

Why Enter the Bulletin Editors Contest?

The following is excerpted and revised from a “Quick Tips for Editors” column I wrote for the AFMS Newsletter in 2010, when I was the AFMS Bulletin Editors Advisory Chair. I have been an editor for our local club, the RMFMS Club Publications Chair, and the AFMS BEAC. I am currently doing a second stint as the RMFMS Club Publications Chair. ---Linda Jaeger (2019)

Let me take a moment to address a comment I received at the [2010 AFMS] breakfast. The comment was: *“Many editors do not enter the contest because they feel like they are nominating themselves for an award.”*

First – Our jobs as editors are to be good communicators within our clubs and federations. This is a TEAM effort. When we enter our bulletins or articles/features/poems/photos/drawings in a contest we are entering our TEAM in the contest. Think about any school-sponsored or competitive sports team. They enter plenty of contests. Entering does not guarantee them (or us) an award, but *it does provide experience and allows us to learn how to improve!* Remember good communication? Comments from qualified judges can give us additional perspective and make our communication skills even better.

Second – *This is how the RMFMS contest works:* Editors from RMFMS member clubs enter their two best bulletin issues, their best articles, etc. in the RMFMS contest. We have 14 categories. Bulletins must be entered in the category that fits the number of pages. There are four different bulletin sizes. Each author, poet, artist, or photographer may have only one entry in each of the remaining 10 categories. The exception is the Special Publications category, in which authors may have multiple entries. After all entries have been judged, awards are presented at the Breakfast with the Editors & Web Masters during the annual RMFMS Show & Convention. There are no ties in the top five. Each first-place winner receives a trophy. The top five entries in each category receive a ribbon. All entries receive a certificate. Then the top three winners from each category are forwarded to the AFMS contest. (RMFMS has one category, Photo Collage, that AFMS does not have.)

Third – This is how the AFMS contest works: Club editors enter their best bulletin issues, best articles, etc. in their regional contests. There are seven regional federations (EFMLS, MWF, SFMS, **RMFMS**, SCFMS, CFMS, and NFMS). The top three winners in each category of each regional federation’s contest are entered in the AFMS contest. We have 13 different categories to cover all the methods of written communication we might use in our bulletins. After these have been judged, we present trophies and badges to the top three in each category and a certificate to every entry. This happens at the AFMS Breakfast with Editors and Web Masters. You also receive a score sheet and judges’ comments for each entry (unless something has gone awry!). **Again** – *entering the contest is NOT nominating yourself for an award. It is an effort to improve our communication skills and strengthen the glue that holds our organizations together.*

Fourth – Sharing what we do best with other editors and their clubs is something else that strengthens the glue holding us together. Every year AFMS Winning Articles are forwarded to the **SCRIBE** (Special Congress Representing Involved Bulletin Editors) archives. If editors do not enter their team’s “best stuff” in the regional Editor’s Contest, the rest of us never get to see it (unless we just happen to exchange bulletins with them). So, c’mon and share!

Fifth – Everyone deserves a “pat on the back” or an “atta boy” for things done well. As a teacher and as the person who helps present these awards, I can tell you *it gives me GREAT pleasure to see someone who is excited to receive an award that tells everyone they have done something worth noticing!*

Have I changed your mind? Do enter the RMFMS Bulletin Editors Contest. **Communicate. Learn. Improve. Share!**

And by the way – AFMS has approximately 640 local clubs as members with about 52,000 people who belong to those clubs. Again, I say, “I wanna see your stuff, too!”