



# Illinois Journalism Education Association

## Board of Directors' ballot

Directions: Please vote for one candidate from each region.

<i>Region</i>	<i>Candidate</i>	<i>School</i>
_____ Region 1	Deb Malcolm (Moline)	Davenport Central
_____ Write-in candidate	_____	_____
_____ Region 2	Barb Thill	Stevenson
_____ Write-in candidate	_____	_____
_____ Region 3	John Gonczy	Mount Carmel
_____ Write-in candidate	_____	_____
_____ Region 4	Jennifer Reiser	Washington Community
_____ Write-in candidate	_____	_____
_____ Region 5	Kelly McBride	Mattoon
_____ Write-in candidate	_____	_____
_____ Region 6	Sarah Doerner	DuQuoin, retired
_____ Write-in candidate	_____	_____

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Return this ballot postmarked by **Sept. 15** to Sally Turner, IJE,  
Department of Journalism, Eastern Illinois University, Charleston, IL 61920

# IJEA honors top student journalists at banquet



**Tanya Sneddon** is the 2006 Illinois Student Journalist of the Year. Sneddon, editor of *The Correspondent* at John Hersey High School in Arlington Heights, was also had leadership positions with *Images*, a literary magazine, and *Endeavor*, the yearbook. Judges were impressed with her comprehensive coverage of censorship issues, in addition to her feature pieces. She was Illinois' JOY representative in the national competition. Her adviser is Janet Levin. Kristin Ellertson, also of John Hersey, was runner-up.

Student journalists were the focus June 10 as IJEA recognized the All-State Journalism Team and the IJEA Journalist of the Year and Runner-up at its annual banquet in Springfield.

Once again sponsored by the Illinois Press Foundation, the event featured a keynote address by Barry Locher, senior editor in charge of the daily operation of the news department and a member of the editorial board for the *State Journal-Register* in Springfield.

## All-State Team:

■ **Matthew Cawvey**, Herrin High School. Editor of *Tiger Tattler*. Adviser Jim Starnes.

■ **Megan Geyer**, Stevenson High School, Lincolnshire. Editor, the *Ambassador* yearbook. Adviser Barb Thill.

■ **Adam Larck**, Lovington High School. Editor and news editor of *Panther Prints*. Adviser Carol Smith.

■ **Tiffany Lu**, Naperville Central High School. Editor for *The Central Times*. Adviser Linda Kane

■ **Lauren Mallett**, Naperville Central High School. Editor



Outgoing IJEA President Dave Sennerud (left) and Matthew Cawvey of Herrin High School chat at the ceremony. Cawvey is the first student journalist to be named to the All-State team twice. Cawvey's coverage of the storm that hit Southern Illinois in November and a story about a new coach controversy impressed the judges.

for *The Central Times*. Adviser Linda Kane.

■ **Elizabeth Orlando**, Prospect High School, Mt. Prospect. Associate editor of *Prospector*. Adviser Jason Block.

■ **Dixie Sexton**, Oakwood High School, Fithian. Editor of *The Oakwood Times*. Adviser Tim Lee.

■ **Ben Slivnick**, Stevenson

High School, Lincolnshire. Managing editor – content of *The Statesman*. Adviser Barb Thill

■ **Tanya Sneddon**, John Hersey High School, Arlington Heights. Editor of *The Correspondent*. Adviser Janet Levin.

■ **Adam Weiner**, Rolling Meadows High School, Rolling Meadows. Opinion editor of *The Pacer*. Adviser Stan Zoller.



## Board honors retiring director Diana Peckham

Diana Peckham, who retired this spring from Pekin High School after 34 years of teaching and advising both newspaper and yearbook, was honored by the IJEA Board of Directors for her more than 30 years with state and national scholastic journalism. James Tidwell, in his presentation of the award, noted that Peckham was one of IJEA's founders and served on its board from 1987 to 2005. She was also IJEA president from 1992 to 1994. Peckham also taught at Morton High School from 1972 to 1983.

Left: Sarah Doerner and Susan Tantillo congratulate Diana Peckham on her award from the IJEA on the occasion of her retirement. Peckham was honored at the All-State banquet June 10 in Springfield.



