

# THE KANSAS PUBLISHER

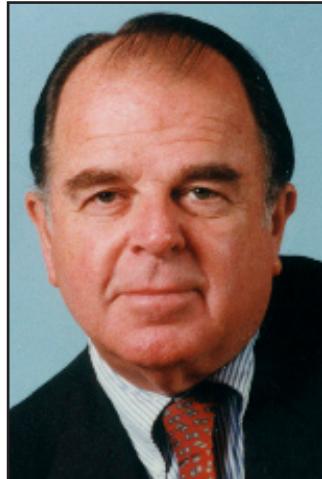


A MONTHLY PUBLICATION FOR THE KANSAS NEWSPAPER INDUSTRY NOV. 4, 2009

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## KPA CALENDAR

### NOV. 12

Montgomery Family Symposium, University of Kansas campus, Lawrence

### DEC. 10

Kansas Press Association board teleconference

### DEC. 15

Bill of Rights Day

### APRIL 22-24, 2010

Kansas Press Association annual convention, Capitol Plaza Hotel, Topeka

(From left) John G. Montgomery, Dolph Simons Jr. and Rudy Taylor will participate in a panel discussion about innovation and risk-taking during the Montgomery Symposium next week.

## Fourth Montgomery Symposium to focus on winning innovations

The fourth annual Montgomery Family Symposium is scheduled for Thursday, Nov. 12 on the University of Kansas campus.

If you're planning to register, don't delay. Just a few slots remain.

The symposium will take place in the Kansas Room of the Kansas Union and the lunch will be served in the Malott Room. Both are on Level 6. Participants will need to park in the Mississippi Street Parking Garage just north of the Union.

The symposium, "Developing Readers, Revenue and Responsible Journalism in Tough Times," is sponsored by the Kansas Newspaper Foundation and the William Allen White School of Journalism and Mass Communications at the University of Kansas. It is underwritten by a gift to the KNF by the John G. Montgomery family.

The program includes a number of topics that will help attendees make decisions about their digital initiatives, a focus of the Montgomery Symposium the past two years.

The schedule begins with coffee and registration at 9 a.m., followed by a welcome from Ann Brill, dean, and Pam Fine of the

KU School of Journalism, and Doug Anstaett, executive director of KPA.

The first session, at 9:45 a.m., is "You Want Me to Do What?" How to create new products and services without cannibalizing what's already working. Jeanny Sharp, publisher of the Ottawa Herald, will moderate the panel of Dan Thalmann, Washington County News; Tony Berg, Lawrence Journal-World; Sherri Chisenhall, Wichita Eagle, and Andy Taylor, Taylor Family Newspapers.

The second session, at 11 a.m., will feature "5 IDEAS in 50 MINUTES," five multimedia ideas designed to enhance readership, build community, provide public service and/or grow revenue, presented by the newspaper staffers who did them. Presenters are Berg of the Journal-World; Fred Hunt, Hays Daily News; Tammi Corn, Salina Journal; Dena Sattler, Garden City Telegram, and Amy Bickel, Hutchinson News.

The luncheon program will include a welcome by Bernadette Gray-Little, KU's new chancellor.

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Could a new iPad from Apple replace printed newspapers and magazines as well as the Kindle and other e-readers?

# Is Apple ready to change way we read newspapers?

By Kevin Slimp

**J**eremy Horwitz, editor-in-chief at iLounge.com, thinks it's a done deal. Brian Lam of Gizmodo.com says he has sources from major newspapers and book publishers who have told him they've been in conversation with Apple about the new device.

Daniel Lyons, in the October 15 issue of Newsweek, seems to think the new apparatus might warrant all the speculation, even though it's yet to be released. Jason O'Grady, editor of PowerPage.org, wrote in July 2008 that Apple was working on an "iPad." He also predicted it would arrive around the end of 2008.

And, to keep things in perspective, Stefan Constantinescu of IntoMobile.com seems to think there never will be an iPad and all the hype is just that: hype.

What is an iPad, you ask? Beats me. I don't even know if there really is such a thing. Rumors have been swirling for years that Apple has been at work, secretly working on a tablet-style creation that does it all. Looking for constant access to the Internet, no matter where you are? Check. Want a device that allows you to

read newspapers and magazines as clearly as on paper? Check. Want to watch your favorite TV show while you sit on the park bench? Check.

