

BNC 2024

BETTER NEWSPAPERS
COMPETITION

*Award
Results*

CELEBRATING THE BEST OF ONTARIO'S
COMMUNITY NEWSPAPERS

Local News



Jobless numbers soar

MARKET DATA

Commodity Futures Contracts

Commodity	Contract	Low	Settle	High	Open
Soybean Meal (cmt)	12790	12780	12790	12795	12790
March	12790	12780	12790	12795	12790
Soybean Oil (cmt)	38.2	38.1	38.2	38.3	38.2
March	38.2	38.1	38.2	38.3	38.2
Rough Rice (cmt)	104.50	104.50	104.50	104.50	104.50
March	104.50	104.50	104.50	104.50	104.50
Wheat (cmt)	104.25	104.25	104.25	104.25	104.25
March	104.25	104.25	104.25	104.25	104.25
Wheat (cmt)	104.25	104.25	104.25	104.25	104.25
March	104.25	104.25	104.25	104.25	104.25

Currency Futures

Currency	Contract	Low	Settle	High	Open
Japanese Yen (cmt)	102.200	102.200	102.200	102.200	102.200
March	102.200	102.200	102.200	102.200	102.200
Canadian Dollar (cmt)	70.00	70.00	70.00	70.00	70.00
March	70.00	70.00	70.00	70.00	70.00
British Pound	1.60	1.60	1.60	1.60	1.60
March	1.60	1.60	1.60	1.60	1.60
Swiss Franc	1.60	1.60	1.60	1.60	1.60
March	1.60	1.60	1.60	1.60	1.60

Community News

An earthquake that struck Springfield on Monday caused "a lot of damage." There are no reports of serious damage, an emergency

One person said the quake "turned his house upside down, with crockery breaking," the station reported, citing Orion, a power company. Sewer lines and water pipes have ruptured, a company spokesman told the station.

"Structural damage to houses and brick glass have been reported throughout Springfield," the station said.

LOCAL

IN TOUCH: CITY/STATE DESK 688-3111

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RECOGNIZING THE HARD WORK & DEDICATION
OF ONTARIO'S COMMUNITY NEWSPAPERS!



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I'm always inspired every time I look through the winners of OCNA's Better Newspapers Competition. Ours is an industry brimming with journalistic skill, creativity and passion, and it's truly wonderful to see our business at its best.

This year we received over 689 amazing entries in 57 different categories from 58 different newspapers. Behind every submission is the story of the reporters, photographers, designers, editors and publishers who went the extra mile to keep their communities informed, educated and entertained. And while our winners are worthy of praise, we all know the hard work and sacrifice which goes into every edition is no less worthy of recognition.

While competitions like ours give winners a chance to be recognized and appreciated by their peers, they're also an excellent opportunity to learn from the best and the brightest of our industry. After every awards competition I come away with at least one great idea to try in my paper.

Of course, none of this would have been possible without three very important groups: the judges, the sponsors and the OCNA staff.

It takes a lot of time and dedication for our volunteer judges to go through a category's worth of stories, photos, websites, ads or newspapers. While the process can be quite fun, it's often done during evenings or weekends outside of normal working hours. Without that willingness on the part of our judges to give freely of themselves and share their wisdom about newspapers, events like the Better Newspapers Competition could not exist. Thank you.

We would also not be able to hold our annual awards without the generosity of our category sponsors. Your donations are what make it possible for OCNA to recognize and reward the best work our industry has to offer. Your continued support is greatly appreciated by all OCNA members.

This year we are fortunate to be able to celebrate in person. We will be announcing the winners at this year's Spring Retreat. Thank you once again to our Awards Gala sponsor Ontario Power Generation for its continued support.

I would be remiss if I didn't thank the OCNA staff for their dedication and hard work on the awards. You're all winners as far as I'm concerned.

Congratulations to all those who entered and to those who had their work chosen to be featured in the pages of this book. I can't wait to see all the great work you'll be submitting for next year's awards.

Colleen Green
President
Ontario Community Newspapers Association

General Excellence

Weather Report

NEWS

Friday

When someone dives into the world of Software Engineering, one day he will need to learn the basics of Software Architecture Patterns. When I was new to coding, I didn't know where to go for a brief introduction to architecture patterns so detailed & c...

to note,

GENERAL EXCELLENCE CLASS 1

CIRC. 1,500 & UNDER

11 ENTRIES



WINGHAM ADVANCE TIMES

There is lots to love about the Wingham Advance Times. It finished at the top of its category for its comprehensive and engaging editorial focused on the community it serves. From its clean front-page design to its overall layout and photography, it's a pleasure to read. The Op/Ed pages feature strong editorial and are coupled with a cartoon. With plenty of local sports coverage and recurring features such as "Memories of Wingham" there is lots to spark discussion and engage readers. The organized Classifieds section and great ad design help deliver a strong finish.



LISTOWEL BANNER

The Listowel Banner starts with a strong front page filled with stories and a photo and continues that effort throughout its pages. The editorial content is supplemented by strong design and effective, attractive advertising. The paper provides interesting and informed commentary on its editorial page, weighing in on issues of the day and adding an editorial cartoon and historic bits to the mix. A strong effort by this newspaper.



HALIBURTON COUNTY ECHO

The Haliburton County Echo starts with an attractive, informative front page that leads readers inside where they will find many more key stories and features, along with numerous strong photos. This paper is well laid out and designed, and the news coverage is supported by attractive, effective advertising. Columnists provide commentary on issues of the day, and the editorial page includes a feature photo and a history photo. There is plenty of value for readers in this newspaper.

HONOURABLE MENTION

MINDEN TIMES - The judges hemmed and hawed about who would get this spot, and The Minden Times gets the nod. The front features some small advertising, but it's the main photo that makes people turn the pages. There's plenty of good, solid local content. People like to see the colour that goes along with a story, and there was plenty of engaging imagery. The opinion pages are solid, as is the advertising, with some nice historical bits mixed in. People love local and The Minden Times doesn't disappoint.

GENERAL COMMENT

It's obvious that print journalism still thrives in small locales, and you can tell those who work for these publications are heavily invested in what they do. They are doing a terrific job of providing their communities with important stories and photographs, along with informative advertising, at a time when trusted news sources have never been more important. One of the personal favourites was The Mildmay Town Crier. You name it and they're reporting on it, right down to the crokinole results from Teeswater. Where else would you get local content like that? People keep trying to write our epitaph, but we're still beating and we're still strong. These newspapers prove that. Keep up the tremendous work.

Judges

Janet Gairdner
Assoc. Group Publisher
South Vancouver Island & Publisher
Saanich News & Oak Bay News
Black Press Media, BC



James McCarthy
Managing Editor
Northern News Services Ltd.
Nunavut & NWT



Frank McTighe
Editor & Publisher
The Macleod Gazette
Fort Macleod, AB



GENERAL EXCELLENCE CLASS 2

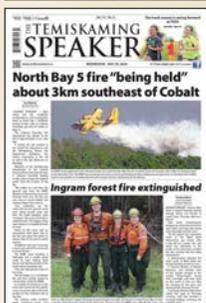
CIRC. 1,501 - 8,000

13 ENTRIES



EGANVILLE LEADER

The Eganville Leader stood out for both design and content. The look of the paper is clean and crisp and makes effective use of colour in its layout. This paper abounds with strong features and news stories and the "Reflections of a Century" feature on its editorial pages highlights its strong roots in the community. A strong advertising base means this award winning paper should go on to serve the community for many years to come.



NEW LISKEARD TEMISKAMING SPEAKER

The New Liskeard Temiskaming Speaker features great depth and diversity of stories, including sports and community interest. Clean layout. Well framed photos. Interesting editorial pages. Impressively healthy classifieds. A credit to the community!



BLYTH/BRUSSELS CITIZEN

The Blyth/Brussels Citizen has fantastic photos, great people stories with impressive locally relevant and expansive features. A paper that appears to be a very proud part of its community.

HONOURABLE MENTION

THE HALDIMAND PRESS - Judging in this category was extremely close and The Haldimand Press finished just out of the top three. The paper features a good layout with frequent use of colour, sharp photography and good local reporting.

GENERAL COMMENT

Newspapering in the '20s isn't easy but the newspapers in this category display incredible perseverance, adaptation through integration with online tools, and dedication to community. They're there at the significant birthdays, heartbreaking business closures and the dry council meetings that are the necessary bread and butter of community newspapers the country over. Particularly notable was the critical local reporting on forest fires – unfortunately an ever more common story and an ever more important one. They all show a long and deep attachment to their communities - in some cases going back well over a century. This and their strong advertising base will hopefully ensure they continue to thrive for many years to come. Local matters now more than ever and these papers collectively are proof of that. Well done all.

Judges

Bronwyn Beairto

*Editor
The Coast Reporter
Sechelt, BC*



Andy Walker

*Retired Editor
Island Farm
Montague, PEI*



GENERAL EXCELLENCE CLASS 3

CIRC. 8,001 & OVER

18 ENTRIES



NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE, THE LAKE REPORT

Congratulations to The Lake Report team for its strong reporting, lovely pagination and commitment to represent all facets of the community. This newspaper is a joy to read. I felt like I had a good sense of what's going on in the region by reading your newspaper! The photographs seem to pop off the page and the composition and framing are near perfect. Feature stories, of which both issues had great examples, make this newspaper a must-read for anyone living in the area, offering a unique product that can't be replicated by other sources of media. The high ad content indicates community buy-in. Overall, a strong community newspaper.



ELMIRA-WOOLWICH OBSERVER

Three cheers to the Observer team for providing a great newspaper that represents the community, providing a sound mix of news, arts, sports, business and human interest articles in each edition. A nicely designed newspaper from the paginator, with the front page limited to a banner ad above the flag, and below the editorial content, thus allowing it to stand out. Strong headlines, one of the best editorial and op-ed pages in the contest, a visually pleasing front page, and well written and researched content are evident. Extensive classified and display ads demonstrate the community's buy-in and it's clear this is a publication that the creators and the community take pride in.



HALIBURTON, THE HIGHLANDER

Well done Highlander team for a great newspaper! Loved your mission statement on the op-ed page and the fact that you provided the names of all of your staff - not just management. This publication represents a healthy community and includes voices from readers through letters to the editor. Bold headlines, large well composed photos and excellent writing make it a delightful read. A strong commitment to the arts, as well as environmental, business and feature style stories once again indicate professionalism and pride in their product. Advertising is colourful, well designed and does not detract from the rest of the paper. What stands out the most is the simplicity.

HONOURABLE MENTION

KITCHISSIPPI TIMES - The Kitchissippi Times publication has a feel of a magazine in a newspaper format. Nice use of unjustified layout with editorial content. Like the headers at the top of the page. Good use of photography as artwork to illustrate with the reporter's words. Plenty of features throughout the various sections. Photography enhanced the pages. All areas of the judging process scored top marks, especially the look of the newspaper.

GENERAL COMMENT

Congratulations to the publication teams for submitting their wonderful work and continuing to inform their communities. Though we had to pick the top three, the truth is there were many newspapers that were very close. Some newspapers do a few things exceptionally well, while others are strong throughout. The importance of the basics, strong and balanced writing, engagement with the community through letters to the editor and attention to all facets of the readerships through news, arts, and sports coverage is reflected on your pages. In all it was a delight to review these newspapers. With products like these, the future of community newspapers is assured.

Judges

Janis Cleugh

*Reporter & Copy Editor
Tri-City News
Coquitlam, BC*



Greg Vandermeulen

*Editor
The Carillon
Steinbach, MB*



Jules Xavier

*Retired Editor
Shilo Stag
CFB Shilo, MB*



GENERAL EXCELLENCE CLASS 4

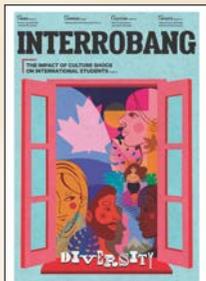
COLLEGE & UNIVERSITY

4 ENTRIES



HUMBER COLLEGE - ET CETERA

Good cross section of community news but there could be a greater focus on Humber news. While writing stories on greater Toronto, provincial and federal issues is great practice for journalism students, the community - in this case Humber students - would likely read more about issues local to the students and school. There was also a bias coming through in some stories, something many editors would frown on. Overall, the best of the newspapers.



FANSHAWE COLLEGE - INTERROBANG

There is room for more college news about the many things Fanshawe has to offer. It's disappointing there were so few photos taken by students in a college with a photography program. The paper should be working with the photography program to promote photojournalism.



UNIVERSITY OF WATERLOO - IMPRINT

This publication had a different format than the others, making it hard to compare. This was especially seen with the different front page. However, it had a good presentation of issues. These were interesting reads that would impact the students.

HONOURABLE MENTION

LOYALIST COLLEGE - PIONEER - This publication has great potential, but there needs to be a greater focus on stories impacting students and their institution. It was also the smallest of the entries.

GENERAL COMMENT

All the stories were great and interesting. One of the trends facing community journalism is a move by the large chains to cut journalists, and local news. There is a resurgence in local newspapers and online publications to counter this as the people want local news. With this in mind, there could be better emphasis on the college or university and how issues impact students.

Judge

Jeff Helsdon

*Editor
Tillsonburg Post
Tillsonburg, ON*



Jeff Helsdon is the editor of the Tillsonburg Post and an award-winning freelance journalist and photographer with hundreds of publication credits. The recipient of OCNA awards in the past, he has a big belief in putting community first in community newspapers.

Powering Community Spirit

From all of us at OPG, we would like to extend our congratulations to the 2024 OCNA award nominees.

OPG is a proud partner of many community activities, initiatives, and events across Ontario. As the province's largest clean, low-carbon power generator, we're dedicated to making Ontario the best place to live, work, and play.

ONTARIO
POWER
GENERATION

*Electrifying
life*

opg.com



*Premier
Awards*



ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

20 ENTRIES



PICTON GAZETTE - KAREN VALIHORA

Kudos to Karen Valihora for her efforts to provide thoughtful context to an upcoming film festival. Instead of simply presenting a synopsis of the event, she honours the festival's curators by exploring what binds the various films together, earning her first place. It's a helpful primer for the audience, many of whom would have been prompted to watch some of the films because of her story. If the graphic was created by the newspaper's team, then an extra bravo!



NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE, THE LAKE REPORT - JULIA SACCO

Julia Sacco has a nice, conversational tone that dovetails with her subject's engaging storytelling ability for a second-place finish. The two draw you into the story easily, keeping your attention right until the last paragraph. Her photos are also exceptional and stand out, especially since, unlike many submissions, they were taken by the story's author.



CREEMORE ECHO - TRINA BERLO

Trina Berlo comes in third for her courage in describing how a local band uses automatic songwriting to create their music. It's not an easy process to encapsulate and yet she does it well. Her interview with the band members also piques interest in the upcoming concert.

GENERAL COMMENT

Submissions for awards categories are an opportunity to celebrate the occasions when reporters have more time to spend exploring their subject's impact and relevance. Several submissions were simply news stories about arts events. Many buried their ledes by not engaging readers with why they should care about supporting the arts. The winners piqued readers' attention and then gave them the practical information they needed.

Judge

Martha Perkins



*Retired journalist of 30 years
Ontario and BC*

Martha Perkins is a retired community newspaper editor, having worked in both Haliburton County and Vancouver. She has a keen interest in arts reporting.

Sponsored by: *Midwestern Newspapers*

BEST BUSINESS & FINANCE STORY

14 ENTRIES



AYLMER EXPRESS - ROB PERRY

The Pincroft Pottery story was a great one to read. It revealed the history and present-day operations of a veteran business in the community. And it gave us a glimpse into the future. Overall, a well-written story deserving of a first-place finish.



