

# Embrace change



Photo by PWWA Treasurer Theresa Hegel

Cate Barron, executive editor at The Patriot-News in Harrisburg, outlined several strategies for surviving newsroom upheavals during her keynote speech at the PWWA awards luncheon in State College in May.

For more about Barron's speech, see Page 9.

# TAKE NOTE

## Resignation

### ■ Northeast district director

Kathy Ruff has stepped down from her position. Stephanie Longo, also PWPA secretary, has agreed to take over the position.

## Contest director

■ **Kay Stephens** has agreed to take on the contest director position for 2012. Rebecca VanderMeulen will assist her.

## 2012

### ■ PWPA's 75th anniversary:

Any ideas how we should celebrate this milestone? Let us know.

## June 2012

■ **June 1 to 2:** Pennsylvania Newspaper Association's press conference in Gettysburg.

## PRESIDENT'S LETTER

# Luncheon was a success

Before we take a break to enjoy the summer months I wanted to address a few things. First of all, thanks to everyone who came to Penn State for the Pennsylvania Women's Press Association luncheon on May 21 as part of the annual Pennsylvania Newspaper Association's annual conference.

Congratulations to the winners of the Excellence in Journalism contest. It is always nice to meet the individuals behind the wonderful work!

For those of you who weren't there, we enjoyed a delicious buffet lunch and were inspired by keynote speaker, Cate Barron, executive editor at The Patriot-News. She shared insight about how to deal with the changing newsroom and offered ideas we could all take back to our offices to help our profession continue to thrive.

That weekend, we were able to re-introduce our upgraded website ([www.pwpa.us](http://www.pwpa.us)).

Images from it were displayed on a big screen during the event. It has been a long time in coming but I think you will find it both informative and easier to use than our past site.

As is our tradition, we presented a check for \$1,500 to a journalism student. Faith Cotter, a senior at Point Park University in Pittsburgh, is this year's awardee. We also

honored Lindsey Poisson, of the Erie Times News as both Rookie of the Year and Journalist of the Year.

During our board meeting and membership meeting I was nominated and voted for a second term to be your president.

I am honored and hope that you will let me know any questions or concerns you have for this organization.

The membership also approved Dawn Goodman (who recently had baby Solomon!!) as vice-president, Theresa Hegel as treasurer and Stephanie Longo as secretary.

We also approved an amended set of new bylaws.

AND DON'T FORGET — Next year we will be celebrating our 75th anniversary, so please plan to come.

There are \$5 mouse pads available for purchase with information about our upcoming celebration.

The PNA's conference is June 1-2, 2012 in Gettysburg. Save the date!

JoAnne Harrop,  
PWPA president

E-mail: [jharrop@tribweb.com](mailto:jharrop@tribweb.com)

Office: (412) 320-7889

Cell: (412) 855-1490



# Members can renew online through PayPal

## By Theresa Hegel

PWPA TREASURER

By now, I hope everyone has had a moment to stop by and check out our redesigned website.

One new feature you may not have noticed will likely come in handy in a few months when membership dues are, well, due.

At the bottom of the membership application page, I've added a "pay now" button

from PayPal. This way, members can pay online with a credit card if they wish. If you decide to renew your membership this way, I would advise you to still fill out the membership application information so that I can update your contact information for my membership list.

It's also a nice feature that new members can both fill out a membership application

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**BALANCES**  
(as of June 19)

**Checking:**

**\$1,038.04**

**Money market:**

**\$13,131.85**

# Cotter: Journalism 'fantastic'

The PWPA's scholarship winner hopes to combine her interest in medicine and writing when she graduates.

By Rebecca VanderMeulen

SOUTHEAST DISTRICT DIRECTOR

As a girl Faith Cotter was attracted to two seemingly different fields: medicine and writing.

At the age of 9, she remembers reading biographies of the Dionne quintuplets, five women who were born in Ontario in 1934. In high school Cotter's goal was to be a perinatologist, a doctor who cares for women going through high-risk pregnancies. When she was 16, she visited the Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh to interview its chief of pediatric surgery about career options.

At the end of Cotter's interview, the surgeon mentioned that a medical writer from The Wall Street Journal was waiting to speak with him.

That's when it clicked for Cotter: Her life's work could combine writing and medicine.

With that realization she propelled herself toward a career in journalism. She expects to graduate in December with a bachelor's degree in print journalism from Point Park University in Pittsburgh, where she belongs to the honors program and Alpha Chi national college honors society.

