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Important Information

NEFAI 2023 Event Page
www.nefac.org/nefai-2023

NEFAI 2023 Schedule, Documents and Presentations
www.nefac.org/nefai-2023-curriculum

Justin Silverman | NEFAC Executive Director
justin@nefac.org | 774.244.2365 (phone/text)
The Academy of New England Journalists

Proud sponsor of

The New England First Amendment Institute

The Academy of New England Journalists is a proud sponsor of The New England First Amendment Institute. Congratulations to the 2023 First Amendment Institute fellows, who are among the very best and brightest journalists in our six-state region.

The first-class training provided at the Institute is an investment in New England’s newsrooms. There has never been a more critical time for journalists to dig deep in order to keep those in power honest and accountable to the voters and taxpayers. That’s what organizations like NEFAC and the Academy are all about.

George Geers, Chairman
Academy of New England Journalists

Founded in 1960, the Academy of New England Journalists honors -- with the Yankee Quill Award -- those journalists from the region who have made extraordinary contributions to a free press and the welfare of their communities. Each year the Academy's Selection Committee, which is comprised of past Quill winners and representatives of New England journalism organizations, select recipients of the award.

The Yankee Quill is the highest honor bestowed on journalists in our region, recognizing the lifetime achievement of those who have had a broad influence for good, both inside and outside the newsroom.
About the New England First Amendment Institute

WHAT IS NEFAI?
Founded in 2011, the New England First Amendment Institute provides intensive training for 25 specially selected journalism fellows in the use of freedom of information laws and investigative techniques. In a rich and collegial environment, the fellows interact with acclaimed media lawyers and award-winning journalists to acquire knowledge designed to enhance their watchdog journalism skills. The 2023 Institute will be held at Northeastern University in Boston from Oct. 29 to Oct. 31.

WHO IS IT FOR?
NEFAI is designed for both up-and-coming and veteran print, digital and broadcast journalists working in New England. Applicants should have at least two years of professional news reporting experience and long-term plans to stay within the profession.

WHAT DOES IT COST?
The 25 fellows selected for this year’s Institute will attend at no cost. A limited number of scholarships are available to cover hotel and travel expenses, if necessary to attend.

SUPPORTERS
Primary support for our Institute is generously provided by the following:

NEFAC appreciates the support of all its donors and Sustaining Members. In addition to those named above, we would like to thank the following Leadership Circle donors and Major Supporters for their contributions: The Boston Globe, Paul and Ann Sagan, the Robertson Foundation, Hearst Connecticut Media Group, Genie Gannett for the First Amendment Museum, Linda Pizzuti Henry, the Champa Charitable Foundation Fund, Connecticut Public and WBUR-Boston.

Testimonials

*NEFAC taught me reporting skills I never acquired when working toward a media degree in college. Since attending the Institute, I have filled out more public records requests with more confidence. NEFAC didn’t just teach me core skills. It also taught me how to be a digital-savvy journalist through data analysis and web scraping. These skills are crucial for journalists.*

There is no question that NEFAC training has allowed me to better keep an eye on the public’s business and hold powerful interests to account. NEFAC trainings have given me the confidence to push back on official narratives and shown me strategies I have used to pursue public information that officials have tried to shield from view.

*The Institute opened my eyes to different ways stories can be shared. I also gained a variety of new skills including web scraping data, how to pitch a solid climate change story, and the rights journalist have to public records. For me, attending the classes was instrumental for my growth as an investigative journalist.*
Former NEFAI Fellows