BLYTH/BRUSSELS CITIZEN - SCOTT STEPHENSON

This is a story that really focuses on the business and finances of a long-time dairy operation. It has a comfortable read and kindles an interest in a vital industry. Good work all around.



FORT FRANCES TIMES - KEN KELLAR

The Hallett Brewing story really gets into what's behind this company. It's good to see why businesses start and why they become successful. It's often a journey of learning and discovery. Well done story.

GENERAL COMMENT

That 14 entries were submitted for this category indicates that many communities throughout the province have thriving business sectors and newspapers that place emphasis on spotlighting some operations for their successes and others for the struggles they encounter. Collectively, the entries displayed strong business writing skills and gave us a look inside many operations. There are always winners, but this was a group of fourteen close-scoring submissions.

Judge

Manfred Tempelmayer

*Retired Publishing Company President
& Past BCYCNA President
Gabriola Island, BC*



Manfred Tempelmayer spent 37 years in the community newspaper industry. Now retired, he was president of Sound Publishing Inc. in Washington state for 10 years and served as vice-president of Island Publishers Ltd. on Vancouver Island for eight years. He is a past president of BCYCNA and served on the board for 25 years. He was also on the CCNA board for two terms and was vice-president of the Washington Newspaper Publishers Association at retirement.

BEST EDITORIAL, CIRC. 8,000 & OVER

11 ENTRIES



NORTH WELLINGTON COMMUNITY NEWS - CHRIS DAPONTE

Textbook editorial. This takes a strong stand, lays out the case for it logically and forcefully and offers a solution.



ELMIRA-WOOLWICH OBSERVER - STEVE KANNON

Extremely well-written and easy to follow. A subject of high importance to the future of the community and a strong opinion.



NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE, THE LAKE REPORT - RICHARD HARLEY

A comprehensive look at a very important subject. Well-argued and fully supported by the paper's own work. Impressive.

HONOURABLE MENTION

UXBRIDGE COSMOS - LISHA VAN NIEUWENHOVE - Calling out the excesses of council is extremely timely with so many people feeling the economic crunch. A thoughtful, reasonable and balanced opinion.

GENERAL COMMENT

When I started in this business a quarter century ago, there was a very clear delineation between editorials and columns. I find it concerning that the line seems to be blurring and that many current journalists don't even know there is a difference. Nevertheless, I found the quality of the entries overall quite good and only disqualified one, which was clearly entered in the wrong category.

Judge

Thom Barker
Regional Editor
Smithers Interior News, Terrace Standard,
Kitimat Northern Sentinel,
Prince Rupert Northern View,
& Haida Gwaii Observer
Black Press Media, Northwest BC



After graduating with a B.Sc. from Carleton University and taking a detour through the high-tech business, Thom started his journalism career as a fact-checker for a magazine in Ottawa in 2002. He quickly progressed to writing freelance features for various publications, but when he landed his first newspaper job with The Interior News in 2005, he knew he had found his calling. He is the winner of numerous journalism awards, perhaps most notable the 2008 CCNA Best Feature Story award for his coverage of the in-custody death of Ian Bush and subsequent coroner's inquest. He has previously been a finalist in both the columnist and editorial writing categories in the BCYCNA Ma Murray Awards. Thom believes strongly in the value of community news, particularly in the digital era.

BEST EDITORIAL, CIRC. UNDER 8,000

16 ENTRIES



BARRHAVEN INDEPENDENT - JEFF MORRIS

Well written. This shows the strength of the newspaper/media in the community. Your stand on the letters to the editor is surprising, but great.



THE INDEPENDENT SERVING PETROLIA AND CENTRAL LAMBTON - HEATHER WRIGHT

A well-developed editorial. Very well written. Well done.



LISTOWEL BANNER - PATRICK RAFTIS

A well written, well-developed editorial. Good background information is included to get the reader up to speed on the issue.

GENERAL COMMENT

The key to a great editorial is to make your reader think. They don't have to agree with you, but we want them to think about the topic. So, make your statement in the first couple of paragraphs, then back your statement with examples, statistics, and make your argument. Don't have long paragraphs - keep it down to one or two sentences, then break to the next paragraph. It enhances readability in our hi-tech world. For layout, remove hyphenation. If you're using Adobe Creative Suite, it's simply a matter of clicking the box for hyphenation. The eye gets caught on all those hyphens and decreases readability for any written material.

Judge

**Sheena
Read**

*Freelance Journalist
Alberta*



Sheena Read has committed decades - yikes, yes decades - to communications. Based in southern Alberta, she is now involved in contract messaging and promotions, with a focus and commitment on community building. She ponders the changes in communications and media and what the future holds with the twists and turns of social media. Read is a strong supporter of journalism.

BEST EDITORIAL CARTOON

5 ENTRIES



ELMIRA-WOOLWICH OBSERVER - SCOTT ARNOLD

This cartoon is well rendered with an eye-catching perspective. It comments on a highly cogent issue of concern to any local community. The impact is strong, and the message is clear.



CORNWALL SEAWAY NEWS - JAMES LAPIERRE

The cartoonist takes on an important issue that many communities are facing. Clean cartooning style and clear message. Could benefit from fewer text clues/labels.



NEW LISKEARD TEMISKAMING SPEAKER - DAVID DICKERSON

The visual statement is clear to the reader, resulting in strong impact. Illustration of the subject is in a clean accessible style. The main drawback is devoting so much space within the cartoon to the very large text, which is essentially the news story on which the cartoon is based. If the news item must be included for the reader to understand the cartoon, make it as brief, small and unintrusive as possible. Less is more.

GENERAL COMMENT

The submissions in the Editorial Cartoon category of the 2024 OCNA Awards mostly adhered faithfully to the key mandate of local news. Relevance and importance of the chosen issue was stronger in some than others. Winners added good drawing skills and clever concepts to elevate their work.

Judge

**Bruce
McKinnon**

*Editorial Cartoonist
The Chronicle Herald
Halifax, NS*



For more than 35 years, Bruce MacKinnon has been the editorial cartoonist for the Halifax Chronicle Herald. Over his career, he has won numerous regional, national, and international awards. His work has been published and exhibited across the globe, featured on a Canadian national postage stamp, and is part of the permanent collections of the National Archives of Canada, the U.S. Library of Congress and the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia among other galleries and institutions. He is a member of the Order of Nova Scotia and the Order of Canada.

BEST EDITORIAL PAGE/SECTION

11 ENTRIES



NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE, THE LAKE REPORT

Wow! Substantial reading, with five pages devoted to the section. Garth Turner as a columnist and a great editorial by Richard Harley. Plenty to read, and much to digest, but it all went down quite well thank you. Great job and congratulations!



FERGUS WELLINGTON ADVERTISER - KELLY WATERHOUSE, DAVE ADSETT & STEVE NEASE

Lots of letters to the editor gives plenty of space for local readers to express their views, adding their voice to that of the publication. Congratulations.



WINGHAM ADVANCE TIMES

Touching, informative piece by Cory Bilyea. Smart piece on intimate partner violence by Pauline Kerr. And the cherry on top is a Steve Nease cartoon. Nice job.

GENERAL COMMENT

A nice variety of editorial pages and sections. From the super serious to the light and relatively whimsical, they were mostly very good reads. The communities you serve are lucky to have you. Cheers!

Judge

**Anthony
Bonaparte**

*Features Editor
The Suburban
Montreal, QC*



For the past 19 years, Anthony Bonaparte has been the Features as well as the Arts & Life editor at The Suburban, Quebec's largest English weekly newspaper. During his almost 25 years in the industry, Anthony has won numerous Quebec Community Newspaper Association awards (QCNA) as well as North American (SNA/LMA) and Canadian (CCNA) awards for his writing, editing, and the editorial cartoons created under his pen name, Napoleon.

EDUCATION WRITING

16 ENTRIES



LISTOWEL BANNER - KELSEY BENT

Outstanding reporting of a challenging issue. Well done. I believe I came away from reading this article with a clear understanding of the parents' and educators' points of view. My only challenge was processing the names and complicated titles of the bureaucrats and remembering who they were further down in the story. Maybe mug shots with names may have helped?



THE INDEPENDENT SERVING PETROLIA AND CENTRAL LAMBTON - HEATHER WRIGHT

Good story examining the impact of cuts to international student enrolment on local colleges. Lots of background. More perspectives from the students themselves would have added colour to the story.



MANOTICK MESSENGER - JEFF MORRIS

Enjoyable read about an important concern to local parents. However, this report was a little one sided. I would have liked to have seen an explanation from the board chair. Still, there was enough background to provide context to the MPP's remarks.

HONOURABLE MENTION

EGANVILLE LEADER - GERALD TRACEY - A straightforward account of the Auschwitz death camp tells a powerful story. The reporter clearly understood why the world needs to be reminded of such horrors. While the story doesn't fit the category of community-based education, it is certainly educational and well-written. As such, it deserves recognition.

GENERAL COMMENT

Reporters for community papers in Ontario covered a wide range of education issues last year from elementary school celebrations to high school construction delays. Congrats to the top three and honourable mention recipients for going beyond the story with additional information to enlighten community members about local education issues. The first place winner went above and beyond to explain the viewpoints of parents and bureaucrats at odds over a Pride activity. The second place winner cited important facts to explain the impact of provincial policies on college budgets while the third place winner aired important concerns about school board dysfunction.

Judge

Diane Strandberg

*Retired Journalist
Tri-City News
Coquitlam, BC*



Diane Strandberg is a retired B.C. community journalist who covered municipal politics, health, business and social issues for over 40 years.

Sponsored by: Ontario Journalism Educators Association

ENVIRONMENT ONTARIO

22 ENTRIES



CREEMORE ECHO - TRINA BERLO

This is an excellent example of what a dedicated community journalist using Freedom of Information tools can do: illuminating a land-use conflict and questionable behind-the-scenes government behaviour.



HALIBURTON, THE HIGHLANDER - MIKE BAKER

The writer has taken a fairly dull but important subject and crafted it into a completely relevant and readable story. Using information and/or quotes from eight different sources really made it stand out.



PICTON GAZETTE - CHRIS FANNING

Each time I read this editorial I found more to like about it. The writer seems to really know the subject and his points are made with an authentic voice of conviction.

HONOURABLE MENTION

BANCROFT THIS WEEK - NATE SMELLE - Way to go Nate! Calling out misinformation is one of journalism's critical roles and it was done in fine style through this column.

MANITOULIN EXPOSITOR - JACQUELINE ST. PIERRE - An extremely important environmental story about the effects of pesticides on pollinators presented clearly by the writer.

GENERAL COMMENT

With so many strong submissions in this category, it was difficult to nail down the top three winners, and I could have quite easily given even more than two honourable mentions. These entries indicate readers of Ontario community newspapers are being well served by coverage of environmental issues.

Judge

Gail Sjuberg

*Editor
Gulf Islands Driftwood
Aqua-Gulf Islands Living Magazine
Salt Spring Island, BC*



Gail Sjuberg has been the editor of the award-winning Gulf Islands Driftwood newspaper in B.C. since 2003 and in the community newspaper business for more than 30 years. She is also the editor of the Driftwood's Aqua - Gulf Islands Living magazine and other company publications. She has been a judge for numerous community newspaper competitions over the years.

FEATURE WRITING, CIRC. 8,000 & OVER

13 ENTRIES



KITCHISSIPPI TIMES - CHARLIE SENACK

A commendably ambitious, well organized piece. A couple of notes: the early section really needed source acknowledgement for the cited facts and numbers. The Michelle Douglas story could have been a feature of its own, or even a sidebar. Watch your use of CP style - caught things such as 70s, 80s, etc., instead of '60s, '70s. You want something this big to be as perfect as it can be.



HALIBURTON, THE HIGHLANDER - LISA GERVAIS

Taking the last bus was a really good idea and made for an enjoyable read. The sidebar turns it into a solid package. Ties it up with a bow.



NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE, THE LAKE REPORT - RICHARD HARLEY

A compelling, heart wrenching story.

GENERAL COMMENT

I was impressed by the ambitious nature of many of these stories. Glad to see and read enterprise journalism in action.

Judge

**John
Kendle**

*Managing Editor
Free Press Community Review
Winnipeg, MB*



John Kendle has been a writer and editor in Winnipeg for 40 years. He is currently the editor of the Free Press Community Review and vice-president of the Manitoba Community Newspapers Association.

Sponsored by: *ORP Law*

FEATURE WRITING, CIRC. UNDER 8,000

14 ENTRIES



LISTOWEL BANNER - DAN MCNEE

Raw stuff, with great insight from the addict interviewed.



KINCARDINE INDEPENDENT - LIZ SMALL

Nice insight into an operation many readers would know little about.



AYR NEWS - IRENE SCHMIDT-ADENEY

Love interviews with Second World War veterans. This was well done and full of facts. I learned a few things.

GENERAL COMMENT

I was struck by the unique qualities of many of these subjects. Quite a few were hyperlocal pieces which underlined the idea that specific stories can and do animate our universal experience.

Judge

**John
Kendle**

*Managing Editor
Free Press Community Review
Winnipeg, MB*



John Kendle has been a writer and editor in Winnipeg for 40 years. He is currently the editor of the Free Press Community Review and vice-president of the Manitoba Community Newspapers Association.

Sponsored by: *ORP Law*

HEALTH & WELLNESS

18 ENTRIES



THE HALDIMAND PRESS - TARA LINDEMANN

This is an excellent, well-written story, with a number of sources who explore both sides of a very complex issue. Well done.



NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE, THE LAKE REPORT - JULIA SACCO

This story is well laid out, itemizing challenges and benefits from a number of sources.



UXBRIDGE COSMOS - LISHA VAN NIEUWENHOVE

This story addresses an issue that is topical and relevant across the country. There is a good eye for detail and a lot of information.

GENERAL COMMENT

The entries in this category covered a wide range of topics. The winners rose to the top with well-written stories, including strong leads, multiple sources, and a great eye for detail. What separated the winners is the judicious use of quotes and the ability to summarize ideas and make them easy to understand. Overall, the entries were strong and everyone who entered should be commended for their effort.

Judge

Rob Vogt

Editor
Claresholm Local Press
Claresholm, AB



Rob Vogt is the editor of the Claresholm Local Press in Claresholm, AB. He has been a journalist for 25 years, first with the Macleod Gazette in Fort Macleod, AB, then for the past 24 years with the Local Press. He has been editor since 2004.

HERITAGE

21 ENTRIES



LISTOWEL BANNER - DAN MCNEE

An outstanding article that combines WWII history, a family's experience, and special details, bringing to life an important but not well known period in the WWII campaign. Well researched and touchingly written.



ELMIRA-WOOLWICH OBSERVER - JULIAN GAVAGHAN

Reading this story about a mysterious cryptogram on a grave marking the deaths of two young women was an absolute delight. Congratulations to the author who carefully traced the history of the graves, the man who ordered the gravestone, and also acknowledged the people who care for it now.



AYR NEWS - IRENE SCHMIDT-ADENEY

I thoroughly enjoyed this story and what it says about public apathy. I am also heartened by the fact that this reporting spurred interest in a heritage committee. By reporting on what is at stake, the reporter galvanized the community. Good work.

HONOURABLE MENTION

KITCHISSIPPI TIMES - DAVE ALLSTON, CHARLIE SENACK & CÉLINE PAQUETTE - An interesting way to raise the issue of city heritage and what's at risk under government legislation. More detail on what could happen to the buildings if they aren't dedicated would be helpful. But I'm glad to know research has been compiled on the history of these buildings and shared with the community in a simple and effective way.

