

MP MISSOURI PRESS NEWS

CONGRATULATIONS

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No fake news, trust starts with upholding core tenets of journalism

The erosion of trust in the mainstream media in recent years seems to have snowballed from a trickle to an avalanche, with accusations of “fake news” and “hoax” being tossed about at almost every turn. For instance, there are people who believe that climate change is a hoax, the COVID virus is a hoax, the vaccines are a hoax, and wearing masks to prevent the spread is a hoax, not to mention the big lie that the last election was a hoax. Yet many of these same people believe that professional wrestling is real.

In a recent overheard conversation, one local coffee-shop guru expounded, “Well, as you all know, COVID was all a media hype.” To which the half dozen seated around the table (known as the College of Knowledge) all nodded in agreement, as if to say, “Tell us something we don’t know.”

It’s as if what was predicted years ago in the novel “Future Shock” has come to bear. Few things are long lasting or permanent and people have access to so much information, they are overwhelmed by it and don’t know what to believe, so they believe what they want. They choose the news that reinforces their personal beliefs and can be fiercely loyal to those sources.

A recently released study by the Media Insight Project, a collaboration of the American Press Institute and the Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research, provides an interesting way of looking at the issue of media trust and may offer new avenues to address it.

According to the American Press Institute, the deep divides over trust in the news media are usually portrayed as largely ideological: “Democrats are seven times more likely than Republicans to say they trust the mainstream media, and independents

are four times as likely. But the argument over media trust often has the feel of people talking past each other—many journalists denying they slant the news to help one party over another, while many of their critics, especially on the right, scoff at that denial. Still others, particularly on the left, question whether some basic notions of journalistic independence and open-minded inquiry are a delusion and the press should become more strictly partisan.”

The study found that not all Americans universally embrace many of the core values that guide journalistic inquiry. It also revealed that an uneasiness with these core values of journalism is more connected to people’s underlying moral instincts than to politics.

According to the American Press Institute, the study was built on moral foundations research led by social psychologist Jonathan Haidt, which tests how people respond to different moral principles.

“Research has found that some people put a higher moral value on caring about others’ well-being and ensuring fairness for all,” they said. “Others also value giving deference to authority and loyalty. Typically, liberals relate most to the values of care and fairness. Care and fairness speak to conservatives as well, but conservatives place additional import on loyalty, authority, and purity.”

A current article, “Fact or Fake,”

“Newspaper journalists today should simply stick to those traditional core values and ethics upon which the Missouri Press Association was founded.”

written for *Editor & Publisher* by Rob Tornoe, was prefaced with this: “In an era of rampant misinformation, journalists tend to focus on the bad players, like social media companies that care more about their bottom line than the wrong

information that washes over their platforms. But we tend to do a lousy job at focusing on our own biases, which can unintentionally lead us to misrepresent facts, provide incorrect or incomplete reporting, and create the perception of misinformation we’re all trying so hard to combat.”

Perhaps the preponderance of misinformation has led to this erosion of trust, possibly leading many of today’s journalists to feel like we are being blamed for the misdeeds of others.

Regardless of all the unreliable sources, fake news and the deluge of misinformation, newspaper journalists today, maybe more so than ever, should simply stick to those traditional core values and ethics, upon which the Missouri Press Association was founded, as we continue with our never-ending battle for truth, justice and the American way.





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ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

Stracener, Hoover named '22 Outstanding Young Journalists

Journalists from Jefferson City, Kansas City will be recognized at MPA's 156th Annual Convention.

From Missouri Press Staff

Missouri Press News

Reporters for *The Northeast News* in Kansas City and the *Jefferson City News Tribune* have been selected to receive the 2022 William E. James Outstanding Young Journalist award from the Missouri Press Association.

Roger Dillon, president of MPA, announced Layne Stracener of Jefferson City and Abby Hoover of Kansas City will receive their awards Sept. 17, in Lake Ozark, during the Association's 156th Annual Convention and Trade Show awards luncheon.

"This is the 14th year for these awards," said Dillon, publisher of the *Shannon County Current Wave*, Eminence. "This marks the 10th year the award is named in honor of our late colleague, William E. James. The Missouri Press Association recognizes Abby and Layne for their excellent news reporting, community engagement and dedication to holding the powerful accountable."

Hoover's first experience reporting for the *Northeast*



Layne Stracener



Abby Hoover

News came in 2017 as an intern, while studying at Kansas State University to earn her bachelor's degree in mass communications, with a focus on print journalism. The following year, she worked as the newspaper's interim managing editor, filling in between editors.

She joined the newspaper full time in 2020 as managing editor, shortly after the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic and following a stint as a reporter at *The Register-Star* in Hudson, N.Y.

"Since that time, Abby has been a strong partnership builder in the Historic Northeast community, opening new doors for *The Northeast News* through her outstanding news coverage and her ongoing commitment to community," wrote Publisher Michael Bushnell in Hoover's nomination letter.

Bushnell said Hoover's work has continually demonstrated her ability "to capture the true essence of a news story," including as an intern winning an award from the Missouri Press

Foundation's Better Newspaper Contest for her interview with a WWII veteran from Kansas City taking a memorial flight on a B-17 bomber.