CONNECTICUT
2011
Richard Campbell
The Register Citizen
Jenna Cho
The Day
J.C. Reindl
The Day
Alexandra Sanders
New Haven Register
Julie Stagis
Hartford Courant
2012
Shawn Beals
Hartford Courant
Beau Berman
WTIC-TV
Alexander Goldstein
The Day
Kevin Litten
Republican-American
Eriana-Carlesso
Hartford Courant
Tina Detelj
WTNH
Jessica Glenza
The Register Citizen
Maggie Gordon
Hearst Newspapers
David Iversen
WTNH
Alec Johnson
Republican-American
Viktoria Sundqvist
The Middletown Press
2013
Lisa Backus
The Bristol Press
Jenna Carlesso
Hartford Courant
2014
Jason Bagley
TruthInAdvertising
Kelly Catalfamo
The Day
Jennifer Swift
New Haven Register
Tess Townsend
The Day
2015
Lindsay Boyle
The Day
Suzanne Carlson
Hartford Courant
Susan Haigh
The Associated Press
Esteban Hernandez
New Haven Register
Patrick Skahill
WNPR-Connecticut
2016
Julia Bergman
The Day
Anna Bisaro
New Haven Register
Mikaela Porter
Hartford Courant
2017
Stephen Busemeyer
Hartford Courant
Jill Konopka
WITF-Hartford
Kaitlyn Krasselt
Norwalk Hour
Martha Shanahan
The Day
2018
Skyler Frazer
New Britain Herald
Ben Lambert
New Haven Register
Barry Lytton
The Stamford Advocate
Erica Moser
The Day
2019
Kimberly Drelich
The Day
Meghan Friedmann
Hearst Connecticut
Jo Koeker
Hartford Courant
Justin Papp
Hearst Connecticut
2020
Tatiana Flowers
Hearst Connecticut
Peter Yankowski
Hearst Connecticut
2021
Verónica Del Valle
Hearst Connecticut
Currie Engel
Hearst Connecticut
Alex Puttermann
Hartford Courant
Elizabeth Regan
The Day
2022
Richard Chumney
Hearst Connecticut
Emily DiSalvo
Hearst Connecticut
Walter Smith
Randolph
Connecticut Public
Sten Spinella
The Day
MAINE
2011
Susan Cover
Maine Today
Emily Guerin
The Forecaster
Jesse Nankin
Watchdog New England
Eric Russell
Bangor Daily News
2012
Will Graff
The Forecaster
Lindsay Tice
Sun Journal
2013
Matthew Curren
WGME
David Harry
The Forecaster
2014
Jon Chisos
CBS13/Fox23
Michael Shephard
Kennebec Journal
2015
Jordan Bailey
Courier Publications
Nate Holst
WMTW-Portland
David Sherwood
Maine Center for Public Interest Reporting
2016
Matthew Daigle
Sun Journal
Stephanie Grimnell
The Republican Journal
Kyle Jones
WMTW News
Joshua Moore
Maine Center for Public Interest Reporting
2017
Marina Villeneuve
Associated Press
2018
Abigail Adams
Lincoln County News
Charles Eichacker
Kennebec Journal
Callie Ferguson
The Forecaster
2019
Anne Berleant
Penobscot Bay Press
Joe Glauber
WMTW-Portland
Rachel Ohm
Morning Sentinel
2020
Amanda Post
WGME-Portland
2021
Sarah Craighead
Deaths
Machias Valley
News Observer
Dan Lampariello
WGME-Portland
Patty Wight
Maine Public Radio
2022
Molly Shelly
The Morning Sentinel
Terry Stackhouse
WMTW News 8
Andrea Swidom
Sun Media
2023
Lynda Clancy
Penobscot Bay Pilot
Kaitlyn Budion
Morning Sentinel
Joaquin Contreras
Sun Journal
2024
Emily Duggan
Kennebec Journal
Sawyer Lofts
Bangor Daily News
Kay Neufeld
Sun Media Group
Vanessa Paolella
Sun Journal
2025
MASSACHUSETTS
2011
Keith Eddings
Eagle-Tribune
Jim Haddadin
Arlington Advocate
Laura Hutchinson
WWLP 22News
Lyle Moran
Lowell Sun
David Riley
MetroWest Daily News
Rory Schuler
Taunton Daily
Matthew Stout
The Enterprise
2012
Alex Bloom
The Enterprise
George Brennan
Cape Cod Times
Deirdre Fernandes
The Boston Globe
David Eisenstadler
The Transcript
2013
Sarah Favot
Lowell Sun
Martine Powers
The Boston Globe
Patrick Ronan
Patriot Ledger
Shaun Sutner
Worcester
2014
Ryan Walsh
WWLP
Doug Fraser
Cape Cod Times
Wes Lowery
The Boston Globe
Joshua Miller
The Boston Globe
2015
Shawn Musgrave
MuckRock
Neena Pathak
Schuster Institute
Nellie Sewell
The Patriot Ledger
2016
Schuyler Velasco
Christian Science Monitor
2017
Seam F. Driscoll
Cape Cod Times
Beryl Lipton
MuckRock
Priyanka McCluskey
The Boston Globe
Alexa Mills
2018
The Boston Globe
Alex Ruppenthal
Medford Transcript
Eli Sherman
Waltham News Tribune
2019
Samantha Allen
Worcester
2020
Angela Rowlings
Boston Herald
Bridget Turcotte
The Daily Item
2021
Grant Welker
Worcester
Business Journal
2022
Amanda Burke
Fall River Herald News
Jo Coode
Fall River Herald News
Zoe Greenberg
The Boston Globe
2023
Gal Tziperman Lotan
The Boston Globe
Haven
2024
Orecchio-Egretiz
Berkeley Eagle
2025
Dusty Christensen
Daily Hampshire Gazette
Vernal Coleman
The Boston Globe
Jessica Hill
Cape Cod Times
### Former NEFAI Fellows

