

AGENDA

Quarterly Newsletter of NFPW



Looking at where we're going, where we've been

Membership survey part of effort to improve future communications

By Melinda Deslatte
NFPW Communications Committee Co-Chair

More than 140 NFPW members responded to a survey seeking information about the organization's publications, website and social media. The survey is part of an effort to review and potentially revamp organizational communications.

Thanks to each of the 143 members who took the time to respond to questions about which publications they read and enjoy, which content needs more work and which ways they'd like to receive information from NFPW. Nearly 20 percent of the organization's membership participated.

The survey, which closed Sept. 23, was intended to gather feedback for an ongoing audit of the organization's communications efforts and was led by NFPW members Melinda Deslatte and Alisha Prather. The audit's recommendations will be presented to board leadership in November.

The communications audit aims to find ways to expand NFPW's reach, draw new members to the organization and better promote the great content included in its monthly and quarterly publications. NFPW contributors produce a wealth of amazing stories and photos that deserve the widest audience possible.

The survey results will inform the audit, but they will not necessarily dictate the audit's final recommendations or the board's future decisions about communications efforts and publications.

When the audit is complete, the board will review the findings and the survey results, and settle on the organization's next steps. NFPW President Julie Campbell will update members about those plans once they are decided, along with the findings of the survey.

The importance of NFPW's history: One historian's viewpoint

By Wendy Plotkin
Arkansas Press Women

From its beginnings in 1937, NFPW included an historian among its officers, and many affiliates followed suit. What was the purpose of the history to be amassed by those board members?

Was it to maintain an organizational history that would allow NFPW to share its efforts, and the efforts of its members, with anyone interested in women's role in communications? Such knowledge would allow us to chronicle our history and to honor the trailblazing women who served this cause, stimulating the interest and career plans of girls and women.

In 1937 and for another 25 years, the integration of this material into the study of U.S. history was unlikely, limiting the availability of this information to the publicity offered by NFPW and its members. In 1937, U.S. history was defined primarily as the study of the nation's governance, politics, economy and warfare, and their mostly male participants.

Attention to other areas of life, including history of the occupations (male and female) and non-political institutions (schools, churches, theater); of the non-political arenas (homemaking; childrearing; domestic relations; social, religious, fraternal clubs); and of gender and sexuality did not advance historians' prospects for positions at leading institutions nor attract the interest of most publishing houses.

This began to change in the 1960s, leading to an extraordinary revolution in the nature and content of chronicling U.S. history. Freed from the myth that the only significant historical activities were associated with war, politics and

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President's Message: The importance of being able to communicate

By Julie Campbell
NFPW President

"You're going to need to be able to write."

With those words, bestselling author Adriana Trigiani opened The Origin Project Literary Festival in Richmond, Virginia, on Sept. 20.

Along with several other members of Virginia Professional Communicators (VPC), I wouldn't have heard that message if not for my membership in NFPW and its Virginia affiliate. We accepted Trigiani's kind invitation to celebrate the craft of writing with teachers, fellow writers and—most important—a passel of inquisitive schoolchildren.

Trigiani co-founded The Origin Project (TOP) in 2012 with the late Nancy Bolmeier Fisher. Its mission: "To inspire young people to release their inner voices through the art of writing about their unique origins."

Attendees of the 2007 NFPW conference in Richmond remember Trigiani as one of our keynote speakers. From Big Stone Gap, Virginia, she has written 20-plus books, starting in 2001. That's when VPC entered the warmth of Trigiani's orbit, inviting her to speak and making her an honorary member. Since then, she's generously supported VPC's members in myriad ways.

TOP started with 40 kids in the schools of Big Stone Gap and expanded to more than 2,600 students in 25 schools. TOP gives each student a journal and publishes their work in an anthology. Previous festivals have seen the students hanging out with novelists David Baldacci and Barbara Kingsolver. This year, authors A. J. Jacobs and John Wilson dispensed humor,

wisdom and kindness to their young audience.

Zara Wakilzada, a poet and a master's student at Georgetown University, got the day off to a fine start with sound advice: By writing, she said, "you can do a lot of cool stuff." She began writing as a refugee to Pakistan from Afghanistan, was a TOP student herself and is now a TOP board member and co-director.

The grown-up attendees had a separate session with Adrienne Brodeur ("Little Monsters" and "Wild Game: My Mother, Her Secret, and Me"). After changing her mindset about a writing routine, she said, she finally keeps a steady schedule. "I now think of writing as the thing I do for myself."

Jacobs ("The Year of Living Constitutionally") likes to learn by immersion, so for his latest book, he wore 18th-century garb and illuminated his work space with candles. He found that writing with a quill pen allowed him more depth and thought.

Wilson ("Tuned In") is a retired Emmy-winning broadcaster known as the Walter Cronkite of Tampa Bay, Florida. He and Trigiani emphasized the importance of being able to communicate. The kids asked a boatload of questions about his world travels—and were awestruck to learn that one of his sons is the actor Patrick Wilson, a star of "Aquaman."

A professional communicator for 40-plus years, I still relish learning new things about my field and encouraging others to jump in. I'm grateful to NFPW and VPC for providing so many opportunities I'd never have otherwise, like watching the bright kids at the TOP event lining up to have the authors sign their books.

