



2021 Mark Twain Travel Journalist Contest Awards

Books

1st. Jackie Sheckler Finch - *Michigan Off the Beaten Path*

Judge's Comments – Tremendous amount of valuable and engaging information presented in a well-organized booklet. Good job!

2nd. Mike Whye - *The Dakotas Off the Beaten Path*

Judge's Comments – Entertaining review of the Dakotas interspersed with favorite spots and alluring discoveries.

3rd. Kath Usitalo - *Secret Upper Peninsula: A Guide to the Weird, Wonderful, and Obscure*

Judge's Comments – Engrossing compilation of the weird and wonderful in this region; admirably-conceived and executed.

Culinary

1st. Carla Waldemar - *Kansas City Barbeque 2020: Where there's smoke...*

Publication – Lavender Magazine

Judge's Comments – Very well crafted, easy to read with lots of facts and engaging BBQ history of Kansas City.

2nd. Wendy Pramik - *From Salvadoran to Somali cuisine, ethnic eateries add spice to Ohio's capital, Columbus*

Publication – USA Today

Judge's Comments – Lots of digging to obtain the story, presented well and in depth.

3rd. Suzanne Corbett - *Patriotic Plates*

Publication – Gazelle Magazine

Judge's Comments – Combining historic taverns and U.S. history captures a unique writing angle.

Digital Alternative

1st. Rich Warren - *Iceland and Elves: A Guide to the Country's Beliefs in Magical Creatures*

Publication – Tripsavvy.com

Judge's Comments – Judge was smiling all the way through the article; larger-than-life fun reading about Iceland's wonders and its unseen little people.

2nd. Katherine Rodeghier - *Sailing the Sea Cloud on the Coast of Spain*

Publication – GoNomad.com

Judge's Comments – Adeptly-written and researched insights into intriguing sea voyage.

3rd. Elizabeth Hey - *Red mountains, blue skies, and green chiles in Las Cruces, New Mexico*

Publication – MatadorNetwork.com

Judge's Comments – Intriguing story focusing on one of New Mexico's less-traveled areas was fact-filled and engaging.

Magazine Domestic

1st. Mary Bergin - *Let's Go Glamping*

Publication – Naperville Magazine

Judge's Comments – Well-conceived storyline with many travel facets, including nearby interesting sites, inviting photos and a litany of information for the traveler.

2nd. Laura Watilo Blake - *The Return to America: Custer State Park's Scenic Drives, Rocks, Stars and Beasts of the Black Hills*

Publication – Travel World International

Judge's Comments – Her family foray to South Dakota turns into a fun-filled journey of adventure that's absorbing and alluring.

3rd. Kit Bernardi - *The Great American Road Trip*

Publication – Rachael Ray Magazine

Judge's Comments – Kit searches out eight varied and enlightening road adventures to capture the spirit of travel and promote the wanderlust in all of us.

Magazine International

1st. Randy Mink - *December on the Danube*

Publication – Cruise Travel Magazine

Judge's Comments – Randy brings the true spirit and atmosphere of the German Christmas season to his work.

2nd. Carla Waldemar - *Travel Memories are Made by People*

Publication – Lavender Magazine

Judge's Comments – Carla's ability to meet total strangers and engage with them leads to this intriguing story.

3rd. Barbara Gibbs Ostmann - *The Wonder of Oberammergau*

Publication – AAA Southern Traveler

Judge's Comments – Interviewing the main characters of the German Passion Play helped give her great insight into the play and how it's organized.

Midwest

1st. Damaine Vonada - *Northern Exposure*

Publication – Lakeland Boating

Judge's Comments – Entertaining, thorough roundup of the numerous water and tourist activities in the Port Clinton area.

2nd. Rich Warren - *Kentucky Roads*

Publication – AAA World

Judge's Comments – His grasp of the best tourist possibilities in Kentucky's Bluegrass Region translates into an engaging salute to this area.

3rd. Laura Watilo Blake - *Off the Hook*

Publication – Lake Erie Living

Judge's Comments – The judge was "hooked" on this fishing adventure that "caught" their attention for creative writing.

3rd. Jackie Sheckler Finch - *Ford Museum honors more than cars*

Publication – Crown Cruise Vacations

Judge's Comments – Well-conceived, well-written account of this museum and its treasures; author makes the museum come alive.

Newspaper Domestic

1st. Janet Steinberg - *Key West is Best*

Publication – Journal & Topics

Judge's Comments – Excellent written summary of what to see, what to do in this popular Florida destination.

