

Youth Content

G E T T I N G
S T A R T E D

A publication of the Newspaper Association of America® Foundation



Youth Content:

GETTING STARTED

Perhaps you have been hired to infuse youth content into your newspaper and you're in a panic.

Perhaps you are taking over an established youth section from a seasoned youth editor, and you are in awe of what awaits you.

Or, perhaps you are a publisher wondering if producing quality youth content is possible . . . or profitable.

In any case, after reading this practical guide, you will understand the major elements of putting a quality youth content program in place.

Youth Content: Getting Started offers advice from current and former youth editors throughout the United States—professionals who have been there, done that.

It outlines the many ways that newspapers “do” youth content. It

presents a variety of approaches—not only what works, but what doesn't. We invite you to pick and choose from what is offered here and tailor a program to fit your own situation.

Don't be put off by the size of this handbook. It is thick because we have covered all major aspects of youth content. And it is good reading.

We appreciate the opportunity to work with you. If we have not talked to you via telephone, please call. We answer questions about youth content all day, every working day. Youth content is one of the NAA Foundation's most important programs. We are here to serve you and help make your success a reality.

For further information contact NAA Foundation staff at (703) 902-1729 or check our Web site,

www.naa.org/foundation/yea/

A Note to Publishers And Youth Editors

First things first—get connected

Before doing anything else to start or expand your youth content program, contact the NAA Foundation and the Youth Editorial Alliance, a nationwide organization whose members produce content for young readers every working day.

In the front pocket of this binder is a copy of the most recent *Foundation Update* magazine, which includes articles about youth content. You'll find information on how to contact YEA and the NAA Foundation in there.

Join YEA (it's free!), join its lively e-forum and sign up for the next YEA conference. Through the "Ambassadors to the Future" program, have a trained youth editor come to your newspaper (at very little expense) to help you get started. Or if you live in the South, attend a youth content session

through the Southern Newspaper Publishers Association Foundation's "Traveling Campus."

Youth editors are a cohesive and growing group of professionals eager to help. In addition to conferences and workshops, the NAA Foundation, YEA and most regional and state committees have a variety of newsletters, Web sites and other services and materials available to make a youth editor's job easier, more fun and more effective.



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Building your youth content program

Why should newspapers target youth? - A message for your publisher

Daily newspapers that invest in teenagers are finding the rewards rich and varied. Increased readership is only the beginning.

Student writers go on to colleges where they often become editors of their college newspapers. Many have returned to newsrooms as interns and, later, as full-time hires, including many minority journalists.

Youth sections serve as a demanding training ground for senior editors. Former youth editors are working at newspapers today in the positions of managing editor, metro editor, education editor, weekend magazine editor, features editor and recruiter.

On the financial side, youth sections can and do bring in new revenue to offset production costs.

Outside the newsroom, youth content can help build better citizens. “The Age of Indifference,” a recent study by the Times Mirror Center for People and the Press, found that young Americans know less and care less about news and public affairs than any other generation in the past 50 years. Sections written by local youth encourage young people to become better citizens by providing information and a forum to develop, test and strengthen their own ideas and opinions.



The Edge, The Roanoke (Va.) Times

Growing your own talent

The most common reasons newspapers start youth sections are to build a younger audience, to give young people a forum of expression and/or to tap a new source of advertising revenue.

More and more, however, newspapers are finding that youth sections are an ideal way to nurture future journalists from diverse backgrounds.

Luis Sanchez, for example, participated in the teen program operated by the Tribune Chronicle in Warren, Ohio, while in high school. At the time, he wasn't even thinking about journalism as a career.

After his two-year stint on the Page One staff, he went on to study photojournalism at Kent State University. His internships included stints with NAA, the Tribune Chronicle, the Cincinnati Enquirer, the Philadelphia Inquirer, the Akron Beacon-Journal and The Atlanta Journal-Constitution. Today, he works as a photojournalist for The Santa Fe New Mexican.

“If I hadn’t been involved in the teen page, I probably wouldn’t have changed my major from physics to photojournalism,” Sanchez said. “The teen page helped me build a really solid foundation from which to grow as a journalist.”

Some other success stories:

As a ninth-grader, **Leah Friedman** quit her high school newspaper staff because of censorship issues and started writing for The Virginian-Pilot’s Teenology page (now called 757). She continued to work for the paper while majoring in anthropology at the University of Virginia.

Right out of college, she landed an internship at National Public Radio that led to a stint in NPR’s public relations department. She then took a job at the Reston (Va.) Times, where she started a teen program while working as a general news reporter. Friedman moved on to the State Journal-Register in Springfield, Ill., where she served as a feature writer and editor of The Voice, the paper’s teen section, as well as an education reporter.

“I got into a newsroom much sooner than my college counterparts,” she said. “I think it also helped my college portfolio. It set me apart from all the other students because I had clips from a real newspaper and not just the school paper. And I had an editor [Lorraine Eaton] to call on the whole way through my career. I think she has gotten me just about every job I’ve had.”

Brandi Kidd Jamerson planned to study physical therapy after graduating from high school. A stint with FlipSide, the teen program of the Charleston (W.Va.) Gazette, sent her in a different direction.

“I was interested in medicine, and my high school had a really good science program,” she said. “[The school] had no journalism classes at all—not even a newspaper. FlipSide was my first experience with real journalism. Initially, I felt like I had no idea how to write a news story, but once I got the hang of it, I was hooked.”

Jamerson went on to major in print journalism at Marshall University and now serves as managing editor of The State Journal, a business publication based in Charleston. Had she not been involved with FlipSide, she said, she would not be where she is today. “It opened up a whole new career path that I never knew existed.”

Amy Robinson, another FlipSide alum, currently works as a part-time features writer at the Gazette.

“FlipSide was a great experience for me,” she said. “Not only did I gain insight into the journalism world, but I also built up a portfolio of my work for use in college. I won a FlipSide

scholarship my senior year of high school to put toward my college education. Then in college, I was able to transfer out of Newswriting 101 because of the work I had done for the program. Finally, I gained my first college internship through FlipSide, by contacting editor Marina Hendricks and working with her at the Gazette.”

Aileen Humphreys, a former member of the Freestyle staff at the Lancaster Intelligencer Journal in Pennsylvania, is the first full-time reporter hired from the newspaper’s teen program.

“She started with me many moons ago, was an intern for me while in high school, was an intern for the main newspaper when in college and is now hired!” Freestyle editor Claudia Esbenshade said. “How cool is that? It just shows that we are grooming tomorrow’s journalists and what we are doing is worth it ... not that I ever doubt that, but many others in the newsroom do.”

Adam Perry, Freestyle’s cartoonist, just published a book of his strips.

“It is called ‘Nerds, Etc.’ and is available online at Barnes & Noble,” Esbenshade said. “Can you imagine the excitement and honor I felt as he gave me the second copy, hot off of the presses? The first went to Mom. I cried.”

Dan Lamothe was a regular contributor to the UNlisted section in the Springfield (Mass.) Union-News (now The Republican) as a teen. After leaving UNlisted, he went on to have a successful college newspaper career, graduating from the University of Massachusetts with a journalism degree and winning several awards for his contributions to the Massachusetts Daily Collegian as a columnist, reporter and editor.

Since February 2004, he has been a paid intern at The Springfield Republican, writing a variety of features and columns on everything from higher education to bear population trends.

“UNlisted was an eye-opener for me in a number of ways,” he said. “First, it showed me how far-reaching the power of the pen can be. Even now, there are times when I will be out on assignment in some remote Western Massachusetts outpost, and people will recognize my name and face and associate it with contributions to UNlisted that seem like a lifetime ago to me. At first it frustrated me, but I realized it happens because people followed what I wrote and enjoyed it. It just makes me legitimately happy that I was able to reach people at that age, to make them remember that kids have a voice and minds of their own.”

Making the financial case

Now that you’ve convinced the powers-that-be that publishing a youth section is a great idea, get ready for a slap in the head.

The truth is that the honeymoon can be short. As priorities shift and decision makers move around, support for your section—no matter how well done—will likely waver.

So it's time to talk cash. Cold, hard advertising.

The bottom line here is as clear as it is black: Despite legions of naysayers, youth sections can—and do—bring in new revenue. And new revenue equals more staying power for your section.

If you don't know it already, you will soon find out that teens have tons of buying power—they spend more than \$100 billion of their own money and influence about \$50 billion more of their parents' purchases each year. That's BILLIONS. And 70 percent look at their local paper each day.

Local advertisers can be educated about teen reading and spending power and they can be sold on advertising in your youth section. The proof is in two reports titled *Teen\$eek* and *Teen\$eek II*, published by the Newspaper Association of America Foundation.

The first *Teen\$eek* details case studies in 2000-01 at three daily newspapers of varying market size, all with established youth sections. Each paper hired a full-time sales rep to sell its teen section and created business plans as well as salary, bonus and commission structures. Each was provided with a readership and marketing survey for 12- to 18-year-olds done by Belden Associates, THE newspaper research firm. But each paper followed a different strategy to bring in those teen-generated dollars, and results varied wildly.

The advertising staff at the Free Lance-Star in Fredericksburg, Va., which forged relationships with nearly every department at the paper, logged the most *Teen\$eek* success. It brought in nearly \$60,000 in new revenue through ads in *it!*, a weekly tabloid-style teen publication. The newspaper that eschewed across-the-board collaboration brought in a mere \$13,000.

Fredericksburg returned in 2001-02 for *Teen\$eek II*. NAA Foundation's goal was to test-drive Fredericksburg's "cross-departmental cooperation" model and to determine whether it could be replicated in other markets. Success came on both fronts—the Free Lance-Star met its revenue goals for a second year, and the test run at the Reading (Pa.) Eagle exceeded its ambitious \$75,000 revenue goal.

"Advertisers look to Voices editorial content to relate to their business or service," says Walt Woolwine, advertising director at the Reading Eagle. "They know that the local teen community is reading Voices. Advertisers know that they can get hold of and sustain this youth market's business through advertising in a product specifically designed for teens and by teens."

All the *Teen\$eek* markets agreed that selling newspaper advertisers on the teen market is tough. But *Teen\$eek II* proved that the effort to bring in new revenue through the youth section can be successful over time. The Reading Eagle's success proved that the Free Lance-Star model can be replicated at other papers.

Get these reports from NAA. Read them. Deliver them to your newspaper's advertising director. You'll likely feel uncomfortable at first scaling the divide between news and advertising, but you will find that it is a fruitful relationship that is completely ethical.

Advice from youth editors who have been there:

At the most basic level, ads ensure that when the bottom line is calculated, the youth section will not be seen as a liability. But beyond the bottom line, ads show that businesses and readers in the community find the youth product one that deserves reading—ads are, in a way, a tangible sign of respect. Finally, a high ad count is an arrow in the youth editor’s quiver if he or she wishes to expand the section, stage outside events or other missions requiring publisher approval.

I know that in journalism classes in college, we were basically taught that advertising was almost the devil to the newsroom’s angel—but I have always tried to take a big-picture approach. Most people in any department—marketing, advertising, news, whatever—are respectful professionals. Very few people would try to cross a line that isn’t meant to be crossed. In my experience, I have never had an ad rep be pushy about a story, or ask that we cover something in order to get an ad.

In my experience here, I’ve had a wonderful working relationship with people across the board. When I’ve needed or asked for advice, I’ve gotten incredibly helpful tips from my colleagues. Together we’ve improved our product. Any youth section needs to have broad support across the paper in order to not only succeed, but survive.

—Dave Smalley,
MyLine/it!, Free Lance-Star, Fredericksburg, Va.

Iwas uncomfortable at first. This was easier to overcome than one would think because the advertising reps and I have some similar goals—we want to reach teenagers with information they want.

It’s very much a relationship. You articulate your needs and principles, they articulate theirs. For instance, I send advertising a copy of our story/theme list each month after I make assignments. They use that to help search for new advertisers or to find advertisers the right fit. Sometimes the rep may call me and say, “Hey if your teens need a source, here is someone who knows a lot about XYZ subject.” But we’ve established that we don’t do quid pro quo articles.

—Lisa Scheid,
Voices, Reading (Pa.) Eagle

NOTE: Bill Smith, advertising director at the Free Lance-Star, who oversaw the Teen\$eek I and II efforts, is glad to talk to your ad director about starting youth sections, or answer questions about existing sections. He can be reached at (540) 374-5470 or bsmith@freelancestar.com.

Good advice from newspaper executives

Executives at newspapers with solid and long-standing commitments to offering youth content give advice to others who are considering whether or not to produce youth content.

June 3, 2004

Program Excellence Awards

NAA Foundation

1921 Gallows Road, Suite 600

Vienna, VA 22182-3900

To Whom It May Concern:

In 1999, we embraced the idea and delved wholeheartedly into the endeavor of creating a weekly section written by, for and about area teens.

We have remained true to our primary goal of developing readership patterns with local youth and are laying the groundwork for future newspaper readership. In addition, high school students have taken a serious interest in Satellite and have pursued journalism in college with the hopes of later seeking a job in the industry.

We strongly believe a newspaper enhances the intellectual and social development of students, while encouraging the formation of vital leadership habits. We also believe reading a newspaper is the single most important part of being an informed and educated citizen.

Clearly the value of our product and the role that it plays in developing a civic consciousness among our youth is evident among our local students and educators. It is my hope that more newspapers model their practices after our organization.

As a family-owned newspaper, our efforts are focused on those programs that serve today's needs as well as those in the future. It is clear from the feedback we receive from administrators, students, teachers and local residents that our Satellite program is making a difference for our youths.

Sincerely,

Robert E. Lorton III

President

Tulsa World

To whom it may concern:

As the "father" of Voices, our teen publication, I must admit a strong bias. That aside, I must say that Voices has become our most significant brand. People throughout our circulation area are aware of Voices and adults are reading it to get a feel as to what kids are thinking and saying.

Unfortunately, the advertising does not balance our costs, but our publisher is dedicated to the idea of getting young people to read and use our newspaper. Voices also has provided a base for talent, as one of our top reporters is a Voices "graduate." It also has provided some of our editors a tool on which they could hone their skills.

Voices continues to be one of the top teen publications in the country, as is reflected in the many awards it has garnered.

At the risk of sounding too much the proud father, I can say Voices is a joy because it has been nurtured by our staff and fed by the wonderful work of our teen contributors. Voices is a very healthy and growing 9-year-old.

Respectfully,

Chuck Gallagher
Managing Editor
Reading Eagle

Youth Editorial Alliance: history and mission

Lorraine M. Eaton, the founder of this organization, describes how YEA was started: The feeling evolved slowly during my first year as youth editor at The Virginian-Pilot. It started in 1992 when I ran an idea for a lead story for our fledgling Teenology section past my supervisor. She was polite (of course, I live in the South where people are always polite), but really was not interested in discussing the finer points of teens and the presidential election.

In the months that followed, I started hearing comments around the newsroom about the section and its teenage writers. Frankly, most were not complimentary. Obviously, these seasoned reporters and editors had not yet grasped the concept of a teenage newspaper audience or its importance to the future of the industry.

Then one day in 1993 it all blew apart. A national survey was released claiming that drug use among America's youth was rising substantially. Our front page story contained quotes from experts, local adult leaders and politicians, but not one teenager. This despite the fact that every reporter at our newspaper had a copy of the names and phone numbers of all our 100 or so high school correspondents.

"Why didn't you ask the kids?" I queried the reporter.

"What would I have asked them? If they do drugs?" He smirked when he said it.

Furious, I looked around for someone to vent with. A member of the business team? A court reporter? A photographer? A health reporter? I knew then that I was alone in the newsroom.

That's when I realized that youth editors needed an organization to bring them together, to allow them to share ideas and to vent when necessary.

With Freedom Forum sponsorship, a small group of youth editors convened in 1993 in Arlington, Va. We talked nonstop for nine hours. The meeting was cathartic, educational and eye-opening. I dreamed of a larger gathering—one that would happen again and again.

A few youth editors from around the country started talking via telephone. We decided that between assigning stories, driving students from the office to their homes, holding training sessions and editing the rawest of copy, we had time to organize a conference.



757 is The Virginian Pilot's current teen section.

Youth editors Laura Crooks, formerly of The Phoenix Gazette, now of The Spokesman-Review in Spokane, Wash., and Debra Leithauser, formerly of The Orlando Sentinel, now with The Washington Post, got on the phone to compile a mailing list of youth editors across the country. When we got 100 addresses, we stopped. That was all the brochures we had to mail!

Evelyn Hsu, then with the American Press Institute, graciously agreed to take us on as an “unofficial” conference, and donated the use of their facilities for a weekend in 1996. A grant from the Landmark Foundation, the philanthropic arm of my newspaper chain, was instrumental in making the conference happen. So was the fact that speakers donated their time without question.

With the help and guidance of the Newspaper Association of America Foundation, we started the Youth Editorial Alliance, which has scores of members. Our ninth annual conference took place in Fort Lauderdale, Fla., in October 2004, hosted by the South Florida Sun-Sentinel.

No longer do youth editors have to work in isolation. YEA provides us a collective voice, a forum for ideas, conferences, a place to find out about job openings and a whole list of people to call when we need to vent.

It was a long time coming. Now it is up to you to take an active part in making sure YEA continues to grow in numbers, strength and power.

**—Lorraine M. Eaton,
former youth editor, The Virginian-Pilot, Virginia Beach**

A youth editor’s job description

The following are actual youth editor job postings from the State Journal-Register in Springfield, Ill., The Orlando Sentinel and former Reading Eagle youth editor, Wendy Zang. One is general, the other specific. Feel free to cut and paste to meet your newspaper’s needs.

The State Journal-Register in Springfield, Ill., is seeking an energetic, passionate editor for its youth section, The Voice. This award-winning section, which was started in 1995, includes news and features about young people, often tackling tough topics as well as fun trend stories. Along with reporting for the weekly section, the Voice editor works with local students, teaching them news-writing style, coaching them and editing their work.

The candidate should have previous editing experience and an affinity for working with teenagers. The Voice editor also contributes stories to other feature sections. Previous Voice editors have moved on to esteemed positions at the paper. The State Journal-Register has a circulation of 58,000 on the weekdays and 68,000 on Sunday. Candidates should send a letter of introduction, resume with references and work samples to: Erin Orr, features editor, The State Journal-Register, One

Copley Plaza, Springfield, Illinois 62701. The State Journal-Register, a Copley Newspaper, offers competitive pay, exceptional benefits and is an equal opportunity employer. Women and minorities are encouraged to apply.

NOTE: The Orlando Sentinel's strategy to attract young readers has changed over the past few years. Rave, its former teen product, is no longer published. However, this job description is very detailed and we include it for that reason.

