

SUMMER 2010

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NORTHERN ILLINOIS NEWSPAPER ASSOCIATION

CONTEST 2010

NINA's 2010 newspaper contest is under way, with a postmark deadline for entries set at **June 30**. This year, we've reduced the number of contest divisions to two: dailies published four times a week or more, and non-dailies published less than four times a week. We've added several

categories and removed a couple of others. All contest information, including rules and entry forms, is online at www.ninaonline.org. The contest is limited to newspapers or individuals who have paid their 2010 dues. Contest results will be announced Oct. 20 at NINA's Fall Conference at NIU.

Questions? Contact Jim Killam at 815-753-4239 or jkillam@niu.edu



I fear three newspapers more than a hundred thousand bayonets.



Napoleon Bonaparte

'DIGITAL INK' BLOG

www.ninaonline.org

Vol. 48, No. 3

Route to:

- ___ Publisher
- ___ Managing Ed.
- ___ Newsroom
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- ___

Junkyard journalism

Come hear from the Chicago press about the fight to be the baddest watchdogs in the whole damn town

Join top Chicago news pros for tough talk about watchdog journalism and the fight for survival in America's most celebrated muckraking town.

To hear the strategies, the Northern Illinois Newspaper Association has called together some of the most prominent editors and writers in Chicago for a forum at 6:30 p.m. Thursday, June 17, at the Union League Club.

The panelists include:

- **James O'Shea**, co-founder of the Chicago News Cooperative and former top executive at the Chicago Tribune and Los Angeles Times
- **George Papajohn**, Deputy Managing Editor of the Chicago Tribune
- **Tom McNamee**, Editorial Page Editor of the Chicago Sun-Times
- **Kurt Gessler**, Interactive Media Editor, The Daily Herald
- **Laura Washington**, Chicago columnist and professor at DePaul University
- **Peter Kendall**, Associate Managing Editor of the Chicago Tribune
- **Polly Smith**, Money and Business Editor of the Chicago Sun-Times

PANEL DISCUSSION

When: Thursday, June 17, 2010

Time: 6:30 p.m.

Where: Union League Club, 65 West Jackson Blvd., Chicago

Cost: Free! Light refreshments provided. Cash bar.

Union League Club dress code: Business casual. Collared shirts / blouses. No jeans, sweats or shorts.

To register: Contact Dirk Johnson, 815-761-6579 or dejohanson@niu.edu. Registration deadline is Monday, June 14. Space is limited.

The discussion will be moderated by Dirk Johnson, a former bureau chief for The New York Times and Newsweek, who lectures on journalism at Northern Illinois University in DeKalb.

The forum is supported by APCO Worldwide, a public affairs and strategic communications firm with offices in Chicago; Northern Illinois University; and the Union League Club of Chicago.

Newspapers, pay your interns

By Jim Killam

My first big break in journalism came in 1981, a week after I graduated high school. Al Post, the editor of the Belvidere Daily Republican, called and asked if I'd like to serve as interim sports editor that summer. I'd covered high-school football for the paper during my senior year and apparently hadn't libeled anyone.

At the time, I was busing tables part-time at a mall steakhouse for the minimum \$3.15 an hour. The newspaper wanted to pay me the princely salary – I'd have a *salary!* – of \$120 a week. Was I interested?

I never set foot in that steakhouse again.

I also quickly discovered that my new salary equated to less than \$2 an hour. No matter. That summer, before I'd even started college, journalism became my career.

Would I have worked for free? Probably. At least until my 1973 AMC Hornet conked out. But the meager income helped me pay my frequent car expenses, take my girlfriend to the movies once in a while and generally not have to sponge off my parents before everything had to go toward college expenses.

I kept working for that paper through college, doing vacation relief for editors and reporters during summers, and sports on fall and winter weekends. They paid me a little, which kept me from having to quit and work more hours at my second job, a retail hellhole called Ardan's.

Today, I get to work with college journalists who have that same wide-eyed enthusiasm. For years, I've been telling them they can make their own breaks and find opportunity. Some do. Others get smacked in the face with financial reality. Plenty of internship opportunities exist ... so long as students are willing to work for free.

