

**2014 BEST OF THE PRESS
IPA EDITORIAL CONTEST**

CLASS 01 - GENERAL EXCELLENCE

Division A

First Place: Forest Park Review, Staff. Forest Park Review: June 25, Oct. 15, 2014. Awesome special section featuring several enterprise stories. Clean design of paper and ads. Original photography.

Second Place: The Woodstock Independent, Staff. Woodstock Independent, General Excellence. Great reporting, and the best photography I've seen yet. Clean design of paper and ads. Promotion of community interests.

Third Place: Berwyn Suburban Life, Staff. Berwyn Suburban Life. Great looking paper with plenty of content. Especially appreciate focus on entertainment/features, not present in many other papers. Commendable writing and photography, too.

Honorable Mention: Elburn Herald, Staff. Elburn Herald May 8, 2014, Aug. 10, 2014. Really nice looking paper with original reporting. Especially enjoyed opinion, sports sections. Plenty of advertising to supplement, too.

Division B

First Place: Bureau County Republican, Princeton, BCR Staff. General Excellence. This paper grabs attention from page 1 to the back page. A real winner for this market.

Second Place: Glen Ellyn Suburban Life, Staff. Glen Ellyn Suburban Life. The paper is loaded. Crisp. Well written and design makes each page easy to read. Just missed first place.

Third Place: Effingham & Teutopolis News Report, Staff. VW Fest Begins 6-5-14 and Alwardt Remembered 8-14-14. Congratulations. Quality pages every time I turned the page. Nice placement, well writing, well planned.

Honorable Mention: Republic-Times, Waterloo, Staff. General Excellence - Aug. 13 and Nov. 19 editions. This is a quality effort front to back. Glad to be able to offer an award.

Division C

First Place: Wednesday Journal Group, Oak Park, Staff. Wednesday Journal, Full editions. Good enterprise reporting throughout the newspaper. Readers who subscribe to the Journal will be informed about their community, for certain. Excellent Viewpoints section with thought provoking views from different sides. A great newspaper.

Second Place: Downers Grove Suburban Life, Staff. Downers Grove Suburban Life. A great design, but a general lack of substance earns this entry second place. Needs more hard hitting and thought provoking stories along with punchier headlines. Editorial voice is lacking as well. This is encouragement to make a good newspaper even better.

Third Place: Austin Weekly News, Chicago, Terry Dean, Claire Innes, Dawn Ferencak. General Excellence Austin Weekly News. Good community coverage. Nice work.

Honorable Mention: Jersey County Journal, Jerseyville, Staff. Jersey County Journal. A good community newspaper.

Division D

First Place: Daily Chronicle, DeKalb, Staff. Daily Chronicle, DeKalb, Ill.. This was a difficult category to judge, with very little separating the top candidates. But The Daily Chronicle rose to the top with its clean, consistent pages.

Second Place: Pekin Daily Times, Staff. General Excellence.

Third Place: The Register-Mail, Galesburg, Staff. General Excellence.

Honorable Mention: The Journal-Standard, Freeport, Staff. Freeport Journal Standard.

Division E

First Place: Rockford Register Star, Staff. Rockford Register Star.

Second Place: The News-Gazette, Champaign, Staff. The News-Gazette.

Third Place: Sauk Valley Media, Sterling, Staff. April 12, 2014; Aug. 12, 2014 (mandatory week).

Honorable Mention: Northwest Herald, Crystal Lake, Staff. Northwest Herald.

Division F

First Place: Chicago Tribune Media Group, Staff. Chicago Tribune General Excellence. A clear first place in this category. The Tribune boasts a wide scope of coverage in each issue, including politics, crime, agriculture, religion and sports. The writing is superb, and I especially liked the investigative piece about the harsh treatment of residents in residential centers. The photos are phenomenal, always clear, focused and well-exposed. The papers have a good mix of local, state and national content, made all the better by the fact that the majority of the content was produced by Tribune staff, not pulled from AP. The design is visually appealing, clean and logically organized.

Second Place: The Dispatch & The Rock Island Argus, Staff. The Rock Island Argus. Lots of great local coverage including schools, breaking news, crime and faith. Layouts are clean, visually appealing and have eye-catching elements. I like the "Cheers and Jeers" column on the editorial page. Photos are also great.

Third Place: Journal Star, Peoria, Staff. Journal Star. The Journal Star is well-written and contains a good mix of local, state and national news. The photos were beautiful. I especially liked the "The New Normal" coverage following the tornado. The content on the editorial page was also good. Layout was clean, but not always eye-catching.

Honorable Mention: Chicago Sun-Times, Staff. Chicago Sun-Times — 2 full editions. Eye-catching layout, good writing and nice photos.

CLASS 02 - COMMUNITY SERVICE

Division A

First Place: Oakland Independent, Janice Hunt. Get Involved!. Nice coverage with a call to action for the readers

Second Place: Forest Park Review, Jean Lotus, Tom Holmes. Community Service: West Suburban PADS - Public Action to Deliver Shelter. Good ongoing coverage of community services

Third Place: Gibson City Courier, Patricia Welander. Gibson City Courier Community Service entry Rotary Project. Nice use of graphics and photos to inspire readers to become a part of this project

Honorable Mention: The Pinckneyville Press, Eric Lambert. "New Hospital Green Lighted". Good ongoing coverage of the progress of the hospital. Good use of photos throughout

Division B

First Place: Glen Ellyn Suburban Life, Nathan Lurz, Anna Schier. Glen Ellyn Suburban Life heroin coverage. Awesome graphic and great coverage on a growing problem. Nice link to everything going on to address the problem

Second Place: The Galena Gazette, Hillary Dickerson, Paul Gothard. Honor Flight. Great coverage and photos of the event. Relevant copy and great layout

Third Place: Bureau County Republican, Princeton, Terri Simon. Community Service - Women of Distinction. Love this idea - nice crisp, clean layout with a great community connection

Honorable Mention: The Galena Gazette, Hillary Dickerson. Salute to Veterans. Great way to recognize a LOT of veterans in a concise way. Good public service/community base

Division C

First Place: Austin Weekly News, Chicago, La Risa Lynch. Affordable Care Act - 2 part series. Timely, well written, well thought. An absolutely top notch effort. This one is the winner. This series is a real button pusher. It fills the information gap that gossip and assumption cannot. Congratulations on a marvelous effort. I am so glad I was picked to judge this classy class.

Second Place: Austin Weekly News, Chicago, Michael Romain. Bases Unloaded. This is so relevant it was almost impossible to pick one over the other. Well written - in fact I read it twice, with the other, and see why your paper's readers are rewarded with the work of your staff and management. I am so glad I was picked to judge this classy class.

Division D

First Place: Daily Chronicle, DeKalb, Staff. Working to improve DeKalb's University Village. Too many newspapers and communities ignore the kinds of residential and planning issues the Daily Chronicle tackled in its special project on DeKalb's University Village. Readers were given an opportunity to learn the history of the neighborhood and what it means to real people. It goes deeper than statistics. Good job.

Second Place: The Courier, Lincoln, Jean Ann Miller. The Courier Citizen of the Year. Good engagement with civic groups.

Third Place: Daily Chronicle, DeKalb, Katie Dahlstrom, Eric Olson . Fatal intersection will be expensive to fix. Good investigative work. For a project like this, maybe the editorial should have been top of the page.

Honorable Mention: Chicago Daily Law Bulletin, Staff. Judicial election coverage.

Division E

First Place: The News-Gazette, Champaign, Staff. Those who served. Great coverage for our soldiers! Soldiers (men and women) who willingly served our country and suffer from countless physical, mental and emotional diagnosis. These individuals should be at the top of the line when needing medical care - no delays!

Second Place: The Southern Illinoisan, Carbondale, Sarah Halasz Graham and John Pfeifer. Issue of bullying. My hat is off to you guys! First place all the way! Bullying IS an issue that desperately needs to be dealt with. In a recent bullying incident in Kentucky... it ended with the victim committing suicide... a 12 year old girl... couldn't take the pressures another day and overdosed... even though her parents had contacted the school board and went through all the processes... the bullying continued. Her parents were in the process of having her transferred to another school... but, all was too late for this precious child. Keep on... keeping on!

Third Place: Journal-Courier, Jacksonville, Staff. Bright Christmas.

Honorable Mention: The News-Gazette, Champaign, Staff. Gifford tornado recovery. Awesome coverage! Stay strong and continue to build on! Love it!

Division F

First Place: Daily Herald Group, Arlington Heights, Marie Wilson; Jessica Cilella; Heroin in the Suburbs / Through Their Eyes. This was the clear winner. Powerful stories with important information. As I described this series to the chairman of our local Champions for a Drug-Free Community, I simply called it riveting. Heroin is a problem that isn't going away and to sweep it under the rug is a great injustice to our readers. It's a huge undertaking and it was handled very well from all sides.

Second Place: Belleville News-Democrat, Jacqueline Lee, Elizabeth Donald. Election 2014 On The Issues. No voter should be able to say they didn't know the candidates and issues. Great job of informing the community. Just from your coverage I believe I could have made an informed vote.

Third Place: The Dispatch & The Rock Island Argus, Roger Ruthhart. Rebuilding youth baseball. It's a sad day when baseball is no longer king. Great job of raising awareness and helping to breathe life back into the gasping program.

Honorable Mention: Journal Star, Peoria, Matt Buedel. Cold Cases. Strong story made more so by a confession years after the shooting and days after the story published.

CLASS 03 - LOCAL EDITORIAL

Division A

First Place: Elburn Herald, Keith Beebe. Enough is enough. Tough issue to confront on the editorial page, especially since the issue lies with one individual. Well done here though.

Second Place: Berwyn Suburban Life, Matthew Hendrickson. ECG screening in schools can save lives. Good use of putting a human face on an issue which affects numerous individuals.

Third Place: The Woodstock Independent, Katelyn Stanek. "Through the roof," Woodstock Independent. Well explained editorial on an issue of importance to the entire community.

Honorable Mention: The Woodstock Independent, Katelyn Stanek. "An offer you can refuse," Woodstock Independent. Thoroughly explained and well-written editorial.

Division B

First Place: Macoupin County Enquirer-Democrat, Carlinville, Staff. Secret meetings do not benefit anyone. Well-reasoned editorial which puts forth a strong argument a very important issue.

Second Place: The Hinsdalean, Hinsdale, Pamela Lannom. D86 press conference little more than lesson in spin. Well thought-out and explained editorial which gets to the heart of the matter effectively.

Third Place: Pike Press, Pittsfield, Julie Boren. Why we support sales tax for schools. It's tough to take a stance which supports another tax, but this writer effectively and thoroughly explains why this is necessary for the betterment of the community.

Honorable Mention: Metropolis Planet, Areia Hathcock. Are our governments and boards transparent?. This editorial not only shows the reader why the newspaper came to its conclusions, but also breaks down the "how." Well done.

Division C

First Place: Jersey County Journal, Jerseyville, Staff. County board getting out of hand. It's always nice to see a county board getting a nice smack when it's deserved. A good read.

Second Place: Downers Grove Suburban Life, Alex Soulier. Village council should take action to help out business. Sign ordinances are needed, I think. But the cost shouldn't run small businesses out of business. Well written.

Third Place: Jersey County Journal, Jerseyville, Staff. Sales tax will be a tough sell.

Division D

First Place: The Register-Mail, Galesburg, Tom Martin. We need new leaders. A very good wrap-up. Folks in Galesburg should be glad they have a newspaper with editorials like this.

Second Place: The Journal-Standard, Freeport, Wally Haas. Freeport School Board needs to get its act together. clear, hard-hitting, well written

Third Place: Pekin Daily Times, Michelle Teheux. Coroners should err on side of doing more inquests. good

Honorable Mention: Robinson Daily News, Greg Bilbrey. Appreciation for teachers is more than just cookies. good example of using a routine annual observance to make strong points about an important part of the community.

Division E

First Place: Northwest Herald, Crystal Lake, Dan McCaleb. County Board risks health of residents. Ballsy commentary

Second Place: Quincy Herald-Whig, Don Crim. School building plan a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for Quincy. It is difficult to convince voters they should approve such large expenditures.

Third Place: The State Journal-Register, Springfield, Jayette Bolinski. Why She Stays. This editorial had a lot of good information. The headline should have been reinforced sooner than the last graph.

Honorable Mention: Rockford Register Star, Wally Haas. Police chief needs to resign. Interesting tact to start on the front page.

Division F

First Place: The Dispatch & The Rock Island Argus, Staff. Rock Island County series. This was an exemplary series of editorials arguing for immediate action to improve government in a county facing serious fiscal and managerial issues. Unlike the Tribune editorials on gun violence, specific ideas were proposed, and may have had an impact, and a wrapup editorial gave credit where credit was due. The only flaw was two uses of "Democrat" where "Democratic" was needed. (One other, somewhat related

suggestion: Scott Reeder is an asset to the state and your page, but the tagline on his column needs to explain what the IPI is.)

Second Place: Chicago Tribune Media Group, John McCormick. John McCormick Local Editorial Series. These were well done, but needed more focus on specific solutions, as in this graf buried near the end of the last one: "If only the aldermen would complain even half as much about constituents who saw something, or heard something, but keep silent. About parents who know their children are gangbanging, but keep silent. About neighbors who know who's trafficking firearms, but keep silent."

Third Place: Chicago Sun-Times, Kate N. Grossman, Tom Frisbie, Tom McNamee. A series of 5 editorials on the David Koschman case. 1. Not enough background

2. still needed a bit more

3. better

4. finally, a photo of the victim

5. good play on Ferguson

All show good, controlled outrage.

Honorable Mention: Journal Star, Peoria, Mike Bailey. Twittergate. Clearly a subject needing a calm, judicious perspective. This was a good line: "You have a right to even be vulgar in America without having the cops show up at your front door." Some editorials were too long, apparently written to fill the space; writers need to remember brevity breeds readership. Finally, why do people say "admonishment" instead of "admonition"?

CLASS 04 - EDITORIAL PAGE

Division A

First Place: Berwyn Suburban Life, Staff. Berwyn Suburban Life editorial page. Good mixture of content and unique ways to give readers a voice on the opinion page. Attractive design.

Second Place: The Woodstock Independent, Staff. Editorial page, Woodstock Independent. Attractive design and excellent local cartoons.

Third Place: Lebanon Advertiser, David Porter. Editorial page. Good mixture of content from readers, columnists and editorials. Really clever local cartoons.

Honorable Mention: Forest Park Review, Dan Haley, Steven Backman, Marc Stopek. Editorial pages, Forest Park Review .

Division B

First Place: The Galena Gazette, Carter Newton. Editorial Page. Thank you for local columns. Clearly the winner in this category. Great graphics to break up the pages. These pages scream "Ready me!" Great job.

Second Place: Glen Ellyn Suburban Life, Staff. Glen Ellyn Suburban Life editorial page. Easy to read. I liked the variety of type and size that added depth to the layout. Great job.

Third Place: Bureau County Republican, Princeton, BCR Staff. Editorial Page. Very pleasing layout. I get that Engel now lives in Peoria, but who is he?

Honorable Mention: Ledger-Sentinel, Oswego, John Etheredge. Ledger-Sentinel Feb. 20 and June 5 editorial pages. Praises for totally local content! Some variety in layout might be nice. But overall an easy read.

Division C

First Place: Wednesday Journal Group, Oak Park, Staff. Viewpoints. Nice job in the design and content.

Second Place: Downers Grove Suburban Life, Staff. Downers Grove Suburban Life Editorial Page. I like the street talk feature. Crisp design.

Third Place: Jersey County Journal, Jerseyville, Staff. Jersey County Journal Edit Page. Love the high letters to editor content.

Division D

First Place: Daily Chronicle, DeKalb, Staff. Opinions. Local editorials and a clean professional design make this the top Opinion Page in the division. Also, good choices in national columns with Carson and Schultz.

Second Place: Breeze-Courier, Taylorville, Marylee Rasar. Editorial Page. The design is solid and uncluttered. Great column from Chuck Sweeney with loads of local institutional knowledge. He needs a tagline. Also the taglines for the state legislators are confusing -- who are "Sally and Barb"? But those are small points. Overall, a solid page.

Third Place: The Register-Mail, Galesburg, Tom Martin. Editorial Pages - Feb. 22. An engaging mix of letters to the editor makes this page a good community forum. Local editorials would make the page even more engaging.

Division E

First Place: The State Journal-Register, Springfield, Jayette Bolinski, Editorial Page Editor. SJR Editorial Page. The State Journal Register's editorial pages stand apart for quality of writing from the editorial board and the local columnists. The variety of letters to the editor indicates a strong connection with the community and readers.

Second Place: Rockford Register Star, Wally Haas. Selection of editorial pages. The Rockford Register Star has done a great job of recruiting local writers on important community topics. Good job on the editorials. The design is clean and solid.

Third Place: Effingham Daily News, Staff. Effingham Daily News Editorial Page. Good job using your editorial page to explain big changes in the newspaper. This page sings local. Great cartoon.

Division F

First Place: The Dispatch & The Rock Island Argus, Kenda Burrows, editorial page editor. VIEWPOINTS. The editorial pages of The Rock-Island Argus rock. I hope the readers appreciate what it takes to deliver this much quality local material. The design is not flashy but local editorials, columnists and letters to the editor set this paper apart. Excellent.

Second Place: Journal Star, Peoria, Mike Bailey. Journal Star Editorial Page. Three local editorial comments on one page, plus local columnists indicates this paper has created a good forum for readers.

Third Place: Daily Herald Group, Arlington Heights, Daily Herald Editorial Board. Daily Herald Editorial Page. The design and presentation is clean and appealing. What is needed is more local content.

CLASS 05 - NEWS REPORTING - SINGLE STORY

Division A

First Place: Oregon Republican Reporter, Vinde Wells, Earleen Hinton. Wandering bear visits Mt. Morris, moves on.

Second Place: The Woodstock Independent, Katelyn Stanek. "At long last, they do," Woodstock Independent.

Third Place: The Carroll County Review, Thomson, Jon Whitney. Drunk Cop.

Honorable Mention: El Paso Journal, Kim Kearney. Pit bull attacks horse during El Paso Christmas Walk.

Division B

First Place: The Hinsdalean, Hinsdale, Pamela Lannom. Homeowner is heartbroken after plans to save home end in rubble. Well told, creates sympathy for owner who wanted to save the home. (The pictures sure helped!)

Second Place: Pike Press, Pittsfield, Beth Zumwalt. F2 tornado cuts through Pike. Good story! Good outline of damage done.

Third Place: Republic-Times, Waterloo, Robyn Dexter. Waterloo native pushes wife through Boston Marathon. Nice story told well. Only issue was putting too much space between lede and ALS angle.

Honorable Mention: Glen Ellyn Suburban Life, Evan Shields. State pulls \$20M in funding for COD. I liked this story, and would have ranked it higher if it got the allegations against the doctor higher.

Division C

First Place: Illinois Times, Springfield, Bruce Rushton. Missing history: When historical documents disappear from courthouses. This story was thorough, informative and interesting, everything I strive for as a reporter and hope for as a reader. Well done.

