

# USBWA has much to offer potential new members

If it is fall, it is time for membership renewals and time to sign up new members. During a teleconference with board members in September, we came up with a plan to attract new members.

Each of our district representatives was given names in their district to solicit, explaining all that the USBWA has to offer for a mere \$40 per year. Even in today's economy, USBWA membership is one of America's great bargains.

As of mid-October, Joe Mitch said a steady stream of new membership applications were making their way to his office in St. Louis. We are off to a nice start, but it is just a start.

We need more members. We need younger members. We need more women. We need more minorities. And we need you to attract them.

Get out your USBWA directory. Check names against people you know that should be in the USBWA. If they are not already members, talk to them and explain the \$40 bargain that pays for itself in one stay at a Marriott using the Athletic VIP card.

In the e-mails we sent out, we included all the benefits. And here they are:

1. Eligible to attend Mock Tournament Selection meeting in Indianapolis with NCAA Basketball Committee every February.
2. Seven-month subscription to *Basketball Times*.
3. *Tipoff*, USBWA's newsletter.
4. USBWA directory – membership, contacts for

SIDs and beat writers.

5. Marriott Athletic VIP card – half-price at many Marriott locations.

6. Hertz discount card.

7. Complimentary access to rivals.com.

8. Chance to vote for Player of the Year, All-America teams, all-district teams, the Most Courageous and Katha Quinn Service awards.

9. Eligible to win cash prizes in the USBWA best writing contests.

10. All for \$40 per year.

As an organization, we are no better than our members. Everyone does not have to be on the board or be an officer, but if everyone can get one or two new members, just think of the possibilities for the USBWA.

Due to the efforts of Greg Shaheen and Dave Worlock, we have a terrific relationship with the NCAA. They have made it very clear they want our organization to be "the" voice for college basketball.

The NCAA was kind enough to provide media lists which, after checking out those lists against our membership, allowed us to target prospective new members whom we knew already covered college basketball.

In addition to our discussion about memberships, we

**Dick Jerardi**  
**Philadelphia Daily News**  
**President**



took two states out of District I (New England) and put them into District II. For some reason that nobody seems to remember, Pennsylvania and West Virginia were in District I with Maine, Vermont, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Connecticut. We moved Pennsylvania and West Virginia into District II with New York, New Jersey, Delaware and Washington D.C.

Two years ago, neither the Big East Rookie of the Year nor the Ivy League Player of the Year made one of our all-district teams, perhaps because too many voters in that district just were not exposed to them. Hopefully, by changing these two districts, we can make the voting more equitable.

Finally, if there any issues that you think need to be addressed – membership, district, anything – let me know and we will get on it.

# Surprise, surprise: Tar Heels are USBWA's No. 1



Tyler Hansbrough's Tar Heels are USBWA's No. 1 team.

North Carolina is the nation's preseason No. 1 team, according to the US Basketball Writers Association. The poll of USBWA officers mirrors the overwhelming opinion of the Tar Heels, who return consensus national player of the year Tyler Hansbrough among their top six players and a three-man freshman class of McDonald's All-Americans.

The Big East Conference played seven teams among the USBWA's Top 25, including four among the top seven. Louisville is ranked second, Connecticut fourth, Pittsburgh sixth and Notre Dame seventh. Georgetown is ranked 12th, Marquette 19th and Villanova 25th.

The Big 12 is the second most-represented conference with four teams – No. 3 Texas, No. 11 Oklahoma, No. 18 Baylor and No. 23 Kansas, the defending national champion.

Other teams ranked among the top 10: No. 5 UCLA, No. 8 Duke, No. Memphis and No. 10 Michigan State.

Davidson, the darling of the 2008 NCAA Tournament behind Stephen Curry, is ranked 20th.

The West Coast Conference placed two teams among the USBWA's Top 25. Gonzaga is ranked 13th, and Saint Mary's finished in a tie for 21st with Arizona State.

