

Pem McNerney

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Award-winning reporter, writer, photographer, and editor adept at community building and helping readers make sense of political, economic, societal, and cultural changes, with a sharp focus on telling stories about how people are affected by those changes.

The recipient of more than 30 awards for journalism excellence from the Connecticut Society of Professional Journalists and the New England Newspaper & Press Association in categories including general reporting, breaking news, feature writing, food page or section, health, religion, in-depth, human interest, diversity, government, COVID series, and sports. See below for a list of those awards.

A self-starter who works well independently and as part of a team, and who is eager to experiment with and embrace new, different, and innovative ways of reaching readers.

Recent work is available at <https://sourceofsustenance.substack.com/> and <https://authory.com/pemcnerney>.

EXPERIENCE

Content Creation Co., Madison, CT

January 2014 to current (on and off)

Writer and Editor

- Write about food and culture at <https://sourceofsustenance.substack.com/>
- Write and edit on a freelance and contract basis
- Mentor, Central Connecticut State University (CCSU) Communications Department mentoring program and stateside editor for CCSU Journalism Department D-Day 70 project, 2014

Shore Publishing, Madison, CT

June 2015 to November 2024

Living Editor

- Living editor reporting, writing, editing, and shooting photos for the Living Section for seven weeklies along the shoreline of Connecticut and the Connecticut River valley. Also served as deputy editor for town and government news, obits, local features, calendar, and announcements

University of New Haven, New Haven, CT

2015 to 2016

Adjunct

- Taught graduate level health communication course on patient-provider communication, health literacy, interactive health technology, and health communication campaigns with a focus on writing, public speaking, and multi-media skills

The Hartford Courant, Hartford, CT

June 2014 to June 2015

Politics Editor

- Supervised a staff of reporters covering politics and government, striving for an emphasis on how political issues affect people in their everyday lives. Worked with reporters to develop daily, enterprise, and long-form journalism projects for the newspaper and web site, using written stories, photography, and videography

AOL / Patch.com, Madison, CT

2010 to January 2014

Editor and Writer

- Developed content for hyperlocal news websites for Madison, Clinton, and Guilford. Madison site, launched in late November 2010, consistently exceeded readership goals set by AOL, by employing strategic and tactical social media techniques. As of January 2014, Madison Patch had the highest penetration by population in the region, when compared to other Patch sites, at 1.36
- Responsibilities included working a 24/7 news cycle writing stories with photos and videos; covering government, politics, public affairs, breaking news, and features; editing, assigning stories and managing freelancers; facilitating conversations on the site and social media channels; cultivating user-generated content and teaching citizen journalists how to use the platform; coordinating social media posts and cultivating online community across platforms
- In 2013, awarded First Place, General Reporting Series-Online, Connecticut SPJ for Hurricane Sandy Coverage. Also in 2013, awarded Madison Chamber of Commerce New Member Award. Also nominated in 2013 for the Madison Jaycees 58th Annual Award for Distinguished Service
- Following coverage of Hurricane Sandy, was asked to contribute article to *Introduction to Emergency Management*, Fifth Edition, a widely used emergency management textbook, and *Disaster Communications In A Changing Media World*. Article explained how social media allowed community to help cover the storm.

Yale University, New Haven, CT

2001 to 2010

- **Senior Web Editor, Office of Development** (2006-2010)
- **Communications Director, CENTURY/TTURC** (2001 to 2006)

Content Creation Co., LLC, Madison, CT

1996 to 2001

Writer and Editor

- Full time. See details above.

The Hartford Courant, Hartford, CT

1987 to 1996

City Editor, Content Coordinator, Reporter, Editor

- Local content coordinator from November 1995 to September 1996, assisted *The Courant* set up its first news websites. Assistant Editor for *Northeast* magazine from January 1995 to November 1995. City Editor from August 1991 to January 1995. Editor for Sunday business section and *Business Weekly* from June 1989 to August 1991. Business Reporter from July 1987 to June 1989.

ADDITIONAL EXPERIENCE, EDUCATION

Writer, Reporter, Editor

- Business Reporter for the *Journal Inquirer*, Manchester, CT. Correspondent for the *Springfield Daily News*, Springfield, MA. Reporter/Editor for the *Westfield Evening News*, Westfield, MA. Writer for the Energy Education Foundation, Boston, MA.
- Knight Center Fellowship, two-week course in finance, College of Journalism, University of Maryland. Continuing education and workplace sponsored courses in social media, communications, photography, and video.
- M.A. Liberal Studies, Humanities, Wesleyan University, Middletown, CT. Bachelor of Arts (English, with honors), Mount Holyoke College, South Hadley, MA

Journalism Awards

Thirty one awards, four from the New England Newspaper & Press Association, the rest from the Connecticut Society of Professional Journalists Awards for Excellence

CT SPJ 2013 (for 2012 coverage):

- In 2013, awarded First Place, General Reporting Series-Online, Connecticut SPJ for Hurricane Sandy Coverage in 2012.

