

Judges' results 2008 contest March 28, 2009

PRINT

Category 1, Best Breaking News

Large

First place: Lisa Demer, "Heaven's doorstep, James Nasti place in grave atop continent's tallest peak," Anchorage Daily News.

Demer showed that a good reporter can cover any subject at any time. This piece demonstrated thorough reporting, with crucial interviews, graphics, photos and context for a unique stranger visiting Alaska's Mount McKinley. Demer's reporting included interviews with a family member, who gave details about Nasti's professional, personal and recreational life; web reports from Alpine that gave insight about the trip; and interviews and records from the park service and rangers who gave historical and trip context. A good example of using all available resources to give a complete story. (The contest entry note also helped to show why this was a strong entry.) □

Second place: Mike Nesper, "Gunman kills 1, wounds 1 at CPH," Peninsula Clarion. Nesper's reporting captured the drama and the details of this hospital shooting. The □ details of guns used in the shooting, precise times of deaths and coinciding events, and witness interviews allowed readers to be right there.

Third place: George Bryson, "The Mystery of Flight 4422," Anchorage Daily News. Bryson's writing approach to this piece made this a winner. This piece was a refreshing alternative to the basic pyramid style. On a Saturday when readers presumably have a little more time and probably reports on the evening news, Bryson gave them a treat—a story that mixed history, mystery and science. And, while dialogue and quotes were missing and missed, Bryson gave a gem of a walk-off with the raw, maybe tasteless humor from an Irish relative who gave legal custody of the remains of his "second cousin twice removed" to the U.S.

Small

First place: Sean Pearson, "Homer man charged in shooting death," Homer Tribune. With the paper ready to go to press, Pearson provided a complete story and photographs on a story that likely was the talk of the town. Without the help of police interviews, Pearson found the documents that told the story—maybe more than police would have offered—and scrambled to court in time to capture pictures and the bail news. Pearson showed the importance of knowing where to find information in absence of a person to quote. Good hustle! □

Second place: Shannon Haugland, "Knife Attack Leaves Four Dead in Sitka," Daily Sitka Sentinel.

A telephone tip to the newsroom sprang reporter Haugland and photographer James Poulson into action. Within two hours, Haugland pulled together an accurate story that identified the suspect and reported the gravity of the situation—four people dead. Good hustle.

Third place: Rob Stapleton, "Alaska villages run out of heating fuel," Alaska Journal of Commerce.

Stapleton took a business story and put a human face on it. The human side: Without fuel, families were suffering and moving from their homes. The business side: The high costs and logistical difficulties of resupplying villages with fuel. His reporting gave solid numbers and perspective. Stapleton reminds us that not all breaking news is death and mayhem and that business arena can have devastating effects on community.

Judge: Carla Kimbrough teaches journalism at University of Nebraska-Lincoln. She was a longtime reporter at the Denver Post.

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Category 2, Best general news

Large

First place: George Bryson and Richard Mauer, "Nation examines Palin's beliefs," Anchorage Daily News.

The reporters overcame a lack of access to Gov. Sarah Palin to provide a detailed and comprehensive look at how Palin's approach to faith has evolved over time. The reporters examined both the churches she has attended and her actions as governor—ostensibly staying above the fray as an elected official but appointing a member of her church who plunged into issues perhaps too controversial for a governor.

Second place: James Halpin, "Rock Bottom," Anchorage Daily News.

Good reporters find details that capture readers' attention. Here's one from James Halpin's look at surging opiate use in Anchorage: "Since March the only way to get into Anchorage's only methadone program is to be pregnant," Halpin wrote. Halpin built his story around a solid factual base of indicators of increased drug abuse but by finding a pregnant addict and getting her to pose for the paper's front page, he brought a story we've all read before to life.

Third place: Mary Pemberton, "Alaska Fishing Danger," Associated Press.

When the Alaska Ranger fishing boat sank, killing five, the AP's Mary Pemberton did readers a service by looking at the numbers behind what has been portrayed with great drama as an extremely dangerous occupation. Pemberton's story is refreshingly counter-intuitive: yes fishing in Alaska is dangerous, but far less than it used to be. Her findings may be bad for reality TV-show ratings but with a few well chosen statistics—deaths are a third of the annual totals in the 1980s—and illuminating quotes such as "you can't make money in bad weather"—she shed some light on an industry long on myth.

Small

First place: Naomi Klouda, "Seldovia Youth Out of Control," Homer Tribune.

Klouda connected the dots between a tragic spring break death and the mysterious suspension of the local police chief. Her authoritative explanation of how and why Seldovia came to be in its predicament clarified what must have been a confusing situation. Klouda's story illustrates the value that a well-sourced reporter can have in a small town.

Second place: Shannon Haugland, "Tidebook Has Errors in Some Listed Times," Daily Sitka Sentinel.

In this deceptively simple story, Haugland achieved one of the central goals of journalism: having an immediate, positive impact on readers' lives. Responding to a reader's tip, she confirmed an error in tide tables that could have affected local residents' safety and livelihoods, determined the cause of the error and corrected it. Her story is service journalism at its finest.

Third place: Rob Stapleton, "Cordova Out in the Cold," Alaska Journal of Commerce.

Stapleton addressed an issue many other reporters covered in 2008—the impact of high oil prices—but he did it better. His look at Cordova residents struggle to heat their homes draws on the context of a declining herring fishery post-Exxon Valdez, weaves in solid examples and quotes and brings a routine story alive with detail, such as what fisherman Steve Smith orders to eat—a bowl of pickled octopus.

Judge: Nigel Jaquiss won the Pulitzer Prize for his work at Willamette Week in Portland, Ore.

Category 3, Best Use of Story and Photos by a Journalist

Large

First place: Roy Corral, "People of the salmon," First Alaskans Magazine

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This might be a yearly story, but the photos are beautifully done, the story short and sweet. The package does well creating a sense of place, sense of identity and a strong sense of the tradition.

Second place: Ashley Smith, "Back Country Paradise at Hatchers Pass," The Northern Light. Great sports action photos, simple and clean, that illustrate the story well. Needed more visual variety, for instance a better overall of the scene and a tight face shot.

Third place: Tamar Ben-Yosef, "A family affair," First Alaskans Magazine.

Dog photos are very nice, but could use more of the family and their interaction with each other and the dogs.

Small

First place: Joseph Robertia, "Above the herd," Peninsula Clarion.

Great potential for the story with dogs full of character. A slice of life often overlooked. Photos tell a story, but better crops might strengthen photos.

Second place: McKibben Jackinsky, "Take a hike," Homer News.

Nicely composed photos that illustrate the story well with a variety of subject matter.

Third place: Clark Fair, "Tiny But Tough," Redoubt Reporter.

A nice variety of wide and up close photos, but could use more variety in content. All photos are action, might be nice to see player interaction or preparation, just a little something off the field.

Judge: Dinah Rogers is the assistant photo editor at the New Orleans Picayune.

Category 4, Best Short Feature

Large

First place: Rachel O'Oro, "Ghost Village," Associated Press.

Really excellent news feature. I like the family lore, the island lore and the description of the mask. It was evocative, but not over the top.

Second place: Tom Kizzia, "Pilgrim Dies in Jail, Unrepentant and Alone," Anchorage Daily News.

Compassionate and yet very clear-eyed about the reality of this man's crazy messianic life. I'm glad you included the redemption of his family.

Third place: Debra McKinney, "At Tom's Septic, the job smells like money," Anchorage Daily News.

I kept thinking this would be too long for the topic, but your witty, light touch kept it, um, going. Even with all the punny stuff, you worked in the business context, so it wasn't just a silly story about the perils of poo. Good job.

Small

First place: Katie Spielberger, Capital City Weekly

"A Raven Named Blueberry" -- I really enjoyed all of your entries, but picked this one because it was a nice mash up of fun, community, ecology and business. Nice light touch and good story selection. (You seem to pick excellent topics!)

Second place: Victoria Barber, "A rare Attu basket takes the long way home," Dutch Harbor Fisherman.

Love this story. Elegantly written — like the basket — and really compelling.

Third place: Naomi Klouda, "The enduring power of fireweed," Homer Tribune.

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Beautifully written and evocative. I wonder if it would have been good to say the botanical name, or show a picture of the plant in bloom. I wanted more so I would know what to look for if I visited Alaska in fall!

Judge: Dana Coffield is the features editor at The Denver Post.

Category 5, Best Long Feature

First place: Julia O'Malley, "Old Ways, New Ways," Anchorage Daily News.

This story was the clear winner in a competitive field. The reporter creates characters with the skill of a novelist while also doing solid reporting on the conflicting values of Western medicine and traditional Hmong beliefs about healing. Beautiful writing and great scene-setting - so much showing rather than telling - and it's clear the reporter spent a great deal of time with the family.

Second place: Mary Beth Smetzer, "Kylie's World," Fairbanks Daily News-Miner.

An intriguing description of the bond between an autistic child and a service dog. Great introduction with the two meeting at the airport and nice work following them over three months and observing changes in the little girl.

Third place: Scott Christianson, "Dog Gone," Anchorage Press.

This piece was so difficult and gut-wrenching to read but effectively puts a face and a story on one of the many dog poisonings that regularly occur around the country. The first-person storytelling about Toby the dog is intimate, raw and leaves a lasting impression on the reader.

Judge: Stephanie Innes is the Arizona Daily Star medical reporter. She has won regional and national awards for her reporting.

Category 6, Best Magazine Feature

First place: Mike Peters, "On Board," First Alaskans.

A profile of the young Olympic-hopeful snowboarder Callan Chythlook-Sifsof. This story does what a good profile is supposed to do: it opens a window not only on a talented teenager, but on a family and a way of life that is pure Alaskan. The way a traditional fishing family has rallied to help a talented athlete pursue her dreams is nothing short of inspiring.

Second place: Alaska Life Publishing LLC, "Trash the Dress"

A whimsical service feature for brides on how they can create memorable post-wedding photos by "trashing" their gown in rivers, mud, and other wilderness settings. The whimsical tone of the article perfectly matches the energetic photo spread to create a package that surprises readers and leaves them grinning. This is the sort of feature readers are sure to share.

Third place: Justin Matley, "Welcome to the Wet Dog," Coast Magazine.

On a planned 2,000-mile ocean race aboard personal watercraft. An unusual topic with a strong central character. While it is clear from the story that the race might not happen, and John Lang's personality could have come through a bit stronger, it was still an engaging read; a follow-up when (if) the race actually takes place would be marvelous.

Judge: Michael Ray Taylor is a professor of communication at Henderson State University and the Magazine Division Chair of College Media Advisers. He has written for Sports Illustrated, National Geographic Traveler and many other magazines.

Category 7, the Vern McCorkle Award for Best Business Reporting Large

First place. Pat Forgey, "Losing Power," the Juneau Empire.

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This story detailing the near comical problems of the city's energy provider is loaded with deep reporting highlighting incredibly bad business practices. This company invested bond proceeds meant for construction in mortgage backed securities, relied on transmission lines built in a landslide zone and diesel generators to help power Alaska's capital city when the landslides wiped out a connection to the city's primary power source. All of this was told in clear writing that was easily understandable, yet did not pander to the reader.

Second place. Zaz Hollander, "Scandal Shadows Mat-Su Gas Entrepreneur," the Anchorage Daily News.

This story of local-man returns home and makes good lifted up the covers of the story and found the entrepreneur had a past no one would be proud to show off. Using extensive research into lawsuits, bankruptcies and an off-shore bank, the reporter told a story of questionable business practices in California, Washington and the Caribbean island of St. Vincent. The result is an engaging story highlighting the past troubles of an entrepreneur preparing to dig into coal-bed methane in Alaska, a new industry that will need extensive financing and business acumen to succeed.

Third place. (tie) George Bryson, "Energy Hunt Heats Up," the Anchorage Daily News.

In a state seemingly awash in oil and natural gas, this reporter tells the story of growing interest by international firms in Alaska's potential for geothermal power. In clear, well-ordered writing, the reporter tells the costs, the benefits and the pitfalls of what could be an ironic industry in oil rich Alaska. Even though there is only one successful geothermal project in the state, the story tells of enormous potential for hot water to ward of Arctic chill.

Third place (tie) Yereth Rosen, "Despite Alaska's Challenges, New Farmers Take Root," The Christian Science Monitor.

Another example of a counter-intuitive business story taking the reader for an interesting look at the unique challenges of agriculture in the 49th state. The reporter tells the story of the demise of a Depression-era dairy and neatly fits the loss into the challenges in growing local food for Alaskans. Well researched with compelling writing, the story details challenges to agriculture ranging from a lack of farm workers to short growing seasons and transportation problems.

Overall, the judging was difficult in the end, winnowing down from six finalists to the required three. If I saw a theme this year it was on energy topics, with a variety of stories highlighting the ironies of high fuel prices in a state known for its oil reserves to the promise of geothermal to the documenting of potential crimes and scandals among energy producers. Stories ran from quirky analysis of the riches of small town journalism to the perils of certain types of heaters used in a state where cold knows no bounds. Alaska is well served by a variety of talented financial writers.

Judge: Peter Sleeth worked at seven newspapers in a 25-year career, most recently at The Oregonian. He served as the lead reporter on the saga of the Kim Family lost in the Oregon wilderness, which won the 2007 Pulitzer Prize for Breaking News. He is writing a book.

Small

First place. Mary Lochner, "Growing Energy Demands, A Cold Reality for Manokotak" Bristol Bay Times. Back in the summer, when it was easy to be distracted by other topics, Lochner sounded an alarm about an energy crunch hitting a Bush village. She documented two significant problems – a lack of storage for gasoline and a lack of cash to fully fill village fuel oil storage tanks for heating (a problem that would become a much bigger issue in Bush Alaska later in the year as the cold weather hit).

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Second place. Margaret Bauman, "Alaska Salmon treats back up yummy sales," Alaska Journal of Commerce.

