

68th SoCal Journalism Awards Winners

A. JOURNALISTS OF THE YEAR

A1. PRINT, over 50,000 circulation

Gary Baum, *The Hollywood Reporter*

<https://tinyurl.com/58j7rp5d>

<https://tinyurl.com/ysjsnn5e>

<https://tinyurl.com/468u75c8>

<https://tinyurl.com/4kxw2zjb>

Judges' comment: Using his veteran, terrific knowledge, research, and writing skills for a major Hollywood entertainment magazine, Baum covers its business, politics, and celebrities with a dogged enthusiasm as he is indeed the Print Journalist of the Year for large-circulation print publications.

2nd: Daniel D'Addario, *Variety*

3rd: Michael Idato, *The Sydney Morning Herald*

A2. PRINT under 50,000 circulation

Mark Stefanos, *LA Weekly*

<https://www.laweekly.com/while-fires-rage-angelinos-step-up-to-help/>

<https://www.instagram.com/laweekly/p/DE1O59NxUXO/>

<https://www.laweekly.com/our-favorite-parties-in-los-angeles-2025/>

<https://www.laweekly.com/the-short-stop-celebrates-25-years-of-being-los-angeless-dance-bar/>

Judges' comment: Writing for the LA Weekly on a mix of stories about current events entertainment, or personality profiles – winning four LA Press Club awards this year – Stefano's journalistic skills are outstanding.

2nd: Beau Yarbrough, *Southern California News Group*

3rd: Tabor Brewster, *Beverly Press/Park Labrea News*

A3. TELEVISION JOURNALIST

David Ono, *KABC-TV*

<https://youtu.be/dbo2snvDhJY>

https://youtu.be/TbPy0JIK_pg

<https://youtu.be/UKq1zOVzs9s>

<https://youtu.be/-Xp7LLMm1U0>

Judges' comment: Also picked for the Anchor/Host award this year, Ono and his steady leadership and profiles during the LA wildfires last year elevate his work as he earns the TV Journalist of the Year award.

2nd: Giselle Fernandez, *Spectrum News 1*

3rd: Gene Kang, *KTLA5 News*

A4. AUDIO JOURNALIST

Caroline Feraday, *KCLU Radio*

<https://bit.ly/4rkIhDB>

<https://bit.ly/3LZWd6X>

<https://bit.ly/3Z5ZTai>

<https://bit.ly/4qUtC2g>

Judges' comment: An LA Press Club past winner of awards, Feraday again shows her skills as the Audio Journalist of the Year by receiving six top awards this year.

2nd: Megan Jamerson, *KCRW*

3rd: Susan Valot, *Freelance for KCRW*

A5. ONLINE JOURNALIST, Tied to an Organization

Jeremy Lindenfeld, *Capital & Main*

<https://bit.ly/47mukxf>

<https://bit.ly/4sa1nwM>

<https://bit.ly/4s2zOFU>

<https://bit.ly/4OXIf9B>

Judges' comment: Earning three LA Press Club awards this year, with two of them about immigration and ICE, Lindenfeld earns this top nod for his work with an organization.

2nd: Brian Steinberg, *Variety*

3rd: Alex Weprin, *The Hollywood Reporter*

A6. ONLINE JOURNALIST, Independent/Freelance

Leena Tailor, *The Hollywood Reporter, Spin, Grammy.com*

<https://bit.ly/4n4oLsR>

<http://bit.ly/3JyvQU6>

<https://bit.ly/4rpJUQr>

<https://bit.ly/4rObOmk>

Judges' comment: Tailor earned five LA Press Club awards this year for her work on various topics that showcases her outstanding ability as a freelance online Journalist.

2nd: Lina Lecaro, *Freelance*

3rd: Daniel Guss, *DanielGuss.Substack.com*

A7. ENTERTAINMENT JOURNALIST

Seth Abramovitch, *The Hollywood Reporter*

<https://tinyurl.com/yr6uky4k>

<https://tinyurl.com/376jc6vj>

<https://tinyurl.com/4xjct4dm>

<https://tinyurl.com/4fej2kmt>

Judges' comment: A versatile journalist who won LA Press Club entertainment awards this year, as well as a couple others in government and politics, Abramovitch fits the bill as a well-rounded journalist.

2nd: Lyndsey Parker, *Lyndsanity, Licorice Pizza Records, FLOOD, Gold Derby, Music Connection*

3rd: Brent Lang, *Variety*

A8. SPORTS JOURNALIST

Michael Duarte, NBC

<https://bit.ly/4cwUKzK>

<https://www.nbclosangeles.com/news/sports/brewers-dodgers-nlcs-game-four-2/3793090/>

<https://www.nbclosangeles.com/news/sports/dodgers-blue-jays-world-series-game-seven/3799643/>

Judges' comment: Duarte demonstrates his reportorial ability to cover multiple sports, such as Dodgers games and English soccer, and won a Press Club award this year for his piece on Dodger superstar Ohtani.

2nd: Bill Shaikin, Los Angeles Times

A9. PHOTOJOURNALIST

Ringo Chiu, *Ringo Chiu Photography*

<https://www.ringochiuphotography.com/index/G0000anGw6x1Qnew>

Judges' comment: Chiu's professionalism and terrific photos, such as the top place for Sports Photo that he won this year, wins him this Photojournalist Journalist of the Year award.

2nd: Osceola Refetoff, *PBS SoCal*

3rd: Jill Connelly, *Freelance for De Los, Bloomberg, Associated Press, Reuters, EPA*

A10. VIDEOGRAPHER

Paul Nankivell, *Spectrum News 1*

<https://bit.ly/4ufUfjW>

Judges' comment: As part of the Spectrum News 1 team that has garnered many awards this year, Nankivell adds his expertise to the many compelling stories told.

2nd: Mark Potts, *Los Angeles Times*

3rd: Sandra Stojanovic, *Reuters TV*

B. ALL MEDIA PLATFORMS Print, Radio, Podcast, TV or Online.

B1. CONSUMER NEWS or FEATURE

K.J. Yossman, *Variety*, "BBC Crisis Explained: How the Beloved U.K. Broadcaster Walked Into One of the Worst Scandals in Its 100-Year History — and Where It Goes From Here"

<https://wp.me/pc8uak-1lGxAi>

Judges' comment: It's one thing to know bits and pieces of this scandal, but to see it all laid out and connected was stunning.

2nd: Oliver Milman, *Noema Magazine*, “The Cult of the American Lawn”

3rd: Carrie Arnold, *Noema Magazine*, “How Much Is Your Kidney Worth?”

B2. FAITH/SPIRITUAL REPORTING

Deborah Netburn, *Los Angeles Times*, “Evangelism and Erehwon: They came to L.A. for the Hollywood dream, then shot to Bible stardom”

<https://tinyurl.com/46c3d43k>

Judges’ comment: There were many deserving contestants in this category, but this profile about the explosive rise of Angela Hallilli and Arielle Reitsma of “Girls Gone Bible” fame was a cut above the rest for its rich exploration of what modern-day evangelism looks like in the social media era.

2nd: Anissa Rivera and Sierra van der Brug, *Pasadena Star-News/Los Angeles Daily News*, “At Easter, a Message of Renewal Hits Home Among Fire-Weary Faithful”

3rd: Jeremy Lindenfeld, *Capital & Main*, “Trump’s War on ICE-Fearing Catholics”

B3. TECHNOLOGY REPORTING

Alex Weprin, *The Hollywood Reporter*, “YouTube Just Ate TV. It’s Only Getting Started”

<https://tinyurl.com/5cb4wxb6>

Judges’ comment: A fascinating inside look at YouTube’s ambitions and how they will change what we see on the screen.

2nd: Susan Karlin, *Fast Company*, “The 32-year-old Colorado cowboy driving to the moon—and eventually Mars”

3rd: Joe Zadeh, *Noema Magazine*, “The Shrouded, Sinister History Of The Bulldozer”

B4. TRAVEL REPORTING

Andrew J. Campa, *Los Angeles Times*, “Primm was once an affordable casino mecca for L.A. Now it has become a ghost town.”

<https://bit.ly/40jLSX2>

Judges’ comment: A great read that takes you to a place you’d never go, and that’s just part of the story.

2nd: Leena Tailor, *The Hollywood Reporter*, “From Snoop Dogg and NSYNC to Post Malone and Bon Jovi: The Diverse and Transformative New Wave of Celebrity Bars Shaking Up Nashville”

3rd: Christopher Reynolds, *Los Angeles Times*, “It’s 43 hours from L.A. to Chicago. These train people like it that way”

B5. MULTIMEDIA PACKAGE

Los Angeles Times Staff, *Los Angeles Times*, “Escape from the Palisades: Split-second decision-making, confusing responses”

<https://tinyurl.com/rxx6zkn7>

Judges’ comment: A real multimedia package with words, recordings, photos and video all working together to create an immersive and chilling experience.

2nd: Katie Licari, *AfroLA*, “Shaken dry: LADWP’s failure to plan and repair for the ‘Big One’”
3rd: Alexis Garcia, Kit Norton and Clare O’Connor, *Investor’s Business Daily*, “Next Data Center Roadblock For Google, Microsoft, Oracle, Meta Is On Main Street”

B6. COMMENTARY/ANALYSIS OF FILM

Ben Fritz, *The Wall Street Journal*, “Can ‘The Naked Gun’ Save the Endangered Big-Screen Comedy?”

<http://bit.ly/47U3tsX>

Judges’ comment: Fritz hooks the reader instantly, maintains interest throughout and leaves with suspense.

2nd: M.G. Lord, *Los Angeles Review of Books*, “A Forever for Sally”

3rd: Corey Atad, *Truthdig*, “Corey Atad on Film”

B7. COMMENTARY/ANALYSIS OF TV

Kayla Cobb, Adam Chitwood, *TheWrap*, “The Future of Late Night Comedy: What’s Lost When – Not if – It Goes Away”

<https://tinyurl.com/7ptx8p7s>

Judges’ comment: An insightful piece – in an extremely strong category – that assesses late night shows, especially their loss of revenue in the last several years.

2nd: Aramide Tinubu, *Variety*, “Apple Is Making a Huge Mistake Postponing ‘The Savant’ in Wake of Charlie Kirk Killing”

3rd: Jose Alejandro Bastidas, *TheWrap*, “How 2025 Rewrote Hollywood’s Playbook for Leaner Scripted Shows | Analysis”

B8. CRITICISM OF FILM, (Over 1,000 Words)

David Rooney, *The Hollywood Reporter*

<https://tinyurl.com/2jk8yn3b>

<https://tinyurl.com/yy8wayv8>

<https://tinyurl.com/wkzpz44v>

Judges’ comment: David Rooney’s film reviews are sometimes hilarious, sometimes serious — all written in a conversational tone that draws readers in.

2nd: Owen Gleiberman, *Variety*

3rd: Neely Swanson, *Beverly Hills Courier*

B9. CRITICISM OF FILM, (Under 1,000 Words)

Owen Gleiberman, *Variety*

<https://bit.ly/4u0yi8p>

<https://bit.ly/4rPAq1A>

<https://bit.ly/3MAERhp>

Judges' comment: Gleiberman's reviews show his extensive knowledge of film and are written in a conversational tone, leading readers to become interested in films he is reviewing.

2nd: Beandrea July, *IndieWire*, *SEEN Journal*

3rd: Siddhant Adlakha, *Truthdig*

B10. CRITICISM OF TV

Aramide Tinubu, *Variety*

<https://bit.ly/3ZWxrlg>

Judges' comment: Tinubu doesn't hold back. The review is as searing as it is enjoyable.

2nd: Ben Travers, *IndieWire*

3rd: Angie Han, *The Hollywood Reporter*

B11. CRITICISM OF THEATER/PERFORMING ARTS

John Lavitt, *The Hollywood Times*, "Theatre Criticism: History, Satire, and Civic Reckoning in Los Angeles"

<https://bit.ly/3ONpenr>

<https://bit.ly/4u8hVa0>

<https://bit.ly/46KPIBE>

Judges' comment: John Lavitt shines as a critic who not only extends deep and expert context to the shows he reviews, he provides compelling reads all by themselves. Top-notch ledes lock in the reader even before they get good.

2nd: Anita Walia Harris, *LA Theatrix*

3rd: Charles McNulty, *Los Angeles Times*

B12. CRITICISM OF MUSIC

Jem Aswad, *Variety*

<https://bit.ly/3MWPLhn>

<https://bit.ly/4r4j3sB>

<https://bit.ly/4rHgwFG>

Judges' comment: The enthusiasm is palpable, and this review does Sir Paul great justice.

2nd: Holly Gleason, *HITS*

3rd: Lina Lecaro, *Freelance*

B13. CRITICISM OF LITERATURE

John Freeman, *Alta Journal*

<https://bit.ly/4bJTSqU>

<https://bit.ly/3PDZ4UE>

<https://bit.ly/4m2n3c9>

Judges' comment: The Headshot review offers wonderful insight into the mind of athletes and the prose of the author under review. A great example of a review so engrossing, entertaining,

and compelling, it leads the reader to the book out of a hunger for more of what the review celebrated and embodied.

2nd: David Kipen, *Los Angeles Times*

3rd: Anita Felicelli, *Alta Journal*

B14. CRITICISM OF ART/ARCHITECTURE/DESIGN

Marianne Dhenin, *Noema Magazine*

<https://bit.ly/4uRXtL3>

Judges' comment: This piece was a masterclass in bringing relevance to an interesting but niche topic, finding the right sources to comment, and guiding the reader to important critical thinking.

2nd: John Last, *Noema Magazine*

3rd: Renée Reizman, *Freelance*

B15. CRITICISM OF FOOD/CULTURE

Bill Addison, *Los Angeles Times*

<https://tinyurl.com/3nzryafb>

<https://tinyurl.com/26n223a5>

<https://tinyurl.com/56ypz72c>

Judges' comment: The reviews are written with the confidence of someone who knows good food and brings it to life on the page.

2nd: Jenn Harris, *Los Angeles Times*

3rd: Brian Addison, *Longbeachize*

C. PRINT/ONLINE – ANY OUTLET, including news bureaus and correspondents. Enter individually or as a team.

C1. HEADLINE

Rachel Parsons, *Context (Thomson Reuters Foundation)*, "Undocumented renters caught between fire and ICE in LA burn zone"

<http://bit.ly/3PHLeR4>

Judges' comment: It's hard to write a headline that uses wordplay but also expresses the gravity of a situation. This captures the news and does so with a twist that drives home the irony.

2nd: Caroline Feraday, *KCLU*, "Deliver us from weevil: Calls for stronger pest controls"

3rd: Mark Peikert, *Meet Me at Crafty*, "'Paper' Cuts: Inside the Peacock Comedy's Editing"

C2. PUBLIC SERVICE NEWS or FEATURE

Robin Urevich, *Capital & Main*, “Locked Out: How Some of Los Angeles’ Biggest Landlords Leave Section 8 Tenants Behind”

<https://bit.ly/4ucEn1T>

<https://bit.ly/4sh9IPH>

<http://bit.ly/4le4a5y>

Judges’ comment: The out and out rejection of one of the nation’s best ways to help families lift themselves out of poverty is reprehensible. Hopefully this reporting will lead to serious sanctions against the offenders.

2nd: Robert J. Lopez, *Capital & Main and Los Angeles Times*, “California’s Child Farmworkers: Exhausted, Underpaid and Toiling in Toxic Fields”

3rd: Nicole Fell, *The Hollywood Reporter*, “How Watch Duty Became an Essential Resource for Angelenos During Wildfires”

C3. MEDICAL REPORTING, Healthcare issues

Jill Replogle, *LAist*, “At a Boyle Heights hospital, ICE agents call the shots, doctors say”

<https://tinyurl.com/y5t2wrzc>

Judges’ comment: A chilling look at how the federal immigration crackdown is bringing agents into clinical spaces at a hospital, with what doctors say is the permission of hospital leaders.

2nd: Corinne Purtill, *Los Angeles Times*, “Strangers in the middle of a city: The John and Jane Does of L.A. General Medical Center”

3rd: Noah Biesiada, *Voice of OC*, “Orange County’s Medi-Cal Program Stockpiles \$1.8 Billion Despite CA Auditor Concerns”

C4. MEDICAL REPORTING

Susan Karlin, *Fast Company*, “How a ‘Shark Tank’-winning neuroscientist invented the bionic hand that stole the show at Comic-Con”

<http://bit.ly/4kJkmeJ>

Judges’ comment: A fascinating, stylishly written dive into the technology and business of automated prosthetics. In a competitive field, this piece stands out.

A well-rounded, compelling story.

2nd: Elizabeth Moss, *AfroLA*, “Wildfire smoke takes heavy toll on kids’ lungs”

3rd: Corinne Purtill, *Los Angeles Times*, “Behind his smile, a silent crisis: Parents seek answers after autistic son’s suicide”

C5. MEDICAL REPORTING, Diseases and Epidemics (see C4)

N/A

C6. SCIENCE REPORTING

Henry Wismayer, *Noema Magazine*, “The Unseen Fury Of Solar Storms”

<https://bit.ly/4dfC5ZI>

Judges' comment: Impressive category overall. The winner takes the category on its use of innovative narrative elements in tandem with extensive research and a timely but unique topic.

2nd: Jess McHugh, *Noema Magazine*, "The Ark-Builders Saving Fragile Bits Of Our World"

3rd: Susan Karlin, *Fast Company*, "How a 'Shark Tank'-winning neuroscientist invented the bionic hand that stole the show at Comic-Con"

C7. LOCAL POLITICS/GOVERNMENT REPORTING, Schools and Universities

Maylin Tu, *AfroLA*, "LAUSD is sitting on millions in state funding for greening schools. Why are projects stalled for years?"

<https://bit.ly/40kLN5m>

Judges' comment: This story is thoughtful, shows persistence and community impact. It highlights how schoolyard greening can transform a campus from heat-trapping asphalt into living, learning space – good from start to finish.

2nd: Tabor Brewster, *Beverly Press*, "ACLU responds to BHUSD controversy: Bregy resigns"

3rd: Tyler Kingcade, *NBC News Digital*, "Inside the Univ. of Virginia gun incident that drew DOJ's ire"

C8. LOCAL POLITICS/GOVERNMENT REPORTING, Homelessness/Housing

Michael Waters, John Gittelsohn, *Bloomberg Businessweek*, "The Billionaire's Town"

<https://tinyurl.com/4h52zppv>

Judges' comment: The back story of the city of Irvine is both extremely compelling and dystopian.

