

# Religion communicators honor two Bahá'í publications as 'Best of Class'

Bahá'í publications continued to shine among their peers in the national sphere, as the "Spirit of Adventure" issue of *Brilliant Star* children's magazine and the Riḍván 2016 Annual Report of the National Spiritual Assembly won two of 10 "Best of Class" awards given at the DeRose-Hinkhouse Memorial Awards ceremony of the Religion Communicators Council on March 30 in Chicago. Several other Bahá'í-inspired efforts also won awards.

"It's a pleasure to see the number of Bahá'ís whose efforts were singled out for distinction in this annual competition," remarked Ken Bowers, the National Spiritual Assembly's secretary. "It's also quite impressive when one considers the range of publications they work on—from a wonderfully imaginative and educative journal for children and junior youth to the Assembly's comprehensive Annual Report, an important component in our national electoral process.

"What connects all these efforts is the friends' wholehearted desire to apply their various skills and abilities to the growth and development of our Faith and to ensure that it is continually presented to the world with excellence."

It was *Brilliant Star*'s fifth Best of Class award since 2004, and its Vol. 48, No. 3, "Spirit of Adventure," was chosen from all single issues of periodicals. RCC members on the staff acknowledged for the award were Amethel Parel-Sewell, editor/creative director; C. Aaron Kreader, designer/illustrator; Amy Renshaw, senior editor; and Susan Engle, associate editor.

In accepting the award, Parel-Sewell took the opportunity to pay tribute to Engle, retiring after several decades with the magazine: "We're losing a colleague, but more notably,

we're losing a beloved family member. We all know that working in faith communications is a labor of love, and when you serve with others in this capacity for so many years, you develop a unique bond that goes deeper than blood."

The Annual Report won Best of Class among all public relations materials. RCC members acknowledged include Thomas Murphy, project manager and editor; James



▲ Bahá'í award winners join fellow members of the Religion Communicators Council honored with Best of Class awards at a March 30 ceremony. Photo by Alan Hatchett

Humphrey, production editor; and Richard Doering, graphic designer.

The RCC is the nation's oldest interfaith association of professionals in the communication, public relations, marketing and development fields, and has members from dozens of faith traditions. Its DeRose-Hinkhouse Awards program honors RCC members who demonstrate excellence in religious communications and public relations.

The following 2016 entries from Bahá'ís received Awards of Excellence:

- *Brilliant Star* (staff), national magazine category, for its 2016 series of issues.
- Bahá'í International Community (Brad Pokorny), public relations/booklet category, for "The Bahá'í Question Revisited: Persecution and Resilience in Iran."
- U.S. Bahá'í Office of Communications (Ellen Price), digital communications/miscellaneous category, for "Bahá'í House of Worship Virtual Tour."

Certificates of Merit were awarded to:

- Shoestring Productions (Susan Engle), specialized writing/book (adult) category, for *The Bahá'í Faith: A Tiny Introduction*.
- Riḍván 2016 Annual Report (Richard Doering), design/publication cover category.
- *Brilliant Star* (C. Aaron Kreader), illustration/publication cover category, for the "Together in Harmony" issue.
- *U.S. Bahá'í News* (Joyce Litoft), e-newsletter/single issue category, for "Why Bahá'ís Don't Participate in Partisan Politics." ■

## Wilmette Institute courses can support bicentenary efforts

The Wilmette Institute has several online courses this spring and summer that focus on Bahá'í history and the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh. The weekly course units will include suggestions and ideas for using the materials during the upcoming bicentenary celebrations of the Birth of Bahá'u'lláh in October. Local study groups are encouraged and scholarships are available.

Go to the Wilmette Institute webpage ([www.WilmetteInstitute.org](http://www.WilmetteInstitute.org)) to learn more about each of these courses (a more complete listing of upcoming courses is on **page 67**):

- **May 1:** "The Mashriqu'l-Adhkár: The Dawning Place of the Mention of God"
- **May 10:** "From Mysticism to Prophecy: Gems of Divine Mysteries and Other Early (Baghdad Period) Tablets by Bahá'u'lláh"
- **May 22:** "Bahá'í History, 1863–2017"
- **June 15:** "The Báb and Bahá'u'lláh: Two Lives, One Story"
- **June 25:** "The Bahá'í Faith: A Comprehensive Introduction"
- **Aug. 1:** The Kitáb-i-Íqán: An Introduction"
- **Sept. 22:** "The Leaves of the Twin Divine Trees," about the women in the Holy Family
- **Oct. 10:** "The Summons of the Lord of Hosts," Tablets to the kings and rulers ■