



**HEADLINE SPONSOR:-MEDIA-EXCELLENCE-AWARDS**

**14 October 2022**

**Press release:**  
**AVBOB FCJ Excellence Awards: All the winners**

For the first time since Covid-19 hit the world, the Forum of Community Journalists NPC (FCJ) again hosted its annual awards in person on October 14 in Gauteng.

This year the FCJ gained the support of a new sponsor to host the AVBOB FCJ Excellence Awards 2021.

AVBOB, through its financial investment in the Forum and industry, showed its acknowledgement of the role of community journalists in society and its support of excellent journalism.

For the second consecutive year two of the top awards were received by the same winners as 2020.

Samantha Lee-Jacobs from People's Post was again announced as the Journalist of the Year and Jarryd Westerdale from Roodeport Record again received the Alet Roux Award for the most promising journalist.

Etienne van Rensburg from Vaalweekblad was announced as the Photographer of the Year and the Randburg Sun was the winner of the new category, the AVBOB Best Community Involvement Award, for its project titled, Hero of the Month.

Carl van der Riet, AVBOB CEO said at AVBOB they believe that if we are to achieve the reality of a fair and equitable society, if we are to create a society that is vibrant and flourishing, everyone needs to unite around the single purpose of creating inclusive economic growth for the benefit of our society.

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**Directors**

Marietta Lombard– Executive Director, Ben Burger – Deputy Executive Director,  
Tobie van den Bergh, Lientjie Mentz, Hugo Redelinghuys, Roelien D'Amico, Joline Nash, Dustin Wetdewich,

**About the FCJ:**

The FCJ (Forum of Community Journalists) is an independent, voluntary non-profit company striving to promote and express the interests of all journalists employed on a permanent or freelance basis at regional community newspapers and online community publications in South Africa.

“For us as business, the relationship between the media and broader society is critical on many levels, like holding decision-makers to account, reporting on key societal issues like gender-based violence, and in giving marginalized communities a voice on issues that affect them.

“And this is where the role of the media comes in as a critical facilitator and enabler. The sharing of trusted and reliable information allows communities to unite on issues, express their frustrations and differences, identify solutions and challenges and move forward together,” Van der Riet said.

“We live in an era of fake news and “alternative facts” with a plethora of unregulated platforms and social media channels designed to push unseen agendas to the unsuspecting consumer. And so, in this time, your role and purpose as journalists to be a source of credible and objective news and information cannot be overstated,” he said.

The FCJ’s loyal sponsors Media24 and Caxton also pledged their support again which enabled the FCJ to host a national seminar with guest speakers Reg Rumney and André Gouws prior to the gala dinner.

Rumney presented his State of the Media report and Gouws addressed community journalists about online journalism.

The Forum commends and thanks the judges’ panel and convener Andre Gouws for the phenomenal work in judging this year’s entries.

The FCJ and its sponsors commend and congratulate all the finalists and winners of the AVBOB FCJ Excellence Awards 2021.

### **Journalist of the year**

Samantha Lee-Jacobs (People’s Post)

### **Photographer of the year**

Etienne van Rensburg (Vaalweekblad)

### **Alet Roux Award**

Jarryd Westerdale (Roodepoort Record)

### **AVBOB Best Community Involvement**

Randburg Sun – Hero of the Month

### **Writing categories**

#### **Columns**

1. **Gerda Bruinette** (Vaalweekblad) - The columnist reveals a very intimate relationship with her readers. Insightful and exciting to read. The author is an expert in storytelling. Her columns are of great quality and take you on a nostalgic journey. Excellently written and captivates you from start to finish.

2. **Eugene Gunning** (George Herald) - Interesting columns that speaks to a more specific audience to convey relatable memories from the past. Good portfolio. The author synchronised national issues with local issues. Well-written. The reader journeys with the author till the end.
3. **Zita Goldswain** (Witbank News) - "Lekker lees" columns that portray personal insights into the life of a journalist and beyond her call of duty. Excellent columns. Each column is a gem that captivates you from the start.
4. **Madré Marais** (Bloemnuus)
5. **Blake Linder** (Knysna-Plett Herald)
6. **Cecilia Hume** (TygerBurger)
7. **Phumelele P. Hlati** (The Representative)
8. **Miranda Lusiba** (The Representative)
9. **Dave Savides** (Zululand Observer)
10. **Tamsyn Jantjies** (Worcester Standard)

