

IMPORTANT SCHEDULE NOTES

Award Presentations

All Awards will be presented during the first session in Multipurpose Room A. If you entered any of the summer contests in Newspaper, Yearbook, Broadcast, or Online News, be sure to attend this session.

Patrick Tuohey Write-Off

Students entering the write-off will write a news article about the keynote panel which will be in Multipurpose Room A during Session 2. Please take a seat near the front. After the session is over, report to room 174 to write your story during Session 3.

Winners will be notified through their school. The Write-Off Contest is sponsored by The Record/NorthJersey.com.

Meals

Coffee and pastry will be served in Multipurpose Room B during registration from 8:30 to 10:00 a.m. for all advisers, speakers, and guests.

A buffet lunch for advisers, speakers, and guests will be served in Multipurpose Room B from 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Students should plan to purchase and eat lunch in the food court area.

Student Chapter

The GSSPA Student Chapter is a group for, and run by, high school journalists in New Jersey.

The group's purpose is to create a network for student journalists who meet online to discuss their school publications experiences and concerns, as well as First Amendment rights and responsibilities.

Join the group through the GSSPA website www.gsspa.org.

GSSPA Fall Conference | 2025

Welcome to GSSPA's Annual Fall Press Day!

We are pleased to welcome you to the Busch Campus Center for an exciting day featuring a variety of workshop sessions and expert speakers.

Please read this conference program carefully, and review the schedule notes to the left for details about the keynote session and the Write-Off Contest, as well as all session information on the following pages.

Students are encouraged to attend as many workshop sessions as possible. We suggest that advisers divide students evenly among the various sessions to avoid overcrowding and to gather the greatest variety of information.

If you have any questions during the day, you may ask any GSSPA board member or visit the registration desk for assistance.

We hope you enjoy the program and take full advantage of the resources presented today.



GSSPA

FALL STUDENT PRESS CONFERENCE 2025

Keeping Our Seat at the Table.

If not us, WHO?



Keynote 2025

Covering Campus Protests: Student Journalists Tell Their Stories

Multipurpose Room A at 9:55 a.m.

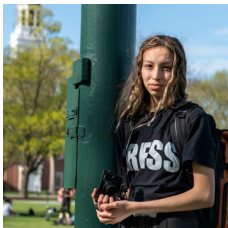
Three courageous university students will detail their experiences about how they covered campus protests and the legal support they needed. A Dartmouth University photographer and two students from Columbia University, the editor of the daily newspaper and a radio reporter, will share their stories as part of a panel that will be moderated by a national Student Press Rights advocate for the First Amendment. The audience will have the opportunity to ask questions and to discuss the challenges of reporting in the current environment.

MODERATOR

John Tagliareni is a founding member of the GSSPA, and he continues to serve on the executive board and as a Past President. He co-led the New Jersey New Voices Team, making NJ the 15th state to pass New Voices Legislation. He has served as a member of the JEA's Student Press Rights Commission since 1990. For 37 years, he advised Bergenfield (NJ) High School's newspaper, Bear Facts, which earned state and national awards. He has been recognized by state and national scholastic and professional press organizations for his service over the years.

PANELISTS

ALESANDRA "Dre" GONZALES



Dre Gonzales is a Multimedia Editor, photographer, and staff writer for *The Dartmouth*, driven by a love of public service that runs through both her reporting and her work as an emergency medical technician in Texas and New Hampshire. Her coverage spans campus protests, the impacts of gun violence, criminal cases, and community features. Stories she's pitched and reported have taken her to on-the-ground breaking news and enterprise assignments across the Upper Valley and South Texas, and her work appears across *The Dartmouth* and the *Uvalde Leader-News* in print, digital, and multimedia formats. When Dre's not on assignment she serves as an EMT on the board of Dartmouth EMS. Dre was arrested on May 1, 2024, while covering a campus protest on the Dartmouth Green. In October 2024, she received the Student Press Law Center's Courage in Student Journalism Award. Dre is expected to graduate from Dartmouth College in June 2027 with a B.A. in psychology and a minor in film.

