



Florida Press Association

2009 Better Weekly Newspaper Contest Rules

Eligibility: The contest is open to all Florida Press Association monthly, semi-monthly, weekly, semi-weekly, and tri-weekly newspaper members, active and affiliates, in good standing, **and whose 2010 dues are current by date of contest entry.**

All contest entries must be the sole work of the newspaper staff or regular contributors.

Entry Dates: All entries must have been published between January 1 and December 31, 2009.

Postmark Deadline: All entries must be mailed to the FPA, 336 East College Avenue, Suite 203, Tallahassee, FL 32301. **Contest entries must be postmarked no later than midnight, Friday, February 12, 2010. No entries, additions, or corrections will be accepted after that date!**

Circulation Divisions: Circulation is determined by the listing on the Florida Press Association website at www.flpress.com. Unless otherwise noted in the category the circulation divisions are:

Division A: over 15,000*

Division B: 7,000 – 15,000

Division C: under 7,000

Judges: Judges will be in-state newspaper staff with newsroom experience and who has been screened prior to the judging to insure that they will not judge competitors entries or entries that could pose a conflict of interest. (Judges must complete a judge's application form.) Final decision on value and applicability of all entries is up to the judges. This will be a two-tier judging system. Judges within the association will select the top six (6) entries for each category. Those entries will then be processed for the final judging by journalism professors from accredited journalism programs, along with the senior elected chairpersons of two Press Associations.

Each newspaper entrant is required to send at least one judge with newsroom experience to an in-state judging event. If a representative from your newspaper is not present at one of the judging locations, your contest entries may be disqualified. Entrants may submit a written request, addressed to the BWN Committee Members, asking to be excused from this requirement due to hardship. Employees with limited newspaper experience may not be accepted as judges.

Hardships taken into consideration are:

- The entrant is 150+ one-way miles away from the nearest judging site.
- Entrant has three or fewer FTE's (full-time equivalents = 1 employee @ 40 hours a week; 2 employees @ 20 hours a week, etc.) including the publisher.
- Entrant submitted no more than three total contest entries.

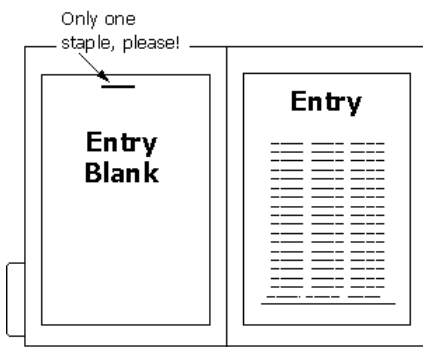
Hardship requests should be faxed to Thelma Givens at (850) 577-3611 or e-mailed to tgivens@flpress.com. All requests must be received no later than Friday, February 12, 2010 to be considered.

Awards: All awards and plaques are issued in the name of the newspaper as the official contest entrant submitting entries produced by its staff or regular contributors. Judges may select First, Second, and Third place winners and one Honorable Mention per class unless otherwise specified. They have complete discretion in making awards and **are not required to grant awards in any category.** Judges may grant **only one award per newspaper in each category.** **No explanatory or background material may accompany entries unless specifically permitted by the category.** In the categories where there are circulation divisions, if there are fewer than five entries by three newspapers in any division, those entries will be combined with the next higher division for judging. **NOTE:** If this occurs, the winning newspaper will be given point credit for whichever division that newspaper falls in. Sweepstakes* trophies will be awarded to the top newspaper in each circulation division, based on point accumulation. Points are awarded as follows: **First Place** – 4 points; **Second Place** – 3 points; **Third Place** – 2 points; and **Honorable Mention** – 1 point. There will be no "tie breaking" procedures. If newspapers tie for top awards, duplicate awards will be presented.

