Judges Training

Flagpole Photographers Camera Club - Info@FlagpolePhotographers.com

Flagpole Photographers Camera Club

Newtown, Connecticut

Founded in 1985 in Newtown, Connecticut. The Flagpole Photographers' mission is to enable members to share their photos and expertise, to learn and grow in their photography, and to enjoy the camaraderie of fellow photographers.

We come from diverse backgrounds, with photographic skills ranging from beginners to professional photographers.

Meetings Are Recorded

The meeting will be recorded and posted on FlagpolePhotographers.com

Agenda

What we are covering today

1. Competition Night

2. Judging Setup

3. Judging Software

Judging Journey

Monday

Viewing of photos opens.

Monday or Tuesday

Join judges' info session in Zoom.

Specific photos each judge will provide live comments on emailed.
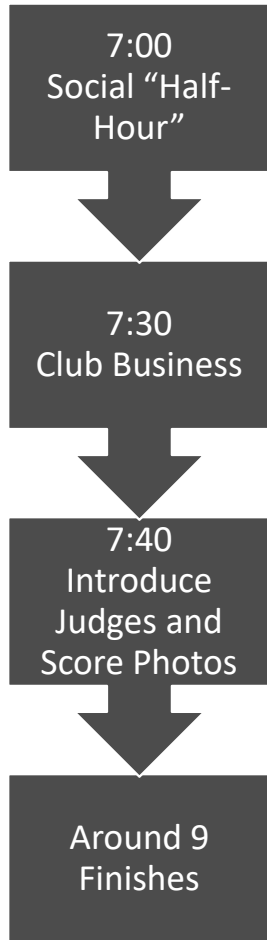
Wednesday

Thursday

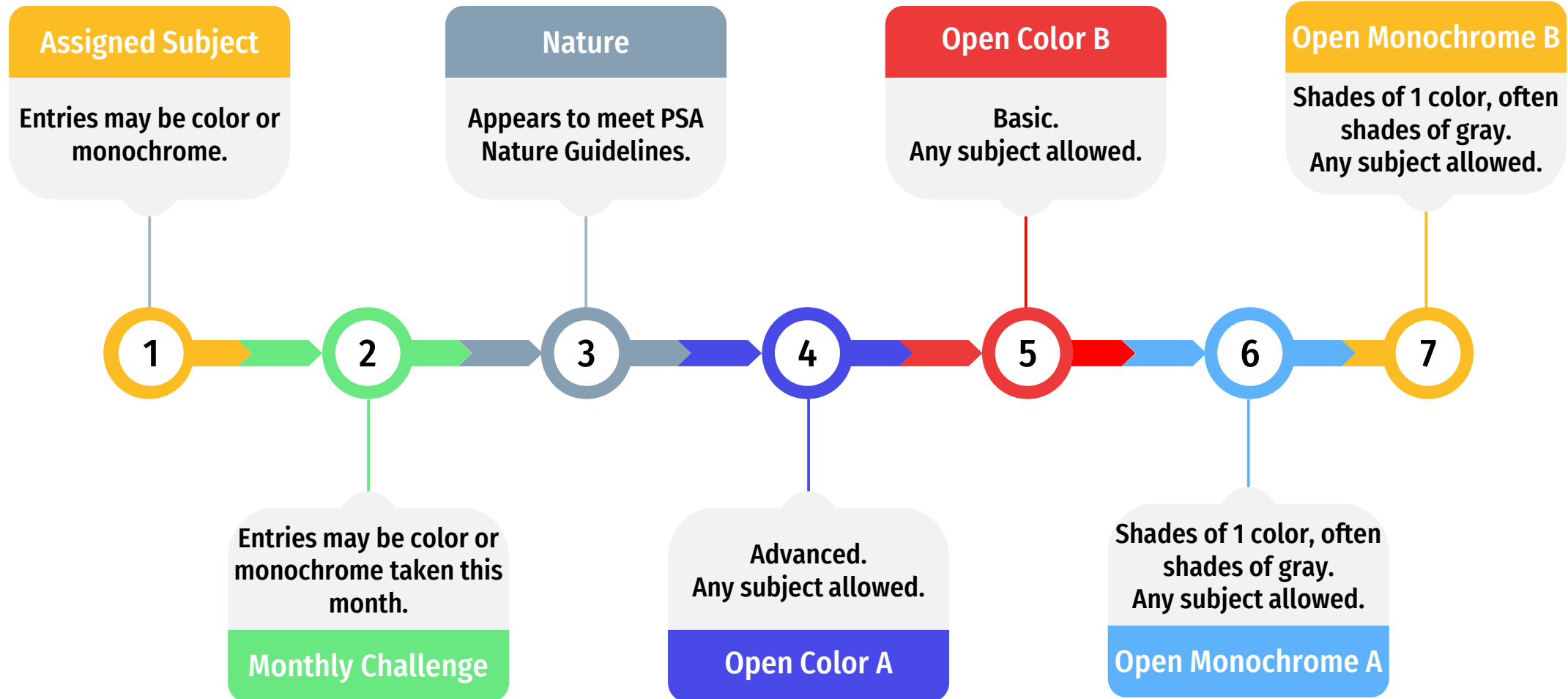By 7:20 pm join competition meeting in Zoom