Hoover's work that has gained the most widespread recognition, however, is what she and the other members of the newspaper's staff did for the *Northeast News*' March 24, 2021, issue, which included a front page intentionally left blank. By doing so, the newspaper raised awareness about what it would mean for the community if it lost its local news source. The newspaper received national coverage of the issue, including by *The Washington Post*.

Bushnell said the main story from that edition, authored by Hoover, "expertly lays out how vital community newspapers are to the neighborhoods they serve."

Stracener joined the *Jefferson City News Tribune* as an education reporter shortly before the coronavirus pandemic shut down schools. She spent the next two years working tirelessly to cover elementary and secondary education in Central Missouri within the limitations that were in place.

"Her stories helped readers understand the constraints and challenges that teachers and students endured during the early days of the pandemic," wrote *News Tribune* Managing Editor Gary Castor in his nomination letter.

Continued on Page 5



Managing Editor Abby Hoover reviews copy for an upcoming edition of *The Northeast News*. Hoover has been with the newspaper full time since 2020. Her tenure has included overseeing efforts to bring awareness about the importance of the newspaper to the local community and helping transition to a non-profit business model in a partnership with the Northeast Kansas City Chamber of Commerce. (Submitted photo/*The Northeast News*)

Continued from Page 4: Outstanding journalists



Layne Stracener, community engagement editor for the *Jefferson City News Tribune*, helps teach crafts during Porchfest, a community event in which artists, musicians and others set up shop in a neighborhood with booths, music, crafts and more. Stracener has been with the *News Tribune* since early 2020, starting as the newspaper's education reporter shortly before the coronavirus pandemic forced schools to go virtual. (Submitted photo/Jefferson City News Tribune)

"And as we all know, the schoolgrounds became the battlegrounds for social discussion and meltdowns over issues such as if students should wear masks, teaching of critical race theory and socioeconomic issues in the community."

Stracener became a driving force for the newspaper's efforts to include more video, photo galleries and podcasts in the *News Tribune's* electronic replica edition and social media posts. With an innate ability to engage her sources and the community in conversation, she was the obvious choice for the newspaper's community

engagement editor when the position came open, Castor said.

"Through community events, whether it's partnerships with community groups, public forums or one-on-one events, she has helped elevate the conversation between the *News Tribune* and the community," Castor said. "Those who are blessed to work beside her can't help but catch some of that passion, and the community is definitely blessed by her devotion and talents."

A Missouri State University graduate with a degree in journalism, Stracener's experience before joining the *News Tribune* includes working in 2019 as a freelance writer for the *Lee's Summit Tribune* and as an editorial assistant for the *Northeast News* in Kansas City.

Winners of the William E. James Outstanding Young Journalist Award have demonstrated excellence in the field of journalism and maintained the quality, ethics and standards of The Journalist's Creed, written by Walter Williams, founding dean of the University of Missouri School of Journalism.

During the Missouri Press Foundation Better Newspaper Contest awards luncheon, Sept. 17, at Lodge of Four Seasons in Lake Ozark, winners will be presented a plaque and \$500.

William E. "Bill" James, the namesake for this award, served as publisher of the *Warrensburg Daily Star-Journal* from November 2007 until his death in November 2013. He was publisher of the *Cass County Democrat-Missourian* in Harrisonville from 1985 to 2000 and was president of the Missouri Press Association in 1998. He was inducted into the MPA Newspaper Hall of Fame in 2001.

Editors or publishers submit nominations for the awards and nominees must have been younger than 30 years old on Jan. 1, 2022. The aim of the award is to reinforce the importance of a journalist's role by recognizing and nurturing talent to further promote quality journalism.

Nominations for the Outstanding Young Journalist award are due by March 31 of each year. For more information, please contact MPA Editor Matthew Barba at mbarba@mopress.com.



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Find inspiration to lead your own wolfpack at this year's Convention

Dan Meers, a.k.a. KC Wolf, is scheduled to speak during Friday lunch at MPA's 156th Annual Convention.

From Missouri Press Staff

Missouri Press News

Being a hype man is a lot of work. You have to always be “on” and usually there’s some schtick you follow to keep people excited. Sometimes you have to do all of this in a costume that weighs more than 30 pounds.

That’s the case for Dan Meers, who has portrayed KC Wolf, the Kansas City Chiefs’ mascot, since being introduced in 1989. He is also scheduled to be the Friday lunch speaker during this year’s 156th Annual Missouri Press Association Convention and Trade Show, Sept. 15-17.

In addition to his mascot duties, Meers is a motivational speaker and the author of two books. He participates in about 350 public appearances annually.

Meers’ first book, *Wolves Can’t Fly*, was written while he recovered from a 2013 zipline accident. His second book, *Mascot on a Mission*, includes stories from Meers’ career and the international trips he has taken to help with numerous ministries. Proceeds from both books go to benefit various non-profits.

He was recently in Columbia for a Chamber of Commerce event where Kristie Fortier, MPA Member Services Director and Meeting Planner, heard him speak. Already on a short list for potential speakers at this year’s Convention, Fortier said hearing Meers speak pushed her to ensure he could come to this year’s Convention.

“[Meers] was entertaining, engaging, inspirational, funny and genuine,” Fortier said. “He’s so much more than just a mascot. I’ll never forget his energy and message, and I can’t wait for him to share it with all our members.”



