

MP MISSOURI PRESS NEWS

Gather round: **MPAME** invites you
to Springfield | P4-5



MPAME ROUND TABLE DISCUSSIONS

Whether blue suede shoes, raspberry beret or black leather jacket, get dressed up to rock out at the 157th Annual Convention | **P6**

You still have time to apply for a Missouri Press Foundation summer intern | **P10**

We'll see you in June as the First Amendment Golf Classic returns to Hermann | **P19**

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Earn YOUR press pass

I can't remember all the salespeople I have trained over the years; some have turned out to be wonderful hires and have had successful careers in newspaper sales while others didn't quite get it and moved on.

Being a small newspaper, I have found that we were often the starting point of a career and it seemed I was constantly training someone new. Mostly I like training people, it is exciting to see the lightbulb go off over their head when they get it. It helps keep me on point with the basics of sales. Ask them to buy. Listen twice as hard as you talk. Be sure to call on them regularly.

I have also found many of the aspects of sales is pertinent in the newsroom. Ask them for the interview or comment. Listen twice as hard as you talk. Be sure to call on them regularly.

The *Laclede County Record* has a new reporter, Katelynne Wagers, she has no formal journalism training or experience. What she does have is enthusiasm, an idea of what she wants for her community, willingness to try a new career and during our first and second interview, she asked excellent questions of us, and she listened and took notes.

I was very excited that she took a leap of faith and accepted the position and joined the team. She has surpassed every expectation we put on her and is constantly amazing us with her natural talent.

If you are not aware of the Earn

"Training for someone with no experience is daunting, where do you begin?"

Your Press Pass program the Missouri Press Association has made available to all our members at no cost, you need to familiarize yourself with it soon.

Katelynne is one of the first members of the press association to have earned a "Press Pass."

Training for someone with no experience is daunting, where do you begin, how much do you throw at them, and when do you send them in public?

Katelynne shared a little about her first few days at the office, "Coming into a new job is already stressful especially when you have no experience. I felt like I was lightyears behind everyone else, I didn't even know the words people were saying to me or what they meant. I kept thinking 'Seriously? What in the world is a cutline?'"

With the Earn Your Press Pass program it is broken up into individual

segments, the first one is Newspaper Jargon. Katelynne went on to say this after her first session, "I learned so much useful information that I now use daily. Now when someone tells me to write a cutline, I know exactly what they want from me."

I felt confident she would adapt to our environment, and that she would become part of the team very quickly, but I didn't feel confident that we would have the time to go over all the terminology, the layout of a paper, how to do this, how to do that.

At times it feels easier to just do things yourself rather than training a new person, but it is not. You don't do anyone a favor by trying to do it all yourself.

The course is not meant to be college-level but rather a great foundation for a new person and in our case, a seasoned reporter who is a new managing editor and a publisher who recently added sports reporter to her resume'.

I signed our editor Steve Smith and myself up so that we could be better mentors to Katelynne when she had questions. And to see if the course matched our guidelines and protocol.

Continued on Page 3



PRESIDENT: Beth Durreman, *Laclede County Record*, Lebanon
1st VICE PRES.: Amos Bridges, *Springfield News-Leader*
2nd VICE PRES.: Peggy Scott, *Leader Publications*, Festus
SECRETARY: Kimberly Combs, *Wayne County Journal Banner*, Piedmont
TREASURER: Mike Scott, *NEMO News Media Group*, Kahoka
NNA Representative: Hannah Spaar, *The Odessan*, Odessa
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: Mark Maassen
ADVERTISING DIRECTOR: Ted Lawrence
EDITOR: Matthew Barba

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

DIRECTORS:

Donna Bischoff, *BridgeTower Media*, St. Louis
Gary Castor, *Jefferson City News Tribune*
Sandy Nelson, *The Courier-Tribune*, Liberty
Bryan Jones, *The Morgan County Statesman*, Versailles
Kevin Jones, *St. Louis American*
Tim Schmidt, *Montgomery Standard*, Montgomery City
Lucas Presson, *Southeast Missourian*, Cape Girardeau
Bryan Chester, *Columbia Missourian*

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Do you know a Sunshine Hero?

Support the Missouri Sunshine Coalition's efforts by nominating someone by April 30.

For Missouri Press News

The Missouri Sunshine Coalition is inviting citizens across the state to take a personal role in boosting awareness of the Sunshine Law and the benefits it affords to citizens from all walks of life.

The coalition is marking Sunshine Week, March 12-18, with an appeal for nominations for its Sunshine Heroes recognition. Dennis Ellsworth, executive director, said leaders of the statewide coalition will select the 2023 honorees later this year based on nominations requested by April 30.

Supporters are encouraged to think about private citizens, members of the legal profession, public officials, government employees, members of the media and any others who have distinguished themselves by using the Sunshine Law, fighting to preserve and improve it, or advocating for greater government transparency.

Last year's recipients included a private citizen who successfully challenged secrecy in his local government, a Jefferson City-based news organization focused on using the law in its coverage of state government, and a county clerk with a history of providing education and promoting compliance with the law.

"We were blown away by how deserving the 2022 honorees were. Each made a genuine contribution to promoting government transparency," Ellsworth said.

"Our experience from last year has encouraged us to continue to pursue stories of people who are respecting the law, benefitting from the law and using it for good."

In addition to Sunshine Hero nominations, the coalition



The Missouri Sunshine Coalition is seeking nominations for this year's Sunshine Hero awards. In 2022, the awards were presented during Missouri Press Association's 156th Annual Convention. Last year's winners included the Missouri Independent for their work covering state government and making their reporting available to other media at no cost. Pictured are Jason Hancock, left, and Rudi Keller, right, representing the Independent, and second from left, Kathy Kiely, Amos Bridges and Echo Menges, representing the Sunshine Coalition. (Staff file photo)

is soliciting personal stories of successes and challenges faced in using the Sunshine Law. The coalition plans to draw on these accounts to show the value of the law and to focus the coalition's efforts on areas of greatest need.

