

OKLAHOMA PRESS ASSOCIATION – 2020 BETTER NEWSPAPER CONTEST

DAILY NEWSPAPERS CIRCULATION MORE THAN 4,700

NEWS CONTENT

FIRST PLACE: *The Norman Transcript*, Feb. 5, Oct. 30, Nov. 1.

JUDGE'S COMMENTS: This was the most consistent publication across all judging guidelines. Coverage of hit and run accident and upcoming elections was especially strong and set this entry apart.

SECOND PLACE: *The Lawton Constitution*, June 28, July 14, August 9.

JUDGE'S COMMENTS: Strong writing and headlines, as well as good balance of coverage, but felt less local and photography wasn't as strong as first place winner.

THIRD PLACE: *Enid News & Eagle*, June 28, Nov. 20, Sept. 20.

JUDGE'S COMMENTS: Strong headlines and organization, but writing was weaker than the top two.

LAYOUT & DESIGN

FIRST PLACE: *The Lawton Constitution*, July 12, July 17, July 24.

JUDGE'S COMMENTS: Dramatic graphics on page 1 related to COVID series. Pie charts offer a quick burst of info for readers.

Love the mask across the mast. Excellent variety of typefaces throughout. Solid use of photos, info boxes and graphics.

I would be excited to see this publication arrive at my door each day. Well done.

SECOND PLACE: *The Norman Transcript*, Feb. 5, Feb. 16, March 27.

JUDGE'S COMMENTS: Nice blending of photos and bold typeface on front, solid use of color photos throughout, especially in sports.

A larger or more distinct headline on stand alone photos would help them stand out more from the surrounding ads.

THIRD PLACE: *Enid News & Eagle*, Jan. 31, May 10, June 23.

JUDGE'S COMMENTS: Clever graphics for the Mother's Day issue with the masked world – so very apt. Nice variety of typefaces. I like the use of info boxes but wish there was a color element instead of gray for info boxes.

ADVERTISING

FIRST PLACE: *The Lawton Constitution*, April 19, April 22, May 20.

JUDGE'S COMMENTS: I liked this paper overall in this category.

Good variety of content and presented it in a way that was easy looking through. It made me excited to look at the next publication.

SECOND PLACE: *Enid News & Eagle*, Dec. 4, Nov. 11, Nov. 28.

JUDGE'S COMMENTS: Nice color throughout. The advertising was very well done. High quality print – registration. Display advertising was unique and had a good range in content.

THIRD PLACE: *The Norman Transcript*, Feb. 26, Dec. 20, Nov. 28.

JUDGE'S COMMENTS: Nice paper. I liked the advertising.

Classifieds were a little wider, which is better I think, and unlike other publications of the area.

EDITORIAL WRITING

FIRST PLACE: *The Lawton Constitution*, "Distinction of.../Norman

Mask.../We need to trust...." JUDGE'S COMMENTS: The editorial on the contradictions inherent in the idea of "Second Amendment Sanctuaries" was illuminating and bold, nailing down the Kafkaesque absurdities of such a law.

SECOND PLACE: *Enid News & Eagle*, "The Flag; Choose wisely; Working ahead."

THIRD PLACE: *The Norman Transcript*, "Grinch, Lax on Masks, Share good news."

PHOTOGRAPHY

FIRST PLACE: *The Lawton Constitution*, "Trio of linemen, place coins on headstones, fire destroys house, natural lighting/football in the rain, with a gentle kiss for luck, muddy MacArthur slide."

JUDGE'S COMMENTS: Definitely the strongest in the category.

Pope has terrific scope of composition in all of his shots, and even without the cutlines, they're already screaming for your eyes to want to know more about each of the photos. The two feature photos are unique, but make you want to pick up that paper and read more about them. The natural lighting football photo is as well a terrifically artistic shot, which just so happens to catch a football game and that beautiful sunset at the same time, like a painting caught on camera. Perfect timing on the player sliding through the mud as well. Very nicely done all around. I'm having trouble finding a photo I dislike in this bunch of six, and this photographer is an asset to your publication.

