

**NASHOBA VALLEY PHOTO CLUB (NVPC) COMPETITION RULES**  
**(Updated June 15, 2023)**

There shall be two types of competition: Print and Digital. All competitions shall be governed by the following paragraphs.

1. [Statement of Subject Matter](#)

The fundamental rule that must be observed at all times and applies to all categories offered in exhibitions and competitions with NVPC is that the welfare of living creatures is more important than any photograph. This means that practices such as baiting of subjects with a living creature and removal of birds from nests, for the purpose of obtaining a photograph, are highly unethical, and such photographs are not allowed in any exhibition/competition. Under no circumstances may a living creature be placed in a situation where it will be killed, injured or stressed for the purpose of obtaining a photograph. Images that show live creatures being fed to captive animals, birds or reptiles are not permitted under any circumstances.

There are also concerns about the use of aerial photography, drones, helicopters, low flying aircraft. These should not cause any interference with other individuals or animals which causes a disturbance in their normal activity or disrupt the way any individuals or animals interact with their environment. Entrants in exhibitions/competitions must comply with all relevant laws and regulations, associated with aerial photography, in the country in which the image was taken. Entry into NVPC exhibitions / competitions is conditional on accepting these policies.

The content of images must comply with the rules of NVPC Categories. Images that - in the sole opinion of the judge(s) or the competition coordinator(s) - do not comply, will be disqualified.

2. All members compete on an equal basis unless a special competition has been prearranged.
3. Entries are accepted only from members who have paid dues.
4. A Maker's entry is disqualified if his/her same image has previously been an award winner in any category in any previous NVPC competition. An award winner is defined as having achieved a benchmark level (BM 1, 2, or 3). An image is considered substantially different when it contains new compositional elements and tells a different story than previously submitted.
5. Salon Competitions
  - a. Digital Competitions are conducted in six categories: Open Non-Avian, Open Avian, Nature Non-Avian, Nature Avian, Assigned and Club Choice. An assigned category subject will include singular and plural. For example, bridges or bridge are equally acceptable.
  - b. Print Competitions are conducted in four categories: Color Non-Avian, Color Avian, B&W Non-Avian, B&W Avian
6. An entry will be considered in category only if the dominant subject of the image is consistent with the category topic. An entry's qualification to meet category will be determined by the Competition Coordinator or the Competition Judge(s).

7. A member may enter a specific subject in only one competition category on the same competition night. Multiple entries of a single subject but not the same object are allowed within a single competition category. The term "Subject" is defined as the generic meaning of the term.

**7a. Example (Open):**

If the entry subject is a lighthouse, then up to the maximum number of images of different lighthouses are acceptable. There cannot be multiple images of the same lighthouse on the same night. If one or more lighthouse images appear in the electronic competition, there can be no other lighthouse entered in the print competitions, and vice versa.

**7b. Example (Nature Avian):**

Up to the maximum number of images of birds can be entered in the electronic competition but they must all be different species of birds such as a Great Blue Heron, a Red Shouldered Hawk and a Snowy Egret. Two Great Blue Herons are unacceptable that night. If a member submits a Great Blue Heron in the electronic competition, they cannot enter one in the print competition (or in Open Avian or Assigned categories that same night). You can have a different Great Blue Heron in a different composition setting on a different competition night but not one similar to a previous winning entry of a Great Blue Heron (similar composition setting, pose, etc.).

**7c. Example (Assigned – Hot Air Balloons):**

If multiple images are entered, they must be of different balloons. Different shots of the same balloon aren't acceptable. If an image of a balloon is put in the digital competition, no balloon may be entered in a coincident Print competition or in the Open category competition.

**7d. Example (Assigned – Broken):**

If more than one image is entered, it must be a shot of a different subject reflecting the assigned topic. More than one shot of the same subject illustrating the topic is not appropriate. If you enter a shot of a broken window, no other shot of that broken window can be entered. You could enter images of different broken windows. If an image of a broken window is put in the digital competition, no broken window may be entered in a coincident Print competition or in the Open category competition.

(This is to promote more diverse entries by each maker and to allow balanced competition from other makers within the same class. It will also align the various Open, Nature, and Assigned categories to the same entry guidelines.)

