CLASS 01 - GENERAL EXCELLENCE

Division A
1st Place: Ford County Chronicle, Paxton.
3rd Place: The Herald-News, Joliet.

Division B
1st Place: The Woodstock Independent. "Outstanding layout! This spread is what captivates readers. Excellent job!"
2nd Place: Cass County Star-Gazette, Beardstown. "Beautiful paper. Excellent community coverage. Great layout!"
3rd Place: Chicago Daily Law Bulletin. "Very clean and neat layout with thorough reporting! Easy to follow! Very nice work!"

Division C
1st Place: Republic-Times, Waterloo.
3rd Place: The Hinsdalean.
Honorable Mention: The MidWeek, DeKalb.
Honorable Mention: The Oakville Times.

Division D
1st Place: The Daily Journal, Kankakee.
2nd Place: Herald & Review, Decatur.
3rd Place: The Pantagraph, Bloomington.
Honorable Mention: The Southern Illinoisan, Carbondale.

Division E
1st Place: Journal Star, Peoria. "Excellent photos and layout, with front page story features relevant to community."
2nd Place: Daily Herald Group, Arlington Heights.
3rd Place: Chicago Sun-Times.
Honorable Mention: The News-Gazette, Champaign.

CLASS 02 - COMMUNITY SERVICE

Division B
1st Place: The Woodstock Independent, Larry Lough.

Division C
1st Place: The Hinsdalean, Staff. Battle of the Boards food drive: "An engaging series of stories that highlights the efforts of area youth to help out those most vulnerable in the community."
2nd Place: The Journal-News, Hillsboro, Staff. 4-H Story Project.

Division D

2nd Place: Effingham Daily News, Staff. Covid and our Community.

Honorable Mention: Daily Chronicle, DeKalb, Katie Finlon, Kelsey Rettkel. "Omicron in DeKalb County: A guide to what you need to know.

Division E

Honorable Mention: Chicago Tribune, Emily Hoerner. Everyone needs access to bathrooms. Chicago doesn’t provide nearly enough of them.

CLASS 03 - LOCAL EDITORIAL

Division A
1st Place: Tuscola Review, Mike Carroll, David Porter. School Board questions: "Informative information given in development of the editorial."
2nd Place: Panhandle Press, Raymond, Rick Wade. Local officials not punching bags.

Division B
1st Place: Cass County Star-Gazette, Beardstown, Brian DeLoche. Difference between brave and being a fool.
2nd Place: Cass County Star-Gazette, Beardstown, Bill Mitchell. Investing in mental health.
3rd Place: The Woodstock Independent, Larry Lough. Get up to speed on city reorg plan; One more task for city’s new executive directors.

Honorable Mention: Cass County Star-Gazette, Beardstown, Brian DeLoche. Healing can’t happen until we start hearing.

Division C
1st Place: The Hinsdalean, Pamela Lannom. People-pleasing can be dangerous motive for board.
2nd Place: The Hinsdalean, Staff. Ten votes at D86 meeting: six or seven too many.
3rd Place: The Commercial-News, Danville, Max Jones. Disappointing mess at D118.

Honorable Mention: The Hinsdalean, Pamela Lannom, Public comment back where it belongs in D86.

Division D
1st Place: Herald-Whig, Quincy, Matt Hopf. Aldermen should adopt rental registration ordinance: ‘Addresses and localizes what is both a national and community issue. Fairly presented, the editorial neatly outlines the local concerns of all involved and presents a reasoned solution.’
2nd Place: Effingham Daily News, Jeff Long. Wishing David Martin the best ... and that some in Altamont had treated him better: "Takes a local mic- sue and summarizes the issue while being frank and calling to task those to whom it applies in the community. Excellent use of advocacy editorializing.
3rd Place: The Register-Mail, Galesburg, Tom Martin. Give us better information about COVID cases in our schools: ‘A call for more information to better inform the community, and especially parents, is soundly and rightly offered in this editorial.’

Honorable Mention: Effingham Daily News, Jeff Long. Our View: U.S. Rep. Mary Miller must apologize: “Takes to task a U.S. representative for what most would consider inexplicable behavior. The editorial board was right to jump on this publicly versus letting the representative hide behind a false flag of First Amendment protection.”

Division E
1st Place: Chicago Sun-Times, Lee Bey. Why buildings matter: “Takes someone to task without being belit- ting. Speaks on facts with information to back up opinion. Very well thought out and researched.”
3rd Place: Northwest Herald, Crystal Lake, Mark Baldwin. "This Is Why We Can’t Have Nice Things.’

CLASS 04 - NEWS REPORTING - SINGLE STORY

Division A
1st Place: Ford County Chronicle, Paxton, Ross Brown. ‘ABSOLUTELY UNBELIEVABLE’: ‘Compelling and comprehensive coverage. Well done.’
2nd Place: Tuscola Review, David Porter, Mike Carroll. End of an era: “An historical and melancholy story of the end of an era and what the industry brought to the town, good and bad.”
3rd Place: The Braidwood Journal, Marney Simon. “Never going to be...” Justice for daughter: “Good story, but it’s a one-source story. Using the family as an exemplar and adding context from law enforcement or treat- ment would have made it a stronger piece. Still a compelling and powerful interview.”

Honorable Mention: Ford County Chronicle, Paxton, Will Brumlewe. Judge orders sale of B&K.

Division B
1st Place: Kendall County Record, Yorkville, Mark Foster. ‘I must remain true to my values’: ‘Tremendous job on this story! I commend not only the writer, but the firefighter as well for staying true to his values! Excellent job!’
2nd Place: The Woodstock Independent, Larry Lough. ‘Accountable for what he did’: “This is a story that we have heard all too well, and this writer did a great job in telling it. If you don’t become infuriated after reading some- thing like this, then you’re not doing your job correctly. But this writer understood the assignment.’
3rd Place: Hancock County Journal-Pilot, Carthage, Mark Cox, Sara King. Southeastern School Fire; 15 Years Later: “I appreciated the word- for-word replies from the interviewer. It made the story. Good job!”

Honorable Mention: Ledger-Sentinel, Oswego, Josh Welge. Coping with loss: ‘Oswego East team pays tribute to fallen member before game: ‘Very touching story on a sad subject. Suici- cide affects everyone around us, and being a member of a sports team, it can have very damaging effects, espe- cially on younger people. Great job by this writer. Keep up the good work.’

Division C
1st Place: The Breeze Journal, Bryan Hunt. Problem-solving court grads: “Informative story on program with importance to the community.”
2nd Place: The Journal-News, Hillsboro, Tori O’Dell. Teacher Takes On ‘Lunch Shaming’: “Informative story on an issue that may be unfamiliar to readers. Explanations on those affected and what someone is trying to do to address the problems that accompany this issue.”
3rd Place: Northbrook Herald, Me- lynda Findlay Shamiie, Dave Oberhel- man. Who Donated And How Much To Northbrook Village Raffle: “Good writing, with a lot of detail.”

Honorable Mention: The Hinsdalean, Ken Knutson. Third arrest made in dealership burglaries: “Good writing and chronology of a significant incident.”

Division D
1st Place: Herald & Review, Decatur, Valerie Wells. Emails show Decatur school administrators ‘fed up’ and ‘alarmed’ with possible bus driver short- age: “Solid accountability reporting showing, through public records sought under FOIA, how a two-month delay in return to in-person instruc- tion might have provided had admin- istrators alerted the school board to the school bus company’s pay and staffing concerns. Outstanding execu- tion on an important issue, using open records laws and tight reporting.”

2nd Place: The Pantagraph, Bloomington, Brendan Moore. Recreational pot made $175 million in Illinois tax revenue. But some aren’t happy with the rollout: “The story about the state’s cannabis law, one year after taking effect, does an excellent job of
CLASS 19 - PHOTO SERIES Division A 1st Place: Ford County Chronicle, Paxton, Andrew Rosten.

CLASS 19 - PHOTO SERIES Division B 1st Place: Cass County Star-Gazette, Beardstown, Brian DeLoche.

CLASS 19 - PHOTO SERIES Division C 1st Place: The Hinsdalean, Jim Slonoff.
contextualizing the massive legal and cultural shift while detailing how the rollout has been going. Incorporates compelling details about the businesses that chose from the new law, the politics behind the rollout’s pace and how the tax dollars are being put to work. Bar charts help to visualize both the rollout and the impact.”

3rd Place: The Southern Illinoisan, Carbondale, Makayla Holder. “Thankful to be alive,” SIU student Michelle Dietzel is recovering after shooting. “Getting any one of the interviews in this story would provide a compelling tale, but this reporter went far beyond, creating strong, emotionally connective storytelling through the lenses of a young gunshot victim, her mother and the friend who helped save her life.”

Honorable Mention: Journal-Courier, Jacksonville, David C.L. Bauer. Creature sighting catches attention of Bigfoot faithful: “This is how all Bigfoot sightings should be written: earnestly, with unexpectedly thorough research about an organization that also take these sightings seriously, an explanation of how the folklore came to be, and a list of local sightings in the area. Well done!”

Division E

1st Place: Chicago Sun-Times, Staff. ‘Our kids are becoming extinct’

2nd Place: Chicago Sun-Times, Manny Ramos. ‘She died doing what she was called to do.’