The man and the mascot, Dan Meers, left, is normally the one inside the KC Wolf suit. He has been the mascot for the Kansas City Chiefs since 1989, the first year KC Wolf was introduced. (Submitted photo)

As KC Wolf, Meers is a reflection of the Chiefs’ fandom. Watch him during a game or search pictures online, and you’ll find Meers using exaggerated body language to emote the same gamut of feelings as those in the stands or watching on TV.

When the team wins, like when the Chiefs were victorious in 2020’s Super Bowl LIV, Meers as KC Wolf is elated. He’s dismayed at losses, such as the case with the following year’s Super Bowl LV defeat. He bangs his head on frustrating or disappointing plays and jumps with joy when a completed pass keeps an offensive drive moving.

Meers’ experience as a mascot goes back decades and encompasses more than just professional football. While attending the University of Missouri School of Journalism for broadcast journalism, he saw a newspaper ad for tryouts for Truman the Tiger, a role he kept through his final days at

Mizzou. In 1989, he was selected as the top college mascot at the National Collegiate Mascot Championships.

Following graduation, Meers joined the St. Louis Cardinals briefly as Fredbird, before being offered the position in Kansas City as KC Wolf. He was inducted into the Missouri Sports Hall of Fame in 2020 and the Mascot Hall of Fame in 2006.

The Kansas City Chiefs are scheduled to play the Los Angeles Chargers at Arrowhead Stadium Thursday, Sept. 15.

Mark your calendars for MPA’s Convention and stay tuned to future Missouri Press publications for more information about registering to attend. If you would like to be a sponsor of this year’s Convention, please contact Michael Harper at (573) 449-4167, ext. 303, or by email at mharper@mopress.com for more information.

Pirates, plaques & programming



Some attendees of this year's Missouri Press Advertising & Marketing Executives meeting participated in a tour around Lake of the Ozarks aboard Calypso, the "pirate ship" operat-

ed by Jolly Rogers Grub 'n Grog. The April 21-22, conference was held at Camden on the Lake Resort and was the group's first dedicated, in-person meeting since 2019. (Staff photos)

Missouri Press Advertising & Marketing Executives met in April to hand out awards, learn from each other and sail Lake of the Ozarks on a pirate ship (kind of).

At right, Twyla Martin, advertising representative with *The Maryville Forum*, was the recipient of the 2022 Dee Hamilton Memorial Sales Pro of the Year award during the Missouri Press Advertising & Marketing Executives' annual awards banquet in April. For more than two decades, she has worked in various positions within the advertising department, most recently as the newspaper's lead advertising rep. Presenting the award was the *Forum*'s publisher, Ken Garner, right, and MPAME President Bryan Chester.



At left, incoming MPAME president Gina Langston, center, leads a round-table discussion on niche products and special publications during the group's meeting in April. Pictured, from left, are Christy Pierce and Donna Farley, both of the *Daily American Republic* (DAR) in Poplar Bluff, Jerry Lutz with the *Maryville Forum*, and Chris Pruett with the DAR.



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Ashland

Jane Flink

Jane Duncan Flink, 93, of Ashland died peacefully in the early morning of April 14, 2022. She was a 2013 inductee of the Missouri Newspaper Hall of Fame in recognition of journalism career that began in 1974 and ended with her retirement in 2001.

Flink began her newspaper career at the *Centralia Fireside Guard*, under the tutelage of Charlie Hedberg. She wrote and edited news for the *Centralia* newspaper and the *Fulton Kingdom Daily News* from 1974-1982. She was agriculture editor for the *Missouri Ruralist* magazine from 1982-1985 and, while continuing her newspaper duties, served as director of the Winston Churchill Memorial and Library at Westminster College, Fulton, from 1985-1990.

With her husband Dick, Flink purchased the *Boone County Journal* in Ashland in 1986 and published



the weekly until their retirement in 2001. Under their guidance, the newspaper was one of the first to transition to desktop publishing, expanding circulation from 500 to 5,000. They also won several awards for their work.

Flink's mark on the world of newspapers included mentoring many young writers and serving as an early advocate for news and features on family and lifestyle issues, rather than on "women's news." She received the "Communicator of the Year" award from Missouri Press Women for nine consecutive years, in 1988 was named the group's "Woman of the Year" and served as its president in 1995.

She is survived by her five children, Jennifer, Elizabeth, Kay, Chuck and Jim; numerous grandchildren and great-grandchildren; and many more family and friends.

Kansas City

Robert McBee

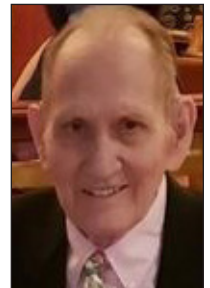
Robert Levi McBee, 92, of Kansas City died peacefully June 9, 2020. A former reporter for *The Kansas City Star* and editor of the *Pleasant Hill Times*, McBee's services were postponed until April of this year.

A U.S. Army Air Corps veteran, McBee was editor of the "The Takeoff," the base newspaper for Smoky Hill Army Airfield in Salina, Kan. After graduating from Westminster College in Fulton, he became a reporter for *The Kansas City Times/Star*, covering Independence.

Later, he edited the *Independence Pictorial News* and then moved to Denver, Colo. to edit the *Catholic Reporter*. He returned to Missouri to edit the *Pleasant Hill Times*, being told to run it like it was his own.

