Minnesota Newspaper Association
2019-2020
College Better Newspaper Contest

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Rules and Categories

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General Purpose of the Contest
One of the reasons for MNA's existence, as laid down in the association's Articles of Incorporation (Art. III) is: "To secure improved standards in the practice and the profession of journalism." The purpose of this annual contest, therefore, is to recognize excellence in the various aspects of college newspaper journalism so that the practice and profession of journalism by future newspaper professionals in Minnesota may be advanced.

Who May Enter
Any college publication in Minnesota is eligible to enter this contest. Some awards are given to the publication as a whole; others are given to individual staff members. If you are not on the list of colleges displayed in the contest system, please contact LuAnn Yattaw by phone (612-278-0235) or email (luann@mna.org).

Contest Website
To submit contest entries, please visit: https://betternewspapercontest.com/MNACollege2020

Judging
Newspaper professionals will judge your work, which includes working newspaper professionals, journalists and journalism instructors. Judges will be directed to award a first, second, and third place in all categories where merited.

Presentation
Awards will be presented at the 154th Annual MNA Convention, January 28-29, 2021, at the Marriott Minneapolis Northwest. Winners will be notified by letter from the MNA office. We will ask all winners not to publicize the fact, but to wait until the January convention to do so.

How to Enter
First, read the rules and accompanying submission instructions! We have tried to make them clear. Judges will be instructed to give weight, in case of a tie, to the entry which most closely follows instructions. Failure to comply with instructions will be grounds for elimination from the contest. If you have questions, the MNA staff is prepared to assist you. To reach us, please call the MNA office, 612-332-8844 or 800-279-2979 or e-mail member@mna.org. You may also contact LuAnn Yattaw by phone (612-278-0235) or email (luann@mna.org).

See the detailed "How to Enter the 2019-2020 MNA Better Newspaper Contest" document for detailed submission instructions.

Entry Guidelines:

- **Deadline:** Sunday, May 31, 2020. All entries must be uploaded to the online system by 11:00 p.m. May 31. Categories that require mailed entries must be postmarked on or before May 31. Entries postmarked later than May 31 will not be accepted. Hand deliveries must be made to the MNA office by 4:00 p.m., Friday, May 29.
- **Fee:** There will be a $3 fee for each entry. Payment for entries may be completed online with a credit card, or a check in the full amount owed may be mailed to MNA. Fees collected will be earmarked for two purposes: To provide winners with awards and to pay expenses associated with judging. Make checks payable to MNA.
- **Time Period:** Any content published from May 15, 2019 through May 14, 2020 is eligible for this contest.
- **Entry Form:** You are required to fill out an entry form online for every single entry. If you submit more than one entry per category, you must fill out a separate entry form for each individual entry. Most categories require the submission of full-page PDF tearsheets online. Some categories require the submission, by mail, of full issues or sections.
- **Materials:** Each category specifies the materials accepted for the entry. You will be directed to submit online a full-page PDF tearsheet, live URL*, or submit by mail full hard copy issues of your newspaper. Do not crop entries. All entries must be unaltered in any way. All mailed entries from a single newspaper must be submitted at one time in one package with entry labels, printed from the online system, affixed to the front of each mailed entry.
- **URL Clarification*:** If you submit an URL and your URL/Webpage is password protected, you must supply a password on the entry form for the judge. We strongly suggest uploading a PDF of the entry in addition or instead of an URL if there is any chance the link could be broken by the time judges are viewing the entry or if providing a password is not possible or not convenient.
- **Date Verification:** The date each entry was published must appear somewhere on the tearsheet materials you submit. If no dateline appears, you must supply a notarized proof of publication that states the run date. The affidavit should be stapled behind the mailed entry blank or uploaded with the entry.
- **Entry Limits:** For awards in the publication division, each college publication may submit one entry. For awards in the individual division, each individual may submit two entries per category.
- For awards in the individual division, you may only submit entries that have appeared in your college publication. (For instance, if an individual worked for his or her hometown newspaper during the summer, he or she could not submit something that had been published in that newspaper. But if it had also appeared in his or her college newspaper, then it could be submitted.)
- Stories or a series done by more than one writer will be counted as a single entry (one of two allowed) for the writer listed first on the contest entry form. Other writers on that series will still be able to enter twice more in that category.
- **General Excellence:** In categories that require the entry of three issues (such as General Excellence), these three issues count as ONE entry at $3, NOT $9. Submit all three issues together. Label mail-in entries correctly. Affix printed entry label securely.

➢ **File Attachment Size:** For entries that require PDF submission online, make sure your PDF file works, and is the correct file for the category. The maximum allowable files size is 5MB.

