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## **Outside Magazine Leads Field of Four Top Winners In SATW Foundation Lowell Thomas Travel Journalism Competition**

### *Freelance Writer Kevin West Earns Travel Journalist of the Year Award*

Oct. 16, 2020 — Outside magazine earned seven awards, and National Geographic Traveler, The New York Times and Travel + Leisure each won six awards to become the top winners in the 2019-20 Lowell Thomas Travel Journalism Competition, overseen by the Society of American Travel Writers Foundation. National Geographic Traveler took three Gold awards, one as the Best Travel Magazine. Outside also won three Golds, all for individual articles. Among its two Golds, The New York Times earned highest honors in Newspaper Travel Coverage. Travel + Leisure won Gold in the Travel Journalism Websites category.

Kevin West, freelance writer from Monterey, Mass., is the Travel Journalist of the Year, earning the Grand Award for a portfolio of work.

The competition, for work from spring 2019 to spring 2020, drew 1,299 entries and was judged by faculty from the University of Missouri School of Journalism. The Lowell Thomas Awards, recognized as the most prestigious in travel journalism, were announced in a video presentation at the 2020 Virtual Convention of SATW, the premier professional organization of travel journalists and communicators. Members usually convene annually at a domestic or foreign destination but went virtual this year because of COVID-19.

In citing the Grand Award winner, judges praised West for bringing “artistry to every assignment. ... Words are not just tossed onto the page, but parboiled and plated with care to deliver a ... result that is as much about style as it is about substance.” West also won Bronze awards for Culinary-Related Travel and Environmental and Sustainable Tourism.

Also honored for Grand Award travel portfolios were Stephanie Pearson, freelance writer and contributing editor for Outside (Silver); Sebastian Modak, freelance writer-photographer and author of “The 52 Places Traveler” for The New York Times in 2019 (Bronze); and Aaron Teasdale, freelance writer-photographer (Honorable Mention).

In Newspaper Travel Coverage, judges praised The New York Times for “unpredictable content, rigorous research, polished writing and lush, striking photography.”

Silver for Newspaper Travel Coverage went to Wall Street Journal Off Duty, complimented for stories that are “smart, stylish and sophisticated — as well as practical and unpretentious.” Commended for its unusual story angles, The Plain Dealer in Cleveland took Bronze. Honorable Mention went to The Boston Globe.

Of Outside's Gold awards, Stephanie Pearson won two: "The Uncertain Future of the Boundary Waters," in Environmental and Sustainable Tourism, and "Does Travel Insurance Cover the Coronavirus?" in Service-Oriented Consumer Work. Mark Sundeen took Gold for "I Was Flying to Montana to Bury My Son," in Personal Comment. Outside also won one Silver and three Bronze awards.

Besides its top Travel Magazine honor, National Geographic Traveler took Gold in Special Packages/Projects for "Sound Journeys," George W. Stone, Editor-in-Chief; and in Photo Illustration of Travel for "California: A Quest for Quiet," by Jennifer Emerling. The magazine also earned two Bronze awards and an Honorable Mention.

Others in the National Geographic media family won two Gold awards: In Culinary-Related Travel, "The Path to Uncharted," by Jill Robinson, in a special issue of National Geographic; and in Guidebooks, "Frances Mayes Always Italy," by Frances Mayes and Ondine Cohane, for National Geographic Books.

For Travel Coverage in General Magazines, which contain varied topics besides travel, Yankee magazine took Gold for the second year in a row. Silver went to Midwest Living, Bronze to Outside and Honorable Mention to Westways.

The second Gold for The New York Times went to Pico Iyer for "A Journey Into Greece's Land of a Thousand Stories," in the publication's Style Magazine. The newspaper also received two Bronze awards for work by freelancer Sebastian Modak as "The 52 Places Traveler" author (2019), besides a Silver and an Honorable Mention.

Besides its Gold, Travel + Leisure earned two Bronze, one Silver and two Honorable Mentions.

BBC Travel tallied five awards, including a Gold for "Is This the Future of Underwater Exploration?" by Ellie Cobb, in Multimedia Single Work.

