

2026 Photo Competition Topics	Competition Date	Competition Type
Open: Color <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>The image must be taken within the past 24 months (from January 2024 through January 2026).</i> The image can be of any subject but it must be a color print. All elements and layers of the image must meet the 24-month date criteria. 	1/14 (submit by 12/24/25)	Print
Symmetry: Perfect Balance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capture an image in camera (not cropped in post processing) that is a balanced and harmonious composition. Elements on one side of the image should be mirrored by elements on the other side, creating a sense of order and visual appeal. The mirrored images can be horizontal, vertical, or radial, where elements radiate outward from a central point. Combine it with other compositional tools like leading lines, patterns, reflections, and textures to create a stronger and more compelling image. 	1/28 (submit by 1/14)	Digital
Stand Out <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capture a person, object, flower, etc. that stands out in a crowd and draws visual attention. Use focus, light, color, texture, patterns, etc. to make the subject stand out from its surroundings. 	2/11 (submit by 1/28)	Print
Brrr... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The image should convey a sense of cold. Capture a person dressed for winter weather, children shivering after leaving a pool, a landscape cloaked in the cool colors of winter, a bird or animal with its feather (fur) fluffed in the cold, an ice-covered stream, or an object, natural or man-made, consisting of snow or ice. 	2/25 (submit by 2/11)	Digital
Close-up or Macro <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Find the extraordinary in the ordinary, the beauty in the details. Your capture of a subject should be close, but it does not need to be a specific 1:1 ratio. Pay attention to focus and sharpness – you may want to focus stack to get good DOF. 	3/11 (submit by 2/25)	Print
Open: “Rule” of Thirds <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>The image must be taken within the past 24 months (from March 2024 through March 2026).</i> 	3/25 (submit by 3/11)	Digital

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The image can be color, B&W, or monochrome. • The image can be of any subject but it must meet the “Rule” of Thirds criteria. • Placing the key subject on intersecting lines, or “power points” creates a stronger image. • All elements and layers of the image must meet the 24-month date criteria. 		
Rust <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capture an image featuring rust. • This image could be an abstract created by zooming in on the rust. • Alternatively, photographing the entire object or an identifiable part of an object can maintain some reality, and evoke thoughts of what might have been. • Look for leading lines, symmetry, textures, patterns, colors, shapes, etc. 	4/8 (submit by 3/25)	Print
Pick a Subject <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topic to be decided at the February digital meeting. • All members may submit one or two topic ideas to be considered. • Topics should be achievable for most members within the given timeframe. • The topic list will be updated to describe the topic after 2/25. • <u>The image must be taken between 2/25 and the submission deadline on 4/8.</u> • All elements and layers of the image must meet the 24-month date criteria. 	4/22 (submit by 4/8)	Digital
Open: Black and White <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>The image must be taken within the past 24 months (from May 2024 through May 2026).</u> • The image must be black and white using only shades of gray, from pure white to pure black. • Capture images that emphasize the interplay of light, shadow, and texture without the distraction of color. • All elements and layers of the image must meet the 24-month date criteria. 	5/13 (submit by 4/22)	Print
Fast Moving Objects <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use a fast shutter speed or flash to freeze the motion of an object in motion. • Capture people participating in sporting events, strong winds blowing people or objects, water moving, etc. • The moving subject should be in sharp focus compared to the background or its surroundings. 	5/27 (submit by 5/13)	Digital
Rainy, Misty, Foggy	6/10 (submit by 5/27)	Print

