

# Alaska Press Club Award 2006

## RADIO

### BREAKING NEWS

Judge: Corey Flintoff got his start in radio at KYUK in Bethel, and also worked for KSKA in Anchorage, and later went on to APRN. With NPR for 16 years, he's currently a State Department and Intelligence Community correspondent. His is a familiar voice to Alaskans.

1st: "New Stu Fire," by Jody Seitz, KDLG, Dillingham. Comments: Good sense of immediacy, and good use of interviewees' voices to give the story interest.

2nd: "Storm Heading Toward Nicolski May Delay Fuel Barges Again," by Charles Homans, KIAL-AM, Unalaska

3rd: "Whale Rescue," by Emily Schwing, KFSK, Petersburg

### SINGLE STORY

Judge: Susanna Capelouto is the news director of Georgia Public Broadcasting's 15-station radio network. She's been reporting in the state for over 10 years and currently works with a staff of five reporters. Her areas of special interest are state politics, education, religion and race relations. Susanna has been honored over the years with awards from the Georgia Associated Press, the Society of Professional Journalists and the Georgia Bar Association. She lives with her husband and two children in Atlanta.

General comments: As a whole, there were so many great stories in this category that it was tough to pick the top 3. The Alaska Press Club can really be proud of the multitude of good reporters you have.

1st: "Tribal Youth Diversion," by Melissa Maroni Wentzel, KCAW Raven Radio. Comments: Melissa did some great reporting for her story. She rode with a police officer, spoke to young people and did her leg work. The story gives a good sense of the problem of underage drinking from all perspectives, and one program that is trying to help.

2nd: "Homeless Anchorage Youth," by Rebecca Barker, Alaska Teen Media Institute. Comments: A very different look at homelessness and the way young people on the streets see themselves. Rebecca did a great job of reporting. I'm not sure if Rebecca herself is a teenager, but I think she's got a great future in radio.

3rd: "Risse," by Sarah Neal, KUAC. Comments: Sarah gives listeners a great sense of place in the beginning of the story. She brings out the character of Mr. Risse really well and hooks people into the story.

#### COMPREHENSIVE

Not available as of press time.

#### ONGOING PUBLIC AFFAIRS PROGRAM

Judge: Barbara Worth, AP

1st: "AK: The Five Senses," by Rebecca Sheir, Jessica Cochran, Ellen Lockyer, Duncan Moon, Michelle

Wozniak, Alaska Public Radio Network. Comments: It was a pleasure to listen to this creative, entertaining exploration of the senses. The show was informative, original, and fun. Good use of sound and interviews. All segments were enjoyable and educational, and the "taste" segment was particularly heartfelt.

2nd: "2006 In Other News," Alaska Teen Media Institute. Comments: The program was full of surprises, with a distinctive youthful feel. Its broad selection of topics, both serious and light, showcased an impressive range of teenage activities and concerns. Nice music and good efforts throughout the show to "play" with the medium. The MySpace segment in particular demonstrated very special maturity, though all of these teens have much to be proud of. Keep pushing yourselves!

3rd: "The Susitna Valley Voice," by Amanda Stossel and Lacey Ruskin, KTNA, Talkeetna. Comments: The show had an informative and wide-ranging look at what's up at the statehouse, a down-to-earth commentary, and a moving tribute to a local adventurer. A solid, thought-provoking presentation.

#### DOCUMENTARY

Judge: Gabriel Sptizer, Chicago Public Radio

1st: "Voices of Courage," by Tania Danielski, Voices Project, News Organization: KHNS. Comments: A candid account of an often-overlooked part of the recovery process. This piece offers an honest, moving account of one woman's story. It might benefit from a bit more variation in scene and voice, and the music scoring could have even more power if the producer chose a wider variety of music and let it run under more of the story. But overall, this is a nice piece about an important subject, and a worthy entry.

No second or third.

