OMNI SUNSHINE/FOIA WEEK NEWSLETTER #2, MARCH 11-17, 2013. YOUR RIGHT TO KNOW, YOUR RIGHT TO OPEN GOVERNMENT. Compiled by Dick Bennett for a Culture of Peace, Justice, and Ecology.

JAMES MADISON’S BIRTHDAY MARCH 16

OMNI’S NATIONAL/INTERNATIONAL DAYS/WEEK/MONTHS PROJECT

Dick’s blog:  War Department/Peace Department
http://jamesrichardbennett.blogspot.com/

My Newsletters:
http://www.omnicenter.org/newsletter-archive/
(see: Interdependence, Internationalism, etc.)

Index:
http://www.omnicenter.org/omni-newsletter-general-index/

A knowledge-based peace, justice, and ecology movement and an informed citizenry depend upon an open democracy.

For Democracy to be possible, many other institutions are necessary, including free information and transparency; secrecy and militarism are the enforcers of totalitarianism.

Contents of #1
Sunshine Week
National Freedom of Information Coalition
Society of Professional Journalists (SPJ)

Contents of #2
Arkansas Sunshine Week 2013 March 10-16
Knight Foundation
1. **Between the Lines - for **Sunshine Week** by Brenda Blagg - The ...**

beebe.news.com/?p=16323

Mar 15, 2012 – Brenda Blagg is a columnist for **Northwest Arkansas** Media and has been the Arkansas coordinator for **Sunshine Week**. E-mail comments or ...

2. **Downloads | APA Documents - Arkansas Press Association**

arkansaspress.org/.../cat.../14-arkansas-publishers-weekly?...

**Arkansas** Press Association, Advertising Conference, Tres Williams, Tom Larimer, Roy... **Sunshine Week**, Freedom of Information Act, Brenda Blagg, **Northwest** ...

Join us in a nationwide discussion about the importance of access to public
information and what it means for you and your community.
Follow Sunshine Week on Twitter for updates on open government news and toolkit resources for participants. Find us @SunshineWeek.

Need an idea boost for Sunshine Week? Check out examples of FOI in Action and find resources in our Idea Bank and participants’ Toolkit.

Join the ever-growing roster of Sunshine Week participants and check out the events calendar to find out what's happening during Sunshine Week.
Sunshine Week is a national initiative to promote a dialogue about the importance of open government and freedom of information. (See more about the new Sunshine Week website.) With an inaugural grant from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, which has continued to support the effort, Sunshine Week was launched by the American Society of News Editors in March 2005. This non-partisan, non-profit initiative is celebrated in mid-March each year to coincide with James Madison’s birthday on March 16.

In 2011, the Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press joined ASNE as a national co-coordinator of Sunshine Week, enabling the organizations to join forces and resources to produce Toolkit materials for participants and keep the website and social media sites engaged.

Sunshine Week seeks to enlighten and empower people to play an active role in their government at all levels, and to give them access to information that makes their lives better and their communities stronger.

Participants include news media, government officials at all levels, schools and universities, libraries and archives, individuals, non-profit and civic organizations, historians and anyone with an interest in open government.

Everyone can be a part of Sunshine Week. Our coalition of supporters is broad and deep. And individual participation can make all the difference, as evidenced by our Local Heroes awards. The only requirement is that you do something to engage in a discussion about the importance of open government. It could be a large public forum or a classroom discussion, an article or series of articles about access to important information, or an editorial.
Celebrating Sunshine Week 2013

CALENDAR
Thursday, March 7, 2013 16:14

Sunshine Week, a nationwide initiative highlighting the importance of open government and accountability, will be held this year from March 10-16. Created by journalists in 2002, Sunshine Week is designed to educate people on their right to access public information in understandable, user-friendly formats to participate more effectively in democracy and to use such information to protect and improve their communities.

Sunshine Week coincides with James Madison's birthday on March 16. Madison is considered the "Founding Father of Freedom of Information."

During the week, news media, government officials, educational institutions, libraries, nonprofit
organizations, individuals, and anyone with an interest in open and transparent government can take part in a variety of events and activities. Shedding new light on the latest developments in freedom of government information, these events will include conferences, panel discussions, and workshops. Here are some notable events that will take place in Washington, D.C., throughout the week:

**Monday, March 11**

The Department of Justice will celebrate significant improvements in Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) mandatory practices over the last four years. At 10 a.m., Acting Associate Attorney General Tony West and agency representatives will spotlight examples of success achieved by a number of agencies in areas addressed by the Justice Department's FOIA guidelines.

The National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), together with the Office of Government Information Services (OGIS), will host two back-to-back events at the National Archives. At 1 p.m., Archivist David Ferriero and OGIS Director Miriam Nisbet will discuss the importance of FOIA and display the original Freedom of Information Act, which celebrates its 47th birthday this year. At 1:45 p.m., agency staff will demonstrate FOIAonline, a new multi-agency FOIA portal designed to streamline the FOIA process for both agencies and requesters.

