

## Don't forget your photo ID at the polls

Last week, I listed the wrong times for the Republican Presidential Caucus. Saturday, March 10, voting will begin at 10:00 a.m. and end promptly at 1:00 p.m. Be sure to bring a photo ID to be eligible to vote.

I have received many e-mails about HB 2437 (Safe and Fair Elections Act) this week. The House voted to amend this act, requiring all persons registering to vote for the first time in Kansas to provide proof of their U.S. citizenship. All current registered voters are exempt from providing proof of their citizenship. The original bill, passed during the 2011 session, had the provision go into effect on January 1, 2013, and the new bill amends the effective date to June 15, 2012. The motivation behind this was the desire to properly vet the wave of expected voters who will register leading up to the Presidential and state elections this fall. The bill passed by a vote of 81 to 43, and I voted for it.

Twenty-seven states have enacted broader voter ID requirements than those required by the federal Help America Vote Act. In those states, all voters must show ID before voting. Nine of those states require photo ID, and the remaining eighteen accept additional forms of ID that do not necessarily include a photo.

An update on the concern about the home-owned carnivals in Northwest Kansas: it appears now that the carnival boards will be required to send proof of insurance to the Department of Labor.

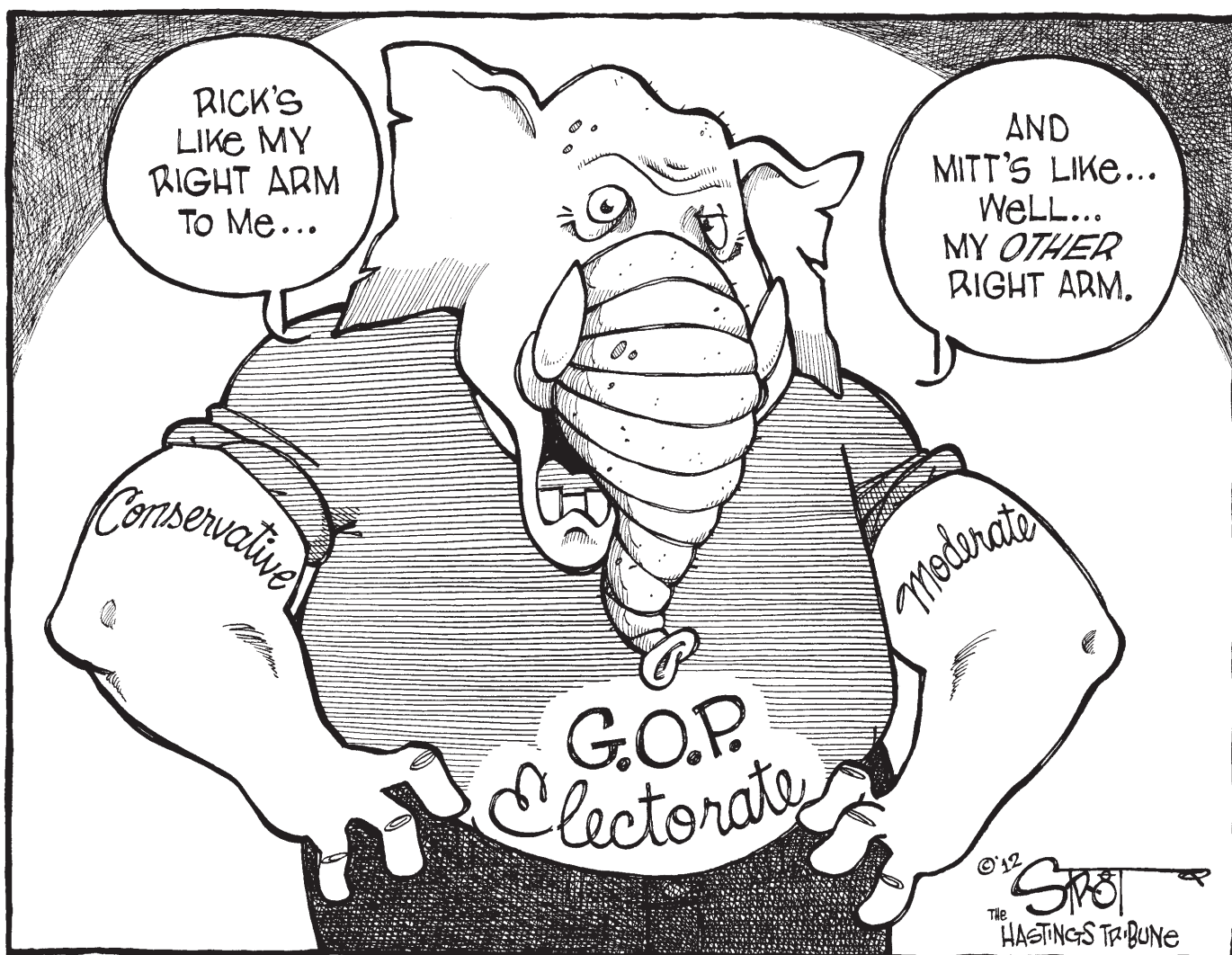
I believe we can live with that requirement. I have assured many people, in Topeka, that nowhere do people work harder to provide a safe, fun environment for our kids.

