

# **THE LENS**



**FOCUSED ON NEW ORLEANS AND THE GULF COAST**

**2013**  
Year Review

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## **The Lens**

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*“I think The Lens has already bumped it up a couple notches since this time last year. More and more I find myself turning to The Lens for hard news instead of NOLA or other local MSM entities.”*

JASON BERRY,  
**American Zombie**

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## TO ENGAGE & EMPOWER IS OUR **MISSION**

The mission of The Lens is to engage and empower the residents of New Orleans and the Gulf Coast by providing the information and analysis necessary to advocate for more accountable and just governance.

With a staff of experienced investigative reporters and pundits, The Lens merges the accuracy, fairness and thoroughness of traditional journalism with the speed, urgency and interactivity of online media. This hybrid model is well-suited to New Orleans, a city where residents count media watchdogs as allies in the struggle to rebuild a better community in the face of limited resources.

# THE STAFF

## FOUNDERS

Karen Gadbois  
Ariella S. Cohen

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# A LETTER FROM THE **CHAIRMAN**

The Lens identified five areas for emphases, Criminal Justice, Schools, Government & Politics, Land Use, and the Environment. In each of those areas The Lens provided New Orleans and the Gulf Coast with analysis necessary to advocate for more accountable and just governance.

This is the overarching goal of The Lens and the Staff and the Board of Directors. We all remain steadfast in our dedication to achieving our goal.

Our readers see it play out in story after story; from live blogs at Court proceedings to uncovering corruption at the Parish Prison to being the only place where consistent information regarding Charter Schools can be found. The Lens has made its mark and will continue to do so. To continue requires both the unfailing willingness of staff but it also requires adequate funding. This is where you, our readers, come in. Keep reading our stories, keep sharing our stories, keep coming to our events and when the time is right join the more than 500 readers who've made a financial commitment to keep the in-depth news The Lens provide coming your way.

On behalf of the Board of Directors I want to thank each and every one of you for your continuous support.

Take care.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Cal Johnson', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

**Retired Judge Calvin Johnson,  
Board Chairman**

# A LETTER FROM THE **FOUNDER**

Thanks to our supporters and readers we are about to celebrate another year of reporting on issues that inform and are informed by an engaged populous.

The changing landscape of how people receive their news and information has undergone dramatic changes this year, and in some ways this was the year of the news becoming the news. With that we saw more opportunities for collaboration.

Sustained collaborations with The Louisiana Weekly and WVUE Fox 8 along with added opportunities for readers to catch a story on our local NPR affiliate WWNO as well as The Times–Picayune and The New Orleans Advocate have ensured The Lens a place on your computer screen, on your morning commute via radio or on your doorstep the old fashioned print way.

We value our role as a part of the news community and hope to see and hear from you in the coming year.



**Karen Gadbois,**  
**Founder of The Lens**



# REPORTING

THAT GETS RESULTS

# IMPACT

Nighttime Photo: NASA Satellite

Our driving ambition at The Lens is to engage the public to enhance awareness of public issues – and to highlight patterns of corruption when we find them in our reporting.

We believe that citizens who are well-informed are better equipped to remain connected to participatory democratic governance. We also believe that corruption begets corruption – and our aim is to stop it in its tracks, whenever and wherever we see it.

We're committed to people-centered accountability, whether we're writing about corrupt charter school administrators embezzling public money or elected officials misusing public funds in their private business dealings.

Bottom line: When accountability is lost, the entire community pays a price. When public officials engage in unchecked shenanigans, the price is paid on the backs of taxpayers left footing the bill. It's paid in the form of cynicism and mistrust of public officials and those entrusted with public money.

Working with our colleagues in the New Orleans Coalition on Open Governance (NOCOG), we identify areas of public concern and provide the in-depth reporting that provides a basis for intelligent and informed decision-making. In turn, the NOCOG coalition of advocacy groups use our stories to educate and work with the community to bring about change.

# CRIMINAL JUSTICE



## ORLEANS PARISH PRISON CONSENT DECREE

The major story of 2013 was a [consent decree outlining reforms at Orleans Parish Prison](#) and the ensuing battle between Mayor Mitch Landrieu and Sheriff Marlin Gusman over who would pay for it. The Lens followed each development and [was the only news outlet to live-blog a critical hearing in federal court](#), where lawyers disclosed a shocking video that showed inmates using drugs and displaying a loaded gun inside the jail. Later, The Lens addressed the price of the consent decree [by](#)

[describing various ways that taxes and fees could be raised to pay for the reforms.](#)

**IMPACT:** People around the country could follow in real time as questions were raised about Orleans jail conditions, and New Orleans residents got real information about how changes could be funded.

## LETHAL INJECTION

The Lens has doggedly covered the delays and questions [surrounding the pending execution of Christopher Sepulvado](#), a focus of debate about capital punishment and government transparency. [After the manufacturer of a drug commonly used for lethal injection proscribed its use in executions](#), the question was whether the state had the drugs it needed to carry out an execution. Lawyers for the state first claimed they had no inventory records for the drug, then produced them nine months later — showing that the supply in hand had expired. Since then, the state has changed its execution method and tried to conceal the source of a new drug combination.

**IMPACT:** Our stories held the state Department of Corrections accountable to the public by detailing how its lawyers have failed to disclose public records that would answer questions about how the government plans to execute a prisoner. And St. Louis Public Radio used documents we published to further its own reporting about a similar situation.



# CHARTER SCHOOLS



## GOVERNANCE PROBLEMS AT LYCÉE FRANÇAIS

Lycée Français de la Nouvelle-Orleans, a French-curriculum charter school, entered 2013 with many of the troubles it had experienced in 2012 still roiling.

In late 2012, [the school disclosed an unexpected \\$90,000 deficit](#) and cut three administrative positions. Early in 2013, The Lens revealed that the [school paid a former principal \\$30,000 after she had left](#), even though the school's board had not approved the payment.