Everyone talks about how to diversify the Alaska economy, Margaret Bauman offers an intriguing and informative look at one entrepreneur who set out to turn excess salmon into a special treat for dogs called. "Yummy Chummies." In doing so, she offers broader insights into both challenges involved in launching a new product from Alaska, and how state officials can help make these ventures successful.

Third place. (Tie)

M.A. Mullins, "Delta Promised Federal Lodging Allowance Raise" The Delta Vanguard. This is a good example of a reporter at a small publication taking it upon themselves to dig into an issue that has big ramifications for their community. This reporter did a thorough job of documenting the inequities of the federal per diem system both in print and in sidebar charts. The reporter also made clear why this matters to readers.

Craig Giammona, "Sitka Fuel Prices Stuck At High Level," The Sitka Sentinel.

By examining the big differential between the costs of gasoline at an established gasoline supplier and a newcomer in town, Giammona offers us fresh insights into the often perplexing pricing of this vital commodity. Giammona does his own investigation—and by spotlighting the forces at work performs a significant public service to his community.

Judge: Hal Bernton, reporter for The Seattle Times and former Oregonian and Anchorage Daily News staff reporter. His work has won regional and national awards including serving on the Daily News team that shared in the 1989 Pulitzer Prize for Public Service.

Category 8, Best Government or Political Reporting

Large

First place: Sean Cockerman and Erika Bolstad, "When Young needs help, he turns to his friends: lobbyists," Anchorage Daily News.

This is a balanced tale of the influence and access that lobbyists have to U.S. Rep. Don Young. The public needs to know about the ties to understand the workings of Congress. Cockerman and Bolstad did a thorough job of explaining Young's relationships and then letting the readers decide the level of importance and influence those relationships carried. A model that many other newspapers can follow.

Second place: Sean Cockerman, "Capital shift?," Anchorage Daily News. Cockerman lays out how Gov. Palin has virtually created a new state capital by operating her offices and allowing most of her commissioners to operate from Anchorage, Alaska's business and population center. Identifying this shift shows the public how a governor, the first in state history and with hardly any debate, can move state government even when voters have opposed moving the seat 10 times in the last 47 years.

Third place: Pat Forgey, "Nation's image of Palin differs from Alaskans," Juneau Empire. In a presidential election that features the state's own governor, Forgey strikes the delicate balance of reporting and writing about the differences between the outsiders' view and the up-close view of the GOP candidate for vice president. Then Forgey takes it one step further by describing the truth of it all. Finally, Forgey presents the story within day's of Gov. Palin's selection as running mate for John McCain and probably captures the thoughts of Alaskans who were scratching their heads about outsiders' comments about Palin. A must-do story handled well.

Small

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First place: Victoria Barber, "Local 302 employees in a sick-out," The Dutch Harbor Fisherman.

Barber provided a balanced report of negotiation difficulties between the city and union workers. While union representatives weren't available by press time, Barber used her reporting notebook filled with information from a previous interview with a union leader and a current interview with a union member to provide one side of the story and a letter to the editor and a current interview with the city manager to provide the other side of the story. Barber captured the city manager's surprise and challenged the increases he received in comparison to the union workers. She also included the details of the sick-out, with how many people reported where and how the city remained in operation. Fair and solid.

Second place: Jenny Neyman, "Sign of the times?" The Redoubt Reporter.

Neyman interviewed both real people and candidates to write a "normal" campaign story about campaign sign thefts. What made this interesting were details about signs being "shot, stabbed, shredded by razors, graffitied and burned,"—who knew you could do all that to a campaign sign?— and then the extra details about the actual costs of signs - from \$350 to \$1,134. Neyman also took pains to make sure her reporting included candidates from both sides and several races. Good job of giving a fresh look at a usual political campaign story.

Third place: Sarah Anne Carter, "Faith amid the war zone," Catholic Anchor.

Nice job with the lede: "God can be hard to locate in a war zone—especially if you're in the Army." This story might be considered on the edge of government reporting, but the military is part of the government. The difficulties of practicing one's faith in a war zone is a rare topic that gives yet another side to the toll of war on the human life - spirituality. Some general circulation papers avoid or rarely tackle the topic of spirituality and religion, so seeing this story anywhere expanded the view of soldiers' lives in the war zone and the many sacrifices they make even beyond being in harm's way daily and being away from family. □

Judge: Carla Kimbrough (see Category 1).

Category 9, Best Education Reporting

Large

First place: Yereth Rosen, "How Schools Use the Iditarod as an instructional tool," The Christian Science Monitor.

Yereth Rosen did a masterful job of sketching the excitement of the Iditarod as viewed through the eyes of some creative teachers. These were lucky students, indeed, to be part of some real-world learning that was fun and subtly educational at the same time.

Second place. Megan Holland, "Second Chances" in Anchorage Daily News.

Megan Holland captured the spirit of Janice Strickland's "Stand and Deliver" methods in her classes, reaching out to students who were facing extraordinary challenges. Strickland deserves a huge bouquet and plenty of extra pay from the school board, and Holland deserves to be recognized as a fine reporter who translated many rough-hewn classroom experiments for readers of the News.

Third place. Dante Petri, "Party to Politics" in the Peninsula Clarion.

Dante Petri must be recognized for taking the time to account for good work being done in Soldotna Middle School by teachers made a learning experience out of a historic election.

Small

First place. Brielle Schaeffer "Single Sex Classes at Junior High Revisited," the Valdez Star.

Brielle Schaeffer found some innovators at Gibson High School and used them to tell about the

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different learning styles of boys and girls and how one school is making use of resources to reach students. This is making the most of a first-class feature situation.

Second place. McKibben Jackinsky, "Jakalof Bay: An open (text) book," the Homer News. McKibben Jackinsky found a natural story in Jakalof Bay and went right after it. He took the time to pick up the flavor and value of a master teacher's work.

Third place. Andrew Cremata for "Finding HOpe amidst fear," the Skagway News.

Andrew Cremata sleuthed out a slice of history that most people don't know by keeping his eyes and ears open at Skagway High. The lucky readers of Skagway found out something of the cost of H-bomb testing in the Marshall Islands due to Cremata's good work.

Judge: Dean Baker has covered local, state and federal government issues in Montana, California, Germany, Oregon, and Washington state for the Eugene Register-Guard, The Oregonian, Salem Times, Vancouver Columbian, and other newspapers and magazines.

Category 10, Best profile

Large

First Place: Julia O'Malley, "Homeless Families Have a Streetwise Mom," Anchorage Daily News

Lively portrait of a hands-on advocate for the homeless, distinguished by the reporter's willingness to follow her subject, to show her in action and on the scene, doing what she does.

O'Malley pulls off what every college creative writing teacher preaches: Show, Don't Tell.

Second Place: Brendan Joel Kelley, "Your Ad Here," Anchorage Press.

Gracefully-written picture of an eccentric, soft-hearted pugilist and organ donor.

Third Place: Lisa Demer, "Chugach Visionary," Anchorage Daily News.

Descriptive story that lets the reader tag along as a national forest supervisor shows off the landscape he can never see.

Small

First Place: Sean Pearson, "Kate's Gift of Life," Homer Tribune.

Well-reported and deftly-written dual profile of a college student who died too young and the man to whom she literally gave her heart.

Second Place: Darrell L. Breese, "Area resident spreads love for sled dog racing," Alaska Star. Terrible headline but well-done profile of a racing teacher, showing him coaching a five-year-old musher.

Third Place: Katie Spielberger, "The Real Santa Claus," Capital City Weekly.

Lots of anecdotes, description and specifics; what could have been a sappy story sings.

Judge: Paula Span is a journalism professor at Columbia School of Journalism in New York and a contributing writer to the Washington Post.

Category 11, Best environmental reporting*

First place: Krestia DeGeorge, "Arctic Doubts," Anchorage Press.

A well-written long story that reads short, this look at the likely effects of the gargantuan oil and gas leases in the Beaufort and Chukchi seas offered readers a meaty take on an important issue.

Second place: Elizabeth Bluemink, "Toxic Nightmare," Anchorage Daily News

This look at the non-cleanup of old military dumps endangered by erosion could have been improved by wider sourcing and a visit to at least one of the sites, with some description.

Third place: Yereth Rosen, "In Oil-rich Alaska, An Energy Crunch," Christian Science

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Monitor.

It is well researched and it's a tad surprising that an energy-rich state like Alaska could find itself short of a crucial form of energy.

Honorable mention: Kate Golden, "Dirty Old Mines," Juneau Empire.

This was a solid look at a widespread and significant environmental problem.

Judge: Robert McClure covers the environment for the Seattle Post-Intelligencer.

**In this category, the judge considered large and small publications together, contrary to contest rules.*

Category 12, Best crime or court reporting

Large

First place: James Halpin, "Mom's Confession Complicates Case," Anchorage Daily News. Halpin shows that he can steer away from the easy cases to write about the tough ones that will make readers wonder what happens inside a courthouse. Well written and thoughtful.

Second place: Megan Holland, "Seeking Justice," the Anchorage Daily News.

Stories of victims, criminals and others in the criminal justice system coming to grips with what people do to one another are all too familiar. But Holland goes deep in her tale to find real emotions from real people, showing just how complex the courthouse can often be. Readers must have been touched.

Third Place: James Halpin, "Cold Case Warms Up," the Anchorage Daily News.

The story of Megan Emerick and serial killer Robert Hansen is chilling. Halpin does a fine job of bringing to full color a case that is 35 years old but still touches the community.

Small

First place: Naomi Klouda, "Seldovia Youth Out of Control," the Homer Tribune.

This story met several goals: telling readers about a growing crime problem and the longtime police chief's important role in the community—and how his absence was affecting crime. Well done.

Second place: Craig Giammona and Shannon Haugland, "Sitka Teen Charged With Four Murders," the Daily Sitka Sentinel.

A big deadline story that's well told by two able reporters. Good detail throughout the piece, and a sense of urgency in the writing, convey how important the story is to readers.

Third place: Patricia Coll Freeman, "Faith Shapes Lawyers Professional Work," the Catholic Anchor.

A story that goes beyond by-the-books reporting to give readers new insight into lawyers and the law.

Judge: Steve Mills is the Chicago Tribune criminal justice reporter.

Category 13, Best Reporting on Health or Science

Large

First place: Tom Kizzia, "Political Science," the Anchorage Daily News.

This is an interesting primer on the debate about whether polar bears belong on the threatened species list. The writer does a good job contrasting positions of the administration in Alaska with the interest groups outside the state. Most importantly, he shows why this debate matters. In the end, the story highlights the need for more conclusive data, which could bring an end to any debate on the subject.

Second place: Becky Stoppa, "An Unfair Struggle," the Anchorage Daily News.

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Good job finding a primary character that the reader can identify with in this story. Uninsured cancer patients are in a quandary in the U.S. health care system -- and this story shows that there are no easy answers,

Third place: George Bryson, "This doc sees everyone," the Anchorage Daily News

A nice peek inside a clinic that operates on an unusual model— treating patients with various ailments in group therapy. It's unexpected, and shows the value of listening and caring for a person's emotional needs as well as their physical needs.

Small

First place: Victoria Barber, "Technology brings clinic home," the Dutch Harbor Fisherman

This is a story that provides a real service for rural readers, introducing them to technology that allows health care providers to monitor their health remotely. The writer found a great personal example, too, where the ability to monitor a patient's health may have saved his life and almost certainly saved a costly evacuation and intensive hospital treatment.

Second place: Shannon Haugland, "ER duty puts stress on Sitka's doctors," the Daily Sitka Sentinel

This is an article that's sounding the alarm from the front lines of rural health care. The shortage of doctors in a local hospital is a vital community issue. This story provides a service by showing readers that someone needs to come up with a solution.

Third place: Naomi Klouda, "Rat Island no more?" the Homer Tribune

You had me at "Rat Island." This is the kind of creepy battle—a \$2 million battle to exterminate and infection of rats— that people will not only read, they'll talk about it. It's just too bad we have to wait two years to see if their efforts succeed.

Judge: Marshall Allen writes about health care for the Las Vegas Sun. In 2008, his body of work placed second among health care journalists nationally in the Association of Health Care Journalists beat reporting category.

Category 14

Suzan Nightingale Award for Best columnist

Large

First place: Drew Herman, "Out of the Loop," Kodiak Daily Mirror

There are a lot of alleged humor columns out there, but this is the real deal. Fast, nimble, vibrant writing, with startling imagery and rapid punchlines. And even a little education thrown in now and then — diabolical.

Second place: Michael Carey, "Selection of Columns," Anchorage Daily News

Clear, persuasive, compelling and seductively readable. It's good to see a sound argument made by someone who understands rhetoric and knows his audience.

Third place: Will Morrow, "Hanging out with Dad," "Another hands-on project," "What goes around ...," Peninsula Clarion

Beautifully crafted, with the kind of effortless charm that takes some effort to keep from cloying or triteness.

Small

First place: Jenny Neyman, "Business leap should have beter safety plan," "And now a word about our sponsors," "Shouldering the burden to lighten the load," Redoubt Reporter

Elegantly and energetically written, funny, smart, accessible and wise. You can feel the excitement and terror in the column about launching the paper, and you cheer for her. The profile of the cancer patient captures toughness and courage and never gets gooey — you have

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to love “embrace it head on, so she could get a good grip around its neck and beat the livin' snot out of it.”

Second place: McKibben Jackinsky, “Off the News Beat,” Homer News

Written with a real sense of rhythm and harmony. A likable everyperson voice that isn't afraid to appear foolish but maintains a sense of perspective and humanity.

Third place: Joel Davidson, “Boring and irrelevant?”, “Justice for all -- are we ready?”, “The Muslim and Me,” Catholic Anchor

A questing mind and a challenging, unpredictable thought process come through the writing, which is clear and engaging.

Judge: Samantha Bennett is president of the National Society of Newspaper Columnists. Her work has appeared in the Vancouver Sun, the Toronto Star, the Montreal Gazette and the Baltimore Sun.

