

NPW NEWS_eLETTER

Thompson is NPW's 2012 Communicator of Achievement

by *Martha Stoddard*

GRAND ISLAND - Sherry Thompson of Omaha was named as the 2012 Nebraska Press Women Communicator of Achievement. Her selection was announced Saturday, Oct. 20, at the NPW fall convention in Grand Island.

Thompson is the communications and program director for the Women's Fund of Greater Omaha, a nonprofit organization that works to improve the lives of women and girls in her community. She also has a freelance writing and editing business and has extensive experience in newspaper and magazine writing and editing, employee communications, corporate and public relations.

Thompson has been a key member of NPW. She is finishing two terms as treasurer, having completed a much-needed update of the organization's financial records. As one nominator said, "Her efficiency, attention to detail, willingness to do the research required on our investments and counsel to the NPW president and finance committee have been invaluable."

She led planning for the 2011 National Federation of Press Women convention, hosted jointly by the Nebraska and Iowa Press Women. Most of her work took place behind the scenes but it was vital to the success of the event. Before moving to Nebraska, she was

Lori Potter



Sherry Thompson

a member and served on the board of the Louisiana Press Woman and the Illinois Women's Press Association.

In addition, she has been an instrumental force behind the post-prom celebration at her children's high school, continuing even after her children graduated. She was also a PTA treasurer and a volunteer leader with her daughter's baton twirling group, the Stepperettes.

Thompson graduated from Missouri Western State University with a bachelor's degree in business management. She is married and has two children.

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New officers and board to serve NPW

by *Bette Pore*

With the election of officers at the Nebraska Press Women Fall Convention, the organization has a new board of directors serving two-year terms.

The new officers are Bette Pore of Grand Island, president; Sherry Thompson of Omaha, vice president; Barb Micek of Fullerton, secretary; and Stephanie Geery-Zink of Lincoln, treasurer.

The board includes three members who run our contests.

Martha Stoddard of Lincoln is continuing as Communicator of Achievement Director. That award is presented at the fall convention and she will be seeking nominations for the 2013 award by next summer. Stoddard is also in charge of compiling the entry for our 2012 COA, Sherry Thomson, in the NFPW COA competition next year.

Mary Jane Skala of Kearney is our Communications Contest Director. She will be collecting entries for the contest in January, with awards to be presented at the spring convention.

Holly Oswald of Kearney is our High School Contest Director, with Mary Pierce of Ogallala as assistant director. They will be collecting entries

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PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

Hello, Nebraska Press Women.

In my first column as president of the organization, I thought an update on the Communications Contest would be in order because there have been some major changes in categories and more change is on the horizon.

As of the printing of this newsletter, NPW now has more than 80 members and that means that some of you are new to the organization. Please consider entering your best work in the contest. One of the benefits of being a member is the opportunity to get feedback on your work and have your skills and dedication recognized.

Our organization is a wide-ranging one, with members involved in newspaper, magazine, advertising, broadcasting, public relations and marketing, as well as education. And the Communications Contest is designed to include categories for everyone, whatever kind of work you do. Some of the newest categories are for websites and social media.

But the National Federation of Press Women has consolidated many of the categories this year so that the 2013 contest will have fewer categories. That means that some of the categories you have entered in the past have been combined. One notable change is that in categories that had separate subcategories for daily and weekly newspapers, there is now only one newspaper category, so weekly paper and daily paper employees will be competing against each other.

Another change will be the entry form. NPW will use the NFPW form this year to save the contest director from having to fill out NFPW forms for the first-place-winning entries that advance to the national contest. The contest director is also asking that you send three copies of the entry form with each entry to make sending them on to NFPW easier.



Bette Pore

Our organization's website has the contest rules, the new list of categories and the new entry form for you to download. They are also available on the NFPW website.

Included in this newsletter is the checklist on page 5 with detailed instructions to help you make sure you prepare your entries correctly. Deadlines for the 2013 contest are Monday, Jan. 7, for books and Monday, Jan. 14, for all other entries. These are post-mark deadlines. The contest director is one of NPW's newest members, Mary Jane Skala, who came to us from the Ohio NFPW affiliate. Entries will be sent to her at the **Kearney Hub**. The checklist includes her address for your entry submission.

