

Winners of the **2007** **UTNE** Independent Press Awards

The process of picking the 2007 Utne Independent Press Award winners was technologically advanced and methodologically incontrovertible. The 111 magazines, journals, newsletters, alternative weeklies, and zines that were nominated by the *Utne Reader* staff two months ago were fed into a gigantic and infallible computer (Intel inside!) that performed sophisticated informational and qualitative meta-analyses and, with an authority befitting the great Oz or the great Google, spat out a list of the 15 winners within minutes. With the exception of a *High Country News* issue that got stuck in an intake chute (along with an intern's hand) and a zine that the computer initially rejected as "unidentifiable media," it all went as smoothly as our IT guys said it would.

And if you believe that, we've got a domain name we'd like to sell you. The fact is, computers can do many incredible things, but when it comes to sorting through the independent press in search of stories that surprise and delight us, good old human judgment—preferably the informed and enlightened kind—is still our best analytic tool. So the unglamorous truth is that we chose the winners in a blatantly old-school way, by reading the nominees extensively, then getting together to champion our favorite titles and challenge one another to examine our opinions. We're a feisty bunch—hypocrisy was exposed, favoritism suspected, and personal tastes called into question—but at the end of the day we emerged with a roster of winners that we're proud to present here.

The following pages tease out the juicy stuff that keeps us coming back to these publications, but we couldn't fit everything we wanted into this section. So we're relying on that newfangled Internet: For detailed profiles of the winners and a full list of nominees, visit www.utne.com/uipa2007.

—The Editors

ColorLines has delivered **RELENTLESS COVERAGE OF NEW ORLEANS**, doggedly following the Katrina beat and exploring new angles even as major news outlets predictably moved on to the next big story. The May-June 2007 cover story, "For Sale: What New Orleans' housing crisis reveals about race in American cities," by executive editor Tram Nguyen, examines black communities struggling to resettle New Orleans and calls for an "overdue debate on urban inequality." The magazine also has a regular Gulf Coast Update, which reports on everything from the lack of aid given to Mississippi, which bore "the brunt of the storm damage," to grassroots activists trying to reform the region's substandard criminal justice system.

UNFORGETTABLE COVER STORIES: The "Fiction Issue" (Nov.-Dec. 2006) makes the case that creative writers are political figures and that fiction, in the words of managing editor Daisy Hernández, "creates for us the story of what people actually experience." "The Innovators" (Jan.-Feb. 2007) profiled fifteen trendsetters and tastemakers "moving big ideas in 2007." In March-April 2007, readers discovered "What Your Doctor Won't See . . . If conservatives make healthcare 'colorblind.'" And in July-Aug. 2007, *ColorLines* gave top billing to "My Road Out of Iraq: A Latino soldier's take on the racism of the occupation."

General Excellence: Magazines **ColorLines**

COLORLINES, THE 2007 GENERAL EXCELLENCE WINNER, bills itself as "the national newsmagazine on race and politics," but its scope is vastly broader. From economics, education, and the environment to immigration, queer issues, fine arts, and pop culture, *ColorLines* examines the myriad ways race—and our ideas about race—intersect with everyday life. The 10-year-old publication entered 2007 with a fresh redesign and a new bimonthly format (formerly quarterly), and we couldn't be happier to celebrate its success. Its editors and writers provide sharp critique and an essential perspective.

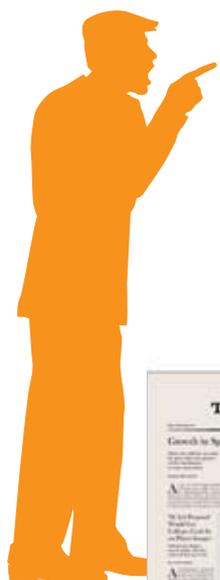


THE RANTS & RAVES DEPARTMENT, a two-page spread in every magazine, provides a quick-hit analysis of the day's top stories, "reading between the headlines" to expose issues of race, class, and culture that would have otherwise been ignored. Recent grabbers include a note about RBC Records' plans to market racist rap music to white prisoners and an item about a Dallas public elementary school where "for years, it was an open secret that white parents could get their children into all-white classes."

