

## A Freshman's review of his first year in office

What a year to start in the Kansas Legislature! We started this year with a \$550m deficit and tremendous uncertainty of what cuts were going to have to be made. On the ninetieth day of the session at 6:00 am, I voted for the budget that transformed that deficit into a \$50m ending balance. The budget passed the House 69-55. Some did not vote for the budget because the cuts were too severe and some voted against it because the cuts were not severe enough.

News from  
your  
legislator  
**Ward Cassidy**



By statute we were to have a positive ending balance that is 7.5% of the \$6 billion State General Fund. We did not meet that statute and \$50m is a pretty thin cushion. I am hoping that revenues continue to improve and that we are not faced with another deficit when we start the session next January.

A big concern in the state and NW Kansas is that each year when the legislature reconvenes and reviews the 2011 budget—the Rescission Budget—that more cuts will have to be made. If the revenues remain consistent there will not be any more cuts to the budget. This would allow us to work on streamlining government and still providing necessary services.

I am a strong supporter of Governor Brownback and I feel he did an extraordinary job in his first few months of office. He had many tough decisions to make and he made them. He heard what we all heard—“cut government, just not what affects my programs.” All cuts made by the Governor and the legislature were an attempt to spread the pain as evenly as possible. Of course, there were some that were hit pretty hard. As I have stated before, “We can't keep spending more money than we have or our children will never see the light of day.” Good news—the All Funds budget is the lowest since 1972.

There were many attempts to save the taxpayer money so the budget could be used to better serve our citizens. One of the most creative was eliminating the purchase of bottled water in the capitol, reducing office supplies, and eliminating some cell phone contracts. That alone saved \$2m. There were over \$3m dollars in savings when welfare recipients were required to have a valid social security number. Hard to believe that would be allowed to happen and there are several employees in that department now looking for jobs. Governor Brownback also cut 2,000 (FTE) full time equivalent positions. Most of those were positions not currently being filled but the agencies were using those numbers in their budget.

I feel the most significant legislation passed to help our state's economy was the Worker's Compensation Reform Bill. It was fair to both workers and employees. This legislation will increase the ability of Kansas to attract job creating industries to the state while insuring injured workers receive the care and benefits they need. Promoting Employment Across Kansas (PEAK) and unemployment insurance reform were also passed to promote job growth, expand the Kansas economy, and shore up the unemployment insurance trust fund. The Governors Rural Opportunity Zone program was passed to help promote growth in rural communities.

Other significant legislation was the pay-go rule which limited political motivated spending amendments, there were four Pro-Life bills passed, flexibility in school finance was passed, KPERS reform was recognized as an urgent need and is being addressed, and voter ID will be enforced in the future.

There has been and will be many discussions on the accomplishments or failures of this year's session. My main focus was to do what I promised—stand up for NW Kansas. I feel some of my best accomplishments were working towards not allowing things to happen that would have affected us adversely.

I loved being our representative. When I have on my State Representative ID, I can get into see the head of any office in no time at all. There were quite a few people in the 120th that requested my help and I did my best to act quickly.

I am proud that I made a mark on this year's legislative session. I was fortunate to have a bill that was passed into law and my investigation into the Fire Marshal's office resulted in several million dollars of savings to schools, hospitals, and nursing homes. I appreciate the phone calls and e-mails, and in most all cases I responded to them the day they were received. I also got a lot of compliments on my legislative updates as they were mine and not the canned variety.

Between now and next January I plan to be throughout the 120th. I would like the Republican chairs to send me there rosters, e-mails, and phone numbers. I want to get them all together with me for a meeting. We need to work together in all of our communities to fight for and promote NW Kansas.

I hope to be our representative for several terms and would appreciate your support. Please check my website [www.wardcassidy.com](http://www.wardcassidy.com). It has some new pictures and a way you can contribute to help with the thousands of miles I drive in our district.



## Keeping a written record of our past

“Good girls keep diaries, bad girls don't have the time and they don't want a written record!”

I'm a good girl. I keep a diary. I started the year our daughter Kate was born. Part of the incentive to do so was my dad kept one. My mom did until she was married. She wasn't married until 30 so there would have been a lot of in there! However she claimed she burned them!

So what exactly does that say about mom? She was good because she kept a diary. Or she was bad because she needed to destroy the written record?

As many young ladies did in those days, she began teaching in a township grade school after high school. After a couple of years she decided she could make more money if she went to college. There was family in Manhattan who could keep an eye on her, so off she went to Kansas State.

Then came the Depression. After college at her first job, as a high school English teacher in Monument, Ks, she made less than she did before college.

These things we know because she told us. The rest she kept to herself. Despite her claims of the burning of the diaries we found one after her death.

Did any of you keep a journal or diary when you were young? Awhile back I saw a cartoon contrasting the differences between 1965 and 2005. In the first panel (1965) the teenager is screaming at her mother, “I can't believe you read my diary! It's private! I hate you!” In the second the teen is sobbing in the mother's arms, “What's the matter with me? Only 200 people read my Blog today!”