### USBWA Officers' Top 25

1. North Carolina (3).....	99
2. Louisville (1).....	96
3. Texas .....	85
4. Connecticut .....	81
5. UCLA.....	79
6. Pittsburgh .....	76
7. Notre Dame .....	71
8. Duke .....	64
9. Memphis .....	59
10. Michigan State .....	52
11. Oklahoma .....	51
12. Georgetown .....	47
13. Gonzaga .....	45
14. Tennessee .....	39
15. Purdue .....	37
16. Miami .....	31
17. Wisconsin .....	30
18. Baylor .....	28
19. Marquette .....	27
20. Davidson .....	24
21. (tie) Saint Mary's .....	20
21. (tie) Arizona State .....	20
23. Kansas .....	18
24. Florida .....	17
25. Villanova .....	16

The United States Basketball Writers Association  
 1818 Chouteau Avenue  
 St. Louis, Mo. 63103  
 Visit us at: [www.usbwa.com](http://www.usbwa.com)  
 314-421-0339  
 Fax: 314-421-3505, 314-421-6120

**PRESIDENT** – Dick Jerardi, Philadelphia Daily News; C: 215-313-3079; H: 215-295-8097; [jerardd@phillynews.com](mailto:jerardd@phillynews.com)  
**FIRST VICE PRESIDENT** – Steve Carp, Las Vegas Review-Journal; O: 702-387-2913; H: 702-243-9109; C: 702-528-2790; [scarp@reviewjournal.com](mailto:scarp@reviewjournal.com)  
**SECOND VICE PRESIDENT** – Bryan Burwell, St. Louis Post-Dispatch; O: 314-340-8185; H: 636-536-0332, C: 314-603-0463; [bburwell@post-dispatch.com](mailto:bburwell@post-dispatch.com)  
**THIRD VICE PRESIDENT** – Lenox Rawlings, Winston-Salem Journal; H: 336-272-2029; C: 336-580-5023; [len30@triad.rr.com](mailto:len30@triad.rr.com)  
**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR** – Joe Mitch, Missouri Valley Conference; O: 314-421-0339; H: 314-227-9113; C: 314-795-6821; [mitch@mvc.org](mailto:mitch@mvc.org)  
**TIPOFF EDITOR** – John Akers, Basketball Times; C: 612-718-4661; H: 704-849-8627; [johna19081@gmail.com](mailto:johna19081@gmail.com)  
**WEBMASTER** – Ted Gangi, C: 214-909-9314; [ted.gangi@sportswriters.net](mailto:ted.gangi@sportswriters.net)  
**BOARD MEMBERS**  
**DISTRICT I** – Ed Daigneault, Waterbury (Conn.) Republican-American; H: 860-945-3506; O: 800-992-3232, ext. 1406; C: 203-206-0959; [sptsscribe@sbcglobal.net](mailto:sptsscribe@sbcglobal.net)  
**DISTRICT II** – David Jones, Harrisburg Patriot-News; O: 717-255-8187; C: 717-319-1837; [djones8681@comcast.net](mailto:djones8681@comcast.net)  
**DISTRICT III** – Robbi Pickeral, Raleigh News & Observer; O: 716-372-3121, ext. 278; C: 716-244-0427; [rpickeral@aol.com](mailto:rpickeral@aol.com)  
**DISTRICT IV** – John Clay, Lexington Herald-Leader; O: 859-231-3226; C: 859-321-5362; [johnclay@alltel.net](mailto:johnclay@alltel.net)  
**DISTRICT V** – Kirk Wessler, Peoria Journal Star; O: 309-686-3216; C: 309-256-9093; [kwessler@pjstar.com](mailto:kwessler@pjstar.com)  
**DISTRICT VI** – Dave Sittler, Tulsa World; O: 918-581-8312; C: 918-629-3851; [dave.sittler@tulsaworld.com](mailto:dave.sittler@tulsaworld.com)  
**DISTRICT VII** – Ted Lewis, New Orleans Times-Picayune; O/C: 504-232-5071; [tlewis@timespicayune.com](mailto:tlewis@timespicayune.com)  
**DISTRICT VIII** – John Henderson, Denver Post; 303-282-4937; [jhenderson@denverpost.com](mailto:jhenderson@denverpost.com)  
**DISTRICT IX** – Nicole Vargas, San Diego Union-Tribune. C: 619-252-4098; [Nicole.Vargas@uniontrib.com](mailto:Nicole.Vargas@uniontrib.com)  
**WOMEN** – Mel Greenberg, Philadelphia Daily Inquirer; C: 215-313-3542; [mgreenberg@phillynews.com](mailto:mgreenberg@phillynews.com)  
**AT-LARGE** – Dana O'Neil, [espn.com](http://espn.com); C: 215-313-3425; [dgoneil@msn.com](mailto:dgoneil@msn.com)  
**SID** – To be determined.

