

MIP

MISSOURI PRESS

NEWS

Celebrate MPA's 2024 Newspaper Hall of Fame inductees in Springfield P4



Howell County News publisher wins ISWNE's Golden Quill | P8
Vote on MPA's 2025 officers, directors at the Convention | P15

REGULAR FEATURES

- President 2
- Calendar 3
- Obituaries 10
- On the Move 12
- Scrapbook 15
- Dan Curry 18



Competing for air at high altitude

I've just returned from a family vacation in Colorado, and I have a few observations I thought I'd share.

One — there are few things more satisfying than deleting a bunch of work-related emails from way up high on a mountain. In the past I've taken an axe to my inbox from Hawksbill Crag in Arkansas and the Bavarian Alps in Germany. The Rockies provided an equally awe-inspiring backdrop for this year's purge.

Two — The low oxygen at high altitude must have affected the brains of Colorado highway designers. Whoever thought a 10-foot lane with a couple of inches of crumbling shoulder hanging off the edge of a cliff (and no guardrail) qualifies as a road ought to be tossed off one. The engineers behind Google Maps neglected to add an "I don't want to die today" filter to route selection, too.

Three — the altitude's effects on engineers appear to have bypassed the state's journalists. Almost everywhere we stopped, next to the rack of tourist trap pamphlets and advertisements would be a stack of local newspapers.

The papers in these mountain towns varied in appearance and heft, with slicker production values in places like Aspen or Telluride and more straightforward layouts in towns aiming for less high-falutin clientele. But what they all shared, broadsheets

"Our online news stories are often competing for attention among a sea of slick, colorful alternatives filled with flashy promises and little real information."

and tabs alike, were front pages laden with the kind of issues that get residents talking.

In Manitou Springs, at the base of Pike's Peak, the top half of 1A carried a news story about a land donation and development proposal that evidently had folks riled — the bottom half was a front-page editorial urging residents to give the proposal a fair hearing at city council before making up their minds.

On the other side of the Continental Divide, the *Ouray County Plaindealer* announced that a local police department was in crisis; further south in Durango, the big news was the long-awaited opening of a new highway connection (designed by oxygen-deprived engineers, no doubt).

The substance contained in those stacks of newsprint was made all the more striking by the glossy pamphlets that surrounded them. Rows and rows of flyers advertising zip lines and four-wheeling adventures, white-water rafting and native cliff-dwelling tours, their bold designs aimed at catching the eyes of passing tourists and separating them from some money.

I picked up a couple in Durango hoping to learn something about Mesa Verde and other local sites but was left disappointed. While the typo-laden pamphlets promised wonder and magical vistas, they told me next to nothing about the history of these very real and much-studied historical sites.

Continued on Page 3



Amos Bridges,
Springfield News-Leader
MPA President



PRESIDENT: Amos Bridges, *Springfield News-Leader*
1st VICE PRES.: Peggy Scott, *Leader Publications, Festus*
2nd VICE PRES.: Bryan Chester, *Columbia Missourian*
SEC.: Ron Schott, *Wright County Journal, Mountain Grove*
TREASURER: Ken Garner, *Garner Media Holdings, Maryville*
PAST PRESIDENT: Roger Dillon,
Shannon County Current Wave, Eminence
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: Mark Maassen
ADVERTISING DIRECTOR: Ted Lawrence
EDITOR: Matthew Barba

DIRECTORS:
Gary Castor, *Jefferson City News Tribune*
Sandy Nelson, *The Courier-Tribune, Liberty*
Bryan Jones, *The Morgan County Statesman, Versailles*
Tim Schmidt, *Westplex Media, Montgomery City*
Lucas Presson, *Southeast Missourian, Cape Girardeau*
Mike Scott, *NEMO News Media Group, Kahoka*
Kimberly Combs, *Better Newspapers Inc., Piedmont*
NNA Rep.: Hannah Spaar, *The Odessan, Odessa*

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Continued from Page 2: A trusted source of consequential news cuts through distraction.

While I didn't spend much vacation time reading online local news, the contrast between those printed papers and the glossy tourist pamphlets got me thinking about the digital landscape, as well. Like the printed papers in those mountain towns, our online news stories are often competing for attention among a sea of slick, colorful alternatives filled with flashy promises and little real information.

Like a tourist picking up the most eye-catching flyer, casual consumers online may be distracted by such trifles. But if we're doing our jobs — putting trustworthy, consequential news of the day in big bold letters on our digital "front page" — local readers and the occasional tourist looking for more substance can be convinced to pass over those glossy freebies to drop a buck or two on stories with more bite.

Even when the air gets thin, folks need real news.

Don't forget to update your Hotline Attorney contact

From Missouri Press Staff

Dan Curry is Missouri Press Association's new Hotline Attorney, so be sure to update your information in case you need to reach him.

Curry's phone number is (816) 756-5458, and you can reach him by email at dan@brownandcurry.com.

Consultation is free to active members, and Curry is eager to help.

Better Newspaper Contest results are out
Congratulations to this year's BNC award winners.
Refrain from publicizing results until after the Awards Luncheon at the 158th Annual Convention in Springfield.

Missouri Press Association / Service / Foundation

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CALENDAR

August

19 — Sleeping Room Reservation
Deadline for Annual Convention

19 — Early Bird Registration Deadline
for 158th Annual Convention,
Springfield

September

19-21 — Missouri Press Association's
158th Annual Convention, Springfield

22-28 — Missouri Photo Workshop,
Kennett

26-27 — National Newspaper
Association Foundation Annual
Convention, Omaha, Neb.

October

17 — Missouri Photojournalism Hall of
Fame Induction Ceremony, Columbia

17 — Ozark Press Association Annual
Meeting, Willow Grove

Did you know?

You can find all of the latest
registration forms for Missouri Press'
events online at www.mopress.com.

The website also has award
nomination forms, board of director
applications and much more.

Four inductees will join Newspaper Hall of Fame

Missouri Press Association will honor each at 158th Annual Convention in Springfield.

By Missouri Press Staff
Missouri Press News

Four inductees will join the Missouri Newspaper Hall of Fame on Sept. 20, during the Missouri Press Association's 158th Annual Convention and Trade Show in Springfield.

The 2024 class is the 34th group to be inducted since the Hall of Fame was established in 1991.

This year's inductees are Doug Kneibert, former editor of the *Sedalia Democrat*; Mike O'Brien, former editor and columnist for the *Springfield News-Leader*; Dianne Elizabeth Osis, founding publisher of *Springfield Business Journal*; and Michael Stair, former city editor for *The Joplin Globe*.

