

To: Nebraska Advisers
Re: 2008 Publication Evaluations

From: NHSPA Executive Board

NEWSPAPER

DEADLINE: ENTRIES MUST BE POSTMARKED BY JUNE 9, 2008. Any entries received which are postmarked later than June 9 will not be eligible for competition for a Cornhusker Award, but they may still be critiqued - Late entries will also be billed a late fee in the amount of the original critique cost; entries received without payment will also be ineligible — **NO EXCEPTIONS.**

Send one copy each of **THREE** different issues, which need not have been consecutively published. If you have published fewer than three issues, send all issues published with an explanation to judges in the designated area in the booklet. Send the information sheet, labelled “NHSPA Newspaper Evaluation,” and attach any notes to the judges that you think would be helpful. Send a school check payable to NHSPA (no purchase orders or personal checks will be accepted) for the correct amount.

Class A1 Newspaper \$50
Class A2 Newspaper \$50
Class B Newspaper \$45
Class C Newspaper \$40
Class D Newspaper \$35

Advisers who are not members of NHSPA who wish to have their publications critiqued must add \$10 to the totals.

YEARBOOK

DEADLINE: REGARDLESS OF SPRING OR FALL DELIVERY, the INFORMATION SHEET labelled “NHSPA Yearbook Evaluation” **AND PAYMENT MUST BE POSTMARKED BY JUNE 9, 2008.** Any entries (comprised of either the information sheet and a check, or the information sheet, the check and the yearbook) postmarked later than June 9 will not be eligible for competition for a Cornhusker Award. Late entries will also be billed a late fee in the amount of the original critique fee. Entries received without payment will also be ineligible. Send the evaluation booklet with staff information provided on the first page, and make any notes to the judges on the appropriate page. Send a school check payable to NHSPA (no purchase orders or personal checks will be accepted) for the correct amount.

Class A1 Yearbook \$50
Class A2 Yearbook \$50
Class B Yearbook \$45
Class C Yearbook \$40
Class D Yearbook \$35

New schools, which have not been members of NHSPA in the last two years, may receive **ONE** free evaluation if they pay the \$25 adviser membership fee. Contact John Bender for more information on this limited time offer. 402-472-3053

If your yearbook is spring delivery, send it along with the information sheet and payment. If your yearbook is fall delivery, mail information sheet and payment postmarked by June 9, and the yearbook itself postmarked by Aug. 22, 2008. Any fall yearbooks postmarked later than Aug. 22 will be ineligible for the Cornhusker competition, although they still may receive a critique.

*A special note to yearbook advisers: Each year many advisers struggle to meet yearbook deadlines which jeopardize the book’s delivery date, and sometimes it is publisher error that delays a yearbook’s shipment. We understand and sympathize, but to be fair to all advisers working under equally challenging conditions, no exceptions to these deadlines can be made (even if the yearbook is shipped to you beyond the evaluation deadline). That is yet another unfortunate consequence of a late ship date.

MAIL ALL FORMS AND ENTRIES TO:

ATTN. JOHN BENDER
147 Andersen Hall
College of Journalism
University of Nebraska-Lincoln
Lincoln, NE 68588-0479

NHSPA

Nebraska High School Press Association

YEARBOOK EVALUATION

School Information Sheet 2007-2008

Classification: (circle one) A1 A2 B C D

Name of Yearbook: _____ Theme: _____

School: _____ Adviser: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Zip: _____

Size of Yearbook Staff: _____ members Number of pages in the Book: _____

Our yearbook is delivered in the: (circle one) Spring Fall

Our yearbook is produced using the following software: (ex. InDesign, Pagemaker #, PhotoShop, Illustrator, etc)

Our yearbook sends pages to our printer:

- _____ Online (via ftp site or Internet submission protocol)
- _____ CD/DVD/Disk Submit
- _____ School Pasteup
- _____ other (please explain):

The yearbook is produced:

