

2021-22 MEMBERSHIP GUIDE

> *Plus a planner for NSPA Individual Awards* <

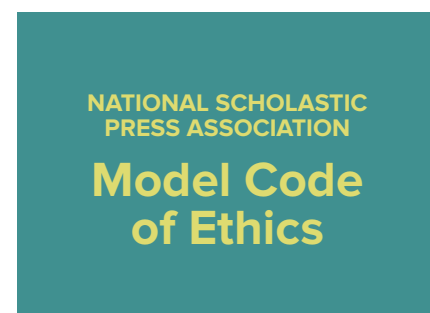
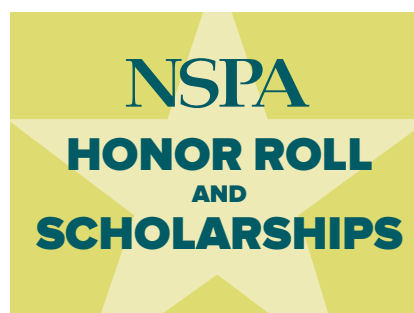
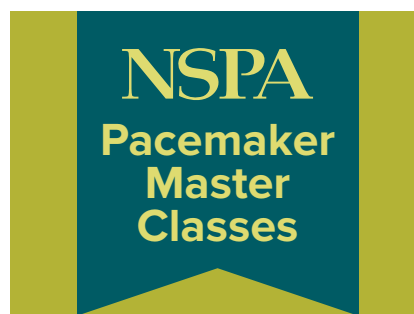
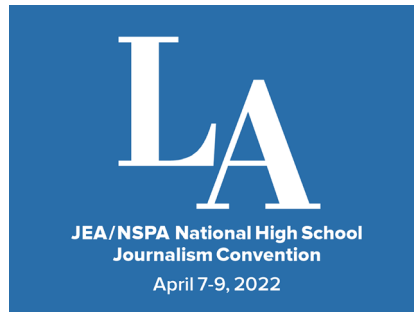
# Conventions + Contests + Critiques + Consultations + Conferences = Community



Empowering  
student journalists

It's all at [nspa.studentpress.org](https://nspa.studentpress.org).

Click these images for direct links to more information.





## NATIONAL SCHOLASTIC PRESS ASSOCIATION

Through education, training and recognition programs for members, the National Scholastic Press Association promotes the standards and ethics of good journalism as accepted and practiced by print, broadcast and digital media in the United States.

NSPA provides journalism education services to students, teachers, media advisers and others throughout the United States and in other countries. Its members are student media organizations at high schools, junior high schools and middle schools.

A nonprofit educational association based and incorporated in Minnesota, NSPA provides journalism education training programs, publishes journalism education materials, provides media critique and recognition programs for members, provides information on developments in journalism and student media and provides a forum for members to communicate with others and share their work.

Its renowned national awards programs honor exceptional student media work from across the nation and around the world. The NSPA Pacemaker Awards are the top publications prizes. Its Individual Awards recognize student achievement in dozens of categories. Its Best of Show competitions celebrate current achievement in student media.

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Q&A with Laura Widmer, executive director

## Let's help you get the most from your NSPA membership

**We have hundreds of members in NSPA. From your perspective, what makes an NSPA membership valuable?**

Our members have learned that NSPA provides time-tested tools for improvement. They use our educational programs, services and insight to improve all facets of their programs, from trends to engaging readers with storytelling across platforms.



Laura Widmer

**What NSPA services are most popular? And why?**

[The critique and contests services](#) are most popular.

In the summer, we will see 800+ yearbook and literary magazine entries delivered to the office. That doesn't include the hundreds and hundreds of broadcast, online, newspaper and magazine entries we download for critiques.

Our critique judges are amazing with the advice provided and recommendations for improvement.

**You've been part of dozens of journalism conventions in your career. You've planned a bunch of them, too. What's the best way for a member to get the most of a convention?**

Take advantage of what the convention offers to you. Examine the individual sessions offered and the speakers presenting the content. We have great professionals and experienced advisers to help you.

There are the other opportunities during the convention, like critiques/consultations, Break with a Pro and swap shops, that allow you to interact with advisers, professionals and peers.

**In your years of advising student journalists, how did contests and critiques help them?**

Having insight from a judge can be invaluable. A critique will point out what you're doing very well, as well as items you need to work on.

It's a great teaching tool. It is especially helpful when you start to set goals for this year's staff.

**What distinguishes NSPA as a journalism organization?**

NSPA membership is by media outlet, not by school or individual. When a media outlet joins, all students on staff and advisers of that publication or station are covered under that membership.

NSPA co-sponsors two national high-school journalism conventions with our partner, [Journalism Education Association](#).

We are also very proud of [the Gloria Shields/NSPA National Media Workshop](#). The quality of the faculty makes it the best summer workshop in the country. The national award-winning publications that join us each year are amazing. So many Pacemaker staffs get their start at our June workshop in Dallas.

**What NSPA service should more members be taking advantage of?**

The NSPA consultation service will pair you with the best in student media to help staffs in real time. This instant face-to-face feedback connects you with professionals, award-winning advisers and experienced educators. We will find you an expert on any topic you request.

So, whether you want an instant critique, input on designs, help with shooting Friday night football, or how to set up project planning, we have people who can help.

NSPA is a community of journalists, and we want to make sure that your needs are met through resources and conventions.



## What's new this year

It's our centennial year, and we hope you join us for birthday celebrations at the fall and spring conventions.

We will share copies of our "Empowering Student Journalists" history book, as well as keepsake journals for students.

### [Pacemaker 100](#)

As part of the centennial, NSPA has announced the Pacemaker 100, top winners from the past 100 years of the nation's top award for scholastic media.

We'll honor the 100, plus special recognition for the Top 10, at this year's conventions.

### [New training sessions](#)

This fall, we are expanding [the Pacemaker Master Class series](#). We'll offer timely, affordable, common-sense training sessions on a range of topics for your staff.

### [Clips & Clicks](#)

In its second year, this new competition has taken off.

Plan your entries for both fall and spring as you compete for the 2021-22 Sweepstakes.



At the JEA/NSPA National High School Journalism Convention, current staffs at the conventions enter their work in the Best of Show competitions, while the Pacemaker Awards, the top prizes in scholastic journalism, are announced to celebrate previous years' work.