Troubles continued for the board, including the revelation — another story broken by The Lens — that its acting CEO [had been accused of threatening a student at another school and had](#)

[been banned from the campus](#). We also reported that the [board had violated the state's open-meetings law by discussing over email](#) plans to oust its principal.

**IMPACT:** Through its enterprise reporting and live coverage, The Lens offered the school community unparalleled access to the board's decisionmaking. The comments sections of our stories became a forum for parents and teachers to discuss the problems at the school. The state [Department of Education and the Louisiana Association of Public Charter Schools stepped in to help the board](#) resolve accountability and transparency issues. By July, Lycée Français had a new CEO and a complete changeover in board members. The chairman of the new board promised to work on establishing transparency and trust.



# CHARTER SCHOOLS



## CHARTER SCHOOL

New Orleans has a larger proportion of students in public charter schools than any other U.S. city, and The Lens provides more comprehensive coverage of those schools than any other media outlet in the city.

Members of our Charter Schools Reporting Corps — freelance journalists and citizens interested in education and governance — attend the vast majority of board meetings held by the 40-plus independent organizations that run these schools. (Each organization constitutes a legally autonomous school district.) Our reporters are often the only members of the public in attendance, conveying vital information to the school community while keeping an eye on compliance with public-meetings laws. When a violation occurs, and they are not uncommon, we write about it. It has a chastening effect on the board — and officials from other schools have taken notice.

### Some of the highlights of our coverage:

- The New Beginnings Schools Foundation board was reprimanded by the state Department of Education for violating open-meetings laws after The Lens reported that the board had improperly limited public comment at a meeting.
- The Lens exhaustively cataloged busing costs at each charter organization, revealing that the cost of transportation had

increased with the proliferation of open-enrollment charters, that some schools paid much more than others, and some children had to deal with long rides across the city.

- The Lens revealed hefty bonuses — one of them topped \$40,000 — that a charter management organization paid teachers because student scores on standardized tests rose.
- After The Lens reported that public schools would be charged for water use for the first time since Hurricane Katrina, three schools sought refunds from the Sewerage and Water Board, which had billed them erroneously.
- The Lens revealed incidents at two schools in which employees had been accused of stealing, yet hadn't been charged with a crime. In one case, The Lens found that the school's background check failed to detect that an employee had been accused of stealing from another school system. Though months had passed since the accusations, the police hadn't completed their investigations. After our stories, charges were filed against both people.



# SCHOOLS



## STANDARDIZED TEST CHEATING

The Lens compiled public records [to describe previously unknown incidents of cheating on standardized tests in New Orleans](#). We then compared rates of irregularities [to show that New Orleans had far more problems than school systems elsewhere in the state](#). We [published stories explaining exactly how we did our research](#), and we posted all the relevant documents online. Reporter Jessica Williams then [participated in a live Web chat to take questions from readers and sources](#).

**IMPACT:** It took months for the state to respond to The Lens' public-records requests for documents on testing irregularities. But for the 2012-13 school year, the state posted its test security report online. Other media outlets in the city co-published our first story, and The Times-Picayune/NOLA.com later published its own examination of test cheating.

## CLOSURE OF FAILING SCHOOLS

We tracked students from schools shut down for poor academic performance, revealing [that in some cases they wound up in schools that were just as bad](#). Another theme that drew our close focus: the disruptiveness of the process [as experienced by teachers, students and their families](#).

**IMPACT:** Lens readers said our stories helped them see how repeated changes in the state's evaluation system made it hard to assess whether schools were improving. Our work was republished and cited by four of our reporting partners, including the nonprofit education reporting outlet, The Hächinger Report.





## SCIENCE VS. POLITICS IN COASTAL RESTORATION DEBATE

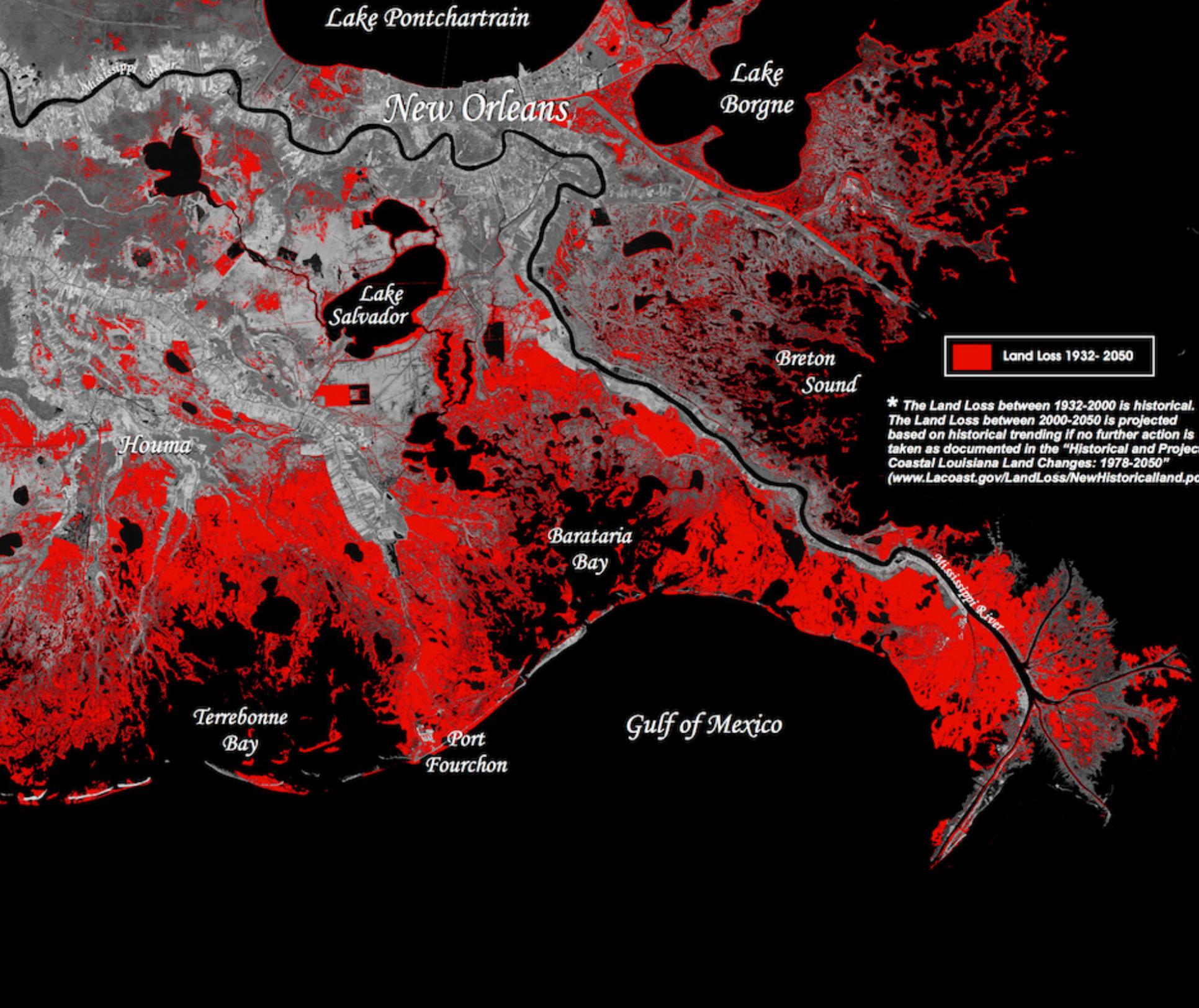
Louisiana’s sinking coast is an issue as complex — and urgent — as any the state faces. The Lens has been at the forefront in covering [evolving strategies](#) to re-engineer our shores and wetlands.

