

ALL MEDIA

James Batten Award for Public Service

First Place: South Florida Sun-Sentinel; Megan O'Matz & John Maines; Florida gun law

Comments: Thanks to the South Florida Sun-Sentinel, we know that burglars, child molesters and even murderers are allowed to carry concealed weapons. We also know that this news doesn't bother the legislature nearly as much as the publication of the gun toters' names. This is why we must continue to have newspapers—to warn us of threats to public safety and the foolishness of public officials. The Sun-Sentinel sounded the alarm—and just in the nick of time.

Second Place: The Palm Beach Post; Tom Dubocq; Palm Beach County's culture of corruption

Third Place: The Florida Times-Union; Staff; Homicide 360

NEWSPAPERS & MAGAZINES

Deadline News Reporting - Large

First Place: The Palm Beach Post; Staff; Pahokee deputies killed

Comments: This was a compelling piece of narrative writing describing several snapshots of a grieving community. Writers used quotes sparingly, but effectively. Readers were able to experience a community's pain and strength at the same time.

Second Place: Daytona Beach News-Journal; Staff; Devastation

Comments: A mother and daughter clinging to the bedroom floor. An elderly couple being flung around their home. A mother snatching her child of a crib. These are just a few of the images the staff put together in the aftermath of a tornado that swept the community. They wrote compelling narrative while still gathering details on a developing story.

Third Place: The Miami Herald; Staff; Officer Somohano: Manhunt

Comments: Just hours after a suspect was apprehended in connection with a murdered police officer, the staff pieced together a detailed account of the last moments of a manhunt that unfolded while many of its readers were sleeping. Great job of deadline reporting and writing.

Deadline News Reporting - Small

First Place: The Villages Daily Sun; Staff; Tornado rips through area

Comments: The coverage of the tornado was outstanding from the Extra Edition published the day of the disaster that included a full page map, vital information for storm victims, picture pages and up-to-date stories to the same extensive effort by the staff on the aftermath. Stories continued day after day, month after month, keeping residents informed. All angles were covered.

Second Place: Bradenton Herald; Staff; 9-year-old slain in gang gunfire

Comments: The stories on the child killed in the gang gunfire were excellent not only because of the news coverage of the tragedy but the follow-up on the effect the death had on others – family members, school, NAACP, the community as a whole. The human touch added so much to the coverage. Also, there are columns plus articles on efforts to curb violence.

Third Place: The Gainesville Sun; Staff; Wildfire coverage

Comments: The newspaper provided thorough coverage of the wildfires that struck Florida. Informational graphics, sidebars on road closures, shelters, emergency lists, what to do if smoked out, how to battle a brush fire plus updates on the web kept the readers aware of all that was going on and how to prepare for the danger. The photos were outstanding. This certainly had to be a tired staff having to be everywhere to keep up with the situation.

Deadline Business Reporting - Large

First Place: The Miami Herald; Staff; Miami mega-plan

Comments: This story begins as a keyhole look into a project that has huge importance for the area and the reporters quickly recognized its significance, documented its status and assembled a powerful package of analytical and explanatory data.

Second Place: The Florida Times-Union; Timothy J. Gibbons; Port ready to land major deal

Comments: It isn't often that reporters get to work a story that has transformational significance to a

city. Gibbons broke a story that officials tried to keep under wraps and coaxed reaction and interpretive comment from a wide range of knowledgeable sources.

Third Place: The Miami Herald; Elaine Walker, Niala Boodhoo & Hannah Sampson; Black Friday madness

Comments: The Black Friday story is as old as the hills—and more than dull—usually. The reporters not only walked into a new angle but put an edge on it—a whole new level of greed and shopping madness.

Deadline Business Reporting - Small

First Place: Tampa Bay Business Journal; Michael Hinman; Chump tower

Comments: The writing made Chump Tower a winner. Instead of the dry, statistical approach, the creative leads drew the readers' attention. By writing simply instead of technically, the writer got even the non-business buff to read his stories. The articles were quite thorough.

Second Place: Bradenton Herald; Brian Neill; Coast Bank derails

Comments: Straightforward coverage enables the readers to understand the why and how Coast Bank went downhill. The timeline is an added bonus to help readers follow the events that transpired.

Third Place: Tampa Bay Business Journal; Margie Manning; FBI raids WellCare Health Plans

Comments: Extensive coverage of WellCare's woes plus stories that are not overwritten make this entry a winner. The coverage is like everything you ever wanted to know has been touched upon by the writer. Good reporting of the situation.

Non-Deadline Business Reporting - Large

First Place: The Palm Beach Post; Kristi E. Swartz; American Power

Comments: Excellent series of eight stories on the challenges facing Florida as it charts a path to providing sufficient energy to meet the state's needs. The series provides the reader with a balanced look at energy sources such as coal and nuclear power, as well as alternative sources such as wind, solar energy, wind and biomass. Well-researched and well-written.

Second Place: The Palm Beach Post; Pat Beall & Jeff Ostrowski; Cracks in the foundation: the rise in foreclosures

Comments: Excellent series localizing what is a national home loan crisis. Pat Beall and Jeff Ostrowski did a thorough job in researching the problem in Palm Beach from various angles, and its impact on residents and the region's economy.

Third Place: The Miami Herald; Niala Boodhoo, Angela Tablac, Patrick Danner & Gregg Fields; Eye on South Florida's economy

Comments: Thorough reporting on the state of South Florida's economy, spread across 11 months of 2007. The series covered all important aspects of the economy, from businesses, to workers, to the housing market and consumer spending. Excellent use of graphics helps reader understand the economic picture.

Non-Deadline Business Reporting - Small

First Place: New Times Broward*Palm Beach; Thomas Francis; Heartbreak Hotel

Comments: Descriptive, compelling writing with much research about the struggle of small motel owners against the developers of high-rise, luxury hotels on Hollywood Beach. A well-organized and balanced -- if not always a pretty -- picture.

Second Place: Tampa Bay Business Journal; Margie Manning; Collection

Comments: Clear, strong coverage of a variety of subjects. Her topics included hospital/health issues, stem cell banking, compliance officers, corporate governance and unauthorized data accessing.

Third Place: Bradenton Herald; Staff; Manatee's Money Squeeze

Comments: This series of articles deals with the housing market, jobs, insurance, retirement, wages and consumer prices. "Survival 101" tips were boxed into each subject to help readers find simple solutions. Charts, pictures, input from community members and experts helped put the troubling economy into perspective. Liked the coverage of "half-backs," who moved to nearby states, because of rising Florida costs. A good community service by half-dozen staffers.

Light Feature Reporting - Large

First Place: The Tampa Tribune; Donna Koehn; When dust clear, friendship remains

Comments: Development, suburban sprawl and dessication of open space are common themes. Donna Koehn reported this piece so thoroughly that those issues became a backdrop to an unlikely story of friendship between a tall, coiffed developer and the 15th son of struggling Spanish immigrants. With her solid reporting to rely on, Koehn crafted the piece carefully, using present tense, excellent pacing and fresh, apt description. As she writes, "This is a cowboy story, but one in which nobody wears a black hat..."

Second Place: The Miami Herald; Fabiola Santiago; My door is always open -- it's a Cuban thing

Comments: Fabiola Santiago sets an unsettled mood with her opening paragraph about a restless night at a B&B, where she and her youngest daughter are staying the night before the teenager starts college. Again, a common theme, the tug on parents who look forward to their freedom when children leave home, but paradoxically are devastated when they go. With details particular to this family and to the Cuban-American experience, this tale becomes universal, and the writer manages to tie in the lead with a satisfying final paragraph.

Third Place: South Florida Sun-Sentinel; Rhonda J. Miller; Minoring in manners

Comments: Rhonda Miller immediately sets a light, bright tone with her opener: "Eeeek!! Crumbs..." and continues this approach throughout the tightly written feature on college etiquette lessons designed to help students invited for a meal as part of a job interview. Miller manages to keep this light touch going throughout the story with good, snappy quotes and pacing. Here's one example from the middle of the piece: "No problem for Nick Paris, 20, an FAU football player and criminal justice major, who came based on two common student priorities. Free. Food."

Light Feature Reporting - Small

First Place: Ocean Drive; Brett Sokol; The new face of Miami Beach politics

Comments: In a sea of "light" feature entrants, Sokol's piece marries the investigative spirit of all good watchdog journalism with an easy, breezy style that is both easy to read and entertaining. The piece is newsworthy, timely and relevant to readers interested in Miami's political future – and its past.