One other future change to keep in mind is that NFPW wants to convert to an online contest in 2014. That will mean that first-place winners in the NPW contest will have to be converted to a digital format in order to be entered in the NFPW contest. Be thinking of ways you can preserve your 2013 work so that you'll have digital files for the 2014 contest. We will be providing more information on this as it's available.

NPW BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President

Bette Pore

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Achievement Award

Martha Stoddard

Communications Contest

Mary Jane Skala

High School Contest

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www.nebraskapresswomen.org

Ayoub shares tips for writing personal columns and blogs

by *Bev Wieler*

George Ayoub grabbed the Nebraska Press Women's attention when he announced that he was older than any one in the room at the 2012 Fall Conference in Grand Island on Oct. 20.

He revealed that he graduated from high school in 1968, which evoked smiles on those who weren't telling their ages, but were thinking about who was older, or perhaps looked younger.

Ayoub was the morning speaker with the topic "Personal Columns and Blogs".

As a senior writer and columnist for the **Grand Island Independent**, he is also an adjunct professor at Doane College, teaching political science, ethics and persuasion.

Revealing his humour with the group Ayoub told about his career, with a few comments about his family, and gave 12 tips on writing columns.

"Writing gave me a voice," he said. "That is a huge responsibility."

Ayoub communicated that when writing columns you may have to wear hats you don't want. He writes newspaper and on-line columns.

"The web isn't going anywhere. It's a force to deal with."

Ayoub shared that he has wrote columns about different careers, working with the people.

"I wrote about people and what they got from their job, not the job."

Another column topic was cancer patients. Ayoub's received a personal reward from the stories in getting to know the patients.

"Some of those are stores are life and death."

A writer's voice remained the focus of Ayoub's topic.



George Ayoub

"Voice is important for a columnist," Ayoub said. "A voice is consistent with who you are. When you express your opinion, you take a chance."

Ayoub's 12 tips for column writing follow.

1. Be a good reporter
2. Be curious
3. Be yourself
4. Be provocative
5. Have a little indignaiton, but be sure it's measured
6. Be engaged in community life, in the world
7. It's good to be a story teller
8. Be thorough.
9. Be good. "I try to hit it out of the park every time Ayoub said.
10. Be prepared for criticism
11. Be flexible
12. Be nice to copy editors

Ayoub has a pretty big territory without any territory bonds.

"Life is my beat," he added.

Spring convention to feature stories of Nebraska women journalists

Creighton University in Omaha will host the NPW Spring Convention on Saturday, April 20, with the board meeting the night before.

Keynote speaker will be Eileen Wirth, who will share humorous and heartwarming stories about Nebraska women journalists "who have not received the recognition they should." Wirth, who is chair of Creighton's Department of Journalism, Media and Computing, recently completed a book entitled **From Society Page to Front Page: Nebraska Women in Journalism**.

"I had no idea what remarkable foremothers we had until this project," Wirth said. "We had White House correspondents, war correspondents, suffragettes, and pioneers in consumerism" yet they are largely unknown, even to women journalists in Nebraska.

Mark your calendars for April 20 to hear some of their stories.

CoA award *cont. from page 1*

The Communicator of Achievement award is the top honor NPW bestows on its members. The award goes to a member who has made outstanding achievements and contributions to the profession of journalism, to the community and to both Nebraska Press Women and the National Federation of Press Women.

Nebraska Press Women Contest Rules-Checklist

DEADLINE:

Postmarked by Jan. 14, 2013. Books are due Jan. 7, 2013.
STRICTLY ENFORCED

ENTRY FEES:

\$7 for the first entry, \$4 each additional entry. Send to contest director with entries. Download the entry form and the contest categories here.

SEND TO:

Mary Jane Skala, **Kearney Hub**, P.O. Box 1988, Kearney, NE 68848

AWARDS:

NPW spring convention, Creighton University, Omaha, April 20, 2013; NFPW conference Aug. 24, 2013, Salt Lake City

CHECKLIST:

PAY 2013 DUES BY DEC. 31, 2012

NFPW/NPW dues:

\$94 for professionals (new members by Dec. 31), \$96, renewals; \$35 for retired, \$30 for students, mail to NFPW Membership Dept., P.O. Box 34798, Alexandria, VA 22334-0798 or pay online at https://secure.shopisg-tech.com/nfpw/renew_membership_app.cfm.

