



Special Election Issue



**You Get
What You
Vote For!**

**So Quit
Complaining
And Vote!**

It's time to vote!!

(Thank Heavens!)

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News and Views of Poly Photo Camera Club Members

November, 2016

Volume 7, No.11

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President – Dee Elwin | Vice President – Josie Ross | Secretary – Jan Handman | Treasurer – Aseem Gupta

Editor – Jim Mildice

From the Editor

The tagline on the cover this month says, “It’s time to vote.” (Boy, am I glad!) But I don’t mean *THE* election, I wouldn’t presume to offer any recommendations about that. I mean the vote about our Poly competitions. To those involved, it seems like there is almost as much controversy in Poly as there has been for that “other” vote.

I was not a member of the committee that was charged with the task to formalize the proposal (on which we will vote this month) to change the competition rules to have a new competition category. But from what I’ve heard, it was a pretty contentious process (meetings, “thousands” of emails – now deleted, and more). It may take all of the committee members some time to recover, but in the end, the committee did a very good job.

First, they satisfied the historical traditionalists who want to maintain the Poly founding principles of “anything and everything” is good for the creation of our pictures. They kept the “Open” category unchanged; and further defined its commitment to have no limits in the creation of our photographic images.

Some members object to the use of Photoshop (or other software) to create images that did not totally exist in front of the camera when the shutter was released. To accomodate them, the committee is recommending the creation of a new “Limited” category, which generally requires that post-processing be limited to the kinds of enhancements that could have been accomplished in-camera or in the average darkroom. The actual requirements are listed later on in the issue.

I have to admit, I am personally conflicted about this upcoming vote. As many of you already know, I don’t believe in too many “hard and fast” rules for volunteer organizations like ours. I think a minimal definition of goals and operating procedures is generally all that should be required.

However, to be effective, the limited post-processing category must have some photoshop-related rules. But it has been said that Photoshop

has at least three different methods to create any effect. (I think that’s an understatement.) So it will be very difficult to to have a set of rules that can’t be circumvented in one way or another. If we vote to accept the proposed rules, we must also realize that, with our vote, we have accepted the responsibility to voluntarily follow their intent.

On principle, I believe that any restriction on the tools and methods used to create a work of art is foolishness. It would be like telling a painter he/she could only use three colors of oil paint and a Size 2 brush.

But my biggest practical concern has to do with one of Poly’s primary goals, helping members to develop their photographic skills. What is the best way to foster the development of casual photographers into capable competition and exhibition participants; and (if they wish) into photo artists?

First of all, it is time we all faced up to the fact that real success in the mainstream world of modern (commercial or amature) photography requires post-processing skills as well as picture-taking skills. Sooner or later, you will have to embrace Photoshop.

We may sometimes long for the “simplicity” of the “*good old days*,” when we found a beautiful subject, decided how to frame it, set aperture and shutter speed, and pressed the shutter. After that, most of us sent the exposed film off to Kodak (in a prepaid mailer) and got a box of finished slides via return mail. But those days are **gone forever**.

The consensus of the committee is that it is best to provide a place where photographers who are in the early stages of their post-processing development can compete, exhibit, and get feedback, without being overwhelmed by more expert practioners.

I don’t know if I agree, because I don’t think that approach would have been best for me. But the bottom line is – Poly is run by and for its members, so if that’s what you all would like to do (and vote for), I’m certainly willing to support it.

Musings from the President

When the proposal for two categories was presented at the October meeting and wording issues came up, the committee immediately went to work. After much deliberation and many revisions, we now think the proposal more closely represents our intentions. In a nutshell:

Category 1 would be for members who prefer to do only basic (or light) editing to their photographs. These members would prefer to have their images judged against like images. This may be an advantage to members who are new to photography, or have limited editing skills or tools.

Category 2 would be the same as we now have in Poly's Open Competition. Any amount of editing, plug-ins, composites, etc. is allowed. You can find more detailed information elsewhere in this newsletter.

As we are now new members of PSA (Photographic Society of America), some of us will be looking into ways that our club can benefit from this membership. If any of you has experience with PSA, and has any suggestions or questions, please let me know. It's my understanding that we have access to judges, other competitions and a DVD library.