ColorLines doesn't limit its coverage to the purely political; each issue contains **DIVERSE ARTS COVERAGE AND BOOK REVIEWS**. The May-June 2007 issue features "The Rise of Krip-Hop," a write-up on disabled rap artists by Beandrea Davis (whose piece on political poster art is reprinted on page 20). Other favorite articles include a piece about black and Latino musicians hoping to revamp the image of classical music, and a report on a new French-language Canadian sitcom centered around race relations.



UIPA ONLINE
For detailed profiles of the winners and a full list of nominees, visit www.utne.com/uipa2007.



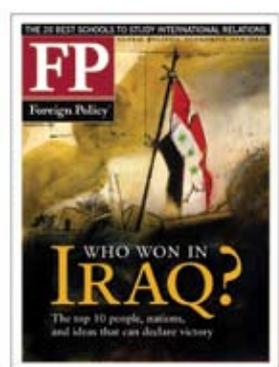
The CONTRARIANS

Political Coverage **The Chronicle of Higher Education**
 International Coverage **Foreign Policy**
 Best New Publication **Democracy**



Most everyone has a theory about why the poor stay poor. Most everyone is wrong. (June 29, 2007) * For all their differences, Jim Thorpe and the Duke lacrosse team have something in common. Both are victims of stereotyping. (Oct. 5, 2007) * Sure, we should respond to terrorism with calm, tactical rationality. We should also call its perpetrators what they are: scum. (July 20, 2007) * There are a few items that journalism students still can't buy on the Web—reportorial judgment, tenacity, humility, and experience. (May 25, 2007) * The frictions that erode democracies are not between civilizations, but within them. (May 18, 2007) * Hats off to conservatives' literary skills—but it's easy to be entertaining when your ideas are simplistic and illogical. (Feb. 2, 2007) * A focus on race and identity distracts us from a greater social injustice: economic stratification. (Dec. 15, 2006) * While intelligent design might not hold up to scrutiny, it raises questions that Darwinists shouldn't dodge or discourage. (Jan. 19, 2007)

Noam Chomsky, Hugo Chávez, Nobel Prize winners Harold Pinter and Joseph Stiglitz, and other supporters of Latin American populism are all idiots. (May-June 2007) * The real fault of the Iraq war doesn't lie with Bush and his cronies, it rests with the American people as a whole. (Nov.-Dec. 2007) * What created Osama bin Laden was the predominance of American power. (Jan.-Feb. 2007) * The war on drugs cannot be won. (Sept.-Oct. 2007) * Rupert Murdoch isn't the tyrant he's made out to be. (Jan.-Feb. 2007) * Despite talk of a new, wired world . . . just a fraction of what we consider globalization actually exists. (March-April 2007) * Today's supercharged global economy is eroding the power of the people in democracies around the globe. (Sept.-Oct. 2007) * Oil companies aren't to blame for high oil prices, and the world isn't really running out of oil. (Nov.-Dec. 2007) * Having your own nuclear weapon used to be a luxury. Today, it is fast becoming a necessity. (Jan.-Feb. 2007)



The export of democracy by force is a fool's errand. (Fall 2007) * Cindy Sheehan and her anti-military cohorts confuse military service with militarism. (Summer 2007) * New York, San Francisco, and other boutique cities are little more than a playground for the nation's ultra-rich. (Fall 2006) * Milton Friedman, the hero of libertarian free-market capitalists, has a lot to teach progressives and they should give him credit. (Spring 2007) * The idea of "Iraqization"—we'll stand down when they stand up—won't work. (Summer 2007) * In the face of mounting debt, liberals shouldn't try to balance the budget. They should start spending more on public works. (Fall 2007) * Economic deprivation doesn't incite terrorism; the humiliation of Muslims carried out by the West does. (Winter 2007) * Globalization policies of Davos and Thomas Friedman are mired in an obsolete paradigm that clouds our understanding of what is happening. (Winter 2007)

