

MIP

MISSOURI PRESS

NEWS

Day at the Capitol puts MPA members in the middle of Missouri politics



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Knowing the right thing and doing it

It's a bitterly cold day at the home office as I write this column and my heart is heavy. Rather than being a downer, I'm going to imagine a sun-kissed Missouri Press board meeting in June, one in which we wrap up the business agenda a little early and head to the bar for a drink and exchange of tall tales.

Future June board meetings won't be quite the same, of course, without Kevin Jones. As many of you know, we lost Kevin a few days into the New Year.

A long-time member of both the Missouri Press Association and Service boards, Kevin spent more than three decades at the *St. Louis American*, which he would happily tell you is the largest weekly newspaper in the entire state of Missouri and a repeat winner of MPA's Gold Cup award. Kevin's pride in the work of the *American* was enormous and his death is an indescribable loss for Tina and his family, the St. Louis community and journalism in our state.

When I first joined the MPA board in 2019, Kevin was one of those who immediately made me feel welcome. At the time, I was still relatively new to editing and managing a newsroom, and the feelings of impostor syndrome were strong as I joined this illustrious assembly of ink-stained wretches working on behalf of the Fourth Estate.

Lucky for me, Kevin was the kind of guy who, upon spotting an uncomfortable newcomer, would

order you a beer and invite you to sit at his table.

Holding down a bar stool with Kevin and partners in crime Trevor Vernon and Jeff Schrag was a great way to learn all sorts of stories about MPA and the fellowship it fosters (as well as providing a direct lesson about having too much fun at the bar after board business is done ...).

And while I know we'll be telling Kevin stories for years to come, I'm confident his contributions at the board table will be felt long after.

One of the many times Kevin impressed me — and taught me a thing or two about leadership — was during our work together on MPA's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee, which he chaired. The committee was formed, in part, in response to reporting about a racist letter a former MPA president wrote in 1895 in response to a British anti-lynching activist. While the MPA board agreed unanimously to issue a statement denouncing the letter, Kevin was among those advocating for further action.

It's not hard to see the right thing and say "we" ought to do it. But Kevin was one of those who recognized the right thing and jumped in to do it, leading without hesitation. And while he was a big guy with a big voice who could have easily had his way, his leadership wasn't about giving orders but instead focused

on listening and laying the groundwork for a collective decision.

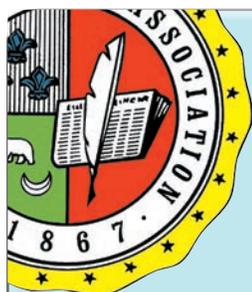
As we recruited folks for the committee, Kevin made sure to emphasize MPA's commitment to long-term improvement, not just short-term public relations. When we held Zoom meetings, he kept things moving while ensuring everyone had a chance to speak.

And when we had drafted and revised what would become MPA's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion statement, he made clear it was just a first step — saying the right thing, which must be followed by jumping in and doing it.

I will miss seeing Kevin at this year's board meetings, miss sharing a beer and swapping stories. I know we'll all miss his insight and guidance as we do our best for Missouri Press. While I hold that sunny June board meeting in my mind, I'm also grateful for his warm welcome and many, many contributions to journalism in the Show-Me State. May his memory warm us and guide us as we carry on the good work he encouraged us all to do.



Amos Bridges,
Springfield News-Leader
MPA President



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TIME IS RUNNING OUT!

DEADLINES APPROACHING



Nominations are being taken now for the top awards of the Missouri Press Association and Foundation:

Missouri Newspaper Hall of Fame Outstanding Young Journalist

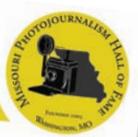
Nominations must be in by March 31

Missouri Photojournalism Hall of Fame

Nominations must be in by May 13

DOWNLOAD NOMINATION FORMS AT
bit.ly/MoPressForms (case sensitive)

Each of the nomination forms includes the criteria for selection. Contact Matthew Barba by phone at 573-449-4167, ext. 302, or by email at mbarba@mopress.com with questions.



**SEEKING
NOMINATIONS**
Missouri Photojournalism
Hall of Fame

The Missouri Photojournalism Hall of Fame endeavors to recognize those people who have made outstanding contributions to Missouri photojournalism and to provide an exhibit venue to showcase these visual reporting pioneers and the work of current photojournalists. The nomination process is now open.



Nominations must be received by May 13.

Inductees will be recognized at a ceremony on Oct. 20, 2022, at SHSMO in Columbia, MO, and examples of their work will be displayed at the Missouri Press Photojournalism Hall of Fame exhibit.

To download the registration form, visit www.photojournalismhalloffame.org

Applications for the Internship Grants Program must be received on or before April 20.

If your newspaper is interested in applying for an internship grant, please go to mopress.com/missouri-press-foundation-internships

If you have questions please call
573-449-4167



Missouri Press members can attend MPW for free

From Missouri Press Staff

The 76th Missouri Photo Workshop will be held Sept. 22-28. A location for this year's workshop is still being determined, as of press time.

The deadline to apply to be part of this year's photo workshop is May 15. Forty photographers will be accepted.

Part of the application process requires a letter of recommendation, so publishers and managing editors please encourage members of your staff to apply for a week of immersive visual storytelling and support the time commitment. The faculty of each Missouri Photo Workshop are some of the top photo editors in the nation.

Letters, resume and portfolio can be submitted via the 'apply' section on the website: <http://mophotoworkshop.org/>.

Members of the Missouri Press Association are eligible for you or your staff member's \$600 tuition and lodging to be waived thanks to the Missouri Press Foundation's support of the workshop. Only a few slots are reserved for in-state papers, however, so apply as soon as possible.

While the location is still being determined, please remember that photographers accepted to the Missouri Photo Workshop will be on-site from Sept. 22-28.

About the workshop

The roots of the Missouri Photo Workshop are embedded firmly in years of rich tradition.

Inspired by the gritty, content-rich photographs of the documentary photo unit of the pre-WWII Farm Security Administration, the workshop promotes research, observation, and timing as the methods to make strong story-telling photographs.

