

PART I

THE RULES FOR WRITING/REPORTING, DESIGN, AUDIO, VIDEO AND PHOTOJOURNALISM

ELIGIBILITY

Journalists are considered members of the Arizona Press Club if they work in the production of news for any Arizona newspaper, online news site, periodical, newsletter, or news service whose primary purpose is to inform the public rather than to sell products or promote a business, government, nonprofit organization or ideology. Journalists for radio and TV news outlets are eligible to enter written reporting published online. Broadcast audio/visual reports are not eligible except in specific audio and visual categories (except for Community News Outlet of the Year and Virg Hill Journalist of the Year.)

All photographers (staff, part-time, freelance, contract and college student) are eligible if they are Arizona residents who had their work published in print or online by a news organization during 2025. Wire service and agency photographers based in Arizona are eligible.

Entries must have been originally published in 2025.

All entries must have been produced for the editorial department of an Arizona publication, media outlet, news website or wire service. Work produced for advertising, marketing or other departments is not eligible. Eligible publications must have editorial independence and exist primarily to produce reporting. Advocacy groups that publish news stories are not eligible.

Stories reported or written by or for publications or websites based outside Arizona are not eligible.

DEADLINE

Entries must be submitted by 11:59 p.m. Arizona time, April 26. All entries must be submitted online at www.newspapercontest.com/azpc.

CATEGORIES

All categories can be entered by any journalist in the state, including students.

Spanish-language publications may enter any of the English-language categories, provided that all stories, headlines and captions are translated into English.

Journalists for student/school-run publications, including college/university newspapers and wire services, should enter the Student Division.

MEMBERSHIP AND ENTRY FEES

Eligible journalists who wish to be club members without entering the contest should select a club membership and proceed to payment without submitting contest entries. Thank you for your support!

\$10 per entry for Student categories

\$15 per entry for Statewide categories

The Big 3

Virg Hill Journalist of the Year: \$25 to enter (Can include audio, video or written entries.)

Nick Oza Arizona Photojournalist of the Year: \$25 to enter

Community News Outlet of the Year: \$25 to enter (Can include audio, video or written entries.)

PAYMENT

Unpaid entries will not be considered. Improperly submitted entries will be disqualified.

STAFF ENTRIES

Entries with five or more contributors should be submitted as a Staff Entry.

JUDGING

Entries will be judged by out-of-state journalists selected by the Arizona Press Club Board of Directors. Judges' decisions are final, unless winning entries do not conform to APC rules.

If there is a tie for first place, no second-place award is given. If there is a tie for second, no third-place award is given.

ETHICS AND DISQUALIFICATION

The Arizona Press Club promotes ethical journalism and recognizes that contest rules cannot envision every potential breach of professional standards. The club reserves the right to disqualify any entry or withdraw any award based on ethical violations or violations of the rules, as deemed by the board. Entries that do not conform to the rules will be disqualified. If an entry is disqualified, the prize will be awarded to the next-place winner. Disqualified entrants will forfeit their entry fees.

GRIEVANCE POLICY

For problems, concerns and complaints about the contest, the contest chairperson shall notify the executive officers. The committee will rule on the matter or forward it to the full Press Club board for final approval.

DISCLAIMER

The Arizona Press Club is not responsible for lost entries but will take reasonable care processing the entries.

ENTRY PROCEDURES

- Journalists should use the field provided on the entry form to explain the size of their outlet or newsroom, resources available to them during the reporting process, challenges faced and impact, if any.
- List headlines or images completely to help identify entries.
- Entries must be submitted exactly as they were published. URLs to online versions can be submitted; for content not available online, content can be uploaded elsewhere as PDFs, doc or docx files and a link provided.
- Multiple story entries for categories should reflect sustained coverage of a single issue or topic, not overall beat reporting. (Example: A collection of stories about the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office or about drunken driving)

enforcement would be eligible; a collection of stories about different police agencies or unrelated topics would not be eligible.)

