

MP MISSOURI PRESS NEWS

Congratulations

to this year's Outstanding Young Journalists



Ryan Pivoney
Jefferson City News Tribune



Jordyn Wilson
The Lake Sun, Osage Beach



Jean Maneke says goodbye to Hotline Attorney duties | P4
Nominations sought for Missouri Press Board of Directors | P5
MPAME travels to Branson for annual meeting | P 10-11

REGULAR FEATURES

President	2
Calendar	3
Jean Maneke	4
Obituaries	15
Scrapbook	15
On the Move	16



When legislators and the courts cut access, tell your readers

Missouri's 2024 legislative session ended in a familiar manner — with gridlock, name-calling and a bunch of dead bills in the Senate, where factional rivalries reached new heights (or lows) in what was likely a prelude to Republican primary season.

That sort of inaction isn't necessarily a bad thing for Missouri Press. Over the past several years, Senate dysfunction has saved us from several bad bills targeting the Sunshine Law or public notices that flew through the House before being caught (whew!) in the logjam on the other side of the statehouse.

Sometimes, though, we hope that our legislators will legislate. In that regard, this session ended in disappointment.

If you caught Jean Maneké's column in the May MPA magazine or have been requesting court documents for your paper in recent months, you've probably noticed the black blobs of redaction that have overtaken the nominally public legal filings in Missouri. New Supreme Court rules propagated over the past year led to an explosion of redaction that often makes it impossible to determine who did what to whom in a given probable cause statement or civil claim.

Working with her counterpart at the Missouri Broadcasters Association, Jean dug into the new rules and discovered they stem from 2023

“Explain to your readers that search warrants and subpoenas and court motions are being concealed because the courts don't think folks with an internet connection can handle the truth.”

legislation drafted by a St. Louis-area state representative, Justin Hicks, who (I'm sure for purely selfless reasons ...) wanted to close certain court records, such as those relating to complaints of physical abuse filed against him by a former paramour.

Sigh. In partnership with the Missouri Press-Bar Commission and

others, MPA and other media orgs lobbied the Supreme Court for a fix, to no avail. Most recently we held our breath hoping for a legislative solution, which died somewhere between Democrats' 50-hour filibuster and Bill Eigel's RINO “joke” in the Senate's final hours.

What comes next? I'm not sure, though there are rumblings of legal action targeting these court rules that fundamentally undermine the idea of a transparent court system. We'll be keeping tabs on that, as well as another troubling trend in the (ostensibly) public courts.

Those of you who regularly work with Case.net have likely noticed the increasing frequency with which court records — in some cases entire case dockets — become inaccessible, sometimes temporarily, sometimes not, due to judges raising the “security level” on the files. Here in Greene County, I've had judges and other court personnel argue such steps are necessary to prevent potential jurors from digging into details they shouldn't prior to a trial.

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*
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*

MISSOURI PRESS NEWS (ISSN 00266671) is published monthly for \$15 per year by the Missouri Press Association, Inc., 802 Locust St., Columbia, MO 65201-4888; phone (573) 449-4167; fax (573) 874-5894; email mmaassen@mopress.com; website www.mopress.com. Periodicals postage paid at Columbia, MO 65201-4888. (USPS No. 355620).

POSTMASTER: Please send changes of address to Missouri Press Association, 802 Locust St., Columbia, MO 65201-4888.

Continued from Page 2: *'Seek truth and report it'*

I find that argument unconvincing and more than a little offensive — I can't be the only one hearing Jack Nicholson's "You can't handle the truth!" — but it also fails to account for all the other documents, including search warrants and subpoena returns, that suddenly are being hidden from public view (hat tip to Katie Kull of the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* for sounding the alarm on some of these more egregious practices).

We're continuing to investigate and monitor that policy, as well, and will do what we can to lobby for a fix — though I'm under no illusions it will be quick. In the meantime, there's something every newspaper and reporter in the state can do, to push back on the problem and serve the public:

Shame them. By which I mean, write clearly and truthfully about the shameful things they're doing.

If a court file is closed ahead of trial, write about it. Tell your readers that you can't share the details of what will be argued in court, or when, because a judge closed the records. Call the judge and ask him or her to explain why the public doesn't have a right to know what goes on in the courthouse — and put that comment or "no comment" in the paper.

Explain to your readers that search warrants and subpoenas and court motions are being concealed because the courts don't think folks with an internet connection can handle the truth. Let 'em know new filings are being redacted into word salad because Rep. Hicks wanted to cover up the protection order his ex took out against him.

Most importantly, don't stop reporting. By concealing information and making it harder for journalists to access details about cases, they're hoping we'll throw our hands up and write about something else.

Don't.

If you can't get a story about the case, write one about the roadblocks thrown up in your way. Name names. Hold the courts and the legislature to account. Let MPA know when you run into trouble (email me at abridges@news-leader.com) and hold us accountable as we work toward a solution.

Whatever you do, don't be quiet, don't move on.

"Seek truth and report it" is just five words; "when convenient" didn't make it past editing.



CALENDAR

June

- 6 — Kevin Jones 1st Amendment Golf Classic, Hermann
- 7 — Missouri Press Association, Service and Foundation Boards Meetings, Hermann
- 7 — Show-Me Press Association Meeting, Hermann
- 13 — Courtroom Training, Cape Girardeau County Courthouse, Jackson
- 13 — Southeast Missouri Press Association Meeting

July

- 4-5 — Missouri Press Offices Closed for Fourth of July Holiday

September

- 19-21 — Missouri Press' Annual Convention, Springfield
- 22-28 — Missouri Photo Workshop, Kennett

October

- 17 — Missouri Photojournalism Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony, Columbia

Did you know?

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

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

Missouri Press Association / Service / Foundation

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

STAFF

Mark Maassen: Executive Director, mmaassen@mopress.com

Matthew Barba: Editor, mbarba@mopress.com

Ted Lawrence: Advertising Director, tlawrence@mopress.com

Michael Harper: Foundation Director, mharper@mopress.com

Kristie Fortier: Member Services, Meeting Planning,
kfortier@mopress.com

Marcie Elfrink: Bookkeeping, melfrink@mopress.com

Jeremy Patton: Advertising Placement, jpatton@mopress.com

Dan Curry: Legal Hotline Counselor, dan@brownandcurry.com

Helen Headrick: NIE & Education Director, hheadrick@mopress.com

Doug Crews: Legislative Director, rdcrews@socket.net

Thanks for the memories

I asked Dan Curry, your new Hotline Attorney, to let me do this final column. Come July 1, I'll be moving on to other adventures in life.

