

**Detroit SPJ
Excellence in Journalism
Award Winners for 2007**

Presented April 15, 2008

Judged by the Minnesota Chapter – SPJ

At discretion of the judges, awards were not made for all places or all categories.

Television Broadcast:

Investigative Reporting

First: M.L. Elrick, WDIV-TV

“They Lied About It”

Judges said: Good use of uncovering information and investigating a serious crime and apparent mishandling the situation by EMU officials. Nice mix of sources. Note: Not really an “undercover” investigation, since there is no undercover video.

Newscast

First: Tim Kochenderfer, WXYZ-TV

Action News at 11, “Government Shutdown”

Judges said: Nice use of resources, good job of breaking down several elements of the top story and showing why and how it affects the average viewer. Good move to have the main anchor field-anchoring at the state Capitol. Appropriate to have other news in the newscast.

Second: Tim Kochenderfer, WXYZ-TV

Action News at 11, “Stephen Grant Captured”

News Special/Documentary

First: Laura Moore and team from WJBK Fox 2

“Tribute to Our Troops”

Judges said: Beautifully edited and produced documentary. Nice mix of topics, stories and interviews. Good transitions between stories. Well done!

Radio Broadcast:

Spot or Breaking News

First: Dustin Dwyer and Steve Carmody, Michigan Radio

“GM Workers Go On Strike”

Judges said: This story soars with clear, concise writing about a strike with nationwide significance. The reporters draw on their depth of knowledge of the issue to pack in context and perspective without losing the listener. They use what would otherwise be dry press conference

audio judiciously, setting the stage first with valuable analysis, then transporting listeners to the street where we hear the workers. This is an impressive package especially given the tight deadlines. Dwyer and Carmody make a smart, formidable team.

Second: Ken Rogulski and Dick Haefner, WJR-AM
"August Tornado"

Judges said: Good public service. WJR covers an impressive amount of ground following a devastating storm from the emergency alert to meteorologist assessments to callers to reporters in the field. The station's staff turns out to provide a valuable public service and solid spot coverage of the "wall of gray smoke" that tore through communities.

Third: Craig Fahle and Jerome Vaughn, WDET-FM
GM Strike

General News Reporting

First: The team of Noah Ovshinsky, Mike Blank, Zak Rosen, Craig Fahle, Amy Miller, Pat Batcheller, Amanda LeClaire and Quinn Klinefelter of WDET-FM

Warren Series

Judges said: WDET reporters distinguish themselves in a category of worthy competitors. This series effectively zeroes in on a relatively small piece of geography to explain much broader concerns. The reporting transitions well from candidates to students to regular voters and spiritual leaders. The story about designing a new city seal is particularly noteworthy for its almost allegorical portrayal of the city's most pressing issues through the lens of a simple class project.

Second: Dick Haefner, WJR-AM

"A Way Forward"

Judges said: A lot of work and reporter expertise went into this impressive series of reports. There's plenty of background and the writing and delivery are both lively and engaging.

Third: Tracy Samilton, Michigan Radio

"Land Banks in Flint"

Features Reporting

First: Pete Misiak, WJR-AM

"Learning to Read"

Judges said: This report starts with a focused, tightly-written lead and maintains momentum through six full minutes. There's a wide range of sources and the piece relies on real people to explain the significance of the issue. The writing and production are well structured and the sound is good for the ear.

Second: Noah Ovshinsky, WDET-FM

Mackinac School

Judges said: A sweet story that begs to be told. The reporter weaves lots of audio in among a passionate advocate for a small school.

Third: Kaomi Goetz, Michigan Radio

“Ford Laid to Rest”

Sports Reporting

First: Steve Carmody, Michigan Radio

High School Concussions

Judges said: This is a very well-sourced and well told story. The sound is plentiful and flows seamlessly without crossing the line to sensational.

Second: Tracy Samilton, Michigan Radio

“Big Ten Network vs. Comcast”

Judges said: Balanced reporting on a timely subject important to college sports fans.