NPW-only:

professionals \$30, retired and students \$15, mail to Sherry Thompson, 5415 S. 174th Ave., Omaha, NE 68135 or pay online at http://nebraskapresswomen.org/?page_id210.

Don't send dues to the contest director.

First place winners in the state contest will advance to national only if the entrant is a member of both NPW and NFPW by Dec. 31.

GET CATEGORIES LIST, ENTRY FORM and SAMPLE MASTER SHEET

at www.nebraskapresswomen.org. The categories also are at www.nfpw.org/competitions.

NOTE: Entries must be work done (published, posted, etc.) in 2012.

CAREFULLY READ CATEGORY REQUIREMENTS AND THIS CHECKLIST

NOTE:

1. Some entries require one story or one-day package; some (e.g., special articles, columns) require two stories; and some (series) have a maximum. Some (e.g., PR) require attached project explanation letters.
2. Some categories have been consolidated or otherwise changed this year, so read the descriptions, instructions and numbering system carefully.

3. If there is no byline, photo credit, design-editing credit or publication date on your tearsheet or other materials, attach a supervisor's note confirming your work and the date.

ONE ENTRY PER PERSON, PER CATEGORY OR SUBCATEGORY

EACH STORY, PHOTO or PAGE DESIGN CAN BE ENTERED ONLY ONCE

For example, a photo entered as a single feature can't be part of a photo page entry. However, a story, photo and design from a single page can be entered in writing, photo and design-editing categories.

SUBMIT FULL TEARSHEETS OR COPIES OF FULL TEARSHEETS

Outline stories using a ruler and highlighter in a color other than black. Remember to mark jumps.

COMPLETE A FORM FOR EACH ENTRY

Include all dates and headlines for multiple parts. Attach three copies to tearsheets with paper clips.

PHOTO ENTRIES REQUIRE A TEARSHEET AND PRINT/COLOR COPY

up to 8x10. A CD or DVD may be used in some web-posted categories.

CREATE A MASTER SHEET

(see example sheet) that includes:

Your name, address, phone numbers daytime and evening and e-mail address

Membership type with proof of dues payment (ie. cancelled check, copy of form sent). NPW/NFPW members must specify that they want first-place entries to advance to the NFPW contest. That commits you to reimburse NPW \$15 of the \$20 NFPW entry fee, payable at spring convention.

A numerical list of all entries:

1.A. News story, print-based newspaper, "The headline....," date

5. Special series (4 parts), "Headlines and label/logo....," dates

PUT ALL ENTRIES, MASTER SHEET AND FEES INTO ONE LARGE ENVELOPE.

Don't put the individual entries into separate envelopes.

BEFORE MAILING, REVIEW CHECKLIST

Questions: e-mail Mary Jane Skala at editormj@yahoo.com.

Journalists share their experiences covering local police and government

by Mary Kay Quinlan, UNL

Three journalists from daily and weekly newspapers described challenges of covering local government and shared tips from their experiences during an afternoon panel discussion at the fall NPW convention in Grand Island.

Sarah Schulz, who covers, police, courts and local government for the **Grand Island Independent**, stressed the value of developing long-term, professional relationships with news sources.

Having such ties makes it possible to work around a city communications director's policy of having reporters check with her first before contacting other city employees, Schulz said.

She said she often calls the people from whom she needs to get information for a story and only afterwards let the communications director know the conversation took place, when it's too late to prevent the interview.

But some challenges are ongoing, she indicated, with a mayor who is unavailable to provide information in a timely fashion and whose erratic behavior makes it unpredictable to deal with him.

Schulz said The **Independent** recently spent \$1,200 fighting to get email correspondence from the mayor to the city council, which should have been released under the state's open records law.

Despite the frustrations, she said, at one level, the news from city hall has been "really amusing."

"Even people I know who could care less about politics are talking about it," she said.

