**Ethics: Libel Practice Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

Based on your intuition as an amateur attorney (and help from your note sheet), classify the situations below using the scale (A, B, or C) and then tell why you made your choice.

1. Should not be printed because it is possibly libelous.
   * Exposes someone to a loss of reputation
2. Should not be printed, even though it is probably not libelous.
   * Bad taste (no reason to publish)
   * Poor word choice
   * Immature journalism
3. Okay! Go to print!
   * Fair comment and criticism
   * Privilege (public records)

Note: When you deal with decisions involving libel or bad taste, there are bound to be borderline cases. Therefore, a few of the examples might spark debate because the classification is not obvious. In dealing with borderline cases, many editors employ the old rule: “If in doubt, leave it out!”

Example One: Our campus security man witnessed a bicycle theft, but did not report it.

Classification: A Reason: exposes security man to loss of reputation.

Example Two: (ending of a sports story) The Tigers will rip the Cardinals to shreds and eat their innards.

Classification: B Reason: bad taste

1. Cafeteria worker Betty Crocker, we are told, rarely washes her hands.

Classification: \_\_\_\_\_ Reason: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. Student Council President Hillary Clinton was wrong when she voted to discontinue “Homecoming Court.”

Classification: \_\_\_\_\_ Reason: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. Marshall Mathers’ speech was delayed as he got nervous and threw up chunks of Mom’s spaghetti.

Classification: \_\_\_\_\_ Reason: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. While grade 12 student Justin Bieber waited with a bloody nose, the school nurse ignored him and continued her coffee break.

Classification: \_\_\_\_\_ Reason: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. Grade 10 student William Shatner’s acting in the school play was terrible.

Classification: \_\_\_\_\_ Reason: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. According to records on file as City Hall, car dealer Mel Farr was once convicted of false advertising.

Classification: \_\_\_\_\_ Reason: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. The latest *Twilight* movie, *Breaking Dawn Part 2*, proves Kristin Stewart is still a lousy actor.

Classification: \_\_\_\_\_ Reason: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. Classrooms are only cleaned weekly, a result of the policy of lazy head custodian, Zack Galifianakis.

Classification: \_\_\_\_\_ Reason: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. Looking a little tipsy, grade 12 student and Drama Club President Lindsay Lohan was sent to the planning room.

Classification: \_\_\_\_\_ Reason: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. A survey of 50 students reveals Ms. Legault is considered the best teacher at CSS and Mr. Lame O’McBorington is considered the worst.

Classification: \_\_\_\_\_ Reason: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_