Second Place: Key West Magazine; Editorial Staff; The Redeemers

Comments: Stimulating narration and wonderful quotes set this piece apart: "Church ain't built for a fashion show. If that's what you got in mind you better go somewhere else." Yet the entertaining prose doesn't detract from the larger discussion of the role of the modern church and how it is boosting its dwindling numbers.

Third Place: Key West Magazine; Editorial Staff; Sexy and single

Comments: A smart, snappy version of the Valentine's Day feature we've all written. This piece proves that a fresh approach that includes the question "why" can turn a tired standby into a colorful package that truly benefits the reader.

Serious Feature Reporting - Large

First Place: The Florida Times-Union; Konrad Marshall; In full view

Comments: Stuart Irving's story is riveting and timely because it could be our story. Mr. Marshall's journey toward identifying and ultimately humanizing this mentally ill homeless man some YouTube viewers and Times-Union readers know as "Knothead" is a fascinating exploration of the system that fails people like Irving. Tightly written and edited – a good read, and daring use of the first person. I also appreciate the work of the page designers and the use of the consecutive booking photos – nice work, everyone!

Second Place: The Associated Press; Melissa Nelson; U.S. bomb school suffers worse year since '45

Comments: It's so difficult to write a story about troops killed in Iraq and Afghanistan without being maudlin, but Ms. Nelson's account of the deaths of the young men and woman of Team Lima in Iraq gives us a rare glimpse into the training they went through and the important work these young heroes did. Well-written and researched, and sadly, the kind of story we need to see more of so we remember that our children are at war, even if we're not.

Third Place: The Florida Times-Union; David Hunt; It's really humiliating -- but will it be a deterrent?

Comments: Mr. Hunt delivers a tight, fast-paced great read on Putnam County's version of "The Scarlet Letter" – my stomach churned in sympathy for these folks who probably wish they had never walked into the store that day. I especially enjoyed the "Crimes and Their Creative Punishments" box at the end. Entertaining and informative. Nice work!

Serious Feature Reporting - Small

First Place: Miami New Times; Tamara Lush; Rapture of the deep

Comments: A satisfying read, even if at the end, the question of why three divers died in the Spiegel Grove can't be fully answered. The writer spins an engrossing tale that effortlessly teaches readers about the lures and perils of diving. It's written with the authority that comes when a skilled writer works with material gathered through thorough reporting.

Second Place: Creative Loafing; Alex Pickett; Second life

Comments: The writer's point of view is clear, but restrained enough to let the reporting speak for itself. Larger questions about the judicial system are woven through a story of how two men's lives intersected and became more purposeful as a result. Readers are left examining their own beliefs -- a sign of a provocative, thought-provoking piece.

Third Place: Naples Daily News; Katy Bishop; Paying the price

Comments: There are a lot of numbers in this story, but numbers -- the economics driving the mix of businesses on Naples' Fifth Avenue South -- are changing the character of a main street. It's easy to tell such a story in hindsight; news organizations do their communities a far greater service to try to tell it while there's still a chance to make decisions that can change the outcome. An ambitious effort to make complicated material meaningful to readers.

Gene Miller Award for Investigative Reporting - Large

First Place: South Florida Sun-Sentinel; Megan O'Matz & John Maines; Florida gun law

Comments: Kudos to Megan O'Matz and John Maines for their exhaustive reporting on a timely topic that garnered national attention -- and with good reason. Too often media outlets report on a law passing but never go back to analyze whether it's working. O'Matz and Maines did just that, revealing to readers that hundreds of their neighbors have a license to carry a concealed weapon despite having criminal records. The series combines impressive data analysis with compelling personal stories. The South Florida Sun-Sentinel's work is a model for other media outlets wanting to serve their readers, viewers and listeners.

Second Place: The Palm Beach Post; Tom Dubocq; Palm Beach County's culture of corruption

Comments: Tom Dubocq's two-year investigation shows the importance of watchdog journalism. His persistence and tenacity over months of records analysis and interviews ensured readers of The Palm Beach Post were well informed about how some of their elected officials were conducting business. Senior federal Judge Kenneth Ryskamp was right in praising the paper's work when he said, "In a free country, we need a very diligent media."

Third Place: The Miami Herald; Larry Lebowitz, Oscar Corral & Debbie Cenziper; House of lies - Miami's crisis

Comments: Readers were no doubt outraged when they learned about the way Miami housing officials were doing their jobs. Reporters Debbie Cenziper, Oscar Corral and Larry Lebowitz are to be commended for their thorough reporting, especially in tracking down the victims who were languishing in squalid housing.

Gene Miller Award for Investigative Reporting - Small

First Place: Miami New Times; Isaiah Thompson; Under Bridge Series

Comments: Isaiah Thompson's story was too riveting to put down. Thompson, with the help of photographer Jacek Gancarz, tell a story that few readers will know but should. Thompson did an excellent job getting sources on the record and confronting elected officials about actions they had taken. This is the kind of journalism more news outlets should be doing.

Second Place: South Florida Business Journal; Brian Bandell & Darcie Lunsford; Business Incentive Letdowns

Comments: The South Florida Business Journal's analysis of business incentives offered readers substantive information about an issue that too often gets glossed over by journalists. Readers need to know whether the tax breaks being given to businesses result in the jobs that were promised.

Third Place: NO AWARD

Election Reporting - Large

First Place: South Florida Sun-Sentinel; Sally Kestin, Peter Franceschina, John Maines & Mike Clary; Fast fortune, big spending

Comments: Wow! This series was a well-thought-out, greatly constructed project. A wonderful read throughout! This work is the epitome of good investigative journalism — something, sadly, that isn't done often enough. Great job!

Second Place: NO AWARD

Third Place: NO AWARD

Election Reporting - Small

First Place: Creative Loafing; Wayne Garcia; The next president

Comments: I really enjoyed reading these sketches. They provided a comprehensive portrait of all the candidates, offering information key to the campaigns but adding personal facts that I found interesting. These stories would serve as a great guide for someone still unsure for whom they're going to vote.

Second Place: NO AWARD

Third Place: NO AWARD

Civil Law Reporting

First Place: Daily Business Review; Jordana Mishory; Behind the JQC curtain

Comments: This well written piece shines a thorough light on the Broward County judiciary's formal watchdog group in a way that is compelling and easy to read and understand. It exudes clarity, as well as nuance, both in just the right dose. Mishory demonstrates a perfect pairing of solid reporting and a heartfelt edge.

Second Place: Daily Business Review; John Pacenti; Legal superstars

Comments: Pacenti has taken a mysterious aspect of the legal arena--the world of big fees--and shows it to be a topic that can be discussed intelligently by the media. Using a sharp ability to report on a sensitive topic, he points out many ironies when it comes to enormous legal fees; and he showcases arguments that give readers much to think about.

Third Place: Daily Business Review; Julie Kay; Charity challenge

Comments: Kay delved into a probate case that encompasses an unusual amount of drama--and she demonstrates quite an ability to pull every aspect of this case into relief. Leaving no stone unturned, Kay is able to plug away at the humanity, the finances, the politics, the worldliness and the justice of this will contest.

Criminal Law Reporting

First Place: The Florida Times-Union; Staff; Homicide 360

Comments: This is an example of old-fashioned journalism at its best: an exhaustive collection of statistics and other information shining light on murders committed in Jacksonville in a three-year period. In this multi-story series, readers have the opportunity to thoroughly understand the harrowing problem--apparently the worst homicide rate in the state many years over--from several engrossing and riveting angles.

Second Place: Scripps Treasure Coast Newspapers; Gabriel Margasak; Officer escapes DUI charge

Comments: When a reporter is able to uncover instances of unfairness and injustice, journalism has a banner day. And this three-part story nicely accomplishes that task. When an off-duty police officer escaped arrest even though he was caught "too intoxicated to drive," Margasak's stories led to a tougher DUI policy instituted by Stuart Police. Due to these fairly simple, diligent and readable stories, an opportunity for greater fairness is now in place.

Third Place: Daily Business Review; Jordana Mishory & Billy Shields; Conflict counsel

Comments: The right to counsel is one of the bedrocks of the American criminal justice system. Mishory and Shields thoroughly explain to readers what happens when budget problems interfere with that crucial right for poor people/defendants who rely on the government to provide them access to counsel. The pieces dealing with this important subject exude thoroughness, diligence and commitment to journalism's role in overcoming injustice.

