

More Vodacom Journalist of the Year regional winners

The central, KwaZulu-Natal and the northern/southern regions recently celebrated the 2011 [Vodacom Journalist of the Year Awards](#) in Bloemfontein, Durban and Johannesburg respectively. These awards recognise the individuals who continually dedicate their lives to report the news.



Overall, the judges were very impressed with the quality of the work submitted by the regions. The winning journalists put intelligent thought into their stories and spent time researching and thoroughly analysing their work.

Central region

Three journalists each won two separate categories:

- Teboho Letshaba from the SABC won the radio feature and sports category
- Charné Kemp won the community media category and best print feature writer category
- Pieter Steyn was awarded with the print general news category, as well as the Editor's Choice Award

Category	Winner	Winning work	Judges' comments
Regional Columnist	James Siddall of <i>Sunday Independent</i>	'The unbearable brightness of being'	Whoever said that life was no bed of roses, knew what they were talking about. Chances are that they had had first-hand experience. Similarly, the winner in this category relates his first-hand experience as a young upwardly mobile gentleman who, on account of the newly acquired status, has the best of what life has to offer, including what could be the envy of his peers, that is, dining and spoiling the current Mss Universe. But these are material things and soon they're all gone. The story is that of a journey characterised by a man-about-town, who later slides down into the gutters, only to realise his mistakes and goes for Divine intervention, with the hope of rediscovering himself. The article is a mirror of life for most young men who start off as the untouchable 'real deals' but end up regretting their foolish mistakes
Regional Community media	Charné Kemp of the <i>Kalahari Bulletin</i>	'Bouers op knieë gedwing'	Many municipalities in the land are inconsistent and they often appear to make decisions that are not based on the necessary consultation with role players. A typical example is that of the Ga - Segonyana municipality at Kuruman which at its own volition without following procedures decided to hike the rate for building plans by more than two thousand per percent - that is, for middle class residential and commercial property plans, while the rate for low cost housing plans was not raised
Regional Consumer Journalism	Ansja Ferreira of <i>Vrouekeur</i>	'Step by step guide on how to save on medical aid costs'	This writer takes what could have been a boring subject and makes it interesting, thus providing a valuable service to the reader
Regional Financial/Economic	Vida Booysen of <i>Sake24</i>	'Draadkarre'	There is a general acknowledgment that unemployment is at the core of the country's most dire challenges - this contributes to the negative image of South Africa as the world's crime capital. It is largely due to this negative perception of South Africa that has seen the world's rating agency Moody's, declaring the country one of the least preferred destinations for investment and tourism, coming in a distant third behind Nigeria and Niger. Against this background, any effort at creating employment opportunities must be encouraged and commended, particularly if these opportunities are directed at rural communities, where the most demand exists
Regional Online Journalism	No winner		
Regional Photography	Willem van der Berg of <i>Wilcoberg</i>	collection of images on the violence that erupted in Ficksburg in 2011	There is a local hero in every area and in South Africa, this comes to the fore when violence and protest centres around such heroes

Regional Print: Feature	Charné Kemp of <i>Volksblad</i>	'SA het talle Bonnie en Clydes opgelewe'	This journalist followed up the shooting of the French couple in the Karoo with a background story, which chronicles other Bonnie and Clyde-type characters, who similarly weaved a trail of blood in South Africa's history. A good angle and well-constructed
Regional Print: General News	Pieter Steyn of <i>Volksblad</i>	'Skokverkragting in Pelonomi!'	The Free State and the national healthcare communities were traumatised by the rape of a doctor on duty at the Pelonomi hospital, which led to new security measures at the institution. Good and innovative on-site reporting under great pressure
Regional Radio: Feature	Teboho Letshaba of Lesedi FM Makumane	'Breakfast in prison'	The winner gave us a first-hand account of life behind bars. What should have been a PR exercise on the part of correctional services officials was turned into a very poignant and credible account of the harsh life inmates really experience behind bars. The interviews were relevant, the script well written and the story creatively packaged. The reporter managed to transport the listener into the prison cells
Regional Radio: General News	Zimasa Mbewu of SABC Current Affairs	'Tatane'	The death of community activist Andries Tatane sent shock waves around the country and this story took us to the heart of developments in the small community as they unfolded from the time the first bullets were fired. The police brutality was highlighted, as was the plight of the poor who pine for service delivery that was clearly portrayed and the tragic pain of the family who lost a loved one was powerfully captured. The winning entry showed the importance of integrity, balance and fairness, in a story that was heart wrenching and could have been sensationalised. This journalist was at the scene when the horror unfolded yet diligently delivered on a body of work that was informative, relevant and clinically crafted for radio
Regional Sport	Teboho Letshaba of the SABC	'Where to Bafana'	South Africans love their sport. So when the 2010 FIFA World Cup came to our shores, the country rallied and put their full weight behind Bafana Bafana. Hopes were high for the team to put in a sterling performance. This was fuelled when the first goal in the tournament was scored by South Africa. However, the high expectations counted for nothing when Bafana Bafana was ousted in the first round. It was a devastating blow given the fact for the first time in World Cup history the host nation was knocked out so early. The journalist captures the emotions of the players who kept their heads high with dogged determination and even rallied behind Pitso Mosimane to be given the job as coach of Bafana Bafana. The views of Mosimane are also elicited
Regional Television: Feature	No winner		
Regional Television: General News	Filane Chomane and Mtale Sebege of SABC News	'Service Delivery, police brutality mass action'	This piece highlights the role of media as a watchdog, which among other things exists to protect citizens' rights. In this instance, the crew captured violence on camera and then authorities could not but respond. The evidence was beyond doubt. The reporters then stayed with the story in subsequent bulletins, giving both detail and context
Regional Editors' Choice	Pieter Steyn, of <i>Volksblad</i>		
Regional Cartoonist	No winner		

