

YOUTH JOURNALISM

youthjournalism.org

I N T E R N A T I O N A L

Young reporters snag international journalism awards

WEST HARTFORD, Connecticut, U.S.A. – Students in eight countries on four continents captured awards in Youth Journalism International’s first worldwide journalism contest.

“We had a wealth of really good entries from many different students and schools. Picking the best proved much harder than we ever dreamed,” said Steve Collins, president of the board for YJI.

Earning top honors as the Student Journalist of the Year was Megan Mizuta of Boise, Idaho, whose stellar work for *The Borah Senator* showed off her courage, her nose for news and her range of talent.

“Megan is the epitome of student journalism: she is honest, communicates clearly, constantly experiments with journalistic forms, assists the staff with copy editing, vehemently practices journalism ethics and provides leadership,” wrote Michelle Harmon, her adviser at Borah High School.

Katie Jordan, a YJI editor, said Mizuta “impressed us with the scope of her writing. She’s just as capable of writing hard news stories about budget cuts and student-teacher affairs as she is of writing opinion or sports stories.”

A high school journalism advisor in Darien, Conn., Stacey Wilkins, won Journalism Educator of the Year for her exemplary work with both her school’s paper, *Neirad*, and her efforts to create the Connecticut Academic Press Association.

One of her former students, Kimberly Michels, said Wilkins devotes countless hours to her students, champions free speech and makes journalism fun.

Wilkins “provides her students with 21st Century skills, challenges them to think critically, invites them to discover their gifts, expects them to share their talents and sees the best in each one of them,” wrote Karen Rezendes, her former principal.

Judges were especially impressed with the tremendous work done by journalism teachers, sometimes against long odds.

“With so many people talking about the decline of print journalism these days, we found it heartening to read students’ letters about exceptional teachers who are doing everything they can to keep journalism alive,” Jordan said.

Genoa, Italy’s Eugenia Durante won the Jacinta Marie Bunnell Award for Commentary for writing the best piece giving voice to an important issue.

In her commentary about Harper Lee’s book, “To Kill a Mockingbird,” Durante wrote with sensitivity about the way ignorance and fear of those who are different hurts everyone, said Jackie Majerus, YJI’s executive director.

The Frank Keegan “Take No Prisoners” Award for News went to Caroline Nelissen of Ermelo, The Netherlands, for a piece examining the Dutch Christmas tradition of “Black Pete,” a black helper for Santa Claus who strongly resembles the Sambo character of old-time Dixie in the United States.

Majerus said Keegan, a longtime newsman whose love of journalism helped give birth to YJI, would no doubt appreciate a reporter like Nelissen, who tackled the subject without hesitation.

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In each of the categories, judges found strong competition. The best were cited as finalists, including Maxine Frendel of Mahwah, New Jersey, the sole finalist in the Student Journalist of the Year category.

Awards were also handed out in 17 other categories, including features, sports, photography, cartooning, reviews and enterprise reporting.

Winners of the top four categories will receive crystal trophies. All finalists and other winners will receive custom made certificates.

“We hope all of those who entered will continue to use their writing, photography and art in a way that helps build bridges and makes the world they’ll inherit a better place for all of us,” Majerus said.

A complete list of winners is attached below.

“It’s really exciting to be able to recognize deserving young journalists all over the world. I hope even more nations are represented in next year’s contest,” Jordan said.

Youth Journalism International has been educating the next generation of news professionals and talented teens since 1994. Formally created in 2007, it is a 501(c)(3) educational non-profit public charity. Its website can be found at www.youthjournalism.org.

The contest covered work published in English between Jan. 1, 2009 and March 31, 2010 in any format. Results were announced June 16, 2010.

For more information, please contact Jackie Majerus, Youth Journalism International’s executive director, at (860) 523-9632 in Connecticut or by writing to youthjournalisminternational@gmail.com.

The list of winners follows:

STUDENT JOURNALIST OF THE YEAR

Winner, Megan Mizuta, *The Borah Senator*, Boise, Idaho

Finalist, Maxine Frendel, Mahwah, New Jersey

JOURNALISM EDUCATOR OF THE YEAR

Winner, Stacey Wilkins, Darien High School, Darien, Connecticut

Finalist, Scott Dalton, Sacred Heart High School in Kingston, Massachusetts

Finalist, Sarah Platanitis, Holyoke High School, Holyoke, Massachusetts

Finalist, Mark Ionescu, The John Carroll School, Bel Air, Maryland

JACINTA MARIE BUNNELL AWARD FOR COMMENTARY

Honors an individual who gave voice to an important issue in a single opinion piece or a series of opinion pieces devoted to the same topic. Bunnell, who was severely disabled, died in 2009 at the age of 26. Among her legacies is a commitment by those whose lives she touched to focus on that most crucial question: “What do you think?” It is a fitting tribute to Jacinta to honor one of the many young people who have tried to answer that question during the past year.