Investigative Reporting

First: WDET news team

“Detroit 1967: A Turning Point”

Judges said: WDET turned what could have been a simple remembrance of the 1967 Detroit riots into a comprehensive and noteworthy documentary exploring the pivotal few days 40 years ago that still shape the city’s direction forward. These stories provide a necessary reminder for Detroit citizens and a bitter education for the rest of us—not just of an important historic moment in time—but what can happen when inequities are squelched under an otherwise enlightened society.

The content of the reports brilliantly captures the context of the times with the added benefit of hindsight. Reporters found key participants and eyewitnesses of the riots to reconstruct the events and effectively put them in perspective. The archive audio of newsman Phillip Nye alone, combined with the poignant reaccounting of the warlike atmosphere that erupted on Detroit’s streets, is an eye-opening and frightening reminder of the conflicts. WDET pieced the various voices together expertly for maximum effect and the pieces look both backward and forward to makes sense of the unfortunate milestone.

The series is well conceived and produced. These are long stretches of audio, even by public radio standards, and the reporters and producers manage to maintain momentum and the listeners’ interest. This was an ambitious project for WDET to take on and they met and even exceeded what the project calls for. This is an excellent, probing and lasting piece of radio journalism WDET should be proud of.

Second: Michigan Radio staff

“Grading Michigan Schools”

Judges said: This is a smart collection of stories focused around the idea of assessing the state’s education system. Michigan Radio staff members are to be commended for taking listeners more into the classrooms and less into official offices to provide a clear, compelling picture of the education system. The reports range from Detroit to Grand Rapids, from suburban public schools to home-school experiments, from straight-ahead trend reporting to a well-produced account from a 12-year-old’s point of view. The reporters got answers to pertinent questions and expertly captured provocative quotes from sources. Although this aired over a period of weeks, it’s a joy to listen to it as a complete package.

Third: Vincent Duffy, Michigan Radio

“Jean Klock Park”

Newscast

First: Charity Nebbe and Michigan Radio newsroom

July 17, 2007, broadcast

Judges said: This newscast is flawlessly stacked and presented. The content is meaty and important—from the state budget crisis, a welcome decision in Grand Rapids and an auto industry trend. Each story is tight and accompanied with well-produced audio. Each conveys local significance. The newscaster is smooth and easy going but credible. Her delivery inspires comfortable, attentive listening. None of the individual reports detract.

Second: Charity Nebbe and Michigan Radio newsroom

Sept. 11, 2007, broadcast

Judges said: Michigan Radio clearly places a high premium on newscasts. The staff supplies this newscast with abundant sound on stories such as the court decision against the mayor and two labor disputes. The newscast maintains quality and momentum.

Third: Amy Miller, WDET-FM

Sept. 24, 2007, 11:04 broadcast

Judges said: An update on the auto workers strike, state budget issues and other stories are well constructed and delivered. Important issues presented with due consideration

News Special/Documentary

First: Michigan Radio – Staff

“Ashes to Hope: Overcoming the Detroit Riots”

Judges said: A comprehensive and soul-searching recounting of the deadly 1967 riots. It's a look back but exposes lingering scars. This is well-planned, well constructed radio. The eye-opening conversation between Sara Hulett and her grandfather alone is worthy of notice. Every aspect of this hour-long special is deliberate and compelling. O'Malley's "Fightin' bunch of bastards" quote is priceless, more so because of the subdued delivery it's juxtaposed against. The myth-busting segment is also a valuable and necessary component. The staff does an excellent job of finding and presenting key voices remembering the riots and elevating them with context and ornamental touches that propel the entire production forward. Music, voice montages, natural sound and important quotes trade off naturally with the voices of a talented staff.

Second: Dick Haefner, WJR-AM

“Honor Flight: A Final Mission”

Judges said: An enjoyable, historic trip with WW2 veterans with juxtaposition against

young peoples' voices. The writing is engaging, fast paced. The content is poignant. A lot of work went into production. Important work. The voices and stories first hand from veterans is important, even though the subjects themselves profess a desire to keep it to themselves.