Further in his career, he became a public information officer for the federal government, including for the Department of Veteran Affairs. There he came up with the idea for Valentines for Vets and worked with columnist Ann Landers to promote the campaign nationally.

In addition to his wife, Lucy, he is survived by three sons, Martin, Mark and Mathieu; four granddaughters and one great-granddaughter; and many more family and friends.



Columbia

David Meadows

David Bruce Meadows, 58, of accomplishments.

Columbia died unexpectedly May Meadows' career in newspapers 11, 2022, at Boone Hospital. Since late 2019, he had been the general manager of the *Jefferson City News Tribune*, *Fulton Sun*, *California Democrat*, *HER Magazine* and Central Missouri Newspapers' printing plant.

A recognized leader who helped the *News Tribune* grow business during the pandemic, Meadows was known for making efforts to connect with staff beyond work. He also enjoyed celebrating other peoples' victories and



editorial. Meadows' career in newspapers spanned more than 30 years, including 16 as a general manager or publisher, and included time spent in Melbourne, Fla., Nashville, Tenn., Savannah, Ga., Topeka and Dodge City, Kan., and Russellville, Ark. He also had experience working newspaper production and editorial.

In addition to his wife, Dianna, he is survived by two sons, Connor and Garrett; three siblings; and many more family, friends and colleagues.

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

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Columbia — The *Columbia Daily Tribune* announced in May it would reduce the number of days per week it publishes a print edition.

Beginning in July, print editions will be published and delivered on Sundays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, with a digital replica of the newspaper being available the other days of the week.

The newspaper told readers the change was being made in response to ongoing shifts to digital news consumption. Managing Editor Kevin Graeler said the *Tribune* will continue to cover mid-Missouri news every day via its online outlets. Subscription rates are to be reduced for a majority of impacted home-delivery customers.

Kansas City — Melinda Henneberger, former columnist and editorial writer for *The Kansas City Star*

until early May when she joined the staff of sister McClatchy publication *The Sacramento Bee*, is the winner of the 2022 Pulitzer Prize for Commentary. Henneberger's work for *The Star* was noted for being persuasive columns that demanded justice for the alleged victims of a retired police detective accused of being a sexual predator.

Henneberger joined The Star Editorial Board in 2017 and was named vice president and editorial page editor for the paper in 2021.

Henneberger was also a Pulitzer Commentary finalist in 2021; an Editorial Writing finalist in 2020; and a Commentary finalist in 2019.

The 2022 Pulitzer Prizes were announced May 9.



Carol Stark posthumously joins Regional Media Hall of Fame

From Missouri Press Staff

Past Missouri Press Association president and former editor of *The Joplin Globe*, Carol Stark was inducted in early May into the Regional Media Hall of Fame at Missouri Southern State University.

Stark was president of the press association in 2018. She was inducted into the Missouri Newspaper Hall of Fame in September 2019, a month after she died following a long battle with cancer.

While she began her career as a reporter with *The Carthage Press*, Stark joined the *Globe's* staff in 1983 and remained there until her death. In 2007 she was named the newspaper's first female executive editor and parent company CNHI named her a regional editor in 2018.

Stark's leadership included guiding *Globe* staff after the May 2011 tornado.



Coverage of the storm and its aftermath resulted in a number of awards for the newspaper and its staff.

One of her proudest personal accomplishments was serving as a Pulitzer Prize juror three times.

Also inducted into the Regional Media Hall of Fame was "Melody Matinee," a long-running television daily music program that originated in the Joplin area.

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'Without their efforts, I would have died.'

The St. Louis American's Kevin Jones had a heart attack at the office but lived to tell the tale thanks to his coworkers.

By Matthew Barba
Missouri Press News

There's an industry trope that the most dedicated newspaper people will die at their desk, so committed are they to the job.

Kevin Jones, chief operating officer for the *St. Louis American*, almost became the trope unwillingly when he suffered a heart attack in mid-April in his office. He says the only reason he is here today is because of the quick actions of coworkers and that the heart attack happened on Wednesday, the newspaper's deadline day.

A few weeks after the attack, Jones can recount the story with reservation, recognizing how lucky he was that circumstances aligned the way they did.

"It was about 2:30 or 3 on April 13, Wednesday afternoon, our deadline day, and we had an event the following day, we had a big print job lined up, and I was just chatting with our accounting person [Robin Britt] in my office," Jones said. "I was just relaxing when she asked me what was wrong because she said my face had turned beet red.

"I started feeling dizzy, so she went to get a cold wash rag and by the time she got back I was feeling really dizzy. I told her to get Dr. Suggs because I knew something was up," Jones said.

In a stroke of serendipity, Jones recalled Dr. Donald Suggs, the *St. Louis American's* executive editor and publisher and a former oral surgeon, had arrived at the office less than 15 minutes before the attack.

"Everything happened so fast. I knew something was not right, but I also thought I was just dizzy," Jones



Kevin Jones, center, credits the quick thinking and actions of his fellow *St. Louis American* coworkers, Art Director Mike Terhaar, left, and Publisher Dr. Donald Suggs, with saving his life following an April 13, heart attack at the office. Jones said without their efforts he would not have lived to see his 30th anniversary with the newspaper on May 15. (Submitted photo/Wiley Price/St. Louis American)

said, chalking up his initial thoughts to blood pressure, which he takes medication to help regulate.

