Best of Mississippi

Scholastic Journalism Awards

F A L L

Best of Mississippi

Rules and Regulations

DUE SEPT 15

ELIGIBILITY AND COST
All contests are free to enter. The only requirement for eligibility in any of our contests is that your school be a member of MSPA ($150/year).

TYPES OF AWARDS
MSPA awards excellence in five different areas of scholastic journalism. The contest calendar breaks down like this:

FALL	**SPRING**
Yearbook	News Publication (paper/magazine/site)
Literary Magazine	Broadcast
	Podcast/Streaming

* There are other Spring awards open to any student or publication (details in the Spring packet.)

Within each of the above areas, contests break out into **Publication (PUB)** and **Individual (IND)** categories. For Publication Categories, schools submit examples of the staff's abilities in a given area, and awards are issued in the name of the publication. For Individual Categories, schools submit strong individual works for recognition, and awards are issued in the name of the student.

CONTEST STRUCTURE
In most PUB and IND categories, judges will select up to five finalists and one winner.

SUBMISSION
We've tried to make submitting your work as uniform as possible. Only pieces submitted properly (and on time) will be considered in each category. Once you have shared your submissions, you may not make any edits or changes to the files/entries.

PUBLICATION CATEGORIES – Mail-in Submission
For these whole-book categories, please send the entire print publication for judging. Each publication is automatically entered in every relevant PUB category.

Our mailing address:
Mississippi Scholastic Press Association
114 Farley Hall
PO BOX 1848
University, MS 38677

INDIVIDUAL CATEGORIES – Digital Submission
To submit digitally, begin by creating a Dropbox or Google Drive account (Google Drive is preferable). Both of these are free and user-friendly.

1. Once you've created an account, create an MSPA Submissions folder in your account. This is where all your digital files will go.

2. Now you're ready to stock your Submissions folder with all the files you plan to enter. DO NOT use subfolders. Your files will automatically sort by the category codes in the file name.

    FILE NAMES – All file names should follow this format: **CategoryCode_School_StudentName**. When submitting multiple entries from the same student in the same category, tack on a 1, 2 or 3 at the end of the filename.

    FILE TYPES – Submit all entries as individual PDFs. Please crop pages down to only the elements being judged in that category.

3. Include one PDF with a composite list of entries, ordered by category with a total file count. This list helps us ensure all submissions were received.

4. Once all your files are in your submissions folder, simply share that folder with **mississippischolasticpress@gmail.com**. The office will download the files as soon as they are uploaded, and advisers will get an email confirming the submissions have been received. If you do not receive an email notification within 24 hours of submission, please email MSPA director R.J. Morgan at morgan@go.olemiss.edu.

If you have any questions about the submission process, call or email for clarification.

** All entries become the property of the Mississippi Scholastic Press Association and may be for promotional purposes, etc.
Because of time and financial constraints, printed entries cannot be returned. **

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MSPA ADVISERS OF THE YEAR

DUE SEPT 15

Good journalism advisers are the most critical part of a program's success. They are more than just teachers; they're managers, motivators, mentors and sometimes even mediators. They are asked to simultaneously be visionaries and micro-managers, helping their students navigate through a variety of daily struggles. These are the people who make scholastic journalism possible, and MSPA seeks to honor those Mississippi advisers who excel at their craft.

SELECTION:

Our Adviser of the Year selection is **a two-step process.** A link to the online nomination form will be distributed via the MSPA listserv sometime in early August. Nominations should explain why the nominee is deserving of the honor and may be submitted by anyone, including principals, colleagues, other advisers, students, parents, etc., or the nominee themselves. A committee of judges will evaluate all nominations and narrow the field to five (5) finalists, each of whom will be prompted to complete a more detailed self-reflection form before the normal Sept. 15 fall contest deadline. Any adviser at an MSPA-member school is eligible, regardless of school size.

AWARD CYCLE:

FALL

Caroline Fair Yearbook Adviser of the Year

Literary Magazine Adviser of the Year

SPRING

JoAnne Sellers Newspaper Adviser of the Year

Broadcast Adviser of the Year

Yearbooks are one of the most sacred and important institutions entrusted to high school journalists. They stand as a permanent chronicle of this place in time for both the school and the community. MSPA seeks to honor excellence in these publications, as well as in the students who produce them. Below is a list of the guiding principles our judges will use for evaluating quality, followed by a comprehensive list of individual and publication categories honored. All entries should be published this calendar year.