NIU is a good school – sometimes a great school – but it's no secret that many students come here because it's their most affordable college option. They spend their summers working in order to cover a chunk of their college costs. If they're lucky, their parents can pick up a chunk. The rest goes onto loans that might take more than a decade to repay.

The Northern Star often is recognized as one of the nation's best college newspapers.

Yet, a low percentage of our students work summer internships in other newsrooms. The reason: They can't afford to. If they don't make money during the summer, they either won't return to school in the fall or they'll have to add to that scary debt load.

Newspapers' legal reasoning for not paying an intern is that the student is, in effect, purchasing something of value. Often, that means the student pays for any college credits earned. I don't like that, but I get it.

In a very real sense, though, that leaves many newspapers to sell journalism experience ... not necessarily to students who deserve it, but to those who can afford it. Last time I checked, that's the kind of thing good newspapers expose ... not propagate.

There are better ways. For instance, the Rock Island Argus and Moline Dispatch have paid their interns for years and have no plans to stop.

"We believe that it's tough to expect good work, response to direction, dependably showing up to work each day, if the person is a volunteer," said Managing Editor Roger Ruthhart. "We also believe that if you are asking people to work for you, you should pay them. Pretty simple concept."

At Rock Island / Moline, that's close to minimum wage. Ruthhart finds it a good summer solution when regular staffers take vacation.

"Our other options would be drops in coverage or paying other staff to work overtime," he said. "Interns are better than nothing and cheaper than time-and-a-half."

Publishers and editors: Even in tough times, please set aside something – anything – to pay your interns. Find creative ways to make it happen, in the same way you find creative ways to meet other necessary expenses. Failure to do so is denying opportunity for some talented college journalists. It's failing to invest in journalism's future.

As an industry, we can't afford that.



Jim Killam is adviser for the Northern Star, the daily student media at Northern Illinois University. He serves as NINA's communications coordinator. Contact him at jkillam@niu.edu, or 815-753-4239.

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NINA honors top student journalists

NINA honored three talented student journalists in its 13th annual Northern Illinois High School Journalist of the Year scholarship competition this spring.

A total of \$1,850 in scholarships was awarded, including \$1,500 from NINA and \$350 from The Daily Herald.

NINA presents scholarships each spring to high school seniors who demonstrate the standards of honesty, integrity, attention to detail, hard work, creativity and an understanding and commitment to quality journalism.

Students are asked to submit an

autobiographical essay, letters of recommendation and a portfolio of their work. John Etheredge, NINA scholarship coordinator, said judges were impressed with the high quality of work they found in the students' portfolios.

"I've participated in the scholarship judging since NINA started the program 13 years ago and I can say without hesitation that this was one of the strongest groups of applications we have ever received," Etheredge said. "It was very difficult for our judges to select the

winners."

He noted that this was the first year that two of the three scholarship winners came from the same school, Bartlett High School.

NINA and its member papers have awarded a total of \$18,250 in scholarships since 1998. As in previous years, The Daily Herald also contributed funds for this year's scholarship winners.

"On behalf of NINA and the scholarship committee, I want to thank The Daily Herald for its continued support of our program," Etheredge said.

First Place

Allison Prang

Bartlett High School

'A tenacious journalist'

NINA judges selected Allison Prang as the 2010 Northern Illinois High School Journalist of the Year based on the professional quality of her work as editor of the Bartlett High Hawk Eye; as a columnist for her local paper, the Bartlett Examiner; and as a correspondent for The Daily Herald.

Joe Grimm, a visiting editor at Michigan State University's School of Journalism, wrote, "Allison Prang is no one to mess with. Sure, she seems nice, but do not be fooled like I was. She is a tenacious journalist and she always gets her story.

"Take a look at her resume ... she does it all. And she will do it all," Grimm wrote.

Tony Sanders, chief of communications for School District U-46, wrote of Prang: "Give her 20 seconds of your time and she will overwhelm you with her energy. Give her five minutes and she will impress you with her intelligence and level of maturity."

Jill Flanagan, a teacher and adviser for the Bartlett High student newspaper, described Prang as one of the most self-motivated students she has ever taught.