The last time I renewed my CDL driving license, I had to travel to Colby. Our county treasurers are more than willing to provide this service, but an upgrade in technology is required. Under current law, there is a three-dollar surcharge on titling of vehicles and that money goes into a fund to provide this upgrade. I was told, in a meeting today, that it will not be until next February that the system is up and running.

The next two weeks, the session is going to heat up with major issues that have been bandied about in the press. I wish we could address the record gas prices we are experiencing. Although the portion through Kansas has already been completed, the pipeline to move Canadian oil to U.S. refineries has been stopped. Besides affecting our oil independence from a country we know and trust, it also affects the Kansas economy.

A reminder that my website [www.wardcassidy.com](http://www.wardcassidy.com) has all of the articles I have written this year. I write one each week and post it.

### News from your legislator Ward Cassidy



## Singers or not, we all have our greatest hits

I love to sing. I'm not very good at it, but I love to sing. Before I met Jim I would have NEVER had the nerve to sing publicly. I did one time in a play, but that was the exception. And, besides, I was playing the part of a tap-dancing, singing nun in our community theatre during the production of "Nunsense: The Second Coming." It was my character, Sister Mary Robert, who was singing, not me.

All of that to say, now I sing. Jim is a good, strong song leader with a great sense of pitch. We mostly sing in church, old folks homes and prison. Notice what these places have in common: our audience either can't hear us or they can't get away.

We lean toward the old traditional music, but really like some of the new songs coming out, too. We heard one the other day by a Southern gospel quartet and Jim went to the Internet to find the lyrics. It's a good thing he did. If we had sung it like he heard it, we might have been in trouble. The song's title is "When I Get Into Heaven With My White Robe On." Jim was singing, "When I Get Into Heaven With My Wife's Robe On."

Singing is a great way to communicate.

### Out Back

Carolyn Plotts



Sometimes a song says something you can't bring yourself to say. Like, "I'm sorry."

One morning after a little spat, Jim left for work and I was left to stew. I knew I was in the wrong, but just couldn't bring myself to say it. Finally, I called his cell phone and when he answered I broke out in the old Stevie Wonder hit, "I Just Called To Say I Love You." We laughed. I cried. All was forgiven.

We can be driving down the highway and one of us say something about how green the wheat fields are and, simultaneously, we'll both start singing, "The Green, Green Grass of Home."

My girls and I logged lots of highway driving when they were little and singing helped them pass the time. I'm sure they still remember the song, "Oh, I had a little chicken and she wouldn't lay an egg. So I poured hot water up and down her leg. Oh, the little chicken

hollered and the little chicken begged. And the little chicken layed me a hard-boiled egg. Thanks for the boiled egg. Pass the salt." And if I sang "I'm Henry the Eighth I Am" once, I've probably sang it a thousand times. Same with "We Are The Gopher Girls," "This Land Is Your Land," "There's A Hole In The Bucket Dear Liza," "I Just Called Up To Tell You That We're Rugged But Right" and "A-amen, A-amen, A-amen, Amen, Amen."

