

**Best of the Press 2011
IPA Editorial Contest**

Class 1 General Excellence

Division A

First Place: Mahomet Citizen. Strengths of this entry include depth of coverage and promotion of community interests. Your photos are very strong and your paper appears to promote your community well.

Second Place: Woodford County Journal, Eureka. Your photos and writing are the biggest strengths of your paper. There was a slightly stronger editorial stance than the other finalists and you do a fine job promoting your community.

Third Place: The Leader, St. Joseph. Writing and scope of coverage bring your paper to a third-place award. Promotion of community interest was strong. Better-cropped photos might have put you higher in the ranking.

Honorable Mention: Forest Park Review. Unique paper with a distinct feel for the community. Local coverage is strong and advertising is outstanding.

Division B

First Place: The Doings, La Grange. Good balance between photos and print. Variety of hard and feature news.

Second Place: The Galena Gazette. Overall good mix of news, including editorial. Good use of photos and layout. Easy to read. A lot of local involvement.

Third Place: Oak Leaves, Oak Park.

Honorable Mention: Bureau County Republican, Princeton. Nice features on local people. Clear photos. Good mixture of government stories. Clean layout.

Division C

First Place: Wednesday Journal, Oak Park. Nice layout, beautiful photos and compelling local stories. Well packaged and a very clean look throughout. Excellent publication.

Second Place: Naperville Sun. Nice, clean covers. Excellent use of promos. Outstanding local content.

Third Place: Austin Weekly News, Chicago. Excellent writing. Newspaper seems to take on the issues that impact the community. Nice, clean look. Very effective layout throughout.

Honorable Mention: Chicago Journal.

Division D

First Place: Pekin Daily Times. All local front page - good lead art - smart packaging inside "Your News" page - Decades special well done!

Second Place: The Courier-News, Elgin. Tab format - dominant image out front with promos top and bottom - lot of special content - even local column on the royal wedding!

Third Place: Daily Chronicle, DeKalb. Local content - even in sports - creative in sky boxes out front - good teases to Web content.

Division E

First Place: Northwest Herald, Crystal Lake. Staff. Excellent design, comprehensive coverage on the housing bust. All-around strong local content. Strong use of graphics and promos. Good photography. A lot of dynamic layouts.

Second Place: Sauk Valley Media, Sterling. Very strong local content. Layout is clean. Promos are well-used. Overall good display of content.

Third Place: The Herald-News, Joliet. Very thorough local coverage. The sports cover photos are outstanding. The same cannot be said of Front Cover. It doesn't seem like the strongest photos or stories were used, which would be especially important for a tab.

Honorable Mention: Herald & Review, Decatur, Staff. Good content, good display. The lead story each day was AP, which I don't think does justice to local content.

Division F

First Place: Chicago Tribune, Staff. This entry towered above all others in the category. Outstanding coverage throughout, great to see enterprise throughout. Great watchdog reporting in both editions, good photography and an extremely cohesive and enjoyable design. Good diversity in reporting. Daley coverage was outstanding. Also, outreach efforts of academic all stars was nice to see despite the wide scope for circulation, nice complete focus given to this effort.

Second Place: Chicago Sun-Times. This entry featured a strong watchdog report and detailed sports reporting. While reproduction was strong in some areas, and questionable in others, this entry featured crisp design. Given the short stories, editions featured tight stories and a variety of strong local columnists.

Third Place: Journal Star, Peoria. Beautiful and crisp design throughout this entry. Great use of photography and alternate article formats. Solid and complete coverage from the state tournament and complete coverage throughout Sunday edition. Strong integration to online and nice diversity in stories.

Honorable Mention: The Beacon-News, Aurora. Good reporting on some strong stories stood out here. Enterprise packages were very well presented with photography and other elements. Nice attention and use of color pages and a clean design.

Class 2 Community Service

Division A

First Place: Village Voices, Lena, Dan Stevens. *Voices Theater Awards*. Newspaper's project to provide extra recognition for students in area school theater productions from the recognition to the scholarship program is a great example of a newspaper making a difference in the community.

Second Place: Pinckneyville Press, Tautchia Coleman, Sarah Shasteen, Pat Bathon. *2011 Local Election*. Coverage of the city election of mayor and four council members from a community forum to individual responses to a series of questions was a good community service effort.

Third Place: Pinckneyville Press, Jessica Holder. *High School Technology Additions*. Standard coverage of high school technology additions makes this the third place entry in this division.

Division B

First Place: The Galena Gazette, Staff. *Getting to Yes*. Helping bring a facilitator to help the community bring people together and develop negotiation skills seems to have been a great community service project. The coverage given to the seminars was well done.

Second Place: Macoupin County Enquirer-Democrat, Carlinville, J. Endress. *Shop Local First Initiative*. This campaign to help get people to shop locally goes well beyond other efforts usually done. From developing a Third Thursday Open Night to making banners and cards for merchant receipts, this is a comprehensive program other communities might want to emulate.

Third Place: Pike Press, Pittsfield, Staff. *Christmas Basket Effort*. Efforts to help a Christmas Basket program that was in trouble because of the economic downturn was a community service success for this staff.

Honorable Mention: Berwyn Life, Lloyd J. Nelson, Joe Sinopoli, Brett Schweinberg. *The Cost of Living Series*. This series on the cost of getting older provided a useful sampling of information for readers.

Division C

First Place: The Orland Park Prairie, Heather Warthen. *Saying Thank You to Soldiers*. Thank You to a Soldier Project gathered nearly 300 cards and five large boxes of care package items while getting the newspaper staff involved in a community effort.

Second Place: Downers Grove Reporter, Brian Hudson, Jes Spivak. *Boundary Issues*. Newspapers' efforts to help readers understand the sweeping changes in the area's legislative districts was a worthy community service effort.

Third Place: The Orland Park Prairie, Heather Warthen. *Cheers to Charity*. Effort working with Rock Bottom Restaurant and Brewery to raise funds for the less fortunate for Christmas was commendable effort.

Honorable Mention: Jersey County Journal, Jerseyville, Robert Lyons. *Danger Zone*. Newspapers' coverage of dangerous road near daycare center was helpful to community.

Division D

First Place: Pekin Daily Times, Staff. *Cleaning Up Pekin*. This couldn't have been easy taking on an issue that brings a lot of emotion on both sides. The fact that the city is now taking action tells you that your concerns were on target.

Second Place: Mt. Vernon Register-News, Tesa Culli, Rorye O'Connor. *Lifeboat Shelter*. The homeless population tends to be one of a community's voiceless groups until they cause trouble. That you are keeping these people in the forefront until action was taken is commendable.

Third Place: Morris Daily Herald, Christina Chapman, Patrick Graziano. *Dreams Come True*. Any time we have a chance to support and thank our men and women in uniform, it is worthwhile.

Honorable Mention: Daily Chronicle, DeKalb, Caitlin Mullen, Jeff Engelhardt. *Community Works Campaign*. Helping a community organization raise more than \$500,000 is commendable though it's too bad the company had to slash its goal.

Division E

First Place: Northwest Herald, Crystal Lake, Staff. *Housing Road Map: A Survival Guide*. This was truly a case of this entry and your second-place one being 1 and 1a - both were outstanding. The Road Map is No. 1 because the topic is more complex, and somewhat unique to your area.

Second Place: Northwest Herald, Crystal Lake, Staff. *My McHenry County: Neighbors Helping Neighbors*. An outstanding entry. You have great depth and a wealth of community information.

Third Place: Journal Gazette & Times-Courier, Mattoon, Penny Weaver. *Work Wanted*. A thorough section that explores something nearly everyone has to do sometime in their life - seek a job. The "Quick Take" is a handy concept, and the stories are written well.

Honorable Mention: Commercial-News, Danville, Staff. *Success by 6*. Good stories for people with young kids. The stories are written well.

Division F

First Place: Belleville News-Democrat, Kevin Bersett, Jacqueline Lee, Zia Nizami. *Overdose Deaths on the Rise*. Very powerful project. The investigation by these reporters was thorough and deep. The sidebars and graphics helped illustrate the facts. The range of sources truly did demonstrate the prevalence of the problem across socio-economic and educational factors. Extremely well put together, and eye opening.

Second Place: Belleville News-Democrat, Laura Girresch. *Homeless*. A timely and fresh look at a long-discussed problem. You prompt the community to examine and re-examine how it is dealing with an invisible population, and your efforts have spurred new discussion in your community.

Third Place: Belleville News-Democrat, George Pawlaczyk, Beth Hundsdorfer. *Workers' Comp*. "Persistent" indeed! Relentless investigating followed by fearless reporting to expose a questionable use of taxpayers' money. You stick to the facts, which speak for themselves, and let readers draw their conclusions. Expect the statewide impact will resonate for a long time.

Honorable Mention: The Pantagraph, Bloomington, Phyllis Coulter. *Supplies in Demand*. The impact of your coverage is immediate as demonstrated in the thanks the newspaper received as well as the surge of volunteers and donations. Liked the numbers you provided in the graphics, as it helped to illustrate the need. A very worthy topic.

Class 3 Local Editorial

Division A

First Place: Clinton Journal, Gordon Woods. *Many ifs with landfill fight.* Good background, well-reasoned, effective writing.

Second Place: Braidwood Journal, Marney Simon. *Braidwood: IDOT's afterthought.* Important local topic. Good observations and use of comments.

Third Place: The Woodstock Independent, Mike Neumann. *State needs to step up.* Flows well. Effective argument.

Honorable Mention: Woodford County Journal, Eureka, Cheryl Wolfe. *Roanoke board should have sought bids for insurance.*

Division B

First Place: Macoupin County Enquirer-Democrat, Carlinville, Editorial Board. *FOIA Series.* Very important to actively pursue FOIA laws and report on them to keep government open.

Second Place: Lemont Reporter/Met, Jerry Moore. *Editorial Series.* Good continuous coverage of subject. Important school issues. Took strong stands.

Third Place: Riverside-Brookfield Landmark, Bob Uphues. *Jack of All Trades.*

Honorable Mention: Oak Leaves, Oak Park, Jennifer Clark. *List is a Wake-up Call.* "Wake-up Call" important topic and handled well.

Division C

First Place: Downers Grove Reporter, Jerry Moore. Good focus on local issues - effective treatment.

Second Place: Wednesday Journal, Oak Park, Dan Haley. As editorials should - keeps local officials in spotlight and hopefully honest.

Third Place: The Wilmette Beacon, Joe Coughlin.

Honorable Mention: The Orland Park Prairie, Heather Warthen. *Settle Down.*

Division D

First Place: Breeze-Courier, Taylorville, Marylee Rasar. *Deceitful convenience.* Well-written and concise lead up to conclusion.

Second Place: Pekin Daily Times, Editorial Board. *Blanchard: the transparent councilman? And others.* Important topic for community and handled well. Other editorials also relevant.

Third Place: Morris Daily Herald, Patrick Graziano. *Series.* "You may not agree..." always important to point out to readers.

Honorable Mention: Daily Chronicle, DeKalb, Jason Schaumburg. Pension reform will require sacrifice & notes taken by reporter should not be fair game.

Division E

First Place: The Herald-News, Joliet, David Rutter. *Flag Raiders get it right after 35 years.* Inviting read from beginning to end. Editorial had universal appeal and is no doubt one the community will discuss for years. A healing column full of humor. This is what community newspapering is all about.

Second Place: The Register-Mail, Galesburg, Tom Martin. *Kohl's nearly the one that got away.* Defining issue in community. Support of Kohl's is explained in accessible manner.

Third Place: Sauk Valley Media, Sterling, Jim Dunn. *Cameras in the courtroom.* Dunn shows why an "inside-baseball" media issue matters to general public.

Honorable Mention: Northwest Herald, Crystal Lake, Dan McCaleb. *Tax hike is betrayal...* It would be hard to support the tax hike after reading this editorial.

Division F

First Place: SouthtownStar, Tinley Park, David Rutter, Tom Finn, Joe Biesk. *Country Club Hills' woes.* Compelling body of work written with ferocity and humor. The column about the camp - Camp

Run Amok was brilliant. This is editorial writing at its best - and appears to be based on great reporting by other staff writers.

Second Place: The Dispatch, Moline, Kenda Burrows. *Chicago Our 51st state?* Kenda may want to use an alias the next time she goes to Indiana. Great topic distilled into readable editorial that beautifully blends humor and fact. Burrows can write.

Third Place: Journal Star, Peoria, Mike Bailey. *Hotel deal flawed, but better than before.* This is clearly a defining issue for Peoria and Bailey presents a commanding knowledge of its history and intricacies. I feel solidly informed - and I have an opinion - after reading just this one editorial. It is a defining piece.

Honorable Mention: Rockford Register Star, Wally Haas. *Court system.* All good editorial writing is based on good reporting. That clearly took place here. Editorials lay out clear picture of crime and punishment issues and how they affect readers' lives.

Class 4 Editorial Page

Division B

First Place: Oak Leaves, Oak Park, Jennifer Clark. Clark wins one with the strength of the editorial on "the list." The layout of pages is stronger than most in the category but could use a redesign. Font is too light.

Second Place: Bureau County Republican, Princeton. What a great local community editorial page. Marcus Throneburg's commentary is a highlight. He took a clichéd subject and made it compelling.

Third Place: Pike Press, Pittsfield, Julie Boren. Good local mix of copy. Good reader-interactive features.

Honorable Mention: Riverside-Brookfield Landmark, Bob Uphues. Good local mix of opinion.

Division C

First Place: Downers Grove Reporter, Jerry Moore, Jes Spivak. Best local layout. Good use of graphics and synopsis at top of main editorial is effective. Thought for a second that park board toilet story was April Fool's joke.

Second Place: Wednesday Journal, Oak Park, Ken Trainor. Bold editorial on Lake Street Investors. Why is Hubbuch writing two columns about his trips? Could find better, more inspiring local column topics.

Third Place: Suburban Journals, Collinsville, Beth O'Malley. Nice mix of local opinion.

Division D

First Place: Daily Chronicle, DeKalb, Staff. Income tax hike column is strong, well-reasoned - and it is empowering to readers to include list of legislators who voted "yes".

Second Place: Pekin Daily Times, Staff. Nice layout. At first, I didn't think Michelle Teheux could pull off column on an international issue but she did. Succinct, nice column on Obama decision.

Third Place: Morris Daily Herald, Mark Johnson. Good mix of views. Mullen's column is just an odd choice. Should replace him with something local.

Division E

First Place: The Times, Ottawa, Editorial Board. Times is fortunate to have veterans like Lonny Cain and Steve Stout. Good community newspapering evident here.

Second Place: The Herald-News, Joliet, Staff. Local. Local. Local. Also, strong editorial on Joe Cook.

Third Place: The Southern Illinoisan, Carbondale, Gary Metro. Solid editorial on \$31B capital improvement plan.

Division F

First Place: The Dispatch, Moline, Kenda Burrows. At the end of the day, no matter how splashy the layout, it comes down to the power of the written word. Kenda Burrows delivers on that measure.

Second Place: SouthtownStar, Tinley Park, Staff. Great layout. Thoroughly local. The "Our View" editorial is consistently strong. If I subscribed to the paper that is what I would read first.

Third Place: The State Journal-Register, Springfield, Matt Dietrich. Love the layout and focus on local. Outstanding work on making coroner's issue interesting.

Honorable Mention: Rockford Register Star, Wally Haas. Excellent mix of local views. Editorial pages brand paper as local product.

Class 5 News Reporting - Single Story

Division A

First Place: Elburn Herald, Susan O'Neill. *Residents respond*. Covering discord in a board when a long-time librarian was fired and community members backed the librarian was handled well. These are tough stories when details of decisions are not forthcoming.

Second Place: Woodford County Journal, Eureka, Jerry McDowell. *Details scarce in apparent murder-suicide*. Good job of reporting on deaths when authorities are not releasing much information directly.

Third Place: The Leader, St. Joseph, Nora Maberry. *He is my hero and he did save my life*. Well-told story of life-saving effort for water company worker.

Honorable Mention: Coal City Courant, Ann Gill. *Man arrested after 5-hour standoff*. Interesting reporting of this standoff story. A little more specific information at the beginning of the story might have been helpful.

Division B

First Place: Brookfield/Riverside Suburban Life, Joe Sinopoli. *They're out there somewhere*. Excellent lead - really sets the scene. Well-told story. Good use of quotes.

Second Place: The Reporter, Hickory Hills, Bob Jaderberg. *Girl fails to arrive home from first day of school*. Enticing lead. Dilemma described clearly. Powerful quotes. Good structure to the story.

Third Place: Riverside-Brookfield Landmark, Bob Uphues. *Riverside employee calls out village president*. Good story-telling technique. Interesting story well told.

Honorable Mention: La Grange/Westchester Suburban Life, Lloyd J. Nelson. *Police: 11-year-old girl beaten, bound and gagged*.

Division C

First Place: Austin Weekly News, Chicago, Chloe Riley. *What's on their money menu?* Story covers an important issue for residents - city money and how it is spent in their neighborhood. Impact is large. Story clearly lays out how decisions are made. Good use of quotes. The snapshot of how money was spent is a good service to readers. Clearly best of a strong category.

Second Place: Wednesday Journal, Oak Park, Megan Dooley. *Wrongly jailed, seeking solace*. The story really helps us feel this man's life, indicating the strong interviewing skills of the writer. It nicely puts a face on Innocence projects and social service agencies wanting to help.

Third Place: The Midweek, DeKalb, Doug Oleson. *Theater troupe gives "penguins" flight*. Really strong introduction - first four paragraphs grab the reader. A great topic often makes a great story and here you have a great topic. The writer clearly conveyed the importance of the musical.

Honorable Mention: Austin Weekly News, Chicago, Ellyn Fortino. *Nursing home cited for health safety violations*. Clearly explained a detailed and important news story.

