



For Immediate Release:
8/18/2010

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SPJ honors four individuals, one newspaper with Sunshine Award

INDIANAPOLIS – The Society of Professional Journalists is pleased to honor four individuals and one newspaper with the national Sunshine Award for their important contributions in the pursuit of open government.

Winners:

- David Andreatta, Democrat and Chronicle, Monroe County, N.Y.
- Jill Riepenhoff and Todd Tones, The Columbus (Ohio) Dispatch
- Charlene Padilla, non-journalist, in working with KPCC Southern California Public Radio
- The Advocate, Baton Rouge, La.

All recipients will be honored during the President's Installation Banquet, Oct. 5 at the [2010 SPJ Convention and National Journalism Conference](#) in Las Vegas. [See a list of past honorees here.](#)

David Andreatta

While researching a civil court case in Monroe County, N.Y., Democrat and Chronicle investigative reporter David Andreatta noticed that documents referenced in the judge's opinion were not available to the public, as required by law. After careful research, he was able to determine that the lapses were not unique to his county but prevalent throughout much of New York state due to local customs.

Andreatta's work uncovering this judicial practice resulted in a pledge from the New York Office of Court Administration to address the filing lapses. Memos to administrative judges from the office made it clear that judges who receive documents submitted directly to their chambers are responsible for ensuring that the documents are transmitted to the court clerk for filing.

Jill Riepenhoff and Todd Jones

To test the effectiveness of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act law, reporters Jill Riepenhoff and Todd Jones of The Columbus (Ohio) Dispatch sent public-records requests to 119 colleges that make up the Football Bowl Subdivision. Their six-month investigation found serious flaws in the law's protection of academic records to include athletes involved in criminal activity that were being shielded in the name of FERPA.

The findings of the study shocked former U.S. Senator James L. Buckley, who authored the bill. He called on Congress to fix the law, telling the Dispatch that universities had misused its purpose. Newspapers from around the country sought permission to reprint the package in their newspapers, and the public response to the article was overwhelming. The reporting of Riepenhoff and Jones brought exposure to college athletes and the inner-workings of athletics departments.

Riepenhoff and Jones received the [Eugene S. Pulliam Award in 2009](#) for their previous reporting on FERPA.

Charlene "Charlie" Padilla

Months after an August 2009 inmate riot at the California Institution for Men at Chino, Charlene Padilla received a letter from her son, who was in custody there, describing his and other inmates' confinement in outside cages without adequate clothing or shade to protect them from searing daytime sun or blankets during the night. Padilla's letter-writing to develop evidence yielded scores of letters from inmates who described the build-up to the riot, the violence and injuries they saw.

Her materials were later used by KPCC Southern California Public Radio reporter Steven Cuevas to produce a three-part series on the events. Padilla, who had shied away from publicity about her role gathering accounts of the outdoor caging of inmates, eventually agreed to be interviewed by Cuevas.

Although she was not a trained journalist, Padilla's qualities of true investigative journalism showed dogged determination, exhaustive documentation and research. As a mother and concerned Californian, she worked to expose and correct substandard conditions in a state prison.

The Advocate

In the days following Hurricane Katrina, volunteer state police from New Mexico and Michigan abruptly left Baton Rouge, La., due to the questionable standards of conduct from the city's police department toward evacuees. For four years The Advocate newspaper fought denied access to information regarding the racist and abusive behavior.

In February, the paper produced a package of stories as well as an editorial describing the extent of the brutality. The expose included allegations of police officers using demeaning language, routinely harassing African Americans, physically abusing citizens and seeking to "make life rough for New Orleans evacuees so they would leave town."

Against lack of support and financial odds, The Advocate established a precedent, rebuking the police contention that privacy issues and their volition did not override the public's right to know how public officials conduct themselves.

Founded in 1909 as Sigma Delta Chi, SPJ promotes the free flow of information vital to a well-informed citizenry; works to inspire and educate the next generation of journalists; and protects First Amendment guarantees of freedom of speech and press. For more information about SPJ, please visit www.spj.org.