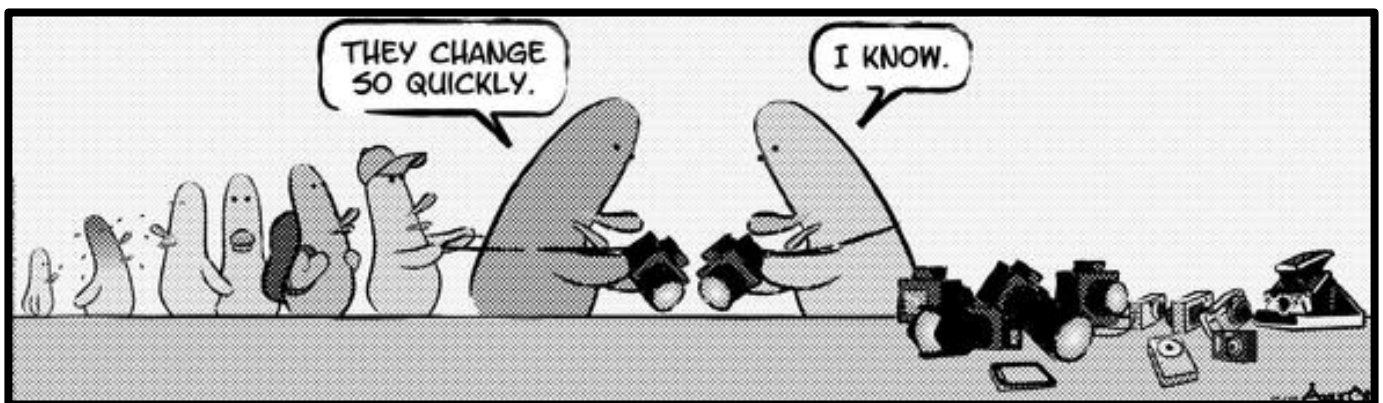
If anyone knows of a good speaker that they could recommend to bring a program to Poly, please let me know. Our creative batteries can always use a little boost with an inspiring presenter.

"If there is no struggle, there is no progress."

Frederick Douglas

Happy Shooting,
-dee

"You might be a Photographer if . . .



Proposed Competition Changes

Bylaws are to be changed as follows:

Article XII – MONTHLY COMPETITION – Section 1

Paragraph 2 will be replaced in its entirety by the following:

PREAMBLE TO GUIDELINES

By virtue of submitting an entry, the photographer certifies the work as his/her own, and is of photographic origin. Images may only be manipulated as noted in individual category definitions. The images of each category shall be separately judged on the same categorical basis without consideration of subject matter.

CATEGORY 1

- A. All adjustments must appear natural. Any cloning is allowed only for the purpose of eliminating spots, blemishes, and extraneous elements that detract from the wholeness of the image (e.g. telephone poles, power lines etc.).
- B. Adding/importing new elements from other sources outside of the image itself (“compositing”) is not allowed. Images with this type of manipulation can be submitted in CATEGORY 2.
- C. Techniques such as HDR and focus stacking are allowed. Stitching for the purpose of creating a panorama, and conversion to gray scale / monochrome is also allowed. There are no restrictions on subjects for images in this category.

CATEGORY 2

- A. Images not qualifying under Category 1 may be entered here.
- B. Entered images must be created by the entrant and start with his/her original photograph. They may not be completely constructed of graphic elements created with a computer. When any graphic elements other than original photographs are incorporated into an image, the maker-produced photographic content of the completed, final image must still prevail.
- C. There are no restrictions on the subjects, workflow, or software used to create Category 2 images.

SCORING

- A. The 5 to 9 point system will be utilized for each category. 1st, 2nd and 3rd places will be awarded at monthly competitions for each category. High points for each category will be totaled for the end of the year, with 1st, 2nd and 3rd place winners in each

Quote of the Month

(with a nod to Jeff Foxworthy)

Look around in this issue, you’ll find more of these.

“You might be a Photographer if . . . your cameras and lenses are worth more than your car.”

Questions and Answers – Proposed Competition Changes

By Paul Shilling

At October's meeting, there was some confusion and many questions about our proposal. Unfortunately, the way the proposal was written, it gave the false impression that we were proposing to take away vital tools that some members have relied on to create their images such as filters and textures. This was not our intention. We have published a revised version of our two-category proposal in this issue of Poly Speaks. It should be clear after reading the corrected version of our proposed guidelines that members will still be able to do everything they are doing now to create their competition images. The only difference will be a separate category for minimally post processed images.

Below are answers to some important questions that have been posed by members.

1) *"Why are we doing this?"*

In 2016 our president, Dee Elwin, sent out a survey to all Polyphoto members asking for feedback on various aspects of the club. In this survey, a number of members had suggested creating a separate competition category for composited/highly manipulated images. Based on these responses, Dee put together a committee of seven Poly members, which included 2 judges, with the goal of addressing the requests for a separate competition category for composited/highly manipulated images. Although the members of the committee did not necessarily agree on the specifics of how to address the issue, all seven members were in favor of creating 2 competition categories.

2) *How is this going to encourage novices and the intimidated to begin competing? The best method is to encourage members to hone their photographic skills and their post processing techniques and to just jump into the competition and learn from the judges' comments, show others your work and have them encourage you to grow and stretch yourself.*

We think you raise an excellent point. However, because of the way the competition is currently structured, we only partially agree with you.