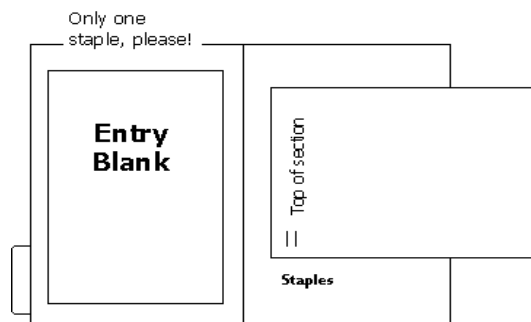
***Newspapers with a circulation exceeding 50,000 are ineligible to win sweepstakes awards. Contest circulation divisions were determined to create a fair and competitive contest – placing newspapers of comparable resources in the same division. As there are inadequate entries from newspapers exceeding circulation of 50,000 to create a separate division, they have been placed with the over 15,000 circulation group. However, in the interest of fairness, they are ineligible to receive the sweepstakes awards due to their significantly greater resources.**

How to Prepare Your Entries

1. Staple the official entry blank to the inside left side of a standard 8 1/2" x 11" manila folder. **Please make sure you fill in all required information on your entry blank or your entry will be disqualified.** Do not use paper clips. (Please use only one staple.)
2. Staple the entry to the inside right side of the manila folder, (or affix in an appropriate manner). You may fold the entry. **Do not cut entry, please submit the entire tearsheet.**
3. For tab-sized special section entries, please follow the example on the next page for how to submit the entry. Do not cut the spine of the section. Please limit the number of staples used to affix your section to the folder or use appropriate size binder clips.
4. On the entry blank, be specific in stating the category. An entry will be considered in only one category. There is a separate entry form for web site category. **Please print clearly.**
5. **Do not write, highlight or use non-reproductive blue pen directly on entry.** Circle article or use arrows to point out which article is being entered, being careful not to write within the article.



Regular Entry



Tab-sized Special Section

What to Pay and Where to Send Entries

1. The contest fee is **\$10.00** per individual entry and is non-refundable. Full payment must accompany your entries by the contest deadline or your entries will be disqualified. **FPA will not invoice newspapers for their contest fees.**
2. Please send all entries at one time and in one package, accompanied by one check payable to FPA or completed credit card information.
3. Because of the size of the contest, you will not be notified if your entry has been rejected, so please follow the rules carefully.
4. Submit only tearsheets. Copies are not accepted and will be automatically disqualified.

Categories

Category 1. General Excellence: Submit any two consecutive issues. Also, submit one issue from the week beginning March 1, 2009 or October 4, 2009. Points to be considered are: General and departmental news; mechanical excellence; advertising enterprise; editorial page; general appearance; makeup and style; photography; and promotion of community interest.

Category 2. Overall Graphic Design: Submit any two consecutive issues. Also, submit one issue from the week beginning May 3, 2009 or December 6, 2009. Judges will be analyzing your use of all graphics in your total newspaper, including typography; use of photographs; line art; effectiveness of presentation; and page design. Clip or rubber band all issues together and indicate the publication dates of all the issues on entry form.

Category 3. Front Page Makeup: Submit any two consecutive front pages. Also submit one front page from the week beginning May 10, 2009 or October 11, 2009. Judges will consider the general appearance of your front page, including the news value of your stories; mechanical excellence; style and impact. Staple all issues together and indicate the publication dates of all the issues on the entry form.

Category 4. Community Service: Any community service effort of the newspaper relating to one specific subject may be entered. Entrants are urged to present entries showing their efforts above and beyond the routine coverage normally given to the endeavors specified. Projects must be promoted and/or developed and completed by the newspaper's own efforts. Exhibits must be related directly to these efforts. Explanatory or background letters may accompany entries. This project must be completed or have made significant progress in the year entered. This category is designed to reveal an outstanding service rendered by the newspaper to its own community. The leadership role played by the paper is the important factor.

A. A brief explanation **MUST** be submitted with summary of purpose, results accomplished, and other pertinent information for the benefit of the judges.

B. Submit clippings, tearsheets, letters and other documentary material pointing to the newspaper's community service role. Staple or binder clip this material together. Indicate all materials used (tearsheet dates, etc) on the entry form.

