



Spring 2010

www.nebraskapresswomen.org

NPW NEWS_eLETTER

Spring Convention to Explore 'Change' in Today's Media



Steve Smith

By Ruth Brown

With all of the change that is occurring in today's media, it seemed a fitting time to select "Change" as the theme for the 2010 NPW Spring Convention April 30-May 1 at the Cornhusker Hotel in Lincoln.

Excellent speakers will present inform, motivate and inspire you regarding the changing face of journalism itself, opportunities (for change) online, how you can be an agent of social change, what you need to know when changing from still photography to video, and changes legislated in this year's Unicameral.

Registration starts at 8:30 a.m., with the NPW business meeting from 9-9:45 a.m. Come hear about NPW's initiatives: starting a Woman Journalists' Hall of Fame, printing Marianne Beel photos on items for sale in order to fund a scholarship for a high school student, and co-hosting the NFPW Conference with Iowa in 2011.

At 10 a.m. Steve Smith, Valerie Jones and Rita Brhel will offer ideas on how you, as an individual, and the media you represent can gain from the many "Opportunities Online."

As the national news editor at the UNL Office of Communications,

Smith works with national media outlets to maintain a high profile for UNL. Prior to joining UNL, Smith was the Lincoln Journal Star online editor and led JournalStar.com to numerous awards for excellence in online journalism. He was also a reporter and editor at papers in Iowa, California and Nevada. A 1994 journalism graduate of UNL, he is the author of "Forever Red: Confessions of a Cornhusker Football Fan."

A 2000 communication graduate of Northwestern University, Jones worked in Chicago and San Francisco for Starcom, a media communications agency that specializes in making connections between consumers and brands, before finding her way back home to Nebraska. After gaining experience at Bailey Lauerman and at Swanson Russell ad agencies in Lincoln, she set out on her own to help clients navigate the digital space and connect with consumers in meaningful, effective ways.

This panel will be moderated by NPW member Rita Brhel, a 2003 UNL ag journalism grad. Brhel is publications director/executive editor for Attachment Parenting International, is the executive director for the Nebraska Sheep & Goat

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Valerie Jones



Rita Brhel

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

Spring Update

By Ruth Brown, president

Media are changing and journalists' responsibilities are changing, which is good reason to have our NPW Spring Convention focus on change.

Seize this opportunity to get up to speed, network with other communicators, and enjoy the ambiance of The Cornhusker Hotel in Lincoln April 30-May 1. I guarantee that you will leave inspired, motivated and ready for whatever comes your way.

Bring the family and make it a vacation! If you're driving in Friday, join the board members at Billy's for dinner. The deadline for convention registration and for hotel reservations is April 16.

You have just a few days left before the deadline to submit a logo for the NFPW 2011 Conference at Harrah's in Council Bluffs. The design must include the theme "Plains Speaking" and the conference dates, Sept. 8-10, 2011; be four-color and high resolution; and include an outline of both Iowa and Nebraska. It will be used on posters, programs, Web site and more. E-mail it to Stephanie Geery-Zink, geeryznk@inebraska.com

Lincoln Press Women met at a casual dining venue JUST FOR FUN. Yes, really. It was in the dead of winter when we got together on a Thursday after work. You could come for a glass of wine, a cup of coffee or stay for dinner – and it was fun. We vowed to do it again when the weather gets a little warmer.

You should try this in your community too. Get together with a few other members who are nearby and invite some people you would like

to see join NPW. It's amazing how much we had to talk about and how much fun it was to just kick back with no program and no deadlines.

The board met in January – by phone. We did a conference call, thanks to KRVN, which let us use their system. It was great not to have to worry about the weather. Written reports were submitted by all board members and distributed prior to the meeting. Much of the discussion was on the budget. Other discussion centered on upgrades to the NPW Web site, fine-tuning criteria for the Marianne Beel Scholarship, and potential vendors and outlets for Beel photo merchandise.

The only action item was approving the Nebraska State Historical Society as the permanent repository for NPW archives. This was done after I reported that Tom Mooney said the NSHS will allow us to temporarily remove a few items for display although they prefer to arrange for duplicates. The issue will be brought before the membership in May for final approval.

Many thanks to NPW board members who have worked hard since our last newsletter.

o Treasurer Sherry Thompson reinvested scholarship funds and collected dues; as of March 4, we had 62 members but hope you will help us recruit more. Send them to www.nebraskapresswomen.org where they can download our brochure.

o Barb Micek collected your contest entries, sent them to judges, and will prepare your awards, which will be presented at the banquet on May 1.



