

# Subsidizing The Times

**April 2, 2016 -- Updated July 13, 2106**

Many of the comments here were published by the Sky Valley Chronicle on March 14, 2016. The link is provided below. *The July update is at the end of this epistle.*

Have you ever wondered why you never see newsprint media publish anything about the Washington Public Records Act (PRA) that isn't biased toward a puff promotion piece? Why they continually quote members of the Washington Coalition for Open Government, which supports blatantly abusing the PRA and has board members who financially profit from the PRA. Why they never go into any detailed analysis of why local agencies are calling for changes. Why, no matter what level of abusing the PRA occurs, and no matter how much it costs local taxpayers, it is "too vital" to change?

The claim is that this bias comes from the need for the media to keep abreast of governmental activities and that it requires a harsh law to do so. However, if you look at how great news stories occur, they tend to follow:

Unaoil international bribery - 2016	inside sources
FIFA International Futbol scandal - 2015	inside sources
NSA surveillance - 2013	inside source
Watergate - 1972	inside source
Pentagon Papers - 1969	inside source.

Nary a FOIA request amongst them.

The PRA does not need to be designed to be abusive to local taxpayers. Both Utah and Rhode Island manage to provide their journalists with good access to public documents without making their PRA a profiteering operation. You can do both.

It would be nice if the mainstream media could make this point on occasion.

More specifics on how the newsprint media financially profits from the Washington Public Records Act can be found at:

<http://www.skyvalleychronicle.com/FEATURE-NEWS/HOW-TAXPAYERS-SUBSIDIZE-THROUGH-STATE-LAW-BR-I-Labor-costs-at-the-largest-for-profit-print-newspaper-in-Washington-I-2434655>

An excellent story on old timey journalism can be found at:

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/morning-mix/wp/2015/06/03/how-a-curmudgeonly-old-reporter-exposed-the-fifa-scandal-that-toppled-sepp-blatter/>.

## **July 13, 2016 Adder**

While reviewing some old records, I came across my notes from the March 8, 2014 Statewide Open Government Conference put on by the Washington Coalition for Open Government. There was one comment from that meeting that applies well to this posting.

### **Filling the Black Holes in the PRA 10:35 am - 11:50 am Session**

Frank Garred, a retired journalist, noted that in the old days when he was a reporter, he established a line of communication with agencies and got what he wanted.

Nowadays, of course, newsprint reporters don't need to do that as they have email and the PRA. Why make the effort of a Carl Bernstein or an Andrew Jennings to develop lines of communication when you can just surf the net and make a couple of phone calls. Developing lines of communication tends to be a lot slower and more expensive than surfing the net.