

Another Top 10 for the Indy



Members of the Clark College Independent staff show off their Associated Collegiate Press award. *Photo: Bradley Wilson*

Clark College's student-run newspaper, *The Independent*, again placed in the Top 10 in a national contest of two-year colleges, earning fourth place in the annual Best of Show competition in Long Beach, California.

The award from the Associated Collegiate Press honored overall excellence among teams of students who attended the Midwinter National College Journalism Convention on March 1-4.

The *Indy*, which is funded by the Associated Students of Clark College, has taken home this award for several years under the direction of former student-media advisor Dee Anne Finken. Finken retired in January but oversaw the publication of the Oct. 18, 2017 edition that judges singled out for

national recognition.

The *Indy* won fourth place in 2017, as well.

“Receiving this award for the second year in a row really brought home how much my staff have invested in this program,” said Riley Clarke, editor-in-chief. “It’s been a year full of change, and I couldn’t be more proud to work with such dedicated, passionate people.”

This article was contributed by Beth Slovic.

Indy earns awards



Staff from the 2017 *Independent*. Photo: Dee Anne Finken/Clark College

Clark College student journalists brought home first- and fourth-place honors from the annual Associated Collegiate Press' midwinter conference, held March 2-5 in San Francisco.

The Clark College *Independent* website outpaced 14 other two- and four-year colleges to win first place in the large-school online news category. The print edition of the *Indy* (to use its nickname) finished fourth from among 12 entries from community colleges.

Editor-in-chief Ieva Braciulyte said the *Indy's* success in the competition felt rewarding. But she also said she and the 11 members of her staff who traveled to San Francisco valued attending the workshops and meeting other student journalists. "It was so exciting to network and get to know the struggles of other newsrooms and how they problem-solve."

Braciulyte said she also appreciated support from the

Associated Students of Clark College, which funded the trip.

“I know the conference inspired and educated our editors,” Braciulyte said. “That will get passed down to next quarter’s staff and benefit the newsroom for a long time.”

Students from 84 colleges and universities attended more than 100 conference workshops, presented largely by media professionals and journalism faculty from colleges and universities across the country. Topics included things like newsroom leadership, photography, investigative reporting, interviewing, social media, and dealing with controversial stories.

Clark students Marvin Peña and Diana Aristizabal, who produce the *Independent*’s Spanish-language insert, *Mundo Clark*, also presented a workshop. “Can You Hear Me Now? Creating New Media Outlets” detailed their efforts to create *Mundo*.

Peña, who is from Venezuela, has been a member of the *Independent* staff for three years. He and Aristizabal, who is from Colombia, created *Mundo* last year as a means for bridging cultures at Clark.

Peña said he appreciated the chance to explain his work to an audience of other college students. “It was challenging because it was my first time presenting on this level,” Peña said. “But it was inspiring because I got to inspire people, and get feedback from other students working on new projects.”

The *Independent* staff publishes a print edition every three weeks and updates the online edition regularly at www.clarkcollegeindependent.com. The award-winning website was designed in 2014 by then-student Lisa Presley.

Presley, who is now studying psychology and human development at Washington State University Vancouver, said the creation of the website was a laborious process between her, then-editor-in-chief Zach McMahon and *Independent* advisor Dee Anne Finken.

“We wanted to improve on the look and make it user-friendly,” Presley said. “We also wanted it to still have a newspaper look with the text columns, and we worked with the Disabilities Services office to make it accessible... It’s kind of my baby.”

The ACP is the nation’s oldest and largest membership organization for student journalists, said executive director Laura Widmer.

This article contributed by journalism professor Dee Anne Finken.

Great News



The spring 2015 staff of *The Independent*, Clark's student newspaper.

Clark College student journalists captured all three top awards in a competition for the best in news reporting, editing and production by teams at 13 community colleges in Oregon and Washington, according to results made public Sunday.

It was the third year in a row that the news staff of *The Independent* captured the Publications Sweeps, a tally of the most first-, second- and third-place finishes for a school in 21 categories of the competition. The *Independent* staff also took first in the General Excellence category of the contest, which, this year was sponsored by the Pacific Northwest Association of Journalism Educators.

Former Clark student journalist Emma Fletcher, who is now studying in Dunedin, New Zealand, captured first in the Individual Sweeps, picking up top awards in feature reporting and feature photography, two second-place awards in news

reporting and multimedia story-telling and an honorable mention in portrait photography.

“This is such a terrific testimony to the hard work, determination and skill of some fine students and young people,” adviser Dee Anne Finken said. “The Independent staff demonstrated once again that they can achieve great outcomes by way of great effort and dedication.”