As I said to the board last fall when I told them I was anticipating retirement, this job began as a dream. I went to law school after four years as a reporter at the *Springfield News-Leader*, and when I got out of school, I went back to being a reporter, initially as a writer/columnist for a national trade magazine, then a financial writer/columnist for the *Kansas City Times*.

After two years there, I took a job as a litigation manager for a media insurance company and, while there, was introduced to the concept of a state's hotline attorney. Missouri didn't have one.

It wasn't long before I started dreaming my dream. And at the convention in the fall of 1992, it happened. My dream came true.

Since then, I've dedicated much of my life to being there whenever you needed me, to support journalists in Missouri. This has been such an education.

You've taught me about law in Missouri's criminal courts. You've taught me about the legislative process and how laws are written. I've learned how cameras in the courtroom work (and don't work).

I've learned the struggles newspaper publishers have.

But I've also learned the most important lesson for me. My background was from a somewhat large newspaper. There, I went from doing obits to covering federal court, a presidential campaign, the crash of the plane carrying Jerry Litton on election night. I'll admit I came into the hotline attorney job with a love of large metro papers.

This job gave me the chance to see up close the role smaller community newspapers play in their towns. Your reporters cover the local fair, the city council meeting (where nobody ever heard of the Sunshine Law) and then the local court docket, all in one day.

"Thanks again for the role each of you played in making this dream of mine come true. I truly am one of those lucky people who has never worked a day in her lifetime!"

(Well, perhaps I exaggerate a little, but I swear it's pretty close to reality).

Without community papers, nobody would know much about the candidates for their local races. Nobody would hear about money missing from the county or city financial records that a local official tapped into. And nobody would hear about Grandma Sally's hundredth birthday or the damage caused by a once-in-a-lifetime cicada emergence.

As we've seen large metro papers cut staff to the bones and move printing out of state, the advantage of a metro paper diminishes and my appreciation for community newspapers grows. Your reporters and the editor do it all. There certainly will always be a place for major metro papers, but both operations play key roles in covering news for citizens.

And I've learned to appreciate well-educated journalists. I am not talking about the result of our J-School, although it plays an extremely important role here. Some of us didn't go there. Some of you didn't even get the chance to go to college.

But I am amazed at how well some of you understand the law related to journalists. Especially the Sunshine Law. There is a huge appreciation by your hotline attorney for those of you who have learned to look up what the law says in order to better discuss the situation with your local citizens.

In fact, there have been many times I've had to pull my Sunshine Law handbook and check to make sure that you didn't understand it better than I did. The times I realize "you're right!" give me a great deal of pleasure! I've always wanted to leave you with a better grasp of the tools you need to do your job.

I similarly leave you in good hands with Dan Curry. Dan and I have worked the last few months to bring him up to speed and to give him all the resources he needs. Dan remembers calling the hotline attorney well back in the days before he began practicing law. He knows the job well.

Where am I going? Nowhere immediately, but in the next few months we are moving out to Santa Barbara, to be closer to family. I will find a way to keep my finger in journalism or law (although I'm not starting a practice out there!). I certainly want time to write for my own pleasure and maybe spend time on some hobbies.

Thanks again for the role each of you played in making this dream of mine come true. I truly am one of those lucky people who has never worked a day in her lifetime!



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

Nominations needed for MPA's 2025 Board directors

The Missouri Press Association nominating committee will meet during the summer to decide on candidates for 2025 MPA Second Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer and four Directors.

The terms of current directors Bryan Jones, *Morgan County Statesman*, Versailles, and Gary Castor, *Jefferson City News-Tribune*, are expiring Dec. 31, 2024. A third director's position formerly held by the late Kevin Jones will also expire at the end of 2024.

MPA Secretary Ron Schott, *Wright County Journal*, Mountain Grove, and MPA Treasurer Ken Garner, Garner Media Holdings, Maryville, are serving one-year terms which expire Dec. 31.

As current board members fill positions of leadership on the board, and accounting for the open director's seat, a fourth Director position will be left vacant by the election

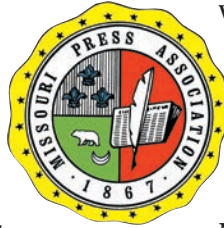
of an existing Board member to Second Vice President.

Persons who wish to be considered for any of the positions, including those currently serving members whose terms are expiring, must complete a nomination form and return it to MPA by July 1.

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

Roger Dillon, *Shannon County Current Wave*, Eminence, immediate past president of MPA, is chairman of the nominating committee this year. Elections will be held during the MPA Business Meeting on Friday, Sept. 20, in Springfield during MPA's 158th Annual Convention.

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



Hotline Attorney handed off

For Missouri Press News

On June 1, Missouri Press Association marked a momentous change as the Hotline Attorney role was officially taken over by Dan Curry.

Curry was hired in March by the Missouri Press Association and Service (MPA and MPS) boards of directors to replace Jean Maneke, who is retiring. Maneke originated the Hotline Attorney role for MPA, starting in December 1992.

"It becomes clearer every day that issues related to the First Amendment, including freedom of the press, have never been more important to our democracy," Curry said. "I look forward to giving my every effort to ensure Missouri Press' member newspapers get the answers they need on everything from the Sunshine Law to court records to copyright issues."

Maneke has been working with

Curry to familiarize the new Hotline Attorney with ongoing issues MPA members are currently facing.

"Dan knows firsthand how important this role is, and like MPA's members, he believes in the importance of strong journalism. I feel confident in leaving the Association's Hotline Attorney in his capable hands," Maneke said.

With Maneke's retirement, questions for the Hotline Attorney should be directed to Curry at (816) 756-5458 or by email at dan@brownandcurry.com.