All of us, I would wager, have enjoyed similar delights through our membership. What are yours?

NFPW Code of Ethics

As a professional communicator, I recognize my responsibility to the public which has placed its trust and confidence in my work, and will endeavor to do nothing to abuse this obligation.

With truth as my ultimate goal, I will adhere to the highest standards of professional communication, never consciously misleading reader, viewer or listener; and will avoid any compromise of my objectivity or fairness.

Because I believe that professional communicators must be obligated only to the people's right to know, I affirm that freedom of the press is to be guarded as an inalienable right of the citizens of a free society.

I pledge to use this freedom wisely and to uphold the right of communicators to express unpopular opinions as well as the right to agree with the majority.

—Adopted in 1975 at the NFPW Conference in Sun Valley, Idaho

2025 communications contests open Nov. 1

The start date for the 2025 communications contests is a month later than usual because the 2025 NFPW Conference is being held later than usual next year.

Colorado chose to host a fall conference, Sept. 11-13, 2025, in Golden.

Both the professional and high school contests will begin accepting entries for the 2025 competitions on Friday, Nov. 1.

The later dates also give the contest directors more time for the biannual contest review, which is currently underway. The Professional Contest categories and guidelines, accessible from the website, will be updated after the current contest review is completed.

Contest deadlines, which are listed below, are also slightly later than in previous years. All deadlines are at noon in your time zone.

Professional Communications Contest

Work published Jan. 1 through Dec. 31, 2024, is eligible to compete in the 2025 Professional Communications Contest.

Early Deadline – Noon on Wednesday, **Jan. 19, 2025**

- Submit your entry by the early deadline to save a one-time \$25 late processing fee charged on the first entry you submit after the deadline.

Book Deadline – Noon on Wednesday, **Feb. 5, 2025**

- Because book entries take longer to judge, no book en-

tries can be accepted after the Feb. 5 deadline.

Final Deadline – Noon on Wednesday, **Feb. 19, 2025**

- All entries must be submitted by the final deadline to compete in the 2025 contest.

High School Communications Contest

Work published between Feb. 1, 2024 and Jan. 31, 2025 is eligible to compete in the 2025 High School Communications Contest.

The High School Contest has only one deadline, which is the same date as the final deadline for the Professional Contest.

High School entry deadline is noon on **Wednesday, Feb. 19, 2025**

Watch NFPW media for updates as the Nov. 1 kick-off date approaches. It's not too early to start thinking about your entries — or to renew your NFPW and affiliate membership to make sure you can enter the professional contest at the reduced member rate.

Learn more about NFPW's communications contests by visiting [Contests \(nfpw.org\)](https://nfpw.org/contests).

Address questions about the contests to Helen S. Plotkin, professional contest director, at Professionalcontest@nfpw.org or Teri Ehresman, high school contest director, at highschoolcontest@nfpw.org.

A few tips for contest success

By Helen Plotkin

Professional Contest Director

Your path to success in the 2025 NFPW Professional Communications Contest starts with your entry form.

Tip # 1: Doublecheck your email, phone number and mailing address on your entry form

You don't want to miss a chance to fix an error or problem with your entries, do you? Affiliate contest directors watch for problems like documents that won't open and online stories behind a paywall, and anything else that might prevent the judges from accessing and reviewing your entry. They'll call or email you if they spot something significant. Help yourself by submitting accurate contact information.

Why does the mailing address matter? If you place in the national contest, but can't make it to NFPW Conference to pick

up your award, it will be mailed to the address on your entry form.

Does someone else fill out and submit the entry forms for you? If so, make sure they have your current contact information. And, if your contact information changes during the contest year, alert your contest director and the NFPW office. If you have co-entrants, be sure their names and email addresses are accurate.

Tip # 2: Doublecheck your name on the entry form

Is this the way you want your name printed on your award certificates? If it's not, better change it before you submit your entry.

All the information you submit on your entry form winds up in a big spreadsheet that is used to print award certificates

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Tips for success . . .

(Continued from page 3)

and judges' comments, generate lists of winners, and draft news releases. Any error you make on your entry form will, unfortunately, be widely shared.

Tip # 3: Avoid common mistakes

What are the most common mistakes contest entrants make?

- Not providing proof that their entry was published during the contest year.
- Not providing the required title for each photo submitted.
- Not providing both a copy of an original photo and a copy of the image as published or displayed.
- Submitting work in a format that can't be opened by the judges or uploading scans of their work that are fuzzy or difficult to read or view.
- Submitting online entries that are behind a paywall without providing a way for the judges to access it. Don't assume that because your publication allows potential subscribers access to a few stories without payment that the judges will be able to complete their work. Judges often read the strongest stories in a category multiple times while deciding how to rank them.
- Submitting more or fewer examples of their work than the category requires. Remember: One is not a series.
- Submitting an entry in a category that requires a one-page statement without addressing each of the items listed in the "Judges will consider" section of the category's instructions.

- Submitting the same piece of work in more than one category. (The few exceptions to this rule are clearly outlined in the Categories and Category Requirements document.)
- Submitting your work in a category that requires material or information you can't provide. Most common: Submitting an entry in a category that asks how your project or program was evaluated when you either can't access that information or it doesn't exist.