Workshop faculty are experts dedicated to passing on the fundamentals of photo research, shooting, and editing to those who hope to carry on these values and techniques in the future.

The workshop still follows founder Cliff Edom's credo: "Show truth with a camera. Ideally truth is a matter of personal integrity. In no circumstances will a posed or faked photograph be tolerated."



CALENDAR

February

29 — Missouri Press Better Newspaper Contest \$6 Entry Fee Ends

March

31 — Missouri Press Better Newspaper Contest \$7 Entry Fee Ends

31 — Missouri Press Outstanding Young Journalist Award and Hall of Fame Nominations Due

April

5 — Missouri Press Better Newspaper Contest Final Deadline

18-19 — MPAME Annual Meeting, Hilton Promenade Hotel, Branson

June

20 — First Amendment Golf Classic, Hermann

21 — Missouri Press Association, Service and Foundation Boards Meetings, Hermann

September

19-21 — Missouri Press' Annual Convention, Springfield

22-28 — Missouri Photo Workshop, Location TBD

Did you know?

You can find all of the latest registration forms for Missouri Press' events online at www.mopress.com.

The website also has award nomination forms, board of director applications and much more.

Requests your press cards

From Missouri Press Staff

Submit requests for 2024 press cards and 2024-2025 MPA auto stickers today by emailing staffers' names to Kristie Fortier at kfortier@mopress.com

There is no charge for press cards or auto stickers for MPA members; please include a total number of stickers needed for your organization. In all requests, please include mailing information for your newspaper.

Because staffing changes occur throughout the year, MPA does not keep a list of cards previously issued.

Members can also request copies of the 2024 MPA sticker calendar.

Email distribution list

Are all your staff who should be



receiving Missouri Press emails signed up? Much of the Association's communication with our members is through email, and we want to ensure everyone stays informed. We also distribute statewide ads via email.

If someone needs to be added, please send the names, job titles and email addresses to Matthew Barba at mbarba@mopress.com



BETTER NEWSPAPER CONTEST

Are you ready for Missouri Press' Better Newspaper Contest?

The 2024 Missouri Press Foundation Better Newspaper Contest template is now open and members can begin submitting entries. If you haven't yet, gather your entries for this year's contest now.

All the information about the contest — rules, categories, entry instructions — is online at mopress.com/better-newspaper/.

Entries to the Missouri Press Foundation's Newspaper Contest will be submitted using the Advanced Contest Entry System (ACES) platform: <https://www.newspapercontest.com/Contests/MissouriPressAssociationBNC.aspx>.

Due to changes in the way the contest template is operated, each PUBLICATION will need a unique email address for uploading contest entries.

While entries will be accepted through Friday, April 5, a tiered fee structure includes reduced costs for newspapers submitting entries earlier in the contest cycle.

The 2024 BNC entry fee structure is as follows:

Entries uploaded before March 1: \$6 per entry;
Entries uploaded before April 1: \$7 per entry; and
Entries uploaded April 1-5: \$10 per entry.

All categories for Missouri's 2024 Better Newspaper Contest require digital entries. Please familiarize yourself with the template and ask questions about how to use it as soon as possible.

You are also encouraged to consider file-sharing websites, i.e., Dropbox, Google Drive, as a method for sharing your larger entries, such as General Excellence and page design entries. There are many free options available that will also provide benefits to your newspaper outside of entering the BNC.

If you need help entering any category, contact Matthew Barba (mbarba@mopress.com) or Kristie Fortier (kfortier@mopress.com) for assistance.

We ask members not to wait until the deadline to enter.

DEADLINE: There is no need to wait until the deadline to upload your entries! The contest template will close at 11 p.m. Friday, April 5, and will not accept entries after that — no exceptions. You may begin uploading your entries now.

ALERT: Please try to keep file sizes under 5mb to aid judges in accessing entry content. For larger files such as Special Sections, options include Dropbox, Google Drive, or any service that lets you "share" files via URL.

Please make sure the file is public or a password is provided and that it can be printed. If a file cannot be easily accessed, it could be skipped over for judging.

3 TIPS TO MAKE UPLOADING EASY:

1. Entries that consist of more than one piece of content should be combined into one file. This will make uploading and judging much easier. Do the same for stories that jump to another page.
2. Entries should have 1-3-word titles that tell the judge precisely what material on the page is to be judged. You can also use Adobe Acrobat's "highlighter" function to indicate content to be judged.
3. Put all your entries into a "Contest Entries" folder on your desktop.

Please read the instructions and category listings carefully!

MPA members see Missouri politics firsthand

By Matthew Barba
Missouri Press News

Presentations to attendees of Missouri Press Association's annual Day at the Capitol are normally tame, with discussions of legislative priorities and the current state of various departments being the norm. But this year's event saw the infighting of state senators literally come knocking at the door.

For the 34th year, MPA members met in Jefferson City for Day at the Capitol, Jan. 25, and the morning started off as it usually does, with attendees meeting in the Missouri State Capitol rotunda for coffee and pastries before being sent to roam the halls and meet with their local legislators. Key among their goals was to draw attention to proposed legislation detrimental to newspapers' ability to keep members of their community informed, including bills that would limit accessibility of records



Gov. Mike Parson speaks to members of Missouri Press Association during the 34th Annual Day at the Capitol. This year's Day at the Capitol was Parson's last, as he is term limited, and a new governor will be elected in November. To see a full video of Parson's address to MPA, check out this video from the *Edina Sentinel*: bit.ly/ParsonDatC. (Staff photos)

through the state's Sunshine Law and take public notices out of newspapers.

When MPA members reconvened for the morning session in the Senate lounge, however, Day at the Capitol went beyond its traditional legislative and statewide updates. Specifically, Senate Majority Floor Leader Cindy O'Laughlin, R-Shelbina, spoke frankly about how the Freedom Caucus Republicans were holding the Missouri Senate "hostage."