## GOVERNMENT OR POLITICAL

Judge: Los Angeles area native Paul Glickman is a senior news editor at KPCC in Southern California. He was an award-winning editor at NPR, including a stint as the network's editor in charge of coverage of Africa and the Americas. His honors include two duPont-Columbia Awards and a Peabody Award.

1st: "PERS and TERS Effects on Petersburg," by Matt Lichtenstein, KFSK Public Radio

2nd: "Agencies Clash Over the Future of the Galena Airport," by Tim Bodony, KIYU

3rd Place: No award

## BUSINESS

Judge: Nina Thorsen, KQED Inc., San Francisco

1st: "New Limits on King Crabs," by Charles Homans, KIAL. Comments: An inventive treatment of what could have been a conventional story. It engaged my interest immediately; the reporter chose to begin the piece not with a "talking head" expert or even someone from the fishing industry, but with a bartender remembering what used to happen when the fleet came in to town. Without being shallow or fluffy, the story gave listeners a vivid sense of what makes this part of Alaska distinctive. Well-recorded, well-chosen actualities, good radio writing, good use of sound.

2nd: "Effects of No Sheltered Seas," by Matt Lichtenstein, KFSK. Comments: A very interesting topic—the impact on a small community of a cruise line changing its route—but I felt the story was longer than it needed to be, and needed to be edited more tightly. The resulting lack of focus made it hard for the listener to sort out the important points. The reporter reads his script too fast, but his expressive reading and informal style made me try to keep up with him.

3rd: "BP Shutdown," by Libby Casey, KUAC. Comments: Good writing, especially into and out of actualities, and thoughtful focus on the broader implications of the BP action saved this fairly straightforward story from being pedestrian. The lack of sound made it a less appealing radio piece.

## ENVIRONMENT

Judge: Jessica Goldstein, NPR producer

No winners.

General comments: Of the 9 pieces I reviewed ... I do not think that any merit first, second or third place recognition. Some of the topics reported on were interesting, but overall, the stories had some serious flaws. The pieces were not

well produced or structured, and the writing was not clear, making it difficult for me in good conscience to give my mark of approval. That said, I do think there are a couple of reporters who show promise, and should be acknowledged for their commitment and effort to covering stories in Alaska that highlight environmental issues.

Below are some brief comments:

Amanda Stossel, "Talkeetna Opposes Herbicides." Comments: This was an interesting story; however it had some major problems. Most significantly, Stossel didn't interview the manufacturers of the herbicide; she only featured a person in town, opposed to the herbicide, reading from the manufacturer's website about the dangers of herbicide. The structure of the piece was good, but some of the internal edits were very rough, and should have been smoothed out before being broadcast.

Matt Lichtenstein, "Forest Service Biologist Challenges Timber Sale."

Comments: Overall I felt like I didn't hear enough from Glen Ith, the biologist who was challenging the sale. It was hard for me to gauge how significant this story is and if it was something NEW being presented to the listener.... were there others within the forest service that came out against sale?

Jody Seitz, "Guides." Comments: Topic of story was interesting, but piece needed to be edited down. The presentation was clear, but overall it was not dynamic enough to keep my attention.

Jody Seitz, "Bridge." Comments: The story was very thorough, and both sides were presented but found myself left hanging with a few significant questions.

## CRIME OR COURTS

Judge: Richard Baker, K-State Radio Network

1st: "Constitutional Amendment," by Sarah Neal, KUAC-FM. Comments: A difficult and complicated story told with good writing and supported by meaningful sound. This is a very good example of the reporter being objective with the soundbytes bringing in the subjective aspects of the story, which makes for compelling story-telling. In addition, a good job of being eased in and out of the soundbytes. Clear and informative.

2nd: "Chevak Tribal Court," by Bonnie-Sue Hitchcock, APRN/AK.

Comments: An interesting and compelling story supported throughout with sound and good writing. Good information and good presentation.

No third.

