

CLASS 01 GENERAL EXCELLENCE

Division A

First Place: Elburn Herald, Staff. Elburn Herald March 14, 2013, Nov. 21, 2013. Clean design, fun pages, very consistent design, good mix of content, strong presentation.

Second Place: The Woodstock Independent, Staff. The Woodstock Independent. Nice use of graphics, good mix of stories, great opinion page, clean and concise.

Third Place: Oakland Independent, Janice Hunt. Oakland Independent (formerly Country Crossroads). Good use of dominant photos, see improvements in design, not afraid to run photo big, packed with local content, most improved.

Honorable Mention: Mahomet Citizen, Staff. General Excellence, Mahomet Citizen. Nice local mix, organized visual presentation.

Division B

First Place: Mason County Democrat, Havana, Staff. MasonCountyDemocrat031313. Lots of nice design elements on front page but teasing page 1 from page 1 is redundant, good mix of stories and photos, great sports photos.

Second Place: Riverside-Brookfield Landmark, Bob Uphues. March 13 2013 and Feb 13 2013. Clean, easy to read, very informative, good use of photos but could benefit from using more photos on inside pages.

Third Place: The Galena Gazette, Staff. General excellence. Page 4's publishers box was very informative to new readers, strong opinion page, nice feature stories and photos.

Honorable Mention: Pike Press, Pittsfield, Pittsfield, Staff. March 13, 2013 Issue and Oct. 2, 2013 issue. Good use of photos, lots of local content, community focused.

Division C

First Place: Illinois Times, Springfield, STAFF. General Excellence entries. This paper stood out. Great local stories. An easy read with an eye-catching graphic on the front. Nice use of color throughout. This paper was page turner.

Second Place: Downers Grove Suburban Life, Staff. Downers Grove Suburban Life. Strong photos. Good local story count. Nice sports section. Great job overall.

Third Place: Austin Weekly News, Chicago, Chicago, Staff. March 13, and Aug. 21, 2013 issues. Beautiful photos. Nice headlines. Great writing and great local coverage about real issues that impact the community.

Division D

First Place: Chicago Daily Law Bulletin, Staff. Chicago Daily Law Bulletin. This was a standout. Great design. Well written stories. Great local story count. Nice use of space on each page. From trial calendars to case summaries, this newspaper is informative to the public.

Second Place: Daily Chronicle, DeKalb, DeKalb, Staff. Daily Chronicle, DeKalb, DeKalb County, Illinois. Design, layout and stories are strong. Good overall newspaper with great local coverage.

Third Place: The Register-Mail, Galesburg, Galesburg, Staff. General Excellence. Great local coverage with well-written stories. Nice layout. Good sports section. Photos are played up nicely as well.

Honorable Mention: Commercial-News, Danville, Staff. Jan. 27, March 15 editions for General Excellence category. Nice layouts and section design. Strong headline writing. Nicely written stories. Great job.

Division E

First Place: Northwest Herald, Crystal Lake, Crystal Lake, Staff. Northwest Herald, Crystal Lake 3-14-13; 6-9-13.

Second Place: Sauk Valley Media, Sterling, Sterling, Staff. Editions of Feb. 2 and March 11 (mandatory week).

Third Place: The Times, Ottawa, Ottawa, Staff. General Excellence.

Honorable Mention: The Daily Journal, Kankakee, Kankakee, Staff. General Excellence entry from The Daily Journal, Kankakee, Kankakee.

Division F

First Place: The State Journal-Register, Springfield Staff. SJR 3.13.13 and 11.10.13.

Second Place: Chicago Sun-Times, Staff. Chicago Sun-Times — 2 full editions.

Third Place: The Pantagraph, Bloomington, Bloomington, Staff. March 13, Nov. 17 editions.

Honorable Mention: Herald & Review, Decatur, Decatur, Staff. General Excellence.

CLASS 02 COMMUNITY SERVICE

Division A

First Place: The Navigator & Journal-Register, Albion, Albion, Patrick Seil. How safe are these bridges?. A fascinating series that clearly took a lot of effort from the staff. How rewarding that it was not for naught, as plans are now in place for a new bridge. I hope they continue following this story. This reporting is excellent. Great work all around.

Second Place: The Cass County Star-Gazette, Beardstown, Beardstown, Jody Woltman for the Star Gazette. Beardstown High School Fallen Soldiers Memorial. Nice coverage of town's attempt to put together this memorial. Certainly, the newspaper's attention to it and encouraging approach brought out residents to make this a reality. Kudos to you for putting your pen where it can do some good.

Third Place: Beecher City Journal, PJ Ryan. More 4 Moore. Publisher really using his place in the community to rally behind tornado victims. Through this reporting and the project in conjunction with the radio station, folks got to a better place more quickly. I applaud the newspaper for becoming active and not just reporting what others were doing.

Honorable Mention: The Pinckneyville Press, Eric Lambert. Bone Marrow Drive. Newspaper takes advantage of its position in the community to rally behind this family in need. Though they did not include the follow-up, I imagine the blood drive had a great turnout. Plus, the story was well-written as well.

Division B

First Place: The Galena Gazette, Hillary Dickerson, Paul Gothard. Honor Flight section. Fabulous project documenting a generation of veterans.

Second Place: Macoupin County Enquirer-Democrat, Carlinville, Carlinville, Staff. Shop Local First. Wonderful to see a newspaper supporting business in the community. Series shows dedication to the issue.

Third Place: Pike Press, Pittsfield, Pittsfield, Beth Zumwalt. Jade Peebles series. Great example of how a newspaper can support the community.

Honorable Mention: Rantoul Press, Dave Hinton. Raising a stink. This series got results. That's the highest compliment any newspaper community service project can receive.

Division D

First Place: Jersey County Journal, Jerseyville, Bob Crossen, Robert Lyons. Saving recycling. The project is most definitely worthy for this award. The stories were well-written and highlighted a very important problem in the community.

Second Place: Canton Daily Ledger, Larry Eskridge. Teaching parents wise choices.

Third Place: Daily Chronicle, DeKalb, Staff. Preparing for IHSA state football championships.

Division E

First Place: Quincy Herald-Whig, Staff. Good News of Christmas campaign celebrates 25 years. What a great campaign! When you positively impact this many lives in a community, the entire community reaps the benefit. Wonderful!

Second Place: The Southern Illinoisan, Carbondale, Staff. Fracking: Boom or bomb.

Third Place: The Daily Journal, Kankakee, Staff. Nuclear Safety: Reactions and Debate series.

Honorable Mention: La Salle NewsTribune, Staff. A practical guide to the patient protection and affordable care act.

Division F

First Place: The Pantagraph, Bloomington, Edith Brady-Lunny, Paul Swiech. Mental health and housing. This was important, detailed and sustained coverage of an issue that deserved this type of attention from its newspaper. Identified the problem and reported on solutions. Well done.

Second Place: Daily Herald, Arlington Heights, Staff. Pension Forum. This was a thoughtful, engaging approach to shedding light on a subject that can be baffling to readers. A true community service.

Third Place – TIE: GateHouse Media, Inc., Illinois Newspapers, Staff. \$100,000 Club. This was a detailed look that certainly contributed to the ongoing debate and conversation about pay for public employees.

Third Place – TIE: The State Journal-Register, Springfield, Staff. The face of hunger. This series sheds the light on the increasing problem of hunger that is only worsening and extending to the middle class. Good presentation of national and state data and personal examples that connect the problem to unemployment, the recession and increasing cost of living.

Honorable Mention - TIE: Belleville News-Democrat, Jacqueline Lee. Belleville Election Coverage. This was robust elections coverage that any newspaper would be proud to publish.

Honorable Mention - TIE: Belleville News-Democrat, Maria Hasenstab, Jennifer Schaaf. Giving from the heart. Well-written an informative series that connects the community with services and programs that help the needy. Excellent use of personal stories from those in need and those who are inspired to help. I can see this series prompting action and a response from the public.

CLASS 03 LOCAL EDITORIAL

Division A

First Place: The Woodstock Independent, Katelyn Stanek. Sergeant's punishment is not enough. Good details, good points, lots of well-deserved passion and indignation. Stands out from the other entries.

Second Place: The Navigator & Journal-Register, Albion, Patrick Seil. Albion's 'Council Wars' hold disastrous consequences for townsfolk, businesses. Strong position, but could use more background. Takes a stand.

Third Place: The Woodstock Independent, Katelyn Stanek. When careers are swapped for jobs, we all lose. Good analysis. Bit overwritten but good last line.

Honorable Mention: Woodford County Journal, Eureka, Staff. Doing More With Less. While somewhat long and overwritten, editorial makes good points about reality of county budget and role of everyone in meeting them - commissioners, department heads, and the taxpayer.

Division B

First Place: Ledger-Sentinel, Oswego, John Etheredge. Kendall County Board per diem editorial. Editorial clearly points out an outrageous abuse of salaries and benefits by county commissioners. The incredibly high salaries should offend any reader from any county in any state. The indignation shows through without excessive use of adjectives. Good job.

Second Place: The Beverly Review, Chicago, Staff. The Beverly Review, Chicago. To the point local editorial against a surveillance camera put up and taken down without accountability, with the extra dimension of prodding the public to care. Particularly relevant in the atmosphere of indignation over NSA watchdogs.

Third Place: Riverside-Brookfield Landmark, Bob Uphues. Finding Bud. Clear editorial condemning poor treatment of dead soldier, strong and unyielding in its compassion for Bud and his family.

Honorable Mention: The Leader, St. Joseph-Union, Vandalia, Dave Bell. Opportunities lost by IHSA decision. A close contender for third place, local editorial mixes legitimate criticism of handling of a sports event with empathy and compassion for one of its casualties.

Division C

First Place: Wednesday Journal of Oak Park & River Forest Group, Dan Haley. Our View 2.

Second Place: Wednesday Journal of Oak Park & River Forest Group, Dan Haley. Our View 3.

Third Place: Jersey County Journal, Jerseyville, Staff. Raising the digital child and The computers are coming.

Honorable Mention: Wednesday Journal of Oak Park & River Forest Group, Dan Haley. Our View 1.

Division D

First Place: McDonough County Voice, Macomb, Lainie Steelman, Jackie Smith. A Hindering Hold Up.

Second Place: The Journal-Standard, Freeport, Wally Haas. Our View: County Board a model of inefficiency.

Third Place: The Journal-Standard, Freeport, Wally Haas. Our View: Get ready for the pension reform ride.

Honorable Mention: The Journal-Standard, Freeport, Wally Haas. Our View: Mandatory minimums the wrong answer.

Division E

First Place: Sauk Valley Media, Sterling, Jim Dunn. Don't let swindler off easy. Our profession is often guilty of not following up stories. This series grabbed an astounding story and wouldn't let it go, following through the entire way in the public's interest.

Second Place: The Times, Ottawa, Scott T. Holland. Banner: An exercise of freedom. Strong and proper stand on an undoubtedly controversial topic.

Third Place: The News-Gazette, Champaign, Jim Dey. School board shouldn't ignore big picture. A firecracker of an editorial that doesn't mince words.

Honorable Mention: Northwest Herald, Crystal Lake, Kevin Lyons. Too lenient on sergeant. Direct, clear and to the point. Writing had a lot of snap.

Division F

First Place: Chicago Sun-Times, Tom Frisbie, Tom McNamee & Kate N. Grossman. 'Standing up for the torture commission -- a series of 5 editorials'. A powerfully written series, with compelling, snappy writing.

Second Place: The State Journal-Register, Springfield, Jayette Bolinski. Shredding scandal. A relentless series of editorials pounding home the importance of a local issue to readers.

Third Place: Chicago Sun-Times, Kate N. Grossman, Tom McNamee & Tom Frisbie. A series of 5 editorials on school closings. Series literally took the broad issue of school closures down to the street level.

Honorable Mention: Chicago Sun-Times, Tom McNamee. 'We are Newtown' by Tom McNamee of the Chicago Sun-Times. A beautifully written, powerful editorial calling for action on gun violence.

CLASS 04 EDITORIAL PAGE

Division A

First Place: The Woodstock Independent, Staff. Woodstock Independent editorial page. The editorial pages showed a strong local voice and local presence throughout. The quality and scope of the coverage was strong overall. Even the editorial cartoon appeared to be local and fashioned toward the coverage.

Second Place: Woodford County Journal, Eureka, Staff. Editorial Page.

Third Place: The Navigator & Journal-Register, Albion, Patrick Seil. Editorial Page.

Division B

First Place: Pike Press, Pittsfield, Staff. Edit and Op-Ed, PP, Apr. 10 and Nov. 20, 2013. The Pike Press, Pittsfield has a winning combination of strong, local content and community involvement in the paper's editorial page.

Second Place: Macoupin County Enquirer-Democrat, Carlinville, Staff. Editorial Page_MCED. A great combination of local coverage and reader interaction.

Third Place: The Journal-News, Hillsboro, Staff. Best Editorial Page.

Division C

First Place: Wednesday Journal of Oak Park & River Forest Group, Ken Trainor. Wednesday Journal Viewpoints sections, April 10 and Feb. 6. It's a nice mix. As the paper understands, the viewpoints are a tad long, but well written.

Second Place: Jersey County Journal, Jerseyville, Staff. Jersey County Journal, Jerseyville.

Third Place: Downers Grove Suburban Life, Staff. Downers Grove Suburban Life editorial page.

Division D

First Place: Pekin Daily Times, Staff. Opinion Page. Strong columnist who isn't afraid to take a stand.

Second Place: The Register-Mail, Galesburg, Tom Martin. Opinion page. Interesting take on getting plenty of opinions on a subject.

Third Place: Daily Chronicle, DeKalb, Staff. Opinions. Strong page. Made it hard to judge.

Honorable Mention: Breeze-Courier, Taylorville, Marylee Rasar. Editorial Page.

Division E

First Place: The Times, Ottawa, Staff. Opinions and weekend Voices. The weekend color section front gives it away: This is a newspaper that cares about its community and the voices and issues in it. Nicely edited pages with a relentless local focus. Great variety of voices and ideas, with a good mix of issues. It's a well-designed opinion section, with good attention to graphics and to a mix of quick hits and longer pieces.. Nice job!

Second Place: The News-Gazette, Champaign, Jim Dey. Editorial and Op-Ed Pages. Strong weekend editorial and op-ed pages. The editorials and many of the columns are local and give a good sense of the community and its issues. The Voices columns are well written and edited and were a highlight of the section. Good work.

Third Place: Sauk Valley Media, Sterling, Jim Dunn, Opinion page editor. Editorial pages from April 10 (mandatory week) and Nov. 23 (2 pages). Good local editorials and impressive batches of letters. Intense local focus is excellent use of available space.

Honorable Mention: Northwest Herald, Crystal Lake, Jason Schaumburg, Dan McCaleb. Northwest Herald, Crystal Lake Editorial Page.

Division F

First Place: Chicago Sun-Times, Tom McNamee, Kate N. Grossman, Tom Frisbie. Chicago Sun-

Times editorial page — 2 dates. A clear winner. Excellent section -- splendid writing and editing throughout, appealing layout, inviting headlines, well-illustrated editorials. It all has a fine, professional touch that sets it apart from most newspaper opinion sections. And the "We are Newtown" editorial: Wow!

Second Place: The Rock Island Argus, Kenda Burrows. Viewpoints. Close call between 2nd and 3rd place winners in this category. Local content, though, is the tipping point that gives this entry 2nd place. Strong local editorials, columns and letters -- holy cow, what a Sunday letters column! That makes for a well-read section, even though it's a lot of work.

Third Place: The State Journal-Register, Springfield, Jayette Bolinski. Shredding scandal; Taser-ing pregnant women. Strong local editorials, especially the piece that calls for -- and apparently got -- a shakeup at City Hall. Nice job!

Honorable Mention: Belleville News-Democrat, Lori Browning. Editorial Page.

CLASS 05 NEWS REPORTING SINGLE STORY

Division A

First Place: The Hoopston Chronicle, Jordan Crook. Massive blaze engulfs Hoopston factory.

Second Place: The Woodstock Independent, Katelyn Stanek. D.B. Hess printing plant could shut down this summer.

Third Place: The Navigator & Journal-Register, Albion, Patrick Seil. Arson ruled in Grayville High School blaze.

Division B

First Place: Washington Times-Reporter, Marlo Guetersloh. Inquiry clouds chief's retirement. Good watchdog reporting by the writer to try to cast light on something that the public should know about.

Second Place: The Galena Gazette, Betty Roliardi. Life without parole.

Third Place: Riverside-Brookfield Landmark, Bob Uphues. Controversial ex-doc rents space for office.

Honorable Mention: Rantoul Press, If More than 3 names type: Staff. A fire waiting to happen.

Division C

First Place: Illinois Times, Springfield, Bruce Rushton. Bon voyage. Reporter Bruce Rushton's piercing examination of the Springfield Police Pension Board's excessive travel spending is an excellent example of watchdog journalism that is certain to provoke public outcry. In a compelling narrative, Rushton points out the board's most expensive junkets on the public dime. Thoroughly reported and well-written.

Second Place: Illinois Times, Springfield, Patrick Yeagle. A decade later, still trying to clear his name. This powerful story describes in detail how a state employee prosecuted with scant evidence lost his job and good name despite a jury's not-guilty verdict. Patrick Yeagle deftly examines the case, the outcome and its aftermath. A worthy story artfully told.

Third Place: Illinois Times, Springfield, Bruce Rushton. Pants on fire. Law enforcement officers are rightly held to high ethical standards, and when one lies under oath, he betrays the public trust he holds. Bruce Rushton holds one such sheriff's deputy to account in a comprehensive story supported by trial transcripts and source documents. A strong investigative effort.

Honorable Mention: Austin Weekly News, Chicago, Lauren Cook. From serving their country to sleeping on its streets. Lauren Cook brings sobering statistics about veteran homelessness to life through the voices of formerly homeless vets, advocates and academics. This thoroughly researched story puts a local face on a national problem.