Ruth Brown

o Mary Pierce collected high school journalism contest entries, sent them to judges and will prepare awards that will be presented at the lunch May 1.

o Barb Batie received college scholarship applications, met with committee members Judy Nelson and Andrea Cranford, and chose a winner. She also sent information on the Marianne Beel Scholarship to Sandhills area high schools, seeking applicants for this inaugural year.

o Diane Wetzel wrote the "Your Right to Know" article for Sunshine Week; it is printed elsewhere in this newsletter. The Nebraska Press Association distributed the article through their newsletter and directed people to our Web site to download the digital file. The Nebraska Broadcasters Association printed a shortened version in their newsletter and put the entire article on their Web site. The NFPW president put the article on the NFPW Web site, said she would write about it in her blog and put something about it in the newsletter.

o Stephanie Geery-Zink and Sherry Thompson met with Iowa Press Women to continue planning the NFPW 2011 Convention that we will co-host, and Lori Potter is starting to line up the pre-tour in Nebraska.

Spring Convention

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Producers, and owns Brhel Communications through which she freelances. She manages an editorial staff of 50+ located around the world, most of whom are volunteers.

At 11 a.m., Maxine Moul will share her thoughts and experiences to inspire you to become “Agents of Social Change;” that is, to find ways to positively affect society.

Moul is a living example of this. After graduating from UNL with a journalism degree, she and her husband purchased the Syracuse (Neb.) Journal-Democrat and founded Maverick Media.

In 1990 she was elected lieutenant governor, leading the state’s rural development efforts. Three years later she was appointed director of the Nebraska Department of Economic Development after which she helped form the Partnership for Rural Nebraska.

More recently she started the Nebraska Community Foundation, serving as its first president. She then founded and coordinated EndowNebraska before being appointed the Nebraska state director of USDA Rural Development.

During the noon luncheon, Michelle Carr Hassler, assistant to the dean and lecturer in the UNL College of Journalism and Mass Communications, will share insights gained at the recent Carnegie-Knight summit on the future of journalism. If you would like a preview of this information, go to <http://www.paleycenter.org/mc-news-frontier-2>.

Hassler has been teaching writing courses at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln since 1998.

Before coming to UNL, she was a newspaper reporter and editor for 16 years, beginning as education reporter at the Tempe Daily News

and Mesa Tribune. She also has served as state editor at the Lincoln Journal and night city editor and interim editorial page editor at the Lincoln Journal Star. She has been a frequent freelance contributor to several magazines, including PC Today and Midwest Living.

Her campus activities include membership on the steering committee of the Faculty Leadership for Writing Initiative and the Enrollment Management Committee. She served five years as adviser to the UNL chapter of the National Society of Collegiate Scholars. She was honored in 2003 and 2005 for her contributions to students by the UNL Teacher’s Council and the UNL Parents Association. She received a bachelor’s degree in journalism and a master’s in English, both from UNL.

Also at the luncheon, NPW board member Mary Pierce will present awards to winners of the NPW High School Journalism Contest. NPW’s college scholarship winners will also be recognized.

The afternoon kicks off with a compelling 30-minute documentary that focuses on young men growing up in North Omaha. Trina Creighton, associate professor of broadcasting at UNL and former KMTV Omaha anchor, will introduce her documentary, “The Academic Achievement Gap: We Do Better When We Know Better.” It’s her way of creating awareness from which she hopes will come change.

An Iowa native, Creighton started her career teaching speech, drama and composition before breaking into broadcasting on 50-watt, black-owned radio station KBBG in Waterloo. After a move to Des Moines, she went to work for KRNT Radio before joining WHO Radio and later WHO TV. When Creighton moved to Omaha, she took a position at Channel 3 where

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Maxine Moul



Michelle Carr Hassler



Trina Creighton

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she worked for 15 years as an anchor before joining UNL in 2001.

At 2:30, UNL's Bruce Mitchell will help NPW members move from still photography to video by providing "Tips and Tricks." Many media organizations now require staff members to shoot video for the Web site, often with little training.

This session and the workshop that follows will help members have more confidence when shooting video on the job or at home with family. Members who have specific questions about the video cameras they use may bring them for some individual instruction.

Originally from Texas, Mitchell has more than 30 years of professional experience, most recently as a producer with Lincoln's Snitily Carr advertising agency. At UNL he teaches classes in advertising copywriting, new media, videography and visual literacy.

Last summer, as part of the Omaha Science Media Project, Mitchell went to Zambia to film children affected by Aids in order to help teach Nebraska children about viruses.

From 4-5:30 p.m. members are asked to come to the NPW Hospitality Room for refreshments and to plan for the Sept. 8-10, 2011, NFPW conference in Council Bluffs that NPW will co-host.



Bruce Mitchell

The NPW Awards Banquet begins at 6:30 p.m. Communicator of Achievement Martha Stoddard will provide highlights of the Nebraska legislative session, noting what changes the senators have made. Operating out of the Lincoln Bureau, Stoddard is a reporter for the Omaha World-Herald and regularly covers state government, a job she also performed while at the Lincoln Journal Star.

Barb Micek, NPW professional communication contest chair, will then present awards to contest winners. The evening will culminate with Micek presenting the NPW Sweepstakes Awards.

Video Shoot, Dinner and Board Meeting Set for April 30

Friday, April 30, Lori Potter will begin shooting footage for NPW's portion of the invitation to attend the 2011 national convention. The invitation will be presented at the 2010 NFPW Conference in Chicago this August.

