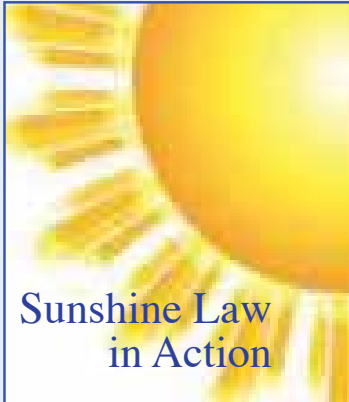


January 2012

Missouri Press NEWS



Sunshine Law in Action

Missouri's legislative districts redrawn by judges in secret, unannounced meetings. Newspapers react. **3 & 16**



Legislative Reception, Day at the Capitol will be Feb. 8-9, watch for details.

Regular Features

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Phil Conger
Bethany Republican-Clipper
2012 President, Missouri Press Association

Delivering papers will be a challenge

We'll work this year to tighten up the Sunshine Law

I am looking forward to serving the Missouri Press Association this year. Kathy and I are anticipating renewing our friendship with our fellow newspaper folks from across the state and with the great staff that we have at the MPA office in Columbia.

I know that we will have a lot of challenges during 2012. One of our biggest concerns will be the implosion of the United States Postal Service. I recall that when I first began taking papers to the post office, we were greeted at the back door by a large staff of eager postal workers who helped us unload the van. Now you could fire a cannon in the post office and not rouse anyone.

As more post offices and sorting centers close, we will have to develop new ways of getting our publications to our subscribers. We probably will have to travel to more post offices to make sure that we get our papers in the hands of our readers on a timely basis. And those of you who have not already done so may want to look into electronic delivery of your newspaper.

I want to remind everyone that our postal consultant, Ron Cunningham, is just a phone or — sorry post office — an e-mail away to answer your questions about delivery issues. Ron has helped our newspaper on a number of issues over the years.

You will be hearing a lot during the coming months about the Sunshine Law. We have already witnessed the blatant disregard for open meetings during the recent House and Senate reapportionment process. The MPA staff, with the assistance of our legal hotline attorney, Jean Maneke, will be working on legislation to tighten up the Sunshine Law.

At every occasion we need to press on our city councils, our school boards and other public bodies the importance of keeping their meetings and records open to the public.

I hope that more newspapers will begin sending PDFs to the Legal Notice Website. We are constantly under attack

by attorneys and governmental officials who believe that they can meet their legal obligations to inform the public through their own websites.

Missouri newspapers do a credible job of keeping our readers informed about trustee sales, court hearings, upcoming elections, property sales and the myriad of other notices that appear

in our newspapers. If all MPA newspapers would place their pages on the Legal Notice Website, we would close the argument that our publications remain the best place to keep the electorate informed.

I thank President Joe and Phyllis May and the MPA staff for a memorable convention in Branson. Our board will be working with Doug Crews and the

other folks at the MPA office on making the convention on Sept. 20-22 in Columbia another successful event.

Kathy and I usually start off the year by attending the Northwest Missouri Press Association's January convention in balmy St. Joseph. But that convention has been moved to a more hospitable June (time and details to be announced). In the meantime, we hope to see all of you at the MPA/AP Day at the Capitol in February.

Here's wishing you and your family a happy and prosperous 2012!



Phil Conger
Bethany Republican-Clipper
MPA President

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Redistricting secrecy baffles citizenry

This editorial appeared in the *St. Joseph News-Press* before the recent unveiling of Missouri's new legislative districts

It's times like this when the average citizen must wonder, "What exactly is so sensitive about the public's business that it cannot be discussed in public?"

The question arises now because a panel of six judges working to redraw boundary lines for Missouri legislative districts has decided it will deliberate in secret.

... Nothing in state law compels this group of prominent jurists, all presumably civic-minded officeholders, to meet in secret. No in-depth explanation is offered, either.

"The commission has taken the posi-

tion that we are not going to operate in public session," said the chair, Judge Lisa White Hardwick of the Western District Court of Appeals. "Our job is to produce two maps, and that is what we are doing at this point."

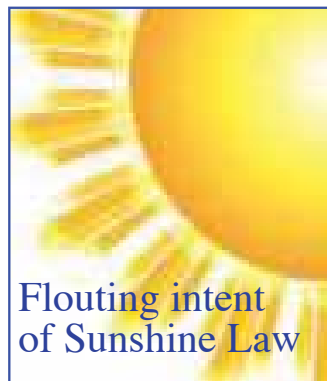
The panel did accept public testimony in a session in Jefferson City. But Missouri Solicitor General Jim Layton, who serves as the judges' legal adviser, said that's as far as the public will be brought into this process that ultimately will determine which citizens will be grouped together for purposes of choosing representatives.

This judgment turns on Mr. Layton's determination that, no matter what the Missouri Sunshine Law might intend,

the state constitution allows redistricting commissions to hold private "executive meetings" as frequently as they choose. To that point, he would not say when or how often the panel has met.

We know political disagreements make the work of the commission difficult. Republicans, who dominate in the legislature, prefer the status quo and Democrats would like to see bigger changes in district boundaries.

What we don't know is why these disagreements cannot be aired in public — for days on end if that is what it takes for the commission to reach reasonable compromises and report out its recommendations.



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- MDC 75th focus: healthy forests
- Turkey hunting clinics for spring turkey season
- Trumpeter swans visit Missouri
- MDC has help for nuisance wildlife problems
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Phil Conger is 2012 MPA President

Publisher's grandfather moved to Bethany in 1927

*Republican-Clipper
a partner with
other publications
in printing plant
in Iowa.*

