

An update from my freshman year in office

It has been a busy month preparing for the upcoming legislative session. Early in December we met in Topeka to choose the House Officials. Mike O'Neal will return as Speaker of the House, Arlen Siegfried will be the Majority Leader, Peggy Mast will be the Assistant Majority Leader, and Gene Vickery will be the Majority Whip. There will be at least 31 freshmen this year on the House side. It has been awhile since I have been a freshman. This time around I am even more excited to learn and have been studying issues every chance I get.

While in Topeka we had a freshmen supper at the Kansas Historical Society. I would recommend anyone who is in Topeka to visit the site. They have great displays of our Kansas heritage. I had a very nice visit with Governor Elect Brownback and was encouraged to hear him talk about helping to develop rural Kansas. We are all looking forward to his budget proposals for the upcoming year. Our current debt, at least \$500 million, presents the problem of cutting programs and finding new revenues. I know that it is going to be a tough year for everyone involved. My campaign promise is to let every agency know how their decisions are affecting Northwest Kansas.

I have been trying to meet as many state senators and representatives I can. I had a chance to meet some of them in Garden City. After a business meeting we were invited to a pheasant ranch to try our hand at hunting. The representatives that were there now introduce me as the man from Northwest Kansas that can shoot. It was a fun time and I also won a drawing for a Browning 20 gauge shot gun, that my grandsons quickly claimed when I arrived home.

I attended a three day workshop in Wichita sponsored by the Kansas Leadership institute the week before Christmas. It was very beneficial. The highlight for me was meeting four ex-state representatives that had over 100 years of experience between them. We could ask any questions we wanted and I had plenty to ask.

Last week I received my committee assignments from the Speaker. I have three committees that meet every day. At 9:00 am I will be in the Education Policy meeting, at 1:30 pm I will be in the Public Safety meeting - this includes Correction and Facilities, Juvenile Justice, the KBI, and the Highway Patrol, at 3:30 pm I will be on the Education Budget committee. I was pleased to be put on a budget committee, especially the one that uses close to seventy per cent of the budget. There were not very many freshmen appointed to budget committees, from what I understand. I had asked for Agriculture as well and I promise to keep an eye on what is going on and let my Farm Bureau and ag friends know.

I will do my best to keep people informed and would appreciate your prayers and input. My office is room L29b in the Docking Building. It is not much of an office, three of us share one secretary and there are only two chairs in the room. It really doesn't matter, as most of my time will be in committee meetings. I am staying at the Senate Suites. It is a four minute walk to the Docking Building. My web site and phone should be available in the next two weeks. You can google the Kansas legislature to get the information, if my next newsletter is not out yet.

Wednesday, January 12 there is a joint session of the Kansas Legislature to hear Governor Brownback's State of the State address. The work then begins. I am officially sworn in at 2:00 pm on January 10.

One last item. I am allowed ten pages per session. I have two from Phillipsburg and to be fair I should have two from each county. If anyone is interested in being a page they should contact the Republican party head in their county or call my office direct.

News from your legislator
Ward Cassidy



Looking down the Road...

KANSAS MARK THE STATE'S 150TH BIRTHDAY...
CELEBRATE OUR SESQUICENTENNIAL
BUT ABANDON A 151ST CELEBRATION BECAUSE IT'S HARD ENOUGH JUST TO SAY SESQUICENTENNIAL.

STATE LAW FINING DRIVERS CAUGHT TEXTING HAS IMMEDIATE IMPACT...
ON THE CONTENT OF FINED DRIVERS' TEXT MESSAGES.

THE LEGISLATURE'S G.O.P. MAJORITY PASSES AN IMMIGRATION LAW...
TO ADDRESS THOSE PESKY DEMOCRATIC LEGISLATORS.

THE WESTBORO BAPTIST CHURCH GOES INTO HIDING...
AFTER THEIR CARS ARE VANDALIZED WITH ANTI-ISLAMIC BUMPER STICKERS.

KANSAS 2011
The MANHATTAN MERCURY

Recent break in political news a relief

Have you noticed anything unusual lately? Something truly out of the ordinary is taking place...few if any politicians are making any noise. There were no Boehner jabs or Pelosi punches. Washington D.C. headlines have been focused on the winter storm and travel delays. The closest CNN came to political news was pushing the death panel talk on Parker Spitzer. The news was all about other people. A welcome relief? Well maybe.

The headlines targeted not the joy of news, but the sad and fearful. The five year old who died on the Wyoming ski slopes or the five teens found dead in a Florida motel room. These stories may be newsworthy but are they news? News stories are emotional by their very nature, but perhaps most importantly is how do we use the information we gain. If the story from the ski slope prompts you

Phase II
Mary Kay Woodyard



to find safe measures for your child's favorite sport then the story was a valuable source of information. Some stories however are more bizarre in nature...the woman who saw Jesus in her x-rays for instance.

Although some might consider the Wikileaks Assange a political story, the book deal isn't. In some ways it only serves to dilute what good, if any, could be gleaned by his actions. Isn't it interesting the attention Assange has received and yet the soldier who actually stole the

information and the computer hacker are little known participants, but without their help Assange probably could not have achieved his notoriety?

