

Babette Herrmann begins term as NMPA president

Written by By Megan Gleason Guest Submission
Friday, 12 November 2021 05:58



SANTA FE — Babette Herrmann rose through the ranks of the New Mexico Press Association to lead as president for a full year as the organization serves New Mexico newspapers and journalists.

Herrmann, who previously served as both the first and second vice president with the New Mexico Press Association and is dedicated to the organization's mission, knows newspapers are still important, despite readers migrating to social media and online news.

"Newspapers still matter. People are still reading newspapers," Herrmann said. "And it's really on us — newspaper publishers — to keep that momentum going and not get caught up in all of the negativity."

Herrmann owns and publishes the *Gallup Sun*, a free paper which publishes weekly and is distributed in McKinley and Cibola counties in New Mexico and Apache County in Arizona. She will split her duties at the *Gallup Sun* with duties at NMPA through Oct. 2022.

Herrmann was voted in as president at a NMPA general member meeting Oct. 30. Members also approved new board members for the year.

"Congratulations to our new board and especially Babette Herrmann," former NMPA President Leota Harriman said at the meeting.

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Herrmann led a discussion to reinstate the NMPA high school journalism workshop, even if it has to be virtual, at an Oct. 29 board meeting.

She said, for an organization that boasts 43 member organizations, fundraising should be a priority. Herrmann said fundraising has not been a focus of the organization recently.

NMPA Director Sammy Lopez instituted virtual board meetings when COVID-19 was first detected in New Mexico in March 2020.

The board began meeting in a hybrid model in March 2021, allowing participants to join either via Zoom or in-person. Herrmann will continue meetings in this format, noting the pandemic created the feeling that “you’re out of the loop.” Herrmann was disappointed by the cancellation of last year’s NMPA convention, but is reunited with her peers again this year.

“It’s just great to be back in person again, even though we have to wear our masks; it’s nice,” Herrmann said. “I’m just happy to be here and be a part of this great organization.”

Herrmann commended Lopez, who “makes our job way easy.” She hopes the 10 current members of the Board of Directors — which will be 11 when one vacant position is filled — will ease the workload of the three administrative staff members as much as possible.

Herrmann, after two years of leadership on the NMPA Board of Directors, is prepared to give other newspapers “the support that they feel they need in order to succeed” as NMPA president.

“I feel really good about it, really positive, and I feel like it’s going to be a great learning experience for me,” Herrmann said.

Harriman appreciates that Herrmann represents a key voice of smaller newspapers.

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“I’ve served with Babette on the board now for several years. She shows up, she gives input, she does the work — that’s all you can ask for, is that somebody shows up to the commitment that they take on,” Harriman said. “I have every confidence in her. I think that she’ll be a fine president.”

Megan Gleason is the editor-in-chief of the New Mexico Daily Lobo. She can be contacted at megngleason2716@gmail.com or on Twitter @fabflutist2716.

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