## This Too Shall Pass Nancy Hagman



I respect mom's wishes for privacy about her 1930's diaries.

What we know from letters, written by others, is she loved Kansas and wished to stay here no matter the hardships. Dad went to Indiana when he graduated from high school. Though they were neighbors growing up, Dad was a year younger, attended a different grade school and delayed going to high school because of the death of his parents.

If mom was setting her cap for anyone it was his cousin. Then the cousin decided to also go to Indiana.

After the cousin got back there he told Dad to look mom up, as he was thinking of returning to Kansas. Their courtship recorded in a few letters was quite funny. Dad teased her about her dedication to the dust bowl, but eventually came back.

They were married “at home” as was oft the custom in 1941. It was several miles from a paved road and it rained torrents. Mom said her brothers went to the highway with the tractor to pickup the minister, so great was their worry if it didn't happen that day she would be an old maid forever! They immediately departed for Arkansas where Daddy had a job.

Why was she willing to go to Arkansas

but not Indiana? It's a mystery? Daddy said he would have stayed in Arkansas after the war but it “was so different, your mother couldn't live there.”

We have all Daddy's diaries. They are not terribly interesting. They report the weather, who came to visit, meetings, church events, who won ball games, farm planting dates and yields.

We also have his letters from WWII, those are interesting. I believe he wrote mom everyday. I have heard of many servicemen who did this. I wonder if they told them to do so when they went through basic training; knowing how important it would be to have the connection?

With all our electronic communications, I treasure letters: how rich we are when we hold something to hold in our hands that can be read again and again!

Why have I faithfully kept a diary? I sometimes look back to see what I was doing in past years on a certain date. I use it to prove I'm right when we have arguments about when something happened! (I never mention it if I am proven wrong.)

Sometimes the hubby will ask me, when did we finish cutting wheat last year? Or when did I put the bulls in? It's nice to be able to help him out, though usually what he thinks was noteworthy never made it into the diary!

I'm not on Facebook and I don't Blog. This column is my Blog. I like newspapers for the same reason I like letters! I'm not sure if I'm a good girl but I do know this: I'm an old-fashioned one!

## Operating under a different set of standards

Well, there's one more guest I can scratch from my dinner list. Of course I would have had his wife, Huma Abedin, on the list before him anyway, but now, well, he can't even have a doggie bag of leftovers. I'm sure you know I am speaking of Representative Anthony Weiner.

It is bad enough the Congressman engaged in actions needing an explanation, but the real zinger is his fabrication of an unknown hacker. He led us to believe, in interviews, this was just a mischievous joke, such as he has been the butt of for years with a name like Weiner. In those statements, he appeared to be an understanding man who could take a joke therefore he would not turn the case over to authorities but rather have a cyber-security professional investigate the problem. All a ruse to try to salvage a marriage, a career, a reputation.

To be sure infidelity is not new, and as to cyber parameters defining it, perhaps each individual or couple must determine what constitutes infidelity in their own

## Phase II Mary Kay Woodyard



relationship. What I am not convinced of is a lawmaker concocting a scene to clear himself. Tweets, texting, sexting all are traceable, combine that with six women he is “sure were all over 21”, for a period of three years and you have a very identifiable problem. Decades ago, one might have been able to keep an affair under cover, but those times are long past. Even 24/7 news makes hidden liaisons nearly impossible, but the attitudes of young women come into play here as well. Years ago a woman might have concealed such relations, no more. It has almost become another notch in the belt so to speak.

I have said on numerous occasions, whether Democrat or Republican, this situation, in and of itself, may not be worthy of resignation. The man may be able to handle this problem and not resign. I think he owes that decision to his spouse and his constituents to say nothing of his fellow congressmen. I do admire his wife for electing not to physically stand by her man. Only they know whether there is enough commitment, strength and courage to try to work through this, but by not being present she has made it clear, regardless of their decision, it will be a private affair.

I don't know if he can be an effective member of Congress. What I do know is, we are once again angered by actions of one who professed to operate under a different set of standards. At a time when critical problems face the country, schoolyard antics take center stage. [mkwoodyard@ruraltel.net](mailto:mkwoodyard@ruraltel.net)

**THUMBS UP!** Thumbs up to Dalton Pfannenstiel, Alec Otter, Mikey Cliff and Brodi Pfannenstiel for cleaning up my yard and driveway after the hail storm. Also, thanks to Steve Vollertsen for hauling the trash away.  
—Brought in

THE NORTON TELEGRAM

ISSN 1063-701X  
215 S. Kansas Ave., Norton, KS 67654

Published each Tuesday and Friday by Haynes Publishing Co., 215 S. Kansas Ave., Norton, Kan. 67654. Periodicals mail postage paid at Norton, Kan. 67654.

Postmaster: Send address changes to Norton Telegram, 215 S. Kansas, Norton, Kan. 67654  
Official newspaper of Norton and Norton County. Member of the Kansas Press Association, National Newspaper Association, and the Nebraska Press Association

Nor'West Newspapers  
Dick and Mary Beth Boyd  
Publishers, 1970-2002

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