## BEST EDUCATION REPORTING

Judge: Emily Kopp, Georgia Public Broadcasting

1st: "Goose Bay Overflow," by Amanda Stossel, KTNA. Comments: It was an excellent topic with relevance for her listeners. She did a great job of taking the listener to the scene through sound.

2nd: "AYP," by Melissa Marconi Wentzel, KCAW-FM Raven Radio.

Comments: The topic was important and relevant. But, while the story covered all the bases, it was dry.

3rd: "Getting Out," by Katie Zager and Chris Frenier, Alaska Teen Media Institute. Comments: Interesting angle on the topic of college selection. The story was well-rounded and informative but it bordered on editorial without sufficient attribution.

### BEST REPORTING ON HEALTH OR SCIENCE

Judge: Adi Gevins won a Peabody in 1977 for a documentary she produced with Laurie Garrett. Currently she is a researcher with the DNA files and director of the Science Literacy Project, which among other things provides training for radio journalists in covering science stories.

General comments: The submissions in this category were superior, competition was tough.

1st: "Brevig Mission: Tracing the Genetic Path of a Pandemic," by Lori Townsend, APRN. Comments: Exceptionally thorough coverage, first class reporting, fascinating story telling, clear and interesting explanations of the science and the process of scientific research, excellent use of sound, news you can use, peopled by characters you get to know and will remember. The story, as told, is local, regional and international. I learned a lot, and enjoyed the experience. A truly excellent piece of work.

2nd: "Learning to Fly: Casting for Recovery," by Rebecca Sheir, APRN.

Comments: A beautifully told story; a moving canvas painted with sound.

Inspiring and informative, this piece teaches us about the physiology and psychology of cancer patients, survivors and healers. We learn about an innovative approach to recovery and discovery. We meet a number of inspiring and inspired women, and leave them with delight, knowledge and respect. Excellent use of sound and character. The people and setting are all Alaska, the story begs universal application.

3rd: "KHNS Forum: Youth and Substance Abuse," Voices Project - Tania

Danielski, KHNS-FM. Comments: What is happening in teen brains? An exceptional presentation of an issue of critical importance to all of us. The guests are top notch, excellent communicators, and professionals with deep, first-hand knowledge of the issues at hand. Complex subjects are handled in an accessible way. New scientific discoveries and social and ethical issues are discussed in ways that are both understandable, and that seem to apply to our daily lives. The moderator moves the discussion artfully, and listeners are

provided with truly useful resources. I only wish I could have heard some of the related Radio Diaries.

Additional judge comments to entrants and Press Club board: I had problems with two of the entries (both of which I selected for awards). 1. The CD of the very excellent program which I selected for First Place honors, "Brevig Mission," either cut out before the end of the second piece, or the true ending was voiced by the program host (which I don't know because I wasn't provided with a narrative description of the program end, or a script, or a transcript). Because of the excellence of the program, I'm trusting that the end of Part 2 was as well crafted as the end of Part 1. I don't know if this snafu occurred because of the file labels identifying the CD, or because the ending was not recorded. Regardless, I think this calls for a careful instruction to entrants that they audition the full CD before mailing it, and that they include any contextual information necessary (such as "host intro" script, or whatever) 2. The Sleeve of the CD of the wonderful program which I selected for Third Place, "Voices of Courage: KHNS Forum: Youth and Substance Abuse" seemed to indicate that "radio diaries" would be included on the CD. When I checked out their website I discovered impressive diaries associated with other programs. The hour panel discussion on the CD they submitted was truly terrific, and definitely worthy of commendation. If there were radio diaries created and distributed in tandem with the discussion, I wish they had been included in their entry. 3. It would be helpful if in the future all Radio category entries included the length of time of the submitted recording.

### BEST RADIO FEATURE

Judge: Karen Michael, former award winning journalist in Alaska with many fellowships and awards including a Peabody, a Fulbright and National Endowment for the Arts fellowships. A contributor to NPR, founder of the Association of Independent Radio, she currently teaches workshops all over the country and is a visiting professor at a college in Poughkeepsie, NY.