One of the major goals of Polyphoto is photo education (Poly Bylaws Article II B, Objectives: "Development of photographic skill through education, practice, critique.") and we feel that the categories proposed will better address this need than the current format.

In the current format to create competitive images a member must develop both photographic and post processing skills. We think you would agree that it's a lot to learn. By adding a new category that limits the amount of post processing, a new member's fears can be limited to images created by members who use minimal post processing in their competition images. The way the club is structured now the intimidation potentially occurs at two levels – photographic skills and post processing skills. Now they have to compete with the great photographers and incredible digital artists in the club. It's a double whammy. In fact, it is possible and probably even likely, that the digital art is even more intimidating and that is why some members have asked for a separate category for composites.

We think you would agree that the photography skills must come first. Once the photo skills are there maybe photo novices will feel more confident to jump into category 2. At least with the 2 category system they would now have two options.

- 3) *"It was stated at the meeting today that more ribbons would be generated. If that is the reason, I believe there are more effective ways to accomplish this goal that would be far less confusing."*

As we hopefully conveyed, awarding more ribbons was not the main motivating force for creating two competition categories. As it turned out, it became a very positive result of our proposal. We don't think anyone would complain about there being twice as many winners each month.

- 4) *"Another issue I see, is having high points recorded for 2 categories. If someone enters in both categories regularly, their points will then be spread across the board and hurt their chances to win a ribbon (which is why we are considering this?)."*

We agree and due to perceived demand, we will consider a combined points award. If our proposal is passed by the membership, we plan to present this addition to our proposal and have the members vote on adding this award as an amendment to the bylaws.

- 5) *"I, personally, see it as an unnecessary change to the bylaws. I appreciate the time and effort that the committee has invested, but I think it is not the answer to a nonexistent problem."*

Although we respect that for you the current competition structure is a nonexistent problem, we disagree that this is a nonexistent problem for the Poly membership as a whole for the following reasons.

- a) At the September meeting, after we first proposed a change to two categories, we took a poll of the members in attendance and a clear majority were in favor of making a change to two categories.
- b) There were sufficient requests from Dee's survey for a separate category for composites/highly manipulated images to motivate her to create a committee to address the issue
- c) All seven members of the committee agreed that changes needed to be made to the competition structure
- d) The current competition structure makes the judging process more challenging and at times questionable. Two well respected long time SCACC judges on the committee, Dan Palermo and Paul Shilling, both have indicated that it would make more sense to judge lightly edited images separately from more highly edited or composited images.

Quote 2

"You might be a Photographer if . . . you're scared of bees and spiders but have no problem if they are one inch from your macro."

This and That

By Clark Winsor

As we heard at the last monthly business meeting, there is a move underway to make a very serious change to the way we conduct our competitions. Since 1948, Poly has stood by their charter to be an open club, and encourage its members to express their creative art without rules that would limit them. While other SCACC clubs were building walls, Poly always built bridges.

In 2004, with the development of digital photography, Poly led the way welcoming all digital photographers to join the club and we were the first to allow digital images to compete on an equal level with film images. Changes were made to existing by-laws to protect all creative work in this new digital world. One rule covered both film, and digital works of art. We still have that one rule to guide us today. "Any image entered in a Poly competition must begin with a photograph taken by the artist." Today, some members want additional qualifications on that simple rule. A committee has been formed to find a way to separate Digital art and unmodified digital photographs. They are looking at having two categories.

Let's follow the steps in their proposal.

When a Poly member works on post processing a competition image, they can elect to do only a "limited" amount. They will have to follow a set of rules that define how much is allowed. Then this image can be entered in Category 1.

If a member wants to do more, he/she can elect to enter the resulting image in the "no limits" category. (Category 2) This remains the

old, simple (only one rule) open competition enshrined in Poly's history, the same as it always has been.

Once that choice is made, they will submit the image with the correct category in the title. Our projectionist will then separate the entries and place them in the right category. He or she will have to separate the entries as follows; one category for Digital Art, one category for Photography Art, and one category for the Project category. On the day of the competition the projectionist will have to show the Project entries first, then the "limited" entries, and lastly the "open" entries. This process will continue through the judging process and the viewing at the end of the meeting. The process using the different divisions will also need to be used for the year-end competition, and the year-end program.

If you think this is a lot of work, it is. I have been scratching my head, trying to figure out what all the fuss is about. You know, to date no one has given me a good reason to create all this additional work. No one has told me what we're trying to accomplish, or what the goal is.

Currently, both art forms score very well and compete very well against each other.