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<th>Year</th>
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BOSTON UNIVERSITY'S COLLEGE OF COMMUNICATION IS DELIGHTED TO CONGRATULATE THE NEW ENGLAND FIRST AMENDMENT INSTITUTE'S CLASS OF 2023 AND TO BE A PROUD SUPPORTER OF THE NEW ENGLAND FIRST AMENDMENT COALITION.
Local FOI Workshops

CONNECTICUT
October 18 | 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.
ACLU of Connecticut
765 Asylum Avenue, Hartford

Dan Barrett | ACLU of Connecticut
Mike Savino | American Business Media

Required Viewing: (1) Introduction to Public Records
(2) Public Record Appeals (3) Introduction to Open Meetings (4) How Newsrooms Respond to Executive Session Secrecy

MAINE
October 10 | 3 p.m. to 5 p.m.
Sun Journal
64 Lisbon Street, Suite 201, Lewiston

Judith Meyer | Sun Media Group
Sigmund Schutz | Preti Flaherty

Required Viewing: (1) Introduction to Public Records
(2) Public Record Appeals (3) Introduction to Open Meetings (4) How Newsrooms Respond to Executive Session Secrecy

MASSACHUSETTS
October 18 | 11 a.m. to 12 p.m.
WBUR
890 Commonwealth Avenue, Boston

Peter J. Caruso, Sr. | Caruso & Caruso
Todd Wallack | WBUR-Boston

Required Viewing: (1) Introduction to Public Records
(2) Public Record Appeals (3) Introduction to Open Meetings (4) How Newsrooms Respond to Executive Session Secrecy

NEW HAMPSHIRE
October 16 | 3 p.m. to 5 p.m.
ACLU of New Hampshire
18 Low Avenue, Concord

Gilles Bissonnette | ACLU of New Hampshire
Paul Cuno-Booth | Independent Journalist

Required Viewing: (1) Introduction to Public Records
(2) Public Record Appeals (3) Introduction to Open Meetings (4) How Newsrooms Respond to Executive Session Secrecy

RHODE ISLAND
October 27 | 2 p.m. to 4 p.m.
Oliverio & Marcaccio
30 Romano Vineyard Way, Suite 109, N. Kingstown

Raymond A. Marcaccio | Oliverio & Marcaccio
Eli Sherman | WPRI-Providence

Required Viewing: (1) Introduction to Public Records
(2) Public Record Appeals (3) Introduction to Open Meetings (4) How Newsrooms Respond to Executive Session Secrecy

VERMONT
October 12 | 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.
Seven Days
255 So. Champlain Street, Burlington

Harrison Stark | ACLU of Vermont
Courtney Lamdin | Seven Days

Required Viewing: (1) Introduction to Public Records
(2) Public Record Appeals (3) Introduction to Open Meetings (4) How Newsrooms Respond to Executive Session Secrecy

Introduction to R — Prep Session (Online)

Fellows will have the option of attending either Basic Database Analysis or Introduction to R during the Institute. Those choosing Introduction to R must attend a 60-minute prep session prior to the Institute.

October 16 | 5 p.m. to 6 p.m.
Sarah L. Ryley | The Boston Globe

Introduction: Justin Silverman | New England First Amendment Coalition
NEFAI 2023 Schedule

How to Cover Current AI Issues (Online)

October 17 | 4 p.m. to 5 p.m. | Recording
Garance Burke | Associated Press

Introduction: Emily Sweeney | The Boston Globe

October 29

1:00 Registration [Curry – Room 333]
1:30 - 2:30 Introductions and Icebreakers [Curry – Room 333]
2:30 - 2:45 Break
2:45 - 3:45 Keynote Speaker [Curry – Room 333]
   Eric Meyer | Marion County Record
   Introduction: Gregory V. Sullivan | NEFAC

5:30 - 8:00 Networking and Dinner Program [Tuscan Kitchen, 64 Seaport Blvd., Boston]
NEFAC will provide transportation from the hotel to the restaurant at 5:15 p.m. and from the restaurant to the hotel at 8:30 p.m.