MPA Executive Director Mark Maassen said Missouri Press is better because of the work Maneke has done over the last 30-plus years.

"Jean has made an enduring legacy that has improved journalism in Missouri," Maassen said. "The members of Missouri

Press are thankful for her patience and enthusiasm for finding answers



Dan Curry



Jean Maneke

Need to contact the Hotline Attorney?

Dan Curry can be reached by phone at (816) 756-5458; or by email at dan@brownandcurry.com

to some of the toughest questions our industry has faced, all while helping to better inform lawmakers in Jefferson City and provide input on pending legislation.

"I know Dan will continue to provide the Association and its members with the high level of counsel they've come to rely on in today's publishing world. I look forward to working with him over the coming months as we navigate Missouri Press through this transition, confident it will be smooth thanks to the stable footing put in place through Jean's decades of diligence and hard work," Maassen said.

Find Jean's final column for *Missouri Press News* on Page 4 of this month's magazine.

Lake of the Ozarks, Jefferson City journalists named 2024's OYJs

By Missouri Press Staff
Missouri Press News

In recognition of their commitment and excellence, two journalists have been selected by Missouri Press Association to receive this year's William E. James Outstanding Young Journalist award.

MPA President Amos Bridges announced Ryan Pivoney of Jefferson City and Jordyn Wilson of Lake Ozark will receive their awards Sept. 21, in Springfield, during the Association's 158th Annual Convention and Trade Show awards luncheon.

"We are recognizing the 16th year for this award, with its 12th being named in honor of our late colleague, William E. James," said Bridges, editor-in-chief of the *Springfield News-Leader*. "Missouri Press recognizes the critical importance of celebrating young talent and showing our appreciation for the dedication these journalists give to our very demanding profession."

"This year, we're recognizing two individuals, one from the daily that covers the Show-Me State's capital city and the other from a semi-weekly covering one of our state's most well-known destinations for visitors from around Missouri and outside of it," Bridges said. "Although these are very different communities, they provide unique reporting challenges that Jordyn and Ryan have shown themselves capable of facing head-on."

Ryan Pivoney

Ryan Pivoney joined the *Jefferson City News Tribune* in May 2021, shortly after his graduation from Truman State University, where he served as editor-in-chief of the student-run *The Index*. His initial beat was covering state government news and Lincoln University, made all the more daunting because he was hired to replace longtime community legend Bob Watson following his untimely death.

News Tribune Editor Gary Castor wrote in Pivoney's nomination that the "fresh out of journalism school" reporter tackled the role successfully, crediting a foundation of good journalistic skills combined with curiosity, dedication and humility.

"Ryan could have easily been overwhelmed with the duties of such a critical beat at our newspaper," Castor wrote. "Yet he rose to the challenge because he had that solid foundation in journalism. He knew the questions to ask of sources and he possessed the confidence to ask them.

"More importantly, he knew he had a lot to learn, and he asked questions of his peers in hopes of improving his skills and his confidence in this new job. He put his ego aside and listened to the criticism and encouragement, realizing he could learn from both," Castor added.

With exceptional organizational skills and extensive experience, Pivoney has become a pivotal player in the *News Tribune's* daily coverage, managing long-term projects in the newsroom and helping to direct the newspaper's other reporting staff. In January 2023, he was promoted to assistant city editor.

"Most importantly, Ryan listens well," Castor wrote. "To this day, Ryan's first questions are almost always how he can help when an opportunity presents itself and how might he better his skills and service. He listens to his source's answers to his questions, looking for opportunities to delve deeper into the subject.

"And he uses those listening skills to understand the questions of his reporting staff, as well as to discern how he can best help them achieve success," Castor continued. "We all would do well to follow this approach."

Continued on Page 7



Jordyn Wilson



Ryan Pivoney



Ryan Pivoney, right, covers the Cole County Fair for the *Jefferson City News Tribune*. Since joining the newspaper in 2021, he has displayed a solid foundation of good journalistic skills. (Submitted photo/*Jefferson City News Tribune*)

Continued from Page 6: Wilson, Pivoney will receive awards at MPA's Annual Convention.

Jordyn Wilson

Jordyn Wilson joined *The Lake Sun*, Osage Beach, in August 2022, fresh out of earning her multimedia journalism degree from Simpson College in Indianola, Iowa, where she had been editor of *The Simpsonian*. Raised in a community of fewer than 500 people, Wilson wanted to work for a newspaper that had a direct impact on the local community.

Lake Sun Editor Dan Field wrote in his nomination of Wilson that 2022 was a tough time for a college graduate looking to break into the journalism field. Wilson, who had family connections in central Missouri, also learned that community newspapers like the *Lake Sun* put focus on "refrigerator journalism," rather than chasing the next big story.

"Jordyn wasn't deterred," Field wrote. "With her small-town background, she fit in immediately and had the insight to ask the right questions when writing stories about everything from local events to government.

"Her Midwest values are often called upon in her coverage of local events and government," Field added. "She actually relished the opportunity to cover Camden County Commission meetings along with the Village of Four Seasons Trustees, two vastly different government entities."

Wilson built bridges with each group but did not shy away from controversial issues, Field continued, and because of her work, she



Originally from a town of less than 500, Jordyn Wilson, right, has embraced her work around the Lake of the Ozarks since joining *The Lake Sun* in 2022. She has gained respect and trust from residents and readers through her ability to cover the area's various communities fairly. (Submitted photo/*The Lake Sun*)

gained the trust and respect of both governmental bodies.

In addition to her reporting duties, late last year Wilson took on editor duties for the newspaper's tourist-driven publication, *Vacation News*.

"Jordyn is a conscientious reporter and writer, verifying her information and quotes. Although she is a novice reporter, she has learned from her

mentors and has used that knowledge to broaden the depth of her reporting and writing," Field wrote. "Jordyn epitomizes the role of a young reporter and journalist."

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

During the Missouri Press Foundation Better Newspaper Contest awards luncheon, Sept. 21, at the Hotel Vandivort in Springfield, winners will be presented a plaque and a \$500 check.

Editors or publishers submit nominations for the awards and nominees must have been younger than 30 years old on Jan. 1, 2024. The aim of the award is to reinforce the importance of a journalist's role by recognizing and nurturing talent to further promote quality journalism.