Second Place: Wednesday Journal Group, Oak Park, Timothy Inklebarger. Teen Drug Use. This story touched on an issue that is important both for the present and the future of the community. Generally, I don't like anonymous sources, but using them was understandable in this situation.

Third Place: Illinois Times, Springfield, Patrick Yeagle. A martyr or a menace?. This was another layered story. It showed how a well-meaning venture (at least according to the person who organized it) can have unintended negative consequences on others.

Honorable Mention: Austin Weekly News, Chicago, Timothy Inklebarger. Oak Park explores allowing taverns 41 years after first approving liquor sales. I enjoyed this story as well. Beyond the issue of allowing taverns, the story explored the changing norms within the community as well.

Division D

First Place: Daily Chronicle, DeKalb, Andrea Azzo. Heroin deaths prompt action. Good, informative piece, written in a descriptive style that set the scene and captured the emotions of those involved. Good job.

Second Place: Chicago Daily Law Bulletin, Dave Gong. An overdose, a death, a downfall. The rise and fall of a judge. Good storytelling and court reporting.

Third Place: Chicago Daily Law Bulletin, John Flynn Rooney. In winning landmark case, lawyer lost a lot. I enjoyed this story very much. The struggles for this attorney continue and the writer explains the entire situation very well.

Honorable Mention: Times-Republic, Watseka, Carla Waters. Prayer, Prayer, Prayer. Well written piece about a human tragedy.

Division E

First Place: NewsTribune, LaSalle, Kevin Caufield and Tom Collins. She was stripped...and we got taken to the cleaners.

Second Place: Northwest Herald, Crystal Lake, Emily K. Coleman. McHenry County school districts try to balance teacher absences, development.

Third Place: The State Journal-Register, Springfield, Maggie Menderski. Finally at rest.

Honorable Mention: The State Journal-Register, Springfield, Jason Nevel. District 186 Security gaps.

Division F

First Place: Chicago Sun-Times, Stefano Esposito. 'Can a cop killer go home again?' by Stefano Esposito, Chicago Sun-Times. Compelling subject and thorough reporting. Would have liked to read more about Mr. Chavez's life once he got out of prison, specifically what life's been like after he was kicked out of the league.

Second Place: Chicago Sun-Times, Frank Main. 'O Block: The Most Dangerous Block in Chicago,' Frank Main, Chicago Sun-Times. The reporter's commitment in "O Block" shows: lots of sources and time spent in the neighborhood. Compelling all the way through.

Third Place: Chicago Tribune Media Group, Bill Ruthhart. "Chicagoland" story. The significance of this story, not only for Chicago, but for the genre of documentary films, makes it praiseworthy.

Honorable Mention: Chicago Sun-Times, Dan Mihalopoulos, Rummana Hussain, Asad Kharal. 'Ex-Rahm aide nabbed in Pakistan' / 'Fugitive diary'. The story about the Emanuel aide who fled to Pakistan made for painful, but entertaining reading. Great use of a quote ("We Googled him") from the Pakistani investigators who pretty much immediately nabbed the fugitive. And working on a breaking news story unfolding on the other side of the world couldn't have been easy. Great follow up with the journals.

CLASS 06 - NEWS REPORTING - SERIES

Division A

First Place: Forest Park Review, Jean Lotus. Triton community college administrator's hefty raises and campaign gifts to board prez. Good job in following the money on this issue. Not everyone would have done the tracking necessary to fully flesh out the details of this story.

Second Place: Berwyn Suburban Life, Joe Sinopoli. District 100 referendum. Excellent job in detailing the issues involved in an important decision to be made by local voters. The people of this community would have a hard time saying they weren't informed on this issue.

Third Place: The Woodstock Independent, Katelyn Stanek. Sergeant Scandal, Woodstock Independent. Good job on following this story closely and in detail, all the way through the process.

Honorable Mention: Paxton Record, Will Brumleve. Paxton abduction. Well done on closely following this ongoing case.

Division B

First Place: The Galena Gazette, Hillary Dickerson. Upheaval at health department. Love the way the newspaper did not back down and fought to get to the bottom of the story. They brought to light information that normally would have been swept under the rug.

Second Place: The Galena Gazette, Hillary Dickerson. Deer culling. Great use of inventive headlines, graphics and information to inform the public on the issue.

Third Place: Ledger-Sentinel, Oswego, Matt Schury. Kendall County Board per diem investigation. Tireless investigating and reporting that is beyond admirable. Great to see relentlessness in getting to the truth and holding those responsible for their actions.

Honorable Mention: Bureau County Republican, Princeton, Goldie Currie and Shannon Serpette. Mysteries of the Illinois Valley. There were many great series of stories in this contest, but this one stuck out because of its high interest value. I liked how it shed light on past mysteries. Good job.

Division C

First Place: Austin Weekly News, Chicago, Terry Dean. Cops versus community: Part 1 and 2. Excellent reporting. A fine example of what good journalism should strive to be.

Second Place: Illinois Times, Springfield, Patrick Yeagle. Black and white: Police say they're trying to make the city safer. But black drivers feel targeted.. Very nice work.

Third Place: Illinois Times, Springfield, Bruce Rushton. A house divided: ALPLM may split from IHPA. Thorough job with this series. Well written. Well done.

Honorable Mention: Downers Grove Suburban Life, Ed McMenam, Kelli Murray. Downers Grove business fights sign ordinance. Nice reporting on a topic that's important to the community.

Division D

First Place: Daily Chronicle, DeKalb, Katie Dahlstrom, Monica Synett. Inside University Village. Very descriptive. Gives readers a real understanding of what current and former residents of University Village face. Best among a strong group of entries.

Second Place: The Register-Mail, Galesburg, Staff. Galesburg District 205 teachers strike. Comprehensive coverage of negotiations between a teachers' association and a school district. Solid reporting showing all sides of the issue. Excellent work.

Third Place: Morris Daily Herald, Heidi Litchfield and Jessica Bourque. July storm hits Morris. The reporter covered the local storm story from all angles. Good job.

Honorable Mention: The Journal-Standard, Freeport, Isaac Guerrero, Jeremy Sharp and Shannon Ireland. The superintendent. Good team coverage.

Division E

First Place: Rockford Register Star, Corina Curry, Brent Lewis. Kylie's Hand. Wow! Great human story, great explanation of the applied science and mechanics at work and the humanitarian effort it spawned. It begged for on-line enhancements which the Register delivered in spades. LOVED the heart made by the hand and the prosthetic in part 2.

Second Place: Quincy Herald-Whig, Don O'Brien. Meth Mess. Great series. From part 1 with the dozens of arrest photos to the alarming arrangement of starter fluid cans. The art and graphics were equally matched by the stories - good leads and interviews give a very comprehensive look into the damage Meth has caused. First rate!

Third Place: Sauk Valley Media, Sterling, Matt Mencarini. Tow fund 'too open'. I am absolutely certain Mencarini's relentless investigation into the controversial tow fund was not received well by all those involved. This is a great story - a lot of depth and a lot of reading between the lines on the various relationships between local government leaders, the old and new Sheriff and the deputies. Great investigative journalism

Honorable Mention: Kane County Chronicle, St. Charles, Ashley Sloboda. Setting up shop. This two-parter was terrific. Sloboda tackled the subject of small business starts and the difficulty of doing so in a climate that favors franchises and name brands over individual ownership. But it can be done.

Division F

First Place: Daily Herald Group, Arlington Heights, Mike Riopell. 'We were almost home' / The story of Tammy Duckworth and the soldiers who saved her life. Loved the narrative style. This is simply good. Thank you for the great read.

Second Place: Chicago Sun-Times, Chris Fusco, Michael O'Brien, Lauren FitzPatrick. 'Inside the IHSA,' Chris Fusco, Michael O'Brien & Lauren FitzPatrick. Wow. Thought this was going to be a sports series and was in the wrong category. I was wrong. Wicked good reporting of a story that needed to be told. Excellent example of reporters putting the spotlight on an area that need illuminating.

Third Place: Journal Star, Peoria, Nick Vlahos. LST. Glad to see that the reporter traveled to Evansville, Ind., to show the competition's side of things. Good job.

Honorable Mention: Journal Star, Peoria, Andy Kravetz. Leuthold Trial. Solid courtroom coverage. Enjoyed the "observations" listed.

CLASS 07 - GOVERNMENT BEAT REPORTING

Division A

First Place: Paxton Record, Will Brumleve. Ford-Iroquois Public Health Department.

Second Place: Clinton Journal, Staff. DeWitt County Board vs. state's attorney- marina.

Third Place: Gibson City Courier, Patti Welander. Gibson City Courier Government Beat Reporting.

Honorable Mention: Clinton Journal, Staff. Clinton City Council - hospital.

Division B

First Place: Riverside-Brookfield Landmark, Bob Skolnik. Riverside School District 96. Navigating school district politics is never easy and communicating it to the public is often even more difficult. The stories here show and communicate in-depth knowledge of District 96 and the politics behind the decisions that affect numerous people in the community. Well done.

Second Place: The Galena Gazette, Hillary Dickerson. City coverage. Nice diversity of subjects, featuring in-depth coverage. Especially of note here is the use of sidebars and informational boxes along with the stories to give the full story to the readers.

Third Place: The Hinsdalean, Hinsdale, Pamela Lannom. District 86 coverage. Good diversity of subjects, coupled with in-depth reporting. This represents effective communication of the government agency to the public.

Honorable Mention: Pike Press, Pittsfield, Justin A. Cobb. Grant funding in rural development. This entry shows a good knowledge of the beat and a good diversity of subjects.

Division C

First Place: Illinois Times, Springfield, Patrick Yeagle. Fracking implementation in Illinois. This writer easily weaves the facts together from a variety of sources. Solid reporting. Great job!

Second Place: Illinois Times, Springfield, Patrick Yeagle. Marijuana in Illinois. Great job on this series.

Third Place: Jersey County Journal, Jerseyville, Bob Crossen. Jersey School Board. Nice job covering this school district's financial issues. The use sidebar stories to further explain emotions of those affected by the board's decisions was smart. Well done.

Honorable Mention: Illinois Times, Springfield, Bruce Rushton. Coach has a past. Very thorough. Nice work.

Division D

First Place: Chicago Daily Law Bulletin, Andrew Maloney. Illinois Statehouse/Supreme Court coverage. Good, well researched, well written stories about issues that strike home with a broad swath of readers.

Second Place: Pekin Daily Times, Michael Smothers. Hundreds of cars ticketed, towed in snow. Loved the pieces here. Well written, and reporter spotted an emotional issue that will strike home to readers.

Third Place: Chicago Daily Law Bulletin, Patricia Manson. Federal courts coverage. Reporter has obvious strong handle on the beat, does a good job of capturing Posner's character.

Division E

First Place: NewsTribune, LaSalle, Tom Collins. Golden noses.

TIE Second Place: Kane County Chronicle, St. Charles, Ashley Sloboda. The skills to survive; Seeing fresh faces; Spreading a message.

TIE Second Place: Effingham Daily News, Tony Huffman. City of Effingham beat.

Third Place: The News-Gazette, Champaign, Mary Schenk. C-U crime and courts.

Honorable Mention: Rockford Register Star, Corina Curry. Education beat coverage by Corina Curry.

Division F

First Place: Chicago Tribune Media Group, Bill Ruthhart. Ruthhart Chicago City Hall coverage. A master class in watchdog reporting, using documents to create stories that read like a novel.

Second Place: Chicago Sun-Times, Dan Mihalopoulos. City Hall reporting by Dan Mihalopoulos, Chicago Sun-Times. Fantastic, compelling breaking news on complicated important stories.

Third Place: Belleville News-Democrat, Brian Brueggemann. Legislators. Great shoe leather reporting exposes fun and foibles of state politicians with wit and verve. Watchdog journalism with such style makes it fun to read important stories.

Honorable Mention: Journal Star, Peoria, Nick Vlahos. Nick Vlahos Government Beat Reporting. This reporter has a good eye and ear for the offbeat, funny and absurd elements of government reporting; clever reporting of interesting and important stories in city life.

CLASS 08 - BUSINESS/ECONOMIC REPORTING

Division A

First Place: The Woodstock Independent, Katelyn Stanek. "Traffic panned," Woodstock Independent. Excellent writing on proposal that is expected to affect an entire business community.

Second Place: Paxton Record, Will Brumleve. B&B owner: 'We will never host gay weddings'. Timely issue creating a conflict between people and a business on a local level.

Third Place: Berwyn Suburban Life, Joe Sinopoli. Czech Plaza still serving Bohemian fare. A nice business feature that takes a look at a unique quality of their changing community.

Honorable Mention: The Woodstock Independent, Katelyn Stanek. "County's first distillery takes a shine to Woodstock," Woodstock Independent. Lively, well-written business feature

Division B

First Place: Ledger-Sentinel, Oswego, Lisa Welz. Video gaming two years later: customers say it's for entertainment only. Great balance to a touchy subject.

Lisa Welz does what a reporter should do with such topics in putting the facts out there and letting readers decide for themselves.

TIE: Second Place: Bureau County Republican, Princeton, Goldie Currie. Virus causes concern among farmers. Picture sets this apart from other stories.

Good job on a simple explanation of the virus that even non-farmers will understand.

TIE: Second Place: Republic-Times, Waterloo, Alan Dooley. This year's corn harvest among best ever. Another good job by Alan Dooly in taking a topic that people take for granted and breaking down the hows and whys. More emphasis on the details of shipping the product is what sets this above Dooly's wheat harvest story.

Honorable Mention: Republic-Times, Waterloo, Alan Dooley. Bumper wheat harvest. Alan Dooly does an excellent job breaking down the process of growing and harvesting wheat and the obstacles farmers face makes and turning a story that could quickly turn into a yawner into something interesting. Good job Alan.

Division C

First Place: Downers Grove Suburban Life, Ryan Terrell. Residential development starts at former farm. The writer captures the heart of this story and told it very well. Nice job. Photographs would have made it even better.

Second Place: The Shorewood Sentinel, Stewart Warren. 'They Have Everything'. This article is very well written, playfulling and skillfully detailing the community's excitement for this new business. Nice job.

Third Place: Illinois Times, Springfield, Patrick Yeagle. The future of Futuregen. Solid reporting.

Honorable Mention: Austin Weekly News, Chicago, Michael Romain. Title change fraud. Good reporting on an important topic.

Division D

First Place: The Register-Mail, Galesburg, Marty Hobe. Sweepstakes of Hope.

Second Place: The Register-Mail, Galesburg, Marty Hobe and Tom Loewy. End of the line for conductors?

Third Place: The Register-Mail, Galesburg, Allison Goodrich and Marty Hobe. Property Tax Comparisons.

Honorable Mention: Morris Daily Herald, Jessica Bourque. Local farms booming from agri-tourism.

Division E

First Place: Quincy Herald-Whig, Deborah Gertz Husar. Agriculture stories on Clean Water Act, PED, Missouri agrability and waste water regulations. Husar covers the local agricultural community with authority and insight. All of her articles showcase a good range of sources and an understanding of how the issues affect local farmers.

Second Place: Northwest Herald, Crystal Lake, Staff. Former Motorola campus in decline. The writer skillfully explains the many issues involved in trying to sell a 325-acre complex that formerly served as a campus for Motorola. Readers can understand why investors would be interested in the site, but also why it's so hard to get a commitment.

Third Place: The News-Gazette, Champaign, Christine des Garennes. Cronus. Des Garennes' coverage of a new chemical plant is built on excellent sourcing and great details. The articles include quotes from the usual economic development people and public officials, but also from a good mix of local residents who are the soul of this small community.

Honorable Mention: Kane County Chronicle, St. Charles, Ashley Sloboda. Setting up shop. This package on how people can be successful starting their own businesses includes personal stories as well as tips from experts. One nice addition is the article on someone whose business recently failed, which helps to provide great insight into the difficulties of running your own business.

Division F

First Place: Chicago Tribune Media Group, Heather Gillers and Jason Grotto. Borrowing Trouble Business Series. The business side of running a large school district often goes unnoticed by students and parents. But the Chicago Tribune shows why scrutiny is important, revealing that the district could lose \$100 million because of its risky investments. The topic is complex and could be confusing, but the newspaper did an excellent job of explaining everything to readers.

Second Place: Chicago Sun-Times, Maudlyne Ihejirika. 'Faces of minimum wage,' Maudlyne Ihejirika, Chicago Sun-Times. The Sun-Times uses personal stories to explain how raising the minimum wage would affect workers and business owners. The policy experts and politicians will have their say in other stories. These stories are about the people struggling to make a living on both sides of the issue. Well done.

Third Place: Chicago Sun-Times, Chris Fusco, Michael O'Brien, Tim Novak. "Secrecy, questions on spending as private companies do public business'. The Sun-Times shows the dangers of allowing private companies to handle the public's business in secrecy. When politically connected leaders benefit from

those deals, then the public should be even more concerned about potential problems with the arrangements.

Honorable Mention: Journal Star, Peoria, Phil Luciano. Coverage of Asian carp. Luciano makes his articles easy to understand, giving readers information about the pros and cons of having an Asian carp processing plant in the region.

CLASS 09 - SPORTS NEWS

Division A

First Place: Paxton Record, Brendan Quealy, Andrew Rosten. Fitting tribute. This story stood out from the rest for its subject matter and its treatment. A great look at what "the show must go on" looks like in a small town, with game highlights sprinkled into remembrances from friends and foes, and everything tied together by baseball.

Second Place: LeRoy Farmer City Press, Jerry Nowicki. Blue Ridge McLean County Tournament Championship. This championship story is everything an award-winning game story should be. Nowicki started with a clever lead teasing us into the crucial moments, then backed away and led us into those moments from the beginning of the overtime. All the other relevant notes from the game were woven into the story beautifully.

Third Place: Berwyn Suburban Life, Dan Santaromita. Roadrunners reign. Not a long story, but really solid writing that takes the reader past the generic action description and stat lines and gives a good sense of the storylines.

Honorable Mention: Elburn Herald, Mike Slodki. Every second counts. It can be tough for a weekly newspaper to handle the big win and the subsequent loss in the same edition. This is a very good job of that, featuring the exciting celebration from the first game without losing the story of the loss in the second game.

Division B

First Place: Rantoul Press, Brendan Quealy. Gifford Boys Fall Short in State Title Game. This was such a heart-warming story and was well-written. The writer took you directly to the heart of the game so that you felt like you were there. This was way more than just an average sports story. This was a clear cut first place effort.

Second Place: The Galena Gazette, Paul Gothard. Pirates fall short. Good lead. Writer made reader feel they were at the game. Loved quotes from players. All good sports stories should have quotes from athletes. Good job!

Third Place: Bureau County Republican, Princeton, Kevin Hieronymus. Losing a coaching legend. Great quotes and reflections on this legend. This was a good read. Excellent reflections on such a positive role model.

Honorable Mention: Republic-Times, Waterloo, Jeremy Kovarik. Finished Business: Eagles win state soccer title. Well told story. Love the team's motto!

Division C

First Place: Wednesday Journal Group, Oak Park, Marty Farmer, Matt Le Cren. Sports News- Marty Farmer. With just three entries, this was the best of the three, although it fell into play-by-play a little more than I would have liked.