**8. Single Member Entries**

When there is only a single member's entries within a category, all of that member's entries will be judged and scored.

**9. NVPC Digital Image Salons**

Salons are usually held at the first meeting of the month. Members compete in the Assigned category, the Open Avian category, the Open Non-Avian category, the Nature Avian category, the Nature Non-Avian category, and the Club Choice category. Generally, each salon will feature entries in each of these categories. Members may submit up to four (4) entries and are limited to a maximum of two (2) entries in two (2) categories. (Combinations: (2,2), (2,1,1), (1,1,1,1)). In no instance shall a member exceed a total of four (4) entries per salon except for special occasions when the maximum number will be announced in advance.

#### **10.NVPC Print Salons**

Members compete in four (4) categories: Color Avian, Color Non-Avian, Black & White Avian and Black & White Non-Avian. All are Open categories and are not required to adhere to Nature print restrictions. Members may submit up to four (4) entries and are limited to a maximum of two (2) entries in two (2) categories. (Combinations: (2,2), (2,1,1), (1,1,1,1)). In no instance shall a member exceed a total of four (4) entries per salon except for special occasions when the maximum number will be announced in advance.

#### **11.Print Sizes and Presentation**

Minimum print size shall be 5" x 7". Larger prints may be any size that will fit in a matte or on a matte or foam mounting board sized such that the sum of the height and width does not exceed 42". Framed prints are not allowed. For the annual Mini Print Salon print size is limited to 5" x 7" and matte or mounting board size is limited to 8" x 10"

#### **12.Special Variations**

Print salons are generally limited to the "Open" category. However, the Club President or the Competition Coordinator may announce any changes in advance of the salon. Any definition of categories would be the same as described for other types of images. The number of entries, digital or print, may be adjusted in advance by the Competition Coordinator or the Club President, as would be dictated by certain circumstances.

#### **13.Acceptable in Salons**

Black & White and Color Prints. Shall originate from film or digital cameras. Enhancement or manipulation of an image is acceptable provided that the final image is the work of the club member. Color or black and white prints may be either commercially made or made by the Club member. However, the image must be the work of the member.

#### **14.Time Restrictions & General Eligibility**

To be eligible for salons all images must have been made within 24-months preceding the month of the Salon Night. Any entry that has not achieved a benchmark level (BM 1, 2, or 3) can be re-entered in future salons as long as it falls within the 24-month time limit preceding the Salon Night month.

#### **15.Digital Salon Rules**

##### **15a. Submitted Images**

Images submitted for a digital salon must originate as photographs taken with either a digital or film camera. The photograph and any digital processing of the image must be the work of the person submitting the image. However, scans to convert an image to a digital file may be performed by a person other than the photographer. Processing of the digital image using Photoshop, or any other photo processing software, is allowed. The adjustment and manipulation of the digital file that is allowed is dependent on the category of the image as defined below:

##### **15b. Categories**

There shall be six (6) categories for Digital Salon competition:

##### **(1) Nature Non-Avian and (2) Nature Avian**

All images must meet the [PSA Nature Definition](#) for Nature Photography. The definition for PSA Nature can be found on the PSA Website.

The distinction between **Nature Non-Avian** and **Nature Avian** categories will depend on the existence and significance of a bird or birds in the image. When one or more birds function as the main feature, as a significant feature or as a supporting feature of the image, the image *must* be entered in the **Nature Avian** category. Otherwise, if the image does not contain a bird, or a bird is present but does not add to the intended interest of the image, the image must be entered in the **Nature Non-Avian** category.

Nature Non-Avian or Nature Avian images that incorporate enhancements and/or adjustments beyond those allowed herein must be entered in the Open Non-Avian or Open Avian category, respectively.

