

NFPW

E-Letter

June 2025

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President's Message

Hey, was someone appropriating my brand? I'd spotted a public library's social media posts advertising a talk about the horse history of Virginia, the subject of my 2010 book. The wording was not exactly copied from the publisher's description of my book, but it came close. And the accompanying artwork was not any image I had used, but the style echoed my cover—black background, brown-ish horse. A friend saw the ad and at first glance thought I was giving the presentation.

I'll admit, it took me aback, and I felt a little huffy for a couple of seconds. But the feeling passed. After all, that field doesn't belong to me. Identifying myself as the author of "The Horse in Virginia," I found out from the programming librarian that the speaker was a staff member from the state history museum, qualified and legit.

And then it hit me: Had someone used AI to create that post?



President's Message

With a bit of trepidation, I shuttled over to Chat GPT for the first time ever. After it produced a couple of lukewarm descriptions of a hypothetical talk about Virginia horse history, I instructed (it? them?): "Write the president's column for an organization of communications professionals."

It replied: "Certainly! Here's a professional and engaging draft for a President's Column tailored for an organization of communications professionals."

This is the first paragraph of that AI draft, in quotation marks and italics to differentiate it: *"As we step confidently into a new season, I'm reminded of the power and purpose that unites us as communications professionals. In an age of rapid change—technological, societal, and organizational—our role has never been more vital or more complex. Yet in that complexity lies opportunity."*

Is it professional? Maybe. Is it engaging? It's generic, to my mind. And what "new season" was it talking about? I prefer to read your own words, and I prefer to write my own.

Nearly every lecture series and professional conference I've attended over the past few years, including those of NFPW and Virginia Professional Communicators, has offered something about AI. At our St. Louis conference last year, for example, speakers made a good and thoughtful case for the judicious use of the tool. I understood their reasoning.

Still, I find AI both fascinating and alarming. We all probably saw [this recent story](#) about how the Chicago Sun-Times ran a summer reading list created by a third party—a list that contained non-existent book titles under prominent authors' names, thanks to the third party's use of AI.

Back here in the analog world, I attended the library's talk. I enjoyed the presenter's images from the archives of the historical society, most of which I'd not seen. The librarian had kindly included my book in a small display of other equine-related volumes. I pondered asking if she had used AI to create the notice, but I didn't want to make even a hint of a fuss about something so inconsequential. It's possible she had turned to AI to ease her full workload, and I couldn't blame her.

So I thanked both the presenter and the librarian, went on my way—and resolved to keep learning.

Julie Campbell
President, NFPW

P.S. On May 3, the racehorses named Journalism and Publisher came in second and fourteenth, respectively, in the Kentucky Derby. But on May 17 at the Preakness, it was Journalism for the win (Publisher did not compete). As I write this column, the lineup for the June 7 Belmont Stakes has not been finalized, but Journalism is in the potential mix.

First Amendment News

The Associated Press and four other media companies have filed a federal lawsuit challenging an Indiana law that bans reporters from witnessing executions. The lawsuit says the law violates the First Amendment's guarantee that the public has "a right of qualified access to certain government proceedings."

The Alexandria (Va.) City School Board has proposed revising its student publications policy to take greater control over the student publications content. The move came after the publication of a story on how buses on

campuses were routinely late, resulting in missed classes. Under the policy, the school principal would become the publication's editor.

An effort to let governments take more time to process requests for public records filed by individuals and businesses died in Colorado. Gov. Jared Polis vetoed the legislation, and legislators failed to override the veto of the legislation.

Please alert us to First Amendment issues in your own communities. You can do so with an email to president@nfpw.org or to me at marshashuler@yahoo.com.

Marsha Shuler
FAN Co-Chair

Conference Registration is Ready for You

It's time—[click here to register for our annual conference](#), Sept. 11–13, in Golden, Colorado!

Colorado Press Women have put together a wide-ranging program that covers everything from the state of the media to science storytelling; nonprofit news models to crisis communications; media literacy to CV reviews.