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

It's easy to earn your press pass, thanks to MPA

From Missouri Press Staff

Earn Your Press Pass helps fill the gaps for newspapers having difficulty recruiting trained journalists. The course provides new hires or freelancers 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.

The goal of Earn Your Press Pass is to impart practical,

usable knowledge to participants. Lessons are designed to take the layperson to a functioning newspaper reporter upon completion in a straight-forward and comprehensive approach.

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

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



Need something to binge? Digiversity.tv is cheaper than ‘those other guys’

Sure, the content might be a lot more specific when you go to Digiversity.tv, but you’re guaranteed to learn something.

And it’s hard to beat the price because there isn’t one. Access to Digiversity.tv is provided to Missouri Press Association member newspapers at no cost.

If you aren’t already signed up, shoot an email to mbarba@mopress.com to get access.

So, what does access get you? Digiversity.tv focuses on the Adobe Creative Cloud suite of products. Russell Viers' videos follow the same engaged, energetic teaching style MPA’s members have seen from him firsthand for more than 25 years. He and other presenters also cover various topics in written articles and live webcasts.

The content guide, accessible at the top of the front page, shows you everything you can learn, including multiple series covering everything from art and advertising illustration to layout to image adjustment and most things in between.

Russell even offers a small section on “practical jokes,” although it might be more useful as a primer on what not to do within the various Adobe programs.

How to sign up:

Go online to
bit.ly/DigiversityMPA

OR

email Matthew Barba at
mbarba@mopress.com.

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

The best part of Digiversity.tv is there no cost for you and all your staff to sign up. It is a benefit of your membership with Missouri Press Association.

It is preferred every staffer using the web-site signs up with a unique email address.

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

MPA awards scholarships to students from Hermann, Odessa

By Missouri Press Staff
Missouri Press News

Allison Boedges of Hermann and Emma Jones of Odessa have been selected as this year's recipients of the Rural Missouri Newspaper Scholarship. The scholarship is a partnership of the Missouri Press Association, Missouri Press Foundation, University of Missouri School of Journalism and Reynolds Journalism Institute.

The Rural Missouri Newspaper Scholarship awards recipients \$5,000 each semester, up to eight semesters while enrolled in the Missouri School of Journalism. Qualification is determined through the federal FAFSA program. Students can also receive an additional \$5,000 summer fellowship funded by RJI and can apply for a further \$1,200 from RJI's Potter Digital Ambassador program.

Boedges and Jones plan to study journalism at the Missouri School of Journalism next year, with both agreeing to work at rural Missouri newspapers following graduation as part of the scholarship process.

An experienced reporter and editor for Odessa High School's *The Growler*, Jones also gives back to her community, volunteering for efforts such as Special Olympics and HopeKids, which coordinates events, activities and support for families of children with life-threatening medical conditions.

In her application essay, Jones wrote that when growing up she used writing as an outlet for expressing her feelings and communicating with her parents. Her childhood also speaks volumes to the benefits of the Newspaper in Education program helping young people know and understand what is going on in the world around them.

"Growing up in rural Missouri has allowed me to see the importance of local journalism in a way that not many can," Jones wrote. "In my town, every Thursday, each teacher was given a copy of the weekly newspaper. Luckily, my father was a teacher and was sure to provide me with my own issue, allowing me to read the paper every week before I went to class."

Reading the local newspaper led Jones to consume other media and a realization about the world, including many of her fellow classmates. "I realized how little everyone around me knew about what was going on locally," she wrote.

With a return to a rural community after college, Jones hopes to use her work as a journalist to inspire progress and help facilitate positive change.

"Rural Missouri is more than just a place to return to after college for me, it's my home," Jones wrote. "By dedicating my work to it after finishing school, I not only will get to do something I love, but I will also be capable of fulfilling my

civil duty by helping improve a place I love.

Crediting her history growing up reading the *Odessan*, Jones hopes she can do the same one day. "I aspire to ... spark the love for journalism in another young girl, just like my paper did for me."

Boedges' journalism experience includes three years in editor roles with the Hermann High School Yearbook Club but almost four years writing regularly for the *Hermann Advertiser Courier*. She got her start at age 14 with a brief feature on COVID-19 from a kid's point of view, published the summer before her freshman year of high school.

"It was at that point that a whole new world opened up to me," Boedges wrote in her scholarship application. "This writing allowed me to share things that were important to me or, even more exciting, things that were important to the people and the community that I love."

Boedges wrote about growing up on a farm north of Hermann and how in a small, rural community you connect with the people around you in a different way. Those people she met through her work with the newspaper and other community volunteer efforts, such as for the Montgomery County Fair, have inspired her to want to become a rural community journalist.

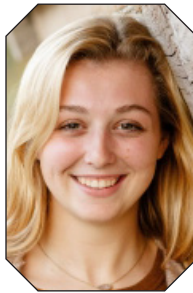
After a follow-up article, also written at age 14, about the pandemic's effect on area farmers, Boedges began writing a bi-monthly column, titled "Bearcats by Boedges." It allowed her to bring news from Hermann High staff and students to the wider community. The column was even sponsored by East Central College.

Boedges began her junior year as a stringer for the Hermann newspaper, improving her writing quality and substance. By the summer of 2023, leading into her senior year, she was writing pieces for the *Advertiser Courier* and *The Montgomery Standard*.

"Now, as I near the end of my senior year of high school ... and look towards my future as a journalist, there are few things I am sure of," Boedges wrote. "As I prepare to leave behind this town that represents everything and everyone I have ever known, it is a bittersweet time for me. Little is known, but I can tell you that I am certain of my desire to grow old in a town just like the one I grew up in.

"One with the same values, the same sense of community, and the same opportunity for true connections," Boedges added. "That is my dream."

Questions about the Rural Missouri Newspaper Scholarship can be directed to Missouri Press Foundation Director Michael Harper at (573) 449-4167, ext. 303, or at mharper@mopress.com. Applications for the scholarship are accepted at the beginning of each year.



