

Travel Media Association of Canada marks 30th Anniversary with Awards Gala saluting our Industry and Media Members

June 18, 2024 (Toronto, ON) – The 2024 national conference of the Travel Media Association of Canada (TMAC) attracted unprecedented interest from 260 delegates from across Canada and beyond to St. John's, Newfoundland & Labrador from June 12th to 16th, 2024, culminating in an Awards Gala celebrating the judged best stories of 2023 authored by Canadian accredited travel media creators. The Awards further recognized the professionalism of destination industry members and acknowledged the dedication of volunteer members that lead the association.

The Award winners are:

TMAC Volunteer of the Year - Erica Hargreave

President of TMAC, Paul Knowles expressed “Tonight, I want to put the spotlight on our volunteers as we honour one of our members, who is a great example of the difference TMACers make.

Erica is the kind of volunteer who could easily fly under the radar. She contributes in ways that often go unnoticed. Despite her behind-the-scenes role, her impact has been profound. This anecdote underlines her commitment and her integrity: The first year TMAC offered the Emerging and Broadcast Media Award, Erica recommended a judge, who subsequently bowed out. Her response was to withdraw her own entries, and volunteer to fill that role. One more comment from a colleague: “Erica’s innovative ideas have been instrumental in updating our Awards program to better serve our growing membership. Her talent for making complex technical concepts accessible has been invaluable, ensuring that our awards program remains inclusive and equitable. Without the dozens and dozens of hours Erica put in the Awards Committee would not have been able to achieve even a fraction of what it has”.

Volunteer Honorable Mentions went to Katie Conklin, TMAC Secretary and Conference Committee Co-Chair and Diane Selkirk, TMAC Awards Committee Chair.

TMAC Industry Member of the Year - Neil Hodges, Tourism New Brunswick

Paul Knowles says, “Numerous accolades for Neil Hodge made him the obvious choice for TMAC Industry Member of the Year. He was praised for truly understanding -- and delivering -- what media are seeking in terms of story ideas, itineraries, and support. Lauded for his encyclopedic knowledge of New Brunswick and his attention to detail, Neil's background in journalism serves him well. His ability to create unique angles for each journalist he works with is applauded.

Industry Member of the Year Honorable Mentions went to Irene Knight, Ontario Science Centre and Nicole Ford, Rocky Mountaineer.

Best Indigenous Tourism Experience in Canada Story Award sponsored by Destination Indigenous:

1st Place: Tim Johnson: [Encounters in Northern Saskatchewan are also lessons in Preserving Indigenous Languages](#) written by Tim Johnson. Published by Special to the Globe & Mail.

2nd Place: Christopher Rudder: [Discovering Indigeneity Through Chocolate with Chef Tammy - Raven Rising | EP2](#) by Christopher Rudder. Published on Rudderless Media YouTube channel.

3rd Place: Kelsey Olsen: [The Amazing Women of Indigenous Tourism](#) written by Kelsey Olsen. Published by Nations / 2023 Destination Indigenous.ca

Best Self-Published Travel Website (includes Blog) Award sponsored by Le Quebec Maritimes:

1st Place: [Adventure Awaits](#) by Jami Savage

2nd Place: [Moi, mes souliers](#) by Jennifer Doré Dallas

3rd Place: [Globe Guide](#) by Tamara Elliott

Best Cultural or Historical Story Award sponsored by Explore Louisiana:

1st Place: Zack Metcalfe: [On Easterly Wind - What it means to find Vikings in Newfoundland](#) written by Zack Metcalfe. Published by Your Local Magazine.

2nd Place: Laura Paquet: [Matilda Joslyn Gage: The suffragist who defied the US government](#) written by Laura Paquet. Published by BBC Travel.

3rd Place: Rod Charles: [At Black Loyalist Heritage Centre, I Feel 'I Am Being Called Home'](#) written by Rod Charles. Published by Vacay.ca

Best Food and Drink Story Award sponsored by Visit Orlando:

1st Place: Cinda Chavich: [Wild, Gangly and Endlessly Adaptable - Tracing the roots of the rare Ozette potato](#) written by Cinda Chavich. Published by Edible Vancouver & Wine Country.