Division D

First Place: Pekin Daily Times, Sharon Woods Harris. *Deadbeat Illinois hits home*. Fantastic lead. It told the extent of the problem right there. Story did a good job of explaining the impact. Helped the reader really see how this problem could affect them.

Second Place: Daily Chronicle, DeKalb, Bill Braksick, Caitlin Mullen. *Ridulph exhumation*. A strong, in-depth look at a story I'm sure everyone was talking about. Good mix of background with the current

development and touching on the future (what might the authorities find?) Good work boiling down lots of information into a solid, readable piece.

Third Place: Daily Chronicle, DeKalb, Bill Braksick, Kate Schott. *Butler shooting*. Answered all the questions and got into all the details of a breaking crime story. Nice treatment to run the companion piece about neighborhood safety.

Honorable Mention: Pekin Daily Times, Ken Harris. *Draining Lake Stinky*. Great description. I could see and smell the swampy area.

Division E

First Place: Northwest Herald, Crystal Lake, Staff. *Blown Away*. Excellent coverage of a storm - every story had a "face on it. You got to the people at the center of it and worked it from multiple angles. Lots of good resource information for readers still in need of assistance.

Second Place: Northwest Herald, Crystal Lake, Katie Anderson. *Defending the castle*. Well-drawn arguments on both sides of the issue, complete with researched examples of how the situation has played out. Though it is not the most hard-hitting topic, I found it to be a compelling read and the kind of thing that clearly has a significant amount of interest in a smaller community.

Third Place: Sauk Valley Media, Sterling, Tara Becker. *Guilty*. Very thorough accounting of the elements of the crime and the trial. It's obvious the reporter built good contacts throughout by the comments/quotes she got in the story. The timeline is a nice breakdown of events for readers especially those not knowing the history.

Honorable Mention: The Register-Mail, Galesburg, Staff. *The bus stops here*. I know the number of angles a presidential swing through your area can have and the staff did a great job keeping up with the stories to be told. I like the balance you give to the opponents and the many voices you included - after all, it was a once-in-lifetime thing for many in your area.

Division F

First Place: SouthtownStar, Tinley Park, Lauren FitzPatrick. *"We didn't even get to say goodbye."* This story, in an extremely difficult category to judge, stood out above the rest. It was well written and kept me wanting to read on. Great combination of facts and narrative.

Second Place: Chicago Tribune, Staff. *Groundhog Day Blizzard*. Wow! What an amazing effort with a weather event. Coverage was complete, with all the necessary news reporting, but some great surprises. Wonderful collection of news coverage.

Third Place: Belleville News-Democrat, Kevin Bersett. *Parkfield Purgatory*. This was a great story starting with the headline. I really felt like I was in the middle of the neighborhood. I felt the tension through the solid writing.

Honorable Mention: Chicago Sun-Times, Natasha Korecki, Abdon M. Pallasch, Lauren FitzPatrick, Dave McKinney. *Ex-Governor Rod Blagojevich sentenced to 14 years in prison*. When every newspaper was covering this, you covered it very well. Lots of good pieces in paper and online. Solid collective job.

Class 6 News Reporting - Series

Division A

First Place: The Woodstock Independent, Mike Neumann. *Courthouse series*. The series was well written and informative. The art complemented the package. The depth of reporting was deep and was professionally written.

Second Place: Village Voices, Lena, Dan Stevens. *Orangeville "safety drill"*. This was a great incident to report on, but the writing was not as solid as the first place entry. Stories were too long and not well focused.

Third Place: Woodford County Journal, Eureka, Cheryl Wolfe. *Animal control*. The topic is one that lends itself to a number of stories. They were written well, but a bit repetitive, dry at times.

Division B

First Place: Macoupin County Enquirer-Democrat, Carlinville, Daniel Winningham. *Redistricting*. Census data is revealing, well written.

Second Place: Bureau County Republican, Princeton, Donna Barker, Terri Simon. *Fire evacuates Tiskilwa*. The series doesn't stop with the first frightening event but covers an ongoing investigation. Good work.

Third Place: Berwyn Life, Brett Schweinberg. *Living in squalor - what went wrong*. Good work in bringing a disturbing story to the public's attention.

Honorable Mention: The Galena Gazette, Hillary Dickerson, Andrew Brunner. *Honor flight veterans*. Good work in combining historical stories in one place for generations to remember.

Division C

First Place: The Rock River Times, Rockford, Richard S. Gubbe. *Toxic waste dumping*. Outstanding investigative reporting. Excellent example of reporting, tracking down numerous sources. Covered a variety of angles.

Second Place: Downers Grove Reporter, Janice Hoppe. *Eric Gilford sentencing*. Reporter dug to give identity to the victim and did a good job of following the story to its conclusion.

Third Place: Austin Weekly News, Chicago, Megan Dooley, Devin Rose, Marty Stempniak. *Murder of Chervon Alexander, 29*. Reporters moved beyond policy reports to tell the story.

Honorable Mention: Wednesday Journal, Oak Park, Terry Dean. *Impact of proposed cuts by school district*.

Division D

First Place: Pekin Daily Times, Michael Smothers, Laura Turner. *Mourning the loss*. Your articles go above and beyond the typical coverage of a fatal accident. Great job covering all angles. The writing was tight and colorful, and the end result of the story was great.

Second Place: Daily Chronicle, DeKalb, Kate Schott, Jason Schaumburg, Jeff Engelhardt, Andrew Mitchell, Caitlin Mullen, Nicole Weskerna. *Broken Benefits*. This was a very well-planned series that covered many angles of the issues. Rails and graphics added to the depth of the reporting. Some of the stories were on the long side.

Third Place: Chicago Daily Law Bulletin, Jerry Crimmins, John Flynn Rooney. *Northwestern professor says two computers belong to him...* This was a well-written series about an interesting topic. Kudos to covering the issue when national attention diminished. Solid job of reporting the issue.

Honorable Mention: Pekin Daily Times, Michael Smothers. *Neumann charged with a felony*. Stories involving city officials are always difficult but you did a good job staying on the case, finding new angles. Nice work.

Division E

First Place: Northwest Herald, Crystal Lake, Staff. *Housing road map: A survival guide*. Outstanding, comprehensive series. Tackles a complicated issue and puts a face - or a lot of faces - on it. Great photography, and graphics as well.

Second Place: Sauk Valley Media, Sterling, Staff. *Two electrocuted*. Heartfelt series capturing both the human angle and the safety angle.

Third Place: The Daily Journal, Kankakee, Staff. *Emington murders*. Paper covered every angle of a tragedy that struck a nearby community.

Honorable Mention: The Beacon-News, Aurora, Matt Hanley. *Waiting for Timmothy*.

Division F

First Place: Belleville News-Democrat, George Pawlaczyk, Beth Hundsdorfer. *Workers comp*. Comprehensive, riveting series. A public service was done to uncover widespread corruption. Excellent reporting and writing. Diligence and hard work are evident.

Second Place: Chicago Sun-Times, Tim Novak, Chris Fusco, Carol Marin. *The violent death of David Koschman*. Excellent writing. Extremely thorough. All angles are covered.

Third Place: Chicago Tribune, Gary Marx, David Jackson. *Fugitives from justice*. Enterprising, thoroughly researched story. Legwork and hard work paid off.

Honorable Mention: SouthtownStar, Tinley Park, Casey Toner. *Country Club Hills' woes*. Investigative journalism at its finest.

Class 7 Government Beat Reporting

Division A

First Place: Coal City Courant, Ann Gill. *Seven years in the making*. Extremely thorough coverage that is supplemented by historical facts and well-placed quoted material. The writer answers the "why" better than the other entries in the class.

Second Place: Scott County Times, Winchester, Wayne Utterback. *ETSB shuts down Morgan contract*. Well-presented information on a topic that appears to have divided the county. Facts are presented clearly, explaining what was happening and why. Lead graphs in the stories draw the readers in.

Third Place: Woodford County Journal, Eureka, Cheryl Wolfe. *Woodford County board*. There is a lot of information here, and you cite a variety of names, though it appears most were at the meetings you cover. There is so much information, in fact, that I wonder if graphics might have been appropriate.

Honorable Mention: The County Star, Tolono, Christine Walsh. *Tolono won't be sending letter for overpass funding*. The needed facts are in the stories, and the information appears applicable to the readers. Not as thorough as some others in the category, and I only see one instance where the writer went beyond basic meeting coverage.

Division B

First Place: Macoupin County Enquirer-Democrat, Carlinville, Louise Jett. *Government Beat Reporting (Loans)*. What sets this entry apart is the scale of reporting. Not only did you attend meetings and interview the players, but your paper went as far as investigating the document that indicated possible problems.

Second Place: Paxton Record, Will Brumleve. *Ford County Board*. These stories show more than basic meeting coverage - you have dug into more than was spoon-fed. They tell me why I should care about what is being reported.

Third Place: Oak Leaves, Oak Park, Todd Shields. *Beat: Village Low-Income Housing*. A few things set these stories apart. One is the way both sides of the story are presented - this allows your readers to make their own decision (and want to). I also felt the lead graphics brought the topic to your readers.

Honorable Mention: Macoupin County Enquirer-Democrat, Carlinville, Daniel Winingham. *Redistricting*. Interesting investigation into whether what the city is doing is legal. The reporting was thorough and made the topic easy to understand.

Division C

First Place: Berwyn Life, Brett Schweinberg. *Crime behind closed doors*. This reporter is able to shine light in dark corners of city operation and show how it really impacts taxpayers' wallets. Crime, litigation, business - a wide variety of interesting topics presented in a way that shows why readers should care.

Second Place: The Orland Park Prairie, Bill Jones. *Orland fire protection district coverage*. Very balanced coverage of difficult topics. Sources seem willing to trust this reporter by freely commenting on sensitive subjects.

Third Place: Wednesday Journal, Oak Park. Marty Stempniak. *Is nano-brewery in the works for Oak Park?* City business is presented in a way that readers can relate to - the business owners, the homeowners, the taxpayers. Balanced coverage showing both sides and varying arguments on the issues.

Honorable Mention: Suburban Journals, Collinsville, Ramona C. Sanders. *Coverage of Collinsville area recreation district*. Nice, tight writing. Like the way you get right to the figures and points that matter. No fat, just lean, easy-to-digest information.

Division D

First Place: Daily Chronicle, DeKalb, Caitlin Mullen. *DeKalb County government*. Compelling stories in which the conflicts are presented clearly. Multiple sources. Good use of quotes. Clean copy.

Second Place: Pekin Daily Times, Ed McMenamin. *Cost of digging out*. I especially liked the Blanchard stories. Comprehensive coverage. Good use of quotes.

Third Place: Morris Daily Herald, Christina Chapman. *9-1-1 center controversy*. Strong presentation of conflict. Easy to follow.

Honorable Mention: Pekin Daily Times, Sharon Woods Harris. *Man petitions for home rule repeal*.

Division E

First Place: Sauk Valley Media, Sterling, David Giuliani. *Boards to big?/County have money?/Tilting toward wind*. Excellent leads to stories that, on the surface, don't seem too exciting. Very personalized. As a reader, I cared about the issues, even though I live nowhere near the circulation area. Conversational style, well sourced and complete with both sides of every topic.

Second Place: The Telegraph, Alton, Cynthia M. Ellis. *Wood River woman missing*. An intriguing topic, the reporter dove in and made it even more captivating. As more is uncovered, all angles are touched on, and the writing style invites readers along for the ride. Not too much time is wasted on the past, but there's enough for those who weren't on board from the start.

Third Place: Herald & Review, Decatur, Chris Lusvardi. *Forsyth business sign*. A classic small-town issue that is given a face by the reporter. Straightforward storytelling, it gives readers the nuts and bolts without a lot of extraneous verbiage. Could have maybe used a couple of other local business owners' thoughts.

Honorable Mention: NewsTribune, LaSalle, Kevin Caufield. *IVCC under federal investigation*. A thorough account of a pretty complex topic. Good reporting.

Division F

First Place: SouthtownStar, Tinley Park, Lauren FitzPatrick. *Court beat reporting*. This is how hard news writing should be written more often. The reporter sets the scene, tells the story and ties it all together with succinct endings. A lot of effort was put forth to get background. And the writing mixes short sentences with longer ones, creating very readable stories.

Second Place: Belleville News-Democrat, Beth Hundsdorfer. *The Coleman trials*. An excellent example of an alternate story form, this series of reports would otherwise have been bogged down by all the characters. Readers can quickly and easily figure out who is who and what is what. The writing gets right to the point.

Third Place: Chicago Sun-Times, Steve Warmbir. *Cicero officials linked to criminals*. Thorough and extensive investigative reporting highlights this entry. Some of the writing could have used a little tightening, and some seems a bit sensationalized. But great work on getting all the particulars.

Honorable Mention: The News-Gazette, Champaign, Patrick Wade. *Champaign City Government*. The first part of the "Extra Set of Eyes" was strong, but a bit overly detailed. The leads of all three were solid and drew in the reader.

Class 8 Business / Economic Reporting

Division A

First Place: The Woodstock Independent, Mike Neumann. *TIF revenues grow*. This piece was relevant and had a lot of good detail. The explanation of what a TIF district is gave readers a guide so that they could understand the issue. Good enterprise reporting - a solid winner.

Second Place: Scott County Times, Winchester, Beth Zumwalt. *Land prices rising throughout central Illinois.* Good enterprise reporting, explaining not only area farmland prices but the impact this can have. The reporter did a lot of digging and the end result is strong.

Third Place: Elburn Herald, Lynn Meredith. *Come fly with me.* Nice tale in the first-person voice. I learned a lot about flying partly because the writer put me in the cockpit where I could visualize what she was seeing.

Honorable Mention: The Woodstock Independent, Mike Neumann, Leland Humbertson. *Springfield Squeeze.* Good job of exploring a local matter. Tighter writing would have pushed this piece higher in the competition.

Division B

First Place: Paxton Record, Will Brumleve. *Downtown Survival.* This is a strong piece that takes an even-handed look at an important matter without becoming either pessimistic or overly optimistic. The even-handed approach was critical to lend credibility to the reporting. Solid work.

Second Place: Skokie Review, Mike Isaacs. *Hunting before dawn for the elusive iPad 2.* The use of the first-person voice to tell this story worked well. The interviews were interesting and fun. Good job, too, of localizing a national story.

Third Place: Paxton Record, Will Brumleve. *Wind farms.* This is a good collection of stories that put together tell a larger story. Good job of exploring several angles in an emotional topic.

Honorable Mention: Berwyn Life, Brett Schweinberg. *Why Berwyn?* This is a good explanation of attempts by Berwyn to boost its economy and image. The primer on TIFs and taxes and sales tax give-back helped the reader understand its government.

Division C

First Place: Austin Weekly News, Chicago, La Risa Lynch. *Expanding the food desert.* Store closings often produce stories about the emotional toll on communities but this story went a step further. La Risa Lynch tells us about the economic cultural and health impact of a local closing. Good reporting.

Second Place: Downers Grove Reporter, Staff. *Pay to Play.* How did a sports staff work its way into 2nd place of a business economic reporting news contest? By showing the pocket book impact of a family pleasure - school sports. Good breadth and strong examples helped, too.

Third Place: St. Charles Republican, Elizabeth Stoeber. *Issue of smoke shop's smells light up.* Good topic, strong sources. The writer does a good job of putting us at the scene for its sights and smells.

Honorable Mention: The Orland Park Prairie, Heather Warthen. *Randy's Market closes in Orland.* Touching recounting of the closing of a family store. Good job of conveying the emotion of that day.

Division D

First Place: Chicago Daily Law Bulletin, Amanda Robert. *In-house lawyers form key bonds with law firms.* Amanda Roberts does a good job of explaining a trend to her audience. The examples are strong and impact is explained in a smart, readable manner.

Second Place: Morris Daily Herald, Jo Ann Hustis. *Food inspector compels Sages to destroy deer.* A lot of work went into compiling this story and it shows. The writer hits all of the main sources to cover each angle and explanation. She picks a good example to illustrate problems of customers.

Third Place: Robinson Daily News, Sarah Ruholl. *Roll model.* The story did a good job explaining the various actions taken to bring a manufacturer to town.

Honorable Mention: Pekin Daily Times, Michael Smothers. *'Awesome' jobs jolt coming.* The story's strength comes from its explanation of how the community got to where it was at the time the story was published. Good perspective piece.

Division E

First Place: Northwest Herald, Crystal Lake, Staff. *Navigating the Housing Market*. It's tempting to look at such an exhaustive report and say it, of course, should win a news competition. But packages like this need to deliver. It does. Topics such as what to tell children bring depth. Subheads direct people to the subject matter. Strong reporting and writing throughout this survival guide.

Second Place: NewsTribune, LaSalle, Staff. *Unemployment: Safety net or vicious circle?* The NewsTribune staff did a good job of putting faces on the unemployment trend hitting its region. The series had good pairings of topical reporting with personal stories. Good explanatory reporting.

Third Place: Northwest Herald, Crystal Lake, Brett Rowland. *Housing bust*. Good review of the housing market problems in the Herald's coverage area. Particularly interesting was the story about the impact rotting homes can have on neighboring property values.

Honorable Mention: Sauk Valley Media, Sterling, Staff. *Still hurting: 10 years after steel mill closed*. The reporters put together a fine package that explored various aspects of a high-impact move - the closing of a major employer and its subsequent re-opening on a far smaller scale. Good text. Good sourcing.

Division F

First Place: Belleville News-Democrat, Mike Fitzgerald. *Mid-America. Is it time to pull the plug on the area's publicly subsidized airport?* Mike Fitzgerald asks at the start of this award winner. Then he delivers enough information so that readers can decide. The best reporting is in a story about subsidies for specific flights.