TIP #4: Read the Categories and Category Requirements document carefully and check your entries against it before submitting them.

- Check this document with extra care this year since it will reflect changes made as part of the regular biannual contest review.
- Read both the general instructions for each section of the contest and the requirements specific to the category you plan to enter.
- Ask questions if anything you read is unclear to you or if your question is not addressed in the Categories and Category Requirements document. Questions can be addressed to your affiliate contest director or to the national director at Professionalcontest@nfpw.org.

Note: The Categories and Category Requirements link above will take you to the 2024 Contest document. When the current review is complete and the document is updated before the 2025 contest opens on Nov. 1, the same link will take you to the new version.

AGENDA Publication Schedule

- January 2025
- April 2025
- July 2025
- October 2025

The deadline for submitting content is the
10th of the month prior to publication.

Submit content to cathykoon1952@gmail.com

Planning underway for 2025 conference in Golden, Colorado

Tours of Glenwood Springs, Denver, Golden on tap for attendees

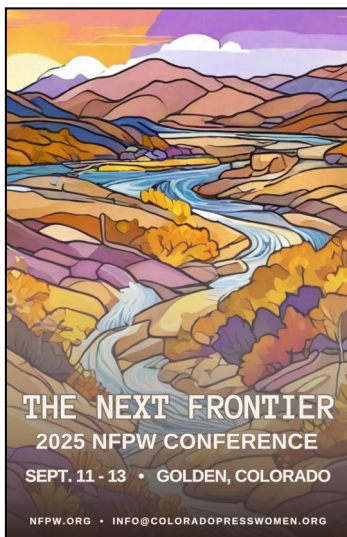
By Gay Porter-DeNileon
and Karen Petersen
Conference Co-Chairs

Detailed planning for the 2025 National Federation of Press Women Conference in Golden has begun, with numerous Colorado Press Women members stepping up to help.

They are busy organizing pre- and post-conference tours, programming and the welcome party.

Following a summer brainstorming session, a planning meeting was held in early September to discuss tours and the opening reception. The group has begun lining up the following activities:

- Preconference tours in Denver on Tuesday, Sept. 9, at History Colorado, followed by lunch and other attractions in Denver's Golden Triangle (including the Colorado State Capitol, the Denver Art Museum, the U.S. Mint Museum, the Clyfford Still Museum, and the Kirkland Museum of Fine & Decorative Art), capped off with happy hour at the unique home of CPW member Donna Bryson.



- Golden area attractions on Wednesday, Sept. 10: Red Rocks Park and Amphitheater, and Colorado Music Hall of Fame, lunch at the Ship Rock Grille, and the Buffalo Bill Museum and Grave
- A morning tour of the National Renewable Energy Laboratory, located near the conference site, Marriott Denver West, on Thursday, Sept. 11
- The evening of Sept. 11, a welcome reception at Foothills Art Center in Golden
- Post-conference tour by bus to Glenwood Springs on Sunday, Sept. 14, two nights and three days visiting various area attractions, and return to Denver via Amtrak train

The Colorado affiliate chose a fall conference to take advantage of better accommodation rates found after tourist season and, not to mention, cooler weather.

Anyone interested in participating in planning and/or speaking should contact the conference co-chairs, Karen Petersen and Gay Porter DeNileon.

Tennessee member's podcast showcases suffragette history

By Paula Casey
Tennessee

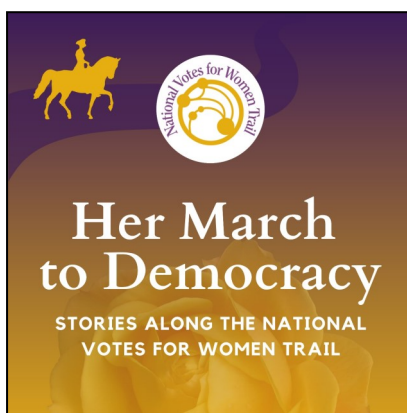
The podcast, "Her March to Democracy ... Stories Along the National Votes for Women Trail," debuted earlier this year.

Longtime NFPW member Paula F. Casey of Memphis, who chairs the National Votes for Women Trail Committee, had the idea for the podcast and raised the money for 25 episodes so this history will be preserved.

The first 11 episodes feature an explanation of the trail and stories about the following states: Alabama (2 episodes), South Dakota, Delaware, Oregon, Illinois, Kentucky, Nevada and Tennessee.

The next 14 episodes will include Maryland, Pennsylvania, New York, Maine, Massachusetts, Utah, Colorado, California, Arizona and Iowa.

Transcriptions will be placed in the Library of Congress so the information will be available and easily accessible for report-



ers, researchers, history buffs and students before America250 in 2026. America250 is a nonpartisan initiative working to engage every American in the 250th anniversary of the United States.

During this election season, it's important to remember and recognize the brave women and the men in 36 state legislatures who supported them, who won the right to vote for us.

The episodes are available at <https://hermarchtodemocracy.buzzsprout.com/>.

