

# 2024 MPA Better Newspaper Contest



## Statewide Contest Spotlights Quality Journalism

Members of the Wisconsin Press Association reviewed 349 entries submitted by 13 Michigan News Media members this year. The competition inspires all journalists to produce their best work, which in turn nurtures stronger communities.

“The annual Michigan Press Association Better Newspaper Contest gives our members a chance each year to assess and put forth their team’s best work in journalism, photojournalism, column writing, graphic design and advertising. After the judges have reviewed the thousands of submissions and made their decisions, awards will be given, bragging rights established and perhaps a few toasts made to the winners. It is a rare moment in our profession where we allow ourselves to reflect and experience something akin to satisfaction for a job well done. Anyone in this business today is in it, not for kudos, but because of a passion and desire to serve our readers, our advertisers and our communities. For us the work is the reward. But on the occasion of MPA BNC contest awards, let’s take a moment to say to all our coworkers and all our colleagues — Good job! And to the winners — Congratulations!”

— Wes Smith, Michigan Press Association Past-President and Group Publisher of View Newspaper Group

**The 2024 “News Media Publication of the Year”** award is presented to the top News Media publication in the Local and Statewide circulation classes based on points accumulated (100 for first, 70 for second and 40 for third) in all Editorial contest categories. Winners of those awards are listed below.

Circulation Class	News Media Publication
Local	Flint Beat
Statewide	Michigan Advance

**The MPA Rookie Writer Award** recognizes exemplary efforts of new writers just breaking into journalism. The three finalists are: Abby Poirier of Crains Grand Rapids Business, Aya Miller of Kalamazoo Gazette and Michael Livingston of Traverse City Record-Eagle, with the award going to **Aya Miller**.

**The MPA Public Service Award** recognizes a distinguished example of meritorious public service by a newspaper or newspaper individual that has made a significant contribution to the betterment of their community. Winners of those awards are listed below based on their circulation Class:

- News Media-Statewide: Bridge Michigan for “The Unfulfilled Promises of Michigan Business Incentives”
- News Media-Local: BridgeDetroit for “Jena Booker’s coverage of Detroit concrete crushing operations”

***The 2025 MPA Better Newspaper Contest opens August 1, 2025.***



**Class 37 - Spot News Story**

**News Media-Local - Class 37 - Spot News Story**

8 Entries

**1st Place**

**Flint Beat**

*City officials, residents fight over city hall gun restrictions*

Sophia Lada, Kate Stockrahm

**2nd Place**

**Flint Beat**

*The death of Flint's beloved Councilman, Eric Mays*

Emilly Davis, Michael Indriolo, Jiquanda Johnson

**3rd Place**

**Crains Grand Rapids Business**

*Grand Rapids businesses advised on how to stay open during water emergency*

Staff

**News Media-Statewide - Class 37 - Spot News Story**

17 Entries

**1st Place**

**Bridge Michigan**

*MSU Shooting Report Release - Deep Reporting on Deadline*

Mike Wilkinson and Isabel Lohman

**2nd Place**

**Michigan Advance**

*Michigan State University to release thousands of Nassar documents, Nessel reopens investigation*

Anna Liz Nichols

**3rd Place**

**Gongwer News Service**

*Michigan House drastically changes energy bill in middle of night*

Elena Durnbaugh, Zach Gorchow, Alethia Kasben

**Class 38 - News Enterprise Reporting**

**News Media-Local - Class 38 - News Enterprise Reporting**

17 Entries

**1st Place**

**Crains Grand Rapids Business**

*Downtown restaurant owners 'blindsided' by decision to end on-street seating program*

Abby Poirier

**2nd Place**

**Glen Arbor Sun Newspaper**

*Twin Flames Universe holds covert Traverse City wedding*

Jacob Wheeler

**3rd Place**

**Glen Arbor Sun Newspaper**

*Can we coexist with black bears?*

Jacob Wheeler

**News Media-Statewide - Class 38 - News Enterprise Reporting**

22 Entries

**1st Place**

**Bridge Michigan**

*Michigan's Industrial Legacy*

Kelly House and Paula Gardner

**2nd Place**

**Michigan Advance**

*LGBTQ+ Michiganders struggle for rights, acceptance*

Jon King, Anna Liz Nichols, Andrew Roth

**3rd Place**

**Michigan Advance**

*The 'mom gap': Few mothers have served in the Michigan Legislature while raising children*