Division D

First Place: The Register-Mail, Galesburg, Staff. President Obama visits Galesburg. There's comprehensive coverage, then there's the full-court press. The Register-Mail, Galesburg pulled off the latter in a daily edition devoted largely to a visit from President Barack Obama. With four front-page stories, six inside stories, a column and a photo page, this paper flexed its reporting muscles and explored every imaginable angle. The Register-Mail, Galesburg's thorough and thoughtful stories go beyond documenting the day's news and demonstrate genuine enterprise.

Second Place: The Register-Mail, Galesburg, Tom Loewy, Ariel Cheung. Stevenson Shooting. In powerful and poignant stories, reporters Ariel Cheung and Tom Loewy describe the last moments of an 18-year-old killed in an accidental shooting and detail the community's outpouring of grief over the young man's untimely death. Gripping quotes from the victim's girlfriend who held him as he died makes this package of stories leap off the page. This story is well-reported and compassionately told.

Third Place: Chicago Daily Law Bulletin, Patricia Manson. Money woes shrink pool of defenders. Less money to reimburse attorneys who defend the indigent in federal court means fewer lawyers willing to represent poor defendants who can't pay. That ultimately spells trouble for those accused of serious crimes. The Chicago Daily Law Bulletin's Patricia Manson provides deft reporting and analysis on an issue of national importance.

Honorable Mention: Pekin Daily Times, Michael Smothers. Enviro-safe blast. In a well-paced and authoritatively written story, reporter Michael Smothers provided solid coverage of an industrial explosion that seriously injured three people. Thorough reporting of a local emergency and its aftermath.

Division E

First Place: Sauk Valley Media, Sterling, Tara Becker, Derek Barichello. Figuring it out. The best among some very strong entries, this work reflected what journalists do best: Get access to information that the public can't find, then use it to tell a story that matters to the community. Good reporting and clear writing make it all work.

Second Place: The News-Gazette, Champaign, Staff. Devastating. When the tornado hit Gifford, The News-Gazette, Champaign realized it had a big story in its hands and treated it as such. The important news is all here and the deadline writing is solid.

Third Place: Northwest Herald, Crystal Lake, Jim Dallke. Nightmare tenant abuses system.

All newspapers get landlord-tenant complaints. Mostly, we ignore them. This one turned into a fine story with solid reporting.

Honorable Mention: Quincy Herald-Whig, Matt Hopf, Steve Eighinger, David Adam. Newcomb 'A Total Loss'. Great context on the significance of the hotel makes this more than a fire story.

Division F

First Place: Chicago Sun-Times, Staff. 'Roger Ebert 1942-2013'. A fascinating journey through the life of a writer who embodied film criticism for much of the country. The package is poignant, funny and heart-felt throughout.

Second Place: Chicago Tribune, Jared Hopkins. Maverick Investor Faces Legal Pressure. A comprehensive look at a complicated man, told from documents and those who know him.

Third Place: The State Journal-Register, Springfield, Doug Finke. History of Neglect/pensions shortfall. Strong explanatory reporting helps readers understand how Illinois got in the mess it is in.

Honorable Mention: Belleville News-Democrat, George Pawlaczyk, Beth Hundsdorder. Cook Drug Scandal. This entry shows evidence of a lot of legwork on deadline as the pieces came together in the death of one judge and the arrest of another.

CLASS 06 NEWS REPORTING SERIES

Division A

First Place: The Woodstock Independent, Katelyn Stanek. Tenant crisis. Stories did a great job explaining the issue and painting a picture of the problems. Series also had a good mix of enterprise and deadline reporting. Info boxes and sidebars also were helpful.

Second Place: West Chicago Suburban Life, Mary Beth Versaci, Anna Schier. Wiant House series. Well-written stories that looked the issue from multiple angles. Series did a good job following the fate of the house throughout the process.

Third Place: Paxton Record, Will Brumleve. How did it come to this. Good coverage of how a watchdog group can make a difference.

Honorable Mention: Coal City Courant, If More than 3 names type: Staff. Tornado coverage, young victims.

Division B

First Place: Ledger-Sentinel, Oswego, Matt Schury. Kendall County per diem investigation. Great example of using a FOIA request to dig into government spending. Good mix of enterprise stories that demonstrate thorough reporting.

Second Place: Effingham and Teutopolis News Report, Jeremy Rinkel. Class 6 Train Series ET News Report. Good enterprise series using a historical event to show how important trains are to this community.

Third Place: Des Plaines Journal, Todd Wessell, Tom Robb. Des Plaines Police Turmoil. Good job following a news topic throughout the process and using the power of the press to shine light on a longstanding problem.

Honorable Mention: The Bolingbrook Bugle, Laura Katauskas. Assessing Valley View students. Good use of anecdotal information as well as numbers.

Division C

First Place: Illinois Times, Springfield, Patrick Yeagle. The cost of fracking. A comprehensive look at a hot-button issue. Good explanation of the fracking process and assessment of the risks involved. Nice balance of pro and con arguments.

Second Place: Austin Weekly News, Chicago, Staff. School closings in Austin community. A good look at the many angles of the school closings, from the effects on the community to the loss of jobs and other issues. Brings the issue home.

Third Place: Illinois Times, Springfield, Patrick Yeagle. Shell game.

Division D

First Place: The Register-Mail, Galesburg, Ariel Cheung. Drug Court. A comprehensive look at an alternative to traditional court that saves lives and money. Good stories of recovering addicts put a face on the issue.

Second Place: The Register-Mail, Galesburg, Tom Loewy, Ariel Cheung and Joe Ward. Fatal Dog attack. Thorough job of reporting on this tragedy. Nice work to get both the victim's mom and the dog's owner to tell their stories. Good follow-through on regulations in place to prevent this type of tragedy.

Third Place: Morris Daily Herald, CHRISTINA CHAPMAN-VAN YPEREN. Teacher sexting case. Good, solid reporting on a disturbing case. Nice to get the interview with the victim and to let him tell his story so that others can learn from his experience.

Honorable Mention: Robinson Daily News, Tom Compton, Graham Milldrum. Prison Break (headlines listed at bottom of "Explanation" above). Good coverage of an issue that should be of concern to everyone -- lax procedures for preventing a prison escape.

Division E

First Place: The News-Gazette, Champaign, Staff. Gifford tornado. Impressive is the only word that can define this winning series. Top-notch reporting and photography tell the impact, reaction and road to recovery for this community. Outstanding journalism! This staff should be very proud of its teamwork and quality of writers and editors.

Second Place: La Salle NewsTribune, Staff. 'Say a prayer for us'. In a tough category to judge, this is another standout series that demonstrates outstanding community journalism. This series covers all aspects of the flood and its impact, while providing valuable information residents need to know. Quality work by a talented staff!

Third Place: Northwest Herald, Crystal Lake, Joseph Bustos, Chelsea McDougall, Lawrence Synett. State of Mental Health. An eye-opening series on the status of mental health services. Telling the story through the eyes of patients is a very effective way of educating the community, along with the parents, families and friends of all affected. Nice job!

Honorable Mention: Effingham Daily News, Staff. Search for missing girl ends in tragedy. Another job well done in a tough category to judge. This staff followed the story throughout and kept readers and the community informed, as sad as it was.

Division F

First Place: Chicago Tribune, Staff. Chicago violence. Impressive work! The series

covers every angle, past and present, of the growing violence. Reporters dug for facts and details, but also gave a touching account of the impact on lives, families and communities. In a tough field, this series was the clear winner. Congratulations, staff, on a terrific job!

Second Place: Chicago Sun-Times, Chris Fusco, Tony Arnold, Monifa Thomas. 'DCFS' Faces of Failure'. Another very impressive and important series. Sheds light on a disturbing issue and serves as a call for action in protecting children who can't protect themselves. A comprehensive and eye-opening series, and a job well done!

Third Place: Belleville News-Democrat, Beth Hundsdorfer, George Pawlaczyk. Cook Drug Scandal. Wow. What a tangled web this series unveils, peering beneath the surface of our judicial system in the process. Reporters did an excellent job in keeping readers informed through every twist and turn. Very nice job!

Honorable Mention: The Pantagraph, Bloomington, Paul Swiech. Health reform.

CLASS 07 GOVERNMENT BEAT REPORTING

Division A

First Place: Paxton Record, Will Brumleve. Ford-Iroquois Public Health Department. This entry exemplifies the importance of hard-nosed local government reporting, where public officials are held accountable for their actions and newspaper dig for the truth with public records requests and hard hitting questions.

Second Place: The Navigator & Journal-Register, Albion, Duane Crays. Firehouse fractures Albion City Council. Thorough reporting kept this story alive and pushed for answers to tough questions the public needed asked.

Third Place: Clinton Journal, If More than 3 names type: Staff. County board versus board chairman Brown. Combined with stories on the county board chairwoman's push to interfere with the state's attorney, this entry shed light on how public officials' ineptitude can hurt how government works.

Honorable Mention: The Woodstock Independent, Katelyn Stanek. Beat-City of Woodstock. Clearly written, solid beat reporting goes a long way.

Division B

First Place: Washington Times-Reporter, Marlo Guetersloh. Washington city beat and police chief changes. Good stories often start as routine beat coverage, and in this case the reporter dug deeper to find a richer tale. Good accountability reporting.

Second Place: Ledger-Sentinel, Oswego, Matt Schury. Kendall County Board per diems, health insurance. A solid effort to give readers a view inside the investigation of the county board.

Third Place: Glenview Announcements, Todd Shields. Fine builds relationships, trust, first year in house. A nicely told story on a topic from the state legislature, an area small local newspaper overlook too often.

Division C

First Place: Illinois Times, Springfield, Bruce Rushton. The Shredgate Saga. An excellent example of watchdog journalism, with solid follow-up reporting to benefit readers.

Second Place: Downers Grove Suburban Life, Ed McMenamin. Downers Grove Village Board coverage. A series of well-written pieces.

Third Place: Wednesday Journal of Oak Park & River Forest Group, Anna Lothson. Hedges, Abu-Taleb disagree on leadership styles. Very thorough reporting on these two candidates helps give perspective on them as both leaders and citizens.

Honorable Mention: Wednesday Journal of Oak Park & River Forest Group, Anna Lothson. Abu-Taleb sworn in as president.

Division D

First Place: The Register-Mail, Galesburg, Ariel Cheung. A Poor Rating. An impressive collection of reports with lots of detail, all very easy to understand and useful to readers.

Second Place: Daily Chronicle, DeKalb, Jillian Duchnowski. Court beat reporting. These stories dig below the surface of basic court reporting.

Third Place: Daily Chronicle, DeKalb, David Thomas. City hall coverage.

Honorable Mention: Chicago Daily Law Bulletin, Andrew Maloney. Springfield beat.

Division E

First Place: Sauk Valley Media, Sterling, David Giuliani. Townships and pensions. Excellent reporting. Clearly the best. Many of the stories tackle difficult issues, but reporter sees it through. Good job!

Second Place: The News-Gazette, Champaign, Mary Schenk. Victim saw; Real lifesaver; Scrapping honesty; Warrant issued; Getting unhooked.. Writer has a good grasp on the issues and is able to convey the story to the reader. Nice reporting.

Third Place: The News-Gazette, Champaign, Patrick Wade. Instillation frustration; red ink; FOIA fight; apartment problems. Reporter is well informed and conveys the information to the public in a way they can understand. Particularly liked the FOIA story.

Honorable Mention: The News-Gazette, Champaign, Julie Wurth. Salvaging a relationship. A case of a reporter taking ownership of a story and sticking with it.

Division F

First Place: Chicago Tribune, Bill Ruthhart. Ruthhart stories on Mayor Rahm Emanuel's administration. All of the top four entries were very good and it was a toss up as to who had the edge. This series received the nod for first due to the in depth coverage and the willingness to dig and put the connections out there on a variety of topics. The mayor's office better follow through on what it says or they will be all over it.

Second Place: Chicago Sun-Times, Frank Main. Frank Main — a sampling of 5 police beat stories. Very close to first place. This reporter is not afraid to dig, but they excel in showing both sides of an emotional issue. Reporting at its best here.

Third Place: Chicago Sun-Times, Tim Novak. Tim Novak — 5 investigative stories out of Chicago City Hall. Second and third place were so very close and this could have easily swung either way. Again, they are bold in asking the questions and don't mind the detail work which makes the story. Excellent work.

Honorable Mention: Journal Star, Peoria, Matt Buedel. Matt Buedel beat reporting. A great job on investigative reporting. Going above and beyond in exposing wrong doing.

CLASS 08 BUSINESS/ECONOMIC REPORTING

Division A

First Place: West Chicago Suburban Life, Mary Beth Versaci. West Chicago community supports its own during Thanksgiving season. Interesting look at an innovative program to help lower-income people and newcomers to America. Included excellent personal examples to show worth of the effort.

Second Place: Paxton Record, Will Brumleve. Bus company sues passengers for violating 'terms and conditions'. Thorough look at a fascinating controversy involving a business and its customers.

Third Place: Woodford County Journal, Eureka, Heidi Bowman. Sam Leman 50 Years. Well-written profile of a long-time business and how its changes reflect those in its industry. Combined nice personal touches about the businessmen with trends they've seen in automobile business.

Honorable Mention: The Navigator & Journal-Register, Albion, Duane Crays, Fran Petit. Frack-turing the fiction. Thorough look at fracking issue, though seemed one-sided too often toward the proponents of the practice. Would have been stronger coverage with more interviews and input from opponents of practice.

Division B

First Place: Mason County Democrat, Havana, Wendy Martin. Mason County's Aquifer. Fascinating look at an issue that, at first blush, wouldn't seem that interesting or important. Excellent approach of showing how a decision made some time ago has ramifications today.

Second Place: The Galena Gazette, Andrew Brunner. Order to chaos. Excellent profile of an innovative approach to updating technology for the public good.

Third Place: Riverside-Brookfield Landmark, Bob Uphues. The green machines. Good look at how a statewide law is having an impact on local businesses.

Honorable Mention: Berwyn Suburban Life, Joe Sinopoli. Rudolph gets added to holiday menu. Well-written, clever profile of a local business owner taking an unusual approach with a product most people wouldn't expect at a restaurant or deli.

Division C

First Place: Downers Grove Suburban Life, Ed McMenamin. Owner wants to know: Why won't Downers Grove allow food trucks?. Nice community story that could prompt discussion, if not action, about allowing food trucks in this area.

Second Place: Downers Grove Suburban Life, Ed McMenamin. Shelves empty quickly as Downers Grove Dominick's prepares to close. Nice story about the potential loss of this store and what it means to those who work there, shop there and to nearby businesses.

Third Place: Jersey County Journal, Jerseyville, Bob Crossen. Cell phones slowly constrict area 911 funding. Informative piece about what the popularity of cell phones and the subsequent loss of surcharges means for communities.

Honorable Mention: Downers Grove Suburban Life, Ed McMenamin. Eagles Restaurant named to Vienna Beef Hall of Fame.

Division D

First Place: The Register-Mail, Galesburg, Nick Ostdick. Galesburg by the slice. Great local story. It grabs readers from the beginning and pulls them into the story. Nice use of breakout graphics, photos, pull out quotes and reader interaction.

Second Place: The Register-Mail, Galesburg, Nick Ostdick. Aging bridges. Aging bridges are important in every community, and this paper did a good job of telling readers about the problem bridges in their area and what's preventing officials from repairing them as quickly as they would like. Easily digestible stories, good use of breakout graphics and photos.

Third Place: The Register-Mail, Galesburg, John Pulliam. The slow climb back. Interesting story about the slow recovery in the housing construction market. Liked tidbits like the lead that said it's been more than a decade since a subdivision has been built in Galesburg. The urban vs. rural probably wasn't too much of a surprise, but seeing the numbers really brought it home for readers.

Honorable Mention: The Register-Mail, Galesburg, Joanie Stiers. Field signs.

Division E

First Place: Quincy Herald-Whig, Maggie Menderski. TAKE TWO ASPIRIN: Shortage of primary care doctors causes headaches for hospitals, rural communities. Excellent reporting on an important, changing trend in the health-care industry. Great use of personal examples, from doctors and patients, with good, well-researched information that shows a decline in doctors at a time when more people will seek medical care. Excellent reporting and great writing.

Second Place: La Salle NewsTribune, Kevin Caufield. Struggling to stay afloat. Excellent reporting that exposes wasteful government spending and underhanded kickbacks for an executive director. Exceptional work in uncovering corruption amidst a much-ballyhooed project.

Third Place: The Daily Journal, Kankakee, Staff. Troubled Assets story series. Great reporting on the far-reaching impacts of federally-seized properties. Very well researched, good use of personal examples, great writing and good presentation of the facts.

Honorable Mention: Northwest Herald, Crystal Lake, Brett Rowland. Hospital charges. Good story that explores the differences in hospital costs but delves deeper into cost differences for the insured and uninsured. Very informative with good examples and enough detail to better understand the disparities.

Division F

First Place: Chicago Sun-Times, Tim Novak. 'Burke's law' — a 3-part series by Tim Novak.

Outstanding reporting that uncovers government corruption at taxpayer's expense. Excellent work in showing the far-reaching impact, while raising questions of further investigation. A true example of exceptional, award-winning journalism.

Second Place: The State Journal-Register, Springfield, Tim Landis. Skills gap (P1, jump pages, Business/Landis col., Opinion/Heisse col.). These stories get to the heart of the unemployment

problem by focusing on the ever-present skills gap. Excellent work in detailing the problem, with good benchmarks from the start of the Great Recession. Very informative, insightful and well-written.

Third Place: Journal Star, Peoria, Leslie Renken. Stop the Bleeding. Great story that shows, through a mother's experience, a sometimes undiagnosed blood disorder. Great writing, good use of personal examples and very informative.

Honorable Mention: Herald & Review, Decatur, Tony Reid. Aiding a Movement. Intriguing story because the writer is actually able to describe this high-tech company and its products in an understandable way. Great job!

CLASS 09 SPORTS NEWS

Division A

First Place: Woodford County Journal, Eureka, Jeff Wiseman. Gold adds silver medal. Compelling story. Reader knows exactly what happened why.

Second Place: Elburn Herald, Mike Slodki. 'Dan'-ger zone. Hooked from the beginning. Excellent work.