**Tuesday, March 12**

The Center for Effective Government and the Electronic Privacy Information Center (EPIC) will host two panel discussions beginning at 1 p.m. on the consistent implementation of open government policies and the reduction of national security-related secrecy. The panels will feature open government experts, administration officials, and congressional staff. [Click for more details and to RSVP for this free event.](#)

The Congressional Transparency Caucus is hosting a panel focusing on recent progress on FOIA reform and what more needs to be done to improve public access to government records, at 3 p.m. in Room 2203 of the Rayburn House Office Building. This event will bring together FOIA experts including OGIS Director Miriam Nisbet; Rick Blum, Coordinator at the Sunshine in Government Initiative; Gavin Baker, Open Government Policy Analyst at the Center for Effective Government; and Richard Pollock, Investigative Reporter at the Washington Examiner. The discussion will be moderated by the Sunlight Foundation’s Policy Counsel, Daniel Schuman.

**Wednesday, March 13**

Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington (CREW) will put together two panel discussions at the George Washington University Law School from 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. The discussions will examine whether the government is justified in keeping secret the opinions drawn up by the Office of Legal Counsel (OLC) to justify policies including extraordinary rendition, the use of torture, and the killing of Americans abroad.

At 10 a.m. the Senate Judiciary Committee will hold a hearing looking at the OPEN Government Act and freedom of information issues in the Dirksen Senate Office Building. The Center for Effective Government's Director of Open Government Policy, Sean Moulton, will testify. Government witnesses will include Melanie Pustay, director of the Office of Information Policy at the Department of Justice, and OGIS Director Miriam Nisbet.

The D.C. Open Government Coalition will present its second annual DC Open Government Summit from 6 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. and will share results of its recent survey of meetings across dozens of D.C. boards and commissions to see if they complied with open government guidelines. The summit will convene such experts as Robert Spagnoletti, chairman of the newly established Board of Ethics and Government Accountability; D.C. Council Chairman Phil Mendelson (D); and David Zvenyach,
The Brennan Center for Justice presents a panel discussion on the future of classification reform and the broader implications for our national security system. Panelists will include Nancy Soderberg, chair of the Public Interest Declassification Board; J. William Leonard, former Director of the Information Security Oversight Office; Steven Aftergood, director of the Project on Government Secrecy; and Elizabeth Goitein, co-director of the Brennan Center's Liberty and National Security Program. The discussion will take place at Carnegie Endowment for International Peace from noon to 1:30 p.m.

The Cato Institute is hosting a two-day Wikipedia and Legislative Data Workshop that explores ways of using legislative data to enhance Wikipedia. The first session, from 2:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m., is designed for people of all technical skill levels and will cover Wikipedia editing and policy. Participants are encouraged to bring a laptop. Friday's daylong workshop will convene experts in government transparency and Wikipedia editorial processes and decisions.

The National Press Club will offer a panel discussion, moderated by Club president Rick Dunham (of the Houston Chronicle), on how to use FOIA to obtain information in the course of investigative work. Panelists include Randy Rabinowitz, Director of Regulatory Policy for the Center for Effective Government; Charles Babcock, Editor at Bloomberg News; and Bill Allison, Editorial Director at the Sunlight Foundation.

The First Amendment Center, OpenTheGovernment.org, the Project On Government Oversight, and the Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press will celebrate the 15th annual Freedom of Information Day at the Newseum. Several experts, including the Center for Effective Government's Director of Open Government Policy, Sean Moulton, will discuss open government issues such as fiscal transparency, FOIA, and disclosure of special interest influence. During the event, the American Library Association will announce the recipient of the 2013 James Madison Award that honors individuals protecting and promoting public access to government information.

The Collaboration on Government Secrecy at American University's Washington College of Law will host its sixth annual celebration of Freedom of Information Day. From 9:30 a.m. to 6 p.m., leading experts will discuss issues including the legislative outlook for open government and the aftermath of the U.S. Supreme Court's decision in Milner v. Department of the Navy.

Anastasia Postnikova contributed to this blog post.

Related Stories

- Fracking Projected to Continue for Decades in Texas
- Money for the People: Grillo's Populist Plan for Italy
- Austerity USA Begins March 1st
- Anthony Kennedy and Antonin Scalia Say the Confederacy Won the Civil War and the Purpose of the Reconstruction Amendments Was to Reinforce Rather Than Diminish State Sovereignty. (Except on Affirmative Action, the Second Amendment, and Real Estate Property "Takings.")
- Class Action Filed Against License Bureau: Consumers Seeking Over $10 Million In Illegal Fee Refunds
- Congress Reigning In Corporate Cell Phone Pirates Over Restricted Cell Phone Use
Here is the link to all OMNI newsletters:
http://www.omnicenter.org/newsletter-archive/

END OMNI SUNSHINE WEEK  NEWSLETTER 2013

--
Dick Bennett
My blog:
War Department/Peace Department
http://jamesrichardbennett.blogspot.com/
Newsletters
http://www.omnicenter.org/newsletter-archive/

Index:
http://www.omnicenter.org/omni-newsletter-general-index/
National/International Days
See Newsletters
Peace, Justice, Ecology Birthdays
See INMOtion
jbennet@uark.edu
(479) 442-4600
2582 Jimmie Ave.
Fayetteville, AR 72703