Category 5. Editorial Page: Submit only tearsheet of entire editorial page from two consecutive issues. The purpose of this competition is recognition of outstanding examples of editorial pages concerned with local issues. One entry per newspaper. Attach tearsheets together on entry folder. Awards will be made based on content of editorials, columns and other materials on the page with particular emphasis on artwork, editorial cartoons or photographs, typography, and makeup of pages.

Category 6. Editorial Award: Submit tearsheet with editorial clearly marked. Tearsheet must bear the name of newspaper, and date of publication. Publishers may, if they so desire, submit a short statement of conditions bringing about publication of the editorial.

Category 7. Original Local Editorial Cartoon: Submit tearsheets of cartoons, with name of newspaper, date of publication and pertinent information about the cartoonist (is he/she also the publisher? retired citizen? etc.) Each cartoon counts as one entry.

Category 8. Humorous Column: Submit tearsheet with column clearly marked. Tearsheet must bear the name of newspaper, date of publication, and name of columnist(s). Each entry for this category shall be locally prepared. Judges will take into consideration the significance of the material presented to the community, suitable handling of the topic, appearance, originality and overall humor. Judging will be done on the basis of the individual merit of each separate column, and awards will be made on the basis of the best single humorous column.

Category 9. Serious Column (Sally Latham Memorial Award): Submit tearsheet with column clearly marked. Tearsheet must bear the name of newspaper, date of publication, and name of columnist(s). Each entry for this category shall be locally prepared. Judges will take into consideration significance of the material presented to the community, suitable handling of the topic, appearance and originality. Judging will be done on the basis of the individual merit of each separate column, and awards will be made on the basis of the best single column.

Category 10. First Amendment Defense (Jon A. Roosenraad Award): Submit editorials, news stories or accounts of actions taken by the newspaper on the local level relating to defense of the First Amendment. This entry may be composed of one or a series of articles or editorials concerning the First Amendment or freedom of information in general. For each entry, submit tearsheet(s), with the story (ies) clearly marked, stapled together in upper left corner. If entry consists of more than one tearsheet, attach entries together on folder and indicate the publication dates of all the tearsheets. Tearsheet(s) must bear the name of newspaper, date of publication, and name of writer(s). Judging will be based primarily on the newspaper's active pursuit of First Amendment defense and/or protection. **Open circulation class.**

Category 11. News Story (Gwen Stevenson Memorial Award): Submit tearsheet with the news story (other than sports) clearly marked. Tearsheet must bear the name of newspaper, date of publication, and name of writer(s). Judges will take into consideration such points as importance of the story in the community, timeliness, thoroughness of fact finding, reporting, sentence and paragraph structure, and impact of headline and lead.

Note: The memorial award will be chosen from the 1st place winners of each Division with the overall winner receiving the Gwen Stevenson Memorial Award.

Category 12. Investigative Reporting (Claudia Ross Memorial Award)*: Single story or series on one topic. Awarded to individual reporter or team. Material must be locally produced and written. Entry must be clearly marked. For each entry, submit tearsheet(s) stapled together in upper left corner. If entry consists of more than one tearsheet, attach entries together on folder and indicate the publication dates of all the tearsheets. Tearsheet(s) must bear the name of newspaper, date of publication, and name of writer(s). Entries may combine elements of news and/or editorials, which exhibit a measurable degree of investigative research. Judges will consider the newspaper's enterprise in attacking or uncovering local issues, events and problems through investigative reporting techniques. This category is distinguished from In-Depth News Reporting, which is covered in Category 13. **Open circulation class. This Award is sponsored by the University of Florida College of Journalism & Communications.**

Category 13. In-Depth News Reporting (Non-Investigative): Single story or series on one topic. Award to individual reporter or team. For each entry, submit tearsheet(s), with the story (ies) clearly marked, stapled together on entry folder. If entry consists of more than one tearsheet, attach entries together in folder and indicate the publication dates of all the tearsheets. Tearsheet(s) must bear the name of newspaper, date of publication, and name of writer(s). Judges will be examining **straight, in-depth reporting**, giving particular emphasis to community-wide importance of the story or series, thoroughness of fact reporting, and research. This category is distinguished from Category 12, which examines Investigative Reporting.