October 30

8:15 - 8:30 Announcements [Curry – Room 333]
8:30 - 9:30 Common Pitfalls with FOI Requests [Curry – Room 333]
   Samantha Hogan | Maine Monitor
   Mark Walker | The New York Times
   Tim White | WPRI-Providence
   Moderator: Robert A. Bertsche | Klaris Law

9:30 - 9:45 Break

9:45 - 11:15 How AI Can Support Local Journalism [Curry – Room 333]
   Margaret Cronan | WCVB-Boston
   Ernest Kung | Associated Press
   Moderator: Robert A. Bertsche | Klaris Law
October 30 (continued)

11:15 - 11:30  Break

11:30 - 1:45  Break-Out Sessions

11:30 - 12:30  Round 1

12:30 - 12:45  Break / Lunch Served

12:45 - 1:45  Round 2

**CLIMATE** [Curry – McLeod 1]

Beth Daley | The Conversation US

**EDUCATION** [Curry – McLeod 2]

Jacqueline Rabe Thomas | Hearst Connecticut Media Group

**HOW TO STAY SAFE WHILE REPORTING** [Curry – Room 342]

Stephanie Sugars | U.S. Press Freedom Tracker

**COURTS AND COPS** [Curry – Room 344]

John R. Ellement | The Boston Globe

**COVERING TRAGEDY** [Curry – Room 346]

Gal Tziperman Lotan | GBH News

*Required Viewing: Interviewing Traumatized Sources*

1:45 - 2:00  Break

2:00 - 3:30  **Intro to Copyright Law and Newsroom Legal Q/A** [Curry – Room 333]

Robert A. Bertsche | Klaris Law
Gregory V. Sullivan | New England First Amendment Coalition

*Introductions: Penelope Overton | Portland Press Herald*

*Required Viewing: (1) How to Respond to a Subpoena (2) How to Avoid Libel in Your Reporting (3) How to Balance Newsgathering with Privacy*

4:45 - 5:45  **Former Fellows Roundtable** [Westin Copley, 10 Huntington Avenue, Boston]

Temi-Tope Adeleye | WJAR-Providence
Emily Duggan | Kennebec Journal
Brad Petrishen | Worcester Telegram & Gazette

*Moderator: Penelope Overton | Portland Press Herald*
October 30 (continued)

5:45 - 8:30 (or later)  Dinner and Presentation [Westin Copley, 10 Huntington Avenue, Boston]

6:15 - 7:15  Keynote Speaker
Sisi Wei | The Markup

Introduction: Penelope Overton | Portland Press Herald

6:45  Dinner

NEFAC will provide transportation from Northeastern University to The Westin Copley at 3:45 p.m.

October 31

8:15 - 8:30  Announcements [Curry – Room 333]

8:30 - 10:00  Effective Sourcing [Curry – Room 333]
Len Besthoff | NBC Connecticut
Cindy Galli | ABC News
Jenifer McKim | GBH News Center for Investigative Reporting

Moderator: Penelope Overton | Portland Press Herald

10:00 - 10:15  Break

10:15 - 12:15  Database Analysis Break-Out Sessions

Suggested Viewing: (1) Data Cleaning 101 (2) Data Cleaning 102 (3) Data Visualization 101

BASIC DATABASE ANALYSIS [Curry – Room 346]
Brooke Williams | Boston University

Required Viewing: (1) Class Introduction and Database Basics

INTRODUCTION TO R [Curry – Room 344]
Sarah Ryley | The Boston Globe

12:15 - 1:45  Lunch [Curry – McLeod Suites]

12:45  Keynote Speaker
Brian Rosenthal | The New York Times, IRE

Introduction: Gregory V. Sullivan | New England First Amendment Coalition
NEFAI 2023 Schedule

October 31 (continued)

1:45 - 2:30  
Photo/Break [Location TBD]

2:30 - 3:30  
Media Break-Out Sessions

  - CONFRONTATIONAL INTERVIEWS [Curry – Room 346]
    Mike Beaudet | Northeastern University, WCVB-Boston
  - WRITING WORKSHOP AND NARRATIVE FLOW [Curry – Room 344]
    Dick Lehr | Boston University

3:30 - 3:45  
Concluding Remarks [Curry Student Center – Room 333]

We would like to acknowledge

THE ROBERTSON FOUNDATION
and
PAUL AND ANN SAGAN

for their generosity and continued support of the First Amendment, the public’s right to know and the education of journalists throughout New England.

Your support makes us a stronger organization and will help this year’s New England First Amendment Institute become the most successful yet.

Thank you.
From telling the stories of Boston's most influential to giving a voice to all in the region—The Boston Globe is honored to be serving our community for over 150 years.
NEFAI 2023 Keynote Speakers

**Eric Meyer**
Marion County Record

Returning to a weekly newspaper he purchased in 1998 with his parents and worked at from fifth grade through college, Eric Meyer is spending his retirement as majority owner, editor, and publisher of the Marion County Record in Marion, Kansas. A veteran of two years at the Bloomington (Illinois) Pantagraph and 18 years at the Milwaukee Journal, where he was news, photo and graphics editor and a Pulitzer Prize nominee for coverage of computer hackers, he spent 26 years as a tenured professor of journalism at the University of Illinois before retiring in 2021. While a professor, he also worked as a consultant to more than 350 online publishers worldwide and was a visiting professor of social media at the Dallas Morning News.