Category 15, Best sports columnist

First place: Danny Martin, “Hey Sarah, are you dissin' us?” Fairbanks Daily News-Miner
Danny has a worldly perspective on sports attracting readers of all types while expanding the scope of a sports column for the average sports reader. He has the ability to retain readers interest while including traditional sports writing techniques into his articles.

Second place: Brad Cohen, “Root, root, root for the Cubbies. Or should you?” Ketchikan Daily News

Brad's articles keep me wanting more, especially the top article picked out. Used great metaphors and made the reader understand who the Cubs would be if they were a real person.

This writing has the ability to make someone who may not be into sports, interested in reading your articles.

Third place: Jeremiah Bartz, “Sundays with Aly,” Mat-Su Valley Frontiersman

Great storytelling! You are extremely descriptive, make it easy to read and follow along as if the reader is right there with you keeping us entertained the entire time.

Judge: Lewis Howes is the founder of www.sportsnetworker.com, where he writes about sports and the business of sports.

Category 16, Best sports news reporting

Large

First place: Joshua Armstrong, “Spaceman's Midnight Sun Game was absolutely one for the ages,” Fairbanks Daily News-Miner.

Bill Lee is one of the all-time characters in Major League Baseball history and it's good to know that all these years later, the 61-year hasn't changed. Joshua Armstrong captured “Spaceman's” eccentric personality with a vivid tale of his return to Alaska to pitch in the Midnight Sun Game. The author's descriptive writing of Lee's interaction with teammates and fans and the pitcher's off-beat quotes and successful outing on the mound despite a creaky-old body was every bit as colorful as his subject.

Second place: Danny Martin, “Barrow High School prepares for first postseason game,” Fairbanks Daily News-Miner.

What's it like to play the first high school football playoff game above the Arctic Circle? It's Oct. 4 and the coach is shoveling 18 inches of snow off the field in 20-degree weather as 3-foot waves from the nearby ocean create a fierce wind. The writer does a nice job of weaving in the frigid preparation for the game with a compelling look at the history of the school's three-year

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old program. The story is an eye-opener for anyone who appreciates the generosity of strangers and the perseverance of high school athletes and administrators.

Third place: Rachel D'Oro, "Urban sprawl, warming climate lead to change for Iditarod start," Associated Press.

A fascinating look at how climate changes in Alaska have forced changes in the world's most famous dogsled race. A nice explanatory piece that was tightly focused and written and full of descriptive reporting.

Small

First place: Diana Haecker, "Back to Mack attack," Nome Nugget

This is a game story that goes beyond the obvious. The author tells the inside story of how Lance Mackey really won the 2008 Iditarod. He fooled his top competitor into thinking he was stopping for rest, but instead drank some coffee and when he heard the snores of his challenger, took off with his dogs and won the race. Nicely crafted tale that was a fun read.

Second place: Klas Stolpe, "Beardslee steps down after building Viking up, up up ...," Petersburg Pilot.

A thorough look at a coach's decision to retire as cheerleading coach and the reaction from her team and followers.

Third place: Aaron Selbig, "Ski club working to preserve history, fun," Homer News
Volunteers take to the hills to repair the Ohlson Mountain Ski Facility. Colorful writing showed the fun and hard work everyone put in to get the Kenai Peninsula's only downhill skiing and snowboarding facility up and running for the season.

Judge: Glen Crevier is the assistant managing editor, sports, Minneapolis Star-Tribune.

Category 17, Best sports game/event reporting

First place: Sean Pearson, "Anglers turn to halibut eyeball-eating for luck," Homer Tribune

This was an entertaining event filled with a unique tradition. These stories don't come around very often, and Sean did an excellent job covering the sport and the story behind the sport.

Second place: Joshua Armstrong, "Cabin boy equals high kick record," Fairbanks Daily News-Miner

It was interesting to learn about a traditional Eskimo sport that I have never heard of. Joshua goes into detail about the sport itself, and also covers an interesting individual covering a compelling story. He breaks the mold from the traditional sporting events covered and for this reason it lands in the top three.

Third place: Matthew Carroll, "Seldovia takes 5th," Peninsula Clarion

The opening paragraph draws you in to want to read more. It's always interesting to hear about the successes from a team who is an underdog and who is not supposed to succeed. The story is interesting because it talks about the struggles it took to win the amount of games they did, and to hear about how there may not be another team for a few years is tough to take. It captures the human emotions and makes you motivated to see how you can help keep the team around for another year.

Judge: Lewis Howes (see Category 15).

Category 18, Best sports feature

Large

First place: Casey Grove, "Masters of disaster," The Anchorage Press

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A chilling look at sport of big mountain riding on Alyeska. Casey captured both the spirit of adventure and the inherent fear that snowboarders face. The lead—No one will die today— instantly grabs you. Read on and, soon enough, death is a big part of this competition.

Second place: Derek Clarkston, “Kodiak’s 12th man,” Kodiak Daily Mirror

Nice attempt at taking a chance by interviewing the last kid on the bench on the high school basketball team and discovering a sweet story. Derek captures the wonderful attitude of Chris Polum and his pure joy of just being a team member.

Third place: Joshua Armstrong, “McCabe earned his ‘C’ with Ice Dogs,” Fairbanks Daily News-Miner.

A nice portrait of perseverance by hockey player Andrew McCabe, who suffered from a severe broken ankle yet returned to become the captain of this year’s team.

Small

First place: Aaron Selbig, “Frozen Out,” Homer News

This is the story of the struggles faced by students from the Russian Old Believer village of Voznesenka who wish to continue their hockey careers in high school but are prohibited from doing so because of Alaska School Activities Association rules. The writer uses multiple sources to balance the hardships faced by the kids who want to play and school and association officials who are sympathetic yet hamstrung by administrative protocol.

Second place: Tom Hewitt, “New high-tech suits have swimmers feeling fast,” The Sun-Star

A fun, light-hearted story that looks at the difference—in their performance times and in their heads – the Nero high-tech swimsuit had for the UAF swim team. Strong, vivid quotes and anecdotes share with the readers the marvel the competitors felt donning, competing in and removing the suits.

Third place: Suzanna Caldwell, “Roller derby finds home in Rage City,” The Northern Light. Roller Derby is back, but not in the way we might remember it where body slams and pulling hair were common practice. While the Rage City Roller Girls compete in a much more refined game, there are still some commonalities to the old-style. The writer captures the essence of the new league with this line: “The total independent spirit of Alaska fits with this sport really well.”

Judge: Glen Crevier (see Category 16).

Category 19, Best arts coverage

First place: Krestia DeGeorge, “The Texture of Alaska,” □ Anchorage Press.

In his review of Bradford Washburn's pictures and the Anchorage Museum of History and Art, Krestia DeGeorge combined clear-eyed and intelligent perspective on the works with just the right amount of historical and background information. As a result, DeGeorge's readers were able to come to the Museum equipped with both her insight and a sense of the pictures' historical context--a Q.E.D. for the sort of service a good art review should offer. □

Second place: Kyle Hopkins, “Palin Strikes Right Chord for Songwriters,” Anchorage Daily News. □ No one could argue that Sarah Palin got too little ink in the most recent election, but Kyle Hopkins' approach to the well-beaten horse of the Alaska Governor's vice-presidential bid made a worthy addition to the coverage avalanche. Like Jimmy Breslin's piece on the gravedigger whose job it was to prepare the ground for JFK's interment in 1963, Hopkins' piece showed that old-fashioned reportorial diligence, combined with a little enterprise and imagination, can yield memorable approaches to the coverage of a shopworn subject.

Third place: Mike Dunham, “Haunting Photos Document Decay” Anchorage Daily News.

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Buildings have lives and histories, too. Mike Dunham's piece on Bonnie Landis's study of the abandoned Buckner Building in Whittier captured both the sadness and strangeness which studies of derelict sites so often convey, while performing one of the community services which newspapers have always performed best: making an entry in the historical record to mark the passages through which our cities and our civic lives pass. □

Judge: Mark Baechtel is the former arts editor at the Anchorage Daily News. He now works with Iowa Book Doctors.

Category 20, Best sustained coverage

Large

First Place: Megan Holland, "Troopergate," Anchorage Daily News

Megan Holland takes first place in the category of "best sustained coverage" for her work following the twists and turns of the Troopergate scandal. Holland's pieces placed each new development in the bizarre and sometimes confusing scandal in context. Her work was well sourced and compelling to read.

Second Place: The Associated Press, Gov. Sarah Palin's vice presidential run

The AP wins second place in the category of "best sustained coverage" for its work on the 2008 vice presidential campaign. The AP bureau's stories served an important function within the state. Reporters offered readers a glimpse into how Gov. Sarah Palin ran the state through the lens of the campaign trail. Kudos for its coverage of race issues.

Third Place: Yereth Rosen of The Christian Science Monitor

Third place in the category of "best sustained coverage" goes to Yereth Rosen for coverage of the 2008 campaign season. Rosen did an excellent job translating what it means to be an Alaska figure to a non-Alaska reader.

Small

First Place: Tyler Rhodes, "Rock Creek Mine Closure, The Nome Nugget.

First place in the category of "best sustained coverage" goes to Tyler Rhodes of *The Nome Nugget* for his standout work in covering the Rock Creek mine. Rhodes' pieces connected global problems to a local crisis, while putting a human face on the ongoing story. He also writes with style. Rhodes crafts a lede that sets the tone and direction of each piece and paces stories well. He also varies lengths as needed. The reporting was thorough and transparent.

Second Place: Michael Armstrong, McKibben Jackinsky, Aaron Selbig, "Presidential election coverage as seen in Homer," Homer News.

Second place in the category of "best sustained coverage" goes to the team of reporters from Homer News for their coverage of the 2008 presidential election. The team reported out the local news surrounding the epic race and localized national stories. The 2008 presidential race was "the story" of 2008 and Homer News made it its own.

Third Place: Michael Armstrong and McKibben Jackinsky, "Stories related to crash of Servant Air," Homer News.

Third place in the category of "best sustained coverage" goes to Michael Armstrong and McKibben Jackinsky of Homer News for their work in covering the tragic crash of the Servant Air flight that left five dead. The reporters covered the news thoroughly as well as the human-emotions surrounding the tragedy.

Judge: Laura McCann is the managing editor of the Washington Independent.

Category 21, Best series*

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First place: Stefan Milkowski, "Alaska's changing climate," Fairbanks Daily News-Miner. This series should be read by every American, not just every Alaskan. Milkowski shows us how global warming is affecting the land, water, animals and people of this earth. In addition to the science, the message hits home through such visual examples as the tired walrus. The series was well-written, well-reported, and presented in an engaging way. It's a service to readers, Alaska, and really, all of civilization. Great work!

Second place: Kim Marquis, "The Quiet Tragedy: Teen Suicide in Juneau," Juneau Empire. An excellent job of showing the pain of teen suicide through the voices of parents and friends. The other strength of this series is the focus on solutions – what is and can be done to prevent these tragic deaths.

Third place: Naomi Klouda and Sean Pearson, "Pebble mine series," Homer Tribune. This series attempts to arm voters with information before they go to the polls on an important ballot measure affecting the future of Alaska's economy and environment. It is difficult to sift through the spin, but the Homer Tribune tries to show readers what is at stake. The focus on environmental implications, as well as jobs, was enhanced by humanizing the issue.

Judge: David Cuillier, is a professor of journalism at the University of Arizona and is chair of SPJ's FOI committee.

**In this category, the judge considered large and small publications together, contrary to contest rules.*

Category 22, Best Headline

First Place: Tony Hall "Thinking inside the box," with the deck, "Cardboard City raises awareness, money for families who live with little," Anchorage Daily News.

I love it when a headline writer takes a well-known phrase, or even a cliché like "thinking outside the box," and turns it to his advantage. By turning that phrase inside-out, Tony wove the ideal headline for this story.

Second Place: Joshua Armstrong, "Good for your Ticker," with the deck, "Study connects 'falling back' to standard time with improvement in hearth health," the Fairbanks Daily News-Miner.

I must say, the photographer gets kudos, too, although I'm not a photo judge. But Joshua's hammer fits the photo like a hand in a glove, making in an irresistible combination.

Third Place: Jenny Neyman, "Blind sided," with the deck, "Flats duck hunters tangle with Parks over regulations," the Redoubt Reporter.

Impressive play on words in an extremely tight headline count — not to mention the bold type, which makes it even harder. These things count.

Honorable mentions:

Gary Black, "Palin rouses the base, one Joe-Six-pack at a time," the Fairbanks Daily News-Miner. Gary Black "GOP faces grand old politicking," Fairbanks Daily News-Miner. Quite a lot of entries by the talented Mr. Black. Joshua Armstrong, "Me Tube" with the deck, "To some psychiatric patients, reality television is their only reality," Fairbanks Daily News-Miner.

Judge: Ron Solomon has worked for newspapers for nearly 40 years. He is a copy editor at the Arizona Daily Star in Tucson.

Category 23, Best Editorial Cartoon

First place: Peter Dunlap Shohl, "A Heartbeat Away," "Mussed," "Fast Forward," Anchorage Daily News.

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Clear ideas, boldly presented in a unique, very loose, painterly art style. Wild, quirky caricatures. Effective use of color.

Second place: Roger L. Maynard, "Plumber," "Hired Guns," "Big Shoes," Fiddlestix Graphics. Good local commentary, clearly presented in a conventional but effective style. Decent use of visual metaphors, with uncluttered layouts and nice rendering in grayscale. (Background notes explaining the context of the cartoons was most helpful to this out-of-state judge.)

Third place: Tony Newman "Toe," "Juneau Avalanche," "Get to Know Sarah Palin," "Palin Returns," Juneau Empire.

Pointed commentary with a nice dose of humor. Straightforward, somewhat static layouts, a bit cluttered in places, are rendered in a simple line with effective use of solid blacks.

Judge: John Trever has been the editorial cartoonist at the Albuquerque Journal since 1976.

Among his awards are honors by the Society of Professional Journalists, the Free Press Association and the Overseas Press Club.

Category 24, Best Section

Large

First place: Play, Anchorage Daily News.

