

To SWMCCC delegates, members and board members:

On Sunday March 2, 2008, the SWMCCC Board—the entire board including delegates, will meet for the first time in two years. We'll be meeting at 1 p.m. at Twin City Camera Club clubhouse, 521 Elm St. , St. Joseph Michigan. The executive board will be meeting at 10 a.m.

SWMCCC is at a crossroads. For years, there have been those saying SWMCCC is dying. This meeting in March is actually a meeting of the minds to decide if SWMCCC dying and can be revived or is it dead and needs to be buried.

When I took on the reigns of President of SWMCCC in the summer of 2006, I had high hopes of revitalizing SWMCCC. We had a successful competition in fall 2006 and a highly enlightening planning strategy meeting in February 2007. We had a successful spring competition in 2007. Then life got in the way for many of us, myself included, and SWMCCC took a backseat. And few people seemed to notice.

I have to commend Fruitbelt Photo Club for attempting to put on a fall 2007 competition, but the details weren't able to be put together in time to hold a competition. No one has stepped up to do a spring 2008 competition and so that will not be happening either.

On top of these setbacks, Jeanne Quillan, our newsletter editor, tendered her resignation. One of her frustrations as editor was the lack of distribution of the newsletter by member clubs. With Jeanne's departure, we are trying to use the website as our main source of communication. So stay tuned to the website—check every few weeks for any news—it'll be right on the front page of the website if anything new arise.

Howard Nahikian also tendered his resignation as Treasurer due to health problems. Both Howard and Jeanne served wonderfully for years and did a fantastic job, however, so far no one has stepped up to take on these positions.

We lost our Vice-Presidents of Competition to resignation in 2006 and that position was never filled.

No one responded to the request for volunteers to form committees and take on the recommendations of the planning committee in 2007.

My own personal and professional challenges in 2007 pushed out any time and attention I might have had to apply to SWMCCC and in frustration with my own lack of leadership, I have made it clear I will not continue as the President of SWMCCC beyond this meeting in March. SWMCCC needs someone who can actually provide some time and leadership and vision. Unfortunately, I am not able to provide that at this time in my life.

As my final act of president I am making the following two recommendations:

1) Seat a new board for SWMCCC that will carry on the work of the SWMCC Summer Weekend of Photography into the future. The support network for that portion of SWMCCC remains intact and I believe should continue into the future. However, it will require a board committed to doing so.

2) If the new board wishes and there is enough support—meaning people to do the work—  
-Make a decision on continuing, modifying or ending the bi-annual competition.

My personal recommendation is to modify the bi-annual competition. If there is enough support, a small group of individuals should form a committee to host the event as a SWMCCC event. Quit relying on individual clubs to put on the event. A committee could find a location in any town from Muskegon to Grand Rapids to Flint to Kalamazoo to Fort Wayne and put on the event.

I would further recommend SWMCCC discontinue its record keeping of past competitions and make future competitions stand-a-lone competitions with 1<sup>st</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> place winners in various categories. I would suggest the elimination of slides and have competition in prints and digital only.

(I would go so far as to go to a strictly digital competition with all entries emailed and the competition held in a location where a digital projector is provided by the location. The digital coordinator can provide the laptop and I would suggest a rental fee be established for use of that individual's laptop. With a digital competition, new categories such as landscapes, fine art and even an assigned subject could be offered. Digital only would reduce the number of people needed to put on a competition also.)

With a stand-a-lone competition, trophies or plaques could be purchased ahead of time and awarded at the competition. We could still award Oscars. But eliminating the tracking of every single contestant in every single category for cumulative awards would reduce the workload of a competition considerably.

A digital only competition would require one to two people to handle the digital entries (One main chairperson and a backup); Two to three persons to make arrangements for the event, purchase awards, handle publicity and take care of set up and tear down at the event. Adding print competition would require chair people at the competition to handle print entries. The treasurer would accept registration for entry into the competition and this could be handled via PayPal on the Internet.

I make these recommendations as a starting point for a new leadership team. I also would challenge any club that if SWMCCC cannot pull together a committed team to put on a competition, that your club may wish to sponsor an annual competition such as I have recommended. Use it as your own club's fundraiser.

Finally,

We must do something. It is imperative that if you care about SWMCCC, you attend this meeting and cast your vote. Your absence will send a strong message.

If you have questions or comments, email me at [Lawrence@heibelmedia.com](mailto:Lawrence@heibelmedia.com) or call me at 616-868-6790 or mail me at 6050 Buttrick Ave. SE, Alto, MI 49302.

While I will not continue on as president, I will continue to assist at the Summer Weekend of Photography as my time permits and I will provide other assistance as I can.

I credit SWMCCC with much of my growth as a photographer. I believe in SWMCCC and would like to see it as a resource for the next generation. However, it is critical that we redefine what kind of resource this group will be, or if it will continue to be a resource at all.

Larry Heibel