3rd Place: Daily Herald Group, Arlington Heights, Rick West. ‘All Of A Sudden, Here Comes A Train’

Honorable Mention: Belleville News-Democrat, Teri Maddox. Out of state victims help unravel 20 years of fraud and deception by Highland woman.

CLASS 05 - NEWS REPORTING - SERIES

Division A

1st Place: Ford County Chronicle, Paxton, Will Brunleme. Discrimination case against Paxton B&B


3rd Place: Ford County Chronicle, Paxton, Will Brunleme. Wind farm building permit saga.


Division B

1st Place: The Woodstock Independent, Susan W. Murray. Addiction in McHenry County: “This was well written and informative. Thank you for marking the jumps.”

2nd Place: The Woodstock Independent, Susan W. Murray. New signs for these times.

3rd Place: The Woodstock Independent, Larry Lough. Mystery tenant; Commission sunsets; $12 million estimate; cost increased 40 percent. Honorable Mention: Mason County Democrat, Havana, Staff. School district takes deep look into solar.

Division C

1st Place: Park Ridge Herald-Advocate, Jennifer Johnson. Niles police whistleblower sues department.

2nd Place: Niles & Park Ridge Journal, Tom Robb. Chasos At The Library.

3rd Place: Kane County Chronicle, Geneva, Staff. Kane County spent $58,211 on DeVry education for one employee.


Division D

1st Place: The Pantagraph, Bloomington, Brenten Moore. Illinois energy: ‘Topical, very impactful, well-reported and well-written.’


Honorable Mention: Daily Southtown, Tinley Park, Mike Nolan. Crestwood mayor scandal: “Well-reported account of corrupt politician being brought to justice.”

Division E

1st Place: Chicago Sun-Times, Staff. ‘Crime in Chicago: a deep look at an especially violent, dangerous year’: ‘A hard-hitting, in-depth look at the situation, the victims, the response (or lack thereof), and the challenge of Chicago’s violent crime problem. Very thorough, very timely reporting.’

2nd Place: Chicago Tribune, Staff. One gun, 27 shootings: How a gun shop burglary in Wisconsin led to terror on Chicago’s streets: “Fascinating insight into the web of crime that devasta Chicago and surrounding areas. The human impact is emphasized, and the struggle for everyone involved is powerful.”

3rd Place: The News-Gazette, Champaign, Staff. The killing of a Champaign police officer: “Very powerful and emotional series on the killing of a police officer, the effect on his family and their response, and the impact on law enforcement and the community.”

Honorable Mention: The News-Gazette, Champaign, Robert Herguth, Robert Herguth, ‘Cardinal, Catholic orders keeping secrets on child sex abuse by clerics’: “In-depth reporting on a sickening scandal in the Catholic Church.”

CLASS 06 - LOCALIZED NATIONAL STORY

Division B

1st Place: Kendall County Record, Yorkville, Shea Lazansky. ‘A son remembered’ and ‘It was everywhere’: “Beautiful presentation of these stories. Very personal and emotional. GREAT WORK!”

2nd Place: Henry County Republic, Geneseo, Beth Welbers. EMIs and paramedics shortage.

3rd Place: Rochelle News-Leader, Jeff Helfrich. Local dealerships explain vehicle shortage issues.

Honorable Mention: Henry County Republic, Geneseo, Beth Welbers. Henry County Real Estate market.

Division C

1st Place: Republican-Times, Waterloo, Madison Lammert. Supply chain issues threaten feast: “This was by far the best story in this category.”


Honorable Mention: The Okawville Times, Debby Stricker, Travis Volz. Nashville Native.

Division D

1st Place: The Pantagraph, Bloomington, Kade Heath, Sierra Henry. 9/11 as seen by Central Illinoisans in D.C., New York.

2nd Place: Daily Chronicle, DeKalb, Katie Finlon, Kelsey Rettek. Kristopher Kramer, 33, shot fatally by DeKalb police had history of cop encounters: “An excellent investigation of the background that led to a man being shot by police. These stories contextualized Kramer’s death and raised questions about whether it was necessary.”

2nd Place: Herald & Review, Decatur, Staff. Herald & Review camera technology: “The issues presented by cameras used for law enforcement purposes are complex and the Herald & Review did an excellent job of presenting the pros and cons. Fighting to show where they would be located made it easier for readers to understand the real implications.”

Honorable Mention: The Pantagraph, Bloomington, Kade Heather. ‘Platform support.’

Division E

1st Place: Journal Star, Peoria, Phil Luciano. Cheri Bustos describes ‘Our lives changed that day’.


3rd Place: Chicago Sun-Times, Staff. ‘Crime in Chicago: a deep look at an especially violent, dangerous year’. Very thorough, very timely reporting.

Honorable Mention: The News-Gazette, Champaign, Jeff D’Alessio. Dear TikiToki.

CLASS 07 - FREEDOM OF INFORMATION AWARD

Division A

1st Place: Ford County Chronicle, Paxton, Will Brunleme. OMA issues in Ford County area.

Division C

1st Place: Niles & Park Ridge Journal, Tom Robb. Niles Police Deny Cover-Up, Justify Actions uncovered Under FOIA: “Great use of public records to track officers on the night in question. The reporting revealed a lot about the operations of the police department that readers may not have suspected.”

2nd Place: Kane County Chronicle, Geneva, Staff. Kane IT boss spent $58,211 in tuition payments for an employee in his department: “Good work in obtaining the information necessary to expose this questionable situation.”

Division D

1st Place: Journal-Courier, Jacksonville, Journal-Courier staff. Various: “This is a case study of a newspaper fighting for records and uncovering activities that fundamentally change what is happening in government. Excellent, tenacious reporting.”

2nd Place: Daily Chronicle, DeKalb, Katie Finlon, Kelsey Rettek. Kristopher Kramer, 33, shot fatally by DeKalb police had history of cop encounters: “An excellent investigation of the background that led to a man being shot by police. These stories contextualized Kramer’s death and raised questions about whether it was necessary.”

2nd Place: Herald & Review, Decatur, Staff. Herald & Review camera technology: “The issues presented by cameras used for law enforcement purposes are complex and the Herald & Review did an excellent job of presenting the pros and cons. Fighting to show where they would be located made it easier for readers to understand the real implications.”

Honorable Mention: The Pantagraph, Bloomington, Staff. Public safety and scanner usage.

Division E

1st Place: Chicago Tribune, Cecilia Reyes, Madison Hodgkins. The Failures Before the Fires.

2nd Place: Belleville News-Democrat, Lexi Cortes. Using public records to take readers inside southwest IL nursing homes.

3rd Place: Belleville News-Democrat, DeAsia Paige. A state senator, mayor’s family are on the payroll of southwest Illinois’ newest town.

Honorable Mention: Belleville News-Democrat, Kelsey Landis, DeAsia Paige, Kavahn Mansouri. State senator won’t talk about his job at controversial utility.

CLASS 08 - GOVERNMENT BEAT REPORTING

Division A

1st Place: Ford County Chronicle, Paxton, Will Brunleme. Court beat:
CLASS 19 - PHOTO SERIES Division E 1st Place: Chicago Sun-Times, Ashlee Rezin.

CLASS 19 - PHOTO SERIES Division D 1st Place: Daily Chronicle, DeKalb, Mark Busch.

CLASS 20 - SPOT NEWS PHOTO Division A 1st Place: Ford County Chronicle, Paxton, Ryan Minion.
with a clear explanation of what the order consisted of, as well as answering a number of questions/concerns residents had. Solid job of reporting! Your detailed coverage of the Menard’s opening answered all the who’s, what’s, when’s and where’s, without the article becoming monotonous. Residents who read your articles should have a clear understanding of what is happening with their local government.”

3rd Place: Effingham Daily News, Zach Roth. Effingham Daily News beat reporting: “Local school systems have been required to implement so many changes and new regulations since the onset of COVID-19. You effectively described the backlash from local superintendents telling the state to ‘let us administer our own policies based on our needs.’ Very well done! Your article on the passing of Elizabeth Weidner exemplified the legacy she will leave and the inspiration she was to students, faculty and administrators. Wonderful article. (Not exactly a government beat story, but written so well).”

Honorables: Daily Chronicle, Dekalb, Katie Finlon, Kelsey Retke. Daily Chronicle beat reporting: “Nice job of investigating beyond the first level. Many reporters would have simply written an article on the approval of the incentive and nothing more. You opened readers’ eyes to the bigger picture – the significant problems the new owner will have to remedy in these units. It would be an outrage to incentivize the sale without some assurances tenants will have habitable apartments to live in. Really good, detailed job of reporting.”

Division C

1st Place: The Commercial-News, Danville, Jennifer Bailey. Education coverage: “Excellent school beats coverage! Detailed and thorough with a nice presentation. Love the bold headings and clean separations to keep the story from getting mundane. Great job!”


Division D

1st Place: Daily Southtown, Tinley Park, Mike Nolan. Crestwood mayor resignation: “Shocking. How could a city council consider creating a job for a former mayor who was convicted of bribery while in office? That thought builds as you read the article. Then you bring it home with the quote from the candidate the mayor defeated, who described the action as ‘unconscionable.’ Nice job covering this important, and shadowy, local news.”