Third Place: Paxton Record, Andrew Rosten. 10 years to the max. Well-written and detailed. Leaves readers feeling involved and full of knowledge.

Honorable Mention: West Chicago Suburban Life, Scott Schmid. Wheaton Academy's Ruggles sets new shooting mark. Good work. Interesting story. Did an excellent job with detail.

Division B

First Place: Piatt County Journal-Republican, Monticello, Andrew Helregel. One more time: Sages complete second perfect season, win another state title. Incredibly well-written. Good reading from beginning to end. Quality work.

Second Place: The Galena Gazette, Paul Gothard. Game for the ages. Gripping story. Well-balanced. Enjoyable reading.

Third Place: The Joliet Bugle, Scott Taylor. Lockport bowling team wins state championship. Entertaining and informative. Well done.

Honorable Mention: Ledger-Sentinel, Oswego, Kristin Sharp. Championship Strikeout. Heart-break and hope rolled into one. Well done.

Division D

First Place: Daily Chronicle, DeKalb, Staff. Orange Bowl makes immediate impact on NIU recruiting. Far and away the best entry in this category, this package had everything a sports fan could ask for. Northern Illinois faithful are fortunate to have such comprehensive coverage of their team by a staff that clearly "gets" how to achieve a perfect balance between stories and stats. Your sports department clearly has its finger on the pulse and, with coverage like this, the fans win time and time again. Congratulations on a fine package.

Second Place: Daily Chronicle, DeKalb, Staff. Fiesta Foiled: Bowling Green 47, Northern Illinois 27. This entry was a clear winner and, frankly, might have taken 1st place were it not for the strength of this sports department's other submissions. Thorough reporting with tremendous detail. The sidebars added

to the reader's experience without simply packing the page with stats. Fine work and a thoughtful approach.

Third Place: McDonough County Voice, Macomb, Scott Holland. Super Cyclones. Great lead that grabs the reader's attention and makes them want to understand just how hard fought this contest was. Fine job.

Honorable Mention: Breeze-Courier, Taylorville, Derek Parris. The streak is over. Detailed and well-written/researched story about the end of an era the Tornadoes are probably happy to forget.

Division E

First Place: Sauk Valley Media, Sterling, Brian Weidman, Dan Woessner. Drive for 5 complete; Numbers game; Sour start leads to sweet finish; Terveer delivers big hit. In some communities, nothing is bigger than a state championship, and this coverage brought the accomplishment to life. Well told game story with an interesting lede, plenty of extras (titles, by the numbers). One thing it needed was a simpler way to find their five titles, broken out in the gamer or maybe even built into the page topper. Overall, the paper produced coverage worth keeping and remembering on a day many of their readers won't forget.

Second Place: Northwest Herald, Crystal Lake, Tom Musick, Jeff Arnold, Jon Styf. Blackhawks vs. Bruins. Coverage started on Page 2, so I'm assuming there was a poster front. No traditional game story, but the column angles were good. Dual report card was a nice touch and I'm sure their readers enjoy the Take 2 debates. Brings their personality to the coverage.

Third Place: Quincy Herald-Whig, Matt Schuckman. Scott Douglas resignation: 'I'm making the right call'. So the challenge we face every day is presenting the news in an interesting fashion, particularly when the news develops out of a news conference. The details and reporting in the story stood out. By the numbers box was a nice extra and the headline and choice of lead art brought readers into the package.

Honorable Mention: Northwest Herald, Crystal Lake, Joe Stevenson, Tom Musick. Johnsbury loss. Musick's column brought a personal touch to the coverage. Covering losing teams is difficult, especially in high school, where the athletes aren't pros and can't be covered as such. The gamer gave you a sense of their emotions, the agony of coming close but also the happiness found in trying. That's what HS sports are about.

Division F

First Place: Chicago Sun-Times, Rick Telander. "Beaten but undaunted" by Rick Telander of the Chicago Sun-Times'. Wonderfully written and reported, matched equally with photos and headline. Strongest overall package in the competition.

Second Place: Chicago Tribune, Brad Biggs. On the Marc. Breaking news on the most competitive beat in a major metro market like Chicago is impressive. Reporters went beyond the news to give you a glimpse of the new coach.

Third Place: The Rock Island Argus, Daniel Makarewicz. Co Mr. Basketball reunion. Excellent idea and execution in localizing a story that no longer is local. Package included everything you wanted, including current stats, current photos, etc.

Honorable Mention: Herald & Review, Decatur, Justin Conn. Raiders repeat. Excellent lead art photo, comprehensive coverage and an interesting game story that included background as part of the narrative. Championship coverage of a championship moment.

CLASS 10 SPORTS FEATURE

Division A

First Place: Niles Herald-Spectator, John Borneman. A chance journey home for Northridge coach Will Rey. A very nice, thorough profile of a coach who ends up in an unexpected place. Story traces the coach's journey and explains the reasons for his moves. Although a longer feature, it moved quickly and held my interest, a testimony to being well-written.

Second Place: The Navigator & Journal-Register, Albion, Duane Crays. Leaving a legacy, a fond farewell to Linda Oxby. A moving tribute to a well-respected coach facing her toughest battle. It used a nice blend of quotes from the coach and her players. It shared her journey without becoming overly sentimental.

Third Place: The Leader, St. Joseph, Nora Maberry-Daniels. 'They just always knew they were going to go to state'. A clever angle on a successful high school football team. Talking to the players' mothers provided a different perspective. Very thorough in its reporting.

Honorable Mention: Paxton Record, Andrew Rosten, Will Brumleve. Citizen (Cham)pain. Hometown kid makes good stories can be common, but this one goes beyond the normal. Not only does the player tell about his life and career, but a younger player discusses his example, too. Writer did a nice job capturing all the varied experiences.

Division B

First Place: Oak Leaves, Oak Park, Matt Harness. Schueler's influence still felt six years after he lost battle with cancer, infection. A clear-cut winner. I loved this story: Excellent lead, well-written and extensive sourcing. It provided a wonderfully moving story about the impact of a youth who died too young.

Second Place: Sandwich Record, Christine Bolin Dascher. Redefining a family. Another very touching story. It would have been easy to miss this, but the writer captures the human element of a seldom-used player. He shows how sports can serve as a healing element.

Third Place: The Reporter, Hickory Hills, Ken Karrson. Better safe than sorry. A very thorough examination of a significant rules change. The issue is placed in a national context but shows the impact on a local level. Many voices are heard in this story. I would have liked a comment from state official on the change.

Honorable Mention: Kendall County Record, Yorkville, Kristin Sharp. Four decades of devotion. A pleasant surprise, capturing the impact of a devoted fan. Nicely captures her long-time role with the team from many angles. It shows how sports is about more than the players and coaches.

Division C

First Place: Wednesday Journal of Oak Park & River Forest Group, If More than 3 names type:

Staff. He's in an Oak Park state of mind. Very interesting story about a hometown athlete who makes it big. Story featured a lot of voices. It provided nice insights into the subject

Second Place: Wednesday Journal of Oak Park & River Forest Group, Marty Farmer. Home Field Advantage. Story does a nice job of capturing the special relationship between two teens. It goes further than the typical buddy story. It combines the athletics with the personal.

Third Place: Illinois Times, Springfield, Patrick Yeagle. MMA mania. Very in-depth article about MMA in Springfield. Good mixture of background and quotes. Was a bit on the longish side.

Honorable Mention: Wednesday Journal of Oak Park & River Forest Group, Marty Farmer. Breaking away to chase their dreams. Intriguing story about an unusual adventure. Shows the motivations for the riders.

Division D

First Place: Daily Chronicle, DeKalb, Ross Jacobson & Steve Nitz. Midweek #MAAction series.

Second Place: Daily Chronicle, DeKalb, Steve Nitz. Jordan Lynch's journey to New York City.

Third Place: Daily Chronicle, DeKalb, Ross Jacobson. Championship thrills.

Honorable Mention: Times-Republic, Watseka, Ryan Buchan. Concussion awareness series.

Division E

First Place: Northwest Herald, Crystal Lake, Jeff Arnold, Maureen Lynch. Club Life Volleyball. An excellent, well-planned, well-executed series

Second Place: Sauk Valley Media, Sterling, Christopher Heimerman. Natural Selection; Manufacturing Iron; Six Angry Teens; You Can Do It. The author's passion about the topic is evident in the work.

Third Place: Northwest Herald, Crystal Lake, Chris Burrows. Softball Masks. Good reporting on a topic that should be of concern to all youth/high school softball players.

Honorable Mention: Kane County Chronicle, St. Charles, Kevin Druley. Almora seizes center stage.

Division F

First Place: Chicago Tribune, Jared Hopkins and Philip Hersh. Cracks in the ice. An extremely well-researched, fact-based piece that examined speed skating's numerous problems.

Second Place: Chicago Tribune, Steve Rosenbloom. 17 Seconds. A highly entertaining read, recounting the events almost by the millisecond.

Third Place: Chicago Sun-Times, Eli Kaberon. "A fighter to the end — the death and life of Omar Henry" by Eli Kaberon'. A great read about a real up-and-comer, with just the right touch of first-person interjection by the writer, who had known Henry since middle school.

Honorable Mention: Chicago Tribune, Paul Sullivan. The endangered ballhawks of Wrigley Field. A great exploration of an interesting topic literally beyond the walls of the friendly confines.

CLASS 11 ENTERPRISE/FEATURE WRITING

Division A

First Place: Elburn Herald, Cheryl Borrowdale. Mallard Point still an issue of contention for

Geary. A good in-depth report that tells the entire story, including both parties' side. Despite length, the story was concise.

Second Place: Elburn Herald, Susan O'Neill. Elburn mourns joyful teen.

Third Place: West Chicago Suburban Life, Mary Beth Versaci. D-33, community partners 'go together' for West Chicago families.

Honorable Mention: Woodford County Journal, Eureka, Cheryl Wolfe. Committee helps flood victims.

Division B

First Place: Lake County Suburban Life, Grayslake, Cassandra Dowell. Once homeless, now in apartment of her own. Great reporting, coupled with flawless writing, made this a winner in an incredibly tough category.

Second Place: Lake County Suburban Life, Grayslake, Cassandra Dowell. Coal today, coal tomorrow? .

Third Place: Riverside-Brookfield Landmark, Bob Uphues. Controversial ex-doc rents space for office.

Honorable Mention: Bureau County Republican, Princeton, Goldie Currie. White Trash Peg.

Division C

First Place: Illinois Times, Springfield, Bruce Rushton. Keeping it real. Fascinating read about a longtime community activist and how he got his start. I imagine for many listeners of his underground show, they learned something new about the man behind the voice. Really good details and weaving in the history without it being boring.

Second Place: Illinois Times, Springfield, Patrick Yeagle. Gunning for change. Very thorough report on debate of conceal carry laws. The writer carefully explored both sides of the issue, not just with lawmakers, but with the real people it would affect.

Third Place: Austin Weekly News, Chicago, Esther Bergdahl. Hope Manor eyes South Side expansion. Well organized and good number of sources and stats to back up a growing problem across the country.

Honorable Mention: Austin Weekly News, Chicago, Tiffany Wilson. Rebuilding trust, healing tensions. Good way to illustrate police mistrust with experiences of real people. Interesting that the police wouldn't comment.

Division D

First Place: The Register-Mail, Galesburg, Joe Ward. New Immigrants - Destination America. The hard work to get immigrants to talk to the reporter paid off. The reports tell the story of a pocket of the community, one that other residents likely didn't know about. I imagine they didn't know the challenges and struggles these new immigrants have encountered, which were well illustrated by the families the reporter spoke with.

Second Place: The Register-Mail, Galesburg, Ariel Cheung. Who was Jane Doe?. Fascinating story about a cold case with an unusual twist. Good job with getting family members and law enforcement to talk in what appears to be a tight turnaround. Makes me wonder what happened next.

Third Place: The Register-Mail, Galesburg, Allison Goodrich. International Adoptions - A family journey. It's clear a lot of work was put into telling the stories of these three families, putting a face on the long struggles to add children to one's families. Good variety of families and their particular circumstances. I imagine readers were interested in learning the outcomes of their respected journeys.

Honorable Mention: The Register-Mail, Galesburg, Allison Goodrich. Grave concerns. Very thorough report on an industry and trend most don't think about -- until they have to. Good job humanizing the stories by talking to families who have used both burial and cremation options. Stories were well organized and covered all aspects of the issue.

Division E

First Place: Northwest Herald, Crystal Lake, Jim Dallke. Fighting a culture of sexual violence. Great lede in, pull quotes and mix of detail and statistics in top of story. Really painted a full picture of a national issue.

Second Place: Quincy Herald-Whig, Maggie Menderski. Hayden's Homecoming. Great detail and narrative. Endearing but not exaggerating. Good balance of the family narrative and technical reporting on the medical aspect.

Third Place: The Times, Ottawa, Jerrilyn Zavada. Questing for God. Well reported. Good detail. Illuminating.

Honorable Mention: The Southern Illinoisan, Carbondale, Becky Malkovich. Poor Farms. Good detail. Illuminating. Relevant subject matter for locals and those from outside immediate area. Could have used more detail and narrative in the top of the story.

Division F

First Place: Chicago Tribune, Jennifer Delgado, Bridget Doyle, Mary Schmich. Hadiya's Friends. Great narrative and deep reporting.

Second Place: Belleville News-Democrat, Mike Fitzgerald. Brandon Cyr. Good balance of narrative and relevant reporting.

Third Place: The Pantagraph, Bloomington, Paul Swiech. Love means never letting go. Good narrative detail that doesn't shy away.

Honorable Mention: Rockford Register Star, Dorothy Schneider. Under the gun. Good narrative detail balanced with firm reporting and statistics. Great additions to story through map and by-the-numbers infoboxes.

CLASS 12 FEATURE WRITING

Division A

First Place: Forest Park Review, Jean Lotus. "The dive bar concept is dead": Owner says 'old man bars' out of style in Forest Park. The writer elegantly and perfectly describes a not-so-elegant topic: dive bars. A very interesting look at how the scene has changed over the years for these businesses.

Second Place: Forest Park Review, Jean Lotus. Goddesses of light: Special effects artist creates portraits using early photo techniques. This writer has a flair for crisp, makes-you-feel-like-you're-there

description. The bit about the Derby girls was a great way to further illustrate light photography for the reader.

Third Place: The Braidwood Journal, Marney Simon. Southland Slashers: Health on wheels. I was hooked from the beginning -- what a way to start. The writer took some risks with this one, and they paid off.

Honorable Mention: Geneseo Republic, Lisa Depies. Legally blind GHS grad lands job at Facebook. A great story about a man who overcame his own limitations to find success.

Division B

First Place: Riverside-Brookfield Landmark, Bob Uphues. A walk through hell. "Wow" was the only thing I could say after reading this. I was hooked from start to finish. The writer not only has a firm grasp on the English language but knows how to eloquently weave words to create a truly extraordinary story.

Second Place: Skokie Review, Mike Isaacs. 'No Place on Earth' sheds light on Holocaust survivors' cave dwellings. This beautifully-written story brought tears to my eyes. The writer's ability to tell a story is spot-on. An obvious winner.

Third Place: Rantoul Press, Dave Hinton. Keepers of the dad. What a unique and interesting topic. Thorough reporting. Well done.

Honorable Mention: The Enterprise, Plainfield, Suzanne Baker. In a league of her own. A fun story with a great start. Intriguing from the very beginning.

Division C

First Place: Illinois Times, Springfield, Scott Faingold. What makes The Whip Guy™ crack?. The writer did a wonderful job telling this man's story. I stayed interested throughout the entire piece and loved hearing how his "act" has evolved.

Second Place: Wednesday Journal of Oak Park & River Forest Group, Ken Trainor. Heaven blessed. I really enjoyed reading about this young man. Would love to hear him sing!

Third Place: Wednesday Journal of Oak Park & River Forest Group, Tom Holmes. Julie Harley profile. What a touching story, told by someone who truly understands.

Honorable Mention: Downers Grove Suburban Life, Ed McMenam. Downers Grove North finds inspiration in homecoming queen with Down syndrome. What a sweet story. Good job!

Division D

First Place: Breeze-Courier, Taylorville, Doug Brady. The winds of heaven came bearing a gift. This is the story I will remember and the one I will share with my family. The writer had a very special story to tell and told it well. I don't mind admitting that I cried when I read it.

Second Place: Daily Leader, Pontiac, Lois Westermeyer. A walk to remember. Well-written story about a special young man.

Third Place: Daily Chronicle, DeKalb, Ross Jacobson. "Commit to the 'Syco Ward' ". I love reading positive stories about teens. Good job telling their story.

Honorable Mention: Chicago Daily Law Bulletin, Jerry Crimmins. Time is on their side. What a nice story. I enjoyed reading about this turn-of-events for these men.

Division E

First Place: Quincy Herald-Whig, Edward Husar. Barbershop Duet. Superior photo layout invited reader, and sharp writing kept reader interested to the end. Good use of humor, and wonderful photos led to a warm feeling while reading. Photo editor should get a pat on the back.

Second Place: The Daily Journal, Kankakee, Lee Provost. Little girl says she has nine lives. The short feature pulled at the heartstrings, as designed, and the writer captured the bewilderment of a youngster and her mother. The photo of them crying was the top piece of the cake. The story led to idea for my newspaper to seek young people for features in August, leading to National Cancer Awareness Week for children.

Third Place: Northwest Herald, Crystal Lake, Jami Kunzer. State of Georgia. Interesting story about teenager who is determined to make a name for herself nationally. Good description of what gives her the drive for accomplishment. The story makes the reader appreciate bluegrass and the fiddle.

Honorable Mention: Northwest Herald, Crystal Lake, Jami Kunzer. Small Steps. The story told of the wonderful idea of how to enhance the lives of children who suffer from health problems, and bring a ray of sunshine into their lives, and the lives of dance studio owners and readers. Good writing and good photos.

Division F

First Place: Journal Star, Peoria, Phil Luciano. 60-year Mystery. Intriguing story with plenty of superior description of the 1950s and 1960s. It's almost as if the writer was there. When he started to write about the disappearance, he didn't just skim the top, he, too, dug into it, and the result was a story that keeps the reader going through the many paragraphs. Superior work.

