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LEADERSHIP SUMMIT

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THRIVING NEWS
ORGANIZATIONS.



INSIGHTS.
CONNECTIONS.
SOLUTIONS.

STRATEGIES FOR
A SUSTAINABLE
FUTURE.

PROGRAM & AWARDS

OCTOBER 9, 2026

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NEN&PA
NEW ENGLAND **NEWSPAPER & PRESS** ASSOCIATION

STRONG LEADERS

THRIVING NEWS ORGANIZATIONS

Welcome to the 2026 NENPA Leadership Summit.

Thank you for joining us in Sturbridge for the 2026 NENPA Leadership Summit. This year's program is designed to bring together publishers, editors, and newsroom leaders from across New England for a day of practical ideas, fresh perspectives, and meaningful conversation about the future of local news.

In a time of rapid change, your leadership matters more than ever. Whether you're here to learn, share, or connect, we're grateful you're part of this important community.

Let's explore what's next – together.

THANK YOU TO

Google News Initiative

FOR SPONSORING THE 2026 NENPA LEADERSHIP SUMMIT



FRIDAY, OCTOBER 9, 2026
Publick House Historic Inn
Sturbridge, Massachusetts

WWW.NENPA.COM

LEADERSHIP SUMMIT

WHAT'S NEXT
Leading the Future of Local News

SCHEDULE AT A GLANCE

8:00 - 9:00 AM	**REGISTRATION, COFFEE & CONTINENTAL BREAKFAST**
9:00 - 9:30 AM	**AI GROWTH LAB: NEWSROOM PROJECTS**
9:30 - 10:30 AM	**AI BEYOND THE NEWSROOM**
10:30-10:40 AM	BREAK
10:40 AM-NOON	**INNOVATIVE NEWSROOM LEADERSHIP**
12:00 - 12:30 PM	BREAK
12:30 - 2:00 M	**AWARDS LUNCHEON**
2:00 - 3:15 PM	**THE *NEXT* JOURNALISM**
3:15 PM	**CLOSING REMARKS**

9:00 AM

OPENING SHOWCASE

AI for News Leaders





Suzanne Perron
Google News Initiative



Cecily Weisburgh
The Keene Sentinel



Nate Thompson
Maine Trust for Local News



Ritika Giri
The Keene Sentinel

Inside the AI Growth Lab

We'll open the Summit with a practical look at how news organizations can move from experimenting with AI to building a thoughtful organizational strategy.

Suzanne Perron, Senior News Partnerships Manager at Google, will moderate presentations from members of the NENPA–Google News Initiative AI Growth Lab: Nate Thompson, News Planning Editor at Maine Trust for Local News; Ritika Giri, Consumer Marketing Manager at The Keene Sentinel; and Cecily Weisburgh, Executive Editor-Digital at The Keene Sentinel.

They'll share the projects they've been developing through the Growth Lab, what they've learned along the way and where they see opportunities for AI in their organizations.

AI for News Leaders: *What's Next*

OPENING SESSION 9:30 AM



Aimee Rinehart

Founder, Frontier Collective

Aimee is focused on shaping the future of journalism through strategic, collaborative innovation. She was most recently a Senior Product Manager for AI Strategy at the Associated Press where she led cross-functional initiatives that integrated generative AI into news and operational workflows with journalistic integrity. She co-founded Humans in the Loop, a networking group for news innovators that meets regularly. She spearheaded collaborative initiatives on verification of online content in Brazil, France, the U.K., and the U.S. Aimee serves on the board for the Page Center at Penn State. Her work foregrounds agency, accountability and human-centered design in news and technology.

AI Beyond the Newsroom

In this one-hour session, Aimee Rinehart will explore what news leaders need to understand about AI — from how large language models work and where their limitations lie to the practical opportunities they present for newsrooms and news organizations.

Drawing on her work developing a five-week AI course for the Knight Center for Journalism in the Americas, Rinehart will share practical strategies for evaluating AI tools, assessing the quality and readiness of an organization's data, establishing strong verification and accountability practices, and making better use of the institutional knowledge that already exists within an organization.

