

OCC COMPETITIONS

The OCC holds two types of competitions: clinics and the annual club competition. The rules and guidelines for submitting images to both the clinics and the annual club completion are detailed in separate chapters. This chapter outlines the judging and scoring process and lists the awards available.

Aside from the competitive element, the essential benefit of participating in the clinics is to learn how to improve your photographic skills from the judges' comments and critiques on your images as well as other members' work.

Divisions – Dancey and Miller

For purposes of competition, members are divided into two divisions: Dancey and Miller. New members are automatically placed in the Dancey division and graduate to Miller upon accumulation of the required number of points and honourable mentions during a club year. Points do not accumulate over a number of years.

At the end of the club year, members who have earned 400 points and eight honourable mentions from the four clinics move from the Dancey to the Miller division.

Points earned in the Annual Competition are not included in calculating the division rank.

Scoring and comments

Images submitted to the Clinics and Annual Competition are evaluated and commented upon by three GTCCC qualified judges who are present at the same time and place. All images are presented anonymously — neither the member's identity or division is revealed to the judges.

Comments

All images are scored, however, because of the sheer volume of entries, not all receive comments. The judges may provide comments on any entry, but are required to comment when the difference between the high and low score for an image is 3 points or higher. Judges' comments are noted on the entry form submitted by the member.

Points

Each judge scores an image to a maximum of 10 points. In theory, the image should receive 3 points for impact, 3 points for composition and 3 points for technical skill. One point may be awarded, at a judge's discretion, for an outstanding image. An image of 'standard value' is awarded 6 points by each judge.

Members should be aware that the judges consider the following three main areas when evaluating and grading an image:

Impact	Does the image get and hold your attention through subject matter, creativity and/or originality?
Composition	Is the image compositionally well balanced? Does the image stand on its own and appear cohesive? Does the image demonstrate traditional composition techniques - Golden Mean, Rule of Thirds, symmetry, negative/positive space?
Technical skill	Does the image demonstrate a well executed skill or technique? At minimum, the image should demonstrate the photographer's skill at achieving crisp focus and good exposure, as well as excellent post-processing technique and retouching.

Tips

A few things to keep in mind when processing your image:

- *Horizons for landscapes and scenery should be level.*
- *Minimize keystone in architectural subjects.*
- *Match colour balance to subject and lighting.*
- *Avoid a busy image.*
- *Avoid over-work and over-compression of jpegs to minimize artefacts.*
- *Watch out for hot spots in the image.*
- *Remove dust spots.*

Honourable mention

To achieve an honourable mention, an image must achieve a minimum score of:

Dancey Division: 21 points

Miller Division: 24 points

Disqualification

Images that do not meet entry guidelines risk disqualification. This is at the judges' discretion and the reason must be agreed to by all three judges. Rules of entry are presented in the next chapter.

Also, the Competitions Director may pre-screen all entries and eliminate any that do not conform to the guidelines. The Competitions Director may also disqualify entries with acknowledgement from one other Executive Committee member, if the reasons for disqualification are questionable.

Awards

Clinic awards

Awards are presented at each clinic for the best image in each of the categories: Nature, Pictorial and Special Topic. When determining the best images for clinics, ties are not broken. Therefore two or more images may be awarded the best image designation in the same category.

Photographer of the Year and other awards

The *Photographer of the Year Award* is presented to the member who has earned the highest total number of points in the four clinics and the Annual Competition.

The *Rising Star Award* is presented to the member in the Dancey division who has earned the highest total number of points in the four clinics and the Annual Competition.

RULES OF ENTRY TO CLINICS

As the OCC is a member of the GTCCC, we adopt competition standards as stipulated by the GTCCC. However, we have modified certain rules to meet our Club's need and Clinic and competition judges follow those rules and any entry that does not conform risks a low score or disqualification.

Please note that submissions will not be considered for judging if the entries, file structure or format do not conform to the stated standards. However the OCC Naming Convention must be maintained on your uploaded entries so they can be sorted properly.

Own work, timeframe and number of images

Own work

The entrant must have taken the original image, regardless of whether the original medium was digital, film or alternate medium. All image elements and digital manipulation must be the work of the submitting entrant.

Original images made in workshops or team projects, without significant ownership by the entrant, may be disqualified from the competition (e.g. model lighting and positioning must have been directed by the maker and not another photographer or instructor).

