

CMPG Handbook

Last Revised: June 2006

Operational Draft

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1 Organization

1.1 Mission

“The Central Maryland Photographers' Guild exists to further the art and craft of photography, with a concentration on educating its members in the areas of photographic technique, use of equipment and in concepts of composition and aesthetics.”

So, what does this mean? CMPG is founded on the ideal that the more experienced should help those just learning. We are centered on developing and sharing our skills as photographers. Thus, we concentrate on talks, seminars, demonstrations, workshops, and critique. We do not emphasize competition or judgment.

1.2 Culture

1.3 Goal

CMPG's goal is to provide an environment where photographers of all backgrounds and skill levels can get together and learn from each other. We are primarily an educational and mentoring organization, concentrating on the improvement of our skills.

As such, we consistently strive to provide our members with opportunities for learning, critique, discussion, and exhibition. We also endeavor to maintain and constantly expand our Internet presence through our website, digital galleries, and interactive forums, as well as through participation in other online communities.

1.4 History

The Central Maryland Photographers' Guild was conceived in the spring and summer of 2003 and began life as an internet mailing list among a number of friends and photography enthusiasts. Most participants were members of other local photo groups, and they soon saw need for an organization that satisfied their desire to grow and mentor.

CMPG was officially launched in November, 2003 with our first meeting in Ellicott City, MD. The founders recognized that targeting the area west of Baltimore, centered in Howard and western Baltimore Counties, would attract an audience that perhaps might not travel to other clubs in the metro areas of Baltimore and Washington, DC. In addition, there seemed to be a desire in the local amateur photography community to have a group that would concentrate on skills development.

In late 2004, CMPG moved its meeting location to the Howard Country Library, East Columbia Branch, and concentrated on growing its member rolls, which at that point were still heavily slanted toward an existing network of friends and acquaintances. As our needs outgrew that of the available space, we moved to the Chapelgate Presbyterian campus in January, 2006.

Throughout this time, we have continued to expand our programs to incorporate presentations and demos from members and regional professionals. We have evolved our techniques for providing group critique and feedback, and have endeavored to plan club shoots and gatherings. In October, 2004 the Guild presented a showing of over 100 pieces in a prominent area gallery.

Currently, we are embarking on a program of expansion, maturation, and growth that will continue to serve our membership and keep CMPG on the path to being one of the premier amateur photographic organizations in the region.

Operational Draft

1.5 Officers

CMPG is not currently an incorporated entity. We have “officers” only in the sense that certain individuals have voluntarily taken on leadership roles. Officers must be fully paid members.

As of the date of this document, two “officer” positions are implemented: the Director and Assistant Director. CMPG currently operates on the “benevolent dictatorship” model, with these positions held by individuals until such time as they choose to abdicate their responsibilities. In reality, they form a co-directorate which handles the organizational and business matters necessary to keeping the Guild in operation, with copious input from the body of members. As such, they are designated Acting Director and Acting Asst. Director.

At such point as CMPG becomes an incorporated non-profit organization, these positions will transition to elected officers, supported by a Board of Directors.

1.6 Positions of Responsibility

In addition to the Officers, CMPG maintains other positions of responsibility. These individuals ensure that vital tasks are attended to in order to serve members and potential members. These positions are only open to fully paid members, as they are extremely important to the day-to-day and month-to-month operation of the Guild.

This list of positions can and will expand as roles are identified, defined, and filled. Some of these positions may, over time, transition to officer roles and be subject to election terms.

Secretary: Maintains CMPG records. Holds and maintains master copies of printed materials (such as this handbook). Maintains contact lists and membership roster, including a member directory. Assembles and publishes meeting agendas.

Online Services Coordinator: Maintains, updates, upgrades, and otherwise assumes responsibility for the CMPG website, the cmpg.org domain, and all that it encompasses. Includes arranging for payment of services, maintaining software licenses where necessary, administration of the site Content Management Systems, and general web development. This position requires proficiency in HTML and CSS layouts, along with basic knowledge of Perl and PHP. Familiarity with the Movable Type CMS or similar software is also preferable.

