



# EXCELLENCE IN JOURNALISM CONTEST

2023

Each year, the Connecticut pro chapter of SPJ recognizes the best in Connecticut journalism in its Excellence in Journalism Contest.

This year's entries showcase the important, compelling, entertaining and compassionate work being done by journalists across the state. This contest also supports the mission of CTSPJ as our biggest fundraiser. We give out thousands of dollars in scholarships to journalism students in or from Connecticut each year, and support other efforts, such as the Legal Defense Fund, CCFOI and CFOG.

*All certificates will be mailed to the winners' newsrooms, unless otherwise requested. We thank you for your support.*

*If you'd like to become more involved in the board and our activities, reach out to any of the board members listed below.*

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## CONTEST COMMITTEE

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## STEPHEN A. COLLINS PUBLIC SERVICE AWARD

*A story or stories that have had significant impact in the public interest.*

Connecticut's elder care reckoning

Connecticut Mirror; Jenna Carlesso and Dave Altimari

***The judges said:***

*“This well-researched and compassionately sourced series not only uncovered a current problem, but projected ahead a catastrophic future problem that will no doubt touch every person in the state. This reporting has done the public the great service of addressing the crisis of elder care before it’s too late.”*

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## THEODORE DRISCOLL AWARD FOR INVESTIGATIVE REPORTING

*A single story or series containing information, obtained through reporting initiative, not readily available to the news media or public.*

CT hospitals in peril

Connecticut Mirror; Dave Altimari, Jenna Carlesso and Katy Golvala

***The judges said:***

*“This series emerged from a deep pool of investigative stories. This series employs a wide range of public records to tell a story of a dysfunctional and problematic health care system. The public records unfold to tell a story with political, sociological and medical implications. The reporters clearly understand the health care landscape and were able to find the right documents and data to uncover a serious and important problem.”*

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## FIRST AMENDMENT AWARD

*A single story or series which increases the public understanding of the role of the press in a free society.*

Transparency failures sow distrust in city marred by corruption

Hearst CT Media; Jacqueline Rabe Thomas, Joshua Eaton and Brian Lockhart

***The judges said:***

*“This thorough look at Bridgeport’s long record of flouting FOI requirements led to both an overdue strengthening of state law and an immediate promise by the city to improve its practices. Follow-up stories documented continuing problems. The response to this well-researched investigation shows the power of the press to be an agent of change and keep government open and accountable to its citizens. Excellent work.”*

# Written reporting categories

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## Arts & Entertainment

### ***Hyperlocal***

**First Place:** From Darien to RuPaul's Drag Race; Darien Times; Mollie Hersh

**Second Place:** Norman Rockwell's great-niece enshrines local backgammon club in painting; Easton Courier; Sara Anastasi, Rick Falco

**Third Place:** Porn stays in the picture at the Fairmount; New Haven Independent; Thomas Breen

### ***Regional A***

**First Place:** Paul McCartney talks 'magic' of lyrics, still writing with John Lennon during Yale conversation; Hearst CT Media; Daniel Figueroa IV

**Second Place:** Death and taxidermists: CT artists wake the dead to find community and conservation; Hearst CT Media; Daniel Figueroa IV

**Third Place:** Performing an O'Neill play in ASL and bringing a different dimension to theater; The Day; Kristina Dorsey

### ***Regional B***

**First Place:** Voices lifted, Co-Op starts the school year fresh; Arts Paper; Lucy Gellman

**Second Place:** Veterans Day Special with Vietnam Vet Ron Farina; Connecticut East This Week; Brian Scott-Smith

### ***Magazine***

**First Place:** The spirit of The Kate; Estuary Magazine; Eric D. Lehman

**Second Place:** Hulme in tune with CT's music realm for 5 decades; Today Magazine; Bruce Deckert

**Third Place:** Guitar guru offers lifetime of teaching wisdom; Today Magazine; Bruce Deckert

### ***Broadcast***

**First Place:** A violinist who defied the Islamic State is now performing his music in Connecticut; WNPR; Lori Mack

**Second Place:** Celine 'Boom' Edmundson; News 12; Keith Sunthorn, Angelica Toruno

**Third Place:** Disrupted: A candid conversation with comedian Roy Wood Jr.; WNPR; Khalilah Brown-Dean, Wayne Edwards, Kevin Chang Barnum, Meg Dalton

## Breaking News

### ***Hyperlocal***

**First Place:** Lambertton Bridge encampment bulldozed; New Haven Independent; Nora Grace-Flood

**Second Place:** Fire marshal investigating cause Of Derby house fire; Valley Independent Sentinel; Eugene Driscoll

**Third Place:** Fairfield looks at how to make Redding Road safer after woman's death; Fairfield Citizen; Jarrod Wardwell, Liz Hardaway

### ***Regional A***

**First Place:** Police: 12-year-old girl killed in drive-by shooting in Hartford; Community devastated; Hartford Courant; Justin Muszynski, Deidre Montague

**Second Place:** Day of chaos on the Gold Star; The Day; Day Staff

**Third Place:** Battle over proposed height, scope of Fairfield apartment building, reaches CT Supreme Court; Hearst CT Media; Ken Dixon

### ***Regional B***

**First Place:** "Schools should be a safe place:" Co-Op students, parents rattled as lockdown lifts; Arts Paper; Lucy Gellman

### **Broadcast**

**First Place:** 'We're in shock': State Rep. Quentin Williams dies in early morning hours following inauguration; WNPR; Frankie Graziano, Patrick Skahill

**Second Place:** 'Put down the guns': Hartford honors life of 12-year-old shooting victim Se'Cret Pierce; WNPR; Chris Polansky

**Third Place:** Flooding devastates Connecticut farmers; WNPR; Lori Mack, Jeni Ahrens, John Henry Smith, Matt Dwyer, Kay Perkins, Michayla Savitt, Abigail Brone, Shanaé Harte, Eddy Martinez, Garrett Argianas