The session will also look beyond individual AI tools to the bigger questions facing news leaders: Where can AI genuinely improve the way an organization works? What should leaders consider before adopting it? And how can news organizations experiment with AI thoughtfully while maintaining the accuracy, transparency and trust at the heart of journalism?

Designed with news leaders in mind, the session will offer a practical framework for thinking about AI not simply as a new technology, but as a tool that can help organizations work smarter, strengthen existing processes and prepare for what comes next.

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Schedule free office hours with the Lenfest Expert Network today.

Whether you're looking to grow your audience, increase revenue, improve technology, or strengthen your organization, we're here to help. Meet with our team to discuss your goals, identify practical next steps, and determine whether a no-cost consulting engagement is the right fit for your organization.

Scan the QR code to get started.

THE LENFEST INSTITUTE

CELEBRATING 10 YEARS

10:40 - NOON **PANEL DISCUSSION**

Leading What's Next

INNOVATIVE NEWSROOM LEADERSHIP

Three newsroom leaders will share how their organizations are adapting to change, seizing new opportunities, and building stronger, more resilient journalism. The discussion will explore strategies for audience growth, newsroom culture, digital innovation, and revenue – and what's next for local news.



Karen Bordeleau
The New Bedford Light

Karen Bordeleau is executive editor of The New Bedford Light and an award-winning journalist with more than 45 years of experience in journalism and journalism education. She previously served as senior vice president and executive editor of The Providence Journal, becoming the first woman in the paper's history to hold its top editorial position. She was co-editor of the newspaper's Pulitzer Prize-finalist coverage of The Station Fire. Karen has also taught journalism at Arizona State University, Emerson College, Northeastern University, the University of Rhode Island and Bryant University. She was inducted into the Rhode Island Journalism Hall of Fame in 2023 and has received some of New England journalism's highest honors, including the Yankee Quill.



PJ Browning
The Post and Courier

Pamela (P.J.) Browning is Chief Executive Officer of Evening Post Publishing and President and Publisher of The Post and Courier in Charleston. Previously, she served as president and publisher of The Sun News in Myrtle Beach, The Telegraph in Macon, Ga., the Centre Daily Times in State College, Pa., and the Sentinel in Carlisle, Pa. Throughout her career, Browning has been recognized for innovative leadership and advancing newspapers in the digital era. She was named the Inter American Press Association's 2023 Executive of the Year and Editor & Publisher's 2019 Publisher of the Year. She currently serves on the boards of the SNPA Foundation, America's Newspapers Foundation and Trident Technical College.



Lauren Gustus
The Salt Lake Tribune

Lauren Gustus is CEO and Executive Editor of the Pulitzer Prize-winning Salt Lake Tribune, the first major metro news organization to become a nonprofit. Under her leadership, The Tribune has launched and acquired newsrooms and, in May 2026, removed its paywall, making its journalism freely available at sltrib.com. She believes journalism should give people information they can use to strengthen their communities. From Fort Worth to Sacramento, her newsrooms have produced accountability reporting that has driven policy change and made a positive impact. Lauren is also a coach in the Media Transformation Challenge program at Northwestern University's Medill School of Journalism. Originally from Massachusetts, she began her journalism career in Los Angeles after graduating from Pepperdine University.



Liz White Notorangelo
Local Media Association

Liz White Notarangelo is a consultant and coach for Local Media Association, and she is a diehard supporter of the industry. She is very passionate about LMA's mission to reinvent business models for news to support a strong democracy — so much so that she served on the LMA and LMF boards for eight years and her former family company was an LMA member for 15 years. Liz is the former publisher and fifth generation family owner of the 150+-year-old Record-Journal in Meriden, Connecticut. She has a demonstrated history of innovating, developing new revenue streams and helping evolve the business model. She has an MBA from Yale and a BS from Boston College.