"This is not how things should work," O'Laughlin said. "No one is

willing to compromise. We're being held hostage, but we're not going to take it anymore."

Ongoing disputes between factions of Republicans in the Senate had prevented even the most basic tasks of the legislature from getting done. O'Laughlin said the biggest roadblock is Sen. Bill Eigel, R-Weldon Spring, who along with other members of the Freedom Caucus have filibustered during most of the Senate's sessions leading up to Day at the Capitol.

Continued on Page 7



Senate Majority Floor Leader Cindy O'Laughlin, R-Shelbina, speaks candidly to Missouri Press members attending Day at the Capitol about issues that plagued the early days of the legislative session. O'Laughlin did not mince words about who she placed responsibility on when it came to the Senate's lack of progress in the session early days. You can see O'Laughlin's full comments online here: bit.ly/OLAughlinDatC.



Attendees of Missouri Press Association's 34th Annual Day at the Capitol wait in the Senate lounge between morning speakers. This year's event literally brought the infighting between the state's Republican factions to the lounge when one Senator inquired of another over statements made during the presentation to MPA.

Continued from Page 6: *'Juvenile' behavior in Missouri Senate.*



Missouri Press Association members attending Day at the Capitol, Jan. 25, listen to House Majority Floor Leader Rep. Jonathan Patterson, R-Lee's Summit, discuss legislative priorities for 2024. Those issues include school choice, which Patterson said he thinks will make progress this year. (Staff photos)

"The longer this goes on, the harder it will be as an obstructionist to convince other people that you would get things done if everyone else wasn't obstructing you," O'Laughlin said.

During her remarks to MPA, O'Laughlin said if she could get the votes, she would move to expel Eigel from the Senate. In response to those comments being posted on social media, Eigel sent two Senate doormen to retrieve O'Laughlin and return her to the Senate floor to respond to the comments.

Before returning to her duties as Majority Floor Leader, O'Laughlin said the behavior by certain state senators was "juvenile" and the body's focus needs to be getting back on schedule in order to debate and approve bills.

O'Laughlin did take time to answer questions, however, and among them was an inquiry on her support for the Missouri Sunshine Law. While there are sometimes situations that should be protected from the public record, she said, overall, "The public has a right to know what we're doing."

You can find a full video of O'Laughlin's comments online, thanks to Echo Menges and the *Edina*

Sentinel, at bit.ly/OLaughlinDatC.

Later during Gov. Mike Parson's question-and-answer session at the Governor's Mansion, he commented on the fighting that had been taking place in the Missouri Senate. While he could see the efforts to get his office involved, Parson said it was not his place to interfere until the dysfunction prevents the General Assembly from performing its legally-mandated obligations.

Gov. Parson's other topics of discussion included childcare and school choice, saying they are some of his top priorities to see passed this legislative session.

"I don't care where a child gets an education as long as it's a quality education," Parson said. "If you want to change society, if you don't give a child an education in some way, in some form, you're never going to change that."

Parson also talked about his support for Texas Gov. Greg Abbott and an ongoing dispute between the state and the federal governments on how to secure the border against illegal immigration.

In what will be his last Day at the Capitol, Gov. Parson said goodbye to

the press, echoing similar sentiments from his State of the State speech the day before that he would leave office with his head held high.

See a full video of the Governor's remarks [here](https://bit.ly/ParsonDatC): bit.ly/ParsonDatC. Again, thank you to Echo Menges and NEMOnews Media for recording and uploading this video.

The morning's other presentations included Patrick McKenna, director of the Missouri Department of Transportation, who spoke about maintaining the department's workforce and the challenges that come with ensuring all the state's roadways are maintained.

McKenna also celebrated a \$92.8 million federal grant that was announced the week of Day at the Capitol, as it will allow for greater roadside improvements to supplement the work Missouri is already doing for projects like the Interstate 70 expansion.

Concluded on Page 8



Washington Missourian Publisher Bill Miller Jr., left, talks with Patrick McKenna, director of the Missouri Department of Transportation, before McKenna's presentation during Day at the Capitol. McKenna gave an update on MoDOT and its ongoing projects, including expansion of Interstate 70, as well as efforts to bolster the department's workforce.

Missouri Press boards meet in Jefferson City



Above, from left, Missouri Press Association Board of Director members Tim Schmidt, Ron Schott and Ken Garner wait for the board meeting to start, Jan. 24, in Jefferson City. Schott and Garner are the board's newest members and will be introduced in short stories in the March issue of *Missouri Press News*. Top right, Doug Crews, Missouri Press' legislative director, presents an update to the MPA Board on important bills that could be considered during the General Assembly's regular session. Bottom right, Missouri Press Association 2021 President Liz Irwin presents Amos Bridges with a new bag during the Board of Directors meeting last month. Presenting the bag continues a time-honored tradition of ensuring the new president of Missouri Press Association has a container in which to lug around all their important paper work related to the office. (Staff photos)



The Missouri Press Foundation Board of Directors met in Jefferson City last month. Board members, from left, Kathy Kiely, Connie Farrow and Peggy Scott, are new to the Foundation board this year.

More photos available
Check out MPA's Facebook page for photo albums from each event, including Day at the Capitol.

Continued from Page 7:

Take time to meet with your elected officials.

Rep. Jonathan Patterson, R-Lee's Summit, started out by saying he reads and subscribes to several newspapers, and had even considered the idea of becoming a journalist before becoming a doctor and then politician.

About talking to the media, Patterson said, "If you're in a position of leadership in government, I feel like it's something you do, talk to the people who are talking to the world."

Patterson said he thinks school choice will move forward during the legislative session but also stressed

the state will need to be more conservative with its budgets going forward. "We've gotten used to flush budgets, but we need to get back to being conservative, more prudent than we've been in past years."

On the Sunshine Line, Patterson said, "I'm here on government time and a government salary, so you should be able to look at our emails."

MPA members are encouraged to meet with their legislators in person as often as possible to relay the importance of laws that ensure

open access to government records and meetings. In-person meetings are the most effective way to get your legislators to listen.