Our "Greatest Hits" album will be available in the lobby after the show. Order now, and as a special bonus, we'll send you a second CD, simply include five-ninety-five for shipping and handling.

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Our two youngest daughters, Becky and Kara, will be reaching a life milestone in the next few days. They will both turn 40. Notice how we say, "Turning Forty." Like fruit "turning bad." Just kidding, girls. Their birthdays are only six days apart so we refer to them as "The Twins."

How can this be? Our babies are 40. Oh, well. It's all in your perspective. In twenty years, they'll be 60 and I'll only be 85.

## When a dog isn't an animal but a family member

"I wouldn't take any amount of money for that dog," were my dad's most often spoken words when referring to our family dog, Lady.

He and my younger sister, Sandy, picked up the young German shepherd pup from our veterinarian in Colby. Lady was a replacement for our Irish setter, Red. This old gal retrieved her last pheasant during the fall of '62, shortly after my 13th birthday.

Lady spent many years on our farm and became a major part of our family. We all loved her.

True to her name, she conducted herself like a lady around our family but this sleek silver and black canine struck fear into the hearts of anyone who drove up to our home. She was a guard that protected us from door-to-door salesmen and other unwanted guests.

I remember a particularly pesky Fuller brush man who Mother couldn't persuade to leave. Once he finally did, I sicked Lady on him and she chased him for nearly 30 yards before he jumped into his car with her ripping at his drawers.

One of Dad's best friends never stepped foot out of his pickup while Lady patrolled our property. This neighbor cursed Lady, swore he'd shoot her but he never messed with her.

This dog was a constant companion throughout our childhood and played

### Insight

John Schlageck



many different roles. She was the scout that trotted out front as we explored the western Kansas countryside. She was the horse that pulled Sandy in the wagon. She was the vigilant lookout that waited patiently for us to return from school. She was also that "silly creature" who slept in our wheelbarrow filled with fall leaves.

But most of all, Lady was the dog that worshiped my dad. My father couldn't drive his pickup anywhere without this four-legged passenger seated to his right.

"She got so she could almost drive," Dad used to tell us with a smile.

This dog would do anything for my father – and she was a joy to watch working cattle.

"She could tell if there was a cow out (of the fenced in pasture) a half mile away," Dad said. "She'd put her head out the window and when I'd stop the pickup she'd round them up and head 'em into the (open) gate."

We enjoyed many happy years with Lady before she became old, tired and feeble. When that day came, we took

her to our vet to have her put to sleep.

This was particularly painful. Lady wasn't just our dog – she was a member of our family. Dad gathered her in his arms, placed her on the seat to his right one last time, and drove her home.

We buried Lady near mom's garden in the back yard. She often played in that garden and it was there she buried her bones.

Yes, we all missed that dog and while it's been a long time ago, I still remember my dad reaching down beside his easy chair to pet the head that was no longer there.

Dad couldn't be without a dog for long and within a few months he brought home another silver and black German shepherd. We called her Lady too.

Whenever we used to visit my folks, we'd bring our little Sheltie, Lorna Doone, home with us. Seeing her race through the grass today takes me back to western Kansas and memories for my father and his dogs. Dad enjoyed the company of his dogs until a few years ago when he passed into the "Great Beyond" as he called it.

And if wishes come true, I know my dad is sitting in his easy chair in heaven with one, or all of his "Ladies," next to him. I can see a smile spread across his face as he pets each and every one of them and listens to the thump, thump, thump of their tails.



Thumbs up to the Norton School crossing guards. You suffer through the wind, rain, snow and sleet to take care of our children every school day. Especially the guard on State Street who always has a smile and a wave for passers by. Thank you for a job well done. Brought in.

Letters to the Editor and Thumbs Up:  
e-mail [dpaxton@nwkansas.com](mailto:dpaxton@nwkansas.com)  
or to write 215 S. Kansas Ave., Norton, Kansas 67654  
785-877-3361

Remember there is no charge for rendering a Thumbs Up. Thumbs Up are meant to give recognition for a positive person or event in the community. Also remember all Letters to the Editor must be signed.

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