Sophia, we know where all the good writers have gone.

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AWARDS LUNCHEON — **12:30 PM**

Celebrating New England Journalism

HONORING EXCELLENCE. CELEBRATING SERVICE.

Today, we celebrate the people and publications whose work demonstrates the strength, importance and enduring impact of local journalism across New England.

Thank You

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THE LENFEST INSTITUTE

2026 | CELEBRATING 10 YEARS

We are grateful to The Lenfest Institute for its support of this year's Awards Luncheon and its ongoing commitment to a stronger, more informed society through local journalism.



TODAY'S HONORS

- New England Newspaper of the Year Awards
- Publick Occurrences Awards
- New England First Amendment Award
- Allan B. Rogers Editorial Award
- AP Sevellon Brown New England Journalist of the Year
- Cornerstone Award
- Bob Wallack Community Journalism Award
- A-Mark Prizes for Investigative Journalism

Strong journalism. Stronger communities.

Congratulations to all of this year's finalists.

Meet the honorees on the following pages.

2026 New England Newspapers of the Year

Finalists

Specialty Publications



Providence Business News
Providence, RI



The Bridge
Montpelier, VT



New Boston Beacon
New Boston, NH

Online News Sites



Rhode Island Current
Providence, RI



VT Digger
Montpelier, VT



The New Bedford Light
New Bedford, MA

2026 New England Newspapers of the Year

Finalists

Weekly Publications *small circulation*



The Vermont Standard
Woodstock, VT



Provincetown Independent
Provincetown, MA



Inquirer and Mirror
Nantucket, MA



The Martha's Vineyard Times
Edgartown, MA

Weekly Publications *large circulation*



The Ellsworth American
Ellsworth, ME



Seven Days
Burlington, VT

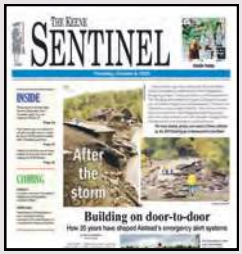


Vineyard Gazette
Vineyard Haven, MA

2026 New England Newspapers of the Year

Finalists

Weekday Publications *small circulation*



The Keene Sentinel
Keene, NH



Greenfield Recorder
Greenfield, MA



Gloucester Daily Times
Gloucester, MA

Weekday Publications *large circulation*



The Providence Journal
Providence, RI



Portland Press Herald
Portland, ME



Bangor Daily News
Bangor, ME

2026 New England Newspapers of the Year

Finalists

Sunday Publications *small circulation*



The Keene Sentinel
Keene, NH



Concord Monitor
Concord, NH



The Day
New London, CT

Sunday Publications *large circulation*



The Sunday Republican
Springfield, MA



The Berkshire Eagle
Pittsfield, MA



Maine Sunday Telegram
Portland, ME

Publick Occurrences Awards

In recognition of New England's most outstanding journalism in 2026

The award was established in 1990 to recognize individual and team merit at New England newspapers to mark the 300th anniversary of the founding of Publick Occurrences, the first newspaper published in America. Four days after it appeared in Boston in 1690, Publick Occurrences was suppressed by the royal governor.

Seven Days, Burlington, VT.....*"I'm not well"*
This extraordinarily well-written story is a riveting exploration of the effects of mental illness on an individual, a family, the community, and the limitations in dealing with the situations. This accounting ended tragically for the young man with mental illness who refused help, and was life-altering for the police officer who tried to save him. Yet the reporter, Colin Flanders, avoided a "good guy" / "bad guy" dichotomy and went deeper for a compassionate portrayal that can lead to understanding.

P**rovincetown Independent,** Provincetown, MA
....."*ICE Arrests Defendant Outside Orleans Courthouse"*
What is the human cost when ICE detains an undocumented immigrant who's lived here since childhood, who's hard-working and who's supporting a family? Journalists Chloe Budakian, Paul Benson, Tyler Jager and Agata Storer devoted months to the saga of Thiago Bastos, who was held under brutal conditions far from home until he was finally released, although his ultimate fate has not been decided. An outstanding example of enterprise reporting. This is a well-told narrative with a strong focus on the lives of those involved.

