

### Many issues being considered in congress

As you probably realize, the bulk of the work done so far in the legislature affects a limited number of Kansans but is still essential for those particular industries, communities, or individuals. That is because it takes longer to get any real consensus on the complex and sometimes divisive segments contained within these tougher issues. Items like tax policy, school finance, immigration policy, and KPERS will all come soon enough. This week is what we call "Turnaround," when most bills must be advanced out of the House of Origin to the other House for consideration. That means long days in session, deliberating, and voting for all members of both Chambers.

News from your legislator  
**Ward Cassidy**



An issue that made headlines this week was the proposal by the Adjutant General to create a \$40m disaster relief fund. The bill proposes to take \$10m annually from the Kansas Universal Service Fund, which provides funding to telecommunications providers who serve rural areas, low-income Kansans, and provides equipment for people with disabilities. While well-meaning, this is another attack on rural Kansas and an attempt to move State General Fund expenses "off" budget to create the illusion the budget is being reduced.

Northwest Kansas has been very concerned about SB 356 that would negatively affect Home Owned Carnivals. The bill has still not been brought to committee, although it could still happen. All of the Northwest Kansas representatives and our Senator are working hard to stop this legislation.

A program that has helped communities across the state is the Kansas Department of Commerce Small Communities Development Block Grant Program (CDBG). This year, there were two communities in the 120th district that were awarded grants. The city of Oberlin was awarded \$394,979 for street repairs, and the city of Phillipsburg was awarded \$209,250 for a fire truck. Anyone with questions about this program should contact your economic development director.

The Kansas Republican Caucus is scheduled for Saturday, March 10, at 99 sites. All Republican voters are urged to attend, and a photo ID is required. Voting will be at 1 p.m. at all sites. Watch our local papers for the site.

I really appreciate the good turnout last week for the coffee shop meetings in my five counties. Senator Ostmeier and I had a chance to answer many questions from concerned constituents. I continue to stress that we need to hear from NW Kansas to be able to fight for their concerns.

The number of deer - car accidents was brought up at several of the town hall meetings. There are several pieces of legislation that are going to try to address a real problem, not only in the 120th district, but throughout the state. The most up-to-date information about these accidents on the Department of Wildlife website is for 2008. That year, there were 248 accidents in the 120th that had over \$1,000 in damage reported. There have been more accidents each year. Be alert out there!

### Congratulations on another successful event

Developmental Services of Northwest Kansas would like to congratulate all of the area Knights of Columbus organizations for another successful Tootsie Roll Drive. For many years, DSNWK has benefited from the generosity and hard work of the Knights. We truly appreciate their kindness and support and feel extremely fortunate to have these extraordinary men in northwest Kansas supporting our efforts. All the money donated to our organization from the K of C go directly to support the people we serve who have developmental disabilities.



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### Freedom (from pets) is so over-rated

How does the saying go? "You are never really free until the last child leaves the nest and the dog dies?"

We mourned the loss of Smiley. But it seemed like a good idea to replace her. Smiley was not a very demanding dog, always content. It was going to be difficult!

Did you know you can find dogs on the internet? There was some funny stuff in the descriptions. One puppy's mother was a lab. "She is keeping quiet on the subject of the father!"

Our friends began calling about dogs. Some seemed like great possibilities. One the owners were anxious to get rid of it, but it had been a house dog. They were appalled upon learning we expected it to live outside. Because you know, dogs should never be allowed to sleep in the sun, chase rabbits and protect us.

A house dog would not have worked but seriously, dogs, except for those bred for indoor life, are outdoor animals. Is the reason those people needed to get rid of that dog because his confinement caused him to develop less than desirable behavior?

We did find a dog. His name is Lamont! The vet says he is about a year old. We are responsible pet owners. He's had his surgery and all is well.

Six weeks ago he was timid with his tail between his legs. Now that tail

This Too Shall Pass  
**Nancy Hagman**



wags back and forth and in circles.

It is pretty clear from his behavior he was abused. He is very shy of people.

Right after Smiley died, the UPS man, a favorite of Smiley's (not necessarily a compliment, Smiley liked everyone) was here and asked, "What happened to your dog?"

I have now figured out why Smiley loved the UPS man! He carries doggy biscuits. However Lamont will not go near him. Even though he leaves a doggy biscuit, Lamont does not want it.

The hubby is Lamont's master! Or visa versa. Lamont taught him to play catch. First Junior throws the ball. Lamont finds it and runs off with it. Then it is Junior's turn to go track it down!

One thing in Lamont's favor is he is not interested in cars. Though I could see him getting run over. He gets distracted sniffing around looking for birds and cats and forgets where he is.

The cat thing gets him in the dog house so to speak. He is very aggres-

sive to cats. Part of the reason we wanted a dog was to protect the cats. The first time we let him off the leash he put a cat to the top of a tree so fast we fell over laughing.

Over time both this behavior has become less amusing to both me and the cats. They are now relegated to the back of the machine shed. We have been forced to design a protected area to feed them.