1st: It's a three-way tie!

"First Berries" by Len Anderson-KSKA for AK. Comments: A sound essay of wonderful storytelling. Terrific writing, a piece of sizzling tape (the cell phone call), interesting voices, a fine enlargement of a seemingly simple subject rendered a radio story that enters the listener into a microcosm of the cycle of life.

"Dumpster Diving," by Rebecca Barker-Alaska Teen Media Institute.

Comments: A well structured, well reported and well written story of a quirky sub-culture. The feature is simultaneously solid and akilter. There's lots of fabulous tape, used pitch-perfectly.

“Seeing voices: Baldness, Bond Villains and the Noah Adams Moment” by Rebecca Sheir-APRN. Comments: Quite wonderful, fun, and sonically rich. Well done and well produced. A fine sense of radio. No second or third.

#### **BEST PROFILE**

Not available as of press time.

#### **BEST SPORTS STORY**

Judge: Tom Goldman, NPR’s award winning sports correspondent and former reporter and producer at the APRN in the 80s.

1st: “Midnight Sun Baseball,” by Libby Casey, KUAC. Comments: Libby did a lovely job of providing the listener with a great sense of place, history and character. She took us to the game with good sound and writing, and quickly established why Midnight Sun Baseball is unique. There was great tape - I think of the first character, Red Boucher (sp?), who runs the Alaska League - his voice just makes you smile. Another funny moment...and we LOVE funny in radio!!!...was the player who talked about being “freaked out” by playing at that time of day. At about the 4 minute mark, I’d had my fill of listening to people talking about baseball and the uniqueness of Alaska and this event - my ear needed a change in direction. Libby expertly DID THAT...giving us the beautiful rendition of the Alaska State Song. It was a great little moment. All in all, a very nice piece of radio...and a worthy first place winner!!

No second or third.

#### **BEST ARTS**

Judge: Euan Kerr, Minnesota Public Radio

1st: “Athabaskan fiddler,” by Bonnie-Sue Hitchcock. Comments: “Hitchcock combines a great character with fine music and produces a pleasing piece which touches on culture old and new.”

#### **BEST DAILY NEWS PROGRAM (RADIO)**

No entries.

#### **TELEVISION**

##### **BEST BREAKING NEWS**

Judge: Al Tompkins Broadcast/Online Group Leader, The Poynter Institute

1st: “Regular session ends,” by Bill McAllister and Jason Kohler, KTUU.

Comments: The story not only shows urgency, but deep expertise

2nd: "Seward Highway crash," by Joy Mapaye and Kyle Stalder, KTUU

3rd: "Valley flooding," by Joy Mapaye and Shawn Wilson, KTUU

### BEST SINGLE STORY REPORTING

Julia Yarbough, WTVJ NBC 6, Mirimar, FL

1st: "A long walk home," by Angela Unruh, KTUU. Comments: The story conveyed excellent emotion. The crew took a standard domestic crime story and turned it into a human, REAL tragedy. The photography work put the viewer in the midst of this woman's struggle and pain, and excellent writing to the video, and nice use of NAT sound. Would have liked to have some information on how the stats of domestic violence; how many women fall victim... Is her case unique, or is it a regular occurrence??

2nd: "The long walk home," by Rebecca Palsha and Scott Jensen, KTUU. Comments: Excellent use of movement with photography to take the viewer into the fire ruins with this woman. Nice writing to the video. Again, taking a standard house fire story and creating a human story. The only thing: would have liked to have seen a photo of the house as it was before the fire... Or perhaps photos of the father to put it into perspective.