Second Place: Downers Grove Suburban Life, Alex Soulier. Mustangs stumble in playoff opener. With limited entries, this was the second-best. This was a relatively straightforward recap of a playoff loss.

Third Place: Downers Grove Suburban Life, Jason Rossi. 'We left it all out on the field'. Again, a relatively straightforward recap of a loss, albeit a tough one. I get that the players played their hearts out, but I don't think the reader needed three separate quotes that basically made the same remark.

Division D

First Place: The Register-Mail, Galesburg, Mike Trueblood. Post 285 supports teammate. The author does a nice job of talking about what must be a tough situation for the players and coaches of the baseball team. Also, this is the only story in the category that understands sports stories are not only about games.

Second Place: Times-Republic, Watseka, Jordan Rich. All they could ask. The author has a nice lead for the story that sets it apart in this category.

Third Place: The Register-Mail, Galesburg, Jackson White. Power Surge. The story was well-written and made a preview story more interesting than most.

Division E

First Place: Northwest Herald, Crystal Lake, Tom Musick, Jeff Arnold. NFL Draft. Full coverage of a hometown boy who got called to the big dance. Did an excellent job of capturing the emotions involved with the player, family, and friends.

Second Place: Effingham Daily News, Alex McNamee. Teutopolis tops mt carmel again. Small town game with reporting that makes the reader feel he was at the game. Lots of sources, a "feel good" story of kids who believed they could win and did.

Third Place: The Herald-News, Joliet, Dick Goss. Sarr kicks Wilmington to state title. Brings the reader into the strategy that led the Wilmington team to an exciting win over a ranked opponent. Showed the highs and lows that can occur during a game and the pressure of a game riding on the foot of the kicker.

Honorable Mention: The Telegraph, Alton, Pete Hayes. Seventh heaven - again. Good blow-by-blow of a professional game with enough color to make even a dull game interesting.

Division F

First Place: Herald & Review, Decatur, Justin Conn. Sages' savior. A marvelous retelling of a story about a softball game that few will remember save the players who were there.

Second Place: Herald & Review, Decatur, Justin Conn. It's Hardin in the Clutch. Another unknown school district feel good story about hard work, perseverance, and a little luck when the season's on the line.

Third Place: Herald & Review, Decatur, Aren Dow. Two for two. Good job in conveying a story about digging deep and finding the answers to changing play on the fly to get back on course.

Honorable Mention: Herald & Review, Decatur, Aren Dow. Two L's equal win for surging Indians. Super job of telling a heartwarming story about a girl who had the will and desire to lead her team to victory after overcoming an injury.

CLASS 10 - SPORTS FEATURE

Division A

First Place: Piatt County Journal-Republican, Monticello, Andrew Helregel. State Symphonies. A cross-country story of daunting length does not pique much interest at first glance. But this one delivered as clearly the best story in the category, with a whole lot more to it than first meets the eye. A curious headline and an interesting lead tie in with other musical themes throughout while Helregel takes us much further than cross-country times and cheap-and-easy quotes. We learn routines and attitudes, history and expectations, with excellent writing throughout.

Second Place: The Woodstock Independent, Jason Learman. Working overtime, Woodstock Independent. This story unfolds beautifully. Even the central theme of hockey becomes secondary to the themes of commitment and effort, and then we learn even more about this astounding young woman that isn't about hockey at all.

Third Place: LeRoy Farmer City Press, Jerry Nowicki. Austin Spencer returns. Very good job touching on the relevant angle — the imminent return — and then going into the back story. Inspiring story that's about more than just basketball.

Honorable Mention: The Braidwood Journal, Brent Sumner. Speed Kills: A look at Reed-Custer boys basketball team. This is a very good profile of a team and a style, going into the preparations and the training that make the result possible.

Division B

First Place: Rantoul Press, Brendan Quealy. Brian Winholtz's life and death.

Second Place: The Journal-News, Hillsboro, Kyle Herschelman. Soccer Marathon Raises \$43,000.

Third Place: Republic-Times, Waterloo, Corey Saathoff. Father, son take part in football showdown on opposing teams.

Honorable Mention: Riverside-Brookfield Landmark, Matt Le Cren. SPORTS FEATURE.

Division C

First Place: Illinois Times, Springfield, Bruce Rushton. For the love of the game: Springfield Foxes play semi-pro football for free. This was the most enjoyable story I read. It included interesting anecdotes, good quotes and background, all of which was blended well with information on the team's present situation.

Second Place: Downers Grove Suburban Life, Scott Schmid. The dividing line. This story showed solid reporting and presented good information on a potential policy change that could affect a number of schools. The multiple sources added to the depth of the story.

Third Place: Wednesday Journal Group, Oak Park, Marty Farmer. SPORTS FEATURE. Nice look at a long-time coach, his motivation and his perspective on the game he loves.

Honorable Mention: Downers Grove Suburban Life, Jason Rossi. Dale Ryndak had a 'desire to win'. This story would have benefited from being a little longer, but overall a nice feature on a "little sister" following in an older siblings footsteps.

Division D

First Place: Breeze-Courier, Taylorville, Doug Brady. From stage to cage: local singer turns fighter. Great lede. Really liked it. Nice use of quotes to tell the story. Not everyday you see a kid's journey take this course. Fun read.

Second Place: The Register-Mail, Galesburg, Mike Trueblood. From Streaks to the NFL. Nice job of telling the story without overloading the readers with stats and stats and more stats from the athlete. It's easy to see the impact this way. Nice job.

Third Place: Daily Leader, Pontiac, Erich Murphy. Schertz sets precedent . Inspiring stuff. Only thing holding this one back was lack of quotes in the first 13 graphs.

Honorable Mention: The Courier, Lincoln, Bill Welt. Ultimate Honor. Nice combo of stories here. Both were very quote driven, which was a nice change of pace. Solid job all-around.

Division E

First Place: Northwest Herald, Crystal Lake, Mike DeFabo. Part of the Family. Powerful story about a unique situation. Insight into an illness that can be written about only via trust in the reporter and an openness from family to discuss such a painful and far-reaching problem. Very nicely done.

Second Place: The Pantagraph, Bloomington, Jim Benson. ISU's Hunter, 3-year-old boy form special bond at event. Story gives a behind-the-scenes look inside the athlete fans don't get to see. Good news story, but one that is captivating to read. Well-written and a great read.

Third Place: The News-Gazette, Champaign, Fred Kroner. The saga of Tyke Peacock. Tragic stories reel in readers. Getting an understanding of addiction only helps everyone, from the addicted, their families and many in today's culture who can, in some ways, have a connection to such afflictions.

Honorable Mention: The News-Gazette, Champaign, Bob Asmussen. Friday Night Football. This story is one readers don't necessarily expect, which normally is a strong read. High-profile program gets a little light on it via a well-written piece on behind-the-scenes event. Well done.

Division F

First Place: The Dispatch & The Rock Island Argus, Daniel Makarewicz. Hard to accept. This story was emotional, but the writer did an excellent job leading the readers up to the emotion and then letting the people involved provide it. Very good job addressing what is a very difficult subject. Helped a lot to have friends and family open to talk with you. This story wasn't exclusively a sports feature, but it transcended sports — as any good sports feature should.

Second Place: Journal Star, Peoria, Adam Duvall. Taken to Tennessee. Excellent treatment of the subject. The writer interspersed historical facts with colorful details from beginning to end, while not spending too much time in any one area and holding the readers' interest. Interesting color graphic makes jump page very appealing.

Third Place: Herald & Review, Decatur, Aren Dow. Kid Dynamite. Definitely an interesting subject to be so young and so successful. Good job fleshing out a story with a 14-year-old as the main source.

Honorable Mention: Belleville News-Democrat, Norm Sanders. When he was Relly. Interesting history dug up about a well-known figure.

CLASS 11 - FEATURE WRITING

Division A

First Place: Berwyn Suburban Life, Joe Sinopoli. Brave hearts are ties that bind. this is a great feature that shows the bond people can make and the compassion they can have for others--it also serves as a reminder that our handicaps should never hold us back--well-written, to the point and significant

Second Place: Beecher City Journal, PJ Ryan. Hell Raiser Rides Again. very well written feature bringing the past into the present and chronicling the journey of a man, his family and his work ethic

Third Place: The Woodstock Independent, Sandy Kucharski. ""Enjoying the ride,"" Woodstock Independent. light hearted view of one man's journey and his enjoyment of life

well-written

Honorable Mention: El Paso Journal, Jennie Kearney. The selfless spirit of a young boy inspired the community. well-written--great story tying both the child's story and the community together

Division B

First Place: The Galena Gazette, Hillary Dickerson, Paul Gothard. Honor Flight. While many writers chose to focus on the Honor Flight, this team of reporters and photographers really covered every single aspect possible. It's a great effort on all fronts from writing to layout, making it the obvious choice for a winner.

Second Place: Barrington Life, Tarah Thorne . Blind man recalls 9/11 with guide dog . A good read from start to finish. Riveting stuff that you don't normally hear from a perspective that's outside of the norm. The story really tells itself.

Third Place: The Journal-News, Hillsboro, Mike Plunkett. Remembering Sonny Daniels. The amount of research and digging done combined with the flowing, narrative style of the article made this an interesting, noteworthy addition. Good work.

Honorable Mention: The Regional News, Palos Heights, Tim Hadac. Is It Junk Or Genius?. Strong, clear writing that clearly outlined the article's subject matter and greater universal theme.

Division C

First Place: Illinois Times, Springfield, Patrick Yeagle. From the streets to stability: One man's path out of homelessness. I would believe this is a subject that many newspapers can tackle. This writer recognized it and did a fantastic job.

Second Place: Wednesday Journal Group, Oak Park, Deb Quantock McCarey. Kidz helps kids help kids. Catchy headline, well-written, crisp and interesting. Outstanding job.

Third Place: Wednesday Journal Group, Oak Park, Deb Quantock McCarey. Sweetheart sister. Nice story about a remarkable person. Writer did a great job.

Honorable Mention: The Shorewood Sentinel, Stewart Warren. Local man fighting for friend to receive Medal of Honor. Good story. Relevant in today's world. Writer did a good job.

Division D

First Place: Chicago Daily Law Bulletin, Jamie Loo. Apocalypto, Esq.. This was a fun read, from start to finish. I like how you put me in the wrestling ring immediately. Good background on the subject.

Second Place: The Commercial-News, Danville, Sunny Strader. Out of respect. The writer lets me see from the story subject's eyes in the lead. Nice touch; kept me wanting to read more.

Third Place: Chicago Daily Law Bulletin, Jack Silverstein. Pope's blessing. Good piece, especially the description of Pope's weeping on the street. I would have placed this one higher if the writer had led with that image.

Honorable Mention: The Register-Mail, Galesburg, Lisa Coon. A man of the earth. Nice intro to the man. Nicely descriptive.

Division E

First Place: Quincy Herald-Whig, Don O'Brien. Behind Prison Walls. This is an excellent story. Often reporters tell the stories of families who have lost loved ones due to drunk driving incidents, but seldom do readers get to see what it's like for those who have been found guilty of drunk driving. This story was a good read. It has a great lead, and overall great local appeal. Good job!

Second Place: Sauk Valley Media, Sterling, Kathleen Schultz. Four decades in the making. What a cool story! I'm certain many readers could relate to both the grandmother's feelings, as well as her grandsons, and with no doubt it brought about memories of proms from the past. It is a great read! The reporter found a different way of writing about an annual event. Good job.

Third Place: The News-Gazette, Champaign, Debra Pressey. Alzheimer's support group. This article tells the story of how Alzheimer's effects those who don't have the disease. The lead made me want to read more. Great story. Good job!

Honorable Mention: Rockford Register Star, Maggie Hradecky. Husband, children continue fight against breast cancer. This story was a great read. It tells the effect cancer has on victims' families and how they manage to go on with life after their loved ones have died. The reporter is an excellent storyteller.

Division F

First Place: Chicago Sun-Times, Stefano Esposito. 'Can a cop killer go home again?' by Stefano Esposito, Chicago Sun-Times. An awesome story told from nearly every angle. Executed perfectly by the reporter.

Second Place: Journal Star, Peoria, Phil Luciano. Riding his way to a better future. Beautifully written, somewhat tragic profile piece done in the best way. Great narrative flow. Shows that every person has a story to tell with the best execution.

Third Place: Journal Star, Peoria, Matt Buedel. A long slow suicide. Well written piece told in a straightforward style. Lots of digging done by the reporter to show larger issues at play in the death of a young girl who should have had everything.

Honorable Mention: The Dispatch & The Rock Island Argus, Rachel Warmke. Cancer-stricken Mackenzie prepares for pot sentencing. Another great piece telling the tragic story of larger issues plaguing an ill man.

CLASS 12 - ORIGINAL COLUMN

Division A

First Place: Lebanon Advertiser, David Porter. Ramblin' Man. Witty and not trying too hard.

Second Place: Villa Grove News, Amy McCollom. Holding It All Together, Villa Grove News. Just because a woman tells a story involving her children, it doesn't mean others have to automatically close their ears and groan. Nice.

Third Place: Forest Park Review, Alan Brouillette. Original columns by Alan Brouillette. Nice, with the bullet point info.

Division B

First Place: Effingham & Teutopolis News Report, Herb Meeker. How we can honor Willow 3-27-14. Depicts the humanity of reporters who must submerge their personal feelings in trying situations. This brought tears to my eyes.

Second Place: Lake County Suburban Life, Grayslake, Judi Veoukas . Off the Deep End columns . A laugh always brightens the day! Pleasurable reading.

Third Place: Effingham & Teutopolis News Report, Herb Meeker. Klans hate has 7-24-14. A very controversial 'organization' that hides their 'mission' under their costumes. Bravo!

Honorable Mention: The Normalite Group, Normal, Jim Bennett. The Spectator - By Jim Bennett. These columns caused me to reflect as well. Good range of topics with history thrown in.

Division C

First Place: Austin Weekly News, Chicago, Dawn Ferencak. Ending the pain of mental illness and addiction. A powerful, inside look at a family tragedy. Series shines light on a topic often taboo and told from an insider's perspective. Powerful reading and illuminating to a public that often sweeps such parts of society aside.

Second Place: Austin Weekly News, Chicago, Arlene Jones. Arlene Jones, columnist. Such key issues and a very pragmatic approach to analyzing the related problems. Portions of black America need solutions. The more common sense voices applied to life circumstances can only serve readers well.

Third Place: Wednesday Journal Group, Oak Park, Jack Crowe. Columns by Jack Crowe in Wednesday Journal. Clearly a political junkie in his element. Everyday events and locales need attention as readers identify with them.

Honorable Mention: Wednesday Journal Group, Oak Park, Ken Trainor. Columns by Ken Trainor. Engaging writing style, and topics and approach invite public interaction. Always, er, most always a plus.

Division D

First Place: The Register-Mail, Galesburg, Tom Loewy. Tom Loewy columns. Your choice of column content and your ability to execute the columns sets you well above the competition. I hope the members of your community appreciate the excellence of your work. There are not many columnists like you in the world.

Second Place: Daily Chronicle, DeKalb, Eric Olson. Editor's Note. Your choice of column topics helps you in this competition. You write about important topics within your community and use your forum to explain important issues.

Third Place: Chicago Daily Law Bulletin, Marc D. Falkoff. Falkoff IPA Awards Submission Feb 2015.pdf. I enjoyed your columns, but they are not for everyone and I would not classify them as general interest. They are well researched and a good read for those of us who are into law.

Division E

First Place: The Pantagraph, Bloomington, Bill Flick. Bill Flick. Flick writes in a compelling, conversational style, telling stories to readers as he would to a friend. And the stories are all interesting, whether it's learning about the real Jake from State Farm or feeling the sadness and pride of parents who turned their son's tragic death into a mission to support organ donations. Well done.

Second Place: The State Journal-Register, Springfield, Dave Bakke. Dave Bakke, metro columnist. Bakke writes mostly about interesting people in the community, but he also inserts himself into the column on occasion. In one excellent column, he described helping a Vietnam veteran track down someone he thought had died in the war. Columnists can be skillful observers, but Bakke also showed the value in participating in a worthy cause -- helping a vet overcome the guilt he felt because he assumed someone had died in his place.

Third Place: Northwest Herald, Crystal Lake, Michael Penkava. Fanfare for the common student. Penkava writes about everyday events, such as the death of a pet or the summertime thrill of an ice cream truck. His appeal to celebrate the average students on graduation day -- and not just the best students -- sparks a nice column about the accomplishment of living a splendidly average life. It's apparent that he works hard to craft each sentence.

Honorable Mention: The News-Gazette, Champaign, Dan Corkery. View from C-Section. The writer's strength is his personal columns, sharing his thoughts about his trashy neighbors and his mother's favorite sayings. He entertains readers as he shares stories that they can relate to their own lives.

Division F

First Place: Chicago Sun-Times, Mark Brown. A series of 3 columns on Henry Williams by Mark Brown, Chicago Sun-Times. Mark Brown's columns reveal the compelling details of a former homeless man who is trying turn his life around. Brown uses good sources, strong writing and important details to share this man's story with readers. These columns are the clear winner in this competitive category.

Second Place: Belleville News-Democrat, Patrick Kuhl. Coach Klinsmann, You're in the Army now, Beginning to look a lot like Santa. The three winners in this category reflect very different approaches to column writing. But they all are well written and cover compelling subjects. This entry excels at personal columns, with none better than his efforts as a child to be like his special older brother.

Third Place: Chicago Sun-Times, Dan Mihalopoulos. A selection of 3 columns, Dan Mihalopoulos, Chicago Sun-Times. Mihalopoulos focuses his columns on political wrongdoing, blending watchdog reporting with analysis and opinion. The columns take hard shots at people who want to abuse power and misuse taxpayer money.

CLASS 13 - SPORTS COLUMN

Division A

First Place: Villa Grove News, Tony Hooker. Hook Line and Sinker, Villa Grove News. Great personable stories.

Second Place: Gibson City Courier, Josh Hohulin. Sports Column.

Third Place: The Cass County Star-Gazette, Beardstown, Don Chipman. Chip's Corner.

Division B

First Place: Rantoul Press, Brendan Quealy. In the Corner Pocket: Rant, Buzzer Beater and Coaching. These columns had meaning and were well-written. Only caught a couple typos but, other than that, these columns were a cut above the competition. Keep up the great work.

Second Place: Bureau County Republican, Princeton, Kevin Hieronymus. Sports column. Good stories with meaning. The writer kept me engaged in each piece. A few grammar mistakes, but on the whole, these were three quality columns.

Third Place: The Journal-News, Hillsboro, Kyle Herschelman. Center and Guard. Herschelman lost me at times with his writing style, but each story had a clear purpose. The writing could be cleaner, but each column kept my interest.

Honorable Mention: The Joliet, Lockport & Crest Hill Bugle, Scott Taylor. Golf Course Review. Clean stories about golf — something that not every sports columnist can write about. I'd like to see more diversity in the ratings, but each course was well-described.

Division D

First Place: Paris Beacon-News, Thomas Hardesty. Beggars, Pumpkins and Guns. The best sports columnists draw readers beyond sports fans. There is no doubt your columns bring readers to the sports page who otherwise don't go there. The beggars column was a brave one and well written. Excellent writing that is surely enjoyed by sports enthusiasts and non-sports enthusiasts.

