



IMAGES ALBERTA
CAMERA CLUB

SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP (SIG) LEADERSHIP MANUAL

Updated by SIG Leaders, November 2021

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the Special Interest Groups (SIG) Leadership Manual is to provide useful information for both current and new SIG Leaders, and those considering the assumption of that role.

The SIG Leadership Manual follows from the document titled “Policy with Respect to Special Interest Groups,” which defines the role that SIGs play within Images Alberta Camera Club (IACC) and can be found on the Club website. The SIG policy document is intended to achieve consistency of operation of the SIGs within the IACC framework. The SIG Leadership Manual presents information that has been gathered from the experience of the various SIGs and is useful to new and current SIG leaders to organize and operate their groups. The SIGs themselves operate independently from each other and each leader tailors group activities to their SIG.

SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS CONCEPT

Members of each SIG share a common interest in a particular topic or focus area within photography. Topics can range from macro to black and white to low light photography. SIGs provide an opportunity for members to pursue common areas of photographic interest for pleasure and learning and offer an additional means for social interaction and camaraderie within the IACC. SIGs can evolve over time and sometimes will be disbanded depending on member interests.

In general, activities are intended for the SIG members only, but there may be occasions when it is possible to extend an invitation to the IACC general membership. When feasible, this is encouraged as it gives other Club members an opportunity to experience the SIG firsthand. When this type of activity is proposed, the SIG leader should involve the SIG Chair, who will provide coordination between the SIG and the Club. Also, two SIG’s can share a meeting on a common topic such as Black and White and Landscape.

Other ways for a SIG to interface with the Club are to take part in exhibits, slide shows, talks or presentations. This benefits the Club members by giving them exposure to what the SIG does. The SIG benefits from establishing and maintaining a profile for their group, and the general SIGs activities within the Club.

One must be a member of the IACC to join a SIG.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

The operation of SIGs within the IACC falls under the purview of the SIG Chair. The SIG Chair has a responsibility to represent the special Interest groups and their members on the IACC Board of Directors. The SIG Chair is also responsible to the Special Interest Groups and the SIG Leaders to offer any assistance they might need to create and/or conduct any specific special interest group.

In general, the role of the SIG Chair is to:

- represent SIG leaders at IACC Board meetings and provide reports,
- communicate SIG needs to the Board and Board needs to SIG leaders, and
- encourage communication between SIG leaders.

The SIG Chair will provide ongoing support to the membership and leaders of special interest groups in the following ways:

- assisting with the initial setup of the SIG,
- promoting the SIGs within the IACC and communicating relevant information between the SIG and the Club membership,
- coordinating the SIG registration process for Club members and providing updated registration information to SIG leaders,
- helping with specific issues, as needed, and
- ensure any recorded SIG meetings are retained in the Club files for an appropriate length of time.

The SIG Chair maintains a list of Club members who are registered in all SIGs, based on the Club's SIG registration process. The SIG Chair will communicate to the SIG Leader, the names and contact information of registered members of the SIG. When registration changes occur that involve a SIG, the SIG Chair will advise the Leader.

Each SIG has a Leader or Co-Leaders, whose primary responsibilities are to provide overall coordination for the group and to serve as the focal point of communications within the group, and between the group and the SIG Chair. The SIG Leader does not carry all the responsibility for the functioning of the group. SIG members will also share in the responsibilities of the operation of their group. Members of a SIG can contribute in a number of ways:

- actively participating in the group's activities,
- providing ideas for group activities,
- sharing in the organization, hosting, and coordination of meetings, outings and workshops,
- teaching and mentoring other group members, and
- providing input in determining the future direction of the SIG, and

FUNCTIONAL CHARACTERISTICS OF SIGs

SIGs carry out their activities outside of the Club's formal structure. In general, SIGs operate in an independent fashion from the Club, are self-managed, yet participate as part of the Club operation.

The IACC supports the SIGs in:

- polling Club membership for new SIG suggestions,
- facilitating the formation of new SIGs,
- providing promotion within the Club,
- communicating to Club members, and
- assisting with SIG initiations, operations, and, when necessary, disbandment.

SIG INITIATION

The initial meeting of a new SIG can be arranged and chaired by a representative of the group and/or the SIG Chair. The SIG Chair will ensure that an announcement is made to the Club membership to give members an opportunity to participate.

Topics that should be addressed at the first meeting or soon after, should include:

- agreement on the scope of the special interest to be pursued and the name of the group
- location of meetings – virtual, in person or combination of the two
- dates and time for meetings (e.g., second Tuesday of each month at 7:00 pm)
- selection of a leader/coordinator for the group
- the structure of activities for the group (meetings, outings, workshops, etc.)
- funding the group, if applicable.