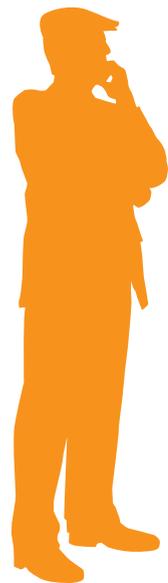
ICONS: NATE JOHANNES / WWW.BLUEGRAPEDESIGN.COM



The GOOD CITIZENS

Environmental Coverage **Earth Island Journal**
 Local/Regional Coverage **Alberta Views**
 Spiritual Coverage **Shambhala Sun**

| | THEIR BEAT | TOUGH QUESTIONS | WORDS OF WISDOM | WHO KNEW? |
|--|--|--|--|---|
| | Global environmental issues including climate change, wilderness and wildlife preservation, food politics, and energy policy | “What are the ethical implications of funding [Venezuela's] socialist revolution on crude oil sales?” “How can we feed ourselves safely?” | “Environmentalists used to fret that humanity was fouling its own nest. Today, as mounting evidence of global warming emerges, it seems we've set our nest aflame.” | <i>Earth Island Journal</i> reports on environmentally friendly funeral pyres in India, militias that patrol the oil-rich Niger Delta, and how the nuclear power industry is remarketing itself as green (reprinted on page 56). |
| | The Canadian province of Alberta, whose booming oil economy has wrought environmental havoc, led to an immigration influx, and fueled a diverse and vibrant arts scene | “What will it take to encourage more immigrants to come to Alberta, and stay put?” “Germany has over 200,000 solar powered roofs. Why does sunny Alberta have so few?” | “Betting hard on the curative powers of economic growth, the government ignored the effect of inflation and growth on welfare benefits, social services, and affordable housing—to the point where homelessness and housing affordability problems became inevitable.” | <i>Alberta Views</i> informs us that Alberta has had 10 consecutive Conservative governments in 35 years, that ticket sales for the Alberta Ballet were up 40 percent in 2006, and that the province's population will hit 12 to 15 million people by 2105. |
| | Buddhist thought and practice, with a focus on health, wellness, and making Buddhism relevant and meaningful in the modern world | “Who owns our attention? Who should have the right to decide what happens to it?” “How exactly are we going to practice peace in a time when there is such a staggering amount of war?” | “To us is granted the privilege of being on hand: to take part, if we choose, in the Great Turning to a just and sustainable society.” | <i>Shambhala Sun</i> reveals that wishing happiness for people we don't like can make them easier to deal with, that participating in rituals that mark life's passages can help us acknowledge impermanence, and that Buddhist principles can save the planet. |



The THINKER

General Excellence: Zines **Macaroni**

Macaroni is a modest endeavor, a tall, dignified zine filled with lyrical ruminations on culture, religion, travel, entertainment, and whatever else is on publisher John Toren's mind. Since this year's winner has been around for 20 years, we decided it was about time we had a chat with Toren about his utterly unique take on the universe. Here's where his mind wandered when asked about some of our favorite Macaroni moments of 2007.

ON SCIENCE AND SOCIETY

Scientists can tell us, for example, what will happen to a bog if ATVs roll across it indiscriminately for a decade or two . . . What scientists cannot tell us is how to weigh the relative importance of mechanized joyrides through the bogs, a healthy water table, the preservation of bird habitat—and the will of the majority. For it may be that, given a choice, the majority of Americans would choose to have their fun now, and the future be damned. These are moral and political issues, not scientific ones.

Thanksgiving 2007

There is a certain implicit conceit that if you attach the word *scientific* to something, then that makes it more important or more valid. And that's really metaphysically wrong; it's not true. And by the way, I'm not in favor of having ATVs ruin the bogs, but I know that people value that, and it's got to be part of the equation.

ON READING

I consider myself an Everyman in that respect. I get my books from the public library de-acquisition shops. I read at random. I've long since given up any pretense of "covering the field" or of "keeping up." Spring 2007

The idea of keeping up—it would be impossible to know just a smidgen of all the things that are out there to know. So keeping up implies that you've already got the background under control, and I certainly don't.