To nominate an individual or organization as a Sunshine Hero, submit nominations by April 30. Stories about successes and challenges in using the law are welcomed throughout the year.

Send hero nominations and personal stories to Dennis Ellsworth, Missouri Sunshine Coalition executive director, at dennis11ellsworth@gmail.com. Questions or suggestions? Call Ellsworth at (816) 261-5373.

Continued from Page 2: *Cross-training between sales and editorial benefits your whole newspaper.*

Katelynne Wagers is her byline, but in the office she goes by Katie, she said, "I took 10 pages of notes during the duration of the course, and I refer to them almost daily. Not only has the course given me a base knowledge of things I need to know, but it has also given me the confidence to achieve my goals."

In her four short weeks in the newsroom, Katie has surpassed the goals we have given her. She has had five front page stories covering, among other things, child pornography, a court room assault and a robbery. Another 10 feature stories by her have included the Salvation Army, Dancing with the Stars, and a brand-new community garden coming to our community.

I am happy to share her experience, maybe this program

can help you and alleviate some stress from all the training of your new hires. Oh, and remember there are segments that work great for any department, such as Newspaper Jargon, which should be in all new-to-the-industry employees' welcome package.

Katie summarized her participation with the program, "I would highly recommend the course to everyone. Whether you have been in journalism for 20 years, or you are walking in the front door with no experience (like I did), this course is a great tool. It is filled with information that will help you no matter your experience, and the instructor is funny. She makes it easy to sit through the videos. Not only was I learning, I was also laughing along with her, she is witty, and incredibly smart."

MPAME

Missouri Press Advertising
& Marketing Executives Meeting

April 20-21, 2023
Hotel Vandivort
Springfield MO



Thursday, April 20

11:00 AM | MPAME Board meeting
Hotel Vandivort – *Pillar Room*

PROGRAM | Events in Cornerstone Room

1:00-1:20 PM | Marijuana Advertising and
Legislative Update with Mark Maassen

1:20-1:45PM | MPS Advertising Updates with
Ted Lawrence and MPA Training Opportunities
with Matthew Barba

1:45 PM | Break

2:00-3:00 PM | Best Ideas Session Bring Your
Best Ideas to Share to win CA\$H!

3:00-4:00 PM | Laura Koch of Metro Creative
Graphics | SPEC ADS training / info session

4:00PM | Adjourn and Hotel Check In

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

8:00-9:30 PM | THURSDAY NIGHT FUN!
Ernie Biggs Dueling Piano Bar

Friday, April 21

Events in Cornerstone Room

8:30 AM | Breakfast

9-10:15AM | Laura Koch of Metro Creative Graphics
SPECIAL SECTIONS review

10:15 AM | Break

10:30-Noon | Hot Topic Round Table Discussions

“NewsMatch & Local Donor Campaigns.”
Bryan Chester of the *Columbia Missourian*

**“Connecting to Your Community: Driving
Engagement with Events”**
Valerie Pister and Amy Egger of the
Springfield Business Journal

**“It may be Sappy, but keep them Happy:
Employee and Client satisfaction,
Engagement and Retention”**
Beth Durreman of the *Laclede County Leader*

**“Interactive Contests: Sponsorships,
Community Engagement and Multimedia
Promotion.”** Jamie Strickland of the *Joplin Globe*

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

Learn from and help others at MPAME's meeting in Springfield

You can also collect your Best Ad Contest awards at the Thursday night banquet

By Matthew Barba
Missouri Press News

Celebrate your newspaper and its staff, learn from others and be ready to sing loud with the piano men during this year's Missouri Press Advertising Managers and Executives' annual meeting April 20-21, at Hotel Vandivort in Springfield.

MPAME's conference this year will focus on building better relationships, from potential customers to your biggest clients to your readers and even, your own employees. With several learning sessions spread across the two days of the conference, there will be plenty you can take back to your own publication.

MPAME President Gina Langston said she is excited for this year's MPAME meeting because it puts an emphasis on attendees learning from each other in addition to sessions with various speakers.

"Newspapers are always working on new ideas and new ways to sell our products, so getting all of these sales people together in the same room is a great opportunity to share what we know and make each other better," Langston said.

In addition to a status update on the final weeks of the state's legislative session from Missouri Press staff, presenting at this year's MPAME conference will be Laura Koch of Metro Creative Graphics, who will do spec ads



During the 2022 Missouri Press Advertising Managers and Executives meeting, Gina Langston led a roundtable discussion on niche products and special sections. Langston is the 2023 MPAME president, which is scheduled to meet April 20-21, in Springfield. See page 4 for a full agenda, including this year's roundtable topics.

training and a special sections review.

Koch has been a senior graphic designer with Metro Creative for more than 12 years and has experience working for newspapers, including at *The Buffalo, N.Y. News*.

The meeting will end with a round of hot topic discussions covering everything from local donor campaigns and driving engagement with your community through events to keeping your employees happy and satisfied and marketing interactive contests.

Of course, it won't be all work and no play, as winners of this year's Best Ad Contest can collect their plaques during the Thursday night awards banquet. Afterwards, attendees will head to Ernie Biggs dueling piano bar, where you're encouraged to "sing loud" with the music.

"There is always a fun event that is part of MPAME's meeting, and I think this year's dueling pianos is going to be the most fun we've ever had," Langston said.

A full agenda for the MPAME conference can be found on page 4 of this month's issue of Missouri Press News. To register to attend, visit www.mopress.com/events or go to <https://bit.ly/3KI7wv8>.

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



Ken Garner, publisher of the *Maryville Forum*, shows off one of his newspaper's marketing ideas during the sharing session at the 2022 Missouri Press Advertising Managers and Executives meeting. For the 2023 meeting, attendees are encouraged to bring their best ideas to Springfield for a chance to win cash. (Staff file photos)

LOST DOG (will be found rocking MPA's 157th Annual Convention)

Whether you are a dad, know a dad or even just have a dad, you're going to love rocking out with Lost Dog, the third-best "Dad Band" in St. Louis, during the Thursday night social at Missouri Press Association's 157th Annual Convention.