Print, Class A:

Spot or Breaking News

First: Business news staff, Detroit Free Press

“A New U.S. Auto Industry”

Judges said: Thorough analysis of a hugely important contract – for GM, UAW and the state of Michigan.

Second: Detroit Free Press staff

Stephen Grant's Capture

Judges said: Great lede ... almost taking the reader to the snowy north woods.

Third: The Detroit News staff

“Off a Cliff”

Judges said: Thorough reporting of all angles of the GM, UAW strike.

General Reporting

First: Christine Tierney, Bill Vlasic, Josee Valcourt of The Detroit News

Coverage of Chrysler leading up to its sale

Judges said: Thorough with great inside knowledge that brings context to the coverage.

Second: Ron French and Mike Wilkinson, The Detroit News

“Union Divide”

Judges said: A “good idea” story, well-executed.

Third: Bill McGraw and Detroit Free Press staff

“Driving Detroit”

Judges said: An interesting idea with lots of surprises. Sometimes overwritten.

Features Reporting

First: Jeff Seidel , Detroit Free Press

“Mothers and Children: Lost and Found”

Judges said: Well-written, touching story. Each part stands on its own but the three-part series becomes a “page-turner.”

Second: Brian Smith, Metro Times

“Jesus of Suburbia: A holiday tale, of sorts”

Third: Mark Stryker, Detroit Free Press

“Making Art Work at the DIA”

Investigative Reporting

First: Ron French and Mike Wilkinson, The Detroit News

“Foreclosure Factory”

Judges said: Every major paper has been covering the foreclosure crisis but this series is thorough and pointed. It analyzed data well in easy to understand terms and explained the “Gold Rush” attitude of mortgage bankers.

Second: David Josar, The Detroit News

“Tax Breaks for Needy Abused”

Judges said: Unbelievable analysis of who is getting these tax breaks, from the cars they drive to their friends on the committee.

Third: Ron French, The Detroit News

“Michigan’s Education Time Bomb”

Judges said: Good analysis of how much “loopholes” cost and how the structure of the system is weighing it down.

Honorable Mention: Jack Kresnak, Detroit Free Press

“Could You Have Saved Ricky?”

Judges said: A great read. Could have more carefully looked at the family’s financial motivation to be foster parents.

Open Government Reporting

First: The Detroit News

Coverage of First Amendment Rights

Judges said: The stories produced through Freedom on Information requests were thorough and significant.

Second: Jennifer Dixon and Chastity Pratt, Detroit Free Press

“An Expensive Way to Learn’

Judges said: Reporting was tenacious, uncovering continued abuses of taxpayer dollars.

Third: Sandra Svoboda, Metro Times

"Let the Sunshine In: WSU Students Test Your Right to Know"

Judges said: Interesting story on Wayne State students.

Criticism

First: Adam Graham, The Detroit News

Judges said: Well-written, consistent work. Shows good understanding of the genre the author is reviewing.

Second: Mark Stryker, Detroit Free Press

Entertainment columns

Third: Susan Whitall, The Detroit News

Music reviews

Honorable Mention: Bill Holdship and Metro Times staff

"100 Greatest Detroit Hits"

News Columnist

First: Daniel Howes, The Detroit News

"Why Comerica checked out; Delphi-UAW deal: Sign of the future; Off a cliff (GM strike)."

Judges said: Howes sliced to the heart of these controversies, building a point of view based on the often-unsettling realities of Michigan's contemporary economy. In particular, his column about the Comerica headquarters move lays out what's at stake for the region as the population declines and markets elsewhere grow. He showed how the corporate directors making that decision are at the center of Detroit's power structure, and questioned whether they and political leaders are working closely enough together to find ways to arrest the economic decline the region is undergoing. His columns on labor tensions present perspectives that not all readers will agree with, but they represent viewpoints that need to be aired prominently. He also got these columns out under deadline pressure, thus exhibiting a talent that merits recognition.

