



2016 Better Newspapers Contest

Now Accepting Entries

ABOUT THE BNC

California has long been known for great journalism. The CNPA Better Newspapers Contest (BNC) is the opportunity for publishers and editors to promote excellence in journalism and recognize their staffs' diligent work to inform and enlighten the community through reporting, design and photojournalism in print and digital media.

The prestigious awards ceremony is held in conjunction with CNPA's annual press summit.

Award-winning members earn bragging rights for promoting their publications. Nearly 4,000 BNC entries are received each year.

CONTEST PERIOD

Entry publication dates must be between Jan. 1, 2016, and Dec. 31, 2016.

ENTRY DEADLINE

Monday, Jan. 16, 2017

ELIGIBILITY

The competition is open to all CNPA-member newspapers in good standing.

JUDGING

Each daily newspaper entrant is required to have at least two professionals from their newspaper participate as a BNC judge online. Weeklies are required to have one participating judge. Preliminary judging will be held in January and February 2016. The final Blue Ribbon judging will be held in March 2016.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

First- and second-place Blue Ribbon winners and finalists will be notified in late March 2016. First and second place will be announced at the BNC Awards Luncheon on Saturday, May 20, 2017, during CNPA's Annual Press Summit at the Loews Santa Monica Beach Hotel in Santa Monica.

Winner plaques will be mailed directly to the newspaper, while first-place General Excellence plaques will be presented at the awards luncheon.

CONTEST QUESTIONS

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ENTRY RULES

Entries must be produced by entrants' staff or regular contributors. Identical entry material may not be submitted in two different categories; however, parts of one entry can represent

entry material submitted in a different category. Entries that have appeared in multiple papers must be submitted only by the highest-circulation newspaper in which they appeared.

A single-subject entry such as Best Photo, Best Writing or Best Sports Story that appeared in several newspapers may be submitted by the newspaper entrant whose dedicated staff member produced the entry, regardless of whether this entrant is the highest-circulation entrant in which it appeared. When this occurs, the entrant must be sure its entry is a product of its own staff resources.

CHOOSING A DIVISION

Each newspaper entrant must choose one circulation division in which all of its entries will compete. The term "circulation" refers to the net number of free and/or paid copies distributed, including online subscriptions, by the issue or edition newspaper entrant.

Use circulation figures closest to July 1, 2016. Do not count any SHOPPER or TMC if entrant is 100% paid.

DAILY DIVISIONS

Dailies (5+ issues per week) shall choose a circulation division below based on the next number of copies that represent an average weekday issue closest to July 1, 2016.

Circulation division	Cost per entry
A. 150,001 & above	\$44 each
B. 35,001 — 150,000	\$38 each
C. 15,001 — 35,000	\$32 each
D. 15,000 & under	\$26 each

WEEKLY DIVISIONS

Weeklies producing one issue per week shall choose a division based on the net number of copies an average issue circulated closest to July 1, 2016.

Weeklies producing 2-4 issues per week shall choose a division based on the sum of the net number of copies of their highest-circulation issue plus an amount that represents 25% of the total number of copies from all other issues circulated that same week.

Circulation division	Cost per entry
A. 25,001 & above	\$32 each
B. 11,001 — 25,000	\$28 each
C. 4,301 — 11,000	\$24 each
D. 4,300 & under	\$20 each



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1. Best Investigative Reporting

(Allows up to 3 entries)

Submit a story that focuses on one in-depth investigative story/series. Entry should have required extensive research, and an above average amount of interviewing, documentation and background research. Attach a cover letter summarizing any obstacles that staff overcame in digging out facts and sifting through complexities to render the coverage meaningful, complete and balanced. Open to work published in print or online.

Judging considerations: Effective organization of facts; thorough support and attribution; thoroughness of investigation, initiative, enterprise and quality of writing.

2. Environmental Reporting

(Allows up to 3 entries)

Submit a story or a series from one subject about any environmental or land-use issue. Open to work published in print or online.

Judging considerations: Comprehensiveness of coverage, quality of writing; selection of material, balanced reporting; local appeal; photography, graphics and headlines.

3. Environmental Reporting: Drought/Fire

(Allows up to 3 entries)

Submit a story or a series focusing on the recent drought or wildland fires that may or may not have been related to the drought. Open to work published in print or online.