### Business

#### **Hyperlocal**

**First Place:** Last store on the block: Former Darien Dry Cleaners owners get nostalgic as demolition nears; Darien Times; Mollie Hersh

**Second Place:** Why buy a book when you can buy the whole store?; Guilford Courier; Pem McNerney

**Third Place:** Easton Man's antique arms and armor collection has global reach; Easton Courier; Joshua Rodriguez

#### **Regional A**

**First Place:** 'Getting doctors is very difficult': Why veterinarians in CT are under pressure; Hearst CT Media; Paul Schott

**Second Place:** Recreational marijuana is legal in CT. This is what it's like to shop for it.; Hearst CT Media; Daniel Figueroa IV

**Third Place:** How an abandoned Connecticut ski resort was turned into a year-round attraction; Hearst CT Media; Liese Klein

#### **Regional B**

**First Place:** Greenwich childhood friends bring fresh seafood from Maine to Bethel, CT: 'sea to table'; News-Times; Dan Nowak

**Second Place:** 150 years of Jewett City Savings Bank; Connecticut East This Week; Brian Scott-Smith

**Third Place:** Much of Old Greenwich's downtown, owned by the Nolan, Thomas families for decades, is up for sale; Greenwich Time; Robert Marchant

#### **Magazine**

**First Place:** Search and rescue: Project SEARCH makes job realm more inclusive; Today Magazine; Christopher DeFrancesco

#### **Broadcast**

**First Place:** Coverage of Lego's departure out of Connecticut; WNPR; Matt Dwyer

**Second Place:** Hundreds of West Hartford apartments open on nunnery grounds; WNPR; Abigail Brone

**Third Place:** Made in Connecticut; News 12; Rebecca Surran

### Continuing Coverage

#### **Hyperlocal**

**First Place:** Evictions coverage; New Haven Independent; Thomas Breen, Laura Glesby, Nora Grace-Flood

**Second Place:** Easton partners with war-torn Ukraine town; Easton Courier; Carissa Munoz, Gale Papageorge, Katya Wauchope, Cleo Rawdon Sonneborn, Isabella Costanza, Marshall Mayer, Nancy Doniger, Ann Marie Somma

**Third Place:** Westport book bans; Westport News; Kayla Mutchler

#### **Regional A**

**First Place:** Bridgeport primary election; Connecticut Mirror; CT Mirror staff

**Second Place:** What led to a domestic violence killing in Bethel and could it have been prevented; Hearst CT Media; Peter Yankowski, Lisa Backus

**Third Place:** Former Glastonbury police officer accused of burglary spree; Hearst CT Media; Christine Dempsey

#### **Regional B**

**First Place:** Brookfield cemeteries close; News-Times; Kendra Baker

**Second Place:** Ongoing coverage of the Public Utilities Regulatory Authority; CTNewsJunkie; Julie Martin Banks

**Third Place:** The fight to change the city's charter; Stamford Advocate; Brianna Gurciullo, Jared Weber

## **Magazine**

**First Place:** Winds of change: Connecticut starts to see signs of offshore turbine development; Wrack Lines; Nancy Balcom

## **Broadcast**

**First Place:** When Connecticut police investigate sexual assault, some victims become suspects; WNPR; Bria Lloyd, Lori Mack

**Second Place:** Downed wire delays; NBC Connecticut; Len Besthoff, David Mulligan, Garrett Allison, Katherine Loy

**Third Place:** Continuing coverage of Connecticut farmers affected by flooding; WNPR; Patrick Skahill, Michayla Savitt, Kay Perkins, Abigail Brone, Eddy Martinez, Catherine Shen, John Henry Smith, Lori Mack, Jeni Ahrens, Matt Dwyer, Katie Pellico

## Courts/Crime

### **Hyperlocal**

**First Place:** State elections commission finds CRG treasurer violated election laws; Easton Courier; Ann Marie Somma

**Second Place:** Easton resident refiles state elections enforcement complaint against local conservative group; Easton Courier; Ann Marie Somma

### **Regional A**

**First Place:** Four cases where CT police departments initially withheld key details after officers used force; Hearst CT Media; Alex Putterman

**Second Place:** Former top GOP lawyer in CT state Senate gets six months in prison for embezzling \$250,000; Hearst CT Media; Ken Dixon

**Third Place:** Peter Manfredonia sentenced to 55 years for CT murder, kidnapping; Connecticut Post; Ethan Fry

### **Regional B**

**First Place:** A Stamford man allegedly stole \$1M from 700 DoorDash drivers. Police say his victims are hard to ID.; Stamford Advocate; Pat Tomlinson

**Second Place:** Connecticut's Conviction Integrity Unit needs to establish credibility; Connecticut Examiner; Chandra Bozelko

### **Broadcast**

**First Place:** Conviction integrity units promise a lifeline for the wrongfully convicted. But justice moves slowly; WNPR; Kate Seltzer

**Second Place:** Reckless on our roads; NBC Connecticut; Len Besthoff, Garrett Allison, David Mulligan, Katherine Loy

**Third Place:** Housing evictions in CT are rarely violent, but there are no rules to track them; WNPR; Abigail Brone

## Data

### **Regional A**

**First Place:** Lamont claims 'more housing built last year than anytime this century' in CT. That's false.; Hearst CT Media; Jacqueline Rabe Thomas

**Second Place:** Tweed? Bradley? JFK? Comparing flight fares at CT area airports; Hearst CT Media; Amy Coval

**Third Place:** CT rents are now closer to national average — except in one area; Hearst CT Media; Daniel Figueroa IV, Allison Arguezo

### **Regional B**

**First Place:** Salaries for CT mayors, top municipal officials are all over the map, so we mapped them; Stamford Advocate; Brianna Gurciullo