A very finely tuned section, obviously crafted with great precision and inspiration. A remarkable achievement of consistency and brilliance for a weekly newspaper section.

Second place: Life & Arts, Anchorage Daily News: Very elegant design with great use of photography.

Small

First place: Gretchen Weiss, Motion, The Northern Light.

Great attention to detail in this section. The orderly, structured feel showcases fun stories, good writing, dramatic photography and artful display headlines.

Second place: Alaska Star, Military section

This is highly tailored to its Eagle River readership, with its many retired and active military personnel. It's important coverage that is undoubtedly highly appreciated by readers.

Third place: Homer Tribune Weekender: Good photography that is played strongly.

Judge: Jim Springhetti is a longtime member of the Oregonian's award-winning presentations staff and a former Frontiersman editor.

Category 25, Best Weekly newspaper

First place: The Homer Tribune.

The Homer Trib clearly recognizes that newspapers are in a fight for their collective lives. The paper's staff seeks the conflicts in news—such as a controversial shoot-out at the Homer airport—and latches onto big issues such as the proposed Pebble Mine (Ballot Measure 4) and pursue them with an admirable mixture of skepticism and enterprise reporting.

Second place: The Homer News.

Nothing brings out the best in journalists like competition. In this year's entries, it's clear that the two weeklies going at each other in Homer elevate the work of both. Of all the entries, the News is the best designed. It also delivers deeply reported stories on local politics and crime that are buttressed with context, great quotes and an eye for detail that bespeaks strong editing.

Third place: The Anchorage Press.

Reflecting its identity as an alt-weekly, the Press delivers a smart, snarky take on state and local politics. Its continued focus on sex crimes in Anchorage and its strong cultural coverage are also

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services to its readers. This year's entries, however, suffered from questionable shot selection in cover stories.

Judge: Nigel Jaquiss (see Category 2).

Category 26, Best Illustration

First Place: Lukas Ketner, "Haiku You," Anchorage Press.

Festive, eye-catching illustration does well to draw attention to feature page event. Bright colors and active composition develop from vibrant drawing. Interesting blend of traditional Japanese and Alaskan imagery w modern extensions.

Second Place: Craig Updegrove, "Campus Media," The Northern Light.

Strong compositions relying entirely on flat blocks of black, white and a single middle gray does well on newspaper, effectively competing with art supported by color and texture.

Although the message isn't entirely clear on the radio spot, its obscurity seems to fit with student-run radio blurb

Third Place: Lukas Ketner, "Joker, Smoker, Midnight Broker," Anchorage Press.

Limited pallette adds drama. Comic book anti-hero references help to insinuate violence. Nice retro feel. Keen drawing skills effectively carry stagey drama of illustration.

Judge: Dan Zakroczemski is an illustrator at the Buffalo News. His work has been recognized by the Society for News Design.

Category 27, Best Page Layout and Design

First place: Krestia De George, "Fifty Years and Fifty Miles," Anchorage Press.

The designer balances photography and text across the spread in a way that reflects the subject matter well. Also, the use of drop cap and space below the main image shows a strong command of fundamentals.

Second place: Jill Homer, "Front Page, Election," Juneau Empire.

On a big day for election news, the designer blends photography, graphics and headlines in a manner that allows the reader to gradually take in the page while still receiving the full impact of the occasion.

Third place: Craig Updegrove. "How to survive your first semester," The Northern Light.

This designer understands the balance of illustration and art heads by effectively using the grid to balance text with fun elements. He also mirrors the design on the jump page in an effective way. Rather than using subheads on the jump in the usual manner, he elevates the looks to reflect the art head on the first page.

Judge: Adrian Johnson is a designer at the Cleveland Plain Dealer, where he designs features sections.

Category 28, Best Graphic

First place: Homer News Production Department, "Gas Prices on the Rise," Homer News
What set this entry apart from the others was simply the use of art. Leading a motorist along a path of varied gasoline prices is an interesting, eye-catching idea. And nicely constructed.

Second place: Craig Updegrove, "Charts," The Northern Light.

Nice use of color and easy to read. Could be vastly improved with art: album covers, artists, etc.

Third place: Gretchen Weiss, "Rent the Northland," The Northern Light

Handy graphic. Smart use of color.

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A few words of advice for all the entrants: I would advise them to be more prudent with the space they have available and really make art a priority.

Judge: Scott Griffin is an award-winning graphic artist at the Waterbury Republican-American in Connecticut.

Category 29, Best Magazine Cover

First place: Doug Demarest, Alaska Coast Magazine, "Kayak Halibut"

The type & graphics treatment is uniquely creative and well set along with an inviting cover.

Second place: Mike Peters, First Alaskans Magazine

The cover photo is sharp and the type usage is strong, clean and easy to navigate.

Third place: Alaska Life Publishing, "Alaskan Bride & Groom Magazine Cover"

The cover photo is very sharp. The cover type usage won out over the others not chosen.

Judge: Greg Epkes is a self-employed designer and illustrator in Portland, Ore. He is a former news designer at the Anchorage Daily News.

Category 30, Best Magazine Overall Design

First place: Alaska Home

Beautiful photography with inviting layouts. Type usage is clean and easy to navigate. Strong cover photo and inside photo spreads. The opening story spreads helped this one win over Alaska Coast although I felt it was close. I do feel the masthead was the only thing that weakened the overall design but not enough to hurt its ranking over the others.

Second place: Doug Demarest, Alaska Coast Magazine

I like the color and type treatment in this magazine. Type usage is clean and easy to navigate. Illustrations in pull out boxes add interest to the pages.

Third place: Mike Peters, First Alaskans Magazine

I loved the photography and the double page spread shots were dynamic and inviting enough to make me want to read the rest of the article.

Judge: Greg Epkes (see Category 29).

Category 31, Best News Photo

Large

First place: Johnny Wagner, "Dumped Truck," Fairbanks News-Miner.

Perfectly shot spot news photo. Great angle and composition took this photo to the top of a strong category.

Second place: Jay Barrett, "Oily Eagles" Associated Press. Fascinating look at something you don't see every day. The simplicity and stark lighting of this image makes it even more interesting.

Third place: Al Grillo, "Welcome Home," Associated Press.

Well composed look at Sarah Palin's first day back in the governor's office, solid news photo.

Small

First place: Joshua Borough/freelance, "Joyful embrace."

Great moment really captured by photographer through strong, all the elements came together to form a powerful image.

Second place: Teeka A. Ballas, "Obama," The Northern Light.

Clean, simple and timely image. Good seeing from a rather routine news event. (This photo had no ITPC info, name gotten from filename).

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Third place: Jane Pascall, "Strut Your Mutt," Homer Tribune. The great moment between dog and owner take this photo into third place.

Judges: Chris Wilkins, Brad Loper, Vernon Bryant & Jake Stevens of the Dallas Morning News photo staff.

Category 32, Best Picture Story

Large

First place: Sam Harrel, "Quest," Fairbanks Daily News-Miner

A tightly edited and very-well paced story that meets all the criteria of a successful picture story. Opening with sense of place, the viewer is quickly led to seeing the difficulties of this sled dog race, the emotional toll it takes and the closing and proud sense of accomplishment as two species work together to meet their goals. Nicely done.

Second place: Johnny Wagner, "Autism Service Dog," Fairbanks Daily News-Miner

A fascinating story of autism and the service dog that facilitates the lives of this family. The story drifts some in its titling emphasis on the dog, but still tells a story in several telling images with captions that fully inform. And the ending photo, in all its swirling grace, imparts a visual magic that closes on the perfect note.

Small

First place: Jesse Kubla Khan Hoff, "The Last Ride," The Sun Star

Four pictures each building on the previous one in this tightly edited funeral story. All that's needed to tell this story is presented here with emotion in the opener, sense of place in both the two middle images and the austere lineup to close.

Second place: Klas Axel Stolpe, "Top of World," Petersburg Pilot.

Considerable emotion well captured, a variety of action and show-stopping feats of cheerleading action. Although this is somewhat like shooting ducks in a barrel, this photographer handled it well and kept the differences between images chosen strong enough to fill this out as a capable picture story.

Third place: Greg Lincoln, "March Madness," The Delta Discovery

This story is very under-edited, but all the elements of a successful picture story are still there. From the opening crowds cheering their teams on, to the basketball game action in both girls and boys games, to the behind-the-scenes in the locker room and, finally, to the victorious conclusion in celebration of victory. Edit much tighter and this would be a stronger story, much more telling and compelling to the viewer.

Judge: Randy Cox is the visuals and production editor at the Oregonian.

Category 33, Best Sports Photo

Large

First place: Eric Engman, "Ear Pull," Fairbanks Daily News-Miner.

Clear winner, good lens selection and peak moment. Painful to look at though! □ ---Second place: Al Grillo, "Somebody stop me," Associated Press.

Emotion rules the day for this image. Good expressions and reactions on all three faces make this a winner.

Third place: Johnny Wagner, "Baseball," Fairbanks News-Miner.

Nice seeing and use of light by photographer. □

Sports

First place: Ray Corral, "Footkick," Alaska Newspapers Inc.

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Not your everyday sports photo. Super clean peak action vaults this photo into first.

Second place: Greg Lincoln, "Bethel Invitational," Delta Discovery.

A close second, really nice moment that benefits from being tones as a black & white to clean up the background.

Third place: Derek Clarkston, "Spotlight," Kodiak Daily Mirror.

Nice composition and unusual shape work together to establish a mood for this offbeat wrestling photo

Judges: Chris Wilkins et al (see Category 31).

Category 34, Best Scenic Photo

Large

First place: Michael Penn, "Backflip," Juneau Empire

Almost perfect. The exactness of the moment of flip caught. The height above all manly things. The cloud cover and the rising mountainscape in the background. Add to that whiff of snow fluttering behind the airborne ski-daredevil and its all there. In a category with but five entries, this terrific photo stands out as the best.

Second place: Bob Martinson, "Aurora Oval," Associated Press

Nature at its most painted. A northern atmospheric phenomena that is breathtaking to behold.

This photographer was fortunate enough and skillful enough to capture a particularly spherical version of said. Wish it was a little sharper, but exceptionally well done nonetheless.

Third place: Al Grillo, "On the Yukon," Associated Press

Another expression of how this land we live in dwarfs man and dog in so many ways not always seen. Good thinking on the photographer's part to have backed off so tellingly and, in addition, the moment of man/driver, arm raised, at just the right point. Nicely captured.

Small

First place: Ryan Long, "Alaskan Morning," Wrangell Sentinel

A lovely morning scene skillfully composed by this photographer that beautifully contrasts the interplay of light and color in a most appealing fashion. The rising/setting moon in the sky-sea of blue sets off the winter wonderland of snow as the view peers into the seemingly endless distance. It's a Christmas card waiting to happen.

Second place: Klas Axel Stolpe, "Swans in Flight," Petersburg Pilot

I can feel myself flying along with these swans in the majesty of their seemingly effortless flight paths. The soft fall-off in sharpness in the background lends this a painterly quality that sets off a masterful composition. Hurrah!

Third place: Klas Axel Stolpe, "UP Seal-a-Scope," Petersburg Pilot

I feel almost like the seal is hamming for the camera while surrounded by the seemingly daunting sea of ice that is his home. A wonderful moment captured in a most uninviting-to-this-non-Alaskan environment. Great catch!

Judge: Randy Cox (see Category 32).

Category 35, Best Portrait

Large

First place: Oscar Avellaneda, "Willie Hensley Cover," Anchorage Press

By far the finest portrait in this category of five submissions. The strength of the face, the wonderful composition so centered and color-conscious and then, like on cue, the falling of the snow as well. A very well composed, very nicely handled portrait. I hope it was published

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large.

Second place: Michael Penn, "Chilton," Juneau Empire

The sense of place comes through so strongly and the care and attention being paid by this craftsman to his art/canoe springs from this composition. And with the deft inclusion of the brother and his wood burning in the background it provides this photo a layering effect that improves it further. Well done!

Third place: Al Grillo, "Proud American," Associated Press

Yes, you can see it on his face, and to some degree, in his body language. The pride as the state's first VP candidate was chosen. Better compositional attention and we'd have an even stronger, emotional portrait.

Small

First place: Serine Halverson, "SCA," The Northern Light

The runaway winner in this category of eight submissions. Strong lighting and appealingly tight cropping give this an intensity that's in your face. Shallow depth of field and the photographer's consciousness of color contribute to a fine portrait.

Second place: Diana Haecker, "Lance Mackey," The Nome Nugget

A moment of triumphant joy between man and dog this photographer captured it for us all to marvel at. Good seeing despite the poor crop and exposure difficulties.

Third place: Klas Axel Stolpe, "Dreaming in Color," Petersburg Pilot

An inherently appealing portrait juxtaposing our smiling artist and her creation. Although the wide-angle distortion is a little bit distracting, that contrast and sense of place we're given provides us an environment, as viewers, satisfies.

Judge: Randy Cox (see Category 32).

Category 36, Best Feature Photo

Large

First place: Hall Anderson, "MakeMine," Ketchikan Daily News.

Just a great moment that made us laugh. Not technically perfect but a rare, wonderful moment captured by this photographer.

Second place: Al Grillo, "Here's looking at you," Associated Press.

Another really humorous photo. It's clean, simple and reads quickly.

Third place: Michael Penn, "Deadeyes," Juneau Empire.

Goth feature photo is well composed and compelling to look at.

Small

First place: Joshua Borough, "Dipnetting," Freelance.

Quality of light added with perfect composition make this a first-place photo. Looks like the photographer took to time to carefully compose this image.

Second place: Klas Stolpe, "Love is in the air," Freelance.

Just a wonderful moment from a situation we've all photographed before. Photographer captured a keeper moment here. □

Third place: Ray Corral, "Time to dance," Alaska Newspapers Inc.

Simple composition and good use of the lights in the background make this photo an easy read. □ □

Judges: Chris Wilkins et al (see Category 31).

RADIO

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Category 37, Best Breaking News Story

First place: Ed Schoenfeld, "Forest Plan," Coast Alaska.