-END-



For Immediate Release:
8/25/2010

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New York Times' Jim Dwyer awarded \$75,000 to study Internet's impact on human rights

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-END-



For Immediate Release:
10/5/2010

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SPJ continues fight for federal shield law

LAS VEGAS - The [Society of Professional Journalists](#) is continuing to fight for passage of S. 448, the Free Flow of Information Act.

SPJ leaders discussed the importance of passing the legislation, known as the federal shield law, during a panel presentation at the Society's [2010 Convention & National Journalism Conference](#).

The bill would provide a margin of protection for journalists and their confidential sources. It would limit the enforcement of federal subpoenas against reporters who refuse to identify sources in certain circumstances. The measure [passed the Senate Judiciary Committee in December 2009](#) after 19 weeks of bipartisan amendments and awaits a full Senate vote.

"It's apparent to members of SPJ that if we are to continue to provide the kinds of stories that the American public needs that we need passage of this bill to protect sources, journalists and the public's interest," SPJ President Kevin Smith said.

According to Smith, the bill has progressed further throughout this year than the past five years, and all issues of national security have been addressed completely.

The bill was stalled after the July 25 WikiLeaks publication of [nearly 77,000 Afghanistan war documents](#). As a result, Senator Dianne Feinstein, D-Calif., has called for two tiers to define a journalist, further limiting the bill's protections. Panelists during the session believe that if the bill does not pass before December, its progress will be hindered up to five more years.

Smith visited Washington, D.C. last week to push for passage of S. 448. [He delivered letters to key senators](#), urging them to allow a final vote on the bill.

According to research by session speaker RonNell Anderson Jones, Brigham Young University associate professor of law, over 7,000 state and federal subpoenas were issued to journalists in the past year.

Other speakers during the session included past SPJ presidents Irwin Gratz, morning edition producer at Maine Public Broadcasting Network, and Steve Geimann, deputy team leader at Bloomberg News.

SPJ is a leader among dozens of media groups and journalism organizations fighting for this legislation. [See SPJ's shield law page here](#).

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New media pioneer Rob Curley discusses hyper-local future of news at SPJ Convention

LAS VEGAS - Greenspun Media Group New-Media Division Editor Rob Curley is revolutionizing the latest news coverage techniques in the digital age and sharing his innovations with fellow journalists.

Curley spoke Tuesday on these advancements during "Re-imagining News: A Conversation with Rob Curley," a session at the [2010 SPJ Convention and National Journalism Conference](#) in Las Vegas. A leader of the online arm of the company that owns the Las Vegas Sun and Las Vegas Weekly, Curley outlined creating a unique "hyper-local" approach to covering the news.

The Sun is employing three different models to each medium of their news coverage in the areas of print, online and mobile. According to Curley, the daily print edition centers on "why" rather than "what" and focuses on investigative journalism.

"We don't tell you what happened, we tell you what it means," Curley said.

The Sun's online edition serves as the breaking-news/real-time function of their coverage while simultaneously engaging audiences. The Sun's sports section is entirely online with live blogs, tweets and podcasting as well as "fan pages" devoted to regional teams with statistics, player biographies and past Sun articles on teams.

"We wanted to build something readers could get lost in," Curley said of the Sun's website.

The Sun has also created an intricate system of databases covering a variety of topics, including the progressive history of the Las Vegas Strip, residential water use in a desert region and "City Center," which provides detailed information on each resort and casino.

Prior to the Sun, Curley was Vice President of Product Development at Washingtonpost.Newsweek Interactive for two years. Before joining WPNI, Curley was director of new media and convergence for the Naples Daily News and its sister publications along Florida's Gulf Coast.

Curley gained national attention when at the Lawrence (Kansas) Journal-World he became one of the first online editors in the nation to lead a news organization's entire print and broadcast news operations. In 2004, Editor & Publisher magazine named the Journal-World as one of the 10 newspapers in the United States that "do it right." Focusing on the newspaper's innovative approaches to hyper-local media convergence, the cover story noted that "the paper's Web innovations are far too numerous to list here."

