

These are the results and the judges' comments for the 2011 Mo. Press Foundation Better Newspaper Contest. Awards were presented Saturday, Sept. 10, during the Missouri Press Association's 145th annual Convention at the Hilton Convention Center in Branson.

Members of the Virginia Press Association judged the entries.

Results are listed from the smallest class of weeklies through the largest class of dailies.

Classes by Circulation:

Weeklies: 0-2,000; 2001-4,000; 4001-8,000; 8001 and over.

Dailies: 0-5,000; 5001-15,000; 15,001 and over.

Gold Medal plaques were awarded to the newspapers that won the most points in their divisions. Those winners are listed with the heading for each class.

Unlisted categories had no entries or no awards were given.

Weeklies, Class 1 (Gold Medal: Republic Monitor)

1 General Excellence

1st New Haven Leader-Buck Collier: The New Haven Leader has all the fundamentals of a good, small-circulation newspaper. There is a detectable desire to do things right.

2 Best Front-to-Back Newspaper Design

HM North Stoddard Countian: This paper is full of local news; tons of people & pictures.

3 Best Front Page

1st Republic Monitor: Photos didn't always reproduce sharply, but this paper consistently shows an eye for details and white space. The front pages are similar - good for recognition - yet the design is changed up enough to provide variety. A lot packed in, but not overwhelming. Good use of color - not overdone. Subtle, dignified, pleasing to the eye.

2nd New Haven Leader: Design & white space make it easy to follow. I like the box above the flag. Good consistency. Could the bylines on stories be centered, or lose the em space? Also a little more breathing room on the rail.

3rd North Stoddard Countian: Good, clear, consistent. Flag a bit overwhelming - headlines don't jump out, feel important, but overall design is solid.

5 Best News Story

HM Excelsior Springs Standard-Kristin Rulon, Child Nutrition: Nice job providing context to a complex issue.

6 Best Feature Story

3rd North Stoddard Countian-Corey Noles, Idalia man: I enjoyed reading about Marvin Webster and his wife; the writing allowed the joy of this couple to come through. I did, however, want to know more about the couple, such as how and why they decided to start working with mules, is this his job (the writer mentioned he was plowing someone else's farm), just a hobby? Did the wife have anything to say, whose idea was it to work/play/travel this way, etc. It left me wanting more.

7 Best News or Feature Series

3rd Rich Hill Mining Review-Jerry Pfeifer, Glory Days: I loved the story idea, recounting the rare and phenomenal achievements of Rich Hill High. The writer did a great job of finding so many people from that time. But the story had too much telling and not enough showing of the emotion of this era. For example, instead of former players talking about how the coach worked them physically, I wanted to see these kids sweating while running laps at midnight, carrying 50-lb. weights to build stamina, doing whatever the coach did to make them mentally tough. I also wanted to care more about these players - what their home lives were like, who their inspirations were, how being a part of something so special impacted them off the field; the writer could have eliminated some of the voices and picked a few select characters and spent more time with them to do that. However, there is great potential here; keep looking for these great stories.

9-H Best Columnist-Humorous

HM Rich Hill Mining Review-Jerry Pfeifer: Good points, well made.

10-F Best Feature Photograph

1st Excelsior Springs Standard-Kristin Rulon, Hometown Holiday: It's a nice moment; 1st and 2nd both could have benefited from a better crop.

2nd North Stoddard Countian-Corey Noles, Winter Wonderland: Nice impact and funny image.

3rd Excelsior Springs Standard-Skylla McKown, Special Needs: It's a nice, light moment you can see her happiness clearly.

10-I Best Photo Illustration

1st Republic Monitor-Cheryl (Johns) Maddox and Rodger Wheeler, Against the: The baseball post 676 story and photo should have run below half.

2nd Republic Monitor-Ryan Squibb and Cheryl (Johns) Maddox, Who Knew?: Too cluttered with words.

10-N Best News Photograph

1st North Stoddard Countian-Corey Noles, Battles Five: Easily stood out from the others. Nice composition and complexity. Simple choice for #1.

2nd Shelbina Weekly-Mark Requet, Crumbling Down: Nice composition. I like the framing at the left and dust rising.

3rd Republic Monitor, Fire Destroys: Best of the rest, not a particularly engaging photo but it is easy to read.

10-S Best Sports Photograph

1st Republic Monitor, Number One: Wonderful moment! Really nice to see this frame, it's quite storytelling. It has lots of energy as well. Nice work! The top two pictures clearly stood out.

2nd Shelbina Weekly-Mark Requet, Flying High: Football at night is very hard to shoot under low-light conditions, so kudos to this photographer. They made a very nice frame in a difficult situation. Good job!

3rd Republic Monitor-Rodger Wheeler, Tip-Off: A decent, overall moment. It's clean and good action.

11 Best Photo Package

1st North Stoddard Countian-Corey Noles, Remember: A nice mixture of images and moments. Nice seeing the event.

2nd North Stoddard Countian-Corey Noles, Easter Egg Hunt: Again, a good variety of images that help tell the story.

3rd North Stoddard Countian-Corey Noles, Memorial Day: Same as above, just not as strong as the other two.

13 Best News Content

2nd North Stoddard Countian: Consistent layout/look. Half-columns cutlines don't look so hot. Writing, reporting, coverage range above par. Some sentence structure awkward. Copy could be more active.

18 Best Sports Feature Story

1st Republic Monitor-Rodger Wheeler, Loud and Clear: Interesting idea and out-of-the box thinking to profile a PA announcer.

19 Best Sports Columnist

1st Republic Monitor-Rodger Wheeler, I Wish...: Heart-felt, touching columns.

20 Best Special Section

1st Republic Monitor, Pumpkin Daze: Clean layout, easy to read. Enjoyed concept of directors and schedule. Consistent headers, ended with festive

recipes.

2nd Republic Monitor-Rodger Wheeler/Cheryl (Johns) Maddox, 2010 Fall: Consistent with layout, team photos and format of schedules. Like how photos span the top of the section.

24 Best Coverage of Government

2nd The Pointe-Michael Gillespie, Municipalized Trash: This article reported the important points of Grain Valley's trash collection proposal, so it succeeded in informing readers. It could have been more clear by saying from the very beginning that if the service is approved, it will mean a \$15 monthly tax for residents.

3rd The Pointe-Christopher Fischer, Solid Waste: This article had a nice lede that showed very clearly an alderman's about-face on Grain Valley's most important public works issue. It could have been better with a more coherent organization between Alderman Chuck Johnston and Mayor Michael Todd.

HM Republic Monitor-Ryan Squibb, Time to Vote: The article effectively communicated that the key issue in the commissioner's debate was the \$18 million to-be-built 911 center. It would have been better if it expanded on each candidate's position.

29 Best Story About the Outdoors

1st Republic Monitor-Rodger Wheeler, Catch of a Lifetime: With only 2 entries, this was a clear winner, but the story could have been expanded a little. Seemed kinda thin. Great quotes - "In the mouth" and "I needed a bigger net" (think "Jaws"). Still, even with the brief length, got key facts in as well as some color and humor. Good writing for a short piece!

30 Best Story About History

1st The Pointe-Michael Gillespie, Old 40 Highway: Lots of interesting information - even for someone not from Missouri. Lots of details, flowed together in an interesting writing style that handles and assembles the facts well and mixes in some humor and colorful writing as well!

33 Best Page Design

1st Weekly Record, Veterans Park: Very dramatic and clean page. Good use of dominant, double-truck photo. Black back lent a sense of reverence to the page. Resisted the urge to do too much and let the story speak for itself.

34 Best Information Graphic

2nd Republic Monitor, School Traffic: Nice audience/topic. Related visual elements.

Weeklies, Division 2 (Gold Medal: Christian Co. Headliner News)

1 General Excellence

1st Christian County Headliner News: Healthy sized paper with excellent display of news and advertising. Some headlines overstate the stories they cover. Good use of pictures throughout. The number of faces in your paper is outstanding. Good use of cross reference to your website. Ads are attractive and abundant. Editorial page could use better headline variety. "On the spot" is a very nice feature. Really good handling of public notices separate from classifieds.

2nd Platte County Landmark: Wide variety of content in an unusual (for today) very broadsheet format. Content is targeted to the local market and displayed appropriately. Writing is clean and varied. Layout is clean and orderly. Photos appropriately sized and displayed. Opinions cover all points of views. Editorial cartoon a little oversized on page A2. Advertising is abundant (yay!), well-designed and attractive. Public notices given prominent display. One overall quibble - you seem to have your typesetting parameter set to no hyphenation. That's resulting in letter spacing that makes some lines very hard to read.

3rd Smithville Herald: Clean, easy to read paper. Community well covered. Writing is clean and varied. Sharp headlines. Good variety of ads, well designed and planned. Very few public notice ads.

2 Best Front-to-Back Newspaper Design

1st Christian County Headliner News: This is clearly the best paper in its division. Impactful A1 stories, not just who was named fair queen on A1. Strong design - best news coverage, best opinion section, best sports coverage, best front pages, etc. This is a solid community weekly newspaper! Please keep covering stories that matter and not just refrigerator art!

2 Best Front-to-Back Newspaper Design

2nd Kearney Courier: Clean design and presentation. I liked the section headers and how the paper was organized - very reader-friendly. B1 stories were nice - be even more daring w/that design. Not a fan of community calendar on A2 - maybe B section? Consider more graphics and info boxes to accompany stories.

3rd Smithville Herald: Solid community paper! Interesting front page, impact stories. Sports coverage very solid. Not a fan of community calendar on A2. That space is more valuable than that.

3 Best Front Page

1st Christian County Headliner News: Interesting, active design that avoids "busyness." Dominant art easy to spot. Overcomes bottom-of-the-page ads. Font variation on one page effective, maybe do a bit more of it.

2nd Ozark County Times: Large color art effectively anchors 2 of the 3 pages. Good use of side rail. I think point size of your top headlines should be increased a bit.

3rd Smithville Herald: "Fall Festival" splash is highly effective and attractive. Multiple art elements per single story are very creative. Some real thinking obviously goes into front-page design.

HM Lawrence County Record: Good job of getting a lot of content on the pages without an impression of clutter.

4 Best Breaking News Story:

1st Gasconade County Republican, Dave Marner, Ernie Adams: Excellent coverage of weather-related death of an elderly man, with great detail both as to the scene and the man's character and accomplishments. The man's pastor was a good person to interview and contributed details that made this a stand-out story done on a tight turn around.

2nd Gasconade County Republican, Dave Marner, West Fatality Fire: The author went the extra mile to not only give the facts about the fatal fire but to get quotes about the victim of a personal nature from the fire chief, who knew him.

3rd Lee's Summit Tribune, Debbie Van Pelt, Woman Dies: Good detail about the apparent victim and observation of what went on at the scene after the fire. The reporter spoke to a large number of sources to get a very full picture for a breaking news story.

5 Best News Story

1st Green Park Call, Evan Young, Recycling Everything: Quirky story that shows an average Joe taking on city hall - and winning. I bet everybody was talking about this story. Great reporting.

2nd Belton Star Herald, Allen Edmonds, 4-22 Rinehart: Extremely professional job. Perfectly reported. Must have been a tremendously difficult issue to hear and tell. Excellent work.

3rd Smithville Herald, Nancy Rigdon, Fresh Start: Such an important story - and well told. Great angle, great lede. Stories like this are why I went into journalism. Congratulations on it.

6 Best Feature Story

1st Clinton County Leader, Becky Black, Cancer Awareness: Very moving story that captured essence of people - human life - and the essence of cancer. Well written. It moved me to tears!

2nd Christian County Headliner News, Amelia Wigton, Underage Soldier: Very telling account of a soldier's story and passion for his country. Great story-telling.

3rd Smithville Herald, Nancy Rigdon, Kidney Donation: Philanthropy at it's

best! Compassion was the heart of the story and it showed.

HM Christian County Headliner News, Emily Hoffman, Sister: I love the balance between current day life of soldiers as they recount and relive their lives as soldiers decades ago. Essence of the people really showed.

HM Platte County Landmark, Bill Hankins, Wolfie: Love the way wolfie was brought to "life" on the page. He is definitely a part of the town, and the writer did a great job telling his story.

7 Best News or Feature Series

1st Christian County Headliner News, Emily Hoffman and Amelia Wigton, Graduation: This was very close between 1, 2 and 3. All three are conversationally written and engaging. What made the graduation stories stand out was how the stories made real, whole people out of teenagers and avoided sentimental cliches that usually invade graduation stories.

2nd Ozark County Times, Sue Ann Jones, Our Veterans: Good details told in an easy-to-read, story-telling manner. The stories may perhaps be a bit on the long side and could have been tightened.

3rd Smithville Herald, Nancy Rigdon, Neighbors: Good snapshots of local people. The writing compared well to the 1st and 2nd entries.

HM Ozark County Times, Sue Ann Jones, Grishams: This lacked anything in Part 1 high up providing immediacy, and the opening was a bit vague. The storytelling itself, once it got going, was good.

8 Tilghman Cloud Memorial Editorial

1st Gasconade County Republican, McBride Assault: It takes courage to call out the prosecutor when she says stupid stuff. That's what this editorial does. This piece rose to the occasion without fear. That's what good editorial pages do. Excellent, courageous work.

2nd Christian County Headliner News, Photo ordinance: Newspapers should take a stand on issues of freedom of speech. Although this may have been an unpopular stance, it needed to be taken. Well-written piece gave me the sordid background and made a good point.

3rd Cassville Democrat, Newspaper: Important topic; gracefully written without being self-serving. This is a powerful and thoughtful piece. Congratulations on it.

9-H Best Columnist -Humorous

1st Lawrence County Record, Virginia Oehlschlager, Home on the Farm: Nice slice-of-life column.

2nd Christian County Headliner News, Donna Osborn

3rd Press-News Journal, Dan Steinbeck

9-S Best Columnist-Serious

1st Green Park Call, Mike Anthony: The columnist's tell-it-like-it-is style and watchdog focus make for a fiesty read.

2nd Kearney Courier, Ray Weikal: A nice mix of personal and political.

3rd Christian County Headliner News, Donna Osborn: Refreshing and honest.

10-F Best Feature Photograph

1st Christian County Headliner News, Brady Brite, Bank Tavern: This photo has a great sense of isolation. Nicely composed. If the bartender were included it would not have the same impact. If I had one complaint it would be that the ISO is a little high, but the graininess kind of adds to the mood of the image.

2nd Platte County Landmark, Bill Hankins, Lifetime Farmer: Composition is nice. Black and white was the only choice for this photo. Great light. Really nice lines with sunlight framed by shadows.

3rd Platte County Landmark, Bill Hankins, Cold Comfort: Really funny image that is also a nice father/daughter moment. It's a great find during the event, could have easily been over looked.

HM Belton Star Herald, Allen Edmonds, Dec. 9: The contrast of emotion between the two sisters is what makes this image stand out. I've seen 1,000 "santa with crying kids" photos, this one stands out because it includes the smiley sister.

10-I Best Photo Illustration

1st Christian County Headliner News, Amelia Wigton, Tightens Belt: Easily the top picture. Clean, informative and a unique illustration.

2nd Ozark County Times, Bruce Roberts, Wild Weather: Nice attempt, we'd recommend flushing it out more (the idea) and seeing how much further they could develop the idea, but nice attempt.

10-N Best News Photograph

1st Belton Star Herald, Allen Edmonds, 6-10: This is a great image. Composition is nice. Gives good feel of the dangers of flooding. Nice that photographer stuck around to get subject's name. He seems so isolated on top of that car with nowhere to go.

2nd Christian County Headliner News, Brady Brite, House Fire: The man's posture is perfect for reflecting on the house fire. The equipment spread all over the scene is a nice element. Would like to have read a caption with the photo to see if the man was the homeowner. This however did not affect the photo's place.

3rd McDonald County Press, Rick Peck, Blood Eye: Great dramatic scene at the end of a domestic disturbance. Photo shows how physical the altercation was.

10-S Best Sports Photograph

1st Smithville Herald, Matt Frye, Comeback Pitcher: Bold graphic, played large and capturing the determination on the face of this winning freshman pitcher makes this a stand-out against many strong entries.

2nd Newton County News, Chad Hayworth, David Bird: Rarely do sports photos capture the "what next?" question going through an athlete's mind. This perfectly framed shot puts the reader on the mat in David Bird's wrestling shoes.

3rd Platte County Landmark, Bill Hankins, Beaned: Sports isn't all glory or defeat: it is also the occasional indignity. This shot is a winner - should have been played larger on the page.

HM Christian County Headliner News, Brady Brite, Brawl Winners: Team sports are time-consuming, grueling and tough. This captures the true happiness of a unified effort.

HM Clinton County Leader, Brett Adkison, Intense Hurdles: A glorious shot of a harrier all but sailing over his hurdle. Well done.

11 Best Photo Package

1st Belton Star Herald, Allen Edmonds, Fools: The double truck and the sizing of the photos were an excellent job by photographer and editor.

2nd Gasconade County Republican, Dave Marner, Corn Harvest: Your time and effort on this project were superb!

3rd Kearney Courier, Kyle Rivas, Janey's Ride: Good use of photos.

HM Belton Star Herald, Allen Edmonds, Carver: A good variety of shots.

HM Platte County Landmark, Bill Hankins, Oldest Farmer: Perfect assignment for black and white.

12-A Best Ad Idea or Promotion of an Advertiser

1st Lawrence County Record, Business Builders: Good consistency while routinely changing categories. Favorites were "Senior Spotlight" and the header for the "Holiday" one.

13 Best News Content

1st Christian County Headliner News: Well-written, front to back. Nice job. An excellent community newspaper.

2nd Pleasant Hill Times: I thoroughly enjoyed reading this - publisher's column is good, news writing is good. Police report is great. News: "Man is rescued from hole in sewer" Outstanding!

3rd Belton Star Herald, Excellent front to back. Well done.

14 Community Service Award

1st Gasconade County Republican, Exit Strategy: The Gasconade County Republican showed the commitment that few news organizations make in

following and helping explain an issue that is important to a community.

2nd Clinton County Leader, Black History Event: The Clinton County Leader's screening of a documentary on the local African American history is an example of the type of community engagement that news organizations everywhere should strive through. The event was an opportunity to extend the newspaper's role of informing and stimulating productive discussion.