Bloomberg Pursuits earned four awards, including Gold for "You Can Now Ride a Submarine to the Deepest Point on Earth," by Fran Golden, in the Short Work on Travel category. Afar took three awards, including Gold for "Playing by Heart," by Lavinia Spalding, in Special-Purpose Travel. And Matador Network won three awards, with two Golds: "Bars That Don't Close and a Deep South Cultural Education in Natchez, Mississippi," by Matthew Meltzer, in U.S./Canada Travel; and "Phil Good Travel: Things Get TRIPPY in Zagreb, Croatia," by Phil Calvert and team, in Video on Travel.

"This contest illustrates why the Lowell Thomas Awards continue to be THE showcase for the best reporting and writing in travel," said Emeritus Professor John Fennell, who with Professor Jennifer Rowe helped coordinate the judging. Winners this year stood out in several respects, Fennell said. Their entries show an ability to balance the personal with the universal, deftly weaving reflections with experiences to create stories that inspire. They also excel at practical information to guide travelers, he said.

Among the other Gold Winners are Kim Cross in Foreign Travel for "Noel + Leon," in Bicycling; Emily Gillespie in Cruise Travel for "Instead of Flying to This Peruvian City, She Took a Slow Cruise Down the Amazon — on a Cargo Ship," in The Washington Post; Melissa Sevigny in Adventure Travel for "The Wild Ones," in The Atavist Magazine; and Taylor Dolven and Alex Harris in Travel News/Investigative Reporting for "Crew Are Stuck on Miami Cruise Ships With COVID-19 Spreading. Some Aren't Being Paid," in the Miami Herald.

Bob Krist won Gold in the Travel Book category for "Old Souls & Timeless Places" from Brilliant Press. Brad A. Johnson took Gold in Travel Blogs for his food and travel blog on BradAJohnson.net.

This year the Travel Audio competition was split into two categories, and Liz Beatty won Gold in both: in Travel Audio-Radio for "Rafting North America's Wildest River System," on Sirius XM Canada Talks, and in Travel Audio-Podcasts and Guides for "Inside Great Lakes Indigenous Culture — Before There Was a Canada/US Border," on NorthAmericanaPodcast.com.

This year SATW Foundation is giving 99 awards in 26 categories and \$21,650 in prize money to journalists in recognition of outstanding travel journalism.

The awards are named for Lowell Thomas, acclaimed broadcast journalist, prolific author and world explorer during five decades in travel journalism. The competition is open to all North American journalists.

The sustainability of the annual competition is made possible by a generous contribution from Gold Supporter Carnival Corp., the world's largest cruise company with a portfolio of brands in North America, Europe, Australia and Asia, including Carnival Cruise Line, Holland America Line, Cunard, Seabourn and Princess Cruises.

**See following list of winners by category.**  
**SATW FOUNDATION**  
**LOWELL THOMAS TRAVEL JOURNALISM COMPETITION**  
**Awards for Work Published in 2019-20**

*Faculty members of the University of Missouri School of Journalism judged the competition, with Emeritus Prof. John Fennell, Prof. Jennifer Rowe and administrative assistant Kim Townlain coordinating. There were 1,299 entries. In the following list of winners, numbers in parentheses denote number of entries in the category.*

*The Winners Gallery, showing the results, judges' comments and links to the winning work for all, may be viewed online at the Foundation website, [satwf.com](http://satwf.com). For questions, contact: Mary Lu Abbott, SATW Foundation administrator, 281-217-2872, or [awards@satwf.com](mailto:awards@satwf.com).*

**Category 101: Grand Award—Lowell Thomas Travel Journalist of the Year (40)**

**Gold:** Kevin West, freelance writer, Monterey, MA

**Silver:** Stephanie Pearson, freelance writer, contributing editor for Outside magazine, Duluth, MN

**Bronze:** Sebastian Modak, freelance writer-photographer and "The 52 Places Traveler" author (2019)  
for The New York Times, New York City

