

BEST IN BUSINESS 2008

**at the Westin Tabor Center
Denver, Colorado**

Monday, April 27, 2009

**Reception: 5:30 p.m.
followed by Awards Ceremony**

S·A·B·E·W

STUDENT CONTEST

STUDENT PUBLICATIONS

Laura Marcinek, University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill

"Private giving could slide"

This is a real cause-and-effect story. It has good numbers, a strong graphic, good comparisons and good explanation of what lower donations will mean for the university and what the university is doing to shore up its donor base. In addition, this story is ahead of the curve, predictive rather than reactive. It's not too long, Quotes are strong. Includes good historical perspective from earlier recessions. It's well-reported, though it could have used a donor voice or two.

PROFESSIONAL PUBLICATIONS

Catarina Saraiva, Triangle Business Journal

"The adult-care gap" (University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill)

The lead, short and to the point, sucked in the reader. The rest of the story didn't let go. While the facts and figures necessary to support the theme were there in abundance, they were back-end loaded so the reader wasn't overwhelmed. Focusing on Kirby provided a much-needed human element without resorting to pathos. Stories are complete, filled with numbers, statistics, anecdotes, strong examples. Package tells a complete story. Writing is good. Reporting is deep and thorough. This is excellent work.

NEWS CONTEST BREAKING NEWS

WEEKLY PUBLICATIONS

Adam Linker, Lee Weisbecker, Amanda Jones Hoyle and Dale Gibson

"A troubled town" (Triangle Business Journal)

It's clear that the Triangle Business Journal set out to put a face on the recession by giving such a thorough treatment to the closing of a Pilgrim's Pride plant - and that goal was accomplished. The reporters helped us travel to Siler City by reading these richly detailed stories. They gave readers a deeper sense of how the closing of a chicken processing plant can ripple through the economy of an entire town, affecting everyone from Hispanic immigrant workers to poultry farmers and the local government. It can be difficult to pull together these kinds of stories on any time table, let alone a short one. Judging by the date when this came out (April 18), it seems they had a little time to plan this - since the closing of the plant was announced in March. Still, these reporters must have been juggling other work while doing this, and given the overall quality of the stories, it is a very strong package.

Stephen Nellis, Barbara Pearson, Henry Dubroff, Emily Rancer and Ray Estrada

"Gap Fire coverage" (Pacific Coast Business Times)

The reporting was strong and presented in an interesting way with a lot of compelling human drama. A tremendous amount of work and dedication went into the coverage of a natural disaster that also affected businesses in the area. The letter from the editor helped influence us in recognizing the work of the Pacific Coast Business Times.

Beth Braverman, Mark Bruno, Tim Catts, Marine Cole, Hilary Johnson, Matthew Monks, Neil Roland, Nicholas Rummell and Matthew Scott

"From crunch to crisis" (Financial Week)

Financial Week reporters managed to crank out a ton of very clear and concrete explanation of all the ramifications of the credit crunch. In some cases, their reporting was prescient. We marveled at the ingenuity involved in tracking down a dentist who served Wall Street clients and finding out about canceled appointments. Also, the story about GM's massive and messy debt load, and all the possible ugly effects it could pose for the overall securities market, showed tremendous insight into the overall crisis. These stories are also littered with concrete examples of how the crunch is affecting particular companies and investment funds, information which is not easy to unearth. The package could have been helped by having one overview story with possibly shorter sidebars. A fine piece of team reporting.

REAL-TIME NEWS ORGANIZATIONS

David Baily, Kevin Krolickie, Jui Chakravorty, Poornima Gupta, Kim Soyoung and Nick Carey

"GM/Chrysler deal hopes rise, then shattered" (Reuters)

This package on the potential for a GM/Chrysler deal broke significant new ground with exclusive details of the negotiations between the two auto companies and the federal government. The stories were comprehensively reported and smoothly written, impressive given the many twists and turns of the story. Besides landing scoops, the reporters were able to see all the angles, and put their exclusives in the larger context of the federal auto bailout and a troubled industry. Although the stories relied heavily on unattributed sources - and the judges would have liked to have seen more precise descriptions of those sources - the stories' accuracy speaks to the quality of the information those sources provided.

Anupreeta Das and Michele Gershberg

"Microhoo: how the Blockbuster deal blew up" (Reuters)

This package of stories on the Microsoft/Yahoo tap dance were a terrific example of great execution on a breaking news story, offering not just high news value, but also great analysis. In addition, these pieces were so replete with intimate details of the negotiations that you sometimes felt the reporters had been in the room. By giving readers a sense of the people and personalities beyond the numbers, the writers were able to distinguish themselves by taking a narrative approach to what was otherwise a deadline-driven story.

SMALL PUBLICATIONS

Tyrone Richardson, Darryl Isherwood, Daniel Patrick Sheehan, Scott Kraus, Patrick Lester, Greg Karp and John Micek

"Bulldog bolts" (The Morning Call)

This package really gave a sense of the history and importance of Mack Trucks to Allentown. It covered all the bases in an extremely well-written fashion. The human element was addressed with some well-chosen examples. The weave of history and tradition with the news is nice. Impact on the NC town that's winning what Allentown is losing is also examined well. This would hold up in a national publication for readers who had never heard of Allentown.

Ilene Aleshire, Sherri Buri McDonald, Diane Dietz, Edward Russo and Anne Williams

"Hynix plant to shut" (Register-Guard)

The Register-Guard's coverage of the Hynix plant closure did a really good job of showing how big a blow the closure was. The stories kept the national economic and tech outlook on the horizon while really focusing on the local aspect. The reaction from workers was nicely woven into the main story and

Henriques and Hilda Wang

"Wall Street financial crisis" (The New York Times)

The Times presented an exhaustive and compelling look at a "frantic weekend" on Wall Street. The package combined careful analysis with detailed drama of the atmosphere on the street. The coverage brought readers into the negotiating room, told them the story of Merrill Lynch's fall, and explained what could happen next.

Jonathan Weisman, Paul Kane, Lori Montgomery, Joel Achenbach, Ashley Surdin, Edward Cody, Mary Jordan, Steven Pearlstein, Neil Irwin, David Cho, Dan Eggen and Michael Abramowitz

"Wall Street's crisis lands in Washington" (The Washington Post)

The Post's coverage of Sept. 29 showed clearly and compellingly what happened on Capitol Hill and on trading floors around the world. The use of graphics and storytelling helped readers understand what happened on a frightening, confusing day. The Post's coverage explained how lawmakers rebelled against the bailout plan and why the public had lost trust of elected officials. And Steve Pearlstein's column foreshadowed the economic earthquake to come.

Carrick Mollenkamp, Susanne Craig, Serena Ng, Aaron Lucchetti, Matthew Karnitschnig, Dan Fitzpatrick, Deborah Solomon, Dennis K. Berman, Liam Plevin and Peter Lattman

"Financial crisis" (The Wall Street Journal)

The Journal presented a very clear look at complicated events that transpired over the weekend, from Paulson's ultimatum to the Bank of America deal to buy Merrill Lynch. The reporting gave readers an inside look, reporting such details as the scene in the men's bathroom at the Fed. The coverage provided historical perspective as well as forward-looking analysis.

NEWS CONTEST COLUMNS

WEEKLY PUBLICATIONS

Greg Hinz

Crain's Chicago Business

Hinz's expertise and the way he is plugged into the local scene was a standout. He takes some dry government issues that might otherwise be ignored and he really relates them to readers' lives. And he raises questions that need to be addressed. That's what you want from a columnist.

Steve Symanovich

San Francisco Business Times

A very engaging writer with good, entertaining approaches. You keep reading his work because of his clever efforts. It's very effective in getting across his points and it moves his writing beyond the traditional business coverage.

Simon Dumenco

Advertising Age

He addresses some important trends with sharp and clear writing. He's plugged into the online world and readers can depend on him to give them what they need to know. He's confident enough in what he knows to provide clear analysis without being too heavy handed. His writing is very approachable.