Board members and other interested NPW members should meet at

the Abraham Lincoln statue on the west side of the capitol at 6 p.m. As soon as we are done shooting we will walk to Billy's Restaurant, 1301 H Street, for dinner.

Other members and guests are welcome to have dinner with us in the private room at Billy's. All diners will be "Dutch treat."

Convention, Hotel Registrations Due April 16

Plan now to attend the April 30-May 1 NPW Spring Convention at the Cornhusker Hotel in Lincoln.

Cost of the convention from beginning to end on Saturday, May 1, is just \$50 if postmarked on or before Friday, April 16. Day-only (morning, lunch and afternoon) registration is \$35. Evening-only (just the banquet) registration is also \$35. A day-only student rate is available for \$25. Members may register late for an additional \$5. Non-members are welcome but should add \$10 to the registration fee.

Please send convention registrations to Sherry L. Thompson, 5415 S. 174th Ave., Omaha, NE 68135. If you are sending it at deadline, e-mail sherrythompson@cox.net to let her know that it is in the mail.

Hotel reservations at The Cornhusker must be made on or before Friday, April 16. Call 402-474-7474 or toll free 866-706-7706 to reserve a room. Rooms are \$89 plus tax if you say that you are part of the Nebraska Press Women.

The rooms are absolutely gorgeous and exquisitely comfortable with soft new pillows, plush down comforters and free high-speed Internet. Bring your swimsuit for the pool and workout clothes for the gym. It's a vacation! The Cornhusker, located at 333 S. 13th St., is a Marriott Hotel.

Following dinner, the board will meet to prepare for the next day's member meeting.

Billy's is known for its casual fine dining. It is in an 1887 historic home and has numerous photos of William Jennings Bryan for whom the restaurant is named.

Nebraska Press Women Spring 2010 Convention Schedule

Friday, April 30:

- 6 p.m. Board gathers at Abraham Lincoln statue on west of state capitol for NFPW video segment.
- 6:30 p.m. Board assembles in private room at Billy's Restaurant, 1301 H Street, Lincoln, for dinner and meeting.

Saturday, May 1 *(all activities at Cornhusker Hotel):*

- 8:30-9 a.m. **Registration** at Cornhusker Hotel, 333 S. 13th St., Lincoln
- 9-9:45 a.m. **NPW Business Meeting**
- 10-11 a.m. **Opportunities Online Panel**
 - Steve Smith, national news editor, UNL Office of Communications
 - Valerie Jones, digital marketing and media strategy consultant
 - Moderated by Rita Brhel
- 11-11:45 a.m. **How You Can Be an Agent of Social Change**
 - Maxine Moul, Nebraska state director of USDA Rural Development
- 12 noon-1:30 p.m. **Awards Luncheon**
 - Michelle Carr Hassler, insights from the recent Carnegie-Knight summit on the future of journalism.
 - NPW Scholarship winners recognized by Andrea Cranford, committee member.
 - NPW High School Journalism Contest winners announced by Mary Pierce, chair.
- 1:30-2:15 **“The Academic Achievement Gap: We Do Better When We Know Better”**
 - Trina Creighton, UNL associate professor of broadcasting and her documentary on young black men
- 2:30-3:30 p.m. **“Moving from Still Photography to Video: Tips and Tricks”**
 - Bruce Mitchell, UNL advertising lecturer and former ad agency videographer.
- 3:30-4 p.m. **Hands-on workshop**
 - Bring the video camera you use, ask questions and get help from Bruce.
- 4-5:30 p.m. **NFPW 2011 Convention Planning Session**
- 6:30-8:30 p.m. **NPW Awards Banquet**
 - Legislative Wrap-up by Martha Stoddard, Omaha-World Herald reporter
 - NPW Professional Communications Contest awards presented by Barb Micek, contest chair

Convention Hotel Information: The Cornhusker, a Marriott Hotel, 333 S. 13th St., Lincoln, Neb.
For reservations, call 402-474-7474 or toll free 866-706-7706 by April 16.
Rooms are \$89 plus tax per night. Mention Nebraska Press Women to receive that rate.

2010 NPW Spring Convention Registration Form

Name _____

Address _____ City/State/Zip _____

Phone _____ E-mail _____

Full registration: ___ NPW members @ \$50 ___ Nonmembers @ \$60

Day-only registration: ___ NPW members @ \$35 ___ Nonmembers @ \$45 ___ Students @ \$25

Banquet only: ___ \$35 per person

Late registration (after April 16): Add \$5 to your registration fee

Make checks payable to: Nebraska Press Women. (If sending a corporate check, please indicate who it is for and enclose a registration form for each person the check covers.)

Send checks to: Sherry Thompson, 5415 S. 174th Ave., Omaha, NE 68135. (Please use address exactly as it appears here to ensure delivery.) If you are sending it at deadline, e-mail sherrythompson@cox.net to let her know that it is in the mail.

