

MP MISSOURI PRESS NEWS

Community champions: 2023 MPA President Beth Durreman

wants to help newspapers
build better relationships.



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Greetings and happy new year!

I am so honored to be president of the Missouri Press Association and am hopeful I serve as competently as those before me.

Please take a moment to read the articles written by Matthew Barba introducing me. I'm pleased he is sharing some of my connections with the Missouri Press Association and its newspaper members. In addition, it's been a great retrospective for me, to realize how lucky I have been with my newspaper journey.

I truly did set a goal of becoming publisher of a community newspaper back in 1993, but honestly, I didn't see being the president of MPA in my future. I believe that was because I was young and focused more on myself and my family.

When I moved back to Missouri in 2016, I reconnected with the Association, and started getting reinvolved.

I was lucky in the beginning of my newspaper career, which began in July 1988. Dalton Wright, publisher/owner of the *Lebanon Daily Record* felt his staff should be active in MPA.

Green as a gourd, I attended Missouri Ad Managers Association conventions, Annual Conventions and Ozark Press Association meetings. I had the honor to be an original board member of the Newspaper in Education program, headed by Dawn Kitchell.

While at Perryville, I aimed to emulate my earlier experience with the staff. Now the graphics design manager is serving on the Missouri

Press Advertising and Marketing Executives board, and the former editor is now publisher.

I encourage all of you, whether you are publisher, management or like me back in '88, green as a gourd, to experience what MPA has to offer.

Later this month at Day at the Capitol, bring the staff that should come but try to add one person who would benefit personally by attending. Is your front desk person new to the job, the community, or just never been invited to attend an event? What about someone from advertising or bookkeeping?

Imagine the benefit for your staff member, the company and for you. Now when your Senator or Representative, or their support staff, calls, there is a personal experience in place, and the beginning of a relationship.

Register yourself and your staff to attend Day at the Capitol on the Association's website. There's no cost to members.

Building relationships is my focus for 2023.

I hope to build relationships with as many of you as I can over the year.

A great way to help your staff build relationships with myself and all the members of MPA and its associates, is to get this magazine in the hands/email of all the members of your team.

If your paper is seeing its legacy employees retiring, or facing cutbacks on staff, you are most likely trying to encourage young people to join their community newspaper. Let your staff

see firsthand what the newspaper industry is doing.

If you or a staff member can return from a meeting with one or two ideas to implement, it was time well spent. Our magazines and bulletins come to you at no cost. They are full of great ideas, educational information, and updates on members. Someone just might bring something to the table that increases revenue, makes for a good story and takes you one step closer to building a relationship.

For those of you that are already doing this, great! Maybe you will be the one who helps me make this column not just my column but a collaboration – you know, building relationships.

I invite as many of you to send me an email with ways you are building relationships with your staff or community. It can be a specific department, the whole team, a civic group or that one advertiser who just won't say yes. I would like to include some in my February column. My email is bethd@laclede record.com.

I will be looking forward to your response. It will also help me hit the word count Matthew has assigned to me for the next twelve months.

Can't wait to see you at the Capitol!



Beth Durreman,
The Laclede County Record
MPA President



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Laclede County Record, Lebanon

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33rd Annual

Missouri Press Association Day at the Capitol • January 25 & 26, 2023

Wednesday, January 25, in Jefferson City

12:00 Noon: Missouri Press Foundation Board Meeting,

2:00 p.m.: Missouri Press Association and Service Board Meeting,
326 Monroe Street, Missouri Bar Assn.

5:00-6:15 p.m.: Reception,

Courtyard by Marriott Lobby | 610 Bolivar Street, Jefferson City

Thursday, January 26, in the State Capitol, Jefferson City

8:00-8:45 a.m.: Breakfast for MPA Members
(pastries and coffee), **House 3rd Floor Alcove**

8:45-10:05 a.m.: Meet with your legislators.

10:10-11:45 a.m.: Day at the Capitol program, **3rd Floor, Senate Lounge**

Program Details to Be Announced

11:45 a.m.: Program to adjourn. Attendees will leave the Capitol for a brief walk to the Governor's Mansion.

Noon: Luncheon, **The Missouri Governor's Mansion**

(You must be registered with Missouri Press Association to attend the luncheon. Missouri Press Association pays for breakfast and lunch costs. There is no charge to members. However, last-minute cancellations will result in a \$40 cancellation fee.)

To Register for Day at the Capitol go to:

<https://tinyurl.com/ysuvm547>

For Sleeping Rooms go to:

<https://tinyurl.com/yt3a5pfm>



Helping newspapers become better community champions

“Newspapers bring the community together, and sometimes, they bring different communities together, to better understand each other. I want this year to be all about community and relationships, how newspapers serve theirs individually and how we can work together as an industry.”

— Beth Durreman
2023 MPA President

On the cover, Beth Durreman makes her first remarks as Missouri Press Association's 2023 president-elect during the 156th Annual Convention in Lake Ozark.

By Matthew Barba
Missouri Press News

Beth Durreman found her calling and her community in the newspaper profession 35 years ago. Kicking off 2023 as Missouri Press Association's new president, she looks forward to helping others in the business find ways to better serve their own readership and position the industry to meet future needs.