## 2021-22 NSPA events calendar

Check [nspa.studentpress.org](https://nspa.studentpress.org) for updates.

**Sept. 14, 2021, noon CT**

Registration opens —  
[JEA/NSPA Fall National High School Journalism Convention](#)

**Oct. 21, 2021**

Early-bird registration ends for the fall convention.

**Oct. 29, 2021**

Convention registration closes for the fall convention.

**Nov. 11-13, 2021**

[JEA/NSPA Fall National High School Journalism Convention](#), Philadelphia Marriott Downtown

**January 2022**

Registration opens —  
[JEA/NSPA Spring National High School Journalism Convention](#)  
Go to [spring.journalismconvention.org](https://spring.journalismconvention.org) starting in January 2022 for the latest information.

**April 7-9, 2022**

JEA/NSPA Spring National High School Journalism Convention, Westin Bonaventure, Los Angeles

**April 2022**

Registration opens —  
[Gloria Shields NSPA Media Workshop](#), Dallas  
Go to [gloriashieldsworkshop.com](https://gloriashieldsworkshop.com) starting in May 2022 for the latest information.

**June 26-30, 2022**

[Gloria Shields NSPA Media Workshop](#), Dallas/Addison Marriott Quorum by the Galleria

# NSPA

## Contests at a glance

We've compiled key contest information — including deadlines and awards announcements — on the NSPA contest page.

[NSPA contests & contests at a glance](#)

[NSPA master calendar for updates](#)

[NSPA contest rules](#)

[BetterBNC Contest portal to submit individual awards](#)

[NSPA membership portal to submit Pacemaker entries](#)

[NSPA Clips & Clicks contest](#)

Celebrate scholastic journalism

*Philly*

**National High School  
Journalism Convention**

Nov. 11-13, 2021  
Philadelphia Marriott Downtown  
[fall.journalismconvention.org](http://fall.journalismconvention.org)

 **jea.**  
**NSPA**

Check [nspa.studentpress.org](http://nspa.studentpress.org) for convention updates.

**LA**

**JEA/NSPA National High School  
Journalism Convention**

April 7-9, 2022 • Westin Bonaventure Los Angeles





# NSPA conventions & Best of Show

You can't beat the training and networking at [our conventions](#).

The **JEA/NSPA National High School Journalism Convention**, offered in both fall and spring, is the nation's largest gathering of high-school journalists and their advisers.

NSPA's convention partner is [Journalism Education Association](#), the nation's largest association of scholastic journalism advisers and teachers.

When we meet on site for the convention, you'll be among the

more than 5,000 in attendance, with hundreds of learning sessions dynamic keynote speakers and dozens of exhibitors.

Should we meet digitally, you'll be part of a digital platform that replicates the on-site convention.

In either format, you and your staff can capitalize upon critiques and on-site competitions, including [the NSPA Best of Show competition](#) and JEA's student media competition.

Best of Show offers a range of categories in which current student

work will compete for top honors.

And it's always a high point of the convention when NSPA announces [the Pacemaker Awards](#), scholastic journalism's preeminent honor.

At the fall convention, we announce Pacemaker winners in broadcast, newspaper/newsmagazine and specialty magazine. At the spring convention, we announce Pacemaker literary magazines, online and yearbooks.



## Fall JEA/NSPA National High School Journalism Convention

Nov. 11-13, 2021,  
Philadelphia Marriott Downtown

Sept. 14: Registration opens.

Oct. 21: Early-bird registration deadline.

Early-bird registration  
\$125 members / \$175 non-members

Regular registration  
\$145 members / \$195 non-members

Room rate at the Philadelphia Marriott Downtown  
\$219, plus taxes

Go to

[fall.journalismconvention.org](http://fall.journalismconvention.org)

for the latest information, including rates, registration and activities.



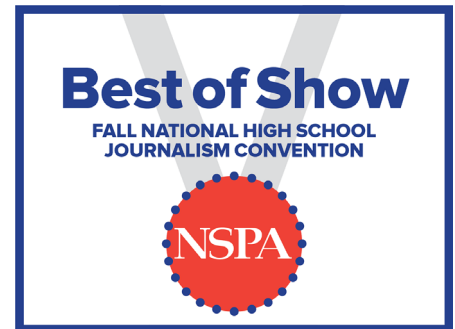
## Spring JEA/NSPA National High School Journalism Convention

April 7-9, 2022,  
Westin Bonaventure Los Angeles  
January 2022: Registration opens.

Go to

[spring.journalismconvention.org](http://spring.journalismconvention.org)

starting in January 2022 for the latest information.



## NSPA Best of Show

Contest categories, plus the deadline and submission instructions, are posted to the fall-convention site in September and to the spring-convention site in January.

Fall 2021 rates

\$30 members / \$45 non-members

**Past winners**

[NSPA Awards Archive](#)

# NSPA awards programs

NSPA presents scholastic journalism's preeminent awards, [the Pacemaker Awards](#), each year.

There is a category for each type of publication — broadcast, literary magazine, online, newspaper/newsmagazine, specialty magazine and yearbook.

Entries are judged by teams of professionals based on the following criteria: coverage and content; quality of writing and reporting; leadership; design; photography; and graphics.

## [NSPA Individual Awards](#)

recognize the top levels of national achievement within an academic year. There are 11 categories, with a number of subcategories in each. Entries are judged by teams of professionals with experience and expertise in the area of each particular contest.

The contests are open to any student on staff of an NSPA member publication. Entries must have been published or broadcast during the academic year.

NSPA's newest student competition, [Clips & Clicks](#), enters its second year of honoring current student work.

Clips & Clicks offers multiple categories for student and publication achievement, and each contest segment encompasses one semester of work.



### **Fall-convention Pacemakers**

*Broadcast, newspaper/newsmagazine and specialty magazine*

Broadcast, newspaper/newsmagazine and specialty magazine Pacemakers are due in June.

### **Spring-convention Pacemakers**

*Literary magazines, online, yearbooks and innovation*

Online Pacemakers are due in October. Yearbook and literary magazine Pacemakers are due in November. Innovation Pacemakers are due in January.

### **Cost & eligibility**

Participation is a benefit of NSPA membership.

### **More information**

Go to the [nspa.studentpress.org/awards](https://nspa.studentpress.org/awards) page for links to specific deadlines, requirements and submission instructions through your NSPA membership portal.