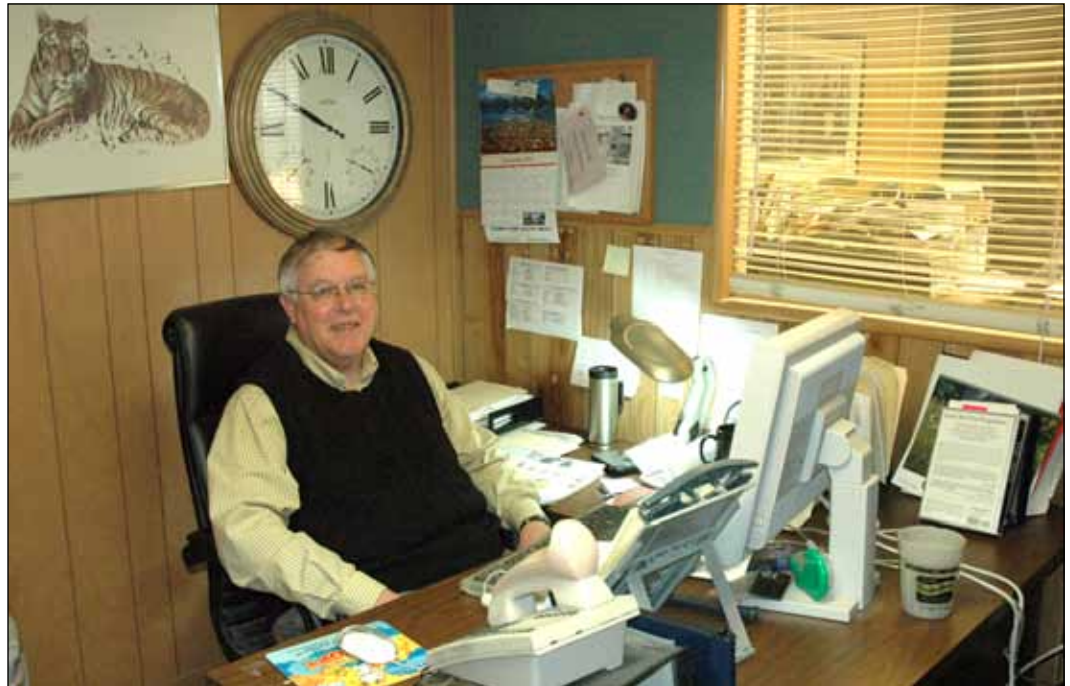
Some newspaper readers in Harrison County may want their headlines on iPads or Blackberries, but not all of them. They do, however, want their news when they want it.

Missouri Press Association's new president, Phil Conger, can testify to that. He's the publisher and editor of the *Bethany Republican-Clipper*.

"We do a big business in counter sales, and they need to be there right at noon," Conger said during a Dec. 1 interview in his office. "They get mad at you if you're not there."

About 800 of the 2,850 *Clippers* printed each Wednesday morning are sold through three machines and seven retail counters in Bethany and one each in Eagleville and Ridgeway. The retailers get a nickel for each paper sold.

Conger, 66, isn't the first in his family to publish the *Clipper*, but he is the first to be President of MPA. He was elected at the association's Convention in Branson in September, and he succeeded Joe May, publisher of *The Mexico Ledger*, on Jan. 1. Erwin "Skipper"



Phil Conger, MPA's new president, sits in his office in the *Republican-Clipper* building just off the downtown square in Bethany. Conger is the third generation of his family to publish the Harrison County-seat newspaper. He's the first from his family to be president of MPA.

Conger published the *Unionville Republican* for many years before moving to Bethany in 1927 to buy the *Republican-Clipper*. His son, Vincent Conger, took over when Erwin died in 1951.

Phil Conger told about succeeding Vincent.

"My father passed away on Memorial Weekend, 1978," he wrote. "(Printing plant partner) Jim Avey and

I were in Ottawa, Kan., learning how to run a Harris press, the same model that we had just installed at our printing plant, when we got the call that he had suffered a heart attack. We raced up I-35, but he had already passed away by the time we reached Bethany.

"Dad had been ill for a couple of years so I had been doing some of his work for quite some time. But I officially became the publisher at his death.

"He passed away on a Friday, and my mother, Bedonna, and Kathy



Kathy Conger, advertising manager for the *Republican-Clipper* and first lady of MPA in 2012, shows the front page of the weekly edition in the newspaper office. In the top center of the photo is the newspaper's clipper ship "mascot."

and I and my brother had to make funeral arrangements for Tuesday and then put out the paper on Wednesday. Pretty tough week, to say the least.

"Ironically my grandfather died on a Friday of Memorial Weekend in the early 1950s, and so did my mother in 1989."

Conger still works full time. "I don't have any choice," he said with an edge of frustration in his voice. "Ironically, we've got several J School graduates from Bethany, but they've all moved away."

Phil Conger, a self-described "news hawk in every form," and his wife, Kathy — the *Clipper's* ad department — get help from two full-timers and two part-timers.

The *Clipper* serves five school districts and a handful of villages in Harrison County, which lies just left of center in the top tier of Missouri coun-



Phil Conger takes pride in showing off these two pieces of memorabilia he's collected. On the back of the newspaper holder on the right is a simple block-letter inscription, "WIFE'S SIDE."

ties. Bethany clings to the left shoulder of I-35, midway between Kansas City, 100 miles south, and Des Moines to the north.

The *Clipper* building, owned by the newspaper since 1968, sits just off the square a block from the courthouse in the center of downtown.

Seven correspondents "in towns from wide spots in the road to 400-500 people" email to the paper news about overnight guests and church dinners.

South Harrison School District in Bethany is the only one in the county that has a football team. Coaches in the other four districts email their basketball game information to the *Clipper*.

"I get out on Friday nights with my camera and get pictures," Conger said.

The *Clipper* and four Iowa newspapers opened Printcraft Inc., a central plant, in Lamoni, Iowa, in 1978. It prints the partners' papers, commercial jobs and other publications.

The *Clipper* and the *Caldwell County News* out of Hamilton are partners in the "Pony Express" shopper. Its 9,000 copies are printed on Monday mornings.

As a result of the sparse population

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'I think how to make money on the Internet is going to be our big challenge. Training and education are going to be important in meeting that challenge.'

of northern Missouri and Bethany's size and location, its retailers thrive by serving an extensive area.

"We're second in the state after Branson in 'pull factor,'" Conger said. He explained pull factor as the amount of retail revenue generated relative to population. Sometimes the pull factor of Bethany, population around 3,100, tops that of Branson, population 10,500, he said.

Farming and retail sustain the local economy, and the sales taxes they generate "really drive our city," he said.

"Farming is the main thing, and farmers are doing well." Retailers have been hurt by WalMart, Conger said, "but we still have a nice men's clothing store on the square."

Pettijohn Auto Center adds to the retail traffic, serving a wide area with an array of makes and models.

During the interview for this story, Kathy Conger returned to the *Clipper* office from a round of morning sales calls. "They're running some Christmas promotions," she said, happy with her results.



The Congers are graduates of the University of Missouri. License plates on their vehicle display fierce loyalty to MU sports teams. (Phil Conger made this photograph.)

Sales calls take her to small towns around Harrison County and to Leon and Lamoni in Iowa.

Conger believes that in spite of the

Kathy and Phil Conger stand outside the front of the *Republican-Clipper* office in Bethany. The painting on the sidewalk is a fund-raiser of a Bethany High School group.

digital news and online shopping provided by the Internet, serving local readers and advertisers will keep community newspapers going. But they must respond to the challenges and opportunities.