Attendees will kick off this year's Convention Thursday, Sept. 21, at the Sheraton Westport Chalet Hotel in St. Louis by catching up with friends and colleagues, feasting on food and drinks and enjoying music from Lost Dog, all in support of the Missouri Press Foundation. The Convention will run Sept. 21-23 and registration information will be available soon.

In the meantime, MPA President Beth Durreman wants the Association's members and friends to mark your calendars, start gathering the perfect outfit to rock out and get ready to crank it to 11 in preparation for this year's Thursday night social.

Durreman said her goal for the Convention takes inspiration from Mick Jagger and the Rolling Stones, in that "You can't always get what you want, but if you try sometimes, you'll find you get what you need."

She added, "Mick Jagger won't be attending our Thursday night social, but there should be plenty of 'Rock Stars' as everyone who comes is encouraged to dress as your favorite artist and enjoy great classic rock from Lost Dog. You might find its just what you need."

The band, Lost Dog, was formed after a neighborhood search party was formed to return a ... lost dog ... to its owners. Since then, the band has played dozens of gigs around St. Louis and are guaranteed to know all your favorite tunes. In 2018, the band took third place in the "Battle of the Dad Bands."

While the Thursday night social starts the Convention with a good time, Durreman said the entire event is also a chance for newspaper staffers to learn something new about the industry and take something back to their own publication to make it better.

"I feel privileged to invite the entire Missouri Press community to St. Louis to acknowledge all the hard work that every person puts into their newspapers across the state, and to recognize all the talent we have as individuals and as an organization," Durreman said.

Finalized planning is underway for Missouri Press Association's 157th Annual Convention and Trade Show, scheduled for Sept. 21-23, at the Sheraton Westport Chalet Hotel in St. Louis.

"Every year I've gone to Convention I always walked away with valuable information and ideas to implement at my own newspaper," Durreman said. "I also gain knowledge from the time spent visiting with other newspapers staff. Our Convention is designed for the passing of information, whether in a defined setting or in a casual conversation."

Keep an eye on future issues of Missouri Press News, the Association's weekly eBulletins and monthly Bulletins for more information about planned events and activities. The Hall of Fame Banquet is Friday, Sept. 22, while the Foundation's Better Newspaper Contest luncheon will be Saturday, Sept. 23.



Editor's note: The above dog is neither lost nor probably going to be rocking at this year's Missouri Press Association 157th Annual Convention and Trade Show in St. Louis. She's a good girl, nonetheless. Story and photo by Matthew Barba.



If you would like to be a Convention sponsor or trade show exhibitor, please contact MPF Director Michael Harper by phone at (573) 449-4167, ext. 303, or by email at mharper@mopress.com. Convention information is also available online at <https://mopress.com/convention/>.



Lebanon — Katelynne Wagers has joined the *Laclede County Record* as a new reporter. Wagers is a native of Lebanon and will be graduating in November from Grand Canyon University with a bachelor's degree in history.



"I feel very lucky that Katelynne has chosen to be a part of her local community newspaper. With her love of history, she is now able to document the history of her hometown and county. She will be a strong asset to our newsroom," said Publisher Beth Durreman. Wagers has been married to her husband for three years and together have a daughter named Parker.

Harrisonville — The *Tribune and Times* recently announced several staff changes, including the promotion of Jimmy Gillispie to editor and addition of Caleb Brubaker as a reporter. Gillispie first joined the newspaper in the summer of 2022 as sports editor, but publisher Dennis



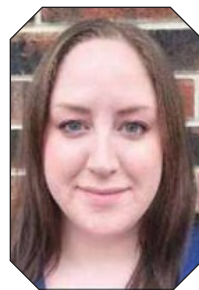
Minich said his skills and knowledge led to the promotion to editor.

Gillispie studied journalism at Baker University in Kansas and for three years was a sports writer at the *Baker Orange* newspaper and after graduating worked for the now-defunct *Baldwin City Signal*. His life and work has also taken him to Iowa, Indiana and Oklahoma, where he spent seven years in Stillwater covering sports, including Oklahoma State University.

Brubaker first got into print working for *The Salem News* as a reporter. Prior to that, he studied journalism at the College of the Ozarks, where he won several awards for his broadcast work. He also has won awards from the Missouri Press Better Newspaper Contest.



Joining Brubaker at the *Tribune and Times* is his wife, Veronica, who is a sales representative at the newspaper.



Minich said the three staffers have him excited for the future. "We have

some fresh ideas and enthusiasm which I think will make for a better product and I am excited to see what all we will be able to accomplish."

Washington — Jonathan Riley has joined *The Missourian* as a general assignment reporter and will cover business and schools for the newspaper. He previously served as editor of *The Morning Sun* in Pittsburg, Kan.



A native of Oakland, Calif., Riley has experience at weekly and daily newspapers there, as well as in Massachusetts. He has reported on a wide range of topics, from government and schools to courts and police, earning numerous awards, including Kansas Press Association's top investigative reporting award in 2020 for a series on health care fraud. He earned his master's degree in journalism from Boston University.

"We are pleased to add another experienced journalist to our staff," Publisher Bill Miller Jr. told readers. "Jon will compliment our team as we continue to expand our coverage in Franklin County."

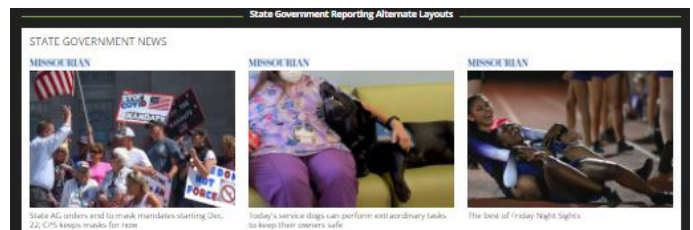
Capitol Report widget can come off websites

From Missouri Press Staff

Due to staffing changes and a planned revamp of the project, Missouri Press members should remove the Capitol Report story collection from their websites.

A few members have asked, prompted by a lack of updated stories in the collection, so if the code is still active on your website and the widget is displaying, please feel free to remove it at this time.