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The scene must clearly convey rain, mist, or fog. • Rain, mist, and fog can add drama or emotion to an image. • Capture reflections in puddles, raindrops on objects, shooting through a rainy window. • Watch your exposure in fog to avoid overexposure. • Use fog to isolate your subject and simplify your composition. • Look for light sources such as the sun or streetlights to create drama in a foggy scene. 		
Shadows <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shadows should be a defining element as either the primary subject or as a crucial part of the composition. • Photograph early or late in the day to capture long shadows, or use artificial light to create interesting shadows. • Use shadows to guide the viewer's eye. • Abstract images can be created from shadows of interesting shapes and patterns. • Consider black and white mode to focus on the interplay between light and dark. 	6/24 (submit by 6/10)	Digital
Gates <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A gate must be the subject or dominant in the image. • The gate can be old, new, in an urban or rural setting. • Frame your shot to include parts of the surroundings to provide context and a sense of place. • Look for unique perspectives, shooting from different angles, capturing a path leading to the gate or through it, etc. 	7/8 (submit by 6/24)	Print
Open: Photographer's Choice <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>The image must be taken within the past 24 months (from July 2024 through July 2026).</u> • The image can be color, B&W, or monochrome. • All elements and layers of the image must meet the 24-month date criteria. 	7/22 (submit by 7/8)	Digital
Flowers in Nature <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The flowers should be growing naturally in fields, gardens, forests, etc. – not cut or purchased and captured indoors. • Photograph large groupings of flowers, small clusters, individual flowers, macro shots of the details of the flower, or with visiting insects. • The flowers could also be a prominent foreground element in a landscape scene. 	8/12 (submit by 7/22)	Print

Architecture: Stairs & Stairways <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The image can be color, B&W, or monochrome. • Focus on staircases with compelling curves, dramatic angles, perfect symmetry. • Capture spiral staircases, grand architectural steps, worn stone stairs, or stairs on a forest path, etc., • Capture elements around the staircase to tell a story of moving from one place to another. 	8/26 (submit by 8/12)	Digital
Nature Landscape <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The image must include a natural environment – no cityscapes or man-made structures or objects in the scene • Nature landscapes typically focus on larger scenes vs. a more intimate capture. • Pay attention to the light, weather, mood, supporting elements, etc. • Try to have a strong, main subject within the image frame that creates a compelling composition. • A strong foreground can add depth and interest. 	9/9 (submit by 8/26)	Print
Modes of Transportation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capture typical modes of transportation such as cars, planes, boats, trains, bikes - or skateboards, scooters, kayaks, etc. • Consider low angles, close-ups on details, or people engaged with the transportation subject to tell a story. • Try to capture the unique characteristics of each mode of transportation. • Capture the subject within its environment or with supporting elements. • The subject may be abandoned or no longer in use. 	9/23 (submit by 9/9)	Digital
Open: Vibrant Colors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>The image must be taken within the past 24 months (from October 2024 through October 2026).</u> • The image must include vibrant or strong colors, particularly on the main subject. • Create color contrast by using elements with complementary colors. • Choose the correct white balance to avoid unwanted color casts. • Use a polarizing filter to reduce glare and deepen the color saturation. • All elements and layers of the image must meet the date criteria. 	10/14 (submit by 9/23)	Print
Barns	10/28 (submit by 10/14)	Digital

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capture new barns, old barns, decaying barns. Image must be of a barn or parts of a barn, not sheds or other farm structures. • Capture the entire barn in its environment, or focus in on the small details of the barn. • Pay attention to color, texture, lines, patterns, etc. to add interest to your image. • Capture the details – copulas, doors, roof peaks, windows, wood grain, rock foundations, etc. • Do not walk on to private property to photograph a barn without asking the owner for permission. 		
Birds or Birds Related <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capture a bird in flight, at rest or interacting with their environment. • The bird can be captive (farm / pet / zoo) or found in the wild. • Alternatively, capture a bird-related object. These can include bird houses, cages, nests, eggs, feathers, or items made of feathers, or anything taking the shape of a bird (natural or man-made). 	11/11 (submit by 10/28)	Print
No Digital Competition – Only one meeting in November	November	Digital
No Print Competition – Only one meeting in December	December	Print
Open: Your Favorite Image of the Year - 2026 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>The image must be taken in 2026.</u> • The image can be of any subject. • The image can be B&W, color, or monochrome. • Can be taken at any location, local or otherwise. • If an image has placed first through sixth in any PCGC club competition during 2026, it will still be eligible to be entered into the “Open – Your Favorite of the Year” competition, as long as it meets the other criteria for this topic. • All elements and layers of the image must meet the date criteria. 	12/9 (submit by 11/11)	Digital