3rd: "Serving our youth," by Angela Unruh and Mike Nederbrock, KTUU. Comments: nice opening shot... Very "film" like. Excellent explanation of the state license and all the marking which indicate under-age. Nice touch to include hidden camera video. Explained the mission of the undercover team, but would have liked to have more information on what the exact laws are and how many violations are reported, and what is the impact of that law being broken? Good delivery by reporter. The piece was informative, i simply felt like i needed a bit more detail on how much of a problem this is... Why are there so many liquor stores if this is such an issue?

### BEST SERIES REPORTING

Judge: Al Tompkins Broadcast/Online Group Leader, The Poynter Institute

1st: "Lending a helping hand," by Rebecca Palsha and Scott Jensen, KTUU.

Comments: Great stories with lots of heart. You show us lots of memorable moments and took us deep inside the Katrina disaster.

2nd: "Arctic winter games," by Rhonda McBride and Brad Hillwig, KTUU

3rd: "Gang violence ... " by Ali Rees and Daniel Carpenter, KTUA.

Comments: This project is an uncommon and laudable dedication of time to a worthwhile topic in Alaska. Stay on tis story. Congratulations.

### BEST LIVE SHOT

Not available as of press time.

### BEST DOCUMENTARY

Judge: Al Tompkins Broadcast/Online Group Leader, The Poynter Institute

1st: "The 49th Star," by Michael Letering and Deb Lawton, KUAC TV.

Comments: This is outstanding and well produced storytelling and journalism.

How useful it is to re-examine history and understand our heritage.

2nd: "Ironwoman," John Tracy, KTUU. Comments: This is a worthwhile dedication of resources that tells a story of Alaskan perseverance.

No third.

### BEST REPORTING ON HEALTH OR SCIENCE

Judge: Karen Larsen, KJRH, Tulsa, Oklahoma

1st: "Tooth & Nail" Series, reporter Rhonda McBride and photographer Phil Walczak, KTUU. Comments: Thoroughly researched, well-written and covered all of the angles. Nice to see the travel to other states for extended coverage.

Conclusion: extremely well-written and beautifully edited to support and match the script. Nice teamwork between reporter and photographer. The on-set dialogue also helped wrap up any loose ends to the story.

2nd: "Mental Illness," reporter Joy Chavez Mapaye and photographer Brad Hillwig, KTUU. Comments: Creatively written piece with a unique twist in the story-telling. Tough story for television but photographer/editor did a nice job. Would have benefited from reporter standups to explain key details when supporting video wasn't available. (Ex: empty courtroom) Also, consider the inclusion of other sources - a judge, mental health expert, state case worker, etc.

No third.

### BEST EDUCATION REPORTING

Judge: Karen Larsen, KJRH, Tulsa, Oklahoma

No awards given.

### BEST ENVIRONMENTAL REPORTING

Julia Yarbough, WTVJ NBC 6, Mirimar, FL

1st: "Clean up the mess," by Rebecca Palsha and Brad Hillwig, KTUU.

Comments: The crew took a simple and basic trash clean-up story and with the use of excellent photography, use of NAT sound and writing specifically to the video, they made the piece really move. It included good information, and a personal touch from the viewpoint of the people taking part in the clean-up.

Quick. Concise. It moved.

2nd: “Cold Climate Housing,” by Maria Downey and Jason Kohler, KTUU. Comments: EXCELLENT information. The reporter was very knowledgeable and authoritative with the subject matter. I would have liked to have seen greater use of outdoor weather images to give a real-life application of why this research is so necessary and how it will directly impact us.  
No third.

#### BEST REPORTING ON CRIME OR COURTS

Not available as of press time.

#### BEST GOVERNMENT OR POLITICAL REPORTING

Not available as of press time.

#### BEST BUSINESS REPORTING

Judge: Karen Larsen, KJRH, Tulsa, Oklahoma

1st: “Hooper Bay Economy,” reporter Rhonda McBride and photographer Phil Walczak, KTUU. Comments: Excellent photography and use of natural sound to bring the story to life. Reporter clearly demonstrated the difficulties of life in Hooper Bay and the need for economic development.

No second or third.