Second Place: Chicago Sun-Times, Kim Janssen, Art Golab. *Powerless: Analysis gives ammo to areas that say ComEd gives them short shrift*. Solid analysis, entertaining and engaging writing ("Burgers don't last long in Adam Vick's freezer lately.") This is a solid data-based story that gives good context.

Third Place: The Pantagraph, Bloomington, Ryan Denham. *Housing headache*. The more I read this story the more I liked where it was taking me. The details on specific properties were easy to grasp. Good job of bringing the housing crisis home.

Honorable Mention: The Pantagraph, Bloomington, Ryan Denham. *The final days*. The reporter does a good job of putting into perspective, with details, the collapse of a bank in town. Particularly insightful was reporting on how the bank extended itself just as the housing market collapsed.

Class 9 Sports Story

Division A

First Place: Village Voices, Lena, Dan Stevens. *Slip sliding away to DeKalb*. Good lead to set up the game story. Very good attention to detail. He hooked me with the "nose picking" line!

Second Place: The Leader, St. Joseph, Chris D. Davies. *The best*. Nice lead. Good quotes & story telling.

Third Place: Village Voices, Lena, Dan Stevens. *"I told you so"*. Snappy lead that took you into the story.

Division B

First Place: Paxton Record, Cody Westerlund. *IHSA denies waiver for PBL athlete in basic training*. Well-written story, presenting both sides of a sensitive issue. Writer even got quote from a state senator.

Second Place: Northbrook Star, Rich Martin. *Compher laces skates for Ann Arbor*. Not your average signing story. Liked lead quote from blogger. Lot of good info here.

Third Place: Ledger-Sentinel, Oswego, Matt Daniels. *A place for basketball fans to unite*. Nice lead explaining need for this new hall of fame. Well-researched and written.

Honorable Mention: Bureau County Republican, Princeton, Kevin Hieronymus. *Former IVCC hoops star slain*. Good job getting reaction on a tough story.

Division C

First Place: The Wilmette Beacon, Joe Coughlin. *NT Green state title.* Good lead. Good quotes. Good mix of play-by-play and atmosphere.

Second Place: The Wilmette Beacon, Joe Coughlin. *Tilson Player of Year.* Good lead. Nice job explaining his value to the team.

Third Place: The Wilmette Beacon, Joe Coughlin. *Emotional senior night.* Lead nicely set up story.

Division D

First Place: Daily Chronicle, DeKalb, Ryan Wood. *Huskie family shocked.* Good idea to reach high school coach of player who was shot.

Second Place: Morris Daily Herald, Steve Nitz. *Raiders keep Cumbie.* Writer did more with a story about a local player making the raiders' practice squad.

Third Place: Breeze-Courier, Taylorville, Chris Daniels. *Tornadoes end losing streak.* Liked the lead and coach's first quote summed this win up nicely.

Honorable Mention: Daily Chronicle, DeKalb, Anthony Zilis. *Youngest golfer has lofty goals.* Feature angle on young golfer worked.

Division E

First Place: Kane County Chronicle, St. Charles, Jay Schwab. *Barefoot winner ran for a cause.* No clowning around - this was a well-written story of an unusual marathon winner.

Second Place: Sauk Valley Media, Sterling, Ty Reynolds. *Step one done.* Great lead, good lines (emotions tugging at his sleeve) and solid reporting.

Third Place: The Register-Mail, Galesburg, Aaron Frey. *Obama surprises streaks.* It isn't every day the President stops by to watch your high school football practice and writer did a nice job on this story.

Honorable Mention: Quincy Herald-Whig, Blake Toppmeyer. *Savoring a sweet treat.* Two words: Dippin' Dots!

Division F

First Place: Belleville News-Democrat, Joe Ostermeier, David Wilhelm. *Cards in 11th heaven.* Good game story written on DEADLINE.

Second Place: The State Journal-Register, Springfield, Dave Kane. *Coming together.* Great anecdote lead, nice story.

Third Place: The Pantagraph, Bloomington, Jim Benson. *Young ace.* Simple tale of a little girl & record ace. You read it and you smile!

Honorable Mention: Journal Star, Peoria, Dave Reynolds. *Positively Passionate. Bradley's new coach lauded for his people skills, sense of humor.* Pretty Prose. Did a little more with new coach introductory news conference.

Class 10 Sports Feature

Division A

First Place: The Woodstock Independent, Megan Ivers. *The right track.* Well-written feature with a lot of voices and anecdotes. You know Kayla Beattie was a special lady as soon as the first paragraph.

Second Place: Mahomet Citizen, Stacey LaFeber. *Not Your Mom & Pop's Roller Derby.* Lot of interviews and work went into this and it's a fun read. Made me want to go out and watch. Love the nicknames, even "Fitch Bace."

Third Place: Village Voices, Lena, Dan Stevens. *Facebook feud hitting the hardcourt.* Like anyone who works social media (Facebook) into a good, timely feature.

Honorable Mention: The County Star, Tolono, Chris D. Davies. *Competing for a cause.* Touching feature but not too sappy.

Division B

First Place: Paxton Record, Cody Westerlund. *Class Act*. Well reported and nicely written feature about the seniors in PBL HS league basketball team. Lead took you into story and it even had a strong finish. Captured lows and highs of those players, who lost a teammate to leukemia.

Second Place: Barrington Courier-Review, Charles Berman. *Gone, But Not Forgotten*. Loved the lead and how writer crafted the story. He made me care about this family of gymnasts and their blind father. Nice conversational tone.

Third Place: The Greenville Advocate, Bill Walker. *McBride overcomes obstacles, makes an opportunity*. Despite a lead that went little too long, this is a terrific story of a kid who has Tourette's syndrome and plays basketball, football and baseball. Good reporting and writing.

Honorable Mention: Lake County Journal, Grayslake, Cassandra Dowell. *Wheelchair games inspire local veterans*. Good little feature with nice mix of voices and anecdotes. You root for people like this and writer did not over-write.

Division C

First Place: Downers Grove Reporter, Scott Schmid, Staff. *Pitch count down*. Good trend piece with different voices (preps, colleges). Even gave opposite view of pitchers getting "too much rest," and medical angle. Nice package.

Second Place: Suburban Journals, Collinsville, Sarah Baraba. *On the field...is bigger better? Heavy hitters*. Feature touched on something we've all witnessed - kids who play sports are getting a lot bigger. Good variety of sports represented. And, it also touched on steroids.

Third Place: The Wilmette Beacon, Joe Coughlin. *Never again to right now*. Great lead. Solid quotes. Well done.

Honorable Mention: The Wilmette Beacon, Alex Mayster. *Back in the game*. Nice feature that let focus of story tell his story. Lead could have been a little stronger.

Division D

First Place: Daily Chronicle, DeKalb, Ryan Wood. *Worth the trip*. Well reported and written. You can feel the cold in DeKalb and smell the manure in Fort Scott.

Second Place: Morris Daily Herald, Steve Nitz. *Making pitches count*. Good trend story with nice variety of sources and anecdotes.

Third Place: The Courier-News, Elgin, Erik Jacobsen. *Going from high school to the pros*. Scene-setting lead sucks you into story - you'd never guess these are high school kids!

Honorable Mention: Daily Chronicle, DeKalb, John Sahly. *Attitude wins out*. Good lead, good story.

Division E

First Place: The Beacon-News, Aurora, Jim Owczarski. *Court redemption*. Excellent tale of a high school star who went down the wrong path - good reporting and writing. Lot of details. Liked the way the writer went back to the lead at the end.

Second Place: Quincy Herald-Whig, Matt Shuckman. *He's playing for Stan*. Poignant story that evoked emotion but wasn't over the top. Great job getting reader into the story.

Third Place: Quincy Herald-Whig, Matt Shuckman. *Making it all add up*. Great idea to closely follow this struggling high school football team and get terrific inside stuff.

Honorable Mention: The Daily Journal, Kankakee, Tim Ahrens. *"Tigerball" grows up quickly*. Good read on a basketball team's unorthodox style of play. Lot of voices. Good lead.

Division F

First Place: Chicago Sun-Times, Rick Telander. *Murray Park: Can heaven still be found on a playground?* Great - and brave - idea to spend a lot of time in this decaying neighborhood that spawned Derrick Rose and write about the people trying to survive, partly by playing basketball. Much more than a sports feature.

Second Place: Chicago Tribune, Dan Pompei, David Haugh, Vaughn McClure, Becky Yerak, Steve Schmadeke. *Dave Duerson is gone. He shot himself in the heart.* Excellent story about the final days of Duerson. Paints a vivid picture of a man slowly losing it with plenty of great details and quotes.

Third Place: Chicago Tribune, Christopher Borrelli. *The greatest pitcher who never was.* A fun read and inside look at one of the greatest hoaxes in sports journalism.

Honorable Mention: The News-Gazette, Champaign, Bob Asmussen. *Back to school.* Good feature of an NFL player who returned to school for his degree, but with much more for the reader.

Class 11 Enterprise Reporting

Division A

First Place: The Free Press Advocate, Wilmington, Pam Monson. *Losing trust.* Solid treatment for a complex sensitive issue. Detailed information was presented to readers early on in investigation and solid sourcing throughout coverage. This was a standout in the class.

Second Place: The Woodstock Independent, Mike Neumann. *Census.* Strong lead on first day of coverage and detailed reporting and sourcing. It would be good to think of how to add some non-official sources. While public appeal can be mixed, impacts are important and those impacts are explained to readers. Second day lead could have been stronger. Second graph was a candidate for a stronger lead.

Third Place: Scott County Times, Winchester, Beth Zumwalt. *Land prices rising throughout Central Illinois.* A strong topic for examination and some good sourcing, but the lead to this story felt like getting hit with numbers. If the third graph could be worked into the lead, you'd have some quantifiers right from the start. The numbers are important, but context is too.

Division B

First Place: Berwyn Life, Brett Schweinberg. *Depth of depravity.* A chilling examination of how a young boy could slip through the cracks. Solid reporting doesn't sensationalize but does a good job asking critical questions that could have kept a boy alive. Reporter does a good job getting information from key voices. Solid presentation on a high impact topic. Very strong writing throughout. Great work.

Second Place: Oak Leaves, Oak Park, Bill Dwyer. *The tragic case of Catherine Trage.* Very compelling and intriguing story that did a great job mixing investigators' accounts and documents along with interviews. A very intriguing storyline and stories broken apart in logical places. Great depth in reporting really shines through the series. Given the prominence in community, case had high impact. Dwyer does a good job laying out lingering questions. Very strong presentation particularly with items that were discarded/removed from home. Great example of open records work, persistence and narration.

Third Place: Riverside-Brookfield Landmark, Bob Skolnik. *RBHS Electioneering Questioned.* A solid and fair examination of potential conflicts in a local ballot issue. Solid and balanced reporting. Good leads through sourcing. Solid examination of what was happening though what the referendum was for was not included in reporting. Easy to follow story line and complete examination. Would have been nice to see some art elements (timeline) in presentation.

Honorable Mention: Ledger-Sentinel, Oswego, Tony Scott. *Heroin: no longer an inner city problem.* A complete look at a disturbing increase of heroin cases. Good example of noticing a growing trend. While the lead was not as strong as it could have been, the amount of research in the reporting was noteworthy. Some photo elements or graphics could have added to overall presentation...reader is left with a lot of text to digest though subheads did help.

Division C

First Place: Downers Grove Reporter, Nick Vogel. *Fair warning or crying wolf?* This is a very high impact topic and one that everyone talks about after a major event. It's a concern that the village didn't respond to whether its equipment could handle polygon system - that could have been higher. Nice context and historical information and nice to see one of the residents in story. The protocols

portion at the end of the story felt abrupt - and additional examples of what was under consideration would have been good to add.

Second Place: Downers Grove Reporter, Brian Hudson, Nick Vogel. *American Dream/National Nightmare*. A high impact topic with several different angles examined good official voices, but felt the story needed some local focus to answer questions about paying premium rent or who struggled with the banks. That sourcing would have propelled this entry upward. Overall strong story organization and clear writing.

Third Place: The Midweek, DeKalb, Dana Herra. *Different religions celebrate the season*. A slightly off-the-beaten-path enterprise story that was well organized and sourced. A lead with focus from the community could have made this more relatable to readers and felt a little less like an officials-based story.

Honorable Mention: Downers Grove Reporter, Brian Hudson. *Boundary Issues*. A strong, high-impact issue with a lot of underlying political implications. While the reporting was solid, there were questions not answered in the main story. There would be some pretty big uncertainty and political issues for a judge to deal with and addressing those questions would help readers understand these weren't the final maps.

Division D

First Place: Daily Chronicle, DeKalb, Kate Schott, Jason Schaumburg, Jeff Engelhardt, Andrew Mitchell, Caitlin Mullen, Nicole Weskerna. *Broken Benefits*. A very well-thought-out project which was well sourced and in depth. Presented in an easy-to-understand way. This was a run-away winner in this category. Outstanding work! Good balance and explanatory where necessary.

Second Place: Daily Chronicle, DeKalb, Jeff Engelhardt, Andrew Mitchell. *DeKalb County AYP Results*. Solid reporting and nice, strong story angles. Overall nice job getting around the jargon, though there were moments where readers were getting bombarded with education acronyms. The examples story was well executed. Good sources with geographic diversity, but parent voices would have been good. Overall, solid execution and well-presented, nice job.

Third Place: Morris Daily Herald, Christina Chapman. *That's not your normal potpourri*. A well-executed idea with solid sourcing and clear writing. Chapman does a good job explaining the impacts of synthetic drugs and did so in a way which wasn't a "how to." This story was very complete - it was nice to see context of availability in the area and comments from store clerk added to story.

Honorable Mention: Pekin Daily Times, Valari Hyatt. *Spreading the word*. This was a strong story idea but there were times where it felt too focused on the incident and not what it put them through (or what families can do if it happens to them.) While this was a strong story idea, it also felt like some of the medical terms weren't explained in terms that readers could understand easily. While HIPAA clearly made sourcing more difficult, Hyatt does a good job getting others to speak. A good lead but takes a while to understand where story is going.

Division E

First Place: The Register-Mail, Galesburg, Knox News Team. *Maytag employees in transition*. A truly unique approach to a huge regional story really stood out. The partnership, survey, research aspects really stood out and provided readers to get a deeper understanding. A few stories were results-heavy and could have used graphics to help understanding, but overall very strong focus areas and sourcing. A very complex project to manage, but information that's truly exclusive. Very nice presentation, though some stories could have used subheads or something to break up text. Outstanding overall execution!

Second Place: Northwest Herald, Crystal Lake, Staff. *Navigating the housing market*. The presentation of this project was top notch - great use of art & graphic elements. Very strong focus areas, good use of faces from community & great story organization. Stories were easy to read and understand and had good historical info with a forward focus. Impacts are truly surprising and this will obviously have an impact that will be difficult for area to overcome. A tight and well-executed project.

Third Place: The Register-Mail, Galesburg, Staff. *Tracking poverty*. A very solid team effort and outstanding presentation. Appreciated the sourcing and telling of stories living in the situation rather than just having officials react. Reporting presents a very honest and true picture. Stories were well constructed and pieced well. Level of detail in reporting shows the level of investment. Some of the photos seemed underplayed and could have helped break up text, but a minor criticism. Overall, a very strong and honest reflection. Nice work!

Honorable Mention: Sauk Valley Media, Sterling, Tara Becker, David Giuliani. *Crossing the line*. The level of detail and aggressive approach to get records and an explanation really stood out. Coverage focused on why board allowed a teacher to resign as well as a solid context piece. The transcript of texts, while explosive, provided readers the opportunity to see a significant piece of evidence. Overall balanced reporting, high-impact topic and strong organization. Nice work.

Division F

First Place: Chicago Tribune, Deborah L. Shelton, Jason Grotto. *Heart rings get a pass/Patients at heart of device debate*. Outstanding reporting and very straightforward and impactful writing helped this entry distinguish itself. Very high-impact lead, compelling throughout. Outstanding sourcing, and great overall story organization. While this involved a technical device, story was written without medical jargon which really made it easy to understand. Presentation was very strong - especially the significant graphic and photography. Top-notch research on this project!

Second Place: Chicago Tribune, Jeremy Gerner, Steve Mills, Stacy St. Clair. *Police shootings*. Very strong reporting on a very high impact emotion filled topic. It's frankly hard to believe a police force the size of Chicago doesn't have a better system in place monitoring/connecting the dots between office-involved shootings. Strong reporting examines the issue; very balanced well-organized piece. Strong reporting and very engaging lead. Great use of sources/comments/quotes, and a high-detailed writing. Work like this will hopefully help the department get a better handle on connecting incidents and measuring mental health.

Third Place: Chicago Sun-Times, Chris Fusco. *Meter Cheaters*. A classic example of how asking questions can lead to change and an unenforced policy is suddenly enforced. Reporter does a great job setting up a logical way to monitor situation and does a great job creating visual scenes. Parking always is a high impact topic - and cracking down on people cheating for better spots is even more so. Examining the \$13.5 million bill brought to light a ridiculous contract term and certainly begs the question of why a crackdown didn't start sooner. Solid work!

Honorable Mention: Belleville News-Democrat, George Pawlaczyk, Beth Hundsdorfer. *Money Talks*. Solid reporting helped point out some highly questionable anti-crime funds. While fines are often routine, reporters did a great job at getting to the bottom of the localized fund. Good to see judges being questioned for approving the deals. Some great audits by reporting them begs the question of how this practice can continue. Well-organized story structure, complete reporting/sourcing lead to a high impact package.

Class 12 Feature Writing

Division A

First Place: Elburn Herald, Lynn Meredith. *History Detectives: Where is the body buried?* The lead paragraph kept me reading this unusual story. This could have been a "dull" story but isn't.

