

SESSION DESCRIPTIONS

State of the Media

What are the challenges, bright moments, existential threats?

Kyle Clark, Dana Coffield, Lee Ann Colacioppo, Ryan Warner.

Moderator: Donna Bryson

The conference kicks off with what is expected to be a lively discussion on challenges facing the media today, including fading trust in journalists in an increasingly polarized climate, competition for people's time and attention from social media and other sources of information, and the struggle to find sustainable financial models for both new and old media. Colorado Press Women member Donna Bryson, an author and a national affairs editor for Reuters, will moderate a panel featuring 9News (NBC) anchor Kyle Clark, Colorado Sun editor and co-founder Dana Coffield, Denver Post editor Lee Ann Colacioppo and Colorado Public Radio host Ryan Warner. Attendees will have an opportunity to put questions to the panelists.

Science Storytelling Workshop

How to communicate about climate change and other "hot topics"

Camille Bergin, Cassie Lee

This workshop will cover the modern challenges of science and technical journalism, with a focus on the global space industry and our changing planet. We'll address breaking through the noise, crafting compelling leads and narratives, making complex and technical information engaging and approachable, and addressing misinformation. Programming will start with a fireside chat featuring hot topics in the space industry, including the stories that have gone viral for their intersection with politics and popular culture; the messy subject of climate; and examples of spectacular failures. Following, hosts @TheGalacticGal Camille Bergin and Open Geospatial Consortium chief innovation officer Cassie Lee will engage attendees for a workshop that unpacks the specific challenges of scientific and technical storytelling for a variety of audiences.

SESSION DESCRIPTIONS

Women in the Newsroom

Stepping into leadership roles, overcoming inequality

Elizabeth Pond, Maeve Condon

Recent journalism graduate Elizabeth Pond (now a Durango [Colorado] Herald staff writer) will share research from her honors thesis on the topic of women and equality in newsrooms. She talked to women in the news media from across the country during the past year then created podcasts of their voices. Maeve Condon, managing editor of Rocky Mountain Community Radio, will discuss Aspen Public Radio's launch of the Women's Desk, which challenges the fact men remain the most-quoted sources within traditional media; the desk is changing that. Condon will discuss gender issues as she sees them. The audience will be encouraged to share their perspectives and experiences, as well.

Beating Burnout

A smarter approach to work-from-home and life balance

Emily Guerra

Working from home should give you more freedom—not make you feel like you're always on. But without clear boundaries and mindful strategies, work can creep into every part of your life, leading to guilt, exhaustion, and burnout. And balance? That can feel impossible. So in this talk, life coach Emily Guerra shares a neuroscience-backed approach to staying productive without sacrificing your well-being or balance. Attendees will walk away with powerful mindset shifts and simple, actionable strategies to create real work-life balance and sustainable routines so they can thrive at work and in life, without the constant overwhelm.

SESSION DESCRIPTIONS

Small Media, Big Impact

The importance of local news, focused on community issues

Patti Brown, Vicky Collins, Deborah Martinez Martinez.

Moderator: Linda Shapley

As local newsrooms contend with limited resources, audience fragmentation and the demand for relevant reporting, three accomplished leaders of community journalism outlets will examine how they have risen to meet those needs. Estes Valley Voice editor and publisher Patti Brown, Bucket List Community Cafe publisher Vicky Collins, and La Cucaracha News business manager and editor Deborah Martinez Martinez will discuss their experiences as well as their strategies for building community trust, sustaining operations and forming partnerships that expand impact. This timely conversation, moderated by CPW member Linda Shapley, will underscore how these women are at the forefront of reshaping local journalism, even in a time of disruption, and driving meaningful change.