Well, maybe.

Even though bloggers and writers are enamored with the idea of this new mechanism, no one outside of Apple seems to know if it really exists. Frankly, I've pretty much ignored all the hype. That is, until I read Daniel Lyons column in Newsweek.

We're not talking about some blog out in the stratosphere. We're talking Newsweek. And if Daniel thinks this might be real, I'm willing to spend a few hours seeing what I can learn for myself.

Since I couldn't find anyone that knows for sure (I did email an old buddy at Apple, but got the response I expected: nothing), I decided to poll some folks who are in the know about this type of thing. After all these years of speaking, writing, teaching and working with software companies, I've gotten to know quite a few really smart people. People who know things. Surely at least



**Kevin Slimp**

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# Slimp

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one of them would have an inside track on the iTablet.

What did I learn? Nothing.

Everyone seemed to agree that it's feasible Apple could be working on such a device. Although one wrote, "If it is real, it will probably be smaller than people expect, heavier, more expensive, or have a battery life of an hour."

And, possibly as a nudge to Apple, all of them volunteered that they would buy such a device as soon as it hit the market. But no one had any inside information. I'd make a lousy crime reporter.

In his Newsweek column, Lyons wrote, "Now imagine a larger form factor, with a screen big enough to hold multiple panes of information. It has no lag time and lasts many hours on a battery charge. Here, then, is your morning newspaper, with videos next to stories and the ability to customize the panes to deliver what you want and leave out what you don't. This device is your TV, your stereo, and probably your telephone too."

I'm sure that many of us are both excited and scared to death about this prospect. What will happen to our newspapers if this is true?

Lyons writes, "In 10 years the print newspapers we have today will seem as quaint and primitive as those old Uncle Miltie shows."

While my friend Ken Blum expects printed newspapers to disappear from the scene entirely over the next few years, I've always felt like the future will include newspapers in print as well as devices like the iTablet that will allow the reader to receive news electronically as easily as picking up the morning paper.

If you wonder what this new device might look like, just go to Google and enter "iTablet." Artists and techies are having a field day guessing what the iTablet might look like, if it exists at all.

This brings me to a point I've written and spoken about for more than a decade. It's imperative that newspapers keep abreast of new technology. Whether it's the computer, the Kindle or some other new gadget, dismissing new technology is never a good idea. And, if the bloggers are right and Steve Jobs announces an iTablet in January, my suggestion would be to get one and figure out how to use it to your advantage.

Do I think it's real? I have no idea. But if it is, I'll be the first in line to buy one.

# Federal shield law gets nod for deal from White House

**T**wo senators announced Friday that the Obama Administration has agreed to a deal that could allow plans for a federal journalist shield law to move forward next week.

Sens. Arlen Specter, D-Pa., and Charles Schumer, D-N.Y., announced that the new version of the Free Flow of Information Act will no longer only apply to "salaried employees" and independent contractors for established news organizations, but will cover freelancers and online journalists. The bill will also preserve a public-interest balancing test for criminal, civil and leak cases, meaning that a judge will be able to weight the public interest in confidentiality against the public interest served by compelled disclosure. The Senate Judiciary Committee is scheduled to mark up the revised bill on Thursday.

"The negotiated compromise creates a fair standard to protect the public interest, journalists, the news media, bloggers, prosecutors and litigants," said Specter. "The news media kept up the pressure for years to produce this compromise for a major improvement over current procedures where journalists have been threatened, fined and jailed for appropriately protecting sources."

Currently, no federal law shields reporters who refuse to disclose confidential sources even though 37 states and the District of Columbia have laws providing legal protection. The House passed a version of the shield law but the measure has until now stalled in the Senate.

The Senate Judiciary Committee debated the shield law bill in September,

but several senators raised concerns about balancing the government's need to know information with the reporter's right to protect it. When Schumer introduced a new definition in September that would have excluded many bloggers and Internet journalists, the committee quickly adopted it. Now Schumer supports a broader definition that would provide protection for freelancers and those who write for the Internet, according to Specter's release.

