

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.