The Extra wins S.F. Peninsula Press Club honors

CENTRAL City Extra received five awards from the San Francisco Peninsula Press Club for stories we published last year. The Extra was awarded two first places and three seconds out of 54 plaques, nearly 10% of the total prizes the press club parceled out in its Non-Daily Newspaper division.

Surprisingly, our main obituary writers, Tom Carter and Marjorie Beggs, only placed second in the Columns Feature category. Perhaps because there was no category specifically for obituaries. But judges called it "an outstanding effort about a segment of our society that is often overlooked." S.F. Business Times' "Editor's Notebook" came in first.

The obituaries we submitted were among Beggs' and Carter's finest, which says a lot considering that The Extra's most popular feature, our obits, have pioneered a fresh path in journalistic storytelling.

Heidi Swillinger, currently The Extra's advertising manager, won a blue ribbon in the News Story category for her meticulously researched piece on the city's "Information Gap" caused by city departments' non-compliance with the charter-mandated requirement to produce an annual report and post it on the Main Library Website.

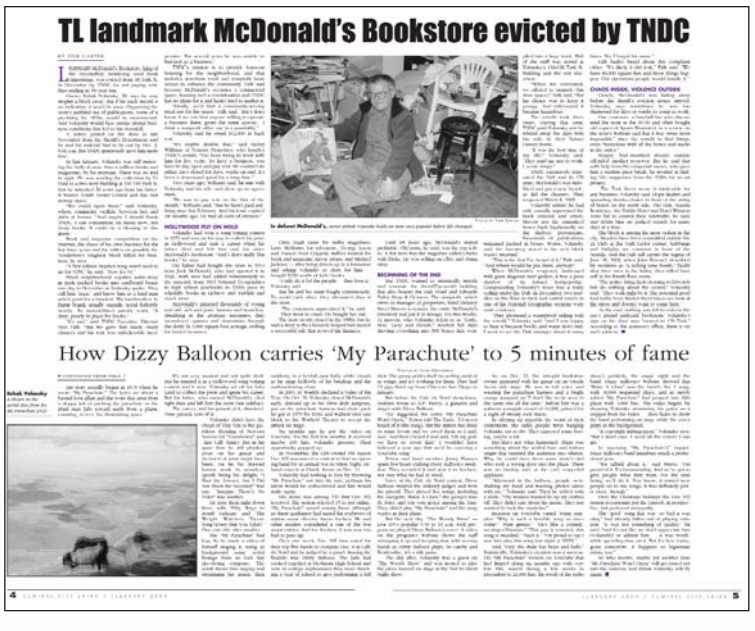
Tom Carter, The Extra's community reporter, snagged second place for his Business Story on TNDC's eviction of landmark TL bookstore McDonald's after the nonprofit developer had bent over backwards on the rent and made other costly accommodations.

Marjorie Beggs, senior writer/editor at the Study Center, the Extra's publisher, who has been turning out high-quality work for us since 1977, took home a first-place plaque June 19 at the Press Club's 33rd annual awards banquet.

She scored top Specialty Story honors with "S.F. vs. Tobacco" her 6,000-word account of the city's Tobacco Free Project's impact through its advocacy for anti-tobacco policies and legislation. The Department of Public Health's health education program is a textbook example of citywide community organizing. Under the leadership of Director Alyonik Hrushow and Mele Lau, the Tobacco Free Project is among DPH Prevention Unit's finest achievements.

Tom Carter grabbed his third red ribbon in the Series category with his two-parter on robbery in the Tenderloin. His Page One "Robbery Roulette" was a first-person account of how he eluded a mugger on Turk Street, making the young man with the knife look like a chump unable to handle an ageless tennis player who also works out daily at Salvation Army. Tom coupled his personal account with a timely story on a spike in robberies in the neighborhood.

What we savor from winning these five awards is the independent recognition from fellow journalists of the high quality of Central City Extra's contents. We have been preaching that "news is a community service," and cover stories that offer insight into neighborhood improvement. ■

— GEOFF LINK, EDITOR AND PUBLISHER

Heidi Swillinger, *Tom Carter and Marjorie Beggs beam for the camera as they display their well-deserved awards against big-time competition. Their award-winning stories are pictured on this page.*