

UW-Madison: On Wisconsin magazine wins multiple awards in international competition

Posted on Tuesday, Jul 12, 2022

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MADISON — On Wisconsin, the University of Wisconsin–Madison’s alumni magazine, has won four awards in the Circle of Excellence competition from the Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE), including a gold award in the “best magazine” category.

The world’s top institutions of higher education compete for the annual awards, and the 2022 contest drew more than 4,500 entries — a CASE record. On Wisconsin’s other winners were Preston Schmitt, who received a gold award for his feature story “I, Food-Delivery Robot”; Dean Robbins, who received a gold award for his profile of children’s author Avi Wortis, “A Rocky Road to Literary Success”; and Danielle Lamberson Philipp and Bryce Richter, who received a bronze award for their photo illustrations in “How I Survived the Pandemic.”

“On Wisconsin aims for the highest standards of journalism,” says associate publisher John Allen. “The writers, photographers and designers have the latitude for stylish self-expression, resulting in a publication that surprises and delights readers while also keeping them informed.”

The 123-year-old magazine is a collaboration of the Wisconsin Foundation and Alumni Association, University Communications, and University Marketing. The CASE judges praised its “bold yet clean design,” “fantastic photography” and “very strong writing.”

Schmitt’s “I, Food-Delivery Robot” playfully chronicles a cross-campus journey from a robot’s point of view. Schmitt imagines unit 6E151’s thoughts as it ferries a lunch

order to the On Wisconsin staff while crossing busy streets.

“Preston uses a short-story writer’s techniques to create a psychologically credible character, fixated on doing its duty in spite of numerous perils,” says On Wisconsin coeditor Robbins. “He brings the robot to life on the page while shedding light on an everyday miracle at UW–Madison.”

In “A Rocky Road to Literary Success,” Robbins profiles a UW–Madison alumnus who coped with a neurological disorder while becoming one of the world’s most celebrated children’s writers under the pen name Avi.

“Dean crafts a vivid portrait through well-chosen anecdotes, revealing quotations and critical commentary,” says coeditor Niki Denison. “He digs into Avi’s unique creative process to show the effort that goes into writing a seemingly effortless novel.”

“How I Survived the Pandemic” profiles UW–Madison students who devised their own ways of navigating campus when COVID-19 shut down in-person instruction. Photographing the subjects proved challenging under pandemic conditions, so Richter and Lamberson Philipp came up with the creative solution of combining photos with illustrations.

“Bryce couldn’t go into residence halls or classrooms to photograph the students, but he was able to safely bring them into his studio,” says Denison. “He and Danielle decided how each subject should pose for a photo, and then she filled in illustrations to show them with musical instruments, sporting equipment and other props, providing compelling images to match the students’ narratives about life during the pandemic.”

On Wisconsin also won three awards in the recent Milwaukee Press Club competition for Excellence in Wisconsin Journalism. Art director Danielle Lawry and illustrator Mathias Ball received a gold award for best single cover design for “Psychedelic Wonder Drugs.” Schmitt won a bronze award for best critical review of the arts for “How the Humanities Building Went Wrong” and another bronze for best personal profile for “Behind the Scenes on Capitol Hill.”