Second: Jeff Gerritt, Detroit Free Press

"Lights out on common sense; A mother fights over prison care; Don't bar prison inspiration."

Judges said: Gerritt's columns argue persuasively the Michigan state government's efforts to trim prison costs are actually hurting taxpayers by focusing on budget cuts that will ultimately cost the state's taxpayers more. He cuts through the fog to help readers embrace an often unpopular cause, prison reform, that has become a critical issue in Michigan. His moving narratives about Theresa Vaughn and Raphael Johnson give readers good insights into the hardscrabble lives so many of us experience, and the hopes that sustain them.

Third: Brian Dickerson, Detroit Free Press

"Murdered, decapitated, stigmatized; Perry's jury, too, was railroaded; Judge gives 13 citizens their due."

Judges said: It's uncomfortably easy for media outlets and legislators to throw the book at sexual predators, but Dickerson shows that these stories are not always as simple as they seem. People can be stigmatized unfairly as sexual predators.

Sports Columnist

First: Mitch Albom, Detroit Free Press

Judges said: Strong opinion on controversial Duke Lacrosse issue plus two excellent human interest columns, off the beaten path.

Second: Michael Rosenberg, Detroit Free Press

Judges said: Strong opinions. Needed a column that required in-depth reporting.

Third: Bob Wojnowski, The Detroit News

Judges said: Needed a unique angle on at least one column to move it up in the mix.

Editorial, single

First: Jeff Gerritt, Detroit Free Press

"Courts should end 17-year injustice"

Judges said: Gerritt acknowledged that Buxton Heyerman is not the ideal "poster boy" for constitutional rights, but argued courageously and convincingly that the criminal justice system had failed him. After winning the right to a new trial, Heyerman should not have been allowed to languish in prison for 17 years. Justice delayed for 17 years is truly justice denied.

Second: Richard Burr, The Detroit News

"Teacher union recall effort reflects flight from reality"

Editorial, series

First: Jeff Gerritt, Detroit Free Press

Four editorials on prisons and state sentencing policies

Judges said: These editorials were well-researched and well-written, and helped keep the focus on the real issues in the political debate over Michigan's sentencing guidelines. They made a powerful case that the proposed reforms would narrow geographic disparities in sentences, reduce the number of prison beds used for non-violent offenders and help slow the growth in correctional costs.

Editorial cartoon

First: Mike Thompson, Detroit Free Press

Judges said: Elaborate, yet simply telling. Cartoons all have layers of supporting details.

Second: Larry Wright, The Detroit News

Judges said: Great ideas. Funny.

Third: Henry Payne, The Detroit News

Judges said: Simple, effective ideas.

News Graphics

First: Tim Summers, The Detroit News

“Wrangling Renegade Gas Pumps”

Judges said: An excellent illustration for a story that was tough to illustrate. It pulls the reader into a piece that might otherwise have been overlooked. Creative, attractive, something people will remember long after they have forgotten the story.

Second: David Pierce, John Fleming, Steve Dorsey and Joe Swickard of the Detroit Free Press

“Fatal Euphoria”

Judges said: The package, as a whole, was well-done and thorough. Graphic describing the nature of fentanyl was excellent. Information was easy to follow, despite the difficulty of the subject matter.

Third: Pat Murphy and Tim Summers, The Detroit News

“Honda Sneaks Up on Big 3”

Judges said: A simple idea that was well-executed, with both the photo illustration and typography. An attention-grabber.

Honorable Mention: Rick Nease, Steve Dorsey and Detroit Free Press staff

“Could You Have Saved Ricky?”

Judges said: The illustrations were top-notch, dramatic without being overdone. The impact was weakened by the small size allowed for some and by the stark contrast between the subject matter of the package and other stories on the page.

Headline writing

First: Brad Betker, Detroit Free Press

Judges said: It’s always a challenge to write strong headlines on serious stories of scope. His worked nicely with other elements of the display.

Second: Susan Hall-Balduff, Detroit Free Press

Judges said: Nice to see someone having fun with a headline while avoiding clichés: “E-I-E-I-WHOA.” Always nice to get readers singing along, too!