This year the Pennsylvania Women's Press Association



Photo by PWPA Treasurer Theresa Hegel

**PWPA President JoAnne Harrop, left, stands with Faith Cotter, the organization's 2011 scholarship winner, at the annual awards luncheon in State College last month. Cotter, 23, plans to graduate in December with a degree in print journalism from Point Park University in Pittsburgh.**

awarded her its annual \$1,500 scholarship, which will help defray the costs of her education.

Cotter, 23, remains interested in pursuing medical journalism. After graduation she hopes to work as an investigative and human interest reporter.

"It's a fantastic and amazing and daunting responsibility to take somebody's story and hold it in my hands," she said.

Cotter got her first chance to conduct investigative reporting while working for the Innocence Institute of Point Park University. Under the direction of Pulitzer Prize finalist Bill Moushey, the institute investigates allegations of wrongful court convictions.

Cotter had a paid position for the Innocence Institute and worked as a student reporter.

Among her duties, she copy

edited the institute's magazine, Justice, and co-wrote an article that won a national Mark of Excellence award from the Society of Professional Journalists.

As a student, Cotter has also worked as a freelancer for two local Patch news websites in the Pittsburgh area, Dormont-Brookline Patch and Baldwin-Whitehall Patch. This fall she plans to

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Spotlight on ...

# Ashley Teatum

**Q:** Where do you work? What are your responsibilities?

**A:** I work for the Times-Tribune in Scranton, Pa., as a sports reporter, covering several local and high school beats, including girls and boys high school soccer, high school wrestling, recreational sports and any other college or local reporting that comes across my desk.

I also serve as an assistant to our clerk, entering box scores and creating rewrites of our local schedule of events for the next day's paper.

In addition, I proofread pages and currently am receiving training to paginate within the next month.

**Q:** How did you get where you are today in terms of education and experience?

**A:** I am a native of Staten Island, N.Y., but I graduated from the University of Scranton in May 2009 with a B.A. in English.

I also studied journalism and women's studies, and two of my internships while at Scranton were with the sports department of the Times-Tribune.

While I was interning with the Scranton/Wilkes-Barre Yankees' public relations office, I heard from my former internship supervisor, then the sports editor



at the Times-Tribune, that there was an opening in the news department, specifically working as an obituary clerk. After starting in July 2009, I transferred to sports that December.

**Q:** What do you do when you're not working?

**A:** When I am not working, I love to read — sports, how folks are covering what I want to write about (baseball, college sports), and fiction — as well as write fiction of my own.

I also write for a recently-founded sports website, Aerys Sports ([www.aeryssports.com](http://www.aeryssports.com)), as the lead New York Yankees writer ([www.stnyanks.com](http://www.stnyanks.com)). The site is run entirely by women.

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## NEW MEMBERS

### MAY 2011

- Valerie Myers, reporter, Erie Times-News
- Adrienne Wright, editor, Hakol, Jewish Federation of the Lehigh Valley

### FEBRUARY 2011

- Zandy Dudiak, associate regional editor, AOL Patch
- Christine Haines, staffer, (Uniontown) Herald-Standard
- Sarah Hofius Hall, staffer, Scranton Times-Tribune
- Laura Legere, staffer, Scranton Times-Tribune
- Ashley Teatum, staffer, Scranton Times-Tribune

### JANUARY 2011

- Rachel Anderson, videographer/photographer, Pittsburgh Tribune-Review
- Greg Bock, reporter, Altoona Mirror
- Jo Ciavaglia, health and crime reporter, Bucks County Courier Times
- Linda T. Gracey, special sections editor, Altoona Mirror
- Shasta Kurtz, copy editor, Altoona Mirror
- Mark Leberfinger, assistant news editor, Altoona Mirror
- Kim Leonard, business reporter, Pittsburgh Tribune-Review
- Laurie Mason, reporter, Bucks County Courier Times
- Kate Morris, copy editor, Altoona Mirror
- Freda Savana, staff writer, The Intelligencer

# Winner says she loves learning

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intern in the news department at the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette.

She looks forward to finishing her degree but doesn't expect her diploma to mark the end of her schooling.

Cotter loves learning and plans to earn master's and doctoral degrees in writing. Eventually, she hopes to teach creative writing at the college level.

Cotter noted that she's far from a stereotypical girly-girl — "I'm not the kind of girl who giggles over 'Twilight,'" she said. In fact, she's spent the last three summers working at a Boy Scout camp in southwestern Pennsylvania.

Still, she values female companionship and believes in PWPA's mission of supporting female journalists.

Organizations like this give women and men a chance to draw inspiration from like-minded professionals, she said.



Photo by PWPA Treasurer Theresa Hegel

**Cate Barron, left, executive editor of the Patriot-News in Harrisburg, chats with Faith Cotter after the PWPA awards luncheon in State College in May.**

## Read, converse, network, Teatum advises

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**Q:** What does the future hold for journalists?