#### BEST TELEVISION FEATURE

Judge: Deborah Horne, KIRO 7 News, Seattle

1st: “Jack’s Perfect World,” reporter Rebecca Palsha and photographer Scott Jensen, KTUU. Comments: Beautifully photographed, very well told story with an incredible surprise! Good job.

2nd: “Peter’s Creek Flooding,” reporter Jason Moore and photographer Scott Jensen, KTUU. Comments:  
Nicely photographed.

3rd: “I Need a Home,” reporter Angela Unruh and photographer Scott Jensen, KTUU.

#### BEST ARTS COVERAGE

Judge: Deborah Horne, KIRO 7 News, Seattle

No awards given.

## ONGOING PUBLIC AFFAIRS PROGRAM

No entries.

### BEST SPORTS STORY

Judge: Gary Horcher, KIRO 7 News, Seattle

1st: "The Sourdoughs." Comments: Covering a triathlon poses so many challenges of time and manpower. Subjects are moving fast, and they're exhausted. Usually, that combination means viewers at home don't get to see feel and hear what motivates a competitor. From beginning to end, this compelling story presented the athlete's essence. The determination, the bravery, and the strategy of a triathlete was explained through brief glimpses into their personalities. Every single one of them was a never-say-die character, and the reporter/photographers captured their spirit beautifully. The stand-up was one of the best I've ever seen in a sports story. (I had to watch it several times to make sure it wasn't staged.) This piece clearly took a hell of a lot of work, and every edit and word was worth it.

2nd: "Aniak Halfbreeds," Kevin Wells, Eric Sowl, KTUU. Comments: This piece was so well shot and edited, and the thoughtful writing was very crisp and entertaining. Great use of nat sound. This story wraps a viewer in the pride and spirit of a small town, determined to keep their controversial team name. It was a lot of fun to watch.

3rd: "Number One with a Bullet," Kevin Wells, Heather Moore. Comments: Well written, shot and edited. An interesting examination of the personalities behind a very obscure sport.

### BEST PROFILE

Judge: Gary Horcher, KIRO 7 News, Seattle

1st: "One Man Mission," Angela Unruh-Reporter, Kyle Stalder-Photographer, KTUU. Comments: The story of Mao Tosi seems right out of a Hollywood script..But the reporter and photographer took careful, measured steps to show the viewer a powerful and tragic example of the type of people Tosi is trying to save. A breathtaking story told in a way that lets the subject's unforgettable character really grow on the viewer. Well shot, and edited. The golden moment was discovering how a coach's small act of kindness saved a man who could in turn save thousands more. I wanted to clap when it was over. Great story.

2nd: "Andrew Halcro Profile," Bill McAllister, KTUU. Comments: So well presented. The writing and editing captured the sharp and clever persona of this candidate. It was well-written as a serious examination of this man's wit and style, and yet, I laughed out loud at Halcro's humor. The use of sound and

images here were very effective. After seeing this piece twice, I wondered how the candidate lost the election.

3rd: "Murkowski Exit Interview," Bill McAllister, KTUU. Comments: McAllister not only delivered a great examination of this former Governor, but he showed off some great interview skills. This character is clearly used to intimidating people, and probably reporters, but this reporter stood his ground, and the result was enlightening. Well written.

#### BEST EDITING

Judges: Eric Kehe and the award-winning photographers at KUSA 9 NEWS, Denver

No awards given.

#### BEST FEATURE PHOTOGRAPHY

Judges: Eric Kehe and the award-winning photographers at KUSA 9 NEWS, Denver

1st: "Springing Spring," by Bradley Hillwig.

No second or third.

#### BEST SPOT NEWS PHOTOGRAPHY

Judges: Eric Kehe and the award-winning photographers at KUSA 9 NEWS, Denver

1st: "An Unfolding Disaster," Scott Jensen, KTUU.

No second or third.

#### SPORTS PHOTOGRAPHY

No entries.