- _____ as part of a regular journalism curriculum
- _____ as part of progressive class structure, example: Journalism I, II, III, IV, etc.
- _____ during the school day by students who are taught a basic journalism course while creating a yearbook
- _____ outside the school day as an extracurricular activity
- _____ other (please explain):

Photography in the yearbook is done in the following way:

- _____ all digital — no conventional darkroom
- _____ all 35mm B&W photography using a chemical darkroom at the school where the students develop the film and print the pictures
- _____ all 35mm photography using outside photo services for developing and printing
- _____ a combination of digital & conventional 35mm photography
- _____ other (please explain):

Advertising is:

- _____ not allowed in our publication by school board policy
- _____ sold and ads are student designed
- _____ other (please explain):

Senior Portrait section is

- _____ bid out and taken by one photo studio
- _____ taken by a variety of studios and students must submit
- _____ taken by a variety of studios and submitted by each studio
- _____ other (please explain):

Explanation of Evaluation System

•The evaluation is divided into five sections:

Theme (how well the yearbook utilizes its unifying concept)

Coverage (how well the yearbook covers all areas of school and student life)

Writing (how well students use journalistic style as it applies to yearbook copy and captions)

Design (how well students follow design guidelines and utilize design to communicate theme and coverage)

Photography (how well students produce photos of technical quality and dynamic content)

- Each division in each section is rated as Superior, Excellent, Good, or Weak.
- Judges will disregard divisions which relate to advertising if the publication does not include ads, and will not reduce a publication's score
- Judges will include comments relevant to each division and therefore each section in the space on the pages provided. In addition, they will include supplementary comments explaining their overall impressions. Judges will nominate a staff for any special recognition they deem appropriate in any section(s) of the evaluation. These nominations will be the basis for the Golden Kernel Award.
- Publications will be awarded one of the following class rankings: Cornhusker, Award of Distinction, or Award of Merit. If a publication receives no official ranking it will receive an extensive evaluation.

To the Judge:

This is a place for the yearbook staff to inform the judge of any special circumstances, unusual challenges, or unexpected problems the staff encountered that may help the judge give a more informed evaluation of the publication.



NHSPA

Nebraska High School Press Association

2007 — 2008

YEARBOOK EVALUATION

Name of School: _____

Classification: (circle one) A1 A2 B C D

Explanation of Evaluation System

- This evaluation is divided into five sections:

Concept (how well the yearbook utilizes its unifying theme)

Coverage (how well the yearbook covers all areas of school and student life)

Writing (how well students use journalistic style as it applies to yearbook copy and captions)

Design (how well students follow design guidelines and utilize design to communicate theme and coverage)

Photography (how well students produce photos of technical quality and dynamic content)

- Each division in each section is rated as Superior (Always), Excellent (Frequently), Good Usually, Average (Sometimes), or Needs Improvement (Never).

- Judges will disregard divisions which relate to advertising or endsheets if the publication does not include ads or print on endsheets, and will not reduce a publication's score.

- Judges will annotate both positive and negative elements of the publication in red so that the staff can easily recognize the remarks. Therefore, judges will write in your publications.

- Judges will include comments relevant to each division and therefore each section in the space on the pages provided. In addition, they will include supplementary comments explaining their overall impressions.

- Judges will award one or two Golden Kernel Awards to a staff for any special strength they see in any one or two bulleted items of the evaluation.

- Publications will, based on the rankings of each section, be awarded one of the following class ratings:

Cornhusker

Award of Distinction

Award of Merit

- If a publication receives no official rating, the judge will provide specific recommendations along with a detailed evaluation.

Part One: Concept

Rating Guide

S - Superior

E - Excellent

G - Good

A - Average

N - Needs Improvement

Average Rating: _____

A. Theme Development

Rating _____

- is a phrase of usually five words or less
- reflects attitudes, events, or special circumstances of the school this year, so is, therefore, original, timely and specifically applicable
- design and thematic copy develops justification for use of theme for this specific year
- design of thematic pages should be significantly different from the rest of the book

B. Cover

Rating _____

- includes school name, name of yearbook, year, volume number, and theme on cover/spine
- design supports thematic concept
- whether professionally designed or student-designed, any featured artwork is clean, clear and well-drawn, and supports theme.