Third: Sandy Silfven, The Detroit News

Judges said: Rhymes are a risk. “In Praise of Braise” worked.

Front page design

First: Steve Anderson and Robert Huschka, Detroit Free Press

“A Very Tragic Result”

Second: Tim Good, Kathy Kieliszewski, Robert Huschka and Steve Dorsey of the Detroit Free Press

“Driving Detroit”

Third: Robert Huschka, Steve Dorsey and Jim Finkelstein, Detroit Free Press

“At Home. At Rest.”

Honorable Mention: Tyler Rau, The Detroit News

“Should They Die?”

Feature page design

First: Amy Martin, Steve Dorsey and Mauricio Gutierrez, Detroit Free Press

“Celebrate Michigan”

Judges said: Very creative solution to sections that are often difficult to illustrate. I found myself spending time with the cover ... wish I could have seen the rest.

Second: Ray Stanczak, The Detroit News

Detroit Institute of Arts special section cover

Judges said: Beautiful and elegant. So very appropriate for the subject matter.

Third: Ray Stanczak, The Detroit News

“Back to School: Getting Ready”

Judges said: A lot of information packed into a well-organized, clever display. The type of page you clip and save ... true staying power.

Editorial Page Design

First: Gerald Skora, Detroit Free Press

Sports page design

First: Ryan Ford, Detroit Free Press

“756!”

Judges said: Simple, but a LOT of impact. Great info. Surprises everywhere. Wonderfully put together.

Second: Ryan Ford, Detroit Free Press

“VER-RIFIC!”

Judges said: Nice photo. Smart,informative display type.

Third: Cindy Lacy, The Detroit News

“UNTOUCHABLE”

Judges said: Well put together. Graphic illustration of Verlander’s no-hitter was inspired and engaging. Nice job!

News Photo

First: Regina Boone, Detroit Free Press

“4 Deaths, Many Tears”

Judges said: This photo captures so many emotions: Pain, grief, anger, sadness, shock. They come through in the composition and framing of this photo.

Second: Elizabeth Conley, The Detroit News

“Tara Lynn Grant: Farewell”

Third: David Coates, The Detroit News

“Never Forgotten”

Feature Photo

First: Todd McInturf, The Detroit News

“The Long Road Home” lead photo

Judges said: The two focal points of this photo, the prosthetic legs and John, are drawn together and connect to give the reader a better sense of what John is feeling at that moment ... and the challenges that lie ahead.

Second: David Guralnick, The Detroit News

Hajj re-enactment photo

Third: Todd McInturf, The Detroit News

“The Long Road Home” motorcycle club photo

Honorable Mention: Kathleen Galligan, Detroit Free Press

“City’s Hope Trumps Its Troubles” Quinceanera celebration photo

Sports Photo

First: Julian H. Gonzales, Detroit Free Press

“Open House”

Judges said: The view from above the goal captures the intensity and excitement of this game-winning save.

Second: David Guralnick, The Detroit News

“Tanked”

Third: Rashaun Rucker, Detroit Free Press

“Historic Win for City”

Honorable Mention: Robin Buckson, The Detroit News

“VER-OCIOUS!”

New Media

First: Free Press Staff

Judges said: Video and on-line graphics are terrific complement to traditional copy. Graphics in both the dog fighting and euphoria stories wer educational and well-done visually. The presentation on-line of the euphoria story was tasteful and creative as well. Your in-depth subject matter and the links from past to present stood out. Overall, tremendous use of the technology available.

Second: Nancy Hanus, Detroit News

Judges said: Fantastic “Panic in Detroit” project. The interactive video and audio elements add to this project and other projects on this site. Auto show inside and accompanying blog are creative and a fitting addition. Great subject matter and overall use of technology.

Third: Alan Baker, Kevin Hill and Ai-Ting Huang, Crain’s Detroit Business

Judges said: Love the bright side videos as a way of portraying the “good news” that the media is often accused of ignoring.

