

CHATHAM CAMERA CLUB

PHOTO CHALLENGE STANDARDS, GUIDELINES and PROCEDURES HANDBOOK

This Handbook has been established to keep club members apprised of the Chatham Camera Club Standards, Guidelines and Procedures with regards to Digital Challenges.

Every effort has been made to make this Handbook as clear as possible; however, changes to the information are inevitable.

Digital Challenges are the best way to improve your photography and take it to the next level as you compete with your fellow members in a friendly atmosphere. You are encouraged to enter each challenge.

GUIDELINES:

Every Member is eligible to submit entries to the Digital Challenges. Reason for choosing to participate in club challenges is purely for the enjoyment of photography, knowledge and fair competition with club peers.

We rely on the honour system and the integrity of the member to know and adhere to the rules.

The following guidelines apply to all challenge entries:

*It is desirable that entries reflect **recent work**. It is understood that there are situations that will not allow this. In this case, it is also desirable to continue to promote inclusiveness.*

- *Images submitted **may not** be the same as, or substantially similar to, another image submitted to a CCC challenge in the current year or any previous year's theme/categories. An image rotated, flipped, re-formatted or converted to monochrome will be **deemed substantially the same image**. **Serially captured images** with only small variations are considered to be **substantially the same image**.*
- *If an image is made from a workshop, the entrant must have complete control over lighting, models, positioning plus total control over camera settings. An exception would be stage or performance lighting.*
- *All entries, the original image and all elements, including digital manipulation and post processing must be the work of the entrant.*
- *Any images or source material used to create your image **MUST** be your own.*
- *Images that are created totally electronically with no photographic origin are prohibited from competition entry.*
- *Inspirational ideas can be found on the web but should not be duplicated. The image should be substantially different.*
- *The submitted image will not contain any watermarks or identification of the entrant.*
- *Subject matter must be predominately tastefully or will be disqualified. It is understood that this is subjective so when in doubt check with Challenge Manager prior to submission. Send inquire to ccc.picsubmissions@gmail.com*



- ***The honour system will apply in regard to members' compliance of the rules for Challenges.*** CCC reserve the right to request a maker's proof of authenticity in whole or in part. At his/her sole discretion, the Challenge Manager reserves the right to remove any images.
- *The Challenge Manager will pre-screen images for appropriateness to the challenge.*
- The decisions about an image entry will be made by the Challenge Manager and will be final.

****REVISED****

Use of Artificial Intelligence in CCC Challenges

In light of the rapid advancements in AI-generative technology and its potential implications for the integrity, authenticity and fairness of photographic challenges the CCC has adapted the following guidelines using information from the direction that the Canadian Association for Photographic Arts and other Photographic Societies has taken on the subject.

- ***AI GENERATED images are prohibited from being entered into any CCC Challenges.*** A generated artificial intelligence image is created totally by an AI system and contains no image captured by the entrant. Therefore it is not considered to be a photographic image for the purpose of CCC challenges.
- ***Content Aware or similar modification, in any post processing software, that is entirely based on pixels in the original image and which does not extend the image beyond its original boundaries will be allowed BUT may NOT be further processed using Generative Fill in ANY software. Ie: Lightroom's Generative AI Remove or the Photoshop Generative fill.***
- Images that involve the use of **AI GENERATIVE** techniques such as **"in-painting, out-painting and/or AI rendering"**, regardless of whether text options are used or not, are **not permitted** for submission to the CCC Challenges.
 - **"In-painting"** is a technique where AI generates pixels to fill in or removes and replaces selected elements from the original photograph with pixel elements from the AI's generative dataset.
 - **"Out-painting"** is a technique where AI extends the visual contents of an image beyond its original boundaries by generating new elements and offering an expansive view or a broader perspective.
 - **"AI rendering"** is the utilization of AI-generative algorithms and models to either generate new visual imagery or enhance an existing image.



- **Various software applications that utilize machine learning algorithms to automate and enhance photo editing tasks include AI features** such as De-Noise, Sharpen, Resolution Enhancement, Masking, Subject Selection, Blurring, AI Auto-enhance, AI Structure, AI skin enhancer that are contained within a post processing application **are permitted** provided they comply with the editing criteria noted for each particular challenge. **When using accepted features, it is imperative to emphasize that these features avoid the introduction of elements to an image that the photographer did not originally capture.**
 - **AI sky replacement** is permitted provided that the new sky was captured by the entrant **AND that replacement is noted as acceptable IN that particular challenge theme documentation.**
- All components of the submitted image must be the entrants' original work and **must not** contain elements created or captured by someone else. Any images or source material used to create your image **MUST** be your own.
- **For all images entered into a challenge, the Competition Mgr. may require an entrant to provide all the RAW images or un-retouched JPG used in creating an image.** Failure to comply with the request for image files will result in the image being withdrawn from the challenge and challenge results will be re-sorted.



POST PROCESSING

The following Post-Processing Categories were developed to assist you in what will be acceptable editing for a particular Challenge Theme.

The acceptable post-processing category and any special additions will be noted along with the Challenge Theme.

Adherence to the stated editing category is the maker's responsibility.