Score and comment on photos

Competition Night Activities

Timeline

7:00 Social "Half-Hour"

↓

7:30 Club Business

↓

7:40 Introduce Judges and Score Photos

↓

Around 9 Finishes

Photo Categories

Assigned Subject

Entries may be color or monochrome.

1

Monthly Challenge

Entries may be color or monochrome taken this month.

2

Nature

Appears to meet PSA Nature Guidelines.

3

Open Color A

Advanced. Any subject allowed.

4

Open Color B

Basic. Any subject allowed.

5

Open Monochrome A

Shades of 1 color, often shades of gray. Any subject allowed.

6

Open Monochrome B

Shades of 1 color, often shades of gray. Any subject allowed.

7

Details on Flagpole Competition Rules and Info

All Competitions Rules

- Capturing and Editing Rules

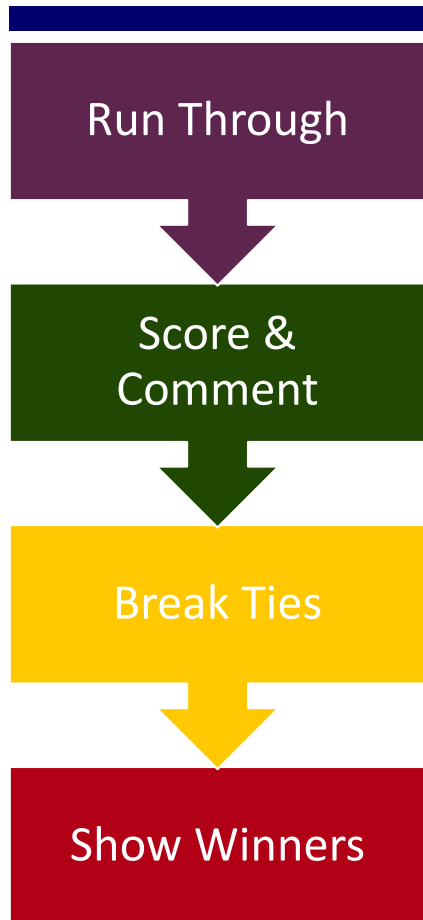- Category Descriptions and Rules

- Class Distinctions

Visit https://FlagpolePhotographers.com/competition-info

This Month's Competition Info

Visit https://FlagpolePhotographers.com/all-upcoming-events

Then click on this first "Competition" event.

Competition Summary

Run Through

↓

Score & Comment

↓

Break Ties

↓

Show Winners

Scoring Range

- 6, 6.5, 7, 7.5, 8, 8.5, 9, 9.5, 10

Comments on every photo

- Rotating judge for the next photo

Deciding on the top 3 photos

- Breaking ties, talk among yourselves
- Rotating who starts the conversation

Formulating an Educational Comment – Tone Examples

Be Specific
- What and Why

Be Positive
- Suggest improvements, not faults

Aligned to Score
- Unless a perfect score, the judge has improvement ideas

Imagine a photo where the snow is 100% white
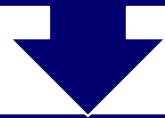
Poor – *"It's all blown out in the snow!"*
The audience can already see this and not much advice on how to improve or why an issue.