KwaZulu-Natal region

Patricia McCracken won two different categories - financial/economic category and the consumer category for the region

Category	Winner	Winning work	Judges' comments
Regional Columnist	Devi Sankaree Govender of <i>Sunday Times Extra</i>	Strip Clubs	No one can fully explain the intrigue of life. It (life) has a way of putting you where you might have sworn you would not go, hence the expression: 'Never say Never!' The writer of the winning piece - evidently someone of exemplary morals and good standing - found herself with little choice but to go to a place she least imagined she would ever attend in her life, a strip club. But duty called and she answered! There, she was amazed to see the profile of the patronage - mostly men of course - enjoying the sight of starkly naked women
Regional Community media	No winners		
Regional Consumer Journalism	Patricia McCracken of Media in Bona, <i>Farmer's Weekly</i> and <i>Essentials Magazine</i>	Series of articles on the CPA	Our winner this year presents a body of work explaining the very important Consumer Protection Act. This journalist followed the Act from the time it was first drafted in 2001. By the time it came into effect, she was well versed in its detail. Using various platforms, aimed at different types and levels of readers, she simplifies the Act, bringing out the salient parts for her readers to take on board
Regional Financial/Economic	Patricia McCracken of Media in <i>Farmer's Weekly</i>	'A white Zulu on land reform mess'	The mark of a true entrepreneur usually manifests itself in the most bizarre circumstances, where often the choice is either to become creative enough in order to come up with something that would sustain you, or to perish. The story of South Africa's land reform programme does not always make for good reading, with the reality suggesting there are more failures than there are successes. However, there is one successful case study in the midlands of KwaZulu-Natal. Writing the story, the author conducted extensive research on the project, making comparisons with other similar programmes. Evidently, the objective was to educate others who might be faced with similar situations

Regional Online Journalism	No winner		
Regional Photography	Sandile Ndlovu of <i>The Mercury</i>	'Diwali'	Photography is drawing with light. When a photographer masters this tricky relationship between drawing and light the results are stunning
Regional Print: Feature	Niren Tolsi of <i>The Mail & Guardian</i>	'On the other side of mountain; Fear and loathing in Obamaland; The cup ran over, now for the hangover'	Afro-American author-poet Maya Angelou once said, "Words mean more than what is set down on paper. It takes the human voice to infuse them with deeper meaning." In the same vein, the writer behind this entry uses text to beautifully weave a tapestry of prose full of texture and imagery. The series of features is gritty and has been masterfully crafted to infuse wonderment in the power of words
Regional Print: General News	Colleen Dardagan of <i>The Mercury</i>	'Maba and the tender hijack'	This is the story of eThekweni mayor Obed Maba's link to a suspected R3bn council tender that was first awarded to another businessman. Every possible angle to the story was covered and all sides cast under the spotlight
Regional Radio: Feature	The winner is Anisa Ussuph of East Coast Radio	'150 years: Reliving the legacy'	This entry grabbed the attention of the listener simply because the reporters adhered to the basics of good radio feature storytelling. The research was powerful, the use of sound precise, the story script concise and the entire package entertaining and informative. The entry told of the 150th celebrations of the arrival of the Indians to KwaZulu-Natal
Regional Radio: General News	The winner is Ellie Makhosini of SABC radio news	IFP Youth Brigade Conference.	It takes courage and skill for a journalist to enter a politically tense arena and then report on the matter without fear. Our winner showed that the radio journalist is compelled to be at the scene, capture the truth as it unfolds and then tells the story in a balanced and fair manner. The winner entry focused on the uncut proceedings at the intense IFP Youth Brigade elective conference that left the listener with enough information as to how the elections unfold and what the greater political ramifications are in the mother party
Regional Sport	Feroz Shaik of Lotus FM	'History of Non-Racial Football'	The sport of football suffered enormously during the difficult days of apartheid. The state allowed one's unbridled enthusiasm and participation to flourish provided it was only played within one's own racial group. In the build-up to the 2010 Football World Cup, the journalist looked at the first non-racial professional league established in South Africa in the early 1960s. The package is peppered with interesting interviews conducted with men who excelled in football. They speak glowingly of the sport they loved but with a tinge of sadness in terms of the conditions under which it was played
Regional Television: Feature	Nicky Troll and Julie Laurenz for Health-e News Services for 3rd Degree eTV	'Peddling poison'	This piece graphically documents the reality of a relatively new substance smoked as an escape from desperate lives. The producers are to be commended on excellent access to a wide range of interviewees, spelling out the whole process from manufacturing to buying and using, with the resulting devastating social consequences
Regional Television: General News	Paula Chowles and Thuthuka Zondi of eTV, eNews prime time	'Long walk to treatment'	These journalists went out of town to the forgotten places and to the forgotten people. The piece highlights the complexity of social problems in South African society by connecting two issues not usually linked. Though ARVs are now available in remote areas, if there is no transport to the clinic, it makes little difference
Regional Editors' Choice	No winner		
Regional Cartoonist	Anthony Stidolph of <i>The Witness</i>	'Stidy'	A well-crafted cartoon, which relates the relevant news as it unfolds, need not be hard to understand. Here the artist takes us on a journey of what our leaders are up to