This was a clear, comprehensive and smart presentation of a development in an on-going story that often gets bogged down in technical detail. Schoenfeld used four voices to lay out the plan in a thoughtful and interesting way.

Second place: Libby Casey "Stevens Indicted," APRN.

Casey illuminated this stunning event by using the Justice Department spokesman to give a clear explanation of the charges, and then she used archival tape of the senator, not only to balance the accusations, but also to give the story emotional depth. Nicely done.

Third place: Jay Barrett "Servant Air Crash," KMXT.

Barrett makes us see the minutes before the crash through the descriptions of the investigator and the Coast Guard spokesman, and he lets us feel some of the pain of the crash in the voice of the company spokesman.

It seems to me that each of these winners is a good example of a reporter "writing with other people's voices." The radio reporter interweaves the voices of interviewees with his or her own writing to tell the story in the most interesting and authentic way. Breaking news is often difficult to do on radio, because it's hard to gather the sound you need to tell a story quickly and well. Breaking news tests the radio reporter's grasp of events and issues, resourcefulness and speed.

Judge: Corey Flintoff is a correspondent for NPR, where he is reporting from Iraq.

Category 38, Best Single Story Reporting

First place: Scott Burton, Two Moms and Two Boys Do make a family, AK.

Great profile of a family and their challenges. Wonderful scenes of them being together.

Second place: Libby Casey, "Church Abuse," KUAC.

A tough story to tell, but is well done.

Third place: Matt Lichtenstein, "Whistleblower Investigation," KFSK.

A complicated subject made easily understandable. □ □

Judge: Susanna Capelouto is the news director of Georgia Public Broadcasting's 15-station radio network.

Category 39, Best Comprehensive Reporting

First place: Maggie Wall, "AGIA," Leg.Head.com

Second place: Maggie Wall, "Kodiak crabbing was an evolving thing," LegHead.com

Third place: Coast Alaska News, "Adapting to the energy crisis 1, 2 and 3," Coast Alaska

Judge: Tom Scheck covers politics for Minnesota Public Radio.

Category 40, Best Ongoing Public Affairs Program

First Place: "In Other News" Alaska Teen Media Institute.

Very clever take on underage drinking and law enforcement, with a kind of amazing scene of the bust. A highly enlightening piece with some amazing documentary tape. Well done ...

lively profile of Magic Eddie, with good writing, good scoring. ... What is Love piece is clever, revealing, couldn't have been produced by anyone but a talented teen reporter. Overall, ATMI delivers a unique and engaging program that couldn't come from anywhere else.

Second Place: "Cabin Fever," KRUA.

The program is upbeat and lively; it contains some slips and production lapses, but they are

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mostly charming. Nice variety of segments, including interviews, reviews and calendar items. A promising new show.

Third Place: "Alaska Fisheries Report"

Not always the sexiest subject matter, but AFR does a solid job of crafting a comprehensive news source for fishing interests. It contains some really good explanation of the Valdez spill compensation, including some revealing tape about the culture among fishermen.

Judge: Gabriel Spitzer, WBEZ Chicago reporter and former host of AK.

Category 41, Best Documentary

No entries.

Category 42, Best Governmental or Political Reporting

First place: Johanna Eurich, "Stevens," APRN

This is a clear, balanced exploration of Ted Stevens' policies towards Alaska's Natives.

Second Place: Rich Stromberg, "Sudan Divestment and the Permanent Fund," KRUA

An in-depth examination of the Sudan divestment issue.

No award for third place.

Judge: Paul Glickman is a senior news editor at KPCC in Southern California.

Category 43, Best Business Reporting

First Place: Bonnie-Sue Hitchcock, "Anchorage Daily News," KCAW

This is a great example of storytelling in a news context. The excellent, conversational voicing makes it engaging, and the structure of the piece hangs together as a narrative. It was clever to approach this story from the perspective of the delivery people and the newspaper readers, and resist the temptation to add a media expert or someone from the Anchorage newsroom, which would have taken so much of the life out of it. Great tape, well recorded, well edited, lively.... great to have a child's voice and the voices of older people; too often we end up just hearing from "newsmakers" in the 35-55 age bracket. Good writing in and out of the acts – for example, into the cruise ship cut; Bonnie-Sue sets up what the source is going to say but doesn't give away the interesting part of it.

Second Place: Annie Feidt, "Gold Fever", APRN

Interesting story, national-quality production. Nice voicing, well-recorded sound, lively writing (although I doubt that people were *literally* going nuts). The sound of the busy store really helps advance the story, it wasn't just gratuitous or obligatory ambience. I liked the specifics about kinds of gold mining gear that people were looking at.....made the scene very real. Annie should work a little bit on improving her articulation of certain words without sounding affected.

Third Place: Matt Lichtenstein, "Processing Sitka Herring," KFSK

"Game is on, we got fish comin' at us" — great way to start the story, very engaging. All of the people who appear in the piece are appealing and natural, great not to have any dull talking-head experts! Voicing is nicely casual, maybe a little too casual; the end particularly sounded too matter-of-fact – it's good to signal the end of a story with your voice. Matt needs to slow down a bit, pause more between sentences, use more variation in tempo. The reporter's voice should be a current that takes the listeners along with it – but not a flood that sweeps the listeners away and overwhelms them. Good writing, natural and conversational — "sucked through the hose onto the dock" instead of a more vague description of processing. I didn't feel

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an explicit sense of “this story is going to explain to you how herring are processed” in the piece; I know it was in the lede, but it would have been great to find a way to signal it in the script as well.

Judge: Nina Thorsen is a radio producer currently based in the San Francisco Bay Area.

Category 44, Best Environmental Reporting

First place: Libby Casey, “Young Alaskans Sees Changing Way of Life,” KUAC.

Libby Casey’s vivid portrait of Mathew Gilbert, a young man who returns to his home in Arctic Village, is very well told, and worthy of first place. Casey’s story gives us an entree into the private world of the Gwich’in Athabascan people of Alaska. I have listened to many stories about climate change, and after a while many can sound the same, but by telling a story of one young man’s interest in learning about the land from his elders is creative and sustained my interest. It is wonderful to first meet Gilbert’s grandparent in their kitchen, as bread is being baked, giving us a true glimpse of his family. Casey’s delivery is clear and the story is well organized, with a good use of sound to establish the different scenes throughout the piece. As Casey takes us out to the woods with Gilbert, I feel like we are riding with them, collecting wood, feeling cold and out of breath. Casey could have taken this story in many directions, but she was right to make it keep it as simply a portrait of Mathew Gilbert; through his voice we understand his personal struggles and the challenges the people of Arctic Village are faced with in a swiftly changing world.

Second place: Bonnie-Sue Hitchcock, “Oil Driven Land Proposal Stirs Controversy,” KCAW.

It is rare to hear a piece about a Fish and Wildlife public hearing and feel not only interested but also entertained. Hitchcock’s story succeeds in maintaining my attention and making me laugh. The first voice we hear of the native man declaring the great importance of the land they live on is moving and funny, and a great way to start off a story. Hitchcock’s writing is descriptive and I could immediately see the group of people huddled in their beaver skin hats and warm jackets in the meeting hall. I like that Hitchcock allows the listener to hear the language of the native people; so often this is something that is not included, denying the listener an opportunity to hear a rare language. All of these details help to make a well-organized, clear piece, including voices from both sides. If Hitchcock could cover all government hearings like this one, I would certainly pay more attention to them.

Third place: Anne Hillman, “Horse Gelding Project,” KUCB.

Hillman’s story about castrating wild horses gives us a sense of a remote area near Unalaska -- the landscape, the people and their struggles. The reporter’s interviews with people from both sides were thorough, well edited and allowed me to understand and take interest in a story I knew little about. Hillman uses good actualities, sound and writing to set up the horse castration scene, allowing us to feel part of the team in the field as the researchers lure the horses, load the immobilization gun, shoot the horse, and then finally castrate the horse (I cringed).

Judge: Jessica Goldstein is a producer on NPR’s science and health desk.

Category 45, Best reporting on crime and courts

First Place: Noah Megan, “Teens and Alcohol,” Alaskan Teen Media Institute.

This is an excellent piece. Megan wove a good story with loads of good sound. I liked the way he brought information to the report and let his actualities, for the most part, brought the emotion. Excellent piece that ought to have both adults and teens thinking!

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Second Place: Maggie Wall on TVs in cars: The law trying to keep pace with technology, LegHead.com.

Wall's approach is part of the effectiveness of this report. While I don't think folksy is the correct word, it comes close. Maybe it should be a knowledgeable folksy. Wall includes a sound byte, but I am not sure it is really needed. The information and her approach is enough. I know the law and I know how it affects me, and I know some of the obstacles lawmakers faced when enacting the legislation. I wanted to listen and learn.

Third Place: Matt Lichtenstein, Sentencing of Tom Evanson the Third, KFSK.

This was an interesting piece, packed with information. It flows smoothly between Lichtenstein and his actualities. A well-constructed, seamless piece that moves carefully through the convoluted facts of the case.

Judge: Richard Baker is a professor in the Kansas State University Department of Communications in the College of

Agriculture and an adjunct professor in the School of Journalism and Mass Communications and news director of the K-State Radio Network.

Category 46, Best Education Reporting

First Place: Matt Lichtenstein, "Living with Autism in a Small Town," KFSK.

Good opening scene, illustration of autistic child's limited communication with parents. Strong imagery. Compelling interview subjects and choice of bites — parents and autistic children. Especially interesting to hear from a sibling about what it's like to have an autistic brother.

Excellent writing in and out of bites.

Would have been good to have "tension" of story - i.e. how to educate autistic children, and funding issues — earlier in piece, perhaps between the two profiles or otherwise woven into their stories, rather than after both family profiles.

Second Place: Joe Viechnicki, "Student Run Movie Theater Celebrates 10th Anniversary," KFSK.

Good opening scene describing giant reel, imagery, natural sound of conversation.

While a profile of the theater was informative, would have liked to hear more tension - why are they the last or one of last remaining of such theaters? What are challenges for next 10 years?

Third Place: Jay Barrett, "Alutiiq," KMXT.

Considering lack of "scene" or tension, reporter used interviewee sound well. Compelling bites. Would have liked to have more context about why her research matters to today's community.

Judge: Rickey Bevington is an executive producer and host at Georgia Public Broadcasting.

Category 47, Best Radio Feature

First place: Scott Burton, "Razzma-Zen," APRN

Natural subject for radio, good use of sound, good descriptions.

Second place: Jay Barrett, "Mr. Whitekeys in Kodiak," KMXT

Good use of sound; fine hand-offs from interview to sfx.

Third place: Mary Donaldson- Afognak

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.

Category 48, Best Profile

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First place: Scott Burton, "Blair Aubrey," AK. This story, about a woman in a small Alaskan community, diagnosed with breast cancer and clearly weak and dying, was extremely moving and well produced. Not only was the reporter able to convey the richness of this woman's life, but also the true character at the center of the story was her small town and her very tight-knit community. It seemed to me to be evocative of many small Alaskan communities and the people who inhabit them. I felt as if this profile really was a profile in community. Well written with beautiful voices and warm, tender emotion.

Second place: Maggie Wall, "Barb Burch – Obsessed with Fishing Safety," LegHead.com. A really nice portrait of a woman on a mission who really changed the way people worked and, ultimately, lived and died in Kodiak. I liked the reporter's husky, experienced voice – she sounds like someone who really understands this way of life; and I liked the strong voice and opinions of Barb Burch. The reporter was able to weave in scenes and history while telling us about Barb Burch's passion.

Third place: Matt Lichtenstein, "Remembering Glen Ith," KFSK.

While this is an obit, Matt was able to work in a scene of friends building a coffin for the late Glen Ith. Ith was such an icon in the area, and many people had evocative and compelling things to say about him. Matt was able to portray a full and well-rounded picture of this man even though he wasn't around to contribute to the "profile."

Judge: Alisa Joyce Barba is the Western bureau chief for NPR.

Category 49, Best Sports Reporting

First place: Bonnie-Sue Hitchcock, "Underwater Hockey," KCAW.

This was an interesting, quirky, funny story. A great way to introduce a sport. Bonnie told the ABC's of this strange activity, but spooned them out nicely while telling a fun story through engaging characters. Bonnie's got the stripped-down "This American Life" delivery which is hot right now in public radio. Sometimes I find that technique pretentious, but Bonnie's worked for me here. "I'm totally not kidding," was a great start - it anticipates nicely the listener's likely response when you say underwater hockey and they say, "You have GOT to be kidding!!" Bonnie's writing was funny and it moved the piece along at a nice clip. She varied the pace well between acts and tracks. I particularly liked the way Bonnie eased into the history part of the sport - telling the big picture story after all the micro detail.

My only complaint was the production - at times it was a bit clunky...background ambience didn't match the ambi. in the acts all the time. And sometimes I was confused about who was talking. Bonnie's voice sounded at times like the main female character in the story. The little kid was cute, but I wanted to know who she was (other than "sound tech/commentator"). I think Bonnie could've identified her without interrupting the flow of the story. But all in all, a well-crafted, quirky, fun story.

Second place: Libby Casey, "Mackey Makes a Move," APRN.

This was a piece with great detail and great storytelling. Libby did a wonderful job of focusing on the leaders....who thankfully are interesting, articulate guys. Through the extensive interviews with Mackey and King, we not only learned about them...but the race itself. It was a nice break from the event reporting we hear so much...who's in what place, who's where in the state, etc. The last Jeff King cut describing Mackey is fabulous. That alone makes the piece quite strong!

The production was good — I did get a little confused at times in the switching back and forth between the mushers — they sounded alike at times.

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Third place: Tiana Johnson, "AFC Fighters," Alaska Teen Media Institute.