Publicity Coordinator: Handles announcements to the local, regional, and community press regarding meetings, events, and exhibitions. Maintains a media contact list, and assumes responsibility for promoting CMPG activities. Organizational skills are a must, plus the persistence required to navigate phone trees, department heads, editorial staffers, and production staff in order to get our message to the public. Also tasked with the production of promotional materials (flyers and similar).

Exhibitions Coordinator: Researches opportunities for the exhibition of Guild works. Coordinates staging of exhibitions, including acting as liaison between the Guild and venue. Works with the Publicity Coordinator to generate promotional materials, press releases, and public announcements of exhibitions.

2 Membership

2.1 Eligibility

Membership in the CMPG is open to all. We do not discriminate on the basis of age, race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, nationality, familial status, or level of skill. We welcome everyone from the absolute beginner to the experienced photographer.

We welcome professionals. As a group focused on skills development, professionals offer experience and knowledge that most amateurs rarely have the opportunity to share. Though CMPG is primarily an amateur organization, we hope we can offer a more informal environment where working photographers can just have fun. The only thing we ask is that you please keep your business separate from your Guild activities.

Youth members are welcome. Those under the age of 16 must be accompanied by an adult sponsor to both events and meetings. Sponsors must be current members of CMPG. Children younger than age twelve should probably not attend, but will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

2.2 Prospective Members

If you are attending CMPG activities/meetings, and have not paid membership dues, you are considered a Prospective Member, unless you are a guest of a paid member (see "Guests"). You may not have access to the full range of resources afforded paid members, and may be expected to pay event fees and/or surcharges for activities above and beyond the cost to members.

Prospective Members may attend up to three regular meetings (not necessarily consecutive) before incurring an obligation to become a paid member in order to continue association with CMPG.

2.3 Guests

Guests of members are accorded an equivalent status to Prospective Members, with the exception of non-meeting events and activities. A member may bring a guest to any scheduled event or activity provided the guest pays any associated non-member activity fee or surcharge. A guest may also attend up to three regular, formal meetings before being expected to contribute dues to continue attendance.

2.4 Members

An individual is a Member of CMPG if he or she has completed the Membership Application, abides by the terms and policies described in this handbook, and has paid the current yearly dues in full. At this time, dues are collected at the beginning of each calendar year, and are good for that year. In future, dues may transition to a rolling twelve-month term.

Members are entitled to all benefits of the Guild, including but not exclusively: attendance to all meetings, eligibility for all talks, seminars, and activities, access to all online services, discounts and group rates for CMPG activities when available, event attendance free of non-member surcharges, and eligibility for Guild exhibitions.

2.5 Non-Members/General Public

Certain events may be marketed not only to members, but to the general public. Day seminars, fund-raising events, and so forth may be open to all, and members of the public would not be considered guests or prospective members. Non-members, while they are not part of our organization, are to be treated with courtesy.

2.6 Dues

The current annual dues fee for CMPG is \$25 per year, per person.

Dues are collected at the January meeting of every year. Memberships remain in effect for a term of the current calendar year, from January 1st to December 31st. New members will be pro-rated as of the date of their application in the amount of \$2.25 per month remaining in the current year. Current members renewing their memberships after January of the current year are responsible for the full \$25 annual dues.

3 Meetings

CMPG holds regular meetings, at a minimum, on the fourth Wednesday of every month. These meetings are opportunities to not only cover Guild business, but to present educational material and hold critique sessions. Occasionally, meetings may be called on an ad-hoc basis either for the entire Guild, or for specific groups/committees, to work on Guild business issues.

Though meetings are mostly informal, there is an agenda. Discussion about the coming months' agendas can be found in the members-only area of the CMPG online forums (<http://www.cmpg.org/ipforums>). There, members can suggest or request items for inclusion, as well as discuss the proposed agenda items. Members can also contact the Guild officers to suggest or discuss upcoming meeting agendas.

Even though meetings are not held to a formal framework (rules of order, etc.), they are times to cover necessary operational items, and to engage some form of instructional or educational program. As such, we ask that attendees give the proceedings (whether business, a critique, or a talk/demo) the courtesy of their attention.

