2025 SPJ Northwest Excellence in Journalism Awards

SIZE DIVISIONS
Small: 1-5 FTE newsroom employees
Medium: Between 6 and 20 FTE newsroom employees
Large: 21-45 or more FTE newsroom employees
Extra Large: 46 plus FTE newsroom employees

AT LARGE | AUDIO | MAGAZINES | PHOTO & DESIGN | VIDEO | WRITING | GENERAL EXCELLENCE | EVERGREEN STATE A-MARK PRIZES

Contact spjwash@gmail.com with added links, fixes or ideas.

AT LARGE

At Large: Column

First Place: Ron Judd, *Cascadia Daily News*
Judge's comments: Excellent writing from the first sentence to the last. Love the diversity, but community locality of this column.

Second Place: Andrea Brown, "What's Up With That?" columns: Behind the Tinted Windows of the Kink Store. Cold-Weather Shorts Guys. Braving the $5 Barber School Haircut." *The Daily Herald of Everett*
Judge's comments: Quirky subjects, fun to read, and strangely informative.

Third Place: Donald W. Meyers, "It Happened Here," *Yakima Herald-Republic*
Judge's comments: Great history column with a variety of local topics that do not make you feel like you are in history class.

At Large: Multimedia Storytelling

First Place: Paul Marshall II, "People of Color Outdoors cultivates community by leading outside gatherings," *Oregon Public Broadcasting*
Judge's comments: Wonderful story in print and video!

Second Place – Erick Bengel, Jake Bertram, Jeremy Burnham, Loryn Kykendall, Greg Lehman, "In Recovery," *Walla Walla Union Bulletin*
Judge's comments: Great series on the local impact that fentanyl has had in the community and the people and agencies working to recover their communities.

Third Place – Fiona Martin, Lauren Frohne, Zachariah Bryan, Sofia Schwarzwalder, David Gutman, “Who are the Zizians?” *The Seattle Times*
Judge's comments: Great coverage of a string of killings with the use of words, sketches, illustrations and video.

At Large: Collaboration

First Place: Johanna Bejarano, Renee Diaz, Gloria Ibanez, Questen Inghram, Olivia Palmer, "Harvest at a Crossroads,"*Yakima Herald-Republic, Northwest Public Broadcasting* and *El Sol de Yakima*
Judge's comments: Very comprehensive, in-depth reporting on harvest problems facing farmers and immigrant workers. The fruit pickers fear ICE and they don't even make minimum wage. Very heartfelt and well told story...
Second Place: Nate Sanford, “Washington city officials are using ChatGPT for government work,” *KNKX*
Judge's comments: An informative story about how local governments use A.I. with focus on the problems solved... and the problems created.

AUDIO

Audio Series – Large

First Place: Jason Pagano, "KUOW Newsroom: December 2025 Floods Coverage," *KUOW*

Audio Series – Small

First Place: Emil Moffatt, "Agents of Change: Addressing Youth Violence — Lessons that Work," *KNKX*
Second Place: Jennifer Wing, Kirsten Kendrick, Emil Moffatt, Mitch Borden, "What's in a Name," *KNKX*
Third Place: Emily Schwing, Rashah McChesney, "Alaska's Crumbling Schools," *KYUK Public Media*

Breaking News – Large

First Place: Lauren Paterson, "Bryan Kohberger pleads guilty to murders of four University of Idaho students,"*Northwest Public Broadcasting*

Breaking News – Small

First Place: Victoria Traxler, "Heavy rains in Lincoln County close roads, flood homes and prompt boil water order,"*Montana Public Radio*

Crime & Law Enforcement Reporting – Small

First Place: Justin Higginbottom, "Lions, guns and meth: Inside the takedown of an Oregon roadside zoo," *Jefferson Public Radio*
Judge's comments: Laid out the story well to give the reader a full account of

the issues.
Second Place: Shaylee Ragar, "Three dozen law enforcement agencies search for Anaconda murder suspect," *Montana Public Radio*
Judge's comments: Good reporting on a complicated story.

Environment & Natural Disaster Reporting – Large

First Place: John Ryan, Isolde Raftery, "Flooding is a familiar foe on the Lummi Reservation," *KUOW*
Judge's comments: Very well told story with good powerful interviews
Second Place: Sara Bernard, Brandon Block, Maleeha Syed, "It's Not Easy Going Green," *Cascade PBS*
Judge's comments: Good in-depth report of a complicated issue but made it clear.

Environment & Natural Disaster Reporting – Small

First Place: Ellis Juhlin, "On mossy ledges behind roaring waterfalls, black swifts find refuge – for now," *Montana Public Radio*
Judge's comments: Through the skillful use of voice, words and sounds, the reporter painted a clear picture, so much so that it felt like you were there.
Second Place: Roman Battaglia, "A biomass plant stands amidst a climate debate on the Northern California coast,"*Jefferson Public Radio*
Judge's comments: A complicated but important story that was told very well.
Third Place: Love Cross, "Left standing: One home, one story from the Beachie Creek Fire," *KLCC*
Judge's comments: Very interesting story on a topic that initially I would not be interested in! But the writer did an excellent job in capturing my interest and keeping in. Loved the sound effects of water! Great entry!

Feature (Hard News) – Large

First Place: Eilís O'Neill, Liz Jones, "His day started with selling a chicken coop. It ended in immigration detention"*KUOW*
Judge's comments: A thought-provoking story that takes an unflinching look at the consequences of immigration policy to a small, blue-collar family.
Second Place: Holly Bartholomew, "'This community is not the enemy': Hillsboro teachers form neighborhood ICE watch," *Oregon Public Broadcasting*
Judge's comments: Careful and thorough documentation of one community's resistance to ICE enforcement.
Third Place: Bryce Dole, "'I just wanna go home': In aging Oregon, older and vulnerable adults struggle to get by,"*Oregon Public Broadcasting*
Judge's comments: Heart-breaking story on elderly people losing their homes, with sharp analysis of supporting data.

Feature (Hard News) – Small

First Place: Justin Higginbottom, "Pineros in Southern Oregon: How Jackson County became a center for guest workers in forestry," *Jefferson Public Radio*

Second Place: Mitch Borden, "Affordable housing groups in Tacoma ask officials to limit renter protections," *KNKX*
Third Place: Nathan Wilk, "Safety in downtown Eugene: Business leaders, homeless advocates, and police chief talk solutions," *KLCC*

Feature (Soft News) – Large

First Place: Crystal Ligori, "Finding 'Sidewalk Joy' around Portland and beyond," *Oregon Public Broadcasting*
Judge's comments: Wonderful story of community.
Second Place: Lillian Karabaic, "'At Work With' Sherwood garbage collector who calls himself 'refuse acquisition and transport specialist,'" *Oregon Public Broadcasting*
Judge's comments: The day in the life of a garbage man. Celebrate the unsung heroes. Great job.
Third Place: Lillian Karabaic, Prakruti Bhatt, "Wilsonville math teacher rides to all 95 MAX stations for world record,"*Oregon Public Broadcasting*
Judge's comments: Interesting story. Had no idea that transit speedrunning was popular, no less a Guinness record. Love the way the math teacher used his teaching skill in his process.

Feature (Soft News) – Small

First Place: Freddy Monares, "Volunteers sniff around Tacoma for a book exploring smellscapes," *KNKX*
Judge's comments: Outstanding use of nat sound and live action interviews. This was engaging, entertaining and enlightening.
Second Place: Ellis Juhlin, "A spectacle, a celebration and a labor of love as geese descend on Freezeout Lake,"*Montana Public Radio*
Judge's comments: Excellent use of the nat sound of the geese with great descriptive words. It feels like you are there.
Third Place: Kendra Schertell, "'Pre-enacting' the apocalypse with Afterworlds, a Lane County LARPing group," *KLCC*
Judge's comments: The interview clips were good and the writing effectively done so listeners can get a picture in their heads.

Federal Impact Reporting – Large

First Place: Ruby de Luna, Carol Smith, "Slashed funding, tighter restrictions could hurt hundreds of thousands WA residents on Medicaid," *KUOW*
Judge's comments: Very effective story-telling and good use of sound which made an important story very interesting.
Second Place: Ruby de Luna, Carol Smith, "WA farmers suffer after feds cut program to provide schools with local fresh foods," *KUOW*
Judge's comments: A great job of reporting one family's personal story which made it easy to follow and better understand the issues.
Third Place: Dirk VanderHart, "ICE plots an outpost on the Oregon Coast," *Oregon Public Broadcasting*
Judge's comments: Detailed story using multiple interviews and lots of short

sound bites to keep listeners engaged

Government & Politics Reporting – Large

First Place: Sara Bernard, Laurel Demkovich, "Ferguson vs. Everyone," *Cascade PBS*
Judge's comments: They were all examples of great reporting, The 1st place entry was very engaging in the discussions and observations.
Second Place: Emily Cureton Cook, "Trump's return brings a mix of emotions and strains relationships in the Northwest," *Oregon Public Broadcasting*
Judge's comments: Second place was a surprise! Considering how it was at the beginning of the President's term, it would be fascinating to interview the same individuals now.
Third Place: Alex Zielinski, "In East Portland, a light post offers hope for a change in City Hall representation," *Oregon Public Broadcasting*

Government & Politics Reporting – Small

First Place: Shaylee Ragar, "Who should get to estimate the costs of a proposed law?" *Montana Public Radio*
Judge's comments: Interesting examination of the cost of policies — and who gets to make that assessment.
Second Place: Rebecca Hansen-White, "Eugene and Springfield will soon have new AI-powered license plate readers that will make 'digital fingerprints' of cars," *KLCC*
Judge's comments: An illuminating look at the risks associated with AI-powered license plate readers, examining privacy and surveillance issues.
Third Place: Bellamy Pailthorp, "Two progressives compete for the most powerful position in King County," *KNKX*

Health Reporting – Large

First Place: Eilís O'Neill, Liz Jones, "As Travis Decker manhunt stalls, Wenatchee veterans call for more mental health services," *KUOW*
Judge's comments: Outstanding and comprehensive story telling of a tragic and emotional case.

Health Reporting – Small

First Place: Aaron Bolton, "Montanans with severe mental illness face a cycle of crisis and homelessness" *Montana Public Radio*
Second Place: Aaron Bolton, "For Homeless Seniors, Getting Into Stable Housing Takes a Village — And a Lot of Luck," *Montana Public Radio and KFF Health News*
Third Place: Nathan Wilk, "Eugene after CAHOOTS: The end of the crisis response program, and the efforts to bring it back," *KLCC*

Investigative Reporting – Large

First Place: Leah Sottile, Ryan Haas, Sage Van Wing, Anna Griffin, Steven

Kray, "Hush Season 2: Love Thy Neighbor,"*Oregon Public Broadcasting*
Judge's comments: This series is excellent. I especially liked the integrity of using facts, not hype, to tell this story.

Investigative Reporting – Small

First Place: Emily Schwing, Rashah McChesney, "Alaska's Crumbling Schools," *KYUK Public Media*
Judge's comments: Stunning work exposing the condition of public schools in isolated areas of Alaska — and what it means.
Second Place: Emily Schwing, Rashah McChesney, "Gone to Pieces," *KYUK Public Media*
Judge's comments: Incredible documenting of an extremely rare scenario – a community forced to move because of the condition of permafrost beneath their homes. Amazing storytelling.
Third Place: Ellis Juhlin, Austin Amestoy, "After landmark climate ruling, state lawmakers work to limit its scope,"*Montana Public Radio*
Judge's comments: Impactful and topical coverage of a landmark case on climate change.