Anna Liz Nichols

**Class 39 - Government/Education News**

**News Media-Local - Class 39 - Government/Education News**

9 Entries

**1st Place**

**BridgeDetroit**

*False arrest of Detroit mother reignites criticism of facial recognition tech*

Malachi Barrett

**2nd Place**

**Crains Grand Rapids Business**

*Kent County to move 180 workers out of downtown under relocation plan*

Kate Carlson

**3rd Place**

**Flint Beat**

*Flint Schools urged to reconsider settlement decision on teachers' pay*

Emilly Davis

**News Media-Statewide - Class 39 - Government/Education News**

27 Entries

**1st Place**

**Michigan Advance**

*Was Ottawa County's newest commissioner punished for running?*

Sarah Leach

**2nd Place**

**Michigan Advance**

*'Trauma after trauma': Nassar survivors grapple with another sexual abuse investigation at MSU*

Anna Gustafson

**3rd Place**

**Between The Lines**

*The Impact of 2023 Legislation on Transgender Youth: A Scorecard for Michigan*

Ellen Shanna Knoppow

**Class 40 - Business/Agriculture News**

**News Media-Local - Class 40 - Business/Agriculture News**

14 Entries

**1st Place**

**BridgeDetroit**

*Can Detroiters afford more dollar stores?*

Jena Brooker

**2nd Place**

**Crains Grand Rapids Business**

*Bank alleges Tommy's Boats defaulted on \$115M in loans, seeks court-appointed receiver*

Rachel Watson

**3rd Place**

**Flint Beat**

*Flint bars, restaurants hopeful for repeal of Sunday morning alcohol sales ban*

Kate Stockrahm

**News Media-Statewide - Class 40 - Business/Agriculture News**

17 Entries

**1st Place**

**Bridge Michigan**

*Michigan's Health Care Worker Shortage*

Robin Erb, Ron French, Isabel Lohman

**2nd Place**

**Bridge Michigan**

*Wolverine Worldwide faces tough times selling shoes. Then came more PFAS*

Paula Gardner

**3rd Place**

**Michigan Advance**

*'We fight the good fight and continue forward'*

Jon King, Susan J. Demas

**Class 41 - Feature Story**

**News Media-Local - Class 41 - Feature Story**

29 Entries

**1st Place**

**The Betsie Current**

*Starting Over, But Still Smiling - Ukrainian family resettles in Frankfort*

Greta Bolger

**2nd Place**

**BridgeDetroit**

*From shelter to home — how one woman climbed out of homelessness*

Nushrat Rahman

**3rd Place** **BridgeDetroit**

*Guardians of graffiti: Inside an effort to protect Detroit's vanishing art*  
Quinn Banks, Malachi Barrett