3rd Lee's Summit Tribune, Pumpkin Party: It is commendable that the Lee's Summit Tribune helped raise money for a child with special needs.

15 Best Editorial Pages

1st Lawrence County Record: These pages stand alone in displaying the heart and soul of an editorial section - editorials that comment clearly and knowledgeably on community issues. I might find another location for the "In past years" feature and devote that space to true opinion.

2nd Platte County Landmark: These pages benefit from a clean, easy-to-read layout, and the prominence of letters to the editor is a definite plus. Thought might be given to converting Mr. Foley's signed opinions to true editorials.

3rd Gasconade County Republican: Substantive pages, but I would give the spotlight to letter writers rather than columnists.

16 Best Sports Section

1st Kearney Courier: Good use of dominant, impactful center pieces. Refers in upper corner add color, art consistently strong. Solid writing, good use of graphics - incorporating information.

2nd Smithville Herald: Very close second. Outstanding centerpiece look, incorporating hammer, kicker, subhead for strong visual impact. Good use of graphics - art and writing solid throughout. Refer box doesn't seem to refer anything. Great cover for special section; running an extreme horizontal in a vertical orientation works in this case.

3rd Belton Star Herald: Good use of elements - cutouts, screens, graphics. Masthead somewhat heavy. Fonts, specially "senior mommy" look antiquated and odd.

17 Best Sports News Story or Package

1st Belton Star Herald, Taylor Freburg, In Second: Good topic; good quotes. Glad to see a story in this category that was not game coverage. Freburg is a good writer.

2nd Cedar County Republican, Adam Stillman, Look Forward: Nice package, good unity. Loved the pull-out boxes "fire questions" and "key players."

3rd Belton Star Herald, Ben Felder, Senior Moment: Excellent topic; well-told story. Made me keep reading.

18 Best Sports Feature Story

1st Smithville Herald, Cindy Meyer, Pitch Perfect: This writer had several strong entries. This lede is perfect, includes telling details, is just the right length. Writing moved me through the story, got me hooked - held on. Nice job in a strong category.

2nd Cedar County Republican, Adam Stillman, "Daves...": Nice story, great early quote. I kept reading because of a compelling story well-told. Why did you refer to the student by his last name and the adult, his mother, by her first name? Nicely done.

3rd Belton Star Herald, Taylor Freberg, Feasting: Great angle, great facts. Topic and decent writing stood out.

19 Best Sports Columnist

1st Smithville Herald, Andy Meyer: Meyer shows a fluid, readable style. What sets his work apart is an ability to unearth less obvious angles. His column "seniors prove invaluable" is a strong example of his honest, interested approach to the topic.

2nd Kearney Courier, Bill Knust: A solid writer, able to deal with the always-sticky losses in an even-handed and thoughtful manner. Would have liked just a bit more opinion in columns, but very readable, clean.

3rd Belton Star Herald, Taylor Freburg: Nice conversational tone, not forced. Particularly liked the piece on Rosenblatt Stadium.

20 Best Special Section

1st Cedar County Republican, Our Kids: Love, love, love the vibrant cover art and how the kid theme is carried all the way through with kid drawn art in paid advertisements.

2nd Christian County Headliner News, Graduation: Nice cover photo. I like the personal nature of photos and quotes from graduates, as well as stories of where they're going to school and scholarships.

3rd Lawrence County Record, Smalltown America: Nice cover and content. Seemed too heavy on ads. More personal stories would be nice.

21 Best Investigative Reporting

1st Christian County Headliner News, Amelia Wigton, Emergency Response: Without Wigton's questions it's unlikely that the claim against Taylor would have been canceled. Sheds light on a money-making business for local government and the private company.

2nd Christian County Headliner News, Brady Brite and Amelia Wigton, Raw Milk: Did a good job explaining raw milk and the controversy around it. I especially enjoyed the short story on how raw milk deliverers were getting around the Health Department's ban--some great description of the sales.

3rd Christian County Headliner News, Donna Osborn, Food: Food safety seems

like an important issue for every community and Osborn does a good job explaining some of the efforts to keep food safe. The Monsanto issue deserves more attention, but obviously the company's decision not to comment makes it difficult.

22 Best Local Business Coverage

HM Kearney Courier: Consistently strong, local coverage. Reader knows what is going on.

23 Best Business Story

1st Christian County Headliner News, Brady Brite, Movies: This is an informative and well-researched story that runs counter to the common wisdom that video rental businesses are on their way out, and gives good facts to support that stance. Readers probably gained useful information, especially about offerings at their local stores.

2nd Kearney Courier, Kevin Smith and Mark Johnson, Romances that work: This is an imaginative way to do a Valentine's Day story. The readers likely were able to relate to the three couples. Nice job taking regular folks in every day-type businesses and capturing readers' attention. Good use of quotes.

3rd Belton Star Herald, Allen Edmonds, Dryden: This is a story that likely touched many readers - the closing of a town's corner drug store. I'm betting residents had lots of questions and rumors were swirling about the closing - and this story did a good job answering those questions. Nice placement of quotes from the owner.

24 Best Coverage of Government

1st Smithville Herald, Boil Order: Clearly written coverage of issue that's important to the community. Boil order background info box is a great way to let readers unfamiliar with the topic understand what's happened so far. The "Making Do" sidebar had interesting and succinct information, like the comparison of H2O sold at a local store. The term "state department" could have been clarified. It may make one think of U.S. Department of State, which is commonly referred to as the State Department.

2nd Kearney Courier, Pilot Traffic Problem: What may seem like an ordinary traffic story was quite important. The matter was causing consistent problems in the community. The importance of the matter was conveyed clearly. The author stayed on the story and relayed all the data needed for the public to be well-informed. Well written. The info box on rejected alternatives was an effective way of mentioning them without cluttering the article.

3rd Kearney Courier, Education Funding: Commendable coverage of education funding issue. However, it would have been more comprehensive had the

author included quotes from teachers, in addition to the superintendent and politicians.

25 Best Coverage of Rural/Agriculture

1st Lawrence County Record: Extensive rural/ag coverage. Great section work. Ongoing coverage throughout examples keeps community informed on regular basis.

2nd Gasconade County Republican: Extensive rural/ag coverage. Interesting and informative stories.

26 Best Story About Rural Life/Agriculture

1st Christian County Headliner News, Brady Brite, Raw Tempers: This newsy ag story avoids the unfortunate tendency of some rural reporting towards cuteness or sentimentality. This concerns a real issue affecting small dairies. Good initiative in contacting attorney general's office and in talking to a larger, traditional dairy along with the raw milk producers.

2nd Kearney Courier, Ray Weikal, Growing Change: Loved the lede. Nice story about farmers' transitioning from mechanized agricultural back to a more local model.

3rd The Vandalia Leader, Ron Schott, Helping Farmers: This was a heart-warming story that deserved to be told and the reporter told it well.

27 Best Story About Religion

2nd Lawrence County Record, Charlie Meeks, Off to Africa: Few approaches are more effective in drawing in a reader than the counter-intuitive lede. Meeks does that in this piece, in which a couple of missionaries who'd rather not land in Africa are voluntarily taking up residence there. He provides a nice read for folks who know a little about African countries or the sacrifices that some people of faith are willing to make to put that faith in action. It's not often that we're exposed to Americans whose aspiration is "to end our days in the third world."

28 Best Story About Education

1st Kearney Courier, Ray Weikal, Small Wins: Engaging lede, sharply focused nut graph, illuminating quotes. This story really drew me in and held my attention. Main suggestion: seek out more sources; get more voices into the story. Could you talk to a student? A parent?

2nd Christian County Headliner News, Brady Brite, Power of I: Good eye for a story. On it's face, a new grading system might not offer much news potential. But the reporter's approach and quotes connect with the reader. A fine example of explanation journalism.

3rd Kearney Courier, Ray Weikal, High Status: I like the mystery lede. Story could have had more context: Are students in other districts facing the same problem?

HM Gasconade County Republican, Dave Marner, Test Scores: Feature approach works well on this story.

HM Green Park Call, Mike Anthony, Lindbergh Board: Comprehensive - Lots of facts. Some sentences/paragraph a bit long.

29 Best Story About the Outdoors

1st Lawrence County Record, Charlie Meeks, Tree Farmer: Strong entry point, followed by context of tract's history. Good explanatory journalism.

2nd Christian County Headliner News, Amelia Wigton, White-Nose Syndrome: Despite a labored opening, the author does a good job relating how a threat to bats will affect the average person. Using that information first would draw readers into the story.

3rd Christian County Headliner News, Amelia Wigton, Caves: This piece was positioned as the centerpiece of a multi-page package, but its strength is the art. Plenty of important information; lacks a strong lead.

30 Best Story About History

1st Lawrence County Record, Kathy Fairchild, Ice by the Block: This is the complete package - a fond farewell to a minor landmark, excellent before and now photos. Terrific quotes from "back in the day." The writer really brought history to life.

2nd Lawrence County Record, Charlie Meeks, Britain Mill: Well-written piece on how one couple brings bygone technology to life for an information age public. Good balance of history and how it is being interpreted.

3rd Christian County Headliner News, Brady Brite, Living History: Genealogy might seem a dry subject but the writer pieces together all the elements of what can make it rewarding, exciting and important.

31 Best Coverage of Family Living

1st Smithville Herald: Families in the Smithville area need to pay attention to this paper. Great coverage of family events.

32 Best Coverage of Young People

1st Cedar County Republican: Becky Groff's story on an 18-year-old stroke victim was thorough and detailed. The Feb. 3 multiple-page spread "celebrating 100 years of boy scouts" was an impressive amount of coverage and devotion to an obviously important topic in the community. Jess Hamlet's unorthodox way of presenting the poetry competition was a little confusing, but was a different way of covering a mundane story.

2nd Lee's Summit Tribune: Great to see the follow-up on the Jamboree and what it meant to these kids. I would have liked to see more information

with the photos, though. What were the stories left untold? Good use of photos.

3rd Smithville Herald: Good use of photos, but little substance on the 4/21 issue. Great job working in the unadulterated voices of young people in the 4/21 commentary page. Nancy Hull Rigdon's 2/17 story was a nice way to highlight the good things young people are involved in.

33 Best Page Design

1st Christian County Headliner News, Emily Hoffman, Sidewalks: Building the story on the sidewalk makes perfect sense - a great choice. From the Christmas tree at the top to the "join in" box at the bottom, a good, inviting page.

2nd Christian County Headliner News, Emily Hoffman, Fair: The sans serif font in the main package was a good call. White or blue in the body of that package is tough to pull off, but that font works, too. The ferris wheel adds a good use of space and info box of events is well placed and useful.

3rd Smithville Herald, Amy Neal, Good Times: A clean, vivid list of things to see and do. Colors work well. Easy to read and follow. Makes me want to visit.

34 Best Information Graphic

1st Christian County Headliner News, Adam Letterman, State Of.

2nd Platte County Landmark, Matthew Silber, Border Players.

35 Best Editorial Cartoon

1st Platte County Landmark, Matthew Silber, Raw Sewage: Making the sewage flow into a Hollywood movie monster was a good call. Nice idea.

37 Best Online Newspaper or Website

1st Clinton County Leader: Liked the centerpiece the most - with rotating image and highlighted story. I liked the online poll. Would suggest moving to IAB standard ad sizes, swapping centerpiece with ad, or moving ad to top of site in 728x90 size. Ad is too dominant. Did not care for print ads moved to online on right - old school.

2nd Green Park Call, Jason Lasher, Evan Young: Liked the centerpiece, but thought images could be smaller. Didn't care for masthead - non animated would be better.

38 Best Video

2nd Gasconade County Republican, Dennis Warden, Homecoming Festivities: Some nice moments here. It's clear the schools took time to capture key moments, which I am sure your audience enjoyed watching. Using a tripod

would have greatly improved the video. I would also like to hear interviews with participants. Tell me a story.

3rd Lee's Summit Tribune, Pearl Harbor: A nice succinct moment that could easily compliment an online story. I'd like to see this expand into a video story about one of the taps players, perhaps one who had a relative stationed at Pearl Harbor.

39 Best Headline Writing

1st Lawrence County Record: Nice use of humor, word play.

2nd Kearney Courier: Punny stuff.

Weeklies Class 3 (Gold Medal: Lee's Summit Journal)

1 General Excellence

1st Branson Tri-Lakes News: The paper does an excellent job at the basics - good use of photos, clean layout throughout, descent writing. Love the listing of births and deaths on page A1. Rapper was weak front photo. Special sections, esp. "Pigskin Preview," are excellent. There were a lot of poor photos and confusing layouts in this category.

2nd Springfield Business Journal: Professionally done, front to back. Great use of photos, wonderful graphics. "Most Influential Women" section was excellent - what a great idea and perfectly executed. Great use of color! Earth tones really work. Too much 80s blue and 70s yellow in other entries in the category.

3rd Lee's Summit Journal: Nice writing, clean layout, decent photos. Kill the blue, green and yellow on front.

2 Best Overall Design

1st Springfield Business Journal: Terrific typography with nice, bold headlines throughout publication. Great use of color and graphics. Overall, nice clean, easy-to-read publication.

2nd Branson Tri-Lakes News: Consistent use of bold headlines and pictures. Outstanding Public Notice section.

3rd Cass County Democrat-Missourian: Excellent use of pictures. Departmentalization excellent.

HM Houston Herald: Very clean design throughout publication. More use of color would help this publication.

3 Best Front Page

1st Jackson County Advocate: Nice, well-defined centerpieces, Nov. 11 ("Still Flying High"). They all should look that good, overline on the depot story below it could have been shorter and punchier. Promos look consistently good. Overall, nice presentation.

2nd Marshfield Mail: Very colorful with nice big photos and a good basic layout, but it loses something with the smallish headlines. Bigger headlines could make it pop.

3rd Lee's Summit Journal: I like the centerpieces a lot. The use of nonstandard fonts outside the centerpiece is a little jarring. The cable barrier graphic on Nov. 17 was an excellent concept, though it wound up being a little hard to read. I might recommend a transparent white or background color box next time instead of the darker shaped box.

4 Best Breaking News Story

2nd Lee's Summit Journal, Emily Jerrett, Found Dead: Good job of quickly reaching the scene, interviewing a witness and capturing drama of a deadly fire. Nice details, from the giant flames on the couch to the disabled smoke alarm. A good reminder young and old - get to the scene to get the story.

3rd Lee's Summit Journal, Miranda Wycoff, Best Downtown: Not a typical breaking news story, but the piece was well organized, thoroughly reported and nicely written. The writer would have received more kudos for breaking the story before the official announcement. Still, the writer captures the small town joy of receiving national recognition.

5 Best News Story

1st Jackson County Advocate, Mary Kay Morrow, Safety Concerns: This was a very competitive category, but this story placed 1st because of its thoroughness. The writer starts with a single incident and expands from there; showing the big picture; that students and adults don't feel safe in schools. Like the varied sources and studies cited; loved the comment from the former mayor that we're all in denial.

2nd Houston Herald, Hospital Financing: It's clear that your staff did some hustling after the hospital announcement was made and put together a complete package on the project's impact on the community. Liked the reaction from local leaders, the details from hospital staff, this was "a great day" for Houston.

3rd Jackson County Advocate, Seann McAnally, Fixing Foreclosures: I liked the writing style on this news feature and enjoyed the descriptions of neighborhoods and Jerry Mitchell. Felt like I was riding along. This doesn't have anything to do with the story - word part of it, but why wasn't there a picture of Mitchell and his well-known truck?

HM Cass County Democrat-Missourian, Ashley Freburg, Toddler Found: There were several quirky news stories in the mix, but this one takes the cake, and the writer does a good job of sorting through some bizarre events.

HM Lee's Summit Journal, Miranda Wycoff, Absentee Mayor: A candidate for office made a claim and the reporter checked it out, going through the minutes to see why the mayor missed so many meetings. Then, the writer

gave both sides the chance to explain themselves. Good job of fair and balanced reporting and research.

6 Best Feature Story

1st Lee's Summit Journal, Miranda Wycoff, Miss Lee's Summit: It is refreshing to read about a "hometown hero." I gather from the story Mary Stacy will long be remembered. If folks there keep scrapbooks, they will clip this story. Nice flow.

2nd Bolivar Herald-Free Press, Jim Hamilton, Survivor Reunion: A well-told tale.

3rd Platte County Citizen, Jeanette Browning, The Wall: A feature doesn't have to be long to be entertaining and interesting. You did a good job of keeping it concise.

7 Best News or Feature Series

1st Houston Herald, Kathy Richardson, War Stories: A top-notch piece of historical reporting. Informative and moving.

2nd Marshfield Mail, Linda Green, Jobs: A solid look at unemployment issues, from youth jobs to small business.

3rd Jackson County Advocate, Mary Kay Morrow, Closure of HMHS: This series ably traces the closing of a High School, from first announcement to implementation.

8 Tilghman Cloud Memorial Editorial

1st Marshfield Mail, City Vehicles: The subject matter was an easy choice for editorial writing, but the arguments were sound and convincing, and the writing clear, and not overly flip - yet flip enough to get the readers' attention, carrying us to a reasonable conclusion - the call for public scrutiny.

2nd Cass County Democrat-Missourian, Shouting Fire: A very tough subject handled beautifully, and a fresh, original take on the matter. No doubt readers completely agreed with this position.

3rd Cass County Democrat-Missourian, Reassess: Clearly written argument intended to raise questions, provoke thought on the structure of government. And, they're good questions!

9-H Best Columnist-Humorous

1st Jackson County Advocate, Paul Thompson, New Guy: Paul has a nice conversational style. More importantly, he has a sense of timing - setting up punch lines throughout his columns - and then delivering a nice kicker at the end. I thought he turned his weakness - being new - into a real strength. They also were all relatively short. Remember Shakespeare! "Brevity is the soul of wit." A lot of the other columns I read ran on too long for their own good. I also liked, nay, loved that his columns were

about something other than himself. They were "reported" columns.

2nd Cass County Democrat-Missourian, Dennis Minich: Dennis also has a nice conversational style and I think a lot of readers could identify with the everyday foibles he writes about. His columns also were relatively short - a plus! They also made me laugh.

3rd Lee's Summit Journal, Emily Jarrett: Emily has a nice touch for writing about everyday things. I did not get the affectation of starting every column with the phrase "Off the record," yes, I know it's the column name, but rather than being cute, I think it unintentionally undermines reader trust - confusing what is and isn't off the record. That's a small nit to pick. The columns also are too long, a bit shorter would help. Still, a nice personal touch - open and warm.