3.1 Inclement Weather Policy

In general, we will follow the policy of the Chapelgate Presbyterian campus. In case of inclement weather, please check the website (www.cmpg.org) for announcements as to whether or not a meeting or event will be held. We will post all necessary information there as soon as we have it. If there is no announcement of cancellation, you can assume that the scheduled meeting is still being held.

3.2 Attendance

Meeting attendance is not mandatory. However, our primary mission is as an educational and mentoring group. Members who wish to take part in that process, and who wish to have input into operational decisions, should make an effort to attend as frequently as possible.

3.3 Business

At the beginning of each meeting, the Guild will address any and all outstanding or new business matters. If there is a time limit due to the evening's program, agenda items get preference over topics raised from the floor. In addition, only full members may submit items to the agenda.

We will make every effort to address all topics, and will carry over items not discussed to the next month's agenda. If pressing issues arise, a separate meeting may be called to deal with them.

When a discussion requires involved input or dialog from a small subset of the membership, such topics should be tabled and addressed in a smaller group for the sake of expediency.

3.4 Critique

Critical viewing and commentary are vital elements of our mission. In order to learn and develop our skills, examination and evaluation of our work by our peers is very important.

Our critique sessions occur every two months, and are centered on photographic assignments that are mostly chosen from the educational programs presented. Normally, a seminar or talk will be given, and the next month an assignment will be proposed based on that seminar. From there, the photographer has two months to prepare and shoot the assignment, and have photographs ready for evaluation.

Participation in critique is not mandatory, but is encouraged. Likewise, it is not required to turn in photos from the bimonthly assignments. However, they are chosen to challenge participants and provide for developing one's technique.

3.4.1 Guidelines

Critique, or critical commentary, is centered on polite, but honest, feedback.

As a presenter, be prepared for surprises. The photo that is your personal favorite may not strike a chord with others. Likewise, an image that you may find marginal could speak to someone else differently, or catch the eye of the group. If you used a specific technique for a reason, state it, but also accept that someone may question that technique or suggest a different method of execution.

If you are supplying critique, please be respectful of the person submitting their photo(s). Be honest, concise, and direct in your comments, but don't be discourteous. Try to concentrate on the execution of the work: the technique, composition, use of subject, and how well the photographer has executed the assignment. If you like or dislike a particular aspect, be prepared to offer an explanation as to why, so that the photographer can understand how their work is being interpreted. Try to balance negative and positive comments.

3.4.2 Methods

Depending on the number of participants, and the time available, we may use one of several critique methods to ensure that everyone who wishes to show their work can do so. Typically, we restrict the number of prints shown to a maximum of three for any given subject. If needs be, the number of prints per individual may be decreased.

The first and simplest method works well with smaller numbers of pieces. We basically take the time we have available and divide it up among the number of presenters. Each photographer then briefly introduces the photo(s) they're offering for critique, and the floor is opened to commentary for the entire time period.

The second method we use frequently is what we call a 3-2-1 critique. Each photographer can show up to three pieces. The photographer has up to two minutes to introduce their work. Then, each attendee who wishes to comment gets one minute to concisely state their criticism. You do not have to offer feedback for every photo – you may pass to the next person if you don't have a specific comment.

Last, if there are a large number of participants in the critique, and it's a subject where we want to allow for more involved discussion, we may break the meeting into groups for open critique. This allows for a more focused examination of photos, but not everyone will get to comment on every work.

3.4.3 *Featured Photos*

After every critique session, we select a number of photographs to be featured on the front page of our website. These images are picked by the critique participants as being those that are the best execution of the photo assignment.

Only members are eligible to submit their images for consideration. You must have a CMPG gallery account into which you can upload your photo for display on the site. All members, guests, and prospective members may cast a ballot for the Featured Photos.

At the end of the evening, we will reserve fifteen minutes so that prints can be laid out for viewing and voting. All ballots must be cast before the meeting wraps; we will tally the scores, and announce the top four photos. Please attempt to stay around until you find out whether or not your photograph has been chosen.

It is not necessary to submit every image presented for critique to the Featured Photo ballot. All photos to be considered must meet the following:

- Printed at least 4x6". 8x10" or larger is encouraged.
- Printed on photographic stock (either by inkjet or by a lab on silver halide paper). Please don't submit inkjet images on plain copy paper.
- The name of the photographer and an identifying title for the photo must be visible on the print.