Judging considerations: Comprehensiveness of coverage, quality of writing; selection of material, balanced reporting; local appeal; photography, graphics and headlines.

4. Agricultural Reporting

(Allows up to 3 entries)

Submit a story or a series from one subject about any agricultural or aquacultural issue, development or practice. Open to work published in print or online.

Judging considerations: Comprehensiveness of coverage, quality of writing; selection of material, balanced reporting; local appeal; photography, graphics and headlines.

5. Enterprise News Story or Series

(Allows up to 3 entries)

Submit a proactive story or series that is not directly based on a news event and that covers a topic or issue in a new and creative way. Series are not required to appear in consecutive issues and do not have to be labeled as a series.

Judging considerations: Coverage should be comprehensive and enlightening, while demonstrating an undertaking of risk,

effort and difficulty; quality of writing; selection of material, balanced reporting; local appeal; photography, graphics and headlines.

6. Best Writing

(Allows up to 3 entries)

Submit a single article that is thought to be your newspaper's best example of excellent writing. Open to work published in print or online.

Judging considerations: Effective use of language, clarity and organization; dramatic effect; reader appeal.

7. Profile Feature Story

(Allows up to 3 entries)

Submit a personality sketch of an individual or group of interest to the community. May include a sports profile feature. Open to work published in print or online.

Judging considerations: Quality of writing, clarity, organization, effective use of language; originality, relevance, news value; graphic presentation, headlines, photos.

8. Non-Profile Feature Story

(Allows up to 3 entries)

Submit an article that provides information supplementing a news or sports story, usually by adding the human element behind a news event or giving background through interpretation or explanation. The entry should be issue, trend or activity oriented and be of interest to the community. Profile articles may not be entered in this category. May include a sports feature. Open to work published in print or online.

Judging considerations: Quality of writing, clarity, organization, effective use of language; originality, relevance, news value; graphic presentation, headlines, photos.

9. Lifestyle Coverage

(Allows a single entry)

Submit two consecutive Lifestyle sections published within the contest period.

Judging considerations: Originality and local appeal; graphic design; breadth of coverage and quality of writing (stories and headlines).

10. Best Sports Game Story

(Allows up to 3 entries)

A news story written about a sports event or anything newsworthy that takes place on the field of play during a sports event. Does not include a sports feature or sports column. Sports opinion stories may be entered in the opinion story category; sports columns may be entered into the column writ-



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ing category; sports features may be entered into the feature story category; and sports profiles may be entered into the profile feature story category. Open to work published in print or online.

Judging considerations: Quality of writing, clarity, organization, effective use of language; originality, relevance, news value; graphic presentation; headlines, photos.

11. Sports Feature Story

(Allows up to 3 entries)

Submit a single sports story. Open to work published in print or online.

Judging considerations: Quality of writing, clarity, organization, effective use of language; originality, relevance, news value; graphic presentation; headlines, photos.

12. Best Editorial Comment

(Allows up to 3 entries)

Submit a single editorial. Open to work published in print or online.

Judging considerations: Persuasiveness, originality; constructiveness, individual thinking; significance of content and quality of writing.

13. Best Columns

(Allows up to 3 entries)

A single entry consists of TWO opinion stories, other than editorials, written by a single author or single writing team. May include humor and sports columns. Open to work published in print or online.

Judging considerations: Originality and quality of writing; creativity; reader appeal.

14. Arts & Entertainment Coverage

(Allows a single entry)

Submit two consecutive Arts & Entertainment sections published within the contest period. Magazines or guides appearing in the same A&E issues may accompany your regularly published sections.

Daily: All circulation divisions in effect.

Weekly: All weeklies will compete for one first- and one second place award.

Judging considerations: Graphic design; comprehensiveness of coverage and event listings; quality of writing (stories & headlines); local appeal and ease of use.

15. Coverage of Local Government

(Allows up to 3 entries)

Submit a story or a series on one subject about local or state

government news. Open to work published in print or online.

Judging considerations: Thoroughness of reporting, quality of writing, news depth; local appeal; photography, graphics, headlines.