## Digital reporting

1. **Christiaan Cloete** (Vaalweekblad) - Some great digital stories with videos and pictures, the cattle story is nice with an interesting video. The drone story is great, really nice video and pics, as well as the Kruger pound story. But the videos are all a bit long, some videos also need more captions, there are long moments of silence at the start of the cattle and drones videos, even though there is some dramatic music. Introduce the stories, with captions or voice-overs. Technically all the videos are edited very well. The Kruger pound and squatter stories have some nice information at the start of the video, this works well, the other videos need information like that when they start. Some more sources needed, like in the Kruger pound story, would be nice to hear from historians or other experts as well. Perhaps slightly shorter videos, but great work! Digital media allows much longer copy than print, but the attention of readers is no less precious.
2. **Danica Hansen** (Berea Mail) - Nice selection of stories, some more original pictures would be nice. The videos with the looting stories are good. The heritage story could really do with a video, showing the DNA package arriving, opening it, this really calls for some visual and video material. The Facebook video of the pastor being robbed while on camera is very dramatic, so why hide it halfway down the story?
3. **Jarryd Westerdale** (Roodepoort Record) - Good selection of visual stories, the sound clips are a nice idea, audio is very popular now. Good interview with Mickey Styles. Very good original pictures throughout, properly captioned and credited. The tennis story really covers all sides, it is very well-presented also. The police video story needs comment from the police. The tavern attack video needs captions or voice-overs. A video might be nice in the BMX story, but it is still a great picture story. With proper context, "Man who cried wolf" could have been developed into a much stronger piece.
4. **Joshua Hendricks** (Capeat6sport)
5. **Candyce Krishna** (Northglen News)
6. **Zita Goldswain** (Witbank News)
7. **Lucky Thusi** (Southern Courier)
8. **Tiisetso Malunga** (Middelburg Observer)

9. **Thabisile Mgwali** (Roodepoort Northsider)
10. **Shiraz Habbib** (Northglen News)

## Editorial comment

1. **Ronelle Ramsamy** (Zululand Observer) - Good arguments. Supportive statements. Well-articulated.
2. **Dave Savides** (Zululand Observer) - These were "easy-read" columns which were very relatable. Insights were also put in perspective with information gained from other sources. Three editorials on a high standard.
3. **Tasmin Cupido** (District Post) - The editor wrote about a wide variety of topics. The articles are short and to the point, but sometimes maybe too short to be fully effective. Three excellent editorials. Authentic voice. Clear arguments.
4. **Dustin Wetdewich** (Potchefstroom Herald)
5. **Angelo Julies** (Eikestadnuus)
6. **Elaine Davie** (The Village News)
7. **Helena Barnard** (Noordkaap Bulletin)
8. **Heleen Rossouw** (Kempton Express)
9. **Mariëtte Strydom** (Hermanus Times)
10. **Sarita Kriek** (Die Pos)

## Hard news

1. **Andries van Zyl** (Zoutpansberger) - Strong stories covering important local issues. Some questions remain, for example the Duvenage murder story, what happened in the end with the taxi driver? Were the events of that night ever clarified? Good coverage of municipal issues, such as the crusher story and the road story. Some stories, like the SEZ story, entered in investigative category also, therefore not taken into account here. Good writer. He is not bound by one type of reporting and he does thorough work. Some excellent examples of international and national developments applied to a local context. Great to read the integration of evidence provided (in form of bylaws etc) in the stories - not just comments.
2. **Marsha Bothma** (Plainsman) - Excellent stories covering a wide range of important community-related topics, housing, Covid, health. Well-written. The K9 story, streetball story, GBV story and Farm 694 story all stand out. Diversity of stories and they are audience-centred. Solid community sources, but little evidence of self-generated news. Some event-driven stories with predictable sources. Well written.
3. **Maanda Bele** (Limpopo Mirror) - Strong stories, although one questions whether the picture of the bullied girl is really needed? Traumatic for the family. Persistent coverage of issues, such as the taxi rank story, nice to look into the issue after a decade of standing empty. Shocking but strong story about the students and prostitution. The lady who makes bricks is a great story, showing how residents make plans in the face of adversity! Big on cultural issues. Some excellent stories, in other comments are missing, sometimes experts are needed. Excellent story on the students, TVET student.
4. **Desiree Rorke** (TygerBurger)