Second Place: El Paso Journal, Jennie Kearney. *A. Zeal for sharing Earth's bounty*. Using the Little Red Hen story in the lead paragraph was attention getting. CSA is a project, which hopefully spreads to the other areas of the state/country.

Third Place: Village Voices, Lena, Dan Stevens. *Queen of the Court*. If the town didn't realize Strohecker's contribution and what a big hole she leaves all should know after reading Dan Steven's piece.

Honorable Mention: The County Star, Tolono, Christine Walsh. *Locals reach out to homeless with food, clothing*. What a marvelous group of people.

Division B

First Place: Glenview Announcements, Irv Leavitt. *The Unemployee Series*. Had to read every word of every piece in the series. Extremely funny and witty writing, yes; but also gives readers an inside look at professions we all wonder about. Beyond entertaining, this reporter is out to teach something.

Second Place: Brookfield/Riverside Suburban Life, Joe Sinopoli. *Treating a 250-pound gorilla*. Lead was fantastic; drew me into the subsequent information that taught a lot in a tightly written piece.

Third Place: Berwyn Life, Brett Schweinberg. *From fades to braids*. Very good description of the atmosphere of this local establishment. I could get a sense of the place through Schweinberg's report. Good supporting quotes from a variety of sources.

Honorable Mention: Rantoul Press, Dave Hinton. *He's a survivor*. Remarkable story about a remarkable life. The lead made me keep reading and the last paragraph that tied back to the beginning was a well-crafted ending. Your use of transitions in what was a long narrative kept the reader moving forward.

Division C

First Place: Austin Weekly News, Chicago, Megan Dooley. *Wrongly jailed, seeking solace*. Compelling story - not just the imprisonment but the hurdles he must jump before he can begin his new life.

Second Place: Wednesday Journal, Oak Park, Ken Trainor. *The journey of joys and sorrows*. Well-told story of life's journey.

Third Place: Wednesday Journal, Oak Park, Jean Lotus. *Chicago's Classical Music Encyclopedia*. Good lead paragraph - thank goodness he gave it a try!

Honorable Mention: Wednesday Journal, Oak Park, Megan Dooley. *One kid claims a space on gender spectrum*. Difficult material handled very well.

Division D

First Place: Daily Chronicle, DeKalb, Bill Braksick. *One boy's Super(man) story*. The writer draws the reader into the story quickly letting the reader see and feel with the boy as he realizes he is the one being honored.

Second Place: Chicago Daily Law Bulletin, Jerry Crimmins. *Young lawyer puts his career on hold to hike across US*. No doubt readers looked for the next installment of the story.

Third Place: Chicago Daily Law Bulletin, John Flynn Rooney. *Son describes the career his father, Ed Rooney, built in local journalism*. What an inspiring career.

Honorable Mention: Robinson Daily News, Sarah Ruholl. *Adopted cat wakes diabetic owner*. Informative.

Division E

First Place: Northwest Herald, Crystal Lake, Jami Kunzer. *Sunflowers for Elaine*. Beautifully written, simple lead, evocative turn of phrase...an easy, satisfying and well-written feature.

Second Place: Herald & Review, Decatur, Annie Getsinger. *Formerly homeless veteran's poetry conveys passion*. Effective storytelling, liked poem excerpts and writer's ability to show how the subject has impacted the community.

Third Place: The Beacon-News, Aurora, Erika Wurst. *Dying to get high*. A real eye-opening look inside teenagers' lives and easy availability of drugs. Nicely written and stark.

Honorable Mention: Journal-Courier, Jacksonville, David C.L. Bauer. *Local laundry's carts*. A great "brite" - short, sweet and unexpected topic; fun, imaginative lead.

Division F

First Place: Chicago Sun-Times, Mark Konkol. *A last gift for Maxx*. A lead that connects...masterful storytelling, interwoven with pertinent information about the in-home pet euthanasia service.

Second Place: Chicago Tribune, Christy Gutowski. *Behind the crimes*. Well-written, well-researched, deeply affecting subjects.

Third Place: Belleville News-Democrat, Scott Wuerz, Jacqueline Lee. *Pearl Harbor*. Strong leads, good historical facts, nice story-telling skills from the writers.

Honorable Mention: The State Journal-Register, Springfield, Chris Young. *Horseracing community voices support for gambling bill*. Nicely written news feature introduces reader to horses, as well as effectively tying into gambling bill.

Class 13 Original Column

Division A

First Place: Mahomet Citizen, Jillian Smith. *Fostering hope*. An important topic delivered well - interesting, which is important if you want readers to finish entire column.

Second Place: Forest Park Review, Tom Holmes. Thoughtful, interesting, well written.

Third Place: Villa Grove News, Amy McCollom. *Holding it all together*.

Honorable Mention: The Woodstock Independent, Leland Humbertson. *Et cetera*.

Division B

First Place: Lake County Journal, Grayslake, Judi Veoukas. *Off the deep end*. Many try to write a humorous column, but usually only half succeed. I found the wit winning me over.

Second Place: The Galena Gazette, P. Carter Newton. *Publisher's Column*. A good blend of observation, topic and long-time connection to a community - thoughtful at times.

Third Place: Glenview Announcements, Meg Moore. *The Style Counselor*. Weaves herself well into articles as an observer & partly a participant.

Honorable Mention: Woodford Times, DeWayne Bartels. *DeWayne's World*. Interesting topics and handled with sensitivity.

Division C

First Place: Downers Grove Reporter, Jerry Moore. Good topics with well-expressed thoughts.

Second Place: Wednesday Journal, Oak Park, Ken Trainor. Well written & interesting.

Third Place: Wednesday Journal, Oak Park, Dan Haley. Good to see someone who doesn't beat around the bush.

Honorable Mention: Austin Weekly News, Chicago, China Hill.

Division D

First Place: Daily Chronicle, DeKalb, Lauren Stott. *View from campus*. Local relevance was the key that brought Lauren Stott's entries to the top of this contest. Her columns have a strong voice and address local issues in an easy-to-read, commanding style.

Second Place: Pekin Daily Times, Michelle Teheux. *Yes, I see you - but where's your helmet?* Concise writing, interesting topics. The piece on motorcycle helmets was particularly strong. More local issues would be welcome.

Third Place: Chicago Daily Law Bulletin, William T. McGrath. *Should Tweets get copyright protection?* Good information delivered in a way that is accessible to people who need this information. The topics connect with readers.

Division E

First Place: The Register-Mail, Galesburg, Tom Loewy. *Free to pursue life on the rails*. Tom Loewy finds people off the beaten path and brings their stories to life. The tales he tells are interesting, insightful and authentic. Reading his column was a joy and a learning experience.

Second Place: Journal Gazette & Times-Courier, Mattoon, Penny Weaver. There is plenty to like in Penny Weaver's straight-talking columns. Strong point of view with information to back her arguments. No fear here - tell it like it is.

Third Place: The Times, Ottawa, Lonny Cain. *Tip for the day*. Good insight. The strongest writing come when talking about local matters - the columns about the different behaviors of "haves" and "have-nots", and looking out for the little guy were strong.

Honorable Mention: The Beacon-News, Aurora, Denise Crosby. Nice job of making sure people in tragic circumstances are understood better. Real emotion comes from these stories.

Division F

First Place: Chicago Sun-Times, Mark Brown. *Series of columns on Cynthia Barnes: "She Had Heart."* Humanity drips from this story in an intimate way. Mark Brown refuses to let this be a one-time tale. His very real characters are strong because he lets them be who they are in his writing.

Second Place: Chicago Sun-Times, *Roger Ebert's Journal*. These columns take us to a different plane, provoking introspection aimed at revelation. Unique work with Ebert's usual strong voice.

Third Place: Journal Star, Peoria, Pam Adams. This will draw your attention: "Of all the guns in Arizona, not one came in handy Saturday outside a grocery store in Tucson." This kind of strong writing made reading Adams' work almost mandatory. Strong topics.

Honorable Mention: Chicago Tribune, John Kass. Strong point of view and narrative about a strong personality. Would like to have seen more submissions.

Class 14 Sports Column

Division B

First Place: Bureau County Republican, Princeton, Kevin Hieronymus. *Hieronymus' Hypothesis*. Twenty-five years on beat pays off with column on regional championship. Princeton kids are lucky to have a writer like Kevin covering them.

Second Place: Rantoul Press, Matt Daniels. Daniels is easily the best lead writer in this category.

Third Place: Woodford Times, Tom Batters. This is a writer who knows and loves prep sports.

Division C

First Place: Wednesday Journal, Oak Park, Brad Spencer. Spencer is a strong lead writer. Potential to really grow. Column on Joplin was a standout and showed range beyond sports.

Second Place: The Wilmette Beacon, Joe Coughlin. He clearly knows his beat.

Third Place: The Midweek, DeKalb, Doug Oleson. The Wii column showed strong reporting skills, nice enterprise.

Division D

First Place: Morris Daily Herald, Steve Nitz. Steve's columns feature strong opinions and continuity throughout each column. Easy to read, interesting and "no punches pulled."

Second Place: Daily Chronicle, DeKalb, John Sahly. Nice variety of subject matter and very well written. So much more to sports column writing than many take advantage of - not John, he sees the value of the "Life Aspects" of sports columns.

Third Place: Paris Beacon-News, Drew Menard. Drew produces a lot of copy but it's very easy to read. Nice, short vignettes on a variety of topics makes for interesting reading.

Division E

First Place: The Telegraph, Alton, Pete Hayes. Three different columns and all well done. Though he hit a GRAND SLAM with Mrs. Pujols column.

Second Place: Kane County Chronicle, St. Charles, Jay Schwab. Heart-warming column in triathlete & good insight in Beebe column.

Third Place: Northwest Herald, Crystal Lake, Tom Musick. Nice jabs at Bears management in "Family Fest" piece. Good back & forth with Cubs & White Sox managers.

Honorable Mention: The Southern Illinoisan, Carbondale, Les Winkeler. Liked both of his Outdoors columns.

Division F

First Place: Chicago Sun-Times, Rick Telander. Like variety of columns; Sosa's corked bat, oldest Cubs fan & day with Ditka. All great reads with a lot of interesting info, anecdotes and solid writing; NOT garden-variety columns.

Second Place: Chicago Tribune, David Haugh. Three different columns - all home runs. Good interviews for Rose column; strong point in Cutler; necessary outrage in Notre Dame death.

Third Place: Journal Star, Peoria, Kirk Wessler. Really liked his World Series game six column and thought he made strong points in Paterno column.

Honorable Mention: Chicago Sun-Times, Rick Morrissey. Jimmy Butler column was great. Good point in Bulls-Heat game. Nice scene-setter for Bears-Packers.

Class 15 Photo Series

Division A

First Place: The Leader, St. Joseph, Jolee Paden, Nora Maberry. *Bus Barn*. Great diverse use of photos. Nice storyline and nice job using wide/tight photos. Easy to look at.

Second Place: The Woodstock Independent, James Militello. *Bryan Bulaga/SuperBowl*. Clean, tells a story with only using a limited number of photos. Good edit. Nice moments.

Third Place: Pinckneyville Press, Jeff Egbert, Jessica Holder, Hannah Egbert, Amanda Hepp. *Heartbreaking*. Tells a nice story throughout week. Needs a major edit. Too many photos telling the same thing. Photo spent a lot of time on assignment, great!

Honorable Mention: The Courier, Carterville, William Bateman, Steve Buhman. *Free Fair*. Nice shots, technically solid. Nice moments.

Division B

First Place: Ledger-Sentinel, Oswego, Joanne Pleskovich. *Prairiefest*. Nicely edited. Each photo stands well on its own. Nice moments.

Second Place: Brookfield/Riverside Suburban Life, Sarah Minor. *Andrea's Pregnancy*. Nice story-telling images. Good wide, details, telephoto images. Nice selection.

Third Place: The Leader-Union, Rich Bauer, Dave Bell. *Fair*

Honorable Mention: Glen Ellyn News, Matt Piechalak. *Jazzfest*.

Division C

First Place: Elmhurst Press, Sarah Minor. *Kristies High Risk Pregnancy*. Great story-telling images. Great variety and detail photographs. Good work.

Second Place: St. Charles Republican, Mark Busch. *River photos*. Beautiful lead image. Wonderful glimpses of wildlife along the river.

Third Place: Downers Grove Reporter, Erica Benson. *Lasting Love*. A different lead image draws you into the story with several good supporting images.

Honorable Mention: Suburban Journals, Collinsville, John Swistak, Jr. *A week of homecoming*. Fun photos, nice variety.

Division E

First Place: The Register-Mail, Galesburg, Nick Adams. *The Visible Man - Harold Palash*. Very well shot. Lots of good singles that when combined together make a very interesting story.

Second Place: The Daily Journal, Kankakee, Nicholas Holstein. *'We do everything together' (father/daughter bond)*. Nice variety of photos. Some very touching moments between the father and daughter.

Third Place: The Register-Mail, Galesburg, Nick Adams. *Alzheimer's - No black and white malady*. Well done. There are some nice moments in the series but we would have liked to see some changes in perspective. All the photos have kind of the same feel.

Honorable Mention: Journal Gazette & Times-Courier, Mattoon, Ken Trevarthan. *Jr. Drag/Girl Power*. Nice group of images. Good use of details.

Division F

First Place: Journal Star, Peoria, Fred Zwicky. *Monkey House*. Great group of images. Lots of variety. Really gave us a sense of how these people live.

Second Place: The State Journal-Register, Springfield, David Spencer. *Living History*. Each photo can almost stand on its own yet they work well together.

Third Place: Journal Star, Peoria, Fred Zwicky. *Megan's Battle*. Good story but it feels unfinished.

Honorable Mention: The News-Gazette, Champaign, Heather Coit, *Whittaker*. Nice story giving us a slice of his life.

Class 16 Spot News Photo

Division A

First Place: Carol Stream Press, Mark Busch. *Train Fire*. Good moment, good lens choice. It stood out as the obvious Spot News Photo winner.

Second Place: Pinckneyville Press, Jeff Egbert. *Fire*. Good perspective. Dramatic Fire. Good composition and nice moment.

Third Place: Village Voices, Lena, Buck Nelson. *Wait up Mom*. Different. Spontaneous.

Honorable Mention: Mascoutah Herald, Keith Gillett. *Fire at Wennemans*. Photo would be better obviously if the photographer was there sooner. Sign in rubble helps make this photo.

Division B

First Place: Republic-Times, Waterloo, Kermit Constantine. *Woman rescued from icy lake*. Best storytelling. Peak action.

Second Place: Berwyn Life, Mark Busch. *Aiming Pistol*. Dramatic single image.

Third Place: Riverside-Brookfield Landmark, J. Geil, *Truck Fire*. Nicely exposed, dramatic. Crop from left to improve image.

Honorable Mention: Rantoul Press, Jessica Starkey. *Twister Aloft*.

Division C

First Place: Chicago Journal, J. Geil. *Back to Life*. We get the point, high emotions. The right place at the right time.

Second Place: Austin Weekly News, Chicago, J. Geil. *Warehouse Fire*. Nice perspective of a big event.

Third Place: Downers Grove Reporter, Mark Busch. *ATV Search*. Could have used more information in the image.

Division D

First Place: Pekin Daily Times, Josh Bradshaw. *Fire on highway*. Photo does a good job of setting the scene. There are lots of little details to find as you look around the photo.

Second Place: Daily Chronicle, DeKalb, Rob Winner. *Firefighter accident*. Good job capturing the face on the firefighter. I also like all the debris on the ground.

Third Place: Pekin Daily Times, Josh Bradshaw. *Fountains*. Nice job capturing the fun emotion of the girl playing in the water. This photo may be out of category and may have done better in feature photo.

Honorable Mention: Robinson Daily News, Tom Compton. *County honors 9/11 victims, emergency workers, police*. Sweet and poignant.

Division E

First Place: The Register-Mail, Galesburg, Nick Adams. *Rollover*. Good use of composition and framing to draw your eye into the woman in the car. Nice job of capturing the emotion of the woman's face.

Second Place: The Daily Journal, Kankakee, Mike Voss. *A criminal cornered in cornfield*. Great job by the photographer to get out to the scene and make a story-telling image of the right place at the

right time. Would have liked to see the subject lightened up a bit to separate him from the background.

Third Place: The Telegraph, Alton, Margie M. Barnes. *Target Trailer Fire*. Great composition. Very graphic.

Honorable Mention: Journal Gazette & Times-Courier, Mattoon, Kevin Kilhoffer. *Water Main*. Nice photo from a fairly mundane event.

Division F

First Place: SouthtownStar, Tinley Park, Matt Marton. *Blizzard*. Great photo that shows the magnitude of the storm. An instant classic.

Second Place: SouthtownStar, Tinley Park, Joseph P. Meier. *Drowning*. The photographer was able to capture the powerful emotion of the moment in the photo. We really liked the officer leaning down to comfort the woman.

Third Place: Journal Star, Peoria, Adam Gerik. *Fatal Prints*. Strong scene photo from a tragic event that happened behind closed doors.

Honorable Mention: The Dispatch, Moline, Paul Colletti. *Fire reflection*. Nice job by the photographer to see an image away from the main scene.

Class 17 General News Photo

Division A

First Place: El Paso Journal, Kim Kearney. *Ladies Man*. Best moment, nice composition.

Second Place: The Courier, Carterville, Steve Buhman. *Perfect Day*. Just a nice clean moment. Story-telling image. Caption was a plus.

Third Place: Village Voices, Lena, Linda Stykel. *Please Don't Break*. Peak Action, nice lens choice.

Honorable Mention: The Woodstock Independent, Leland Humbertson. *McHenry County Fair*. Different perspective. Wish kids were reacting more, would have made this a first place image.

Division B

First Place: Oak Leaves, Oak Park, Tom Cruze. *27 Story Rappel*. Best general news photo. Stands out as the best story-telling image.