Keene Sentinel, Keene, NH .....*"Unfinished Business"*
Many businesses come and go, particularly in the restaurant industry, but reporter Noah Diedrich's enterprising and thorough examination of the sudden closing of a popular downtown brewery depicts the forces at play. It's a business story, and also a people story of the many who lost their investments in the start-up. It's also a cautionary tale as the brewery owner shifted his focus to Maine. The package went the extra step to explain the risks for "ordinary" people to invest in crowdfunding ventures.

Seven Days, Burlington, VT.....*"Dividing Line"*
Solid reporting that shows the precipitous drop in illegal border crossings from Canada resulting from the Trump administration crackdown. This coverage also shows how border patrol officers are, in many ways, an accepted part of the communities.

MassLive, Springfield, MA.....*"Gabriel House Fire"*
Really deep reporting on the worst fire in Massachusetts in decades. Hadley Barndollar scooped other media on several points and reported how the nursing home owner ignored warnings and brushed off legally required inspections for years.

Provincetown Independent, Provincetown, MA.....*"Community of Jesus"*
Reporters dug deep into this longtime controversial religious group on the Cape and worked hard to get many former "CoJ" members to talk about how they were turned into forced labor as children, among other things.

Berkshire Eagle, Pittsfield, MA
.....*"Legionnaires disease at Berkshire Medical Center"*
Reporter persisted after hospital officials would not admit two deaths at BMC were likely caused by Legionnaires caught at the facility. Reporting uncovered water tests that showed very high levels in the water system and the repeated obfuscation by officials.

Daily Item, Lynn, MA.....*"Where have all the good men gone?"*
A well-crafted opinion piece that might have opened quite a few eyes and possibly made some men take a good look in the mirror.

Seven Days, Burlington, VT.....*"Up in the Air"*
Well told and remarkable tale about the fraught nature of young acrobats in a traveling troupe.

Seven Days, Burlington, VT.....*"Ice at the Doorstep"*
This gripping, minute-to-minute story follows an immigration standoff in South Burlington. Federal agents tried to pull over a car they thought carried an undocumented Mexican man. But the driver fled, and ICE agents surrounded a house they thought the man had entered. Then, a slew of activists confronted the agents. Seven Days was on the scene from 9:15 a.m. to 7:30 p.m., and produced a running, moment-to-moment story about the confrontation. It used court records, on-scene reporting, interviews, videos and public statements to report fully on the day — the police, the people in the house, the protesters, the confrontations. And in the end, it turned out the man ICE was chasing was not in the house. Immigration and ICE have been a constant issue across the nation. This Seven Days story provides a closeup look at the drama, tension, disagreements, behavior and uncertainty inherent in these situations happening all across the country.

Berkshire Eagle, Pittsfield, MA.....*"Hinsdale Police Shooting Investigated"*
This entry includes eight stories, covering the fatal shooting, police injuries, police decisions and actions, and the second-guessing. It reports on the mental health crisis of the man who was killed, on the police officer who was wounded, on the decisions police made on the scene, and whether the police department followed its own policies. The coverage also linked to a shooting three months earlier, leading to a broader examination of policing, mental health response, and public oversight. Some material was gathered through successful public records requests.

Portland Press-Herald, Portland, ME.....*"Bath's Hyde School"*
The elite private Hyde School in Bath, Maine, came under criticism for stern policies applied across generations, calling into question whether students faced abuse and mistreatment. More than a dozen students came forward, and a class-action lawsuit alleged that the school violated laws on human trafficking, forced labor and negligence, and that more than 100 students were affected.