Winner, Eugenia Durante, “In hope that we will kill no more mockingbirds,” Genoa, Italy

Finalist, Yumna Baloch, “IBseriously Censored,” Warsaw, Poland

Finalist, Tasman Anderson, “Q Youth with Tasman Anderson,” Queensland, Australia

Finalist, Lim Zhi Quan, “Art vs. Graffiti - Paint vs. Scrawls,” Singapore

Finalist, Megan Harrigfeld, “Con: Ada County website violates privacy,” Boise, Idaho

FRANK KEEGAN “TAKE NO PRISONERS” AWARD FOR NEWS

Honors an individual who showed the nose for news exemplified by longtime newsman Frank Keegan, whose love of journalism and determination that it has a future helped give birth to Youth Journalism International.

Winner, Caroline Nelissen, “Dutch Debate Sinterklaas’ ‘Black Pete,’” Ermelo, The Netherlands
Finalist, Jackie Jin, “Plastic Bags Banned,” San Jose, California

NEWS

News Team Reporting

First Place, Julia Lang and Kimberly Michels, “Students Moonstruck, The Mystery of the Middlesex Lagoon,” Darien, Connecticut

Second Place, Tiffany Chien and Michelle Deng, “Only school within 40 mile radius without performing arts center,” Saratoga, California

ENTERPRISE

First Place, Suzanna Quiring, “Sexual content invades teen paradigms,” Fresno, California

Second Place, Tiffany Chien, “The end or the means: how much honor matters,” Saratoga, California

Honorable Mention, Jacqueline Wang, “Writing on Hands,” Los Altos Hills, California

FEATURES

Features Team Reporting

First Place, Shreya Nathan, Nayeon Kim and Alisha Mayor, “Five Families,” San Jose, California

Individual Reporting

First Place, Justin Kirkham, “Students experience foreign culture,” Boise, Idaho

Second Place, Alisha Mayor, “San Francisco gives Harrison Ford the red carpet treatment,” San Jose, California

FIRST PERSON ESSAY

First Place, Eroll Yabut, “Filipinos blend cultures for festive Christmas,” Castillejos, Zambales, Philippines

Second Place, Yelena Samofalova, “My first time trick-or-treating,” West Hartford, Connecticut

PROFILE

First Place, Andi Cara, “Santa’s in Town Early,” Darien, Connecticut

Second Place, Shreya Nathan, “Scuba diving,” San Jose, California

Honorable Mention, Samantha Whittaker, “Ellen Hopkins: Famous author visits school,” Boise, Idaho

REVIEWS

Music

First Place, Daniel Gallen, “Polar Bear Club strives to return to perfection,” Bel Air, Maryland

Second Place, Chris Janson, “Young Delivers Old Style on Owl City,” Darien, Connecticut

Honorable Mention, Justin Brown, “New Gaga Video Rings in Message for Viewers,” Hartford, Connecticut

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Theater/Film

First Place, Caroline Nelissen, "Love, shame and shattered lives in *The Reader*," Ermelo, The Netherlands

Second Place, Jenna Potter, "*Nine* is impossible to forget," Ontario, Canada

Honorable Mention, Samantha Hoffman, "Surrogates," Palo Alto, California

General Reviews

First Place, Michelle Deng, "Windows 7: A remarkable change for the better," Saratoga, California

SPORTS

Sports News

First Place, Emily Close, "Ivy Dreams Take Root in Squash Court," Darien, Connecticut

Second Place, Ayla Washam, "No spots in weight class for regulars," Boise, Idaho

Sports Opinion

First Place, Parker Simmons, "Team free falls into a 0-9 ring of fire," Boise, Idaho

Second Place, Clare Hern, "A-Rod isn't a 'true Yankee,'" West Hartford, Connecticut

Sports Team Reporting

First Place, Clare Hern and Kiernan Majerus-Collins, "Behind the scenes at ESPN," West Hartford, Connecticut

CARTOONS

First Place, Lisa Garrard, "Prince, I'm Leaving You for Snow White," Boise, Idaho

Second Place, Elahn Santiago, "Graduation Day," Holyoke, Massachusetts

Honorable Mention, Michelle Deng, "The sea of causes," Saratoga, California

PHOTOGRAPHY

News Photo

First Place, Caroline Nelissen, "Kurdish demonstrators take to the streets in Istanbul," Ermelo, The Netherlands

Sports Photo

First Place, Megan Mizuta, "Borah High senior Adam Bunch," Boise, Idaho

Feature Photo

First Place, Eugenia Durante, "Genoa's enchanting Christmas," Genoa, Italy

Photo Illustration

First Place, Emily Brady, "Harassment," Holyoke, Massachusetts