2nd Place: The Edwardsville Intelligencer, Charles Bolinger. The fight for green space, affordable living and sustainability: “You took a subject (water boil order) that could have caused residents to panic, and broke it down
grounded in ample evidence and local voices.”

Division E

1st Place: Chicago Sun-Times, Stephanie Zimmermann, Tom Schuba. What’s in Illinois’ legal weed: “It’s good to see journalism taking this industry, which is massive, popular, and largely unregulated, seriously. In depth and informative.”

2nd Place: Belleville News-Democrat, Kelsey Landis. Most Illinoisans have some internet access, but many pay a fortune for dismal speeds.


Honorables: The News-Gazette, Champaign, Debra Pressey, Jeff D’Alessio. COVID and the local economy.

CLASS 10 - OBITUARY TRIBUTE

Division A

1st Place: Tuscola Review, David Porter. Dave Lohr was the face of Little League. The Sidell Reporter, Rinda Maddox. Brown Will Be Deeply Missed.

2nd Place: The Sidell Reporter, Rinda Maddox. Office Assistance Loses Battle to COVID.


Division B

1st Place: The Woodstock Independent, Sanday Kucharski. ‘You touch a lot of lives in 27 years’: ‘Very touching tribute and well-written.’


3rd Place: The Fulton Democrat, Lewistown, John Froehling. Late Ted Stromberg tribute by beloved Cubs.


Division C

1st Place: The MidWeek, DeKalb, Katrina J.E. Milton. ‘Tess lit up the room wherever she went’: ‘Well-written story. Captivated the subject.’

2nd Place: The Hinsdalean, Pamela Lannom. Former wrestling coach will be missed.

3rd Place: The Hinsdalean, Ken Knutson. ‘Beautiful soul’ had an inclusive spirit.

Honorables: The Hinsdalean, Pamela Lannom. Smith remembered as more than a CEO.

Division D

1st Place: Daily Southtown, Tinley Park, Ted Slowik. Mother of 13 loved
CLASS 20 - SPOT NEWS PHOTO Division B  1st Place: Cass County Star-Gazette, Beardstown, Brian DeLoche.

CLASS 20 - SPOT NEWS PHOTO Division C  1st Place: Republic-Times, Waterloo, John Spytek.

CLASS 20 - SPOT NEWS PHOTO Division D  1st Place: The Telegraph, Alton, John Badman
books, hats and family: “The smallest of details are what define the best obituary writing, and Ted Slownik masterfully reveals them in the story of Margaret Collins. Metically researched and beautifully written.”

2nd Place: The State Journal-Register, Springfield, Steven Spearing. Springfield dad accomplished his goal of being the best father: “Nicely written obituary that captures the heart of this man and the family and friends he influenced.”

3rd Place: The Telegraph, Alton, Greg Shashack. Football coach for 53 years, ‘great man’ for lifetime, Dobrino dies at 86: “Well researched sports-focused news obituary that tracks the achievements of a beloved coach.”


**Division E**

1st Place: Chicago Sun-Times, Maudyline Iteljirika. “Tim Black, historian, civil rights activist!”


3rd Place: Chicago Sun-Times, Maureen O’Donnell. “Sr. Mary Joseph of the Trinity, socialite who became ‘kind of an unusual nun.”


**CLASS 11 - SPORTS NEWS**

**Division Daily**

1st Place: Chicago Tribune, LaMond Pope. Tim Anderson provides the movie-like heroes in the White Sox’s Field of Dreams win: “Like a good movie, this article’s first, second and third acts were well written. All centered around the movie theme. Well done!”

2nd Place: Chicago Sun-Times, Ben Pope. ‘Chicago Blackhawks sexual misconduct scandal’: “This was a well written series of articles on the former Hawks video coach. I felt raw emotion from reading the article, and it was very informative.”

3rd Place: Chicago Tribune, Dan Wiederer. Steve ‘Mongo’ McMichael is suddenly in a vicious fight against ALS: “I’m a wrestling fan, and this hit me in many ways. I felt the emotion and yet, optimism, from McMichael in this story.”

Honorable Mention: The Telegraph, Alton, Greg Shashack. Bulldogs brace for ‘a really hard game’: ‘This story made me look forward to the next game. A good setup to what’s next. Well done.’

**Division NonDaily**

1st Place: The Hinsdalean, Pamela Lannom. Girls swimming ties for second at state: “I felt the emotion of the team and those covering them in the pictures and article. Unfortunately, all of us in the news business have seen and felt the hurt of the loss of young lives.”

2nd Place: Ford County Chronicle, Paxton, Andrew Rosten. Legendary run: “This one reminds me of some of the legendary coaches I’ve covered and some are still active in my career of over 47 years.”

3rd Place: Ford County Chronicle, Paxton, Andrew Rosten. ‘Really exciting’: “This really is an exciting story about an underdog winning a game that no one saw coming.”

**Honorable Mention:** The Commercial-News, Danville, Chad Dare. Lady Buffaloes snap 7-year losing streak: “I loved the story of the girls who stayed on the team despite everyone’s making fun of them. Love, honor and respect to the members of this team.”

**CLASS 12 - SPORTS FEATURE**

**Division Daily**

1st Place: Journal Star, Peoria, Dave Eminian. Peoria Chiefs facing MLB mandate that will require millions in renovations to Dozer Park.

2nd Place: Chicago Sun-Times, Anne Costable. “Sweetheart of Chicago.”

3rd Place: Northwest Herald, Crystal Lake, Michal Dwokaj. Loyola’s James Kyl just wants a chance.

**Honorable Mention:** The Telegraph, Alton, Greg Shashack. ‘A Murder in Memphis’

**Division NonDaily**

1st Place: The Hinsdalean, Pamela Lannom. Lawrence’s journey took unexpected path.

2nd Place: The Harrisburg Register, Michael ‘Spyder’ Dann. Dunks and downhill dogs.

3rd Place: The Woodstock Independent, Sandy Kucharski. Learning the ropes.

**Honorable Mention:** Kendall County Record, Yorkville, Joshua Welge.

**CLASS 13 - FEATURE WRITING**

**Division A**

1st Place: Oregon Republican Reporter, Alexia Zollo. Mistreated horse gets new life thanks to teenager.


3rd Place: The Marion Republican, Holly Kee. An unlikely friendship.

**Honorable Mention:** Oakland Independent, Janice Hunt. ‘That’s a God wink’

**Division B**


2nd Place: The Woodstock Independent, Tricia Carzoli. ‘I laugh, smile, cry’.

3rd Place: Robinson Daily News, Angela Downing. May is 25th anniversary of Birds flood.

**Division C**

1st Place: Glenview Herald, Dave Oberhelman. The Right Match.

2nd Place: The MidWisc, DeKalb, Katrina J.E. Milton. Somonauk student’s book shares 103-year-old WWII veteran’s tale.

3rd Place: The Okawville Times, Debby Strohler, Travis Volf. Venedy Coup.

**Honorable Mention:** The Breese Journal, Bryan Hunt. Maple syrup with Jitty and Leroy.

**Division D**

1st Place: Sauk Valley Media, Kathleen A. Schulz. Man prevents tragedy on bridge: “Fine feature writing tells us something about ourselves, and this story does just that by exploring the questions that arise when our lives intersect with others in unexpected ways.”

2nd Place: News Tribune, LaSalle, Staff. Fiestal by Tom Collins: “With writing as colorful as the photos that accompany it, this feature beautifully captures the significance of the ‘feast,’ and its importance to the Latinx community in LaSalle.”

3rd Place: The Telegraph, Alton, Scott Cousins. So long, Charlie’s; popular drive-in closing: “In the final hours before a beloved, local drive-in restaurant closes for good, Scott Cousins reminds us of the importance of place, and how even the smallest parts of a town’s history can shape us.”

**Honorable Mention:** Star Courier, Kewanee, Susan DeVelder. The art of keeping pigeons: “Susan DeWelder takes us into the world of pigeon racing, and without overwriting the story, she lets her subject tell us all about it. Terrific.”

**Division E**


2nd Place: Chicago Tribune, Christopher Borrelli: “Like the art, hate the artist...I not only appreciated the subject matter, but also the story.”

3rd Place: Chicago Tribune, Louisa Chu. Decolonizing food: “About much more than indigenous food. Well told.”

**Honorable Mention:** Belleville News-Democrat, De Asia Paige. These Black women urban farmers work to bring fresh food to southwest IL communities: “Food desert. Good understanding of the issue and the women who are doing something about it.”

**CLASS 14 - FEATURE WRITING - PERSONALITY PROFILE**

**Division A**

1st Place: Oakland Independent, Janice Hunt. ‘My goal is just to make everybody’s day a great day.’


3rd Place: Oregon Republican Reporter, Earlene Hinton. Mom gets a muddy surprise from her son.

**Honorable Mention:** The Sidell Reporter, Rinda Maddox. Getting an accurate measurement.

**Division B**

1st Place: Cass County Star-Gazette, Beardstown, Staff. Isaac: “Well written story. The encouragement of the teachers and his dad made a huge difference for Isaac. Finding his purpose must be such a great feeling for him. You can’t help but love him!”