He was recognized in 2001 when the Newspaper Association of America named Curley the industry's New Media Pioneer of the Year. Curley's ground-breaking work has been documented in everything from college journalism textbooks to industry and mainstream magazines and white papers to even a 20-minute segment on NPR's "Morning Edition." In a 2005 Sunday business story, The New York Times referred to Curley's work in Lawrence as "the newspaper of the future."

In 2006, he was named by the Newspaper Association of America's PRESSTIME magazine as one of the top "20 Under 40." In 2007, Curley was named to Washingtonian Magazine's annual list of the Washington D.C. metro area's "40 under 40."

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For Immediate Release:
12/6/2010

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SPJ supports Evergreen Freedom Foundation's battle for public records

INDIANAPOLIS – The Society of Professional Journalists is granting the Evergreen Freedom Foundation \$1,000 for its pursuit of records regarding a ferry accident last year at Seattle's Colman Dock.

The case is set go before the state appellate courts to determine whether a Federal regulation can be used to override the Washington State Public Records Act, keeping the documents sealed. Should the courts determine the regulation can be applied, SPJ feels this could set a precedent that would hurt public records access for state journalists.

"This request to a public agency for records impacting public safety seems to epitomize the reason for FOI laws. It's clearly in the public interest," SPJ President Hagit Limor said. "The implications of this ruling could harm future reporting on a wider scale."

The state-operated ferry accident, involving the MV Wenatchee, injured one passenger and cost more than \$327,000 in damages when it crashed into Coleman Dock. The foundation's investigative journalist, Scott St. Clair, sent a public records request to the Washington State Department of Transportation for drug and alcohol test results of the crew involved in the collision.

WSDOT supplied records in response to the request, but some contained redactions – including a report titled "Report of Required Chemical Drug and Alcohol Testing Following a Serious Marine Incident." This report was completed the day of the accident. The agency later removed some of the redactions following a request from the foundation, but it continued to withhold the results of the alcohol tests administered to the ferry's crew.

The department believes that the redactions were justified because of a U.S. Department of Transportation regulation which prohibits the release of drug and alcohol testing records. When St. Clair made a second public records request for the investigative report written in response to the accident, the agency employed the same federal regulation to justify withholding additional documents.

The foundation filed a complaint with the Thurston County Superior Court, arguing that the Washington Public Records Act states that agencies are to grant public records upon request unless nondisclosure is necessary by an exemption within the Act or other statute. In a following motion for summary judgment to dismiss the department's claim, the foundation argued that the redactions were unjustified because the state failed to cite a statutory exemption recognized under the Act to redact portions of records, and the federal regulation does not preempt the Act.

The trial court denied the motion on the grounds that the Act contains an exemption allowing for the use of the federal regulation. An appeal was filed with the Washington Court of Appeals, Division II, and the case will be heard in early 2011. The Foundation is also requesting an award of costs and penalties under the Public Records Act.

Through the Legal Defense Fund grant, SPJ supports the Foundation's assertion that there is an argument for disclosure of the redacted information because the public has the right to know why their safety was jeopardized. Nondisclosure would harm the watchdog role of Washington journalists.

The SPJ Legal Defense Fund aids journalists in defending the freedom of speech and press guaranteed by the First Amendment. Grant money can also be used to initiate and support litigation that enforces public access to government records and proceedings. For more information about the SPJ Legal Defense Fund, or to donate, visit www.spj.org/ldf.asp.

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For Immediate Release:

1/14/2011

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SPJ supports Maryland defamation requirements protecting journalists and lawyers

INDIANAPOLIS – The [Society of Professional Journalists](http://www.spj.org) has joined an amicus brief seeking to uphold strict Maryland requirements for defamation claims in a case that, if reversed, could increase the number of defamation claims against journalists.

In the case *Norman v. Borison*, the state's highest court will address whether an attorney who provides a fair, accurate report of information that is available to the general public and affects the public interest is able to do so with privilege and without libel. The court will also consider whether statements about a corporation directly concern someone associated with that company.

