

MIP MISSOURI PRESS NEWS

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Do I hear bells? Why, yes you do

If you have the opportunity to visit Leader World Headquarters in Festus, be sure to ask someone, “What’s the deal with the bells?”

We’d love to demonstrate the power of a little positivity.

Here at the Leader, each of the three people who most often answer phones has a bell on her desk. These old-school, hit-the-button-on-top-type bells are nothing special to look at, but when Patty, Annika or Kimberly – the Leader’s frontline staff members – rings a bell, the entire office takes notice.

That is the goal.

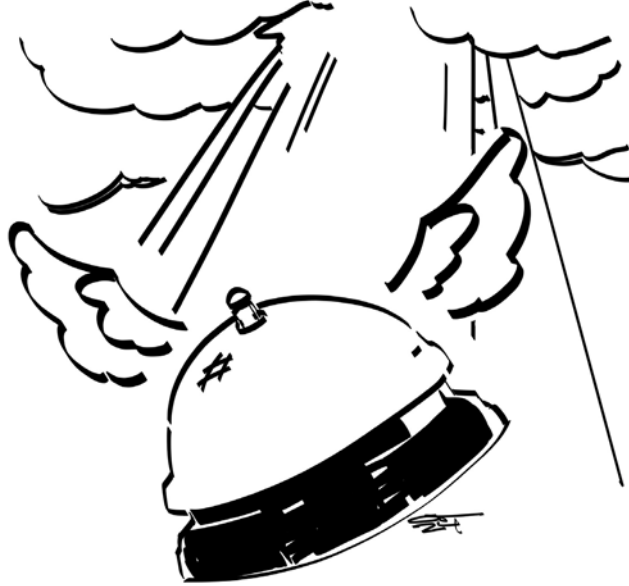
Individually, Leader staffers know our work is important. Local journalism is vital to community success. Our readers need to know the good and the bad about what’s happening, and it’s our job to tell these stories.

Reporters ask tough questions. They shed light, uncover the truth and share the news. Not everyone is delighted when some facts come to light and are printed in our newspapers. Some days, it seems no one is happy. It can feel like we live in a negative world.

But our front-office staff knows that isn’t true. They answer the incoming onslaught of calls and hear from readers who are thankful, pleased, happy and grateful for the work we do. Readers often end their calls with “I love the Leader.”

It happens more often than you might think. People recognize and appreciate the hard work required to produce quality local journalism.

They call to tell us that the story about a grandchild’s sports accomplishment drew lots of



Leader Publications cartoonist Cody Taylor provides accompanying artwork for MPA President Peggy Scott’s February column. (Submitted graphic)

attention at Sunday church. They let us know the fundraiser we helped promote worked and generated money for a community cause. They learned about a new business opening. A new business owner saw results from their Leader advertising.

When readers call to renew their subscriptions, they often mention how much they look forward to Thursdays, the day their Leader shows up in the mailbox. Readers tell us the Leader provides a connection to others, and sometimes a direct link improves life. That’s important work, folks.

Our team does their best to share the positive messages with all our staff. But we are busy people at Leader World Headquarters, and we don’t feel we have the time to stop everything and share a quick thank you with the whole office each time we get a compliment. So, we put our heads together and came up with a way to share those good vibes with the whole Leader team while not

disrupting the flow too much.

The answer was bells. Anytime any of us get a compliment or a thank you for the work we do, we ring a bell. It’s a quick, unobtrusive message for the whole team that someone somewhere, at least in that moment in time, is happy with the work we do.

It’s been months since the bells started to ring. At first, there was an attitude that the bell ringing really wasn’t necessary. Newspaper folk often cultivate a persona that’s a bit crusty, even cranky. We can be curmudgeons.

We are skeptics, trained to question everything, to dig through the fluff to find the facts. But we do appreciate kind words and recognition for work well done.

The bells won them over, and now Leader staffers throughout the building periodically holler out, “Ring the bell.” That means someone offered a compliment, appreciated a story, noticed the work the Leader does.

For fans of the Christmas classic movie, “It’s a Wonderful Life,” you know every time a bell rings, an angel gets their wings. It’s almost the same here. Every time a bell rings at Leader World Headquarters, it’s a promise we make to ourselves and our community to be bolder and better because they deserve it.



Nominations for MPA's top awards due March 31

Help Missouri Press honor deserving inductees to the Hall of Fame and young journalists.

From Missouri Press Staff

Nominations for the Missouri Newspaper Hall of Fame and William E. James Outstanding Young Journalist are available to fill out on the Missouri Press website, www.mopress.com.

Each form contains the relevant nomination criteria and can be found under the "Nomination forms" section at bit.ly/MoPressForms. Both are due back to Missouri Press staff by March 31 to be considered for the current year.

Inductees to the Missouri Newspaper Hall of Fame will be recognized at a special ceremony during the 159th Annual Convention and Trade Show in September. Look for more information about the convention in upcoming Missouri Press newsletters and future editions of the magazine.

Hall of Fame nominations can be submitted to cstebbins@mopress.com.