2nd: Ethan Ward, *AfroLA*, "2028 Olympics: L.A.'s 'no-build' promise faces housing crisis reality"

3rd: Robin Urevich, *Capital & Main*, "Locked Out: How Some of Los Angeles' Biggest Landlords Leave Section 8 Tenants Behind"

C9. LOCAL POLITICS/GOVERNMENT REPORTING, Crime/Corruption

Jason Henry, Scott Schwebke, *Los Angeles Daily News*, "Clients of Efren Martinez, under investigation by DA, received \$16.5 million from Huntington Park over last 3 years"

<https://bit.ly/47pYBLM>

Judges' comment: This takes a politically sensitive, emotionally loaded issue and elevates it into a rigorous, panoramic analysis of America's aging leadership. I love how it blends sharp reporting with demographic science, economics.

2nd: Jon Regardie, *Golden State*, "Why won't the LAPD give the public usable crime data?"

3rd: Phil Hopkins, *Local News Pasadena*, "DOJ Claims Weak Links in California's Automated License Plate Reader Law are Local Police Departments"

C10. LOCAL POLITICS/GOVERNMENT REPORTING, Governing

Ryan Carter, *Los Angeles Daily News*, "Amid fire recovery, lessons may linger from Riordan's 'say-sorry-later' Northridge quake mantra"

<https://bit.ly/3PYPuvs>

Judges' comment: Carter effectively uses former L.A. Mayor Riordan's management decisions to bypass normal procedures in rebuilding from the 1994 earthquake to explore how the current administration speeds-up rebuilding plans from the devastating 2025 fires.

2nd: Robert J. Lopez, *Capital & Main and Los Angeles Times*, "California's Child Farmworkers: Exhausted, Underpaid and Toiling in Toxic Fields"

3rd: David Zahniser, *Los Angeles Times*, "For L.A.'s mayor, a Palisades recovery marked by missteps, reversals and delays"

C11. NATIONAL POLITICS/GOVERNMENT REPORTING

Ronald Bailey, *Reason Magazine*, "Can America Get Out of the Gerontocracy Trap?"

<https://bit.ly/3O5WCWs>

Judges' comment: This piece takes on an emotionally charged topic—America's aging political class—and turns it into a clear, data-driven, hopeful narrative. It blends sharp political observation with demographic research and economic modeling. The writing is confident, well-sourced, and unafraid.

2nd: David Ariosto, *Noema Magazine*, "Destination Mars"

3rd: Alexander Zaitchik, *Truthdig*, "A Safety Net Coming Apart at the Seams"

C12. EDUCATION REPORTING

Jaweed Kaleem, *Los Angeles Times*, "Times Investigation: Ex-Trump DOJ lawyers say 'fraudulent' UC antisemitism probes led them to quit"

<https://tinyurl.com/ujxt4km2>

Judges' comment: This thoroughly reported story into the "sham investigation" by the DOJ into alleged UC antisemitism brings to light how the Trump administration operates like a bully and without due diligence or facts. To find 9 attorneys who quit, and interview some, was quite a feat."

2nd: Sorina Szakacs and Angela Johnson, *Los Angeles Collegian*, "Journalism Cuts- Parts 1, 2, 3 and 4"

3rd: Tyler Kingkade, *NBC News Digital*, "Parents say school-issued iPads are causing chaos with their kids"

C13. HUMOR/SATIRE WRITING, PRINT/ONLINE

Phil Hopkins, *Local News Pasadena*, "The Case of the Vanished Tabby"

<https://localnewspasadena.com/2025/the-case-of-the-vanished-tabby/>

Judges' comment: The use of a noir voice works so well in this column, the mystery of a missing cat. The writer gives it just enough space to tell the story without going too long

2nd: Mikey O'Connell, *The Hollywood Reporter*, "I Lost My Home in the L.A. Wildfire. This Is What I'm Holding On To."

3rd: Chris Willman, *Variety*, "Making the Public Domain Even More Horrifying: Modest Proposals for Turning 1920s Classics Into Slasher Fare, From Mickey to Hemingway"

C14. OBITUARY/IN APPRECIATION, Film/TV Personalities

Daniel D'Addario, *Variety*, "Hollywood's Humanist: Rob Reiner Was a Gifted Collaborator Who Understood Why We Tell Stories"

<https://bit.ly/46utJtb>

Judges' comment: So much has been written about Rob Reiner, but this piece balances all of his work, both in art and advocacy, into a human picture of a man who cared deeply.

2nd: Peter Rainer, *The Christian Science Monitor*, "Robert Redford appreciation"

3rd: Angelique Jackson, *Variety*, "Chadwick Boseman's Star Gets a Prime Spot on the Hollywood Walk of Fame: 'A Place of Prominence for a King'"

C15. OBITUARY/IN APPRECIATION, Politics/Business/Arts Personalities

Mark Kreidler, *Capital & Main*, "The Loss of Kent Wong and the Future of Labor and Immigrant Rights in California"

<https://capitalandmain.com/the-loss-of-kent-wong-and-the-future-of-labor-and-immigrant-rights-in-california>

Judges' comment: This is not only a lovely commemoration of a life, but a look forward at what his community will be without Kent Wong. The analysis is incisive and well told.

2nd: Rich Archbold, *Press-Telegram*, "Chantara Nop, Long Beach Cambodian leader, dies at 70"

3rd: Gwen Muranaka, *Zócalo Public Square*, "The Mexican American Photographer Who Captured Little Tokyo"

C16A. SOLUTIONS JOURNALISM, Health/Science

Christopher J. Preston, *Noema Magazine*, "'Climate Delusion' Or Vital Solution? Carbon Capture's Uphill Battle"

<https://bit.ly/4thvG56>

Judges' comment: Very competitive category. First place wins on the combination of depth of reporting, quality of prose and focus on solutions to a core problem identified by the article.

2nd: Michaela Haas, *Reasons to be Cheerful*, "Former Navy SEALs Are Diving to Save the Ocean"

3rd: Jeremy Loudonback and Michael Fitzgerald, *The Imprint*, "Medicated in Foster Care: Who's Looking Out?"

C16B. SOLUTIONS JOURNALISM, Sociopolitical

Paige St. John, **Laurence Darmiento**, **Summer Lin**, **Sandhya Kambhampati**, *Los Angeles Times*, "Fires reveal insurance crisis that was years in the making"

<https://tinyurl.com/4fpxchm4>

<https://tinyurl.com/5n8sk72j>

<https://tinyurl.com/y4u2v2sv>

Judges' comment: A definitive investigation that illustrates why independent journalism is crucial to meaningful transparency and accountability. The series provides an understanding of a crisis that affects everyone, but was unavailable until the Times weighed in.

2nd: Ian James, Kayla Bartkowski and Lorena Iñiguez Elebee, *Los Angeles Times*, "L.A.'s hydrants ran dry during the fires. Residents are still demanding solutions"

3rd: Oliver Milman, *Noema Magazine*, "The Cult Of The American Lawn"

C17A. IMMIGRATION REPORTING, ICE related, PRINT/ONLINE

Jeremy Lindenfeld, *Capital & Main*, "'I've Never Seen Anything Like it.' Aggressive ICE Raids Led One Man to Ask: Should I Self-Deport?"

<https://bit.ly/4s2zOFU>

Judges' comment: This story details the agonizing choice made by Juan Ramón González to self-deport back to Mexico rather than risk being seized in a violent arrest and shipped off to prison. His dread of being targeted in an immigration raid led to his heartbreaking decision to leave the Pasadena community where he had lived for decades.

2nd: Brittny Mejia, *Los Angeles Times*, "Hard lives in California's fields: 'The American dream eats us alive'"

3rd: Nadra Nittle, *The 19th*, "Nory and her mother were deported together. Then she was orphaned."

C17B. IMMIGRATION REPORTING, Sociopolitical, PRINT/ONLINE

Nadra Nittle, *The 19th*, "She's devoted her life to teaching your kids — in a country that now wants to deport her"

<https://bit.ly/4beUPpJ>

Judges' comment: In a category filled with extremely compelling entries, this story stood out because of its delicate calibration between highly personal storytelling, exploration of national and international context, reporting in an interdisciplinary fashion, and emotional resonance.

2nd: Kate Morrissey, *Capital & Main*, "Stranded"

3rd: Amairani Hernandez, Brenda Verano and Jacqueline Garcia, *CALÓ News*, "LA's immigration defense organizers are burning out. Here's how they keep going"

C18. CRIME REPORTING

Clara Harter, Brittny Mejia, *Los Angeles Times*, "'Acts of pure evil': Feds indict alleged members of child sex abuse network"

<https://tinyurl.com/ef3wt3sa>

Judges' comment: A powerfully written story, so unsettling and disturbing that it cries out for action to protect vulnerable people from such "acts of pure evil."

2nd: Michele McPhee, *Los Angeles Magazine*, "The Hunt For Ryan Wedding"

3rd: Matthew Ormseth, *Los Angeles Times*, "Inside the alleged Mexican Mafia plot to smuggle heroin with an L.A. jail deputy"

C19. SPORTS

Michael Duarte, *NBC*, "Shohei Ohtani's legendary three-homer, 10-strikeout game sends Dodgers back to the World Series"

<https://www.nbcla.com/news/sports/brewers-dodgers-nlcs-game-four-2/3793090/>

Judges' comment: A great feature story on Shohei Ohtani and his impact with the Dodgers and particularly his performance against Milwaukee in the NLCS in 2025.

2nd: Allan Medina, *The LA Local*, "Two brothers will face off in the East LA Classic, but family always wins"

3rd: Angelique Jackson, *Variety*, "Simone Biles Teams With Religion of Sports to Expand Entertainment Portfolio: 'We Want to Give Others Bigger Platforms to Narrate Themselves' (EXCLUSIVE)"

C20. SPORTS COMMENTARY

Natalia Molina, *Caló News*, "The Dodgers: They Just Like Us"

<http://bit.ly/3MFEstX>

Judges' comment: A well-done feature on Dodger fans and how they relate players to their own lives. Great insight into, again, the impact of the team in Los Angeles.

2nd: Wesley Reutimann, *Colorado Boulevard Newspaper*, "LA Without Open Streets? A Setback for Public Health and Community Building"

3rd: George B. Sánchez-Tello, *Capital & Main*, "Running While Black, Latino or Asian American — Under Trump"

D. ART/PHOTOGRAPHY All Platforms

D1. NEWS PHOTO, Single Image

Jeremy Lindenfeld, *Capital & Main*, "Smoke drifts over Will Rogers State Beach during the Palisades fire"

<https://capitalandmain.com/trumps-fema-proposals-and-feud-with-gavin-newsom-could-devastate-californias-disaster-response>

Judges' comment: The photo is an excellent example of composition while also showcasing the vastness of this news story despite the photo's simplicity.

2nd: Julie Leopo, *Voice of OC*, "Orange Backs Off Trying to Unmask ICE"

3rd: Michael Blackshire, *Independent*, "Los Angeles Ice Protest"

D2. FEATURE PHOTO, Single Image

Brandon Richardson, *Long Beach Watchdog*, "Death on the soccer field"

PDF

Judges' comment: This emotionally powerful photograph captures all the anguish of this man's loved ones in the face of his relatives

2nd: Arsenii Vaselenko, Jennifer Laski, Tiensirin Tiennern, Ian Robinson and Shannon Watkins, *TheWrap*, "Seth Rogen, Evan Goldberg and 'The Studio' Cast on How They Make Loving Fun of Hollywood"

3rd: Osceola Refetoff, *PBS SoCal*, "Cal Energy Generation Thermal Plant – Infrared Exposure – Calipatria, California"

D3. PORTRAIT PHOTO, Entertainment

Richard Phibbs, Jennifer Dorn, Jennifer Halper, *Variety*, "A\$AP Rocky"

PDF

Judges' comment: Sharp and stylish, captures all the personality.

2nd: Heather Hazzan, Grayson Khos, Jenny Sargent and Samantha Xu, *Billboard*, "Gracie Abrams"

3rd: Cathlin McCullough, Jennifer Laski and Tiensirin Tiennern, *TheWrap*, "Portrait of Cynthia Erivo at Sundance Films Festival 2025"

D4. PORTRAIT PHOTO, Non-Entertainment

Dustin Snipes, *Super Lawyers Magazine*, "'Now, Do You Want to Hear the Twist?'"

<http://bit.ly/3OMsShi>

Judges' comment: The cold light and hint of smoke draws you in, curious about the twist.

2nd: Matjaž Tančič, *Noema Magazine*, "China's Pet Parents Choose 'Fur Kids' Over Human Children"

3rd: Osceola Refetoff, *PBS SoCal*, "Diablada (Dance of the Devils) – Fiesta de la Tirana – Chile"

D5. SPORTS PHOTO, Single Image

Ringo Chiu, *Ringo Chiu Photography*, "Fingertips and Flight"

<https://www.ringochiuphotography.com/index/G0000anGw6x1Qnew/I0000se2Qp1ZIE04>

Judges' comment: "Fingertips and Flight" is a beautiful photograph that elevates the subject matter and zeroes in on the center of the story with very few identifying details in place. The abstraction empowers the image to move beyond the literal and the specific contest and instead capture the essence of the contest on the court. It stands as a work of art independent of its context.

2nd: Aidan Sun, *Daily Bruin*, "UCLA football upsets Penn State in first season win"

3rd: Hans Gutknecht, *Los Angeles Daily News*, "UFC 311 kick"

D6. ENTERTAINMENT PHOTO, Single Image

Ash Barhamand, Alison Edmond, Erik Madigan Heck, *The Hollywood Reporter*, "Tim Burton + Jenna Ortega"

<https://bit.ly/3PP1FLs>

Judges' comment: This photo stood out from a competitive field. It captures the character of the subjects and hints at the nature of their work without resorting to overt references. It may not tell an unambiguous story, but it draws the reader in to discover the story behind such an evocative image.

2nd: Joe Pugliese, Jenny Sargent and Samantha Xu, *Billboard*, "'Weird Al' Yankovic"

3rd: Emilio Madrid, Jennifer Dorn, Haley Kluge and Jennifer Halper, *Variety*, "Darren Criss and Cole Escola"

D7. PHOTO ESSAY (single topic), Culture/Entertainment

Mark Stefanos, *LA Weekly*, "The Short Stop Celebrates 25 Years of Being Los Angeles's Dance Bar"

<https://www.laweekly.com/the-short-stop-celebrates-25-years-of-being-los-angeless-dance-bar>

Judges' comment: Stefanos masterfully captures humanity's hustle and heat in a single, super-charged night at the Short Stop.

2nd: Alexi Lubomirski, Jennifer Dorn and Haley Kluge, *Variety*, "Actors on Actors"

3rd: Zaydee Sanchez, *Freelance*, "WrestleMania? In Los Angeles, It's LuchaMania."

D8. PHOTO ESSAY (single topic), News/News Feature

Barbara Davidson, *Capital & Main*, *Los Angeles Times*, "California's Child Farmworkers: Exhausted, Underpaid and Toiling in Toxic Fields"

<https://bit.ly/40X3J6d>

Judges' comment: These images masterfully tell a visual story that is extremely difficult to tell. It gives light to a sensitive topic while maintaining artful composition.

2nd: Stefano Schirato, *Truthdig*, "Caravans of Faith and Memory"

3rd: Erika Taylor and Josiah Mendoza, *Voice of OC*, "Waiting for Work, Watching for ICE"

D9. EDITORIAL CARTOON

Eli Valley, *Truthdig*, "The Clarifier"

<https://tinyurl.com/2fscsh5b>

Judges' comment: Eli Valley offers a striking and evocative punch complete with museum-quality graphic detail and a rim-shot message.

2nd: Chandra Bozelko, *Censie*, *The Red Pen of Censorship*, "Censie Goes Live!"

3rd: Marc Ratner, *Colorado Boulevard Newspaper*, "Note to Self: Lonely Elf"

D10. ILLUSTRATION

Matt Mahurin, *Alta Journal*, "Sketchbook: Disasters Bring Out Our Best"

<https://bit.ly/4t7Q7kF>

Judges' comment: Matt Mahurin's series of illustrations for Alta Journal's Sketchbook finds beauty and hope in the tragedy of the Palisades and Eaton fires - including his first person

experience of the former. Heroic portrayal of rescuers mixes the real and surreal in a landscape that glows not only with wildfires but also the heroic auras around firefighters and miraculous flying machines as they descend into the hellscape. Each figure is lovingly modeled in Mahurin's painterly style including figures rebuilding and replanting.

2nd: Ricardo Tomas and Haley Kluge, *Variety*, "CBS Microphone"

3rd: Dadu Shin, *Noema Magazine*, "The Languages Lost To Climate Change"

D11. GRAPHIC

Kurt Snibbe, *Southern California News Group*, "Air Attack"

PDF

Judges' comment: This dynamic infographic treatment suits the dynamic content. Information is present in an easily digestible yet visually engaging manner with great movement on the page and a great use of the grid to manage the various components. This infographic makes you want to dive into the dramatic story of how firefighting aircraft got the job done in one of 2025's most important, and tragic, news events.

2nd: Jeff Goertzen and Kurt Snibbe, *Southern California News Group*, "Footprints of Devastation"

3rd: Jeff Goertzen, *Southern California News Group*, "Tariff Tactics"

D12. ANIMATION/MOVING GRAPHIC

PBS SoCal Team, *PBS SoCal*, "Lost LA: Animation"

<https://vimeo.com/1171380847?share=copy&fl=sv&fe=ci>

Judges' comment: Interesting, insightful animation about Walt Disney and the Disney company.

2nd: Andreion De Castro, *Noema Magazine*, "The Politics Of Superintelligence"

3rd: Scot Donaldson, *IBD Weekly*, "Moby Dick"

D13. COVER ART

THR Staff, Maer Roshan, Ada Guerin, Neil Jamieson, *The Hollywood Reporter*, "The New Face of Hollywood"

https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/q29nle155hsvmbpvzccgg/20_Plastic-Surgery_Neil-Jamieson.pdf?rlkey=2xj0cspurnufni4tmxkdwidmp&st=xy1ebbcy&dl=0

Judges' comment: This cover design and art hit every mark. It's provocative, tells the story, invites a long, long look and compels the reader to open straight to the cover story.