Staff reporter Bob Marshall, a Pulitzer Prize winner, [has guided Lens readers](#) through a devilish mix of [science](#), [law](#), economics and politics. Not least of the challenges has been sustaining public attention to decisions that must be made here and now, even though impacts are decades away. Among other scoops, The Lens broke the news [that Louisiana faces the highest rate of relative sea-level rise in the world](#). It was one of our most-shared stories, and other news outlets followed the story.

Marshall reported [“The Louisiana Coast: Last Call,”](#) a 15-part series that ran during “Morning Edition” on the local NPR affiliate, WWNO.

We were also in the vanguard in reporting new research [that has raised questions about the state’s primary method to save the coast](#): diverting Mississippi River water into marshes starved of sediment since the river was leveed after 1927. The story — of vital concern to the coastal fishing industry — was picked up by the Houma and Thibodeaux papers as well as The Advocate. Fox 8 News [aired a package Marshall prepared](#) and interviewed him during a news broadcast. And WWNO repeatedly called on The Lens’ environmental reporter for insights on the coastal issues.

**IMPACT:** Marshall spoke to a variety of groups — and did three documentary interviews — about the issues facing the coast. “Last Call” generated so much interest that The Lens hosted a panel on the subject that drew a standing-room crowd to Loyola University. Rattled by the mounting clamor, the state’s Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority announced it is [assembling an independent committee of scientists to review concerns about diversions](#). The state also [responded to our sea-level rise story by defending their plan to rebuild the coast](#), which they said accounts for rising seas.



Lake Pontchartrain

New Orleans

Lake Borgne

Lake Salvador

Breton Sound

Land Loss 1932- 2050

Houma

Barataria Bay

\* The Land Loss between 1932-2000 is historical. The Land Loss between 2000-2050 is projected based on historical trending if no further action is taken as documented in the "Historical and Project Coastal Louisiana Land Changes: 1978-2050" ([www.Lacoast.gov/LandLoss/NewHistoricalland.p](http://www.Lacoast.gov/LandLoss/NewHistoricalland.p))

Terrebonne Bay

Port Fourchon

Gulf of Mexico

Mississippi River



## COASTAL EROSION LAWSUIT

One key vector in the struggle over the coast was a lawsuit filed in July by the east bank Flood Protection Authority against 97 oil, gas and pipeline companies. Its goal is to force the companies to finance coastal recovery by holding them to environmental restoration agreements they signed decades ago in securing the rights to dredge canals, lay pipe and drill wells.

Levee board officials said the suit was warranted by the enormous increase in flood protection costs stemming from coastal destruction allegedly caused by the industry. [To Gov. Bobby Jindal, it was tantamount to an act of war](#) against an industry central to the state's economy — and one famously quick to open its checkbook in support of candidates and legislative goals it favors.

In continuing coverage, [Marshall shed light on the legal nuances of the suit](#) and its roots in local history. The Lens [live-blogged meetings](#) and [provided access to key documents](#) so our readers could experience the debate firsthand and come to their own conclusions.

John Barry, the author and flood expert who convinced the Southeast Louisiana Flood Protection Authority-East to file the lawsuit, [was the guest at the first of our Breakfast with the Newsmakers events](#). Marshall and other experts [made themselves available for our live Web chats with readers](#). Marshall frequently spoke before groups and on talk radio about the suit. The Lens' Mark Moseley was also [invited to speak before the state coastal authority after one of his columns](#).

**IMPACT:** Lens readers gained a deep understanding of the issues at hand and had a front-row seat at important public meetings.

# LAND USE



## COMMUNICATION BREAKDOWNS HURT RECOVERY

Although 9th Ward resident Kimberly James thought the process to revamp her Hurricane Katrina-damaged home would be a simple one, miscommunication between [city and state agencies resulted in the house being bulldozed](#) by the city's blight-eradication program even after a contractor had begun renovation.

**IMPACT:** The story, which was brought up during a City Council budget hearing, drew attention to problems with city record keeping and showed poor communication between the city and the state. Although the city never explained to James what happened, The Lens obtained correspondence that showed what had gone wrong.

## FIGHTING ILLEGAL YARD PAVING

In her Squandered Heritage column, reporter and co-founder Karen Gadbois returned repeatedly to the city's epidemic of [front and side yards being paved illegally to make parking spaces](#). It was [more than a matter of aesthetics](#); there was also the issue of public safety. Vehicles in front yards frequently obstruct sidewalks, forcing pedestrians into the street. More hazardously, paved yards reduce stormwater absorption and increase street flooding in a low-lying city that needs every square foot of greenspace.