REAL-TIME NEWS ORGANIZATIONS

Al Lewis

Dow Jones

Al Lewis' acerbic wit, institutional knowledge and breezy, conversational prose set him apart. Whether chronicling the dubious behavior of a corporate executive or the dreams of an oddball junk collector, he excels at allowing the voice and personalities of his subjects shine through. His column, "The worst thing to say is..." should be required reading for financial journalists who too often let such canned statements go untested.

Liz Pulliam Weston

MSN Money

Liz Pulliam Weston has developed a successful recipe for her MSN Money personal finance column: Take an important yet complicated topic, break it down to its basic components, put it in language the average reader can understand, explain why the problem exists and what readers can do to help themselves. Her columns are relevant, authoritative, well researched, and presented in an inviting manner.

Jonathan Weil

Bloomberg News

Jonathan Weil's prose is engaging and distinctive, which is no small task given that he's often writing about complicating accounting issues. Weil takes his readers on an expedition into company's balance sheets. He pinpointed inflated asset valuations at Time Warner, derivative-related obfuscation at AIG and deferred tax calculations that inflated asset values at Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac. Most importantly, he exposed the problems before they became apparent to the market at large and resulted in takeovers, bailouts and restatements.

SMALL PUBLICATIONS

Jon Chesto

The Patriot Ledger

Jon Chesto engages readers with a clear, confident voice and a strong sense of the community he describes. He excels at connecting local issues to national stories - using a surge in small local banks to illuminate the banking crisis and a local oil company's plans to allow customers to buy gas at a fixed rate to highlight rising gas prices. Chesto is funny, turning a year-end column into a recap of the year's wackiest business stories. He is hard hitting. And he is poignant, as in a column about how work on the Big Dig ruined a "once-proud" local construction company. Modern Continental, he writes, was forced to move from opulent offices overlooking the Charles River to a subterranean space near the Boston border: "This is how a failed dream so often ends - not with a bang, but with an empty silence in a dark, basement room on the outskirts of town."

Greg Karp

Morning Call (Allentown, Penn.)

Greg Karp writes personal finance the old-fashioned way, with strong reporting, useful information and a host of links so readers can follow up on his research. In one column, he helped readers understand the pressing issue of moving to digital TV, explaining conversion options far more simply and effectively than many other colleagues around the country. The judges particularly liked his analysis of how unlimited cell-phone plans are a waste of money for many users. In that piece, Karp compared the cost per minute of pre-paid plans and of unlimited plans when consumers use fewer than 400 minutes per month - a topic the judges found surprising, interesting and well executed.

MID-SIZED PUBLICATIONS

Dan Haar

Hartford Courant

Dan Haar's unadorned, clearly told stories of real people in tough times resonate far beyond the usual business news audience and stood out in a strong field of entries. He offers a nice balance of on-the-street reporting and focused opinion - from his piece on how the relentless drone of recession coverage amplifies the angst among working people to the economic realities that remain for minorities in the Obama era. That he manages this while serving as the paper's business editor makes his work all the more impressive.

Mitchell Schnurman

Fort Worth Star-Telegram

Mitchell Schnurman's no-holds-barred style is both lively and engaging. He covers a range of topics with the acumen of a beat reporter and the moxie of a watchdog. His column about buying a share of Radio Shack to gain entry to the annual shareholders meeting just to hear its elusive CEO was a standout; it gave readers a view of something most would never witness.

Harriet Johnson Brackey

Sun Sentinel

Harriet Johnson Brackey helps readers navigate the complexities of the economy and personal finance with deft, demonstrating a keen knowledge of her topics without speaking down to readers. More importantly, she delivers real utility, speaking directly to the issues affecting average people. Her column on the panel of financial planners who took readers' questions for three hours offered real insight into their fears and practical solutions for overcoming them.

LARGE PUBLICATIONS

David Nicklaus

St. Louis Post-Dispatch

Here's a columnist who consistently goes beyond the obvious. David Nicklaus has command of his subject matter and has a clear opinion. His columns are on a variety of topics, each is well-written, and he's not afraid to take an unconventional stand, such as when he told St. Louisians, in effect, to "get over it" when Anheuser-Busch was up for sale. If you believe that a local business columnist should actually write about local business and do so with insight and verve, you can't do much better than Nicklaus.

Al Lewis

The Denver Post

Al Lewis is a fine, lively writer who finds a way to make an issue come alive. Rather than simply carping about how Qwest is inattentive to details, Lewis wrote about the Ph.D. in applied statistics who can't make sense of his monthly bill from Qwest and then can't get an explanation that makes sense, even from the CEO.

Tom Walsh

Detroit Free Press

Tom Walsh is one Detroit columnist who is no apologist for the auto industry. But he's no shrill antagonist, either. He manages to point out the automakers' shortcomings in a way that is mature, informed and powerful. What's more, he even manages to break some news.

GIANT PUBLICATIONS

Andrew Ross Sorkin

The New York Times

For the most important financial story in a generation, Andrew Ross Sorkin of The New York Times produced some of the most important journalism. His columns consistently led the pack, challenged conventional wisdom and helped set the public agenda. He labeled the initial, three-page Treasury bailout plan the "financial equivalent of the Patriot Act." He reported that banks were hoarding bailout cash, rather than lend it, to brace for a worsening economy. Very early, he proposed a government-supervised bankruptcy for ailing automakers, an idea that may yet take hold. As his editor said, government officials and corporate executives tried all year to spin their way out of the mess they created, but Sorkin would have none of it.

Steven Pearlstein

The Washington Post

Much is expected from a commentator who is near the seat of power when government rides to the rescue, and Steven Pearlstein of The Washington Post rose to the occasion. He brought an unrivaled mix of insight and populism, expert analysis and edgy opinion, to economic events that shook the world. He scoffed at business leaders who use the "Perfect storm" as an alibi for their failures. He captured the disgust of a nation that had no choice but to bail out Wall Street, conceding that part of him was saying, "Burn, baby, burn." He had the courage to mock Alan Greenspan, along with the details to back it up. A top Treasury official told Pearlstein that he was either very well-sourced or incredibly knowledgeable. As his editor said, he's both.

Gretchen Morgenson

The New York Times

Gretchen Morgenson's columns in The New York Times were distinguished by her willingness and ability to engage with the dirty details of how business works. Her column on GE Capital, a mandatory entry, managed to explain the risks of its business model clearly despite the unit's famous opacity. The short sale column also benefits from her ability to engage with nuts and bolts. She makes, very early on, points that lead readers to the conclusion, since shown to be correct, that the real estate situation was not going to improve. Her work was an island of specificity in an ocean of generalization when it comes to comment on the crisis.

NEWS CONTEST PROJECTS

WEEKLY PUBLICATIONS

Bernard Dagenais, Dell Poncet, John Spencer, Frank Devlin, Sonja Sherwood, Athena D. Merritt, Natalie Kostelni, Jeff Blumenthal, John George, Peter Key and Peter Van Allen

"Price of crime" (Philadelphia Business Journal)

"The price of crime" takes a fresh, multi-faceted look at the impact of property crimes and violence on Philadelphia's economy. In more than 20 related articles, the weekly explores not only how crime affects business but also how government and business - from local corporations, banks and colleges down to the Tastykake thrift store - can help address the problems that give rise to it.

Lucy May and Dan Monk

"Empty promise" (Cincinnati Business Courier)

"Empty promise" took a close look at a unique program that attempts to address a glut of vacant buildings, and laid out the problems associated with it. The initial story stood out for its inclusion of real people impacted by the law, its comprehensive take on the issue and its strong sourcing and writing. The follow-up pieces showed the project spurred city officials and neighborhood advocates to act to try to find ways to improve the law's results.