### **Broadcast**

**First Place:** Educational attainment drops in Connecticut prisons; WNPR; Ashad Hajela, Jim Haddadin

**Second Place:** What's a classic car? In CT, 20-year-old vehicles make the cut; WNPR; Patrick Skahill, Jim Haddadin, Walter Smith Randolph, Sam Hockaday

**Third Place:** Heat vulnerability in CT; NBC Connecticut; Katherine Loy, David Mulligan, Len Besthoff

## Diversity Coverage

### ***Hyperlocal***

**First Place:** Guilford's Ham Primus House, home of freed enslaved person, now listed on CT Freedom Trail; Shoreline Times; Susan Braden

**Second Place:** Fairfield works to reduce racial imbalance in schools, but is CT law outdated?; Fairfield Citizen; Jarrod Wardwell

**Third Place:** Tribal Nations partner with state to create Native American curriculum; Easton Courier; Joshua Rodriguez

### ***Regional A***

**First Place:** Trading sex to survive, sleeping in cemeteries: CT's LGBTQ homeless youth exploited, not supported; Hartford Courant; Alison Cross

**Second Place:** How CT's college-readiness system leaves students of color behind; Connecticut Mirror; Jessika Harkay

**Third Place:** For people with disabilities in CT, a path toward workplace inclusion; Connecticut Mirror; Erica E. Phillips

### ***Regional B***

**First Place:** Migrant family's search for home reflects hard road for many renters; Record-Journal; Lau Guzmán

**Second Place:** At Norwalk fertility clinic, she defied the odds as a Black mother with identical twins; The Hour; Kalleen Rose Ozanic

**Third Place:** Parents, advocates support English language learners' Bill of Rights; Record-Journal; Lau Guzmán

### ***Magazine***

**First Place:** MLK Day bus ride + Rwanda genocide; Today Magazine; Bruce Deckert

**Second Place:** Seeking equity in education realm: S.E.E. champions underrepresented students; Today Magazine; Bruce Deckert

**Third Place:** No place for hate: Bus ride shines spotlight on love; Today Magazine; Lillian Peng

### ***Broadcast***

**First Place:** Borinqueneers: The Army's all-Latino unit Connecticut connections; NBC Connecticut; Jane Caffrey

**Second Place:** Bridgeport transgender pioneer advocates for acceptance; News 12; Suzanne Goldklang, Keith Sunthorn

**Third Place:** Love for trans son inspires first known LGBTQ+ Pride event in Guilford; WNPR; Kay Perkins

## Education

### ***Hyperlocal***

**First Place:** In Ms. Chambers' class, "math is everywhere"; New Haven Independent; Maya McFadden

**Second Place:** Connecticut sees sharp increase in calls to ban books from public libraries, schools, officials say; Westport News; Kayla Mutchler

**Third Place:** How CT schools address field lighting and equity in high school sports; Westport News; Kayla Mutchler

### ***Regional A***

**First Place:** A Danbury charter school, approved but unfunded, causes tensions; Connecticut Mirror; Jessika Harkay

**Second Place:** Teachers: Connecticut special education system riddled with flaws, threatens compliance and services; Hartford Courant; Alison Cross

**Third Place:** Kindergarten cutoff could mean millions less in education funding for CT's largest city; Connecticut Post; Richard Chumney

### ***Regional B***

**First Place:** "It's not enough:" NHPS youth & parents call for a more LGBTQ+ inclusive district; Arts Paper; Lucy Gellman

**Second Place:** Multilingual teachers bridge the language gap in Wallingford; Record-Journal; Lau Guzmán

**Third Place:** Use of restraint, seclusion rose in Meriden; Record-Journal; Mike Gagne

### ***Magazine***

**First Place:** Teacher honors his best teacher; Today Magazine; Stuart Abrams

**Second Place:** Hartford youth scholars: Empowering students for success; Today Magazine; Matthew Broderick, Bruce Deckert

**Third Place:** Post-Holocaust hope: Avon High dedicates special library to Shoah survivor; Today Magazine; Bruce Deckert

#### ***Broadcast***

**First Place:** Teen chefs, big dreams; WNPR; Ryan Caron King, Julianne Varacchi, Dave Wurtzel, Tyler Russell

**Second Place:** A second chance; News 12; Mark Sogofsky, Mark Sudol

**Third Place:** Stamford teen and others with severe disabilities are falling through the gaps in CT, attorneys say; WNPR; Sujata Srinivasan

### Feature Story

#### ***Hyperlocal***

**First Place:** 'It was supposed to be you': NCHS grad becomes mom to 'Safe Haven' baby; NewCanaanite.com; Michael Dinan

**Second Place:** Surprise drop-off turns bottle man east; New Haven Independent; Paul Bass

**Third Place:** A 19th century Darien girl's headstone went missing. Years later, it turned up in a Milford cemetery; Darien Times; Mollie Hersh

#### ***Regional A***

**First Place:** Bridgeport museum's 4,000-year-old mummy is not who scholars thought; Connecticut Post; Katrina Koerting

**Second Place:** A UConn student is growing surfboards in her laundry room as an alternative to plastic foam boards; Hearst CT Media; Vincent Gabrielle

**Third Place:** This small town has become the 'moose capital of Connecticut'; Hearst CT Media; Jesse Leavenworth

#### ***Regional B***

**First Place:** Sandy Hook first responder who survived depression and tragedy dies weeks before birth of 6th child; News-Times; Rob Ryser

**Second Place:** Spotted lanternflies dot downtown Stamford sidewalks. Some experts say the population is 'growing.'; Stamford Advocate; Amanda Cuda

**Third Place:** This 7-year-old from Tolland vanished 50 years ago. Her family is hoping to break the case open.; Journal Inquirer; Eric Bedner