Hall of Fame inductees or their families receive Pinnacle Awards in honor of the inductees' service to the Missouri newspaper industry and their communities.

Inductees' plaques will join the permanent display

of inductees in the MPA office in Columbia and in the student lounge in Lee Hills Hall at the Missouri School of Journalism.

— Doug Kneibert —

Described by many as a "quintessential newspaperman," Doug Kneibert started his career at *The Kansas City Star* in 1964 after completing his master's degree at the Missouri School of Journalism. Three years later, he joined the *Sedalia Democrat's* staff as managing editor, being promoted to editor in 1971, a job he held for more than 20 years.

While his brusque manner was often noted initially, Kneibert also was known as a kind and sympathetic mentor who provided even-tempered guidance. Through his efforts, the *Democrat* provided a quality of news coverage unmatched by many larger newspapers.

In 1970, three years after Kneibert joined the *Sedalia Democrat*, it was presented the Honor Award for Distinguished Service in Journalism by the MU School of Journalism. The *Democrat* took five first-place awards for general excellence in MPA's Better Newspaper Contest during Kneibert's editorship, plus many other first-place awards.

Kneibert kept a watchful eye over the *Democrat's* news staff, which was made up of young Missouri J-School-trained journalists looking to get experience before moving on to other publications.

He took pride in writing daily local editorials plus a weekly column that made it clear where the newspaper stood politically, but kept opinions to the editorial pages, expecting reporters to be objective watchdogs who looked out for the public interest.

Besides his news career, Kneibert served as president of the Mid-America Press Institute, the Sedalia Council on the Arts, the Sedalia Symphony Society, the Sedalia Kiwanis Club and the Pettis County Pachyderm Club.

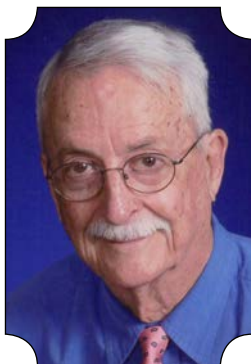
After leaving the *Democrat* in 1993, Kneibert became a free-lance journalist, writing articles for Catholic newspapers and magazines.

In 2023, he helped advise the Missouri Photo Workshop when it returned to Sedalia, helping to bring the workshop there in 1980. At age 88, he continues to keep his hand in journalism through columns he writes for the *Democrat*.

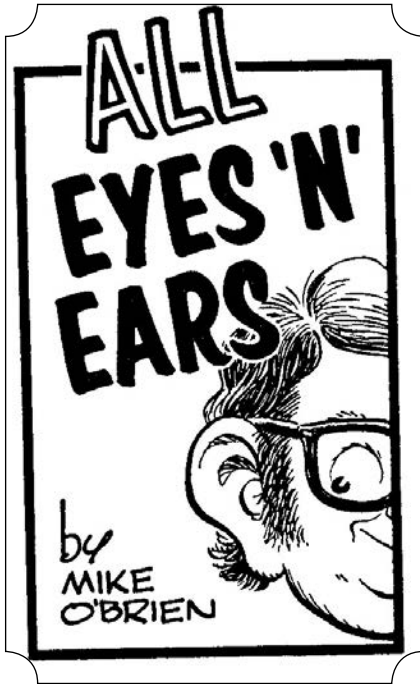
Continued on Page 5



Doug Kneibert was editor of the *Sedalia Democrat* for more than 20 years and with the newspaper more than 25 years. Known for his even-tempered guidance, he helped ensure the *Democrat's* news staff were objective watchdogs who looked out for the public's interests and provided a quality of coverage unmatched by many larger newspapers. (Submitted photos/Doug Kneibert)



Continued from Page 4: Inductees also include O'Brien, Osis.



Mike O'Brien has spent nearly 60 years keeping Southwest Missourians informed and entertained. In newspapers, he has been everything, from photographer and editor to columnist and technical

support. Helping others develop and hone their skills, O'Brien has been called the "best role model and mentor a budding journalist" could have. (Submitted photos/Mike O'Brien and Springfield News-Leader archives)

— Mike O'Brien —

For almost 60 years, Mike O'Brien has been a driving force in keeping Southwest Missourians informed and entertained thanks to his nose for news, informative columns, photography work and remarkable knowledge on how to present a story that grabs readers' attention.

And that long editorial career almost completely hinged on his summer internship with Springfield Newspapers in 1966 overlooking the fact he was an advertising major at the Missouri School of Journalism.

Still, after graduating in 1967, O'Brien joined the dual *Springfield Leader & Press* and *Springfield Daily News* operation and remained there through its merger into the *Springfield News-Leader*. He left the newsroom in 1987 as associate editor but continued as a columnist for another 20 years.

Throughout his career, O'Brien has embraced the future of the profession, from setting up Springfield Newspapers' first computer system and teaching colleagues how to use it to his unselfish commitment of helping younger people develop and hone their skills.

Wise and full of helpful advice, "OB" is regarded as a true master of the journalist's craft and described as "the best role model and mentor a budding journalist could ask for."

Over the years, O'Brien has been asked to return to the newspaper to provide new reporters with a lesson on all aspects of the job and share the history of the Ozarks. O'Brien's departure from the *News-Leader* proved to be the journalism profession's gain as he joined the faculty

of Missouri State University and later, Drury University, to train the next generations of journalists, a role he continues to fulfill.

Adept at adapting, O'Brien has worked in all the newsroom roles of a print newspaper, but he is, at his heart, a beat reporter. Today, O'Brien's beat is writing occasional feature stories for the non-profit *Springfield Daily Citizen* and writing on social media about community issues that interest him.

— Dianne Elizabeth Osis —

Dianne Elizabeth Osis produced her first newspaper, *Top's Executive Journal*, in July 1980 from her kitchen table with only an academic background in journalism. Standing for *The Ozarks Pulse*, it was inspired by a similar publication from her time working at a law firm in Tulsa, Okla. and was the first business journal in Missouri.

The newspaper, initially published every other week, limped along in its early years because people in the area were not familiar with the business journal concept. Osis persisted because she believed the newspaper model could work in Springfield, and in 1983, the publication was renamed as *Springfield Business Journal*, bringing new success.

A move into Springfield's fledgling downtown in the mid-1980s, combined with Osis' determination meant the newspaper embraced the up-and-coming area and in turn the businesses supported *SBJ*. She would further show her commitment to the downtown by purchasing and renovating a former hotel to serve as the newspaper's offices.