GENERAL COMMENT

An outstanding collection of stories showing that interest in heritage is alive and well in Ontario. Many of these stories take extra steps to give the reader a thorough understanding of the topic. Congratulations to the first-place winner whose touching story about an Ontario soldier shed new light on the impact of war and the Sicily campaign. Second place to a charming story of a tombstone puzzler that goes beyond a ghost story to speak to the quirks of people from the past. Third place goes to a well reported story of public apathy about heritage that led to the formation of a heritage committee. Honourable mention goes to a report of the heritage buildings that could be lost with new legislation.

Judge

Diane Strandberg

*Retired Journalist
Tri-City News
Coquitlam, BC*



Diane Strandberg is a retired B.C. community journalist who covered municipal politics, health, business and social issues for over 40 years.

Sponsored by: Fort Frances Times

BEST NEWS STORY, CIRC. 8,000 & OVER

8 ENTRIES



HALIBURTON, THE HIGHLANDER - LISA GERVAIS

Great work. Perhaps play up the importance of the detonation.



FERGUS WELLINGTON ADVERTISER - ROBIN GEORGE

Great stuff. A solid arrangement as well.



KITCHISSIPPI TIMES - CHARLIE SENACK

Great political nuance here.

HONOURABLE MENTION

MANOTICK MESSENGER - CHARLIE SENACK - Some classic breaking news.

GENERAL COMMENT

A great run of submissions - some simply lost marks to break ties because they weren't on the front page. If they are the best story of the year - and they aren't on your front page for the week - what story was there that beat the submission?

Judge

Rob Brown

*Publisher
This Week in Dawson Creek
Dawson Creek, BC*



Rob Brown, 46, has written daily for 32 years and owns This Week in Dawson Creek, replacing 80 years of regional print history after the closure of the Alaska Highway News and Dawson Creek Mirror. He was the managing editor of the Dawson Creek Mirror, Northern Horizon, and Pipeline News North for eight years. His 17-year journalism career earned 25-plus awards in both Alberta and Manitoba. A 2005 Alberta Centennial Citizen of the Year, 2017 Culture Ambassador for Northern BC, and 2024 Silver Quill awardee, Brown released his first feature film, "Sukunka," in 2022. In 2023, he produced the 10-episode talk/variety show "Peace Region Xposure" on OptikTV. In 2024 he completed legendary director Albert Pyun's science fiction film 'Interstellar Civil War' with the hope it plays at San Diego Comic Con in 2025. His second film 'Blind Dates' is now in post production.

BEST NEWS STORY, CIRC. UNDER 8,000

13 ENTRIES



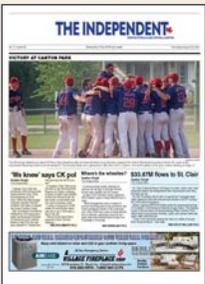
BARRHAVEN INDEPENDENT - CHARLIE SENACK

Best writing of the bunch, and a serious news breaker.



WINGHAM ADVANCE TIMES - RACHEL HAMMERMUELLER

Running a solid balance here, both in the story and as far as running a line in the community. Some of the best quotes are buried in the piece.



THE INDEPENDENT SERVING PETROLIA AND CENTRAL LAMBTON - HEATHER WRIGHT

Some work is in the field, some is on the research. Great.

HONOURABLE MENTION

WOODSTOCK INGERSOLL ECHO - LEE GRIFFI - The story is solid. Where does it go? Follow ups for next year's nominations.

GENERAL COMMENT

Always a mix of immediate stuff. The serious. Some built with research. But all moments in time. Then get put to the record. This year's top mix were all serious, from senior abuse, holding politicians accountable for their work, a murder spree, and the reputation of a local and Canadian artist - a Nobel winner for writing, no less. Your winner is the most serious of stories - breaking - and was also the best written of the bunch.

Judge

Rob Brown

*Publisher
This Week in Dawson Creek
Dawson Creek, BC*



Rob Brown, 46, has written daily for 32 years and owns This Week in Dawson Creek, replacing 80 years of regional print history after the closure of the Alaska Highway News and Dawson Creek Mirror. He was the managing editor of the Dawson Creek Mirror, Northern Horizon, and Pipeline News North for eight years. His 17-year journalism career earned 25-plus awards in both Alberta and Manitoba. A 2005 Alberta Centennial Citizen of the Year, 2017 Culture Ambassador for Northern BC, and 2024 Silver Quill awardee, Brown released his first feature film, "Sukunka," in 2022. In 2023, he produced the 10-episode talk/variety show "Peace Region Xposure" on OptikTV. In 2024 he completed legendary director Albert Pyun's science fiction film 'Interstellar Civil War' with the hope it plays at San Diego Comic Con in 2025. His second film 'Blind Dates' is now in post production.

BEST FEATURE/NEWS SERIES, CIRC. 8,000 & OVER

11 ENTRIES



1 CALEDON CITIZEN - ZACHARY ROMAN

Comprehensive, detailed reporting on a zoning issue affecting the future of this community. Great coverage of the public meetings, the town officers seeking the zoning, and of the community residents affected.



2 NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE, THE LAKE REPORT - RICHARD WRIGHT

Great effort capturing the frustrations and attendant emotions of those most affected by raging rainfall and an absent drainage infrastructure around their community. Series focuses on the affected but seems short on connecting with those accountable for managing and maintaining infrastructure.



3 HALIBURTON, THE HIGHLANDER - LISA GERVAIS

A broad, detailed account of the deer population invading the community, being fed by some residents, and the effect the invasion has on property. Good writing and engaged sourcing.

GENERAL COMMENT

Excellent entries reveal the sincerity and focus of the newspapers toward their communities and especially their readers! Several entries were "incomplete" due to the category rule limiting number of stories related to series; suggest lifting that limit so judge could evaluate the stories' themes start to finish. Very good writing and sourcing for all entries; narrative style for some carried the subject on a more personal manner. Especially searched for style that engaged readers!

Judge

Frank Garred

*Retired Publisher
The Leader
Port Townsend
Washington, US*



Frank Garred is the retired publisher and editor of The Leader, Port Townsend, Washington. He also served as board member/president of WNPA (state newspapers), NNA (US newspapers) and ISWNE (international weeklies) and with many community, state and national organizations. During "retirement" he was an adjunct Journalism professor at two state colleges. He and his wife Pat live in Port Townsend.

BEST FEATURE/NEWS SERIES, CIRC. UNDER 8,000

9 ENTRIES



THE INDEPENDENT SERVING PETROLIA AND CENTRAL LAMBTON - CATHY DOBSON & GLENN OGILVIE

Excellent series. Writing and photography spot on. A great way to illustrate the problem of homelessness. I really enjoyed reading the series and seeing the photo layout attached to the stories. The universality of homelessness is what appealed to me. I found myself engrossed and searching for answers, as in every corner of the country, there is homelessness. I have nothing negative to say about this piece and believe both writer and photographer did an exemplary job of covering the topic.



STRATFORD TIMES - CONNOR LUCZKA

Connor Luczka's City Hall bans were an excellent read. The relevance to the community is obvious. Freedom of speech, even at the grass roots level, must be defended. When city council failed to give adequate examples to justify their ban of those Stratford citizens, Luczka did his job and reported on events at city hall fairly and balanced allowing the reader to make up their own minds. As gate keepers to the public interests, holding politicians accountable through honest, balanced pieces is the cornerstone of good journalism.



LISTOWEL BANNER - KELSEY BENT & RACHEL HAMMERMUELLER

Kelsey Bent and Rachel Hammermueller presented well researched and thoroughly covered stories on this topic. The relevance to the community, while significant with regards to public safety, dealt with a narrow portion of the population, namely ATV operators. Stories were balanced, fair and objective. The council, the public and ATV advocates were fairly presented. A good example of town council coverage. Well done.

GENERAL COMMENT

Overall, the stories were well written, research based and provided information to the community. Community newspapers have the unique opportunity to go below the surface and flush out details that daily news quite often overlooks. The first place winner in this category dug down deep into the issue of homelessness in their region. To have photographs to punctuate the story and support it were well orchestrated. While the submissions were good, they could have been better. Better photos. Tighter leads. In a world where journalists are being accused of fake news, it is an opportunity to do better. Be better.

Judge

Kimberley Kielley

*Freelance Journalist
Winnipeg, MB*



Kim Kielley is a graduate of the journalism program at Canadore College. She has extensive experience as a journalist, having worked for the media in six provinces and one overseas stint. She has also published three non-fiction books and is currently working towards launching her blog and podcast. Kielley resides in Winnipeg, Manitoba.

BEST INVESTIGATIVE NEWS STORY

10 ENTRIES



THE INDEPENDENT SERVING PETROLIA AND CENTRAL LAMBTON - HEATHER WRIGHT

In extensive reporting, Wright reports on a possible plan to bring a large landfill near the small community of Dresden. Wright went the extra mile with what was obviously a detailed FOI request. The request detailed that the discussions had long been in the works, despite some elected officials lying about when they became involved. It also indicated the large number of vehicles and amount and type of waste the landfill would've handled on a daily basis. It's clear this reporting not only informed the public but also led to more extensive environmental testing for the potential project.



CREEMORE ECHO - TRINA BERLO

The Ontario government has a poor reputation when it comes to protecting the environment. Berlo's story is yet another example of this. Through strong investigative work that included a FOI request and an appeal to the province's privacy commissioner, the story highlighted the behind the scenes work done to add additional climbing in Devil's Glen Provincial Plan. The records showed bureaucrats at Ontario Parks followed the management plan, but when the minister's office became involved, following provincial policy fell to the wayside. This is a terrific example of patience in reporting, thoroughness and not giving up when running into roadblocks on an issue in the community.



KITCHISSIPPI TIMES - CHARLIE SENACK & SARAH MACFARLANE

As the opioid crisis and growing homelessness impact communities across the country, specific local analysis is necessary and important to complete. In this long story, the Kitchissippi Times takes a look at the Somerset area of Ottawa and the role police may be having in the area. The piece was well researched and gave an informative look at an important topic.

HONOURABLE MENTION

NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE, THE LAKE REPORT - RICHARD HUTTON, KEVIN MACLEAN & JULIA SACCO - Freedom of speech is often a topic that hits home, but after the head of the library was fired for a column written in The Lake Report, it garnered significant community outrage. The in-depth and strong work by this group of journalists covered an important topic for community members, as many tried to avoid accountability.

PICTON GAZETTE - KAREN VALIHORA - An interesting look at a topic that would've otherwise slipped under the radar. Valihora takes an otherwise mundane topic of a rock quarry that got around a specific type of licensing, due to a legislative loophole, resulting in the private company earning more than \$60 million in profits.

GENERAL COMMENT

This was an incredibly strong category, with excellent reporting, writing and investigative work. Each submission was unique to their community and highlighted the important journalistic work being done. The reporting was both in-depth and detailed, and a credit to each journalist who took time to dig deeper into a topic of importance for their readers.

Judge

Greg Colgan

**Editor
Rocky Mountain Outlook
Canmore, AB**



Greg is the editor of the Rocky Mountain Outlook in the area of Banff and Canmore, Alberta. He has been a journalist for 15 years, working in Ontario and Alberta, and has had his work recognized at both a provincial and national level.

BEST RURAL STORY

16 ENTRIES



FORT FRANCES TIMES - ELISA NGUYEN



This is a great feature on someone who is very important to rural life. There is a great eye for detail, good anecdotes, and it is well written. The only addition would have been a quote or two from clients or community members.



ELMIRA-WOOLWICH OBSERVER - LEAH GERBER



This story is a great example of going from the general to the specific, as a feature story should. It discusses the study, then talks to three actual producers involved. There is good detail, good writing, and strong quotes. An excellent job.



EGANVILLE LEADER - BRUCE MCINTYRE



This is a compelling first-hand account of how a tragedy in a rural area can affect everyone. The presentation is very good. Because it is quite long, the effective use of subheads really makes it easier to read, as do the photos.

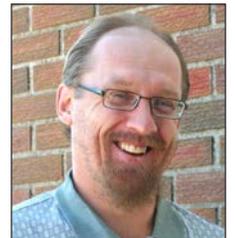
GENERAL COMMENT

This was an incredibly difficult category to judge. Every single entry covered a different aspect of rural life, and all the entrants should be commended for their efforts. The stories that rose to the top had a human element. They illustrated how people react in rural communities, whether it is a tragedy, the retirement of a key community member, or how they operate their farms. The winners put a human face on some complex issues. Entrants could also benefit from talking to more people and getting wider perspectives, because that enriches every story. Overall, a job well done.

Judge

Rob Vogt

*Editor
Claresholm Local Press
Claresholm, AB*



Rob Vogt is the editor of the Claresholm Local Press in Claresholm, AB. He has been a journalist for 25 years, first with the Macleod Gazette in Fort Macleod, AB, then for the past 24 years with the Local Press. He has been editor since 2004.

SPORT & RECREATION STORY

21 ENTRIES



AYR NEWS - RICHARD YOSHIOKA & IRENE SCHMIDT-ADENEY

Here's a great story about a saddle club in the community that has options for everyone to join. That's how you do it and this story hit all the right notes: history, programming, user experience. Very well done.



ORANGEVILLE CITIZEN - SAM ODROWSKI

I'm a huge fan of anything having to do with the Special Olympics or programs of that nature. It's great to see a community team giving people a chance to play. The author did a very nice job on this.



NAPANEE BEAVER - ADAM PRUDHOMME

I love these sorts of stories. A club loses its home due to fire and they find a new home to keep on going. A perfect example of the community doing what it has to.

HONOURABLE MENTION

BARRHAVEN INDEPENDENT - JEFF MORRIS - This is written almost how I would write it, right down to the lede. Stories like this are always fun to read because it's a start-to-finish recounting of what appeared to be an amazing experience. Inspiring stories like this are always great reads.

GENERAL COMMENT

Every community has a great story to tell about sports and recreation and that's what makes a great newspaper. I'm a firm believer that sports and recreation is what people love to read about and it always sells newspapers. The equestrian club story was my choice in that it's a small club looking to grow and offering up something for everyone, regardless of skill level or ability. That's what this category was all about and that story checked almost every box for me. Well done to you all and let's keep it going!

Judge

James McCarthy

*Managing Editor
Northern News Services Ltd.
Nunavut & NWT*



James is the managing editor for NNSL Media based in Yellowknife and has been in the role since August 2022. Before that, he served as the sports editor - and still does, albeit in a somewhat reduced role - from July 2007 until being asked to move into his current position.

BEST HEADLINE WRITING

5 ENTRIES



HALIBURTON, THE HIGHLANDER - LISA GERVAIS & MIKE BAKER

Kudos to 'Getting the scoop'. The headline and the photo work hand in hand. A pleasure to read.



THE HALDIMAND PRESS

Word play and food like pancakes are definitely joyous. This headline made me break into a grin or buy a paper. Well done.



NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE, THE LAKE REPORT - KEVIN MACLEAN & RICHARD HARLEY

Front page headline is Anything you can do - This paean to female farmers is a headline that absolutely makes you want to read the article. Great package in general. NOTL?? Very local readers will get it...

HONOURABLE MENTION

FORT FRANCES TIMES - ALLAN BRADBURY & ELISA NGUYEN - Polar plunge headline certainly deserves an Honourable Mention. Nicely done.

GENERAL COMMENT

Generally, editors take on the headline writing role. The idea is to keep headlines concise, so most aim for 6-8 words to facilitate optimal engagement. Power words, like "exclusive," "secret," or "ultimate" can add punch. Write headlines from the heart, not the head. However, don't forget how important accuracy is. Headlines need to match the facts in the story, be spelled right and be grammatical. If time allows try to give some notion of why this story matters. Vague headlines will not offer readers a reason to delve in. Clarity matters because headlines should be read and understood in a single glance. Headlines can be creative with witty references and wordplay, but in a busy newsroom there is so little time to contemplate truly clever headlines. So short, active sentences work well, such as the unlikely old journalistic favourite: Man Bites Dog.