YEARBOOK GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Theme:
- A well-conceived, unifying verbal/visual theme is relevant to student readers and to the school for this particular year.
- Theme is apparent throughout the book via graphics, sidebars/modules, colors, fonts, phrases or other elements.
- Theme is noticeably included on the cover, end sheets (if applicable), title page, table of contents, opening and closing pages, dividers as well as on internal pages.

Coverage:
- All major areas of school life should be present (academics, student life, cubs, sports and people) and should be organized in a way that is fresh and specific to the school. Coverage should emphasize what makes this year different for this school.
- Content is organized by sections of the staff's choosing (traditional, blended or chronological), and sections are clearly discernible to readers.
- The book is as inclusive as possible, covering as many different people and angles as space will allow.

Writing:
- Writing includes traditional body copy, sidebars/modules and alternative information, captions or photo identifiers and headlines.
- Writing captures readers' attention with strong, original leads & angles, and clear evidence of research and interviews.
- Headlines should grab readers' attention and draw them into the subject of the page and copy, while secondary headlines should enhance the readers' interest and knowledge.
- All copy should use effective transitions, a variety of sentence types and lengths, should be written in past tense, third person, active voice and should adhere to basic rules of grammar, usage, and mechanics.

Design:
- Each section has a distinct design with pages designed as double-page spreads.
- Each spread contains a dominant element, clear eyeline and good verbal/visual balance.
- Spreads employ consistent, sufficient external margins and effective use of white space.
- Copy, captions and headlines fit the space allotted, are set in attractive and readable styles and present a logical, imaginative and well-planned layout.

Photography:
- Photos possess a storytelling quality, focus on action, faces and emotions, and reflect a balance of individual, medium and large-group shots.
- Photos show an understanding of composition elements such as rule of thirds, framing and leading lines and are taken from a variety of angles.
- Cropping emphasizes center of interest, eliminates unnecessary areas and does not cut off body parts/pieces of objects at awkward points.
- All photos should have a caption that answers the readers' questions about the subject of the photo and the page, uses active voice without stating the obvious or editorializing, and is written in present tense showing evidence of research.
- Credit is given to all photographers, either on the spread or in the colophon. Photos represent original student work. With the exception of portraits and group/team shots, photos from professionals should be kept to a minimum.

PUBLICATION AWARDS

These are awarded in the name of the publication, and we'll use the entire yearbook to holistically judge these categories. **Just send us one book -- no additional paperwork necessary.**

1. Photography
Overall best use of student photography to capture and document the school year, and to reflect the culture of the school (i.e. homecoming, pep rallies, parades, cheer sections, etc.). Photos should demonstrate strong storytelling content, be effectively cropped for emphasis, technically strong, in focus, exhibit proper contrast and use of the rules of composition.

2. Copy
Overall best coverage/reporting of the school year including events, sports, academics, clubs and organizations. Copy should include meaningful student quotes that enrich the story and reflect effective interviewing by verbally creating a picture of the school year.

3. Graphics/Art
Overall best use of graphics in a publication. Graphics should shows evidence of careful planning and clear purpose: to unify, separate, emphasize or direct and not used simply to decorate or fill space. Judging based on how well graphics compliment spreads' content and design.

4. Senior Advertising
Must be student-generated. Judging is based on the overall section layout and quality of design. Section should demonstrate elements of the theme while also showing innovative and attractive personal ad designs.

5. Cover Design
The cover sets the tone for the entire yearbook. Does it create a favorable first impression through use of type/color/materials? Must include book name, school name, year and volume number on the spine. Must be student-generated.

6. Overall Design
Overall best publication design based on correct use of journalistic / design principles. Design should show evidence of careful planning, consistency and fluidity. Photos, copy, captions, headlines, graphics and whitespace are arranged to guide the reader through the layout.

7. Theme Development
Overall best use of a theme/concept throughout a publication. Theme must be introduced on the book's cover and carried out visually/verbally on the ensuing endsheets, opening/closing pages, table of contents & sections dividers, and colophon. Careful development and unified presentation create a cohesive book that effectively tells the story of the school year to the desired audience.