This was a really interesting, fresh piece. From the start, I knew I was hearing something different. I liked the two hardass fighters right off the bat — I liked Tiana's giggle. Completely non-traditional. (We like that!!!). It engaged me as a listener. After that, the piece was pretty straight and formulaic. The fighters were raw and real.... I'm sure it helped loosen them up that Tiana was a sister of one of them. I liked the essay quality to Tiana's script. And I like her young sounding voice. There's something engaging about hearing a non-professional (in the classic sense) voice. At about the 4-minute mark, I got antsy. I needed either the story to change structure or to go to another scene...maybe sound of an MMA event or sound of them sparring/practicing. The back and forth interview format started to get stale for me. That was my main complaint - the piece went on too long. If you're going into the 6, 7-minute range, you have to give your listener some change along the journey!

Judge: Tom Goldman is the NPR sports correspondent. His first professional job in radio was at APRN.

Category 50, Best Arts Reporting

First place: Teeka A. Ballas, "Pamayua," KRUA. A great snapshot of what sounds like a great community evening, carefully constructed through vibrant writing around interesting voices, mixed with ear-grabbing music.

Second place: Jay Barrett, "Tits-n-skateboarding," KMXT.

A high-energy mix of interview and sound clips from a spoof movie about professional female skateboarders in Kodiak. I got a little lost in it, but I know I want to see the movie now.

Third place: Matt Lichtenstein, "Vagina Monologues Feature," KFSK.

Good voices talking about the Eve Ensler show's history and its place in Petersburg at this particular time.

Judge: Euan Kerr is an editor at Minnesota Public Radio News.

Best reporting on health or science/radio Category 51

First Place: Bonnie-Sue Hitchcock, "Eyeball Dissection Sheds Light on Whale Age," □ KCAW.

Exemplary writing-with-sound, authoritative scientific researchers, and on-site field recordings bring us information about a fruitful area of scientific inquiry, a view of how science happens, and insight into the graphic experience of students and scientists. An informative and inspirational use of the radio/audio medium in the service of health/education reporting. □ □

Second Place: Katie Zager, "Power Teen Clinic," □ Alaska Teen Media Institute.

Beautiful exposition of an original approach towards a universal problem: teens, sexuality, parenthood, adulthood. The reporter creates a powerful presentation of the thoughts, motivations, dedication and methods of the Teen Clinic. This piece could have had more lasting impact if it included interviews with clients as well as providers. Field/Environmental sound would push this piece into major national programs. That said, it is an important and emotionally resonant example of excellent health reporting.

Third Place: Ed Schoenfeld, "Moonmilk," □ Coast Alaska News.

Excellent use of sound, first-person-reporting-we-can-relate-to, the experts we should hear, and musings about the possible implications of exotic research, make this piece an award-winner.

□ □

Judge: Adi Gevins won a Peabody in 1977 for a documentary she produce with Laurie Garrett.

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Category 52, Best Daily News Program

First place: The KMXT Midday Report and Jay Barrett. The program delivered a wide variety of stories with accuracy, and made for good radio.

Second place: KFSK Public Radio's Midday Magazine with Matt Lichtenstein.

Matt did an outstanding job of gathering tape and turning it around quickly for the Midday program. The stories were interesting and in-depth.

Third place: No third place awarded.

Judge: Mark Moran is a reporter at KJZZ in Phoenix. He has covered national and international issues, including the aftermath of the Exxon Valdez oil spill.

TELEVISION

Category 53, Best Breaking News Story

First place: Jill Burke and Carolyn Hall, "Stevens verdict," KTUU.

Jill Burke and Carolyn Hall covered a difficult story thoroughly. It is a federal trial so they had no courtroom access, it was a story in which the defendant did not talk or cooperate in any way, they were working in a very difficult place (DC) and still managed to pull together a coherent story with breaking news AND background information all rolled into one. We would have liked to have seen a little more energy in the standups. The graphics, while very useful would have been more useful if the faces and names had appeared as Jill mentioned them. As they were, the graphics were dense and really busy so we didn't always know where we should be looking. Overall great work and a ton of hustle.

Second place: Jill Burke, Carolyn Hall and Dean Robertson, "Hikers found," KTUU. The hikers story was covered top to bottom but it was hard to know how much of this was exclusive to KTUU or did everybody have pretty much the same thing? The story did show that KTUU dedicated significant resources to the story. An explanatory map would have helped this story a lot. Where were they looking? Where were the two women found?

The copy seemed to indicate these facts were known, so let's make them clear.

Nice job humanizing the story.

Third place: Chelsea Lynn Titi, "Trooper reassigned," KIMO

Judge: Al Tompkins and other broadcast faculty at the Poynter Institute. Tompkins is the broadcast and online group leader at Poynter.

Category 54, Best Single Story Reporting

First place: Ted Land and Scott Jensen, "Just another anniversary," KTUU

I will first say that our station management made a decision years ago to NOT show the actual video of the plane hitting the tower and the real time collapse in NYC. Having said that, I do think that with this story, Ted managed to turn what could have been "Just another Anniversary" into just another basic story on the anniversary date. I like that he took an interesting angle to create a new type of story...asking the tough question of "do people still care? Do they want to care? Is it necessary to care? In doing that, he evoked a host of different emotions... whether you agree with the piece or not, I think it does stir something within anyone who watches. The woman from Canada was the lightning rod for this story. It was well written in conjunction with the video – nice use of nat sound to capture the mood and feel of the ceremony. Nice reporter stand-up without being TOO inclusive in the piece but gave a nice presence. At times, I felt as if the story was a bit "preachy"...but again, I think it stirred

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emotion and drove home the point that this event changed our world and whether someone wants to remember or forget, it still affects them.

Second place: Jason Lamb and Carolyn Hall, "We trounced him," KTUU

Right off the start, the reporter captured the energy of the moment. This was an event taking place in conference halls across the country so it was not unique. What made this story stand out was the creative analogy the reporter chose to work with – that of writing a book – and he stuck with it throughout, weaving a tale within the segment. There was an excellent effort to write specifically to the video. The reporter had a nice mix of people to include in the piece, and made their stories more personable within the overall context of the story. The woman with a husband in Iraq, the Obama "look-a-like", the average supporter in the crowd...they were all different, and I had a sense of who they were in relation to the overall crowd and celebration. Again, using the "book" analogy worked well, because it made each of the subjects a character in this particular chapter as well. This could have been a basic "celebration meeting" story; yet the reporter chose to take it in a new direction.

Third place: Sean Doogan and Shawn Wilson, "Thin Blue Line," KTUU

This is a fascinating story! It seems as though the reporter and photographer had a good sense of what each would need to make this story work – in terms of planning and logistics and facing the elements in order to finish the story. I thought it was a good approach to tell the story through the eyes of the officer on that one shift, but would have liked to hear more from the officers on a personal level: how is this lack of staff affecting them? Do they feel safe? Are they burning out? Are they angry about the situation? Why do they keep doing it? Also, given there was a two man crew, I would have liked to have seen a reporter stand-up at some point...I could tell a great deal of work went into this piece...that involvement would have brought it home a bit more. Personalize it more through the voices of the officers.

Honorable Mention: Christina Grande, "Snettisham Hydroelectric Plant," KIMO

I know you usually don't do this, but I felt compelled given the conditions for actually getting this story. To produce this story as a one-man band took a great deal of planning, creativity, focus and discipline. Given that limitation, the video gave viewers a good sense of the severity of the situation and what local crews are doing to fix the plant. I think viewers probably never have the chance to see and understand how it all works, so this bird's eye view must go a long way to give everyone a better appreciation for what the repair crews are up against. Christina gave a very thorough overview of the situation and I was highly impressed that this was a one-person effort.

Judge: Julia Yarbough is an anchor at NBC Universal WTVJ. She also writes for South Florida Adventures Magazine.

Category 55, Best Series

First place: Jason Moore, "Troopergate," KTUU

Jason's coverage of the Sarah Palin/Trooper Gate investigation was the only entry in this category; nonetheless, it was a comprehensive view of this story. It was interesting to watch the more detailed happenings in this case from a local perspective (The rest of us only had the major portions once it reached national news) so that gave the story an intriguing twist for me. I was impressed with the amount of time station management allotted for each of these segments; although I believe the story could have been effectively told in much shorter increments. It was comprehensive, but much of the court proceedings I believe could have been paraphrased more efficiently by the reporter, rather than drawn-out courtroom exchanges.

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Again, watching this series of reports from the outside, I also found it curious to watch the slow transformation of the Governor, as the rest of us only began to know her after she was in the national spotlight – seeing these stories gave me a much better understanding of what the local officials were probably up against during this time, given her status within the GOP.

Educational, comprehensive, thorough (almost to a fault) – relentless in following the trail. It all indicated to me the reporter has a good network of contacts and understands the inner workings of local politics.

The only thing I would have liked to see: more of Jason Moore. There were missed opportunities to tell portions of the story/paraphrase with the use of a stand-up or bridge, or even a newsroom shot!!

No second or third place awarded.

Judge: Julia Yarbough (see category 54).

Category 56, Best Live Shot

First place: Leyla Santiago, reporter and Zac Gooch, photographer, “The Laundromat,” KTUU.

Second place: Leyla Santiago, reporter and Eric Sowl, photographer, “Crash in the Neighborhood,” KTUU.

Third place: Lori Tipton, Daniel Hernandez “House Demolition Brings Joy,” KTUU.

Judge: Doug Druschke is a photographer at WAVE-TV3 News in Louisville, Ky., where the Kentucky News Photographer's Association has honored his work.

Category 57, Best Documentary

First place: Geo Beach, “Tougher in Alaska,” History.

There were no other entries in the category.

Judge: Doug Druschke (see Category 56).

Category 58, Best Reporting on Health or Science

First Place: Ted Land, “Dr Veerman's Spa,” KTUU.

Great use of video/music/effects. Terrific writing strategy to put a surprise twist in story. Such a technique provides a good “wow” factor for viewers. Plus, this is a timely topic considering America's growing interest in merging alternative medicine approaches with traditional medicine. Thanks for holding off on the surprise. Wow!

Second Place: Scott Elnes and Joshua Borough, “411: High Pressure,” KTUU.

Clever standups and catchy writing, yet still provided clear and easy-to-understand explanation of scientific concepts. Great personality. Good information and presentation.

Third place: Scott Jensen and Angela Blanchard, “James' Addiction,” KTUU.

Good use of audio/video links. Strong writing helped draw viewer in by making them wonder, “What happened?”

Great close-up shots and interviews. Good use of file video and natural sound.

***Judge's note to all entrants: “This was a difficult category to judge this year, as there were many terrific entries. Congratulations to all of the entrants for their solid reporting. In future competitions, please be sure to include your photographer and/or editor for credit on your entries. Without their expertise and dedication, we would be working in radio.”

Judge: Karen Larsen is an anchor at KJRH in Tulsa, where her work has won Emmys and accolades from the Society of Professional Journalists and the Oklahoma Association of Broadcasters.

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Category 59, Best Education Reporting

First Place: Leyla Santiago, Dan Carpenter and Shawn Wilson, "Two Different Worlds," KTUU.

Solid storytelling in this report. Nice use of interview and natural sound to support the story line. Meaty topic explained well. Good job bringing the story full circle: starting in the home — moving to the school — and ending at home.

Second Place: Chelsea Lynn Titi, "Dog Gone," KIMO/Channel 13

Solid anchor and reporter lead-in's. Good audio/video links in story. Tag lines helped wrap up the conflict and explain more clearly to viewers why the dogs had been removed.

Judge: Karen Larsen (see Category 58).

Category 60, Best Environmental Reporting

First place: Jill Burke and Rich Jordan, "The Yukon River Crisis: Heat or Eat," KTUU

Second place: Jill Burke and Rich Jordan, "The Yukon River Crisis-overview," KTUU

Third place: Leyla Santiago and Zac Gooch, "The Big Move," KTUU

In most markets, any one of these three stories would have won. We were especially impressed with the depth of sourcing on these stories. It would have been easy to slide by with one or two personalities, but these stories went beyond that--way beyond.

The Big Move, for example, included a science teacher and a town council meeting to explain the depth of the problem.

The Yukon stories provided context and deep cultural understanding.

The photojournalism in all three of these stories was simply stunning, with wide vistas and telling close-ups. The natural sound in all three stories was crisp and close-up.

We cannot allow the judging to end there however. We loved the KTUU entry "The switch to coal" because it included a homeowner installing coal, a homeowner who already has it, an environmental activist and a coal supplier. Four very different points of view. GREAT job.

"Fire Season," from Rebecca Palsha was another very thoroughly sourced story that not only explained what the source of worry is, but what homeowners can do to make their homes as safe as possible.

Rebecca's story on the fish volunteer was a strong people driven story but would have been a contender if it has included a contextual explanation of why the budget is under so much pressure and how important this restocking is.

Christina Grande's story from Juneau about shore power for ships was really interesting but needed more sourcing and context to keep up with this very full category. How much did this save customers? How much did this reduce pollution exactly?

A VERY worthwhile topic that we are glad you tackled.

Judge: Al Tompkins et al.

Category 61, Best Reporting on Crime or Courts

First place: Ted Land and Kyle Stalder, "Adding it up," KTUU

This piece succeeded in taking a yearly story that is told in markets around the country and turning it into a unique story-telling opportunity. The reporter chose an excellent theme – ADDING IT UP – to weave the entire story into a compelling reminder of not only the physical dangers of DUI... but also the costs to the individual and society.

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The creative use of stand-ups throughout the segment indicated just how much time and effort was put into the completion of this story. I especially liked the stand-up from the bus-station with the passing vehicle – VERY HOLLYWOOD-LIKE in how it was shot. It gave it a “notch above” flair to the story. Photographer had an excellent use of nat sound, music and fast-pace shots to really make the segment stand out.

Ted managed to take a typical holiday DUI situation and shed an entirely new light on the topic; he made the issue more REAL than just telling statistics or showing troopers pulling people over. Especially in this tight economy, putting the focus on the economic costs of such behavior drove the point home. CREATIVE. TIMELY. ARTISTIC. As a reporter/Anchor in a fast-paced city, I am curious how much time management allotted to complete this piece... I was truly impressed with all the various elements. Every portion of this story really “Added-Up.”