9-S Best Columnist-Serious

1st Nixa Xpress, Ryan Bowling: The writer's style engages readers because it's conversational, yet he pulls few punches. His best column examines the misgivings of a councilman who voted to impeach a political opponent. It was critical without being at all hysterical. He writes with authority, whether the subject is the aforementioned conflict of interest, professional wrestling or the importance of seat belts. He relates his subjects to local people or issues and in this way draws in his audience. A minor weakness; he depends a little too much on the pronoun "I." You don't have to write "I agree that it's the appropriate thing to do." Rather, "It's the appropriate thing to do," gets his point across more effectively.

2nd Platte County Citizen, Lee Stubbs: Two of this writer's obvious strengths are his connectedness to his community and his thoughtfulness. His account of a tragic accident that badly injured a little girl, and the community raising money for her, is moving without being maudlin. His piece about drug testing for students who want to drive to high school raises pensive questions rather than smart-alecky ones. The column that began with a pitch for new subscribers is an unusually self-serving entry in a writing contest. But he redeemed it by moving on to a sober reflection on a longtime community employer that's shutting its doors. His voice through all three entries is sincere and consistent.

3rd Lee's Summit Journal, John Beaudoin: This writer isn't afraid to take a politician to task for ugly campaigning. But he's equally comfortable bestowing praise on a community institution (a longtime former publisher) or reflecting on the overseas death of a soldier who was once a local sports hero. Good writing is difficult, yet he seems to pull it off with ease. The columns would be stronger if he had steered clear of the pronoun "I," which is almost always unnecessary. A minor quibble: pay better attention to the differences between "dual" and "duel."

10-F Best Feature Photograph

1st Lee's Summit Journal, Julie Scheidegger, Wear Pink: The cropping made a funny photo pop even more funny.

2nd Branson Tri-Lakes News, Joshua Clark, New Show: Stage lighting behind the spotlight performer added great contrast.

3rd Branson Tri-Lakes News, Mindy Honey, Thanks: Photo says a lot!

HM Cass County Democrat-Missourian, Ashley Freburg, Mutton Bustin': A good feature shot with action.

HM Warren County Record, Derrick Forsythe, In League: The athletes expression caught my eye before the medals did.

10-I Best Photo Illustration

1st Jackson County Advocate, Andrea Wood and Seann McNally, One Block: The illustration is a nice clean informative graphic. It's a interesting illustration.

2nd Lee's Summit Journal, Julie Scheidegger, Turf Liars: Close between this and the first place. We liked the illustration and design on the page. Good work.

3rd Jackson County Advocate, Andrea Wood and Colleen May, Founding Family: Nice blending of visual icons and story. Helps us want to read story.

10-N Best News Photograph

1st Cass County Democrat-Missourian, Ashley Freburg, Cario Dance: An easy-to-read and to-the-point photo.

2nd Houston Herald, Brad Gentry, Sheriff's Car: Seeing the sheriff's car in the middle made me stop to scan the entire photo twice.

3rd Lee's Summit Journal, Julie Scheidegger, House Fire: A tighter crop on the little boy. A fireman on steps and this could have been 1st.

HM Lee's Summit Journal, Julie Scheidegger, Wreck: A busy but interesting photo.

10-S Best Sports Photograph

1st Lee's Summit Journal, Julie Scheidegger, Defeat: A perfect photo! A emotional rollercoaster!

2nd Lee's Summit Journal, Stephen Bubalo, Tower of Power: Great action photo!

3rd Lee's Summit Journal, Julie Scheidegger, One in Hand: Tough, could have easily been first place.

HM Houston Herald, Jeff McNiell, Catch: Great timing!

HM Lee's Summit Journal, Julie Scheidegger, Rain Delay: Good behind the scenes action.

11 Best Photo Package

1st Warren County Record, Fair: If you didn't go to the fair then, the readers were treated to a full day of photos.

2nd Warren County Record, Bill Barrett, Deutsch Country: I felt like I was back in time.

3rd Marshfield Mail, Nick Snow and Linda Greer, County Fair: A fun day of photography.

HM Cass County Democrat-Missourian, Ashley Freburg and Stephanie Yeagle, Homecoming: A small-town treasure.

12-A Best Ad Idea/Advertiser

1st Springfield Business Journal, Mar' Ellen Felin, Sustainable: Excellent use of color, design and layout. Modern and exciting flow of pages and information. Design was exciting and flows in sync with emphasis of the piece. Was a bit confused on last 2 pages looked like they should have been reversed with the big fp/finish.

2nd Springfield Business Journal, Mar' Ellen Felin, Make Over Team: Eye-catching use of color and design elements. Creative watermark effect. Uniform ad legend codes were a good idea.

3rd Bolivar Herald-Free Press, Billie Marsh, Football Flag: Good use of color and flow. Game schedule could have been highlighted more. Overall look was well done.

HM The Odessan, Linda Gillis, Odessa's Heroes: Unique and creative. Would have liked to know "why" or "what" focus was, but a good idea.

HM Springfield Business Journal, Mar' Ellen Felin, Who's Who: Great flow. Crisp/clean design. Bold in approach.

12-N Best Ad Idea/Newspaper

1st Springfield Business Journal, Heather Mosley, VIP Pass: Very creative idea! I really liked that you used gutter space to create this image. Very modern and eye catching. Really "pops" and information is clear to the reader.

2nd Nixa Xpress, 50 Years: Creative use of vintage look blended with modern style. Good balance of layout and look.

3rd The Odessan, Golden Milestone: Good visual effect. Nice blend of old and new content.

HM Bolivar Herald-Free Press, Billie Marsh, Holidays: Balanced, colorful and creative.

HM Springfield Business Journal, James Phinney, SBJ.net/life: Great tagline(s). Image was a bit conflicting with tagline on box of chocolates ad.

13 Best News Content

1st Branson Tri-Lakes News: A good, hefty community paper. The three

editions were newsy and generally well written.

2nd Springfield Business Journal: Chock full of well-written stories. There's more variety and life in this business publication than in many general-interest publications.

3rd Bolivar Herald-Free Press: Very solid community paper. The distance between 1st and 3rd in this category is tiny. Design is not a factor in this category, but the cluttered, dated look is disguising a very good newspaper.

14 Community Service Award

1st Jackson County Advocate, Memorial Scholarship: This was a very fitting tribute to one of your staffers. The messages from community members were very touching and seemed to include a diverse cross section of community members including local political figures, elected officials, business owners and friends. Wonderful idea and effort.

15 Best Editorial Page

1st Bolivar Herald-Free Press: Very strong pages. Nice typography use.

2nd Branson Tri-Lakes News: Clean pages. Like the color.

3rd Lee's Summit Journal: Nicely done.

16 Best Sports Page

1st Warren County Record, Derrick Forsythe: Great writing and photography, good layout of headlines, a well-written column - and it's all the same person! Derrick Forsythe knows what he is doing. Give him a raise! Excellent job.

2nd Branson Tri-Lakes News, Pat Dailey: Another entry with multi-talented writer and photographer, and a good one. Blue at top of page with yellow is a bit dated. NAIA photo spread is a bit busy. Craft mall story is a neat idea, but the ad in the story is a little hokey. Otherwise, outstanding!

3rd Platte County Citizen, Lee Stubbs: Nice overall coverage. I love the "Trails and Shore's" outdoor column. Holy smoke what a huge advertisement at the bottom - it overwhelms the page. Kill the purple in the box.

17 Best Sports News Story or Package

1st Cass County Democrat-Missourian, Stephanie Yeagle, Sherwood Coach: Extensive coverage of "issue." Keep the reader well informed and he'll become a fan of yours. Good reporting. Where is Gibbs now?

2nd Bolivar Herald-Free Press, Bill Breshears, Cross Country: Good event coverage. Nice mix of narrative with statistics. Better than just a list of placements. Gives story life.

3rd Jackson County Advocate, Paul Thompson, Higher Leaps: Interesting

lead. Shows White's character. Nice presentation.

18 Best Sports Feature Story

1st Lee's Summit Journal, Stephen Bubalo, Decisions: Bubalo pulls us in with his lead and follows the decision-making process for a talented, young athlete. He subtly suggests his subject's working-man ethic (I was pouring concrete...) and low-key, balanced approach. No fireworks, just a solid piece of feature reporting (kudos also to photographer Julie Scheiddeger with her pensive portrait).

2nd Warren County Record, Derrick Forsythe, Tour of Duty: Forsythe takes the ordinary--high school coach--and tells about the extraordinary experience of serving in Afghanistan. The feature brings a far-away, international trouble spot into the immediate grasp of its readers. Good photo selection completes the package.

3rd Marshfield Mail, Ryan Cornelius, Mason Hinkle: Nine-year-old Mason Hinkle is a winner and an unlikely looking one from the charming shot by author Cornelius -- and his parents are with him all the way. A refreshing feature that breaks with the usual sports offerings. Cornelius covers all the bases involved from safety to promo.

HM Lee's Summit Journal, Stephen Bubalo, Iraq Basketball: The story of coaching an Iraq women's team is a great tale of local/global. Reporter Stephen Bubalo balances feminist issues quite well. Terrific photos!

HM Platte County Citizen, Jerry Keuhn, Kayaking: When was the last time a kayaking story got top billing on a sports page? Jerry Keuhn's narrative about a high school industrial arts student is refreshing.

19 Best Sports Columnist

HM Lee's Summit Journal, Stephen Bubalo: Crisp, solid columns on local sports.

20 Best Special Section

1st Bolivar Herald-Free Press, Vision 20/20: I liked the concept - sounded like it might be overwhelming for staff - kid on cover is appropriate - that is the future. Variety of stories. Easy to follow. Community would find an advertiser index helpful.

2nd Nixa Xpress, 50 Years: Great cover. Interesting stories. Involves the community.

3rd Houston Herald, Kathy Richardson, Reenactment: Cover a little busy with all the font work, but it remains focused. Serves a purpose.

21 Best Investigative Reporting

1st Lee's Summit Journal, Miranda Wycoff, Documents Confirm: Nice use of records to confirm information from sources. Good accountability journalism.

HM Jackson County Advocate, Paul Thompson, Inn Closes: The most vital information was deep in the story. Otherwise, nice effort.

22 Best Local Business Coverage

1st Springfield Business Journal, Eric Olson.

2nd Houston Herald.

3rd Cass County Democrat-Missourian.

23 Best Business Story

1st Lee's Summit Journal, Emily Jarrett, Create Local: Well-written story. I get the impression the business community is very supportive and the newspaper is a key player.

2nd Lee's Summit Journal, Miranda Wycoff, RED: Public financing of private ventures is always a challenging topic. Your reporting and writing make it seem so simple.

3rd Cass County Democrat-Missourian, Ashley Freburg, Peculiar Place: Good example of a successful effort to recognize accomplishment of a local business without making it seem like an advertisement.

24 Best Coverage of Government

1st Lee's Summit Journal, Primary Finances: Informal yet engaging writing style. Not stilted like so much hard news reporting these days. Writer obviously engaged and knowledgeable of subjects. Good use of analysis mixed in with news-without crossing line into editorial.

2nd Marshfield Mail, City Vehicles: Well organized story, clearly written, thoroughly researched.

3rd Houston Herald, Brad Gentry, Anderson: Stories informative yet easy reads. Good balance of new information and background on stories as case progressed.

HM Bolivar Herald-Free Press, Charlotte Marsch and Sarah West, Aquatic Center.

HM Lee's Summit Journal, Mayor ousted.

25 Best Coverage of Rural Life/Agriculture

1st Buffalo Reflex: This newspaper offers useful, if not flashy farm news and pays tribute to an overlooked segment of society.

26 Best Rural Life/Ag Story

1st Marshfield Mail, Linda Greer, Dexter: This story provided a beautiful sense of place. The writing was both clear and explanatory. The story was also well-organized and featured a variety of voices. Nice slice of life.

2nd Bolivar Herald-Free Press, Sarah West, I Do: What a delightful little tale! This story wove together an everyday life occurrence with a slice of

agricultural life. One of those stories that just makes you go "awww."

27 Best Story About Religion

2nd Bolivar Herald-Free Press, Sarah West, Planting Seeds: This story could have risen to first place if the reporter had talked to more people than Kayla. It was a nice story, but had limited voice. What about talking to other members of the team? The story was organized well and had a readable tone.

3rd Cass County Democrat-Missourian, Ashley Freburg, AIDS Relief: The reporter planted a nice twist in the middle of this story, and that's what helped raise it to 3rd place. The story also made a connection between the AIDS crisis and religious bent of the group raising funds.

28 Best Story About Education

1st Jackson County Advocate, Mary Kay Morrow, Perfect Touch: Wow, this is certainly not your typical brick and mortar story. Facts and details are there. Morrow makes it known this is a special place and then tells why it needed to be a special place.

2nd Lee's Summit Journal, Emily Jarrett, Staying on Track: After reading this one, I feel like I know who Storm Scogen is. Thanks for not dwelling on his hardships. There's more to him than his past. He's got future.

3rd Lee's Summit Journal, Emily Jarrett, Hunter Runs: I like your style. You really let your subjects tell the story. Good use of quotes. You tied it all together well.

29 Best Story About the Outdoors

1st Platte County Citizen, Bill Graham, Bird Dogs: Lovely descriptions of "finding a bobwhite covey here and there and chasing quail singles and him looking up right "on point" with Rex. It would have been easy to get sappy, but Graham gives his bird dog an honorable send-off.

2nd Bolivar Herald-Free Press, Sarah West, Steve Criner: Who knew there was a business in predator calling? West explains Criner's work and what got him interested!

3rd Jackson County Advocate, Paul Thompson, Carving a Niche: Good find for profile material on Steven Higgins.

30 Best Story About History

1st Lee's Summit Journal, Miranda Wycoff, Flight to Remember: You give the reader just enough facts to put the reunion into perspective. That keeps the reader focused on the people, not the place or the war. That's the way I like it.

2nd Cass County Democrat-Missourian, Ashley Freburg, Pitts Chapel: Nice treatment of effort to restore and preserve a local landmark.

3rd Houston Herald, Kathy Richardson: This is an interesting story from the "home front." Although a bit wordy. I bet your regular readers expect the whole story.

31 Best Coverage of Family Living

1st Jackson County Advocate: Nice news/features show that the newspaper has a heart for the community.

2nd Bolivar Herald-Free Press: Very interesting features, and the twins are beyond cute.

32 Best Coverage of Young People

1st Lee's Summit Journal: I thought the High School Sports coverage was quite good. The writers developed nice angles and included plenty of quotes to give the stories color.

2nd Bolivar Herald-Free Press: The one thing that caught my eye in this entry was the Botts Culinary story - nice photos and most importantly, it went beyond the bulletin-board material so common in small papers.

33 Best Page Design

1st Springfield Business Journal, Aaron Scott, Springfield: Good story, great photo, liked the information box, "Ups and Downs" graphic stole the show. Should it have been ragged right? I don't know, either. Captions are ragged right, however?

2nd Lee's Summit Journal, Miranda Wycoff, Downtown: Boxes, timeline, photos. This is a very nice piece on an important milestone. Made me care and want to read about it. Excellent selection of photographs.

3rd Houston Herald, Road Ahead: Hey! That's a fun layout and great idea. Somebody gets high marks for creativity!

34 Best Information Graphic

1st Lee's Summit Journal, Cable vs. Concrete: Though a little dark/hard to read, this summed up precisely what the readers needed to know. Costs, effectiveness, and what happens with these barriers. If readers never read the story, they'd understand immediately its conclusions.

2nd Lee's Summit Journal, Candidate Numbers: Summarizes 3 candidates' financial resources in one easy box. Could have been improved by omitting photos and evening the type - but information is a good grasp.

3rd Bolivar Herald-Free Press, Charlotte Marsch, Street Paving: Clear, sharp image/map of exactly where roads are proposed for improvements - would have helped with a brighter red, but readers got the picture.

35 Best Editorial Cartoon

1st Lee's Summit Journal, Mike Gempeler, Crybaby: "Miss Karen" verbiage is

funny, along with the overall concept. And it's local.

2nd Houston Herald, Kathy Richardson, Digging Deeper: The multi-frame buildup creates suspense and last panel delivers a funny punch.

3rd Houston Herald, R.T. Smith, Monkey: Nice ape!

36 Best Newspaper in Education Program

1st Eldon Advertiser: I picked this program as first because it focuses on writing and getting students to want to write. And what better way to do that than by letting kids publish their own paper. I'm glad you still devote space to youth work in this miserable economy, when so many other papers have had to cut the space once devoted to youth work.

2nd The Odessan, Renee Spaar and Staff: Very complete program! You've obviously gotten things down pat in 10 years. The local stories, about the Civil War or from Mark Twain are a great way for kids to connect to their newspaper and the community around them.

3rd Warren County Record: Your NIE numbers are awesome. Congratulations for getting into so many classrooms and homes. Hope your circulation growth will mirror your ongoing NIE efforts.

37 Best Online Newspaper or Website

1st Springfield Business Journal, Geoff Pickle: I liked the stock tickers across top of site. I liked the centerpiece very much. I also liked the social networking tools above fold. Suggestions: Exchange 468 X 60 with 725 X 90, looks like you have enough room.

2nd Douglas County Herald, Josh Hoppe: Like animated centerpiece. Looked very "newsy." Noticed the lack of ads, wondering if it's because I logged in? If not, get some ad revenue!

HM Houston Herald, Jeff McNiell and Brad Gentry: Too many animated ads (and I love online ads). Peel back and pencil ad loaded on my first visit. Both car ads bad first impression.

39 Best Headline Writing

1st Lee's Summit Journal: "Crossing Guard" took a well-known phrase and gave it a different meaning. "Wreaking Havoc" was the least strong.

2nd Jackson County Advocate: "Crossing the Line" made me want to read more because it didn't give away the whole story. "Still Flying High" was maybe a little too obvious and "Well-Kept Secret" was poorly written.

Weeklies, Class 4 (Gold Medal: St. Louis Business Journal)

1 General Excellence

1st St. Louis American: While this qualifies as a niche publication, because it doesn't cover the community as a whole, this is by far the best

minority publication I have ever seen. We have a few in Virginia, Richmond, Norfolk and an Asian-American publication in Northern Virginia. This blows all of those away. I love the range and variety from A1 to "Party line." Directory issue was outstanding! A truly beneficial and enlightening project. Great writing, great stories, wide variety. This paper serves the African-American community very well!