Medical/Health Care/Science Reporting

First Place: The Tampa Tribune; Gretchen Parker; Echo of an epidemic

Comments: You got me at "bowed like a banana." Skillfully written narrative that weaves in the necessary medical information, and the cosmically unfair outcomes of their struggles, without the least bit of

sentimentality. Clear, honest and true writing.

Second Place: The Palm Beach Post; Staff; Diabetes: the invisible epidemic

Comments: Talk about scared straight! If this doesn't get people up and moving, nothing will. Really effective package that doesn't let go. A great public service that let's hope gets through to kids early.

Third Place: Daily Business Review; Julie Kay; Better than bank robbery

Comments: Great lead, and a deceptively simple conclusion -- Medicare fraud "has eclipsed narcotics as the hottest and most lucrative field of crime" -- a major trend that costs us all.

Consumer Reporting

First Place: The Tampa Tribune; Mary Shedden; Toxic trinkets

Comments: The enterprise and amount of research the reporter put into this story is obvious. She tackled it from a variety of angles over a long period of time. The visual presentation of toys the Tribune itself had tested for lead is compelling.

Second Place: The Miami Herald; Martha Brannigan, Jennifer Lebovich & Matthew Haggman; Property taxes

Comments: The reporters took a creative, engaging approach to a common topic, using excellent graphics (especially in the story "The Tax Imbalance") to make it engaging. They made it very relevant to the average homeowner by zeroing in on specific homes and also covered the story from a variety of angles, including residents who are downsizing and buying second homes.

Third Place: South Florida Sun-Sentinel; Mc Nelly Torres; Is your nail salon safe?

Comments: This investigation showed initiative in looking into a major industry that is generally ignored. The story spurred new legislation to regulate inspections, which the reporter also followed through on in her coverage. The paper took extra steps by creating its own database on salons and using creative graphics to showcase the story, summarized statistics and information on what to look for in salons.

International/War/National Security Reporting

First Place: The Miami Herald; Casey Woods, Tyler Bridges, Phil Gunson & Casto Ocando; Venezuela Referendum

Comments: Solid deadline and contextual reporting gives readers a full picture of what happened and why. Separating this entry from the competition is its strong focus on the personalities of the main actors.

Second Place: Tallahassee Democrat; Julian Pecquet; Fighting Without Guns

Comments: A vivid slice-of-life look at conditions for U.S. forces on the ground outside the well-publicized zone of Iraq and Afghanistan.

Third Place: The Miami Herald; Carol Rosenberg; Guantanamo

Comments: Efficient contextual reporting that offers readers who may not closely follow the issue a useful basic picture of current conditions at Guantanamo.

State & Federal Political/Government Reporting

First Place: Bradenton Herald; Nick Azzara; Tax reform - the true impact

Comments: A fine example of public service journalism rooted in the everyday coverage of a traditional beat. The Herald offers readers a comprehensive, locally oriented examination of why the tax situation is as it is, how officials are debating to resolve it, and how such proposals have fared in other jurisdictions. Potential referendum voters would cast their votes with a solid grasp of the issues.

Second Place: Daytona Beach News-Journal; Deborah Circelli & Jim Saunders; State's disabled citizens facing care crisis

Comments: A sensitive but hard-hitting examination of how the state may be abandoning some of its weakest citizens.

Third Place: Daytona Beach News-Journal; Melissa Griggs & Anne Geggis; FAA bans radios from towers

Comments: Solid coverage of an alarming disconnect between air traffic controllers and their regulators in Washington.

Local Political/Government Reporting - Large

First Place: The Florida Times-Union; Beth Kormanik; Do you know when and where your city council is?

Comments: In a state known for its strong public access laws, reporter Beth Kormanik managed to show

that Florida's open meetings law may have been repeatedly violated by the Jacksonville City Council. The reader-friendly presentation of her dogged reporting made the story a pleasure to read. And her work underscores the crucial role journalists must continue to play in keeping government honest. Beth and The Florida Times-Union are to be commended.

Second Place: The Florida Times-Union; Mary Kelli Palka; Mayor's ex-aide wrongly won jobs
Comments: Mary Kelli Palka's investigation of the city of Jacksonville's procurement practices demonstrates the importance of checking records and holding officials accountable for their actions. Her clear, direct writing is a model for other government reporters.

Third Place: The Miami Herald; Ronnie Greene & Todd Wright; Hollywood Inc.
Comments: Miami Herald reporters Todd Wright and Ronnie Greene's tale of lobbyist influence on Hollywood, Florida, is a fine example of watchdog reporting. Thanks to Wright and Greene's work, readers know the story behind the story.

Local Political/Government Reporting - Small

First Place: South Florida Business Journal; Oscar Musibay; Political payoff?

Comments: Oscar Pedro Musiabay's dogged reporting and clear writing ensure readers will stay with these stories all the way through. Congratulations to Oscar and the South Florida Business Journal on giving readers the watchdog journalism they want and deserve.

Second Place: Tallahassee Democrat; Jeff Burlew & Julian Pecquet; Severance pay nears \$1 million
Comments: Bravo to the Tallahassee Democrat's Jeff Burlew and Julian Pecquet for their fine reporting that revealed that taxpayers were on the hook for \$1 million in severance pay. The well-written prose combined with the helpful chart made this a must read.

Third Place: Creative Loafing; Wayne Garcia; The athletic supporter
Comments: Wayne Garcia's well-timed analysis of a proposed sports complex hits all the bases. The reporting is solid, the writing is smooth and the context provided to readers adds much.

Education Reporting

First Place: The Miami Herald; Donna Gehrke-White & Fred Tasker; State colleges getting choosier
Comments: Not a glamorous story but well written, comprehensive and very useful information for aspiring college students to know - a great public service.

Second Place: Tallahassee Democrat; Staff; Turning Nims around

Comments: A really readable and acutely observant account of a principal's efforts to turn around a failing school.

Third Place: Scripps Treasure Coast Newspapers; Margot Susca, Colleen Wixon & Kelly Tyko; Are school grad rates simply an illusion?

Comments: I've never read about this, really learned something new. Helps cut through the obfuscation of graduation rates that some schools resort to and sheds lights on a group of students living and working out of the spotlight.

Age Beat Reporting

First Place: Daytona Beach News-Journal; Ray Weiss; Boxes tell the stories of their lives

Comments: Good piece of enterprise reporting on a subject that affects almost every family. No-frills writing style works for me. It was touching.

Second Place: South Florida Sun-Sentinel; Lois Solomon; Aging Holocaust survivors get help

Comments: A nice job telling a story worth telling. Writer maybe could have used a little more emotion in her telling it.

Third Place: NO AWARD

Social Policy Reporting

First Place: South Florida Sun-Sentinel; Megan O'Matz & John Maines; License to Carry

Second Place: The Miami Herald; Lisa Arthur & Nuri Vallbona; Mean Streets

Third Place: The Florida Times-Union; Staff; Homicide 360

Deadline Sports Reporting - Large

First Place: Orlando Sentinel; Ed Hinton; Franchitti finds Hollywood ending to his Indy 500 journey

Comments: This was hysterical. It had me laughing aloud as I was reading on. I was almost convinced it really was a movie script, or treatment therefore. The elements couldn't have come together more perfectly -- the celebrities, the event, the weather, the drama of the race -- than if it was really a movie. The story was an Academy Award winner.

Second Place: Orlando Sentinel; Dave Curtis & Lynn Hoppes; Donovan wants out

Comments: Once again the stars aligned just right to produce a great piece of reporting and to beat everyone else to it as well. This is the kind of reporting we need more of, while leaving the "expert analysis" and "commentary" to the self-labeled experts at an unnamed network whose initials are ESPN, who use stories like this to find out what happened in the first place.

Third Place: NO AWARD

Deadline Sports Reporting - Small

NO ENTRIES

Non-Deadline Sports Reporting - Large

First Place: Orlando Sentinel; David Whitley; Journey of self-discovery leads to football player's gender switch

Comments: Talk about non-traditional sports reporting, this takes the cake. Actually, this cuts it, literally. A fascinating examination into the feelings, physical and emotional, that gave cause to a young football star becoming a female via medical transformation to satisfy a long-time, secret biological desire. No two-minute-drill/game-winning drive here. Just a two-decade-long self-reflection, and self-admission.