Second Place: The Register-Mail, Galesburg, Mike Trueblood. Mike Trueblood sports columns. It's obvious you are well versed in area sports. Columns are informative, entertaining and well written.

Third Place: Pekin Daily Times, Mark Rich. Early or late, this rivalry is special.

Honorable Mention: Morris Daily Herald, Rob Oesterle. Sports Views.

Division E

First Place: The News-Gazette, Champaign, Loren Tate. Tatelines. First rate work - as always. Loren Tate's voice and insights into the world of sports has been honed for years. Add to that excellent header layouts for two of the three columns and you have work that exceeds any opinion ever voiced on Sportcenter.

Second Place: Kane County Chronicle, St. Charles, Jay Schwab . "Prep Zone" columns. There are as many biting hints of good-natured satire in Schwab's columns on the Cubs and Mooseheart as there are heartfelt moments in his elegy to the late Jim Newbill. A pleasure to read for his insights and well-developed writing style.

Third Place: Quincy Herald-Whig, Matt Schuckman. Matt Schuckman columns about Drew Wilt/QHS coach/dreams in winter. I had to take a minute to wring my tears out of a ream of printer paper after reading Schuckman's column on Drew Wilt. He's an excellent columnist with a deft ear for detail and language. His column on the school board's dismissal of a coach was equally strong in asking hard questions, but ended with a bit less focus than when it began.

Honorable Mention: Northwest Herald, Crystal Lake, Tom Musick. Tom Musick columns. Musick has a good eye for finding the telling detail in his commentary. Letting the organ player at the Blackhawks' last playoff game of the season register a note of hope for the upcoming one; the emotional excitement of being a young player getting picked up in the NFL draft; to my favorite — a dynamite angle on the

changes at Wrigley Field through the eyes of a lifelong ball hawk. I'm homesick for Wrigleyville all over again. Outstanding work.

Division F

First Place: Journal Star, Peoria, Phil Luciano. Phil Luciano Sports Column Writing. What happened to America's pastime: An enjoyable read from start to finish and one I'm sure is relatable to plenty. Mighty Palms have struck out: I did not imagine a story on palm trees at a baseball field drawing me in, but this one certainly did. Great job of turning a trivial issue into an interesting tale.

Second Place: Chicago Sun-Times, Rick Telander. A selection of 3 sports columns by' Rick Telander, Chicago Sun-Times. Public disgrace- We know who failed at Currie. A story that simply had to be told. I liked the take-no-prisoners approach, and it was accompanied by a great design.

As Tears Go Bye: Good storytelling on something that is always difficult to write.

Third Place: The Dispatch & The Rock Island Argus, Daniel Makarewicz. Taylor firing; Dalton remembered; State champ anti-bullying. Dalton remembered for putting others 1st: This was a story that I am sure made Dalton's family and close ones proud. I especially liked your lede and how you shared your own story.

Honorable Mention: Journal Star, Peoria, Kirk Wessler. Kirk Wessler sports columns.

CLASS 14 - PHOTO SERIES

Division A

First Place: Oakland Independent, Janice Hunt. Sobering. Really great composition and technical skill by the photographer here. Also a unique subject.

Second Place: The Leader, St. Joseph, Nora Maberry-Daniels. Knockout punch:SJO sends Unity packing in second round. The photos here are very technically sound and show a clear sequence of events.

Third Place: The Pinckneyville Press, Jeff Egbert. Family Night in the Park. Photos are clear and have good composition. What I really like, though, is the variety.

Honorable Mention: LeRoy Farmer City Press, Jerry Nowicki and Jeff Zogg. Memorial Day photo series. Nice photos with unique composition. Like the tight shots, focus on faces.

Division B

First Place: The Hinsdalean, Hinsdale, Jim Slonoff. A day in the Life of The Community House. An interesting story, nicely told.

Second Place: Bureau County Republican, Princeton, Mike Vaughn. Bureau County Fair. Rich, colorful shots documenting a county tradition. Well done.

Third Place: The Joliet, Lockport & Crest Hill Bugle, John Patsch. Light Up the Holidays parade. Some really nice shots here. Don't know why they were cropped so tightly, as the images have nice compositions to them.

Honorable Mention: Ledger-Sentinel, Oswego, Steven Buyansky. Oswego PrairieFest photo series. Some nice colorful shots of the festival.

Division C

First Place: Wednesday Journal Group, Oak Park, David Pierini, Claire Innes. Following his pipe dreams - 07/02/14. The clear winner here. Good variety of shots with great composition and lighting. I especially like the photo with the reflection of the pipe organ keys in his glasses. The photo series can tell the story without the copy, that's why it's the winner.

Second Place: Downers Grove Suburban Life, Bill Ackerman. Festivalgoers get down at GroveFest. Good photo illustrations of a colorful car show. I like the long shot of the Dad and his son looking at the vintage cars especially.

Third Place: Illinois Times, Springfield, Patrick Yeagle. Inside the Bel-Aire Motel. Nice portraits of the motel residents. But I would like to have seen them actually inside the doomed low rent motel.

Division D

First Place: Daily Chronicle, DeKalb, Monica (Maschak) Synett. Soldier Surprise.

Second Place: The Register-Mail, Galesburg, Steve Davis. Making the Cut.

Third Place: Daily Chronicle, DeKalb, Rob Winner. Cortland Elementary students sickened by fumes.

Honorable Mention: Daily Chronicle, DeKalb, Monica Synett . Storm Dayz.

Division E

First Place: Quincy Herald-Whig, Steve Bohnstedt. A Tough Cell. Great behind-the-scenes look at subject matter, particularly the shot of the stairwell where there was an injury earlier. Photo composition superb. Great editing, as I'm sure there were many solid photos.

Second Place: Quincy Herald-Whig, Philip Carlson. Fishers of Men. Great story! Photos complement the story well. You can sense from looking at the photos the pain behind these people's lives, but also the hope. Dominant photo was the right choice. Shows the small space carved out for their lives, plus the man pulling his socks up – great allusion – getting ready for work. Nice series of pics.

Third Place: The Daily Journal, Kankakee, Scott Anderson. Injured football player, Hayden, receives visitors at hospital. Story that could be considered easy to illustrate, with all the love involved in the drama of his recovery. But the moments were captured, and the frame selections clearly were done with care, as were the shots.

Honorable Mention: Rockford Register Star, Max Gersh and Brent Lewis. Underwater Gridiron. Wow. For a split second, I was confused as to the sport. Interesting, to say the least. Photos draw reader in immediately. This was a cool idea, one that in the end works well. Outside the box!

Division F

First Place: Herald & Review, Decatur, Danny Damiani. Trail Blazers Rodeo. Photographer demonstrates strong command of form and color, paying attention to light. Humor a refreshing and smart element to this series in frame where the boy watches dubiously of the man on the ground; and the feet flying in the air merits a laugh.

Tight composition of cowboy wrestling steer to ground is compelling and classic.

Second Place: Belleville News-Democrat, Derik Holtmann. White Castle wedding. Funny and light-hearted daily life feature about the beauty of being different.

The gawking employees and onion ring doubling as wedding ring are delights.

A tighter edit, removing some redundant wedding-esque posed shots would let readers focus on humor of onion ring wedding bands.

Third Place: Belleville News-Democrat, Steve Nagy. Prison ministry. Photographer able to focus in on storytelling emotion and concepts like men bowed in prayer and barbed wire through fence, but doesn't take us step further in creating sense of mood.

Would like to learn more about Rev. Wagner: Where does he write sermons? Are they written by hand? Does he talk to old guards? A simple portrait of Rev. Wagner so we can see him in detail.

CLASS 15 - SPOT NEWS PHOTO

Division A

First Place: LeRoy Farmer City Press, Bonita Burgess. Farmer City ADM Fire. Awesome wide shot showing fire at its peak. Simple, but effective. All the components are included.

Second Place: Elburn Herald, Patti Wilk. Basketball Regional champs. Great composition showing scoreboard, face of athlete. Although initially skeptical about considering it "spot news," this photo captures one fleeting moment that's illustrative of the entire game.

Third Place: The Woodstock Independent, Alex Vucha. After Fire, Woodstock Independent. Technically-sound photo, in which you can actually make out the waves of heat. Stands out among other fire photos.

Honorable Mention: The Free Press Advocate, Wilmington, Pam Monson. Lifestar called to accident. Unique vertical shot that includes helicopter en route. Nice composition.

Division B

First Place: Bureau County Republican, Princeton, Kevin Hieronymus. Flipping out. A once in a lifetime shot! Quick action on the photographer's part. This is a winner.

Second Place: Republic-Times, Waterloo, Alan Dooley. Fire destroys barn south of Waterloo. Billowing smoke and flames draw the eye, but the flames on the vehicle make this picture.

Third Place: Republic-Times, Waterloo, Alan Dooley. Fatal truck rollover south of Waterloo. Outstanding depiction of emergency responders at their finest in a tragic situation. Great shot!

Honorable Mention: Macoupin County Enquirer-Democrat, Carlinville, Jan Dona. Airlift. Honorable mention. Falls just a few points short of third place photo.

Division C

First Place: Jersey County Journal, Jerseyville, Robert Lyons. Off road vehicle. This a well-composed photo that captures the scene well, unfortunately for the vehicle's driver.

Second Place: Downers Grove Suburban Life, Mark Busch. Train hits car. This photo captures what I hope is a rare situation. I'm somewhat amazed that the car doesn't look a lot worse.

Third Place: Wednesday Journal Group, Oak Park, Chandler West. Ferguson 2014. While this is a strong image, it could have placed higher if I had a cutline to put it in context. Is it a response to the incident in Ferguson, but in another community or a protest that actually occurred in Ferguson? I just wish I knew a little more about it.

Division D

First Place: The Register-Mail, Galesburg, Steve Davis. Red Fire. Dynamic eye by the photographer to catch the silhouette of the firefighters against the red light. Then the water is striking an area of white light. I mean, just good stuff.

Second Place: The Register-Mail, Galesburg, Steve Davis. Manning the ladder truck. This is another good photo of a fire scene. It just isn't as dynamic as the first-place photo, but still good with excellent use of light.

Third Place: Pekin Daily Times, Skyler Edwards. Spot News Photo. Most of the time, the secret to spot news photography is being at the right place at the right time. Sometimes, though, a photographer can make the best of the situation after the fact. That's what this photo represents.

Division E

First Place: The Daily Journal, Kankakee, Scott Anderson. Man screams for help near his burning home. This was a field of strong entries - extremely strong entries. This one takes first because all the elements are in place and perfectly framed. The man's scream - and the obvious situation going on in the background. Great job.

Second Place: The Times, Ottawa, Doug Larson. Police Arrive. The subject wasn't my favorite - students mocking police officers - but the emotions were running high and the photographer captured them all. This was an unusual situation - great job of being on the spot.

Third Place: Quincy Herald-Whig, Philip Carlson. Cat rescued from Hotel Elkton fire. I love this shot. Great job. A very tough category to judge.

Division F

First Place: Chicago Sun-Times, Alex Wroblewski. 'Covering the human toll of Chicago's violence: outside Rainbow PUSH'. That face conveys so many emotions simultaneously, and combined with the posture and those clenched fists, this photo speaks like no words could. The expressions on his companions' faces and in the eyes of the guy on his right cap off the moment. And then there's that vest that adds so much contextSuperb!

Second Place: Journal Star, Peoria, David Zalaznik. Fire escape. I like the peeling, crinkling vinyl and the fact you can see the water drops raining against the dark background. The framing is just right. It looks more like he's trying to get some air than extinguishing hot spots, but either way, there is something significant you can see happening in the photo, unlike with the other fire photos that showed the actual blaze.

Third Place: Chicago Sun-Times, Alex Wroblewski. 'A tear-gassed protester seeks relief in Ferguson, Missouri'. All four of the Ferguson entries from the same photographer were excellent, but this was a more unusual perspective.

On the one hand, it's not immediately reflective or telling of the event; I had to read the caption to see what's happening. On the other hand, it's not immediately reflective or telling of the event, but it drew me in and made me want to read the caption to see what was happening. The light caught in the water is really nice.

Honorable Mention: The Dispatch & The Rock Island Argus, Gary Krambeck. Water rescue. I wish the rescuers didn't look quite so jovial at this particular moment, but I'm thinking the photog had to go to some lengths to get this one and it does capture something personal and also more unusual.

CLASS 16 - GENERAL NEWS PHOTO

Division A

First Place: The Hoopeston Chronicle, Jordan Crook. Area youths raise money during Vacation Bible School. An awesome photo that captures a fun moment for a community.

Second Place: Villa Park Suburban Life, Mark Busch. Marshmallow disbelief.

Third Place: The Woodstock Independent, Ken Farver. Marriage.

Honorable Mention: Lebanon Advertiser, David Porter. Festival Ride.

Division B

First Place: Bureau County Republican, Princeton, Amelia Bystry. Fourth of July. In a group of amazing photos, this one stood out instantly from the pack. The vividness of the fireworks contrasting with the wonderful silhouette makes for an unforgettable image.

Second Place: Kendall County Record, Yorkville, Eric Miller. Kayaking down the Fox River. Great photo capturing an exciting moment. It is like the photographer was on the water themselves.

Third Place: Lake County Suburban Life, Grayslake, Candace Johnson . Intergenerational reading . Sweet photo. Love the expressions on the grandchildren's faces.

Honorable Mention: The Galena Gazette, Jay Dickerson. Fallen soldier. One of those at the right place at the right time photos. Shows the commitment of those portraying the soldiers.

Division C

First Place: Downers Grove Suburban Life, Mark Busch. Ice bucket challenge. Perfect timing, showing some of the athletes dumping the water with gusto, while others hesitate. The expression on the boy's face in the foreground makes the shot, and captures first place. Nice work.

Second Place: Wheaton Suburban Life, Mark Busch. Prayer vigil. A moving shot of an elderly woman at a prayer vigil in the park. Makes us want to join in the prayer with her. Great composition, with the sun highlighting her on the bench. This photo evokes emotion.

Third Place: Jersey County Journal, Jerseyville, Michael Weaver. Capturing the moment. A selfie with the college president at graduation. What a great sendoff. The photographer captured the funny moment perfectly, along with the new graduate.

Honorable Mention: Jersey County Journal, Jerseyville, Robert Lyons. A final salute to the chief. I would have liked to have seen this same photo from a slightly higher angle.

Division D

First Place: The Register-Mail, Galesburg, Steve Davis. Cooke School Closing. Captures an emotional moment in the life of a child, as well as the distress the moment puts on a caregiver. Excellent photo.

Second Place: Daily Chronicle, DeKalb, Danielle Guerra. Homecoming for Mom and Dad.

Third Place: The Daily Register, Harrisburg, Tom Kane. Jailhouse Baptism.

Honorable Mention: Breeze-Courier, Taylorville, Doug Brady. Piercing Parade.

Division E

First Place: The Herald-News, Joliet, Lathan Goumas. Presenting the colors. Great job capturing a heartbreaking moment.

Second Place: The Herald-News, Joliet, Lathan Goumas. Visiting grandfather. This photo brought tears to my eyes. There really are no words necessary. The photo speaks for itself.

Third Place: The News-Gazette, Champaign, Robin Scholz. Heels over head.

Honorable Mention: Northwest Herald, Crystal Lake, Kyle Grillot. Charity Harvest. Love the composition.

Division F

First Place: Chicago Sun-Times, Alex Wroblewski. 'Cage the Elephant plays Lollapalooza 2014,' Alex Wroblewski, Chicago Sun-Times. The flow of the bodies almost looks like he was dropped into that position, and the angle pulls you into the chaos for a closer look.

Second Place: Herald & Review, Decatur, Lisa Morrison. T-Ball Spring Training. That expression -- through body and face -- is just too stinkin' cute, and it's the essence of capturing the moment. The photog had to really be paying attention to get this.

I pondered whether it would have been better to crop down to just him and the guy (which coach?) in front of him but the crate of balls adds important context. From the left of the boy in the blue shirt going to the right, though, doesn't really add anything. The second coach doesn't really appear to be part of the celebration, and the caption does not say which coach is which.

Third Place: Journal Star, Peoria, Fred Zwicky. Welcome home. The image says it all, and the guy sticking out of the window is a neat little secondary element.

Honorable Mention: Belleville News-Democrat, Derik Holtmann. Fill 'er up. Do I want to know where this photographer was when shooting this? Hmmm.

Background is just right, and the detail on the windows on the cockpit of the lower plane is pleasantly surprising.

CLASS 17 - FEATURE PHOTO

Division A

First Place: Forest Park Review, David Pierini. Photos by David Pierini. From the lighting to the shadow creating a mirror image of the musician, this is a perfect photo. Great job.

Second Place: Oakland Independent, Janice Hunt. Walnut Point puts on a show. This is an amazing scene setter photo. The calm lake, the fall leaves on the trees and the reflection on the water creating a mirror image is breathtaking.

Third Place: The Pinckneyville Press, Jeff Egbert. Jail Evacuation Drill, A Learning Experience. While a very simplistic portrait, it is eye-catching and striking.

Honorable Mention: Lebanon Advertiser, David Porter. Water Fountain. Really good in-the-moment photo here capturing a great expression. In a category filled with great photos, this could have been even higher in the rankings honestly.

Division B

First Place: Republic-Times, Waterloo, Robyn Dexter. Old church finds new life as wedding venue. Great photo. The photographer did a great job framing this shot. The overall composition is great.

Second Place: Effingham & Teutopolis News Report, Herb Meeker. Queen in derby car 8-14-14. The photographer did a great job capturing the emotion of the fair's queen as she prepared to participate in a demolition derby.

Third Place: Bureau County Republican, Princeton, Amelia Bystry. Fourth of July. Nice silhouette, good exposure, great timing. The only thing that takes away from this photo is that the subject's legs were cut off in the shot.

Honorable Mention: Sandwich Record, Eric Miller. Duck Pluck at the Sandwich Fair. Good job capturing an exciting moment at what is most likely an annual event.

Division C

First Place: Jersey County Journal, Jerseyville, Robert Lyons. Reaching for the top. Nice tight shot with a good angle.

Second Place: Jersey County Journal, Jerseyville, Robert Lyons. School year swirls to an end. Nice action shot.

Third Place: Jersey County Journal, Jerseyville, Robert Lyons. Fall pileup. Nice colorful photo of kids having fun in early fall.

Honorable Mention: Jersey County Journal, Jerseyville, Robert Lyons. A-maiz-ing ears of corn. This is a good photo of something people see every day but might not notice.

Division D

First Place: Daily Chronicle, DeKalb, Monica (Maschak) Synett. Junior Olympic Jumper. Great job at capturing a moment. The joy in her face is beautiful and is not lost in the hair beads and jump rope. If anything, they draw your eye to her face.

Second Place: The Register-Mail, Galesburg, Steve Davis. Drainage Problem. The ripples! The car and the building add to the moment.

Third Place: Daily Chronicle, DeKalb, Monica (Maschak) Synett. A Veteran and his Sons. That's love and home wrapped up in one picture.

