

# FSPA Today

FLORIDA SCHOLASTIC PRESS ASSOCIATION

Spring 2007



## HOTEL REGISTRATION DEADLINE EXTENDED

**By Jill Maassen - Hotel Liason**

Good news! If you were worried about not being able to meet the hotel deadline of March 2, don't be. The room reservation deadline at the Tampa Hyatt Regency has been extended until March 14, 2007, at 5 P.M. All reservations must be either mailed or faxed to the hotel. No phone reservations will be accepted.

In a good faith move, the Hyatt agreed to the extension because of the late distribution of the convention booklet.

"Because of our association with FSPA, we have become aware of the problems facing high schools with regard to scheduling transportation, securing checks, and getting approval from school districts to take trips. When Jill Maassen called and told us of the current problem facing advisers and asked for an extension, we were delighted that we were able to provide a solution to help FSPA," said Darren Gidney, associate director of catering for

the Hyatt.

Advisers should be aware if FSPA's room block of 340 rooms is filled prior to the extended deadline rooms will be issued upon availability from the hotel.

Advisers including an email address on the reservation form will receive confirmation of their reservations from the Hyatt after the deadline.

The Hyatt only has 200 double/double rooms. A maximum of four people can be in each of those rooms. Once the double/double rooms have been assigned, king rooms with a maximum of three people will be assigned to schools. Rollaways may be used in king rooms, but if rollaway beds are needed in rooms, advisers need to request those on the reservation form.

Room cancellations must be made at least 72 hours prior to check-in or the hotel may charge the adviser one night's stay per room cancelled.



*The Hyatt Regency Hotel, located in Tampa, FL. Photo courtesy of Global Hyatt Corporation.*

To be eligible for tax exempt status, advisers need to either fax, mail or bring to the convention a school tax exempt form. Hotels can't keep tax exempt forms from year to year and need to be provided a new one annually. Additionally, advisers must pay with a check issued by the school to which the tax exempt certificate is issued.

**SCHOOL VIDEO FOOTAGE DUE MARCH 9  
CONVENTION REGISTRATION DUE MARCH 14**

## FSPA PRESIDENT LOOKS AHEAD, BIDS FAREWELL

**By Terry Sollazzo - FSPA President**



Good things are happening in the world of scholastic journalism, one of them at our sponsoring institution. Once again, the University of Florida's School of Journalism and

Communications will offer the Summer Journalism Institute (SJI) June 23-28 for publication advisers and 80 students who are rising sophomores, juniors or seniors.

Endorsed by FSPA, SJI offers six days of intense but fun training for all participants. Tracks are offered for advisers, editors, photojournalists, broadcast students and writers. If you have never attended the program, here is your chance to make a difference in your program. I know first hand how SJI can help your future advising years run more smoothly while helping you to produce a publication of which I know you and your staff will remain exceedingly proud. The opportunity is there; take advantage of it.

All questions can be directed to the Institute's directors, William McKeen (wmckeen@jou.ufl.edu) and Ted Spiker (tspiker@jou.ufl.edu).

There is a \$340 registration fee; however, SJI does offer full and partial scholarships to help defray costs. The registration fee covers all classes, class materials, room, board and three graduate credits. The deadline to apply is the first of June. Applications can be downloaded from FSPA's SJI link.

The Julie E. Dodd Scholarship and The Webb-Stapler Scholarship are also available to financially help advisers attend summer media workshops to help improve scholastic journalism in their schools. The deadline for these scholarships is March 20, so hurry and apply today. The applications can be found at FSPA's Web site, <http://www.jou.ufl.edu/fspa>.

Finally, this is an election year for FSPA. At the state convention you will vote on the future president and vice president of our organization. It is vital to FSPA's future

that you carefully review each applicant's resume and platform and cast your ballot at the advisers' luncheon on Friday, April 13. If you have ever entertained the notion of running for office, please do. FSPA needs you.

I would also like to thank you for the opportunity to work with all of you for the last nine years I have served on the Executive Board.