Judge

Wendy Elliott

*Columnist
Valley Journal Advertiser
Annapolis Valley, NS*



An OCNA judge for several years, Wendy Elliott was a reporter and editor in the Annapolis Valley of Nova Scotia for 40 years. She has won regional and national newspaper awards and is currently a columnist with the Valley Journal Advertiser.

BEST POLICE/COURT STORY

8 ENTRIES



FERGUS WELLINGTON ADVERTISER - JORDAN SNOBELEN

Easily the best story in this category. Jordan Snobelen tells the cold case story on the murder of Monica Chisar from the start to end including police investigation, arrest, court coverage, and family impact statements about the murdered woman. He methodically laid out the story chronologically, including interviews with a number of investigators who were instrumental in finding Chisar's killer. Congratulations!



THE HALDIMAND PRESS - TAMARA BOTTING

Cold cases always make a great story for newspaper readers, and this was the case as I perused the words written by Tamara Botting, who covered all the investigative processes and talked to all the key participants looking to solve the death and to give a young child her name. Hopefully, from a 3D rendering, her story will pique community interest, perhaps someone coming forward with information to help police solve this cold case and find out who the child was. Tightly written with excellent artwork, though it would have been nice as a full page story on the front, especially with the 3D photo.



MANOTICK MESSENGER - JEFF MORRIS

Another cold case story, but not with a happy ending. A high school teenager went missing after school three decades ago. The teen's jawbone was found by a worker installing fencing for a new subdivision, leading to his remains. With changes to OPP detachments, the investigation remains dormant, but it was nice the reporter brought the story back to light, perhaps piquing someone to come forward to tell what happened to the teenager.

GENERAL COMMENT

Cold case stories ruled the day in the Best Police/Court Story category, with the top three submissions focused on cold cases, telling three different stories for their respective readers. There were just eight entries, but all did a great job of telling their stories.

Judge

**Jules
Xavier**

*Retired Editor
Shilo Stag
CFB Shilo, MB*



After a journalism career that spanned more than four decades, judge and award-winning journalist Jules Xavier retired after 12 years as editor of the now defunct 75-year-old Shilo Stag newspaper that served the CFB Shilo community in Manitoba as well as the Canadian Army in Western Canada. His retirement was short-lived, as he then worked for eight months covering sports for the nearby daily Brandon Sun (MB). He's now officially "retired" and calling Vancouver Island home again, but is still available to judge annual OCNA, CCNA and other provincial journalism competitions. He started his journalism career with York University's campus newspaper Excalibur in the late '70s and was hired by now retired award-winning Brampton Guardian editor Lorne Drury in 1984.

BEST POLICE/COURT SERIES

5 ENTRIES



FERGUS WELLINGTON ADVERTISER - JORDAN SNOBELEN

Great job, Jordan! Your stories are well written and there is a lot of colour from the courthouse. You have good use of CP Style, grammar, punctuation and hyperlinks. Still, for the online read, I would have liked to have seen a different image for each article, as well as visual elements such as a video, map or graphic, if possible. You could have also included a line at the bottom of the story to link victims to a sexual assault hotline, since the topic is so sensitive, and you've placed a warning label at the top.



MANOTICK MESSENGER - JEFF MORRIS

Good job, Jeff! These are very touching stories - with no bylines or photo credits! There is a lot of emotion; however, the narrative is told with very long quotes in some places. There is also a quote via CTV News (please don't quote other media). For future reporting, stick to CP Style, shorten sentences, ensure the photos are not blurry and avoid the use of the word "local."



THE HALDIMAND PRESS - MIKE RENZELLA

Great job, Mike, on following this important story for voters. I like that you use Plain Language principles for accessible reading (i.e., bullet points) and there are a lot of voices in your storytelling. A few points for your future reporting. Don't bury the lede; write in an inverted pyramid style (e.g., "guilty" is in the first line, not four paragraphs in). Write in an active, not passive, voice. Avoid clunky phrases and clauses (e.g., "as of publication," "... had the following to say) and avoid telling the online reader to "click here" for the hyperlink; just make it part of the story.

GENERAL COMMENT

Congratulations to the newsrooms that submitted their best police or court stories of the year! This beat is the bread and butter of journalism, reporting on alleged crimes and misdeeds in the community, and holding people publicly accountable. My recommendation is that reporters strive to tell more of a story - by painting a picture of what is happening inside and outside the courtroom with the victims and the accused, and their supporters and opponents - rather than provide a transcript of the legal proceedings. Follow-ups with the victims are also required.

Judge

**Janis
Cleugh**

*Reporter & Copy Editor
Tri-City News
Coquitlam, BC*



Janis Cleugh has been a reporter, copy editor and paginator in the U.K. and Canada for more than 30 years. She is currently one of two reporters at the Tri-City News in Coquitlam, B.C., which went digital in August 2023. Janis is a recipient of the Hong Kong Economic Trade Office (HKETO) Fellowship, a two-time recipient of the Jack Webster Fellowship and, last year, was decorated with the King Charles III Coronation Medal for her service to the community and country. She is a nationally certified proofreader through Editors Canada and holds diplomas from Simon Fraser University in Plain Language, Editing, Publishing and Business Writing. She is a community newspaper judge for Alberta, Saskatchewan, Quebec and national competitions. You can read her news stories via Instagram at @janiscleughwrites.

DIVERSITY COVERAGE

19 ENTRIES



FERGUS WELLINGTON ADVERTISER - JOANNE SHUTTLEWORTH & ROBIN GEORGE

The clear winner in this category. The articles submitted include fearlessly told stories with powerful interviews and the subject matter is local and relevant. The articles not only present problems but also look at solutions.



THE HALDIMAND PRESS - MIKE RENZELLA

An engaging read that tells two separate stories well, dispels misinformation and shows evidence of much research and care.



KITCHISSIPPI TIMES - CHARLIE SENACK & HANNAH WANAMAKER

The article on the poly/furry relationship was eye-catching and eye-opening and was told respectfully. The local LGBTQ rights timeline was interesting and a good idea for localized Pride content.

GENERAL COMMENT

Many submissions were well-written and well-told stories based on interviews with members of minority communities. The best entries, however, were the more bravely written stories that approached diversity topics head-on and, I think, better fit with the spirit of this category. These stories would have certainly provoked reflection, and hopefully understanding and community-building as well.

Judge

Greg Sakaki

*Managing Editor
Nanaimo News Bulletin
Nanaimo, BC*



Greg Sakaki is managing editor of the Nanaimo News Bulletin and has worked in community newspapers for more than 20 years.

BEST GUEST/FREELANCE COLUMN

5 ENTRIES



MANITOULIN EXPOSITOR - MARIE MCGREGOR PITAWANAKWAT

A well-written column, which does not hold back on expressing a strong level of frustration. The writer does not mince words or tone down her disappointment. The resulting column is a strongly written piece, but at the same time uncomfortable for many to read.



LISTOWEL BANNER - KEISHA FLETCHER

Columns of this nature are difficult to write, especially in a predominantly white community. I applaud this writer for addressing this topic, using specific details from her life and her family. This puts a human face on a topic often discussed in generalities.



UXBRIDGE COSMOS - WYNN WALTERS

In this piece, the writer addresses the concerns raised by those who had a play banned, days before it was to be staged. The arguments are solid and well-reasoned. However, running this piece as a guest editorial rather than a guest column is a puzzling move. An editorial is a place to present the view of the paper, and bringing in someone outside the paper to write that view starts to blur a line.

GENERAL COMMENT

A good guest column should provide a fresh perspective on an issue of interest to a community or a region. They also help to connect the newspaper to a broader array of voices and experiences. The five entries in this year's category were all strong contenders, and each had something to offer. The top three pieces stood out in this category. Two dealt with the experiences of marginalized people within their communities. In both instances, the writers were given the freedom to be direct and honest with their words. These two columns were powerfully written to the point of being uncomfortable. The third was written after a play was cancelled and worked well as it rebutted the specific arguments without devolving into broad-brush platitudes. Not everyone would have agreed with this piece, but the arguments were presented well. In each of these three pieces, the level of frustration made for powerful columns. I hope to see each of these writers continue to speak out both where they live and beyond. Their voices deserve to be heard.

Judge

**John
Arendt**

*Editor
Summerland Review
Summerland, BC*



John Arendt is the editor of the Summerland Review in British Columbia. He has been working as a journalist for more than 30 years.

HUMOUR COLUMNIST OF THE YEAR

5 ENTRIES



NEW LISKEARD TEMISKAMING SPEAKER - DIANE JOHNSTON

Lighthearted, well written, and very amusing. Diane Johnston put a smile on my face again and again.



ELMIRA-WOOLWICH OBSERVER - STEVE GALEA

The turkey hunt and fishing stories were all funny pieces of writing. Could have easily been a winner. Good job.



BARRHAVEN INDEPENDENT - JEFF MORRIS

Reading about Jeff's obsession with A&W's Mozz Burgers and root beer, as well McDonald's McRib and McNuggets made me hungry at first but filled me up after a while. Funny, but a bit long.

GENERAL COMMENT

This is always a tough category to judge because humour is so very subjective. Monty Python or Mr. Bean? Curb Your Enthusiasm or Three's Company? To that end, all the writers did a great job - for their audiences.

Judge

Anthony Bonaparte

*Features Editor
The Suburban
Montreal, QC*



For the past 19 years, Anthony Bonaparte has been the Features as well as the Arts & Life editor at The Suburban, Quebec's largest English weekly newspaper. During his almost 25 years in the industry, Anthony has won numerous Quebec Community Newspaper Association awards (QCNA) as well as North American (SNA/LMA) and Canadian (CCNA) awards for his writing, editing, and the editorial cartoons created under his pen name, Napoleon.

COLUMNIST OF THE YEAR

15 ENTRIES



1

FORT FRANCES TIMES - BOB DUNN

Well written, very readable and the one on kids drinking alcohol in the locker room was brave. Would like more like that!



2

LISTOWEL BANNER - KELSEY BENT

Brave columns. Given our shrinking newsrooms, it is increasingly rare to have columns that criticize council. These were refreshing to read.



3

NEW LISKEARD TEMISKAMING SPEAKER - DARLENE WROE

Loved the one about the decline in communication. Same thing all across the country. Would love to see more of her columns take folks to task like that!

HONOURABLE MENTION

WINGHAM ADVANCE TIMES - RACHEL HAMMERMUELLER - Loved these columns. Powerful, sometimes brave, humorous, and insightful. Well done.

GENERAL COMMENT

Such amazing work by talented writers. So many communities are better off for them. Thank you for your service, for being brave and for sharing your creative talents with your readers. I hated to pick just three winners!

Judge

Jennifer Thuncher

*Editor
The Squamish Chief
Squamish, BC*



Jennifer Thuncher is the editor and a roving reporter at The Squamish Chief. She can be found chasing down the paper's other journalists, local politicians, or wildlife, depending on the day. She is a Simon Fraser University and Langara journalism grad. She had careers as an English instructor, administrative assistant, and ice-cream scooper in her life before journalism. Jennifer is the winner of the inaugural 2022 Jack Webster Foundation Shelley Fralic award for dedication to community journalism.

REPORTER OF THE YEAR

6 ENTRIES



KITCHISSIPPI TIMES - CHARLIE SENACK

Your Stephen Shaw Award winner.

1



LISTOWEL BANNER - KELSEY BENT

Solid work. Great mix.

2



NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE, THE LAKE REPORT - JULIA SACCO

The wheelchair story was excellent. Story of the year potential.

3

HONOURABLE MENTION

THE INDEPENDENT SERVING PETROLIA AND CENTRAL LAMBTON - HEATHER WRIGHT - Strange placements for great stories. Get them on the front.

GENERAL COMMENT

Less about the chance hits of serious breaking news - the Reporter of the Year is certainly more about the variety a writer can bring to the newspaper. More tools in the toolbox is better for the woodshop. Or for this application - the editorial mix of a paper for readers. Only one point separated first from third, and another to honourable mention. It was this mix of stories, this year, on these three days of judging.

Judge

Rob Brown

*Publisher
This Week in Dawson Creek
Dawson Creek, BC*



Rob Brown, 46, has written daily for 32 years and owns This Week in Dawson Creek, replacing 80 years of regional print history after the closure of the Alaska Highway News and Dawson Creek Mirror. He was the managing editor of the Dawson Creek Mirror, Northern Horizon, and Pipeline News North for eight years. His 17-year journalism career earned over 25 awards in both Alberta and Manitoba. A 2005 Alberta Centennial Citizen of the Year, 2017 Culture Ambassador for Northern BC, and 2024 Silver Quill awardee, Brown released his first feature film, "Sukunka," in 2022. In 2023, he produced the 10-episode talk/variety show "Peace Region Xposure" on OptikTV. In 2024 he completed legendary director Albert Pyun's science fiction film 'Interstellar Civil War' with the hope it plays at San Diego Comic Con in 2025. His second film 'Blind Dates' is now in post production.

Sponsored by: Ontario Power Generation

PHOTOGRAPHER OF THE YEAR

3 ENTRIES



1

NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE, THE LAKE REPORT - DAVE VAN DE LAAR

This was an easy decision. Three of the four images were excellent. Love the colourful gum boots on the young "soldier", not posed, but nice isolation of the main image from the background. Perfection of the frisbee toss to the leaping canine, using DOF to let the dog/frisbee stand out from the woman in the background. The mayor walking away from protestors would have scored perfect but should have been shot vertically, because what makes this photo is the man behind him cupping his mouth to likely yell something. Good cross-section of the photographer's work!



2

KITCHISSIPPI TIMES - AARON REID

Second-place honours go to Aaron Reid. His best photo of the four featuring a beach volleyball game being played at dusk, with Reid using a back-lit focus to provide an excellent front page. Nice celebratory photo with the four adults toasting. Nice use of the Depth of Field and tight cropping. The strawberry floating in one mug stands out. The Spiderman shot was captured nicely but was lost in the layout on the page. Don't ruin a good photo by not letting it breathe on the page. Make it stand out from the ads. The three ladies going for a walk looks too posed, as they look at the camera.



3

WINGHAM ADVANCE TIMES - CORY BILYEA

Cory Bilyea's best photo is the kids interacting with the Musical Ride Mountie and her mount. Great shot and perspective. Your sports trophy lifting moment photo could have been much better by using telephoto to fill the lens and remove distractions. We know he had skates and is a hockey player based on the jersey, so let's see his facial excitement of being victorious in the playoffs and lifting that trophy high for all to see. Covering four communities, you'd expect to see a lot more photos to show off your photography skills ... if it's a boring assignment, then work the event to find that dominant photo.

GENERAL COMMENT

I lament the lack of photographers across Ontario not participating in this category, with just three submissions to judge. Does this mean community newspapers are no longer using staff photographers, instead relying on two-way reporters/photographers who are apt to focus on the words for their stories versus working an assignment to find artwork? Future advice - participants should avoid submitting static photos, instead look at your best active captures from the past year. With only four photos to enter, it's best all your submissions, covering sports, feature, news and spot news, are your strongest photographs, and that the editors played them prominently. And remember to fill the frame when focusing on an event.

Judge

Jules Xavier

Retired Editor
Shilo Stag
CFB Shilo, MB



After a journalism career that spanned more than four decades, judge and award-winning journalist Jules Xavier retired after 12 years as editor of the now defunct 75-year-old Shilo Stag newspaper that served the CFB Shilo community in Manitoba as well as the Canadian Army in Western Canada. His retirement was short-lived, as he then worked for eight months covering sports for the nearby daily Brandon Sun (MB). He's now officially "retired" and calling Vancouver Island home again, but is still available to judge annual OCNA, CCNA and other provincial journalism competitions. He started his journalism career with York University's campus newspaper Excalibur in the late '70s and was hired by now retired award-winning Brampton Guardian editor Lorne Drury in 1984.