### **(3) Open Non-Avian and (4) Open Avian**

Images of any subject, including nature subjects\* and images that have creative content\*\*, may be submitted in the **Open Non-Avian** or **Open Avian** category. The primary objective is that the image should first be a quality photograph that demonstrates the photographer's ability to obtain a decent initial image (photography) and then adjust it to achieve a decent final image (digital editing). The image may be cropped, flipped, or reversed. Altering between horizontal and vertical is allowed. There is no limit to the digital enhancements that may be used to improve image characteristics such as color, saturation, luminosity, exposure, color balance and sharpness. The following practices may be used to modify the taken image:

- Cloning to remove distracting characteristics
- Moving objects within the image
- Inserting objects from another photographic image of the Maker's creation
- Combining images of the same subject, such as a series of bracketed images, to increase the dynamic range of the image
- Combining images to create a panorama

\*For nature subjects in Open Non-Avian and Open Avian – The only nature subjects permitted in Open Non-Avian or Open Avian must have content or digital manipulation that is precluded from the Nature Non-Avian or Nature Avian categories. The distinction between **Open Non-Avian** and **Open Avian** categories will depend on the existence and significance of a bird or birds in the image. When one or more birds function as the main feature, as a significant feature or as a supporting feature of the image, the image *must* be entered in the **Open Avian** category. Otherwise, if the image does not contain a bird, or if a bird is present but does not add to the intended interest of the image, the image may be entered in the **Open Non-Avian** category.

\*\*Images with creative content are those where the photographer makes an artistic presentation by combining different photographic images, by combining photographic images with computer graphics or by the use of filters to create brushstroke, watercolor, palette knife and other such effects in the image. Photography must be the dominant element of the presentation. All of the components of the image, photography, and graphics must be the original work of the person creating the image. Clip art and other such images may not be included.

### **(5) Assigned Topic**

Rules for the Assigned Topic category are the same as for the Open Non-Avian category (or Open Avian if the assigned subject happens to involve birds) except that the dominant feature of the entry must be the assigned subject. The subject for an Assigned Topic will be announced for that competition. Entries may be disqualified if, in the opinion of the Competition Coordinator or the Competition Judge, the image does not meet the category definition.

## **(6) Club Choice**

Rules for the Club Choice category are listed below for each genre. Entries may be disqualified if, in the opinion of the Competition Coordinator or the Competition Judge, the image does not meet the category definition. In a given Salon month, members may submit images fitting the current Club Choice (CC) genre to both the CC category and the Open Non-Avian (ON) category.

- Scapes – This is an Open category with the primary subject a Landscape, Seascape, or Cityscape.
- Macro or Close Up - This is an Open category with the primary subject photographed up close. Special equipment is not needed (macro lens, close up filter, etc) but may benefit the photographer.
- PSA Monochrome – All images must meet PSA Definition of Monochrome Photography. [The definition for PSA Monochrome can be found on the PSA Website.](#)

## **16. Scoring**

Salon entries shall be considered by one or more judges, who shall award a score, generally from 17 – 30 points.

Each time a judge is requested to review and rate salon images, he or she should be advised that the NVPC requests that each of its submission categories be appraised on its own merits within that category and specifically not against images in any other category. A copy of the category definitions calling attention to the distinctions between them must be given to the judge for each salon.

## **17. Benchmark System**

Each member shall compete each year against a set of benchmark criteria as follows.

**BENCHMARK 1, Competent Photographer:** Nine (9) images/prints that score 22 points or higher.

**BENCHMARK 2, Accomplished Photographer:** Nine (9) images/prints that score 24 points or higher.

**BENCHMARK 3, Distinguished Photographer:** Nine (9) images/prints that score 26 points or higher.

There are two Benchmark Ratings one for Digital and one for Prints.

The number of images and prints required to meet each benchmark may be revised year to year by the Board of Directors.

## **18. DIGITAL AND PRINT IMAGE OF THE YEAR SALON**

18a. Members may submit up to four (4) digital entries and are limited to a maximum of two (2) entries in two (2) categories. (Combinations: (2,2), (2,1,1), (1,1,1,1)). The Categories are Assigned, Open Non-Avian, Open Avian, Nature Non-Avian, Nature Avian and Club Choice.

18b. Members may submit up to four (4) print entries and are limited to a maximum of two (2) entries in two (2) categories. (Combinations: (2,2), (2,1,1), (1,1,1,1)). The Categories are Color Non-Avian, Color Avian, B&W Non-Avian, B&W Avian.

## **19. AWARDS**

The following certificate and plaque awards will be made to qualifying members. (Recipients may choose to forgo the certificate or plaque to reduce club costs.) A list of all annual achievements and awards will

be published in June.