"I don't agree that newspapers are going to be dead in 10 years," he said. "I think how to make money on the Internet is going to be our big challenge. Training and education are going to be important in meeting that challenge."

The *Clipper* has a digital edition and uses Twitter and Facebook to send snippets of stories to readers.

About 100 readers subscribe to the online edition, a few of them are in Bethany. "They just like to see all of the photographs in color," Conger said.

As President of MPA, Conger wants to do what he can to keep the regional press associations strong. He is one of four members of his family who have served as president of the Northwest Missouri Press Association: His grandfather Erwin in 1935, his father Vincent in 1949, Phil in 1974 and Kathy in 1992.

Kathy continues to serve Northwest Press as its secretary, a position she'll likely hold until she's had enough.

Like many Missouri counties, Harrison has only one newspaper, the *Republican-Clipper*. When Erwin Conger moved to Bethany in 1927 and bought the *Republican*, he had competition in town from three or four newspapers, including the *Clipper*.

"My grandfather bought out one of the publishers twice," Conger said. Erwin failed to include a non-compete agreement in the first transaction. "That's what mother told me."

New MPA president grew up working in father's back shop

Daughter is design director for Albuquerque Journal

Phil Conger, MPA's 2012 President, began sweeping floors, cleaning the saw cage and putting hand-set type back in the cases at his father's newspaper, the *Bethany Republican-Clipper*, when he was in high school.

He received a degree from the Missouri School of Journalism in 1968 and returned to the *Clipper* as its editor, writing most of the front-page news, sports articles and editorials.

In 1969 he married Kathy Stroup of Fredericktown. They had met after Kathy transferred to MU from Mineral Area College. Her degree is in home economics. Kathy joined her husband at the newspaper, where she is now the advertising manager.

The day after returning to Bethany from their honeymoon, Phil went back to work at the *Clipper*.

The press broke down, not an uncommon occurrence, and Phil didn't return home for two days, he said. His mother, who also worked at the newspaper, called Kathy at 4 a.m. and asked her to get dressed so she could deliver papers to the post offices around the county.

That was Kathy's introduction to the newspaper business, Conger said.

The Congers' daughter, Rachel, grew up working in the *Clipper's* newsroom, mailroom and darkroom. She attended the Missouri School of Journalism and now is the design director for the *Albuquerque Journal* in New Mexico.

Phil's brother, Michael, another graduate of the J School, attended law school at UMKC. He practices on the Plaza in Kansas City. His son, Max, is a student in the School of Journalism.

About 10 years ago, at the request of the late historian and retired professor Dr. William Taft, Conger wrote a brief autobiography. Much of this material



Phil and Kathy Conger pose in the office of the *Republican-Clipper* with their two full-time employees. At back left is Angela Ragan who manages the paper's website. At right is Carla Hillyard, who keeps the books, manages circulation and the paper's country correspondents and helps Kathy with advertising. Phil writes the news; Kathy manages the advertising.



Phil Conger, center, and other members of the Bethany Rotary Club listen as Doug Crews, executive director of the Missouri Press Association, talks about Missouri's newspaper history at the Dec. 1 Rotary luncheon meeting. The HyVee grocery store in Trenton caters the weekly Rotary lunch in the Bethany Community Center. Kathy Conger is out of the photo to the right.

came from that piece. It also included this paragraph:

"Over the years, there has been a sufficient number of murder trials, bank robberies, major floods, blizzards and other calamities to make life interesting for the newspaper editor.

"But just as fulfilling have been the high school football and basketball games, the occasional trips to state playoffs, the accomplishments of students, the opening of new businesses, and the everyday comings and goings

of the community that have been an important part of the newspaper during the past quarter of a century."

The Congers are active in the Rotary Club and Chamber of Commerce. He's on the Bethany Library Board and is a member of the Harrison County Genealogy Society and the Harrison County Historical Society.

Conger was elected in September to be the Missouri Press Association's 141st President. He took office Jan. 1.

David Bradley elected chairman of University Board of Curators

David Bradley, publisher of the *St. Joseph News-Press*, has been elected to be the next chairman of the University of Missouri System Board of Curators.

Gov. Jay Nixon appointed Bradley to the board in 2009. His term will expire Jan. 1, 2015.

Bradley was elected chairman during a meeting of the board on Dec. 9 in St. Louis. He will service as chairman of the board of curators for one year.

He succeeds Warren K. Erdman, whose term as chairman included the loss of System President Gary Forsee, who resigned to care for his ailing wife; the hiring of a new basketball coach, the move from the Big 12 Conference to the Southeastern Conference and the hiring of a new system president.

Bradley was president of the Missouri Press Association in 2007.

Letter

Reader appreciates Northeast News in K.C.

To the editor of *The Northeast News*, Kansas City:

In a day and time when true "journalism" is nothing but a shadow of its former self, I want to commend *The Northeast News* and their staff for raising the bar and setting the standard for excellence in "community journalism."

Every week, I marvel at the depth of reporting, the variety of stories and the excellence in editorial content provided by "my" paper, especially considering the size of *The Northeast News* staff. Other publications, large and small, throughout the Kansas City area should take notice.

My hat's off to Michael Bushnell, Christine Adams, Leslie Collins and the entire *Northeast News* family.

At a time when many throughout the city question the relevance of Kansas City's Historic Northeast, you embrace it and bring it to the forefront every week!

John Baccala

Kansas City, Mo.



Missouri Press Foundation

These individuals and organizations made recent contributions to Missouri Press Foundation. Donations to the Foundation are wonderful tributes to Missouri newspaper people, and they make excellent year-end gifts to programs that support and advance the newspaper industry.

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In Memory of Les Simpson

The Charles Hedberg Family

In Memory of Myrtle Taft and Dr. William H. Taft

Joe and Kathy Snyder, San Marcos, Texas

Dave Berry, Bolivar

In Memory of James C. Kirkpatrick

Doris H. Kirkpatrick, Warrensburg



'Trustees' video presented to area high schools

The *Washington Missourian* recently donated copies of the Emmy-winning program "Trustees for the Public: 200 Years of Missouri Newspapers" to high schools in the area. A personal presentation was made at Washington High School. Standing, from left, are Dawn Kitchell from *The Missourian* and Missouri Press Association and Foundation, which produced the video, and William Miller Sr., editor and publisher of *The Missourian*. Seated, from left, are Jennifer Wirthwein, gifted and language arts teacher at Washington Middle School, and Ann Loesing, Washington High School library media specialist. Wirthwein worked with Kitchell to write a teacher's guide to go along with the video. (*Washington Missourian* photo)

Louisiana Press-Journal joins 'Free to Tweet' First Amendment project

Lakeway Publishers, Inc., the parent company of the *Louisiana Press-Journal* and a number of other Missouri newspapers, joined the "Free to Tweet" project in December to celebrate the First Amendment.

