

2015 DVOC Members' Photo Night and Contest

Categories and definition:

- 1) **Birds:** Photos of birds. Judges will prefer photos of live, wild birds that are free and unrestrained.
- 2) **Fauna:** Photos of animals that are not birds. Photos of free and unrestrained living, wild animals will be favored by the judges.
- 3) **Flora:** Photos of plants (including but not limited to flowers), fungi, algae and other life forms that are not animals. Flora photographed in its native habitat will be preferred by the judges. Photographs of seeds, spores, pinecones and other propagules qualify for this category.
- 4) **Scenery:** Photos in this category will capture elements of the great outdoors and not rely upon their subject matter being alive. This is a catch-all category that includes such subjects as landscapes, skies and weather, astronomical photography, rock formations and other landscape elements, rocks, fossils, bones, shells, pollen, fallen leaves, crystals, water, roads, paths, signage, etc. Essentially, these are nonliving subjects that might be encountered while birding, hiking or on an outing for outdoor photography. If plants or animals are within these photos, the photos will only be judged on how well the photos succeed in terms of the inanimate subject matter and any live plants and animals will be treated as part of the scenery.
- 5) **Birders:** Photographs of birders and/or nature photographers.

Maximum submissions per member:

- 1) Birds: 4 photos per member
- 2) Fauna: 2 photos per member
- 3) Flora: 2 photos per member
- 4) Scenery: 2 photos per member
- 5) Birders: 2 photos per member

Image Resolution:

Since these photos will be projected at a DVOC meeting, the recommended photographic resolution is 1024 x 768 (photos can be smaller on one axis or another, but the resolution should be ≤ 0.787 megapixels). To avoid any unwanted compression artifacts in submitted photos, members are advised to submit a photo that fits within this resolution. Any images submitted at higher resolution may be at a disadvantage during judging and may not be projected optimally during the members' photo night. For those submitting images at higher resolution, the judges recommend members also submit copies of the image that will fit within the projector's resolution of 1024 x 768. If photos of this resolution are not submitted, the organizers of the DVOC Members' Photo Night will produce a compressed lower resolution photo for projection purposes.

Awards:

1) The Peregrine Award for Photographic Achievement: Judges will first determine the winner of the Grand Prize, The Peregrine Award for Photographic Achievement. The photo that wins this category will be considered the overall "best-in-show" for the members' photo night and contest. In contrast to previous years, this winner will be considered to merit a category all its own. While the winning photo certainly would win first place within the subject category to which it will have been submitted, this photo will be given the top prize overall, leaving the first place category in the winning photo's subject matter open for competition.

2) The Avocet Award for Artistic Achievement: The second major prize to be awarded will be "The Avocet Award for Artistic Achievement." This award will only be presented to a member who submits a photo that meets the award criteria. This award will honor a qualifying photo that transcends the conventions of wildlife or nature photography in terms of mere documentation. Instead, a competitive photo will approach its subject matter in a manner that illustrates a unique artistic vision for the subject using a unique and artistic photographic process. This award is not required to be given by the judges, and will only be used to honor an appropriately artistic photograph. A photo that wins the Avocet Award is still eligible for a First Place, Second Place or Third Place Award within its particular category.

3) From the remaining pool of entrants, winners of First Place, Second Place and Third Place for each category will be chosen. As described above, the photo that wins the Peregrine Award will not be eligible to receive an additional award, leaving the remaining entrants to contend for these prizes.

Submissions:

Please do not include your name or a personal watermark within the image of submissions for the photography contest. Judging is to be performed blind, and submissions of such marked photos may necessitate obscuring such identifying marks, which can affect the overall appearance and impact of the photographic work.

For each photo submitted, please include the following information along with the photo (but not within the image):

- 1) Title of the photo
- 2) A short description of the subject of the photo
- 3) Location for the photo.
- 4) Category for the photo. Choose one of the following for each photo submitted: Birds, Flora, Fauna, Scenery or Birders.

