

# Observer captures state press awards

## Joel from page 1A

The Farmington Observer captured three awards in the annual Michigan Press Association 1995 Better Newspaper Contest, including first place for editorial writing.

Farmington Observer Editor Tom Baer was cited by MPA judges for having the best editorials among weekly and twice-weekly newspapers with circulations of more than 25,000.

Photographer Sharon LeMieux received a second-place award for feature picture. The Farmington Observer also earned second place in page design, which is coordinated by copy editor Beth Sunhla and graphics editor Randy Bowers.

The Birmingham-Bloomfield Eccentric captured nine awards, including a third place in overall general excellence, in the Michigan Press Association 1995 Better Newspaper Contest.

Competing in 18 categories against weekly and twice-weekly newspapers with a circulation of more than 25,000, The Birmingham-Bloomfield Eccentric also placed first and third for special sections; second for editorial writing, local news reporting and

sports feature; and honorable mention for best sports picture.

Overall, the Eccentric Newspapers earned 16 awards for its five Oakland County editions, including first place in overall general excellence by the Rochester Eccentric. Individually, West Bloomfield Eccentric photographer Dan Dean took four awards for news and sports photography, including a first place for feature picture.

Birmingham reporter Greg Kowalski placed second for local news reporting, Birmingham Editor Joe Bauman took second place in editorial writing, Birmingham sports reporter Chris Mayer second for sports features and Birmingham sports editor Marty Budner third for sport reporting. West Bloomfield reporter Tim Smith earned an honorable mention for feature story writing.

"The awards point to how our peers judge the quality of our work but also our commitment to producing the best community newspapers that we can," said Robert Sklar, Eccentric managing editor. "Our entire staff works hard to meet the needs of our readers and advertisers. These



Tom Baer



Sharon LeMieux

awards underscore that. "We take pride in all of the honors our newspapers and our staff members have won."

Other awards included:

- Editorial Pages — Rochester Eccentric, Editor Dave Varga, third place.
- Editorial Writing — Troy Eccentric, editor Alice Collins, honorable mention.

- Picture Story — West Bloomfield-Lakes Eccentric, photographer Dean Dean, second place.
- Special Sections — Birmingham-Bloomfield Eccentric, "Holiday Gift Giving," edited by Stacy Parker, first place; Birmingham-Bloomfield Eccentric, "Back To Fashion," edited by Susan DeMaggio, third place.

computer databank.

Joel, who turned 13 on Thursday, was at the point where he would have to go through more painful chemotherapy treatments when the family received word in the middle of September that a suitable donor had been matched.

"They found one for him, which is like a miracle," said Joel's grandmother, Juanita Abid. "It's a wonderful miracle."

Joel's battle has inspired those around him.

Power Middle School is having a "Turkey Trot" 2:30 p.m. Friday, Nov. 17, which is a benefit in Joel's honor. Marathon runner Cheryl Bender will run in his name in the Honolulu Marathon. Bender needs \$3,500 to enter the race, which includes 33,000 runners. Of those, 3,000 are running for the National Leukemia Society of America. Donations can be made to the National Leukemia Society of America.

Power students Hryan Campbell and Jason DeSousa have helped generate support for the fund raiser. Another friend shaved his head as a gesture of support after Joel underwent chemotherapy.

"His friends from school have been wonderful," Linda DeBuc said. "... I know they've been praying for him in many ways."

After undergoing surgery, Joel returned home last week while he continues his recovery.

The donor remains anonymous. A federal act requires that no information about the donor or the patient be released.

All the DeBuc family knows is it's a middle age man. They can correspond, but everything has to be screened.

"Joel wrote him a note and told him he had really great marrow," Linda said. "He told him thank you."

The donor also reportedly sent a gift to Joel, which was returned because it could reveal his identity.

"(Joel) was one of the easier matches I was able to work with," said Pat Steele, a bone marrow transplant coordinator at U-M Hospital. "He had matches right off the bat."

Transplants have a 50 percent success rate, Steele said. A lot depends on age, type of disease and previous treatment.

But, added Joel's mother, "I don't go on numbers."

Throughout the ordeal, Joel continues to defy statistics through his courage and spirit.

"So many of his nurses have said he has shown evidence of inner strength," Linda said. "They say you don't see that in many kids."

"His attitude has been such a blessing. Not only has he been receiving treatment, he has been doing it with a smile."

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