While I have thoroughly enjoyed the five state conventions I chaired and my association with all of you, I have decided not to run for office this year. I have three extremely active sons (one of whom is playing college ball and another being recruited to play collegiate basketball) who need 100 percent of my support, 100 percent of my time. I also have a large newspaper staff that has run on automatic pilot for too long. It's time for the people closest to me to feel they are the number one priority in my life. I hope you understand.

FSPA will always hold a special place in my heart. Take good care of her.

**Find all information at <http://www.jou.ufl.edu/fspa>**

# FSPA WEB SITE RESTRUCTURED FOR FUTURE, OFFERS NEW LOOK

By Judy Robinson - Executive Director

With all the changes the digital era brings, FSPA has begun to expand the scope and offerings of its Web site.

Although you can see the change in the Web site design, you cannot see the change in the structure of the Web site. It has been re-structured to provide visitors with fast updates and multimedia materials.

FSPA had its first Web pages in 1998 when a University of Florida graduate student put information about FSPA on the college server. In 2001, a UF undergraduate created a more complete FSPA Web site as her major project for a course. FSPA was online again. Those pages have been maintained and updated by the office and with the expanding role of digital multimedia in communications, we have again begun to prepare the Web site to be able to host a variety of digital materials.

As our world continues to adapt to the digital methods of communication, we increasingly hear words like "digital storytelling," "backpack journalism" or "mojo." (mobile journalist).

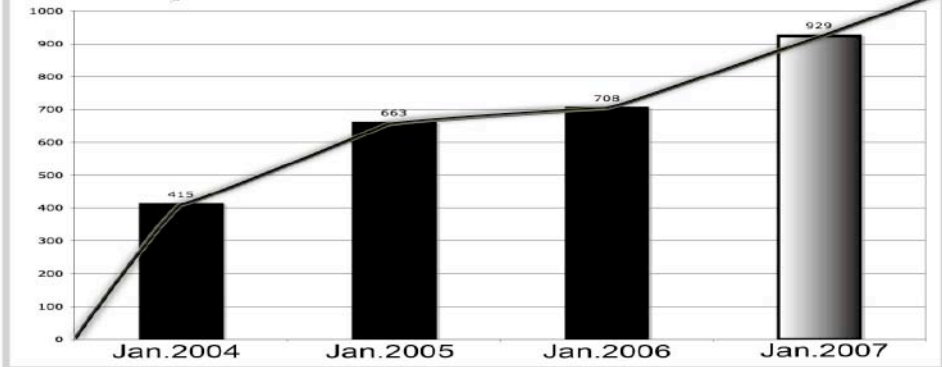
Terms like 'convergence' give way to words like 'fusion' and we marvel at the world our students will be working in.

Be part of the sharing on the FSPA Web site. If you have an online paper, magazine or Web site

for your media, share it with us. Send us your URL and we'll link to you.

It's good to see so many of you visiting the Web site regularly.

## FSPA Web site hits



The above graph details the number of "hits", or visits, to the FSPA Web site in the month of January over four years.

## VIDEO SUBMISSION DEADLINE EXTENDED

Howdy student journalist/advisers!

We want you! Yes, we want you alive and kickin' in your production rooms, classrooms, closets or just out-and-about in your various schools. We have decided over yonder at Pace High School to extend the deadline for your video footage. Yes, the new postmark date is now March 9! Remember, we want unedited video footage so we can put it all together for a good ole' opening video show that highlights the 2006-2007 reality of journalism in your neck of the woods! We also need to make a very important correction on our address as it is posted wrong in the

convention booklet. So round up a video crew, lasso some good lighting, shoot some footage\ and send that stuff to the following address:

Molly Cobb  
Pace High School  
4065 Norris Road  
Pace, Florida 32571

If you have any questions regarding the video, please email me at [cobbm@mail.santarosa.k12.fl.us](mailto:cobbm@mail.santarosa.k12.fl.us)

## Florida Scholastic Press Association

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FSPA Today is the official newsletter of the Florida Scholastic Press Association, a not-for-profit organization, housed in the College of Journalism and Communications at the University of Florida. This newsletter is produced with Adobe InDesign CS2 and Photoshop CS2 on a Windows XP computer. Fonts used are Orlando and Myriad Pro.

