

NEW YORK NEWS PUBLISHERS ASSOCIATION, INC.

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President

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Rome—Daily Sentinel
Salamanca—Salamanca Press
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Saratoga Springs—The Saratogian
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Staten Island—Staten Island Advance
Syracuse—The Post-Standard
The Tonawandas—Tonawanda News
Troy—The Record
Utica—Observer-Dispatch
Watertown—Watertown Daily Times
Wellsville—Wellsville Daily Reporter
White Plains—The Journal News

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ALBANY, NY – The New York News Publishers Association has announced the winners of its 2008-2009 Awards for Excellence competition. This year's winners were officially recognized at the Excellence Awards Dinner and Reception on Wednesday, April 28 at The State Room in Albany. The annual contest recognizes journalistic excellence among the association's member newspapers.

Newspapers competed against one another in five circulation categories: Under 10,000; 10,000-24,999; 25,000-49,999; 50,000-175,000; and Over 175,000.

Contest judges selected winners from 517 entries submitted by 29 New York State daily newspapers. The judges were Caitlin Brown PhD, Assistant Professor of Communications at the College of St. Rose in Albany; Mark Lindsay, Senior Industry Editor at SNL Financial in Charlottesville, VA; Eric Paddock, Editor of the *Times Observer* in Warren, PA; Laura Wahler, Assistant Editor of *Going Places Magazine* for AAA of Western and Central New York; and Wendy Zang, Director of Special Sections for McClatchy Information Services in Sewichley, PA.

Awards were presented in each of 15 traditional print categories:

Distinguished Breaking News Coverage, Distinguished Investigative Reporting, Distinguished Business Reporting, Distinguished Editorial Writing, Distinguished Feature Writing, Distinguished Column Writing, Distinguished Headline Writing, Distinguished Sports Writing, Distinguished Community Service, Distinguished State Government Coverage, Distinguished Sports Coverage, Distinguished Page Design/Presentation, Distinguished News Photography, Distinguished Feature Photography, and Distinguished Sports Photography.

Awards were also presented in each of four online categories:

Distinguished Online Breaking News Coverage, Distinguished Online Blog, Distinguished Online Graphics, and Distinguished Multi-Media Presentation.

Winning entries in the Distinguished Breaking News Coverage category reflect effective newspaper response to deadline demands; and clarity, thoroughness, balance and aggressiveness in the coverage of local spot news.

Winning entries in the Distinguished Investigative Reporting category demonstrate thorough, thoughtful, fair, and resourceful reporting of local stories that reveal corruption, or malfeasance, or inherent flaws in the functioning of society's institutions; and/or effectively measure the performance of those institutions against their stated missions.

Winning entries in the Distinguished Business Reporting category show effective newspaper coverage of business and the economy, skillful investigative reporting and excellence in writing style, editing, display and other pertinent criteria. The subject matter deals primarily with how business and economic events relate to individuals and the newspaper's community.

Winning entries in the Distinguished Editorial Writing category stress the concern for local community problems, courage in taking a position regardless of the popular view, and originality of viewpoint and style.

Winning entries in the Distinguished Feature Writing category showcase good writing in non-deadline situations. Submissions can include personality profiles, trend stories, narratives and general features, and must demonstrate style, originality and the ability to connect emotionally with the readers.

Winning entries in the Distinguished Column Writing category demonstrate originality, insight, wit, the capacity to illuminate character, and the capacity to enhance the reader's understanding of people and events in the community served by the newspaper.

Winning entries in the Distinguished Headline Writing category show clarity, creativity, and the capacity to distill and capture the essence of the story.

Winning entries in the Distinguished Sports Writing category demonstrate quality and clarity of writing, originality, and local appeal.

Winning entries in the Distinguished Community Service category show effort and effect on the part of a local newspaper toward improvement of the community it serves.

Winning entries in the Distinguished State Government Coverage category demonstrate effective coverage of state government as manifested in service to the community, skillful investigative reporting, and excellence in writing style, editing and display, with subject matter dealing primarily with an aspect of state government and how it relates to a newspaper's community.