# Election Days coming up for USBWA, too

In this election year, it's time to nominate individuals for the U.S. Basketball Writers Association's annual awards.

These awards recognize members for their service and contributions to the organization and others who reflect honor on college basketball.

If you have a person you wish to nominate for the awards listed below, we encourage you to do so before the end of the year. Please send your nominations to either me ([mitch@mvc.org](mailto:mitch@mvc.org)) or USBWA President Dick Jerardi ([jerardd@phillynews.com](mailto:jerardd@phillynews.com)).

Here's the list of USBWA awards:

**HALL OF FAME.** Established in 1988, the USBWA Hall of Fame honors past and present members who are recognized for their achievements in sports writing and contributions to the organization.

To be eligible for consideration, individuals must have 20 years of service in the profession.

Since its inception, 50 people have been inducted into the USBWA Hall of Fame. Last year's inductee was Steve Wieberg, a past USBWA president (1996-97) and a sports writer for *USA Today* since 1982.

**KATHA QUINN AWARD.** This is the organization's primary service award, given in memory of Katha Quinn, the late sports information director at St. John's University who died of cancer in 1990.

The award honors individuals for their service and contributions to the USBWA, especially those who have excelled at servicing the media and, like Katha, are an inspiration to those in the sports journalism profession.

The award is presented each year by past presidents Malcolm Moran and Jim O'Connell, who were particularly close to Katha and established an award that would carry on the memory of a friend to writers everywhere.

Last year the USBWA had for the first time co-winners for the award, ESPN media relations vice presidents Mike Soltys and Josh Krulewitz.

Past recipients include sports information directors

Tim Tolokan of UConn, Roger Valdiserri of Notre Dame; and Rick Brewer and Steve Kirschner of North Carolina; former NCAA media coordinators Jim Marchiony and Bill Hancock; *Washington Post* sports writer Mark Asher; and former PR men-turned-commissioners, Wayne Duke (Big Eight and Big Ten) and Mike Tranghese (Big East).

**MOST COURAGEOUS.** Since 1978, the USBWA has honored individuals who wage courageous battles in the face of adversity and personal hardships.

Last year's recipient was LSU-Shreveport player Josh Porter, who was considered a walking miracle after returning to play for the Pilots following a life-threatening neck injury sustained in a game the previous season.

Porter fractured the vertebrae in his neck in a collision with a teammate during a game and fell so hard that the plastic facemask he wore to protest a broken nose shot across the floor upon impact. Porter required life-saving surgery to fuse the vertebrae in his neck. Only later did Porter learn how terribly close he came to becoming a quadriplegic and possibly dying. Doctors said later that less than one percent of those who sustain injuries similar to Josh's ever regain movement or even live.

Other Most Courageous Award winners in the past include Tennessee Tech coach Mike Sutton, who continues to coach while battling paralyzing effects of Guillain-Barre Syndrome; Trey Schwab, the former Marquette assistant who had a double-lung transplant; the Oklahoma State program following the plane crash that killed 10 members of the team; and former Tulsa and Arkansas coach Nolan Richardson for dealing with racial prejudice in his life and the death of his daughter from leukemia.

