

SUMMER 2006



**ONLINE RESOURCES  
FOR JOURNALISTS**

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**NORTHERN ILLINOIS NEWSPAPER ASSOCIATION**



In a world of narrowcasts and niches, we still need a town square – a place where we gather as a community to experience events that matter. And gathered, we need a trusted guide.



*Jill Geisler  
The Poynter Institute  
April 2006*

Vol. 44, No. 2

Route to:

- Publisher
- Managing Ed.
- Newsroom
- Advertising
- Circulation



# Need to go?

*NINA's annual Grammar for Journalists workshop offers refresher course*

**9 A.M. TO NOON FRIDAY, JUNE 16, 2006**

*Campus Life Building, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb*



**Your Grammar Coach:** Tom Johnson, news editor, The Beacon News, Aurora.

**Tom says:** "Rather than focus on grammar as a set of rules, we'll focus on getting the words right. The premise is that because clear language reflects clear thinking, the essentials of grammar will fall into place."

Tom will use real-life examples of grammar problems in stories that made it past at least two journalists before they were intercepted ... or weren't.

**Cost:** Just \$10 for registrants from NINA-member papers. \$20 for non-members. Pay at the door.

**Please register** by Friday, June 9, by contacting Jim Killam, [jkillam@niu.edu](mailto:jkillam@niu.edu) / 815-753-4239.

**From past attendees:** "It helped clear up my problems with punctuation" ... "Good reminders to establish consistency in style." ... "I don't feel as dumb as I did before I came. I'll write with confidence now."

# 36 questions every J-school grad should be able to answer

By Jim Killam

We asked journalists and educators to help us come up with the following list. The responses varied widely — not only the questions, but who might be asking them. Here are our consensus picks. Test yourself. If you don't know an answer, you should know where to find it quickly.

Why 36? Because we couldn't fit 37.

1. What five freedoms are guaranteed by the First Amendment?
2. What are the four major "commandments" in the SPJ Code of Ethics?
3. Give examples of when a reporter should and shouldn't use the inverted pyramid.
4. When is it legal to tape record a telephone conversation?
5. Identify the subject, verb and object in the following sentence: *The quick, brown fox jumped over the lazy dog.*
6. If a person's property tax rises from \$4,000 a year to \$4,600 a year, what is the percent increase?
7. What's the difference between the mean and the median?
8. What's a FOIA request and how do I fill one out?
9. When can a public body legally move into executive session?
10. Name the past five U.S. presidents, in reverse order starting with the current one.
11. Name all of the continents.
12. What are the major differences in the beliefs of Christians, Muslims and Jews?
13. How do I set up a blog?
14. What is an RSS feed?
15. How do I set up a podcast?
16. What are the three largest newspaper groups in the United States?
17. Who are Jayson Blair and Stephen Glass?
18. How do you get sources to return your calls on deadline?
19. Under what circumstances would you grant a source anonymity?
20. What does it feel like to you when you see your byline in the newspaper?
21. Why do you want to be a journalist?
22. Who are your favorite writers (or photographers)?
23. What's the best work you've ever done?
24. Are you a better writer or reporter?
25. Are you willing to work nights and weekends?
26. Do you like Ramen noodles?
27. Do you think you should live in the community you cover?
28. What are your hobbies and do you envision them causing any conflict of interest with your reporting?
29. Do you have a library card?
30. How soon can you send me some of your best clips?
31. Who died and left you in charge of looking for the truth?
32. What will it cost me to get you to forget about doing this story?
33. When are you going to realize that what I do as a public official is none of your business?
34. Where in the Constitution does it say anything about the public's right to know?
35. Why do you journalists like to cause people so much pain and suffering?
36. How would you feel about this story or photo if it involved you and your family?



Jim Killam is adviser for the Northern Star, the Daily student newspaper at Northern Illinois University, and is the NINA newsletter editor. Contact him at [jkillam@niu.edu](mailto:jkillam@niu.edu).

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# NINA honors 5 with scholarships

Five talented student journalists were honored this spring in NINA's annual scholarship competition for high school seniors.

Judges selected the three scholarship winners and two honorable mentions from among 43 applicants. A total of \$1,600 in scholarships was awarded, including \$1,300 from NINA and \$300 from The Daily Herald. The Kankakee Daily Journal also

contributed \$100 to NINA's scholarship fund this spring.

Since the program started nine years ago, NINA and local papers have given \$10,200 in scholarships to graduating high school seniors who have expressed an interest in continuing their journalism education at college level. NINA has received 323 scholarship applications over those nine years.

The scholarship committee is grateful to the NINA Board, the Northern Illinois University's Department of Communication staff for their continued support of the program and the contributions from The Daily Herald and Kankakee Daily Journal.

"Our panel of judges really enjoyed reviewing the applications, but also

found it very difficult to select the winners. There was a great deal of talent and passion for journalism evident in the applications," said the Ledger-Sentinel's John Etheredge, NINA's scholarship coordinator. "As an association we're pleased to honor a few of these students through this program and look forward to seeing them in our newsrooms in the future."



**First Place**  
**ERIKA STREBEL**  
Glenbard North  
High School  
  
\$600 from NINA,  
\$300 from the Daily  
Herald

NINA judges selected Strebel as this year's top scholarship winner based on her work as a reporter and editor of her school's student newspaper, The North Current. The judges were especially impressed with the talent Strebel has shown as both a news and feature writer.