LGBTQ+ Equity Reporting – Large

First Place: Lillian Karabaic, "Billie McBride-O'Neel is skating out of the shadows for trans youth," *Oregon Public Broadcasting*
Second Place: Casey Martin, Isolde Raftery, "Small town on Washington's Olympic Peninsula shows its pride following school trans ban," *KUOW*
Third Place: Jenn Chávez, Julie Sabatier, Emily Hamilton, Steven Kray, Nalin Silva, "'The Evergreen': Portland-based photographer explores what it means to be butch," *Oregon Public Broadcasting*

LGBTQ+ Equity Reporting – Small

First Place: Vanessa Finney, "A place of their own: "Outliers and Outlaws" in Eugene," *Jefferson Public Radio*
Second Place: Aaron Bolton, "Missoula gender care clinic closes as Trump ramps up threats," *Montana Public Radio*

Racial Equity Reporting – Large

First Place: Reneé Dìaz, "A woman's remains were found in 1968 in Illinois. She's been laid to rest in the Yakima Valley," *Northwest Public Broadcasting*
Judge's comments: A respectful, poignant story of a woman whose remains were unidentified for years. Touching and real.
Second Place: Reneé Dìaz, "Lowriders, high hopes: Wenatchee leaders use bike program to curb gang influence,"*Northwest Public Broadcasting*
Judge's comments: A strong piece focusing on the layered meaning of a youth lowrider outreach effort.
Third Place: Paul Marshall II, "People of Color Outdoors cultivates community by leading outside gatherings," *Oregon Public Broadcasting*

Racial Equity Reporting – Small

First Place: Freddy Monares, "A little cafecito': Midday party creates space for Seattle-area Latinos to sing, dance,"*KNKX*
Judge's comments: Nicely produced, written and edited, bringing so many voices together with the vibe of the music. I felt like I was there and this is what radio does best!
Second Place: Victoria Traxler, "Native American lawmakers turn political capital into policy gains," *Montana Public Radio*
Judge's comments: Well-constructed around the personal experiences of the legislators. Would have liked to hear even more of this versus the procedural details.
Third Place: Vanessa Finney, "'Aging While Black' amplifies experiences of elderly Black Americans," *Jefferson Public Radio*
Judge's comments: An important topic worthy of this coverage.

Technology & Science Reporting – Large

First Place: Jes Burns, Brooke Herbert, "Why do sharks love Willapa Bay? Northwest scientists have some ideas,"*Oregon Public Broadcasting*
Judge's comments: Excellent piece on working to find out why there is such a large migration of sharks in Willapa Bay, and what role they play in the ecosystem
Second Place: Crystal Ligori, "New tech at Trail Blazers games helps engage blind sports fans," *Oregon Public Broadcasting*
Judge's comments: Wonderful story about technology created to help the visual impaired be involved while at a sports event.
Third Place: Monica Samayoa, "Oregon is digging deep to tap into an uncommon renewable energy source — Super Hot Rocks," *Oregon Public Broadcasting*
Judge's comments: Great story on the study of geothermal energy as a renewable energy source

Technology & Science Reporting – Small

First Place: Ellis Juhlin, "Data center power needs could mean higher costs for NorthWestern customers," *Montana Public Radio*
Judge's comments: Well-written story about civic engagement and accountability and the perils of technology.
Second Place: Roman Battaglia, "In Arcata, anyone can fly planes and fight wildfires without leaving the library,"*Jefferson Public Radio*
Third Place: Mike Green, Natalie Golay, "Student engineers build custom car for four-year-old," *Jefferson Public Radio*

MAGAZINES

Arts & Culture

First Place: Blake Peterson, "Heart of the Deernicorn's Practical Magic," *Premier Media Group/South Sound*
Second Place: Anne McGregor, "A Writer's Retreat," *Inlander Health & Home*
Third Place: Andrea Brown, Janice Podsada, Sue Misao, "Road Trip to Twisp: Getting There & Being There," *Sound & Summit magazine, The Daily Herald of Everett*

Environment & Natural Disasters

First Place: Joanna Kresge, "Just a Pile of Rocks?" *Premier Media Group/South Sound*
Judge's comments: I really enjoyed reading about this subject. This author "rocked" her metaphors and history of cairns. I had no idea why people did this in the back country and I actually learned something new. Cairns are okay on the beach but in the back country it is not always ecologically safe. Who knew?!
Second Place: Hailee Wickersham, "Tacoma's Remakery Makes the Old New Again," *Premier Media Group/South Sound*
Judge's comments: Highlighting people "walking their talk" is just as important as breaking news. Featuring a person who has dedicated themselves into repurposing, reusing, and helping others who have less is such an altruistic endeavor/vocation. Clear and humanistic writing.

Food & Restaurants

First Place: Janice Podsada, "Firehouse Fare: 'We Like Good Food,'" *The Daily Herald/Sound Publishing*
Second Place: Dora Scott, "'Like Mother, Like Daughter'," *Inlander Health & Home*
Third Place: Kate Lebo, "Some Conditions Under Which I'll Consent to Make Stuffing," *Inlander Health & Home*

Health & Science

First Place: E.J. Iannelli, "Beating Your Brain" *Inlander Health & Home*
Judge's comments: I found this story quite interesting since insomnia has been my bedmate for years. The "sound" of lightning having a vibration was fascinating. If this unit wasn't so expensive (more expensive than an epipen), I would def try it. I especially appreciated the careful explanation in layman's terms of what happens in the brain disseminating sound. Excellent writing for us "non-sciencey" people. [sic]
Second Place: E.J. Iannelli, "Splitting Hairs," *Inlander Health & Home*
Judge's comments: LOVE the title! Having my hair analyzed versus a blood

draw would be so much more comfortable. Wish this would hurry up and become the "norm."

Magazine Print Page Design

First Place: Ali Blackwood, Leslie Douglas, "'Like Mother, Like Daughter'," "A Writer's Retreat," and "A Culinary Escape**,"** *Inlander Health & Home*
Judge's comments: I like the variety of creative layouts. Although each are distinct, they fit well as a whole.
Second Place: Alex Schloer, *Premier Media Group*
Judge's comments: Very creative layouts tailored for each story.
Third Place: Corianton Hale, "Pie, Pie, My Darling," "Tidepooling" and "20 Hours on the 1," *The Stranger*
Judge's comments: Love the illustrations in this layout. Unique and almost a lost art.

Personal Profile

First Place: Hannah Murphy Winter, "The Making of Katie Wilson," *The Stranger*
Judge's comments: Topical, timely and insightful portrait of an unusual politician – giving insight into what makes her tick.
Second Place: Adriana Janovich, "The constant diarist," *Washington State Magazine*
Judge's comments: A meticulously crafted portrait of the most prolific diarist. Couldn't stop reading.
Third Place: Bob Geballe, "The Verdict," *Washington Super Lawyers Magazine*

Review

First Place: Blake Peterson, "Seattle Couldn't Quit Haim," *Premier Media Group/South Sound*
Judge's comments: Although the first paragraph was packed with em dashes and lofty metaphors, I appreciated this writer's enthusiasm and knowledge of the band's history. His descriptions of the performance gave me a real sense of drama and realism.

Technology- Business & Economics

First Place: Destiny Valencia, "How These Local Women Tattoo Artists Are Leaving a Mark," *Premier Media Group/South Sound*
Judge's comments: Wonderfully written.
Second Place: Joanna Kresge, Hailee Wickersham, Blake Peterson, Destiny Valencia, "Selling Spooky," *Premier Media Group/South Sound Business*
Third Place: E.J. Iannelli, "The Home Team," *Inlander Health & Home*

PHOTO & DESIGN

Feature Photography – Extra Large

First Place: Mark Graves, "Pig N Ford," *The Oregonian/OregonLive*
Judge's comments: The absolute, very best pig in a Ford photograph I have ever seen! Hilarious picture to illustrate the 100th anniversary of the Tillamook County Fair Pig-N-Ford races.
Second Place: Karen Ducey, "Rainy day botany class," *The Seattle Times*
Judge's comments: Beautiful photo of two fifth grade girls in the rain that was used to illustrate an article about the weather

Feature Photography – Large

First Place: Amanda Cowan, "Little construction supervisors," *The Columbian*
Judge's comments: It is tough to compete with cute kids in an interesting setting.
Second Place: Kathryn Styer Martínez, "'Honor the dead by fighting for the living:' Central Oregon celebrates Día de Muertos," *Oregon Public Broadcasting*
Judge's comments: Colorful, poignant and reverent...

Feature Photography – Medium

First Place: Santiago Ochoa, "Mental health court graduation," *Cascadia Daily News*
Judge's comments: Great expressions, fist pump helps tell the story.
Second Place: Santiago Ochoa, "Superintendent plays a round of playground parachute," *Cascadia Daily News*
Judge's comments: Nice composition, expressions and lighting made this a winner.

Feature Photography – Small

First Place: Mark White, "Unbroken Threads," *South Seattle Emerald*
Judge's comments: I like the composition, lighting and the strong colors of this image.
Second Place: Logan Bury, "Taking a selfie at the Polar Plunge," *My Edmonds News*
Judge's comments: The background is a bit busy, but I like the expression and excitement of the image.

General News Photography – Extra Large

First Place: Karen Ducey, "Safety on the Metro Bus," *The Seattle Times*
Judge's comments: A work of art... It reminds me of a David Hockney photographic creation
Second Place: Allison Barr "Portland ICE protester," *The Oregonian/OregonLive*
Judge's comments: Dramatic statement: gas, mask and the American Flag

General News Photography – Large

First Place: Kristyna Wentz-Graff, "Searching for Sarah," *Oregon Public Broadcasting*
Judge's comments: The lighting and composition are haunting. The blue vase and yellow flowers are a stark contrast to the profound sadness and loss captured by this photo.
Second Place: Saskia Hatvany, "Euthanized Whale is Removed From Oregon Beach," *Oregon Public Broadcasting*
Judge's comments: It appears a man is photographing a bird of prey as it attacks a defenseless beached whale

General News Photography – Medium

First Place: Bob Brawdy, "West Richland flooding," *Tri-City Herald*
Judge's comments: Power image that tells the story behind the flood. Great image!
Second Place: Young Kwak, "News Photography: Spokane ICE Protests," *Inlander*
Judge's comments: Great capture by the image maker. I enjoyed the approach to getting the shot and telling the story while maintaining the exposure's highlights and detail.

Graphics & Illustrations – Extra Large

First Place: Fiona Martin, Lynda Mapes, Frank Mina, "How the Columbia River Basin formed over millions of years,"*The Seattle Times*
Judge's comments: All three entries were excellent. This first illustration in this entry is particularly easy to visualize and understand.
Second Place: Fiona Martin, Seattle Times Staff, "Melting mountains," *The Seattle Times*
Judge's comments: Likewise, the first image in this entry is very 'graphic.' I like the drawings of the animals, and the hungry walleye in the third entry deserves mention.

Graphics & Illustrations – Large

First Place: Teo Popescu, Liz Brazile, "How Trump's birthright citizenship ban could impact all 50 states," *KUOW*
Judge's comments: What a great use of interactive illustrations. Well done.
Second Place: Merridee Hanson, "Piecing together provider puzzle," "Tiffany Hill Act stalls in state" and "Setting people up for failure," *The Columbian*
Third Place: Teo Popescu, Eilís O'Neill, Liz Jones, "Who's at risk of deportation in Washington state? 5 things to know," *KUOW*

Graphics & Illustrations – Medium

First Place: Greg Stump, "Keep Digging," *The Stranger*
Judge's comments: A clever and fun way to tell a story visually — executed in such a way that doesn't take away from the medium's ability to tell a story.

Second Place: McKenzie Young-Roy, "Proof – Cover Illustration" *Eugene Weekly*
Judge's comments: Strong illustration that marries well with the words.

Graphics & Illustrations – Small

First Place: Etta O'Donnell-King, "Look to Le Guin," *Street Roots*
Judge's comments: Stark black and white drawing gives Ursula LeGuin the appropriate otherworldly image to illustrate the cover story.
Second Place: Wendy Wahman, "It's time to plant your fall and winter garden," "The seed oil controversy; What science really says" and "How the freezer became my superpower," *Sound Consumer (PCC Community Markets)*
Judge's comments: Fun and whimsical illustrations...

Graphics & Illustrations – Magazine

First Place: Marc Palm, "Stranger Things Cover," *Seattle Gay News*
Judge's comments: A strange and eerie cover which is the exact image the artist wanted to convey.
Second Place: Emory Liu, *Seattle Gay News*
Judge's comments: I especially like the third image of "Fall Arts" designed to look like a playing card.

Print Page Design – Large

First Place: Caitlin Miller, *The Spokesman-Review*
Judge's comments: The First Place award goes to pages entered by Caitlin Miller. Sent to judge via email because the wrong pages were entered in the portal. Excellent use of images that work in concert with type, especially the two features covers. Stunning work.
Second Place: Chris Soprych, *The Spokesman-Review*
Judge's comments: These entries are by Chris Soprych. Nice and lively design with excellent use of visuals and typography.

Print Page Design – Medium

First Place: Whitney McPhie, Sophia Mick, "Griddle Me This, Gonna Fly Now, Best New Bands," *Willamette Week*
Judge's comments: Really fun designs and some clever use of typography — making the pages lively.
Second Place: Kathleen Ballard, "Making space," *Walla Walla Union Bulletin*
Judge's comments: Loved the front page — excellent use of photo illustration with typography.

