

Wauneta Breeze sweeps weekly newspaper awards

Written by Wauneta Breeze
Thursday, 21 April 2011 21:15 -

By Josh Sumner

The Wauneta Breeze

For the second year in a row, the Wauneta Breeze took home top weekly honors at the Nebraska Press Association's annual convention and awards banquet, held this past weekend in Lincoln.

The Breeze — staffed by the four-person crew of Managing Editor Josh Sumner, Associate Editor Tina Kitt and production team members Susan Jones and Berneta Steinert — won the Loral Johnson Community Weekly Sweepstakes Award at last Saturday's awards banquet in Lincoln. The honor is awarded to the weekly newspaper which emerges atop the Better Newspaper Contest point standings.

This marks the third time, and second in two years, the Breeze has been named the sweepstakes winner across all classes. In 2002, the Breeze claimed the weekly sweepstakes award, which was then known as "The Maggie."

Eighteen first place finishes, eight second place finishes and four third place finishes in writing, photography and advertising categories powered the Breeze to the sweepstakes win. The Breeze also walked away as the Class A Sweepstakes winner, coming in ahead of the Hemingford Ledger and the Oakland Independent among those newspapers with a circulation of under 1,000.

Finishing behind Wauneta for the Loral Johnson Weekly Sweepstakes was the Gothenburg Times and the Bellevue Leader.

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A pair of awards from the Omaha World-Herald brought in a cash prize of \$200 each for Wauneta. The Breeze was named Class A winner of the Omaha World-Herald's Community Service Award and the Class A winner of the Omaha World-Herald's Service to Agriculture award.

This year's sweepstakes winner in the daily newspaper category, which excludes the Omaha World-Herald and Lincoln Journal Star, was the Grand Island Independent.

The 2010 NPA Better Newspaper Contest was judged by the Iowa Newspaper Association.

In addition to entries submitted reflecting the work of current staffers over the past year, former Breeze staffer Dave Vrbas garnered several awards for work he had done at the Breeze in 2010 prior to moving with his family to Lincoln. He received a first place award for sports feature photography and joined Sumner and Kitt in receiving first place awards for Editorial Writing and for In Depth Writing for the Breeze's coverage of the school construction project.

Kitt received first place awards for news photography, feature series writing and community promotion ad. She received second place awards for news photography, sports writing, community promotion ad and single classified ad idea. She garnered a third place award for computer graphics. Kitt and Sumner took third place in Class A photo page for their pictorial coverage of Harvest Fest.

Sumner received first and second place awards for feature story writing and a third place award for sports column writing.

Jones received a third place award for single classified ad idea.

Other area winners include The Imperial Republican, which won two first place awards for its editorial page and photo page featuring space shuttle coverage.

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The Republican earned three second place awards in the categories of sports feature photo, special section for coverage of Imperial's 125th anniversary and editorial.

Five third place awards included feature photography by Carolyn Lee, newspaper promotion, specialty pages, sports writing by Russ Pankonin and spot news photography by Jan Schultz.

The Grant Tribune-Sentinel brought home one first place award for public notice and its promotion. Three third place awards were won for single retail advertising idea, small ad and lifestyles page.

Imperial and Grant participated in Class C, which consists of newspaper with a circulation between 1,051 and 2,800.

Here's a comprehensive list of awards won by the Breeze in the newspaper contest and announced during Saturday's awards banquet:

NPA Contest results

First place awards

- Best in Class — Class A

- General Excellence

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- Front page
- Headline writing
- Lifestyles page
- Editorial page
- Classified page
- Public notice and its promotion.
- Youth coverage (Bronco Beat)
- Reader contest (Grandparents Day Contest)
- Web site
- Editorial writing by Kitt, Sumner and Dave Vrbas
- In-Depth Writing by Vrbas, Sumner and Kitt for school improvement project coverage
- News photography by Kitt for “Elevator Paint Job a Tall Order”

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- Sports feature photo by Vrbas for “Potato Race”
- Feature series writing by Kitt for her Wauneta Volunteer Fire Department’s 100th year review
- Community promotion ad by Kitt for Palisade’s Community Christmas ad
- Single feature story by Sumner for “Palisade Church Helps Local Family in Need.”

Second place awards

- Specialty page
- Sports page
- Reader interaction for the annual Vacation Issue
- News photography by Kitt for “Need Help in the Field? Call Mom!”
- Sports writing by Kitt for “Bronco Gridders”

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- Community promotion ad by Kitt for Wauneta's Santa Saturday ad.
- Single feature story by Sumner for his story on Glen Beneda "WWVII Vet Returns"
- Single classified ad idea by Kitt.

Third place awards

- Photo page for Harvest Fest photos taken by Kitt and Sumner
- Use of computer graphics produced in-house by Kitt about tornado safety tips
- Sports Column by Sumner
- Single classified ad idea by Jones.