New Hampshire Bulletin, Concord, NH.....*"A System of Harm"*
Exposing big problems in the state's intellectual and developmental disability care system. The news outlet said its "three-part series on abuse and neglect in New Hampshire's disability care system has done what excellent community-focused journalism is supposed to do: It elevated awareness, invigorated discussion, and created an appetite for change." The Part One headline: "A series of tragedies exposes patterns of abuse and neglect in New Hampshire's disability system." The Bulletin uncovered 1,405 complaints of abuse, neglect, and exploitation committed against people with intellectual and developmental disabilities receiving state services from January 2023 through the first six months of 2025. Of those, 467 were deemed credible after a state investigation. Records showed 119 people died in New Hampshire's intellectual and developmental disability system from January 2023 through June 2025, and state officials wouldn't explain details of what had happened.

Seven Days, Burlington, VT.....*"Ways and Means"*
Profiling freshmen legislators has been done before, but rarely with the in-depth reporting and elegant writing that Hannah Bassett accomplished in the series "Ways and Means," tracking the experiences of two rookie lawmakers in Vermont, one Republican and one Democrat. The reader sees them grapple with hope, disappointment, party leaders that take umbrage over outreach to the other side, committee assignments that don't accomplish as much as promised, and the personal evolution of idealistic intentions vs. reality that all politicians experience. Along the way the reader learns about how things get done in the state legislature, and can marvel that idealism still lives in politics. Congratulations on a fine series!

The Providence Journal, Providence, RI.....*"FM Global Investigation"*
Some of the most important stories start with a simple phone call. That was the case when a Glocester, R.I. resident called Providence Journal reporter Alex Kuffner about suspected PFAS, so-called forever chemicals, in her well water. The suspected source was FM, a global company, which had a nearby campus that may have polluted the underground aquifer. Kuffner went to work, and drawing upon his decade of covering the issue, quickly amassed a wealth of interviews with residents and scientists, documents, emails, and tests that showed the PFAS levels were some of the highest he had seen, and far higher than levels considered safe. This story was impressive for its completeness and helpful information to others who wonder about the safety of their water, with information about how to get water tested for the chemicals that most ordinary tests don't detect. The story was enough for FM to drop plans for another project in the area. These stories had excellent writing, reporting, and were a great public service. Well done!

Seven Days, Burlington, VT.....*"Empty Desks"*
An important topic, tackled well. In-depth research and solid reporting inform an eye-opening examination of an issue that affects Vermont now and for the future. In 20 years, Vermont has added 20,000 in population but lost a quarter of its student population, from 98.000 to 73,000. The state also has 119 school districts, despite a small population, and residents resist closing schools. All these tensions add to a growing dilemma that will affect the state for years to come. Good reporting, sensitive coverage, and clever graphics illustrate the urgency of the issue. Excellent work by reporter Alison Novak.

The Concord Bridge, Concord, MA.....*"Confronting antisemitism"*
Thorough reporting exposes a cancerous underbelly of hate in Concord, Mass., public schools that local officials let fester and grow. The Concord Bridge persisted in following this sensitive issue at every turn to bring it into sharp focus for local readers, led by reporting of Dakota Antelman. Most telling thread in the reporting shows that local officials, especially those in authority at the public schools, continually covered up this issue and exhibited an appalling lack of transparency, This series was even-handed, in-depth, and a public service.

MassLive, Springfield, MA.....*"Hidden Hunger"*
A slam-dunk series of stories that illustrates the depth and breadth of hunger in Massachusetts, including communities such as Sudbury, where many people might not expect it.

A-Mark Awards Finalists

Connecticut

Marc E. Fitch
Inside Investigator
“Nonprofit Abuse”

Noam N. Levey, Katy Golvala and Jenna Carlesso
The Connecticut Mirror and KFF Health News
"Diagnosis: Debt Connecticut"

Katherine Revello and Brandon Whiting
Inside Investigator
"Sexual Misconduct at CSCU and UConn"

Maine

Emily Duggan
Portland Press Herald
“Parents Rights Groups”

Callie Ferguson and Josh Keefe
Bangor Daily News and The Maine Monitor
"Maine State Police/Justin Savage Arrest"