SECOND PLACE: *The Norman Transcript*, "Joseph Harroz at desk, Santa at gazebo, ice storm, BLM protest, K-State quarterback leaps, NHS v. Stillwater defender." JUDGE'S COMMENTS: I think the area this one falters for me is on the feature photos. The news photos and the sports photos are by far some of the strongest in this category, and if it was those four alone, this would rise above second. The way the photographer captures clean-up efforts following an ice storm, with cars and other tree branches is quite great, and both of those sports photos are terrific in composition and crops, and draw your eyes in, which is even harder to do when one of them is a square photo. The two feature photos, though, try to sell the event they are from, but they miss the mark for me.

THIRD PLACE: *Enid News & Eagle*, "Caught in high water; Kelsey Berkenbile stands outside; Icicles hang from; Alexandra Logoutine sprays; Chisholm's Molly Burchel; Garber's Daegan Vandiver celebrates." JUDGE'S COMMENTS: The ice storm feature page is unique, finding a way to highlight when the storm hit and decorations in the community, and preparing the ice rink for opening works well as a second feature photo. The tree/storm damage to the trailer is also a good package of photos to accent storm damage and very well composed. The truck driving through high water doesn't draw my eye in. When it comes to the sports photos, good

job in the photographer capturing that celebration right at the tail end of that overtime win. Great composition and tells a story without any words. The hurdle photo, likewise, is great action, catching her hair suspended behind her as she runs, with her sharply in focus. Really good shots here.

SPORTS COVERAGE

FIRST PLACE: Enid News & Eagle, March 8, May 10, Sept. 26.

SECOND PLACE: The Norman Transcript, Feb. 13, Feb. 28, Nov. 8.

THIRD PLACE: The Lawton Constitution, Jan. 21, Aug. 30, Sept. 13.

SALES PROMOTION

FIRST PLACE: The Norman Transcript, "The Pet Issue."

JUDGE'S COMMENTS: Nice photos. Interesting stories and DIY section. Classy layout. Consistent design throughout. Ads are clean and eye catching. Publication is a great balance of fun and informative.

SECOND PLACE: The Lawton Constitution, "Shop Local. Shop Strong." JUDGE'S COMMENTS: Nice video of local retailers and sponsors. Great plan to work with seven other area newspapers. Sponsorship is a brilliant idea. Like that the sponsor money was used to give promotional materials to participants.

THIRD PLACE: Enid News & Eagle, "Candy Cane Cash."

JUDGE'S COMMENTS: Nice logo. Well thought out concept. Productive way to get people to give 'shop local' support.

COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP

FIRST PLACE: The Lawton Constitution, "Community Coloring Challenge." JUDGE'S COMMENTS: It's a newspaper's job as a community leader to cover the news of the day, to examine trends and give readers context about what's happening. It also needs to lead with its heart. That's what the Constitution did with its coloring contest that encouraged readers to share art and encouraging messages with nursing home residents. Creating personal connections is a way for a newspaper to be seen in a different light, one that enhances people's perceptions of it, one that opens the door to being seen as the go-to business in the community. Nice job. Great idea.

SECOND PLACE: Enid News & Eagle, Homelessness series.

JUDGE'S COMMENTS: Solid reporting on the situation involving the impact of homelessness in Enid gave readers knowledge of what was happening. The reports were comprehensive and there was an editorial to back it up. There was some reporting with the homeless community members, which is difficult to attain, but more of that would have been a great addition.

THIRD PLACE: The Norman Transcript, "Changes to city mask mandate after student house party coverage." JUDGE'S COMMENTS: When people are getting sick in a pandemic, it's newsy that people just decided to move the tailgate to private property and ignore all of the health warnings. The Transcript blew the whistle with a video and a report, and changes came. Good job.

DIGITAL MEDIA

(All daily newspaper divisions combined)

FIRST PLACE: The Lawton Constitution, swoknews.com, Facebook, Twitter, Youtube. JUDGE'S COMMENTS: Nice looking website.

Easy for the reader to navigate. Great social media presence.

SECOND PLACE: The Shawnee News-Star, news-star.com, Facebook, Twitter. JUDGE'S COMMENTS: Clean website. Great social media presence.

THIRD PLACE: The Ada News, adanews.com; Facebook.