If you have questions about meeting with legislators, either during the legislative session or during the summer, feel free to contact MPA Executive Director Mark Maassen, who can provide MPA members with talking points about critical legislation that is being considered. Contact Maassen at (573) 449-4167, ext. 308, or at mmaassen@mopress.com.



St. Louis

Kevin Jones

Kevin Michael Jones, 57, of Marketing Executives and received Manchester died suddenly Jan. 4, that group's Dee Hamilton Old Pro 2024, at his home. He was Missouri Press Association's 2010 president and a member of the Board of Directors at the time of his death.



An honors graduate of the Missouri School of Journalism, Jones was a 31-year employee of the *St. Louis American*, serving as its chief operating officer for many years. Prior to that, he was an advertising manager with Suburban Journals of St. Louis.

In addition to his term on the MPA Board culminating in his presidency in 2010, he volunteered for a second round of service to the Association in 2019, saying at the time, "I feel like I still have a lot of energy and can continue to bring fresh ideas to the table."

He also chaired MPA's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee and is responsible for several nominations to the Missouri Newspaper Hall of Fame and other awards.

Jones was past president of the Missouri Press Advertising and

Award.

He was a member of the Advertising Club of St. Louis, the Press Club of Metropolitan St. Louis and served as a St. Louis Sports Commission board member.

In 2007, Jones was named "National Advertising Director of the Year" by

Suburban Newspapers of America, and in 2021, he was also named North American Runner Up for Newspaper Operations All-Star by *Editor & Publisher*.

St. Louis American Publisher and Executive Editor Donald M. Suggs said of Jones, "His initiatives and hard work were essential to The *American's* progress and successes over many years. He will be deeply missed as a colleague and friend and for his steadfastness and dedication to *The American* and its mission."

Jones is survived by his wife Tina; two children, Nick and Amanda; two grandchildren, Chloe and Emma; and many more family, friends and colleagues from throughout Missouri and beyond.

Washington

Charley Coy

Charley Coy, 88, of Washington died Dec. 28, 2023.

A longtime newspaperman, Coy worked for the *Washington Missourian* for 22 years, from 1985 until his retirement in 2007, selling advertising and writing columns and other stories.



A graduate of the Missouri School of Journalism, Coy was also publisher and owner of several newspapers around the state, including publications in Garden City, Lexington, Waverly, Sullivan and St. Clair, before joining the *Missourian*.

In his retirement, he wrote four books, "Small Town on Prairie," "Mein Fraulein von Heilbronn a/N," "When I Come Home We'll Marry," and "Chronicles of Ascalon Commandery No. 16 Knights Templar stationed at St. Louis, Missouri."

In addition to his wife, Elsie, he is survived by his children, Jonathan and Lisa; and many more family and friends.

St. Joseph

Terry Jordan

Terrence James Jordan, 72, of St. Joseph died Jan. 3, 2024.

A graduate of the Missouri School of Journalism, Jordan devoted much of his life to writing articles for the *St. Joseph News Press*.

During his time with the *News Press*, he was

known throughout the Northwest Missouri region for his articles on life, and most recently, his "Turning Back" articles looking back at St. Joseph's history.

He is survived by a sister, Denise; and many more family and friends.



Missouri Press News needs your help to remember our industry colleagues who have passed.

Send obits to mbarba@mopress.com to be included in the monthly magazine and our In Memoriam during the Annual Convention.

2024 Newspapers in Education Series Now Available

Plan to start this year's NIE serial story in your newspaper before April!

The Missouri Press Foundation and National Newspaper Association Foundation are offering a new original free series to newspapers across the country for publication.

This year, readers will enjoy an 8-chapter series that features science, art, language arts and history about solar eclipses. The solar eclipse will occur on April 8 with the path of totality crossing the country from Texas to Maine, including across the southeastern part of Missouri.

A wide swath of totality across the country and that viewers outside the path of totality will still be able to view a partial solar eclipse will ensure newspapers and readers will be drawn to this content. Dr. Linda Maxine Godwin wrote the features with science slants. She is an American scientist and retired NASA astronaut.

Godwin joined NASA in 1980 and became an astronaut in July 1986. She retired in 2010. During her career, Godwin completed four space flights and logged more than 38 days in space. Dr. Godwin is a Professor Emeritus at the Department of Physics and Astronomy of the University of Missouri. The series is illustrated by Philip Goudeau.

This series will be offered free of charge to newspapers for publication until June 30, 2024. Visit mo-nie.com and use the code: **eclipse24** to download the entire series.



Download Code: **eclipse24**

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&



ON THE MOVE



Odessa — John Spaar, co-publisher of *The Odessan* and *Focus on Oak Grove* and Missouri Press Association president in 2005, received the Odessa Chamber of Commerce’s lifetime achievement award last month. Spaar has worked for his family’s newspapers since 1990 and currently oversees advertising sales for the company.

John and his brother, Joe, took over publishing the newspapers in 2018, following the death of their mother, Betty Simpson Spaar. In April 2019, John Spaar received the Dee Hamilton Old Pro award from Missouri Press Advertising and Marketing Executives, then Missouri Advertising Managers Association.

At right, John Spaar, left, with Kevin Jones after Spaar received the Old Pro Sales Award at the 2019 awards dinner for Missouri Press Advertising and Marketing Executives. (Staff file photo)



Lebanon — Jennifer Early has been named publisher of the *Laclede County Record*, becoming the 14th person to hold the position. Early has been with the newspaper for 17 years, starting under Rene Barker in the advertising department, and becoming advertising director in 2018 following Barker’s retirement.

Born and raised in Laclede County, Early told readers her favorite parts of the job are helping others and being able to be out in the community working with local businesses. “Little did I know my first day at the newspaper that it was going to turn into my career and that one day I would become advertising director. Never did I think I would be the publisher,” Early told readers.

Early told readers more digital options are in future plans for the newspaper but also a printed product will be a mainstay for local subscribers for many years to come.