19a. Annual Awards – The following annual awards shall be made. The methodology for determining these awards is defined in Paragraph. 20.

- **Digital Image of the Year** – A certificate awarded to the 1st, 2nd, 3rd place images in each of the club's six categories.
- **Print of the Year** – A certificate awarded to the 1st, 2nd, 3rd place prints in each of the club's four print categories.
- **Digital Photographer of the Year** – A plaque awarded to the member demonstrating the highest level of craftsmanship across all digital categories.
- **Print Photographer of the Year** – A plaque awarded to the member demonstrating the highest level of craftsmanship across all print categories.
- **Best Digital Maker in Open Non-Avian** – A certificate awarded to a member in each Benchmark group.
- **Best Digital Maker in Open Avian** – A certificate awarded to a member. in each Benchmark group.
- **Best Digital Maker in Nature Non-Avian** – A certificate awarded to a member in each Benchmark group.
- **Best Digital Maker in Nature Avian** – A certificate awarded to a member in each Benchmark group.
- **Best Digital Maker in Assigned** – A certificate awarded to a member in each Benchmark group.
- **Best Digital Maker in Club Choice** – A certificate awarded to a member in each Benchmark group.
- **Best Print Maker in Color Avian** – A certificate awarded to a member in each Benchmark group.
- **Best Print Maker in Color Non-Avian** – A certificate awarded to a member in each Benchmark group.
- **Best Print Maker in B&W Avian** – A certificate awarded to a member in each Benchmark group.
- **Best Print Maker in B&W Non-Avian** – A certificate awarded to a member in each Benchmark group.
- **New Member Participation Recognition** – A certificate is awarded to each new member who actively participates in the club's Salon competitions during the year.
- **The NVPC Memorial Service Award** - This award was established in memory of past members who have contributed time and effort to make NVPC successful. A plaque is awarded.

The methodology of determining the above awards is detailed in paragraph 20.

## 20.DETERMINATION OF AWARDS

20a. **The Digital Image and Print of the Year** awards are self-determining by virtue of the scores attained in the June salon. Ties will be broken.

20b. **Best Maker in Categories: Open, Open Avian, Nature, Nature Avian, Assigned, Club Choice, Color Prints Avian, Color Prints Non-Avian, B&W Prints Avian, and B&W Prints Non-Avian** are awarded in each respective Benchmark group.

To determine a Best Maker in Category for a Benchmark group, 4 or more Makers need to compete. If there are less than 4 Makers then Honorable Mentions may be awarded.

Marker award (10 award categories each having 3 Benchmark groups) is determined by taking the average of a Maker's top five (5) scores in the awarded Category. Eligibility for this award requires 5 entries in the Category. Ties will share the distinction and award.

**20c. Photographer of the Year – Digital Images** – To be eligible a member must have entered a minimum of 14 digital images in aggregate in at least 5 of the 6 categories. The winner is determined by calculating the sum of only the top 4 scores in each of the 6 categories. Ties will share the distinction and award.

**20d. Photographer of the Year – Prints** – To be eligible a member must have entered a minimum of 14 prints in aggregate in at least 3 of the 4 categories. The winner is determined by calculating the sum of only the top 4 scores in each of the 4 categories. Ties will share the distinction and award.

**20e. New Member Participation Recognition Award** – A certificate will be awarded to each new member who actively participates in the club's salons defined by having submitted entries in digital and print categories an aggregate of at least 9 entries during the new member's first competition year defined as 9 consecutive monthly salons from the date their membership dues are paid.

**20f. The NVPC Memorial Service Award** – A special plaque is awarded at the annual banquet in June. The winner is nominated by the Board of Directors applying the following criteria. The underlying concept of this award is to select a member of the club who has contributed his/her time and effort to the success of NVPC over a year or more. It can be someone who has served in several elected or coordinator roles over a period of several years, or it can be someone who has contributed a great deal of time, productivity, and enthusiasm, in a relatively short period of time. This service award exemplifies an effort to help improve the success of our club and the recipient of this award is chosen each spring by Board members.