### **Past winners**

[NSPA Awards Archive](#)



### **Fall-convention awards**

*Eleven categories, with 49 subcategories*

### **Timeline**

Entries must have been published or broadcast during the academic year. Entry submission is in June, and Individual Awards are presented at the Fall JEA/NSPA National High School Journalism Convention.

### **Cost & eligibility**

Participation is a benefit of NSPA membership.

### **More information**

Go to the [nspa.studentpress.org/awards](https://nspa.studentpress.org/awards) page for links to specific deadlines, requirements, the number of entries and submission instructions through the BetterBNC contest system.

### **Past winners**

[NSPA Awards Archive](#)



*Fall and spring components, with results compiled into an annual Sweepstakes Award*

### **Timeline**

Fall competition opens in September and closes in December, with winners announced in late January.

Spring competition opens in mid-December and closes in mid-May, with winners announced in the summer.

### **Cost & eligibility**

\$10 per entry, with no limit on entries.

Any student on staff at an NSPA-member publication is eligible.

### **More information**

Go to the [Clicks & Clips page](#) for links to specific deadlines, requirements and submission instructions.



# Make the most of NSPA's contests & critiques

## What is the difference between a contest and a critique?

A critique evaluates student media using a score sheet that outlines journalistic standards for coverage/content, writing/editing, design and photography.

It can be submitted digitally at any time, but staffs typically submit their work for critique after a school year or semester.

Judges look at what your readership sees — through the lens of the critique criteria. In their written critiques, they cite specific examples from your publication to highlight the strengths and provide suggestions for improvement. In addition to the comments, judges assign a score and a rating.

In a contest such as the Pacemaker and Individual Award competitions, the entries compete against each other with the best overall publications and productions named as finalists or winners. Scores and critiques are not provided.

## Are contests only for big schools with journalism programs?

In the Pacemaker competition, schools of all sizes compete and excel.

Publications, broadcasts and websites compete in categories grouped by school population or publications size.

While budgets do affect some aspects of a publication, quality coverage, reporting, writing, design and photography comes from many student-media outlets operating on very limited budgets.

## Who judges the Pacemaker competitions?

All of the Pacemaker categories are judged by a team of three judges who analyze and discuss all the entries.

Two of the three judges must



Gary Lundgren

agree on whether the entry is eliminated, or earns finalist or Pacemaker status.

Judges are Pacemaker-winning advisers or former advisers. Award-winning journalism educators and media advisers who are experts in scholastic journalism also judge. Active advisers are never in the room or judging a category with their own publications.

The names and professional bios of the judges are listed on the association's website. Video comments from the judges are also provided.

## Who are the critique judges?

Our judges are qualified professional journalists and past and present advisers of award-winning student media.

NSPA reviews the work of all judges to check for consistency before the critiques are returned to advisers and staffs.

## How should the critique be used?

The critique is an educational tool. Review and discuss the critique score sheet with your entire staff. Use the constructive criticism of the judge to review practices and set goals for the current year.

Use this critique in tandem with [NSPA's Best of the High School Press](#), an annual collection of award-winning scholastic journalism.

Consider signing up for [the NSPA Consultation Service](#) for a 30-minute video conference to address overall or specific areas of concern.

## What's the best way to prepare for the contests?

The Individual Awards feature dozens of categories on all aspects of journalism.

While the deadline isn't until June, staffs should save the files and links featuring their very best work throughout the year. **Use the planning guide that starts on Page 15 of this membership guide.**

Often a team of editors will work together to select the staff's entries for the year from the very best work saved throughout the year. All of the contests are highly competitive.

## How are the individual-award categories determined?

The categories reflect all aspects of journalism.

An advisory committee recently updated all of the award categories to include digital storytelling using multimedia, interactive graphics, podcasts and blogs. The best use of social media for reporting and promotion was added.

Also, a portfolio-of-the-year category honors the artist, broadcast journalist, designer, marketer, multimedia journalist, photojournalist and writer of the year.

## How is Best of Show different from the Pacemaker competition?

Best of Show is an on-site competition at the NSPA conventions, with attending schools submitting their entries during the convention.

For categories and the entry deadline, check convention information, including the convention site.

Entries are judged on site, and thus no critique is provided. Winners and top finishers are announced at an NSPA awards ceremony.

## Can members also get critiques at a convention?

Yes, they can, and they should sign up when they register for the convention.

**A convention critique** differs from a submitted critique. At the convention, you and your staff get 25 minutes of face time with a experienced adviser or professional who will share on-the-spot impressions of your work.

## Can we get a more in-depth consultation at the convention?

Yes. Our [NSPA consultation service](#) gives you and your staff an expanded version of the convention critique — with 50 minutes of consultation at the convention.

Get more information at [nspa.studentpress.org](https://nspa.studentpress.org).

## NSPA Pacemaker Master Classes

### The Pacemaker Master Class series

returns this fall with a series of training sessions for your staff.

We'll offer timely, affordable, common-sense training sessions on a range of topics for your staff.

Capitalize upon [our archive of past sessions](#), in which panelists share their perspectives on the latest trends, the freshest advice and

insight into award-winning work.

These master classes, plus our webinars on trending topics, are great resources for both staff training and classroom instruction.

Past webinars have covered everything from developing revenue for student media to covering protests and unrest to converting your publication fully to digital.

## NSPA HONOR ROLL AND SCHOLARSHIPS

More than a thousand scholastic journalism scholars are inducted into the NSPA Honor Roll each spring.

Advisers and journalism instructors nominate students. Inductees serve two years or more on a student media staff, with a 3.5+ grade-point average on a 4.0 scale. Honor Roll seniors are then eligible to apply for one of two Honor Roll Scholarships.

NSPA also awards one annual Wikoff Scholarship for Editorial Leadership. Student applications, with three published editorials and an adviser recommendation, are due in February.

[Honor Roll & scholarship information](#)

[2021 Honor Roll recipients](#)

## NSPA Critiques

We offer three options —

**a virtual critique, \$149**, in a real-time, face-to-face digital consultation,

**a traditional critique, \$119**, where scores and comments are delivered on the member portal,

and **an annotated critique, \$149**, with comments placed directly within the publication or broadcast to supplement comments on the member portal.

[NSPA critiques](#)

## Best of the High School Press 26

Our 26th edition of the Best of the High School Press, the NSPA awards annual, will ship to member schools early in the fall semester.

It contains a full collection of the past year's award winners — and it's both a handy instructional resource and an impressive keepsake.