Print, Class B:

Spot or Breaking News

First: Randal Yaakey, The Oakland Press

“Manhunt in Waterford”

Judges said: Good telling of a story with constantly changing parts. Relevant background high in the story.

Second: Paula Pasche, The Oakland Press

"Changing of the Guard"

Judges said: Strong with interesting anecdotes throughout.

Third: Dave Groves, The Oakland Press

"He's Got a Gun"

Judges said: Nice package of voices and photos. Some relevant background could have been higher in the story.

Honorable Mention: Paula Pasche, The Oakland Press

"Maized and Confused"

General Reporting

First: Jerry Wolffe, The Oakland Press

"Wounded Warriors"

Judges said: Good analysis of data revealing a surprising and sad statistic about those serving in the war in Iraq.

Second: Paula Pasche, The Oakland Press

"U-M vs. Ohio State Still Important"

Judges said: Thorough beat reporting from beginning to end.

Third: Maryanne Kocis MacLeod, The Macomb Daily

"Longer Days: Full Day Kindergarten Reaches Macomb"

Judges said: A timely topic, thoroughly reported.

Honorable Mention: Ron Fonger, Melissa Burden and Richey Hampton, Flint Journal

SWA football and jail

Features Reporting

First: Carol Azizian, Flint Journal

"Ready for the World"

Judges said: Totally engaged with the narrative from the lede; I wanted to finish reading this piece. Nicely organized; humanistic without being sappy.

Second: Tom Willard, The Macomb Daily

"Playing Through Pain"

Judges said: Gets inside the head of the character and documents his growth and evolution in a believable fashion. A nice read.

Third: Gina Joseph, The Macomb Daily

"State Rejects Latest Harsens Island Bridge Proposal"

Investigative Reporting

First: David Birkett, The Oakland Press

"Promises Unfulfilled"

Judges said: Interesting take on a very human issue: Athletics and the drug trade.

Second: Stephen Frye and Randal Yakey, The Oakland Press

"Jail Overcrowding"

Judges said: Ambitious project.

Third: Ron Fonger, Flint Journal

"Who Failed Rose?"

Judges said: Left me wanting more.

Criticism

First: Gary Graff, The Oakland Press

"Night Will Move Again"

News Columnist

First: Chad Selweski, The Macomb Daily

"County economy slides while officials sleep; Corporate myths keep workers on the crosshairs; Obsessed with Tara? Here's the story you missed."

Judges said: Chad Selweski's columns exhibit the critical thinking that differentiates a good newspaper from a same-old, same-old newspaper. He alerted his readers to the weak economic development efforts of Macomb County officials. He "afflicted the comfortable and comforted the afflicted" with his column about rising economic disparities. And at least by implication, his column about the media frenzy over the murder of Tara Grant criticized his own newspaper's coverage of that brutal killing and needled his own readers for their addictions to this story. These are the things that a good columnist does.

Sports Columnist

First: Jeff Kuehn, The Oakland Press

"Everyone should be proud of Oakland County Athletics; Country Day Senior Gets a Second Chance; Dantonio's Spartans Pass Their First Tests of Adversity"

Second: Pat Caputo, The Oakland Press

“U-M, Ohio State and ND were all frauds; Pontiac’s Tony Stiel Turns 80; Herring Comes Through For His Father”

Third: Dana Garuder, The Oakland Press

“Managing: Proof That a Sucker is Born Every Minute; Some Dos and Don’ts For Finding Players For Your Team; Thank God, and Comcast, No One Saw This”

Editorial, single

First: Ken Kish, The Macomb Daily

“No reason to hold new hearing on Lupo appeal.”

Judges said: This editorial make the case that a former law enforcement officer who conspires to defraud two school districts doesn’t deserve a get-out-of-jail card.