BEST FEATURE PHOTO, CIRC. 8,000 & OVER

7 ENTRIES

Happy 254th birthday, Brock



**NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE,
THE LAKE REPORT
- DAVE VAN DE LAAR**

The photographer is showing off a great eye here. The background is super clean with the nice pops of blown out orange in the bushes behind. A really nice moment with the child and his outfit and boots. This is a fantastic feature.

HONOURABLE MENTION

LEAMINGTON/WHEATLEY SOUTHPOINT SUN JOURNAL - PAUL FORMAN - What a charming moment with a lot of human and animal faces alike. The photographer captured it from a great angle where we could see the maximum number of faces in a wonderful moment. Nice job!

GENERAL COMMENT

I really enjoyed the charm and beauty of showing off really strong entries to a category that is under-appreciated at times. The perfect feature is an important part of the photographer's job and one of the clear differentiators between an experienced and inexperienced shooter. All the work here stands out. A wonderful cohort of images.



**CORNWALL
SEAWAY NEWS
- JASON SETNYK**

This photo has decent perspective – and an interesting look for the reader.

As the sun sets



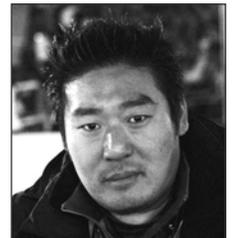
CHATHAM VOICE

A really nice moment here where the building is a character. The time of day is well captured on a wide-angle-lens that really shows off the landscape in a charming way.

Judge

**Arnold
Lim**

**Executive Producer
Black Press Video Networks
Victoria, BC**



Arnold Lim is a photojournalist, videographer, producer and director who has won Ma Murray Awards, Canadian Community Newspaper Awards, Leo Awards, a Jack Webster Award and many more over a 15-year career in visual storytelling. His stills photography has been published across six continents through publications including the Globe and Mail, TSN, Sports Illustrated and the BBC and he served as Photography Manager for five Olympic Games.

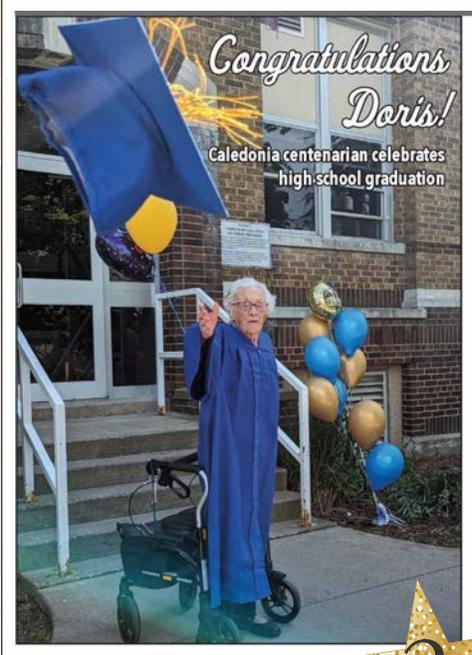
BEST FEATURE PHOTO, CIRC. UNDER 8,000

12 ENTRIES



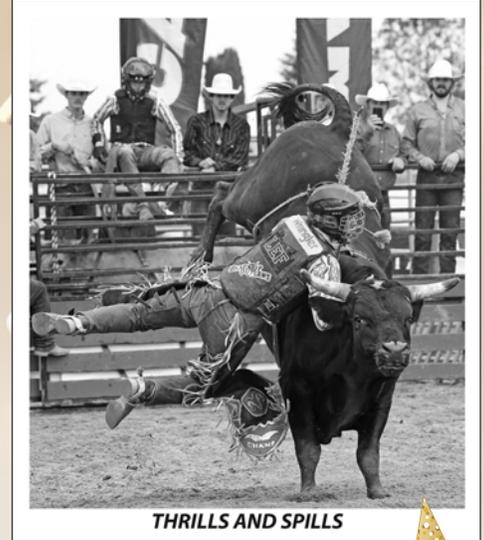
1 LISTOWEL BANNER - NICOLE BESWITHERICK

A fantastic action shot with the perfect angle at a great moment. Your choice of background, focal length and timing is really impressive. A really nice shot.



2 THE HALDIMAND PRESS - TAMARA BOTTING

A perfect moment of Doris throwing her cap. A great capture.



3 NEW LISKEARD TEMISKAMING SPEAKER - SUE NIELSEN

This photojournalistic sports capture is well-timed and well-executed. The sense of action and danger is on the mark and capturing those watching is the cherry on top.

HONOURABLE MENTION

DEEP RIVER NORTH RENFREW TIMES - TERRY MYERS - What a funny photograph. I love these little micro-moments captured in fun and playful ways. A really nice documentarian capture.

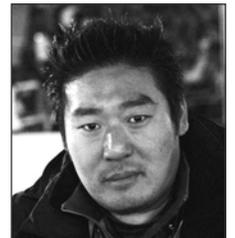
GENERAL COMMENT

I was so impressed with the quality of photography in our communities with a circulation of 8,000 and under. The journalists in those communities really captured the beauty and essence of what community photojournalism is and I am excited to see more of their amazing work moving forward.

Judge

**Arnold
Lim**

*Executive Producer
Black Press Video Networks
Victoria, BC*



Arnold Lim is a photojournalist, videographer, producer and director who has won Ma Murray Awards, Canadian Community Newspaper Awards, Leo Awards, a Jack Webster Award and many more over a 15-year career in visual storytelling. His stills photography has been published across six continents through publications including the Globe and Mail, TSN, Sports Illustrated and the BBC and he served as Photography Manager for five Olympic Games.

BEST PHOTO LAYOUT

17 ENTRIES



THE INDEPENDENT SERVING PETROLIA AND CENTRAL LAMBTON - HEATHER WRIGHT

Heather Wright really captured the action with her rodeo photos. Lots of movement and lots of colour. Well done. One tip to whoever did the layout, and to others who read this, is to make sure the gaps between photos, whether vertical or horizontal, are all the same size.

1



FORT FRANCES TIMES - KEN KELLAR

Ken Kellar's photos are packed with colour, and this layout carries plenty of impact. Three suggestions: vary the angles from which the photos are taken; make sure to keep the spaces between photos, both vertical and horizontal, the same size; and try to vary the sizes on photos in the layout so that they're not all competing with one another.

2



ELMIRA-WOOLWICH OBSERVER - LEAH GERBER & CASSANDRA MERLIHAN

I like Leah Gerber's photos and would have liked to see more of them, and more that better took me inside the kitchen of these wonderful bakers and showed them at work, telling a story. Two layout notes: the cutouts around the heads of two of the bakers are sloppy; and the two-letter drop caps are super distracting.

3

HONOURABLE MENTION

THE HALDIMAND PRESS - I'm giving this feature an Honourable Mention because it's kind of cool and quirky, showing different views of the eclipse and wrapping it up with the obligatory shot of people looking at the eclipse. Keep it weird, people.

GENERAL COMMENT

In addition to the top four entries in this category, there are a number where the layout amounted to dropping a bunch of photos on a page with no thought to weight or story. Some tips: fewer photos of people staring at the camera; ensure consistency in spacing between photos and of photos frames; please avoid the angles and overlaps that make a photo page look like someone's scrapbook; and use cutouts exceedingly sparingly, as you would an exclamation mark.

Judge

Richard Dal Monte

*Freelance Editor and Writer
Former Editor
The Tri-City News
Colquitlam, BC*



Richard Dal Monte is a freelance writer, editor and journalist who worked in community newspapers in B.C. for 34 years - the last 19 years as editor of The Tri-City News - before his termination during the early days of the pandemic. He has won more than 20 provincial, national, international and corporate journalism awards individually and as a team leader and is a recipient of a News Media Canada Silver Quill Award. He now writes and edits for a variety of news organizations, universities, non-profits and corporate clients. He co-teaches a class for editors in the Langara journalism program in Vancouver.

BEST SPORTS PHOTO

18 ENTRIES



1 LISTOWEL BANNER - NICOLE BESWITHERICK

Nothing like a team photo with the cup. The Edmonton Oilers were on to something all those years ago. Names all there and looks like a popular win.



SQUEEZE PLAY - A Centennials player is underdressed by a couple of Stratford Warriors try to keep him from the puck. The Centennials won the game on Thursday 3-1.

2 AYR NEWS - JIM BALKWILL

Always like getting these sorts of shots in a hockey game. Point of impact and the attacking forward trying to squeeze through. Nicely done.



It was an emotional end to the season as the Niagara Predators were eliminated from the Greater Metro Hockey League. Tyler Gearing consoled all-star goalie Zane Clausen after their shootout loss. Full story, Page 16. **DAVE VAN DE LAAR**

3 NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE, THE LAKE REPORT - DAVE VAN DE LAAR

There are always two sides to every game and here's the bad side. What do you say to your goalie after a sudden-death loss? By the way, I hate shootouts.

HONOURABLE MENTION

ST. MARYS INDEPENDENT - SPENCER SEYMOUR - Goalie down and out, yawning cage and we know the result. Nice timing on it.

GENERAL COMMENT

A great photo makes all the difference and there are some great ones here. The Sutherland Cup victory photo was my choice due to the fact that it's right after it's all done and the players are all one big sweaty mess. Those are the photos you remember and that's certainly a memorable one.

Judge

James McCarthy

*Managing Editor
Northern News Services Ltd.
Nunavut & NWT*



James is the managing editor for NNSL Media based in Yellowknife and has been in the role since August 2022. Before that, he served as the sports editor - and still does, albeit in a somewhat reduced role - from July 2007 until being asked to move into his current position.

BEST SPOT NEWS PHOTO

10 ENTRIES



1

PICTON GAZETTE - JASON PARKS

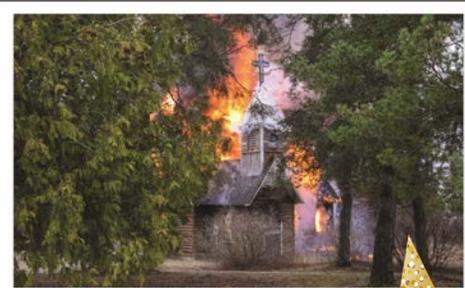
This photo by Jason Parks is impactful, jumping off the page at the reader. Yes, it's a standard fire photo construction – firefighter, back to the camera, facing the flames - but it's striking nonetheless.



2

ELMIRA-WOOLWICH OBSERVER - JULIAN GAVAGHAN

Julian Gavaghan's photo is a rare fire photo that isn't all about the flames. It shows both a firefighter and the aftermath of the fire which is impactful for the scope of the damage.



3

MANITOULIN EXPOSITOR - MICHAEL ERSKINE

Michael Erskine's photo is expertly framed and impactful even without people in it.

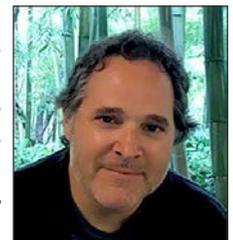
GENERAL COMMENT

Spot news photos can be hard to come by in smaller communities, but the top entries here did a good job with that old standard, the fire. One note to future entrants: make sure your entry is spot news. There are a couple of decent entries in this category that, while not spot news, might have been more suitable for other categories.

Judge

Richard Dal Monte

*Freelance Editor and Writer
Former Editor
The Tri-City News
Colquitzlam, BC*



Richard Dal Monte is a freelance writer, editor and journalist who worked in community newspapers in B.C. for 34 years - the last 19 years as editor of The Tri-City News - before his termination during the early days of the pandemic. He has won more than 20 provincial, national, international and corporate journalism awards individually and as a team leader and is a recipient of a News Media Canada Silver Quill Award. He now writes and edits for a variety of news organizations, universities, non-profits and corporate clients. He co-teaches a class for editors in the Langara journalism program in Vancouver.

Sponsored by: *Midwestern Newspapers*

BEST NEWS PHOTO

14 ENTRIES



1
FERGUS WELLINGTON
ADVERTISER
- JESSICA LOVELL

This is simply a great photo. Great subject, great composition, great lighting. Great capture of the concentration on six-year-old Pearl McGuire's face. Great job.



2
LEAMINGTON/WHEATLEY
SOUTHPOINT SUN JOURNAL
- MARK RIBBLE

Good shot showing the width and depth. Nice tribute to an important topic. Good job.



3
NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE,
THE LAKE REPORT
- JOHN DELORENZI

Crisp and clean photo that clearly shows the size and scale of the work being done. Congratulations.

GENERAL COMMENT

A great variety of photos from some very talented and observant journalists and photographers. While some stood out more than others, they all added value to their respective publications. Good job everyone.

Judge

Anthony Bonaparte

*Features Editor
 The Suburban
 Montreal, QC*



For the past 19 years, Anthony Bonaparte has been the Features as well as the Arts & Life editor at The Suburban, Quebec's largest English weekly newspaper. During his almost 25 years in the industry, Anthony has won numerous Quebec Community Newspaper Association awards (QCNA) as well as North American (SNA/LMA) and Canadian (CCNA) awards for his writing, editing, and the editorial cartoons created under his pen name, Napoleon.

MOST CREATIVE GRIP & GRIN PHOTO

7 ENTRIES



**NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE,
THE LAKE REPORT
- EVAN LOREE**

This is a great shot. Good colour and good lighting. Sums everything up in a single shot!



**MINDEN TIMES
- THOMAS SMITH**

Nicely done! Ribbon cuttings make for great grip 'n' grins! And this one tells a great story.



**THE HALDIMAND PRESS
- TAMARA BOTTING**

It would have been great to have this bigger - the mortarboard could have been a cut-around and that would have made it leap off the page. But great pic, and really captured the moment!

HONOURABLE MENTION

ELMIRA-WOOLWICH OBSERVER - STEVE KANNON - Good grip and grin. I like that they used the chickens instead!

GENERAL COMMENT

We love grip and grins! They sum up the story with just one photo. We're always looking for innovative ways to portray these - whether it's the setting, or what our subjects are doing. Fill the frame - unless the setting is critical to the success of the photo. While the standard grip 'n' grin handshake is still acceptable and still good community news, making it unique is going to be what makes your readers really smile.

Judge

**Sheena
Read**

*Freelance Journalist
Alberta*



Sheena Read has committed decades - yikes, yes decades - to communications. Based in southern Alberta, she is now involved in contract messaging and promotions, with a focus and commitment on community building. She ponders the changes in communications and media and what the future holds with the twists and turns of social media. Read is a strong supporter of journalism.

COMMUNITY SERVICE

4 ENTRIES



THE INDEPENDENT SERVING PETROLIA AND CENTRAL LAMBTON - PETROLIA'S 150TH - 1874 REPLICA NEWSPAPER

This wasn't a difficult choice for first place. The Independent staff obviously put a lot of time and energy into this project. Their efforts created a history of the community, the type of which is hard to find. This will become a real keeper issue. A wonderful job.



BLYTH/BRUSSELS CITIZEN - CITIZEN OF THE YEAR AWARDS

Good work by the Citizen staff on this project. Already a tradition in the community, the recognition of community leaders is important to everyone. It's good to see that the Citizen has been doing it for nearly 40 years.



NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE, THE LAKE REPORT - CELEBRATING THE WOMEN OF NOTL

Good coverage of International Women's Day by the Lake Report staff. A very comprehensive package was produced, and a lot of forethought went into it. Kudos all around.

