide feedback and decisions based on what was displayed on the screen. We do not want you to be unduly influenced by file metadata (e.g., camera brand, F-Stop, Shutter Speed, etc.) or BY zooming into the photo. All the images should be a maximum of 2048 pixels on the long side.

## Print Contests

For print contests we have four smaller contests, unlimited and novice monochrome and unlimited and novice color.

**Monochrome** - A monochrome image is defined as having varying shades of no more than one color (various shades of that color from very light to very dark) but it maybe any single color. Multi-toned images (various shades of two or more colors) and greyscale images with an added accent color are not acceptable. Monochrome prints which are toned (sepia, selenium, cyanotype, etc.) will be considered monochrome. Prints displaying more than one color must be entered as color prints. In the event of a dispute the Contest Chairman's application of this rule will be final.

**Photographic Processes** - Photographs made by any recognized photographic process will be acceptable. Recognized processes include, but are not limited to, chemical prints, ink and/or dye-based prints, collage, montage, toning, and the like.

**Print Quality** - Print Quality is critical to print contests and is what separates the print contest from the digital. It usually requires a better image for printing (e.g., higher resolution).

**Presentation** - Although presentation is important to print contests, please try to focus on the merits of the photograph vs. the quality of the mat.

**Print Size** - It can be expensive to print and mat larger images. Judge the image based on its merits as a photograph. In other words, size shouldn't matter!

## Feedback

**Give feedback that will help the photographer (and the other members observing the contest) to learn.** We urge you to first recognize the effort the photographer has made in producing the image.

**Let the photographer know how well the image met the theme or not.** Images that do not abide by the theme should not be awarded prizes. However, this is mostly subjective and up to the judge's interpretation.

**Tell the photographer if the photograph succeeded in having impact on the viewer.** If the image is strong and has impact, describe the features that contributed to the impact. Also let the photographer know what features of the photograph weakened its impact and why. This information will be extremely valuable to novice photographers who may lack experience in this area.

**Use the photographer's vocabulary.** That is, to the extent possible, use precise terms that are simple and clear and that are traditionally used in discussing photographs. Vocabulary such as "leading lines," "rule of thirds," "flat light," "saturation," "contrast," and "composition" are helpful. Terms such as "weird light," "cool-looking," or "unpleasant" may not help the photographer understand what is working and what is not in a photo. Unpopular feedback includes "There are better images" without additional feedback.

**Provide the photographer feedback on the composition and treatment.** For purposes of competition a photograph consists of two elements: Composition and Treatment.

**Composition** is the arrangement of “things” in the image. It's elements, subjects, objects, etc. and how they are arranged in the image. How an image is cropped is also a compositional element.

**Treatment** is the way the photograph, as a whole, has been treated. Treatment includes techniques such as (but not limited to) toning, coloring, posterization, solarization, sandwiching, etc.

**Digital manipulation is acceptable.** It does not matter if the image was initially a singular image straight out of the camera or digitally edited in Photoshop or some other image editing software. The image can even be a composite if all photographic elements of the image are the work of the photographer. Clip art, stock images, Artificial Intelligence generated images and other copyrighted material are not allowed. You do not have to police the image or determine if the club member abided by the rules. Just judge the image on its merit. Does it work or not? Does it have an impact?

## Conclusion

Finally, we would like to express our deep appreciation for your time and skill in judging and providing feedback to our club. Your support contributes to the richness of our club experience.

If you have any questions, please contact the VP of Contests or the Club President.