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# 10 Social Media Awards finalists tweet for better community

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BY ARI AUBER - AMERICAN-STATESMAN STAFF

When the Statesman's Social Media Awards were first presented five years ago, Twitter was only 2 years old, and Pinterest didn't exist. The awards were about recognizing the people and organizations who were doing social media right at a time when many were just figuring out the various sites.

It's different now. As social media and what people do with it have evolved, so have the awards. This year's Social Media Awards honors those who take their tweeting, Facebook posting and pinning (and so much more) to a new level by having an impact on their real-world community.

Four judges selected 10 of the more than 100 nominations; from those 10, there will be an overall winner announced Monday night at Opal Divine's on Penn Field.

The judges were Statesman technology writer Omar L. Gallaga, social media editor Jackie Stone, food writer Addie Broyles and last year's winner, Kerri Olsen, one of the masterminds behind Austin Grand Prix, a go-to spot for F1 news.

"We originally started the awards as a way of saying, 'Here are the people doing it right,'" Gallaga said. "But now everyone is expected to be good at it. It's when they're not good at it that it stands out. We've had to make the judging more rigorous and more focused, and we looked more at community impact than on whether (the nominees) can tweet well."

The nominations, a total of 126, were submitted on statesman.com, and fans of those nominated were invited to comment on and rate them.

Gallaga said surprises were a big trend this year. For example, he hadn't known about the blog 365 Things to Do in Bastrop before

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looking through the nominations, and he hadn't expected to find an alcohol and drug recovery center among the nominees. He also said that businesses and agencies savvy at social media are far more common than they used to be.

The 10 honorees:

### **365 Things to Do in Bastrop**

**@365Bastrop**

Joleen Smith first started her blog about all things Bastrop in the summer of 2010, curious to find out about all the fun places to eat, shop and play in her small town. Now, her goal is to make the site a "premiere marketing avenue for Bastrop County" — but she couldn't have gained such a following without, most importantly, Facebook. "I wanted to help transform Bastrop's image as a sleepy small town with nothing to do into something a lot more hip," she said.

### **Alamo Drafthouse**

**@drafthouse**

The Alamo Drafthouse, Austin's beloved movie theater chain, preserves the same quirky reverence for film on its various social media sites — which include a Tumblr, Birth. Movies. Death, with movie posters and shots of film stars — as it does in its theaters, where talking and texting can get you thrown out.

### **Austin Recovery**

**@AustinRecovery**

On Pinterest, the nonprofit alcohol and drug treatment center has boards that range from healthy lifestyle tips to inspirational messages. On Facebook, the center has a private fan page for its alums to connect and find additional support for their sober lifestyles. And on all other social media platforms, Austin Recovery demonstrates the same level of community and compassion toward its clients.

### **C.R.A.F.T/Jamie Dorobek**

**@thecraftblog**

Mending holes in a pair of jeans? Needing a headboard for your bed, but don't have the funds to buy one? That's where Jamie Dorobek's C.R.A.F.T blog (which stands for "Creating Really Awesome Free Things") comes in. With more than 6,500 Facebook likes and 12,400 followers on Pinterest, she has mastered the art of bringing do-it-yourself crafts to thousands.

### **Friday Night Fanstand**

**@FridayFanstand**



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What's most impressive about this site covering Central Texas high school football is that its Facebook and Twitter accounts routinely post photos, news updates and other engaging content even during the off-season.

### **Jacqueline Hughes**

#### **@JacquelinesLife**

Jacqueline Hughes uses her robust Twitter presence to tie in all of her various interests and projects, including her startup CraftLaunch, which helps Etsy sellers customize their Etsy websites, and Austin Startup Week, a five-day event celebrating Austin startups.

### **RSVPster/Jennifer Sinski**

#### **@jennifersinski**

If you want to know where all the free SXSW parties and events are, Jennifer Sinski not only can get you that information quickly, she and her fellow RSVPster co-founder Miles Dahmann will sign you up for many of the unofficial SXSW parties. That wouldn't be possible without social media, specifically Twitter, she said. "We're able to spread information quickly, find the right links for events, and get a general feel of what people are talking about or excited about in regards to SXSW unofficial events," she said.

### **SafePlace**

#### **@SafePlace\_ATX**

SafePlace, a shelter and counseling center for sexual and domestic violence victims, relies on social media to spread its mission and programs. The shelter posts statistics, photos of SafePlace volunteer efforts and other relevant tools onto Facebook, Twitter and Google Plus, all to bring awareness to everyone, not just the victims of abuse.

### **Texas Parks and Wildlife**

#### **@TPWDparks**

The state agency in charge of Texas parks, recreation and wildlife relies on multiple social media avenues to reach followers and their needs: "News updates via Twitter and Facebook, sharing outdoor photos with Instagram and Flickr, and getting in-depth coverage of parks and wildlife through YouTube," said Whitney Bishop, who handles Texas Parks and Wildlife Department's social media. The department balances informative posts, such as coverage of natural disasters like the Bastrop wildfires, with fun ones, such as snapshots of bluebonnets — all to "spread the word that life's better outside."

### **Texas State Library and Archives Commission**

#### **@tslac**

Waiting for William B. Travis' SOS letter to return to the Alamo wouldn't have been as exciting without the Texas State Library and Archives Commission posting real-time updates to Facebook, Twitter and Flickr about its journey back. The library and commission's social media goal is to make Texas history and Texas libraries, as well as the library and commission itself, more accessible with educational and engaging posts.

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### **Social Media Awards**

When: 7-9 p.m. Monday

Where: Opal Divine's Penn Field, 3601 S. Congress Ave.

Tickets: Free, but to attend the event, RSVP at <http://statesmansocialmediaawards.eventbrite.com/#>.