Second Place: The Winnetka Current, Lois Bernstein. *Trier High School Dance Day*. Intriguing image. Makes you want to read the story and outline. Nice composition.

Third Place: Brookfield/Riverside Suburban Life, Matt Piechalak. *Gorilla physical*. Unique, great access.

Honorable Mention: Riverside-Brookfield Landmark, J. Geil. *Nice Ice*. Nice scene.

Division C

First Place: Wednesday Journal, Oak Park, J. Geil. *Funeral for Coach*. Perfect composition. Perfect moment. Great job.

Second Place: Naperville Sun, Brian Powers. *Bubbles*. Perfect timing. Good composition. Humorous moment.

Third Place: Chicago Journal, J. Geil. *Occupy*. Good perspective of this event.

Honorable Mention: Wednesday Journal, Oak Park, J. Geil. *Snow blowin'*. Chilly moment during storm cleanup.

Division D

First Place: Daily Chronicle, DeKalb, Kyle Bursaw. *NIU Vigil*. Great emotion! There is a lot to look at in this photo.

Second Place: Pekin Daily Times, Skyler Edwards. *Ghost and Goblins*. Good faces. You can really see the excitement in the kids.

Third Place: Daily Chronicle, DeKalb, Rob Winner. *Robotic Seal*. I like the composition and the contrast between the white seal and the red on the woman. I also like the contrast between the soft fur and the wrinkles.

Honorable Mention: Pekin Daily Times, Skyler Edwards. *Relish Show*. Good shot from a performance. I like all the stuff in the air.

Division E

First Place: The Telegraph, Alton, John Badman. *Summer Heat at Band Practice*. Love the texture of the sweat on the brow. Photo really makes you feel how hot it was.

Second Place: The Register-Mail, Galesburg, Nick Adams. *Black Fried Out*. Really nice photo of a very tough event to make interesting photos of. May have placed first if it was cropped a bit tighter.

Third Place: The Beacon-News, Aurora, Brian Powers. *Untitled*. Really nice composition. Photo makes me ask a lot of questions about the scene. Technically very well done.

Honorable Mention: The Beacon-News, Aurora, Brian Powers. *It's a Boy*. Great story-telling moment. Her face tells you everything you need to know.

Division F

First Place: Journal Star, Peoria, Fred Zwicky. *Put Down the Guns*. Very powerful and story-telling image.

Second Place: Rockford Register Star, Max Gersh. *Tornado drill*. This image made us stop in our tracks and wonder what was going on. Nice job by the photographer to make a unique image.

Third Place: Belleville News-Democrat, Derik Holtmann. *Arch Marine*. Great composition. Nice job by the photographer to put himself in the right spot.

Honorable Mention: The Dispatch, Moline, Todd Mizener. *Secret service*. This image has a classic quality to it. It makes you want to know more.

Class 18 Feature Photo

Division A

First Place: Forest Park Review, J. Geil. *Blizzard Walk*. Awesome/funny moment. Tighter crop (crop out sign on right) would improve this. Stand out winner.

Second Place: Forest Park Review, J. Geil. *Football in America*. Nice "Americana" moment. Great lens choice. Good angle and action.

Third Place: Forest Park Review, J. Geil. *Caroling*. Funny moment. Good composition.

Honorable Mention: Carol Stream Press, Mark Busch. *Snow Car*. Storytelling, good photo for not having people.

Division B

First Place: Lake County Journal, Grayslake, Candace H. Johnson. *Waterfront Well*. Best found feature. Loved the moment.

Second Place: Pike Press, Pittsfield, Wayne Utterback. *Fair Nibble*. Nice job by photographer to capture this moment and have the right lens for the shot.

Third Place: Buffalo Grove Countryside, Michael Schmidt. *Dodgeball Dare*. Great facial expression.

Honorable Mention: Berwyn Life, Mark Busch. *Beware of Dog*. Nice juxtaposition. Good found moment.

Division C

First Place: Wednesday Journal, Oak Park, J. Geil. *Flipping In*. Great composition and point of view of diving into the pool.

Second Place: Downers Grove Reporter, Mark Busch. *Disappearing Man*. Good image of an unusual job.

Third Place: Chicago Journal, J. Geil. *On the Hunt*. Funny moment of a mother and child on an Easter egg hunt.

Honorable Mention: Downers Grove Reporter, Mark Busch. *Missing Antler*. Good image of an unusual moment.

Division D

First Place: Daily Chronicle, DeKalb, Rob Winner. *Beach Party*. Nice peak action photo that is technically sound. I would have liked to see it cropped into a vertical.

Second Place: Robinson Daily News, Tom Compton. *Feature Photo*. Fun photo. I would have liked to have seen more emotion from the kid on the right.

Third Place: Pekin Daily Times, Josh Bradshaw. *Bike Trick*. Cool use of shadows.

Honorable Mention: Pekin Daily Times, Skyler Edwards. *Can you see me now?* Nice use of depth of field.

Division E

First Place: The Register-Mail, Galesburg, Nick Adams. *Afternoon Swing*. We liked the composition and technicality of this photo. The layering and leading lines draw your eye through the frame and the viewer is rewarded with lots to look at.

Second Place: Northwest Herald, Crystal Lake, Lance Booth. *Oz*. We liked how the darkness of the photo causes you to stop and look and then you pick up the iconic image of Dorothy and Toto. It has a very moody feeling.

Third Place: Sauk Valley Media, Sterling, Alex T. Paschal. *Harvesting*. Nice use of silhouette. The pattern of the corn broken up by the person is nice.

Honorable Mention: Herald & Review, Decatur, Mark Roberts. *One Man Concert*. Nice job making a funny photo of a situation with not much going on.

Division F

First Place: Belleville News-Democrat, Steve Nagy. *Full of Hot Dogs*. The photo tells you everything you need to know about the situation.

Second Place: SouthtownStar, Tinley Park, Brett Roseman. *School of Rock*. Well-composed, interesting photo.

Third Place: The News-Gazette, Champaign, John Dixon. *Upside down at the Fair*. Nice faces on the kids.

Honorable Mention: Rockford Register Star, Scott Morgan. *Blizzard Digging Out*. Nice daily image with a good story.

Class 19 Personality Portrait

Division A

First Place: The Courier, Carterville, Steve Buhman. *AJ Chamness*. Simple, nice background, well lit.

Second Place: The Woodstock Independent, Michelle Krenger. *Kayla Beattie*. Story-telling image. A cleaner background would have made this better.

Third Place: The Free Press Advocate, Wilmington, Pam Monson. *Oh the Soft Glow*. Interesting moment.

Honorable Mention: The Courier, Carterville, William Bateman. *Sarah's Place*. Touching. Interesting choice through the window with name of store overhead.

Division B

First Place: Lombard Spectator, Mark Busch. *Toy Store Owner*. Standout, best portrait that tells exactly what the person does.

Second Place: Geneva Republican, Mark Busch. *Snow beard*. Story-telling image, perhaps tighter crop.

Third Place: Oak Leaves, Oak Park, Suzanne Tennant. *Lost Child*. Very dramatic, well composed. Mood sets off the photo.

Honorable Mention: Berwyn Life, Matt Piechalak. *Berwyn Homeless*. Expressive.

Division C

First Place: Wednesday Journal, Oak Park, J. Geil. *At the Movies*. Clean, well-lit image.

Second Place: Suburban Journals, Collinsville, John Swistak, Jr. *Weapon Wielding Squirrel*. An odd photo that made us laugh.

Third Place: Downers Grove Reporter, Paul Iwanaga. *Beach Treasure*. Good expression.

Honorable Mention: Downers Grove Reporter, Paul Iwanaga. *Directing the choir*. Good expression.

Division D

First Place: Daily Chronicle, DeKalb, Kyle Bursaw. *Hudon Portrait*. Nice idea and great light. Good composition.

Second Place: Daily Chronicle, DeKalb, Rob Winner. *No Legs Portrait*. Great composition. This is a very story-telling piece.

Third Place: Daily Chronicle, DeKalb, Rob Winner. *Davis Portrait*. Well executed with a good face.

Honorable Mention: Daily Chronicle, DeKalb, Kyle Bursaw. *Waller Portrait*. I like the reflection and the photographer worked hard to get a unique angle.

Division E

First Place: The Register-Mail, Galesburg, Nick Adams. *The Visible Man*. Great photo. Makes me ask all kinds of questions about the subtext. Technically very well done.

Second Place: Kane County Chronicle, St. Charles, Sandy Bressner. *Niski*. Strong photo. Good idea, well lit.

Third Place: Northwest Herald, Crystal Lake, Lauren Anderson, *Eye on Prize*.

Honorable Mention: Herald & Review, Decatur, Mark Roberts. *Dentist in Mexico*. Well lit. Nice point of view.

Division F

First Place: Journal Star, Peoria, Fred Zwicky. *In Memorial*. Technically superior. We really liked the projected image on the ball.

Second Place: SouthtownStar, Tinley Park, Brett Roseman. *World War II Photographer*. Very nice image. We really liked how the photographer incorporated the subject's own equipment.

Third Place: The Dispatch, Moline, Paul Colletti. *Silhouette*. Very moody. It was something visually different than all the other photos.

Honorable Mention: Belleville News-Democrat, Derik Holtmann. *Art Singer*. Nice use of the reflection and the juxtaposition of the faces.

Class 20 Sports Photo

Division A

First Place: Greene Prairie Press, Carrollton, Carmen Ensinger. *Safe at Third*. Best peak action. Nice moment. Good crop. A little busy background.

Second Place: Mascoutah Herald, Keith Gillett. *Muddy header first*. Great moment, reflection helps. More tighter crop from left and right would help clean it up.

Third Place: Pinckneyville Press, Tonya Blackwell. *State Championship*.

Honorable Mention: Village Voices, Lena, Dan Stevens. *First title*. Nice reaction.

Division B

First Place: Riverside-Brookfield Landmark, J. Geil. *Header*. Unique peak action. Tighter crop would make this better.

Second Place: Oak Leaves, Oak Park, Rob Hart. *Wrestling Reaction*. Wonderful moment with the coaches. Needs crop from left. Different way of showing emotion of match.

Third Place: Mundelein Review, Michael Schmidt. *Winning Point Reaction*. Peak moment. Classic reaction, good composition.

Honorable Mention: Lake County Journal, Grayslake, Candace H. Johnson. *Gurnee Warren Soccer Header Faces*. Funny shot. Everyone is flinching except the boy who looks like he's about to be hit in the face.

Division C

First Place: Wednesday Journal, Oak Park, J. Geil. *Shadow Ball*. Great image and perspective.

Second Place: Naperville Sun, Brian Powers. *Defeat*. Perfect moment of celebration.

Third Place: Downers Grove Reporter, Matt Piechalak. *North Pole Vault*. New perspective.

Honorable Mention: The Wilmette Beacon, Jack Hardman. *Wrestling Cheer*. Good timing. Makes me want to know more.

Division D

First Place: Pekin Daily Times, Skyley Edwards. *Washington Football*. Nicely framed. Spot-on focus on quarterback. Good timing. Just a superb shot. Foreground and background being out of focus help direct the eye to the important area.

Second Place: Daily Chronicle, DeKalb, Rob Winner. *MAC Winner*. Nice angle. Good expression. Good exposure.

Third Place: Times-Republic, Watseka, Ryan Buchan. *Caleb Parson*. Interesting shot with parallel images. A little flashed out.

Honorable Mention: Daily Chronicle, DeKalb, Kyle Bursaw. *Orange sea*. Colorful, nice capture of faces and movement contrasted by the referee in black and white.

Division E

First Place: Northwest Herald, Crystal Lake, Lauren Anderson. *Face First*. You can't beat "right place, right time." The ball on the left completes the story.

Second Place: Northwest Herald, Crystal Lake, Daniel J. Murphy. *Consolation*. Photo speaks to the boy's character in a role reversal from what one might expect. The wall of players in front makes it a "behind the scenes" peek.

Third Place: The Southern Illinoisan, Carbondale, Steve Jahnke. *Miscommunication*. Perfect timing. Great expression.

Honorable Mention: The Register-Mail, Galesburg, Nick Adams. *Crushing Defeat*. The more you look at this photo the more it tells. The one player looking directly at the photographer detracts from the picture.

Division F

First Place: Belleville News-Democrat, Steve Nagy. *Freese Scores*. A great capture of a defining moment.

Second Place: Journal Star, Peoria, Ron Johnson. *Steamed*. Great photo from a technical perspective.

Third Place: Journal Star, Peoria, Adam Gerik. *Redneck Catch*. The fish in the net made this picture. Tells a story and expresses the fun of the event.

Honorable Mention: The State Journal-Register, Springfield, Justin L. Fowler. *Runny Ketchup*. There were better photos but the uniqueness and humor of this shot kept it in the mix. Could have used a little more mustard.

Class 21 Editorial Cartoon

First Place: Bureau County Republican, Princeton, Greg Wallace. *Light Bulb*. I'm still chuckling at how this simple cartoon says so much so well. I hope there's much more where that came from.

Second Place: The State Journal-Register, Springfield, Chris Britt. *Flypaper*. Great concept very well executed to show story of political flies getting caught up in corruption. Isn't that what flies do?

Third Place: Belleville News-Democrat, Glenn McCoy. *How Much for Seat?* Well-executed look at Rod Blagojevich's first day in jail. Message told well and succinctly.

Honorable Mention: The Woodstock Independent, Jim Pearson. *State Needs to Step Up Cartoon.* Simple illustration of state of finances for Illinois tells story without a word.

Class 22 Illustration

Division B

First Place: El Paso Journal, Kim Kearney. *Blueprint for our future.* Went well with story - catches eye.

Second Place: El Paso Journal, Kim Kearney. *A soldier's story.* Nice mixture of elements to create one artwork.

Third Place: The Woodstock Independent, Jason Neumann. *Construction season.* Nicely frames article.

Division B

First Place: Bureau County Republican, Princeton, Greg Wallace. *Slap Happy.* The multiple-exposure stop-action illustration gives the reader an idea of what a slap hit actually is...far more than a single picture could have.

Second Place: O'Fallon Progress, Staff. *Schaefer Scrabble Club.* Extremely eye-catching illustration that leaves no doubt to the reader about what the accompanying story is going to be about.

Third Place: Bureau County Republican, Princeton, Kevin Hieronymus, Todd Olin. *Michael Murphy's mad dash.* Uniquely illustrates the game-winning play with an extreme amount of detail. Sports junkies eat this kind of thing up.

Honorable Mention: Macoupin County Enquirer-Democrat, Carlinville, Staff. *Population rises.* There is a great deal of information here, and the county graphic is easy to read, though the list is a little heavy with the screened backgrounds.

Division C

First Place: Downers Grove Reporter, Scott Lester. *Time to Pick.* Unique graphic lead into election coverage. The use of faces to simulate the stripes of the flag is something I have never seen done, and it definitely draws the reader's attention.

Second Place: Downers Grove Reporter, Ryan Terrell. *iNFLUENCES.* We've all seen the mind bubbles before, but using them to lead into a series of stories is clever, and makes me want to read the story it's leading to.

Third Place: The Orland Park Prairie, Julie Vaughan. *Can you see your tax dollars?* Interesting collage of various elements of finance.

Division E

First Place: The Times, Ottawa, Julie Stroebel. *Cleaning the Board.* Unique, well-conceived, interesting...this illustration has a lot going for it. Adjusting the board to illustrate the key points of your story was a clever idea without going overboard and being too cute.

Second Place: Sauk Valley Media, Sterling, Alex T. Paschal. *Crossing the line.* Anyone older than 25 years old can remember standing at the front of the classroom or watching friends at the front of the classroom at the chalkboard writing lines. This was a modern version of the same thing, which really intrigued me.

Third Place: Northwest Herald, Crystal Lake, Scott Helmchen. *Listen Up.* A very informative illustration that complements the information presented extremely well.

Honorable Mention: Northwest Herald, Crystal Lake, Scott Helmchen. *Fall arts preview.* The tree illustration intrigued me, though some difficulty reading the names of the various performances pushed this slightly below your other entry.

Division F

First Place: The News-Gazette, Champaign, Lyncoln Delporte. *It's been real*. Truly interesting presentation of the timeline of the player's life and career. The film graphic is very eye-catching and almost tells the story without need for words. Excellent.

Second Place: The News-Gazette, Champaign, Erin Lippitz-Gelsthorpe. *In search of meaning*. One of the better examples I've seen of creating feeling with a newspaper page. The use of light blue color to accent the white creates a state of mind for the reader.

Third Place: The Pantagraph, Bloomington, David Proeber. *Tree Allergies*. The face semi-hidden within the greenery certainly typifies what many allergy sufferers feel - as if they are in a fog. This certainly draws attention to what the rest of the story is about.

Honorable Mention: Chicago Sun-Times, Jessica Sedgwick. *The next new (old) thing*. A good example of simple being just as effective as a more complex graphic. The huge picture draws eyes, and the unusual build illustrates the meaning of the story.

Class 23 Informational Graphic

Division A

First Place: The Woodstock Independent, Katelyn Stanek. *Census Snapshot*. Information was generally clear and easy to understand. Some additional detail in median age could help reader detect small differences.

Second Place: The Woodstock Independent, Katelyn Stanek. *By the Numbers: 2010 US Census Figures*. This visualization presented an array of information clearly and housing and ethnicity information were creative and easy to understand.

Third Place: The Woodstock Independent, Katelyn Stanek. *The Springfield Squeeze*. The graphic was generally easy to understand, but there were a few decisions for abbreviations and lack of color labeling (money owed section) where it would have been nice to have numeric values or distinction between dollars & percentages.

Honorable Mention: Scott County Times, Winchester, Wayne Utterback. *Land prices rising throughout Central Illinois*. Line graph was easy to understand; though some of the colors were difficult to distinguish in reproduction of page.