2nd: Greg Swales, Haley Kluge and Jennifer Dorn, *Variety*, "Bad Bunny Cover"

3rd: Nicolás Ortega and Haley Kluge, *Variety*, "Trump Cover"

D14. PAGE DESIGN

John Goecke, Brent Hatcher, *Alta Journal*, "Special Section: 25 Books That Define California"

PDF

Judges' comment: Clean, easy to read, the right amount of white space, and creative. Just every layout should be.

2nd: Will Hooks and Haley Kluge, *Variety*, “Stranger Things”

3rd: Karen Villalpando, *Beverly Press/Park Labrea News*, “Our People Our Places”

D15. BEST ISSUE

John Goecke, Brent Hatcher, *Alta Journal*, “25 Books That Define California”

PDF

Judges’ comment: Outstanding, engaging design from cover to cover. The “25 Books That Define California” package was especially clean and easy to read, with a variety of approaches to showing the covers. Very nicely done!

2nd: Darrick Rainey, *Music Connection*, “Music Connection's December Year-End Issue”

3rd: Malina Saval, Sara Smola, Ada Guerin, Mary Franz and Jen Rosenstein, *Pasadena Magazine*, “2025 Pasadena Power Women: Celebrating Local Legends”

E. PRINT – ANY OUTLET

E1. EDITORIALS

Ellen Snortland, *LA Downtown News*, “Zone 0 Makes Zero Sense: ‘One size fits all’ laws don’t work”

<https://bit.ly/4cE0xUu>

Judges’ comment: The column on Zone 0 brought to my attention an issue or issues that few in the public are aware of— educational and informative, as great editorials should be.

2nd: Ryan Gajewski and Darah Head, *The Hollywood Reporter*, “Parm to Table: Dan Tana's Was a Cut Above”

3rd: Rance Collins, *Beverly Press/Park Labrea News*, “Bring the movies home: one fan's plea for tax incentives”

E2. HARD NEWS

Southern California News Group Staff, *Pasadena Star News/Los Angeles Daily News*, “LA County Wildfire coverage”

<https://bit.ly/4rYwRp5>

Judges’ comment: At a time of unimaginable peril, this news team offered sweepingly comprehensive and yet also intimate first-day coverage. An impressive job.

2nd: Erika Ritchie, *Southern California News Group*, “Golden Dome defense system could involve many tech companies in SoCal”

E3. BUSINESS REPORTING An article or series

James Queally, *Los Angeles Times*, “A billionaire’s son sold investors on the ‘ultimate man cave.’ Was any of it real?”

<https://tinyurl.com/2z2pxhe5>

Judges' comment: Really competitive category all-around, so congrats to all that placed and to many of the fine entries they edged out. It was really hard to pick a single winner, but first place takes the category for the strength of the reporting paired with clear, succinct prose.

2nd: Gary Baum, *The Hollywood Reporter*, "Is Dana White the Most 'Untouchable' Whale in Vegas?"

3rd: Michael Waters and John Gittelsohn, *Bloomberg Businessweek*, "The Billionaire's Town"

E4. ACTIVISM JOURNALISM

C.J. Ciaramella, *Reason Magazine*, "Texas and Florida Have Become National Models for Using the Police State To Wage Culture War Battles"

<https://bit.ly/4IV3SAU>

Judges' comment: A terrifying and disheartening look at a possible future for us all. Orwell called and he's gobsmacked.

2nd: Ellen Snortland, *LA Downtown News*, "Takin' It To The Streets"

3rd: Nicole Garcia and David Wolman, *Alta Journal*, "The 'Undesirables'"

E5. LIFESTYLE FEATURE

Brian W. Carter, *Los Angeles Sentinel Newspaper*, "St. Eugene's ONSTAGE Performing Arts Program Brings the Talent from the Playground"

<https://lasentinel.net/st-eugenes-onstage-performing-arts-program-brings-the-talent-from-the-playground.html>

Judges' comment: An intimate look into a program that is changing young people's lives. This story is a good read.

2nd: Lisa Niver, *Pasadena Magazine*, "Frozen Fun on The World's Final Frontier in Antarctica"

3rd: James Hibberd, *The Hollywood Reporter*, "Knives Out: Celebrities Reveal Plastic Surgery Secrets — But One Procedure Still Taboo"

E6. RACE AND SOCIETY REPORTING

Abené Clayton, *The Guardian*, "Guns & Lies in America"

<http://bit.ly/40fIY6T>

Judges' comment: The field was tight, but this reporter was able to get access to inmates in prison to discuss a topic that's largely hidden to society at large. It's amazing to see quotes from prison inmates.

2nd: Kristy Hutchings, *Press-Telegram (Long Beach)*, "Tribal leaders raise concerns about CSULB's handling of sacred Puvungna site"

3rd: Gene Maddaus, *Variety*, "Gender-Neutral Bathrooms and Land Acknowledgements: How California's Film Diversity Rules Will — and Won't — Change Life on Set"

E7. GENDER AND SOCIETY REPORTING

Malina Saval, *Pasadena Magazine*, “Riders on the Storm: Pasadena's Fearless Female Firefighters Blaze a Heroic Trail”

<http://bit.ly/48hw3Ev>

Judges’ comment: The details and a wide range of sources made this story about female firefighters a winner. The descriptive writing makes readers feel as if they’re at the scene of the fires.

2nd: Nicole Garcia and David Wolman, *Alta Journal*, “The ‘Undesirables’”

3rd: Nicole Fell, *The Hollywood Reporter*, “K-pop Has Its Ellen Moment”

E8. ENVIRONMENTAL REPORTING

Beau Yarbrough, Brian Rokos, *The Press-Enterprise*, “Inland Empire faces significantly higher wildfire risk, Cal Fire says”

<https://www.pressenterprise.com/2025/03/29/inland-empire-faces-significantly-higher-wildfire-risk-cal-fire-says/?share=roflwsgetrfnggiemw9p>

Judges’ comment: This story comes alive because the reporter took the time to find a human face (literally in the picture) to illustrate the sometimes scary and uncertain future of living in a wildfire zone. The pictures, and the way the pictures tell the story, put this ahead of other competitors in this category.

2nd: Michelle Ma, *Bloomberg News*, “Toxic Smoke Damage in LA Homes Deepens Insurance Nightmare”

3rd: Lila Seidman and Jason Armond, *Los Angeles Times*, “Majestic wild horses are trampling Mono Lake’s otherworldly landscape. The feds plan a roundup”

F. NEWSPAPERS Over 50,000 circulation. Includes news bureaus and correspondents. Enter individually or as a team.

F1. NEWS FEATURE, General News/Hard News

Bloomberg Staff, *Bloomberg News*, “How 9 Popular YouTubers Helped Trump Win a Second Term”

<https://tinyurl.com/4cmv3dwx>

Judges’ comment: In a stunning analysis of some 2,000 videos made by podcasters and streamers, the Bloomberg staff show how they promoted the political agenda leading to Pres. Trump’s re-election.

2nd: Robert J. Lopez, *Capital & Main* and *Los Angeles Times*, “California’s Child Farmworkers: Exhausted, Underpaid and Toiling in Toxic Fields”

3rd: Hailey Branson-Potts, *Los Angeles Times*, “Mobile homes by the beach: In Pacific Palisades, a middle-class dream is destroyed”

F2. NEWS FEATURE, Society/Culture/History

Julie Jargon, Ben Fritz, *The Wall Street Journal*, “How Two Young Men Got Pulled Into Internet Darkness, and How They Got Out”

<https://bit.ly/416QYGs>

Judges’ comment: Fascinating story about young men pulled into internet darkness and how they got out. Great sourcing of both the young men and the internet providers.

2nd: Katerina Portela, *Los Angeles Times*, “Lucha libre and leather: Latinos rule the L.A. goth scene”

3rd: Emily St Martin, *Los Angeles Daily News*, “Journalist and convicted murderer John J. Lennon takes on true crime in new book”

F3. ENTERTAINMENT NEWS or FEATURE

Ben Fritz, *The Wall Street Journal*, “L.A.’s Entertainment Economy Is Looking Like a Disaster Movie”

<https://bit.ly/4uYKibi>

Judges’ comment: Informative story the economic challenges facing the film industry. Fair, balanced and very well crafted.

2nd: Jessica Gelt, *Los Angeles Times*, “Inside the dash to save the Getty Villa from the Palisades fire: A timeline”

3rd: August Brown, *Los Angeles Times*, “Fire charred two L.A. music utopias. Will they ever recover?”

F4. PERSONALITY PROFILE

Mark Olsen, *Los Angeles Times*, “‘Sorry, Baby’ was a way for Eva Victor to heal. The director is finding a lot of company”

<https://tinyurl.com/2b93amjn>

Judges’ comment: Interesting insights, great themes and imagery developed early on about tattoos, permanence art and healing. A compelling read.

2nd: Christine Terrisse, *Los Angeles Times*, “Larry Mantle’s L.A.: Beloved Radio Host Reflects on 40 Years of ‘AirTalk’”

3rd: Pamela Chelin, *Los Angeles Times*, “Bruce Springsteen wanted a ‘Scott Cooper movie.’ We asked the director what that is”

F5. INVESTIGATIVE

Robert J. Lopez, *Capital & Main* and *Los Angeles Times*, “California’s Child Farmworkers: Exhausted, Underpaid and Toiling in Toxic Fields”

<https://bit.ly/40X3J6d>

<https://bit.ly/4rgSuQU>

<https://bit.ly/4rhunS0>

Judges’ comment: Great shoe-leather reporting pairs well with a massive document dive into regulatory (in)actions across a very under scrutinized sector. Solid reporting all around. Impactful, well written, bold and educational.

2nd: Tony Briscoe, Noah Haggerty and Hayley Smith, *Los Angeles Times*, “Uncovering the toxic soil lurking in L.A.’s burn zones”

3rd: Los Angeles Times Staff, *Los Angeles Times*, “L.A. firestorms: Uncovering how government failed the public”

F6. COMMENTARY

Natalia Molina, *Los Angeles Times*, “When It Comes to Mole, It's Personal and Political”

<https://bit.ly/3MqzK3e>

Judges’ comment: This piece could stand as an expert restaurant/food review with how beautifully she describes mole. While on its surface it's about mole, it's really about how LA and Mexico -- and its peoples -- are connected. And how that connection is strained with the Trump administration's immigration policy.

2nd: Chandra Bozelko, *Los Angeles Times*, “California’s inmate firefighters deserve more than a raise. Make them employees.”

3rd: Robert Kerbeck, *The Wall Street Journal*, “Lessons Learned From a Fiery Decade in L.A.”

F7. COLUMNIST

Steve Lopez, *Los Angeles Times*

<https://tinyurl.com/3pczcxvn>

<https://tinyurl.com/296ma8kz>

<https://tinyurl.com/34p23fp6>

Judges’ comment: These columns are deeply reported and well written. They tackle relevant and important topics in unique ways.

2nd: Gustavo Arellano, *Los Angeles Times*

3rd: Patricia Bunin, *Southern California News Group*

G. NEWSPAPERS Under 50,000 circulation. Includes news bureaus and correspondents. Enter individually or as a team.

G1. NEWS FEATURE, General News/Hard News

Chris Haire, *Pasadena Star News*, “Eaton fire destroys 3 generations of Altadena family’s homes”

<https://bit.ly/4bxWka9>

Judges’ comment: This category showcased compelling writing about the devastating 2025 fires. By lingering with members of one extended family and exploring their deep roots in Altadena, Chris Haire gave readers a sense of place, community and history, showing why — and just what — they and so many others want to rebuild.

2nd: Mark Stefanos, *LA Weekly*, “While Fires Rage, Angelenos Step Up to Help”

3rd: Francine Kiefer, *The Christian Science Monitor*, “Altadena Fire”

G2. NEWS FEATURE, Society/Culture/History

Brian W. Carter, *Los Angeles Sentinel Newspaper*, “Henrietta Lacks Symposium at Cedars-Sinai Highlights the Power in Family”

<https://lasentinel.net/henrietta-lacks-symposium-at-cedars-sinai-highlights-the-power-in-family.html>

Judges’ comment: The reporter handles this incredible subject with nice reporting and a “you are there” feel to the story.

2nd: Steve Scauzillo, *Pasadena Star-News*, “Norman the werewolf still stands as Altadena’s symbol of resilience – and dressed up for Halloween”

3rd: Edwin Folven, *Beverly Press/Park Labrea News*, “Artist vows to persevere after devastating wildfires”

G3. ENTERTAINMENT NEWS or FEATURE, NEWSPAPERS Under 50K

Mark Stefanos, *LA Weekly*, “Our Favorite Parties in Los Angeles 2025”

<https://www.laweekly.com/the-short-stop-celebrates-25-years-of-being-los-angeless-dance-bar>

Judges’ comment: This story was well written, well researched and took readers behind the scenes of what makes this longtime LA bar not only survive, but thrive. Readers almost felt like they were there. It showed how entertainment makes a community and stays relevant.

2nd: Zhiyu Luo, *Los Angeles Business Journal*, “Bidding War for Warner”

3rd: Lisa Friedman Bloch, *Beverly Hills Courier*, “Byron Allen | How His Extraordinary Journey Created a Media Empire”

G4. PERSONALITY PROFILE

Brian Fishbach, *Jewish Journal of Los Angeles*, “103 Year Old Holocaust Survivor Joseph Alexander Celebrates Birthday Alongside Rescued Hostage”

<https://jewishjournal.com/community/385271/celebrating-the-birthday-of-103-years-young-holocaust-survivor-joseph-alexander/>

Judges’ comment: Powerful narrative, powerfully told. Great use of quotes and descriptive detail.

2nd: Mark Stefanos, *LA Weekly*, “The Melancholy and Might of Junior H: The Mexican Corrido Phenom Caps His \$AD BOYZ LIVE & BROKEN TOUR at the Hollywood Bowl”

3rd: Myko Lyric, *Los Angeles Sentinel Newspaper*, “Tiana Day is Leading with Love Through Youth Advocates for Change”

G5. INVESTIGATIVE

Semantha Raquel Norris, *The San Fernando Valley Sun/el Sol Newspaper*, “Silicosis Series”

<https://sanfernandosun.com/2025/04/02/the-cost-of-your-countertops-stone-fabrication-workers-dying-from-silicosis/>

<https://sanfernandosun.com/2025/04/09/latino-workers-lives-are-being-cut-in-half-in-the-northeast-valley/>

<https://sanfernandosun.com/2025/04/16/is-the-dust-from-stone-fabrication-shops-impacting-the-wider-community/>

Judges' comment: Great project looking at the hidden toll of a simple household convenience. Great reporting and writing.

2nd: Jason Henry, *Los Angeles Daily News*, "Mold, rats and neglect: a year of inspections at Men's Central Jail reveals 'horrific' conditions"

3rd: Beau Yarbrough, *The Press-Enterprise*, "San Jacinto Unified investigates, reports board member to district attorney"

G6. COMMENTARY

Monica Osborne, *Jewish Journal of Los Angeles*, "The Ethics of Fearlessness in an Age of Jewish Erasure"

<http://bit.ly/4dPrPrd>

Judges' comment: Monica Osborne provides insight into being Jewish in today's antisemitic environment.

2nd: Scott Phelps, *Colorado Boulevard Newspaper*, "Quid Pro Quo Politics in Pasadena?"

3rd: Calvin Naito, *Beverly Press/Park Labrea News*, "Let's Make Our New Year Our Best New Year!"

G7. COLUMNIST

Monica Osborne, *Jewish Journal of Los Angeles*

<https://bit.ly/4tdaVax>

<https://bit.ly/3PNwiAP>

<https://bit.ly/4uVTiha>

Judges' comment: Ms. Osborne writes with depth, addressing fear, progressive politics and grief after the Eaton Fire. It's hard not to write about the Eaton Fire in Southern California in 2025. Osborne does it from afar with sensitivity and tackles other topics with great thought.

2nd: Larry Wilson, *Pasadena Star News*

3rd: Rich Archbold, *Press-Telegram (Long Beach)*

H. MAGAZINES

Including magazines with L.A. bureaus.

H1. INVESTIGATIVE

Paul Solotaroff, *Rolling Stone*, "Inside the Battle for the Soul of the LAPD"

<https://bit.ly/4bYuyMx>

Judges' comment: Incredible depth of storytelling, unique perspectives and insider accounts.

2nd: Rebecca Keegan, *The Hollywood Reporter*, “This Is Not Keanu: Inside the Billion-Dollar Celebrity Impersonation Bitcoin Scam”

3rd: K.J. Yossman, *Variety*, “Inside the Nightmare Production of Indie Film About Beatles Manager Brian Epstein: ‘I Wish I’d Never Heard the Words ‘Midas Man’”

H2. COMMENTARY

Andrew Dubbins, *Alta Journal*, “Will Rogers is on Fire”

<https://www.altanline.com/dispatches/a63434429/los-angeles-fires-pacific-palisades-andrew-dubbins/>

Judges’ comment: A riveting and suspenseful read that delivers a view of one of the nation’s most ghastly crises from both 30,000 feet and ground zero. Total page turner.

2nd: Steven Zeitchik, *The Hollywood Reporter*, “I Sat Down to Dinner With Rob, Michele and Nick Reiner. It Was Heartwarming and Jarring.”

3rd: K.J. Yossman, *Variety*, “BBC Crisis Explained: How the Beloved U.K. Broadcaster Walked Into One of the Worst Scandals in Its 100-Year History — and Where It Goes From Here”

H3. COLUMNIST

Brad A. Johnson, *OLTRE*

https://issuu.com/oltreluxurytravel/docs/oltre_vol_8_-_digital_pdf/88

https://issuu.com/oltreluxurytravel/docs/oltre_-_volume_11_the_taste_issue/82

https://issuu.com/oltreluxurytravel/docs/oltre_-_volume_10_the_entertainment_issue/82

Judges’ comment: Brad Johnson expertly illustrates what sets compelling signed column journalism apart from every other kind of news writing. He grabs the reader in the first few words and takes them on a fun, entertaining and deeply informative ride in each of his three entries.