16. Coverage of Business News

(Allows up to 3 entries)

Submit a story or a series from one subject that focuses on business, financial or economic news. Open to work published in print or online.

Judging considerations: Comprehensiveness and selection of material; local appeal; quality of writing (stories and headlines); graphic design, headlines (charts, tables, etc.).

17. Coverage of Education

(Allows up to 3 entries)

Submit a story or a series from one subject that focuses on local education, school or youth news. Open to work published in print or online.

Judging considerations: Comprehensiveness of coverage, quality of writing; local appeal; selection of material; balanced reporting.

18. Best Sports Page or Section

(Allows a single entry)

Submit two consecutive and complete sports sections or pages published within the contest period.

Daily: All circulation divisions in effect.

Weekly: Combined divisions: A and B; C and D

Judging considerations: Layout, graphic design; selection of material; local appeal, quality of writing (stories and headlines); photography.

19. Breaking News

(Allows up to 3 entries)

Submit coverage of a single breaking news event. Open to work published in print and online.

Judging considerations: Quality of coverage and effective use of language; effective use of headlines, photos, graphics; organization.

20. Special Section

(Allows a single entry)

Special sections (excludes sports sections) that are not a regular part of the newspaper or produced special editions are all eligible. Section must have been distributed with the newspaper. Stand-alone publications not distributed as part of the newspaper are not eligible.

Judging considerations: Worthiness of purpose; quality of



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writing, usefulness of information; graphic design, layout, use of photos; originality of concept.

21. Special Sports Section

(Allows a single entry)

Special Sports sections are sections that are not a regular part of the newspaper or produced more often than on a monthly basis. They address a sports theme. ROP sections, inserts, niche publications and special editions are all eligible. Section must have been distributed with the newspaper. Stand-alone publications not distributed as part of the newspaper are not eligible.

Judging considerations: Worthiness of purpose; quality of writing, usefulness of information; graphic design, layout, use of photos; originality of concept.

22. Informational Graphic

(Allows up to 3 entries)

Charted information, graphs, diagrams or maps using illustration or photography. May be a stand-alone informational graphic.

Judging considerations: Quality of artwork; effectiveness in informing the reader; organization and clarity of message; effective use of color.

23. Best Front Page: Broadsheet

(Allows a single entry)

Submit **ANY THREE** complete front pages. Pages do not need to be from consecutive issues.

Daily: All circulation divisions in effect.

Weekly: Combined divisions: A and B; C and D

Judging considerations: Layout and news selection; quality of story and headline writing; use of photography and graphic design.

24. Best Front Page: Tabloid

(Allows a single entry)

Submit **ANY THREE** complete front pages. Pages do not need to be from consecutive issues.

Judging considerations: Layout and news selection; quality of story and headline writing; use of photography and graphic design.

25. Inside Page Layout & Design: Broadsheet

(Allows a single entry)

Submit **ANY THREE** complete inside pages. Pages do not need to be from consecutive issues but all need to be from different editions.

Daily: All divisions in effect.

Weekly: Combined divisions: A and B; C and D

Judging considerations: Layout and consistency throughout the paper; quality of story and headline writing; effective use of photography and graphic design; effective use of color and/or B/W.

26. Inside Page Layout & Design: Tabloid

(Allows a single entry)

Submit **ANY THREE** complete inside pages. Pages do not need to be from consecutive issues but all need to be from different editions.

Judging considerations: Layout and consistency throughout the paper; quality of story and headline writing; effective use of photography and graphic design; effective use of color and/or B/W.

27. Photo Illustration

(Allows up to 5 entries)

Submit a single photo illustration that appeared in print or online. A contrived photographic illustration (not an informational graphic) that depicts a concept. It can be assembled either electronically or with traditional darkroom techniques and can include montage, double exposure and other techniques to manipulate the image. May be a set-up or arranged photo and use costumes and props. Open to work published in print or online.

Judging considerations: Quality of artwork; effectiveness in informing the reader; organization and clarity of message; effective use of color.

28. Best Editorial Cartoon

(Allows up to 5 entries)

Submit a single editorial cartoon. Include an explanatory statement if necessary. Open to work published in print or online.

Daily: All circulation divisions in effect.

Weekly: All weekly newspapers will compete for one first- and one second-place award.