Sawyer Loftus
Bangor Daily News and ProPublica
"USDA Foreclosures"

Massachusetts

Hadley Barndollar
MassLive
"Gabriel House Fire"

Hadley Barndollar and Greta Jochem
Massive and The Republican
"Death Under Watch"

Jack Styler
Provincetown Independent
"Community of Jesus"

Generously sponsored by: A-Mark Foundation

A-Mark Awards Finalists

New Hampshire

Todd Bookman
NHPR
"Judicial Branch $50k"

Damien Fisher
InDepth NH
"Corrections Commissioner Hanks"

William Skipworth
New Hampshire Bulletin
"A System of Harm"

Rhode Island

Antonia Noori Farzan and Jonny Williams
The Providence Journal
"Hospital Dumping"

Alex Kuffner
The Providence Journal
"FM Global Investigation"

Nancy Lavin
Rhode Island Current
"Home Foot Care"

Vermont

Justin Lavely
North Star Monthly
"VTSU-Lyndon"

Greta Solsaa
VTDigger
"Nursing Homes"

Ethan Weinstein
VTDigger
"Vermont Prisons and ICE"

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Allan B. Rogers Editorial Award

Recognizing the best editorial on a local subject that ran in New England in the past year. The award honors the editor of the Eagle-Tribune (North Andover, MA), who died in 1964 at the age of 31.



The Inquirer and Mirror

"Strengthening the Net"

The Nantucket Inquirer and Mirror is the recipient of the 2026 Allan B. Rogers Editorial Award for its moral leadership.

This editorial amounts to a clarion call to the community to take care of all Nantucketers. At a time when newspapers are cutting back on editorials or hedging their language for fear of backlash, the moral clarity shines through.

"Strengthening the net" demonstrates the power of a newspaper's editorial voice to confront a difficult issue within its own community with both compassion and conviction.

Prompted by the tragic death of 71-year-old Nantucket resident Kevin Ryan, the editorial examines how someone could fall through the cracks despite an established network of social services and people working to help those in need. Rather than assigning blame to a particular agency or individual, The Inquirer and Mirror asks the community to consider what can be learned from the tragedy, and what can be done differently the next time a neighbor is struggling.

The editorial also makes clear that responsibility does not rest solely with institutions. It calls upon Nantucketers themselves to notice when friends and neighbors may need help and to respond with compassion, whether by listening, offering assistance or helping connect someone with available services.

The piece closes with a simple but powerful challenge: *"Nantucket has long been known as a community that takes care of its own. All of them. We can do better."*

New England First Amendment Award

This award recognizes a New England news organization for its exceptional work upholding the First Amendment and/or educating the public about it.

The Keene Sentinel

"Fall Mountain public records case"



For three years, The Keene Sentinel pursued public records related to a sexual harassment investigation in a local school – a determined effort that ultimately took the newspaper all the way to the New Hampshire Supreme Court.

The Sentinel's persistence and willingness to challenge the denial of public information resulted in a significant victory for government transparency. A favorable ruling by the state's highest court led to the release of important details about the investigation, including the amount of public money paid to a law firm to conduct it and funds paid as part of a settlement.

The impact extended well beyond the records at the center of the case. As the online legal publication Verdict.News observed, the decision "clarifies procedural aspects of Right-to-Know Law litigation that may influence how future cases are handled in New Hampshire courts." The ruling also provides media organizations and other public-records requesters with greater clarity about the judicial review process when disputes arise over disclosure.

In selecting The Keene Sentinel for the New England First Amendment Award, the judges recognized not only the journalism that resulted from the newspaper's efforts, but also the determination required to obtain information the public had a right to know.

The Sentinel's three-year pursuit is a powerful example of the essential watchdog role of a free and independent press — and of the commitment sometimes required of local news organizations to hold government accountable. By investing the time, resources and resolve necessary to pursue this case through the courts, The Keene Sentinel strengthened public access to information not only for its own readers, but potentially for journalists and citizens throughout New Hampshire.