GENERAL COMMENT

This was a strong group of entrants. It wasn't hard to see that these newspapers have a keen sense of community and are trying to make their regions stronger. It is too bad more newspapers didn't enter this year.

Judge

**Manfred
Tempelmayr**

*Retired Publishing Company President
& Past BCYCNA President
Gabriola Island, BC*



Manfred Tempelmayr spent 37 years in the community newspaper industry. Now retired, he was president of Sound Publishing Inc. in Washington state for 10 years and served as vice-president of Island Publishers Ltd. on Vancouver Island for eight years. He is a past president of BCYCNA and served on the board for 25 years. He was also on the CCNA board for two terms and was vice-president of the Washington Newspaper Publishers Association at retirement.

BEST FRONT PAGE

22 ENTRIES



MANITOULIN EXPOSITOR

I like how they have all news and no advertising on their front page. Rare to see. Lots of appealing stories and the photograph really catches your attention. I was eager to read the stories that were continued inside the paper (Although I only had the front page). They did a great job with community news being the focus.



ELMIRA-WOOLWICH OBSERVER

Really nice and clear layout with interesting and relatable stories for the community. I like the weekend weather shown on cover!



KINCARDINE INDEPENDENT - LIZ SMALL & PAULINE KERR

Nice layout. Bright and fun photo. Nice balance of editorial and advertising. The body copy for the story of the theatre guild is a bit awkward with line breaks, otherwise a really great cover!

HONOURABLE MENTION

HALIBURTON, THE HIGHLANDER - LISA GERVAIS - Nice clean and clear design. Nice balance of ads and editorial. I would have liked the photo caption to be underneath the photo rather than in a box over the photo. Otherwise, a great job!

THE AURORAN - BROCK WEIR - Nice size paper. Great photo. A bit heavy with advertising, although they are great designs and really work well together. Nice job.

GENERAL COMMENT

A difficult category to judge without having a hard copy. It's incredible how great all of these newspapers are, and the teamwork it takes to produce. All the elements come together in this category. Writing, photography, advertising and design. The winning front cover had the "news" first and foremost with a "no need for words" photograph. Congratulations to the winners and great work by all the entrants.

Judge

Andrea Hillo

Publisher and Graphic Design Haliburton, ON



Andrea is an award winning freelance graphic artist and independent book publisher who owned her own community newspaper and is a past OCNA award winner, judge and member. Andrea has worked in the graphic design, newspaper and publishing industry for over 35 years. Now living near Algonquin Park, she designs and publishes fine art books, working with some of Canada's leading forces of art and culture, including legendary naturalists/artists Robert Bateman, Glen Loates and Michael Dumas, author/journalist Roy MacGregor and artist/musician Mendelson Joe.

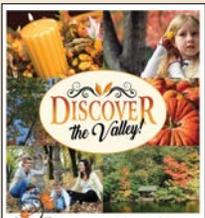
BEST VERTICAL PRODUCT

13 ENTRIES



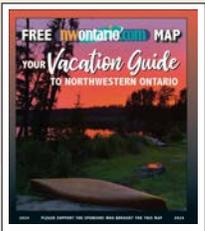
KITCHISSIPPI TIMES - 20TH ANNIVERSARY

Very uniquely done, and a fine tribute to the importance of a community newspaper. An important product for residents, new and old to be reminded of the events of the past 20 years covered by the paper, plus to see the people who brought it to life. Nice job.



EGANVILLE LEADER - DISCOVER THE VALLEY!

Nice magazine. Well laid out. Nice to page through. Interesting local stories, which seem to be advertorials about some local businesses, but still of interest. Hits the audience, which is tourist, on what to see and do in the area, plus locals who may want to know a bit more about their local vendors.



FORT FRANCES TIMES - 2024 VACATION GUIDE MAP

The format in which this was submitted made it very difficult to get a true reader's perspective of what this vertical is truly like. I was not able to judge its size or the impact of seeing a cover, and then turning the pages to see the layouts, flow and affect of the information. That being said, the product is colourful, eye-catching and filled with important information for anyone who would like to visit the beautiful wilderness in Ontario. In a day and age of GPS, it is very courageous to publish maps, which can come in handy when GPS is not working. The idea for the brochure is original and creative. However, it would have been nice to have more information or details about each area.

GENERAL COMMENT

I am always so impressed by the quality of the verticals entered into the OCNAs. So many ads, at a time when getting advertisers into print is challenging, and uplifting to see so many local writers, editors and photographers. This year it was more challenging to judge this category using the supplied PDFs, or even flipbooks, rather than the hard copy; the actual print copies allow a judge to see the size of the publication, the paper stock, and have the reader experience turning pages and seeing the spreads. Nonetheless, the merits shone through. Congratulations to everyone.

Judge

Marlene Eisner

*National Editor
RENO+DECOR magazine and Editor
New Home + Condo Guide
Vancouver, BC*



Marlene Eisner is a Toronto writer and the editor of RENO+DÉCOR magazine, which publishes in the GTA, Winnipeg, Calgary, Edmonton and Vancouver, and the Vancouver-based New Home and Condo Guide magazine. Prior to moving to Toronto in 2014, she was a reporter, associate editor and editor-in-chief at the Suburban Newspaper (1994-2007), and editor-in-chief at the NDG Free Press (2011-2014). She has won nine awards for her writing, including two gold awards from the Parenting Publications of America Editorial Design Awards for Best News Feature (2002) and Best Column Review (2008), and first place in the Quebec Community Newspaper Association (QCNA) Awards for her column The Glass Ceiling (2006).

BEST SPORTS SECTION

7 ENTRIES



ELMIRA-WOOLWICH OBSERVER

Plenty of good photos and stories, but what sticks out to me is that the stories are written by people who obviously get sports. Great headlines, terminology on point and a sports section I would read all day long. My first editor told me to have some fun with sports because you can and it's great to see the writers doing that. Very well done.



ST. MARYS INDEPENDENT

A little of something for everyone, which is what makes for a great sports section. The Lincs are obviously a big part of the town, but the Canadian Baseball Hall of Fame is what St. Marys is known for. That photo of Russell Martin says it all.



NEW LISKEARD TEMISKAMING SPEAKER

When it comes to local content, there's no shortage of it with this sports section and I love seeing that. That's why people buy a newspaper - people want to know what's happening there and why it's important. This paper obviously knows sports sells.

HONOURABLE MENTION

AYR NEWS - I like the local content here and the photography is good, but there may be too many stand-alones for my liking. I get that not everything has to be a story, but maybe some more information about what each photo entails would be nice.

GENERAL COMMENT

Sports sections are an integral part of any newspaper because it's the one section that sells better than anything else. Having been a sports editor for nearly 20 years before becoming a managing editor I'm convinced of that. The Elmira-Woolwich Observer had everything: great photos, superb sports writing and plenty of great content to keep the reader interested.

Judge

**James
McCarthy**

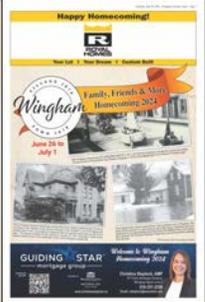
*Managing Editor
Northern News Services Ltd.
Nunavut & NWT*



James is the managing editor for NNSL Media based in Yellowknife and has been in the role since August 2022. Before that, he served as the sports editor - and still does, albeit in a somewhat reduced role - from July 2007 until being asked to move into his current position.

SPECIAL SECTION

16 ENTRIES



WINGHAM ADVANCE TIMES - HAPPY HOMECOMING!

Good section! I like the use of the background image throughout, the photos on angles, and the banner as a consistent image for a logo to the event. A very nice history and event feature, which makes a great keepsake. All supported with nicely designed ads.



BARRY'S BAY, THE VALLEY GAZETTE - THE TRAIN'S A COMING...ALL ABOARD

Great section! Love the use of the background image. The layout is fun, interesting and eye-catching. Great stories. An amazing keepsake.



NORTH WELLINGTON COMMUNITY NEWS - REMEMBRANCE DAY

Nice section! I like the use of poppies in the page headers, headline accents and with the pull quotes! The ads are all very well designed and easy to read. The stories are interesting and informative.

GENERAL COMMENT

A tough category to judge. Lots of excellent entries. You can see the hard work and care put into each one, displaying a real community connection. Well done.

Judge

Amanda Zimmer

*Publisher
Claresholm Local Press
Claresholm, AB*



Amanda Zimmer is the publisher of the Claresholm Local Press and has been in the community newspaper business for 25 years as a graphic designer. She gained her first experience working in a print shop as her after school job in high school. She completed her Printing Management Technologies diploma at SAIT, taking her practicum at the Local Press. She truly believes volunteers make a community and has given back to various organizations throughout the years. She is also on the AWNA board of directors. Amanda loves living in a small community and being a part of the connection people have with each other through their paper. She believes the newspaper is the hub of their community and loves to see people reading and sharing it.

BEST FEATURE/UNIT PAGES

13 ENTRIES



NORTH WELLINGTON COMMUNITY NEWS - DRAYTON FARM SHOW

Outstanding layout with the use of the Holstein that drew it all together. The white space. The large print. How could you not believe this was the place to go! Good content as well so people would know what to expect. The ads also stood out and were easy reading! Great job!



UXBRIDGE COSMOS - A NOD TO MAUD SUMMER SOCIAL

Excellent use of the large photo. This feature packed in a lot of information but the use of colour fonts and sizing made it easy to navigate. Very creative. Excellent work!



FERGUS WELLINGTON ADVERTISER - VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION WEEK

I like the headers on the pages of this feature with the photos of the volunteers within. Ads were well designed with real people in many of them that would attract a lot of attention. The layout made for easy reading. Excellent feature.

GENERAL COMMENT

A few were the standard feature pages, but it was very difficult to judge most of these entries as there were many good ones. But the top three were exceptional! I've seen a lot of Volunteer recognition, but this was exceptional for the ads which I felt were outstanding. Both Uxbridge Cosmos for their 'Nod to Maud' large photo layout and North Wellington Community News for their use of the 'Holstein cow' large photo throughout the layout. That made those two features stand out. Besides the creativity, both features were pleasing in their layout and drew the reader throughout. The use of more pages provided more advertising and content, which was all very valuable for the reader, so I awarded first place to North Wellington Community News for their 'Drayton Farm Show' with 'Nod to Maud' in second place. Congratulations!

Judge

Joyce
Webster

Publisher
East Central Alberta Review
Coronation, AB



Getting "long in tooth", (cowboy language for getting older) as I enter my 45th year of publishing a small regional newspaper that reaches 26,297 homes in east central Alberta and enjoying the countryside where I live on a quarter section. I've had the privilege of attending every educational AWNA weekend seminar and others throughout my career and hopefully have been able to supply some worthwhile comments for bettering our newspapers. P.S. 'long in tooth' origin: believed to originate from horses' teeth. The older the horse gets, the longer their teeth become! Haha! Congratulations to all and all the best in our battles keeping newspapers publishing and maintaining democracy!

BEST CREATIVE AD

13 ENTRIES



FERGUS WELLINGTON ADVERTISER - EMILY HUGHES

I don't normally read car ads. I'd read this one.



LISTOWEL BANNER - JANINE MARTIN

This was very cute. Caught my eye.



KITCHISSIPPI TIMES - CÉLINE PAQUETTE

This was a fun series.

GENERAL COMMENT

It's been a tough year for Community newspapers. Many have ceased publishing or ceased print publishing...including my local one. Give the best value to your advertisers. Give your readers a reason to stop on that page and read that advertiser's ad!

Judge

**Wayne
Aubert**



*Professor, Advertising
and Marketing Communications
Management Program
Mohawk College, ON*

Wayne Aubert is a Professor at Mohawk College in Hamilton, teaching in Advertising and Common Business. Prior to his work at Mohawk, he produced MANY, MANY newspaper ads for the Ontario Government, KFC, and Jaguar, just to name a few. He misses receiving his Mountain News each week.

IN HOUSE PROMOTION

9 ENTRIES



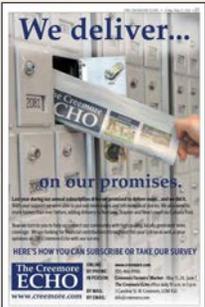
NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE, THE LAKE REPORT - RICHARD HARLEY

The Lake Report newspaper goes all out to celebrate their achievements and awards with OCNA. Four pages worth! Great job and winners of the In House Promotion category.



NORTH WELLINGTON COMMUNITY NEWS - ALICIA ROZA

Clean and clear, full-page promotional piece. Nice job!



CREEMORE ECHO - TRINA BERLO & SARA HERSHOFF

Effective and original in house promotional piece! Full page to grab attention! A bit difficult to read with smaller text overtop of photo.

GENERAL COMMENT

Ontario newspapers are doing such a terrific job with design and advertising! Always nice to see the different approaches. Although each entry in this category was well thought out, the winners all promoted their accomplishments and services above anything else.

Judge

Andrea Hillo

Publisher and Graphic Design Haliburton, ON



Andrea is an award winning freelance graphic artist and independent book publisher who owned her own community newspaper and is a past OCNA award winner, judge and member. Andrea has worked in the graphic design, newspaper and publishing industry for over 35 years. Now living near Algonquin Park, she designs and publishes fine art books, working with some of Canada's leading forces of art and culture, including legendary naturalists/artists Robert Bateman, Glen Loates and Michael Dumas, author/journalist Roy MacGregor and artist/musician Mendelson Joe.

LOCAL RETAIL LAYOUT

12 ENTRIES



KITCHISSIPPI TIMES - CÉLINE PAQUETTE

I liked this local retail layout. A lot of information but good use of photos and type size with this original idea for a guide. The spacing made it easy to read and not cluttered. It gained extra points as the entire layout was very creative, original and eye-catching. Great work.



ELMIRA-WOOLWICH OBSERVER - CASSANDRA MERLIHAN

The use of the large photo, followed up by the smaller photos provided excellent content for the reader to get a good idea of what this outlet is all about at a glance. Excellent work!



THE INDEPENDENT SERVING PETROLIA AND CENTRAL LAMBTON - TYLER VISCOUNT

Liked the creative Christmas layout providing all the pertinent information, followed up by each individual business' ads. The wording outlined in the Christmas tree made this ad stand out, and the screened, soft-coloured Christmas background gave this ad breathing room and appealed to the eye. Congrats on a great job.

GENERAL COMMENT

The majority of these ads were excellent so made it hard to judge. My first place choice was Kitchissippi Times because of the original creative and unusual way of layout for a gift guide. For second, the Elmira-Woolwich Observer Pancake House ad had a lot of information but not lost when using the big photo, followed up by the smaller ones. Third place went to The Independent Serving Petrolia and Central Lambton. Their Christmas layout provided lots of well-designed ads and information but gave it breathing room so it did not look cluttered. Congratulations to all!

Judge

Joyce
Webster

Publisher
East Central Alberta Review
Coronation, AB



Getting "long in tooth", (cowboy language for getting older) as I enter my 45th year of publishing a small regional newspaper that reaches 26,297 homes in east central Alberta and enjoying the countryside where I live on a quarter section. I've had the privilege of attending every educational AWNA weekend seminar and others throughout my career and hopefully have been able to supply some worthwhile comments for bettering our newspapers. P.S. 'long in tooth' origin: believed to originate from horses' teeth. The older the horse gets, the longer their teeth become! Haha! Congratulations to all and all the best in our battles keeping newspapers publishing and maintaining democracy!

Sponsored by: Metro Creative Graphics

ORIGINAL AD IDEA

9 ENTRIES



FERGUS WELLINGTON ADVERTISER - ALICIA ROZA

Cute concept! I would not put the s on Yukons. Neither of the others have the s, and we know there is more than one because you tell us on the next line. Great job!