The Orlando Sentinel – FlipSide

JOB TITLE: FlipSide Editor

DEPARTMENT: Editorial

REPORTS TO: Arts and Entertainment Editor

MAJOR PURPOSE

Acts as the FlipSide Editor for the Editorial Department of The Orlando Sentinel with responsibility for ensuring that a well-written, well-designed youth section is produced weekly.

MAJOR RESPONSIBILITIES

- To brainstorm and assign articles and photographs that are appropriate for a teenage audience and that represent all counties in which the section is circulated. This includes writing and updating a budget for Sentinel staffers and freelancers to follow.
- To manage a large number of teenage freelancers, which includes assigning articles and photographs, organizing staff meetings, furthering good working relationships and providing journalistic training.
- To content-edit freelance articles so that they are interesting, informative and accurate. Also to edit copy for grammar, style and spelling errors and libelous material, and to ensure, to the extent that time and resources allow, that the reports accurately present all the facts.
- To search the wire services for articles and ideas that would be appropriate for a teenage audience and seeing that these articles are re-written with spin. Also to search for items to buy from other publications.
- To edit film so that photos are good quality, tasteful and reflect the article's angle.
- To design a section that is attractive, creative and reflects the irreverent nature of today's youth using the Macintosh computer.

- To transcribe calls and verify the accuracy of each call to be published.
- To write creative headlines that reflect the facts and tone of the reports to entice readers; and to write cutlines that inform the reader in a clear and concise style and accurately describe the photograph.
- To promote the section by speaking at high schools, taking part in community activities and working closely with the Marketing Department of The Orlando Sentinel.
- To pay freelancers, keeping in mind the section's budget.
- To ensure that all copy, photographs, artwork, proofs and corrections are handled in a timely manner so that all Editorial deadlines are met.
- To ensure that page proofs are read and all necessary corrections are made.
- The preceding list of major responsibilities describes only those essential job functions considered important in accomplishing the purpose of this job. It is not meant to include all job functions. Other duties include:
 - To be familiar with the contents of The Orlando Sentinel and other publications as an aid to understanding, and putting into context, information contained in subsequent reports.
 - To protect the journalistic principle of the public's "right to know" and the spirit and letter of the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States.

AUTHORITY

The Rave Editor acts within Company policy and applicable federal, state and local legislation to do whatever is necessary to produce an accurate and attractive section within given deadlines.

However, the FlipSide Editor may not:

- Change deadlines
- Enter into a relationship with any employee that may have or may appear to have an adverse effect upon his/her ability to carry out his/her responsibilities.

REQUIREMENTS

- Should have at least a four-year college degree or equivalent related experience.
- Typically requires three to five years experience on the copy desk of a daily newspaper or as a Desk Editor II at The Orlando Sentinel. Reporting experience is encouraged.

- Needs a good understanding of today's youth; good grasp of language and grammar; good news judgment; talent at editing, writing headlines and designing pages; an ability to take initiative with limited supervision; an ability to work on the electronic newsroom system; a working knowledge of libel laws; good communication skills; and an ability to work well with others.
- Must be able to use the Atex computer system to enter and edit information.
- Must be able to use the Macintosh computer system to design color and black-and-white pages. QuarkXPress and Adobe Illustrator experience is expected.
- Must be able to effectively manage teenage freelancers.
- Must be able to work effectively under deadline pressure.
- Must be able to proofread and edit text on a video display terminal or a page proof; to evaluate the quality of photographs and graphics and differentiate their colors; and to design pages.
- Must be able to sit for extended periods.

IMPACT OF DECISIONS

Indirect financial impact: Responsible for planning and producing a section that affects several areas: potential lawsuits; production costs, which include edition makeovers, late press starts and use of color; quality for subscribers (a drop in quality could result in a loss in circulation and advertising); and upholding respect and credibility within the newspaper industry.

Impact on business or employee relations: Responsible for dealing professionally with Editorial, Operations and Marketing employees and contributing to an atmosphere of teamwork. If the job were performed incorrectly, the drop in quality could lead to libel suits, lower circulation and decreased advertising revenue.

WORK RELATIONSHIPS

Works under the limited supervision of the Arts and Entertainment Editor. Works daily with other Editorial divisions, with the Operations Department, with Marketing and occasionally with the public to produce the section.

The Reading Eagle – Voices

NOTE: Here is a job description written by Wendy Zang, former youth editor at the Reading (Pa.) Eagle.

As editor of Voices, the 20-page, weekly teen tab of the Reading Eagle, I am responsible for the production of the tab — including assigning stories, working with teen writers, editing stories and overseeing the production process. I also host the section's monthly TV show and am responsible for the Voices Web site, which is updated weekly with Web-exclusive stories.

With such a large section and a Web site, the main focus of my job is production – just getting the section and site together each week – to get a teen voice into our paper. My secondary focus is teaching and training our teen writers to be better journalists.

A list of my responsibilities follows:

- Edit all stories that appear in Voices (usually about 20 teen stories, plus some regular standing features like the question of the week).
- Provide teen writers with feedback on those stories (usually via e-mail).
- Oversee production each week, including proofing pages and approving design.
- Assemble section budgets with story and topic ideas (each issue has a central topic, plus news, sports and entertainment stories).
- Oversee art planning (including weekly meetings to discuss upcoming issues and what photos/illustrations we need).
- Meet with teens monthly to assign stories; get feedback.
- Coordinate bi-monthly writing sessions to help the teens.
- Edit all stories for the Web edition, coordinate/plan Web editions, coordinate teen workers to keep Web updated weekly (the site includes eight to 10 Web-exclusive stories).
- Host/plan “Video Voices” (monthly cable access show, which is a discussion with a panel of four to eight teens).
- Supervise a full-time adult reporter who writes for the section, handles photo assignment, works with teens and occasionally writes for other sections of the paper.
- Keep track of pay for the teens.
- Supervise two high school interns, who work 10 hours a week.
- Recruit new writers twice a year, with a focus on a diverse staff.

Where to find a youth editor—newsroom or classroom?

A question many newspapers face when hiring a youth editor is whether to look for a professional journalist or a journalism teacher. Candace Perkins Bowen, Scholastic Media Coordinator at Kent State University, and Guy Coviello, youth editor and assistant managing editor of the Tribune Chronicle in Warren, Ohio, offer opposing viewpoints.

Experience in the classroom is a big plus for youth editors. Former teachers realize workload issues today's teens face and may have more realistic expectations of the way many bright and involved journalism students try to balance AP classes, athletics, other extracurriculars plus outside jobs. In addition, former teachers can empathize with current teachers and reassure them the youth section doesn't represent a "brain drain" of their best writers.

Today's research shows coaching writers, and not just mercilessly editing their work often makes an editor's job easier later on. Former classroom teachers often have used this idea with students and can apply it to youth section students. If their time and contact with students permits, they can employ education methods designed to enforce good grammar and other writing skills and build a stronger staff. They also have links with scholastic press associations and others who may offer conventions, workshops and summer programs that can benefit youth section staffs as well.

At least one teen page editor valued the teaching aspect of her job so much she wanted to verify her credentials: Lorraine Eaton of The Virginian-Pilot became a Certified Journalism Educator. This program, which includes CJE and the more intensive Master Journalism Education, involves showing, through course work or a test, that you know how to teach about journalism and advise a publication. For more information, contact The Journalism Education Association headquarters at Kansas State University in Manhattan, Kan., at (785) 532-5532.

—*Candace Perkins Bowen*,
Kent State University, Kent, Ohio

Newsroom experience is important when you are working with young staff members. You have a great deal of credibility when you have "been there." You have even more if you still are a working journalist. Young people trust your advice and respect the lessons you are passing on to them.

They see you as an expert who works alongside and guides them as they learn on-the-job journalism. We all know that experience is the best teacher. My experiences working in a newsroom give me a wealth of information to share. When I tell the young people "war stories" about my own mistakes and triumphs, they become infected with the same passion and intensity that I have for my work.

—*Guy Coviello*,
Page One, Tribune Chronicle, Warren, Ohio

What are you worth?

The youth editor position is unique, and many organizations have struggled to determine an appropriate salary. In addition, many (if not most) youth editors have other duties, from business and religion editing to education reporting to producing television newscasts from the newsroom.

It's no surprise then that salaries vary widely. We solicited 2004 salary, job description and circulation information from youth editors from across the country. The following will give you a general idea of what the market bears.

Circulation up to 50,000

Salaries range from \$25,000 to \$44,000.

Each of the six youth editors in this category who responded to the survey juggled more than one title. Most had three or four. They included NIE coordinator, religion editor, features editor, business editor, education writer, military writer, layout artist and photographer.

Circulation from 50,000 to 150,000

Salaries range from \$34,000 to \$50,000.

Youth editors in this category had fewer duties; some were also the feature editor.

Circulation 150,000 and up

Salaries range from \$30,000 to \$62,000 (and a wide range of experience).

Jobs here were even more streamlined—this is where youth editor is more likely to be a full-time position.

What makes a good youth editor?

What makes a good youth editor? There are many answers to this question. Here are some ideas from youth editors and even some young writers themselves:

A good youth editor needs enthusiasm, first and foremost. This enthusiasm must infect your editors as well as your charges, those teenagers who will need you to inspire them and help them get through each month or week, depending on how you do your section. Your enthusiasm also will provide some job security, because if your supervisors are excited about your section, they'll help you push it and make sure it stays successful.

Diplomacy and patience will serve you well. You will be the person who keeps everything and everyone on track, and teens will not understand deadlines until they've missed them once or twice and met with the consequences. Diplomacy and patience will serve you here, as well.

Organization is the key. Good planning, and planning way ahead, will help you be prepared and cover yourself when stories or teens fall through.

—*Kathy Miedema*,
former youth editor, *Read This!*, San Jose Mercury News

Our philosophy is as follows: Make a section that is completely student-driven. Do not make it a boring place to be a writer, or a reader. Do not make it journalism class — they learn proper journalism here in the course of hands-on writing and getting edited, rather than lectures from the youth editor. Feed the writers with pizza and trust. And don't be afraid to try new concepts, both in terms of story ideas and actual writing technique.

—*Dave Smalley*,
MyLine/it!, Free Lance-Star, Fredericksburg, Va.

A youth editor should be patient and willing to read the irreverent articles from the teen contributors. The editor is basically a safety net expected to make sure the adolescent contributors don't make fools of themselves. Some writers will contribute more professionally than others, and it is up to the youth editor to appoint responsible people to higher positions. Nonetheless, since you are the adult, you are the person that everyone will point to whenever there's an error in the page. Just don't expect to be treated like one.

—*Anthony Miccio*,
Blue, Centre Daily Times, State College, Pa.

The best quality a good editor for a teen page can have is patience. Teens often have good ideas and simply need time and gentle guidance to bring them to fruition as ideas become stories and concepts become page designs. Too much interference can make teenagers feel like they aren't doing anything, and they will lose interest. Given time and help with tweaking and editing stories, teens will not only produce a good page, but will become better and better at what they do.

—*Asa Shumskas-Tait*,
Blue, Centre Daily Times, State College, Pa.

I think that a laid-back adult who is willing to have friendly, close relations with the writers makes for a good editor. It's nice to be able to know you can talk to your editor, not only about articles, but about everyday issues. I think that patience, understanding, flexibility and the willingness to help are important too.

Sometimes that important article that can't be covered until right at the deadline date is accepted late because a good editor is flexible on special occasions. An editor who is willing to share his or her personal life and share his or her sense of humor is also important. Teenagers don't want to think that they are only present at meetings to listen to instructions; they want to feel like they belong to something special and they want to feel accepted.

—*Jennifer Jett*,
FlipSide, Charleston (W.Va.) Gazette

Advice to the new youth editor for those first few days

Being a new youth editor can be scary. One editor described the job as “running for mayor every day.” But with a little advice from veterans, you're on your way. Below two youth editors share their words of wisdom.

Patience and Pizza

Patience is a virtue, and pizza is gold. These are the first two things you must learn as you tackle the rewarding, frustrating job of editing a youth section. It is a position that offers you the chance to groom, teach and learn from a vibrant sector of the population. It is also a lesson in just how much energy it takes to motivate a group of people whose top priority may not be you and your publication.

Once you've settled into your desk/cubicle/office, set up an introductory meeting. Ask about schedules, school calendars and expectations. Make sure you outline what it is you'd like to see as well. Set up, and pass out, production schedules far enough in advance to give yourself breathing room should the unexpected occur. Be prepared to repeat all of this in about a month or two.

What works at Children's Express, at least sometimes, is letting the kids govern themselves with your peripheral oversight. Senior teen editors, those with experience, not necessarily age status, are responsible for helping new editors and reporters through the story process. The adults emphasize deadlines and help make reminder phone calls.

Part of being a youth editor is being a teacher. Unlike producing an essay or term paper, newspaper writing requires a different kind of writing proficiency. Coordinating Journalism 101 workshops

utilizing some of your co-workers is a great way to get others at the paper interested in what you're doing. It's also a great way to refresh your own education. Get in the habit of going over as many stories as you can with reporters. Time will not always allow this. Often you're just too happy to have something turned in. However, by being able to show a few kids what it is you're looking for, you're able to breathe easier at crunch time because you know you won't have to coach those few through an article. They may be able to act as assistant editors in this stage as well.

You want to be a friend to your young staff, as well as a respected boss. It's not always easy. This is where the patience comes in. Let them know this by saying that there are times when being their friend means insisting that they live up to their commitments. You have a job to do and it depends largely on them holding up their end of the deal. But also, ask about what they're doing outside of the academics and their work for the paper. Let them know what you did over the weekend. Hold ice cream socials. Offer movie passes. Send thank you notes. Call their parents and tell them what a great job their kid is doing.

Being a youth editor is fun. You get to live under the partial delusion that you're hip. You get to hang around energetic people who may not be getting paid for what they do, but do it anyway. You get to bring a voice to the mainstream that may not be as well-heard or homogenous as others may think.

And you get to know all of the great pizza delivery businesses within a 10-mile radius of your newspaper office. Bon appetit!

**—Monette Austin,
former Children's Express editor, Washington, D.C.**

Relax and Enjoy

No doubt you're feeling a bit overwhelmed right now. Relax (as much as you can, anyway). Even the veterans among us feel overwhelmed sometimes—especially when we're faced with training a new staff each year and convincing the higher-ups (and our advertising people) that our publications are important.

But it's not all bad, I promise. Although I've had plenty of moments wondering why I agreed to work with teen writers, I've had even more when I realized why I chose this job. I see good writers becoming better writers and even improvements in the not-so-good writers. I'll see an idea come to fruition—and it could be a cover shot or a way to sell more ads—and it becomes a “Eureka!” moment. Or was that Hoover? Either way...

Young writers can be just as egotistical and hard-headed as veteran reporters, but they also have ideas and perspectives that are different from what you've dealt with before and that can be extremely refreshing.

My first piece of advice is to find a system of organization that works for you and start using it

immediately. It may be folders or computer files or boxes or three-ring binders or a combination of these (as mine is). Whatever it takes, get things in order and it will make the rest of your job much easier. It will also make things easier for your kids if you have your act together and they understand exactly what you expect from them.

If you're replacing someone, contact that person and find out when you should start thinking about certain subjects, like prom and scholarships, if your publication offers any. While you're in touch with the former editor, it would be a good time to raid his or her brain for contacts that have been cooperative with your publication and will certainly come in handy to you. And remember to get your hands on copies of forms used for keeping track of deadlines, meetings, pay, even the applications for future writers. You'll likely alter these so that they fit your ideas, but at least you'll have a place to start.

If you're brand new, well, welcome to our club! As a member of this club, you're entitled to many exciting privileges and fantastic deals! Among those privileges and deals is the ability to wrack our brains for ideas, tips, pointers and, yes, advice. We're here for you, so seek us out. One of us has surely been in your situation before and can offer some possible answers.

Need to vent? Complain? Brag? Come to us because we'll know precisely where you're coming from. Hang in there, though, it does get easier.

—Kerri M. Barnhart,
former FlipSide Magazine editor, Charleston (W.Va.) Newspapers

Make Friends

It's important that a new youth editor make friends around the newsroom to get the message across that young readers are important. If news meetings are open to you, take a seat at the table the day before your section appears and pitch a 1A promo. (Then, be sure to write the promo for them and follow up with the desk to see that they found artwork.) Speak up also when stories that affect young readers come up. You might be able to encourage more reporters to include a younger point of view in their stories.

If you can meet the people who market your section or sell ads for your section, that's helpful, too. Make sure that everyone linked to your project knows who you are and what you stand for, what your recent achievements are and how to reach you. One editor told me "this job is like running for mayor every day." This doesn't mean you're selling out on your goals. It just means that people know the basics—like that your section exists and that they should make it a priority when they do their jobs.

Last, tell your boss when good things happen. Forward praise from kids, parents, readers, up the chain. Managers know you're doing good work in general, but seeing specific proof of success helps make your case that resources spent on youth are well spent. The same goes for awards—enter the contests so you can have a concrete measure of the worth of your work. These aren't the only measure, just one more way to support your campaign that young readers should be a priority.

—*Jennifer Okamoto*,
KidsDay, The Dallas Morning News

Make friends with EVERYONE

Seriously, when a new section is starting up, lots of folks may be resistant to the change. It means more work for many different departments and people. If these people know the editor personally and like him or her, it makes it hard for them to resent the new section and it may even make them want to help.

Get to know the whole production process, not just your part in it. Who is involved in producing your section? From the sales people to the production staff, marketing people, press room, etc. You'll know where to turn and to whom to turn when there is a problem and you may be able to offer helpful suggestions.

—*Leigh Sprimont*,
The Buzz, The Sun, Charlotte Harbor, Fla.

Ambassadors to the rescue

By now it should be obvious that you are not alone. While the youth editor position is fairly new to the world of commercial newspapers, many, many professionals have succeeded in publishing a youth section from scratch.

And while it's great to read advice from seasoned youth editors, wouldn't it be better to have them at your side?

Now, a NAA Foundation program, "Ambassadors to the Future," will literally bring experienced help to your doorstep.

Ambassadors are experienced youth editors, trained volunteers who deliver on-site training to newspapers in one or more of three subject areas—starting a new section, managing a young staff and recruiting a diverse staff. Ambassadors have a track record of success at their own newspapers, and many have developed award-winning youth sections and supervised award-winning young journalists.

These professionals developed the ambassador's curriculum that will be delivered to you. They know what works and, sometimes more importantly, what doesn't. Follow-up training and consultation is included in the package.

Here's the really good news: It's a steal. The NAA Foundation picks up the tab for the ambassador's travel. Your paper has to ante up food and lodging costs.