2nd St. Louis Business Journal: Strong publication all the way around. Great design, great graphics, wide range of stories. Features as well as hard-hitting stories. Sharp advertisements. Wide variety with social events, opinion, etc. However this is a niche publication and not a traditional newspaper, for example - no sports section - (one of the criteria). The only thing keeping it from being first. Biggest weakness: Front cover consider a "cover story."

3rd Missouri Lawyers Weekly: While it's hard to compare a niche publication like this to a traditional weekly community newspaper - this publication is very well done. If you are a lawyer in Missouri, you should be reading this; wide range of thorough information. Features, briefs, graphics, news, profiles - good range. Still a lot of "grey space" at times - more visuals on the inside would help.

HM Washington Missourian Wednesday: This is the definition of a community newspaper. Relevant stories, lots and lots of information (almost all local) lots of names and faces (photos). A few suggestions: Inside content seems very hodge-podge at times, briefs scattered about etc. may want to block those out or create categories for community notices. More letters from readers would be nice too. Drop the line under wild art headers! Too much for rules on the page. P.S. the weekend edition would have also eared an HM, but it appears to be the same paper, just a little thinner, they also had A1 stories with no headlines.

2 Best Front-to-Back Newspaper Design

1st St. Louis Business Journal: Clearly the best! Clean, neat appearance. Well labeled and easy to follow. May want to text wrap points of entry, such as mug shots, pull quotes, graphs. Rather than breaking columns completely. Split these elements b/w 2 columns and use text wrap instead. Very attractive publication! Charts are easy to read and understand. Use more real photography and be less dependent on mugs and clipart and portraits.

2nd St. Louis American: Very sharp looking publication. This was a close second. Some minor details may have kept this from being first place. Good use of white space, but almost too much white space. Ruler missing in places where they were needed to separate packages. Various news is grouped well and easy to follow. Some pull quotes sit too close to body text. Good use of color and variation of headlines. Lots of photos - always good. May 5th issue too little copy w/top story. Strong entry!

3rd Missouri Lawyers Weekly: Very sharp presentation. Great information boxes on cases. Very reader friendly. However, lots of gray space. Needs more visual elements. Photographs, graphics, clip art, most art is mug shots or portraits. Nice section on Women's Justice Awards!

HM Guidon: This was close to winning third place. Very clean presentation, lots of information. Cutouts on mastheads as teasers are great. Color on every page-impressive! (must be nice) Good use of text wrap! April 8th issue, 2 rows of mugshots doesn't work for A1.

3 Best Front Page

1st Missouri Lawyers Weekly: Comprehensive coverage of important topics. Nice, clean lines and layout. Readable headline font. Oct. 11 issue: great idea to put a mugshot of person in pull quote. Oct. 18 issue: Wish more newspapers had "Why this Story Matters" like you do. Clearly marked and bold use of table of contents on front page for extensive coverage of church an important and timely topic. Creative graphic would have been better had its color either matched the newspaper name exactly or been completely different. Too much white space at bottom under company logo. Make logo bigger to fill.

2nd Liberty Tribune: The photos have personalities! Excellent use of color. Easily readable font. At least 3 headlines (or 2 heads and a kicker) are above the fold, which is a great way to get more people to pick up the issue. Keeping info in box simple with basic who, what, when and where is good. It keeps it uncluttered.

3rd Guidon: Good coverage of diverse topics that are important to a military community. Clean layout but consider having more subheads or pull quotes to grab attention and get people more interested in reading the articles. There are plenty of photos, but they don't have any "personality."

4 Best Breaking News Story

1st Washington Missourian Wednesday, Ed Pruneau, Charge Suspect: Good pair of stories: one on the bust of a meth lab and the second on the impact of crime on the children of those arrested. I would have liked to have had another source quoted in the foster care piece, however.

2nd Missouri Lawyers Weekly, Allison Retka, Goes Nuclear: Important story, and it's good to know someone is paying attention and not letting poor defendants fall through the cracks of the court system.

3rd St. Louis Business Journal, E.B. Solomunt, Hospital Ruling: Nice look beyond the patient-care facility of the health-care industry and the competitive business aspects - well done.

5 Best News Story

1st Washington Missourian Wednesday, Bill Miller Jr., Defeated: This is a

cautionary tale about drug abuse that pulls the reader in from the first sentence. A true tell-it-through-a-person approach to a regional meth problem.

2nd Washington Missourian Weekend, Ed Pruneau, No Charge: This is an illuminating story that likely was of great interest to readers considering who to vote for in the November election. The background of the official's past confrontations in the political arena was a nice touch.

3rd Arnold-Imperial Leader, Kim Robertson, Free Digs: A nice case of the press alerting one of the parties involved to a situation. The writer did a good job delineating the "gray areas" involved in what at first appeared to be a blatant abuse of position, and also bringing in the legal dispute over the property.

HM Northeast News, Emily Randall, Murdered Teen: Good job covering a local tragedy and getting the broader perspective on the crime problem in a minority community through a crime prevention group.

6 Best Feature Story

1st Washington Missourian Wednesday, Bill Miller Jr., Defeated: In a category with many entries, this was the best by a couple of lengths. Mr. Miller knew where he wanted to go and, by golly, got there with this fascinating and cautionary tale of self-destruction that could well be a teaching tool for a drug-prevention program. Bravo. And, by the way, great interviewing technique. Final quote was a little anticlimactic - authorial narrative would have been better.

2nd St. Charles Journal, Raymond Castile, Waitkoss: This is a riveting story about one of life's losers-very sad yet tastefully done. Wonderful detail. And the first two paragraphs are an absolute hook - though I would have combined them.

3rd Jefferson County Leader, Laura Marlow, Enormous Egg: This is a well-written, funny story much improved by Ms. Marlow's low-key grace notes (calling the hens "ladies," a henly diet of "whatever bugs she can scratch up," etc.).

HM Jefferson County Leader, Rebecca Bishop, Unstoppable: A nice, upbeat story, basically well handled but focus should be more on the boy and less on the bureaucracy. Pursue those personal details!

7 Best News or Feature Series

1st St. Charles Journal, Raymond Castile, Homeless: Very compelling series with outstanding reporting felt immediate connection to the subjects of the stories. Good use of information boxes, good photos and presentation. Great writing.

2nd Jefferson County Leader, For Richer: Nice to see a newspaper doing the heavy lifting needed to keep its community informed. Very comprehensive

series.

3rd St. Louis Business Journal, Bank Woes: Very good series of stories bringing the impact of a national issue - the housing market collapse - home and illustrating its impact on the local business community.

HM Washington Missourian Weekend, Ed Pruneau and Tim Schmidt, Bottom Road: Good job highlighting the unwillingness of local government to own up to its responsibilities. Unbelievable that neither government will step forward to fix this problem.

8 Tilghman Cloud Memorial Editorial

1st Washington Missourian Wednesday, Good News, Mayor!: This newspaper's entries were all very good - I caught myself reading some of the editorials above and below the actual entries. Several of the editorials explained the role of newspapers in a thoughtful way, but none more than "Good News, Mayor!" It explains the process of finding an "Above the Fold" front story in a way that is open and transparent. A courageous, well-written statement that needs to be made from time to time.

2nd St. Charles Journal, Vegas Trip: Absolutely a must-write and must-read. Somebody needs to do the heavy lifting of editorial writing, and this newspaper certainly is. Steve Pokin, the writer, must be among the best journalists in the state. His name is everywhere. Can he come to Virginia?

3rd Liberty Tribune, Giving Oaks: I love an editorial that gets me out of the council chambers and into the community. Parallel with "The Giving Tree" is superb. Good conclusion, but writer probably could have taken more of a stand.

9-H Best Columnist-Humorous

1st St. Charles Journal, Steve Pokin: This wins with fresh turns of phrase, comical signature and writing that makes me smile. Writing humorously is hard to pull off. This guy has cracked the code. The "lying' sleaze ball" piece was brilliant.

2nd Jefferson County Leader, Patrick Martin: This entry shows a nice array of topics. Writer seems like he has a great working history of the community and a knowledge of its issues. The "Cleaning Up" column was especially well done.

3rd Jefferson County Journal, Kevin Carbery: This guy wins because the trivia quiz is such a creative idea. Writing is good, but the quiz is a popular feature, I bet.

9-S Best Columnist-Serious

1st South County Times, Don Corrigan: Don Corrigan gets it. Using facts he cuts through the baloney to get to real stuff. The readers of the South County Times are fortunate to have him.

2nd Jefferson County Leader, Patrick Martin: Folksy voice a good tool for handling complex subjects that he doesn't mind taking an unpopular stand.

10-F Best Feature Photograph

1st Liberty Tribune, Matt Frye, Aderal: I had to read the cutline, the blur made this photo #1.

2nd Liberty Tribune, Grad Kids: Nice to see something other than moving the tassel.

3rd Washington Missourian Wednesday, Jeanne Miller Wood, Take a Ride: Very funny and a different side of beauty queen.

HM Webster-Kirkwood Times, Diane Linsley, Monarch: The large size and color made this shot.

10-I Best Photo Illustration

1st St. Louis Business Journal, Michael Behrens, Charter Snake: Very simple, clean and innovative - smart execution of idea. Good job.

2nd St. Louis Business Journal, Michael Behrens, Anheuser-Busch: Nice attempt - only concern was that it may be misconstrued as New York drinks/etc. But it's a good attempt. Good to see the effort!

3rd St. Louis Business Journal, Michael Behrens, Foreclosures: Clearly not as good as the others, but it's simple, clean and easy to understand, and it's informative.

10-N Best News Photograph

1st Washington Missourian Weekend, Nathan Woodside, Interstate Crash: I could not take my eyes off, perfect angle.

2nd Washington Missourian Weekend, Jeanne Miller Wood, Vehicle Recovery: Great cropping, rescue lights add good effect.

3rd Washington Missourian Wednesday, Jeanne Miller Wood, Hunt Robber: Looks like you are one step ahead of the law, great positioning.

HM Washington Missourian Weekend, Jeanne Miller Wood, Heavy Smoke: Great composition, front and back!

10-S Best Sports Photograph

1st West County Journal, Andrew Jansen, Pass Defense: Impact shot, I could feel and hear the hit.

2nd South County Journal, Rich Graefe, Intensity: The timing made this photo really pop.

3rd Arnold-Imperial Leader, Ted Howell, Rock Knocked: Tighter cropping, upper half to the two players would result in higher finish.

HM St. Louis American, Wiley Price, One More Win: Better cropping, should have cropped out photographer.

11 Best Photo Package

1st Missouri Lawyers Weekly, Karen Elshout, Have Robe: You must have put a lot of time in this and it shows. Excellent work!

2nd St. Charles Journal, Stephanie Eichmeyer, Snap Shots: The variety of photos made this a winner.

3rd Liberty Tribune, Kyle Rivas, Do Si Do: A down home feeling.

HM Missouri Lawyers Weekly, Karen Elshout, Fighter: Great story.

HM Webster-Kirkwood Times, Diana Linsley, Turkey Day: Nice selection.

12-A Best Ad Idea or Promotion of an Advertiser

2nd St. Louis Business Journal, Dan Schriber, Kipp.

3rd Washington Missourian Wednesday, Mindy Heidmann, Imo's Pizza.

12-N Best Ad Idea or Promotion of the Newspaper

1st St. Louis American, Kevin Jones, Reader Calendar: Great idea! Impressive results, great way to promote annual sections for the year.

2nd Washington Missourian Wednesday, Holiday Gift Pages: Eye catching, bold and crisp art/colors.

3rd St. Louis Business Journal, Dan Schriber, Patience: Innovative concept, uncluttered and unique layout and idea.

13 Best News Content

1st St. Louis Business Journal: The Business Journal took gold in this. The news content is spread throughout the publication in a wide variety of content. Every aspect of the business world covered with an interesting and conversational tone. Great work!

2nd Missouri Lawyers Weekly: Every page of Missouri Lawyers Weekly was an intriguing read. The variety of stories coupled with the reporters; crisp writing style made for an overall great product. The features on new partners and scammers were nice additions.

3rd Jefferson County Leader: Great variety of news from government to education to sports to crime.

14 Community Service Award

1st St. Louis American: This newspaper is involved in a veritable onslaught of community-boosting activities providing uplift and recognizing achievement in ways hard to enumerate.

2nd Washington Missourian: "Book Buzz" should be emulated in some fashion by newspapers across the country. This newspaper is supplying "value added" to children in the process of growing up.

3rd St. Louis Business Journal: A very worthy undertaking.

15 Best Editorial Pages

1st Washington Missourian Wednesday, Bill Miller Sr.: Great commonsense editorials and commentary.

2nd St. Louis American: Excellent job holding officials' feet to the fire.

16 Best Sports Pages

1st Liberty Tribune, Chris Geinosky: Clean look to fronts with strong centerpiece package. Strong feature photos used prominently. Good mix of feature and columns content.

2nd Washington Missourian Weekend: Strong overall local content. Fonts a little much for readers. Score boxes too large, competing with subheaders and even headlines. Could use more dominant centerpiece.

3rd Washington Missourian Wednesday: Same strengths and weaknesses as the second-place finisher, minus oversized score boxes. Good photo use, but should pick a dominant shot for lead. Info boxes a good addition and add to package.

HM Guidon, Matt Decker: Good overall content, but less is more with photos. Needs a dominant package with one or two strong photos.

17 Best Sports News Story or Package

1st Jefferson County Journal, Dennis Barnidge, Drama: Lead pumps the reader up for a long run. Very thorough. I liked hearing from the coaches and the runners.

2nd Jefferson County Leader, Gordon Bess, De Soto Football: Story telling style, full of details turns what could have been another lopsided victory story into a pleasurable read.

3rd St. Louis Business Journal, Christopher Tritto, Zero to 200: Effective lead drew me into reading a story I otherwise would not have read.

18 Best Sports Feature Story

1st Missouri Lawyers Weekly, Anna Vitale, Fighter: Crisply written, well-told story of a nontraditional athlete. Great topic was matched with great writing. Thanks for saving me from all the sound-the-same high school sports stories.

2nd St. Louis Business Journal, Christopher Tritto, Rams Insurance: Great topic well explained. Answered the question all of us ask about these high-dollar athletes. Very informative, nice work.

3rd South County Journal, David Kvidahl, Last Hurrah: What a package! Excellent sidebars and good writing. It would have been nice to get a quote in the main story.

HM Jefferson County Leader, Gordon Bess, Activities Director: Wonderful topic. Great way of telling the story. Held me until the end. Would have done better but a very competitive category. Great writing.

HM Jefferson County Journal, Dennis Barnidge, Surviving: Great idea for a

story, but you missed on execution. An overwritten lead! Got better as it progressed.

19 Best Sports Columnist

1st Liberty Tribune, Jeff Nations: Showed impressive range with first-person account and sidebar news/analysis piece. Solid work throughout.

2nd Jefferson County Leader, Gordon Bess: Has a knack for weaving relevant information into an easy, conversational style of writing. Establishes a topic and sticks to it.

3rd Washington Missourian Wednesday, Bill Battle: The column on Haddox's death was well-done, especially the inclusion of his own interactions. Probably should have been the topic of the entire column--the break was somewhat jarring.

HM St. Louis American, Mike Claiborne: Strongest opinions in group; would have preferred more local focus.

20 Best Special Section

1st Missouri Lawyers Weekly, Jill Miller and Jason Lewton, Practically Everything: Great content delivery inside, nice user-friendly format with glossy pages. One critique, title and photo on cover a little confusing.

2nd Missouri Lawyers Weekly, Jill Miller and Jess Huang, 31 Days: Close to first! Great layout and cover. Nicer on glossy stock. Did like the "number treatment on top of pages."

3rd St. Louis Business Journal, 30 Under 30: Nice theme, great photography and layout! Interesting writing!

HM St. Louis American, Diversity: Nice theme and editorial. Overall, nice and strong piece.

21 Best Investigative Reporting

1st St. Charles Journal, Steve Pokin, Las Vegas: Excellent investigation into government. Typography, images, graphics all contribute to a well-thought-out, well-executed report.

2nd Jefferson County Leader, Big Bucks: Solid work in exploring disparate pay for elected positions. Text is number-heavy, making it difficult to follow at times. Tables comparing salaries may have been more useful.

22 Best Local Business Coverage

1st St. Louis American: Outstanding issue--wide coverage of diversity in the workplace along with additional coverage of other business issues such as a bond issue for school improvements and a feature on a homeless support center-operated business incubator.

2nd Washington Missourian Wednesday: Good overall business news on a variety of happenings including a visit by the governor associated with

the groundbreaking for a new industrial plant. Nice feature on small business person who makes jewelry of antique buttons. Nice variety.

3rd Liberty Tribune: Good informative stories on topics of interest to readership--local college rankings as to graduate earnings, the upcoming opening of a chain grocery store, follow-up on reaction of local businesses to a smoking ban for restaurants and bars.

23 Best Business Story

1st St. Louis Business Journal, Christopher Tritto, Rare Earth: Fascinating, intriguing story brings home the international complexity. Great to see how this all ties together. Well done.

2nd St. Louis Business Journal, Angela Mueller and Christopher Tritto, St. Louis Stocks: Great local story brings to life stock returns in an engaging manner. Great individual success stories throughout.

3rd Missouri Lawyers Weekly, Allison Retka, Yellow Pages: Fantastic look at a dying business--Yellow Pages--and the impact on local attorneys.

HM Missouri Lawyers Weekly, Christine Simmons, Healthcare Law: Good look at positive of new law.

24 Best Coverage of Government

1st Jefferson County Leader, For richer: The Jefferson County Leader's series on fire districts is an enormously important, ambitious project fully deserving of the top prize in this category. The series is detailed, well-reported and comprehensive, reflecting the very best of what a community newspaper should be. Everyone involved should feel very proud of this work. This excellent reporting leaves readers well armed for debate. But voices for change are mostly silent. Is the legislature pleased with how this law is working? Are taxpayers happy with what they're getting? How do other counties and other states pay for firefighting? Consolidation, worth its own chapter in the series, comes up far too deep to have much impact.