Bill Orben, Denise Hicks, Anjali Fluker, Dan Ping, Chris Kauffmann and Tiffany Beck

"Water woes" (Orlando Business Journal)

In its "Water woes" package, the Orlando Business Journal tackles the complex and important issue of water development and consumption in central Florida. The package lays out the scale of the problem, including the costs and technologies involved in developing water resources. It includes a list of 25 of the largest corporate water users - though, unfortunately, the paper was not able to access Walt Disney World Resorts' water-consumption statistics. The authors also identify policy alternatives for developing water resources and reducing consumption. The package is well written. In addition, it includes a number of visual elements that make it particularly accessible.

REAL-TIME NEWS ORGANIZATIONS

William Selway and Martin Z. Braun

"Broken promises" (Bloomberg News)

This package delivers outrage. As the government spends billions bailing out financial firms, we have these school districts and municipalities staffed with deals they didn't understand - or didn't bother to investigate. It correctly pointed out that JPMorgan's practices were at odds with the glow surrounding the bank under Jamie Dimon's leadership.

Staff

"Recipe for famine" (Bloomberg News)

This is the kind of reporting that reminds you how important investigative journalism is to society and what's at stake when media outlets shutter or trim their staffs. "Comprehensive" is an overused word, but this series is a catalog of waste and misplaced priorities that interfere with the basic human need to have food to eat and contribute to the ultimate indignity - the loss of human life. A powerful global effort.

Eric Carvin, Chris Rugaber, Alan Zibel, Rachel Beck, Madlen Read, Ellen Simon, David Pitt, Marcy Gordon, Mark Jewell, Marty Crutsinger, Jeannine Aversa, Janna Elphinstone, Dirk Lammers, Shaila Dani, Candice Choi, Andrew Miga, Tom Murphy, Dennis Conrad, Dave Carpenter, John Porretto, Kimberly Johnson, Vinnie Tong, Chris Bain, Deborah Yao and Joe Bel Bruno

"Meltdown 101" (The Associated Press)

Perhaps no other entry was of greater service to the general reader. Meltdown 101 lives up to its name: FYI finance information about the economic crisis. An exhaustive effort.

SMALL PUBLICATIONS

David Giffels, David Knox, Betty Lin-Fisher, Mark J. Price, Tracy

Wheeler, Cheryl Powell, Lisa Abraham, Kim Hone-McMahan, Mary Beth Breckenridge, Bill Lilley, Katie Byard, Jim Mackinnon and Dennis Willard

"The American dream" (Akron Beacon Journal)

Wow. Talk about dedication to a community. This isn't a project, it's a movement, with the Beacon-Journal leading the charge to turn Akron into a 'savings community.' It's refreshing to read a paper advocating so effectively for the needs of people in its community - who could ever cancel a subscription to a newspaper that cares this much about its readers? This series is a model for how newspapers can remain vital to readers, and a concept that could be applicable to other reader needs. The fact that it was published in 2008, as the economy went into a tailspin only underscores its timeliness. I'm sure that Akron is better off than other communities facing the recession because of the frank conversation convened by the Beacon-Journal. Bravo.

Kevin McCallum

"Life savings lost to fraud/The money trail" (The Press Democrat)

Great digging, great details, great writing, great work. You read stories like these and just want to scream "run!" as the victims are introduced. Good explanation of how Armitage's scheme worked. The fact he preyed on the elderly made this story even more heartbreaking. Stories on ponzi schemes can be confusing, but these were clear and reader-friendly.

Steven Oberbeck

"Hidden dangers" (The Salt Lake Tribune)

An incredible revelation of a powerful company abdicating its responsibility to a community and its safety. The company ignoring the advice of its lawyers and covertly buying up houses while public officials looked the other way is a shocking tale - all Hollywood needs is for the dam to break to turn this into a screenplay.

MID-SIZED PUBLICATIONS

Ames Alexander, Kerry Hall, Franco Ordonez, John Simmons, Peter St. Onge, Ted Mellnik, Reid Creager, Rogelio Aranda, Holly Farrant, Bill Pitzer, Dave Puckett, Dave Enna, Tony Lone Fight, Marion Paynter, Maria David, Jim Walser, Gary Schwab, Mitch Weiss, Glenn Burkins and Patrick Scott

"The cruelest cuts" (The Charlotte Observer)

This series is the definition of what a great project should be - deeply researched, broad in scope yet with loads of specific anecdotes, well organized and well written. It's obvious that substantial time and effort was devoted to this series of articles, which by itself doesn't warrant any award. But it's clear that a tremendous amount of thought and creativity was put into this project, which was original and thought provoking, and one that you really wanted to keep reading. The fact that people were called on the carpet as a result of the reporting speaks to its importance and effectiveness. Simply put, journalism at its best.

Matthew Haggman, Rob Barry and Jack Dolan

"Borrowers betrayed" (The Miami Herald)

Outstanding and exhaustive reporting on the local impact of what was clearly the most important story of the year - the mortgage meltdown. This enterprising package was well presented and had strong narrative threads throughout. The reporters did a great job combing state records and then following up to show how financial regulators allowed a criminal class to prey on those least able to defend themselves. And the series produced results by forcing state officials to address the lack of oversight of the lending industry.

Christine Tierney

"Russian revolution" (Detroit News)

A gutsy, thorough article about a subject that has received little if any coverage: automakers competing for the fast-growing Russian car market. As many journalists have learned, criticizing the Russian government is dangerous, but Christine Tierney spoke to a wide range of sources to get the goods on the troubled alliances between automakers in well-developed but saturated markets like the United States, France, Japan and their Russian counterparts. Especially when one considers the limited resources The Detroit News has at its disposal, this is impressive work.

LARGE PUBLICATIONS

Michael J. Berens and Ken Armstrong

"Culture of resistance" (The Seattle Times)

Fearless and thorough investigative reporting at its best. In exposing the prevalence of a dangerous germ at area hospitals, the Times unraveled a real and sometimes shocking story that might quite literally have saved lives. It was well told and exhaustively researched with compelling facts and figures that put a human face on the contagion. Moreover, the project was enhanced by great use of charts and boxes and smart use of the web as an adjunct. Not only was it a stellar example of enterprise reporting, it stands on its own as laudable public-service journalism.

Cary Spivak, Dan Bice and Ben Poston

"Easy money" (The Milwaukee Journal Sentinel)

From its opening paragraph, this story was a winner and stood out in a sea of coverage about the subprime mortgage mess. It took a step-by-step approach of taking apart how these loans got approved, but did so in an enlightening way, always bringing us back to the human side of the pain it caused. The paper took a widely reported national story and through great reporting, evocative photos and helpful graphics, filtered it through a local prism. Simply put, it generated good old fashioned outrage among the judges - this project hit a nerve.

Fred Schulte, James Drew and Bernie Kohn

"Hospital debt" (Baltimore Sun)

This project exposed charity-care hospitals that improperly billed those who could not afford to pay, and told the story through the eyes of its victims. The project required incredible spadework, digging through hundreds of thousands of lawsuits, yet the result is clear, readable, thorough and engaging. In the words of one of our judges, "This hit the trifecta of human interest, government accountability, and hospital problems."

GIANT PUBLICATIONS

Michael Hiltzik, Lisa Giron and Daniel Costello

"Shedding risk" (Los Angeles Times)

A highly informative, well written series on a subject that matters to everyone: health insurance. Excellent reporting shows how insurance companies are weeding out the policy holders who need help most in favor of helping the companies' bottom line, understandable in a free enterprise system but harmful, even devastating to the folks excluded. Very timely in light of the current public debate about universal health care. Impact reported on public opinion and public policy.