5. **Kaizer Nengovhela** (Limpopo Mirror)
6. **Carina Roux** (TygerBurger)
7. **Samantha Lee-Jacobs** (People's Post)
8. **Charné Kemp** (Noordkaap Bulletin)
9. **Helena Barnard** (Noordkaap Bulletin)
10. **Kaylynne Bantom** (People's Post)

## Headlines

1. **Dave Savides** (Zululand Observer) - The headlines are extremely creative and to the point. Tongue-in-the-cheek sells, as shown by this journalist. Brilliant. Clever interplay with words. A master crafter of headlines.
2. **Etienne van Rensburg** (Vaalweekblad) - Extremely creative headlines that tell a story in merely a few words. Excellent work! Two very good sport headlines.
3. **Madré Marais** (Bloemnuus) - The headlines captured the essence of the stories effectively. It was slightly confusing to figure out which headlines on the pages are linked to the entry. Good headline. "Boksterte se wip uit omgee geknip".
4. **Samantha Lee-Jacobs** (People's Post)
5. **Gerda Bruinette** (Vaalweekblad)
6. **Mariëtte Strydom** (Hermanus Times)
7. **David Rush** (South Coast Herald)
8. **Zita Goldswain** (Witbank News)
9. **Elsje Vermeulen** (Vaalweekblad)
10. **Carina Roux** (TygerBurger)

## Human interest

1. **Samantha Lee-Jacobs** (People's Post) - Great introductions, well-written stories - relevant, versatile. The journalist shines! Intelligent writing with a good human angle. Good use of language and story-telling style. Excellent attribution. Good reading-flow.
2. **Helena Barnard** (Noordkaap Bulletin) – Excellent work, stories that speak to you. Good intros. Variety of stories. Good presentation.
3. **Noluvu Ludidi** (Weslander) – Great writer! Good intros, well-constructed stories. Big variety. Compact and interesting stories that are great to read, well done! Versatile both in topic and language. Good use of language and good writing style.
4. **Kayleen Bantom** (People's Post)
5. **Nettalie Viljoen** (People's Post)
6. **Jarryd Westerdale** (Roodepoort Record)
7. **Andries van Zyl** (Zoupanberger)
8. **Ntsoaki Mokete** (Potchefstroom Herald)
9. **Tamsyn Jantjies** (Worcester Standard)
10. **Charné Kemp** (Noordkaap Bulletin)

## Investigative reporting

1. **Anton van Zyl** (Zoutpansberger) - Very strong stories, the lottery corruption and municipal park corruption stories go to the core of maladministration in some local municipalities. Excellent investigative work that seems to have made a national impact. Good work on Lottery money - team used public records, site visits, interviews thoroughly. No outcomes yet.
2. **Zita Goldswain** (Witbank News) - Interesting stories about the neglect and abuse at the old-age home, showing persistence and follow-through, with clear impact and changes at the home. But more versatility needed. Also, one wonders whether readers really need to see such graphic pictures. No evidence of the measures that followed the reporting? Some stories are more like hard news.
3. **Rick Marais** (Hermanus Times) - Interesting and strong stories, but some appear more appropriate for hard news category, investigate reporting needs to show more own initiative, finding stories that are not event-driven, following through on stories and should have some impact. Scarface appears more investigative. Show possible impact, as there was a commitment to address the problem.
4. **Christiaan Cloete** (Vaalweekblad)
5. **Andries van Zyl** (Zoutpansberger)
6. **Nettalie Viljoen** (People's Post)
7. **Carina Roux** (TygerBurger)
8. **Charné Kemp** (Noordkaap Bulletin)
9. **JP Myburgh** (Worcester Standard and Breederivier Gazette)
10. **Sarita Kriek** (Die Pos)

## Sport

1. **Etienne van Rensburg** (Vaalweekblad) - Very good. Obviously a seasoned sports writer, but some stories lack relevance.
2. **Andries van Zyl** (Zoutpansberger) - Excellent writing, but intros sometimes too long. Strong writing, but could do with more variety.
3. **Fuad Essack** (Plainsman) - Good. Can write shorter. Great intros and writing style, some stories lacks relevance.
4. **Jarryd Westerdale** (Roodepoort Record)
5. **Phiwokuhle Mothemela** (Worcester Standard)
6. **Wouter Pienaar** (Potchefstroom Herald)
7. **Helena Barnard** (Noordkaap Bulletin)
8. **Carina Roux** (TygerBurger)
9. **Samantha Lee-Jacobs** (People's Post)
10. **Sarita Kriek** (Die Pos)

## Photography - General

1. **Taylum Meyer** (The Village News) - Very good photos. Keep it up!
2. **Zita Goldswain** (Witbank News) - Good photos. More impact, something to look at. Strong portfolio.