**Joe Mitch**  
**USBWA**  
**Executive Director**



## USBWA Membership Application Form

If you have not yet renewed your membership to the U.S. Basketball Writers Association, now is the time to act. For your \$40 membership fee you will receive:

- the most complete directory in college basketball
  - Marriott Athletic VIP Card
  - voting for All-America team and player and coach of year
  - seven issues of *Basketball Times*;
  - access to USBWA website ([usbwa.com](http://usbwa.com))
  - eligibility for Best Writing Contest, with cash prizes
- Send a check for \$40 and let the USBWA make your job of covering college basketball easier.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Newspaper/Publication/Website/College \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Office Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Fax \_\_\_\_\_ Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

**USBWA**  
 1818 Chouteau Avenue  
 St. Louis, MO 63103

## Invite your local college-paper beat writer to join USBWA

I happened to notice my college diploma the other day (yes, I actually did graduate) and realized it'll be 30 years next May that I earned a degree in journalism from San Jose State.

The reason I bring up college is because as our numbers shrink – I'm talking newspapers and newspaper jobs – we need to find ways to shore up our membership in the USBWA.

In talking to Joe Mitch last August, I mentioned to him that instead of putting our efforts into recruiting beat writers at daily newspapers, perhaps we should look into signing up writers who cover college basketball for their school papers.

Joe told me that the USBWA does offer membership to college journalists. It's \$20, and while that may be a little steep for a college kid (back in 1979, 20 bucks could be a hell of a lot of beer at the Spartan Pub), it might be a pretty savvy investment.

I'm not talking about the Marriott card and the Hertz discount. Those are nice perks, but most college papers don't travel with their teams. What I'm thinking about is the opportunity to have a vote for the national player of the year, the All-America team and the all-district team.

Think about when you were in college and you'd see

### Steve Carp Las Vegas Review Journal Vice President



the Wooden Award and All-America teams announced in late March. Tell me you didn't disagree with the choices from time to time. I'll bet you were wishing you had a voice and could offer your opinion.

The USBWA, of course, provides you that opportunity. As a member, you are part of the process. To me, that's a way to sell a college kid on the merits of joining. Let's play to his or her ego, so they can brag to their friends on campus that they had a say as to who won the Oscar Robertson Trophy. The question is, how do we let these budding future journalists know they are not only welcome to join our group, but we really, really want them?

Simple. Chances are you've befriended the kid who writes for the college team you cover. Next time you see he or she at practice, let them know about the USBWA and offer them the opportunity to join. Tell them they can go on-line to USBWA.com and sign up. Perhaps they can convince their school paper to pick up the tab for them.

If we could get just half of the Division I schools to get their campus newspaper to sign up, that would really boost our organization.

When you go to practice or are at a game, go up to the school-paper beat person and invite them to be part of our family. We can use the warm bodies.

## Women's coverage feeling the brunt of newspaper decline

When Connecticut marched to its first NCAA women's title with an unbeaten record in 1995, the Huskies, located not far from the media centers of the Northeast, attracted unprecedented print and electronic media coverage to the sport.

As coach Geno Auriemma's squad grew the collection to five through the early part of the current decade, the media crowd continued to increase, as well.

This season, UConn will hit the starting gate as the overwhelming favorite to open the doors to its NCAA trophy case for the first time since 2004 after the Women's Final Four concludes in St. Louis in April.

Much less uncertain, however, is the size of the media contingent who will chronicle the Huskies and their challengers along the way.

It's no secret to the USBWA membership here on either side of gender coverage that these are not the best of times in the newspaper world. And who knows how much the economy will affect the rest of the industry, including the electronic sector.

But one unfortunate trend already has developed, indicating the women's beat has become an early victim of decisions in newsrooms.

In recent months, some prominent women's members of our group have accepted voluntary buyouts after seeing what was directly ahead for them at both national and local levels of their coverage.

Milton Kent left the *Baltimore Sun*, in part disagreeing with how the University of Maryland, still a Women's Final Four contender, was going to be handled locally.

Mechelle Voepel left the *Kansas City Star*, although she'll continue to be a leading contributor to ESPN.com.

Doug Feinberg, the Associated Press women's national writer, in charge of organizing the voting board, reported at least 15 vacancies that had to be filled since the final tally of last season.

After the AP poll became a media panel in 1994-95, it was not unusual for seven to nine changes to occur because of voters who either changed beats or moved to other papers or elsewhere.