Jennifer Jackson, left, has stepped down as publisher of the *Springfield Business Journal*, turning the role over to Marty Goodnight, with plans to also turn over ownership by 2026. (Submitted photo)

Springfield — Former *Springfield Business Journal* (SBJ) associate publisher Marty Goodnight has rejoined the newspaper as publisher, with plans to eventually take ownership of the newspaper from Jennifer Jackson. The transfer of ownership for the newspaper is expected to happen in 2026.

Goodnight previously worked as associate publisher of the *SBJ* from June 2016 to December 2020, after which he joined a local e-commerce agency as director of marketing. He also previously worked at the *Springfield News-Leader* as a former advertising director.

Jackson had been publisher of the *Springfield Business Journal* since 2011, taking over from her mother, Dianne Osis, who founded the publication in July 1980. She became owner of the *SBJ* in 2016, following Osis’ retirement.



Jennifer Early, left, is the new publisher of the *Laclede County Record* following her promotion to the position by owner Dalton Wright. (Submitted photo)

Resources to get your story started



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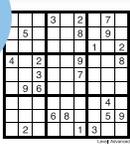
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ON THE MOVE



Palmyra — Mark and Patty Cheffey have retired from *The Palmyra Spectator* after nearly 30 years. The couple sold the *Spectator* in 2018 to Mike and Sue Scott, owners of NEMOnews Media, but remained to cover the community as a team.

The *Spectator* has been recognized as the oldest



Steve Miller

continuously published weekly newspaper in Missouri. Founded in 1839, the Cheffey family purchased the *Spectator* in 1994, representing only the third family to publish it.

Joining the *Spectator* as reporter is Steve Miller. Jenny Ryals will remain a familiar face in the newspaper's office.

At left, Mark and Patty Cheffey have retired from the *Palmyra Spectator* after nearly 30 years. They represent the third family of ownership for the publication, having sold it in 2018 to Mike and Sue Scott. (Submitted photo)

SCRAPBOOK



Eminence — The *Shannon County Current Wave* is celebrating its 150-year anniversary in 2024, having covered its region of Missouri since 1874 with the slogan, "Shannon County First, the World Afterwards."

William Aden French, the newspaper's editor from 1937-1962, previously explained how the name came to be. In the telling, Jake Wingo of Salem had recently purchased the publication and was trying to think of a new name for it. While Wingo and his wife were traveling south to Eminence, they forded the Current River and his wife remarked, "look at the wave of the current." With that, inspiration struck Wingo who settled on "*Current Wave*" for the new name.

This year also marks the 40th anniversary as editor and publisher for Roger Dillon. He served as Missouri Press Association president in 2022.

Journalism broadcast student and local high school graduate, on a reader survey project. The project is part of the Reynolds Journalism Institute's 2024 Student Innovation Competition, and it will also help the newspaper poll readers on which news categories are most important to them.

Reeves' portion of the project is intended to help the newspaper measure the real-life impact of its coverage, rather than just looking at digital metrics like clicks or website visits. Of particular interest for Reeves is that the *Advertiser* is a free distribution newspaper.

"I want to measure the news impact in Barry County because rural communities often get left out by regional news outlets that mostly cover larger cities. It's important for people to know what's going on and to stay informed in their communities and in a perfect world, people shouldn't have to pay for news, it should be free," Reeves told *Advertiser* readers in announcing the project.

have moved to 280 Magee St. in Troy. Publisher Gregory Orear said the move aligns with the newspapers' goal of providing a better product to readers and advertisers.

"We are more interested in investing our resources in the product, rather than a building," Orear said in announcing the move. "A newspaper is so important to a community, and we look forward to continuing to serve in that role and tell the stories of Lincoln County while keeping citizens informed."

Daily Journal

Park Hills — Following up on an announcement made after its purchase by Better Newspapers Inc., the *Park Hills Daily Journal* has returned to local printing as a press has again been installed in the newspaper's office. Along with the printing press comes a new printing press crew, with readers receiving the Park Hills-printed editions beginning in early January.

Publisher Greg Hoskins told readers a local printing operation would be re-established after his company's purchased the *Daily Journal*, *Fredericktown Democrat News* and *Farmington Press* in June of last year from Lee Enterprises.



Troy — Offices for Lincoln County's three newspapers, including the *Lincoln County Journal*, *Troy Free Press* and *Elsberry Democrat*,

Member Opinion: Locked out of local government

From Andy Ostmeyer
The Joplin Globe

It wasn't that many years ago that a local lawmaker told us he thought this paper made too much of open records and open meetings. The gist of the conversation was that's just a newspaper hang-up; the public doesn't care about it, so consequently, neither do some politicians.

He was half right — transparency and access to government records and meetings are a hang-up of ours — one we'll unabashedly own, but it's more than that. It's about your ability to hold the public servants who work for you accountable.

A recent collaboration between CNHI, parent company of *The Joplin Globe*, and The Associated Press helped bring into a focus a disturbing trend — the rising indifference if not undisguised contempt for open government.

Titled "Locked out of Local Government," we urge you to give it a read if you haven't found time during the busy holiday season. You can find it here: <https://bit.ly/lockedoutoflocal>.

The story cited examples from around the country of governments running amok in the dark.

"It's been going on for decades, really, but it's accelerated the past 10 years," said David Cuillier, director of the Joseph L. Brechner Freedom of Information Project at the University of Florida.

A review by Cuillier of data provided by MuckRock — a nonprofit news site that files and shares public records requests — found that between 2010 and 2021, local governments' compliance with records requests dropped from 63% to 42%.



A collaboration between CNHI, The Joplin Globe, and The Associated Press helped bring into a focus the rising indifference, if not undisguised contempt for open government. Titled "Locked out of Local Government," you can find it here: <https://bit.ly/lockedoutoflocal>.

This hostility is on the rise at a time when media companies have been weakened, and the divisiveness and polarization we see at the national level have spilled over into the local

level.

"Governments feel emboldened to basically flout democracy (and) say, 'We're in charge. Don't question us. We're not telling you what's up,'" Cuillier said.