#### ***Magazine***

**First Place:** Too much to bear?; Connecticut Magazine; David Holahan

**Second Place:** Canton food bank celebrates 40th anniversary; Today Magazine; Bruce Deckert

**Third Place:** The serendipitous transatlantic tale of one tiny but mighty boat; Wrack Lines; Syma Ebbin

#### ***Broadcast***

**First Place:** NBC CT investigates the bouncing pickle test; NBC Connecticut; Katherine Loy, David Mulligan, Garrett Allison, Doug Steinman, Len Besthoff

**Second Place:** For these quilters, sewing isn't just a hobby. Their stitches honor their ancestors' stories; WNPR; Diane Orson

**Third Place:** Nailed it; News 12; Mark Sogofsky, Mark Sudol

### Health

#### ***Hyperlocal***

**First Place:** When there are no answers; The Source; Pem McNerney

#### ***Regional A***

**First Place:** 'How could this happen at Yale?': Serial podcast features women whose pain meds were swapped; Hearst CT Media; Daniel Figueroa IV

**Second Place:** Rockville Hospital; Connecticut Mirror; Katy Golvala, Jenna Carlesso

### ***Regional B***

**First Place:** Her Alzheimer's diagnosis turned CT couple into advocates — and made their marriage even stronger; News-Times; Kaitlin Lyle

**Second Place:** From evaluating strokes to predicting patient downturns, AI is transforming health care; Hartford Business Journal; Michelle Tuccitto Sullo

**Third Place:** Asthma disparities persist due to range of environmental factors; Record-Journal; Cris Villalonga-Vivoni

### ***Magazine***

**First Place:** Century celebration: CCHF marks 105 years of community care; Today Magazine; Sylvia Cancela

**Second Place:** Farmington Valley VNA celebrates 115 years; Today Magazine; Bruce Deckert

### ***Broadcast***

**First Place:** Can \$500 each month, no strings attached, improve health outcomes for people recently incarcerated?; WNPR; Sujata Srinivasan

**Second Place:** A housing activist opens up his backyard to unhoused people; they say it's improving their health; WNPR; Sujata Srinivasan

**Third Place:** Doctor delays; NBC Connecticut; Angela Fortuna, Shannon Miller, David Mulligan

## Government

### ***Hyperlocal***

**First Place:** Official placed on leave after reporting “questionable” immigrant marriages to feds; New Haven Independent; Thomas Breen, Laura Glesby

**Second Place:** Valley Indy election night coverage; Valley Independent Sentinel; Valley Indy Staff

**Third Place:** Fairfield officials bought birthday cake, dinners and more with town credit cards; Fairfield Citizen; Jarrod Wardwell

### ***Regional A***

**First Place:** New probe planned as questions about race and priorities swirl around CT public defender's office; Hartford Courant; Edmund H. Mahony

**Second Place:** How a GOP legislative rat overrode home rule in a small CT town; Connecticut Mirror; Mark Pazniokas

**Third Place:** Chris Murphy wants America to be less lonely. He thinks government can help; Connecticut Mirror; Lisa Hagen

### ***Regional B***

**First Place:** Stamford charter revision controversy fuels longstanding tensions between mayor, board of reps; Stamford Advocate; Brianna Gurciullo

**Second Place:** License plate readers used by some Connecticut police departments catch the attention of lawmakers; Journal Inquirer; Eric Bedner

**Third Place:** One Greenwich school has a geothermal heating system. It's 'failed across the board,' officials say; Greenwich Time; Andy Blye

### ***Magazine***

**First Place:** Beyond busy: For Dave Roberts, volunteering is like breathing; Today Magazine; Bruce Deckert

### ***Broadcast***

**First Place:** Wrongful conviction claims languish in Connecticut; WNPR; Kate Seltzer

**Second Place:** CT's new paid leave program denied one third of claims; WNPR; Jim Haddadin, Bria Lloyd

**Third Place:** Former CT Sen. Joe Lieberman says 'No Labels' doesn't mean 'yes' to Trump; WNPR; John Henry Smith

## In-Depth

### ***Hyperlocal***

**First Place:** State elections commission finds CRG treasurer violated election laws; Easton Courier; Ann Marie Somma

**Second Place:** In trust; Easton Courier; Elizabeth Boyce



**Third Place:** Seymour cop with long disciplinary record was allowed to retire in 'good standing'; Valley Independent Sentinel; Jean Falbo-Sosnovich

### ***Regional A***

**First Place:** The forces that shaped a Hartford toddler's life — and death; Connecticut Mirror; Ginny Monk

**Second Place:** CT domestic abuse victims often wind up homeless – and the problem is getting worse; Hearst CT Media; Jacqueline Rabe Thomas, Taylor Johnston

**Third Place:** Everyday, Detective Mark Conway works to expose the monsters behind crimes against children; Waterbury Republican-American; Matt Tobin

### ***Regional B***

**First Place:** An \$850 rent increase? Danbury tenants say they feel 'pushed out' by rising rents; News-Times; Kendra Baker

**Second Place:** Danbury murder-suicides highlight 'escalating' domestic violence and 'unique' risks for immigrants; News-Times; Michael Gagne

**Third Place:** Betti Kuszaj, 41 years at the northeastern CT chamber; Connecticut East This Week; Brian Scott-Smith

### ***Magazine***

**First Place:** The changing face of nuclear power; Connecticut Magazine; David Holahan

**Second Place:** Search and rescue: Favarh's Project SEARCH makes job realm more inclusive; Today Magazine; Christopher DeFrancesco

**Third Place:** Fostering home hope: Future of foster care depends on us; Today Magazine; Sarah Klepack, Bruce Deckert

### ***Broadcast***

**First Place:** More than a movie; WNPR; Dave Wurtzel, Mark Mirko

**Second Place:** Crime files: Burning desires the story of Joan Wertkin's murder; News 12; Nancy Lynch, Frank Bruce, Mark Sogofsky, Stacey Pattberg, Audrey Gruber