2nd: Chris Willman, *Variety*

3rd: Nathan Gardels, *Noema Magazine*

H4. FEATURE, Business and Government (Over 1,000 Words)

Alex Weprin, *The Hollywood Reporter*, “Mickey vs. Shrek: Inside the Multibillion-Dollar Theme Park War”

<https://tinyurl.com/2xtpend7>

Judges’ comment: A fascinating look at how theme parks are part of the storytelling in the movies.

2nd: Seth Abramovitch, *The Hollywood Reporter*, “Crumb!, The Cookie That Broke the Internet

3rd: Tatiana Siegel, Brent Lang and Matt Donnelly, *Variety*, “Inside David Ellison’s Dramatic First 100 Days at Paramount: Courting Tom Cruise Blockbusters, Forging Ties With Trump and Daring Anyone Else to Buy Warner Bros. Discovery”

H5A. FEATURE, Culture and Society (Over 1,000 Words)

Kaleb Horton, *Esse Magazine*, "Do or Die: George Harrison's Love for Formula 1"

<https://bit.ly/4rcaUSL>

Judges' comment: A delightful, cleverly written romp underpinned and propelled by truly original reporting and a good story

2nd: Jess McHugh, *Noema Magazine*, "The Ark-Builders Saving Fragile Bits Of Our World"

3rd: Peter Kiefer, *The Hollywood Reporter*, "Vanessa Bryant vs. Hollywood: Inside the Secret Kobe Bryant Footage You May Never See"

H5B. FEATURE, Entertainment (Over 1,000 Words)

Rebecca Milzoff, *Billboard*, "'Weird Al' Yankovic on His Unexpected Longevity, Biggest Tour Ever & Creative Freedom: 'Nobody Owns Any Piece of Me'"

<https://bit.ly/4ujkPJe>

Judges' comment: The amount of reporting from people in Weird Al's orbit and strong narrative style made this engaging from start to finish and painted a fresh picture of this unique American icon.

2nd: Gary Baum, *The Hollywood Reporter*, "Prize Fight: Inside an Oscar Family Feud"

3rd: Trish Deitch, *Variety*, "Jamie Lee Curtis: 'I Can't Not Be Who I Am'"

H6. FEATURE (Under 1,000 Words)

Selome Hailu, *Variety*, "How Planned Parenthood's Caren Spruch Works With Lena Dunham and Other Creatives to Sensitively Portray Abortion on Screen"

<https://wp.me/pc8uak-1IG4QN>

Judges' comment: This story is a great example of blending the right quotations with just enough background information that anybody could read and understand. Intriguing, thoughtful, and overall very well done.

2nd: Brad A. Johnson, *OLTRE*, "Showdown at The Grand"

3rd: Michael Saponara, *Billboard*, "Country Power Players Innovator: BigXThaPlug"

H7. ENTERTAINMENT FEATURE, TV/Streaming Related

Katie Kilkenny, *The Hollywood Reporter*, "The Microdrama Production Gold Rush Is Here"

<https://tinyurl.com/bdekbkk7>

Judges' comment: Very well researched, easy to read, great lede and conclusion.

2nd: Todd Spangler, *Variety*, "YouTube at 20: How the Video Colossus Launched the Creator Economy and Turned From Hollywood Foe to Friend"

3rd: Steve Pond, *TheWrap*, "Noah Wyle Isn't Happy That the Healthcare Crisis Has Given 'The Pitt' Such Rich Material for Drama"

H8. ENTERTAINMENT FEATURE, Film Related

Ramin Setoodeh, *Variety*, "Julia Roberts, Andrew Garfield and Ayo Edebiri Aren't Holding Back: 'After the Hunt' Stars on Making the Year's Most Provocative Movie"

<https://tinyurl.com/bddf8en2>

Judges' comment: Great quotes, a well-researched piece, thoughtful questions were asked and great summary of the film being spoken about.

2nd: Brent Lang, *Variety*, "Benedict Cumberbatch Tells All on Doctor Strange's Future, His New Sundance Film and Not Being Your Typical Movie Star: 'I'm Not Brad, I'm Not Leo'"

3rd: Glenn Whipp, *Los Angeles Times: The Envelope Magazine*, "An oral history of the 'Sinners' musical sequence: Inside the year's best scene"

H9. ENTERTAINMENT FEATURE, Music Related

Ethan Shanfeld, *Variety*, "Inside the Diddy Trial Circus: How Screaming Fans, Baby Oil and Street Preachers Turned the Courthouse Into a Madhouse"

<https://wp.me/pc8uak-1lG0Ld>

Judges' comment: Great lede, article paints vivid summary of what the chaos was like in the courtroom.

2nd: Selome Hailu, *Variety*, "Sabrina Carpenter's Wild Year of 'Man's Best Friend,' Taylor Swift and Growing Up: 'It's Not My Fault I Got a Job When I Was 12 and You Won't Let Me Evolve'"

3rd: Lyndsey Parker, *FLOOD Magazine*, "The House Gorillaz Built"

H10. ENTERTAINMENT FEATURE, Theater/Performing Arts Related

Hannah Dailey, *Billboard*, "Meet the College Marching Bands Who Play Hits By Chappell Roan, Tyler, the Creator & More"

<https://bit.ly/4s5b5Rd>

Judges' comment: In-depth explanations of music selection, good lede, story keeps reader's attention throughout, and interesting sources.

2nd: Chris Willman, *Variety*, "Adam Lambert on Playing the Emcee in Broadway's 'Cabaret,' and Why Its Anti-Fascist Themes Hit Harder Now Than When He Began the Run: 'It's Wild, How Relevant It Is'"

3rd: Seth Abramovitch, *The Hollywood Reporter*, "David Blaine Has One More (Deadly) Trick Up His Sleeve"

H11. ENTERTAINMENT NEWS

Adam Chitwood, *TheWrap*, "Late Night Comedy Discovers the Dangers of Resistance Under Trump 2.0"

<https://tinyurl.com/3ssr23bx>

Judges' comment: This winning entry examines why late-night comedians are willing to risk losing their jobs to poke fun at Donald Trump. Even as their corporate parents are paying large sums of money to settle lawsuits brought by Trump, the comedians' critiques have become more pointed in the president's second term.

2nd: Todd Spangler, *Variety*, “How Netflix’s WB Megadeal Stunned Hollywood — and Sparked a Fight From David Ellison”

3rd: Katie Kilkeny, *The Hollywood Reporter*, “Trump’s Man With a Plan in Hollywood Opens Up”

H12. PERSONALITY PROFILE, Film Personalities

Trish Deitch, *Variety*, “Jamie Lee Curtis: ‘I Can’t Not Be Who I Am’”

<http://bit.ly/3MULdrN>

Judges’ comment: Wonderful profile on Jamie Lee Curtis, covering all facets of her life, the prizes and the pitfall she has endured. Great feature piece.

2nd: Kate Aurthur, *Variety*, “Tatum O’Neal Is Still Here: The Oscar Winner on Surviving Addiction, a Stroke and Coming to Terms With Being Left Out of Her Father’s Will”

3rd: Lacey Rose, *The Hollywood Reporter*, “The Second Coming of Ariana Grande”

H13. PERSONALITY PROFILE, TV Personalities

Lisa Friedman Bloch, *Beverly Hills Courier*, “Byron Allen | How His Extraordinary Journey Created a Media Empire”

<https://bit.ly/4qEqw1e>

Judges’ comment: Bloch leaves no stone unturned in profiling Byron Allen. This is not a typical TV personality profile. It is well researched, well written and a great read.

2nd: Michael Schneider, *Variety*, “Kathy Bates, Still Badass: The Icon on ‘Matlock,’ Saying ‘F— You’ to Weight Loss Critics and Why Being an Old Emmy Nominee Is a ‘Badge of Honor’”

3rd: Angelique Jackson, *Variety*, “Harrison Ford Goes Deep on ‘Star Wars,’ His First Emmy Nomination for ‘Shrinking’ and the Future of America: ‘Rich Get Richer. Poor Get Poorer. That Ain’t Right’”

H14. PERSONALITY PROFILE, Music/Theater Personalities

Lisa Friedman Bloch, *Beverly Hills Courier*, “Gustavo Dudamel: The Legacy of a Megastar Maestro, Feature Interview”

<https://bit.ly/4aUhp7S>

Judges’ comment: Bloch’s profile of Gustavo Dudamel is highly readable and shares telling details of the maestro, both from his past and present.

2nd: Angelique Jackson, *Variety*, “A\$AP Rocky, Movie Star: The Rapper on Method Acting With Denzel Washington, Planning a Film With Rihanna and Being ‘Blessed to Work’ After Assault Trial”

3rd: Nicole Fell, *The Hollywood Reporter*, “Rosé Can’t Chill”

H15. PERSONALITY PROFILE, Politics/Business/Arts Personalities

Seth Abramovitch, *The Hollywood Reporter*, “How Ben Shapiro Conquered the MAGA-verse”

<https://tinyurl.com/4xjct4dm>

Judges’ comment: A must-read peek behind the scenes in the world of a powerful player.

2nd: Gary Baum, *The Hollywood Reporter*, "The Righteous Fury of Spencer Pratt"

3rd: Elsa Keslassy, *Variety*, "Is Mubi Really Worth \$1 Billion? Inside Efe Cakarel's Plan to Make the Global Streamer Cooler Than A24"

H16. IN-HOUSE or CORPORATE PUBLICATION

Susan Bell, Letty Avila, *USC Dornsife Magazine*, "USC Dornsife Magazine, The Life Issue"

<http://bit.ly/3OLL1vQ>

Judges' comment: "The Life Issue" is a beautifully ambitious and thought-provoking collection that explores the complexity and wonder of life through rich storytelling and interdisciplinary insight.

2nd: Joseph Wakelee-Lynch, Maureen Pacino and Jon Rou, *LMU Magazine*, "Japanese American Incarceration: How It Happened Here"

I. BROADCAST – ANY OUTLET TV/Film/Radio/Podcast

I1. HUMOR/SATIRE WRITING

Andrew Heaton, Austin Bragg, Meredith Bragg, John Carter, *Reason Magazine*, "Andor v. Star Trek: How Star Wars gets government right"

<https://bit.ly/47whSv1>

Judges' comment: This was a thoughtful commentary that made deft use of comedic devices to keep the viewer engaged and convey interesting arguments about U.S. politics.

2nd: Gustavo Arellano and Stacey Grenrock Woods, *Alta Journal*, "Ask a Californian"

3rd: Patt Morrison, *Los Angeles Times*, "How Crazy Are Ice Cream Flavors? Brace Yourselves"

I2. OBITUARY/IN APPRECIATION

Mary Beth McDade, John Fenoglio, *KTLA*, "Ozzy Osbourne Remembered"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WzAwefW0drI>

Judges' comment: More than a highlight reel of Ozzy Osbourne's career, this piece chronicled the struggles, the layers and the impact of the man Gene Simmons called a "singularity" in the music world.

2nd: Cher Calvin, Micah Ohlman, Nick Greitzer, Todd Griffith and Pete Wilgoren, *KTLA*, "Hollywood Tragedy: Remembering Rob and Michele Reiner"

3rd: George Pennacchio and Cheryl Diano, *KABC-TV Los Angeles*, "Reminiscing on the Life & Career of Bobby Sherman"

I3. PUBLIC SERVICE NEWS or FEATURE

Erin Stone, *LAist*, "911 calls during the Eaton Fire"

<https://tinyurl.com/5yfpmtvs>

Judges' comment: This excellent reporting tells the story of one family's tragic loss in the devastating LA fires with compassion and craft. But more than that, it asks how it happened that emergency services failed to evacuate a father and son who were unable to leave their burning home due to disability. Stone also took a broader view of the emergency system for people with special needs, asking activists and the family what needs to change to prevent this from happening again.

2nd: Rebuilding L.A. Team, Kate Cagle, Megan Larson, Jordan Paterson and Megan Botel, Los Angeles Times Studios, "Tapped Out: What We Learned About Why A Key Reservoir Was Empty When The Fires Came"

3rd: PBS SoCal Staff, PBS SoCal, "Lost LA: When the St. Francis Dam Collapsed"

14. BUSINESS REPORTING

Renee Eng, Cory Minderhout, Paul Nankivell, MacKenzie Sherwood, Sasa Brakovic, Spectrum News, "Hiding In Plain Sight"

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1CfUs-75MaODyUxxcT2A7MZC_PbpEAWGU/view?usp=sharing

Judges' comment: A very good look at an issue that affects a lot of people in California: unlicensed cannabis shops. Solid investigation that follows the threads where they lead. Good sourcing, solid document and court reporting and impact on a large number of people that informs and digs deep.

2nd: Megan Jamerson, KCRW, "The Waymos are coming. How worried should Uber and Lyft be?"

3rd: Clare O'Connor, *Investor's Business Daily*, "Inside The AI Job Shock: CEOs Warn Of Massive Disruption"

15. ACTIVISM JOURNALISM

PBS SoCal Staff, PBS SoCal, "PST ART: For Dear Life: Art, Medicine & Disability"

<https://www.pbssocal.org/shows/pst-fusing-art-science/episodes/for-dear-life-art-medicine-and-disability>

Judges' comment: A moving and elegantly produced look at how disabled artists like Katherine Sherwood have explored their conditions through art.

2nd: PBS SoCal in association with Daniel H. Birman Productions, *PBS SoCal*, "Earth Focus: Combating Climate Change with Trees"

3rd: Zach Weissmueller, John Osterhoudt and Lex Villena, *Reason Magazine*, "Snowden was right. Now Trump should pardon him."

16. MEDICAL/HEALTH REPORTING

Neil Steinberg, Mark Jonathan Harris, Steve Purcell, Karin Hayes, Ken Dychtwald, PBS SoCal, "Aging in America: Survive or Thrive"

<https://bit.ly/4buKacg>

Judges' comment: A sweeping and exhaustive look at how our health care system is dealing with an aging population and how we care for aging Americans. It is rare to see such depth in

reporting on an issue that is very difficult to help people understand. It's done with reporting on people, on programs, on history and the issues that Americans everywhere, not just in California, need to understand how we begin to address the cost and morality of caring for a changing population. Slickly produced with humanity.

2nd: Elizabeth Zwerling, *WHYY - The Pulse*, "When Should Patients Decide for Themselves?"

3rd: Jill Replogle, *LAist*, "Health workers say ICE agents at hospitals are compromising patient care"

17. SCIENCE REPORTING

PBS SoCal Staff, *PBS SoCal*, "Lost LA: Space Shuttle"

<https://www.pbssocal.org/shows/lost-la/episodes/space-shuttle>

Judges' comment: In an absorbing and eye-opening video, the PBS SoCal staff trace the history of the space shuttle program, emphasizing its SoCal roots in design, building, and flights, and showing the Endeavor ending as an L.A. science center monument.

2nd: PBS SoCal Staff, *PBS SoCal*, "PST ART: Remote Sensing"

3rd: David Ono, *KABC-TV*, "We Should Have Known"

18. LOCAL POLITICS/GOVERNMENT REPORTING

Giselle Fernandez, Anaconda Street Productions, Seth Katz, Spectrum News 1 Team, *Spectrum News 1 SoCal*, "LA Stories with Giselle Fernandez - 'Rick Caruso'"

<https://vimeo.com/1059878332?share=copy&fl=cl&fe=ci>

Judges' comment: The devastating wildfires that tore through Los Angeles in January 2025 will have repercussions on the city's politics, economy and culture for years to come. This is a thoughtful and in-depth look on the issues the city is facing as it works to rebuild through the perspective of one man.

2nd: Frank Stoltze and Brianna Lee, *LAist*, "Prop 50: Is California's redistricting push a threat to democracy or a defense of it"

3rd: Juliet Lemar, *KSBY News*, "No nurse, no evidence: The Nursing Shortage Failing Survivors of Sexual Assault"

19. NATIONAL POLITICS/GOVERNMENT REPORTING

Kate Cagle, Diana Romo, Eric Karkheck, Jose Guzman, *Spectrum News 1*, "Redrawing California: Prop 50 Special Election"

<https://bit.ly/40MpBBh>

Judges' comment: This was an exceptionally clear and engaging explanation of the Prop 50 issue with an interesting mix of advocate, politician and everyday person interviews that gave context not found in other reporting on the issue.

2nd: Elex Michaelson, Debbie Kim, Tony Buttitta and Greg Lindsay, *KTTV FOX 11 Los Angeles*, "Pres. Trump's Unprecedented First Week"

3rd: Cher Calvin, Micah Ohlman, Nick Greitzer, Eytan Wallace and Chris Wolfe, *KTLA*, “Election Night in America: Prop 50 passes as Democrats win big in NYC, NJ, and VA”

I10. ENVIRONMENTAL REPORTING

PBS Staff, Balance Media, *PBS*, “Weathered: Inside the L.A. Firestorm”

<https://bit.ly/4IYZFMJ>

Judges’ comment: “Weathered” does a skillful, compassionate and even-handed job digging into the environmental and urban factors driving conflagrations, searching for both answers and solutions. Very well produced, relevant and thorough.

2nd: Jacob Margolis, *LAist*, “Illegal dumping in the Southern California desert”

3rd: Sarah Pilla, *Spectrum News 1*, “Saving Kelp: Preserving and Ocean Forest”

I11. EDUCATION REPORTING

Antonia Cereijido, Mariana Dale and Natalie Chudnovsky, *LAist*, “Imperfect Paradise: Did the cellphone ban in high schools work?”

<https://tinyurl.com/vbxcxpe9>

Judges’ comment: The impact of technology in the classroom is one of the most important issues facing education today, and a concern that has exploded into the public consciousness in recent years as teachers, parents and politicians all grapple with solutions. This is a deeply-reported look at one school district’s response to the challenge that includes the perspective of those most directly affected — the students themselves.

2nd: Renee Eng, Cory Minderhout and Lee Ortlieb, *Spectrum News 1*, “Department of Education workforce cuts leave fewer attorneys to handle massive backlog of civil rights enforcement cases”

3rd: Christine Devine, Sam Dubin, Morgan Martini and Steve Thorp, *KTTV FOX 11*, “Prison Bachelor's Degree”

I12. SOLUTIONS JOURNALISM

Phillip Palmer, *ABC7 Los Angeles*, “Rebuilding from the Camp Fire”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mCD15XP54NQ&t=1s>

Judges’ comment: Outstanding in-depth report covering all angles of the City of Paradise Tragedy and how we must apply the lessons to the Palisades and Eaton Fires.