CT SPJ 2016 (for 2015):

- Third place, Living With Connecticut Wildlife

CT SPJ 2017 (for 2016):

- First, Feature Writing, A Deceptively Beautiful Day Turns Fatal
- First, Leisure, In Pursuit of a Most Delicious Fish Loved By Locals
- Second, Arts & Entertainment, How Art, Storytelling Are Being Used to Save Plum Island

CT SPJ 2018 (for 2017)

- First, Health, The Straight Dope on Prescription Drug Abuse”
- Second, In Depth, with Photographer Kelley Fryer, “I’m Worth It”
- Second, Diversity, Culinary Traditions, Cultures, and Stories By Sanctuary Kitchen Through Food For The Heart”

NENPA 2018 (2016-2017?)

- Second, Food Page or Section, Food Court. “Very eye catching photography, fun concept with Food Court”
- Honorable Mention, Environmental Reporting, “Richly reported and well written story about an undeveloped, publicly owned island on auction block. Very interesting strategies by artists and activists to keep it in public hands.”

CT SPJ 2019 (For 2018)

- First, Feature Story, Race. Wreck. Fix. Repeat
- First, In Depth, Race. Wreck. Fix. Repeat
- First, Leisure, Perfecting Perfection in The Village of Essex

- Second, Arts & Entertainment, Though This Be Madness, Yet There Is Method In't
- Second, Health, When It Comes To Suicide Prevention, Direct is Best

CT SPJ 2020 (for 2019)

- First, Arts & Entertainment, From Baked Goods to Broadway Production
- First, Religion, All of Us Together
- Second, Feature, The Secret to Arnold's Success
- Second, In Depth, Saving Lives—Just Another Day At The Beach for Hammo Lifeguards

NENPA 2020 (2018-2019?):

- First, Human Interest, The Secret to Arnold's Success
- First, Sports, Race. Wreck. Fix. Repeat
- Second, Food Page, Food Court

<https://www.zip06.com/news/20200218/shore-takes-top-prizes-at-new-england-news-awards>

First place in the Human Interest Feature Story category went to Living Section Editor Pem McNerney for her story The Secret to Arnold's Success. Judges said, "This feature is written with a clever sense of place, journey and history—a fun, full, conversational read. The cadence is deliberate and effective; the story puts the reader squarely in the writer's shoes, all senses heightened. Still, despite the unique voice, the author never gets in the way. The piece is wonderfully descriptive and stitched together with brief, but lively quotes ("One senior and a Junior Mint, please"). It's also written with an economy of well-chosen words. The read is tied up beautifully, if not brilliantly, with an unexpected—or not—ending to cleanse a popcorn-and-Coke covered palate. And who knows...maybe an espresso to go."

First place in the Sports Feature Story also went to McNerney for her feature Race. Wreck. Fix. Repeat. The judges said, "Exceedingly well-told story. Felt as if I knew the story subjects well. Good job connecting and making the reader feel the emotions of the subjects."

Our Food Court section curated by McNerney took second place in the Food Page or Section. Judges said the section is "energetic in color, coverage, and page design. Nice work."

CT SPJ 2021 (for 2020)

- First, Arts & Entertainment, Here's What Happens When You Disregard Normal
- First, Leisure, It Was Precedented
- Second, Government, Local, State, Officials Stepping Up To Meet Election Day Challenges

- Second, Diversity, with Madison Reporter Jesse Williams, Youth Led BLM Rally Brings Madison Into National Conversation

CT SPJ 2022 (for 2021)

- First, COVID Series, with Photographer Kelley Fryer, COVID Creativity
- First, Sports, She Just Wanted to Play
- Second, Arts & Entertainment, Cultivating Well Being, Belonging, Curiosity, and Empathy Through Art
- Second, In Depth, They Helped Us; Now We Can Help Them
- Second, Religion, What It Takes To Get Through The Darkest of Dark Times

Links to zip06 awards stories:

<https://www.zip06.com/news/20200527/shore-publishingzip06-journalists-win-top-honors-in-ct-spj-awards>

<https://www.zip06.com/news/20190604/zip06-journalists-receive-statewide-honors>

<https://www.zip06.com/news/20180601/zip06-news-team-takes-top-honors-on-state-stage>

<https://www.zip06.com/news/20210528/zip06-journalists-recognized-for-2020-excellence-by-ctspj>