RESTRICTIVE Editing:

Restrictive editing typically pertains to Nature and Photojournalistic Photography Categories

The following image editing techniques are allowed:

- Cropping and straightening.
- Adjustments that enhance the image without changing the content of the original scene, including:
 - exposure (globally and selectively),
 - color balance
 - contrast
 - dodging and burning,
 - sharpening (globally and selectively),
 - noise reduction,
 - conversion to greyscale monochrome (with no color added),
 - Straightening and resizing.
- Editing that removes small elements that were not part of the original scene (such as spots caused by dust on a digital sensor or scratches on a scanned image).
- High dynamic range (HDR) techniques - because the pictorial content of the individual images and the combined image is the same.
- Focus stacking of images - because although this involves the combining of several images the pictorial content is not being changed.
- Adjustments that compensate for lens deficiencies such as distortion, chromatic aberration and lens flare - because they do not change the pictorial content.

The overriding requirement for any of the allowed adjustments is that the results must appear natural to the viewer (the maker is not the viewer – the viewer is the judge!) Judges should not give high scores to images in which the allowed adjustments are excessive.

The following image editing techniques are **NOT allowed in Restrictive Editing:**

- Any form of manipulation that alters the truth of the photographic statement.
- Cloning.
- Blurring the background to obscure elements in the original scene.
- Darkening the background to remove elements in the original scene.



- Adding a vignette not originally produced by the camera.
- Adding textures or artistic filters.
- Replacing image elements (such as the sky).
- Combining images by stitching.

Techniques that Add, Relocate, Clone, Replace, or Remove pictorial elements except by cropping ARE NOT PERMITTED

Some challenges may have special rules that will be clearly stated beforehand.



The following post processing procedures are acceptable in the “open editing” category.

OPEN EDITING

The goal is to have all adjustments appear natural.

White balance/color adjustments. B/W conversion

Tone, exposure, contrast, highlight and shadow detail adjustment

Adjustment to white/black points. Use of curves/levels adjustment

Image enhancement using clarity, de-haze, texture sliders

Balancing of image saturation/vibration

Dodging/Burning to adjust exposure of light/dark/tonal ranges in image

Sharpening, Noise reduction

Perspective Correction/Straightening to adjust the vertical or horizontal distortion in an image

Vignette and use of vignette options/radial filters/gradient filters

Spot Removal: Repair of faults such as dust, lint, scratches, sensor spots

Limited Clone/heal to remove **small distractions** such as hydro lines, signposts trash

Cropping to change image boundaries

Flipping/rotating to change orientation

Pin-line borders, Digital Mats, Digital Frames

Use of presets PROVIDED they do not add elements that were not photographed by you ie. textures.

Basic Editing programs that allow masking for local basic adjustments, within their programs such as Lightroom, and Camera Raw.

Exposures taken at the same location at the same time as a continuous sequence – seconds or minutes apart:

- HDR Merger for exposure control - in camera or with editing software
- Panorama stitching - in camera or with editing software
- Focus stacking - in camera or with editing software
- Multiple exposure – in camera
- Infrared images in camera

NOTE: This list may not be all inclusive. There are many “basic” editing options available in a variety of software products.

The main goal of OPEN editing is that:

TECHNIQUES THAT ADD, RELOCATE, REPLACE ELEMENTS or DRASTICALLY ALTER an image ARE NOT PERMITTED UNLESS SPECIFICALLY STATED IN THE CHALLENGE DETAILS

SPECIAL EDITING TECHNIQUES:

The following techniques will be acceptable in post processing

ONLY WHEN SPECIFICALLY STATED in the Challenge Descriptions.

- Sky replacement
- Combining images and elements in a final image - all components must have been taken by you
- Adding a texture - all components must have been taken and/or created by you
- Artwork or computer graphics generated by entrant provided **original photographic content predominates.**

ANYTHING GOES EDITING:



The following post processing procedures are acceptable in the “ANYTHING GOES editing” category.

- All different: In-camera, On-camera and Post Processing techniques can be used.
- This **includes all SPECIAL EDITING TECHNIQUES**
- In this category you may ADD, RELOCATE, and REPLACE ELEMENTS or DRAMATICALLY ALTER an image provided that you are the originator of all of the elements in your image. Ie. Creating a fantasy image.

The entrant must have taken/processed all components of the final images.



INSTRUCTIONS FOR ENTERING OUR PHOTO CHALLENGES

Digital files are entered online at: ccc.picsubmissions@gmail.com

You may enter **2 images to each challenge**.

*****Continuing for 2024-25 season*****

IMAGE SIZE. To ensure that the image can be displayed on the club's projector, images may be no larger than the following maximum dimensions:

Horizontal Dimensions: no greater than **2100 pixels across**

Vertical Dimensions: no greater than **1575 pixels tall**

File Type: **PERFERABLY jpg** although **jpeg** will be accepted


Compression: 10 compression in Photoshop/Elements

83% compression in **Lightroom**

90% in **FastStone**

TIP: Set your VERTICAL dimension to 1575 and let the Horizontal dimension calculate automatically.