**Lights**

**Camera**

**Action!**

Designed by Nicolle Cure, FSPA Graphic Designer

**UF** UNIVERSITY of FLORIDA  
The Foundation for The Gator Nation

## SPEAKERS AND SESSIONS AT CONVENTION “WILL SATISFY”

By Joe Humphrey - Vice President

If the contests are the appetizer and the banquet is dessert, then sessions certainly are the meat of this convention – and we’re rounding up a tasty menu of speakers for your enjoyment at the 2007 FSPA Convention.

Get ready for the return of FSPA favorite Les Rose, a CBS video journalist who will present a full Friday of workshops on reporting and visual storytelling. Even with a hectic schedule that will involve Les taking the red eye from Los Angeles, he’ll be in attendance at the convention.

While Les is flying cross-country to join us, many other speakers will come from the fertile journalism landscape that is the Tampa Bay area. We’re blessed to be in a town with two vibrant newspapers, both clawing for readership both in print and online, and we’ll

be joined by reporters, editors, photojournalists and other pros from both the St. Petersburg Times and Tampa Tribune, including:

☞ Times media critic Eric Deggans, who will serve on our panel about blogging and teach a pair of sessions

☞ Times reporter Ben Montgomery, who will share tips on how to make even the smallest articles narrative masterpieces

☞ Tribune movie critic Bob Ross, who will offer advice on effective and exciting review writing

We’ll also be joined by pros from other Bay area media outlets, including the Sarasota Herald-Tribune’s Bart Pfankuch, who will coach writers on when quotes should (and should not) be used. Diane Mathes, owner of Community News Publications, a rapidly growing chain of Tampa-area weekly papers,

will offer advice on effective advertising sales techniques, while graphic artist Haris Silic will show how to take those new ads and make them look great. The Poynter Institute has also agreed to send several speakers.

We’re also proud to welcome student and professional speakers from the University of Florida, the University of South Florida, the University of Tampa and Jacksonville University. FSPA advisers and students will also lead sessions on topics including preparing for college, documentary filmmaking, using video on the Web and much more.

We’re still assembling the program, but know that regardless of your interest – broadcast, newspaper, lit mag, yearbook or online – we’ll have sessions that will satisfy. I look forward to seeing you in Tampa.

## NEW PRESIDENT AND VICE PRESIDENT TO BE ELECTED IN TAMPA

By Jill Maassen - Hotel Liaison

At the convention, the FSPA membership will elect a president and vice president whose terms will begin immediately following the convention. Please encourage your well-qualified colleagues to run, or run yourself. Officers will serve two-year terms, ending in 2009.

The FSPA Constitution does not allow political parties, so candidates must run independently. The campaign filing date is March 22.

### Qualifications

To be eligible for nomination a candidate must be an adviser of an active FSPA member staff.

### Duties

The president presides at all board and general membership meetings, appoints all committees and helps plan and supervise the convention. Additionally, the president guides the organization in undertaking programs de-

signed to achieve its goals and objectives. The president also represents the organization at other journalism meetings and conventions.

The vice president serves as chair of the adviser education committee, convention co-chair and, in the absence of the president, as the president.

### Application Package

Candidates must submit the following:

- A resume that includes the following divisions: teaching experience, publication advising experience, teaching certification areas, academic degrees, service to FSPA, service to other journalistic organizations, personal honors and awards, staff honors and awards, list of publications advised and the number of years advising each. Please condense your responses to 150 words or less.

- A statement of no more than 200 words outlining your goals for FSPA and your

rationale for each.

- E-mail a current photo.

- Deadline: Send all materials together to the FSPA office by March 22.

### Additional Information

Each candidate will give a speech of no longer than two minutes at the advisers’ luncheon on Friday, April 13. Nominations will be accepted from the floor and candidates will be expected to give a speech as well. Voting is done through secret ballot. There is one vote per member publication. No proxy votes are allowed. Advisers must be present at the luncheon to vote.

Each candidate should also plan to meet the membership at the advisers’ reception on Thursday evening, April 12, where their letters of intent will be distributed.