### New officers already at work

The IJEA board of directors elected new officers at its summer meeting in June.

**Sarah Doerner** will take over the helm from Dave Sennerud, who has left his position at Hononegah High School in Rockton to pursue a Ph.D. Doerner, a retired adviser from DuQuoin High School, has been a member of IJEA since its inception.

**John Gonczy**, newspaper adviser from Mount Carmel High School in Chicago, will take over as vice president and lead IJEA's fall membership drive.

**Dan Kerns**, who advises the newspaper and Journalism Class Productions at Richwoods High School in Peoria, is the group's new secretary. He also will work with the Web site.

**Susan Tantillo** stays on as treasurer. Tantillo is retired from Wheeling High School and remains active with the Journalism Education Association, most recently coordinating IJEA's Chicago convention.

At its summer officers' workshop, the officers reviewed IJEA bylaws in an effort to make sure the group was still on track to do what it had set out to do in 1988.

To that end, the board is proposing some bylaw updates (see above) to be voted on at the Oct. 6 board meeting in Urbana.

In addition, a membership drive is planned involving all regions. Details will be coming this fall.



IJEA officers, from right, Dan Kerns, Sarah Doerner, Susan Tantillo and John Gonczy, accept their positions on the Board of Directors at its June 10 meeting in Springfield.

#### Proposed changes to IJEA bylaws

1.02: The purpose of the association shall be to assist scholastic media advisers and teachers in promoting high standards in scholastic media and to elevate the status of scholastic media programs in secondary schools across the state. The association will assist scholastic media advisers and teachers in all phases of advising and teaching.

To do so, it will:

- actively seek to connect with new advisers and teachers
- communicate with intermediately experienced advisers and teachers
- provide ongoing educational support for veteran advisers and teachers
- act as a clearinghouse for sharing ideas and maintaining data relevant to media education
- support opportunities for interaction of student staffs, advisers and teachers
- cultivate and maintain positive working relations with those in professional media operations
- foster an ongoing awareness of educational and career opportunities in journalism and mass communications
- recognize outstanding performance in and outstanding support for the field of scholastic media

The board also will continue to work with the Illinois High School Association's statewide journalism contest, sectionals and state to be held this year in April.

IJEA, a group for advisers and people in journalism education, is working toward recognizing the needs of its members and acting as a clearinghouse to help all regional high school journalism groups in Illinois with current issues and trends

in scholastic journalism. In that capacity, Doerner will represent IJEA at the Illinois Regional High School Press Associations' meetings in Springfield. There, under the leadership of Kim Filson with the Illinois Press Foundation, she meets with regional directors of scholastic press associations to help plan the year's activities and contests and aid them in making those activities successful.

#### ■ Reminder:

**The next Board of Directors' meeting will be from 1:30 to 2:20 p.m. Oct. 6 in the Illini Union Federal Room at the Illinois State High School Press Association fall convention in Urbana. All directors should plan to be there.**

#### Board elections

Accompanying this newsletter, a ballot is being sent with a slate of nominees for positions open on the board of directors.

These positions represent the six regions of the state. Each region has two representatives on the board, and each director serves a two-year term.

Please return the ballot within 10 days. New and returning board members will be notified of the votes and will be expected to begin serving on the board at the Oct. 6 meeting.

#### Web site ready soon

Dan Kerns, IJEA secretary, with the help of a Bradley University intern, will be overseeing the IJEA Web site: [www.IJEA.net](http://www.IJEA.net).

The Web site will act as a clearinghouse for information from all regional high school journalism organizations in Illinois, as well as the source for news and information from IJEA and its members.

# Former director reflects on IJEA's history

*James Tidwell, IJEA executive secretary from 1988 to 2005, has a long history with scholastic journalism. As he stepped down from his position to assume the role of chairman of the department of journalism at Eastern Illinois University, The Adviser sat down with him as he reflected on scholastic journalism's past and future.*



James Tidwell, former executive secretary of IJEA, now sits at the helm of the department of journalism at Eastern Illinois University in Charleston. Tidwell remains active with scholastic journalism, serving as an at-large member of the Board of Directors, working with JEA and teaching three online summer classes for advisers.