Winning entries in the Distinguished Sports Coverage category exhibit innovative layout, design and photography, scope of content (variation of local sporting events), writing skill, headline suitability and appeal, and use of local features.

Winning entries in the Distinguished Page Design/Presentation demonstrate strong visual appeal, style and originality, and enhance the written content, making it easy to understand or navigate.

Winning entries in the Distinguished News Photography category stress news value, timeliness, communicative effectiveness, and skill as shown in composition and technical quality.

Winning entries in the Distinguished Feature Photography category demonstrate imagination, communicative effectiveness, appeal to reader interest, and skill in composition, technical quality and cropping.

Winning entries in the Distinguished Sports Photography category sharply capture the drama inherent in human athletic competition and draw the reader's eye to peak action, capturing the moment and communicating it on an emotional level with a high degree of technical skill, composition and quality.

Winning entries in the Distinguished Online Breaking News Coverage category demonstrate effective newspaper response to a breaking news story online, while exhibiting clarity, thoroughness, balance and aggressiveness in the coverage of local spot news.

Winning entries in the Distinguished Online Blog category show timeliness, originality, insight, reader interaction and the capacity to enhance the reader's understanding of persons and events in the community served by the newspaper.

Winning entries in the Distinguished Online Graphics category help explain the news, feature, or sports story the entry accompanies, and were selected based on impact, attractiveness and relevance.

Winning entries in the Distinguished Multi-Media Presentation category demonstrate work that incorporates distinguished journalistic storytelling via media other than the print format, while clearly showing creativity, ease-of-use for the Web site visitor, impact on the community and overall technical execution.

Following is the list of winners:

Under 10,000 Circulation Class

The Recorder in Amsterdam won awards in **Distinguished Column Writing** for "Graffiti isn't art" by J'Lyn Wimple, and in **Distinguished Sports Writing** for "Schenectady youngster still the talk of Hall of Fame Classic" by Adam Shinder.

The *Daily Mail* in Catskill took home the award for **Distinguished Online Breaking News Coverage** with "1 dead, 1 in custody following shooting, chase" by Susan Campriello.

The *Cortland Standard* won the award for **Distinguished Sports Coverage** with "New York Jets first camp in Cortland" by the Cortland Standard Staff.

The *Register-Star* in Hudson won in the **Distinguished News Photography** category for "Raging Inferno" by Robert Ragaini.

The *Adirondack Daily Enterprise* in Saranac Lake was one of the biggest winners in its circulation class, taking home awards in **Distinguished Breaking News Coverage** for “Dog stabbed to death” by Nathan Brown; **Distinguished Investigative Reporting** for “Uihlein draws major fine” by Jessica Collier; **Distinguished Feature Writing** for “Harrowing escape” by Jessica Collier; **Distinguished State Government Coverage** for “Yellow-lettered signs could go by the wayside” by Chris Knight; and **Distinguished Feature Photography** for “Family Fishing” by Lou Reuter.

The Saratogian in Saratoga Springs was the other big winner of the Under 10,000 circulation class, with wins in **Distinguished Business Reporting** for “Agriculture Coverage” by Paul Post; **Distinguished Editorial Writing** for “City Budget Editorials” by Barbara Lombardo; **Distinguished Headline Writing** for “Karnar Blue, park's top dog?/Butterflies may oust canines from select state park space” by Kellen Riell; **Distinguished Sports Photography** for “Safe at Third” by Ed Burke; and **Distinguished Online Blog** for "Saratoga City Desk" by Andrew Bernstein.

10,000-24,999 Circulation Class

The Citizen in Auburn won two awards, including **Distinguished Investigative Reporting** for “Auburn DPW Scandal” by Christopher Caskey, and **Distinguished Multi-Media Presentation** for “Visiting Tubman Sites” by Jill Connor.

The Daily Messenger in Canandaigua took home awards in **Distinguished Editorial Writing** for editorials by Kevin Frisch; **Distinguished Feature Writing** for “The Canandaigua Treaty” by Margaret Poe; **Distinguished Column Writing** for “Funny Things” by Kevin Frisch; and **Distinguished Online Breaking News Coverage** for “Canandaigua Fire” by Jessica Pierce.