Print Page Design – Small

First Place: Mikayle Stole, Feb. 19, Oct. 9, Oct. 30 and Dec. 18, *The Brownsville Times*
Judge's comments: Easy to read, visually pleasing, full of news and human interest.

Second Place: Etta O'Donnell-King, *Street Roots*
Judge's comments: Very artistic

Print Page Design – Magazine

First Place: Emory Liu, Nico Sereda, "Seattle Torrent: A Fan's Handbook," *Seattle Gay News*

Portrait Photography – Extra Large

First Place: Beth Nakamura, "Living Victorian," *The Oregonian/OregonLive*
Judge's comments: In addition to her 1890s lifestyle, youthful barrister Adelaide Beeman-White possesses a sophisticated name and projects a Victorian profile from an era formerly known as "The Gay Nineties." Her charming story earns first place for being gay in the original meaning of the word.

Portrait Photography – Large

First Place: Kristyna Wentz-Graff, "Shedding light on sub-prime loans," *Oregon Public Broadcasting*
Judge's comments: Terrific photograph to illustrate the headline... the photographer perfectly captured the light and shadows, particularly the sadness in the woman's eyes.

Portrait Photography – Medium

First Place: Evan Abell, "Wheelchair racer Amir Peña," *Yakima Herald-Republic*
Judge's comments: I like how the image used a clean, no people background of the track. Made the subject stand out more. I like how they shot back lit. which gave the white bike detail.
Second Place: Erick Doxey, "Portrait Photography: Andre Lewis," *Inlander*
Judge's comments: Great use of a neutral background, makes the lighting on the subject stand out more, with a hint of red gave it some punch.

Portrait Photography – Small

First Place: Jarrette Werk, "'I Want to Change the Film Industry,'" *Underscore*
Judge's comments: A young Indigenous woman with big dreams frames her own portrait.
Second Place: Meron Menghistab, "As Air Pollution Rises, Local Programs Help South Seattle Families Breathe Easier," *South Seattle Emerald*
Judge's comments: A portrait of a happy family

Portrait Photography – Magazine

First Place: Rick Dahms, "Tricky Business,'" *Washington Super Lawyers Magazine*
Judge's comments: This photo certainly conveys the message that Emily Gant is surrounded by weed and knows her way around...

Photo Story or Portfolio – Extra Large

First Place: Karen Ducey, *The Seattle Times*
Judge's comments: Great use of imagery using several captures and the expressions on their faces to tell the story.
Second Place: Beth Nakamura, *The Oregonian/OregonLive*
Judge's comments: I really enjoyed this image; it told the story. Just wish it was a little sharper.

Photo Story or Portfolio – Large

First Place: Megan Farmer, *KUOW*
Judge's comments: Wonderful variety of photos in this portfolio. My favorite of the twenty is the first image of the lights on the water. Images of flooding are excellent.

Photo Story or Portfolio – Medium

First Place: Liesbeth Powers, *Tacoma News Tribune*
Judge's comments: Photographer has an eye for human interest; wonderful composition. Great variety of photographs.
Second Place: JP Bogan, "Hell Yeah, Brother: T-Boy Wrestling," *Willamette Week*
Judge's comments: Hell Yeah, it looks like a lot of fun!

Photo Story or Portfolio – Small

First Place: Darrell Kirk, "Solstice Parade Photo Coverage," *The Islands' Sounder*
Judge's comments: These photos make the viewer feel like they are actually attending the Orcas Island parade with a lot of people having fun
Second Place: Alex Garland, "With a Handkerchief and Bottlecaps, Uncle John Keeps an Ancient Hawaiian Game Alive," *South Seattle Emerald*
Judge's comments: An interesting character telling an interesting story with interesting "game pieces"

Photo Story or Portfolio – Magazine

First Place: Tierney Patterson, *Premier Media Group*
Second Place: Rodrigo DeMedeiros, *Premier Media Group*

Photo Essay – Large

First Place: Megan Farmer, "Atmospheric River Aftermath," *KUOW*
Judge's comments: On the basis of scope and scale, this outstanding photo essay tells a story of devastation and destruction beyond words.
Second Place: Chris Pietsch, "Oregon's radical drug policy," *Eugene Register-Guard*
Judge's comments: Upbeat story in photos. Beautiful wilderness pictures along the journey. You can feel the spray in your face...

Photo Essay – Medium

First Place: Liam Griffith, "Skateboards Only," *The Stranger*
Judge's comments: The power of black and white photography conveys the grit and visceral impact that make this photo essay about skateboard culture stand out from the other entries.
Second Place: Hailey Cook, "Soup Squad," *Salem Reporter*
Judge's comments: These pictures tenderly capture the kindness of people feeding the hungry... and their pets.

Photo Essay – Small

First Place: Charity Burggraaf, "Chef Nikki Demmert's recipes on foraging, family and food sovereignty" and "Nikki Demmert's recipe collection," *Sound Consumer*
Judge's comments: I liked seeing a wide range of styles of shooting this essay-closeups of hands, focal lengths and great use of light.
Second Place: Nate Gowdy, Carrie Schreck, "What's the Fourth of July Mean at the Muckleshoot Fireworks Mall? Family, Freedom, and the Right to 'Blow Stuff Up,'" *South Seattle Emerald*
Judge's comments: Enjoyed the images for this essay. I would like to see a few different approaches to seeing this-instead of using flash, maybe a silhouette of a face, a few shots of something without people. Great essay!

Sports Action Photography – Extra Large

First Place: Sean Meagher Oswald, "Oregon Ducks touchdown," *The Oregonian/OregonLive*
Judge's comments: Great action photograph, well done to the image maker..

Sports Action Photography – Large

First Place: Ben Lonergan, "Sadiq hurdles," *The Register-Guard*
Judge's comments: "Great action shot, captured the moment using a long lens. Well done.
Second Place: Taylor Balkom, "Prep Notebook: Camas boys, Union girls earn No. 1 seeds to bi-district," *The Columbian*
Judge's comments: Nice action images, enjoyed the expression on her face.

Sports Action Photography – Medium

First Place: Evan Abell, "East Valley vs. Selah football," *Yakima Herald-Republic*
Judge's comments: Great action photo of high school football player hurdling over a would-be tackler.
Second Place: West Smith, "Cinco de Margo," *The Stranger*
Judge's comments: Skateboarder defying gravity living on the edge

Sports Action Photography – Small

First Place: Michael Bury, "Cheering on the Warriors at State," *My Edmonds*

News
Judge's comments: Great action photos in this category, but this image of high school kids cheering for their team captures the emotion of sports
Second Place: Whittney Thornton, "In the face of Carter Pabst's acrobatic TD catch," *CougFan.com*
Judge's comments: Wonderful close-up of seemingly impossible reception

Spot News Photography – Large

First Place: Megan Farmer, "Rising Floodwaters in Snohomish," *KUOW*
Judge's comments: Most dramatic, because it is a singular building surrounded by flood water.
Second Place: Megan Farmer, "Atmospheric River Flooding," *KUOW*
Judge's comments: More to study with outbuildings and vehicles

Spot News Photography – Medium

First Place: Bob Brawdy, "Tri-Cities Homelessness Crisis," *Tri-City Herald*
Judge's comments: Resident of unusual temporary housing unit with one shoe on and one shoe off...
Second Place: Isaac Wasserman, "Hideaway Hills Fire,'" *Lookout Eugene-Springfield*
Judge's comments: It ain't easy rescuing a goat... Great expression on the young woman's face

VIDEO

Breaking News – Large

First Place: Alaska's News Source Staff, "Impacts from Halong," *Alaska's News Source*
Judge's comments: Captured the scope of the disaster, not only from the scene but from Anchorage where several entities — schools, Red Cross, city leaders — are hurrying to deal with the impact the evacuees would have.
Second Place: Alaska's News Source Staff, "Summit in Alaska," *Alaska's News Source*
Judge's comments: A difficult assignment, handled admirably.

Feature (Hard News) – Large

First Place: Jaelynn Grisso, "5 years after wildfire, Malden is still rebuilding," *Cascade PBS*
Second Place: Nate Sanford, Paris Jackson, Shannen Ortale, "The Newsfeed: Records show broad ChatGPT use by WA city officials," *Cascade PBS*
Third Place: Lillian Karabaic, Prakruti Bhatt, "In Pendleton, a tiny plane keeps people connected. But could buses do it better?" *Oregon Public Broadcasting*

Feature (Hard News) – Small

First Place: Tom Layson, Steve Kiggins, Phillip Townsend, "Northwest Now – Fire on the Horizon," *KBTC-TV*
Judge's comments: Excellent coverage of the dangers of wildfires currently in the area with great interviews, a good look at what was and what is now, utilizing several wildfires and the impact they had on communities, available funding before and after these disasters.
Second Place: Jordan Wood, Nate Eaton, "Inside the Hunt: Undercover with Idaho's ICAC," *EastIdahoNews.com*
Judge's comments: A great inside look at the statewide effort in combatting crimes against children.

Feature (Soft News) – Large

First Place: Crystal Ligori, Stephani Gordon, Christie Goshe, "How the Pacific Northwest is leading a radicchio renaissance," *Oregon Public Broadcasting*
Second Place: Paris Jackson, Shannen Ortale, "The Newsfeed: Social justice library goes beyond books to housing,"*Cascade PBS*
Third Place: Prakruti Bhatt, Lillian Karabaic, "Wilsonville math teacher rides to all 95 MAX stations for world record,"*Oregon Public Broadcasting*

Feature (Soft News) – Small

First Place: Will Yurman, "Wishes and Wants Hopes and Dreams," *West of the Tunnel*
Judge's comments: Wishes and Wants Hopes and Dreams
Second Place: Bryan Dutt, Scott Schaefer, "VIDEO: Burien's amazing Arts-A-Glow festival shines with lanterns, art and joyful crowds Saturday night," *South King Media*
Judge's comments: Love how this event brought a community together.

Federal Impact Reporting – Large

First Place: Jaelynn Grisso, "The Newsfeed: Immigration advocates assist released ICE detainees," *Cascade PBS*
Judge's comments: These are difficult stories to cover. They take time to build trust and gather information. It's critical to invest in them. This story brings another aspect of the nation's immigration policy to light.

Federal Impact Reporting – Small

First Place: Teresa Mahoney, Yesenia Amaro, "Immigration officials took their parents. A Portland couple gave 4 kids a new home," *The Oregonian/OregonLive*
Judge's comments: Beautiful story of an older couple caring for four American born children when their immigrant parents and grandfather were detained for three month by ICE
Second Place: Kevin Teeter, "Rep. Newhouse confronted on his decision to vote for Medicaid cuts in Big Beautiful Bill," *KHQ-TV*

Judge's comments: Congressman paints rosier picture of struggling rural hospitals to survive than frustrated hospital administrators do. Reporter asked tough questions...
Third Place: Kevin Teeter, "Rural Head Start programs face funding uncertainties in Okanogan County," *KHQ-TV*
Judge's comments: Heartbreaking story about rural Oregon Head Start programs losing federal funding. Kudos to reporter for covering the crisis.

General Assignment (Pre-Produced) – Large

First Place: Beth Verge, "Katmai's past serves scientists as prime research point for future," *Alaska's News Source*
Judge's comments: Well written, well edited, all-around well-done story. You covered a lot of ground, figuratively and literally, in four minutes time. I could watch this story again and again.

General Assignment (Same Day) – Large

First Place: Beth Verge, Rachel McPherron, "'The division was not prepared': State lawmakers grill officials on elections processes, issues," *Alaska's News Source*.

General Assignment (Same Day) – Small/Medium

First Place: Christina Giardinelli, Justin Wynn, "Woman returns to rubble after Rowena Fire destroys home that housed generations," *KATU*

Investigative Reporting – Large

First Place: Rebecca Palsha, Rachel McPherron, Matthew Simon, Colin Lamar**,** "Kathleen Jo & Veronica: Who Else,"*Alaska's News Source*
Second Place: Jaelynn Grisso, "The Newsfeed: Immigration advocates assist released ICE detainees," *Cascade PBS*
Third Place: Beth Verge, Rachel McPherron, "Early legislative session questions focus on oil forecast, energy crisis,"*Alaska's News Source*

Investigative Reporting – Small

First Place: Christina Giardinelli, Ric Peavyhouse, "The Cost of Redemption," *KATU*
Judge's comments: Excellent piece on crimes against children and children committing crimes. Extremely localized, this story is backed up with personal interviews, data research. It does everything an investigative story should do. Bring insight to the public.