In addition, the Southern Newspaper Publishers Association is offering ambassador programs through the SNPA Foundation Traveling Campus.

For more information on the programs and how to apply to have an ambassador come to your newspaper, contact Sandy Woodcock at the NAA Foundation, 1921 Gallows Road, Suite 600, Vienna, VA 22182-3900 or woods@naa.org.

Publishing decisions you have to make

Format and frequency

You've got the green light. Now you need a vision.

What format will you use? Tab or broadsheet? Online or paper? Or both? And how often will you publish? When? What is your target audience?

There is no best answer because each newspaper is different.

You have to consider your market, your audience, the size of your staff and budget and whether there are other resources available to you such as technical online assistance, advertising and marketing.

Print publications

A 2002 NAA Foundation survey of 110 newspapers with printed youth content found the following:

- Most newspapers with youth publications (79%) target 14-18-year olds.
- About half (47%) target the under 14 crowd.
- Most are published weekly.
- The most common weekday is Tuesday, with 37 papers reporting publishing a youth publication on that day; the least common was Friday, with 20 publications that day. (Many newspapers publish on the day when the most newspapers are delivered to schools through NIE programs.)
- Youth content is not usually published on the weekends.

Children's sections

Thanks to the industry's increasing focus on readership throughout the life cycle, more newspapers are offering sections for children. Read on to find out how some papers reach out to younger readers, writers and artists.

Kid Stuff is published on Wednesdays. It features local kid content once a month, and then staff-written copy the other weeks. One of the most popular parts of the page is when we have

“crafts” pages, where our staff artist lets kids know how to make a lemonade stand, or a sand castle, or a skim board. We also have things like geography questions, jokes, facts on New Jersey, kid book reviews (we receive a lot of kids books from various publishers).

—Bill Canacci,
Teen Scene, Home News Tribune, East Brunswick, N.J.

Colorado Kids, a weekly four-page tabloid, is written by a staff of 60-plus children between the ages of 8 and 13. Young writers are recruited through classroom visits and applications printed in the section itself.

The core team of eight kid reporters conducts interviews with celebrities, authors, political figures and kids, and writes articles for the section. The advisory board members are provided with toys, books, movies, video games and other products, and write reviews for the section and the Web site (colokids.com).

In addition to the kid-written content, Colorado Kids includes a nonfiction serial story, with questions based on the statewide assessments for language arts. Colorado Kids also partners with the local Radio Disney affiliate—writing and recording weekly educational spots that preview upcoming issues of the section.

—Eric Elkins,
Denver Newspaper Agency

Ido a monthly publication for elementary kids called the Southeast Missourian Jr. It is a tab (usually 24 to 28 pages) that is distributed in our newspaper, plus delivered to all the elementary schools, both public and private, in the area. The newspaper is actually written by the kids—they send in things for publication. I also have a mascot “Tracker” and we visit schools, community events, etc.

—Cheryl Ellis,
Southeast Missourian, Cape Girardeau, Mo.

We have a kids section called NewsFun. The four-page tab publishes every Monday during the school year. The product targets grades two to six, but it’s most popular with grades three and four.

The content is a mix of locally-produced features and wire stories. As often as possible, we try to run a local feature on the front (our NIE team contributes at least one story a month). We also accept kid book reviews. Our most popular section is the MiniForum, in which we post a weekly question and kids send in their replies. We publish as many of the responses as we can.

There is also a NIE activity in each issue. We vary the subject matter for the activities. In the past, we've run World of Wonder and Ask Shagg, two syndicated products, on the back page. But this year, we're looking at KidScoop, just to change things up.

—*Robin Floyd Garrett,*
The Edge, Roanoke (Va.) Times

We do a four-page, all-color edition every Wednesday called NOW! It is geared to 8-14-year-olds and is a mix of youth-oriented stories, news, entertainment and such. Currently, we open up the section for any kid within our age range to write in to our various prompts. For example, author Margaret Peterson Haddix wrote a Halloween story-starter last year and we invited kids to write an ending to it. We received nearly 4,000 entries.

More than half of our editions were youth-written last year. We incorporate a variety of topics, from politics (kids will be casting their votes in the presidential election) to black history. We also ask kids to color our NOW! logo every week and we publish their creations, along with their names and ages, atop each of the inside pages.

The paper's staff reporters also are very much involved in writing to our target audience, covering topics from how to deal with bullies to tips for overcoming shyness. Even when staffers write for us, they incorporate quotes and interviews from kids within our age range.

I tell folks here at the paper that I have the best job around, and I really feel that way. The notes kids send in are refreshing, rewarding and reinforce the importance of such a section.

I think the best tip for someone looking to start a new section is: JUST DO IT! Of course, focus groups and that kind of thing are important and very helpful, but sometimes you just gotta go for it! We do a lot of things that are new—sometimes things work; sometimes they don't. But the important thing is to keep TRYING and mix things up.

—*Becky Kover,*
NOW!, Columbus (Ohio) Dispatch

KidsDay runs on Wednesday and Friday within the Living section. We produce almost all local copy.

KidsDay aims to reflect life as a kid in the Dallas area for children up to age 12. It includes their writing, reviews, opinions and drawings and also includes stories written about them by adults who take care to write at their level without talking down to them.

Stories about their lives include their comments about topics such as sibling rivalry, having too much homework or getting along with bullies. Short narrative articles written by adult staff writers

offer intimate pictures of their activities—for example, what life is like at a lock-in or at an elementary school newspaper. We also include activities for kids, such as contests, scavenger hunts, crafts and quizzes.

It's important to our staff to include a wide diversity of children in our section. We want hundreds of kids' voices reflected in our coverage and work hard to use a wide range of types of stories so that



KidsDay, Dallas Morning News

KidsDay attracts kids with differing interests and backgrounds. That gives us depth and authority and it gives kids a sense of their ability to influence have a voice in their newspaper and their world.

We run several programs to interact with kids. For Mrs. G's Book Club, a reading teacher and a staff writer team to choose a book for the club each month during the school year. Kids are asked to read the book and write a letter about it. From the response, we choose eight to 10 to go on a field trip and discuss the book. Results of that discussion appear in the paper.

We regularly invite children to come to screenings of movies with us and provide short, informal reviews of the films. We also assign a small team of kids books to review. We have a core group of about 10 children we use regularly for book reviews. For movie reviews, we find different children every time.

More than 1,000 kids a year enter our annual story contest. We provide a starting paragraph and ask them to continue from there, writing to a specific word limit. Using the starting paragraph helps us ensure that the writing is original.

We reprint the best essays, poetry and creative writing from writing competitions held in the area. We also sometimes have an exceptional classroom submit its work.

Periodically, we assign a child to write a story for us. For example, instead of doing a traditional "how to throw a party" story for the holidays, we asked the child to throw the party with us, invite her friends and write about how it went.

Frequently, we ask kids to write in on a particular topic and we run the best of the replies.

—Jennifer Okamoto,
Kidsday, Dallas Morning News

Electronic publishing

Many newspapers publish youth content both in print and online. Very few have gone the total online route.

To get a current look at online sections, go to www.naa.org/foundation/yea and click on “Resources” then “Sites to See.”

Rob Runett, NAA’s manager of electronic media analysis, put together a PowerPoint presentation that provides an overview of teen online use, many examples of publications and special projects, advice on capturing advertising and other tips for going online. The full presentation is available at www.digitaledge.org/pdf/TeenSeek.ppt

Another more in-depth article by Runett on the same topic can be found at www.digitaledge.org/monthly/1999_03/webteen.html.

Now for some advice from the trenches:

The most essential element to creating a Web site for teens is involving teens in the process. Teens, who are spending more and more time on the Internet, have a wealth of good ideas when it comes to attracting other teens to your Web site. So spend some time discussing the look and potential content of your site with a group of teenagers before starting to design your Web site. It is also helpful to browse the Web for other teenage sites and have your teen resources point out what they do and do not like about other sites.

However, there are a few Web site elements that teens seem to favor more than others:

- interactive prompts (surveys, chat rooms, etc.)
- sound/audio features
- news about teens doing positive things
- links to organizations for teens who want to make a difference
- entertainment news
- links to other cool teen Web sites

Finally, since Web sites are in need of constant updating, it may be to your benefit to train several teens to maintain and update the site. There are a number of Web publishing software programs, such as Adobe GoLive and Microsoft FrontPage, that are easy to learn and use.

**—Robin Floyd Garrett,
The Edge, Roanoke (Va.) Times**

Web site DO'S:

- Be sure to incorporate the section's masthead, so you help create cross-branding—you don't want your Web site to look like a different publication than the hard copy (unless, of course, it IS a different publication).
- Include contact info on: A) how to get involved, B) how to send in a letter to the section editor, C) general feedback.
- Make the site look different from the rest of the paper — just like the hard copy version. You want it to stand out, but don't get carried away with gimmicks.
- Make it colorful, easy and fun to navigate.
- Consult teenagers when setting it up.
- Consult teenagers periodically to take the temperature of the site.
- Provide multiple entry points, interactivity.

DON'TS:

- Be wary of what you, as an adult, think is “cool” — it probably isn't to teenagers.
- Be wary of gimmicks — a few go a loooooong way.
- Don't be afraid to try something different, something “wild” — but listen to what teens have to say about it.
- Don't be afraid to ask for help, input, guidance, tutelage from teens.

**—Erin Orr,
The Voice, The State Journal-Register, Springfield, Ill.**

Recruiting young people for your staff

How to recruit

Now that the basic decisions are out of the way—format, frequency and so forth—it’s time to think about where you’re going to get the content to fill your section. That means a youth staff.

Think back to when you were a teenager (come on, it hasn’t been THAT long). Remember how hungry you were for the chance to work on a real newspaper? Well, today’s students are just as hungry. And those journalism-starved teenagers are the key ingredient in every successful youth section recipe.

So where do you find them? How do you find them? The answers to those questions vary, as you’ll see in these comments from youth editors around the country:

We send letters to all high schools in our area and ask them to choose to students to be on our teen page board.

—*Wendy Stemple,*
County Highlights, Daily American, Somerset, Pa.

We send announcements to all area schools and place notices at the end and the beginning of school year on the teen page.

—*Tim Bucey,*
Generation Gap, Springfield (Ohio) News-Sun

We host an informational meeting at our office each May for all interested correspondents. We serve refreshments, of course. To advertise, we run a short announcement on the INK page a few weeks ahead of time and post flyers at all of the local high schools. We also put the announcement about the meeting on our newspaper’s Web site. In addition, we ask our graduating seniors to talk it up at school and try to recruit someone to replace them each year. They’re great at this and some of my best kids have come through them.

I also make a monthly visit (more frequently when I can) to one local high school during lunch to give kids a chance to come to me. I have found that guys, particularly, seem more interested in this

face-to-face time. I take application packets and other things we're working on (story topics, man-on-the-street questions, etc.) and can answer any questions anyone has about the program. I get some great story ideas there too, so I never come away empty-handed.

—*Carmen Musick*,
INK, Kingsport (Tenn.) Times-News

I run a half-page, full-color ad in the paper to recruit staff. They call to request an application. There is a list of activities on the application for them to choose from, so I can see their skill levels. I also send letters to each of the schools in the area—English department, art department, technology department—to ask teachers to recommend The Student Sun to students.

—*Laurie James*,
The Student Sun, Evening Sun, Hanover, Pa.

Recruiting happens once a year, in June before school ends. I usually place an ad in the section for a few weeks. This year, more than 30 kids responded, and about 10 of those have become contributors.

—*Bill Canacci*,
Teen Scene, Home News Tribune, East Brunswick, N.J.

We run ROP ads, online ads, and send letters/applications to the local high schools. Our first year, we even did school visits to stir up interest. But we didn't have time for that this year ... I think we should make time in the future.

—*Robin Floyd Garrett*,
The Edge, The Roanoke (Va.) Times

Attracting a diverse staff

In an ideal world, the teenagers who apply for your staff will be a reflection of your community.

That's in an ideal world. But the reality is that it's sometimes tough to attract students who represent the diverse nature of your circulation area. And we're talking about diversity in all of its forms: racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, religious, gender, sexual orientation, residential, age, school ... well, you get the idea.

The questionnaire below is designed to help you get a handle on your community's diversity. Once it's complete, use it as a guideline to plan your recruitment strategy.

1. List all school-to-work programs in your circulation area. Examples include Boy Scouts Explorers, JobReady, workplace co-ops, public school programs and vocational education internships.
2. What is the racial breakdown of your community?
 - _____ % White
 - _____ % African American
 - _____ % Asian American
 - _____ % Native American
 - _____ % Hispanic
 - _____ % Pacific Islander
 - _____ % Other
3. Do you live in a military community? Check all that apply.
 - _____ Navy
 - _____ Coast Guard
 - _____ Marines
 - _____ Air Force
 - _____ Army
4. List the nontraditional schools in your area. Some of these might include alternative, private, parochial, vocational education, magnet, charter, boarding, Department of Defense schools and home-school organizations.
5. List the nonschool youth organizations in your area. These may include Boys and Girls Clubs, scouts, church youth groups, scholastic press associations, community centers, recreational centers, sports clubs, agricultural clubs, youth courts and drug, alcohol and tobacco awareness programs.
6. If there are teens, there are cliques. List all the types of cliques in your circulation area—goth, jock, prep, skaters, surfers, etc. Where does each group hang out?
7. How many high schools are in your area? Middle schools? Elementary schools? Private schools?
8. Do you expect to have a correspondent from each school?
9. List local publications that appeal to teens, such as zines, independent city papers, etc.

Now take a look at how three youth editors approach the diversity in recruitment issue:

We recruit through house ads and applications. If I sense a lack of diversity, I go to a school rich with diversity and talk to outstanding students myself, trying to get them to come on board. We have an annual application process. Applicants are chosen based on skill, but schools and diversity are considered.

—*Barbara Allen,*
Satellite, Tulsa World

Young D.C. runs a house ad on recruitment in each issue. One section of our application asks teens to express why they want to be a part of a newspaper that is committed to diversity in the newsroom.

While affluent and less diverse schools tend to contact us about internships, I rarely go to such schools for presentations. I usually present on the paper in general and on internships at schools that draw teens from low-income, high-minority neighborhoods. My summer activities include a J-camp for D.C. Parks and Recreation, and outreach to an indie camp that serves housing project kids.

We have National Association of Black Journalists and National Association of Hispanic Journalists members on our board of directors. They are workshop presenters, too. I highly recommend that youth editors—whatever their ethnic/racial identities—join such organizations.

—*Kathy Mannix,*
Young D.C., Washington, D.C.

The two places where I've been a youth editor are both very undiversified cities, with overall ethnic minority populations far smaller than the national average. I've faced smaller pools of students of differing ethnic backgrounds to draw from. Reaching those students has been difficult.

I always try the obvious places to recruit: schools with higher minority populations; organizations and clubs for minority students; and minority conferences. Yet it takes more than just showing them your product and saying they can get involved. You have to prove to them that you are truly interested in their voice. And then you have to earn the trust of the population, which takes time, especially if you're starting from ground zero.

I try to imagine what goes through their minds every time we have a meeting with students and a student of color walks in, looks around and sees a sea of white faces staring back. Then I use what I've seen to inspire me to make their experience a good one. And I've learned the value of comfort in numbers. So I invite them to bring a friend next time.

What helps is the other students' acceptance. Even though we hear so much about racial tensions among students, I see an overwhelming sense of acceptance among the students who have worked for youth sections.

I moved from the paper in the town where I grew up, and where I knew all of the places to reach minority students, to a new city. I learned the value in asking others for help in reaching students. I made it clear to staff members what we want and what we offer. I asked for help from newspaper staff members who go out and talk to schools and those who work with teens in the community. Staff members who have teenage sons and daughters can be a great resource. Asking others for leads has been the single most helpful trick in reaching students of color.

One of my first tasks was recruiting students for the next Our Generation Teen Council. Having met with some degree of success in getting a diverse staff at my former paper in Phoenix through an open application process, I decided to try it in Spokane.

We sent out well over 100 applications and selected 40 or so students for the council based on their applications. Boy, was I stunned and disheartened at the council orientation when every student who walked through the door was white, except for one black girl who was returning for her second year on the council.

My editors had been pounding the word diversity into me for months, and even though I sent applications to places where I believed students of different ethnic backgrounds would find them, and even though I specifically encouraged teachers to suggest names of students of color, my efforts had failed.

After that, I turned to a woman at the paper who does more with the community than anyone. I asked her for help. She provided me the names of some adults who work with students of color. I called all of them and received a half-dozen names of students they recommended. I called the students, pitched the program, mailed them information and expressed how excited we would be to have them on the council. One student joined.

My efforts to diversify the council continued, little by little, bit by bit. We had five minority students on the council five months later.

And knowing that the sheer numbers of students I have from minority populations will probably always be small in comparison, I learned to rethink the definition of diversity. Too often, we see diversity only as the color of faces. Now I'm looking more at diversity of experiences and interests.

I'm changing the structure of our program to open the door to more students from all walks of life. I'm stealing ideas from other youth editors around the country, and I'm not giving up. Diversifying is a never-ending process, but is perhaps the most important tool in making a youth section truly successful.

—Laura Crooks,
former editor of Our Generation, Spokesman-Review, Spokane, Wash.

Organizing your staff

Some youth sections operate as lean, mean fighting machines with a staff of 10. Others rival the size of their parent newspapers with staffs of more than 100 teens.

Whatever size is right for your section, you still have to organize it in a way that best suits what you're trying to accomplish. Here's how some youth sections do it:

Voices

- Weekly, 20-page tabloid insert published by the Reading (Pa.) Eagle
- Approximately 150 teen correspondents who write, illustrate and photograph for the section. Specialty columns (vary according to talents/interests) and open columns any correspondent can write. The 2004-05 staff includes a college life columnist, a political columnist and a sports columnist.
- 4 teen advice columnists who write about problems in their or friends or fellow students' lives.
- 2 teen interns who work 10 hours a week (some administrative, some reporting). Responsibilities include weekly teen-on-street feature and weekly calendar, plus a centerpiece story each month.
- 2 adult editors – assistant editor writes more difficult teen-related stories, coordinates photo shoots, edits Web and other stories.
- 2 teen cartoonists
- 1 adult designer who dedicates about three-quarters of her time to put the section together. Major support from professional photographers who usually shoot the cover, center and many other assignments.
- Major support from promotions department, which has no single person dedicated to the section but does coordinate events including basketball shootout, championship football game and baseball games.
- Major support from advertising department, which sells some ads and coordinates Generation Next Fest each year.

