



AMERICAN SOCIETY OF NEWSPAPER EDITORS

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December 2005

Dear Editor:

The ASNE Awards are among the most prestigious journalism honors, cherished for their representation of excellence in our craft.

This year's special category is "Local Watchdog Reporting," honoring work done by newspapers that holds important local institutions accountable for their actions. Including this category, the ASNE Awards offer seven writing categories and the Community Service Photojournalism Award.

As you may know, a generous gift from longtime member David Laventhol underwrites the \$10,000 prizes for deadline reporting that honor his late father, former Philadelphia newsman Jesse Laventhol. The Freedom Forum supports a \$2,500 award for distinguished writing on diversity. The ASNE Foundation funds the remaining prizes, each of which is \$2,500. Winners receive their awards at the ASNE convention and portions of the winning work will be published by The Poynter Institute in its "Best Newspaper Writing 2006" book.

The rules and a sample entry form for this year's ASNE Awards are enclosed. Based on our experience judging recent contests, we thought it might be helpful to offer some advice about entries.

- Though strong reporting is essential as a basis for the journalism recognized by ASNE, it is important to understand that writing is the most important element.
Remember that the deadline categories should be considered broadly. Time pressures exist every day, as in the case of the daily coverage of a gripping murder trial or the oozing story of the collapse of a ruling regime, two winning entries in the individual deadline category.
Stories must be properly sourced. Our judges have been concerned in recent years about stories, particularly in narrative writing, in which attribution was missing. Fortunately, we have found that the finest writers have no difficulty working attribution into their work; but we have been troubled to have to reject some otherwise fine writing for lack of proper sourcing.
The purpose of the photojournalism award is to recognize a body of work by an individual on a single subject that contributes to an improvement or heightened awareness in the community through photography. The entries could have run in a newspaper to illustrate a package or series of stories, or they could have been a freestanding photo story or series.

To process your entries more quickly, we encourage you to fill out the entry form electronically at Poynter Online: http://www.poynter.org/ASNE2006. Follow the prompts. Then print out the completed form to include with your entry.

Entries must be postmarked by Feb. 1, 2006, to be considered by judges. Please note that the entry form requires the nominating editor to attest that the entry, as submitted, is the version that appeared in the newspaper. This has become important because a number of submissions we receive are computer printouts rather than actual clippings.

We hope you nominate the best work in your paper for our writing awards and make a special effort to help us find the very best in community storytelling through photography as well.

Sincerely,

[Signature of Peter K. Bhatia]

Peter K. Bhatia
The Oregonian, Portland
Chair, ASNE Awards Board

[Signature of Rick Rodriguez]

Rick Rodriguez
The Sacramento (Calif.) Bee
ASNE President

Enclosures