Non-owned or copyrighted material taken from publications, the internet or stock photo sites are not acceptable. This includes photographs of artwork created by third parties.

Timeframe

There is no time frame limit on photographic images used for entries as long as all images are produced by the entrant.

Number of images

A maximum of five images may be entered in each clinic.

No more than three images may be entered in any one of the four categories: Nature, Pictorial a Special Topic and a selected ACC category.

Categories

Nature

Nature photography depicts subjects found in nature such as animals, birds, plants, geology and phenomena not produced by man. The primary objective of this category is to depict an accurate record of the subject in its natural environment

'Hand of Man' Minimal evidence of the *Hand of Man* and man's specialized environment is permitted. Allowance is made for natural adaptation to a man made environment, but the focus and emphasis is to be on the subject. *Hand of Man* elements should not detract from the main subject. (Tip: minimize the *Hand of Man* by the angle of your shot or throwing it out of focus).

Some examples of acceptable instances of *Hand of Man* in a nature image:

- Appearance of a building in an image of a barn swallow or a barn owl is acceptable as long as the human element is kept to a minimum and the main focus is on the bird.
- A bee or other insect on a cultivated plant is acceptable as long as the focus is on the insect and not the plant.

Plants Photographs of cultivated plants, domesticated and/or obviously controlled specimens, mounted specimens and museum items are ineligible.

Animals and insects in zoos and conservatories Zoo and game farm specimens, butterfly conservatory specimens etc. are acceptable if there is NO visible evidence of the *Hand of Man* in the photograph.

There should be no sign that the subject is in captivity i.e. tags, tethers, cages, fences, leashes or any other form of constraint. The subject should appear to be able to leave at will.

Note: Images of zoology subjects with scientific bands are acceptable.

Digital Realism	Digital images in Nature Photography must follow the definition of Digital Realism. Ensuring an accurate record of the subject should be the primary objective. General correction is permitted in terms of resizing, cropping, selective lightening or darkening and restoration of original colour of the scene. No special effect filters can be applied. Any sharpening must appear natural.
Minor manipulation	Any manipulation or modification of the image must be limited to minor adjustments and must not alter the essence of the original. Minor manipulation or modification, in terms of cloning or retouching, is permitted as long as the final result appears natural. Minor manipulation would constitute dust spot removal, minimal cloning and minimal touch-ups, when adding or deleting minor elements. Images may be disqualified if there is evidence of major alteration or manipulation of the image.
HDR	The use of HDR techniques is acceptable for nature images as this technique falls under the allowed selective lightening and darkening technique; however, the final result must appear natural. Over processed HDR images or artistic HDR images are not acceptable as nature images.
Blurred water	Blurred water in nature landscape images, due to slow shutter speeds, is acceptable.
Monochrome	Desaturated images are allowed in the Nature category. This refers to images that contained colour information when taken, but the colour was subsequently removed through desaturation or other similar processes to become a monochrome or black and white image.
Discrepancies	If there is a tie between images or if the extent of the retouching is questionable, the maker may be asked to show the original RAW image for comparison. A RAW image can be viewed as a digital negative, the contents of the image cannot be edited or changed (hence the requirement to

convert a RAW image to another format in order to edit it). A JPEG image on the other hand can be edited directly. Hence there is no way to determine if a JPEG image is an original image or one that has been edited. Also, the EXIF data written to the JPEG image by the camera can also be edited, changed or removed entirely.

- Honour system It is understood that all images entered in the Nature category are on an honour system and it is the maker's responsibility to abide by the morals and principals of the club.
- Story-telling The inclusion of a story-telling element in nature images is strongly encouraged.
- Respect for
wildlife Good manners and a true respect for nature and all wildlife must be the paramount objective of any photographer. Close-up photography of nests of newly born birds and mammals is to be avoided as the process disturbs the nesting area and usually puts the young animals at risk. Shooting from a distance via a long telephoto lens is recommended for this type of photography.
- The use of flash to photograph nesting birds or birds with brood or other baby mammals is frowned upon by judges and may result in lower scores..
- Naming
convention The name of the nature image should be appropriate to the subject.
Only the common name or scientific name of the subject is allowed.
- Note: Use of a descriptive or 'cute' title will disqualify the image.

Pictorial

In contrast to the Nature category, no subject or contextual limitation is placed on Pictorial images. Pictorial images may be digitally altered; however, all digital manipulation or modification of the image must be done by the member.