2nd Place: The Woodstock Independent, Tricia Carzoli. ‘I wanted to fly.’

3rd Place: The Fulton Democrat, Lewistown, John Froehling. Canton man delights in raising Monarch butterflies.

**Honorable Mention:** The Woodstock Independent, Tricia Carzoli. Friday mornings with Ray.

**Division C**


2nd Place: The Hinsdalean, Ken Knutson. Physical trainer flexes inspiration in fight of his life: “Good story, well written. Addresses a difficult diagnosis with a clear-eyed yet hopeful assessment.”

3rd Place: The Hinsdalean, Ken Knutson. Wright enthusiast ready to take on Bagley House: “Good story, well written. Clearly explains the purchase process and why the issue was so important to the new owner.”

**Honorable Mention:** The Hinsdalean, Pamela Lannom. Vet reflects on 9/11, his service in Iraq: “Good story that takes a look at a defining event for a nation through the eyes of an individual.”

**Division D**

1st Place: The Pantagraph, Bloomington, Brenden Moore. Meet the new boss: Speaker Emanuel ‘Chris’ Welch seeks to put his stamp on Illinois House: “Well written. After reading, I felt like I knew the new speaker of the house.”

2nd Place: The Pantagraph, Bloomington, Brenden Moore. Adam Kinzinger charts path from Illinois to new political battlefield: “Every aspect of Rep. Kinzinger’s was captured in words – good storytelling.”

3rd Place: The Herald-News, Joliet, Denise M. Baran-Unland. An Extraordinary Life: “The writer was able to capture the judge’s personality as his life was remembered.”
CLASS 20 - SPOT NEWS PHOTO  
Division E 1st Place: Belleville News-Democrat, Derik Holtmann.

CLASS 21 - GENERAL NEWS PHOTO  
Division A 1st Place: Arcola Record-Herald, David Porter.

CLASS 21 - GENERAL NEWS PHOTO  
Division B 1st Place: Downers Grove Suburban Life, Sandy Bressner.
Honorable Mention: Daily Chronicle, DeKalb, Katie Finlon. Meet Chuibs, a Genoa barn cat who found fame during pandemic: “Although surprised to find a story about Chuibs the barn cat in the personality category, it was an enjoyable read and likely popular with readers.”

Division E

1st Place: Journal Star, Peoria, Phil Luciano. From Qatar to Peoria: How a Bradley student became a terror suspect: “Great story and great research.”

2nd Place: Journal Star, Peoria, Phil Luciano. Ex-Peoria gang chief, now a minister, looks at heartbeat past: “Very inspiring story.”

3rd Place: Daily Herald Group, Arlington Heights, Katllyn Smith. Tiny Baby Has Had Big Life.

Honorable Mention: Chicago Sun-Times, Patrick Finley. “Back from the brink.”

CLASS 15 - EDITORIAL PAGE

Division Daily

1st Place: Chicago Sun-Times, Chicago Sun-Times editorial board: “Striking use of eye-catching photos and professional layout.”

2nd Place: Daily Herald Group, Arlington Heights. Jim Slusher, Editorial Board. “Clean layout that incorporates both photos and artwork; mixture of local and national subject.”

3rd Place: The Telegraph, Alton, Ron DeBrock. “Clean layout with excellent placing of artwork/political cartoons; relevant content.”

Honorable Mention: Northwest Herald, Crystal Lake, Dennis Anderson. “Balance of content between local and national topics; could benefit from more photos.”

Division NonDaily

1st Place: The Woodstock Independent, Staff. “The Woodstock Independent’s opinion pages are topical and a good mix of political and personal, ranging from commentary about public health measures in schools to sharing stories about hobbies and travels. The Letters to the Editor are especially impressive as readers appear to be well informed, engaged and contributing thought-provoking points to the conversation. The design is also appealing. I also like that it refers readers to information elsewhere in the same paper for added context.”

2nd Place: The Commercial-News, Danville, Max Jones: “Very appealing design to the opinion page and a good mix of the local and national topics. The editorial about COVID is strong without making readers who disagree feel insulted or readers condescending to. The editorial about confronting violence is very powerful. Not sure how local the issues and voices are vs. syndicated columnists. Thought-provoking and not dull.”

3rd Place: The Hinsdalean, Staff: “Pamela Lannom’s column about her trip to Universal provides readers with a sense of what the experience is like, the main takeaway being that it is expensive and best suited for younger kids. …This is probably a good editorial page if you know the people.”

CLASS 16 - STORY/SERIES - AGRICULTURAL STORY

Division Daily

1st Place: Chicago Sun-Times, Stephanie Zimmermann, Tom Schuba. What’s in Illinois’ legal weed?: “Thought this was an outstanding package, touched all notes.”

2nd Place: The Pantagraph, Bloomington, Staff. “Strong package on an important story for the area.”


Honorable Mention: Daily Chronicle, DeKalb, Katie Finlon, Kelsey Retke. Solar farms stir up controversy in DeKalb County: “Another strong package following an important story. Top four in this category all exceptional work to be proud of, and very close to each other.”

Division NonDaily

1st Place: Ford County Chronicle. Paxton, Will Brumleve. Ford County Wind Farm: “An amazing amount of work packaged into both features and news. Nice work.”

2nd Place: Henry County Republic, Geneseo, Beth Wellers. Farmer sues: “Nice job looking for angles that other papers covering agriculture may not catch. This is important information for the community. Nice work.”


CLASS 17 - ORIGINAL COLUMN

Division A

1st Place: The Marion Republican, Holly Kee.

2nd Place: Panhandle Press, Ray- mond, Rick Wade.


Division B

1st Place: Beecher City Journal, PJ Ryan. Pokin’ Along With PJ: “I love the flavor of this writer’s work. He has a way of bringing you into his thoughts and musings in a gentle, easy manner that makes you smile and want more. It is no wonder that his column is the first that readers look for when they open their newspaper!”

2nd Place: The Courier-News, Elgin, Wendy Fox Webster: “The writer presents valuable information in a way that gets your attention and keeps it. Good work!”

3rd Place: The Leader-Union, Vandalia, Shaun Hanausker.

Honorable Mention: The Leader-Union, Vandalia, John Broux. Musings and Perusings.

Division C

1st Place: Republic-Times, Waterloo, Bill Ott. Ott Observations: “You did a fine job of advocating for people to let facts dictate their decisions, rather than speculation or internet rumors. Sadly, it probably won’t change the minds of many conspiracy theorists. Folks, the lake is there for many things we’re fighting about. - Masterful, award-winning journalism!”

2nd Place: The Journal-News, Hillsboro, Tort O’Dell. Small Snippets: “Your open door into how you deal with anxiety was inspirational. I’m better equipped to handle the present moment when I make time for stillness. Wow! How much time do we really make for stillness in our hectic lives? So thought provoking. Great job!”

3rd Place: The Hinsdalean, Pamela Lannom: “Conversing, not Canceling” would be a timely column in most any newspaper in our country. Instead of simply attacking the ‘cancel culture,’ you explain why it’s important to be exposed to some outdated points of view. You said it eloquently: ‘The way things were then is not how they are now, and that doesn’t mean we have to open our evidence to the contrary.’ Amen. So well written!”

Honorable Mention: Jersey County Journal, Jerseyville, Carissa Marie Sikti. Happy Hallowgivingmas. There were no Veteran’s Day Cards, Resolutions were no Veteran’s Day Cards, Resolutions

Division D

1st Place: The Pantagraph, Bloomington, Chris Coates.

2nd Place: The Pantagraph, Bloomington, Brenden Moore. Brenden Moore’s state government column: “The heart of this story: The nature of politics is the party in power isn’t going to share it ‘simply out of the goodness of their hearts.’ You did a great job of explaining the concept of the People’s Independent Maps Act and why it won’t ever become a reality. Perfect placement of your quote from Republican whale Ken Griffin: ‘Chicago is like Afghanistan on a good day.’ Your sports gambling column hit a home run with your final paragraph: ‘That’s not a bet I’m prepared to make.’ Your columns are so informative and I commend your ability to break political news and debate into an easy to understand, informative column.”

3rd Place: The Telegraph, Alton, Joseph Crawford: “After a few initial grousings, I warmed to your humor columns. You made a column on ketchup packet shortages interesting and fun to read. And I grew to appreciate your column-concluding puns, as I’m sure your readers do as well.”

Honorable Mention: Des Plaines Journal, Todd Wessel. Off The Record: “There is an old-style to your writing, and that’s a compliment for a columnist. Your column about the council changing its vote on the dispensary demonstrates how citizen input can result in government action. Also, I loved your line following the councilman’s explanation that a new dispensary will attract new people to downtown. ‘So will a pool hall.’ Understated, yet so effective!”

Division E

1st Place: Daily Herald Group, Arlington Heights, Jim Slusher. Jim Slusher’s ‘Letter to Readers’: ‘Punchy, relevant, and, maybe most importantly, communicating to the readers an underlying thesis of our industry’s continued relevance.”

2nd Place: Daily Herald Group, Arlington Heights, John Lampinen.

3rd Place: Chicago Tribune, Louisa Chu. The Wiener’s Circle and other reviews.