### Mel Greenberg Philadelphia Inquirer Women's Representative



But the buyouts and retirements helped swell that total this season. With news of planned staff reductions at the *Newark Star Ledger* in New Jersey and the *Hartford Courant*, two markets that provide heavy coverage of the Rutgers and Connecticut women who compete nationally, there are no safe havens.

Our very own Wendy Parker, who had moved in recent seasons from print to the internet operation at the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, decided in mid-summer to accept the voluntary buyout at her organization.

There was no pressure on Parker to make her decision, but she noted she could see the future and sooner rather than later she'd be facing the same situation again.

"Coaches who read the headlines and don't differentiate between a wire-service byline and a staff-written piece think everything is still rosy out there," Voepel said. "Obviously, we know different."

But all is not totally lost. In the modern age of the internet and other technological advances, there are ways to maintain and perhaps still grow coverage even if the method of delivery will transform from what has been the traditional way to offer game coverage and features.

In a sense, because the industry is taking a hit nationwide, enough reporting talent exists in all regions to develop a model that could be both cost effective to those that still want to be involved with coverage and to the actual entity that emerges.

At the moment, the discussions on these fronts are

still in early brain-storming stages, along with determining where investors and advertisers can be found to produce the entity.

As one women's player, known for scoring a lot of points, once told yours truly, "Never up, never in."

And so the exploration for a new world of women's coverage will continue.

Meanwhile, in being asked to discuss media matters pertaining to women's coverage, the original intent here was to lead with the chaotic situation in Knoxville last season that followed the controversial finish of the Rutgers-Tennessee game won by the Vols with the aid of a "frozen" clock that was ignored by the officiating crew.

The preceding topic made a nice, if somber keynote to where the media world stands in women's hoops.

In other particulars, the writing workshop at the Women's Final Four instituted two seasons again remains a success. In 2007, the event was held at Cleveland State.

Last season, South Florida played host to another well-attended session and the panel consisted of yours truly, the AP's Feinberg, and the *Chicago Sun's* Steve Tucker. Penn State's Marie Hardin was the moderator.

The women's side is looking for regional reps in the same arrangement the men have for postseason voting on awards. Last season, the ballots were emailed directly to me, and while it was no problem to do the ballot count, Joe Mitch says he'd like a uniform operation.

# Cramped and courtside is a tradeoff that works for everyone

A few years back, when covering a game from the end-zone bleachers seemed unusual as well as stupid, the University of Maryland opened its shiny, new center.

Among the amenities: end-zone bleacher seats for the minimally tolerated press.

Any reporter who ever saw the T-shirts demanding certain actions against Duke or heard the bombs dropped on J.J. Redick might consider end-zone bleacher seats a logical extension of the red-carpet treatment.

Or maybe those are just provincial customs.

Anyone who ever tried to cover a Washington Redskins game from the lowdown, tucked-away corner between the upper and lower decks might infer that a certain disdain for journalists permeates the Beltsville sporting culture. If you want to see punts, passes or kicks in all their dropped-from-the-sky glory, the Redskins' press box isn't the place.

These viewing obstacles flow from different outlets and different attitudes. Maryland's press seats probably have less to do with the state of mutual respect than with reverential respect for money. Sideline seats that enable donors to grind their heels on the painted hardwood generate tremendous revenues. Most reporters don't even want to buy a tepid dog.

Maryland built the arena, which has excellent sight lines and surprising intimacy for a 17,566-seat telescope. (The building can't match Cole Fieldhouse for proximity or raw emotion, but time dribbles on.) Maryland chose its preferred revenue sources, joining many other colleges in premium-seat marketing.

## Lenox Rawlings Winston-Salem Journal Vice President



exist in the U.S. Constitution or NCAA by-laws. This

At N.C. State, for instance, the most prominent donor controls several sidecourt seats on what was exclusively press row when the Raleigh arena opened. In addition to the seats at the press table, used mainly by his family, the donor gets a monitor that constantly updates the box-score. He keeps the monitor under the table, at his feet.

This isn't about Maryland or N.C. State. This isn't about Georgia Tech, North Carolina or Wake Forest, all of which shifted the majority of press seats into elevated end-zone areas. This is about perspectives.