[Resources from the Best of the High School Press 26](#)

[NSPA Store:](#)  
[Purchase recent editions.](#)

## NSPA Pioneer Awards

The Pioneer Award is the highest award NSPA offers to journalism educators.

NSPA Pioneers are individuals who make substantial contributions to high school publications and journalism programs outside their primary employment.

[NSPA Pioneer Award recipients, including 2021 honorees](#)



## GLORIA SHIELDS NSPA MEDIA WORKSHOP

GLORIASHIELDSWORKSHOP.COM

Join us in Dallas this summer  
as we help students sharpen  
and gain skills in photography,  
graphic design, advertising,  
writing, leadership and more.

**June 26-30, 2022**

Newspaper • Yearbook  
Photography • Design  
Online/Video • Advisers

Get more information at [nspa.studentpress.org](https://nspa.studentpress.org).



Publications inducted into the NSPA Hall of Fame have earned 10 All-American ratings from our publication critique service within an 11-year span.

[NSPA Hall of Fame, including recent inductees](#)



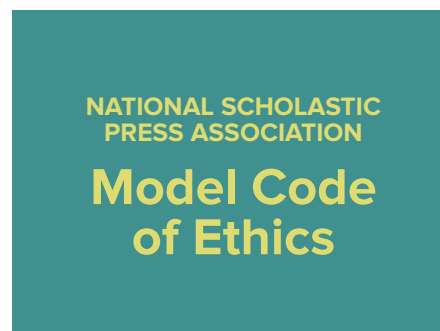
Make a fashion statement in our T-shirts or sweatshirts —

**I'm essential. I'm a journalist.**

**Journalism matters.  
Now more than ever.**

**I'm essential.  
I'm a journalism adviser.**

[Check them out in the NSPA Store.](#)



One of the best ways to apply best practices is to make the NSPA Model Code of Ethics a part of your process.

Updated in 2019, the code contains more than two dozen components to help you and your staff navigate journalism decision-making.

Each NSPA member-school gets a copy, and additional copies are for sale in [the NSPA Store](#).

# Advisers at member schools capitalize on NSPA

## Laurie Hansen

Publications adviser, Stillwater Area High School (Minnesota), retired, and past NSPA board member



Laurie Hansen

### How have you participated in NSPA?

My publications have been members of NSPA since I started teaching in Stillwater 30 years ago.

I have used the critique services for newspaper, yearbook and literary magazine, and over the years, NSPA has added so much to its resources. It is an invaluable membership.

### How have you and your students benefited from NSPA?

Students benefit directly from the critiques because they see your comments from an outside perspective, and all of the sudden, they realize those suggestions are valid.

The work NSPA does in putting on the national conventions is also a plus for any students attending these conventions. Whenever I have taken students, they have always returned with their batteries charged and ready to take on the challenges of their publication.

### How can you get the most from your NSPA membership?

Get the critique done annually. Share the results with the kids early in the year, and set goals based on your conversations.

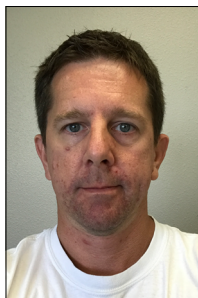
Take advantage of all the resources online and attend the national conventions.

### What advice do you have for a student or adviser new to NSPA?

The online resources will make your advising life easier. By taking part in the critique service, you will receive a certificate of achievement and this will help make your publication stand out in the eyes of your administration.

## John Horvath

Teacher and yearbook adviser, Upper School, Hill Country Christian School of Austin (Texas)



John Horvath

### How have you participated in NSPA?

I started by getting our book critiqued and then took my kids to the convention when it was in Orlando. I've tried to organize a trip with students every few years, but also make an effort to go to conventions for my own benefit.

### How have you and your students benefited from NSPA?

We've found that the critiques help keep us focused on doing things *the right way*, while the competition has encouraged us to dare to think outside the box.

Meanwhile, the conventions have allowed my kids to learn from some of the best in the business and give them a sense that they're a part of something significant.

### How can you get the most from your NSPA membership?

First and foremost, I'd encourage everyone to get their book critiqued. We have a chance to teach something way more important than how to make a book. We help students strive for excellence.

I'd also encourage convention attendance for the adviser. Not only are they great places to learn and improve, but the networking has proved invaluable.

Finally, I'd take kids to a convention. It's really funny how they can hear something from you 100 times, but when someone says it at a convention, they're like, "You know, we should really do this."

### What advice do you have for a student or adviser new to NSPA?

Get connected. Get involved. For newer advisers, there's a chance to connect with others who have been around the block a few times. I found that invaluable.

## Michelle Coro

TV/film media adviser, Desert Vista High School, Phoenix; adjunct faculty, Grand Canyon University, Phoenix; and NSPA board member



Michelle Coro

### How have you participated in NSPA?

I've been a member and affiliated with NSPA for most of my 20+ years of teaching newspaper, yearbook and broadcast. Being asked to join the board of NSPA has certainly been a highlight.

### How have you and your students benefited from NSPA?

NSPA offers a wealth of knowledge to anyone who needs direction on how to improve their media productions. Early in my years of learning to advise, I would scour the NSPA guidebooks to figure out what to teach and learn to do this all-encompassing job. Through critiques and contests, NSPA offered tangible ways to see student and publication growth.

### How can you get the most from your NSPA membership?

Getting the most out of NSPA meant getting involved in the workshops, seminars and opportunities that the organization offered.

### What advice do you have for a student or adviser new to NSPA?

Get your money's worth by taking it all in. We all have a place from which we start and level to achieve. NSPA is the helping hand that offers to get you where you want to go.

So, put yourself in the convention cities where hundreds and thousands of journalists just like you gather to become better. Enter the many contests to see how your skills match up. Finally, take advantage of the critiques. Seasoned advisers and professionals can help your publication rise to the level you envision.



## Jim Streisel

HiLite adviser and communications teacher, Carmel High School (Indiana)

### How have you participated in NSPA?

First, I attend as many national conventions as I can. I also actively participate in both giving (and getting) publication critiques, and I have served as a judge for annual Pacemaker competitions for both web and newspapers.

### How have you and your students benefited from NSPA?

Awards are nice, but the critiques the NSPA provides for student publications are my favorite benefit of the NSPA. My students and I always appreciate the in-depth suggestions the evaluators provide to help make our publication even better.