Honorable Mention: Chicago Tribune, Nick Kindelsperger. Home Depot hot dogs and other columns and reviews.

CLASS 18 - SPORTS COLUMN

Division Daily

1st Place: Chicago Sun-Times, Steve Greenberg: “IMO these entries are the prototype of what a sports column should be.”

2nd Place: The Pantagraph, Bloomington, Randy Kindred: “Great storyteller.”

3rd Place: Chicago Sun-Times, Rick Morrissey: “Compelling analysis.”

Honorable Mention: Herald & Review, Decatur, Justin Conn: “Another great storyteller.”

Division NonDaily

1st Place: Bureau County Republic, Princeton, Staff. Hieronymus’ Hypothesis: “I really enjoyed these columns. Rather than focusing on the games on the court/field, Hieronymus wrote personal features. Well done.”


3rd Place: Ford County Chronicle, Paxton, Andrew Rosten. Great to be
CLASS 21 - GENERAL NEWS PHOTO Division C 1st Place: Kane County Chronicle, Geneva, Sandy Bressner.

CLASS 21 - GENERAL NEWS PHOTO Division D 1st Place: Journal-Courier, Jacksonville, Darren Iozia.

CLASS 21 - GENERAL NEWS PHOTO Division E 1st Place: Chicago Sun-Times, Ashlee Rezin.
CLASS 22 - FEATURE PHOTO  Division A 1st Place: Oakland Independent, Janice Hunt.

CLASS 22 - FEATURE PHOTO  Division B 1st Place: Mason County Democrat, Havana, Bob Martin.

CLASS 22 - FEATURE PHOTO  Division C 1st Place: Kane County Chronicle, Geneva, Sandy Brossner.

CLASS 22 - FEATURE PHOTO  Division D 1st Place: The Times, Ottawa, Staff.

CLASS 22 - FEATURE PHOTO  Division E 1st Place: Journal Star, Peoria, Matt Dayhoff. Meow.

CLASS 23 - PORTRAIT/PERSOALITY  Division A 1st Place: Oakland Independent, Janice Hunt.

CLASS 23 - PORTRAIT/PERSOALITY  Division B 1st Place: Cass County Star-Gazette, Beardstown, Bill Mitchell.
back; Going out on a high note; Recognizing seniority.

Honorable Mention: Cass County Star-Gazette, Beardstown, Don Chipman. Chip’s Corner.

CLASS 19 - PHOTO SERIES

Division A

1st Place: Ford County Chronicle, Paxton, Andrew Rosten. ‘Really exciting’

2nd Place: Arcola Record-Herald, Nancy Raindanz. Razing Metropolitan Block Week 2.


Division B

1st Place: Cass County Star-Gazette, Beardstown, Brian DeLoche. Apartment fire woman rescued: “Gripping scenes, well shot.”


Honorable Mention: The Woodstock Independent, Tricia Carzoli. Dented, but flourishing.

Division C

1st Place: The Hinsdalean, Jim Slonoff. Hinsdale Central Homecoming: “Clearly the best among entries in this category, reflecting a keen sense of timing and composition.”

2nd Place: The Hinsdalean, Jim Slonoff. Pomp, circumstance & celebration: “Appears simple, but being a photographer I know how long your photographer was looking through the viewfinder and waiting for eruptions of joy and emotion. Made me smile.”

3rd Place: Niles & Park Ridge Journal, Tom Robb. 400-Year-Old Sicilian Religious Festival Takes Flight: “Interesting and love the closer up photos of the little girl suspended. Would have possibly had more impact if focused on one dominant photo, that one.”

Honorable Mention: The Journal-News, Hillsboro, Mike Plunkett. Don’t Let The Parade Pass You By: “Good coverage of the event, conveys a sense of what someone would have seen if they’d been there. Would have benefitted from having one image be dominant.”

Division D

1st Place: Daily Chronicle, DeKalb, Mark Busch. DeKalb hosts Pride Day: “Strong package, liked the variety in content.”

2nd Place: Daily Chronicle, DeKalb, Mark Busch. Mark Busch, Waterman SummerFest: “Liked the variety of content and display in this package too, wish we could have a 1a and 1b.”

3rd Place: Daily Chronicle, DeKalb, Mark Busch. Torandoes damage property in DeKalb County: “Severe weather packages can be one-note, liked the variety in this one.”

Honorable Mention: The Telegraph, Alton, John Badman. This Week In Pictures: “Good snapshot of a week, Mickey’s D’y pic may be my favorite of the entries.”

Division E

1st Place: Chicago Sun-Times, Ashlee Rezin. Heated exchange at City Hall.

2nd Place: The News-Gazette, Champaign, Anthony Zilis, Mike Goebel. Behind the scenes of a local high school football rivalry.

3rd Place: The News-Gazette, Champaign, Robin Scholz, Niko Dugan. A sight to see.

CLASS 20 - SPOT NEWS PHOTO

Division A

1st Place: Ford County Chronicle, Paxton, Ryan Minion. You’ve got... water: “This photo really shows the depth of the problem.”

2nd Place: The Lexingtonian, Laurie Sleeter, Winter Wonderland and Power Outages: “A beautiful shot that also captures the ugly side of nature with the downed power line.”

3rd Place: Oregon Republican Reporter, Earleen Hinton. Fox jumps at squirrel: “Very interesting shot. Makes one wonder what happened between these two.”

Division B

1st Place: Cass County Star-Gazette, Beardstown, Brian DeLoche. Life Saved: “This picture defines spot news. You can almost sense the urgency of the firefighters as they work intently to rescue this resident, and this lady looks terrified. It’s all about being in the right spot at the right time and this photographer understood the assignment.”

2nd Place: Cass County Star-Gazette, Beardstown, Brian DeLoche. Life Saved: “This picture defines spot news. You can almost sense the urgency of the firefighters as they work intently to rescue this resident, and this lady looks terrified. It’s all about being in the right spot at the right time and this photographer understood the assignment.”

Division C

1st Place: Arcola Record-Herald, David Porter. Amish school moving: “When I see this picture, I immediately want to read the story. It’s not something you see every day.”

2nd Place: Arcola Record-Herald, David Porter. School moving – Amish kids.


Division D

1st Place: Downers Grove Suburban Life, Sandy Bressner. Over the rainbow: “WOW!”

2nd Place: The Free Press Advocate, Wilmington, Alyssa Oholund. Wildcats Last Run out of woods.

3rd Place: Mason County Democrat, Havana, Bob Martin. Watertower angles: “Neat perspective.”


Division E

1st Place: Kane County Chronicle, Geneva, Sandy Bressner. Lakeside memorial: “This poignant photo skillfully captures a moment of catharsis for two parents suffering from an unimaginable loss.”

2nd Place: The Hinsdalean, Jim Slonoff. Seeing art in everything.


Honorable Mention: The Hinsdalean, Jim Slonoff. Firefighters quickly extinguish Hinsdale garage fire.

Division D

1st Place: The Telegraph, Alton, John Badman. Fire destroys McDonald’s: “Stood out immediately. Great color and perception.”

2nd Place: Herald & Review, Decatur, Clay Jackson. Decatur fire: “I could feel the heat of the fire from the photo.”

3rd Place: The Telegraph, Alton, John Badman. Marshals on roof: “Great action.”


Division E

1st Place: Belleville News-Democrat, Derek Holtmann. Suspicious Fire.

2nd Place: Daily Herald Group, Arlington Heights, Mark Welsh. Funeral For A Family.

3rd Place: The News-Gazette, Champaign, Robin Scholz. Melting the ice.


CLASS 21 - GENERAL NEWS PHOTO

Division A


Honorable Mention: Daily Herald Group, Arlington Heights, Brian Hill. Discharge 2,000: “Great lines and focus. Fantastic photo catching a joyous moment.”

CLASS 22 - FEATURE PHOTO

Division A


Honorable Mention: The Lexingtonian, Laurie Sleeter. Haddie’s Happy Feet.

Division B

1st Place: Mason County Democrat, Havana, Bob Martin. Man verus Fish: “The photographer snapped this at the perfect moment...flying fish, lots of action, and the expressions on the faces of the fishermen make this a first place photo.”

2nd Place: The Leader-Union, Vandalia, John Broux. Fun in the flood: “The photographer captured a moment of
CLASS 23 - PORTRAIT/PERSÖNLICHkeit Division D 1st Place: The Daily Journal, Kankakee, Tiffany Blanchette.

CLASS 23 - PORTRAIT/PERSÖNLICHkeit Division C 1st Place: Kane County Chronicle, Geneva, Sandy Bresner

CLASS 23 - PORTRAIT/PERSÖNLICHkeit Division E 1st Place: Daily Herald Group, Arlington Heights, Brian Hill.
joy and ‘kids being kids.’ The framing and clarity of the image is striking.

3rd Place: The Woodstock Independent, Ken Farver. Frighteningly funny fun: “What a fun picture! The photographer captured just the right moment.”

Honorable Mention: Beecher City Journal, PJ Ryan. Heeere, mousy, mousy: “The photographer showed great skill in being able to get this fox in frame.”