Concluded on Page 6



Dianne Elizabeth Osis founded Missouri's first business journal, *Springfield Business Journal*, from her kitchen table. Seen as a "model for a civic-minded journalist", Osis and *SBJ* helped revitalize the Springfield downtown and championed business and community leaders with events such as *SBJ's* annual Most Influential Women awards. (Submitted photos/*Springfield Business Journal*)



Continued from Page 5: Stair rounds out 2024 inductees.

Community leaders credit Osis' vision and commitment as a significant factor in the revitalization of Springfield's downtown, helping to build confidence with others in the area and inspire a resurgence of investment over the following years.

Regularly volunteering for community efforts, Osis is an example of an unselfish leader and seen as "a model for a civic-minded journalist" with many of the same traits that made her a good journalist also applying to her work on various boards and committees.

Osis' work as one of the first female business journal publishers in the nation broke barriers and paved the way for other women in the industry, including her daughter, Jennifer Jackson, who succeeded Osis as publisher of the *SBJ* in 2011 and as president of *SBJ Publishing* in 2017. Her commitment to journalism and mentorship of aspiring journalists continues to have a lasting impact, fostering growth and success of countless individuals during her career.

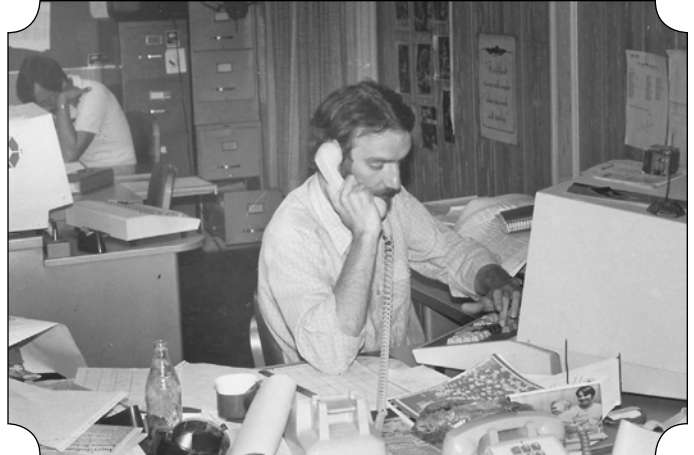
— Michael Stair —

Equal parts challenging, exacting and encouraging, Michael Stair knew how to get the best out of reporters in the newsroom. His clear love for newspapers and the power of the written word were evident throughout his more than 56 years, beginning part-time in 1967 with the *Joplin Globe* and the *Joplin News Herald*, to becoming a general assignment reporter in 1971 after graduating from the Missouri School of Journalism the year before and through his retirement at the end of 2023.

Stair has said it was the *Globe* that put the ink in his blood but the MU J-School taught him how to use it.

In 1980, Stair was named the *Globe's* city editor and became the man on the watchtower night after night for decades, ensuring interns, graduates fresh from college and seasoned journalists produced the best reporting possible. His name didn't appear in the *Globe* often, but the copy that filled its pages was better for having gone across his desk.

Remembered fondly, if not a bit fearfully, for his scrutiny of stories and any failures of journalistic integrity, Stair's attention to detail in the newsroom was well known and well respected. The reputations of the *Globe* newspaper



Michael Stair always said the Joplin Globe put the ink in his blood, but the Missouri School of Journalism taught him how to use it in service to his community. And he did for more than 40 years as the Globe's city editor, ensuring the newsroom staff produced the best reporting possible for the benefit of readers, even if reporters sometimes dreaded his call. (Submitted photos/Michael Stair)

and countless members of its staff over the years can thank Stair for his diligence.

The effectiveness of his techniques proved influential as others who learned from Stair have adopted the "Michael Stair eye," editing in anticipation of the kinds of calls their former editor would make from the copy desk, as he looked for missing sources in a story, sought clarification for a passage or asked for citation of important information.

For a newspaperman like Stair, his is a life spent in journalism in service to his community. Because of this, it is difficult to overstate his impact on generations of journalists and legions of readers across a career guided by the principle of providing information in a clear, accurate and fair way, all for the benefit of readers and anything less than that was unacceptable.

Reserve your sleeping room for the Convention today!

The deadline to reserve a sleeping room for Missouri Press Association's 158th Annual Convention and Trade Show is Aug. 19.

Attendees wanting a room at the Hotel Vandivort in downtown Springfield at the special rate of \$169 need to contact Debra Yokum at sales@hotelvandivort.com or call (417) 851-5209.

The early registration deadline for this year's Convention is also Aug. 19. A tentative schedule can be found on the back cover of this month's *Missouri Press News*, along with registration information.

Missouri Press Foundation Convention Fundraiser

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Springfield, Missouri



Mendez wins Golden Quill award from ISWNE

For Missouri Press News

Missouri newspaper publishers dominated the International Society of Weekly Newspaper Editors' 2024 Golden Quill contest for editorial writing, claiming three of the 12 awards.

Amanda Mendez, publisher of the *Howell County News*, won the top prize – the Golden Quill – for a column titled “The role of a small-town paper in 2023.” The award was presented June 22 at the ISWNE’s annual conference in Toronto, Ontario.

ISWNE has presented the Golden Quill awards since 1961 with the purpose of recognizing good opinion writing in non-daily publications from around the world.

Dan Wehmer, editor and publisher of the *Webster County Citizen*, and Kyle Troutman, editor and publisher of the *Cassville Democrat*, each won Golden Dozen awards, placing them in the top 12 of the 95 contest entries. It was the third Golden Dozen award for Wehmer and the second for Troutman.

The judge was Ted Barris, from Uxbridge, Ontario, who has written 21 books primarily on Canadian military history. A former journalism and broadcasting professor at Centennial College in Toronto, Barris has been a freelance writer for 50 years. His work has regularly appeared in Canada’s national newspapers.

“Publisher Mendez writes a column reflecting on four years assembling the news and commentary for the weekly *Howell County News*,” Barris said about Mendez’s winning entry. “She assesses the difficulty of attempting to provide a news-gathering service for her community while still asking tough questions of its administrators and other decision-makers; she calls it reporting ‘on hyperlocal news.’ Mendez considers herself the eyes and ears of fellow citizens. But she also calls on her readers for feedback, asking, ‘What captures your attention?’ to ensure that she fulfills the role of a proactive small-town paper.”

You can read the column from Mendez on Page 9 of this month’s *Missouri Press News*.

In her acceptance speech at the ISWNE conference, Mendez thanked her mentor, Wehmer, and her “grand-mentors,” Gary and Helen Sosniecki. “You may have noticed Missouri is wildly overrepresented on this international stage,” she said. “That must be because these Missouri Press Association Hall of Famers are building a dynasty.”