Lucy Dalglish, the executive director of the Reporters Committee, told the New York Times the deal is far from inked. "This is a huge deal, but it's not a done deal, and quite honestly, until all of the media coalition members sign off on it, it's not a deal," she said. The Reporters Committee is among the media organizations that have worked to move the shield bill through Congress.

Specter credited White House negotiators with orchestrating the compromise.

The Obama administration hailed the president as the first commander-in-chief to support a federal media shield law and White House spokesman Ben LaBolt said he expects the measure to move forward with bipartisan support.

"We have been engaged with members of the Senate and the media to craft legislation that protects the confidentiality of reporters' sources and gives the courts the power to decide whether the disclosure of such information is ever necessary in the interests of national security or other imperatives," LaBolt said. "The President looks forward to signing it into law."

**... the Act will no longer only apply to "salaried employees" and independent contractors for established news organizations, but will cover freelancers and online journalists.**



## THIS MONTH'S QUESTION

Q. I understand that the Advertising Conference in Hutchinson was the last stand-alone event of its nature. Could you explain?

A. Yes. The KPA Board of Directors voted this summer to combine the annual convention and the advertising conference. The cost savings from putting the two events together will be plowed back into the program. We will try to schedule the event to maximize the opportunity for Kansas newspapers to participate in the annual convention.

# Most important principle of ads is clarity

By John Foust

**S**ome years ago, I heard a speech by John O'Toole, president of the famous Foote, Cone & Belding advertising agency. After his talk, I made my way to the dais and chatted with him for minute or two. During that brief conversation, I asked what he thought was the most important principle of advertising communication. Without hesitation, he said, "clarity."

I remember being impressed by the unwavering certainty of his answer. He knew that there is no substitute for clarity. Big budgets, fancy flow charts and dazzling special effects aren't worth a nickel

unless consumers receive a clearly expressed message.

Fast forward to a recent business conference which featured speakers on a variety of topics. Although the "sales and marketing" speaker did a good job of covering the statistical side of lead generation, she had some

misperceptions about advertising creativity.

When she put two ads on the screen and said, "These are outstanding print ads," I couldn't help but think of Mr. O'Toole's succinct statement. Clarity was nowhere to be found.

The first ad featured a headline which boldly stated, "The essence of luxury." It was surrounded by four stock photographs: a smiling man holding a golf club, a smiling woman holding a cup of coffee, a smiling couple walking on the beach, and a smiling kid playing with a smiling puppy. How's that for generic? The ad could have been promoting golf. Or family vacations. Or coffee. Or cosmetic dentistry.

The second ad had a photo of a hot dog, with a headline that

read, "Frankly speaking." The speaker explained, "With a picture of a hot dog and a headline that plays on the word 'frank,' most people would think this is an ad for food. But the body copy shows that it is an ad for an open house. They were serving hot dogs."



**John Foust**

I'm glad she told us the ads were promoting real estate developments, because no one in the audience could tell from looking at the screen. Ironically, we were in the same position as someone turning the pages of a newspaper; we were relying on headlines and visuals to let us know what the ads were promoting.

The speaker had good intentions, of course. But unfortunately,

she was interpreting clever copy and artsy photography as effective communication. She was confusing style with substance.

If clarity had been the guideline for those two ads, the headlines and photographs would have worked together to create messages that communicated with laser-beam accuracy.

According to an oft-quoted statistic, only two out of 10

people read further than a headline. It is human nature to glance at headlines and pictures, then turn the page. The only ads that are read in their entirety are those which promise "more information about this specific subject in which you are interested." If a merchant relies too heavily on the body copy to communicate what is being sold, the result may be advertising that is mentioned in speeches, but ignored by consumers.

**John Foust** can be contacted about his training videos for ad departments at [jfoust@mindspring.com](mailto:jfoust@mindspring.com).

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## NEWSMAKERS

**Y**ou can remove the "interim" title from Fred Hunt of the Hays Daily News. Hunt is now officially the technology consultant for Kansas Press Association. The Daily News was awarded a contract to provide technology services to KPA. Hunt's telephone number is (785) 628-1081, Ex. 147. His e-mail is [fhunt@dailynews.net](mailto:fhunt@dailynews.net).

