



Photo of the Month

Marshall Independent Photographer Rae Kruger captured a rescuer emerges from a school bus after a crash involving two other vehicles which claimed the lives of four students on the bus Feb. 19, 2008 near Cottonwood, Minn. She collected \$100 for submitting the top member photograph in February.

Dates to Remember:

- Minnesota Associated Press Association Awards Banquet Friday, June 6, at The Depot Minneapolis



Helen Burke, left, presents the Minnesota Coalition on Government Information's 2008 Freedom of Information award to St. Paul, Minn., correspondent Brian Bakst, center, and newswoman Martiga Lohn, right, Friday, March 14 in Minneapolis. Bakst and Lohn were honored for work including investigative stories on the collapse of the Minneapolis freeway bridge. (AP Photo/Jim Mone)

Bakst and Lohn receive 2008 FOI Award

Minnesota AP's strong commitment to the public's right to know was recognized in March when two staff members, Brian Bakst and Martiga Lohn, won the annual FOI award given by the Minnesota Coalition of Government Information.

Bakst and Lohn are based in St. Paul, covering state government and politics. Both have made aggressive use of FOI tools in recent years, and never more so than in the wake of the Minneapolis bridge collapse. The pair filed numerous stories in the past seven months based on documents obtained through FOI. Many stories spotlighted the state's inspections and maintenance of the bridge; others delved into the state's response to the disaster itself.

The bridge wasn't the only area of FOI activity. Lohn used data requests to help her document possible conflicts of interest for members of a state committee that recommends drugs used in Medicaid programs for the poor and disabled – work that directly led to changes in the committee's policy.

Bakst and Lohn are far from the only Minnesota AP staffers making use of FOI. The bureau has held training sessions over the years in how to effectively pursue public data, and is always on the lookout for situations where data requests may be necessary to get the full story.

Regionalizing AP

AP has begun the process of regionalizing its news operations to improve service and get members news they need instantly, complete with images, sound and video.

The first of four regional desks will be located in Atlanta, which will be responsible for a 13-state South region and slated to be up and running by the end of April. That desk will be followed by development of three other regional desks, starting with the East desk to be located in Philadelphia. Locations for the Central and West desks have not been determined but all four regional desks are scheduled to be in operation by the end of 2009.

Regionalization is about getting information to members more quickly. It's about building a core team of editors focused on providing a range of multimedia content that is more relevant locally, regionally, nationally and internationally.

The overall AP staff will not be increased or reduced by regionalization. AP is moving editing and filing duties out of bureaus and into these regional centers. This will allow AP to increase the speed, quality and range of material provided to members – and to focus our bureau staff on reporting.

At the same time, many editing duties will be moved outside of New York to put them closer to reporters and editors in the bureaus. Editors filing national stories from these regional desks will be more familiar with local and regional issues that affect those stories. All of our formats will work together more closely than ever. Video, multimedia and photo coordinators will operate under one regional editor, improving coordination and cooperation.

As the AP evolves to help members meet the challenges of this new era, our commitment to covering breaking news at the state, national and international level remains unchanged.

For more information, visit <http://www.ap.org/pages/about/pressreleases/preleaseindex.html>.



Chief of Bureau Dave Pyle presents Karren Mills with a Certificate of Recognition for her 40 years with The Associated Press in Minneapolis during her retirement party March 5.

Staff Work

As an expected Delta-Northwest merger bogged down over pilot seniority issues, Minneapolis business writer **Josh Freed** teamed with Atlanta biz writer Harry Weber and Minneapolis newsman **Chris Williams** for a story explaining why it was so difficult to merge the two airlines' pilot lists. ... **Freed** also had a story explaining why Northwest CEO Doug Steenland's future role in a merged company appeared to be holding up talks. ... **Elizabeth Dunbar** was first to report that victims of the 2005 Red Lake school shooting were filing new lawsuits, this time targeting a company hired to develop a crisis plan for the school. ... **Fred Frommer** was first to report that the United States planned to reduce the number of auditors and investigators at its development agency in Baghdad. ... **Frommer** also was first to report that Democratic Senate candidate Mike Ciresi was loaning his campaign \$2 million, a sign of weakness. ... **Frommer** also was ahead with news that federal officials would take another look at a \$5 million anti-terrorism reward that excluded two Zacarias Moussaoui tipsters.