Second Place: The Palm Beach Post; Hal Habib; Death match

Comments: Some don't consider professional wrestling a sport. Just entertainment. Sport competes for the entertainment dollar and wrestling competes for the sport dollar. To the death, from time to time, unfortunately. This story details the lives, the motivations and the blameless system that allows these men and women to drive themselves to their own deaths via drugs designed to make them perform better or mental motivation that drives them over the edge, all the way to suicide. But this can't be sports because they don't do that in other sports, do they?

Third Place: The Associated Press; Tim Reynolds; Miami player's slaying remains unsolved

Comments: I know what you're thinking: this is about Sean Taylor, right? Not. Bryan Pata is not Sean Taylor, is not a multimillion-dollar NFL superstar who has run afoul of the authorities. The \$21,000 offered as a reward for information in his killing is pocket change for the likes of the late Sean Taylor, the all-pro Washington Redskins defensive back killed in his Miami home. Pata was a gentle giant off the field who "pancaked" guys on the field. He was respected by his teammates, his coaches, his friends, loved by his girlfriend and his family. And his dog. His death and how it happened didn't give cause to moments of silence before NFL games or flyovers by the Blue Angels as after the death of Pat Tillman. But after you read this, you'll think there should've been.

Non-Deadline Sports Reporting - Small

First Place: The Ledger; Mike Cobb & Dick Scanlon; 100 years of high school football in Polk County

Comments: What a piece of research. The names, the dusty old yearbooks to pore over, the hunt for the oldest fans and participants still around, the memories, the great ones who have come and gone. Impressive. So was the five-part story.

Second Place: New Times Broward*Palm Beach; Bob Norman; Gang tackled

Comments: Hard to resist awarding this piece its due. Just the kind of story you never want to hear about, see or read. But just the kind of story you can't put down once you start it.

Third Place: Miami New Times; Isaiah Thompson; Grady and the champ

Comments: Little-known, forgotten boxer, but a bit-time local influence. Who knew? Muhammad Ali (nee Cassius Clay), that's who. And now the rest of us, thanks to this article.

Spanish-Language Publication

First Place: Visión Latina / The Ledger; Staff

Comments: Solid balance between pictures, stories and layout. Pictures popped off the page, and illustrated the stories well. Strong cover stories that touched on topics of importance.

Second Place: El Sentinel / Orlando Sentinel; Staff

Comments: Great layout. Balanced sections, with good mix of stories from the local, national and the Americas. Eye-catching life section, with interesting features.

Third Place: Gaceta Tropical / The News-Press; Fernando Zapata, Efrain Salmon & Adriana Libreros-Purcell

Comments:

Trade/Special Interest Publication

First Place: Lakeland Magazine; Staff; Lakeland Magazine

Comments: Great mix of stories that had strong and obvious ties to the area served by the publication, not just a passing relationship. Beautiful art. And, as these types of publications go, the judges had no trouble differentiating the stories from the ads.

Second Place: Florida Catholic Inc.; Ana Rodriguez-Soto, Denise O'Toole Kelly & Christopher Gunty; Florida Catholic of Miami

Comments: Interesting to Catholics and non-Catholics. The July 6 issue was well written and edited. The panel agreed that had the second issue submitted for judging been equally strong, this would have been a first place finisher.

Third Place: South Florida Business Journal; Staff; Miami Real Estate

Comments: Good overall consistency and stuck to particular themes that all were brought back to have strong ties to the niche the publication serves. Judges also were impressed that the publication was willing to write about subjects, such as down markets, that might make the reader uncomfortable rather than taking the easy tack of writing nothing but cheerleading pieces. The panel also liked the cover art for the May 2007 edition.

Special Publication/Section

First Place: Orlando Sentinel; Sports Department; Football is king: 2007 football preview section

Comments: Simply impressive. From the writing to the photography to the design, amazing barely seems to cover it. The section covered every yard needed to get everyone ready for the upcoming football season at every level but Pop Warner. They crowned football King, but I'd say they take the crown themselves.

Second Place: The Palm Beach Post; Eliot Kleinberg, Bruce Moore & Sandy Nortunen; Storm 2007

Comments: We've all seen sections like this that turn out to be more "advertorial" than "editorial." This one wasn't one of those. Plenty of useful information, well packaged and written. Graphics ease the reader through what they should do and be prepared for in the coming storm season. Great job by the staff.

Third Place: Charlotte Sun; Staff; Disturbing the peace

Comments: Solid reporting, simple, but informative writing, beautiful layout. This section did a great job of boiling down the issues from the state report into how it affects everyone. Good job.

Editorials - Large

First Place: The Florida Times-Union; Joe Adams; City Council's lost episodes

Comments: This winning entry is an example of what the best editorials should do – uncover misdeeds and create change. The year-long investigation by Joe Adams uncovered open meetings abuses in Jacksonville and led to a grand jury probe and a new ordinance to ensure compliance with Florida's Sunshine Law.

Second Place: The News-Press; David Plazas, Dan Warner, Mark Stephens & Doug MacGregor; Lee County Commission

Comments: This series examined the squabbling and dysfunction of the Lee County Commission. It revealed their pettiness and their inability to do their jobs and called on them to work together for the public interest. Newspapers have a duty to hold their elected officials accountable and this series accomplished that.

Third Place: NO AWARD

Editorials - Small

First Place: Miami Today; Michael Lewis; Let's decide what will keep Miami alive after Castro

Comments: The writer demonstrated an impressive sense -- supported by facts and clear analysis -- of

the negativity that defines Miami politics, an anti-Castroism that deprives the region of leadership. This is a great example of how perspective grown through years upon years of observation is developed into a compelling argument for people to step out of the shadows and lead.

Second Place: Naples Daily News; Todd Pratt & Karie Partington; Reforms must be tangible to protect at-risk children

Comments: A well-written call for ensuring that the deaths of two children returned to abusive homes galvanize the public and child-welfare officials to see to it that no youngster is ever again abandoned to such a shocking fate.

Third Place: Naples Daily News; Jeff Lytle; We can all be on lookout for those in need of help

Comments: The piece is a timely and appropriate reminder that senior citizens can be among the most vulnerable members of the community. Having a heart is all it takes to make their shortening lives just a bit better.

Editorial Cartooning

First Place: Florida Today; Jeff Parker

Comments: All three cartoons creatively and cleverly address some of the most important issues of our times, civil liberties, immigration and the mortgage crisis. Parker slams home the issues with wit, grace and a fierce use of color.

Second Place: South Florida Sun-Sentinel; Chan Lowe

Comments: Lowe's cartoons highlight how soldiers lives are gambled over in the conflict in Iraq while another draws parallels between slavery and guest worker programs. These cartoons make you wince with their biting truth.

Third Place: The Florida Times-Union; Ed Gamble

Comments: Gamble creates eclectic characters to draw us into local to national issues with multi-panel cartoons. The results are hilarious.

Religion Reporting

First Place: The Tampa Tribune; Michelle Bearden & Baird Helgeson; Without Walls

Comments: In fascinating detail, the series follows the Whites as they build a megachurch. The series focuses on money -- what the Whites do, and don't do, with it. Bearden's and Helgeson's coverage leads to a hearing on church finances in the U.S. Senate on how churches raise and spend money. Well researched, well organized and well written.

Second Place: South Florida Sun-Sentinel; Lois Solomon; A personal path to God

Comments: In a time when fewer young men are choosing to become Catholic priests, Solomon talked to seminarians about why they have chosen to train for the priesthood. Enlightening and moving.

Third Place: The Ledger; Cary McMullen; Alternate churches

Comments: An informative look at the growth in small and informal congregations as alternatives to more traditional churches.

Real Estate Reporting

First Place: The Miami Herald; Monica Hatcher & Matthew Haggman; Mortgage Fraud

Comments: This group of articles did an excellent job of investigative reporting on the devastating Florida mortgage crisis and mortgage fraud. The work was well-researched, well-written and not only newsworthy but useful. It went one step further than other entries which is why it was selected as the first place winner. Not only did report on the hows and whys of the problem, but it offered useful tips to readers on how to do their own research and what red flags to watch for. I enjoyed reading and learning from the journalists. Well done!

Second Place: Daily Business Review; Oscar Musibay & Billy Shields; Real estate fraud

Comments: This entry included solid reporting on real estate fraud which can be confusing with all of the players involved. However, the journalists did a good job of focusing on one topic at a time, and putting it in terms that any reader can understand. Nice job.