**Third Place:** My name is Wynston Browne; News 12; Frank Bruce, Mark Sogofsky, Mark Sudol

## Investigative

### ***Hyperlocal***

**First Place:** Seymour cop with long disciplinary record was allowed to retire in 'good standing'; Valley Independent Sentinel; Jean Falbo-Sosnovich

**Second Place:** Alder fled crash scene; New Haven Independent; Laura Glesby

### ***Regional A***

**First Place:** How the battle for absentee ballots defined the Bridgeport election; Connecticut Mirror; Andrew Brown, Jose Luis Martinez, Katy Golvala, Dave Altimari

**Second Place:** Millions unspent: CT criticized for denying dozens of grants to improve air quality in schools; Hearst CT Media; Jacqueline Rabe Thomas, Alex Putterman

**Third Place:** Rising number of CT youth drownings reveals inequities in access to swim lessons, officials say; Hearst CT Media; Peter Yankowski

### ***Regional B***

**First Place:** Investigating Greenwich Schools, CT AG's office asked again and again for Project Veritas raw video; Greenwich Time; Jessica Simms

**Second Place:** Brookfield GOP town clerk candidate didn't start 2022 fight that led to lawsuit, PD say in report; News-Times; Michael Gagne

**Third Place:** Salaries for CT mayors, top municipal officials are all over the map, so we mapped them; Stamford Advocate; Brianna Gurciullo

### ***Magazine***

**First Place:** Fostering home hope: Future of foster care depends on us; Today Magazine; Sarah Klepack, Bruce Deckert

**Second Place:** Century celebration: CCHF marks 105 years of community care; Today Magazine; Sylvia Cancela

### **Broadcast**

**First Place:** BDL close call; NBC Connecticut; Len Besthoff, David Mulligan, Garrett Allison, Steven Pancione, Katherine Loy

**Second Place:** Doctor disciplinary records in Connecticut missing key information; WNPR; Kate Seltzer, Bria Lloyd, Jim Haddadin

**Third Place:** CT health clubs must have AEDs. Many don't.; NBC Connecticut; Caitlin Burchill, Steve Pancione

### Leisure

#### **Hyperlocal**

**First Place:** Preserving Connecticut's stone walls, one stone at a time; Easton Courier; Nicholas Vukota, Emma Grimes

**Second Place:** Majesty, signs and stupidity — Grand Canyon; Easton Courier; Lea Sylvestro

**Third Place:** You've never had a better bagel; Greenwich Sentinel; Emma W. Barhydt

#### **Regional A**

**First Place:** How CT dairy farms and artisans are shaping the cheese-making scene in the state; Hearst CT Media; Leeanne Griffin, Amy Coval

**Second Place:** In CT's taxidermy art scene, playing with the dead honors life; Hearst CT Media; Daniel Figueroa IV

#### **Regional B**

**First Place:** Gourmet cheese shop will leave your mouth watering; Record-Journal; Ciara Hooks

**Second Place:** Trails to connect Norwalk to Danbury and beyond, creating 'ripple effects' of benefits; News-Times; Sandra Diamond Fox

#### **Magazine**

**First Place:** Farmington River fun: Recreation for everyone in the Valley; Estuary Magazine; Eric D. Lehman

### **Broadcast**

**First Place:** Seasoned: The gift of the Buffalo Creek squash; WNPR; Robyn Doyon-Aitken, Tagan Engel, Stephanie Stender, Meg Dalton, Catie Talarski

**Second Place:** Danbury decorator rides Barbie wave; News 12; Suzanne Goldklang, Keith Sunthorn

**Third Place:** Why is Connecticut's fall foliage so stunning? Take a hike through a forest to find out; WNPR; Patrick Skahill

### Local Reporting

#### **Hyperlocal**

**First Place:** Yes, in my backyard; Guilford Courier; Pem McNerney

**Second Place:** Branford food pantry braces to assist residents as extra SNAP benefits end; The Sound; Pam Johnson

**Third Place:** In 2023, they found freedom; New Haven Independent; Laura Glesby

#### **Regional A**

**First Place:** How a group of Norwalk friends rescued 3 people from Long Island Sound after deadly boat sinking; Hearst CT Media; Peter Yankowski

**Second Place:** CT food deserts: In 24 towns, no stores accept food stamps; Connecticut Mirror; José Luis Martínez

**Third Place:** As a CT multiplex enters its final weeks, former workers plan reunion for one last movie; Hartford Courant; Don Stacom

#### **Regional B**

**First Place:** City releases video of police encounter that led to \$550,000 lawsuit settlement; Record-Journal; Mike Gagne

**Second Place:** As Norwalk grows, residents say the streets have become 'impassable' and 'like the wild, wild west'; The Hour; Katherine Lutge

**Third Place:** Tenants of condemned Stamford apartment building aren't sure where to go: 'I'm just waiting'; Stamford Advocate; Jared Weber

### **Magazine**

**First Place:** Giving thanks for banks: Food banks observe milestone anniversaries; Today Magazine; Bruce Deckert

**Second Place:** Favarh's aim: Empower lives + inspire hope; Today Magazine; Penny Phillips

### **Broadcast**

**First Place:** New solutions to assisting unhoused people: Moving beyond the shelter model; WNPR; Sujata Srinivasan, Tess Terrible

**Second Place:** Disrupted: The state of Connecticut's cannabis industry from 'Clean Slate' to equity joint ventures; WNPR; Khalilah Brown-Dean, Wayne Edwards, Kevin Chang Barnum, Meg Dalton

**Third Place:** Firefighter hit and run; NBC Connecticut; Len Besthoff, David Mulligan

## Religion

### **Hyperlocal**

**First Place:** How officials say social media plays a role in the rise of antisemitism in Connecticut; Westport News; Kayla Mutchler