New newspapers have recently opened in Anthony and Kensington.

Shawn and Kate Catlin recently began publishing the Harper County Herald and Terri White initiated publication of a newspaper serving the Kensington area.

Sweepstakes winners in the annual Kansas Press Association Advertising Contest were: Russell County News, Atchison Globe, Great Bend Tribune and Salina Journal.

These newspapers compiled the most overall points in each circulation category.

**I remember being impressed with the unwavering certainty of his answer. ... Big budgets, fancy flow charts and dazzling special effects aren't worth a nickel unless consumers receive a clearly expressed message.**

## Montgomery

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The 1 p.m. session is "Putting Their Money Where Their Mouths Are." Dolph Simons Jr. of the World Company of Lawrence, John G. Montgomery of Montgomery Communications of Junction City and Rudy Taylor of Taylor Family Newspapers of Caney will discuss what they've learned about taking risks and managing them, leadership and creating a

culture of innovation and change.

The final session, "How to Position Your Paper to Remain Relevant in the Future," will begin at 2:15 p.m. Jane Stevens and participants will discuss their ideas for what it will take to keep news organizations vibrant and vital as the environment and the audience change.

To register for the event, contact Rachel Willis at KPA. Deadline is 5 p.m. Monday.

Cost is \$75 for KPA members and \$150 for non-members. A registration form is attached to today's newsletter as well.

## Komives is new director of SND

**N**ORTH KINGSTOWN, R.I. — The Society for News Design has named veteran board member and industry leader Stephen Komives as its executive director. Komives, design editor at the Orlando Sentinel for the past five years, has also directed the Society's quick course design workshops since 2007. In his eight years on SND's board of directors, he has also served as SND Diversity Director and organized two annual SND Workshops — 2006 in Orlando and 2002 in Savannah, Ga. His first day as SND executive director will be Nov. 16.

He succeeds Elise Burroughs, SND's executive director since 2004, who is leaving the organization at the end of the year to explore new options.

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# Prepare early for election; it often requires extra effort

By Jim Pumarlo

**U**S. federal elections are a year away. Numerous other jurisdictions will conduct elections between now and then. It's not too early to begin outlining your election coverage.

Election coverage is one of the most demanding and exhaustive tasks that newsrooms undertake. The process will be smoother for newsrooms – and the coverage more relevant to readers – if you take early steps.

Each newsroom must approach coverage based on its resources and its particular lineup of races. One is to identify and examine the “elements” of election coverage. Here is one blueprint:

- Interviewing candidates – Newspapers are a primary source for in-depth information about candidates, especially their positions on a variety of issues. Reporters must be as well schooled on the issues as the candidates in order to produce stories with substance and meaning.
- Letters to the editor – More newspapers restrict endorsement letters due to orchestrated writing campaigns. The problem must be addressed. Don't forget, however, that the exchange of ideas remains the lifeblood of editorial pages and the heart of newspapers.

- Editorial endorsements – Newspapers have a responsibility, even an obligation, to weigh in on those individuals who they believe will best represent the interests of their communities. Editors and reporters usually have a distinctive insight on candidates.

- Graphics – Graphics play an important role in all aspects of election coverage – from profiling candidates to reporting vote totals. Graphics, when done right, are another entry point into the story and give readers immediate information.

- Utilizing the Web – Newspaper Web sites are a vital element of coverage. They offer opportunity for leading the way on breaking news, to supplement analysis of issues, and to facilitate exchange among

readers and candidates.

- Voter guides – These guides, if produced, must be viewed as one slice of election coverage. They must be coordinated carefully so they complement and do not diminish other ongoing coverage.

This is but one starting list, and newsrooms are likely to identify other “elements” of coverage by convening a brainstorming session. For example:

Judges are arguably among the most influential of elected officials. Newspapers should not be afraid to scrutinize judicial candidates and even offer a recommendation, especially if the races are of high visibility. Doing so requires extra effort, however, and therefore extra planning.

School referendums pose special circumstance, too. Schools are at the heart of community life, and newspapers are supposed to be boosters of quality education.

That said, responsible reporting means examining issues and writing stories that could prompt “yes” as well as “no” votes.