"Allison has the qualities of a fair, honest, objective reporter and team member, and I am confident in her abilities to attain success as part of the journalism field," Flanagan wrote.

In her autobiographical essay, Prang wrote that she'd like to be an investigative reporter.

"I aspire to be the next Bob Woodward or Carl Bernstein because of my indescribable passion for journalism and the effect it can have on society. I really like the thought of pursuing a career in the harder side of journalism, like investigative reporting, because I have a passion for bringing a voice to the truth."

Prang received a total scholarship award of \$950: \$750 from NINA and \$200 from The Daily Herald. She plans to attend the University of Missouri this fall.



Second Place

Jimmy Hibsich

Rolling Meadows High School

'A good paper was made great'

Jimmy Hibsich was selected by NINA judges for second place based on his work as editor in chief of The Pacer, Rolling Meadows High School's award-winning student newspaper.

"Excellence and passion and Jimmy Hibsich go hand-in-hand," wrote Stan Zoller, an English and journalism teacher at Rolling Meadows. "He is always looking for creative ways to make the paper more visually exciting through imaginative layouts or fascinating graphics.

"Under Jimmy's leadership, The Pacer has not wavered from its tradition of outstanding writing and reporting," Zoller added. "Jimmy finds stories throughout the communities the paper covers — whether it's the student body, the school board or the local city council."

Charles Johns, principal at Rolling Meadows, described Hibsich as a "unique high school journalist" who has made "an indelible impression on the school, the community and me. Through his leadership, a good paper was made great."

Superintendent David R. Schuler wrote that Hibsich has done an outstanding job as reporter and two-year editor in chief of The Pacer: "In my 10 years as superintendent, I have never had the privilege of having a student journalist of Jimmy's ability."

In his autobiographical essay, Hibsich said he lives and breathes journalism.

"Journalism has taken me to unimaginable places—places where many high school student only dream of going. What career will allow me to interview the secretary of state one day and meet a chart-topping band's singer for coffee at Starbucks' the next? I will never quit," he wrote.

Hibsich plans to study journalism at the University of Missouri. He received a scholarship of \$600: \$500 from NINA and \$100 from The Daily Herald.



CALENDAR

Thursday, June 17

• Panel discussion, Union League Club, Chicago.

Friday, June 25

• NINA Board meeting, 10 a.m., Northern Star, NIU.

Friday, Sept. 10

• NINA Board meeting, 10 a.m., Northern Star, NIU.

Wednesday, Oct. 20

• NINA Fall Conference and Awards Banquet, NIU.

Friday, Dec. 3

• NINA Board meeting, 10 a.m., Northern Star, NIU.



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☛ Scholarships: from Page 3

Third Place

Kourtney Liepelt

Bartlett High School

'Wrote to make my voice heard'

NINA judges picked Kourtney Liepelt for a third-place scholarship based on her work as a reporter and editorial/opinions editor for Bartlett High School's student newspaper, The Hawk Eye.

Judges were especially impressed with several of the well-reasoned and highly readable editorials Liepelt wrote for The Hawk Eye.

Judges also took note that Liepelt and some of her friends organized a student newspaper at a local elementary school, and she won a first place award for column writing at a high school journalism camp hosted by Indiana University.



Jill Flanagan, faculty adviser for the Hawk Eye, described Liepelt as an "outstanding choice" to receive a NINA scholarship.

In a letter of recommendation, Flanagan noted that the student newspaper that Liepelt and her friends organized at the elementary school helped inspire "young students to learn more about the role of journalism in a democratic society."

In her autobiographical essay, Liepelt said she

discovered her interest in becoming a writer at an early age.

"At the age of 5, most girls picture themselves growing up to be a princess straight from a Disney movie. They believe that magic can provide them with anything their hearts may desire," she wrote. "I, on the other hand, aspired to become a writer. I did not need to be swept off my feet by some handsome prince when I held the power to give others that same weightless feeling with my words. I wrote to express myself. I wrote to enrich my mind. I wrote to make my voice heard."

Liepelt plans to continue her journalism education at the University of Indiana this fall.

She received a \$300 scholarship: \$250 from NINA and \$50 from The Daily Herald.