

Meet Cohort XV

Shelly Zeller, Publisher/Editor Alden Advance

Shelly Zeller acted as the Editor of the Alden Advance for 10 years, before purchasing the business on January 1st, 2019. Now Zeller is not only the editor, but the owner, publisher, photographer, writer, bookkeeper and everything else that goes into the newspaper—she's the sole employee.

Zeller's dedication to journalism began when she attended Simpson College in Indianola, Iowa, and majored in Journalism and Mass Communications, as well as Marketing. While there, she was the Editor of the college newspaper, The Simpsonian, she was the second junior to ever hold this position since the college was founded in 1860. This paper is the Nation's Oldest Continuously Published Student Newspaper.

Now, Zeller owns and runs the Alden Advance, which is Freeborn County's Oldest Continuously Published Newspaper!

Besides the love of print, Zeller is a part of her family farm as well as her fiance's farm, enjoying her time driving semi and hauling grain, corn and soybeans, to and from both farms.

Along with devoting every minute she can to her eight-year-old daughter, Zeller enjoys time with a blended family of now five children, traveling and spending time with her numerous pets, especially her basset hound.



Mike Dalton, Publisher/Editor Cannon Falls Beacon



Mike Dalton is a fifth-generation newspaper editor/publisher, taking over the reins from his father Dick Dalton in 2013. The Cannon Falls Beacon has been published continuously since 1876 and has been in the Dalton family since 1880.

He is currently a member of the Minnesota Newspaper Association board of directors and serves as its past president. He is an E & P alum and firmly believes that community newspapers are the lifeblood of the towns they serve.

Dalton and his wife Mary have two children, Ethan (24) and Emma (19). Dick Dalton became editor of the newspaper in the mid-1960s and continued in that position until 2013. His wife Kathy worked at the newspaper for 30 years before retiring in 2013.

**Chris Knight, Publisher
Mesabi Daily News (Virginia)**

Chris Knight has served as the Regional President of Adams Publishing Group's Northern Minnesota and Northern Wisconsin regions since March 2014. He has more than 25 years experience in advertising sales and management. In addition, he is the Publisher of the Mesabi Daily News in Virginia and the Hibbing Daily Tribune.

Chris also serves as the Vice President of the Board of Directors for the Minnesota Newspaper Association and the Minnesota News Media Institute. He is a member of the Mesabi Range College Alumni Association's Board of Directors, as well as several other local organizations. Knight resides in Virginia, with his wife, Marci, and their Golden Retriever, Vinnie.



**Jerry Burnes, Editor
Mesabi Daily News (Virginia)**



Jerry Burnes is the editor of the Mesabi Daily News, Hibbing Daily Tribune and Chisholm Tribune Press on Minnesota's Iron Range, a role he assumed in 2019.

Before being named editor of the northern Minnesota group, he was the managing editor of the Mesabi Daily News beginning in 2015. Jerry previously worked as the editor of the Williston Herald in Williston, North Dakota from 2012-2015 where he covered the Bakken oil boom and its impact on the local community and state. Prior to that he was a reporter at the Free Press Newspapers based in Wilmington, Illinois, from 2009-2010.

In 2009, Jerry received his Bachelor of Arts degree in journalism from Northern Illinois University. In 2012, he received a Master of Arts in communication studies and public relations from Northern Illinois University.

Jerry has earned several awards for his writing, editorials and photography from the Illinois, North Dakota and Minnesota press associations.

He currently lives in Eveleth, Minnesota with his wife, two adoptive children, one foster child and two dogs.

**Lisa Drafall, Publisher
Redwood Gazette (Redwood Falls)**



Lisa Drafall is the Senior Group Publisher of 13 publications throughout Minnesota and North Dakota. She also works as the direct publisher of the Sleepy Eye Herald, the Redwood Gazette, the Wabasso Standard, and the St. James Plaindealer. Lisa has a Master's Degree in Business and has worked in the media industry for 20 years.

Throughout her career, Lisa has worked in small and large markets, for newspaper, television, and radio. She also has a strong background in digital marketing, sales, and accounting.

Lisa also has a love of theater and the performing arts! For 15 years Lisa was a member and director of a popular improv group and was voted Redding, California's funniest comedian twice. She moved to Minnesota 5 years ago and has enjoyed spending more time with her kids, Gabriel (16) and Paris (15).

**Deborah Moldaschel, Editor
Sleepy Eye Herald Dispatch**

Deb Moldaschel has been the Editor of the Sleepy Eye Herald-Dispatch, a weekly newspaper in south-central Minnesota, since 2015. Deb has lived in Sleepy Eye since she was in first grade—many years ago. Her career path has included a variety of positions, mostly related to public relations for community organizations or businesses.

Deb earned a bachelor's degree in Business Administration, with a minor in non-teaching English, from Minnesota State University, Mankato, as a “non-traditional student.” (That's what they call grown ups who go back to college.) Deb's only qualification to write and edit the local newspaper is a lifelong love of reading newspapers, along with an affinity for writing, and spelling and grammar skills.

Deb has an interest in public policy, local government (and state and national government—but we can't do everything at a small-town newspaper.) Deb is a naturally nosy person who always wants to know “what's going on.” Her philosophy is, if you want to know something, ask the person who has the answer—they will either answer or tell you why they can't.

Deb and her husband, Tom, have two adult daughters and five grandchildren. These perfect daughters had the good sense to settle in the same small community, only an hour away from Sleepy Eye.



**Sean Ellertson, Editor
St. James Plaindealer**



Sean is a recent graduate of Franklin Pierce University with a degree in Sports Media. Since 2018, he has been a staff writer and editor for the St. James Plaindealer covering a variety of events, including local high school sports, community events and feature writing, which has helped him create many strong connections within the community.

Being a Massachusetts native, he has been a sports fan his entire life and knew he wanted a career in sports media ever since he was a kid. In college, Sean wrote for the school newspaper and was fortunate to broadcast for four years. With his experiences, he was able to secure a position with the Cotuit Kettleers in the Cape Cod Baseball League.

**Jessica Jensen, Editor
Westbrook Sentinel/Tribune**

I am currently the managing editor for three weekly papers - Lyon County Reporter, West Lyon Herald and Sioux County Index papers at New Century Press.

I started as a fill-in in March 2013 when the then editor was slated to go on maternity leave after my position with a financial services company was eliminated. The job became full-time when the editor did not return and has since evolved to include overseeing staff and content for three papers as well as covering community events, taking sports pictures and writing stories.

My interest in the field started in high school when I was the editor of the school newspaper and yearbook. At the University of Northern Iowa, I studied communications-public relations and journalism and created and wrote publications for the study abroad program. I was also involved in the school's chapter of Public Relations Student Society of America, contributing to the chapter's newsletter and working on a number of local campaigns.



In the community, I have been involved in a number of organizations and projects. I currently teach catechism to fifth graders at church, serve on the after-prom committee at the high school and help with our region's Special Olympics. I live in Rock Rapids with my husband, Brian, a funeral director, and our three kids. Nolan is a senior, Tatum is a sophomore and Lainee is in 8th grade. In our free time we enjoy following a variety of sports and teams, camping, and traveling to visit family and friends.