Amanda Mendez, left, is the recipient of this year’s Golden Quill, from the International Society of Weekly Newspaper Editors. Tad Barris, right, was the judge of this year’s awards, which recognize good opinion writing in non-daily publications from around the world. (Submitted photos/ISWNE)



Kyle Troutman, left, publisher of the *Cassville Democrat*, is one of this year’s Golden Dozen award winners from ISWNE. He received his award from judge Tad Barris during the group’s meeting last month.

In his Golden Dozen-winning editorial, Wehmer wrote about the death of a 4-week-old Amish child in a car-buggy accident near Seymour.

“He doesn’t try to pigeon-hole it as hatred, carelessness or confrontation with his Amish neighbors,” Barris said. “Instead, he searches out ways for a community to find solutions – inviting his readers too – to find practical ways to avoid any such future tragedy being repeated.”

Troutman wrote about a spur-of-the-moment town hall meeting in Cassville, attended by about 100 people who told stories of repeated thefts while

brainstorming solutions.

“He covers shortcomings in law enforcement, inadequate budgeting, and hamstrung social services,” Barris said. “But most welcome are his suggestions for proactive, not reactive, responses to crime, including using social media to ‘engage the power of a community.’ His recommendation for all who attended the meeting? Don’t point fingers. Find solutions.”

Previous Missouri winners include Gary Sosniecki, who won in 1998 while working at the *Webster County Citizen*, Seymour, and again in 2006, representing *The Vandalia Leader*. In 2009, David Martin with *The Pitch* in Kansas City also won the Golden Quill.

Member opinion:

The role of a small-town paper in 2023

Editor's note: *The following column was originally published in April 2023. Most of its points remain valid more than a year later. It has been edited slightly for length.*

By Amanda Mendez

This edition of the *Howell County News* contains the 80th installment of The Way We Were, which is Lonnie Whitaker's column.

Big, round numbers like eighty (80!) tend to put me in a contemplative mood. In July, Ron and I will have owned and operated the newspaper for four years. As I have reflected on all the challenges and blessings the newspaper has brought to my family, my thoughts turned to the service we provide for the community.

It's a digital age. At first blush, a weekly newspaper may not seem to have a place in this time when instant gratification is the standard and Google is the all-knowing oracle. We don't do breaking news. In fact, the last time I tried my hand at breaking news the backlash was so volatile and vulgar that I paused at length to consider whether a career in local news was right for me.

There's another trend in modern journalism that isn't my style. I'll probably date myself if I call it "gotcha journalism." The people who do it call themselves "First Amendment Auditors," and their goal is to catch public officials in their natural environment. Here in Howell County, law enforcement is the most common target, but judges and court clerks have also been "audited."

Ranging from confrontational and profane to delusional and incendiary, I've never seen a piece from a First Amendment Auditor that gave the impression the creator was rational.

Their growing popularity, however, reveals an unmet need that local, weekly newspapers can (and in my case do) provide. People seem to want transparency. They want a watchdog holding local officials accountable. They want someone to ask hard questions and to (figuratively) step on

HOWELL COUNTY NEWS

toes when necessary.

I believe I provide that service for this community. And I try to do it with professionalism because I don't get to go back to the city after I harass a sheriff's deputy. I live here. The issues that affect you affect me, too. They affect my children.

This brings me to some thoughts I have to share on a story I wrote last week about the Howell County Collector's Office. Despite the apparent desire for transparency on a local level, I spend most of my days trying desperately to convince everyone I meet to care about their local government. With the recent race for collector of revenue, I didn't have to drum up interest. It was already there. So, I covered it. And covered it. And hosted a debate. And then covered it some more.

Now, thanks to the public appetite for information about it, I believe a lot of people learned something recently about the office of the county collector, namely on top of his county salary, he also earns as compensation 3 percent of the taxes he collects on behalf of West Plains and Willow Springs. In 2021, this was an increase of about \$51,000.

Though I was shocked and even dismayed to learn a public official in Howell County earns so much from the taxpayer, I do think it's unfair to present this information as a shocking revelation, or some closely guarded secret. Nothing I have found in my investigation leads me to believe anything illegal happened. I wrote it up as news because the new collector wants to change it, and the uphill battle before her is interesting.

But the initial action of this story took place over 35 years ago. I was a wish in my mother's heart the year the first contract was signed. It's a shock primarily because of how much money it is, but also because it all happened long, long before there was lively public

interest in this office.

And that's my daily fight – to help my readers care about things like municipal contracts and council votes so they can be part of the action in real time. I think it's much better than reacting in dismay after the fact. Still, it's a struggle.

National news outlets have an army of reporters searching for the splashiest headline-worthy stories. This news outlet has hot topics like collector of revenue compensation and the removal of downtown parking spaces. Which one is more likely to affect your daily life – the artwork on a can of beer or eight fewer parking spaces in downtown Willow Springs?

This is the service I provide, my mission in life – to investigate and report on hyperlocal news. I will keep track of the elections, the players, their jobs, and the Sunshine Law. I will ask hard questions, but I need your help.

I don't consider myself to be a tastemaker, or even to be able to predict the issues that will matter most to my readers. Lively interest in the collector of revenue was not on my 2022 bingo card.

The vast quantity of information I collect about the actions of local governments and school boards is enough to fill 100 pages weekly. I have 12 pages to give you.

When I sit in these meetings, I represent you, the public. I am your eyes and ears. So, I want to hear about your concerns and questions more often. Every time I host a community forum, I get questions that weren't on my radar at all. I can't host a weekly community forum, but I can chat over a cup of coffee or answer an email any day you like. What captures your attention? Is it budgets? Ordinances? Crime?

Stop by the news office at 110 West Main. Call us at 417-252-2123. Email me directly at editor@howellcountynews.com.



Macon

Shon Coram

Ivan Shon Coram, 55, died unexpectedly July 7, 2024.

After graduating from Macon High School, Coram entered the U.S. Marine Corps and served until forced into a medical discharge.

Coram worked a variety of jobs during his life, but it was with the *Macon County Home Press* that he discovered his passion.

Shon and his wife, Sharon, purchased the rights to the *Home Press* in 2023 and devoted



themselves to keeping it solvent for the community. The couple strived to serve their entire county, attending countless sporting and community events, taking pictures and writing stories. Devoted to covering the area's young athletes, he often took pictures for their families at no cost.