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#### **Revision History**

- There is no record of changes prior to June 2007.
- June 2007: The bylaw was revised to add rules for electronic (digital) competition. Various general paragraphs were changed to include digital competition. Various paragraphs were changed to correct grammatical errors without changing the meaning of the paragraph. In the paragraphs defining the Annual Awards, the award for "Best in ..." was changed from a plaque to a certificate.
- May 2008: The Constitution of the Nashoba Valley Camera Club was put back into the Handbook. It had been accidentally removed from the 2005 – 2006 version.
- June 2008: Sandy Selesky added as a recipient of the Marshall J. Van Etten Memorial Service Award.

- March 2009: The bylaw was revised to remove all references to slides and slide competition. Minor grammatical and formatting changes were also made.
- June 2009: Charline Oelfke added as a recipient of the Marshall J. Van Etten Memorial Service Award.
- October 2009: the bylaw was revised to eliminate the member classifications of B Class, A Class and Star Class. The Digital and Print Competitions were replaced by Digital and Print Salons, i.e., a gallery for the presentation of photographic work. A benchmark system for the measurement of member performance in the salons was incorporated. The annual awards were revised to be compatible with the benchmark system.
- June 2010: Jenn Buliszak added as a recipient of the Marshall J. Van Etten Memorial Service Award
- June 2011: Walter Harrington added as a recipient of the Marshall J. Van Etten Memorial Service Award
- June 2013: Meyer Franklin and Linda Lecuyer added as recipients of the Marshall J. Van Etten Memorial Service Award; WELCOME page revised; FOR THOSE WHO ALWAYS WANTED TO KNOW page updated.
- September 2013: Various changes to Competition by-laws were made. References to slides were removed. Award of ribbons was eliminated as well as award of certificates for benchmark achievement. The definition of mounted or matted print size was changed. Award of certificates and plaques was made contingent on recipient's election to receive or not to receive.
- September 2014: Added Michael Los to the list of recipients of the Marshall J. Van Etten memorial award.
- February 2016: Added Robert Stevens to the list of recipients of the Marshall J. Van Etten memorial award.
- August 2016: Amended Bylaws Attachment #1 revised reflecting the Adopted Bylaws of May 20, 2016 vote expanding and re-defining the Categories of Digital Salon entries and end of year awards. Revised "Welcome" page to reflect Bylaws changes and Digital Salon image resolution dimensions for submissions. Added Mark Buliszak to the list of recipients of the Marshall J Van Etten Memorial award.
- September 2016: Updated max number of Digital Images and the Digital Image Benchmark requirement per June BOD Meeting.
- June 2017: Added Jim Coutr  to the list of recipients of the Marshall J. Van Etten memorial award.
- January 2018: Restored and updated the Revision History notes to this document.
- April 2018 – Updated Print Photographers of the Year, Updated 4 images in Digital Image of the Year Salon
- June 2020: Updated competition rules to include:
  - Addition of a new category – Club Choice – to the digital salons.
  - Changing the requirements for submissions to allow a (2,2) combination in digital salons.
  - Definition of the new Club Choice category.
  - Modifications to Digital and Print Image of the Year award salons.
  - Addition of Best in Club Choice awards in each Benchmark group.
  - Addition of a Photographer of the Year – Prints award, to be awarded a plaque.
  - Modifications to Photographer of the Year – Color Prints and B&W Prints, to include awards for each of the 4 categories, and to receive certificates instead of a plaque.
  - Modifications to Photographer of the Year eligibility and winning criteria for digital images, color prints and B&W prints.
- June 2022 Updated competition rules to include:



- Update the Club Choice Genre from “Creative – defined by PSA” to “Macro or Close Up”
- Updated PSA rules definitions website links
- March 2023 Updated competition rules to include:
  - Update the Club Choice Genre from “Photo Journalism” to “Monochrome”
  - Changed Print & Image eligibility date to 24 months
  - Added Statement on Subject Matter
  - The Marshall J. Van Etten Memorial Service Award renamed to NVPC Memorial Service Award
- June 2023
  - Added Statement of Subject Matter
  - Changed Time restriction to 24 months
  - Clarification on disqualifying an image, defined what is an award winner
  - Correction to award names for Best in Print Categories
  - Updated calculations for Best in Categories
  - Change name of “Marshall J. Van Etten Memorial Service Award” to Nashoba Valley Photo Club Memorial Service Award