Division B

First Place: Macoupin County Enquirer-Democrat, Carlinville, Staff. *Harvest*. Nice incorporation of art with information. Information was clear, labeling adequate and sourced. Simple, nice design.

Second Place: The Galena Gazette, Andrew Brunner. *Piling up*. Nice work getting a photo and informational graphic to work well together. Information was clear and labeling adequate. Nice blend of colors between graphic & art.

Third Place: Highland Park News, Lenore Krasner. *Bike-Walk HP2030*. Nice work graphically presenting a lot of information and easy to understand graphic. Photos of examples really help bring clarity. One thing that was not clear was the different colors (red, brown) that were used. A key could have helped understand this quicker.

Honorable Mention: The Journal-News, Hillsboro, Mike Plunkett. *County population tops 30,000*. Sometimes it's better to do a bit less. While information was clear, the effort to get numbers within county shape made this graphic distracting. A source for data would be good, as would a column for 2000 populations. Readers won't do the math.

Division C

First Place: Downers Grove Reporter, Eric Hahn. *The end: The sentencing of a murderer*. A detailed timeline captures emotion and provides readers with a good recap from the case. A good mix/balance of text and art. Sequential nature is easy to understand.

Second Place: Downers Grove Reporter, Eric Hahn. *Siren FAQs*. A graphic that doesn't try to do too much, but presents important information and answers some of the most frequent siren questions. Nice sequencing in the steps, while Q & A format is easy to understand. Blend of color and design lends to an overall attractive package.

Third Place: Downers Grove Reporter, Jes Spivak, Jen Berta. *Boundary issues, who represents who?* This is a very complex graphic which provides a significant amount of information beyond which lawmaker will represent residents. The key was helpful and the summaries helpful, and very nice re-production. Map, because of geographic scope, was at time limited in detail of streets/boundaries.

Honorable Mention: Austin Weekly News, Chicago, Alaina Buzas. *Chicago Alderwomen.* A good effort to illustrate the portions of Chicago represented by women. The limited reproduction hurt clarity and this could have been strengthened with an introductory graph.

Division D

First Place: Pekin Daily Times, Rick Rynerson. *What will you pay?* This graphic was the most aggressive attempt to portray information in the category though there were some typographical errors that were noticeable, the spacing/scale of the graphic is also something to be careful with. The scale here made \$27 and \$61 jumps look comparable to some other jumps.

Second Place: Morris Daily Herald, Patrick Graziano. *Hot enough for you?* This was a very straightforward graphic that was easy to understand. The thermometer graphic was not reproduced very crisply. Basic, but intuitive.

Third Place: Daily Chronicle, DeKalb, Kurt Cunningham. *Senate Redistricting.* The graphic provided a lot of textual detail but did not have the same visual detail. Maps were very generic and didn't include some of the communities, etc. The legend was helpful, but some of the text should have been visually represented.

Honorable Mention: Morris Daily Herald, Patrick Graziano. *What readers are saying on Facebook.* Nice to see some audience engagement in a graphic. Clean display and easy to understand.

Division E

First Place: Northwest Herald, Crystal Lake, Dave Lemery. *The War in Iraq.* Very visual and detailed timeline which does a nice job concisely recalling a variety of topics related to the war. Good recap of major events and nice job providing detail into Iraq's culture. Great layout...stands at top of the category.

Second Place: Northwest Herald, Crystal Lake, Dave Lemery. *The steps of foreclosure.* This series of graphics does a good job of explaining a series of complex topics and does a great job adding context to the reporting. Nice breakdown of information, strong details.

Third Place: The Register-Mail, Galesburg, Christina Landon. *Timeline of a murder spree.* An easy-to-understand timeline of a horrendous spree of events. Tight display and good blend of visual elements. Overall solid presentation.

Honorable Mention: The Daily Journal, Kankakee, Evan Hill. *5 principles of Tigerball.* A creative idea and good execution. The presentation of the five points was difficult to follow around and it felt like the stats supporting the principle should have been transposed.

Division F

First Place: Chicago Tribune, Jemal Brinson, Jonathon Berlin. *Building a runway.* A beautiful graphic which provides a detailed look at how a runway is built. Great design and layered look helps readers understand the equipment & role of each layer - and also helps provide context to other surfaces. Master plan & prep graphic really help understand the scope of the project. Great work!

Second Place: Journal Star, Peoria, Chris Grimm, Scott Hinton. *"600."* A great tribute to a hometown slugger. Great use of photography blended with statistics to build a visually stunning package that allows fans to relive memories. A nice collectable piece.

Third Place: Chicago Tribune, Phil Geib. *Where no crafts have gone before.* This piece creates a great timeline of the Voyager program, look at the spacecraft and the distance traveled. Great visual concept and presented in a truly clean fashion. Great work!

Honorable Mention: Rockford Register Star, Margo Morgan, Chris Soprych. *Did a pond derail a train?* Strong presentation on a chain of events leading to a significant derailment. Graphic provides

good context and breakouts of detail areas; help readers understand how the situation was changing by the minute. Good explanatory work.

Class 24 Single Page Design

Division A

First Place: The Woodstock Independent, Katelyn Stanek. *Census snapshot*. Very clean and attention grabbing page - with good font use and nice colors. Good decision not to use reverse type in article body. Simple headline, and very solid use of graphics. This entry was very eye-catching and attractive. Nice work.

Second Place: The Woodstock Independent, Katelyn Stanek. *A little help from the friends*. A very nice feature layout with a nice panoramic photo which helps reader take in a view from the park. This helps put the focus on the park. Nice use of color on the pull quote and beautiful overall design. The use of fonts is to be commended...a very clean and pleasing look on the eyes.

Third Place: Elburn Herald, Leslie Flint. *Leash on life*. A nice overall page blending attractive photography with some text at-a-glance elements. A nice style element to bold the names in photo options. While the body text seems to stand out a bit, nice fonts and design throughout.

Honorable Mention: Woodford County Journal, Eureka, Mark Barra. *6/16/2011*. A solid local news page with straightforward headlines and good use of photography. Simple but nice typography.

Division B

First Place: Skokie Review, Lenore Krasner. *Getting fresh at Wilde & Greene*. Well done page. The series across the top is well done. Text slightly curved along the apple slice and complimenting spot color under the recipe.

Second Place: O'Fallon Progress, Staff. *Front Page*. Nice clean page. Centerpiece story is graphically clean! Text is open, easy to read. Page is nice to read.

Third Place: East Peoria Times-Courier, Philip Lasseigne. *Front Page*. Centerpiece story is well done with photos, eye catching bold headline and quick hits items and secondary story.

Honorable Mention: The Winnetka Current, Shannon Mashek. *Just dance*. Nice use of photos and headline text. Outline in the lower left gets lost.

Division C

First Place: Downers Grove Reporter, Eric Hahn. *Lives changed forever*. A well-done page, clean, concise, great use of type styles and images to create a simple but interesting page.

Second Place: Downers Grove Reporter, Eric Hahn. *Job Description*. Good use of text, spot color and images. I love the paper clip detail. Well done.

Third Place: Wednesday Journal, Oak Park, Alaina Buzas. *An inside look at history*. Simple design works well for this page. Images of showcase homes with faded image in the background is nice.

Honorable Mention: Chicago Journal, Mark Tatara. *Float on – Metropolis*. Interesting text on the photo grabs your attention. The secondary image draws your attention into the text and the "If you go..." information.

Division D

First Place: Daily Chronicle, DeKalb, Kurt Cunningham. *Snow daze*. I like the commitment of selling out the whole front page to one issue. Photos, a big headline & infographics work well together.

Second Place: Pekin Daily Times, Eric Atkins. *The look of the pros*. Clean, fun look, works great for a lifestyle page. Headline font matches the subject matter & images tie the page together.

Third Place: Pekin Daily Times, Eric Atkins. *Olympia grad chases rodeo dream*. Very impressed with how graphics are layered on this page with the article's subject cut out of the story and over a second image. Well balanced and very readable.

Honorable Mention: Daily Chronicle, DeKalb, Inger Koch. *Midwest Fest*. Strong design, full page commitment. It's very basic but works as a whole package.

Division E

First Place: Journal Gazette & Times-Courier, Mattoon, Jeff Ruble. *Flights of fancy*. This page is thrilling! The combination of the plane combined with a big headline above the fold draws readers in. The small amount of text on the page allows the photos to tell the story.

Second Place: Northwest Herald, Crystal Lake, Valerie Katzenstein. *Sunflowers for Elaine*. Readers are drawn in by the colors and met with a surprise at the bottom of the page. It's lively and fun.

Third Place: Herald & Review, Decatur, Mike Albright. *Program of the Year - St. Teresa*. Well put-together double truck. Bordering on cluttered, the amount of information, but still really enjoyable. Highlights the subject well.

Honorable Mention: The Southern Illinoisan, Carbondale, Rhonda Ethridge, Alan Rogers. *Council questions*. Interesting approach to a potentially boring subject. I like the bulletin board idea and think it works well for this topic.

Division F

First Place: Chicago Tribune, Shanna Novak. *Thirsty? Beautiful* - the background detail image keeps you focused on the page. And the simple headline tops it off. Great work.

Second Place: Journal Star, Peoria, Chris Grimm. *A1*. Wonderful balance of great local news and the unfolding international disaster. Text headlines and images are blended perfectly.

Third Place: The Dispatch, Moline, Staff. *Big snow, big chill*. Great headline & image grab your attention and tell the story.

Honorable Mention: The State Journal-Register, Springfield, Katie Davis. *Extreme savings*. Great use of a simple graphic...the "red dotted line."

Class 25 Newspaper Design

Division A

First Place: Elburn Herald, Staff. Nice clean front page. Beautiful layout throughout. Well-organized throughout. Nice crisp photos (although page 1 on Sept. 8 could use a dominant photo).

Second Place: Mahomet Citizen, Amelia Benner. Excellent use of dominant photos, top of front page very clean. Could use a dominant headline on page 1.

Third Place: Woodford County Journal, Eureka, Mark Barra. Nice use of white space. One page (Sept. 8) lacks a dominant photo.

Honorable Mention: Pinckneyville Press, Staff. The fire issue is extraordinary.

Division B

First Place: O'Fallon Progress, Staff. Nice, clean look. Especially like the Sept. 15 Page 1 layout. The masthead is nice and the promos down the side are effective. A good-looking newspaper.

Second Place: Ledger-Sentinel, Oswego, John Etheredge. Beautiful photo reproduction. Layout is simple and effective. Promos look nice.

Third Place: Chillicothe Times-Bulletin, Staff. Good use of dominant photos. Promo boxes at top are effective. Could use dominant headlines on Page 1.

Honorable Mention: Riverside-Brookfield Landmark, Alaina Buzas.

Division C

First Place: Chicago Journal, Mark Tatara. Love the large dominant photo on the cover of Jan. 6. The use of a small rail on the left side of the front is informative and yet small. I commend you on the minimally invasive ad on the front; it does not distract from the content.

Second Place: Austin Weekly News, Chicago, Alaina Buzas. I like the voice from community members in the Street Beat. The use of white space and font type add to the style of the paper. The submitted and contributed photos are weak but J. Geil photos stand out well in the paper. You should use more of their work.

Third Place: Wednesday Journal, Oak Park, Rebecca Lomax, Mark Tatara, Alaina Buzas. Great overall layout and design. Love the "small" ad on A1, too many posed and contributed photos. Many pages look similar.

Division D

First Place: Daily Chronicle, DeKalb, Staff. Great job of display in blizzard package - entire front page of photos, copy & graphics. Before and after NICE & carried it inside. Snow daze, indeed. 9/11 Front - somber & simple.

Second Place: Morris Daily Herald, Staff. 3-3 Basketball package good mix of photos, stories, and graphics. 9-11 design different and it worked; liked sports front (high school football)

Third Place: Pekin Daily Times, Staff. Ruffled Feathers - right dominant photo. 9-11 Special Section - B&W front worked. Lifestyle - learning through music different look a plus. Good Rail treatment for promos.

Division E

First Place: Herald & Review, Decatur, Staff. Newspaper flowed very well from headlines to visuals. Great use of 1A tease. I liked the Web page reefer under masthead. Special sections were impressive. This paper definitely stood out from the rest.

Second Place: Northwest Herald, Crystal Lake, Staff. A very easy paper to look through. Good use of art and graphics. The headlines complimented the stories and packages nicely. Very good use of white space, really sets off the visual appearance of the sections. Lots of references to the Web product.

Third Place: The Register-Mail, Galesburg, Staff. What stood out for me was the different font shades and graphic colors as well as the spacing of each section. I liked the 9/11 graphic element size for the Sunday issue on 1A. Designers seem to know not to put too much art on a page. Easy to read through.

Honorable Mention: Quincy Herald-Whig, Staff. Paper had good flow throughout. Photos didn't seem to amplify the headlines on the stories as much as the other three did.

Division F

First Place: Chicago Tribune, Jonathon Berlin. Across the board, a well-designed publication. Pleasing section fronts. Open, readable interior pages. Headlines are well written and photos are well played.

Second Place: The News-Gazette, Champaign, Tony Mancuso. Overall a clean pleasant-designed paper. Great use of images. Well-done headlines and subhead. Interior pages are clean and easy to read. Classified section is easy to navigate through.

Third Place: Rockford Register Star, Staff. Quick hits on A1 sending the reader through the rest of the paper is nicely done. Section fronts are well designed with photos played well. Interior pages do get a "packed in" feeling.

Honorable Mention: The State Journal-Register, Springfield, Staff. This is a clean looking paper. Section front gets a little busy but interior pages are very clean and easy to read. Nice use of color throughout the entire publication.

Class 26 Headline Writing

Division A

First Place: The Free Press Advocate, Wilmington, Pam Monson. *End of the line*. Good use of stories' premises to write your headlines. Catchy, but not silly.

Second Place: The Woodstock Independent, Jay Schulz. Creative use of headlines made me smile and want to read the story.

Third Place: The Courier, Carterville, Linda Buhman. *She knows the drill*. Clever headlines to draw attention to stories.

Honorable Mention: Village Voices, Lena, Dan Stevens. Interesting use of subjects' names to interest readers.

Division B

First Place: The Reporter, Hickory Hills, Ken Karrson. Clever.

Second Place: The Bugle Newspapers, Plainfield, Matt Honold.

Third Place: Bureau County Republican, Princeton, Kevin Heironymus.

Honorable Mention: The Homer Horizon, Bill Jones.

Division C

First Place: Wednesday Journal, Oak Park, Ken Trainor. Clever but relevant to the story. Made me want to read the story.

Second Place: The Wilmette Beacon, Joe Coughlin. *Fandom of the Opera*. Like the way you use the most pertinent part of the story to generate your headlines. Catchy without being too "cutesy."

Third Place: Downers Grove Reporter, Ryan Terrell. *Forestry program pines for greener village*. Like the variety of styles you put into your headlines - some more descriptive, and some that offer two or three powerful words that draw the reader's attention.

Honorable Mention: The Orland Park Prairie, Bill Jones. *Chop and awe*. Clever and appealing.

Division D

First Place: Morris Daily Herald, Patrick Graziano. No wonder some say puns are the lowest form of humor. :)

Second Place: Morris Daily Herald, Mark Malone.

Third Place: Daily Chronicle, DeKalb, Jason Yates.

Division E

First Place: Quincy Herald-Whig, Julie Ann Marra. Heads draw attention, explain stories enough to give insight to what to expect.

Second Place: Northwest Herald, Crystal Lake, Valerie Katzenstein. *Hire education, the strut of a legend*. Enough variety to bring readers to story; not too cute.

Third Place: Northwest Herald, Crystal Lake, Jeff Cota. *Mood for Lovie*. This is a case where two-word main heads (on 4 of 5 stories) are effective, mainly because of strong subheads.

Honorable Mention: Northwest Herald, Crystal Lake, Dave Lemery. *Smoke in eyes*.

Division F

First Place: The News-Gazette, Champaign, Joel Leizer. *Judge doesn't spare the rod*. Attention grabbing, but not to the point of losing the seriousness of the story. "Today is Cancelled" headline is one of the best I can remember.

Second Place: The News-Gazette, Champaign, Mike Goebel. *Full court stress*. You avoided the temptation to be too cute with these heads. Main heads draw attention, subheads tell the stories.

Third Place: The Pantagraph, Bloomington, Katie Jankowske. *Last writes*. These headlines draw me to the story without a lot of effort to know whether it is a story I'll be interested in.

Honorable Mention: Journal Star, Peoria, Dean Muellerleile. Headlines draw readers without going over the top in terms of cleverness.

Class 27 Sports Section

Division A

First Place: Elburn Herald, Mike Slodki. The writing set this particular entry above the others in this class - the stories have strong leads and supporting material. The pages also have strong lead photos that draw the readers' attention.

Second Place: Woodford County Journal, Eureka, Jeff Wiseman. The May 26 section in particular is very strong layout and photo-wise, though the writing is not as strong as the first-place entry. The

Jan. 13 entry is not as strong, with less dominant photos that have issues with shadows. There is also no dominant element here that draws my eyes. Overall, however, these are strong entries.

Third Place: The Woodstock Independent, Jay Schulz. I enjoyed the feature stories on the front page of your Jan. 5-11 entry. The Oct. 19-25 entry has strong coverage of key events, but the photos knock it down a bit. Overall, however, this is a good section.

Honorable Mention: Mascoutah Herald, Keith Gillett. Photos are better in these sections than the entries that placed second and third, though other factors are not as strong. Your headlines are a bit wordy.

Division B

First Place: Republic-Times, Waterloo, Mark Hodapp. These sections have the look and feel of a much larger paper with the content readers look for in their local weekly. The pictures are outstanding, headlines capture the reader and the writing is strong. This is an outstanding entry.