**IMPACT:** The city's failure to enforce its own laws and permitting requirements was an important revelation. One property owner who had paved his Orleans Avenue yard in its entirety — a focus of multiple stories by Gadbois — was rebuffed by the city when he applied to legalize the unpermitted work. Grass now grows where a concrete slab sluiced water into the street and adjacent properties. The more lasting impact is pervasive but harder to measure: a reluctance by better-informed homeowners to make that same mistake in the first place.



# LAND USE



## CITY CODE ENFORCEMENT EFFORT REVIVED

The attention to illegal yard paving was part of a more general concern on Gadbois' part: the tendency of property owners to simply ignore land-use decisions and the inability of the Department of Safety and Permits, the Vieux Carré Commission, the Historic District Landmarks Commission and the Board of Zoning Adjustments to enforce compliance.

Though the public clamored for enforcement, city departments were overstretched by the massive post-Katrina rebuild, and certain types of zoning violations weren't being enforced.

In a frontal attack on the problem, The Lens requested the agendas and results of previous Board of Zoning Adjustments hearings to see what became of properties that were denied permits for various purposes, including plans to pave and park.

**IMPACT:** Shortly after we requested this information, [the city began to hold zoning variance hearings again](#), for the first time in more than a year. It now holds them weekly and is starting to deal with a backlog of cases.

## DOWNTOWN REDEVELOPMENT

Last spring, The Lens learned of several related proposals that would reshape the downtown area. Over a period of days, we broke news [about a convention center expansion](#) and a [proposal to create a major tourist attraction on the river](#). We described [a proposed fee on hotel guests to fund the projects](#).

Later [we detailed developer Pres Kabacoff's \\$1 billion vision of a reconfigured downtown](#), a plan combining new ideas with those advanced by Mayor Mitch Landrieu and others, including: renovation of the Iberville public housing development and parts of Tremé;

moving City Hall and the Civil District Court into the former Charity Hospital building, and turning two vacant blocks on Canal Street into retail shops.

**IMPACT:** Rather than wait for officials to announce a deal put together behind closed doors, The Lens gave the public an advance look at the plans. We then [offered forums for public input](#) by hosting a live Web chat about [what to do with the abandoned Charity Hospital](#) and publishing [readers' ideas](#).

# GOVERNMENT & POLITICS



*State Rep. Chris Broadwater checks government websites for compliance with his law requiring that a custodian of records be listed.*

## GOVERNMENT TRANSPARENCY

In 2013, legislators passed a resolution requiring government agencies to make it easier for people to obtain public records. The resolution simply required agencies to post online the name of the person who was the custodian of public records. In October, The Lens followed up with state Rep. Chris Broadwater, the sponsor of the law. He was frustrated that so few government agencies had complied.

**IMPACT:** The offices of the governor and lieutenant governor [immediately complied after The Lens contacted them for the story.](#)

**Public records requests matter because that's the most important way we have transparency in government. We ought to be able to read anything we want that is not excepted under the law. — C.B. Forgotston**

## RIVER FERRY CUTBACKS

The hours for the Algiers ferry were suddenly curtailed last summer after funding was cut and no company stepped forward to take it over. The Lens interviewed elected leaders and pored over transportation planning documents to see what had happened to the city's ferries. [It turned out that many had seen this crisis coming,](#) raising alarms for years about the viability of New Orleans ferry services. And yet local officials had not heeded the warnings to ensure their continued operation.

**IMPACT:** The Friends of the Ferry circulated The Lens story as it fought to restore the ferry to its original schedule. More than 100 people attended a public meeting, which [The Lens live-blogged,](#) to voice support for longer hours and changes in the proposed fare structure. The City Council made some of those changes when it approved the new fares.

# GOVERNMENT & POLITICS



## CONFLICT OF INTEREST EXPOSED

The Lens' Charles Maldonado uncovered a potential conflict of interest involving a City Council member whose police-officer sons stood to benefit from her changes to an ordinance reforming the Police Department's off-duty employment program.

**IMPACT:** The Lens was the first to bring this issue to light, and the U.S. Justice Department warned the city that the changes could violate a consent decree over the NOPD. The council member in question later recused herself from the key vote.

## NOLA FOR LIFE FUND

In late 2012, the city unveiled the NOLA for Life Fund, a \$1 million, privately administered grantmaking fund connected to the mayor's violence-reduction program. The Lens found that grants had been awarded to questionable, newly created and in some cases nonexistent nonprofits. In one case, an organization received a grant although it had failed to follow through on a previous proposal to build a publicly funded community center.

The Lens also reported on the grantmaking process, which was closed to the public despite the close involvement of city officials.

**IMPACT:** Citing coverage in The Lens, the City Council held a public hearing on the grant program and called for increased accountability.



# GOVERNMENT & POLITICS



## FISCAL HAWKS CHALLENGE GOV. JINDAL

Beginning with an in-depth article in February, Lens reporter Tyler Bridges, a Pulitzer Prize winner, identified the emergence of influential conservative Republicans dubbed the Fiscal Hawks. They attacked Gov. Bobby Jindal's claim on fiscal conservatism by [assailing his plan to balance the state budget with accounting gimmicks](#), specifically the [use of one-time money to pay for recurring expenses](#).

The unexpected attack on a conservative governor by lawmakers further to his right [was one of two major stories out of the session](#).

The Lens stayed with the story of the Hawks' revolt, [describing a summer meeting between them and Democratic leaders](#) — a meeting some didn't want to discuss because of pressure from Jindal supporters.

**IMPACT:** The Lens' articles brought widespread attention to the Fiscal Hawks; newspapers and TV stations followed with their own coverage. Now exposed through in-depth reporting, the budget gimmicks they opposed will be harder to deploy in future budget battles.