Kearney Hub city hall reporter Mary Jane Skala, who was a suburban newspaper editor in Cleveland, Ohio, before moving to Kearney in June, said she has had to become

Lori Potter



Sarah Schulz, Mary Jane Skala, and Deb McCaslin (left to right) discuss the challenges of covering local government for their daily and weekly newspapers during a panel discussion at the fall NPW convention in Grand Island.

accustomed to a more laid back news environment, compared to her experience in Cleveland, where there was stiff news competition from radio and television.

"I'm learning to sit back and do things the way Nebraskans do," she said.

Skala expressed frustration with the Kearney City Council's practice of holding seven-minute meetings at which everything is decided by unanimous vote. Council members must be meeting and talking some time, but "they're certainly not doing it publicly," she said.

And for his part, the city manager always just says "no comment," Skala said.

Local government officials don't seem to understand the benefits of working with the newspaper instead of against it, she said, adding:

"We're all in the business of educating citizens."

In small towns, that can be a particular challenge, **Custer County Chief** publisher Deb McCaslin said.

When you cover local government in a small community, you're also covering the person who goes to your church, whose grandchildren play with your grandchildren and who may be your next-door neighbor, she said.

That means community editors just need to be willing to do their job, she said, even in the face of local animosity, which, in one case, was expressed by a disgruntled reader who sent a package of horse manure.

McCaslin, whose grandfather started the Broken Bow, Neb., newspaper in 1892, said she believes part of the newspaper's job is to teach local officials about open meetings laws and to make sure meetings that are supposed to be open are, in fact, genuinely open.

Moreover, she said, it's important not to underestimate the value of the local press in yet another way.

McCaslin said residents in one community she covers thanked her for attending a local school board meeting. They told her, "The discussion was civil because you were there."

New NPW officers, board *cont. from page 1*

in February, with the awards to be announced in time to recognize the students at the spring convention.

The board also has members involved in promotion, recording its history and drawing in new members.

Mary Pat Hoag of Norfolk is continuing as Historian. She collects information on the organization and its members and preserves it.

Continuing as membership director is Cheryl Alberts Irwin of Lincoln. She contacts prospective members and helps them join the organization.

Terri Hahn of Osceola is continuing as publicity director. She coordinates NPW's Facebook page, as well as writing and distributing press releases on the organization's activities and its members.

Continuing as newsletter editor is Carole Meyer of Hastings. She produces the organization's quarterly newsletter and sends it by email to members.

The board also includes a Legislative/First Amendment Director. Lori Potter of Kearney has moved into this position. She will update the board

on legislative issues and other First Amendment news.

The board's parliamentarian will continue to be Judy Nelson of Lincoln. She helps the board make sure it conducts the organization's business properly.

Scholarship Director again this term is Barb Batie of Lexington. She coordinates the two scholarships awarded by NPW, one for high school students and the other for college students.

Past president is Ruth Brown, who will continue her work as webmaster, coordinating the updating of the NPW website.

There is one position on the board that is still open, Member Services Director. This board member brings ideas to board meetings and conventions regarding promotional material/specialty advertising products for NPW and provides the materials the organization has for members to purchase at conventions. Anyone interested in joining the board in this position should contact Bette Pore at (308) 383-7299.

NEW MEMBERS

National Federation of Press Women/ Nebraska Press Women

Rick Brown, entertainment reporter and columnist, *Kearney Hub*, P.O. Box 1988, 13 East 22nd Street, Kearney, NE 68848, rick.brown@kearneyhub.com, 308.233.9728; home 308.338.1265

Jean A. Lukesh, owner/writer/editor/publisher/presenter, 454 8th Avenue, Palmer, NE 68864, jeanlukesh@aol.com, 308.380.3315; home 308.380.3315

Holly Oswald, regional correspondent, 3807 Avenue H, Apt. 8, Kearney, NE 68847, holoswald10@hotmail.com, 308.237.2152; home 308.380.9309

Kris Williams, regional correspondent, 79419 Sumner Road, Broken Bow, NE 68822, nascarkris@nebraska.com, 308.237.2152; home 308.872.2157

Also, transferring to NFPW/NPW from Ohio is **Mary Jane Skala**, *Kearney Hub*, home: 2210 5th Ave., Kearney, NE 68845, 308-234-1948, editormj@yahoo.com.