News Graphics

First: Kevin Martin, The Macomb Daily

“Holiday Stress”

Headline writing

First: K. Michelle Moran, C&G Newspapers

“Seinfeld Spreads His Wings in ‘Bee’ Movie”

Second: Matt Mowery, The Oakland Press

“U-M Survives Little Brown Juggles”

Front page design

First: Michael Huggler, The Macomb Daily

“Rivalry Like No Other”

Second: Elsa Frohman, The Macomb Daily

“Driving the Dream”

Feature page design

First: Kevin Martin, The Macomb Daily

“Pink and Justin at the Joe”

Judges said: A good way to put fun in the package. Clean and consistent.

Second: Kevin Martin, The Macomb Daily

“Rooted in the Fall”

Judges said: Another clean design, but would benefit from dropping one image.

Sports page design

First: Matt Mowery, The Oakland Press

Judges said: Nice wrap of Verlander in Hawkins' column.

Second: Kevin Martin, The Macomb Daily

News Photo

First: David Dalton, The Macomb Daily

"Raging Inferno"

Judges said: The intensity and contrast of the colors in the photo help create a strong sense of the devastation left by this fire.

Second: David Posavetz, The Macomb Daily

"Truck Falls Through the Ice"

Sports Photo

First: Ray Skowronek, The Macomb Daily

"Blue Devils Romp"

Judges said: This photo captures a powerful moment of impact with the two players colliding mid-air and the goalie's reaction.

Second: Ray Skowronek, The Macomb Daily

"Dakota Pounds Ford"

Third: Ray Skowronek, The Macomb Daily

"Takin' A Shot"

Print, Class C:

Spot or Breaking News

First: Paula Gardner and Nathan Bomey, Ann Arbor Business Review

"After Pfizer, What's Next?"

Judges said: Shows the breadth of the impact of Pfizer's exit. Done on tight deadline.

Second: Brent Snavely, Crain's Detroit Business

"Is Icahn Set to Be King Lear?"

Judges said: Good analysis of Icahn. Needed a couple of graphs on where Lear was, business-wise.

Third: Terry Oparka, C&G Sterling Heights Sentry

“Home Where Baby Died Was Filthy, Police Say”

Judges said: Good story but wrong judge’s name kept it from placing higher.

General Reporting

First: Brent Snavelly, Sherri Begin, Bill Shea, Amy Lane and Chad Halcom, Crain’s Detroit Business

“Toyota in Motown”

Judges said: Timely topic even 35 years later. Well-covered.

Second: Richard Bak, Rebecca Powers and George Buland, Hour Detroit

“Reflections on a Tragic Milestone”

Third: Brian Cox, The Saline Reporter

“Granholm Pushes for Consolidation”

Features Reporting

First: George Bulanda, Hour Detroit

“Word Processing”

Judges said: Beautiful work. This feature not only tells one woman’s personal story but explains, in terms that are easy to understand, a complex medical condition.

Second: Richard Bak, Hour Detroit

“The Lone Ranger Rides Again”

Third: Jack Lessenberry and Michelle Franzen Martin, Wayne State Magazine

“Transforming Wayne”

Honorable Mention: Robin Schwartz, Detroit Jewish News

“Another Heartfelt Gift”

Investigative Reporting

First: Brian Cox, The Saline Reporter

Investigation into conduct of school superintendent Geltner

Judges said: Reporter was on top of the story every step of the way.

Second: Keri Guten Cohen, Detroit Jewish News

Articles supporting Israel

Third: Shelli Liebman Dorfman and Robert Sklar, Detroit Jewish News

"Partners in Torah"

Criticism

First: Christopher Cook, Hour Detroit

"Casual Comfort" and "Mansion Makeover"

Judges said: This writer's casual yet clean prose makes you feel at home in the restaurants he describes.

News Columnist

First: Paula Gardner, Ann Arbor Business Review

"Detroit's potential rekindles optimism for a tattered city; We have to fight to clear Michigan's hurdles; We'll all be losers in Visteon's shell game."

Judges said: Paula Gardner has a knack for bringing a personal perspective to broad economic issues. She put Visteon's celebratory announcement of a new plant into context by recounting its sweeping cuts in jobs and wages. And her columns about the economies of Detroit and Michigan give moving testimony to the importance of hope in overcoming seemingly insurmountable adversities.

