

## Former Fresno Bee reporter Diana Marcum wins Pulitzer Prize for L.A. Times



Diana Marcum PULITZER BOARD / HO — Pulitzer Board

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Former Fresno Bee reporter and columnist [Diana Marcum](#) won the [Pulitzer Prize](#) for feature writing Monday for her coverage of the drought for the Los Angeles Times.

Judges said her dispatches from the Central Valley offered nuanced portraits of lives affected by the state's drought, bringing an original and empathic perspective to the story. The Times has packaged the ongoing reporting as "[Scenes from California's Dust Bowl.](#)"



Marcum was a reporter at The Bee from early 2001 through spring 2009. Her work included a regular column, "Edge of Town: Tales of real life in the Valley." She also was one of a team of eight (four reporters each teamed with a photographer) who hiked the John Muir Trail in the Sierra in late summer 2006 and then produced an award-winning series of stories about what they saw.

She also filed reports on the mood of New York City in the days immediately after 9/11.

Her writing at The Bee earned her several awards, including third place in the 2006 Best of the West journalism competition for her feature, "The one and only Santa."

After leaving The Bee, Marcum stayed in Fresno. She visited the Azores (she had profiled its connection to the central San Joaquin Valley for The Bee) on a book project and began writing for the Times, her lifelong dream. Last year, she began producing stories that chronicled the human effect the drought is having.

In one, published in The Bee in July, she visited “gentleman farmer” Fred Lujan in Terra Bella. He called his pistachio trees his babies, his girls, and gave them names, Marcum wrote: “‘Come on, Suzanne,’ he’d say to his wife in the evenings. ‘Let’s have a glass of wine and sit outside and watch our girls grow.’”

Considered one of American journalism’s most prestigious awards, the Pulitzers recognize 14 categories of reporting, photography and opinion writing, as well as editorial cartooning. There’s also a division for books, drama and music. Winners and finalists were announced Monday.

Another Times’ winner was Mary McNamara, TV critic and cultural editor, who was honored in the criticism category.

The other California paper to be honored was the Daily Breeze of Torrance, which won the Pulitzer Prize for local reporting for a series of stories exposing corruption and cronyism in a small, cash-strapped Southern California school district whose superintendent was ultimately fired.

The 70,000-circulation Daily Breeze’s award was shared by the reporting-editing team of Rob Kuznia, Rebecca Kimitch and Frank Suraci.

Among the finalists was an [entry from the McClatchy Washington Bureau](#) in the national reporting category for its coverage of the CIA interrogation program and ensuing Senate investigation.

Bee news services contributed to this report.