Today, Durreman is publisher of the *Laclede County Record* in Lebanon, the southwest Missouri town with claims to historical Route 66 and one of the state's most photographed locations in Bennett Spring State Park. Her newspaper journey began here in July 1988, selling display advertising, and since then it's always felt like home, even when it wasn't.

But the journey between that beginning and Durreman's taking over as Missouri Press Association president on Jan. 1, had a few stops along the way, not the most insignificant of which was her serving as publisher of newspapers on both sides of the Mississippi River. Before coming back to Lebanon, she was publisher of the *Perryville Republic-Monitor*, a role she's proud to say brought with it many professional accomplishments but also personal reservations due to the coronavirus pandemic.

“COVID was so isolating,” Durreman said, “I came back home, and I was just so happy to be back here. I didn't realize what a member of this community I had been, but here I was getting hugs and being welcomed back. Now I'm up to my neck in activities, and it's like I never left.”

As someone who can make a friend quickly (a valuable skill for any salesperson), sense of community is important to Durreman. She wants that to be the focus for her year as MPA president, so it seems appropriate she chose to meet for this story out in the community, at a local coffee shop.



New President Beth Durreman credits newspaper owner Dalton Wright with encouraging staff to participate and attend Missouri Press Association-related events. Since early in her career, she has attended Missouri Managers Association (now Missouri Press Advertising and Marketing Executives) meetings, including this one in Branson with, from left, Debbie Chapman Wiese, Leann Vernon McClanahan, Durreman and Melaina Varble. (Submitted photo)

It's the kind of place where the building's history is as much known as speculated on while you wait for your order.

"Before this was a coffee shop, it was a barbecue place," Durreman offered. "And before that I think it was a car dealership."

The actual history of the building doesn't really matter to the conversation, but rather how it represents the changes that towns like Lebanon go through over the years. How old buildings find new life, and how local entrepreneurs will find a way to work what they know in business into an existing location.

Like the coffee shop has undergone its transformation, so too has Durreman, who got her start in the industry a few blocks away at what was then the *Lebanon Daily Record*, although a name and address change has happened since.

Later, during a tour of the newspaper's current offices that were undergoing renovations, Durreman arranged a meeting with owner Dalton Wright. Himself a past MPA president, Durreman credits working with Wright and other state industry leaders in helping her prepare to lead the Association.

Facing changes together

While a lot has changed, both for Durreman and for newspapers, since her first site visits to places like Independent Stave Company to sell full page ads for special sections, something that hasn't is the need for newspapers to bring different groups together.

When Durreman returned to Lebanon in 2022, she found many of the same faces she knew from before, but there were also lots of new faces too. "One thing they all have in common is they want to make the community a better place for everyone. I think you'll find in any town you go to, it's something the newspaper lends itself to helping make happen."

Durreman wants to bring that same camaraderie to the Association, engaging members of all stripes to reflect on their successes as community newspapers, whether it's the towns they cover, the readership they write for or the advertising clients they help promote.

"Every market is different, but there is a lot more similar about our newspapers than there is different," Durreman said, adding that she wants to highlight those similarities in her monthly president's column in *Missouri Press News*.

"I want to pose a question each month for people to reach out to me and share their thoughts. That interaction is one of the things that I'm excited about for this coming year."

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Beth Durreman, first from left, gave a presentation for Business and Professional Women when she was still new in the newspaper industry. Her presentation, titled "Shattering the Glass Ceiling," outlined her plan to become a newspaper publisher one day. (Submitted photo)

Shattering the glass ceiling

By Matthew Barba
Missouri Press News

Beth Durreman has worked in newspapers for the majority of the past four decades, starting out selling display advertising at the *Lebanon Daily Record* (now the *Laclede County Record*). She has witnessed firsthand various industry changes and helped multiple publications adapt to readers' needs.

In addition to becoming Missouri Press Association's sixth female president in 2023, Durreman is also celebrating her 35th year in the industry, kind of. There's a couple of years there when she worked for a radio station and some more time when she oversaw the roll out of Info-Line, an AudioText telephone information service.

Recently, Durreman served as president of Southeast Missouri Press Association. She has also been involved in Missouri Advertising Managers Association/Missouri Press Advertising and Marketing Executives, including as a past president, remembering fondly her first meeting in Springfield when she met Joe May, Walt Gilbert, Dennis Warden and John Spaar early in her career.

Continued on Page 7



Beth Durreman listens to Gov. Mike Parson speak during Missouri Press Association's 2022 Day at the Capitol in Jefferson City. Remembering her own first time attending the event, she encourages other publishers to send their staff to experience what it is like to walk the halls of the Capitol building and advocate for the newspaper industry. (Staff photo)

Continued from Page 5

MPA's 2023 president wants newspapers to help each other learn and adapt.

Topics she plans to ask about will range from advertising and sales, to special promotions and activities, to ways to improve operations. She also hopes newspapers will share their ideas for improving how they get the final product into readers' hands.