Second Place: Journal Star, Peoria, Steve Tarter. Finding a hidden gem. What happened to the mural? It'd be a crime not to know. Headline got reader into story, and that's what it's all about.

Third Place: The Rock Island Argus, Staff. 24 hour census logs plants, animals in Milan Bottoms. Great coverage by entire staff of an unusual event that educated the staff and the readers. Crisp writing kept reader going to see what was found next. As an amateur birder, the judge was delighted to read about the effort and will take the event in Illinois as an example of what can be done in his own community. Thank you!

Honorable Mention: The State Journal-Register, Springfield, Tamara Browning. Spiritual warfare/U-Turn (P1, jump page & Heartland section). Story makes you want to help. Every community has the homeless, and only a few people, with the patience of Job, can deal with those who have fallen prey to alcohol and drugs. Good photos.

CLASS 13 ORIGINAL COLUMN

Division A

First Place: Forest Park Review, Sharon Daly. Original columns by Sharon Daly. Willing to take on issues with a strong voice.

Second Place: Forest Park Review, Tom Holmes. Tom Holmes original column.

Third Place: The Navigator & Journal-Register, Albion, Duane Crays. Original columns by Duane Crays.

Honorable Mention: Forest Park Review, John Rice. Original Column John Rice.

Division B

First Place: Des Plaines Journal, Todd Wessell. Off The Record by Todd Wessell. Columns were engaging and well-written, but most of all they brought a strong perspective on local issues. Nicely done.

Second Place: The Galena Gazette, P. Carter Newton. Publisher's notebook.

Third Place: Morton Times-News, Adam Larck. Tunnel closing ushers in change in tradition, 'It's gone', 'The memories remain'.

Honorable Mention: Kendall County Record, Yorkville, Tony Scott. Interjections: marriage equality, national cat day, attorney general.

Division C

First Place: Illinois Times, Springfield, Bruce Rushton. Who you gonna call?. Conduct the public's business, Mr. Mayor and Aldermen, in public ... or I'll sue you. A great column on behalf of government for the people, by the people and of the people. And then there's Shredgate; and finally an attorney general and, apparently, a Fourth Estate that neither know sunshine from a cloudy day. Bruce Rushton is a watchdog with a bite, and when this journalist senses corruption, he's not afraid to expose it for what it is and hold 'em accountable. Congratulations, Mr. Rushton.

Second Place: Wednesday Journal of Oak Park & River Forest Group, Ken Trainor. Three columns by Ken Trainor. From George Zimmerman, the goof, among irresponsible gun owners to love as a common denominator whether gay or straight to a touching and most insightful column on the birth of two grandsons that warmed a grandfather's heart ... Ken Trainor is a columnist to be reckoned with, and a gift to his readers.

Third Place: Wednesday Journal of Oak Park & River Forest Group, Jack Crowe. Three columns by Jack Crowe. So, you lost out in the municipal election, congratulations you lucky dog. Witty and charming and insightful. All is well on the el, unless your are blind with a pit bull. Cute. Keeping the politicians honest in Springfield Hell, and a column told well by Jack Crowe, a wordsmith in all his entries.

Honorable Mention: Wednesday Journal of Oak Park & River Forest Group, Dan Haley. Three columns by Dan Haley. Dan Haley takes readers back to the integration of Oak Park, with memories galore. He bares his soul about Mariah, his daughter struggling with mental health issues, and holds nothing back. Finally, a publisher turns juror in a murder trial, and Dan Haley skillfully helps us become a juror, too, in deciding a verdict. Nice writer.

Division D

First Place: The Register-Mail, Galesburg, Tom Loewy. Tom Loewy columns. Tom Lowey is a storyteller, and tells the story of a 7-year-old's tragic death with compassion - from being with a mother, grandmother, aunt, relatives ... until the youngster is laid to rest. He further tells us of the grieving neighbor ... a mother of equal lament. There's more to just writing as a columnist. You have to listen,

observe, ask the questions, relay the words ... and Tom Loewy does it well for his readers and his community. Well done, Mr. Loewy.

Second Place: Pekin Daily Times, Amy Gehrt. "Gun debate full of loaded questions". Amy Gehrt is a sound writer ... and she captured my heart with her tender story of Sosa, the pet she loved. She writes that one with heart, and should write more of them. She writes clean and makes her points, although a bit lengthy. Her column on Sosa made me cry ... and touching reader emotions is the sign of a good columnist.

Third Place: Pekin Daily Times, Michelle Teheux. Not-so-good changes coming to town. Michelle Teheux selected good subject material, but none better than her take on breast cancer, which this judge often has written about. Nice work in explaining breast history in women ... from youth, with some tongue-in-cheek humor, to those moments when breast cancer rears its ugly head in women.

Honorable Mention: Robinson Daily News, Greg Bilbrey. Signs of Life column. Greg Bilbrey is a wordsmith, and clearly the better wordsmith of all category entries. He has a way with words and knows how to turn a phrase. He doesn't just talk to his reader; he talks with them. Really, really like his style. He should devote his writing talents to serious subjects, too, and Illinois Press Association awards will come his way by the scores.

Division E

First Place: The Daily Journal, Kankakee, Rachael Reynolds-Soucie. A collection of Rachael Reynolds-Soucie's columns. Love, love, love your humor

Second Place: The Times, Ottawa, Angela Accomando. National What? Month. Love your humor

Third Place: Quincy Herald-Whig, David Adam. David Adam columns on Quincy schools/class reunion/moving out. I like your style and human interest on your personal experiences...good job

Honorable Mention: Northwest Herald, Crystal Lake, Mike Penkava. Mike Penkava Columns. Good humorous columns that are personal...

Division F

First Place: Chicago Sun-Times, John W. Fountain. John W. Fountain — a selection of 3 columns. Love your personal touch to your columns

Second Place: Belleville News-Democrat, Pat Kuhl. Pat Kuhl's columns. Like your writing about real life.

Third Place: Chicago Sun-Times, Neil Steinberg. Neil Steinberg — a selection of 3 columns. nice job

Honorable Mention: Chicago Tribune, Rex W. Huppke. Rex W. Huppke columns. good work

CLASS 14 SPORTS COLUMN

Division A

First Place: Woodford County Journal, Eureka, Jeff Wiseman. Sports Column. The Craig Gerdes column is the best piece of writing in this group, a nice tribute to a person who is clearly a legend in that community. I enjoyed learning more about him.

Second Place: Mahomet Citizen, Terry Greene. From the Press Box. Always great to be reminded about life in sports beyond the play by play and the box scores. Well-captured in this style of writing.

Third Place: Paxton Record, Andrew Rosten. The Great Rostradamus. Enjoyed the golf outing column quite a bit. Humor is a place where columnists don't go nearly as often as they used to.

Honorable Mention: The Cass County Star-Gazette, Beardstown, Don Chipman for The Cass County Star Gazette . Chip's Corner by Don Chipman.

Division B

First Place: The Journal-News, Hillsboro, Kyle Herschelman. Center and Guard. Three good entries in this category, but liked revealing the story behind the story of someone everyone locally sees on the sidelines during games.

Second Place: Bureau County Republican, Princeton, Kevin Hieronymus. Sports column. Liked the variety of stories and relating the tornado experiences of natives that moved into that part of the state.

Third Place: The Reporter, Hickory Hills, Ken Karrson. Bartosh.

Division C

First Place: Wednesday Journal of Oak Park & River Forest Group, Marty Farmer. Nothing Lasts Forever. Really enjoyed how the writer took the time to relate two events that all involved people in his community. Appreciate the effort of trying to go beyond box scores as well.

Second Place: Jersey County Journal, Jerseyville, Sam Elliott. The Sam Antics. Good recap of local events by the writer.

Division D

First Place: The Register-Mail, Galesburg, Matthew Wheaton. Matthew Wheaton columns.

Second Place: Daily Chronicle, DeKalb, Ross Jacobson. Views.

Third Place: Daily Chronicle, DeKalb, Steve Nitz. Views.

Honorable Mention: The Register-Mail, Galesburg, Mike Trueblood. Mike Trueblood columns.

Division E

First Place: Quincy Herald-Whig, Matt Schuckman. Matt Schuckman columns on Jack Cornell/Sean Taylor/Luke Guthrie.

Second Place: La Salle NewsTribune, Jared Bell. With the first pick...

Third Place: Kane County Chronicle, St. Charles, Kevin Druley. Kevin Druley sports columns.

Honorable Mention: Kane County Chronicle, St. Charles, Jay Schwab. Jay Schwab sports column.

Division F

First Place: Belleville News-Democrat, Joe Ostermeier. Sports columns by Joe Ostermeier.

Second Place: Chicago Tribune, Philip Hersh. 1. U.S. stance calls out Putin, IOC 2. The One, 3. Surreal voyage into OT.

Third Place: Chicago Sun-Times, Rick Telander. A selection of 3 sports columns by Rick Telander of the Chicago Sun-Times.

Honorable Mention: The State Journal-Register, Springfield, Jim Ruppert. Sveum; Zanot; UIScity.

CLASS 15 PHOTO SERIES

Division A

First Place: The Cairo Citizen, Isaac Smith. Her Turn.

Second Place: Beecher City Journal, PJ Ryan. Stew-Stras Volleyball Comets State Runner Up.

Third Place: Beecher City Journal, If More than 3 names type: Staff. CHBC Lady Hornets Win 4th In State.

Honorable Mention: The Hoopston Chronicle, Jordan Crook. Massive fire engulfs Hoopston factory.

Division B

First Place: Metropolis Planet, Clyde Wills & Terra Temple. Brookport Tornado Aerial Photos.

Second Place: The Leader, St. Joseph-Union, Vandalia, Dave Bell, Rich Bauer. Band Fundraiser.

Third Place: Washington Times-Reporter, Marlo Guetersloh. Washington Tornado 2013.

Honorable Mention: The Reporter, Hickory Hills, Jeff Vorva. We won! Who me? We won!.

Division C

First Place: Wednesday Journal of Oak Park & River Forest Group, David Pierini. Pushing the Envelop. An excellent set of images, well composed and edited into a clean narrative.

Second Place: Wednesday Journal of Oak Park & River Forest Group, David Pierini. Starting Fresh. Good access was key to this story, telling moments and a compassionate photographer made for a nice package.

Third Place: Austin Weekly News, Chicago, David Pierini. Under the tent with Inspirational Deliverance Center. A nice collection of images that gives a good overall picture of the event.

Division D

First Place: Daily Chronicle, DeKalb, Monica Maschak. Championship thrills. Good moments and good picture editing made this an easy first place choice.

Second Place: The Register-Mail, Galesburg, Steven Davis, John Williams. Downpour. Good images showing the devastation and response to the flood.

Third Place: McDonough County Voice, Macomb, Jackie Smith. Those were the Days. A good collection of images with a few really nice moments.

Division E

First Place: Quincy Herald-Whig, Phil Carlson. An Independent Spirit. Inspirational!

Second Place: Quincy Herald-Whig, Phil Carlson. Barbershop Duet. Very nice pictures, having photographed these type stories before myself, I know how hard it is to avoid having a picture of yourself taking pictures in the mirror.

Third Place: Quincy Herald-Whig, Phil Carlson. Hayden's Homecoming. Raw emotional images!

Honorable Mention: Effingham Daily News, Chet Piotrowski Jr.. Willow Long vigil. Nice job on a difficult assignment.

Division F

First Place: Journal Star, Peoria, Photo Staff. Autumn twister. Excellent coverage of a devastating natural disaster, I could tell the crew worked incredibly hard day after day to bring the story to life for the reader! Awesome Job!

Second Place: The Pantagraph, Bloomington, David Proeber. Overcoming Cleft Palate. Nice job with a powerful story! Great selection of pictures that told the story of this child's struggles.

Third Place: Journal Star, Peoria, Photo staff. Spring flood. Outstanding photo package.

Honorable Mention: Herald & Review, Decatur, Danny Damiani. Make 'em Smile. Cool feature, I love the variety of images used to tell this story.

CLASS 16 SPOT NEWS PHOTO

Division A

First Place: The County Star, Tolono, Christine Walsh. Grain bin accident. This is a really nice moment caught by the photographer, a clear standout in the category. A tighter crop on the bottom would have made it even better.

Second Place: The Courier, Carterville, William Bateman. Corbell Fire 2. Best of the fire pictures. Nice composition and framing.

Third Place: The Pinckneyville Press, Jeff Egbert. Emergency Responders Hurry to the Scene. Photo of a unique crash situation that has a sense of urgency, nice job.

Honorable Mention: Elburn Herald, Kimberly Anderson. Elburn mourns joyful teen. Very nice moment, but suffered from too loose of a crop.

Division B

First Place: Oregon Republican Reporter, Earleen Hinton. Overturned semi. Very nice photo of an odd crash situation. A clear standout in the category.

Second Place: Bureau County Republican, Princeton, Terri Simon. After the blaze. A nice quiet photo from a fire scene. This photo proves you don't always have to have flames to make a nice fire picture. A caption might have bumped this photo to first.

Third Place: Rantoul Press, Jessie Starkey. Gifford tornado photo. This is a nicely composed photo of a very tense moment. The toning is slightly overdone compared to the page pdf that was included for judging.

Honorable Mention: The Galena Gazette, Jay Dickerson. Hill street fire. This is a well composed photo from a fire scene. The photo suffers from not having a caption and toning could have been better.

Division C

First Place: Jersey County Journal, Jerseyville, Robert Lyons. Pilot uninjured in plane crash. Plane crashes can be extremely hard to get to at times and I give the photographer credit for the hustle.

Second Place: Jersey County Journal, Jerseyville, Robert Lyons. Rollover claims life of driver. That the wreck was a fatal one elevates this picture. The tightness of the crop is good and makes for an easily displayed picture in the newspaper and I am sure it had high impact online as well. Good job by the photographer in getting necessary information for cutline as well.

Third Place: Downers Grove Suburban Life, Bill Ackerman. Canoeing through floodwaters. This shot tells the story well and that the photographer showed the roadway in the foreground made it clear that this is supposed to be a street and not a pond.

Honorable Mention: Downers Grove Suburban Life, Lorae Mundt. Checking on ducklings. This is a nice moment, but just needs one thing...a duckling.

Division D

First Place: Daily Leader, Pontiac, Joy Butler. Rescued dog. One could not have gotten a more timely moment from this scene. Kudos to photographer for getting there and for this nicely framed shot.

Second Place: The Register-Mail, Galesburg, Steven Davis. Overturn on I74. The essence of spot news is getting there. This photographer captured the excitement of the moment in a smartly framed image.

Third Place: The Register-Mail, Galesburg, John Williams. Disbelief. Great reaction from the man next to the car. It makes the shot.

Honorable Mention: Pekin Daily Times, Josh Bradshaw. Tornado Rubble. This shot could have easily been first place if the photographer had found a person amid the rubble, an official, a bystander, a dog, a cat, anybody. But while it is a striking picture, it needs a human component. It is a sad, sad scene, though and credit goes to the photographer for getting in to the path of destruction to make this picture.

Division E

First Place: Quincy Herald-Whig, Michael Kipley. A Break with Buster. Wonderful moment and composition showing a more feature style image of the aftermath of flooding. The eyes easily from left to right starting with the police car, the high water, the broom and shovels, the old man waving and finally the dog. Well done.

Second Place: The News-Gazette, Champaign, Robin Scholz. Inside Out. Nice composition of the woman sitting in the bottom right corner with the destruction of her home all around her. The dried blood on her nose and the look in her eyes tell the personal story of tragedy.

Third Place: Northwest Herald, Crystal Lake, Sarah Nader. Home Burned. Nice reaction shot of the three girls watching the home burn.

Honorable Mention: Quincy Herald-Whig, Phil Carlson. Hannibal Windstorm. Nice moment showing the man dwarfed by the destruction of the gallery. The composition and exposure is well thought out.

Division F

First Place: Belleville News-Democrat, Zia Nizami. Drowning grief. Wonderful composition of a tragic moment. The woman with the young girl is powerful in itself, however with the addition of the figures holding each other in the background, the photo's power is taken to the next level.

Second Place: The Rock Island Argus, Todd Welvaert. Downtown devastation. A dramatic image of what remains after the fire was brought under control. The orange glow of hot spots contrast deeply against the cool white flashlight and the silhouette of the fireman.

Third Place: The Rock Island Argus, Paul Colletti. Washington wiped out. Strong telephoto shot of people combing through the rubble of what was once their homes.

Honorable Mention: The Pantagraph, Bloomington, David Proeber. Rescue from Hell. Nice capture of firefighters saving an unconscious woman from a burning home.

CLASS 17 GENERAL NEWS PHOTO

Division A

First Place: The Free Press Advocate, Eric Fisher. A moment to remember.

Second Place: The Woodstock Independent, Ken Farver. St. Baldrick's Day. Nice moment from a potentially mundane assignment.

Third Place: The Courier, Carterville, William Bateman. Dear Santa.

Honorable Mention: The Cairo Citizen, George Lamboley. A Family's Embrace. Nice emotion although a tighter shot may have been stronger.

Division B

First Place: Mason County Democrat, Havana, Bob Martin, Wendy Martin. Bruce Smith Of Kansas. Nice peak moment!

Second Place: Mason County Democrat, Havana, Bob Martin, Wendy Martin. An Unexpected Vocal Expression.

Third Place: Ledger-Sentinel, Oswego, Steven Buyansky. Chukkers for Charity victory champagne.

Division C

First Place: The MidWeek, DeKalb, Curtis Clegg. Retiring the flag. A nicely lit quiet moment caught as the two Boy Scouts lower a flag at a retirement ceremony.

Second Place: The MidWeek, DeKalb, Curtis Clegg. Roses for veterans. It might be his first Veteran's Day ceremony but I don't think it will be his last.

Third Place: Downers Grove Suburban Life, Bill Ackerman. At odds over gay marriage. Good capture of The Times, Ottawa as a supporter, (State Rep. Ron Sandack,) is shouted down by anti-gay marriage protesters.

