

MP MISSOURI PRESS NEWS

MPAME Sets Sail for Camden on the Lake in April



Time is running out to submit nominations for Missouri Press' top awards | P3
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Our state's Sunshine Law helps everyone see clearly

It's been almost 50 years since the Freedom of Information Act was passed by Congress and Missouri followed suit with our Sunshine Law (RSMO Chapter 610), putting it into the state Constitution and making us one of the earliest advocates of the open records act.

The law clearly states that meetings, records, votes, actions, and deliberations of public governmental bodies are to be open to the public.

Records are defined by Missouri law as "any record, whether written or electronically stored, retained by or of any public governmental body including any report, survey, memorandum, or other professional service paid for in whole or in part by public funds, including records created or maintained by private contractors under an agreement with a public governmental body or on behalf of a public governmental body."

While we, as journalists, may be the most frequent users of the Sunshine Law, anyone can request documents and a statement of purpose is not required, though I suspect it is not rare that a public official asks for one.

Though we may tend to think of it as "our" law, the Missouri Press Association has for over four decades campaigned tirelessly to inform our readers and the public in general that the law is for everyone.

And a benefit to all Missouri citizens.

When asked what threats or challenges the Sunshine Law faces, MPA's legal guru Jean Maneké said the No. 1 obstacle to the public is cost.

"When a requester cannot specifically identify what record is sought, it hinders fast location of that record, which drives up the 'search' portion of the cost," Jean stated, adding that today's electronic databases have helped lower those costs. "Copying thousands of pages of records can now sometimes be done in the push of a button, saving data onto an external drive."

"The biggest threat to Sunshine Law rights is the push by public bodies to refuse to disclose public information they hold," Jean wrote. "Access to information is beneficial

"Though we may tend to think of it as 'our law', the Missouri Press Association has for over four decades campaigned tirelessly to inform our readers and the public in general that the [Sunshine Law] is for everyone."

to the public, but the public has to overcome a natural 'secrecy' mentality — that what people don't know can't hurt them. It can hurt them. Information is the way society grows and solves problems. Secrecy only hurts that process."

Unfortunately, it appears that the biggest threats to Sunshine Law rights today just might be certain Missouri legislators, such as Rep.

Bruce DeGroot, Attorney General Eric Schmitt and Governor Mike Parson.

Continued on Page 9



PRESIDENT: Roger Dillon, *Shannon County Current Wave, Eminence*

FIRST VICE PRESIDENT: Beth Durreman, *Leader Publications, Festus*

SECOND VICE PRESIDENT: Amos Bridges, *Springfield News-Leader*

SECRETARY: Marion Jordon, *The Kansas City Globe*

TREASURER: Bryan Chester, *Columbia Missourian*

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: Mark Maassen

ADVERTISING DIRECTOR: Ted Lawrence

EDITOR: Matthew Barba

PAST PRESIDENT: Liz Irwin, *Missouri Lawyers Media, St. Louis*

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Gary Castor, *Jefferson City News Tribune*

Sandy Nelson, *The Courier-Tribune, Liberty*

Bryan Jones, *The Morgan County Statesman*

Kevin Jones, *St. Louis American*

Tim Schmidt, *Montgomery Standard, Montgomery City*

Lucas Presson, *Southeast Missourian, Cape Girardeau*

Hannah Spaar, *The Odessan, Odessa*

NNA Representative: Peggy Scott, *Leader Publications, Festus*

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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

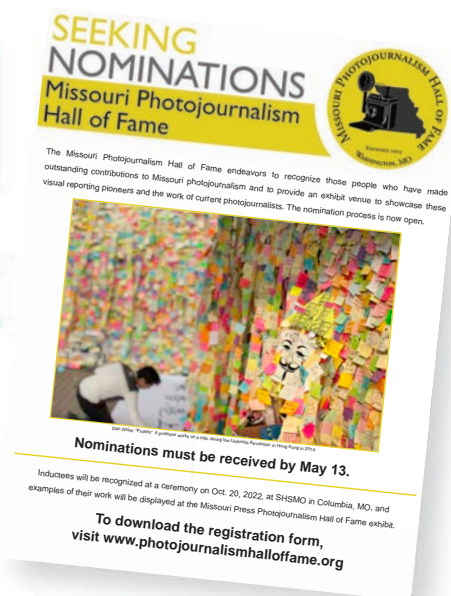
Nominations must be in by March 31

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.



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



Attend MPAME and seize a bounty of ad knowledge

Collect your Best Ad treasure in person, April 21.

By Matthew Barba
Missouri Press News

As spring approaches and brings with it promises of warmer weather on the open water, make plans to bring your advertising crew to the Missouri Press Advertising and Marketing Executives annual meeting April 21-22, at Camden on the Lake Resort.

This year marks the return of a dedicated event for MPAME after two years of interference caused by the coronavirus pandemic. The 2020 meeting eventually was made virtual, while last year's meeting was incorporated into the 155th Annual Missouri Press Convention in Excelsior Springs.

MPAME President Bryan Chester said there is a lot of excitement surrounding this year's MPAME meeting not only because of the pandemic's effects on the last two meetings but also the presentations planned for attendees.

Attendees at this year's MPAME meeting, Thursday-Friday, April 21-22, will have the chance to participate in a variety of learning opportunities and training. Winners of this year's Best Ad Contest will also be able to collect their awards in person during the Thursday night Best Ad Contest awards banquet.

"The changes we had to make for the last couple of years' meetings were necessary as a response to the pandemic," Chester said. "Now that things appear to be improving throughout the state, it is exciting to think about having our own advertising meeting once again."

Chester said the highlight of the two-day advertising-focused meeting will be a presentation from Russell Viers, renowned design presenter and software consultant. Viers has more than 25 years' experience doing live trainings in 24 countries.

"We're very excited to have Russell coming to speak to us. I think his topic of creating ads that get noticed will be very helpful to members looking for a way to help their communities continue recovering from the pandemic," Chester said.

Viers' presentation, titled "Create Ads That Get Noticed," will help attendees take advantage of all of the benefits of the Adobe Creative Cloud to help those ads stand out on the page and drive more traffic for customers.

Some of what will be covered includes using InDesign's Gridify to change the way you build ads, how to include your sales rep in the creative process using Adobe Capture, using CC Libraries to move seamlessly between InDesign, Photoshop and Illustrator and much more.