2nd: Nick Gillespie, Justin Zuckerman, Hana Ko, Ian Keyser and Lex Villena, *Reason Magazine*, “How Texas beat California on housing”

3rd: PBS SoCal Team and Daniel H. Birman Productions, *PBS SoCal*, “Earth Focus: Rewiring California: Outages & Innovation”

I13. RACE AND SOCIETY REPORTING, Racial Histories

Antonia Cereijido, Natalie Chudnovsky and James Chow, *LAist*, “Rebuild or leave? One Black family in Altadena decides their future after Eaton Fire”

<https://tinyurl.com/mv4h66b9>

Judges' comment: In a compelling audio story, LAist skillfully weaves the past, present and future of Black families in Altadena, from redlining to fire to the fight to hold on to what you have in a changing world.

2nd: PBS SoCal in association with Tivuron, *PBS SoCal*, "Coastal California: Agua Por Vida: Sleepy Lagoon Mural Project"

3rd: Scott Hays, *OC World*, "Keeping Tradition Alive"

I14. RACE AND SOCIETY REPORTING, Individual Profiles

Giselle Fernandez, Anaconda Street Productions, Seth Katz, Spectrum News 1 Team, *Spectrum News 1 SoCal*, "LA Stories with Giselle Fernandez - 'Debbie Allen and Brayden Jordan'"

<https://vimeo.com/1063756112?share=copy&fl=sv&fe=ci>

Judges' comment: Spectrum News and Giselle Fernandez thoughtfully tell the stories of some truly exceptional individuals. The piece is engaging from start to finish with compelling interviews, strong visuals and powerful storytelling.

2nd: PBS SoCal Staff, *PBS SoCal*, "Lost LA: Floyd Norman - Disney's Groundbreaking Black Animator"

3rd: Anabel Munoz, Michael Cervantes, Saul Clemente and Jason Burks, *KABC-TV*, "Songs From the Hole"

I15. IMMIGRATION REPORTING

Megan Jamerson, KCRW, "Immigrant day laborers learn how to do risky fire cleanup"

<https://bit.ly/4lg3ZXD>

Judges' comment: An important but easy to overlook angle on the fallout from the catastrophic L.A. wildfires told compellingly, thoroughly and sensitively. Strong soundbites, great characters and engaging storytelling - well done!

2nd: NBC4 News Team, *NBC4*, "Immigration Raids in LA"

3rd: Carlos Saucedo and Ken Koller, *KTLA*, "OC family struggles after family detained by ICE"

I16. GENDER AND SOCIETY REPORTING

Megan Jamerson, NPR, "Clinic for trans youth in LA closes, leaving some families struggling to find care"

<https://bit.ly/4lds7da>

Judges' comment: Through interviews and excellent narration, Jamerson covers this disappointment and passions of trans minors losing gender-affirming care when doctors and hospitals feared federal government funding cuts under a Trump anti-trans executive order.

2nd: Omar Younis and Sandra Stojanovic, *Reuters TV*, "Transgender influencer takes on Trump over passports"

3rd: Kimberly Cornell, Olivia De Bortoli and Kris Arciaga, *KTLA*, "LA: Unscripted: Queer Surf"

I17. CRIME REPORTING

Susan Leibowitz, Chetna Joshi, Ann Preisman, Robert Higgins, Sergei Ivonin, *Dateline NBC*, “Sean Combs: The Insiders Speak”

<https://app.frame.io/reviews/85717924-87c5-458a-a0b8-69aafd796904/429373b0-511c-4404-858c-dd907f98335e>

Judges’ comment: *Dateline NBC*’s special report on the Sean Combs case is a well-produced and complete package, offering important context and background, strong interviews, and the latest breaking developments.

2nd: NBC4 News Team, *NBCLA*, “Menendez Brother's Resentencing Hearing”

3rd: David Ketterling and Vince Sturla, *Dateline NBC*, “The Prince, The Whiz Kid, & The Millionaire”

I18. SPORTS

David Ono, *KABC-TV*, “FACEism: The Lantern”

<https://youtu.be/UKq1zOVzs9s>

Judges’ comment: This broadcast was informative, engaging and succinct.

2nd: Scott Hays, *OC World*, “Todd Marinovich on Football, Addiction and Art as Therapy”

3rd: Megan Ely, Andy Schlachtenhaufen, Nathan Palm and Adam Vandekerchove, *Spectrum News 1*, “Beyond The Sport: Pali High Football”

I19. WEATHER or TRAFFIC REPORT

Gene Kang, *KTLA5 News*, “Stormy Night”

<https://tinyurl.com/GeneKangStorms>

Judges’ comment: Gene Kang's weathercast stands out as top-tier, combining clear delivery with an engaging, polished presentation that makes the forecast especially compelling.

2nd: Paul Deanno, *CBS LA*, “CBS LA Next Weather Forecast”

J. TELEVISION/FILM Broadcast, including online and cable TV, produced in Southern California.

J1. REGULARLY SCHEDULED NEWSCAST

CBS LA AT 11PM Staff, *CBS LA*, “CBS LA AT 11PM”

<https://youtu.be/HA82JZIngel>

Judges’ comment: An engaging, well produced and well-paced newscast that gives audiences more than just information they need, it also provides information they can act on.

2nd: Spectrum News 1 Staff, *Spectrum News 1*, “Your Evening on Spectrum News 1”

3rd: ABC7 Eyewitness News Team, *KABC-TV*, “Eyewitness News at 4pm”

J2. ANCHOR/HOST

David Ono, KABC-TV

<https://youtu.be/dbo2snvDhJY>

Judges' comment: Working as an anchor is difficult work, but anchoring a breaking news story takes special talent and dedication. David Ono leads viewers through the fire coverage with confidence despite the fire's and the coverage's changing landscape.

2nd: Lisa McRee, *Spectrum News 1*

3rd: Nathan Masters, *PBS SoCal*

J3. VIDEOGRAPHER

Antonio Diaz, PBS SoCal, "Rebel Kitchens Southern California"

<https://www.pbssocal.org/shows/rebel-kitchens-southern-california/episodes/after-the-city-shut-him-down-he-kept-the-fire-going>

Judges' comment: Excellent use of colors, lighting, smoke, and slow motion in the beginning to help illustrate Daniel Castillo's point of being "underground" bbq. Good framing on the interview and b-roll shots.

2nd: Emily Topper, *PBS SoCal, "Art & Science Collide"*

3rd: Matt Bass, *PBS SoCal, "PST ART: Color in Motion"*

J4. BREAKING NEWS

CNN Staff, CNN, "LA Wildfires"

<https://vimeo.com/1166135074/1401eba2ec?fl=pl&fe=sh>

Judges' comment: CNN's coverage of California's wildfires is of the highest quality. It is responsible, compassionate and enterprising, going beyond news conferences and on-scene commentary to elevate stories of the community.

2nd: ABC7 Eyewitness News Team, *KABC-TV, "SoCal Firestorm"*

3rd: CBS LA Team, *CBS LA, "SoCal Fires"*

J5. INVESTIGATIVE REPORTING

Ross Palumbo, CBS LA, "High & Dry: Uncovering Hundreds of Broken Hydrants in Wake of Palisades Fire"

<https://youtu.be/18XM3liTzD0>

Judges' comment: In a shocking broadcast segment about the LA fires, Palumbo reveals that hundreds of fire hydrants, including some in the Palisades burn area, were needing repair as city departments feuded over the number.

2nd: Renee Eng, Cory Minderhout, Luca DeSando-Grassi, Paul Nankivell and Francisco Coronel, *Spectrum News 1, "Trashed: Illegal Dumping"*

3rd: Mary Beth McDade, *KTLA, "Cult-like California religious group at center of missing persons investigation"*

J6. NEWS FEATURE (Over 5 Minutes)

Connie Schulte, Andres F Pruna, *KMEX-TV*, “Entre Cenizas Y Esperanza”
<https://vimeo.com/1122270983>

Judges’ comment: A comprehensive and empathetic look at the aftermath of Los Angeles’s worst urban fire ever. Residents share stories of their struggles and small victories.

2nd: Robert Kovacik and David Gregory, *NBC LA*, “The Palisades Paintings”

3rd: Andy Schlachtenhaufen, *Spectrum News 1*, “LA Times Today | Saving Altadena’s Trees”

J7. NEWS FEATURE (Under 5 Minutes)

Mark Potts, *Los Angeles Times*, “Christmas Tree Lane lights up, bringing hope to fire-ravaged Altadena”

<https://tinyurl.com/4xsxz4xm>

Judges’ comment: A vibrant story, both visually and in the subject matter, capturing the preservation of a beloved community tradition after tragic fires.

2nd: Renee Eng, *Spectrum News 1*, “Cycle of Giving Back”

3rd: Phillip Ige, *KTLA 5*, “Karate For All”

J8. HUMAN INTEREST FEATURE (Over 5 Minutes)

PBS SoCal in association with Life & Thyme, *PBS SoCal*, “Rebel Kitchens Southern California: How a Simple Pastry Changed This Chef’s Life”

<https://www.pbssocal.org/shows/rebel-kitchens-southern-california/episodes/how-a-simple-pastry-changed-this-chefs-life>

Judges’ comment: This entry was hyper-focused on a Los Angeles kitchen that was made from scratch and a dream. It follows a local’s inspiring storyline, accompanied by excellent shots, audio, and overall production, keeping viewers engaged from start to finish.

2nd: Zach Weissmueller, John Osterhoudt and Lex Villena, *Reason Magazine*, “Why Trump made a deal to free Ross Ulbricht”

3rd: Aitana Vargas, *La Cronista & La Opinión*, “Uvalde: El Precio de un Tiroteo Masivo”

J9. HUMAN INTEREST FEATURE (Under 5 Minutes)

Kimberly Cornell, Angel C. Kim, Dayna Devon, Ernesto Huerta-Juarez, *KTLA*, “LA Unscripted: Rock Steady Boxing”

<https://bit.ly/4v8qBO4>

Judges’ comment: This was a very skillful presentation of people overcoming adversity through the care and assistance of others, and it illuminated an important pathway for those who may be seeking help.

2nd: Laura Diaz, Sam Dubin and Art Talavera, *KTTV*, “Milagro Cinema”

3rd: PBS SoCal Staff, *PBS SoCal*, “Lost LA: The Hidden Film Studio Behind Atomic History”

J10. LIFESTYLE FEATURE

Harry Buerkle, Tiffany Taylor, Jason Rovou, Maer Roshan, *The Hollywood Reporter*, “Meet the Video Store Owner Defying the Streaming Era”

<https://bit.ly/4bNUo7d>

Judges’ comment: This is a unique, endearing story many can relate to. The b-roll is well-timed and the story flow is engaging. It is quirky yet sharp. There is a sophistication to the framing of the shots.

2nd: PBS SoCal in association with Life & Thyme, *PBS SoCal*, “Rebel Kitchens: The Smuggled 69-year-old Sourdough Starter at Le Le’s Core”

3rd: PBS SoCal, *PBS SoCal*, “PST ART: Views of Planet City”

J11. ENTERTAINMENT NEWS or FEATURE (Over 5 Minutes)

Seija Rankin, Jason Rovou, Lesley Corral, Stephanie Fischette, Maer Roshan, *The Hollywood Reporter*, “Jennifer Lawrence, Cynthia Erivo, Amanda Seyfried & More at the THR Actress Roundtable”

<https://bit.ly/4vbET0w>

Judges’ comment: Revealing, enlightening-- and a fun roundtable discussion with some very talented people.

2nd: PBS SoCal Staff, *PBS SoCal*, “Lost LA: Animation”

3rd: PBS SoCal Staff, *PBS SoCal*, “PST ART: Color in Motion: Chromatic Explorations of Cinema”

J12. ENTERTAINMENT NEWS or FEATURE (Under 5 Minutes)

Tara Lynn Wagner, *Spectrum News 1*, “The Role of a Lifetime”

<https://bit.ly/47uTMAZ>

Judges’ comment: I loved the inside look at the professionals who are an intrinsic part of making an opera production work -- not by being the stars, but by creating the visual and musical tapestries so the stars can shine and the audience can enjoy the spectacle.

2nd: Gene Kang, *KTLA5 News*, “Breaking: Jimmy Kimmel Is Back”

3rd: Robert Kovacic and Susan Monroe, *NBC Los Angeles*, “Debbie Allen: Dancing in the Light”

J13. ENTERTAINMENT PERSONALITY PROFILE/INTERVIEW

Giselle Fernandez, Anaconda Street Productions, Seth Katz, *Spectrum News 1 Team*, *Spectrum News 1 SoCal*, “LA Stories with Giselle Fernandez - ‘Ozomatli’”

<https://vimeo.com/1113077478?share=copy&fl=cl&fe=ci>

Judge’s comment: In a category stacked with excellent entries, 'Ozomatli' stands out. This profile gets straight to the heartbeat of this hometown ensemble and to their roots and their reach in the community. The storytelling is compelling, flowing and focused. A timely news feature.

2nd: PBS SoCal Team and Sunny and Mild Media, *PBS SoCal*, “Locationland: Road Trip with “Grease” Director Randal Kleiser”

3rd: Tiana DeNicola, *Variety*, "Hilary Duff on Her Musical Comeback, the Stories Behind Her Early Hits, and the Role That Started It All"

J14. NON-ENTERTAINMENT PERSONALITY PROFILE/INTERVIEW

David Ono, *KABC-TV*, "FACEism: 9066"

<https://youtu.be/ujRYjXWf8mU>

Judges' comment: An emotional illustration of how the past informs the present, through the powerful interview of Toshi Ito.

2nd: Steven Lange, Alison Martino, Austin Harris and Jeffrey McHale, *Spectrum News1 SoCal*, "Will Rogers Great Granddaughter"

3rd: Giselle Fernandez, Anaconda Street Productions, Seth Katz and the Spectrum News 1 Team, *Spectrum News 1*, "LA Stories with Giselle Fernandez | Father Greg Boyle"

J15. TALK/PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Elex Michaelson, Debbie Kim, Sam Dubin, Greg Lindsay, Dustin Parker, *KTTV FOX 11 Los Angeles*, "Mayor Bass' 1st Interview"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DAi4qm7jVQ&t=4s>

Judges' comment: Holding power to account is one of the basic tenets of journalism, and this program does it well in an interview with Los Angeles Mayor Bass

2nd: Dr. Angela Sadler Williamson, *KLCS PBS*, "Performing Arts Studio West"

3rd: Cher Calvin, Micah Ohlman, Nick Greitzer, Todd Griffith and Christine Miceli, *KTLA*, "U.S. Ports see shipment slump amid Trump-China tariff war"

J16. FEATURE DOCUMENTARY (Over 25 Minutes)

Dateline Staff, *Dateline NBC*, "Fire & Ash: Devastation in L.A."

<http://bit.ly/4v2GWUDU>

Judges' comment: An extensive and thoughtful look at the devastation of the fires and the hope that residents are left with to move ahead. The involvement of reporters who had history in the area brought viewers closer to the emotion of the loss.

2nd: Peter Jones, John Bard Manulis, Taylor Vracin-Harrell, David Jakubovic and Salia Hovanec, *PBS SoCal*, "Fortunate Sons"

3rd: Yarel Ramos, Sandra Cervantes, Arturo Quezada, Susana Meza and Angie Gonzalez, *N+Univision 34 Los Angeles*, "Desterrados: Inmigrantes en la mira"

J17. DOCUMENTARY SHORT (Under 25 Minutes)

Morgan Chesky, Jon Gerberg, Steven Louie, Tate James, Alexandra Chaidez, *NBC News*, "This Hit Home: Reporting on the Texas Hill Country Floods"

<https://bit.ly/4lQPI9e>

Judges' comment: This short documentary does an impressive job telling both the story of a disaster-ravaged small town and the journalist sent to cover the aftermath.

2nd: Seth Katz, Diana Romo, Andy Schlachtenhaufen and Jose Guzman, *Spectrum News 1*,
“Candelas Guitars: A Legacy of Family and Music”
3rd: PBS SoCal Staff, *PBS SoCal*, “SoCal Snowy Owl”

K. AUDIO JOURNALISM

Radio broadcast, podcast or stream produced in Southern California.

K1. ANCHOR/HOST

Scott Feinberg, *The Hollywood Reporter*

<https://tinyurl.com/4vrrvund>

Judges’ comment: The host did an amazing job of sharing Alec Baldwin’s accolades over the years. The hosts’ knowledge of Alec’s history I believe encouraged a very open discussion inspiring Alec to share a lot of great information. The host had done his homework with the result being a compelling interview.

2nd: Ana Garcia, *True Crime News: The Podcast*

3rd: Michael Schneider, Clayton Davis, Jazz Tangcay and Emily Longeretta, *Variety*

K2. BREAKING NEWS or NEWS FEATURE

Megan Jamerson, *NPR*, “LA artist gets over 1,000 requests after volunteering to draw homes lost to wildfires”

<https://bit.ly/40gvLtp>

Judges’ comment: This is a compelling story that takes a hard news angle and lends a quality feature and positive moment that came from a dark time.

2nd: Susan Valot, *Freelance for KCRW*, “Altadena Mosaic Takes Shape from Ashes – And Broken Shards”

3rd: Caroline Feraday, *KCLU Radio*, “Funding loss could lead to crisis for early childcare”

K3. NEWS FEATURE, see K2

K4. LIFESTYLE FEATURE

Caroline Feraday, *KCLU*, “A rescue camel lives with his human best friend on a ranch”

<https://bit.ly/3LZWd6X>

Judges’ comment: This story was brilliantly done. It was funny, interesting and perfectly paced.

2nd: Robert Garrova, *LAist*, “The macabre history of the Verdugo Hills Cemetery”

3rd: Lisa Niver, *Make Your Own Map*, “Explore Wild Ireland with Founder Killian McLaughlin!”