Stephen Norman was the owner, operator and an attorney for Sussex LLC, a title insurance company and defendant in a June 2007 class action lawsuit that was later re-filed in a federal trial court. The lawsuit alleged that the Metropolitan Money Store and several other companies and real estate professionals engaged in mortgage fraud.

An attorney in the lawsuit, Scott Borison, created a website that listed the parties in the case and provided links to their law firms and pleadings in the case. Although Norman's name was only mentioned in one of those pleadings as a victim rather than perpetrator, he filed a defamation claim in Maryland state court, claiming that Borison and the other class action lawyers defamed him by talking to the press about the suit and posting court documents online.

The state appellate court affirmed a lower trial court's ruling, holding that allegedly defamatory statements about a company are not "of and concerning" the owners or shareholders of that company. The court also affirmed that the statements were protected by a privilege that extends to papers filed and comments made during litigation and are public record.

"The court has in its power the ability to protect journalists from a burgeoning number of unwarranted defamation cases," SPJ President Hagit Limor said. "Equally important, journalists have depended on attorneys regularly to provide records and documents of public interest and to comment and explain to provide context. We would lose an important protection should this longstanding Maryland policy be reversed."

The amicus brief, authored by the [Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press](http://www.rcfp.org), argues that the lower court was correct in dismissing the claims and that the underlying policy rationale requires a finding that attorneys are privileged to provide journalists with copies of legal filings as well as accurate summaries and comments on the documents.

In one of its roles as a free press and free speech advocate, SPJ initiates and joins amicus briefs to support First Amendment and open records cases. Most recently, [SPJ joined a brief in a Pennsylvania libel case, protecting journalists from defamation claims years after online publication](http://www.spj.org).

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SPJ president urges Maryland senators to amend Bill 740

On March 22, 2011, SPJ President Hagit Limor sent letters urging state senators in Maryland to amend Senate Bill 740. If made into law, 740 would limit citizens' and journalists' ability to obtain records in the public domain with redaction of critical metadata, expensive fees and access determined by third-party custodians acting in the interest of government.

A copy of the letter is below:

Dear Senator:

The Society of Professional Journalists opposes Senate Bill 740 in its current form. We also oppose a proposed amendment that would allow a state agency to continue outsourcing public databases to a private contractor who then profits by charging significant sums for those public resources.

Despite the SB 740's stated purpose of enhancing access to public records in electronic formats, we believe that this bill is so deeply flawed that it would undermine the access. The relevant issues are important and can be complex. We respectfully urge you to amend SB 740 to remove its flaws, or to refer it to summer study. This would allow the General Assembly to craft legislation that would uphold the public's right know, truly meet SB 740's stated goal, and bring the Maryland Public Information Act into accord with the federal Electronic Freedom of Information Act and with more progressive laws in other states.

The Society of Professional Journalists (SPJ) is a national organization that includes broadcast, print and online journalists, journalism educators, and students interested in journalism as a career. As a core part of our mission, we work to promote freedom of information so that people may better understand how their government works and may engage in the democratic process from a well-informed perspective. Through Project Sunshine, National Sunshine Week, and other initiatives, the SPJ educates its members and the public about the value and workings freedom of information. Our members and other journalists often seek access to public records, including records in useful electronic formats.

We know that the National Freedom of Information Coalition, the Society of Environmental Journalists and other public-interest organizations have pointed out serious flaws in SB 740. We share their concerns about SB 740's inaccurate definition of "metadata", its overly vague definition of acceptable electronic formats, its provision allowing agencies to scrub metadata from public records, and its failure to set limits on the fees that agencies seek to charge for electronic records. We encourage you to give careful considerations the concerns and suggestions that they have laid out in their testimony.

Inaccurate Definition of Metadata: SB 740's current definition of metadata is inaccurate and does not comply with standard definitions recognized by state and federal courts, and by other authorities. The definition should be struck or it should be amended to comply with those recognized definitions. In addition, metadata should be treated like any other information in a public record – protected where it is legally exempt, provided where it is not.