Gretchen Morgenson, Peter S. Goodman, Eric Dash, Julie Creswell, Charles Duhigg, Carter Dougherty, Jo Becker, Sheryl Gay Stolberg,

Stephen Labaton and Kitty Bennett

"The reckoning" (The New York Times)

Witnessing our financial system falling apart, readers desperately seek context and insight to understand what went wrong. The Times' "The reckoning" provides an exemplary public service by exhaustively exploring the root causes of the financial crisis. "The reckoning" supplies in-depth reporting conveyed with authority and human detail, pinpointing the greed, conflict of interest, and risk-promoting public policy that set the stage for the nation's financial collapse. The scope of the project is remarkable. From an analysis of the Bush philosophy of the ownership society to regulation-averse views of former Fed Chairman Alan Greenspan to the synthetic CDOs purchased by a local school department's pension fund in Wisconsin, the project shows how financial risk was either discounted or misunderstood. Its reporting of CitiGroup's failings - especially its lax risk management - is searing. In perhaps the most impressive installment of the project, "The reckoning" connects the dots between unwitting small-time institutional investment decisions and a vast network of global financial players.

Thomas Farragher, Scott Allen, Marcella Bombardieri, Michael Rezendes, Liz Kowalczyk and Jeffrey Krasner

"Partners Healthcare" (The Boston Globe)

This courageous series took on the most prestigious hospitals, both Harvard-affiliated, and health insurance companies in Massachusetts, describing how they collaborated to raise insurance rates to provide higher reimbursements to hospitals for care that provided no better results than other hospitals'. According to the series, the hospitals are using their increased revenues to establish new facilities in Massachusetts communities that already have hospitals, threatening to undermine their finances. The series had impact on public opinion, healthcare industry leaders, and public officials. Good corroboration is on page 1 of The New York Times of March 14, 2009, describing Massachusetts' efforts to rein in runaway healthcare costs, and specifically crediting The Globe's series with prompting action by Governor Patrick. Good investigative reporting and well written.

NEWS CONTEST ENTERPRISE

WEEKLY PUBLICATIONS

Richard Clough

"IndyMac's last gasps" (Los Angeles Business Journal)

The story of IndyMac's failure quickly grabbed the attention of national media, and yet it was the hometown business journal that provided the insider sourcing to tell a compelling story of the spectacular breakdown. Banking reporter Richard Clough did an excellent job of weaving together the publicly known facts and newly obtained insider perspective. He also effectively captured the personality of chief executive Michael Perry, through the viewpoint of his colleagues, and his role in the company's demise.

David Sterrett

"McD's eye-opener" (Crain's Chicago Business)

In this investigative enterprise piece, David Sterrett concisely outlined the challenges McDonald's faces with their gourmet coffee rollout. He followed internal documents pertaining to Kansas City - a test market cited - and talked to hundreds of customers. Then he rounded out the reporting with strong expert interviews, and pulled it all together in a succinctly written story.

Bill King

"Finding growth in green" (Street & Smith's Sports Business Journal)

Green is an issue that has been written about in every industry, but the Sports Business Journal did an excellent job relating the size and scope of green efforts by sports franchises to their readers. Bill King provided specific examples and strong sourcing in a well written story that took readers to the field and helped them visualize the impact of the energy-saving measures.

REAL-TIME NEWS ORGANIZATIONS

John Helyar, Alison Fitzgerald, Mark Pittman and Serena Saitto

"Ten days changed Wall Street" (Bloomberg News)

The writers captured not only the details and the news of what was happening, but the emotion, fear and surprise among various players such as Bernanke and the Lehman staffers. This story is a fine example of taking multiple news events and crafting a cohesive narrative that gives people the full context and impact of the news. This has the on-the-ground details with the birds-eye view and serves the reader quite well. It is a business story with sweep and impact that will become a rich piece of information for researchers trying to make sense of this "Great Recession."

Mitch Weiss

"Weak rules cripple appraiser oversight" (The Associated Press)

Fantastic reporting and sourcing with some very good writing. Weiss shows that the problem goes way beyond fixing the appraisal and oversight system. The problem is there is no energy and teeth and follow-through with the existing system, and as much as people bang the gong, no one seems to care.

Simon Clark, Michael Smith and Franz Wild

"China lets child workers die" (Bloomberg)

This was a difficult story to report and to tell, and it's clear the reporter talked with a lot of different sources - and a lot of reluctant sources - to nail it. Responses were guarded at best, both from Chinese government officials and from corporations doing business in that part of Africa. The ability to build a compelling narrative, especially given the type of story it was and the difficulty in getting it and verifying it, was impressive.

SMALL MAGAZINES

William Selway and Martin Z. Braun

"Schools flunk finance" (Bloomberg Markets)

This story does two things that are still all-too-rare in financial journalism: It lifts the veil on complex Wall Street deals, showing not only how they work but how the bank makes its money. And it vividly demonstrates the real-world consequences of all this financial engineering. The judges were impressed by the writers' richly detailed reporting, which covered every conceivable base: the school's struggles, the impact of lobbyists, the alleged "churning," how the pitch worked, and why school boards were so susceptible. It is a story that ought to make readers angry, and regulators pay attention.

LARGE MAGAZINES

Richard Behar

"China storms Africa" (Fast Company)

Truly outstanding work that combines research, on-the-ground reporting and analysis to lay bare global relationships and trade that could doom American business and political will in Africa - if not the entire world - one day. The article takes readers from ignorant to informed in an engaging read that proved World Bank statistics can be compelling when used effectively. "China storms Africa" stands out for its idiosyncratic writing style and great sense of place.

Robert Berner

"The watchdogs who warned us" (Business Week)

Shed light on a complicated and previously unexplored subject. The legal rulings on federal power preempting state's rights are not sexy, but this well-reported account showed how they played a big role in the housing crisis.

SMALL PUBLICATIONS

Dawn House

"Liquor" (Salt Lake Tribune)

This defines the term enterprise: Take on a hot-button topic, expose the facts and watch people squirm. Workers in Utah's state-owned liquor monopoly stores are underpaid, and seriously so. Of all fulltime workers, 35 percent earn enough to be only near or at the poverty level; the fate is the same for 90 percent of part-timers. Further, the state liquor board is deeply involved in its own form of protectionism - moral protectionism, to be precise. The Salt Lake Tribune did a commendable job of examining a touchy subject in Utah. It did so without holding back to protect itself from possible economic or social backlash. Outstanding package, particularly in a conservative state that might not have been particularly open to this topic. It provided a special perspective, from businesses to underpaid state employees. It also touched on religious underpinnings on the governing board.

Gary Pakulski

"Down but not out" (Toledo Blade)

A broad look at the statewide business community, putting the problems in perspective. The depth of examination is compelling. The stories are relevant, beyond the routine, enterprising and significant.

Kevin McCallum

"For Exchange Bank, Wrong Time, Wrong Place" (Santa Rosa Press Democrat)

A solid professional piece of research and writing, this enterprise effort goes behind the scenes to tell how a well-connected local bank's expansion plans backfired. The result: suspension of dividends, which funded the scholarship program at the local junior college. This shows good research and organization - and the Page One photograph is a stark indicator of the bank's troubles.

MID-SIZED PUBLICATIONS

Rick Rothacker

"The good deal that wasn't" (The Charlotte Observer)

A wonderful look inside a not-so-golden deal. Rothacker uses a well-structured, well-reported piece to show the psychology that can take hold within a big company - even when that works against its own interests. He does an excellent job of weaving first-hand accounts and dry facts into a lengthy but compelling read. Beyond Wachovia, the story shows how solid banks and bankers were lured into the subprime mortgage market - and the high price they paid when it collapsed.

Bryce G. Hoffman

"Ford inside story" (Detroit News)

In what must have been an avalanche of Detroit failure stories in the local press, this one reads surprisingly clear-headed: an authoritative account of the debate inside Ford. Hoffman dives right in and takes the reader into the hard decision facing Alan Mulally as he tries to find a solution for Ford. Does Mulally cut to the bone, or try and forge ahead with new investments Ford believe in? Readers could feel the pressure as they read and Hoffman introduces readers to the human drama at the top of the corporate ladder without losing sight of the bigger picture.

