

**NORTHERN ILLINOIS NEWSPAPER ASSOCIATION
NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION
2010 NEWSPAPER CONTEST RULES**

1. Publication period for the contest is May 1, 2009 to April 30, 2010. Entries submitted must be from newspapers or websites published during this period. **ENTRY POSTMARK DEADLINE: WEDNESDAY, JUNE 30, 2010.** Entries should be addressed to: NINA c/o Jim Killam, Northern Illinois University, Campus Life Building, Suite 130, DeKalb, IL 60115. Entry materials will not be returned. Please note that the entry address is different this year.
2. Contests are open to paid member newspapers and paid individual members. Questions regarding membership status and dues should be addressed to NINA headquarters at 815-753-4239, or via e-mail at jkillam@niu.edu.
3. Content of all entries must be original work.
4. The official contest entry form is at www.northernstar.info/nina. For each entry, type the entry information into the form, print it and proceed to step 5.
5. We highly encourage you to submit page PDFs on a CD-ROM rather than newspaper tearsheets. Tearsheets are acceptable for entries where a PDF is not available.

If submitting tearsheets: Each entry must be clearly marked indicating the category in which it is to compete. Entries should be securely assembled, but must not be mounted or bound. An official contest entry form must be stapled (no paper clips) **to each entry**, with group and category marked. If publishers do not have the preferred originals, they may submit photocopies.

If submitting PDFs: Submit an official contest entry form for each entry, along with *one* CD containing *all* of your entries. Please use the following file-naming convention:

category number_letter a-d_newspaper name_division.

Examples:

For Best Headline, first of your four entries: *2a_dailynews_dailies.pdf*

For Best Feature Story, third of your four entries: *3c_weeklystandard_nondailies.pdf*

6. Publishers may enter any or all of the contests at a fee of \$6.00 per entry, per category. Unless otherwise specified, the contest limits four entries per paper/per category. Each individual writer or photographer is limited to two entries 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, editorial page, education reporting, community service. (Each category description explains these and other limits.)
7. 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/or the contest coordinator. Judges are typically NIU journalism faculty, other journalism educators in the region and/or professional journalists not associated with the contest. However, accomplished professionals and/or scholars with relevant subject matter expertise who are not journalists or journalism educators may also serve as judges. Judges will be provided contest rules and relevant category entry information.
8. Newspapers winning first place in each contest or classification of contest will be awarded a framed certificate. Second and third place winners will be awarded certificates. Judges also may designate honorable mention awards.

CLASSIFICATION OF NEWSPAPERS

Contests now are divided into **TWO** classifications of NINA members. **Non-Dailies** includes all newspapers published fewer than four times per week. **Dailies** includes all newspapers published more than four times per week, and all newspapers printed as inserts in those dailies. Sunday editions are eligible for entry.

Entrants must identify group to which they belong on all entries and may enter in only one group. Multiple newspaper nameplates which share all editorial operations under one roof count as one newspaper; submit entries under the group name.

Sweepstakes: Newspapers scoring the largest accumulation of points in all categories will receive the Donald R. Grubb Newspaper Award for those in the Non-Dailies group; and the James Copley Award for those in the Dailies group.

CONTEST CATEGORY AND ENTRY INFORMATION

1. BEST DESIGN

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 and display of advertising also will be considered. Entries should consist of three issues published during the contest year.

Entry: Submit three complete PRINTED issues, plus (if available) a PDF of one of those front pages: One entry per paper.

2. BEST INFORMATIONAL GRAPHIC

Judged on originality, clarity and ability to illustrate the concept or story. Graphs, maps, charts, and original illustrations are eligible. Black & white or color. Note: Illustrative photos should be entered in the “Best Photo” category.

Entry: Submit PDF, or tearsheet 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 per individual with limit of four entries per paper.

3. BEST HEADLINE

Judged on imagination and originality, and relevance of the headline to the story. Display headlines also may be entered, and will be judged additionally on how well they contribute to the story-package design.

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

4. BEST SPECIAL SECTION

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 the complete PRINTED section, plus (if available) a PDF of the cover page. One entry per paper.

5. BEST GENERAL FEATURE

For a single feature article, as contrasted with a spot/breaking news story, not covered in the “Personality Profile” category. Judged on news value, quality of reporting and writing and local focus.

Entry: Submit page PDFs, or tearsheets clearly marked. Please write the headline on the entry form. No more than two by each individual writer with limit of four entries per paper.

6. BEST PERSONALITY PROFILE

For best single feature article, as contrasted with a spot/breaking news story, profiling a person. Judged on news value, quality of reporting and writing and local focus.

Entry: Submit page PDFs, or tearsheets clearly marked. Please write the headline on the entry form. No more than two by each individual writer with limit of four entries per paper.

7. OWEN PHELPS AWARD FOR BEST RELIGION STORY

For a single story that illuminates issues of faith and/or spirituality in everyday life. Judged on news value, quality of reporting and writing and local focus. Sidebars published the same day may be included as part of entry.

Entry: Submit PDF(s), or tearsheets clearly marked to indicate the entry. Please write headline on the entry form. No more than two entries per writer with limit of four entries per paper.