C. Endsheets (optional)

Rating _____

- design complements cover design
- space is used effectively to communicate necessary information, if applicable
- both front and back endsheets are designed to complement each other

D. Table of Contents

Rating _____

- should appear at or near the front of the book
- sections are in page number order and page numbers accurately reflect division pages for each section
- if mini-themes are used, sections are also clearly identified (sports, clubs, etc.)
- all sections, including advertising and index, have accurate page numbers clearly listed
- design is complementary to thematic development, probably reflecting thematic graphic or font treatments

E. Title Page

Rating _____

- includes school name, address, city, state, zip code, telephone number, and school enrollment; may even include e-mail address and fax number
- includes name of yearbook, year, and volume number
- photo(s) or artwork is the epitome of visual reflection of the theme, and include captions which help explain their thematic significance; photo is not of school building or is not posed unless vital to the development of the theme
- theme is repeated to maintain consistent design flow from the cover

**commendations
and
recommendations**

Part One: Concept

(continued)

Average Rating: _____

Rating Guide

S - Superior

E - Excellent

G - Good

A - Average

N - Needs Improvement

F. Opening

Rating _____

- repeats theme or appropriate variation
- copy stylistically explains theme, and uses specific, timely examples from the school year to justify why the theme is applicable and appropriate
- copy reflects personality of the yearbook editor(s) and staff, but is focused to appeal to the high school audience
- photos are diverse visual examples of theme, with captions that include enough information to help audience see why photos are thematic
- photos are examples of the best photography in the yearbook
- photos are not posed; they are action-packed and emotional
- design supports visual impact of photos and thematic graphics or logos that will be continuous elements throughout the yearbook

G. Divisions

Rating _____

- design is significantly different from normal yearbook spread so that it is obviously a divider separating sections
- copy maintains stylistic tone established in the opening copy, and through use of specific examples from the designated section, further justifies how the theme applies to each section
- copy makes reference to section's mini-theme if one has been selected, and through its use demonstrates why it's appropriate
- photos are dominant and dramatic illustrations of the content of that section, and support the theme through their content and their captions
- may include graphic elements established either on the cover, the title page, or the opening spread that tie the division spread back to other thematic pages, and which serve not only as continuous elements, but also as another signal to the reader that they are looking at a division spread

H. Closing

Rating _____

- design closely relates to opening spread design, either by repeating the design, mirroring it, or in some other way using continuous elements to relate back to the opening
- uses dramatic photos and captions that sum up the year, and are thematic
- copy summarizes events of the year that illustrate theme; also provides closure

**commendations
and
recommendations**

Part Two: Coverage

Rating Guide

S - Superior

E - Excellent

G - Good

A - Average

N - Needs Improvement

Average Rating: _____

A. Sections

Rating _____

- individually distinct, divided by coverage areas, such as sports, academics, student life, people, clubs, etc.
- if sections are not divided traditionally (see above), all areas of the school, including academics, clubs, people (including faculty and staff), sports, and students' outside-of-school lives, still receive coverage

B. Academics

Rating _____

- coverage highlights a variety of academic departments, and justifies inclusion because of photos and stories about interesting and dynamic projects or activities happening in those departments
- coverage includes all facets and grade levels of academics, in and outside of the classroom
- section avoids photos of students sitting apathetically in their desks or a teacher standing lecturing in the front of the room unless those type of photos serve the content of the spread (like a spread on how to stay awake in classes)
- attempts to include a wide variety of students in quotes and photos, especially those who are not already going to be pictured on several other spreads like sports or clubs.