Judging considerations: Quality of artwork; effectiveness in handling the subject matter; clarity of message; humor.

29. Illustration

(Allows up to 5 entries)

Submit a single illustration. Artwork used in lieu of photographs, with intent to enhance any news, feature, sports or opinion article. May not include an informational graphic, photo illustration or editorial cartoon. Open to work published in print or online.

Judging considerations: Quality of artwork; effectiveness in informing the reader; organization and clarity of message; effective use of color.



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30. News Photo

(Allows up to 5 entries)

Submit a single general or breaking news photo. Open to work published in print or online.

Judging considerations: Visual impact and technical quality.

31. Feature Photo

(Allows up to 5 entries)

A feature photo differs from a news photo in that the photographer had some control of the setting and/or circumstances under which the photo was taken; may either illustrate a story or be used as a stand-alone. The photographer may have some control of the setting in which the photo is taken, but the photo may not be set up, unless it's a portrait. The photo should have good technical quality and include interesting light, compelling content and use of creative technique (blur, depth of field, panning, etc.). The photo should be timeless in nature, have universal appeal and human interest, and capture the moment. Open to work published in print or online.

Judging considerations: Visual impact; storytelling; technical quality.

32. Sports Feature Photo

(Allows up to 5 entries)

A sports photo that provides information supplementing a sports story, usually by adding the human element behind a news event or giving background through interpretation or explanation. The photographer may have some control of the setting in which the photo is taken, but the photo may not be set up, unless it's a portrait. A sports photo of post-game or sideline action may be included in this category. Open to work published in print or online.

Judging considerations: Visual impact; storytelling; technical quality.

33. Sports Action Photo

(Allows up to 5 entries)

Submit photo taken of activity on the field of play. The photo should have good technical quality and include interesting lighting, compelling content or creative technique. May not include photos of post-game or sideline action. Set-up photos may not be entered. Open to work published in print or online.

Judging considerations: Visual impact; storytelling; technical quality.

34. Online Photo Story/Essay

(Allows up to 3 entries)

A set of three or more photos presented as an electronic self-

running or interactive presentation designed to tell a story. The presentation may include sound or animation, but MAY NOT contain video; presentations containing video should be entered in the Video Journalism category.

The self-running or interactive presentation may be presented in Flash, SoundSlides, QuickTime video, Real Media, Windows Media or JAVA format. If the entry requires a special plug-in to be viewed, it must be supported by both Mac and PC browsers, and free plug-ins must be available.

Judging considerations: Quality of photos and effectiveness of theme; storytelling or technical quality.

35. Photo Story/Essay

(Allows up to 5 entries)

A grouping of three or more printed photos that visually tell a story and/or make a point without the help of an accompanying story. Any text block that runs with the photo story should be no more than 250 words. Double truck pages may be submitted as one entry. Online photos are not eligible to be entered into this category. Enter them in the Online Photo Story-Essay category instead.

Judging considerations: Quality of photos and effectiveness of theme; storytelling or technical quality.

36. Artistic Photo

(Allows up to 5 entries)

Submit a single artistic photo. Photo can be of individuals, building structures, scenery or landscape and should have an inspirational value. Open to work published in print or online.

Judging considerations: Visual impact; storytelling; technical quality; inspirational factor.

37. Video Journalism

(Allows 1 entry)

A journalistic video shot and edited specifically for the Web. An entry in this category may be, but is not limited to, any of the following: news, news feature, feature, sports news or sports feature. A play-by-play game story may not be entered in this category.

The entry MUST include video; if it does not include video it will be disqualified. The entry may include still shots but they are not required. The entry may not include copyrighted material, including audio, from another source without written permission from the copyright holder. The video may be presented in Flash, QuickTime or Windows Media Format. Entries must be no more than five minutes long.

Judging considerations: Quality of photos and effectiveness of theme; storytelling or technical quality.



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38. Online General Excellence

(Allows a single entry)

The Online Journalism General Excellence contest is designed to award outstanding efforts among members in the area of electronic and other new media journalistic efforts.

A “digital edition” only cannot be entered as this award is for the publication’s total digital presence.

Criteria for judging will be use of interface, site organization, coverage and content, and use of graphics/multimedia.