Recipients of the Outstanding Young Journalist (OYJ) award will receive their plaques and a check for \$500 from Missouri Press Foundation during the Better Newspaper Contest luncheon at the end of this year's Convention.

For information about nominating an OYJ, contact mbarba@mopress.com.

Don't hesitate to upload your public notices!

Did you know, uploading public notices to MPA's mopublicnotices.com, is one of the most effective arguments for keeping public notices in newspapers? Uploading your notices in a timely manner ensures they are quickly and easily accessible while also being maintained by an independent third-party organization.

Need more information about uploading to mopublicnotices.com?

Contact Kristie Fortier at kfortier@mopress.com.



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CALENDAR

February

28 — Missouri Press Better Newspaper Contest \$6 Entries Ends

March

31 — Missouri Press Better Newspaper Contest \$7 Entries Ends

April

7 — Missouri Press Better Newspaper Contest Closes

10-11 — Missouri Press Advertising Managers and Executives Meeting, Sheraton Westport Chalet, St. Louis

June

5 — Kevin Jones Memorial First Amendment Golf Tournament | Loutre Shores Country Club, Hermann

6 — MPA/MPS/MPF Board Meetings, Hermannhof Inn & The Tin Mill Restaurant

6 — Show-Me Press Association Meeting, Hermann

Missouri Press Day at the Missouri School of Journalism March 14 | Reynolds Journalism Institute

Here are the details:

WHEN:

9 a.m. to 1 p.m.
Friday, March 14

WHERE:

Reynolds Journalism
Institute

WHO:

Missouri Press
members
and students at the
Missouri School of
Journalism



The Missouri School of Journalism is hosting an event — Community News & You — to bring together students and Missouri Press editors and publishers. This event is a combination of networking, job fair opportunities, panels and discussions about community news and why it's an exciting time to work with Missouri Press members. We'll have networking and interviews alongside a couple of panels in the morning. All attendees will come back together for lunch and a panel of editors and publishers.

**Register
and find
out more
details
today!**



Missouri School of Journalism
University of Missouri



<https://bit.ly/mopressjschool>

Celebrating Mark Maassen and his newspaper career

From Missouri Press Staff

Mark Maassen, who will retire as executive director of Missouri Press Association later this month, was joined by family, friends and colleagues for a celebration to honor his 45-year career in newspapers.

Maassen has been executive director of Missouri Press since 2016, succeeding Doug Crews in that role. While Maassen will officially retire later this month, he will continue working with MPA as a consultant for about a year.

Prior to joining the Association in 2015, while working for *The Kansas City Star*, Maassen served on the MPA Board of Directors for several years, culminating in a term as president in 2013.

A 1980 graduate of the Missouri School of Journalism, Maassen told those attending the January retirement

reception, held at the Tiger Hotel in downtown Columbia, that he felt fortunate to be ending his career just two blocks from where it started.

He added that he remains optimistic about the newspaper industry and the role it continues to play in American society.

"There's a lot of concern regarding newspapers today but I'm telling you that I'm a glass half full kind of guy," Maassen said. "Doug [Crews] already said it, and I say it every time I have a chance to interview with a student over at the J-school, I'm bullish on newspapers, I really am."

Maassen added that he was proud to be a member of the profession that serves as the watchdog of democracy.

Doug Crews reminisces with Mark Maassen about some of the issues the pair have faced in Jefferson City in support of Missouri's newspapers. Crews was Missouri Press' executive director before Maassen.

"Newspapers may change in format going forward, whether it be printed on newsprint, whether it be streamed on your tablet or whether it be texted on your phone, we need newspapers probably now more than ever," Maassen said. "And I'm glad to say that I was a part of it for the last 45 years."

Taking over as MPA executive director from Maassen is Chad Stebbins, and you can learn more about him on pages 8-9 of this month's *Missouri Press News*.



"I'm bullish on newspapers, I really am."
— Mark Maassen



Above, Mark Maassen speaks with Dennis Warden, who served as Missouri Press president in 2016, the same year Maassen became executive director. Maassen was also joined for the evening by his sons, Arron and Sam, pictured in the red shirt.



New statewide office holders meet with MPA members

Lunch with newly elected Gov. Mike Kehoe capped off Missouri Press Association's 35th Day at the Capitol.

From Missouri Press Staff

Missouri Press Association members attending this year's Day at the Capitol had the opportunity to hear from the state's new Secretary of State, Speaker of the House and both Lieutenant Governor and Governor.

For the 35th year, MPA members met in Jefferson City for Day at the Capitol, Jan. 23. The morning started off with attendees meeting in the Capitol for a quick legislative update before being sent to roam the halls and meet with their local legislators.

As in previous years, the key goal for the morning is facetime with legislators so newspapers can draw attention to proposed legislation that is detrimental to the publication's ability to keep their community informed. While bill numbers change year-to-year, important legislation to keep an eye on includes those that limit accessibility to records through the state's Sunshine



Gov. Mike Kehoe speaks to Missouri Press Association members during the 35th Day at the Capitol. Following lunch at the Governor's Mansion, Kehoe met with members and answered several questions about his plans for the coming year. (Staff photos)

Law or take public notices out of newspapers, both of which are a concern this legislative session in various forms.