The National Votes for Women Trail is a project of The National Collaborative for Women's History Sites, collecting sites from all over the country to tell the untold story of suffrage for all women, of all ethnicities, that extends well past the passage of the 19th Amendment. The collaborative has 44 state coordinators and more than 2,000 sites on its database. Its partner, The William G. Pomeroy Foundation's contribution was the donation of 250 historic roadside markers nationally.

NFPW's history . . .

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governance, historians extended their interest to activities and institutions previously excluded from published history.

Among the new areas of study, gender history has shown the greatest promise in advancing a fuller and more textured understanding of the United States and the world beyond. Historians have investigated the dynamics of home, marriage and child-rearing, and the topics of domesticity, sexuality and childhood. Equally exciting is the examination of the causes, effects and timing of challenges to gender roles within society, and the evolving integration of women into male spheres within society.

Underlying this explosion in topics is the belief that the knowledge unearthed in these highly specialized studies will enhance our understanding of society as a whole, including its traditional domains of governance, politics and warfare. The interplay of birth control and women's increasing employment in improving the nation's economy in the 1950s and 1960s — and the use of the resulting expansion in tax revenues to fund the military budget — demonstrates the inter-connected nature of women's and U.S. history. The introduction of female issues such as abortion and contraception into public affairs has effected sweeping changes in the nation's politics and governance over a relatively short period, including violent backlashes to diminish this influence to levels reminiscent of the past.

Most "specialized" studies also offer fodder for investigating discrete areas in addition to the nature of advocacy among women in communications. NFPW's history demonstrates this well. Examining the evolution of NFPW's affiliates over the decades would contribute to an understanding of advocacy on behalf of American women communicators in general, and to variations in the nature of advocacy among the affiliates, reflecting geographic and cultural differences in the general situation of women in these regions.

A history of NFPW and its affiliates would also contribute to greater insight into the nature and extent of national and state activism as a whole on behalf of women in the United States. Adding studies of NFPW's experience to previous works of the Women's Christian Temperance Union, the League of Women Voters, the Women's Trade Union League and the National Organization of Women in terms of their structure, activities, membership requirements and membership characteristics would expand our understanding of the breadth and

scope of women's advocacy activities during the past two centuries.

Last, but certainly not least, an expanding set of biographies of the pioneering women communicators who joined NFPW in the last 87 years would be among the greatest contributions to the study of U.S. women (both as communicators and in other respects) made possible by preserving and providing access to the records of NFPW and its affiliates.

Examples of the fine work that has brought the lives of U.S. women in communications to the forefront are NFPW member Eileen Worth's "From Society Page to Front Page:

Nebraska Women in Journalism" (2022), Illinois Woman's Press Association member and past NFPW president Marianne Wolf-Astrauskas's "Leadership 1937-2013: The First Forty Presidents of the National Federation of Press Women" and Linda Williams Reese's "Dear Oklahoma Lady: Women Journalists Speak Out," *Chronicles of Oklahoma* (1989).

Looking at where we're going . . .

These works reflect the growing body of published historical studies of women communicators and their advocacy organizations since the 1960s. Contributing to this profusion is the establishment of two organizations devoted to communications history — American Journalism Historians Association (AJHA) and the History Division of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communications (AEJMC). Both organizations were established by experienced journalists who joined journalism departments in universities and colleges in the U.S. to promote the study of journalism. Academic historians have joined their ranks, as well. Their journals, *American Journalism* and *Journalism History*, are leaders in publishing and disseminating work about the history of communications in the U.S.

For all these reasons, the potential uses and value of NFPW's and affiliates' historical records have expanded in importance since NFPW was established in 1937. If NFPW and its affiliates contributed even minimal records to an archives, positive results would accrue to the benefit of NFPW, the affiliates, and the world at large.

Specifically, 1) an account of the individuals and activities of NFPW and its affiliates since 1937 could be included in the books, articles, websites and other media carrying the history of the communications field in the U.S., including the impact of women's and other advocacy organizations in effecting change over time, and 2) insights obtained from these specialized studies would be available for further analysis by historians of

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Journalism, transformations: Adapting to 21st-century challenges

Art Silverblatt

2024 Conference Speaker

In June, I attended a journalism conference in St. Louis, Missouri, addressing the issues and challenges facing the journalism profession in the 21st Century. Sponsored by the National Federation of Press Women, the event brought together veteran reporters and media-literacy educators.

Here are some key takeaways from the conference:

The pervasiveness of journalism

Journalism — defined as the collection, preparation and distribution of news, commentary and feature materials through the news media — is more pervasive than ever.

In this age of direct access to audiences, virtually anyone can meet this broad definition of “journalist.” Within this context, it is crucial for the journalism profession to distinguish itself from the wave of wild assertions and disinformation. This can be achieved by adhering to established guidelines and practices to instill public confidence in the information produced:

- **Multiple sources:** Confirm facts with multiple, independent sources to ensure accuracy. Editors often require reporters to have at least two sources before publishing a story.
- **Fact-checking:** Implement rigorous fact-checking procedures, including verifying information through public records, eyewitness accounts and official statements.
- **Clear attribution:** Attribute all information to its source, using direct quotes where appropriate and providing context for the information.
- **Transparency:** Be transparent about sources of information. When anonymity is granted, explain the reasons for such decisions.
- **Sensitive reporting:** Handle stories involving vulnerable subjects (such as children or crime victims) with extra sensitivity, avoiding details that could cause undue harm.
- **Privacy considerations:** Respect the privacy of individuals, especially private citizens, and avoid unnecessary intrusion into personal lives.
- **Avoid conflicts of interest:** Avoid any real or perceived conflicts of interest. Do not accept gifts, favors or compensation from sources or subjects of stories.
- **Plagiarism and originality:** Do not plagiarize. Always provide original reporting or clearly attribute and credit sources of information.