And then there are the tours, including one of Denver (art, history, shopping) and another of our headquarters, the town of Golden, and its surroundings (Buffalo Bill, earth science, and music).

The conference website also contains a link to book your room at the Denver Marriott West. (While the name includes "Denver," rest assured that the hotel is in Golden.)

NOTE: Because of increased costs for food, beverages and hotel space, the board raised the registration price by \$25 for all categories *except* for the student rate, which remains the same.

See you in Golden.

First-Timer Conference Grants

Are you attending the NFPW Conference for the first time? If so, you are eligible to apply for a First-Timer Grant from the NFPW Education Fund (aka the Ed Fund). These grants provide all or part of the registration fee for attendees in this category.

The First-Timer Grant application deadline is Friday, June 20. [Click here to apply.](#)

The Ed Fund underwrites educational opportunities for NFPW members and students through grants. It is financed through contributions from NFPW members—proceeds from the Silent Auction held at the conference each year, as well as donations. It operates as an entity separate from NFPW.

It also awards Professional Development Grants to help underwrite the cost of non-NFPW conferences and seminars for a limited number of applicants who seek to sharpen their professional skills. The Ed Fund board reviews applications as they are received.

For more information, please contact Education Fund Chair Karen Rowley at kmrowley059@gmail.com.

High School Contest Winners

Congratulations to the winner of the 2025 Julie Hoffman Memorial Best of the Best Award: The Hornet Media Staff, Bryant High School, Bryant, Arkansas, for their "Hornet News Now" Episode 3, which aired Nov. 20, 2024.

[Click here](#) to read the list containing all winners of NFPW's annual contest for high school journalists. That website also contains links to the work of all the winners, plus the link to watch the Zoom presentation, which took place on May 14.

The contest is sponsored by the NFPW Education Fund, which invests in our members by funding programs that fulfill evolving educational projects such as this contest and the First-Timer Grants for the annual conference. The fund operates solely on donations. Two anonymous long-time members of the organization sponsored the Best of the Best contest for the first seven years, and NFPW members' donations have since funded the contest in memory of the late NFPW member Julie Hoffman.

NFPW Member Directory

If you want your name and contact info to be available to other members, you must opt in. Here's how:

1. [Log into the NFPW website](#). If you don't have a password, you can obtain one there.
2. [Then, go to the Members Only website.](#)
3. Change the setting on your profile page/edit profile and scroll down to the bottom to indicate your Member Directory preference.

Need help? Contact Lisa Volz at lisa@nfpw.org.

Call for Agenda Content

Editor Cathy Koon invites your submissions for the Summer issue of AGENDA. **The deadline is June 10.**

How to submit: Email Cathy at cathykoon1952@gmail.com.

What to submit: Articles and/or photos about special affiliate events and member accomplishments, and submissions for special issues or topics as requested by the editor. Please include photos and artwork when possible. Articles must include a byline that contains the author's home state or affiliate. Photos must be accompanied by cutlines. Word counts are flexible and up to the editor's discretion; a general guideline is 400 words per page of the newsletter. When in doubt, ask the editor.

Affiliate Officer Contact Info,

Please

During the 2025 NFPW contest, the state contest directors received spreadsheets of their affiliate members. Now, we want to extend regular communication of these spreadsheets to the appropriate affiliate officers.

First, we need your help.

We ask officers to complete a short form with this information:

- First name
- Last name
- Email address
- Affiliate state (or full name and state if a chapter)
- Phone number (optional)
- Which office held (president, vice president, secretary, treasurer, membership director or other)
- Length of term of office
- Year term expires

[The form is available by clicking here.](#)

By the 5th of each month, affiliate spreadsheets will be pulled and emailed to affiliate presidents. Because we are starting to collect contact info, expect the first spreadsheet close to June 5.

These membership lists are helpful most for affiliates who ask their members to join or renew through nfpw.org. For affiliates who choose to collect their own membership information and dues, then forward the information and funds to NFPW headquarters, there may be a delay in adding to the NFPW database.