KITCHISSIPPI TIMES - CÉLINE PAQUETTE

I would shift the image to the right by enlarging it just a bit. This would cut the bike out and allow the BBQ to be in the image more. Also, a couple text edits All around a great ad!



UXBRIDGE COSMOS - SUSAN GALLÉ

Cute ad! I want to see the show! Could have used the blue on the show dates to make them stand out as well, but overall nice job.

GENERAL COMMENT

Some really nice ads in this category! The competition was close and I was tough on you all! Make sure you edit your copy! Keep your message clear and concise so it's easier to make it look pretty.

Judge

Amanda Zimmer

**Publisher
Claresholm Local Press
Claresholm, AB**



Amanda Zimmer is the publisher of the Claresholm Local Press and has been in the community newspaper business for 25 years as a graphic designer. She gained her first experience working in a print shop as her after school job in high school. She completed her Printing Management Technologies diploma at SAIT, taking her practicum at the Local Press. She truly believes volunteers make a community and has given back to various organizations throughout the years. She is also on the AWNA board of directors. Amanda loves living in a small community and being a part of the connection people have with each other through their paper. She believes the newspaper is the hub of their community and loves to see people reading and sharing it.

BEST USE OF COLOUR

13 ENTRIES



KITCHISSIPPI TIMES - CÉLINE PAQUETTE

The designer did a beautiful job with this two page spread. Nice colours. Soft - not overwhelming. Original and creative.



ELMIRA-WOOLWICH OBSERVER - CASSANDRA MERLIHAN

Nice balance of colour and white space.



FERGUS WELLINGTON ADVERTISER - EMILY HUGHES

Fun ad with great impact.

HONOURABLE MENTION

NORTH WELLINGTON COMMUNITY NEWS - ALICIA ROZA - Nice use of colour. Bright and just popped off the page! Great work!

GENERAL COMMENT

It's incredible to see all the hard work by the design departments of community newspapers. It is interesting to see and compare ads that are very colourful to others that have a more subtle use of colour. Overall, all the entries were well done and pop off the pages, which of course the advertiser wants! Great job everyone.

Judge

Andrea Hillo

*Publisher and
Graphic Design
Haliburton, ON*



Andrea is an award winning freelance graphic artist and independent book publisher who owned her own community newspaper and is a past OCNA award winner, judge and member. Andrea has worked in the graphic design, newspaper and publishing industry for over 35 years. Now living near Algonquin Park, she designs and publishes fine art books, working with some of Canada's leading forces of art and culture, including legendary naturalists/artists Robert Bateman, Glen Loates and Michael Dumas, author/journalist Roy MacGregor and artist/musician Mendelson Joe.

BEST COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER WEBSITE

13 ENTRIES



THE NORTH GRENVILLE TIMES - NGTIMES.CA

Grand branding - high marks on a computer and phone. Perhaps too much branding!



NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE, THE LAKE REPORT - NIAGARANOW.COM

Great presentation!



ST. MARYS INDEPENDENT - GRANTHAVEN.COM

Looks strong - perhaps a tighter presentation on computer, more news front and centre.

HONOURABLE MENTION

MANITOULIN EXPOSITOR - MANITOULIN.COM - Great look - robust.

GENERAL COMMENT

Did three judging looks at these. Two on computers and one on the phone. One round of complete award matrix scoring had less than 5 points between first and 13th position here. Three scoring rounds were added up out of 270, then divided by three for an out of /90 ranking.

Judge

Rob Brown

*Publisher
This Week in Dawson Creek
Dawson Creek, BC*



Rob Brown, 46, has written daily for 32 years and owns This Week in Dawson Creek, replacing 80 years of regional print history after the closure of the Alaska Highway News and Dawson Creek Mirror. He was the managing editor of the Dawson Creek Mirror, Northern Horizon, and Pipeline News North for eight years. His 17-year journalism career earned over 25 awards in both Alberta and Manitoba. A 2005 Alberta Centennial Citizen of the Year, 2017 Culture Ambassador for Northern BC, and 2024 Silver Quill awardee, Brown released his first feature film, "Sukunka," in 2022. In 2023, he produced the 10-episode talk/variety show "Peace Region Xposure" on OptikTV. In 2024 he completed legendary director Albert Pyun's science fiction film 'Interstellar Civil War' with the hope it plays at San Diego Comic Con in 2025. His second film 'Blind Dates' is now in post production.

BEST ONLINE JOURNALISM

2 ENTRIES



NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE, THE LAKE REPORT - SUMMER OF THE FLOOD: PART 1 - RICHARD WRIGHT

This is an interesting series, giving readers a platform to hear the residents' flooding frustrations. However, for an online piece, please consider the following suggestions: 1. Write in an "F" pattern (as that is the way we read online). 2. Attach the image to the top of each story; don't do a photo carousel. 3. Use a sans serif typography for accessible reading. 4. Avoid a long, italicized introduction to the series; just get to the point. 5. Add other visual elements such as maps, graphics, etc. to keep the reader engaged.



PICTON GAZETTE - CATASTROPHIC FIRE ON THE ADOLPHUS REACH - JASON PARKS

Great photos, Jason, and congratulations for being on the scene so fast and sharing the information with the community via social media. Still, for your online story, while the photos were colourful, the story was not. There needed to be quotes, especially from those who lost their homes. There also could have been more visual elements such as a video, map or graphic. For the online presentation, the typography needs to follow Plain Language principles by using a sans serif font and the grid needs to align for the text and photo placement.

GENERAL COMMENT

Great work from the reporters about what's being posted online! This is an important category as more of our newsrooms go digital in Canada, following the loss of many of our social media platforms. My suggestion is that newsrooms find ways to add more visual assets to their online articles with photo essays and videos, which are useful to keep the readers on the page. As well, newsrooms should pay attention to formatting as people read differently online than with print. Ensure you write in an F-shape pattern and use Plain Language principles like bullet points and sans serif fonts for reader accessibility.

Judge

**Janis
Cleugh**

*Reporter & Copy Editor
Tri-City News
Coquitlam, BC*



Janis Cleugh has been a reporter, copy editor and paginator in the U.K. and Canada for more than 30 years. She is currently one of two reporters at the Tri-City News in Coquitlam, B.C., which went digital in August 2023. Janis is a recipient of the Hong Kong Economic Trade Office (HKETO) Fellowship, a two-time recipient of the Jack Webster Fellowship and, last year, was decorated with the King Charles III Coronation Medal for her service to the community and country. She is a nationally certified proofreader through Editors Canada and holds diplomas from Simon Fraser University in Plain Language, Editing, Publishing and Business Writing. She is a community newspaper judge for Alberta, Saskatchewan, Quebec and national competitions. You can read her news stories via Instagram at @janiscleughwrites.

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College & University



WORLD

SPORTS

BUSINESS

PUZZLES/GAMES

METRO

BREAKING NEWS

Bad timing

ACROSS

- 1. ...
- 6. ...
- 10. ...
- 12. ...
- 14. ...
- 15. ...

DOWN

- 1. ...
- 2. ...
- 3. ...
- 4. ...
- 5. ...
- 6. ...

Yesterday's puzzle solved

FILE	PAVE	PRINCE
ALICE	ALICE	ALICE
CHOCOLATE	CHOCOLATE	CHOCOLATE
TOMATOES	TOMATOES	TOMATOES
STARS	STARS	STARS
PLATE	PLATE	PLATE
LEAD	LEAD	LEAD
FLAME	FLAME	FLAME
ABSENCE	ABSENCE	ABSENCE
PIZZA	PIZZA	PIZZA
WEST	WEST	WEST
BAKE	BAKE	BAKE
WIND	WIND	WIND
WAL	WAL	WAL
SLAMS	SLAMS	SLAMS
TRIPS	TRIPS	TRIPS
ENDS	ENDS	ENDS



STUDENT FEATURE WRITING

19 ENTRIES



HUMBER COLLEGE - CARLO CANTISANI

Right from the beginning the story started off with very strong writing which I felt could have been published in many major newspapers. It was structured in a way that was very easy to read with interesting stars flowing through the piece. Very nice work!



CENTENNIAL COLLEGE - HARUKA IDE

Love the use of sub heads but felt they broke up the story in a way that made it competitive. The videos were a nice touch. The individuality was nice and touched on interesting points like culture and accessibility.



HUMBER COLLEGE - ANNICCA ALBANO & JEFERSON QUIRO-VARGAS

The story began with a very strong lead; however, I feel some more scene setting could have been done. I also thought the way many of the sources were introduced became a bit repetitive. The article was structured very nicely and flowed well. The types of sources quoted were very impressive.

HONOURABLE MENTION

DURHAM COLLEGE - GAGE PATTE - A few grammar and CP style errors. There were lots of very interesting details that were organized in an articulate way with statistics to prove the points. I hope many young people will read this important piece of journalism and look after their health.

GENERAL COMMENT

Students across Ontario displayed a strong level of talent. Not only did their writing shine through, but so did their ability to find interesting, community-minded story ideas. One of the hardest jobs as a journalist can be finding sources. I was very impressed by the variety that was seen, including some that would have taken a lot of research to track down. Ontario's media future is in good hands with this upcoming generation of young journalists!

Judge

Charlie Senack

*Editor
Kitchissippi Times
& Ottawa Lookout
Ottawa, ON*



Charlie Senack is an award-winning journalist who is editor of the Kitchissippi Times newspaper and the Ottawa Lookout. He also writes for the Ottawa Citizen, Barrhaven Independent and Manotick Messenger. Senack began his journalistic career at the age of 15.

STUDENT NEWS WRITING

20 ENTRIES



HUMBER COLLEGE - ANTONIO CANYAMERAS ROJAS

Beautifully crafted and a pleasure to read! The writer toggled between paraphrasing and quoting, which gave the story bounce, life and rhythm. Sports are a great source of school pride, and this story did a great job of elevating cross country. It inspired pride in the program, by bringing the reader right inside the mind of the runner, to see the level of grit and determination needed to compete. A simple story but elevated with poetic imagery and skilled writing. Beautiful!



UNIVERSITY OF WATERLOO - NADIA KHAN

Clear, organized and well researched article regarding a significant change to student life. The writer did a good job of balancing the two sides, into an unbiased, informative article. A solid article, which left the reader feeling informed and with few, if any, unanswered questions.



CENTENNIAL COLLEGE - CHRISTIAN ZDRAVKO

This is a really well done look at dog violence, in the wake of a local tragedy. It melded a lot of sources into a cohesive narrative. The opening at the dog park was a great way to add a little humanity - the dog owners gave a nice gateway for readers, but the article still offered plenty of researched facts and relevant interviews, to give readers a few things to chew on. A nicely put together piece.

HONOURABLE MENTION

FANSHAWE COLLEGE - MAURICIO PRADO - A really interesting story, and an important one to get the word out on misconceptions around the food bank. Clearly written, with a variety of quality sources. It would have been good to ask Sathya for a copy of the e-mail, so info could be pulled from it.

GENERAL COMMENT

It is heartening to see such a large and diverse slate of entries in the student competition - the future of news reporting in Canada is bright. The articles submitted showed a strong commitment to quality reporting on important and sometimes thought provoking topics. Everyone who entered should feel proud of the work they put forward.

Judge

Megan Walchuk

*Editor
Fort Frances Times
Fort Frances, ON*



Megan Walchuk is currently the editor for the Fort Frances Times newspaper. She graduated from the Print Journalism program at Sheridan College in 2001 and has worked in community print news outlets for her entire professional career.

Sponsored by: Ontario Journalism Educators Association

STUDENT EDITORIAL

12 ENTRIES



ALGONQUIN COLLEGE - NAOMIE TWAGIRUMUKIZA

This is a deeply personal and evocative piece that captures the resilience and adaptability of a family navigating constant change due to global conflicts and professional commitments. Through vivid storytelling, Naomie Twagirumukiza conveys the emotional challenges of displacement, the concept of home as a fluid rather than fixed entity, and the strength drawn from familial bonds. The narrative seamlessly intertwines personal anecdotes with broader reflections on the impacts of war, cultural adaptation, and the pandemic. The article's strength lies in its emotional depth, clarity of expression, and ability to humanize global issues through an intimate lens.



ALGONQUIN COLLEGE - ARTY SARKISIAN

Arty Sarkisian gives us a deeply introspective and evocative narrative that captures the disillusionment, helplessness, and emotional turmoil experienced by ordinary people caught in the shadow of historical events. The writing is raw and vivid, blending personal anecdotes with broader reflections on war's human cost. Sarkisian's ability to weave the mundane, with the harrowing realities of war makes the article profoundly relatable and haunting. Its strength lies in its honesty and nuanced exploration of guilt, privilege, and survival, making it a poignant and thought-provoking reflection on the often-overlooked consequences of war.



HUMBER COLLEGE - SANTIAGO HELOU QUINTERO

Santiago Helou Quintero's article is a compelling and urgent analysis of the systemic erosion of essential services and societal infrastructure in Canada. The article skillfully connects a wide range of critical issues, including food insecurity, housing affordability, healthcare shortages, and exploitative labor practices, to demonstrate how decades of underfunding and policy failures have exacerbated inequality and undermined the basic necessities of life. Quintero employs striking imagery to emphasize the gradual but perilous nature of these crises. Overall, the article is a sobering and thought-provoking call to action, highlighting the need for radical systemic change.

GENERAL COMMENT

Each of the student journalists in this category produced well-written and thought-provoking editorials. Although all the entries were both enjoyable and enlightening, this year's winners demonstrated exceptional editorial writing skills while taking a bold stance on a diverse range of important issues. Congratulations to the winners, and thank you to all of the writers for sharing their work.

Judge

Nate Smelle



*Managing Editor
Bancroft This Week & Bancroft Times
Bancroft, ON*

In 2012 Nate Smelle began his first stint as Editor of Bancroft This Week, before moving to the Niagara Region in 2016 where he served as Editor at The Voice of Pelham. In the Summer of 2018, he returned to Bancroft and took on the role of Editor of Bancroft This Week and The Bancroft Times. Throughout his career he has also worked as a freelance journalist with publications such as: Now Magazine, The New Tanner, County Life and Haliburton County Echo. Smelle's first book, 'Twas A Sunny Day: The Life And Creativity Of Anti-Fascist Artist Arne Roosman, is scheduled for release in the Spring of 2025.

STUDENT PHOTOGRAPHY

14 ENTRIES



**LOYALIST COLLEGE
- JILLY MACIVER**

Great job with this photo. Hockey is one of the most difficult sports to photograph due to lighting, board glass that's never clean, fast action, and all that white ice to mess up with the light meter. The action is crisp, well focused where it needs to be, and at a creative and interesting angle. If this photo was submitted to where I work, I'd select it for the top of the sport page or A1. My only suggestion is to always treat the cutline with a photo as if it is going to be detached from the story. More information in the cutline would either tell the story on its own (highlights) or tell the reader to look beyond the photo and read the story below. Great work. Keep up the good job.

GENERAL COMMENT

There was such a range in subjects and photographic styles from all the entrants. This is encouraging and shows that despite all the challenges currently facing the journalism/photojournalism craft, we have a great new generation of storytellers entering the field.



**CENTENNIAL COLLEGE
- ZACHARY PHILLIPS**

The cropping/closeness of this photo is fantastic. It is the right photo at the right time of the event and illustrates what the sport is and what's happening. While the water and most of the subject is crisp, I think either gear or depth of field made a difference here. The hand in the foreground should have been in focus as well to lead the viewer more into the photo.



**ALGONQUIN COLLEGE
- MAT DICSÍ**

Great photo and good work on the cropping. Leaving a player on the right helps establish the close quarters the players are battling in for the ball. The photo is sharp and freezes the action. Great work!