The story collection, a collaborative effort between Missouri Press members, the Missouri School of Journalism and the Reynolds Journalism Institute will likely return in the future with a specific plan to keep it updated during the legislative session but remove it when the General Assembly adjourns for the year.



If you have questions about the Capitol Report story collection, please contact MPA Editor Matthew Barba at mbarba@mopress.com.

Thank you to all of the Association's members who installed the widget on your websites and helped Missouri Press staff navigate this project.



With MPAME's upcoming meeting, now is the perfect time to sign up

Here's the plan: Take some time between now and April 20-21, when the Missouri Press Advertising Managers and Executives meet in Springfield and get acquainted with everything Digiversity.tv has to offer.

Then, when you get together with your fellow marketing and advertising colleagues, talk about what you've learned! It's a great learning opportunity for you and an even better networking opportunity.

And the best part? There is no cost to sign up for Digiversity.tv and you're already planning on attending MPAME, so why not capitalize on the timing. Seems like a good return on investment, if you ask me.*

So what do you get when you sign up? Digiversity.tv focuses on the Adobe Creative Cloud suite of products, with lauded Adobe software trainer and all-around guru Russell Viers using videos that follow the same engaged, energetic teaching style MPA's members have seen from him firsthand for more than 25 years. He and other presenters also cover various topics in written articles and live webcasts.

His goal is to help designers and graphic artists make the hard days easier by providing complete answers and solutions to everyday challenges and more.

How to sign up:

Go online to
bit.ly/DigiversityMPA
OR
email Matthew Barba at
mbarba@mopress.com.

Check your spam and junk folders just in case the activation email ends up there.

Missouri Press will provide access through the end of 2023. There is no cost to the newspaper, but it is preferred every staffer using the website signs up with a unique email address.

In addition to the training and explaining, Viers regularly answers viewers' questions, so feel free to reach out to Viers directly at russell@digiversity.tv.

*Me is MPA Editor Matthew Barba, who really wants you to sign up for AND sign your staff up for Digiversity.tv. It's a great program that doesn't cost member newspapers any thing but their time, which I know is in short supply, but still, it's a good deal!



Examiner editor Jeff Fox speaks at the open house celebrating the newspaper's 125th anniversary. (Submitted/Mike Genet/The Examiner)

Independence — The *Independence Examiner* marked its 125th anniversary in February, celebrating with members of the community during an open house at the newspaper. The first edition of the weekly *Jackson Examiner* was published Feb. 19, 1898, with “Colonel” William Southern Jr. as publisher.

Recognizing the *Examiner*, which is now owned by CherryRoad Media, state legislators representing Independence presented editor Jeff Fox with a resolution from the Missouri General Assembly.

Pierce City — The *Pierce City Leader-Journal*, formerly a sister publication to the *Sarcoxi Record* published by Paul Donley, has joined Ozark Prairie Independent Media, a not-for-profit corporation formed last year. Ozark Prairie also operates the *Dudenville Gazette*, which covers Dade and northern Lawrence counties.

The *Leader-Journal* will be led by James McNary, whose career began with *The Dudenville Gazette* in January 1998. At that time, the publication was known as

the *Maple Grove-Dudenville Gazette* and staffed primarily by high school students. McNary also has experience at several other Missouri newspapers, including most recently as editor of the *Greenfield Vedette*.

McNary told readers that Ozark Prairie Media wants to preserve news outlets for rural communities in the region, with plans to introduce online and digital content in time. In keeping with the *Gazette's* history of student staff, McNary told readers content from capable student journalists is welcome, and he is interested in working with teachers and instructors to provide course credit for those students.

Donley's publishing company, fstop Publications, will continue to operate three weekly newspapers in Jasper County, including *The Sarcoxi Record*, *Jasper County Citizen* and *Carthage Chronicle*.

THE MONETT TIMES

Monett — The *Monett Times* announced in late February it was making the move to weekly publication in March. Previously one of the state's small dailies, the newspaper had been being printed twice weekly following its purchase by Lisa Craft effective at the beginning of 2023.

The newspaper staff told readers the plan is to take more of a “current news” approach on its website, saying, “The first and foremost priority is getting the community the news in a timely manner. There will be some information that will only be in the printed edition, so don't make the mistake of thinking you will always keep up by looking at the website. You might miss something.”

Craft also thanked readers for their patience and understanding as the newspaper continues to adjust so it will be best positioned to provide the Monett community news and advertising services.

Use this year's NIE story for free before June 30

From Missouri Press Staff

The Missouri Press Foundation and National Newspaper Association Foundation are offering for free an original series to newspapers for publication through June 30, 2023.

This year, readers can enjoy a short story in each chapter about an American scientist or inventor that changed the world. Some of them made small changes — furniture that serves more than one function. Some of them made big changes — improving the way we grow the food we eat.

Some of them are famous — the

Scientists and Inventors

Written by Carolyn Mueller | Illustrated by Nicole Hartfelder

Wright Brothers and John Deere. Some of them will probably be new names — Lyda D. Newman and George Alcorn, Jr.

All of the stories emphasize the lives of normal people who found a problem, looked for a solution, and made their dreams a reality.

Chapter exercises encourage students to find inspiration for their own discoveries in their local newspaper.

Have questions about NIE content?

Contact Helen Headrick at hheadrick@mopress.com.

To download the series, go to mo-nie.com and use the code: **inventors**.



TIME IS RUNNING OUT!

DEADLINES APPROACHING



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

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

SEEKING NOMINATIONS

Missouri Photojournalism Hall of Fame



Melissa Farlow: A foal stands out in the herd as mustangs head down a dusty trail to a waterhole.

Nominations must be received by May 13.

**If you have questions please call
573-449-4167**



Open Records Reporting: **Village officials vacated from office after open records lawsuit**

By Amanda Lubinski

From the Courier-Tribune, Liberty /Gladstone Dispatch

Two officials appointed to fill open seats on the Village of Oakwood Park Board of Trustees have been vacated from office after a Clay County court judgment concluded the community's leadership violated the Sunshine Law.