## ■ What was the initial purpose for IJEA? Why was there a need in the state for it?

The initial purpose of IJEA was stated in the initial bylaws of the organization. That purpose hasn't really changed. The Bylaws say:

The purpose of the association shall be to promote high standards in scholastic journalism and to elevate the status of journalism programs in secondary schools across the state. The association will assist journalism teachers in all phases of teaching and advising. To do so, it will:

- act as a clearinghouse for sharing ideas and maintaining data relevant to journalism education;
- provide opportunities for interaction of student staffs and teachers;
- cultivate and maintain positive working relations with those in professional media operations;
- create an ongoing awareness of career possibilities in journalism/mass communications.

Many advisers at the time IJEA was created in 1988 thought the state needed an advisers advocacy group. There had been an informal organization that got together each fall at the U of I high school conference, but it didn't really do anything.

## ■ Who were the principal minds behind the organization, and what did they bring to the table?

The leaders of the organizing group included Melinda Foy, Tom Winski, Susan Tantillo, Candy Perkins, Randy Swikle, Diane Peckham. They were all long-time educators and journalism advisers who had been active with JEA who wanted a state equivalent.

## ■ Describe the challenges of those early years.

The early challenges weren't really any different than they are now. We were trying to find our niche and provided members with something they couldn't get anywhere else.

We did a couple of really good things in the early years. For three years we produced an IJEA calendar sponsored by a yearbook company. Each month was illustrated by a student photograph selected from entries submitted. We had some really good photos and created some buzz for the organization. However, after three years we couldn't get a yearbook company interested in sponsoring the project so it was discontinued.

Another positive contribution we made early on, thanks to the leadership of then vice-president Melinda Foy, was a campaign to get colleges to count a high school journalism class as English credit for admission to college. At the time, publications from the Illinois Board of Higher Education were stating that journalism classes typically shouldn't count as English credit. Melinda directed an informational campaign to promote the idea that journalism classes provided valuable educational experiences and should be counted. I remember Melinda, Candy Perkins and I meeting with an IBHE official in Springfield and convincing her that the negative comments about journalism should be eliminated from IBHE material.

## ■ IJEA went to the state legislature to try to ensure high school students had press rights. Tell us a little about that experience.

After a couple of aborted efforts, all the stars seemed to be aligned for us in 1997. We had a good bill, we had a couple of good sponsors in the general assembly, we had strong support from the Illinois Civil Liberties Union and we convinced the School Management Alliance not to oppose the bill. We also got some great support from the Illinois Press Association.

Randy Swikle and I made five or six trips to Springfield to lobby for the legislation. We both testified in support of the bill in the House Education Committee, and later

Randy testified before the Senate Education Committee. We also had dozens of advisers and students writing letters and making phone calls to legislators. It really was an amazing lobbying effort.

The bill passed overwhelmingly in the House, but we knew it was going to be more difficult in the Senate. We first learned that the chairman of the Senate Rules Committee was reluctant to release the bill. The chairman was from Champaign-Urbana, so we got all our members in the area, along with the editor of *The News-Gazette*, to lobby the chairman as hard as possible. Because of that effort the Rules Committee chairman did release the bill and assigned it to the Education Committee.

Then a few weeks later when Randy and I were in Springfield we thought some members of the Senate Education Committee were wavering. We made a few phone calls to advisers asking them to make phone calls to certain members of the committee. A couple of hours later, as we were talking to one senator in his office, he noted that he had received a half dozen calls in support of the bill in about an hour. That was very impressive!

My lobbying experience with the legislation made it clear to me that I wasn't cut out to be a lobbyist. Randy did a much better job than I did. If you want to hire a lobbyist I think Randy might be your man!

Eventually, the bill passed

overwhelmingly in both the House and the Senate. However, Gov. Edgar vetoed the bill after the School Management Alliance got alarmed about a federal appellate court decision in Massachusetts that ruled a high school newspaper had to publish an advertisement that student editors had rejected. Although that decision was later overturned, the concerns raised by the decision were enough to convince the governor to veto our bill.