### FISCAL HAWKS

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Brett Geymann



Rep. John Schroder



Rep. Cameron Henry



*Mother's Day Shooting, 2013.*  
Photo: Abdul Aziz

People have come to rely on The Lens for thoughtful columns in which members of the community weigh in on issues of public interest. These columns sometimes play off the opinions expressed by others and frequently inspire vigorous debate in the comment sections.

## GUNPLAY ON MOTHER'S DAY

[A cluster of opinion pieces](#) addressed [the tragic Mother's Day rampage](#) in which a gunman opened fire on a second-line parade. [Among the contributors was videographer and blogger Deb Cotton](#), a colleague of The Lens who nearly lost her life in the incident.

## THERE GOES THE NEIGHBORHOOD

Marigny native son C.W. Cannon treated readers of The Lens [to a series of columns on gentrification](#), informed by his scholarship — Cannon is a professor at Loyola — and his [personal experience as a lifetime resident of a community undergoing rapid change](#).

The columns were some of the best-read pieces The Lens published in 2013. [Reaction on both sides of the gentrification debate was intense](#), whether readers hailed Cannon's insights or dropped into a defensive crouch as though he was personally calling out newcomers to his neighborhood.

## COMMENTGATE

Lens staff columnist Mark Moseley [pursued a fascination](#) with [the scandal that engulfed the U.S. Attorney's office in New Orleans](#) after key personnel were found to have posted pseudonymous comments on online news stories about cases. By following hunches and analyzing topics and writing styles, Moseley added to the list of usernames seemingly involved. U.S. District Judge Kurt Engelhardt apparently noticed, including those usernames in a lengthy opinion in which he vacated convictions for the high-profile Danziger Bridge police shootings. It was a reversal that rocked the city.

*“The information regarding the Near Miss “program” is unbelievable. Thank you again for reporting real news in our city.”*

**MAURA SYLVESTER**



# MOST READ STORIES

The stories below are our most read and shared stories of 2013. Here is your chance to revisit them now.

1. [NEW RESEARCH: LOUISIANA COAST FACES HIGHEST RATE OF SEA-LEVEL RISE WORLDWIDE](#)
2. [GENTRIFICATION FLAP ROOTED IN AN OLDER DEBATE OVER NEW ORLEANS ‘EXCEPTIONALISM’](#)
3. [MEDIA HYPOCRISY AND THE N-WORD: WAS PAULA DEEN FIRED FOR HER SINS OR OURS?](#)
4. [TEACHER PAID \\$43,000 BONUS AS PART OF NEW BEGINNINGS CHARTER SCHOOL INCENTIVE SYSTEM](#)
5. [PRES KABACOFF OUTLINES \\$1 BILLION VISION TO REDEVELOP NEW ORLEANS’ URBAN CORE](#)
6. [FAMILY’S LONG JOURNEY HOME AFTER KATRINA ENDS WHEN CITY BULLDOZES HOUSE](#)
7. [CONVENTION CENTER OFFICIALS ENVISION ICONIC SCULPTURE ON FORMER WORLD TRADE CENTER SITE](#)
8. [CHARTER LEADER EMPLOYS SIX RELATIVES; TWO MAY VIOLATE STATE ETHICS LAW](#)
9. [CONTINUING LIVE BLOG: CONSENT DECREE HEARING ON ORLEANS PARISH PRISON](#)
10. [STATE DOCUMENTS DETAIL STANDARDIZED TEST CHEATING, IRREGULARITIES AT NEW ORLEANS SCHOOLS](#)

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Puentes  
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The Institute of Southern Studies  
The People Say Project  
The Times-Picayune | nola.com  
Uptown Messenger  
WRBH  
WTUL  
WWOZ

## 2013 AWARDS

Best News Website  
Best Investigative Website  
Finalist for Press Club of New Orleans



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*“You people do great work.  
It’s like having a second  
Inspector General in  
NOLA.”*

ROBERT CERASOLI,  
Lens member

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# INDIVIDUALS & ORGANIZATION SUPPORT

The Lens is funded solely through private donations. To become a member of The Lens, please [click here](#). Special thanks to the following individuals and organizations for their generous support of The Lens.

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Laitram LLC \*  
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## GIFTS \$5,000 – \$9,999

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## GIFTS \$100 – \$249

Merle Albers \*, James Amerson, Florence Andre \*, Sandra Barbier \*, Robin Barnes, Richard Baudouin \*, John Berendt, William Borah \*, Thomas Braly, Georgia & Alton Bryant \*, Martha Brewer, The Burka Family, Elizabeth Burns, Rebecca Catalanello, Robert Cerasoli \*, Michael Chabon & Ayelet Waldman, Nathan Chapman, Bette Cole \*, Peter Cook, Susannah Coolidge, Deborah Cotton, Keith Crawford \*, In honor of John McDonough, 1779-1850. Ron Cropper, James Cullen, Jacquelyn Dadakis, Ina & Rick Davis, Jack Davis, Carol DeGraw, Marlane Drake \*, Sherelda Dorsey, Albert A. Estes, Sr., Robert Evans / Con Tech International, Jane Ferguson, John Fischbach, Barbara Forrest, Fresh Money Studio, Karen Gadbois \* #, Elizabeth Galante \*, Guy & Salomé Gonzalez, Roberta Gratz \*, Angie Green, John W. Groome, Michael Hahn \*, Elizabeth Hampton, Abram Handler, Jenel Hazlett \*, Fred L. Herman, Barbara Hill, Paula Hoffman \*, Karl Holzmuller \*, Carole B. Jarrell \*, Sandy Juarez \*, Betsy Kaston, George Paul Kemp, Chris & Deanna Kieffer \*, William Kirby, Alexander Kolker, Moshe Kornfeld, Mari Kornhauser, Karen