Better – *"To make the snow look more natural, you might want to try adjusting the exposure to capture more detail."*
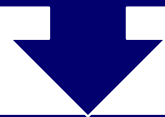
What to Say

Start with a positive comment
"I like the photo" needs a "Why" linked to photographic principles

Suggest an improvement for before the shutter was clicked
The subject, composition, exposure, perspective, story ...

If needed, suggest a simple improvement done in post processing
Crop, brightness, contrast, shadow, color, remove ...

Improvement ideas are suggestions, not rules
Use words like Maybe, Might, Consider ...

Imagine a photo where the critter is eating.

Poor – "*I wonder if the squirrel was eating!*"
While a good questing the photographer will not answer.

Better – "*Maybe showing what the squirrel is eating would make the story stronger.*"

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What to Avoid Saying

Don't simply describe a photo back to the audience
There is no value since everyone can already see the photo

Remove perceived personal bias **by not saying …**
I know the location, I love cat photos, I don't do nature …

Avoid complex post-processing suggestions & tool names
Since they exclude half of the audience, e.g., "remove" for clone stamp, healing brush, content aware fill …

Rarely should more than one judge comment on a photo
Avoid confusing the audience and avoid judge squabbling

Avoid

Dogs are not as cute as cats
Clone stamp out the arm
Never have a holiday light background
A dog next to a fireplace at Christmas
I love it, score 1 out of 5
It's a snapshot, not a competition photo

Previewing Photos to Enhance Comments

Commenting within seconds of seeing a photo can be challenging.

We offer early access to the photos to assist with this.

Keep an eye on your email for details on which photos you'll comment on.
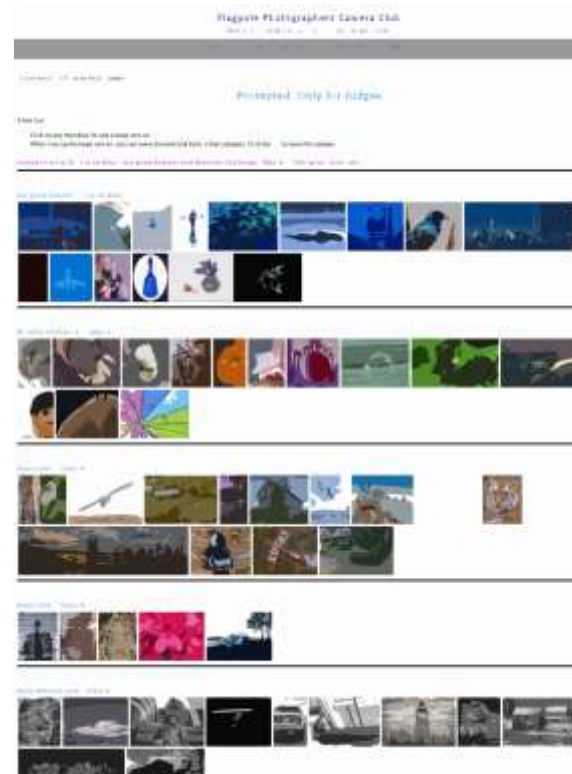
Scoring and comments are live on Thursday night.

View the photos at
https://flagpolephotographers.com/only-for-judges-<a 4 digit number>

The full link, with the 4 digit number at the end, is in your email

Available starting the Monday before competition

What Is the Role of a Photo's Score?