In addition to his wife, Coram is survived by a daughter, Joslyn; his mother, Ellen; and many more family and friends.

Fairhope, Ala.

Bruce Mackey

Bruce Q. Mackey, 78, died May 21, 2024, while receiving treatment at a Fairhope, Ala. hospital following heart surgery.



Mackey had a long career in teaching, journalism and publishing.

From 1986-1990, he was publisher of the *Springfield News-Leader* and recently worked as a newspaper consultant.

He is survived by his wife, Patricia; and many more family, friends and industry colleagues.

Send obits for Missouri Press News to mbarba@mopress.com.



These individuals and/or organizations made recent contributions to Missouri Press Foundation. For more information about supporting the Foundation's mission and programs, please contact Michael Harper at (573) 449-4167, ext. 303.

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WHEN THEY'LL COME

Jan. 13-17

HOW TO PARTICIPATE

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bit.ly/mizzouambassador



"Thank you so much for providing this service. Our small newspaper has had a difficult time in the past understanding some of these more technical issues online."

— Skye Pournazari, Maryville Forum

"I'll be honest, I did not know how much benefit we would actually get from having an ambassador, but I was very pleased with how it all went and what I learned. I was most impressed with our ambassador's knowledge of all things analytics."

— Kyle Troutman, Cassville Democrat

ON THE MOVE



Kansas City — Julia Williams has been hired as the new managing editor of *The Northeast News*, joining the newspaper earlier this summer. Williams is a recent graduate of the Missouri School of Journalism.



Former publisher Michael Bushnell told readers that Williams is an excellent addition to the newspaper's award-winning team and looking for ways to grow the publication's brand and new coverage capabilities.

"[Williams] is competent, capable and has a passion for Community Journalism," Bushnell wrote to readers.

Columbia — Roger McKinney retired from the *Columbia Daily Tribune* at the end of May. McKinney was with the Columbia newspaper for about 10 years of a nearly 40-year career that will continue through freelance work.



In addition to his regular reporting, McKinney also spent several years as an education reporter for the *Tribune*.

Before joining the *Tribune*, McKinney was with the *Joplin Globe* for about 19 years. His work there included covering the catastrophic tornado that devastated that city

in 2011. Prior to the *Globe*, he was a reporter for the *Parsons Sun* in Kansas.

Sedalia — Nicole Cooke ended her time with the *Sedalia Democrat* and *Warrensburg Star-Journal* at the end of June, just one month shy of 11 years with the former publication. She started with the *Democrat* in July 2013 as a copy editor and education reporter, a couple months after graduating from the University of Central Missouri.



Cooke later took on other roles, including the city beat, and eventually found herself in the editor's chair in July 2017. She added additional duties of editor of the Warrensburg newspaper when it was purchased in October 2020.

In total, Cooke estimated to readers she had contributed to roughly 3,300 print editions of the *Democrat* and *Star-Journal*, writing more than 1,000 stories just in her time as a reporter. "I've loved getting to know my community in such a hands-on way," she wrote in her farewell. "I've felt privileged to tell every single one of those stories. I'm a firm believer that everyone has a story to tell, even if they don't realize it. Now, it's time for me to start a new chapter in my own story."

Kansas City — Michael Bushnell has left *The Northeast News* after

26 years with the publication. His tenure included positioning the newspaper as a non-profit publication overseen by a board of community members, a decision that resulted in many questions from other publishers about the partnership's viability.



In a letter to the editor announcing that he had been let go via email, Bushnell wrote that there were many proud editions of the newspaper during his years, including wall-to-wall coverage of a fire that killed two firefighters in 2015 and a decision in 2021 to print a blank front page that brought the *Northeast News* nationwide attention.

He also touted the awards the newspaper won since 1999, with more than 100 coming from Missouri Press' Better Newspaper Contest. Three of those awards are Tilghman Cloud Memorial Editorial Awards for Bushnell's own opinion pieces critical of local government.

Bushnell continued his letter, "Moving forward, I would encourage the community to support the team and the mission at *The Northeast News*. As smaller newsrooms across the country continue to close, support for community newspapers remains critical. An embedded and independent community news source is key to the overall health and vitality of its community and *The Northeast News* is no exception."

Send YOUR newspaper's news and moves to mbarba@mopress.com.

Political advertisements need proper 'Paid for by' attribution

From Missouri Press Staff

Be sure all political advertising that runs in your newspaper contains proper attribution as set out by the

Missouri Ethics Commission. Your newspaper can be fined for not properly attributing ads.

Also, make sure the attribution

in an ad matches where the money comes from.

Check out www.mec.mo.gov/ for more guidance.

Resources to get your story started



Every Business Needs an Online Presence.

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



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Donald Suggs will receive Honor Medal from Missouri School of Journalism

Suggs and other recipients will present master classes in September at University of Missouri campus in Columbia.

From the Missouri School of Journalism

The Missouri School of Journalism announced in July winners of the 2024 Missouri Honor Medal, which recognizes extraordinary service in journalism and strategic communication. Recipients include Donald Suggs, publisher of the *St. Louis American*; Renetta McCann, a strategic communications and public relations executive; and Radiolab, an innovative radio program that explored a variety of topics.

The medals will be conferred in a ceremony on Sept. 23, in downtown Columbia. Earlier that day, students at the School of Journalism will be treated to master classes delivered by the medalists based on their work and professional experiences.

"This year's medalists bring an incredibly varied list of accomplishments and impacts on the industry," said David Kurpius, dean of the School. "Anyone who works in journalism or strategic communication has felt the influence of one of these honorees, and audiences consume more representative, accurate and engaging content because of their work. It's a privilege to present them with this award."

Suggs joins a lengthy list of recipients from Missouri newspapers and organizations dating back to the award's inception in 1930, including Missouri Press Association, which received the Honor Medal in 1985.

A full list of past recipients is here: <https://bit.ly/4f8Te5H>.

Donald Suggs

Donald Suggs has served as publisher of the *St. Louis American* since 1984, taking the Black community newspaper from a circulation of just over 4,000 to its

current position as the largest weekly newspaper in Missouri.

Suggs' entry into journalism came relatively late in his career. Born in 1932, just four years after the *St. Louis American* published its first issue in 1928, he became a successful oral surgeon but, in the burgeoning days of the Civil Rights Movement, he faced obstacles in finding a faculty position in academia. He ultimately became the first Black associate clinical professor at Saint Louis University Dental School.

Suggs was active in the Civil Rights Movement and played a key role in organizing the Poor People's March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom in 1968, a march originally planned by Martin Luther King before his assassination. He sees his involvement in journalism as a natural extension of his efforts to bring communities together, noting that he was impressed by the impact of journalism even as a young man.