**Second Place:** Passover 2023: A big tzimmes; Easton Courier; Jane Paley

**Third Place:** Helping to celebrate 100 years of St. Stephen's AME Zion Church; The Sound; Pam Johnson

### **Regional A**

**First Place:** Complaints after CT prison halts Muslim prayer services for weeks; Connecticut Mirror; Jaden Edison

**Second Place:** Mikveh: A biblical commandment is fulfilled in Hartford; Hartford Courant; Ed Stannard

### **Regional B**

**First Place:** "Hope On, Dixwell!" As Rev. Streets preaches final sermon; Arts Paper; Lucy Gellman

**Second Place:** Outdoor Torah dedication begins Havurah's New Year; Arts Paper; Lucy Gellman

### **Magazine**

**First Place:** The road that leads to Calvary; Catholic Transcript; Karen A. Avitabile

**Second Place:** Habitat affiliate commemorates 35th birthday; Today Magazine; Bruce Deckert

**Third Place:** A love for the eucharist; Catholic Transcript; Karen A. Avitabile

### **Broadcast**

**First Place:** In Greenwich, a Black church celebrates 126 years of building community; WNPR; Eddy Martinez

**Second Place:** New Haven church installs first African American senior minister; WNPR; Eddy Martinez

## Reporting Series

### **Hyperlocal**

**First Place:** Official placed on leave after reporting "questionable" immigrant marriages to feds; New Haven Independent; Thomas Breen, Laura Glesby

**Second Place:** Book review series; Easton Courier; June-Ann Greeley, Nidhi Shrivastava, Michelle Loris, Emily Bryan, Claire Marrone

**Third Place:** History corner series; Easton Courier; Bruce Nelson, Elizabeth Boyce

### **Regional A**

**First Place:** Museums still have hundreds of Native American remains from Connecticut despite 1990 law; Hearst CT Media; Joshua Eaton, Vincent Gabrielle

**Second Place:** Chief holds off gun buy; Waterbury Republican-American; Livi Stanford

**Third Place:** High water, high anxiety; Connecticut Mirror; Jan Ellen Spiegel

### **Regional B**

**First Place:** Connecticut's CIU: Conviction Integrity Unit or 'Cover It Up?'; Connecticut Examiner; Chandra Bozelko

### **Magazine**

**First Place:** MLK Day bus ride + Rwanda genocide; Today Magazine; Stuart Abrams, Bruce Deckert, Lillian Peng, Wendy Rosenberg

**Second Place:** Post-Holocaust Hope: Avon High School Honors Shoah Survivor; Today Magazine; Stuart Abrams, Bruce Deckert, Bebeann Oh, Aliyana White

### **Broadcast**

**First Place:** Transforming corrections; WNPR; Walter Smith Randolph, Bria Lloyd, Catherine Shen

**Second Place:** Coverage of Latino communities in Connecticut; WNPR; Maricarmen Cajahuaringa

**Third Place:** Bears in Connecticut; WFSB; Patricia Del Rio, Michael Kopelman, Eric Budney

## Sports Column

### **Regional A**

**First Place:** Inside UConn men's basketball coach Dan Hurley's surreal offseason of celebration; Hearst CT Media; Mike Anthony

**Second Place:** Geno Auriemma returned to coaching with new perspective. How time away changed him.; Hearst CT Media; Mike Anthony

**Third Place:** Behind Dan Hurley's 'monumental achievement' of leading the UConn to the Final Four; Hearst CT Media; Mike Anthony

### **Regional B**

**First Place:** Baseball has it all wrong; Greenwich Time; David Rafferty

## Sports Feature

### **Hyperlocal**

**First Place:** 'A culture of belonging and hard work': NCHS girls cross-country wins another state championship; NewCanaanite.com; Donovan West

**Second Place:** 'I feel very blessed': NCHS '16 grad Lucas Niang wins Super Bowl with KC Chiefs; NewCanaanite.com; Donovan West

**Third Place:** Calling all men; The Source; Pem McNerney

### **Regional A**

**First Place:** A CT football coach's message after his daughter took her life: 'Tell someone'; Hartford Courant; Lori Riley

**Second Place:** Brain cancer stole a Hall High senior's life in April. Family and friends are struggling to cope; Hartford Courant; Lori Riley

**Third Place:** Inside the tormented psyche of UConn men's basketball coach Dan Hurley; Hearst CT Media; Mike Anthony

### **Magazine**

**First Place:** Donovan Clingan is the 7-foot-3 face of UConn basketball. He's still a small town CT kid at heart.; Connecticut Magazine; Mike Anthony

### **Broadcast**

**First Place:** Quinnipiac hockey alum returns to ice following Parkinson's diagnosis; NBC Connecticut; Matt Finkel

**Second Place:** Over the edge with Special Olympics CT; NBC Connecticut; Matt Finkel, Gregg Monte

**Third Place:** A goal only a giraffe could love; News 12; Suzanne Goldklang, Keith Sunthorn

## Sports News

### **Hyperlocal**

**First Place:** Avon beats RHAM by a half point for first state title since 1995; CollinsvillePress.com; Gerry deSimas, Jr.