K5. PERSONALITY PROFILE/INTERVIEW, Entertainment Personalities (Over 10 Minutes)

Lyndsey Parker, *Lyndsanity*, "The unguarded moments: The Church's Steve Kilbey opens up about 45-year career, loveless fascinations with Duran Duran and record label 'f***ing idiots and philistines,' and more"

<http://bit.ly/3JFwHCq>

Judges' comment: The unguarded moments: The Church's Steve Kilbey opens up about 45-year career, loveless fascinations with Duran Duran and record label 'f***ing idiots and philistines,' and more -- Lyndsey Parker gives a smart, multi-faceted look at a singer and songwriter who gracefully and uniquely describes close to 50 years of survival as an artist.

2nd: Larry Mantle, *LAist*, "Notable AirTalk super fan and actress Kristen Bell joins the program"

3rd: Angelique Jackson, *Variety*, "Marsai Martin on Navigating the Transition From Child Producer to Mogul in the Making: 'I've Learned What It Takes to Become a Legend'"

K6. PERSONALITY PROFILE/INTERVIEW, Non-Entertainment Personalities (Over 10 Minutes)

Billy Binion, *Reason Magazine*, "Helen Prejean: Why This Nun Is Fighting To End the Death Penalty"

<https://bit.ly/4lXi0tr>

Judges' comment: Insightful interview and profoundly passionate.

2nd: Lisa Niver, *Make Your Own Map*, "Tara Schuster Isn't Afraid to Go There—And You'll Be Glad She Did"

3rd: Esther D. Kustanowitz and Erin Benmoche, *The Bagel Report*, "Breaking Down the Prince of Egypt with Tzivia Schwartz-Getzug"

K7. PERSONALITY PROFILE/INTERVIEW (Under 10 Minutes)

Julia Paskin, *LAist*, "Artist Gary Tyler turns 40 years of wrongful imprisonment into powerful textiles"

<https://tinyurl.com/45pvdvfx>

Judges' comment: Very well done, entertaining and informative.

2nd: Caroline Feraday, *KCLU Radio*, "Ojai singer-songwriter behind 'The Rose' reflects on the song that changed her life"

3rd: Caroline Feraday, *KCLU*, "One of the most influential labor activists of modern times"

K8. INVESTIGATIVE

N/A

K9. ENTERTAINMENT REPORTING

Heather Brooker, *KFI News/iHeartRadio*, "The Benn Family - From Ashes to AGT"

<https://on.soundcloud.com/QUqEc9FBqzqr8sGg7F>

Judges' comment: Very nimbly done, as the reporter appeared and disappeared seamlessly, allowing the subjects and supporting characters of the piece to actually tell the story. The music in the background was actually pitch perfect, as far how much, and the timing of how loud and how softly it could be heard. Although the human struggle/America's Got Talent hook

is what that show is based upon, it did not detract from the family's desire to re-connect with and repair their neighborhood from not only a construction standpoint, but also the relationships that were lost for the moment, and how they used music to do it. This report stood out discernably from the rest of the entries.

2nd: Caroline Feraday, *KCLU*, "Mane attraction: The therapy horses with a Hollywood connection bringing joy to seniors"

3rd: Kassidy Hudson, *AnnenbergMedia*, "The Trans Chorus of L.A. Transcends Gender Roles"

K10. USE OF SOUND

Robert Garrova, *LAist*, "These old, trippy recordings of nature are inspiring Angelenos to use sound for art and healing"

<https://tinyurl.com/ytmkfwzw>

Judges' comment: This piece combining narration and ambient sounds makes for a very useful mental wellness/stress reduction resource.

2nd: Caroline Feraday, *KCLU Radio*, "The unique and adventurous program making commercial diving accessible"

3rd: Susan Valot, *KCRW*, "Keeping Yosemite Clean, One Piece of Toilet Paper at a Time"

K11. REGULAR PODCAST

Josh Schimmels, *Los Angeles Business Journal*, "PNC C-Speak: The Language of Executives"

<https://bit.ly/4dhuSsc>

Judges' comment: Outstanding episode shining the light on how Women's Sports, Female Executives, and Revenue & Salaries of Women are finally getting their shine.

2nd: California Book Club, *Alta Journal*, "California Book Club: Lisa See"

3rd: Antonia Cereijido and Larry Mantle, *LAist*, "The first five days: Inside LA's most destructive wildfires"

K12. LIMITED SERIES PODCAST

Christopher Goffard, *Los Angeles Times*, "Pandora's Box: The Fall of L.A.'s Sheriff"

<https://tinyurl.com/wxd666x2>

Judges' comment: This is well produced and keeps the listener on their toes. The storytelling and pacing is on par with an on-screen thriller. Incredibly, it's real life. Bravo!

2nd: Katie Hyson, *KPBS Public Media*, "One of Their Own"

3rd: Natalie Lopez, Mallory Carra, Megan Donis, Charles Zukoski and Allison Agsten, *AnnenbergMedia*, "Your Community, Electrified"

K13. TALK/PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Larry Mantle, *LAist*, "The rise of OnlyFans and its impact on the sex work industry"

<https://tinyurl.com/4awhmcbs>

Judges' comment: Strong storytelling, interesting topic.

2nd: Chris Greenspon and Joe Linton, *SGV Connect*, "SGV Connect 137: Olympic Cricket at the Pomona Fairplex"

3rd: Alta Journal Staff, *Alta Journal*, "Alta Journal's California Book Club"

K14. DOCUMENTARY

Lance Orozco, *KCLU Radio*, "Apocalypse: 80 Years Later"

<https://bit.ly/3Z5ZTai>

Judges' comment: A very well produced documentary. Engaging interviews keeps the listener riveted.

L. ONLINE

Exclusively published on the Internet.

L1. EDITORIALS

Bennet Kelley, *Democratic Underground*, "A Call to Action on a Somber VE Day"

<https://bit.ly/4s5GHWg>

Judges' comment: This is an eloquent and engaging call for citizens to consider the values and ideals that previous generations of Americans fought for; the institutions they created, --and their dedication to expanding and sustaining democracy. VE (Victory Europe) Day, May 1945, celebrates the defeat of fascism and Nazism, as 80 years later those dark ideals are gaining traction here. A thoughtful and relevant editorial for today.

2nd: Hans Johnson, *Local News Pasadena*, "Why Are Pasadenans Paying for Kristi Noem's Illegal Ad at Local Airport?"

3rd: Daniel Guss, *DanielGuss.Substack.com*, "Numb and Number: Karen Bass Endorses Antonio Villaraigosa for Governor"

L2. HARD NEWS

Meghann Cuniff, *Independent*, "New U.S. attorney in LA moves to strike jury's felony civil rights verdict against cop"

<https://www.legalaffairsandtrials.com/p/new-us-attorney-in-la-moves-to-strike>

Judges' comment: This important story was reported and nicely written with speed. Well done.

2nd: Alejandra Molina, Jessica Perez, Andrew Lopez and Laura Anaya-Morga, *The LA Local*, "Toddler among 6 people taken as immigration agents raid Cypress Park Home Depot"

3rd: Jeremy Lindenfeld, *Capital & Main*, "Forest Service Cuts Leave Firefighters Mowing Lawns While Morale Craters"

L3. GENERAL NEWS

Stephanie Mendez, *ABC News*, "Domestic workers in Los Angeles face financial crisis after homes they worked in were lost to the fires"

<https://bit.ly/41dTjzA>

Judges' comment: Very well constructed and economically-written piece that resists being overly sentimental and heavy-handed - It presented the event, fallout, solution, and more work-to-be-done progression very well with real life characters, who were easy to care about. Written before the ICE events in Minneapolis, but judged after, it evoked strong feelings of 'haven't these people been through enough already', without screaming it unbiasedly. The lede could have been a form of what is contained within the fifth paragraph, but that's a minor matter of taste.

2nd: Tess Patton, *TheWrap*, "An AI Podcasting Machine Is Churning Out 3,000 Episodes a Week — and People Are Listening"

3rd: Roger Cheng, *TheWrap*, "AI Is Still a Dirty Word in Hollywood. That's the Problem"

L4. CULTURE NEWS, Film/TV Related

Brian Steinberg, *Variety*, "CBS Put 'Evening News' Through Massive Overhaul. Now It Needs People to Watch"

<https://bit.ly/3USMSP9>

Judges' comment: Steinberg's analysis of the CBS Evening News was selected as #1 for its depth, clarity and significance. It demonstrates strong reporting, insider views and relevant data to frame the format change as a message of how television news must adapt to survive, and the ability to connect the changes at CBS Evening News to the industry as a whole makes this piece stand out.

2nd: Whitney Friedlander, *The Ankler*, "Gen Z Is Huge. Their TV Shows Are Tiny. And Hollywood Is Panicking"

3rd: Jose Alejandro Bastidas, *TheWrap*, "The Rise of 'Heated Rivalry': What Hollywood Can Learn From Canada's Gay Hockey Smut Phenomenon, Analysis"

L5. CULTURE NEWS, Profiles

Miles Klee, *Rolling Stone*, "Dylan Mulvaney Wanted to Write About Girlhood. Then She Had to Grow Up Fast"

<https://bit.ly/3NG9WRm>

Judges' comment: The writer put the reader on the boat with the subject.

2nd: Emily Longeretta, *Variety*, "Phil Feeds Somebody: Phil Rosenthal and Daughter Lily Plan to Fix America With Their Family Diner"

3rd: Brandon Richardson, *Long Beach Watchdog*, "'I'd rather be depressed around colors': Open Gallery set to reopen one year after a drunk driver smashed into building"

L6. CULTURE NEWS, Events

Solvej Schou, *ArtCenter College of Design*, "We Will Be Strong: 'Resilience in the Ashes' installation at Grad Show pays tribute after Eaton and Palisades fires"

<http://bit.ly/3OIDbD6>

Judges' comment: Nice story, strong storytelling and certainly worthy of first place in this category.

2nd: Sophie Dunne, *Billboard*, "Coachella 2025 Expands 'Soberchella' With More Non-Alcoholic Options Than Ever"

3rd: Elsa Keslassy, *Variety*, "Israeli Filmmakers Warn an Industry Boycott Will Hurt 'Those Who Are Fighting to Tell the Stories of This Conflict'"

L7. ENTERTAINMENT NEWS, Film/Broadcast

Seth Abramovitch, *The Hollywood Reporter*, "Conan O'Brien Threw a Holiday Party to Forget a Bad Year. Then Nick Reiner Arrived."

<https://bit.ly/4dqSECd>

Judges' comment: Conan O'Brien Threw a Holiday Party to Forget a Bad Year. Then Nick Reiner Arrived -- Seth Abramovitch took a very difficult news story and managed to describe it eloquently, concisely, with interesting facts and an immense amount of empathy.

2nd: Michael Schneider, *Variety*, "PBS CEO Reveals Plan to Save Stations and Programming After Trump Killed Funding, Admits There's No 'White Knight That Will Save Us'"

3rd: Alison Foreman, *IndieWire*, "I Survived 'The Long Walk' Treadmill Challenge — What 5 Miles with the New Stephen King Classic Felt Like"

L8. ENTERTAINMENT NEWS, Music/Performing Arts

Lina Lecaro, *The Hollywood Reporter*, "Running for Cover(s): A Look at the Grammys' Newest Category"

<https://bit.ly/4tpCuxp>

Judges' comment: So interesting! SO interesting! This entry is fun and fresh, embodying the spirit of its content, while still upholding the core tenets of journalism in sourcing, research, and, of course, excellent writing.

2nd: Chris Willman, *Variety*, "Nezza Speaks Out on Defying Dodgers' Rules by Singing National Anthem in Spanish: 'I Think God Entered My Body at That Moment'"

3rd: Brandon Richardson, *Long Beach Watchdog*, "'Punk's not dead': Band arrested for guerilla show outside Warped Tour Long Beach"

L9. INVESTIGATIVE, Entertainment or Business Related

Kyung Lah, CNN Investigative Team, *CNN*, "How crypto ATM companies profit from scams"

<https://www.cnn.com/interactive/2025/10/us/crypto-atm-scams-companies-profit-invs-vis/>

Judges' comment: The crypto story was complex, detailed, multi-layered with video extras, giving a full-picture into the heartbreaking scams that target people, especially the elderly. Yes, CNN has an advantage over other contestants with their resources but they used them all to really enhance the investigation. It's a piece that should have received more attention.

2nd: Umberto Gonzalez, *TheWrap*, "Valnet Blues: How Online Porn Pioneer Hassan Youssef Built a Digital Media 'Sweatshop'"

3rd: Jennifer Oldham, *Capital & Main*, “Oil and Gas Companies Used Banned Toxic Chemicals Near the Rocky Mountains”

L10. INVESTIGATIVE, Government Related

Cal State LA’s University Times Community News, *Los Angeles Public Press*, “Tiny homes are a flawed solution to LA’s homelessness crisis, investigation finds”

<https://bit.ly/4tmPK60>

Judges’ comment: This investigation provided a detailed look at the issues facing the Tiny Homes for the homeless in LA. Interviews and data painted a vivid picture of the failings of the ventures and what should be done to turn this into a more positive initiative.

2nd: Robin Urevich, *Capital & Main*, “Locked Out: How Some of Los Angeles’ Biggest Landlords Leave Section 8 Tenants Behind”

3rd: Justin Nobel, *Truthdig*, “West Virginia’s Radioactive Party Zone”

L11. INVESTIGATIVE, Crime Related

Michelle Zacarias, *Prism*, “‘It was for their entertainment’: Formerly incarcerated youths speak out about abuse at LA County juvenile hall”

<https://bit.ly/4vssh5t>

Judges’ comment: Zacarias’s article with interviews on the indictment of 30 L.A. County Juvenile Hall officers forcing incarcerated children to fight is a concise, compelling crime piece.

2nd: Sahra Sulaiman, *Streetsblog Los Angeles*, “They Came to Mourn. LAPD Came in Force. Now Two Men Could Face Serious Consequences Because LAPD Won’t Acknowledge They Were Wrong.”

3rd: Brandon Richardson, *Long Beach Watchdog*, “Long Beach pastor who confessed to viewing child porn won’t face prosecution”

L12. BUSINESS REPORTING

Brian Steinberg, *Variety*, “TV News Faces Creator Chaos as Anchors Chase Digital Dreams That Bring Big Bucks (or Return Little Reward)”

<https://bit.ly/4tQPcpZ>

Judges’ comment: In a terrific, comprehensive anatomy of the new trend, Steinberg traces the ongoing major movement of corporate broadcast journalists to create their own podcasts.

2nd: Hosam Elattar, Julie Leopo, Gigi Gradillas and Hugo Rios, *Voice of OC*, “Will ICE Raids be the Death of Local Swap Meets in Orange County?”

3rd: Susan Karlin, *Fast Company*, “How a ‘Shark Tank’-winning neuroscientist invented the bionic hand that stole the show at Comic-Con”

L13. ACTIVISM JOURNALISM

Kate Morrissey, *Capital & Main*, “International Tribunal Condemns U.S. Border Officials for Torturing, Killing Immigrant”

<https://capitalandmain.com/international-tribunal-condemns-u-s-border-officials-for-torturing-killing-migrant>

Judges' comment: Great interview and investigation. The images in the article brought the human aspect of this story to light - with the wife mourning.

2nd: Michael Kwet, *Truthdig*, "Students Under Surveillance"

3rd: Pat Saperstein, *Variety*, "How Entertainment Workers Are Finding New Careers in Homeless Services — With a Little Help From Keanu Reeves"

L14. RACE AND SOCIETY REPORTING

Ziwei Liu, *World Journal LA*, "Unseen in Care: Chinese Immigrant Mothers and Maternal Health Inequities in Southern California"

<https://bit.ly/4rx8r6H>

<https://bit.ly/4aPFZWx>

Judges' comment: This compelling pair of stories has fantastic sourcing, is extremely well organized, and is so, so beautifully written. The thoroughness, cultural sensitivity, and detail in this work truly makes it stand out in a tough category filled with great stories.

2nd: Nicolle Okoren, *Truthdig*, "A True American Tale: Indigenous Rights vs. Corporate Greed"

3rd: Sahra Sulaiman, *Streetsblog Los Angeles*, "They Came to Mourn. LAPD Came in Force. Now Two Men Could Face Serious Consequences Because LAPD Won't Acknowledge They Were Wrong."

L15. GENDER AND SOCIETY REPORTING

Louis Keene, *The Forward*, "A groundbreaking agreement for LGBTQ+ Orthodox Jews collapsed after 50 days. What happened?"

<https://bit.ly/46MHIQB>

Judges' comment: Powerful story that delivers hard-hitting news while explaining a topic with complex cultural and legal resonance. The writing is truly excellent. The investigative reporting here survives the "brick wall" test, i.e., stands up in places where other pieces might buckle if a few foundational bricks are removed.

2nd: Chloe Shrager and Lesley M.M. Blume, *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, "Trump's new radiation exposure limits could be 'catastrophic' for women and girls"

3rd: Hannah Reynolds Martinez, *Truthdig*, "Being Trans in Trump's America"

L16A. ENVIRONMENTAL REPORTING, Climate Change/Society

Tess Eyrich, Stan Lim, Omar Gonzalez, Rick Donato, Jessica Weber, *UCR Magazine*, "Deliver Us From Overnight Delivery"

<https://www.ucr.edu/magazine/presents/2025/deliver-us-from-overnight-delivery>

Judges' comment: A sharp, deeply reported examination of the hidden environmental cost of overnight delivery. This is a story many should care about because it affects everyone. The writer connects consumer convenience to sprawling warehouse growth, air pollution, and community health impacts with clarity and urgency. By grounding a vast logistics system in the

lived experience of Inland Empire residents, it delivers accountability journalism that is both locally rooted while still resonant with a national audience.

2nd: Hiroki Endo, Kenji Asada, Naomi Hayase, Yukiko Une and Noritaka Yada, *NIKKEI*, “NIKKEI Film: The ‘megadrought’ striking the American Southwest”

3rd: Angelina Hicks, *Voice of OC*, “San Clemente’s Struggle With the Coast”

L16B. ENVIRONMENTAL REPORTING, Flora and Fauna

Matthew Ponsford, *Noema Magazine*, “How To Build A Thousand-Year-Old Tree”

<https://bit.ly/4108NXG>

Judges’ comment: Elegant, ambitious, and intellectually expansive, this story highlights the age-old trope of men planting trees they will never sit in the shade of. The writer reframes environmental journalism through the long view, asking readers to imagine stewardship on the timescale of centuries rather than news cycles. By pairing ecological insight with philosophical depth, it offers a rare and memorable meditation on what it could mean to build systems resilient enough to outlast us.