Allison Boedges



Emma Jones

MPAME heads to Branson



Missouri Press Advertising and Marketing Executives held its annual meeting in April at the Hilton Promenade at Branson Landing. The group spent a day and a half sharing ideas, learning and celebrating each other. In addition to

knowledge, attendees took home awards from the Best Ad Contest and capped the evening off with drinks (and possibly a sore shoulder) at a local bowling alley. Find more pictures on Missouri Press' Facebook page. (Staff photos)

From Missouri Press Staff

Missouri Press Advertising and Marketing Executives traveled to Branson in April for its annual meeting, electing new officers, learning how to improve their businesses and awarding the work members did in 2023.

Leading MPAME for the next year will be Stephanie Schumer-Vandeven of the *Perry County Republic-Monitor*, who takes over for Gina Langston after the latter served two terms as president. The group met April 18-19, at the Hilton Promenade at Branson Landing.

In addition to the annual Best Ad Contest awards, MPAME also presented the Dee Hamilton Memorial Sales Pro of the Year to Deanna Moore of Phillips Media Group. Moore has decades of sales experience and currently serves as publisher of several newspapers around the Springfield area.

Notably absent from this year's MPAME meeting was the late Kevin Jones, a former president of the group who died in January. Bryan Chester of the *Columbia Missourian* made a short presentation in remembrance of Jones and his many contributions to MPAME, including advocating the group change its name from Missouri Advertising Managers Association to be more inclusive of other professionals in the business, and Missouri journalism in general.

Photos from the event are available on Missouri Press Association's Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/missouri.press>.

You can also join the MPAME Facebook group. Find it by searching for "Missouri Advertising and Marketing Executives" on Facebook.

If you are interested in becoming more involved with MPAME, please contact a board member or Kristie Fortier at kfortier@mopress.com or by phone at (574) 449-4167.

The location for next year's MPAME meeting is still being determined. Please stay tuned to Missouri Press' emails and newsletters for more information about next year's meeting and Best Ad Contest.



Deanna Moore, center, group publisher for Phillips Media Group, receives this year's Dee Hamilton Memorial Sales Pro of the Year award. Moore has worked in newspaper sales for many years and recently took over publishing duties for Phillips' newspapers around Springfield. Presenting this year's award were Jim Hamilton, former husband of the late Dee Hamilton, both of whom worked for the Buffalo Reflex, and Melissa Saner, daughter of Jim and Dee Hamilton.



At left, Stephanie Schumer-Vandeven, left, receives the Best in Show award in MPAME's Best Ad Contest. Winners of the contest were featured in the May issue of Missouri Press News. Schumer-Vandeven also took over as president of MPAME at the April meeting.

More from MPAME's meeting

Richard E. Brown was the main speaker for this year's Missouri Press Advertising and Marketing Executives meeting. Brown presented on simplifying digital advertising for beginners, onboarding new sales executives for maximum impact on revenue and customer-centric strategies that boost newspaper's bottom line. (Staff photos)



At left, from left, Katelyn Mary Skaggs and Peggy Scott with Jefferson County Leader talk with Stephanie Schumer-Vandeven of the Perry County Republic-Monitor and Kim Combs of the Wayne County Journal-Banner during a break in MPAME's meeting in Branson. Above, Stephanie Watkins with the Jackson Cash-Book Journal presents during the Best Ideas session on a community logo contest the newspaper sponsored.



Jean Maneke, former Missouri Press Association Hotline Attorney, presents on artificial intelligence during the MPAME meeting. Maneke was the Hotline Attorney for more than 30 years and a staple presenter at the advertising meeting to answer questions about various issues affecting newspapers, including AI.

More photos from the MPAME meeting are available through Missouri Press' Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/missouri.press>.

The *Unterrified Democrat* doesn't want to scare you with its skeleton Mr. UD Readsalot just wants to get your attention.

By Matthew Barba
Missouri Press News

It's one thing to operate your newspaper with a skeleton crew, but since last Halloween, the *Unterrified Democrat* in Linn has been operating with a skeleton ON the crew. Sort of.

Enter Mr. UD Readsalot.

Connie Warden, the *Unterrified Democrat's* (UD) office manager and co-owner, said the newspaper's staff had been looking for a skeleton decoration to purchase because "we thought it'd be fun to have one here."

Striking out at the local graveyards, citing too much "prep work" to get a skeleton from there ready for "prime time," Warden said one of the newspaper's employees, Kim Verslues, found the perfect candidate in Jefferson City for only \$40.

"Connie had her heart set on a skeleton for the office," Verslues said. "One evening, I was in Walgreens and on my way out, there on the shelf was Mr. UD Readsalot, although he didn't know it yet."

"As it turns out, it was the best \$40 we could have spent," Warden said. "I never really thought our skeleton would be any more than a Halloween decoration. But Kim had an idea one day of taking a picture of the skeleton in a chair with the paper and then taking a picture of another UD employee, Rob Eisterhold, our ad salesman for Maries and Osage counties, in the exact same pose."

Verslues added, "I'm not sure who had the idea of putting him in an ad, but we set to work on the props and then adding Rob to an identical photo. I put together an ad but being that I am not a graphic artist, Dennis [Warden] took over and designed the final 'first' ad featuring Mr. UD Readsalot."

The photos were coupled with the tagline, "Starving for local news?" and the result endeared Mr. UD Readsalot to readers. What has followed has



STARVING for local news?

Don't let this happen to you.

CALL: 573-897-3150 today to START YOUR SUBSCRIPTION TO THE U.D. or go online: UnterrifiedDemocrat.com Rates start at just 58¢ per week

OSAGE COUNTY
Unterrified Democrat
SINCE 1866

Top, Dennis Warden, publisher of the *Unterrified Democrat*, introduces Mr. UD Readsalot during the Best Ideas session at the Missouri Press Advertising Managers and Executives meeting in April. Warden said the skeleton prop has been used in several promotions, from a "help wanted" ad for the newspaper to launching a new pets-focused special section Above, Mr. UD Readsalot's first appearance opposite ad salesman Rob Eisterhold. (Staff photo)

been a steady flow of ideas utilizing the skeleton in various advertisements, promotions and public appearances.