Division C

1st Place: Kane County Chronicle, Geneva, Sandy Bressner. My Fair Goat: “The photographer did a good job of capturing the expression of child and goat.”

2nd Place: The Hinsdalean, Jim Slo-noff. Lady and gentleman, start your engines: “Summer childhood memories.”

3rd Place: The MidWeek, DeKalb, Katrina J.E. Milton. Yes to the Dress: “Great photography eye, from reflection to capturing the times we are living.”

Honorable Mention: The MidWeek, DeKalb, Katrina J.E. Milton. Mailman Retiring: “The picture told the story.”

Division D

1st Place: The Times, Ottawa, Staff. Cow comfort.


3rd Place: NewsTribune, LaSalle, Staff. TBM Avengers by Scott Anderson.

Honorable Mention: The Southern Illinoisan, Carbondale, Byron Hetzler. Winter walk.

Division E

1st Place: Journal Star, Peoria, Matt Dayhoff. Meow.

2nd Place: Northwest Herald, Crystal Lake, Matthew Appar. Tug of war.

3rd Place: Chicago Sun-Times, Anthony Vazquez. Edith Renfrow, 107, granddaughter of slaves.

Honorable Mention: Northwest Herald, Crystal Lake, Matthew Appar. Pumpkin patch.

CLASS 23 - PORTRAIT/PERSONALITY

Division A

1st Place: Oakland Independent, Janice Hunt. In memory of Ava Grace.

2nd Place: Oakland Independent, Janice Hunt. Proud veteran.

3rd Place: Chenoa Town Crier, Laurie Sleetor. You’re taking my photo.

Division B

1st Place: Cass County Star-Gazette, Beardstown, Bill Mitchell. Doing his part: “The light and shadow, the framing, the subject matter, and having a cute farm kid make this a first-place photo.”

2nd Place: The Woodstock Independent, Ken Farver. Dog With Everything: “It’s hard not to have a fun picture with the Wienermobile, I suppose, but the photographer did a great job of illustrating the sense of joy and humor one would have to drive a giant hot dog.”

3rd Place: The Woodstock Independent, Ken Farver. Carved from the heart: “A very haunting portrait of a man who clearly has a passion for his craft.”

Honorable Mention: Cass County Star-Gazette, Beardstown, Bill Mitchell. Little Swimmer: “A cute baby and artful capture of the water. Great job!”

Division C

1st Place: Kane County Chronicle, Geneva, Sandy Bressner. Justice for Ludwig: “This photo does a good job capturing the unconditional love of man’s best friend.”

2nd Place: The MidWeek, DeKalb, Katrina J.E. Milton. Master Farmer. “This takes a village — Brian King.”

Honorable Mention: The MidWeek, DeKalb, Katrina J.E. Milton. Open-Door Coffee.

Division D

1st Place: The Daily Journal, Kanka-bee. Tiffany Blanchette. Kankakee man saves his family, pets from house fire: “Pure storytelling, I don’t need to even read the story to know what’s happening in this photo. A couple with everything in the world that matters to them wrapped within their arms.”

2nd Place: Sauk Valley Media, Alex T. Paschal. Rescued: “This portrait tells a pure and emotional story. Raw and real.”

3rd Place: Daily Chronicle, DeKalb, Mark Busch. Honoring veterans: “With everyone now able to shoot in portrait mode, what sets portraits apart is the composition. The blurring of the flag in this veteran photo sets it way above others of its like.”

Honorable Mention: The Daily Journal, Kankakee. Tiffany Blanchette. First taste of Friendship Festival: “An irresistible photo that tells the story of pure joy as only a child can capture. Invites me into the story.”

Division E

1st Place: Daily Herald Group, Arlington Heights. Blythe the tags out Darri: “The photo captures the sense of urgency with the play at the plate. Also, displays the athleticism of the catcher attempting to make the tag.”

2nd Place: The Braidwood Journal, Shawon Long. Clearing the bar - Pickard: “The photo did a good job capturing Pickard’s level of concentration.”

3rd Place: The Harrisburg Register, Michael “Spyder” Dann. The Tag: “I would have liked to see more of the glove in the tag or maybe about a frame or two sooner.”


Division B

1st Place: Downers Grove Suburban Life, Mark Black. Catcher celebration: “The photo captures the elation of the catcher and the disappointment of the opposing players.”

2nd Place: Downers Grove Suburban Life, Sandy Bressner. Happy swimmer: “The winning swimmer’s joy is contagious in this picture.”

3rd Place: The Leader-Union, Van-dalia, John Broux. Post game elation: “Having shot lots of sports pictures myself, I realize it’s hard to capture the right moment in a celebration.”

Honorable Mention: Arthur Graphic-Clarion, Stephanie Wieman. 2021 Softball Condill-Otto pic: “This picture captures a moment in sports – something I know is hard to do at just the right time!”

Division C

1st Place: Republic-Times, Waterloo, Corey Saathoff. Uhoh, coach?: “Hands down (pun intended), this photo gets the best reaction! And either the one-eye or the caption might be the clincher. Adorable!”

2nd Place: The Hinsdalean, Jim Slo-noff. End zone: “Impressive acrobatics by the player and timing by this photographer. Nice!”

3rd Place: Republic-Times, Waterloo, Corey Saathoff. Yer Out!: “Felt like I was on the field with them from this vantage point/level. Good composition and great timing. Super clear and crisp. Only wish I could see the bag, but will have to trust the ump!”

Honorable Mention: The Hinsdalean, Jim Slonnoff. Instant replay: “The utter concentration shows to her fingertips and toes. Great perspective!”

Division D

1st Place: NewsTribune, LaSalle, Staff. Safe at Second by Scott Anderson: “This photo has it all – lots of action, including the runner’s hand on the base, the ball in the glove, and the helmet falling off the runner whose face displays an intense expression. Kudos to the photographer for capturing an excellent photo!”

2nd Place: Herald & Review, Decatur, Clay Jackson: “Very close to first place – great photo, like the angle with real action and the American flag in the background.”

3rd Place: Daily Chronicle, DeKalb, Mark Busch. Celebrating victory: “Nice celebration photo, it captures the emotion of the moment.”

Honorable Mention: Sauk Valley Media, Alex T. Paschal. Super Win: “Lots of faces in a photo that will be remembered as the years pass.”

Division E

1st Place: Northwest Herald, Crystal Lake, Matthew Appar. Sectional loss.

2nd Place: Northwest Herald, Crystal Lake, Matthew Appar. Balance ball.

3rd Place: Northwest Herald, Crystal Lake, Matthew Appar. Touchdown celebration.


CLASS 25 - SPORTS PHOTO - PORTRAIT/PERSONALITY

Division B


Division C

1st Place: The Hinsdalean, Jim Slo-noff. Athlete profile — Johnny Taylor: “Great composition and color. We love how this photo spotlights the athlete in his element.”

2nd Place: The Hinsdalean, Jim Slo-noff. Athlete profile — Olivia Widfeld.

3rd Place: Kane County Chronicle, Geneva, Sandy Bressner. Volleyball player of the year.

Honorable Mention: The Journal-News, Hillsboro, John M. Galer. Dunn, Reed Headed To The Hall Of Fame.

Division D

1st Place: Daily Chronicle, DeKalb, Mark Busch. Frustration overload: “The emotion in this pic is palpable. Just a superb moment in time.”

2nd Place: NewsTribune, LaSalle, Staff. Girls Basketball Player of the Year: “Appreciate the adventurousness in this one. Maybe a little different crop and ball just a little higher?”

3rd Place: Daily Chronicle, DeKalb,
CLASS 24 - SPORTS PHOTO Division C 1st Place: Republic-Times, Waterloo, Corey Saathoff.

CLASS 24 - SPORTS PHOTO Division A 1st Place: Ford County Chronicle, Paxton, Andrew Rosten.

CLASS 24 - SPORTS PHOTO Division B 1st Place: Downers Grove Suburban Life, Mark Black.
Mark Busch. Winning smile: “More palpable emotion, and personality as befitting the category.”


Division E
1st Place: The News-Gazette, Champaign, Anthony Zilis. Her hoops dreams have faded: “My heart goes out to this young lady, but great job to the photographer and author in telling her story!”

2nd Place: The News-Gazette, Champaign, Robin Scholz. Quite the character: “This is a contrast to the first-place photo with the fun look on the Illini player’s face and expression. Although I live in the deep South, I love to hear and read stories about athletes from other parts of the nation.”

3rd Place: The News-Gazette, Champaign, Robin Scholz. King of the pool: “I love the unique concept of this picture. I don’t think I’ve ever seen anything quite like it!”

CLASS 26 - ONLINE PHOTO SERIES/GALLERY

Division Daily
1st Place: The News-Gazette, Champaign, Robin Scholz, Jim Rosso. Steve Hoffman. Area pays tribute to slain Champaign police officer.

2nd Place: Daily Herald Group, Arlington Heights, Jeff Knox. Drone Photos Of The Year.

3rd Place: The Telegraph, Alton, John Badman. ‘3100 is not responding.’

Honorable Mention: Belleville News-Democrat, Derik Holtmann. Cave reopens: “Professionally done. Does what the best journalism does: ‘takes us into places we haven’t been, might want to visit or can’t access ourselves. A trip into another world.’”