The Cornerstone Award

Nicole Jackson

The Martha's Vineyard Times

The Cornerstone Award recognizes and honors unsung heroes in our news organizations who meaningfully and significantly contribute to the accomplishments of our publications without recognition. These individuals are the lifeblood of our operations, consistently providing the support and commitment needed to keep our departments and publications thriving.

At The Martha's Vineyard Times, Nicole Jackson is often called the "MVP of MVT" — and with good reason.

One of The Times' longest-tenured employees and its senior designer, Jackson has demonstrated extraordinary dedication, versatility and commitment to the organization. But her value extends far beyond her title. She is the colleague people turn to when something needs to be figured out, fixed or simply made better.

"Ask Nicole" is a familiar phrase around the office. More often than not, she knows the answer, knows where to find it or has already solved the problem before anyone else realizes there is one.

Jackson oversees the design of the weekly print edition of The Martha's Vineyard Times and many of its specialty publications. Her work ranges from everyday production needs to designing entire magazines and special sections, including Vineyard Visitor, Year in Review and the 2026 graduation supplement. But her contributions don't stop with design. She provides IT help, conducts research, troubleshoots problems, supports colleagues and quietly keeps countless pieces of the organization moving forward.

When The Times launched a new website in April, Jackson quickly identified ways the platform could better serve both the newsroom and its readers. Rather than simply recommending improvements, she helped make them happen. After learning that the new platform could support Issuu, allowing print publications to be presented digitally, she took responsibility for creating a digital edition of the newspaper each week so that it would consistently be available to readers.

Her colleagues joke that Jackson is the "two-brained, eight-armed woman," because it sometimes seems impossible for one person to accomplish so much, so well and with such consistency. She anticipates needs, solves problems quietly and generously shares her knowledge with everyone around her.

Jackson exemplifies the spirit of the Cornerstone Award: someone whose work may often take place behind the scenes, but whose impact can be seen throughout the entire organization. Her knowledge, talent, patience, dependability and willingness to step in wherever she is needed have made her indispensable to The Martha's Vineyard Times.

Her colleagues put it simply: "Where would we be without her?"

The answer: not nearly as strong, not nearly as organized and not nearly as good.

Bob Wallack

Community Journalism Award

Abby Remer

The Martha's Vineyard Times



For the past eight years, Abby Remer has brought the people, places and character of Martha's Vineyard to life through her work for The Martha's Vineyard Times. A versatile and deeply engaged features writer, she combines an intimate knowledge of the Island with curiosity, sensitivity and a genuine appreciation for the community she covers.

Remer is the kind of journalist who sees a story where others might not. She recognizes the significance in the everyday details of Island life—from the remarkable art collection at Martha's Vineyard Hospital to the restaurants that keep their doors open through the quiet winter months. Her particular strength is covering the fine arts, where her ability to capture both an artist and the meaning behind the work has produced some of her most memorable writing.

But Remer's contribution to community journalism extends well beyond her storytelling skills. Over the years, she has developed warm and trusted relationships throughout Martha's Vineyard, including within the Wampanoag Tribe, the Black community and the Island's Brazilian immigrant community. She approaches those relationships with respect and sensitivity, understanding both the importance of telling stories across the community and when people should have the opportunity to tell their own stories.

Her knowledge of Martha's Vineyard has also made her an invaluable resource to her newsroom. She routinely brings forward story ideas that might otherwise go unnoticed and helps newer writers make connections, understand the community and find their footing. When circumstances change and the features section suddenly needs a story, Remer can be counted on to step in—sometimes on very short notice—and deliver thoughtful, engaging work.

Through changes in ownership, publishers and editors, Remer has remained a constant at The Martha's Vineyard Times. Her institutional knowledge, reliability and commitment to the Island have made her an essential part of the newspaper and the community it serves.

For her ability to find meaning in the everyday, her commitment to telling the stories of her neighbors, and her deep connection to Martha's Vineyard, Abby Remer is a deserving recipient of the Bob Wallack Community Journalism Award.