Northern/Southern region

Category	Winner	Winning work	Judges' comments
Regional Columnist	Janet van Eeden of <i>Sunday Independent</i>	'Get over yourself - after all, it's just sex.'	We often only realise that times have changed when we can no longer participate intelligently in discussions with our young ones, or when the subjects they raise make us feel uncomfortable. This becomes evident when an issue such as sex is raised, and you immediately look around to see who else is listening (because you're embarrassed). The writer wonders aloud and questions the constant flurry of topics and issues around sex in various news channels - whether it be a billboard, a newspaper or a radio station
Regional Consumer Journalism	Herman Scholtz of <i>Rapport</i>	'Frozen chicken horror'	Some of the best investigative stories are born out of casual conversations with complete strangers. A good newshound smells the scent and follows its trail. Once he had established the need for an investigation, this journalist worked hard to gain the confidence of his source, obtaining all the background information plus documentary proof. His meticulous research resulted in one of South Africa's biggest consumer scandals and a major investigation by the Department of Agriculture

Regional Financial/Economic	Lindokuhle Xulu of Moneyweb	ICT/Kumba saga	If unemployment and crime is South Africa's primary Achilles heel, then corruption has become so common in our everyday life - particularly in the public sector - that it has had the effect of numbing the soul and moral consciousness of society who no longer raise an eyebrow when they see or read about such stories. And this provides the perfect setting for a slide down the road to decadence. No sooner had a group of politicians settled in their positions, than members of their families became instant billionaires. How was that possible? The answer: the establishment of various business entities whose primary objectives were to make use of their connections to amass wealth. The story of a 'forged signature' in order to acquire a prospecting licence for mining rights shows the extent the country has slid towards seeing corruption as an institution in our society
Regional Online Journalism	Lauren Clifford-Holmes, Lloyd Gedy and Paul Botes of <i>The Mail & Guardian</i> , Mail & Guardian Online	'How Shangaan went electronic and then global'	This was a beautiful piece of work embodying fine skills in writing, investigation and storytelling. It also showed great sensitivity to the issue as well as knowledge of the topic and the central characters in the Shangaan disco landscape. The video material represented the highest quality of all the online entries and, supported by the writing, became a case study in how to rekindle knowledge of a forgotten culture
Regional Photography	James Oatway of <i>Sunday Times</i>	'Afghanistan at war'	Part of true photojournalism is to risk one's life just to be able to capture events as they unfold
Regional Print: Feature Winners	Sam Sole, Stefaans Brümmer and Ilham Rawoot of <i>The Mail & Guardian</i> Newspaper	'Radovan Krejcir: The mobster at the gates'	A masterful investigation and damning report of alleged Russian born mobster, Radovan Krejcir. Extraordinary investigative skills open a can of worms. This entry is a tribute to the tenacious and incisive attribute of some of South Africa's foremost investigative journalists
Merit mentions	Mandy Wiener of <i>Marie Claire</i> Ayanda Sitole of <i>The Mail & Guardian</i>	'Lolly Jackson Murder' 'Locals have Soweto sewn up' & 'I want my kids to be righteous and Rasta'	For her well written and researched feature on the murder of Teazex boss, Lolly Jackson. The story provides readers with powerful insight into the belly of the beast that is South Africa's underworld Her perceptive and beautifully written pieces on Soweto fashion designers and on a Rasta family in Soweto are resplendent with colourful prose that underlines the swagger and deliberate poise which punctuates township life
Regional Print: General News Winners	Stephan Hofstatter and Mziikazi wa Afrika of <i>Sunday Times</i>	'Bheki Cele's R500m police rental deal'	The journalists broke the story of an irregular signing of a controversial lease agreement for a Pretoria office block by police chief Bheki Cele. Despite angry official denials, the Public Protector's investigation confirmed the substance of the <i>Sunday Times</i> reports. It became one of the major news stories of the year and has ongoing ramifications. Excellent investigative skills, lucid writing
