

AFMS BULLETIN CONTEST SPECIFIC GUIDELINES
(Bulletins, Articles, & Features)

ORIGINAL ADULT ARTICLES,
ORIGINAL ADULT ARTICLES ADVANCED,
WRITTEN FEATURES, and DRAWN FEATURES

1. Original articles submitted for AFMS competition **must be written expressly for the club bulletin from which they were entered.**
2. **Authors** whose original articles are submitted for AFMS competition **must be members of the club that submitted the entry in the regional competition.**
3. An **original article** for AFMS competition **should have been written for one bulletin and one region** to avoid duplication of AFMS Awards and Trophies. If some authors/editors who belong to more than one club/region were to send **different articles** to two or more club bulletins in one or more regions, it would not cause any duplication and would be acceptable in the AFMS competition.
4. Original **articles/features written for Regional Newsletters ARE NOT ELIGIBLE** for AFMS Club Bulletin Awards.
5. **The BEAC should have chosen the best article by each author to submit for competition.** If the Regional Federation allows multiple article entries per author, and one author has more than one article eligible for AFMS competition, the BEAC may make the decision on which article to submit to the AFMS judge. **BEACs may submit ONLY ONE original adult article per author in AFMS competition.**
6. If an **article has been published** in a magazine or company publication, used for a display case or show handout or class/seminar, etc. it is **NOT ELIGIBLE** for AFMS Original Article competition.
7. **Reports should not be entered in AFMS competition as original articles,** although they are a vital part of the bulletin. Field trip reviews and vacation travelogues are reports. If an author writes about geological features of the area, gives a good description of materials found, and/or uses research to enhance the educational value of the article, it **CAN** be submitted as an original article for competition. The BEAC should screen and reject entries that are reports. The judge will make the final determination of acceptance as an article or rejection as a report.
8. AFMS article competition is geared primarily for the single article written in one issue of the bulletin. If members write a **series of articles or Part I, Part II, etc.**, they should be written so that each month's segment could be entered individually, along with necessary bibliography. Each "part" of a series will be considered a separate article for AFMS competition. BEACs **may enter ONLY ONE part of a series in AFMS competition.**
9. **Articles that required research should have a bibliography. Illustrations** (drawings or photographs) **should list the sources**, and if they are copyrighted illustrations they would require permission granted to copy.
10. **Copyrights are ownerships and should not be violated.** Avoid verbatim copying! Avoid changing a few words then copying. Copying without permission from the original author is plagiarism, and is grounds for disqualification.
11. **Original Adult Articles** is the category for persons who are eighteen years of age or older and who:
 - Have not won a first place trophy in Adult Articles, OR
 - Have NOT earned a living in the earth science field, OR

- Have not had an article or book published.

Whenever the amateur Adult Article author accomplishes any one of the above three feats, he/she moves up to the Adult Articles Advanced category, just as in the exhibit competition.

Adult Article 1st place trophy winners may enter the Adult Articles Advanced category in the following year's competition. All future entries of an Adult Article 1st place trophy winner who writes more articles will be in the Advanced category.

12. **Original Adult Articles Advanced category** is for persons eighteen years of age or older who:

- Have won a 1st place trophy in Adult articles OR
- Have earned a living in the earth science field OR
- Have had an article or book published.

13. Experienced writers (**Adult Advanced**) are capable of writing quality articles. **If knowledge is not drawn from experience and/or observations, articles should be well researched and include a bibliography.**

14. All **original articles** published in the club bulletin and entered in the AFMS competition **are assumed written for the benefit of club members.** Therefore, the articles **should be written in a manner that can be easily understood by club members.**

15. **The 1st place trophy winner in AFMS Adult Articles Advanced category** is NOT eligible for competition in this category in AFMS for the following two years. However, he/she would be eligible to enter other categories, such as special publications or poetry.

16. **Written Features** includes **hobby-related**, original contributions (other than poems) that bring a special zest to a bulletin but **do not follow an article format.** The piece “shows” the reader something, making pictures form in the reader’s mind. It plays on the interests and emotions of the reader. Though there is no length limitation, it is generally shorter than a page. The topics here are sometimes broad and may not be limited to the interests of the club members. A diverse audience can appreciate the originality, wit, and creativity that are displayed by the themes. The Feature’s **originality** is as important as **enlightening the reader** and both should be present in the entry. Examples are: a humorous anecdote; president’s column; shop hints; play on mineral names; special club contest; club history commentary (not just copied quotes from past newsletters – the author must introduce input/analysis); **member biography/accolade**; **website commentary**; **book review**; **field trip report/travelogue**; **review of a program**; or report of a presentation for a school/community.

