

2005 APSO CONTEST: Judges' Comments - Division IV

General Excellence

First Place

The (Lorain)

Morning Journal

This paper offered strong breadth of coverage; readable and reader-friendly packages; often-compelling and imaginative headlines, good selection and use of photos and clean, inviting layouts. The Morning Journal is a very good newspaper. Very nice Katrina presentation on A1 – the best of the papers we looked at. April 3 sports cover worked very well; juxtaposing two determined-looking players squaring off against each other set the tone for the upcoming matchup well. Each issue featured strong art elements that were played effectively to create balanced, compelling design. Pages were clean and free of clutter, making it easy for readers to navigate them. "Metal Magic" presentation used a good variety of photos to illustrate the story. The football previews were very extensive and well-packaged.

Second Place

The (Willoughby)

News-Herald

This paper offered great breadth of coverage, good use of photos and graphics and inviting layouts. The Pope package works well. We especially liked the use of historical photos in the rail to chronicle the Pope's career visually. Center piece photo was strong, and the inset type of the pope's last words worked well. The refer package was clear and easy to read. Using an AA section for the "other" news of the day was a good touch, allowing readers to keep the main section as a souvenir. Baseball scouting reports were nicely presented. The package was clean and easy to read. It appears one staff member produced the bulk of this section. Quite an achievement! The "Display has wings" package is very effective. The art elements complement one another, and the graphic element in the headline is handled well. The second-day Katrina coverage is impressive.

Third Place

The Lima News

This is a nice package overall. The breadth of coverage is usually fairly good. Layout is strong and reader friendly. Headlines are often creative and inviting. Photo choice and reproduction are very strong. The coverage of the Pope's death is certainly extensive. The cover design is striking and well done. The inside pages are well laid out and inviting. The fire centerpiece is strong on Region & Ohio cover. Overall, strong vertical design works well, with complementary art elements accenting the centerpiece. "Friction power" is a strong centerpiece on the Business cover, in terms of composition. The travel page package is well done. The Katrina cover provides potent centerpiece art. Colorful art on the Region & Ohio front is great – really eye-catching. The "Lammers: Retry Richey" package (July 1) is a strong effort. The writing is good and the timeline is very helpful. The "Living on the edge" series (July 24) looks like a tremendous effort by the paper. Good job!!

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Best Breaking News

First Place

The Lima News

"Down and Outage"

Excellent job all the way around. Great team effort -- kudos to all.

Second Place

The (Canton) Repository

"Water Near Record Levels"

Excellent coverage, photos, graphics. Outstanding team effort.

Third Place

The (Lorain) Morning Journal

Alex Parker

"Flash Flood Kills Two"

Good teamwork. writers and photo.

Best Enterprise Reporting

First Place

The Cincinnati Post

Tony Cook

"Brave New World"

Concise, interesting and well-written, this enterprise package makes the reader laugh, grimace and -- perhaps most importantly -- think. Great job!

Second Place

The (Canton) Repository

Tim Botos and Julie Vennitti

"Tiny Lives"

It's obvious this reporter/photographer combo spent the extra time necessary to get this poignant story package. Good job!

Third Place

The (Willoughby)

News-Herald

David S. Glasier

"Inside OVI"

Stories capture the subtleties of a common community concern in this well-rounded series.

Honorable Mention

The (Lorain) Morning Journal

Scott Patsko and Jennifer

Bracken

"Dirty 30"

This series captures the community essence and daily struggles with a growing epidemic of violence.

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Best Investigative Reporting

First Place

The (Canton) Repository

Veronica Van Dress

"Is Alternative Learning Really Learning at All?"

The examination of questionable practices at a charter school resonates with parents, who assume the feedback they receive from schools accurately reflects their children's progress.

Second Place

The (Canton) Repository

Paul E. Kostyu

"Who's Protecting Us?"

An exhaustive study of lax government oversight that clearly states how it impacted the community.

Third Place

The (Canton) Repository

Kelli Young and Malcolm Hall

"Bliss Unknown"

A fascinating examination of social service gone bad, focusing on the particularly egregious record of one counselor.

Best Business Reporting

First Place

The (Canton) Repository

Tim Botos and Kelli Young

"How Safe Is It to Dine at Restaurants?"

This story represents a long-term commitment to the readers. With Americans eating out in record numbers this is an important issue.

Second Place

The Lima News

Heather Rutz

"A Taxing Issue"

A subject near and dear to most tax payers, this story did a good job of covering the area's tax incentives and their efficiency.

Third Place

The Lima News

Jim Sabin

"The Next Small Thing"

Jim Sabin did a very good job of explaining a complicated issue without talking down to the reader.

