



## **IRMA CON 2024 ATTENDEE GUIDE**

### **SPEAKER BIOS AND SESSION DESCRIPTIONS**

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# ● Keynote Speakers

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THURSDAY JUNE 13, 2024

## What Ails You and How to Cure It



**JOHN WILPERS**  
Principal, Katahdin  
Media Management

In this keynote, John presents a 30,000-foot overview of the biggest challenges facing publishers today — focusing primarily on Revenue, Talent, and Audience — followed by a selection of practical, achievable, proven solutions.

After 35 years as a writer, editor, and media executive, **John Wilpers** has consulted for the last 14 years with media companies around the world helping them transform from unprofitable, depressed, endangered print-centric operations into profitable, energized, multimedia, multi-platform, 24-7 content- and revenue-generation operations. John's recent projects include: a multi-title Norwegian B2B publisher, a pan-Asian consumer magazine group, two major American B2B media companies, two South African media groups, an Italian multi-newspaper group, an Indian multi-magazine publisher, a Czech multimedia publisher, two American consumer magazines, and the University of Virginia. From 2010-2021, John was the author of the annual "Innovations in Media World Report" published by the world association of magazines (FIPP). Outside of media, John runs a global jazz blog ([GlobalRhythms.net](http://GlobalRhythms.net)). He also started and still runs a self-esteem-building soccer program for girls ages 2-6, graduating 5,000 girls since 1996 ([hotshotssoccer.org](http://hotshotssoccer.org)). He is a long-board surfer, gardener, and was "Mother Ginger" in "The Nutcracker" in Boston for 22 years.

## The Food Section with Hanna Raskin

*The Food Section's* mission is to serve eaters across the American South by providing them with the news they need to make their meals more meaningful. It is the home of original, inclusive, and independent reporting about everything that influences how and what we eat and drink in the region today. Hanna Raskin joins us to share the story of The Food Section, and to provoke conversation about culinary coverage, ethics and food journalism, and more.

**Hanna Raskin** is editor and publisher of *The Food Section*, a twice-weekly newsletter covering food and drink across the American South. Since its launch in 2021, The Food Section has been named one of the best newsletters in the country by the Online News Association, Local Independent Online News Publishers, International Association of Culinary Professionals, NYU's Arthur L. Carter Journalism Institute, and the James Beard Foundation, which in 2023 awarded its Dining and Travel writing medal to the publication. Raskin previously served as food editor and chief critic for The Post and Courier in Charleston, South Carolina, where her work earned the Beard Foundation's inaugural Local Impact Journalism prize. She is the author of "Yelp Help: How to Write Great Online Restaurant Reviews," a book honored by Les Dames Escoffier International with an M.F.K. Fisher Award. A past president of the Association of Food Journalists, Raskin is an active alumna of the Entrepreneurial Journalism Creators Program at the Craig Newmark Graduate School of Journalism at CUNY. She's a frequent contributor to Garden & Gun and serves as columnist for Gravy, the Southern Foodways Alliance's quarterly magazine.



**HANNA RASKIN**  
Editor and Publisher,  
The Food Section

# ● Keynote Speakers

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FRIDAY JUNE 14, 2024

## So, I Bought A (Sixty-Year-Old, BELOVED, Outdoor) Magazine



**MIKE ROGGE**  
Editor/Owner,  
Mountain Gazette

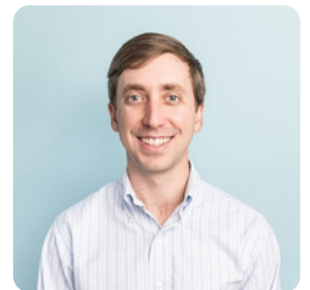
In 2020 Mike Rogge's company Verb Cabin purchased *Mountain Gazette*, a much-loved outdoor magazine that writer Dick Doworth described as "a free-form, free-spirited favourite" of western mountain lifestyle enthusiasts in the 1960s and 1970s, that had lived many lives in print and then online. Key to the return of *Mountain Gazette* has been its commitment to building subscribers, expanding the brand into merch and multi-media, and eschewing click-bait gear reviews for stories about the joy of going outside. All this in a delightful design capturing the enthusiasm of the team that makes it. In this conversation with Annie Stoltie of *Adirondack Life*, Mike will share the story of bringing back a 60-year-old publication, leaning into the heritage and ethos of those original issues and building a subscriber base using all the tools of the digital age.