"I think about Sergia Pecaut, a retired English and Journalism teacher from Perryville High School. She came in and volunteered as our proofreader," Durreman said. "I think it would be grand if newspapers would find retired people in their communities who could help. We were even able to nominate Sergia for Senior of the Year for Perry County because of her work with us."

Newspapers are also collectively navigating new waters with marijuana, first its legalization for medicinal use in 2018 and then recreational use last year. Marijuana is providing selling opportunities that were unthinkable for many who have worked in newspapers for decades previously. In fact, Durreman said she sold her first "head shop" ad in the lead up to last year's Black Friday.

"I never thought this was something I'd be doing for the newspaper. I never thought when I started out there would be advertisements for cannabis in the newspaper," she said, holding up a copy of the ad.

Newspapers remain unique, Durreman said, in how they serve communities but also the experiences they



As Southeast Missouri Press Association president, Beth Durreman, then publisher of the Perryville Republic-Monitor, used the group's meeting to share with attendees unique aspects of the community. Perryville is home to Missouri's National Veterans Memorial, and SEMO attendees toured the facility as part of the meeting. (Staff photo)

offer to connect people. One of the most endearing memories she has from her time working as a newspaper sales consultant is visiting Shawnee, Okla. There she met the vice president of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation and was offered a rare chance to walk with the people of the Sac and Fox Nation.

"How many people get to do that? Newspapers bring the community together, and sometimes, they bring different communities together, to better understand each other," she said. "I want this year to be all about community and relationships, how newspapers serve theirs individually and how we can work together as an industry."

She hopes members will participate in the Association's various events, beginning with Day at the Capitol, scheduled for Thursday, Jan. 26, in Jefferson City, followed by the Missouri Press Advertising and Marketing Executives meeting, April 20-21, the regional press meetings held throughout the year and finally September's 157th Annual Convention, Sept. 21-23 in St. Louis.

"I remember the first time I attended Day at the Capitol and was floored by the magnificence that came with being inside that building and meeting with all of those lawmakers," Durreman said. "I really hope as many people attend as possible, because I think it's one of those events that can both show our industry's collective strength and the influence we still have in our communities."

Beth Durreman is MPA's 2023 President. She took office on Jan. 1 after being elected president during MPA's 156th Annual Convention. She is married to Carl Durreman, and they live in Lebanon.

MPA's 157th Annual Convention and Trade Show is scheduled for Sept. 21-23, at the Sheraton Westport Chalet in St. Louis.

A colorful advertisement for 'The 1022' store. The ad features a variety of products including crystal bracelets, wild berry incense, clothing, locally made soap, calligraphy sets, and gift card specials. The background shows shelves stocked with these items. The text 'PEACE... LOVE... MERRY CHRISTMAS!' is prominently displayed at the top. The store's contact information and address are provided at the bottom.

PEACE... LOVE... MERRY CHRISTMAS!

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The 1022

With more than 30 years of newspaper sales experience, Beth Durreman said the addition of cannabis advertising opportunities is something she never thought she would see. She sold her first "head shop" ad last year as voters approved legalizing recreational marijuana. (Submitted graphic)

Continued from Page 5

Beth Durreman found her career and her community in newspapers.

"As new as I was in the business, they really left an impression on me," she says with a smile and a laugh.

Her life is so ingrained in newspapers, she and her husband, Carl, have shared much of their history in the business, as well. He has experience working in several printing plants in Missouri.

"I know newspapers, I care about them," Durreman said, sitting down to talk about her upcoming year as MPA president. "I used to tease Carl that when our son was born, they didn't draw blood, they drew ink."

The community's pulse

From the beginnings of her career, Durreman knew something she wanted to accomplish was to be publisher of a newspaper. She remembers a presentation she did in 1993 for the local chapter of BPW (Business and Professional Women) with the topic, "Shattering the Glass Ceiling."

"My presentation was that I would become a newspaper publisher," she said with a smile. "I'm very proud that I made that a reality."

Success often requires teamwork, and Durreman gives credit to the early friendships she formed with longtime colleagues such as Sherry Bennett, Rene Barker and Gregg Snyder. She also says working with former MPA Board members, including former presidents Dalton Wright, the late R.B. "Bob" Smith, Gary and Helen Sosniecki, and Bill Miller Sr. helped her better understand what it means to take the reins of Association leadership.

Durreman was able to fulfill her goal of becoming a publisher thrice, first at the *Paris Beacon News* in eastern Illinois from 2014-2016, then at the *Perry County Republic-*

Monitor in Perryville from July 2016 until late 2021 and then the *Laclede County Record* in December 2022.

"I love being publisher of a newspaper, to have your finger on the pulse of the community and the respect that comes with the newspaper," Durreman said.

In Perryville, she said, her biggest promotion, for better and worse, was a buy-one-get-one free subscription, but her favorite event was an ongoing medallion hunt for which the newspaper published clues and received a lot of community involvement.

"I am looking forward to traditional events and promotions in Lebanon. I am very excited to work with Jennifer Early, our advertising director and Terra Bernhardt, our CFO and office manager, on some new and exciting events," Durreman said.

"But mostly, to be back with the folks of Lebanon and Laclede County has me thinking these next few years will be my swan song."