Second Place: Woodford Times, Tom Batters. Much like the first entry, this entry also has a bigger-paper look and feel. The writing is, again, strong and the stories are well supplemented by photos. Some of the photos, however, seemed dark, and some of the pages seemed almost over-dominated by the pictures. This was the difference between the first- and second-place entries.

Third Place: The Galena Gazette, Andrew Brunner. The coverage of the state basketball tournament with both photos and stories is something your local readers will remember for a long time. The second entry had a lot of strong content as well, but it didn't have that "wow" factor that the first entry did. This is a strong entry in a strong class.

Honorable Mention: The Leader-Union, Andrew Harner. There are a lot of stories here and the writing and photography are relatively strong. Headlines could use a little more zip (in some cases they seem too wordy), and the layouts could use a central focal point.

Division C

First Place: Wednesday Journal, Oak Park, Brad Spencer. There is a lot to like in these entries, with outstanding photos, good writing and a lot of coverage. I liked the roundup and sports extra segments, and seeing youth coverage was also a plus. I also liked that your paper started the sports on the back page and worked into the paper.

Second Place: Downers Grove Reporter, Staff. *Snow soaring; Slap happy.* I like the fact that these are feature-based stories - they read well and are supplemented by good photos. The "Slap happy" photo essay was outstanding, and I liked the map you provided with ski locations.

Third Place: The Wilmette Beacon, Staff. *Denied!* These sections have a lot of content and are very readable. Most of the stories featured strong photos. A strong entry in a strong class.

Honorable Mention: The Orland Park Prairie, Heather Warthen. *Come and get it.* Another case of a section with a lot of content about your local schools and teams. The stories read well, though the photos could be cropped tighter in some cases.

Division D

First Place: Daily Chronicle, DeKalb, John Sahly. Emphasis on local content (including NIU) is outstanding, as are the pictures. Headlines and writing are also strong, and I liked the youth standings in your Oct. 7 entry.

Second Place: Morris Daily Herald, T.G. Smith, Steve Nitz, Mark Johnson. That your content is mostly locally written (even stories with a regional slant) is a tribute to your staff. Good use of photos, though in a few cases I would like to have seen them cropped tighter. I also liked the use of graphics and pull quotes with most of your stories.

Third Place: Times-Republic, Watseka, Ryan Buchan, Chuck Babinski. Local coverage and writing are strong as is the use of photos (though some could be cropped tighter).

Division E

First Place: Quincy Herald-Whig, Don O'Brien. These sections were among the deepest in the class and the photography was outstanding. I liked the local focus and the story about the individual from another school coming to town.

Second Place: Northwest Herald, Crystal Lake, Staff. The dominant photos - particularly in the Nov. 25 entry - stood out among the other entries in the class. The writing is strong and the headlines are the best among all entries.

Third Place: The Telegraph, Alton, Staff. Locally written content was particularly strong in this entry, though I admit I would have liked to have seen more of it. Local photos were solid. Nice recreation section in the Sunday entry.

Honorable Mention: Herald & Review, Decatur, Mike Albright. Strong layout and photos, though the first of the two entries seemed to be lacking local content. The prep football coverage in your Oct. 15 issue was outstanding.

Division F

First Place: The News-Gazette, Champaign, Jim Rossow. The front pages are what set this paper apart from the rest of the class. There are great photos that have some of the best detail I have seen in a newspaper. I also liked that the editor chose to feature more than just college, or professional or high school...on the front.

Second Place: Chicago Sun-Times, Staff. One of the things I liked most about these sports sections was the lead-in magazine-style photo on the cover of your issues. The presentation throughout the section is eye-catching. The writing is obviously outstanding, as are the photos particularly in the first half of the sections.

Third Place: Chicago Tribune, Staff. Interesting way to present the dual preview football playoffs/basketball game in the Jan. 14 edition. Dave Duerson coverage in the Feb. 27 edition is extremely deep, moving and well written. The scope and depth of coverage is outstanding.

Honorable Mention: The Pantagraph, Bloomington, Staff. The coverage here has nice balance between state and regional with strong photographs to bring the reader into the dominant front-page story. Writing is extremely solid.

Class 28 Lifestyle Section

Division B

First Place: Glenview Announcements, Meg Moore. *Diversions/Trends*. Strong writing, broad scope and the trend coverage helped this entry stand above others in this field. While inside design was good, felt the covers could do a little more to catch reader's eye. Overall, a diverse & interesting package of stories.

Second Place: Oak Leaves, Oak Park, Staff. *Diversions*. The strong writing and scope of coverage helped this package finish second. Nice locally relevant cover story, though I'd like to see more eye catching cover. While it's obvious there are some zoned editions of this publication, this team did a nice job keeping coverage focused on Oak Park.

Third Place: The Homer Horizon, Staff. *Pumpkin Showdown*. A wide spectrum of coverage, and good use of photography helped distinguish this entry. Strong cover layout and nice community contributions also made this section noteworthy. Stories were local and well written to sufficient level, but weren't quite to the level of top two in the category.

Honorable Mention: The Mokena Messenger, Staff. *Life & Arts*. A nice overall package. Great layout and design on the cover of the 8/18 entry, but didn't feel the October design was quite as strong. The spectrum of coverage is nice to see and the blend of community voices is nice to see. Overall good use of photos throughout. While Homer entry was very similar, the October portion of Mokena entry was a little too focused on school activities.

Division C

First Place: Wednesday Journal, Oak Park, Ken Trainor. *Lifelines*. Crisp, clean design and great diverse voices helped this entry stand out. Great in-depth cover story and significant amount of re-

porting throughout. Nice photography throughout the sample and strong calendar. Reactions piece was a neat concept. Great overall work!

Second Place: The Tinley Junction, Tinley Park, Staff. *Lifestyle Section*. Strong design on cover helped draw reader's eye in. Appreciate the community voices. Decent amount & use of photography help design. Good writing - and nice diversity in subjects in the submitted editions.

Third Place: The Frankfort Station, Jamie Lynn Ferguson. *Banded Together, Where the Bluegrass Grows*. Strong competition between second and third places. Nice cover design & use of photography throughout. Though clearly a templated approach across communities, nice addition of community voices and guest contributors. The sponsored pet contest lacked a photo in 10/6 edition, while the 7/21 edition felt heavy on calendar items rather than staff stories.

Honorable Mention: The Orland Park Prairie, Heather Warthen. *Queen of Halloween*. Nice use of photography throughout and wide breadth of coverage. The Halloween cover didn't produce that well and was difficult to read. Good writing and diversity of coverage, though some others contained additional community voices.

Division D

First Place: Daily Chronicle, DeKalb, Inger Koch. *Lifestyle Section*. Strong reporting and unique cover story ideas helped this entry. Good mix of coverage on a variety of topics. Some pages were a little text heavy, but articles were well written. Good commitment to telling area stories, with good supporting wire and syndicated content to support it to round out coverage.

Second Place: Pekin Daily Times, Staff. *Lifestyle Section*. Good local cover stories, but felt the syndicated copy and wire stories from other places were a bit overused. While covers were visual, some of the inside pages were very text heavy (Mullen & Shepherd page). The school page was nice to see student voices included, as was the case for some of the seniors' content.

Third Place: Breeze-Courier, Taylorville, Staff. *Neighbors Section*. Visual pages made the entry stand out. While other entries contained all wire, nice to see local reporting. There were some gaps in reporting and copy editing issues. Still nice effort with local stories.

Division E

First Place: Herald & Review, Decatur, Jeana Matherly. *Lifestyles Section*. Liked the use of dominant photos and graphics in layout, as well as incorporating Web/video developments for support. Depression cover particularly effective. Buzz adds newsy element to pages. Overall section was a good read.

Second Place: The Southern Illinoian, Carbondale, Staff. *Lifestyles/Flipside*. Flipside is an appealing entertaining section. Balance of nicely written stories vs. listings is nice to see. Too many entertainment sections to fill with list after list, which makes for gray pages. Coverage of area entertainment was extensive.

Third Place: Journal Gazette & Times-Courier, Mattoon, Beth Heldebrandt. *Lifestyles Section*. Good photos give strong accompaniment to cover story; well written piece on kids' bowling. Community news is well represented with lots of photos for a nice visual package.

Honorable Mention: The Register-Mail, Galesburg, Staff. *Lifestyles*. Particularly liked effort to involve readers to create an effective, sweet Mother's Day cover. Q & A format for religion page profile worked, but might have benefitted from a lead-in graph.

Division F

First Place: Belleville News-Democrat, Suzanne Boyle, Jason Koch, *Lifestyles Section*. Attractive layout and graphics treatment on covers; strong writing displayed, particularly Pat Kuhl's fight story, supported by good photo package by Zia Nizami. Whole section feels "complete," informative.

Second Place: SouthtownStar, Tinley Park, Staff. *SouthtownStar Weekend*. Strong entertainment section fronted by appealing covers. Writing is a nice mix of staff/columnists offering a "something for everyone" approach, as well as popular culture (movies, music, etc.)

Third Place: Journal Star, Peoria, Danielle Hatch. *Cue*. Effective use of art to draw readers in; Hatch's writing skills, paired with Adam Gerik's photos make for strong packages that are also entertaining reads.

Honorable Mention: The Pantagraph, Bloomington, Staff. *Life (Section D)*. Nice looking section serves wide range of readers.

Class 29 Special Section

Division A

First Place: The Cass County Star-Gazette, Bill Beard. *Civil War Commemorative*. A treasured historical keepsake for Cass County - for everyday readers and history buffs alike.

Second Place: The Woodstock Independent, Mike Neumann, Katelyn Stanek, Leland Humbertson, Matt Fagerholm. *Retrospect*. A groovy idea that was executed perfectly.

Third Place: The Woodstock Independent, Mike Neumann, Katelyn Stanek, Leland Humbertson, Matt Fagerholm. *Did you know?* A fascinating examination of a community's unique, but occasionally weird, DNA!

Honorable Mention: Village Voices, Lena, Dan Stevens. *Fall Sports Preview*.

Division B

First Place: The Galena Gazette, Jane Holland. *Honoring Veterans*. Sophisticated, respectful and a keepsake edition for relatives and readers alike.

Second Place: Lake County Journal, Grayslake, Staff. *ForeFronts 2011*. A great reflection of your commitment to the community, well-told stories in an easy-to-read format.

Third Place: Riverside-Brookfield Landmark, Mark Tatar. *2012 Community Guide*. Strong visual presentation makes this a must-save guide to community life.

Honorable Mention: Macoupin County Enquirer-Democrat, Carlinville, Staff. *Fair Guide*.

Division C

First Place: Wednesday Journal, Oak Park, Rebecca Lomax. *Fall Fashion*. Beautiful presentation and authoritative writing/photography on fashion. A keeper!

Second Place: Wednesday Journal, Oak Park, Mark Tatar. *Pride 2011*. Sophisticated, informative and great storytelling. A gem of a section.

Third Place: Wednesday Journal, Oak Park, Rebecca Lomax. *"Answer Book."* Everything a resident wants/needs to know in a well-conceived and logically presented book.

Honorable Mention: Wednesday Journal, Oak Park, Mark Tatar. *"Home Book."*

Division D

First Place: Times-Republic, Watseka, Carla Waters. Staff. *We Will Never Forget*. A must-read section defined by evocative storytelling and presentation. A fitting tribute.

Second Place: Breeze-Courier, Taylorville, Chris Daniels, Joe Dorr. *2011 Fall Sports Preview*. Informative, fun and packed with key stats & profiles. A winner of a section!

Third Place: Breeze-Courier, Taylorville, Staff. *Pets are Family*. How can you not love such a wonderful collection of pets, stories and terrific photos?

Honorable Mention: Breeze-Courier, Taylorville, Staff. *Fair Days*.

Division E

First Place: Northwest Herald, Crystal Lake, Staff. *Housing Road Map: A Survival Guide*. A best of class winner that thoughtfully and comprehensively revealed McHenry County's housing crisis. A top-notch effort.

Second Place: Herald & Review, Decatur, Staff. *Outlook*. Well-presented wealth of information.

Third Place: Quincy Herald-Whig, Staff. *Heroes*. A compelling tribute to some of the community's essential, yet unsung heroes.

Honorable Mention: Sauk Valley Media, Sterling, Sports Staff. *Putting it all together*.

Division F

First Place: Rockford Register Star, Randy Ruef, Adam McHugh. *Gridiron Rock Stars*. Most creative, engaging and still-informative football preview section I've ever seen. Truly a must-read.

Second Place: Chicago Tribune, Staff. *Destination Dallas*. Great information produced in a creative, compelling way.

Third Place: Journal Star, Peoria, Sally McKee. *Race for the Cure*. Heartwarming stories of survivors blended with useful medical information.

Honorable Mention: The Dispatch, Moline, Staff. *State Champ Rocks*.

Class 30 Best Website

Division B

First Place: The Galena Gazette, Staff. *Galenagazette.com*. Best of class. Strong presentation, easy to navigate, smartly focused local news and a commitment to strong, breaking news coverage.

Second Place: Bureau County Republican, Princeton, Rita Roberts.

Third Place: Macoupin County Enquirer-Democrat, Carlinville, Brenna McDermott.

Honorable Mention: Oak Leaves, Oak Park, Jennifer Clark, Bill Ruminski. *oakpark.suntimes.com*.

Division C

First Place: Wednesday Journal, Oak Park, Mike Risher, Graham Johnston, Evan O'Brien, Staff. *Oak-Park.com*. Solid navigation, high value placed on local news and impressive monthly breaking news subscription list.

Second Place: Downers Grove Reporter, Staff. *www.mysuburbanlife.com/downersgrove*.

Third Place: The Bugle Newspapers, Plainfield, Andrew Samaan, Matt Honold.

Division D

First Place: Morris Daily Herald, Mark Malone and staff. *www.morrisdailyherald.com*. Dynamic presentation that trumpets a commitment to strong local news and reader engagement.

Second Place: Pekin Daily Times, Staff. *www.pekintimes.com*.

Third Place: Times-Republic, Watseka, Staff. *www.timesrepublic.info*.

Honorable Mention: Daily Chronicle, DeKalb, Staff. *www.Daily-Chronicle.com*.

Division E

First Place: Northwest Herald, Crystal Lake, Adam Nekola, Staff. *nwherald.com*. Terrific site! Obviously strong commitment to multi-media, local news, reader engagement and navigation. A great digital model for others.

Second Place: Quincy Herald-Whig, Jessica M. Martin-Cate, David Adam, Copy, Sports Desk. *whig.com*.

Third Place: Kane County Chronicle, St. Charles, Staff. *www.Kcchronicle.com*.

Honorable Mention: Northwest Herald, Crystal Lake, Adam Nekola, Staff. *mchenrycountysports.com*.

Division F

First Place: Chicago Sun-Times, Staff. *suntimes.com*. One of the nation's best sites. Tremendous local content, well-conceived navigation, unique content features and a "Chicago personality" that reflects the market.

Second Place: The State Journal-Register, Springfield, Staff. *SJ-R.com*.

Third Place: Journal Star, Peoria, Adam Gerik. *pjstar.com*.

Honorable Mention: Rockford Register Star, Staff. *rrstar.com*.

Class 31 Best Web Project

Division B

First Place: Oak Leaves, Oak Park, Dan Luedert and Todd Shields. *Joyful tears punctuate civil union.* The kind of multi-media storytelling that readers aspire to find. Evocative & historic, while capturing the grandeur of the event.

Second Place: The Galena Gazette, Jay Dickerson. *Galena Chamber Merger.* Great use of Web-only content focused on a prominent community topic.

Third Place: Journal & Topics Newspapers, Des Plaines, Sean Stillmaker. *Another BG Days Extravaganza.* Strong community storytelling using video.

Division C

First Place: Downers Grove Reporter, Brian Hudson, Sarah Minor. *Where We Were: Pearl Harbor - 70 years later.* A terrific use of the digital space to capture veteran's stories before it's too late - and to involve an entire community.

Second Place: Wednesday Journal, Oak Park, Evan O'Brien. *The Big Melt Contest.* What a fun project! Great use of the site in an interactive manner.

Third Place: Downers Grove Reporter, Staff. *iNFLUENCES: Invasion of technology, pop culture tests kids parents.* This is innovation and engagement at its best. A terrific resource for families.

Honorable Mention: Downers Grove Reporter, Sarah Minor. *Juanita and Antonio's difficult pregnancy.*

Division D

First Place: Morris Daily Herald, Mark Malone, Rebecca Trusheim, Jo Ann Hustis. *Veterans Day.* Capturing the emotional response and war stories of Elmo Ray Younger is a priceless success story.

Second Place: Morris Daily Herald, Lisa Pesavento. *Elf on a Shelf.* A creative approach to a holiday classic..

Third Place: Morris Daily Herald, Mark Malone. *Game Breakers: Calvin Hill.* Very enterprising approach to an important community topic - prep sports.

Honorable Mention: Morris Daily Herald, Tim Smith, Steve Nitz. *Sports MVPs.*

Division E

First Place: Quincy Herald-Whig, Staff. *"Blizzard 2011."* The only thing larger than Quincy's blizzard in 2011 was the Herald-Whig's blockbuster coverage.

Second Place: Northwest Herald, Crystal Lake, Adam Nekola, Jenny Kane, Staff. *Housing Road Map: A Survival Guide.* Outstanding explanatory journalism in the digital space. It compliments an excellent print pack-age.

Third Place: Northwest Herald, Crystal Lake, Adam Nekola, Lance Booth. *Beyond the Game.* Family and football come to life in this documentary. Fantastic work!

Honorable Mention: Northwest Herald, Crystal Lake, Erick Ward, Les Johnson. *Fastest Four Minutes.*

Division F

First Place: Belleville News-Democrat, Kevin Bersett, Jacqueline Lee, Zia Nizami. *Overdose deaths on the rise.* An information-laden, comprehensive presentation of a true community problem. Excellent example of leveraging the digital space with net-exclusive content.