Merit mentions	Luzuko Pongoma of <i>Sowetan</i>	'Aurora mine murders'	Luzuko first reported the killing of illegal miners at the Aurora mine and followed it up with several other stories which bore the brunt of official denials. At considerable risk, a rare initiative was shown by going deep underground to interview miners and relatives of the victims. This is a good example of keen journalism reporting from the scene and supplying illuminating eyewitness accounts
Regional Radio: Feature	Krivani Pillay of SABC Radio News	'Living positively with HIV'	There were several noteworthy winning contenders in this category, with most adhering to the requirements for intense research and analysis on critical issues accompanied by a good use of sound and powerful storylines. One piece stood out simply because the reporter went the extra mile to take the listener beyond the experience of one, but touched on other issues and aspects pertaining to an HIV pandemic, giving the infected hope, and the afflicted a better understanding of how to deal with the situation
Regional Radio: General News	Eye Witness News reporter Rahima Essop from 702 Talk Radio	'Death of Andries Tatane'	Radio news is about breaking stories. Sometimes the radio news reporter is at the mercy of a competitor who has the scoop of a story that shocks the nation. When a radio news reporter can notice such a scoop and deliver it with precision, credibility and tenacity for the relevant sound bite and on-the-spot reports, who got the story first is irrelevant. For her intense hunger for the core values of a good, breaking news story and for creatively patching together the ever-changing developments on the brutal death of Andries Tatane

Regional Sport	Sameer Naik of <i>Saturday Star</i>	'2010 FIFA World Cup'	Very little else mattered in 2010. The Football World Cup took centre stage for most South Africans. Since South Africa was announced as the host of the showpiece, a fervent anticipation and palatable excitement engulfed the nation. It was a story that every journalist would love to cover. This journalist played an incredible role off the field of play. He cleverly captured various behind-the-scenes happenings, including the complicated ticketing system and chaos at the queues, the pride and passion of the nation and the many tourism opportunities. He even spoke with the creator of the 'makarapa'. Such human interest angles helped to keep the reader fully engaged
Regional Television: Feature	Asanda Magaqa of SABC News	'No woman's land'	People will go to desperate lengths to find a better life for themselves. This gripping story used a variety of interviewees to give an in-depth account of the horrors economic refugees face in trying to get into South Africa
Regional Television: General News	Mpho Lakaje of eNews	'Hate crime'	In the midst of a national event, Lakaje found an off-beat way to highlight how a marginalised group used the game of soccer for social education. It was beautifully executed, every shot meaningful, and woven together as a compact narrative around two disparate subjects - soccer and lesbianism
Joint winners	Fathima Simjee, Health-e News Service, Morning Live, SABC	'Positive Heroes'	The piece demonstrated that even within the strict confines of a news report, one can create a complete and satisfying mini-documentary. Strong case studies, good interviews and solid background information, combined with exceptional camera work and editing ensured that the story made its point: you can live fully, and even run the Comrades, in spite of being HIV positive
Regional Editors' Choice	Rahima Essop of Primedia Broadcasting		
Shared Award	Lionel Faull of <i>The Mail & Guardian</i>		
Regional Cartoonist	The winner is Wilson Mgbobhozi of Independent Newspapers for <i>The Star</i> , <i>Pretoria News</i> , <i>The Mercury</i> , and <i>Isolezwe</i>	'One man, One wife!'	Newsworthy, creatively illustrated and humorous news stories always take us on a journey of fun with the added element of reality. Here we witness two leaders taking a different stance on the number of wives one is allowed to have

The regional winners were each awarded R7500 and stand a chance of being crowned the national winner of the 2011 Vodacom Journalist of the Year Awards at the national awards ceremony to be held on 4 November 2011 in Johannesburg.

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