JUDGE'S COMMENTS: Homepage looks great.

NEWS STORY

FIRST PLACE: Scott Rains, The Lawton Constitution, "Sisters tell story." JUDGE'S COMMENTS: This story puts you in the courtroom and holds you until the last word. Compelling.

SECOND PLACE: Gary Reddin, The Lawton Constitution, "No means no." JUDGE'S COMMENTS: The reporter got plenty of voices in the story...that always spells success for readers.

THIRD PLACE: Alexander Ewald, Enid News & Eagle, "Mask mandate passes." JUDGE'S COMMENTS: Great quotes. It presents a thorough look at the situation.

FEATURE STORY

FIRST PLACE: Scott Rains, The Lawton Constitution, "Firefighter takes upperhand in fight for his life due to COVID-19." JUDGE'S COMMENTS: Excellent lede. This story puts a face to the COVID-19 pandemic and what people have been through.

SECOND PLACE: Alexander Ewald, Enid News & Eagle, Homelessness series: 'Ruined for the rest of us.' JUDGE'S COMMENTS: A good in-depth look into the homelessness of this community. Talking to those who are homeless puts a face to the issue.

THIRD PLACE: Scott Rains, The Lawton Constitution, "Brazzel celebrated at the end of his 45-year shift." JUDGE'S COMMENTS: What a nice story to honor a man who served his community.

SPORTS STORY

FIRST PLACE: Glen Brockenbush, The Lawton Constitution, "Does Redskins decision signal change in OK?" JUDGE'S COMMENTS: This was thought provoking. The doctor was a great get for the subject.

SECOND PLACE: Bruce Campbell, Enid News & Eagle, "Hot start ... sudden stop; NOC's Ambren Voitik." JUDGE'S COMMENTS: Great headline for the story. This tells a good love story and regardless of what you lose, when you love, it is going to hurt.

THIRD PLACE: Glen Brockenbush, The Lawton Constitution, "Not everyone gets Kobe treatment." JUDGE'S COMMENTS: This makes some valid points that make one think about deeper things. A good read.

IN-DEPTH REPORTING

(Divisions 1 and 2 combined)

FIRST PLACE: Ashlynd Huffman, Stillwater News Press, "Lack of prosecution for sexual assaults and rapes in Payne County." JUDGE'S COMMENTS: Fabulous reporting on a tough topic. The reporter noticed a trend in rape investigations and sexual assaults and dug into the issue, using strong data and interviews with a variety of sources to tell an often overlooked story. I can really tell the time, research and care you put into this series.

SECOND PLACE: Kim McConnell, The Lawton Constitution, "Capital Improvements Program." JUDGE'S COMMENTS: Great job taking a large topic like the Capital Improvements Program and making it easier to understand and digest for readers. The reporter – and newspaper – provided a real public service to the community, making sure residents were fully aware of what they were voting for.

THIRD PLACE: Alexander Ewald, Enid News & Eagle, "Enid mask mandate and related recall petition." JUDGE'S COMMENTS: Good job following the progression of the mask mandate issue and the recall election efforts. All stories provide good background information, so readers who may not have been following closely aren't left behind.

COLUMN WRITING

FIRST PLACE: Jeff Mullin, Enid News & Eagle, "Sidelines: Playing the crazy ... / If everyone wore ... / She's leaving home ..." JUDGE'S COMMENTS: If you want to sit down and read a newspaper column that describes the vibe of the day, or makes you think about your place in the world, read Mullin's work. He does what a columnist ought – challenge you to think.

SECOND PLACE: Dave Ruthenberg, Enid News & Eagle, "The Deep End: Hana 'just wanted to be loved'/ Fear, not a virus, ruining sports for kids / Granting unlimited, undefined power rarely ends up as positive." JUDGE'S COMMENTS: In these entries, Ruthenberg had a point to make and he escorted readers through his reasoning to offer it at the conclusion. People can certainly disagree with his opinions if they choose, but they would likely not be as adept at showing their work.

THIRD PLACE: Gary Reddin, The Lawton Constitution, "Wannabe Wired." JUDGE'S COMMENTS: Reddin has taken it upon himself to explain the technological age in terms parents and grandparents of millennials can understand. He does it with a breezy approach that is encouraging all the while acknowledging and putting into context the potentially negative impacts on society. That's a neat trick, but he performs it.