Oakwood Park is a village of roughly 189 residents that encompasses a square area off North Oak Trafficway near Gladstone Fire Station No. 1. Village leadership consists of five elected leaders who serve on a Board of Trustees that typically meets at 7 p.m. the third Tuesday of the month at Oakview City Hall, according to the village's website.

In the lawsuit, resident Karol Hughes on behalf of several other residents, sued the village, claiming village leaders violated the state's open records law by failing to post a public meeting notice for a July 2021 meeting and that the board failed to keep minutes, including votes taken, for the meeting. Defendants for the village were listed as Trustees Laurie Draughon, Angela Koester and Russ Trollinger. Draughon, who serves as village clerk, is noted to record minutes for the board during meetings.

At the July 20 meeting, which took place at Summit Grill restaurant and not the typical public meeting location, two new trustees were appointed after those seats were resigned by former trustees who had been elected in April of that year.

"At this meeting, these defendants voted to appoint defendants Don Draughon and Damien Salazar to serve as replacement trustees. There is no evidence that any member of the public or any residents of the village attended this meeting," states court records.

Witnesses in the suit testified they regularly watched for meeting notices on the village message board regarding the July 20, 2021, meeting and one was never posted. The clerk testified that she posted a timely meeting notice in a public location.

"Multiple resident witnesses testified that they had attended the May and August 2021 board of Trustees meetings upon seeing the public notices. Multiple witnesses further testified that they only found out about the board resignations and replacements at the August 2021 meeting," reads the lawsuit judgment.

In the judgment rendered this year, the court noted defendants produced a meeting notice during the discovery phase of the suit that was titled "Work Session-Closed (Emergent)," but there was no evidence the notice was posted in a public location before the meeting



and that there was no evidence the meeting location scheduled, a local restaurant, could accommodate the public. The meeting notice, according to the judgment, also did not reference the exception allowed for a closed meeting of the public body as is required by the Sunshine Law and that there was no evidence of a vote of the trustees to enter into a closed meeting.

"Ms. Draughon testified that accepting resignations of trustees and appointing their replacement was a personnel matter; however, the persons resigning were publicly elected trustees, not employees of the village. The conduct of the meeting reasonably infers that defendants held the meeting with the expectation that the public would not be present," reads the court judgment.

The court found that trustees violated the Sunshine Law by failing to post prior notice and an agenda of the meeting to the public, but did not fail to record minutes from the meeting as the clerk took hand-written notes noting the votes approving the newly appointed board members.

As a result of the court's findings, the board's vote to appoint Don Draughon and Salazar were voided and the village was ordered to set a public meeting that is properly noticed with an agenda where replacement trustees will be selected. The notice and agenda must be posted to the village's physical message boards and website no less than 24 hours prior to the meeting. The judge also ordered the village to pay \$1,000 civil penalty and the plaintiff's attorney and lawsuit fees totaling \$4,727.30.

The village clerk Draughon declined to comment on the suit. Hughes also declined to comment.

As a result of the board appointments being voided, the village [accepted] resumes ... from those who wish to fill the unexpired terms that end in April of this year.

This article was originally published online here: <http://bit.ly/3TEVwiH>. It has been edited lightly for length. In honor of the Sunshine Law's 50th anniversary this year, Missouri Press News is sharing the efforts of Association members who raise awareness about the law, including through reporting that highlights an effective application of open records statutes to further inform readers.



Have you earned your press pass?

Through the end of 2023, Missouri Press Association member newspapers have access to a different kind of training tool. Earn Your Press Pass is a web-based course that teaches the fundamentals of journalism.

Earn Your Press Pass is intended to fill the gaps for newspapers having difficulty recruiting trained journalists. The course is being provided to all Missouri Press members at no cost.

The course provides new hires the information and structure they need to sit down and complete lessons that teach the basics of good journalism. Everything from common newspaper terminology to story writing to media laws are covered in the materials.

Not intended as a college-level course, the goal of Earn Your Press Pass is to impart practical, usable knowledge to participants. Lessons are designed to take the layperson to a functioning newspaper reporter upon completion in a straight-forward and comprehensive approach.

It's also a great tool to give your sales people some additional training in case they stumble upon a story while making the rounds in the community.

Earn Your Press Pass began as a cooperative project with the Kansas Press Association and Lindsey Young, part owner of Kansas Publishing Ventures, which operates four community weekly newspapers in south central Kansas. Previously a high school teacher, Young has experience instructing students in everything from English to public speaking to journalism.

Learn more at earnyourpresspass.com and find out what the course can offer your publication and staff.

To sign up for the course and get added to the Missouri Press group, send an email to mbarba@mopress.com or kfortier@mopress.com.

And don't forget, after your staff earn their press pass from the above program, contact Missouri Press and we can issue an MPA press pass for them to keep on their person.

Resources to get your story started

Digital FOOTPRINT
OFFERED BY MISSOURI PRESS SERVICE



Every Business Needs an Online Presence.

Contact Ted Lawrence
at Missouri Press.
tlawrence@mopress.com
573-449-4167



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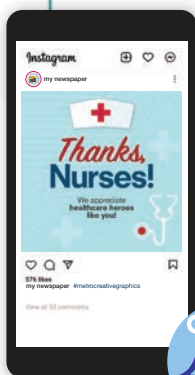
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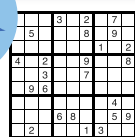
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Sunshine all the time

By Matthew Barba

Missouri Press News

In case you haven't heard, Missouri's Sunshine Law is a big deal, a landmark piece of legislation that ensures transparent government proceedings and open public records. Smarter people than me have written of its impact on government and more industrious reporters than I could ever hope to be have used it to hold the powerful accountable.

So why am I writing about it in the April edition of *Missouri Press News*, a month after proponents of government transparency recognized Sunshine Week on a national level?

A few reasons, actually, not the least of which is this year marks the 50th anniversary of the Sunshine Law in Missouri and while Sunshine Week is important, promoting transparency in government and open records is something journalists should be doing at every opportunity. It's not something to relegate to just one week a year.