8. BEST BUSINESS/FINANCIAL/CONSUMER STORY

Can be either news or feature story. Judged on news value, quality of reporting and writing and local focus.

Entry: Submit PDF(s), or tearsheets clearly marked to indicate the entry. Please write headline on the entry form. No more than two entries per writer with limit of four entries per paper.

9. BEST TECHNOLOGY/MEDICAL STORY

For a 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 PDF(s), or tearsheets clearly marked to indicate the entry. Please write headline on the entry form. No more than two entries per writer with limit of four entries per paper.

10. BEST FEATURE SECTION

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 PRINTED issues, with section or pages clearly marked, plus (if available) a PDF of one of the section-front pages. One entry per paper.

11. 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 PDFs, URLs and/or 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.

12. BEST SPORTS STORY

Judged on news value, quality of reporting and writing and local focus. Single story. Sidebars published the same day may be included as part of entry. No columns.

Entry: Submit page PDFs, or tearsheets clearly marked. Please write the headline on the entry form. No more than two by each individual writer with limit of four entries per paper.

13. BEST SPORTS COLUMNIST

For the best three locally developed bylined sports columns. Judged on originality, voice, quality of writing and local focus.

Entry: Submit three columns, which may be either related or unrelated. Send page PDFs, or tearsheets clearly marked. Please write the headlines on the entry form. Limit **one** entry by an individual writer and **three** entries per paper.

14. BEST SPORTS SECTION

Judged on quality of writing, editing, design, photography/graphics and local focus.

Entry: Submit three PRINT issues (tearsheets or complete sections) plus (if available) a PDF of one section-front page. One entry per paper.

15. BEST COLUMNIST

For the best three locally developed bylined columns (as contrasted to unsigned editorials). Non-sports. Judged on originality, voice, quality of writing and local focus.

Entry: Submit three columns, which may be either related or unrelated. Send page PDFs, or tearsheets clearly marked. Please write the headlines on the entry form. Limit **one** entry by an individual writer and **three** entries per paper.

16. BEST EDITORIAL

For best single editorial on a local issue. Judged on quality of writing and strength of argument and suggested solution.

Entry: Submit page PDFs, or tearsheets clearly marked. Please write the headline on the entry form, along with name and staff position of the individual(s) who composed the editorial. No more than two entries by each writer with limit of four entries per paper.

17. BEST EDITORIAL PAGE(S)

For 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 PDFs or tearsheets from any three issues. One entry per paper.

18. BEST SPOT NEWS PHOTO

Judged on urgency/news value of the image, composition, technical quality and cutline information gathered.

Entry: Submit PDF or tearsheet. On entry form, please write brief description of photo. No more than two entries by an individual photographer with limit of four entries per paper.

19. BEST FEATURE PHOTO

Judged on composition, technical quality, emotional appeal, news value and cutline assistance.

Entry: Submit PDF or tearsheet. On entry form, please write brief description of photo. No more than two entries by an individual photographer with limit of four entries per paper.

20. BEST SPORTS PHOTO

Judged on news value, composition, technical quality, emotional appeal and cutline assistance.

Entry: Submit PDF or tearsheet. On entry form, please write brief description of photo. No more than two entries by an individual photographer with limit of four entries per paper.

21. BEST ONLINE SLIDESHOW

Entry should consist of a series of related photos, presented online with or without related audio. Judged on news value, emotional appeal, composition and technical quality of individual photos, plus cohesiveness and design of the entire slideshow. Cutlines will be considered in judging.

Entry: Submit entry form which includes URL of the slideshow. No more than two entries by an individual photographer with limit of four entries per paper.

22. BEST VIDEO

For video reporting presented online. News or feature story. Judged on news value, quality of editing/production and selection of a story that uses the medium well. Note: Audio slideshows should be entered in that category rather than this one.

Entry: Submit entry form with the video's URL clearly printed. Two entries per individual with a maximum of four entries per publication.

23. BEST WEBSITE

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. One entry per publication.

24. BEST SPOT NEWS STORY

Judged on news value/urgency, quality of reporting and writing and local focus. Single story. May include related sidebars from the same issue.

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

25. BEST IN-DEPTH NEWS STORY

Judged on news value, evidence of investigative work, quality of reporting and writing and local focus. Entire story must have been published in one issue. Multiple related stories published the same day will be considered one entry.

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

26. BEST NEWS STORY SERIES

Series can be about any one topic followed for several issues, 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 PDFs, or tearsheets clearly marked indicating the entry. Entries that represent a team effort should list team members and designate lead writer or editor. Please write headlines on the entry form. One entry per paper.

27. BEST EDUCATION REPORTING

For excellence in education reporting as demonstrated by an individual's best three stories from the contest year. Judged on news value, variety, quality of reporting and writing and local focus. Supplemental online material also may be entered. Do not enter a series; use category 26 for that.

Entry: Three stand-alone stories. Submit PDFs, URLs and/or tearsheets clearly marked indicating the entry. One entry per paper.

28. COMMUNITY SERVICE

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 PDFs or tearsheets. An accompanying statement from the newspaper should explain how the entry spurred change, community spirit or public involvement. One entry 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 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.**

Questions regarding the contest should be addressed to:

Jim Killam, Northern Star, Northern Illinois University, 815-753-4239; jkillam@niu.edu.