**News Media-Statewide - Class 41 - Feature Story**

32 Entries

**1st Place** **Bridge Michigan**

*Michigan town adjusts to life with 'ghost newsroom,' as local papers wither*

Ron French

**2nd Place** **Bridge Michigan**

*Michigan tribes race to save their language from extinction*

Ron French

**3rd Place** **Bridge Michigan**

*MSU professor saw students die. A year later, he fights for 'a good life'*

Kelly House

**Class 42 - Best Opinion**

**News Media-Local - Class 42 - Best Opinion**

7 Entries

**1st Place** **Glen Arbor Sun Newspaper**

*Overlooking Jim Harrison*

Tim Mulherin

**2nd Place** **BridgeDetroit**

*Opinion: Train station rebirth proof 'Detroit never left'*

A.J. Johnson

**3rd Place** **Glen Arbor Sun Newspaper**

*In defense of journalism, civil liberties, and a more perfect union*

Eric Carlson

**News Media-Statewide - Class 42 - Best Opinion**

12 Entries

**1st Place** **Bridge Michigan**

*Opinion | An awful law led to Flint water disaster. Why it is still in place?*

Curt Guyette

**2nd Place** **Between The Lines**

*The Dark Side of Advocacy, According to This Leading Michigan*

*Trans Advocate*

Julisa Abad

**3rd Place** **Michigan Advance**

*Rick Haglund*

**Class 45 - Best Newspaper/Publication Design**

**News Media-Statewide - Class 45 - Best Newspaper/Publication Design**

1 Entries

**1st Place** **Michigan Advance**

*The Michigan Advance*

Nelle Dunlap, Goran Butorac, Susan J. Demas

**News Media-Statewide - Class 46 - Best Page or Pages Design**

6 Entries

**1st Place** **Bridge Michigan**

*Social Media Design - Michigan's Industrial Legacy*

Asha Lewis

**2nd Place** **Michigan Advance**

*'Yearning for help': Teen dating violence survivors and allies call for more education on abuse*

Anna Liz Nichols, Susan J. Demas

**3rd Place** **Bridge Michigan**

*Social Media Design - Electric Vehicle Road Trip*

Asha Lewis

**Class 47 - Special Section**

**News Media-Local - Class 47 - Special Section**

2 Entries

**1st Place** **The Betsie Current**

*Special September Issue*

Staff

**2nd Place** **Flint Beat**

*Gray Matters*

Jiquanda Johnson

**News Media-Statewide - Class 47 - Special Section**

7 Entries

**1st Place** **Gander Newsroom**

*That One Time in Michigan When the Mighty Mac Was Born*

Karel Vega

**2nd Place** **Gander Newsroom**

*The Michiganja Report: Cannabis News From Across Michigan*

Kyle Kaminski

**3rd Place** **Gander Newsroom**

*That One Time in Michigan When The Council of the Three Fires*

*Was Formed*

Karel Vega

**Class 48 - News Photo**

**News Media-Local - Class 48 - News Photo**

3 Entries

**1st Place** **Flint Beat**

*DOJ*

Michael Indriolo

**2nd Place** **Flint Beat**

*Urban Boy Scouts*

Michael Indriolo

**3rd Place** **Flint Beat**

*DOJ*

Michael Indriolo

**News Media-Statewide - Class 48 - News Photo**

10 Entries

**1st Place** **Michigan Advance**

*Supporters defiantly wave Trump's mug shot as he speaks in Detroit*

Andrew Roth

**2nd Place** **Michigan Advance**

*President Biden warns Trump is out for 'revenge'*

Andrew Roth

**3rd Place** **Bridge Michigan**

*Reproductive Rights Protest at the Capitol*

Dale Young

**Class 49 - Feature Photo**

**News Media-Local - Class 49 - Feature Photo**

2 Entries

**1st Place** **Flint Beat**

*The Funeral*

Michael Indriolo

**2nd Place**

*Graduation*  
Joshua Johnson

**Flint Beat**

**News Media-Statewide - Class 49 - Feature Photo**

13 Entries

**1st Place**

*Ms. Tea says the rent is 'too damn high'*  
Anna Liz Nichols

**Michigan Advance**

**2nd Place**

*Abortion rights loom large in 2024 campaign*  
Lucy Valeski

**Michigan Advance**

**3rd Place**

*Legendary singer Diana Ross wows Detroit at Michigan Central Station reopening*  
Andrew Roth

**Michigan Advance**

**Class 51 - Sports Writing**

**News Media-Local - Class 51 - Sports Writing**

1 Entries

**1st Place**

*Confessions of a once reluctant Michigan Wolverine*  
Jacob Wheeler

**Glen Arbor Sun Newspaper**

**News Media-Statewide - Class 51 - Sports Writing**

11 Entries

**1st Place**

*Riley Gaines' selection as commencement speaker riles some Adrian College alums*  
Jon Kling

**Michigan Advance**

**2nd Place**

*That One Time in Michigan When the Red Wings Played in Prison*  
Karel Vega

**Gander Newsroom**

**3rd Place**

*Michigan approves new deer hunting regulations to address overpopulation*  
Janelle James

**Bridge Michigan**

**Class 55 - Best Video Presentation**

**News Media-Local - Class 55 - Best Video Presentation**

4 Entries

**1st Place**

*Since That Day: Cheetah's Journey*  
Michael Indriolo, Jiquanda Johnson

**Flint Beat**

**2nd Place**

*'The dream is to be the top dog' Flint boxer chases heavyweight title*  
Michael Indriolo, Jiquanda Johnson