Too many people think the Sunshine Law and FOIA provide journalists with special access, but journalists are just using the same rules that apply to everyone to be better champions for their communities. It's critical to remind readers when you advocate for open records and transparent government, you're doing it for their benefit also.

Seriously, stories that require you to complete a Sunshine Law or Freedom of Information Act request should absolutely reflect that in your reporting. You should be editorializing that the same rules allowing you to report on the people's government allow the people themselves to ask for information from the government.

Recognizing the Sunshine Law's milestone anniversary, *Missouri Press News* has been and will continue featuring articles, editorials and other work by MPA member newspapers that highlight the importance of "sunshine" laws.

Much more important to this column's appearance in April, following



the General Assembly's spring break, is not to reflect on what the Sunshine Law allows journalists to do, but proposed legislation in Jefferson City that would make the people's government less accountable to those it represents.

Some members of the General Assembly and statewide office holders want to weaken Missouri's Sunshine Law. Unfortunately, opponents to transparency are nothing new, but in recent years there does seem to be renewed vigor in the fight against open government.

Rather than talk about the specifics of any particular bill proposed or moving in the Capitol building, as those things could change before you get the chance to read these words, I want to address the mindset of what our industry is up against.

Hotline Attorney Jean Maneke recently described a bill making headway within the General Assembly as "anti-things that we would want, it has really bad things in it."

While Maneke was talking to the Missouri Sunshine Coalition at the time, her words remain relevant to the press association's position on such legislation. If this bill passes, she added, "we will have lost a lot."

If this particular bill doesn't pass this year, Maneke's portent will remain hauntingly relevant in the next legislative session. Opponents to the Sunshine Law are not going away.

Even if you don't feel comfortable calling out politicians by name,

positioning yourself and your newspaper as supporting open government records and meetings shows your readers you are looking out for them.

Dennis Ellsworth, executive director of the Missouri Sunshine Coalition and whom many will recognize from his time as editor of the *St. Joseph News-Press*, offers a simple mantra, "Be for the Sunshine Law and what it represents for every person."

Again, words directed to the Sunshine Coalition but applying just as much to newspapers and, much more importantly, every single one of your readers who stand to lose power to hold their elected officials accountable.

What can you do? Make sure you are keeping up on bills of interest to the newspaper industry. Missouri Press maintains a list of legislation it is following on its website, www.mopress.com. The list is updated throughout the legislation session.

Some of these proposed bills might inspire you to write an editorial codifying your newspaper's position for or against them. That would be good for your newspaper and its ongoing conversation with your readers and, one could hope, inspiring letters to the editor.

On occasion, Missouri Press will ask for your help contacting legislators about proposed bills in the Capitol. Keep an eye out and be prepared to lend your voice, but also, be willing to encourage others in your community to do the same.

From the smallest village board of trustees right to the Missouri House and Senate and beyond, a governing body should operate with the idea that its work is for the people it represents.

As proud as I am to be in this industry, democracy doesn't die in darkness because newspapers are snuffed out. It dies when the public can no longer see through the windows into the people's house. If you're not fighting for government transparency, the windows might as well be blocked out with the pages of your newspaper.



Missouri Press Foundation

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Society of 1867

Jeff Fox, Martha Pickens, Kim Robertson, Daniel Spurgeon

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Jane Gallagher, Jean & Larry Snider

Are you up to date on your fictitious name?

From Missouri Press Staff

MPA Hotline Attorney Jean Maneke wants to remind ALL NEWSPAPERS in the state to check to ensure they have a fictitious name registration on file with the Missouri Secretary of State's office. Periodically, that must be renewed, so it's important to keep that on your periodic to-do list.

If you have questions about this process, give her a call and she'll walk you through it.

And if your company is an actual corporation (as opposed to an LLC), you periodically need to file your annual report with the Secretary of State. It's important you not let your corporate status lapse.

Missouri Press Association / Service / Foundation

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CALENDAR

2023

April

7 — Better Newspaper Contest
Template Closes

20 — Last Day to Apply for a Missouri
Press Foundation Summer Internship

20-21 — MPAME Advertising Meeting,
Springfield

June

15 — Missouri Press Foundation First
Amendment Golf Classic, Hermann

16 — Missouri Press Board Meetings,
Hermann

16 — Show-Me Press Meeting,
Hermann

September

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

24-30 — Missouri Photo Workshop,
Sedalia

October

19 — Missouri Photojournalism Hall of
Fame Induction Ceremony, Columbia

Did you know?

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events online at www.mopress.com.

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nomination forms, board of director
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Ted Lawrence,
Advertising Director
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Focus on the Sales Journey

Jeb Blount of [SalesGravy.com](https://www.salesgravy.com) reminds salespeople that when your sole focus is on closing the sale rather than helping your buyer, they will feel that vibe, it turns them off, and you are more likely to lose than win.

He says to always be able to identify where the customer is in the buying journey: Awareness, Research, Consideration, Decision, and Post-Purchase.

Then tailor your approach accordingly. For example, if the customer is in the awareness stage, focus on providing educational content to help them better understand the problem they are trying to solve. If the customer is in the consideration stage, focus on providing more detailed information about your products or services, and how they can solve the customer's problem.

The salesperson should also be able to answer any questions along the way, and provide guidance and support throughout the buying journey. This includes providing recommendations, addressing objections, and helping the customer understand the value proposition of your newspaper.

Ultimately, the salesperson's role in guiding the buying journey is to build trust and rapport with the customer, and to create a positive experience that inspires the customer to make a purchase.

Far too many salespeople and their leaders make the mistake of focusing too much on closing the sale and not enough on the process, journey, and buying experience. Hours are devoted to training, practicing, and mastering closing techniques. Yet these closing techniques often turn off modern, informed buyers who do not want to feel manipulated.

The truth is that closing the sale is only one small part of the sales and buying journeys. Effective closing should be a natural step in a well-executed sales process rather than an event in time.

Understand that buyers are in control of their journey. They will make the decision to buy from you for their reasons, not yours. It is not your job to "close" the buyer, but rather to help the buyer close themselves. As a result, building trust and rapport with the buyer is a much more effective way to close a sale than using high-pressure tactics.