Video Series – Large

First Place: Kami Horton, Bruce Barrow, **"**Uncovering Boarding Schools," *Oregon Public Broadcasting*
Second Place: Staff, "Out & Back," *Cascade PBS*
Third Place: KING 5 Seattle, KGW Portland, KREM Spokane, KTVB Boise,

"Environment Northwest: Glaciers on Thin Ice," *KING 5*

Video Series – Small

First Place: Finn Wendt, Cocoa Laney, **"**Made in Cascadia," *Cascadia Daily News*
Judge's comments: In-depth stories about making kimchi, art prints, native jewelry and dressmaking. Vina Brown's fashions are particularly imaginative.
Second Place: Steve Kaufmann, "Public Lands are for Everybody," *Central Oregon Daily*
Judge's comments: Beautiful and uplifting stories about making Oregon accessible to all.

Sports

Judge's overall comments: These entries were neck and neck. The quality was impressive! The placement decision was extremely close. My congratulations to the journalists for these beautifully constructed and well told stories.
First Place: Steve Kaufmann, **"**Soldiers on the Slopes," *Central Oregon Daily*
Judge's comments: Beautifully told through the visuals and first rate editing, letting the narrative be driven by the participants. It's the quality of any national feature story.
Second Place: Kyra Antone, "Battle of the Nations Showcases Love of Basketball in Indian Country," *Underscore*
Judge's comments: A razor thin decision between first and second. The sports action is excellent, but I valued the inclusion of the reaction shots – the "showboating" described by the organizer.

WRITING

Arts & Culture Reporting – Extra Large

First Place: Erik Lacitis, "Controversial connection" *The Seattle Times*
Judge's comments: Article about whimsical sculpture that captures public attention and also the judge's attention to receive this first place award!
Second Place: Margo Vansynghel, Lulu Ramadan, "Reporting on affordable artist housing that revealed oversight gaps,"*The Seattle Times*
Judge's comments: Excellent in-depth report on the bad combination of an incompetent non-profit and an unresponsive government that should protect its citizens.
Third Place: Samantha Swindler, "Signs of life at a dying mall," *The Oregonian/OregonLive*
Judge's comments: A wacky series about an abandoned mall that refuses to die. Enterprising entrepreneurs take advantage of rents well below market to create a garage sale/swap meet environment to make a buck.

Arts & Culture Reporting – Large

First Place: Winston Szeto, Jeff Kastner, Arya Surowidjojo, Jenn Chávez, Mia Estrada, "A Portland group was formed to support China during wartime. Now it fights a battle to keep the beat of traditional music alive," *Oregon Public Broadcasting*
Judge's comments: Excellent cultural series on the past, present and future of Cantonese opera
Second Place: Katie Campbell, Stephen Howie, "Memoirist Putsata Reang talks about the 'complicated love' for America, Cambodia, and Ma," *KUOW*
Judge's comments: Compelling from the first sentence to the last.
Third Place: Dyer Oxley, Stephen Howie, "Dungeons & Dragons and disinformation: How gaming can combat the misinformation age," *KUOW*
Judge's comments: Interesting twist on how gaming creates critical thinking and differentiates between information and disinformation.

Arts & Culture Reporting – Medium

First Place: Mirandah Davis-Powell,"The Diner Fighting for Inclusivity," *Eugene Weekly*
Judge's comments: Well done coverage of a struggling business that caters to an underrepresented community.
Second Place: Megan Burbank, "Can You Call It a Comeback?" *The Stranger*
Judge's comments: Deep dive into the repercussions of a disgraced artist. Extremely well researched and poignantly written.
Third Place: Rachel Saslow, "Grand Finale," *Willamette Week*
Judge's comments: Wonderful story, but disheartening to see such a longtime community event facing its demise

Arts & Culture Reporting – Small

First Place: Tracy Simmons,"Doug Wilson Coverage," *FAVS News*
Second Place: Nolan Parker, "Can Portland Be a Music Capital Again?" *Portland Mercury*
Third Place: Darrell Kirk, "Lopez Original Theater | Where inclusive community theater comes alive," *The Islands' Weekly*

Arts & Culture Reporting – Magazine

First Place: Frank Gaimari, Richard Isaac, "In conversation with Philip Gladstone: Modern intimacy in male nudes,"*Seattle Gay News*
Judge's comments: Excellently written. Great interview questions, giving the artist plenty of room to talk about his art, perspective, and its impact on certain communities.
Second Place: Adriana Janovich, "The constant diarist," *Washington State Magazine*
Third Place: Adriana Janovich, "And the ladies of the Pullman club," *Washington State Magazine*

Breaking News Reporting – Extra Large

First Place: Staff, "Trump says he'll send troops to Portland," *The Oregonian/OregonLive*
Judge's comments: The president's announcement and the reporting of state and local reaction was palpable. The inclusion of national context gave the breaking news clarity.
Second Place: Staff, "24 hours outside Portland's ICE facility: Is this what 'lawless mayhem' looks like?" *The Oregonian/OregonLive*

Breaking News Reporting – Large

First Place: Alayna Shulman, Alexandra Duggan, Garrett Cabeza, Mitchell Roland, "Two firefighters killed in 'ambush-style' shooting east of Coeur d'Alene," *The Spokesman-Review*
Judge's comments: This story succeeds by balancing the clinical precision of a tragedy with the human wreckage it left behind. The team of reporters avoided the trap of a hold police reporting by including the emotional effect on the community as a whole.
Second Place: Doug Flanagan, "High-voltage line rescue prevents cat-tastrophe," *The Columbian*
Judge's comments: Reporter Doug Flanagan laid out the story in detail and put the reader at the scene while balancing the details of the rescue of a cat stuck for days at the top of a utility pole — a touching, thorough job.
Third Place: Mia Ryder-Marks, Chrissy Booker, "Health nonprofit suspends services," *The Columbian*
Judge's comments: A good job by a duo team of reporters covering a public interest story about a nonprofit health clinic closing.

Breaking News Reporting – Medium

First Place: Erin Sellers, Luke Baumgarten, Val Osier, Aaron Hedge, "Everything we know about the Spokane ICE protests," *Range Media*
Judge's comments: Thorough coverage during heightened emotions.
Second Place: Kaylee Tornay, Whitney Bryen, "A 12-year-old killed herself at a Spokane hospital that recently closed its youth psychiatric unit," *InvestigateWest*
Judge's comments: Detailed reporting centered on a rare move to try a child as an adult, capturing the public's outrage over the brutal crime and the resulting plea deal.
Third Place: CDN Staff, "Disastrous flooding in Whatcom, Skagit counties two weeks before Christmas," *Cascadia Daily News*
Judge's comments: Excellent coverage of a devastating flooding published on deadline.

Breaking News Reporting – Small

First Place: Jeremiah Hayden, "Mayor Wilson Puts Portland Housing Bureau Director On Leave," *Portland Mercury*
Judge's comments: This was a difficult category to judge, because there were

many fine entries. The article explores politics, reputation and the blame game which includes accusations about money. Who is believable?
Second Place: Barry Bolton, "WSU's early removal of one president and hiring of another," *CougFan.com*
Judge's comments: This was a difficult category to judge, because there were many fine entries. Is this article about college sports and money or money and college sports? Accusations are leveled, feeling hurt and truth depends on the source. The search for a new college president was promised to be "open and transparent," but it was not...
Third Place: Raymond Miller-Still, "White River Bridge Closure," *The Courier-Herald*
Judge's comments: This was a difficult category to judge, because there were many fine entries. These articles report on an important issue for the community. A bridge is badly damaged and social media estimates it will be out of commission for a year. Government officials insist the repairs won't take that long and the bridge is functioning again even sooner than expected. This is news the readers need!

Breaking News Reporting – Magazine

First Place: Madison Jones, "Justice for Nikki Armstrong: A Transgender Woman's Story of Assault, Survival, and Perseverance," *Seattle Gay News*

Business & Economics Reporting – Extra Large

First Place: Megan Ulu-Lani Boyanton, "Seattle, a coffee haven, is watching java prices spike. Why?" *The Seattle Times*
Judge's comments: Seattle is best known for starting the consumer coffee craze, and this article highlights the current world impact on something that is part of everyday life.
Second Place: Matthew Kish, "Nike's Starfish scandal," *The Oregonian/OregonLive*
Third Place: Heidi Groover, Nick Wagner, Mark Nowlan, "Tenants were promised lawyers, but many still face eviction alone," *The Seattle Times*
Judge's comments: Housing is the number one concern for most of the population. This story gives an in depth reality check.

Business & Economics Reporting – Large

First Place: Henry Brannan, Sarah Wolf, "Shipping industry braces for a hit; Steel importers hurting after tax hike; Columbia shipping industry uneasy," *The Columbian*
Judge's comments: Great in-depth coverage!
Second Place: Henry Brannan, "'Perfect storm' of factors hits apple growers," *The Columbian*
Judge's comments: Very crucial economic statement
Third Place: Venice Buhain, "Is Washington state falling out of love with Tesla?," *Cascade PBS*
Judge's comments: Perhaps a statement how much of the nation feels.

Business & Economics Reporting – Medium

First Place: Elizabeth Hayes, Demi Lawrence, "Tif for Tat," *Portland Business Journal*
Judge's comments: Richly detailed reporting with smart explainers, beautifully illustrated with helpful visuals for readers on a decision that will affect the city of Portland's future.
Second Place: Malia Spencer, "Vacasa bidding war," *Portland Business Journal*
Judge's comments: The boiling down of the details here was a heavy lift, but the narrative never weighs the reader down. Excellent reporting.
Third Place: Christian Wihtol, "Waiting for Stratacache," *Eugene Weekly*
Judge's comments: Solid reporting on a broken promise, the kind of vital followup we don't see often enough.

Business & Economics Reporting – Small

First Place: Jeremiah Hayden, Jake Thomas, "Portland fights AI rent-fixing," *Street Roots*
Judge's comments: Thorough reporting with exceptional detail and sources to back up the information presented on a topic of economic importance to many readers who are renters — or may someday be a renter.
Second Place: Jeremiah Hayden, "PPB protest settlements cost the city over $9.1 million since 2020," *Street Roots*
Judge's comments: Reporting on the rights of citizens is among the highest callings of journalism. Highly informative reporting.
Third Place: Michael Whitney, "Records imply which Rite Aid, Bartell's stores CVS bought in Snohomish County and broader area," *Snohomish County Tribune*
Judge's comments: Old fashioned records based reporting — and I say "old fashioned" as a compliment in the best possible way.

Business & Economics Reporting – Magazine

First Place: John Stearns, "Local Space Sector has the Ingredients for Growth," *Premier Media Group*
Judge's comments: With the recent Artemis voyage around the moon, this is a timely story about the importance of the space industry to the local community.

Crime & Law Enforcement Reporting – Extra Large

First Place: Noelle Crombie, "The intersection," *The Oregonian/OregonLive*
Judge's comments: Incredibly powerful imagery compelled me to keep reading. Moved to tears. Incredibly well-written. Powerful. I gasped reading the first few grafs and stayed rapt. Reporter Noelle Crombie put the reader in the cars, in the rooms. Beautiful, compelling, heartbreaking.
Second Place: Ted Sickinger, Noelle Crombie,"'Turmoil at the top': More than half of Oregon's prison doctors on leave, fired or left in past year," *The Oregonian/OregonLive*
Third Place: Paige Cornwell, "'A Bellevue man killed his wife. He has dementia.

Now what?" *The Seattle Times*

Crime & Law Enforcement Reporting – Large

First Place: Rose Evans, Alex Brizee, "'Instant panic': Families break silence over police shooting by Roaring Springs,"*Idaho Statesman*
Judge's comments: The shooting of a suspect near a busy freeway and crowded waterpark was dissected expertly with the use of records, interviews and camera footage. Evans and Brizee give a complete look at what happened that day, the aftermath and questions raised by the deputies' tactics. Great accountability reporting.
Second Place: Conrad Wilson, Michelle Wiley, "DNA helps unlock a Washington County cold case. It could also unravel it," *Oregon Public Broadcasting*
Judge's comments: Wilson and Wiley took what could have been your standard trial walk-up and turned it into a compelling true-crime read that gets at the questions at the heart of the case, including the complexities of DNA evidence, and the high stakes involved. The reader walks away with a question of who-dun-it, and also feeling a little smarter when it comes to DNA.