2nd. Mary Bergin - *An Aquarium of Possibilities*

Publication – Chicago Tribune

Judge's Comments – Turned what could have been a mundane subject into a stimulating reading adventure.

3rd. Randy Mink - *History only Steps Away in Colorful Capital City*

Publication – Journal & Topics

Judge's Comments – Absorbing first-hand account of this author's many experiences in Old San Juan. Author has a knack for "finding the story."

Newspaper International

1st. Janet Steinberg - *Hopping the Continents*

Publication – Journal & Topics

Judge's Comments – Only a few journalists are lucky enough to have visited so many continents...Janet eloquently captures the essence of those she writes about.

2nd. Randy Mink - *Buenos Aires*

Publication – Journal & Topics

Judge's Comments – Readers will become inspired to learn more about, and visit, Buenos Aires based on Randy's carefully crafted article.

3rd. Jackie Sheckler Finch - *Bob Marley Tour Visits Birthplace and Tomb of Jamaican Legend*

Publication – The Herald-Times

Judge's Comments – Jackie weaves her on-sight experiences with reggae superstar Bob Marley's history to offer a revealing, inside look at this man's life.

Photography

1st. Laura Watilo Blake - *The Return to America: Custer State Park's Scenic Drives, Rocks, Stars and Beasts of the Black Hills*

Publication – Travel World International

Judge's Comments – Wonderful collection of colorful, exciting photographs that significantly enhance the storyline.

2nd. Wendy Pramik - *Donut Mind if I Do*

Publication – Ohio Cooperative Living

Judge's Comments – The donuts “fly” off the page, making this story/set of photographs a real sweet deal.

3rd. Kit Bernardi - *Path of Petals*

Publication – Go Escape

Judge's Comments – Vivid photos beautifully taken and presented weave into the copy to make this piece an eye-catcher.

Photojournalism

1st. Katherine Rodeghier - *Road Tripping along California's backbone*

Publication – St. Louis Post-Dispatch

Judge's Comments – Excellent choice and use of photographs to bring the complete story to readers.

2nd. Wendy Pramik - *Taking Refuge*

Publication – Ohio Cooperative Living

Judge's Comments – Creative article and accompanying colorful illustrations to bring this story to life.

3rd. Elizabeth Hey - *Kicking Back on the Cote d'Azur*

Publication – Travelsquire.com

Judge's Comments – Elizabeth brings the color and excitement of the region to life in print.

Recent Sites

1st. Jackie Sheckler Finch - *Titanic Survivor's Story Told at Pigeon Forge Museum*

Publication – The Herald-Times

Judge's Comments – First hand account of Titanic disaster gives extra special significance to this interview which was handled brilliantly.

2nd. Katherine Rodeghier - *Where to Eat in Wichita*

Publication – Chicago Tribune

Judge's Comments – Fine wrap-up of some of the better and interesting restaurants in Wichita.

3rd. Jackie Sheckler Finch - *Dolly Parton's Loving Legacy in Her Mountain Home*

Publication – The Herald-Times

Judge's Comments – Good in-depth interview with Dolly Parton makes this a standout feature story.

Short Copy

1st. Suzanne Corbett - *Catch the Louisiana Blues*

Publication – AAA Southern Traveler

Judge's Comments – Skillfully crafted copy with an on-target illustration.

2nd. MeLinda Schnyder - *Fashion with a Sense of Place*

Publication – Motorcoach Living

Judge's Comments – MeLinda tackles a subject with possible limitations but succeeds in shaping a good story quickly and accurately.

3rd. Susan Pollack - *Doin' Doughnut Time*

Publication – Long Weekends

Judge's Comments – An arresting story, easily read and digested.

Travel Blog

1st. Janet Steinberg - *The Travel Authority*

Judge's Comments – Whether it's exploring the highlights of California, walking through Arlington Cemetery or visiting the beaches of Normandy, Janet Steinberg quickly crystallizes what readers want to read about. Excellent reporting.

2nd. Mary Bergin - *Roads Traveled*

Judge's Comments – Rapid-fire reporting on numerous topics of local interest help keep readers informed. Mary sifts through the jungle of topics and brings a concise review to the surface.

2021 Mark Twain Travel Journalist of the Year

Laura Watilo Blake - *The Return to America: Custer State Park's Scenic Drives, Rocks, Stars and Beasts of the Black Hills*

Publication – Travel World International

Judge's Comments – Her captivating family's foray article into the West, combined with her beautiful photos, makes for a complete travel story worthy of top honors.