Dr. Suggs came in and started asking Jones questions and taking his pulse. Realizing the seriousness of the situation, someone called 911. Another coworker and one of Jones' oldest friends, Mike Terhaar, the *American's* art director, helped move him to the ground.

"They grabbed me to get me on the ground, and my pulse was very faint," Jones said. "It was a really weird experience because I could hear them talking but I couldn't respond. I couldn't get words out of my mouth, couldn't do anything. This is the first time I've ever been unconscious; I

was in and out of it, I could feel them doing something."

Jones said there was a point when Dr. Suggs could not feel a pulse, and Jones stopped breathing. Dr. Suggs and Terhaar began CPR and mouth-to-mouth while they waited for first responders to arrive.

"From what I was told by another co-worker, once the first responders arrived, Suggs finally stopped working on my chest, and looked completely exhausted," Jones said. "Mike told me he was so excited that he could see me start breathing on my own after he gave me mouth to mouth, but then apparently I stopped breathing again so they had to keep going."

Continued on Page 13

MPA Board nominations wanted by July 1

From Missouri Press Staff

The Missouri Press Association nominating committee will meet during the summer to decide on candidates for 2023 MPA Second Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and three Directors.

The terms of current directors Hannah Spaar, *The Odessan*, Odessa, Lucas Presson, *Southeast Missourian*, Cape Girardeau, and Tim Schmidt, *Montgomery Standard*, Montgomery City, are expiring Dec. 31, 2022.

MPA Secretary Marion Jordon Sr., *The Kansas City Globe*, and MPA Treasurer, Bryan Chester, *Columbia Missourian*, are serving one-year terms, also expiring Dec. 31, 2022.

Persons who wish to be considered for any of the

positions, including those persons whose terms are expiring, must complete a nomination form and return it to Missouri Press Association by July 1.

A copy of the nomination form is available online or by contacting members of Missouri Press Staff.

Liz Irwin, *Missouri Lawyers Weekly*, St. Louis, immediate past president of MPA, is chairman of the nominating committee this year. Elections will be held during the MPA Business Meeting on Sept. 16, in Lake Ozark during MPA's 156th Annual Convention.

If you have any questions about the nomination process, please contact MPA Executive Director Mark Maassen at (573) 449-4167, ext. 308 or at maassen@mopress.com.

Continued from Page 12: Doctors told Jones he was lucky following 'widowmaker' heart attack.

Loaded on a stretcher to be moved outside, Jones recalled feeling the cold rain on his stomach before being put in an ambulance. At St. Louis University Hospital, he was given a blood thinner and pain killer.

"When we get to the hospital, I remember busting through the doors, and it's the only time I recall feeling pain," Jones said. "Then they shot a blood thinner in me and gave me fentanyl, and then 15 minutes later I was feeling just fine."

Jones distinctly remembers being surrounded by "like a dozen" people at the hospital and as they prepared him for monitoring equipment and a catheter, he thinks back to how frustrated he was that they cut up the shirt he was wearing that day. "It was one of my favorite shirts from the PGA Tour."

Doctors told him the heart attack was caused by a blockage of the left anterior descending artery, which carries fresh blood into the heart to provide it with oxygen. It is often called a "widowmaker heart attack."

When doctors scoped Jones' arteries, they were able to identify where the plaque broke off to cause the blockage. However, as his luck continued to hold out, the blockage broke up "just in time," he was told, and didn't require medical intervention.

"They asked if I play the lottery and

that I should think about buying a ticket because I was lucky to be alive," Jones said. "I told them to let me out of the hospital so I could do just that. Instead, they kept me there under observation for three days. By 5:30, so like two or three hours after this happened, I was sitting up, with my wife, seeing if someone could bring me a sandwich."

The road to recovery

The heart attack happened about five weeks before he was set to recognize his 30th anniversary at the *American* on May 15. It was also just a week before the annual Missouri Press Advertising and Marketing Executives meeting in Lake Ozark, which Jones attended.

On May 13, two days before his anniversary with the newspaper, Jones had another heart-related incident that sent him to Mercy Hospital where doctors performed an emergency stent procedure.

Prior to his heart attack, Jones had been working to lose weight (he's down about 50 pounds from his previous biggest), and he and wife Tina had bought new bikes for Christmas. Now he wears a heart monitor vest, takes a blood thinner and vitamins and is in supervised cardio therapy three times per week.

"This business is extremely stressful," Jones said. "We're doing well, even with the last couple of years, but it's just a lot of stress that all of us go through."

He and Tina are currently planning a trip in June to Alaska so he can mark the 49th state off his bucket list for playing golf. Later this year, he plans to complete the goal of golfing in every state by playing in Arkansas with friends Trevor Vernon and Jeff Schrag.

Otherwise, life is going along pretty much as it was before the heart attack. "I still do all the same things I was, but I do moderate myself more. If I'm working in the garden, which is one of my passions, then I'll work for 15 minutes and rest for 15 minutes."

With a family history of heart problems, including his dad and grandfather, and an older brother who died of a heart attack at 48 and a cousin who died at 44, Jones said he is acutely aware of what it means for him to be alive today.