When MPA members reconvened for the morning session, they were sent to the House lounge. Historically, the Association's morning Day at the Capitol program has been held in the Senate lounge, but this year it was moved to the opposite end of the building in conjunction with the House lounge opening for tours for the first time since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020.

Among the morning's speakers were House Speaker Jonathan Patterson, who talked about his legislative priorities for the chamber this session, including making "Missouri the most pro-life state it can be."

Patterson said he is waiting on legislation to come together and there are a wide range of views to consider when crafting a response to Amendment 3, approved by Missouri voters in the November 2024 general election.

Continued on Page 7



Missouri Speaker of the House Jonathan Patterson addresses the Missouri Press members attending Day at the Capitol. This year's meeting coincided with the re-opening of the House lounge in the Capitol building, which is famous for the murals adorning its walls painted by Thomas Hart Benton.

From Page 6: *New statewide officholders express support for Pres. Trump's agenda.*

"Whatever we do has to go back to the will of the voters," he said.

Also speaking in the morning were new statewide office holders Secretary of State Denny Hoskins and Lieutenant Gov. David Wasinger.

Wasinger started his remarks by talking about his experience as a boy delivering the *Hannibal Courier-Post* in his hometown. He also talked about how when he would go to collect subscriptions on his route, he would see how important the local newspaper was to people who might not have a lot of extra money to spare.

Because of his previous experience delivering newspapers, Wasinger said when he was asked by MPA Executive Director Mark Maassen to speak during the morning program, he jumped at the chance. Wasinger also said he appreciates the work that the media, especially local newspapers, do to ensure people are informed.

He described himself as a political outsider who can't be "bought and paid for" and a supporter of Pres. Donald Trump. Like the president, Wasinger said he wants to shake up the political establishment in Jefferson City.

"I will be a warrior for the Trump administration in the lieutenant governor's office," Wasinger said, adding that he will work "hand in glove" with federal authorities to "eliminate the out-of-control illegal immigration problem in the state of Missouri."

Secretary of State Hoskins, who previously served as a state senator and representative, also expressed his support for local newspapers. As a subscriber to his local newspaper in Warrensburg, Hoskins said he will continue to do whatever he can to support them because they are "vitaly important"



Missouri Lt. Gov. David Wasinger holds up a copy of the Hannibal Courier-Post, which he used to deliver as a boy. Wasinger's remarks ranged from praising local newspapers' role in keeping people informed to pledging his office will work however it can to promote Pres. Donald Trump's agenda in Missouri. (Submitted/John Hacker/The Joplin Globe)

to their communities.

In his new statewide role, Hoskins said he plans to visit all parts of Missouri. "It's important to get out amongst the people and not just be in a box here in Jeff City."

Hoskins said election integrity will be a critical issue for his office moving forward as he wants Missouri's elections to be considered the most secure and fair elections in the country.

As the state's keeper of records, Hoskins stressed that he wants his office to set an example for open government in Missouri.

"We want to be transparent at the Secretary of State's office, but we want other parts of government to be transparent too," he said.

At the Governor's Mansion, Gov. Mike Kehoe spoke to members and took questions about the state's legislative priorities for the coming year. Since Kehoe had not yet given his State of the State address, some questions were deferred until he could lay out plans during that Jan. 28 speech.

Still, Kehoe reiterated his support for cutting taxes for Missourians and developing a legislative response to Amendment 3's passage last year.

Members are encouraged to meet with their legislators in person as often as possible to relay the importance of laws that ensure open access to government records and meetings. In-person meetings are the most effective way to get your legislators to listen.

If you have questions about meeting with legislators, contact MPA Executive Director Mark Maassen or Chad Stebbins, who can provide talking points about critical legislation being considered. Contact Maassen at mmaassen@mopress.com and Stebbins at cstebbins@mopress.com.



Secretary of State Denny Hoskins talks with MPA President Peggy Scott before addressing the Association in the House lounge during Day at the Capitol. Hoskins said he wants his office and other parts of the government to be transparent in their operations. (Staff photo)

Getting to know Chad Stebbins, MPA's next executive director

From Missouri Press Staff

Chad Stebbins is Missouri Press Association's next executive director, succeeding Mark Maassen, who will officially retire from the role later this month.

A former communications professor at Missouri Southern State University in Joplin, Stebbins is also executive director of the International Society of Weekly Newspaper Editors.

Stebbins started with Missouri Press in January and has already had a busy first few weeks with the Association, including his first Day at the Capitol. But he took the time to answer some questions from *Missouri Press News* so MPA's members will better know the person leading their organization into its next chapter.



Chad Stebbins and his wife, Laurel, walking their miniature horses in the Carl Junction Fourth of July parade.



Chad Stebbins

Who has influenced your life the most?

Richard Massa was my mentor while I was a student at Missouri Southern State University. Everyone called him "Mr. Massa." He grew up in Joplin and received his bachelor's and master's degrees from the University of Missouri School of Journalism. He was the adviser to the student newspaper, *The Chart*, and taught all the journalism courses.

Mr. Massa instilled in all of us the desire to produce a professional newspaper that did a considerable amount of in-depth and investigative reporting. We tackled all sorts of stories, even doing some reporting from the State Capitol.

