

GLEN L. COX
2007 CARRIER OF THE YEAR WINNERS

SENIOR DIVISION

Anne D. Wilcheck, Toledo Blade

ADULT DIVISION

Brenda Pierce, Akron Beacon Journal

YOUTH DIVISION

Natalie Czech, Toledo Blade

There are literally thousands of carriers throughout the state of Ohio. We are here this evening to recognize the achievements of the carriers who have attained the status of "Carrier of the Year" in three categories – youth, adult and senior. Carriers are the lifeblood of our business and are right there on the front lines handling the grass roots effort of our newspaper operation every day.

Each year, OCMA recognizes outstanding carriers with the Glen L. Cox Carrier of the Year Award. This year we had 29 entries which is a record number of entries. The three winners we will recognize this evening are the best of the best and should be very proud of this achievement. We know that they provide inspiration to other carriers to raise their standards and produce outstanding results.

The winners will be receiving a Michael Garman News Statue and \$2000 savings bond for this tremendous accomplishment. Their entry forms will also be entered in the Newspaper Association of America's National Carrier of the Year Competition. In the past two years, OCMA has produced NAA winners – In 2006, Bryan Brigadoi from the Courier won the NAA Youth Carrier of the Year and in 2005, Robert White from the Akron Beacon Journal won the NAA Senior Carrier of the Year!

Thank you to all the judges who met back in August to review the entries and determine the winners. Denny O'Neil, Don Jordan, Tom Iona, Pat Elgin and Jim Menninger

did a great job – their part in this program was essential to it's success.

ANNE D. WILCHECK

The winner of the senior division, Anne D. Wilcheck, is a carrier for The Toledo Blade. Anne started delivering papers in 1991 when she helped her sons deliver their routes when they were still in school. As they left home to go to college, she gradually took over these routes and since 1999 has delivered the same ones that they started. The Blade enjoys many satisfied customers courtesy of Anne's values combined with the excellence of service she provides. With a CPT of 0 daily, yes you heard that right, and a .10 Sunday, is it a surprise that her route has grown substantially over the years? She believes in the "old school" way of doing business – handwritten thank you notes, papers to arrive in perfect reading condition and above all, top notch personal customer service with a smile. It works! She considers her customers as part of her extended family.

When asked to name one benefit of being an independent carrier, Anne's answer was, "I am in control of giving excellent service to all of my customers as I am running my own business". I implore each of you here today to bring that one statement back to your carriers as it epitomizes the core value of being a newspaper carrier.

Anne enjoys reading, playing bridge, needlework and bowling in her spare time. She also raises money for the Toledo Animal Shelter and the schools her children used to attend.

What do her customers say?

"Of course, she delivers the paper promptly everyday in every kind of weather, but most importantly it seems there is nothing she won't do for the customer. She should be carrier of the century! If every carrier was a duplicate of Anne Wilcheck, The Blade would greatly benefit as part of our high level of customer satisfaction rests in the superior service we receive from her!".

BRENDA PIERCE

The winner of the Adult division, Brenda Pierce, comes to us from Mogadore and is a carrier for the Akron Beacon Journal. Brenda has been delivering newspapers for nearly 6 years. Her route is a very healthy 365 daily and a whopping 550 Sunday! Brenda became a carrier because she was intrigued with the idea of delivering papers and felt she could do a better job than her own carrier was. Mission accomplished!

Denny Lemons, her District Manager, defines Brenda as a hard working independent contractor who is extremely dedicated to her customers. He also said that during her six years of delivering papers, she has never left her routes uncovered – her customers always come first! Brenda's CPT is below 1.0 for both daily and Sunday which is excellent considering her route size and the fact that it is 100% porch delivery!

Brenda meets the needs of her customers by communicating directly with them, providing for special requests, giving prompt service and most importantly, being accessible. That's it in a nutshell – what all carriers should strive for.

Other carriers have been able to benefit from Brenda's experience and knowledge. She is constantly helping other carriers and district managers at the center when needed, and always with a smile.

Brenda is very active in the local schools with her children by volunteering as a room parent and she assists in reading programs. She is a very active participant and volunteer in community activities and events.

Brenda delivers the newspaper to the Mogadore Village Council President who says, "Brenda has been the best newspaper carrier our family has ever had. Our paper is always delivered on time and frequently early, in good condition, never wet from rain or snow. Brenda is always cheerful and professional – both excellent characteristics for a newspaper carrier!". Another customer wrote, "She does

a great job – our paper is always on time and put neatly on our front porch. I wish I had the energy that Brenda has!”.

NATALIE CZECH

The winner of the Youth division, Natalie Czech, is eighteen years old and is a carrier for the Toledo Blade. Hmm, two winners from Toledo – is it something in the water or could it be their leadership and management there?

As a 6 year veteran carrier for the Toledo Blade, Natalie delivers 196 daily and 226 Sunday papers with prompt, friendly and dependable service. She has a cpt of 0 daily and just over 1.0 Sunday. Using the money she made from her route, she helped pay tuition for her catholic high school education where she achieved magna cum laude all 4 years! She also received the Old Newsboys Scholarship. Continuing as a carrier in the future, she will help put herself through college to become an aeronautical engineer.

Natalie says her responsibility is good route management, customer service and maintaining high grades through the schooling she helped pay for. That is a great outlook from a young adult who, with no doubt, will be one of our future leaders. Natalie’s personal discipline, initiative and dedication to the newspaper, school, and family shows in all facets of her life.

Greg Lodge, Natalie’s district manager, stated, “It can be said that the worst 10% of a carrier force takes up 99% of a managers time – Natalie is in the 1% and the very upper percentile of the carrier force at our distribution center. If I had 75 more carriers like her, my job would become much easier!”

Natalie is very involved in her school and community through raising money, participating in rowing and achieving scholastic excellence as evidenced by the focus on her education and grades. She served as a coxswain for the Master’s Women’s Rowing Team – her insight in the boat’s dynamics accompanied by her positive, experienced skills

and unfailing motivation was a testimony of her responsibility and determination.

Natalie's customers rave about her. One said, "Natalie is tops as a carrier and has my 100 percent vote for Carrier of the Year. I would cast more votes if I could". Another said, "Her service has been beyond wonderful – very punctual and she always has a nice greeting when we run into each other in the morning, even when we've had a level 3 snow emergency! Her dedication to her job rising so early every morning and attending school is a fine example to other young people."

Natalie's success with The Blade, school and sports is a stepping stone for the great successes she can expect as she ventures into college and beyond.

WHO'S NEXT???

It's never too early to start thinking about next year. When you return to your newspaper, take a long hard look at your carriers and just ask yourself who exemplifies the characteristics of the Carrier of the Year. The entry form and information on the OCMA website in the next few weeks so be sure to check it out.