In her biographical essay, Strebel wrote: "I've tasted the mix of euphoria and stress during late nights trying to meet deadlines, suffered the long-winded speeches of school and district administrators during interviews, felt the burn behind my eyes from staring too long at a computer display while designing a double truck, and sighed in exasperation because the computer crashed before I could save that ad I'd been working on for the last four hours. Yet I love what I do with an inexplicable, fiery passion."

Jaime Hajek, faculty adviser to the North Current, described Strebel's work for the paper as "exemplary: She is a brilliant writer; she provides strong editorial leadership to the newspaper; and she demonstrates a tremendous work ethic, as well as a cool collected behavior while working in stressful situations."

Strebel has received six other awards for her writing, including being named a national winner in the American Society of Newspaper Editors/Quill and Scroll 2005 International Writing and Photo contest in the in-depth individual and news story categories.

She plans to pursue a career as a reporter. She has been accepted at the University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana where she plans to major in both English and journalism.



**Second Place**  
**JILLIAN GINDY**  
Bradley-Bourbonnais  
High School  
  
\$500 from NINA

Judges awarded Gindy a scholarship based on her work as editor and columnist for her student newspaper, The Boiling Point. Gindy has served as editor of the paper for the past two years. Judges were especially impressed with Gindy's lively writing style.

In her biographical essay, Gindy wrote she decided she wanted a career in journalism as she worked on The Boiling Point. "I realized that this is what I want to do with my life. ... Journalism class has ironically become the thing that keeps me up at night and also the thing that gets me out of bed in the morning."

"Either write the things worth reading or do the things worth the writing," said Benjamin

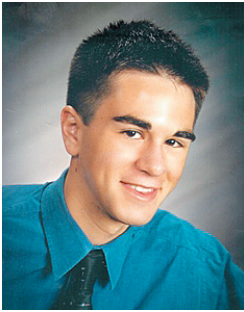
Franklin, and in my lifetime, I plan on doing both," Gindy added.

In a letter of recommendation, Debra Howard, a guidance counselor at Bradley-Bourbonnais, emphasized the leadership skills Gindy has demonstrated as The Boiling Point editor.

She plans to attend DePaul University in Chicago.

## SCHOLARSHIPS

From Page 3



**Third Place**  
**AVI KUPFER**  
**Deerfield**  
**High School**  
**\$200 from NINA**

NINA judges chose Kupfer for a scholarship award based on his work as editor of his school newspaper, Deerprints.

In his autobiographical essay, Kupfer wrote: "My motivation lies in the simple fact that I want to communicate my ideas to people. With every story I've written in my high school newspaper, I've written out of a desire to influence people and help them to think in new ways...I know with every story I write for the newspaper and every newspaper I read myself, I am building a foundation that will help

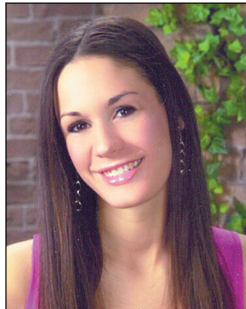
me to learn more about the issues that impact our nation."

Shari Kellogg, faculty adviser to Deerprints, described Kupfer as one of the finest students she has worked with at the school. She assessed his work as editor this way: "I am continuously impressed by his ability to grapple with difficult ethical dilemmas with integrity. ... Avi's own skills in writing, reporting and editing have grown to a professional level through mentoring other writers, while simultaneously improving the paper as a whole."

### Honorable Mention

**STEPHANIE  
SCHAEFER**

**West Aurora  
High School**



NINA judges took note of Schaefer's work as editor of her school newspaper, The Red & Blue, and as a stringer for the Beacon-News in Aurora. Schaefer has shown talent as an interviewer and a writer of hard news stories, features and editorials.

In her autobiographical essay, Schaefer wrote: "Even if I end up working at the smallest newspaper in the smallest state in the nation making next to nothing, I know that I will enjoy it because I will be writing."

She plans to attend a four year college where she will major in journalism and minor in Spanish.

### Honorable Mention

**AL  
GOEHRING**

**DeKalb  
High School**



NINA judges were impressed with Goehring's work as editor and columnist for his school newspaper, the Barb Wire.

Goehring wrote in his autobiographical essay how he has worked to boost both the content and the professionalism of the Barb Wire during his tenure as editor.

Greg Solomon, a teacher at DeKalb, wrote of Goehring, "He is rarely satisfied with a story that only tells what is apparent to the naked eye. He goes beyond that and digs deeper, wanting the reader to know the whole story, not just what is apparent at the surface level."

## CALENDAR

### Monday, June 12

Deadline for entries in NINA's annual newspaper contest (note earlier deadline!).

### Friday, June 16

NINA's Grammar for Journalists workshop, NIU-DeKalb. See page 1.

### June 18-23

NIU Journalism & Media Camp for high school students. For information, contact Jim Killam, jkillam@niu.edu or 815-753-4239.

### Friday, June 23

NINA Board meeting, Northern Star, NIU.

### Aug. 24-27

The Society of Professional Journalists holds its national convention at the Hyatt Regency Chicago.

Info: [www.spj.org](http://www.spj.org)

### Friday, Sept. 8

NINA board meeting, Northern Star, NIU.

### Friday, Sept. 29

High-school adviser workshops: Rockford, Arlington Heights, Aurora.

### Friday, Oct. 27

NINA Fall Conference and Awards Luncheon, NIU-DeKalb.

### Friday, Dec. 8

NINA Board meeting, Northern Star, NIU.

**Save the Date: Friday, Sept. 29, 2006**  
**Workshops for High School Journalism Advisers**

3 host sites: Rockford Register Star • Daily Herald, Arlington Heights • Beacon News, Aurora

Watch for details soon