Lakeway provided a \$300 prize to encourage local students to participate in the national observance and competition, which began Dec. 15 — Bill of Rights Day — and ended Dec. 31.

Free to Tweet was a project of 1 for All, a national program to build understanding and support for First Amendment freedoms. The James S. and James L. Knight Foundation provided 22 \$5,000 scholarships for the Free to Tweet competition.

The contest encouraged students to post their thoughts and videos about the First Amendment on social media.

To help local students participate, the *Press-Journal* invited them to use its Your News web page to post their comments.

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Scrapbook

• **Union** — The Missouri School of Journalism has reached an articulation agreement with East Central College that will allow ECC students to transfer seamlessly to the J School.

The agreement states that ECC students who earn an associate of arts in journalism degree are guaranteed that MU will accept their credits. ECC offers three journalism courses: introduction to journalism, news writing, and diversity.

• **Albany** — *The Ledger* now has an online edition that is available for \$22 per year.

• **Chillicothe** — About 70 vendors participated in this year's *Constitution-Tribune* Holiday Bazaar held in the Chillicothe High School gym and commons area after the Holiday Parade on Nov. 19.

The *C-T* kicked off its 28th annual Food for the Needy drive on Nov. 22 with the goal of collecting \$10,000 in cash and food items to help brighten the holiday season for area families.

• **Dexter** — Tom Love of Dexter won the *Daily Statesman* Football Challenge and promptly donated the 32-inch television set he won to the Stoddard County Children's Home.

• **St. Louis** — Longtime *Post-Dispatch* cartoonist Amadee Wohlschlaeger observed his 100th birthday anniversary on Dec. 3 at the Mari de Villa Retirement Community in Town and Country.

Among the guests were Cardinals Baseball Hall of Famer Red Schoendienst, *Post-Dispatch* cartoonist Dan Martin, former *Post-Dispatch* sports writer Dave Dorr and *Post-Dispatch* sports writer Rick Hummel.

• **Moberly** — *Monitor-Index* publisher Bob Cunningham presented a \$350 donation from the newspaper to the Run for Her Life campaign. The 5K run raises funds to help women in the community get mammograms.

The money was a percentage of the advertising proceeds from the paper's 2011 Breast Cancer Awareness edition.

• **Lebanon** — Santa and Mrs. Claus visited with children Nov. 25 at the *Lebanon Daily Record* office to kick off the holiday shopping season in downtown Lebanon.

• **Ste. Genevieve** — For more than two decades the *Ste. Genevieve Herald* has contributed \$1 of each new subscription in December to the "Read the Herald and Help Feed the Needy" campaign.

From renewed subscriptions, 50 cents is given to the East Missouri Action Agency, which provides various services to county residents.

• **St. Louis** — Each of the five departments at the *St. Louis American* decorated its own Christmas tree. The editorial staff hung reporter's notebooks all over its tree.

Purple peacock feathers adorned the tree in the lobby.

• **Cameron** — More than 500 pounds of food and \$300 in cash were donated to the Cameron Food Pantry from the food drive conducted by Cameron Newspapers on Nov. 18. Donations were collected at the holiday tree lighting ceremony at a local park.

• **Belle** — Tri-County Newspapers sponsored a Thanksgiving coupon pro-

motion in the Nov. 23 editions of the *Belle Banner* and the *Bland Courier*.

To be eligible to win free turkeys or packages of bacon, residents had to clip coupons from the papers and deposit them in boxes at the participating businesses.

• **Joplin** — *The Globe* has begun carrying an internet crime mapping service on its website, joplinglobe.com, that derives information from the records of local law enforcement agencies.

The Colorado-based internet service Crime Reports, which updates information daily, can be accessed on the Crime & Courts page of the website.

• **Maryville** — Jefferson Elementary in Maryville celebrated Children's Book Week in November with the theme "In the News." *Nodaway News Leader* publisher Kay Wilson was the guest speaker for the final event, a sleepover in the library.

Wilson read a book to the group and told about the beginning of her weekly paper. During the evening, the pupils created their own newspaper, *Library Sleepover News*, that chronicled the week's events.

• **Washington** — Managing editor Ed Pruneau was recognized for 35 years of service to the *Washington Missourian* during the annual employee recognition party on Nov. 17.

Recognized for 30 years of service were Steve Luecke of the sheetfed printing department, Sharon Pruessner, graphic artist; and Brenda Klekamp, composition supervisor.

• **Nevada** — Rusty Murry, a reporter for the *Nevada Daily Mail*, has received the Missouri Police Chiefs Association Mary Phelan Media Award. Awards



Purple peacock feathers adorn this Christmas tree at the *St. Louis American*. (St. Louis American photo)

were presented Dec. 8 at the MPCA Awards Banquet in Jefferson City.

MPCA presents its Media Award to those employed in the media “who stand out in their conduct and service to the public in reporting information that is both accurate and fair.”

In its citation, the MPCA said Murry “consistently reports the facts of every significant event in a professional manner. His commitment to integrity and fairness is exemplary.”

Last spring Murry participated in the first Nevada Citizen’s Police Academy and wrote a news article on each class. Since then he has been on a ride-along with officers and participated in a DWI

Checkpoint.

• **Hannibal** — The *Courier-Post* partnered with Douglass Community Services for a Holiday Hope program to match donors with needy families and elderly singles and couples.

Donors could give cash or buy gifts for those in the program.

• **Marble Hill** — The *Banner Press* joined with the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services to collect items for the elderly. Each week the paper published a list of families and their needs.

The Christmas for the Elderly pro-

gram sought donations of cleaning supplies, warm clothing, personal items, pet food and supplies, cookies and holiday decorations.

Common items requested by those in the program were warm socks, small heaters and throws to help them keep warm.

• **Platte City** — The *Landmark* held its annual Christmas open house 4-8 p.m. Dec. 9 at the Comfort Inn.

Residents were invited to enjoy refreshments, meet with staff members and sign up for door prizes.