"We had very little materially, but we always had a newspaper," Suggs said of his upbringing in Indiana. "I was taught to be of some service in a way that goes beyond yourself, and I've always been fascinated and intrigued by journalists and the role they play in society."

Suggs' tenure at the *St. Louis American* has seen the newspaper not only dramatically rise in circulation but introduce more content raising awareness of health disparities in the Black community. Programs like Newspapers in Education, which provides free newspapers to public elementary school students with an emphasis on STEM education, have

also aimed to increase news literacy and education outcomes among young people.

In fact, Suggs has made the newspaper the nexus of a wide range of efforts and events designed to uplift the people of St. Louis. The nonprofit St. Louis American Foundation provides scholarships to students in need, hosts events like the Salute to Excellence Awards Gala to recognize educators and other community

figures, and supports youth-focused nonprofits in the area. Suggs, who is also the namesake of scholarships at no less than 12 colleges and universities in Missouri, sees these programs as additive to principled, ethical journalism.

"My life has been very much enriched by being involved with the *St. Louis American*, and I've had many more rewards than I deserve — but you still see the people who are left behind and mistreated," Suggs said. "There is no excuse not to be engaged and make things more inclusive, more compassionate, more caring. Journalists are a group I admire no less than health care workers: they are giving voice to a community with journalism people need and can depend on."

Suggs was inducted into the Missouri Newspaper Hall of Fame in 2023 and has won many more awards for his work, including Publisher of the Year from the National Newspaper Publishers Association in 2016 and the Greater St. Louis Association of Black Journalists Trailblazer Award that same year. He is a member of the St. Louis Media Hall of Fame and the Missouri Public Affairs Hall of Fame.



Donald Suggs

Final slate of MPA's 2025 officers, directors selected

Members will vote during September's Convention.

From Missouri Press Staff

Missouri Press Association's Nominating Committee met last month and finalized a slate of MPA officers and directors for 2025, effective Jan. 1.

The election of officers and directors is scheduled during the annual MPA business meeting Friday, Sept. 20, at the 158th annual MPA Convention at the Hotel Vandivort in Springfield. See the back cover of this month's *Missouri Press News* for more information about the Convention schedule and how to register to attend.

Here are the candidates proposed by the nominating committee:

- 2025 President, Peggy Scott, Leader Publications, Festus
- First Vice President, Bryan Chester, *Columbia Missourian*
- Second Vice President, Bryan Jones, *Morgan County Statesman*, Versailles
- Secretary, Donna Bischoff, Bridge Tower Media, St. Louis
- Treasurer, Jaime Mowers, *Webster-Kirkwood Times*, St. Louis



Peggy Scott

Directors for three-year terms: Ron Schott, *Wright County Journal*, Mountain Grove; Kenneth L. Garner, Garner Media Holdings, Maryville; and Gary Castor, *Jefferson City News Tribune*

Hannah Spaar, *The Odessan*, Odessa, is being nominated as the National Newspaper Association state chair.

Continuing on the MPA Board in 2025 will be directors: Kimberly Combs, *Bettors Newspapers Inc.*, Piedmont; Tim Schmidt, *Westplex Media*, Montgomery City; Lucas Presson, *Southeast Missourian*, Cape Girardeau; Sandy Nelson, *Courier Tribune*, Liberty; and Mike Scott, *NEMO News Media Group*, Kahoka.

Amos Bridges, *Springfield News-Leader*; will serve as immediate past president in 2025.

The nominating committee was chaired this year by Roger Dillon, *Shannon County Current Wave*, Eminence.

The committee members thank everyone who submitted nominations. If you have questions about the nominating process, contact MPA Executive Director Mark Maassen at (573) 449-4167, ext. 308, or by email at mmaassen@mopress.com.



Eldon — Vernon Publishing has taken over three publications formerly owned by Main Street Media (MSM), including the *St. Clair Courier* in Osceola, the *Appleton City Journal* and the *Rich Hill Mining Review*. The newspapers will be produced at the company's printing plant in Eldon.

Vernon Publishing acquired the newspapers after MSM announced they would be closing the newspapers and others at the beginning of July. The company said the increasing cost of labor and mailing compounded efforts to keep publishing.

A total of seven newspapers were considered for closure by MSM, with three others acquired by James

Mahlon White's publications in Warsaw and Clinton. The seventh, the *Humansville Star-Leader*, was closed.

Warsaw — Three newspapers sold by Main Street Media have been acquired by James Mahlon White's publications in Warsaw and Clinton. The *Cole Camp Courier* and *Lincoln New Era* newspapers, which both serve Benton County, will continue to be published as inserts of the *Benton County Enterprise*.

The *Windsor Review*, which covered parts of Benton, Henry, Johnson and Pettis counties, will continue to be published as an insert

of the *Clinton Daily Democrat*.

Cape Girardeau — Rust Communications, which operates the *Southeast Missourian*, has sold four publications to Paxton Media Group, based in Kentucky. The newspapers include the *Greencastle Banner Graphic*, *Brazil Times* and the *Greene County Daily World* in Indiana and the *Dyersburg State Gazette* in Tennessee.

Rust Communications continues to operate more than 10 newspapers in Missouri and has minority ownership in Mississippi River Radio, which operates 17 radio stations in Missouri and Illinois.

Let Missouri Press News know what's going on by sending clips to mbarba@mopress.com.

Work to restore equipment at Print Shop Museum continues

From Missouri Press Staff

Missouri Press News

With about \$20,000 raised by Missouri Press Association members and friends for the project, significant progress has been made on the rehabilitation of equipment once critical to the newspaper industry on display at the Print Shop Museum in Arrow Rock.

Folks associated with MPA raised the money for the project, but the work itself is being done by a group of letterpress printing enthusiasts from Missouri and beyond. The group, led by Eric Woods of St. Louis, is made up of print operators and mechanics who know their way around the machines.

Two years ago this month, *Missouri Press News* shared the group's story and an ambitious plan to turn the relics on display at the Print Shop Museum into a working exhibition. Doing so, it was reasoned, would bring renewed interest in the art of letterpress printing and newspaper production before it was transformed by desktop publishing.

"The technology is far enough removed that I think most people look at these machines and think they're supposed to be museum pieces, but with a little bit of elbow grease and love, and a few parts, they can be operational again," Woods told *Missouri Press News* after the group's initial visit in May 2022.