C. Sports

Rating _____

- includes coverage of all levels of athletics, and not just varsity sports
- includes featured coverage of multiple facets of athletics, both on and off the playing field
- highlights accomplishments and/or challenges of each team that are unique to this year
- includes accurate records of teams' performances, including ratings, season records, post-season honors, and significant competitions, as well as contributing factors such as a change in level of participation, a change in coaching staff, injuries, etc.
- team photos are included somewhere in the book, but are not dominant photos on each spread; rather, they are used for reference
- if used on the team page(s), team photos are never dominant; they are big enough that each face is identifiable; group photo captions are consistent in the way they identify the name of the group and each athlete's location in the photo (L to R, or Front Row, or whatever style is chosen)
- captions not only identify the player, but say which game it was, and any significant result of the action in the photo

**commendations
and
recommendations**

Part Two: Coverage

(continued)

Average Rating: _____

Rating Guide

S - Superior

E - Excellent

G - Good

A - Average

N - Needs Improvement

- stories include coach and athlete quotes, and avoid cliches like “We’re hoping to go to state,” or “It’s a rebuilding year,” or “We’ve been working really hard...”

D. Organizations **Rating** _____

- stories do more than define the purpose of each organization; they use anecdotes from members to show how this year in this organization was different than any other year
- group photos of organization members are included somewhere in the yearbook, and though they are never dominant, they are big enough that each face is identifiable; group photo captions are consistent in the way they identify the name of the group and each student’s location in the photo (L to R, or Front Row, or whatever style is chosen)
- photos should show the preparation for/or activities of the group
- photos attempt to include organizations’ events both in and out of school
- coverage also includes reference to issues all members of any organization must deal with: time management, fundraising, etc.
- spreads attempt to include a wide variety of students in quotes and photos, especially those who are not already going to be pictured on several other spreads

E. Student Life/Activities **Rating** _____

- traditional school activities such as homecoming, graduation, prom, etc., are covered
- primary focus of this section should be on what students do when they aren’t studying, attending club meetings or activities, or playing school sports.
- photos are candid, not posed, and highlight a wide variety of activities, considering that the school’s students probably have very different lifestyles
- coverage strives for realistic coverage of teen interests, but is careful in its treatment of controversial issues
- coverage works toward creative, original perspectives of students’ lives, rather than covering the same topics every year
- photos, quotes, and graphics strive to include all types of students, and not just those who will already be in the yearbook several other places

F. People **Rating** _____

- portrait section should include infographics, candid photos and featurized

**commendations
and
recommendations**

Part Two: Coverage

(continued)

Average Rating: _____

Rating Guide

S - Superior

E - Excellent

G - Good

A - Average

N - Needs Improvement

stories that are a continuation of student life topics

- baby pictures are avoided unless specifically pertinent to a story
- student wills and senior superlatives are avoided
- faculty, staff and administration are pictured here or elsewhere in the book

G. Advertising (Optional) Rating _____

- section may include community coverage, through stories, photos, and/or graphics detailing changes in the community or showing examples of the relationship between students and the community
- advertising designs may include photos or other references to students when requested

H. Index Rating _____

- section may include eye-catching features such as stories, photos, photo polls, or graphics that supplement the reference purpose of the index
- index lists not only every student, faculty member, support staff, and administrator, but also every merchant, and major topics covered in the yearbook

I. Other Rating _____

- yearbook may include news coverage of local, state, national, and global news which help students put their year's experiences in context; this coverage may be incorporated into traditionally established sections or into special sections such as a mini-mag
- colophon specifically explains details of the production of the yearbook, including fonts, colors, etc.
- a list of yearbook staff members is included, along with their respective positions

**commendations
and
recommendations**

Part Three: Writing

Rating Guide

S - Superior

E - Excellent

G - Good

A - Average

N - Needs Improvement

Average Rating: _____

A. Stories

Rating _____

- leads are dynamic and concise, grabbing readers' attention and pulling them into the story
- quotes are anecdotal; they're "feeling" rather than "fact" quotes
- source names are carefully proofread to avoid spelling errors
- consistent style is followed, and stories are carefully edited for spelling and grammatical mistakes
- paragraphs are short to enhance readability
- topics are not mundane and overused, and coverage shows, and doesn't merely tell
- stories include answers to all key questions (who, where, why, what, when, and how), but even more importantly answer "So what?"
- stories feature quotes from all different kinds of students
- copy is written in past tense
- stories feature unique angles to necessary topics such as homecoming, dramatic productions, and team and club coverage
- students are identified by first name, last name, and grade, and faculty and administrators are identified by first and last name, and subject taught (English teacher Tom Jones); sources are identified by last name only on second reference