2nd St. Louis Business Journal, Tobacco tax: The St. Louis Business Journal's discovery that Missouri's cigarette tax had become the lowest in the U.S. was well worthy of page one treatment. The story is well researched and raises an important public policy question; why is the tax so low--lower even than tobacco-producing states? The story does a nice job exploring reasons why the tax should be higher. But it never really explains why it's so low. Also, the failure to compare Missouri's cigarette price per pack with New York, for example, keeps this story detached from many readers.

3rd St. Louis American: The St. Louis American views coverage of government as a core newspaper function. The attention to government news is a commendable public service, showing that its leaders are willing to expend considerable resources to inform readers, especially about election

issues. The Political Eye column is especially noteworthy. The column is witty, informative and intimate, distinguishing the newspaper from any competitor.

26 Best Story About Rural Life Or Agriculture

1st Jefferson County Leader, Laura Marlow, Ouch!: If the lead doesn't get you to read this story, the photo will.

2nd Liberty Tribune, Ray Weikal, New B&B: Good treatment of an intriguing business concept. The writer goes beyond the obvious, citing research to support the need for such businesses.

27 Best Story About Religion

1st Webster-Kirkwood Times, Don Corrigan, Religious Differences: Though not the best writing in this group, it is easily the best treatment of religious issues. Well done.

2nd South County Times, Don Corrigan, See Jesus?: Strong feature on how a child's innocent observation can touch so many people.

3rd Washington Missourian Wednesday, Karen Cernich, Celebrating Sisterhood: A terrific opportunity for a feature on what propels women to become nuns. Elements are there; readers got a nice biographical piece.

28 Best Story About Education

1st Missourian Weekend, Karen Cernich, Pets Go: Nicely written profile of an animal trainer who offers programs in local schools. The reporter did a good job using quotes that made it clear how the programs are used to teach character-building lessons to students.

2nd Missourian Weekend, Karen Cernich, Fitness Revolution: Interesting feature writing with good amount of detail about on school's innovative nutrition and fitness program--telling at a local level an important story related to the USA's epidemic of youth obesity.

3rd Liberty Tribune, Ray Weikal, Hope Factor: Informative story about often overlooked segment of schools--English language learners--told through experience of student who recently immigrated from Pakistan.

29 Best Story About the Outdoors

1st Webster-Kirkwood Times, Don Corrigan, Stay Safe: The author draws the reader in to build interest in a community-wide effort. Graphics help define the issue.

2nd Washington Missourian Wednesday, Karen Cernich, It Grows: Good feature on a community garden. The writer entices the reader with a personal account, then weaves the stories together.

3rd Liberty Tribune, Ray Weikal, On the Path: Well-done follow-up on a decades-old story. Sometimes the best stories come from our own archives.

30 Best Story About History

1st Jefferson County Leader, Laura Marlow, Wreck on River: Terrific, colorful lead that pulls the reader right into the river with the bull! Brings the story into the present...especially with hull still visible at times.

2nd South County Journal, Chris Campbell, Baseball Heaven: Who doesn't love a well-told tale of an underdog? Focusing on the 36 living Browns players adds special poignancy.

3rd West County Journal, Mary Shapiro, Fashionable: The "Chipmunk quilt" is a great way to take your best shot...and use it. Well-written piece traces long history of region/community through selected artifacts.

31 Best Coverage of Family Living

1st Liberty Tribune: The Tribune's coverage was by far the best in this category. The haunted house story stood out--it took what might have been a silly story and lent it some credibility by quoting an expert. Spooky art, too. I also liked the Bungalow package.

2nd Washington Missourian Wednesday: While the stories were generally routine, the paper certainly had plenty of items that might reflect "family living." Farm story separated this batch from 3rd entry--lots of detail.

3rd Missourian Weekend: Very little difference between this and #2.

32 Best Coverage of Young People

1st Washington Missourian Weekend: Comprehensive coverage of issues affecting young people, including the offering of somewhat interactive products like the page for teens and the summer reading program for children. The sections were packed with photos of classroom happenings, but reporters also tackled bigger issues, such as the impact of state funding cuts. The best feature in the selection was the piece geared toward grandparents encouraging children to read. The topic was an excellent choice to match the demographics of the reader with a relatable issue.

2nd Washington Missourian Wednesday: Wednesday also featured strong coverage of young people; again presented rich photo sections of school and. Impressive to see the variety of schools covered, from public to private, even preschools. Additionally, these selections were not just limited to classroom coverage, but included church-related activities, such as confirmation ceremonies, and civic activities, ie Boy Scout projects.

3rd St. Louis American: Hearty range of coverage related to young people, from the implementation of a mentorship program at underperforming schools to a fun feature about sisters starring in a theatrical production.

33 Best Page Design

1st St. Charles Journal, Stephanie Eichmeyer, Roots: Each element--plaid S, wood frame, chalkboard, etc.--works to create a unified vision for this display. The designer didn't go bananas with fruit pix or pepper this with vegetable frames. Good, clean design. A feast for the eyes.

2nd North County Journal, Chris Oth, 500 Win: Eye-catching and informative. Nice use of gold ribbon for win list.

3rd Liberty Tribune, Chris Geinosky, Top 10: Staggering of polaroid/pix works here to create scrapbook feel that works well with the story.

HM St. Louis Business Journal, Michael Behrens and Alison Green, 30 under 30: Crisp, clean layout provides good space for information balanced against playful photos.

34 Best Information Graphic

1st St. Louis Business Journal, Michael Behrens, Energizer Bunny: Great use of pop icon image in graphic/graph to support story/headline.

2nd St. Louis Business Journal, Michael Behrens, Landing Fees: Love the use of money in the bar graph. Great detail.

3rd St. Louis Business Journal, Michael Behrens, Tobacco Tax: Great use of the product to create line graph, representing message.

HM St. Louis Business Journal, Alison Green, Stocks Dip: Very visual, clear image even separate of story.

35 Best Editorial Cartoon

1st Jefferson County Leader, Judy Dixon, Budget Cleavers: Great amount of detail and imagery really brought home the message.

2nd Northeast News, Bryan Stalder, Election Day: Simple, but very effective. Great use of colors.

3rd St. Louis American, Angelita Jackson, For Sale: Great image of with just enough copy (signs) to explain content.

HM Jefferson County Leader, Judy Dixon, Go Bristol.

36 Best Newspaper in Education Program

1st Washington Missourian Weekend: Consistently great program throughout the year with variety of in-paper features and community events. Program demonstrates a total commitment by the newspaper to attracting young readers by providing content that families can share and children of all ages will enjoy.

37 Best Online Paper or Website

2nd St. Louis American: Lots of information and news on broad array of subjects from local to national, crime to society and fashion. Good video

elements. There is a problem with the lack of dominant elements, same as with most websites. Nothing seems to be any more important than anything else. It's all just there. Your staff knows the audience; use that to give big stories more space and little stories less space. The revolving elements are distracting.

HM St. Louis Business Journal: An OK website; a company template with local news plugged in. A lot of information. Many pages with lists of links to stories provide no direction for reader to determine what's the hot news of the moment and what's cold. Offer busy readers some help by giving the big news stories bigger play than the little ones. Revolving stories are a frustrating distraction; if I start reading 3 seconds before the story goes away, it just makes me mad. I'm not going to wait for it to come back around. You lost me.

38 Best Video

1st St. Louis American, Rebecca Rivas, Female Chief: Well-done profile; technically very good. Videos need "paraphrasing" from reporter to explain gist of story quickly, then provide live action to back it up. Would also be good to get some St. Louis American branding into the production--other than at the end--don't know how, maybe just a ghost logo in the corner.

HM St. Louis American, Rebecca Rivas, Refugee: Good video feature; a bit long. Make tough editing choices. Need comment from a law enforcement official--a year in jail!? Story needs some outrage--from somebody. If you can't get a source on video, include comments as text or as video of the reporters saying what the source said. Very nice style and editing.

39 Best Headline Writing

1st Missouri Lawyers Weekly

2nd St. Louis American

Dailies, Class 1 (Gold Medal: Warrensburg Daily Star-Journal)

40 General Excellence

1st The Daily Star-Journal: Clear Winner. Strong front page with variety of articles, both news and feature. Excellent photography, especially shots by J.C. Ventimiglia. A real, community/locally focused editorial page with clear reasoning. Not jazzy graphics, but clear. Crisp writing in news stories. Reflects region well.

2nd Richmond News: Lively presentation with powerful lead photo on front page. The news stories use short sentences to engage the reader. Good coverage of schools. Balanced presentation of political news. Editorial page could use a single, local voice.

3rd Rolla Daily News: Clean presentation on front page that is carried throughout the paper. No-nonsense headlines tell the story. Community

Calendar is well-done. More feature stories would be welcome.

41 Best Front-to-Back Newspaper Design

1st The Daily Star-Journal: A very attractive small newspaper. Creative use of fonts and nice color. Would be no burden at all to read every day.

2nd The Neosho Daily News: A very clean, by-the-numbers appearance appeals to my German heritage.

42 Best Front Page

1st Rolla Daily News: Consistently clean and well-organized presentation. The use of graphic elements and break-out information helped storytelling.

2nd Richmond News: A single, well-organized approach to the front page and a willingness to "Go Big" for the state champs.

3rd The Daily Star-Journal: Showed a dedicated effort to create exciting engaging front pages. The frequent use of less sophisticated graphics hurt the overall impact, getting in the way of the stories. Applaud consistent effort to make energetic, appealing presentations.

43 Best Breaking News Story

1st The Neosho Daily News-John Ford, Guilty: An unusual twist in an "Official Misconduct" case for sure. Well-reported and thoroughly explained. Would have helped to have a timeline breakdown.

2nd The Daily Star-Journal-Jack "Miles" Ventimiglia, Fine Takes House: Well-reported, especially giving the history of the previous fire. Lots of good detail and quotes from resident and neighbor. Would have been first place had not time references (Tuesday vs. Wednesday) been wrong.

3rd The Neosho Daily News-Amye Buckley, Water Rescue: Good coverage of an evolving, wide-ranging story.

44 Best News Story

1st The Daily Star-Journal-Jack "Miles" Ventimiglia, County Jail: Superb reporting! The author really brought the reader into the jail with him. He effectively addressed the jail's many issues and quoted multiple sources from both sides.

2nd The Daily Star-Journal-Sue Sterling, Hip Recall: Well-written succinct coverage of an issue that could explode into something bigger.

3rd Richmond News-David Knopf, Hockemeier: Captivating story that keeps the reader hooked to the end.

HM Rolla Daily News-DawnDee Bostwick, Barriers: Good hook. Touches on an important topic, the kind of article that makes people more aware and serves the community.

45 Best Feature Story

1st The Daily Star-Journal-Jack "Miles" Ventimiglia, Centrawoven: Keen observations of an offbeat crowd elevate this story. This may be my first encounter with the word "helmed." Nice touches of narrative humor.

2nd Lake Sun-Jennifer Hollis, Superhero: The best part of this interesting story is Mr. Hollis' description of the very kid-like behavior of Preston, which juxtaposes strikingly with his cool-headed mature behavior that may have saved his mom's life.

3rd Lake Sun-Rance Burger, Invasion: Good lead teases the reader regarding the nature of "invaders," this story could have moved up a peg in interest if it had included more facts about this curious animal species.

46 Best News or Feature Series

1st Neosho Daily News-Amye Buckley, A Different World: A well-organized, carefully reported series that begins with the basics - What is Autism? - and covers local programs, individuals' experiences and the debate over state funding. Vivid writing with great quotes.

2nd Fulton Sun-Katherine Cummins, Alternative School: The reporter brings in many voices to explore the consequences of closing a local alternative school, and follows up after the decision's made. A story bringing the reader inside the school would have been a good addition.

3rd Fulton Sun-Chris Waller, Fulton State Hospital: A thorough examination of an important topic: The effects of closing state mental-health facilities. Structure of first story could be improved by getting to the nut graph more quickly.

HM Daily Statesman-Noreen Hyslop, Special Needs: A compelling and unsentimental look into several families' struggles.

HM Daily Star-Journal-Jack "Miles" Ventimiglia, Education Funds: Clear, vivid writing and dogged reporting. What's the real frontline impact of losing the programs?

47 Best Editorial

1st Daily Star-Journal, Cut House: Practical and direct. There's remarkable clarity in the thinking, writing and presentation.

2nd Daily Star-Journal, Ignore Voters: Good, solid, worthy of outrage.

3rd Daily Statesman, Farewell : A lovely elegy of an important figure.

48-H Best Columnist-Humorous

1st Lake Sun-Jennifer Hollis, My Story

48-S Best Columnist-Serious

1st Kirksville Daily Express-Jason Hunsicker: Weaving together the personal and the political. Hunsicker provides readers with solid, well-

reasoned commentary. Clearly not afraid to fight for what he believes.

2nd John Tucker, Camdenton Lake Sun: Provides good perspective and passion for local community. Really get the hometown feel.

49-N Best News Photograph

1st Daily Star-Journal-Jack "Miles" Ventimiglia, Fiery wreck: This image probably took some doing to get. Tracking down the end of a high-speed chase is not easy. Nice composition to get the truck fire and the suspect in the same shot. He's a little small but you can still see him.

2nd Neosho Daily News-Wes Franklin, Flood rescue: Nice rescue photo. Little different than the rest with the rope being used to guide the woman and her son. Woman shows how heavy the rain is. She's soaked.

3rd Daily Star-Journal-Jack "Miles" Ventimiglia, Bike wreck: Prompt response to the scene. Photographer did a great job getting close.

49-F Best Feature Photograph

1st Richmond News-JoEllen Black, Day of Prayer: Very nice, touching photo, well done.

2nd Daily Star-Journal-Jack "Miles" Ventimiglia, Drummer Boy: Excellent photo - quality also excellent.

3rd Daily Star-Journal-Jack "Miles" Ventimiglia, Sideways: On-the-ball photographer got a very funny and interesting photo.

HM Daily Statesman-Noreen Hyslop, Let it Snow: Nice fun photo.

HM Monett Times-Melanie Roberts, Ferris Wheel: Good quality photo captures the proud feeling of the little boy.

49-I Best Photo Illustration

2nd Daily Star-Journal-Jack "Miles" Ventimiglia: A simple illustration that is neutral, but inviting to the story.

3rd Daily Star-Journal-Jack "Miles" Ventimiglia: Simple, informative.

49-S Best Sports Photograph

1st Daily Star-Journal-Jack "Miles" Ventimiglia, Double Take Down: Great photo - I can't believe it was not used initially.

2nd Richmond News-JoEllen Black, Hanging On: Nice, subtle shot.

3rd Neosho Daily News-Rick Rogers, Tip Off: Just the right moment.

HM Daily Statesman-Jerry Jarrell, Dive: Stretched out, good timing.

HM Daily Star-Journal-Corey Edwards, Interception: Nice action.

50 Best Photo Package

1st Daily Star-Journal-Jack "Miles" Ventimiglia, Unused: Several very nice photos. Good idea to use unused.

2nd Neosho Daily News-Rick Rogers, Eye on Education: Nice photos and

effective layout. Well done.

3rd Daily Star-Journal-Jack "Miles" Ventimiglia, Dance A Thon: Nice set of fun photos.

HM Daily Statesman-Corey Noles and Noreen Hyslop, Remembering: Good representation of events.

HM Fulton Sun-Stephanie Backus, Bubbles: Variety, cute photos.

52 Best News Content

1st Neosho Daily News: Loaded with news. Presented in digestible ways. Clear writing, well-sourced facts. A lot of voices on every page.

2nd Daily Star-Journal: Straight forward. Nice mix of hard, soft news.

3rd Rolla Daily News: Good focus on local government and schools.

HM Monett Times

53 Community Service Award

1st Lake Sun, Fit and Fun Challenge: Public service journalism can take many forms, but the core of every good project is finding an issue that resonates with the community - and then figuring out an approach that not only informs your readers but also engages them. The Fit & Fun Challenge accomplished both of those goals. In a lake community, tourism is a key economic driver and it's clear that the perception of E coli contamination in the water loomed large in the minds of many. As an out-of-state reader, I could have used a little more background on the issue and why it was important, but most in this community probably knew much of it. I was impressed with John Tucker and his team used both print and online platforms to connect with readers on this issue. The newspaper not only chronicled the challenge but also organized multiple events to bring out the public.

2nd Daily Star-Journal-Jack "Miles" Ventimiglia, Jail Tax: It's not often that a ballot issue - especially a new tax - can pass after failing four times. That's what happened in Warrenton, MO, according to the Daily Star Journal. The voters were well informed by the newspaper's coverage of the jail conditions. The July 20 "Inside the County Jail" story, followed by an editorial urging support of the issue, were the strongest points of this coverage. Nice job taking your readers behind the scenes.

54 Best Editorial Page

2nd Daily Star-Journal

55 Best Sports Pages

2nd Neosho Daily News: Content is strong, especially local copy. Main issue is use of photos. Instead of using strongest shots, a scattergun

approach seems the norm. It tends to make the pages busy. Good use of logos within text.

3rd Daily Star-Journal-Corey Edwards: Nice to see the special section, but mule graphics at top fairly off-putting. Bold, varied headlines add impact, but seem overdone. Front for Aug. 30 could have used one less photo, one more story. Photo quality fairly sharp, writing overall is solid.

56 Best Sports News Story or Package

1st Fulton Sun-Ryan Boland, Benner's Title Touch

2nd Neosho Daily News-Rick Rogers, Neosho Football

3rd Daily Star-Journal-Corey Edwards, Road to Glory

57 Best Sports Feature Story

1st Monett Times-Jared Lankford, Against All Odds: Great lead to set up the story. Nice job following wrestler's career and hurdles. A few grammar errors, but nothing too severe.

2nd Fulton Sun-Ryan Boland, Daughter's Gift: Not only a nice sports feature, it's a nice Father's Day feature. Good, solid reporting and nice emotional link between father and daughter.

3rd Rolla Daily News-Dave Roberts, The Game: Nice solid story. Nice way to educate the public about a rare disease.

HM Neosho Daily News-Rick Rogers, Dynamic Duo: Nice preview piece. Wasn't sold enough that either was the favorite to win the state title. Nice find though, that the two were likely to finish high at the meet. Nice feeling of comradery between the two athletes.

58 Best Sports Columnist

1st Rolla Daily News-Dave Roberts: Great format, personal connection and headlines.