"Probably my favorite Mr. UD

appearance was at the Linn Lions Christmas Parade," Connie Warden said. Adorned with a Santa hat and red and white scarf, Mr. UD was seated in an office chair during the parade.

"He received cheers, waves and huge smiles along with candy thrown in his lap," Warden said. "I think that really started my thinking that we've got a good thing going here."

Verslues said she has seen Mr. UD as a chance to throw some fun into her work, while bringing smiles and laughter to the community that interacts with the newspaper.

"Of course, after Halloween we couldn't just stick him away in a closet, so we started coming up with prop ideas for the upcoming holidays," Verslues said. "February, he was decked out in a top hat covered with, yep, you guessed it, UD newspaper. He also had a bow tie and a bouquet of roses made of UD papers. Quite the gentleman.

"I really liked the way he put 'Love in the Air' for Valentine's Day," she added.

In March, the skeleton was fitted with green wig, sparkling vest and top hat, as well as some boxer shorts sporting shiny green clover leaves. For Easter, he held his very own basket, with plush bunny and a comically large plastic egg.

For Eisterhold's birthday in April, the office helped him celebrate with a Hawaiian-themed day and Mr. UD even got in on the festivities with his own Hawaiian shirt and a newspaper lei. In May, the newspaper used Mr. UD to celebrate Cinco de Mayo, fitting him with a red sequined sombrero and guitar.

"This simple Halloween prop has become a happy mascot for our office, town, county and our many subscribers," Verslues said. "We hope that when folks see him, he makes them smile and laugh if even for a few minutes. This world needs happier things to read about."

Continued on Page 13

Continued from Page 12: How do you promote your newspaper to readers?

Growing fame

Mr. UD Readsalot has even been featured in a “help wanted” ad for the newspaper, with the extra help necessary since the skeleton was “working his fingers to the bone.” The mascot even helped the newspaper launch a new special section this year in honor of National Pet Week, which featured pictures of readers’ pets.

There have also been interactions within the community the newspaper staff didn’t realize until later. On April 8, the day of the solar eclipse, the UD employees watched the celestial event with homemade box viewers and a local business owner took a picture of the skeleton to post on social media, tagging it as “this is what happened to co-owner, Connie Warden when she didn’t take solar eclipse warnings seriously.”

“We had not realized that Mr. UD was out there on Facebook when someone came into the office and mentioned it,” Warden said.

Now that same business owner is in talks for Mr. UD to appear in advertising, and the newspaper is working with other businesses on ad ideas, including a local chiropractor.

“Can you imagine Mr. UD Readsalot pumping gas at a local gas station, buying a new truck, trying on a pair of new boots, getting his back adjusted or checking out a new lawn mower? We have some ideas for Osage County businesses that we’ll be approaching them with,” Warden said.

In the meantime, if other newspapers are considering adopting a mascot to have fun with and integrate into marketing materials, Warden says to go for it.



Above left, Connie Warden accompanies Mr. UD Readsalot to last year’s Linn Lions Christmas Parade. So far, it has been her favorite use of the skeleton prop-turned-mascot. Above right, Kim Verslues, who found Mr. UD Readsalot for the newspaper, really likes how he helped promote the newspaper leading up to Valentine’s Day earlier this year. Below right, During the April solar eclipse, a local business owner snapped a photo of Mr. UD Readsalot and posted it on social media. The newspaper republished the photo but also used the opportunity to open talks for using the skeleton in an advertisement for the business. (Submitted)

“Our job as a local newspaper is, of course, to report what is happening in our communities but also to be more than that for the readers,” Warden said. “Don’t worry about being so serious all the time. Life can be stressful for everyone, but if you can bring a little bit of fun and laughter into others’ lives, then you become more than just a method for them to receive news.

“You become a part of a bright spot in their day that they look forward to,” she added.

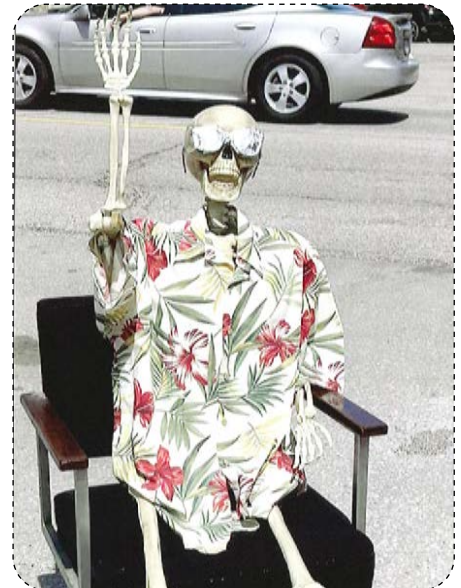
Love is in the air!

Show you care - Give someone a subscription to the UD today!

Mr. UD Readsalot loves the UD - You will too!
Subscribe or Renew today!

\$40 in county for 1 year/\$105 for 3 years, \$46 in state for 1 year/\$123 for 3 years, \$52 for out of state/\$141 for 3 years

Call today: (573) 897-3150



Reserve your sleeping room for the Convention today!
The process to reserve a sleeping room for Missouri Press Association’s 158th Annual Convention and Trade Show is a little different this year. Members 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.

Resources to get your story started



Every Business Needs an Online Presence.

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



The Missouri Bar
Jefferson City • 573-635-4128
Find us on Twitter @mobarnews,
on Facebook.com/MissouriBar



MISSOURI FARM BUREAU
www.mofb.org

For information about agriculture or issues affecting rural Missouri call 573.893.1468.




Missouri State Medical Association

For all things medical in Missouri, turn to the experts at the Missouri State Medical Association.

Lizabeth Fleenor
800-869-6762 • lfleenor@msma.org
www.msma.org

2,913,035

NEWSPAPERS mailed weekly through Interlink's postal presort.

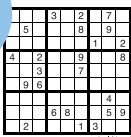
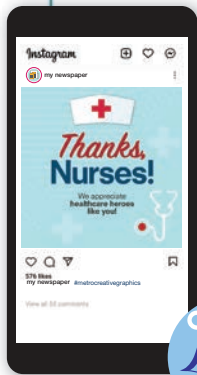
Learn why we are newspaper mail experts.