Scoring is independent of category and class

- In a 6 to 10 range, the average is 8
- You'll probably have half of your scores in the 7.5, 8.0 and 8.5 range
- Scoring allows awarding the top three photos. We break ties. There are no honorable mentions – only 1st, 2nd & 3rd

Average

Rare

Rare

6

8

10
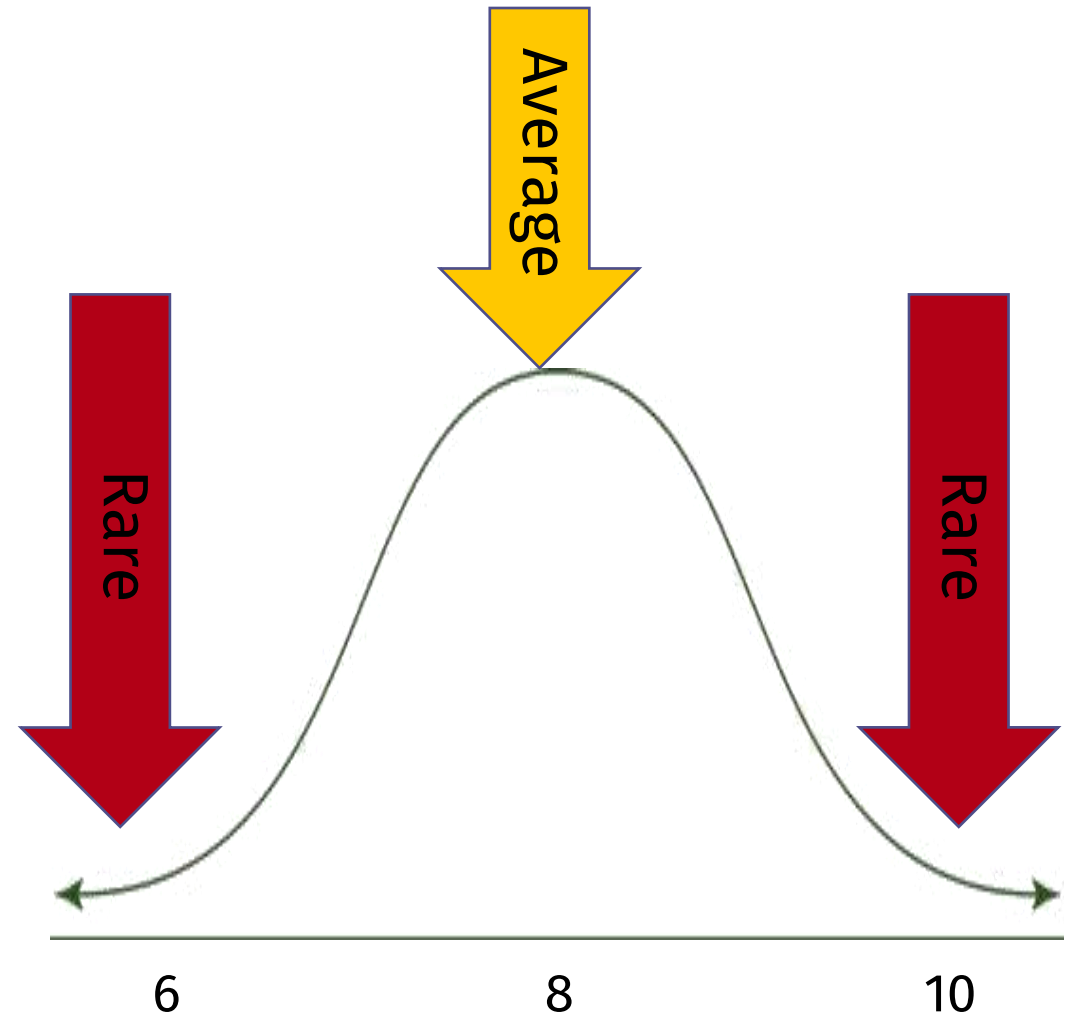
Deciding on a Score

Base the score on the merit of that individual photo
In this, and only this, single category

Use consistent reasoning in evaluating photos
Provides the ranking order

Understand the category's requirements
Nature, monochrome, assigned subject …

What Creates Impact?

Impact

Impactful photos evoke laughter, sadness, anger, pride, wonder or another intense emotion.

Think of **Impact** as a stool supported by these four legs.

With 4 legs: Hard to knock over
With 3 legs: Still very strong.
With 2 legs: Hard to stand up.
With 1 leg: Easily falls over.
With 0 legs: It's a snapshot.

