

# New state editor named

By KEN ABRAMCZYK  
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A 22-year veteran community journalist who has won numerous awards for his work will succeed Tim Richard as the news service regional editor for HomeTown Newspapers Network.



Mike Malott

part of our coverage," Malott said. "The state sets all the rules for school districts, cities, townships and counties. A lot of the policy begins at the state level."

Malott was honored as HomeTown Newspapers Journalist of the Year in 1992. He has won numerous awards from the Michigan Press Association, the National Newspaper Association and Suburban Newspapers of America.

Richard praised Malott. "He has a very inquiring mind," Richard said. "He's an extremely sharp person." As a managing editor for The Novi News and The Northville Record, Malott was responsible for managing a staff of 11, assigning stories, editing copy, writing editorials and laying out the newspaper. In 1990, Malott served as a managing editor at The Milford Times and The South Lyon Herald in South Lyon.

Malott also worked as news editor for six years at the Spinal Column newspaper, weekly Oakland Business Monthly, and prior to that, as a staff writer, covering the state, county and regional issues.

In 1977, Malott received a bachelor's degree in applied arts and sciences from Central Michigan University with majors in journalism, psychology and sociology.

# Veteran journalist retires from Capitol beat

By KEN ABRAMCZYK  
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Anyone who files a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act probably has veteran newspaperman Tim Richard to thank.



Tim Richard

Though Richard downplays his role in the passage of that law and the Open Meetings Act, his advocacy on that issue helped get the news service regional editor for HomeTown Communications Network elected to the Michigan Journalism Hall of Fame last year.

And this week, Richard, 63, has decided to retire and relocate from Livonia with his wife, Nancy, to Bear Lake in Manistowish County, where he plans to pursue his hobbies of fishing and training his Australian shepherd, Sheila, for agility competition.

"The lake is near the shore of Lake Michigan, in a great fruit and vegetable growing area, where there are a lot of pine trees and lakes teeming with fish," Richard said.

**Career history**  
Richard ends a 32-year career with the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, where he worked after stints at the St. Joseph Herald-Press and Kalamazoo Gazette. After graduating from Redford High School in 1963, Richard attended the University of Michigan where he received a bachelor's degree in economics in 1967 and a master's degree in business administration in 1969.

Richard is credited for his work toward the eventual passage in 1976 of the Open Meetings Act and Freedom of Information Act.

Stan Soffin, chairman of the Michigan Journalism Hall of Fame Committee, said last year the committee was impressed by Richard's "courageous leadership on behalf of a free press."

"(Richard's) commitment to the FOIA and Open Meetings Act - and his tireless work behind the scenes to protect these measures - will stand as a model for Michigan journalists for years to come."

Phil Power, owner and chairman of HomeTown Communications Network Inc., wrote in his nomination letter that Richard is the "single most competent" political and governmental reporter in Michigan.

"Tim's journalistic output is truly prodigious," Power said.

**'He is particularly the greatest example I know of a disciplined, serious and perceptive reporter relating statewide events to the needs of individual readers in their hometown communities'**

Phil Power  
—HomeTown Communications Network chairman

"He regularly writes core stories on significant events with localization possibilities scattered throughout."

**Richard praised**

Power also cited Richard for single-handedly reporting policy issues associated with the State Board of Education and with its attempt, fundamentally to change the nature of Michigan public schools.

"He is particularly the greatest example I know of a disciplined, serious and perceptive reporter relating statewide events to the needs of individual readers in their hometown communities."

But today Richard downplays his role. "I was given the lion's share of credit, but I was part of a movement for open government."

In 1968, Richard, who was a reporter with the Kalamazoo Gazette, was excluded from secret meetings of the board of Western Michigan University. Richard asked for minutes of past meetings and the board secretary accidentally gave him the minutes of the secret meetings, during what they had made policy decisions.

Richard wrote the story and the editor killed it, which gave Richard "a fire in my belly about the issue of open government."

The unpublished WMU expose in 1968 led directly to his advocacy of the Open Meetings Act, and activity in the Society of Professional Journalists and Michigan FOI Committee Inc. to defend the "sunshine" laws and teach people how to use them through seminars and newsletters.

**He is particularly the greatest example I know of a disciplined, serious and perceptive reporter relating statewide events to the needs of individual readers in their hometown communities'**

In 1971, Richard wrote about the "age of majority" in the Observer and said the idea to Gov. William Milliken, which resulted in the state laws lowering legal ages from 21 to 18.

"People are physically maturing younger by two or three years than they were in the 19th century," Richard said. Richard reasoned that 18-year-olds were fighting in wars. "Let's give them a chance to vote," Richard said.

**Richard admires**

Richard's most admired politicians are former Gov. William Milliken and Lt. Gov. James Brickley. "They were moderates. They solved problems without adherence to ideology. There were a lot of good people in both parties."

Richard also admired former Gov. James Blanchard's knowledge of facts and his "feel for history."

Richard says the press and the public should continue to watch government with attorneys now chipping away at the FOI and Open Meetings acts. "The biggest abuses we are seeing is in the hiring of the chief executive process and the second biggest bunch of abuses are in the FOI in the charging high prices for documents and the long delays in processing the documents."

Richard also sees politicians "using the tools of government to promote themselves."

Richard has enjoyed helping out people with FOI requests and giving seminars on the same.

"You have a right to know what the government wants to do to you before it does it to you. You have a right to know the amendments before the final product comes out, who's really on your side or who's voting yes at the last minute."

"You have a right to your own input of government. You have a right to know who else has input to the government."

For now, though, Richard looks forward to relaxation with his wife and his dog, and casting into Bear Lake and other waterways in northern Michigan.

"I've been married to the same woman for 37 years, and she's a better fisherman than I am."

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**SPOTLIGHT ON Orthodontics**  
by Josephine Finazzo, D.M.D.  
**AN EARLY CHECK**

While not every child needs braces, the American Association of Orthodontists suggests that all children be screened for braces by age 7. At that time, the orthodontist can check to see if the child's four front teeth and six-year molars have emerged and if there are eight permanent teeth present. The orthodontist will also want to check for habits (such as thumb sucking) that might contribute to the need for braces. The orthodontist might conclude that the child does not need braces. If treatment is recommended, the child might undergo more extensive exams that include taking a mold of his or her teeth and a full set of X-rays. These will help the orthodontist plan a safe and tooth-savest strategy.

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by Herbert M. Gardner, D.D.S.

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P.S. More than 400 species of bacteria live in the mouth, where some may infect the gums and underlying bone that support the teeth.