• **Troy** — The *Lincoln County Jour-*

Sources and Resources for Missouri Newspapers



Missouri State Medical Association

For information about health care, contact:

Lizabeth Fleenor
 Director of Communications
 Managing Editor, Missouri Medicine
 800-869-6762
 lfleenor@msma.org • www.msma.org

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nal on Nov. 28 launched its “entirely new website, created from scratch.”

Publisher Kathy Colbert said the new site “streamlines navigation, loads faster and does a better job of highlighting all that the website has to offer.”

- **Macon** — The *Chronicle-Herald* now has a mobile website — m.maconch.com — with news updates, sports and entertainment. New features will be added, including multimedia, publisher Pat Quinley said in a story about the site.

- **Piedmont** — The *Wayne County Journal-Banner* urged holiday shoppers to keep their dollars at home to help the local economy. Its “Come Home for Christmas” promotion pointed out that shopping at home helps create jobs, funds city services through sales taxes and contributes to community development.

The social, shopping and snacking event encouraged people to go from business to business checking decorations, sampling treats, entering drawings and shopping for Christmas items.

The paper encouraged people to visit all of the local merchants, not just those participating in the promotion.

- **Hopkins** — The *Journal* held an open house during regular business hours on Dec. 15. It invited readers to stop in for refreshments and sign up for drawings.

- **Thayer** — The *South Missourian News* and other papers of Areawide Media, which is owned by Rust Communications, now have up to eight pages of color in each edition.

Rust has partnered with Community Publishers of Harrison, Ark., in a new venture, Ozark Printing LLC. With a new building in Harrison and upgraded equipment, Ozark Printing provides color in the publications of Areawide Media and eight other Rust-owned newspapers and three Community Publishers-owned newspapers in the northern Arkansas and southern Missouri area.



Pregame party in Hearnese Fieldhouse

Kathy and Phil Conger of *The Republican-Clipper* in Bethany visit with retired publisher David “Scoop” Peery at the Nov. 19 pregame tailgate party in the Hearnese Center in Columbia. Missouri Press members and their guests attended the football game versus Texas Tech after the party. Phil Conger is the 2012 President of Missouri Press Association. Peery, of Pleasant Hope, published the *Smithville Lake Herald* before retiring.

Lying would have been policy

Editorial

Open-government groups
pressure congressmen
to turn back effort
to give agencies
authority to deny
existence of records

THE JOPLIN GLOBE

Members of the public, even though they probably didn’t realize it, won a big victory (in November) when the U.S. Department of Justice had second thoughts about telling outright lies.

A proposed Freedom of Information Act measure from the DOJ would have allowed federal agencies to tell requesters of certain law enforcement or national security records that the information did not exist — even if it did.

After several members of Congress balked at this blatant effort to sidestep transparency, the DOJ withdrew the measure.

Sen. Charles Grassley, R-Iowa, is

among those we’re thanking today.

“The Justice Department decided that misleading the American people would be wrong, and made the right decision to pull the proposed legislation,” Grassley said in a press release.

The current system allowed under the FOIA isn’t a lot better. It lets agencies — such as the FBI — tell those requesting information that they can neither confirm nor deny the existence of records. But, at least it doesn’t provide for scuttling the request. Had this revision occurred, the Department of Justice could have responded as if the records never existed.

Open-government groups are also to thank for applying the pressure in September when this measure was first announced. The Freedom of Information Act was enacted in 1966 to give the American public greater access to the federal government’s records. The Electronic Freedom of Information Act Amendment of 1996 then expanded the scope and included electronic records as well.

But, nowhere in the act does it say that it’s OK to pretend like the records never existed.

Mapping panel continues secrecy

Meetings to draw new Senate districts not announced as required by Sunshine Law

By RUDI KELLER / *Columbia Tribune*
A new state Senate apportionment map designed to allay constitutional concerns has stirred up new controversies for the Appellate Apportionment Commission.

On (Dec. 9), the commission announced it had withdrawn the map it filed Nov. 30 in favor of a new plan for the 34 Senate districts. The revised map was signed by four of the commission's six members. The changes, the news release said, were designed to allay concerns about counties being split among multiple districts.

The meeting was not posted nor was it open, as required by the Open Meetings and Records Law for most state boards and commissions. And some question whether the commission had the authority, once it had submitted a map, to revise it.

"What is their statutory or constitutional authority for doing that?" state Rep. Chris Kelly, D-Columbia, said after hearing the new map had been submitted. Kelly said he believes the commission should have done its work in open, posted meetings.

"It is just amazing disregard for the law," he said.

The new plan was submitted before the constitutional deadline, set for (Dec. 16), so the commission was within its discretion to make changes, said Judge Lisa White Hardwick of the Western District Court of Appeals and chair of the commission. She referred other questions to the commission's legal adviser, Assistant Attorney General James Layton.

Nanci Gonder, spokeswoman for Attorney General Chris Koster, said (Dec. 12) the office would have no comment "due to the potential for litigation related to this issue." Layton has said a provision allowing for "executive" sessions of the reapportionment commission provided a blanket exemption from the Sunshine Law.

The reapportionment task fell to the panel of judges after a bipartisan Senate Apportionment Commission could not

agree on a plan. The appellate commission also redrew lines for the 163 Missouri House districts.

The bipartisan commissions that met this summer posted their meetings, said Yancy Williams of Columbia, a Republican member of the Senate Apportionment Commission. Williams is on the staff of Sen. Kurt Schaefer, R-Columbia.

"I am deeply concerned that the process started out as a public process and it turned into a process that was conducted behind closed doors in a veil of darkness," Williams said.

Jean Maneke, an attorney for the Missouri Press Association, said she has no doubt the commission should have operated in public, with posted meetings. The Sunshine Law applies to public bodies created by statute or the constitution for legislative or administrative purposes, including judicial bodies that meet in an administrative capacity.

The commission is creating the for-

mat for the legislative branch, an administrative function, Maneke said. "It is clearly an entity created by the constitution, and they are obligated to follow the Sunshine Law."

A longtime court critic, James Harris of Better Courts for Missouri, said the actions are "alarming. There are several things I am concerned about. The one branch that shouldn't operate in secrecy is the courts."

The issue of split counties also could create legal problems for the map. An ideal Senate district should have 176,145 people. According to the Missouri Constitution, counties with fewer than that number are not supposed to be split. If the population is more than that amount, the remainder after a district is drawn is not supposed to be split again unless it is enough for another full district.

The new map fixed three of those splits but created a new one in Lafayette County.