At the annual gathering of the Missouri Press Association, in late September, this was a hot topic, in part because Missouri's Sunshine Law, which provides for open meetings and open records, turned 50. They discussed efforts to get from lawmakers a simple resolution honoring the 50th anniversary of the law, but couldn't get support for even that from legislators.

"It was a brick wall," Dave Roland, director of litigation for the Freedom Center of Missouri, which advocates for transparency in government, told us in an interview afterward. "That certainly seems to be indicative of the current mindset of the Missouri Legislature."

We've stood by Missouri's Open Meetings and Open Records law for everyone of those 50 years. We battled local and state officials when they haven't complied.

But we can't go it alone.

They'll be a local election in April, and state and national elections later this year. There are a lot of issues, to be sure. We urge you to make sure transparency is one of them. Find out where the candidates stand. Find out their history on this issue.

If they are not unabashedly behind open government, they're the wrong person for the job, whatever else they say.

Andy Ostmeyer is editor of the Joplin Globe. This editorial was originally published Dec. 26 and can be found online here: <https://bit.ly/3RZhjSo>.

Share YOUR newspaper's views and opinions on issues related to journalism. Send them to mbarba@mopress.com.

The power of location

By Elizabeth Stephens

For the Reynolds Journalism Institute

Last fall, I taught a course that looked at the state of community news and what the future looks like. We had guest speakers from startups, nonprofits and legacy newspapers talk about the successes and challenges of working in community news.

One of the most enlightening parts of the course was visiting community newsrooms around the state. We visited in person with eight news outlets, four on the west side of the state and four on the east side.

Based on these visits and the guest speakers, there were some overall takeaways and reminders about what is working and what is not for community newsrooms here in Missouri.

Local control makes a difference

The visits included a mix of locally owned news outlets and corporate owned newsrooms. When the control and ownership was handled locally, there appeared to be more success in both building revenue and providing quality journalism. It was clear in all the newsrooms that there was passion for serving their communities, but when employees felt supported with local leadership and not overstretched by corporate mandates, they seemed to be more engaged in the work.

Place matters

Throughout the course, we have read and discussed Nikki Usher's book, "News for the Rich, White and Blue." One of the premises of her book is that a local newspaper helps define a place. We could see that play out in our visits and conversations with journalists.

At Leader Publications, based in suburban St. Louis, they have added a new regional newspaper as recently as 2017. When considering whether to expand to cover a community, publisher Peggy Scott says they look to see if it is a place with its own identity — does it have a downtown, are citizens engaged in public life, etc. The way they are able to be successful in an area depends on the support of the community, and the community needs to have some pride in the place they live to support the newspaper.

We also saw a difference in where newspaper offices were located in a community. On one Zoom call, Echo Menges, editor of the *Edina Sentinel*, was interrupted because the sheriff came in to talk about a story she had reached out to him about. I asked her about it after overhearing the interaction, and she said the offices are across from the courthouse and major government buildings so the officials end up stopping by to talk about stories. "They figured out it was easier to come tell me what's going on before I have to go hunting them down."

The *Sedalia Democrat* has always had a downtown presence but did move about half a mile in the last year. The new location puts them even closer to the courthouse and government buildings for the city. During our hour-long visit, one reporter stepped out to cover a meeting and



Students from the community news class during a field trip to the Sedalia Democrat. From left, Quinn Coffman, Molly Miller, Eli Hoff, Emily Hood and Sam Barrett. If you'd like your newsroom to meet with Elizabeth Stephens, email her at stephensec@missouri.edu, particularly if you're in northern Missouri. (Submitted photo/Reynolds Journalism Institute)

was back before we left.

We also saw readers and community members stopping by newspaper offices that were centrally located. *The Northeast News*, in suburban Kansas City located on Independence Avenue in the heart of the neighborhoods they cover, has a space for pop-up businesses in its front lobby, and one reader came in during our visit to get help finding a story she was looking for.

Local advertising is a revenue stream that needs more attention

The news outlets we visited were split on requiring a subscription and providing printed papers for free. The *Webster-Kirkwood Times*, which was purchased by employees in 2020, has free distribution by carrier every week. For the months in 2020 when the newspaper was not printed and delivered, readers continually asked when they would get it back. The owners figured out how to bring print back, but they were direct with readers that the way it works is local businesses buy the ads and the community needs to support those businesses. This cycle keeps businesses advertising and community members with a local printed newspaper.

Leader Publications has expanded relationships with local advertisers to help them with broader digital marketing efforts. The Leader has adopted the strategy of serving as a digital marketing agency for clients. While not a new practice to create a new revenue stream, success only comes with great execution. The Leader capitalized on the trusted relationship it has developed with its advertisers. The personal service and engagement local newspapers can offer advertisers can set them apart from larger outlets. The Leader found many advertisers wanted to utilize Facebook advertising but were lost on where to start. The Leader serves as a middleman getting ads out on social media and in the Google ad network.

Continued on Page 16



Elizabeth Stephens

Sunshine Week is March 10-16

From The Brechner Report

The Joseph L. Brechner Freedom of Information (FOI) Project at the University of Florida College of Journalism and Communications will coordinate this year's national Sunshine Week.

National Sunshine Week, to be held March 10-16, 2024, highlights the importance of open government and the dangers of excessive and unnecessary secrecy.

For decades, Sunshine Week has provided an annual rallying point for educational initiatives, including in-depth newspaper reporting projects, government proclamations, and public education through social media. All U.S. residents have the right to attend public meetings and see government documents through "sunshine laws," shedding light on issues of public importance.

The News Leaders Association (NLA), which led Sunshine Week since 2005, has transferred the public awareness campaign to Brechner. The Brechner FOI Project has provided education and research in acquiring civic information since its inception in 1977.

"It is an honor to carry on this decades-old tradition to inform the public about the legal rights to find out



what their government is up to," said David Cuillier, director of the Brechner FOI Project. "Research shows that freedom of information improves people's lives and encourages government to be more accountable, cost-effective and honest."