Durreman said when the time finally comes for her to retire from newspaper work, she plans to travel throughout the country with her husband to various festivals and fairs. "I'm a natural born salesperson, so our plan is to get different nonperishable food items made in Missouri and take them with us to sell at these

events. It will be like bringing a taste of each of Missouri's communities to the rest of the country."

To learn more about Durreman's plans for the Association in 2023, see the story beginning on Page 4 of this month's *Missouri Press News*. Also, over the next year, Durreman wants to hear from MPA members about a variety of topics she'll be covering in her president's column, found on Page 2.



Making the nice list, Beth Durreman receives a gift during a visit by Santa to the newspaper office. Santa is played by Durreman's husband, Carl, who also has industry experience, having worked in several printing plants.



Kevin Jones hands over the presidency of Missouri Advertising Managers Association, now Missouri Press Advertising and Marketing Executives, to Beth Durreman. She said participating in groups such as the advertising-focused MAMA was important to helping understand the newspaper business and building industry relationships. (Submitted photos)



Kyle and Jordan Troutman, pictured here with their two daughters, are the new owners of the Cassville Democrat. The couple purchased the newspaper from CherryRoad Media, which owned it since March 2022. (Submitted photo)

Cassville — For the first time in almost 20 years, the *Cassville Democrat* is under local ownership with its purchase by Kyle and Jordan Troutman, a husband-and-wife team who also served most recently as the newspaper's editor and reporter. They purchased the newspaper from CherryRoad Media, effective Jan. 1, although the sale was announced in December.

Kyle had been editor of the *Democrat* and *Monett Times* since 2014, with the latter also being sold by CherryRoad to Lisa Craft. He previously worked for *The Daily Citizen* in Searcy, Ark.

"I cannot express how excited Jordan and I are to take over ownership of the *Cassville Democrat*. This is an incredible opportunity not only for our family and professionally, but even more for the Cassville area community," said Kyle Troutman, who will lead the newspaper's reporting, sports coverage and design.

Jordan Troutman has worked at the *Democrat* since August 2018. She will continue reporting in special projects and take on the office manager role, as well. She told readers, "We want to engage and be part of this community while simultaneously using our business to give the people what they need and deserve. This is what we are building for you, as well as for our own daughters."

Vicky Abraham will continue her role as the newspaper's sales executive.

The *Cassville Democrat* was established in 1871 by John Ray, whose family owned it for more than 120 years.

Monett Times — As of Jan. 1, the *Monett Times* is under ownership of Lisa Craft, who purchased the newspaper and *Connection Magazine* from CherryRoad Media. Craft was previously the company's regional advertising manager.

"There is something to be said for the newspaper to be locally owned and operated. When the owner and staff are known by the community and we can operate the business by knowing the needs and wants of the audience, there is a hometown connection," Craft wrote in the sale's



Craft



Gervais



Roberts



Chrysler

announcement.

Started in 1899, the *Times* was under local ownership until its sale in 1972 to a Georgia-based group. It was later sold to Rust Communications in 2009 and then CherryRoad Media in March 2022.



Baker



Funcannon

A Monett native, Craft has been at the newspaper since 1989, starting as a lifestyles editor but since holding almost every job title in the industry save "pressman." The newspaper's current offices are in the former Cox/St. Vincent's Hospital, where she was born. "Ironically, I was born at St. Vincent's, so I figure I will retire in the same building I was born in."

In addition to Craft, staff at the *Monett Times* includes Jennifer Baker, business manager; Mike Gervais, managing editor; Marion Chrysler, senior marketing executive; Melonie Roberts, news reporter; and Kevin Funcannon distribution director. Former employee Murray Bishoff will continue as occasional contributor for the publications.

St. Louis — Late last year, *Missouri Lawyers Weekly* announced the weekly newspaper would be switching the frequency of its print product to a monthly magazine format. In a letter to subscribers, the newspaper said the publication's staff will continue to provide timely news and updates on its website.

The magazine, which began delivery this month, will focus on in-depth coverage of relevant legal topics, as well as added features, such as profiles and Q&A features with legal industry figures.

St. Joseph — The *St. Joseph News-Press* announced in December changes to its publishing frequency beginning this month. While a digital replica of the newspaper will be available Monday through Friday, print newspapers will only be delivered via mail on Wednesday and Friday.

The Wednesday edition will be a free distribution, advertising-supported product and replaces the company's previous shopper publication.

The Friday "Weekender" edition will be subscriber-supported and feature local, regional and national news, as well as additional features exclusive to the edition.

Liz Irwin named president of Missouri Press-Bar Commission

From Missouri Press Staff

In 2022, the Missouri Press-Bar Commission welcomed 11 new commissioners and saw a Missouri Press Association publisher take over as president.

Since its creation by The Missouri Bar in 1972, the Missouri Press-Bar Commission has helped to foster better communications between the media and the bench and the bar. The commission is composed of media professionals, lawyers and judges who collaborate on projects and programs that promote a better informed citizenry and strong First and Sixth Amendments.

Liz Irwin, publisher of Missouri Lawyers Media, St. Louis, is president of the commission, which she has served on for several years, including when she was president of the Missouri Press Association. She replaces the Hon. Mary R. Russell.