To close the sale, it is essential to focus on the needs and wants of your buyer. It also means building trust and rapport, so that they feel comfortable and confident in making a purchase from you. You'll build trust by:

1. Being honest and transparent: Be upfront about the limitations of your products or services and avoid making exaggerated claims or hiding important information from your buyer.

2. Actively listening: Listen carefully to your buyer's needs and concerns and demonstrate that you understand and empathize.

3. Providing value: Offer solutions that meet your buyer's specific needs.

4. Establishing credibility: Do so by sharing success stories, industry expertise, or providing references from other satisfied customers.

5. Following up: After the sale, follow up with your new customer to ensure their satisfaction and address any issues or concerns. This helps build a long-term relationship, shows the buyer that you care about their experience, and makes closing the sale much easier on their next purchase.

Don't focus too much on the features and benefits of your products or services, rather than on the needs and wants of the buyer. While it is important to communicate the value of what you are offering, it is equally important to tailor your proposal to their unique situation using their language. Remember: people buy for their own reasons, not yours.

Have a great selling month!





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Case.net accessibility brings questions about case closures

This summer will bring a major change to Case.net, as you may know. The Missouri Supreme Court is planning on July 1 to initiate Remote Public Access. All of you will be able, for the first time, to “click through” on case docket entries and see the pleadings.

No longer will you need to go to the courthouse (or email a friendly attorney) to send you copies of pleadings. And those of us who are lawyers are working hard to keep our brain engaged in terms of what must be redacted from case documents we file.

But, behind the scenes, a troubling practice continues to rise to the surface in regard to Case.net. And now it's time for you to help protect your right to access court cases online.

You already probably know how to go to Case.net and to type in a case number or a name and, as a result, locate a list of potential cases that will satisfy your search. You are able to do that because the Missouri Constitution guarantees that “all trials upon the merits shall be conducted in open court ...” and, Missouri statutes guarantee that “the sitting of every court shall be public”

But it probably won't surprise journalists to know there are exceptions to every rule. Almost every case involving a juvenile is conducted in a closed courtroom and case records regarding such matters are not open to the public. There are other cases where proceedings may be closed, but Missouri court rules require a showing in an open courtroom that there are “compelling circumstances” – one often-cited case in Missouri held that in making a determination whether to close a proceeding, the “court must explain why closure or sealing is necessary and why less restrictive alternatives are not appropriate”

Recently, Eugene Volokh, a professor at University of California at Los Angeles and frequent blogger/

“It would be beneficial for the court rules to set out a standard for when cases are ‘closed’ to public review.”

columnist on the subject of legal and political issues, discovered that a case in which he had provided an affidavit was not available on Case.net. He hired attorney Mark Sableman, from St. Louis, to litigate the unsealing of that case and, ultimately, a Missouri appellate court upheld the refusal of the trial court to make that case open to the public.

Mark and I are members of the Missouri Press-Bar Commission, a group operating under the auspices of the Missouri Bar, which has as its purpose to enhance communication between the media and the judiciary (and, of course, with lawyers in general). Included in its mission is to strengthen First Amendment access to courts while also strengthening Sixth Amendment rights, including the rights of criminal defendants. This includes the rights to a public trial. And it inherently includes the right of the public to access court records.

After comparing notes about cases we have come across that were not publicly available on Case.net, we concluded that it would be beneficial for the court rules to set out a standard for when cases are “closed” to public review – under the terms of Case.net, that means cases where the “security level” is so high that

the case totally disappears. In such cases, you cannot get a case number by searching the Party Index and, if you happen to know the case number, a search of the Index for that case number generates no result. The case has literally disappeared.

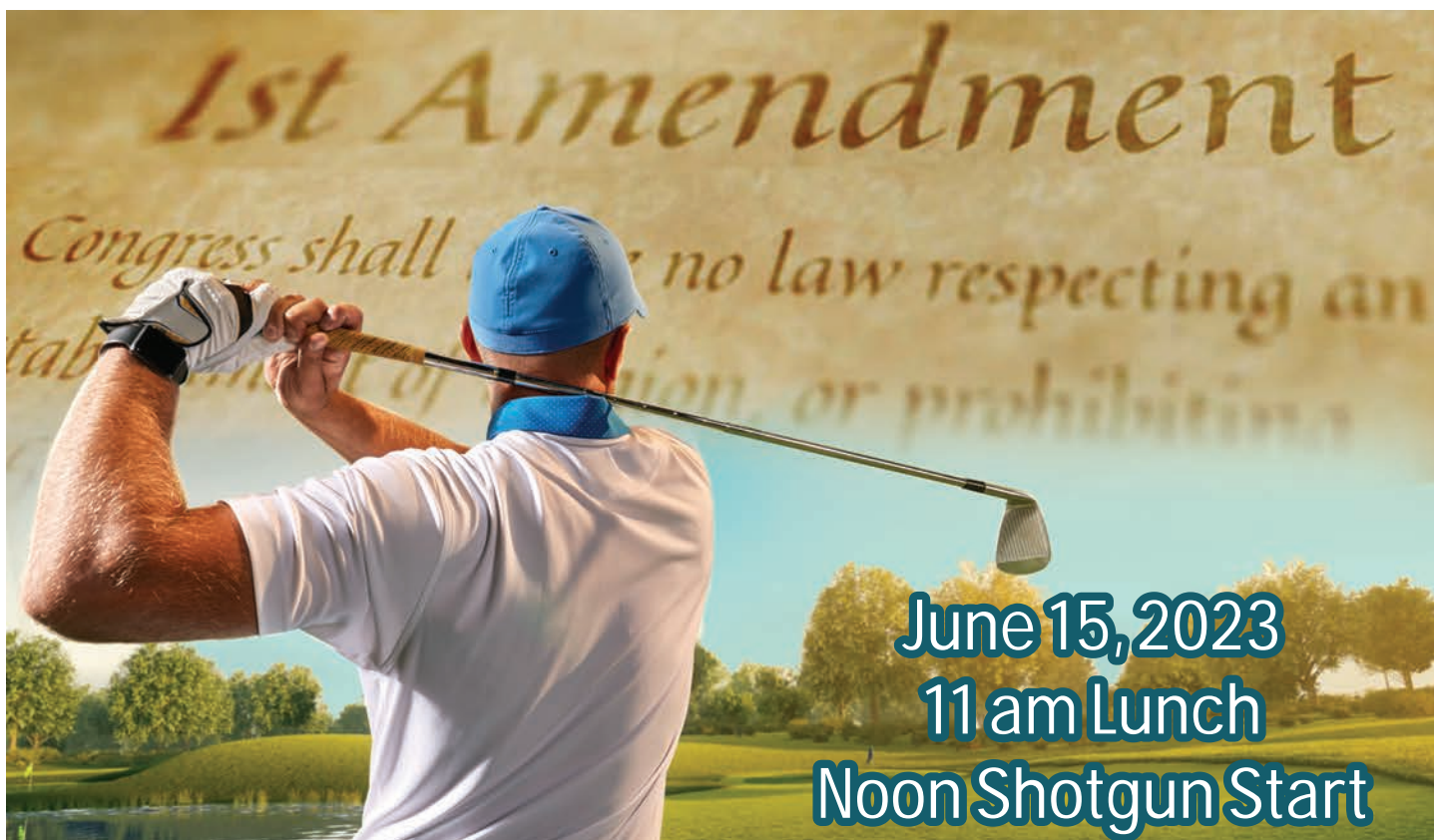
Mark, attorney for the Missouri Broadcasters Association, and I, on Missouri Press' behalf, have written to the Clerk of the Missouri Supreme Court, asking that it look into this situation. We believe a standard should be set as to when such a disappearing act is permitted. This would involve amending an existing Missouri Supreme Court Rule to provide the following: a) a public hearing would be required where there would have to be “compelling circumstances” justifying the closing (embarrassment of the parties wouldn't qualify); b) detailed court findings would be required in the public court file; and c) closure would be limited based on the circumstances -- not every part of the file could be closed. The public would have a right to seek reconsideration of this Court order one year after it was entered.