NATALIE LAHR



Natalie Lahr is a Sophomore at Barnard College of Columbia University, double-majoring in Political Science and Human Rights. Natalie first connected with the Student Press Law Center in high school after a podcast episode she produced for PBS NewsHour's Student Reporting Labs faced censorship from administrators. She currently works as a field reporter for Columbia University's student-run radio station, primarily covering the student protest movement, union relations, and other breaking news on campus. In May of 2025, Natalie was suspended and faced eviction from student housing after reporting live from inside a sit-in at Columbia University's Butler Library. This experience solidified her commitment to broadcast/radio journalism as a powerful storytelling medium and reignited her passion for press freedom advocacy. She hopes that by equipping the future generations of journalists with tools to combat censorship and retaliation, they will be empowered to tell stories that matter.

SHEA VANCE



Shea Vance is a senior at Barnard College of Columbia University majoring in American Studies. She serves as the 149th editor in chief and president of the Columbia Daily Spectator, Columbia's independent flagship student newspaper and the second-oldest college daily in the nation. At Spectator, Shea leads a staff of over 300 student journalists, salespeople, analysts, and engineers as they work to diligently report on Columbia and its surrounding communities. Formerly a university news editor, Shea has spent the majority of her time at Spectator reporting on Columbia and Barnard administration, finances, and campus protests. Shea helped lead Spectator's award-winning coverage of the 2024 encampment protests that made headlines across the world, and now leads Spectator's newsroom as it covers unprecedented federal scrutiny and administrative tumult at Columbia. Aside from campus reporting, Shea writes for amNewYork, a local newspaper in New York City with a circulation of over 300,000, where her coverage focuses on local politics and the upcoming mayoral election.

ROOM 9:00 a.m. - 9:40 a.m. - DESCRIPTION

Multipurpose	Showcase of Excellence <i>GSSPA Board</i> Newspaper, Yearbook, Broadcast, and Online News Awards will be presented during the Showcase of Excellence. If you entered one of GSSPA's annual contests, this session is for you.
Center Hall	Producing Live TV News Coverage <i>Elizabeth Yuskaitis, Executive Producer, Fox News & Dean Sicoli, Fox News</i> A day in the life of producing live national and international news coverage.
The Cove	
Room 174	
Room 122	Do not comply: Resisting fascism and fighting for free speech and democracy <i>David A. Love, Assistant Teaching Professor of Journalism and Media Studies, Rutgers</i> This session will explore present-day threats to freedom of speech, press freedom and academic freedom, and discuss solutions to resist creeping authoritarianism and preserve democracy in America.
Room 120	How Humans of New York inspires us to tell stories of everyday people <i>Shawn McDonald, adviser and Social Media Manager for WHS publications</i> We will explore the power of the Humans of New York concept and how we use it at WHS. Hear advice for creating your own account and finding the best stories at your school. Experience a hands-on challenge to report some "Humans of NJ High School Journalism" stories to submit for GSSPA social media.
Room 118	
Room 117	Conversational hallucinations in AI art <i>Rhiannon Morgan, Teacher of Visual Arts</i> We will consider the strengths and limitations of AI tools for art and design, including design thinking. We will go over the historical base of AI in cybernetics and future projections for AI given contemporary clues present in trends.
Room 116	From Maury to markets: How journalism translates anywhere <i>Lauren Babbage, Cheddar Media VP of Content</i> Lauren Babbage currently runs a small business news network called Cheddar, but the start of her career was far from market headlines and business stories. Her first job out of college was a production assistant for the Maury Povich Show, where she spent three years learning about paternity tests and lie detector tests. She's worked at daytime talk shows, game shows, and home-improvement shows. This session will walk through how your journalism skills can transcend to any profession, how to adapt quickly in the new media environment, and highlight the importance of your network.
Room 115	