Category 14. Feature Story: Submit tearsheet with feature (other than sports) clearly marked. Tearsheet must bear the name of newspaper, date of publication, and name of writer(s). Judges will take into consideration such points as importance of the story to the community, thoroughness of reporting, sentence and paragraph structure, and impact of the headline or lead.

Category 15. Individual Graphic (Non-photo, Non-cartoon): Entries may include map, graph, chart or other non-photographic illustration. Must submit tearsheet bearing the name of the newspaper, date of publication and name of the graphic artist. Judges will consider quality of artwork and overall effectiveness. Graphic submitted may be part of a news, feature story, or editorial, or may stand alone. **Graphic artists may submit up to three individual entries. Each entry must be in a separate envelope.**

Category 16. Spot News Picture (Spot news of an actual local event): Must submit a photo, print or print-out of a digital photo, accompanied by its tearsheet, both bearing the name of the newspaper, date of publication and name of the person who took the picture. Sports photos will not be considered for this category. **Must be locally prepared.** Judging will be based on the timeliness of news value, composition, camera technique, imagination, and immediacy of the event. Quality of reproduction will not be considered. **Up to three entries per photographer. Each entry must be in a separate envelope.**

Category 17. Feature Picture: Must submit local photo, print or print-out of a digital photo, **accompanied by tearsheet**, both bearing the name of the newspaper, date of publication and name of the person who took the picture. Judges will consider human interest, reader appeal, action, creativity and quality of the photograph. Quality of reproduction will not be considered. **Must be locally prepared. Up to three entries per photographer. Each entry must be in a separate envelope.**

Category 18. Sports Picture: A local photo, print or print-out of a digital photo, and **accompanied by tearsheet**, both bearing the name of the newspaper, date of publication and name of the person who took the picture. Photos of all sports activities at all levels will be considered in the category. Action, newsworthiness, creativity and quality of the picture will be the criteria. **Up to three entries per photographer. Each entry must be in a separate envelope.**

Category 19. Photo Series In One Issue: Must submit local photos, original, prints or print-outs of digital photos, **accompanied by their tearsheets**, each bearing the name of the newspaper, dates of publication, and name of the person or persons who took the pictures. Judging will be on the basis of completeness of the presentation and quality of the pictures. Attach a completed entry form to the back of each photo and mark each to show the number of photos in the series (i.e., 1 of 3, 2 of 3, etc.). Staple tearsheets together on entry folder and indicate on entry form how many tearsheets are in the series. **Up to three entries per photographer. Each entry must be in a separate envelope.**

Category 20. Portfolio Photography (Robert J. Ellison Memorial Award): Must submit **no more than five** local photographs, or print-outs of digital photos, **along with actual tearsheets bearing** name of newspaper, date of publication and name of person who took the pictures. Mark each photo to show the number of photos in the series (i.e., 1 of 3, 2 of 3, etc.). Staple tearsheets together on entry folder and indicate how many tearsheets are in the series. Judges will consider creativity, human interest, imagination, camera technique and photo quality. Judges will **not** consider newspaper reproduction of photos. These photos need not run together in a series and need not be related. This category will honor a photographer's best work all year. **One entry per photographer. Open circulation category.**

Category 21. Best Headline: A headline writer must submit five headlines she/he has written in the contest period. An entry must consist of full page tearsheets with the headlines written by the staff member clearly marked. Judges will take into consideration the use of the headline to draw the reader into the story, the information the headline conveys and how accurate it is. **Open circulation category.**

Category 22. Sports Page or Section: Submit tearsheets or entire sports sections from **two consecutive issues.** The name of the newspaper, the city and date of publication must appear on the entry. Indicate publication dates of all the tearsheets on entry form. Newsworthiness, style, reader interest, and use of photos will be some factors in judging. **One entry per newspaper.**

Category 23. Sports Feature Story: Local or national subject matter. **Submit tearsheet only** with story clearly marked. The name of the newspaper, date of publication, and name of the writer must appear on the tearsheet. Originality, style of writing and reader interest will be factors in judging.