## MEMBERSHIP TO VOTE ABOUT CHANGE TO BYLAWS IN APRIL

The FSPA Board has discussed the following and recommends to the membership that a change be made to the FSPA bylaws. The bylaws are available in full on the FSPA Web site at <http://www.jou.ufl.edu/fspa/about>.

### Article V/ Meetings

#### Section 3. STATE CONVENTION

A state convention shall be held in the Spring of each year. The state convention shall be open to high school students who are on staffs of FSPA regular members and middle school and high school advisers who are advisers of [sic] FSPA regular members. To be eligible to

attend the convention, a staff must have been represented by the adviser and at least one student at the fall district workshop.

FSPA membership will be asked to vote to accept an amendment that would allow members to attend the convention without attending the district workshop but with an additional cost.

The amendment would state:

“Staffs which are not represented by an adviser and at least one student in a Fall District Workshop will be eligible to attend the State

Convention at a higher cost.”

According to Article X, Amendment of Bylaws:

“These bylaws shall be subject to amendment at any regular meeting of the regular membership [ . . . ] The proposed amendment shall be deemed to be adopted by the membership provided at least fifty percent (50%) plus 1 of the membership shall respond to the referendum within sixty days from the date of mailing to the membership and provided that a majority of those responding shall vote for the adoption of the proposed amendments.”

Questions about the convention? Contact convention co-chairs.

President, Terry Sollazzo  
[terry.sollazzo@sdhc.k12.fl.us](mailto:terry.sollazzo@sdhc.k12.fl.us)

Vice President/Convention Co-Chair, Joe Humphrey  
[joseph.humphrey@sdhc.k12.fl.us](mailto:joseph.humphrey@sdhc.k12.fl.us)

Convention Co-Chair/ District 3 Director,  
Shannon Zabele  
[smzabele@volusia.k12.fl.us](mailto:smzabele@volusia.k12.fl.us)

Hotel Liaison, Jill Maassen  
[maassenje@usa.net](mailto:maassenje@usa.net)

## EVALUATION SERVICE HELPS PUBLICATIONS IMPROVE

By Daniel Sanmiguel - Managing Editor

"The media is an ever-evolving form and school publications should look to be evolving as the professionals do," said Jane Robbins, who has over 30 years of scholastic journalism experience.

Robbins now coordinates FSPA's evaluation service, which is open to all FSPA member publications and broadcasts. It is meant to provide a channel for meaningful feedback for the students and advisers who dedicate their time and energy into producing yearbooks, newspapers, TV news programs and more throughout the year.

"I think every publication should go through some kind of evaluation process to pat themselves on the back for what they do well and to take the areas of weakness to improve," Robbins said.

While Robbins coordinates the evaluation procedure, it is actually hand-picked judges from around the country that will end up critiquing any of the pieces submitted. Judges are typically chosen from out-of-state to avoid any possible bias.

"Florida judges tend to be too familiar with the schools," Robbins said.

The judges are chosen at Robbins' discretion, generally from a list of qualified advisers or journalists acquired through the Journalism

Education Association.

The evaluators are paid for each submission that they judge, Robbins explained. The fee to participate in the evaluation process, which ranges from \$45 to \$70, depending on submission type, helps to cover the judges' compensation.

While the idea behind the evaluations is to gain useful insight into how to improve your publication or broadcast, staffs that submit their work get to take home more than just advice on how to improve their work. Each year, awards are given out at the annual FSPA convention to those submissions which score the highest.

This year, there were submissions from 40 newspapers, 23 yearbooks, 10 broadcast tapes and eight literary magazines. Additionally, 612 individual entries – those typically being the work of just one student – were submitted.

Though it is too late to enter your publication, broadcast, or individual work this year, applications for next year will be found on the FSPA Web site.

Robbins, who has served as District Four director and has received both the

FSPA Gold Award and FSPA's Lifetime Membership recognition, offered the following on why it is important to participate in this unique evaluation opportunity.

"Just like educators who are always tweaking their methods, so should publications always be open to change ...submitting a publication to yearly evaluation is the best thing a school can do to improve their publication."