Contest Categories

Division I: Awards to Newspapers

1. General Excellence
2. Website

Rules for this division: Entries from three different issues from within the contest period must be submitted for general excellence. Each publication may submit one entry for these categories.

Division II: Awards to Individuals

3. Best Advertisement - print or online
4. Local Breaking News Coverage
4A. Hard News
5. Government/Public Affairs Reporting
6. Investigative Reporting
7. Human Interest Story
8. Business Story
9. Social Issues Story
10. Arts & Entertainment Story
11. Sports Story
11A. Sports Feature Story
12. Columnist
13. Editorial
14. Use of Information Graphics and Graphic Illustration
15. Best Use of Multimedia
16. Photography
      a. News Photo
      b. Feature Photo
      c. Sports Photo
      d. Photo Story

Rules for this division: Each individual may enter up to two entries in each category. Entries may be selected from any issue in the contest period.

Special Note
For the purpose of judging, MNA has one college contest group. This one group consists of 2-year and 4-year schools with daily or non-daily frequency. All contestants will compete in the same division until such time as the number of entries and schools justify splitting the combined group.

Division I: Awards to Newspapers

The following categories are open to publications (print or online) from all colleges in the state. Each publication may submit ONE entry in each of the following categories.

1. General Excellence (Competition for the total publication)

This award will recognize the balanced excellence of the college publication as a whole. Judging on five criteria:
(a) depth, breadth and quality of news coverage,
(b) quality of advertising, both classified and display,
(c) quality of editorial page, with particular attention to relevance to community,
(d) quantity and quality of pictorial material, and
(e) overall appearance of the publication.

Each publication may submit one (1) entry. One entry consists of three (3) full newspaper issues published between May 15, 2019 and May 14, 2020.

Submit newspapers to MNA by mail. Online publications – submit URL.

2. Website (Competition for the total publication)

This award will recognize excellence in college publication websites. Your website will be randomly visited by our judges a minimum of three times. Judging will be based on the following criteria:
• Content: quality of news and editorial matter
• Navigation: ease of finding and retrieving information from the website
• Visual/Design: layout, use of graphics, photographs, animation, color and other visuals
• Advertising: innovative strategies and/or evidence of revenue generation
• Community: demonstration that the website fulfills a "community gatekeeper" role.

Submit URL online.

Division II: Awards to Individuals

The following categories are open to individuals from all college newspapers in the state. If more than one person on a newspaper staff wishes to enter the same category she or he may do so. The rules allow each individual to enter up to TWO entries per category in the following categories. No more than two entries per category by a single individual is permitted. For example, an individual may choose his or her two best columns to enter. These two must be treated as two separate entries; entrants will fill out an entry form for each entry and $3 must be paid for each column entered.

Writing Criteria: Judges are asked to give equal weight to the writing and to the form in which it is written. That is, what the entry is about is as important as the how; expressed in another way, the selection of significant material to report about will be given equal weight to the way such material is handled.

3. Best Advertisement (Competition among all individuals.)
This award will recognize overall excellence of the best staff-produced print OR online college newspaper ad, awarded to the individual who conceived and developed the idea. Judges will be asked to consider the originality and appearance of the ad, and give 50 percent weight to the ad idea, 25 percent to the copy and 25 percent to the layout and design.

Submit PDF tearsheets or URLs online from issues dated May 15, 2019 through May 14, 2020. Each individual may submit two (2) separate ad entries.

4. Local Breaking News Coverage (Competition among all individuals.)
This award will recognize excellence in breaking news coverage both in print, and online. Entrants may submit online coverage from a 24-hour period surrounding the news event, as well as the edition of the newspaper printed in closest proximity to the event (the next printed edition). Judges will consider: enterprise, thoroughness, objectivity and local importance; clarity will be paramount; style will be a secondary criteria.

You may submit online coverage of the news events from a 24-hour period, in addition to stories from the next available print edition of the newspaper. Each entry consists of one (1) or more full page PDF tearsheets and related URLs on a local news story submitted online.
Each individual may submit two (2) separate entries.

4A. Hard News (Competition among all individuals.)
This award will recognize excellence in hard news coverage. Judges will consider communitywide importance/impact, timeliness, quality of writing, thoroughness and effectiveness of delivery.

Submit PDF tearsheets and/or URLs online from any issues within the contest period
Each individual may submit two (2) separate entries.

5. Government/Public Affairs Reporting (Competition among all individuals.)
This award will recognize exemplary reporting on local, state or federal government and how it affects a newspaper's community. Judges will consider the clarity and relevancy to readers. Stories might be on coverage of city hall, school boards, state legislation, etc. Editorials supporting the reporting examples may be part of the entry, but not the focus of the entry.