**A:** Instead of thinking about the future of newspapers, we need to figure out how journalism is going to evolve in the next few years.

With the advent of social media, readers are consuming news from all sorts of venues, and they want more opinion, I believe, than simple news.

Though, I still think that aspect of objectivity needs to stay in place, whatever journalism looks like 10 years from now.

**Q:** Best career moment so far? Worst moment?

**A:** Worst moment: Not realizing it was a publisher calling in a tip to

the newsroom, and failing to follow up on the story immediately for the next day's paper.

Best moment(s): These boil down to the folks I have met while covering local sports. Meeting Dave Winfield during the Little League World Series; being in the same room with Brian Cashman when he came to watch Chien Ming Wang at Scranton/Wilkes-Barre; spending a season covering players like Shelley Duncan, Eric Duncan, Juan Miranda and Austin Jackson at Triple-A; and meeting the many talented and intelligent high school athletes in Northeast Pennsylvania.

**Q:** What advice do you have for other journalists?

**A:** Read. Converse. Network. That's all it boils down to.

**Q:** Why did you decide to join PWPA?

**A:** A few other women in our newsroom are members, and I thought it would be a great opportunity for me to join, learn about events and contests, and simply be connected with a group of journalists who are women.

**Q:** Any other thoughts or stories you'd like to share?

**A:** I work in a department of all men. It took some time to get used to it, but I just needed to be able to throw back whatever wit and sarcasm they tossed my way.

And in a few months, I went from being like a little sister in the department to one of their peers and coworkers.

That is my favorite accomplishment working for the Times-Tribune.

# A minute of reflection

By **Lindsey Poisson**  
ERIE TIMES-NEWS

The moment of doubt usually happens at about 2:36 p.m.

By then the coffee-chased-by-a-sugarless-Red-Bull from earlier in the morning starts to wear off. The calls out to sources continue to go unanswered. And as I try to write out my stories, I can't help but feel that everything coming from my speedy fingers to the screen reads like complete drivell.

That's when I think: Why am I doing this?

When I try to think back on what made me want to be a journalist, I remember my first laminated press pass from fifth grade. Back in Hartland, Mich., my elementary school class was putting together a newspaper — although the “newspaper” was a stapled-together packet of random writings from each kid in the class.

(Just for the record: I wrote a lively review of 1996's “Space Jam” starring Michael Jordan.)

After that, I just knew I wanted to be a writer.

School newspapers led to college internships at the Flint Journal and the Bay City Times, and then I graduated with honors from Michigan State University's journalism school in 2008.

Then I came to the Erie Times-News in Erie, Pa., on an internship, never guessing I'd be hired full time later that year.

At that point, it was pretty official. I was a journalist — this was my job and way of life.

As a feature writer, there's no limit to what I can write about. I've gone along on ghost hunts, made “American Idol” webisode spoofs using marshmallow Peeps and spun a fashion story about kilts. I've mixed up homemade makeup for spooky Halloween costume photo shoots. I've entered an airsoft arena, knowing full well I'd likely be bruised and battered by small plastic BBs for my 20-inch story.



Photo by PWPA Treasurer Theresa Hegel

**2011 contest director Deb Erdley, left, presented PWPA Northwest District Director Lindsey Poisson with the journalist of the year award at May's awards luncheon.**

Whatever the story — big or small, serious or silly, challenging or simple — I try to motivate myself to take it on fully, completely and to the greatest extent of my creativity.

Sometimes I feel proud of my work. Other times, I lie awake the night before a story runs, mentally rechecking all my facts and thinking of all the things I should have done.

Always, however, I wonder if what I do makes a difference.

The older journalists in the newsroom talk about “changing times” as they log in to Facebook and Twitter. In confer-

ence room meetings, staffs discuss what this will mean in a year or two down the line. Sometimes it seems they look to the youngest in the newsroom for some sort of hint.

But I have no idea what it will mean. Just like them, I can't see into the future.

What I do know is that when it was announced in our paper that the Pennsylvania Women's Press Association awarded me the honor of Journalist of the Year, the response was unexpected.

I received many e-mails and calls from

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# Methods may change, responsibility doesn't

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readers I didn't know congratulating me and saying they enjoyed everything I write. People told me what they learned from this article or that article, and sometimes how much stories meant to them. Some even said they clip out and save some of the stories I've written.

Frankly, knowing this helps. In the

end, what keeps me going is the hope that what I do — what many of us do — daily will help or influence someone. The methods of what we do might change, but our responsibility doesn't. The world will always need investigators, educators and storytellers.