What are criteria for statewide candidates who seek local coverage? How do you follow the campaign of a local candidate seeking a congressional office? Have you developed a checklist for election night so staff is prepared for the expected and unexpected results?

Solid election coverage requires solid planning. Campaigns include many red-letter dates and events. As crowded as this calendar appears with filing dates and candidate forums and endorsement conventions, the newsroom's

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**Each newsroom must approach coverage based on its resources and its particular lineup of races. One is to identify and examine the “elements” of election coverage.**

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“internal” calendar will be even more detailed. When must candidate questionnaires be distributed and answers compiled? What are the deadlines for letters to the editor? When will endorsements be published?

Election coverage is like sports coverage. Certain elements are standard procedure. Preseason previews give readers a glimpse of teams' strengths and weaknesses. Candidates' announcements shed light

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**Jim Pumarlo**

# Remembering the good ol' days of Halloween

I was pushing my grandson in a kiddie car along the sidewalk of a Branson outlet mall recently when an elderly gentleman came up and offered him a piece of candy, saying he had been watching him enough the sunny afternoon and thought he was a well-behaved young man.

My grandson, Cole, 4, hesitated, looked at me, his grandmother and his mom, and then turned to the man and told him politely that he didn't want it.

I wasn't sure what he was going to say, but we were proud of him that he didn't take it. His mom told him he made the correct decision to reinforce that he had done the right thing.

It didn't appear the man had evil intentions, but in today's environment, one can't be too sure. I think it's a shame that kids have to worry about such things at such a young age. It's certainly wasn't something we worried about 50 years ago, you know, in the good old days.

One of my favorite Halloween memories as a kid was getting homemade cookies or popcorn balls. While I enjoyed getting candy bars and Tootsie Roll Pops,



**Tom Throne**

popcorn balls always were the best treat in your bag, especially if they made your teeth stick together.

The big deal was to compare how many homemade treats I received compared to my sisters.

Some years I won and some years I lost, but it was fun. The apartment complex we lived in was pretty good size, so we just went from house to house not really looking at what we were getting until we were home. Then the fun began as we dumped our treats in piles on the floor.

Later after I was married, my wife and I made popcorn balls for Halloween for trick-or-treaters who we knew. However, we gave up on that after people started doing bad things to homemade treats, such as drugs into candy or razor blades into apples.

Costumes had changed as well. Gone are the days of princess masks and ghost faces in favor of decorated faces so that kids can see better as they walk along their route.

My grandson was a chicken this year. His costume had orange legs with a puffy white body and a hood with a rooster's comb on top. As a proud grandpa, I'd say

he was the cutest kid.

Of course, his mother had a pretty good clown costume when she was younger. I liked being a hobo.

It seems over the years, people have become more involved in decorating their homes.

It used to be pumpkins on the porch, but now there are elaborate decorations in the trees and on the lawn.

It is always fun when people call up to have a picture taken of their decorations, which, of course, are the best in town.

Halloween should be a happy time and I always hated to hear news reports of kids being injured or made sick following an evening of fun.

I feel fortunate that we never had to report on such incidents at any of the papers for which I worked. We were able to keep Halloween as a good neighborhood time as it should be.

**Tom Throne** is president of the Kansas Press Association for 2009-10 and general manager of the Junction City Daily Union.

## Belleville Telescope sold to McBattas Publishing

The Belleville Telescope has been sold to McBattas Publishing Co., Inc.

The company has owned and published numerous newspapers in southern Nebraska and currently owns the Fairbury (Neb.) Journal-News and other commercial printing plants in Fairbury, Beatrice and Marysville as well as a national over-the-road truck line.

McBattas Publishing is owned by Fred Arnold, who is based out of Fairbury.

"We are pleased with the sale and believe the Telescope will continue to serve the community in the hands of experienced publisher Fred Arnold," said Nikki Miller of Manhattan.

She along with her sister Debbi Drewry, Redondo Beach, Cal., had owned the newspaper since the passing in March of their father, Mark Luman Miller, of Belleville.

The new owner is a former Belleville resident and worked for the Miller family at The Telescope during the 1980s.