Keynote

Eating and Drinking with Buffalo Bill

Steve Friesen

Author and museum curator Steve Friesen explores an unfamiliar side of a familiar character in American history, William F. “Buffalo Bill” Cody: the evolving role of eating and drinking in his life, starting with his culinary roots during his youth out West in the 1850s. Buffalo Bill discovered gourmet dining while leading buffalo-hunting expeditions and scouting. As his fame increased, so did Cody’s desire and opportunities for fine dining at some of the best restaurants in the country. When he created his Wild West Show in 1883, he introduced his diverse cast of employees to dining that equaled America’s best restaurants. Comfortable eating around a campfire on the plains or at Delmonico’s in New York City, he also dined with leading celebrities of his day.

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Crisis Communications

Addressing natural disasters, cyber attacks, school shootings, pandemics and more

Jacki Kelley, Dave Perry, Mark Techmeyer. Moderator: Marilyn Saltzman

Floods in Texas, fires in Colorado, school shootings, pandemics, ICE raids. How do the media and PIOs work together during a crisis and what unique challenges does each face? Three seasoned professionals, Aurora (Colo.) journalist and publisher Dave Perry, and Jefferson County (Colo.) Sheriff's Department public information officers Mark Techmeyer and Jacki Kelley will reveal the lessons they have learned over the years. Moderated by former Jefferson County Public Schools communications manager Marilyn Saltzman, the trio will discuss how to respond when timing is critical and how to handle rumors, Monday-morning quarterbacks and conspiracy theories. The panel will also address promoting transparency while protecting victims.

Nonprofit News Models

Are they working for owners, reporters, funders, readers?

Melanie Asmar, Tina Griego, Nathan Schneider. Moderator: Laura Frank

Newspapers are in a notable decline, and many are now owned by firms focused on profit maximization and cost-cutting. The result is reduced local news coverage, staff shortages and audience disengagement. Nonprofit news media outlets, which operate with a public service mission, have stepped into this void, providing communities with critical coverage of local issues, particularly in areas like investigative reporting and political coverage. They rely on diverse funding sources, including grants, donations, and employee ownership, and face challenges balancing journalistic mission with financial sustainability. Laura Frank, director of Colorado News Collaborative, will lead a discussion with Chalkbeat Colorado bureau chief Melanie Asmar, ProPublica reporter Tina Griego and University of Colorado researcher Nathan Schneider in a discussion about these challenges, successes and what's ahead.

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Beyond Bias

Creating a media-savvy public

Kelly Jones-Wagy, Vanessa Otero

In these days of “alternative facts,” citizen journalists and social media as a major news source, it’s more critical than ever to have a media literate citizenry. Media Bias Chart® creator Vanessa Otero, decorated teacher Kelly Jones-Wagy, will address what teachers are doing to promote media literacy among high school students and how Ad Fontes supports media literacy. Panelists will discuss the challenges and opportunities of ensuring a media-savvy public and how professional journalists can help promote this effort.

PR with a Purpose

Strategies for engaging diverse audiences

Jolene Fisher, Bryn Webster

Public relations practitioners are expected to know how to communicate to build relationships with any audience their client needs to reach. This panel explores strategies and tactics for doing this in today’s world of communication channel complexity. The panel taps the knowledge of Jolene Fisher, PhD, who teaches PR at the University of Colorado Boulder, researches using digital games for social change and brings international nonprofit experience to the table. Balancing her are two PR agency pros with different approaches. Rebecca Brooks used personality and media contacts to build national fame for clients of her New York City agency. Bryn Webster is the wiz for new technology for a Denver PR agency that works with everything from Fortune 500 companies to governments and nonprofits.

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President's Roundtable

A Glimpse of the Colorado Magazine Scene

Tina Eichner, Kathi McCarty, Elizabeth Meheret-Ab. Moderator: Julie Campbell

Representatives from three Colorado magazines. Tina Eichner, owner, publisher and editor of Our Broomfield; Kathi McCarty, editor and founder of Home Zone Magazine; and Elizabeth Meheret-Ab, digital editor for Colorado Homes & Lifestyles, will talk about the rewards and challenges of magazine publishing; print vs. digital; the genesis of their publications; their career paths and more with NFPW President and retired writer, editor and author, Julie Campbell.