"It's a terrific honor to work with the committee," Irwin said. "Of course, following in the footsteps of Missouri Supreme Court Judge Mary Russell won't be easy by any stretch. Still the incredible support and work of the Missouri Bar and its executive director, Mischa Buford Epps will continue to drive the committee's success."

Past projects of the Missouri Press-Bar Commission

include seminars on the state's Sunshine Law, the News Reporters Handbook on Law and the Courts and the News Reporter's Legal Glossary, links for which are available on <https://news.mobar.org/>.

"The commission's work, I believe, is a linchpin in connecting the legal community and Missouri press in effective communication and shared goals," Irwin said.

Of the 11 new commissioners joining last year, five are staff at MPA member newspapers. They include Sarah Gassen, *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*; Harrison Keegan, *Springfield News-Leader*; Kim Robertson, *Leader Publications, Festus*; Debby Woodin, *Joplin Globe*; and Jordan Yount, *Missouri Lawyers Media, St. Louis*.

Additionally, four judges joined the Commission, including the Hon. Michael Carter; the Hon. Chuck Replogle; the Hon. Brenda Stacey; and the Hon. W. Douglas Thomson. Jeff Haldiman with the Missouri Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Ashley Byrd of Learfield Communications are the other new members.

MPA Executive Director Mark Maassen and MPA Legal Hotline Attorney Jean Maneke also serve on the Commission.



Liz Irwin

ON THE MOVE



Sikeston — David Jenkins has bid farewell to the *Standard Democrat* after 24 years with the newspaper. Jenkins left the newspaper in early December to become communications director for the city of Sikeston.



Starting out as city editor and most recently serving as co-editor of the *Standard Democrat*, Jenkins said he grew up wanting to work in the newspaper business. He told readers that as a child he would clip sports stories and pictures from the paper,

and when he started at the Sikeston newspaper, he never expected to stay as long as he did but fell in love with the job.

Kansas City — Greg Farmer has been named interim executive editor of *The Kansas City Star* after Mike Fannin stepped down as president and editor in early December.

Farmer will fill the interim position until a permanent replacement is named. He has been with *The Star* since 1997 and served



Greg Farmer

as managing editor for the past seven years. Before joining *The Star*, he held several positions at the *Louisville, Ky. Courier-Journal*.

Fannin had also been with *The Star* since 1997, becoming executive editor in 2008. In 2019, he was named the company's president and also central region editor for McClatchy.

He helped lead *The Star* to become a finalist in the Pulitzer Prizes for five straight years, along with winning two Scripps Howard awards and several more awards.



Mike Fannin

Do members of your staff need to receive Missouri Press emails? Send names and job titles to mbarba@mopress.com to get added.



Enter the 2023 MPAME Best Ad Contest and show everyone the great work you have done to drive revenue and maybe help others out in the process!

CONTEST INFORMATION

To find full information and rules, go to <https://mopress.com/ad-contest/>

Entries must have been published between January 1, 2022 and December 31, 2022.

The contest is open to all staff members of publications holding ACTIVE or ACTIVE ONLINE membership in the Missouri Press Association.

All entries must be submitted as FULL-PAGE electronic tear sheet files. Please name the file(s) in a way that clearly identifies the ad(s) being submitted for judging. You may also circle or include other graphic markings to indicate which ad is to be judged.

All entries must have been conceived, written, designed and sold by full or part-time employees of the newspaper.

Note: For large files, you may use Dropbox, Google Drive, Scribd or issuu to create a remote digital file and share the url. **Please make sure the file is public, made shareable or that a password is provided, so it can be printed for judging and/or display purposes. For smaller files, you can use PDF or Word Documents.**

A fee of \$7 per entry must be paid online, mailed or called in by time of entry deadline. Pay online at:

<https://bit.ly/2Lg6FVe>. If mailing payment, please mail check to: MPAME Contest, 802 Locust Street, Columbia, MO 65201 or call credit card payment into the MPA office: 573-449-4167

ENTER ONLINE AT: betternewspapercontest.com

Find: 2023 Missouri Best Ad Contest | Deadline Jan. 30, 2023

If you have any questions, need your password or email reset for betterbnc.com, OR feel your newspaper is in the wrong class, please contact Kristie Fortier at kfortier@mopress.com or call 573.449.4167

AWARDS & MEETING INFORMATION

Make plans now to attend the Missouri Press Advertising and Marketing Executives meeting being held on April 20-21, 2023.

Winners will be recognized, and awards presented **Thursday, April 20, 2023**

Event Registration form will be available in January of 2023, at www.mopress.com under **EVENTS**.

Applications open for MPA scholarship

From Missouri Press Staff

Now in its second year, Missouri students can again apply for the Rural Missouri Newspaper Scholarship, a need-based award for up to \$40,000 for a qualifying student attending the Missouri School of Journalism for four years (eight semesters).

Students chosen for the program must be pursuing a degree in journalism or strategic communication, and upon

graduation students receiving the scholarship will be expected to work for a rural Missouri newspaper for at least two years.