Jennifer Hiller

"On the hot seat" (San Antonio Express-News)

Hiller writes a very important story about an extremely high-profile person in her community. The piece is sharp without seeming accusatory or shrill. Notably her story was followed by other, similar stories from the national press, looking at Cisneros and others who helped fuel the subprime debacle. At the same time, Cisneros provides a golden opportunity to revisit the age-old problem of acquiescent board members. Hiller lists all the warning signs at Countrywide ahead of the subprime lending crisis, and ultimately shows how the need for vigorous corporate governance is painfully relearned in a downturn.

LARGE PUBLICATIONS

Tim Higgins

"Pattern of harassment" (Detroit Free Press)

Higgins meticulously and evenhandedly explored repeated allegations by workers that they had been sexually harassed by both company and union officials at Chrysler Corp.'s Toledo North Assembly Plant. Higgins' careful examination showed that though civil rights investigators and courts found not every complaint to be persuasive, the plant fell short of Chrysler's goal, as a spokesman described it, of "zero tolerance...for harassment of any kind."

Andrew McIntosh

"Nail gun safety under fire" (Sacramento Bee)

Anyone who has ever worked with an air-powered nail gun knows two things: It's a lot more efficient than a hammer - and, potentially, a lot more dangerous. McIntosh used the tragic death of construction worker Manuel Murillo as an occasion to examine the safety record of nail guns, which injure 42,000 Americans a year at an estimated cost of \$338 million in medical bills and workers' compensation payments. This exhaustively researched and well-told story makes a strong case for safer - and proven - nail gun technology.

John Gittelsohn

"Washington Mutual funded home flippers" (The Orange County Register)

A fascinating peek into unscrupulous real estate speculation and careless lending practices that contributed to the collapse of California's out-of-control residential housing market. In this thorough investigation, the Orange County Register's John Gittelsohn uncovered excesses that provide insight into the flimsy foundation that underpinned America's historic - and temporary - housing and financial boom.

GIANT PUBLICATIONS

Susanne Craig, Jeffrey McCracken, Aaron Lucchetti and Kate Kelly

"The weekend that Wall Street died" (The Wall Street Journal)

The Weekend That Wall Street Died is the kind of story you wait your whole life for, and when you get

it, you hit it out of the park. It is a riveting account of a September weekend of round-the-clock secret negotiations by the CEOs of America's giant investment banks as they struggled to keep their firms afloat. Through deep sourcing and a wonderful behind-the-scenes storytelling style, the writers take readers from the beginning of the financial crisis, over two days of hell and through to the end. Incredible detail based on interviews with Wall Street executives, traders, regulators, investors and others, and a narrative structure that fits all the pieces together in a way no one else has done makes this story a clear winner. The accumulation of sources along with the depth of knowledge and years of experience of these reporters covering Wall Street makes this story definitive.

Thomas Farragher, Scott Allen, Marcella Bombardieri, Michael Rezendes, Liz Kowalczyk and Jeffrey Krasner

"A healthcare system badly out of balance" (The Boston Globe)

While health care writing can be dense and impossible, this piece reads like a conversation. Excellent details and explanations about the health care industry were slipped in as part of the tapestry of the story. The Globe team demonstrated real digging when they obtained a long-private database of confidential insurance data that showed a few hospitals, including Partners HealthCare, were being paid much more by insurers for health care procedures even though in many cases they were no better than average. Strong investigative reporting and clear writing about a complicated subject along with information-packed graphics brought the story home to the Globe's readers.

Binyamin Appelbaum and Ellen Nakashima

"Banking regulator played advocate over enforcer" (The Washington Post)

This story is dynamite on all fronts and sheds new light on an issue. The writers clearly understand the intricacies of bank regulators, and they document the lapses in vivid detail. This story shows how the Office of Thrift Supervision adopted a strategy of accommodating the firms it regulated, failed to check destructive excesses and ignored evidence of mounting problems. Though filled with the alphabet soup of bank regulators, compelling writing keeps readers hooked until the end. And telling the story of the regulatory environment through the eyes of one regulator was an excellent way to focus. This is a model of enterprise reporting. It represents the first truly comprehensive examination of the OTS and holds this agency accountable.

ONLINE CONTEST AUDIO-VIDEO

SMALL/MIDSIZED WEBSITES

Thomas Mucha, Brandon Copple and Mark Scheffler

"Entrepreneurs in action" (Crain's Chicago Business)

"Entrepreneurs in Action" does a superb job of finding interesting startup companies in the Chicago area and bringing them to life on screen. The producers show us the reality of the startup life via revealing, in-depth interviews with their entrepreneur subjects. Impressively, they also find fresh angles on big stories such as the future of the news business ("Big ideas, small profits") and the changing nature of intellectual property ("Callpod: Running with the big dogs")

LARGE WEBSITES

Gretchen Morgenson, Matt Orr, David Rummel, Emily Hager, Rob Harris and Todd Heisler

"The debt trap" (The New York Times)

In "The debt trap," The New York Times does an excellent job examining the alarming increase among Americans who find themselves overburdened with debt. Through simple but effective techniques, including the use of still pictures, the reporter did a superb job of translating the emotional toll that accompanies financial ruin. Ultimately, however, "The debt trap" is the winner, because it's the category's best example of solid journalism - exploring the reasons behind larger trends through a personal and compelling experience.

ONLINE CONTEST CREATIVE USE OF ONLINE

SMALL WEBSITES

Ian Lamont, Eric Hill, Kristen Nicole and Bill Snyder

"10 'Net services that will succeed (and 10 that will probably fail)" (The Industry Standard)

A solidly reported, well-designed site that covers the tech industry from many different angles. We particularly liked its witty, innovative use of the marketplace prediction feature. From a design perspective, the producers do a great job of making the page user-friendly. The larger white open space is inviting. Yet it makes clear use of typography to break up a lot of content into smaller, more easily scanned areas.

MID-SIZED WEBSITES

Tony Lone Fight, John Simmons, Bill Pitzer, Peter Weinberger, Ames Alexander, Franco Ordonez, Kerry Hall, Peter St. Onge, Ted Mellnik, Reid Creager, Rogelio Aranda, Holly Farrant, Dave Puckett, Dave Enna, Marion Paynter, Maria David, Jim Walser, Gary Schwab, Mitch Weiss, Glenn Burkins and Patrick Scott

"The cruelest cuts" (The Charlotte Observer)

This package is a winner on all fronts. It is truly a multimedia experience with text, photos, video, print and an interactive graphic. The stories are compelling in all formats. The videos are well-edited with strong interviews. The stories capture the pain in the poultry workers' lives. And the print and interactive explain the problems medically. You can see that the online package was planned from the beginning of the project. There is no way they could have produced such a rich presentation otherwise.

Ken Wheaton Jr., Charlie Moran and Rahmin Pavlovic

"Ad Age Power 150" (Advertising Age)

The Power 150 site is jam-packed with information and nifty technology. The ability to track your blog's performance is sure to have bloggers returning again and again to the site.

Sheryl Harris, Felesia McDonald and William Neff

"Scamfinder" (Plain Dealer)

This site is a good example of a situation in which good old usefulness and fine storytelling outweigh technical gimmickry. Scamfinder provides timely tips that readers are sure to pass around.

LARGE WEBSITES

Gretchen Morgenson, Amy O'Leary, Tom Jackson, David Rummel, Amy Schoenfeld, Amanda Cox, Matthew Bloch, Emily Hager, Matt Orr,

Rob Harris and Todd Heisler

"The debt Trap" (The New York Times)

A comprehensive, well-executed effort that effectively used online technologies to improve upon an excellent journalistic effort. It powerfully illuminated one of the major contributory factors to the housing and credit bubbles and related steep economic decline when these bubbles burst. There is a lot of thought and planning behind a nicely integrated package of stories, videos and interactive graphics, benefiting from the Times' intuitive and easily navigable user interface, which permits effective display of lots of pieces of this package.

