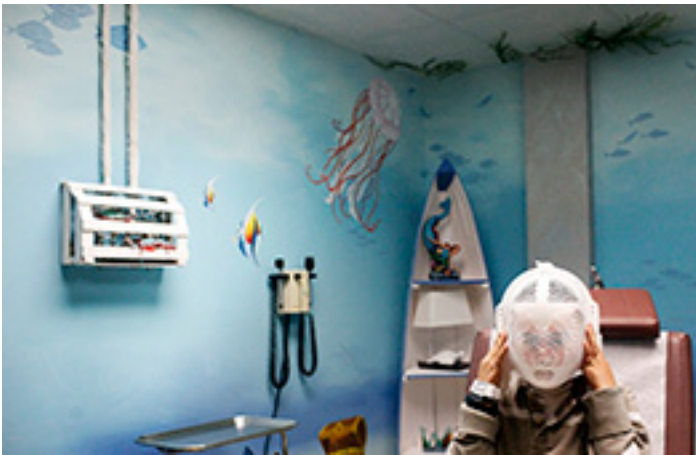


# 2014 SNPA Photo / Video Awards

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## GRAND PRIZE and 1st Place Best Video



### “LITTLE MAN AND THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS”

**Dania Maxwell**  
**Naples Daily News, Naples, Fla.**



[View the video](#)

#### Judges' Comments:

- Painfully beautiful. I appreciated and applaud the smart use of natural sound and live music woven strategically throughout this piece. The editing was superb – the passion and pain of this mother and child undeniable. An example of compelling, multi-sensory and emotional storytelling at its finest.
- This was the clear winner, because of the time and attention to detail that deftly blended months, if not years, of reporting, interviewing, photography and video to tell the heartbreaking, but also inspiring story of this young man's fight. The storytelling is superb and I felt like I came to know Ethan and his courageous mother. Their relationship is perfectly captured with grace and strength through the amazing still photos that capture the most important moments of his life, the interviews that help define this piece and the music interwoven throughout.
- Right from the start, this video captivated me. It was very professionally done. The shots and cuts were very effective. It had great sound. It was obvious that this team was given great access to the family and to the medical care and they put the time in to make a great video story. The stills were especially vibrant. It was humbling and uplifting and happy and sad, all at the same time. Bravo.

- The combining of still and moving images artfully stitched together was just one outstanding element of this piece. The videography had a European or Middle East feel to it. I felt I was watching a documentary aired on Al Jazeera. In the final analysis, the multiplicity of images so artfully connected simply overpowered the single images of the still photo competition.
- The Grand Prize winner richly deserves the recognition. The use of still photos and video is outstanding. The straight-forward presentation of the heart-tugging plight of child and his mother is excellent. It is obvious this winner took a team effort.

## 2nd Place Best Video



### “WOUNDED WARRIOR”

**Gerry Melendez**  
**The State, Columbia, S.C.**

[View the video](#)

#### Judges' Comments:

- This was effective storytelling with good imagery, great sound, and involving use of stills and video. It did a lot in a short time. There was good use of narrative voiceover mixed with live action. The shot of the subject talking to the people in the car was especially humanizing.
- Strategic lighting and a variety of angles in this one – beautifully capturing a broken body but an unbroken spirit. Inspirational, and a job very well done.
- This video did a great job of allowing this veteran to define his life and not let the injury define him. The use of active scenes, still photography and nice unique angles convey his passion and enthusiasm.

### 3rd Place Best Video



#### “PAIR BATTLES LOGJAMS TO CLEAR BAYOU FOUNTAIN”

**Heather McClelland**  
**The Advocate, Baton Rouge, La.**

#### [View the video](#)

#### Judges' Comments:

- There was some nice camera work here, given the somewhat difficult environment in which to shoot. It's sometimes hard to get adequate sound, but this video succeeded. While I thought that it took a bit long (a minute) to get to the logjam, the story moved nicely after that. Good camera work, good sound, and good lighting. A very nice effort.
- The video is a great example of how video can elevate what seems like a simple story. The use of natural sounds is excellent and shooting from inside the canoes and kayaks added a dynamic feel to the video. The editing nicely paired the subject's description with corresponding video elements.
- Artistic, lovely, and great use of natural light – this video captures the natural beauty of a Louisiana bayou with a build-up and reveal that made me want to jump in and help clear out the debris. Really nice job.

### Honorable Mention Best Video



#### “KIM & JERRY TRIED TO GET MARRIED, BUT RAN OUT OF TIME”

**John Clanton**  
**Tulsa World, Tulsa, Okla.**

#### [View the video](#)

#### Judges' Comments:

- This video used detail effectively to convey the emotion of the story revealed bit by bit.
- Who knew that names on a mailbox could mean so much more than an address? This soft, quiet piece captures a struggle and grief that speaks volumes. I enjoyed the simplicity and emotion – proof that video doesn't have to be complicated to have an impact.
- Although we don't get to see one half of this couple on video, we see so many nice details of their lives together through the visual tour of their home together. The interview with Jerry also does a nice job of telling the arc of the story and puts a real face to the issue of gay marriage laws.