NPW UPDATE

Meet Our 2010 Scholarship Winners

By Barb Batie

Two UNL journalism majors have been named recipients of the 2010 Nebraska Press Women scholarships.

Jamie Klein, a junior news editorial major from Papillion, will receive the \$500 NPW Memorial Scholarship, while Erin Starkebaum, a sophomore news editorial major and native of Colorado, will receive the \$300 Excellence in Media Scholarship.

Both young women were active in their respective high schools, with Klein gaining preliminary journalism experience by serving two years as yearbook editor and working on video production and Starkebaum as a reporter for two student organizations and producing two documentaries on the high school girls' basketball team.

Klein has worked for the Daily Nebraskan and has had summer internships at the Papillion Times and San Antonio Express-News. She is currently an intern with the Omaha World-Herald. She has been selected for an internship with the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette for this coming summer.

Starkebaum contributed an article to the UNL Web site about a study abroad trip to Mexico this past summer and participated in a weekend reporting trip to Norfolk that culminated with an article being published in the Oct. 8, 2009, edition of the Norfolk Daily News.

Both are members of NPW's student chapter at UNL and Starkebaum is also a member of the College of Journalism Photo Club.

Joseph Starita, the Pike Professor of Journalism at UNL, describes Klein as "young and aggressive.



Jamie Klein

She's passionate and savvy. She's a gifted reporter and a fluid writer," he said, adding that she has good instincts and news judgment for her age.

Mary Kay Quinlan, associate professor in the College of Journalism and Mass Communications at UNL, notes Starkebaum's passion is photography, and "she is



Erin Starkebaum

a first-rate reporter and writer who pays scrupulous attention to details in her written work ... I wish I could clone her."

Klein and Starkebaum have been invited to attend NPW's spring convention in Lincoln April 30-May 1 and will receive their scholarships as soon as verification of enrollment is received.

NPW, High School Contest Results to be Revealed at Spring Convention

NPW received 213 entries from 29 members for the 2009 Communications Contest. This total was 15 more entries than last year.

Entries were judged by members of South Dakota Press Women who sent notes of high praise and compliments of the professionalism displayed by entrants. The thorough comments given by each judge make it clear that each entry was meticulously examined.

The results have been tabulated and they will be announced at the convention banquet on Saturday evening. Don't forget to register and join in the excitement as the individual winners as well as the sweepstakes winners are revealed.

The lure of a deadline was not lost on entrants into the 2009 Nebraska Press Women High School Communications Contest either.

Packets were received from 12 schools, including nine from Class A schools and three from Class B-D schools. Five of the schools were new to the competition this year.

Entries were received from the following schools: Blair, North Platte, Millard West, Crete, Lincoln Southwest, Grand Island Senior High, Hastings Senior High, Omaha Marian, Papillion-LaVista, Rock County, Loup City and Broken Bow.

Contest results will be announced at spring convention.

Update: Marianne Beel Memorial Scholarship

The NPW scholarship committee is pleased to announce the first Marianne Beel Memorial Scholarship is set to be awarded to a deserving Nebraska Sandhills high school senior this May.

The scholarship is dedicated to the memory of long-time NPW member Marianne Beel. Beel loved the Sandhills and shared that love through her writing and photography. Her column, "Sand in My Shoes," was much beloved by readers of the North Platte Telegraph and her writing and photography appeared there and in many other publications over the years.

NPW Scholarship chair Barb Batie and several long-time NPW members and friends of Marianne Beel have worked over the winter to develop criteria for selection. Press releases and letters announcing this new scholarship went out March 3 to high schools and newspapers in the following Sandhills counties: Custer, Logan, McPherson, Arthur, Grant, Hooker, Thomas, Blaine, Loup, Garfield, Rock, Brown, and of course, Cherry County.

Criteria include that the student applying is a writer/photographer/and/or videographer in the general category of rural Nebraska, with preference given to Sandhills subject matter.

The applicant must be seeking some type of post-secondary degree or certificate (not necessarily a four-year school) in a communications-related field and will be required to submit three samples of subject-related work, which may be any combination of writing/photography/or videography.

They will need to complete an application form with a 250-word



Beel explains one of her beloved Sandhills images.

essay on their choice of four topics, attach a copy of their high school transcript with current GPA, one letter of reference and a resume outlining contributions to the school and community, i.e., church, 4-H and volunteer work.

Deadline for the applications has been set for April 15 and the scholarship will be awarded at the recipi-

ent's high school graduation and/or school honors night. Hopefully, an NPW representative will be able to attend, depending on school policy.

In subsequent years the scholarship application process will be opened to all Nebraska high schools, but the committee felt this first year for sentimental reasons it should go to someone from the Sandhills.

Who Will You Nominate for COA?

Start thinking about submitting names of nominees for the 2010 Nebraska Press Women Communicator of Achievement Award, the organization's highest honor.

The award is presented for: professional achievement, 60 percent; community service, 20 percent; and contributions to NPW and the National Federation of Press Women, 20 percent.