Photos do not need to be framed or matted, but you may do so if you wish. Critique and balloting are centered on the print itself, not the display.

When voting:

- You will be asked to rank your top three picks. First choice receives three points, second receives two, and third gets one point. These are tallied and the four images with the top scores will be displayed over the next two months, starting the Wednesday following our critique meeting.
- You must indicate both a) the name of the photographer, and b) the title of the photo *as given by the photographer*. If your name and title do not match a submitted print, your vote(s) will be discarded.

If you have a photo chosen as a Featured Photo:

- In order to be displayed on the website, we need to have the image in digital form. If you plan on submitting a print for voting, please take the time to have a digital version available before you need it. If you are submitting a print from a non-digital source, take a few minutes and make a scan from the print or film ahead of time, have a lab make a scan for you, or if neither is available to you, ask if another member can help.

- Files submitted for website display should be no bigger than 640 pixels in their longest dimension, and in JPEG format. The web admins will not resize, crop, or convert files for display. Files that don't meet these guidelines will be returned to the submitter to be fixed.
- If you wish for a copyright notice to be displayed on your image, please add it using the text tool of your image editor before submitting it for display.
- It is the photographer's responsibility to provide image files. We prefer that you have a CMPG gallery account, and upload the photos to your own album. If you cannot do this, please attach your photo to guild@cmpg.org with the subject "Featured Photo from Critique on <date>". The web admin(s) will not chase you down for your files. If your photo has not been uploaded or sent to the admins by the time it is to be displayed, the next photo in line will be substituted.
- With your photo, provide as much detail as you can: location, subject, technical information (camera, film, lens, lighting, aperture, exposure time, etc.), and any other useful or interesting facts about it.

3.5 Instructional

3.5.1 Seminars/Demonstrations

Seminars are talks given either by members or guest speakers. Typically geared to run an hour to an hour and a half, they may include demonstrations of equipment or techniques.

Any member may give a seminar. Please contact the directors if you have an idea for a topic, or would like to request a subject be covered. If you are planning a seminar, please coordinate appropriately to ensure that you have sufficient time and/or equipment (slide projectors, digital projector, screens, etc.). You are responsible for your own material and preparation, and should bring any equipment you deem necessary.

Past seminars have featured professionals speaking on the topics of nature and landscape photography, event photography, and more. In addition, members have given talks on macro/closeup, action photography, vacation photos, and color management.

3.5.2 Workshops

For some more technical aspects, CMPG may hold short workshops of an hour and a half to two hours. Typically led by a member, they are hands-on activities that concentrate on a particular topic, skill set, or technique. For workshops, members are heavily encouraged to bring their own cameras to participate. Typically, we will be actively shooting a subject.

In the past, we have held workshops for using natural lighting and studio strobes. Other potential topics include portraiture, still-life subjects, macro, and composition.

3.5.3 Roundtable Discussions

If there are areas of general interest that perhaps don't have a member who is willing to assemble a presentation, we may hold a roundtable. This is a group discussion where more than one person can offer knowledge or expertise in the evening's topic.

Some roundtables may be open discussions; others may be led by an individual or a panel.

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4 Activities and Events

4.1 Coordinating

Every event requires a coordinator in order to be scheduled on the CMPG calendar. The coordinator's responsibilities are: submit the event to the CMPG Events calendar via the web site or get all information to one of the officers for posting, make any arrangements with the facility necessary, arrange any payment or group discounts with the facility (if applicable), and collect advance payments and/or events fees.

Optionally, the event coordinator may also work with the Publicity Coordinator to produce announcements or flyers in the case of an event open to the public.

4.2 Guidelines

When scheduling an event, it's necessary to provide a date, time, meeting place, location, and directions, along with contact information. It would also be prudent once the event is on the calendar to start a forum thread under Photo Events. Signup for events can also take place at our regular monthly meetings.

An event should be composed of a seminar, shoot, or field-trip that is pertinent to CMPG's photographic activities. Shoots can be held at any location where we would be permitted to photograph. Shoots do not have to be confined to a single location, but can include a walking tour, hike, or other similar activity. Field-trips can include gallery viewings, museum visits, tours, or any other lightly-structured activity. Seminars require a meeting facility, a speaker or leader, and advance planning – preferably 3 months or better from the intended date, especially if open to the public.