**Sisi Wei**
The Markup

Sisi Wei is the Editor-in-Chief of The Markup. Before joining The Markup, she was Co-Executive Director of OpenNews, where she envisioned and executed transformative initiatives for journalism. As part of her work, Sisi founded the DEI Coalition For Anti-Racist, Equitable, And Just Newsrooms in 2020, and led more than 100 members of the journalism community in co-creating and launching the DEI Coalition Slack space in March 2021. The Slack is dedicated to sharing knowledge and taking concrete action in service of a more anti-racist, equitable, and just journalism industry. She was the Assistant Managing Editor at ProPublica from 2018 to 2020, where she oversaw three editorial teams focused on news apps.

**Brian M. Rosenthal**
The New York Times, IRE

Brian M. Rosenthal is a Pulitzer Prize-winning investigative reporter at The New York Times and the president of Investigative Reporters and Editors (IRE), a nonprofit that trains thousands of journalists around the world. He has worked at The Times for six years, primarily writing in-depth stories about New York. Previously, he was a beat reporter covering local government at The Seattle Times and the Houston Chronicle. He won the 2020 Pulitzer Prize in Investigative Reporting for revealing that leaders of the New York taxi industry had trapped thousands of cabdrivers in predatory loans, and he was a finalist for the 2017 Pulitzer Prize in Public Service for showing Texas was systematically denying special education services to children with disabilities.

NEFAI 2023 Faculty and Other Speakers

**Temi-Tope Adeleye**
WJAR-Providence

tadeleye@sbgtv.com  
† TemiTopeReports

Temi-Tope Adeleye is a multimedia journalist and segment contributor with NBC 10 WJAR in Providence, R.I. Adeleye graduated with a bachelor’s degree in Mass Communications from Western Carolina University and a master’s degree in Journalism from Emerson College. During her time with NBC 10, she has covered everything from crime and fatal fires to health and community involvement.

**Dan Barrett**
ACLU of Connecticut

dbarrett@aclu.org

Dan Barrett is the American Civil Liberties Union of Connecticut’s legal director. His interests in the law include anonymous speech, freedom of movement, mass surveillance, and maximizing democratic control of government through open courts and open records. Prior to coming to the ACLU of Connecticut, Barrett directed the litigation at the ACLU of Vermont for seven years and clerked for the Hon. Janet Bond Arterton of the United States District Court for the District of Connecticut.
Northeastern University is proud to support the New England First Amendment Coalition. We believe in your mission to advance the understanding of free speech, transparency, and public access to government.
Mike Beaudet
WCVB-Boston
m.beaudet@northeastern.edu
Channel_Mike

Mike Beaudet is a journalism professor at Northeastern University in Boston and an investigative reporter at WCVB-TV, Boston’s ABC affiliate. He’s worked in local television news for more than 30 years. Beaudet started his career in radio covering politics at the Massachusetts State House and also made stops at television stations in Bangor, Maine and Manchester, N.H. Before joining WCVB-TV he was an investigative reporter and anchor at WFXT-TV FOX25 in Boston. Beaudet has won numerous awards, including 20 New England Emmys. His most recent Emmy came in 2021 when he was named Outstanding Investigative Reporter. One of the reports in his award-winning composite was produced with Northeastern students in his investigative reporting seminar. Beaudet’s reporting has also been recognized repeatedly by the Associated Press and the Radio Television Digital News Association. Beaudet’s research at Northeastern focuses on the future of video news storytelling and finding new ways to grow the local TV news audience and engage younger viewers both on-air and online using tools like animation.

Robert A. Bertsche
Klaris Law
rob.bertsche@klarislaw.com
rbertsche

Robert A. Bertsche, a long-ago newspaperman and magazine editor, heads the Media and First Amendment practice at Klaris Law in Boston. In his fourth decade as a media lawyer, he handles content review for some of the nation’s most prominent magazines and websites; litigates in federal and state courts on behalf of media entities of all kinds; and plays an “outside general counsel” role to a host of print, online, video and documentary film clients. Bertsche has particular expertise in libel, newsgathering, and copyright law. General counsel to the New England Newspaper and Press Association and a board member of NEFAC, Bertsche is nationally ranked in First Amendment law and litigation by Chambers, and “Best Lawyers” has named him Boston’s First Amendment “Lawyer of the Year” for 2024, among other honors. He also serves as Board President of the startup nonprofit Needham Observer newspaper, launched earlier this year to help fill a news desert that Gannett left behind. Bertsche graduated, many moons ago, from Wesleyan University and Harvard Law School.