Freestyle

- Weekly, page-and-a-half broadsheet section published in the Lancaster (Pa.) Intelligencer Journal
- About 40 correspondents
- 15 reviewers

- 10 feature writers
- 5 general assignment
- 3 editorial writers
- 1 photographer
- 1 cartoonist

TX

- Weekly broadsheet section published in the Standard-Examiner, Ogden, Utah
- 49 staff members
- 37 writers
- 3 illustrators
- 3 photographers
- 6 interviewers (all sophomores, job is to gather quotes from different schools)

Teen Scene

- Weekly broadsheet section published in the Home News Tribune, East Brunswick, N.J.
- More than 100 on staff list
- 20 to 25 regular contributors (who write the main stories, features, profiles, columns, reviews and poetry)

How to run a meeting

It's the day you've dreamed of.

There they are in the newsroom conference room—your eager, talented, diverse young staffer, make that your loud, splintered, on the brink of anarchy staff. And is someone really dancing over there in the corner?

Your job, at this very moment, is to take control and to run a productive, time efficient meeting that is also fun. It can be done. In fact it has been done hundreds of times. Our talented veterans gladly share their secrets.

Many a youth editor will tell you that the first rule is this: Have an agenda and stick to it.

In your first meeting, you'll want to go over the ground rules: no plagiarism, ethics policies, etc. Likely you'll want to cover some Journalism 101: writing leads, using quotes, interviewing techniques. And you'll want to build a list of potential stories and get them assigned.

It's a lot of ground to cover, and to keep everyone moving right along, some youth editors write their agenda on a flip chart or erase board at the front of the room.

The second rule: Feed them.

Little Debbies are a fave of youth editors as the sugar content practically guarantees a spirited debate. Cookies, pizza and soda are de rigueur. (Some have hopefully offered apples, but they'll likely end up at the copy desk.)

The third rule: Don't make them stay too long.

For training meetings where you might cover writing, ethics, how to interview or any other topics, three hours is about tops. And recruit people from the newsroom as instructors so you aren't droning on for hours.

Brainstorming meetings for story ideas don't need to be as long; time needed will depend on the size of your staff.

In addition, youth editors suggest:

At the first meeting, we always talk about how to come up with story ideas. When we begin talking about how to generate a story idea, story ideas inevitably start popping up because the kids then realize what kinds of things they can write about for the section. When they come to the second meeting, they are better prepared — they've already been looking for ideas and are more likely to bring some with them.

—Kathy Miedema,
former youth editor, Read This!, San Jose Mercury News

One thing we've done when we have larger groups is to do breakout sessions where each group works on certain agenda items and then everyone comes back together to discuss their ideas. It's a good way to kick start a meeting when people are hesitant to talk or have trouble paying attention in a large group.

—*Carmen Musick,*
INK, Kingsport (Tenn.) Times-News

My tip is to learn how to whistle through your teeth. You know, that loud, piercing kind of whistle. When the meeting seems to have “gotten away from you,” one good whistle usually quiets the troops. It certainly scared the heck out of one of our photographers who happened to be in the room while one of my meetings was in progress!

Failing to master that skill, try a call bell. Several taps on the top also brings the room back to order.

One more thing: it also seems to help to hand them a current story budget. Seeing their name and a due date for their story seems to bring on their abilities to focus.

—*Ellen Cornelius,*
Synergy, Carroll County (Md.) Times,
Westminster, Md.

Choose one or two students and put them in charge of the brainstorming part of the meeting. They tend to do a better job of regulating themselves than I do. (This is in a group of 10-16, I don't know that it would work as well in larger groups.) Obviously, the youth editor needs to run the “rules and basics” part. Have handouts. Go over them there; do not trust your teens to read them at home.

—*Jennifer Butler,*
Next Generation, South Florida Sun-Sentinel,
Fort Lauderdale, Fla.

How about a getting-to-know-you ice breaker activity ... age, school, siblings, favorite book, I am most proud of ... that kind of stuff. Break them off into pairs; each one “interviews” the other and then reports the findings to the rest of the group.

—*Melissa Holland,*
Kids Rule!, Frederick (Md.) News-Post

Here's an idea I think I picked up from another youth editor on this list a few years ago. I pair the teens up — make them change seats if they are sitting with a friend — and have them interview each other for about 15 or 20 minutes. Then they stand up and talk about the lead they would write about the other person if they were doing a story. It works amazingly well as an icebreaker and allows us to talk about leads and story focus. . . . I just want them to become comfortable doing an interview and then to start thinking about how to craft a lead.

—*Liz Allen,*
Erie (Pa.) Times-News

I have recently instituted the Daffy Duck Pez of Power. It may be completely dorky and you may want to disregard this, but I've found as my meetings are getting larger, it's hard to keep everyone listening to each other. So, in lieu of a talking stick or something normal (because I'm just not) I've instituted the Pez of Power. I have a Pez dispenser that we pass about.

—*April Helmer,*
Expressions, Express-Times, Easton, Pa.

I always include a time for them to bring up any problems, concerns, etc. that they are having with stories. Maybe they need other kids to help them get some quotes; maybe they don't know who to call or talk to for the story, etc. Sometimes they have lots to talk about during this time; other times not so much. But overall it's a helpful thing.

Sitting in a circle or around a table, seems to help the kids connect with each other more. When we're sitting "classroom style" in rows, people tend to clump up or try to talk to their neighbors.

Go with the flow, is my other advice. Some meetings are highly productive; the writers have lots of great story ideas and are enthusiastic. But every so often, things just don't seem to click — they have no ideas, they aren't very talkative, we get less done. Don't worry too much about those off times — just take it in stride and focus on the big picture.

—*Becky Cairns,*
TX., Standard-Examiner, Ogden, Utah

We always start our meetings by looking at our most recent edition. We talk about everything from layout to content and discuss what worked, what didn't, where we hit the mark and where we need to improve. If any one on the staff has gotten feedback from readers about the edition, we talk about it. There's a whole slew of things we look for and I've found this is a really great way to get the staff "into" the meeting and ready to talk about the budget.

—*Timmi Toler,*
Listen Up, Daily News, Jacksonville, N.C.

Budgeting for staff rewards and expenses

What's in it for teen correspondents? The byline. The clips. The experience working for a *real* newspaper.

That's how many newspapers do it. Others, especially union shops, pay the kids.

When pay isn't an option, youth editors and parent newspapers see to it that young journalists get more than just a sentence or two to put on their college applications—from pizza to paychecks.

These perks don't have to break the bank, either. "I believe you could run a decent youth section for under \$500 a year," says Barbara Allen of Satellite at the Tulsa World, who spends about twice that amount on her staff each year.

Below, find out how Allen and other youth editors budget for staff expenses and rewards.

(For information on youth editor salaries, look in Section I of this handbook.)

FlipSide, Charleston (W. Va.) Gazette

- Weekly section front plus hop page of the Charleston (W.Va.) Gazette
- Monthly 12-page tabloid delivered directly to schools during the academic year (nine issues total)
- Web site
- Budget: \$6,000/year
- Correspondents are paid \$10 per published article, set of photographs (2 or more) and illustration.
- Photographers get free film and processing.
- 13 teachers who oversee distribution of FlipSide Magazine at their schools get \$100 each to use for programs that benefit students (newspaper, yearbook, clubs).
- Rest of budget goes to food for staff meetings, supplies for special events, contest entry fees and promotional items (just bought the first FlipSide T-shirts we've had in several years!).

Teen Scene, Home News Tribune, East Brunswick, N.J.

- Weekly two-page section of the Home News Tribune, East Brunswick, N.J.
- Budget: \$500/month, mostly used to pay correspondents (\$25 for front-page stories, \$15 for anything inside; also pay for photography and illustrations, but not poetry).
- \$30 or so for pizza and soda to serve at meetings.

Satellite, Tulsa World

- Weekly broadsheet section of the Satellite, Tulsa World
- Budget: Around \$980/year
- \$80 for Boy Scouts Exploring charter
- \$300 on pizza, cookies, soda
- \$600 on movie rentals (for reviews)
- \$100 on contest entry fees
- \$100 on Oklahoma Interscholastic Press Association membership

TX, Standard Examiner, Ogden, Utah

- Weekly broadsheet section of the Standard-Examiner, Ogden, Utah
- Stories: main cover, \$35 or more, depending on effort involved, etc.
- Columns/reviews, \$25-\$35
- Color photos: \$40 per photo package; \$25 per single photo. Photographers are reimbursed for film and developing.
- Color illustrations: \$35
- Calendar items: \$2
- Quote assistance: \$5
- Staff meetings: \$5 (mileage)
- Mileage of 28 cents per mile to and from interviews or events. Teens are reimbursed for movie tickets, phone bills, CDs (although they must return the CD for our newspaper's graft auction).

- Concert tickets: \$10 maximum
- Advance approval for expenses is required; receipts must be submitted.

Page One, Tribune Chronicle, Warren, Ohio

- Weekly, 2-page broadsheet of the Tribune Chronicle, Warren, Ohio
- We do not pay our teen staff. The incentive for participation is that we provide lots of training and give them an opportunity to be published.
- The incentive for quality participation is that we offer up to three summer fellowships for high school graduates who have done the best work. These students will earn \$1,000 working in our newsroom between the day after they graduate from high school until they leave for college.
- We do spend some money on the kids, but it is in the form of paying to enter their work in competition, or sending them to workshops and seminars, etc. We also pay unusual expenses encountered while working for us (long-distance phone calls, gas mileage to events, etc.).
- We also buy them small holiday gifts (a movie pass, etc.) and occasionally throw them a party if they have done something collectively that is exceptional (usually pizza and pop at a local restaurant) or take them out to eat if they've done something exceptional individually.
- Also, whenever our newsroom gets stuff in the mail, we'll use it as a reward for a kid who does great work.

The Verge, Florida Today, Melbourne

- Weekly broadsheet section of the Florida Today, Melbourne, Fla.
- Budget: \$250/month
- \$45 (9 Leadership Council members, \$5 each)
- \$60 (4 \$15 Best Buy gift certificates for CD reviews)
- \$40 (4 \$10 Best Buy, Blockbuster or Barnes & Noble gift certificates for multimedia reviews)
- \$40 (8 \$5 Blockbuster certificates — 2 per week for male/female video reviews)
- \$25 centerpiece “best of” reward

- \$20 secondary “best of” reward
- \$10 debate “best of” reward
- \$10 debate “best of” reward

757, The Virginian-Pilot, Virginia Beach

- Weekly broadsheet section of the Virginian-Pilot, Virginia Beach, Va.
- We pay very few of our staffers. Most want to be journalists and most do not yet have the ability to write stories that merit pay. We line-edit all stories, and the writers are basically paid in knowledge.
- When students get to the point that their work is not labor-intensive to edit, they can start making some money. We pay regular free-lance rates, but only to students who turn in work that is comparable to what regular freelancers turn in.
- In college, when students become campus correspondents, they are paid for every story (of course, they have to have demonstrated skills to join this level of reporters), every tip and every feed, again at freelance rates.
- A few exceptions on the high school level: We pay movie reviewers \$20 a review; our regular columnist starts at \$20 and can work up to \$55 a column; and advice columnists make \$35.

Voices, Reading (Pa.) Eagle

- Weekly, 20-page tabloid insert of the Reading (Pa.) Eagle
- Stories: between \$10 and \$25 based on quality (rubric for \$25 follows; it was created by the teen executive board, a group of about 20 most active juniors and seniors).
- Photo: \$10-\$25 per photo based on quality of work, provided they actually had to buy film and didn't just submit photos they had already taken.
- Tickets for movie reviews: \$7
- CD and/or concert reviews: Teens are simply paid for their stories. We do not reimburse for CDs or concert tickets.

Voices rubric

All Voices writers, illustrators and photographers get paid for their work. Voices pay is on a sliding scale of \$10 to \$25, at editor's discretion.

At the request of the Voices Executive Board, the \$25 top pay is reserved for exceptional stories — stories that show the writer went above and beyond the call of duty. Exceptional stories show that the writer did extensive research, conducted many interviews and/or wrote a nearly flawless story.

Missing deadline will automatically reduce your pay.

Here's how you can earn \$25 for your work:

- Turn in your story or artwork on time (by 3:30 p.m. Mondays)
- Include sources for all of the facts, statistics or other information you include in your article. If it is a quote, make sure to have the person's FULL name, grade and school; or for adults, their FULL name and title of their jobs.
- Include direct quotes from relevant people. If possible, get quotes from a diverse group — not just your friends, but people from different grades or schools, teachers, counselors, experts, professors, clergy ...
- For opinion pieces, back up your opinion with facts and examples. Quote people or Web sites or books to support your ideas.
- Make sure all information is factually accurate — names are spelled correctly; numbers are correct; all facts are correct and attributed to someone.
- Stay within your assigned word count (500 to 600 words).
- Make sure your story includes no spelling or grammatical errors.
- Use appropriate voice or person (first person, third person) — meaning that if the story is a feature about Joe Schmo, you focus on Joe and leave yourself out of it.

Awards, rewards, parties and celebrations

Youth editors are a creative bunch, especially when it comes to finding ways to recognize their staffs for a job well done: scholarships, door prizes at meetings, educational opportunities, gift certificates ... and, of course, food.

We feed them for free at the workshops and give them goodies (pens, notebooks, whatever freebies I may have). We give them an end-of-year banquet and thank-you gift. We offer one cash award per high school at the end of each year at their awards assemblies.

—*Wendy Stemple,*
County Highlights, Daily American, Somerset, Pa.

We have food and door prizes at every meeting. The door prizes may be books (received for review by our features editor), free movie passes (an ad exchange here) and other publicity items we've received in the mail (especially from our entertainment editor). Note: Make friends throughout the building and tell them to send freebies your way!

Our publisher also budgets enough money to give each of our seniors a \$20 mall gift certificate at the end of the year. Our contributors get to come back each year until they graduate as long as they don't strike out (three-strike rule on deadlines, unexcused meeting absences, etc.). Anyone with perfect attendance at meetings gets a gift certificate, too.

—*Carmen Musick,*
INK, Kingsport (Tenn.) Times-News

As an indie, teen-produced paper, our structure is quite different from the teen sections in dailies. Young D.C. awards a \$1,000 scholarship to our managing editor and \$50 scholarships to seniors who have served as section editors (news, lifestyle, entertainment, sports, humor), plus the managers of layout and advertising. We call these "book" scholarships.

—*Kathy Mannix,*
Young D.C., Washington, D.C.

I have pizza or subs once in a while at the meetings. We go out for a nice Christmas dinner and end-of-the-year dinner; The Evening Sun puts \$15 toward each student (otherwise they'd all eat lobster tail). I try to take interested students to seminars or YEA conferences. In addition, we give two \$500 scholarships to deserving seniors.

—*Laurie James,*
The Student Sun, Evening Sun, Hanover, Pa.

No monetary rewards, but they still come back for more! We try to have an end-of-the-year pizza and pool party, and sometimes we have cookies and pop at the meetings for special occasions.

—*Barbara Allen,*
Satellite, Tulsa World

We offer pizza and pop at the first and last meetings of the year. We have a drawing for a \$10 Target gift certificate at each meeting. Each time someone does something, they get their name placed in an end-of-year drawing for a \$200 gift certificate. A story with art turned in gets your name in four times, a Sound Off two times, etc. The more you do, the more chance you have of winning the \$200.

—*Tim Bucey,*
Generation Gap, Springfield (Ohio) News-Sun

Training your staff

Most students lack journalism experience

Your staff may be eager, talented and diverse, but it's also likely to be green, raw and wet behind the ears.

Instead of tearing your hair out in despair, look at it this way: Here's your chance to mold your teen staffers into journalists who suit your section's goals. You can train in one marathon workshop, periodic sessions or as you go, tailoring your messages to their needs—and yours. You can do it in person, over the phone or by e-mail. Whatever works for you (and your kids) works.

Don't know where to start? Don't worry. You have plenty of resources at your disposal: your newsroom colleagues; universities in your area; scholastic journalism organizations such as JEA; books, magazines and other publications; and, of course, the Internet. (See the end of this section for some recommendations on training materials and Web sites.)

Last but not least, you have your fellow youth editors, some of whom have offered the tips here to get you started. And if you want samples of training manuals, just post a request to the YEA e-forum. We don't mind sharing!

Writers

Researching a story, finding its angle and asking productive questions are basic to journalism. For young staffers coming out of the classroom into your newsroom, it may help to remind them that the process is not much different than the one used to prepare a class paper.

However, students will need to learn a slightly different way of organizing the material into an interesting piece. Remember the inverted pyramid?

To make your how-to-do-it guides or style manuals truly helpful, include some basic lessons from Journalism 101, such as:

When preparing to do a story, make sure the focus is clearly defined. This will save a lot of time when researching. Also, it helps when formulating questions.

If the focus happens to change, shift the story's research and questions. Keep your questions open-ended when answering the who, what, where, when, why and how.

—Monette Austin,
formerly with Children's Express, Washington, D.C.

We have an introductory workshop during the day in the fall. Our editor, a reporter (who lays out the teen page), and I do the training. We try to have a mid-year workshop as well and bring in speakers such as photography, journalism, AP writers, etc.

—*Wendy Stemple*,
County Highlights, Daily American, Somerset, Pa.

Young D.C. holds meetings on the second and fourth Saturday of the month. One of these meetings involves a training workshop. Because we accept applications year-round, we have a set of the Annenberg/CPB News Writing tapes to lend if someone needs a workshop we've already given. We also have other training materials stored in the newsroom and used one-on-one as needed.

—*Kathy Mannix*,
Young D.C., Washington, D.C.

I hold a five-hour session on a Saturday to give a basic overview of the method, including a tour and lunch. Each of the student editors talks about the types of stories they will be assigning—news, features or opinion. We also have a three-hour session for writers that's more in-depth, touching on AP style, ethics, interviewing and the mission of journalism. One more session I'm hoping to add this year is for artists and photojournalists—bringing in our staff photographers and editorial cartoonist.

—*Laurie James*,
The Student Sun, Evening Sun, Hanover, Pa.

It's a one-on-one thing. I do discuss journalism issues at meetings, but I usually work with the students directly via e-mail or over the phone.

—*Bill Canacci*,
Teen Scene, Home News Tribune, East Brunswick, N.J.

I give each member of my staff a 30-minute crash course in journalism, photojournalism or art, depending on their role. Each of them is required to meet with me personally once before they are given an assignment. This helps me to get to know them and ensures they are paying attention to my "lecture."

Training is conducted at the meetings when I slip it in (using anecdotes, maybe that day's paper, etc.). First stories are carefully edited and changes explained, ideally with the student sitting with me. Same goes with photos.