The deadline to apply for the scholarship for the 2023-24 academic year is Jan. 31, 2023. Qualification for need is determined through the federal FAFSA program. Students will also receive an additional \$5,000 summer fellowship funded by the Reynolds

Journalism Institute (RJI) and can apply for a further \$1,200 from RJI's Potter Digital Ambassador program.

An application for the scholarship is available on Missouri Press' website, www.mopress.com or accessed directly at <https://bit.ly/3fOn2e3>.

Contact MPF Director Michael Harper with any questions at (573) 449-4167, ext. 303, or mharper@mopress.com.

Find many legislative resources for you to use on mopress.com

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 established 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 review any time, including:

- Legislation summaries that affect the newspaper industry;

- Legislative reports from MPA's lobbying partners in Jefferson City;

- Calls to action for Missouri Press members;

- Information about proposed, passed or defeated legislation;

- Information on federal legislation being proposed; and

- Contact information for state and federal legislators.

If you have questions about specific legislation or how to speak with legislators, please reach out to MPA Executive Director Mark Maassen at mmaassen@mopress.com or by phone at (573) 449-4167, ext. 308.

We Want YOU! Sign Up to Judge Kansas Press Association's Awards of Excellence Contest!

Judging will begin in early March, with a **HARD** deadline of March 25! Kansas Press Association will be judging MPA's contests in 2023, if you plan to enter MPA's Better Newspaper Contest, or Best Ad Contest, we **STRONGLY** urge you and your staff to sign up to judge for Kansas!

SIGN UP TODAY!!!

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<https://tinyurl.com/49vev2x9>



Member Opinion: Lawmakers, add teeth to Sunshine Law

By Jerry Willis

From the Joplin Globe

Providing open access to public business and public records should be the default approach of public officials.

Though that is the policy required under Missouri's Sunshine Law, yet another Missouri state office was recently found to have sought to conceal public records, engaging in skullduggery in an attempt to evade the law's requirements.

Cole County Judge Jon Beetem earlier this week ruled that staff in then-Attorney General Josh Hawley's office used private email accounts to "knowingly and purposefully" subvert the state's open records law. The judge found that the attorney general's office violated the Sunshine Law by taking steps to conceal emails between now-Sen. Hawley's staff — on state payroll and state time — and his political consultants during his 2018 campaign for the U.S. Senate.

The request for the records came from the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee in late 2017. Hawley's office denied the existence of the emails, yet was shown to have attempted to conceal them by using



private email accounts.

Setting aside for a moment the shell game Hawley engaged in, it should not matter who is asking for records. Public is public. Those on state payroll don't get to pick and choose to whom they will release information.

Back to the email lie: It is especially disgusting that the office tasked to enforce the Sunshine Law engaged in subterfuge to evade it. Further, Hawley used state-paid workers on state time, yielding their direction over to a private consultant to promote his campaign efforts and avoid any disclosure of those efforts, effectively taking money from public coffers to evade a law he should have been enforcing.

Not wanting the public to know what one is doing is a pretty strong indication one shouldn't be doing it in the first place.

The attorney general's office now must pay \$12,000 in civil penalties — the maximum allowed under state law

— plus attorney's fees. That comes out of taxpayers' pockets — not Hawley's.

We've asked it before: What will it take to get bureaucrats and elected officials to obey the law and treat public records as the public property they are?

It seems, sadly, that the only thing that might work is if the penalty to officials had an impact that was greater than the perceived benefit of skirting, obstructing or simply ignoring the Sunshine Law. Having the office alone paying the penalty seems to be no deterrent.

The Legislature needs to add real teeth to the Sunshine Law, whereby officials have real skin — personal penalties and fines, perhaps — in the game, to enforce the openness required under the law.

As for Hawley, at the least he should acknowledge and apologize for his ethical lapse. Repaying his former office for the fine would be even better.

Voters will have to decide in 2024 if the price he pays should be greater.

Jerry Willis is design editor and a member of the editorial board for the Joplin Globe. This editorial was originally published by the Globe on Nov. 18.

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For more information, contact Matthew Barba at mbarba@mopress.com.

These ads were created in partnership between Missouri Press Association and the Public Notice Resource Center.

Sources and Resources

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Promote your community's varied voices

By Matthew Barba
Missouri Press News

Hello and welcome to the inaugural edition of "By the Barrel." I decided to start this regular feature to share some of the ideas Missouri Press staff comes across and which we think are worth ink in your newspaper, space on your website or your time to organize.

Some background on me, before I worked for Missouri Press Association I was a community newspaper editor in Bolivar. Before that, I was a managing editor in Southern Illinois for a small group of family-owned newspapers. I understand budget shortfalls, time constraints and staff limitations, so while not every idea may work for your publication, I think they're worth checking out.

Launching this column at the beginning of the year is particularly good timing because new MPA President Beth Durreman wants 2023 to be all about newspapers building better relationships with and within their community. The timing is serendipitous as most of the topics I will cover come straight from members of the Missouri newspaper community.

Now that introductions are out of the way, let's dive into an idea I have been ruminating on for a while and which saw some discussion during last year's Ozark Press Association meeting in October.