Obituaries

Louisiana

James Gierke

James "Jim" Alan Gierke, 64, Sunrise Beach, formerly of Louisiana, died, Dec. 20, 2011, in Fayetteville, Ark. of



Jim Gierke

a brain aneurysm suffered in October. Mr. Gierke was the former president and owner of the *Louisiana Press-Journal*, the *Bowling Green Times*, Press-Journal Printing, and weekly newspapers in Troy, Elsberry, Hermann, and New Haven. He was the founder of the *Lincoln County Journal* in Troy.

Mr. Gierke was a life-long resident of Louisiana until his retirement in 2002. He was a charter board member of the Missouri Press Foundation

and a board member of the Missouri Press Association. He was also a member of the board of directors of the *Columbia Missourian*, the Missouri School of Journalism's newspaper. He was preceded in death by his parents, Victor and Laura Gierke, and two sons, Jacob in 1989 and Christian in 2010.

He is survived by one son, his wife, Sue, and their three children; and two sisters.

Junction City, Kan.

William M. Hays

William M. Hays, 61, Junction City, Kan., a former editor in Independence and Marshall, died Nov. 3, 2011.

Mr. Hays was the city editor of the *Independence Examiner* from 1975-76 and managing editor of the *Marshall Democrat-News* from 1978 to 1981.

He also worked at the *Wichita Eagle*, *Pittsburg Morning Sun* and *Topeka Capital-Journal* in Kansas.

Mr. Hays leaves a son, a daughter and one grandchild.

On the Move

• **Stover** — The longtime editor of the *Morgan County Press*, Connie Viebrock, retired effective Dec. 31.

• **St. James** — Nickol Beckemeier has joined the *Leader-Journal* to write news and help local businesses with their advertising.



Nickol Beckemeier

A native of Maine, Beckemeier graduated in December 2010 from William Woods University in Fulton. She was married in June 2010 to Karl Beckemeier, a master's student at Missouri University of Science and Technology, Rolla.

• **Washington** — Nancy Sebastian is the new sponsorship coordinator for *The Missourian's* youth outreach program, *Missourian In Education*.

Sebastian will raise funds to support the literacy programs of the newspaper and will work closely with Dawn Kitchell, *The Missourian's* director of educational services.

Sebastian is retired from a 30-year teaching career in the Pattonville School District in St. Louis.

• **Levittown, Pa.** — Newspaper publisher Calkins Media has named Mark Contreras, a former Missouri newspaper executive, as its new CEO.

Contreras, a former executive with Pulitzer Inc. and an advertising director for *The Kansas City Star*, also is a former chair of the Newspaper Association of America and the American Press Institute.

Calkins Media, based in Levittown, is a private company that operates six papers in Pennsylvania, one each in Florida and New Jersey and the website phillyburbs.com. It also owns TV stations in Sarasota and Tallahassee, Fla.

• **Columbia** — Pam Johnson, 65, the first director of the Reynolds Journalism Institute at the Missouri School of Journalism, retired in November.

A 1969 MU graduate, Johnson began duties at RJL in 2004, four years before the center opened.

Johnson worked at *The Kansas City Star*, where her team earned a Pulitzer for coverage of the Hyatt skywalk disaster, then became managing editor at the *Phoenix Gazette* in Arizona.

She later was promoted to executive editor and senior vice president at *The Arizona Republic*, a larger sister paper.

Before joining RJL, Johnson served

on the faculty at the Poynter Institute. (*Columbia Daily Tribune*)

• **Independence** — Steve Curd, publisher of the *Examiner*, resigned effective Dec. 31 to pursue other interests.

Curd is the newly elected treasurer of MPA. He was publisher of the *Examiner* for five years.



Steve Curd



Joplin Globe photographers, from left, Roger Nomer, T. Rob Brown and B.W. Shepherd look at their work in a copy of "32 Minutes in May: The Joplin Tornado." The book, published by *The Globe*, features the photographers' work after the May 22 tornado. (*Joplin Globe* photo)

Joplin Globe project honored

Editor & Publisher award for 'Forever Bound'

The *Joplin Globe* has received an EPPY award for the August project "Forever Bound: The JHS Class of 2011" for Best News or Event Feature on a Website in the Under 250,000 Unique Monthly Visitors class.

Presented by *Editor & Publisher* magazine, the awards "honor the best media-affiliated websites across 43 diverse categories."

The project was a *Joplin Globe* print and online package covering the Joplin High School class of 2011, their graduation, and the stories of students in the wake of the May 22 tornado.

"The project was one we knew would be important to our community," said Carol Stark, the *Globe's* editor; "This was

a way to tell the story of this group of seniors who will be 'forever bound' by the tornado."

Stark and her staff also worked with a Joplin High School class of 2011 graduate on the project.

"We were especially pleased to have Sarah Sticklen, a JHS 2011 graduate and editor of the *Spyglass*, the Joplin High School newspaper, working on the project," said Stark. "My journalists and photographers put a lot of passion into documenting the story. Their work speaks for itself."

The Forever Bound project is found on the *Globe's* website at www.joplinglobeonline.com/tornado/.

Elementary students produce newspaper

(From a story by Rayma Bekebrock Davis, *Lamar Democrat* editor)

LIBERAL—What a delightful time it was for this editor to meet with Mrs. Linda Krueth's after school students. The youngsters from third to fifth grade produce a school newspaper, a project they began this school year, and so far they have had two editions full of stories about classes, individuals and student successes.

When they talk about their newspaper, their faces light up, and they have plenty to talk and write about. They were excited to know how *The Lamar Democrat* works.

...We began with the question, what is a journal?

They had the answers. Something to keep notes on...something to write a story in...

So, then, why is newspaper considered journalism?

"That's easy," one young reporter said, "You take notes and write a story."

The students have practiced taking notes and interviewing and writing stories; they even have an advice column.

...We discussed everything from how the paper is built from beginning to end; how we decide on what to print and how to choose letters to the editor. One was interested in the crosswords because she and her grandpa work them together every week. They wanted to know how to get a job in the newspaper and where to go to school. They wanted to know how many people work in the *Democrat* and how young a writer can begin.

One young writer said, "If you get

your feelings hurt easily, being an editor is probably not for you, right?"

That certainly is a good point.

...The discussion also included some history with names of famous Missouri journalists... We talked about Mark Twain. They knew he was an author, but did not know he was a newspaperman first.

When this writer/editor took their photo, there was a photo lesson concerning what should happen any time a photo is taken. They knew the photographer needs to get the names of the people in the photo correct. They didn't know the photographer also needs to match names to faces in the photo, but as they said, "That makes sense."