2nd Place: Amy Rosen: [Canada's Best New Restaurants](#) written by Amy Rosen. Published by enRoute Magazine, Air Canada.

3rd Place: Tim Johnson: [Alligator cheesecake and fried bologna sandwiches — to find the best food in New Orleans, I asked the locals](#) written by Tim Johnson. Published by The Toronto Star.

Best Landscape or Evocation of Place Story Award sponsored by Tourism Saskatchewan:

1st Place: Roland Bastarache: [Sunset at Mont St. Michel](#) photograph shot by Roland Bastarache. Published by Blog Rolandbast.com

2nd Place: Kevin Wagar: [Fishing boat in the Phi Phi Islands](#) photograph shot by Kevin Wagar. Published by Wandering Wagars - Adventure Family Travel.

3rd Place: Oksana St John: [A night at the Dark Hedges](#) photograph shot by Oksana St John. Published by DrinkTeaTravel.com

Best Tourism For Positive Change Story Award sponsored Destination BC:

1st Place: Jessica Lockhart: [Kohutapu Lodge: A model for regenerative tourism in New Zealand](#) written by Jessica Lockhart. Published by BBC Travel.

2nd Place: Chloe Berge: [Finding Hope in Bosnia and Herzegovina's Wild Nature and Historic Towns](#) written by Chloe Berge. Published by AFAR Magazine.

3rd Place: Sandra MacGregor: [I Went on a Safari in Botswana With a Female Guide. Here's why it made all the difference](#) written by Sandra MacGregor. Published by Travel and Leisure.

Best Outdoor Adventure, Sport or Recreation Story Award sponsored by Niagara Parks:

1st Place: Jessica Lockhart: [Bass Rocks](#) written by Jessica Lockhart. Published by the New Zealand Herald.

2nd Place: Jennifer Bain: [Walking Canada's Camino](#) written by Jennifer Bain. Published by Zoomer Magazine.

3rd Place: Wing Sze Tang: [The Grandest Adventure](#) written by Wing Sze Tang. Published by The Toronto Star.

Best People Photo Award sponsored by Tourism Ireland:

1st Place: Tamara Elliott: [Teaching new generations about a traditional kudlik welcoming ceremony](#) photograph shot by Tamara Elliott. Published by Globe Guide.

2nd Place: Amy Rosen: [The Geiko of Kyoto](#) photograph shot by Amy Rosen. Published by The Toronto Star.

3rd Place: Sharon Matthews-Stevens: [On the Island of the Great Spirit](#) photograph shot by Sharon Matthews-Stevens. Published by roadstories.ca

Best Spirit of Canada Award sponsored by Tourism Yukon:

1st Place: Claudia Laroye: [A Literary Kitchen Party Flourishes in Woody Point](#) written by Claudia Laroye. Published by Vacay.ca

2nd Place: Jennifer Bain: [Marine Adventures in Nunavut's Protected High Arctic Waters](#) written by Jennifer Bain. Published by National Parks Traveler

3rd Place: Christopher Mitchell: [What I Learned Spending One Memorable Month in Newfoundland & Labrador](#) written by Christopher Mitchell. Published by travelingmitch.

Best Emerging & Broadcast Media: Stories Over 10 minutes in Length Award sponsored by Tourism Richmond:

1st Place: William Tang: [Winter in Banff is Epic](#) by William Tang. Published on Going Awesome Places YouTube channel

2nd Place: Mary Anne Ivison: [Adam Shoalts Returns](#) podcast by Mary Anne Ivison Published by Let's Take This Outside.ca.

3rd Place: Ayngelina Brogan: [The REAL CARTAGENA Colombia Afro Colombian History, Bazurto Market & La Maria](#) by Ayngelina Brogan Published on Ayngelina YouTube channel.

Best Photo Series Award sponsored by Parks Canada:

1st Place: Robin Karpan: [Photographing Saskatchewan's Living Skies at Night](#) by Robin Karpan Published by Prairies North Magazine.

2nd Place: Roland Bastarache: [The Daily Meet UP](#) photographs by Roland Bastarache Published by Instagram RolandBast and Blog Rolandbast.com

3rd Place: Skylar Anderson: [Northern Lights over Lake Ainslie, Cape Breton Island](#) photographs shot by Skylar Anderson. Published by CTV Atlantic, Saltwire, Chronicle Herald, CTV National News, Daveyandsky and Explore Canada.