Also, the semi-annual conventions are a great way for my students and I to recharge as we navigate each school year.

For me personally, though, the connections I've made with other advisers is the biggest selling point. It's great to be able to talk with people all over the country who do what I do and to get advice from some of the best advisers in the business.

### How can you get the most from your NSPA membership?

- Go to conventions.
- Get critiques.
- Network, network, network.

### What advice do you have for a student or adviser new to NSPA?

Don't be afraid to reach out to other advisers from the get-go. I know conventions can seem a little intimidating, but, trust me, every adviser I know wants to help. We love meeting new people and helping other advisers solve tough issues.



Jim Streisel

## Kathryn Campbell

Director of publications, St. Paul Academy and Summit School (Minnesota) and NSPA board member

### How have you participated in NSPA?

So many ... a start.

We use resources (including the **NSPA Model Code of Ethics**) for journalism education/staff training.

Students submit for individual awards and NSPA Honor Roll.

We submit publications for Pacemaker and Best of Show.

We attend JEA/NSPA journalism conventions.

We submit for (and use the feedback from) NSPA critiques.

I judge for NSPA (critiques and Pacemakers) and serve on the NSPA Advisory Board. I learn so much.

### How have you and your students benefited from NSPA?

NSPA provides a view of the journalism world that is unique, connecting students to resources that allow them to grow as individuals, connect to and collaborate with other student journalists, and discover more about the professional landscape of journalism. NSPA expands their perspective.

### How can you get the most from your NSPA membership?

- Contests and critiques.
- Professional connections.
- Conventions.

### What advice do you have for a student or adviser new to NSPA?

Go to a convention. It's a tremendous form of professional development.

Get involved with your regional student press organization. Say "yes" a lot. Try it all.

You will find an incredible community that will walk beside you through the challenges and gifts inherent in journalism education.



Kathryn Campbell

## Ann Visser

Journalism and English teacher, Pella Community High School (Iowa), retired, and past NSPA board member

### How have you participated in NSPA?

I have critiqued NSPA publications for years, so that is certainly my first — and continuing — experience with the organization.

I have also had the pleasure of attending a number of conventions throughout the years.

My NSPA face-to-face connections began when I was JEA's president. It was my pleasure to work with the NSPA staff on site visits and convention activities. I had great respect for the organization and all it did to complement our partnership. I moved from my JEA past presidency into an NSPA board-member role.

### How have you and your students benefited from NSPA?

Attending conventions throughout the years was of great benefit to my students and to me in so many ways. We always came back a better staff because of what we had learned at convention. I absolutely was a better adviser because of the connections I made by attending conventions.

We also loved using the Best of the High School Press as we searched for new ways to design our publications and/or for content ideas.

### How can you get the most from your NSPA membership?

- Attend conventions.
- Have critiques done of your publication(s).
- Make connections with advisers from across the nation.

### What advice do you have for a student or adviser new to NSPA?

Make the most of what NSPA offers you and your publication(s). Your connections with a professional organization can help you become stronger and better.



Ann Visser

## Jeanne Acton

Journalism  
director,  
University  
Interscholastic  
League, Austin,  
Texas, and  
NSPA president

### How have you participated in NSPA?

When I was a student, I won first place in feature writing for NSPA, and then when I was a teacher, we belonged to NSPA and participated in the contests.

### How have you and your students benefited from NSPA?

Personally, NSPA helped me find my path. When I was a junior in high school and won that award, it reaffirmed to me that journalism was a viable path for me. I was not a confident student, and I wasn't sure I had the skills to go into journalism in college — which led me to where I am now.

### How can you get the most from your NSPA membership?

1. Get a critique. This is critical for growth. To improve your program, you need feedback. Don't focus on the rating. Focus on the critique and share it with your students to make a plan for improvement.

2. Attend a convention. I am always amazed at the level of presenters at the conventions. As a student and as a teacher, I got so much inspiration from attending the conventions.

And when you are at the convention, make it a point to attend an adviser's session. Too often, journalism teachers are singletons in their schools — meaning no one else teaches journalism but them. It can be a lonely thing. Find your colleagues at the conventions. Build connections and relationships. And then use those connections when



Jeanne Acton

you need advice, want to share celebrations or just need to unload. Journalism advisers are the best people in the world.

3. Check out the NSPA website for resources. **The Tim Harrower Archive** is such a fantastic resource for advisers. The design PowerPoint is top-notch and makes learning design so easy. And the cool thing is, it is totally classroom ready.

### What advice do you have for a student or adviser new to NSPA?

Meet people — other journalism advisers, the NSPA staff, presenters, etc. Ask questions. Get contact information. And then, when you need it, ask more questions.

## Debra Klevens

Journalism  
adviser,  
Parkway West  
High School,  
Ballwin, Missouri

### How have you participated in NSPA?

I have been a member for 21 years and have participated in the annual critique process both as a judge and as a recipient of feedback.

Having another professional provide my students with constructive advice has been a blessing for our program. Receiving feedback from an outside source is just the push my students need to see beyond the beauty of their creation.

In addition to the critique process, I have entered NSPA's Best of Show contests, Pacemaker awards and attended many national conventions.

### How have you and your students benefited from NSPA?

My students have benefited greatly from the conventions, contests and critique services. My



Debra Klevens

students' confidence has soared as they now proudly call themselves a national award-winning program thanks to the great opportunities NSPA has to offer.

### How can you get the most from your NSPA membership?

1. The individual contests offered at the national convention show my students just how much they know. They often doubt themselves, but these contests show them how much they have learned.

2. The network of colleagues I have to interact with throughout the country is a gift worth the membership. NSPA has introduced me to some instrumental people that have helped me grow as a professional so that I can be the best educator for my students.

3. The Pacemaker! It was always a career dream to be a Pacemaker recipient. I idolized my peers that had coveted this prestigious award. I love the challenge it provides my staff annually. That, coupled with the clear guidelines set in the critique, makes it very transferable in the classroom to areas of staff growth.

### What advice do you have for a student or adviser new to NSPA?

You are not alone. You have been hired to do the most remarkable job in your school. You will transform the lives of your students and your community, regardless of what they choose to pursue down the road.

Don't be intimidated by what you don't know. We are a welcoming community looking to grow and support one another. Teaching high school journalism is more than a job, it is a passion. I know I am not alone in these thoughts.

Allow NSPA members to help you.