ROOM 9:45 a.m. - 10:55 a.m. - DESCRIPTION

Multipurpose	Covering Campus Protests: Student Journalists Tell Their Stories KEYNOTE Three courageous university students will detail their experiences about how they covered campus protests and the legal support they needed. A Dartmouth University photographer and two students from Columbia University, the editor of the daily newspaper and a radio reporter, will share their stories as part of a panel that will be moderated by a national Student Press Rights advocate for the First Amendment. The audience will have the opportunity to ask questions and to discuss the challenges of reporting in the current environment.
Center Hall	
The Cove	
Room 174	
Room 122	
Room 120	Sports Journalism: Spreading the Word <i>Greg Tartaglia, Sports Reporter, The Record/ NorthJersey.com</i> Learning to be a good sportswriter can help you with sports broadcasting — and vice versa. Tips on writing well for print, how writing well for broadcast differs, and how to tell the same story in different ways for different audiences.
Room 118	
Room 117	
Room 116	From Maury to markets: How journalism translates anywhere <i>Lauren Babbage, Cheddar Media VP of Content</i> Lauren Babbage currently runs a small business news network called Cheddar, but the start of her career was far from market headlines and business stories. Her first job out of college was a production assistant for the Maury Povich Show, where she spent three years learning about paternity tests and lie detector tests. She's worked at daytime talk shows, game shows, and home-improvement shows. This session will walk through how your journalism skills can transcend to any profession, how to adapt quickly in the new media environment, and highlight the importance of your network.
Room 115	

ROOM 11:00 a.m. - 11:50 a.m. - DESCRIPTION

Multipurpose	Visual Storytelling <i>Thomas E Franklin, Associate Professor & Multimedia Journalist, Montclair State University</i> Experienced photojournalist and professor will discuss his experiences and share tips for telling stories visually.
Center Hall	Write to Know <i>Donna S. Beck, EdD</i> In this interactive session, students will explore how the changing media landscape is reshaping the way news is written and delivered. Through guided discussion and a hands-on activity, participants will learn how broadcast news writing differs from print and online journalism. They'll practice rewriting an online news story for broadcast and then step into the role of news anchor to deliver their copy on camera.
The Cove	Student Roundtables <i>Mary Henry</i> Members of our inaugural group of New Jersey Journalism All Stars lead student roundtable discussions on Covering Controversial Topics, The Process of Developing Story Ideas, and The Immigrant and POC Experience in Student Journalism.
Room 174	Patrick Tuohey Write-off Contest Students entering the write-off contest should report to room 174 directly after the keynote session. You will have 50 minutes to write your story. One entrant per staff.
Room 122	Designing with Impact: Using Art and Photography in Newspaper Layouts <i>Tanya Pastor, Lyndhurst H.S.</i> We've all heard the phrase, "A picture is worth a thousand words." In this session, Tanya Pastor, adviser of Lyndhurst High School's award-winning student newspaper, The Lighthouse, will explore how professional and scholastic publications effectively integrate art and photography into their layouts. Discover how to select and legally reprint images and logos for your own publication, and learn how to adapt inspiring design ideas to create standout page layouts.
Room 120	Sports Talk: Working in the "Toy Department" <i>Greg Tartaglia, Sports Reporter, The Record/ NorthJersey.com</i> Sports talk shows are popular in the media (TV, radio, podcasts, etc.). Good ones require a mix of hard work and having fun. Learn how to prepare well and engage with sports fans who share your enthusiasm.
Room 118	Managing Managing and Student Life <i>The Daily Targum, Uju Nwanonyiri, Editor in chief & Tanvi Dave, Managing Editor</i> We will discuss how we've handled running a student-led newspaper alongside other responsibilities, what we would've done differently, how our thoughts on journalism evolved within our roles, and advice we would give to those pursuing journalism.
Room 117	From Ordinary to Extraordinary and Everything in Between <i>Bonnie Blackman, CJE, Jostens Publishing Representative</i> Actions that you can take to impact your publication and elevate it in a positive way.
Room 116	Do you want to build a SNO site? <i>Brian Smith and the Delphi Staff, Delaware Valley Regional High School</i> Does your school publish its online news through a SNO site? Do you want to learn more about what your site can do? Come discuss how to maximize your site with the staff of The Delphi, a four-time SNO Distinguished Site award winner. Bring your questions and be ready to network with other New Jersey SNO site staffs.
Room 115	Crisis Control & Coffee: Troubleshooting common problems as a newspaper adviser and journalism teacher <i>Alana VanDerSluys, MJE, Kinnelon H.S., GSSPA Board</i> Crisis Control & Coffee" provides solutions for common challenges journalism advisers face—like lack of funding, resources, experience, or support — by highlighting professional networks, fundraising, free resources, legal protections, and growth opportunities to help build strong, sustainable programs.

