

literary magazine

critique

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school name	_____
school year	_____
publication	_____

FSPA
Florida Scholastic Press Association
www.jou.ufl.edu/fspa



EVALUATION SERVICES

“Educating, training and supporting scholastic journalists and their advisers”

The Florida Scholastic Press Association’s purpose is to educate, train and support scholastic journalism statewide. FSPA, an organization of more than 200 student publications and broadcast programs, offers a variety of services to assist journalism students and teachers. One is an evaluation service for publications and broadcast programs.

For many advisers and staffs, asking an outsider to evaluate their publication is not easy. Egos are fragile. While most of us conceded the value of constructive criticism, we seldom enjoy having our “pride and joy,” the publication we’ve spent countless hours producing, assessed by someone who didn’t have to endure the long road to creating the publication.

If they only knew how late we stayed up to meet out deadline.

They just don’t understand how underfunded we are.

Well, out of 35 students, seven did the work.

Although we value the merit of a top rating, we need to remember that awards are not the only rewards of critiquing service. Some rewards include the following:

- Positive competitive spirit can service as a motivator to improve weak areas of publication.
- Consistent membership and rating can build a tradition of excellence from one year to the next.
- Recognition can enhance a student’s college and career potential and can enhance an adviser’s professional standing.

ELIGIBILITY FOR JUDGING – All Florida high school and middle/junior high school publications and broadcast programs that are FSPA members for the current academic year are eligible for the critique service.

JUDGES – Each year, approximately 30 individuals are judges for the FSPA evaluation service. Judges are journalism teachers and publication advisers from other states who are recognized for their publication programs, college and university journalism professors, college yearbook advisers and members of the professional media with experience with student publications. The judge receives the publication, evaluation forms and directions about judging. The judge is encouraged to be specific in offering recommendations and to identify strengths, as well as weaknesses, of the publications reviewed.

RANKING -- Newspapers, magazines, broadcast programs and yearbooks are evaluated by ranking areas of five categories. The judge then gives that category a score based on the rankings within the specific categories. The final score is determined by averaging each scores from each category, for example Superior = 5, Excellent = 4, Good = 3, Average = 2, and Needs Improvement = 1. Rankings will be determined by adding the points.

AWARDS – All Florida awards are announced at the FSPA State Convention banquet each spring, where staffs will receive award certificates and plaques. Gold, Silver, Bronze, and Merit certificates will be mailed with scorebook results. All Florida certificates or plaques not picked up at the convention will be mailed after the convention.

The evaluation is divided into four sections. Each section has a numerical rating ranging from 5 to 1, as shown below:

READER SERVICES – the necessary elements to allow the reader to locate information

WRITING – how skillfully the headlines, captions and literary forms are presented

PHOTOGRAPHY/ ARTWORK – the selection of and use of artwork and photography to showcase broad spectrum of talent

DESIGN - how well students follow design guidelines and utilize design elements

EXPLANATION OF FINAL EVALUATION SYSTEM

Each division in each section is rated a final grade as

- Superior = 5
- Excellent = 4
- Good = 3
- Average = 2 or
- Needs Improvement = 1

To the Judges:

- Judges will disregard "Advertisement" if the publication does not include ads and will not penalize a publication's rating.
- Judges may annotate in the book both positive and negative elements of the publication so that the staff can easily recognize the remarks. Therefore, judges may write in your publications.
- Judges will include comments relevant to each section in the space provided. In addition, they will include detailed supplementary comments explaining their overall impressions in the scorebook with specific references to pages.
- Judges may use fractions as a sub-section rating,

PART ONE: Reader Services

Theme Development

Rating _____

- An underlying concept and careful planning for unity and consistency is evident.
- The theme appears on the cover, title page, explanation of purpose and table of contents
- All elements work together in a creative and original way.
- The theme guides the selection of stories, student writing and visual core.
- The photographs carefully advance the concepts in quality, contrast, variety and content.