"I am very honored to be returning to Belleville where my newspaper career essentially began and I am flattered that the Miller family has had me in mind for someone to continue their fine Kansas journalistic efforts," Arnold said.

The sale marks the end of the Miller era. The Telescope has

been owned and managed for more than 100 years by a member of the Miller publishing family.

It was first purchased by Alexander Quin Miller, Sr., in 1904. He first owned the Telescope along with H. G. Stitcher until 1911.

Mark Miller, the third generation of Millers, had owned and published the Telescope since the passing of his father, Merle M. Miller, in 2003.

A.Q. Sr. published the Telescope until his older sons Carl and A.Q., Jr. took over management in the 1930s.

Eventually both Carl and A. Q. left for other newspaper opportunities in the developing San Gabriel Valley of California, east of Los Angeles.

A.Q. Sr.'s youngest sons Merle and Luman were partners in the operation of the Telescope from 1936 until 1955, when Luman left to become publisher of The Dalles Chronicle in Oregon.

Merle's sons, Monte and Mark, joined their father in the management of the Telescope in the 1960s.

It was during this time the Telescope was moved from its downtown location on the south side of the square to a new offset printing plant on U.S. 81 at the west edge of Belleville.

## MARKETPLACE/JOB

### NEWS

News editor/reporter for Kansas twice-weekly about 4 1/2 hours east of Denver, near federal reservoir, fishing, hunting, outdoor sports. This professional will be responsible for news content, supervision of part-time staff and correspondents, pagination, design and coverage, reporting to general manager. Also involved in award-winning series of joint news sections produced by regional group. This is a prime opening for a reporter or editor with some experience or for a graduate who feels they can step up and produce an award-winning newspaper. Salary based one experience. Send letter and resume to s.haynes@nw-kansas.com and dpaxton@nw-kansas.com, The Norton Telegram.

**Sports editor —** The Hutchinson News, Hutchinson, KS, seeks an energetic and creative sports editor to supervise a staff of three full-time writers and several part-time staff members., The News provides prep sports coverage for more than 30 counties in south-central and southwest Kansas. The right candidate for sports editor should have a working knowledge and encourage the use of multimedia platforms – especially Twitter and hutchnews.com – that help speed delivery of sports news and scores., This position also requires a person who can demonstrate good organizational skills and be an effective communicator, supervisor, editor and writer. Experience with Quark or similar desktop publishing software is required., The News is recognized for its coverage of high school sports, and also covers the NJCCA and some Big 12 football and basketball games., The News is the flagship paper of the Harris Group, which owns four other newspapers in Kansas and one in Iowa. We offer a competitive salary, Profit Sharing, 401(k) and other benefits. Please submit a letter of application, resume, three writing samples and three page designs by Monday, Nov. 16, 2009, to: Mary Rintoul, managing editor, The Hutchinson News, Box 190, Hutchinson, KS 67504-0190 or e-mail mrintoul@hutchnews.com.

The Newton Kansan, a six-day-a-week, award-winning newspaper in south-central Kansas, is looking for a productive, resourceful reporter to join our outstanding news team. The Kansan's general assignment reporter will enjoy a variety of assignments, including city and county coverage, business stories, features and, occasionally, sports stories. The job includes shooting

photos, designing pages on Quark, typing obituaries and proofreading. The ideal candidate should produce clean, clear breaking news stories throughout the week for print and online, but also thrive on enterprise journalism. Some evening and weekend work is required. Send resume, 3-5 clips and 3 work references by November 13 to Christine Wyrick, managing editor, 121 W. Sixth St., Newton, KS 67114 or email: Kenneth.Knepper@thekansan.com. EOE/ Drug free

**State Capital Reporter —** Flint Hills Center for Public Policy seeks a full time reporter for our state capital news bureau that will open later this year. This position will be based in Topeka and requires an experienced business or government reporter who is passionate about informing readers about the impact of government policy on business and individual taxpayers. FHCPP is a non-profit organization that believes free enterprise solutions and open, efficient government will provide Kansans with more economic freedom. That said, our reporting is balanced and in-depth. We want stories that: Examine competing thoughts so readers can make informed decisions; Hold elected officials and state employees accountable to taxpayers; Seek viable solutions to major problems. If you are comfortable reporting in both traditional and new media, have a solid reputation, good storytelling skills, expertise in computer-aided reporting, are comfortable working

with numbers, not afraid to challenge the status quo and have a real desire to make a difference...let's talk. Competitive pay package. Send resume, references and a cover letter explaining why you are the ideal person for this job by November 16 to: Brian R. Hook, Bureau Chief, Flint Hills Center for Public Policy, 250 N. Water, Suite 216, Wichita, KS 67202, brhook@flinthills.org, www.flinthills.org