ROOM 11:55 a.m. - 12:40 p.m. - DESCRIPTION

Multipurpose	Sports: The ultimate in deadline writing <i>Wayne Woolley, Communications H.S. & Quinnipiac University</i> We discuss the writing mindset needed get your stories and reports, especially written content, out to your website and social media channels as quick, accurately and colorfully as possible.
Center Hall	Let's Get Social <i>Staci Toporek, CJE, GSSPA President, Governor Livingston H.S.</i> Building a social media presence for the journalism program at your school.
The Cove	Elevate Your Yearbook <i>Bonnie Blackman, Jostens, & Kara Sterner, Varsity Yearbooks</i> Two experienced yearbook professionals will critique current trends in yearbook and offer suggestions for making your book even better.
Room 174	Ethics Matters to Every Journalist <i>Jane Primerano, Independent Journalist, Society of Professional Journalists</i> How the the SPJ Code of Ethics applies to high school journalists
Room 122	Click-Worthy: The Psychology of Storytelling <i>Ava Gutkin, Editor-in-Chief, Colt Chronicle</i> This session will combine national psychology studies and real headline examples to show high school journalists how attention, curiosity, and emotions determine what readers click on and remember. This allows journalists to craft headlines that are both engaging and impactful.
Room 120	Photographing History as it Happens <i>Michael Nigro, Photojournalist</i> How I approach politics, protests, and conflicts as a photojournalist, and thoughts on being an observer of history.
Room 118	Inequity in Newspapers and Journalistic Positions <i>Aayush Gupta & Tanush Kandpal, Edison High School</i> We will discuss the inequalities in high school newspaper programs that affect a publication's stance on political issues and the overall output of the newspaper. Leadership conflicts in newspapers lead to greediness, article holding, and denials in article ideas due to personal conflicts. Furthermore, in the way that editors, editors-in-chief are selected, lead to numerous publications being controlled by a group of people, who only pass on their positions to friends of theirs. While our school doesn't experience these issues, it is common for numerous publications across the state to go through them. Our goal is to highlight these leadership problems and inequalities in high school journalism and bring forth ways to combat these situations.
Room 117	Headless Body in Topless Bar <i>Claire Regan, Journalism Professor, Wagner College</i> It takes most journalists a whole career to become good headline writers – but you can do it in just 45 minutes during this session. Three simple steps will help you master this critical skill.
Room 116	Building a Podcast from the Ground Up <i>Brian Smith and the Delphi Staff, Delaware Valley Regional High School</i> If you are looking to start a podcast, this session is for you! Come learn how to take your idea and turn it into a reality as we discuss the writing, recording, publishing and branding processes needed to build a successful podcast.
Room 115	Cultivating Healthy Hustle <i>Livia Kam & Chloe Marshall, Editors-in-Chief for MFS WordsWorth</i> Does your staff regularly blow by deadlines as if they were just multiple snooze buttons in the clock app? Learn how you can spark a sense of purpose and a healthy hustle in your staff by setting clear expectations and building a shared mission. Additionally, dive into our practical tutorial on tracking content progress with an online workflow tool.