Individuals: Submit PDF tearsheets or URLs online from any issue within the contest period. One entry consists of government/public affairs coverage from any one issue (may include more than one story). Each individual may submit two separate (2) entries.

6. Investigative Reporting (Competition among all individuals.)
This award will recognize excellence in investigative reporting. Judges are asked to give equal weight to the content of the writing and to the form in which it is written, that is, the selection of significant material to report about will be given equal weight to the way such material is handled.

Submit PDF tearsheets or URLs online of either a story or a series of stories on the same subject, written by the same reporter, at any time from May 15, 2019 through May 14, 2020. "Investigative reporting" will be defined as in-depth reporting that goes beyond the surface of the news, requiring more time, more work and more professional skill than normal reporting work. Each individual may submit two separate (2) entries.

7. Human Interest Story (Competition among all individuals.)
This award will recognize excellence for a single human-interest story. A human-interest story is a feature story on a subject/subjects that discusses a specific small group or individual in relation to problems, concerns, interest or achievements of that group or individual. Columns should not be entered in this category. Judges will consider: readability, originality and impact.

Submit PDF tearsheets or URLs online from any issue within the contest period.
Each individual may submit two (2) separate entries.

8. Business Story (Competition among all individuals.)
This award will recognize excellence in business writing. Business columns should not be entered in this category. Judges will consider: readability, content, impact, local importance.

Submit PDF tearsheets and URLs online from any issues within the contest period.
Each individual may submit two (2) separate entries.

9. Social Issues Story (Competition among all individuals.)
This award will recognize excellence for a social issues story or stories. This category fits those stories that affect a community or society as a whole, rather than an individual or small group. Common social issues include poverty, violence, justice, human rights, equality or discrimination and crime. Columns should not be entered in this category. Judges will consider: readability, originality and impact.

Submit PDF tearsheets online from any issues within the contest period. If the entry is part of a series of multiple stories, the entry will be limited to three (3) stories per single entry. One entry consists of full-page PDF tearsheets or URLs for (1) to three (3) stories online.
Each individual may submit two (2) separate entries

10. Arts & Entertainment Story (Competition among all individuals.)
This award will recognize excellence in coverage/critiques of arts and entertainment events. Judges are asked to give equal weight to the content of the writing and to the form in which it is written.

Submit PDF tearsheets or URLs online from any issues from the contest period. Each individual may submit two (2) separate entries.

11. Sports Story (Competition among all individuals.)
This award will recognize excellence in sports reporting. Judges are asked to give equal weight to the content of the writing and to the form in which it is written. Selection of significant material to report about will be given equal weight to the way such material is handled.

Submit PDF tearsheets or URLs online from any issues from the contest period. Each individual may submit two (2) separate entries.

11A. **Sports Feature Story** (Competition among all individuals.)
This award will recognize excellence in sports feature writing. Judges will consider basis of subject, quality of writing & originality.

Submit PDF tearsheets or URLs online from any issues from the contest period. Each individual may submit two (2) separate entries.

12. Columnist (Competition among all individuals.)
This award will recognize excellence in column writing. Judges will evaluate the purpose of the column (i.e., whether it interprets, entertains, advocates, etc.). With that in mind, they will determine how well the column fulfilled its goal. Literary style, ability or cleverness of the writer, depth of the material or research, local interest and relevance to the college community will be considered.

Submit columns published during the contest period May 15, 2019 through May 14, 2020. Each individual may submit two (2) separate entries.

13. Editorial (Competition among all individuals.)
This award will recognize the single best editorial published in a Minnesota college publication from May 15, 2019, through May 14, 2020. Quality of writing, significance to the school, importance of the issue, success of the argument on the reader, general impact—all will be considered.

Submit editorials published during the contest period.. Each individual may submit two (2) separate entries.

14. Use of Information Graphics and Graphic Illustrations (Competition among all individuals.)
This award will recognize excellence in staff-produced information graphics and graphic illustrations. Judges will consider: artistic design; usefulness to the reader, clarity of content; and enhancement to the story.

Submit PDF tearsheets or URLs online from any issues within the contest period. Each contest entry consists of full-page PDF tearsheets or URLs of three (3) to five (5) examples along with the related story submitted online. Please provide descriptive language of the graphic in the entry form.
Each individual may submit two (2) separate entries.