"In this class, we'll see what can be done to create ads



The Calypso is a "pirate ship" on Lake of the Ozarks operated by Jolly Rogers Grub 'N Grog. Attendees of this year's Missouri Press Advertising Managers and Executives meeting, April 21-22, will have the chance to enjoy drinks and party music on the 65-foot boat while cruising around the lake. Find registration information on Page 5 of this magazine or visit www.mopress.com. (Submitted)

quickly in InDesign, and then turn up the gas to see what we can do with other CC tools," Viers wrote in his description of his presentation.

Also on the agenda is MPA Hotline Attorney Jean Maneke and an advertising idea sharing session that will net a cash prize to the attendee who shares the best idea of the day. Rounding out the agenda will be roundtable discussions on digital advertising, niche publications and special sections, marketing and self-promotion, and producing events.

Following the awards banquet, MPAME members can live out their pirate fantasies during a sunset cruise aboard Lake of the Ozarks' 65-foot pirate ship, The Calypso, which is operated by the owners of Jolly Rogers Grub 'N Grog at the lake.

"I am delighted that we are once again meeting in person and can't wait to set sail for a fantastic event," Chester said.

More information about MPAME's meeting in April can be found on Page 5 of this month's issue of Missouri Press News. To register to attend, visit www.mopress.com/events or go to <https://bit.ly/3KI7wv8>.

Call Camden on the Lake Resort at (573) 365-5620 to reserve a room by March 20 at the special MPAME rate of \$132.

For more information about MPAME or the April meeting, please contact Kristie Fortier at kfortier@mopress.com.

MPAME

Missouri Press Advertising & Marketing Executives Meeting

April 21-22, 2022

Camden on the Lake
Resort, Lake Ozark



Thursday, April 21

11:00 AM | MPAME Board meeting | H. Toads Restaurant

Events in Harbor Ballroom

1-2:15 PM | Legal Hotline Attorney Jean Maneke

2:15 PM | Break

2:30-3:30 PM | Best Ideas Session | Bring Your Best Ideas to Share to win CA\$H!

3:30-4:30 PM | Hot Topic Round Table Discussions

The Evolution of Engaging & Monetizing Audiences, the Big Choice on Online, Subscriber verses Advertising model.
Hosted by Brett Simpson of LakeExpo.com

Niche products and special sections. Creating "targeted" print content that attracts new advertisers. Exploring additional distribution outside your DMA. Partnering for content creation.
Hosted by Beth Durreman of Leader Publications

Events. Building revenue through event hosting and sponsorship.
Hosted by Kevin Jones of the St. Louis American and Trevor Vernon of Eldon Advertiser and the Lake Sun Leader

Marketing and self-promotion. Ideas for building/leveraging your brand. Marketing campaigns we've tried. What's worked? What hasn't? The impact of local news. Sponsorships & trades. The value of community engagement.
Hosted by Bryan Chester of the Columbia Missourian

5:30PM | Awards Banquet and Best Ad Idea Session Winner Announced

7:30-9:30 PM | Jolly Rogers Pirate Sunset Cruise Aboard the Calypso with Bar and Party Music

Friday, April 22

Events in Harbor Ballroom

8:30 AM | Breakfast

9-10AM | Russell Viers

Create Ads That Get Noticed

If you are creating ads in InDesign, but not taking advantage of the many other benefits Adobe's Creative Cloud has to offer, you're missing out on tools that can make your ads stand out on the page, driving more traffic for your customer. In this class, we'll see what can be done to create ads quickly in InDesign, and then turn up the gas to see what we can do with other CC tools, including Illustrator, Capture, Adobe Fonts, CC Libraries, and more. Some of what we'll cover includes:

- How InDesign's Gridify can change the way you build ads
- Make Type more fun and exciting with Illustrator
- Eliminate many font problems with Adobe Fonts (formerly TypeKit)

10:15 AM | Break

10:30-Noon | Russell Viers

- Include your sales reps in the creative process with Adobe Capture
- Move between Photoshop, Illustrator, InDesign and Bridge seamlessly with CC Libraries
- Making InDesign's Snippets do the work for you
- much much more

**The Special MPAME Room Rate is \$132,
Call Camden on the Lake at
573.365.5620 by March 20 for
Reservations at the Special Rate.**

Russell Viers Bio:

Russell Viers is a native Missourian who started his newspaper career as a reporter/photographer for the Lamar Daily Democrat in 1981. He has been around the industry longer than that, having a mother who was a typesetter and a brother who was a pressman. He got into the design and production aspects of publishing in 1987 and became a speaker/trainer in 1997, with his first workshop for the Missouri Press Association. In the 25 years since, he has trained or presented live in 24 countries. His topics range from how to get the most from Adobe software to how to improve workflows and processes. In addition to live training, Viers offers training online through his website, Digiversity.tv. He has also published videos for Adobe, Lynda.com, and Total Training.



Online registration form: <https://bit.ly/3KI7wv8>

Lucas Presson, Marion Jordon are two of MPA's new-for-'22 directors

They join Bryan Chester and Tim Schmidt on Missouri Press Association's board.

By Matthew Barba
Missouri Press News

With more than 200 newspapers represented in Missouri Press' membership from every corner of the state, it is important that not only are different sizes of newspapers represented in the Association's leadership but also the different communities they represent.

Missouri Press Association had four new members join the Board of Directors for 2022, including Marion Jordon, *The Kansas City Globe*; Lucas Presson, *Southeast Missourian*; Bryan Chester, *Columbia Missourian*; and Tim Schmidt, *Montgomery Standard*.

Directors are elected each year during the business meeting held as part of the Association's annual convention and trade show. Nominations to serve on the board are accepted until July 1 and are then reviewed by a nominating committee for consideration by the entire MPA membership.

Marion Jordon

From being raised on a farm in Mississippi to owning multiple businesses in Kansas City, Marion Jordon is honored to be doing the work he does now, especially when he thinks about the generations that came before him. Jordon is owner and publisher of *The Kansas City Globe*, which he runs with his wife, Denise, who serves as managing editor.

The *KC Globe* was started in 1972, in response to Marion Jordon, a mortgage banker and real estate broker at the time, not feeling like other media in the greater Kansas City metro area were properly covering stories related to the Black community.

