

The Camera Club of Boca Raton **About Our Monthly Evaluations***

* While we used to host monthly competitions, we felt it was far more important to view the process as a learning experience rather than a competition. We therefore suspended selecting first, second, and third place winners and asked guest judges simply to provide comments and assign scores to all entries. To stress the teaching aspect over the scoring, we now refer to the process as **evaluations**.

Evaluation Nights are typically held on the **second Wednesday of the month** during the club year from September to June, with no sessions during July and August.

Prints must be handed in the night of the evaluation, before evaluating begins.

Projected entries must be emailed no later than midnight of the Sunday prior to Evaluation Night to give the projectionist time to set up the program correctly.

Specifics on submitting prints and projected entries are detailed in separate information sheets.

To be eligible to participate, a member must be in good standing with dues fully paid. It is **not** necessary to enter, though having your own work evaluated greatly enhances your learning experience. And, submitting the maximum number of entries in the year (30: three for each of ten meetings) provides the participant with the highest cumulative score by the end of the year.

Typically a guest evaluator (or judge) is invited to critique the entries and assign a score. Keep in mind that, while the best assessments are objective, the evaluator's previous experience is bound to come into play. You may not agree with an evaluator's comments—take away what **YOU** consider important and try to avoid taking the rest too seriously.

Member Groups

Participants are divided among three groups based on their level of experience, both in camera club membership as well as photographic know-how:

* **Level 1**, the least experienced in terms of camera club membership and/or photographic skills.

* **Level 2**, intermediate, more advanced photographers who have belonged to this or other camera clubs previously and/or have a fair amount of familiarity photographing.

* **Level 3**, advanced, the most experienced group, having been camera club members for a while and have demonstrated skill in the photographic arena.

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Subject Categories

There are two categories:

1. **Assigned Subject:** As with most clubs offering this category, photos entered here must comply with the subject assigned that month constituting the majority (over 50%) or primary theme of the image. While clearly fitting the category, these entries must also comply with considerations that constitute strong images. These are evaluated separately within each level.

2. **General/Open:** Any subject (including altered reality or obviously manipulated work). These also are evaluated separately within each experience level.

In a given month, members may enter three prints **OR** three images for projection, distributed in any combination (all three in one, or one in one of the categories and two in the other). Neither category is required—participation is totally the member's choice. Any entry may be color or black and white.

About Altered Reality/Creative Edit: Submitting altered reality photographs is encouraged. Entries may deviate from reality in any way, clearly manipulated in the camera (zooming the lens or shaking the camera) or in the computer (using filters, colors, added objects in the frame, and similar departure from reality). These images can be entered in either category: If dealing with the Assigned Subject, they should go into that category; otherwise, the altered images should go into the General/Open Category.

Critiquing Versus Scoring

While scores remain meaningful and can be fun, what the evaluator says is more important than the number. The evaluator is asked to be as specific as possible, considering all aspects of the photograph: impact, composition, and technical characteristics such as exposure, sharpness, distracting elements, clarity of colors or range of whites and blacks, etc.

Our Scoring Guide

We use a four point scoring system, that spans a high of 9 to a low of 6:

- * A "9" constitutes an excellent picture having impact and needing very little, if any, improvement.
- * An "8" represents a strong picture in terms of subject, composition, exposure, etc. but needs minor corrections.
- * A "7" is an average or OK picture, which needs corrections and/or lacks impact.
- * A "6" is reserved for seriously flawed images.

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Our Scoring Guide (Continued)

For teaching purposes, we ask the evaluator to comment on aspects that make the 9 images especially strong.

For the 6, 7, and 8 photos we hope the evaluator will comment on how to improve these pictures.

Promotion to the Next Experience Level

Monthly scores are cumulated across the year. **In June**, the member (or members) whose cumulated score is (are) the highest in Level 1 is (are) invited to move to Level 2; similarly, the member (or members) whose cumulated score is (are) the highest in Level 2 is (are) invited to move to Level 3. Moving up is not required, but people are encouraged to move in fairness to those in each lower level as well as in recognition of their increasing skills.

Regardless of their scores, anyone in Level 1 and Level 2 may request and be granted promotion to the next level. This choice should be considered carefully since the competition is keener in each progressive level and once promoted a member may not return to his former level for a full club year.

Submitting Winning Images to the Webmaster

Photographs garnering a "9" in the digital competition are sent automatically to the webmaster. Those who garner a top score of "9" in the print category are asked to email those images to the Webmaster for inclusion on our website **by the end of the weekend following** the competition. It is a fair amount of work for our webmaster to effect the "slide show" on the Home Page of our website, so once it is finished, he will not be able to go back and add late entries. Thank you!

Added thoughts for visitors and new members to keep in mind:

* According to one of our longer-term members: "I have found it to be incredibly instructive to observe other members' photos and to hear the judges' critiques of all the photos in the contest, not just the ones that I submitted."

* Also: Club members have commented over the years that they have seen "great improvement in the photographic skills of those who regularly participate in competitions."

Please note our website link: www.bocaratoncameraclub.org