**Flint Beat**

**3rd Place**

*Love Yourself*  
Michael Indriolo

**Flint Beat**

**News Media-Statewide - Class 55 - Best Video Presentation**

18 Entries

**1st Place**

*Climate change threatens fish in Michigan's Great Lakes.*  
Aaron Martin, Kelly House

**Bridge Michigan**

**2nd Place**

*How's your wifi, rural Michigan?*  
Sophie Boudreau

**Gander Newsroom**

**3rd Place**

*A library in every Michigan school*  
Lucas Henkel

**Gander Newsroom**

**Class 56 - Best Digital Presentation**

**News Media-Local - Class 56 - Best Digital Presentation**

1 Entries

**1st Place**

*Flint Beat's Redesign*  
Jiquanda Johnson, Align Simple

**Flint Beat**

**News Media-Statewide - Class 56 - Best Digital Presentation**

4 Entries

**1st Place**

*The Michigan Advance*  
Nelle Dunlap, Goran Butorac, Susan J. Demas

**Michigan Advance**

**2nd Place**

*'Gander Newsroom'*  
Rebecca Russ, Marc Blumenfeld

**Gander Newsroom**

**3rd Place**

*Gongwer.com, news, information and bill tracking on Michigan state government and politics*  
Staff

**Gongwer News Service**

**Class 57 - Public Service Award**

**News Media-Local - Class 57 - Public Service Award**

4 Entries

**1st Place**

*Jena Brooker coverage of Detroit concrete crushing operations*  
Jena Brooker

**BridgeDetroit**

**2nd Place**

*Pier Pressure: remembering a drowning in Frankfort*  
Dan Wanschura

**Glen Arbor Sun Newspaper**

**3rd Place**

*BridgeDetroit 2024 Voter Guide: Everything you need to know about participating in elections*  
Staff

**BridgeDetroit**

**News Media-Statewide - Class 57 - Public Service Award**

7 Entries

**1st Place**

*The Unfulfilled Promises of Michigan Business Incentives*  
Paula Gardner

**Bridge Michigan**

**2nd Place**

*Michigan's kids are making a comeback after COVID-19—and public schools are helping*  
Lucas Henkel

**Gander Newsroom**

**3rd Place**

*Redistricting of Michigan's state legislature*  
Gongwer News Service Staff

**Gongwer News Service**

**Class 59 - Best Podcast**

**Daily A - Class 59 - Best Podcast**

5 Entries

**1st Place**

*"Where Secrets Go To Die"*  
Detroit Free Press staff

**Detroit Free Press**

**2nd Place**

*Whitmer announces energy and housing initiatives at Mackinac Policy Conference*  
Alethia Kasben, Cheyna Roth, Zach Gorchow

**Gongwer News Service**

**3rd Place**

*MIRS Monday*

**Michigan Information and Research Services Inc.**

Samantha Shriber

**Class 60 - Best Writing**

**News Media-Statewide - Class 60 - Best Writing**

42 Entries

**1st Place** **Bridge Michigan**

*Michigan tribes race to save their language from extinction*

Ron French

**2nd Place** **Detroit News**

*Paralyzed child's story shows how Michigan's no fault reforms endanger care*

Chad Livengood

**3rd Place** **Detroit Free Press**

*Amid Addiction, Finding Purpose*

Georgea Kovanis

**Class 63 - Rookie Writer**

**Daily D - Class 63 - Rookie Writer**

8 Entries

**1st Place** **Kalamazoo Gazette**

Aya Miller

**2nd Place** **Crains Grand Rapids Business**

Abby Poirier

**3rd Place** **Traverse City Record-Eagle**

Michael Livingston

**Class 64 - Most Innovative Story Telling**

**Daily D - Class 64 - Most Innovative Story Telling**

22 Entries

**1st Place** **Flint Journal**

*10 years after it was triggered, Flint remembers the beginning of the water crisis*

Staff

**2nd Place** **Bridge Michigan**

*The Electric Vehicle Road Trip*

Kelly House, Paula Gardner, and Asha Lewis

**3rd Place** **Detroit News**

*Michigan Central Station seeks to keep Detroit the Motor City for the next century*

Staff