Finken said the results were also satisfying because the competition this year was broader than in years past. Washington Community College Journalism Association media advisers opened the contest to two-year schools in Oregon, Montana and Idaho this year and conducted the contest under the banner of the Pacific Northwest Association of Journalism Educators.

“The competition was tougher and larger in number, but Clark students again prevailed,” she said.

The Independent staff finished in front of Mt. Hood Community College students in Gresham, Oregon, who took second in the Publications Sweeps and Shoreline Community College student journalists from Shoreline, Washington, who finished third.

In the General Excellence category, Clark student journalists finished in front of the Pierce College student news staff, from Lakewood, Washington, who took second, and the Shoreline staff, who took third.

Finken acknowledged the success was also due to the support of other faculty and staff at Clark, as well as professionals in the community, especially those who serve on the college’s Student Media Advisory Committee. “The Independent’s success is also because we’ve had thoughtful people supporting a fine co-curricular program that blends an extra-curricular activity with academics. It’s been a great partnership.”

Tra Friesen, The Independent’s editor-in-chief, who won third

place in the news photography category, said his work for the publication has been highly rewarding.

“Joining the Independent is hands-down the best decision I ever made for my education,” Friesen said. “Not only did I improve as a critical thinker and writer, I also learned real world skills like leadership, teamwork, and communication.”

As for the team’s success, Friesen credited a dedication to constant improvement. “We are never satisfied and we always try to make each issue better than the last.”

Sports editor/managing editor Tyler Urke won first place in sports feature reporting and an honorable mention in feature writing.

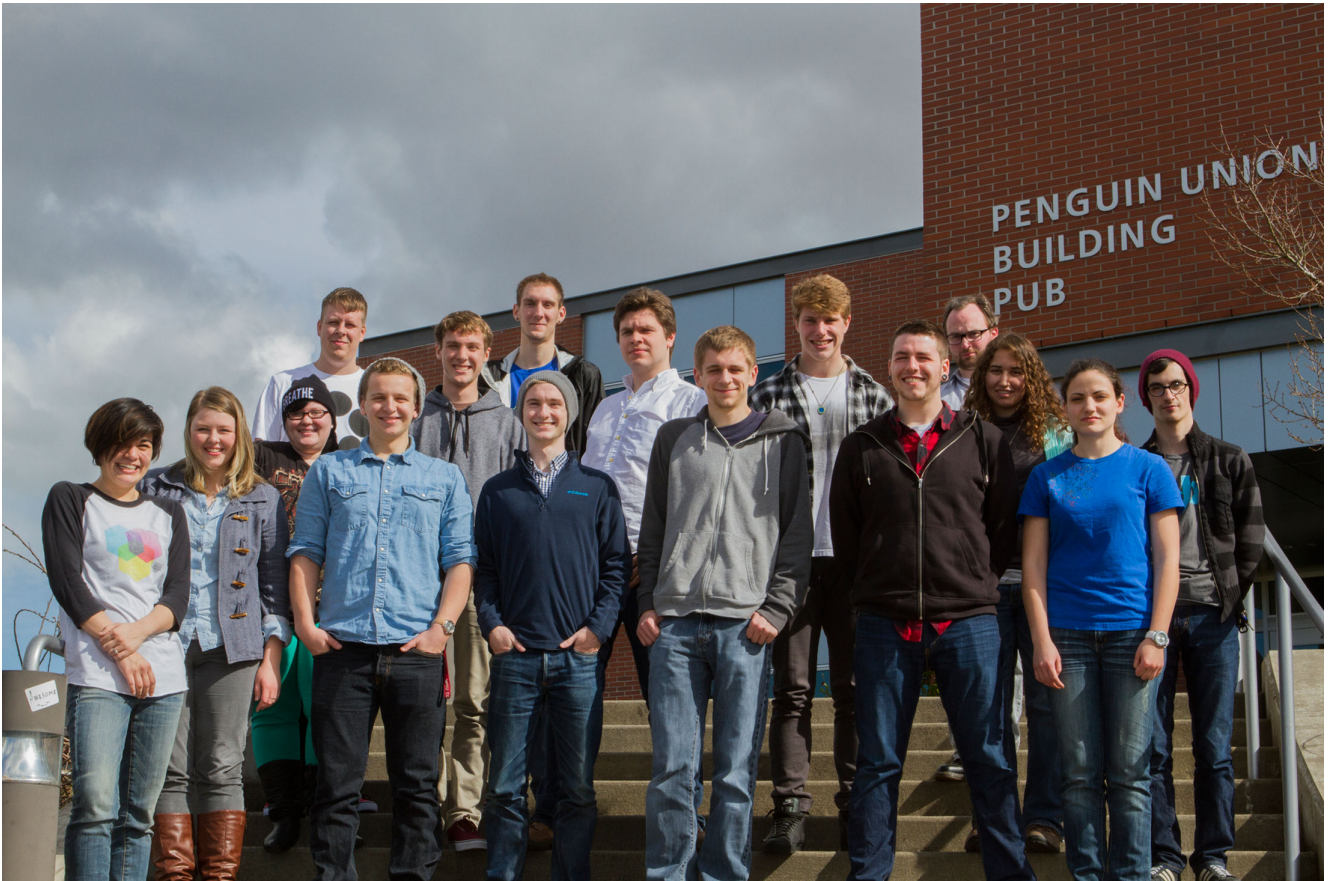
Multimedia editor Scott Unverzagt, chief photographer Kameron Johnson and design manager Kyle Bliquez also won first-place awards; and sports reporter Becca Robbins captured a second-place in sports news reporting.