Glenn Hall and Bill McCandless

"TheStreet.com Mobile" (TheStreet.com)

TheStreet.com merits high marks for creative and effective use of technology to make sure its real-time content is available on a real-time basis - of particular value in the investment world. One judge with a black belt in BlackBerry says this is the best mobile application: "...better than any other mobile site I've tried. I appreciate the fact that it isn't just a miniaturized version of the 'big' web site. It's functional, thorough, and personal. I found it easy to use; for example, adding or deleting stock symbols is quick and simple. I will continue to use it."

David Pogue, Danielle Belopotosky, Raymond McCrea Jones, Sam Grobart, Tom Jackson, John Niedermeyer and Zach Wise

"Pogue-o-matic" (The New York Times)

Way up there on the "cool" scale, this was a highly creative and engaging project that displayed lots of attention to structure and detail. It was fun to watch, but reflected a lot of detail in its executions. In the view of one judge, it ranked among the best examples ever seen of "reader interactivity" - a trait that everyone talks about but is seldom pulled off, and rarely so well as here. Perhaps one of the best compliments here is that what could have been a geek-laden meal of information overkill was creatively parsed into very digestible pieces that were fun to consume.

ONLINE CONTEST PROJECTS

SMALL WEBSITES

Matt Carmichael, Michelle Evans, Jeff Hartvigsen, Erik Unger and Jennifer Fletcher

"Market facts" (Crain's Chicago Business)

A wonderful example of how to use multiple multimedia to enliven what could have read like an almanac. The judges were especially impressed with the interactive maps of the Chicago metro area, which conveyed a tremendous amount of information in an easy-to-use format, and the alderman's video tour of Lincoln Square. The whole package not only conveyed a sense of real authority - "This is the place to go to learn about living and working in Chicago" - but an appreciation for what multimedia tools best served each particular type of information.

Ian Lamont, David Cotriss and Mark Henricks

"Where are they now?" (The Industry Standard)

A very timely idea - a look back at the last bust from the vantage point of the current bust. Some of the stories about What Went Wrong were fascinating (money laundering by Russian mobsters helped sink Flooz - who knew?), and the user comments often added more insight on how and why these dot-bombs detonated - an example of how interactivity can enhance the overall package. It would have been nice, though, to explicitly draw lessons on why these companies failed, and perhaps tie them to the current

troubled. And for this category, the judges would have liked to see greater use of audio, video or other multimedia tools.

Matthew Carmichael, Michelle Evans, Allison Riggio, Melissa Phee, Jeff Hartvigsen, Jennifer Fletcher and Stephen J. Serio

"Best places to work in Chicago" (Crain's Chicago Business)

The judges were impressed with the way this package took a rather tired idea - "best places to work" - and used multimedia to perk it up. The Google tour gave us a fascinating look inside this ubiquitous yet rather opaque company, and the "confessionals" videos were great ways to hear directly from actual people. All in all, a great example of how the Web can take a cliché assignment and infuse it with color, depth and authenticity.

MID-SIZED WEBSITES

John Simmons, Bill Pitzer, Tony Lone Fight, Peter Weinberger, Ames Alexander, Peter St. Onge, Franco Ordonez and Kerry Hall

"The cruelest cuts" (The Charlotte Observer)

This ambitious 22-month project by The Charlotte Observer combined narrative, video and interactive graphics to tell a powerful story of the human cost of poultry production. "The cruelest cuts" is in the finest tradition of newspaper investigative journalism, bringing the plight of injured and vulnerable immigrant laborers to life in compelling fashion and shining a light on an industry that would prefer to go about its business outside the glare of the press. It also utilized to strong effect online multimedia features, such as Internet videos on living with an injured hand and a historic poultry plant fire, and an interactive graphic explaining carpal tunnel syndrome and other musculoskeletal disorders. While the main poultry producer profiled, House of Raeford Farms, responded only in generalities to the Observer's findings, the series was scrupulously fair to the company. This is an outstanding example of how journalism can make a difference in a community.

Ronald Campbell

"Lenders did booming business" (The Orange County Register)

Orange County is Ground Zero for the subprime mortgage crisis that engulfed the nation, and analyzing tens of millions of loans in public databases, the Orange County Register did a superb job of documenting the spread of subprimes through distressed counties in Southern California and beyond. This was an excellent example of explanatory journalism, making a complex story understandable. The judges especially liked the maps showing the spread of subprime mortgages over successive years in both California and the nation as a whole, and the reader feedback that was showcased in the package.

Frank Tantillo and Team and Russ Blinch and Team

"Agflation" (Reuters)

Reuters mobilized its global staff to offer a comprehensive look, through stories, Internet videos, and interactive features, at the impact of rising food prices around the world. The stories were compelling, the videos professionally produced, and the judges particularly like the heat map that directed viewers to stories, videos, and facts about the fallout in different countries.

LARGE WEBSITES

Kris Hundley, Kathleen Flynn and Kainaz Amaria

"Testing grounds" (St. Petersburg Times)

This project showed Americans how our pharmaceutical companies have moved drug trials to India, where expenses and patient protections are less burdensome. "Testing Grounds" broke news and used

compelling graphics, photos, videos and interactive maps to supplement what was fundamentally good journalism.

Louise Story, Tara Siegel Bernard, Jenny Anderson, Mark Landler, Matt Orr, Brad Stone, David Rummel, Jonathan Glater, Emily Hager, Rob Harris, Todd Heisler, Tom Jackson, Amy O'Leary, Amy Schoenfeld, Amanda Cox and Matthew Bloch

"The debt trap" (The New York Times)

This New York Times package was the most comprehensive and cohesive of the big projects. It followed the story of America's debt binge with good, close journalism. Both the layout and graphics were clean and easy to grasp. The videos were very well produced, with coherent story arcs.

Barbara Hansen, Doug Carroll, Julia Schmalz, Juan Thomassie, Mindy Fetterman, William Couch, Barbara De Lollis, Marilyn Adams and Anne Carey

"Flight cutbacks" (USA Today)

The interactive graphics in "Flight cutbacks" let readers see where cuts in airline service would affect their future business and vacation travel. In the solidly reported text, USA Today gives advance warning of changes in local service of interest to business travelers, vacation planners and members of the travel industry. But it's those interactive graphics that lift this project above other contest submissions. Other journalists should study these displays and admire how they let readers easily explore changes otherwise hidden inside a database of airline schedules.

ONLINE CONTEST BREAKING NEWS

SMALL/MIDSIZED WEBSITES

Rick Rothacker, Christina Rexrode, Jefferson George, Kirsten Valle, Jen Aronoff, Stella M. Hopkins, Fred Clasen-Kelly, Kerry Hall, Doug Smith, Deirdre McGruder, Trevor Freeze and Tony Lone Fight

"Wells Fargo wins Wachovia" (The Charlotte Observer)

The Charlotte Observer staff showed strength and depth with the collapse of Wachovia and its on-again, off-again marriage proposals. The online entry - from that Oct. 9 evening when Citigroup backed away from its engagement to Wachovia and left Wells Fargo the winner of the nation's No. 4 bank - demonstrated a good understanding of the troubled industry. It had both national scope and local perspective. Its package of graphics and visuals helped sell the importance of the story.

Kirsten Grind, Eric Engleman and Staff

"Wamu seized by regulators and sold off" (Puget Sound Business Journal)

The Puget Sound Business Journal had just gone to press when Washington Mutual failed. But the staff was prepared and turned to the Web to publish a compelling report that brought the national story home. Thanks to obvious sourcing and preparation, they were able to analyze the Seattle-based institution's failure and the possible ripple effects on other banks, the local real estate market and even philanthropy. No base was left uncovered in the well-organized package of stories.