Allowing Custodians to Redact Information About a Public Record's History: This type of information can be vital to authenticating a public record and to understanding the public process. Allowing a custodian to scrub this type of information simply because it exists as metadata is unnecessary and undermines the public's right to know. Moreover, federal courts and the two state supreme courts have ruled that metadata is intrinsic to a public record and generally should be provided as part of an electronic record. Any agency that redacts metadata from a public record should be required to provide the requestor with a full accounting of those redactions, one that is sufficiently detailed for the requestor to understand the potential impacts of those redactions and to contest the redactions if necessary.

Continuing to Allow Agencies Too Much Latitude on Electronic Formats: If SB 740 is to meet its own stated purpose and the intent of the Maryland Public Information Act, then it should be amended to require clear, compelling language on required and permitted formats. As required under federal law and other states' laws, if an agency possesses a public record in an electronic format, and a person or organization asks for the record in that electronic format, the agency generally must provide the record in that format at the least cost and with the least delay.

Failing to Provide Adequate Guidance on Reasonable Fees: The practice of charging large sums for public records that have been created with public resources for public purposes obstructs public access and discriminates against people and organizations who lack the resources to purchase public data or bring legal action. This is especially true in the case of electronic records that can relatively easily and inexpensively be copied to a compact disk or posted to an agency web site. We encourage you to provide needed clarity on this point, generally limiting the amount that an agency may charge to the direct, incremental cost of creating a copy of a public record.

We encourage you to do the important work of removing these flaws from SB 740 and strengthening this legislation so that it enhances rather than undermines transparency in Maryland.

Sincerely,

*Hagit Limor
President*

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SPJ supports Mississippi TV station's fight to air detention center video

INDIANAPOLIS – The [Society of Professional Journalists](http://www.spj.org) has joined an amicus brief supporting a TV station in Hattiesburg, Miss., fighting to lift a court order preventing it from airing a videotape of alleged abuse at a youth detention facility.

WDAM, an NBC affiliate, has petitioned the Mississippi Supreme Court to allow it to broadcast video it acquired of alleged abuse at the state's Forrest County Juvenile Detention Center. A former employee at the detention center had obtained the footage and provided it to WDAM.

The video depicts approximately six juveniles in a physical exchange with detention center staff. Prior to airing the footage, WDAM acknowledged to Forrest County Youth Court prosecutors that the station obtained the video.

The prosecution was quickly granted a court injunction on Dec. 30 by the court to prohibit WDAM, or any other individual or news outlet from disclosing, publishing or broadcasting the tape, even though WDAM agreed to blur the juveniles' faces. The court ruled that WDAM failed to provide evidence of a need in showing the video. The court also concluded that the tapes were obtained unlawfully and that the prior restraint was needed to protect the inmates' privacy.

"The prosecutor and judge fail to explain how the inmates' privacy is invaded when their identities and faces are blurred," SPJ President Hagit Limor said. "This smacks of unlawful prior restraint. If we allow courts to demand 'evidence' of a need to show video, next they'll want proof of a need to tell any story. That would slip sadly into a new arena of the courts restricting press freedoms."

An amicus brief, authored by law firm Covington & Burling LLP on behalf of a coalition of media companies and non-profits, reinforces the station's petition to the state's highest court. The brief asserts that the order is an unconstitutional prior restraint on the station's ability to publish truthful information of public significance. Also, it reflects WDAM's argument that the court failed to present evidence that this action will protect confidentiality and serve rehabilitative purposes.

The state Supreme Court has not ruled on the petition or set a hearing date. The brief, which SPJ has joined along with The Associated Press and other journalism organizations, was filed on Jan. 20.

In one of its roles as a free press and free speech advocate, SPJ initiates and joins amicus briefs to support First Amendment and open records cases. Most recently, [SPJ joined a brief seeking to uphold strict Maryland requirements for defamation claims to protect journalists and lawyers reporting on public records](#).

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SPJ joins fight for national access to records in Va.

INDIANAPOLIS – The [Society of Professional Journalists](http://www.spj.org) has joined an amicus brief in support of a case challenging the constitutionality of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act.