3. **Wayne van der Walt** (Highvelder) - Good photos but have a look at the criteria about news value and impact. "Tragedy strikes" stands out.
4. **Etienne van Rensburg** (Vaalweekblad)
5. **Carina Roux** (TygerBurger)
6. **Elsje Vermeulen** (Vaalweekblad)
7. **Samantha Lee-Jacobs** (People's Post)
8. **Lientjie Mentz** (Bloemnuus)
9. **Michelle Roodt** (Roodepoort Record)
10. **Blake Linder** (Knysna-Plett Herald)

## Photography – News

1. **Elsje Vermeulen** (Vaalweekblad) - Very good! Good variety and brings out emotion! "Ek gaan jou baie mis" is outstanding.
2. **Zita Goldswain** (Witbank News)- Very good, but work on the impact of your photos. "Drome verbrand" stands out. Missed out on some great opportunities.
3. **Carina Roux** (TygerBurger) - Very good! Good variety and brings out emotion! Some images in her overall selection bring the portfolio down.
4. **Wayne van der Walt** (Highvelder)
5. **Adele Louw** (Carletonville Herald)
6. **Etienne van Rensburg** (Vaalweekblad)
7. **Jamey Gordon** (District Post)
8. **Samantha Lee-Jacobs** (People's Post)
9. **Kgomotso Makgabutlane** (Fourways Review)
10. **Blake Linder** (Knysna-Plett Herald)

## Photography – Sport

1. **Etienne van Rensburg** (Vaalweekblad) - Very good photos!! Keep it up! "Blonde Blits" and "Grascutter" stand out, overall high standard. Some images were cropped too tightly, which created unwanted amputations.
2. **Wayne van der Walt** (Highvelder) - Very good photos. Keep it up! Great selection of events, sharp focus, could do with less special editing on images like on the motor sport. "Heads-up" stands out, overall high standard.
3. **Elsje Vermeulen** (Vaalweekblad) - Very good photos!! Keep it up! One of the best panning images I have seen in a long time. Some lack in sharp images and composition issues. Good portfolio.
4. **Wouter Pienaar** (Potchefstroom Herald)
5. **Jarryd Westerdale** (Roodepoort Record)
6. **Michelle Roodt** (Roodepoort Record)
7. **Taylum Meyer** (The Village News)
8. **Kgomotso Makgabutlane** (Fourways Review)
9. **Zita Goldswain** (Witbank News)
10. **Blake Linder** (Knysna-Plett Herald)

## Best front page – Independently-owned

1. **Limpopo Mirror** - Clever use of deep-etched pictures, pictures in teaser a nice touch, but also no uniform type size and font. Interesting and creative inside boxes. Nice and bright. Looks as if they had fun with the layout. Good use of pictures to support layout. Overall good effort.
2. **Die Pos** - Impressive presentation, but too busy with lots of small ads, no uniform type size and font for headlines. Beautiful layout and use of photos. Good use of pictures to demonstrate impact. Overall good effort.
3. **Witzenberg Herald** - Ads in masthead a no-no. Absence of teasers a concern. Too much death and destruction on front page. It gets the job done, but it lacks energy. Use of pictures supports headlines and good overall layout.

## Best front page – Corporate-owned free

1. **Berea Mail** - Excellent use of photos, not scared to experiment. Smaller front page ads a "win for the newsroom", it definitely helps when trying to create impactful front pages. Excellent use of pictures to support layout- overall good effort. Excellent use of pictures, striking design.
2. **Carletonville Herald** - Creative and impactful. A judge's favourites. Nice stories, but somewhat excessive use of design gimmicks.
3. **Centurion Rekord** - Striking layout, excellent use of graphics. Clever use of pictures which support overall layout. Too much text on front page, but clever use of infographics.
4. **East Rekord**
5. **Polokwane Review**
6. **Swartland Gazette**
7. **Highway Mail**
8. **Krugersdorp News**
9. **Mamelodi Rekord**
10. **Noordkaap Bulletin**