#### BEST DAILY NEWS CAST (TV)

Judge: Tim Ryan, Assistant News Director, KUSA TV Denver  
President of the Heartland Chapter of the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences (NATAS), the organization responsible for the presentation of regional Emmy awards for excellence in television.

1st: KTUU Channel 2 Late Edition. Comments: Thorough spot news coverage, lots of different places, especially the October newscast with the flooding in Seward and Valdez. Nice use of maps to tell that story. Good job!

2nd: KTUU, Channel 2 NewsHour

No third.

## **ALL MEDIA**

### **BEST ALASKA OUTDOORS STORY**

Judge: Mark Larabee, outdoors reporter, The Oregonian

1st: Kevin Klott, Anchorage Daily News, “Hard-working Halibut Slayer.”

Comments: Mr. Klott did a nice job with this story. I thought it was a well-rounded profile of an interesting boat captain, a woman who certainly illustrates the hearty spirit of the Alaskan people. Mr. Klott showed well-honed observation and writing skills throughout the piece. By far the best of the lot. No second or third.

### **BEST ALASKA HISTORY STORY**

Judge: Fairbanks-born Stanton Patty “retired” from The Seattle Times in 1988 after thirty-four years as a regional reporter, editor and travel writer. In 2004 he authored “Fearless Men and Fabulous Women: A Reporter’s Memoir from Alaska & the Yukon,” and continues to freelance as a writer and photographer.

1st: “Chitina Curse,” by Ellen Lockyer, Alaska Public Radio Network.

Comments: A compelling story. Smooth blending of legends, history and modern interviews.

2nd: “Chair with a Story,” by Debra McKinney, Anchorage Daily News.

Comments: What might have been a routine story became a solid, well-researched feature in the hands of a talented reporter.

3rd: “Z.J.’s Legacy: Love of literature,” by Mike Dunham, Anchorage Daily News. Comments: Excellent work. This entry almost won second place.

## **HUMOR**

Judge: Steve Mirsky is the wit behind Scientific American’s “Anti Gravity” column and host of the magazine’s podcast.

1st: “Brokeback Troller--Crabbait Radio,” by Matt Lichtenstein, KFSK Public Radio, (I think I chose this same team last year for first.)

2nd: Smattering of Pattering Leaves Audience Laughing Critic Nattering,” by Mike Dunham, Anchorage Daily News.

3rd: “Lawyers Work Their Magic,” by Drew Herman, Kodiak Daily Mirror.

General comments: Seemed like far fewer entries than last year. And many people enter material as humor that is straight reporting of something offbeat. There’s got to be something in the writing/broadcast that’s just plain funny! Well, made it easier to judge, anyway.

## **INVESTIGATIVE REPORTING**

Judge: Bob Drogin, National security reporter for the Los Angeles Times;

former IRE board member and winner of the Pulitzer Prize, the Robert F. Kennedy award and the Polk Award.

1st: “Legislators and Conflicts of Interest,” Kizzia, Demer, Mauer, Ruskin, Hopkins, Anchorage Daily News. Comments: The FBI raid on legislative offices last fall marked a dark moment in Alaskan history. Senior elected officials were under investigation for suspected conflicts of interest, influence peddling and corruption. But much of the case was old news to readers of the Daily News. The paper already had been digging into this story for more than a year. They reported on Senate President Ben Stevens and his failure to report \$70,000 a year in cash and stock from Semco Energy, as well as his work for commercial fishing companies and oilfield services contractor Veco. Three months after the searches, Rep. Tom Anderson was indicted. Once again, the Daily News was ahead of the story, laying out his dual role as a legislator and a lobbyist. The reporting throughout is clear, solid and timely.