**Mike Rogge** has been in outdoor media for 20 years as a journalist (*Powder Magazine*, *Vice Sports*, *ESPN*) and film producer (appearing on PBS and in the Banff Mountain International Film Fest Festival). In 2020, he resurrected the historic *Mountain Gazette*, returning the magazine to glory in a 160-page, oversized format.

## How to Make Local Media Profitable

Ted Williams has a passion and a knack for building successful businesses. He founded the popular — and profitable — *Charlotte Agenda* newsletter, which grew to 1,700 paid supporters and \$2.2M in revenue before it was sold to Axios Local. After a stint as general manager for Axios Local, Ted is now in an advisory role and consulting and teaching entrepreneurial business students at Queens University of Charlotte. Ted believes that local news can be profitable, and in this conversation, he will share some of the secrets to building successful digital products, how to sell advertising to local retail businesses, and how to build high performing small teams.

**Ted Williams** was the founder of *Charlotte Agenda*. It grew fast. He sold the local media company to Axios in late 2020 where he then became GM of Axios Local and scaled the concept to 30 cities across the United States. In 2022, Cox Enterprises purchased Axios. Ted recently left Axios and is now an Executive in Residence at Queens University of Charlotte as well as a consultant with UNC Chapel Hill Hussman School of Journalism and Media. Previously, he held digital leadership roles at *The Charlotte Observer* and LendingTree.



**TED WILLIAMS**  
Entrepreneur-in-  
Residence, Queens  
University of Charlotte

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# ● Member-Led Sessions

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THURSDAY JUNE 13, 2024

## Hits and Misses

In this perennial IRMACON favourite, a representative of each member magazine presents specific examples, big or small, on any topic, to show what has gone well in the past year—and what hasn't. You'll learn a lot and take away some great ideas. Take good notes and plan to follow-up after the session.

Host: **Lauren McKenney**, Associate Publisher, *Saltscapes!*

## The Road to Reinvention: Redesigning Texas Highways

**Andrea Lin** (Publisher), **Mark Mahorsky** (Creative Director), **Emily Stone** (Editor-in-Chief), *Texas Highways*

*Texas Highways* is debuting its first redesign in a decade, and this time everything is on the table. From logo to paper stock to frequency, the brand is being completely reinvented. Join Andrea Lin, Mark Mahorsky, and Emily Stone for this inspiring and informative hour walking us through the audience research, design and editorial ideas that will bring *Texas Highways* to life for a new generation of motorists and visitors to Texas.

Host: **Amy Kenny**, Editor, *Yukon North of Ordinary*

## Great PR for Magazine Teams: Earning Media on a Shoestring

**Michelle Kelly**, Editor-in-Chief, *Cottage Life*, **Robert Stieve**, Editor-in-Chief, *Arizona Highways*, and **Peggy Laborde**, Producer and Host, WYES-TV

Does your small team struggle with promoting your brand outside of your four walls? Do you wonder how to build relationships that get your special issues and events on the radar in local media? Wonder what makes the ideal person on your team for the job of promoting your brand?

This expert panel have spent years leading regional brands and covering regional stories, and know a thing or two about convincing media that a story is worth covering, and about how to make it a great segment. This will be an informative panel for editors, publishers, and marketing teams handling their own PR.

Host: **Errol Laborde**, Executive Editor, *New Orleans Magazine* and *Louisiana Life*

## Member-Led Roundtable Discussions

Join a table for publishing, editorial or design to share ideas and solutions with peers. Foster community and collaboration with other IRMA members and come away inspired!

Table Hosts: **Manu Keggenhoff**, Creative Director/Publisher, *Yukon, North of Ordinary*; **Kelly Mero**, Publisher, *Arizona Highways*; **Emily Stone**, Editor-in-Chief, *Texas Highways*

# Member-Led Sessions

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FRIDAY JUNE 14, 2024

## Keeping Up With Editorial Design Trends – Inspo for Everyone

**Sara D'Eugenio**, Art Director, *Texas Highways*, and curator, @arteditdesign

What's the secret to keeping your editorial brand fresh and connecting with readers? Sara D'Eugenio wants to share her favourite trends, spreads, and treatments from around the world of print design. When she isn't focussed on layouts for *Texas Highways*, Sara is busy curating and sharing inspirational images at @arteditdesign. Identifying what's on trend and what's cutting edge keeps your pages relevant, and Sara will share which magazines and design/edit teams are creating looks to lead print design into the second half of the decade.