## Best front page – Corporate-owned paid

1. **Newcastle Advertiser** - Hard hitting stories, impressive design. Teasers could be bigger. Elements of creative layout, overall satisfactory. Impactful photos, read insides work well, consistently well.
2. **Weslander** - Excellent use of pictures to create dramatic effect. Should consider including teasers. Creative and impactful use of picture, which quickly and cleverly draws the reader in supported by deliberate and clever word use in headlines. Great effort altogether. Lacks proper teasers.
3. **South Coast Herald** - Simple and yet effective layout and news presentation. Altogether impactful and well presented. Same presentation in all three front pages, sometimes it can be monotonous. Inside boxes a bit too heavy.
4. **Vryheid Herald**
5. **Zululand Observer**



6. African Reporter
7. District Mail
8. Estcourt News
9. Northern Natal Courier
10. Knysna-Plett Herald

### **Newspaper of the year – Independently-owned**

1. **Limpopo Mirror** - Strong well-written stories. Good reporting, really being a watchdog for the local community. A judge's favourite. Lovely read. A testament of a local newspaper who is the watchdog of its community. Only negative is that headlines on inside pages could be bigger.
2. **Witzenberg Herald** - Clean modular layout, strong stories and headlines. Good local content but layout could be renewed. Some of the headlines are too small considering the weight of the story. Two-deck headlines bothersome in some cases.

### **Newspaper of the year – Corporate free: fewer than 24 pages**

1. **Krugersdorp News** - Excellent local newspaper. Love the different sections and subtle use of colour. Neat and easy to read. Good balance between hard and soft news. Clever headline writing. Nice mix of Afrikaans and English. Lots of movement in the pictures. Clever use of features.
2. **Roodepoort Record** - Excellent local newspaper. Good balance between hard and soft news. Good ad/editorial balance. Nice deep etch touches throughout the paper. Lively layout, great variety of stories.
3. **TygerBurger Belville** - Good local newspaper, but inside boxes would be nice. Use of "letters to the editor" and columns gives a mainstream feel. Great stories, neat modular layout.
4. **Northcliff Melville Times**
5. **TygerBurger Milnerton**
6. **Eikestad Nuus**
7. **Randfontein Herald**
8. **TygerBurger Goodwood**
9. **Potch Herald**
10. **Noordkaap Bulletin**

### **Newspaper of the year – Corporate free: more than 24 pages**

1. **Fourways Review** - Solid design, fresh use of feature pages, but stories lack punch. Neat newspaper with lots of hyperlocal stories. Nice touch to involve the younger reader.
2. **TygerBurger Brackenfell** - Tasteful design, but content suffers due to high ad loading. Good use of photos. Clear and neat layout style.
3. **Randburg Sun** - Good use of pictures and storytelling. Neat newspaper with lots of hyperlocal stories. Nice touch to involve the younger reader. Inside boxes a nice addition, but contains too much info. Maybe focus less on crime.
4. **Bedfordview Edenvale News**

## 5. Carletonville Herald

### Newspaper of the year – Corporate paid: circulation under 5000

1. **Vaal Weekblad** - Tasteful design, strong news stories, good read. Solid reporting, solid use of pictures, solid lay-out: overall excellent work. Use of two-deck headlines makes the newspaper feel heavy, some white space needed. The “n” in Afrikaans not used correctly.
2. **District Mail** - A good newspaper. A bumper read every time. Love the addition of a diary. Nice balance of hard vs soft news.
3. **Polokwane Review** - A lot of feel-good stories. White space welcomed. The “n” not used correctly in Afrikaans. Nice touch with the occasional deep etches.
4. **Northern Natal Courier**
5. **Ladysmith Gazette**
6. **Estcourt News**
7. **Vryheid Herald**

### Newspaper of the year – Corporate paid: circulation more than 5000

1. **Lowvelder** - Strong local stories, tasteful design. Jampacked with local news, what's not to love about this newspaper? Clear, defined sections, good headlines, nice language balance, photos used well, care taken with layout.
2. **South Coast Herald** - Good use of pictures, strong stories, but dog's leg design a concern. Good, dramatic use of pictures with good headlines - overall excellent newspaper. Good use of available space, clear lead stories per page, neat layout, striking front pages.
3. **Newcastle Advertiser** - Great design, strong community stories, excellent use of feature pages. A good local newspaper with neat layout.
4. **Witbank News**
5. **African Reporter**
6. **Worcester Standard**
7. **Weslander**
8. **Zululand Observer**