Editors’ favorites
Last November, features reporter Aaron Randle found seven rising hip-hop artists to watch in KC. He did this by doing a lot of research on social media, as these artists seems to only live on Twitter and Instagram.

To go with the story, video journalist Shelly Yang filmed a group cipher, which was the perfect accompaniment. It allowed us to showcase each artist and to bring music into the story — a component whose effect words alone cannot achieve.


The Kansas City Star

These seven artists just might take KC's hip-hop scene to the next level

Why?

It's the simple question that has dominated Kansas City's hip-hop scene pretty much since there has been a Kansas City hip-hop scene.

Why can't local artists find success outside of Kansas City? Why isn't there more local media support for our artists (not named Tech N9ne)? Why does our music always seem one — or a few — steps behind the sounds coming from other corners of the country? Why can't we boost an artist (again, other than Tech N9ne) into the national limelight?
Editor's favorite: Revamped podcast

We had a pop culture podcast that was a labor of love for a reporter and multimedia producer but hadn’t connected with a wide audience despite consistently strong content. A new name and better marketing has already doubled downloads and given fresh energy to the team. The new name – I Love You So Much: The Austin360 Podcast (often shortened to I Love You So Much) – focuses the content and the tone and plays off one of the city’s most popular selfie murals (we got the blessing of the mural creator). Our team also really streamlined how this is produced and now involves more members of the features staff and the community. We knew the content was good; we needed to package it better.

Austin American-Statesman and Austin360
Are po-boys now for rich folks? The price of New Orleans po-boys

Po-Boy Prices

Numbers can be fun. After one of our reporters complained about the price of her shrimp po-boy sandwich, we can decided to find the average price around town. Since the sandwiches can be cut to different lengths, we also calculated a price per inch. We used the menu collection of a local university to find the inflation adjusted prices. And we included charts.

NOLA.com | The Times-Picayune
Editor’s favorite — reflecting your community: One great way to embrace the diversity and universality of your community is through food, faith and celebrations. Ann Maloney went to a local mosque and joined that community as it broke its Ramadan fast.

NOLA.com | The Times-Picayune
Food writer and dining critic Mike Sutter launched “365 Days of Tacos” — a yearlong project where he features a different taquería, restaurant or truck every day on our subscriber site, ExpressNews.com. Each week, he compiled a short round-up of the week’s offerings into a taco roundup that appears in our Sunday Taste section and on our free site, mySA.com. On our subscriber site, on the project’s landing page, ExpressNews.com/tacos, there’s a map updated each day with a new pin and link to the write-up.

At the end of the project, we will compile the best places and tacos of the series into a book that will be sold in local tourist spots downtown as well as booksellers and online. As part of the promotion of the book, the Express-News will hold some sort of ticketed taco event/festival.

Next year’s project will be 52 weeks of barbecue and will also end with a book.

San Antonio Express-News
365 Days of Tacos

Click through the slideshow to follow the series through 2017.

E-N food critic Mike Sexton updates NPR as his taco expedition approaches the halfway mark.
Taco map!!
Reader-driven: 21 more of New Orleans' most annoying people: Are you on the list? Doug MacCash, art critic and culture reporter, asked our readers to tell us about the most annoying people in the city. Then, he made emoticons of each one. It was so popular, readers kept sending in more suggestions, so he even did round 2: “Thanks to suggestions by our NOLA.com commenters and some more curmudgeonly consideration, we've come up with 21 more of New Orleans' most annoying.”
Health challenges: Our nutrition columnist has begun doing health challenges for readers. She created her own Facebook group for the challenges. So far, we’ve done two: alcohol abstention, sleep and intermittent fasting. We run them online and in print, do FB Live talks, and, in the case of the “Alcohol Free for 40” challenge, we hosted a mocktail party at the office, inviting local restaurants and bars and health drink providers to set up stations to present their wares. The event included free before-and-after blood work for folks through the local blood bank. Readers love challenges, hundreds responded, especially to alcohol free, and took part. Many thanked Molly for helping them to see they had a drinking problem or to just cut back on booze consumption. (No nutrition columnist? Partner with a hospital or other health organization on these.)
This is no-brainer tied to weather.

After a rainy spell, we asked readers to email mushroom pix from their yards. Our callout specified that contribution amounted to an agreement to have their pic published by us (without other compensation). From that came a great photo front and an online gallery.