"We had a large contract that didn't go well, and then we didn't get our story told. There was some discrimination

involved," Jordon said. "I had always wanted a newspaper, so I went to my brother and told him that we should start our own, to get the truth out and better communicate for our community."

Jordon describes the founding of the *Globe* as "somewhat of a protest and to tell our side of the story."

"As we started looking around, we found other people in the community with stories that hadn't been told, so we told their stories. We did profiles of people who had been ignored," Jordon said. "Positive news would be the spin of our newspaper. We looked for features and news stories, histories, that sort of thing, and it took off from there."

He added that by always trying to hire people smarter than them, the newspaper was able to flourish and give back to the community.

"My mother always said to me, black business should try to contribute back to the community," Jordon said. "I love people, and my favorite part about the newspaper is building relationships with people in the community. I believe part of the race problem is a lack of communication, and I think once people get to know one another, you find we're more alike than different."

Helping build relationships between communities is a challenge newspapers are not only tasked with themselves but also one they have to help other people overcome, Jordon said. Critical to that challenge is getting more young people involved in the profession and reading the newspaper so they are informed



Marion Jordon is publisher of *The Kansas City Globe*, and one of Missouri Press Association's new board directors. In addition to running the newspaper, he grows popcorn that a separate business, Jordon Foods, sells as George Washington's Favorite, named for his father. (Submitted photos)



about their community.

"We need to challenge young people today, because if something is too easy, they don't give their full attention to it," Jordon said. "There's so much out there now, you've got to give them a challenge and then reward them, otherwise they start slipping away."

Jordon said he wants to use his time on the MPA Board of Directors to improve communication and relationships in order to strengthen the newspaper profession, which in turn helps each member's communities.

"I hope to continue to improve on communication and build a better relationship between the Black community and the white community," Jordon said. "I feel so honored to think about where I came from in Mississippi, about my uncle fighting in World War I, about my great-great-granddaddy who was a slave, to today and doing what I can to help improve things."

"We can reach out to leaders in government, in our communities, in corporations and show them how our business is about building a better way for people to work together," Jordon said.

Continued on Page 7

Continued from Page 6: New MPA directors

While Jordon has a passion for his newspaper, he considers himself a workaholic and keeps busy with other ventures, including a farm in Knob Noster.

"Since my dad owned a farm, I learned how to plant corn and cotton, and I told myself as soon as I got enough money and was able to buy a farm, I would. And I did, and I raised soybeans and corn. Then I did a survey in order to get more yield out of the ground, and that led to me deciding to grow popcorn," Jordon said.

Growing popcorn led to the creation of Jordon Foods, which produces several items for sale online and in eight states, as well as at all of the KC-area grocery stores. The chief product is George Washington's Favorite Popcorn, named for Jordon's father.

Jordon Foods also sells Margaret's Homemade Apple Butter, named after Jordon's mother and which uses her own family recipe. Coffee, cooking oil and popcorn seasoning round out the company's offerings.

"I love being a farmer, planting soybeans and corn, and it's been a great support for the newspaper, and the newspaper has been great for supporting the foods business," Jordon said.

Lucas Presson

A southeast Missouri native, Lucas Presson didn't always aspire to be a member of the fourth estate. In fact, until his junior year in college (and into a second semester of organic chemistry), he had planned to go to pharmacy school.

"I had taken several speech communication courses and enjoyed it," Presson said. "I decided to finish a degree in communication studies, with a minor in chemistry, which basically serves as an interesting ice breaker story now."

After college, Presson earned his MBA from Southeast Missouri State University. The combination of communication and business has been a great asset during his first decade-plus in media.

Presson reached out to the Rust family, publishers of the *Southeast Missourian*, about opportunities at his hometown newspaper. Hired as a reporter in the newsroom, in four years he worked his way up to editorial page coordinator/editor then to assistant managing editor.

In 2015, he was named general manager of rustmedia, the company's full-service advertising agency, and for the last five he has been assistant publisher of the *Missourian*.

Presson said he likes the work he does because it gives him a "license to be curious" since few entities are more tied to the community than newspapers. "And there's something special about local journalism. We care deeply about the communities we serve," he said.

In particular, the digital transformation of local journalism has been exciting for Presson, who said the *Missourian* has

grown digital subscriptions by 386% since March 2018. The company has been a participant in the Google News Initiative and Facebook Journalism Project, and it continues to look at new ways to grow digitally, from types of content to delivery methods (newsletters and text alerts) to overhauling its online platform, which it plans to launch to the industry later this year.

"Our culture is one of testing and not being afraid to fail," Presson said. "Back in 2013, I pitched an idea for a best in high school sports awards show called the Semoball Awards. It would be a first-class experience similar to the ESPYs or NFL Honors with a celebrity speaker, great food and highly produced experience. Our company leadership embraced the idea, and today it's one of our marquee events."

Between rising distribution costs and declining pre-print advertising, Presson said the industry is facing challenges that were made worse when COVID-19 wiped out a big chunk of advertising dollars. In turn, that led to a drop in frequency for the *Southeast Missourian* from six days a week to three.

"We still produce an e-edition six days a week, which is key to our digital transition," Presson said. "We embrace innovation around here. So, while print newspapers are core to our business, there's so much more. We're not simply in the newspapering business. We're in the news disseminating business. It takes many forms these days."

A challenge in the last year has been recruiting.

"We don't know if it's a short-term issue," he said. "But it's been especially challenging in news and circulation, especially finding drivers. We know, however, that other industries are having similar challenges."

Helping the newspaper industry meet those challenges and more is why Presson decided to volunteer for the MPA Board.

"It's a great opportunity to learn from other media leaders across the state, stay engaged at a state level and represent Southeast Missouri," Presson said. "Hopefully I bring a perspective to the board that helps spur ideas, both for individual properties and our Association."

"More specifically, reader revenue is something at the top of my mind. It's something more media companies will need to focus on, specifically digitally, to thrive going forward," he added.

If you ever meet Presson at an Association event and want to pick his brain about journalism's digital transition but don't know enough about organic chemistry to break the ice, consider using America's pastime instead.

Presson said he is a big baseball fan and played in high school. Going back even further into his childhood, however, he has a long history of tickling the ivories.

"I also play piano. Started when I was 3," he said. "In fact, I taught in my parent's studio through college. These days I play for my church band, which is something I really enjoy."



Lucas Presson



Tim Schmidt



Bryan Chester



BETTER NEWSPAPER CONTEST

We want YOU to enter this year's BNC!