15. Best Use of Multimedia (Competition among all individuals.)
The award will recognize excellence in using new media to impact storytelling. Judges will consider: best presentation that supports storytelling and enhances the impact of the story with the use of multimedia; and must include, but is not limited to, audio, video, podcasts, photo galleries or animation as appropriate for the story. The entry can be a story that appeared on the Web only - but must include the use of multimedia. If the story also appeared in print, the story on the website must go beyond what appeared in the print edition to enhance the story.

Submit URLs online from any date from the contest period. Each individual may submit two (2) separate entries.

16. Photography (Competition among all individuals.)
This award will recognize excellence in photojournalism by individual newspaper photographers. There are four categories:

    a. <u>News Photo</u>: Any single photo depicting spot news/breaking news or illustrating hard news. Judges will consider content, reader appeal, technical quality, composition and editing.

    b. <u>Feature Photo</u>: Any single photo distinguished for its creativity and economy of expression, strong human interest, fresh view of the commonplace or depicting or illustrating feature news. Judges will consider content, reader appeal, technical quality, composition and editing.

c. <u>Sports Photo</u>: Any single photo portraying participation or competition in a game or sports event, or a sports-related feature photo. Judges will consider content, reader appeal, technical quality, composition and editing.

d. <u>Photo Story</u>: A photo story is defined as three or more photos that tell a story. Photo stories will be judged on the story told by the photos, not the accompanying copy.

Judges will give 75 percent weight to the content of the photo, 25 percent to technique.

Submit full page PDF tearsheets or URLs online from the issue in which the photo was published, if more than one photo appears on the page, add descriptive language in the comment section of the entry form.

Submit any photo(s) published May 15, 2019 through May 14, 2020. Each individual may submit two (2) entries.

Have You…
1. Complied with the rules for each category entered?
2. Completed an entry form online for each entry?
3. Attached a printed entry label to each mailed entry?
4. Included a list of all entries along with the $3 entry fee for each entry?
5. Postmarked or submitted your entries by May 31?

Mail payment and general excellence entries to:

MNA College Better Newspaper Contest
10 South Fifth Street, Suite 1105
Minneapolis, MN 55402-1502

E: member@mna.org | P: 612-332-8844

If you have any questions about the BNC, please read the full rules and instruction packet first. We have tried to make the directions clear and user-friendly. We've provided some answers to frequently asked questions below, but if you still have questions, the MNA staff is prepared to assist you. To reach us, please call the MNA office, 612-278-0235 or 800-279-2979 or email luann@mna.org.

Frequently Asked Questions

What work can I enter in the BNC?
Anything published between May 15, 2019 through May 14, 2020.

What browser should I use?
For best contest experience, BetterNewspaperContest.com/ MNA recommends that contest entrants use the Google Chrome browser. Visit the contest website for more information.

How do I know what my password is?
If you have used BetterNewspaperContest.com previously, your password will remain unchanged.

If you have not previously used the website, the first time you log in into the system, the default password is "bnc" (password is case sensitive). You will be prompted immediately to update your password and contact information. If you have lost or forgotten your password, or need help logging in, please email or call LuAnn Yattaw who can help re-set your password (luann@mna.org or 612-278-0235).

What if my info is wrong or my publication is not listed!?
We have worked very hard to make sure all MNA newspapers are included on the publication list, and that the divisions of each paper are as accurate as possible. However, if you note that your newspaper is missing OR the division/circulation is listed incorrectly, please do not panic, simply call MNA at 800-279-2979 or 612-332-8844 or email member@mna.org and it will be fixed A.S.A.P!

Do I have to fill out an entry form online for entries that I mail to MNA?
Yes. You must fill out an entry form online for every single entry. Print and affix entry label securely to the entry materials that require mail-in submission. When more than one section or issue is required, be sure to bind all materials together securely with a binder clip, rubber bands, or enclose in a manila folder or envelope.

Which categories can by submitted by mail?
1: General Excellence

MNA's mailing address is 10 South Fifth Street, Suite 1105, Minneapolis, MN 55402. Mailed entries must be postmarked on or before May 31.

All other categories must be submitted online. If you do not have the capability to provide digital files for entry categories, contact MNA immediately, and we will work with you to create files that can be uploaded to the online contest system.

There is no specific title for my entry (or there are multiple titles). What should I put here?
On the entry form, when asked to provide "Headline or Title of Entry (exactly as it appears on the page)" - if there is no specific title, use the category title as a guide (e.g. "Paynesville Press – General Excellence" or "Sally Jones - Design Portfolio").

How do I make changes to an entry that I've already submitted?
On the "Manage Entries" page of the contest system, identify the entry you'd like to update or change. In the "Actions" column, click "Label" to print a label to affix to mail-in entries. Click "Edit" to update or change an entry. You can delete uploaded files and upload new or additional files, here, as well.
Click "Disable" if you'd like to remove the entry from view of the contest administrator and judges. Click "Delete" if you'd like to remove the entry. This action is permanent.