The Supreme Court will take time as it considers making this rule change. In the meantime, if you become aware of a similar case, let us know. We may update our information to the Supreme Court as they ponder this request.

The thing that seemed most offensive to us as we considered the cases we knew that were closed – some of them were simply publicly-owned businesses who didn't want the public to know they were fighting or the outcome of the fight. What justification is there for that?



Jean Maneke,
is MPA's Legal Hotline attorney.
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jmaneke@manekelaw.com.



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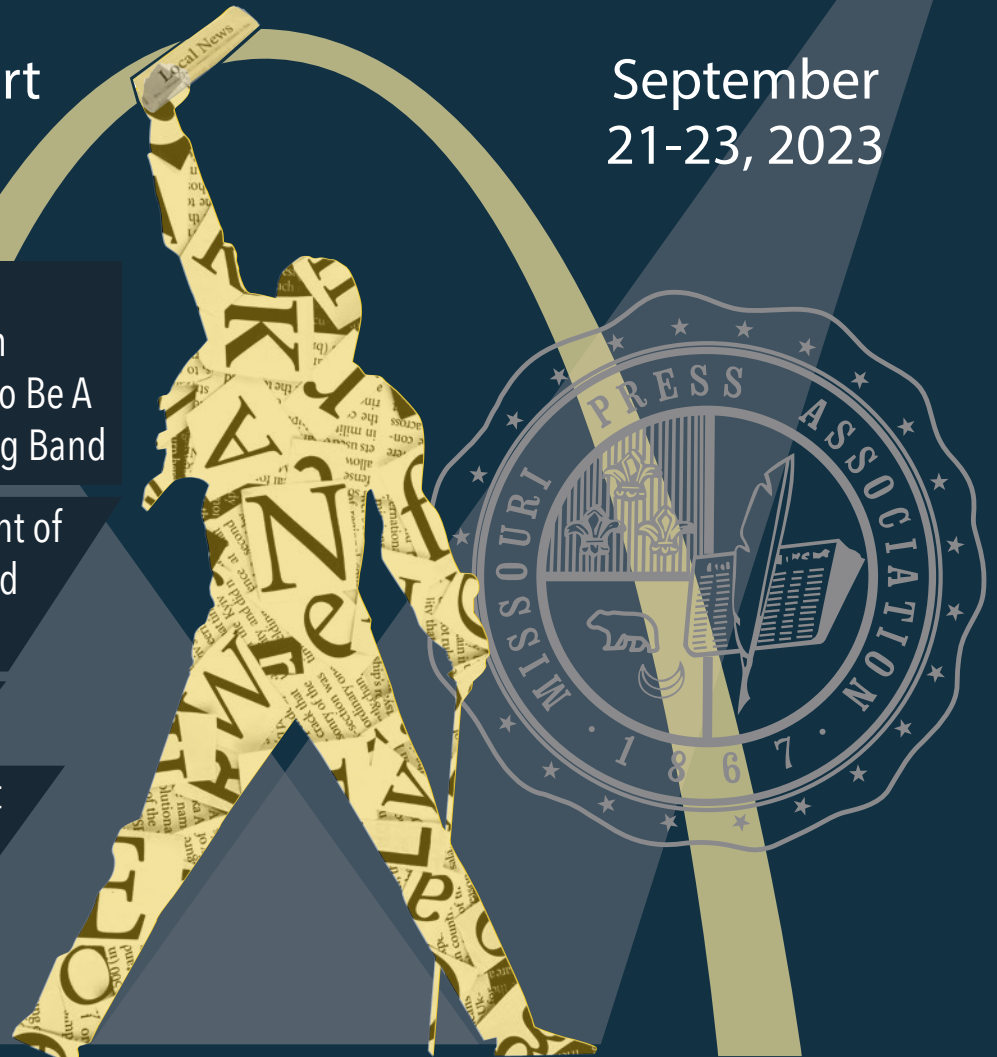
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