Secure reduced entry fees through March 31

From Missouri Press Staff

The 2022 Missouri Press Foundation Better Newspaper Contest template closes April 7, no exceptions. Get your entries for this year's contest together and entered before Thursday, March 31, to take advantage of the tiered fee structure.

The 2022 BNC entry fee structure is as follows:

Entries 1-10: \$7 per entry;

Entries 11-50: \$5.50 per entry;

Entries 51 and over: \$5.25 per entry.

MPF's 2022 BNC will remain open until 11 p.m. Thursday, April 7. ALL entries received after March 31, will be subject to a flat \$10 entry fee.

All categories for Missouri's 2022 Better Newspaper Contest require digital entries.

Entries to the Missouri Press Foundation's Newspaper Contest will be submitted using BetterBNC Online Journalism Awards Platform: <https://betternewspapercontest.com/login>.

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

We encourage members not to wait until the deadline to enter entries in the template. If a significant number of people attempt to use the template at the same time, it can slow everyone down and could cause you to miss the deadline window.

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

Significant changes for this year's BNC include revised language for categories 18 and 47, Best Editorial and Opin-

ion Pages and Best COVID-19 Coverage, respectively.

For category 18, the name and language of the category has been expanded to clarify newspapers are encouraged to also enter their op-ed and opinion pages, as well as editorial pages. The change was suggested to highlight newspapers' diversity of opinion content and community engagement.

Category 47 was changed to be five items associated with a newspaper's coverage of the coronavirus pandemic. Newspapers are still limited to one entry for the category, and the award will still be presented to the newspaper.

In addition to the tiered fee structure only being available to newspapers entering by March 31, the discounted price for additional entries was adjusted slightly to help ensure the BNC is able to pay for itself. The two "free" entries have also been removed.

If you have any questions about the 2022 Better Newspaper Contest, please don't hesitate to contact Barba (mbarba@mopress.com) or Fortier (kfortier@mopress.com).

THREE TIPS TO MAKE UPLOADING EASY:

- If you have entries that consist of more than one piece of content, combine them into one file. This will make uploading and judging much easier. This will apply to Best Columnist, Best Front Page, etc., where an entry is more than one piece. Combine them into one file. Do the same for stories that jump to another page. Combine the pages into one file for uploading.

- Entries should have 1-3-word titles that tell the judge precisely what material on the page is to be judged.

- Put all your entries into a "Contest Entries" folder on your desktop.

Please read the instructions and category listings carefully!

Mark your calendars for Missouri Press Association's 156th Annual Convention, Sept. 15-17, 2022, at Lodge of Four Seasons in Lake Ozark.

OBITUARIES



Phoenix, Ariz.

Jim Avey

James "Jim" Avey, 88, of Phoenix, 1985-1987. Ariz. died Feb. 2, 2022, at the Honor Health Sonoran Crossing Medical Center in Phoenix. He was diagnosed with COVID-19 shortly before his death.

Avey and wife Jo Ann published the *Princeton Post-Telegraph* from 1972-1985. He left Princeton to work for Western Newspapers as editor and publisher of the *Foothills Sentinel* in Cave Creek, Ariz. from



He was a former president of the Northwest Missouri Press Association. For 40 years, he was a partner in Printcraft, Inc., of Lamoni, Iowa, which published several newspapers in Missouri and Iowa.

In addition to his wife, Jo Ann, he is survived by two children, Holly Beth and Josh; two granddaughters; one brother and one sister; and many more family and friends.

To make a donation to Missouri Press Foundation, contact Michael Harper at 573-449-4167, ext. 303, or at mharper@mopress.com.

Ashland

Mark Paul

Mark Charles Paul, 71, of Ashland, died Jan. 25, 2022, at home from complications of cancer.

After graduating from the University of Missouri with a degree in journalism, Paul moved to Ashland where he was a wedding photographer. He also purchased and published *The Boone County Journal* for many years.

In addition to his wife, Teresa, he is survived by his children, Jill, Seth and Danny; four grandsons; and many more family and friends.



Continued from Page 2: *Missouri's Sunshine Law would be hobbled by proposed legislation*

DeGroot's proposed HB 2049 would narrow the focus or put limits on Missouri's Sunshine Law by creating new categories of public records, called "transitory records" or "draft records," that would be exempt.

The bill also appears to be an attempt to undo a recent Missouri Supreme Court decision that the public should not be charged unreasonably large fees for the process of sorting and retrieving public records. The bill would also narrow the definition of "public business" substantially, making some existing public meetings no longer public, including meetings of subcommittees.

As noted in a recent Op-Ed piece by national columnist Thomas L. Knapp, which ran under the headline: 'Missouri Governor Mike Parson Tries to Stick it Where the Sun Don't Shine,' Parson tried to charge Elad Gross, a candidate for state attorney general \$3,618 for documents Gross requested under the state's Sunshine Law, claiming more than 90 hours of required "research and processing" at \$40 per hour.

According to Knapp, the "processing" involved having attorneys redact information from requested documents, and "Now Parson's asking the state legislature to amend the Sunshine Law so that he can keep more government documents secret and charge more for handing over such information.

"In the meantime, the state's attorney general, Eric Schmitt, claimed that he couldn't investigate alleged violations of the Sunshine Law by the governor's office because that office (rather than, say, the people of Missouri) is his 'client,'" Knapp noted. "Government transparency should be the rule, not the expensive exception."

The Missouri Press Association's position has long been that the Sunshine Law is critical to protecting the state's citizens and promoting government transparency.

There are a myriad of important challenges and problems that the Missouri 2022 legislative session should be addressing. Changing, diluting and restricting the Sunshine Law should not be among them.

**Are you receiving Missouri Press' emails?
What about everyone else at your newspaper?**

To get yourself or another member of your staff on our email list, or for more information, please contact mbarba@mopress.com

Remember Rex Rust's rule: Consider the crazy shot

The Relevance Project draws inspiration from a Missouri newspaper leader's approach to photo ops.

Editor's Note: The following is a Relevant Point of the Day from The Relevance Project, which is publishing one point every weekday in 2022. This point was published Jan. 17, online at relevanceprojectnet.wordpress.com/. Visit The Relevance Project's website for more helpful ideas, information and resources to improve your newspaper.