Crime & Law Enforcement Reporting – Medium

Judge's overall comments: There were many high-caliber entries showing dogged reporting, sourcing and records work. Many stories also were noteworthy for their humanity – not always easy when reporting on such dark issues. It was tough to pick only three from this very large group of entries. Bravo to all the journalists in this group!
First Place: Melanie Henshaw, "Two killings, no explanation: Families left reeling after Bureau of Indian Affairs shootings," *InvestigateWest*
Judge's comments: Henshaw blends narrative storytelling and watchdog reporting well here, focusing on the deaths of two cousins at the hands of BIA officers to illustrate larger problems with transparency and accountability within the agency. Good use of public records and interviews, particularly the family who are left with so many questions. A fine piece of journalism.
Second Place: Katheryn Houghton, "In a Broken Mental Health System, a Tiny Jail Cell Becomes an Institution of Last Resort," *KFF Health News*
Judge's comments: Good enterprise work that takes readers inside the cell of mentally ill jail inmates. The writing is clear on Montana's lack of options for caring for such people and reflects a larger national trend. These are cases where there are no easy answers, and the reporter navigates that territory well.
Third Place: Brandon Block, "How a WA prison turned a treatable ailment into a death sentence," *InvestigateWest*
Judge's comments: The reporter uses one man's death behind bars to illustrate larger shortcomings within the prison health care system, from solitary confinement to questionable care decisions to failure to communicate with loved ones to accountability. Good use of records, interviews and engaging writing.

Crime & Law Enforcement Reporting – Small

First Place: K. Rambo, "Portland said it was investing in homeless people's safety. Deaths have skyrocketed," *Street Roots/ProPublica*
Judge's comments: Well reported and well-written, using solid data coupled with a wide array of good interviews with knowledgeable sources.
Second Place: Courtney Vaughn, "Despite DOJ Intervention, Portland Police are Still Killing People in Mental Health Crisis," *Portland Mercury*
Third Place: Shaanth Nanguneri, "Oregon Democrats push for charging federal agents with state law. Police say not so fast,"

Crime & Law Enforcement Reporting – Magazine

First Place: Hannah Saunders, "Cops mob Trans, Queers, and allies over popped balloon at Mayday USA counterprotest," *Seattle Gay News*

Editorial & Commentary – Extra Large

First Place: Helen Jung, "Keep proving Trump wrong," *The Oregonian/OregonLive*
Second Place: Naomi Ishisaka, "'You need to make a choice' about Gaza. Last Sunday, 1,700 people did," *The Seattle Times*
Third Place: Andrew Binion, "What a trip across Canada by thumb and rail taught me," *The Seattle Times*

Editorial & Commentary – Large

First Place: Craig Brown, "In Our View: County charter races warrant scrutiny," "In Our View: Vancouver, Camas projects on our wish list," and "In Our View: Affordability is top issue for 2026 Legislature," *The Columbian*
Judge's comments: Former Speaker of the House Tip O'Neill noted, "All politics is local." Both of your entries are excellent, but I'll go with your opinions about local politics which are most meaningful for your readership.
Second Place: Colleen Keller, "In Our View: More taxes wrong way to rectify Wash. budget," "In Our View: Feds' double-standard at work against our state" and "In Our View: Washington must brace for future budget hits," *The Columbian*

Editorial & Commentary – Medium

First Place: Vivian McCall, "It's All About the Dick," *The Stranger*
Second Place: Penny Rosenberg, "'Do no harm.' Long live the harm," The lessons pirates have for us about the Trump administration" and "WWTID, What would the innkeeper do?", *Albany Democrat-Herald/Corvallis Gazette-Times*
Third Place: Nicole Vulcan, Aaron Switzer, "Supportive Housing is a Lifeline. The Public Deserves Strong Oversight of How It's Going," "Chill Out, They're on an E-Bike," "With Home Fire Prevention Efforts, Expect a Future of Patchwork Regulations," *Bend Source Weekly*

Editorial & Commentary – Small

First Place: Alex Brown, "The Fish That Climbed a Mountain," *Longreads*

Second Place: Marcus Harrison Green, "What This Mayoral Election Owes 'Black Seattle,'" *South Seattle Emerald*
Third Place: Andrew McKean, "Why aren't hunters and environmentalists better allies?" *Columbia Insight*

Editorial & Commentary – Magazine

First Place: Gregory Scruggs, *Monocle*
Judge's comments: Clever and insightful commentary about Alaska's lack of facilities to host international dignitaries, training F-15 pilots in Idaho and problems with the Boeing 787 Dreamliner commercial jet... all topics of interest in the northwestern United States.
Second Place: Blake Peterson, "Movie Love" *Premier Media Group*
Judge's comments: Detailed "double feature" movie reviews.

Education Reporting – Extra Large

First Place: Claire Bryan, Sharon Lurye, Carly Flandro, Jackie Valley, "Schools use AI to monitor kids, hoping to prevent violence. Our investigation found security risks," *The Associated Press*
Judge's comments: Very well-done.
Second Place: Julia Silverman, "Teachers are missing more school than ever. Their bosses don't want to talk about it,"*The Oregonian/OregonLive*
Third Place: Hillary Borrud, "She alleged discrimination. 5 years later, why isn't Oregon done with its investigation?"*The Oregonian/OregonLive*

Education Reporting – Large

First Place: Brianna Murschel, Becca Robbins, "Hudson's Bay students walk out," "District releases letters documenting teacher's behavior with students" and "Probes find school missed 'red flags,'" *The Columbian*
Judge's comments: As reported, one of the signs carried by a student during a protest told the whole story: "Your inaction is our outrage." The inaction of school officials following allegations of sexual assault witnessed by a custodian against a teacher was outrageous. It is also outrageous that the principal and assistant principal did not lose their jobs!
Second Place: Becca Savransky, "Special education in Idaho," *Idaho Statesman*
Judge's comments: Excellent reporting on the lack of services for students with disabilities in Idaho. Some districts try to provide services; others clearly do not. Only 12% of Idaho students receive special education services... lowest in the country.
Third Place: Holly Bartholomew, "'This community is not the enemy': Hillsboro teachers form neighborhood ICE watch," *Oregon Public Broadcasting*
Judge's comments: When ICE agents arrested the parent of a student at an elementary school with a high percentage of Hispanic students, teachers mobilized to stand watch in the neighborhood around their school before classes began. Was it effective? A teacher stated, "ICE seems to have an aversion to the teachers." Symbolically, their action had a positive effect on the community.

Education Reporting – Medium

First Place: Moe Clark, "Teacher sexual misconduct in Mercer Island," *InvestigateWest*
Second Place: Nicole Girten, "'Connecting the soul to your past': MCPS celebrates second annual bison harvest," *The Missoulian*
Third Place: Charlotte Alden, "A 19-year-old unseated a Mount Vernon School Board incumbent. Inside his campaign,"*Cascadia Daily News*

Education Reporting – Small

First Place: Tom Henderson, "The (journalism) kids are alright," *Street Roots*
Judge's comments: Wonderful and inspirational article about the accomplishments of high school students upholding the highest ideals of journalism. When many schools are dropping newspapers, these schools are raising them to another level.
Second Place: Alex Baumhardt, "Oregon's governor made a deal with Nvidia to get AI education in Oregon schools. What does it mean?" *Oregon Capital Chronicle*
Judge's comments: Excellent article about the difficulty getting answers to questions regarding the AI agreement entered by the Oregon Department of Education with Nvidia. Bottom line: There were many more questions than answers.
Third Place: Jordan Gonzalez, "Cashmere senior sues school district over valedictorian eligibility," *NCWLIFE-TV*
Judge's comments: Interesting situation involving the concept of valedictorian. Student felt she had met the criteria, but school disagreed. Matter went to court and judge agreed with the student.

Environment & Natural Disaster Reporting – Extra Large

First Place: Lynda V. Mapes, Erika Schultz, Fiona Martin, Lauren Frohne, "Columbia River Reckoning," *The Seattle Times*
Second Place: Conrad Swanson, "The desiccation of Washington's fruit basket," *The Seattle Times*
Third Place: Amanda Zhou, Erika Schultz, "Will flooding force Seattle's South Park residents to leave?" *The Seattle Times*

Environment & Natural Disaster Reporting – Large

First Place: Brandon Block, "WA families struggle to rebuild after utility-sparked wildfires," *Cascade PBS*
Judge's comments: Superb storytelling. Grabs you from the very first line and keeps you reading until the very end. It's human interest, news, disaster and environmental reporting all rolled into one, with drama and emotion to complement the main thrust.
Second Place: Kevin Fixler, Ian Max Stevenson, "$13 billion in Idaho gold. A mineral critical to U.S. defense. And fresh fears for salmon," *Idaho Statesman*

Judge's comments: This in-depth investigative report is incredibly well researched, covers both sides of a very controversial issue with balance (while at the same time pointing out the pros and cons offered by both sides). Last but not least, it makes a somewhat complicated story/issue a lot easier to understand.
Third Place: Scott Hewitt, "Are there salmon in Salmon Creek?,'" *The Columbian*
Judge's comments: Excellent blend of historical research and timely current reporting, plus good photos and a map that help explain the story, and even a surprise (someone released their pet alligator in Salmon Creek?). It reads like the life story of a stream that's had its up and downs but seems to be on the road to recovery now despite continuing barriers that must be overcome.

Environment & Natural Disaster Reporting – Medium

First Place: Alex Brown, "Coverage of immigration raid at Bear Gulch fire," *Stateline*
Second Place: Ashli Blow, "What's Under Pre's Trail?" *Lookout Eugene-Springfield*
Third Place: Annette Cary, "Drawdown,'" *Eugene Weekly*

Environment & Natural Disaster Reporting – Small

First Place: Will Yurman, "The Disappearing Dunes," *West of the Tunnel*
Judge's comments: Excellent piece, fantastic accompanying photographs. I really enjoyed reading this.
Second Place: Jadenne Radoc Cabahug, "As Air Pollution Rises, Local Programs Help South Seattle Families Breathe Easier,'" *South Seattle Emerald*
Judge's comments: This is both an informative and touching story.

Feature (Hard News) – Extra Large

First Place: Claire Bryan, The Seattle Times and Sharon Lurye, The Associated Press, "Student privacy vs. safety: The AI surveillance dilemma in WA schools," *The Seattle Times and the Associated Press*
Judge's comments: Well done. A great look at the Ai surveillance and how it affects children in school and gives insight to what many students' deal with in today's society.
Second Place: Nina Shapiro, "As travel ban begins, WA Afghan immigrant races to reunite with family," *The Seattle Times*
Judge's comments: Excellent story, great outcome, truly a race of time.
Third Place: Daniel Beekman, "Seattle's history was defined by the waterfront. What about today?" *The Seattle Times*
Judge's comments: Wonderful, interesting story on how Seattle's waterfront became, and still today is a vital part of how the history of the city's waterfront has always been a part of its success, but not without costs to the native and settlers who built this magnificent center of trade.

Feature (Hard News) – Large

First Place: Farah Eltohamy, "Washington's immigrant rights orgs mobilize amid deportation push," *Cascade PBS*
Second Place: Monica Carrillo-Casas, "'They thought they were living the American dream': ICE arrest of Othello woman rattles community as teen son is left to run family's food truck," *The Spokesman-Review*

Feature (Hard News) – Medium

Judge's overall comments: One of the toughest categories. All deserving an award. Glad so many are having courage to report the difficult stories!
First Place: Peter Talbot, "Long-distance gaming romance ends in deaths," *Tacoma News Tribune*
Judge's comments: This is becoming a widespread phenomena and needs to be discussed. Bravo!
Second Place: Kelsey Turner, "She was raped and relentlessly demanded answers — until the city took her to court for harassment," *InvestigateWest*
Judge's comments: A tough subject no wants to discuss. Been going on in the world, thanks for being brave and speaking up.
Third Place: Elizabeth Hayes, "Raising the Alarm," *Portland Business Journal*
Judge's comments: Great insight!

Feature (Hard News) – Small

First Place: Alex Brown, "The Fish That Climbed a Mountain," *Longreads*
Judge's comments: Beautifully constructed, rich with detail but never weighed down by the information presented. This is first person reporting at its finest.
Second Place: Nika Bartoo-Smith, "'He Didn't Deserve What Happened:' Community, Family of Madras Man Killed by Police Speak Out," *Underscore*
Judge's comments: Balanced reporting on a troubling reality and vitally important topic.
Third Place: Alex Garland, "How Human Composting in SoDo Challenges Class-Based Death Care," *South Seattle Emerald*
Judge's comments: Fascinating look at an issue that affects us all without exception: death.