**Second Place:** Isaiah Adams wins second straight State Open title for Avon; CollinsvillePress.com; Gerry deSimas, Jr.

**Third Place:** Newington survives threat from Knights hockey team; Easton Courier; Rocco Valluzzo, Nancy Doniger

### **Regional A**

**First Place:** Windsor football returns to field in first game back since Elijah-Jay Mariano Rivera's death; Hearst CT Media; Myer Lee

**Second Place:** Dom Amore: For the Muhl family, a long journey, a pride-filled night – and a little gamesmanship; Hartford Courant; Dom Amore

**Third Place:** Some CT high school referees went months without payment despite complaints; Hearst CT Media; Will Aldam

### **Broadcast**

**First Place:** Breaking down the federal ruling on transgender athletes in Connecticut; WNPR; John Henry Smith

**Second Place:** Meet a New England woman who just swam the entire length of the Connecticut River; WNPR; Jennifer Ahrens

## **Photo/video categories**

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### Feature Photo

#### **Hyperlocal**

**First Place:** Keeping it in the pocket; North Haven Courier; Wesley Bunnell

**Second Place:** North Pole magic; Valley Courier; Wesley Bunnell

**Third Place:** Queen who appeared on 'RuPaul's Drag Race' will perform in their CT hometown; Darien Times; Tyler Sizemore

#### **Regional A**

**First Place:** John Mayer at Sound on Sound; Hearst CT Media; Andrew DaRosa

**Second Place:** Atomic Veteran Hank Bolden living for 'that one song that will tell it all'; New Haven Register; Arnold Gold

**Third Place:** A father's grief, and purpose; Connecticut Mirror; Shahrzad Rasekh

#### **Regional B**

**First Place:** Candlelight lit holiday show; The Hour; H John Voorhees III

**Second Place:** Painting of the cross; Record-Journal; Dave Zajac

**Third Place:** Sunrise Easter service; Greenwich Time; Tyler Sizemore

#### **Magazine**

**First Place:** Record store owner in the groove; Connecticut Magazine; Stan Godlewski

**Second Place:** Big bird bath; Today Magazine; Wendy Rosenberg

**Third Place:** Century celebration: CCHF marks 105 years; Today Magazine; Tom Kutz

#### **Broadcast**

**First Place:** Bushnell Carousel LED upgrade; WNPR; Tyler Russell

**Second Place:** Stamford teen and others with severe disabilities are falling through the gaps in CT; WNPR; Joe Amon

### News Photo

#### **Hyperlocal**

**First Place:** A year after tragedy, Darien community walks for suicide prevention; Darien Times; Tyler Sizemore

**Second Place:** Veterans honored for service and sacrifice; Easton Courier; Mollie Lewis

#### **Regional A**

**First Place:** Witness heard 'boom' before New Haven partial building collapse that injured 8 people; New Haven Register; Arnold Gold

**Second Place:** Welcoming spring; The Day; Sarah Gordon

**Third Place:** Corneliuz's service; Connecticut Mirror; Shahrzad Rasekh

### **Regional B**

**First Place:** City officials, developers tout success of Meriden Commons; Record-Journal; Dave Zajac

### **Broadcast**

**First Place:** Ice storm; WNPR; Mark Mirko

**Second Place:** Se'cret Pierce; WNPR; Tyler Russell

**Third Place:** No-fault eviction; WNPR; Joe Amon

### Photo Essay

#### **Hyperlocal**

**First Place:** Photo gallery: Honoring American patriots at Union Cemetery; Easton Courier; Richard Falco

**Second Place:** Photo gallery: Lions Club bonfire and Easton Trunk or Treat; Easton Courier; Sara Anastasi, Mollie Lewis

**Third Place:** Photo gallery: Fourth annual Easton EMS fireworks display; Easton Courier; Mollie Lewis, Emma Grimes

#### **Regional A**

**First Place:** A diaspora in focus; Connecticut Mirror; Yehyun Kim, Katy Golvala

**Second Place:** Historic, family-run Roxbury farm receives \$5,000 state grant to buy new cultivation equipment; Hearst CT Media; H. John Voorhees

#### **Third Place**

Fall foliage over Connecticut 2023; Hearst CT Media; Patrick Sikes, Lidia Ryan

### **Regional B**

**First Place:** Brookfield woman fills Danbury-area food pantries with donations – 1 truckload at a time; News-Times; H John Voorhees III

### **Magazine**

**First Place:** Vinyl's back in the groove; Connecticut Magazine; Stan Godlewski

### **Broadcast**

**First Place:** Hundreds protest eviction of tenants in New Haven; WNPR; Mark Mirko

**Second Place:** UConn students celebrate as men's hoops scores its 5th NCAA title; WNPR; Ayannah Brown

### Sports Photo

#### **Hyperlocal**

**First Place:** Valley regional baseball defeats Old Saybrook; Valley Courier; Wesley Bunnell

**Second Place:** Hand boys' hoops earns win versus Guilford in SCCs; The Source; Wesley Bunnell

**Third Place:** Barlow football repeats as class SS champion; Easton Courier; Rocco Valluzzo

#### **Regional A**

**First Place:** Five-o'clock shadows; Hartford Courant; Stan Godlewski

**Second Place:** Overcoming a hurdle; Hartford Courant; Stan Godlewski

**Third Place:** Stonington boys soccer falls to Lewis Mills in Class M state championship; The Day; Sarah Gordon

#### **Regional B**

**First Place:** High school football; Record-Journal; Dave Zajac

**Second Place:** Greenwich police and firefighters face off; Greenwich Time; Tyler Sizemore

### **Broadcast**

**First Place:** Nika Muhl; WNPR; Joe Amon

**Second Place:** Quinnipiac Frozen Four; WNPR; Dave Wurtzel

## Video Storytelling

### **Regional A**

**First Place:** A trip around Paul Newman's home track ahead of Lime Rock's Trans Am Classic this weekend; Hearst CT Media; Daniel Figueroa IV

### **Broadcast**

**First Place:** Climate change along Connecticut's coast; WNPR; Ryan Caron King, Julianne Varacchi, Sam Hockaday

**Second Place:** Transforming corrections; WNPR; Walter Smith Randolph, Bria Lloyd, Joe Amon, Ryan Caron King, Tyler Russell, Dave Wurtzel, Meghan Lyden, Glenn Goettler, Kevin Kuhl, Sam Hockaday

**Third Place:** 'It's the end of prohibition': Inside look at how cannabis retailers prepare for sales; NBC Connecticut; Jane Caffrey

