

firm, Mercury Boost, based in Council Bluffs. He is the business development director for Latino IQ, an Iowa-based organization. Burns resides in Carroll, writes for several Iowa newspapers, with his work also having appeared in *The Minneapolis Star-Tribune* and *Kansas City Star*. He is a member of the Iowa Writers Collaborative. You can subscribe to his blog, *The Iowa Mercury*, on Substack

CASEY, MAURA, has been an editorial writer for four newspapers, including *The New York Times*. She is a native of Buffalo, NY, but has lived in Connecticut for 35 years, which makes her a newcomer. Maura has kept journals for more than 50 years, which inspired her to write a memoir titled *Saving Ellen*. (No publisher yet, but stay tuned). Her weekly Substack column, *Casey's Catch*, keeps her busy writing. She has two adult children, a hubby, and two take-no-prisoners granddaughters.

***CHASE, RACHELLE**, author of *Creating the Black Utopia of Buxton, Iowa* and *Lost Buxton*, has given more than 100 presentations about the amazing town of Buxton and has appeared in the media—radio, television, news publications, and documentaries—more than 60 times. She's also a published romance author who, while writing romance, created and co-hosted an online writing contest for aspiring romance writers (which resulted in numerous writers landing agents and book deals) with Leigh Michaels and hosted two popular podcasts featuring bestselling authors that amassed more than 19,000 profile views and 40,000 listens. She has been a columnist for the *Des Moines Register* and author of a historical fiction book for middle-grade students, coming in 2024. In 2021, Rachelle launched a nonprofit, *Uniting Through History*, and invites you to join their monthly History Book Club for adults. For more, please visit UnitingThroughHistory.org and RachelleChase.com.

CROWDER, COURTNEY is a reporter and columnist at *The Des Moines Register*, writing narrative pieces about culture, people, and social justice. She believes inspiring stories can change the world and wants to incite transformation. An award-winning journalist, Courtney finds unique stories, captures reader interest, experiments with form, and delivers pieces that touch hearts and minds. From working cops' shifts to covering a presidential candidate through the caucus to digging into social movements to writing short, pithy pieces on pop culture, she constantly varies the structure and tone of her work to reach new audience segments. Through innate curiosity and an unshakeable authenticity, Courtney nurtures sources locally and nationally and works diligently to earn their trust.

***CULLEN, ART** is a Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist, editor of *The Storm Lake Times* (a family-run weekly newspaper in small-town Iowa), and author of the critically acclaimed *Storm Lake: A Chronicle of Change, Resilience, and Hope from a Heartland Newspaper*. Art has made it his life's work to ask the big questions, speak truth to power, and share the struggles and successes of his unique community of Storm Lake, Iowa (Census pop. 10,076). His book is part