Host: **Shelly Bryant**, Lead Designer for Sunflower Publishing, *Kansas! Magazine*

## From Curation to Connection: A renewed view of the role of magazines

**Käthe Lemon**, President/co-Owner, *Avenue/RedPoint* Media Group

In this pre-recorded session, Käthe Lemon shares how *Avenue* is remaking itself as a connector rather than a curator of content, and has reinvigorated its relationships with readers, advertisers, and custom publishing clients.

## The Secrets of Successful Anniversary Packages

**Will Grunewald**, Editor-in-Chief, *Down East*; **Alysha Vandertogt**, Senior Editor, *Cottage Life*; **Steve Gleydura**, Editor-in-Chief, *New Mexico Magazine*; **John McCauley**, Art and Photography Director, *New Mexico Magazine*

We've all got them: Anniversaries. But what's the secret to keeping anniversary packages and celebrations fresh and engaging for our audience? (Not to mention intellectually stimulating for the editors and designers.) And what about brand extensions, digital programs, events and partnerships? How to know what it is, when it should happen, and how to sell it to advertisers.

This panel will look at what it takes to deliver lively and original content in Anniversary Issues, and how to generate new packaging ideas that will generate revenue and buzz for your brand.

Host and Panelist: **Ed Graves**, Publisher/CEO, *New Mexico Magazine*

## Magazine Show and Tell

Led by **Nathan Gunter**, Editor-in-Chief, *Oklahoma Today*

Got a great editorial execution to share with the group? In this lively session for editors and art directors, colleagues will share ideas for packages and stories that really wowed their audiences. Spoiler alert: This is a great spot to pick up ideas for your own title!

Join IRMA colleagues to share your experience and learn from others in this member-led conversation.

## Member-Led Roundtable Discussion

Publishers: Stay for the show and tell, make a small group or head to the patio for the last hour of the day.

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# ● Member Speaker Bios

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## **SARA D'EUGENIO, Art Director, *Texas Highways***

Sara D'Eugenio is an art director in Austin, Texas. Past employers include Conde Nast, Seattle Met, and the Travel Channel. During her spare time, she curates @arteditdesign, goes to pop punk concerts, and reads mysteries with her two fluffy cats.

## **STEVE GLEJDURA, Editor-in-Chief, *New Mexico Magazine***

Steve Gleydura has served as editor-in-chief of *New Mexico Magazine* since March 2020. During his tenure, he has led the magazine's yearlong celebration of its 100th anniversary, which included a commemorative cookbook, museum exhibition, and July 2023 special collector's edition. The magazine was a finalist for IRMA Magazine of the Year in 2023. Steve previously spent 17 years as the editor of *Cleveland Magazine* and vice president of editorial for Great Lakes Publishing Co. He has also worked as a freelance writer and independent marketing and communications consultant. A former president of the board for the Press Club of Cleveland, he was inducted into the Cleveland Journalism Hall of Fame in 2018. He and his wife, Kathleen, have three children, Patrick, 26, Molly, 24, and Anne, 22.

## **EDWARD GRAVES CEO/Publisher, *New Mexico Magazine***

Ed Graves has been CEO of *New Mexico Magazine* since January 2020. Before joining the New Mexico Tourism Departments' team, Ed was CEO and managing partner for News Connection USA, Lifestyles, after 50 senior publications in Florida. Ed has an extensive background in media publishing, having worked for Gatehouse Media, Gannett Company, and *USA Weekend Magazine*. He is from Louisville, Kentucky, and is a graduate of Eastern Kentucky University. Ed has lived in seven US states and enjoys travel and art during his spare time.

## **WILL GRUNEWALD, Editor-in-Chief, *Down East***

Will Grunewald is *Down East's* editor-in-chief and has been with the magazine since 2016, after previously working at *Washingtonian*. He lives in Brunswick with his wife, Heidi, and a spunky little dog named Wally.

## **NATHAN GUNTER, Editor-in-Chief, *Oklahoma Today***

Nathan Gunter is the Editor-in-Chief, of *Oklahoma Today*, and an award-winning editor, journalist, writer, and communications professional with nearly two decades of experience executing high-quality, creative plans for publications, communications, events, and partnerships.

## **MANU KEGGENHOFF, Creative Director/Publisher, *Yukon North of Ordinary***

Manu Keggenhoff is an award-winning photographer and the creative-director/publisher at North of Ordinary Media in Whitehorse, Yukon (Canada). The media company publishes several magazines in the Yukon, Northwest Territories, Nunavut, and beyond, covering northern lifestyle, business, and travel. She has over 25 years of experience in the fields of graphic design and art direction, with an emphasis on magazine publishing since 2007. Manu's photographic work has appeared in numerous publications, such as the *New York Times*, *Globe & Mail*, *Canadian Geographic*, *Photo Life*, *DigitalPhoto*, and many more.