**Honorable Mention:** Aaron Teasdale, freelance writer-photographer, Missoula, MT

**Category 102: Newspaper Travel Coverage (6)**

**Gold:** The New York Times, Amy Virshup, Travel Editor

**Silver:** Wall Street Journal Off Duty, Deborah Dunn, Travel Editor

**Bronze:** The Plain Dealer, Cleveland, Susan Glaser, Travel Editor

**Honorable Mention:** The Boston Globe, Chris Morris, Travel Editor

**Category 103: Magazines (14)**

**103A — Travel Magazines**

**Gold:** National Geographic Traveler, George W. Stone, Editor-in-Chief

**Silver:** Afar, Julia Cosgrove, Editor-in-Chief

**Bronze:** Travel + Leisure, Jacqueline Gifford, Editor-in-Chief

**Honorable Mention:** Southbound, Kevin Benefield, Editor-in-Chief

**103B — Travel Coverage in General Magazines**

**Gold:** Yankee, Mel Allen, Editor

**Silver:** Midwest Living, Kylee Krizmanic, Editor-in-Chief; Trevor Meers, former Editor;  
Timothy Meinch, Travel Editor

**Bronze:** Outside, Christopher Keyes, Editor-in-Chief

**Honorable Mention:** Westways, Leslie Mieko Yap, Editorial Director; Elizabeth Harryman, Travel Editor;  
Eric Van Eyke, Creative Director

**Category 104: U.S./Canada Travel (118)**

**Gold:** Matthew Meltzer, "Bars That Don't Close and a Deep South Cultural Education  
in Natchez, Mississippi," Matador Network

