

**NORTHERN ILLINOIS NEWSPAPER ASSOCIATION
NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION
2008 NEWSPAPER CONTEST RULES**

General

1. Publication period for the contest is May 1, 2007 to April 30, 2008. Entries submitted must be from newspapers published during this period except as specified otherwise. **ENTRY POSTMARK DEADLINE: MONDAY, JUNE 30, 2008.** Entries should be addressed to: **NINA, Department of Communication, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, IL 60115. Entry materials will not be returned.**
2. The contests are open to paid member newspapers and paid individual members. Questions regarding membership status and dues should be addressed to NINA headquarters at 815-753-1564.
3. Papers entering in Group 3 (dailies) may not include Sunday editions in entries requiring three complete newspapers or tearsheets. Nondaily papers that publish Sunday editions may include those editions in their entries.
4. Newspapers or newspaper clippings submitted as entries should be printed on the same paper used for general circulation to subscribers. If publishers do not have the preferred originals, they may submit photocopies.
5. Publishers may enter any or all of the contests at a fee of \$6.00 per entry, per category. In most categories, the contest limits four entries per paper/per category. Each individual writer or photographer is limited to two entries for work done individually in each category. This rule does not preclude an individual writer or photographer from being included in another entry in the same category as a member of a team. Publishers are limited to one entry in the following categories: design; feature section; special section; sports section, news story series; and editorial page. (Each category description explains these limits.)
6. The Executive Secretary of NINA, in consultation with the NIU Journalism faculty, will coordinate judging for the contests. Judges will be selected on the basis of academic and/or professional expertise by the Executive Secretary and Chair of the Department of Communication. Judges will ordinarily be NIU journalism faculty, other journalism educators in the region and/or professional journalists not associated with the contest. Judges will be provided contest rules and relevant category entry information.
7. Newspapers winning first place in each contest or classification of contest will be awarded a plaque and a certificate. For an additional fee, editors and/or publishers may request an individualized plaque to be presented to their award-winning staff member/s (see last page of contest rules for order form). Second and third place winners will be awarded certificates. Judges may also designate honorable mention awards.
8. Each entry must be clearly marked indicating the contest in which it is to compete. Entries should be securely assembled, but must not be mounted, bound, or ornamented. An official contest entry form must be stapled (no paper clips) to each entry, with group and category marked. Make as many copies of the entry form as needed. Please do not create your own entry form.

CLASSIFICATION OF NEWSPAPERS

Contests are divided into three classifications of NINA members. Group I includes all non-dailies, 4,999 or less in circulation. Group II includes all non daily newspapers 5,000 or more in circulation. Group III includes all daily newspapers and all papers printed as inserts in those dailies.

Content of all entries must be original work. Entrants must identify group to which they belong on all entries and may enter in only one group (based on the guidelines below):

- **Non-daily group newspapers with shared editorial operations should enter using their group name, based on total circulation of the non-daily group.**
- **Newspapers that do not share editorial operations should enter based on the circulation of the individual newspaper. In such a case, staff members may enter work only from that newspaper.**

Newspapers scoring the largest accumulation of points in all categories will receive the Donald R. Grubb Newspaper Award for those in Group I; the C.V. Amenoff Memorial Award for those in Group II; and the James Copley Award for those in Group III. Newspapers are not prohibited from winning any of these sweepstakes awards in consecutive years.

CONTEST CATEGORY AND ENTRY INFORMATION

1. BEST DESIGN (GROUPS I, II, III)

Award to newspaper showing excellence in design, including typography, photo/graphics use, and general appearance. Front page will be considered the most important factor, but other news, sports, feature and opinion pages -- including display of advertising -- also will be considered. Entries should consist of three issues published during the contest year.

Entry: Submit three complete issues, as instructed in General Rule 3: One entry per paper.

2. BEST HEADLINE (GROUPS I, II, III)

Award to individual publishing the best headline. Judged on imagination and originality, and relevance of the headline to the story.

Entry: Submit tearsheets, clearly marked, of three headlines. All headlines in an entry must be by the same writer. No more than two entries by each writer with limit of four entries per paper.

3. BEST SINGLE GENERAL FEATURE (GROUPS I, II, III)

Award to individual publishing best single feature article, as contrasted with a straight news story, not covered in the "Feature: Profile/Personality" category. Judged on news value, quality of reporting and writing and local focus.

Entry: Submit tearsheets with single feature story or article clearly marked. No more than two by each individual writer with limit of four entries per paper.

4. BEST SINGLE FEATURE: PERSONALITY PROFILE (GROUPS I, II, III)

Award to individual publishing best single feature article, as contrasted with a straight news story, profiling a person. Judged on news value, quality of reporting and writing and local focus.

Entry: Submit tearsheets with single feature story or article clearly marked. No more than two by each individual writer with limit of four entries per paper.

5. BEST FEATURE SECTION (GROUPS I, II, III)

Award to the newspaper, publishing the best locally developed feature section. May include seasonal features, entertainment, family, home interest or food pages. Judged on quality of writing, editing, design, photography/graphics and local focus.

