

The Lindsay Crysler award is one of QCNA's most prestigious honours because it pays tribute to individuals who set the highest standard of excellence which in turn raises the profile of community newspapers. The award is named after Lindsay Crysler, a former dean of journalism at Concordia University who was instrumental in raising the bar for journalists within QCNA, and for recognizing the high impact of community journalism. In the early 1980s it was Lindsay, and then-editorial services coordinator Judy Taylor, who judged all entries in the QCNA Better Newspapers Competition. Lindsay encouraged his journalism students to do a stint, or forge a career, in a community newspaper so they can truly appreciate the impact of what they write. QCNA wanted to recognize his longstanding contribution, thereby creating the Lindsay Crysler Award, first presented at the QCNA gala in 1994. It was Lindsay's wish that the award be presented to an individual who has made an outstanding contribution to the community newspaper industry in general or whose work in a community newspaper has made an extraordinary contribution to the community.

The winner of the 2008 Lindsay Crysler Award for outstanding contribution to the growth and development of community newspapers in Quebec is:

STEVE BONSPIEL

Co-Publisher and Editor
The Eastern Door

I am nominating Steve Bonspiel for this award because of his outstanding commitment, tireless hard work and great successes as the new publisher and editor of The Eastern Door.

We purchased the paper together six months ago with the knowledge that it was operating in the red and had been losing money for the last five years. We brought in fresh ideas and enthusiasm in hopes that we could make it a viable newspaper once again.

But change does not come easily in small towns and we dealt with a lot of skepticism and backlash when we first took over. But in a matter of weeks, the paper grew from its 28-page average when we purchased it to a consistent, and at times overwhelming, 40-pager.

This incredible growth in advertising was a direct result of Steve's first order of business: he told his writers that their new mission was to fill the paper with 95 percent community content. Inspiring his employees by practicing what he preached, Steve didn't sit comfortably in his editor's chair while they carried out his orders. He made sure that he contributed the same amount of stories as they did each week, working after hours to stay on top of all of his other duties. He worked hard to inspire his writers and to support them.

It didn't take long before we began hearing positive feedback about all of the local content, the quality of the articles and the thicker paper. It was very fulfilling to us both and just pushed Steve to work harder.

With a natural talent and no professional schooling, Steve fell into the industry five years ago when he started working with The Nation magazine. In that first year, Steve won two QCNA awards and has continued to win in the years that followed. He was promoted to assistant editor that same year for the bi-weekly

publication. In 2007, he was a double nominee in the community newspaper category at the prestigious Canadian Association of Journalists Awards. He has also contributed to the Montreal Gazette, the Calgary Herald, Windspeaker, Nunatsiq News and Redwire Magazine.

I mention these details because I think it really highlights how far he has come in such a short amount of time. He has now made a smooth and flawless transition to owning and publishing a weekly newspaper. His passion to work for his own people has been a constant driving force. This isn't just a "job" for either of us; it's an honour we take seriously.

In his position, like all editors, he is the "face" of the paper, handling complaints, angry calls or even the occasional threat. As his business partner, these situations are particularly upsetting for me but he handles these circumstances with such grace and calm.

Recently, a local businessman who was angry we were writing a story about his new controversial business, called to threaten Steve with violence if we published the article. He then showed up at the office and had to be locked out as he screamed more threats through the door. Steve did not waver at all as intimidation was never going to influence his decisions. I was very impressed and proud at how calmly he handled the situation and his resolve to never be censored. We published the article that week and that same man actually called to say he liked the article!

As an editor and a reporter, the quality of his pieces is also very impressive. He has natural storytelling ability and an incredible amount of compassion. I use that adjective because he truly listens to people. The contacts and content he has obtained in the last six months is astonishing, from confidential minutes of a government meeting to multiple sources within the controversial tobacco industry to the heart-wrenching testimony of a mother who lost her son in a tragic accident. He is a person people trust and respect.

I should also note that Kahnawake is not his home community. He is from Kanesatake, which is a Mohawk community located 45 minutes outside of Montreal. I am from Kahnawake and this is his adopted community. So that fact alone has also given him great hurdles to overcome but, as I explained above, he has done so with ease. He now knows more people than me.



As the editor of our paper, he is responsible for the product that ends up in our readers' hands. So, while we are partners, our success is greatly dependant on the product that we are producing. In only six months, I'm elated to share that we are now running in the black with enough profit to have given raises to all of our deserving staff, hired more staff and have begun updating our equipment. The turnaround has happened so much quicker than we had hoped and I credit the product that he and his team are producing each week. It is something people look forward to reading and advertisers want in on the action.

In six months, he has brought vitality, enthusiasm and success back to The Eastern Door. At 32-years-old, Steve has accomplished an incredible amount to be proud of. Always meeting challenges head on with composure, dignity and professionalism, I consider him to be a fantastic role model for all budding, emerging and seasoned journalists.

I know there is much more to come from him and we have big plans for The Eastern Door, but it's hard to imagine a year filled with so many obstacles and yet, despite them, so many more moments of success.

I think he deserves to be recognized for the Lindsay Crysler Award because he has been a true leader, completely dedicated to serving our readers and, most importantly, inspirational to all that work with him.

*Tracey Deer
Co-Publisher
The Eastern Door*

This award is given to a member of a sales staff who has made a significant contribution to the newspaper through sales performance, dedication, client development and community outreach work that raises the profile of the newspaper. This year's winner is:



GRAHAM DOUGHTY

Sale Representative
The Chronicle West Island

Graham Doughty is without question the definition of what a successful community newspaper sales person is all about. From his community involvement to his sunny disposition at the office on a daily basis, Graham is a newspaperman first and a salesman second. Graham has been at The Chronicle since 1999, and is always among the first to arrive every morning, often bringing fresh, hot bagels for colleagues with him.

Graham is a man who has overcome numerous challenges, both personally and professionally. And in the newspaper business, we know challenges come fast and must be solved even faster – and Graham gives us a wealth of problem-solving expertise.

Graham's client base is large and loyal because they know he will always sell them the right product. He takes the time to understand each client's business, their challenges and their goals. He then uses his creative skills to put together an advertising plan that both suits their budgets and their needs.

In 2008, despite personnel turnover at the newspaper and the many emerging changes in the marketplace, both internally and externally, Graham delivered a stellar year in sales surpassing his previous year by a whopping 32% or \$113,000. As a result, Graham was recognized into the Elite Sales Club at Transcontinental's National Sales Conference.

Graham has a passion for his craft and enthusiastically shares his knowledge and skills with all his fellow Sales Representatives. He is a founding member of the very successful The Chronicle Young Achievers Awards. He is also the founder of the West Island Chapter of MADD. And if you happen to drop into the office just before Christmas, yes, that is Graham dressed as Santa Claus on his way to a local school with candy canes in hand.

Graham's significant contribution to sales for The Chronicle, his dedication to his clients' needs and his tireless involvement in the community, thus raising the profile of the newspaper makes him a tremendous candidate for the Joan Durnin Outstanding Salesperson Award.

*Cordially,
Lynn Brown-Poole
Sales Manager
The Chronicle*