"A majority of our people are work from home or hybrid, so a lot of days our 6,500-square-foot office might have four or five of us in it," Jones said. "But because it was Wednesday afternoon, Dr. Suggs was there, Mike was there, and if Robin hadn't been sitting in my office with me, I probably would have passed out and they wouldn't have found me until much later."

"Dr. Suggs' calm, cool collectedness to assess the situation, and all of them acting quickly together, they deserve all the credit. Without their efforts, I would have died."



Festus — Pam LaPlant of Leader Publications, which includes the *Jefferson County Leader*, *Arnold-Imperial Leader*, *West Side Leader* and *Eureka Leader*, announced her retirement after almost 48 years in the newspaper business effective in early June. LaPlant spent seven years as publisher of Leader Publications and another 21 years, since the newspaper company's inception in 1994, as its business manager.



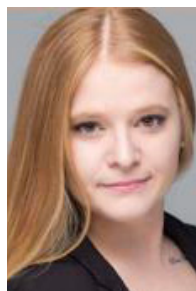
LaPlant started her newspaper career with the *Jefferson County Daily News-Democrat*. She recalled to readers in an editorial column (the first and last in her career) the eagerness she and Glenda O'Tool Potts felt in spreading word about the launch of Leader Publications.

She thanked the advertisers who kept the Leader Publications newspapers in business since the start and thanked the newspapers' staff who were dedicated to ensuring a successful product was published and delivered to readers each week.

"I want to give my personal thanks to all the loyal advertisers who made it possible for us to produce an award-winning newspaper. Without your continued support, the *Leader* would not have become the staple in our community it is today," LaPlant wrote. "Those who know me understand that I am all about keeping things short and sweet. So that's what I'll say: Thank you for being a friend."

Lebanon — Shelby Atkison has joined the *Laclede County Record* as the newspaper's managing editor, replacing Fines Massey, who is leaving to work full-time at his Lebanon comic book store.

Atkison is formerly the editor of the *Marshfield Mail*, where she had worked since August 2020. She also has experience working as a news anchor and reporter for KTTS radio in Springfield and earned her degree in advertising and public relations from Drury University.

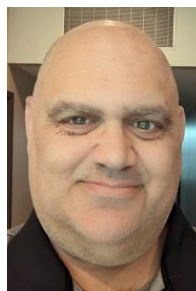


She is currently serving a three-year term as a member of the Ozark Press Association Board of Directors.

Massey was with the *Laclede County Record* for nearly 12 years, joining the staff when the newspaper was still the *Lebanon Daily Record*. He and his wife started Massey's Comics four years ago and, he told readers, he has been spending an increasing number of hours at the business while continuing to cover community news.

Under Massey's leadership, the newspaper won its first Gold Cup in the Missouri Press Better Newspaper Contest, as well as multiple General Excellence awards.

Moberly — Eric Viccaro joined the staff of *The Moberly Monitor-Index* in April as the new sports editor. Most recently, he was the sports editor and associate editor at the *Ste. Genevieve Herald* since July 2020.



Viccaro also has experience as sports editor at newspapers in Nebraska and Texas, and as a sports copy editor and page designer at newspapers in Arkansas and Iowa. Publisher Tim Schmidt said Viccaro's experience and passion for high school and college sports will help with rebuilding the *Monitor-Index's* coverage of the Moberly community.

Apply for Missouri Photo Workshop by June 15

For Missouri Press News

The Missouri Photo Workshop (MPW) is now accepting applications from Missouri journalists interested in working on a photo story under the guidance of some of the top photo editors in the nation. This year, we'll be in Excelsior Springs, Missouri. The dates are Sept. 18-24, 2022. Forty photographers will be accepted.

As a member of the Missouri Press Association, you or your staff member's \$600 tuition and lodging is waived thanks to the Foundation's support. A couple slots are reserved for in-state newspapers. If accepted,

the photographer would be in Excelsior Springs during the week of Sept. 18-24.

Part of the application process requires a letter of recommendation. Publishers and managing editors are encouraged to support the time commitment.

The application deadline is June 15. The letters, resume and portfolio can be submitted via the 'apply' section on the website:

<http://mophotoworkshop.org/>

About the workshop: When the late Clifton C. Edom of the Missouri School of Journalism founded the

Missouri Photo Workshop in 1949, he too, looked to the past to map the path for photojournalism's future.

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

The workshop still follows 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."

The Northeast News turns non-profit

From Missouri Press Staff

At the beginning of May, *The Northeast News* announced to readers the newspaper would begin operating under a non-profit corporation entitled Historic NorthEast Media Incorporated. Partnering with the Northeast Kansas City Chamber of Commerce, the newspaper will operate out of the Economic Growth Gallery, which is operated by the chamber.

The partnership comes 24 years after Michael Bushnell and Christine Adams took ownership of the free-distribution newspaper.

In a letter to readers, Bushnell said the mission of the newspaper will remain unchanged and staff will continue to bring relevant news and information to the community. It

will also allow the *Northeast News* to seek grant and foundation funding to support readership reach and engagement.

The newspaper also plans to establish a Community Engagement Board made up of residents from the area's neighborhoods and who will act as a sounding board for the newspaper's coverage. Future goals include restarting the Spanish translation of the newspaper and diversifying staff.

Bushnell told readers and advertisers that paid advertisements will still be accepted with the exception of some paid political or campaign ads. The newspaper also plans to continue its monthly non-profit sponsored content series.