From Tom Silvestri
The Relevance Project

The funeral of Rex Rust, a friend of many, is today (Jan. 17). He died Jan. 6 at age 52. Yes, too young.

Rex was co-president of Missouri-based Rust Communications, a second-generation media company operating primarily in the Midwest that owns more than 40 newspapers and has interests in radio stations, a digital agency and commercial real estate. Like many publishers, corporate representatives and newspaper vendors, I ran into Rex at industry conferences and board meetings.

To know Rex was to have a lifelong colleague and plenty of lessons on how to compete with gusto, appreciation for the game, and respect for colleagues. I can never remember a moment where I saw Rex down in the dumps or negative. That's what made his battle with cancer over the last year a profile in courage.

In his obituary, there's an unusual Relevant Point that can apply to

newspapers in their transformations. Call it the Rex Rule: Always considering the offbeat before making a key decision.

Here's why: You don't want to miss a potential hidden opportunity, an innovative route that's off the beaten path, or even a process that produces a surprisingly positive result.

Besides, conventional thinking can fall short in challenging times.

Among the many things Rex was known for, the obituary stated, "he also loved doing the 'crazy shot' when taking a photo." The crazy shot? The obit explains: "There could be one serious shot, but there had to be a 'crazy one' as well (and the crazy shot was always the best)."

Among his friends and colleagues, there were plenty of crazy shots shared when they learned he died. Happy memories brought smiles despite the sadness.

That explains today's Relevant Point, aka the Rex Rule: Before

"The Rex Rule: Before you frame an urgent Relevant solution, make sure you consider the crazy shot or angle. Don't let the naysayers disrupt your potentially disruptive idea."

you frame an urgent Relevant solution, make sure you consider the crazy shot or angle. Don't let the naysayers disrupt your potentially disruptive idea.

Open up the pores and deeply think about a different approach. Be bold. Even zany. Unusual. Then, snap the picture. Look at it. And don't ignore it because it just

might be the approach everyone will ultimately remember, be thankful they were a part of, and look forward to the next time.

And this: At least have some fun with the Rex Rule. (You can always go with the serious plan, if you must.)

Thank you, Rex, for that lasting advice. As his obituary further reminded us: "He was one in a million and to know him was to love him."

Amen.

Tom Silvestri is executive director of The Relevance Project, a partnership of press associations founded in 2018 to speed the resurgence of newspapers in North America.

Sunshine Week is March 13-19

Members of the media, including newspapers, are encouraged to highlight the importance of openness through stories, editorials, columns, cartoons or graphics.

To help you recognize Sunshine Week, a content toolkit is available online at www.newsleaders.org/sunshine-week-toolkit. Permission to use the resources in the toolkit is for the seven days of Sunshine Week.

MPA Legal Hotline helps publishers navigate questions of the law

By Matthew Barba
Missouri Press News

When Missouri Press Association launched its Legal Hotline in 1991, the goal was for all members to help each other have access to an attorney. In turn, any member needing counsel would be able to get help on legal issues related to government meetings and records, the Sunshine Law, advertising questions and more.

It has proven to be one of the most valuable benefits to membership with Missouri Press Association simply because attorney fees can be costly for individual newspapers.

Kay Wilson, publisher of the *Nodaway News* in Maryville, describes the legal hotline service as “priceless for small newspapers in Missouri. I have used it for help in corralling organizations who are less than transparent in their dealings.

“Sometimes a quick phone call to the organization’s leadership or hired hand will rectify the situation,” Wilson said. “Sometimes, I was too vigilant in trying to let the public know what was going on, and I appreciated that ruling.”

Because the MPA Legal Hotline was launched with the help of Kansas City-based attorney Jean Maneke, it is all but impossible to separate the two in the minds of many who have used the service. In fact, when prompting members to share Hotline feedback, her name was left off the query, but most responses included her by name.

Jack Miles, editor of the *Richmond News* and *Excelsior Springs Standard*, said he has sought Maneke’s counsel many times over the years.

“She is helpful, knows the law and has provided comments on relevant legal issues several times,” Miles said. “I could not get that help elsewhere without expending much more time to get dubious results.”

Mike Scott, publisher of NEMOnews Media Group, which includes seven northeast Missouri newspapers, including the *Kahoka Media* and *Edina Sentinel*, also praised the Legal Hotline service.

“We have used Jean Maneke’s advice numerous times,” Scott said. “We often ask her to read over potentially problem stories prior to publication. Getting her ‘blessing’ gives me, as the publisher, some peace that I’m not missing something that will cost me the company.”

Maneke’s history in newspapers goes back to her school days and her last gig inside the industry was as a business and law journalist/columnist for *The Kansas City Star*, so she understands the demands put on news publishers. Like the newspapers she represents, Maneke wants to help MPA members report the story and not become the story.

“Sometimes, she’ll tell us it’s a great story, but don’t run it because it wouldn’t be defensible in court,” Scott said. “I believe if we ask her the question, we’d better take her advice, and we pull back and wait for more information to develop.

“She has also helped advise us in getting out of trouble when

MPA members with Legal Hotline questions can contact Jean Maneke by email: jmaneke@manekelaw.com; or by phone: (816) 753-9000.

we should have run something past her before publication. Fortunately, that hasn’t happened in many years,” Scott said.

Accountability through Sunshine

On the day *Missouri Press News* reached out to MPA members for feedback on the Legal Hotline, Allen Edmonds, editor and co-owner of the *North Cass Herald*, said he had just contacted Maneke for advice.

“I usually have a question for Jean once to twice a year. Almost always, the questions deal with open meetings and records issues, and her expertise is absolutely critical to our work,” Edmonds said. “Jean’s opinion is viewed as that of a ‘referee,’ while ours would be viewed as another ‘player.’

“Our government officials most often are simply mistaken if they violate the Sunshine Law and quickly correct the issue when notified,” Edmonds said. “Just as often, I have turned out to be mistaken despite my years and years of working in the industry.”

Edmonds added that having someone to help him know when he is right and wrong about legal issues has helped improve the way the newspaper is viewed by the community and its leaders.

“It increases our credibility in the eyes of the government officials we work with to know we’re always willing to find the truth to an issue, not just what we may think it to be,” Edmonds said.

On the other side of the state, Scott said his newspaper group has benefitted from the past help the Legal Hotline has provided when it comes to the Sunshine Law and working with officials to get records.