2nd: “Nonprofit Funding in Question,” Rod Boyce and Sam Bishop, Fairbanks Daily News Miner. Comments: Another FBI investigation, this time in Fairbanks, focused on former mayor and pastor Jim Hayes. But long before the feds arrived, Rod Boyce and Sam Bishop were filing requests under the Freedom of Information Act to obtain records from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development, the Department of Justice, the Internal Revenue Service, as well as state and city files, to investigate the operations of a non-profit social services organization founded by Hayes and his family. They ultimately tracked the apparent misuse of nearly \$3 million in federal funds. Their stories in early 2006 laid out a scheme that federal investigators later confirmed.

3rd: “Land Deal Opens SeaLife Center, Seward Rift,” Tom Kizzia, Anchorage Daily News. Comments: This lengthy story details how a powerful politician diverted federal funds to help a friend with a lucrative land deal. In this case, Sen. Ted Stevens diverted \$1.6 million that was slated for the city of Seward to instead go to the Alaska SeaLife Center. Sealife then spent \$558,000 to buy a derelict waterfront structure that was filled with asbestos and had an appraised value of only \$94,000. The co-owner was Steven’s former legislative aide, Trevor McCabe. Kizzia’s hard-edged reporting shines a bright light into a dubious land deal.

#### BEST MEDIA WEBSITE

Judge: Frank Bass, author of *The AP Guide to Internet Research and Reporting*, is a member of the AP’s special projects team. While at the *Montgomery Journal of Commerce*, he won a Pulitzer Prize for stories exploring causes of infant mortality in Alabama.

1st: “Voices Project,” Haines (<http://www.voicesproject.org>). Comments: Far and away the best mix of journalism, community service and multimedia in the field. A terrific contribution and something larger markets would do very well to emulate.

2nd: “The Trail,” Anchorage Daily News (<http://www.adn.com/thetrail>). Comments: Amusing, well-written—the hopeful future of campaign journalism. A reminder that political blogs don’t have to be loud, obnoxious and polarizing.

3rd: KTUU-TV (<http://www.ktuu.com>). Nice mix of current video, print; weekend updating gets bonus points. Content is very good, although site loses points for jumbled design.

#### PUBLIC SERVICE AWARD

Judge: Gary Cohn, reporter Los Angeles Times, adjunct professor USC Annenberg School of Journalism, former Atwood Professor, University of Alaska, Anchorage. 1998 Pulitzer Prize winner.

Comments: I have decided to award two winners this year in the Public Service Category. I believe that each of these two entries is extraordinary public service journalism that deserves to be recognized and rewarded. The two entries, one print, one broadcast, involved terrific reporting and storytelling and the marshaling of resources above and beyond what is expected.

It is my privilege to award the Public Service Award to (in alphabetic order) Libby Casey and radio station KUAC for “Remembering the Fallen” and Margaret Friedenauer and the Fairbanks News Miner for reporting from Iraq.

In 2006, the Iraq war had a huge impact on the country—and on Fairbanks, Alaska. Each of these entries performed a big public service for listeners and readers in Alaska.

In a series of touching portraits, reporter Libby Casey of KUAC vividly and sadly told us the stories of local servicemen killed in Iraq, breathing life into the names of those killed in action and bringing home the sad local consequences of a war being fought far away. In her reports, Libby Casey made readers care about the local people fighting the war and connected local listeners with the world.

In two outstanding reporting stints in Iraq, reporter Margaret Friedenauer of the Fairbanks Daily News-Miner gave Fairbanks, a town that sent 10 percent of its population to Iraq, a firsthand, on-the-ground view of the war and what it

means to be deployed to a war zone, while embedded with the 172nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team. Margaret showed extraordinary courage and resourcefulness in reporting from Iraq, taking her own photographs and filing stories daily while also keeping a Web log of short stories and observations. At a time when many larger news organizations have been cutting back on foreign and war correspondents, managing editor Kelly Bostian and the paper's executives sent Margaret across the world twice to tell this story that is so important to Fairbanks residents.

Margaret Friedenauer and Libby Casey and their news organizations represent the best in public service journalism today, not just in Alaska but nationally. Congratulations to both of them on their awards.