## Design categories

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### Headline

#### **Hyperlocal**

**First Place:** Pig tales/For he's a jolly good felon/Silence of the lawmakers; Easton Courier; Richard Lechtenberg

#### **Regional A**

**First Place:** Headlines by John Ruddy; The Day; John Ruddy

**Second Place:** Peek-a-books / Doggy care day / Geared up; New Haven Register; Sue Nusbaum

#### **Magazine**

**First Place:** Today Magazine — Headlines; Today Magazine; Bruce Deckert

#### **Broadcast**

**First Place:** Headline portfolio by Patrick Skahill; WNPR; Patrick Skahill

### Infographic

#### **Regional A**

**First Place:** Is UConn men's basketball a Blue Blood?; Hearst CT Media; Taylor Johnston, Dan Brechlin, Derek Turner

#### **Broadcast**

**First Place:** Connecticut considers a '67 Chevy a classic car. So is a '95 Corolla. Opinions are mixed.; WNPR; Sam Hockaday, Jim Haddadin

**Second Place:** Connecticut has more than 200 bridges in poor condition. What will it take to fix them?; WNPR; Jim Haddadin

### Non-Page 1 Layout

#### **Regional A**

**First Place:** Top cats: Quinnipiac's rise to national champions in college hockey; Hearst CT Media; Bryan Haeffele

**Second Place:** A monumental lifeline turns 50; The Day; Scott Ritter

### Page 1 Layout

#### **Regional A**

**First Place:** Rating airports for local travelers; Hearst CT Media; Bryan Haeffele

**Second Place:** UConn off to Elite 8; New Haven Register; Sue Nusbaum

**Third Place:** Tweed? Bradley? JFK?; New Haven Register; Sue Nusbaum

### **Magazine**

**First Place:** Scholar power – HYS empowers students for success; Today Magazine; Bruce Deckert

**Second Place:** Avon High School honors Shoah survivor; Today Magazine; Bruce Deckert

## Opinion writing categories

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### Editorial

#### **Hyperlocal**

**First Place:** 'Checks and balances' at Town Hall; NewCanaanite.com; Michael Dinan

### General Column

#### **Hyperlocal**

**First Place:** Column: It didn't stop in Salem; Easton Courier; Lea Sylvestro

**Second Place:** Who knew: And then, there was pizza; NewCanaanite.com; Laura Ault

**Third Place:** Navigating loss; The Source; Liz Egan

#### **Regional A**

**First Place:** The most nuanced discourse I've ever heard in a college classroom; Connecticut Post; Susan Campbell

**Second Place:** What's going on: When medical marijuana makes life worth living; The Day; Lee Howard

**Third Place:** A property owner returns to CT, finds a new \$1.5M house on his land. Now police are involved; Hearst CT Media; Dan Haar

#### **Regional B**

**First Place:** Quigley's folly; Greenwich Time; David Rafferty

**Second Place:** Connecticut's Conviction Integrity Unit might gain credibility if it loses Zarella.; Connecticut Examiner; Chandra Bozelko

**Third Place:** The zealots are driving the message; Greenwich Time; David Rafferty

#### **Magazine**

**First Place:** 'Be careful driving'; Catholic Transcript; Karen A. Avitabile

**Second Place:** School fashion follies: Diagnosing a teen dysfunction; Today Magazine; Shayaan Khan

### Humorous Column

#### **Hyperlocal**

**First Place:** On growing old(er); Greenwich Sentinel; Icy Frantz

**Second Place:** Who knew: A beginner's guide to winged New Canaan; NewCanaanite.com; Laura Ault

**Third Place:** The red chair; Easton Courier; Jane Paley

#### **Regional A**

**First Place:** Woke me up before you go-go; Hartford Courant; David Holahan

**Second Place:** The U.S. Supreme Court and their BBFFS (best billionaire friends forever); Connecticut Mirror; David Holahan

**Third Place:** Mother Yale, say grade-inflation ain't so!; Hartford Courant; David Holahan

#### **Regional B**

**First Place:** I have a better date for New Years; Greenwich Time; David Rafferty

**Second Place:** My child is an adult. What do I do now?; Stamford Advocate; Deborah DiSesa Hirsch



# Digital categories

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## Innovative Digital Storytelling

### ***Regional A***

**First Place:** Case closed: Wreck of sub built by EB is identified after disappearance during WWII; The Day; John Ruddy, Scott Ritter

**Second Place:** Found in the Sound; The Day; John Ruddy, Scott Ritter

**Third Place:** What you need to know about growing recreational cannabis in CT; Hearst CT Media; Jordan Fenster, Derek Turner

### ***Broadcast***

**First Place:** Impacts of climate change along Connecticut's shoreline; WNPR; Ryan Caron King, Sabrina Herrera

**Second Place:** Connecticut River flooding; WNPR; Dave Wurtzel, Francesca Fontanez

**Third Place:** Investigative report on sexual assault victims and false reporting charges; WNPR; Bria Lloyd, Jim Haddadin, Walter Smith-Randolph, Tyler Russell, Sabrina Herrera

## Podcasting

### ***Hyperlocal***

**First Place:** Moving the 1913 library building; NewCanaanite.com; Michael Dinan

**Second Place:** Dateline New Haven: Proud Boys attorney Norm Pattis; New Haven Independent; Paul Bass, Harry Droz

**Third Place:** LoveBabz LoveTalk with Babz Rawls-Ivy: American Modern Opera Company; New Haven Independent; Babz Rawls-Ivy, Harry Droz

### ***Regional B***

**First Place:** Remembering lost military children - Goldstar Mothers and the Hero Tree; Connecticut East This Week; Brian Scott-Smith

**Second Place:** Honoring Vietnam veterans on the 50th anniversary; Connecticut East This Week; Brian Scott-Smith

**Third Place:** Memorial Day and Honor Flight Connecticut; Connecticut East This Week; Brian Scott-Smith