



# Opinion

## National Sunshine Week is March 16 through 22

By Doug Anstaett

After a long winter, it seems everyone is in the mood for some sunshine.

It couldn't be a better time to be celebrating National Sunshine Week, a time for the citizens of Kansas to recommit themselves to the ideals of open government.

National Sunshine Week is March 16 through 22.

Why should Kansans care about this?

Because, unfortunately, there are dozens of incidents where public officials have fallen far short of what state law requires.

The Kansas Press Association's 240 member newspapers try to do their part to make sure public bodies are following the law, but they need your help. Citizens who take their democratic form of government seriously can provide effective oversight when they attend meetings, seek records or simply observe their governmental officials in action.

Do your local public bodies give proper notice of their meetings? When they do meet, do they discuss policy issues in public or do they seem to have their minds made up when the meeting begins? Do they resort to executive sessions and discuss issues that aren't allowed under the Kansas Open Meetings Act exclusions? Do they ever vote outside the meeting room?

The Kansas Open Meetings Act and the Kansas Open Records Act say that meetings and records of public bodies should be open to the

public. And, in the vast majority of cases, elected and appointed officials carry out their duties conscientiously.

Yet there are some who don't believe they owe the public anything, that they can meet when they want, where they want, often without telling their constituents about it at all.

They are wrong.

While newspaper staffs would love to have the resources to cover every meeting, often they cannot.

That's where you come in.

When you attend meetings, seek public records and question those in authority about how they are conducting themselves, you help keep government open, accessible and accountable.

"Sunshine" is a perfect description of how government should operate. It means that the public's business is discussed thoroughly in public, with the public's participation, and it means decisions are never made behind closed doors without the public's knowledge or input.

"Sunshine Week" is an annual reminder that smoke-filled rooms and secret meetings are simply anti-American and betray our heritage of self-government.

Please do what you can to make sure your local governmental bodies are playing by the rules.

Doug Anstaett is executive director of the Kansas Press Association.



THE FALTERING ECONOMY SLICES INTO MIDDLE-CLASS LIVELIHOODS.

## News From the Past

### 25 years ago - 1983

Robert Grace was elected president of the St. Francis Chamber of Commerce at the annual meeting and Bill Smith was elected vice president. Elected to the board of directors were Karen Towns, Mary Walz, Tim Burr and Rick Lucas.

The Cheyenne County Commissioners accepted delivery of a 1983 ambulance to replace one of the two 1971 models which had been in service since 1972.

A Burlington Northern freight train with 23 cars got stuck in a snow-filled cut just east of Bird City Tuesday night and remained stuck until Sunday afternoon despite efforts to free the train.

The top bull at the annual Quality Cut Sale of the Western Republican Valley Hereford Association went for \$3,400.

Ideal Super Market is celebrating its 20th anniversary this week at the corner of Benton and Washinton streets. The store opened at this location on Feb. 14, 1963. Prior to the move the super market was located on the south side of Washinton Street where Rieb

Skogmos is now located.

W.E. "John" Busby celebrated his 40th anniversary operating the Service Oil Station at the corner of Washington and Benton streets.

### 40 years ago - 1968

Chaplain Marvin Zimbelman of St. Francis recently received word that he had been awarded the Bronze Star for his meritorious service with the armed forces in Vietnam.

The Cheyenne County Hospital has received the largest cash gift in its history this afternoon. A check for over \$53,146.48 was presented from the estate of Oliver Sawyer.

Kevin Alsup, son of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Alsup, was the recipient of the Eagle Scout Badge at the Methodist Church of Feb. 12.

Seniors on the high honor roll include Betty Arnold, Linda Floyd, Sue Garrison, Jackie Hawkins, Roger Jensen, Tom Kite, Glenda Nitzel, Myrna Northrup, Patricia Pugh, Marvin Raile, Debbie Rieb, Glenn Shoemaker and Colleen Thompson.

The St. Francis wrestling team placed second at the State Wrestling Tournament. Earning championships were Bill Keller, Marv Raile and Steve Miller. Other Indians placing in the top four were Gary Walter, Randy Cook, Lanny DeGood and Mike Holliman.

The Cheyenne County Hospital Guild has sponsored the installing of beautiful new drapes throughout the hospital.

### 60 years ago 1948

The Rural Electric Association is constructing 330 miles of lines for 414 members of the Cheyenne/Rawlins county area.