Jane Robbins, who has been active in scholastic journalism for over 30 years, is in charge of coordinating the evaluation service.

## TO AVOID CENSORSHIP BATTLES, MAKE A PUBLICATION POLICY

By Katie Sanders - Administrative Assistant

When faced with an issue of censorship, scholastic media organizations are quick to seek legal action and fight those daring to suppress their free voice.

Before starting a bitter battle over the First Amendment, those publications under scrutiny should ask themselves an important question: What does our school publication policy have to say about this?

A more important issue is learning if a publication policy has even been drafted between the publication and the school's administration. If not, the issue could take months to work out – time that should be spent reporting news to the student body. Establishing a

publication policy agreeable to both parties will make efforts of censorship much easier to resolve.

There are many resources on the Web from different press organizations to help schools develop strong policies.

The Journalism Educators of America Web site has a censorship resource packet that includes a model letter to help advisers address problems in a professional manner, a form to send to the JEA Press Rights Commission to report instances of censorship and sample editorial policies that do not include prior review used by other schools.

The Student Press Law Center is a valuable organization to contact with legal issues.

They offer a Virtual Lawyer, available 24 hours a day, to answer legal questions when their office is closed. They receive over 2,000 requests for legal assistance a year, according to the SPLC Web site.

The JEA considers a publication policy to be a "double-edged sword" on their Web site.

"If carefully drafted, they can be used to cut the bonds of censorship," reads their Web site. "If not carefully worded, however, they can ultimately create more trauma for advisers and students than having no policy at all."



## FIU TO HOLD FREE URBAN JOURNALISM WORKSHOP

Florida International University is seeking applications from high school students for its 2007 Urban Journalism Workshop, scheduled July 15-27 at the School of Journalism and Mass Communication on the Biscayne Bay Campus in North Miami.

The program will select 15 fellows for an intensive two-week curriculum in reporting, editing, ethics, law, photography and design. To be eligible, applicants must be juniors, seniors or 2007 graduates.

Funded in part by the Dow Jones Newspaper Fund, the Urban Journalism Workshop at Florida International University is supported by the Miami Herald, the South Florida Sun-Sentinel and the Palm Beach Post. Five students will

be selected from each of the three counties of Broward, Dade and Palm Beach.

The workshop is free and all meals are provided for students selected to participate. Students must commit to attend the workshop each day and provide their own transportation to and from FIU-Biscayne Bay. Students will learn from FIU faculty and some of the best and brightest newspaper professionals in South Florida.

Students making application to the workshop must provide a high school transcript, three letters of recommendation from teachers, and an essay on a topic specified on the application form, which can be downloaded at <http://jmc.fiu.edu/dowjones/> or obtained via e-mail from

Dr. Fred Blevens, associate dean of the SJMC, at [blevensf@fiu.edu](mailto:blevensf@fiu.edu).

Applications must be received by March 30.

### FSPA seeking host institution bids

FSPA Vice President Joe Humphrey sent out requests for proposals to Florida institutions that might be interested in serving as the organization's host institution beginning July 1, 2008. Florida's current host institution, the College of Journalism and Communications at the University of Florida has received the request for proposals. The RFP can be found online at <http://www.jou.ufl.edu/fspa/about>.

# COCONUT CREEK HIGH SCHOOL PREPARES FOR CONVENTION

Being in Coconut Creek High School's award-winning newspaper, the Harbinger, is an experience of a lifetime. In 2006 we attended district competition and won six awards in vari-



Student journalists at Coconut Creek High School are hard at work.

Photo courtesy of Stephanie Polin

ous categories. Attending FSPA at the district level really opened our eyes to many aspects of professional journalism; the energy was invigorating and you could feel adrenaline in the atmosphere.

Going from our regular journalism class to a large competition such as FSPA was a huge leap. In our Harbinger class, we know when it's

time to get things done. Our staff is constantly hard at work, trying to get the news out to our students on time. Not to mention the countless hours we spend searching for local businesses that willingly choose to advertise in our publication.