The nomination deadline is July 1. Send the name and a brief description of why the nominee is worthy of the honor to: Cheryl Alberts Irwin, 3274 Merrill St., Lincoln, NE 68503, or calberts1@unl.edu.

Any NPW member may nominate an individual. Past COA recipients cast the votes for the new COA, who will be recognized during the 2010 fall convention.

Two individuals are ineligible: Ruth Brown, current NPW president, and Joan Burney, 1993 NFPW COA winner.

Help Us Plan a National Convention

By Stephanie Geery-Zink, co-chair
NFPW Conference Committee

The 2011 National Federation of Press Women conference has been set for Sept. 8-10, 2011. We hope everyone can do their part to make this a successful conference – the first-ever joint affiliate conference!

The conference committee been meeting on a monthly basis to finalize the contract and do some initial planning. The contract has been signed for Harrah's in Council Bluffs and everyone on the committee is excited about the meeting rooms being in one area (no running all over to find your workshop) and the nearness to the hotel tower. The food is great and there is a club near the meeting rooms if anyone wants to steal away for a chat over drinks.

At our last meeting we decided to assign each committee chairperson a main area of planning. If you have any questions or ideas, you can contact the designated committee co-chairs:

Julie Hoffman, facilities and transportation, jhoffman68@gmail.com, 402-681-5067 (cell).

Marsha Hoffman, local tours and events, marshatres@aol.com, 712-328-8494 (home).

Sherry Thompson, sponsorships, sherrythompson@cox.net, 402-891-5789 (home), 402-917-5789 (cell).

Stephanie Geery-Zink, speakers, geeryznk@inebraska.com, 402-328-9969 (cell).

We're doing this so we have a "go-to" person instead of everyone on the committee taking suggestions and trying to coordinate each piece. If you have general questions that don't fit into one of the four categories, you can ask any of us.

We are looking for committee members from both states, along with committee chairpersons. The committee has some names, but since we're now getting serious about working committees, please let us know. You can serve on more than one committee if you have the time and inclination! The more the merrier!



Potter, Micek to Attend NFPW Board Meeting

NFPW First Vice-President Lori Potter of Kearney and Historian Barb Micek of Fullerton will attend the NFPW Board meeting April 15-17 in Albuquerque. Issues on the agenda include membership – please act on the every-member-recruit-one-member challenge, a report from a committee studying our Web site needs, and reports on the 2010 convention in Chicago and 2011 Nebraska-Iowa convention in Council Bluffs.

The national board meeting is the same time as New Mexico Press Women's 60th anniversary celebration. Board members will participate in New Mexico's workshops and banquets as time allows.

Potter and Micek will report any national board action at NPW's spring convention in Lincoln.



Calling NPW Artists ...

The Iowa and Nebraska Press Women need proposals for designs for the logo for the 2011 National Federation of Press Women conference we are co-hosting in Council Bluffs, Sept. 8-10, 2011. Design entries must include the conference theme "Plains Speaking," be four-color, include an outline of both Iowa and Nebraska, bear the conference dates, be high resolution, and be done by a member of IPW or NPW.

The winning entrant will be able to enter the design in her state communications contest and use the design in her personal portfolio. The image will be featured on IPW and NPW as well as NFPW Web sites and correspondence. It will also appear on the posters placed in meeting rooms at the 2011 conference site and the conference program book, as well as the program book for the 2010 NFPW conference in Chicago.

An example of Illinois' logo is at: Call for logo proposals:
<http://nfpw.org/conference.htm>

Designs can be mailed or e-mailed to Stephanie Geery-Zink, geeryznk@inebraska.com, 7352 S. 29th St., Lincoln, NE 68516. They must be postmarked by March 19.

Nebraska Journalists Championed the First Amendment

The following article was written by NPW board member Diane Wetzel to celebrate Sunshine Week 2010, March 14-20. Sunshine Week focuses on the importance of government conducted in the open and emphasizes the public's right to know. The article is available for download on the NPW Web site. Go to <http://www.nebraskapresswomen.org/announce.html> and click on "Your Right to Know."

By Diane Wetzel
The North Platte Telegraph

As members of the only profession protected by the U.S. Constitution, journalists carry a heavy responsibility.

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.

That is why reporters sit in city council meetings and spend hours in court hearings, challenge local boards to open their meetings and attempt to shine a light on the actions of those tasked with making decisions that impact the public. Journalists are on the front lines in the skirmishes and the battles for the people's right to know.

Constitutional scholars note that the 1976 U.S. Supreme Court decision on *Nebraska Press Association v. Stuart* is one of the most significant in First Amendment law. Robert O'Neil, founder of the Virginia-based Thomas Jefferson Center for the Protection of Free Expression, said he would rank it as one of the top three cases, along with *New York Times v. Sullivan* and *New York Times Co. v. United States*. Since the Supreme Court decision, prior restraints on the press

are now viewed with suspicion, O'Neil noted.