Can I submit a series of stories as one entry in the contest?
Unless otherwise noted, one entry consists of one story. Some categories allow you to submit more than one story as a single entry.

What file formats are accepted for uploading?
File formats accepted by the system include .pdf, .jpg, .gif, and .png (and .doc in applicable categories). If for some reason you don't have a PDF of the tearsheet you wish to submit, it would be easy to snap a photo and submit the resulting photo file.

What is the maximum file size?
5MB is the maximum file size allowed by the contest system.

How can I make my PDF files smaller?
Most newspaper PDFs include high-resolution (200-300dpi) grayscale or CMYK images for printing. However, PDF contest entries will be viewed and judged on a computer monitor, which displays at low resolution (72-96dpi) in RGB color.
Changes in the resolution and color mode of images are the most effective ways to reduce file size without sacrificing quality.
1. Resolution. In PDFs, text is always clear regardless of resolution. Resolution relates only to photos and rasterized graphics. Reducing resolution by half reduces image file size by 75%. The recommended maximum resolution of 96dpi can be enforced by Distiller settings.
2. Color mode. Converting from CMYK to RGB color will reduce image file size by another 25%. This color conversion can again be enforced by Distiller settings. If you reduce image resolution and/or convert color mode in your entry PDFs with a PDF editor (e.g., Enfocus Pitstop or Quite A Box Of Tricks) or use the native profiling/ editing tools in Acrobat 6 or later, YOU WILL NOT GAIN THE EXPECTED REDUCTION IN FILE SIZE unless you **redistill** the PDF afterward.

What is the most efficient way to collect entry files?
Collect copies of all PDF files that contain entry-related pages into one place. These may be full-issue, full-section, or individual-page PDFs that you sent to your printer or that you saved from your page layout program for other reasons. The sizes, resolutions, color modes, and other characteristics of those PDF files can be ignored at this point. Extract entry-related pages from any multi-page PDFs, or delete non-entry pages. Give each resulting file a clearly descriptive name. Combine into a single PDF file the pages that comprise each entry. Instructions for extracting and combining PDFs are provided below. Distill. Once you've created all your entry PDFs, redistill each one as explained above to reduce it to the smallest practical size. It is not productive to try to reduce the sizes of individual files before combining them into complete entries. Like all changes, combining pages can increase overall PDF file size.

How do I extract pages from a full-issue or full-section PDF?
In Acrobat, open the PDF file, then choose "Extract Pages..." from the Document menu and follow the instructions. This will allow you to save individual or sequential pages in separate files anywhere on your system.

How do I combine PDF pages or files into a single entry?
Open the PDF file that is to appear first in the entry, choose "Save As..." from the File menu, and save that file with the name you'd like to give the final PDF entry. Choose "Insert Pages..." from the Document menu, choose the file that is to appear next in the entry, then specify where that file should be inserted. When all insertions have been made, save and close the PDF file. You'll need to redistill the final PDFs.

How will MNA prevent fraud?
We prefer to trust our member publishers not to submit embellished or edited entries. It is true that ads and articles can be re-edited, photos can be retouched or replaced, and page layouts can be changed. However, major deception probably would be noticed, if only because winning PDFs will be available to the public and MNA members on the MNA website. If fraud is suspected with any entries, a full investigation will follow.

How do I submit payment for my entries?
First, calculate the amount owed. To do this, go to the "Manage Entries" page of the online system, click "Calculate Entry Fee" in the upper right-hand corner of the page. If you are paying by check, please print this list and mail it along with a check for the full amount owed, to MNA. Checks should be made payable to "MNA." MNA's mailing address is 10 South Fifth Street, Suite 1105, Minneapolis, MN 55402. Mailed payment and entries must be postmarked on or before May 31. You may also pay by credit card. On the "Calculate Entry Fee" page, click the link at the bottom that reads, "If you wish to pay online with a credit card, click here." This link will take you through MNA's online credit card payment process. If you have any questions about BNC payment, please contact MNA Accounting Manager Debbie Evans by email (debbie@mna.org) or call 612-278-0231.

What is the deadline for submitting contest entries?
Friday, May 31, 2020. All entries must be uploaded to the online system by 11 p.m. May 31.
Categories that require mailed entries must be postmarked on or before May 31.

What is the link to enter again?
https://betternewspapercontest.com/MNACollege2020

Where can I get more help for anything I can't find here?
Call MNA at 800-279-2979 or 612-332-8844 or e-mail member@mna.org.