

Minutes

October 02, 2025 Press Club Meeting

1:30 p.m. – 2:30 p.m. in Crystal Beach Room at East Activity Center

Present: Doug Kates, Editor; Donna Gagnon, Vice-President; Joanne Cordes, Secretary; 18 members

Call to Order – at 1:30 p.m. by Doug

Starting the meeting promptly at 1:30, Doug first asked Joanne to read the Minutes of the prior meeting. This meeting was a Special Meeting called for August 27 in the WAC Learning Lab. The primary purpose of this meeting was Doug's concern for our limited number of building reporters with 58 of 91 buildings having no reporter. Joanne read an accounting of the Minute highlights. The full Minutes are posted on the Press Association's web page via OTOW/Newsletter/Box Office.

Following a reading of the Aug 27 Minute highlights, Doug explained that Tom was absent and in his stead, Donna, as Vice-President, had the floor.

Donna began with a summary of our presentation for the Fall Fest 2025 display. We've not had a distinct presence in past years but this year will be different. Donna showed a poster of our display ideas; one we're now using as an ad preview. We will have a raffle for a gift basket of wines by Aspirations Winery. To enter the raffle, participants must complete a simple, anonymous survey on newspaper preferences. The winner of the gift basket will be contacted by phone on the Monday following the Fall Fest.

Meantime, announcement of the raffle will play on TV-901.

During Donna's presentation, several in our group had questions:

- Why is there only 1 advertiser with a gift? Doug replied that Aspirations volunteered 5 bottles of wine when Doug asked if they would like to participate; there was no need to pursue other sponsors.
 - Pat O'Beirne asked specifically if Family Restaurant couldn't provide coupons for our display table.
- After a lengthy discussion with all in the meeting, it was unanimously decided that staff of the newspaper would **not** participate in the raffle. As someone voiced: it would not be well-received if the winner was a writer at the newspaper.
- Richard Broadhurst asked who had posted the Press Association Fall Fest poster on Facebook – Hilda's neighborly group. Answer from Doug: Jesse Tiamson. Doug also mentioned there were 700 views within the first few hours of being posted. This is considered a real positive.

Donna clarified that the purpose of our Fall Fest table is to advance the survey. Please note, if anyone is interested in becoming a writer for the OTOW News, they can be referred to Doug.

Donna added that there may be a surprise or two on the Fall Fest display table, for our writers.

And in closing, Donna asked us all for a favor to our fellow writer Fran Fairfield. Fran began at the newspaper 12 years ago with her first building article. And Fran has not missed one single month since. That's 144 consecutive stories, until this past month. Since Fran recently lost her good friend neighbor and also her best friend, her dog Kevin, Donna asked that we thank Fran for her devotion to the paper all these years.

As Doug took to the floor, he asked the group if anyone had questions on an old business topic. There being none, we proceeded to the current and upcoming news.

“Great Paper, Everyone!” Doug tells us this often and sincerely means it with each repetition of the phrase. This time, the proof of our newspaper greatness is in the increased number of advertisers for October. In fact, Doug says, it is the highest count of half-page ads – 14 -- for any single newspaper. Ever. In fact, in addition to more ads in October’s paper, Doug also heard from the publisher of an online shopper who is choosing to close her business. When advertisers asked her who should they go to, to be covered and promoted, she told them to check out our newspaper. Yes, the OTOW News. Doug pointed out that this is a great compliment to us and every story we produce. We do have a good reputation, a great product, and we can be proud of our affiliation with OTOW News. [This is despite some ongoing problems, as Irene Piper described. Irene witnessed that stacks of the papers were found in the recycling bins of the garbage room in her building. She saw the papers in the bins twice, and twice she took the papers out of the bin to place back into the wire basket in the core. The third time she saw the stack of papers in the bin, they were covered with messy recyclables so that they were unrecoverable.]

Doug delivered the annual announcement of his Writers’ Workshop event on November 6 in the EAC Auditorium. Doug told us that Tom will cook his great gourmet sliders. And there will be other snacks and water, along with wine from Doug. Doug even proclaimed: Everything coming from Doug sounds better with wine. As usual, Doug asked that we have 90 writers present. But he’ll be happy with 45.

The final point on Doug’s agenda was a reminder of the Tampa Bay Downs trip in February with three other clubs, namely New York/New Jersey, Travel, and Canadian. We can join them in the racing event and then the luncheon. The cost is \$45 each – which included lunch and we are to provide our own transportation. A hand count showed just 2 in our group with an interest in going. Doug would like at least 15-20 participants. We can let Doug know by email directly to him.

Pat O’Beirne had 2 questions before meeting’s end:

- Can we the staff have rate sheets to disburse when we visit restaurants? Yes, was the reply.
- Did we decide what to call occasional writers? No, that is yet to be determined, was the reply.

Winner of our 50/50 raffle of \$13 was Mary Lou Wall.

Adjournment followed at 2:10 p.m.

Minutes submitted by Joanne Cordes, secretary