Click for more info

Storytelling

The photo's ability to evoke imagination in the viewer's mind

Creativity

A fresh expression of a scene conveying an idea or message.

Composition

Bringing all the visual elements together to express the purpose

Technical Excellence

The quality of the photo itself as it is presented for viewing

What About Photographer Effort in Commenting?

It is a slippery slope for a judge to include effort when commenting on a photo because assumptions must be made.

There is no way to know the actual capture effort

- Effort is highly dependent on photographer, technique & luck
- Maybe it's a composite
- Maybe it's a controlled environment (photo ops, zoo)

Plus, effort also happens outside of photo capture

- Hiking all night uphill to capture the sunrise?
- Using Photoshop for 20 hours?
- Planning and learning for three weeks?

Was this a lot of effort? It depends on what is effort.

- Two weeks of wondering what is a great 'bricks' photo?
- Reading the camera manual to learn what is possible?
- Waiting for afternoon shade?

How did I capture this?

- Using video mode on my camera.
- One take, one brick destroyed, one video frame used.
- Effort was a lot less than you think!

The best choice is to comment on the photographic principles that you see.

Agenda

What we are covering next

1. Competition Night
2. **Judging Setup**
3. Judging Software

Judge Setup Requires Two Screens

Most common setup

Alternate setups

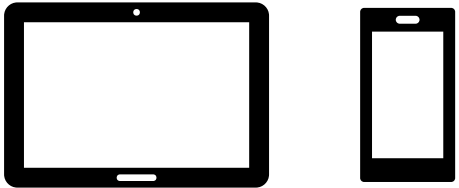**PC for web meeting to view photos & talk.**

Camera and mic 1920 x 1080 resolution or higher
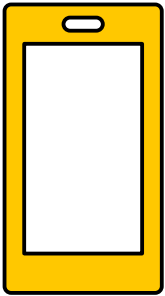
Phone or Tablet for scorepad

No software to install. Uses web browser
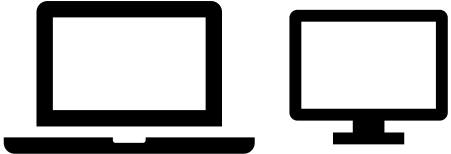
Computer with two screens

Large tablet plus a phone

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Live Training

Fire up your scorepad and let's score some photos and break some ties!

Flagpole Photographers Competition

Event   Scoring Ro...

Judge Training Example - Sep 26, 2020

Assigned Subject "Nature"   Monthly Challenge is "Barns"   Open Color - Class A

Number of photos 14   ---   Scored photos 0

1. RUN-THOUGH

2. SCORE PHOTOS

3. RESOLVE TIES

4. SHOW WINNERS

Agenda

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1. Competition Night
2. Judging Setup
3. **Judging Software**

Scorepad page is used to send scores to the live competition

Runs in a browser

Judge #

Make a typo, just ask to score again

Acknowledgement visible for 10 seconds
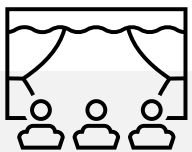
Home page of competition web app
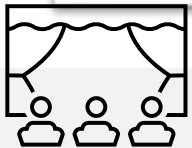
Quick run-through to preview all photos

Each photo displayed
full screen for 2.5 seconds
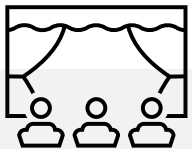
Score photos live using judge's scorepad

Each photo displayed full screen while scoring

Scores arrived blue indicator
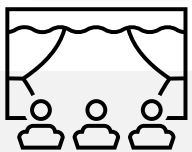
Break ties with a live discussion

Choose 1 photo for third place. Need to break a 2 way tie for third place.

3RD

Bad Luck

I Need An Umbrella!

If needed, all tied photos displayed

Option to show full screen

Option to remove photo

Competition with "Nature" As...

Assigned Subject "Nature"

2. SCORE PHOTOS

3. RESOLVE TIES

4. SHOW WINN...

Display 3rd, 2nd and 1st places. Winners will discuss their photo.

Place, Name, Title

Second - Rhonda Cullens - Driven to Ride