But whatever happens tomorrow doesn't change my deadline today.

So by 2:37 p.m., I'm ready to write on.

## AWARD-WINNING STORIES

### Poverty strikes hard in rural northwestern Pa.

CONNEAUTVILLE — Throughout Jennia Williams' tidy home are shelves of elephant figurines, of every size, color and material, that she's collected over the years.

"They say they're supposed to bring luck," she said.

She chuckled softly to herself.

"Not with all the bad luck I've been having."

Williams, 52, is slowly packing the figurines away, along with the rest of her possessions, and adding to the stack of boxes steadily multiplying in the den of her rented home in Conneautville, which sits amid open fields of farmland south of Albion in Crawford County. ...

**Read more:** [www.goerie.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20100411/NEWS02/304109907](http://www.goerie.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20100411/NEWS02/304109907)

### Erie County paranormal groups gain momentum

Saturday, 6:40 p.m.: Darkness creeps across an already overcast sky as the rain steadies to a drizzle. Still, members of the Erie County Paranormal team do not hurry up the steps of an ordinary-looking home in Lawrence Park Township.

It's just another Saturday night for team founder Frank Grande and co-founder Jerry Thompson. Since 2007, they've been called to places with a similar rep:

Voices and footsteps out of nowhere. Objects moving on their own. Touches from an unseen person.

If there's something strange in their neighborhood, who do people call? These guys. ...

**Read more:** [www.goerie.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20101014/NEWS02/310139900/-1/ETN](http://www.goerie.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20101014/NEWS02/310139900/-1/ETN) (Video for "After dark": [http://goerie.com/section/video#vmix\\_media\\_id=19326931](http://goerie.com/section/video#vmix_media_id=19326931))

### Your guide to legends and ghost tales around Erie County

**To read:** [www.goerie.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20101001/LIFESTYLES09/309309867/0/LIFESTYLES07](http://www.goerie.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20101001/LIFESTYLES09/309309867/0/LIFESTYLES07)



**Asa Emile (Asa Raviv)  
Beaubien**

## New arrival for member

PWPA southeast district member Carin Smilk gave birth to a son at 9:07 a.m. June 1.

Asa Emile (Asa Raviv) Beaubien weighed 7 pounds 11 ounces and was 20 inches long.

Smilk is the former treasurer of the Pennsylvania Womens Press Association. She is the managing editor of *The Jewish Exponent* in Philadelphia.

According to Smilk, she and the baby are doing well.

## Membership reaches 82

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online and pay their dues through the web.

In terms of membership, we are up to 82 members for 2011. I will be sending out this year's membership list in a few days, so look for it in your mailbox soon.

As always, if you have any suggestions or submissions for the PWPA newsletter, I welcome them. Just shoot me a quick email at [thegel13@hotmail.com](mailto:thegel13@hotmail.com).

Have a great summer!



# Meeting of the minds



Photos by PWPA Treasurer Theresa Hegel

PWPA members discussed their new bylaws, the annual contest and a number of other issues at the annual meeting, held before the awards luncheon, in State College in May. At top, from left to right, are Sarah Hofius Hall of the Scranton Times-Tribune; Stephanie Longo, PWPA secretary; and Daveen Rae Kurutz, southwest director.

Above is Rebecca VanderMeulen, southeast director. At right, JoAnne Harrop, PWPA president, leads the meeting.





Photo by PWPA Treasurer Theresa Hegel

PWPA members and guests converse before the 2011 awards luncheon, held in State College in May.

# Change is good, Barron says

**By Theresa Hegel**

PWPA TREASURER

Anyone who has worked in a newsroom for a few years knows that change is unavoidable.

Instead of lamenting the fact that we live in an age of tweets, blogs and shaky video clips, Cate Barron says we must embrace such changes.

Though the advent of Internet journalism is a good thing, Barron acknowledged that it can be “very nerve-racking,” especially for the old guard.

“Learning something new means being temporarily incompetent,” she said.

Barron, executive editor of *The Patriot-News* in Harrisburg, was the key note speaker at the PWPA’s awards luncheon in State College in May. She discussed several strategies on how to handle change gracefully and effectively.

Her handy do-and-don’t list was tailored to newsroom leaders, but many of her suggestions were applicable to anyone who wants newspapers to remain viable.

The first item on her list was communication. If the newsroom is implementing a new Internet policy or installing a

different pagination system, editors must explain why it’s important. Transparency and honesty are key, Barron said.

“The whole newsroom has to be on the same page,” she said. “Rumors flourish in periods when there’s a vacuum of information.”

It’s important to stay visible and not burrow into your office because people will need you more during upheavals than at any other time, she said.