- Enter as many times and in as many categories as desired. However, no story may be submitted more than once, except that stories entered in other categories may also be used to enter Journalist of the Year-level categories and other exceptions only as noted.
 - If a story is entered in more than one category, the Arizona Press Club Board will determine the single best category to have it judged in, and remove it from contention in the other categories, at the board's sole discretion. A refund for invalid and/or excess entries may be provided, at the board's discretion.
- Entries that do not conform to the rules will be disqualified. If an entry is disqualified, the prize will be awarded to the next winner. Disqualified entrants will forfeit their entry fees.

PART II

THE CATEGORIES

SPANISH-LANGUAGE PUBLICATIONS

Unless otherwise noted, entries are strictly limited to a maximum of five stories or pieces of work. Sidebars count toward the total. (Example: Four stories plus a sidebar is a valid entry. Four stories plus two sidebars is not.) Column categories have a different story count; see specific rules for each.

Spanish-language news reporting: A single story or up to five stories about one news event or issue.

Spanish-language feature reporting: A single story or up to five stories that reflect how people live their daily lives.

Spanish-language commentary/analysis: A single piece of commentary/opinion or up to five pieces on one topic or issue.

CATEGORIES

Categories are intended to honor the work of any Arizona journalist from any size of publication. All entries, except if specifically noted otherwise, are strictly limited to a

maximum of five stories or pieces of work. Sidebars count toward the total. (Example: Four stories plus a sidebar is a valid entry. Four stories plus two sidebars is not.) Many categories have a different story count; see specific rules for each.

The Don Bolles Award for Investigative Reporting: One or more pieces on a single subject — published on a single day, or over the course of the year — that are the result of extensive research and original investigation. The winning entry will uncover corruption, incompetence or systemic problems in an area of high public interest and importance. A one-page letter, explaining what motivated the project and any impact that might not be apparent in the actual stories, is optional.

Public service journalism: One or more pieces on a single subject — published on a single day, or over the course of the year — that serve the public good. May include sidebars. A one-page letter explaining what motivated the project and any impact that might not be apparent in the actual stories is optional.

Breaking news: A single day's reporting of one or more pieces of unscheduled news on a single subject. May include sidebars. Entries should be reported and written in a single shift. A one-page letter explaining deadline circumstances is optional.

Justice system reporting: A single story or up to five stories concerning a specific aspect of law enforcement, courts, corrections, fire and rescue, or related areas.

John Kolbe Politics Reporting Award: A single story or up to five stories concerning a specific aspect of local, state or federal political issue or election-related coverage.

Health and social issues reporting: A single story or up to five stories concerning a specific aspect of healthcare or social issues. Social issues may include faith and religion, social services and the poor, families and children, aging and substance abuse.

Environmental reporting: A single story or up to five stories concerning a specific topic or trend related to natural resources, ecology, environmental policy, science or human interaction with nature.

Education reporting: A single story or up to five stories concerning a specific topic related to education.

Immigration reporting: A single story or up to five stories concerning a specific event or topic about immigration and related issues.

Business reporting: A single story or column, or a combination of up to five stories and columns on a specific aspect of business, finance or consumer issues.

Sports reporting: A single story or column, or a combination of up to five stories and columns, about a specific sport, team, issue, athlete or sporting event. This category is open to news, features and investigative reporting.

Column, opinion and editorial writing: Three pieces identified as columns written with a focus on reporting news, explaining recent events or telling a human-interest story, including sports; or, three opinion pieces expressing the views of a publication as an institution, whether signed or unsigned.

Personality profile and human interest writing: A single story or up to five stories that give an in-depth look at an individual or a specific group of people, or that demonstrate excellent use of narrative voice.

Arts, food and beverage reporting and criticism: Three stories that explore events, personalities or trends about food, theater, visual arts, music, movies, fashion or similar subjects. Entries may be written from the author's point of view.