Honorable Mention: Daily Chronicle, DeKalb, Danielle Guerra. Flying High. Wow. The birds' reactions to the eagle is something people can only see via work like this.

Division E

First Place: Northwest Herald, Crystal Lake, Sarah Nader. Frozen. This is a great shot. The detail in this photo really tells a story and makes you feel how cold it had to be that day. The photographer has a good eye and made a great call going with a nice tight shot. The frozen eyelashes are a nice touch.

Second Place: Quincy Herald-Whig, Philip Carlson. Eagles Converge on Carrion. Nice timing on this shot. It's well exposed and isn't something you see every day.

Third Place: The Times, Ottawa, Doug Larson. Sloshing Steins. This photo was exposed nicely, timed perfectly and really makes you think that Oktoberfest in Ottawa is a blast. Great shot. The photographer did an excellent job capturing the excitement of the evening.

Honorable Mention: Rockford Register Star, Max Gersh. Flying high. Very interesting shot. The photographer did a great job taking this photo while in inverted flight.

Division F

First Place: Journal Star, Peoria, Ron Johnson. Cemetery tussle. First off, it must be noted that this category was extraordinarily difficult to judge because the caliber of all entries was so high. Kudos to the field. However, it comes down to this. Ordinary moments made extraordinary, and two deer sparring at dusk IN A CEMETERY is just too good to pass up. Heck, just seeing two deer standing in a field should make a shooter feel lucky to capture. The shooter of this image, A, had an idea in advance something like this was going on or, B, just happened on it while cruising and took full advantage. Either way, it made for an amazing image that I'm sure caught readers' attention. Well done.

Second Place: The Dispatch & The Rock Island Argus, Paul Colletti. Dachshund race. Two standard subjects that always are a sure winner are kids and dogs. Well, when it comes to this image, not only are dogs involved, but it just happens to be the lovable wiener dog! What makes the shot, though, is the expressions on the owners' faces. They are so into this race and, contrary to much of society these days, they're all smiling and having a good time. Readers of this paper were smiling a lot the day this came out, as was I when it came to seeing it for my judging collection.

Third Place: Journal Star, Peoria, Kristen Zeis. Easter finery. It's either dogs or kids that make the best image subjects, right? Here is another example. A typical Easter Sunday. A shooter is there probably to cover the church service itself when all of a sudden, this moment happens. Again, an extraordinary (and just plain cute) moment from an ordinary event/activity. Great job.

Honorable Mention: The Dispatch & The Rock Island Argus, Gary Krambeck. Night lights. The extraordinary coming from an ordinary activity idea is taken to a new level here. When I first saw this, I thought of Van Gough's "Starry Night." The sky has such color and the time lapse had allowed for the same type of texture to appear. The idea to try this showed the shooter's imagination. The one thing that kept this from winning the category, though, was the fuzzy appearance of the flyer. That can't be helped in time lapse, sure, but it just can't beat out images that were sharper. Still, this shot had to get in the top 4. Just had to.

CLASS 18 - PERSONALITY PORTRAIT

Division A

First Place: The Pinckneyville Press, Jeff Egbert. Jail Evacuation Drill, A Learning Experience. This was the most daring and original of the entries; the fact the photographer wasn't afraid to get in tight set this one apart.

Second Place: The Woodstock Independent, Ken Farver. St. Baldrick's Day. It is a lovely moment and wisely uncluttered.

Third Place: The Woodstock Independent, Ken Farver. Sunflower Farmer. This radiates joy, and not just from the sunflower. Much better not to have him looking at the camera in this instance.

Honorable Mention: The Pinckneyville Press, Eric Lambert. Having a Heart for Art. If the photographer had done more with this moment, it could have placed higher.

Division B

First Place: Bureau County Republican, Princeton, Donna Barker. Crown. Nice and less overdone way to showcase a beauty pageant type event.

Second Place: The Galena Gazette, Carter Newton . Among the shelves. Good framing and an attractive photo, though it seems a little like a high school yearbook.

Third Place: Glen Ellyn Suburban Life, Erica Benson. 99 bottles of beer on the wall. This guy owns who he is, and this no-frills photo somehow captured that entirely.

Honorable Mention: The Journal-News, Hillsboro, Pavel Slepicka. Old Settlers Parade. This is nice and would have placed higher if not for the uncomfortable associations of a toddler with a gun.

Division C

First Place: Wednesday Journal Group, Oak Park, David Pierini. Comic artist and publisher 2014. Clear winner. Direct, intense, well-styled, vibrant.

Second Place: Downers Grove Suburban Life, Erica Benson. The third dimension. The layers here are actually fairly interesting.

Third Place: Jersey County Journal, Jerseyville, Robert Lyons. JCHS gets new SRO. If this is supposed to make a statement about the officer switching to a faster pace, I like it. If not, it is distracting.

Division D

First Place: The Commercial-News, Danville, Sunny Strader. Just like the record. A wonderful portrait, both in composition and capture. With just enough interesting light to bring it together.

Second Place: The Register-Mail, Galesburg, Steve Davis. Railroad Days. Great shot--expression and composition working together here.

Third Place: Daily Chronicle, DeKalb, Danielle Guerra. Overdose Upstairs. I've seen a version of this shot--a parent holding a dead child's portrait--countless times. But this one has a quiet power of its own to it, largely owing to the mother's layered expression of grief, but also the soft light.

Honorable Mention: Daily Chronicle, DeKalb, Monica (Maschak) Synett. Softball Player of the Year. A cool idea executed well. Makes for a great action portrait, with interesting contrast and color.

Division E

First Place: Rockford Register Star, Max Gersh. Blackhawk Island. Love the framing and the cats.

Second Place: Northwest Herald, Crystal Lake, Sarah Nader. Swimmer of the Year. Her attention looks clearly focused on the camera but not likely given the glistening water unless someone threw a bucket of water on her. Still makes for a good shot.

Third Place: The Daily Journal, Kankakee, Mike Voss. What it's like to be homeless. Wish I knew what the photographer had said to prompt this 'what you talking about' look.

Division F

First Place: Herald & Review, Decatur, Jim Bowling. Powwow Organizer. Really like the subject matter and the details.

Second Place: Herald & Review, Decatur, Danny Damiani. Chess Wiz. Shows that being nerdy is OK.

Third Place: Belleville News-Democrat, Tim Vizer. Wish granted. Like the use of the woman in the wish T-shirt as the backdrop. Subtle enough as to not be distracting.

CLASS 19 - SPORTS PHOTO

Division A

First Place: Elburn Herald, Marshall Farthing. Nauert. Awesome ground-level angle and perfect timing helped this photographer show a distinct central subject as well as fellow competitors.

Second Place: Elburn Herald, Marshall Farthing. Barnes sets a new conference record. The sky really made this shot, but it was up to the photographer to get the photo right and use the sky to his or her advantage.

Third Place: The Woodstock Independent, Ken Farver. Basketball Title Game. Great mix of context and detail in a wide-angle shot.

Honorable Mention: The Woodstock Independent, Ken Farver. Sled Dogs. Really good shot of a fringe sport in a category dominated by traditional sports.

Division B

First Place: Ledger-Sentinel, Oswego, David Toney. Oswego high jumper.

Second Place: The Galena Gazette, Mark Van Osdol . Brrrr!.

Third Place: The Journal-News, Hillsboro, Pavel Slepicka. Cavies Sneak Past Toppers For Title.

Honorable Mention: Effingham & Teutopolis News Report, Herb Meeker. Altamont Lady Indians getting trophy 6-12-14.

Division C

First Place: Wednesday Journal Group, Oak Park, David Pierini. speed skater 2014. Nice composition with the bands of colors, leading lines and angle.

Second Place: Jersey County Journal, Jerseyville, Robert Lyons. Fair full of thrills. I'm a sucker for rodeo photos, but would have liked to seen one from full-on the front instead of from the side.

Third Place: The Monday's Pub, Ullin, Lindsey Rae Vaughn. Egyptian Middle School Baseball. Not the most original shot, but good facial expression, lighting and angle. Could have been cropped tighter.

Division D

First Place: Du Quoin Evening Call, Doug Daniels. Leaping grab by Carns. Nice peak action

Second Place: Daily Chronicle, DeKalb, Monica (Maschak) Synett. Close Call. Photo tells the story of that play. Nice and sharp, well exposed and nicely cropped.

Third Place: Daily Leader, Pontiac, Erich Murphy. Dairy Queen pitcher Aiden Tammen. I love the look on this kid's face! Did he catch it? Only knock is the placement of the leg from another player right behind the ball. Fraction of a second later would have been better for composition.

Honorable Mention: Daily Chronicle, DeKalb, Monica (Maschak) Synett. Out at Home. Cropped nice and tight. Eye is drawn immediately to the crux of the action. Wish I could see the plate, though.

Division E

First Place: Quincy Herald-Whig, Michael Kipley. Out at the Plate. Outstanding.

Second Place: The State Journal-Register, Springfield, Ted Schurter. Hats Off. As far as first and second, it strictly is a matter of knowing that gaining a shooting rhythm for football is a little easier than with

baseball. But what a moment captured here! I'd be proud to hang this on a wall in my office for all to see. Super job.

Third Place: NewsTribune, LaSalle, Chris Yucus. Flipping out. As someone who has shot boat races before, I have never had a moment like this come along and the ability to capture this was just amazing, plus from the angle it appears the shooter was fairly close which had to produce a skip of the heart beat. The only thing that kept it from winning for me was the cropping. I would've shown less water splash and zeroed in more on the driver. Amazing effort though!

Honorable Mention: The Pantagraph, Bloomington, Lori Ann Cook-Neisler. The longest yard. Only one word for this shot comes to mind, hypnotic! Those eyes on the runner look like they're about to pop out; clearly this race meant a lot to him. Great shots are about capturing the moment just right and that is not only what the shooter did here, but that is what so, so, so many of the entrants of this category did. What talent! And it was a pleasure to have the chance to judge this overall powerful category.

Division F

First Place: Herald & Review, Decatur, Jim Bowling. Softball Celebration. Clear winner. Rose to the top quickly. Peak moment.

Second Place: Belleville News-Democrat, Zia Nizami. Fly out.

Third Place: Daily Herald Group, Arlington Heights, Mark Black. Joyful.

Honorable Mention: Herald & Review, Decatur, Danny Damiani. State Football Reaction.

CLASS 21 EDITORIAL CARTOON

All Divisions Judged Together

First Place: Pike Press, Pittsfield, Bill Beard. "Let It Go," my "deer". Very funny and well done. Made me laugh more than any other cartoon.

Second Place: Wednesday Journal Group, Oak Park, Staff. Shrubtown 112614. I caught myself nodding in agreement as soon as I looked at this cartoon. Perfectly portrays reliance and addiction to technology in today's society.

Third Place: The Galena Gazette, Jay Dickerson. Sharpshooters. Really humorous take on rather seems like a silly proposal by the city council. Good job.

Honorable Mention: Wednesday Journal Group, Oak Park, Marc Stopeck. Shrubtown 05-21-14. Really puts people's "problems" in perspective.

CLASS 21 - ILLUSTRATION

Division A

First Place: Beecher City Journal, PJ Ryan. Founding Families Logo. Original, readable and enhances the story.

Second Place: The Woodstock Independent, Jason Neumann. Into the Darkness. Full of detail, interesting to look at.

Third Place: The Woodstock Independent, Katelyn Stanek. Top 10 Sports. Bright and bold, enhances story.

Division B

First Place: The Bolingbrook Bugle, Shelley Holmgren . The race for District 11. The illustration is detailed, attention-getting and informative. It is put together well and visually appealing. It's clear depiction of the information and still refers readers to important information inside.

Second Place: The Niles Bugle, Morton Grove & Park Ridge Bugle, Shelley Holmgren, Alex V. Hernandez. Fans Assemble. The illustration is a very creative, eye-catching way to display photos and is also very relevant to the event coverage.

Third Place: The Galena Gazette, Jay Dickerson. School budget shred. The illustration fits well with the headline and gets straight to the point summarizing the story, while directing those who wish to know more to the appropriate inside page, prompting them to dig deeper in to the paper. The font size of the information is certainly attention-getting.

Honorable Mention: The Galena Gazette, Jay Dickerson. Piece of Junk?. The illustration is eye-catching and illustrates the survey findings in a way that would draw more attention than a block of text or common graph.

Division D

First Place: Daily Chronicle, DeKalb, Monica (Maschak) Synett. Track Jumper. Tremendous photo illustration. Great execution of a very creative idea. Fantastic entry.

Second Place: Daily Chronicle, DeKalb, Danielle Guerra. Cost of Raising Kids. Very cute, very evocative illustration. Tells a story of its own.

Third Place: The Register-Mail, Galesburg, Steve Davis. A Blood Moon on the Rise. Good photography makes this illustration shine.

Division E

First Place: The News-Gazette, Champaign, Joel Leizer. Growing pains. Excellent illustrations of the buildings. Informative and adds information to the story, as well as providing a visual component.

Second Place: Kane County Chronicle, St. Charles, Scott Helmchen. Eating disorders: National awareness week brings attention to severity of illness. Well done, with simple details that illustrate the emotion and seriousness of the topic.

Third Place: Rockford Register Star, Max Gersh. Underwater. Attractive and clever. Clearly illustrates the main topic of the story.

Honorable Mention: Northwest Herald, Crystal Lake, Scott Helmchen. Governor donations. Crisp and clever. Could be improved by less money in Quinn's jar to illustrate the difference.

Division F

First Place: Journal Star, Peoria, Chris Grimm. Experience Jimmy. Great illustration. You know immediately who it is and the bright colors really draw your attention to the story.

Second Place: Journal Star, Peoria, Chris Grimm. All for Richard. Nice dominate illustration, plus smaller ones at the bottom of the page. Good work.

Third Place: Journal Star, Peoria, Michael Anthony Noel. Brain needs exercise, too. Illustrates story well. Nice work.

Honorable Mention: Journal Star, Peoria, Michael Noel. Shifting Careers. Simple, but effective. Good job.

CLASS 22 - INFORMATIONAL GRAPHIC

Division A

First Place: Villa Park Suburban Life, Jes Spivak. Villa Park Over the Years Timeline. This entire package is appealing -- from the old photos to the timeline. A clear winner in the field of tough competition.

Second Place: Forest Park Review, Jean Lotus, John Rice, Sky Hatter. Forest Park Cemeteries Map. Informative and eye catching. I was engaged and I'm not even from the area. That's what it's all about.

Third Place: The Woodstock Independent, Katelyn Stanek. Roadmap Mishmash. Thank you for simplifying a confusing issue.

Honorable Mention: The Woodstock Independent, Katelyn Stanek. Housing By the Numbers. This is a nice collection of information that is presented easy for the readers to follow.

Division B

First Place: Macoupin County Enquirer-Democrat, Carlinville, Brandon Secrist. High Voltage Line. The graphic breaks down the benefits of the project in a way that makes them clear to readers without them needing to read the entire story, but provides enough information to draw them to the text. It's clear, clean and simple while also well organized and graphically pleasing.

Second Place: The Romeoville Bugle, Shelley Holmgren, Laura Katauskas . Impact of education funding on area school districts . The graphic is bright and attention-getting while very practical. It conveys several pieces of information in one easy-to-read package and allows for a very quick visual comparison that would be impossible to obtain with text alone.

Third Place: Downers Grove, Westmont, Woodridge & Lisle Bugle, Shelley Holmgren, Jonathan Samples . Breaking down stormwater utility numbers. The graphic breaks down each project by cost and explains the rate structure, clearly displaying the information readers want to know in a creative manner that supplements the text well.

Honorable Mention: Macoupin County Enquirer-Democrat, Carlinville, Aimee Arseneaux-Payne. City council members neglect OMA training. The graphic is eye-catching and puts the percentages mentioned in the text into visual perspective, highlighting the importance of the issue.

Division C

First Place: Downers Grove Suburban Life, Dave Lemery. Monthly home sales trends. Easily the top entry in this category. Easy to read graphic helps the reader understand the story.

Second Place: Jersey County Journal, Jerseyville, Annette Marshall. Late winter deer season. Good job. Informational. It is sure to grab the attention of deer hunters.

Third Place: Downers Grove Suburban Life, Jes Spivak. Sports championships by the numbers. Good job. If it was a bit larger, it may have placed higher.

Division D

First Place: The Register-Mail, Galesburg, Christina Landon. Cha-Ching. Bright graphic jump off the page. It's a good way to present a lot of numbers in a clear, straightforward manner.

Second Place: Daily Chronicle, DeKalb, Kristina Peters. Property tax rates in DeKalb County. Clear, clean graphic. The background image in the center is a nice touch.

Third Place: The Register-Mail, Galesburg, Christina Landon. Who's teaching?. Good, informative graphic. There could have been more of a difference in the shading on a couple of the circles.

Division E

First Place: The Daily Journal, Kankakee, Dawn Breeden, Dimitri Kalantzis. Kankakee City Budget. Tremendous amount of information packed into one graphic. Well presented, easily understandable and extremely well done. Kudos

Second Place: The Daily Journal, Kankakee, David Dressler. Beer & Food Pairings. A great looking graphic adds information to the accompanying story. Looks great and contains good content.

Third Place: Northwest Herald, Crystal Lake, Kristina Peters. Absent teachers info graphic. A simple graphic that looks great. Nicely designed and filled with good information.

Division F

First Place: Chicago Sun-Times, Max Rust. 'What the 2014 World Cup would look like if it wasn't about soccer'. I love the concept for this graphic. Tremendously interesting. I don't love the circular buttons for the flags, but that is really being picky about a wonderful graphic.

Second Place: Journal Star, Peoria, Michael Noel. 3D EF-4 Tornado. Great looking graphic. I love the information and the details about how radar maps a tornado. Really strong entry in a very, very competitive field.

Third Place: The Dispatch & The Rock Island Argus, Douglas Teggatz and Kevin Smith. Television political advertising spending. Wow. So much information it's stunning. Great job producing this product. It looks great and is chock-full of information readers NEED to know.

Honorable Mention: Herald & Review, Decatur, Jean Zerfowski. Heart information.

CLASS 23 - SINGLE PAGE DESIGN

Division A

First Place: The Woodstock Independent, Katelyn Stanek. Off to the Races. The eye contact, forward motion and visual energy of the photograph carried this entry to the top of the category.

Second Place: Forest Park Review, Sky Hatter, design; John Rice text. Gravedigger for the world. Subject matter illustrated with period photos made a nice informational connected graphic. Clean and neat, appealing to the eye.

Third Place: Berwyn Suburban Life, Jes Spivak. Run fast!. Great photo, attention getting and action filled. Yet it needed more information to engage the reader.

Honorable Mention: Paxton Record, Will Brumleve. Page 1 Sept 17. Great photo to pull readers into the page. But mug shot facing off the page detracted from the layout.

Division B

First Place: The Regional News, Palos Heights, Chuck Ingwersen. The Regional News Front Page December 4, 2014. Judging this category is subjective. There are differing views on page design. Many of us still believe we can have graphically pleasing page design that draws the reader with crisp headlines,

interesting photos and graphics and still include good old fashioned text. When I see this page, I want to spend time with it. The design draws me in and the quality content keeps me there.