There is presently no separate Feature category for **Junior** entries. If applicable, the top of the score sheet includes a place for this to be noted; in any case, it will be judged with the adult entries.

17. **Drawn Features** will include original, **hobby-related** items that bring non-literary spice to a bulletin. Included here are puzzles that are made up of a form or shape (**not computer-generated puzzles such as word searches/scrambles, etc.**), cartoons, crystal structures (drawn by author and incorporated in an original application). It should have some accompanying description/heading to add to the **originality** but the drawing predominates. **Entries based on computer graphics including ClickArt® and Clipart are not original and should not be considered.**

*18. The following information explains in more detail how the **Features** categories will be judged:*

#1. **TECHNICAL INFORMATION (max. 15 points)**

A. **Title or explanation appropriate ((max. 5 points)**

A deduction depends on the degree that the title isn’t suitable, lacks description/information, or does not capture the reader’s interest.

B. Author identified (max. 5 points)

A name, initials, or some designation of authorship. If the editor is the author, and a byline is not accorded, this should be noted at the top of the score sheet by the editor.

C. Approach to subject suitable for type of material. (max. 5 points)

If there is an obviously poor choice of presentation of the subject matter, there is a deduction, but this is the exception, rather than the rule. Usually, with a written format, the material could not be better presented as a drawing, cartoon or puzzle, or vice versa. There may be a deduction if the prose is burdened with too much description and would be more easily understood and visualized by using a picture or if photos should be added to a field trip report, a review of a collection, etc.

#2. RELATIVITY (max. 15 points)

Of interest to or meeting the needs/purposes of the club or hobby

Ask the following questions as you consider the entry:

- Is the feature a meaningful addition to the bulletin?
- Does it seem to occupy a large amount of space, and rightfully so?
- Is it truly original or has something similar been seen before and appears to be copied? - Does it include information that broadens the reader's knowledge about something that may occur at the meeting, field trip, etc.?
- Does the president's message relate to a current topic that is important to the club?
- Does a humorous feature relate to a memorable incident, be it a field trip, program, workshop experience?
- Is the drawing, cartoon, or puzzle descriptive of an adult or junior club activity?

Some of the judging here can overlap #5 Interest/Appeal, but **Relativity** is geared more to the broader purpose of the club and hobby.

#3. EFFECTIVENESS: (max. 25 points)

Written Feature

To what degree does the feature accomplish its purpose?

Score sheet items note different areas to consider depending on the type of feature. In addition, photographs are often an important consideration. If this is lacking and would add to the feature, there should be a deduction. Also, newsletters (paper copy) are usually not sent to members in color, and photographs lose some of their resolution when printed in black and white. If the original photo was clear and good quality, it should be fine in the transition. However, if this is not the case, and it has a meaningful effect on the presentation of the feature, there should be a deduction.

Drawn Feature

Access to the internet has increased possibility of copying, therefore, entries should be looked at, primarily, for originality. Word puzzles (searches, scrambles, anagrams, crossword, etc.) are not accepted and should be disqualified.

#4. Quality: (max. 20 points)

The amount of effort by the author usually goes along with the quality shown. Most of the authors are not professional writers, deductions are only made for the most glaring grammar oversights. Examples are: wrong verb tense, incomplete sentences, lack of proper punctuation, and improper use of conjunctions. The

editor will usually make needed corrections before publishing, so there should be few errors noted. A **deduction of .1 point for each example (not each item) of poor grammar and for each item of poor spelling** is acceptable. Larger deductions are warranted if an entry shows lack of detail and neatness in the drawing, an incomplete procedure, poor composition, or incomplete facts when the latter is crucial to the content.

#5. Interest/Appeal: (max. 25 points)

Would a club member (and general reader) find the feature enjoyable and/or noteworthy, or is it a rehash of an old theme? Usually entries with high scores for #2, and #3 would have similar scores here.