But on the other hand, I'd like to cover the field in terms of cultural references, without getting snooty about it. Culture is really available to everybody. I

think everyone should read Plato, for example. Most people don't know that the dialogues are easy to read and they're kind of fun. But they're kind of off-putting, just because they sound academic.

ON GOD

I sometimes wonder if we, as individuals, are God's inner life. The pain we feel when we read the newspapers, contemplate our latest faux pas, or toss and turn in our efforts to give our lives a meaningful shape, are the burning shards of that primordial supernova which was God—and is. That's a nice thought: a universe endowed, from the very beginning, with a conscience. Summer 2007

I think that's one of the things that I'm most convinced about, what might be called the imminent reality of divinity as opposed to the transcendental. It's kind of a Hegelian idea, really, but the idea that history is like God's autobiography, and we're all kind of writing it ourselves. We're not writing the whole book, but we're contributing to it.

ON FARGO, NORTH DAKOTA

We watched the light fade from the sky behind Moorhead, and as the white stream of smoke, or steam, continued to drift westward from that sugar-beet plant (or whatever it is), into the beautiful emptiness of rural North Dakota, I was thinking that small cities are just pretty neat. Summer 2007

You don't have to go very far to come to these cool places. We got lucky with the movies in Fargo; if they had been showing *Caddyshack II* I don't know if we would have liked it quite so well. But it's true that if you just pay attention, all kinds of little delights will surface from places everywhere.

The ARTISTS

Best Writing **The Sun**

Best Design **Theme**



Theme, Winter 2007, "Transplants"

Her plan was to get a PhD and teach gender studies in some suave city like Boston, where she could occasionally contribute smart, iconoclastic essays to smart, iconoclastic academic reviews. She did get her PhD, but she didn't get the college teaching job she had hoped for. In that, she is like most of us: she's achieved what she wanted in some ways, and in other ways she has missed the mark.

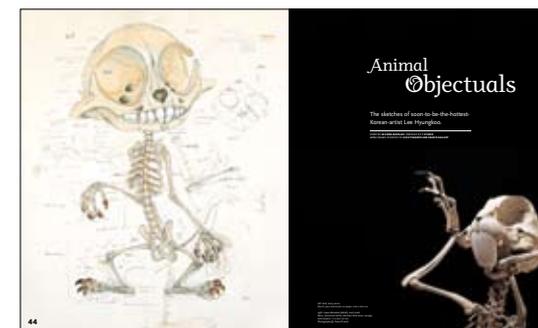
The Sun, August 2007, "Consumer Report"



Jim stood by the bed and touched my shoulder. When I flinched and turned away, he lay down behind me, still wearing his heavy boots, and I curled up even smaller, as if trapped inside an egg. Slowly, while facing the wall, I told the story of the expert and the fly-smearing window. After I'd finished, he squeezed me tight and said one word: "Bullshit." And I felt the weight that had been pressing on my chest lighten.

"He's no more autistic than I am," my young husband said.

The Sun, February 2007, "Father and Son"



Theme, Summer 2007, "Journals"



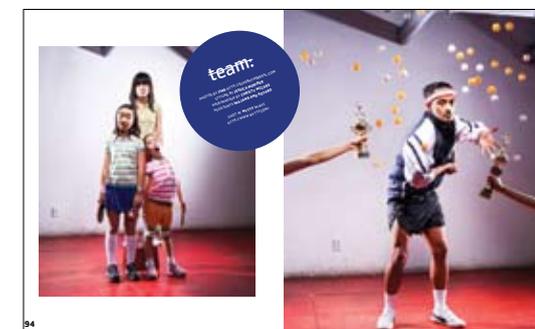
Theme, Spring 2007, "Nerds"

Steve was popular and known for his jokes. I was a shy girl who had only one close friend. In the spring of our sixth-grade year, Steve was absent for several weeks. Rumor had it that he was in the hospital. Finally a teacher reported that Steve had diabetes. None of us really knew what that meant, but we passed the word *diabetes* back and forth like a medicine ball. When Steve returned, he looked the same as he had before, so we stopped talking about it.