SMALL SPACE AD

FIRST PLACE: Luke Garis, Enid News & Eagle, "Land Run Steakhouse." JUDGE'S COMMENTS: Great use of colors.

SECOND PLACE: Belinda Darnell and Kayla Durham, The Lawton Constitution, "Brady's Design Center." JUDGE'S COMMENTS: Lots of content in small space well done.

THIRD PLACE: Kathy Young, Enid News & Eagle, "Rowdy Stickhorse." JUDGE'S COMMENTS: Great tie-in from editorial and ads.

LARGE SPACE AD

FIRST PLACE: Belinda Darnell and Kayla Durham, The Lawton Constitution, "Discount Foods Thanksgiving." JUDGE'S COMMENTS: Boxes and content all lined up nice and neat. Great looking ad.

SECOND PLACE: Kathy Young, Enid News & Eagle, "81 Ranch." JUDGE'S COMMENTS: Graphics make this ad. Clean and straight forward.

THIRD PLACE: Cindy Wright, Debbie Sinderson and Toni Wilson, The Lawton Constitution, "Classic Lawton Chevrolet Cares." JUDGE'S COMMENTS: Good use of type to drive home message.

NEWS PHOTOGRAPH

FIRST PLACE: Kyle Phillips, The Norman Transcript, "Protest for justice." JUDGE'S COMMENTS: Excellent visual reporting. The photographs are the proof of value of visual reporters.

SECOND PLACE: Billy Hefton, Enid News & Eagle, "Woman rescued by Enid Fire Department after tree crashes through trailer." JUDGE'S COMMENTS: A special and emotional moment recorded without disturbing the moment of news.

THIRD PLACE: Michael Pope, The Lawton Constitution, "Fire destroys Cache houses." JUDGE'S COMMENTS: Great photograph in a dangerous situation.

FEATURE PHOTOGRAPH

FIRST PLACE: Michael Pope, The Lawton Constitution, "Little girl kisses her mini hereford heifer." JUDGE'S COMMENTS: Super cute photo!

SECOND PLACE: Michael Pope, The Lawton Constitution, "Full moon behind church before Easter." JUDGE'S COMMENTS: Great shot!

THIRD PLACE: Billy Hefton, Enid News & Eagle, "Icicles hang from a Halloween skeleton." JUDGE'S COMMENTS: Super cool shot.

SPORTS PHOTOGRAPH

FIRST PLACE: Billy Hefton, Enid News & Eagle, "Garber players celebrate state win." JUDGE'S COMMENTS: Celebration shots are great, capturing the blend of excitement and dejection in one isolated moment with the ball in the background.

SECOND PLACE: Kyle Phillips, The Norman Transcript, "KU quarterback tries to leap over OU defense."

JUDGE'S COMMENTS: Nice midair stop. You can see the pained expression on his face as the OU defender makes a big stop.

THIRD PLACE: Michael Pope, The Lawton Constitution, "Sunset at MacArthur v. Noble game." JUDGE'S COMMENTS: Although the TD finish is a bit fuzzy, the beautiful sunset makes this sports anchor photo.

FRONT PAGE DESIGN

FIRST PLACE: Sonya Bilovecky, Dee Ann Patterson and Cindy Wright, The Lawton Constitution, July 17. JUDGE'S COMMENTS: Love the mask on the masthead and the consistent use of masks throughout the page. A great diversity of graphics, photos and illustrations. It has a flow directing readers through the page.

SECOND PLACE: Joe Malan, Enid News & Eagle, June 23.

JUDGE'S COMMENTS: Great use of a ticket shape for the story box. The creative text treatments draw the eye. A possible improvement could be adding a different color in the background of the centerpiece to add more differentiation.

THIRD PLACE: David Christy, Enid News & Eagle, May 10.

JUDGE'S COMMENTS: Love the Mother's Day text treatment. Good use of photos with faces, bold subheads and logos. The blue photo circle does not fit the theme of the page. Possibly have both photos styled the same and staggered on the page.