Len Besthoff
NBC Connecticut
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lenbe

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Jacqueline Rabe Thomas is an investigative reporter with Hearst Connecticut Media. She has also been an investigative reporter with Connecticut Public’s Accountability Project, a housing and education reporter with The Connecticut Mirror, and a fellow with ProPublica. A recent investigation she led uncovered undocumented immigrants being trapped in the hospital despite being healthy enough to leave. Shortly after that story was published, the governor changed the policy and hundreds of immigrants returned home. After her investigation into the air quality in schools during the pandemic, the governor reversed course and dedicated millions in state spending for ventilation upgrades. A series about youth crime during the pandemic — and how a backlog of court cases was preventing children from getting connected to help — resulted in the governor announcing the day after the story was published that more judges would be hired and cases processed faster. Her team at Connecticut Public recently won a national Sigma Delta Chi award for fact checking the claims being made around youth crime and a Public Media Journalists Association award for Best Continuing Coverage of special education during the pandemic.

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Sarah L. Ryley is an investigative and data journalist. Before joining the Globe in 2021, she had been a journalist in New York for 15 years. More recently, she covered the coronavirus pandemic as a freelancer for the New York Times Opinion video team, law enforcement’s failure to solve shootings for The Trace, and was an investigative reporter and projects editor primarily focused on courts and policing for the New York Daily News. Her work has led to dozens of laws and other reforms, played a significant role in dismantling “broken windows” policing in New York City, and helped free a man from prison, and has won or was named a finalist in more than two-dozen awards. Her series on the NYPD’s abuse of eviction laws, done in partnership with the Daily News and ProPublica, was the recipient of the 2017 Pulitzer Prize for Public Service. She was born and raised in the Midwest and studied journalism at Wayne State University in Detroit.

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Eli Sherman is an Emmy and Murrow award-winning journalist. He joined the 12 News investigative unit in 2019, having previously worked as an investigative reporter for GateHouse Media. He’s also covered economics for Providence Business News and worked as a metro reporter for the Waltham News Tribune. Sherman was part of the 12 News team to win a national Edward R. Murrow award for overall excellence in 2023. He’s also the recipient of a New England Emmy and multiple regional Edward R. Murrow awards for investigative journalism.

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We are dedicated to fostering an environment where **diverse voices** are heard and respected, and where **facts and truth** are upheld as the cornerstones of informed decision-making.

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Jamie Costa knew she wanted to be a journalist when she was 17 years old. Already an avid reader and writer, she took a journalism class on a whim during her junior year of high school and never looked back. A 2018 graduate of Roger Williams University, she studied both Journalism and Spanish and earned a dual degree. As both a freshman and a senior, she traveled to Chile and the Dominican Republic on study abroad trips where she reported on social justice issues throughout the countries and covered the controversial 2016 Presidential Election as part of her studies. She began her career with the Cortland Standard as a city government, crime and law enforcement reporter in the winter of 2021 in upstate New York and shortly left for a position with her hometown paper, the Sandwich Enterprise, that fall. Bored by weekly town reporting, she sought a job with the Concord Monitor in 2022 and was quickly accepted into the high profile position covering the capital city as a city government, crime and law enforcement reporter with a focus on investigative journalism. In 2022, Costa earned third place as a social justice reporter as part of the New England Newspaper & Press Association local newspaper competition and hopes to grow her career as an investigative journalist in the city of Concord. Growing up on Cape Cod, she has a love for all things outdoors, especially on the water and even more so when she can involve her dog. She spends her downtime binging true crime and historical fiction novels, spending time with friends and cooking.

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Corey McDonald is a writer and reporter contributing to the Vermont Community Newspaper Group, which publishes The Stowe Reporter, The News & Citizen, The Other Paper, The Shelburne News and The Citizen. He was previously based in New Jersey, where for four years he covered a variety of beats including politics, government and policy, crime, education and more for The Jersey Journal, The Newark-Star Ledger, N.J.com, and Hudson County View. He won several New Jersey Press Association awards during his time there, including First Place for Best News Writing Portfolio and Second Place for the Robert P. Kelly Award for New Journalists. Originally from New Jersey, McDonald graduated cum laude from West Virginia University’s Reed College of Media in 2016 with a B.S. in Journalism and a Minor in Communications. He lives in Vermont with his partner Sam and their dog Willow.

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Stella Lorence is a general assignment reporter at the Woonsocket Call in northern Rhode Island and a board member for the New England chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists. She is currently a NEFAC mentee of The Public’s Radio reporter Ian Donnis. She graduated with a journalism degree from Boston University, where she got her first exposure to both investigative reporting and NEFAC through excellent mentors, including Maggie Mulvihill. In Woonsocket, she has investigated and reported on issues including malfunctions at the regional wastewater treatment plant, corruption at the public housing authority and trouble with the city’s financial audit. Lorence is also a proud native of the San Francisco Bay Area.