At issue are denied open records requests of Mark McBurney and Roger Hurlbert, both non-residents of Virginia who made records requests under the Act. The current statute denies open records access to anyone who is not a resident of Virginia.

"The rights to freedom of information that our founding fathers guaranteed did not halt at state lines. They always were intended as a federal mandate," SPJ President Hagit Limor said. "If every state begins restricting information to its own citizens, national investigative reporting could be brought to a standstill. Restrictions on a free press equal restrictions on every individual citizen, as this case proves."

McBurney, who relocated from Virginia to Rhode Island, twice sought VFOIA documents after the state's Department of Child Support Enforcement admitted mishandling his child support case. The department denied both requests, citing that he was no longer a Virginia resident.

Hurlbert, a California resident, made a VFOIA request to the Henrico County Assessor's Office for real estate tax assessment records for his clients. The request was denied because of his non-residency status.

The U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia denied the case motion for summary judgment filed by McBurney and Hurlbert, which argued that the VFOIA provision requiring in-state residence was unconstitutional. The case is now pending in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit.

Authored by The Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press, the brief argues that the state law has some limited exceptions for non-resident media who either distribute or broadcast within Virginia but effectively shuts out much of the national media and independent journalists who cannot make direct requests to Virginia agencies. The brief was filed March 23.

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SPJ announces 2010 Region 4 Mark of Excellence Award winners

INDIANAPOLIS – The [Society of Professional Journalists](http://www.spj.org) is pleased to announce the Region 4 Mark of Excellence Award winners for the 2010 calendar year. SPJ Region 4 includes Michigan, Ohio, Western Pennsylvania and West Virginia. This year, the contest received almost 4,000 entries across SPJ's 12 regions.

The honorees were awarded certificates on April 2 during the Region 4 and 5 SPJ Spring Conference held in Erlanger, Ky. First place regional winners will advance to the national round of judging. National winners will be announced in early May.

The winners are listed below. For additional information on the Mark of Excellence awards, please contact Awards Coordinator Lauren Rochester at lrochester@spj.org.

2010 Region 4 Winners

Four Year College/University winners:

Breaking News Photography

- First Place: Fire causes approximately 2,100 to lose power early Saturday morning- by Chelsi Baker, West Virginia University.
- Second Place: Gov.-elect John Kasich celebrates with family – by Cody Cousino, Ohio State University.
- Third Place: Bomb Threat a mystery to many – by Austin Owens, Ohio State University.

Feature Photography

- First Place: Helping Haiti – by Libby March, Central Michigan University.
- Second Place: Life on Chittock – by Jake May, Central Michigan University.
- Third Place: Obama rally coverage – by Andy Gottesman, Joe Podelco, Lauren Hallow & Cody Cousino, Ohio State University.

General News Photography

- First Place: Election victory – by Jeffrey Smith, Central Michigan University.
- Second Place: Solemn Soldier – by Paige Calamari, Central Michigan University.
- Third Place: Tear of Remembrance – by Philip Botta, Kent State University.

Photo Illustration

- First Place: Who is No. 43? – by Jake May, Central Michigan University.
- Second Place: Life with the undead – by Sara Winkler, Central Michigan University
- Third Place: Trey Zeigler – by Sara Winkler, Central Michigan University.

Sports Photography

- First Place: Good Sportsmanship – by Sean Proctor, Central Michigan University.
- Second Place: Patrick Strang, University of Cincinnati.
- Third Place: Slapshot – by Jeffrey Smith, Central Michigan University.

Best Student Magazine

- First Place: The Burr, Kent State University.
- Second Place: Fusion, Kent State University.
- Third Place: Backdrop, Ohio University.

Non-Fiction Magazine Article

- First Place: Reconstructed – by Dawn Einsel, Kent State University.
- Second Place: Tipping Point – by Will Cooper, Ohio University.
- Third Place: Roots of Rebuilding – by Brian Bienkowski, Michigan State University.

