

Ontario Community Newspapers Association



Champion receives top honour at awards gala

We're No. 1!

Loyal *Champion* readers who depend on the paper to bring them the latest in community news and sports can be confident they're getting a quality product.

The *Champion* took top honours March 31 at an industry competition, beating out 20 other newspapers from across Ontario to place No. 1 in general excellence.

Awards for the 2006 Better Newspapers Competition, held by the Ontario Community Newspapers Association (OCNA), were presented in Niagara Falls.

"We're extremely proud of the recognition the *Champion* has received, especially considering the trying times it has had over the past month or two," said Publisher Neil Oliver, referring to the fire that forced staff to re-locate to the Holiday Inn Express and the office of the *Oakville Beaver*, the *Champion's* sister newspaper, until a temporary location could be secured.

The *Champion* was up against newspapers from Clarington and Barrhaven for the General Excellence award in its circulation class of 12,500 to 24,999.

The judges said they based their decision on several factors, including front-page layout, community news, editorial comment,



Karen Miceli



PHOTO BY RIZIERO VERTOLLI

Mohsen Taghavi (left) of Salam Toronto presents Graham Paine with his Photographer of the Year award.

photography and advertising content.

"(It was) easily tops among the 21 entries thanks to a clean front page, excellent photography from veteran shooter Graham Paine, strong writing from the reporters and a flow to the community coverage thanks to the editors," said one of the judges.

"Being selected as the top provincial newspaper in our circulation class is a reflection of the hard work of a great team of people," said Editor in Chief Jill Davis.

"Without each other we couldn't do it. From advertising to editorial to photography to circulation to production, it takes a dedi-

cated group of talented individuals to produce the *Champion*. This particular award shines a light on all of the departments — and I am proud to be a part of this close-knit newspaper family."

Champion Managing Editor Karen Miceli accepted the award at the Niagara Falls gala.

"I'm really proud of all the staff," she said after the win.

Also recognized with an impressive distinction was *Champion* photographer Graham Paine, who was once again named Photographer of the Year.

Oliver said Paine's involvement in the community is reflected in his photos. "We're extremely proud of Graham," he said.

Judge Larry Wong said Paine's photos stood out from the other entries.

"This versatile photographer demonstrates he has a good eye and understands the importance of good composition," he said.

Paine is far from being a stranger to this award, with this being the third time he's taken the honour. He also placed third this year for Best Sports Photo.

The *Oakville Beaver* placed first for General Excellence in the over 40,000 circulation class. The *Burlington Post* was third.

The wins of the *Champion*, the *Burlington Post* and the *Oakville Beaver* contributed toward the impressive overall success of the Metroland West group at this year's OCNA competition, Oliver said.



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