8. Yearbook of the Year (Highest Honor, All-Inclusive)
Yearbook of the Year honors will be given to the publication that most-effectively demonstrates excellence in all the above-mentioned categories.

INDIVIDUAL AWARDS (LIMIT 3 ENTRIES PER CATEGORY, PER SCHOOL)

These are awarded in the name of the student who produced the indivudual artifact being judged. These entries should be digitally submitted as individual files as outlined at the beginning of this packet. **(File Name Example: YFP_Brownsville_AbigaleBagwell)**

1. Student Life Photo (YSLP)
A photo related to school academics, organizations and activities. The photo must have strong-storytelling content, effectively cropped for emphasis, technically strong, in focus, proper contrast and use of the rules of composition.

2. Feature Photo (YFP)
Photo must reflect either the culture of the school (i.e. homecoming, pep rallies, parades, cheer sections, etc.) or accompany a specific story (stylized, environmental, etc). The photo must have strong-storytelling content, effectively cropped for emphasis, technically strong, in focus, proper contrast and use of the rules of composition.

3. Sports Photo (YSP)
A photo action shot showing a purposeful focus on the play. The photo must have strong-storytelling content, effectively cropped for emphasis, technically strong, in focus, proper contrast and use of the rules of composition.

4. Alternative Copy (YAC)
Non-traditional storytelling module within a given spread. Sidebar, Q&A, infographic, etc. Judging will be based on clarity and effectiveness of design + quality of information presented.

5. Feature Writing/Reporting (YFR)
Writing should be clear, relevant and have an engaging angle with a solid lead that draws readers into the story. Writing should include meaningful student quotes that enrich the story and reflect effective interviewing.

6. Sports Writing/Reporting (YSR)
Writing should be clear, relevant and have an engaging angle with a solid lead that draws readers into the story. Writing should include meaningful student quotes that enrich the story and reflect effective interviewing.

7. Student Life Spread (YSLS)
This category is for spreads telling a story related to school academics, organizations and activities. Judging will be based on the attractiveness and effectiveness of the spread as a whole, including design, copy, art and photography. The spread should be entered in the name of the designer, whether or not they wrote any of the stories or took any of the photos on the spread.

8. Feature Spread (YFS)
This category is for spreads telling a story related to individuals or topics of student interest, or non-traditional coverage. Judging will be based on the attractiveness and effectiveness of the spread as a whole, including design, copy, art and photography. The spread should be entered in the name of the designer, whether or not they wrote any of the stories or took any of the photos on the spread.

9. Sports Spread (YSS)
This category is for spreads telling a story related to school athletics. Judging will be based on the attractiveness and effectiveness of the spread as a whole, including design, copy, art and photography. The spread should be entered in the name of the designer, whether or not they wrote any of the stories or took any of the photos on the spread.

Literary Magazines veer from the normal just-the-facts method of journalism. They offer students a chance to express their creativity through fiction, poetry and art. MSPA celebrates this freedom of expression by awarding excellence in a variety of categories. Below is a list of the guiding principles our judges will use for evaluating quality, followed by a comprehensive list of individual and publication categories honored. All entries should be published this calendar year. If your school publishes more than one issue per school year, please include all issues published.

LITERARY MAGAZINE GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Theme and Cover
- The theme or overarching design element should be noticeably included on the cover, end sheets (if applicable), title page, table of contents, opening and closing pages, dividers as well as on internal pages.
- The cover arouses interest and attracts attention to the content of the magazine. It should include the publications name, year, volume/issue number, school name and theme name (if any).

Overall Design
- Magazine design concept is creative, unique and is evident cover-to-cover.
- Internal pages are designed as visually unified two-page spreads where each spread features a clear dominant element and has a natural visual flow with a pattern of consistent design among all spreads, providing cohesion but not monotony.
- Designers make effective use of color and style to draw the reader into each spread in a way that does not sacrifice readability.
- Art and literature are integrated so as to visually and conceptually complement one another.
- Large bodies of text are set in columns and/or broken up with pull quotes or artwork. Headlines, pull quote or teaser format/spacing/sizing is consistent from spread-to-spread and complements the design.