B. Captions

Rating _____

- captions are usually more than one sentence, and should be written in present tense when describing the photo specifically, and in past tense in subsequent sentences providing valuable supplementary or background information to the photo
- captions do not merely state the obvious (John Smith catches the football), but instead tell about what isn't in the photo, such as details about the environment in which the photo was shot, the outcome of the event in the photo, background information leading up to the picture, or anything else that adds to the story of the photo
- captions identify every recognizable person in the photo except when impractical; usually six or fewer people in a photo need to all be identified by first and last names, and by grade
- group captions are consistent in their designation of the location of a student (Front Row, Back Row, etc.)
- captions attempt to answer who, what, where, when, why, how, and so what
- gag captions are not appropriate
- photos include a complete caption with rare exceptions
- names are very carefully checked for proper spelling and accuracy in identification

**commendations
and
recommendations**

Part Three: Writing

(continued)

Average Rating: _____

Rating Guide

S - Superior

E - Excellent

G - Good

A - Average

N - Needs Improvement

C. Headlines

Rating _____

- headlines are clear summaries of the content and angle of the stories to which they refer
- headlines are carefully proofread to avoid unclear language, misspellings and grammatical errors
- all headlines have a subject and a verb, whether by themselves or in conjunction with a secondary head or readout, and are active rather than passive
- headlines are written in present tense
- language is dynamic so that headlines grab reader attention
- headline style is consistent regarding which words are capitalized

D. Index

Rating _____

- names are all carefully checked to ensure correct spelling, and different variations of the same name (Michael Jackson, Mike Jackson, and M.J.) are all combined

**commendations
and
recommendations**

Part Four: Design

Rating Guide

S - Superior

E - Excellent

G - Good

A - Average

N - Needs Improvement

Average Rating: _____

A. Basics

Rating _____

- each section should have its own distinct appearance
- layouts are designed as two-page spreads, rather than single pages, except when section must end or begin on a single page
- layouts follow consistent columnar or grid plan throughout a section, and evidence of this layout plan is obvious based on the consistent width of story columns and on the width of captions
- internal margins are consistent, and external margins are effectively utilized to frame the spread
- there is no trapped white space or trapped copy; photos remain on the inside of the spread, and copy and white space remain around the outside; white space may sometimes appear in the middle of the spread if effective to the spread design
- every spread strives for an eyeline, a horizontal imaginary line of internal margin which provides an anchor line above and below which all elements are placed; this eyeline is not in the exact center of the spread

B. Use of Photos

Rating _____

- every spread has a dominant photo that is at least twice as large as any other photo
- inside spreads (not division spreads) typically should have 5 or more photos, with varied shapes (horizontal or vertical)
- subjects of photos are not looking off the page, but rather into the story or spread
- panel photos should be head and shoulder shots, where the face is at least 50% of the photo
- it is easy to identify which captions go with which pictures
- panel photo pages avoid irregular shapes

C. Graphics

Rating _____

- graphics are used effectively to add additional information or student opinion to coverage of a spread, but do not overpower the spread, and are consistent within each section
- if spot color or grey screens are used, their use is effective and complementary to the purpose of the spread
- white space is used as an effective graphic element to guide reader's attention to the focus of the spread
- staffs are not afraid to experiment with designs they've seen in magazines or in other sources, but they adapt these designs to suit their coverage and thematic goals

**commendations
and
recommendations**

Part Four: Design

(continued)