Events are not just photo shoots, gallery trips, or lectures. They are also social opportunities. If at all possible, include plans for an informal meal somewhere in the day's itinerary. For example, an afternoon museum visit can conclude with a late lunch in a nearby café.

We encourage coordinators to attempt to arrange group discounts, docent tours, and other extras in order to make their events a fuller experience.

4.3 Fees

The collection and handling of fees depend on the specifics of the event.

In cases where no cost is involved to access a location (a shoot in a public park or garden, a simple visit to a museum that does not charge an admission fee, etc.), then no fee arrangements need to be made.

Likewise, if the event involves a standard, per-attendee cost with no group arrangements – a service charge for a state park, an admission fee, ticket, etc. – then it is up to the organizer whether or not they wish to collect advance payment or let each attendee handle their own admission.

However, if group arrangements are being made (and we highly encourage this), then the event coordinator should collect all fees in advance.

Since there is then an advantage to attending as part of the CMPG group, a non-member event fee should be charged. In the case of a group discount, members should pay the

discounted rate, while non-members should pay the discounted rate plus a non-member event fee. The event fee should be a nominal amount, the idea being to make the price appealing - hopefully less than a standard admission, and never more than what someone would pay to attend the same event independent of the Guild.

In the case of special docent arrangements, guided tours, etc. a surcharge for non-members should be specified. All non-member surcharges are to be remitted to the director for deposit in the CMPG operational fund.

For any meal portion of an event, each attendee is responsible for his or her costs. If you are arranging advance reservations for food, please ensure that separate checks (or the equivalent) are available, either by the nature of the venue or by calling ahead.

If there are any questions about fees and arrangements, or if you just want some additional help in planning, please don't hesitate to contact any of the officers.

4.4 Public Seminars

This section not yet complete.

5 Exhibitions

5.1 Locations

5.2 Terms

5.3 Works for Sale

5.4 Participation

5.5 Responsibilities

This section not yet complete. Pending working draft from Officers and Exhibitions Coordinator.

6 Code of Ethics

As a Member or Prospective Member of CMPG, we must all agree to the principles on which the organization was founded.

- We will give every member the respect and courtesy they deserve.
 - Every member deserves to be treated with respect and common courtesy. Every member deserves to be treated as a peer, to have their opinions considered, and their efforts evaluated fairly. Presenters deserve the attention and courtesy of their audience.
- We will foster an environment of cooperation, learning, and mentorship.
 - All members are teachers. All members are students. We each bring a variety of skills to the table. Share your unique talents or your experience, and be willing to learn from others.
- Plagiarism is never acceptable. We will never take credit for another's work.
- We are ethical, and respect the copyrights of others.
 - As we expect to exercise our rights as artistic creators, we must always respect the rights of others, give credit where due, and abide by the rules of fair use.
- We are honest. We never falsify documentation or misrepresent our work.
 - In the age of widely-available image manipulation technology, we require our members to disclose all substantial manipulation of subject matter beyond that of basic retouch. Photo composites, manufactured images, and collages need to be described as such.
- We respect the facilities, equipment, time, and work of others.
 - Whether our regular meeting places, event locations, or public places, we always leave things better than we found them. In the field, we take only pictures and leave only footprints. All belongings and work of others should be treated with the utmost care with which you would treat your own.
- We conduct ourselves professionally. At all times, we are representatives of the Guild.
 - Whether officially or not, your association with CMPG means that in the eyes of the public, you represent the Guild. Always strive for the best impression, be honest and ethical.
- We will respect and obey all laws, codes and legal statutes.
 - Guild members will respect the property and personal rights of others, all trespassing laws, and other legal elements as they pertain to photography. This means asking permission before shooting on private property, respecting the wishes of property owners, and obtaining releases as necessary.

- We must always be aware of conflict of interest, and avoid the appearance of commercial affiliation.
 - CMPG must always operate within the parameters of a non-profit organization, and may not promote or form associations with for-profit entities. Avoid any and all conflicts between this principle and your professional life.
- We will have fun doing it.
 - We're passionate about photography, yes. However, we're not just serious all the time. CMPG is about making the art and craft of photography enjoyable for everyone.