# Planning guide for NSPA Individual Awards

NSPA Individual Awards honor the nation's best scholastic journalism in a wide range of categories.

The awards are presented to individuals and small teams. A new award-management website offers an improved submission experience.

For high schools, there are 49 contests

in 11 categories outlined in detail below, and junior high/middle schools have three categories in which to compete.

**2022 entry deadline: June 24, 2022**

Check [the NSPA contest rules](#) for the latest information, deadlines and submission information.

## KEY LINKS

[NSPA contest rules](#)

[BetterBNC Contest portal to submit individual awards](#)

[NSPA membership](#)

## 1. Broadcast Story of the Year

*Use this interactive PDF to compile notes as you plan entries. Then save the PDF for later reference at the contest deadline.*

### 1A. Broadcast News Story

Reporting on breaking news or an issue of importance to your audience that demonstrates strong news-gathering skills while delivering concise information.

Number of Entries: Two entries per NSPA-member media outlet.

Submission: Website URL link.

### 1B. Broadcast Feature Story

Personality profiles or human-interest general features.

Number of Entries: Two entries per NSPA-member media outlet.

Submission: Website URL link.

### 1C. Broadcast Sports Story

Coverage of past or present games or a seasonal summary, may also include profiles of sports personalities or human-interest sports features.

Number of Entries: Two entries per NSPA-member media outlet.

Submission: Website URL link.

### 1D. Broadcast Commentary

An editorial segment designed to inform and persuade an audience.

Number of Entries: Two entries per NSPA-member media outlet.

Submission: Website URL link.

# Planning guide for NSPA Individual Awards / 2

## 2. Cartoon of the Year

### 2A. Comics Journalism

A form of journalism that covers news or non-fiction events in comic form — a combination of words and drawn images.

Although visual narrative storytelling has existed for thousands of years, the use of the comics medium to cover real-life events is currently at an all-time peak. Entries might include picto-essay or graphic nonfiction, word balloons, GIFs or multimedia editorial art.

Number of Entries: Two entries per NSPA-member media outlet.

Submission: Website URL link or PDF file of printed page. Do not submit both.

### 2B. Comic Strip/Panel

Usually but not always humorous or light-hearted in its message, with a recurring theme or cast of characters. Comics are fictional and for entertainment. Each installment of the comic strip counts as a separate entry.

Number of Entries: Two entries per NSPA-member media outlet.

Submission: Website URL link or PDF file of printed page. Do not submit both.

### 2C. Editorial Cartoon

Typically printed on the editorial page or other opinion pages and often communicates an opinion on a subject presented in an accompanying editorial or other timely topic in the news. GIFs or multimedia editorial cartoons are allowed in this category.

Number of Entries: Two entries per NSPA-member media outlet.

Submission: Website URL link or PDF file of printed page. Do not submit both.

## 3. Design of the Year

### 3A. Newspaper Front Page

First page featuring dynamic nameplate and compelling verbal and visual content.

Number of Entries: Two entries per NSPA-member publication.

Submission: PDF file of printed page.

## Planning guide for NSPA Individual Awards / 3

### **3B. Newspaper Page/Spread**

Single-page or spread entries including news, sports, opinion, feature, photo or entertainment that are intended to be viewed without facing pages or two facing pages that together display a single verbal/visual story or a package of related content.

Number of Entries: Two entries per NSPA-member publication.

Submission: PDF file of printed page(s).

### **3C. Newsmagazine Cover**

First page featuring dynamic nameplate and compelling verbal and visual content.

Number of Entries: Two entries per NSPA-member publication.

Submission: PDF file of cover.

### **3D. Newsmagazine Page/Spread**

Single-page or spread entries including news, sports, opinion, feature, photo or entertainment that are intended to be viewed without facing pages or two facing pages that together display a single verbal/visual story or a package of related content.

Number of Entries: Two entries per NSPA-member publication.

Submission: PDF file of printed page(s).

### **3E. Literary/Specialty Magazine Cover**

First page featuring dynamic nameplate and compelling verbal and visual content.

Number of Entries: Two entries per NSPA-member publication.

Submission: PDF file of cover.

### **3F. Literary/Specialty Magazine Page/Spread**

Single-page or spread entries that display verbal/visual content intended to be viewed without the facing page or two facing pages that together display a single verbal/visual story or a package of related content.

Number of Entries: Two entries per NSPA-member publication.

Submission: PDF file of printed page(s).

## Planning guide for NSPA Individual Awards / 4

### **3G. Yearbook Spread**

Facing pages, that together display a single verbal/visual story or a collection of related content.

In the case of chronological coverage, the content is from a clearly labeled period of time. Spreads such as opening, closing and dividers must be entered in contest.

Number of Entries: Two entries per NSPA-member publication.

Submission: PDF file of printed page(s).

### **3H. Yearbook Theme Package**

This package includes cover, endsheets, title page, opening, closing, divider and final/parting page presented together as a portfolio and compiled into a single file.

Number of Entries: One entry per NSPA-member publication.

Submission: PDF file of the portfolio.

### **3I. Informational graphic**

Combines illustration and information in an easy-to-read presentation.

Popular formats include factoids, lists, quizzes, bar charts, line charts, pie charts, tables, ratings, timelines, step-by-step guides, diagrams and maps.

Number of Entries: Two entries per NSPA-member media outlet.

Submission: Website URL link or PDF file of printed page. Do not submit both.

### **3J. Illustration**

Art or photography used to illustrate a story.

All elements must be the original work of the photographer/artists. If appropriate for accuracy, must be labeled as an illustration when published.

Number of Entries: Two entries per NSPA-member media outlet.

Submission: Website URL link or PDF file of printed page. Do not submit both.

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## 4. Digital Story of the Year

### 4A. Multimedia News Story

Reporting on breaking news or an issue of importance to your audience that demonstrates strong news-gathering skills and delivers concise information.

In addition to text and images, entry must include audio, video, slideshows, interactive content (maps, timelines, etc.) or animation.

Number of Entries: Two entries per NSPA-member media outlet.

Submission: Website URL link.

### 4B. Multimedia Feature Story

Personality profiles, trend stories or human-interest stories; not news or sports. In addition to text and images, entry must include audio, video, slideshows, interactive content (maps, timelines, etc.) or animation.

Number of Entries: Two entries per NSPA-member media outlet.

Submission: Website URL link.