## **MICHELLE KELLY, Editor and VP Content, *Cottage Life***

Michelle Kelly started her career in publishing in 1998, as the office manager at *Cottage Life*. Since then, she has held various positions in the editorial department at the magazine until she was named Editor in July 2015 and Vice President, Content, for Blue ant Media in September 2019. She sits on the Professional Advisory Committee for Centennial College in Toronto and is a board member for the International Regional Magazines Association. She is also the recipient of several Canadian National Magazine Awards, including Editor Grand Prix in 2021.

# Member Speaker Bios

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## **ERROL LABORDE, Executive Editor, *Louisiana Life***

Errol Laborde holds a Ph.D. in political science from the University of New Orleans and is the Editor in Chief of Renaissance Publishing. In that capacity he serves as Editor/Associate Publisher of *New Orleans Magazine* and Editor/ Publisher of *Louisiana Life*. Errol is also a producer and a regular panelist on Informed Sources, a weekly news discussion program broadcast on public television station WYES-TV, Channel 12. Errol is a three-time winner of the Alex Waller Award, the highest award given in print journalism by the New Orleans Press Club. Errol's most recent books are "Krewe: The Early Carnival from Comus to Zulu" and "Marched the Day God," a history of the Rex organization. In his free time he enjoys playing tennis and traveling with his wife Peggy to anywhere they can get away to, but some of his favorite spots are the Caribbean and historic locations around Louisiana. Errol is a two-term past president of IRMA, and his latest book is, "When Rex Met Zulu. Chronicles of the New Orleans Experience."

## **PEGGY SCOTT LABORDE, Host and Producer, WYES-TV**

Peggy Scott Laborde is an Emmy Award-winning television producer and the host/producer of Steppin' Out, New Orleans' only weekly arts and entertainment discussion program, now in its 38th season on WYES-TV (New Orleans Public Television). She is also the co-author of four books and has produced over 30 documentaries focusing on the food, culture and history of New Orleans.

## **KÄTHE LEMON, President, co-owner, *Avenue*, RedPoint**

Käthe Lemon is the president and co-owner of RedPoint Media Group, Alberta's largest independent, locally owned media company. RedPoint is the publisher of Calgary's city lifestyle magazines, *Avenue* and *The Scene*, and through RPM Content Studio also creates award-winning custom publications, content-driven events and digital content.

## **ANDREA LIN, Publisher, *Texas Highways***

Andrea joined *Texas Highways*, owned by the Texas Department of Transportation, in the summer of 2015 as the Marketing and Circulation Manager, becoming Publisher/Section Director of Travel Publications in December 2017. She oversees operations and management for all projects and products in the section, including the magazine, digital channels, the annual Texas State Travel Guide and Map, the quarterly *Texas Highways* Events Calendar, and more. In her previous life, Andrea was a Media Director at GSD&M, a full-service advertising agency in Austin.

## **MARK MAHORSKY, Creative Director, *Texas Highways***

Mark's 25+ year publishing career started with Rodale Press working on titles such as *Men's Health*, *Prevention*, and *Bicycling* magazines. In 1998, he left the northeast and headed south to Austin, Texas, to be Art Director for *Texas Parks and Wildlife* magazine. While in Austin, contract clients included *Austin Monthly* magazine, D custom content publishers and *Texas Monthly* Custom publishing group. In 2005 he headed north to Dallas to pursue a new position as creative director for Patience Publishing and later, D custom content publishers. Clients included: Associa, AT&T Performing Arts Center, D magazine, EDS, First Command Financial Services, Hewlett-Packard, Lennox Industries, Nestlé Purina, Omni Hotels, Rexel, Sally Beauty, SMU, Texas A&M University, Texas Farm Bureau Insurance, and Texas Tech University. After 8 years in the big D, Mark longed to be back in the Texas Hill Country. He left the city and accepted a creative director position at *Texas Highways* magazine. In the past ten years Mark has been designing and experimenting with *Texas Highways* branded content. On a personal note, both his son and daughter attend the University of Texas, Austin, and he couldn't be more proud, Hook 'em.