Second Place: LaGrange Suburban Life, Dave Lemery. Champs!. Simple but awesome. Great way to celebrate a historical moment in the community. Definitely a keepsake.

Third Place: Bureau County Republican, Princeton, Sarah Denton. Single page design.

Division C

First Place: Downers Grove Suburban Life, Jes Spivak. Diving in. The full - spread beautiful picture ROCKS this page. Love it! I do like the bottom spread - i'm sure the blurry is from a dropped link?

Second Place: Austin Weekly News, Chicago, Claire Innes, David Pierini, Terry Dean. Happy to dance - 07/02/14. beautiful bright feature picture - wanted to go read the story listed above the mast good use of white space on byline areas

Third Place: Wednesday Journal Group, Oak Park, Jacquinete Baldwin, David Pierini. Lifeline feature section design. love this new and different way of featuring the year-in-review.. nice large pictures.. WHEN I steal this idea I might use the cutlines on each picture instead of the numbers to keep from having to hunt the info (because I AM stealing this!!!) lol

Honorable Mention: Austin Weekly News, Chicago, Claire Innes, LaRisa Lynch, Terry Dean. A symphony in Austin - 03/19/14. Like the lead letter - several entry points to enter as a reader - I even had to stop and read the questions/answers even though I was only supposed to be doing design ;)

Division D

First Place: The Register-Mail, Galesburg, Adam McHugh. GameTime - A Physical Showdown. Nice balanced page. And in a world of horizontal photos and layout, I love to see such a vertically drawn page!

Second Place: Daily Chronicle, DeKalb, Inger Koch. Living Green. Simple layout, and the white space is nice on the eyes.

Third Place: Daily Chronicle, DeKalb, Inger Koch. Strings Under the Stars. Nice artwork. The columns look a little off balance at the bottom. Not a big deal, but distracted me a bit.

Honorable Mention: Paris Beacon-News, Christopher Morrival. New Hope. Love the originality of the artwork. Nice. You made something bigger out of a building.

Division E

First Place: The News-Gazette, Champaign, Niko Dugan. Exit strategy. Great graphics/design, tying in with subject, and even the other story on the page has a nifty photo.

Second Place: Northwest Herald, Crystal Lake, Scott Helmchen. Election 2014. good, clean, not too busy. I'm not 100 percent sold on the story being above the banner, but the only real negative I would say is that the complete election coverage would CONTINUE not begin on the inside page.

Third Place: The Herald-News, Joliet, Scott Helmchen. Road to recovery. Although I get the reference that she was injured in a roadway accident, the headline is cliché. The overall layout, though, is good, with a balance of photos from before and after, and the pull quote, although it might have been more useful elsewhere in terms of breaking up gray. I like the side folios.

Honorable Mention: The News-Gazette, Champaign, Mike Goebel. SHOUT. LOL -- Really like the idea behind this, and I, not really a sports fan, even started reading the column, so that says a lot. I do think too much was crammed in on the right-hand side, though. The Australian open could have gone inside.

Division F

First Place: Chicago Sun-Times, Jessica Sedgwick. 'Get juiced,' Jessica Sedgwick, Chicago Sun-Times. The page was visually stimulating with a variety of fonts, shapes and colors without being cluttered. It offered a variety of information in simple, clean style.

Second Place: Chicago Sun-Times, Jessica Sedgwick. 'Worth their salt,' Jessica Sedgwick, Chicago Sun-Times. The page had an attention grabbing headline and great use of spot color to break up the background. The text was formatted in a clean manner and the center photo was perfectly placed to break up text, but everything was labeled clearly to support a good reader flow. And all of this was done without over-doing any one element or appearing cluttered.

Third Place: Daily Herald Group, Arlington Heights, Brian Shamie. Brian Shamie Page Design. The sizing of the photos and headlines at the top of the page grabs reader attention and draws interest into the text at the bottom. The design is bold, but clean.

Honorable Mention: Journal Star, Peoria, Chris Grimm. All for Richard. I most enjoy the artwork of this page and that the dominant image was large and given room to breathe. The font size and variety adds depth where the illustration alone could have appeared flat and the kicker paragraph and breakouts are arranged and formatted well to break up what otherwise could have just been a block of gray.

CLASS 24 - NEWSPAPER DESIGN

Division A

First Place: Forest Park Review, Jacquinete Baldwin, David Pierini, Jean Lotus. Forest Park Review design . Great layouts that are easy to follow; strong use of photos and graphics. Headline choices balanced between bold and informative.

Second Place: Berwyn Suburban Life, Staff. Berwyn Suburban Life. Appealing use of graphics and color draws readers in. Headlines are accurate and informative.

Third Place: The Woodstock Independent, Staff. Newspaper Design, Woodstock Independent. Great font choices create a good flow throughout and help to break up text. Pages and subjects easily identifiable, good touches with identifiers on the obits and headlines.

Honorable Mention: LeRoy Farmer City Press, Jerry Nowicki. LeRoy Farmer City Press Newspaper Design. Packs a lot of news into the space, but good flow keeps things easy to follow.

Division B

First Place: The Galena Gazette, Staff. Newspaper design. Clean layout/design; easy to navigate; good photos; interesting stories; ad placement did not detract from stories. Good job!

Second Place: Riverside-Brookfield Landmark, Sky Hatter, David Pierini, Jaquinete Baldwin. Riverside-Brookfield Landmark Design. This paper was easy to navigate. Interesting/varied layout/design. Headlines interesting and told what story was about. Nice use of white space.

Third Place: Bureau County Republican, Princeton, BCR Staff. Newspaper Design. Clean layout/design. Good photos. Nice job!

Honorable Mention: Glen Ellyn Suburban Life, Staff. Glen Ellyn Suburban Life. Good photos/headline choices. Nice use of white space.

Division C

First Place: Downers Grove Suburban Life, Staff. Downers Grove Suburban Life. A very progressive design. I love the page headers and the info graphs at the top. Headlines could have a little more punch. But overall a fantastic design in any division.

Second Place: Wednesday Journal Group, Oak Park, Claire Innes, David Pierini, Dan Haley. Anonymous texting - 10/15/14. Very close to first place winner. I like the centered heads in this format. Headlines are snappy and attention grabbing. Plenty of local stories and photos inside with pull quotes and graphics. Nice work.

Third Place: Austin Weekly News, Chicago, Claire Innes, Terry Dean, Dan Haley. Gleaming wisdom - 10/15/14 and Austin cop - 01/01/14. Nice, clean design. Would like to see more locally written stories, which would lead to better design inside. Too many pages filled up with photos.

Division D

First Place: The Register-Mail, Galesburg, Staff. Newspaper Design. Good use of color and black and white mix. Just not the same old same old. Looking at the pages causes more than a cursory glance. It grabs one's attention.

Second Place: Pekin Daily Times, Staff. Newspaper Design. The front section is a WOW with the coverage from the tornado. The rest of the paper less than lackluster, but still not too shabby

Third Place: Paris Beacon-News, Christopher Morrival. A Final March On the Line. Like the basic layout, some "yowser" factors but not too many. However, good job overall.

Honorable Mention: Daily Chronicle, DeKalb, Staff. Daily Chronicle. Good, solid, old school basic newspaper design. Not too fancy but not really jaw-dropping exciting, either.

Division E

First Place: The News-Gazette, Champaign, Staff. The News-Gazette. Well balanced and organized; good flow from start to finish. Engaging headlines. Use of color helps balance pages without detracting from stories.

Second Place: Northwest Herald, Crystal Lake, Staff. Northwest Herald. Good use of graphics and art. Good overall flow of the paper. Could use more separation for larger issues.

Division F

First Place: Herald & Review, Decatur, Staff. Newspaper Design. Beautiful and inviting design. Color palette is perfect. White spacing works well. It is clear attention to detail and a formula for success were used both in producing the day's edition and designing it.

Second Place: The Dispatch & The Rock Island Argus, Staff. The Rock Island Argus. Unique look. Each section blends well with the next. Information well-organized. Editorial page looks fantastic. Super look.

Third Place: Chicago Sun-Times, Staff. Chicago Sun-Times design (2 days). One-story covers can be powerful, but they too can be repetitive. Clearly, the Sun-Times is well done. It's an engaging look.

Honorable Mention: Journal Star, Peoria, Staff. Journal Star. Nice, clean look, strong font selections. Conventional, not much risks or deviations from the norm but well done nonetheless.

CLASS 25 - HEADLINE WRITING

Division A

First Place: Paxton Record, Will Brumleve. Paxton Record headlines. Best overall collection of headlines, particularly 'Honored..' and 'Perfect 10', which were standouts here.

Second Place: Oakland Independent, Janice Hunt. Janice Hunt headlines. Another good collection of headlines, with the standout being 'Love is on the air', with its playful twist on the familiar chestnut.

Third Place: The Woodstock Independent, Sandy Kucharski. Headlines, Woodstock Independent. Good headline that draws you in to see what it means. Complemented well by the equally interesting deck headline.

Honorable Mention: El Paso Journal, Jennie Kearney. Headline entries as above. A bovine brouhaha doesn't happen often. Nor does alliteration like that.

Division B

First Place: The Galena Gazette, Hillary Dickerson. Headline writing. Lots of playfulness in this set, and they serve the visuals well. Nicely done.

Second Place: Bureau County Republican, Princeton, Terri Simon. Headline writing. Some nice headlines.

Third Place: The Reporter, Hickory Hills, Jeff Vorva. Five headlines from Jeff Vorva. Some creative headlines.

Honorable Mention: Lake County Suburban Life, Grayslake, Jes Spivak . Lake County Suburban Life headlines . Some good ones here.

Division C

First Place: Jersey County Journal, Jerseyville, Robert Lyons. Saluting, A-maizing, Capturing, Swirling, Kicking.

Second Place: Wednesday Journal Group, Oak Park, Ken Trainor. Wednesday Journal, Headlines, 2014.

Third Place: Downers Grove Suburban Life, Renee Tomell. Headlines.

Division D

First Place: Daily Chronicle, DeKalb, Eric Olson. Headlines. Lots of variety here, which makes this entry stand out. Nothing here was generic. Everything grabbed my attention too. Was a close call in this division, but the fish, odor and tractor ones pushed it ahead of the others.

Second Place: Chicago Daily Law Bulletin, Pat Milhizer. Chicago Daily Law Bulletin headlines. 'Spilling the beans', 'One Foote' were two of my favorite in the entire category. Was a close second.

Third Place: Chicago Daily Law Bulletin, Josh Weinhold. Chicago Daily Law Bulletin headlines. Another solid entry, with a lot of variety. No shame in third place here. Easily could have been the winner. 'This call may be recorded' is a very, very good headline. Well done.

Honorable Mention: Robinson Daily News, Greg Bilbrey. Paintball players mount battles on a Biblical scale. While this headline was also very good, only one headline in this entry. By rules, should be five.

Division E

First Place: The News-Gazette, Champaign, Mike Goebel. Instant Rice. coaches hed with photos was innovative; "biting cold" and "super conductor" and "instant Rice" were nicely succinct.

Second Place: Sauk Valley Media, Sterling, Jeff Rogers. This little pig went to market. "winter's a hoot" and "hold the salt" stood out; pig went to market was all too obvious

Third Place: Sauk Valley Media, Sterling, Jeff Rogers. The doctor is in ... the money. better than the above

Honorable Mention: Northwest Herald, Crystal Lake, Jami Kunzer. Train Attraction. These showed more imagination

Division F

First Place: Chicago Sun-Times, Darel Jevens. A selection of 5 headlines by Darel Jevens, Chicago Sun-Times. steak tasted good; nymph missed the mark; eggs/dozen was a little stretch; hunky wolf OK; beak of burden good

Second Place: Belleville News-Democrat, Jason Koch. Headline writing: Jason Koch. Committee meeting didn't really end in success, because it was only committee approval, so Chloe's headline wasn't precisely accurate. But all the others were above average.

Third Place: Daily Herald Group, Arlington Heights, Don Friske. Don Friske Headlines. What a drag IS a drag; Special deliveries isn't clear; Hale still hearty a but trite but OK; Bouncing ball: no imagination; All do and no die works for me

Honorable Mention: Journal Star, Peoria, Kathy Ryneanson. Kathy Ryneanson Headlines. nothing special but good work

CLASS 26 - SPORTS SECTION

Division A

First Place: Elburn Herald, Staff. March 13, 2014, Sports section, May 22, 2014, Sports section. Stellar visuals and clean copy. Some small design hiccups but overall a very pleasing sports section.

Second Place: The Woodstock Independent, Staff. Sports Section, Woodstock Independent. Great unique stories. Would like to see more photos to go with the content. Design was clean.

Third Place: The Carroll County Review, Thomson, Jon Whitney. Sports Section. Thorough content with good photos to match. Design was sometimes hard to follow.

Honorable Mention: LeRoy Farmer City Press, Jerry Nowicki. LeRoy Farmer City Press Sports. Clean design and good content. No significant eye-catching photos or stories.

Division B

First Place: Glen Ellyn Suburban Life, Staff. Glen Ellyn Suburban Life sports section. Great design. The page flowed well, the content was easy to read and understand and the stories and photos were strong as well. Readers should be happy.

Second Place: Kendall County Record, Yorkville, Staff. Kendall County Record March 16 and Nov. 13 Sports pages. Top-notch sports coverage for baseball and softball, visuals strong throughout. Design became repetitive but the content was thorough.

Third Place: Macoupin County Enquirer-Democrat, Carlinville, Staff. MCED Sports Section. Good photos and the stories were on point. Would have liked to have seen more design emphasis on the photographs.

Honorable Mention: The Galena Gazette, Paul Gothard. Galena Gazette Sports Section. Photos were superb. Design and writing were not up to the quality of the photographs.

Division C

First Place: Downers Grove Suburban Life, Staff. Downers Grove Suburban Life sports section. Very tough call here, but this entry got the slight nod for the variety offered to readers. The athlete of the week feature and 'all-area' selections made this stand out from a very tight group.

Second Place: Wednesday Journal Group, Oak Park, Marty Farmer. SPORTS SECTION. Great local coverage. Quality of writing in this issue gave it the edge over the remaining two. Nicely done story on the student-athlete who passed away.

Third Place: Wednesday Journal Group, Oak Park, STAFF. SPORTS SECTION. Another nice section with lots of coverage. Several different options for readers.

Honorable Mention: Jersey County Journal, Jerseyville, Sam Elliott. Journal Sports. While a great sports section in its own right, when compared to the rest of the multi-page sections in this category, this entry lacks a little luster. Job well done either way.

Division D

First Place: The Register-Mail, Galesburg, Staff. Sports Section. This section had everything a sports reader would want. Its great variety and the sheer depth of interesting tidbits pushed this entry over the top. Design of the Aug. 28 issue (football preview) was top-notch. Kudos.

Second Place: Daily Chronicle, DeKalb, Staff. Sports section. A very close second. Lots of local coverage, which is always important. MAC championship package was as good as it gets.

Third Place: Breeze-Courier, Taylorville, Derek Parris. Sports Section. Fall Sports Preview looks like quite the undertaking. The sheer volume of coverage makes this as impressive as any section in the category.

Honorable Mention: Du Quoin Evening Call, Doug Daniels. Photos of highlight-reel catches headline Regional tournament coverage. Another good section with a bunch of great photos. Only thing holding this one back was lack of creative design.

Division E

First Place: Sauk Valley Media, Sterling, Sports staff. March 22, 2014; May 23, 2014. Front pages are consistently eye-popping. Loved the shot of long jumper landing. The March mix of interesting graphics,

text enlargements and photos was terrific. I like the spare use of a single column for quick stats and news briefs. It may wind up being too busy and hard to find certain items, but it made for an interesting page to the eye.

Second Place: Quincy Herald-Whig, Matt Schuckman. Herald-Whig Sports Section. Excellent opening photos on both sections. Best photos in October edition: sad look on losing team's face in softball. Soccer head clash maybe should have been bigger. In March, I liked stat page showing up at end of section. Both sports sections promote web content well, but do not have teasers to draw readers into the sports section.

Third Place: The News-Gazette, Champaign, Staff. The News-Gazette. Oct. 16 - Loved the picture of McLain. The tombstone-ing of three stories below his picture could have used a bit more creativity. Really liked the upper two pics that promoted stories inside the section. Insides are good blends of small portrait pics with stats mixed with interesting action shots. In March issue - liked the state outline featuring players with the irony of not one Illinois school in big dance. Excellent two-page graphical section, too. Good layout / interview with wrestler.

Honorable Mention: Effingham Daily News, Staff. Effingham Daily News sports section. Of the two entries, the May section balanced good photos with the accompanying stories. The community news held precedence over the national and pro headlines. The layout was fundamentally sound and logical, but it didn't experiment, it didn't push. But it was all well written and got some unusual angles, heralded sports that don't get as much attention.

Division F

First Place: Chicago Sun-Times, Staff. Chicago Sun-Times sports sections (2 days). Clear first place winner. The layout, graphics, photos, writing... everything is phenomenal. Everything about these pages and pops and draws the eye to something interesting.

Second Place: Journal Star, Peoria, Staff. Journal Star Sports Section. Pretty good front page layouts, but some pages, particularly on the inside, tend to become busy. Good writing, though. Especially like the top 10 stories of the year, and the stories about the fallen sports heroes.

Third Place: Herald & Review, Decatur, Mike Albright. Sports Section. Layouts are consistently clean and easy to follow. Photos are great! These sections are great because there's a nice balance of game-coverage, features and in-depth coverage. Really like the story about the pitchers.

Honorable Mention: The Dispatch & The Rock Island Argus, Staff. Sports. Two really good sections. Pages have a lot of information and several stories each, without becoming too busy or overwhelming to the eye. There are some unique design elements used that make the pages interesting — the drop shadows on pictures and infoboxes. The design of the all-star bowlers pages was really great. Writing was also good, good balance of coverage of different sports on the local and national level.

CLASS 27 - LIFESTYLE SECTION

Division A

First Place: Berwyn Suburban Life, Staff. Berwyn Suburban Life lifestyle section. Beautiful layout, great content the section made you want to go there.

Second Place: The Cass County Star-Gazette, Beardstown, Staff. Breast Cancer Awareness. Covering a difficult subject and connecting it with the community is always a success. Good effort.

Division B

First Place: Ledger-Sentinel, Oswego, Staff. Jan. 23 and Aug. 28 Countywide sections. Good layout and section includes every aspect of lifestyles.

Second Place: The Galena Gazette, Staff. Lifestyle section. Clear, colorful pictures, especially the St. Patrick's Day features. This posed a difficult decision between first and second place rankings. Great job!

Third Place: Glen Ellyn Suburban Life, Staff. Glen Ellyn Suburban Life lifestyle section. This entry vies for second-place tie, lacking only in amount of content included in their lifestyle section.

Honorable Mention: Bureau County Republican, Princeton, Rita Roberts/Sarah Denton. Lifestyle section. Colorful pictures. More impromptu poses would add to this section.

Division C

First Place: Downers Grove Suburban Life, Staff. Downers Grove Suburban Life lifestyle section. This was a tough one to judge. Both are quality entries. The welcoming presentation of the Downers Grove section allowed it to edge out Lifelines. I particularly like how events are featured in the easy-to-read Plan it. Mystery diner is also a nice feature. Well done.