Alexandra Leslie
WPRI-Providence

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Alexandra Leslie is an investigative reporter for WPRI 12’s award-winning Target 12 team. While she only joined the investigative unit in May 2023, she has been with the station since 2018. She is currently tasked with covering the Providence beat which includes the state-run school department, a new mayor, a new police chief, and much more. Leslie also enjoys covering crime and courts. In 2021, she was honored as one of the Rhode Island Foundation’s COVID heroes for her reporting during the pandemic. Prior to joining WPRI 12, she was a reporter, producer, and anchor for WVNY/WFFI in Burlington, Vt. She is a 2014 graduate of the Roy H. Park School of Communications at Ithaca College where she earned a degree in Journalism. Leslie is originally from North Reading, Mass. She lives in Pawtucket, R.I. with her fiancé, Stephen, and their dog, Eddie.

Zara Norman
Bangor Daily News

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Born and raised in the UK, Zara Norman moved to New England in 2018 to attend Brown University in Rhode Island. There, she took classes in journalism while majoring in American Legal History and Ancient Greek. She also managed a comedy publication and interned with The Boston Globe’s Rhode Island bureau. After graduating, she joined the Morning Sentinel in Waterville, Maine where she ran the gamut on 14 communities in Somerset County as a general assignment reporter. She joined the Bangor Daily News in 2023.

Hunter Oberst
The Keene Sentinel

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Hunter Oberst is the city government and housing reporter at The Keene Sentinel, a publication based in Keene, New Hampshire. Oberst is a Granite State native, having grown up in Alstead, about 18 miles north of where he currently lives and works. In his final semester at Keene State College, before graduating in spring of 2022, Oberst was fortunate enough to land a general assignment reporting internship at The Sentinel and joined the newsroom full time after he got his degree. In Oberst’s current role, he aims to provide readers with a thorough and consistent source of information for what’s going on at Keene’s City Hall. He also keep tabs on the trends in New Hampshire’s housing market and strives to identify ways communities are trying to increase housing supply.

Kathleen O’Brien
Bangor Daily News

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Kathleen O’Brien was born and raised in Portland, Maine and earned a degree in Communications and Journalism from Marist College in Poughkeepsie, New York. She began her print journalism career in 2019 at The Times Record, a daily newspaper based in Brunswick, Maine where she covered the city of Bath and Bath Iron Works, a major shipyard known for building Navy destroyers. In 2022, O’Brien joined the Bangor Daily News, a daily newspaper based in Bangor, Maine, the state’s third largest city. She primarily covers the Bangor City Council and the Bangor School Department as well as homelessness and the ongoing opioid crisis.

Peter O’Neil
Needham Observer

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After a near 40-year hiatus, Peter O’Neil returned to journalism in the spring of 2023 as the founding Executive Editor of the Needham Observer. A free, independent, nonprofit news service launched and operated by a volunteer group of journalists and engaged community members, the

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Observer (needhamobserver.com) provides news and features via a weekly newsletter and website that serves the 33,000 residents of Needham, a near suburb of Boston. His last newspaper role had been a four-year tenure as a general assignment reporter at a suburban daily, the Malden Evening News, where he worked from 1980-84. He had previously worked as a sports reporter at another suburban daily, the Westfield Evening News in western Massachusetts, his first job after his graduation from Boston College in 1979. While attending BC, he had worked as a sports correspondent for the Boston Globe from 1977-79 where he mostly covered high school sports. The 40-year gap between leaving journalism and helping launch the Observer was spent in several jobs in both the public and private sectors, all with the common element of providing research and writing services. This included time as a Congressional aide, public information officer for UMass Amherst and a state environmental agency, and finally as a research manager for an institutional investment research firm before ‘retiring.’ He is a 30-year resident of Needham where he is a member of Town Meeting and formerly served as Chair of the Special Education Parents Advisory Council.

**Olivia Richardson**
**New Hampshire Public Radio**

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Olivia Richardson has reported for WUWM in Milwaukee where she was the Eric Von Fellow. She started in journalism at WBEZ in Chicago, where she contributed stories about the local house music scene and the city’s role in the Underground Railroad. She also has extensive podcast production experience, including for The Double Shift.

**Katy Savage**
**The Mountain Times**

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Katy Savage is an award-winning reporter based in Vermont. She has more than 10 years of experience working in daily, weekly and digital news organizations as both an editor and reporter. She graduated from the University of Vermont and shortly after started freelancing at the Vermont Standard, where she got her introduction to news writing. She is now the editor at the Mountain Times.