Third Place: Daytona Beach News-Journal; Staff; Housing slump

Comments: This collection of articles on the mortgage crisis took a slightly different approach than the others; it included a variety of personal stories about how 'average' homeowners and investors got caught up in the mortgage crisis, some unwittingly and some ignoring red flags to get into the home of

their dreams. This series showed how easily - and how often - this occurred in Florida, painting a dismal picture of the preference for financial gain over human morality in the mortgage industry.

Environmental Reporting

First Place: Daytona Beach News-Journal; Dinah Voyles Pulver; Our natural treasures

Comments: Great stories overall in this category. Lots of explanation of the problems facing the state in the future. Very tough choices along the way. The winner created the kind of package that we all wish we could do. And to not only do it, but to do it on such a grand scale, with superb writing and research. The packages brought the environment to the people.

Second Place: Florida Trend; Cynthia Barnett; Salty solution?

Comments: A cautionary tale, with solid reporting and writing. Covers all the bases it needs, and breaks down why exactly the reader should care what they're doing with their money.

Third Place: The Associated Press; Brian Skoloff; Everglades restoration

Comments: This entry tackles an issue that may seem like just a Florida problem, but is really does hit home nationally. Money promised, but not delivered seems to be a consistent issue with the federal government, and how it's ruining a stretch of land that holds so much life ... amazing.

Arts Reporting

First Place: Miami New Times; Rob Jordan; Artist as Prisoner

Comments: This piece was excellent in every aspect. The writing was superior, as was the reporting. The close attention to detail really put me into the story, held my focus, and actually made me sad when I was finished because it was so compelling. Great job!

Second Place: The Florida Times-Union; Judy Wells; Can you spot a real original?

Comments: What an interesting piece! It was well-written, and the reporting was excellent — a great use of sources! The accompanying fact boxes provided educational information that would be very valuable to the reader.

Third Place: The News-Press; Mary Wozniak; What has he done to those Beanie Babies?

Comments: This was a very fun article written in the perfect tone. The accompanying column was the perfect complement! The package was a delightful read and undoubtedly resonated with lots of readers!

Food/Beverage Writing

First Place: The Tampa Tribune; Jeff Houck

Comments: There are no tired clichés in Jeff Houck's food stories. His well-crafted, off-beat food features made me want to read more of his work. It is an exercise in fun.

Second Place: The News-Press; Drew Sterwald

Comments: Readers get a two-fer when they head to the food pages of the News Press. Drew Sterwald entertains and educates his readers. His writing left my mouth watering and planted a seed that maybe, just maybe I could pull off some of the culinary feats he explains so well.

Third Place: Creative Loafing; Brian Ries

Comments: In a well-researched look at the food stamp program, Ries gives a voice to those who are rarely heard. Instead of the typical first-person "how-I-got-by-and-you-can-too" he introduces the reader to families who must live on a food stamp budget, provides the reader with a thorough look at the program and then gives us his experience eating on \$21 a week.

Criticism

First Place: St. Petersburg Times; Eric Deggans

Comments: Deggans does more than just review what's on television. He taps into issues that make us question why we watch television and what that says about our society and culture.

Second Place: St. Petersburg Times; Josh Korr

Comments: Korr writes about music by dissecting trends and whether subculture means anything at all in this technological age. He does so with sass and seriousness.

Third Place: The Miami Herald; Glenn Garvin

Comments: The Miami Herald's Garvin is no couch potato even though he jokes that he is. His witty writing captures what we're watching from Ken Burns war documentary to our obsession with Anna Nicole Smith.

Travel Writing

First Place: The Miami Herald; Jane Wooldridge; Compilation

Comments: Jane Wooldridge's three travel stories, about Greenland, Israel and China, flow easily between giving the reader vivid pictures of the landscape and a taste of the joys and traumas of travel abroad. We also get a sense of what "real life" is like for the locals, as Wooldridge deftly acknowledges the gap between the pampered traveler and those who live there day to day. Wooldridge has the advantage of more space to fill than some and exotic locations, but her fluid writing style and conscientious delivery of historical details and current-day surprises made her a clear winner.

Second Place: The Associated Press; Travis Reed; Cinderella and me

Comments: Travis Reed's portrayal of a freebie night in Disneyland's Cinderella Castle is so real and so funny it's a close runner-up. Every shiver of embarrassment, indulgence and paranoia that any good-living journalist might experience on such an implausible night is spelled out in stark and honest detail. I smiled from start to finish and knew exactly why I could live without sharing his over-structured and eerily-monitored experience as Cinderella for a night.

Third Place: The Associated Press; Adrian Sainz; Keys at a crossroads

Comments: I particularly enjoyed Adrian Sainz's story about the gap between the rich and not-so-rich in Florida Keys because it introduced me to an area I don't know with a bit of heart. The facts that led to this yawning gap in lifestyles are there, the stories of the frustrated local people are there, and the inevitability of the developers' bulldozers is there. This side of paradise is far more interesting than white beaches and palm trees. The story has great quotes and is compellingly written.

Humorous Column Writing/Commentary

First Place: The Palm Beach Post; Frank Cerabino

Comments: The way he deftly slices and dices his targets, had he not become a columnist Cerabino would have made an excellent steakhouse chef. He displays an innate ability to take South Florida's silliest people and situations and craft columns that make them appear even sillier.

Second Place: St. Petersburg Times; Stephanie Hayes

Comments: What could have been mundane features on spray tanning, shoes and microwave lunchtime options are given a pulse, Frankenstein-style, courtesy of Hayes' electric observations. Her witty asides occasionally veer off the subject, but usually at the crucial moment when the subject desperately needs such treatment.

Third Place: Daytona Beach News-Journal; Mark Lane

Comments: It's not easy to draw chuckles over typically coma-inducing topics such as the need for civics classes or the bureaucratic phrasing of government proclamations. Lane does it, however, and does it in a manner that inspires readers to think as well as smile.

Serious Column Writing/Commentary

First Place: Naples Daily News; Brent Batten

Comments: His writing is emotional without being maudlin. His subjects are serious. His research is thorough. His outrage is clear and justified.

Second Place: Creative Loafing; Wayne Garcia

Comments: Maybe not a problem-solver but certainly an adept problem-citer. Perhaps Greater Tampa-St. Pete should hire him as a consultant.

Third Place: Florida Trend; Mark Howard

Comments: Nothing wrong with good, old-fashioned column-writing when it's clearly written, well-documented and this constructive.

Sports Commentary

First Place: The Tampa Tribune; Martin Fennelly; Dungy's loved ones are with him tonight

Comments: A well-written piece that opens up a window to a public figure who is worth knowing. It was touching without being maudlin.

Second Place: Key West Citizen; Raph Morrow; It is Bonds' turn to be acclaimed

Comments: A nice dose of reality that many of us needed, and told with an honest style.

Third Place: The Florida Times-Union; Sam Borden; Public school coaches should teach, not preach

Comments: Risky material shows courage on the part of the writer, who gave everyone a chance to share views on important issue. A little long, but not a subject that can be dispatched easily.

NEWSPAPER & MAGAZINE COPY EDITING, PHOTOGRAPHY & GRAPHICS

Breaking News Photography - Large

First Place: The Miami Herald; Carl Juste; Veteran's funeral

Comments: The picture was simply wonderful. It was one most impacting photographs from a veteran's funeral that I have seen since the beginning of the Iraq war. Each corner of the photograph is layered with emotion from the family's loss. The images are so powerful it could have been cropped into two different pictures.

Second Place: The Palm Beach Post; Staff; Two home-grown heroes lost

Comments: The photojournalist did an excellent job in properly reporting the tragic of the story with his collection of photographs. What makes this well-done photo essay solid is the newspaper's commitment to use photographs well and larger enough to have visual impact.

Third Place: The Tampa Tribune; Michael Spooner; Cooter Pond tornado

Comments: The picture shows real compassion between a mother and son after losing their home and half of their family to destruction. There is an empty look by the subjects that makes the picture visually striking.

Breaking News Photography - Small

First Place: The Villages Daily Sun; Bill Mitchell, George Horsford, Mark DiOrio & Katie Derksen; Tornado rips through area

Comments: Great team coverage of a significant local news event. Some very fine photos, especially the reverend holding Sunday services atop his ruined church. The paper backed it all up with outstanding play and design.

Second Place: The Ledger; Ernst Peters; Dog rescued during fire in apartment complex

Comments: A very nice moment in the midst of chaos cause by the apartment fire.