ROOM 12:45 p.m. - 1:30 p.m. - DESCRIPTION

Multipurpose	Starting Out In Sports Journalism <i>Jared Greenspan, Writer / Researcher, Major League Baseball</i> I want this to be primarily question-driven, but overall, I hope to provide advice for students with aspirations of breaking into sports journalism. I will talk about what's helped me reach this point in my career, and also explain how I go about covering baseball.
Center Hall	What's Your Inspo? <i>Staci Toporek, CJE, GSSPA President, Governor Livingston H.S.</i> Discover new sources of inspiration and unlock your creativity by looking to the pros in advertising and marketing to inspire your theme and/or design for yearbook. Examine successful advertising and marketing campaigns to understand how industry professionals capture attention and engage audiences. See how these strategies can be adapted to create a memorable and impactful yearbook.
The Cove	Student Networking Roundtable <i>Jason Langer, Golda Och Academy, & Diane Frey, Edison High School</i> A chance to meet student journalists from other schools, come together to discuss hot topics and interesting issues, share ideas (and frustrations!). Stop in and step up as state-wide student journalism leaders.
Room 174	Fast is Fine, But Accuracy is Everything <i>Jane Primerano, Independent Journalist, Society of Professional Journalists</i> A discussion with students on how to avoid errors in an era of instant posting.
Room 122	
Room 120	Opinion Writing: Editorials, Columns, Essays <i>Alfred Doblin, Director, Strategic Communications Port Authority NY&NJ</i> Discuss the differences among editorials, columns, and essays (oped). Explore how they are written and interact with students regarding issues they may face writing editorials and opinion pieces at a student newspaper.
Room 118	Lit Mag Launchpad: How to Build Your School's Arts & Literary Magazine <i>Emmie Huynh & Owen Rodwell-Simon, Editors-in-Chief "Images", Moorestown Friends School</i> In this session, co Editors-in-Chief Emmie Huynh and Owen Rodwell-Simon will detail the ins and outs of kickstarting and leading a high school arts and literary magazine publication. From collecting and selecting student submissions to designing and formatting the magazine, this session will cover everything students and advisors need to create a student-run magazine or improve a school's already existing publication.
Room 117	AP Style Smackdown <i>Claire Regan, Journalism Professor, Wagner College</i> Does your staff follow Associated Press Style? Do they even know what it is? Learn why the AP Stylebook is the definitive reference for journalists and how you can start using it to strengthen your writing and editing skills.
Room 116	Writing the Write Way <i>Kara Sterner, CJE, Varsity Yearbooks</i> Yearbook is more than just pictures. Don't leave the viewer wondering what the photo was about or forgetting who the person is in 10 years. Headlines, captions, body copy are there to tell the whole story!
Room 115	

Remember, NJ has you Covered: New Voices is the Law!

PROTECTING SPEECH RIGHTS OF STUDENT JOURNALISTS, TEACHERS, AND ADVISERS



Both houses of the New Jersey legislature passed our New Voices Law unanimously in June, 2021. Governor Phil Murphy signed the bill on December 21, 2021. It is now law!

The law reaffirms the First Amendment rights of student journalists under the Tinker standard and also protects journalism teachers and advisers in public high schools and institutions of higher learning from retribution for supporting their students. The law, which went into effect immediately upon Governor Murphy's signing, also mandates that each school district in the state develop and adopt a publications policy, consistent with the law, by the start of this school year.

New Jersey is the 15th state to pass this type of protection, but there's more work to be done.

The Student Press Law Center has created a guide that will help all New Jersey stakeholders understand the New Voices Law. Please access the information entitled, "A Guide to New Jersey's New Voices Act" at [splc.org](https://splc.org/know-your-rights-new-jersey/). <https://splc.org/know-your-rights-new-jersey/>

Teachers and students, should check to make sure that their school boards have adopted a publications policy that complies with the law. The information from the SPLC will help you. They have a form for that!

We are very grateful to The Student Press Law Center's Executive Director, Gary Green, and Assistant Director Josh Moore, and the legal team and staff of the SPLC. Their dedication and support has been invaluable.

GSSPA Publication Contests 2026 - Deadline July 1, 2026

The Garden State Scholastic Press Association annual competition recognizes excellence in News Media and Yearbooks. Publications are critiqued and scored by experienced journalism advisers from other states. Critiques provide valuable feedback to help you improve your publications.

News Media Entry forms and judging sheets are all digital. Yearbooks are mailed.