Answer

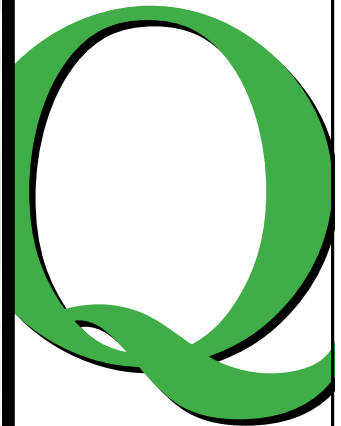
Public Notices.

Construction bid notices, published in a legally-qualified local newspaper, inform citizens how their tax money is being spent and inform construction contractors about public projects on which to bid.

Hardly a week passes without some small notice being printed in this newspaper. These notices, required by law, affect you and your family and friends.

They show how your government is being run, how much money is being spent and where. They keep you in touch with your government through this newspaper.

That's the whole idea.



Question

The County is planning a major construction project. How do you know?

This Newspaper Supports Your Right to Know

— Correction —

Lakeway Publishers Inc. owns *The Vandalia Leader*, in addition to newspapers in several other Missouri towns.

The story in the December issue of *Missouri Press News* about Lakeway's Jeff Fishman becoming the new president of the Tennessee Press Association left Vandalia off the list of towns in Missouri where Lakeway has newspapers.

Ron Schott is the general manager/ editor of *The Leader*.

Download ads like this one to promote the printing of Public Notices in newspapers. You can get the ads at <http://www.mopress.com/publicnotice.php>.

Parents reading newspapers biggest influence on young

'Reading Across Missouri' begins this month

The School District of Washington, Mo., recently commissioned a survey of patrons in the District to gauge their pulses on a bond issue heading to the ballot in April. One of the questions in the survey asked where they get their school news. Eighty-seven percent said their local newspaper, *The Missourian*.

I'm certain surveys across the state would find similar results — community newspapers are important to schools and families. Did you know that parents reading newspapers make the most significant impact on whether their children will be newspaper readers? That modeling ranks above all other factors in repeated studies on promoting reading habits in children.

That's always been one of the goals of Newspaper In Education — backpack sampling. We send newspapers to schools where they are used as the outstanding educational resource they are, then, they go home in backpacks. Mom and/or dad pick up that school copy and if they don't subscribe, they read the newspaper, modeling reading for their children. If they already do subscribe, it's a perfect segue into a discussion of what's inside that issue, a tremendous value in connecting families and communities.

Regardless of what news format today's youth will seek out as they age, it's important that they know what is inside a newspaper. And your community newspaper is key to future newspaper readership. You have their parents and grandparents reading — make sure

you pull those young eyes in as well.

Missouri Press has a terrific project available this month to help you pull in all eyes — but especially those important young eyes! This is the eighth year we've offered a serialized story through our Reading Across Missouri project — and it's FREE to your newspaper.



Dawn Kitchell is MPA's NIE director. Contact her at (636) 932-4301; dawn.kitchell@gmail.com.

1861-1865.

This story is like a good family movie — there's something in it for all ages. The dog, Chuck, will draw in and engage young readers. Chuck's humor will engage older readers. Each chapter in the story highlights a dog mascot that participated in, or witnessed, a fray or major battle in the Civil War, from St. Louis to Pennsylvania, concluding in Illinois with Fido, President Lincoln's beloved mutt.

The guidelines for the story are simple, you cannot put the story on your website unless it is password protected or you post a PDF-replica image of your print edition online. Publish the story in your print edition and drive readers to your website to access the teacher guide — which you may post there.

There are many places to make the story your own. In the promotional ad, you can add your logo and change

the location teachers access the teacher guide from our general site to your website. You can add your logo to the teacher guide cover, and even add a page into the guide about your newspaper. Add an inch to the story feature and recognize a sponsor or your own newspaper for providing the resource.

All of these materials are available now for you to access at www.mo-nie.com using download code readmo12. We'll post a feature story on author Chris Stuckenschneider there in early January.

And just as this story wraps up in March for most of you, we'll be providing a new series on gardening we're creating with Missouri Extension. By then, we'll all be ready for spring!

Happy New Year!

Extra papers taken lead to stealing charge

A Houston woman was cited for stealing under \$500 in November after allegedly taking newspapers from a machine outside the *Houston Herald*.

An employee of the *Herald* had noticed that the machine had been coming up short of money for several weeks. A suspected person was told to stop taking extra papers.

She was reported to police when a video recorded after she had been warned showed her paying for one paper and taking six.

Publisher evaluates paper's purpose

Mission, goals of *The Rural Reporter* shared with readers

By PAULI CLARIDAY

The Rural Reporter, Lathrop (Nov. 10, 2011)

Comprehensive Improvement Plan of some sort ... whatever you want to call it, I've had a little heart-to-heart with myself these past couple of months. I've been around the world and back, so to speak, and picked up some pretty invaluable lessons along the way.

Mostly, I guess, is that if God opens a door that won't close, and closes a door that won't open, you'd better pay attention. And if you beat your head against a wall long enough, you eventually learn that opening a door is a whole lot less painful.

Anyway, I've deliberated on the Mission and Goals of this newspaper. Of my purpose — our purpose — and I have found new life.

These are some pretty tall marching orders, and a great responsibility. The kind of thing that I should print out several copies and post on every door I enter and every mirror I look into.

Strategic plans should be comprehensive, and they should be able to support your purpose and goals.

Here is mine — you get to hold me accountable.

We are ...

Invested and Engaged. Bringing you insight to your hometown community. Connected with the people and deci-

Editorial - Lathrop

A hometown newspaper should serve its readers and public as a model of citizenship.

sions that matter to you. Hometown. Family owned and operated.

We believe ...

A hometown newspaper should bring its readers insight to the decisions that affect the community, and opportunities to engage with the decision-making processes that make a community better.

A hometown newspaper should serve its readers and public as a model of citizenship.

A hometown newspaper should always remember it is through the diligent efforts of the citizens, families, and stakeholders designed to improve the quality of life, that cause a community to stand apart.

Our Mission and Goals ...

Mission: To provide a medium for citizens and stakeholders in which informational, insightful, entertaining, and commemorative content is held in

the highest regard.

Goal: To engage the community at all levels — local government, schools, churches and organizations — so that ownership and responsibility are shared by all.

Goal: To provide a medium for government, businesses, organizations, and churches to engage the residents in order to find a common ground toward working for the betterment of the community.

Goal: To exercise journalistic professionalism that respects the intelligence of our readers and seeks to capture the full intent of its subjects.