This is trial by fire—some of the kids are going to get it and provide you with amazing content right away, some aren't. It's your job to realize strengths and weaknesses of each student and use them to your advantage, as far as putting out a good section goes.

—*Barbara Allen,*
Satellite, Tulsa World

Our first meeting of the year is a training session, using a Power Point presentation. Each monthly meeting, tips are given.

—*Tim Bucey,*
Generation Gap, Springfield (Ohio) News-Sun

We try to accept individuals with at least some newspaper/publishing experience. We also hold at least two training session/workshops a year. The sessions consist of reporting, editing and visual/art training from professionals who work at the paper. We also work with the staff one-on-one as much as possible.

—*Robin Floyd Garrett,*
The Edge, Roanoke (Va.) Times

Photographers and illustrators

Some youth editors also offer guidance to the visual journalists on their teen staffs. Here are excerpts from two training manuals:

When you are assigned a photo, be sure to pick up some film from my desk. Shoot a lot—film and processing are cheap. I like you to shoot at least two full rolls per assignment, preferably three.

After you shoot film, you have several options. Generally, you can just give it to me and I'll take care of it. However, if we're short on time, I might have you take care of it yourself.

After your film is processed, you can come up to the Tulsa World and scan it in yourself or I can scan it in for you.

I highly suggest you at least be present to look at your film on a light table and pick your favorite shots. A photo tech will enter your negatives into the system, or you can do it yourselves if you are familiar with our equipment.

Writing cutlines (the information that accompanies the art) is going to be an essential part of your job. Every cutline should be written in present tense. You should say what is going on in the picture and name those in the frame. **NAMES MUST BE SPELLED RIGHT.** Don't mess up here or you aren't going to get any more assignments. Name the people left to right. If they are students, find out what school they go to and what grade they're in.

In short, you are writing a story here. Don't rely on the writer to get the information. When you walk away from a photo shoot, you should know **EVERYTHING EXACTLY** about what just went on. You should be able to write the kind of cutline that wouldn't even need a story to go with it.

Does this mean you're going to have to walk around with a notepad and pen, like a reporter? Absolutely. That's what you are—from this moment forth, you're a photojournalist, not a photographer.

Warning—I do not take kindly to those who mess up photo cutlines. Other than that, I'm pretty easy to get along with. When you turn in art, have your cutline written out and ready to be entered into the computer.

Illustrations can be drawn by hand, on the computer, collages, painted, watercolored—whatever you want to create, I can run. But consider: Newsprint is a very difficult medium in which to have your work reproduced.

What you turn in needs to be, first and foremost, big and solid. That means it needs to have a lot of texture and color. There shouldn't be dead space in your illustration, and if you want it to run all across the cover, your best bet is to make it rectangular. You've seen the page—art that conforms to the shape of our section's cover is preferred. You don't need to make it that big, but if it's going to be small, consider how much we're going to have to blow it up once it's scanned in or photographed.

You have two options for turning in your work. You can e-mail it (but make sure it's saved at a **VERY** high resolution) or you can turn it in by hand. I like to see sketches of your work before you dive in to make sure I think the idea is going to work.

Each illustration works on a case-by-case basis—there really aren't too many rules. Try to keep it free of text and words. We need to let the headlines and the writers do the talking. Also, if there's a natural space in your art where we can print text, all the better. Just try to keep in contact with me about illustrations and we can work together to get the best play for your art.



Award winning photos from TeenScene, Home News Tribune, East Brunswick N.J.

**—Barbara Allen,
Satellite, Tulsa World**

Illustrations—How assignments work:

I will call or e-mail you about an illustration opportunity with details and contact information. You can accept the assignment or pass on it. If you accept, it's up to you to contact the writer for more information to help you come up with an idea for illustration. I'll give you a deadline. Usually, your illustration will be published eight days after the deadline.

How they should look:

Illustrations should be on 8.5 x 11 paper and in black and white unless I tell you otherwise. They will be printed in black and white so chose an appropriate medium. Use ink or go over your work in ink. The illustration shows up better that way.

All illustrations for the Web, cover or center spread should be in color. Your work needs to be labeled with YOUR NAME, GRADE AND SCHOOL and the name of the writer of the article and the date the illustration is supposed to run (eight days after your deadline).

Delivering your work:

You can mail or drop off your work. If you mail it to us, please give it at least three days so that we get it by deadline. You can drop it off ... be sure to put your illustration in an envelope or folder and label it "For Voices" and put your name on it.

Photographs — how assignments work:

I will call you or e-mail you about a photography opportunity. You can accept the assignment or pass on it. If you accept, it's up to you to contact the writer to arrange to take photos. It is your responsibility to arrange transportation to the assignment. Sometimes you can ride along with the writer who is covering the event/story. No ride, no assignment. I'll give you a deadline. Usually, your photos will be published eight days after the deadline.

How they should look:

Use 35 mm and shoot at least one roll. Photographs should be in focus and not dark. You can use point-and-shoot cameras, but please don't use disposable cameras. Always use a flash.

Watch your backgrounds! Be aware of any poles, trees, etc., sticking out of people's heads. A nice, clean background shows off your subject. When using a point-and-shoot camera, be aware that the autofocus focuses for the center of the frame, so while shifting your subject to one side of the frame is more pleasing to the eye, unless some part of your subject is in the middle of the frame, the picture will be back-focused. By moving your subject or part of your subject to the middle of the frame, the autofocus will work correctly.

Get as close as you can. Get really close. Closer!

Changing perspective can make your photos more interesting. Get up high, use a chair or a stepladder. Get down low, but be sure to use fill flash if your subject is against the sky or a light background. Remember, if you have someone look down at you, you are blocking out most of the light to the face. A better placement is to have the subject face the window, so the nice, soft light will hit the face.

Identifying your subjects:

You can do this two ways. If you are photographing a group of people, you can write down info on each person along with a physical description. For example: Mary Smith—red shirt, glasses, long hair, senior, Muhlenberg High School. That way, we can match the description with the photos. Or, you can keep track of each photo you take and write down identification (this is what professional photographers do). That would be like this: Photo 1) Mary Smith, senior, Muhl and Joe Schmo, junior, Muhl; Photo 2) Joe Schmo, junior, Muhl and Mike Jones, 9th grade, Central Cath. Always identify people in pictures from left to right. Put this identification information with your film when you turn it in.

Delivering your work:

It is a good idea to call ahead and let us know that you are dropping off the film or prints. Make sure it is in an envelope with your name and “For Voices” on it. Make sure identification information is with the film or prints. After we get the film processed and the photos entered into our computer, we will return the negatives and/or prints to you. Your work needs to be labeled with YOUR NAME, GRADE AND SCHOOL and the name of the writer of the article and the date the photo is supposed to run (eight days after your deadline).

—Lisa Scheid,
Voices, Reading (Pa.) Eagle

Resources

“The Radical Write” by Bobby Hawthorne

“Journalism Teacher’s Writing Manual” by Bobby Hawthorne

“Creative Interviewing” by Ken Metzler

“When Words Collide” by Lauren Kessler and Duncan McDonald

“Coaching Writing” by Roy Peter Clark and Donald Fry

“The Starting Point: Young Journalists and the Law” by the Student Press Law Center (available from NAA Foundation)

www.naa.org/foundation/yea (Youth Editorial Alliance of the Newspaper Association of America Foundation)

www.highschooljournalism.org (comprehensive site for student journalists and teachers sponsored by the American Society of Newspaper Editors)

www.poynter.org (comprehensive site for professional journalists sponsored by the Poynter Institute — plenty of material that can be adapted for use with teens)

www.turnitin.com (plagiarism prevention site)

www.splc.org (Student Press Law Center site)

www.jea.org (Journalism Education Association site — has an online bookstore under “resources”)

www.columbia.edu/cu/cspa (Columbia Scholastic Press Association)

www.uiowa.edu/%7EQuill-sc (Quill and Scroll Society)

www.studentpress.org (National Scholastic Press Association)

Working with NIE

We all learned it in journalism school—newsrooms and the business side don’t mix. Ever. End of story.

But if you’re in charge of your paper’s youth program, then you’ll soon find out that you need allies throughout your newspaper—not just in editorial, but on the business side as well. Quite frankly, your section’s survival may depend on it. A good place to start is your Newspaper in Education department.

Whether your NIE department is affiliated with circulation, marketing or another part of the newspaper, it can be a valuable asset in helping you build your youth program. After all, who has better access to schools than NIE coordinators?

Your NIE coordinator can help you reach out to students and increase your section’s profile in the community. Best of all, NIE coordinators can get your section into the schools and straight into the hands of the target audience. That increase in circulation is something that’s sure to impress the suits.

So pick up the phone, or better yet, visit your NIE coordinator in person. It could be the beginning of a beautiful friendship.

Below, some youth editors who have braved the big divide tell how their relationships with NIE are paying off for their programs:

It's nice to have an ally and support. We've sort of divided the tasks, like if it's for eighth-graders and younger, NIE will get involved, whereas if it's high school, they will always look to me for suggestions and input. With NIE, we've hosted a songwriting contest (winner got a recording session), a cutline contest (winner got 10 passes to see "Stomp") and we are currently working on a battle of the bands (another recording session). NIE has better community contacts than we do, it seems, so I rely on my NIE liaison as a go-between in the community.

—*Barbara Allen,*
Satellite, Tulsa World

We partnered with our NIE department and our local Barnes & Noble to host a reception for teachers during Teacher Appreciation Week last spring. It was open to all area teachers and gave us an opportunity to hand out literature about our programs while teachers enjoyed cheesecake and coffee on us. I also invite our NIE coordinator to speak to our teens during one of our meetings. She uses it as a time to see what they want from NIE and to "test-market" new products she's considering. Also, she runs a stock market game and we do a story about the winners in INK — talking to the teens, of course, about what they learned, how they made decisions, etc.

—*Carmen Musick,*
INK, Kingsport (Tenn.) Times-News

We have a great relationship with our NIE program. The NIE department helps with recruitment and any correspondence we send to the schools. It also helps organize training sessions and communication with the staff members. In fact, the NIE team has one person dedicated to helping with the business/organizational side of our teen section. Better yet, the NIE team secures a sponsor each school year to pay for distribution of our newspaper (and The Edge) to local high schools. This makes the Edge available to high school students and they don't have to pay anything for it. This program adds more than 2,000 papers to the NIE program's weekly circulation.

—*Robin Floyd Garrett,*
The Edge, Roanoke (Va.) Times

NeXt is important in our NIE program, which has its biggest circulation day on Wednesday. I have collaborated with NIE coordinator Cindy Sterner more and more in recent years, including a successful NeXt Book Club launched this spring with the help of school librarians in all eight counties of our circulation area.

Every school library received two free copies of the book, “The Thief Lord” by Cornelia Funke. We promoted the book club in NeXt but NIE-participating schools promoted it and we ended up with 40 book reviews from young readers, many of which were printed in NeXt, and every reviewer received a prize.

As part of our book club this fall, we are working to bring an author to Buffalo who would visit a local school, address NIE teachers and librarians and young writers. A serialized version of one of his stories will run in NeXt over five weeks.

NIE runs two sportswriting camps every year and we usually cover one of them with a story in NeXt. NeXt is working with NIE on some election-related material as well.

Whenever NeXt has a strong package of particular interest to schools, NIE makes an extra effort to circulate more copies to try to attract more schools to the NIE program. This year, we also began a Question of the Week in NeXt, with responses directed to our Classroom Connection, a homework hotline also run through NIE.

*—Jean Westmoore,
NeXt, Buffalo News*

Some youth sections are handled by the NIE department. Here’s how it works at one newspaper:

As NIE coordinator, I do all the contact work, scheduling and planning for the teen page. The editorial staff supplies support and layout and space. As NIE, I offer classroom presentations and tours to the teachers. For the 10th anniversary and now again this year for our 15th, I’m planning a “reunion” page or two featuring past writers, what they are doing now, and have them answer a question of the week.

*—Wendy Stemple,
County Highlights, Daily American, Somerset, Pa.*

Finally, features editor Erin Orr (a former youth editor) and former NIE coordinator Edie Weaver from the State Journal-Register in Springfield, Ill., offer their top 10 list of tips to the NIE coordinators out there who want to cultivate a relationship with the newsroom. ...

- 1. Communication.** That this is number one on the list should come as no surprise. Send e-mails, follow up with phone calls, drop by the newsroom until you get the attention of the youth editor/features editor/managing editor and hold it for more than 30 seconds. Which brings us to ...
- 2. What DO you do?** Most newsroom staff doesn’t know or understand what NIE coordinators do. Spell it out.

- 3. Establish a variety of contacts.** Don't rely on that one relationship with the youth editor. Cultivate relationships with a few different people in the newsroom. The more people who understand what you do, why you do it and how it plays a part in building readership, the more advocates and allies you'll have.
- 4. Learn how the newsroom works.** The more informed you are about the process of reporting, story writing, and how stories and photos are played, the better you can knowledgeably speak the language.
- 5. Read the newspaper.** Demonstrate a working knowledge of what's in the newspaper on a regular basis. You'll be better poised to pitch projects to people in the newsroom—and you'll gain their respect.
- 6. Explore newsworthy topics of interest to all age groups:** 9/11, elections, weather, anything special about your city/region/state, etc. Explain how these topics will be of interest to schools, and what role the newsroom can play.
- 7. Get feedback.** Ask your teachers: What parts of the paper do they use in the classroom? What NIE projects have they used? Which ones did they dump or ignore? Why? Bring those results back to the newsroom.
- 8. Be dogged.** Don't take "No" for an answer. So your first, second, third, etc., pitch is shot down. Do what the best reporters do: Never give up.
- 9. Engage.** Invite different members of the newsroom to be part of various outreach events, be it career fairs, speaking to classes or job shadowing. Key: Give serious thought to which reporter or photographer or editor would be best for different events. The religion reporter is likely ill suited to speak to students wanting the lowdown on sportswriting.
- 10. Don't be intimidated.** Journalists are people, too — no matter what you've heard.

Working with teachers

Some youth editors collaborate with teachers from their local schools to provide the training that young staff members need. This can be a boon for those with responsibilities beyond the teen section, but it can come with a price: possible censorship and prior review.

Here, one veteran youth editor shares her experience:

In the early years of our program (which started its 14th year in fall 2004), a teacher from each of the high schools in our circulation area helped to advise correspondents. The teachers assisted with brainstorming for story ideas, did preliminary editing on articles and made sure students met

monthly deadlines. They also supervised circulation of the section at their schools and saw to it the students were available when I arrived at schools for monthly meetings.

The advisers were selected by their principals and were usually English, yearbook or media teachers. They were paid \$150 per semester for their efforts.

The teachers' help was invaluable in the first few years of our program. But their responsibilities lessened considerably as I became more comfortable with the job.

Because the magazine (now one of three components of our teen program) is circulated directly to schools at the "will and pleasure" of two county school boards, teachers sometimes were held accountable for content by their supervisors. Censorship occasionally (and routinely in a few cases) was the unhappy result. It got to the point that students from some schools were submitting directly to me and bypassing their advisers entirely.

Budget cuts eventually put an end to the adviser system. It came down to paying the kids or paying the teachers, and I thought it was more important to pay the kids.

—*Marina Hendricks*,
FlipSide, Charleston (W.Va.) Gazette

Creating youth content

Editing

The deadline has passed, and your staff came through with flying colors. What do you do with this pile of stories that's staring you in the face?

We're not going to lie. Editing is, without a doubt, the hardest part of being a youth editor. You have to figure out a way to preserve your writers' voices while meeting the standards of good journalism. One false move and you could kill a teen's enthusiasm for newspaper writing forever ... or erode the credibility of your youth section and newspaper.

So before you even start, think. Think long and hard about the kind of editor you want to be. These are some of the questions you should ask yourself:

Is AP style my be-all and end-all? Am I a stickler for grammar, spelling and punctuation? Do I live by the inverted pyramid? Do I live by the five Ws and the H? How do I feel about slang? How do I feel about first-person? How many sources will I require? How will I handle Internet research? What words do I consider "bad"? Can I give my writers leeway to break the rules when the situation calls for it?

And the most important questions of all: How much time do I have? Will I handle rewrites myself and risk losing authors' voices? Or will I send articles back to the authors and risk never seeing their stories again?

Every youth editor handles editing differently. Read on:

It depends on the kid. Sometimes, the copy is clean. When I see a story from a student, I can tell if they read a newspaper on a regular basis, and I can also tell if they are naturally gifted as writers.

I have many teens who do not want to be journalists, but they do enjoy speaking their mind, writing music reviews, etc. There's nothing wrong with that, but I have to tighten up their copy. I do go over these issues with them, and I do see improvement as they continue writing, but they will never be as smooth as someone who has natural ability.

For those students, I work on improving their copy by talking to them about the importance of finding additional sources, of going more in-depth on a topic, of turning an idea into a story. I work



Award-winning, first-person story from TeenStar, The Kansas City Star

with these students closely because I know they have the desire to go to Northwestern or Syracuse or some of the top J schools. These are also the students who usually volunteer to write our front-page stories.

There's no secret to editing teen copy, just like there's no secret to editing professional copy. The trick is to make sure you don't turn teen copy into something that sounds like an adult. I go out of my way to try to keep their voice in the story. After all, this section is for them, and their peers.

—Bill Canacci,
Teen Scene, Home News Tribune, East Brunswick, N.J.

Itry to train teens who will be editing their peers to strive to preserve the voice of each reporter. Insist, I-N-S-I-S-T, that teens check the spelling of every name used in an article and mark checked names with a cq.

Also, learn the areas where AP and MLA style diverge: Tell them newspapers are passive voice-free zones; commas and quotation marks are frequently handled differently.

—Kathy Mannix,
Young D.C., Washington, D.C.

With the explosion of the Internet, many of our stories rely on information found on the Web. Because anyone can post anything on the Internet, reporters and editors are asked to verify information with a phone call to a related source or to the organization itself.

Nothing replaces keeping up with an issue through more traditional newspapers and magazines. Subscribe to a few large daily newspapers and smaller local publications. Get kids to monitor a certain topic and clip related articles. It can take a month or so before the story is produced, but the background work will be in a file already.

When stories are based on surveys or polls, reporters and editors are encouraged to look at the results carefully. Who sponsors the poll? Is there some sort of benefit for those filling out the survey?

—Monette Austin,
former Children's Express editor, Washington, D.C.

My main method of editing is via e-mail. The kids turn in their stories, I read them, make suggestions or comments and send them back for changes.