It's our obligation to abide by these principles. If you have a question about any of the Code of Ethics, are witness to or suspect misconduct, or are involved in a situation that may come into conflict with the Code, please address your concerns with the directors.

7 Misconduct

We hope that it will be the rare occurrence that any CMPG member would conduct themselves in anything other than a professional manner.

However, it is still necessary that we enumerate the processes for handling any incident of misconduct within the Guild.

7.1 What Constitutes Misconduct

Misconduct is chronic or egregious behavior that conflicts with the CMPG Code of Ethics, interferes with the operation of the Guild, interferes with another member's participation in Guild activities, or casts the Guild in an unprofessional light.

For instance, any instance of plagiarism, comments or actions that make for a hostile environment for other members, or actions that reflect poorly on the organization would be considered misconduct.

7.2 Reporting/Complaints

Any concerns or complains about any CMPG member's conduct should be addressed, privately, to the acting CMPG officers. The officers will take all necessary steps to resolve the issue, either by addressing the situation in a group context or by private discussion with the individual(s) involved.

Please do not escalate any conflict with another member individually. Intervene only if necessary, you see unsafe conduct, or become aware of an immediate need to halt a situation in progress.

In the case of a complaint directed at a particular individual, we will maintain confidentiality to the best of our ability. In some cases, however, it may be necessary for all parties to engage in face-to-face dialog to truly resolve a given issue.

7.3 Remediation

Actions taken to resolve any conduct issues may range from a simple chat to termination of membership privileges, depending on the severity and scope of the incident. In all but the most severe incidents, all attempts will be made to remedy the problem in the least disruptive manner possible.

Remediation of misconduct may follow any or all of the following stages:

7.3.1 Informal Warning

Upon the receipt of a complaint or the occurrence of any incident, the acting officers will gather information from all those involved. There may or may not be a meeting between the concerned parties to resolve differences. If misconduct is evident, the officers will address the issue with the responsible party(ies) to discuss what conduct is expected of them going forward.

Example: two members have a personality conflict, which is becoming disruptive. Other members are complaining, so the officers speak with both parties and ask them to be aware that their disagreement is making others uncomfortable. All parties agree to be more respectful of each other.

7.3.2 Formal Warning

In more severe cases, or in the case of a recurring problem, the responsible parties will be formally warned that their conduct is unacceptable and/or is causing problems for the Guild. Further incidents will result in more drastic remedies.

Example: the members who were previously warned about their conflict are again experiencing disagreement, and their issue is disrupting activities or meetings. The members are both warned that their conduct is interfering with the operation of the Guild and is generating a hostile environment for other users. If their conduct does not improve, they may be subject to temporary or permanent loss of membership privileges.

7.3.3 Suspension of Privileges

A member has stepped continuously or drastically out of bounds, and it is necessary to remove certain privileges either to prevent further problems, or as a penalty.

Privileges suspended should be appropriate to the incident being addressed, such as removing access to online galleries and forums in the case of their being abused. However, suspension may encompass all membership privileges in serious cases, including meeting and event attendance. Also, suspension of certain privileges may be permanent, even if membership is not terminated.

Example: a member has contributed a print to a group exhibition that is later found to not be his/her own work. The member may be excluded from future exhibitions for a period determined by the Guild officers.

7.3.4 Termination of Membership

In the most drastic situations, individuals involved in gross misconduct may be invited to sever their association with the Guild. If conduct issues are repeated without improvement, or an incident of such irreconcilable severity has occurred, it may be best for all parties that Guild membership be terminated permanently. This involves loss of all CMPG member privileges and exclusion from all Guild meetings and events.

7.4 Appeal

In a case where a member feels that they are the unfair recipient of disciplinary action, they may address their concerns to the acting officers. The officers will review their situation and may re-open a dialog with all parties to resolve the issue amicably. However, the decision of the officers is final.

The only exception is if the aggrieved member wishes for their appeal to be public, at which point the issue will be put to the entire membership for a consensus vote. This vote will be taken as advisement to the officers as to the wishes of the members, and a final decision will be based on this.