



Cedarburg High School

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Common Sense newspaper staff wins awards at state high school journalism competition
By Grace McMillen

The Cedarburg High School *Common Sense* newspaper staff earned one group award and 23 individual awards at the Northeastern Wisconsin Scholastic Press Association (NEWSPA) Journalism Conference Apr. 20. Nineteen schools—bringing 325 students—attended the conference, which is held at UW-Oshkosh each spring.

One of the highlights of the day was the presentation of the annual NEWSPA scholarship, sponsored by the Wisconsin Newspaper Association. Senior Zoe Johnson was awarded the \$500 scholarship. She was chosen from a field of several applicants after writing a 500-word essay, expressing why she is choosing to major in a journalism-related field.

"I'm so happy for Zoe," *Common Sense* adviser and English department chairperson Heather Vande Sande said about her daughter. "I know she'll tap into her creativity in a field such as advertising or public relations and will end up having an exciting, rewarding career."

"This means a lot to me. Thank you," Johnson told the NEWSPA board members when she was presented with the scholarship. "I'll be sure to let my Journalism teacher, aka my mom, know."

For seven consecutive years, the *Common Sense* earned recognition for the overall publication. This year they were given Red Ribbon Honors.

"We've been consistent in earning Red Ribbon Honors," Vande Sande said. "It's amazing to me that year after year, even with the changeover that happens in editors and especially layout staff, we have been able to maintain this level of excellence."

This year's editors are seniors Emma Brauer, Emily Tomashek, Catherine Torner and sophomore Brenna Fischer.

Twenty-three entries placed in the writing or graphics divisions.

"This was a record year for the staff. We topped last year's results of winning 12 individual writing awards, which was still an accomplishment," Vande Sande said.

Ten of this year's awards placed at the top of their categories.

A first place writing award went to junior Emily Bewalda for her serious column where she pondered why some teachers find it necessary to grade papers with a red pen.

Torner earned first place for her story on the annual Alyssa Dorfler charity swim meet which takes place in the fall with the girls' swim and dive team competing with the varsity football team.

Junior Alea Kahn took first place for her feature story on a CHS graduate whose high school community service experience inspired her to participate in similar activities in college.

Junior Grace McMillen earned first for her feature story on a Webster sixth grade student who attends CHS for advanced level math and science classes.

Junior Skylar Steffes' sports feature on math teacher Lynn Packard's involvement in the Milwaukee Curling Club also earned first place.

"College: the constant conversation" is the title of the serious column which earned junior Chloe Weil first place.

Junior Barb Rasmussen took first place with her movie review of *Star Wars: The Force Awakens*.

In his first year as a cartoonist, junior Nathan Wegner brought home a first place award.

Sophomore Bridget Hagen also earned first for her news story on how one's involvement in sports helps students learn time management skills.

Hagen was also part of a team of reporters whose in-depth story on teachers recalling their college experiences took first; others on the team include senior Zoe Johnson, juniors Kahn, Natalie Knoepfel and Bobby O'Neil; and sophomore Fischer.

This year's editors won second place for their humorous column, "eXcellent and Overrated."

Additional second place writing awards went to seniors Brauer, Alec Collins and Heidi Willden; juniors Catherine Mett and Roxy Weiland; and sophomore Hagen.

Third place writing awards went to seniors Brauer, Evie Thomas and Torner; and juniors McMillen and Wegner.

In the graphics division, juniors Abby Butt and Bobby O'Neil won second place for their infographics which accompanied the in-depth story on teachers recalling their college experiences.

Each newspaper can enter two stories in each of the 14 writing categories. "Out of our 28 writing entries, the students won awards in 13 of the categories," Vande Sande said. "This also tops our record last year, when we placed in 12 categories."

Vande Sande has been the adviser of the *Common Sense* since 2000.

NEWSPA has been serving high school students around Wisconsin since 1969.