Andy Giegerich, Erik Siemers and Matthew Kish

"Freightliner closing Swan Island plant" (Portland Business Journal)

When one of Portland's biggest employers closed its factory, the Portland Business Journal was pre-

pared. Within minutes, it broke the story on its Web site and updated the story throughout the day. The staff had been investigating the plant for months and was in a perfect position to tell the inside story that the competition couldn't.

LARGE WEBSITES

Staff

"Sunday, Sept. 14" (The New York Times/nytimes.com)

The Times' coverage provides a model for how to cover a breaking news story online. The reporting team was on the story immediately and updates came fast and furious throughout the day. Key developments were chronicled as they happened, and just as importantly, stories contained context and analysis. The Times didn't simply cover breaking events, but helped readers understand why they mattered and what could come next. The Times' team distinguished itself by helping its audience make sense of a complicated and historic day, and by doing so as events unfolded.

ONLINE CONTEST BLOGS

SMALL WEBSITES

Greg Hinz

Crain's Chicago Business

You don't have to be a Chicagoan to find Hinz's blogging effective, well-researched and spicy. Those that focus on people are excellent but the retailers' tax break blog is one of the best. And it shows that, by quickly responding to the negative comment, he eagerly takes advantage of the give-and-take nature of the blogs.

Ian Lamont

TheStandard.com

The Twitter post was spot-on. Then the follow-up on Twitter and podcasting advanced the issue further and was a longer piece, but still interesting. His voice could be stronger. Still, he is a fine writer who keeps his readers' interest.

Jonathan Blum

Blumsday.com

Jonathan Blum is a spirited blogger. The post detailing his problems working virtually at CES is a fun read and the critique of the speech from the Journal's economic reporter is engaging. Blum has the gift of gab but a little more reporting would raise the blog a notch.

MID-SIZED WEBSITES

Jonathan Lansner, Mary Ann Milbourn and Jeff Collins

The Orange County Register

The Orange County Register's real estate blog is a model for others to follow. It is informative, current with the latest analysis on real estate news and trends, visually appealing with good use of graphics and charts and it has a clear focus and is tightly written. The lead writer knows his audience and has clearly

developed a loyal following among those who believe that if you care about real estate in Orange County, this is the place you have to go to read about it.

LARGE WEBSITES

Jason Gertzen and David Hayes

The Kansas City Star

This well-handled blog represents risk-taking by focusing on one major employer and the power of the Internet to target micro-markets. It mixes information from corporate moves to product reviews, showing what local and regional blogs can do if they put their mind to it. The blog has a clear niche, knows its audience and is willing to incorporate information from others. It is a strong and commendable entry that, given the right circumstances, other sites around the country could emulate in their own areas.

David Leonhardt, Catherine Rampell and R.M. Schneiderman

The New York Times

This blog gives the viewer reason to return to it throughout the day, adding relevance to a topic that is not always handled in a compelling fashion. It responds directly to viewers and its posts often represent answers to their questions. It uses outside contributors directly, which helps its credibility. It also brings the viewer inside the Times newsroom (one example was the debit card item) with its explanations. Rather than a monolithic institution, the Times reveals itself here as a newsroom with an open ear to its viewers and one that opens its doors and lets them inside.

Geoffrey James

BNET.com

This blog is particularly relevant and useful to its audience, avoiding some of the often-repeated clichés in sales and instead encouraging its viewers to defy conventional wisdom. Its focus on how to sell during recession is a roll-up-your-sleeves approach that is neither Pollyanna nor Grim Reaper. The presentation is smooth with a number of elements, such as video, that fit well in the overall theme. It is a site to which viewers will return.

GENERAL EXCELLENCE

WEEKLY PUBLICATIONS

Indianapolis Business Journal

Tom Harton, Editor

The Indianapolis Business Journal was a clear standout for its consistently excellent page one enterprise with depth and variety. The design had a good mix of illustrations and photos to draw in readers. In one issue, the paper gave a color-coded breakout of each economic industry and how it would be affected by the recession. It also had a strong selection of stories including news and profiles. The judges particularly liked the story about hospitals having trouble in the down economy and "mystery at charter homes" for its tawdry tale that went behind the lawsuits and liens.

Cincinnati Business Courier

Rob Daumeyer, Editor

The Cincinnati Business Courier is clearly a paper with reporters who know their beats. The weekly is consistently excellent with in-depth reporting, smart insider columns and novel stories. Industry expertise is displayed across beats in interviews with top CEOs. The judges particularly like the health-care coverage for its breadth and expertise. The "Empty Promise" story made for good accountability report-

ing. Another story, "Bench strength," about judicial inefficiency was not a story one would expect from a business weekly, but the topic affects bottom lines, as the Courier story showed. This sophisticated analysis gave decision-makers a tool for sizing up the judicial IQ of local courts.

Philadelphia Business Journal

Bernie Dagenais, Editor

The Philadelphia Business Journal impresses because of its interesting mix of enterprise and general news. From immigration to crime, this weekly tackles unlikely topics for a business publication - but that's the secret to its quality, standout coverage. The newspaper took a look at the influence of crime on business, called, "The price of crime," which impressively dug deep into the economic costs of crime. Also, the newspaper clearly is dedicated to covering minorities and immigration. The newspaper devoted an entire issue to minority issues. Also, the teasers on the front page give readers lots of options.

SMALL PUBLICATIONS

Arizona Daily Star

Tim Steller, Business Editor

The Arizona Daily Star provides consistent and sophisticated business coverage and provided more coverage of the financial crisis than most other small dailies. Especially note worthy was its investigation of a car dealership that routinely ripped off consumers and employed ex-convicts. In addition, its aggressive coverage of the impact of the wave of flight reductions that swept the nation over the summer was first rate.

Salt Lake City Tribune

Michael Limon, Business Editor

The Salt Lake City Tribune distinguishes itself with enterprise. A major staff effort revisiting the impact of a highly publicized raid on a meat processing plant that employed illegal aliens was first rate, with sharp-eyed coverage of the impact on communities and people-including a compelling story on those who returned to Mexico. A sophisticated look at the safety of Utah banks deserves praise but would have been more impactful if it had concentrated on those in trouble rather than trying to reassure workers. It would be interesting to know what has changed since the story was published.

The Patriot Ledger (Quincy, Mass)

Jon Chesto, Business Editor

The Quincy Patriot Ledger offers strong consistent local coverage, often tied to national events. The small staff distinguishes itself with special sections. One of a major deregulation of the Massachusetts auto insurance market provided clear-eyed advice to readers/consumers while demonstrating a sophisticated mastery of the economic and regulatory issues involved.

MID-SIZED PUBLICATIONS

Miami Herald

Lisa Gibbs, Business Editor

The investigative piece about the criminal records of mortgage professionals was first rate ("Borrowers betrayed," page 1A July 20). This is the type of investigative work that only local and regional papers can do well, and this item uncovered a real problem in state regulation that directly impacted Florida homeowners. This was great reading. Other noteworthy items also appeared on 1A, such as "Dismal days," on Sept. 24, explaining the bleak outlook for Cuba following hurricanes Gustav and Ike. It's nice to see a paper make the effort to report from difficult places. In "Home sales bounce back," Oct. 25, the use of a single home as an example of the slide in home prices was a perfect way to illustrate the stark

reality of the housing market in Florida. The graphics were a nice addition for such a numbers-driven story. We'd like to see more space dedicated to local coverage (meaning less wire copy), but with resources the way they are at newspapers, the hard-hitting news the Miami Herald produced far outweighs what was excluded.

The Grand Rapids Press

Nancy Crawley, Business Editor

The Grand Rapids Press does a wonderful job focusing on the news and information happening within its immediate region. The staff-written stories were short, to the point, and made clear the local impact. This is the type of news readers can't find anywhere else, making the Grand Rapids Press more valuable to its audience.

Seattle Post-Intelligencer

Margaret M. Santjer, Business Editor

Great coverage of the MSFT-YHOO deal/debacle. In general, the P-I covers the big companies in its area very well (and gets it right!). We'd like to see more local business coverage.