Boost Your Website's Impact

Intro to user-experience (UX)

Julia Laser, Amy Vaughn Liles, Kelly Scott Raisley

This UX workshop equips participants with practical tools to boost their website's impact through user-centered design and clear, strategic content. You'll learn how to apply core UX principles like hierarchy, accessibility, and usability, alongside web writing best practices such as effective intros, content chunking, smart linking, and SEO. By combining design thinking with UX research insights, participants will walk away with actionable techniques to make their sites more intuitive, engaging, and impactful.

When Facts Are Fiction

Upholding journalistic standards in a challenging media environment

Angelica Kalika, Liz Skewes, Bob Steele. Moderator: Lee Anne Peck

Three speakers who have taught or currently teach and/or written about media ethics will examine challenges covering political misinformation and disinformation coming from the White House administration over the past decades. Falsehoods via all forms of media have been spread and endanger both democracy and credible journalism. Problems and possible solutions will be discussed.

SESSION DESCRIPTIONS

Scribere Ex Machina

How emerging journalists are using AI-supported writing

Isabel Guzman, Sydney McGarr Moderator: Stacy Feldman

This student-led breakout session will explore how writers can use generative AI to support, rather than replace, the human creative process. Participants will discuss best practices for using AI as a tool for brainstorming, research, editing, and content refinement while maintaining an authentic voice and avoiding plagiarism. The conversation will highlight the risks of AI-supported writing, like inaccurate information or over reliance on AI tools or, and will invite participants to share real-world experiences, tips, and perspectives. The session will examine how communicators can preserve curiosity, creativity, and trust as technology evolves, especially for those entering the journalism and communications fields in a landscape of rapidly shifting technology.

Pitching Your Story

Succeed in placing your stories across media with expert advice

Regina Griego, Deb Hurley Brobst, Chandra Thomas Whitfield

You have a brilliant idea for story, but don't know how to go about getting it into print or broadcast. What are some tried and true techniques to get your story published? Hear from author Regina Griego, broadcast journalist Chandra Thomas Whitfield and newspaper editor Deb Hurley Brobst about proven methods to unearth creative, compelling story ideas and how to successfully pitch them. Learn how editors evaluate pitches that they receive from freelance writers, authors and/or public relations professionals.

SESSION DESCRIPTIONS

Freedom of Information vs Censorship

Who is censoring whom? Who decides?

Eric Sondermann, Steve Zansberg

Whose rights are violated when books are pulled from library shelves, information is scrubbed from government websites and access to public documents are denied? Eric Sondermann, a veteran news analyst for the Colorado politics, and Steve Zansberg, a media-rights attorney on the board of the Colorado Freedom of Information Coalition and the ACLU of Denver, will discuss such topics as: What is free speech, and what is hate speech, and who gets to say? What is censorship, and what is information suppression and is there a difference? What are the circumstances, if any, in which the government has a role in the suppression of protected speech?

CV/Portfolio Review

A critique by award-winning professionals

Rebecca Brooks, Donna Bryson, Sylvia Lamb, Helen Richardson

Four award-winning professionals bring their experience, expertise and empathy to reviewing the CVs, clips and portfolios of people starting their careers in or looking for new opportunities in communications and journalism during the conference. Rebecca Brooks, president and founder of The Brooks Group, a public relations agency known for promoting and developing of some of today's most successful lifestyle personalities, including Rachael Ray and Guy Fieri. Donna Bryson was a foreign correspondent in Africa, Asia and Europe for The Associated Press for nearly two decades, has published two nonfiction books, and now is a Denver-based national affairs editor for Reuters. Sylvia Lambe was a BBC producer with more than 20 years of experience on London arts and entertainment shows before founding Lambe PR after relocating from the UK to Colorado in 2017. Helen H. Richardson has worked as a staff photographer for The Denver Post since 1992. Her assignments have included covering the 9/11 terrorist attacks, the aftermath of the 2004-05 Christmas tsunami in Indonesia and Thailand, and two Olympic Games.