Nebraska Press Association v. Stuart is taught in journalism and law schools throughout the country. NPA executive director Allen Beermann told the First Amendment Center that the case "represents probably the most significant of all First Amendment cases as it relates to the press and open courts."



Many groups were involved with the "\$100,000 plus" case in 1976, said Larry Walklin, professor of journalism at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Although the case bears the name of the NPA, the docket also lists as petitioners the Omaha World-Herald, the Journal-Star Printing Co., Western Publishing Co., North Platte Broadcasting Co., Nebraska Broadcasting Association, Associated Press, United Press International, and the Nebraska Professional Chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists and several individuals.

"The amazing thing is that it started right here on a small town paper," said North Platte Telegraph veteran reporter Sharron Hollen, who covered the Kellie murders and the subsequent court case and contributed to this article. "It didn't come out of some big city newspaper."

It began on a blood-soaked autumn night in the small town of Sutherland, Neb. Six members of the Kellie family were discovered murdered in their modest home. The dead were Henry Kellie, 66; his wife Audrey, 57; their son David, 32; his children Deanna, 7; and Daniel, 5; and another granddaughter, Florence, 10.

The next day, a 29-year old unemployed farm worker named Erwin Charles Simants, who had been living with family members next door to the Kellie home, surrendered to the police. There were rumors of necrophilia and sexual assault. He was held in the Lincoln County Jail in North Platte.

"Fear permeated the darkness of Saturday night and Sunday morning," The North Platte Telegraph reported. "Sutherland huddled behind locked doors while a murder suspect roamed the night."

Local, regional and national media descended, expecting to report on a horrific crime but quickly found themselves "in a courtroom confrontation between the conflicting rights of a free press and of a defendant to a fair trial," TIME magazine reported on Monday, May 3, 1976, after the Supreme Court decision.

The day after the discovery of the bodies, Simants was arrested. His attorney and the prosecuting attorney asked Lincoln County Court Judge Ron Ruff to issue a gag order prior to Simants' preliminary hearing. They argued that if the media were allowed to publish or

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broadcast information about his confession, details about a note he wrote on the night of the murder and aspects of alleged sexual assaults of the victims related to the case, Simants would not receive a fair trial. Simants' right to a free trial superseded the freedom of the press, the Judge said, granting the order.

Several days later, members of the media, which included publishers, reporters, and press and broadcast news organizations, asked the county court to remove the gag order. Arguments were heard in District Court, and Judge Hugh Stuart upheld the order. He found that "because of the nature of the crimes charged in the complaint that there is a clear and present danger that pre-trial publicity could impinge upon the defendant's right to a fair trial."

In an interview before his death in 2006, Stuart said he was "trying to achieve a balance between the First Amendment right to a free press and the Sixth Amendment right to an impartial jury."

The NPA appealed the decision to the Nebraska Supreme Court, which modified Stuart's order, prohibiting reporting on the confession, any confessions or statements made to third parties, except members of the press and other facts "strongly implicative of the accused."

In the meantime the case went to trial on January 5, 1976, and Simants was found guilty of murder and sentenced to death. Stuart had declined to move the trial but agreed to isolate the jurors. He barred the news media from a suppression hearing and refused to allow the public and press to attend jury selection.

Five months after Simants' conviction, the U.S. Supreme Court issued a unanimous ruling that struck down Stuart's gag order.

Writing the ruling, Chief Justice

Warren Burger said, "there is nothing that proscribes the press from reporting events that transpire in the courtroom." The thread running through all the cases is that prior restraint on speech and publication are the most serious and least tolerable infringements on First Amendment rights, Burger wrote.

Simants had been on death row for two years; two execution dates were set, then stayed. Then a new motion was filed saying that Stuart had visited jurors while they were sequestered and that the county sheriff, who was a witness for the prosecution, had played cards with them. Simants was granted a new trial.

On October 1, 1979, Simants went on trial for the second time, this time in Lincoln, where he plead not guilty by reason of insanity. One day shy of the fourth anniversary of the murders, Simants was acquitted. He was committed to the Lincoln Regional Center where he remains today.

The Nebraska case, which asked the Supreme Court to determine whether Stuart's gagging of the media was constitutional, in effect forced the high court to weigh in on the sometimes conflicting rights of First Amendment free press and Sixth Amendment fair trial. In reality, they were also weighing in on the public's right to know.

The problems presented by the case are almost as old as the Republic, Burger wrote.

"It is inconceivable that the authors of the Constitution were unaware of the potential conflicts between the right to an unbiased jury and the guarantee of freedom of the press."

In 2001, Will Norton Jr., then dean of the UNL College of Journalism and Mass Communications, wrote that "the nation is indebted to Nebraska journalists for their sense of responsibility and personal investment in freedom of expression."

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www.nebraskapresswomen.org

NPW MEMBER NEWS

NPW Member, Ag Journalist Ann Toner Gottwald Died Feb. 6

By Mary Pat Finn-Hoag

Ann Toner Gottwald of Nebraska City, one of the country's most respected agricultural journalists, died of cancer on Feb. 6, 2010. She was 60.

