

2012-2013 College Better Newspaper Contest Rules & Contest Categories



MINNESOTA
NEWSPAPER
ASSOCIATION

2012-2013

College Better Newspaper Contest Rules

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 men and women in Minnesota may be advanced.

WHO MAY ENTER

Any college newspaper in Minnesota. Some awards are given to the newspaper 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).

DEADLINE

Monday, October 14, 2013. All entries must be uploaded to the online system by 11 p.m. Oct. 14. Categories that require mailed entries must be postmarked on or before Oct. 14. Entries postmarked later than Oct. 14 will not be accepted. Hand deliveries must be made to the MNA office by 5:00 p.m., Monday Oct. 14.

TIME PERIOD

Anything published from September 1, 2012 through August 31, 2013.

JUDGING

Judges from the Illinois Press Association (IPA) which include working newspaper professionals, journalists and journalism instructors, will be selected as judges. Judges will be directed to award a first, second, and third place in all categories where merited.

AWARD PRESENTATION

The College Better Newspaper Awards will be presented at the Better Newspaper Contest Banquet, along with the professional awards, on Thursday, January 23, 2014 at 6:30 p.m. as part of the 146th Annual MNA Convention at the DoubleTree by Hilton Minneapolis South. Winners will be notified by letter from the MNA office. We will ask all winners not to publicize the fact, but 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 2012-2013 MNA Better Newspaper Contest" document for detailed submission instructions.

CONTEST TIPS

You are required to fill out an entry form online for each entry. Most categories require the submission of a full-page PDF tearsheet or URL online. Some categories require the submission, by mail, of full issues or sections.

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.

The date each entry was published must appear somewhere on the document 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.

For awards in the individual division, you may only submit entries that have appeared in your college newspaper. (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

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college newspaper, then it could be submitted.)

For awards in the newspaper division, each college newspaper may submit one entry. For awards in the individual division, each individual may submit two entries per category.

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.

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. 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 envelope.

For entries that require PDF submission online, make sure your PDF file works, and is the correct file for the category. Please keep file sizes to 5MB or less, to aid judges in accessing entry content.

FEES

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.

SPECIAL NOTE

For the purposes of judging, MNA has divided contestants into groups based on information in our member records. If you feel MNA has mis-categorized your newspaper, please let us know immediately, and we will update your records. These divisions include, “circulation groups” defined as “2 Year College/University” or “4 Year College/University;” and “frequency” defined as “Daily” or “Non-Daily.”

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. Each newspaper may submit one entry.

AWARDS TO INDIVIDUALS

3. Best Advertisement - print or online
4. Local Breaking News Coverage
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
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 no more than two entries in each category. Entries may be selected from any issue in the contest period.



Awards To Newspapers

THE FOLLOWING CATEGORIES are open to NEWSPAPERS from all colleges in the state. Each newspaper may submit ONE entry in each of the following categories.

1. GENERAL EXCELLENCE

(Competition for the total newspaper)



Purpose: To recognize the balanced excellence of the college newspaper 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 newspapers.

Submit entire issues by mail from three separate months between September 1, 2012, and August 31, 2013, for a total of THREE issues.

2. WEBSITE

(Competition for the total newspaper)



Purpose: 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.

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

(Individual competition)



Purpose: To 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 tearsheets or URLs online from issues dated September 1, 2012, through August 31, 2013. Each individual may submit two (2) entries.

4. LOCAL BREAKING NEWS COVERAGE

(Individual competition)



Purpose: 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.

Individuals at Dailies: Submit tearsheets and URLs online from any issues within the contest period. You may submit print and online coverage on the news events from a 24-hour period.

Individuals at Weeklies: Submit tearsheets and URLs online from any issues within the contest period. 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 individual may submit two (2) separate entries. Each entry consists of one (1) or more full page PDF tearsheets and related URLs on a local news story submitted online.

5. GOVERNMENT/PUBLIC AFFAIRS REPORTING

(Individual competition)

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

6. INVESTIGATIVE REPORTING

(Individual competition)

Purpose: To 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 tearsheets online of either a story or a series of stories on the same subject, written by the same reporter, at any time from September 1, 2012 through August 31, 2013. "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 (2) entries.

7. HUMAN INTEREST STORY

(Individual competition)

Purpose: This award will recognize excellence for a single human interest story. A human interest story is a feature story that discusses a person or persons in an interactive and/or emotional way. It presents people and their problems, concerns, or achievements in a way that brings about interest or sympathy in the reader. Columns should not be entered in this category. Judges will consider: readability, originality and impact.