But keeping a cool and calm demeanor during these times of great stress is also vital.

“Don’t raise the temperature of the newsroom,” Barron said.

Another pitfall to avoid is the natural inclination to ignore the difficult people in the newsroom — the ones Barron affectionately referred to as the “eye-rollers” — and spend your time with your favorites.

Barron’s suggestion for dealing with the loudly skeptical set is to put them in charge of something, perhaps by having them run a meeting.

When they have to take ownership, “They won’t be able to eye roll,” she said.

And in an era of cutbacks, layoffs and pay freezes, it’s still a good idea to recognize the survivors who are meeting the challenge of a leaner, meaner newsroom.

Even if there are no raises to offer your staff, Barron suggested other perks, such as complimentary tickets from the advertising department, goofy awards or low-cost training.

Try not to let the changes overwhelm you or allow you to lose sight of why you entered the business in the first place, Barron said.

“Celebrate your victories,” she said. “Focus on the work. ... I’m convinced this is still the best calling in the world.”

Though navigating change can be stressful and time-consuming, don’t let it affect your health. Whenever possible, try to maintain a balance between work and home, she said.

If you like Barron’s suggestions but are worried you’ll have trouble implementing them, try writing one goal on a sticky note attached to your computer terminal for a month. Then, don’t allow yourself to leave at the end of the week until you’ve followed the sticky note’s advice.

By the end of the month, it should become a new habit.

# PWPA OFFICERS



**PRESIDENT**  
JoAnne Harrop  
jharrop@tribweb.com  
(412) 320-7889



**VICE PRESIDENT**  
Dawn Goodman  
dgoodman@observer-reporter.com  
(724) 222-2200 ext. 2481



**TREASURER**  
Theresa Hegel  
thege13@hotmail.com  
(215) 538-6381



**SECRETARY**  
Stephanie Longo  
stephanie.a.longo@gmail.com  
(570) 815-7401

## DISTRICT DIRECTORS

### 1. NORTHWEST DISTRICT

#### DIRECTOR

Lindsay Poisson

Lindsey.poisson@timesnews.com  
(814) 870-1871

### 2. SOUTHWEST DISTRICT

#### DIRECTOR

Daveen Rae Kurutz

dmclaughlin@tribweb.com  
(412) 380-5627

### 3. CENTRAL DISTRICT

#### DIRECTOR

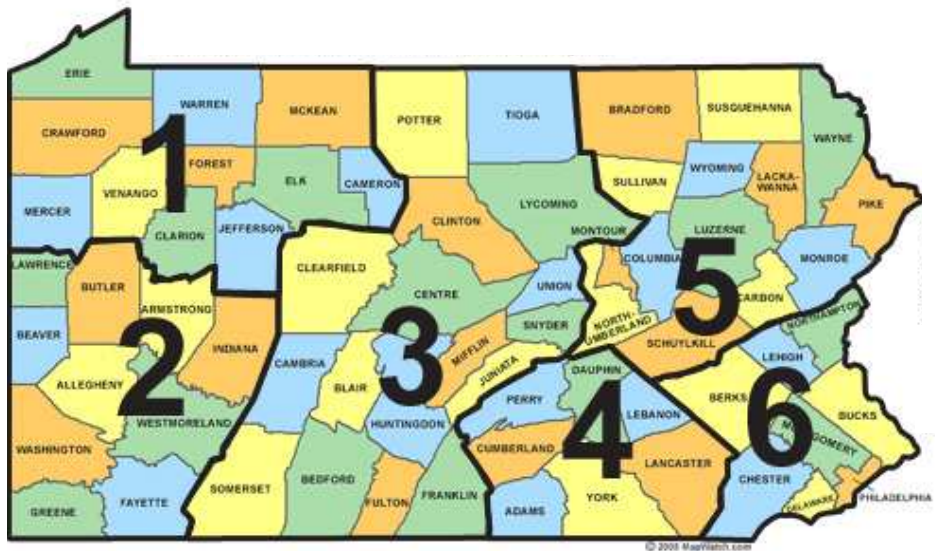
Amanda Clegg

aclegg@altoonamirror.com  
(814) 949-7030

### 4. SOUTH CENTRAL DISTRICT DIRECTOR

Linda Espenshade

linda.espenshade@gmail.com  
(717) 413-6115



### 5. NORTHEAST DISTRICT

#### DIRECTOR

Stephanie Longo

stephanie.a.longo@gmail.com  
(570) 815-740

### 6. SOUTHEAST DISTRICT

#### DIRECTOR

Rebecca VanderMeulen

rebeccavm@gmail.com  
(610) 873-4251