Second Place: Wednesday Journal Group, Oak Park, Staff. LifeLines. This category was tough. Your Lifelines section holds a wealth of information that I'm certain your readers follow faithfully. I liked that you chose to use large headlines. It helped to break up the uniformity of the same-sized book covers. It's good section.

Division D

First Place: The Register-Mail, Galesburg, Staff. Lifestyles. That's one of the most beautiful jump pages I've seen. Classy look to it. The front is good too, of course. I love local, local. And the interesting byline.

Second Place: Daily Chronicle, DeKalb, Inger Koch. Lifestyle. A lot of great stuff to look at!

Third Place: The Register-Mail, Galesburg, Staff. Religion.

Honorable Mention: Pekin Daily Times, Staff. Lifestyles.

Division E

First Place: Northwest Herald, Crystal Lake, Jami Kunzer. Planit Play. Nice section. It has local stories that are really good and will help readers remember where they saw them, so they know to pick up the section again and again for added entertainment.

Second Place: Sauk Valley Media, Sterling, Lucas Pauley, Planit editor. Planit Sauk Valley. Nice mix of local stories, calendar of events and other material.

Third Place: The Southern Illinoisan, Carbondale, Cara Recine, Brenda Kirkpatrick. Flipside. Good section. Nice local appeal.

Honorable Mention: The Telegraph, Alton, Jill Moon. Aton Telegraph Lifestyles. Good section. Nice mix of material included. Good work.

Division F

First Place: Journal Star, Peoria, Sally McKee, Chris Grimm, Thomas Bruch. Journal Star Cue section. Phenomenal layout and wonderful writing. I LOVE the story about the Breaking Bad script supervisor.

Second Place: The Dispatch & The Rock Island Argus, Staff. Timeout ; South of 20. Nice layout! Great original contact. Really liked the Valentine's Day feature.

Third Place: Herald & Review, Decatur, Jeana Matherly. Lifestyle Section. Although the design leaves something to be desired, the pages offer readers a lot of information.

Honorable Mention: Daily Herald Group, Arlington Heights, Deb Pankey, Staff. Daily Herald Food Section. Lots of good columns and recipes! The Cook of the Week Challenge is a neat idea, too.

CLASS 28 - SPECIAL SECTION

Division A

First Place: Coal City Courant, Staff. Veterans Day edition. What a great way to honor veterans. Nice section. Good work.

Second Place: The Woodstock Independent, Staff. Up All Night. Great idea for a special section! Let's readers know what's going on after regular business hours. Great work!

Third Place: El Paso Journal, Jennie Kearney, Rita Drake. Special Section for El Paso Public Library new construction. Super neat way to recognize a change in the community. Good work!

Honorable Mention: LeRoy Farmer City Press, Jerry Nowicki. Special LeRoy Fire and Ambulance Section. Nice work! Great way to help readers recognize change. This section could even be saved as a keepsake.

Division B

First Place: Lake County Suburban Life, Grayslake, Staff. Forefronts 2014 . This stood out as a first place winner because of the content covered. This was a section that was well done from start to finish, including the layout/design, writing and photography. Great effort!

Second Place: The Galena Gazette, Hillary Dickerson. Salute to Veterans. Interesting content; great layout/design. I'm sure this was a highly read and kept section. There was a good balance of stories. Good job

Third Place: The Galena Gazette, Paul Gothard, Hillary Dickerson. Tour of Homes. Good layout/design; Interesting content.

Honorable Mention: Effingham & Teutopolis News Report, Staff. Kids to veterans in one year November 6, 2014. Nicely done; great layout; eye-catching cover.

Division C

First Place: Wednesday Journal Group, Oak Park, Staff. Community of Caring 2014. Cover was beautiful! Stories were well-written, informative and interesting. This was a well-done section. Easy choice for first place.

Second Place: Wednesday Journal Group, Oak Park, Staff. Spring Home 2014. Eye-catching photos. Stories were interesting and informative. Nice job!

Third Place: Downers Grove Suburban Life, Staff. Suburban Life Best Under 40. Great concept for a special section. Layout/design was easy to follow and appealing. Articles were well-written.

Honorable Mention: Wednesday Journal Group, Oak Park, Jacquinete Baldwin, David Pierini, Marty Farmer. Basketball Preview . Interesting stories. It was great to see quotes from student athletes; makes for a more interesting read. Good use of quotes throughout stories. Good job!

Division D

First Place: Daily Chronicle, DeKalb, Staff. Prep football tab. I love the puzzle theme. Especially how each photo is treated differently. Sports are always important. Great job!

Second Place: Pekin Daily Times, Staff. Horizons. Thin columns and text heavy, but the content is so important! And although it's local to you, that section would fit nicely in most communities!

Third Place: The Courier, Lincoln, Bill Welt. Rainers make history. Great, useful special section. Advertisers made a great decision.

TIE: Honorable Mention: Daily Chronicle, DeKalb, Staff. Made in DeKalb County. Beautiful example of supporting your community.

TIE: Honorable Mention: The Register-Mail, Galesburg, Lisa Coon. What's in a Name?. Neat idea. Something for everyone. Good, consistent section.

Division E

First Place: Rockford Register Star, Staff. 1944: America in battle.

Second Place: Northwest Herald, Crystal Lake, Staff. Everyday Heroes. Loved the stories on individuals making a difference.. lots of time and hard work went into this issue!

Third Place: Sauk Valley Media, Sterling, Sports staff. High School Hard Knocks.

Honorable Mention: Rockford Register Star, Staff. Haunted Rockford. lots of research went into this issue.. interesting reading... took hours to put this together... time well spent!

Division F

First Place: Journal Star, Peoria, Staff. Washington Tornado One Year Later. This one will be a keepsake. Amazing photos throughout - before and after. Great job. It's obvious it was a labor of love.

Second Place: Belleville News-Democrat, Jason Koch. High School Football Preview. I think sports should have a separate special section category. This one is fantastic, and the only reason it is second instead of first is that #1 has a broader appeal. There is no flaw I can find in writing or photography. Excellent work.

Third Place: Belleville News-Democrat, Brad Weisenstein. Belleville Family Album. I hope you had as much fun developing this section as I did reading it. Great photos.

CLASS 29 - BEST WEBSITE

Division A

First Place: Forest Park Review, Staff. Forest Park Review Website. I truly enjoyed this website and thought it to be easy to navigate through. The website is clean, and a viewer could see that throughout, starting with the tabs and sub-tabs. I liked the way the sub-tabs expanded horizontally rather than vertically. It kept the sub-tabs from interfering with the stories below. The only suggestion I would make is to highlight the graphics or photos in the top story making it larger. For example, on Tuesday, March 10, the main story is titled "Brewmasters." I would have expanded that block across the top of the website.

Second Place: The Woodstock Independent, Staff. TheWoodstockIndependent.com. Bumped up a division. I like how the latest news is highlighted at the top of the website by scrolling through and including photos. The website is easy to navigate through, which is always a plus.

Another aspect that I like is the interactive calendar at the top right of the website. For a weekly paper, one of the main focuses should be on the community and community events. It seems like this website is one of the go-to places to find out what activities and events are happening. I would suggest making the scrolling latest news larger to highlight what is the most important aspect on the website. It should act like an interactive newspaper. If you are designing a newspaper, you want to highlight one graphic as the centerpiece to show what is important. On your website, it should show what the viewer NEEDS to see as the largest piece on the page.

Division B

First Place: Republic-Times, Waterloo, Ryan Ledendecker, Christine Otten. Republic-Times website. This website is first place because every bit of the website screams community. The Republic-Times uses a breaking news scroll, a countdown to important events, sports scores and links to social media to capture the visitors to the site. It provides just enough information where the visitor will want more from the paper. The only thing I would suggest is to bring up the bar at the bottom showing stories from business, city/county, community, government, police and school. It is important to highlight the information the community wants and needs in a website, and this one does that.

Second Place: Bureau County Republican, Princeton, BCR Staff. Best Website. I truly enjoyed this website. The large, scrolling images at the top followed by local stories and image-based news going down the page really kept the visitor's eye on the page and wanting to open the stories. The only thing I would be worried about is the lack of a pay wall. There might be a correlation between dwindling subscribers and free news on your website.

Third Place: Riverside-Brookfield Landmark, Staff. Riverside Brookfield Landmark Website. The design on this website is nicely done, except for the fact that it is text heavy. I see in the picture/screenshot provided that there was picture on the top portion of the website, but when visiting the live site, there was no center picture or something highlighted at the top of the page. The visitor just gets lost in the text that flows all the way down the page.

I liked the contrasting colors and font for the website, which I believe sets it apart from other websites who like to stay neutral and serif in font.

Honorable Mention: The Galena Gazette, Staff. galenagazette.com. The navigation through this website was easy and refreshing. As far as navigation though, I would provide some sort of border around the stories going down the page. Some of the stories bleed together. I really enjoyed the large, scrolling pictures at the top of the page and ease of the tabs.

Division C

First Place: Downers Grove Suburban Life, Staff. mysuburbanlife.com. The large photo slideshow at the top of the website really captured my attention, and that is a feature you unfortunately just don't see often on news websites. However, I feel as if that is one of the most vital parts to originally capture the visitors. The rest of the website was still very clean. It seems easy for the visitor to find what he/she is looking for.

Second Place: Voyager Media, Plainfield, Jonathan Samples, Andrew Samaan, Stewart Warren. BugleNewspapers.com Website. The reason this website is second place is because the ease of navigation through the website and the larger photo slideshow at the top of the site. What really threw me off though, was the advertisements on both sides of the site. I know sometimes there is no control over it, but it distracted the visitor from the content.

Third Place: Austin Weekly News, Chicago, Staff. Austin Weekly News Website. The site seemed very uniform. I like the sans serif font choice, it looks very clean. I would suggest adding more photo to the front page. The only photo the visitor gets to see is the smallish picture at the top.

Honorable Mention: Wednesday Journal Group, Oak Park, Staff. Wednesday Journal Website. I liked the website and the sans serif font, but what really bothered me was the changing of color on the navigation bar at the top of the site. It just didn't fit in with the rest of the site at all. I would also suggest more photos to capture the visitor.

Division D

First Place: Daily Chronicle, DeKalb, Staff. Daily-Chronicle.com. Everything about this website is what I look for. Large rotating pictures and stories at the top followed by photo thumbnails with stories underneath. It draws the visitor through the entire website. If you missed anything scrolling through, you can easily find it at the bottom. This is just an altogether great website.

Second Place: Times-Republic, Watseka, Times-Republic Staff. Times-Reublic website. I really liked the emphasis on photos and videos on the front page of the website, and I think your visitors enjoy that as well. It is a website that is easy to navigate.

Third Place: The Journal-Standard, Freeport, Staff. journalstandard.com.

Honorable Mention: The Register-Mail, Galesburg, Jay Redfern. galesburg.com.

Division E

First Place: The News-Gazette, Champaign, Staff. www.news-gazette.com. Minimal yet ornate. Easy to navigate. Looks beautiful, the most modern of the entries. If you're familiar with The New York Times' website, you'll know that it's similar to www.news-gazette.com.

Second Place: The Southern Illinoisan, Carbondale, Staff. Best Website The Southern Illinoisan. Looks good. Filled with information. Plenty of links to click on the front page. Solid entry.

Third Place: The State Journal-Register, Springfield, Jason Piscia and staff. SJ-R.com. Lots of info on the front page. Plenty of links. Seems easy to navigate.

Honorable Mention: NewsTribune, LaSalle, Amy Flanery. Newstrib.com. Many newspaper websites in this category used this format. However, Newstrib.com executed it the best with the picture ratio and layout.

Division F

First Place: Chicago Sun-Times, Staff. Chicago Sun-Times online. Clear winner. Unique, modern, plenty of pictures and even video. No comparison.

Second Place: Daily Herald Group, Arlington Heights, Staff. dailyherald.com. Unique layout, easy to navigate. Good balance of pictures and text. Refreshing entry.

Third Place: Herald & Review, Decatur, Staff. Best Website. Also had a unique approach. Seems like there's plenty to dive into on the page. Very close with second place.

Honorable Mention: The Dispatch & The Rock Island Argus, Staff. www.qconline.com. Apart from the website's overwhelming masthead, the website does offer clear, navigable layout.

CLASS 30 - BEST WEB PROJECT

Division A

First Place: The Pinckneyville Press, Eric Lambert, Jamie McKee and Staff. Pinckneyville Mardi Gras Goes Live Again. A mix of video, photos and live broadcast, this project supplemented a simple event story in a massive way. Not only was it likely time consuming for those involved, it offered a glimpse into the events for those who may have been unable to attend. It provided much more than simple text would have been able to convey.

Second Place: The Hoopston Chronicle, Jordan Crook. 'A Stroll Through the Park' A video tour of the McFerren Park Lighting Displays. This project supplemented a story well because while you can explain something like a tour of lights, there's nothing like seeing it. A video in addition to a story about the event was a wonderful idea.

Division D

First Place: Daily Chronicle, DeKalb, Staff. Heroin deaths in DeKalb County prompt action. This is the best entry by far. Great combination of web-only items such as video, graphics and timeline with deaths of those who have overdosed on drugs. Also, the stories are very good.

Second Place: Daily Chronicle, DeKalb, Staff. Benjamin Black sentencing. Second place just isn't as thorough as first place. Still, it is very well done.

Third Place: Chicago Daily Law Bulletin, Staff. 160th anniversary. This is a nice collection of items online, but the overall quality isn't as high as the quality of first and second place.

Division E

First Place: Quincy Herald-Whig, Philip Carlson. Raptor Refuge. Outstanding use of print story and simple, straightforward and effective video presentation. Web video extremely well-produced. Maybe edged a bit too much on the contrast-y dramatic lighting in the interview. But the "behind the scenes" footage - terrific. Fly tape on escaping little bird a nice detail. The narrative and images matched up very well. And timing of video - @ five minutes - is right. Print piece - quibbles. The barred owl was not the bald eagle in the lead. Barred owl looked like it was being strangled - thank goodness for cutlines. But the jump was first rate. Loved the FAQ section, photos, and the well-written feature.

Second Place: The News-Gazette, Champaign, Staff. Courtroom videos. Now this is reality television. Excellent enhancement of the published story appearing in print for those readers who are interested in the drama of actual courtroom proceedings. In the controversial sentence of Craft, the video made excellent use of photos from the incident and the subsequent community reaction. It's unadorned reporting. Of the various applications of the web the New Gazette has experimented with, this is first rate.

Third Place: Quincy Herald-Whig, Steve Bohnstedt. Lena's Story. PRINT: I appreciate the choice to use black and white photography in the printed piece. The photo was stark and affecting, particularly in

context of Ms. Wilson's well-written introductory story to the project. Bohnstedt is a gifted photographer as well.

Web piece: Outstanding organization. Loved the clickable thumbnails to each week of Lena's journey. I was unable to read them all, but those I did had emotional and intellectual impact. Ironically, I was not as sold on the b/w photography in the web series. It was beautiful, but I don't know how the b/w images thematically served the story, except as a color palette link. Its contemporary, it's happening now. Let a little color in.

Honorable Mention: The State Journal-Register, Springfield, Rich Saal, Bart Bolton, Justin Fowler. The Visual Journal. The Visual Journal adheres to the Jobs philosophy of keeping things simple and clean. It makes great use of excellent photography. It also uses a good font for its text and its margins are right on. It invites reading just as much as it invites scrolling through its nice, big images. No one has yet to come up with a suitable answer for long, long downward scrolling. But its visually pleasing for the subject matters the Visual Journal wants to address. I wish it addressed more than just those stories that had a strong visual element. There's nothing wrong with applying the same type of clean, simple template to stories that have more text than pics to them.

Division F

First Place: Chicago Sun-Times, Becky Schlikerman. 'A New Crop — <http://pot.suntimes.com>'. The fact that the site is a centralized collection of every story on the topic is great. It offers a centralized, simple, clean and visually pleasing database where interested readers can find everything on one ever-evolving topic without having to search for individual entries or without even having specific stories in mind. I feel like this online project is very creative, appealing and reader-friendly.

Second Place: The Dispatch & The Rock Island Argus, Todd Mizener. Putting the band back together. The video supplemented a story in way words would be incapable of. It offered a glimpse in to a very visual process so anyone reading a story could not only know how the statues got to be where they are, but they could actually see it happen and see their importance first-hand. The piece flowed and appeared to be put together very well.

Third Place: Chicago Sun-Times, Maudlyne Ihejirika, Peter Holderness. 'Faces of minimum wage'. Through a combination of in-depth, very personal reporting and videography, this package went above and beyond to personify a political and sometimes standardized issue and put faces to the argument. I feel as if it did a great service, not only by sharing stories that otherwise might have gone untold, but by informing readers in a way words alone could not have done.

Honorable Mention: Journal Star, Peoria, Matt Dayhoff, Ron Johnson, David Zalaznik and Fred Zwicky. Then and Now: Tornado destruction. These collection of photos and their presentation explained the devastation of a natural disaster and the strength of a community in a very appealing, creative way. Being able to see the photos not only side-by-side, but overlapping was a brilliant way to get the message across.

CLASS 31 - MOST INNOVATIVE PROJECT

Division A

First Place: Oakland Independent, Janice Hunt. News Travels. Clearly this project was intended to connect with readers and the number of photos carried each week were a testament to its success.

Second Place: The Hoopston Chronicle, Jordan Crook, Travis Holley, Shania Goble, Dylan Robinson, Jacob Nunn. Chronicle Multimedia (Broadcast series: "This Week"/"Chronicle Ag Report"). This is a great project to get younger people involved in your media outlet. Good job.

Third Place: Oakland Independent, Janice Hunt. Orchids and Onions. This effort is probably well read but probably would work much better if the comments were connected to real people which of course is tough to do sometimes. Still it touches on community issues and they count.

Division B

First Place: Metropolis Planet, Staff. Path of Destruction: The Nov. 17, 2013 Massac and Pope Counties Tornado.

Second Place: The Journal-News, Hillsboro, Kyle Herschelman. MCCA Throwback for a Cure.

Division E

First Place: The Pantagraph, Bloomington, Edith Brady-Lunny, David Proeber. Shortchanged: Unjailing the mentally ill. Excellent job of tackling an important issue.

Second Place: The News-Gazette, Champaign, Mike Howie. The data game. Offers an interesting look at the area.

Third Place: The News-Gazette, Champaign, Jeff D'Alessio. The Big 10. Certainly a change of pace, and a good one.

Honorable Mention: The Southern Illinoisan, Carbondale, Staff. 99 Things. I enjoyed looking at the various things. Package offers readers something extra and special.

Division F

First Place: Belleville News-Democrat, Brad Weisenstein, staff. Belleville's Bicentennial. Your bicentennial coverage was absolutely brilliant. From interactive online content to photos of people from the past, you thought outside the box and gave your community a year of genuine treasures. Well done!

Second Place: Herald & Review, Decatur, Staff. 50 things that define Decatur. This is a great collection of work. The array of topics was impressive and I'm confident your readers were excited to see what tomorrow's topic would be.