My first objective is to point out the good things in the story. If the writer has a great lead, or a super ending, or uses tons of quotes or sources, I will comment on that. Praise is a good motivator and making note of what they do well will hopefully encourage them to keep doing it! Even if the story needs a lot of work, find something positive to comment on — even if it's just the story idea itself.

When asking questions regarding information in the story, I usually make a list of questions so it's easier and more clear-cut for the writer to respond (i.e., 1, 2, 3, etc.). When I make suggestions, I do it the same way—or sometimes I put the question/comment in the story itself, in CAPITAL LETTERS, so they can see what I'm referring to and where.

With suggestions, I try (when I have time) to give them examples of what I'd like them to work on.



TX, Standard-Examiner, Ogden, Utah

For instance, one common problem is kids stringing quote after quote together in a kind of list—which doesn't read well. So, I'll suggest they try alternating the formatting of the quotes and give them an example:

“I love these new Italian charm bracelets,” said Amber Frey, a senior at Fremont High.

Cindy Smith, a Northridge High junior, said, “I have more than 200 charms — I'm going crazy over this.”

“I never go out of the house without my bracelet,” said Megan Dunn, a sophomore at Weber High.

But senior Tim Jones at Viewmont High said, “The bracelets are dumb. I hate them and I won't date girls who wear them!”

As much as possible, I try to keep the students' words and voice intact in the story. If a story needs major changes or just doesn't work out, I always talk to the writer about that and work with her on how to improve it (with a phone call, or maybe in an e-mail message). If the story just needs minor

editing, I don't always point out every single correction.

We generally follow AP style, although there are some exceptions. Although I want them to be creative, it is a certainty that all newspaper writers need to learn the required style. To help the students learn style, we talk about various points in our staff meetings or hand out worksheets on common mistakes I see in their copy.

One frustration is that it never seems like there is enough time to do editing, or work individually with the students the way you might like to. I'm interested in learning about how other youth editors handle this, or how they work with and train their staffs because I'm sure there are things we could improve on.

—Becky Cairns,
TX, Standard-Examiner, Ogden, Utah

With a roster of correspondents that can be as many as 150, we have to work mostly through e-mail critiques. Some critiques are post-editing (kind of what I did to your piece and why); some are comments on drafts that are sent back for revision. Some pieces receive no critique. I also send back way-too-long pieces (30 inches when our general guide is 15 inches) to the teen for cutting, with advice on what may be pertinent.

The problem with e-mail is that your words can hurt, discourage, be forwarded or printed out. E-mail just comes across differently than a spoken exchange. The reader of the e-mail may perceive something that isn't there or they may react to a critique by flaming. Rant a little to yourself and always take the high road. Be helpful and try to be consistent.

Editing teens required me to learn to talk about the craft of journalism, answering questions that I hadn't considered in years. In a teen's story, I change "exclaimed" or "declared" to "said." Now, why did I do that? It flies in the face of everything they have been taught about writing in English class, so I have to have a pretty good reason.

The same goes for personal writing. Teens can do some great personal pieces and research shows that teen readers enjoy those kinds of pieces. In my newsroom, personal writing is considered unprofessional. But teens read *Rolling Stone* and other magazines and wonder why they can't put themselves into the story. The challenge for a teen editor is to explain the difference between good and bad (and lazy) first-person pieces.

Ideally, in guiding the teen writers, I try to keep in mind what our teen readers like, where the teen writers are at in terms of their development as writers and where I want them to be.

Also, I play to their strengths, at least for starters. Some kids write great movie reviews and CD reviews, but really don't want to have to interview ANYONE—or can't do it well. Some will write about vegetarians because it is something they care about, but wouldn't touch a story on student council.

Use their interests to develop the best piece of journalism. To me, that means encouraging the vegetarian to go deeper into a subject, to interview other teens representing a variety of points of view.

Of course, there are days when we all fall short of the ideals. Kids miss deadlines; kids completely forget they have stories due. I slog through copy that has "When I asked her ... she said," —copy that should be better.

I have no answer for what to do except to keep trying, assess what went wrong and focus on the great things that your writers have accomplished. Oh, and don't write a policy that you can't keep consistently.

—Lisa Scheid,
Voices, Reading (Pa.) Eagle

The work of Voices writers is evaluated according to the following editing scoresheet:

Rate each area below using this scale: 10 = perfect; 9 = above average; 8 = average; 7 = below average; 6 = poor; 5 = halfway; 4 = almost halfway; 3 = somewhat; 2 = barely noticeable; 1 = almost nothing.

1. The lead.

Does it have strong, interesting first words? Does it arouse interest?

score: _____

comments: _____

Does it summarize or hint at the story's subject and tone?

score: _____

comments: _____

Total lead score: /20 points

2. Read through the entire story.

Does it hang together? Does it have good transitions?

score: _____

comments: _____

Are paragraphs or information arranged in effective, logical order? Are the most important elements first?

score: _____

comments: _____

Is the meaning clear? Is the subject clearly identified, including the subject's authority to speak about a subject?

score: _____

comments: _____

Are all the facts here? Have facts been cross-checked so everything adds up correctly?

score: _____

comments: _____

Is the story properly developed?

score: _____

comments: _____

Total read-through score: /50 points

3. Reread the story for specifics.

Concise wording (not unnecessarily wordy); lack of repetition; precise wording (the best words used to convey meaning).

score: _____

comments: _____

Are quotes accurately attributed (Don said)?

score: _____

comments: _____

Are quotes accurately punctuated (“Please,” Wendy said.)?

score: _____

comments: _____

Has the “When asked, she said” format been avoided?

score: _____

comments: _____

Are opinions attributed?

score: _____

comments: _____

Are there sufficient quotes?

score: _____

comments: _____

Total specifics score: /60 points

4. Reread the story for mechanics.

Spelling

score: _____

comments: _____

Journalistic style

score: _____

comments: _____

Sentence structure

score: _____

comments: _____

Grammar

score: _____

comments: _____

Total mechanics score: /40 points

TOTAL SCORE (add up all categories): /170 points

Using e-mail

For youth sections in less populated areas, e-mail can be a lifesaver. Teen staffers can interview sources for stories without racking up long-distance charges or worrying about transportation. An e-mail transcript also makes it that much more likely that sources are quoted accurately.

Of course, e-mail is not without its drawbacks. Teen journalists sometimes rely on it to the point that they avoid interviewing sources in person. And if the sources aren't trustworthy ... well, you know what a nightmare that can be.

Here's how some youth editors handle the e-mail issue:

I don't have a problem with it. Often, I feel that e-mailed answers are the most secure to not be misquoted.

—*Maureen Tisdale,*
formerly of *The Verge, Florida Today, Melbourne*

We allow it here on a limited basis, because sometimes it is the best option for students who live in outlying areas. The Voice staffers seem to understand it is the exception rather than the rule, though, and whenever possible to talk with the person on the phone or face-to-face.

—*Erin Orr,*
The Voice, State Journal-Register, Springfield, Ill.

I don't really have a problem with it, as long as the reporter has done her or his homework, talked with at least some sources face-to-face or by phone, and it notes in the story that the response came in an e-mail interview. It's the modern world in which we live, and I imagine it will be THE main form of communication in the years ahead.

—*Dave Smalley,*
MyLine/it!, Free Lance-Star, Fredericksburg, Va.

Our policy for the newsroom is to note when someone is interviewed via e-mail. The same rules apply to students.

—*Lorraine Eaton,*
former youth editor, *757. Virginian-Pilot, Virginia Beach*

There are a number of reasons why e-mail sometimes works better than a phone call for these younger folks. Lots of them have access to e-mail at times they don't have access to, or are available to, use the phone. For instance, they can respond to an e-mail during study hall when they have gone to the library where they can access the Internet. They wouldn't be able to access a phone at that time. If they have an after-school job or practice of some sort, they may not get home until after 7 p.m. and then may have limited availability or access to the phone.

That is why I think kids have turned to e-mail as a way to interview. They can type up their questions at any time of the day or night they are able to access the Internet. Their sources can respond the same way.

One small thing to note: If they use this method of gathering information, they need to make sure that it really came from who they think it came from. That may sound a little convoluted, but here's my experience. Reporter interviews subject via e-mail; prints out responses and incorporates them into story; paper is published; subject comes to class saying he never said those things; I ask writer; writer shows me printout. Next thing I know, the parent is calling.

It was a controversial subject and sometimes kids will back off and deny they said things under pressure from peers or parents. In this case, a friend was using the kid's e-mail account and actually responded as the kid we quoted. The other kid was identified and said he said what we printed. We printed a correction in the next issue.

Long story short, e-mailing for interviews may give rise to some issues you won't face if your reporters only do face-to-face interviews and likely wouldn't be an issue with telephone interviews.

—*Sandy Woodcock*,
Newspaper Association of America Foundation
(former high school journalism teacher)

Story ideas and suggestions

Ideas naturally come to some teens, while others seem to suffer from perpetual writer's block. In that respect, teen journalists aren't much different than their adult counterparts.

You have the advantage, though, because you already know what to do: Keep a story idea file!

To get you started, we offer this list of “evergreens” and “seasonals” (some of which are inspired by winning entries in past YEA content award contests):

- | | |
|--|--|
| Abstinence and virginity | Dealing with divorce |
| Abusive relationships | Depression |
| Activism | Discrimination |
| Adoption | Dissection |
| AP/dual credit classes | Diversity |
| April Fool’s Day | Driving — <i>driving lessons/driver’s ed; getting a license; car insurance; owning your own car; maintenance</i> |
| Boy/Girl Scouts | Drug and alcohol use |
| Back-to-school — <i>freshman fears; hot fashions; new rules/classes/programs/teachers; dress code; getting back in the groove</i> | Drug testing |
| Blogging | Eating disorders |
| Cell phones and other electronic gadgets | Exchange students |
| Cheating | Extracurricular activities — <i>band, sports, clubs, student council, youth groups</i> |
| Computers and the Internet | Extreme sports |
| Community theater | Fashion — <i>seasonal, retro, do-it-yourself, thrift/secondhand, accessories, faux pas, formal ... and don’t forget the guys!</i> |
| College — <i>college visits; admissions process; financial aid/scholarships; choosing a college; expectations and fears; being away from home; dorm room decor</i> | Gambling |
| Copycat friends | Graduation — <i>policies for the ceremony (dress code, prayer); last days of high school; senior skip day; senior memories; class ranking system; speeches/speakers; senior trips.</i> |
| Curfews | Halloween — <i>how older teens celebrate; vandalism; costumes.</i> |
| Dating — <i>interracial or same-sex couples; blind dates; dating rules; breaking up; flirting; asking someone out; public displays of affection</i> | Hazing |
| Day in the life of ... | Health issues (<i>ADHD, diabetes, etc.</i>) |
| Dealing with death | Home-schooling |
| Dealing with difficult teachers | |

- Homework
- Homosexuality
- Language classes — *offerings; usage; applications.*
- Local bands
- Local crime
- Mainstreaming special education students
- Marijuana legalization
- Mass retailers (*Wal-Mart, Target, etc.*) vs. *malls*
- Music downloading
- Media reviews
- Parental relations
- Peer pressure
- Prom — *finding a date; good/bad themes; formal wear; when to start preparing; how to cut costs; what to do before and after; showcase evening from start to finish*
- Reality TV
- Religion — *religious minorities; prayer in schools; religious clubs; religion in relation to larger issues (i.e., same-sex marriage); finding religion; atheism.*
- Retro trends
- Road rage
- Role models
- Rowdy sports fans
- School safety/security
- Senior year — *expenses, senioritis, senior trip, etc.*
- Sex education in schools
- Siblings
- Sleep issues — *bad habits; not getting enough; how to improve your sleep; how not enough/too much affects daily life*
- Smoking
- Standardized tests
- Student profiles — *athletes, artists, leaders, brains (but just about everyone has a story to tell)*
- Summer jobs — *how to get one; what they teach you; best/worst ones; internships.*
- Summer reading
- Sweet 16
- Teen clubs
- Teen pregnancy and parenting
- Title IX
- Twins, triplets, etc.
- Unusual hobbies
- Vacation — *popular travel spots; surviving family vacations; road trips.*
- Vegetarians
- Violence and the media
- Volunteerism

The poetry and creative writing option

In addition to stories, photos and illustrations, some youth sections include creative writing. This helps youth editors increase the diversity of youth voices in the publication, because many young people enjoy writing short stories and poems. In fact, it's such a popular feature that most teen magazines include pages of reader-submitted creative writing.

But, a word of caution is needed.

In youth publications, a regular page devoted to poetry can be a wonderful thing. It's an easy way to fill space, and an excellent means of attracting writers who might not otherwise contribute to the section.

However, poetry pages also can be the bane of a youth editor's existence. Plagiarism is all too common. Over the years students have claimed credit for song lyrics, poems published in national magazines like *Seventeen*, and poems that were actually written by their peers.

Sometimes, students believe the rules of libel, ethics and good taste do not apply to poetry. Our *Teen* program began in 1991, and over the years I have dismissed only one student from the staff. An otherwise promising and trustworthy writer, she chose to express her dislike of a fellow student through a poem she submitted under a pseudonym. The wronged student did not file a libel suit. We were lucky.

If you want to include poetry in your teen publication, here are some guidelines:

1. Ask poets to include basic information with their work: full name, school, grade level, home address and home phone number. This is just a precaution so you have documentation in case there is a question about the author.
2. If you have a good working relationship with schools in your area, ask teachers to screen and sign poems submitted by their students. Accept only poems that come directly from teachers.
3. If you really want to go all out, draw up a poetry submission form for distribution to schools in your area. Include spaces for the poet's personal information (see no.1 above) and a teacher's signature. At the bottom, have the student sign his/her name under the statement, "I verify that the attached poem is my own work."
4. If you prefer to work directly with writers, verify each poetry submission with a follow-up phone call to the author. Or, mail each author a verification form (see no. 3 above) and don't publish the poem unless it is returned.
5. Do not publish poems under pseudonyms.
6. Publish your guidelines for poetry submissions in each issue.

7. Don't ignore plagiarists. Call or send a letter to those who submit the work of other people as their own. Use this opportunity to teach the teen it is not OK to claim authorship. Getting caught will teach him or her a valuable lesson and maybe prevent them from making the same mistake in the future.

—*Marina Hendricks,*
FlipSide, Charleston (W.Va.) Gazette

Using young people as designers

In general, youth sections are designed by professional staff members. However, the Orlando Sentinel experimented for a time with using a teen staffer to help design its youth section, then known as Rave. Here's how it worked:

The correspondent was a high school freshman who was already proficient in Adobe Photoshop and Adobe Illustrator when he applied for the position. He actually applied to be a writer but listed his graphic experience on the application, so he ended up doing both for the section. We decided to pay for graphic work the same way we pay for photos and stories—\$15 per illustration or page designed.

The student came in most Fridays after school and stayed for three to four hours. We usually focused on something for the front page—an art headline or an illustration. If time permitted, we also tackled an art headline for the movie review on the other color page. The student knew the topics ahead of time, so he had thought about what he might want to do to illustrate the subject.

When he first arrived at the Sentinel, we traded ideas and came up with a plan. Then the student headed back to the graphics department where the programs he needed were located. He knew the artists, and they were great about answering questions for him. Although he was well-versed in the programs, he didn't know things particular to a newspaper, such as how to allow for darkening color on the presses or at what resolution a photo must be saved.

Working with a student artist took time. I had to go back and regularly check his progress to make sure we were on the same track and that he was focused on the task. I couldn't afford to let him waste time because once he left on Fridays, his input was finished. If there was a problem with his work, I either had to fix it myself, get an artist to fix it or scrap it altogether.

I wanted his work to appear in print because it increased student participation in the section. In addition, this student was talented and produced some great work, which drew in more readers. We ended up adding a question about graphic experience to our correspondent applications in hopes of finding even more talent.

—*Kristin Ford,*
Flipside!, Orlando Sentinel

Readership surveys

Many newspapers rely on readership surveys to get feedback about who is reading the paper, which sections they read and what opinions they have about content. The editorial staff then can consider the information collected in the survey as they make coverage decisions. Marketing and promotions staffers also can use survey information to prepare campaigns.

Youth editors can conduct their own formal or informal readership studies, or they can work with other departments to learn more about who is reading their publications. As examples, we offer two different approaches:

For 12 years, the *Virginian-Pilot* conducted a statistically sound survey of graduating high school seniors. At first, we did the project out of the newsroom and asked schools to distribute the surveys in homerooms.

Our marketing department handled the survey for the last decade. The surveys, which covered everything from drug use to post-high-school plans and attitudes on race, were distributed in random senior homerooms. The last dozen questions were about readership with specific questions about our youth section.

We used the results of the surveys as the centerpiece stories in our graduation coverage. But the biggest benefit was that we had statistically accurate local information about local teens that we could use in stories throughout the year. The new FERPA law put an end to this survey. However, marketing surveys still can be conducted if no personal questions are asked.

—Lorraine Eaton,
Virginian-Pilot, Virginia Beach, Va.

The Kansas City Star's questionnaire

Youth editor Bill Norton has used the following questionnaire with his TeenStar advisory board.

The answers I receive provide a sort of “reality check” for me. I can also use the information I receive from the first section to promote teen readership both inside and outside the newspaper.

The second section gives me information that I can share with the marketing and advertising people at our paper. The last two sections help me to decide what to write about and help with the design and positioning of the section.

Picking your brain, one more time

Name: _____

Birthday: _____

E-mail: _____

S E C T I O N O N E

—The Kansas City Star

1. Pretend The Kansas City Star is a person, not a newspaper. Now ask yourself, would this person be a man or a woman?
2. How old would this person be?
3. What would she or he be wearing?
4. What kind of car would this person drive?
5. What would he or she be like at a party?
6. Now, pretend TeenStar is a person, not a newspaper page: Now ask yourself, would this person be a man or a woman?
7. How old would this person be?
8. What would she or he be wearing?
9. What kind of car would this person drive?
10. What would he or she be like at a party?
11. Does your household subscribe to The Star?
12. Does anyone in your family buy single copies of The Star? What day?
13. Do you read The Star?
14. What for or why?
15. Where do you see The Star? (circle one) Home? School? Other (describe)
16. How many days a week do you read the paper?
17. What days do you read the paper?
18. Why those days?
19. When: before or after school?

20. How many minutes do you spend reading the paper?
21. Do you read TeenStar? If yes, where? (circle one) Home? School? Other (describe)
22. When do you read it? The day it appears? Later?
23. Do you have to look for it or do your parents give it to you?
24. Is reading a newspaper old-fashioned?
25. Is it something only older generations do?
26. Please suggest contests TeenStar could stage for our readers:
27. We want to do more surveys and polls. Suggest several topics:
28. Should TeenStar movie reviewers rate each film using stars?