Best All-Around Daily Student Newspaper

- First Place: The Michigan Daily, University of Michigan.
- Second Place: The State News, Michigan State University.
- Third Place: No Award.*

Best All-Around Non-Daily Student Newspaper

- First Place: Central Michigan Life, Central Michigan University.
- Second Place: The Independent Collegian, University of Toledo.
- Third Place: The News Record, University of Cincinnati.

Breaking News Reporting

- First Place: Campus shooting – by Collin Binkley, Ohio State University.
- Second Place: Cows loose on campus – by The Lantern staff, Ohio State University.
- Third Place: Duquesne drops four sports teams – by John Bojarski & Steve Orbanek, Duquesne University.

Editorial Writing

- First Place: Ryan Dunn, Ohio University.
- Second Place: Brad Canze, Central Michigan University.
- Third Place: Ethan Keating, University of Toledo.

Feature Writing

- First Place: Honor of a Lifetime – by Brittany Shammass, Michigan State University.
- Second Place: CCM grad rocks hard backstage – by Ariel Cheung, University of Cincinnati.
- Third Place: Farewell to arms: How do young Iraq war vets quell classroom angst? – Robert Guttersohn, Wayne State University.

General Column Writing

- First Place: Sean Webster, John Carroll University.
- Second Place: Kate Noftsinger, Bowling Green State University.
- Third Place: Samuel Kay, Miami University.

General News Reporting

- First Place: Police records at Marshall University – by Sam Turley, Marshall University.
- Second Place: OSU music facilities 'awful' – by Ryan Book, Ohio State University.
- Third Place: The day according to students – by Kristine Gill, Kent State University.

In-Depth Reporting

- First Place: Mohammed and the Major – by Brittany Shammass, Michigan State University.
- Second Place: Search for the Cure: How University scientists are defining the field of stem cell research – by Stephanie Steinberg, University of Michigan.
- Third Place: Concussions – by Grant Freking & Jimmy Oldham, Ohio State University.

Sports Column Writing

- First Place: Zack Meisel, Ohio State University.
- Second Place: Tony Dobies, West Virginia University.
- Third Place: Doug Tiff, Xavier University.

Sports Writing

- First Place: They Call Him Shoelace: The story of Denard Robinson – by Ryan Kartje, University of Michigan.
- Second Place: Doug Tiff, Xavier University.
- Third Place: Time for Trey – by Aaron McMann, Central Michigan University.

Best Affiliated Web Site

- First Place: cm-life.com, Central Michigan University.
- Second Place: The BG News, Bowling Green State University.
- Third Place: The News Record website, University of Cincinnati.

Best Independent Online Student Publication

- First Place: gcmag.org – by Grand Central Magazine staff, Central Michigan University.

- Second Place: Great Lakes Echo website – by Great Lakes Echo staff, Michigan State University.
- Third Place: No Award.*

Online Feature Reporting

- First Place: A life beyond limitations – by Tessa Bargainnier, Kent State University.
- Second Place: Living with Lymphoma – by Jackie McLean, Amanda Hinds & Jackie Valley, Kent State University.
- Third Place: The Final Delivery – by Laura Torchia, Kent State University.

Online In-Depth Reporting

- First Place: Coverage of OSU's "Tatto-gate" football scandal – by Zack Meisel & Jimmy Oldham, Ohio State University.
- Second Place: HPV at Miami – by Chloe Esposito, Miami University.
- Third Place: Recycling Cities – by Great Lakes Echo staff, Michigan State University.

Online News Reporting

- First Place: Who is Terry Norman? – by Taylor Rogers, Emily Inverso & Sierra Guterba, Kent State University.
- Second Place: May 4th, Forty Years Later – by KentWired staff, Kent State University.
- Third Place: Data breach – by Ally Marotti, Ohio State University.