It is not necessary to finalize all of the above items at the first meeting. Some of these may evolve and change over time, but the more defined they are at the beginning, the better.

When setting the schedule for future meetings, try to avoid schedule conflicts between the new SIG and Club activities (e.g., outings, workshops). The Club activity should take precedence if it has already been booked. Also, it is advisable to avoid schedule conflicts between the new SIG meetings and those of other SIGs. The SIG Chair can provide guidance on the meeting schedule for other SIGs. Most scheduled SIG activities are shown on the IACC website calendar.

Some SIGs, by their nature, have a classroom workshop focus and structure. Historically, these have been classified as SIGs versus Club workshops, as they are multi-session, and carry on for an extended period of time, compared to single-session workshops that are offered as Club workshops. They are often initiated by a member of the Club with particular expertise in an area and will often be led by this individual. With this type of SIG, it is helpful if the leader provides a description and list of topics to be covered, available to Club members before registering, to help them decide whether the SIG is

appropriate for them. Many of the first meeting topics mentioned earlier will likely have been addressed by the SIG Leader by the time the group meets.

SIG LEADERSHIP

The SIG leader may lead a small group of members, or the SIG could grow into a larger group as time goes by. Over time, leadership of the SIG will likely change. This section is intended to provide some guidelines for current and new SIG leaders and to ease the transition of some members into SIG leadership. Leadership of a SIG isn't difficult with a common interest in photography. The SIG leader needs to be able to facilitate conversations between SIG members, encourage those who have become silent, seek feedback and lead the meeting to conclusion. Meetings are kept simple and typically end after an hour and a half.

Some SIGS employ a simple sharing and discussion of images while others might have a structure such as LEARN, DO, SHARE where there is a demonstration of techniques, sharing of a photo exercise, and showing of images with discussion. Some SIGS hold outings specific to the SIG and separate from regular club outings.

From time to time, a SIG Leader will choose to step down from their role. Development of potential leaders is necessary to allow for an orderly transition and to maintain functioning of the SIG. The SIG Leader can engage members to lead SIG topics and activities over the year and encourage them to take on additional SIG responsibilities. Co leadership also provides a means to distribute SIG activities among the members and allows experience to be passed on. Alternatively, the SIG Chair can solicit interest from within the Club if no one from the SIG wishes to assume leadership.

SIG Leaders can also retain information related to the SIG for reference by future leaders. There are several ways this can be done:

- Record SIG meetings and incorporate them into the Club's digital assets,
- A Google Drive account can be used to provide articles and publicly free eBooks to members, and
- Leaders may also keep a list of websites and web articles that demonstrate a technique or concept relevant to the SIG interests.

MEMBER PRIVACY AND IMAGE OWNERSHIP

- Maintaining the privacy of SIG members is essential. The blind carbon copy (BCC) option should be used to send emails to the SIG membership. SIG leaders can only provide contact information for SIG members with permission.
- SIG members maintain image ownership over all images submitted to SIG leaders for showing during the meetings. Upon the completion of the meeting, SIG Leaders are expected to delete all submitted images from their computer systems.

SIG OPERATION

SIG activities should be chosen within the agreed upon scope of the group's area of interest. Most SIGs hold regularly scheduled meetings and may also organize and take part in occasional outings and/or workshops in their area of interest. However, they are not limited to only these activities if they choose to structure the group in other ways. The scope can also be decided prior to each meeting, with a Call for Meeting Agenda items solicited from each SIG member.

SIG Membership

Any Club member can join a SIG by using the Club's online SIG application form, currently based on Jotform. The majority of the members typically sign up at the beginning of the year, but new members can join any time either by contacting the SIG leader or using the application form. Most members find that about three SIGs is the most they can attend given their own personal time constraints. Also, for in person meetings, SIG membership could be limited by the size of the venue. The leader and members will need to decide the size of the SIG and in some cases, a SIG may be split into two groups according to interests.

Experience level of SIG members can be quite broad within the group. One of the challenges for a SIG is to strike a balance between having an environment where less experienced members are encouraged to participate and ask questions without feeling intimidated, while also allowing the group to explore concepts that appeal to advanced members.

The SIG Chair maintains a list of Club members who are registered in all SIGs, based on the Club's SIG registration process. The SIG Chair will communicate to the SIG Leader, the names and contact information of registered members of the SIG. When registration changes occur that involve a SIG, the SIG Chair will advise the Leader.