The work included following up to collect contracts via email for the photos we considered for print. We had SO MANY OPTIONS there was no holdup if we didn’t get a contract back in time.

A reporter followed up with a feature about the local mycology group and how they know what to eat.

Arkansas Democrat-Gazette | Arkansasonline.com
Readers sent almost 1000 pix; we picked 11 for this photo front and pulled the rest into an online gallery.

A reporter went out with the local mycological society and wrote a cover about how they know what’s edible.

Fungus finders

‘And for the ladies, a poke on the head’

If the Arkansas Mycological Society can’t ID it, for heaven’s sake don’t put it in your mouth
We had seen studies saying that today’s teens are more stressed than adults, and we wanted to find out why. On this video, Soledad O’Brien offers a first-hand look into the lives of teens and a major stressor: homework. Through the teens’ words, expressions and body language, we understand how much homework stress is affecting their lives. The video was part of a special report that included two other videos from O’Brien’s Starfish Media and coverage of a WebMD survey about teen stress. Given the negative impact that excess stress can have on teens’ mental health, we felt our special raised awareness of this issue in an authentic way.


Insta-everything: We've had great response to stories we've done on how Instagram and other social media change the way we live. Whether it's how Instagram makes restaurants re-think their lighting and décor, or how selfie-culture has sparked a rise in Botox treatments for the young, these stories elicit comments and engagement.


Star Tribune
Local, local, local: Is there a term or phrase that is unique to your community, but no one is quite sure of its origin? Dig into it. We did that with the story: “'The Trinity': How onion, celery and bell pepper got that name”

After lots of interviews and searches in newspaper archives, Ann Maloney discovered: “We may never know who first used the term "the holy trinity” to refer to the humble onion, celery and bell pepper, but we can be fairly certain that chef Paul Prudhomme is the person who popularized it.”

NOLA.com | The Times-Picayune
Do you remember Nick's Original Big Train Bar? A lost New Orleans bar

By Todd A. Price, tprice@nola.com
NOLA.com | The Times-Picayune

The bumper stickers said, “Follow me to Nick’s Bar.” If you took that advice, you would have found a barely standing bar at 2400 Tulane Ave. in the shadow of the Dixie Brewery called Nick's Original Big Train Bar. And behind the bar, until he died in 1979 at the age of 86, you would have encountered Nick Castrogiovanni.

Vintage restaurant photo

Each Thursday, for Throwback Thursday, we post a vintage restaurant photo in our Facebook Group dedicated to food and ask readers to share their memories. The following week, we run the photo on the inside of the Food & Living section with a brief history and the best memories from readers. Online, we post the story with a gallery of photos. The feature ties together social, print and web.

NOLA.com | The Times-Picayune
Old News is our weekly column that picks a story from 100 years ago and researches the people involved. It generated this cover and 13 weeks of an art feature that readers responded to.

The Page of Presidents was an advertising contest created by a turn-of-the-century entrepreneur and published in several states (look it up in Newspapers.com). He talked 27 businesses into sponsoring 27 individual blocks in a full-page ad with info about the 27 presidents to that date — plus deliberate typos. Readers were to spot all the typos, take their list to each advertiser and also write to the paper. The prize was worth about $500 in today’s money.

Of course the newspaper printers added accidental typos.

We explained all that in an introductory cover story May 22, 1917. Then our art department re-created the ad blocks, with all their typos and then some, and for the next 13 weeks we ran them in batches. We did not offer a prize, and we got a lot of email from typo-spotting readers.
Editor's favorite — Always, our top 100 restaurants:
https://graphics.stltoday.com/apps/stl100-2017/

We do an event with this every year where about 40 of these restaurants bring samples. We raised the prices this year and it sold out again.

St. Louis Post-Dispatch
Restaurants and Immigrants: Each year we do a project for our Taste section, and this year we zeroed in on immigrants and the critical role they play in the food world, both as change agents in bringing new cultures and tastes to the area and as a workforce. This special print section was made up of an overarching story, a couple dozen profiles and a map of restaurants. We created a special web app to showcase it online.


Land of lutefisk? Hardly. Meet 26 immigrants who have woven their cooking into the fabric of Minnesota, changing the Twin Cities dining scene forever.