Looking at where
we're going . . .

- **Correct errors:** Promptly correct any published errors, maintaining transparency with the audience about what was incorrect and how it has been fixed.

- **Engagement and feedback:** Encourage and facilitate audience feedback. Be open to criticism and use it to improve journalistic practices.

The evolving media landscape

In today's mass-media environment, individuals frequently turn to their media devices for information. The traditional corporate newspaper model, a remnant of the printing press era, is becoming obsolete.

Metropolitan newspapers are struggling to attract readers, and the corporate ownership model often leads to conflicts of interest, layoffs and other cost-saving measures that compromise news coverage. Many of the remaining newspapers have resorted to merely putting their print editions online, which does not adequately address these problems.

Digital adaptation and challenges

Digital news organizations like ProPublica are adapting to the new digital media landscape. Recognizing journalism as a social institution charged with informing the public and connecting diverse cultural segments, these online news agencies have shifted to financial models based on non-profit organizations and direct audience subscriptions.

However, several challenges with this new model remain:

- **Local and regional coverage:** While these organizations provide national and international news, they often lack local and regional coverage. Collaboration with community reporters could fill this gap.
- **Compensation for journalists:** These operations generally rely on freelance reporters, who are often paid by the word. This system rewards production over preparation — time-consuming research, cultivating sources and conducting interviews.

For the journalism profession to flourish, a staff of full-time reporters must be compensated fairly and work with health benefits.

- **Generative AI in journalism:** The advent of Generative AI cannot be regarded as a way to reduce the number of reporters. If used properly, AI could redefine the role of journalists. In

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The importance of NFPW's history . . .

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more general trends in history, adding to the depth and quality of their work.

I proposed the creation of an NFPW history committee to work toward gathering and organizing the information I have detailed in this article. I look forward to working with NFPW to promote this activity.

Wendy Plotkin, a retired historian and member of Arkansas Press Women, welcomes comments in response to this article at wplotkin66@gmail.com. The creation of the History Committee was announced at the 2024 conference and in the president's column of the summer 2024 issue of AGENDA. If you are interested in serving on the committee, please contact president@nfpw.org.

Journalism, transformations . . .

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In addition to researching stories and editing copy, reporters can use Generative GPT to tailor content to individual audience members.

Nevertheless, reporters must not simply hand off assignments to AI; they must ensure the clarity and accuracy of the presentation. Moreover, media literacy guidelines should be programmed into AI systems to ensure the information is verifiable, reliable and transparent.

Conclusion

The journalism profession must adapt to maintain its credibility and relevance in the 21st Century. By adhering to rigorous standards and embracing new technologies responsibly, journalists can continue to fulfill their crucial role in society.



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Creativity links communicators with artists

By Janice Denham

Missouri Professional Communicators

Missouri Professional Communicators (MPC) and St. Louis Artists' Guild shaped a team in 2014.

Ten years later, that team would collaborate to host the welcome reception of the 2024 NFPW National Conference.

"Each group had strong selling points. To me, the strong historical nature of both organizations seemed like a good fit," journalist and photojournalist Karen Glines said. She previously presided over both boards.

The Artists' Guild has been a regional center since 1886 for people who make and love art; MPC joined the National Federation of Press Women the day after it formed in 1937.

They officially connected during the Artists' Guild's challenging move into its present location, a former department store. Artisans, photographers and fiber artists already were subsections.

"But there was no section that stressed writing and communications," Glines emphasized. "MPC needed a home, a location to meet. Neither group was diminished."

Kathryn Nahorski, then executive director of the guild, said, "I personally wondered how a professional women's press club would fit the Artists' Guild. We decided to give it a try and see what would happen."

With MPC as the guild's Communication Arts Section, programs linking artists and writers developed. Janice Denham became section liaison on the Artists' Guild board and soon added secretarial duties, testimony to filling a writing need. Each group eyed the collaborative prospect of a new audience seeking free programs with meaning and opportunity.



From left, Deb Reinhardt, Janice Denham and Ruth Thaler-Carter shared planning duties for the 2024 national conference.

"What is the value of that beautiful gallery if no one is there?" Nahorski asked. "Sharing email lists, providing space that everyone always seems to appreciate and sharing ideas works. MPC, with Janice as its representative, found a partnership with us beyond what other sections ever reached."

In "Tell Me a Story" workshops, writers' words interpreted what artists invented on canvas. MPC member Susan Fadem's "word portraits" and Marian Brickner's 57 photos in their book, "Her Self," added a program during the gallery exhibition. Black History Month and Women's History Month speakers tap mutual resources.

Deb Reinhardt, MPC co-president with Denham, doesn't remember a time when the organizations were not aligned.