When he stepped down as *The Chart* adviser in 1984 to devote more time to the newly established Department of Communications, I replaced him. Fifteen years later, I succeeded him as the director of the Institute of International Studies at MSSU. Mr. Massa was a visionary, a risk-taker, and the most intelligent person I have ever met. I had the honor of giving the eulogy at his funeral in 2019.

Where are you from?

I was born in Kansas but have lived in the Joplin area since the age of 9 – except for time away at graduate schools. I grew up reading *The Joplin Globe* and later *The Kansas City Star* so I could more closely follow the Royals and the Chiefs. I became a sportswriter for *The Globe* in college.



Chad Stebbins and several former journalism students at Missouri Southern State University gathered for a reunion on Dec. 7. (Submitted photos)

What is your greatest professional accomplishment so far?

I suppose my long career in higher education. Even though my father taught biology at MSSU for 30 years, I never envisioned going into teaching.

For starters, I always had a fear of public speaking. I put off taking it in college until my senior year. When I was thrust into a teaching role just two years later, I quickly had to overcome my stage fright. I even had to teach two or three sections of public speaking every semester. I would always tell the students how terrified I had once been.

Keep getting to know Chad Stebbins

How do you think Missouri newspapers are doing?

I think they are holding their own. Some are struggling, but others have found ways to turn a modest profit. (The 2024 election year surely helped.) Amanda Mendez, publisher of the *Howell County News*, often refers to a “renaissance” of print news occurring in her community. The renaissance is due to her holding public officials accountable, hosting debates and public forums, conducting reader polls, and being relentlessly local in her coverage of Willow Springs and surrounding communities.

Amanda isn't doing anything particularly new, but she has a zest for aggressive local news coverage that has caught the community's attention and resulted in a 14 percent circulation increase since she and her husband, Ron, bought the paper in 2019.

What do you think is the industry's biggest hurdle right now?

Figuring out how to stem the tide of declining revenues while securing new funding sources and models. While printing and postage costs continue to increase, attempts to generate new revenue sources have largely stalled. It may take legislation in the form of tax breaks or requiring Google to compensate papers for republishing their content.

Personally, I always grumble when I hear someone complaining about having to pay for a story that's behind a paywall. They expect newspapers to give away their content but think nothing of paying \$5 for a coffee at Starbucks.

What is the industry's greatest strength?

Newspapers provide the only reliable source of local news in a community; nothing else compares. The local paper is often regarded as the lifeblood or bedrock of the community. Next to the school system, it's the most important institution in town. When a community loses its paper, it loses part of its identity. It becomes a lesser town and doesn't matter as much as it once did. There is nothing else that can hold public officials accountable on a regular basis.

What's the last book you read?

I'm currently reading “The Demon of Unrest: A Saga of Hubris, Heartbreak, and Heroism at the Dawn of the Civil War,” by Erik Larson. He's my favorite author. I highly recommend his “The Devil in the White City: Murder, Magic, and Madness at the Fair That Changed America,” and have given away numerous copies. I usually read only non-fiction.

What do you do for fun?

I like to hike, spend time with the grandchildren, follow the Chiefs and Royals, and research local history. My latest project has been writing the text and finding the photos for a series of storyboards on the new Joplin Heritage Trail. I'm also a news junkie – I subscribe to six digital newspapers. I'd like to start playing tennis again, too.

Chad Stebbins hiking on the Appalachian Trail. (Submitted photos)



Chad Stebbins with three students from Missouri Southern State University at Kost Castle in the Czech Republic.

Which part of teaching did you enjoy most?

Wednesday evenings were production nights when I advised the student newspaper. I enjoyed working closely with the editors in putting the paper together, even though we seldom finished before midnight. If I thought a particular story didn't have a strong enough lead, I would call for the “lead doctor” to “scrub up.” One of the editors would come over and attempt to write something more compelling.

Even though Wednesday nights could be quite stressful – such as when our Compugraphic processing system broke down – so many of my former students say how much they miss those long hours we spent together.

What is your greatest personal achievement?

I have written two books: “All the News Is Fit to Print: Profile of a Country Editor,” published by the University of Missouri Press in 1998; and “Joplin's Connor Hotel,” published by The History Press in 2021. The former told the story of Arthur Aull, editor and publisher of the *Lamar Democrat* from 1900 to 1948. Aull's reporting of every sensational incident that occurred in Barton County brought him subscribers in all 48 states plus Canada and England.



BETTER NEWSPAPER CONTEST **GET YOUR STUFF TOGETHER!**

*Enter the Missouri Press Foundation
Better Newspaper Contest for only \$6 through Feb. 28*

The 2025 Missouri Press Foundation Better Newspaper Contest template is now open and members can begin submitting entries. If you haven't yet, gather your entries for this year's contest now.

All information about the contest – rules, categories, entry instructions – is online at mopress.com/better-newspaper/.

Entries to the Missouri Press Foundation's Newspaper Contest will be submitted using the Advanced Contest Entry System (ACES) platform.

