When a boxing story has a residual impact on its subject matter, it adds a certain cachet that increases its value, both to the reader and to the sport. Charles Jay, editor-in-chief of The Sweet Science, has built a reputation penning such stories, from his groundbreaking “Operation Cleanup” series through the current book “Body Shots.” Although it is not a requirement, Jay sees it as a bonus for stories under consideration for the monthly CJ Award if they have some importance that goes one step beyond the pleasure it gives the audience.

“The written word has a way of stimulating thought and inspiring action,” says Jay. “And sometimes thought and action are necessary on the part of those the writer is trying to reach. I know that from firsthand experience. So when the writer seizes the opportunity to use reporting or commentary to make a greater point, and it can have a positive potential effect, that means something extra to my way of thinking.”

Two of the three pieces cited by *The Sweet Science* for the June 2005 CJ Awards, emblematic of superlative boxing journalism, carry that additional component.

First-place honors for June went to Mitch Abramson, whose piece, entitled “ **New York State Commission Tests Boxers** ” took an in-depth look at a new experimental testing method in New York where, curiously, fighters were asked, only minutes after stepping in or out of the ring, to perform various written tests, including looking at pictures and reproducing them from memory. This practice, which drew protests from fighters and evoked questions in Abramson’s piece, has not become mandatory, as was originally hoped.

The award “was a nice surprise,” said Abramson, an accomplished journalist who has worked with the *New York Times* and *Village Voice*, among others, and who was a runner-up for the CJ Award in May.

“In typical Abramson fashion, the piece is beautifully written, light of touch, but razor-sharp in its attitude, as he sheds light on the cronyism and half-baked thinking of the commission, and how the fighters, at least in this instance, are made to suffer as a result,” said Robert Ecksel, *The Sweet Science* ’s editor.

One of the runner-up slots went to Ed Schuyler, who wrote about controversies in the Diego Corrales-Jose Luis Castillo bout in “The Long Count vs. The Long Stand.”

Schuyler pointed out that Corrales appeared to have an inordinately long time to recover as a result of intentionally spitting his mouthpiece out after being floored for the second time by Castillo in the tenth round of the May 5 fight.

Upon reading the story at *The Sweet Science*, Larry Hazzard of the New Jersey State Athletic

Control Board decided to make a modification to the rule regarding replacing the mouthpiece after a knockdown. In a July 8 memorandum addressed to all state-licensed referees, Hazzard wrote:

"According to Mr. Schuyler, the present procedure utilized in applying the rule provides an unfair advantage for a knocked down boxer when time is immediately suspended after the Mandatory Eight Count to replace his mouthpiece. Schuyler believes that a knockdown should be viewed in all fairness as an intricate aspect of the immediate action, and not a lull in the action. Therefore, if the mouthpiece is knocked out during a knockdown, then the knocked down boxer should be required to demonstrate his ability to continue in the bout by creating a lull after the referee administers the Mandatory Eight Count. The mouthpiece should remain out until the boxer who was knocked down CREATES the lull in the action. The referee can then have the mouthpiece replaced at the first opportunity during the lull."

Hazzard went on to detail the revised procedure referees should employ.

Schuyler is one of the most highly-respected writers in recent boxing history, having covered the sport for the *Associated Press* for nearly 40 years. In 1979 he won the Nat Fleischer Award for "excellence in boxing journalism."

Bill Knight's "Bruce Trampler Loves Boxing," a profile of Top Rank's esteemed matchmaker, garnered the other runner-up spot. Knight, a veteran reporter for the *El Paso Times*, pointed out in his piece that while Trampler may not be recognizable to the general public, he is nonetheless one of the most important people in the industry; indeed, he is the architect of many careers, including that of current WBO junior welterweight champ Miguel Cotto. "Not everybody knows the insider personalities in the fight game," said Chris Gielty, web editor of *The Sweet Science*
. "I appreciated Knight telling me some things I didn't know."

"One can write only so many stories about Mike Tyson or Bernard Hopkins or Oscar De la Hoya," said Jay. "When you deliver a piece about someone like a Bruce Trampler, you're inviting the fans in for something they may not have been privy to. There's a built-in originality to that."

The CJ Award is a monthly honor named for Jay, who is acclaimed for his hard-hitting observations of boxing from the inside. It is the only award for boxing writers that is accompanied by money – the winner of each month's prize receives $300, with the runners-up receiving $100 apiece.

CJ Award winners are determined by the editorial board of *The Sweet Science*, a group of people involved with the sport that, aside from Jay, includes editor Robert Ecksel, web editor Chris Gielty, and Dino daVinci, founder of the International Brotherhood of Prizefighters (IBOP). Editorial board members and officers of TheSweetScience.com or IBOP are ineligible to win the CJ Award.

The Sweet Science sets the gold standard for boxing journalism. Updated on a daily basis, it

includes hundreds of features, interviews, columns, predictions, odds, angles and more. Anyone interested in boxing will find a treasure trove at *The Sweet Science*, located at http://www.thesweetscience.com. More details about the CJ Award, as well as links to the award-winning stories, can be found at http://www.thesweetscience.com/cj-awards.php.