LARGE PUBLICATIONS

Detroit Free Press

Randy Essex, Business Editor

The Detroit Free Press seemingly makes no distinction between "news" and "business news". Local state and national business issues and economic challenges are a fundamental part of everyday coverage. The paper's business coverage is consistent, aggressive and comprehensive, and its editors bring smart resources to bear on how stories are displayed and enhanced by photography and graphics. The paper is well-poised to pounce on breaking news with speed and expertise. Enterprise, depth of knowledge and a commitment to the community's interests drive the Free Press approach to business coverage.

Kansas City Star

Chris Lester, Business Editor

The Kansas City Star is committed to aggressively covering business and economic stories that affect its community, from the U.S. Capitol and Wall Street to the corner store. The newspaper has a staff of capable business writers who can handle a wide variety of stories, from the macro to the micro. The Star's designers adopted the color orange for the business section, and use it to great effect. When the stock market took the nation on a wild ride during one week in September, The Star filled the top third of page one with a timeline backed by the business section's signature orange color. The Star gets the big stories right, but it also goes deep, filling inside pages with staff-written stories and briefs. The diversity of business stories in The Star is noteworthy. This paper goes where many daily business sections rarely tread, offering comprehensive stories on such things as endowment spending, federal grants and the business of hospitals.

Rocky Mountain News

Rob Reuteman, Business Editor

The Rocky Mountain News delivered intensely to readers, despite extraordinary pressures from the paper's financial woes. Not just the big stories were covered, but the section offered solid, consistent coverage of day-to-day business and personal finance and investing. It is the non-centerpiece stories, produced day in and day out, that tell your audience that a newspaper's business section is in touch across the market and make the section a must-read. A hallmark of the section's success was its ability to find people who were affected by the national and global forces that affect us all. Stories were crisp. Editors used wire copy judiciously. Photography was considered and interesting, suggesting that editors and the folks with cameras easily communicated with another - to the reader's benefit. The section

overall featured useful, clear and clean graphics. In addition, the highly efficient organization of the section told readers that the editors understood not just the local market and economy but how the national economy affected everyone.

GIANT PUBLICATIONS

The News York Times

Larry Ingrassia, Business Editor

Depth and breadth. Comprehensive and incisive. Authoritative and engaging. These words came to mind as we read this section. This paper truly sets the agenda. With the financial crisis, it was quick to recognize that the world had changed, and it didn't hesitate to state that, explain it and analyze it. The Times takes advantage of an outstanding stable of editors and columnists, and they write with clarity and insight. We were particularly impressed with the rapid dissection of the Madoff scandal, written by Diana Henriques just days after the massive Ponzi scheme was disclosed.

Star Tribune (Minneapolis)

Eric Wiewering, Assistant Managing Editor, Business

This is an excellent example of what a local business section can be. It took the big national stories and brought them home to readers with clear, intelligible writing. And it tackled local and regional stories with gusto. The editors picked their targets and deployed their resources wisely. Notably, this staff did a remarkable job of storytelling, from exploring local scandals and scoundrels, to capturing the economic angst at a coffee shop. The coverage was very readable, with bold graphics and design.

The Washington Post

Greg Schneider, Deputy AME - Business

This paper truly rose to the occasion, jumping on the economic meltdown and covering it with energy and authority. Playing to its strength, the Post recognized the Washington angles and explored all of them. The staff took us behind the scenes as regulators, policy-makers and politicians wrestled with the challenges. But they didn't stop there; they also reported from Wall Street and Main Street. We are not the first to appreciate Steven Pearlstein's excellent columns, but his analysis was noteworthy and readable as the crisis was unfolding.

SMALL MAGAZINES

Bloomberg Markets

Laura Colby, Managing Editor

If the definition of an excellent magazine is "something you want to read rather than something you have to read," then this monthly's massive masthead truly delivers the goods - and then some. Bloomberg Markets' mix of smart, substantive, stylishly presented stories and packages included well-timed and highly skeptical takedowns of the Dubai real estate bubble and a terrific look at loopholes in the FDIC's insured-deposits program that former banking regulators have exploited to build their own bank-serving businesses. Sharp, clean, easy-to-follow design.

LARGE MAGAZINES

Business Week

Stephen J. Adler, Editor-in-Chief

The combination of consistently strong, timely and thoughtful coverage with readable design makes Business Week a winner. The magazine routinely delivers excellent investigative reporting, such as a

November piece on hackers stealing NASA's secrets. Its stories related to the financial crisis, such as a look at moves by subprime lenders into FHA financing, seem relevant even months later. The solid mix of reporting and analysis that isn't afraid of charts and graphs and doesn't mistake style for substance - as so many other business magazines do - feels just right for these times.

SMALL WEBSITES

Crain's Chicago Business

Brandon Copple, Managing Editor

A "must-read" site for anyone interested in business news in Chicagoland. There's a wealth of well-produced content here - test-driven breaking news, as you would expect, but also digital-only features that leave the competition in the dust - well-developed blogs, strong online video, searchable data and intelligent use of user comments. In all, this is a smart, sharply produced site.

MID-SIZED WEBSITES

Bloomberg.com

Matt Winkler, Editor-in-Chief and Janet Guyon, Managing Editor

Bloomberg.com isn't the prettiest website, but boy is it useful. The company knows its target audience - financial junkies - and provides it with a staggering amount of information. The data and news are well-organized on the site, which lets visitors sort by topic, industry and region. It highlights the most popular subjects with tags, such as Madoff and environment. The coverage is aggressive; reporters do yeoman's work, digging up minor and major scoops on a vast range of companies across the globe. They avoid flowery writing, land interviews with industry titans and ask tough questions, but they also step back to investigate and explain, such as in a series of stories on the Stanford Investment Group scandal. Perhaps the gem of the website is its deep well of financial data. Some is locked behind a subscriber wall, but much of it is free. It's unfailingly accurate and up-to-date.

LARGE WEBSITES

Business Week

John Byrne, Executive Editor, Editor-in-Chief

The site is innovative, featuring good interactivity and depth of issues. Viewer involvement has increased significantly, which is a credit to the site's accessibility and content. It represents a marriage of strong writers with intelligent technology. In an era of many look-alike sites, this one works hard to distinguish itself and succeeds at reaching that goal. Provided solid journalism in a momentous year for business news.

BNET.com

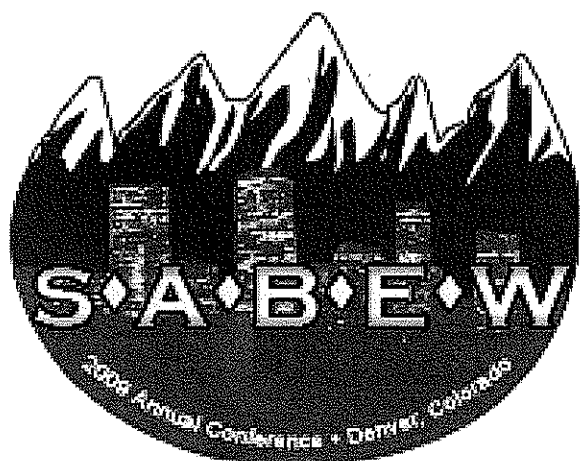
Jeffrey Davis, Editor

Though launched in just 2007, this site has established itself as a noteworthy resource for business executives seeking practical information. Going beyond its unique and sophisticated look, it also encourages active participation by viewers. Material is well organized and top-notch, focusing on what is new and exciting. This is a great new player on the business information scene that has a style all its own.

St. Petersburg Times

Robert Trigaux, Business Editors

This site offers a clear focus on its region and seems to know its market extremely well. Neighborhood Watch page, group content, multimedia and overall look are impressive, especially for a site that is local in nature. In addition, this in-depth coverage of the community can serve as an example of how news can be presented in attractive and comfortable fashion to viewers who have previously been more accustomed to reading newspapers.



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