Third Place: The Gainesville Sun; Doug Finger; Wildfires

Comments: The woman covering her face from the smoke of a wildfire humanizes the destruction of property by the fire. One can see the tension in her eyes and through her body language.

Sports Action Photography

First Place: The Florida Times-Union; Rick Wilson; Eye-poking defense

Comments: Great peak action with a clean background. This photo stood out among the contenders. The image received nice play.

Second Place: Daytona Beach News-Journal; Jim Tiller; Spectacular end to the ride

Comments: The photographer captured the surfer at the perfect moment. All of the elements came together for this photo.

Third Place: South Florida Sun-Sentinel; Robert Duyos; Three and out

Comments: This photo captured a game-telling moment from a game that had little to offer, considering the 3-0 score.

Feature Photography

First Place: Scripps Treasure Coast Newspapers; Alex Boerner; This could be a bumpy ride

Comments: Great creative shot, first comment was WOW -- perfect way to display this photo subject. Photographer stepped outside the box and created a photo that displays what a feature photo is all about. Taking the elements around them and creating a great creative photo. The photographer waited for the perfect moment to turn a dinosaur sculpture that would have been just a sculpture shot into a hungry dinosaur looking to eat an airplane. Nice job.

Second Place: Daytona Beach News-Journal; Jim Tiller; Great Dane

Comments: This photo brought a laugh to the newsroom. Photographer used the subject at hand to create a great feel-good photo. Great job working with the subject at hand.

Third Place: Daytona Beach News-Journal; Pam Lockeby; The world awaits

Comments: Very nice tight shot. Photographer created a nice shot with the subject. Photographer found the picture within the picture to create this award winning photo. Nice work.

Feature Photography Series

First Place: South Florida Sun-Sentinel; Carey Wagner & Taimy Alvarez; Bracing for change in Panama
Comments: Very moody, excellent composition, real moments, great use of color. Of all the entries, the camera is the least obvious, the photographer is least apparent.

Second Place: The Palm Beach Post; Uma Sanghvi; Walking with angels

Comments: This entry tells a complete story from A to B. Part of the photographer's job is to earn the trust of the family and they let this photographer stay there for the whole thing.

Third Place: The Palm Beach Post; Gary Coronado; HIV: Heroes of the epidemic

Comments: The photos have a Diane Arbus street-like quality.

Art/Photo Illustration

First Place: South Florida Sun-Sentinel; Josh Ritchie & Emily Olson; All-County class Fall 2007

Comments: This entry tells a variety of stories. There are many points of interest to draw the eye. Judges were impressed with the staging of a single, chaotic moment.

Second Place: The Florida Times-Union; Jon M. Fletcher; All First Coast athletes

Comments: Very cohesive style, looks almost like a high fashion shoot.

Third Place: Daytona Beach News-Journal; Octavio Diaz

Comments: Very unique, well-executed design. Eye catching and it tells a story.

Front-Page Design - Large

First Place: Daytona Beach News-Journal; Kelly Ann Markowitz, Jennifer Cason & Scott Turick

Comments: The paper looks very newsy. It offers readers lots of different types of information. Makes the audience feel they are getting a lot from their paper. I am not in love with the display typography but these are pages that jump to readers.

Second Place: The Miami Herald; Marco Ruiz, Ana Lense-Larrauri & Wilhelm Gerdts

Comments: This is a beautifully designed newspaper. Their fronts present clear and beautiful typography and a clean hierarchy of elements. The pages have labels that make it easy to navigate though them.

Third Place: The Tampa Tribune; Mark McDaniel

Comments: The three were Sunday edition pages with a more magazine design approach. It makes use of powerful, nicely edited photography, which makes a joy to look at and to read.

Front-Page Design - Small

First Place: The Gainesville Sun; Staff

Comments: Never underestimate the power of a big headline and a great photo. These cover pages not only convey what is happening, they also make it look interesting. As piquing reader interest is the principal goal of a cover page, these pages are a success. Well done.

Second Place: Bradenton Herald; Jennifer Yeoman

Comments: Going the other direction, Jennifer uses illustration and infographics to capture reader interest, with eye-grabbing (and thus newspaper grabbing) above-the-fold information, well presented.

Third Place: The Villages Daily Sun; Heather Weinsheimer

Comments: Lots of information appears on these pages, but they never look cluttered—no small feat! Again, great photos, headlines and an occasional information made for a compelling first look at the days news and invited further reading.

Local Front Design

First Place: Daytona Beach News-Journal; Kelly Ann Markowitz & Jamie Bender

Comments: Smart design. Great use of photography and illustrations. It seems to address its audience appropriately.

Second Place: The Miami Herald; Chris Melchiondo

Comments: Very well organized within the design. The central packages are attractive and interesting to look at. They definitely get your attention. Headlines are very catchy.

Third Place: Tampa Bay Business Journal; Pam Langan

Comments: It does look like a very informative biz newspaper. Condensed typography allows for the display of longer headlines. The format is very manageable and the publication seems to know its readers.

Business Front Design - Large

First Place: The Miami Herald; Chris Melchiondo

Comments: Excellent use of illustration and color makes these pages spring to life, not only adding visual interest to the features, but also helping to more clearly tell the story. Very well done.

Second Place: The Florida Times-Union; Monty Zickuhr, Colleen Flannery, Kyzandra Z. Pratt & Denise M. Reagan

Comments: Disproving the notion that nothing good comes out of a committee, these pages compel you to look at the news differently...literally. By switching up the layout from a vertical format to a horizontal one, these artists do things that can't be done when thinking "tall." The 10 balloons used to illustrate rising costs in the "Up, up and away" feature is a perfect example of this kind of work, and it makes for a more active reader experience.

Third Place: The News-Press; Bianca V. Camano

Comments: Fine layout work, with great use of photography and clever sizing and placement. Bianca would benefit, however, from thinking bigger or smaller. The "Japan loves Minicars" feature would have been more eye-catching if the text and photo were even smaller. The pink flamingo looked fine on the gray background, but would have had more eye-grab with no background and dark pink text. Push the envelope more!

Business Front Design - Small

First Place: The Ledger; Laurie Lawrence

Comments: Laurie understands the maxim "size matters": Big pictures + big use of color = big reader draw on the front page.

Second Place: Tampa Bay Business Journal; Pam Langan

Comments: Pam's effective use of the grid makes information easy to find, while altering between wide horizontal and narrow vertical articles keeps the page looking interesting.

Third Place: South Florida Business Journal; Stacey Shervan

Comments: Stacey comes in a very close third, with good photos and article placement, but she needs to push herself and take more risks with the layout. Right now, it feels too "safe," which is okay for a business magazine, but not terribly compelling. Zoom in (or out) more on pictures, push boundaries on the grid, and if you're going to place a picture up near the masthead, go all the way up, not just half-way.

Feature Front Design - Large

First Place: The Miami Herald; Ana Lense-Larrauri

Comments: Colorful, loud, busy yet appropriate for the South Florida audience. It addresses its name; what Tropical Life is all about. Pages are filled with information. The designer works flawlessly with so many pieces offering hierarchy to them.

Second Place: The News-Press; Lindi Daywalt-Feazel

Comments: I particularly liked the clogs page. Quite inventive. The headline type is very well presented. All the pages define very clear points of entry.

Third Place: The Tampa Tribune; Pat Kane

Comments: Very well organized. Excellent use of white space. They all are very unified pages. Even though the designer uses different fonts for the main headlines, they don't clash but get integrated to the overall composition.

Feature Front Design - Small

First Place: The Ledger; Laurie Lawrence & John Pitts

Comments: Nicely organized pages, very appropriate to the subject matter. They present several unexpected details that get the reader's attention. The redesigned section front shows a lot of improvement.

Second Place: The Gainesville Sun; Jean Fleetwood

Comments: It presents a quiet, more pastel color palette, elegant typography (in two of the entries) and it

is a very easy-to-follow read.

Third Place: The Villages Daily Sun; Hillary Crawford

Comments: The illustrations are very well executed. Type treatment is appropriate to the subject matter. This publication showcases pages where the headline typography is chosen according to the topic.

Sports Front Design - Large

First Place: The Florida Times-Union; Robert McGinty, Kevin Upright & Denise M. Reagan

Comments: Great design. Excellent use of proportion in photography and typography. Very well defined centers of visual impact. Appropriate use of alternative story forms and graphics.