Second Place: Belleville News-Democrat, Jennifer Bowen, Scott Wuerz, Jacqueline Lee. *Our War: Korea.* Historic storytelling captures Korean War veteran's stories - before it's too late.

Third Place: The Dispatch, Moline, Todd Mizener, Aaron Facemire. *Bird's Eye View.* Creative approach to an important community event.

Honorable Mention: The State Journal-Register, Springfield, Ted Schurter. *Chuck Weyant, Indy car driver.*

Class 32 Illinois Policy Institute's Public's Right to Know

Division B

First Place: Berwyn Life, Brett Schweinberg. *The Death of Matthew Degner*. Unbelievably sad expose that examined how a 14-year-old disabled boy met tragedy, the victim of a system that let him down. Very solid writing, offering amazing details of a tragic life and death.

Second Place: Macoupin County Enquirer-Democrat, Carlinville, Louise Jett. *Revolving Loan Fund mismanaged*. Strong advocacy reporting that protects taxpayers is at the heart of this successful package.

Third Place: Macoupin County Enquirer-Democrat, Carlinville, Daniel Winningham. *It's your business and you have the right to know it*. Hard-nosed editorial that protects taxpayers and demands their "right to know" trumps council's unwillingness to discuss public business in accordance with state law.

Honorable Mention: O'Fallon Progress, Daniel Kelley. *Ruling: Shiloh violated meetings act*.

Division D

First Place: Daily Chronicle, DeKalb, Kate Schott, Jason Schaumburg, Jeff Engelhardt, Andrew Mitchell, Caitlin Mullen, Nicole Weskerna. *Broken Benefits*. The main headline says it all: Too heavy to bear? Revelatory analysis and deep use of public records set this entry apart from its peers.

Second Place: Downers Grove Reporter, Nick Vogel. *Is it fair warning or crying wolf?* Interesting package raises pertinent questions about the dependence of tornado sirens. Excellent examination of an important topic.

Third Place: Jersey County Journal, Jerseyville, Robert Lyons. *Fuss over stained glass windows*. Solid look at a stained glass window controversy focused on windows too unsafe for public display.

Division E

First Place: Northwest Herald, Crystal Lake, Kevin P. Craver, Cyndi Wyss. *County board secret re-districting meeting*. Two guys walk into a meeting - no joke. They rotate in and out so a government body can work on public business. The Northwest Herald did top notch work exposing this and staying with the story. The effort included bringing about an Attorney General's intervention, training for the government body and change perhaps.

Second Place: Sauk Valley Media, Sterling, David Giuliani, Kevin Murphy. *An open book?* Good concept, good execution, good display. Nice job of showing how difficult it is for an average citizen to gain access to government records.

Third Place: Northwest Herald, Crystal Lake, Kevin P. Craver. *State local governments attack Sunshine Laws*. Good explanatory reporting on a tough FOIA climate in Illinois..

Honorable Mention: Sauk Valley Media, Sterling, Staff. *Teacher "resigns;" district won't release records*. Tough story to tackle in a small community. Good job handling the story.

Division F

First Place: Belleville News-Democrat. Staff. *On the sly*. It's one thing when you deal with government trying to close access to its public business. But simply trying to shift public hearings for the expressed purpose of avoiding press coverage is another. Excellent job of knocking on doors - literally - and staying with a story and then explaining the public good that comes from the effort.

Second Place: The News-Gazette, Champaign, Julie Wurth. *UI violated Sunshine Law, Madigan says*. Good blend of stories and editorials that explain a public matter how Illinois FOIA law helped with that explanation and why all of this matters to the public.

Third Place: The News-Gazette, Champaign, Paul Wood. *Trustees vowed transparency, but it's hard to see*. Good survey of the struggles Illinois' residents have getting full transparency from the University of Illinois Board of Trustees. Well-chosen examples gave the story breadth.

Honorable Mention: SouthtownStar, Tinley Park, Lauren FitzPatrick, Steve Metsch. *Sunshine in the Southland*. Best story in the entry was the one explaining who submits most of the FOIA requests - the individuals but also the businesses.

Class 33 Best School Board Coverage

Division A

First Place: Coal City Courant, Ann Gill. *Test scores up, taxes down.* This entry stood out from the others for its excellent leads, well-written copy and information that was more than what comes out of a school board meeting.

Second Place: Woodford County Journal, Eureka, Cheryl Wolfe. *R-B schools in need of repair.* Good coverage but some issues with presentation, especially in the iPad story. To us the point is that the technology is here (which was relegated to a subhead) rather than teachers discussing their use. Survey story might have benefited from a graph as could the budget story.

Third Place: Braidwood Journal, Marney Simon. *Expanding the student experience.* Good topics but writing is just not as inviting as the top two. Timing of AP class schedule was confusing and might have been better presented in a sidebar or graphic.

Honorable Mention: Pinckneyville Press, Jessica Holder. *Local school board series.* Too much based strictly on board meetings. While it's good to cover the meeting, school boards and districts, meeting stories written in a chronological order don't serve your readers. No one cares that they approved the consent agenda.

Division B

First Place: The Bugle Newspapers, Plainfield, Laura Katauskas. *Valley View school district coverage.* Strong story on school board's new grading policy and good board member quotes. Also good coverage of school board candidate forum.

Second Place: Kendall County Record, Yorkville, Kathy Farren. *Yorkville school board.* Good coverage but confusing array of stories that may confuse readers as well. You might want to consider a "related story(ies)" graphic.

Third Place: Paxton Record, Will Brumleve, Cody Westerlund. *Paxton, Illinois school board.* Good stories but little mention of school board involvement kept this from placing higher.

Honorable Mention: Ledger-Sentinel, Oswego, Lyle Rolfe. *Oswego school board.* Stories for both had interesting topics but writing overall was lacking. Try to make your leads - even on meeting stories - be more than what was obvious. Don't fall into the trap of using something in the lead that has to be explained like "injunctive and declaratory relief."

Honorable Mention: Macoupin County Enquirer-Democrat, Carlinville, Brenna McDermott, Louise Jett. Stories for both had interesting topics. Try to make your leads - even on meeting stories - be more than what was obvious.

Division C

First Place: Pioneer Press, Glenview, Karen Berkowitz. *College ready-or-not?* Excellent lead article on whether its grads are prepared when they leave area schools propelled this to the top. Good quotes from school board members in other articles that show them acting in proper board roles.

Second Place: Wednesday Journal, Oak Park, Terry Dean. *Coverage of elementary school board's tax hike referendum.* An important community issue that was well explained. Maybe it wasn't your call, but why run the board president's mug shot with a strong story that didn't quote him?

Third Place: Pioneer Press, Glenview, Jane Michaels. *Lyons Township High School District 204.* Nice stories but only two actually mentioned school board elections. Others were student, not board, related.

Division D

First Place: Daily Chronicle, DeKalb, Andrew Mitchell. *DeKalb school district 428 reporting.* Excellent tie-ins for all stories to board actions and an example of how to make a board meeting story more than a rehash of approving an agenda item.

Second Place: The Courier-News, Elgin, Emily McFarlan. *D300/U46.* Good coverage of an explosive issue but more focused on the students and parents rather than any follow up with the board. You were just edged out by stories that put more focus on board actions.

Third Place: Morris Daily Herald, Mark Malone. *Coal City Community Unit School District 1*. Good leads and stories but you were bested by some very strong entries in this category. Keep up the good work.

Honorable Mention: Morris Daily Herald, Christina Chapman. *Morris CHSD 101*. Again, good articles but just a bit less than the others in terms of writing. This was a VERY strong class!

Division E

First Place: Quincy Herald-Whig, Edward Husar, David Adam. *Quincy school board*. Excellent continued coverage of board distress in Quincy. Good use of the timeline with the April 21, 2011 story.

Second Place: The Times, Ottawa, Melissa Garzanelli. *Can we be friends? Et al*. Also good coverage of important issues but only one board member quote.

Second Place: Northwest Herald, Crystal Lake, Jane Huh. *District 300 EDA coverage*. Good coverage of a complex issue but few comments from the board even the board president.

Second Place: Northwest Herald, Crystal Lake, Joseph Bustos. *District 156 deficit disparity*. Again, good coverage of a complex issue with slightly more comments from board itself

Third Place: Northwest Herald, Crystal Lake, Katie Anderson. *D26 woes years in the making*. Yours probably would have been much stronger entry without the Prairie Hill School story. This was a very close call on all the placings.

Honorable Mention: Herald & Review, Decatur, Valerie Wells. *Dress code raises lots of questions*. Good ongoing coverage in your three articles regarding dress code implementation. This class had a big number of good entries.

Division F

First Place: Journal Star, Peoria, Dave Haney. *Peoria school district 150*. Excellent leads, tight writing and good use of graphics give this entry first place. Could have used more board member perspective and quotes.

Second Place: Belleville News-Democrat, Elizabeth Donald, Scott Wuerz. *Report cards*. While this was a gigantic undertaking, there was very little indication of board positions or involvement.

Class 34 Best Coverage of Taxation

Division B

First Place: O'Fallon Progress, Daniel Kelley. *City approves TIF, Tax exempt? O'Fallon approves tax levy after heated debate*. Well-researched and finely told package of stories examining tax issues relevant to homeowners, taxpayers and local governments. Expertly delivered to readers.

Second Place: Bureau County Republican, Princeton, Donna Barker. *Computing your taxes*. Incredibly valuable and comprehensive Taxes 101 package.

Third Place: Macoupin County Enquirer-Democrat, Carlinville, Louise Jett. *Revolving loan fund mismanaged*.

Honorable Mention: Ledger-Sentinel, Oswego, Kathy Farren, Matt Schury, Lyle Rolfe. *Property taxes*.

Division E

First Place: Northwest Herald, Crystal Lake, Kevin P. Craver. *Writing the rules and cashing in*. In-depth and high-quality enterprise of a highly contentious plan to revamp state pension plans. Solid reporting and analysis elevated this package.

Second Place: Kane County Chronicle, St. Charles, Ashley Rhodebeck. *What's in a budget?* A reader-friendly, easy-to-decipher package that should be shared with Illinois students.

Third Place: NewsTribune, LaSalle, Kevin Caufield. *Hospitals may lose millions in property tax payments*. Thoughtful and comprehensive review of possible insolvency issues facing Illinois hospitals.

Honorable Mention: Pioneer Press, Glenview, Karen Berkowitz. *Analysis of property taxes*.

Division F

First Place: Belleville News-Democrat, Mike Fitzgerald. *Assessments*. Excellent example of bringing a "consumer approach" to a complicated tax matter. Wonderful use of real stories by real taxpayers elevated the package.

Second Place: The News-Gazette, Champaign, Christine Des Garennes. *Some cry foul*. "Homestead exemption" issues could glaze eyes, but this well-reported package was informative and easy to understand.

Third Place: Belleville News-Democrat, Laura Girresch, Wally Spiers. *Wheel Tax*. Solid analysis of a controversial - and unliked - \$20 per vehicle tax.

Honorable Mention: Journal Star, Peoria, John Sharp. *CAT seeks \$28 million drop in assessed property values*.

Class 35 Best Investigative / Enterprise Reporting

Division B

First Place: O'Fallon Progress, Daniel Kelley. *Illegal tax exemptions*. By revealing how home builders avoided taxes through questionable exemptions, the newspaper documented the loss to the community of tens of thousands of dollars through the ineptness of the county assessor. The newspaper also showed exemplary resilience in pursuing the investigation despite the loss of significant advertising from a home-building company.

Second Place: The Rock River Times, Rockford, Richard Gubbe. *Toxic waste dumping and well contamination sites*. Culling a tip from attending a public meeting, the newspaper uncovered evidence of the dumping of a toxin into a water supply of a neighborhood. It also discovered alarming cancer illnesses in the neighborhood. The reporting led to government investigations and government-funded connection of homes in the neighborhood to city water.

Third Place: Macoupin County Enquirer-Democrat, Carlinville, Louise Jett. *Revolving Fund*. In another example of daily community coverage leading to solid investigations, the newspaper learned of the county loaning money to those already having delinquent loans. Through FOIAs the newspaper received documents showing other shortcomings in the handling of county funds. The work led to new policies and procedures to protect the public's money.

Division E

First Place: Daily Chronicle, DeKalb, Staff. *Broken Benefits*. A strong and thorough enterprise effort that told clearly how Illinois pension system came to be underfunded and how governments in DeKalb County struggle to make payments. The newspaper named the names of top pensioners and disclosed their benefits, interviewed them, but also objectively explored the ways to resolve the crushing burden of a system gone awry.

Second Place: Northwest Herald, Crystal Lake, Staff. *Housing Road Map: A Survival Guide*. This comprehensive and enterprising series of five special sections went far beyond the standard explanatory pieces of a failing real estate market. It dug deeply into public records and conducted numerous interviews to show the community and personal impact of the Great Recession on McHenry County.

Third Place: Northwest Herald, Crystal Lake, Kevin P. Craver. *McCollum Lake Brain Cancer*. The continued coverage of the McCollum Lake cancer cluster over the past five years is admirable and should serve as a shining example of how a newspaper should serve its community.

Division F

First Place: Chicago Tribune, Jason Grotto, Ray Long, Jodi Cohen, Marsha Bartel, & Mark Suppelsa. *Pension Games*. With deep data and document analysis and extensive human sourcing, the newspaper exposed how top union officials managed to get union and public pension benefits. Then the Tribune went further, showing in detail how politics had corrupted the system to favor a few and led to systemic flaws endangering future pension payments for many workers and undermining the state's financial condition. A masterful investigative piece.

Second Place: Belleville News-Democrat, Staff. *Worker's Comp*. This is a classic investigation into the broken system of state worker's compensation overrun by multiple and questionable claims in which employees, including arbitrators and supervisors apparently game the system. The series has led to investigations, reforms and suspensions and firings of arbitrators.

Third Place: Belleville News-Democrat, George Pawlaczyk, Beth Hundsdorfer. *Money Talks*. In a shocking expose, the newspaper revealed how defendants accused of violent and serious crimes win dismissals or probations on their charges by contributing money into "anti-crime" funds. Through its detailed investigation into this scandal in five Illinois counties, the Belleville-News Democrat delivered a worthy public service.

Honorable Mention: Belleville News-Democrat, Kevin Bersett, Jacqueline Lee. *Overdose*. This enterprising project showed how the number of accidental overdoses from legal and illegal drugs is climbing in the region. It brought home the impact through interviews with families, addicts and experts.

Class 36 Best Legal Media Coverage

Division B

First Place: Macoupin County Enquirer-Democrat, Carlinville, Daniel Winningham. *Redistricting*. Insightful analysis of how a redistricting plan could affect this community's residents and political process.

Second Place: Braidwood Journal, Marney Simon. *Court: Blatant and embarrassing abuse of police power*. Well-focused and comprehensive breaking legal affairs story.

Division D

First Place: Chicago Daily Law Bulletin, William T. McGrath. *Should tweets get copyright protection?* Insightful, authoritative and humorous - all the makings of a thoughtful examination of an incredibly relevant topic.

Second Place: Chicago Daily Law Bulletin, Staff. *Coverage of issues in local/state courts, law firms and corporations*. Comprehensive, well-researched and expertly dissected coverage of numerous issues.

Third Place: Chicago Daily Law Bulletin, Ann M. Lousin. *How the U.S. Constitution caused the Civil War*. Revelatory look at how the Civil War has a fight over slavery as the basis of political influence in the federal government. Historically illuminating!

Division E

First Place: Northwest Herald, Crystal Lake, Sarah Sutschek, Kevin P. Craver, Kevin Lyons. *The Trials of State's Attorney Lou Bianchi*. Comprehensive, well-articulated coverage that captured all the details. Thorough reporting & good writing dominated entry.

Second Place: Northwest Herald, Crystal Lake, Kevin P. Craver. *McCullom Lake brain cancer lawsuits*. Clean writing marked this entry, thorough knowledge of legal issues and the cases intricate details more evident.

Third Place: Sauk Valley Media, Sterling, Larry Lough. *Arrest is news/Jury duty/Answers sought*. Incredibly thoughtful explanation of the criminal justice system and the role of Sterling's primary media site plays. Wonderfully written.

Division F

First Place: The Pantagraph, Bloomington, Edith Brady-Lunny. *Execution ban/Jail stay/Successful cases/Looking for freedom*. Thoughtful reporting on a high-profile & costly case that could wreak financial havoc on Logan County. Outstanding context and what it could mean to taxpayers.

Sweepstakes Winners

Verle V. Kramer Memorial Trophy

Division A

Third Place – Woodford County Journal, Eureka

Second Place – Village Voices, Lena

First Place - The Woodstock Independent

Harold and Eva White Memorial Trophy

Division B

Third Place – Bureau County Republican, Princeton

Third Place – Berwyn Life

Second Place – Macoupin County Enquirer-Democrat, Carlinville

First Place - Oak Leaves, Oak Park

Will Loomis Memorial Trophy

Division C

Third Place – Austin Weekly News, Chicago

Second Place – Wednesday Journal, Oak Park

First Place - Downers Grove Reporter

James S. Copley Memorial Trophy

Division D

Third Place – Morris Daily Herald

Second Place – Pekin Daily Times

First Place - Daily Chronicle, DeKalb

Mabel S. Shaw Memorial Trophy

Division E

Third Place – Sauk Valley Media, Sterling

Second Place – The Register-Mail, Galesburg

First Place - Northwest Herald, Crystal Lake

Stuart R. Paddock Memorial Trophy

Division F

Third Place – Chicago Sun-Times

Second Place – Chicago Tribune

Second Place – Journal Star, Peoria

First Place - Belleville News-Democrat