Division D

First Place: Pekin Daily Times, Josh Bradshaw. School Carnival. A nice moment. Lots of facial excitement and animation from the little boy to the teacher and all of the happy faces in the background cheering on their school carnival.

Second Place: The Register-Mail, Galesburg, Steven Davis. Vigil for Boofer. A quiet moment between friends and the father of an accidental death of his son. Nicely lit.

Third Place: Robinson Daily News, Randy Harrison. Too much excitement. Not what you usually expect of a 4th of July Parade, but sometimes you just can't fight the humming of the tractor's engine and give in for a nap. Good find, different.

Division E

First Place: Northwest Herald, Crystal Lake, Lathan Goumas. Rained On. Composition and timing really set the image apart. Great split background, lining of umbrellas, rain fall and the expressions.

Second Place: Northwest Herald, Crystal Lake, H. Rick Bamman. Palm Burning Cross. The image makes a strong statement and the composition is key. Timing with the flame creates true religious influence.

Third Place: Northwest Herald, Crystal Lake, Sarah Nader. Pony Tail Surprise. Perfect moment and expression. Great use of depth of field with the hand and hair. Really demonstrates what the story is about.

Honorable Mention: Sauk Valley Media, Sterling, Alex T. Paschal. Smile. The composition has nice movement beginning at the older gentlemen leading you up to the girl who is bursting with expression. Very sweet moment.

Division F

First Place: Chicago Sun-Times, Jessica Koscielniak. 'Tornado's path of destruction'. Perfect way to show the whole devastation of an area. Clear cut tornado line really helps put it into perspective.

Second Place: The Pantagraph, Bloomington, David Proeber. Honor a fallen firefighter. Ariel view really shows the support and the importance of the moment.

Third Place: Rockford Register Star, Brent Lewis. Burpee Museum Flood. What a unique photo. Love the completely filled, busy composition and the slight weirdness of the image.

Honorable Mention: The State Journal-Register, Springfield, Ted Schurter. Legislative Muscle. Always a nice moment when you can catch a politician goofing off. Good eye and quick response.

CLASS 18 FEATURE PHOTO

Division A

First Place: Elburn Herald, Mary Paulson. Homecoming. This photo has excellent composition, it tells a story and it evokes emotion. When I look at it, I can almost feel the joy of the Knights' victory. It's a unique approach to the shooting the homecoming game, and it's definitely a subject of local interest. Fantastic work!

Second Place: The Courier, Carterville, William Bateman. Fireworks. Shooting fireworks takes a great amount of skill, and it also takes being there at the right moment. I like that the photographer incorporated people into the shot because that's what fireworks are all about—sitting back and watching the show. Excellent work.

Third Place: The Cairo Citizen, Isaac Smith. Fun in the Floodwater. There were a lot of flood photos in this lot, but this one stood out. Not only does it show the water level, but it shows the

very human reaction of a child. It's a unique perspective, and it's a good quality photo. If it had been a tighter crop (to a vertical shot) and shown a little more of the boy's face, it would have placed higher.

Honorable Mention: West Chicago Suburban Life, Mark Busch. Despicalimp is watching. This photo immediately caught my eye, and I kept going back to it, which I think is important. The composition is great; it does look as if Despicalimp is watching the man work. While there are some fantastic photos in this group, this one stood out because of the uniqueness of the subject. You won't see this same shot just anywhere.

Division B

First Place: Bureau County Republican, Princeton, Mike Vaughn. Fun at the fair.

Second Place: Bureau County Republican, Princeton, Becky Kramer. Pretty in puddles. Beautiful photo. I love the emotion in the girls' faces.

Third Place: Berwyn Suburban Life, Sarah Minor. Dancers on parade. I love this photo. There is a lot of energy and movement in this photos, and it has great color and composition.

Honorable Mention: Oregon Republican Reporter, Chris Johnson. Tug of War. This is a great pic. The men's faces tells the story.

Division C

First Place: Wednesday Journal of Oak Park & River Forest Group, David Pierini. On your mark.

Second Place: The MidWeek, DeKalb, Doug Oleson. Flowers for Mom.

Third Place: Wednesday Journal of Oak Park & River Forest Group, David Pierini. First bite.

Honorable Mention: Wednesday Journal of Oak Park & River Forest Group, David Pierini. Horseradish.

Division D

First Place: The Register-Mail, Galesburg, Steven Davis. Airborne. Really nice shot and great cropping!!

Second Place: Daily Chronicle, DeKalb, Rob Winner. Cowboy target practice. Great shot!

Third Place: Pekin Daily Times, Josh Bradshaw. Hydrant flushing.

Honorable Mention: Robinson Daily News, Tom Compton. Fest fireworks.

Division E

First Place: The Times, Ottawa, Doug Larson. Exploding Snowball. Great timing and technically sound. A nice clean composition that instantly draws you into the subject matter. Well done.

Second Place: The Times, Ottawa, Tom Sistak. Stepping Lightly. Artistic and unexpected. Well done.

Third Place: Quincy Herald-Whig, Michael Kiple. Pedal Power. Great job following your subject closely to capture that great expression.

Honorable Mention: The News-Gazette, Champaign, Rick Danzl. Out of the Blue. Not your typical feature! Nice selection of a clean landscape to use as the background to capture this colorful storm. Good job.

Division F

First Place: Herald & Review, Decatur, Jim Bowling. Baptism Embrace. Wonderful moment. Nice demonstration of editing. Well done.

Second Place: Herald & Review, Decatur, Danny Damiani. Arts in the Park. Great way to capture the routine and make it memorable. Nice job.

Third Place: The Pantagraph, Bloomington, David Proeber. Icing on the antennas. This photographer demonstrates good editing and a great eye for composition.

Honorable Mention: Journal Star, Peoria, David Zalaznik. Redneck fishing. Lots of descriptive information in this photo.

CLASS 19 PERSONALITY PORTRAIT

Division A

First Place: The Woodstock Independent, Ken Farver. Monk Bhante Sujatha. Very nice composition and lighting in this photo. Plus, I really get a sense of this man's serenity and joy.

Second Place: The Woodstock Independent, Ken Farver. WWII vet. A very successful photo that does communicate something about a person without showing his face. Not the easiest thing. Unorthodox but effective.

Third Place: The Pinckneyville Press, Joseph Kosma. Taking Watch. Really cute, love this little guy. Definitely expresses a sense of what it's like to be a kid.

Honorable Mention: The Pinckneyville Press, Jeff Egbert. And That Night a Forest Grew. Love this guy's gentle expression and the bright greens surrounding him. A little washed out at the top but other than that a fine photo

Division B

First Place: The Journal-News, Hillsboro, Pavel Slepicka. Pete Moyer To Go For Another Record In Birthday Performance. I love that this photo manages to capture both the cockiness and goofiness of this young man. The double circles (ball and hoop) are a nice touch, and the Abe Lincoln statue is just random enough to work.

Second Place: Bureau County Republican, Princeton, Mike Vaughn. Remembering when Beautiful photo, you really get a sense that this is a tough-minded little girl, like Scout from "To Kill a Mockingbird"

Third Place: Bureau County Republican, Princeton, Daniel Acker. An inaugural view. Only the eyes are visible, but this photo still manages to convey a lot of pride -- in her president and her fashion sense. Great shot.

Honorable Mention: The Journal-News, Hillsboro, Pavel Slepicka. HHS Invaded By The Harlem Shake. Just a really fun photo, really captured the exuberance of these kids.

Division C

First Place: The MidWeek, DeKalb, Dana Herra. A mother fights heroin. A very emotional photo. Really captures this woman's sadness and her quest to make her son's death mean something. Powerful.

Second Place: Wednesday Journal of Oak Park & River Forest Group, David Pierini. Thinking back. Very emotional photo, really captures a sense of sadness and mourning. Great composition with the umbrellas and the expression on the vet's face is just heartbreaking.

Third Place: Wednesday Journal of Oak Park & River Forest Group, David Pierini. One of a kind. Love the look of determination mixed with a little bit of nervousness. The expression (and the Band-aid on the knee) really convey the sense of a scrappy little girl.

Honorable Mention: Downers Grove Suburban Life, Bill Ackerman. A tasty hot dog. Cute kid, like the composition with the ketchup in the background. Love the hair.

Division D

First Place: Daily Chronicle, DeKalb, Rob Winner. Veteran of the month. I laughed out loud when I saw this. What a moment, what an expression! Nice work.

Second Place: Daily Chronicle, DeKalb, Monica Maschak. GOP cheerleader. Very well framed, fantastic angle. Her expression, the way she looms over the camera, the sky in the background all combine to make one feel they are present in the photo. And I really love how they are all looking at something different!

Third Place: Daily Chronicle, DeKalb, Rob Winner. The graduate. I really like the contrast of the young girl, between youth and adulthood, making an excitedly silly face in front of all the more serious middle-aged faces behind her.

Honorable Mention: Daily Leader, Pontiac, Joy Butler. A walk to remember. There's something about the way he is turned with his artificial leg sitting to his right that tells the story of his leaving his leg behind. How poignant.

Division E

First Place: La Salle NewsTribune, Scott Anderson. Ottawa pirate. Wow. This photo is imaginative, surreal, uses light -- in the sky, in the boat, on the water-- exceptionally well, and amusing when you see how the football shirt stands out in the setting. Before reading the photos description, I pretty much knew what the story was about and what the school's nickname was.

Second Place: Sauk Valley Media, Sterling, Alex T. Paschal. Getting into his Work. Attention-grabbing photo. The composition is masterful and architectural; the lighting is perfect. I love that his face is partly hidden among all the tools of his trade, just as a photographer himself is not visible in his work, but his apparent intensity and attention to detail is obvious.

Third Place: Northwest Herald, Crystal Lake, Sarah Nader. Clean Shave. This photo works on so many levels. One can't help but smile at the look on his face, then upon closer inspection the juxtaposition of those large hands on top of and next to his face; the lighting and shadows... It all works.

Honorable Mention: The Times, Ottawa, Tom Sistik. Time Of His Life. Love the spacing of him and the trucks, and him looking so much bigger than than the trucks.

Division F

First Place: The State Journal-Register, Springfield, Ted Schurter. Big Band Shuffle. What a moment to capture! Obviously, this woman felt comfortable in the photographer's presence, which allowed so much personality to shine through. Her eyes and body language express pure joy and youth.

Well cropped -- love the body language of the man in the chair. Everything around her seems to still and staid, and she's living in the moment.

Second Place: The State Journal-Register, Springfield, Rich Saal. Strawberry Nehi. Brilliant. This photo is so original. The explosion of light from the Nehi, the silhouette of a man with a dance in his walk: A moment of joy in his profile of shadow and light outlined against what appears to be a very typical day on a very typical street. Very moving and delightful.

Third Place: Belleville News-Democrat, Tim Vizer. Tech Ed Crosshairs. One of the most original and striking photos I've seen. the silhouetted hands, the crosshairs on the face of one put on the spot at a tender age, the smallness of the child in contrast with the large overbearing hands, the contrast of light and dark and color, the expression on the child's face, all combine to make this a winner.

Honorable Mention: The State Journal-Register, Springfield, Rich Saal. Bomber Mission Veteran. The moment captured and the cropping really make this photo work. The expression on his face seems to combine satisfaction, wistfulness and remembrance, and the inclusion of so much of the window makes it particularly poignant.

CLASS 20 SPORTS PHOTO

Division A

First Place: The Courier, Carterville, William Bateman. Dalton Hoch 1. Tremendous shot. The timing of the shot is outstanding, what put it over the top is its importance in the event that was covered. Fantastic job!

Second Place: The Woodstock Independent, Michelle Krenger. High jump. Absolutely beautiful picture. The timing was great and the contrast of all the colors, the uniform, grass, bar and the young man's hair popped off the screen. Well done!

Third Place: Beecher City Journal, PJ Ryan. Winning Hug. Fantastic emotional shot. Very moving picture in every direction. Nicely done.

Honorable Mention: Beecher City Journal, PJ Ryan. Inside Dive. Awesome shot with great timing. Love the shadow and the toe-tips on the floor. Well done!

Division B

First Place: The Journal-News, Hillsboro, Pavel Slepicka. Big Dawg Pack Grows To 279 In Second Year. The winner should feel a huge sense of accomplishment for claiming first place in such a deep field of entries. The photographer took the viewer into the mud, which makes for a very powerful image.

Second Place: Pike Press, Pittsfield, Doug Pool. And they call the thing rodeo, A1 July 24, 2013. Very powerful and scary image. This picture has an enormous amount of depth, from the center image of the rider in danger, to the efforts of the rodeo clowns, and the expressions of concern on the faces of the other cowboys. Fantastic job.

Third Place: Republic-Times, Waterloo, John Spytek. Jump kick. Nice job with the timing of the shot. From the expression on the goalkeeper's face, to the ball being almost underneath him, to the close call with the forward. Tremendous shot for a sport that lends itself to great photography.

Honorable Mention: Bureau County Republican, Princeton, Mike Vaughn. Welcome home. Fantastic shot, but what makes this work is that the photographer has to have great anticipation for what's coming. The expressions and the timing make this one a definite winner in an incredibly deep, competitive field of entries.

Division C

First Place: Wednesday Journal of Oak Park & River Forest Group, David Pierini. Heartbreaker. Great emotion with this shot. The lighting definitely gives the "Friday Night Lights" effect. Well done!

Second Place: Downers Grove Suburban Life, Bill Ackerman. Perfect balance. Fantastic timing with this shot. The fingertips on the beam make this one special. Well done!

Third Place: Wednesday Journal of Oak Park & River Forest Group, David Pierini. Heads up. Nice use of natural lighting. Very artistic shot, definitely something the readers would appreciate.

Honorable Mention: Downers Grove Suburban Life, Matt Piechalak. Joyful moment. Love the emotion of this shot. Nice job of finding the storytelling picture in the chaos of match point.

Division D

First Place: Du Quoin Evening Call, Doug Daniels. P'ville catcher Rice showcases quick reflexes. Awesome capture of a quick moment of action that is always hard to capture. Excellent focus.

Second Place: Daily Chronicle, DeKalb, Monica Maschak. Big save. Love the expression of effort on goalie's face.

Third Place: The Register-Mail, Galesburg, Steven Davis. P'pen at third?. Interesting change of pace for a routine type of photo. The "dust storm" really makes it stand out from the norm.

Honorable Mention: Daily Chronicle, DeKalb, Kyle Bursaw. Fans of the 'Syco Ward'. Fun pic. Like the focus on kid up front.

Division E

First Place: Quincy Herald-Whig, Michael Kipley. Tears of Sadness. The tear drop is the killer here. Great capture of a great moment.

Second Place: Northwest Herald, Crystal Lake, H. Rick Bamman. Pure Joy. Excellent moment captured. Right at the end. Love it.

Third Place: The Times, Ottawa, Tom Sistik. The Cowboy Way. Something about getting facial expressions from the man, horse and calf makes this one special.

Honorable Mention: Sauk Valley Media, Sterling, Philip Marruffo. Big Win. Getting a bit of the agony, with a lot of ecstasy. Nicely framed.

Division F

First Place: Rockford Register Star, Max Gersh. Fight College. Saw this one and thought, going to be tough to beat, and it was. Excellent in every way. Love the look on his face and the sweat on his brow...

Second Place: Herald & Review, Decatur, Jim Bowling. State Track Jubilation. Lots of great emotion here. There were a bunch of celebration shots, and this one stood out.

Third Place: The State Journal-Register, Springfield, Justin L. Fowler. Turned On His Head. Definitely stood out in the sports action shots. A rare moment, perfectly snatched.

Honorable Mention: Belleville News-Democrat, Zia Nizami. Tie Down. Awesome shot. From the rope around the neck, the horse's look and the intensity in his face...

CLASS 21 EDITORIAL CARTOON

All Divisions Judged Together

First Place: Pike Press, Pittsfield, Bill Beard. Nov. 20, 2013 Editorial Cartoon. This was very simple yet had a strong message. Nicely done.

Second Place: Wednesday Journal of Oak Park & River Forest Group, Marc Stopeck. Shrubtown 121813. This one drew my attention. Well-done.

Third Place: Chicago Sun-Times, Jack Higgins. 'Paper? Or plastic?'. Very interesting take on the gun control issue.

CLASS 22 ILLUSTRATION

Division A

First Place: The Navigator & Journal-Register, Albion, Laura Green. Grayville basketball preview. Attractive design. Good color contrast helps this section front pop.

Second Place: The Woodstock Independent, Katelyn Stanek. The Fifty 50. Clean, clear, modern look. Good use of typography and color selection.

Third Place: The Navigator & Journal-Register, Albion, Laura Green. Edwards County volleyball tab cover. Images complement apparent emotional theme of section.

Honorable Mention: The Navigator & Journal-Register, Albion, Laura Green. Sectional champions.

Division B

First Place: The Galena Gazette, Mark Van Osdol. Big air!. Composite image drives this illustration. Nice action with clean background draws reader in for a closer look.

Second Place: The Joliet Bugle, Shelly Holmgren. Ventra Error. Strong play of front-page graphics makes story package stand out.

Third Place: The Galena Gazette, Jay Dickerson. Hotel motel tax receipts. Clean, simple illustration provides a quick read on figures central to story.

Honorable Mention: The Journal-News, Hillsboro, Staff. Lest We Forget.

Division D

First Place: Daily Chronicle, DeKalb, Rob Winner. Perfect day to quit. Sometimes simple is the best route. Very effective use of art.

Second Place: The Register-Mail, Galesburg, Julie Swanson-Davis. Pizza Pie (chart). A mouthwatering way to illustrate the many kinds of pizza available in town, and executed well. Good job.

Third Place: Daily Chronicle, DeKalb, Caleb West. Open market. Good illustration to get across the point of making health care choices.

Division E

First Place: Northwest Herald, Crystal Lake, Scott Helmchen. Cell phone ban. The State Highway Patrol might want to borrow this illustration to get a message across to drivers -- don't use your cellphone while driving. The chain and lock say it all. Nice work.

Second Place: The News-Gazette, Champaign, Lyncoln Delporte. Don't fret just yet. Nice illustration of dominoes falling — all but the last one, that is — reflecting the Illini season to that point. Crisp and attractive.