### 4C. Multimedia Sports Story

Coverage of games or seasonal summary, may also include profiles of sports personalities or human-interest sports features. In addition to text and images, entry must include audio, video, slideshows, interactive content (maps, timelines, etc.) or animation.

Number of Entries: Two entries per NSPA-member media outlet.

Submission: Website URL link.

### 4D. Photo Slideshow

A photo story on a single subject with each photo communicating a different angle. Captions must be included for every image.

Number of Entries: Two entries per NSPA-member media outlet.

Submission: Website URL link.

### 4E. Interactive Graphic

Allows reader to navigate through an informational graphic to engage with the information.

Popular formats include factoids, lists, quizzes, bar charts, line charts, pie charts, tables, ratings, timelines, step-by-step guides, diagrams and maps.

Number of Entries: Two entries per NSPA-member media outlet.

Submission: Website URL link.

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### **4F. Podcast**

Delivers relevant content through engaging audio storytelling and should appear on your media outlet's NSPA-member website.

Number of Entries: Two entries per NSPA-member media outlet.

Submission: Website URL link.

### **4G. Blog**

Must reflect journalistic standards in topics, coverage and writing and should appear on your media outlet's NSPA-member website.

Number of Entries: Two entries per NSPA-member media outlet.

Submission: Website URL link.

## **5. Photo of the Year**

### **5A. News Photo**

Captures a timely visual story and displays news value and evidence of on-the-spot coverage.

Number of Entries: Two entries per NSPA-member media outlet.

Submission: An image file (JPG, TIF, PNG) is required along with a caption. Do not submit URL link or PDF file.

### **5B. Feature Photo**

Delivers a human-interest story with the emphasis on people in their environment.

Number of Entries: Two entries per NSPA-member media outlet.

Submission: An image file (JPG, TIF, PNG) is required along with a caption. Do not submit URL link or PDF file.

### **5C. Sports Game/Action Photo**

Captures the competitive action and emotion of athletes on school teams competing in games, matches and meets or in personal, non-team sports.

Number of Entries: Two entries per NSPA-member media outlet.

Submission: An image file (JPG, TIF, PNG) is required along with a caption. Do not submit URL link or PDF file.



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## **5D. Sports Feature Photo**

Images communicate a story other than direct action on the playing field including human-interest sports stories such as profiles of sports figures.

Number of Entries: Two entries per NSPA-member media outlet.

Submission: An image file (JPG, TIF, PNG) is required along with a caption. Do not submit URL link or PDF file.

## **5E. Environmental Portrait**

Posed images of one or more individuals taken in their natural surroundings to provide insight into their work, interests or personality.

Number of Entries: Two entries per NSPA-member media outlet.

Submission: An image file (JPG, TIF, PNG) is required along with a caption. Do not submit URL link or PDF file.

## **6. Story of the Year**

### **6A. News Story**

Reporting on breaking news or an issue of importance to your audience that demonstrates strong news-gathering skills and delivers concise information. The first-place winner in this category competes for the \$1,000 Brasler Prize.

Number of Entries: Two entries per NSPA-member media outlet.

Submission: Website URL link or PDF file of printed page(s). Do not submit both.

### **6B. Feature Story**

Personality profiles or human-interest general features. The first-place winner in this category competes for the \$1,000 Brasler Prize.

Number of Entries: Two entries per NSPA-member media outlet.

Submission: Website URL link or PDF file of printed page(s). Do not submit both.

### **6C. Sports Story**

Coverage of past or present games or a seasonal summary, may also include profiles of sports personalities or human-interest sports features. The first-place winner in this category competes for the \$1,000 Brasler Prize.

Number of Entries: Two entries per NSPA-member media outlet.

Submission: Website URL link or PDF file of printed page(s). Do not submit both.

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### 6D. Editorial

The statement of the publication's opinion supported by fact. Editorials generally do not have bylines. The first-place winner in this category competes for the \$1,000 Brasler Prize.

Number of Entries: Two entries per NSPA-member media outlet.

Submission: Website URL link or PDF file of printed page(s). Do not submit both.

### 6E. Opinion

Columns or bylined opinion pieces providing research and personal insights and anecdotes. The first-place winner in this category competes for the \$1,000 Brasler Prize.

Number of Entries: Two entries per NSPA-member media outlet.

Submission: Website URL link or PDF file of printed page(s). Do not submit both.

## 7. Social Justice Reporting

### 7A. Social Justice Reporting

With a focus on equity and inclusion, news stories in this special category are welcome from all media platforms (print, broadcast, online).

A statement explaining why this coverage was included in the publication and any outcomes or effect the coverage had within the school community is required.

The first-place winner in this category competes for the \$1,000 Brasler Prize.

Number of Entries: Two entries per NSPA-member media outlet.

Submission: Website URL link or PDF file of printed page(s). Do not submit both.

## 8. Local Climate Change Reporting

### 8A. Local Climate Change Reporting

Climate change is one of the most important stories of our generation. This contest, in partnership with the George Mason University Center for Climate Change Communication, encourages local climate change reporting by student media.

Long-form news stories, published in print or online, should be accompanied by sidebars, graphics and data. Broadcast news stories may also be entered.

All student journalists who are interested in reporting on climate change as a local story are

## Planning guide for NSPA Individual Awards / 9

encouraged to use the Climate Matters reporting resources, science-based reporting materials that are funded, in part, by the National Science Foundation. These materials can be used in award submissions.

The first-place winner earns \$500 and the second- and third- place winners \$300 and \$200 respectively. Team reporting is permitted, and the cash prize will be divided among the names on the entry form.

Number of Entries: Unlimited entries per NSPA-member media outlet.

Submission: Website URL link or PDF file of printed page(s). Do not submit both.

### 9. Portfolio of the Year

#### 9A. Artist of the Year

Each member media outlet may nominate one person. Portfolio includes a one-page statement from the nominee explaining contributions and what was learned.

Portfolio features five original pieces of print, digital or multi-media art including editorial cartoons and comic strips featuring the nominee's talents published this year along with one to three sentences describing each piece.

Number of Entries: One entry per NSPA-member media outlet.

Submission: Website URL link or PDF file of portfolio. Do not submit both.

#### 9B. Broadcast Journalist of the Year

Each member media outlet may nominate one person. Portfolio includes a one-page statement from the nominee explaining contributions and what was learned.

