

KEYA PAHA COUNTY, NEBRASKA

Springview Herald

LETTER TO THE EDITOR POLICY

- We have the right to decline publication of any submission
- We have the right to ask the author to revise any submission before agreeing to publish the submission
- We do not accept letters that ‘campaign’ for candidates running for election, it must be a paid ad
- In the event that we are not comfortable with the letter, that is reason alone for refusing to publish it
- Each letter to the editor must be ‘signed’, if submitted electronically we must first call the author of the letter and speak to the individual to confirm he/she sent the letter
- At the end of the LTE we must list the author’s full name, address (list city, state), and their phone number

NEBRASKA PUBLISHING LAWS

- Q: If we print a letter to the editor which is libelous, can the newspaper also be held liable even though we did none of the investigation and have no way of knowing whether the libelous comment was true or false?
- A: YES, and especially because you have printed or “republished” a libel without checking on the accuracy of the reputation –damaging remarks in the letter. See section on Libel.
- LIBEL – Letters to the Editor. The publisher is liable for libel in letters to the editor, and therefore care especially must be taken with letters to the editor on emotional subjects, customer complaint or “action line” stories and the like. If highly damaging statements of fact are in a letter to the editor about some person or company, it is wise to treat it with care. Either find an independent means to verify the truth of the statement, force the writer of the letter to the editor to supply sufficient proof, or edit out the libelous material, normally after consultation with the writer of the letter. Many newspapers use letters to the editor which were signed, but the signature was withheld. The Nebraska Shield Law permits you to withhold that name, and that law has been tested in the context. But withholding the name of the author simply means that the newspaper itself will take all the “heat”, in the event there is a libel or breach of privacy case. Letters to the editors have furnished the material for numerous libel cases all around the country and while they are in an extremely important and necessary part of a newspaper, in most people’s view, nevertheless they require special attention and “libel proofing.”

Latest update 3-19-14

AJ/aj – Letter to the Editor Policy