## **JOHN MCCAULEY Art and Photography Director, *New Mexico Magazine***

After living and working in Boston for a number of years, John McCauley moved to Santa Fe, New Mexico for an Art Director job at *Outside* Magazine. He has since made the Southwest his home and is currently the Art and Photography Director at *New Mexico Magazine*. His design work has won numerous awards from Society of Publication Designers and the International Regional Magazine Association. When he isn't designing, he enjoys hitting the road with the family in their Airstream "Hank."

# ● Member Speaker Bios

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## **LAUREN MCKENNEY, Associate Publisher, *Saltscapes***

Lauren McKenney is a forward-thinking publishing professional, print and media nerd, and dedicated Swiftie who crunches numbers as Advocate Media's Associate Publisher (*Saltscapes* and *Maine Home+Design* magazines). With a skillset spanning digital and print, a background in marketing research and an interest in paid content strategy, she's passionate about tackling publishing challenges with innovative solutions. Her passion lies in delivering exceptional publications by understanding readers' unique experiences. After work hours, find her with her dog, getting lost in a good book, or thrift store surfing. Lauren grew up in St. John's, Newfoundland but has lived in Halifax, Nova Scotia for nearly 8 years, with a brief stint in Vancouver to study her Master of Publishing at SFU. If you're ever on Canada's East Coast, feel free to reach out and say hello!

## **KELLY MERO, Publisher, *Arizona Highways***

Kelly Mero is the seventh publisher for *Arizona Highways* Magazine, and CEO of Grand Canyon State Logo Signs. Kelly's professional career has been in publishing and information technology. Currently Kelly is active in many charitable and community organizations and currently serves on the Fiesta Bowl Board of Directors and the Walter Cronkite Board of endowment. Kelly and his wife Cindy have two children, daughters, Quin and Carson.

## **ROBERT STIEVE, Editor, *Arizona Highways***

Robert Stieve is the editor of *Arizona Highways*. He's been serving in that role since April 2007. Prior to his arrival at *Arizona Highways*, he served as editor of *PHOENIX* magazine for eight years, and another three years as managing editor. He's worked for several newspapers and radio stations around the country, and was a speechwriter at the U.S. Department of Justice in Washington, D.C. In addition to his work at *Arizona Highways*, he's an adjunct professor at the Walter Cronkite School of Journalism at Arizona State University, and he serves as a board member of the Cronkite School. He holds a master's degree in journalism from the Cronkite School and a bachelor's degree in journalism from Marshall University.

## **ANNIE STOLTIE, Editor-in-Chief/Co-publisher, *Adirondack Life***

Annie Stoltie, a graduate of Colgate University and the S. I. Newhouse School for Public Communications at Syracuse University, began her journalism career at *Good Housekeeping*, in New York City, later moving north to the Adirondack Park, where she's editor-in-chief and co-publisher of *Adirondack Life*, in Jay, New York. Stoltie has written and edited hundreds of stories for *Adirondack Life* over her 24-year tenure there. Her work has also appeared in *The New York Times*, *Slate*, *Newsweek*, *Forbes*, *Modern Farmer* and others, and she's the co-author of the guidebook *Adirondack: A Great Destination*, published by W. W. Norton. Stoltie has taught nonfiction writing at the Ray Brook Federal Correctional Institution, in the Adirondack Park, served as writer-in-residence at the State University of New York at Potsdam, and is currently an instructor at the State University of New York at Plattsburgh. She sits on the board of directors of the International Regional Media Association and serves as a judge for the American Society of Magazine Editors' National Magazine Awards, based at Columbia University, in New York City.

## **EMILY STONE, Editor-in-Chief, *Texas Highways***

Emily Roberts Stone is the editor in chief of *Texas Highways*, the official travel magazine of Texas. Since she joined the magazine in 2016, *Texas Highways* has been nominated for three National Magazine Awards and was included in the 2022 edition of the Best American Magazine Writing anthology. She currently serves as a judge for the National Magazine Awards. Previously, she worked at Community Impact Newspaper, where she launched and managed 10 editions in the Houston Metro area as managing editor. She is a native of Orange County, California, where she started her publishing career as the founder and editor in chief of *North Orange County* Magazine and *Fullerton* Magazine.

## **ALYSHA VANDERTOFT, Senior Editor, *Cottage Life***

Alysha Vandertoft started her career in publishing as an intern at *Cottage Life* in 2016 and is now one of the magazine's senior editors. She's a graduate of Queen's University and Centennial College's Book, Magazine & Electronic Publishing program. She has received awards from the Canadian National Magazine Awards, the Canadian Society of Magazine Editors, and the International Regional Magazine Association. Alysha also sits on Blue Ant Media's Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Council.