Judge

**Phillip
Blancher**

**Reporter
Morrisburg Leader
Morrisburg, ON**



Phillip Blancher has worked as a journalist and photographer in print, online, and radio for over 25 years and is based in Morrisburg, ON. He is presently the local journalism initiative reporter for the Morrisburg Leader – one of Ontario's last remaining independent weekly newspapers, which has been in publication since 1862. Bylines have been published in the Toronto Star, many Postmedia newspapers including the Cornwall Standard-Freeholder, Brockville Recorder and Times, the Ottawa Citizen, and Ottawa Sun.

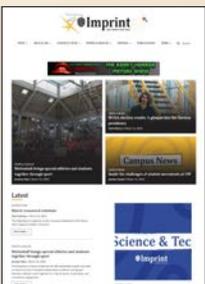
BEST COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY NEWSPAPER WEBSITE

7 ENTRIES



CENTENNIAL COLLEGE - TORONTOOBSERVER.CA

The Toronto Observer stands out as an exceptional example of student journalism, showcasing strong editorial standards, compelling storytelling, and excellent multimedia integration. The site effectively balances local and broader news coverage, demonstrating professionalism and a deep understanding of audience engagement. It is a well-deserved winner and a testament to the talent and dedication of Centennial College's journalism students.



UNIVERSITY OF WATERLOO - UWIMPRINT.CA

Imprint excels as a student news website with its comprehensive coverage, diverse content, and professional presentation. The site effectively engages its audience through well-written articles and a clean, user-friendly layout. Its commitment to showcasing student perspectives and addressing a wide range of topics is commendable, making it a strong contender for recognition.



HUMBER COLLEGE - HUMBERNEWS.CA

Humber News showcases a professional layout and engaging content that reflects solid journalistic practices. The site demonstrates strong reporting, diverse story selection, and a clear commitment to serving its audience. Its design and usability enhance the reader experience, making it a commendable contender in this category.

HONOURABLE MENTION

ALGONQUIN COLLEGE - ALGONQUINTIMES.COM - The Algonquin Times news site demonstrates a high standard of student journalism with its professional design, well-structured navigation, and diverse range of stories.

GENERAL COMMENT

Judging the campus news websites for the OCNA awards was a rewarding experience, showcasing the incredible talent and dedication of student journalists across Ontario. Each website demonstrated unique strengths, from compelling storytelling to creative multimedia integration, reflecting the hard work and passion of their respective teams. It was inspiring to see how these students are honing their craft and contributing to campus journalism. While some sites displayed room for growth in areas such as design and user experience, the overall quality and commitment to delivering impactful news were truly commendable.

Judge

**Mohsin
Abbas**



*Publisher
Lakeshore News Reporter, Lasalle
Post Reporter & Tilbury Times
Reporter, ON*

Mohsin Abbas is a Pakistani-Canadian journalist, filmmaker, and advocate for press freedom with a nearly three-decades-long career. Nominated for an Emmy award, he has passionately shaped narratives since 1993, working as a news/investigative reporter, producer, and fixer across various media platforms in Pakistan, Afghanistan, India, Canada, and South America. He dedicates himself to revitalizing small community publications and contributes to BBC News South Asian Languages from Canada.

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2025 OCNA HALL

The OCNA Hall of Fame recognizes and celebrates individuals who have made exemplary contributions to Ontario's community newspapers. Inductees are respected community news professionals who have remained passionate about the industry throughout challenges, opportunities, and changes. They are leaders who have helped community newspapers adapt and grow.

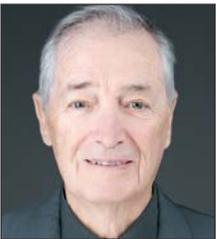
To view all our Hall of Fame inductees, please visit OCNA's Hall of Fame page.



DAVID ARMSTRONG

*Owner & Publisher, New Liskeard Temiskaming Speaker
Awarded Posthumously*

Dave Armstrong exemplified the best of what a community newspaper owner should be – a principled individual and consummate community builder. Dave grew up in Sarnia and attended Western University where he met his future wife and business partner, Trudi. After working for Bell Canada in Toronto, the couple moved north and purchased, in partnership with Trudi's father Leonard Wilson, first a motel and later the Temiskaming Printing Company and the Temiskaming Speaker. Under Dave's leadership, the paper thrived, providing award-winning journalism and local information to its readers. He wasn't shy about investing in the product, even when other publishers were cutting back on staff. Beyond his own newspapers, Dave served as a board member of the Canadian Community Newspapers Association and the Ontario Community Newspapers Association, including a term as president in 2005. He remained active in the industry until he sold the paper and retired in 2011. That year he also received a Silver Quill award celebrating 25 years in the business. He died in 2015 at age 66. Dave was a founding member of the Temiskaming Foundation, a long-time member, and a past president, of the Rotary Club of Haileybury and served as a member of the parish council at Our Mother of Perpetual Help Church in New Liskeard. And as much as he loved his newspaper and his community, former Speaker editor Gordon Brock said that it was always clear that Dave's top priority was his family.



FRED HEIDMAN

Publisher & General Manager, Parry Sound North Star & Beacon Star

Fred Heidman got his start at the Parry Sound North Star as an 18-year-old printer's devil in 1960 and did almost every job the paper had to offer. In 1974, Fred became the paper's general manager, a position he would hold until he retired in 2008. Along the way, he helped launch new products like Fun in the Sun, Fun in the Snow, a large print phone book and Sideroads Magazine. After the paper's owner bought the Georgian Bay Beacon, Fred was instrumental in merging the two operations which led to the creation of the Beacon Star, which published along side the North Star. Fred served on both the OCNA and CCNA boards of directors, including as OCNA's president in 2002. During his time on the provincial board, he helped rewrite the bylaws to allow papers that publish in languages other than English or French to join. He received a Silver Quill in 1996. He was also an early adopter of new technology, and was among the first weekly newspapers to have a news website. He has been a member of numerous boards and committees, including the West Parry Sound Health Centre Board, Parry Sound Area Chamber of Commerce and the Regional Economic Development Advisory Committee. Fred not only built his community and his papers, but the men and women who worked for him. "I regularly hear Fred's past advice resonating, insisting on fairness, accuracy and hard work," wrote former employee Jack Tynan. "I'm sure many in our industry have heard, and still adhere, to that advice today."

OF FAME INDUCTEES



JIM SCHMIDT

Owner & Publisher, Ayr News

Awarded Posthumously

Jim Schmidt spent his entire life in and around the Ayr News. His father and uncle purchased the paper in 1913, which has been in the family ever since. In 1942, Jim left school at 15 and began his full-time apprenticeship in the family business. He became sole owner 26 years later, continuing to work at the News until well into his 80s. "I don't know whether I liked it when I started," he said. "But it gave me the freedom to do the things I really liked doing." Those things included working to enhance the village's infrastructure, volunteering as a firefighter for more than 50 years (including 17 as chief) and being a founding member of the Ayr-Paris Band. The community's Schmidt Park is named in his honour. Jim married Lavina McCombs in 1951, with whom he had eight children, several of whom continue on at the News. He was also a published author, writing local history books about Ayr. He received the Queen's Jubilee Medal in 2002 and was the first, and to date, only recipient of News Media Canada's Diamond Quill award, which recognizes his 75+ years in the newspaper business. Jim died on May 22, 2023 at the age of 95. One of the key newspapering lessons Jim learned from his father was the importance of publishing local news and opinion content. For over 35 years he wrote his Ayring the News – a column that, like the paper itself, continues in the care of the Schmidt family.



MOHSEN TAGHAVI

Owner & Publisher, Salam Toronto

Mohsen Taghavi's love of the written word began when he was a young boy in Iran reading the classics of both Persian and world literature. While studying in Los Angeles, Mohsen got his first taste of journalism when he volunteered to collect and summarize the news from home and share it with his fellow students during the height of the Iranian revolution. Returning to Iran, he worked at the country's second largest daily paper until, fed-up with the censorship and pressure coming from the regime, he left in 1984. He went on to help launch a series of progressive weeklies and dailies, before he was muscled out by the state. In 1997 Mohsen and his family came to Canada where he quickly found work writing and editing for two Persian language publications. In the summer of 2000, he launched his own publication Salam Toronto. The paper became an OCNA member in 2002 (one of the first non-English or non-French publications to do so) and in 2007 Mohsen became the first publisher representing the multicultural press to be elected to OCNA's board of directors. In 2017 he received Canada's Sesquicentennial Citizenship Award for excellence in journalism and his outstanding contributions to promoting citizenship. While Salam Toronto went online-only due to the pandemic, the publication continues to provide essential news and information to Canadians of Iranian, Afghan, Tajik and Turkmen descent. Mohsen has always sought to foster a sense of belonging among his readerships, and to help new immigrants navigate life in their new home, Canada.



MIKE WILLISCRIFT

Owner & Publisher, Grimsby NewsNow

Mike Williscraft began with a dream of starting his own harness racing publication. After a stint with the Globe & Mail in 1985, he was hired on as managing editor of The Standardbred Magazine. Following a change in ownership, Mike took a job as a sports reporter with the Goderich Signal-Star and started to branch out into more hard news coverage. Deciding to move to Ottawa, Mike became managing editor of the Manotick Messenger and Barrhaven Independent, before returning to edit a trio of papers in Niagara. An ownership change led to Mike being laid off and launching the Grimsby News. The paper soon expanded and added a weekend edition called Niagara West This Week. Mike sold the papers to Metroland in 2004 and joined the local team. He grew Metroland's circulation and helped to launch a free daily newspaper in the region. Laid off again in 2012, Mike opened NewsNow Niagara, three months later. Mike served as president of both OCNA and CCNA. He also served on several chambers of commerce, helped draft economic development strategies, raised money for good causes and played a vital role in saving the West Lincoln Memorial Hospital. For his efforts, Mike received OCNA's Mary Knowles Award in 2008. "There isn't a day when there isn't a politician, business owner, lobbyist or just a sweet senior with a bee in their bonnet, perched on the rickety chair pulled alongside Mike's desk," wrote NewsNow contributor Joanne McDonald. "The door is open and it's not a stretch to say that Mike's opinions hold significant sway on many decisions that affect the community."

GENERAL EXCELLENCE JUDGE SCORE SHEETS

NEWSPAPER	Front Page	Community News	Editorial & Op-Ed Pages	Presentation	Photography	Advertising Content	Advertising Design	Classified Advertising	Local Features	Sports	Arts Coverage	TOTAL	RANK
CLASS 1 (CIRC. 1,500 & UNDER)	150	150	100	100	100	100	100	25	50	25	25	925	
Wingham Advance Times	135	129	85	85	86	83	84	19	39	20	20	785	1
Listowel Banner	127	133	83	84	86	83	84	21	40	21	20	782	2
Haliburton County Echo	122	126	83	86	86	84	88	21	34	20	21	771	3
Minden Times	122	130	86	82	82	83	85	23	37	20	18	768	4
Walkerton Herald times	132	128	84	83	83	82	83	18	36	19	17	765	5
Barry's Bay, The Valley Gazette	110	137	73	79	85	86	85	21	43	24	17	760	6
Kincardine Independent	126	124	83	83	81	83	84	19	38	18	19	758	7
Deep River North Renfrew Times	119	123	77	81	80	82	85	19	34	20	19	739	8
Bancroft Times	114	126	84	80	77	81	80	19	36	16	18	731	9
Mildmay Town & Country Crier	107	126	62	72	73	80	80	21	38	17	18	694	10
Atikokan Progress	108	89	58	71	63	79	78	20	30	11	15	622	11

NEWSPAPER	Front Page	Community News	Editorial & Op-Ed Pages	Presentation	Photography	Advertising Content	Advertising Design	Classified Advertising	Local Features	Sports	Arts Coverage	TOTAL	RANK
CLASS 2 (CIRC. 1,501 - 8,000)	150	150	100	100	100	100	100	25	50	25	25	925	
Eganville Leader	125	111	87	87	87	84	85	17	38	17	12	750	1
New Liskeard Temiskaming Speaker	125	106	87	84	86	83	80	20	39	23	12	745	2
Blyth/Brussels Citizen	120	103	85	85	83	85	79	17	36	13	20	726	3
The Haldimand Press	121	109	70	86	81	85	85	16	38	14	12	717	4
Stratford Times	118	103	75	78	80	79	81	15	39	22	21	711	5
Petrolia Lambton Independent	121	105	74	74	80	81	80	18	38	21	13	705	6
Fort Frances Times	118	106	77	77	81	83	79	16	38	15	12	702	7
Wilmot - Tavistock Gazette	116	101	80	78	77	79	80	17	37	20	11	696	8
Bruce Peninsula Press	125	100	72	72	83	81	80	19	36	12	13	693	9
Aylmer Express	117	102	75	75	83	81	80	18	36	13	12	692	10
Creemore Echo	118	104	71	74	79	79	82	17	37	17	13	691	11
St. Marys Independent	116	103	69	71	77	80	79	17	37	21	20	690	12
Ayr News	113	102	67	72	76	80	80	16	36	13	10	665	13

NEWSPAPER	Front Page	Community News	Editorial & Op-Ed Pages	Presentation	Photography	Advertising Content	Advertising Design	Classified Advertising	Local Features	Sports	Arts Coverage	TOTAL	RANK
CLASS 3 (CIRC. 8,001 & OVER)	150	150	100	100	100	100	100	25	50	25	25	925	
Niagara-on-the-Lake, The Lake Report	135	138	92	93	92	95	92	5	48	14	22	826	1
Elmira-Woolwich Observer	123	134	68	87	87	92	93	23	43	21	21	792	2
Haliburton, The Highlander	120	128	85	86	81	93	92	23	33	13	24	778	3
Kitchissippi Times	127	135	47	93	87	92	93	7	49	15	20	765	4
Fergus Wellington Advertiser	117	110	88	68	65	87	85	25	27	11	23	706	5
Caledon Citizen	105	113	80	63	60	87	87	22	10	14	16	657	6
Bancroft This Week	100	113	82	65	67	85	82	23	16	0	13	646	7
Orangeville Citizen	107	117	43	65	67	88	88	13	18	16	23	645	8
Napanee Beaver	100	104	73	67	58	87	87	22	5	12	15	630	9
King Weekly Sentinel	100	102	60	70	62	83	85	23	10	15	18	628	10
Picton Gazette	113	82	60	67	58	88	85	23	26	0	24	626	11
The Auroran	98	88	55	65	68	85	83	22	15	12	17	608	12
Cornwall Seaway News	88	94	83	67	70	87	68	18	12	8	12	607	13
Listowel Independent Plus	90	87	62	73	63	85	83	23	8	7	13	594	14
Leamington/Wheatley Southpoint Sun Journal	83	98	43	68	65	82	82	23	15	18	12	589	15
Uxbridge Cosmos	99	83	78	62	43	80	82	17	3	1	7	555	16
Kemptville, North Grenville Times	83	69	43	40	43	78	77	16	3	7	13	472	17
New Liskeard Temiskaming Speaker Weekender	103	75	30	47	43	73	70	23	3	0	2	469	18

NEWSPAPER	Front Page	Community News	Editorial & Op-Ed Pages	Presentation	Photography	Advertising Content & Design	Local Features	Sports	TOTAL	RANK
CLASS 4 (COLLEGE & UNIVERSITY)	150	150	100	100	100	25	100	50	775	
Humber College - Et Cetera	140	140	75	90	90	10	80	42	667	1
Fanshawe College - Interrobang	90	115	95	87	65	25	85	30	592	2
University of Waterloo - Imprint	80	105	0	80	95	10	72	15	457	3
Loyalist College - Pioneer	85	105	0	80	91	0	72	10	443	4

*Congratulations
to all our
winners!*