Short-form audio storytelling: A single audio story or series on any subject. Entries should be under two-minutes and may include podcasts or radio broadcasts.

Long-form audio storytelling: A single audio story or series on any subject. Entries should be longer than two-minutes and may include podcasts or radio broadcasts.

Podcast: Up to three episodes.

Video storytelling: A single video story or series on any subject.

Newsletter: Up to five samples

Photojournalism – Picture Story: (10 images max.)

Photojournalism – News: A single photograph from a news event.

Photojournalism – Feature: A single photograph of a “found” situation that features strong human interest, or a fresh view of an everyday scene.

Photojournalism – Pictorial: A single picture that explores a graphic or aesthetic moment with emphasis on composition.

Photojournalism – Sports: A single picture that captures a news or feature event, including peak sports action or emotion or other reaction among athletes and fans.

DESIGN CATEGORIES

Print page design portfolio: Up to three pages of a publication

Digital project design portfolio: Up to three pages of a website or newsletter

STUDENT JOURNALISM

Work in these categories must have been published in a student news outlet. Students who wish to enter work published elsewhere should enter the Statewide category.

Student news reporting: A single story or up to five stories about one news event or issue. Entries may include investigative reporting that includes extensive research and original investigation. Sports reporting may be entered in either news reporting or features reporting category.

Student features reporting: A single story or column, or a combination of up to five stories and columns, that reflect how people live their daily lives. Entries may include sports features.

Student photojournalism: A single photograph from a news, sport or feature assignment, or up to five photographs that show a body of work.

VIRG HILL ARIZONA JOURNALIST OF THE YEAR

ENTRY FEE: \$25

Virg Hill was a popular and witty political columnist and reporter for The Phoenix Gazette. Hill died at the age of 62 of a heart attack while covering the Arizona House of Representatives. He passed away in January 1969, and in December of that year, the Arizona Press Club created the award in his honor.

The Virg Hill Award goes to the journalist who, in the opinion of the judges, did the best work during 2025. The winner will be selected by three out-of-state judges.

- Entries shall include at least five and no more than eight main stories (sidebars may also be included and do not count as part of the total).
- Up to two of those stories may have a double or multiple bylines. All others must have a single byline.
- Entries may include a one-page letter explaining the obstacles overcome in reporting one or all of the stories in the entry.
- The winner, the first runner-up and second runner-up will receive a certificate.

NICK OZA ARIZONA PHOTOJOURNALIST OF THE YEAR

ENTRY FEE: \$25

Nick Oza was an Arizona Republic photojournalist who died in a vehicle crash at age 57 in late 2021.

Oza was awarded the Arizona Press Club 2017 Arizona Photojournalist of the Year and shared in two Pulitzer Prizes in his career. He was an immigrant who spent much of his time at the Republic documenting immigrants traveling through Mexico in search of better lives in the United States.

The award was named for Oza beginning with the 2023 awards to honor his dedication to photojournalism and the respect he showed for the community he served.

The Nick Oza Arizona Photojournalist of the Year goes to the photojournalist who, in the opinion of the judges, did the best work during 2025.

Entries should include:

- At least one Picture Story but no more two. (Up to 10 images)
- Up to 10 single photographs. No more than 30 images in a portfolio. You must have at least four categories represented from the following:
 - News (Single photo)
 - Feature (Single photo)
 - Pictorial (Single photo)
 - Sports Action (Single photo)
 - Sports Feature (Single photo)

- Picture Story (Project)

Entries may include a one-page letter explaining the obstacles overcome in reporting one or all of the stories in the entry.

ARIZONA COMMUNITY NEWS OUTLET OF THE YEAR

ENTRY FEE: \$25

The Community News Outlet of the Year Award is a new award designed to recognize an entire news organization for its engagement with and impact to the community in 2025.

Entry should include a letter detailing the organization's commitment to the community, including ways it engages with its audience, and the result this work and the organization's coverage has on the community.