2nd Republican Times-Seth Herrold: Love the story-telling ability and writing style.

59 Best Special Section

1st Lake Sun, Veterans Day: Amazing cover illustration that touches readers emotionally, very powerful

2nd Daily Star-Journal-Amanda Lubinski, Welcome Back: Excellent cover and imagery to attract and connect with students. Great content, right on target for audience.

3rd Neosho Daily News, Our Town: Cover is clear, headlines are bold and readable. Great personal stories inside. Paper choice stands out. Note: advertising seems to be a little too much.

HM Lake Sun, Game Night: Great coverage and supportive info.

60 Best Investigative Reporting

61 Best Local Business Coverage

3rd Daily Star-Journal: Nice Variety in business stories. I would like more depth and investigative style.

62 Best Business Story - News or Feature

1st Fulton Sun-Katherine Cummins, The Nest: Clear, concise writing on a simple subject. Wish she'd delivered more details about the business: Menu prices, how many people the restaurant seats, how much space it took, how many people it employs. Also, instead of letting the owner speak for the customers, let a customer speak. Nice writing throughout.

2nd Daily Statesman-Noreen Hyslop, Culture Collide: A nice little story on a retirement gone awry, though a reader may still wonder why. This story too called for more details about the business such as the price of the wines and whether it's a restaurant or just a tasting room. More a feature than a business story, but is a well-written story about a business.

3rd Daily Star-Journal-Jack "Miles" Ventimiglia, Energy Bill: This is the best of several he-said/she-said political stories about a bill that may or may not pass Congress or the state legislature that may affect businesses. This one more simply lays out the two sides than the others; though they all read like political stories rather than business stories.

63 Best Coverage of Government

1st Richmond News-Sean Comer, Audit: The release of the state auditor's report was clearly an important day in the future of Richmond, with taxpayers unfortunately left holding the bag on former city leaders' transgressions. After detailing what was in the report, Comer rightfully puts the municipal complex change orders in context and asks the tough questions of local officials involved. His hard-nosed reporting prompts councilwoman Stanley's public doubt of the fire chief's involvement and draws an admission from the council's lone holdover, "I wish we had done a lot of things different." The Post-it note graph is golden. Great job.

2nd Daily Star-Journal-Jack "Miles" Ventimiglia, County Jail: The paper's sunlight treatment of an election-day issue is commendable. Ventimiglia's account of conditions at the current jail stands out and surely made some residents want to reconsider their vote. Overall, an example of good, responsible, civic-minded reporting.

3rd Daily Star-Journal, Session Ends: Good localizing of difficult legislative session. A bit heavy on education, but final piece shows the breadth of coverage you can achieve from walking the halls of the statehouse.

HM Rolla Daily News, Kohl's: A solid, thorough review of just what it takes for some communities to land a major retailer.

65 Best Story About Rural Life Or Agriculture

1st Richmond News-David Knopf, Prop B: As a series, all 3 pieces worked well together. Knopf did an excellent job of making such a large scaled proposition to the smaller scale of local residents. It was made incredibly relevant to its readers and brought some much-needed attention to an issue that may have gone unnoticed.

2nd Richmond News-David Knopf, Election Night: Simply nostalgic! Tied many generations in this small community together. Linked the old with the new quite well with his "down-home" writing--I felt like I was there and it made me yearn for the "good 'ole days."

3rd Daily Statesman-Noreen Hyslop, Wild Haven: Great detail about horse breed--made it family-oriented by including the couple's children.

66 Best Story About Education

1st Daily Star-Journal-Jack "Miles" Ventimiglia, District Fails: The writer does a nice job of taking two seemingly opposing pieces of news and telling readers, with some appropriate authority on the issue, what each really means and how it's possible. The lead nicely ties the ideas together. Breaking up the text into sections helps navigate too.

2nd The Daily Star-Journal-Amanda Lubinski and Teresa Shane, State Testing: Excellent reporting to tell readers not only what the state change is, but what that means in local schools - how it will look, what will change and what won't. Well-sourced and the ending looks ahead nicely to what's next.

3rd Fulton Sun-Website Offers: This isn't a story that came from a meeting or a news release, and that's what made this piece stand out. Good reporting to see what's going on daily in the classroom and the work/lives of teachers. Good details from sources.

HM The Daily Statesman-Open Enrollment: A nice take on a complex subject, with good details and information on "what's next"

67 Best Story About the Outdoors

1st Daily Star-Journal-Jack "Miles" Ventimiglia, Egrets

2nd Daily Statesman-Noreen Hyslop, Making a Difference

68 Best Story About History

1st Richmond News-David Knopf, Last Chapter: Nicely structured story, moving from the present to the past and then coming back to present and so on. The history was conveyed with authority--the writer clearly did his homework.

2nd Daily Star-Journal-Cynthia Nold, Rain nor Snow: I was drawn in by the lede--simple and interesting. Would have enjoyed seeing the story framed as a lunchtime conversation instead of one person's recollections, then another's. But interesting history and nice details.

69 Best Coverage of Family Living

No award given

70 Best Coverage of Young People

No award given

71 Best Page Design

2nd Daily Star-Journal-Jack "Miles" Ventimiglia, Election: Great balance and formatting especially with sheer volume of information to cover.

3rd Daily Star-Journal-Jack "Miles" Ventimiglia and Corey Edwards, Mules: Vivid layout with vibrant photos. Players pop off the page.

72 Best Information Graphic

1st Daily Star-Journal-Jack "Miles" Ventimiglia, Bunker Buster

2nd Daily Star-Journal-Jack "Miles" Ventimiglia, Enrollment

3rd Daily Star-Journal-Jack "Miles" Ventimiglia, Red Ink

73 Best Editorial Cartoon

1st Daily Star-Journal-Jack "Miles" Ventimiglia, Money Bags

2nd Daily Star-Journal-Jack "Miles" Ventimiglia, Zombie Train

74 Best Newspaper in Education Program

1st Daily Star-Journal-Teresa Shane: Solid work. What NIE is all about.

77 Best Story About Religion

1st Richmond News-David Knopf, Biblical Comfort: Outstanding job showing that religion does not have to emanate from a pulpit. Perhaps the highest compliment I can pay is that a copy of this story now resides in my file of story ideas.

2nd Rolla Daily News-R.D. Hohenfeldt, Cowboy Culture: Nice feature on taking religion to those who are seldom exposed to it. More care needed in writing (or editing). Information appears in consecutive paragraphs.

3rd Daily Statesman-Noreen Hyslop, Grace: Great idea by a church to organize its own home makeover. The writer captures the commitment church members have for the project. Some writing/editing issues at places text is repeated.

Dailies, Class 2 (Gold Medal: Columbia Missourian)

40 General Excellence

1st The Examiner: Really nice product. Your A1 entries are well-chosen, well written, well edited and well placed. Good reads throughout. Lots of content, well organized. Ads are attractive and well placed. Solid editorial pages.

2nd Columbia Missourian: Good writing and editing through all sections. Good handling of ads. Balanced editorials. Public notices handled well.

3rd Sedalia Democrat: Nice reads. Good localizing of national/world stories to your local audience. Attractively organized paper. Nice ads and public notices. Good editorial page.

41 Best Front-to-Back Newspaper Design

1st Columbia Missourian

2nd Sedalia Democrat

3rd The Daily Record

42 Best Front Page

1st Columbia Missourian: Shows a clear ability to present information in a variety of ways--and to do it well. On the traditional news page, there is an elegant sense of space and typography, and stories show clear hierarchy and dominance. The sports poster page is uniformly bold--the type, the photo. You really get drawn into that page. But the most impressive is the election recap. It gives all of the information the reader needs quickly and sends readers inside if they crave depth. These pages have energy, information, the whole 9 yards.

2nd The Examiner: The Examiner staff is willing to try things differently. Given the mugshot of a building, a designer is able to use type and color to create a lead package. And given file art of a marching band that won a more recent contest, the designer is able to use type and a great headline to bolster the package. This design staff is not satisfied with giving up, or presenting an exterior just as an exterior. No, these designers integrate stories and photos, even under less-than-ideal circumstances.

3rd Sedalia Democrat: These pages are clean with a nice, understated use of typography and photography.

43 Best Breaking News Story

1st Columbia Missourian--Chris Hamby, Erickson Recants: A lot of good work here, pulling together a 9-year-old case and getting all of the facts into the context of the convicted man's new claims. Nicely done.

2nd The Examiner--Michael Glover, Missing Man: Good work in tying up all of the pieces of Bud's wanderings. Told well and a good read.

3rd Sedalia Democrat--Matthew Steingraber, Copter Crash: Nice work.

44 Best News Story

1st Columbia Missourian-Washington Gikunju, Columbia Lures 800 Jobs: Comprehensive coverage--team effort--under deadline pressure. Excellent context and perspective.

2nd Daily American Republic-Tim Krakowiak, Nursing Student: Dramatic storytelling. Very readable, strong quotes, solid writing.

3rd Daily Record-Julie Turner-Crawford, Council Retracts: Good watchdog journalism. Fine use of sources and records.

HM Daily Record-Julie Turner-Crawford, Teens

HM Sedalia Democrat-Matthew Steingraber, Operation Erin

45 Best Feature Story

1st Examiner-Jeff Martin, Cut Above the Rest: Very nice lead and good, concrete description setting the scene at the outset.

2nd Columbia Missourian-Brad Racino, Giving Back: Good descriptive detail. Too many passive verbs at the top of the story gave it a slow start.

3rd Examiner-Adrienne DeWeese, Mother's Love: Nice opening moment. The story had the emotional potential to win if there had been more "showing" instead of "telling."

HM Examiner-Adrienne DeWeese, Just Like Dad: I really liked the opening scene, but the story took forever to get to the point--the scene went a bit too long.

46 Best News or Feature Series

1st Columbia Missourian-That's Life: Clever and witty language to tell stories about fertility that might otherwise get lost in scientific, mundane talk. The issue is told from every angle. I especially like the "What Would God Say?" story.

2nd Daily Record-Julie Turner-Crawford, Proposition B: The writer shows both sides of what seems like a controversial issue in a crisp tone. It was nice to see that the writer dove deep into both sides of the issue.

3rd Columbia Missourian-Matt Pearce, Oil Spill: The writer, through his storytelling language, puts the reader in Louisiana with him. I would have liked to see the writer delve a little deeper into how the spill was also affecting the area.

HM Columbia Missourian, Drink up

HM Daily Quill-Tamara Whiteside/Crystal Daniels, Bat Scratch

47 Best Editorial

1st Sedalia Democrat, K2 Ban: Clear, reasoned arguments are not in short supply in this. Editorials taking unpopular stands are another matter, and criticizing a local ban on synthetic marijuana certainly qualifies.

2nd Daily Quill, Constitution: If this one had been shorter/tighter/more focused, it might have moved up. Reminding people of how unpopular things are in line with core American principals is always a good thing.

3rd Daily Record-Julie Turner-Crawford, The Law: A public records spat is always good grist for the mill. This one would have benefited from a little less anger and more professional distance.

48-H Best Columnist-Humorous

1st Columbia Missourian-Molly Harbarger: Enjoyed her light touch in dealing with both ways to enjoy the outdoors and the controversy over hiring the gay chief financial officer for the Methodist Conference. Her easy, conversational style drew me in and kept me reading.

2nd Columbia Missourian-Michael Grinfeld: Smacks you in the face with his cross-column to make his point, but also conveys the nervousness and angst of being the father of the bride. He shows plenty of range.

3rd Columbia Missourian-Kelsey Whipple: Her examples of lies she has told on a flight are some of the funniest passages in the batch of entries. But she tends to get off-track in other entries and could use some editing.

48-S Best Columnist-Serious

1st Sedalia Democrat-Bob Satnan: This columnist made me care. With each topic he drew me in. He made connections. He was controversial. I could imagine sitting across from him in a bar and really enjoying his company. I liked his style--made strong points in a patient, well-reasoned way.

2nd Columbia Missourian-Erin O'Neil: I found this columnist refreshing--her voice, her subject matter, her humor and indignation. Always a good payoff and clearly a writer in control of her subject matter.

3rd Columbia Missourian-George Kennedy: Strong opinions. Would have enjoyed seeing subjects outside political realm, too.

49-F Best Feature Photograph

1st Sedalia Democrat-Sydney Brink, Overalls: Photo is hilarious. Made me laugh as soon as I saw it. It's a really funny moment. Good catch.

2nd Daily Quill-Crystal Daniels, Welcome Home: Nice surprise moment. Girl's emotion is very nice.

3rd Examiner-Adam Vogler, No Like: Nice contrast between parents and child. Nice tight crop. Photo has a nice flow to it.

HM Daily Record-Fines Massey, Play ball!: A very funny image. Glad it's a plastic ball. Girl's reaction is priceless. Might have cropped the image tighter, leaving just player and girl.

49I Best Photo Illustration

1st Examiner-Adam Vogler, Team Effort: Nice overall illustration--fairly

complete execution and nice thought going into it.

2nd Columbia Missourian-Andrew Williams, Smashed Clock: Well executed, easy to read. Nice thought process.

3rd Columbia Missourian-Eve Edelheit, Stripped Bare: It's clean and best of the remaining, but not as strong as the top two.

49-N Best News Photograph

1st Sedalia Democrat-Sydney Brink, Lucky Dog: Subject completely overjoyed. Great moment. Nice crop. Should have been the bigger image.

2nd Columbia Missourian-Alex Giddings, Fire Causes: Good emotion. Nice crop. Nice comforting moment between mother and daughter.

3rd Daily Record-Tammy Helm-Teter, Murder-Suicide: Good vantage point to capture the whole scene. Good emotion with man on car.

49-S Best Sports Photograph

1st Columbia Missourian-Eve Edelheit, Roar!: Great shot of the rabid fan base. Great angle and color. Only issue is with man in upper right, whose face is covered. Just wish he wasn't there, would have made a cleaner image. Really good energy in this shot.

2nd Examiner-Adam Vogler, Point!: Nice composition. I really like how the player and coach have same reaction. Great emotion.

3rd Sedalia Democrat-Sydney Brink, In the net: Like seeing goal keeper in this one. Wish she had a better reaction to the goal. Nice tight crop.

HM Examiner-Adam Vogler, Goal!: Nice isolated celebration. Wonderful light and great color.

50 Best Photo Package

1st Columbia Missourian-Jeff Lautenberger and Andrew Williams, Roots in Blues: Nice set of photos, especially stoker. Good variety.

2nd Columbia Missourian, Drink up: Nice story telling photos--very nice package. Well done.

HM Columbia Missourian-Alex Giddings, Boone Life: Nice story, nice photos. Corn to ethanol.

HM Columbia Missourian-Jeff Lautenberger, Runners: Nice Labor Day Run photos. Good mood shots--Well-used.

51-A Best Ad Idea or Promotion of an Advertiser

1st Columbia Missourian, Homecoming: Nice layout, consistently good throughout. Nice editorial and ads.

51-N Best Ad Idea or Promotion for the Newspaper

1st Sedalia Democrat, Award Winners: Nice consistent branding. Good way to get to know who works for the paper in the community. Suggestion: enlarge

photo and headline and less copy.

52 Best News Content

1st Examiner: Readers of the Examiner are well served. This paper packs it all in--the quality of writing/reporting/investigating is consistent and clear. The story choices are intelligently made and cover the local news thoroughly without skimping on important topics. Nice balance of hard news/features.

2nd Columbia Missourian: A close second--this paper has some great writers on staff--strong op/ed commentary, interactive with readers, heavier focus on local issues. Not afraid to celebrate local figures while simultaneously hitting the hard news.

3rd Sedalia Democrat: A little heavy on AP news over local content but well packaged, well reported stories. Love the front page photo features.

53 Community Service Award

1st Columbia Missourian, Open Records: Excellent coverage of this vital issue--open records--with good info on how to access the records.

2nd The Examiner, Wall That Heals

55 Best Sports Pages

1st Columbia Missourian: Excellent local content focused--rightfully so--on Missouri sports. Design clean and readable with judicious use of info boxes. Photos are sharp, but tend to look dark.

2nd Examiner: Distinctive look, eye-catching for certain. Section uses color availability to strong effect. Local coverage is strong--this staff does a great job with the rarer sports. The downside to all that color and design elements is a tendency to look almost gimmicky, but in general the section reads well.

3rd Sedalia Democrat: Clean, readable section. Good local content, but daily centerpiece could use more impact with bolder headlines/more space. The left-hand briefs rail limits design possibilities without adding much front page-worthy content. Might consider moving it inside.

56 Best Sports News Story or Package

1st Columbia Missourian, Homecoming: The writing sparkles. You don't have to be a Mizzou fan, or even a football fan, to appreciate it!

2nd Sedalia Democrat-Kyle Smith, Cool Cats: Solid, engaging but get to the point sooner.

3rd Columbia Missourian, Missouri Football: Great details.

HM The Daily Quill-Allison Wilson, Record Breaker.

57 Best Sports Feature Story

1st Columbia Missourian-Len Goldman, *Playing Through the Silence*: What a great story! A pleasure to read. The time and effort in this story really shows. Nice set up. Great story breaks. Ran a little long, but it needed to. I loved how the story encompassed the entire season. Showed hurdles on and off the court. Reporter didn't pull any punches, "Confusion on the court" is fantastic in helping round out an excellent piece of work. Thought it was handled very sensitively while showing the struggle of this team.

2nd The Examiner-Bill Althaus, *Exceptional*: This is a great story about a fantastic organization. Nice descriptive style. Really made the reader feel like they were there.

3rd Columbia Missourian-Harry Plumer, *Women Rule*: Nice solid story about a very unique crew. Solid writing. The uniqueness of the subject really stood out with this one.

HM Columbia Missourian-Robert Mays, *Coming Back*: This was a solid story that was well written and vividly descriptive in a that had some really unique stories. It's a really nice job.

58 Best Sports Columnist

1st The Examiner-Bill Althaus, *Sports View (column)*: This writer gets to the human element of sports. He talks about real people, real problems, real issues. Some sports columnists have visions of being on ESPN and get bogged down in statistics and analysis. This writer knows how to tell a story and does it well!

59 Best Special Section

1st Columbia Missourian, *Sustainability Issue*: Great use of industry-related colors on cover and throughout. Relevant imagery, informative topics and detailed content. Great section.