Division NonDaily
1st Place: The Woodstock Independent, Sydney Wood. So police can ‘deploy,’ ‘not fire.’

CLASS 28 - DISTINGUISHED COVERAGE OF DIVERSITY

Division Daily
1st Place: The News-Gazette, Champaign, Jeff D’Alesio.

2nd Place: The News-Gazette, Champaign, Ethan Simmons.

3rd Place: (tie) Daily Chronicle, Dekalb, Katrina J.E. Milton. Including Dekalb, and other untold stories.

Honorable Mention: Belleville News-Democrat, Derik Holtmann. ’deploy, ‘not ‘fire’. ‘

Division NonDaily
1st Place: The Woodstock Independent, Sydney Wood. So police can ‘deploy,’ ‘not fire.’

CLASS 29 - INFORMATIONAL GRAPHIC

Division A

Division C
1st Place: The Harrisdalean, Jim Slonoff. Understanding state’s property tax cycle: ‘Great job explaining a very complex issue. Lots of information, but the layout is easy to read and follow.’

2nd Place: Republic-Times, Waterloo, Madison Lammert.


Division D
1st Place: The Telegraph, Alton, John Badman. Historic moon eclipse.

Division E
1st Place: Chicago Sun-Times, Jesse Howe. Through the flames: “This was the only digital-only entry in the category. I love that. As physical newspapers are falling off to the side, editors and designers are going to start having to be more online minded. I think scrolling and having the copy be short paragraphs is a smart idea. As more and more people login on smartphones and tablets, it’s easier on the eye and begs the reader to keep scrolling. I wish you had included the PDFs from the print edition to compare the two mediums.”

2nd Place: The News-Gazette, Champaign, Jeff D’Alesio, Mike Goebel. Roger and me: “This is great. Roger Ebert is a household name, and I’m pretty sure he wasn’t as famous with my generation as he was in generations before. This is a great tribute to a local legend, a good holdover until ‘Ebertfest!’ is able to be held again. I appreciate that the entry includes history, some of his most famous reviews and what his reviews meant to the actors that have portrayed some of the most memorable characters in cinematic history. The fact that this stretches over three pages is a plus. I wish the link to the online article would have been submitted to compare the two mediums.”

3rd Place: The News-Gazette, Champaign, Jeff D’Alesio, Mike Goebel. Black History Month: “Nice design. I sometimes feel that print editions live and die on rules separating the different elements on a page. This entry has four distinct elements and not the first rule, but it doesn’t really need them. The headline and subhead in the black box does an excellent job separating the page. The copy below the box is laid out nicely, and it is easy to tell that all three legs of copy are separate from one another. I like how in-your-face the ‘directors’ cut’ headline is. I wish the link to the online article would have been submitted to compare the two mediums.”

Honorable Mention: The News-Gazette, Champaign, Jim Rosso. Governor ends debate on masks in schools.

Division B
1st Place: Cass County Star-Gazette, Beardstown, Staff.

2nd Place: Cass County Star-Gazette, Beardstown, Staff. FFA Week.

Division C
1st Place: Glenview Herald, Brian Shanie. Glenview’s TomCat Trumpet.


3rd Place: The Hinsdalean, Jim Slonoff. Governor ends debate on masks in schools.


Division D
1st Place: The Daily Journal, Kanka-kee, Design Desk. 20th anniversary of 9-11: “Beautiful visual storytelling. This page handles a lot of elements and does so in a way that is clean and clearly leads me around the page. Great mix of local, national and international in a one-page package. I’d clip this page and keep it.”

2nd Place: The Pantagraph, Bloom-ington, Staff. Pantagraph A1: “Excellent use of a reverse of a reverse and the cutout map is subtle and adds a big visual dimension to the story. Clean layout that moves you around the page.”

3rd Place: The Telegraph, Alton, Staff. July 12 Telegraph: “This page handles a lot of elements on a small palette. Pull quotes, sub heads, photos and stories are well managed without looking cluttered. Clearly moves me around the page.”

Honorable Mention: The Southern Illinoisan, Carbondale, Staff. The trek less traveled: “Good choice for lead photo to draw you both into the page and the story. Good use of white space and design elements for a lengthy story. Inner art could be better positioned to break up the gray.”

Division E
1st Place: Chicago Sun-Times, Akiko Spencer. Stitches in time: “Some stories are visually a gimme. How
CLASS 24 - SPORTS PHOTO Division D 1st Place: NewsTribune, LaSalle, Scott Anderson

CLASS 24 - SPORTS PHOTO Division E 1st Place: Northwest Herald, Crystal Lake, Matthew Apgar.

uniforms change? Not as obvious, but your page is interesting in every aspect. The content, the photos, the look at how the uniforms changed. This is something even non-sports fans are going to read because it is so well presented. Great job.

2nd Place: Daily Herald Group, Arlington Heights, Sam Stanclag: “The use of large photos is in exactly the right place, balanced with information the reader can use. Fabulous.”

3rd Place: Journal Star, Peoria, Staff. South Peoria: Past, Present and Future: “Love the photo on top that shows the change. Really nicely put together and presented even though the photos are not as exciting as they are in other pieces. It’s tough to make those less fun photos tell the story. This works. Well done.”

Honorable Mention: The News-Gazette, Champaign, Niko Dugan. Rising from the ashes: “Wow, talk about working with what you’ve got. Nicely done with photos and components that are not as fun as other stories may have been. You made the best of what you had and it looks fantastic. Nice work.”

CLASS 31 - NEWSPAPER DESIGN

Division A

1st Place: DuPage County Chronicle, Wheaton, Jack McCarthy.
2nd Place: Chenoa Town Crier, Laurie Sleeter.
3rd Place: The Lexingtonian, Laurie Sleeter.

Honorable Mention: Ford County Chronicle, Paxton, Will Brunmelve and Andrew Rosten.

Division B

1st Place: The Woodstock Independent, Larry Lough. Playing it by the books; After 16 years, mayor exits, stage left; “They’ll milk you at the station.
2nd Place: The Woodstock Independent, Larry Lough. Change brewing; Push tax; House business; Singer hams; Taken for grants.
3rd Place: The Hinsdalean, Ken Knutsen.

Honorable Mention: Glivenview Journal, Tom Wessell.

Division C

1st Place: The Journal-News, Hillsboro, Kyle Herschelman: “The headlines in the Journal-News are highly creative and find the right mix of playfulness and wordplay, as seen in ‘Puff, Puff ... Pass!’ and ‘Mask-It Ball Makes Debut’.”
2nd Place: The Hinsdalean, Ken Knutsen.
3rd Place: The Hinsdalean, Pamela Lannom.

Honorable Mention: Glenview Journal, Tom Wessell.

Division D

2nd Place: Des Plaines Journal, Tom Wessell. We Have Liftoff.
3rd Place: The Southern Illinoisan, Carbondale, Jackson Brandhorst.

Honorable Mention: Journal-Courier, Jacksonville, David C.L. Bauer.

Division E

1st Place: Daily Herald Group, Arlington Heights, Rick Kirby: “Good play on words.”
2nd Place: The News-Gazette, Champaign, Jim Rossow. Reel improvement.


CLASS 32 - SPORTS SECTION

Division A

1st Place: Chicago Sun-Times, Staff: “Well done – colorful and interesting from start to finish!”
2nd Place: Daily Chronicle, DeKalb, Eddie Carifio: “Eye-catching and interesting front leads an excellent section.”

Division B

1st Place: The Telegraph, Alton, Pete Hayes & Greg Shashack: “Excellent lead page in a very good section!”

Honorable Mention: The Edwardsville Intelligencer, Matt Kamp: “Great story opens a quality sports section.”

Division C

1st Place: The Hinsdalean, Staff: “A very impressive community sports section. I wish ours was so thorough and packed with great spots, features, and photos!”
2nd Place: Ford County Chronicle, Paxton, Andrew Rosten.
3rd Place: Bureau County Republican, Princeton, Kevin Hieronymus.

Honorable Mention: The Woodstock Independent, Sandy Kucharski.

CLASS 33 - SPECIAL SECTIONS

Division A

1st Place: The Daily Chronicle, DeKalb, Friday Night Drive Staff. State championship preview section: “This special section features engaging photos which tell a story with just a flip of the pages. The use of strong headlines and pull quotes make for a nice design. The section shows how much DeKalb County takes pride in hosting the state championship game and celebrates the teams with the opportunity to make an appearance.”

2nd Place: Herald-Whig, Quincy, Debra Gertz Husar. Farm and Field.


Division B

1st Place: Cass County Star-Gazette, Beardstown, Staff. Fall Sports: “This is such a great resource for the community. Great use of photos. Well placed, balanced and relevant advertising.”


3rd Place: Cass County Star-Gazette, Beardstown, Staff. Letters to Santa: “Love the letters to Santa!”

Honorable Mention: Hancock County Pilot, Carthage, Mark Cox, Sara King, Keith Yex. Nauvoo Grape Festival Special Edition.

Division C

1st Place: The Hinsdalean, Staff. Year in Review: “Very well done. Not the usual layout, but it worked. Lots of comments from the community made this section special!”