**Wanted —** Full-time paginator/graphic designer. Job involves laying out pages, working with graphics and photos and updating the Web site. Involves some weekend and evening work. Must be reliable, quick but accurate, and have a keen eye for design and sense for details. If this fits you, please send letter, portfolio, resume and references to Dale Hogg, managing editor, Great Bend Tribune, PO Box 228, Great Bend, Kan., 67530, or to dhogg@gbtribune.com.

### NEWSPAPERS FOR SALE

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## Pumarlo

**Continued from Page 2**

on their strengths.

The grind of a sports season offers opportunities for highlighting individuals' roles and to report on team development. Months-long campaigns provide ample chance for candidates to exchange press releases on what they would bring to the table and how they would best serve constituents. Through it all, editors and reporters must strive for consistency and balance.

**Jim Pumarlo** writes, speaks and provides training on Community Newsroom Success Strategies. He is author of "Votes and Quotes: A Guide to Outstanding Election Coverage" and "Bad News and Good Judgment: A Guide to Reporting on Sensitive Issues in a Small-Town Newspaper." He can be contacted at [www.pumarlo.com](http://www.pumarlo.com).

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# Coverage of Kennedy tragedy led to a career

**A**n anniversary comes up each November that makes me harken back to 1963.

We had just finished lunch. I was in seventh grade PE class at Lyndon Grade School when we first got the news that President John F. Kennedy had been shot.

Even though I was just 12 years old, this single event would end up shaping my life and, eventually, my career.

I was raised in Lyndon, 30 miles south of Topeka. Fortunately for me, my parents enjoyed reading the newspaper, so I grew up reading the Topeka Daily Capital and Topeka State Journal, back when there were morning and evening editions.

Yes, I read them both, even in elementary school. I probably concentrated more on the comics than on the front page, but when Kennedy was shot, I became a voracious reader of newspapers. I couldn't wait to see what was new each day after the assassination.

I was fascinated by the investigative reporting and all the details that become part of news stories. While I had always enjoyed reading and writing, the aftermath of that national tragedy laid the groundwork for my career in journalism.

This may sound quirky — or even a bit morbid — but my mother noticed my fascination with the Kennedy assassination and bought me the Warren Report as soon



**Doug Anstaett**

as it was in print.

Needless to say, I read it cover to cover more than once, amazed at how much information had been assembled about all aspects of that day in Dallas.

Through the years, I have continued to be a Kennedy assassination buff.

I raise this subject today because there is a growing fear across our nation that good-quality journalism is headed for the ash heap of history.

Certainly, the economic reality of newspapers today precludes the kind of investments in investigative reporting that most of the over-40 crowd came to expect.

But I'm not as pessimistic about the future as some.

Quite the contrary.

While the economic model at the metropolitan newspapers — where much of our investigative reporting takes place — is under extreme pressure, there is every indication that out of the ashes we may see a new kind of journalism. It may not be exactly what we see today, but the savings that result from digitalization of our information may actually serve to increase our access to information even more in the future.

Think about it. Your newspaper only has so many pages for information, and on some days, it's just not enough. That's where the web comes in. There, space is never a concern and therefore it is never an excuse for not providing information.

Just imagine for a minute what it would have been like to have bloggers, online fact-checkers, Twitter and Facebook accounts and the like during the minutes and hours following the Kennedy assassination.

The amount of information shared would have been a million-fold of what it was in 1963.

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**Even though I was just 12 years old, this single event would end up shaping my life and, eventually, my career.**

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Rather than just the Abraham Zapruder 8-mm film, we would have had a thousand or more video cameras, phone cameras and other recording devices taking in the sights and sounds of Dallas that day.