**Julian E.J. Sorapuru**
**The Boston Globe**

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Julian E.J. Sorapuru is the inaugural Development Fellow at The Boston Globe, where he rotates onto different teams every few months. Prior to joining the Globe, he interned at KQED, POLITICO and The Times-Picayune in his hometown of New Orleans. Sorapuru was the first and only Black male Editor-in-Chief in the history of the University of San Francisco’s student newspaper, the San Francisco Foghorn.

**Megan Stewart**
**Burlington Free Press**

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Megan Stewart is the government accountability reporter for the Burlington Free Press in Burlington, Vermont. A recent Oregon transplant, she previously worked as a general assignment reporter for the Newberg Graphic and the Forest Grove News-Times, notably covering the unconstitutional Black Lives Matter and Pride flag ban in Newberg schools that made national headlines. Possessing a B.A. in Journalism and Psychology from George Fox University, Stewart’s investigative passions lie in researching religious and political extremism, social injustice and government corruption. When she’s not working, she enjoys reading, hiking and talking at her two cats, Nyx and Gingersnap.

**Jared Weber**
**The Stamford Advocate**

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Jared Weber writes about growth, development and economic mobility for The Stamford Advocate in Stamford, Connecticut. He came to The Advocate in 2023 from the Lansing State Journal, where he covered breaking news in Michigan’s capital. Before then, he studied journalism and global studies at his hometown college — the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill — graduating in the early months of the pandemic. Outside of work, they can often be found playing some type of racket sport, being awestruck about living so close to New York City, listening to music or meeting the demands of their cat Mitty. They are also trying their hand at writing fiction and watching Gilmore Girls to tap into the Connecticut spirit.
The New England First Amendment Coalition is pleased to announce its first class of student journalism fellows. With the support of the Rhode Island Foundation, the coalition accepted this year a group of student journalists to attend along with 25 professional reporters, editors and producers from newsrooms throughout New England. The students were all nominated by faculty members at their respective schools.

Susan Azizi
Salve Regina University
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Susan Azizi is from Afghanistan and currently a transfer student at Salve Regina University majoring in English, communication, and media. Previously, Azizi was a third-year Journalism and Mass Communication student at the American University of Central Asia (AUCA) in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan. During her studies there, she was a member of the AUCA Media Fellowship Program which was a comprehensive program on different practical trainings for students from different majors and backgrounds. As a starter in the media field, capitalizing from the training on podcasting she received, Azizi created a podcast called Home, Away from Home, on the stories of Afghan refugees, their struggles, and joys. She also worked on a documentary named “Surviving the Taliban” where she told the story of being stuck in Afghanistan while the Taliban took power in August 2021.

Lauren Drapeau
University of Rhode Island
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Lauren Drapeau is a junior journalism student at the University of Rhode Island. Drapeau is originally from North Smithfield, R.I. where she discovered a passion for writing and numbers. She has fully immersed herself in campus life, joining the school newspaper and working up to the position of Entertainment Editor. When Drapeau is not covering or pitching stories for the school newspaper, she is spending time with loved ones, journaling, or pursuing new opportunities to further her career. Drapeau works at the Digital Research and Writing Center on campus where she teaches other students how to use programs for multimodal projects, such as Adobe Illustrator, InDesign or Premiere Rush.

Noble Brigham
Brown University
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Noble Brigham is a senior journalism student at Brown University. He writes investigative stories regularly for The Providence Journal and interned at The Idaho Statesman as a general assignment news reporter on the accountability team. In the summer of 2022, he interned at The Virginian-Pilot as a city hall reporter. His favorite projects include a recent story for The Journal about how local courts in Rhode Island often do not use credentialed language interpreters, potentially violating federal law; a Journal story about Rhode Island’s unclaimed bodies burial program; and a story he wrote at The Statesman about Idaho’s decision not to accept $15 million in federal funding for food insecure students when two state agencies couldn’t figure out how to work together.

Tyler Jackman
Rhode Island College
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Tyler Jackman is from West Warwick, Rhode Island and is a senior at Rhode Island College, finishing his B.A. in Communications. Jackman is also the Managing Editor of The Anchor, Rhode Island College’s independent student newspaper. He serves as the Social Media Manager for Anchor TV, Rhode Island College’s student-run TV station. Journalism and media studies as a whole have always excited him because he sees the free media as a bulwark of an open and democratic society, and he strives to be a part of that and help advocate for those who need a voice. Beyond journalism, Jackman is an avant-garde music and art fanatic, and enjoys cycling and exploring his local community in Rhode Island.

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In big ways and small ways, Hearst Connecticut Media Group works each day to better our towns, cities and our state - by producing journalism that makes a difference.
The most important thing you can do while you’re here is to ensure the world will be better when you’re not.

Proud to support the work of the New England First Amendment Coalition