# INDIVIDUAL SUPPORT

Longon \*, loudpoet productions, Patricia Loughran, Nicholas Mark, Thomas Matthews \*, Alan Maclachlan, Edward McGinnis \*, Virginia Miller \*, Tommy Milliner \*, John Morton \*, Steve Myers #, Wayne Neveu, Karen Ocker, Offbeat Publications, Haigler Pate, Holley Pavy, Donna Rachal \*, Joann Ricci \*, Marjory Russakoff & Phillips Lauriat \*, William Quigley \*, Frank Rabalais, Robert & Karen Ritchie \*, Mark Romig \*, Tim Ruppert \*, Stephen Scarbrough \*, Walter David Siegel \*, Thomas Snedeker \*, Pamela Stevens, Sandra Stokes, Jonathan Tate \*, Rebecca Theim, Ma Thomas, Mark Tobler, Torbjorn Tornqvist, Maria Redmann Treffinger, Wayne Troyer \*, Keith Twitchell \*, The Steven W. Usdin Family, The Thomas M. Usdin Family

In honor of Linda Usdin's birthday. Bradford Walker \*, Delores Walker \*, Lori Waselchuk, Susan Weeks, Donald Wing, Holly Wiseman, Robert Wisnewski \*, D Wolff \*, Lynda Woolard, Sally Zebrick, Jennifer & Lee Zurik \* +, David Zalkind \*

## GIFTS \$50 – \$99

Broderick Bagert, Jason Berry, Ron Biava & Emily Clark, Florence Brown \*, June Butler \*, Vivian & Richard Cahn \*, Barbara W. Carlton \*, William Carter, Nathan Cataline, Nancy Chachere \*, Leigh Checkman \*, Susan Clements \*, Ariella Cohen +, Matt Davis, Joseph M. and Wanda C. DeFraités \*, Christopher Dendy, Nancy Dinoto, Danielle Dreilinger, David Eber, Lolis E. Elie, Jonah Evans, Josephine Everly \*, Abigail Feldman, Phoebe Ferguson, Robert Fogarty, Victor Franckiewicz, Lillian G. Gahagan, Sharon Gancarz-Davies, Tim Garrett, Sonia Gasparini, Sean Gerowin \*, Sue Hall, Stephen Hand, Zeph Hardy, Meredith Hathorn, Stacy & Jeremy Head \*, Jordan Hirsch, Cassandra Holbrook \*, David Holt \*, Janet & Scott Howard, Tessa Jackson, Barbara Johnson \*, Stephen Joseph, Sharon Kirkpatrick, Louisiana Governmental Studies, Meg Lousteau \*, Travis Lux, Valerie Marshall, Virginia Miller, Kathryn Montgomery \*, Andreanecia Morris, Anne Mueller \* #, Kathleen Gibson Muse, Karen Norfleet \*, Alexandra Norton, Susan C. Norwood, Steven Ostertag +, Kristina Peterson, Leslie & Hunter Pierson, Allison Plyer, Lawrence N. Powell, Darren Preston, Eileen Rafferty, Stephen Wade Rathke \*, John Reed, Molly Reid, Gary Rivlin, Elizabeth Jane Rolling \*

Brianne Rome \*, Margaret Ross-Martin, Cade Roux, Alexander Shaw, Annette Sisco, Donna Smith, Scott Sternberg, Ann Stevens, Janie Tijerina \*, Yoko Toda, Denice Warren Ross, Matthew Segraves \*, Alexandra Wesley Smith \*, Linda M. Walker

\*, Jane Wholey, Kathryn Wohl, Darlene Wolnik, Jonathan Wool \*, Erin McQuade Wright \*, Veronica Young,

## GIFTS \$35 – \$49

Geraldine & Johnny Addison, James Amdal, Christina Antolini, David C. Billings, Elizabeth Blankenship \*, Jeffrey Bostick, Brian Boyles & Kimberly vanWagner, Derek Bridges, Andrew Brott, Jewel Bush, Elizabeth Charron, Arlene Cohen, Michele Collins, Stephen Danley, Louis Freeman, Margery Freeman, Amy Elizabeth Gage, Peter Gardner, Rose Gilbert, Marie Gould & Bob Marshall #, Della M. Graham, Julie Graybill, Gulf Restoration Network, Ingrid Hearn-Alexander \*, Kerrie Holley, Eric Jensen, Pamela Jewson & Pete Swenson, Patrick Kadow, Bonnie Keller, Michael King, Thomas Klekamp \* Michele & Leo Laventhal, Jonathan Leit, Joshua Lichtman, Sharon Litwin, Brendan McCarthy \*, Daniel Maiuri, Darryl Malek-Wiley / Sierra Club, Linda Mauskopf, Ann Meese, Melanie Merz, Nels Nehen, Amii Onellion, OCH Art Market, Juliet Page, John Pecorino, Nicholas Peddle\*, Anthony Pumilia, Edwin C. Rabon, J. Cathy Rogers, Ph.D., Linda Santi, Peter Seltzer, Martha Sharp, David Shepard, Isabel S. Sherman, Marcus Smith \*, Lee Stafford \*, Chris Staudinger, Reid Stone, Reuben Blaine Teague, Harry S. Tervalon, Jr., Lon Thomas, Charles C. Thompson, Constantine von Hoffman, Molly Vigour, Lisa Williams, Leith Womer

## GIFTS UNDER \$35

Thomas Abrams, Laura Beatty, Sarah Bolton, Robert & Mary Burch, Debra Calmes, Merrill Collett \*, Robert Collins, Maggie Dawes, Bonnie Dwyer, Sebastian G. Ferman, Eric Glisch, Andy Horowitz, Rebecca Houtman, Debra Johnson, Rodger Kamenetz, Stefan Kamph, Andrew King, Konrad King, Maya Lowy, Kerry Maloney, Karin Martin, Nathan Martin, Charles Maldonado \* #, William McCurdy, John T. O'Connor, Ryan Pepper, Cindy Ridgway, Audra Rouse, Katherine Senter, Rose S. Sher, Alexandra Simmons, William Sothorn, Jon Staiger, Alexandra Stroud, Zoe Sullivan, Superior Alarm, Paul Waldman, Susan Wayman, Jessica Williams #, AJ Ylizarri