Third Place: Northwest Herald, Crystal Lake, Scott Helmchen. Facebook Like Dislike. The Facebook thumbs-up "like" symbol shows up in a lot of places. This illustration cleverly incorporates the thumbs (up and down) in the headline. Smart.

Honorable Mention: Northwest Herald, Crystal Lake, Scott Helmchen. Crowddout Effect - Internet usage. The increasing amount of time we spend online has crowded other things out of our lives and even our brains, a fact that this illustration captures very well. Good job.

Division F

First Place: Journal Star, Peoria, Chris Grimm. Breaking Peoria. Wow. If you're going to strut your stuff, you might as well do it full-page. This graphic about breakdancing in Peoria shows audacity and flair, as well as good organization and attention to making copy easy to read. Just as breakdancing turns dancing on its head, this layout has readers looking at the page differently. And it works — big time. Great work!

Second Place: Journal Star, Peoria, Scott Hinton. Travel Illinois. You know you're on the right track when readers do a doubletake. At first glance, this graphic looks like a nice drawing of Mount Rushmore, complete with Abe Lincoln. Then you realize it includes Obama, Reagan and could that be U.S. Grant? It's hard to imagine a more vivid or memorable way to impress readers with the fact that four presidents have called Illinois home. Clever and attractive. Love it.

Third Place: Journal Star, Peoria, Michael Anthony Noel. Dyslexia. I've read and heard a lot about dyslexia, but this illustration gave me the best understanding yet of what people with dyslexia see when they try to read. Excellent.

Honorable Mention: Journal Star, Peoria, Chris Grimm. 8-Percenters. The numbers for the state of Illinois' employees come across loud and clear in this sharp info graphic. It's bold and eye-catching, as befits the topic.

CLASS 23 INFORMATIONAL GRAPHIC

Division B

First Place: Macoupin County Enquirer-Democrat, Carlinville, Aimee Arseneaux-Payne. City seeks input for plan. Nice use of images to tell the story. Organized, easy to read, engaging. Nice use of color also. Great information for the reader

Second Place: Macoupin County Enquirer-Democrat, Carlinville, Aimee Arseneaux-Payne. Scope of the problem. A very clever way to show how the city council and the property owners don't always connect. I would have liked it better if the headline text was off the graphic. Nice job!

Third Place: The Downers Grove , Woodridge and Westmont Bugle, Shelly Holmgren. Washed up. This graphic has nice use of text and images to tell the story. I like the soft colors used in the background against bolder text and graphics layered on top. It gives the graphic a fresh modern look.

Honorable Mention: The Galena Gazette, Jay Dickerson. Hotel motel tax . A simple graphic but it tells the reader what they need to know. Using a monopoly hotel icon as the bar and adding the faded monopoly board in the background was a nice touch!

Division E

First Place: The Daily Journal, Kankakee, Staff. Troubled Assets double truck. Really informational ... interesting how the same name or family name kept appearing. Made me want to stop judging to look for the package online! This is what a newspaper is supposed to do. Well done.

Second Place: The Daily Journal, Kankakee, Kim Carpenter. Day of Destruction double truck. Really outstanding work. Not much more I can say, just really outstanding

Third Place: The Daily Journal, Kankakee, Staff. Who will replace Dwight?. As a longtime sports writer and editor, this is the kind of graphic that drives a section. Clean, crisp and lots of information. I noticed most of the schools were similar in size except Ottawa Township. Loved the mascots

Honorable Mention: Northwest Herald, Crystal Lake, Kristina Peters. Informational graphic. Nice, clean, easy-to-follow graphic that should have delivered to the reader. Kudos!

Division F

First Place: Chicago Tribune, Jemal Brinson, Ryan Haggerty. New paths to health insurance. Crammed full of information, but relatively easy to follow. An exceptional job of delivering detail on ACA in a way the reader can follow.

Second Place: Chicago Tribune, Kyle Bentle, Jonathon Berlin, Carolyn Aler. Mapping school closings. Nice detail. Really shows the clustering of some schools. Good work.

Third Place: Belleville News-Democrat, Jason Koch. Stan the Man - by the numbers. Great work and presentation. That classic reach for the ball surround by a "by the numbers" approach hit a home run with me.

Honorable Mention: Chicago Sun-Times, Max Rust. 'High octane'. Nice detail, but you missed the role the speculators and futures folks play in running up the prices

CLASS 24 SINGLE PAGE DESIGN

Division A

First Place: The Woodstock Independent, Katelyn Stanek. Woodstock Independent spread.

You built a strong spread with nothing but a lackluster handout photo. Excellent typography in the Tebo quote and smart use of white space gave the package the weight it needed that the old photo couldn't provide on its own. I wish white space wasn't trapped under the blue story lead-in, but overall, nice work.

Second Place: West Chicago Suburban Life, Dave Lemery. The West Chicago Suburban Life is your new West Chicago Press. Effective. Reflecting the actual pages inside was a small but essential detail many people would miss.

Third Place: Paxton Record, Andrew Rosten.No. 1 — Josh Wallick wins state.Good example of how text on photos should work, though your text up top could use a bit more breathing room.

Honorable Mention: The Leader, St. Joseph, Nora Maberry-Daniels. Aug. 8 Page 1. So many (too many) green circles! But I'm a sucker for a well-carried-through theme. And the cluster of photos actually works as a dominant element.

Division B

First Place: Macoupin County Enquirer-Democrat, Carlinville, Danielle Seago. Demuzio Wins. You presented a crazy amount of information on this cover. But the clean typography, smart use of reverse bars, bullets and numbers and the summary of key issues almost made me forgive your obsession with magenta. Great job.

Second Place: Riverside-Brookfield Landmark, Staff. Riverside-Brookfield High School Graduation. Strong photos captured the emotions of the even. A nice way to add punch to a list parents will keep for years.

Third Place: The Galena Gazette, Jay Dickerson. Wrapped in warmth. A dominant photo cutout done well. And the layout keeps the story from jumping unnecessarily.

Honorable Mention: Berwyn Suburban Life, Laura Mihelich. Worth the drive. Even with a few bad line breaks this was a clean, well-designed spread with a nice variety of photos. Simple but strong.

Division C

First Place: Downers Grove Suburban Life, Dave Lemery. 'We had to do something'.

Second Place: Wednesday Journal of Oak Park & River Forest Group, Staff. Momenta.

Third Place: Wednesday Journal of Oak Park & River Forest Group, Claire Innes, David Pierini. The actress next door.

Honorable Mention: Wednesday Journal of Oak Park & River Forest Group, Staff. Ghost in the Graveyard.

Division D

First Place: The Register-Mail, Galesburg, Adam McHugh. Galesburg by the slice.

Second Place: Daily Chronicle, DeKalb, Inger Koch. Rick Springfield comes to the Egyptian.

Third Place: Daily Chronicle, DeKalb, Paul Wleklinski. Heisman hype secondary to wins for Lynch.

Honorable Mention: Daily Chronicle, DeKalb, Inger Koch. Taking it to the streets.

Division E

First Place: The News-Gazette, Champaign, Jim Rossow, Mike Goebel. Devastating. Simplicity sometimes is the best approach. This front page captures the emotion and gravity of events. Great use of a quote in a headline and the three bullet heads make this design perfect for the content.

Second Place: Quincy Herald-Whig, Jason Lewton. July 14 Page 1A Flood of Memories.

Third Place: Northwest Herald, Crystal Lake, Scott Helmchen. Jori's Jams.

Honorable Mention: Northwest Herald, Crystal Lake, Caleb West. Huntley girls basketball. The concept for this page was well-planned.

Division F

First Place: Chicago Tribune, Dan Mann. Chicago Tribune design: Dan Mann. This page was creative, innovative and unafraid. The typography and space devoted to the Trestman centerpiece was appropriate and set this page apart from the rest. The use of promos across the top was functional and clean. The page entices the reader while also facilitating ease of access.

Second Place: Journal Star, Peoria, Chris Grimm. Breakdancing is alive and well.

Third Place: Journal Star, Peoria, Chris Grimm. 60 Years Still a Mystery.

Honorable Mention: Chicago Tribune, Jeff Bowen. Chicago Tribune design: Jeff Bowen.

CLASS 25 NEWSPAPER DESIGN

Division A

First Place: Forest Park Review, Lisa Armstrong, Mark Tatara. Forest Park Review May 1, 2013 and May 29, 2013. Great looking paper. Bravo.

Second Place: West Chicago Suburban Life, Staff. West Chicago Suburban Life newspaper design. Solid design and attention to details.

Third Place: The Woodstock Independent, Staff. The Woodstock Independent design. Solid design and good use of typography and design elements.

Honorable Mention: Oakland Independent, Janice Hunt. Oakland Independent (formerly Country Crossroads). Nice redesign. Very neat and orderly.

Division B

First Place: Berwyn Suburban Life, Staff. Berwyn Suburban Life newspaper design. A great looking paper that looks professionally designed. Great attention to typography, white space, insets and more. Very nice.

Second Place: Riverside-Brookfield Landmark, Staff. Landmark, May 8, 2013. Very nice, magazine-like format. Good attention to polish and details. Nice work.

Third Place: Bureau County Republican, Princeton, BCR Staff. Bureau County Republican, Princeton - Newspaper Design. This is a newspaper with personality. A few adjustments to typography can make this sing.

Honorable Mention: Suburban News Bulletin, Jack McCarthy, Brandon Bressner. staff choice for Newspaper Design contribution. A clean, inviting layout. Lack of color hurts a little, but good design and details make up for it.

Division C

First Place: Illinois Times, Springfield, STAFF. Newspaper design - Illinois Times, Springfield. striking throughout, photos, type, fonts and graphic elements balance well

Second Place: Austin Weekly News, Chicago, Claire Innes, Terry Dean. Austin Weekly News, Chicago 041013. great use of photos to convey emotion of stop the violence article, great layout throughout

Third Place: Downers Grove Suburban Life, Staff. Downers Grove Suburban Life newspaper design. consistently good layout, great balance of color, photos, type, fronts and graphics

Honorable Mention: Wednesday Journal of Oak Park & River Forest Group, Claire Innes. Election results. striking front page, good layout throughout, great use of photos, graphic elements

Division D

First Place: Pekin Daily Times, Staff. Newspaper design. great use of color, love lead photos on front, good visual balance throughout paper, excellent photos, consistency of good layout design

Second Place: Daily Chronicle, DeKalb, Staff. Daily Chronicle, DeKalb. good use of graphics, perspective in University of Northern Illinois photo, LOVE Yosemite photo, has feel of hometown paper

Third Place: The Register-Mail, Galesburg, Staff. Register-Mail Newspaper Design. Good use of type fonts, second entry more striking than first, good photos

Division E

First Place: The Southern Illinoian, Carbondale, Staff. Newspaper Design.

Second Place: Quincy Herald-Whig, Staff. Newspaper Design entry for Quincy Herald-Whig.

Third Place: The Times, Ottawa, Staff. Newspaper design: May 7 and April 20. Great flood photos.

Division F

First Place: Chicago Tribune, Staff. Chicago Tribune: Overall Design. Clean design, great use of photos and typography. And the good design doesn't stop with the section fronts. The inside pages are clean and have lots of well played photos and graphics.

Second Place: Journal Star, Peoria, Staff. Peoria Journal Star, Peoria. Clean design, good use of photos and graphics. The November 18 tornado pages are well designed, with great photo play. Really amazing photos. Love the Cue section front design. Don't love the Daily Deal coupon by the masthead.

Third Place: Herald & Review, Decatur, Staff. Newspaper Design. Nice clean design. The November 24 paper was well designed all the way through, especially the JFK doubletruck.

CLASS 26 HEADLINE WRITING

Division A

First Place: The Pinckneyville Press, Staff. Best Headlines. Very well-written and thought-out headlines! Nice placement too, they incorporate well into the design. Great job!

Second Place: The Woodstock Independent, Sandy Kucharski. Woodstock Independent headlines. Nice cross-section of entries: witty, smart and eye-catching.

Third Place: Paxton Record, Will Brumleve. Hitting it on the head(line). Solid entries, particularly enjoyed the "Milk" headline

Honorable Mention: Oakland Independent, Janice Hunt. Janice Hunt -- Oakland Independent. Great job tying headlines with stories

Division B

First Place: The Reporter, Hickory Hills, Ken Karrson. Sports Headlines. This headline writer knows how to draw eyes to stories. Great job, very creative.

Second Place: The Reporter, Hickory Hills, Jeff Vorva. Headlines. Great job writing headlines that make you want to read the story; particularly enjoyed "Doggone it"

Third Place: Bureau County Republican, Princeton, Kevin Hieronymus. Headline writing - See above. Solid entries; "One nation" headline was an attention-grabber

Honorable Mention: The Journal-News, Hillsboro, Kyle Herschelman. Headline Writing. "All fair in love and mules" made me laugh out loud; solid entries

Division C

First Place: Jersey County Journal, Jerseyville, Robert Lyons. Crash n burn, Raising hope, Proud Mary, Best trip ever, Bald is beautiful. Outstanding headlines! Particularly enjoyed the "Proud Mary" head -- and I can't get the song out of my head now (which I'm sure was the same reaction as your readers)! All five entries did a fine job of pulling the reader in, which is the goal. Great work.

Second Place: Wednesday Journal of Oak Park & River Forest Group, Ken Trainor. Wednesday Journal headlines. Solid entries and imaginative writing. Good job of drawing eyes to the stories.

Third Place: Jersey County Journal, Jerseyville, Sam Elliott. Free for all, Jump around, Panther Classic, Twice is nice, Let's play ball - or not. Some witty headlines.

Division D

First Place: Chicago Daily Law Bulletin, Josh Weinhold. Chicago Daily Law Bulletin headlines.

Second Place: The Register-Mail, Galesburg, Rob Buck. Rob Buck Headlines.

Third Place: Morris Daily Herald, Sammie Kiesel. Morris Daily Herald headlines.

Honorable Mention: Daily Chronicle, DeKalb, Jim Wilson. Headlines.

Division E

First Place: Kane County Chronicle, St. Charles, Rose DeLeon. Kane County Chronicle, St. Charles headlines.

Second Place: Quincy Herald-Whig, Jason Lewton. Headlines by Jason Lewton.

Third Place: The News-Gazette, Champaign, Niko Dugan. Going in peace, Don't I get a say in this, Well 'vetted, Scam? Check, In line of fire.

Division F

First Place: The Rock Island Argus, Emily Heisse. Packing peanuts needed? ; You could be sleeping with enemy; Hunters eyeing big bucks.

Second Place: Belleville News-Democrat, Jason Koch. Headlines - Jason Koch.

Third Place: Chicago Sun-Times, Darel Jevens. A sampling of 5 headlines by Darel Jevens of the Chicago Sun-Times.

Honorable Mention: Journal Star, Peoria, Shannon Countryman. Headlines by Shannon Countryman.

CLASS 27 SPORTS SECTION

Division A

First Place: West Chicago Suburban Life, Staff. West Chicago Suburban Life sports section. The overall look of this section stands out from the rest. Layout and design leads me to want to read the content. Like the breakout boxes and the photos. The stories were also well-done. Great job by the entire staff.

Second Place: Woodford County Journal, Eureka, Jeff Wiseman, Mark Barra. Sports Section. Very good, comprehensive coverage presented. I like the graphic elements used throughout.

Third Place: Elburn Herald, Staff. SportsKnight 082913. Really liked the cross-country art and story here. Good coverage of different sports throughout.

Honorable Mention: The Leader, St. Joseph, Nora Maberry-Daniels. The Leader, St. Joseph. Good use of art in the football lede. Love the 5 things in the package.

Division B

First Place: Bureau County Republican, Princeton, Kevin Hieronymus. Sports section. Good graphics, good photos and great use of yardsticks. A very good section with a lot of information. Nicely done.

Second Place: Berwyn Suburban Life, Staff. Berwyn Suburban Life sports section. These sections have a great presentation with photos, graphics and stories. Breakouts and pull-quotes tie it all together. Well-done. A very close second.

Third Place: The Downers Grove, Woodridge and Westmont Bugle, Scott Taylor. Downers Grove Sports Section. Nice large photos carry the section. Good package on state champions. One-word large headline tells the story. Good job.

Honorable Mention: Macoupin County Enquirer-Democrat, Carlinville, Staff. MCED sports.
I like the photos used in the 9/5 edition and the picks graphic is a nice touch.

Division C

First Place: Wednesday Journal of Oak Park & River Forest Group, Staff. Sports sections. Great artwork. It carries both sections submitted. The OPRF playoff football artwork was stellar and used well. Layout is also well-done. Stories are good but missing box scores.

Second Place: Downers Grove Suburban Life, Staff. Downers Grove Suburban Life sports section.
I like the presentation, especially the alternative story format of the student-athlete Q&A. Good use of breakout boxes. All-Area soccer presentation was also well-done.

Third Place: Jersey County Journal, Jerseyville, Sam Elliott. Jersey County Journal, Jerseyville Sports. Good spread of local content but the layout leaves a little to be desired. Lines need to separate centerpieces with secondary stories. Box scores would add to your content. The entry of Nov. 6 was incomplete and made judging impossible.

Division D

First Place: Daily Chronicle, DeKalb, Staff. Sports section. Great Friday night football coverage and other prep sports did not suffer because of it. Good all-around coverage, writing and photos.

Second Place: The Register-Mail, Galesburg, Mike Trueblood, Matthew Wheaton and staff. Register-Mail Sports Section. Great local coverage on the front with good use of art.

Third Place: Breeze-Courier, Taylorville, Derek Parris. Sports Section. Good mix of all different levels of sports.

Honorable Mention: Du Quoin Evening Call, Doug Daniels. Dramatic ending to Pinckneyville-Du Quoin game; Jr. High State Tourney. These sections were filled with lots of information and photos and the hardest working person in sports journalism.

Division E

First Place: Sauk Valley Media, Sterling, Dan Woessner, sports editor. Sports sections from May 17 and Nov. 4 (mandatory week). Great local coverage. Loved all the track photos (try to mix up size). Great wrap up of weekend football games.