S E C T I O N T W O

How do you spend your day?

Think back to your average school day. Now, starting from when you awaken, describe when and from where you get your information.

Example:

5:30 a.m. – Alarm clock goes off. Slap on headphones to listen to Breakfast Brothers on 103 JAMZ while shower and shave and that other stuff. Takes 25 minutes. Over bran flakes and skim milk, read The Star sports section and editorials. Half hour maybe.

6:30 a.m. – Drive to work. Takes 20 minutes. Listen to NPR ... blah, blah.

Go through the day. Jot down any time you're reading or plugged into a source of information (radio, TV, newspapers, magazines, telephone, Internet, e-mail, chat rooms, etc.) and how much time you spend at each, on average. (If you record television shows to watch later, include the day and time and the show.)

On the weekend, describe any changes.

S E C T I O N T H R E E

What do you like to read?

Rank the following categories: 1—most important; 2—next most important; etc.

- ___ Advice column, from someone who can answer your questions
- ___ Teen horoscope
- ___ Movie reviews by teens

- Current events stories, written so they are relevant to teens
- Hotline phone numbers
- Classified ads for teens
- Stories dealing with teen life
- College articles
- Weekly schedule of events
- Polls and surveys
- High school sports news
- Music reviews
- Top 10 lists, like movies or video games or music
- Comics
- Fashion news
- Q&A
- Opinion columns

S E C T I O N F O U R

How and when would you read it?

If you could chose TeenStar's format, would you prefer:

- A page inside the feature section
- A page inside the news section
- To have the stories and photos of TeenStar writers scattered throughout the paper
- A cover page of the feature section one day a week
- A separate section

If you prefer a separate section, should it be a

- Broadsheet (like the newspaper is now) or a
- Tabloid (like the Preview section)
- Would it be a weekly?
- Or a monthly?

If it were a weekly, what day would it appear? _____

Promoting and marketing

(Or like you don't have enough to do already!)

These matters of marketing and promotion may seem optional, colorful ice cream sprinkles type things.

Let us be clear about this: Getting the word out about your section internally as well as to the community you serve is critical to your success.

“Teens are far more susceptible than other segments of the market to promotion and marketing,” says Suzanne H. Phillips, senior vice president of Belden Associates in Dallas, a firm that conducts marketing research for newspapers. “They’ve got to constantly be reminded about why they should pick up teen products.”

Internal promotion helps your colleagues and management understand and appreciate what you are doing; external promotion attempts to attract readers to your section.

Marketing builds image.

Internal promotions

“Woe to the youth editor, the visionary who sees potential where seasoned newshounds see a wasteland of no-account teenagers. When you take this job, you must be prepared for being your own best cheerleader.” That good advice comes from Carol Robidoux, former youth editor at the Bucks County (Pa.) Courier Times.

The first thing you can do may not seem like a promotion at all—making your staff useful to the rest of the newsroom, either as primary sources or sources for sources. Hand out their phone numbers and e-mails including which school they attend along with a copy of your policy about whether your young staffers may be quoted in your newspaper. (It’s OK some places, not in others.)

The next opportunity to promote yourself will probably be via fan mail. When your first piece arrives, brag to everyone from your staff (of course) to co-workers and managing editor all the way up to the publisher. Show them their investment is resonating with readers.

Another opportunity comes from touting those awards you and your staff will be winning, the ones mentioned in Section 7. If you win something and have a company newsletter or Web site, write up an announcement (and don’t hold back on the accolades!) and get the news out there. If there’s no internal news conduit, write letters to your boss, and her boss and her boss. Make sure that key people in advertising, marketing and Newspapers in Education also get the message.

It's well-deserved praise, and because your job is so specialized, it might go unnoticed otherwise. And a far-reaching, multi-departmental broadcast might start some synergy elsewhere in the organization.

Here's some words of wisdom:

Our youth section, *Satellite*, has been going strong for more than five years now. Early on, I focused on promoting the section within my own newsroom, because I didn't know how veteran reporters would feel about a bunch of kids running around on their turf, with low-rise jeans and flip-flops complicating the issue.

Thankfully, almost everyone was pleased to see young people taking an early interest in their profession.

Within a short time, writers and editors began to see the teens as an asset. Suddenly we had a resource we didn't have before. When there was a chemistry lab explosion at one of our private Catholic high schools, we were able to e-mail photographs of a chaotic campus so our teens could identify the students and administrators running around. One of our most famous stories happened when, at a party, a student stabbed three others, one fatally. Within two hours, we had pictures of the three victims and the suspect, which our teen staffers provided from yearbooks and senior pictures.

Sources were easy to find when our business department wanted to do a series on video games and who played them. When we needed photographs of teen smokers, our students showed our photographers the right places to find kids puffing away. On two occasions, area teachers have been charged with felonies and we've gotten photos of them from yearbooks. When a young coach hid a video camera in the girls' locker room, that school's students refused to discuss the case with any media outlet—except the *Tulsa World*, because we had students in that school. The staff is often pleasantly surprised at how far-reaching student influence can be.

**—Barbara Allen,
Satellite, *Tulsa World***

Find out when your marketing department meets to discuss circulation, marketing and advertising ideas, etc. In the meantime, contact some marketing research company oriented to journalism (Teen Research Unlimited is a good one and NAA's 2004 report titled *Teengauger* is an excellent resource).

Recreate graphs, charts, statistics, etc. Marketing and advertising types love that stuff. They will jump on your enlightening information and incorporate it into their next presentation to the bigwigs.

I didn't need their support when we published monthly, but now that I'm trying to publish weekly, I do. So we've developed mockups for the type of advertisers we think they could target. The mockups have been presented to our company's senior leadership team and the advertising

leadership team. Next, we go to the ad reps. You must become your own marketing rep, gather research (i.e., teen spending and readership habits), and write up official proposals, preferably in nice binders. Ad and marketing folks really like those.

—*Lori Lancaster,*
The Herald, Everett, Wash.

At news meetings, I always pitch what’s on my cover. Usually, they give me a skybox, but from time to time, they give us a “billboard,” which lets us print the first part of the story on A1, usually with a picture or even the cover of the section.

—*Bill Canacci*
Teen Scene, Home News Tribune in East Brunswick, N.J.

Sell yourself and sell your kids. If it’s good, don’t be afraid to let the higher ups know it. And, endlessly sell their stories to the mainsheet pages. Other editors will begin to see what you see and will appreciate the opportunity to use the good stuff on their pages—plus, it helps target younger readers—which is what we’re all trying to do.

—*Toni Guagenti*
757, The Virginia-Pilot, Virginia Beach

External promotions

External promotions include everything from rack cards to handing out frisbees sporting your section’s logo to talking to local journalism classes. Anything to get the word out.

Here are some ideas from the field:

Besides producing several promotional items, we regularly hang posters in high schools. We partnered with USA Weekend to host a regional leg of the John Lennon Teen Songwriting contest, and we paired with a local theater booking group to host a “cutline” contest — the students with the most creative photo caption to go along with a cast photo of “STOMP” (with members flying through the air with sticks) won 10 tickets to the show and a school visit from the troupe.

Our students have also participated in a variety of outside activities. For example, several students mentored underprivileged middle school students in a program called “Girls Unlimited.” Several

female seniors spent a morning at an area university speaking to prominent Oklahoma women on issues facing adolescent girls.

I regularly speak to schools and academic groups about writing, newspapering and Satellite – including a National Honor Society induction ceremony, a young writers contest reception and several high school newspapers.

—*Barbara Allen,*
Satellite, Tulsa World

Our circulation department has made FREE copies of The Roanoke Times and The Edge available to local high schools each Wednesday during the school year. A local sponsor pays for the newspapers, which are stored on a newspaper rack in the school cafeteria or commons area. Each week students are encouraged to pick up their free copy. This effort has honestly made our section well-known with our community youth and therefore increased readership of the section.

—*Robin Floyd Garrett*
The Edge, Roanoke (Va.) Times

Our newspaper does not promote the Voice page, so as a staff we have been challenged to promote it ourselves. We have done this on our own time by volunteering to speak at youth groups and in classrooms. I've offered to speak to journalism, social studies, current events and English classes.

During the school year, I write a monthly profile on an area high school. This is a fun feature about what's hot and what's not at the schools. I try to write about what kids think and want to know about a school—not necessarily what parents and school officials want to promote. This is a good promotion tool for our section because it helps me to meet a bunch of kids, and it introduces many of them to Voices.

—*Kristi Wright,*
formerly of the Omaha World Herald

It's important to put the section on newspaper boxes, especially if it is a new section. Something simple such as "Read Teen Scene every Thursday" is a good way to promote the section. We also have house ads that our marketing department created.

I can't stress enough the importance of NIE to teen sections. Working with teachers, NIE can make sure your section gets into classrooms and generates discussions about world events, trend stories, the latest music and film, etc. At one time, I had more than 8,000 papers getting into schools throughout our county. Having a strong relationship with your NIE coordinator, and having an NIE coordinator who has the time and resources to promote the section, is very important.

—*Bill Canacci*,
Teen Scene, Home News Tribune, East Brunswick, N.J.

Marketing—the big events

Marketing includes the bigger stuff, stuff you may not want to take on in your first year. It takes the form of poetry slams in a few markets, football games in Reading, Pa., and all-out music festivals in Fredericksburg, Va., and Warren, Ohio.

This stuff isn't just fun, it's really important. "If teens don't connect with a brand in some emotional way, it's hard to get them to want to make that brand a part of their lives," says Grant MacDonald, a principal at North Castle Partners Advertising, a foremost expert on teen marketing.

But it also takes a lot of work, and cross-departmental cooperation.

Here's a guide from those who have succeeded:

Page One sponsors an annual battle of the bands competition. We advertise for local teen bands to submit demos. We then assemble a small group to listen to the demos and pick the top five. One teen from our staff, one program manager from a local rock radio station and maybe one more person are chosen to serve on the selection panel.

The top five bands then compete in a live performance during which each finalist gets to play a 30-minute set. They must provide their own roadies. We provide the venue, lights, sound and security. Sponsors donate prizes that are appropriate for young musicians. A local club owner will hire the winning band to perform. A photographer donates a photo shoot for a promotional flier. A copy shop contributes free printing for fliers. A backdrop for future performances is contributed by a local art studio. A pizza party is donated by a local pizza shop. A local radio station donates air time to promote the band. A new guitar comes from a local instrument store, etc.

Each sponsor has the option of providing a judge at the event while we and the local radio station each provide two judges. The band voted the best gets all the prizes. We cover the show in our regular paper and promote it in the teen section for about two months.

We charge \$4 to get in.

My big piece of advice is don't go light on security. We had 500 people the first year and 700 people last year. We had four uniformed security bouncers and two uniformed police officers with their patrol cars. This year we expect about 1,000 people and have added two more bouncers. We have not had a problem, but, just in case, make sure you have the necessary liability insurance. The first year we did it we bought a rider for \$500. Last year we found out that was not necessary. All we have to do is call our carrier to let them know what's going on.

—*Guy Coviello*,
Page One, Tribune Chronicle, Warren, Ohio

Our paper has a cross-promotional arrangement with a local radio station that's popular with teens and this year THEY decided to sponsor a battle of the bands at the local grad night sponsored by our big area amusement park. NeXt was a co-sponsor.

At first, a teen correspondent was going to serve as a judge (until it turned out that bands weren't going to start playing until 9 p.m., with the last band going onstage at 1 a.m.). That seemed like too much to ask a teen to do, so instead we just were listed as a sponsor and agreed to cover the event and make a big deal out of it in our section.

The radio station advertised for teen bands, picked five finalists and handled arrangements for setting up stage, sound system, judges, etc. I just had to drive two correspondents out there and chaperone while they interviewed boys in the bands for four hours.

They got a good story out of it and took photos of the last two bands after our photographer left. NeXt has lucked out on a similar promotion with a high school photography contest for the past four years; a local arts center does all the work of soliciting the work and hanging the show, the News supplies prize money and a big story in the section.

—*Jean Westmoore*,
NeXt, Buffalo News

Bringing home the gold

Gold. Silver. Bronze. Whatever.

Even if your work is highly prized at home, nothing screams louder than national awards won by you, your section and your writers.

A bevy of contests welcome entries from youth writers and a contest sponsored by the NAA Foundation recognizes outstanding children's and teen sections, including an annual "Rookie of the Year" award.

Winning will not only boost the confidence of you and your staff, it will increase respect for what you do within your organization.

Enter! If you don't enter, you definitely won't win!

Contests include:

NAA Foundation's Program Excellence Awards

The Program Excellence Award is one of the most prestigious awards given to newspapers. It is presented each year to newspapers that show an exceptional effort in their youth programs. Entering this contest takes time – you must assemble a binder that showcases your entire program ... recruitment, training, promotions, work with NIE, marketing, etc. But the glory is worth it.

For information, go to <http://www.naa.org/foundation/yea/>

NAA Foundation's YEA National Conference Teen Fellowship Competition

Up to 10 teenagers receive fellowships to participate in the NAA Foundation/Youth Editorial Alliance's annual national conference. The fellowships are awarded to outstanding writers, editors, photographers and illustrators who contribute to teen sections at their local newspapers. Teen fellows assist with conference activities and participate in the creation and production of a teen page. Teen fellows also critique sections brought by youth editors who attend the conference. In order to be eligible, nominating youth editors must accompany their fellows to the conference. Youth editors are responsible for their own transportation, registration, housing and non-conference meals.

For information, contact Sandy Woodcock, Director, NAA Foundation, 1921 Gallows Road, Suite 600, Vienna, VA 22182-3900; 703-902-1932; FAX 703-902-1751; woods@naa.org

YEA Youth Content Awards

This annual contest is designed to recognize outstanding young journalists and youth sections. Winners are announced at the national YEA Conference.

The sweepstakes contest awards first-, second- and third-places to publications in each of three circulation categories in recognition of overall achievement in design, writing and photography. Other categories include Web site and design.

In addition, first-, second- and third-place awards and honorable mentions are presented to young journalists for outstanding individual stories, photos, illustrations, special projects and cartoons. Scholastic and college publications are not eligible to participate.

For information, go to www.naa.org/foundation/yea/

Journalism Education Association

Media Citation awards are given annually to a professional journalist or professional media outlet which has made significant contributions to scholastic journalism. Several awards may be presented each year. For information, go to www.jea.org/awards.

Your state press association may also sponsor contests for youth editors or young writers.

Resources

Scholastic Press Associations

These organizations are your kin. Before YEA, this was where youth editors went for training. They are still valuable resources. Candace Perkins Bowen is one of the most respected names in high school journalism. Here, she describes how scholastic press associations can help the youth editor:

These groups, some connected with a college or university and others with national scope, support high school journalism teachers and their students. They often host workshops and press days, hold contests, publish newsletters and post Web sites that can be helpful to teen journalists.

When YEA founder Lorraine Eaton first attended the Journalism Education Association/National Scholastic Press Association (JEA/NSPA) convention, she was looking for her “own kind.” What she found were her “cousins.” Scholastic press associations share youth editors’ concern for educating teenagers so they become informed media consumers. They also share the hope that some of them go on to news careers.

The JEA/NSPA conventions, held each fall generally in the Midwest and each spring in the West or

Southwest, draw more than 4,000 high school journalists and their advisers. Sessions cover everything from interviewing tips to packaging stories and working as a team. In addition to sitting in on hundreds of sessions, students participate in on-site writing contests, tour media outlets and hear keynote speakers like broadcaster Stone Phillips and Seventeen editor Caroline E. Miller.

Besides activities for teens, the conventions have adviser sessions where youth editors can discover how to cope with motivating teens, helping them meet deadlines, building a collaborative atmosphere, finding story ideas and many other issues.

In addition to national conventions, almost every state has at least one scholastic press association that holds conferences or workshops. In Ohio, Great Lakes Interscholastic Press Association at Bowling Green offers a late September event with four different time slots where students can choose from a variety of topics. In December, Journalism Association of Ohio Schools hosts a day-long conference at The Ohio State University in Columbus where each student focuses on a single topic such as in-depth writing, features or design.

Kent State University's Northeast Ohio Scholastic Press Association (NOSPA) sponsors a spring Press Day with sessions, tours and on-site contests. In the summer, Kent, Bowling Green and Ohio universities all offer workshops that last several days so students live on campus. Besides gaining specific tips and techniques, teen page staffers can develop camaraderie with others who share their concerns.

Another plus from some press associations is contests and evaluations. Because teen pages wanted competition, too, NOSPA expanded categories to include ones for their writers. Teen page news, features and opinion categories were added to 26 existing ones. Others who direct scholastic press associations were asked to do the same, and may be receptive if approached by youth editors.

For information about scholastic press associations in your state, visit JEA at www.jea.org or NSPA at www.studentpress.org

—*Candace Perkins Bowen*,
Kent State University

Section descriptions

The following are short descriptions of youth sections from across the country. See ideas you like? Have questions about how they did it? Anyone interested in contacting individual youth editors should contact the NAA Foundation for a copy of the Foundation Directory which contains a listing of youth editors nationwide.

The youth section of the **Yakima Herald-Republic—Unleashed**—is published on Tuesdays. It is broadsheet and usually about a page and a half, including a section front. Students write the

stories and columns, take photographs and create illustrations. The page design and layout is done by adults on the newspaper staff. The teen staff size varies. For 2004-05, we have 35 teens. Twenty-five are writers. Four are artists. Six are photographers. They are paid \$15 per story, photo or work of art. We meet monthly at the newspaper office. We provide pizza and pop. The teens get to vote on the top two works of the month; winners receive a pair of movie tickets.

—*Adriana Janovich,*
Unleashed, Yakima (Wash.) Herald-Republic

NeXt, published by **The Buffalo News**, is a 12-page tab that publishes every Wednesday. NeXt prints stories, reviews, commentaries and cartoons by teen correspondents, along with occasional stories by adult news staffers and some wire copy. Photos are taken by Buffalo News photographers and the section is designed by a news graphic designer.

NeXt is unusual because it has included content for both teens and younger readers since it began in 1995 (although the original labels “Not for anyone over 18” and “Not for anyone over 12” were dumped along the way).

Since April 2004 when the daily comics were moved from four pages of NeXt to the regular paper, the MiniPage has been published in NeXt, on pages 10 and 11.

Because The Buffalo News is a Guild newspaper, teen writers are considered freelancers and are paid anywhere from \$10 to \$50 for a story depending on the quality of the story and where it is played in the section.