At the end of 2023, the Missouri Press Foundation issued an appeal with the hope of raising \$15,000 for the project. The end goal would be to restore the presses and other equipment in the museum to have a working exhibit, capable of showcasing the early days of print.

The group returned to Arrow Rock in May and during that visit organized, tuned and tested three of the hand presses at the museum. These hand presses were moved near the front of the museum, and along with two platen presses (also operational), can be seen through the windows if the museum is closed.

Members of the group cleaned and began identifying the type collection on display in the museum, intending to create a font menu for the options available at the museum.

Other improvements include a sharpened and secured paper cutter and a separate storage cabinet for inks and other materials and another cabinet for flammable chemicals, such as solvents stored at the museum.

Foundation Director Michael Harper sees the potential for the Print Shop Museum to one day hold workshops, host artists from around the world or even just show visitors how these presses were used in a working print shop.

"We're grateful to everyone who has given their support to this project," Harper said. "Through the money we raised and the work being done in Arrow Rock, we can ensure the Print Shop Museum will continue to educate



Letterpress enthusiasts volunteer time to work on restoring equipment at the Print Shop Museum in Arrow Rock. In addition to restoring several of the presses to working order, the layout of the museum has been changed to be more visually appealing to visitors and allow the presses to be used as a working print shop. (Submitted photos)

visitors for many years to come."

One of the largest pieces of equipment in the museum, a Campbell Complete Cylinder Press, was assessed. While the parts move, damage was found in the casting that supports the bed of the press. Woods' report following the group's visit in May points out that even without restoring the press to working order, it represents an important historical piece to visitors of the museum.

The historic town of Arrow Rock is northwest of Boonville, about 13 miles north of I-70 on Highway 41. Missouri Press Foundation owns the museum contents and contributes to the maintenance of the building. The building is owned by the Friends of Arrow Rock.



Missouri Newspaper Organizations

SHOW-ME PRESS ASSOCIATION: President, Roxie Murphy, *Maries County Advocate*; Directors: Hannah Spaar, *The Odessan*, Odessa; Gary Castor, *Jefferson City News Tribune*; Tim Schmidt, Westplex Media; Jacob Warden, Warden Publishing; Ethan Busse, *Washington Missourian*.

OZARK PRESS ASSOCIATION: President, Amanda Mendez, *Howell County News*, Willow Springs; Vice President, Jordan Troutman, *Cassville Democrat*; Secretary-Treasurer, Dan Wehmer, *Webster County Citizen*, Seymour; Past President, Ron Schott, *Wright County Journal*, Mountain Grove. Directors: Steve Pokin, *Springfield Daily Citizen*; Shelby Atkison, *Marshfield Mail*; Kimball Long, *El Dorado Springs Sun*; and Kyle Troutman, *Cassville Democrat*.

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

NORTHWEST MISSOURI PRESS ASSOCIATION: President, Ken Garner, *The Maryville Forum/Grant City Times-Tribune*; Vice President, Brent Rosenauer, *The Savannah Reporter*; Secretary, Kathy Conger, Bethany Republican-Clipper, and Skye Pournazari, *The Maryville Forum/Grant City Times-Tribune*; Treasurer, W.C. Farmer, *The Atchison County Mail*, Rock Port.

MISSOURI PRESS ADVERTISING & MARKETING EXECUTIVES:

President, Stephanie Schumer-Vandeven, Perryville; First Vice President, Jennifer Early, Lebanon; Secretary-Treasurer, Kristie Fortier, Columbia. Directors: Robin Gregg, Paris; Katelyn Mary Skaggs, Festus; Karl Giddens, Columbia; Bryan Chester, Columbia; Stephanie Watkins, Jackson.

MISSOURI PRESS SERVICE: President, Liz Irwin, St. Louis; Vice President, Trevor Vernon, Eldon; Secretary-Treasurer, James White, Warsaw. Directors: Jeff Schrag, Springfield; and Dennis Warden, Owensville.

MISSOURI PRESS FOUNDATION, INC.: President, Brian Brooks, Columbia; Vice President, Dave Berry, Bolivar; Secretary-Treasurer, Doug Crews, Columbia. Directors: Laura White Erdel, Columbia; Connie Farrow, Columbia; Kathy Kiely, Columbia; Wendell Lenhart, Trenton; Joseph Martineau, St. Louis; Joe May, Mexico; Jim Robertson, Columbia; Vicki Russell, Columbia; Peggy Scott, Festus; Jean Snider, Harrisonville; John Spaar, Odessa; James Sterling, Columbia; Paul Stevens, Lenexa; and Beth Pike, Columbia.
Directors Emeritus: Kathy Conger, Bethany; Bill Miller, Sr., Washington; and Rogers Hewitt, Shelbyville.

MISSOURI COLLEGE MEDIA ASSOCIATION: President, Hannah Claywell, Northwest Missouri State University; Vice President, Savannah Athy-Sedbrook, Northwest Missouri State University; Secretary, Precious Kenney, St. Louis Community College-Forest Park; Adviser, Steven Chappell, Northwest Missouri State University; Conference co-director, Julie Lewis, University of Central Missouri; and MPA Liaison, Jack Dimond, Missouri State University.

Should the state decide if press is bona fide?

I was writing a column about press credentialing in Missouri for the viewing of crime scene photographs and videos when the assassination attempt of Donald Trump happened.

By this time everyone will be familiar with the photograph of former President Donald Trump's blood-smeared face, braced by Secret Service agents, raising a defiant fist with the flag in the background. One of the most profound images of recent times. It was taken by Associated Press photographer Evan Vucci, who has been covering Trump for years.

Another image: The whirl of a bullet smeared through a photograph by the *New York Times* photojournalist Doug Mills.

Both photographers were near Trump when the shots rang out, in what is described as a buffer area a few feet from the candidate, where pool reporters were stationed.

But depending on prior coverage, it's possible neither journalist could have been in the right place at the right time.

In April of this year, *Vanity Fair* published an account of the press pool attached to the Trump campaign, in which reporters from the Washington Post, Axios, and *Vanity Fair* had experienced revocation of their press credentials by the campaigns at various times following their stories. The Trump campaign still allows evicted press to attend events as a member of the public, even if they are "unable to secure a coveted press badge," Trump spokesman Steven Cheung told the magazine.

Press credentials present an intriguing double edge. They're really useful. They manifest the idea of press exceptionalism – that reporters and editors, devoted to newsgathering, are performing an essential democratic function recognized in the First Amendment. And therefore, they deserve protections and benefits, such

"That phrase 'bona fide' pops up frequently in laws and rules touching upon press access. Sometimes agencies attempt a definition. Other times, though, the phrase is left undefined."

as first rights to scarce resources like a slot in the buffer area at a Trump rally. They help us deliver the news.