2nd: Jess McHugh, *Noema Magazine*, “The Ark-Builders Saving Fragile Bits Of Our World”

3rd: Dean Kuipers, *Red Canary Magazine*, “Why You Want a Wolf”

L17. NEWS FEATURE, Film/Broadcast Related

Brent Lang, *Variety*, “Controversy Swirls, Legal Threats Fly After Sundance Documentary ‘The Stringer’ Questions Origin of Iconic ‘Napalm Girl’ Photo”

<https://bit.ly/3ODOXyw>

Judges’ comment: Riveting, well written, controversial and thought provoking.

2nd: Rance Collins, *IndieWire*, “When Hollywood ‘Went Gay All of a Sudden’: TCM Highlights Films That Track Queer Evolution”

3rd: Michael Schneider, *Variety*, “L.A. Reporters Cover Devastation in Their Own Neighborhoods During Wildfires: ‘Feels Like a Nightmare’ and ‘Fatigue Is Setting In’”

L18. NEWS FEATURE, Music/Culture/Performing Arts related

Leena Tailor, *The Hollywood Reporter*, “Tears, Spaceships and Nostalgia: How Backstreet Boys ‘Pushed the Limits’ of Las Vegas’ Sphere With ‘Mind-Boggling’ Residency Launch”

<http://bit.ly/4mWtjBo>

Judges’ comment: Fun, witty - great quotes and a good piece on the phenomenon that is BSB and the Sphere.

2nd: Maximo Santana, *Voice of OC*, “OC’s Biggest Fossil Can Only Be Seen in LA”

3rd: Chris Willman, *Variety*, “How the Acrisure Arena Became an Unlikely Desert Oasis for Music Fans From Around California... and a Favorite Kickoff Point for Some Major Tours”

L19. HARD NEWS FEATURE, General News

Sara Tiano, *The Imprint*, “Despite Federal Law and Due Process Rights, Most Children Taken Into Foster Care on an ‘Emergency’ Basis Before Parents Get a Hearing”

<https://bit.ly/4I9DAL3>

Judges’ comment: This piece stands out as first place because it identifies an issue, supports the issue with multi-state data, and describes complex legal issues into clear and easy to understand reporting that paints a picture of the real consequences for families. The combination of original reporting, large-scale relevance and implications for legal and civil rights makes it a very relevant and compelling story.

2nd: Jerry Redfern, *Capital & Main*, “The David vs. Goliath Story of a Ranching Family and an Oil Giant”

3rd: Nadra Nittle, *The 19th*, “Nory and her mother were deported together. Then she was orphaned.”

L20. SOFT NEWS FEATURE, General News

Tyler Kingkade, *NBC News Digital*, “Baseball meetup helps a group of dads stitch life back together after L.A. fires”

<https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/los-angeles-fires-eaton-altadena-sandlot-baseball-rcna190232>

Judges’ comment: Interesting take on men coming together for comfort and support after suffering loss. Several good moments, including: No longer using heater as a baseball term. And no home plate.

2nd: Fallon Brannon, *AfroLA*, “Recovery after the Eaton Fire isn’t one size fits all”

3rd: Lexy Perez, *The Hollywood Reporter*, “Talk Dirty to Me: Inside Hollywood’s Audio Erotica Craze”

L21. LIFESTYLE FEATURE

Weilian Zhu, Matjaž Tančič, *Noema Magazine*, “China’s Pet Parents Choose ‘Fur Kids’ Over Human Children”

Judges’ comment: Beautiful, colorful writing paired with lovely photographs.

2nd: Rebecca L. Root, *Noema Magazine*, “Would You Eat This Bug To Save The World?”

3rd: Rance Collins, *IndieWire*, “How Cinespia Turned a Cemetery Into L.A.’s Weekend Hot Spot”

L22. TV/STREAMING/RADIO FEATURE

M.G. Lord, *Los Angeles Review of Books*, “A Forever for Sally”

<https://bit.ly/3PZGLcv>

Judges’ comment: Thoughtful piece about an extraordinary woman forced to hide just how extraordinary she was.

2nd: Matthew Frank, *The Ankler*, “Ghosts in the Balcony: A Cross-Country Trip to 58 Theaters Fighting to Survive”

3rd: Hanh Nguyen, *Salon.com*, “‘Keeping you obsessed’: Netflix’s demons vs. hunters movie captures the mystical allure of K-pop”

L23. FILM FEATURE, Documentaries/Animation/Indies

Lily Ford, *The Hollywood Reporter*, “The Rage of ‘Adolescence’: Inside the Single-Shot Sensation Blowing Up the Manosphere”

<https://tinyurl.com/2hywzmv4>

Judges’ comment: Well crafted deep dive into the how, the why and the impact of an extraordinary production.

2nd: Lauren Huff, *Entertainment Weekly*, “The race is on: Inside Glen Powell's action-packed turn as ‘The Running Man’ — and why he's happy ‘chasing the danger’”

3rd: Simi Horwitz, *FORWARD*, “At 87, one of the great Jewish film directors thinks there's still time to start over”

L24. FILM FEATURE, Profiles of Creatives

Eliza Brooke, Lucas Shaw, *Bloomberg Businessweek*, “It's Never Been Harder to Get a Job in Hollywood”

<https://tinyurl.com/ybky4r5p>

Judges’ comment: This piece has the widest appeal out of these many fine entries; it stands out for the superior depth of sourcing to back up the point it's trying to make. It feels enterprising in nature — rising to the spirit of an incredibly impactful kind of journalism — and features great writing on a topic with blockbuster implications for American cinema.

2nd: Drew Taylor, *TheWrap*, “How ‘KPop Demon Hunters’ Became Netflix’s ‘Frozen’, Exclusive”

3rd: Angelique Jackson, *Variety*, “Ryan Coogler Dissects ‘Sinners’: How the Blockbuster Filmmaker Reinvented the Vampire Movie on a Near-Impossible Timeline”

L25A. FILM FEATURE, Production Histories, Business

Kate Aurthur, *Variety*, “Bravo Boss Frances Berwick on the ‘Joy’ of BravoCon and Who Can Be Forgiven by the Network (Karen Huger!) — and Who Can’t (Jen Shah, Probably)”

<https://bit.ly/4l36rjR>

Judges’ comment: So many tasty tidbits. A nice look at the business of reality TV from the inside out.

2nd: Selome Hailu, *Variety*, “‘Forever’: Mara Brock Akil on How the Period Before George Floyd’s Murder, the Dangers of Smartphones and Judy Blume Inspired Her Black Teen Love Story”

3rd: James Hibberd and Peter Keifer, *The Hollywood Reporter*, “Paramount Never Made Taylor Sheridan an Offer to Stay: How TV’s Biggest Partnership Fell Apart”

L25B. FILM FEATURE, Production Histories, Shows

Leena Tailor, *The Hollywood Reporter*, “How New Kids on the Block’s Jonathan and Jordan Knight Breathed New Life Into HGTV”

<http://bit.ly/47gXKhe>

Judges' comment: Fun, informative, great read from beginning to end.

2nd: Ethan Shanfeld, *Variety*, "Vince Gilligan and Rhea Seehorn on What 'Pluribus' Is Really About, Why Hollywood 'Needs More Heroes' and How Silicon Valley Has 'F—ed Up the World'"

3rd: Kate Aurthur and Adam B. Vary, *Variety*, "'I'm at a Loss Without the Show': Inside the Final Days of 'Stranger Things' and the Cast's Heartbreaking Goodbyes"

L26A. MUSIC FEATURE, Groups

Sam Quinones, *Zócalo Public Square*, "The Tuba's Cross-Border Journey to the Front of the Band"

<https://bit.ly/3ONHUn9>

Judges' comment: Sam Quinones piece on the tuba is unexpected, informative and well researched and written.

2nd: Leena Tailor, *Grammy.com*, "How Indian Artists, Beats & Collabs Are Taking Over Mainstream Music, From Coldplay To Coachella"

3rd: Lyndsey Parker, *Lyndsanity*, "How powerpop power couple Vicki Peterson & John Cowsill's real-life romance was predicted by teenage fan-fiction: 'You're either going to find this adorable, or you're going to run screaming into the night'"

L26B. MUSIC FEATURE, Solo Artists

Leena Tailor, *The Hollywood Reporter*, "Taylor Swift: Tribute Acts Are Saving Lives, Pocketing Paychecks and Finding Fame"

<http://bit.ly/3JyvQU6>

Judges' comment: Leena Taylor's piece focuses on a not-obvious subject and is well reported and written

2nd: Holly Gleason, *POLLSTAR.com*, "Megan Moroney, the 'Emo Cowgirl'/'Bad Bitch Country Artist Sells Out Radio City (2x), Sheds, Arenas + More"

3rd: Matt Hurwitz, *Mix Magazine*, "Making of the Music for 'Springsteen: Deliver Me From Nowhere'"

L27. THEATER/ARTS FEATURE

Naman Ramachandran, *Variety*, "'MJ the Musical' Star Jamaal Fields-Green on the 'Huge Responsibility' of Playing Michael Jackson on Stage: 'I Have No Choice but to Continuously Perfect the Craft'"

<https://short-url.org/1kLoj>

Judges' comment: Engaging interview - it explained the actor's journey very well.

2nd: Scott Feinberg, *The Hollywood Reporter*, "'Getting to Do It for an Audience, It's Like Drugs': 7 Tony Nominees on Jumping Between Hollywood and Broadway"

3rd: Chris Willman, *Variety*, "Reimagining 'Hamlet' as a Lynchian L.A. Story: Director Robert O'Hara on Doing Shakespeare With a Noir/'Mulholland Drive' Twist at the Mark Taper"

L28. VISUAL ARTS/DESIGN/ARCHITECTURE FEATURE

John Last, *Noema Magazine*, "The Vanishing Art Of Building Sacred Spaces"

<https://bit.ly/47tudjL>

Judges' comment: In exploring spiritual architecture, this piece highlights the power of design and architecture to evoke powerful feelings.

2nd: Marianne Dhenin, *Noema Magazine*, "The Gulf World That Air Conditioning Wrought"

3rd: Pat Saperstein, *Variety*, "'Marty Supreme': How Production Designer Jack Fisk Worked With Josh Safdie to Recreate 1950s New York: 'He Was Always Ahead of Me'"

L29. PERSONALITY PROFILE, Film/TV Personalities

Darrin S. Joy, *USC Dornsife News*, "Actor earns philosophy PhD on his way to major movie and television roles"

<https://bit.ly/3MOOB7S>

Judges' comment: Great writing. It kept my interest. I love the connection to the university and to his film career. It's a great profile that was well thought out, and expertly written.

2nd: Michael Schneider, *Variety*, "Why 'It's Always Sunny' for Rob McElhenney and Kaitlin Olson: A Power Couple Who Juggle Four Hit TV Shows, a Winning Soccer Team and Ryan Reynolds"

3rd: Marc Malkin, *Variety*, "Barbra Streisand on Her New Album, Not Being Paid Enough for 'Meet the Fockers' and if She'll Ever Direct or Perform Live Again"

L30. PERSONALITY PROFILE, Music/Art Personalities

Ellise Shafer, *Variety*, "Diana Silvers on Her Debut Album 'From Another Room' and Following Folk Heroes by Speaking Truth to Power: 'If Your Art Doesn't Scare You, It's Not Really Worth It' (EXCLUSIVE)"

<https://bit.ly/46zmiAU>

Judges' comment: A charming and insightful profile that shares the vulnerability behind artistic inspiration.

2nd: Laura Sirikul, *Forbes*, "After 'MAGICMAN 2,' Jackson Wang Is Done With The Magic Tricks"

3rd: Victoria Thomas, *Local News Pasadena*, "Doyenne of the Diaspora"

L31. PERSONALITY PROFILE, Business/Government/Society Personalities

Jeff Gordinier, *Alta Journal*, "Holbox's Michelin Chef Was Awaiting Citizenship Until 2025"

<https://bit.ly/41bB79B>

Judges' comment: Wonderfully executed story that balances human interest, food and current events.

2nd: John Gittelsohn and Patrick Clark, *Bloomberg Businessweek*, "The Political Transformation of California's Mall King"

3rd: Jon Regardie, *Westside Current*, "Adrin Nazarian and the Quest for the Front Bench"

L32. COLUMNIST on Entertainment/Media

Corey Atad, *Truthdig*

<https://tinyurl.com/5csjyman>

<https://tinyurl.com/2byacs58>

<https://tinyurl.com/2rm656ns>

Judges' comment: Each piece was thoroughly researched, well-written and covered starkly diverse subcultures within the film industry. These were written by someone who obviously loves movies, but can analyze the germane genre with assurance and unbiasedness. The writing is crisp and clear and the audience should be appreciative of that, plus he doesn't need 5,000 words to achieve this. Extremely well done. These pieces are an asset to anyone who cares about the film industry. I'm not trans, but I certainly cared, and was happy to learn about what it's like for Weard and her journey. Every film discussed in #MeToo piece was easily compared to something else in a way that didn't scream, 'look at how much I know about movies'. That was the tone throughout the three pieces and that should be appreciated by Truthdig's readers.

2nd: Lucas Shaw, *Bloomberg News*

3rd: Alison Herman, *Variety*

L33. COLUMNIST on Politics

Mark Kreidler, *Capital & Main*

<https://capitalandmain.com/patients-will-suffer-patients-will-die-why-californias-rural-hospitals-are-flatlining>

<https://capitalandmain.com/congress-could-get-millions-of-people-off-of-snap-by-raising-the-minimum-wage-but-it-hasnt-for-16-years>

<https://capitalandmain.com/beyond-hollywood-rob-reiner-created-opportunity-for-young-children-out-of-a-massive-health-crisis>

Judges' comment: Mark Kreidler is a storyteller in the truest sense of the word. His work blends anecdotal and narrative writing with hard facts and persuasive argumentation. Further, his writing possesses a deep sense of empathy and compassion for his subjects. In short, great work!

2nd: Jon Regardie, *Westside Current*

3rd: Bill Blum, *Truthdig*

L34. COLUMNIST on Current Events

Erin Aubry Kaplan, *Capital & Main*

<https://capitalandmain.com/re-construction-and-altadena>

<https://capitalandmain.com/why-the-black-pope-matters-from-new-orleans-7th-ward-to-south-los-angeles-and-beyond>

<https://capitalandmain.com/hitting-the-bullseye>

Judges' comment: Erin Aubry Kaplan beautifully captures and elucidates history with a strong voice and perspective. Kudos on a fine set of columns!

2nd: Nathan Gardels, *Noema Magazine*

3rd: Ellen Snortland, *Substack*

L35. POLITICAL COMMENTARY, National

Deanne Stillman, *Washington Monthly*, "Alligator Alcatraz: The Ice Detention Center Is a Sin Against Nature"

<http://bit.ly/4qX6wb5>

Judges' comment: Deanna Stillman does a great job tying the Trump Administration's immigration crackdown to its implications for the environment.

2nd: Ethan Ward and Dana Amihire, *HEATDRAWN Media*, "The American Experiment"

3rd: Sonali Kolhatkar, *Truthout.org*, "I've Covered Climate Disasters for Decades. Now I Live on the Front Lines."

L36. POLITICAL COMMENTARY, Local

D. J. Waldie, *Zócalo Public Square*, "Will California Still Be Golden in 2050?"

<https://bit.ly/47igL1Q>

Judges' comment: The author raises many important questions about the future of California and the direction it is heading in.

2nd: Norberto Santana Jr., *Voice of OC*, "Anaheim Can't Afford to Play With the MLB Angels"

3rd: Avani Khorana, *AnnenbergMedia*, "OPINION: I was raised to believe in America"

L37. NON-POLITICAL COMMENTARY

Natalia Molina, *Zócalo Public Square*, "Making Guisados of Our Grief"

<https://bit.ly/40SqUyA>

Judges' comment: Felt the loss and the restarting of family.

2nd: John Lavitt, *The Hollywood Times*, "The Banality of Evil on Stage: 'Here There Are Blueberries' at The Wallis"

3rd: Leah Zani, *Noema Magazine*, "The Sex Lives Of Common Vegetables"

L38. ENTERTAINMENT COMMENTARY, Film/TV

Corey Atad, *Truthdig*, "Corey Atad on Film"

<https://tinyurl.com/5csjyman>

<https://tinyurl.com/2byacs58>

<https://tinyurl.com/2rm656ns>

Judges' comment: Much to say. Said it well

2nd: Abbey White, *The Hollywood Reporter/Freelance*, "'The Bear' Is Really a Work Warning for All of Us"

3rd: Sheryl Turner, *Local News Pasadena*, "'The Rebel Girls' Forgotten Heroines of the Civil Rights Movement"

L39. ENTERTAINMENT COMMENTARY, Arts

Lyndsey Parker, *Gold Derby*, "Rock & Roll Hall of Fame Class of 2025: Our voter's unfiltered official ballot"

<https://bit.ly/4lf93Lz>

Judges' comment: Excellent, comes from the heart.

2nd: Ellise Shafer, *Variety*, "In Defense of Rachel Zegler and Jamie Lloyd's Controversial 'Evita' Balcony Scene: It Gets to the Heart of What the Musical Is Really About"

3rd: Tama L. Brisbane, *Zócalo Public Square*, "Hip-Hop's Coming of Age in Stockton"

L40. BLOG, INDIVIDUAL

Daniel Guss, *DanielGuss.Substack.com*

<https://bit.ly/4cUCMaT>

Judges' comment: Daniel Guss's blog post compellingly shared - with strong supporting facts, strong opinions & an engaging voice & visual presentation - how he and others doggedly, successfully dealt with a longstanding, serious problem. What a remarkably strong field of entries!

2nd: Bennet Kelley, *KelleyGram*

3rd: Brian Addison, *Longbeachize*

L41. BLOG, GROUP

Jackie Strause, Rick Porter, Tony Maglio, James Hibberd, Etan Vlessing, *The Hollywood Reporter*, "Live Feed"

<https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/e/live-feed/>

Judges' comment: Clean display of the stories/feed. Easy to navigate the group of stories.