Member Shout-Outs

- **The Independent** of Marshall provided key help in the hours and days after a school bus crash in Cottonwood killed four children. **The Independent** moved pictures quickly from the crash and provided detailed reporting from the scene.
- **The Free Press** has won a courageous -- and lengthy -- fight to protect reporter notes sought by Blue Earth County law enforcement authorities in the Jeffrey Skjervold standoff and suicide case. The Minnesota Supreme Court denied a petition filed by Blue Earth County prosecutors who tried to force the Mankato newspaper to turn over unpublished information gathered by reporters covering the armed standoff at Skjervold's Amboy home. Two officers were shot on Dec. 23, 2006, after attempts to get Skervold to surrender failed. They went to the Sjkervold home after he shot out the tires of a family vehicle to prevent his wife from leaving during an argument. A **Free Press** reporter, not knowing who was involved in the incident but knowing the general area, began random calls to homes and eventually reached Skjervold. Sjkervold killed himself and the next day's **Free Press** story included Skjervold comments made in his conversation with the **Free Press** reporter. Authorities wanted information from that conversation that wasn't published. The newspaper lost at the district court level, where the judge suggested **The Free Press** caused Sjkervold to kill himself, but won in a state appeals court decision. The appeals court ruled authorities hadn't satisfied all the requirements to wave **The Free Press'** protection under the state's shield law, which protects journalists from disclosing unpublished information. Free Press managing editor Joe Spear said the case was a difficult one for his staff, which had to contend with hostile law enforcement officers. Some reporters, fearful of sudden arrest, programmed the phone numbers of defense attorneys into their cell phones, Spear said.

Save time and money with AP Page Ready Baseball

Opening Day is just weeks away and AP is again offering Page Ready: Baseball, a popular service that delivers AP baseball agate in a page-ready module that saves you time and money every night. *AP Page-Ready: Baseball* frees your sports desk from the labor-intensive task of assembling baseball agate, while also appealing to advertisers because of its organized and consistent look.

Newspapers have been able to pair the agate presentation with advertising that covers the cost of the product and also allows them to make a profit on it.

Delivered via the Web and available in QuarkXPress and Adobe InDesign formats, *AP Page-Ready: Baseball* gives you an eye-catching presentation that meets your needs whether you feature linescores, box scores or expanded box scores. It's easy to use; all you need is an Internet connection and software most newspapers already have. AP also offers a full lineup of other sports agate products:

- Team-by-Team Schedules
- Expanded box scores
- Weekly Averages
- Team-by-Team Stats/MLB Pitching Comparisons
- MLB Mug shots

AP Page-Ready: Baseball also provides you with one of four modules depending on the sports content available at your service level. If content in any of these modules isn't available at your AP service level, you can purchase it separately:

- Standings and Linescores
- Standings and Box Scores
- Standings and Expanded Box Scores
- Standings, Regular Box Scores and One Expanded Box Score

Please contact Dave Pyle, dpyle@ap.org or (800) 552-7250, for further information.



AP Money & Markets

With the economy on everyone's mind, check out examples of all the print and online options for AP Money & Markets at www.ap.org/markets. Get general information about the service, and see detailed descriptions and samples of all the modules the service offers, including our new package Money & Markets Extra, geared to weekend use. We're "thinking outside the box" to find innovative, consumer-friendly ways to provide financial and economic news and save you time.

Online Video Network – Syndicate your local video

Local news often sparks national interest. Consider making your local video work harder for you than ever before with the latest

enhancement to AP's Online Video Network. Members who upload local video to their players can now syndicate that content to the rest of the network – over 1800 Web sites. Every time your video plays on another member's site, you'll earn a share of the ad revenue.