Named in honor of longtime New England journalist and former New England Press Association Executive Director Bob Wallack, this award recognizes an individual who has an exceptional record of commitment to community journalism. It celebrates the accomplishments of someone who, over a sustained period of time, has faithfully served the community for which they are responsible.

New England Society of News Editors

AP Sevellon Brown

New England Journalist of the Year

Callie Ferguson

Deputy Investigations Editor
Bangor Daily News



Callie Ferguson is being recognized for her exceptional reporting on the Immigration and Customs Enforcement surge that swept across Maine from January through March.

From the beginning of the enforcement operation through its aftermath, Ferguson provided readers with persistent, deeply reported coverage of its impact on Maine communities. She reported on immigrants preparing to leave Lewiston before the raids began, a woman confronted at her home by federal agents, immigrant workers swept up in the crackdown, and Mainers whose vehicles were struck with projectiles while they filmed agents at work.

When the surge ended in late January, Ferguson continued reporting. Through February and March, she used public records, court filings and data to examine what had happened and hold federal and local officials accountable. Her reporting revealed that ICE sought a sheriff's employment records after he criticized an arrest and that a quarter of those detained during the surge were challenging their cases in court.

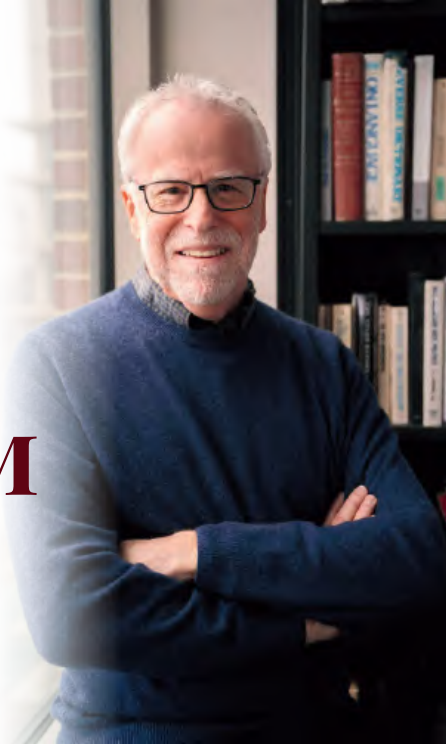
Among her most consequential work was a records-based examination of federal claims that agents were arresting "the worst of the worst." Ferguson's reporting found that only a small fraction of those detained had criminal histories; subsequent data showed that just 11 of those arrested had criminal records. Her work provided one of the most comprehensive public accountings of the ICE operation in New England.

Ferguson has already distinguished herself as one of the region's accomplished young investigative journalists. She was a 2022 Livingston Award finalist and a 2023 New York Times Local Investigations Fellow. Her Lawmen Off Limits series, examining accountability among Maine sheriffs, received the New England First Amendment Coalition's Michael Donoghue Freedom of Information Award and a Sidney Award.

Through rigorous reporting, persistent follow-up and careful use of public records and data, Ferguson gave readers a clear, factual account of one of the year's most consequential and contentious stories.

2:00 PM KEYNOTE SPEAKER

The *Next* Journalism



In a time of rapid change, what's next for journalism – and how can local news organizations position themselves to thrive? Tom Rosenstiel will share insights into the trends, challenges, and opportunities shaping our industry's future.

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Tom Rosenstiel

Journalist, author, and media leader

Tom Rosenstiel is a journalist, media critic, researcher, novelist, and professor. He is the author of eight influential nonfiction books, including The Elements of Journalism, and four novels. Rosenstiel has been a press critic for the Los Angeles Times, chief congressional correspondent for Newsweek, press critic for MSNBC, and director of media studies at the Pew Research Center. He also led the American Press Institute and now serves as Eleanor Merrill Professor on the Future of Journalism at the University of Maryland. He lives in Washington, D.C.