

The Cunningham Courier

"The only newspaper in the world that cares about Cunningham, Kansas"

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(620) 298-2659

\$1.50
February 26, 2026
Volume 36 Number 9

Chuck Holcomb Presented USD 332 Hall of Fame Award



Chuck Holcomb was presented the award by Bart Ricke.

Eric Meyers wrote the following article, which he read at the Hall of Fame ceremony for Mr. Holcomb.

I am here this evening to present the 2026 USD 332 Hall of Fame Award.

This year's recipient graduated from Kansas University with a business degree and moved to Chicago to work in the banking industry, but after four years he returned to the family farm near St. Leo. This was in 1976.

Soon thereafter, he volunteered to operate the clock and scoreboard at Cunningham High School games beginning in 1978 alongside announcer Duane Elliot. Together they were important contributors to Wildcat basketball during varsity and tournament games. Never on the payroll, he was always on time and on task. This year's recipient had a special interest in all Cunningham athletes and was known to dish out a comment or two to the athletes as they checked in and out of the game.

Former player Joe Strohl said that during the 1978-79 regional tournament vs. Sharon, Cunningham was of course leading when the clock and scoreboard quit, and this resulted in our recipient, Chuck, using a stopwatch and pencil and paper to do his job at the scorer's table. In that game as he was checking in, Joe recalls Chuck saying, "Thank God these idiots are fouling you guys because the dead ball situations are the only thing allowing me to keep up!"

Stephen Petz was former player that also worked for Chuck on the farm and he says Chuck always had a grin and a head shake depending on how the

game was going, and then once back at the farm, a full play-by-play recap of the game.

His son Bill recalls fondly the times he checked in to the game and to have Chuck buzz the horn announcing his time to shine.

His son Jacob never played basketball, but he remembers sneaking into the hospitality room for snacks. He also suggested that in games not overly competitive, he might have stopped the clock a little late and started the clock a little early just to speed things up. As a referee, I can appreciate that!

Chuck was almost always cool under pressure but his younger brother Jim remembers one (and only one) time when Chuck hit the horn inadvertently and began flinching and repeatedly hitting the horn time and time again which caused him great embarrassment.

Often times deserving people get overlooked despite their many years of volunteering in support of our youth, but tonight, recognizing 41 years of service that spanned three different scoreboards, the Cunningham community says "Thank you, Chuck Holcomb".

When asked for a comment, Mr. Holcomb replied, "I really enjoy basketball. Running the clock gave me the best seat in the house, without distractions."



Minutes From City Council January Meeting

The Cunningham City Council met in a regular session on Monday, January 26, 2026, at City Hall, 119 N. Main St.

Present were Mayor, Aaron Murphy; Council Members: Craig Woodard, Jason Ruckle, Tanner Newell, and Bryce Murphy; City Attorney, Greg Graffman; City Superintendent, Mesa Sallee; and City Clerk, Molly Morgan.

Guests present: Jackie Ruckle, Property Officer; John Riggins and Steve Rose, Kirkham Michael Engineering.

Mayor Murphy called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Motion by Woodard, second by Ruckle, to approve the agenda. Motion carried, 4/0.

Motion by Woodard, second by Ruckle, to approve the minutes of the December 29, 2025, meeting as written. Motion carried, 4/0.

Motion by Newell, second by Murphy, to approve the minutes of the January 21, 2026, meeting as written. Motion carried, 4/0.

No Public Comments.

John Riggins, Update on "Potholes to Progress" Project – A meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, February 3rd. John, Jackie, and Mesa will meet with utility companies in the field to talk about relocating utilities, construction easements, and timelines.

Maintenance Report – Mesa reported that work had been done on 4th

Street to prepare for the "Potholes to Progress" project. Mesa, Jackie, and Jack Thimesch have removed trees at the corner of 4th and Dresden and hauled in dirt. A sidewalk was removed on the north side of 333 N Dresden and that water meter was relocated closer to the house. *The work on sewer discharge structures has been completed. *Eck Electric was called to repair the wells generator switch. *The pedestrian bridge near the pool entrance has broken, rotting boards that need to be replaced. The lumber has been purchased, and all boards will be replaced on that bridge.

GAAP Waiver – Motion by Newell, second by Murphy, to approve Resolution 2026-02 (attached to minutes.) Motion carried, 4/0.

Review of 1-209 Compensation – City Attorney, Greg Graffman, informed the Governing Body that this had not been updated since elections were moved to the month of November. The current City Code Chapter I, Article 2, Section 209, has not been updated since 1993. It was the consensus of the Council to update this section of the Code by Ordinance. Mr. Graffman will draft the Ordinance and present it at the regular February meeting.

Leak Forgiveness Request – Motion by Ruckle, second by Woodard, to credit \$90.75 in leak forgiveness to the account for 211 N Henderson. Motion carried, 4/0.

Community Center Custodian – Motion by Ruckle, second by Newell, to hire Kyra Morgan as community center custodian with a salary of \$100/

month and \$15/hour for any work over six hours a month. Motion carried, 4/0.

Property Officer – Court was held for one case before the Council meeting began.

Clerk Report – The Public Water Supply Loan is due, and the clerk would like to pay it online. Motion by Newell, second by Woodard, to make the payment of \$9,368.93 using the bill pay option on on-line banking. Motion carried, 4/0.

Financial Report – Motion by Ruckle, second by Murphy, to approve the financial report and pay the bills as presented. Motion carried, 4/0.

Adjournment – Motion by Murphy, second by Newell, to adjourn. Motion carried, 4/0.