But the other edge is sharp – press credentialing enables and invites government control of the press. That's something that's not good for papers or a democratic society.

In July, the Missouri Department of Public Safety issued a proposed rule concerning the process by which "bona fide" members of the press can view certain crime scene photographs.* But part of the rule also sought to define what "bona fide" would mean.

Thirteen years ago, Jean Maneke, writing about the eventual statute authorizing the proposed rule at issue here, warned MPA members about the dangers this posed to press freedom: "Would you want the Department of Public Safety making decisions about what standards to use to recognize you as a member of the media?"

That phrase "bona fide" pops up frequently in laws and rules touching upon press access. Sometimes agencies attempt a definition. Other times, though, the phrase is left undefined. Still other times, the law

leaves the definition of "bona fide" up to the press itself. The third option, in my view, is the best option because it avoids having the government venture into selecting who or what can be the media and thereby influence, even if indirectly, the content of news coverage.

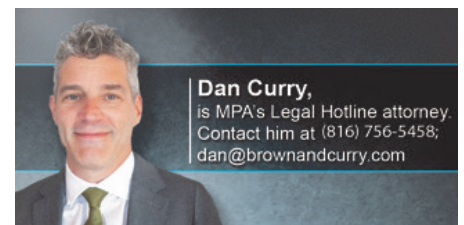
The Missouri Department of Public Safety's proposed rule would define "bona fide media organization" as an organization that "has demonstrable editorial oversight, a verifiable street address and telephone number, and has reported on matters of public concern."

What would the state consider to be "demonstrable editorial oversight"? What if it was a one-person operation?

What is "public concern"? Answers might vary depending on who's in charge and would require a state actor to make judgment calls on the paper's content. If the state actor starts making decisions based on viewpoints or content, the First Amendment is implicated.

MPA has submitted a comment to the department urging it to remove the proposed rule language seeking to define the press. Where press credentialing is necessary, it is best left to the press to determine what it means to be "bona fide."

**The proposed rule, 11 CSR 30-19.010, would allow bona fide members of the media submit to the records custodian a written request to view crime scene videos and photographs that the agency closed pursuant to 610.205 RSMo. Media would then be able to view – not copy or record – closed materials within 15 days of the request.*



Dan Curry,
is MPA's Legal Hotline attorney.
Contact him at (816) 756-5458;
dan@brownandcurry.com



It's easy to earn your press pass!

Since Missouri Press began offering Earn Your Press Pass, dozens of beginning journalists (and more than a couple industry veterans) have signed up to take the course.

Now, Earn Your Press Pass (EYPP) users have access "Extra Credit" videos to supplement the existing Community Journalism Training course.

If you were already in the EYPP system, you or staff you requested to be added previously have automatically been enrolled in the extra credit portion of the program. Any users your newspaper requests be added to the EYPP system will also have access.

Earn Your Press Pass is intended to fill the gaps for newspapers having difficulty recruiting trained journalists.

The course is provided to all Missouri Press members at no cost.

EYPP 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 EYPP is to impart practical, usable knowledge to participants. Lessons take the layperson to a functioning newspaper reporter upon completion in a straight-forward and comprehensive approach.

The journalism course can also give

your salespeople a heads-up about how to help the newsroom if they stumble upon a story while making their rounds in the community.

Speaking of sales, this summer the EYPP program will be expanded to include newspaper sales training to make onboarding new advertising reps easier.

Topics that will be covered in the sales training course include the language of sales, how to talk about advertising with customers, ethics in newspaper advertising and best practices associated with newspaper advertising.

The sales training portion of EYPP will be made available to Missouri Press members at no extra charge when it becomes available later this year.

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.

Visit earnyourpresspass.com to learn more about what the course can offer your publication and staff. To get added to the Missouri Press group, email mbarba@mopress.com or kfortier@mopress.com.



158th Annual Missouri Press Convention and Tradeshow

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Sept. 19-21, 2024

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Deadline for a sleeping room is August 19th.

EARLY BIRD! Register by August 19th and save \$20-\$50
on Base Registration!

-Tentative Schedule -

Thursday, September 19

11AM | Registration Open

Noon | MPF Board Meeting | **Cornerstone Room**

2PM | MPA/MPS Board Meeting | **Ballroom**

6:30-9PM | Foundation Fundraiser
Ernie Biggs Dueling Piano Bar

Friday, September 20

7:30AM-6:30PM | Registration and Better Newspaper
Contest Photo Displays | **Living Room**

8AM-4PM | Trade Show Open | **Living Room**

8:15AM | Breakfast Program and Welcome | **Ballroom**
Making Your Own Swift Beat
Bryan West, Gannett's Taylor Swift Reporter

9AM | General Session | **Ballroom**
Tent. Appealing to Young Readers Panel

9:45AM | Break Tradeshow Area | **Living Room**

10:15AM | General Session | **Ballroom**
Using AI in Ads: Mortality, Machines, and Magic Words
Gabriel Cassady, 2 Oddballs Marketing

11:15AM | General Session | **Ballroom**
Earn Your Ad & Press Pass | **Joey and Lindsey Young**

Noon | Lunch

12:15PM | Lunch Program | **Ballroom**
From Missouri to Outer Space! | **Astronaut Dr. Linda Godwin**

1PM | Business Meeting | **Ballroom**

1:15-1:40PM | Sundae Break | **Living Room**

2PM | Political Forums | **Fox Theater**
157 Park Central Square

2PM | Gubernatorial

3:20PM | Senate

6PM | Hall of Fame Reception | **Ballroom**

6:20PM | Silent Auction Ends | **Ballroom**
Last Call for Bids!

6:30PM | Hall of Fame Dinner | **Ballroom**

Est. 8:30PM | Hospitality Room Open | **Master Suite**

Saturday, September 21

7:30AM-Noon | Registration and Better Newspaper
Contest Photo Displays | **Living Room**

8:30AM | Breakfast Program | **Ballroom**
Susan Croce Kelly, "Newspaper Women of the Ozarks"

9:15-9:30AM | Break | **Living Room**

9:30-10:15AM | General Session | **Cornerstone Room**
Nick Mathews, University of MO
Facebook vs. Smalltown Newspapers

10:15-11:15AM | General Session | **Cornerstone Room**
Free Press? The Marion Co. Record Raid, **Emily Bradbury**

11:30AM | Better Newspaper Contest Lunch | **Ballroom**