The Buffalo News circulation area includes eight counties and more than 80 high schools, and NeXt aims for diversity of gender, race, age and ZIP code in its recruiting of writers. NeXt is important in our Newspapers in Education program, which has its biggest circulation day on Wednesday. NeXt and NIE cooperated on a new NeXt Book Club this spring with cooperation from school librarians and teachers in all eight counties.

Many NeXt correspondents have gone on to major in journalism in college and some have returned as summer interns during college.

—*Jean Westmoore,*
NeXt, The Buffalo News

Next Generation, the teen section at the **South Florida Sun-Sentinel**, is an open broadsheet page published once a week in zoned editions, one in Broward County (Wednesday or Friday, depending on zone) and one in Palm Beach County (Friday).

All NextGen content is student produced. We run staff mugs often, but drop the staff mugs if a “teen on the street” feature is published on the page. Layout is done by the NextGen coordinator.

Staff is about 110 students. Text assignments pay \$10-\$20, and art assignments pay \$30.

The goal of the program is to give teens a voice in our product, to interest students in journalism, and to attract younger readers through the work of their peers. We have a Web site that displays the work of both county programs, and tie NextGen into the annual High School Journalism Awards to increase our presence within high schools. We also recruit for three teen programs at once — Next Generation, Teentime, and the Summer Minority Internship Program, which helps us carry a talented and large staff.



Next Generation

—*Jennifer Butler,*
Next Generation, South Florida Sun-Sentinel, Fort Lauderdale

Teen Scene is published every Thursday in the East Brunswick, N.J., **Home News Tribune**. Teens write about 90 percent to 95 percent of the copy for the two-page broadsheet section, including stories, columns, reviews and poetry. In addition, some students take pictures and illustrate the main features.

Teen Scene, which was created in January 2000, does not have a “staff,” as students interested in writing for the section can join throughout the year. While we have more than 100 students on our e-forum, about 25 to 30 are active participants. Students are paid \$25 for every front-page feature, and \$15 for every story, review or column published inside.

The section’s main goal is to provide a voice for students 12 to 19, whether they want to comment on what’s happening at their school or on world events. We also hope the section reflects the interests, hobbies, passions and ideas of area students.

—*Bill Canacci,*
Teen Scene, Home News Tribune, East Brunswick, N.J.

The Voice is published each Tuesday in the Springfield, Ill., **State Journal-Register**. It occupies a section front and jump page. Students write most of the stories, though that can fluctuate depending on time of year. The Voice editor also writes for the section. Currently no photographers or illustrators work on the section, but it is always open to them. The program has about 15-20 regulars, some 30 on the roster, and one paid part-time teen intern, plus a full-time editor/writer.

Program members, except for the intern, are unpaid. The glory of their name in print fuels them. (Well, that and the occasional round of pizzas.)

The goal of the program is to provide local teens the opportunity to write for a professional paper, gain real-world experience and give readers insight into the life of teens.

—*Kelsea Gurski,*
State Journal-Register, Springfield, Ill.

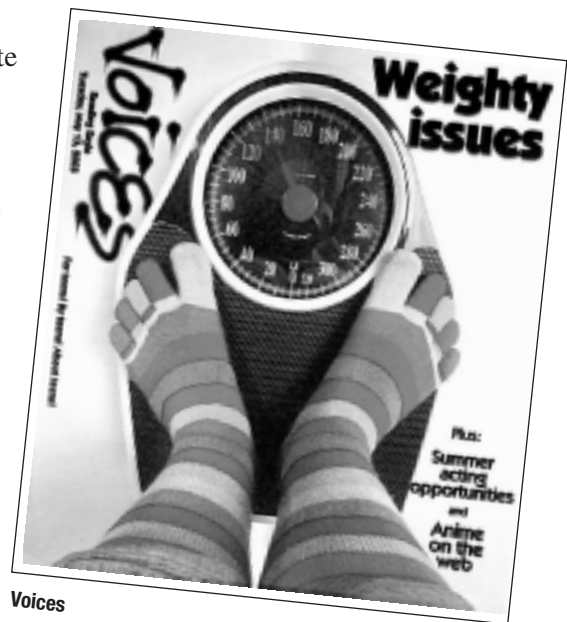
Voices is a 20-page tabloid section published by the **Reading (Pa.) Eagle** every Tuesday. In each issue, the cover, color center-spread and four to six additional pages are devoted to a theme of the week. Topics range from the serious—the Holocaust, banned books, cheating, anger management—to the fun—friendship, pets, magic, board games, dining out, owning your own business. Each issue also includes pages about news, entertainment (teen-authored CD, book, movie and Web site reviews) and sports.

Regular features include “In Your Face,” a teen spotlight; “Hot Question,” a teen-on-the-street; and “What’s goin’ on this week,” a weekly calendar of events.

Since its launch in 1995 Voices has sought to accurately portray our local teens through their own voices, giving them a positive voice in their community. At the same time, Voices brings teens into the paper and encourages them to become regular newspaper readers.

The more than 150 teens on the roster from each of the 18 public and two parochial high schools in Berks County attest to the diverse interest in the section. Also on the roster are home-schooled teens and teens who attend private schools outside of the county.

We accept applications for correspondents twice a year. Voices is not strict about writing ability. Our philosophy is that the more diverse the section and its writers, the better the product. While we do want a well-written section, we do not want the product to be “by and about” one elite group of teens. So, if a student writes coherently and makes the effort, we accept him or her.



Voices

Voices also hires two part-time high school students to serve as interns during the year. The internships give teens an even closer look at newsroom work.

Students are paid on a sliding scale of \$10 to \$25 per story or piece of art. Pay is adjusted based on the quality of work.

Voices is managed by two full-time adult staff members—an editor and an assistant editor. The Reading Eagle design department dedicates a designer, Celia Reber, whose main job is to put the section together. Reading Eagle’s professional photographers and graphic artists also contribute to making the teens’ work shine.

—*Lisa Scheid and Stacie Jones,*
Voices, Reading (Pa.) Eagle

KidsDay is a vibrant, highly visual page developed for kids under 12 that appears twice a week in the features section of **The Dallas Morning News**. Interactivity is key to making young readers feel like the paper reflects their lives, so reader participations take a new twist in this section.

For example, “Mrs. G’s Book Club” invites kids to read a book and send a letter about it to a former reading teacher who volunteers with us. From the kids who write in, 10 go on a field trip with Mrs. G and discuss the book and a report about the trip appears in the paper afterward. We also ask kids to vote on their favorite films of the year and ask them to write mini-reviews of what the movies mean to them. In our story contest, kids write short stories based on an introductory paragraph we provide. Because of enthusiastic classroom participation, movie voting and the story contest each receive more than 1,000 entries a year.

The section also reflects the extraordinary things kids are doing in the Dallas area — fixing bicycles for needy children, writing a Web column for the Dallas Mavericks, filming a documentary about a chronic disease. It also educates young readers on everything from civil rights heroes to Earth Day to Japanese haiku. Political coverage explains how City Hall and presidential campaigns work. And a network of young writers regularly weighs in on youth lifestyles and the latest books and movies. The goal is to have a part of the paper where kids see themselves, kids like them and subjects that are parts of their lives. We hope to connect readers to the paper, creating a reading habit that lasts a lifetime.

The section is produced by a team that includes an editor, designer and two writers. None of these staffers works on the section full-time however (we probably each spend about 1/3 of our time on this work) and contributions come from across the newsroom. (This year, for example, the desk covering the elections volunteered to produce three packages.) The work combines children’s writing and adults writing for kids. Children are generally not paid for their work, but they are often allowed to keep products and books that they are asked to review.

—*Jennifer Okamoto,*
KidsDay, The Dallas Morning News

The **Springfield (Ohio) News-Sun Generation Gap** page was first published in August of 1992, using approximately 15 to 25 area high school volunteer students. The black-and-white page appears inside the Sunday B section. It gives aspiring journalists a way to get a head start on their careers, but is open to anyone who enjoys writing. Meetings are held monthly August through May on Saturday mornings, beginning at 11 a.m. and lasting for one hour. A training session is held in August.

—*Tim Bucey,*
Generation Gap, The Springfield (Ohio) News-Sun

Listen Up! is a broadsheet, section back of the lifestyle section published every Sunday in **The Daily News** in Jacksonville, N.C.

The staff of about 20 teens from area high schools meets on Mondays for an hour. The content for the page, save photos on occasion, is conceived and produced by the staff.

Listen Up! has four main elements: a main feature story located in the center of the page that focuses on teens or teen-related issues; an “On the Edge” rail column where staffers editorialize about the triumphs and tragedies of teen life; our “slight insight” mini-profile of a local teen runs across the bottom; and a “411” feature lists happenings and tidbits of interest to our readers.

Members of the Listen Up! staff is held to the same standards as the The Daily News staff. Staff members are paid a marginal amount for published stories.

—*Timmi Toler,*
Listen Up!, The Daily News, Jacksonville, N.C.

The **Edge** came to life in September 2003 as a means of attracting younger readers to the pages of **The Roanoke (Va.) Times**. While it has engaged younger readers, it has also given a new generation a voice in our product—is the mission of the page.

This one-page (broadsheet feature publishes every Wednesday on the back of our entertainment section. Our 35-member staff meets weekly to brainstorm story ideas and to finalize content and layout for the next edition. Staff is not paid, except for good food, and we feel that the experience is payment enough.

We strive to make each page completely student-produced, but occasionally rely on our professional photographers and artists. We are fortunate that we have a reporter, a copy editor and a layout editor who work with the staff each week to produce the page. We are even more fortunate that a member of our online staff maintains and updates The Edge web site. The section truly is a collaborative effort.

—*Robin Floyd Garrett,*
The Edge, The Roanoke (Va.) Times

The Free Lance-Star publishes two youth sections each and every week. The first, **MyLine**, is a broadsheet color page, with a backward jump into the middle of the section (we're quite proud of actually getting a backward jump approved!). MyLine tends to feature serious news feature stories and opinion columns. It is completely student written, and the art and photos are largely student-produced.

The second section, **it!**, is an eight-page tab, which tends to push the envelope in every way possible. **it!** tends to focus on entertainment, including movies, music, books, art, video games and more. Like MyLine, the section is completely student written and art is normally from students as well. This section is one of the most widely-read sections of the paper. Both sections tend to be read by many area adults as well as the target teenagers, interestingly enough.



Our staff size varies, but is generally around 40 kids. None are paid. We do have weekly meetings where pizza and soda are devoured, and I take them to dinner at a fancy restaurant twice a year. So in that sense, they're paid in food.

—*Dave Smalley,*
MyLine/it!, Free Lance-Star, Fredericksburg, Va.

The **Buzz** is a weekly, 16- to 32-page tabloid supplement to the Charlotte Harbor, Fla., **Sun** published on Tuesdays. The section is targeted to teens and young adults and the content comes largely from local teens.

The **Buzz** launched in November 2002 and has since become one of the most popular sections of our paper and is read by people of all ages. The section's main goal is to generate interest in the newspaper among younger readers. A second, but equally important goal is to provide a creative outlet for local teens.

During the school year, we invite each local middle and high school to contribute their own "school page." This is usually coordinated by an English or journalism teacher working with a specific class or club. Each week, the teachers submit students' articles and photos, and I compile these submissions into pages. I also work with the teachers and students throughout the year. Our school pages are a unique way to involve hundreds of students in our program, many more than I could work with individually.

We also have several **Buzz** interns (some of the older ones work onsite and receive school credit; the younger ones submit articles and photos on a volunteer basis). I traditionally recruit these talented

teens through columns and ads in my section. This summer, with three of my four interns graduating, I published a column asking teens to fight summer boredom by becoming Buzz summer interns. One of my interns wrote a companion column describing the amazing experiences she has enjoyed here.

The response was better than I dared to hope! Dozens of teens contacted me. Most of the kids are having fun, learning lots and want to keep doing writing for The Buzz.

—Leigh Sprimont,
The Buzz, Charlotte Sun, Port Charlotte, Fla.

Page One is published every Monday inside the **Tribune Chronicle**, a 36,000 daily newspaper in northeast Ohio. Page One is produced almost entirely by teens. It makes up our Lifestyle cover and a spillover page.

There is a staff of about 15 students who generate story ideas, write the stories, take the photographs, draw the illustrations, edit and tone the photos, paginate the cover page and maintain the Web site that was created by a teen.

Students are not paid except for the paginator (\$25 per page) and the photo editor (\$25 per week to process and file photos).

A large portion of the readers are pre- or early teens and parents/teachers/grandparents of teens.

To join the staff, students must graduate from the Tribune Chronicle Journalism Explorers Post, a series of journalism workshops throughout the school year. The best students are then invited to join.

—Guy Coviello,
Page One, Tribune Chronicle, Warren, Ohio

The Student Sun is produced by high school students in the 9th through 12th grades. It publishes every 2 out of 3 Sundays from September to May in **The Evening Sun** of Hanover, Pa. It is the wrap that goes over all the inserts. This gives us high visibility since our Sunday newspaper is delivered in two sections.

Twenty to 25 students make up the staff of editors, reporters, photojournalists, artists, advertising representatives, and Web designers. There are about 10 local high schools represented.

The 4-page broadsheet section is entirely produced by the students—from story ideas to page layout. Students are paid a commission for assignments that are published, and the editors are paid minimum wage per hour.

The Evening Sun, which has supported this project since 1991, is motivated to involve the youth of our community by allowing a “real-life” work experience and encouraging students to be active and informed citizens.

—*Laurie James,*
The Student-Sun, The Evening Sun, Harper, Pa.

FlipSide is the teen program of **The Charleston** (W. Va.) **Gazette**. Launched in 1991, the program has three components: FlipSide Magazine, a 12-page monthly tabloid circulated directly to high schools during the academic year (total of nine issues); FlipSide Saturday, a section front published in the Gazette itself once a week (total of 52 issues); and the FlipSide Web site, which contains content from both print products as well as features all its own.

The FlipSide staff includes one adult editor, one part-time intern and 50 to 60 students in grades 9-12. The adult editor doubles as a lifestyles writer. Gazette photographers and a member of the company’s Internet staff also provide assistance.

Because the Gazette serves as the “state newspaper” of West Virginia, we consider FlipSide to be “the source of all things teen” in West Virginia. The FlipSide products provide young people throughout the Mountain State with content produced especially for them by their peers.

FlipSide nurtures the talents of teen writers, photographers and artists, giving them a professional, uncensored and reliable outlet for their work. Staffers get \$10 per published contribution, occasional pizza parties and whatever “perks” (door prizes at meetings, field trips, job shadowing, workshops) we can arrange for them.

—*Marina Hendricks,*
FlipSide, The Charleston Gazette

Teen Sources

Q. I’m wondering how other youth sections handle adult reporters’ need for teen sources when stories arise at various high schools. Do you have a list of correspondents with phone numbers accessible to any staffer who needs a source at a school? Is there an understanding about getting parental permission before interviewing kids under 16 for sensitive stories that may include quotes from the teens? Do you have a blanket rule barring correspondents from being quoted in other staffers’ stories? I’d like to hear how you handle this!

—*Jean Westmoore,*
NeXt, Buffalo News

A • [As a former] adult reporter on metro side and with the teen section — it is lazy at worst and a last resort at best to troll the teen section for sources. And yes, I've been lazy or pressed and sent out a mass e-mail to Voices writers to get leads for sources for stories.

Now setting my opinion aside—**our policy is not to quote Voices writers** as sources for news or feature stories. If they, however, do something newsworthy then they can be quoted. Voices writers are discouraged from interviewing each other. Sometimes as a last resort or if an assignment says play a game with a group of friends—and the friends are all Voices writers— I'll let them.

I will help adults in the newsroom if they ask me to send out an e-mail to get leads for a trend story or such and let interested teens contact the adult—that way the control is in the teen's hands and they don't feel pressured or put on the spot. I remind the teens and the adults of the policy. It's like interviewing another reporter for a story—you wouldn't do it unless there was a damn good reason. If the story is a touchy one I will steer adults away from using Voices kids to rat out other kids or administration—my bosses support that.

I like to suggest places to find teens where the reporter might have good access—some all-age clubs, upcoming sporting events, Borders book store, the Y and other teen centers, mini golf. Reporters often don't want to hear that because it is more work. But I smile and offer my two cents anyway.

Voices policy on parental permission is that we see teens as able to give their own consent. It goes to the very philosophy of a teen section. That said, as an adult with more savvy and power than a teen writer, I've found ways to indicate to parents that their child is being interviewed. Call during the day and leave a message for the teen and identify yourself is one way—also a good way to get a teen writer to call you back if they have been ignoring you. Sometimes it is good to interview the parents about whatever touchy subject you are working on. Don't be sneaky. You have nothing to be sneaky about.

I think the fear of parents saying no is worse than parents stepping in. Why act like you are doing something wrong? You betray the whole idea of getting teens voices in the paper and giving teens respect. That assumes the reporter is not being manipulative.

So after that diatribe, my final suggestion is to ask your teens what they think about this.

—*Lisa Scheid*,
Voices, Reading (Pa.) Eagle

After my own blooper earlier this year, we have a new practice (not a rule or written policy) not to interview my teen reporters. We had a teen reporter who felt taken advantage of after she was featured in an article on dress codes in schools. That incident prompted the change in our practice.

(Before, I encouraged reporters to talk to my teens.) We still have in “shared folders” a list of all the teen staff, their schools and complete contact information. Anyone in the network can access this, but most do not know about it. I would say 99 percent of requests for teen sources come to me, and now I warn people to get sources from our teens rather than interview them for their stories. However, on breaking news and other situations where the teens are directly involved, it is not prohibited to use them as sources.

—Jennifer Butler,
Next Generation, South Florida Sun-Sentinel

While I’m happy to provide the staff with a list of names and numbers of my correspondents, they are to use it only to gain other sources—in other words, don’t interview my kids! In trying to get my students as realistic a view of newspapering as possible, I avoid having them in the paper as sources at any cost. We wouldn’t interview other reporters, so why interview my kids? I think it’s lazy reporting when coworkers see the easy way out by interviewing my kids. I also keep an electronic file of the names and numbers of ALL the students we’ve interviewed and worked with (not those who work for us) in the past year, so staffers can access that and use those students as sources. We have an understanding at this newspaper that sensitive matters should be handled as such in all cases, no matter the age of the source. We don’t have a minimum age limit for sources, and I know we’ve talked to plenty of kids under 16 (to about 14) without parental consent. The law is hazy in that area, and we don’t seem to feel afraid to test its limits. However, each situation is handled on a case-by-case basis.

—Barbara Allen,
Satellite, Tulsa World



Newspaper Association of America Foundation™

1921 Gallows Road, Suite 600, Vienna, VA 22182-3900

703•902•1600 Fax 703•902•1736

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