The Northeast News in Kansas City recently announced a partnership with the local Chamber of Commerce that will have the newspaper operate under a non-profit corporation. The newspaper's staff includes, from left, Graphics Assistant Bethany Alzanadi, Customer Service Associate Dorri Partain, Managing Editor Abby Hoover, Wife of Publisher Christine Adams, Publisher Michael Bushnell, Art & Creative Director Bryan Stalder and Circulation Director Rayna Oldham. (Submitted photo/*The Northeast News*)

Missouri Press Association / Service / Foundation

802 Locust St., Columbia, MO 65201-4888
(573) 449-4167 / Fax: (573) 874-5894 / www.mopress.com

STAFF

Mark Maassen: Executive Director, mmaassen@mopress.com
Matthew Barba: Editor, mbarba@mopress.com
Ted Lawrence: Advertising Director, tlawrence@mopress.com
Michael Harper: Foundation Director, mharper@mopress.com
Kristie Fortier: Member Services, Meeting Planning, kfortier@mopress.com
Marcie Elfrink: Bookkeeping, melfrink@mopress.com
Jeremy Patton: Advertising Placement, jpatton@mopress.com

Jean Maneke: Legal Hotline Counselor, jmaneke@manekelaw.com
Helen Headrick: NIE & Education Director, hheadrick@mopress.com



CALENDAR

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 Meetings, Hermann

July

1 — MPA Board of Directors Nominations Due

21 — Southeast Missouri Press Association Annual Meeting, Cape Girardeau

August

18 — MPA Past President's and Spouses Dinner, Jefferson City

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

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.

More On Advertising

Ted Lawrence,
Advertising Director
Missouri Press Service



GETTING TO “NO”

Doug Phares reminds us in a recent issue of *Editor & Publisher*, when selling, work toward a clear answer, even if it's “No”.

Obviously that's counterintuitive in sales, he says. But most of the time a “No” is better than a “Maybe”. “The important thing is to always direct someone toward a clear, final answer. Instead of selling someone, think of yourself as facilitating their final decision by providing them with clear, pertinent information.”

Otherwise, if you leave someone with a “maybe,” it's likely not going to be in your best interest or theirs.

The person you're selling to might spend time reflecting, reading reviews, consulting with others, but then end up without a decision. That probably means the salesperson will be back again, trying to get a final answer, and likely going through the sales presentation an extra time.

The real value of getting someone to a “no” is in the time that is saved. Phares says, “I know you want every conversation to end with a sale, but no matter how much you believe in your product, it just isn't going to be for everyone. And the more time you waste trying to convince someone who doesn't want to buy, the less time you'll have for a customer who could actually make a purchase.”

A good salesperson can size up what information a person needs to make a decision and then deliver it. The salesperson ensures that people have the correct information to make good decisions. And being able to help people make informed, quick choices can save you a lot of time that could be spent working toward your goals.

With that in mind, Phares gives us some sales tips:

1. Ask: “This or that?” Instead of asking if they want to buy, ask if they want the horizontal ad or the vertical one. “Do you want to buy?” means a hard choice, but choosing between two options is much simpler. And it's a fast way to get a clear, final answer from someone.

2. Ask the little question instead of the big one. If you're trying to get a signature on a big contract, don't keep reminding them that you're waiting on a decision. Instead, ask a smaller question that's easier to answer. For example, instead of asking for final approval on an entire campaign, ask, “Does the online version of this ad look okay to you?” Then, “Is there anything else that's an issue?” If they say no, assume you just got the answer you've been waiting for — hand it over for their signature.

3. Ask what they would change. Instead of asking for a final decision, ask if they would make any changes. If they do, that's an intellectual investment, and you can often consider them sold.

Sales, life, and business are all about making decisions, and the quicker you can get someone to make a choice, the more effective and efficient you'll be.

Doug Phares is the former CEO of the Sandusky News Group. He can be reached at doug@silverwind.biz.





Missouri Newspaper Organizations

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

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.

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

NORTHWEST MISSOURI PRESS ASSOCIATION: President, ; Vice President, ; Secretary, Kathy Conger, Bethany; Treasurer, W.C. Farmer, Rock Port. Directors: Past President, Phil Cobb, Maryville; Mike Farmer, Rock Port; Jim McPherson, Weston; Adam Johnson, Mound City; and Kay Wilson, Maryville.

MISSOURI PRESS ADVERTISING & MARKETING EXECUTIVES: President, Gina Langston, Joplin; First Vice President, Stephanie Vandeven, Perryville; Secretary-Treasurer, Kristie Fortier, Columbia. Directors: Brittney Cady, Jefferson City; Karl Giddens, Columbia; Robin Gregg, Paris; Kevin Jones, St. Louis; Past President, Bryan Chester, Columbia.

MISSOURI PRESS SERVICE: President, Trevor Vernon, Eldon; Vice President, James White, Warsaw; Secretary-Treasurer, Jeff Schrag, Springfield. Directors: Dennis Warden, Owensville; Jim Robertson, Columbia.

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MISSOURI COLLEGE MEDIA ASSOCIATION: President, Nathan Gladden, Southeast Missouri State University; Vice President, Genevieve Tlustos, Truman State University; Secretary, Caitlin Smith, Evangel University; Adviser, Kate Stepaniuc, Southeast Missouri State University; and MPA Liaison, Jack Dimond, Missouri State University.