Rotary Club hosted 125 pilots and passengers from area towns. Among those attending from here were Joe and Hollis Harpole, Don Burnham, Bion Reynolds, Bob Cram and son Jim.

The 18th annual Kansas Day will be held in Bird City on Jan. 29. Mrs. E.E. Kite is in charge of the event. Kansas Day was organized by Mrs. C.W. Trickett of Bird City, a pioneer lady who settled here in 1885.

## Hangin' With Marge

Election Year

By Margaret Bucholtz



Surely I'm not the only person that is really kind of sick of the presidential election. It is kind of interfering with my TV shows and after watching some of the debates I really don't know anymore than I did before.

I don't know if any of you watched Jon Stewart the other night when he was showing the commercial of "who you want to answer the 'Red Phone' in the White House when there is an emergency?"

If you didn't this is the way it was: You hear the phone ringing

and it is showing scenes of children sleeping, and husband and wives sleeping and I think even the cat and dog were sleeping when the phone got answered. Jon said, "People, if the red phone in the White House rings six times before the president answers it, you can consider yourself dead, because the bomb or whatever has already had time to hit."

In the last issue of Kansas Country Living, Larry Freeze, editor, wrote, "Attacking the opponent is nothing new. History tells us the 1828 race between Andrew Jackson and John Quincy Adams, for

example, was about as low as it could get. Adams reportedly called Jackson a 'barbarian who cannot write a sentence of grammar and can hardly spell his own name.'

Unfazed, Jackson replied, "It's a damn poor mind that can only think of one way to spell a word." (Now that phrase can be used not only by politicians, but also with

the Saint Francis Herald staff.) No matter how you look at it, we still have about six months until the people decide which candidate can lie the best.

## Casey's Comments

By Casey McCormick



Earlier this week one of my all-time favorite holidays came around: St. Patrick's Day.

It might have something to do with my last name. Or it might be because I love to eat corned beef and cabbage and Irish soda bread. Then again, it could be because I own a kilt and don't have enough occasions to wear it.

Whatever the reason, I'm proud of my Celtic roots and March 17

gives me a reason to "put on the green" and blow my horn.

There is another reason why I have heritage on my mind on that day. For it was 20 years ago on St. Patty's Day that my dear father, Joe Raleigh McCormick, left this earth.

Before that happened I always celebrated the day with reckless abandon. Of course, when I was a young man, every day of my life was celebrated with reckless abandon.

But when Dad left, March 17 became something different.

In the years right after, I spent the day feeling angry. Something

had been taken away from me and I felt slighted.

However, with time I knew that being mad and hurt was selfish. And it sure didn't honor my dad.

So I try to think good thoughts on St. Patrick's Day. I have many, many great memories of him and I know that he's still with us.

I see more and more of him in the mirror each day and in his grandson, Joseph Raleigh McCormick.

Happy Belated St. Patrick's Day!

## Letters from Linda

By Linda Schneider

By Linda Schneider



By now, most people either like me or not. No in between and I learned long ago that I cannot please everyone. It is too exhausting.

However, I do have an agenda. I have a passion to protect the underdog and those who cannot, or are unable speak for themselves. This has been very problematic because it can look like I just want to stir up trouble, but this is simply not true.

We all have something we are passionate about. Think about it! Whether growing up in large

populous or in a small town, everyone has something to crusade about.

Maybe you do not think that way, but an advocate can be just the person in the middle. The one who takes the brunt of the matter, and we all have been in the middle for someone — someone who was not able to defend or speak on his or her own behalf.

This week is very foundational for many folks, including myself. You see, I have my own advocate — someone who is passionate for me. At a time when I was unable to speak on my own behalf, He

did. And because of what He did, I am able to live a fuller life. That is what an advocate does.

Easter can mean one of two things, either a good egg hunt or life. I will say that I do enjoy a good egg hunt with friends and family, but I reserve Easter Sunday for celebration to the One who gave me life.

Who knows, it may be your turn to ask the same question I did, "What is all the fuss about that Cross anyway?"

**GOD SAYS**

I will be glad and rejoice in thy mercy: for thou hast considered my trouble; thou hast known my soul in adversities; Have mercy upon me, O Lord, for I am in trouble: mine eye is consumed with grief, yea, my soul and my belly. For my life is spent with grief, and my years with sighing: my strength faileth because of mine iniquity, and my bones are consumed.

Psalms 31:7, 9, 10

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