Chris Lui posted his YouTube video under the guise of the Patriot Pilot and in so doing disclosed security lapses at San Francisco International Airport. He said they (pilots) were urged by Janet Napolitano, Secretary of Homeland Security, "if you see something, say something." I think the phrase 'chain of command' may have been overlooked.

Although the above weren't political they did provide a good break from the hard government news. I like to think if it had been a real news week I wouldn't have had to know Kate Gosselin wants a husband for 2011 or that octomom is being evicted. I guess when it is a slow news week however you have to run with what you have. mkwoodyard@ruraltel.net

Kansans' way of life is special

Kansas is a great place. In Kansas, we know our neighbors and look after them. We teach our children to be moral, responsible citizens. And we work hard to provide for our families and build a better future. The pioneering spirit of those Kansans years ago who settled our state lives on in us today. We are independent people who want to make a difference. I appreciate you allowing me the opportunity to make a difference during my years of service in the U.S. House of Representatives.

I'm on a new journey and now have the honor of representing all Kansans in the U.S. Senate. We lead a special way of life in Kansas, one that is worth fighting to preserve for the next generation.

As a member of the House Agriculture Committee, I worked on legislation that will help Kansas farms and ranches remain viable. This included fighting for estate tax reform, working to open markets overseas, writing farm bills and preserving the viability of crop insurance.

Improving the quality of life for the

Capitol Views

Sen. Jerry Moran



veterans has also been a top priority. As a member of the House Veterans Affairs Committee, I was an advocate for veterans who had trouble getting the health care they needed.

Kansas ranks fourth in the nation in total highway miles. Our state's aviation industry accounts for about 20 percent of our manufacturing employment and employs tens of thousands of Kansans. During my time on the House Transportation Committee, I authored legislation to improve highways and railways in Kansas, while also protecting and promoting the growth of the aviation industry in our state.

In rural Kansas communities, access to quality health care is essential to the prosperity and survival of the towns we

call home. I led the fight to save rural hospitals, bring more physicians to underserved areas and worked to restore Medicare funding for small hospitals. As co-founder of the Congressional Community Pharmacy Coalition, I worked to make sure that Kansans have access to a pharmacist within their own communities.

Since first coming to Congress in 1997, I have made it a priority to stay connected to the Kansans I represent, so I have returned home each weekend, and have held annual town hall meetings in each of the 69 counties I represented in Congress. In the years ahead, I will continue to return home and travel throughout all 105 counties to hear from Kansans directly. I will not forget where I came from.

My generation has a responsibility to the next, to be good stewards of what we have been given. As I begin this new journey, I remain committed to do what is necessary, so our children and grandchildren can enjoy the same freedoms and opportunities that we have.

Best laid plans backfire when it comes to turkey

It seemed like a good idea at the time. Sure I had a ham and everything to make party potatoes. But I had not cooked a turkey for awhile. And I had a craving for cold turkey sandwiches.

Truth be told, it has been years since I cooked a turkey. I've discovered if you go cold turkey on cold turkey it can become an obsession.

So I said to the hubby, "I'm thinking about fixing turkey for Christmas." And he mentioned it to his mom who was coming for dinner.

So she brought me a gift: dried bread and two boxes of Turkey Stove Top for the dressing.

Thinking of preparing dressing cured my turkey withdrawal. Let's be logical, I had a ham and everything to make party potatoes.

You really can't mess up party potatoes or ham. You can (or at least I can) mess up dressing. In reality I've never made dressing that was exactly edible, though

This Too Shall Pass
Nancy Hagman



to my knowledge no one ever became ill! And everyone has always been polite about it! The dressing dilemma has everything to do with why it has been years since I attempted a turkey dinner.

Despite all that, somehow a turkey found its way to my house.

Guess I'll cook it! Guess I'll make dressing. Guess I'll ask my sister to peel potatoes and fail to tell there will only be six of us for dinner. (Somewhere in the midst of all this the hubby said, gee that's a lot of work, we should have had ham!)

More surprising than the size of the bowl of mashed potatoes was the dress-

ing. Best dressing I ever made!

Since the whole idea of the turkey dinner was to have leftovers, I'd say the mission was accomplished! It was an amazing success.

Until the third day after Christmas when I discovered someone eating a bratwurst. And someone else dishing up salsa and tortilla chips.

And what do I hear? "I'm tired of turkey." "I don't like dressing!"

Okay how about turkey and noodles tonight for a change? "Ugh, we'll still be eating mashed potatoes, won't we?"

YES----- You will still be eating mashed potatoes! And tomorrow you will be offered another turkey sandwich. Better enjoy it! Like the old song says "I may be a long time leaving but I will be a long time gone!"

I may have discovered how to make acceptable dressing, but it's going to be awhile before I do turkey again!

Party potatoes anyone?

THUMBS UP!

Thumbs up to the NCHS students at Tuesday's basketball game. Thank you for standing respectfully and quietly during the national anthem - yes, it is noticed. Emailed in.

To render a Thumbs Up write:
•dpaxton@nwkansas.com •nortontelegram@nwkansas.com
There is no charge to render a thumbs up; names of those providing the information are not used, only the method of transmission.
Thumbs Up is meant to honor good deeds or events around town. Thumbs Up are reviewed by Telegram staff prior to publication. Thumbs Up comments may be denied if they are not meant to honor a positive event or deed.

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