In just a few weeks, you will be able to share your content with other affiliates in the network and here are some of the impressive features:

- **Syndication Rules – Share your content while remaining in control of it.**
The local video content management tool will allow you to create rules so that you can decide where your content can be featured across the AP network of affiliates.
- **Tool Facelift – More useable too!**
We've redesigned the interface so you can intuitively create rules and navigate new features.
- **Transcoding – Updates and additional formats.**
We've updated our transcoding engine and enabling a few of the transcoding types we've blocked in the past. Here's the new list of supporting transcoding types: .mov, .3gpp, .gxf, .lxf, .mpg, .mlv, .m2v, .m4e, .mpe, .h264, .vob, .yuv, .3g2, .3gp, .3gp2, .asf, .dv, .qt.
- **Inline Player – Buy one get one free!**
With this release the Inline Player is included as part of the video tool. This also includes a large thumbnail feature.
- **Monitoring Update**
We've instrumented the new features we've added, and updated some of the current features, with the same monitoring technology so that we know, before anyone else, if things go awry.

'Ask AP,' a Q&A column that takes on readers' news questions, goes weekly

"Ask AP," a Q&A column The Associated Press began publishing seven weeks ago, has officially gone weekly. The Q&A initiative, in which AP reporters and editors answer questions about the news sent in by the public, is being made available for use online and in newspapers every Friday morning.

Readers are invited to send news-related questions to the e-mail address newsquestions@ap.org, with "Ask AP" in the subject line. Several questions are answered in each weekly installment, which also includes a call for additional questions. Over the past several weeks, AP received questions from around the United States on topics ranging from the presidential campaign and the war in Iraq to college football and gas-rationing coupons.

Newspaper editors have reacted enthusiastically to the new feature, and many have expressed an interest in using Ask AP each week in their pages or on their Web sites.

"I like this feature and I can see us using it in print on Sundays and, of course, somewhere on the Web," Peoria (Ill.) Journal Star Managing Editor John Plevka wrote in an e-mail to AP. David Hill, editor of the Daily Reporter in suburban Indianapolis, was excited about the first Ask AP installment: "We used it in our weekend edition. Pretty cool!"

For more information, see the latest Ask AP column on the AP corporate Web site at http://www.ap.org/pages/about/whatsnew/wn_022908a.html.



Special Editions

The "Pets" Special Edition will move Tuesday, March 4. Stories include how to protect pets against coyotes; the rise of the pet birthday party; the latest on the declawing debate; and the latest in home veterinary care. Stories will be accompanied by photos and video.

The Special Editions calendar for the remainder of the year:

- April 1 – Boomers
- May 6 – Outdoors
- June 3 – Weddings
- July 8 – Back to School
- Aug. 5 – Teens & Tweens
- Sep. 9 – Cars
- Oct. 7 – Crafts & Hobbies
- Nov. 4 – Holidays
- Dec. 9 – Weddings

The Associated Press names Donald Ma as its Asia-Pacific regional director

The Associated Press has appointed Donald Ma as its Asia-Pacific regional director, responsible for overseeing business strategy and sales throughout Asia for AP's Global Newspaper Markets and AP Digital divisions. Global Newspaper Markets also participates in administrative management of the region and assists the photo sales efforts of AP Images, a GNM unit. Read more about Ma's appointment at http://www.ap.org/pages/about/pressreleases/pr_021108a.html

Sarah Nordgren named an AP deputy managing editor with new global recruiting responsibilities

Sarah Nordgren, director of state news for The Associated Press, has been named a deputy managing editor, taking on responsibilities for global recruiting. The appointment was announced by Mike Silverman, senior managing editor to whom she will continue to report.

More about Sarah Nordgren's appointment is available on AP's corporate site at http://www.ap.org/pages/about/pressreleases/pr_022608b.html

Dan Tullberg named Asia-Pacific business development director for AP

The Associated Press has appointed Dan Tullberg as its Asia-Pacific business development director, responsible for overseeing business strategy and sales throughout Asia for its Global Newspaper Markets and AP Digital divisions.

Read more about Tullberg's appointment at http://www.ap.org/pages/about/pressreleases/pr_022608a.html

Ted Bridis named editor of AP's Multimedia Investigative Team

Ted Bridis has been named editor of the AP's Multimedia Investigative Team in Washington. He has been acting editor of the investigative team since January 2007, directing exclusive enterprise journalism across print, broadcast and Internet formats at The Associated Press. More about Bridis' appointment is available on AP's corporate site at

http://www.ap.org/pages/about/pressreleases/pr_030308a.html