"In my view, the biggest benefit is that it gives us a physical home and space. The relationship has helped with program ideas. Even when we go off the rails and don't feature something that ties into shows, we have access to resources," Reinhardt added.

The Artists' Guild enthusiastically volunteered its location for a welcome reception during this year's NFPW conference. Filling all 75 chairs amid the exhibit was show-and-tell time. Nahorski called it an opportunity to share the show of regional and national artists and "see our beautiful gallery and the hard work that we do."

Will the two organizations continue their tango?

Zackary Petot, Artists' Guild executive and artistic director since 2023, said the collaboration has greatly enriched programming and attracted a wider audience beyond the arts community.

"We look forward to continuing this fruitful partnership, creating impactful events that inspire and engage our community for years to come," Petot said.



Attendees at the NFPW welcome reception browsed through the art exhibits at the St. Louis Artists' Guild gallery in St. Louis.

Author chronicles Nuremberg press corps

By Noël-Marie Fletcher
NFPW Member At-Large

Of all the journalist groups I've belonged to over the course of my news career, I've always valued my NFPW membership, especially learning about how the women in NFPW have contributed to the journalism profession I hold dear.



Noël-Marie Fletcher

It gave me great pleasure to write about pioneering women journalists in my newest book, "Reporting the Nuremberg Trials: How Journalists Covered Live Nazi Trials and Executions." Some lesser-known journalists included in my book are Ann Stringer, United Press; Judy Barden, North American Newspaper Alliance; Elisabeth May Craig, Maine's Portland Press Herald, and Peggy Poor, International News Service.

The day I received my first copies from the publisher, I thought how strange it was to have three years of my life's work in the palm of one hand. I've written a lot as a journalist and author of several other books, but this project was the hardest and longest.

I wrote the book about how the international press corps (print, radio, newsreel men and photographers) lived in a castle built by a pencil king named Faber while covering the first trial of top Nazi war criminals and the subsequent executions of 10 of them.

Famous war correspondents and young journalists (Walter Cronkite and Marguerite "Maggie" Higgins) who later became household names explored bombed ruins and faced dangers due to a lingering spirit of Nazism in Nuremberg. The trial, lasting almost a year, 1945 to 1946, made history.

I believe many of us today recall the photos, videos and reports from this most famous trial of Nazi war criminals due to the important work journalists did while facing tremendous obstacles and dangers in war-torn Germany.

On a cold winter's day among a mob of tourists in Nuremberg, I visited the actual courtroom where the trials were held. I got the creeps while standing in the same spot Adolf Hitler did at the Nazi party rally grounds where the stone seats now crumble, and I explored the stale rooms inside an opulent *nouveau riche* castle where the U.S. Army billeted the trial press corps.

I felt no one gives them a place in history for their incredible contributions and sacrifices. Their pictures and video from

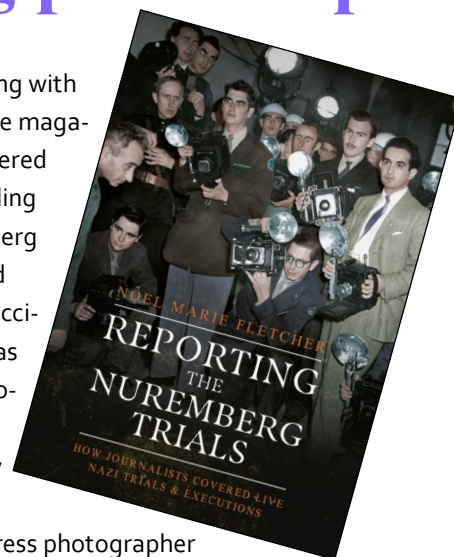
the trials is shown, along with the print coverage. One magazine reporter, who covered the first trial, was heading from Berlin to Nuremberg as the next trial started when he died in a car accident that some said was a murder by Nazis saboteurs who were killing Americans in Germany after the war.

One Associated Press photographer even had hot coffee thrown in his face and on his camera by one of the Nazi defendants who didn't like his picture taken eating lunch.

I amassed mountains of research and had more than 300 footnotes when all was said and done. I hope my hard work in writing this book underscores the importance of journalism and journalists in a free society—especially in this age when reporters are attacked by the public, the term "fake news" is bandied around, most communities lack local newspapers to reflect important events in the lives of their people and some media organizations are resorting to artificial intelligence electronic bots to "write" the news.

Editor's Note: Noël-Marie Fletcher is an at-large member of NFPW. In 2021, she received a first-place award from NFPW for her autobiography, "My Time in Another World: Experiences as a Foreign Correspondent in China."

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From left: Drew Middleton (The New York Times), Walter Cronkite (United Press), Dick Clark and Ann Stringer (United Press) were among correspondents reporting on the Nuremberg Trials. Photos courtesy of Noël-Marie Fletcher

Nuremberg press corps . . .

Photos from "Reporting the Nuremberg Trials" courtesy of author Noël-Marie Fletcher:

Top right: Marguerite "Maggie" Higgins of the New York Herald Tribune, shown working in the Nuremberg press room of the Palace of Justice, was the first person to announce to prisoners at Dachau concentration camp that they were free before the U.S. military arrived.



