Chronicle wins press awards

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The Cambridge Chronicle was honored for its writing and photography at the annual New England Press Association awards ceremony Saturday.

NEPA announced the winners of the Better Newspaper Contest at the Park Plaza Hotel on Saturday night. A panel of judges from the American Press Institute chose the best in several categories from thousands of entries.

Editor Deborah Eisner took home first place in the Editorial Writer category. The winning editorials were "Oh, don't whine" (Dec. 9, 2004), about MIT's payment in lieu of taxes; "Redefine affordable housing" (Jan. 27, 2005), calling on the city to expand its definition of affordable housing; and "Don't emasculate the police review board" (March 17, 2005), which took City Manager Bob Healy to task for his position on the Police Review and Advisory Board.

"{Eisner's} writing has punch and directness," wrote the contest judges. "Pieces end with clear call for public action."

Assistant editor Chris Helms won first place in the Transportation/Commuting writing category for his story about the broken elevators at the Harvard Square MBTA station.

The judges praised Helms for not only interviewing users, state officials and litigators but for spending time with a wheelchair-using commuter and explaining her perilous attempts to get into the station without a working elevator.

Photo editor Jim Walker took home a second place in the Feature Photo category for a photo of a table tennis player at Harvard University, published Feb. 17, 2005.

"A strong photograph," the judges said.

Herald Media Inc., owner of Community Newspaper Company and the Cambridge Chronicle, earned more than 100 awards from NEPA this year.

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