**Silver:** Lillian Li, "All Eyes On D.C.," Travel + Leisure

**Bronze:** Peter Fish, "The Forever Magic of Big Sur," Coastal Living

**Honorable Mention:** Jon Gorey, "Blue Ridge Serenade: Asheville Makes Artsy Look Easy,"  
The Boston Globe Magazine

**Category 105: Foreign Travel (128)**

**Gold:** Kim Cross, "Noel + Leon," Bicycling

**Silver:** Chris Colin, "Road Tennis Is the Coolest Sport You've Never Heard Of," Airbnb Magazine

**Bronze:** Sebastian Modak, "In Uzbekistan, Encounters With a Dead Goat. But in a Good Way,"  
The New York Times

**Category 106: Photo Illustration of Travel (52)**

**Gold:** Jennifer Emerling, "California: A Quest for Quiet," National Geographic Traveler

**Silver:** Matt Brass, "Water, Smoke, Spirit, Forest, Ghost, Land, Sky," National Parks

**Bronze:** Dina Litovsky, "Philadelphia," National Geographic Traveler

**Honorable Mention:** Gregg Segal, "American Idyll," Smithsonian Magazine

**Category 107: Special Packages/Projects (10)****Gold:** George W. Stone, "Sound Journeys," National Geographic Traveler**Silver:** Nikki Ekstein, Chris Rovzar, Justin Ocean and James Gaddy, "Where to Go in 2020," Bloomberg Pursuits**Bronze:** Beshia Rodell, "World's Best Restaurants 2019," Travel + Leisure**Category 108: Cruise Travel (53)****Gold:** Emily Gillespie, "Instead of Flying to This Peruvian City, She Took a Slow Cruise Down the Amazon — On a Cargo Ship," The Washington Post**Silver:** Fran Golden, "Welcome to Your Luxury Cruise! Here's Where It Gets Complicated," Bloomberg Pursuits**Bronze:** Christina Ianzito, "America by River," AARP The Magazine**Honorable Mention:** Maggie Shipstead, "Spirit of the North," Travel + Leisure**Category 109: Adventure Travel (81)****Gold:** Melissa Sevigny, "The Wild Ones," The Atavist Magazine**Silver:** Nick Heil, "The Tragedy on Howse Peak," Outside**Bronze:** Jayme Moye, "Thirteen Feet Under," Alpinist**Honorable Mention:** Adam Karlin, "Welcome to the Land," The Statesider**Category 110: Travel News/Investigative Reporting (44)****Gold:** Taylor Dolven and Alex Harris, "Crew Are Stuck on Miami Cruise Ships With COVID-19 Spreading. Some Aren't Being Paid," Miami Herald**Silver:** Chabeli Carrazana, Rich Pope and Adelaide Chen, "Laborland: In a Theme Park Parking Lot, a Worker Sleeps in Her Car," Orlando Sentinel**Bronze:** Alex Perry, "The Last Days of John Allen Chau," Outside**Honorable Mention:** Nikki Ekstein, "Carbon Credits Won't Be Travel's Saving Grace," Bloomberg Pursuits**Category 111: Service-Oriented Consumer Work (61)****Gold:** Stephanie Pearson, "Does Travel Insurance Cover the Coronavirus?" Outside**Silver:** Paula Froelich, "Traveling to Asia Amid Coronavirus: Masks, Raw Hands, Empty Planes and Paranoia," New York Post**Bronze:** Katherine LaGrave, "An A to Z Guide to Not Killing the Planet When You Travel," Condé Nast Traveler**Honorable Mention:** Lisa Ballard, "Be a Savvier Traveler," Image Health Watch**Category 112: Environmental and Sustainable Tourism (99)****Gold:** Stephanie Pearson, "The Uncertain Future of the Boundary Waters," Outside**Silver:** Aaron Teasdale, "Building an American Serengeti," Sierra magazine**Bronze:** Kevin West, "Too Much of a Good Thing," Departures**Honorable Mention:** Bob Howells, "Prairie Home," National Geographic Traveler**Category 113: Cultural Tourism (86)****Gold:** Pico Iyer, "A Journey Into Greece's Land of a Thousand Stories," The New York Times Style Magazine**Silver:** Amanda Castleman, "Love in a Time of Abundance," Hidden Compass**Bronze:** Jeff MacGregor, "The Last of the Great American Hobos," Smithsonian Magazine**Honorable Mention:** Christopher P. Baker, "The Ancient Guardians of the Earth," BBC Travel**Category 114: Personal Comment (95)****Gold:** Mark Sundeen, "I Was Flying to Montana to Bury My Son," Outside**Silver:** Diane Covington-Carter, "Departure Points: Dad's Stories Resonated," Los Angeles Times**Bronze:** La Carmina, "I Traveled to Brazil With Author Elizabeth Wurtzel. Here's Everything She Taught Me," Fodor's Travel**Honorable Mention:** Steve Macone, "Ice Fishing Is Fun!" The New York Times**Category 115: Special-Purpose Travel (82)****Gold:** Lavinia Spalding, "Playing by Heart," Afar**Silver:** Ken Budd, "The Moral Dilemma of Volunteer Tourism," The Washington Post Magazine**Bronze:** Taylor Gee, "Fame, Romance, and a Second Chance on the PCT," Outside**Category 116: Short Work on Travel (61)****Gold:** Fran Golden, "You Can Now Ride a Submarine to the Deepest Point on Earth," Bloomberg Pursuits**Silver:** Mary Bergin, "Pitmaster Puts Town on Map," Chicago Tribune**Bronze:** Sarah Khan, "Raise the Roof," Condé Nast Traveler**Honorable Mention:** Fran Golden, "Choose a Cruise Line With Strong Local Ties," Travel + Leisure**Category 117: Culinary-Related Travel (89)****Gold:** Jill Robinson, "The Path to Uncharted," National Geographic (special issue)**Silver:** Christopher Hall, "Purple Gold," Via Magazine**Bronze:** Kevin West, "The Tables of Babel," Departures**Honorable Mention:** Deborah Jacobs, "It's Piquillo Pepper Season. So Don't Mess With the Roaster in Tolosa," DeborahJacobs.com blog

