

## Bulletin Editor and Author Competition Tips for SCFMS Editors, Page 1 of 2

### WHAT ARE JUDGES LOOKING FOR?

With the announcement of the 2016 Editor and Author Contest, editors should begin scouring the 2015 newsletters for their strongest entries, but what constitutes a "strong entry" and what, exactly, will judges be looking for?

A great place to begin is with AFMS Contest page: <http://www.amfed.org/editor/BEAC/contest.htm>  
(We have their guidelines reposted on our SCFMS contest page)

But particularly within the "fillable score sheets" available at the following links:

<http://www.amfed.org/editor/BEAC/Forms/FillableBulletins.pdf>  
<http://www.amfed.org/editor/BEAC/Forms/FillableAdultArticles.pdf>  
<http://www.amfed.org/editor/BEAC/Forms/FillableAdultArticlesAdv.pdf>  
<http://www.amfed.org/editor/BEAC/Forms/FillableJuniorUnder12Articles.pdf>  
<http://www.amfed.org/editor/BEAC/Forms/FillableJunior12to17Articles.pdf>  
<http://www.amfed.org/editor/BEAC/Forms/FillableAdultPoetry.pdf>  
<http://www.amfed.org/editor/BEAC/Forms/FillableJuniorPoetry.pdf>  
<http://www.amfed.org/editor/BEAC/Forms/FillableFeatures.pdf>  
<http://www.amfed.org/editor/BEAC/Forms/FillableSpecPublications.pdf>

Because our South Central Federation will use the same categories and scoring system as the AFMS, editors will know EXACTLY what items should be included in their entries to remain competitive in Regional and National levels. The score sheets can help "guesstimate" the deductions to expect if required items are absent. As former AFMS BEAC Chairman, Linda Jaeger, phrased it, "It seems like the federations that use the same guidelines & score sheets as AFMS tend to do better in the AFMS contest --- no real mystery there!" I would also recommend that editors familiarize themselves with the "Contest Specific Guidelines" and use the category breakdowns to encourage and fuel club members with submission ideas.

The Contest Specific Guidelines can be found at the following links:

<http://www.amfed.org/editor/BEAC/Forms/GenGuidelinesBulletinsAndArticles.pdf>  
<http://www.amfed.org/editor/BEAC/Forms/SpecificGuidelinesBulletins.pdf>  
<http://www.amfed.org/editor/BEAC/Forms/SpecificGuidelinesAdultArticlesAndFeatures.pdf>  
<http://www.amfed.org/editor/BEAC/Forms/SpecificGuidelinesJrArticles.pdf>  
<http://www.amfed.org/editor/BEAC/Forms/SpecificGuidelinesAdultAndJrPoetry.pdf>  
<http://www.amfed.org/editor/BEAC/Forms/SpecificGuidelinesSpecPublic.pdf>

Another yardstick for measuring how submissions compare to "the competition" can be found online. The SCFMS and AFMS provide links to other regions on their websites, and a number of clubs digitally archive their publications. Study what other editors have done successfully. Make notes and reminders of elements that could be incorporated into your club's newsletters as they build and improve. Remember, another editor's layouts should be used as reference only! Great editors shouldn't appropriate another editor's designs, but adapt what is appealing and make it your own. Judges will be on the lookout for something different and above the rest, so try putting a new spin on an old idea and explore the possibilities!

Talk to past and current editors from other clubs about what worked and didn't work in previous competitions, and don't be afraid to scour the directories and approach someone- even if you haven't been formally introduced. "Rock folk" are some of the friendliest people on the planet! In my experience, it takes about ten seconds to establish an instant rapport. Share your name and club affiliation, then prepare to put aside an hour discussing anything other than the reason for your call! Most are warm, generous with their time and knowledge, and willing to offer valuable insight from their own experience that will save both time and headaches.

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The following items are from the current AFMS Bulletin Editor's Contest Guidelines at <http://www.amfed.org/editor/BEAC/Forms/SpecificGuidelinesBulletins.pdf> and specific to the criteria judges will use when scoring bulletin entries:

- neat and attractive
- bulletin title, club name, city, state, publication date on cover or front page AND on every page
- return address on outside cover
- editor's name & contact information
- club officers, club address or contact info, dues, purpose, club federation
- date, time, place of regular meeting
- headings, margins, white space, spacing good
- orderly & interesting arrangement of subjects
- spelling & grammar acceptable
- all articles credited to writers/publications
- info/articles appear correct
- good use of illustrations
- variety of material that fulfills the needs of this club
- no copyright violations
- programs announced, previous program reviewed
- highlights of minutes of last club meeting
- committee/board meeting reports, president's message
- field trips, workshops/classes, community/federation projects announced, reported
- coming events or calendar of club activities
- events/shows/news of other clubs
- news of members
- American Federation news
- club's Regional Federation news
- articles:
  - educational, hobby-related
  - variety of hints & tips, safety info, book reviews, humor, etc. as appropriate to your club
  - original articles & items submitted by club members
  - articles from exchange bulletins and/or other sources

I hope this information helps each of you as the deadline for our regional contest approaches, and additionally as you look forward to what can be implemented within your club bulletins with the contest in mind.

As always, please call or email if there are any questions or concerns.  
Good luck to everyone!

Kimberly J Brannon  
SCFMS BEAC, SCFMS Exec. Secretary  
225 620 5174  
kimberlyarts@hotmail.com