HOW NEWSPAPERS DO MAIL™

www.ilsw.com | 888-473-3103 | info@ilsw.com

“ I didn't know you had this! ”



- PRINT & DIGITAL SPEC ADS
- ARTICLES & RECIPES
- PUZZLES & HOROSCOPES
- SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS
- CUSTOMER REQUESTS
- FREE WEBINARS

& so much more



FREE TRIAL OFFER!

METRO

800-223-1600

service@metro-email.com

metrocreativeconnection.com

CREATE. SELL. PROFIT.

Visit metrocreativeconnection.com to see all we offer!

OBITUARIES



Fulton

Ryan Boland

Ryan Christopher Boland, 60, of Fulton died April 22, 2024, at University of Missouri Hospital, surrounded by his loved ones.

Boland attended college at Northeast Missouri State University, now Truman State University. He worked as the sports editor for the *Fulton Sun* for nearly 30 years but most recently worked at the Dollar General Warehouse in Fulton.

In addition to his wife, Kati, he is survived by two daughters, Jordyn and Ryli, and a son, Kevin; as well as many more family and friends.



Kansas City

G. Fred Wickman

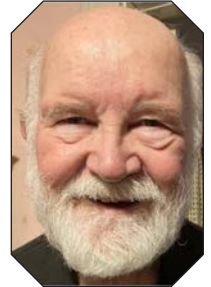
Gustav Fred Wickman, 77, of Kansas City died April 27, 2024.

A 1968 graduate of the Missouri School of Journalism, he afterwards served in the U.S. Navy, first on a nuclear-powered ship and later as a recruiter in St. Louis.

Wickman joined *The Kansas City Star* in 1973 as a reporter, staying there for 23 years and eventually becoming a columnist for the newspaper. He shared the workplace with his wife, Rosanne, for 14 years, whom he met while they both served on the national board of the Society of Professional Journalists.

After leaving *The Star*, he taught a news writing class at the University of Missouri-Kansas City and advised the student newspaper.

In addition to his wife, he is survived by their son, Ben, and many more family, friends and colleagues.



SCRAPBOOK



SEDALIA DEMOCRAT

Sedalia — In April the *Sedalia Democrat* announced it was transitioning to a twice-weekly newspaper with print days on Tuesdays and Fridays. Previously, the newspaper had printed a one-section newspaper Tuesday-Friday and a two-section paper on Saturdays.

Publisher Jamila Khalil told readers in the announcement, “The newspaper industry has been going through major changes and challenges over the last two decades as people have shifted their news habits. Changing our print publication days was not an easy decision, but it was a decision that will allow the *Democrat* to adapt in an evolving market and continue operating as Pettis County’s only newspaper.”

The newspaper assured readers that breaking news and times coverage will continue to be published on the newspaper’s website as they happen. Khalil said the change in publication schedule will allow the newspaper to add to the printed product and update parts of the decision.

Both editions of the twice-weekly version of the *Democrat* will contain news and sports in one section, along with an opinion page, features and classifieds in the B section. New monthly columns and weekly rotating features are also being considered.

St. Louis — In late May it was announced the *Riverfront Times* alt-weekly newspaper in St. Louis had been sold and all of the newspaper’s editorial staff laid off. Reporting about the sale of the newspaper did not disclose its buyer as of press time

for *Missouri Press News*.

The *Riverfront Times* was founded in 1976 and had been sold a few times since, with the most recent coming in 2023 to Big Lou Holdings LLC, which publishes similar alt-weekly newspapers in other cities around the country.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the newspaper struggled as many of its advertisers were forced to close or significantly change their operations and events were canceled. It was even announced all but two employees had been laid off. However, on March 25, 2020, the community showed their support for the publication and staff ended up publishing the “Can’t Stop, Won’t Stop” edition of the *RFT*.



Make sure political advertisements contain 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.



Sedalia — Jack Denebeim was hired in February as the *Sedalia Democrat's* sports editor, having graduated from the University of Kansas in December 2023 with a bachelor's degree in journalism and mass communication and minor in sports management. While at KU, he worked as a sports editor and reporter for the Eudora Times, as well as spent a semester working as a multimedia journalist for KUJH News in Lawrence, Kan.



A native of Shawnee, Kan., Denebeim said he was excited to land the role of sports editor in Sedalia. "Something relatively close to home with a community that cares deeply about its sports teams was very intriguing to me," Denebeim told readers. "I'm excited to continue my career and continue to grow as a journalist in Sedalia."

For his work at the *Eudora Times*, Denebeim won 12 awards in Kansas Press Association's editorial contest, including third place in the statewide New Journalist of the Year competition.

Denebeim replaced Bryan Everson, who left the *Democrat* to take a sports editor role at the *Oakland Press* in Oakland County, Mich.

Warrenton — Jack Underwood is a new staff writer for the *Warren County Record*, beginning in April. A native St. Louisan, Underwood's responsibilities include directing the newspaper's news coverage and editorial focus.



A graduate of the Missouri School of Journalism, Underwood previously worked as a reporter at the Scottsbluff Star-Herald in western Nebraska, where he covered local government, business and healthcare.

"We're excited for Jack to join our team," Publisher Tim Schmidt told readers in announcing the hire. "He understands the role of a community newspaper in the communities we serve and that will keep The Record as the go-to source for local news."

Pulaski County — Allison Skinner has been hired as content manager for *Pulaski County Weekly* and *Phelps County Focus*, two publications of Salem Publishing, which also operates *The Salem News*. Skinner had previously been general manager and editor at the *West Plains Daily Quill* from 2002-2021, before becoming city clerk for West Plains and then working in the insurance industry for the last year in Rolla.

Salem Publishing President Donald Dodd said the company is fortunate to bring Skinner on board as her experience and skills align with future plans for expanding

coverage. She will coordinate coverage for Pulaski and Phelps counties, while writing stories that focus on Pulaski County. "We have wanted to step up news coverage in Pulaski County, and hiring Allison enables us to do that," he said.