The native of Humboldt, Iowa, graduated with a degree in science journalism from Iowa State University. Her journalism career began in Florida. Over her nearly 35 years as a reporter for newspapers and magazines, she also worked in Iowa, Minnesota, Nebraska and Missouri. She was an award-winning member of the Nebraska Press Women and National Federation of Press Women since 1996.

Gottwald was a longtime member of the North American Agricultural Journalists (NAAJ), serving as its president in 1986, while at the Kansas City Star.

In 1983, while at the Lincoln Journal Star, she was honored by President Ronald Reagan as the Agricultural Journalist of the Year. Gottwald was also employed by the Omaha World-Herald. She was field editor of the Nebraska Farmer magazine from 1997 until her death.

Excerpts from a tribute to Gottwald written by editor Don McCabe in the March 2010 issue of the Nebraska Farmer follow: "We at Nebraska Farmer have lost a close friend and colleague, and Nebraska has lost a dedicated agricultural journalist. Ann had a strong interest in and love for agriculture, and was adept at writing on any subject, from human interest to rural life, to crop and livestock production, to issues and technology.

"As her editor, I always marveled how she could turn a phrase and come up with a clever lead



PHOTO COURTESY NEBRASKA FARMER

paragraph to draw readers into her articles. She had a great knack for making complicated subjects easily understood by her readers.

"In the office, we experienced her wry, subtle sense of humor. Some of that humor came in her description of the antics of the animals on her farm, the goats, horses and pets, as well as the not-so-friendly night predators that ventured into the barn. Most of all we knew the love Ann had for her family – husband Allen and son Alex.

"A proud moment for her several weeks before her death was the announcement that her son, Alex, had earned his Eagle Scout award, the highest ranking with the Boy Scouts of America." (Alex redid landscaping and planted rose bushes lining the sidewalk in front of St. Joseph's Catholic Church southwest of Nebraska City where Ann was married Dec. 5, 1987, and where her funeral was held Feb. 11.)

Among tributes paid to Gottwald by NAAJ members were:

"Her loss will ... be felt in the

agricultural community, as there is one less knowledgeable journalist out there covering this industry's complexities." – Laura Rance, editor, Manitoba Co-operator, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada.

"... Ann was one of the organization's outstanding members who wrote locally and thought globally – always encouraging and thoughtful, always remembering the newbies. My most memorable conversations with Ann ... were in places like Omaha, where she walked and talked about her husband and son. She loved being married to her farmer, and she enjoyed the pleasures and challenges of being a mom. She had a fruitful life, but too short." – Mikkel Pates, Agweek (Grand Forks, N.D.) reporter.

Here's a sampling of Gottwald's award-winning writing in this branding story in the Omaha World-Herald datelined Thedford:

"With a proprietary sizzle, rancher Wayne Licking placed a booted foot on a bawling black calf and applied his mark of ownership. Smoke and the smell of singed hair rolled from the animal's back. There was noise all around him ... the exclamation muttered by a calf wrestler whose hand discovered a handful of sandburs in the tail of a calf ... neighbors helping with branding, a tradition older than ranching in the Sandhills, rushing to do their tasks like a well-oiled machine ... applying permanently his 'Diamond E' brand ..."

Survivors include her husband, Allen; son Alex, 16; and brother Michael Toner, a retired journalist and Pulitzer Prize winner, of Atlanta, Ga.

Potter Earns Ag Journalism Honors

Lori Potter, agriculture and natural resources writer at the Kearney Hub, garnered two wins in the North American Agricultural Journalists' 2009 Writing Contest.

She ranked second in the news category for an Aug. 8, 2009, story headlined "Pounded, shredded, bruised." The story focused on hail damage to crops in the Funk area from a storm several days earlier.

The judge wrote: "This project is intensely local, intensely moving and intensely informative. With a series of on-scene stories, it explores the impact of a major event in ways big and small. The writing carries the reader along and the variety of topics provides great depth."

Potter finished third in the NAAJ columns division for her "Potter's Wheel" column that had ties to the Nebraska Press Women and National Federation of Press Women.

Of Potter's Oct. 2, 2009, column headlined "Absorbing glimpses of 'beautiful nothingness,'" the judge wrote:

"This is a lovely and not overly sentimental piece that provides a sense of place and helps to explain why people who live and work and play there love it so. The excerpts from a dead friend's column, written a quarter-century ago, bring history and continuity and personality into the story. The delighted response of a newcomer shows that the land has a future, or should."

The column detailed the rural Nebraska visit of NFPW member Mary Jane Skala of Cleveland, Ohio, last September. Potter's column included excerpts from a "Sand in My Shoes" column written by the late Marianne Beel of Valentine, a longtime NPW/NFPW member.

The awards will be presented on April 26 at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C., during the spring NAAJ meeting.