Best Emerging & Broadcast Media: Stories Under 10 Minutes in Length Award sponsored by Visit Tampa Bay:

1st Place: Skylar Anderson: [Finding our Ancestry on our Irish Honeymoon](#) by Skylar Anderson. Published on daveyandsky Instagram channel.

2nd Place: William Tang: [Magic of Easter Island](#) by William Tang. Published by Going Awesome Place YouTube channel.

3rd Place: Lauren Yakiwchuk: [France Canal Cruise: Our Luxury Barge Cruise in Burgundy](#) by Lauren Yakiwchuk. Published by Justin Plus Lauren YouTube channel.

The People's Choice Photo Award sponsored by TMAC:

[Gary Dalvos slows a hot air balloon Fred Flintstone style by hanging onto the basket's edge, his feet acting as brakes](#). Photograph shot by Jenn Smith Nelson.

Ann Britton Campbell Family Travel Award in partnership with the TMAC BC & Yukon Chapter:

1st Place: Robin Esrock: [A hands-on education in Churchill, Manitoba. Tundra Buggy pioneer Frontiers North invites adventurous families to northern Manitoba for a bucket list summer vacation](#), written by Robin Esrock. Published by Canadian Geographic.

2nd Place: Jennifer Merrick: [Family Travel: Kids' Obsessions Make Awesome Family Vacations. Plan a vacation that lets your young ones live out their ultimate fantasies](#), written by Jennifer Merrick. Published by Boldtraveler.ca

3rd Place: Diane Selkirk: [Travel has helped me see my daughter more clearly. By stripping away everything familiar, all that's left is her. Raising my child with a sense of adventure came with rich—and bittersweet—rewards](#), written by Diane Selkirk. Published by The Star.

Nathan Fong Memorial Award sponsored by the Fong Family in partnership with TMAC's BC & Yukon Chapter:

1st Place: Bianca Bujan: [Malaysian Chef Alex Chen Makes Vancouver's Michelin List](#) written by Bianca Bujan. Published by Canadian Geographic.

2nd Place: Carolyn Heller: [On the Steveston Waterfront, a Thai Chef Blends Alchemy, Gastronomy, and Tradition](#) written by Carolyn Heller. Published by Montecristo Magazine.

3rd Place: Lucas Aykroyd: [A Chinese Tapestry](#) written by Lucas Aykroyd. Published by re:porter Porter Airlines.

2023 Host Conference Destination Award sponsored by Destination Sudbury:

1st Place: [Ultimate Visitors Guide to Sudbury](#) by Arienne Parzei

The conference in St. John's, Newfoundland & Labrador saw registration reach capacity in a mere five hours of the opening and marks the 30th anniversary of the Association. This travel conference represents the largest gathering of Canadian travel media in 2024.

The annual TMAC conference is held in host locations across Canada and occasionally in international destinations. This year, the opportunity to visit St. John's meant that hundreds of members registered on the first day of opening. In addition to the conference itself, media members participate in pre- and post-conference experiences in Newfoundland & Labrador.

“St. John's put together a fantastic menu of experiences and opportunities in the city and throughout the province,” said TMAC President and freelance travel journalist Paul Knowles “And our Conference Committee volunteers, led by chair Rod Charles of Vacay.ca and co-chair Katie Conklin of Discover Halifax did a spectacular job of organizing networking, professional development, and entertainment events for our members.”

To find out more about TMAC or becoming a member, visit <https://www.travelmedia.ca/membership>

About the Travel Media Association of Canada

Rooted in Canada with an international reach, the Travel Media Association of Canada creates a positive space for travel media and travel industry professionals to cultivate relationships that result in relevant collaborative, comprehensive opportunities and successful outcomes to foster and inspire travel. Its over 375 members include accredited Canadian travel media and representatives of travel destinations in Canada and across the globe. For more information, visit www.travelmedia.ca

Contact:

Christine Painter
CAO
Travel Media Association of Canada
christine.painter@travelmedia.ca
613-392-3233