Meetings

Most groups meet once per month. Meeting venues may include:

- members' residences,
- employer meeting space,
- rented space (the SIG Chair may be able to provide guidance about possible sources of rental space, contact persons and estimated costs),
- sponsor-donated space (e.g., London Drugs, Vistek) (the use of this space must be booked well in advance),
- public library meeting rooms where members pay a prorated share for the use of the space on a per meeting basis,
- Zoom, Google Meets or Microsoft Teams meetings are also possible. These can be used in place of in person meetings when members are outside the Edmonton region, driving is difficult, or health restrictions apply. The Club Zoom account can be used to conduct Zoom meetings longer than the free 40 minute limit, and

- Hybrid meetings which are a combination of in person and virtual meetings. The Club has equipment available for this type of meeting.

The structure of meetings is up to the group. However, for most SIGs it includes one or more of the following:

- Brief introductions sometimes ten or fifteen minutes before the meeting, with casual conversation and social time within a group smaller than larger Club membership,
- Educational activities – image editing, YouTube videos, book excerpts, etc.,
- Image sharing – discussions on why the photo interested the member, any editing and comments from other members on suggested improvements or appreciation,
- Image editing – My Image, your Edit and discussion of the results. Sometimes image sharing has a certain theme – B&W, contrast, exposure, etc.,
- Other discussions related to the SIG members’ interests,
- Upcoming Club activities, and
- Next meeting date and time

In general, the SIG Leader should keep meetings simple, yet at times, explore complex topics to broaden members’ understanding of the topic. Some helpful tips are provided at the end of this document. The main topics of the meeting should be completed in an hour and a half or less. If meetings run longer, the Leader should indicate that those who wish to continue can remain for additional discussion.

SIG members should remember that when they are in public spaces (outings, etc.) they are ambassadors for IACC and should always act in a manner that reflects well on IACC and its membership.

Outings

Either occasionally, or as a regular part of the group’s operation, a SIG may organize a group outing at a location or event that suits the nature of the group’s special interest area. Outings should be planned and carried out in a manner that ensures safety for both the group members and the public. The Club has policies that in some cases, require liability waivers, releases and other administrative requirements that must be in place before the event occurs.

Workshops

A SIG may occasionally hold a workshop to cover a particular aspect of the groups’ special interest. Most often, workshops are led by an experienced member of the SIG or by a guest. Considerations for workshop planning should include space requirement, selection of an appropriate venue, and equipment requirements. Most workshops in the Club are organized by the Workshop Chair and communicated to the Club membership.

Programs

A SIG may occasionally request a program, theme or topic which considers their area of interest. Most programs are organized by the Program Chair and communicated to the Club membership. Programs

can include presentations on specific topics or themes of interest. In addition to SIG membership, others in the Club can be invited to present their work on the topic. At the beginning of the Club year, the Programs Chair organizes presentations by each SIG to engage members participation in the area.

Communication

When SIG meetings and other events have been scheduled by the group, information such as event description, date and time should be communicated to either the IACC Webmaster or the SIG Chair so that the event can be added to the Club's website calendar. If communicated directly to the Webmaster, the SIG Chair should also be copied on the message.

In addition, the SIG Leader will often send a reminder e-mail to the SIG members in advance of the event. This may include a request for members to RSVP their planned attendance at the event, so that the leader and host of the event can prepare for it appropriately.

The SIG Leader may occasionally poll members of the group to get a sense of how well they think that the group is functioning, and to consider suggestions for improvement, where applicable. This can be done by polling members individually or as a group, or as a meeting discussion item.

Likewise, the SIG Chair will periodically check with the SIG Leader for feedback about how the group is doing or for other relevant information. The SIG Leader is encouraged to contact the SIG Chair at any time with any developments, questions, or concerns.

Finances

In line with the idea that SIGs generally operate independently of IACC operations and are self-managed, SIG members are also responsible to share the costs that are required to operate the SIG. The cost of operating a SIG, in most cases, is not large, but may include items such as food and beverages for meetings, space rental, or special costs associated with an outing or workshop. For regular ongoing costs, some groups may have a small nominal fee that is paid per meeting by its members. Fees collected should be coordinated with the Club Treasurer.

IACC Equipment Use

IACC-owned equipment may be made available for use by one or more of the SIGs for say, hybrid or in person meetings. Requests for use of equipment should first be directed to the SIG Chair who will contact the appropriate Board member to ensure there are no conflicts with other Club activities.