Average Rating: _____

Rating Guide

S - Superior

E - Excellent

G - Good

A - Average

N - Needs Improvement

D. Continuity

Rating _____

- continuous elements are used consistently and effectively; examples include folio treatment, body and caption copy font and point size, use of logos, etc.
- continuous elements support theme, and are not intrusive to the spread's design

E. Typography

Rating _____

- body and caption typeface and size should remain consistent throughout the entire section
- staff members are careful not to mix too many typefaces on the same spread; usually two other typefaces in addition to the body copy is the limit
- spreads make good use of reader aids like pulled quotes, large initial letters, and subheads
- type can be used as a graphic element, but should never be a distraction
- headline size is relative to size of stories, and is not the dominant graphic on the page, nor do it overwhelm the story
- graphic treatment of headlines remains consistent throughout the entire section, and enhances readability and reader interest

F. Advertising (Optional)

Rating _____

- advertising borders are not distracting and/or overwhelming; instead, they enhance the message of the ad
- ads do not use more than two typefaces
- ads are designed to appeal to a teenage audience, and include appropriate creative slogans meant to catch students' attention
- ads may make use of student photos to promote the merchant
- ads use graphics effectively, and ensure that they highlight the purpose of the ad, rather than distract from it
- internal margins are consistent, and external margins are effectively utilized to frame the spread
- ads for similar businesses (like florists or banks) are not placed next to each other, and preferably not even on the same spread, unless there is no way to avoid it (i.e. only one spread of ads, etc.)
- camera-ready ads from businesses are run without distortion

**commendations
and
recommendations**

Part Five: Photography

Rating Guide

S - Superior

E - Excellent

G - Good

A - Average

N - Needs Improvement

Average Rating:

A. Technical Quality

Rating ____

- photos have appropriate contrast, where whites are not gray, and there is a definition variation of gradations between gray and black
- photos are free of water spots, dust specks, scratches, and other flaws
- photos are in focus, and make good use of depth-of-field
- photos are not printed backwards so that numbers or letters are reversed
- photos are not grainy or fuzzy because they were enlarged too much or were shot with the wrong lens
- lighting is correct, and photographer did not try to shoot into the sun or into a window
- photos are not pixelated due to inappropriate resolution
- non-traditional treatment of photos, such as cut-out backgrounds, vignettes, ghosting, etc., is effective

B. Content

Rating ____

- photos are not posed, and do not include subjects who are looking at the camera, except when appropriate
- photos strive to capture emotion, especially surprise, laughter, determination, or sadness
- sports photos include key elements — the ball, the racket, the golf club, etc.
- no person is cropped at major joints such as the elbow or knee, thus leading some to assume the person may be missing that body part
- photos are cropped so that excessive ground or sky, as well as any other unnecessary background distraction, is eliminated
- photographers strive for unique, creative photographic angles, including shooting from above the subject to lying on the floor shooting up at the subject
- photographers shoot so that photos appear close-up, and avoid printing photos where subjects are merely unidentifiable blobs (like in soccer or football)

**commendations
and
recommendations**

Judge's Final Comments

Judge's Signature

Final Rating

- Each division in each section is rated as Superior (5 points), Excellent (4 points), Good (3 points), Average (2 points) or Needs Improvement (1 point).
- Judges will include comments relevant to each division and therefore each section in the space on the pages provided. In addition, they will include supplementary comments explaining their overall impressions.
- Publications will, based on the rankings of each section, be awarded one of the following class ratings:
 - Cornhusker (Superior — 23-25 points)
 - Award of Distinction (Excellent — 18-22 points)
 - Award of Merit (Good — 13-17 points)
- If a publication receives no official rating, the judge will provide specific recommendations along with a detailed evaluation.

Part One: Concept	Rating _____
Part Two: Coverage	Rating _____
Part Three: Writing	Rating _____
Part Four: Design	Rating _____
Part Five: Photography	Rating _____

_____ **Cornhusker**
_____ **Award of Distinction**
_____ **Award of Merit**

Golden Kernel Awards:



Name of School: _____

Classification: (circle one) A1 A2 B C D