Second from top: Photographers, who worked in a pool arrangement, snap scenes unfolding in the courtroom during the Nuremberg Trials. Permission to allow cameras in a live courtroom marked an early and important step for the American press. The U.S. Army was in charge of conducting the Nuremberg Trials since the courtroom was in the American occupation zone in Germany.



Second from top: Associated Press trial correspondents (from left) Roland "Boots" Norgard, Louis Lochner, Wes Gallagher and Dan DeLuce listen to the court proceedings and take notes during the trial. They were often in fierce competition with rivals from United Press, which later became United Press International.

Third from top: The press camp for the Nuremberg Trials was located at Faber Castle in the small town of Stein on the outskirts of Nuremberg. Unsanitary and cramped conditions at the press camp resulted in unhappy journalists giving it the nickname of "Stalag Stein." The Faber castle's garish interior decor made it the subject of both wonder and derision among visitors. The once-proud city of Nuremberg was left devastated by Allied air raids. Many corpses beneath the ruins were left unburied for many months, resulting in a pervasive odor of decomposition throughout the city, which was noticed by all who visited during the Nuremberg Trials.



Directly below: Overview of the trial in session with the prisoners in the dock (left) surrounded by U.S. Army guards. In the upper right are photographers. This photo was taken from a special overhead booth built into the wall for photographers. Above are special ceiling lights the Army installed for superior photo quality, which often resulted in Nazi defendants complaining about the glare and wearing sunglasses inside the courtroom.



Affiliate and Member News . . .



New Mexico Press Women

If you like a book that makes you laugh and at the same time teaches you something interesting (like gardening), check out "The Competently Quirky Parables of an Eccentric Master Gardener" by Rose (Rosie) Marie Kern. The collection of stories and insights might make you wonder if Erma Bombeck ever owned a tractor.

From unique methods of insect control and comments on relatives with

black thumbs, to regional observations about cactus and talking plants, her horticultural symbiosis offers the kind of perspective usually ascribed to fiddleheads and theoretical physicists. The strange part is that the techniques she uses really work.

Rose is a member of New Mexico Press Women and president of South-West Writers. She has written more than a thousand magazine articles and seven published books on topics from gardening to aviation.

Colorado Press Women

Nationally recognized journalist Sandra Fish looked back on her 42 years of political and technological change during a talk at Colorado Press Women's September meeting.

Fish, who made national headlines

when she was escorted out of the Colorado Republican Party Assembly in Pueblo in April because the party chair viewed her reporting for the *The Colorado Sun* as "very unfair," is well known in local journalism circles as an advocate for women and freedom of information. She's covered government and politics in Iowa, Florida, New Mexico and Colorado.

She was also a full-time journalism instructor at the University of Colorado for eight years, and her work has appeared on Colorado Public Radio and KUNC and in *The Washington Post*, *Roll Call* and other outlets.

This summer, she won the Colorado Press Association's First Amendment Award, which honors a journalist for championing the freedom of information.

We Remember . . . compiled by Amy Geiszler-Jones

North Dakota

Professional Communicators

Linda Sailer, 76, of Dickinson, North Dakota, died July 31, 2024, at CHI St.

Alexius Hospital in Dickinson.

After attending North Dakota State University and marrying her husband in late 1969, Sailer moved to Dickinson to be closer to family.

In January 1970, she began her more than 50-year newspaper career at *The Dickinson Free Press*. She was the newspaper's lifestyle editor. In an article announcing her death, the newspaper called her a "cherished journalist and cornerstone of *The Dickinson Press*."

The newspaper's Facebook post received a multitude of comments from people in all walks of life.

According to her obituary, "Linda always had a camera around her neck just in case she might stumble upon a story that needed to be told."

Pennsylvania Press Club

Patricia Ryder, 88, died Aug. 14, 2024, in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania.



Ryder began her long communications career at an advertising firm where her supervisor was Fred Gwynne, the actor who later played Herman Munster.

She started freelance reporting for the *Emmaus Free Press* and later honed her newspaper layout skills with the *Parkland Press*.

Pat retired in 2000, in time to join her husband on an international consulting assignment in Tokyo; they eventually

formed a travel agency to share their love of traveling.

She was an active member of the *Pennsylvania Press Club*, including serving as president.

An avid reader who was especially fond of female writers, including Agatha Christie, Janet Evanovich and Erma Bombeck, Ryder later took up painting.

In lieu of flowers, the family suggests donating to NFPW's Education Fund in Pat's name.

Submitting obituaries

Please remember to notify NFPW Historian [Amy Geiszler-Jones](#) of the deaths of affiliate/NFPW members so NFPW may recognize those individuals in *AGENDA*, the *E-Letter* and at the annual memorial service during the national conference.

Writer's guide to self-editing: 7 essential tips

By Madison Zdravec

Beyond Bylines

Self-editing is an art that can transform your writing from good to great. By learning to effectively revise and refine your work, you'll not only enhance clarity and impact but also develop a stronger, more confident writing voice.

Explore these seven self-editing tips to hone your skills and elevate your writing.

1. Chart Your Course

Lost in a sea of your own words? Start by creating a clear roadmap or outline to guide your work. Distill your content down to its essential points so that your main ideas shine through from the beginning.