Feature (Soft News) – Extra Large

First Place: Jackie Varriano, "WA ranchers deeply love their cattle, from birth to burger," *The Seattle Times*
Judge's comments: What a fun story. Really enjoyed the tale of this rancher and the care he takes with his herd, and how that all translated into better beer. Great headline, too.
Second Place: Jamie Hale, "How one tribe's 'flower house' is re-seeding Oregon with native plants," *The Oregonian/OregonLive*
Third Place: Moira Macdonald, "Seattle's Century Ballroom marks the end of an era, a new one to come," *The Seattle Times*

Feature (Soft News) – Large

First Place: Mia Ryder-Marks, "Turning grief into purpose," *The Columbian*
Judge's comments: Nicely done. The details were both lovely and heartbreaking. The writer painted a complete picture of this woman and her grief.
Second Place: Brianna Murschel, "Parallel paths: Mother, son with autism learn to navigate world, strive to raise awareness," *The Columbian*
Judge's comments: It's hard not to feel as if you're along for the road trip in this well-written feature. There are good sidebars included throughout the story. It's a fun story to read.
Third Place: Josh Cohen, "On this show, Seattle's City Council is a bunch of sock puppets," *Cascade PBS*

Feature (Soft News) – Medium

Judge's overall comments: Some excellent writing and reporting! A few pieces made you want to meet the subjects and see them in action. Only three winners in this category... officially. But several stories were very close behind. Congratulations to all!
First Place: Michael Ambrose, "Trout Lake caters to surging demand of Pacific Crest Trail thru-hikers,'" *Yakima Herald-Republic*
Judge's comments: Outstanding writing on a story that many others would have passed by!
The author paints picture after picture to bring it all to life.
Second Place: Annie Aguiar, "Timothy and Siena go to the Fair," *Lookout Eugene-Springfield*
Judge's comments: Very sensitively written with a perfect collection of photos! Thought-provoking.
Third Place: Cody Mann, "Swept to sea by sneaker wave, Corvallis woman remembered as mother, artist, teacher,"*Albany Democrat-Herald/Corvallis Gazette-Times*
Judge's comments: A tragedy that was told with empathy and tenderness.

Feature (Soft News) – Small

First Place: Julia Shumway, "Oregon Capitol honors late Senate President Peter Courtney, state's longest-serving lawmaker," *Oregon Capital Chronicle*
Judge's comments: Beautiful tribute to the beloved leader of the Oregon State Senate. In this day of crippling political acrimony, Oregon Democrats and Republicans agreed that Peter Courtney (a Democrat) was the person to resolve gridlock. Motivated by public service, he was described as "compassionate and cantankerous." That is a rare combination. R.I.P. Peter Courtney.
Second Place: Janey Wong, "Welcome to Portland's Kitchen," *Portland Mercury*
Judge's comments: Clear and concise reporting about Portland's long awaited James Beard Public Market. This venue will become a major point of interest for Portland residents and visitors when it finally opens.

Feature (Soft News) – Magazine

First Place: Adriana Janovich "The constant diarist," *Washington State Magazine*
Judge's comments: Wonderful off-beat story about Robert W. Shields, who wrote what is "largely considered the world's most voluminous diary," He didn't have time to read his own infinitely detailed journal, because he was too busy chronicling the next day's pages. Was Mr. Shields the most boring man in the world or was he a savant of the mundane? One thing is certain, his lifetime's obsession filled a lot of cardboard boxes which can be found in the library at Washington State University. Has anyone ever attempted to read the 37 million words that fill his diary?
Second Place: Adriana Janovich, "And the ladies of the Pullman club," *Washington State Magazine*
Judge's comments: Congratulations to the impressive ladies of the Pullman Fortnightly Club, This elegant history should be required reading for modern feminists who believe the discovery of women can be traced back to the 1970s. The members of the PFC continue to maintain the high standards and ideals of their foremothers who began the literary group in the nineteenth century.
Third Place: Blake Peterson, "'It's Really Important to Us to Bring That Female Perspective': Inside Emergence Films' Mission to Support Women Filmmakers," *Premier Media Group*
Judge's comments: An upbeat story about young women making an impact in the film industry... the photo tells it all!

Federal Impact Reporting – Extra Large

First Place: Alexandra Yoon-Hendricks, Nina Shapiro, Dan Beekman, Kai Uyehara, "Refugees approved to resettle in WA stranded after Trump cancels travel," *The Seattle Times*
Second Place: Nina Shapiro, "Impact of Immigration Crackdown on Washington," *The Seattle Times*
Third Place: Isabella Breda, "Federal cuts hammer Seattle fisheries office," *The Seattle Times*

Federal Impact Reporting – Large

First Place: Jenna Kunze, Marc Lester, "They can't go home. They can't stay. What lies ahead for Ukrainian refugees in Delta Junction?" *Anchorage Daily News*
Judge's comments: Excellent story of a Ukrainian community in Delta Junction, and the obstacles they face in a continuously changing administration as they try to reinvent their lives in America.
Second Place: Orion Donovan Smith, "Chief VA watchdog who helped expose flawed computer system in Spokane speaks out after being fired by Trump," *The Spokesman-Review*
Judge's comments: Excellent coverage of local VA inspector general without consideration of his evidence that its electronic health record system was harming patients.

Third Place: Stephen Howie, Liz Brazile, "How far could Trump's NIH funding cuts set medical innovation back? By decades, UW researchers warn," *KUOW*
Judge's comments: A well covered story on the impacts of the current administration's funding cuts on Alzheimer's research, and the irreparable damage it incurs in Seattle and nationwide.

Federal Impact Reporting – Medium

First Place: Elliott Almond, "Federal moves threaten North Cascades National Park's pack mules program," *Cascadia Daily News*
Second Place: Annie Todd, Risa Schnebly, Sophia Gates, Santiago Ochoa, "Federal impact in Whatcom, Skagit counties," *Cascadia Daily News*
Third Place: Joseph T. O'Connor, Amanda Eggerte, "'A cascading effect': Forest Service, Park Service workers who lost jobs amid mass layoffs explain rippling fallout," *Mountain Journal*

Federal Impact Reporting – Small

First Place: Alex Baumhardt, "Fears over Columbia Basin dams, hydroelectricity grow as agencies lose hundreds of employees" *Oregon Capital Chronicle*
Judge's comments: Very well researched and written. Writing was clear and the story had an excellent flow and conclusion.
Second Place: Kelcie Moseley-Morris, "Cervical cancer could be eradicated, experts say. But not with Medicaid cuts and anti-vax politics," *Idaho Capital Sun*
Judge's comments: Excellent piece on an issue that is not getting enough coverage.
Third Place: Nika Bartoo-Smith, Luna Reyna, Jarrette Werk, "Impacts of ICE on Indigenous Communities" *Underscore*
Judge's comments: Important voices being showcased. Well written.

Government & Politics Reporting – Extra Large

First Place: Shane Dixon Kavanaugh, "A top Portland political aide took in a homeless woman. He abandoned her at a state park days later," *The Oregonian/OregonLive*
Judge's comments: Outstanding journalism that asks the hard questions and truly holds the powerful accountable.
Second Place: Jamie Goldberg, "How Washington County sewer officials scored annual Hawaii trips and 5-star lodging," *The Oregonian/OregonLive*
Judge's comments: Fascinating analysis of questionable spending by an 'under-the-radar' agency.
Third Place: Daniel Beekman, "Trump shadow hangs over race in one of WA's most purple districts," *The Seattle Times*

Government & Politics Reporting – Large

First Place: Dirk VanderHart, "As 'placeholder' bills surge in Oregon, what you see isn't always what you get," *Oregon Public Broadcasting*

Judge's comments: Illuminating and thorough reporting on a statewide practice that's shocking in its lack of transparency and fairness.
Second Place: Mai Hoang, "How a $22M judgment against Cle Elum pushed the city to bankruptcy," *Cascade PBS*
Judge's comments: The problems of one small town may not draw much attention, but this detailed and insightful reporting explains why it should matter to everyone.
Third Place: Alex Zielinski, "The state of Portland's homelessness crisis, as mayor's critical deadline passes," *Oregon Public Broadcasting*
Judge's comments: A thorough job of reporting on a vexing problem faced by too many cities.

Government & Politics Reporting – Medium

First Place: Isaac Stone Simonelli, "Detective alleges co-worker made 'disgusting' AI video of her, shared around Sheriff's Office," *Cascadia Daily News*
Judge's comments: A clear view into a modern problem
Second Place: Isaac Stone Simonelli, "Secret relationship in prosecutor's office fueled allegations of favoritism and mismanagement," *Cascadia Daily News*
Third Place: Annie Todd, Julia Tellman, "Dripping sewage, no privacy and makeshift workspaces: Sheriff's office asks county for new office," *Cascadia Daily News*.

Government & Politics Reporting – Small

First Place: Mia Maldonado, "Some GOP constituents call him a RINO. Other Oregonians are starting to trust him,"*Oregon Capital Chronicle*
Judge's comments: The entries in this category displayed deep curiosity and resourcefulness in reporting on the workings of government. The winning entry provides a fascinating profile of an elected official who defies categorization.
Second Place: Alex Baumhardt, "State Rep. Bobby Levy weighs in on bills close to family business while lawmakers weigh regulations," *Oregon Capital Chronicle*
Third Place: K. Rambo, "Portland said it was investing in homeless people's safety. Deaths have skyrocketed," *Street Roots*

Government & Politics Reporting – Magazine

First Place: John Stearns, "JBLM is More Than Just a Fighting Force," *Premier Media Group/South Sound Business*
Judge's comments: Detailed article about the economic impact of a military base in terms of employment for local residents.

Health Reporting – Extra Large

First Place: Kristine de Leon, "Portland's ICE protests at their doorstep," *The Oregonian/OregonLive*
Judge's comments: Very interesting take on ICE protests.
Second Place: Jayati Ramakrishnan, "Involuntary Treatment in Washington,"

The Seattle Times
Judge's comments: Good story that illustrates the strains on all levels of the behavioral health system.
Third Place: Lillian Mongeau Hughes, "How one Portland police unit helps mentally ill people bridge 'two nearly broken systems,'" *The Oregonian/OregonLive*

Health Reporting – Large

First Place: Brianna Murschel, "Looking for a location for Luke," *The Columbian*
Second Place: Iris Samuels, "'Nothing you can do except stand here': Public assistance office keeps Alaskans waiting,"*Anchorage Daily News*
Third Place: Sarah Cutler, "'People are going to die': Idahoans fear spike in insurance costs," *Idaho Statesman*

Health Reporting – Medium

Judge's overall comments: Wow. What a collection of great journalism. These remarkable stories captured the tumult, fear and consequences of a changing health care landscape that is leaving the nation's most vulnerable at greater risk for a higher profit. Bravo!
First Place: Kelsey Turner, "Under Idaho's abortion ban, a family confronts life-or-death reality — and a crisis of faith,"*InvestigateWest*
Judge's comments: An exceptionally well-written story. Perfect tone.
Second Place: Samantha Wohlfeil, "Desperate for Relief," *Inlander*
Judge's comments: What a horrific experience this woman went through. Kudos to the reporter for telling the story in a respectful and caring manner
Third Place: Anthony Effinger, "Operation: Merger," *Willamette Week*
Judge's comments: Nicely done.

Health Reporting – Small

First Place: Jeremiah Hayden, "Portland's emergency systems may leave homeless residents vulnerable to extreme weather," *Street Roots*
Judge's comments: A skillfully written story. Using the death of a homeless man in a snowstorm to illustrate a flawed system was provoking and powerful.
Second Place: K. Rambo, "Portland said it was investing in homeless people's safety. Deaths have skyrocketed," *Street Roots/ProPublica*
Judge's comments: Fascinating read. Kudos for showing how a policy change -- focusing on clearing encampments rather than creating more permanent housing -- led to a marked increase in homeless deaths. Stunning to see how the numbers were greater than LA and San Diego!