No second- or third-place awarded.

Judge: Julia Yarbough (see Category 54).

Category 62, Best Government or Political Reporting

First place: Scott Jensen Megan Baldino, “One Road United, Two Towns Divided,” KTUU
Good job using people and their safety to illustrate the importance of issue. Didn't shy away from problems like race, and handled it in a mature way. Could have changed the structure a little bit and moved the map up to when the actual issue of the road was first brought up. Good job handling the issue with care and emotion.

Second place: Rebecca Palsha and Carolyn Hall, “A New Battle,” KTUU

Good job working on a tight deadline. I really enjoyed the set up of “the day after” talking about the two different camps and how they were reacting. Sound bites were well used.

First place: Jason Lamb, “This Meeting is Over,” KTUU

The sound bite off the top was a great way to set up the story, it brought out the anger and frustration of the issue. Could have better explained why regular people might have considered it a big issue. Good job making a meeting engaging.

Judge: George Knapp is the chief reporter for the I-Team on KLAS-TV in Las Vegas.

Category 63, Best Business Reporting

First Place: Ted Land, Reporter, “Whittier Woes,” KTUU.

Excellent photography matched with strong writing. Nice story flow with good use of natural sound. Good pacing.”

Second Place: Ted Land, Reporter, “Green Ware,” KTUU.

Timely topic. Good job with visuals and writing to maintain pace. Use of natural sound was also well placed.

Third Place: Christina Grande, Reporter, “Alaska Travel Industry,” KIMO/Channel 13.

Timely topic. Good effort. However, judges would encourage the reporter to personalize the story. Begin by telling it through the eyes of a single business then widen the scope to include the industry as a whole with supporting, less crowded graphics.

Judge: Karen Larsen (See Category 58).

Category 64, Best Feature

First Place: Scott Jensen and Jason Moore, “Shawn's Long Wait,” KTUU.

Comments: Well told story. Great structure with a good setup, strong middle and heartfelt

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end. Great character. Great moments generated from the classmates' video. Good natural moments with Shawn and his mom. Good use of natural sound woven throughout the story to take me there. The slow zoom effect of the exteriors of the buildings was overdone and slowed the story down. Despite the pacing, the story is sad, but powerful. I was pleased to see the commitment by reporter, photographer and station to spend the time and tell such a complete story.

Second place Place: Jason Lamb and Eric Sowl, "Politics on the Menu," KTUU.

Fun story. Good setup. Great surprise! Good reaction. Photog and reporter worked well as a team. Good natural sound woven into the story, which helped the pace. Story was a little long. Just when I was ready for it to be over, some of the best sound brought me back in.

Third place: Jason Lamb and Zac Gooch, "A Present of the Past," KTUU.

Nice, tight, complete story. Good job letting the characters tell the story. The explanation of what happened wasn't staged, which I appreciate very much. Good story structure with beginning middle and end.

Judge: Eric Kehe is the director of photography at 9News KUSA-TV in Denver.

Category 65, Best Arts Coverage

First place: Eric Sowl, "Sheila's Stars," KTUU

Second place: Shawn Wilson, photographer and Rhonda McBride, reporter. "Finishing Cello #49, KTUU.

Judge: Jon Smith is a photographer at WLEX-TV in Lexington, Ky.

Category 66, Best Ongoing Public Affairs Program

No entries.

Category 67, Best Sports Story

First place: Scott Jensen and Jason Moore "Back Where She Belongs, In the Mountains," KTUU

Judge: Jon Smith (See Category 65).

Category 68, Best Profile

No results yet

Category 69, Best Editing

First place: Scott Jensen, "Not Where I Belong," KTUU

Second place: Carolyn Hall, "Ted Stevens Trial," KTUU

Judge: Jon Smith (See Category 65).

Category 70, Best Feature Photography

First place: Scott Jensen and Megan Baldino, "Life on the Yukon," KTUU.

Tremendous dedication and time spent on a wonderful piece of storytelling. Stunning photography, combined with great nat peppered throughout, makes this piece a pleasure to watch. We loved the fact that though this piece was on and along the river, we got to see so much more than just the river. There was wonderful pacing to this package, edited with the same, as the reporter says, "fairly easy float" as the river itself. Though the pix were gorgeous, this was definitely not the most exciting material to work with, but the story was shot and

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edited together so well that it had the judges wanting more. It was obvious the amount of work that went into this...and it paid off.

Second place: Mike Nederbrock and Sean Doogan, Northern Edge 2008," KTUU.

A truly amazing sights and sound piece...a rare look at the Alaska Air National Guard.

Unbelievable access was given to this reporter/photographer team. An "unparalleled view" of this "video game" in the sky. Only suggestion: during the editing process, watch your nat sound underneath; at times it was overpowering the reporter's tracks...otherwise great job.

Third place: Eric Sowl, "Perfect is for heaven," KTUU.

This was a solid piece of storytelling on an amazing story. Both the photographer and reporter did a fantastic job on a wonderful "teamwork" stand-up through the window. Some great use of light with a lowering sun used throughout... a very nice piece.

Judge: Michael DelGiudice is a TV news photographer/editor at WNBC-TV, New York.

Category 71, Best Spot News Photography

First place: Shawn Wilson, "It made that noise," KTUU.

Great job shooting this fire in progress with rock solid pix and a great variety of shots. Good nats throughout including the moment of the piece...capturing the explosion on camera as it happened...GREAT! Great presence of mind to swing your camera in that direction while shooting your average b-roll shot...it truly made the piece and it sent it in a whole new direction...fear for the firefighters and everyone around, including yourself and your reporter. This is an excellent job of photojournalism on the scene of a true spot news story.

No second- or third-place awarded.

Judge: Michael DelGiudice (See Category 70).

Category 72, Best Sports Photography

No entries.

Category 73, Best Daily Newscast

These entries were lost in the mail. Refunds are forthcoming.

ONLINE

Category 74, Online Breaking News

First place: Kyle Hopkins, Wesley Loy, David Hulen, Release of the Troopergate Report, Anchorage Daily News.

ADN's breaking coverage of the Monegan report managed to provide comprehensive coverage for those around the country tuning into the release of the report, while still providing local context and insight. And it used all aspects of the online medium well.

One reason I particularly enjoyed this entry was the way it included both official releases and a more casual tone appropriate to a blog: the latter replicated conversations with legislators (such as the tip "Page 97, appendix B" from David Guttenberg.), and replicated the tensions and boredom of the wait for the release of the report. The efforts to contextualize the delays—particularly the discussion about whether there were enough voting Council members present—were helpful, too.

This entry makes ample use of multimedia, with direct link to a PDF of the report, pictures, and interviews; the interviews with legislators provides a good range of context. The pictures—particularly the "circus" and the Branchflower in a crowd pictures—show how even low production value pictures can effectively add to the story.

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Second place: Juneau Empire, Selection May Shake Up State and Nation, Juneau Empire
This article provides great immediate analysis of how the Palin VP candidacy will affect Alaska politics—particularly its prescient prediction it might help Stevens and Young. That said, it doesn't use the online medium to the same extent as other entries. Even a link to an update on the Young/Parnell race or to the Constitution would add value to this story.

Third place: Kyle Hopkins, Julia O'Malley, Rich Mauer, Megan Holland, Election Night 2008, Anchorage Daily News

The strength of this story is way it portrays the dawning realization that all the polls and pundits appeared to be wrong (and were, in the House race). This piece does a good job of capturing the reactions of people and finding knowledgeable people on both sides to present their view of the evolving surprise, but it could really use an assessment of whether the spin about the dawning stories was accurate.

At the same time, it didn't have all the details it might have had—most notably election returns and analysis of them in the narrative. Ethan Berkowitz was spinning hard about rural returns—but there was just one line, “that's a lot of ground to make up,” that would have been much better if it included even high level detail from the returns.

Judge: Marcy Wheeler is a blogger who writes for FireDogLake, Daily Kos, the Huffington Post and others. She blogged live from the courthouse during the trial of I. Lewis “Scooter” Libby.

Category 75, Best Multimedia Presentation of a Story

First place: Robinson Duffy, Brian O'Donoghue, News-Miner Staff, “Hartman,” UAF Fairbanks Daily News-Miner.

Features: Photo of subject, graphics, summary blurb, photo gallery widget, document library, audio clips, discussion forum.

Story: The writing is solid and the breadth and depth of materials supporting the thesis are exceptional. The user feedback in particular but also the other social media tools support the complexity of this story and the modern convergence of producer and reader.

Artistic - The tabloid style of the title graphic and to some degree the display style, or possibly even the mere use, of the mug shots of the convicted boys plays like sensationalism and undermines credibility. The presence of the photo feed (and the particular sample photos in it) at top right establishes the controversial nature of the story in a more neutral way.

Technical: The technical execution is superb. The interface is intuitive and references current trends in social media. The elements work flawlessly with no technical issues.

How topic lends itself to this multimedia treatment: The topic lends itself well to this treatment because providing source documents and a forum to discuss the case addresses the modern media user who is both savvy and cynical. In addition providing this material supports the thesis of the piece, which is that this case merits extensive further review in the interest of justice.

Second place: Kyle Hopkins, “Waiting Game,” Anchorage Daily News.

Features: Print, Video

Story: This piece is “traditional” for a multimedia news presentation but solid. There is a handshake in the sense that the print version refers [judge's comment garbled here] like this may seem rote these days but it represents a reconciliation of branches of the media organization that often have an uneasy relationship to one another. This is an important issue in

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multimedia journalism and can be difficult to treat. Other strengths are that each component can stand alone and each component is appropriate for its medium.

Artistic: I craved a little more creativity in the style, especially for the video, because of the subject matter. The talking head interview style feels somewhat static for this subject. Even though the gamer might be sitting on a couch, we want to see what they see.

Technical: This is technically solid.

How topic lends itself to this multimedia treatment: The topic lends itself to a multi sure there is anything in the style of this treatment that is specific to the topic, but I'd like to challenge the journalist to think more about that for future works.

Third place: Rebecca George, Amy Chausse, Jesse Darling, "Retracing McCandless," Extreme Alaska/UAF Journalism.

Features: Flash, Video

Story: Web presentations can and do reach global audiences. This feels somewhat location or population-centric and I think assumes the user knows more about the subject than they might. You can easily make it accessible to a wider audience by framing your story with the equivalent of an introductory paragraph. One possible avenue might be to put the "Scope of the Wild" link at the top, because that video begins with a shot of the book, and an explanation of the purpose of the piece, which is to ext explanation in the "Scope of the Wild" section is also a good introduction to the entire piece. You should not rely solely on the teaser blurb from the page on the news site to introduce the topic, but reiterate your introduction in the actual piece. This also helps it to stand alone for other uses. In addition, because there is such a stylistic difference between the multimedia piece and the page on the news site that links to it one forgets what was on the original page and cannot easily refer back to it without extracting oneself from the 'spell' of the self-contained Flash project.

Artistic: Beautiful treatment. Rich color. Great imagery. The video treatment is very sophisticated looking. The layers of the video and the transparency of the text box over the background image lend a really nice sense of depth. I like the collage treatment on the home page.

Technical: Technically excellent for the most part. In the sections, all the fonts are the same. You might want to differentiate clickable items with variations in elements like size or color (or background as on the home page). The "Life's Graffiti" slideshow seems to be unnecessarily larger in size than the videos, which are executed beautifully and load much faster.

How topic lends itself to this multimedia treatment: The topics of McCandless' search and your search for him are set against the backdrops of great natural beauty. The images you've chosen and particularly the depth you've achieved in layering images speak to the depth of McCandless' own search.

Judge: Kris Britt owns a multimedia development company called silente.com, and works primarily as a web designer in New York City.

Category 76, Online Coverage of Single Topic

First place: Stefan Milkowsky and Johnny Wagner, Climate Change, Fairbanks Daily News-Miner.

The human details of everyday life stand out in this fine online series, which combines clean and concise writing with "extra mile" reporting and terrific production and photography.

Thanks to Milkowsky's writing and Wagner's photography, I can almost smell the melting

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permafrost - and see the fear of ground-level climate change on the faces of Alaskans. The News-Miner can be proud of bringing a global issue home with such power.

Second place. New Media Department, Quiet Tragedy, Juneau Empire.

In a dignified and serious news package, the Juneau Empire brings to its online community a deeply troubling story — and tells it with compassion, and with the opportunity to make Juneau's voices heard. This series stirred commentary and some controversy, and it turned needed attention to the tragic increase in teen suicide. The stories by Kim Marquis were powerful; the deeply engrossing (and moving) comments online were even better — and the Empire's “call to conversation” was clearly heard.

Judge: Tom Watson is the managing partner, CauseWired Communications LLC and a longtime journalist and professional communicator.

Category 77, Online Video Journalism

First place: Fran Durner, “Bugs of Summer: the good, the bad and the squishy,” Anchorage Daily News

[HTTP://COMMUNITY.ADN.COM/MINI_APPS/VMIX/PLAYER.PHP?ID=1955675&GID=118](http://COMMUNITY.ADN.COM/MINI_APPS/VMIX/PLAYER.PHP?ID=1955675&GID=118)

First and foremost, the title was creative and eye-catching; it instantly made me wonder what the content of the story would entail – my curiosity was piqued from the title graphic alone. I found the piece to be extremely educational and entertaining and I found myself wondering if I would have read the entire article only in print, so the on-line component added a nice spark to the subject matter. The segment was especially effective being told from the “In their own words” perspective... I felt like I was taking a gardening/extension course as I watched the piece. The photography was EXCELLENT...given the tiny size of most of the subjects of the piece. Nicely edited; well told – Fran turned what on the surface would seem like a rather mundane topic into an educational, visually pleasing and entertaining clip.

Second place: Juneau Empire New Media Department, “Young Science,”

[HTTP://LINK.BRIGHTCOVE.COM/SERVICES/LINK/BCPID1243526600/BCLID1243732116/BCTID1448204766](http://LINK.BRIGHTCOVE.COM/SERVICES/LINK/BCPID1243526600/BCLID1243732116/BCTID1448204766)

The moment I began watching the piece, I was pulled into the story of this science teacher. The online component of this segment added life and flavor to what goes on in that classroom.