While we might still be debating 46 years later whether Lee Harvey Oswald acted alone in killing the president, Officer J.D. Tippit and Gov. John Connally, we certainly would have had more information to digest about the situation.

Yes, the news business is changing. Not all of it, of course, is for the better.

Yet, there is no turning back either. Technology will only get more sophisticated and complicated.

Our privacy will continue to be more difficult to protect.

There's one other thing.

Citizens worried about information overload will tend to turn to those they trust for their news.

Let's make sure they turn to us.

**Doug Anstaett** is executive director of the Kansas Press Association.

## GUEST COMMENTARY

### The Kansas City Star

**A** recent opinion by Kansas Attorney General Steve Six contains advice that all public officials should take to heart.

Asked for a hypothetical opinion based on the facts of a long-disputed incident at Johnson County Community College, Six cautioned public bodies to honor the state's open meetings law, even when no one is looking.

"Within an executive session, the governing body or agency ... should remain vigilant and engage in self-policing to assure compliance," Six said.

The trustees and president of the community college could have spared themselves a lot of trouble if they had followed

that line of reasoning last February.

The trustees were meeting in executive session to evaluate college President Terry Calaway's job performance. Asked about the upcoming budget, Calaway produced a list of possible upcoming budget cuts. Former Trustee Benjamin Hodge shared the list with the media, provoking the wrath of other trustees.

In response to a complaint from Hodge, Johnson County District Attorney Steve Howe said the list fit into the category of "personnel matters of non-elected officials" and could be discussed in a closed meeting.

We couldn't disagree more.

The proposed cuts were general in nature and didn't discuss specific person-

nel. Job evaluation sessions aren't meant to provide a haven for boards to discuss issues of keen interest to the public.

Howe's opinion leaves a wide hole for school boards, city councils and other boards to conduct public business behind closed doors. That's not a precedent the district attorney should set.

In his recent advisory, Six noted that Kansas courts have said that public boards must separate matters that are permitted in executive session and those permissible only in open meetings, except to protect the privacy of employees. That wasn't the case with the community college meeting.

The Kansas Press Association has called upon Howe to reconsider his opinion. We hope he will.

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# MONTGOMERY FAMILY SYMPOSIUM

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9 A.M. TO 3:30 P.M.  
THURSDAY, NOV. 12, 2009  
UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS  
LAWRENCE

## Tentative program

9-9:30 a.m.: Coffee and registration.

9:30-9:45 a.m.: Welcome — Doug Anstaett, Ann Brill, Pam Fine.

9:45-10:45 a.m. — “You want me to do what?” How to create new products and services without cannibalizing what’s already working. Moderator: Jeanny Sharp. Panelists: Dan Thalmann, Tony Berg, Sherri Chisenhall, Andy Taylor.

11:-11:50 a.m. -- “5 IDEAS in 50 MINUTES”: Five terrific multimedia ideas designed to enhance readership, build community, provide public service and/or grow revenue, presented by papers who did them ...

Noon: Lunch (12:30 p.m.: Welcome from Bernadette Gray-Little, KU Chancellor, introduced by Ann Brill).

1-2 p.m.: “Putting Their Money Where Their Mouths Are.” Dolph Simons Jr.; John Montgomery and Rudy Taylor discuss what they’ve learned about taking risks and managing them, leadership and creating a culture of innovation and change. Pam Fine will moderate.

2:15 - 3:30 p.m.: How to position your paper to remain relevant in the future... Jane Stevens and participants discuss their ideas for what it will take to keep their own news organizations vibrant and vital.

SPACE IS LIMITED! SEE NEXT PAGE FOR REGISTRATION FORM

# MONTGOMERY FAMILY SYMPOSIUM REGISTRATION FORM

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Newspaper \_\_\_\_\_ Contact Person \_\_\_\_\_  
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Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail Address \_\_\_\_\_

## Names of Attendees

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

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Registration is \$75 for KPA members and \$150 for nonmembers. Fees include lunch and class materials.

## Questions?

For more information, contact Rachel Willis at (785) 271-5304 or [rwillis@kspress.com](mailto:rwillis@kspress.com). Driving directions and additional class information will be sent to each attendee upon receipt of registration.

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