2nd Place: The Hinsdalean, Staff. Veterans: “This section was a massive project. What a great way to honor the veterans of that community. I am sure each family appreciated seeing their loved one included.”

3rd Place: Jersey County Journal, Jerseyville, Connor Ashlock, Jessica Abbott. Two Rivers History.

Division D

1st Place: Daily Chronicle, DeKalb, Staff. Theater Reborn: “Theater Reborn is an intriguing special section. It draws readers into the story from the start with a design showcasing the transformation of the theatre through time displayed by a reel of photos. The layout is nice, with a good use of body copy font that is easy to read. The headlines are strong for feature stories and the photography is engaging. Not only does this special section give history on the downtown building dating back to the 1920s, but it tells the stories of the people who are behind the grand efforts of reviving the theatre. This is a publication that can be cherished by the Des Plaines community and the Des Plaines Theatre.”

2nd Place: Daily Chronicle, DeKalb, Friday Night Drive Staff. State championship preview section: “This special section features engaging photos which tell a story with just a flip of the pages. The use of strong headlines and pull quotes make for a nice design. The section shows how much DeKalb County takes pride in hosting the state championship game and celebrates the teams with the opportunity to make an appearance.”
CLASS 25 - SPORTS PHOTO - PORTRAIT/PERSONALITY Division C 1st Place: The Hinsdalean, Jim Slonoff.

CLASS 25 - SPORTS PHOTO - PORTRAIT/PERSONALITY Division D 1st Place: Daily Chronicle, DeKalb, Mark Busch.

CLASS 25 - SPORTS PHOTO - PORTRAIT/PERSONALITY Division E 1st Place: The News-Gazette, Champaign, Anthony Zilis.
| Division NonDaily | 1st Place: Bloomington, Staff. “Next steps” |
| Division NonDaily | 2nd Place: Springfield, Staff. A Year of COVID. |
| Honor Mention: | Carolyn P. Smith and DeAsia Paige. |
| 2nd Place: Republic-Times, Waterloo, James “Tal” Moss. The Horrid Tales of Long COVID: “Great coverage of Long Covid, an issue many have overlooked. The story is well written and engaging. Excellent work.” |
| Division NonDaily | 3rd Place: Hinsdalean, Pamela Lannom & Ken Knutson: “Wrote a complete and comprehensive coverage of COVID. The reporter hit all the angles well and provided quality information the community needed.” |
| CLASS 38 - COVID-19 | Division Daily |
| 2nd Place: The News-Gazette, Champaign, Ben Zigerman. Wild cards: “A great, well-written treatment of a surprising topic. This article combines a different side of the sports world with human-interest and COVID coverage.” |
| 3rd Place: Journal Star, Peoria, Dave Emminian, Nick Vlahos and Stan Morris: “Great sports/COVID coverage.” |
| Honor Mention: The News-Gazette, Champaign, Ethan Simmons. Inside UI wrestling’s COVID cancella-tion: “Great article about the difficul-ties everyone has faced as we’ve tried to make the ‘right decision.’” |
| Division NonDaily | 1st Place: The Hinsdalean, Ken Knut-son & Pamela Lannom. |
| 2nd Place: Ford County Chronicle, Paxton, Will Brumleve. |
| Honor Mention: Ford County Chronicle, Paxton, Will Brumleve. |
| CLASS 37 - COVID-19 NEWS COVERAGE | Division Daily |
| 1st Place: Chicago Sun-Times, Tim Novak, Lauren FitzPatrick, Caroline Hurley. Cook County property assess-ment failures: “THIS IS why journalism matters, and it’s far and away one of the best public service end of year stories I’ve read in years. Extraordinary investigative reporting that never lets up, with an outstanding cast of characters. It’s also a reminder that if you think taxes aren’t sexy, buckle up.” |
| 2nd Place: Republic-Times, Waterloo, Scott Woodsmall, Corey Saathoff, Christine Otten: “Clean layout with easy navigation, and I like that your digital tools also push readers back to the print edition.” |
| Honor Mention: The Jour-nal-News, Hillsboro, Staff: “I liked that readers have access to the e-edition.” |
| CLASS 36 - PUBLIC NOTICE JOURNALISM AWARD | Division All |
| 1st Place: Daily Southtown, Tinley Park, Mike Nolan. Crestwood mayor scandal meeting coverage: “Detailed article covering public office.” |
| 2nd Place: Daily Chronicle, DeKalb, Katie Finlon, Kelsey Retteke. DeKalb City Clerk drama returns with newly elected official. |
| 3rd Place: Ford County Chronicle, Paxton, Will Brumleve. Quadrangular reassessments in Ford County. |
| Honor Mention: The Marion News-Telegraph, Marion, Staff. “Great job of differentiating coverage from everyone else by finding unusual angles. It’s easy for COVID coverage to become quite standard, but that didn’t happen here.” |
| Division NonDaily | 1st Place: Oakland Independent, Jan-ice Hunt: “Phenomenal work ensuring each story has proper context available to the reader. Does a great job of showing how the board operates with the community.” |
| 2nd Place: Tuscola Review, David Porter, Mike Carroll. Tuscola School Board: “Great reporting on the develop-ments of the school board, excellent research and framing for the editorials. Great work promoting dialogue with the community and defining major public policy issues.” |
| 3rd Place: The News-Journal, Hills-boro, Kyle Herschelman. Panhandle School Board: “Very well-articulated in showing the nuances of public comment while remaining neutral throughout the story.” |
| Honor Mention: The Hinsdalean, Pamela Lannom. District 86 coverage: “Great dialogue for readers to understand the role of the school board, and great work breaking down issues into easy-to-digest chunks.” |
| CLASS 40 - Maurice Scott Award for BEST COVERAGE OF TAXATION | Division Daily |
| 1st Place: Chicago Sun-Times, Tim Novak, Lauren FitzPatrick, Caroline Hurley. Cook County property assess-ment failures: “THIS IS why journalism matters, and it’s far and away one of the best public service end of year stories I’ve read in years. Extraordinary investigative reporting that never lets up, with an outstanding cast of characters. It’s also a reminder that if you think taxes aren’t sexy, buckle up.” |
| 2nd Place: Belleville News-Democrat, Teri Maddox. Victims help unravel 20 years of fraud and decep-tion: “A fascinating and important recounting of a lengthy con game that took advantage of well-intentioned people. A cautionary tale for all.” |
| Division C | 1st Place: Chicago Tribune, Cecilia Reyes, Madison Hopkins. The Failures Before the Fires: “A classic investiga-tion into the systemic negligence, arrogance and incompetence of city inspectors and prosecutors who are entrusted to keep residents from resi-dential fires.” |
| 2nd Place: Chicago Sun-Times, Frank Main, Casey Toner, Jared Rutecki. The costly toll of dead-end drug arrests, Sun-Times/BGA: “A deep and thorough probe into the injustice of minor drug arrests that could be easily corrected if officials cared to make changes.” |
| Honor Mention: Chicago Tri-bune, Staff. Chicago’s 2020 unrest: A Tribune investigation: “The kind of enterprise reporting that should have been done in all cities that experienced riots, vandalism and theft. It showed clearly the neighborhoods that had suffered most from the violence, and not the ones that first received most media attention.” |
Illinois Press Association’s 2021 Sweepstakes Winners

David B. Kramer Memorial Trophy
Ford County Chronicle, Paxton
2nd Place: Oakland Independent
3rd Place: Panhandle Press, Raymond
4th Place: The Sidell Reporter & Tuscola Review (Tie)

The David R. Kramer Memorial Trophy was established in 2014 by the Kramer family in memory of the late publisher of the Gibson City Courier and the other Kramer weekly newspapers. It is awarded to a Division A weekly newspaper.

Mabel S. Shaw Memorial Trophy
The Woodstock Independent
2nd Place: Cass County Star-Gazette, Beardstown
3rd Place: Downers Grove Suburban Life
4th Place: Henry County Republic, Geneseo

The Mabel S. Shaw Memorial Trophy is awarded to a Division B weekly newspaper. It was established in 1994 and contributed by the Shaw family in memory of the late publisher of The Telegraph in Dixon.

Will Loomis Memorial Trophy
The Hinsdalean
2nd Place: The Journal-News, Hillsboro
3rd Place: Republic-Times, Waterloo
4th Place: Kane County Chronicle

The Will Loomis Memorial Trophy is awarded to a Division C weekly newspaper. The Cook County Suburban Publishers Association established it in 1949 in memory of William W. Loomis, former publisher of the LaGrange Citizen.

Patrick Coburn Award of Excellence
The Pantagraph, Bloomington
2nd Place: Daily Chronicle, DeKalb

The Patrick Coburn Award of Excellence is awarded to a Division D daily newspaper. It was established in 2011 and contributed by Patrick Coburn, former publisher of the State Journal-Register and vice president of Copley Press, Inc.

Stuart R. Paddock Memorial Trophy
Chicago Sun-Times
3rd Place: The Telegraph, Alton
4th Place: Herald & Review, Decatur

The Stuart R. Paddock Memorial Trophy is awarded to a Division E daily newspaper. It was established in 1978 and contributed by the Paddock family in memory of the late publisher of the Chicago newspaper company.