Due to the way the ACES platform operates, your PUBLICATION will need to re-register for the 2025 Better Newspaper Contest. Login credentials from the previous year's contest will not be valid for this year's contest template.

Each PUBLICATION requires a unique email address for uploading contest entries. You can re-use the same email address from the previous year's contest when registering for the 2025 Better Newspaper Contest.

While entries will be accepted through Monday, April 7, a tiered fee structure has been put in place with reduced costs for newspapers submitting entries earlier in

the contest cycle.

The 2025 BNC entry fee structure is:

Entries in before March 1: \$6 per entry;

Entries in March: \$7 per entry; and

Entries between April 1-7: \$10 per entry.

The template will close automatically at 11 p.m. Monday, April 7, and no entries will be accepted after it closes.

All categories for Missouri's 2025 Better Newspaper Contest require digital entries. Please familiarize yourself with the template and ask questions about how to use it as soon as possible.

You are also encouraged to consider file-sharing websites, i.e., Dropbox, Google Drive, as a method for sharing your larger entries, such as General Excellence and page design entries. There are many free options available that will also provide benefits to your newspaper outside of entering the BNC.

If you need help entering any category, contact Matthew Barba (mbarba@mopress.com) or Kristie Fortier (kfortier@mopress.com) for assistance.

We ask members not to wait until the deadline to enter this year's Better Newspaper Contest!



Written by Carolyn Mueller | Illustrated by Philip Goudeau



An Adventure in Arrow Rock

This eight-chapter NIE series will be offered free of charge to newspapers for publication from January 1st until June 30, 2025. Visit mo-nie.com to download the entire series.

Download Code: arrowrock

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Shelbina

Rogers Hewitt

William Rogers Hewitt, 94, served as president of the Northeast Missouri Press Association in 1962; commentator Will Rogers, died Jan. 1, 2025, at the Shelbina Villa Lifecare.

Hewitt enlisted in the U.S. Air Force and served four years during the Korean War. He returned to Shelbyville in 1955 and served as co-publisher with his father of the *Shelby County Herald* until 1967 when his father died, and he became sole owner and publisher.

He was publisher of the *Shelby County Herald* until 1997, when he and wife Jerri sold it to the Williams family, owners of the *Clarence Courier*. The Hewitts bought the *Lawson Review* weekly newspaper in 1979 and later turned it over to Roger Cress Hewitt, who became publisher.

Rogers Hewitt was very active in the Missouri Press Association and



Missouri Press Association's president in 1980; and was inducted into the Missouri Newspaper Hall of Fame in 1996. He was the first elected president of the Missouri Press Foundation Board and served as president for four years.

He served in many community organizations and was chosen as a member of the Missouri State Historical Society in 1980 and served for several years. He was a member of the Missouri Tourism Commission and a former president of the Missouri Democratic Editors.

He is survived by his wife, Jerri, and their two children, Roger and Paula; along with many more family, friends and newspaper colleagues throughout Missouri.

St. Louis

Joe Whittington

Joe Whittington, 82, a retired columnist at the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* died Jan. 10, 2025.

Whittington joined the *Post-Dispatch* in 1976 and held a variety of roles with the newspaper over the years, including city editor, night city editor, news editor and copy editor. As a columnist, he wrote about a variety of people, companies and deals throughout the metro area.



Before coming to St. Louis, he was a sportswriter for the *Houston Post*, in the city where he grew up, covering a all types of high school, college and pro sports, including the Houston Rockets.

He also was a U.S. Army veteran.

Survivors include his wife, Carolyn; his children, Geoff and Marcie; and three grandchildren.

Cape Girardeau

Gary Rust

Gary Wayne Rust, 89, founder of Rust Communications, died Jan. 5, 2025, at his home surrounded by his family.

In the late 1960s, he bought interest in a weekly newspaper as an outlet for commentary. Later, stung by what he believed was unfair political reporting, he left the family furniture business to focus his energy on the small weekly newspaper.

Before he could dedicate himself full-time to the newspaper, however, he was appointed to represent Cape Girardeau in the Missouri General Assembly and then re-elected three more times.

In 1978, with competition threatening the weekly he had grown into a trio of total market-coverage newspapers in Southeast Missouri, he decided not to run again for state representative.

Rust dedicated himself to the media industry, bringing visionary strategy, and along with a group of talented executives, including each of his children at one time or another, grew Rust Communications to 50 newspapers in eight states read by more than a million people. In 2003, he retired from day-to-day operations and transferred management to his sons but continued to serve as chairman of the board, active in the *Southeast Missourian's* editorial positions. He continued to come into the office at least weekly until September 2024.

Through the years, Rust served the public and his industry in numerous official board capacities and received many prestigious awards and honors. In 2003, he was inducted into the Missouri Newspaper Hall of Fame.

He is survived by his wife, Wendy, and his children, Penny, Gary, Holly, Wynn, Jon; and many more family members, friends and industry colleagues across the country.



**Missouri Press News
needs your help to remember those
industry colleagues who are no
longer with us.
Send obits to mbarba@mopress.com.**

OBITUARIES



Kansas City

Dennis Sharkey

Dennis Sharkey, 50, of Kansas City died Jan. 10, 2025, one day after his birthday.



