

House votes to limit free speech

In their first significant policy action of the 2013 Kansas Legislative Session, 68 members of the House of Representatives voted to trample on the right of teachers and other public employees to collectively and freely advocate for schools, social services, and public safety.

House Bill 2023 prohibits public employees from using any dollars collected for any purpose through payroll deduction to be used for "political activities." The bill defines political activities so broadly that not only could the money not be used for electioneering communications to the public, it could not be used even to communicate with members internally.

Some legislators and organizations - notably the state's largest spending political organization, the Kansas Chamber of Commerce - seek to silence all opposition to their message in the political arena. The Kansas

Chamber of Commerce intends for this bill to silence public sector workers - they said as much in the Committee hearing when their lobbyist Eric Stafford responded to a question by saying, "I need you to pass this bill so we can get rid of public sector unions."

Said KNEA President Karen Godfrey, "I have been an active teacher for over 30 years and I have never seen such a deluge of offensive anti-teacher legislation as has been produced in the first 12 days of this session. Kansans are ashamed to be represented in such a vindictive manner. The heartfelt thanks of thousands of dedicated public employees go out to the 56 Democrats and Republicans who stood up for them today."

Prior to yesterday's preliminary vote, House Republican leadership called for extra security, warned Republican legislators to not wear their name tags,

and urged the women to take back stairways or seek a male escort through the capitol. Their fear was a massive turnout of angry school teachers who happen to believe they are entitled to free speech rights.

When asked where the "union thugs" from KNEA were, KNEA lobbyist Mark Desetti responded, "Our members put their students first. That's why they are back in their classrooms caring for and teaching our children and grandchildren. They don't have time to be up here in the middle of the week defending their constitutional rights."

In fact, that's where these anti-teacher legislators can always find our teachers - standing in front of their students. We have come to expect them even to put themselves between a gunman and the children but just let them try to express a political opinion and the Kansas legislature will shut them down.

An Oklahoma reunion and love stories

Soft Oklahoma twilight, flocks of ducks fluttering in, coming to roost on a tranquil lake. Among the birds we noticed a single swan. "There's our little widow," pointed out the hostess of our group observing the water fowl from a nearby patio. "They mate for life, you know, and her mate died last year, so she swims alone. It breaks my heart."

"We did that, too," replied a gentleman in the gathering, reaching for his wife's hand, "didn't we, Betsy?" To those of us sipping coffee and visiting he said, "I fell in love with her voice long before we ever met and I proposed the day we did." We laughed when she said, with a twinkle in her eyes, "That doesn't mean I accepted, not right away." "No," he said, "it took me a long time to get a date but I captured her at last and we're more fortunate than your lonely swan."

Included in the group were a couple of WWII retired Air Force vets. We listened, fascinated, to two wartime whirlwind love stories. Most have now passed away, so I feel free to share their joy with you. Names have been changed to protect this writer from lawsuits, but the stories are true.

The first fellow was on a temporary duty assignment far away from his air base, calling in daily reports to his commanding officer. Betsy was the executive secretary who took those calls. He thought she had the most enchanting voice he'd ever heard and resolved to meet the girl that went with the voice. Day by day his longing to meet that girl grew. When his TDY team returned, he disembarked, hurried to the PX, bought a rose, found her office and proposed. "And she said no," he told us, amazed. "That wonderful voice turned me down flat!"

"Smart gals had to learn how to say no effectively," she told us, "surrounded as we were by handsome guys in uniform. We were choosy, protecting our reputations. But there was this one officer whom I talked with for weeks before we met." Turning to the ladies in the group, she rolled her eyes. "Oh, girls, he was SOMETHING

Pieces of life's puzzle
Liza Deines



when we did meet - tall with a smile that lit up my world, thick, wavy hair, the clearest blue eyes you ever saw. He just melted my heart and eventually I did say yes. We were married shortly before he went overseas and I became an Air Force wife."

They sat there, almost seventy, holding hands as they told their story. She, a petite, silver-haired knockout, and he, a bit bent with a cane, great hair long gone, but both still seeing each other exactly as they were in 1942.

The other USAF vet spoke right up, "Heck, I can beat that story. I met a cute gal on a California troop train. We sat up talking for two days and a night. She was wearing a hunk of an engagement ring and I had a girl back home." She blushed and giggled and he grinned at her and said, "You tell it, Katie."

She began, "I was a USO girl volunteering for a year in Italy and he didn't even know where he'd be assigned, but we fell for each other the moment we met. By the time our train arrived in Chicago for an hour layover, our minds were made up. We ran for the pay phones in the station lobby, called home, and broke our engagements."

He spoke up again, "She had forty-eight hours in New York before she sailed and I had a three-day pass. We rented a car, drove to Virginia and were married by special license. I was almost broke so we only had two days together in a tacky cabin camp before our assignments separated us. Man, did we keep the postman busy and the phone lines hot until that blasted war ended."

She winked at him and admitted, "Some of those wartime romances didn't last, but we'll celebrate our fiftieth anniversary next year."

Next week more of the Oklahoma reunion tales for you . . . wait for it . . . wait for it . . .

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It's time to prepare for gardening season

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I knew a new garden season wasn't far away when the first seed catalog arrived in my mailbox a few days after last Thanksgiving. It was from Pinetree Garden Seeds located in New Gloucester, Maine, which is about as far from my garden as you can get and still be in the United States of America. But it was one of the most unique seed catalogs I had ever seen, because the listing of every seed packet tells you how many seeds are in each packet, and prices are lower than most other companies I know of. For example, a packet of 200 Jade bush bean seeds costs just \$1.75, and a packet of Crosby Egyptian beet seeds goes for just \$1.50.