“Jean has also advised us on Sunshine issues several times, and over the years, it’s become less of an issue,” Scott said. “Many of our northeast Missouri officials now understand that they need to provide information when we ask.”

David Meadows, general manager for WEHCO Media, which includes the *Jefferson City News Tribune*, said the service has also helped his group with advertising content, internet copyright and libel questions.

“It is very useful to know we have a resource to help us make decisions on antagonistic ad content, as well as copyright and potential libel claims against us for online content,” Meadows said. “I also like the responsiveness, usually getting back to us quickly, which helps in ad buy situations.”

An extension of the MPA Legal Hotline is a monthly column, currently authored by Maneke, which can usually be found on page 18 of each month’s edition of *Missouri Press News* (including this one!).

Prosecutor: No ‘criminal intent’ by reporter Missouri governor accused of hacking

By Jason Hancock
Missouri Independent

There was no evidence of any criminal intent by a *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* reporter who was targeted by the governor after finding a security flaw in a state website, Cole County Prosecutor Locke Thompson said in an interview on Feb. 21 with the *Missouri Independent*.

If any crime was committed, Thompson said, it was in the “fringes” of an overly-broad state law and “wasn’t going to be worth the time, the effort or, quite frankly, the taxpayer dollars to pursue.”

The law in question says a person commits the offense of tampering with computer data by “accessing a computer, a computer system or a computer network, and intentionally examines information about another person.”

“The law does appear to be so vague that it basically describes someone using a computer to look up someone’s information,” Thompson said.

Lawmakers may want to consider revising that section of state law, Thompson said.

“Our investigation didn’t uncover

what we believe to be any criminal intent,” he said. “Even though it still may have technically been a crime, we didn’t believe that there was intent.”

Thompson spoke to *The Independent* after releasing the file associated with the investigation of Josh Renaud, the *Post-Dispatch* reporter who in October discovered that Social Security numbers for teachers, administrators and counselors were visible in the HTML code of a publicly accessible site operated by the state education department.

HTML code is the programming that tells the computer how to display a web page.

The documents include summaries of interviews conducted by the Missouri State Highway Patrol and prosecutor’s office of Renaud, several state employees and Shaji Khan, a cybersecurity professor who helped confirm the security flaw for the *Post-Dispatch*.

Renaud told investigators that he discovered the security flaw by accident while he was collecting publicly available data for a potential story on teacher accreditation.

He was trying to build a data set so the *Post-Dispatch* could run analysis on it and look for trends that could lead to a story, Renaud told investigators. He needed to look at the source code to figure out the best way to collect the information, and in doing so he found what he thought was a social security number for an educator.

“He stated he located a parameter that was labeled ‘Educator SSN’ and a nine-digit number below it, which at face value appeared to be a social security number,” the summary of the interview says. “He stated he was shocked because he was not looking for it and did not expect to find that information.”

To make sure what he found were indeed social security numbers, Renaud said he ran the information by teachers he knew. He also checked with Khan, who told investigators the problem discovered by Renaud has been a continual issue for the past 10 to 12 years.

This article was originally published online Feb. 21, at missouriindependent.com/.

Find the original article at <https://bit.ly/3BHxhYc>.

Court backs ban on public funds for campaigns

From The Associated Press

The Missouri Supreme Court in mid-February ruled in favor of a law banning the use of public funds for campaigning.

Several cities in 2019 sued to overturn the law against using public resources to support candidates or ballot measures. The cities argued the law unconstitutionally limited public officials’ free speech.

A lower court judge sided with cities, but Supreme Court judges ruled unanimously that while the law limits the use of public funding, it does not limit free speech.

The Supreme Court sent the case back to the lower court for further legal proceedings.

Judges in their ruling wrote that the law “does not limit or prohibit officials’ speech; it merely prohibits them from using public funds to facilitate or augment that speech.”

The Republican-led Legislature last year amended the law to ensure that it applies to schools. For example, it prohibits a school spokesperson in their official capacity from writing a press release in favor of a tax hike to raise money for schools.

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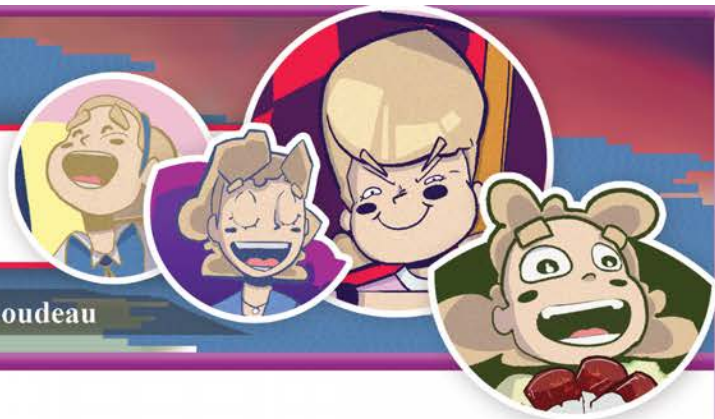
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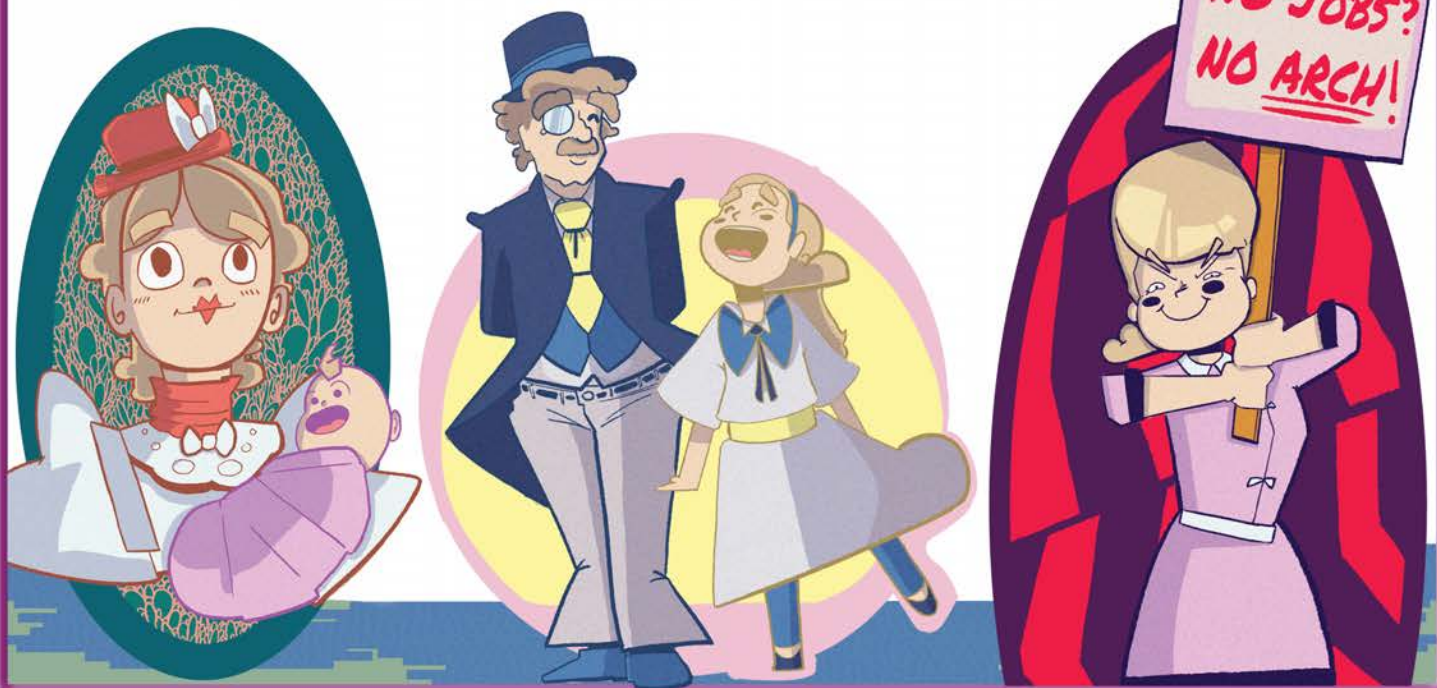
Written by Carolyn Mueller | Illustrated by Philip Goudeau