Second Place: The Miami Herald; Kevin Scott

Comments: Beautiful typography and very well coordinated color palette. "Unconditional love" package presents such a peculiar type treatment with the use of an asterisk—the photo looks like a painting. As a page, it offers readers different news as entry points. It's hard to design with advertising on the page but this paper does it nicely.

Third Place: Scripps Treasure Coast Newspapers; Mike Bjorklund

Comments: Very elegant design. It has more of a magazine visual approach to it. The "ear" ad makes me think of a webpage. It's easy to read and easy to navigate. Great use of white space.

Sports Front Design - Small

First Place: Bradenton Herald; Alan Bellittera

Comments: Excellent use of hierarchy—all the news are easily located and identified. The use of white space in sport pages is not too common. The paper does a good job about it. The graphics are very clear.

Second Place: The Gainesville Sun; Sports Staff

Comments: Lots of visual elements that do not look cluttered; clear focus and good use of color.

Third Place: Key West Citizen; Paul Dehner, Jr.

Comments: This publication seems to take visual risks. The design looks a little dated but I can see people behind it trying to make it look better and challenging themselves.

Informational Graphics/Special Page Design

First Place: The Miami Herald; Mark Mattern; Super Stadium

Comments: The scope of this project, while quite large, maintains extraordinary attention to detail. The sub-graphics were extremely useful and engaging. The project provides a broad wealth of information.

Second Place: The Florida Times-Union; Anna Berken, Steve Nelson & Denise M. Reagan; Conducting Business at the Orchestra

Comments: The creative use of the graphic is most impressive. The graphic portrayed a sense of motion which is unique.

Third Place: South Florida Sun-Sentinel; Karsten Ivey; The Search for Amelia Earhart

Comments: The illustration and color engage the reader. The combined use of the overall world map with enlarged detail was useful.

Graphic Design

First Place: The News-Press; Lindi Daywalt-Feazel

Comments: The overall design style is very creative, consistent and clean. It grabs the attention of the reader. Strong typography. Loved the Clog feature!

Second Place: Daytona Beach News-Journal; Scott Hiestand

Comments: The style remained consistent throughout the scope of this large, special section. The graphics and imagery is used well with the text almost as if it is illustrating the story. Great use of the page and space available.

Third Place: The Miami Herald; Zach Folzenlogen

Comments: Strong use of color, space, and graphics. Design is attention grabbing.

Headline Writing

First Place: The Tampa Tribune; Rick Mayer

Comments: Rick Mayer's strongest headlines—"Tales From the Script," for a story on the Ohio State marching band; "Charley Doesn't Live Here Anymore," about a hurricane's aftermath; and "Oh, Where,

Oh, Where Have Their Little Dogs Gone?" about two globe-trotting dogs—pack a wallop. His strength is in referencing puns and cultural references in fresh ways and crafting headlines that work powerfully with accompanying artwork.

Second Place: Sarasota Herald-Tribune; Jeffrey S. Rubin

Comments: Jeffrey Rubin has a flair for writing headlines that directly address readers. The best examples of this approach are evident in two headlines: for a story on faulty memories, "You can read this. Remembering it is another story"; and "I just met a real-live rock star....Wait, didn't I?" for a story about a scam artist. Switching gears, Rubin can also make a literary reference work, with his "Barrier to Mars? The fault lies in our stars, and in our cells"—no small feat, considering how tempting it is to force Shakespeare's words to fit a headline. In this case, the pun works like a charm.

Third Place: The Palm Beach Post; Mike Tighe

Comments: Mike Tighe is skilled in writing punning headlines ("County leaves sacred ibis' fate to higher authority"; "Truth revealed: 'World' is flat, so Boca publisher pulls plug," about the demise of the Weekly World News) as well as compelling grabbers like the banner head he wrote in text-message-speak that's helpfully translated into English in the deck headline. These work examples show what a flexible writer he is, able to effectively and appropriately use humor and puns for news story headlines.

BROADCAST

Deadline News Reporting - Television

First Place: WKMG-TV; Erik von Ancken; Loss-of-Sand Storm

Comments: A strong, complete piece that built upon previous reports, new information and interviews with locals. The knowledge of past work at the beach, along with the impressive images of what the storm has wrought made for the top in this category.

Second Place: Bay News 9; Laurie Davison & Jonathan Haas; Ammonia Spill

Comments: Excellent information, and not to sound cliché, but the reporter showed a lot of hustle. During the unfolding situation, she mixed in interviews with someone from the neighborhood, an official police report and even a graphic that pulled it all together.

Third Place: NO AWARD

Feature Reporting - Television

First Place: WPBT Channel 2; Marilu Lozada & Allan Farrell; Colombia: Musica de Mi Tierra

Comments: Amazing, amazing work. Footage is superb and stories were engaging. A fascinating look at something that ties a culture together.

Second Place: WTSP-TV; Kathryn Bursch & Mitchell Wallace; Green Cemetery

Comments: Beautifully photographed, well reported and well edited. This was definitely among the best overall pieces the judges have seen through the years (judging or not).

Third Place: CBS4 WFOR; Laurie Stein, Reizel Larrea, John Dumontell & Gani Espinoza; Pink in Paradise

Comments: Deeply personal, yet important information that affects many women. The story was strongly reported, featured personal stories along with expert information. Well done.

Deadline Sports Reporting - Television

NO ENTRIES

Sports Feature/Commentary - Television

First Place: WINK News; Randy Scott; Deaf softball Star

Comments: This feature is both interesting and inspirational without being heavy-handed. Use of sign language like the pitcher and her teammates use was a good touch.

Second Place: WTSP-TV; Kathryn Bursch & Larry Perkins; A good day

Comments: Nicely done feature.

Third Place: Bay News 9; Laurie Davison & Jonathan Haas; Tackling stereotypes

Investigative Reporting - Television

First Place: WKMG-TV; Tony Pipitone, Darran Caudle & Tim Arnheim; Food fight

Comments: A detailed, well documented report about contracts and apparent sweetheart deals when it comes to awarding tourism food contracts. Use of sound bites was especially effective as those involved repeatedly hung themselves with their own words, denials and refusals to comment. A public service that will hopefully result in some changes to save taxpayer money.

Second Place: WTSP-TV; Mike Deeson, Tim Burquest, Casey Cumley & Paul Thorson; Pasco 911

Comments: This is a sobering and frightening look at the systematic failures of a vital public service--911--which led to at least one death. WTSP-TV presented the facts and got results. The viewing audience should be grateful for the service the station provided.

Third Place: WKMG-TV; Tony Pipitone, Darran Caudle, Tim Arnheim & Paul Giorgio; The Guetzloe files

Comments: A fascinating look at a political consultant whose various deeds were exposed all because he failed to pay a storage fee.

Election Reporting - Television

NO AWARDS

Criminal Justice Reporting - Television

First Place: WFTS ABC Action News; Staff; Couey Trial

Comments: A great job of giving us the news, getting strong interviews and enterprise on a story that was a big-time story. Good work from everyone involved.

Second Place: WINK News; Lindsay Liepman, Lauren Sweeney, Matt McConico & Sergio Munoz; Witness Test (Part I & II)

Comments: An excellent example of enterprise. Allowing viewer participation was a great touch, giving people the opportunity to find out how hard police work really is.

Third Place: WKMG-TV; Erik von Ancken & Scott Rates; Repeat Red Light Running

Comments: Very, very close choice between this one and second place. All of the entries from this reporter were considered, but this one was the tops of his group. Story puts public faces to the people who break the law every day, no matter how small the infraction seems. Having each person's driving record was great, as well as doing the investigation/report from in front of the Highway Patrol office.

Consumer Reporting - Television

First Place: WFTS ABC Action News; Jackie Callaway & Matt McGlashen; Taking Action

Comments: (NOTE: Based on our interpretation of the rules, we only judged the first one on lottery scratch-off tickets). Interesting premise on the lack of big prizes left. Interesting stats. Nice that they provided a way on the Web site to check what prizes were left. Good scratch-off graphic showing the state lottery's response.

Second Place: WTSP-TV; Mike Deeson & Paul Thorson; SunPass Problems

Comments: Interesting problem with the toll system. Good people examples in the package. The follow-up story did a better job of framing the issue and types of problems discovered.

Third Place: WINK News; Nadia Ramdass, Vincent Postiglione, Matt McConico & Lindsay Liepman; COL-FAKE: Bad Colgate on Store Shelves

Comments: The reporter displayed some good initiative. Good info to help consumers spot the fakes.