CLASS 32 - Illinois Public Policy Institute Award for BEST PROMOTION OF PUBLIC'S RIGHT TO KNOW
Recognizes an effective job of furthering the cause of Freedom of Information.

Division A

First Place: The Pinckneyville Press, Jeff Egbert. Threatening Note Released. Good work on sticking with the FOIA requests. Strong advocacy for transparency. The public needed to know how the case was settled.

Second Place: The Pinckneyville Press, Jeff Egbert, Nate Fisher. Fill 'er Up! (the Butch Stern Case). The public's right to know was served well in this newspaper's pursuit. I suggest that the tone of the headlines be re-evaluated. The headline, "Fill 'er Up!", sounds judgmental, and while the stories seek to expose wrongdoing, all parts of the story need to be reported seriously.

Third Place: Paxton Record, Will Brumleve. Iroquois County Board. Good reporting and placement of the stories on the front pages.

Honorable Mention: Lebanon Advertiser, David Porter. City must start complying. Passionate editorial that shares why open government laws are important. These laws are not just for the press; they are tools for the public to use in its right to know government business.

Division B

First Place: Macoupin County Enquirer-Democrat, Carlinville, Staff. A simple conversation; Newspaper files lawsuit against city of Carlinville.

Second Place: North County News, Red Bud, Mary Koester. Diewald retires, becomes consultant.

Third Place: The Galena Gazette, Hillary Dickerson. Upheaval at health department.

Division C

First Place: Jersey County Journal, Jerseyville, Bob Crossen. Many interpretations of board compensation. Excellent coverage and editorial. I hope this paper continues to monitor whether the board makes efforts to correct disparities.

Second Place: Illinois Times, Springfield, Bruce Rushton. Let the sunshine in: Springfield's troubles with open government. Great analysis of the problems citizens and the press are having with Springfield government.

Third Place: Illinois Times, Springfield, Patrick Yeagle. State police spying on smartphones: NSA-like eavesdropping has been used in Illinois since 2008. Good report. I hope this paper will continue to press state police for records.

Division D

First Place: Daily Chronicle, DeKalb, Eric Olson . "After 10 months, records may come".

Second Place: The Courier, Lincoln, Jessica Lema. Civil Rights Lawsuit.

Third Place: Pekin Daily Times, Sharon Woods Harris. Best promotion of public's right to know.

Division E

First Place: Sauk Valley Media, Sterling, Matt Mencarini. A Sorry State. There is no more important work than protecting our most vulnerable populations, the elderly and children. This body of work gives voice to the voiceless.

Second Place: Northwest Herald, Crystal Lake, Jeff Englehardt, Kevin P. Craver, Joe Bustos. Oakwood Hills secret meeting. This paper championed open records all the way to the state house.

Third Place: Quincy Herald-Whig, Don O'Brien. Reports detail morning of death.

Honorable Mention: The Pantagraph, Bloomington, Staff. Overtime and local government. The public always needs to know how money is being spent and why. This body of work explains that.

Division F

First Place: Chicago Tribune Media Group, Bill Ruthhart. Ruthhart Chicago City Hall coverage.

Second Place: Belleville News-Democrat, Daniel Kelley. County settlements.

Third Place: Belleville News-Democrat, George Pawlaczyk, Beth Hundsdorfer. Search warrants yield stories.

CLASS 33 - PUBLIC NOTICE JOURNALISM AWARD

The purpose of this competition is to recognize excellence in journalism that draws reader attention to public notices. The winning entry from Illinois will be entered into a national competition (in 2016) to vie for a \$700 award. Presentation of the national winner will be made at a recognized national association event in 2016.

First Place: Daily Chronicle, DeKalb, Katie Dahlstrom. 'There's zero growth'. All divisions compete in together for this class. It's new this year.

Second Place: Lebanon Advertiser, David Porter. Public Notice awareness. All divisions compete in together for this class. It's new this year.

CLASS 34 - Robert M. Cole Award for BEST SCHOOL BOARD COVERAGE

Sponsored by the Illinois Association of School Boards

This award, named for the first full-time Executive Director of the Illinois Association of School Boards, recognizes outstanding coverage of education issues that emphasize the community's connection with its local public school district.

Division A

First Place: Oakland Independent, Janice Hunt. Ag, art cuts / Change of heart. Small newspapers can make a big difference. Janice Hunt helped a community and the school board revisit a decision to cut programs by explaining the impact to the district, teachers and children. The appeal was made in a deliberate, thoughtful and civil manner and succeeded. Great example of local school governance.

Second Place: Coal City Courant, Ann Gill. Coal City Unit 1 school coverage. This newspaper and its editor Ann Gill consistently cover school board-related issues with a balanced approach, thorough reporting and a good understanding of what matters to its readers and community.

Third Place: Paxton Record, Will Brumleve. Paxton-Buckley-Loda school board. Quality reporting on a wide variety of school board-related issues. Very thorough report on the new legislative initiative, Vision 20-20.

Honorable Mention: The Pinckneyville Press, Jeff Egbert. Leitzen Investigation. Aggressive coverage of an employee dismissal and alleged Open Meetings Act violations.

Division B

First Place: The Galena Gazette, Hillary Dickerson. School board coverage. The Galena Gazette knows how to bring attention to important issues, such as budgets, school funding, technology, sales taxes, and facility's needs. Hillary Dickerson combines words and vivid graphics to tell the complete story.

Second Place: Ledger-Sentinel, Oswego, Natalie Stevens. School District 308 Board of Education. Natalie Stevens does a credible job covering a wide variety of school board issues. All are reported with the reader/public in mind.

Third Place: Riverside-Brookfield Landmark, Bob Skolnik. Riverside School District 96. Volatile issues and opinions dominate local school board issues in this community. The paper does a commendable job giving all parties a chance to be heard.

Honorable Mention: Bureau County Republican, Princeton, Zita Henneberry. Late work This paper and the school board were both surprised by the reaction to a policy change. Credit goes to both for listening to reason and bringing out the reaction without taking sides or letting the issues become personal.

Division E

First Place: The State Journal-Register, Springfield, Jason Nevel. Springfield District 186 coverage. District 186 coverage. In presenting stories on security measures, federal grants and school closing discussions, Jason Nevel covers a wide range of education policy topics, and does so clearly and thoroughly. This entry distinguishes itself in this category because the articles offer insight into the school board's role in decision-making and governance. Each article shows excellent enterprise, especially noting the research and background work for "In the neighborhood: Officials weigh future of District 186 buildings." Nevel earns high marks for depth and clarity as well as connecting each issue with community members. Useful infographics help complete the picture, especially the security gap and federal grant stories.

Second Place: Robinson Daily News, Randy Harrison, Graham Milldrum, Tom Compton. Study recommends merging Unit 1, 3. Robinson Daily News; Study recommends merging Unit 1, 3 Outstanding coverage by a trio of writers brings clarity and depth to the region's school consolidation options. Graham Milldrum and Tom Compton present an overall summary, bringing definition to a complicated situation. Separate stories from each of the three impacted districts, by Milldrum, Compton, and Randy Harrison, contribute to each community's understanding. The series also offers insight into local school governance, helping frame the discussion and highlighting the necessary work being done in advance of any consolidation decisions. This entry is remarkable for a newspaper of its size and is a notable example of a small newspaper's necessity and facility to connect issues with the community.

Third Place: The News-Gazette, Champaign, Julie Wurth. Search for a new Central. Third Place News-Gazette; Search for a New Central ; The News-Gazette offers a multi-faceted look at school facilities, with good reporting and engaging storytelling. "The Maze known as Dr. Howard" by Julie Wurth, in particular, paints an expressive picture with both content and photos. Although the series isn't strong on governance or policy perspectives, they are there, and the good writing and excellent community dialogue are pluses.

Honorable Mention: The News-Gazette, Champaign, Noelle McGee. C-U area schools. News-Gazette. C-U Area Schools. Area coverage from the News-Gazette shows strong enterprise writing and reporting on a range of issues. Writer Noelle McGee earns high marks for community, clarity, and impact, but with less depth or governance/policy connection.

Division F

First Place: Daily Herald Group, Arlington Heights, Madhu Krishnamurthy, Staff. School Report Cards. Daily Herald. School Report Cards Series. The Daily Herald covers the Illinois School Report Card in

a series that offers impressive depth of coverage across several subtopics and brings welcome clarity and utility. Russell Lissau's introduction to report card changes is comprehensive and well executed. The story "Where minorities are the new majority" by Madhu Krishnamurthy is a huge plus for this entry, demonstrating outstanding depth and breadth of coverage, especially of the school/community relationship. Marie Wilson's improvement article makes policy correlations and explains how changes have given more local control to school districts. The ACT piece by Melissa Silverberg is comprehensive reporting that looks beyond the numbers and connects school districts with their community members in a vital way. The online resources are fantastic, but even without, the Daily Herald team hits the sweet spots of good writing, depth and clarity of coverage, enterprise, and policy and community connections.

Second Place: Belleville News-Democrat, Jamie Forsythe. Expulsions on the rise. Belleville News-Democrat. Expulsions on the rise. In the series included in "NOWHERE TO GO' Parents of expelled metro-east students struggle to find alternatives," Jamie Forsythe examines the issue of expulsions and alternatives in a manner that is informative, clear and with good depth of coverage. This piece demonstrates the best community perspective of any in this contest, along with policy coverage and governance aspect. Among the openings provided for effective dialogue between school board and community were schools district's different approaches to alternative education. These factors distinguish this piece from other entries.

Third Place: Chicago Sun-Times, Staff. 'Public schools, private profits,' Chicago Sun-Times. Chicago Sun-Times. Public schools, private profits. These "Watchdog" articles by Becky Schlikerman, Dan Mihalopoulos, Lauren FitzPatrick, and Tim Novak earn the highest possible marks for enterprise, depth, and import. These examinations are a valuable contribution to the "big picture" of school leadership accountability. With great, bold, and direct writing, each article demonstrates the research and investigation behind the story and offers comment from opposing perspectives. Understandably, such stories do not fully meet the contest criteria of effective dialogue and understanding of governance, but each carries clarity and necessity.

Honorable Mention: Herald & Review, Decatur, Chris Lusvardi. School Board coverage. Decatur Herald-Review. School Board Coverage. With the distinction of being the most "school board-focused" entry, Chris Lusvardi presents reporting on the work of a particular school board and its budget challenges. Articles are clear and provide emphasis for the board's work. The referendum article, especially, demonstrates the community's connection with its local public school district.

CLASS 35 - Maurice Scott Award for BEST COVERAGE OF TAXATION

Sponsored by the Taxpayers Federation

This special award recognizes outstanding achievement in coverage of state and local taxation issues.

Division A

First Place: The County Star, Tolono, Christine Walsh. Voters reject tax increase for roads. The writer was very thorough and followed it through two votes.

Second Place: Oakland Independent, Janice Hunt. 1% sales tax could bring property tax increase. Nice details of how the school board wanted to spend the money, with good balance in the story of opponents and proponents. Simple but informative.

Third Place: El Paso Journal, Jennie Kearney. Best taxation stories as listed above.

Division B

First Place: The Galena Gazette, Hillary Dickerson, Jay Dickerson, Betty Roliardi. School facilities sales tax issue. Very thorough.

Second Place: Pike Press, Pittsfield, Justin A. Cobb. Tax coverages from several angles.

Third Place: Bureau County Republican, Princeton, Goldie Currie and Shannon Serpette. The cost of the 911 crunch.

Division D

First Place: Pekin Daily Times, Sharon Woods Harris. The property tax puzzle not an easy one. Clearly told; good comparative data.

Second Place: Daily Chronicle, DeKalb, Jillian Duchnowski, Katie Dahlstrom. Property tax gap.

Division E

First Place: Quincy Herald-Whig, Edward Husar. Taxation coverage of Quincy schools, Liberty schools, Adams County taxes and Quincy taxes. While many of these stories could have used more compelling leads, they are both easy to understand and comprehensive guides to the many ways that taxpayers support and do not support out schools, especially in these times of less state funding. Great body of work.

Second Place: The Daily Journal, Kankakee, Staff. Taxation coverage. Great, readable and comprehensive coverage of an issue that affects every taxpayer, parent, resident. Presented in a compelling but easy to understand way. Very impressive package.

Third Place: Effingham Daily News, Bill Grimes, Tony Huffman and Jackson Adams. Tax Swap. Clear crisp writing in a series that does a good job of illustrating different points of view. Very valuable reporting on very important issue.

Honorable Mention: NewsTribune, LaSalle, Tom Collins. Billing error. Good accountability journalism of an important issue in public life.

Division F

First Place: Daily Herald Group, Arlington Heights, Jake Griffin. Suburban Tax Watchdog. Would that every newspaper would put their resources towards columnists like this one, to examine these important issues and hold public officials accountable.

Second Place: Belleville News-Democrat, Mike Fitzgerald and Brian Brueggemann. Tax auction forms. Detailed coverage of a fascinating story as it unraveled in real time. Good work explaining these complex issues.

Third Place: Belleville News-Democrat, Daniel Kelley and Jamie Forsythe. Governments settle suits in secret. Great use of watchdog reporting and open records to stay on an important and under-reported topic.

Honorable Mention: Belleville News-Democrat, Daniel Kelley. Pension scandals. Good coverage of a story that many take for granted, but one that is even more important as pensions falter financially.

CLASS 36 - Knight Chair Award for BEST INVESTIGATIVE/ENTERPRISE REPORTING

Sponsored by the University of Illinois Department of Journalism/Knight Chair for Investigative-Enterprise Reporting

This award will be presented for a single story or series of stories on the same subject that demonstrates enterprise, initiative and thoroughness in research and/or investigation, and the ability to convey the results to the reader both in print and online.

Division A

First Place: The Pinckneyville Press, Jeff Egbert, Nate Fisher. Fill 'er Up! (the Butch Stern Case). A fine example of watchdog reporting - getting a tip on wrongdoing by a public official, getting out into the field to document it, and following through with a concise story.

Second Place: Paxton Record, Will Brumleve. Solar panels not paying off as expected. Enterprising work that showed claims of savings of solar panels for two counties were inflated and the bidding procedure for the contractor questionable.

Third Place: The Braidwood Journal, Tonya Michalec. Six year later, city's TIF buys being investigated. Strong digging by the reporter to produce a story that went past allegations to document the failure of a costly tax incentive program.

Honorable Mention: Paxton Record, Will Brumleve. 'We thought it was just one of the little tanks leaking'. Good reporting on dangerous conduct by a dispatcher responding to a toxic leak, but needed more context.

Division B

First Place: The Galena Gazette, Hillary Dickerson, Betty Roliardi. Jo Daviess County bridges. Good enterprise work in finding out how big the bridge infrastructure problem is in addition to the problems of one bridge.

Second Place: Bureau County Republican, Princeton, Terri Simon. Living in the shadows. Enterprising research and exposure of a very difficult family issue and a guide on how to deal with reporting incest. Not clear on how often it occurs in the area or is prosecuted.

Third Place: Macoupin County Enquirer-Democrat, Carlinville, Kaylan Schardan. Immigration Investigation. Solid follow-up on breaking news, but would have liked more work on history of restaurant and other possible immigration issues in the area.

Division D

First Place: Daily Chronicle, DeKalb, Katie Dahlstrom, Monica Synett. Inside University Village. A well-written and well-researched story into an impoverished community that went far beyond statistics and perceptions.

TIE: Second Place: Daily Chronicle, DeKalb, Katie Dahlstrom. Fatal intersection will be expensive to fix. Good use of documents to show how officials cannot fix a well known dangerous road.

TIE: Second Place: Illinois Times, Springfield, Bruce Rushton. The most expensive lawsuit: Stubbornness costs Sangamon County \$5.3 million. A thorough recounting of a costly settlement for the death of a mentally ill inmate in a county jail and the improvements made in jail care despite officials' fight against a family lawsuit against the county.

Honorable Mention: Daily Chronicle, DeKalb, Katie Dahlstrom. New tow fee funds police extras. Solid enterprising work to reveal how police are spending tow fees to buy items outside the city's supervision. The \$80 spill proof dog bowl was an excellent example.

Division E

First Place: Sauk Valley Media, Sterling, Matt Mencarini. A Sorry State. A well-documented probe into the terrible state of nursing home care in the Sauk Valley region that illuminated the frequent and shocking problems in the homes.

Second Place: Quincy Herald-Whig, Don O'Brien. Meth Mess. An investigation that went past just the citation of criminal statistics to show the human impact of the methamphetamine in Adams County where meth use is rampant.

Third Place: Northwest Herald, Crystal Lake, Kevin P. Craver. Police militarization's hidden costs. These stories not only did the usual good reporting on police were getting in military gear and looked at the future financial burdens and other problems that the acquisitions could bring to public agencies.

Division F

First Place: Chicago Tribune Media Group, David Jackson, Gary Marx and Duaa Eldeib. Harsh Treatment Investigative Series. A deeply impressive investigation that ethically navigated the issues of reporting on juveniles to reveal the widespread abuses in residential treatment center for youths. The series of stories was shocking and convincing, leading to immediate calls for reform.

Second Place: Chicago Tribune Media Group, David Kidwell and Alex Richards. Red Light Cameras Investigative Series. This investigation into a terribly flawed traffic program and public corruption that threatened drivers' safety demonstrated the power of journalism when computer-assisted reporting and field work are combined. A textbook of example of public service journalism.

Third Place: Chicago Sun-Times, Tim Novak, Chris Fusco & Carol Marin. "A little justice for David," Tim Novak, Chris Fusco & Carol Marin, Chicago Sun-Times. A testament to the impact of relentless reporting by dedicated journalists, this project not only exposed abuses by police and the politically powerful, but corruption, but led to justice finally being served.

Honorable Mention: Daily Herald Group, Arlington Heights, Marni Pyke. Hidden Hazards. With explosions and serious rail accidents on the increase in many areas, this is the kind of data-driven story that serves the public well.

2014 Sweepstakes Winners

2014 Sweepstakes Winners

David B. Kramer Memorial Trophy –

The Woodstock Independent

2nd Place: Forest Park Review

3rd Place: Berwyn Suburban Life

4th Place: Pinckneyville Press

Harold and Eva White Memorial Trophy -

The Galena Gazette

2nd Place: Bureau County Republican, Princeton
3rd Place: Republic-Times, Waterloo
4th Place: Glen Ellyn Suburban Life

Will Loomis Memorial Trophy -
Wednesday Journal of Oak Park & River Forest
2nd Place: Downers Grove Suburban Life
3rd Place: Jersey County Journal, Jerseyville
4th Place: Illinois Times, Springfield

Patrick Coburn Award of Excellence -
Daily Chronicle, DeKalb
2nd Place: The Register-Mail, Galesburg
3rd Place: Chicago Daily Law Bulletin
4th Place: Pekin Daily Times

Mabel S. Shaw Memorial Trophy -
The News-Gazette, Champaign
2nd Place: Northwest Herald, Crystal Lake
3rd Place: Quincy Herald-Whig
4th Place: Rockford Register-Star

Stuart R. Paddock Memorial Trophy -
Chicago Sun-Times
2nd Place: Journal Star, Peoria
3rd Place: Herald & Review, Decatur
4th Place: The Dispatch & The Rock Island Argus