Submit tearsheets online from any issue within the contest period.

Each individual may submit two (2) separate entries. One entry consists of full page PDF tearsheet(s) submitted online.

8. BUSINESS STORY

(Individual competition)

Purpose: 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 tearsheets online from any issues within the contest period.

Each individual may submit two (2) separate entries. One entry consists of full page PDF tearsheet(s) submitted online.

9. SOCIAL ISSUES STORY

(Individual competition)

Purpose: This award will recognize excellence for a social issues story or series. Social issues are matters that can be explained only by factors outside an individual's control and immediate social environment which affect many individuals in a society. Common social issues include poverty, violence, justice, human rights (suppression of), equality (or discrimination), and crime, and usually revolve around conflicting viewpoints and tensions between people who take different stances. Columns should not be entered in this category. Judges will consider: readability, originality, and impact.

Submit tearsheets online from any issues within the contest period.

Each individual may submit two (2) separate entries. 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 for (1) to three (3) stories online.

10. ARTS/ ENTERTAINMENT STORY

(Individual competition)



Purpose: To 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 tearsheets online from any issues from the contest period. Each individual may submit two (2) entries.

11. SPORTS STORY

(Individual competition)



Purpose: To 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. Each individual may submit two (2) entries. Submit tearsheets online from any issues from September 1, 2012, through August 31, 2013.

12. COLUMNIST

(Individual competition)



Purpose: To 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 in any issue from September 1, 2012, through August 31, 2013. Each individual may submit two (2) entries.

13. EDITORIAL

(Individual competition)



Purpose: To recognize the single best editorial published in a Minnesota college newspaper from September 1, 2012, through August 31, 2013. Quality of writing, significance to the school, importance of the issue, success of the argument on the reader, general impact—all will be considered. Each individual may submit up to two (2) entries.

14. USE OF INFORMATION GRAPHICS AND GRAPHIC ILLUSTRATION

(Individual competition)



Purpose: 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.

Individuals: Submit tearsheets or URLs online from any issues within the contest period. Each individual may submit two (2) separate entries. Each contest entry consists of full page PDF tearsheets 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.

15. BEST USE OF MULTIMEDIA

(Individual competition)



Purpose: 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) entries.

16. PHOTOGRAPHY

(Individual competition)



Purpose: To recognize excellence in photojournalism by individual newspaper photographers. There are four categories:

- a. News Photo
- b. Feature Photo
- c. Sports Photo
- d. Photo Story*

Judges will give 75 percent weight to the content of the photo, 25 percent to technique. More than one person per newspaper may enter.

*A **photo story** is defined as three or more photos that tell a story. For photo story entries, submit **ONLY TEARSHEETS**. If a number of photos on the same story appear in successive issues or in a single issue, they should be entered as a single entry. Photo stories will be judged based on the story told by the photos, not the accompanying copy.

For all other photo categories, submit entire tearsheets 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. Each individual may submit two (2) entries. Submit any photo(s) published September 1, 2012 through August 31, 2013.

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 October 14?

Mail payment and entries to:

MNA College Better Newspaper Contest
12 South Sixth Street, Suite 1120
Minneapolis, MN 55402-1502
E: member@mna.org | P: 612-332-8844



Frequently Asked Questions

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, 612-332-8844 or 800-279-2979 or email member@mna.org.

What work can I enter in the BNC?

Anything published between September 1, 2012, through August 31, 2013

What browser should I use?

The contest site www.betterbnc.com is compatible with Internet Explorer (6+) and FireFox (2+) on the PC, and FireFox (2+) on the Macintosh. FireFox is BetterBNC's recommended browser.

How do I know what my password is?

The first time you login 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've already changed your password, and have lost or forgot it, please email or call LuAnn Yattaw who can help re-set the password (luann@mna.org or 612-278-0235).

What if my info is wrong or my paper 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 must be submitted by mail?

1: General Excellence

MNA's mailing address is 12 South Sixth Street, Suite 1120, Minneapolis, MN 55402. Mailed entries must be postmarked on or before October 14.

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 12 South Sixth Street, Suite 1120, Minneapolis, MN 55402. Mailed payment and entries must be postmarked on or before October 14.

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?

Monday, October 14, 2013. All entries must be uploaded to the online system by 11 p.m. Oct. 14. Categories that require mailed entries must be postmarked on or before Oct. 14.

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.