We can all agree newspapers want to be a community forum, THE community forum if we're being honest, but sometimes it is difficult getting people to write something that can be published. Lots of newspapers have seen letters to the editor fall off as social media becomes the de facto outlet for voicing gripes and too often op-ed pages, if they exist, are padded by columnists with no local connection.

In October, Kyle Troutman, who many will recognize for the often-long lists of awards he snags each year in the Missouri Press Foundation Better Newspaper Contest, introduced his readers to a new concept for the *Cassville*



A screenshot of the *Cassville Democrat's* Dec. 7, electronic edition shows the newspaper's all-local commentary page. This edition features a column from the school superintendent but other local leaders are given the opportunity to write, as well. (Screenshot/*Cassville Democrat*)

Democrat's opinion page.

"Faced with how anti-local the page was when we pride ourselves on being a community first newspaper, I had an idea," Troutman told readers at the time. "What if I reached out to the leaders of Cassville in different industries and professions, from schools to banking to history to health to community engagement? What if I could use this page to give the community a voice?"

Columns the *Democrat* feature are written by the Chamber of Commerce president, the school district superintendent, a local health professional, a representative of the local college, a bank president, a historian with the Barry County Museum and even someone from the newspaper.

"It was a little bit hard to organize but now it's running well and getting great reactions," Troutman said at the OPA meeting. "They're killing our news stories on our website for page views."

Sprouting from a workshop over the summer during the International Society of Weekly Newspaper Editors' annual convention, the local columnists help the *Democrat* be a place where the community can exchange ideas, hear each other's thoughts and concerns, sometimes be entertained and always be better informed.

I think all newspapers would like a little more quality interaction between members of the community with the goal of improving things for everyone. That starts with showing readers the pages of your newspaper can reflect their points of view, even when they're not your point of view.

An important point Troutman made at OPA that should be repeated here is none of the columnists he invited to participate are elected officials or running for public office. The columnists

should champion your community, not themselves or even one institution over another.

If you want to read Kyle's explanation to readers from October, you can find it online at <https://bit.ly/3WoE6gC>.

Did you fill out your MPS rate agreement?

From Missouri Press Staff

If you haven't yet, please take a few minutes to fill out your 2023 advertising rate agreements for Missouri Press Service.

It is imperative you fill this form out FULLY. It includes language regarding

digital uploads of your newspaper, including providing login information for your website or digital edition.

Find a link to the form on the MPA website, www.mopress.com.

Return completed forms as soon as possible to jpattson@mopress.com.

Send requests for 2023 press cards

From Missouri Press Staff

Submit requests for 2023 press cards and 2022-2023 MPA auto stickers today by going online or emailing staffers' names to Kristie Fortier at kfortier@mopress.com

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

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

Members can also request copies of the 2023 MPA sticker calendar.

Email distribution list

Are all your staff who should be

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

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



CALENDAR

2023

January

25 — Missouri Press Board Meetings, Jefferson City

26 — Missouri Press Association Day at the Capitol, Jefferson City

30 — Best Ad Contest Entries Due

March

31 — Hall of Fame Nominations Due

April

20-21 — MPAME Advertising Meeting, Springfield

June

15 — Missouri Press Foundation First Amendment Golf Classic, Hermann

16 — Missouri Press Board Meetings, Hermann

September

21-23 — MPA's 157th Annual Convention, Sheraton Westport Chalet, St. Louis

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.

Missouri Press Association / Service / Foundation

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More On Advertising

Ted Lawrence,
Advertising Director
Missouri Press Service



The priorities of good customer service

Newzware (icanon.newzware.com) recently conducted a survey of 5,800 customers regarding their customer service experiences. In this final column of 2022, let's see what points apply to our life in newspapers:

1. 84% of Business-to-Business customers say they will buy more often from a company if customer service representatives understand their goals when purchasing the product. Ad salespeople, please take the time to ask: "What are you hoping to accomplish with your ad campaign?" Get on their team. Celebrate when goals are met; dig in and make collaborative changes when they aren't.
2. 85% believe the buyer experience is as important as the product or service. Sounds like it's worth doing some things to make the advertiser's experience a pleasant one, doesn't it?
3. 79% of customers seek a self-service option. Should we be considering something along these lines?
4. 75% reveal that companies' corporate values and ethics impact the buying decision. Always tell the truth. Be ethical, even if doing so might cost you a sale. You'll win in the long run.
5. 79% of customers expect a quick reply when they contact a company. Do you make this a priority? Do you make it a point to respond to questions and complaints within a reasonable time? Perhaps you could plan to end every day by returning all calls and emails.
6. After receiving excellent service, 78% of customers are prepared to forgive a brand for an error. Unless you are perfect and never make errors, make "excellent service" a huge priority. It'll pay off the next time there's a typo in their ad.
7. If a customer finds it challenging to make a purchase, 74% will change to another brand. If the salesperson is slow to respond, or overstays his or her welcome at busy times, or doesn't provide good design ideas (spec ads!), 3 out of 4 customers will advertise with someone else!
8. In-person sales interactions dropped 52% during the pandemic. Now, only 29% of B2B companies consider it their go-to-market sales model. You may have a big advantage if you are willing and able to meet face-to-face with an advertiser as often as they'd like.
9. Buyers who experience a self-driven learning path are 147% more likely to buy more than initially planned. Wow! Be sure you are providing good market information. Be a source of reports like: "How many of our readers will soon be buying something from a store like yours?" and "How many dollars are spent in this



area on these products?" and "What do my competitors spend on advertising?"