Entry: Submit three issues in accordance with General Rule No. 3, with section or pages clearly marked. One entry per paper.

6. BEST SINGLE COLUMN (GROUPS I, II, III)

Award to individual publishing best single locally-developed bylined column (as contrasted to an unsigned editorial). Non-sports. Judged on originality, voice, quality of writing and local focus.

Entry: Submit tearsheets with locally written single column clearly marked. No more than two entries by an individual writer with limit of four entries per paper.

7. BEST SINGLE EDITORIAL (GROUPS I, II, III)

Award to individual(s) who writes best single editorial on a local issue. Judged on quality of writing and strength of argument and suggested solution.

Entry: Submit tearsheets with name and staff position of the individual(s) who composed the single editorial written in margin. No more than two by each writer with limit of four entries per paper.

8. SPECIAL SECTION (GROUPS I, II, III)

Award to newspaper publishing the best special section. This is for a one-time section marking a specific event, observance or topic. Judged on quality of writing, editing, design, photography/graphics and local focus.

Entry: Submit either the complete section or clearly marked tearsheets. One entry per paper.

9. COMMUNITY SERVICE (GROUPS I, II, III)

Award to individual(s) whose reporting and/or photography and graphics have helped make the community a better place to live, as evidenced by any or all of the following: news stories, photos, graphics, editorials, additional online information, and testimonial letters from community members.

Note: Investigative reporting that reveals previously hidden wrongs is best entered in either the In-Depth News Story or News Story Series categories rather than here.

Entry: Submit tearsheets, clearly marking the relevant material. An accompanying statement from the newspaper should explain how the entry spurred change, community spirit or public involvement. One entry per paper.

10. PHOTOGRAPHY -- BEST SINGLE SPOT NEWS PHOTO (GROUPS I, II, III)

Award to individual submitting best single spot news photo. Judged on urgency/news value of the image, composition, technical quality and outline assistance.

Entry: Submit tearsheets, clearly marked to show the photo. No more than two by each individual photographer with limit of four entries per paper.

11. PHOTOGRAPHY -- BEST SINGLE GENERAL FEATURE PHOTO (GROUPS I, II, III)

Award to individual submitting best single feature photo. Judged on composition, technical quality, emotional appeal, news value and cutline assistance.

Entry: Submit tearsheets, clearly marked to show the photo. No more than two by each individual photographer with limit of four entries per paper.

12. PHOTOGRAPHY -- BEST SINGLE SPORTS PHOTO (GROUPS I, II, III)

Award to individual submitting best single sports photo. Judged on news value, composition, technical quality, emotional appeal and cutline assistance.

Entry: Submit tearsheets, clearly marked to show the photo. No more than two by each individual photographer with limit of four entries per paper.

13. PHOTOGRAPHY -- BEST PHOTO SERIES (GROUPS I, II, III)

Award to individual submitting best picture series. Entry may consist of paired pictures, picture sequence, picture group (miscellaneous pictures on a single subject), picture essay or picture story. Judged on news value, emotional appeal, composition and technical quality of individual photos, plus cohesiveness and design of the entire spread. Any accompanying text will be considered in judging.

Entry: Submit tearsheets, clearly marked indicating the entry. No more than two by each individual photographer with limit of four entries per paper.

14. SPORTS -- BEST SINGLE SPORTS STORY (GROUPS I, II, III)

Award to individual publishing best locally developed sports story. No columns. Judged on news value, quality of reporting and writing and local focus.

Entry: Submit tearsheets, clearly marked indicating entry. No more than two by each writer with limit of four entries per paper.

15. Sports --BEST SINGLE SPORTS COLUMN (Groups I, II, III)

Award to individual publishing best locally developed sports column. Judged on originality, voice, quality of writing and local focus.

Entry: Submit tearsheets, clearly marked indicating the entry. No more than two by each writer with limit of four entries per paper.

16. SPORTS -- BEST SPORTS SECTION (GROUPS I, II, III)

Award to sports editor, or if there is no editor, to newspaper, publishing best sports section. Judged on quality of writing, editing, design, photography/graphics and local focus.

Entry: Submit three issues in accordance with General Rule No. 3, with the sports section or pages clearly marked. One entry per paper.

17. NEWS -- BEST SINGLE SPOT NEWS STORY (GROUPS I, II, III)

Award to individual who writes and develops best locally developed single spot news story (non-wire or syndicated source). Judged on news value/urgency, quality of reporting and writing and local focus.

Entry: Submit tearsheets, clearly marked indicating the entry. Entries that represent a team effort should list team members and designate lead writer or editor. No more than two entries by each writer or team with limit of four entries per paper.

18. NEWS -- BEST SINGLE IN-DEPTH NEWS STORY (GROUPS I, II, III)

Award to individual who writes and develops best single in-depth news story (non-wire or syndicated source). Multiple related stories published the same day will be considered one entry. Judged on news value, evidence of investigative work, quality of reporting and writing and local focus.