International/War/National Security Reporting - Television

First Place: WTSP-TV; Mike Deeson, Mitchell Wallace, Larry Perkins & Wayne Waichunas; The Spellissy affair

Comments: This somewhat disturbing story was the clear winner. How a former Army colonel who oversaw an four billion dollar budget and ended up on trial for an alleged \$4,500 bribe because he refused to hide \$20 million in his budget unfolds like something out of a novel. Well paced and edited with strong interviews. After viewing this, we'd like to know how it all comes out in the end.

Second Place: WINK News; Nadia Ramdass, Vince Early & Matt McConico; Scuba Terrorist

Comments: This story fits a lot of information into a short amount of time. Good use of sound bites with dive shop owner.

Third Place: WINK News; Jeremiah Jacobsen & Jason Nguyen; Smuggling training

Comments: Informative report about a little known national security program to stop terrorists and

smugglers in international waters and how the training is not limited to American trainees. Interesting underwater shots.

Political/Government Reporting - Television

First Place: WKMG-TV; Tony Pipitone, Darran Caudle, Tim Arnheim & Paul Giorgio; The Guetzloe Files
Comments: Very thorough reporting that started with a tip into the station. The reporter and the station fought injunctions, a subpoena and lawsuit to bring the stories to the public, exposing a political consultant's dirty tricks and secret campaign contributions. The reporter followed up on dozens of boxes of files that were uncovered with numerous interviews with all the parties involved. Perfect example of dogged political/government reporting.

Second Place: WTSP-TV; Mike Deeson & Paul Thorson; Greg Cox and the PTC
Comments: A solid political investigation that yielded results. A county investigation was launched after this report aired and the subject of the report resigned before he could be fired.

Third Place: WINK News; Melissa Cabral, Matt McConico, Sergio Munoz & Andrew Miller; Timeout rooms

Comments: Good report that shined a light on a practice that no doubt raised a lot of questions in the minds of parents in the school district.

Spanish-Language Newscast - Television

NO ENTRIES

Public Affairs Program - Television

First Place: PRC Digital Media; Bill Retherford, Jay Pennington, Chris Linke & Ray Hays; Revenge of the River

Comments: A very thorough and thought-provoking report that included a call to action for viewers and told them how they could make a difference. Perfect example of public affairs reporting.

Second Place: WKMG-TV; Tony Pipitone, Darran Caudle, Tim Arnheim & Paul Giorgio; The Guetzloe Files Special

Comments: Very dogged reporting that started with a tip into the station. The reporter and the station fought injunctions, a subpoena and lawsuit to bring the stories to the public, exposing a political consultant's dirty tricks and secret campaign contributions. The reporter followed up on the files that were uncovered with numerous interviews with all the parties involved.

Third Place: WFLA-TV; Paul Gourley, Steve Jerve & Phil Hill; Hurricane 2007: Are You Ready?

Comments: Good example of public affairs reporting. The special explained why the 2007 hurricane season would most likely be more destructive than 2006 (when dire predictions were way off) and included practical tips of how viewers can prepare themselves.

Newscast - Television

First Place: WFTV - Channel 9 Eyewitness News; Staff; Channel 9 Eyewitness News

Comments: All three newscasts were excellent, but the nod went to WFTV for their newscast entry which focused on killer tornadoes moving through the area. Very well produced. Each package had a unique storyline, rather than repeating the same story in multiple locations, as often happens in such coverage. Good sound bites too. Off the top, they did a nice job of dipping into and out of a live press conference to get the key information.

Second Place: WFLA-TV; News Channel 8 Staff; News Channel 8 at 11

Comments: The second and third place newscasts focused on the same ammonia pipe breach. News Channel 8 provided a very people-oriented/viewer-focused newscast, which gave it the edge. An explainer on symptoms of ammonia exposure was one example. While the direction could have been cleaner, the judges came away feeling this newscast did a great job of providing relevant news we could use.

Third Place: WFTS ABC Action News; Staff; ABC Action News @ 6 p.m.

Comments: Clean and straightforward, this was a very tightly produced newscast with a lot of great graphics.

Deadline News Reporting - Radio

First Place: WUFT-FM/Mid-Florida Public Radio; Donna Green-Townsend; Bugaboo fires
Comments: This report made liberal use of sound bites from people affected differently (residents, Salvation Army workers, firefighter) by the fires, which brought the listener to the scene. Well produced and reported, "Bugaboo Fires" hits the mark.

Second Place: WUFT-FM/Mid-Florida Public Radio; Jessica Napolitano; Taser fallout
Comments: Well produced and balanced report that effectively covered what was a very visual story. Reporter made good use of natural sound--the protestors--which captured the pitch of activity and tension on campus over the incident.

Third Place: NO AWARD

Feature Reporting - Radio

First Place: Imagination Room Multimedia; Vanessa Williams, Aron Myers, Taylor Cox & Brett Wellman;
The life and times of Zora Neale Hurston

Comments: The winner in an extremely competitive category. This program explores an intriguing subject and her many sides and manages to educate the listeners in an engaging way. "The Life and Times..." is a complete package of broadcast excellence. It is well written and produced with wonderful music and smooth narration. Good use of experts' sound clips help make Hurston and her legacy come alive.

Second Place: Marketplace Americas Desk; Dan Grech; Venezuela's 21st century socialism
Comments: This series represents an impressive commitment of resources and time to explore and explain the social and political changes in Venezuela and their impact upon the United States. It holds the listener's interest throughout, which is a notable achievement given the scope of the subject.

Third Place: WUFT-FM/Mid-Florida Public Radio; Luis Hernandez; Abuela
Comments: The reporter provides a personal look at Alzheimer's disease and its effect upon his family along with useful information from experts. A memorable feature.

Public Affairs Program - Radio

First Place: WLRN-Miami Herald News; Phil Latzman, Alicia Zuckerman, Irina Lallemand & Peter Maerz;
Cuba - the developing story

Comments: What could have been a dull and academic public affairs program was lively and interesting due to the panelists and their various areas of expertise about Cuba. Highly informative.

Second Place: WUSF Public Broadcasting; Carson Cooper & Bobbie O'Brien; Florida Matters: State gambling deal

Comments: This program not only covers the pending state gambling deal with the Indian tribes, but how it will affect other gambling entrepreneurs and the counties. The historical perspective provided is critical and enables a non-Floridian to not only follow, but stay interested, in this program.

Third Place: NO AWARD

Spanish-Language Newscast - Radio

NO ENTRIES

Newscast - Radio

NO AWARDS

INTERNET

News Web Site

First Place: TBO.com; Staff; TBO.com

Comments: The submitted special reports area is a multimedia extravaganza featuring, video, photography and well-written text. Overall, the news site features interactive community news and a well-organized "tab" design.

Second Place: Florida Today; John Kelly, Todd Halvorson, Patrick Peterson & Dennis Lowe;
FloridaToday.com - Space

Comments: The Floridatoday.com space report section successfully balances informative and technical with bright and entertaining. It is an excellent mix of live and edited video, text and interactive animation.

Third Place: The Ledger; Newsroom; LedgerTimeout.com

Comments: The youth-oriented version of The Ledger news site is bright and lively—leaning to entertainment. It meets all the stated goals of the project and presents an attractive mix of interactive content.

Original Reporting - Internet

First Place: The Miami Herald; Jim Varsallone; Chris Benoit murder/suicide

Comments: This series of stories, written exclusively for the Internet, dug deep into the tragic murder/suicide involving Chris Benoit and his family. The piece took readers into the world of professional wrestling, including the role of steroids and other drugs. Blogs and other interactive features brought readers closer to the story.

Second Place: The News-Press; Michelle Hudson, Jessie Vega, Kevin Lollar & Brian Fuller; Plight of the panther

Comments: This interactive feature allowed readers to find information about the location of panthers in their community; an issue that had become a major safety issue. The piece not only featured good original reporting and creativity, but also was a service to the community.

Third Place: NO AWARD

Enterprise Reporting - Internet

First Place: Florida Today; John Torres, Caroline Perez & Dennis Lowe; Justice for Junny

Comments: The staff chronicled the emotional story of the Rios-Martinez family waiting for justice for Junny Rios Martinez who was murdered in 1992. Reporters and staff members used the Internet to tell a compelling story that spanned nearly 16 years.

Second Place: NO AWARD

Third Place: NO AWARD

STUDENTS

College Journalist of the Year

First Place: John W. Cox, University of Florida