During the first game I covered in Maryland's new place, the reporter on my right elbow had trouble identifying players who committed fouls and got rebounds at the far end. That isn't an extreme rarity among multitasking witnesses, regardless of where schools put the press seats.

The central point: This has nothing to do with reporters' rights to the best seats, because no such rights

has everything to do with the public's unwritten right to the most accurate information, even at basketball games.

In a reasonable world, the information occasionally involves coaching behavior but more often involves the nuances of players' styles and personalities, the details and expressions and emotions that tell the story. Those kinds of stories engage the reader and increase the sport's appeal. Those stories tend to get lost in the hazy, noisy distance.

Schools benefit financially from selling the sidecourt seats. They also benefit from sharing some of those seats with reporters. Duke does that, still reserving the sideline across from the benches for the media.

The residue: collateral spit, showers of blue glitter and nudges from outraged students, followed by annual odes to the beauty of basketball in cozy Cameron Indoor Stadium. That's a trade-off that benefits all the teams.

# Better manage your e-mail, better manage your life

The facsimile machine was such a fine invention. Thank goodness, no more telecopiers.

And, then along came the plain-paper fax and, then — there it was — electronic mail. And, on top of that, e-mail with attachments. Right there, right on your computer screen.

Now, you were home free. No more waiting by the fax machine. No more busy signals. No more incomplete, crooked or illegible faxes.

Life was good.

Until, e-mail started multiplying faster than the hangers in your closet.

Here they come, by the dozens. In all shapes and sizes. With attachments, big and small.

Every morning, you wake up, fire up the laptop — or even your cell phone — and they just keep on a-coming. One after the other.

Ask anyone in our business how much e-mail they get and the answer will be, "Too much."

Is it really possible that e-mail has become a burden?

Try taking a few days off now and then, with your eyes closed and your fingers crossed, check your e-mail.

And, mixed in with all that are work assignments, bad jokes, bills, e-mails from readers of all intelligence levels and various spam messages. And then there are some things you actually might need hidden in there.

So, what are we to do? Here are a few suggestions:

- If you haven't already done so, create a separate personal e-mail account, whether it's with your home internet provider or a free service like Yahoo! or AOL. Once you do that, keep it separate. And make sure that goes for your outgoing messages, too. Remember, it's against most company policy to use their e-mail for any personal reason.

## Ted Gangi Webmaster



- Remove yourself from any lists you don't want to be on. Be polite, but ask to be removed. (In many cases, it's automated.) Make sure, however, you don't get overzealous with this, because, in some cases, it might be more of a pain to get back on a list.

- Clear out your messages as often as possible. Save the ones you need and kill the rest. The last thing you want are hundreds of old messages. With many providers, there are ways to save old e-mail to a local drive, if you really feel you need those old messages.

- Keep your outgoing messages short and to the point. The less e-mail you send, the less you will get. But, when you do send an e-mail, again, get to the point.

- Use common courtesy and answer your e-mail as quickly as possible, or simply respond to say that it might take a while to fully respond to a request.

- Don't get into an online "shouting" match with a reader (or colleague). Many newspapers are asking that their writers respond to e-mail, so do your best. But, remember, people read into things in strange ways, so keep it vanilla and on point — and, of course, short. The last thing you want is that reader firing off e-mails to you and

then getting his face-painting friends to join in.

- And, perhaps most of all, pick up the phone. If you have something to discuss, call the recipient. No sense in making a mess of each other's inbox. Make a phone call, say hello, and then resolve the situation. It's a nice, more personal approach.

Now, I can't say that I always follow those rules. There are always exceptions. And, you are likely going to overlook an occasional e-mail, just as someone may overlook one of yours. Don't take it personally. That's another good time to make a phone call. Just because people receive their e-mail instantly doesn't mean they are going to respond instantly.

While e-mail does continue to pile up, you can do your part by limiting what you send. And, even more so, be responsive as much and as quickly as you can.

E-mail is not going away. Although social networking sites like Facebook will continue to provide new ways to communicate. But as much as we all rely on e-mail, we can all make the Internet a better place by using some common sense, discretion and respect for each other's time.