10. One-third of B2B buyers say collaboration among decision-makers has increased since the pandemic. That's higher than I might have guessed. Be sure you are asking: "In addition to you, is there anyone else who will be a part of this decision?"
11. 85% expect customer service teams to understand their business. Be interested in the advertiser's business. Ask good questions. Learn all you can about their industry.
12. 66% seek a solution without a sales pitch. Be confident and informative, not pushy just to make a sale.
13. 86% expect that a trustworthy relationship will materialize. To build trust, tell the truth. Arrive on time. Do what you say you will do. Pay attention to what the advertiser says he or she needs.
14. 57% do not receive the level of knowledge that was promised. Be knowledgeable and informative. Anticipate questions. Go the extra mile.
15. 63% believe that sales reps focus on pitches, not solutions. Again, don't be pushy or aggressive, as though you are just wanting to "make a sale". Be a good listener. Present long-term campaigns that have the best chance to work well. Be prepared with an answer to the question: "How can your business help my business grow?"



Missouri Newspaper Organizations

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Your voice is needed to oppose efforts to dim Sunshine

This column is a call for help to each one of you. All of you are interested in Missouri's Sunshine Law and you are the ones we need over the next few weeks to help support it. You desperately need to pay attention here to what is about to happen.

In 2023, the Missouri Sunshine Law will be 50 years old. The Missouri Sunshine Coalition is already beginning to plan activities to celebrate that important anniversary. The Missouri Press Association is working to have this important date recognized by resolution within the Missouri legislative bodies during this upcoming session. That all sounds well and good, but that is not the whole story.

Legislators are hard at work on several bills as this session begins that would make severe inroads into the language of the present Sunshine Law. In their minds, guarantees of openness in the present law are harmful to their interests and they want those freedoms removed. They do not see sunshine in government as beneficial.

For example, House Bill 394, filed by Representative Bill Falkner, of St. Joseph, makes several negative changes to the law. Access to many records would be removed by this proposed change. Examples include:

- allowing members of the public body to meet in secret so long as no vote or other final action on a proposal was made;

- allowing public bodies to extend response time for Sunshine requests from three days to five days;

- allowing public bodies to charge for their cost of redacting closed materials from public records, including the cost of the attorneys fees for lawyers they hire to review records before they are released in response to a Sunshine request;

- closing copies of drafts of proposed actions after the final version is passed, closing memos and other

In 2023, the Missouri Sunshine Law will be 50 years old. Use this anniversary to remind legislators and readers of its importance.

advisory materials public body members receive in connection with proposed actions, and closing a large number of inter-agency or intra-agency records;

closing correspondence a legislator receives from constituents; and

closing much correspondence a legislator receives regarding pending legislation.

There are additional changes in that bill, but those are some of the most egregious. This bill also has the support, we believe of Sen. Andrew Koenig, of St. Louis County.

All of these changes are devastating. Especially the one allowing for charging for attorneys' fees for redacting of content in public records. Sunshine law advocates across the state fought to get that ruling from the Missouri Supreme Court a few years ago.

One of the biggest hindrances in recent years to the public getting access to records has been the huge costs charged for the review process separating open records from closed records, although the law for years had been clear that the cost of that separation was the responsibility of the public body.

You need to do two things as soon as possible to help Missouri Press with this crisis. First, you need to get in touch with your local legislators and make sure they are aware of your concerns about this bill.

Tell them about any situations you've had where the cost to get records was a hinderance. Tell them that if you had to pay for costs in the range of hundreds of dollars to get copies of records, you won't be able to do it.

Remind them that local citizens need access to what their local officials are doing on their behalf. Tell them your stories. Explain to them that changes like this make it harder to provide the public information they are entitled to receive about local government, as well as state government.

Remind them of this 50th anniversary and it seems a shame to be "gutting" the rights guaranteed by the Sunshine Law at such a special time.

And then, write an editorial this month about the benefits of the Sunshine Law. Make a note to write another editorial every month about the importance of this law in Missouri. Send a copy to your local legislator each month to remind them of how important this law is to you.

If legislators stop by your offices, bend their ear about this subject. Suggest one of your reporters contact the Missouri Sunshine Coalition (<https://www.facebook.com/mosunshinecoalition/>) for background historical information on this anniversary.

This is a critical time for those of us working to support your right to access. Doug Crews and Mark Maassen can only do so much in Jefferson City on their own. We need you behind them adding additional support.



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



BETTER NEWSPAPER CONTEST

The template will open soon!

**Prepare your entries for the 2023 BNC
and be ready to upload ASAP.**

Full contest rules and categories can be found on Missouri Press' website at
<https://mopress.com/better-newspaper/>

Here are some tips to help you prepare your entries.

1. 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.

2. Make the category number the first element in the title of each entry.

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

If you have any questions please contact Matthew Barba at mbarba@mopress.com

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