Fiction Content
- Prose pieces showcase a variety of types and styles, are unique and insightful instead of trite, derivative and/or cliché and adhere to the expected formatting conventions for its genre.
- Poetry is unique in theme and topic, is not cliché or derivative and varies in terms of form, topic/theme, voice, etc. Line integrity of poems has not been compromised by spread design.
- The titles add meaning and impact to the poems, stories and essays.
- Song lyrics or spoken-word poems are denoted as such.

Non-Fiction Content
- All pieces are edited effectively and adhere to basic rules of grammar, usage, and mechanics.
- Essays and other non-fiction pieces effectively convey the facts and emotion of the piece to the audience.

Visual Content:
- Artwork is unique in theme/topic, is not cliché or derivative and includes a variety of media and topics/themes while representing technical skill in the media represented.
- Every piece of art is of "stand alone" quality and is not dependent on the literature to support it.
- All artwork is reproduced at high quality – no pixelation, distortion, etc. Images are at a high enough digital resolution to print effectively. Proportion has not been distorted.
- Art credits include the name of the artist, the title of the piece and the art medium.
- Any and all graphic elements complement the design concept and add visual appeal rather than being distracting/irrelevant. The use of clip art is discouraged.

PUBLICATION AWARDS

These are awarded in the name of the publication, and we'll use the entire magazine to holistically judge these categories. **Just send us one magazine -- no additional paperwork necessary.**

1. **Cover Design**
2. **Layout & Design**
3. **Continuity of Theme**
4. **Quality of Writing**
5. **Quality of Visuals**
6. **Literary Magazine of the Year** (Highest Honor, All-Inclusive)

INDIVIDUAL AWARDS (LIMIT 3 ENTRIES PER CATEGORY, PER SCHOOL)

These are awarded in the name of the student who produced the individual artifact being judged. These entries should be digitally submitted as individual files as outlined at the beginning of this packet. **(File Name Example: LMSF_Brownsville_AbigaleBagwell)**

1. Poem (LMPO) Judges will consider use of concrete language, figurative language and imagery; the use of literary devices (simile, metaphor, repetition), cadence, verb tense and development of tone and mood to create an emotional impact. No entry length.

2. Flash Fiction (LMFF) Entries in this category should consist of fictional prose compositions less than 600 words in length. Judges will consider use of literary devices: attention-grabbing beginning, logical plot, effectively dialogue (if any), strong transitions, top-notch editing.

3. Short Fiction (LMSF) Entries in this category should consist of fictional prose compositions larger than 600 words in length. Judges will consider use of literary devices: attention-grabbing beginning, logical plot, effectively dialogue (if any), strong transitions, top-notch editing.

4. Narrative Nonfiction (LMNF) Narrative nonfiction is a subgenre that tells fact-based stories using narrative or literary styles. Entries in this category should use creative leads, strong transitions and contain a quality conclusion. No entry length.

5. Personal Essay (LMPE) A personal essay is a short work of autobiographical nonfiction that relates the author's intimate thoughts and experiences to universal truths. They often conclude with the author having learned, changed, or grown in some way, presenting some truth or insight that challenges the reader to draw their own conclusions. No entry length.

6. Dramatic Composition (LMDC) A script, screenplay or drama (include staging directions). Entries should feature dialogue along with other narrative devices. No entry length.

7. Original Song Lyrics (LMSL) Lyric entries should display originality and creativity, as well as offer a strong, coherent message. For this category, students may either submit written lyrics via PDF or a performed version via audio file.

8. Photo (LMPH) Photo submissions should demonstrate original interpretation, interesting and visually striking framing, good use of composition techniques and lighting, and effective contrast, depth-of-field and tone. The work is a simple, accurate design to illustrate the context of the copy. Entries will be judged based on both the subject composition and technical quality.

9. Art (hand-drawn) (LMHD) These works are student-produced, handcrafted designs that illustrate the context of the copy. Entries should exhibit a control of the medium through both their design and the use of various artistic techniques.

10. Art (graphic illustration) (LMGI) Entries in this category are created on the computer or enhanced by a computer program to illustrate the context of the copy. Again, entries should exhibit a control of the medium through both their design and the use of various artistic techniques.

11. Spread Design (LMSD) Entries in this category should consist of two facing pages that, when viewed together, display a single verbal/visual story or a package of related content. Entries should exhibit a control of the medium through the use of both effective design and original content.