### Honorable Mention Best Video



#### “PALMETTO HEALTH RICHLAND'S TRAUMA CENTER”

**Gerry Melendez**  
**The State, Columbia, S.C.**

## View the video

### Judges' Comments:

- Great natural sound in this one, from the nurses to the “thump, thump” of the heart machine. This video “took us there,” capturing the stress and emotion of what it takes to work in a trauma ward. Nice job.
- This was professionally done. It gave a very realistic sense of the caring that the trauma staff shows on the job. The black and white imagery gave the video a cool, somewhat detached look and feel, and I think helped viewers not focus on the gore.
- The use of black and white videos is often overused, but very nicely applied here. Great use of natural sound and still photos to convey the chaos in the ER and nice angles on the interview subjects.

### 1st Place Spot News



**Rick McFarland**  
Arkansas Democrat-Gazette  
Little Rock



### Judges' Comments:

- Most powerful spot news photo in the contest. The image virtually placed the reader in the car with the driver, who seemed to be holding the engine on her lap. The curious and patient facial expression of the trapped driver added complexity while the reader asks, “How did she survive?”
- Excellent entry that places you alongside rescuers and draws your eyes to the plight of the victim. The image goes far beyond the average accident photograph and deserves the lofty first-place ranking.

### 2nd Place Spot News



**James Durbin**  
Midland Reporter-Telegram, Midland, Texas

### Judges' Comments:

- The photographer has masterfully framed this struggle between firefighters and a blazing oil pipeline blaze in such a way that one can almost touch the intense flames and feel the heat. Excellent entry.
- Classic fire photo with high action.

### 3rd Place Spot News



**Jennifer Reynolds**  
Galveston County Daily News  
Galveston, Texas

### Judges' Comments:

- Poignant and riveting image seldom seen.
- Strong image that immediately draws the viewer not only to the shirtless man being carried by

police but also to the caption that explains his fate. Well done.

### Honorable Mention Spot News



**Bob Brown**  
**Richmond Times-Dispatch, Richmond, Va.**

#### Judges' Comments:

- The smiles tell the story. The right place and exactly the right moment.
- Hard-to-shoot and offers much better action than most images from these highly controlled situations. No handshaking. No cliché, this image.

### Honorable Mention Spot News



**Melissa Gerrits**  
**Arkansas Democrat-Gazette, Little Rock**

#### Judges' Comments:

- This photograph allows us see this tragedy through the eyes of a child. While the caption provides the details, the picture tells the story.
- Heartbreaking image as little girl gathers the things that mean the most to her.

### 1st Place Sports



**Michael Woods**  
**Northwest Arkansas Newspapers**  
**Fayetteville**



#### Judges' Comments:

- This picture skillfully takes a typical sports action picture in a different direction. Rather than colliding helmets, viewers are carried along by the young players as they run headlong into their first game of their season. The photographer's strong use of sky and dusty ground help bring this scene to life.
- Beautifully composed and lighted night shot. Far superior to the usual high school athletic contest photo.

### 2nd Place Sports



**Benjamin Krain**  
**Arkansas Democrat-Gazette, Little Rock**

#### Judges' Comments:

- This picture screams action – from charging horses and wildly rocking chuckwagons to the clouds of flying dirt. This entry captured my attention and my imagination. Well done.
- High action, crisply shot and puts the reader in the picture. Fine composition and timing. This image was not an accident.

### 3rd Place Sports



**Jonathon Gruenke**  
Daily Press, Newport News, Va.

#### Judges' Comments:

- This entry announces a game's outcome from another perspective – the agony of defeat. A strong picture that deserves its lofty ranking.
- Heartbreak trumps jubilation. This is a compelling photo of players from the losing team. Composition just right on.

### Honorable Mention Sports



**Allison Carter**  
TimesDaily, Florence, Ala.

#### Judges' Comments:

- The photographer leaves no doubt that one player is headed for a fall. Not only does this picture capture the moment but it does so from exactly the right angle.
- Terrific action shot that outscored a variety of other game images.

### Honorable Mention Sports



**Benjamin Krain**  
Arkansas Democrat-Gazette, Little Rock

#### Judges' Comments:

- Great framing. This cowgirl almost jumps out of the picture. A strong entry.
- Terrific tightly focused action. Rider's face mirrors that of horse in color and concentration. The eye can't avoid this one. A contest favorite.