Goal: To bring together the technology of today and tomorrow with the foresight of the changing landscape, while valuing the history and heritage of the community newspaper.

Goal: To recognize that local and area businesses contribute to the economic viability of the region, and provide an affordable, comprehensive media outlet to capture existing and new audiences.

Goal: To explore and bring insight to local government, demanding open government for the people and by the people.

Goal: To assist in the evolution of Clinton County to become a unified front for its citizens, businesses, and economic future.

Stover newspaper office moves in at Versailles

The *Morgan County Press* in Stover will move its office and consolidate operations to the office of the *Versailles Leader-Statesman* beginning Jan. 1.

The *Morgan County Press* will continue to be published in its current form. Operations are being consolidated in an effort to bring the paper into a more profitable situation, reduce expenses and improve the product, said managing editor Bryan Jones.

"While we understand this change will be inconvenient for a time and

require some adjustments, we hope this move results in an improved *Morgan County Press* for our readers and advertisers," Jones said.

The Stover and Versailles papers are owned by Vernon Publishing, Inc., which also has papers in Eldon, Tusculumbia, Tipton and Laurie.

The *Press* will continue to be delivered to Stover area vendors and be available for purchase in Stover vending machines as usual and at regularly scheduled times. Subscribers will notice no change in

delivery of their papers.

The editor of the Stover paper, Jami Mathis, will have an office in Versailles.

The *Morgan County Press* was founded as *Stover News* in 1911 by Henry Harrell. He changed the name of the paper to the *Tri-County Republican* in 1922.

Harrell's son-in-law and daughter, Matthew and Clarice Washlick, became publishers in 1963. They changed the name of the paper to *The Morgan County Press* in 1965 and sold it in 1978 to Vernon Publishing.

Remember 'Super Bowl' is registered trademark

Don't let advertisers use sports phrases

Now that the end-of-the-year holidays are past us, the newspaper advertising staffs will begin gearing up for the Super Bowl festivities that will come the first of February. So perhaps now is a good time to once again issue the reminder that while news stories can discuss the Super Bowl as often as desired, your advertisers need to tread carefully in this area if you don't want to generate nasty letters or worse for your newspaper.

The words "Super Bowl," like their cousins "Final Four," "Sweet Sixteen," "Elite Eight" and other such sports phrases are all registered trademarks. When an advertiser uses them in advertising, that advertiser needs to be a company that is an official supporter of the Super Bowl 2012 event.

If your local grocery store wants to sell chips and dip for residents to consume while watching the event on Feb. 5, the grocery store needs to find a euphemism or synonym for that event. Maybe it's something like "the big game" or maybe it's the "super event" that weekend.

If your advertiser is unhappy, just remind him that the use of a trademark like the ones mentioned above, when you are not authorized to use it, can generate anything from a nasty letter from the owner of the mark to a lawsuit. Nobody wants to deal with those kinds of headaches, and because the newspaper would be drawn into the battle, it's just easier to pick something else for the ad.

Also the first of the year brings with it the opening session for the Missouri legislative bodies. We've not had a bill revising the sunshine law for several years, and there is reason to believe that perhaps this year such a bill can gain

some traction in the legislature.

I've been working with the association on what changes we might like to see in the law, incorporating suggestions that have come from many of you in the past few years.



Jean Maneke, MPA's Legal Hotline attorney, can be reached at (816) 753-9000, jmaneke@manekelaw.com.

At the same time, we all realize that we never get everything we want, and the process is long and drawn-out. It involves a bill being filed by a sponsor, hearings in both the House and the Senate, and hoping the bill can move through the process to get onto the floor and up for a vote in each chamber. Finally, a version must be crafted that is acceptable to legislators in both chambers and which can be presented to the

governor for signature.

Each of you plays an important part in this process. You may be asked to come to Jefferson City to testify. You absolutely are needed in Jefferson City on Missouri Press Day at the Capitol in order to talk to your legislators and to listen to the governor and others about bills of interest to you and your readers.

(This event is planned for Feb. 9. I'm hoping you will get it on your calendars NOW and make a special effort to attend. Don't forget there will be a reception the night before where legislators are invited to attend, and you should plan to come in early enough to attend that event, too!)

Finally, and most importantly, I urge you to watch for emails from Doug Crews and others advising of the status of the bills and asking for your calls to your local legislators. Those last-minute emails come when you are busy, I'm sure, but they are our way of keeping you advised as to what is happening up to the moment in the legislative process.

And when YOU pick up the phone to call your local legislators and ask for their support of the bill at the moment those emails request such a call, you are making the difference in whether this bill passes or not. Legislators tire of seeing the faces of lobbyists and executive directors of organizations who frequent their offices day by day. But when YOU call, they listen. They know you are able to generate publicity for them in your local papers that will help them in their campaigns and in getting word out to their constituents as to whether they are doing a good job for the local voters in their districts.

This is an election year. They will be especially listening to local voices. Be

one of those local voices. Give them a call when we request those calls be made. Let them know you are interested in what they are doing in Jefferson City. Play the part created by the legislative process for voters like you to play. Make your voice heard!

As always, wishing all of us a strong, profitable year in an industry that is undergoing great change. What all of you do is critical to ensuring liberty and justice in this country. My longtime friend and former editor, Paul McMasters, once said, "...the tradition that has kept the press necessary and vital ... is that the more the public knows, the more secure the individual."

Have a wonderful 2012!

When YOU pick up the phone to call your local legislators and ask for their support of the bill..., you are making the difference in whether this bill passes or not.

Missouri Newspaper Organizations

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CALENDAR

January

- 11** — Missouri Press Ad Workshop, Troy, *Lincoln County Journal*, 10 a.m.-Noon
- 19** — Missouri Press Ad Workshop, Cape Girardeau *Southeast Missourian*, 10 a.m.-Noon

February

- 8** — MPA/MPS Board Meeting, Jefferson City
- 8** — MPA/AP Legislator Reception, 5-7 p.m., DoubleTree Hotel, Jefferson City
- 9** — Missouri Press/AP Day at the Capitol, Jefferson City
- 22** — Business Journalism Workshop, Union Station Marriott, St. Louis

March

- 9** — Missouri Press Foundation / Reynolds Journalism Institute newspaper workshop, Columbia
- 11-17** — National Sunshine Week

April

- 19-20** — Missouri Advertising Managers' annual meeting, Courtyard by Marriott, Columbia

June

- 22** — Northwest Missouri Press Association Annual Meeting, St. Joseph

September

- 20-22** — Missouri Press Association 146th Annual Convention, Holiday Inn Executive Center, Columbia



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