Entry: Submit tearsheets, clearly marked, indicating the entry. Entries that represent a team effort should list team members and designate the lead writer or editor. No more than two entries by each writer or team with limit of four entries per paper.

19. NEWS -- BEST NEWS STORY SERIES (GROUPS I, II, III)

Award to individual who writes and develop best news story series (non-wire or syndicated source). Series can be about any one topic followed for several days, or it could be an investigative series that has brought about public awareness of matters previously hidden from the public. Judged on news value, evidence of investigative work, story organization, quality of reporting and writing and local focus.

Entry: Submit tearsheets, clearly marked to indicate entered stories. Entries that represent a team effort should list team members and designate the lead writer or editor. One entry per paper.

20. BEST RELIGION REPORTING (OWEN PHELPS AWARD) (GROUPS I, II, III)

Award to individual for best reporting illuminating issues of faith and/or spirituality in everyday life. Judged on news value, quality of reporting and writing and local focus.

Entry: Submit tearsheets, clearly marked to indicate the entry. No more than two by each writer with limit of four entries per paper.

21. BEST SINGLE BUSINESS/FINANCIAL/CONSUMER STORY (GROUPS I, II, III)

Award to individual who writes best single story reporting on business, financial or consumer matters. Can be either news or feature story. Judged on news value, quality of reporting and writing and local focus.

Entry: Submit tearsheets, clearly marked to indicate the entry. No more than two by each writer with limit of four entries per paper.

22. BEST SINGLE TECHNOLOGY/MEDICAL STORY (GROUPS I, II, III)

Award to individual who writes best single locally-developed story reporting, explaining or interpreting a technological subject, including medical or health subjects. Story may be either feature or news, but should focus on technological advances as related to people in your community. Judged on news value, quality of reporting and writing and local focus.

Entry: Submit tearsheets, clearly marked to indicate the entry. No more than two by each writer with limit of four entries per paper.

23. BEST SINGLE INFORMATIONAL GRAPHIC (GROUPS I, II, III)

Award to individual who produces best single original informational graphic. Graphics may be black and white or color. Judged on originality, clarity and ability to illustrate concept or story the graphic supports. Graphs, maps, charts, and original illustrations are eligible. Illustrative photos should be entered in the "Best Photo" category.

Entry: Submit tearsheets, clearly marked to indicate the entry. Packages where more than one element is used for same project may be entered as a single graphic. No more than two entries by each individual with limit of four entries per paper.

24. BEST EDITORIAL PAGE(S) (GROUPS I, II, III)

Award to newspaper showing excellence in editorial page content and presentation. Judging will emphasize: attention to local issues; quality of writing, editing, design and use of photos/graphics; opportunity for reader involvement; and innovative approaches to presenting local issues. Entries should consist of editorial pages from three issues published during contest year.

Entry: Submit editorial pages from three issues, as instructed in General Rule 3. One entry per paper.

25. BEST WEB SITE (GROUPS I, II, III)

A general-excellence award. Judged on overall content and design, local emphasis, interactivity, ease of navigation and extra features not found in the print edition.

Entry: Submit entry form with your site's URL clearly printed. A brief explanatory note may be included. One entry per publication.

26. BEST EFFORT TO ATTRACT YOUNG READERS

What innovative way did your publication – in print, online or both – reach out to readers under age 30? It may have been in a single story or series, a regular feature or an extended campaign. We encourage a wide variety of entries. This category will be judged by young-adult readers, and will focus on creativity, quality, overall appeal and evidence of results.

Entry: Submit newspaper tearsheets and/or online printouts, clearly marked to show entry components. Attach other supporting material as warranted. Please include an explanatory statement. One entry per paper.

27. BEST INNOVATIVE COVERAGE OF A “ROUTINE” EVENT

What’s “routine”? Meetings, speeches, elections, accidents, minor police news, weather, etc. These are staples for most newspapers, but they’re usually not the kinds of stories that end up as contest entries. We’re looking for your most innovative reporting and presentation of a routine event – something that otherwise might have been largely ignored by readers. Judging will focus on news value; nontraditional storytelling; use of photos, graphics and/or other visual devices; and special online material.

Entry: Submit tearsheets, clearly marked to indicate all components of the entry. A brief explanatory statement may be included. No more than two entries by each individual or team, with a limit of four entries per paper.

CONTEST AND AWARDS SPONSORSHIP

The Journalism Program of the NIU Department of Communication conducts this contest (in cooperation with the Northern Illinois Newspaper Association) and sponsors plaques and awards for this contest. The Department reserves exclusive rights in determining, in accordance with contest rules, the eligibility of entries, judging of entries, and awarding recognition. A judging fee of \$6.00 for every individual or newspaper entry in every category must be enclosed along with entry. Make contest entry checks payable to: Northern Illinois Newspaper Fund. Inquiries regarding the contest should be addressed to Valerie Clawson, Department of Communication, Northern Illinois University, 815-753-1564; vclawson@niu.edu.