2022 Newspapers in Education Serial Now Available

The Missouri Press Foundation and the National Newspaper Association Foundation are offering a new original free serial story to newspapers across the country for publication. This year we follow a family through many generations, participating in historic events from 1821 to the present. Chapter 1 is set in 1821, where a young girl and her father join others at the market in St. Louis on the banks of the Mississippi River to watch the announcement of Missouri achieving statehood. Descendants of this family are the main characters in the following chapters, watching or participating in important events that occurred within their lifetimes, including Dred Scott's freedom, the Eads Bridge connecting Illinois to Missouri, the 1904 World's Fair, the 19th Amendment, Churchill's Iron Curtain speech, the Arch Protest and the Flood of 1993. Each event had national impacts and so will resonate with newspapers across the country. This series will be offered free of charge to newspapers in Missouri and across the country, with publication beginning Jan. 1, 2022 and ending June 30, 2022.

Visit *mo-nie.com* and use the download code: *generations* to access the teacher's guide and all eight chapters.



Submit your nominations for Hall of Fame by March 31

From Missouri Press Staff

Your nominations for some of Missouri Press' top honors are needed by March 31, including for the Missouri Newspaper Hall of Fame and the Williams E. James Outstanding Young Journalist award.

You can find nomination forms on Missouri Press Association's website, mopress.com, by visiting bit.ly/MoPressForms (case sensitive). You can also contact MPA Editor Matthew Barba at mbarba@mopress.com for help with the forms.

Each of the nomination forms includes the criteria for selection.

Missouri Photojournalism Hall of Fame nominations are due by May 13. Those nomination forms can be found on the page linked above or by contacting Missouri Press Foundation Director Michael Harper at mharper@mopress.com.

Applications for the Foundation's Internship Grants Program are due by April 20. If your newspaper is interested in applying for an internship, please visit mopress.com/Missouri-press-foundation-internships.

You can also contact Harper for more information about internships.



CALENDAR

March

- 3** — Missouri Press Association's 32nd Day at the Capitol, Jefferson City
- 31** — Nominations for Missouri Press Newspaper Hall of Fame, Outstanding Young Journalist Due
- 31** — Better Newspaper Contest Entries Due for Reduced Entry Fees

April

- 7** — Better Newspaper Contest Template Closes
- 20** — Missouri Press Foundation Summer Internship Applications Due
- 21-22** — Missouri Press Advertising and Marketing Executives Annual Meeting, Camden on the Lake

May

- 13** — Missouri Photojournalism Hall of Fame Nominations Due

June

- 23** — First Amendment Golf Classic, Loutre Shore Country Club, Hermann
- 24** — Show-Me Press Association Annual Meeting, Hermann
- 24** — MPA/MPS/MPF Summer Board Meeting & Show-Me Press Association Annual Meeting, Hermann

September

- 15-17** — 156th Annual Convention and Trade Show, Lodge of Four Seasons, Lake Ozark

October

- 20** — Missouri Photojournalism Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony, Columbia

Legislative resources available on Missouri Press' website

From Missouri Press Staff

To help you be better prepared to talk with your legislators and discuss the issues important to the newspaper industry, Missouri Press has created a legislative resources page on its website.

Located at <https://mopress.com/missouri-press-legislative-roundup/> or accessed from the front page of the Association's website, the page hosts information for members to access any time, including:

- Legislative reports from Lathrop GPM, MPA's lobbying partner in Jefferson City;
- Calls to action for Missouri Press members;
- Information about proposed, passed or defeated legislation;
- Legislation summaries that affect the newspaper industry;
- Information on federal legislation being proposed;
- Contact information for state and federal legislators.

Missouri Press Association / Service / Foundation

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More On Advertising

Ted Lawrence,
Advertising Director
Missouri Press Service



Up-selling to existing customers drives growth; but which customers are worthy?

Colleen Francis, at SalesGravy.com, reminds us that up-selling and cross-selling to our existing customer base — rather than focusing all our attention on new business development — is the easiest and most efficient way to drive business growth.

Because existing customers already know and trust us, up-selling them can result in quicker sales and higher profits. As a result, they typically require less work to convince them to buy more of the products and services we offer.

But Francis reminds us that, while selling to existing customers might offer the path of least resistance to driving efficient growth, that doesn't mean we should be trying to sell more products and services to ALL of our customers.