Investigative Reporting – Extra Large

First Place: Rebecca Moss, "Uncommitted," *The Seattle Times*
Judge's comments: The clear winner in a category where every entry demonstrated exemplary work. The scope of this investigation is nothing short of phenomenal. The journalists here did not rest until their questions were

answered. Their work yielded significant reforms. This is the best of our profession.
Second Place: Claire Bryan, Sharon Lurye, Carly Flandro, Jackie Valley, "Schools use AI to monitor kids, hoping to prevent violence. Our investigation found security risks," *The Seattle Times/Associated Press*
Judge's comments: An eye-opening look at risks to student privacy rights and safety created by AI loopholes that resulted in corrective action.
Third Place: Manuel Villa, "WA retirement plans allow pension padding, costing taxpayers millions," *The Seattle Times*
Judge's comments: While the information here doesn't reveal any wrongdoing, it points out systemic unfairness in civil service pension rules

Investigative Reporting – Large

First Place: Katie Campbell, Diana Opong, Liz Brazile, "A Seattle doctor was investigated for fertility fraud,"*KUOW*
Judge's comments: The entries showed a breathtaking range of topics and a high caliber of investigation, images and even data visualization, making this a very difficult contest to judge. Ultimately, the standout entry focused on the highly complex and secretive fertility industry, lifting the curtain to expose a horrifying breach of patient care and disregard for women's fertility choices.
Second Place: Lizz Giordano, "The controversial medical exams that help decide WA workers' comp," *Cascade PBS*
Third Place: Ashley Hiruko, Isolde Raftery, Steve Suo, "Seattle spent millions on hotel rooms to shelter unhoused people. Then it stopped filling them," *KUOW*

Investigative Reporting – Medium

First Place: Whitney Bryen, Wilson Criscione, "Guarded by Predators," *InvestigateWest*
Judge's comments: Excellent in-depth coverage about a subject rarely discussed.
Second Place: Owen Racer, "County terminates health department staffer accused of domestic violence weeks after a CDN investigation into 17 months of paid leave," *Cascadia Daily News*
Judge's comments: Investigative reporting pays off. Especially excellent investigative reporting.
Third Place: Penny Rosenberg, "Albany property manager Watson accused of holding onto rents," *Albany Democrat-Herald/Corvallis Gazette-Times*
Judge's comments: Excellent in-depth coverage of dubious business practices.

Investigative Reporting – Small

First Place: James Neff, Khushboo Rathore, "Oregon Schools: What Went Wrong," *Oregon Journalism Project*
Second Place: K. Rambo, "Portland said it was investing in homeless people's safety. Deaths have skyrocketed," *Street Roots/ProPublica*
Third Place: James Neff, "A Nice Place to Visit," *Oregon Journalism Project*

LGBTQ+ Equity Reporting – Extra Large

First Place: Bill Oram, "Booed for winning a state title, this Oregon teen now just wants a safe place to run," *The Oregonian/OregonLive*
Second Place: Daniel Beekman, "Eastside council member and candidate receive hateful mail, speak out," *The Seattle Times*

LGBTQ+ Equity Reporting – Large

First Place: Josh Cohen, "Despite federal ruling, trans Seattleites can't update passports," *Cascade PBS*
Second Place: Ian Max Stevenson, "Gay marriage in Idaho," *Idaho Statesman*
Third Place: Brianna Murschel, "State: District discriminates against students," "La Center schools appeal state's finding of discrimination" and "Pronoun policy supporters and opponents flock to La Center board meeting," *The Columbian*

LGBTQ+ Equity Reporting – Medium

First Place: Emma J Nelson, "Housing a Rainbow," *Eugene Weekly*
Second Place: Becca Most, "'Not going to give up,'" *Tacoma News Tribune*
Third Place: Tom Henderson, "A Pride month without a Pride festival in Corvallis?," *Albany Democrat-Herald/Corvallis Gazette-Times*

LGBTQ+ Equity Reporting – Small

First Place: Mark Van Streefkerk, "Atasha Manila, the 'OG Drag Queen' of Beacon Hill, Won't Let Hate Win," *South Seattle Emerald*
Second Place: Ty Vinson, "Tumwater schools trans athletes controversy" *The Olympian*
Third Place: Cameron Martinez, "Skagit County teen caught up in politics over gender-affirming medical care," *Skagit Valley Herald*

LGBTQ+ Equity Reporting – Magazine

First Place: Alex Garland, "Trans community and allies rally in Seattle against rising violence and political threats," *Seattle Gay News*
Second Place: Madison Jones, "Jake's On 4th: De-Queering the Birdcage," *Seattle Gay News*

Poverty & Homelessness Reporting – Extra Large

First Place: Lillian Mongeau Hughes, "2,000 Portland area residents stare down homelessness while waiting for tardy Oregon Health Plan rent checks," *The Oregonian/OregonLive*
Judge's comments: First rate reporting backed up not merely with data but with first person interviews humanizing the scope of the problem. The writing conveys the sense of urgency and despair with the pacing of a thriller.
Second Place: Daniel Beekman, "Hope 'N Wellness series," *The Seattle Times*
Judge's comments: Too often situations like the one faced like Hope 'N Wellness get a one and done article. The reporter stuck with story and saw it through to its conclusion. Each installment provided the foundational information

in a succinct way even if the reader had missed the prior articles. The first person interviews created a rich tapestry.

Poverty & Homelessness Reporting – Large

First Place: Mia Ryder-Marks, "'Setting people up for failure'," *The Columbian*
Judge's comments: An evenhanded look at an organization struggling to address a difficult societal issue.
Second Place: Bryce Dole, "'I just wanna go home': In aging Oregon, older and vulnerable adults struggle to get by,"*Oregon Public Broadcasting*
Judge's comments: Well-researched and thoughtful look at an aspect of homelessness being overlooked to everyone's peril.

Poverty & Homelessness Reporting – Medium

First Place: Erin Sellers, "Jordin v. Brayman: Spokane's first right-to-counsel eviction trial by jury," *Range Media*
Judge's comments: The article reads like high level fiction, but it is built on a foundation of facts and due diligence. Outstanding work and a fascinating situation.
Second Place: Erin Sellers, "'It's Hard to Really Call it a Study,'" *Range Media*
Judge's comments: This article illustrates the need to avoid accepting "studies" at face value. It would have been easy to simply blast it as partisan, but the reporter makes the case through fact based sourcing. Simply excellent work that reminds me to question authority.
Judge's additional comments: *If permitted, there is so much good work in this category that I recommend two honorable mentions.*

- *"Food Insecurity," Lauren Kessler, Lookout Eugene-Springfield*
- *"The 10-Year Emergency," Shauna De La Rosa, Puget Sound Business Journal*

Poverty & Homelessness Reporting – Small

First Place: Guy Oron, "What happens after city officials take everything you own?," *Real Change*
Judge's comments: Too often, the average citizen doesn't see the humanity behind homelessness statistics and policies. This article lets the human experience drive the narrative, brilliantly supported by the factual data. Outstanding.
Second Place: Will Yurman, "Unlivable," *West of the Tunnel*
Judge's comments: Among so many good entries, it was the delicate and empathetic quality of the writing that made this entry stand out. Any article can be crammed with facts... but it is the human stories we remember and that shape our understanding.

Racial Equity Reporting – Extra Large

First Place: Fedor Zarkhin, "'I am the offspring,'" *The Oregonian/OregonLive*
Judge's comments: Excellent story, heartbreaking and heartwarming

Second Place: Jamie Hale, "'An incredible privilege and a daunting task': Oregon tribe harvests beached whale for the first time in generations," *The Oregonian/OregonLive*
Judge's comments: Great story on how the history of the tribe came to work in the present.
Third Place: Alexandra Yoon-Hendricks, "How a Seattle hospital erased racial disparity in unnecessary C-sections," *The Seattle Times*

Racial Equity Reporting – Large

First Place: Sally Krutzig, Carolyn Komatsoulis, "ICE raid at Idaho horsetrack," *Idaho Statesman*
Judge's comments: Congratulations to the Statesman team for bringing this incident to light, sticking with it, digging in and illuminating what happened for its readers and citizens.
Second Place: Winston Szeto, Anna Lueck, Jenn Chávez, Mia Estrada, "'A Place of Rest' provides more than delicious meals. It preserves Japanese American traditions and builds intergenerational bonds in Portland," *Oregon Public Broadcasting*
Judge's comments: What a wonderful taste of culture and community! While there are many issues of racial equity to cover, it is equally vital to share uplifting and positive efforts as well.
Third Place: Brianna Murschel, "'Do I step in?'; ¿"DEBERÍA INTERVENIR?"," *The Columbian*
Judge's comments: It's appalling so little has been done by the educational leadership to address this issue, and then doubled down on the problem by leaning on students.

Racial Equity Reporting – Medium

First Place: Alex Brown, "For Indian Country, federal cuts decimate core tribal programs," *Stateline*
Judge's comments: Bringing the truth to light.
Second Place: Wendy Culverwell, Eric Rosane, "Food truck deported after routine immigration appointment," *Tri-City Herald*
Judge's comments: Great commentary on a sad situation and the struggles facing many.
Third Place: Seira Kitigawa, "Thriving Under Fear," *Eugene Weekly*
Judge's comments: Great always to see solutions!

Racial Equity Reporting – Small

First Place: Luna Reyna, "Indigenous Housing Inequities in Washington," *Underscore*
Judge's comments: Brilliant and balanced reporting on a complicated, complex issue.
Second Place: Jeremiah Hayden, Diego Diaz, Grace Mangali, "Oregonians organize against ICE," *Street Roots*
Judge's comments: Dedicated, driven reporting on the realities of immigration

enforcement under the current administration through the stories of individuals affected by it.
Third Place: Yuko Kodama, "South End Life: Communities of Color Explore Their Relationship With Water, Learn to Swim," *Sound Publishing*
Judge's comments: This article shines with humanity and illuminates an inequity about a topic – learning to swim – far too many people of color experience, and far too many people are completely ignorant about.

Review – Extra Large

First Place: Bethany Jean Clement, "Bethany Jean Clement unflinchingly reviews Canlis, Seattle's most famous restaurant," *The Seattle Times*
Judge's comments: The existence of restaurant criticism is itself under criticism, but critical feedback given honestly and kindly with expert context provided is a valuable journalistic outlet that yes, does tend to inspire a flurry of reactions, but in an organic way rather than a rage-bait-fueled blast for the sake of blasting. This is a great example of a well thought out, well written review that provides direct examples of what went wrong, what felt right, and where consumers can still find something enjoyable as well as where the restaurateurs can find tangible ways to improve (should they so choose). It takes guts to be an honest critic nowadays and this is an excellent example of how to do it with historical context, genuine honesty, expert commentary, and still being sure to mention high points to avoid making it a complete roast.
Second Place: Michael Russell, "At new bistro L'Echelle, a tribute to Naomi Pomeroy looks a lot like Portland's best new restaurant," *The Oregonian/OregonLive*
Judge's comments: The intro is very clever – how many restaurants DO count carrots as essential? Right away, this piece engages the reader and while the tone is mostly positive, it's always honest and doesn't annoyingly simper with praise. The descriptive visuals really make the dishes pop off the page. The sentences flow in a very fluid, narrative cadence, and by the end you don't realize how much essential information the writer has packed into it, because it's just been a pleasure to read.

Review – Large

First Place: Rachel Pinsky, "Paul's is back with updated favorites," *The Columbian*
Judge's comments: If I'm ever in Vancouver, Washington, I'll be dining at Paul's.

Review – Medium

First Place: Kristine Sherred, Liesbeth Powers, "TNT food writer ate at a lot of Pierce County burger stands. Here are her faves," *Tacoma News Tribune*
Judge's comments: Who doesn't love burger joint reviews? Who cares about the DASH diet, the Sirtfood diet and Paleo diet reviews? They're no fun. I especially liked the ratings for "Top Three Burgers Under $10" and "Top Three burgers Over $10" in Pierce County. Knowing the best burger joints in your area

is a required survival skill.
Second Place: Chase Hutchinson, "Train Dreams is a transcendent, life-altering work of art and one of the best films ever shot in Washington," *Inlander*
Judge's comments: A beautifully crafted and highly personalized movie review. What better compliment can be given this wonderful review than to state it convinced me to watch "Train Dreams."

Review – Small

First Place: Nolan Parker, "Album Review: The Barbaras Take Us For A Ride," *Portland Mercury*
Judge's comments: The Barbaras don't look like "boob flashers," but the reviewer makes them sound like a lot of fun. The humorous and off-key writing style would tempt me to catch their act. They just don't look as sassy as purported...
Second Place: Jenn Ngeth, "Unapologetic Cambodian Food: Khmer-Style Restaurant Doesn't Tone Down Its Roots for Anyone," *South Seattle Emerald*
Judge's comments: This detailed restaurant review is a testimony of love. Many dishes are discussed and they all sound good.