RENAMING YOUR FILE FOR SUBMISSION:

 **FirstLastname Image number**

Example:

JohnSmith1

JohnSmith 2

CHALLENGE MANAGER WILL INFORM YOU IF A PARTICULAR CHALLENGE REQUIRES A DIFFERENT NAMING CONVENTION. PLEASE PAY PARTICULAR ATTENTION TO THAT DETAIL

Submitted images must not contain any watermarks nor the name of the photographer embedded in the image.

Deadline for submissions is 10pm Saturday, ten days prior to the Challenge date at which the results are given. This is to allow for file preparation for judging. Also, it will allow a couple of days for a re-submission if there is an issue with an image that is being entered. There can be no extension to this deadline unless otherwise stated.

Send your submissions to ccc.picsubmissions@gmail.com



A brief reply will be forwarded stating that the images have been received.

CHALLENGE LEVELS

Four skill levels allow members to compete with peers of similar skills and experience.

NOVICE (N): all new members will automatically be assigned to the Novice Level unless they are able to provide evidence of competition experience and skill within another club.

INTERMEDIATE (I): This level consists of members who have been promoted from the Novice Level

ADVANCED (A): This level consists of members who have been promoted from Intermediate Level.

SALON (S): This level consists of members who have been promoted from the Advanced Level.

Images entered in Chatham CC challenges by members of the Intermediate, Advanced and Salon Groups will be judged together.

Images entered by members of the Novice group will be judged separately. In addition, the Novice group will continue to enter separate competition/challenges that the other three groups have undertaken previously, thus enhancing the mentoring process.

TRANSFER OF MEMBERS FROM GROUP TO GROUP

In order for member(s) to be transferred from Group to Group, the member must have competed in all Challenges during the current season to advance. As with all things, an exception may be considered if it is deemed that a member has spent many years within the same category and/or there is reason to consider an adjustment.

The Challenge Manager (and assistant(s), if applicable) may suggest to the Executive which members, if any, should be transferred from the Novice group to the Intermediate group and/or from the Intermediate group to the Advanced Group. Upon approval by the Executive, these transfer(s) will be implemented for the subsequent season(s).

The Challenge Manager (and assistant(s), if applicable) OR the Executive may suggest to the Salon Group and Executive which members, if any, should be transferred to the Salon Group. Upon approval by both the Executive and the Salon Group, these transfer(s) will be implemented for the subsequent season(s).

Members of the Salon Group may suggest the transfer of a member(s) to the Salon Group. Upon approval by both the Salon Group and the Executive, these transfer(s) will be implemented for the subsequent season(s).

When a recommendation of a move into a next level category is put forward, AND the said member has less than 3 years within their category, the member will have the option to defer that move for a period of 1 year. The deferred member will automatically be moved to the next level the following year. If the member being recommended for a move has been in a continuous category for 4 years or more, no deferral will be allowed.





END OF SEASON CERTIFICATES

ONE certificate will be presented for “Photo of the Year”.

Members who have submitted less than 6 images into the current year’s challenges will not qualify for “Photo of the Year”

Photo of the year images are chosen from the *top scoring images from the current season’s challenges.

*The Actual number of images considered will be determined by the number of images that have achieved a top score and can be adjusted if too few or too many qualify.

1st, 2nd and 3rd Highest Cumulative Score Certificates in each of the Salon, Advanced, Intermediate and Novice groups (a total of twelve certificates, three within each group) will be awarded at End of Year Meeting.

Honourable Mention Certificates will be presented to members of the Novice group who have scored *22 points or more for an image entered in competition

Honourable Mention Certificates will be presented to members of the Intermediate and Advanced groups who have scored *23 points or more for an image entered in competition.

Honourable Mention certificates will be presented to members of the Salon group who have scored *24 points or more for an image entered in a competition.

*The actual numerical score required for an honourable mention certificate can be adjusted if too few or too many scores qualify; however, it should remain easiest for a member of the Novice group to attain such a certificate and hardest for a member of the Salon group.

JUDGING

For each challenge there will be 3 judges selected. Judges will score each image from 5 points to 10 points in ½ point increments. Those scores will be totaled for a final score out of 30.

The final score from each challenge will accumulate and become the year end final total score for the season.

Judges award their scoring based on key elements such as story-telling value, pictorial quality, creative vision, the degree that the image is within the Scope of the Theme, composition, technique and subject matter.

Strong emphasis on the creative message, quality of execution, innovation, appropriateness to the challenge theme and WOW factor are desired elements.

The judges follow criteria laid out by the Canadian Association for Photographic Arts (CAPA).



Scoring **guideline suggestions** with descriptions are as shown below.

Points can be awarded in ½ point increments.

- 5 Fair, possibly with major faults
- 6 Good, displays average technical qualities and average impact
- 7-8 Excellent, image is above average in technical qualities and impact
- 9 Exceptionally good – very high technical qualities and high impact
- 10 Demonstrates the “wow” factor – outstanding impact and technical aspects

Definitions of “Excellent” and Exceptionally Good” are left to the evaluator.

The scores produced by the judges are final and without appeal.