Disbandment of a SIG

Occasionally a SIG will run its course and SIG members may decide to disband the group. This can happen as a result of members changing or expanding their focus in the photography they pursue, or for other reasons. In cases where the SIG ceases to be active, it is important that the SIG Leader advise the SIG Chair as soon as possible so that this information can be properly communicated to the Board and membership of the Club. The SIG Chair will also facilitate other items, such as updating the Club's

website to remove the SIG, and return of Club-owned equipment, if applicable. If the SIG meetings have been recorded the SIG Chair should ensure the recordings are retained in the Club files for an appropriate length of time.

SOME USEFUL HELP FROM CURRENT AND PAST SIG CHAIRS

As part of the 2021 update to this document, current SIG chairs were asked to provide their practices to ensure SIG meetings were effective for Club members. Some of this information was integrated into the update, while some of it is supplementary and useful for leaders to bear in mind when facilitating and conducting meetings:

Viewing Member Images

- Images are personal to the photographer, only the photographer has to like the image,
- Keep the discussion positive - focused on what people like about an image, critique of the image is important to the photographer – contrast, color, exposure, high key/ low key, emotion, etc. are concepts to explore in an image.
- Try to prevent others from being repetitively critical about an image,
- If improvements to an image are repeatedly made, indicate that the suggestion has been heard and the person presenting the image is free to use the suggestion or not.
- If there is little to no comment about an image, offer the SIG leader should offer some appreciation.
- Keep the pace of the group up by moving to the next image or topic when comments cease, and
- If possible, randomize the order of images so that one image from each person is shown early before moving on to the remaining submissions.

Inviting Member Images

- Invite people to submit jpg images as e-mail attachments or if sending as TIF, PSD, or RAW images, send via applications such as WeTransfer or Dropbox.
- Suggest a file naming convention so it makes ordering the images for presentation easier - for example [Round Number]-[Name of image]-[Photographer initials].file extension (as an example 01-hairofthedog-JD.jpg), and
- About two to three images appears optimal for smaller SIGs while one image from each member or images from selected members is appropriate for larger SIGs.

Suggested Optional Activities

- Club members can showcase their portfolio of images related to the SIG. The member can be invited if they're not a SIG member,
- Review of a SIG member's website,
- A How-to segment on some related aspect of photography with demo, and
- Discussion of places to shoot images related to SIG.

POSSIBLE MEETING THEMES

The following was modified from the Abstract Leader's information and could be useful for other SIG leaders. If an image theme is chosen for the meeting, the leader can choose to present the topic and/ or invite member images based on the theme for discussion.

- **Composition**
 - Diagonals/ Lines
 - No centre of interest
 - Repetition
 - Kaleidoscope
 - Textures/ no texture (smooth surfaces or area)
 - Complementary colours
 - Shapes/ Curves, and
 - Negative space
- **Technical**
 - Black and White
 - High contrast
 - Unsharp (in whole or in part)
 - Everything in sharp focus, and
 - Aerial Photography
- **Subject**
 - Dominant Colors
 - Snow/Ice
 - Season
 - Shadows and Reflections
 - Text (e.g., printed, written, graffiti, etc.), and
 - Specific object (forest, streets, etc.)
- **Artists/Art Styles related to the SIG focus:**
 - Surrealism – Escher, Dali
 - Pictorialism – What is “fine art” photography?
 - Impressionism – Monet, Degas, etc.
 - Landscape – Turner, and
 - Abstract Expressionism – Jackson Pollock, Mark Rothko, Georgia O’Keefe
- **Photographers**
 - Street – Daido Moriyama, Vivian Maier, Elliott Erwit, Eric Kim
 - Macro – Adam Gor, Javier Ruperez
 - Landscape – Thomas Heaton, Adam Gibbs, Nick Page, Ben Horne
- **Photography Books**
- **Image Making**
 - Lithographic film and paper emulsion/ printing techniques
 - Cyanotype,
 - Fine Art,
 - Mixed Media, and
 - Print Making – paper, aluminum, etc.

- **Relevant Websites** - . Internet searches yield a diverse range of information on a particular topic. Each Leader should have their own preferences for websites and their associated content depending on the SIG's interests. Some useful websites are:
 - FStoppers - <https://fstoppers.com/>
 - Digital Photography School - <https://digital-photography-school.com/>
 - Digital Photo Mentor – <https://www.digitalphotomentor.com>
 - Photzy - <https://photzy.com/>

The list of possible meeting themes is extensive as are the resources on each topic. Each leader will develop their own over time.