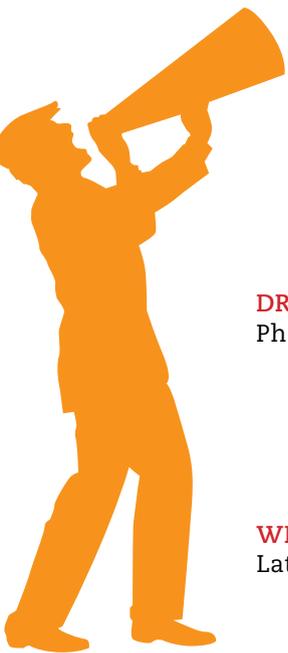
The Sun, January 2007, "My Friend and Bruce Springsteen"

It was shortly after that, while I was staying with my grandmother for the summer, that I became part of a bicycle crew in Queens. . . . The camaraderie we shared was seductive, and for the first time in my life, I understood what it meant to love someone other than a relative or the silent, pretty girl at the back of the class. These were my first true niggas, and my relationship to them was the initial demarcation of my blackness. I would have killed anyone who tried to take it away.

The Sun, July 2007, "Bang, Bang, in a Boy Voice"



Theme, Spring 2007, "Nerds"



The TRUTH TELLERS

In-Depth/Investigative Reporting **Intelligence Report**
Science/Tech Coverage **Science News**
Health/Wellness Coverage **POZ**

DRUG OVERFLOW

Pharmaceutical factories foul waters in India [Aug. 11, 2007](#)

NOT-SO-CLEAR ALTERNATIVE

In its air-quality effects, ethanol fuel is similar to gasoline. [May 5, 2007](#)

WILDFIRE, WALLEYES, AND WINE

Latest predictions for life in North America's changing climate. [June 16, 2007](#)



THE LATVIAN CONNECTION

On the West Coast, a violently anti-gay extremist movement has emerged in evangelical churches serving Slavic immigrants. [Fall 2007](#)

SOUTHERN GOTHIC

Two North Carolina Klan cases open a window onto a bizarre Southern underworld of murder, cocaine, and a plot to blow up a courthouse. [Summer 2007](#)



L.A. BLACKOUT

Acting on orders from the Mexican Mafia, Latino gang members in Southern California are terrorizing and killing blacks. [Winter 2006](#)

DEATH IN DIXIE

Why South Carolinians are literally dying to get HIV meds. [April 2007](#)



LOST IN AMERICA

Meet several undocumented HIV positive immigrants struggling to live stateside. They're outside the fabled melting pot—and even farther outside the law. [May 2007](#)

THE BIG FIX

In light of the many HIV treatment advances, are we forgetting to set our sights on a cure? [November 2007](#)

The ENTERTAINERS

Social/Cultural Coverage **Gastronomica**
Arts Coverage **Film Comment**



“There are no pointy-headed killjoys on this **ROLLER COASTER RIDE!** This is high-octane magazine making for the movie-loving masses . . . A guileless, gutsy, **GA-GA-GORGEOUS** miracle!!”

[Peter Travers, Rolling Logs](#)

“Watch out, Oscar! Award season is descending, and **Film Comment's HEROIC GUEST WRITERS** are sharpening their pencils!”

[Gene Shalit, Yesterday](#)

“Editor Gavin Smith's **DENTURE-DROPPING PERFORMANCE** demands a renewal notice.” [Richard Schickel, author, Loving Clint](#)

“Sink your teeth into this sumptuous quarterly feast. **Gastronomica** dishes up **MOUTH-WATERING MUSINGS** on cuisine and culture at all elevations . . . From food taboos to poems about pomegranates, there's always something to tantalize the taste buds.” [Frank Bruni, Big Apple Syndicate](#)

“**BAM!** Salting their pages with brain-teasing essays, juicy memoirs, spicy rumblings, and **RAMBUNCTIOUS RUMINATIONS**, these guys never fail to kick it up a notch. And the artful, eye-popping presentation? **YEAHHH BABY . . .**”

[Emeril Lagasse, chef, Emeril Expressions](#)