Don't Create More Chaos Than Profits:

First, she says, if we spend too much time up-selling or cross-selling to certain types of customers, we're probably going to produce more chaos than profits. For instance, if a customer is a perpetual complainer or a customer service headache, do we really want to keep trying to sell more to those clients? Probably not. Especially if the cost of maintaining and servicing those customers is higher than the money they bring in.

So how can we determine who our up-sell and cross-sell candidates are, and what should we do once we've identified them?

Francis' answer:

Implement A Customer Review System

Our customer review system should gauge our new and existing customers' path to purchase, and their current needs or concerns. This is simply an intelligence gathering process that will allow us to better understand who our customers are, why they buy, and what their current and future pain points are.

During those engagements with new and existing customers (which according to Francis should take place within the first 30 days of acquiring new customers), we might ask questions like:

- *What prompted you to buy our product or service?*
- *Why are you continuing to do business with us?*
- *How is our product helping you, and are there additional features that could add more value?*

We need to be sure that we don't focus only on acquiring positive customer feedback, however. It's also critical that we uncover our customers' concerns and objections.

That information can help us understand what's keeping our customers from buying additional products or services. It could also tell us why they might be choosing competitors to fulfill a particular need that our product might address. To do that, we might ask questions like:

• ***"What kept you from buying a larger product package from us?"*** If we know this, then we can address that concern and tailor our package to mitigate it.

• ***"How important was pricing in your decision?"*** If a customer reveals that they didn't buy more from us because they didn't think they could afford it, we might be able to convince them of the value of a package deal, appealing to their price-first concerns.

• ***"What features do you think our product lacks or what would you change?"*** There might be some features or services that a customer wishes they had, feels would improve their experience, or is unaware that we offer. Ultimately, that could open the door to premium tier up-sell opportunities, or cross-sell packages.

Ultimately, says Francis, this information will help us strike when our customers are happiest, most interested, or most needy. Quite simply, those types of customers are often the most worthy of our up-selling and cross-selling energy.





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OZARK PRESS ASSOCIATION: President, Kyle Troutman, Monett Times/Cassville Democrat; Vice President, Ron Schott, Wright County Journal; Secretary-Treasurer, Norene Proski, Ozark County Times, Gainesville. Directors: Steve Pokin, Springfield Daily Citizen; Shelby Atkison, Marshfield Mail; Kimball Long, Eldorado Springs Sun; and Amanda Mendez, Howell County News.

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Every publisher contributes to the foundation of press freedom

Last month, media lawyers across the country watched Sarah Palin's libel trial with bated breath. Coming at a time when some of the U.S. Supreme Court members have been muttering in side opinions about their unhappiness with the long-standing *New York Times v Sullivan* standard, one in our profession cannot help but worry that perhaps the blessings of the First Amendment may be imperiled.

In that seminar case, you will remember the *Times* ran an ad claiming a "wave of terror" was being raged against those seeking to support civil rights and asking for financial support for those supporting the student movement in certain Southern states. Sullivan was a Montgomery police Commissioner and believed he was targeted by the ad. He claimed he was libeled and his reputation harmed.

The decision is complex and not quickly summarized. "...[W]e consider this case against the background of a profound national commitment to the principle that debate on public issues should be uninhibited, robust, and wide-open, and that it may well include vehement, caustic, and sometimes unpleasantly sharp attacks on government and public officials," the Supreme Court said. "The constitutional guarantees require, we think, a federal rule that prohibits a public official from recovering damages for a defamatory falsehood relating to his official conduct unless he proves that the statement was made with 'actual malice' — that is, with knowledge that it was false or with reckless disregard of whether it was false or not."

Today, 58 years after that opinion was issued, it is hard to believe that the case on which newspapers stand while going to press every day may be yanked away from us. But hearing the testimony from the editors at the *New York Times* reminds us of the diligence required by editors every day in doing their jobs, as they stand between the

reporter and the public.

A long time ago, I created a list of questions I ask myself as I review your stories. This is not everything I look for, but it gives you an idea of what you need to look for when you edit your own content. For example, I ask myself: Who is the potential plaintiff? Is it a public figure, such as an elected official or someone who seeks out the public eye and promotes himself and his business

frequently in the local media? Or is the potential plaintiff a private person, who does not seek out attention in the media? Is the potential plaintiff a minor/child?

What is said about the potential plaintiff? Does it seem negative? Are the "facts" in the story true and easily verifiable? Even better, are they from public records, or do you find that the facts come from interviews with third parties? Does the reporter have copies of public records on which the story is based? What does the headline to the story say? Does it accurately reflect the gist of the story? Are there pictures with the story? Do the cutlines of the photos accurately reflect the gist of the story? Could the photos be misinterpreted in the context of the story?

Is the story balanced? Did all sides have the opportunity to respond to the allegations in the story? Is the editor aware of any bias of the reporter doing the story? In particular, has the reporter done stories on this subject in the past, and how does this story reflect in connection with those prior stories? Who is the reporter's source? Is it an

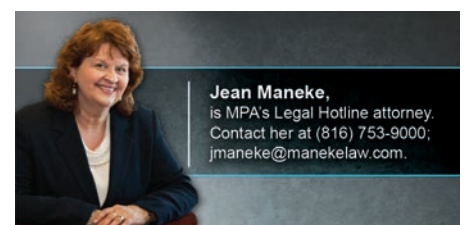
"We do not lose our Constitutional rights because of one court decision ... it is when we haven't done our best job of ensuring what we publish is truth that we put those rights in jeopardy."

unnamed source? Was confidentiality promised to the source? What is the source receiving in connection with the publication of this story? Did the reporter trespass on private property to gather information or photographs for the story? Did the reporter have to lie to get access to information for the story? Were documents stolen in the process of gathering information for the story?

These are just general concerns — every story can have its own red-flags that grab the attention of the lawyer doing a pre-publication review. A good editor can catch some of these issues early in the editing process and strengthen the final product before it ever comes to the lawyer for review.

I know I've discussed this with all of you before, but now, more than ever, as we ponder what the U.S. Supreme Court will do in coming years, it seems important to bring all this back down to your level. Each of you is a pebble in the foundation of our First Amendment rights.

We do not lose our Constitutional rights because of one court decision ... it is when we haven't done our best job of ensuring what we publish is truth that we put those rights in jeopardy.



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



June 23, 2022
11 am Lunch
Noon Shotgun Start

2022 First Amendment Golf Classic

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