When there is time for fun and leisure, we play pranks on one another and joke around just like we were back in the good old days of elementary school. Calling each other silly names and just acting goofy – a fun yet productive atmosphere is always wafting in the air as you step foot in this classroom, and there's always a smile waiting to greet you.

In addition to the school newspaper is the esteemed Omnibus literary magazine that has been in publication since the 1970s. Any student that attends our school has the opportunity to submit poems, short stories, photographs or drawings to be judged. Hundreds of submissions are sent in, and the Omnibus staff takes one long month to sort through the work and pick only the best to be published. We here are very excited to get this process underway this spring. Tensions will definitely boil as they argue about which poem is good enough and which is not Omnibus-ready, and the same applies for the artwork. If you are to submit an entry that is not chosen you should not be discouraged, because you are going up against the best of Coconut Creek High School.

All we can really say is that we do not envy the chosen few that have to pick the few lucky poets, writers, and artists; the talent at Coconut Creek High School is just plain bubbling over!

Also, if you are one of those talented people at our fair school, you can try out for a spot at the Coffeehouse! The next Coffeehouse is planned for March 8, 2007. It takes a tremendous amount of guts to get up in front of people and perform your work.

The Coffeehouse was established to showcase the writing talents of the students at Coconut Creek High School and to raise funds for publication costs of the Omnibus. This particular show is designed to be laid back and relaxed and give students a place to express themselves creatively.

With two publications underway, a coffeehouse, and lots of fundraising, we are ready to attend the FSPA convention in Tampa. A unanimous vote from the entire staff states: "We can't wait and are so excited!" We are working hard and appreciate the opportunity to learn from others and to participate in the many contests and of course the other great events that the FSPA staff has planned for us. See you soon!

*This article was submitted by the staffs of the Harbinger and the Omnibus out of Coconut Creek High School.*

# FSPA TODAY'S MANAGING EDITOR SHARES THOUGHTS, ADVICE

By Daniel Sanmiguel - Managing Editor



Though I did not have the opportunity to participate in the Florida Scholastic Press Association when I was in high school, I was heavily involved in journalism at the scholastic level. For three years I served as editor to Baitline, the student newspaper of Coral Reef High School in Miami-Dade County.

I now find myself a sophomore at the University of Florida, and as I move further and further away from my roots in high school journalism it is becoming readily apparent that I can't get by on them alone. I cherish the time I spent on the staff of Baitline and would not trade the experience for anything in the world. However, regardless of how successful and involved anyone is in high school, it is still imperative to continue your involvement and to keep pursuing opportunities when you reach a collegiate level.

Involvement and active participation in the journalism community is key, not only in order to further hone your skills as a journalist but also to begin building the foundation for your career.

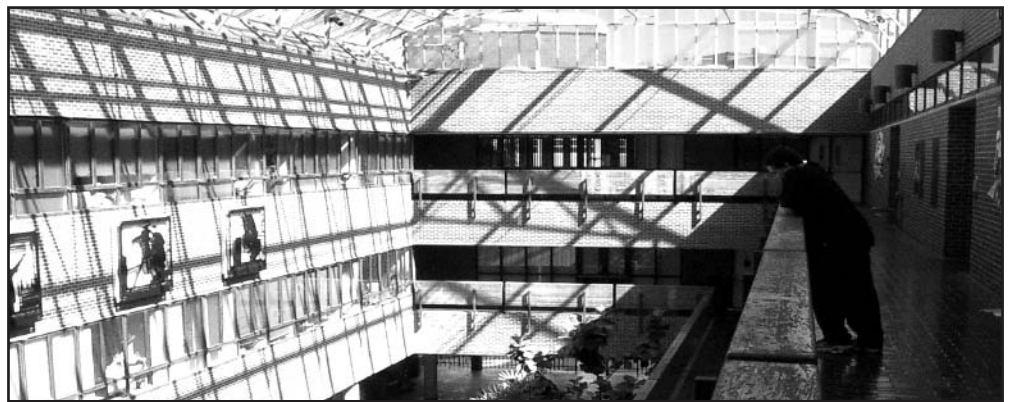
I understand that much of what I am about to impart on you has probably already been drilled into your heads and those of high school seniors across the country, but I cannot stress the importance of it enough.