Category 24. Sports Game Day Story: Local or national coverage of a single (game day) sports event. Submit tearsheet only with story clearly marked. The name of the newspaper, date of publication, date of game and name of the writer must appear on the tearsheet. Judging will be based on quality of writing and reader interest.

Category 25. Sports Column: Submit tearsheet with column clearly marked. Each entry shall be locally prepared. The name of the newspaper, date of publication, and name of the sports writer must appear on each sheet. Judges will take into consideration timeliness of sports topic, significance to community, and originality. Judging will be based on individual merit of each sports column and awards will be made on the basis of the best single column.

Category 26. Outdoor Writing (Feature, Article or Series): Submit tearsheet with article(s) clearly marked. The name of the newspaper, date of publication, and name of the writer must appear on the tearsheet. Specific content should include outdoor writing about Florida including, but not limited to, outdoor recreational activities, hunting, fishing, camping, etc. Staple tearsheets together on entry folder and indicate the publication dates of all the tearsheets on entry form. **Material must be locally prepared and must deal with single subject.** Judging will be based on originality, style of writing and reader interest.

Category 27. Agricultural Writing (One Topic): Feature, article or series. All agricultural writing **relating to one specific subject** may be entered. Entrants are urged to present material showing their efforts above and beyond the routine coverage normally given to agricultural writing. Writing submitted must be done by newspaper's own staff, locally produced. Mass compilations of agricultural releases showing no local effort will be disqualified. Entrants may submit tearsheet(s), stapled together, with name of the newspaper, date of publication, and name of writer or writers clearly marked. Indicate the publication dates of all the tearsheets on entry form.

Open circulation category.

Category 28. Environmental or Conservation (Single Story or Series): Submit tearsheet(s) with the story (ies) clearly marked. The name of the newspaper, date of publication, and name of the writer must appear on the tearsheet. Coverage may include photos, editorials, news stories or accounts of leadership actions taken by the newspaper in identifying and attempting to improve some environmental condition. Material must be locally produced and written. Staple tearsheets together on entry folder and indicate the publication dates of all the tearsheets on entry form. Submit a **brief** resume of results. **Each entry must be on one subject only.**

Category 29. Business Writing: Any single article or series of articles on any single business and/or consumer subject is eligible. Judging will be based on quality of writing, timeliness, impact and community interest. Staple tearsheets together on entry folder and indicate the publication dates of all the tearsheets on entry form.

Category 30. Special Issue, Section or Supplements (Locally prepared): Any industrial progress, fair celebration, fashion, centennial, building, historical, patriotic, anniversary, or other locally prepared special edition or section, or an issue in which a sizable part of the paper was devoted to a project of particular interest or importance to the community may be entered in this category. A statement on circumstances connected with the issue may be submitted as part of the entry. Judges will consider the excellence and depth of supporting material and use of pertinent photographs and illustrative material. Entries will score extra points for skillful handling of tie-in advertising. **Limited to three entries per newspaper. Each entry must be in a separate envelope.**

Category 31. Newspaper Promotion: This award is for a "one time" or extended promotion by a newspaper of itself and/or the newspaper industry. Material from every department of the newspaper may be included. Attach entries together on folder and indicate other materials (tearsheet dates, etc) on the entry form. Judges will consider creativity, ingenuity, and effectiveness of the promotion. Material must be locally produced.