**Category 118: Travel Book (17)****Gold:** Bob Krist, "Old Souls & Timeless Places," Brilliant Press**Silver:** Peter Zheutlin, "The Dog Went Over the Mountain — Travels With Albie: An American Journey," Pegasus Books**Bronze:** Jane Ammeson, "Lincoln Road Trip: The Back-Roads Guide to America's Favorite President," Red Lightning Books, an imprint of Indiana University Press**Honorable Mention:** Caroline Van Hemert, "The Sun Is a Compass: My 4,000-Mile Journey Into the Alaskan Wilds," Little, Brown Spark, an imprint of Little, Brown and Co.**Category 119: Guidebook (21)****Gold:** Frances Mayes and Ondine Cohane, "Frances Mayes Always Italy," National Geographic Books**Silver:** Henry Kisor and Christine Goodier, "Traveling With Service Animals," University of Illinois Press**Bronze:** Anne Howard and Mike Howard, "Comfortably Wild: The Best Glamping Destinations in North America," Falcon, an imprint of The Rowman & Littlefield Publishing Group**Honorable Mention:** Valerie Stimac, "Dark Skies," Lonely Planet**Category 120: Travel Journalism Websites (12)****Gold:** TravelAndLeisure.com, Travel + Leisure, Deanne Kaczerski, Digital Executive Editor**Silver:** FathomAway.com, Fathom, Pavia Rosati and Jeralyn Gerba**Bronze:** Afar.com, Afar, Julia Cosgrove, Editor-in-Chief**Honorable Mention:** MatadorNetwork.com, Matador Network, Laura Reilly, Scott Sporleder and Ross Borden**Category 121: Travel Audio (54)****121A: Travel Audio — Radio****Gold:** Liz Beatty, "Rafting North America's Wildest River System," Travel Update episode on Canada Now, Sirius XM Canada Talks Channel 167**Silver:** Thomas Wilmer, "Door County's Haunted Lighthouses, Cheese, Cherries & Family Resorts," NPR One/NPR affiliate KCBX**Bronze:** Rick Steves, Timothy Tattan, Isaac Kaplan-Woolner and Kasmira Hall, "Travel With Rick Steves, Program 571: Pluto; One Giant Leap; Astronaut's view; Summer of '73," Rick Steves Europe**121B: Travel Audio — Podcasts and Guides****Gold:** Liz Beatty, "Inside Great Lakes Indigenous Culture — Before There Was a Canada/US Border," NorthAmericanaPodcast.com**Silver:** Liz Beatty, "The Viking Heart of American and Canadian New Icelanders," NorthAmericanaPodcast.com**Bronze:** Scott Gurian, "Medicine Man," Far From Home podcast**Category 122: Video on Travel (25)****Gold:** Phil Calvert, Rob Chursinoff, Fraser James, Doree Simon and Scott Sporleder, "Phil Good Travel: Things Get TRIPPY in Zagreb, Croatia," Matador Network**Silver:** Anne Banas and Anna Bressanin, "Anne-Sophie Pic: The Chef Who Rules France," BBC Travel**Bronze:** Seth Doane, Sari Aviv, Steve Tyler, Rand Morrison and Henry Bautista, "CBS Sunday Morning: A Chance to Dream," CBS Sunday Morning**Honorable Mention:** Kate Schoenbach, "The Africans Who Wear Victorian Petticoats," BBC Travel**Category 123: Travel Blogs (38)****Gold:** Brad A. Johnson, Food & Travel Blog, BradAJohnson.net**Silver:** Janet Steinberg, Travel Blog, TheTravelAuthority.com**Bronze:** Sylvia Longmire, Spin the Globe, SpinTheGlobe.net,**Honorable Mention:** Amanda Williams, A Dangerous Business Travel Blog, Dangerous-Business.com**Category 124: Multimedia Single Work (13)****Gold:** Ellie Cobb, "Is This the Future of Underwater Exploration?" BBC Travel**Silver:** Shannon Sims, Todd Heisler, Phaedra Brown, Stephen Hiltner and Rumsey Taylor, "Discovering Cuba, An Island of Music," The New York Times**Bronze:** Katie Knorovsky, "21 Visionary Women Travelers," National Geographic Traveler**Honorable Mention:** Laura Kiniry and Daniel Kavanaugh, "For Salvadorans, Pupusas Mean Comfort," BBC Travel

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