### Honorable Mention Sports



**Rob Ostermaier**  
Daily Press, Newport News, Va.

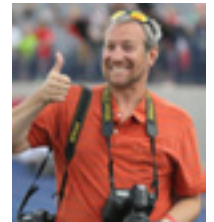
#### Judges' Comments:

- This strong entry makes the viewer wince by displaying the exact moment of a big-time foul. The image tells the story.
- Very unusual basketball action with an element of humor. Nicely captured by the photographer and then cropped effectively. A favorite and certainly one of the photos from the contest to be remembered.

### 1st Place Features



**Tim Fischer**  
Midland Reporter-Telegram  
Midland, Texas



#### Judges' Comments:

- This well-deserved winning entry is proof positive a good picture can uniquely capture a special moment – just examine the face of the terrified child. By including the wild-eyed child's excited aunt, the contrast in emotion is obvious. A true winner.
- The wonderful expressions captured just right vaulted this photo to the top of the most competitive category.

### 2nd Place Features



**Benjamin Krain**  
Arkansas Democrat-Gazette, Little Rock

### Judges' Comments:

- This entry richly blends brilliant colors of tossed powder with the many faces of excited revelers. One can almost hear the shouts of celebration after a hard race.
- Talk about eye candy. The colors in this photo are unbelievable. What an image!

### 3rd Place Features (tie)



**Gerry Melendez**  
**The State, Columbia, S.C.**

### Judges' Comments:

- This entry could easily earn honors in both the feature and news categories. The photographer leaves no doubt that the medical staff fought to the last to save the victim whose covered body completes this tragic scene. The absence of color only sharpens the scene. Great entry.
- The failed surgery shot is worth its own chapter in a photography textbook. The crazy, awkward angle, the decision to shoot black and white, and then having no people in the image – what a contrarian photograph. But it is absolutely compelling to this judge. I have never seen that before, and it feels almost voyeuristic – like we shouldn't be allowed in there, alone with the body. It seemed more like a feature shot, perhaps part of a photo package and needed to compete with the larger number of entries in features. *(Judges moved this entry from the spot news category to the feature category.)*

### 3rd Place Features (tie)



**Mara Kuhn**  
**The Sentinel-Record, Hot Springs, Ark.**

### Judges' Comments:

- In great contrast to the trauma photo, we had the delightful photo of the boys playing in the fall leaves. But this was not your usual fall weather shot – it offers terrific composition, color, sharpness and overall attractiveness. The stark distinction between sadness and happiness seemed to put these two images on a par.
- An entry that draws one into the childhood antics on a fall day. This winner has smile written all over it. Well done.

### Honorable Mention Features



**Tom Gilbert**  
**Tulsa World, Tulsa, Okla.**

### Judges' Comment:

- The excellent use of angles and the bleacher – jumping girl can't help but draw a second look. This photographer took full advantage of the moment.

### Honorable Mention Features



**Woody Marshall**  
**Macon Telegraph, Macon, Ga.**

#### Judges' Comment:

- The silhouetted girls in contrast with the colorful umbrellas and the action of the water all come together to make a wonderfully composed summer feature photo. The reader wants to jump in there with them.

### Our Contest Judges

#### Still Photos were judged by:

**Ron Harrist, retired Associated Press news editor in Mississippi**

**Rogelio Solis, Associated Press photographer**

**Ed Staats, retired Associated Press reporter, editor and administrator**

#### Videos were judged by:

**Stacey Plaisance, video and print journalist for the Associated Press based in New Orleans.**

**John Mura, former digital director, The Courier-Journal, Louisville, Ky.**

**Kristin Hall, Associated Press entertainment/video journalist, Nashville, Tenn.**

### General Comments:

- All of this year's entries were excellent. Several pictures just missed out on making the champions list in all three categories. In some cases, the entry was rich in subject matter but could have been framed in a more appealing way.
- We would have liked to see more entries in the spot news category. We had some wonderful images from which to choose, but features offered us three-fold more. Perhaps it is an old-fashioned concept, but newspapers need to maintain a commitment to aggressively covering spot news developments with both words and pictures. Few citizen journalist photographers can match the work of professional news photographers. But, if a stellar citizen journalist image is out there, the newspaper needs to have a mechanism for finding it and bringing it into the newspaper for publication and use on the website. And the same with video, of course.
- With videos: Remember that strong audio is just as important as strong visuals, so always mic your subjects and don't bother adding background music. Play up natural sounds instead – or live music, if there's an opportunity to do so. It really helps bring the viewer in. Also, use more video and fewer stills whenever possible, especially when your story is building up to a reveal. Storytelling falls short when there's great video leading up to a big moment and then there's no video of "the" moment. Your viewers want to see AND hear what's happening, and stills only give part of the story. Lastly, keep in mind you're telling a story, so you don't want to give everything away in the first few seconds. Take your viewer on a little journey, and save some surprises and special moments to drop in along the way to keep the story flowing and hold their interest. Also keep in mind that videos don't have to be long. In fact, the shorter the better a lot of the time. People are busy and they generally want the story in about two minutes or less – unless, again, it's really compelling video.