Note that the entrant must enter images which qualify as 'nature' in the Nature category. If a landscape image tells a nature story, then the image can be placed in the Nature category. If it is just a landscape image, it should go into the Pictorial category. Nature-like images can be entered in Pictorial if there is obvious evidence of manipulation e.g. abstract effect, filters, plug-ins or crude and unnatural composites.

In the Pictorial category, you may use an appropriate title that suits the subject.

Special Topic

A Special Topic is identified for each clinic and listed in the annual program. Recent topics have included: hot, bridges, at the zoo, children, in the kitchen, contemporary, weather and crazy captions. The general rules for Pictorial apply to this category and an appropriate title that suits the subject may be used.

ACC Topic

One selected category from the Annual Club Competition will be identified for each Clinic. The Clinic Director will state which category will be for each Clinic. Rules from the ACC guidelines will apply for these entries.

Entry Submissions

Starting the 2011/2012 season, all entries will be submitted online through the Clinics Home Page at www.occ-clinics.com . The Clinics Home page will list all open Clinics & Competitions and also host the results from completed Clinics. You will have the option to submit, revise entries until the stated deadline for each clinic. All eligible members will be required to have a **Username** and **Password** to access the submissions page for each clinic. The Clinics Director will supply the relevant login information to all members.

Before proceeding with the online submissions, you should know the following:

Category	Refers to the category of the entry: Nature, Pictorial, Special Topic or ACC Nature entries are numbered N1 through N3. Pictorial entries are numbered P1 to P3. Special Topics are numbered S1 through S3. ACC entries are numbered A1 through A3.
Image Title	The title must exactly match the name of the digital image file. Do not use hyphens as part of your image title.
Division	The photographer's division is indicated by either D (Dancey) or M (Miller).
Member ID	This is the 3 digit number assigned to you at time of registration. The number is also stated on your Club Membership Card on bottom right. The primary function of the ID is to assist in sorting the entries and track your point standings from the Clinics and the ACC.

Procedures for the Online Submissions is documented on pages 25 thru 31 of this handbook; on the Documentation Page on the Clinics Home Page and also posted on the Reference Page on our Club Website.

OCC File Naming Convention and File Format

Each digital file must be named using the following five-part naming convention:

Category-Image Title-Maker's ID-Division.File Format

Example: **P1-Autumn Leaves-234-D.jpg**

Category P1, P2, P3, N1, N2, N3, S1, S2, S3 or A1, A2, A3

Image Title The name of the image: Autumn Leaves.

Note: Image Title can have spaces between the words, but do not use hyphens.

Maker's ID As assigned to you by the club (eg. 234)

Division Either D (Dancey) or M (Miller)

File Format JPEG only

Note: The ".jpg" file extension will be inserted automatically when the image is saved in the JPEG format. Do not type in ".jpg" because this causes the words .jpg to occur twice.

A hyphen without any spaces separates the category, image title, maker's ID and division. **Do not use hyphens within the image title**; they serve as field separators when sorting the entries.

All images must be within 1024 x 1024 pixel size. The maximum size of an image, whether in portrait or landscape format, must not be more than 1024 pixels in the longest dimension, whether it's the height or the width. Therefore, it may be necessary to resize an image before it is submitted.

The recommended colour profile for images is sRGB, 8 bit.

How to resize an image in photoshop:

- Top Menu - Image > Image Size
- Check "Constrain Proportions" and also "Resample Image" (Bicubic for smooth gradients)
- Under Pixel Dimensions - key in 1024 for the longest side (height or width)
- The shortest side will automatically resize to a proportionate amount if done correctly
- If the longest side is 1024 pixels and the other dimension is less than 1024, the image has been correctly resized
- Hit OK and do a Save As (see Naming

Image borders

Avoid putting 'decorative frames' around your images as this detracts from the judged image. However, it is acceptable, and recommended, to put a thin white or light coloured keyline, or stroke, around low-key or dark images to mark the outer boundaries of the image during projection.

Submitting Entries

All Entries are to be submitted online through our Clinics Website Page. Other methods of file submissions (eg. email, CD, DVD, memory sticks/cards, etc.) will NOT be accepted.

For those competitions that have Print categories, a corresponding digital reference file will be required – upload these through the submissions page. Digital File name must match the Image title of the print and follow the OCC Naming Conventon. Be sure to hand in your prints to the Clinics Director before the deadline.