

NLGJA announces 2006 Excellence in Journalism Award winners

by Thomas Cashman Avila

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The National Lesbian & Gay Journalists Association (NLGJA) announced Oct. 3 the recipients of its Excellence in Journalism Awards, including its Journalist of the Year honor to be presented to Jason Bellini of CBS News on LOGO.

NLGJA's 2006 Excellence in Journalism Awards and Hall of Fame Ceremony will be held on Nov. 8 at Chicago's Palmer House Hilton. In addition to a presentation of all national Excellence in Journalism Awards, NLGJA's hosting Chicago chapter will honor longtime member Tracy Baim of the Windy City Media Group with its Outstanding Chicago Journalist Award.

"As coverage increases on LGBT issues, we're also seeing more sophistication in reporting," said NLGJA President Eric Hegedus. "It's so rewarding that we're able not

only to acknowledge the best work offered by the industry, but also that NLGJA's efforts as a viable newsroom resource are making such a positive impact and are a part of the process."

NLGJA's Excellence in Journalism Awards were established in 1993 to foster, recognize and reward excellence in journalism on issues related to the LGBT community. In addition to Journalist of the Year, awards will be presented for HIV/AIDS coverage, written news, written feature, written opinion/editorial, radio, television, photojournalism, new media, LGBT media and student journalism.

The NLGJA Journalist of the Year Award recognizes the outstanding professional achievements of an LGBT journalist who is a member of NLGJA. CBS News on LOGO's Jason Bellini will accept this award of

distinction on Nov. 8 in Chicago. Jason Bellini is a correspondent for CBS News on LOGO, and is the first anchor for MTV's new channel for the LGBT community. Before joining CBS News on LOGO, Bellini served four years as a CNN news correspondent where he covered the world's conflict regions, doing three rota-

tions in Iraq. During 2003's Operation Iraqi Freedom, Bellini reported as one of CNN's embedded journalists. He spent months in New York covering the aftermath of the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks and, as the crisis evolved into an international war on terrorism, also covered the story from Afghanistan.

"It is notable that Jason is being recognized for his work," said NLGJA President Eric Hegedus. "The stories he relates are, of course, topical and enterprising. But they come to fruition in a unique manner: He's really a 'mainstream' media journalist whose work appears on an LGBT media outlet. Jason tackles some singular challenges along the way — and excels in the process."

NLGJA's Excellence in Journalism Awards include \$500 first place prizes in 11 separate categories, as well as a \$1,000 first place prize presented to the winner of the Sarah Pettit Memorial Award for Excellence in LGBT Media, a category dedicated to LGBT Media. All second and third runners-up receive award certificates.

NLGJA's Excellence in Journalism Awards are selected by 40 distinguished journalists from across the country who volunteer their time to serve as judges. The Journalist of the Year was selected by faculty members at the University of Southern California's Annenberg School of Journalism.

2006 NLGJA Excellence in Journalism Awards Winners:

NLGJA Journalist of the Year Award

- Presented to Jason Bellini, CBS News on LOGO

Sarah Pettit Memorial Award for Excellence in LGBT Media

- First Place presented to Malinda Lo, *AfterEllen.com*
- Second Place presented to Todd Henneman, *The Advocate*
- Third Place presented to Karen Ocamb, *IN Los Angeles* magazine

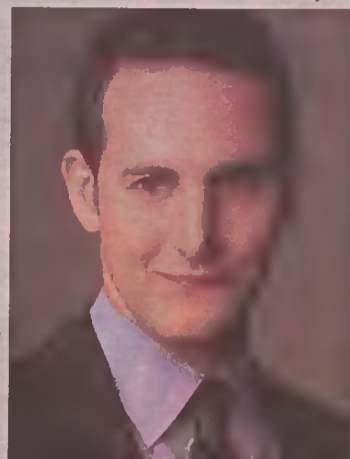
NLGJA Excellence in News Writing Award, sponsored by Hearst Newspapers

- First Place presented to "From Pain, Family," Tina Brown and Elizabeth Hamilton, *The Hartford Courant*
- Second Place presented to "Gay Tide," David Crary, *The Associated Press*
- Third Place presented to "PlanetOut Bids Big for \$610 Billion Gay Market," James A. Lopata, *IN Newsweekly*

NLGJA Excellence in Feature Writing, sponsored by Hearst Newspapers

- First Place presented to "Out Here: Gay Voices in Hampton Roads," David Nicholson, Mike

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Jason Bellini of CBS News on LOGO is the recipient of the Journalist of the Year honor.

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