Second: Catherine McClure, Detroit Legal News

"Michigan Supreme Court ruling on voter ID law calls for increased vigilance at the polls; The merit of prosecutorial discretion in federal death penalty cases; The inevitability of partisanship in the courts"

Third: George Cantor, Detroit Jewish News

"Father Knows Zilch; What's in a Name; Making It Better"

Sports Columnist

First: Jerry Hinnen, Saline Reporter

"Fun and Games"

Judges said: Conversational style works well. Should try to limit use of the word "I."

Editorial

First: George Cantor, Detroit Jewish News

"Political overdose."

Judges said: Cantor demonstrated insight and courage in calling the National Jewish Democratic Council on a clear political cheap shot. While the editorial may not have been universally popular in the Jewish community, it served the cause of good journalism and helped foster greater civility in our political discourse.

News Graphics

First: Ritu Parr and Nathan Bomey, Ann Arbor Business Review

“Pfizer on the Market”

Headline writing

First: David Sachs, Detroit Jewish News

“What Gives?”

Second: George Bulanda, Hour Detroit

“Rose’? Don’t Blush”

Third: George Bulanda, Hour Detroit

“50 Going On 15: Dressed to Kill”

Honorable Mention: David Sachs, Detroit Jewish News

“Deli Laughs”

Front page design

First: Nancy Clark, Crain’s Detroit Business

“Pfizer: Crisis or Opportunity?”

Magazine cover design

First: Nathan Schroeder, Hour Detroit

June cover: “Best of Detroit”

Judges said: This cover is creatively designed with striking use of illustration. Instantly sparks the readers’ interest.

Second: Nathan Schroeder, Hour Detroit

May cover: “Fresh Picks”

Judges said: Great use of color. Perfect font choice.

Third: Margaret Kelly, Wayne State Magazine

Winter 2007: “Borrowed Treasures”

Magazine spread design

First: Nathan Schroeder, Hour Detroit

“Would You Like Fries With That Bypass?”

Judges said: Interesting use of color and font choice. Color and size are all great choices on the first page of the story.

Second: Margaret Kelly, Wayne State Magazine

“Students 101”

Third: Cassidy Zobl, Hour Detroit

“The Lone Ranger Rides Again”

Feature page design

First: Nancy Clark, Crain’s Detroit Business

“Woodward Avenue: Road to the Future”

Judges said: Very clean, consistent and lively design ... which can be difficult to execute with such large packages. So easy to read!

Editortial page design

First: Nancy Clark, Crain’s Detroit Business

Sports page design

First: Jerry Hinnen, Saline Reporter

“Triumph and Tears”

Judges said: Nice sports photography! Played well.

Second: Jerry Hinnen, Saline Reporter

“Ch-ch-ch-Changes”

Judges said: Gallery of photos works well but watch the quality of photos. Lower quality can diminish your package.

News Photo

First: CJ Carnacchio, The Oxford Leader

“Dude Looks Like a Lady”

Judges said: The photo captures a fun, and lively, scene.

Second: CJ Carnacchio, The Oxford Leader

“Remember”

Feature Photo

First: Justin Maconochie, Hour Detroit

"Building Blocks" freeway photo

Judges said: The elevated angle gives this photo an interesting, almost simplistic, feel to complex section of infrastructure. The winding interchange gives this photo a sense of movement.

Second: Joe Vaughn, Hour Detroit

"Global Groceries"

Third: Jerry Zolynsky, X-Ology Magazine

"Nanorex: New Dimensions in DNA Research"

Sports Photo

First: Casey Curtis, The Oxford Leader

"That's Using Your Head"

Judges said: Good timing is demonstrated in this photo, capturing an intense and exciting moment in the game.

Second: Casey Curtis, The Oxford Leader

"Race to the Base"

Third: Hiroshi Onama, The Milan News-Leader

"Bears Bashed"