The *Finger Lakes Times* in Geneva received recognition in three categories, winning awards in **Distinguished Community Service** for “Leachate & The Lake” by David Shaw, Chuck Schading, and Paul Barrett; **Distinguished Feature Photography** for “The Immigrant Child” by Spencer Tulis; and **Distinguished Sports Photography** for “Goal” by Spencer Tulis.

The *Leader-Herald* in Gloversville won the award for **Distinguished Online Blog** with “Bill's Broadsides” by Bill Ackerbauer.

The Ithaca Journal won the award for **Distinguished State Government Coverage** for “DEC, Cornell and Lake Source Cooling” by Krisy Gashler.

The *Union-Sun & Journal* in Lockport took home awards in **Distinguished Breaking News Coverage** for “Coverage of Flight 3407 Crash” by the Union-Sun & Journal Staff, and **Distinguished Page Design/Presentation** for “Why? The crash of Flight 3407” by Jocelyn Delmar.

The Daily Star in Oneonta received recognition in three categories, including **Distinguished Sports Writing** for “Stallions Series” by Dean Russin; **Distinguished Sports Coverage** for “First at last” by Dean Russin, PJ Harmer, and Rob Centorani; and **Distinguished News Photography** for “Manhunt” by Brit Worgan.

The *Press-Republican* in Plattsburgh won awards in **Distinguished Business Reporting** for “Battle to Survive” by Bruce Rowland, and **Distinguished Headline Writing** for “TV climax: Local star laments being American idle” by Bob Grady.

25,000-49,999 Circulation Class

The *Press & Sun-Bulletin* in Binghamton took home five awards, including **Distinguished Breaking News Coverage** for “Massacre on Front Street” by the Press & Sun-Bulletin Staff; **Distinguished Sports Coverage** for “Dancin’” by Dave Shultz, Kevin Hogan, Al Vieira, and Mark Ruiz; **Distinguished Page Design/Presentation** for designs by Al Vieira; **Distinguished Sports Photography** for “Third Base Slide” by Diogenes Agcaoili, Jr.; and **Distinguished Online Blog** for “The Watchdog Blog” by Doug Schneider and Jeff Platsky.

The Post-Star in Glens Falls won awards in **Distinguished Editorial Writing** for “Cutting County Budgets” by Mark Mahoney, and **Distinguished Multi-Media Presentation** for “Living with Autism” by Jeff Fehder, Alyson Martin, and Alex Nunes.

The *Poughkeepsie Journal* was one of the biggest winner of the night, winning awards in nine categories, including **Distinguished Business Reporting** for “CRM” by Mary Beth Pfeiffer; **Distinguished Feature Writing** for “Birth by surgery: the skyrocketing cesarean rate” by Mary Beth Pfeiffer; **Distinguished Column Writing** for selections by Maria Burnham; **Distinguished Headline Writing** for “Planet Albany’: Few stars, no sense of gravity” by Ron Bittner; **Distinguished Sports Writing** for selections by Mike Benischek; **Distinguished State Government Coverage** for “MTA Impact” by Jenny Lee-Adrian and John Penney; **Distinguished News Photography** for “Picture Window” by Spencer Ainsley; **Distinguished Feature Photography** for “Surviving and Thriving” by Darryl Bautista; and **Distinguished Online Breaking News Coverage** for “Snowstorm Pummels Valley” by the Poughkeepsie Journal Staff.

The *Staten Island Advance* won the award for **Distinguished Community Service** for “Staten Island’s Health Care Crisis” by Frank Donnelly.

The *Observer-Dispatch* in Utica took home the award for **Distinguished Investigative Reporting** with “Conflicts of Interest” by Jennifer Fusco.