Review – Magazine

First Place: Sara Michelle Fetters, Richard Isaac, "Tina Romero digs up a fabulously killer zombie comedy with Queens of the Dead," *Seattle Gay News*

Series – Extra Large

First Place: Matthew Kish, "Nike's Starfish scandal," *The Oregonian/OregonLive*
Judge's comments: A major accomplishment in detailed investigative reporting. For years, Nike gave lip service to correcting numerous complaints of sexual harassment and inequity in the workplace and then accused the newspaper of wanting only to embarrass the accusers and accused with prurient intent. If anything, this report did not sensationalize outrageous behavior by top Nike executives. In the finest tradition of objectivity and impartiality in journalism, this series is highly deserving of first place honors.
Second Place: Maxine Bernstein, "Fatal error," *The Oregonian/OregonLive*
Judge's comments: A well-written and tragic story of a police mistake with fatal consequences. Because of the error, it was a difficult story to explain. The reporter put the pieces together to make it understandable. A fine example of excellence in journalism.

Series – Large

First Place: Nick Gibson, "Return to Space series," *The Spokesman-Review*
Judge's comments: Great coverage on a local legend.
Second Place: Kevin Fixler, "Bryan Kohberger case profiles," *Idaho Statesman*
Judge's comments: Interesting look at the local court system through the eyes of the prosecutor, the defense attorney, and the judge. Well done.

Third Place: Orion Donovan Smith, "Baumgartner's first year in office," *The Spokesman-Review*
Judge's comments: Great continuing coverage of an elected representative's first year in office.

Series – Medium

First Place: Abbey McDonald, "Sentenced to the Sidewalk," *Salem Reporter*
Second Place: Erin Sellers, "The State of Surveillance in Spokane," *Range Media*
Third Place: Christian Wihtol, "Bricks $ Mortar Unveils Amazon," *Eugene Weekly*

Sports Column – Extra Large

First Place: Bill Oram, "If allegations prove true, we are all victims of Chauncey Billups' fraud," *The Oregonian/OregonLive*
Judge's comments: The columnist finds himself confronting a homegrown sports scandal in the midst of his community gaining nationwide attention. He channels the anger, outrage, and disappointment of the fans, and his neighbors dealing with a black mark against Portland with the right tone grounded in what is known.

Sports Column – Large

First Place: Dave Boling, *'It's really, really, really hard': Gonzaga's NCAA Tournament run, often taken for granted, built on more than cluck; "*Even through loss, this Gonzaga women's team embodied the Fortier spirit;" WSU football coach Jimmy Rogers gets to the point, he's in the business of proving people wrong,*"The Spokesman-Review*
Judge's comments: The reporter's longevity is a rare asset in modern journalism, but it wouldn't mean as much without the humanity richly expressed in these exquisitely written columns full of small details that add up. A breeze and a pleasure to read.
Second Place: Tim Martinez, "Wiffle ball for Tony," "Long road to recovery was worth it" and "Basketball travels land Union's Haywood at Oregon," *The Columbian*
Judge's comments: This columnist has carved out a wonderful niche profiling high school sports figures and their stories, even posthumously. Clearly he is able to engage and gain the trust of his subjects.

Sports Column – Medium

First Place: Les Gehrett, "Oregon State put Trent Bray in position to fail," "Oregon State football: What led to the firing of Trent Bray," "To remain relevant on the national stage, Oregon State needs another trip to Omaha,"*Albany Democrat-Herald/Corvallis Gazette-Times*
Judge's comments: Knowledgeable and leads the reader through the topic without frills, fuss, or self-indulgence.

Second Place: Steve Gress, “Beavers make accomplishing rare feat look easy in Corvallis Regional,” “Rueck's best coaching job leads Beavers back to NCAA tourney” and “Two regional sites better than four in women's tourney,” *Albany Democrat-Herald/Corvallis Gazette-Times*
Judge's comments: Lots of personality here, sometimes a bit too much.

Sports Column – Small

First Place: Jamey Vinnick, "Jamey Vinnick: Up close with the Cougs," *CougFan.com*
Judge's comments: Reading Vinnick's column is like chatting about sports with your smartest friend, and that's a high compliment. Columns can be overwrought with tortured writing. Not this one.

Sports Feature – Extra Large

First Place: Bill Oram, "Rev's return," *The Seattle Times*
Judge's comments: This entry is about everything sports represents about humanity and finding your way through life even in the most difficult situations. What a pleasure to enjoy a unique style of storytelling no AI could ever replace.
Second Place: Ryan Clarke, "'The heartbeat of the deal'," *The Oregonian/OregonLive*
Judge's comments: I nearly had to brush the dust off my shoes after reading this entry full of rich detail.

Sports Feature – Large

First Place: Michael Wright, "Along the 46th parallel: How the Washington constitution swung a hunting case near the Washington-Oregon border," *The Spokesman-Review*
Judge's comments: Not a traditional sports feature topic. Compliments to the reporter for finding and covering this fascinating and tricky situation. Even someone like this reviewer who is not conversant with hunting found it to be riveting reading with just enough detail for clarity.
Second Place: Marc Lester, "APU's rebuilt glacier training center is again propelling cross-country skiers toward an Olympic season," *Anchorage Daily News*
Judge's comments: Timely coverage given interest in the Winter Olympics and well written. Although this is a writing competition, the reporter's photos are stunning and make a significant contribution to the article narrative.

Sports Feature – Medium

First Place: Megan Seling, "How to Make a Hockey Team in 205 Days," *The Stranger*
Judge's comments: In-depth story on making progress in women's sports
Second Place: Robert Ohman, "Gonna Fly Now," *Willamette Week*
Third Place: Tyson Alger, "'Just like me growing up': In Junction City, a former Duck finds what he always loved about the game," *Lookout Eugene-Springfield*

Sports Feature – Small

First Place: Steve Witter, "Dennis Hogg, trailblazer in integration of WSU basketball, still going strong," *CougFan.com*
Judge's comments: Wonderful entries. It was difficult to select the best. Dennius Hogg beats Dr. Ed in triple overtime…
Second Place: Steve Witter, "For Dr. Ed Tingstad, sideline fixture at 296-straight Cougar games, Pullman is where the heart is," *CougFan.com*

Sports Reporting – Extra Large

First Place: Mike Rogoway, Maxine Bernstein, Joe Freeman, "Blazers coach Chauncey Billups arrested," *The Oregonian/OregonLive*
Judge's comments: It can be challenging for sports reporters when they must quickly get up to speed as criminal justice reporters, all while balancing the community's interest in sensational accusations. This article successfully made it happen with clarity and fairness, well reported.

Sports Reporting – Large

First Place: Theo Lawson, "Theo Lawson's sports reporting," *The Spokesman-Review*
Judge's comments: Diligent old school reporting and the determination to see this story through to its conclusion. Plenty of details without weighing the story down for the reader.
Second Place: Winston Szeto, Tony Schick, Bradley Parks, Morgan Barnaby, Joey Lovato, "After Trail Blazers' stunning draft, Yang Hansen lands in Portland feeling 'beautiful connection' to the city," *Oregon Public Broadcasting*
Judge's comments: Sparkling writing and such a nice use of interview quotes. The video is a bonus. Yes, this is a writing competition but the visuals matter to the reader.

Sports Reporting – Medium

First Place: Dan Rosenfield, "Cowlitz County rodeo," *The Daily News*
Judge's comments: Solid, knowledgeable coverage of a sport often considered controversial. The reporter acknowledges this range of opinions. He makes it accessible even to nonfans without dumbing things down for knowledgeable readers.
Second Place: Jon Manley, "NIL comes to high school sports," *Tacoma News Tribune*
Judge's comments: This article goes beyond game day coverage to look at a new reality high school athletes are now navigating. I learned something new!

Sports Reporting – Small

First Place: Greg Witter, Barry Bolton, "The death of Dale Ford, a one-time star who reclaimed a derailed life,"*CougFan.com*
Judge's comments: The backstory is amazing but it wouldn't have carried this entry alone without the reporting and writing to convey the many layers to this

story. In the end a story of humanity, humanly told.
Second Place: Alex Bruell, "CHAMPION: Vashon wrestling earns championship, more wins at state," *Vashon-Maury Island Beachcomber*
Judge's comments: The reporter made sure all of the match details are here, but it was beautifully wrapped with the human emotions that drive every athlete and inform their innermost goals.

Technology & Science Reporting – Extra Large

First Place: Mike Rogoway, "Small Oregon county reckons with fallout from data center scandal," *The Oregonian/OregonLive*
Judge's comments: It is the job of journalists to always question authority and uncover the truth
Second Place: Amanda Zhou, "A PNW bird is in mysterious decline. Two Salish Sea islands hold clues," *The Seattle Times*
Judge's comments: Nice science piece.

Technology & Science Reporting – Large

First Place: Nate Sanford, "Washington city officials are using ChatGPT for government work," *Cascade PBS*
Judge's comments: Good story that shows the extent that AI tools are being used by all levels of government
Second Place: John Ryan, Catharine Smith, "Scientists crack the case of the melting sea stars. It only took a decade,"*KUOW*
Judge's comments: Scientific discovery is often imperfect, as this story illustrates
Third Place: Monica Samayoa, "Oregon is digging deep to tap into an uncommon renewable energy source — Super Hot Rocks," *Oregon Public Broadcasting*
Judge's comments: Cool story

Technology & Science Reporting – Medium

First Place: Erin Sellers, "The State of Surveillance in Spokane," *Range Media*
Judge's comments: Exceptional explanatory story on a now ubiquitous surveillance technology: how it works, who uses it and why it's concerning. Bravo!
Second Place: Penny Rosenberg, "Is the winning design in the OSU Dam Proud Day T-shirt contest AI?" *Albany Democrat-Herald/Corvallis Gazette-Times*
Judge's comments: I can't think of a more interesting story to illustrate the creative tension that AI brings to the arts. Nicely done.
Third Place: Katheryn Houghton, "Federal Cuts Ripple Through a Bioscience Hub in Rural Montana," *KFF Health News*
Judge's comments: A good service to readers

Technology & Science Reporting – Small

First Place: Jeremiah Hayden, Jake Thomas, "Portland fights AI rent-fixing,"

Street Roots

GENERAL EXCELLENCE

Writing – Extra Large

First Place: *The Oregonian/OregonLive*
Judge's comments: The journalists of this publication serve their readers with quality reporting.

Writing – Large

First Place: *The Columbian*
Judge's comments: In a close competition, the versatility of the entries including investigative reporting, profiles and features made the difference.
Second Place: *Cascade PBS*
Judge's comments: Each entry features reporting with clarity and efficiency. This is all killer, no filler and something readers value.
Third Place: *Idaho Statesman*
Judge's comments: Dedication to the region's most critical issues — but I would like to see a bit more variety in the submitted entries.

Writing – Medium

First Place: *Albany Democrat-Herald/Corvallis Gazette-Times*
Judge's comments: Overall, this news site is well-balanced with stories from hard news, opinions, community news, covering the many aspects of a local community.
Second Place: *Puget Sound Business Journal*
Judge's comments: Intriguing stories that demonstrate the importance of businesses in the community from large to small businesses.
Third Place: *InvestigateWest*
Judge's comments: InvestigateWest lives up to its mission statement in reporting inequities in the community with data, facts, great interviews, creating compelling and informative news.

Writing – Small

First Place: *Oregon Capital Chronicle*
Second Place: *Portland Mercury*
Third Place: *Capitol Hill Seattle Blog*

Radio – Small

First Place: Emily Schwing, Rashah McChesney, *KYUK Public Media*
Judge's comments: Excellent reporting in all areas. Powerful writing. Amazingly effective use of sound that captured not only what people said but the emotions behind it. This work would be a winner anywhere in the country, even in much larger cities. Well done!

Second Place: Maria Carter, Jane Vaughan, Justin Higginbottom, Roman Battaglia, *Jefferson Public Radio*
Judge's comments: This team did well what journalists should all do. They told very important stories and also made it interesting and compelling to listen to.
Third Place: Ellis Juhlin, Victoria Traxler, Elinor Smith, Austin Amestoy, Aaron Bolton, *Montana Public Radio*
Judge's comments: The use of sound was very well done in these reports, and you can tell the reporters are passionate about the subject matter.

Video – Large

First Place: Tracy Sabo, Matthew Simon, Alaska's News Source Staff, *Alaska's News Source*
Judge's comments: A strong selection of hard news and features, compelling storytelling throughout.

Magazines

First Place: *Inlander Health & Home*
Second Place: *425 Magazine*
Third Place: *South Sound Business*

EVERGREEN STATE A-MARK PRIZES

(Washington only) read more

First Place: Kelsey Turner, "A WA mother had custody of kids and protection from her abuser. Then a guardian ad litem got involved," *InvestigateWest*
Second Place: Rebecca Moss, "Uncommitted," *The Seattle Times*
Third Place: Moe Clark, "Teacher sexual misconduct in Mercer Island," *InvestigateWest*