2nd Columbia Missourian, *Tiger Kickoff*: Fabulous cover imagery, supported by intense images inside. Nice use of graphics.

3rd Columbia Missourian, *Collegetown*: Nice information for students. Great representative images of college culture.

60 Best Investigative Reporting

1st Columbia Missourian-Patrick Sweet, *Whistle Blowers*: This reporter uncovered an alarming trend within the nuclear power business. Good, solid reporting.

HM Columbia Missourian-Elisa Essner, *Fields Convicted*: This reporter showed just how cozy business and government can get. Good to keep them on their toes.

61 Best Local Business Coverage

1st Columbia Missourian: Good, deep reporting on big local business stories. Nice use of graphics to present details. Not all business news is good; you report on bad news, too. Good writing, editing, presentation.

2nd Sedalia Democrat: This team gets it. Great, brief business profile anchors each page. Plenty of briefs and market news to inform readers. Just right.

3rd Examiner: What these pages lack in design they make up for in content. Great to see local events as well as business news and columns.

62 Best Business Story - News or Feature

1st Columbia Missourian-Robert Johnson, Recycle: The lead pulls the reader into this insider's look at the auto salvage industry from the perspective of a family-run operation. Nice integration of national policy's (Cash for Clunkers program) effects at the local level.

2nd Daily Record-Ken York, From the Ashes: This story takes what could have been a routine business reopening story and turns it into a captivating read through the retelling of the fiery crash that burned the business. Great use of quotes and humor of the owner.

3rd Daily Record-Fines Massey, Haunting: This is a nice timely seasonal business story. Good lead. Good practical information about time, place, location along with good use of quotes from both the owner and an actor at the haunted house business.

63 Best Coverage of Government

1st Columbia Missourian: Planning, April ballot, Council Election: The paper's ability to take government and bring it to a level that readers could easily understand was outstanding. The writers did a great job of avoiding government lingo that can sometimes bog down stories.

2nd Sedalia Democrat-City Administrator, County Prosecutor, EMS: I was impressed with how the paper stuck to an issue and flushed it with good detail, including how it affected readers.

3rd Daily Record-Chief, Wrong info, Dispute: The paper through the reporters showed a great grasp of how government affects readers and was able to showcase that through crisp, concise storytelling.

64 Best Coverage of Rural Life or Agriculture

3rd Daily Record-Fines Massey. Chick kick: The story gives readers a great look into how a local biz is thriving, especially in taking advantage of an urban trend. I would have liked to see interviews with residents who are opting to have chicken coops in their yards.

65 Best Story About Rural Life Or Agriculture

1st Columbia Missourian-Han Cheung, That time of year: Nicely told feature

about something many people wouldn't know anything about. Good description and pacing.

2nd Columbia Missourian-Lydia Mulvany, Japanese Beef: Good featurey lead without unduly delaying the point.

3rd Sedalia Democrat-Bob Satnan, Swine Pavilion: Not enough writers take the time to wander around county fairs without a story already lined up. However, the presentation here wandered a bit much. Really good ideas, but a little more focus in the telling would have moved this up.

66 Best Story About Education

1st Columbia Missourian-Genevieve Conti, Adults in College: A well-done story with the perfect person to illustrate it. I'm sure your readers must have rooted for Roger's success, like I did when I read the story. Great info on why mid-life students are going back to the classroom and what their lives are like.

2nd Columbia Missourian-Bryan Richardson, Talking about race: Another thorough and well-researched story, this time about a difficult topic. It was good to hear from so many diverse voices on the topic. Like the bulleted items on how to bring about dialogues. Very helpful.

3rd Daily Record-Fines Massey, It's a long shot: This was a nice story--nice subject, easy to read and just a feel-good story for readers. Who says stories about the bad things happening in our communities are the only ones that win awards?

67 Best Story About the Outdoors

1st Daily Record-Ken York, Bear Necessities: How could a story that starts "What do bears do in the woods? Some of them eat doughnuts" not win!? Great beginning was followed up with thorough accounts of the state's efforts to study the bear population. I read several bear stories in this, but none snared me like this one.

2nd Columbia Missourian-Katy Bergen, Sturgeon 1094: Interesting read about efforts to track one particular female sturgeon--and why the stalking of 1094 is so important. The descriptions, the efforts, the history of this one fish were great. Who knew a fish could be so fascinating?

3rd Columbia Missourian-Regina Wang, Ancient Weapon: What an interesting story, about modern Missourians using a weapon favored by the Aztec gods. Lots of good detail, background, and info here. Love the quote about it being more addictive than cocaine.

68 Best Story About History

1st Sedalia Democrat-Dennis Rich, Coffee Pot Café: An untimely subject for a story, Rich's writing makes an old town landmark come alive again. A fine piece of historical reporting.

2nd Columbia Missourian-Katy Bergen, Undoing Ignorance: It tells a

horrible story but manages to convey hope as well. Memorable, moving.

3rd Sedalia Democrat-Latisha Koetting, They served: A well-written reminder of citizen sacrifice in a time of prejudice. A nice package.

HM Columbia Missourian-Dan Claxton, New Lease: A heartwarming tale of renovation and rebirth.

HM Columbia Missourian-Katie Bevan and Mitch Ryals, Fading Generation: A well-written profile of an important family in the community.

69 Best Coverage of Family Living

1st Columbia Missourian, Blooming Backyard: Nice color, both in display and writing, and nice range of topics. Good job of putting faces on urban gardening, going to college as a parent and Rwanda refugees.

70 Best Coverage of Young People

1st The Examiner

2nd Mexico Ledger-Kimberly Long

71 Best Page Design

1st Examiner-Sheila Davis, Wounds of War: Great imagery, use of fonts and colors.

2nd Examiner-Sheila Davis, Perfect Match: Fonts and photos support story and essence of message. Colors are good and sidebar format simple.

3rd Columbia Missourian, Be Our Guest: Vivid imagery balances with many text-heavy resumes. Screened color boxes help offset text and break up page.

72 Best Information Graphic

1st Columbia Missourian-Tanya Ortiz, Missouri Lottery: The key to a successful info graphic is the clear and clean presentation of a significant amount of info. The chart on which numbers are picked was simple and clean--perfect. The reader can easily understand that he or she should avoid picking number four in most drawings. Well done.

2nd Columbia Missourian-Patrick Sweet, Executions: A nice, easy-to-follow rendering of lethal injection. Process info graphics are rarely as informative as this one. Simple, yet affective.

3rd Columbia Missourian-Erica Mendez, Taking a look: Each section of the layout adds to the overall understanding of Gabbert's season. Timeline works well, too.

75 Best Video

1st Sedalia Democrat-John Hansen. Bomber's Mix: Best video quality. Interesting, easy to follow.

2nd Sedalia Democrat-John Hansen, Pilot Grove: Like seeing girls

basketball featured.

3rd Sedalia Democrat-John Hansen, Warsaw Softball: Amazing pitcher, video quality was on and off.

76 Best Headline Writing

1st The Examiner: Of the entries, all 5 of this paper's headlines were clever but not too flip, intriguing, and fit their stories perfectly. My favorites-- "Raze the Roof" and "Copper and Robbers." Nicely done!

2nd Columbia Missourian: Five different headline writers and variety of how well they applied to their stories-but most of them worked. A couple were confusing but most pulled me in.

3rd Daily Record: "(Insert Your Name Here)" was attention-grabbing. Also liked "the groundhog was right." Still worried about the pot headline on McDonald's story, but... Sure it caught a giggle.

77 Best Story About Religion

1st Columbia Missourian-Darren Orf, Less Traveled: Orf hooks the reader immediately with a well-crafted sense of place and a straight-forward nut graph that sets up the intriguing tension between Amish native sons and their diverging responses to the sect's lifestyle. We learn about Amish life from a personal perspective rather than a tutorial--and fact-hungry readers are free to chew on the sidebar of stats. The story is a classic of "showing, not telling" and the photos are an excellent complement to the atmosphere Orf provides with creative writing.

2nd Columbia Missourian-Brian Pellet, A Journey: Pellet invites us into an odd and fascinating road-trip. Highways can both connect and split communities, and this delightful symbolism is a great entry for discovering how porn-purveyors and people of faith reconcile their neighbor status (or not). Without being salacious, the reporter peels back this onion to reveal that there is more overlap between these two special interest groups than outsiders would expect. Good use of descriptive language to paint word pictures.

3rd Columbia Missourian-Kelsey Whipple, Your Mother: Whipple deconstructs the stereotypes and cultural biases her readers likely have toward arranged marriage by putting them in the shoes of an articulate Muslim young man. Lede graphs nicely set up this explanation on the reasoning behind arranged marriages, with deft touches on his hands and smile also speak for him. The last section puts us right there at the betrothal moment. The middle section is interesting, but feels like a departure from the narrative story we really want to know about--how things work out for Abdullah. I'm left wanting to hear his wife's side of arranged marriage.

Dailies, Class 3 (Gold Medal: The Kansas City Star.)

40 General Excellence

1st Kansas City Star: Good variety of content and easy on the eyes. Many of the photos are downright dramatic. No obvious, glaring flaws. It seems a likeable newspaper.

2nd St. Louis Post-Dispatch: A lot of news presented in a very vertical format. Newspaper overall has a rather old-fashioned, gray appearance, but perhaps readers are accustomed to it. This is certainly a paper you could settle down with for a couple of hours, if you had a couple of hours.

3rd St. Joseph News-Press: Good use of photographs and other graphics. Easy to read. A paucity of letters to the editors, however, suggests a lack of interface with readers. This, if typical, should concern you.

41 Best Front-to-Back Newspaper Design

2nd St. Joseph News-Press: Nice section fronts but sometimes a bit cluttered. Inside pages balanced well; some lack dominant element. Extremely narrow classified columns are unattractive. Good use of photos on fronts. Clean, open look. Art behind nameplate sometimes not done too well. Overall attractive design.

3rd St. Louis Post-Dispatch: Overall page fronts are good. Tops of page 1 cluttered. Inside ad packaging leaves little room for creative design. Lots of "briefs" packaged well but offer no direction for reader - what's more important? Good photos used well. Good graphics complement some stories.

42 Best Front Page

1st Springfield News-Leader: Great graphics never distract, only enhance. The News-Leader is a perfect example of this. No tricks. No gimmicks. Crisp, clear presentation with multiple entry points. Provides many dimensions - without resorting to 3-D glasses.

2nd St. Joseph News-Press: Great use of white space, never bunching too much information. Good mix of stories -- national, international, local, features, hard news. Masthead/Photo works well.

3rd St. Louis Post-Dispatch: Never any doubt as to what the big story is. Plenty of entry points. Good use of big photos.

43 Best Breaking News Story

1st Jefferson City News Tribune-Gerry Tritz and Jeff Haldiman, Rampage: This story had a lot of good information about the possible whereabouts of a gunman still on the loose. It also spent a good portion of the copy informing the public about the victims. It was a good balancing act between the two elements of the story.

2nd Kansas City Star-Joe Robertson, Schools Close: A different kind of breaking news story. Good job conveying the emotion of the event. This is a story that affects a large portion of the population. Graphics and mugs

with pull quotes really added to this piece. The reporting was well balanced.

3rd St. Louis Post-Dispatch, ABB: Nice 3-story package to report on the single event. Main story focused on shooting while sidebars got public reaction and the litigation that may have prompted the act. Nice work all around.

HM St. Louis Post-Dispatch, Bus Crash: Nice lead, but I want to know more about the victims who died before the quote from one of the parents in the main story. That quote should have been later in story. "Killed in the impact" paragraph needs to be closer to the top, maybe 4th paragraph. 2nd story is solid. Gave good eye-witness accounts.

44 Best News Story

1st St. Louis Post-Dispatch-Christine Byers, Heroin: Heartbreaking story, told with great sensitivity. Good use of statistics. Compelling, tough story.

2nd Kansas City Star-Christine Vendel, Tony Rizzo, Waldo Rape: Scary story and great examination of the issues of parole and curfews. The sidebar on Maria would have benefitted from another source talking about how reliable her side of other story is.

3rd Joplin Globe-Jeff Lehr, Missing Pieces: Good job piecing together the last hours of Stacy's life even without cooperation from the police.

HM Columbia Daily Tribune-TJ Greeny, Cause of Death: Good overall look back at a very puzzling case. Also good portrait of the surviving woman's life and how it remains in disarray.

45 Best Feature Story

1st Kansas City Star-Sarah Benson, Turning Points: The writer's detailed, colorful language offered a detailed look into the lives she wrote about. This story stood above the rest because it offered a look into the lives of people that might not otherwise be noticed for their courage. The writer's tone and attention to detail did a great service to the people featured in the article.

2nd St. Louis Post-Dispatch-Todd C. Frankel, Grizzlies: Frankel's style of writing puts the reader on the field with the ball player. The story gives the reader a rare glimpse into a life that, to the average game-goer, might go unnoticed. An easy and great read.

3rd Columbia Daily Tribune-Aarik Danielsen, Doubly Rich: Writer tells the story in an array of colorful language--just like the paintings and art he writes about. The combo of feature story telling combined with medical stats made for a good read.

HM Kansas City Star-David Klepper and Jill Silva, Food Deserts

46 Best News or Feature Series

1st Kansas City Star-Joe Robertson, Eric Adler, Rick Montgomery, Mark Davis, Saving 17,000 Kids: Wow! Where can I start to describe this awesome, incredibly comprehensive and wonderfully illustrated--in words and graphics--series? Hope your readers appreciate your efforts and the change this series, no doubt, will help to bring about.

2nd St. Louis Post-Dispatch-Phillip O'Connor, J.B. Forbes, Stephen Deere and Doug Moore, Haiti Quake: I almost passed over this one because I thought I had read it all before. But your coverage in Haiti and back home was incredible. We got to know Pat Bradley through your words and pictures, and premature baby who died on the way to help...oh my. Great work.

3rd Kansas City Star-Laura Bauer, Childhood Hunger: There were other series in this that ran longer, demonstrated more research and results and were in general, more far-reaching. But this one was tops for impact and I felt terribly guilty reading it. I was moved by the reaction from your readers as well. How gratifying!

47 Best Editorial

1st Kansas City Star, Mr. President: A highly interesting subject gets clear, no-nonsense treatment in an editorial that knows when to stop. Although the editorial regrets that the Buffalo Commons idea has not come to fruition it is refreshingly free of a sour-belly tone.

2nd St. Louis Post-Dispatch, Justice: This editorial continues the honorable tradition of making the institution of the newspaper a knight in the service of a powerless individual. However, it could have been twice as effective if half as long. One yearns for a more disciplined writing style that would stimulate the emotions inherent in such a pitiable case.

3rd Springfield News-Leader, Settle Dispute: The writer devises an interesting approach to an important issue and ends the editorial emphatically with the same metaphor.

48-H Best Columnist-Humorous

1st St. Louis Post-Dispatch-Bill McClellan: Bill McClelland's writing style is a textbook example of the lesson every writer needs to learn - write it in the same way you'd tell the story to a friend over a beer. Good range of topics. Everything knits together well in all three pieces. I suspect he's a reader favorite because he knows how to deliver a smile.

2nd Kansas City Star-Mike Hendricks: Love the topics, especially "Cash in on the Memories?" Wonderful use of language and seasoned with great details. Takes a lot of courage to write about how nice your legs look to the opposite sex!

3rd St. Joseph News-Press-Alonzo Weston: I always like to see a columnist take chances to pull it off. "On the Prowl" and "Shameful Attire" fit that bill. Love the thoughtful approach and the solid writing.

HM St. Joseph News-Press-Steve Booher: His stuff makes me smile. I really enjoyed the way he lit up PETA's nonsense. His closer on "Going for the Goal" was a nice way to tie off soccer and vampires.

48-S Best Columnist-Serious

1st Springfield News-Leader-David Iseman: Well-rounded, unflinching series of columns that take strong points of view. A pleasure to read.

2nd St. Louis Post-Dispatch-Kevin Horrigan: A strong voice and in-your-face viewpoints that challenge the reader to think in different ways. I imagine that this columnist encourages much reader feedback.

3rd St. Joseph News-Press-Alonzo Weston: From local issues to national controversies. The columnist isn't afraid to dive in head first and deliver an original take on matters.

HM Kansas City Star-Mike Hendricks: Good reporting and a very readable style.

HM Kansas City Star-Mary Sanchez: Good job with wide mix of subjects.

49-F Best Feature Photograph

1st Columbia Tribune-Joshua A. Bickel, Sad Apples: Absolutely stunning photo. It captures a sad truth while giving the orchardists tremendous dignity. Illustrates the story beautifully.

2nd St. Joseph News-Press-Jessica Stewart, Therapy Dog: Handsomely framed shot that is one with the article. I swore I'd never choose a pet/animal shot for a winner...but this is a dunk shot.

3rd St. Louis Post-Dispatch-David Carson, Down the Hatch: There is a clarity and elegance to this photograph that reminds us why nature shots are so important. In a funny way they reinforce our humanity. Bravo.

HM Columbia Tribune-Don Shrubshell, Total Wreck: Mr. Shrubshell's photo ain't necessarily pretty, but neither is a demolition derby. Great job of capturing the event/moment.

HM St. Joseph News-Press-Eric Keith, Spinning Seeds: Spinning Seeds is poetry in motion. A bold and handsomely graphic imagine. It's so abstract, however, it should have run much larger.

49-I Best Photo Illustration

1st Jefferson City News Tribune-Stacy King, Nincompoops: Good idea and excellent execution.

2nd Joplin Globe-Roger Nomer, Loud Library: A fun illustration - worked well with story.

3rd Kansas City Star-Chris Oberholtz, Korean War: Illustration works very well with the story.

HM St. Joseph News-Press-Eric Keith, Intervention: Good mood setting illustration. Very effective.

HM Columbia Tribune-Parker Eshelman, Coming Through: Nice illustration. Beautiful lighting.

49-N Best News Photograph

1st Joplin Globe-T. Rob Brown, Salazar Funeral: Heavy emotion. Great use of telephoto lens, funerals like this are always a tough assignment. Telephoto let photographer get the image while allowing the family some privacy. Very jarring subject matter.

2nd St. Louis Post-Dispatch-Robert Cohen, Mayor slain: Nice solemn moment. Nice flow and composition. Great sense of togetherness.

3rd Columbia Tribune-Nick King, Theatre Destroyed: Great sense of scale between lone firefighter and the fire itself. Nice job stepping back and getting a wider view of what's going on.