Best Feature Reporting

First Place

The (Canton) Repository

Tim Botos

"To Protect and Save"

A fascinating look at mental illness that clearly explains what Stieber and his family went through. Nice details, and it illuminated a topic that includes many people.

Second Place

The Lima News

Heather Rutz

"Capitol Gains"

An interesting look at a day in the life of a congressman.

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Third Place

The (Lorain) Morning Journal
Scott Patsko
"The Measure of Success"

Really brought home what this young wrestler was feeling and going through.

Best Headline Writer

First Place

Springfield News-Sun
Tom Stafford

Smart, funny, great play on words.

Second Place

The (Canton) Repository
Jeff Verbus

Funny, witty, good play on words. Relates to stories.

Third Place

Warren Tribune Chronicle
Bern Olmstead and Ed Puskas

Well written and well thought-out.

Best Editorial Cartoonist

First Place

Warren Tribune Chronicle
Rick Muccio

This portfolio showed a winning diversity of topics and approaches. Well executed, particularly the lottery cartoon and Oscar parody.

Best Editorial Writer

First Place

The (Willoughby) News-Herald
Laura Kessel

Laura Kessel is clear, organized and even-tempered. Anyone who invokes the memory of "The Rock" has to have her finger on the readers' pulse.

Second Place

Warren Tribune Chronicle
Guy Coviello

Guy Coviello makes his point without beating the reader over the head. Wry, but without rancor.

Third Place

The (Canton) Repository
Gayle F. Beck

Gayle Beck's writing makes local news issues interesting to a reader with no local ties. She's logical and organized.

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Best Columnist

First Place

The (Canton) Repository
Rick Senften

Covers a range of topics with skill and depth. Is hard where he needs to be hard, touching where it warrants a softer hand. Effectively showcases what a columnist should be -- a community activist.

Second Place

The Cincinnati Post
Kevin Eigelbach

Writing about religion can be hard. Doing a column can be downright challenging. Kevin Eigelbach pulls it off, and doesn't steer away from controversial topics.

Third Place

The Cincinnati Post
Mark Neikirk

Thorough, to the point. Mark Neikirk does a good job of breaking down large, complicated issues to the local level. Columns also are hard-hitting, but respectful in tone.

Best Business Writer

First Place

The (Canton) Repository
Edd Pritchard

Edd Pritchard's Maytag story, written on deadline, was thorough and intelligent. His straightforward lede was right on.

Second Place

The (Canton) Repository
G. Patrick Kelley

Nice change of pace -- from the critical to the light-hearted.

Third Place

The (Canton) Repository
Benjamin Duer

May not be a biz writer, but demonstrates good writing, off-beat subjects can cross beats.

Best Graphics Artist

First Place

The (Canton) Repository
Michael Weiss

Consistently great graphics in both concept and execution, and diverse in approach.

Second Place

The (Canton) Repository
Eri Hashimoto

Strong portfolio of diverse work, well suited to each story.

Third Place

The Cincinnati Post
Ryan Ostrander

Beautiful illustrations that creatively enhance accompanying stories.

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Best Feature Writer

First Place

Springfield News-Sun
Andrew McGinn

Hilarious, insightful and sharply written. Andrew McGinn proves that you don't have to write long to write well. The best leads I've read in years.

Second Place

The (Canton) Repository
Tim Botos

Tim Botos wonderfully brings out the human element of a story. The "Tin Men" story especially stood out as a piece of slice-of-life writing that delights readers without demanding too much from them.

Third Place

The (Canton) Repository
Ed Balint

Ed Balint brings a fresh approach to every story. Though they are different in style, they are similar in excellence.

Best Photographer

First Place

The (Canton) Repository
Scott Heckel

Scott Heckel has a solid body of work that demonstrates a mastery of the craft.

Second Place

Mansfield News Journal
Dave Polcyn

Dave Polcyn has a great variety of work.

Third Place

Springfield News-Sun
Marshall Gorby

No comments.

Best Sports Columnist

First Place

The Cincinnati Post
Lonnie Wheeler

Lonnie Wheeler has an excellent feel for sports and the way games tug on family time, in a good or bad way.

Second Place

Mansfield News Journal
Larry Phillips

Larry Phillips doesn't hold back, using strong opinion on college playoff column. He also provides a light touch in writing about the death of Hal Lebovitz.

Third Place

The (Youngstown) Vindicator
Joe Scalzo

Good imagination and description. Joe Scalzo admits to borrowing ideas, but they are well done. Got a kick out of the fitness tips.