Second Place: Quincy Herald-Whig, Staff. Best Sports Section entry for Quincy Herald-Whig. Good mix of high school, college sports. Good photos

Third Place: Kane County Chronicle, St. Charles, If More than 3 names type: Staff. Kane County Chronicle, St. Charles sports section. Great local coverage. Love the SportsNeighbor feature and the local photos of youth teams

Honorable Mention: Northwest Herald, Crystal Lake, Staff. Northwest Herald, Crystal Lake sports section. Great local content throughout. Enjoyed the club stories, could have used a little more depth with some actual numbers and some action photos would have helped. Liked that they took a chance on rotating the front page, but again an action photo would have been more dramatic.

Division F

First Place: Herald & Review, Decatur, Staff. Sports Section. Like the football boxscores with the stories, great service to readers. Well written stories. Good photos. Nice layout. All-around good package.

Second Place: Chicago Tribune, Staff. 1. January 1 Lovie Smith coverage 2. November 8. Great pro and college coverage. Lacking high school coverage. Well written stories. Good photos and layout. Good job on Lovie Smith coverage.

Third Place: Journal Star, Peoria, Staff. Journal Star, Peoria Sports Section. Good coverage. Good layouts. Lots of information on the front page and refers to other stories. Great use of space inside.

Honorable Mention: Chicago Sun-Times, Sun-Times sports staff. Chicago Sun-Times sports section — 2 dates. good mix of college, pro sports, little shy on high school coverage.

CLASS 28 LIFESTYLE SECTION

Division A

First Place: The Navigator & Journal-Register, Albion, Staff. Lifestyle section.

Second Place: The Cass County Star-Gazette, Beardstown, If More than 3 names type: Staff.
Autism Awareness Month: Three families share story of life with autism.

Division B

First Place: The Galena Gazette, Staff. Lifestyle. Eye-catching graphic design for Mardi Gras story.

Second Place: Kendall County Record, Yorkville, Staff. 9-12-13 and 10-31-13 Countywide Sections.

Third Place: Bureau County Republican, Princeton, Rita Roberts and Sarah Maxwell. Life&Arts.

Honorable Mention: Effingham and Teutopolis News Report, Staff. Class 28 Society ET News Report.

Division C

First Place: Wednesday Journal of Oak Park & River Forest Group, Ken Trainor. LifeLines section, Sept. 11 and Feb. 13. great design and use of local photos/faces to accompany events listing; strong writing on original pieces, especially the 2/13 lead on same-sex couples, compelling lead photo and smart choice on size to command the page and help tell the story

Second Place: Downers Grove Suburban Life, Staff. Downers Grove Suburban Life lifestyle section. fun, energetic design

Division D

First Place: Daily Chronicle, DeKalb, Staff. Lifestyle section. super design with great front page photos and good use of white space; good writing and content mix with lots of faces; love how the grilling advice video connects local businesses with readers and the paper's online presence

Second Place: Pekin Daily Times, Staff. Lifestyle Section. great content mix, strong writing

Third Place: McDonough County Voice, Macomb, Lainie Steelman. Lifestyle. nice job on mix and coverage of local people, clubs, events (Heritage Days historical homes series)

Division E

First Place: The Southern Illinoian, Carbondale, Brenda Kirkpatrick, Cara Recine, Adam Testa. Flipside. Loved, loved, loved this section.

Second Place: Sauk Valley Media, Sterling, Lucas Pauley, Plan!t editor. Lifestyle sections of 9/12 and 3/12. The painting in the street was so much fun to read I wanted to go the event. The rest of the pages were energetic and creative. They didn't just write this section for one group but for people with a diversity of interests and ages would count on this kind of reporting to plan their activities.

Third Place: Northwest Herald, Crystal Lake, Scott Helmchen. Lifestyle / entertainment section. Good information to the reader. Loved this.

Division F

First Place: Journal Star, Peoria, Staff. Peoria Journal Star, Peoria - Cue. What a wonderfully designed section that's chock-full of information, yet easy to navigate and well organized. Kathy Griffin story, for example, offered readers multiple entry points without seeming cluttered. Your headline, body and brief

head fonts play off each other well and the kickers contribute to ease of navigation. Certainly, your page 1 designer is one of your favorite people in the newsroom, as he/she should be.

Second Place: Daily Herald, Arlington Heights, Staff. Daily Herald editors, how smart of you to enter Food sections. Photos of food played with a nice style on recipes is hard to beat. While your section fronts would benefit from a more dominant element, the section overall is presented well to readers and is easy to navigate. And what a huge, wonderful project you all undertook. Just looking at it made me tired. Great, great job!

Third Place: Belleville News-Democrat, Staff. Belleville News-Democrat - best Lifestyle section. Nice illustration for the your wheelchair story; as much attention to the recycle story would have bumped you up a notch in this category. Your sections are clean-looking, easy to navigate and filled with interesting stories and staples readers want. Also kudos to your advertising department for putting together the yard sale map. I'm betting readers love that.

Honorable Mention: Rockford Register Star, Rebecca Rose. Life&Style Section, Rockford Register Star. Though your fronts would benefit from a bit more design and presenting a dominant element, the section is well organized and easy to navigate. Very clean-looking. And I'm envious that you can still devote two full pages to TV.

CLASS 29 SPECIAL SECTION

Division A

First Place: Forest Park Review, Staff. Forest Park Review Community Guide. Great resource for the community. Especially like the for newcomers section which is often absent in these community guides.

Second Place: The Woodstock Independent, Staff. 50 in 50. Great idea for a section. Lots of information.

Third Place: West Chicago Suburban Life, Staff. West Chicago football preview: Touchdown 2013. Gives lots of information in an easy-to-read format. Great resource for high school football fans.

Honorable Mention: Paxton Record, Andrew Rosten. Start of fall sports season. While I'm not typically a fan of team photos, I think it worked in this case making the section not only informative, but also a keepsake for players and their families. I especially like the senior section.

Division B

First Place: Lake County Suburban Life, Grayslake, Staff. Forefronts. Great idea for a section. Really like that it is a yearly section. Also like the quotes at the top of the page.

Second Place: Berwyn Suburban Life, Staff. Berwyn football preview: Touchdown 2013. Great photo on cover. Good information inside. Love all the boxes.

Third Place: Riverside-Brookfield Landmark, Staff. Riverside-Brookfield Community Guide. Great cover photo! Great guide for residents and newcomers.

Honorable Mention: The Galena Gazette, Hillary Dickerson, Paul Gothard. Honor Flight. Loved this section with each person's story. Would have preferred a different cover photo. While the photo of everyone was a nice touch, it was impossible to see everyone.

Division C

First Place: Wednesday Journal of Oak Park & River Forest Group, Sky Hatter. Community of Caring 2013. Great cover photo. Interesting, well-written stories. Very nice photography. Simple but effective layout. Informational boxes were great.

Second Place: Wednesday Journal of Oak Park & River Forest Group, Sky Hatter. Pride 2013. The stories were informative and nicely written. Nice art and layout.

Third Place: Austin Weekly News, Chicago, Terry Dean, Claire Innes, Dawn Ferencak. West Side Community Guide. Impressive body of work with great information.

Honorable Mention: Wednesday Journal of Oak Park & River Forest Group, Sky Hatter. My Holiday Home. Beautiful cover with impressive layout.

Division D

First Place: Pekin Daily Times, Staff. Horizons. A very complete body of work on some interesting topics. Very nice covers. The stories were interesting reads. All involved in this project should take great pride on a job well done!

Second Place: Daily Chronicle, DeKalb, Staff. A Crowning Achievement – IHSA football championships come to DeKalb. This is great, comprehensive work. Very colorful. Congratulations on your great work!

Third Place: Daily Chronicle, DeKalb, Staff. HuskieWire 2013 Season preview. This is very nice work, with impressive layout and design.

Honorable Mention: McDonough County Voice, Macomb, John Hallwas, Kathy Nichols, Voice Staff. Heritage Days. Nicely designed, well-done special section.

Division E

First Place: The News-Gazette, Champaign, Staff. Gifford. Powerful the entire way through. Incredible photos that show devastation and hope at the same time. Great community coverage.

Second Place: The Times, Ottawa, Staff. Starved Rock Country magazine. Nice, clean layout. Beautiful photos.

Third Place: Kane County Chronicle, St. Charles, Kane County Chronicle, St. Charles staff. Everyday Heroes.

Division F

First Place: The State Journal-Register, Springfield, Staff. Remembering JFK. What a piece of history you have here. Amazing photos. I love all the memories submitted by members of the community. Well done.

Second Place: Journal Star, Peoria, Staff. JimThome, Hometown Hero. Impressive! Clean and interesting design elements. More people would enjoy the sports section of the paper if it looked like this. I can tell a lot of work went into this. Nice job!

Third Place: The State Journal-Register, Springfield, Brien Murphy, Features Editor. State Fair guide. Well done, eye-catching cover and well-written features. This is definitely a must-have before going to the fair.

Honorable Mention: The State Journal-Register, Springfield, Erin Orr. SO Magazine Sept/Oct. Great mixture of stories - something for everyone. Great layout and design on content and ads.

CLASS 30 BEST WEBSITE

Division A

First Place: Forest Park Review, Staff. Forest Park Review. I found the background wallpaper distracting (I found myself wondering about the hidden bagpipe player ...) But overall, it was a nice display of headlines with art and it was easy to find frequently sought info, such as contacts, subscriptions, etc. I really liked the dining section, which seemed like a great useful tool for readers.

Second Place: The Woodstock Independent, Staff. thewoodstockindependent.com. Clean layout, but I would have liked more art. I like that the featured display at the top had clearly marked controls. I like the easy-to-find sports scores Twitter feed, but it doesn't seem to be kept up.

Division B

First Place: Republic-Times, Waterloo, Teryn Schaefer, Christine Otten and Staff. The newly improved RepublicTimes.net website. Like the photos with each section on the home page and big, short headlines that are easy to scan. Really liked the college signing feature, but slideshow had no outline info that I could see. Nice breaking news scroll and prominent social media links.

Second Place: The Niles Bugle, Andrew Samaan, Jonathan Samples. The Bugle Newspapers Website. Easy to share articles in multiple ways. Like the related articles linked to each one and the multi-photo display. Featured presentation on home page is very visual, but most of page is not. Nice live coverage on Twitter (sports, debate). Multimedia doesn't seem updated.

Third Place: Riverside-Brookfield Landmark, Staff. Riverside-Brookfield Landmark website - rblandmark.com. Easy to find social media sharing on articles, as well as email, twitter for reporters. Would like to see more art on the landing pages. Nice search filter on inside pages but couldn't always find what I was looking for in the calendar. Dining page seems to be missing content.

Honorable Mention: The Journal-News, Hillsboro, Staff. Best Website. Interesting poll -- would like to see follow up when temp does hit 70! Confused about online features - just wire content or all ads? (Liked the clear advertorial label on the Top Story but it didn't appear on the article itself.) A couple of sections that don't appear updated (blogs, thru the years), but nice to see lots of local ads and prominent social media links on articles.

Division C

First Place: Wednesday Journal of Oak Park & River Forest Group, Staff. Wednesday Journal website - oakpark.com. An excellent website for any size paper, better than many operated by larger papers I have seen. Very strong local content including hard stories that generate conversation and comment -- very thoughtful commenting. The directories and calendars are terrific. Everything seems to work toward community inclusiveness and participation. Great blogging, great look and feel. Please add photos and videos, maybe an e-edition, more story level links so I don't have to backtrack. Hooray no paywall!

Second Place: Austin Weekly News, Chicago, Staff. Austin Weekly News, Chicago website - austinweeklynews.com. This site deserves praise similar to the first-place winner. The content is equally

good but just a tad less varied. Hard to pick between the two. Very, very good work. I definitely will be borrowing some of your initiatives and ideas. Thanks!

Division D

First Place: The Register-Mail, Galesburg, Jay Redfern. Best website galesburg.com. Strong local content in general, including active blogs, photo galleries and videos. There was more local content on this site than on a similar site from a similar publication -- photos and videos in particular -- but I wanted to see some good local breaking stuff in the top story feed rather than wire. Like the sister site, the main menu pull-down options offer a good detailed guide to content and I liked the calendar feature. The ZINC ad is very annoying.

Second Place: The Journal-Standard, Freeport, Staff. journalstandard.com. Strong local content in general, including active local blogs, photo galleries and videos, but I wanted to see some good breaking stuff in the top story feed. Solid e-edition. The main menu pull-down options offered a good detailed guide to site content. Glad to see a thorough election guide and I liked the calendar feature.

Third Place: Times-Republic, Watseka, Staff. Times-Republic, Watseka website.

Division E

First Place: The Daily Journal, Kankakee, Staff. The Daily Journal, Kankakee website. This website has clean margins and great eye appeal from primary page on. Ads are not overbearing, there's a good mix of photos, ads and text. Its easy to find headlines, easy to connect via social media. Great navigation over whole site. Twitter feed on tertiary posts keeps reader up with breaking news. Good single stack main menu bar. All the elements of solid website are here -- good photo galleries, social media connections. The total package.

Second Place: Quincy Herald-Whig, Staff. Quincy Herald-Whig entry for best website. The top three spots were very tight. The Herald Whig has a fabulous website -- high marks all around -- easy to find breaking news, using Trumba on the calendar to make it easy for subscribers to add events to their own calendars is brilliant. Solid content, solid website elements. Good use of polls. Unfortunately, the light blue back ground and small type make it a little hard on the eyes.

Third Place: The News-Gazette, Champaign, Michael Howie, Jim Rossow, John Reed. News-Gazette.com. This website has great eye appeal -- very readable. Could not find where to sign up for e-mail or text alerts (if available), but the multimedia is outstanding. Robust lifestyle section. Good website.

Honorable Mention: Kane County Chronicle, St. Charles, Kane County Chronicle, St. Charles staff. www.kcchronicle.com. This website has many excellent elements. The extra large photos on front page grab the reader's attention. The lines are all nice and clean, which is easy on eyes. Great use of white space and the ads are balanced. Kudos for having a responsive design website.

Division F

First Place: Chicago Sun-Times, Chicago Sun-Times staff. Chicago Sun-Times suntimes.com. Wow! As a longtime journalist, I am in awe of the vision and talent at suntimes.com. I lost myself in this site and am a better person for it. I'm stealing several ideas for my own newsroom. The special reports, the high school site, the blogs and your newsy homepage are easy to navigate and

engaging. I spent 45 minutes clicking through numerous news websites across the state. That said, your site is remarkable -- and better presented and more engaging than any other I've seen in Illinois.

Second Place: The State Journal-Register, Springfield, Staff. The State Journal-Register, Springfield Best Website. SJR puts a lot of effort into its website, and readers benefit from that -- from a strong news homepage (thank you, thank you, for putting so much news above the scroll) to its push to engage readers. On this day, prominent space is given in the top belt for readers to share graduation photos. I also appreciate the red tags for readers who visit the site multiple times a day. The tags on this particular day tell me your team is truly online first, with numerous stories being posted.

Third Place: Daily Herald, Staff. Dailyherald.com. Daily Herald staff have a tough job -- covering so many communities, but their website is testament that their strategies are working. I applaud the navigational tools surrounding specific communities and the staff's push for a homepage that feels newsy. I also appreciate that the newspaper blogs have personality and are engaging with readers. Its multimedia efforts also are to be applauded.

Honorable Mention – TIE: Belleville News-Democrat, Joe Ostermeier, Carla Keller Anderson, Maria Baran. bnd.com - best website. BND is a comprehensive site working to represent all interests, but the site's homepage needs better organization. Currently, it feels like a magazine front. Except for a few stories, most of the news is below the scroll -- under "Featured" stories, photo galleries and videos. While the red publish/update tags are helpful navigation tools, recognizing that news is your No. 1 reason for existence is going to require a shift in your thinking.

Honorable Mention - TIE: Herald & Review, Decatur, Staff. Best Website. A really classy website. The blue background makes everything pop visually. Great local photo galleries. Readers have to love the History Corner. Great local columns. Self-run obituaries were great to see. Solid website. Easy to use.

CLASS 31 BEST WEB PROJECT

Division B

First Place: Republic-Times, Waterloo, Teryn Schaefer, Christine Otten and Staff. Republic-Times, Waterloo Best of 2013. A thorough effort to involve and actively engage readers with the business and services in their communities, a good vehicle for advertising and building business relationships and a great way to bring people to the website.

Second Place: The Journal-News, Hillsboro, Kyle Herschelman. Journal-News Headlines. This is a solid sustained effort to engage both the web and print audience. I like the idea of using contests, prizes and social media to encourage participation. I like the conversational style of the presenters, but they could tighten it up a bit. I like going on location but invest in a windsock for your microphone.

Third Place: The Pinckneyville Press, Eric Lambert, Olivia Chapman and Staff. 2013 Mardi Gras Parade. Events like the Mardi Gras Parade are a great source of pride for a town, and it speaks well of the paper to be involved at such level. A webcast like this is challenging technically and logistically, but the paper's enthusiasm for its community outshines its production limitations.

Honorable Mention: Bureau County Republican, Princeton, Rita Roberts. BCR Alerts. This is a great service. I would like to see some examples of the text messages and how they linked back to the paper/website. I would like to know how the information distributed in the alerts is gathered. I would like to know how much of the work is done through the contractor.

Division D

First Place: Daily Chronicle, DeKalb, John Sahly, Steve Nitz, Ross Jacobson. Heisman history: Jordan Lynch's journey to New York City. enjoy this, though the layout is a bit faulty. the headline below the buttons puts the emphasis on the wrong place first, move that around, and you've got yourself an awesome resource.

Second Place: Daily Chronicle, DeKalb, Staff. HuskieWire: Gameday Live. i like this idea, but i felt a little more context was needed. it felt too much like a lifestream with little commentary that put me in the time and place. maybe a more prominent feature of the liveblog would help.

Third: The Journal-Standard, Freeport, Staff. Test Scores.

Division E

First Place: Northwest Herald, Crystal Lake, Les Johnson, Erick Ward.