The House overrode the veto, but Senate support for the override wasn't strong enough. I remember being called out of a meeting at the JEA national convention in St. Louis by a phone call from our Senate sponsor giving us the bad news about the over ride.

We've never had the will since then to try it again after we worked so hard and came so close.

## ■ What is the state of those high school press rights in Illinois today?

Things really haven't changed much. School administrators who want to control content will continue to put pressure on advisers. I think the key is to convince administrators that it makes good educational sense to give freedom to student publications. They need to be convinced that 16 and 17 year olds can be trusted with content decisions if they're guided by strong, well-trained advisers.

See Tidwell, next page



Susan Tantillo presents James Tidwell with the Journalism Education Association Medal of Merit at the 2005 JEA/NSPA national fall convention in Chicago. The award was one of two Tidwell received in Chicago. The other was the Lifetime Achievement Award from IJEA.

## Tidwell

### ■ What is the biggest challenge today's high school adviser faces?

There are too many teachers who are "forced" into advising without proper training. Then they're at the mercy of administrators who want to micro-manage the publications.

Of course, there are a large number of administrators who believe in freedom of speech and press and trust their advisers, but there are still way too many administrators out there who want their student publications to "speak no evil." These type administrators can't countenance negative news because they have no confidence in their own abilities.

It's really difficult for advisers to teach sound journalistic principles when they're constantly second-guessed by paranoid administrators. I spoke to a group of advisers in San Antonio, Texas, in August and the stories they told of administrative interference was really depressing.

### ■ For years you have been teaching an advising publications course for high school teachers. How has the direction of that changed over the years?

The biggest change is that the course I teach is now offered completely online. I just finished my fifth summer of online teaching. The online format allows me to reach a much broader audience. This past summer I had teachers from California and Kansas in the class.

I've also had American teachers in Italy and France take the class in previous years.

One positive change in the class in recent years is that more and more teacher-education students at EIU are taking the class. I hope that means that there will be more young teachers out there with journalistic and advising training.

### ■ What is it most important for high school advisers to know to be successful?

Advisers need to be role models for students and be able to get them excited about practicing good journalism. That means they have to have strong journalistic skills and instincts and be able to teach those skills and instincts to their students. They have to know when to push and prod and when to step back when dealing with students, teachers and administrators. A successful adviser certainly has to know when to pick his or her battles.

### ■ Is there anything else you would like to add?

I think the future of IJEA is very bright. I think the ongoing support of the Illinois Press Foundation will be a tremendous asset. Also, leadership is in good hands. Sally Turner will do a terrific job as executive secretary.

## IJEA recognizes excellence: Friend of Scholastic Journalism

This award is given to an individual or group that has demonstrated outstanding commitment to scholastic journalism. The award is presented at the ISHSPA conference in Urbana. Last year's winner was the Illinois Press Foundation. Accepting the award was Kim Filson, director of Educational Programs.



Kim Filson

## Administrator of the Year

This award is given to an administrator who has demonstrated a commitment to the First Amendment, to a free scholastic press or to his or her students and adviser. The award is presented at the winner's school and again at the All-State banquet in Springfield in June. Last year's winner was Kassie Patton, director/principal of the University Laboratory High School in Urbana.



Kassie Patton

## Journalist of the Year

This award recognizes the top high school journalist in Illinois. The winner is recognized by IJEA at his or her high school as well as at the All-State banquet. The winner also represents Illinois in the national Journalist of the Year competition sponsored by the JEA. Last year's winner was Tanya Sneddon; see page 4.

## All-State Journalism Team

The All-State Journalism Team recognizes those students who have proven themselves to be indispensable to their respective school media. Illinois already has numerous journalism contests that recognize individual "bylined" excellence. It recognizes students who are "most valuable players" — whose leadership, energy, dedication, and expertise make their publications possible but whose main contributions often occur behind the scenes. Nominations are due May 1, and winners and their advisers are honored at a banquet in Springfield in June.