Don't be resigned to public bodies accepting resignations in closed session

It's time to launch a crusade! No more! It's time for public bodies to be reminded about one Sunshine Law issue in particular. It's time to end closed meetings of public bodies where resignations are accepted. Such meetings are not provided for under the Sunshine Law and should no longer be tolerated!

Just last month a paper in Missouri reported, in reference to a school board meeting, that "action was also taken in a closed session to accept three resignations of teachers." Probably the notice of that closed meeting said it was being held under auspices of Section 610.021 (3), the exception that relates to personnel matters.

But when you look at that section, it allows for closure for meetings relating to "Hiring, firing, disciplining or promotion of particular employees ... where personal information about the employee is discussed or recorded." The key is the first four words of that exception. Hiring, firing, disciplining or promotion. None of those words are the word "resignations."

Hiring an employee is just what it says — a vote is taken on a motion to hire a new employee. Firing an employee is just the opposite — a vote is taken on a motion to fire a current employee. Firing an employee means you terminate someone's employment without their consent. It's an involuntary action, not a voluntary action.

Disciplining an employee is a motion to punish an employee for some action that is severe enough that they need to be formally warned against doing it again. And promoting an employee is a vote taken on a motion to give someone a title with more authority or a new position with new responsibilities beyond what they have been doing. Neither of those two tasks relates to an employee who is voluntarily leaving the public body's employment.

But it is painfully clear public bodies

across the state routinely receive resignation letters and then go into a closed meeting to discuss whether or not to accept the resignation. There is no ability to "refuse a resignation" of an employee — no public body can force someone to continue employment against their will.

And that is the key here — a resignation does not require any act by a public body to be effective. If a body wants to acknowledge the resignation, that certainly can be done in an open session; but again, it is not a closed meeting action to "hire," "fire," "discipline" or "promote" an employee.

Perhaps there is an argument that the document was an "individually identifiable personnel record" or a "performance ... record[s] pertaining to employee" as noted in Exception 13 of that statute. Maybe the resignation letter contains a significant amount of personal information about their health or other personal matters. But since the body is not "hiring, firing, disciplining or promoting" an employee, whatever happens in regard to that resignation should happen in an open meeting.

There is no need for a vote at all in regard to a resignation. It is fine to announce a list of those who have resigned and read any public comments as are appropriate. If the content of the letter contains personal information, perhaps the letter itself becomes "individually identifiable personnel" information and could be a closed record. But there should never be a vote taken in a closed meeting to accept

"It is painfully clear public bodies across the state routinely receive resignation letters and then go into a closed meeting to discuss whether or not to accept the resignation."

(or not accept) a resignation letter.

Is there NEVER a situation where a resignation should be discussed in a closed meeting? A lawyer learns early to "never say never." If the public body had the employee under a long-term contract and the employee was resigning, then possibly there might be facts

that would lead to a discussion as to whether to sue the employee for breach of contract. If so, then that could be discussed in a closed meeting, but it would be under exception 1, commonly known as the "litigation exception."

Or if the board just wanted to explain to individual board members why the employee was resigning, due to a personal matter, then the letter could be discussed if the meeting was closed under exception 13, but again, there should not be a vote taken to accept the resignation. Rather, it would seem appropriate to just release a list of persons who resigned with no further public details given.

So, my point is we need to start questioning this. Why is the resignation being taken up in a closed meeting? Voting on a resignation is not "hiring, firing, disciplining or promoting." Grab your Sunshine Law book and go have that chat next time this comes up!



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



Networking the Grapevine Show-Me Press Association

Tentative Agenda

11AM Lunch

11:30AM Using Missouri Independent as a Source of State Government and Political News

12:30PM Elections Session To Be Announced

1:30PM Break

1:45PM Political Endorsements Editorial Discussion

2:45PM Tools of the Trade: What Technology Are You Using to Make Reporting or Advertising Easier and/or Better – Is there an App for That!?

3:15PM Advertising During Elections: How to Bring in More Advertising / Reaching Candidates

4PM Happy Hour at Hofgarten/Black Shire Pavilion, Appetizers & Tasting | 111 Gutenberg St.

\$40 In Person Including Lunch & Happy Hour

Friday, June 24 | 150 Market Street | Hermann, MO

Register Online: <https://bit.ly/3gCMAZF>

Staying Overnight? Email Kristie Fortier at kfortier@mopress.com for The MO Press Assn. Rate of \$149



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156th Missouri Press Association Convention & Trade Show

September 15-17, 2022
Lodge of Four Seasons | Lake Ozark



Call the Lodge for reservations at 888.265.5500
for MPA Special Rates of \$119-\$159, depending on room type, by August 19th.

Come See All We Have to Offer!

- Get Inspired and Entertained by Dan Meers, KC Wolf Mascot of the Kansas City Chiefs and First Inductee Ever into the Mascot Hall of Fame!
- Successfully Transition all the Changes Coming Our Way with Leonard Woolsey, President of Southern Newspapers, Inc.
- Celebrate the 2022 Hall of Fame Inductees and Better Newspaper Contest Winners
 - Network with Other Newspapers and Journalism Professionals from throughout the State
 - Come See Everything Our Exhibitors Have to Offer in the Trade Show and SO MUCH MORE!!!