Welcome new Nebraska Press Women members

Deborah McCaslin, publisher, *Custer County Chief*, P.O. Box 190, Broken Bow, NE 68822, 308-872-2471, publisher@custercountychief.com, cell 308-870-2909

Ellen Mortensen, managing editor, *Custer County Chief*, P.O. Box 190, Broken Bow, NE 68822, 308-872-2471, chiefnews@custercounty-chief.com, cell 308-870-2191



Newly officers were elected at the Nebraska Press Women Fall Convention in Grand Island. Pictured, left to right, are Bette Pore of Grand Island, president; Stephanie Geery-Zink of Lincoln, treasurer; Sherry Thompson of Omaha, vice president; and Barb Micek of Fullerton, secretary.

Lori Potter

Photo recap of the NPW fall conference

by Lori Potter



MEMBER NEWS

New address for Ruth Brown:
1310 Manchester Drive, Lincoln, NE
68528

Please use this for all correspondence.

Save the Date

The DuPont Pioneer Western business unit headquarters is excited to be the host of the 2013 Nebraska Press Women fall meeting.

Stay tuned for more details. In the meantime, mark your calendars for a trip to Lincoln!

Date: Saturday, October 12, 2013

Location: DuPont Pioneer Western Business Unit, 8100 South 15th Street, Lincoln, NE 68512

Host: Kerry Hoffschneider, communications manager, Western region of DuPont Pioneer

Cell: (402) 363-8963

Email: kerry.hoffschneider@pioneer.com

CALENDAR

Dec. 31: Deadline to pay 2013 dues for ALL members.

Jan. 7: Deadline to postmark book entries in the NPW Communications Contest.

Jan 14: Deadline to postmark all other entries in the NPW Communications Contest.

April 19-20: NPW Spring Convention at Creighton University, Omaha.

Aug. 22-24: NFPW Conference, Salt Lake City, Utah

Oct. 11-12: NPW Fall Convention at DuPont Pioneer, Lincoln.

Lukesh combines love of writing with history

by Cheryl Alberts

All her life, Jean Lukesh loved words. Loved writing. Loved creating messages. Loved research. Growing up, she read encyclopedias in her basement and penciled her thoughts onto tablet paper—a writer-in-the-making.

Lukesh knew her words could be “reader-friendly,” whether for her parents, her classmates or her teachers. She adapted her writing style to her audiences, word counts and editor requests.

“Writing in a Reader-Friendly Way—or Everything I Know I Learned from Reading Cereal Boxes and *Mad Magazine*” was the title of Lukesh’s luncheon session Oct. 20 at the NPW fall convention in Grand Island.

Bright, bold messages of action words printed on cereal boxes promoted small toys and other items inside—messages that hooked children and fascinated Lukesh.

Mad magazine, with satire and groundbreaking parodies, also influenced her thinking. “You learn a lot from a magazine like that,” Lukesh said. “I inhaled it.”

Lukesh retired after 30 years as a Grand Island Public Schools educator; in 2008 she earned her doctorate in education.

Her love of history and of writing have resulted in children’s books of Nebraska heroes such as *Lucky Ears: The True Story of Ben Kuroki*. Kuroki is said to be the only Japanese-American in the U.S. Armed Forces to serve in combat in the Pacific, flying 58 combat missions. Not only did this help prove his loyalty to the United States, it was a way to combat racial prejudice for Japanese-Americans.

Lukesh and Kuroki, now 93 and living in California, have spent many hours together interviewing, and stay in touch.

Lori Potter



Jean Lukesh talked about her love of writing and research at the luncheon session at the NPW fall convention in GI.

Kuroki was mentioned in *The Nebraska Adventure*, Lukesh’s book that is now the official history textbook for most fourth-grade classrooms in the state. She also authored *Sky Rider: The Story of Evelyn Sharp* and *Wolves in Blue: Stories of the North Brothers and Their Pawnee Scouts*. Her writings have won five national, two state and two literary arts book awards. In addition to other writing, Lukesh also regularly writes the **Nebraska Trivia Quiz**.



The Nebraska Press Women Newsletter is published and sent electronically four times a year. Send e-mail address updates and member news to editor Carole Meyer, cmartist@inebraska.com. Please use NPW as the Subject.