Get involved with clubs and student organizations, particularly those pertaining to the field

you wish to work in. Actively look for internships and job opportunities. And perhaps most importantly write as much as you can. Student newspapers or even campus editions of city newspapers are a great place to start, and even if you have to be a little enterprising in coming up with story ideas or in freelancing it will be worth it. Journalism is a field of writing and

Be sure to attend as many professional seminars and workshops as possible. Not only will you learn more about the business and how to succeed, you might even get input and feedback on your portfolio.

Remember, the reporter is the watchdog of the world. Always keep on the lookout for possible story ideas. Even if something that



Weimer Hall is the home of the University of Florida's College of Journalism and Communications.

communication, and prospective employers want to see what you can do.

That leads me to my next point – save everything you write, design, or edit. It is important to build a portfolio. Even now, while you are still working on getting through high school, begin to catalog your work. You will find that as you move on to bigger and better things your portfolio will slowly evolve and more recent work will replace your high school writings, but you need somewhere to start.

you would like to write about has already been covered, think about approaching it from a new angle. You'd be surprised how many opportunities there are for stories and chances to be published exist if you look for them proactively.

It is never too early to get started. As scholastic journalists you are off to a great start. Continue on your path and keep working hard and I'm sure I'll be reading your stories in newspapers from across the country soon enough.

# IMPORTANT CHANGES TO PRE-CONVENTION BOOKLET

Advisers,

In regards to contests, a couple of revisions did not make the final draft.

First, my email address at school was changed from kimberly.mattes@sdhc.k12.fl.us to **kim.mattes@sdhc.k12.fl.us**. Many people have had e-mails returned because they were using last year's address.

Next, the contest entry form does not have a spot for registering students for the mixed company contest. If you would like to enter a student in this contest, you may simply write the information in the blank box on the entry form grid: above advertising there is a blank

box.

Finally, both the creative writing and write-off areas on the entry form do not specify which sub-category students are to be entered into. For example, the creative writing contest will consist of poetry writing and fiction writing. Likewise, write-off students may compete in editorial, news, feature, sports or entertainment review. I need for you to tell me what subcategory your students should be placed in.

Terry Sollazzo should have sent you a new form in the email blast she sent from

her school. If you did not get the e-mail, please contact her at terry.sollazzo@sdhc.k12.fl.us. The form can also be downloaded from the FSPA Web site.

I apologize for the confusion and hope that I have addressed everything that you may have had questions about. If you have other questions, please do not hesitate to contact me either through e-mail or phone. My extension in the journalism lab is (813) 744-8333, ext. 260, and I am in the lab all day after 9 a.m.

See you in April!

Kim Mattes Davis

## A WORD FROM THE STUDENT CO-CHAIR



*Don't forget to pack your western gear for this year's convention.*

**By Laura Graham - Student Co-Chair**

Hey ya'll! Can't wait till April, when we join together to round up reality. This fun filled weekend in Tampa is going to be one to remember. We've got lots of activities planned for you students other than just the classes and contests.

Join us Thursday night as we gather 'round the saloon for root beer floats, Texas Hold Em, music, movies, cards and more.

Be sure to come in your most creative western attire for this event. Come on in with your cowboy hats, your denim skirts or pants, or whatever you feel best represents you that night.

## Mark your Calendars

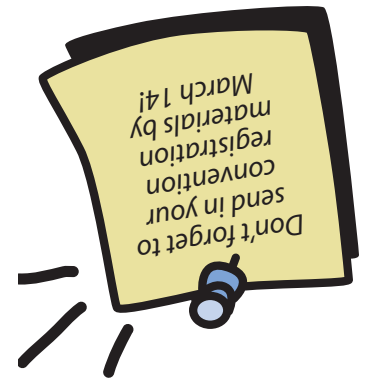
### March

9 Video for Convention Due

14 Hotel and Convention  
Registration Due

### April

12-14 FSPA Convention (Tampa)



PRSR STD.  
US Postage  
**PAID**  
Gainesville, FL  
Permit #94

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