There was an excellent mix of shots of the children –what this story is really all about – which really drove home the emotion of why this program is so important not only for the teacher but for the kids. I could tell this teacher is passionate about what she does, the program and why she teaches her students. The segment gave me a good “tease” of what to expect by reading the full article and I would have been much more likely to read more after watching this clip. It was a well-told “mini-story” within the story, which I found to be a creative use of resources to drive more readers to the story and the newspaper.

Third place: Juneau Empire New Media Department, “Smithsonian Bound,”

[HTTP://LINK.BRIGHTCOVE.COM/SERVICES/LINK/BCPID1243526600/BCLID1243732116/BCTID1534502819](http://LINK.BRIGHTCOVE.COM/SERVICES/LINK/BCPID1243526600/BCLID1243732116/BCTID1534502819)

A beautiful opening shot! Excellent use of nat sound off the top of the piece. I was hooked immediately to this story; not only the information but also the scenery and the way it was shot. I thought there was a good mix of interviews with the individuals who have helped to make this project possible and what it takes to get the canoe to Washington, D.C. – fascinating! The only thing I would have like to have seen and/or heard, was more comments from the participants of

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their EMOTIONS... how did they FEEL to be working on this project – what was it like to paddle toward their place in history... were they excited, proud, nervous, etc, etc. I am curious to see how this journey concludes and would be overjoyed to visit the Smithsonian and see the canoe, which would put the finishing touches on this story. Again...more emotion was the item, which would have put this story over the top!!!

Judge: Julia Yarbough (See Category 54).

Category 78, Best Blog

First place: Anchorage Daily News Staff, “Alaska Politics” Anchorage Daily News

The ADN's Politics Blog makes a good case for itself as a great example of how a blog can be an effective part of a news organization—no small feat considering this was the biggest year for Alaskan politics in recent memory. A variety of contributors covering the spectrum of state-wide politics, the use of video, audio and photos, and the original reporting gives a sense of the personalities, the processes, and the general goings-on of government and politics in Alaska. It was indispensable reading in the build-up to the election as Alaska's political establishment was in upheaval. And through it all, and despite its label of “blog” and the constant need for more content, the contributors kept their standards of good journalism, citing sources and vetting late-breaking information.

Second place: Peter Dunlap Shohl “Off and On: The Alaska Parkinson's Rag” Peter Dunlap Shohl

Peter Dunlap Shohl's Alaska Parkinson's Rag is many things: a community resource, a humor column, a science and medicine explainer. But it's also something that few blogs ever manage to be: addictive and gripping. Everything seems to work just right on this blog, and it is a powerful testament to what a person can achieve in this medium. Shohl's cartoons act not only as illustration, but an expansion of his message, especially in examples such as The Adventures of Flash Molasses. The vivid original artwork could just as easily hang in a gallery as illustrate Shohl's writing. This blog should be required reading for anyone whose life has been touched by, or is simply curious about, Parkinson's disease. He tackles a tough subject with energy, wit, and grace.

Third place: Fran Durner, “Talk Dirt to Me,” Anchorage Daily News

First, that name. Fran Durner struck gold with that name — or should I say pay-dirt? The murky floor of the blogosphere is littered with the rusting shells of blogs neglected and poorly named, maybe the key is to come up with a title that makes you smile every time you read it. But Durner does more than float on a well-named blog. She creates a community and does not waver in serving it with information on events, techniques, and interesting anecdotes. And the photography is terrific and well deployed. More blogs should follow Durner's lead and remember to add a visual element to each post, especially when the subject matter offers so many opportunities for photography.

Judge: Jeremy Rue is a multimedia training instructor for the Knight Digital Media Center at the University of California-Berkeley Graduate School of Journalism. He judged this category in collaboration with colleagues.

Category 79, Audio Slideshows

First place: Brian Patrick O'Donoghue, “Field Testing the Witness” News Miner/UAF Journalism.

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This is one of the more compelling slideshows we've seen recently. It's a great use of the medium that pushes the craft of audio slideshows into investigative reporting narrative. We were impressed by the use of recorded interviews, old news clips, visual aids, and the strong narration to create a well-paced piece. We particularly enjoyed the segment with the students re-enacting the scene of the crime. We do feel the overall photography could have been much stronger, that the ending could have been tightened up and that speakers were more often identified. But overall, a strong piece of reportage.

Second place: Amy Schenk and Joshua Borough, "Miss Chugiak-Eagle River Scholarship Pageant," Alaska Star.

Schenk and Borough have created an excellent example of classic audio slideshow storytelling: a narrator (who is not the reporter) combined with a visually interesting subject to provide a glimpse into an event. The audio is particularly effective at introducing us to this world. The photos were good, but were mostly performance shots. We would have liked to have seen more variation, such as behind-the-scenes shots of the girls preparing, practicing, or worrying over their performances.

Third place: Johnny Wagner, "Arctic Man 2008," Fairbanks Daily News-Miner.

The opening and closing photos of this series were perfect, with many gorgeous photos in-between. We felt each photo was strong enough to stand on its own as a great centerpiece published in a newspaper, but would have liked to have seen them come together more fluidly to form a narrative. The interviews were pretty good, these people just sound interesting. But we'd like to see the audio and visual match up -- show us more of the family with the divorced parents, or make it more clear that the participant has an injured leg. Overall, the pacing was somewhat relaxed, which contrasted a little too much with the excitement of the subject matter.

Judge: Jeremy Rue et al (see Category 78).

ALL MEDIA

Category 80, Leslie Ann Murray Award for Best Editorial Writing

First place: Jenny Neyman, The Redoubt Reporter

This is classically good editorial writing, and would be recognized as such in any paper in the country. She's done her thinking before her writing. She has a good take. She gets to the point quickly, sets up her arguments well, parries counter arguments and finishes strong. Editorials are clean, logical and persuasive.

Second place: Matt Zencey, Anchorage Daily News

Matt lays the lumber on the governor by artfully contrasting the facts with the governor's spin. Editorials are clear, well sourced and leave no doubt what the page's position is. Ms. Palin didn't pull one over on the Daily News.

Third place: Thad Poulson, Daily Sitka Sentinel

Good mix of local and state viewpoints. The piece on the city's near-giveaway of property to a private company is exactly the kind of local analysis that demonstrate the worth of editorial pages.

Judge: Tom Condon is an editorial writer and columnist at The Hartford Courant.

Category 81, Best Alaska Outdoors Story

First place: Tom Miller, Bad luck, and then good," Ketchikan Daily News

A detailed look at how an ordinary family fishing trip turned into a life or death situation.

Miller breaks down how a family's resilience and a community's volunteer emergency response

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turned a possible tragedy into a survival story. This story stood out because it recreated the event with key moments full of the smallest details.

Second place: McKibben Jackinsky, "Taking it slow with Alaska's brown bears," Homer News
A scene-by-scene breakdown of how two videographers are using a new, high-tech camera to capture the unique hunting behavior of brown bears. The descriptive scenes of the bears fishing in Hallo Bay illuminates the power of the new cameras and what's special about the subjects being filmed. The story compliments another piece in the same paper about how bear viewing is an important tourist draw for Homer and the surrounding area.

Third place: Scott Jensen, Jason Kohler, Carolyn Hall and Jason Moore, "Running of the...What!" KTUU, Channel 2

A humorous look at the running of the caribou. From the opening clip, "Only in Alaska," to the quick cutaways of people running down the city streets dodging caribou, the distinctive local flavor of the event comes out. Quick edits and fun quotes make this video story stand out.

Judge: Joe Spring is an assistant editor at Outdoor magazine.

Category 82, Best Alaska History Story

First place: John Carpenter and Eric Sowl, "Castner's Cut Throats," KTUU.

Relatively unknown but important story; very well edited interviews; good establishing of context and significance of story; good on the unique aspects of the story (locals with wilderness experience, "right kind of people;" getting posted to the unit despite objection of general); good production values.

Second place: Scott Christiansen, "Pulling History from the Sea," Anchorage Press.

Highly interesting story, as much for the current saga of organizing the diving project and tracking down information as for the attempt to establish the Army on the Kenai Peninsula in 1868; good background and context; good use of detail; good photos

Third place: Johanna Eurich, "Two Villages," APRN.

Important perspective on rural/bush Alaska; excellent editing of interviews, arresting details (name of village [wrong way to go], drowning of founders, community building of Stoney River, story of the generator crank); high production values.

Judge: Steve Haycox is a professor of history at the University of Alaska Anchorage who has written extensively about Alaska history.

Category 83, Humor

First place: Rich Chiappone, "What We Talk About When We Talk About Squirrels,"

Anchorage Press.

Entertaining, relatively lengthy tale that fortunately doesn't end with the porcupine on fire along with the rest of the house, like a famous Outside magazine story did. Plus, Rich's story elicited four all-important LOLs. (I judge based on witfulness and the number of times I actually laugh out loud.) Lovely turns of phrase, including "the dog standing...howling its limited supply of brains out" and "I have not seen an expression that blank since a former governor left office."

Second place: Ryan Reynolds, "Weird Book of the Week: All About Varmint Hunting," Seward Phoenix Log.

Short and sweet, garnering three LOLs. A muscular yet agile writing style that reminded me so much of my own that I had to award Ryan a top-three standing. I will ever hence treasure the idea of Punxsatawney Phil "taking a face plant in the last shadow he'll ever see."

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Third place: Matt Lichtenstein and Crabbait Radio, "It's Rougher in Alaska," KSFK
The audio imagery of the treacherous trip to the library stands as a stark reminder of the dangers lurking at every turn in a state from which one can so easily see Russia.

Judge: Steve Mirsky keeps his humor while writing for Scientific American.

Category 84, Investigative reporting

NOTE: 1 & 2 were very, very close, nearly a tie.

First place: Lisa Demer, "Begich, Stevens Intertwined with Anchorage Developers,"
Anchorage Daily News.

Though not nearly as long as a couple of other entries, this was classic investigative reporting aimed at powerful people who were supposed to be serving the public. The series exposed apparent misuses of power and improper relationships by high-ranking public officials, and it told readers a story they needed to know.

Second place: Brian Patrick O'Donoghue and UAF journalism students, "Decade of Doubt,"
Fairbanks Daily News-Miner.

Though leaning more towards serial narrative at times than classic investigative reporting, the work was thoroughly researched and detailed in its presentation. This was obviously a story the community yearned to hear and a story that offered explanations for long-held suspicions by the community.

Third place. No third place.

Judge: Russell Carollo is a Pulitzer Prize winner for national reporting and was a finalist three other years.

Category 85, Best media website

First place. Anchorage Daily News. There are a few redundancies, and some of the news tends to get lost in the clutter, but the Daily News web site is still the most comprehensive, authoritative online resource for much of the state. It has excellent multimedia presentations, user-friendly widgets, and small touches (prominent statewide and local forecasts) that make it one of the better models for online news presentation.

Second place. UAF/Extreme Alaska. A wonderful hodgepodge of stories. Larger and older, more well-established media would do well to pay attention to some of the innovative ideas being pursued by these students. Some things work, and some things don't, but they deserve extra credit for trying. If this is the future of news, it's not all bad.

Third place. Alaska Teen Media Institute. A site that chases the mythical young news consumer without any of the pandering or condescension that's doomed so many efforts to failure. Bonus points for giving the kids a double-dose of context: A clear-eyed look at what it's like not just to be a teen-ager, but to be a teen-ager in Alaska.

Judge: Frank Bass, author of The AP Guide to Internet Research and Reporting, is a member of the AP's special projects team.

Category 86, Public Service Award

First place (Tie): Matt Zencey, Frank Gerjevic, Rosemary Shinohara, Anchorage Daily News.
Editorials on Gov. Sarah Palin

Brian O'Donoghue and students, Fairbanks Daily News-Miner investigative series "Decade of Doubt."

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This was an extraordinary year for public service journalism in Alaska. Judges Gary Cohn and Loretta Tofani were greatly impressed by the overall quality of the entries. They have decided to give two Public Service Awards this year – to the Anchorage Daily News for its clearly written and brilliant editorials about Gov. Sarah Palin and to the Fairbanks Daily News Miner for its groundbreaking investigative series that raised questions about the convictions of four young men in the 1997 murder of 15-year-old John Hartman.

The Anchorage Daily News editorials on Gov. Palin were insightful and informative, well-reasoned and balanced on an issue of vital public concern: the strengths, weaknesses and policies that Sarah Palin would have brought to the Vice Presidency, based on her performance as Alaska governor. As Judge Loretta Tofani commented, “Through these editorials, I learned more about the record of Sarah Palin than I did from any of the dozens of stories I read about her in national newspapers and magazines. Compared to these editorials, everything else I read about Sarah Palin feels like fluff.”

The Fairbanks News Miner investigative series, “Decade of Doubt,” by Brian O’Donoghue and his University of Alaska at Fairbanks students was a careful and comprehensive look at the controversial trials and convictions of four young in a controversial murder case. Over a six year period, O’Donoghue reviewed evidence presented at the trials – and evidence not admitted – and provided a full picture of what happened the night John Hartman was murdered.

O’Donoghue took readers to the police station where police manipulated young men to confess, to a crime lab that incorrectly linked a young man’s boots to bruises on the murder victim’s face, and to a wedding reception that a convicted man attended at the time the murder took place. The findings, particularly that of the highly circumstantial nature of the evidence, raised serious questions about the convictions — and the quality of justice in Alaska’s law enforcement system.

Judges: Gary is a former Atwood Professor at the University of Alaska Anchorage and the winner of the Pulitzer Prize and numerous other national journalism awards. Loretta Tofani is a longtime investigative reporter and foreign correspondent and the winner of the Pulitzer Prize and numerous other national journalism awards.

Category 87 Howard Rock-Tom Snapp First Amendment Award

Gregg and Judy Erickson.

Judges: The Alaska Press Club board of directors.