Judging considerations: General news coverage, local and community news coverage, breadth of coverage, story selection; editorial excellence, quality of writing, news judgment;

graphic excellence (readability, makeup, art reproduction, advertising, presentation and appearance); editorial pages.

39. General Excellence

(Allows a single entry)

Submit two complete, consecutive issues that were published in March or September 2016.

Judging considerations: General news coverage, local and community news coverage, breadth of coverage, story selection; editorial excellence, quality of writing, news judgment; graphic excellence (readability, makeup, art reproduction, advertising, presentation and appearance); editorial pages.

Judging Requirements for Each Newspaper

Judging

Each daily newspaper entrant is required to have at least two professionals from its newspaper participate as BNC judges. Weeklies are required to have one participating judge for each of their newspaper entrants. We no longer excuse newspapers from participating in contest judging due to “hardship.”

Online Judges

There are 39 categories in the 2016 BNC. All entries in all categories are uploaded to the BNC site:

www.newspapercontest.com/cnpa/newspaper

Judges will receive by email an assignment of one or more categories to judge.

Judging Sign-up

Judges are to sign up their participation in the judging at:

cnpa.formstack.com/forms/bnc

Confirmations

Judging confirmations, assignments and instructions will be emailed to all online judges in late January 2017. The official entrant contact will also be emailed a copy of the assignments.

Judging Deadlines

Online judging assignments must be completed by end of business on Friday, Feb. 17, 2017.

Questions?

Contact Simon Birch at CNPA, 916-288-6010 or simon@cnpa.com.



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Entry Instructions

How to Enter

All entries for 2016 contests are uploaded to the CNPA Contest site.

Payment is made through the BNC entry site. Please follow the entry steps below and if you have any questions, contact Simon Birch at 916-288-6010 or simon@cnpa.com.

Step by Step Instructions to Enter

1. Go to:
www.newspapercontest.com/cnpa/newspaper
Select "Register", and enter your information as required. Register on the contest website using your email address. You will receive a confirmation email, which you will need to complete registration. Association Code is "CNPA"
2. Login (or use the link above). You will see a page showing any entries you have already submitted. Complete rules for both advertising and editorial contests are available above (click links). Some browsers, such as Safari, will open the rules in a new window; others will require you to download the PDF file to your computer.
3. Click on the "Add New Entry" link.
4. On this page, select your newspaper name. A lot of information will autofill. If that information is incorrect, please call Simon Birch at 916-288-6010. Your Division will be selected for you based on your circulation. Fill in the preparer's name.
5. Select the contest class. These are drop-down menus for your convenience. This field will clear each time you save an entry, so you must select a class for each new entry. When you select the class, special instructions will appear below it.
6. If necessary, provide an explanation of your entry. The explanation/cutline box is limited to 3,000 characters. It's a good idea to write your explanation in another program, such as Word, and copy/paste into the explanation box. If a URL is required, fill in the URL box; there is no need to type "http://".
7. Include the name of the entry. If uploading full-page PDF files, it will be helpful if the entry name matches the headline on the page so the judges can find it easily. If the judges cannot tell what is to be judged, the entry may be discarded. Please upload pdfs that have been reduced in size- large files may be a problem for the judges.
8. Include the name of the person or people who should be credited for any award. This is generally the writer, reporter, photographer, graphic artist, cartoonist, etc. It is not necessarily the name of the person submitting the entry but will be the people to receive credit — more than four people should be credited as Staff.
9. Add your file or files. You can drag and drop files or use the "Add files" button to navigate your files. Generally, files should be in PDF format except photos, which should be in high-resolution JPG format. Other files and URLs may be acceptable as noted in the special instructions. Upload as many files as are necessary to complete your entry but refer to the special instructions for any limitations.
10. When you have completed your submission, click the "Save" button. If you click the "Back to list" button, you will lose the entry you just completed. After clicking "Save," you will be directed back to the list of your entries.
11. To submit another entry, click "Add New Entry." As long as you have not logged out of the system, your newspaper name will still be in place and you can simply start at Step 6 again. You may log out and log back in later to continue adding entries. You will need to select your newspaper name each time you log in.
12. If you have finished submitting entries, please review the list. You may not change an entry, but you may delete an entry and resubmit it.