Category 32. Community History: Single story or series. Entries should highlight the history of the community (for example, its founders, people, growth, changes, events and location). Judges will take into consideration significance of the material presented to the community, suitable handling of the topic, appearance and originality. Awarded to individual reporter or team. Material must be locally produced and written. For each entry, submit tearsheet(s) stapled together on entry folder. Tearsheet(s) must bear the name of newspaper, date of publication and name of writer(s). Indicate the publication dates of all the tearsheets on entry form. **Open circulation category.**

Category 33. Website Development: See separate entry form for information and instructions for entering this category. Send the Website Development Form in with your other entries. Entry fee is \$10.00.

Category 34. Religion Writing: Any single article or series of articles relating to places of worship such as, churches, temples, synagogues, mosques, etc. and their services, programs, special events and other activities. Judging will be based on quality of writing, timeliness, impact and community interest. Enter only tearsheets. Staple tearsheets together on entry folder and indicate all tearsheet dates on entry form.

Category 35. Criticism: Three (no more, no fewer) locally written reviews (not editorial or columns) of art, entertainment, or literature. Judging will be based on clarity, grasp of subject and originality. Enter only tearsheets. The three reviews constitute one entry. Please enclose all three reviews in the same folder with one entry form and indicate tearsheet dates on form.

Category 36. News “oops” of the Year (Open division category): Despite our best efforts, bloopers seem to occur. Share yours and see if it is worthy of the title, BLOOPER OF THE YEAR! **(NO ENTRY FEE REQUIRED.)**

Category 37. Best Obituary by a Newspaper: This category is designed to recognize well written local obituary stories. Submit tearsheets with the obituary clearly marked. Each entry in this category shall be locally prepared. Judges will consider creativity, ingenuity, quality of writing, reader interest and presentation.

Category 38. Education (Single story or series): Submit tearsheet with article(s) clearly marked. The name of the newspaper, date of publication, and name of the writer must appear on the tearsheet. Specific content should include writing about local education issues. Staple tearsheets together on entry folder and indicate the publication dates of all the tearsheets on entry form. **Material must be locally prepared and must deal with single subject.** Judging will be based on originality, style of writing and reader interest.

Category 39. Health (Single story or series): Submit tearsheet with article(s) clearly marked. The name of the newspaper, date of publication, and name of the writer must appear on the tearsheet. Specific content should include writing about community health issues. Staple tearsheets together on entry folder and indicate the publication dates of all the tearsheets on entry form. **Material must be locally prepared and must deal with single subject.** Judging will be based on originality, style of writing and reader interest.

Category 40. City and/or County Government (Single story or series): Submit tearsheet with article(s) clearly marked. The name of the newspaper, date of publication, and name of the writer must appear on the tearsheet. Specific content should include writing about local (city or county) government issues. Staple tearsheets together on entry folder and indicate the publication dates of all the tearsheets on entry form. **Material must be locally prepared and must deal with single subject.** Judging will be based on originality, style of writing and reader interest.

Category 41. The TaxWatch Award for reporting on a state or local tax issue (Single story or series): Submit tearsheet with article(s) clearly marked. The name of the newspaper, date of publication, and name of the writer must appear on the tearsheet. Specific content should be writing about state, county or city tax-related issues. Entries should be well-researched yet provide the reader with a clear assessment of the issues. Staple tearsheets together on entry folder and indicate the publication dates of all the tearsheets on entry form. **Material must be locally prepared and must deal with single subject.** Judging will be based on originality, style of writing and reader interest.

REMINDER

The entry fee is \$10.00 per entry. The deadline to postmark entries is Friday, February 12, 2010. 2010 MEMBERSHIP DUES MUST BE PAID.

The Random List of Winners will be posted in April, after the Final Judging, on the FPA Website at www.flpress.com.

Awards will be announced and presented at the 2010 FPA/FSNE Annual Convention held June 17-18 at The Ritz-Carlton in Sarasota. ***The awards presentation luncheon is scheduled for Friday, June 18, 2010.***

Registration information will be posted at www.flpress.com. If you have any questions please contact Thelma Givens at (850) 521-1161 or tgivens@flpress.com.