Honorable Mention

The (Canton) Repository
Steve Doerschuk

No comments.

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Best Sports Writer

First Place

The (Canton) Repository
Todd Porter

Todd Porter's versatility sets him apart. Hard news, game columns, in-depth reporting on the Chase Fairfield feature. He did it all and did it all well.

Second Place

The (Youngstown) Vindicator
Joe Scalzo

Joe Scalzo writes about a girls' track star as easily as he writes about the NFL draft. Every piece he wrote was entertaining.

Third Place

The Cincinnati Post
Josh Katzowitz

Josh Katzowitz's work is solid start to finish.

Best News Writer

First Place

The (Canton) Repository
Tim Botos

Great leads, compelling writing on a variety of topics.

Second Place

The Lima News
David Trinko

Inviting, open style that draws the readers into topics that might otherwise be daunting.

Third Place

Warren Tribune Chronicle
John Goodall

Clean, concise, compelling style.

Best Game Story

First Place

The (Lorain) Morning Journal
Jason Lloyd
"Troy Story 2"

Jason Lloyd got all the facts in without resorting to play-by-play, capturing the mood of Ohio on a Sunday morning after the win over Michigan: "Every kid ... wants to be Troy Smith."

Second Place

The Cincinnati Post
Marc Lancaster
"Willy Mo Flexes Muscles"

It's never easy writing 100-plus baseball games, but this one stood out, giving the reader tons of background while also providing the 5 W's.

Third Place

Springfield News-Sun
Lucas Sullivan
"Arrows Remember Friend"

In succinct fashion, Lucas Sullivan illustrates the winning team's motivation with quotes and descriptive language. He doesn't lapse into play-by-play providing the right amount of game summary.

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Best Sports Breaking News

First Place

The (Youngstown) Vindicator
Joe Scalzo
"Draft Day Surprise"

Joe Scalzo demonstrated excellent writing skills when weaving together this breaking news piece. He certainly had great access. But what made this stand out were the details provided that only an exceptional reporter can cull.

Second Place

The (Canton) Repository
"2005 Hall of Fame
Enshrinement"

The Repository staff ruled the HOF with extensive, descriptive packages written on deadline. Stellar job!

Third Place

The (Canton) Repository
Steve Doerschuk
"Day of Discord"

Steve Doershuk clearly knows the game and its players. While luck played a part in getting an exclusive, readers won with both the fresh interview and well-written story.

Honorable Mention

The Lima News
Tom Usher
"NCAA Flags ONU"

Tom Usher uses creative, punchy ledes to draw the reader in then doesn't disappoint them. This story had thorough background and analysis -- all on deadline.

Best Special Sports Section

First Place

The (Canton) Repository
"DIY Football Improvement"

Great development of a theme and excellent use of it throughout section, not only in design but in story concept and construction.

Second Place

Springfield News-Sun
High School Football Preview

Great use of 'how it feels' concept to highlight details fans might not get elsewhere and ties whole section together.

Third Place

**The (Willoughby)
News-Herald**
High School Football Preview

Creative use of a theme to make yearly section fresh and attractive to new readers as well as providing new information to fans.

Honorable Mention

The Lima News
"Going Deep: Inside Camp"
Football Preview

Compelling design throughout section and great idea to offer in-depth look at camp.

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Best Daily Sports Section

First Place

The (Canton) Repository

Wow! Excellent design, sharp photos, good writing with an intensely local focus. Thorough, but not boring. Innovative, but not outlandish. Great work, especially the prep extras.

Second Place

The Cincinnati Post

Excellent breadth of coverage; Cincy has much to cover and the Post does it well with good writers all around.

Third Place

Springfield News-Sun

Solid design and excellent articles on Burba and Collier. This section handled big events well and offered comprehensive daily, local coverage.

Honorable Mention

The (Willoughby) News-Herald

No comments.

Best Illustration

First Place

The (Canton) Repository

Michael Weiss

"Chicken Pox: Still Around, Still Contagious"

Simple but powerful. Drives home the point of the story without overwhelming the reader. Carrying the 'spots' down the page is a nice added graphic element.

Second Place

The (Willoughby) News-Herald

Ken Blaze

"Balanced Diet"

Illustration instantly gives reader the topic of the story. Attractive to the eye and simple at the same time. Gets the message across without overwhelming the reader.

Third Place

The Lima News

Matt Steiner

"Good vs. Evil"

Illustration fits well with the story. Accurately conveys the dual traits of e-mail. Good use of colors and images to get the message across.