Sunshine Week has Florida roots, building on Florida Sunshine Sunday, which was founded in 2002. The program expanded to a full week nationally in 2005 through the American Society of News Editors (ASNE), with support from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation. In 2019, ASNE merged with the Associated Press Media Editors to become the News Leaders Association.

On Dec. 8, 2023, the NLA board voted to dissolve the organization in June 2024.

"NLA is thankful that the Brechner Project will lead Sunshine Week and continue the important work of both celebrating and protecting access to public information and open government," NLA President Alison Gerber said.

Make plans to educate your readers about the importance of Missouri's Sunshine Law. Look for more information about Sunshine Week resources in future Missouri Press eBulletins and on our website, www.mopress.com.

Share your thoughts on changes to the USPS

From Missouri Press Staff

Consider visiting www.keepuspostaged.org and share your thoughts about USPS price increases with your members of Congress. On the website's front page, click the "Take Action" button, which will bring you to a form you can fill out.

The website is the project of a nonprofit advocacy group

that includes the National Newspaper Association and the News Media Alliance, among many others.

Remember, USPS is no longer accepting paper statements for mailing reports, such as Form 3541.

Also, new rates went into effect last month. Another rate increase is possible later this year.

Continued from Page 15: *Figure out what works best for you, your publication and your community.*

No one size fits all solution

This is a conclusion that you'll find over and over in articles and discussions, and it's what Usher comes to in her book and we came to in our class. There are things that work well for some outlets because of the ownership model or the community they are a part of or the makeup of the staff in that moment. However, in another community even 50 miles down the road, it's not replicable, but something else is working for them.

What gave me the greatest hope in

these conversations was that people are still willing to jump in and do the work to inform their community. At a regional press association meeting, five owners spoke about why they wanted to own their newspaper and how they made it work. Most of them had purchased or taken over ownership of the newspaper in the last five years. That optimism should be encouraging for the industry. We might not know what forms community journalism will take in the future, but there is still passion for doing it well.

Elizabeth Stephens is the executive editor of the Columbia Missourian, the Missouri School of Journalism's community newspaper, and the Missouri Community Newspaper Management Chair. Stephens is seeking more newsrooms to visit as part of her ongoing work, especially in areas north of I-70 and about two hours from Columbia. If you are interested, contact her at stephensec@missouri.edu. This story was originally published online at <http://tinyurl.com/d3bwms4u>.



Missouri Newspaper Organizations

SHOW-ME PRESS ASSOCIATION: President, Roxie Murphy, *Maries County Advocate*; Directors: Hannah Spaar, *The Odessan*, Odessa; Gary Castor, *Jefferson City News Tribune*; Tim Schmidt, Westplex Media; Jacob Warden, Warden Publishing.

OZARK PRESS ASSOCIATION: President, Amanda Mendez, *Howell County News*, Willow Springs; Vice President, Jordan Troutman, *Cassville Democrat*; Secretary-Treasurer, Dan Wehmer, *Webster County Citizen*, Seymour; Past President, Ron Schott, *Wright County Journal*, Mountain Grove. Directors: Steve Pokin, *Springfield Daily Citizen*; Shelby Atkison, *Marshfield Mail*; Kimball Long, *El Dorado Springs Sun*; and Kyle Troutman, *Cassville Democrat*.

SOUTHEAST MISSOURI PRESS ASSOCIATION: President, Lucas Presson, Cape Girardeau; Second Vice President, Tamara Buck, Cape Girardeau; Secretary-Treasurer, Gina Raffety, Jackson; Historian, Peggy Scott, Festus. Directors: Kim Combs, Piedmont; and Jay Forness, Jackson.

NORTHWEST MISSOURI PRESS ASSOCIATION: President, Ken Garner, *The Maryville Forum/Grant City Times-Tribune*; Vice President, Brent Rosenauer, *The Savannah Reporter*; Secretary, Kathy Conger, Bethany Republican-Clipper, and Skye Pournazari, *The Maryville Forum/Grant City Times-Tribune*; Treasurer, W.C. Farmer, *The Atchison County Mail*, Rock Port.

MISSOURI PRESS ADVERTISING & MARKETING EXECUTIVES:

President, Gina Langston, Joplin; First Vice President, Stephanie Vandeven, Perryville; Secretary-Treasurer, Kristie Fortier, Columbia. Directors: Bryan Chester, Columbia; Jennifer Early, Lebanon; Stephanie Fitzgerald, Washington; Karl Giddens, Columbia; and Robin Gregg, Paris.

MISSOURI PRESS SERVICE: President, Liz Irwin, St. Louis; Vice President, Trevor Vernon, Eldon; Secretary-Treasurer, James White, Warsaw. Directors: Jeff Schrag, Springfield; and Dennis Warden, Owensville.

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MISSOURI COLLEGE MEDIA ASSOCIATION: President, Rachel Becker, University of Central Missouri; Vice President, Sydney Ellison, Truman State University; Secretary, Ellie Whitesell, University of Central Missouri; Adviser, Julie Lewis, University of Central Missouri; and MPA Liaison, Jack Dimond, Missouri State University.

Protection of the P.R.E.S.S.

Late in January, media in this country got exciting news! The U.S. House of Representatives passed the PRESS Act which would provide journalists a federal shield law protecting confidential sources from immediate discovery in any federal investigation. Further, the bill prevents data from cell phones and other telecommunications devices from being seized by federal authorities prior to notice being given to the journalist and an opportunity to challenge the seizure in court.

(As an aside, I'd like to thank those Missouri representatives who voted to support it. But Congress' website says "On motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill Agreed to by voice vote." So, no record of a vote to haunt anyone. I will presume every U.S. Representative from our state supported it.)

This bill, in one form or another, has been pending for decades in Congress. The "Protect Reporters from Exploitative State Spying" Act specifically includes those who regularly gather, collect, photograph, record, write, edit, report, investigate or publish news on the local, national and international level. It protects us from entities or employees of the judicial or executive branch or an administrative agency of the federal government who has power to issue a subpoena or otherwise compel access to information.

