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## A-Mark Prize for Misinformation and Disinformation



Photo: LA Press Club

The A-Mark Prize for Reporting on Misinformation and Disinformation, administered by the Los Angeles Press Club, honors and encourages outstanding journalism addressing one of the critical problems of our time.

Fearless journalism that exposes and counters untruths and the people and organizations that perpetuate them is a critical antidote to the growing problem of misinformation and disinformation. To fight against the problem, the A-Mark prize will go to a piece of journalism published on any platform that excelled at examining misinformation or disinformation in the public discourse.

Entries might take on a specific instance of media manipulation, for example, examining its perpetrators and its impact. Entries can also explore possible solutions to the disinformation problem, or individuals or groups active in either perpetrating or solving it. In short, the work should delve deeply into any aspect of the troubling phenomenon in any journalistic format.

The first place winner receives \$4,000 and second and third place winners receive \$500 each. Eligible entries must have been published, broadcast or transmitted in Southern California, or had Southern California as the focus. For more information visit the [Los Angeles Press Club](#).

### 2023 A-Mark Prize Recipients

An investigative news story that revealed how power utilities in Alabama and Florida manipulated local news media won the first A-Mark Prize for Reporting on Misinformation and Disinformation.

The \$4,000 prize went to Miranda Green and Mario Ariza of Floodlight and David Folkenflik of National Public Radio for, "[In the Southeast, power company money flows to news sites that attack their critics.](#)"

"This team of reporters painstakingly traced the financial connections, through documents and interviews, between a consulting firm and six news sites in Alabama and Florida to show how money influenced coverage to the detriment of Alabama electric utility customers," wrote the judges, citing the audio report as, "a prime example of what makes the A-Mark Prize so important."

The prize was announced at the Los Angeles Press Club's Southern California Journalism Awards annual gala on June 25, 2023, at the Millennium Biltmore Hotel in Los Angeles, Calif.

Second prize went to James Rainey of the Los Angeles Times for, "[His website skewers Stockton politicians and agencies. Then one gave him a cushy job.](#)" Sam Kestenbaum received third prize for his Rolling Stone article, "[I Think All the Christians Get Slaughtered: Inside the MAGA Road Show Barnstorming America.](#)" Second and third place winners received \$500 each.

To produce the winning entry, NPR joined with Floodlight, a nonprofit newsroom that investigates the powerful interests stalling climate action.

The judges wrote that their work provided, "A bright shining light on misinformation leading to apparent corruption by those who are supposed to serve the public interest."

### A-Mark Fellowship

The rise of digital media has unleashed a flood of inaccurate, misleading or outright fabricated information across all news platforms.

In the past two years alone, we've seen the spread of lies about the 2020 election, falsehoods perpetrated during the COVID-19 pandemic, climate-change denialism and conspiracy theories that single out specific individuals or minority groups with baseless and damaging claims.

A critical antidote to this growing problem is serious, persistent and fearless journalism that exposes and counters these untruths and the people and organizations that perpetuate them.

The Santa Monica-based, non-partisan A-Mark Foundation has joined with the Los Angeles Press Club to award grants of up to \$2,500 to journalists for stories focussing on misinformation and disinformation.

Our goal is to facilitate stories that expose the larger problem of fake news, explore specific instances of misinformation and disinformation in social and news media and hold perpetrators of misleading news accountable.

While we will give special consideration to L.A.-based stories, we will accept statewide, national and international topics.

## 2023 A-Mark Fellowship Recipients

### OLGA GRIGORYANTS

A reporter for the Los Angeles Daily News and Southern California News Group, Grigoryants will use research and data to report on the impact of the Kremlin's wartime propaganda and disinformation campaign on Russian-speaking immigrants in Southern California.

### SAM KESTENBAUM

Sam Kestenbaum will be producing a multipart narrative podcast covering a topic at the intersection of religion-fueled disinformation, conspiracy theories and celebrity culture. Kestenbaum is a journalist covering religion in America. His work appears in [The New York Times](#), the Washington Post and Rolling Stone, among other outlets, and has recently been anthologized in a Routledge series on religion. His reporting has won the Wilbur Award for magazine writing, the Rockover Award for Excellence in Feature Writing, and top awards from the Society for Features Journalism and the Silurians Press Club.

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Contact us

A-Mark Foundation  
530 Wilshire Blvd Ste 201  
Santa Monica, CA 90401

[info@amarkfoundation.org](mailto:info@amarkfoundation.org)

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