Cover/Title Page/Table of Contents

Rating _____

- The cover is attractively designed and printed on suitable paper stock.
- The cover reflects the content or concept of the magazine.
- The cover includes school name (either on front cover or spine), school year, volume number and theme.
- The title page should contain the name of the magazine, volume number, school name, complete school address and phone number.
- Visuals have been used to enhance the design and provide a tie-in with the cover.
- All necessary information (listing of materials with page numbers, titles, authors) is included in the contents listing
- Page numbers correspond with the correct page.
- If no table of contents, an index is utilized.
- The genre of each piece may also be included, if not organized by genres.
- Proofreading is evident.

Staff Listing/ Patrons, Advertising/ Colophon

Rating _____

- A complete staff listing is included.
- The adviser's name is listed and is printed somewhere other than the beginning of the listing.
- The patron list, if included, is presented in a tasteful way.
- Ads are attractively presented, and if used, presented at the back of the magazine.
- Artwork has been used to enhance the design.
- A colophon has been included listing the specifications, including the program used, copies printed, typefaces used, and other pertinent information.

Recommendations and Commendations

Average Rating: _____ Rating Guide –Superior (5), Excellent (4), Good (3), Average (2) or Needs Improvement (1)

SPECIAL DISTINCTION: _____ **Why?****PART TWO: Writing****General Guidelines**

Rating _____

- Grammar and punctuation has been proofed and edited for easy readability. .
- Editing is consistent and follows a standard format – AP, Quill and Scroll, etc.
- Captions and photo/art credit lines are consistent throughout the magazine.
- Verbs are active rather than passive.
- Overworked words and trite language are avoided.
- "To be" verbs are minimized.
- Sentence beginnings and sentence length are varied.
- A title with a byline is included for all selections.
- A variety of forms are included – essays, short stories, poetry, artwork, photography, drama, non-fiction, etc.
- The number of columns appears to be governed by the size of selection and type.
- Typeface is limited for the selection.
- There are diverse types of creative work.
- Copyrighted material has not been used without written permission of the owner and no plagiarized material is included.

Headlines

Rating _____

- The title grabs reader's attention and draws the reader into the selection.
- The number of fonts used is limited.
- Subheads, if used, are effective and appropriate.
- Headline type is appropriate for selections and visual interest

Captions

Rating _____

- Captions for photographs, if needed, are evident.
- Captions should go beyond the obvious in telling the story in the photograph.
- When necessary, people (fewer than six) should be identified.

Fiction

Rating _____

- Subject matter should be original and imaginatively presented.
- Topic should be appropriate for student audience.
- Writing should be free of clichés and endings devoid of expectation
- Short stories, one-act plays, personality profile feature strong character development, use of detail and figures of speech.
- Poetry selections demonstrate freshness of content, subject variety, description and figures of speech.

Non-Fiction

Rating _____

- Writing should be informative and show evidence of research by use of direct and indirect quotes, accurate facts, and correct names.
- Subject matter should be of interest to the school or community but based on research and interviewing.
- The beginning should grab reader’s attention.
- Essays may be personal or argumentative and contain a clearly stated purpose which is developed in a logical manner.
- Reviews may be written about current books, movies, plays, music, art exhibits, and restaurants.

Recommendations and Commendations

Average Rating: _____ Rating Guide –Superior (5), Excellent (4), Good (3), Average (2) or Needs Improvement (1)

SPECIAL DISTINCTION: _____ Why?

PART THREE: Photography/ Artwork

Artwork

Rating _____

- Illustrations are properly credited.
- There is a proper balance of art, copy, graphics and white space on each spread.
- A variety of types of artwork have been used – pencil, pen and ink, painting, illustrations, cartoons, and sculpture.
- Each piece is strong enough to stand alone.
- Artwork and photos are cropped correctly in terms of focus and composition.
- Illustrations blend harmoniously with copy. Bleeds are used effectively.
- Work is dark enough, with enough contrast, to reproduce well in the magazine.
- Each piece of artwork is an essential component of the magazine, not just used as filler.
- Both horizontal and vertical art pieces have been included.
- Artwork selection shows good taste for the student audience.
- Background screens should not overpower the art or literary selection.
- A variety of artists is represented.

