

Gothenburg Times takes top honors in class again

Written by Elizabeth Barrett

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For the seventh year in a row, the Gothenburg Times has been judged as the top newspaper in its circulation class in the Nebraska Press Association's Better Newspaper Contest.

While The Times received 21 awards, the most coveted prize was first place in General Excellence, according to Greg Viergutz, co-publisher of The Times.

"This category includes all phases of the newspaper, from front to back," Viergutz said. "The award gives recognition to the exceptional effort that our entire staff puts in each issue."

Judges consider the breadth of the newspaper: news; content; quality of writing; headlines; page design; photos and captions; graphics; special pages such as front, sports, lifestyle; reproduction; advertising design and content; and treatment of public notices. a

This marks the fourth time in the last five years that The Times has received first place in General Excellence.

The newspaper earned four first place awards, 12 seconds and five thirds. The judging was done by members of the Michigan Press Association.

Other first place awards were for: sports feature photo; ad copywriting; and a single classified advertising idea, black and white.

The Times placed second in the competition for the Loren Johnson Community Newspaper Sweepstakes Award, which is given to the top weekly newspaper regardless of circulation category. The Aurora News-Register repeated as the sweepstakes winner.

While Gothenburg won the Class C circulation group, Papillion was second and West Point third.

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The Tri-City Tribune placed second to Aurora in Class D. Corbey Dorsey dominated the photo competition in the class with nine first or second place awards. The Trib was also awarded first in General Excellence for Class D.

The Lexington Clipper-Herald, competing in Class C, picked up five awards.

In the daily division, the Kearney Hub won the sweepstakes award.

Viergutz ended his service on the Nebraska Press Advertising Service board of directors. Gothenburg native Jim Dean, publisher of the Columbus Telegram, was elected to the Nebraska Press Association board of directors.

Newspaper Placings

Loral Johnson Sweepstakes Award, Weekly—1. Aurora News-Register, 2. Gothenburg Times, 3. Gering Courier

Class C Weeklies—1. Gothenburg Times, 2. Papillion Times, 3. West Point News

Class D Weeklies—1. Aurora News-Register, 2. Cozad Tri-City Tribune, 3. Bellevue Leader

Individual Awards

1st—General Excellence, (Feb. 22, July 11, Oct. 17). Organized, clean design. Great pictures and graphics. Packed with news, creative headlines, wide variety of topics and strong ledes and writing. Nifty public notices front page promo. Nice design for obits. Extensive sports; creative

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features. You guys have a lot to be proud of.

1st—Single Classified Advertising Idea, B&W (June 27, Gothenburg State Bank) by Greg Viergutz. Very clean and attention-getting. Great use of space and layout.

1st—Ad Copywriting (April 14, Comfort Suites) by Kathi Viergutz. Ha! Made me laugh. Very nice.

1st—Sports Feature Photo (July 11, Dangerous Dismount) by Deb Egenberger. Great work to get just the right shot. Exceptional.

2nd—Front Page. Fun and tragic news stories, side by side, give readers a true and timely snapshot of their community. The page designer has some fun with the centerpiece, and the new lead treatment conveys seriousness. Interesting, informative tidbits anchor the bottom of the page.

2nd—Sports Page (April 4, May 16, Oct. 17, Dec. 5). Fantastic photos and they know how to use them.

2nd—Use of Computer Graphics (Valuation Climbing) by Greg Viergutz. Graphic shows the point of the story clearly. The last piece jumping out of the graphic is a nice touch.

2nd—Reader Interaction (Jan. 11, Feature Story Contest), by Greg Viergutz.

2nd—Community Promotion Advertisement (Gothenburg Shares) by Greg Viergutz. Good campaign for less fortunate during holiday season. Newspaper should be proud of its community service.

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2nd—Classified Section (June 27) by Kathi Viergutz. Crisp and easy to read. Good heading, nice ad font.

2nd—Advertising Campaign (Super Senior) by Jo Atkinson. Lots of student recognition in this ongoing series. It's stronger because the photos are not all cookie-cutter head shots.

2nd—Ad Copywriting (Nov. 21, Wild Horse Golf Club) by Kathi Viergutz. Fun and engaging.

2nd—Sports Writing (Feb. 15, Three Qualify for State) by Deb Egenberger. Very nice flow to your writing.

2nd—Photo Page (July 11, Pony Express Rodeo) by Deb Egenberger. Well taken action packed photos.

2nd—Use of Color, News (Feb. 29, Music Man) by Elizabeth Barrett and Jo Atkinson. Great use of color from top to bottom.

2nd—In-depth Writing (Rehabilitation of Lake Helen) by Elizabeth Barrett. The reporter takes in in-depth look at the dangers of Lake Helen to animals, how the city planned to rehabilitate it, ideas for clean-up and tentative timeline for the recovery of the lake. She followed the process every step of the way—from the first vote to the final decision. She also encourages community involvement by not only interviewing administration but also by talking to the public and including previews of upcoming meetings. She also did a fantastic job at remaining unbiased and including all sides of the story.

3rd—Advertising Campaign (RTI Computer) by Kathi Viergutz. A good consistent look through many ads. Not the biggest, but good example of presenting a foot forward again, again and again.

3rd—Single Retail Advertising Idea, Color (March 28, Theater Event) by Kathi Viergutz. Good

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idea to stage a community event and tie it to a full page ad—the local theatre. Great look to the ad, too.

3rd—Personal Column by Deb Egenberger. Here's a writer who likes to use coins to tell a story. She has done that twice, very well. Clever.

3rd—Youth Coverage (Feb. 1, March 28, Oct. 31). Kids' Kronicle, one of the best and most inclusive I've seen (this judge subscribes to six weeklies from throughout Michigan). Informative sidebar on parent-teacher conferences. Letters to the editor (by students) is a good idea.

3rd—Headline Writing