Most recently, Sharkey was a sports reporter for the *Platte County Citizen* in Platte City. He also had experience at several other newspapers in Kansas and Missouri, including the *Mound City News* and *Mexico Ledger*.

Sharkey graduated from Northwest Missouri State University with a bachelor's degree in journalism. He served as editor of the school's newspaper, the *Northwest Missourian*, while there.

He is survived by his parents, Nancy Montaleone and Dennis Sharkey Sr.; along with many more family and friends.

Jefferson City

Roman Patten

Roman W. Patten of Jefferson City where he worked City died peacefully Dec. 27, 2024, at the Missouri Veterans Nursing Home in Mexico, three days after his 90th birthday.



Beginning at age 17, Patten served in the U.S. Navy during the Korean War in Japan, Vietnam and China. In 2015, he participated in Central Missouri Honor Flight #34.

Following his service, he received an associate's degree in printing from Lincoln University and began his career at the *Boonville Daily News*. After two years, his family moved to

Jefferson City where he worked for the Missouri Department of Corrections as a supervisor in the print shop.

Patten then transitioned to a 36-year career with the *Jefferson City News Tribune*, beginning as a typesetter and ending as the newspaper's business manager. In retirement, he spent another eight years as a doorman for the Missouri State Senate.

In addition to JoAnna, his wife of 66 years, he is survived by two children, Sandy and Bradley; several grandchildren and great-



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Missouri Press Foundation

Preserving the Past. Focused on the Future.

Mark Maassen, Retiring Executive Director of the Missouri Press Association

Thank you for your donation!

Because of you, we have raised \$7,177.34 for the Foundation to support local newspaper journalism in Missouri. We are absolutely overwhelmed by your generosity and extremely grateful to everyone who made a gift to the Foundation at the end of 2024.

Dave Berry

Jean Black

Diane Buchmann

Doug & Tricia Crews

Jim Curley

Deborah Daniels

Dennis Ellsworth

Steve & Laura Erdel

Jeanne Erickson

Sandy Falloon

Belinda Fender

Gary Fennewald

Dik Ganahl

Brent & Sue Gierke

Renee & Tim Graham

Lila Gunn

Sarah Humfeld

Greg Jackson

Denise & Marion Jordon

Kathy Kiely

Bill Kuykendall

Fran Madden

Joseph Martineau

Bill & Jackie Miller

Deb Baker & William Milligan

Frances Muench

Walter Pfeffer

Martha Pickens

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Marlyn Whitney

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Jordan Yount

Mark Zacher

ON THE MOVE



Joplin — Katherine Miller has been named publisher of *The Joplin Globe*. The appointment is somewhat of a homecoming for Miller, who is a native of Joplin and began her career at *The Globe* in 1996 as an advertising representative and eventually becoming assistant sales manager.



“I am very excited to be back in Joplin where I grew up, began my career and raised my children,” Miller told readers. “Joplin has always been the place I call home, and I look forward to spending my time getting reacquainted with the community.”

In 2023, Miller was named publisher of *The Norman Transcript* and the *Chickasha Express-Star* in Oklahoma, and she will continue in that role along with her duties in Joplin. Before that, she was a group publisher for three newspapers in Alabama owned by CNHI, parent company of the *Globe* and *Transcript*.

West Plains — Abby Hess is the new general manager of the *Daily Quill*, a role she took on in mid-January. Celebrating her 10th anniversary with the newspaper last month, Hess had previously been managing editor and worked as news editor before then.

In her new role, Hess will oversee

office operations at the *Quill* and continue her duties as editor, including working directly with reporters and the community to emphasize local news coverage in the print publication and online.



“We are turning a new page at the *Quill*,” said Hess. “We are committed to including your voices, telling your stories and sharing your perspectives on what it means to be a part of this vibrant community. I want you to know my door is always open, and I’m excited to hear from you your ideas for what comes next.”

Salem — Donald Dodd, publisher of Salem Publishing Company, announced his plans to retire following the sale of *The Salem News*, *Pulaski County Weekly* and *Phelps County Focus* to Carpenter Media Group. Dodd was publisher in Salem since 1995 and owned the newspapers with his wife, Felicia.



Before coming to Missouri, Dodd had been a journalist in Mississippi since 1980. He worked as a sports columnist and editor, first for the

Daily News in Starkville, Miss. and later joining the staff of the *Clarion Ledger* in Jackson, Miss.

In writing his farewell to readers, Dodd said, “It’s been almost 29 years, one month since we made the drive on a snow-covered Highway 32/72 from Ridgeland, Mississippi, to Salem, Missouri. I wondered if I’d regret it. I haven’t. You have been a joy.”

Cape Girardeau — Lucas Presson, the former general manager and assistant publisher of the *Southeast Missourian*, left Rust Communications in late January. Along with leaving the newspaper industry, Presson resigned from the Missouri Press Association Board of Directors, on which he had served for several years.



Presson has joined the Southeast Missouri Regional Economic Development Inc. as director of business growth and innovation.