Photography

Rating _____

- Photos accompanying features or interviews have captions.
- Photos are sometimes used as a complement to the literary piece.
- Photos have strong composition and adequate contrast.
- Focus is sharp and photo is free from flaws.
- Cropping is used to emphasize a particular element.
- Both horizontal and vertical photographs have been used.
- Good taste appropriate for a student audience is apparent.
- Digital images have the proper resolution and do not appear “pixilated.”
- Background screens do not overpower the photo.
- A variety of photographers is used.

Recommendations and Commendations

Average Rating: _____ Rating Guide –Superior (5), Excellent (4), Good (3), Average (2) or Needs Improvement (1)

SPECIAL DISTINCTION: _____ **Why?**

PART FOUR: Design

General Design

Rating _____

- Pages are linked to form a single unit of design.
- There is a proper balance of copy, art, graphics and white space on each spread.
- There is a visual element which ties each spread together.
- Each spread has a dominant element.
- Graphics unify or separate elements without overpowering the spread.
- Margins are consistent and sufficient. The use of white space, both internal and external, helps create contrast and show case design. Trapped white space is avoided.
- Bleeds, guttering and shading have been used appropriately to enhance design and provide unity for the publication.
- Folio lines have been used consistently.
- Printed bylines and credits have been placed consistently on each spread.
- Column widths are appropriate used to provide both variety in design and unity of the entire magazine.

Graphic Elements

Rating _____

- Graphic elements have been used effectively to tie the literary pieces and photography/artwork together.
- Graphic elements have been used subtly so they enhance design, not overpower it.
- Reverses, screens and boxes do not interfere with legibility of copy or overpower the page.
- Boxes, screens and reverses are used consistently
- White space is used as an effective graphic element to guide reader's attention to the focus of the spread
- Staff is not afraid to experiment with design they've seen in publications or other sources, but should adapt these designs to suit their coverage and thematic goals

Advertising (Optional)

Rating _____

- Advertising is localized to student market and shows student participation in community.
- Ads for similar businesses (like florists or banks) are not placed near each other
- Ad borders enhance the message of the ad rather than distract
- Internal margins are consistent, and external margins should be used to frame the spread
- Camera-ready ads from businesses are run without distortion
- High quality photos and artwork is used

Typography

Rating _____

- Body and caption are easily read and remain consistent throughout the magazine.
- The same font is used consistently for text type (unless there is a specific reason to change).
- Headline styles (ups, down, centered, flush left, etc.) must be consistent.
- The font (height, weight, serif, sans serif, shape) contributes to the overall design of the magazine.
- Bylines are set in the same font and type size.
- Photo/art credits are set in the same font and type size.
- There is a consistency in the placement of bylines and credits.
- Oversized type has been used when necessary to make copy more readable.
- Typography enhances design rather than detracts from it.

Recommendations and Commendations

Average Rating: _____ Rating Guide –Superior (5), Excellent (4), Good (3), Average (2) or Needs Improvement (1)

SPECIAL DISTINCTION: _____ **Why?**

Judge's Summary Comments

Judge's signature (optional)

Final Rating

Each division in each category is rated as **SUPERIOR** (5 points), **EXCELLENT** (4 points), **GOOD** (3 points), **AVERAGE** (2 points), or **NEEDS IMPROVEMENT** (1 point).

Judges will include overall comments for each section for both strengths and weaknesses. Specific references will be included. In addition, they will conclude with comments to explain their overall impressions. "Special Distinction" may be awarded to a publication for a category the judge feels excels.

Publications will be awarded one of the following ratings based on the total points of each category:

Part One:	Reader Services	Rating _____	Special Distinction: _____
Part Two:	Writing	Rating _____	Special Distinction: _____
Part Three:	Photography/Artwork	Rating _____	Special Distinction: _____
Part Four:	Design	Rating _____	Special Distinction: _____

_____ All Florida (20-18) _____ Gold (17-15) _____ Silver (14-11) _____ Bronze (10-8) _____ Merit (7-0)

_____ Number of Special Distinctions