Revisit the outline to check that your piece aligns with the initial plan. If it doesn't, refocus key ideas to ensure your writing stays on track and delivers a clear, compelling message from start to finish.

2. Draw Readers In

The title or headline is your story's first impression—make it count. Start by drafting a working title that reflects your key message. As you write, let this headline guide you.

Reassess the title after you've finished the piece, tweaking it to perfectly capture the tone and essence of your content. A strong headline not only grabs attention but also sets the right expectations for the reader.

3. Lead with Impact

Your lead, or opening paragraph, is your story's handshake. It should be firm, engaging and free of fluff. Avoid adding unnecessary anecdotes or details that do not serve your main point.

After writing, revisit your lead to ensure it's as strong and engaging as possible—if it doesn't pull readers in, revise it until it does. A well-crafted lead sets the tone for the rest of your piece.

4. Confirm the Details

Inaccuracies can sink your credibility and lead to post-publishing edits. Triple-check every fact, figure, date, acronym and name in your piece.

Rely on trustworthy sources and watch out for autocorrect errors that can slip by unnoticed. Taking the time to verify your information is a small but crucial investment that pays off in credibility and trustworthiness.

5. Keep It Simple

Break down your thoughts into clear, digestible pieces. Simplicity isn't about dumbing down; it's about smart communication.

Keep in mind that complex sentences are like hurdles — too many, and your readers will trip. Ask yourself if your sentences have enough variation in length. Consider separating long sentences to improve readability.

If your piece is lengthy but still not hitting the mark, weed out all irrelevant details. Include only those that add clarity, perspective or other value to your reader.

6. Read It, Don't Just Write It

Reading aloud might feel awkward, but it's a surefire way to catch clunky sentences and awkward phrasing. If you find yourself stumbling over a sentence, it likely needs revision.

For a fresh perspective, try reading aloud in a different tone. Use a deep, gruff voice or sing the words in a melody. Hearing the text differently may help you catch details that were overlooked when reading silently.

7. Know Your Audience, Speak Their Language

Writing isn't one-size-fits-all. Evaluate your audience and their familiarity with the topic. Have you given readers the tools to understand your story?

Tailor your content to your audience's level of understanding and interests. Avoid jargon unless you're sure readers will understand it. You may need to define uncommon terminology or use simpler language.

Most importantly, ensure your writing is inclusive of readers' diverse perspectives. Your writing should resonate with your audience, making them feel seen and understood. This not only broadens your appeal but also demonstrates respect for all audiences.

The Bottom Line

Editing isn't just about fixing errors; it's about refining your voice and making sure your message hits home. Self-editing is where your writing truly comes to life.

Apply these tips to sharpen your focus, improve clarity and make your writing more impactful. Take the time to edit carefully — it's well worth the effort.

Editor's Note: I found this column from Beyond Bylines to be an excellent guide for writers of any type of communication — newspaper, news releases, books, magazine articles, whatever it may be. It aligns with what I look at when editing pieces for AGENDA.



Just a thought . . .

By Cathy Koon
AGENDA Editor

Ten years ago, when the above photo was taken in South Carolina, I had just buried my dad, and I couldn't make my flight. I missed that conference and the nine after it.

But thanks to my volunteer job as AGENDA editor, I was able to keep up with NFPW through the pages of this newsletter. It's not the same as being there in person — I miss the hugs, and the "I'm with NFPW, who the hell are you" moments — but it helps to read all about it afterward.

So, thanks, Kay Casey, for sending me this wonderful reminder of 2014 and those NFPW moments you never forget.

Be the first to send me a cutline for this photo, and I'll send you a prize from Cakoon Creations. How many of these people can you identify?

* * * *

As a journalist and member of NFPW, I have long been an advocate of the First Amendment and the role of a free press in a democracy. But in the past two years, I've had a look at free speech from the other side, so to speak: the side of the public official. It truly is a different perspective.

I was appointed nearly two years ago to the planning and zoning commission in my county. The seven-member board decides on applications for zoning changes and subdivisions.

Most recently, after nearly five hours of oral testimony at a public hearing attended by more than 400 people, we denied a change of zone from rural base to industrial. The developers

wanted to build a private air park with 30 private homes with airplane hangars on 400 acres just a hop, skip and a jump from Yellowstone National Park. Most of those 400 people had already submitted nearly 300 pages of written testimony.

One of them, in her verbal testimony, accused us of already having made a decision during back-room negotiations, citing an unimpeachable source and presenting her remarks as fact.

I took exception to that accusation when it was the commission's turn to speak and make a decision.

What the general public may not realize is that appointed officials are bound by strict rules about what they can hear and read and research prior to such a hearing. We are prevented from discussing the issue in ex parte communications with anyone, even other members of the board. We aren't allowed to research the issue on our own.

We are limited to the written and oral testimony that is included in the official public record. No back-room negotiations, no gossip around the dinner table, no phone calls or texts or emails from constituents.

For me, the restrictions reek of suppression of my First Amendment rights, but it is done to make sure we do everything in the public view. Total transparency. And it protects the commission from being sued and having its decisions reversed.

It feels different when you are being reported on than when you do the reporting.

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Secretary:

Kristin Netterstrom Higgins, Arkansas

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