2nd: Sharon Waxman, *TheWrap*, "WaxWord"

3rd: Joe Linton, Sahra Sulaiman, Damien Newton, Chris Greenspon and Joe Anthony, *Streetsblog Los Angeles*, "Streetsblog Los Angeles"

L42. WEBSITE, NEWS ORGANIZATION EXCLUSIVE TO THE INTERNET

IndieWire Staff, *IndieWire*, "indiewire.com"

<http://www.indiewire.com>

Judges' comment: The page is clean and easy to navigate. Headlines are clear.

2nd: Farley Elliott, *SFGATE*, "sfgate.com/la"

3rd: Tracy McCartney and Joe Donnelly, *Red Canary Magazine*, "redcanarycollective.org/magazine"

L43. WEBSITE, TRADITIONAL NEWS ORGANIZATION

The Hollywood Reporter Staff, *The Hollywood Reporter*, "hollywoodreporter.com"

<http://bit.ly/2pWrzhf>

Judges' comment: This is a clean website that's easy to find just what you're looking for. The writing is solid and the categories make sense.

2nd: TheWrap Staff, *TheWrap*, "thewrap.com"

3rd: Dorothy Wong, *Colorado Boulevard Newspaper*, "coloradoboulevard.net"

M. SOCIAL MEDIA, Judged on content, creativity and engagement.

M1. BEST USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA TO ENHANCE and/or COVER A STORY By an Independent Journalist

Mel Buer, *Bluesky Live Thread*, "MacArthur Park Raid, Bluesky Live Thread"

<https://bit.ly/4d6bFJU>

Judges' comment: This standout social media piece demonstrates how independent journalism can be both nimble and deeply resonant, using a native platform format to deliver reporting with clarity, confidence, and emotional precision. Its strong sense of voice and immediacy turn a fleeting scroll into a meaningful act of witness, underscoring the vital role independent journalists play in reaching audiences where they are.

2nd: Susana Canales Barrón, *Caló News*, "Infant left momentarily parentless after immigration raid near a WIC store in Oxnard"

3rd: Nachele Alonzo, *Instagram*, "The Reality of SNAP Benefits Cuts in America"

M2. BEST USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA TO ENHANCE and/or COVER A STORY By a Journalist Tied to an Organization

Susana Barrón, *Los Angeles Public Press*, "An LA day laborer was deported to Mexico. His dog was left behind"

<https://bit.ly/4dtdqRE>

Judges' comment: This is a powerful story told extraordinarily well through text and videos. The pacing is perfect and it was easy to become invested in this man's story. This is one of those rare videos that would stop people in their tracks and keep them engaged.

2nd: Gigi Graciette, *KTTV FOX 11*, "The Disappearance of Baby Emmanuel Separating Fact from Fiction Thru Social Media By Gigi Graciette"

3rd: Matthew Seedorff, *KTTV FOX 11*, "Reporter POV: The Palisades Fire"

M3. BEST USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA TO ENHANCE and/or COVER A STORY By a Group

Karen Foshay, Mark Grizzle, Steve Padilla, Anna Magzanyan, *Los Angeles Times Studios*, "Texts of Terror"

<https://bit.ly/3NTuBRV>

Judges' comment: This concise, high-impact social media entry captures the fear, urgency, and real-time confusion surrounding texts sent during ICE raids, using a fast-moving video format to make a complex and volatile moment immediately legible and palpable to viewers. Its

immediacy and emotional force highlight the power of short-form journalism to document how immigration enforcement reverberates through everyday lives and communities.

2nd: Carolyn Burt, Dorothy Elder and Will Lester, *Los Angeles Daily News*, “The destruction and devastation caused by the LA fires”

3rd: Pablo Ortega and Sharon Romeo, *Truthdig*, “Pricey IVF Test May Be Selling False Hope”

N. FOREIGN CORRESPONDENTS based in Southern California, reporting for an outlet outside of the US. Print, radio, TV or online. An English translation must be submitted along with the original work.

N1. NEWS

Martha Kelner, *Sky News UK*, “LA Wildfires Exclusive Reports”

<https://bit.ly/4sFcs9y>

<https://bit.ly/4taAHMO>

<https://bit.ly/4lUd3BM>

Judges’ comment: Videos were very engaging and showed emotion.

2nd: Janet R. Nepales, *GMA-7*, “Fil-Am Jonathan Eusebio talks of his feature film debut, ‘Love Hurts’”

3rd: Nicole Schermuly, *RTL Germany*, “ICE Raids Spark Escalating Protests in Los Angeles”

N2. FEATURE

Mary O'Hara, *View Digital Magazine*, “Why would you want the worst healthcare system in the world?”

<https://tinyurl.com/2mnhz9np>

Judges’ comment: Stark information about the U.S. health care system that is easily digestible & hopefully serves as an eye opener for anyone who isn't aware of the massive inequalities in our health care system.

2nd: Hiroki Endo, Kenji Asada, Naomi Hayase, Yukiko Une and Noritaka Yada, *NIKKEI*, “The ‘megadrought’ striking the American Southwest”

3rd: Michael Idato, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, “‘I didn’t know how to unpack the pain’: TV star finally comes face to face with his trauma”

N3. PERSONALITY PROFILE

Lena Basse, *Moteris/Lithuania*, “Jafar Panahi and the Moral Labyrinth of Iranian Cinema”

<https://bit.ly/4rmMd6e>

Judges’ comment: What a powerful profile for a man who continues to hold truth to power, despite the consequences.

2nd: Nicole Schermuly and Marc Sterzenbach, *RTL Germany*, "Mickey Rourke: The Self-Destruction of a Hollywood Icon"

3rd: Michael Idato, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, "'I've got nothing left to hide': Brendan Fraser on his extraordinary third act"

N4. ENTERTAINMENT NEWS or FEATURE

Alessandra Mattanza, *Best Movie*, "Interview with Ethan Hawke: 'With the character of "The Graber" I return from the realm of the dead.'"

PDF

Judges' comment: Story is engaging and clear

2nd: Ruben V. Nepales, *Rappler*, "At 62, Demi Moore finally feels 'liberated' from her own self"

3rd: Janet R. Nepales, *GMA-7*, "Historic wins of Sean Baker and Anora at the Oscars"

N5. COLUMNIST or CRITIC

Lena Basse, *Moteris/Lithuania*

<https://tinyurl.com/yva4k37k>

<https://tinyurl.com/haz3nk9a>

Judges' comment: Well-done documentation of the struggle of making the film and paralleling it with the film's premise - i.e. the character of the film is trying to escape fascism, just as the filmmakers were (perhaps not as actively) escape the 'undistributable' tag of the film itself. Seven years is a long and hard sentence and this piece does a good job of letting the reader know that the film industry is not always so tinsel-town.

2nd: Ruben V. Nepales, *Rappler*

3rd: Michael Idato, *The Sydney Morning Herald*

O. STUDENT MEDIA

Student media includes groups with students in charge, including school newspapers and/or online publishing. Student media: high school, local college, university undergraduate or graduate publications or news websites.

O1. BEST COLLEGE NEWSPAPER

Los Angeles Collegian Staff, *Los Angeles City College*, "*Los Angeles City College Collegian*"

PDF

Judges' comment: This paper has it all -- hard-hitting news, light features, arts and entertainment and sports. A good look and good reporting.

2nd: el Don Staff, *Santa Ana College*, "*el Don*"

3rd: Long Beach Current Staff, *California State University Long Beach*, "*Long Beach Current*"

O2. BEST HIGH SCHOOL NEWSPAPER

Alexxa Berumen, *The Accolade*

<https://bit.ly/3OSG4RP>

Judges' comment: Slick design, hard-hitting coverage with a fresh, local angle on the LA wildfires. This paper is as good as some magazine designs.

2nd: Joel Nam and Olamide Olumide, *VNHS Mirror*

3rd: Irene Park and Nicole Park, *The Accolade*

O3. BEST COLLEGE NEWS WEBSITE

el Don Staff, *el Don*, "eldonnews.org"

<https://eldonnews.org/>

Judges' comment: Best of the best with plenty of top competition. Clean website. Easy to navigate.

2nd: The Los Angeles Loyolan Staff, *The Los Angeles Loyolan*, "laloyolan.com"

3rd: The Union Staff, *The Union*, "eccunion.com"

O4. BEST HIGH SCHOOL NEWS WEBSITE

Aashna Dialani, *The Accolade*, "shhsaccolade.com"

<https://bit.ly/4b2CZHu>

Judges' comment: The Accolade's website is better than some college newspaper websites. It is better than the websites of some larger non-school-affiliated newspapers owned by billionaires that serve much larger communities. Its work is something to emulate

2nd: Joel Nam, Olamide Olumide, Aidyn Kinchen and Haik Ushaglyan, *VNHS Mirror*, "vnhsmirror.com"

3rd: LILA Gazette Team and Guillaume Serina, *International School of Los Angeles*, "lilagazette.com"

O5. BEST NEWS PHOTO

Ethan Cohen, *Long Beach Current*, "Crowds, chaos, resistance: Scenes from DTLA's anti-ICE protests"

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1YV-KXDoRF4kRSDhfgteuexo2iU1tcPnh/view?usp=sharing>

Judges' comment: This photo is well framed with the woman and her reflection- both looking in opposite directions of the image pleading for help.

2nd: Jake Crandall, *The Corsair*, "A protester stands on top of a destroyed Waymo car holding a hammer"

3rd: Kayjel J. Mairena, *The Corsair*, "Jimmy Kimmel cancelation protestor"

O6. BEST FEATURE PHOTO

Eddy Cermeno, *Warrior Life*, "The Hairapist Is In"

<https://bit.ly/47aKg5z>

Judges' comment: This is a well-executed image with lighting, posing and props. It might have told a little more of her story if there was another hand or two with baby items, but very well done.

2nd: Griff Yarmaloff, *The Los Angeles Loyolan*, "She wanted to be in the military. Trump's executive order is stopping her."

3rd: Diego Perez, *Long Beach Current*, "Get on Pointe"

O7. BEST SPORTS WRITING – PRINT or ONLINE

Brandon Rowley, *el Don*, "Blading Cup 2025 draws world's top talents to Santa Ana"

<https://bit.ly/4usQYyb>

Judges' comment: Strong writing on a fun subject. The best of what was a crowded group of excellent sports writing.

2nd: Alyson Cerna, *VNHS Mirror*, "Fresh journeys, familiar bonds"

3rd: Karan Lodha and Travis Ellison, *AnnenbergMedia*, "The invisible hand: Behind the scenes of Angel City's gameday setup"

O8. BEST ARTS WRITING – PRINT or ONLINE

Jack Hallinan, *AnnenbergMedia*, "The life and rebirth of Vidiots"

<https://bit.ly/4se1RBN>

Judges' comment: Fascinating look at the way a venue has transformed over the years. Great work!

2nd: Nina Kremer, *Daily Trojan*, "AI actress Tilly Norwood sparks Hollywood debate"

3rd: Avidha Raha, *AnnenbergMedia*, "In discussion with Homebound filmmaker Neeraj Ghaywan"

O9. BEST NEWS WRITING, Campus Issues, Budget/Personnel

– PRINT or ONLINE

Delilah Brumer, *Pierce College Roundup News*, "Pierce students grapple with food insecurity"

<https://bit.ly/4tyEzyz>

Judges' comment: A thoughtful piece about how a budget-driven policy change at Pierce College's free food pantry is impacting students. This well-written story is both timely and relevant to student readers.

2nd: Kate Luengo, *Tribe Tribune*, *Fullerton Union High School*, "Senior Assassin game triggers lockdown"

3rd: Andrea Curiel, *The LA Local*, "LAUSD students prepare for 'major shift' as cellphone ban takes effect"

O10. BEST NEWS WRITING Campus Issues, Layoffs/Strikes/Protests

– PRINT or ONLINE

Sorina Szakacs, Angela Johnson, *Los Angeles City College Collegian*, “Journalism Cuts - Part 1, 2, 3 and 4”

PDF

Judges’ comment: This detailed, four-part series about cuts to the journalism program at Los Angeles City College was investigative journalism at its finest. Well-documented, well-presented; good use of records requests to dig into the discussions behind the scenes before decisions were made.

2nd: Henry Adams, *The Graphic*, “Pepperdine Administrators Shut Down Weisman Exhibition After Censoring Artwork”

3rd: Sam Mulick, *Daily Bruin*, “Long commutes, short-staffed – ‘We want to live,’ union leaders demand from UC”

O11. BEST NEWS WRITING, Off Campus Issues – PRINT or ONLINE

Danielle Hughes, *AnnenbergMedia*, “One Year After a Historic Settlement, Section 14 Survivors Are Still Fighting for Home, Healing, and Recognition”

<https://bit.ly/4aUUoBS>

Judges’ comment: Fascinating and seemingly underreported story on reparations effects with deeply reported history.

2nd: Hali Mecklin, *AnnenbergMedia*, “Art and education programs are the heart of San Quentin. Where’s their funding, Newsom?”

3rd: Adriana Valencia, *The LA Local*, “For some students, the most dangerous part of the school day is getting home”

O12. BEST FEATURE WRITING, Campus Issues – PRINT or ONLINE

Emily Kim, *The Accolade*, “RITUAL VS. REALITY: Superstitions rule the game for SH students”

<https://shhsaccolade.com/22912/feature/ritual-versus-reality-superstitions-rule-the-game-for-sh-students/>

Judges’ comment: Interesting topic handled well. Writing was clear, to the point, and easily drew the reader top to bottom.

2nd: Haylie Ross and Emma Martinez, *The Graphic*, “Keeping ‘Our Girls’ Light Alive on Campus”

3rd: Alicia Bennett, *Tribe Tribune, Fullerton Union High School*, “Time For Change”

O13. BEST FEATURE WRITING, Off Campus Issues – PRINT or ONLINE

Hali Mecklin, *AnnenbergMedia*, “Art and education programs are the heart of San Quentin. Where’s their funding, Newsom?”

<https://bit.ly/4u5in96>

Judges’ comment: This feature news story examining underfunded arts programs in California prisons through the lens of the governor's high-profile/high-dollar reform promises combined great feature writing and human approach with accountability journalism.

2nd: Kimberly Aguirre, *AnnenbergMedia*, “‘Our Playground’: A love letter to lesbian bars”

3rd: Emma Martinez, *The Graphic*, "Sell or Stay: Malibu's Iconic Beachfront Properties After the Flames"

O14. BEST PERSONALITY PROFILE, Campus Personalities – ANY PLATFORM

Elise Pak, *The Accolade*, "Capturing the moments"

<https://bit.ly/4sywz8K>

Judges' comment: Vivid writing that well matches the personality of the photographer being profiled, with lots of details and an easy-read rhythm.

2nd: Madison Thacker, *VNHS Mirror*, "Julian Pankowski UNSCRIPTED"

3rd: Erica Lee, *Warrior Life*, "The United Skates of Keiana"

O15. BEST PERSONALITY PROFILE, Off Campus Personalities – ANY PLATFORM

Caitlin Brockenbrow, *Daily Bruin*, "Liberation Left Untold"

<https://prime.dailybruin.com/primedonaldkilhefner>

Judges' comment: Weight in this category is given to profiles that include multiple voices, such as this one. This piece was well written and well illustrated. The quote near the bottom, "...people have become spectators of their own movement" should have been moved nearer the top, but otherwise this is a very solid profile.

2nd: Hannah Anaya, *The LA Local*, "'I just hope I can leave my mark': Teaching math goes beyond the numbers for this Roosevelt High teacher"

3rd: David Rendon and Nicholas Corral, *Daily Trojan*, "'It's a bookstore in a van down by the river'"

O16. BEST TV or STREAM REPORTING

Coleman Standifer, **Sabatino Stacchi**, *The Los Angeles Loyolan*, "There is a 'demographic cliff' threatening college enrollment numbers"

<https://bit.ly/4qIpS2R>

Judges' comment: The reporters use interviews and data to explain the "demographic cliff" in higher education. Well reported and well explained.

2nd: Isabella Garcia, Grace Lawson and Dante Estrada, *Long Beach Current*, "Second Street bars hit 30-day blackout"

3rd: Jenna Tibby, *The Corsair*, "Fighting food waste through the Santa Monica College Bodega"

O17. BEST RADIO or PODCAST REPORTING

Daishalyn Satcher, **Jack Waterman**, *AnnenbergMedia*, "Black History From Where We Are"

<http://bit.ly/4cQ7OjQ>

Judges' comment: While Black History is covered widely, this podcast stands out because of the broad coverage with snippets of many aspects of black history.

2nd: Jenny Marquez and Jasmine Thompson, *Room 22 Podcast*, "Student journalists in the age of the Trump Administration"

3rd: Megan Vahdat, *Daily Bruin*, “Persian Perspectives Today: Journalist, author and activist Homa Sarshar”

P. A-MARK CASH PRIZE FOR REPORTING ON MISINFORMATION AND DISINFORMATION

Tyler Kingkade, *NBC News Digital*, “One photo, a deluge of threats: Inside the Arizona high school turned upside down by right-wing activists”

<https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/one-photo-deluge-threats-arizona-high-school-turned-upside-right-wing-rcna241672>

Judges’ comment: A deep dive into a photo meant as a joke that blew up in the faces of the teachers.

2nd: Louis Keene, *The Forward*, “After MIT professor’s killing, Jewish influencers spread unverified antisemitism claim”

3rd: Jason Leopold, *Bloomberg News*, “UK Ambassador Told Epstein 'I Think the World of You' Emails Reveal”

Q. TATIANA SCHLOSSBERG ENVIRONMENTAL CASH AWARD

Lisa Fung, *Blueprint Magazine*, “Gaurav Sant: Looking to the Oceans for Answers”

<https://bit.ly/4k9z2Uq>

Judges’ comment: This has everything this category requires. Rigorous reporting on a response to an environmental problem and its associated evidence, as well as how they're trying to fix it. It was solid writing with a unique twist on storytelling.

2nd: Michelle Peng, *The San Francisco Standard*, “California forests have a labor crisis: Not enough people willing to climb trees”

3rd: Gabrielle Canon, Hilary Beaumont, Lois Beckett, Maanvi Singh and Sam Levin, *The Guardian*, “The perfect storm: Why did LA’s wildfires explode out of control?”