**\* Indicates multiple gifts have been given by the donor.**

**+ Lens board member (current or former)**

**# Lens staff member**

# TRIBUTE GIFTS

## **MERLE ALBERS**

*In memory of Mrs. Merle S. Marshall*

## **FLORENCE ANDRE**

*In honor of Linda Usdin and Anne Mueller.*

## **MILLIE BALL & KEITH MARSHALL**

*Thanks to Steve and the gang.*

## **LYNN BETTIS**

*In honor of the children of New Orleans.*

## **AMY JEAN BOEBEL**

*In honor of Jean B. Boebel who believed in the power of clean government practices.*

## **THE BURKA FAMILY**

*In honor of Linda Usdin's birthday.*

## **JEWEL BUSH**

*In honor of my fellow journos who take the craft seriously and remember life before blogs.*

## **LYNN CHAO**

*In memory of Robert C. Meder, Jr.  
In gratitude to Steve Beatty.*

## **NATHAN CHAPMAN**

*In honor of Nathan Bolton and Bill Chapman,  
former newspaper publishers.*

## **ARIELLA COHEN +**

*In honor of Portia Rotkin, my grandmother  
who always taught me to ask questions and pay  
attention.*

## **ARLENE COHEN**

*In honor of Ariella Cohen.*

## **KEITH CRAWFORD**

*In honor of John McDonough, 1779-1850.  
Ina & Rick Davis*

*In honor of Karen Gadbois' continued vision.*

## **CHRISTOPHER DENDY**

*In honor of Stephanie Grace*

## **NANCY DINOTO**

*In honor of all those affected by flooding in New Orleans and surrounding areas.*

## **BARBARA FORREST**

*In honor of independent, truthful reporting.*

## **KAREN GADBOIS**

*In honor of Aida Schooler.*

## **ROBERTA GRATZ**

*In honor of Karen Gadbois.*

## **MICHAEL GRAY**

*In honor of ace journalist Steve Beatty.*

## **INGRID HEARNS-ALEXANDER**

*In memory of Kerry Hearns.  
In honor of Louis, Verna Mae & Kerry Hearns.*

## **PAULA HOFFMAN**

*In honor of New Orleans, city of my birth, and in  
pride of its and your indomitable spirit!  
Good luck!!  
In honor of Monica Edelstein & Kenneth Hoffman.*

## **TESSA JACKSON**

*In honor of those who have lost their lives speaking  
the truth to power. Thank you Lens staff for being  
the "truth tellers" of the Gulf Coast!*

## **ERIC JENSEN**

*In honor of the incredible reporting of Matt Davis!*

## **WILLIAM KIRBY**

*In honor of Ashley Morris.*

## **MEG LOUSTEAU**

*In honor of Karen Gadbois.*

## **ALAN MACLACHLAN**

*In honor of my mother, who wasn't afraid to ask  
the tough questions.*

## **MARK ROMIG**

*In honor of Karen Gadbois*

## **MARGARET ROSS-MARTIN**

*In honor of Mary Ellen Ross.*

## **MARJORY RUSSAKOFF & PHILLIPS**

## **LAURIAT**

*In honor of Lane Lauriat.  
In honor of Elaine Lauriat, Wesleyan Class of '09.*

## **LINDA SANTI**

*In honor of the tradition of daily news in this  
myopic and great newspaper city.*

## **SEIU LOCAL 21 LA**

*In honor of SEIU Local 21 LA.*

## **CHRIS STAUDINGER**

*Thankful for Bob Marshall's environmental  
reporting.*

## **THE STEVEN W. USDIN FAMILY**

*In honor of Linda Usdin's birthday.*

## **THE THOMAS M. USDIN FAMILY**

*In honor of Linda Usdin's birthday.*

## **MOLLY VIGOUR**

*Thanks for great Lycee Francais coverage this year!*

## **HOLLY WISEMAN**

*In honor of Karen Gadbois for her Ethics in  
Journalism Award.*

## **DARLENE WOLNIK**

*All of the New Orleanians that I have known, those  
native and those reborn here.*

# FOUNDATION SUPPORT



VICTOR  
FOUNDATION



*The  
Ella West Freeman  
Foundation*

**THE HARNISCH  
FOUNDATION**

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**Fertel etc.** *weaving people and ideas to make a difference*



**THE ZEITOUN  
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FOUNDATION**

*For a vibrant region.*

CATALYST FOUNDATION      NEW VENTURE FUND  
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# LENS EVENTS

“Mentioning @  
gadboislensnola at the  
Animating Neighborhood  
live talk! @TheLensNOLA  
IS THE BEST @MASNYC  
@rowemw #ArtsFwd”

FRANCESCA MCKENZIE  
@CheskaMcKenzie



Jessica Willams and RSD superintendent Patrick Dobard



Karen Gadbois with Keith Hardie, Attorney/Social Activist

Lens Events are a new dimension in The Lens’ core mission to educate, engage, and empower readers with information and analysis.

Off-line with the Lens is a regular coffee shop chat session in which Lens staffers gather in various communities around the city to meet the neighbors, discuss the news, educate the public about The Lens, and find out what people think we should be reporting.

Breakfast with the Newsmakers is a new monthly series that features Lens staffers conducting in-depth interviews with one guest speaker, prominent in that month’s stories. Newsmakers events are part information sessions, part networking opportunities, and part social gatherings. They’re held at the beautiful Basin St. Station and have been met with rave reviews: “I’m so glad you all are continuing to do this” ... “What a great idea!” ... “Put me down for the next one — whoever the speaker is.”

The Lens will continue to build its Events calendar with educational salons — panel discussions that delve deeply into conversations about the topics most important to the future of New Orleans.