In an announcement of his departure, Presson told *Missourian* readers he is grateful for the opportunities afforded him over the 14 years he worked at the newspaper company. “Local media plays a vital role in a community, and this team truly exemplifies how to do it the right way,” he said.

Capitol reporting brings state news to your readers

From Missouri Press Staff

Services available to Missouri Press Association members can help ensure readers are better informed about goings on in Jefferson City and throughout the state.

Each legislative session the Missouri School of Journalism sends reporters to Jefferson City for the State Government Reporting Project. A weekly recap of the stories produced by reporters in the Capitol is distributed to MPA members during the legislative session by Missouri Press staff. This “Capitol Report” is available to all MPA members for republishing and in addition to being emailed,

will also be available online at www.mopress.com.

Missouri Independent

The *Missouri Independent* is a nonpartisan, nonprofit news organization covering state government, politics and policy. It is staffed by veteran Missouri reporters and dedicated to investigative journalism.

Missouri Independent's work is free for other news outlets to republish. Requirements for republishing include only editing for style or to shorten a story’s length, provide proper attribution and a link to the *Missouri Independent* website, <https://missouriindependent.com>.

Platte County sports reporter fatally shot on I-29

From Missouri Press Staff

Dennis Sharkey, a sports reporter for the *Platte County Citizen*, was shot and killed on Jan. 10, in an apparent road rage incident in Platte County.

As of publication time, law enforcement is continuing to investigate the events surrounding Sharkey's death. Family members have called for anyone with information about the shooting to come forward.

According to reporting from area media, Sharkey was found non-

responsive in a vehicle resting near a barrier fence on I-29. He was covering sporting events for the *Citizen* the night of the shooting.

Platte County law officers said two vehicles had stopped on the interstate for some sort of incident. The suspect was believed to have gotten out of the car before firing a single shot into Sharkey's vehicle.

Sharkey was a graduate of Northwest Missouri State University



Dennis Sharkey

and editor of the university's newspaper, the *Northwest Missourian*. He joined the Platte County Citizen's staff in July 2024 and had previously worked at the *Mexico Ledger*, *Mound City News*, *Platte County Landmark* and multiple Kansas newspapers.

This report was compiled from several media sources in the region. An obit for Sharkey is on page 9 of this month's *Missouri Press News*.



Salem — Carpenter Media Group announced in late January it would acquire Salem Publishing Company. Owned by Donald and Felicia Dodd, Salem Publishing operates *The Salem News*, *Phelps County Focus*, *Pulaski County Weekly*, as well as specialty publications, a commercial printing plant and a sign company.

The Dodds have published the Salem newspaper since 1995 and added to the group in that time. They plan to retire following the sale to Carpenter Media Group (CMG).

Catherine Wynn, the Dodd's daughter and editor for Salem Publishing's newspapers, will remain and manage the



magazines and hyperlocal news websites serving more than 240 communities in the U.S. and Canada.

properties under CMG's ownership.

Salem Publishing's print circulation is 14,300, reaching an estimated 40,040 readers per week in Phelps, Dent, Pulaski and adjoining counties. The publications' websites have averaged more than three million pageviews per year for the past few years and have over 32,000 followers on social media.

CMG purchased Phillips Media Group and Nowata Printing in Springfield in 2024. The company now owns and manages newspapers,

Use Jumbl to request 2025 press passes

From Missouri Press Staff

The process for requesting press cards in 2025 is a little bit different as members will now need to go through the Jumbl platform to submit names and other information.

Missouri Press' press pass request form can be found here: <https://bit.ly/492tR2P>.

In addition to names for press passes, you can provide job titles and email addresses for staff, although that information is not required to receive press passes.



The form is also available in the "Forms" section of Jumbl. For more information about getting started, please contact kfortier@mopress.com or mbarba@mopress.com.

You can also request 2025 calendars and up to six "PRESS" auto stickers for your staff. Please remember, the PRESS auto stickers you received in 2024 remain valid

in 2025.

Finally, the form includes a field where you can indicate which staff should receive emails from Missouri Press.



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, Jordan Troutman, *Cassville Democrat*; Vice President, Steve Pokin, *Springfield Daily Citizen*; Treasurer, Dan Wehmer, *Webster County Citizen*, Seymour; Secretary-Past President, Amanda Mendez, *Howell County News*, Willow Springs. Directors: Pat Hindman, *Cedar County Republican*, Stockton; Kimball Long, *El Dorado Springs Sun*; Kyle Troutman, *Cassville Democrat*; Ron Schott, *Wright County Journal*; and Deanna Moore, Carpenter Media Group, Bolivar.

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.

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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; Adviser, Steven Chappell, Northwest Missouri State University; Conference co-director, Julie Lewis, University of Central Missouri; and MPA Liaison, Jack Dimond, Missouri State University.

A Latin prescription for redaction headaches

New corporate reporting requirement could affect newspapers, depending on court outcome.

On the first business day of January this year, the judge in *Gross v. Parson* pending in Cole County Circuit Court issued a *nunc pro tunc* judgment on his earlier partial judgment declaring the state law requiring redactions from court records unconstitutional.