I believe what a good friend told me, "That we should leave well enough alone, and our judges will sort it out." There is really no need to reinvent the wheel, and in the process destroy what Poly has stood for since its beginnings.

Talk to you next month,
Clark

Quote 3

"You might be a Photographer if . . . non-photographers view your photo albums and ask why you weren't on the family vacation."

Pros and Cons

Quotes overheard about our competition rules changes.

It's hard to organize and analyze all the possible things members have said (both for and against) about the proposed changes for Poly's competitions; to give our readers a sort of overview, without any attribution. We're just giving you a partial list here (without comment or analysis). Maybe this will help if you are still undecided.

There is no significance to the order of the quotes or how they are placed with respect to one-another.

"Why do we need to change at all?"

"A majority of the members want more than one competition category."

"This would be a violation of one of Poly's founding principles. 'Any and all images must compete on an equal basis.'"

"*Realistic* images do not do well when judged against *Fantasy* images."

"Poly's foundation was based on the principal that there are no limits on the methods and/or technology used to create our images."

"Why is it desirable to have multiple categories with complex rules to separate them?"

"I have no hope of winning if I must compete against highly-manipulated images."

"Having so much variation between images entered in competition is hard for the judges."

"One of Poly's goals is to help photographers with their continued development; having a category that limits Photoshop usage will be a better teaching tool."

"Requiring beginning competitors to '*jump into the deep end of the pool*' will better motivate them to learn more quickly."

"I don't like highly-manipulated, Photoshop images."

"Members who are not Photoshop experts should not have to compete against those that are."

"We should try more categories, Poly has always been willing to try new things."

"More divisions and categories will make the preparation, sorting, and accounting much harder for our projectionist; and he already has a lot to do."

"Having categories and rules about the tools methods used in artistic expression is the antithesis of art. If we aspire to be artists, we must resolve not to accept them."

"We should all be able to use all the tools that are available to us to produce a finished image."

"Poly also has always embraced change. Changes in image styles, and/or in equipment and/or methods and/or technology have always been accepted enthusiastically. So we can try a new category that limits post-processing as long as the "*open*" category continues with no limits."

"It's time to face the facts of life – To be a serious, modern (amateur or professional) photographer, you need to develop your skills in picture taking and in post-processing."

Programs and Coming Events

Josi Ross & Barbara Fletcher

November 5 - Competition

November's Project Theme is "Rim Lighting."

Our judge for this month will be **Sally Vogt**. Here is a little about her, in her own words. A few of her images are also shown below. You can see more at

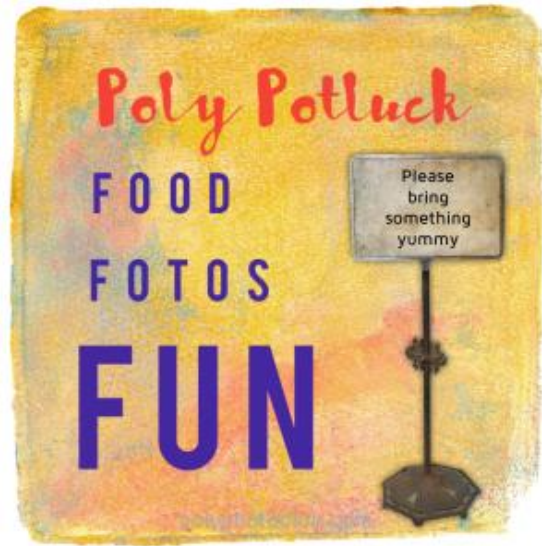
<http://photoartsgroup.zenfolio.com/p837033386>

"German born architect Mies van der Rohe once said 'God is in the details.' As a photographer and designer, I am in constant search of those visual moments and details that, for me, give meaning and excitement to the everyday world.

Seeing, rather than photographing, is my passion and I enjoy these moments with or without a camera. I make these observations whether sitting in a room, riding in a car or exploring the great outdoors. I do it consciously and unconsciously. My greatest joy comes from the visual stimulation that exists as much in the mundane as in the grand. It is in the nuances of light, pattern, color, gesture, proportion, form and expression that I find my entertainment. The camera is merely a tool to record and share these moments with others."



November 19 – Poly End-of-Year Potluck – PAB; 10:AM



This is a potluck - bring something yummy to share. Since we will start eating in the middle of the morning, think Brunch. So you can bring breakfast-type food or something more appropriate for lunch, depending on your own likes and preferences.

We will have informal photo-sharing after the meal. Bring photos or a slideshow of general interest (no more than five minutes) on a disc or flash-drive (do not send them via email).

We'll also have a swap meet/garage sale table for photography items; so bring cameras, lenses, bags, filters, books, whatever, to sell or give. As you know, photographers are always looking for new items they don't really need but want anyway.