"When I first became a beat reporter, I was terrified," Skinner told *Pulaski County Weekly* readers of her first job as a staff writer/photographer in 2002. "I had no idea what I'd agreed to do. I am grateful for a career in which I could visit with people on every topic, from about how they met the love of their life, to what brings them joy; or find success in their chosen fields. I've taken flight in a homemade helicopter, interviewed prominent leaders and well-known artists, and helped those suffering loss.

"It didn't matter who I was talking to, my job was always to listen and tell their story to others, whether it was the governor of the state of Missouri, or a farmer with the largest potato he's ever grown. I treat everyone with respect and curiosity."

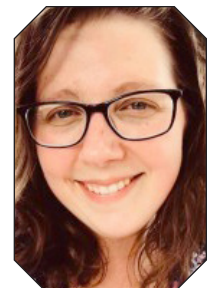
Fulton — Emily O'Leary took over the editor's role at the *Fulton Sun* last month, replacing Anakin Bush. O'Leary has been with the newspaper for about a year and studied communication and media at Truman State University, graduating in 2023.



Bush is returning to his hometown of St. Joseph for a job with rail and highway contractor Herzog.

"Looking to the future, the *Fulton Sun* is in very capable hands with Emily," Bush wrote in his farewell to readers. "I have seen her grow as a writer, and I know she will be an excellent editor."

Moberly — Megan Pullyard joined the *Monitor-Index* in late March as the publication's newest reporter. Originally from Maine, Pullyard moved to Missouri in 2011 and had previously written for another area publication.



"I am a librarian at heart, and I enjoy researching and writing about our community," Pullyard told *Monitor-Index* readers. "It has been a great blessing to be able to write about the wonderful families living in Randolph County."

She received her bachelor's degree in English from Columbia College and a master's in information science and learning technologies from the University of Missouri.



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.

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, Lucas Presson, Cape Girardeau; Second Vice President, Tamara Buck, Cape Girardeau; Secretary-Treasurer, Gina Raffety, Jackson; Historian, Peggy Scott, Festus. Directors: Kim Combs, Piedmont; and Jay Forness, Jackson.

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, Rachel Becker, University of Central Missouri; Vice President, Sydney Ellison, Truman State University; Secretary, Ellie Whitesell, University of Central Missouri; Adviser, Julie Lewis, University of Central Missouri; and MPA Liaison, Jack Dimond, Missouri State University.

Member Opinion: Artificial intelligence is here to stay

By Matt Pearl

Publisher, Tri-County News

Approximately 39 percent of my time spent in education and in publishing goes to my being my own tech support.

Okay, that's a made-up number. Most weeks it's significantly less than that, but those weeks when I feel like I'm constantly making fixes to this, solving a font issue for that or getting an outdated computer going long enough to rescue a few useful files – well, those weeks make me feel like it's me who's getting a bit old.

But I can't deny that working my way through a problem with technology gives me a thrill. And having other people think I know something about computers feels, well, nice.

Never mind that I can't find my way around several of the games on my kids' gaming console, and forget the fact that my last round of office tech repairs – figuring out how to turn the email function back on for the copier – took me two months. Still, in the right moment, I can shine for a minute or two.

Perhaps soon my skills as an amateur computer applications helper-outer will be obsolete. I can't imagine that folks are pumping all of this money into artificial intelligence without there being a real possibility that AI will be our future tech support medium.

Artificial intelligence is intriguing and, I must admit, a bit frightening to me. My professional life has been dedicated to the written word, both as an English teacher and as a newspaper publisher. But it's the task of writing that seems to be one of AI's early targets.

People just don't enjoy writing for the most part, preferring it only slightly to speaking in public. I like to write, but the fact that most people do not has given me a niche in which I can operate professionally. You want to know information, I like to write, so you pay me (and my staff, of course) to write things for you. It's a simple deal,



Matt Pearl is publisher of the Tri-County News in King City.

and it has been a satisfactory one for many years now.

But I won't live forever. Imagine the world as it could be a few decades from now, when the task of composing words has so few devotees that everything you read came from a bot. You really don't need to imagine much at all: you and I would probably be shocked if we knew how much of what we had read on social media was created by a computer.

The implications of AI to create necessary instructional models and products is exciting, but I'm less enthused with computers replacing writers, actors, artists and others who work to impact the world through use of creativity.

As we speak, there are newspaper organizations that have begun experimenting with using artificial intelligence to write stories for publication. And maybe that's the natural progression of thing, but it's unsettling to me.

I guess I'll have to get over my trepidations about AI: when have you ever known technology to move backyard? Once the human race gets into our imaginations to do a thing, we generally persist in getting it done – and then, when we have reached the finish line, we take our newfound innovation past the point of its intended use and create a whole new set of problems to solve.

Oh, well. Perhaps that's all further in the future than we think. For the next several years, AI will likely remain a novelty – a way to use a website to assemble information into an organized written format, or to compose an 'original' painting of a llama playing an accordion. And, I would say, AI will soon be your first option for technology support.

Until that time when a helper-bot completely replaces my ability to reboot computers, change default settings on Microsoft Word and make the totals come out on the Excel spreadsheet, I have at least a little bit of job security.

Matt Pearl owns and operates The Tri-County News in King City. This column was originally published in the March 29 edition of the newspaper.

If you or another member has published a column, editorial or news story that discusses issues important to the newspaper industry or the journalism profession, consider sharing it with *Missouri Press News*.

Submissions can be sent to mbarba@mopress.com to be reprinted in a future issue of your Association's magazine.



158th Annual Missouri Press Convention and Tradeshow

Hotel Vandivort | 305 Walnut Street
Springfield

Sept. 19-21, 2024

-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**

SAVE THE DATE



158th Annual Missouri Press Convention & Tradeshow

September 19 - 21, 2024



HOTEL VANDIVORT
305 E Walnut St.,
Springfield, MO 65806

Know a potential sponsor?

Sponsor information at:

mopress.com/convention or contact

Michael Harper at mharper@mopress.com

Need more information about this year's convention?

Contact Kristie Fortier at kfortier@mopress.com

**To reserve a room at the MPA
special rate of \$169,**

please contact

group manager Debra Yokum, at

sales@hotelvandivort.com

or call

417-851-5209.

See all information by visiting mopress.com/convention