Questions about the process or the form? Please contact Gwen Larson, past NFPW president, at gazettegl@yahoo.com.

Affiliate News

We want your news! As the president assembles each issue of this E-letter, she checks every affiliate's website for upcoming events. She also relies on you to send items about your achievements and your affiliates' programs to president@nfpw.org. Thank you.

To learn more about these events, please see the individual affiliate's website. [Find the complete list of our affiliates here.](#)

Arkansas Press Women

On June 21, they will celebrate the winners of their Communications Contest at an awards luncheon in Conway. The featured speaker will be APW vice president Lara Farrar, who will discuss her investigative reporting on psychiatric residential treatment facilities in Arkansas. Attendees will also learn the identity of the recipient of their \$750 investigative journalism mini-grant. It will go to a reporter with a compelling in-depth reporting project that holds the promise of generating documentable change in an Arkansas community, or for broader populations across the state.

Colorado Press Women

On June 30, they'll travel to Nederland to visit The Mountain-Ear newsroom and meet the staff, who recently joined CPW, followed by lunch in a local

Nepalese restaurant. The award-winning newspaper (and now digital site) has covered the Peak to Peak Highway area since 1977. Attendees will hear from Managing Editor Barbara Hardt and her newsroom about how they cover the community and how they've adapted to the challenging local news environment.

Ann Lockhart, CPW's co-president (with Sandy Nance), wrote a piece about CPW's April speaker, Marianne Goodland, a veteran political reporter. Here is an excerpt; for the entire article, see the upcoming Summer issue of AGENDA:

How has reporter Marianne Goodland survived covering the Colorado legislature for 27 years? She said "I have a life outside the legislature . . . a husband and a daughter and I play the harp. It keeps me grounded." She has even played the harp on the final day on the (Colorado) House floor for close to 10 years.

Regarded as the dean of the State Capitol press corps, she has been a political reporter since 1998. She is chief legislative reporter for Colorado Politics (a weekly print and 24/7 online news outlet), the Denver Gazette and the Colorado Springs Gazette, which are owned by billionaire businessman Philip Anschutz.

She covers the Colorado General Assembly, state agencies, public policy and elections. "I love what I do," she admitted to Colorado Press Women at the group's annual meeting April 19 in Denver. The legislature and covering water are her two areas of expertise; water is a major interest of rural Colorado areas often plagued with drought. She works to cover all sides of issues.

Illinois Woman's Press Association

Congratulations to IWPA member Michele Weldon. The former Northwestern University journalism professor and award-winning author recently discussed her book, "The Time We Have: Essays on Pandemic Living" (Northwestern University Press, 2024), on "CBS News Chicago." [Watch Michele here.](#)

Wichita (Kansas) Press Women

On June 4, they welcome award-winning journalist Laurie L. Dove, who will talk about "Journalism, Crafting Authentic Characters and the Debut Novel." Dove, the author of "Mask of the Deer Woman" (Penguin Random House), is now an occasional professor who writes fiction full-time.

LET'S LINK UP!

NFPW is committed to leveraging our professional network to increase our outreach. And so we'll use LinkedIn to attract more members, share the successes of our members, and provide information about the communications contest and conferences. [Connect via LinkedIn here.](#)

Send Your Information

We can't communicate what we don't know! Please send news about your affiliates and members for inclusion in the monthly E-Letters and in Agenda, which is published quarterly. Send items to president@nfpw.org. **The deadline for each E-Letter is the 15th of the month preceding.**

We Remember

*Affiliates, please remember to notify NFPW historian Amy Geiszler-Jones, algj64@sbcglobal.net, of the deaths of **current** affiliate/NFPW members so that NFPW may recognize those individuals in the organization's E-Letter, Agenda and annual memorial service. Deaths will be reported in the E-Letter and an extended obituary will appear in Agenda.*

Calendar

Upcoming Events

- September 11-13, 2025 - NFPW Conference, Golden, Colorado

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.

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*"We draw strength, enrichment
and friendship from one
another."*

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