Portfolio features five original broadcast stories featuring the nominee's talents published this year along with one to three sentences describing each piece.

Number of Entries: One entry per NSPA-member media outlet.

Submission: Website URL link or PDF file of portfolio. Do not submit both.

#### 9C. Designer of the Year

Each member media outline may nominate one person. Portfolio includes a one-page statement from the nominee explaining contributions and what was learned. Portfolio features five original designs featuring the nominee's talents published this school year along with

## Planning guide for NSPA Individual Awards / 10

one to three sentences describing each piece.

Entries may include complete spreads, pages, advertisements, covers, informational graphics, sidebars, etc., from print, web or video.

Number of Entries: One entry per NSPA-member media outlet.

Submission: Website URL link or PDF file of portfolio. Do not submit both.

### **9D. Marketer of the Year**

Each member media outlet may nominate one person. Portfolio includes a one-page statement from the nominee explaining contributions and what was learned.

Portfolio features a detailed marketing plan that was implemented this year with results documented.

Number of Entries: One entry per NSPA-member media outlet.

Submission: Website URL link or PDF file of portfolio. Do not submit both.

### **9E. Multimedia Journalist of the Year**

Each member media outlet may nominate one person. Portfolio includes a one-page statement from the nominee explaining contributions and what was learned.

Portfolio features five stories featuring the nominee's talents published this school year along with one to three sentences describing each piece. In addition to text and images, multimedia entries must include audio, video, slideshows, interactive content (maps, timelines, etc.) and animation as part of each robust story package.

Number of Entries: One entry per NSPA-member media outlet.

Submission: Website URL link or PDF file of portfolio. Do not submit both.

### **9F. Photojournalist of the Year**

Each member media outlet may nominate one person. Portfolio includes a one-page statement from the nominee explaining contributions and what was learned.

Portfolio features five images featuring the nominee's talents published this school year along with one to three sentences describing each piece. Captions must be published with the images and included as part of the entry.

Number of Entries: One entry per NSPA-member media outlet.

Submission: Website URL link or PDF file of portfolio. Do not submit both.

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## **9G. Writer of the Year**

Each member media outlet may nominate one person. Portfolio includes a one-page statement from the nominee explaining contributions and what was learned.

Portfolio features five pieces of journalistic writing featuring the nominee's talents published this school year.

Number of Entries: One entry per NSPA-member media outlet.

Submission: Website URL link or PDF file of portfolio. Do not submit both.

## **10. Best Use of Social Media**

### **10A. Social Media Reporting**

Coverage using social media platforms for reporting, updating and engaging with the school community.

Collect social-media examples using an online content-curation tool or by capturing screen shots with links to create a portfolio.

Number of Entries: One entry per NSPA-member media outlet.

Submission: Website URL link to portfolio or PDF portfolio. Do not submit both.

### **10B. Social Media Promotion**

Use of social media platforms for promoting traffic to an online site, broadcast or print news publication or to promote the sale of the yearbook.

Collect social media examples using an online content-curation tool or by capturing screen shots with links to create a portfolio.

Number of Entries: One entry per NSPA-member media outlet.

Submission: Website URL link to portfolio or PDF portfolio. Do not submit both.

## **11. COVID-19 Coverage**

### **11A. Broadcast: News or Features**

Broadcast news or features reporting on the effect of COVID-19 on your student audience.

The student press has a distinct perspective and role in covering the broad effects upon schools while confronting the challenge of school closures and remote interviewing.

Please do not put yourself or others in jeopardy

## Planning guide for NSPA Individual Awards / 12

of being infected with COVID-19 through your reporting.

Number of Entries: One entry per NSPA-member media outlet.

Submission: Website URL link.

### **11B. Online: News or Features**

Online news or features reporting on the effect of COVID-19 on your student audience/readership.

The student press has a distinct perspective and role in covering the broad effects upon schools while confronting the challenge of school closures and remote interviewing.

Please do not put yourself or others in jeopardy of being infected with COVID-19 through your reporting. Images must be properly sourced and credited, and possible copyright violations will be disqualified.

Number of Entries: One entry per NSPA-member media outlet.

Submission: Website URL link.

### **11C. Print: News or Features**

Print news or features reporting on the effect of COVID-19 on your student readership.

The student press has a distinct perspective and role in covering the broad effects upon schools while confronting the challenge of school closures and remote interviewing.

Please do not put yourself or others in jeopardy of being infected with COVID-19 through your reporting. Images must be properly sourced and credited, and possible copyright violations will be disqualified.

Number of Entries: One entry per NSPA-member media outlet.

Submission: PDF file of printed page(s).

### **11D. Yearbook: Spread**

A yearbook spread reporting on the effect of COVID-19 on your student readership.

The student press has a distinct perspective and role in covering the broad effects upon schools while confronting the challenge of school closures and remote interviewing.

Please do not put yourself or others in jeopardy of being infected with COVID-19 through your reporting. Images must be properly sourced and credited, and possible copyright violations will be disqualified.

Number of Entries: One entry per NSPA-member media outlet.

Submission: PDF file of printed page(s).



# Planning guide for NSPA Individual Awards / 13

## Junior High/Middle School Individual Awards

NSPA Individual Awards honor the nation's best scholastic journalism — in a wide range of categories. The awards are presented to individuals and small teams.

This year, a new award management website offers an improved submission experience. For middle schools and junior high schools, there are three contests outlined below that follow the same rules and guidelines as the high school category.

**HOW TO ENTER:** Visit the new BetterBNC award platform to submit, track and manage Individual Award entries. Creating an Open Call account is required and takes only a few minutes for one-time set-up.

### **12A. Design of the Year**

A single page or spread from literary magazine, newspaper/newsmagazine or yearbook.

Number of Entries: Five entries per NSPA-member media outlet.

Submission: PDF file of printed page(s).

### **12B. Story of the Year**

A news story, feature story or broadcast story appearing in a broadcast, literary magazine, newspaper/newsmagazine, website or yearbook.

Number of Entries: Five entries per NSPA-member media outlet.

Submission: Website URL link or PDF file of printed page(s). Do not submit both.

### **12C. Photo of the Year**

News, feature or sports photo appearing in a literary magazine, newspaper/newsmagazine, website or yearbook. A caption is required.

Number of Entries: Five entries per NSPA-member media outlet.

Submission: An image file (JPG, TIF, PNG) is required along with a caption; do not submit URL link or PDF file.

# NSPA

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