

# THE GRAND RAPIDS CAMERA CLUB

## JUDGING GUIDELINES

### A. SCORING CRITERIA

Judges may score from 1 to 5

5) A judge's highest score. A five is an image of highest quality in all technical and compositional respects, with impact. Impact is exhibited when a photograph is striking and has an *immediate* and *strong* effect on those viewing it.

4) An above average image. An image is excellently lighted and superbly composed with no noticeable technical flaws in such things as focus, color, slanted horizon, distracting backgrounds, or empty foregrounds. All elements of the image work together.

3) An average image. This image is properly exposed, correctly focused and has good composition. It is acceptable, but does not generate any special interest or stir emotions. Technical flaws are not immediately obvious.

2) Below average image. The image exhibits technical flaws in such areas as exposure, focus and composition.

1) Well below average image. Exhibits *several* technical flaws.

9) Judges will score a 9 if they feel the image does not meet the category criteria for judging. The score keeper will then call for a discussion. A re-vote will require at least two judges voting 9 to disqualify the image. If an image is disqualified, it may be re-entered at a future competition in the appropriate category.

The score keeper may also call for a re-vote if the range of scores between any two judges is 2 points or greater. At that point the score keeper will clear the score and judges will re-judge the image. Before making their decision, judges should re-evaluate the image and look at their scoring box to determine if that is the score that they intended.

0) Judges are to vote 0 if the image is their own or that of an immediate family member.

Scoring is used to separate competition entries into groups of similar quality, thus allowing honors to be given, and standings to be defined. The judging process however is more than just scoring for honors. It provides a maker with feedback as to how successfully he or she may have been in creating a striking image. While the numerical score does provide some feedback to a maker, a score should not be considered to be a definitive evaluation of photographer's work. It is simply one judge's perspective on the image at that particular time.

## **B. CATEGORIES**

**ASSIGNED:** The assigned subject should be significant in the image portrayed and meet the assignment's intent.

**OPEN:** Any and all subjects may be entered.

**PORTRAITURE:** A human subject must be the primary focus.

**PHOTO-JOURNALISM:** News or story telling of human interest in one to four images takes precedent over composition and technical excellence.

**NATURE:** The image should not include the cultural influence of people (hand of man). Products of technology, domestic animals and horticultural varieties of plants are not to be entered in the category. Nature subjects are to be portrayed in their natural habitat which may include such things as gulls on pilings, a baby robin in a lawn or a barn swallow nest in a building overhang. Tagged or banded animals found in the wild are acceptable. Digital enhancement and manipulation must not be obvious.

**CREATIVE:** The creative category is for manipulated and enhanced images and those where the maker's creativity comes into view in the final image. These entries may depict the maker's interpretation of any subject or style. Although there is not any exclusion from this category, images entered should be unique and different, perhaps out of the ordinary.

## **C. DIVISIONS**

**SLIDES:** Slide entries should have impact, a strong center of interest and a background that does not distract from the main subject. A word of caution – not all slides are going to have all the desired qualities of perfect technique and composition. Proper exposure is critical for slides. Detail should be seen in both shadow and highlight areas

**PRINTS:** Remember that only the very best of images will be made into prints. The same guidelines that apply to slides should be applied to prints with the following additional considerations:

- In black and white prints, look for shadow and highlight detail.
- In color prints, look for detail in highlight areas.
- The work that is put into the presentation (mounting and matting) should also be reflected in the final score.

**DIGITAL:** Since complete control is possible with digital images, the guidelines that apply to slides and prints should be applied to digital images with the following additional considerations:

- Although digital images are not matted and mounted, if a matt or decorative or artistic border is included in the image, that treatment should also be considered when scoring the image.
- Post-capture enhancements and manipulation must also be considered when scoring digital images. They should be done carefully. The skill in using them should be considered in scoring the image. These treatments should not distract or detract from the image itself.

## A SYNOPSIS FOR JUDGES

*A Judge should . . . . .*

- Be open to freshness and new vision, and not assume that the only successful competition images are those which fit a certain time honored mold. He or she should be willing to recognize those photographers who bring new life, spirit and vision to an age old craft and thus to the organization as a whole.
- Be willing to reward both freshness and creativity along with technical excellence.
- Strive to remove personal bias and not unduly favor or penalize images based upon their subject matter, the difficulty of the shot, or knowledge of the maker.
- Apply scores consistently so that all images given a certain score can be expected to be of comparable quality. He/she should not succumb to the temptation of changing his/her standards midstream. No matter whether individual judges' scores as a whole are perceived by the audience and "high" or "low" the consistency is perceived as fairness.
- Use the *entire* scoring scale effectively to differentiate images.
- Be sensitive to a maker's feelings but the judge must still be honest. A judge giving inflated "feel good" scores should realize that his or her unwillingness to give the low score that is deserved often results in the deflation of another maker whose work truly deserved the higher score. That maker is now having his or her work placed in the same category as a decidedly worse image. True learning does not come from false complements, but honest appraisals. An image should be scored a 2 or a 1 if it exhibits technical flaws, such as obvious over or under exposure, is out of focus or shows very poor composition.