It covers not only employer-provided accounts containing information but also covers personal accounts or "personal technology devices" and protects "any information identifying a source who provided information as part of engaging in journalism," including all related papers and documents.

Prior to obtaining access, the federal entity must give notice to the journalist and allow the journalist to go to court and seek court protection. The court must find that disclosure is necessary "to prevent, or to identify any perpetrator of, an act of terrorism" against this country or that disclosure

is necessary "to prevent a threat of imminent violence, significant bodily harm, or death...." Without evidence meeting those standards, there will be no compelled disclosure.

And the Act contains limitations on what content may be sought and limitations on the breadth of the Act. (Unfortunately, it doesn't apply to libel and slander claims under state law, even if they are brought in a lawsuit in federal court.)

So, it's not everything. But it's something. Inasmuch as Missouri's shield law protection is thinner than the piece of paper you are reading this on, it's a good tool to add to your toolkit. On the state level, there are only a couple of cases where a court had addressed a journalists' shield law privilege. One of the most commonly cited is State of Missouri ex rel Classics III, Inc., v. Ely, a 1997 decision by a Missouri appellate court that held source disclosure in a libel case requires proof relating to four elements that are then balanced by the court in making its determination.

Those are: 1) whether the movant has exhausted alternative sources of the information; 2) the importance of protecting confidentiality in the circumstances of the case; 3) whether the information sought is crucial to the plaintiff's case; and 4) whether the plaintiff has made a prima facie case of defamation.

Efforts have been made in the Missouri legislature to pass a shield

"Sen. Eric Schmitt actually relied on a First Amendment defense similar to a shield law in litigation back in 2019 as Attorney General, when he claimed while defending a libel case against a state representative."

law many times, unsuccessfully.

So, the PRESS Act now goes to the U.S. Senate, where it seems the odds are good for passage.

Can we count on Missouri's senators to support this bill? I cannot find any record online of any statement made by either Senator Josh Hawley or Senator Eric Schmitt stating their position for or against a shield law policy. If you as a reporter run into either of them in the next few weeks, it might make a

good story to see what you can draw out of them.

And if you are a publisher, I'd urge you to drop our Senators a note reminding them that this bill is very important to protect your First Amendment rights. Senator Hawley repeatedly touts his constitutional law "street cred".

Senator Schmitt actually relied on a First Amendment defense similar to a shield law in litigation back in 2019 as Attorney General, when he claimed while defending a libel case against a state representative that the identity of constituents who made complaints against that legislator deserved protection from discovery. Surely, he'll understand.



Jean Maneke, is MPA's Legal Hotline attorney. Contact her at (816) 753-9000; jmaneke@manekelaw.com.

Are you using these resources?

Expand and enhance your editorial coverage.

From Missouri Press Staff

Missouri Press News

As a local newspaper, nobody knows your community like you do because it's YOUR beat. But what about statewide coverage, or business news, or the ongoing effects of policies long-since signed into law?

Much commentary has been written in recent years about the collaborative future of journalism, but in many ways local newspapers have always relied on collaboration

to keep the community informed. Remember country correspondents? Or how about running photos a parent took at the game your staff couldn't attend?

That's how you get the job done for your local community, but what if you want to expand your coverage beyond the city, county or region?

There are several statewide and even national services your newspaper can take advantage of and, in some cases, even help contribute to the stories being produced.

Missouri Independent

The Missouri Independent is a nonpartisan, nonprofit news organization covering state government, politics and policy. It is staffed by veteran Missouri reporters and is dedicated to investigative journalism that sheds light on how decisions in Jefferson City are made and their impact across the Show-Me State.

Missouri Independent's work is free for other news outlets to republish. Requirements for republishing include only editing for style or to shorten a story's length, provide proper attribution and a link to the Missouri Independent website, <https://missouriindependent.com>.

Free poetry-focused column

Missouri Press, on behalf of the *Springfield News-Leader*, is making available a column focused on poetry. The columns are available for newspapers to republish online or in print at no charge.

A running list of previous installments of the column is available on Missouri Press' website.

The column was initiated at the request of David L. Harrison, Missouri's poet laureate, who has published more than 100 books for young people and educators, and features insight from many more acclaimed poets.

Missouri Business Alert

A digital newsroom providing business news from across the state while training University of Missouri students in new technology and methods, giving them hands-on experience in business reporting, marketing and other skills.

Sign up for the Morning Minutes newsletter to get a rundown of statewide business news. Content from the Missouri Business Alert newsroom is available for republication with attribution, similar to other Missouri School of Journalism projects.

Visit missouribusinessalert.com to subscribe to the newsletter or contact Managing Editor Michael Stacy at stacyjm@missouri.edu with questions about content.

Capitol Report

Each legislative session the Missouri School of Journalism sends reporters to Jefferson City for the State Government Reporting Project.

The Capitol Report is available to all MPA members for republishing. A weekly recap of the stories produced by reporters in the Capitol is distributed to MPA members by Missouri Press staff and stories of particular note are sometimes distributed separately to allow members to use them more quickly.

Newspapers wanting a more localized approach to statehouse reporting are encouraged to contact Mark Horvit with story ideas or requests for comment from legislators in response to specific legislation or state policy. Horvit can be contacted by email at horvitm@missouri.edu.

To receive the Capitol Report weekly emails, email Matthew Barba at mbarba@mopress.com.

The Conversation

Faculty from research universities throughout the U.S. contribute articles on pressing news topics, which are available for free republication by news outlets and organizations at theconversation.com.

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Missouri Press Foundation

Preserving the Past. Focused on the Future.

Doug Crews, Former Executive Director of the Missouri Press Association

Thank you for your donation!

Because of you, we have far surpassed our fundraising goals this year, raising \$25,111 for the Foundation to revitalize the equipment at Arrow Rock Museum. We are absolutely overwhelmed by your generosity and extremely grateful to everyone who made a gift to the Foundation at the end of 2023.

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