Nunc pro tunc. Latin for: “Now for then.” Legalese for: “Do over.”* Occasionally reporters might come across this phrase on Casenet, when a court issues a second judgment *nunc pro tunc*, correcting a clerical error in an earlier judgment. Trial judges retain their plenary power to correct their own records, and this includes their judgments. So, this Latin phrase lets them issue their own corrections.

The upshot is this: The *Gross v. Parson* decision, if it stands, should ameliorate the redaction headaches reporters have been facing ever since witness names began being blotted in court files. At press time, the Missouri Attorney General’s office still had not attempted an interlocutory appeal. And the time for a formal appeal typically does not begin until the case is fully decided.

The *nunc pro tunc* judgment does not alter though what is currently a standing order that the redaction portions of the law are unconstitutional. We will get more certainty once a final judgment resolving all matters is issued.

**It’s a phrase I wish I could apply to other areas of my life. If the New Year is a time for a reset, perhaps nunc pro tunc is the path forward this year.*

In another year-end legal battle, small businesses nationwide continue to be whipsawed by decisions

“The Gross v. Parson decision, if it stands, should ameliorate the redaction headaches reporters have been facing ever since witness names began being blotted in court files. At press time, the Missouri Attorney General’s office still had not attempted an interlocutory appeal. And the time for a formal appeal typically does not begin until the case is fully decided.”

regarding the implementation of the Corporate Transparency Act (“CTA”)’s Beneficial Ownership Information reporting requirements. The Supreme Court on January 23, 2025, reinstated the law, despite a Fifth Circuit decision around Christmas that stayed the laws provisions – including stiff fines for failing to report – while the legal challenge works its way through the courts.

Although it surprises me every time I come across it, the federal CTA, which took effect in 2024, would have required businesses to register with the U.S. Department of Treasury’s Financial Crimes Enforcement

Network (FinCEN) by submitting a form and identification for business owners. The stated goal is to create a database that law enforcement, courts, regulators, prosecutors, banks (but alas, not journalists) to crack down on shell companies engaged in illicit activities. But the Act’s requirements are still not widely known, and they impose another administrative burden on small businesses.

Here’s the kicker, though: Originally, if a business failed to register by December 31, 2024, they may be subjected to a \$591 daily penalty. They could also be subject to a \$10,000 fine and up to two years of imprisonment.

Even though the Supreme Court reversed the Fifth Circuit’s freeze on the law’s requirements, another Texas U.S. District Court has issued a separate stay on the law. Because that separate stay remains unchallenged, FinCEN is taking the position – currently – that small businesses do not have to file beneficial ownership yet, but may do so voluntarily. More information can be found at <https://boiefiling.fincen.gov/>.

Take away for newspapers: As of right now, there is no reporting requirement in effect. But this could prove very temporary. It all could change as soon as the Fifth Circuit issues its substantive opinion on the CTA’s legality, or the other district court’s stay is rescinded or challenged.



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

Dig deep into your investigative reporting for a chance at **\$15,000**



The **A-Mark Prize for Investigative Journalism** will award a first-place prize of \$5,000 to the winning journalist and \$2,500 to their news organization. Second place awards \$3,000 to the journalist and \$1,500 to the news organization. Third place awards \$2,000 to the journalist and \$1,000 to the newsroom.

Enter the contest using the form here: <https://bit.ly/4fQhpoU>.

The contest for the A-Mark Prize for Investigative Journalism is open to all journalists and all news organizations in Missouri. The deadline to enter the 2025 contest will be 11:59 p.m. Central; Monday, April 7, 2025, and no extension will be granted.

This award will recognize excellence in investigative reporting, defined as the development of information about government, organizations, businesses, institutions or individuals not readily available to journalists and which requires exceptional skill and effort by the journalist.

In many cases, the subjects of the reporting wish these topics remain undisclosed to the public. Information presented through the reporting should be presented in a way that gives readers understanding and insight into subject matter that is not generally known to the public.

This contest is open to all news media organizations based in Missouri and their staff members and includes newspapers, broadcast outlets and digital-only platforms. Freelance journalists based in Missouri whose reporting is published or aired by Missouri news media organizations are also eligible to enter.

Entries must have been predominantly published or aired during 2024. Entries must also include a written statement (500 words or less) outlining the background and scope of the entry and highlighting potential outcomes resulting from the reporting. News organizations will be allowed up to three entries for consideration. A fee of \$10 per entry will be assessed.



About A-Mark:

The A-Mark Foundation is a nonpartisan nonprofit founded in 1997. A-Mark is dedicated to supporting and encouraging journalism and investigative reporting through grants to organizations that offer awards recognizing journalistic excellence. One of A-Mark's flagship initiatives is the A-Mark Prizes program, which recognizes and rewards the best investigative journalism in each state.



About Missouri Press Association:

Since its founding in 1867, Missouri Press Association has played a key role in promoting the interests of the state's newspapers, while helping to ensure a more robust journalism profession and greater access to information for all. Missouri Press' 200-plus member newspapers keep readers in communities of all sizes informed while stimulating local economic development. From the founding of the Missouri School of Journalism in 1909 to ongoing scholarship efforts, MPA works to ensure the next generation of journalists are ready to face whatever challenges the industry brings.



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