

Tallahassee Writers Association Contest Code of Ethics

In an attempt to conduct our contests as ethically as possible, we have developed clear and specific contest guidelines and are making the mechanics of our selection process available to the public.

TWA uses a blind judging system for its Penumbra and Seven Hills contests.

1. The contest coordinator selects qualified screening judges, usually three per contest category. The coordinator also selects a qualified finalist judge for each category.
2. After receiving your entry by snail mail, the contest coordinator removes identifying information about you from the submission, and assigns the manuscript a unique number. Submishmash electronic entries are set to automatically exclude identifying information from judges.
3. The coordinator logs manuscript titles, unique numbers, author names, and contact information into an Excel spreadsheet. The TWA treasurer will keep a separate record with payment information. This information will be recorded by Submishmash for electronic submissions.
4. The coordinator files cover sheets until final decisions are rendered. Manuscripts, only identifiable by the assigned number, are then forwarded to screening judges. Screeners consider each manuscript holistically. They keep a set of criteria in mind as they judge the quality of manuscripts. For prose contests, these criteria are posted on line for entrants to view.
5. Screening judges meet and use their notes on each entry to reach a consensus on finalist possibilities. If a screening judge recognizes any entry, he or she recuses him or herself from consideration of that manuscript and returns it to the contest coordinator who will assign an alternate judge. No screener will read a friend's manuscript knowingly.
6. After the coordinator receives the manuscripts selected by the screening committees, the coordinator forwards them to the finalist judge. This may be handled online.
7. The finalist judge awards final rankings of the manuscripts. TWA publishes first, second, and third place, and honorable mention manuscripts in the Seven Hills and Penumbra contests.
8. If you have any concerns regarding this matter, either before, or after the winners have been announced, please contact the contest coordinator directly.