Online Opinion & Commentary

- First Place: Great Lakes Smackdown! – by Alice Rossignol & Rachael Gleason, Michigan State University.
- Second Place: No Award.*
- Third Place: No Award.*

Online Sports Reporting

- First Place: WVU introduces coach in-waiting Holgorsen – by Brian Gawthrop, West Virginia University.
- Second Place: No Award.*
- Third Place: No Award.*

Best All-Around Radio Newscast

- First Place: The Newscenter 88 news team, Marshall University.
- Second Place: No Award.*
- Third Place: No Award.*

Radio Feature

- First Place: Model Trains: A Family Affair – by Adam Cavalier, Marshall University.
- Second Place: Jessica Jordan: Helping Students – by Leannnda Carey, Marshall University.
- Third Place: The Drumline – by Adam Cavalier, Marshall University.

Radio News Reporting

- First Place: Coping with Disaster: Montcoal, WV – by Leannnda Carey, Marshall University.
- Second Place: SGA Election Complaints – by Leannnda Carey, Marshall University.
- Third Place: Central Michigan University students clean up campus, honor mother Earth – by Alice Rossignol, Michigan State University.

Radio In-Depth Reporting

- First Place: Tracking Stimulus Dollars in Southwest Ohio – by Emily Atwood, Katie Morgan, Joe Sampson & Josh Messerly, Miami University.
- Second Place: Marshall Football 2009: End of the Line – by Adam Cavalier, Marshall University.
- Third Place: The Marshall Women's Basketball 2009-2010 Season in Review – by Adam Cavalier, Marshall University.

Radio Sports Reporting

- First Place: The Mitch Express – by Adam Cavalier, Miami University.
- Second Place: Spring Practice Brings Intensity – by Adam Cavalier, Marshall University.
- Third Place: Jordan v. Whiteside – by Robert Iddings, Marshall University.

Best All-Around Television Newscast

- First Place: UT: 10 News– by Ashley Roth & Paul Webb, University of Toledo.
- Second Place: WVU News staff, West Virginia University.
- Third Place: Focal Point staff, Michigan State University.

Television Feature

- First Place: The Price of Education – by Jeannette Reyes, Kent State University.

- Second Place: Ellis Island: A Family Affair – by Patrick Henderson, Ohio University.
- Third Place: Social Media – by Shannon Teets, West Virginia University.

Television Feature Photography

- First Place: Le Chat Gourmet – by Marty Berman, Michigan State University.
- Second Place: Jack3d Work Out Supplement – by Marty Berman, Michigan State University.
- Third Place: Band Goes Bowling – by Kelley Tourangeau, Michigan State University.

Television General News Reporting

- First Place: Burglary – by Ashton Pellom, West Virginia University.
- Second Place: 2011 Look Ahead – by Marty Berman, Michigan State University.
- Third Place: Jack3d Work Out Supplement – by Marty Berman, Michigan State University.

Television Breaking News Reporting

- First Place: Governor Tours Area Hit Hard By Storm – by Evan Millward, William Tapper & Michael Locklear, Ohio University.
- Second Place: Court Street Celebration – by Evan Millward & Gabe Ross, Ohio University.
- Third Place: No Award.*

Television In-Depth Reporting

- First Place: Sunshine Project – by Evan Millward, Patrick Henderson, Taylor Mirfendereski & Kelly May, Ohio University.
- Second Place: Don't Ask Don't Tell and the MSU ROTC – by Kelley Tourangeau, Michigan State University.
- Third Place: Dorm Safety – by Rich Pierce, Kent State University.

Television News Photography

- First Place: School Bus Safety – by Jazmin Bailey, Michigan State University.
- Second Place: No Award.*
- Third Place: No Award.*

Television Sports Reporting

- First Place: Julian Bailes – by Andrea Sauer, West Virginia University.
- Second Place: UM-MSU Tailgate – by Jonathan McEmber, Michigan State University.
- Third Place: Roller Derby – by Tamra Johnson, Michigan State University.

Two Year College winners:

Best All-around Non-Daily Student Newspaper

- First Place: The Voice, Cuyahoga Community College.
- Second Place: No Award.*
- Third Place: No Award.*

Television General News Reporting

- First Place: Mold after the Flood – by Lisa Benton, Ohio Center for Broadcasting.
- Second Place: No Award.*
- Third Place: No Award.*

**Mark of Excellence Awards honor the best in student journalism. Judges are not required to select first, second or third place winners.*

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