Lamont is a freckled and looks rather like a Brittany spaniel. He was a rescue dog so no one seems to know for sure. I have observed him assume a perfect "pointer" position when a cat is in the area.

Lamont has decided it is his duty to protect us. Some nights he barks a lot! This morning he has a very distinct odor. I'm hoping the experience taught him to leave furry little things alone, particularly skunks and CATS!

We began to question the wisdom of getting another dog as we prepared to leave on an overnight trip. Who was going to feed Lamont? And then there are the accusatory looks, it almost like he knows we are leaving.

When we return he's very cool, he doesn't come running. He yawns and acts bored. But he stays so I think we are getting to him! It's pretty clear he's gotten to us!

Freedom is very over-rated!

### Santorum has forgotten the battle once waged for equality

Santorum falls in with a long line of products espousing the word Christianity to promote their agenda or build their sales. We go from Christian dating services to Christian contractors and God forbid, the insufferable Christian politician. Unfortunately the mere adding of a label does not validate the product. To be sure this is not the first campaign to use the word to gain votes, instill fear or make one appear to be the most faithful of candidates, but Santorum has honed it to a new level.

I do believe Santorum is sincere in his beliefs, which is exactly why we should fear him. The last president we had who believed he was on a direct mission for God initiated a war in Iraq, to kill a leader his father didn't pursue, escalated the war in Afghanistan and invoked the Patriot Games, oops Act, on his fellow citizens. Now a decade later and having borrowed "virtually all of the money to pay for the Iraq and Afghanistan conflicts...adding at least \$1.5 trillion to our national debt."\* the possibility of a Santorum presidency should send shivers down our spine.

Phase II  
**Mary Kay Woodyard**



Women should be particularly fearful of Santorum's agenda and I am not referring to just his stand on abortion, but rather his views toward women in general. For instance,

After receiving a great deal of criticism regarding his views of women in combat, he then stated the reason was that men would feel obligated to protect. Talk about an underhanded swipe at both men and women.

On another occasion the Former Senator said, "One of the things I will talk about before is the dangers of contraception in this country, the whole sexual libertine idea."

And my personal favorite from his

2005 book, "It Takes a Family," "The radical feminists succeeded in undermining the traditional family and convincing women that professional accomplishments are the key to happiness." The reason this is my favorite? Because he said he was unaware of this statement as his wife wrote a good part of the book. Not surprisingly however it is his picture on the front of the book with only his name as the author.

There is a long list of individuals whom I feel have forgotten the battle women once waged to be seen as equals. Some young women promote their sexuality for varied reasons. The important aspect of this is that they have the right to choose who/what they are. If they want to be a sex object, fine, but if they want to be a bomber pilot, fine as well. There was a time when women desired to be seen as valuable in a world they found demeaning and belittling. Now the very things we fought for are in jeopardy of being replaced. mailto:mkwoodyard@ruraltel.net

\*Linda Bilmes, economist Harvard University

### The definition of family is more than parents and children

I have recently read several articles about family. One article suggests that the definition of family is changing. So I looked the word family up in a dictionary, and it gave me a very traditional explanation: "A group consisting of parents and children living together in a household."

My parents were divorced before I started grade school, and that meant I grew up in a non-traditional setting. My mother and I lived with her parents, and they were my caretakers while she worked. I doubt few, if any, of my contemporaries in that small town shared my particular situation.

Since my childhood, divorce has become common. Statistics tell us about half of all marriages end in divorce. Unwed parenthood is widespread and accepted. Some couples choose not to have children; others pursue adoption of children from foreign countries. And there are the legal battles surrounding same-sex unions.

Our language has been altered, as well. We now speak commonly of "sin-

Life is Good  
**Rita Speer**



gle moms" and "single dads." Writers pen articles on how to bring off a successful "blended" family. The expression, "Who is your daddy?" has multiple connotations.

As I have thought about how the understanding of family has changed, I've thought about some of the changes within the more traditional family unit. I worked most of the years of our children's growing up, so that meant babysitters and day-care providers helped with day-to-day rearing of these children. It also meant others were a part of passing on values and beliefs.

Our three children are now all adults. Our oldest daughter has three charming

children, and because she has worked since before their arrival, they too have been in the care of persons other than their parents. Our middle child has chosen to remain single. Our youngest has been married before and now is a stay-at-home daddy to two delightful little girls. He set aside his career so the girls wouldn't have to go to day-care at the tender age of six or eight weeks. His wife is an officer in the Navy; when she finishes her commitment to the government, their situation will change.

What about families in which both parents have children from previous relationships? How does one build a family when one or another of the children goes to a different parent on weekends? Is a couple whose children are all adults, living away from the parental home, a family? Exactly what is a family in 2012? It's obvious the definition in the first paragraph no longer works. I believe it is time to seriously consider just what we mean when we use the word family.

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**THUMBS UP!**  
Thumbs up to Holly's Clubhouse for becoming a Power Panther Preschool. Called in.

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