50,000-175,000 Circulation Class

The *Times Union* in Albany received honors in four categories, including **Distinguished Editorial Writing** for “Ghost Tickets” by Jim McGrath; **Distinguished State Government Coverage** for “No-Work State Worker/State Insurance Fund” by James M. Odato; **Distinguished Page Design/Presentation** for designs by Tom Palmer; and **Distinguished News Photography** for “Dog Hit and Run” by Lori Van Buren.

The *Times Herald-Record* in Middletown won the award for **Distinguished Feature Writing** with “Sex fiend who abducted young girls up for parole” by Oliver Mackson.

The *Democrat and Chronicle* in Rochester was another big winner of the competition, taking home honors in **Distinguished Business Reporting** for “Surviving and Climbing” by the Democrat and Chronicle Staff; **Distinguished Column Writing** for “A Life Lived” by Mark Hare; **Distinguished Headline Writing** for “The Roaring 40s/Your guide to spotting and dating cougars” by Marcia Greenwood; **Distinguished Sports Writing** for “Voices of Seasons” by James Mandelaro; **Distinguished Community Service** for “Picture the Impossible” by the Democrat and Chronicle Staff; **Distinguished Sports Coverage** for “Wegmans LPGA Tournament” by the Democrat and Chronicle Staff; **Distinguished Feature Photography** for “Dancers” by Carlos Ortiz; **Distinguished Online Graphics** for “From Tee to Green - Golf Course Interactive” by Scott Sheils and Sal Maiorana; and **Distinguished Multi-Media Presentation** for “Double Initial Murders” by Gary Craig, Max Schulte, and Kyle Omphroy.

The Post-Standard in Syracuse received recognition in three categories, including **Distinguished Investigative Reporting** for “Sins and Confessions” by John O’Brien; **Distinguished Sports Photography** for “Refusal to Jump” by Lauren Long; and **Distinguished Online Blog** for “Following Orion” by Dave Tobin.

The Journal News in White Plains won awards in **Distinguished Breaking News Coverage** and **Distinguished Online Breaking News Coverage** for its coverage of a fatal crash on the Taconic State Parkway.

Over 175,000 Circulation Class

The Buffalo News had winning entries in eight categories, taking home awards for **Distinguished Headline Writing** with “City says E-I-E-I-No” by Melinda Miller; **Distinguished Sports Writing** for “Core Strength” by John Vogl; **Distinguished Community Service** for “Flight 3407” by the Buffalo News Staff; **Distinguished Page Design/Presentation** for “Lord of the Rings” by Vince Chiamonte; **Distinguished News Photography** for “Plane Crash” by Harry Scull, Bill Wippert, and Derek Gee; **Distinguished Feature Photography** for “Music in Motion” by Bill Wippert; **Distinguished Sports Photography** for “Niagara Loses Championship” by Mark Mulville; and **Distinguished Online Blog** for “Outrages and Insights” by James Heaney.

Newsday won the award for **Distinguished Editorial Writing** for editorials by Anne Michaud.

The New York Times received recognition in four categories, including **Distinguished State Government Coverage** for “World of Hurt” by N.R. Kleinfeld and Steven Greenhouse; **Distinguished Sports Coverage** for “The 2009 U.S. Open” by the New York Times Sports Department Staff; **Distinguished Online Graphics** for “Green speeds, a weapon and a signature at the Open” by Shan Carter, Mika Grondahl, and Joe Ward; and **Distinguished Multi-Media Presentation** for “One in Eight Million” by the New York Times Staff.

The Wall Street Journal in New York won awards in **Distinguished Breaking News Coverage** for “GM Bankruptcy” by the Wall Street Journal Staff; **Distinguished Investigative Reporting** for “The Highflying Mr. Pang” by Mark Maremont; **Distinguished Business Reporting** for “Beyond the Bubble” by the Wall Street Journal Staff; **Distinguished Feature Writing** for

“Broken Homes” by Michael M. Phillips; and **Distinguished Column Writing** for “Bonds/On Relationships” by Elizabeth Bernstein.

John Peter Zenger Award

Robert J. Freeman, Executive Director of the New York State Committee on Open Government, received the John Peter Zenger Award in recognition of his exemplary service to freedom of information and open government in New York State.