Lori's third-place column:

I'm a child of the Nebraska prairie. My roots are in a patchwork quilt of farms bordered by graveled roads in Franklin County. Those roads lead me to familiar places, but others in the state could take me to a million corners I've never explored. The trails get longer and narrower in the Sandhills as they wind through grass-covered sand dunes in the heart of Nebraska. The region is a treat for the eyes, but a challenge for photographers. Not even the widest angle camera lens can do justice to the 360-degree views.

That was clear Saturday afternoon as I stood on the highest ridge at a southern Cherry County Ranch with two Press Women friends, ranch owner Lyn Messersmith and Mary Jane Skala of Cleveland.

We could see Lyn's home place, hay meadows dotted with big round bales, cattle grazing by beautiful blue Swan Lake and the top of a windmill just above a distant hill. My camera also zoomed in on Sandhills details – cactus, forked tassels of big bluestem, a sandy cattle trail.

Mary Jane is a child of a city on Lake Erie, but she fell in love with the West during family vacations to national parks. Unlike many "back East" folks, she appreciates wide open spaces and places with subtle beauty that often are ignored by people who speed through Nebraska on Interstate 80 on their way to mountain, canyon or coastal scenery.

Mary Jane is in the third week of a two-month camping-visiting-exploring adventure to the West made possible by taking a buyout from the suburban weekly newspapers she edited for more than 20 years. She's mapped routes on prairie and mountain states' secondary highways and back roads.

Our focus last weekend was the Sandhills, but we also walked along



the Platte and Niobrara rivers, traveled Highway 2 on a Junk Jaunt day, enjoyed waterfalls and a rodeo in the Valentine area, and learned about poultry, corn and soybeans at the Batie farm near Lexington.

It was fascinating to see my Nebraska through Mary Jane's eyes. Her passion for trains was indulged as we drove on highways along Union Pacific and Burlington Northern Santa Fe lines.

Her reporting skills kicked in each time she met a farmer, rancher or interesting characters at small town cafes, stores, events and attractions. She nearly picked Lyn's brain clean with questions about ranching in the Sandhills.

As we jumped into Lyn's pickup Saturday afternoon for a tour of her 8,000-acre ranch, Mary Jane assumed we'd drive down the road to see cattle. "But no," she wrote in her e-mail journal to family and friends. "Lyn turned that pickup right onto the grass and we began bouncing and jostling on that rough prairie ... like tennis shoes in a dryer." Lyn's goal was to drive near, but not in, the well-worn cattle trail and not drop into a washout hidden by grass.

Describing the view from the highest hill, Mary Jane wrote: "What beautiful nothingness."

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During the white-knuckle drive down the hill, Mary Jane blurted, "Do you know where you're going?"

Lyn calmly replied, "Yes, just like you know the layout of your living room."

We later walked the ranch road under an amazing star-filled sky. On Sunday morning, Mary Jane and I photographed the sunrise while Lyn made breakfast.

Mary Jane wrote: "It was my favorite stop of the trip so far."

Time will tell how the Sandhills stack up to the Rockies, Grand Canyon and other well-known natural monuments, but she'll always remember seeing a unique part of Nebraska. She's now staying with friends in Longmont, Colo., waiting for the weather to clear so she can camp in Rocky Mountain National Park.

I wish Mary Jane could have met my other Sandhills friend and mentor Marianne Beel. Marianne died two years ago, so instead of going to her central Cherry County ranch, I visited her grave Sunday morning in Valentine.

Marianne loved the Sandhills and its people. For more than 30 years, she featured both in her photos, stories and "Sand In My Shoes" columns for the North Platte Telegraph.

She wrote in a Nov. 19, 1986, column: "... when seen from the window of a car speeding down a highway, the Sandhills bring to mind a lot of trite and erroneous descriptions: desolate, bleak, barren, isolated ... In that case, the Sandhills have been done a great injustice and a unique experience was missed.

"Perhaps the country is best seen at a leisurely pace, seen over a horse's ears with frequent stops for exploration (and) pauses to meditate and to ponder the land and its inhabitants."

She'd be happy to know that Mary Jane and I came to her Sandhills, paused frequently and went home with sand in our shoes.

The Nebraska Press Women Newsletter is published and sent electronically four times a year. Please send e-mail address updates and member news to newsletter editor Andrea Cranford at acranford@huskeralum.org or awcranford@earthlink.net. You may also send a printed version to Andrea at 2554 Kessler Blvd., Lincoln, NE 68502.

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

March 19: Deadline for NFPW 2011 Conference logo entries.

April 16: Deadline to register for NPW Spring Convention and to make hotel reservations at The Cornhusker Hotel.

April 30-May 1: Spring NPW Convention at the Cornhusker Hotel, Lincoln.

August 26-28: National Federation of Press Women Convention, Chicago.

Oct. 8-9: NPW Fall Convention, Red Cloud. That's Willa Cather country!

April 29-30, 2011: NPW Spring Convention, Halsey.

Sept. 8-10, 2011: National Federation of Press Women Conference at Harrah's in Council Bluffs. Co-hosted by NPW and IPW!