I knew a new garden season wasn't far away when I received my seed catalogue from Dixondale Farms, the onion people from Carrizo Springs, Texas. Dixondale offers free shipping to your front door, and you can buy 30 bunches of beautiful fresh onion plants for \$77. They'll arrive on the date you specify. But look! This is their Centennial year, and they are offering the newly developed Texas Legend onion that contains more healthful benefits than any other onion on the planet, and yet is sweeter than the famed Texas Supersweet!

I knew a new garden season wasn't far away when I received my new Burpee catalog and right there on the cover, in plain sight, was this picture of a giant toma-

to! It has been given the name of Super Sauce, the world's largest sauce tomato. Right next to the picture, in bold letters, was the caption "Shown Actual Size." Can this be true? The picture showed the tomato to be 5 1/2 inches tall and 5 inches wide! And I can receive a packet of 25 seeds for only \$6.50, plus postage and handling. Of course I've ordered a packet! What red-blooded American gardener wouldn't fall for something like that when the only thing that remotely tastes like a tomato here in the dead of winter comes from one of the jars of tomatoes you canned last summer! Hey, I may order 2 packets! Maybe not.

I knew a new garden season wasn't far away when my new Jung Seeds and Plants catalog arrived. The Jung catalog is my favorite because it is so well organized and I have no problem locating the stuff I'm looking for. Prices always seem to be close to reasonable compared to the others. This year, it even offers the new Francis Meiland Hybrid Tea rose, the only AARS winning rose of the year. No other catalogue seems to have it.

I knew a new garden season wasn't far away when I glanced at the calendar and discovered that it was February already. How could that be when just a month or two ago we were storing onions and enjoying the final cantaloupe and making salsa? Time passes quickly!

I'm glad to be with you again as we prepare for the 2013 gar-

den season. I promise to do my best to plant new ideas in your mind as we go merrily, merrily down the garden path, searching for ways to improve our gardening acumen.



Sweetheart Expo



The Sweetheart Home Based Craft Business Expo was held over the weekend. Many vendors brought their wares and many shoppers attended. Presenters from Organo Gold offered taste testers of coffee and tea to shoppers Stephanie Ryan, Lisa Wagoner and Valerie Wagoner.

- Telegram photo by Dana Paxton

Success has come through 'extra' effort

By Ron Wilson
Huck Boyd Institute

"Extra! Extra! Read all about it!" That was the cry of the newsboys of yesteryear, when newspapers would put out special editions with breaking news. Today we'll learn about a Kansan who got his start in the newspaper business in just that way, and developed his family's paper into one of the leading newspapers in the state.

Dolph Simons Jr. is chairman and editor of the World Company, which publishes the Lawrence Journal-World and other newspapers. He comes from a long line of pioneering Kansans.

One of his ancestors - the widow of his great-grandfather - came to Kansas to homestead after the Civil War. She moved to a sod house near the rural community of Jetmore, which now has a population of 933 people. Now, that's rural. Here, this brave woman raised five children on the wilderness of the Kansas plains.

One of her sons, W.C. Simons, was home-schooled and spent a few years in a Salina school. After working briefly in St. Joseph, Missouri, in December 1891, W.C. journeyed by horse and buggy from St. Joe to Lawrence, Kansas where he and two partners started a newspaper.

"There were seven newspapers in Lawrence at the time," Dolph said. "They started the eighth. W.C. was twenty years old. They started with \$50 in capital."

In 1892, they published the first edition of the Lawrence World which would join with many other newspapers through the years.

"Over the decades, as many as 50 or so newspapers merged into what is now the Lawrence Journal-World," Dolph said. W.C. Simons was joined in the business by his son Dolph and his grandson Dolph Jr., who started his 60-plus years with the paper as a carrier.

On Dec. 7, 1941, all the Simons family members were at W.C.'s home for their weekly Sunday dinner. A news flash came over the radio that Pearl Harbor had been attacked. "We're putting out an extra," the older newspapermen said. The younger Dolph was 11 years old.

"Dad gave my brother and I each a whistle," Dolph said. "We went out on the streets and started selling the extra edition." It was his first direct introduction to the world of journalism. "I was hooked."

Dolph grew up in the business. After graduation from KU, he worked abroad as a reporter for the London Times and later the Johannesburg Star in Africa. He then came back to Lawrence and worked his way up through the family newspaper business, now known as the World Company. He became president of the company in 1969 and editor of the paper in 1978.

"News is my first love," Dolph said. "I like to write." He oversees the staff and still writes a weekly editorial.

In 1979, Dolph talked to Allen Neuharth of the Gannett company which was developing the idea of a nationally distributed newspaper: USA Today.

"I told him, if you want to have a print site in the middle of the U.S., I'd love to have a shot at it," Simons said. "I promised to have the best print site of any non-Gannett print site in the country." Today Gannett has 32 print sites around the nation. Dolph has been true to his word.

Page design is done in a newsroom in northern Virginia and transmitted by satellite to Lawrence and other print sites around the nation. Press time begins at 10:30 p.m. Then the new edition of the papers is distributed regionally, from Des Moines down to Oklahoma.

Dolph is very involved in his community and has received many honors. As president of the Kansas Press Association, he was the fourth KPA president who was son of a former president.

"Extra! Extra! Read all about it!" That was the cry of the newsboys of yesteryear, and that was how Dolph Simons Jr. got his start. We commend Dolph Simons Jr. and all those involved with the World Company for making a difference with their long-term commitment to the newspaper industry. Success has come through "extra" effort.

And there's more. Can a newspaper co-exist with a cable television company? We'll explore that next week.

Transportation worker celebrates 10 years of service

Karri Sisk, Storekeeper Specialist, was recently recognized for having 10 years of state service with the Kansas Department

of Transportation (KDOT). Sisk works in Norton's District Three headquarters shop as

the only person in charge of the district's supplies.

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