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Best Informational Graphic

First Place

The (Canton) Repository

Bob Kast

"Hot Air Balloons"

Loaded with useful information, this graphic has excellent use of color and space.

Second Place

Warren Tribune Chronicle

Christyne Kotel

"False Security?"

Compelling and easy to read.

Third Place

The Lima News

Denise Hunter

"Proposal for Military Bases in Ohio"

Easy-to-read at-a-glance information.

Best Spot News Photo

First Place

Mansfield News Journal

Dave Polcyn

"Standoff 6-11-05"

Easy choice: this is what spot news coverage is all about.

Second Place

Springfield News-Sun

Marshall Gorby

"Run Away Llama"

Very fun moment. Nice off-beat entry to this category.

Third Place

The (Canton) Repository

Michael S. Balash

"Fire Video"

The photographer really broke out of the box here and gave us something that is fun to look at and still tells the story.

Honorable Mention

The Cincinnati Post

Jason Geil

"Pop-Up Shower"

This image is too unusual to ignore. Way to work the moment.

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Best General News Photo

First Place

Mansfield News Journal

Dave Polcyn

"Reluctant Camper"

Storytelling and evocative moment.

Second Place

The (Canton) Repository

Scott Heckel

"Saying Goodbye"

Good success seeing beyond visually one-dimensional coverage of a funeral.

Third Place

The Lima News

Ty Wright

"I Feel Pretty, Oh So Pretty"

No comments.

Best Feature Photo

First Place

The (Canton) Repository

Scott Heckel

"Eyeing His Game"

Great image. The photographer really took the time to think and come up with a compelling moment.

Second Place

Springfield News-Sun

Bill Lackey

"Splash"

This is a fun moment that really defines the feature category.

Third Place

The (Canton) Repository

Scott Heckel

"Keeper of the Light"

Great way to make an image out of an everyday event.

Best Sports Photo

First Place

The (Lorain) Morning Journal

David Richard

"Flea-flicker"

Perfect reaction photo.

Second Place

Springfield News-Sun

Bill Lackey

"Hurdle View"

No comments.

Third Place

The (Lorain) Morning Journal

David Richard

"Fan Slammed"

Nice job of keeping your eyes on the sidelines as well as the field.

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Best Photo Essay

First Place

The (Canton) Repository

Julie Vennitti Botos
"Tiny Lives"

The persistence to follow this story through with great variety of imagery really paid off.

Second Place

The (Canton) Repository

David Distelhorst
"Gang Task Force"

This is a well done, newsy entry that has meaningful impact.

Third Place

The Lima News

Drew McMurtrie
"The Will to Live"

Great subject, good technical skill.

Best Community Service

First Place

Warren Tribune Chronicle

"Make a Difference Day"

A shining example on conveying communities. As its name implies, this project helps make a difference.

Second Place

The Lima News

"Living on the Edge"

Puts focus on a serious community issue and may help bring about change.

Third Place

The (Canton) Repository

Melissa Griffy Seeton
"Cuts So Deep"

Brought to light an important issue for young and old, told in compelling way with focus on solutions.

Best Special Section

First Place

The (Canton) Repository

"2005 Pro Football HOF Festival"

Fun, interesting and full of innovative reader interactivity. Also clearly helpful with maps and tips on how to save money and still enjoy the festival. A gem.

Second Place

The (Lorain) Morning Journal

"War Stories"

Moving tribute to the heroes of war. We bet readers adored this section.

Third Place

The (Canton) Repository

Gary Brown and Michael Weiss
"Two Centuries of Memories"

Creative approach that's fun and a quick, enjoyable read. Excellent example of short-form storytelling.

Honorable Mention

The Lima News

"Ice Storm '05"

In a very strong category, this piece deserves recognition for helping readers understand and remember a significant news event.

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Best Full Page Layout

First Place

The (Canton) Repository
Michael Weiss
"Star Wars"

Clearly going above and beyond on both creative and production levels.

Second Place

The (Willoughby) News-Herald
Mark Meszoros
"Mis-givings?"

Design of centerpiece excellently attached to story concept and creates a superbly readable story.

Third Place

The Cincinnati Post
Jason Geil
"A Day at the Mall"

Great depiction of 'day in the life' concept and doesn't let other stories on the page distract from the main layout.

Best Page One Layout

First Place

The Cincinnati Post

All entries included attractive and compelling rack fronts and a diverse selection of designs so each looked fresh.

Second Place

The (Canton) Repository
Dwight Kier and Michael Weiss

Nice dominant package on each day, each with a different look to showcase abilities of designers.

Third Place

The Lima News

Strong editorial choices for main packages without overlooking other news of the day.