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*“Thank you for the article. Without public awareness, this mess will go on forever. Meanwhile, residents of Vista Park and Oak Park have to travel fairly long distances for items we used to ‘walk around the corner’ to get.”*

MALCOLM MARTIN

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# MENTIONS IN PUBLICATIONS

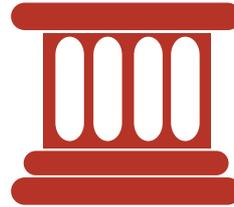
DENVER POST  
FACING SOUTH  
HARPERS INDEX  
INFORMED SOURCES  
INTEGRITY  
INVESTIGATIVE NEWS NETWORK  
NEWSWEEK  
NEXT AMERICAN CITY  
NOLA.COM | THE TIMES-PICAYUNE  
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THE ATLANTIC  
THE CENTER FOR PUBLIC INTEGRITY  
THE DAILY BEAST  
THE LOUISIANA WEEKLY  
THE ROOT  
THE TRUMPET  
WWNO-FM  
WTUL-FM  
WVUE-TV  
YOUTH TODAY

# 2013 BY THE NUMBERS

**15** reporters at the Charter School Reporting Corps



**58%** increase Foundations support



2013 FOUNDATION SUPPORT



2012 FOUNDATION SUPPORT

**14%** increase in Members



2013 MEMBERSHIP INCREASE IN SIZE

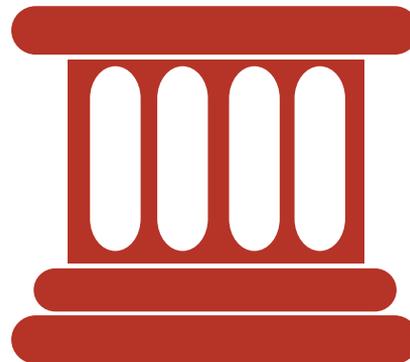


2012 MEMBERSHIP (250 +)

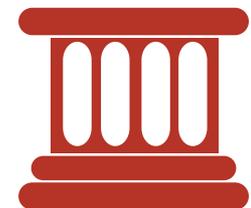
# 2014 BY THE NUMBERS

**77%** increase Foundation support

**\$500,000 +**

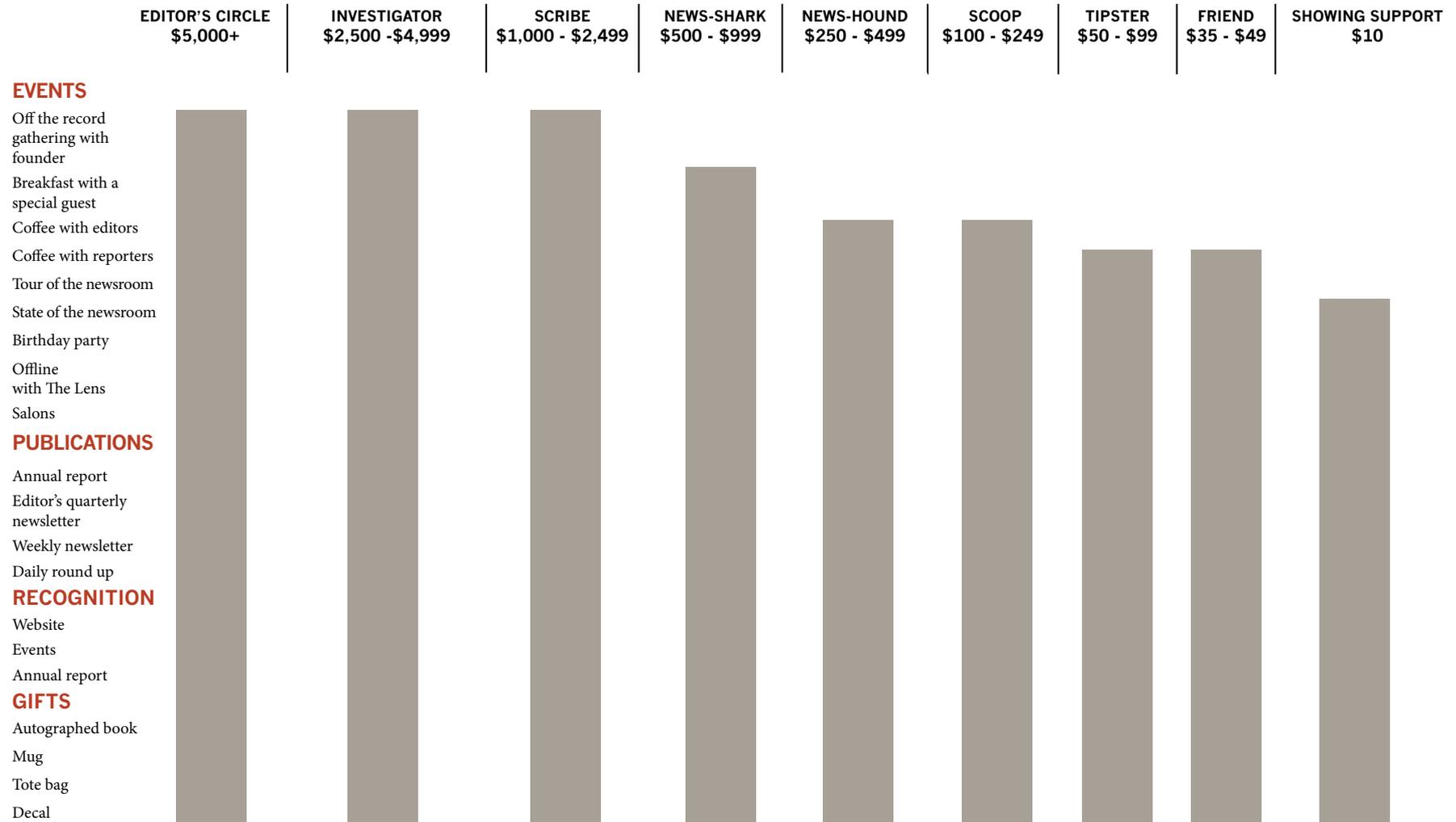


2014 FOUNDATION SUPPORT



2013 FOUNDATION SUPPORT

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“The Lens is providing a truly vital service which would otherwise go unfulfilled if not for what you do.” – Alan Maclachlan, Lens Member



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