

NIAF 2017 Photo Contest Tips

So you want to submit a jpeg image to the NIAF 2017 Photo Contest but aren't sure if it's high-resolution or large enough?

Without getting too technical, here are a few tips that might help:

Use Photoshop

- ▶ The surest way to determine if your image is high resolution and large enough size is to open it in a photo editing program such as Photoshop. In Photoshop, click "Image" at the top tool bar, scroll down the menu, and click "Image Size." Resolution needs to be 300 dpi or larger. Ideally, the image size should be in the neighborhood of 3,600 x 3,600 pixels (or 12" x 12"), but bigger is better since winning photos will be enlarged to poster size for Gala display.
- ▶ If Photoshop shows your digital image at 72 dpi, then even 4" x 6" (about 430 x 290 pixels) is too low res and too small, so please don't submit it. But, if it's 72 dpi and the dimensions are 20" or 30" or 40" inches or more, when converted to 300 dpi that jpeg will be high resolution and large enough to submit. You can change the 72 dpi to 300 dpi to see how it affects the size of your image.

Use Windows Live Photo Gallery or other photo-viewing programs

- ▶ If you have Windows Photo Viewer or Windows Live Photo Gallery, or other photo-viewing programs, open your image and right click on it. Then, click "Properties." Scroll down and you'll see "Horizontal Resolution" and "Vertical Resolution." Both should read 300 dpi or higher for high resolution. Now take a look at "Dimensions." Typically they show as pixels. If your image is something like 2400 x 3000 pixels, or about 3600 x 5100 pixels, or even larger, you're good. If the pixels are in hundreds instead of thousands, not good, too small, don't submit.

Look at the jpeg file's size in your Pictures directory

- ▶ It doesn't always give an accurate read on resolution, but the jpeg file's size can be a clue whether the image is high resolution and large enough. Rule of thumb: The bigger your image file the better. First, look at your jpeg file in your directory using the "Detail" view (click the view settings in the tool bar...it's there). Most photos less than 1MB (1000kb) won't work. If your jpeg file is around 3MB (3000kb), it should be fine. Bigger than that, like 6MB or more (6000kb and up), that's sweet! And 10-12 MBs? Definitely! But if your jpeg is something like 20kb up to 750 kb, your photo is most likely too low resolution.

How to scan a photograph to get a high-resolution jpeg file

- ▶ If you have a flatbed scanner or a multifunction printer with scanner, try scanning that 4" x 6" or 6" x 8" analog photo at the 600 dpi setting instead of 300 dpi. Set the type of file at tif instead of jpeg. Give it a try.

Shooting photos

► Whether using an iPhone or a high-quality DSLR camera, you can adjust settings to make sure you are shooting at the highest quality and high resolution. Most later-model smartphones automatically shoot at high-quality. And, when you send the image from your phone, choose “actual size” or “original size” when prompted. That’s high resolution.

Sending your jpeg image using Mac Mail?

► Mac Mail causes more headaches for sending high resolution jpegs. Mac Mail automatically reduces the size and resolution of your attached jpeg or image for easier sending. To make sure your large high-resolution image stays large and high-resolution, once you open the new email message and attach the file, look at the bottom right-hand corner of the message window and make sure the size pop-up says “Actual” size. If it is set on “small,” “medium” or “large” size, your image has already been reduced, so change the size to “actual,” then save that email as a draft, and go back and try sending a new message with an attachment. That should change your setting so that the pop-up now reads “actual.”

Enlarge your photos

► If you have a great photo that you want to submit to the NIAF Photo Contest, but you know it’s simply too small and its resolution is too low, you can have a photo specialist enlarge it. Google “photo enlarging services” and find a long list of online professionals you can send your jpeg to and, for a price, enlarge it. Stores such as Walmart or drugstores often have photo services as well. Make sure you get the enlarged version as a jpeg for the contest and that it meets all requirements.