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## Cheers & Jeers: Lanphier students get great introduction to teaching

**THE STATE JOURNAL-REGISTER**

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**CHEERS** to the 10 Lanphier High School seniors taking part in **the school's Teaching Academy**. By taking part in the academy, these students are getting a look at the teaching profession they plan to pursue as a career. Created and led by Deborah Huffman, a former Lanphier teacher who had retired after three decades in the classroom, the academy places the seniors with Springfield elementary school classes, where they help teachers and students in just about all aspects of classroom life. This is a great introduction to both the challenges and rewards of teaching.

**CHEERS** to the **Downstate Illinois Innocence Project** at the University of Illinois Springfield, which recently was awarded a grant of \$687,448 to pay for DNA testing in the cases it pursues. "This gives us the opportunity to examine cases that haven't received resources before," said Bill Clutter, director of investigations for the project. "It gives us resources to investigate requests we previously had to just file away." DNA testing has led to 261 exonerations nationwide, and the Downstate Innocence Project will focus on 30 cases for possible DNA testing, said Larry Golden, project director. The project will work with the law schools of the University of Illinois and Southern Illinois University to seek out cases that merit DNA testing. Given Illinois' poor record on wrongful death sentence convictions alone, this is a worthy grant.

**CHEERS** to the Springfield Area Arts Council and the organizers of First Night Springfield for moving this year's First Night **fireworks display** from the traditional midnight to 6:30 p.m. New Year's Eve. First Night has always excelled at being a family friendly event and moving the fireworks will allow families with children to enjoy them without disruption to their kids' sleep schedules (and, by extension, disruption to their parents' lives New Year's Day).

**CHEERS** to The State Journal-Register's own Bernard Schoenburg for earning the top award for commentary/column/analysis from Capitolbeat, a nationwide organization of state government reporters and editors. Capitolbeat announced the award at its annual conference in Phoenix. Schoenburg won in the category for newspapers under 75,000 in circulation. Before joining The State Journal-Register in 1990, Schoenburg covered the Capitol for the Bloomington Pantagraph and also was a reporter with The Associated Press in Chicago. Schoenburg's contributions to these pages in his twice-weekly columns are invaluable and his knowledge of local and state politics is unparalleled. Sure, we're a little biased, but we can't think of a more deserving recipient of this award.

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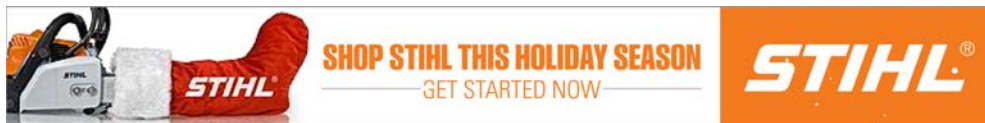
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