Other college news staff who competed were from Everett Community College in Everett, Washington; Linn-Benton Community College in Albany, Oregon; Green River Community College in Auburn, Washington; Edmonds Community College in Lynnwood, Washington; Seattle Central College; Portland Community College; Peninsula College in Port Angeles, Washington; and Whatcom College in Bellingham.

Entries consisted of work students completed during the Spring 2014, Fall 2014 and Winter 2015 terms.

Eighteen judges—professional and former staff members from *The Seattle Times*, *The (Tacoma) News Tribune*, the *Tacoma Weekly*, the *Wenatchee World* and the (Longview) *Daily News*; and faculty and advisers from non-participating colleges—evaluated and scored the submissions, Finken said.

Indy Wins Awards



Clark College Independent 2014 winter quarter staff include, *left to right* Caitlin Calsbeek, Emma Fletcher, Cloe Beck, Aleksi Lepisto, Kyle Souvenir, Tra Friesen, Kenneth Zummach, Tyler Urke, Robert Berman, Ryan Rutledge, Brody Voge, Tyler “Charle” Brown, Evan “Smiles” Jones, Alejandra Magallanes, Ester Manea and Bradley York. *Photo: The Independent/Bradley York*

Clark College students who publish the print and online editions of *The Independent* captured two national awards at the Associated Collegiate Press 30th annual National College Journalism Convention, held Feb. 27-March 2 in San Diego.

In addition to attending more than 72 workshops and training

sessions while at the convention, *The Independent* staff won third place in a “Best of Show” competition among more than 30 community colleges from across the country that publish weekly newspapers. The Clark College student staff also captured 10th place among large schools – both community colleges and four-year institutions – that produce news websites.

This was the first award for *The Independent*’s online publication, said Clark journalism instructor Dee Anne Finken, who advises the student staff. She said the acknowledgement is evidence the student staff’s digital-first emphasis is working, and noted that the staff’s success in the print category was a step up from last year, when Clark students finished seventh at ACP.

Finken and adjunct instructor Jeff Bunch accompanied the 12 students who attended the three-day conference, which also included workshops on everything from the basics of newswriting to the future of journalism in the digital age, each led by experts in the field. Other workshops featured faculty from the Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communications at Arizona State University and the Poynter Institute along with *New York Times* Public Editor Margaret Sullivan.

Editor-in-chief Aleksi Lepisto said Clark students are committed to publishing a high-quality news product and will continue to work hard to do even better next year. “If we do good work, people will see it,” Lepisto said.

Lepisto said the issue the staff submitted in the “Best of Show” judging featured a solid representation of the quality coverage for which *The Independent* staff has become known. It included a feature story about a Clark anthropology instructor who is also a ghost hunter and archeologist; a look at some of the issues faced by the growing blind student population at Clark; a commentary about a lack of political awareness among students; and an update on the popularity of the food carts on

campus.

Finken and Lepisto said they were grateful for support from the Associated Students of Clark College, which helped fund the trip.

Finken noted that student news teams are in a similar situation as professional news outlets when it comes to figuring out best practices for operating in the rapidly evolving news landscape.

“It’s challenging right now,” Finken said. “We have one foot in developing the fundamentals, but we also have to look ahead to develop more ways of storytelling and delivering the news. But we are up for the challenge.”

In addition to Lepisto, Finken and Bunch, the following student staff members represented *The Independent* at the conference: Esther Manea, Emma Fletcher, Tyler Urke, Tyler “Charlie” Brown, Tra Friesen, Nate Nienaber, Alejandra Magallanes, Kenneth Zummach, Brody Voge, Ryan Rutledge, and Robert Berman.

Other staff members are Caitlin Calsbeek, Evan Jones, Daniel Hampton, Bradley York, Cloe Beck, Killian Bailey, Boyd Lainhart, Kyle Souvenir and Kait Terrel.

Independent staff contributed this article.