NEWS MEDIA CATEGORIES

1. News Writing
2. Feature Writing
3. Sports Writing
4. In-depth Reporting Package
5. Editorial Writing (unsigned)
6. Opinion Writing (signed)
7. Personal Narrative
8. Column Writing
9. Review Writing
10. Artwork/Illustration
11. Photography
12. Infographics

13. Editorial Cartooning
14. Layout & Design
15. Overall Excellence - Newspaper
16. Multimedia Package - News
17. Multimedia Package - Features
18. Multimedia Package - Sports
19. Broadcast Segment
20. News Magazine Show (Long Form)
21. News Show (Short Form/Episode)
22. Short Documentary
23. Podcast
24. Breaking News
25. Photo Gallery

27. Social Media Presence
28. Overall Excellence - Online/Broadcast

YEARBOOK CATEGORIES

1. Profiles
2. Student Life
3. Sports
4. Academics
5. Clubs and Organizations
6. Sidebar mods
7. Infographics
8. Theme



IMPORTANT DATES IN SCHOLASTIC JOURNALISM 2025-2026

OCTOBER 2025

27 GSSPA Fall Press Day — Busch Campus Center, Rutgers

NOVEMBER 2025

3 CSPA Fall Conference — Columbia University

13-16 JEA/NSPA National High School Journalism Convention — Nashville

FEBRUARY 2026

6 Scholarship Deadlines: Bob Stevens Scholarship and Bernard Kilgore / NJ High School Journalist of the Year

6 Quill & Scroll Writing, Visual, Multimedia Contest deadline

23-27 Scholastic Journalism Week — “Press Under Pressure”

MARCH 2026

18-20 CSPA Spring Conference — Columbia University

APRIL 2026

16-18 JEA/NSPA Spring National High School Journalism Convention — Minneapolis

JUNE 2026

21-26 CSPA In Person Summer Workshop — Columbia University

JULY 2026

1 GSSPA Summer Contest Deadline Newspaper, Online Media, Broadcast, and Yearbook

6-10; 13-17; 20-27 CSPA Summer Workshop Virtual Sessions



GSSPA Executive Board

Staci Toporek, CJE, President
Brian Smith, CJE, Vice President
Diana Day, CJE, Secretary
Susan V. Everett, MJE, Treasurer

GSSPA Fall Conference Committee

Conference Committee Chair - Susan V. Everett, MJE

Student Chapter Committee - Diane Frey and Jason Langer

Contest Committee - Heather Hunkele (Yearbook) and Brian Smith (Newspaper)

New Jersey School Journalism All Star Committee - Mary Henry, Greg Gagliardi, CJE, Tom McHale, CJE

Bill Allen
Bonnie Blackman, CJE
Karen Bruno
Carlo Iacono
Shawn McDonald
Jane Primerano
Kara Sterner, CJE
John Tagliareni
Alana Van Der Sluys, MJE
Wayne Woolley

Final Notes

Special Thanks

The GSSPA 2025 Fall Conference is held in partnership with the Department of Journalism and Media Studies, Rutgers University.

Thanks also to:

- David Love
- Laurall Thompson, Rutgers School of Communication and Information
- The Record/NorthJersey.com, sponsor of the write-off
- The New Jersey Press Foundation
- The staff of the Busch Campus Center

Scholarships

Visit the New Jersey Press Association website <https://njpa.org/foundation/scholarships.html> to learn about the scholarships available to GSSPA members.

Bernard Kilgore Memorial Scholarship

\$5,000 college scholarship awarded to a high school student who is planning to pursue a career in journalism. This student also is named the Garden State Scholastic Press Association's New Jersey High School Journalist of the Year, and is entered into the JEA National High School Journalist of the Year competition.

Bob Stevens Memorial Scholarship

\$2,000 college scholarship awarded through the Garden State Scholastic Press Association to a high school senior who has demonstrated dedication to their school newspaper or yearbook.

GSSPA Membership

Advisers who attend the GSSPA Fall Conference also enjoy full membership benefits for this school year, including:

- Eligibility for students to compete for the Bernard Kilgore / NJ Journalist of the Year Scholarship and the Bob Stevens Memorial Scholarship.
- Eligibility to enter the Summer Newspaper, Online News, Broadcast and Yearbook Contests.
- Email updates on important student journalism news and events.

GSSPA FALL STUDENT PRESS CONFERENCE 2025

Keeping Our Seat at the Table.

If not us, WHO?