McHenryCountySports.com 2013 Football Preview. Impressive supplement to sports preview coverage; a 3-minute interview tells you all you need to know about a team's past and hopes for the future. Well produced, multiple interviews, not a lot of wasted talk by players and coaches.

Second Place: Northwest Herald, Crystal Lake, Staff. Everyday Heroes. Volunteers, do-gooders tell their stories. Puts viewer on the scene with everyday heroes in a way that print just can't capture. Even after I'd grasped the concept, I kept watching to see the other stories. Video quality varies.

Third Place: Quincy Herald-Whig, Staff. Chasing the Crown: Miss Quincy tries to win Miss America pageant. Newspaper takes a step up in providing web coverage of Miss America potential. Chat with former contestants adds depth to otherwise surface subject. Love the betting angle by David Adam. Consider trying similar coverage on serious subjects.

Honorable Mention: Sauk Valley Media, Sterling, David Giuliani, Angel Sierra. 'I thought it was the end for us'. Quick video turnaround on out-of-town news story. Video humanizes story of F4 tornado in community 2 hours to the south in a way that reminds locals of tragedy outside their borders.

Division F

First Place: Chicago Sun-Times, Staff. Homicide Watch Chicago. A great tool for readers. This is an excellent Web project because it provides depth and is a good resource beyond one story.

Second Place: The State Journal-Register, Springfield, Ted Schurter. A well put together project with moving stories from those who participated in the march. Video snippets and photos told the story in a unique way.

Third Place: Daily Herald, Arlington Heights, Tim Broderick. School Checker. Easy to use Web tool and good presentation.

Honorable Mention - TIE: Rockford Register Star, Brian Wallheimer, Kevin Haas and Wally Haas.Parole Petitions. Parole hearings resurface years after a crime, long after people have forgotten to pay attention. Some criminals return to neighborhoods unnoticed. Good for the rehabilitated, bad for future victims. This tracking system, alongside links to petitions for and against and updated articles on the case history is a valuable tool for residents.

Honorable Mention - TIE: Journal Star, Peoria, Matt Dayhoff, Danielle Hatch and Phil Luciano. Barstorming. Delightful series. Better than much of what's on the Food Network. My biggest complaint? Now I want to jet to Illinois for monster meatballs and 24-scoop-platters of ice cream.

CLASS 32 MOST INNOVATIVE PROJECT

Division B

First Place: The Journal-News, Hillsboro, Kyle Herschelman. Throwback Outfit Benefits MCCA. Interesting way to lead by example in a project that brings the community together and puts the newspaper and, in particular, sports editor Kyle Herschelman, in a position of leadership. People expect that kind of leadership from their community newspaper and this is a creative way to urge the community to action all year long.

Second Place: Bureau County Republican, Princeton, BCR Staff. NorthCentral Illinois AgMag. Very well written section with good photography and a wide variety of perspectives on an issue that is surely important to a lot of people in the region.

Third Place: Republic-Times, Waterloo, Christine Otten and staff. Republic-Times, Waterloo Breaking News Tool. Today's news-cycle has become a 24-hour monstrosity and it is a labor-intensive effort, especially with a small staff, to put news out for consumption on a daily basis and, even several times a day. But that's what will make a newspaper remain a vital source of information into the future. The trick is to convert the breaking news into more of a second-day kind of story for print. I would encourage you to use the breaking news feed for more than just public safety and weather.

Honorable Mention: The Pinckneyville Press, Eric Lambert, Olivia Chapman and Staff. 2013 Mardi Gras Parade. What a neat way to be forward-thinking about an event that could be old hat, especially after 91 years. We're sure people watching from Japan, Canada and, yes, even the lady from North Carolina loved the opportunity to be a part of a community tradition. Over time, some of the technical aspects of the presentation can be improved, but it's a great idea to carry on with next year.

Division D

First Place: Breeze-Courier, Taylorville, Marylee Rasar. 272 Words. 150th will only come once; good community involvement. Clean layout. Needed some proofing.

Second Place: Daily Chronicle, DeKalb, Staff. HuskieWire: Gameday Live. Sports coverage is important to any community; involving fans is a great way to increase perceived ownership of the event!

Division F

First Place: Daily Herald, Arlington Heights, Staff. The Newspaper Partnership. In one of the universe's supreme ironies, newspapers - the ultimate storytellers - often far fall short of telling their own story. Daily Herald presents a thorough, compelling story that shares its mission, importance to the community and our democracy, and honors its deep roots in its community.

Second Place: Chicago Sun-Times, Staff. 'Homicide Watch Chicago'. A lack of followup on stories is one of the great failings of modern media, including newspapers. Homicide Watch Chicago turns that model on its head by not just noting every murder in Chicago, but following through on the disposition of each case, telling the story of victims and of the impact of the crime on loved ones. The court

calendar offers clarity on an often foggy part of the judicial system; the effort also provides needed historical perspective. Well done.

Third Place: The Times, Ottawa (bumped up from E division), Staff. Starved Rock Country. An ambitious, multi-tiered branding effort that in the end will help a community define itself on its own terms - an effort that also clarifies The Times' own mission and place.

Honorable Mention -TIE: The Rock Island Argus, Todd Mizener, Marc Nesseler and staff. The Press Box.

Honorable Mention -TIE: Chicago Sun-Times, Paul Saltzman, Chad Merda. 'The Killing of David Koschman' website.

CLASS 33 Illinois Public Policy Institute Award for Best Promotion of Public's Right to Know

Division A

First Place: Paxton Record, Will Brumleve. State: Board violated Open Meetings Act. This is one of several outstanding entries by this newspaper in promoting the public's right to know. Initial FOI request was made by a third-party watchdog organization; the newspaper carefully reported those original (and subsequent) allegations and results from that group's persistent efforts and later got more directly involved with its own challenge of a violation of the state's open meetings act by the county's public health board. Good, comprehensive coverage. Well done.

Second Place: The Pinckneyville Press, Jessica Holder, Jeff Egbert and Eric Lambert. Teacher (Leitzen) Resigns. An observant and tenacious publisher dug to find out what school board members had done in closed meeting about a Jr. high teacher who wrote a threatening note; he warned school board members they were violating the law by refusing to disclose a settlement reached behind closed doors, a warning vindicated by the state's A.G. who found that board members violated the state's open meetings law by not revealing terms of the agreement.

Third Place: Forest Park Review, Jean Lotus. Riveredge suicide coverage. Excellent research, good use of public records law to get access to information, well-written stories. Puzzling editorial decision, especially inconsistent with the category of the entry (having gone to such lengths to obtain the information), not to use the last names of suicide victim or members of her family.

Division B

First Place: Mason County Democrat, Havana, Wendy Martin. Airport. We thought our state had its share of backroom deals and public officials with lax ethical standards, but your airport authority could give even most of our folks a real run for the money. No bids for years, then mysterious withdrawals, and voilà, the airport president's son gets the bid for yet another year. Excellent job of tracking this story; clearly, it's one this watchdog paper has followed conscientiously for several years. Keep up the good work.

Second Place: The Galena Gazette, Jay Dickerson. Public information?. Only a politician would find something so clearly in the public domain (the selling prices of houses) and question whether the public really needs to know that information; it's the first thing they want to know (as a part of estimating how much their own might be worth). [By the way, does one of your local court bureaucrats actually think she has the right to censor public records (i.e., divorces) before letting the newspaper see them? Outrageous!]

Third Place: The Galena Gazette, Hillary Dickerson. Administrative restructure?. Another good example of this newspaper's doggedness (as in watchdoggedness) in following and reporting on local public bodies. It appears this newspaper's editor uses its state's FOIA frequently and knows its open meetings act well.

Division E

First Place: Sauk Valley Media, Sterling, David Giuliani. Often, minutes remain closed. Looking into what local governments talk about in closed sessions and whether they are following the law regarding open government not only serves the public well, but makes government more accountable. Here they found the law's standards aren't always met and often notes from closed sessions are poorly kept.

Second Place: Daily Chronicle, DeKalb, Jillian Duchnowski, Eric Olson, Felix Sarver. D-427 must hold another meeting. Stories correctly call into question whether a school board violated the state open meeting law. Strongly worded and timely editorials backed this up.

Third Place: Sauk Valley Media, Sterling, David Giuliani, Matt Mencarini. A lock on public access. Good package of stories highlights inconsistencies in how public access issues are handled and makes solid arguments for why documents should be released.

Honorable Mention: The News-Gazette, Champaign, Christine des Garennes. UI senate violates Open Meetings Act. Newspaper stories should have an impact. Calling a practice into question and changing and obvious wrong is part of what a good newspaper should do.

Division F

First Place: The State Journal-Register, Springfield, Jayette Bolinski, Dan Petrella, Jason Nevel. Shredgate. This set of stories clearly demonstrates what's at stake in the shredding of these documents—and the recalcitrance of city officials.

Second Place: The State Journal-Register, Springfield, Jayette Bolinski. Lack of transparency. Kudos to the paper for telling readers what their tax dollars could be funding—and about their right to know.

Third Place: The Rock Island Argus, Dawn Neuses, Tyler Langan, Eric Timmons. Airport Board: Business not discussed; Airport board alters meetings. Good initiative to send an intern to these meetings and then follow up on a board that probably flies under the radar

CLASS 34 Robert M. Cole Award for Best School Board Coverage

Division A

First Place: Coal City Courant, Ann Gill. Coal City School Board coverage. Ann Gill has a way of explaining complex school issues that boards face so that they can be understood by community members

Second Place: Paxton Record, Will Brumleve and Andrew Rosten. Paxton-Buckley-Loda school board. A close second good writing about creating a culture of fitness in the district, but little mention of the school board's role in this

Third Place: Woodford County Journal, Eureka, Cheryl Wolfe. School issue-Tax ballot-Capponi 2 stories. story about the theft by the school bookkeeper was good but no mention of the school

board No mention of the board in the selection about the school facilities tax either. The board was mentioned in the story about the bond sale but little other than quotes from a meeting

Honorable Mention: Forest Park Review, Jean Lotus. Proviso Township HS D 209 and it's relationship with Forest Park. Interesting article with lots of information but little mention of board thoughts or opinions kept this out of the top spots. The story about the Proviso brawl didn't even take place on school property.

Division B

First Place: Kendall County Record, Yorkville, Kathy Farren. Yorkville Board of Education. Good coverage of A number of different board level issues with comments from board members earns this entry the top spot.

initiative other than just what happened at a meeting.

Second Place: Ledger-Sentinel, Oswego, Lyle R. Rolfe. Oswego school board - principals, budget, enrollment growth, apartments. Another entry with a variety of board-level issues; Might have been stronger with more emphasis on the board's role and deliberation.

Third Place: Mason County Democrat, Havana, Wendy Martin. Big Decisions On Horizon. Well-written board story but misses the opportunity to elaborate on the board's vision for the district with few board member comments. Detecting and reflecting the community's expectations for the school district is the true work of the board

Division C

First Place: The Doings - Hinsdale, Kimberly Fornek, Chuck Fieldman. Best School Board Coverage.

Second Place: Wednesday Journal of Oak Park & River Forest Group, Terry Dean. District 200 Finance Advisory Committee.

Division E

First Place: Effingham Daily News, Bill Grimes. School Cuts. What elevates this coverage about one district's financial plight is the effort to explain what could happen, and why, and the interaction between the community and school board throughout the process.

Second Place: Sauk Valley Media, Sterling, Derek Barichello. Dixon teachers strike. Exhaustive coverage of a highly-charged school strike. Really like the paper's additional use of social media and its offer to meet with the community at a local bookstore.

Third Place: Quincy Herald-Whig, Edward Husar. \$71 million plan/Test scores/Replace, repair or reconfigure/Alternative school. Not just another review of referenda needs, but using detailed facilities data and lots of online resources to help readers understand the issues.

Honorable Mention: La Salle NewsTribune, Kevin Caufield. Cherry consolidation. The decision to consolidate, the available options and the prospective impact are well chronicled.

Division F

First Place: Belleville News-Democrat, Jamie Forsythe. Tech in Ed. This series of articles

does a good job of telling the "why" and "how" behind the decision to expand technology in the classroom.

Second Place: The State Journal-Register, Springfield, Molly Beck. Coverage of Springfield's public schools. It is always difficult to balance parent and student opinion with administration and board opinions. These sensitive issues provoked a lot of response and this entry kept abreast with the public side. Would like to see more attribution from the board side.

Third Place: The Pantagraph, Bloomington, Phyllis Coulter. Common Core. Thorough overview of Common Core standards and how they will change teaching and assessment. Parents should have a better idea of what to expect after reading these articles.

Honorable Mention: Belleville News-Democrat, Jamie Forsythe. School cafeteria inspections. Haven't seen many stories on school cafeteria inspections. Glad they didn't find much and the articles should assure parents of children's safety.

CLASS 35 Maurice Scott Award for Best Coverage of Taxation

Division A

First Place: The Pinckneyville Press, Jeff Egbert. Who Pays Tim Russell?. This effort stands out above the rest.

Second Place: The Pinckneyville Press, Nate Fisher and Eric Lambert. Park Grant - Soccer.

Division B

First Place: Ledger-Sentinel, Oswego, Matt Schury. Montgomery, Oswego in the middle on utility bills. This reporting showed extra initiative by the newspaper and reporter.

Second Place: Macoupin County Enquirer-Democrat, Carlinville, Staff. Carlinville Sales tax increase. Good coverage of an important local topic.

Third Place: The Galena Gazette, Jay Dickerson. Hotel motel tax.

Division D

First Place: Daily Chronicle, DeKalb, Jillian Duchnowski & David Thomas. TIF district coverage.

Second Place: Breeze-Courier, Taylorville, Laura Wolfe. School Tax.

Division E

First Place: Quincy Herald-Whig, Edward Husar/Matt Hopf. Property taxes/tax levy/school taxes/video gambling.

Second Place: The Daily Journal, Kankakee, Staff. Taxation stories.

Division F

First Place: Belleville News-Democrat, Jacqueline Lee, Dan Kelley. Are TIFs worth it. Nice depth of coverage on the issue of TIFs

Second Place: The Pantagraph, Bloomington, Staff. Boom or bust? Central Illinois TIF districts. Solid reporting on the value of TIFs

Third Place: Belleville News-Democrat, George Pawlaczyk, Beth Hundsdorfer. Centreville scam. Nice coverage of taxpayers being shafted by a land deal.

CLASS 36 Knight Chair Award for Best Investigative/Enterprise Reporting

Division A

First Place: Paxton Record, Will Brumleve. Solar panel contract scandal. This a strong series of document driven stories that revealed deep problems with the bid process and the blunders by public officials.

Second Place: Forest Park Review, Jean Lotus. Commissioner linked to anonymous "dirty laundry " blog. An solid investigation that revealed the attempt by a Village Commissioner to anonymously use the Web to attack other public officials. The kind of reporting that needs to be done in the digital world.

Third Place: The Pinckneyville Press, Jeff Egbert. Who Pays Tim Russell?. Through Freedom of Information requests the story unraveled the convoluted trail of multiple payments to a public employees.

Division B

First Place: Mason County Democrat, Havana, Wendy Martin. Airport. Determined watchdog reporting that uncovered an outrageous series of procedures in a public bidding process

Division C

First Place: Illinois Times, Springfield, Bruce Rushton. You drink, you drive, you cruise. An in-depth story that exposed many of the shortcomings in the enforcement of laws against drunken driving.

Second Place: Illinois Times, Springfield, Bruce Rushton. No room at the inn. A moving expose about a mentally ill homeless man who died in jail but never should have been there.

Division E

First Place: Northwest Herald, Crystal Lake, Staff. Strapped in the Suburbs. These stories relentlessly look at the poverty in the suburbs that generally goes unnoticed. Solid reporting that blends documents, data and interviews into a compelling series.

Second Place: Sauk Valley Media, Sterling, Matt Mencarini. Spending in sheriff's department. Terrific use of FOIA to uncover misspent tax dollars and the attempts to mislead the public.

Third Place: La Salle NewsTribune, Kevin Caufield. The penniless in school. These stories go beyond the numbers to provide human stories and context for the statistics for homeless students.

Honorable Mention: La Salle NewsTribune, Kevin Caufield. Struggling to stay afloat. A enterprising report that shows the shortcomings of a nonprofit tourist program.

Division F

First Place: Chicago Sun-Times, Chris Fusco, Tony Arnold, Monifa Thomas. 'DCFS' Faces of Failure'. A hard-hitting story on an incompetent agency that allows children to die. Bringing together statistics, documents and human stories, this is an excellent dissection of systemic failures.

Second Place: Chicago Tribune, Staff. Broken Bonds. An investigative series that should inspire other newsrooms to examine how their governments misuse bond money.

Thoroughly documented, well-written stories on a topic that too often goes uncovered.

Third Place: Belleville News-Democrat, Dan Kelley. Full-time benefits for part-time workers. This investigation into costly benefits brought quick results. Outstanding public service journalism.

2014 Sweepstakes Winners

David B. Kramer Memorial Trophy -

The Woodstock Independent

2nd Place: The Navigator & Journal-Register, Albion

3rd Place: Forest Park Review

4th Place: Paxton Record

Harold and Eva White Memorial Trophy -

The Galena Gazette

2nd Place: Bureau County Republican, Princeton

3rd Place: Riverside-Brookfield Landmark

4th Place: The Journal-News, Hillsboro

Will Loomis Memorial Trophy -

Wednesday Journal of Oak Park & River Forest

2nd Place: Downers Grove Suburban Life

3rd Place: Illinois Times, Springfield

4th Place: Jersey County Journal, Jerseyville

Patrick Coburn Award of Excellence -

Daily Chronicle, DeKalb

2nd Place: The Register-Mail, Galesburg

3rd Place: Pekin Daily Times

4th Place: Chicago Daily Law Bulletin

Mabel S. Shaw Memorial Trophy -

Northwest Herald, Crystal Lake

2nd Place: Quincy Herald-Whig

3rd Place: Sauk Valley Media, Sterling

4th Place: The News-Gazette, Champaign

Stuart R. Paddock Memorial Trophy -

Chicago Sun-Times

2nd Place: State Journal-Register, Springfield

3rd Place: Journal Star, Peoria

4th Place: Chicago Tribune