Prizes:

Currently prizes are as yet to be determined, but will be announced as they become finalized through discussions between the DVOC Vice President and DVOC Treasurer.

Deadline:

The deadline for submissions is 21 October 2015. A special Gmail account has been created for the contest. Please submit photos to the following email address:

photocontest.dvoc@gmail.com

Judging Process:

The details on the judging process may change as needed (for instance, we are currently seeking a third judge), but the process will essentially follow the description below.

Steve Kacir will organize the submitted photos for the judges, so the judges will not have knowledge of the identities of the photographers.

The judges will not be privy to the identities of the photographers. Judging will be performed blind, so that photographs are judged on their merit, and without bias related to the photographer.

Our volunteer judges for 2015 currently include Patty Rehn and Steve Mattan. A third judge is currently being sought.

Judging will take place at the discretion of the judges, but will occur no later than 1 DEC 2015.

Eligibility:

- Only members are eligible to submit photos. Members may only submit their own work for the competition; though, members can submit images to share with the club that were taken by nonmembers. Such photos are ineligible for the competition, but still count towards that member's maximum allowed submissions for the photo's category.
- Contest judges and compiler are ineligible for the competition, but may submit images to share with the club on the DVOC Members' Photo Night. Even contest judges who are not DVOC members may submit images to share during the photo night if they so desire. Judges are held to the same maximum submissions as eligible members.
- Photos that had previously won an award at a past DVOC Photo Contest are ineligible for competition. Likewise, photos submitted to the DVOC Photo Contest in a past year are ineligible for this year's competition.
- Photos may have been taken in any year. The competition is not limited to photos taken during the year of the competition, but only newly submitted photos are eligible for competition.
- Winning Photos will be displayed as low-resolution versions on the DVOC website. Entering photos into the contest constitutes consent for the DVOC to publish these low-resolution versions on the DVOC website. Winners may also want to consider submitting winning photos to *Cassinia* for publication, though this is not required.

Judging Criteria:

While judging photos is necessarily a subjective matter, the judges believe it to be in the interest of the competition to detail certain artistic and photographic elements for which the judges will be looking during the judging process. These elements essentially fall into a few somewhat overlapping categories that are listed below. Keep in mind, these are not meant to be all-inclusive lists and no single photograph is likely to include all the components listed below.

1) Photographic Competency: Lighting, Focus, Exposure, Depth of Field.

2) Artistic Competency: Lighting, Composition, Distance to Subject, Color, Texture, Rule of Thirds or other Appropriate Compositional Style for the subject matter, Interconnectedness of Compositional Elements, Depth of Imagery and/or Depth of Field, Background Choice.

Elements of composition can include such items as pattern, symmetry, texture, depth of field, lines to train the eye, framing, perspective, sense of space, balance & imbalance.

As a helpful hint, past judges had noted particular issues with photos that were cropped as squares – choosing such an aspect ratio can be especially challenging. Unless there is an artistic reason to crop a photo as a square, the judges recommend avoiding such an aspect ratio.

Similarly, cropping a very small element out of a larger photo – regardless of original photo resolution - will often result in an image that is not competitive. This can be due to a flat look of the subject matter, lack of resolution of fine details, odd perspective, or introduction of artifacts by the camera or editing process. Feel free to submit such photos, as they almost always will still look great when they are projected for the photo night. However, if you are feeling competitive, choose photos that don't need much cropping of the original image.

3) Photographic voice: Lighting, Storytelling, Capturing a Moment, Use of Color, Perspective, Viewpoint, Experimentation, Creation of Mood, Connection with viewer, Evocation of Emotion, Title of the Photo, Use of Bokeh or Deep Focus, Strong Moments.

Strong Moments: "When every part of the picture interacts with the other parts in a way that the viewer might think – wow this is special and probably doesn't happen that often."

-- Jacob Maentz of the blog *Light Stalking*

<http://www.lightstalking.com/5-fundamental-elements-of-great-photographs>