HM Columbia Tribune-Gerry Tritz and Jeff Haldiman, Providence Wreck: Right place at the right time. Subject's reaction is strangely calm given the situation.

HM Kansas City Star-Keith Myers, Police Standoff: Nice tense moment. Right place at the right time.

49-S Best Sports Photograph

1st Kansas City Star-John Sleezer, Closeout: Great photo - used only one column, shame on the editor.

2nd Joplin Globe-T. Rob Brown, Duel Challenge: Ball in the gut and facial expression make this photo a winner.

3rd Kansas City Star-David Eulitt, Explosive Run: Spectacular photo.

HM Columbia Tribune-Parker Eshelman, Reach Back: The anticipation is great! He caught it - nice.

HM Joplin Globe-Roger Nomer, Blocked: Very nice peak action.

50 Best Photo Package

1st St. Louis Post-Dispatch-Chris Lee, All Metro 2010: Very interesting concept. Good photos & layout. Excellent cover. Well done.

2nd Kansas City Star-Allison Long, All Man: Good story, good photos, good layout - well done.

3rd Kansas City Star-David Eulitt, Arkansas Traveler: Very nice photos - well done.

HM Kansas City Star-Jill Toyoshiba, Roller Derby: Nice collection of roller derby photos.

HM St. Louis Post-Dispatch-Robert Cohen, Kodachrome: Good idea, well executed.

51-A Best Ad Idea or Promotion of an Advertiser

1st Kansas City Star-Robin Langdon, Jacquie Lehatto, Mike Fitzgerald, KC

Flavor

2nd Kansas City Star-Robin Langdon, Jacquie Lehatto, John Revenaugh, New Arrowhead

3rd Springfield News-Leader, Pink for Life

HM Springfield News-Leader, Stopping Diabetes

51-N Best Ad Idea or Promotion of the Newspaper

1st Kansas City Star-Tom Lore, Vana Sweetland, Sale Safari: Engaging for the reader and it incorporates bold art, color & graphics. It offers pertinent info that retains readers plus a print & online combo to reach as many people as possible. Anything a garage sale person needs to know in a fun, colorful, bold format. Love it!

2nd Kansas City Star-Tod Machin, Jacquie Lehatto, Scored a Hit: Original idea for fundraising & helping local children. Community involvement and giving back. Layout is clean and relevant to reader and the community. Themed color layout is good. Like this community promotion and effort.

3rd Kansas City Star-Mike Nickells, Mike Fitzgerald, Sunday Drive: Wow! The art & graphics are "In Your Face" and grab your attention immediately. One of the best auto promotion I have seen. Colorful, attention grabber and the ads tie in with the same creativity. What auto dealer wouldn't want to be on these pages?

HM Kansas City Star-Tod Machin, Linda Cruse, Green Life: A wonderful way for the publication to draw attention to National Recycle Week & Earth Day. Clean layout and well designed. Great way for advertisers to connect to a good cause.

52 Best News Content

1st Kansas City Star: It's not just the volume of news that makes The Star the stand-out winner in this, it's how well those stories are told. The writing is clear, concise and enjoyable to read and packages contain tons of information with easy-to-digest breakouts and graphics.

2nd St. Louis Post-Dispatch: Your paper is filled with solid packages, local angles and tons of local news. The package on the bus wreck was especially moving because it wasn't just another wreck story. It told the stories of the band members who worked so hard to earn the trip, that should have been one of celebration.

3rd Springfield News-Leader: You have solid centerpieces, which are complemented by informative graphics and breakouts. These kinds of packages are key when you don't have breaking news and your paper does a great job of telling complete stories.

53 Community Service Award

1st Kansas City Star-Joe Robertson, Eric Adler, Rick Montgomery, Mark

Davis, School Series: This six-part series took a hard look at the Kansas City School District. The use of brilliant storytelling, graphics and photography launched the series to the top. Readers should be proud to have this paper as their source for answers to tough issues.

2nd Kansas City Star-Anne Spenner, Democracy Project: This project took understanding the election process, candidates and platforms to a new level. Newspapers throughout the county now have something to look up to in achieving compelling, thorough election coverage.

54 Best Editorial Page

1st Springfield News-Leader: The best in a strong field. The page includes a nice mix of local voices along with national syndicated columnists.

2nd St. Louis Post-Dispatch: Easy to read, inviting section that offers up a variety of views. The page manages to fit a lot in its allotted space.

3rd Kansas City Star: Easily the best looking of the pages being judged. The Star's Editorial page benefits from a very active Letter's section.

55 Best Sports Pages

1st Kansas City Star: Compelling visual style - great hammer heads, although mast is a bit heavy. Well-organized section, great quality of writing by columnists and staffers. Inside pages get plenty of attention and add real value/impact to the paper.

2nd Columbia Tribune: Very strong sports writing-centered section. Overall design clean and readable although sometimes lacking clear focal point on fronts. Info graphics/logos add variety without being overdone.

3rd St. Louis Post-Dispatch: Great content, writing, photography especially strong. Design incorporates lots of elements which overall can make the fronts busy. Graphic elements aren't particularly eye-catching.

HM Joplin Globe

56 Best Sports News Story or Package

1st St. Louis Post-Dispatch-Vahe Gregorian and Stu Durando, Football Conferences: As definitive a look at 2010's conference alignment drama as I've seen.

2nd Kansas City Star-Michael Mansur and Blair Kerkhoff, Top Pay: Good punchy news lead. A story that stands out in the whole KU mess.

3rd St. Louis Post-Dispatch-Stu Durando, Bryan Burwell, Jeremy Rutherford, Tom Timmerman, Derrick Goold and Kathleen Nelson, Head Injuries: A good examination of the issue, but not enough personal stories. They shouldn't be hard to find, and I don't know why a good one wasn't used to make the main story more immediate and human.

HM St. Joseph News-Press-Andrew DeWitt and Cody Thorn, Tjeerdsma Retires: Excellent package. If the Big 12 and KU hadn't had meltdowns, this could

have been a 1st contender.

57 Best Sports Feature Story

1st Kansas City Star-Kent Bass, Brain on Football: Explanatory presentation at its best. A grabber of a lead, reporter, real people, terrified reporting & writing.

2nd Kansas City Star-J. Brady McCollough, Golden Journey: An important history lesson that's relevant today. Uh, who relocated this to page 8?

3rd St. Louis Post-Dispatch-Bryan Burwell, Growing Up Bradford: Great profile! I finished feeling that I really know who Sam Bradford is.

HM Springfield News-Leader-Michael Stacy, Praying for a Miracle

HM St. Joseph News-Press-Andrew DeWitt, Passion in Classroom

58 Best Sports Columnist

1st St. Louis Post-Dispatch-Bryan Burwell: Burwell's work shows a willingness to explore this community for his topics, which weaves issues with sports in a compelling manner. His McGwire piece, however, showed his undiluted ability to express a strong personal point of view.

2nd Kansas City Star-Sam Mollinger: Really, really strong entries, probably 1-A. The Meier column took just the right tone, the parking piece was classic strong opinion and the Royals column simply a fun read.

3rd St. Louis Post-Dispatch-Bernie Miklasz: Strong opinions on timely topics. Really, what else do you want from a Sports columnist?

59 Best Special Section

1st Kansas City Star, Football 2010: Awesome cover, content is exciting and keeps tempo with excitement. Big, bold style, felt adrenaline rush reading it.

2nd Columbia Tribune, Our Town: Good cover, good flow to read, sections are well displayed and easy to follow.

3rd Kansas City Star, Fall Arts: Name says it all, artsy and contemporary, cut-outs are eye catching and bold, content has good flow and informative.

60 Best Investigative Reporting

1st Kansas City Star-Alan Bavley, Big Bucks U: The only thing more anyone could ask of these stories would be for them to have come out while the woman was still in office. It's an impressive, hard-hitting investigation.

2nd St. Louis Post-Dispatch-Jeremy Kohler and Blythe Bernhard, Protecting Patients: The idea that medical boards protect doctors isn't new, and yet it continues to shock. An excellent job putting a spotlight on a board that the average person expects to do the right thing even when no one's looking.

3rd Kansas City Star-Mark Morris, Mike McGraw, Mike Mansur, J. Brady

McCullough, KU Ticket Scandal: This story appeared to snowball. Good work following up the news of the federal investigation with hard looks and questions by the Star.

HM Kansas City Star-Mike McGraw and Glenn E. Rice, Leon Jordan Stories: A historical whodunnit, well told.

HM St. Louis Post-Dispatch-Blythe Bernhard and Jeremy Kohler, Medical Errors: Like the 2nd winner a story that ought to be in regular rotation every few years to be sure the people charged with caring for such a vulnerable population are really doing it.

61 Best Local Business Coverage

1st Kansas City Star: Comprehensive coverage on business stories. Captivating headlines and images.

2nd St. Louis Post-Dispatch: Varied coverage. Good layout. Like focus of business on a Sunday, which is rare.

3rd Columbia Tribune: Great format and local business coverage. Nice, large images and cover format.

HM Kansas City Star: Love the layout. Nice local business flavor.

62 Best Business Story - News or Feature

1st St. Louis Post-Dispatch-Matthew Hathaway, Money Pit: A story of convergence -- real estate, greed, bankruptcy that is perfectly timed. The quantity and quality of research shows in the intricate portrait. Moves along almost like a true crime novel.

2nd St. Louis Post-Dispatch-Steve Giegerich, Chrysler: Solid follow-up with great individual stories woven through the tapestry. Vivid, well told.

3rd Kansas City Star-Scott Canon, Diane Stafford, Free Fall: Perhaps more education story than business. This three-day exploration does a great job looking at individual graduates in the job market. Helps to bring the generic "bad economy" story to life.

HM Columbia Tribune-Jodie Jackson, Sweet Deal: Good telling of locals and how they pulled off such a great economic deal.

63 Best Coverage of Government

1st St. Louis Post-Dispatch-Jake Wagman: I bet your readers, especially the ones who can barely afford Cardinals' seats - except in the nosebleed section - fumed when they saw this story. Especially interesting were comparisons to what can/can't be given by lobbyists in other states. Thorough reporting and solid story-telling! Good job.

2nd Kansas City Star-Alan Bavley, Big Bucks U: Wow, I'd like to know why Karen Pletz was fired! Great job detailing her rise to fame and her run at living large. Your paper does a great job of listings salaries, pay

increases and other financial details of public officials. I'm sure your readers love you for that, especially in this economy when they're probably struggling and University presidents are living large.

3rd Jefferson City News-Tribune-Jeff Haldiman, Rosa Ruiz, Gerry Tritz, Rasmussen Debacle: Good job of following a story and asking questions that officials would rather not answer. All three winners in this share a theme - the special treatment public or appointed officials get vs. the deal the rest of us regular Joes are afforded. Good job bringing this into light.

64 Best Coverage of Rural Life or Agriculture

1st Kansas City Star: Great coverage of large and small personal issues related to agriculture.

65 Best Story About Rural Life Or Agriculture

1st Kansas City Star-Donald Bradley, Chicken Escape: It wasn't just the story line that made this a winner. It was the great writing throughout "A Tender Heart Won Out Over Chicken Tenders" or her stepfather being the "wheel man." You also put the situation in context so even city slickers (like judges from Northern Virginia) would understand the teacher's purpose in doing the project.

2nd Kansas City Star-David Klepper, American's New Look: Great package and awesome job describing, with words, statistical data and anecdotal stories about how rural life in America's Heartland is changing. Loved the images you created describing life in the Tyson plant and on Main Street.

3rd St. Louis Post-Dispatch-Georgina Gustin, Egg Operators: Fascinating story that weaves together elements of small-town farmer, big factory operations, food safety and human treatment of chickens. Good read. Well done!

66 Best Story About Education

1st Kansas City Star-Rick Montgomery, Saving 17,000 Kids: A really big picture story looking at an ambitious rethinking of the city's troubled schools. A battleship story: big & weighty but moves really fast.

2nd Kansas City Star-Alan Bavley, Big Bucks: A diligently reported, well-written expose of the financial shenanigans at a medical school. Bonus: the sidebar explaining osteopathy.

3rd St. Louis Post-Dispatch-Elisa Crouch, Second Chance: A really touching feature about the unlikely success of an abandoned, homeless student.

HM Kansas City Star-Eric Adler, Laura Bauer, Yearbook Spots: A thoughtful piece on a topic I've never seen covered before.

HM St. Louis Post-Dispatch-Jessica Bock and Virginia Young, Leaving: Delves deep into the problems with the educator pension system.

67 Best Story About the Outdoors

1st Kansas City Star, Brent Frazee, Big Bucks: Captured all the right elements. Informative, interesting, timely. well-written. Didn't get too bogged down in numbers, yet provided enough to deliver on the headline.

2nd Springfield News-Leader, Wes Johnson, Trout: Provided a perfect tie-in to the local economy. It was also nicely written, making it an interesting read. One question: What does a fly fisherman spend \$3,000 on? A couple more sentences would have lent perspective to that number.

3rd Kansas City Star, Roseanna Moring, Prairie Chicken: The reporter did a terrific job of capturing detail and building suspense. What would have helped this story were a few more quotes from the hunters and a little more perspective on why prairie chickens matter.

HM Springfield News-Leader, Summer: Readers love to see themselves and neighbors in the paper. This was a nice, breezy interactive approach.

68 Best Story About History

1st Kansas City Star-Matt Campbell, Fountain Mystery: Terrific job of focusing on something as simple as a piece of a sculpture and telling the story of its journey over time. Real detective work.

2nd Joplin Globe-Debby Woodin, Still Alive: Colorful writing that brings an important and beautiful building...and community treasure...to life.

3rd Springfield News-Leader-Didi Tang, Denied: This is the type of story that must be told...of individuals that maintained their dignity in times of indignity. Beautiful article about a wonderful person.

69 Best Coverage of Family Living

1st Kansas City Star: Awesome coverage - the story about extreme coupons was fascinating, the one about food desert was eye-opening. The column featuring a child for adoption is a great community service.

2nd St. Joseph News-Press: Cover stories told well and illustrated well with lots of practical break-out and tip boxes, which are great for readers.

70 Best Coverage of Young People

1st Kansas City Star: The Star's coverage of young people goes beyond the required high school sports events, graduation stories. The Hanukah story put much emphasis on how children perceive the holiday. The "Family Wanted" advocates for children in foster care. What really set this entry apart was the "See Me" series, which accomplished what other newspapers in this contest did not: it gave a voice to young people. It was powerful, and I'd encourage you to do more of it.

2nd St. Louis Post-Dispatch: The Post-Dispatch does an impressive job representing young people in its news coverage. From photos to trend stories, I see young faces and news about young people all over the

newspaper. The stories were missing something, though. They were missing the young people's perspective - their voice. Many young or teen stories are written for the adult reader. What if, when writing about teens, you thought of your audience in a different way?

3rd Kansas City Star, Ink: The contest guidelines didn't define "young people" and I know your publication's audience is probably on the older end of "young people." I didn't expect to read about fourth-graders in your publication, but I admit it was hard to judge this publication against others, which featured stories about infants, children, teens and young professionals. That said, the publication had a tremendous amount of content for the young professional or 20-and 30-year olds. I'd be happy to have a similar publication in my town. It's fun, informative and newsy.

71 Best Page Design

1st Kansas City Star-Gentry Mullen, Trees that Please: Graphic really pops off the page and supports story. Layout clear, refreshing, powerful.

2nd Jefferson City News-Tribune-Stacy King, Winner is: Page layout and design elements really speak to story content. Great use of angles, colors and balance.

3rd Columbia Daily Tribune-Jason Tyler, Lunchtime Laments: Simple, yet elegant - headline size and photo size are proportioned well. Layout gets reader's attention.

HM Kansas City Star-Neil Nekahodal, Brave New World: Great use of color. Image is a little large and almost seems too much valuable real estate was taken up.

HM Kansas City Star-Gentry Mullen, Taking Credit: Excellent details and image. Wish colors a little stronger.

72 Best Information Graphic

1st Kansas City Star-David Eames & Kent Babb, Camping Out: Excellent use of colors/frames in the layout. The angles/shadowing make images pop off the page. Details - even field yard lines - are legible.

2nd Kansas City Star-Gentry Mullen & Stacy Downs, Know What: Interesting use of large format/side graphic to support copy. Minimal text or image lets graphic demonstrate and tell story. Nice balance of colors.

3rd St. Louis Post-Dispatch-Tom Borgman, Cleaver Lead: Complex material/process displayed visually in an easy-to-read graphic. Great process flow in image.

HM St. Joseph New-Press-George Stanton, Camp Map: A lot of informational text balanced well with image without overcrowding.

73 Best Editorial Cartoon

1st Kansas City Star-Lee Judge, Two Elephants: Sharp, concise. Makes a

clean point with plenty of wit.

2nd Columbia Tribune-John Darkow, Tiger: Uses standard animal imagery to great effect by employing a sense of scale to make judgment.

3rd Kansas City Star-Lee Judge, Soldiers: A not uncommon point of view in this argument but presented with such verve that one can't resist its draw.

74 Best Newspaper in Education Program

1st St. Louis Post-Dispatch: Great ideas and execution. Wonderful that you were able to partner with the pro sports teams. Gave you a great connection with the students. All of the lesson materials were excellent. Your results are among the best I've seen in recent years.

2nd Springfield News-Leader: Excellent partnership with the newsroom resulted in an in-paper product of interest to students and parents alike. Excellent teacher materials provided.

3rd Kansas City Star: Your description sounded wonderful, but I was unable to log into the site as sie@kcstar.com w/password of MPA Contest. Response was "We're sorry, the Fall 2010 term has ended. Click Here to register the 2010-11 school year..."

76 Best Headline Writing

1st Columbia Tribune: Nice collection of arresting puns, wordplay.

77 Best Story About Religion

1st Kansas City Star-Laura Bauer, Open Eyes: Very well written and thorough examination of the tough issue of churches reaching out to sex offenders.

2nd Springfield News-Leader-Linda Leicht, Christian Ink: Good story on churches tearing down walls that exclude others. Good explanation of the Bible issues as well as history of tattoos.

3rd St. Louis Post-Dispatch-Doug Moore, Urban Magnet: A great story about a congregation becoming the soul of the community and taking a leadership role in its revitalization.