Mayor Murphy adjourned the meeting at 8:12 p.m.

Minutes From City Council Special Meeting

The Cunningham City Council met in a special session on Wednesday, February 11, 2026, at City Hall, 119 N. Main St.

Present were Mayor, Aaron Murphy; Council Members, Jason Ruckle, Craig Woodard, Tim Schultz, Tanner Newell, and Bryce Murphy; and City Clerk, Molly Morgan.

Guests present: None

Mayor Murphy called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Motion by Woodard, second by Murphy to approve the agenda as written. Motion carried, 5/0.

Executive Session - Motion by

Ruckle, second by Newell, for the governing body, to recess into executive session with the City Clerk, applicant, and applicant's spouse, to conduct an interview with a person whose name is withheld to protect the privacy rights of that person.. The justification of the motion is for the non-elected personnel matter exception [K.S.A. 75-4319(b)(1)] with the Council meeting to resume in open session in fifteen (15) minutes. Motion carried, 5/0.

The above met in executive session from 6:31 to 6:46 p.m., at which time the meeting resumed in open session and Mayor Murphy stated that no action had been taken during the executive session.

Executive Session – Motion by Ruckle, second by Woodard, for the governing body to meet in executive session with the City Clerk to discuss personnel matters of nonelected personnel in order to protect the privacy interests of the person(s) to be discussed, the justification being the non-elected personnel matter exception [K.S.A. 75-4319(b)(1)], with the Council meeting to resume in open session in fifteen (15) minutes. Motion carried, 5/0.

The above met in executive session from 6:50 to 7:05 p.m., at which time the meeting resumed in open session and Mayor Murphy stated that no action had been taken during the executive session.

Adjournment – Motion by Murphy, second by Newell, to adjourn. Motion carried, 5/0.

Mayor Murphy adjourned the meeting at 7:08 p.m.

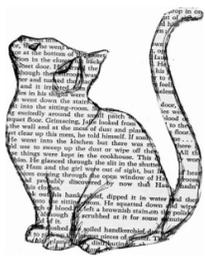


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Meanderings

My favorite genre for reading is mystery. I do love mysteries.

Canadian author Alan Bradley published his first novel in 2009 at the age of seventy. He had written some screen

plays and two memoirs, but not a novel. He was working on a novel, for some reason he placed a 'girl on the camp stool' in the writing as a minor character.

And for whatever reason, he and his wife could not get this young girl out of their minds. Eventually she encouraged him to write about this girl and enter into the Dagger Award for crime fiction.

He did so, won the award and a contract for three books about the young girl.

And Flavia de Luce was born. The first book, 'The Sweetness at the Bottom of the Pie' begins with this sentence: "It was as black in the closet as old blood."

And that is how the reader meets Miss Flavia de Luce. Eleven-year-old Flavia lives in England in the 1950s with her eccentric, stamp-loving father and her two older sisters in a large, rambling estate called Buckshaw. Other members of the household include Dogger, a man-about-the-place, and a daytime cook, Mrs.

Mullet. Flavia is a chemist with a proclivity for poisons. She asks many questions and doesn't mind offending anyone.

Not only did Bradley win a Dagger Award, but the book also won the 2009 Agatha Award for Best First Novel; 2010 Barry Award for Best First Novel; 2010 Dilys Award; 2010 Arthur Ellis Award for Best First Novel; 2010 Macavity Award for Best First Novel; and was a finalist for 2010 Anthony Award for Best Mystery.

He has currently written 10 books about Flavia, Besides the 1st one, four others have been nominated for mystery awards.

The second book "The Weed That Strings the Hangman's Bag" begins with this sentence: "I was lying dead in the churchyard."

And the third book, "A Red Herring Without Mustard" begins: "You frighten me," the Gypsy said, "never have I seen my crystal ball so filled with darkness." And yes, the person seeking

her fortune was Flavia de Luce.

Those are the only books I have here in front of me, but I can't wait to read the first sentences of the other books.

Although the books are written for adults, reviews have said they aren't violent and would be good reads for young adults.

Always reading, and currently reading, "The Weed That Strings the Hangman's Bag" by Alan Bradley, Roberta

Tallgrass and Tumbleweeds by Gaille Pike

Dear Readers, Sometimes when sitting down to kick out this column I have no idea what I am going to write about. Today is one of those times. I did have a topic but upon further study realized it was basically a flawed premise. I was going to do a kind of "This Day in Kansas History" piece highlighting, well, stuff that happened around here going back as far as recorded history would allow. But then I realized that "this

day" wouldn't work because this column appears in different newspapers at different times. One town's Saturday column is another town's Wednesday column, and so on. So in the interest of journalistic accuracy and integrity I had to 86 that concept. It was too narrow to begin with because, let's face it, a lot of days go by around these parts where absolutely nothing happens. Kinda like what's going on at my desk right now.

But fear not because although today might be a slow news day, Kansas history does recall some monumental National

achievements that can be accredited to our Fair State. We're talking world-changing advancements in business, industry, politics, sports and the arts. And there are quite a few "Firsts." So let's start with some of those.

Kansas was the first state to adopt an amendment prohibiting all alcoholic beverages. This was in 1881. Almost 30 years before the rest of the country. In 1912 we became the first Midwest state to grant women the right to vote. The first Native American Vice President? Charles Curtis of Topeka in 1928. Fifty

years later Nancy Landon Kassebaum became the first woman elected to a full senate term (without being preceded by a husband.) So far I'd say we're a pretty progressive place. Especially when you consider we were the first state to officially expel the KKK from within our borders. That was in 1927, and 58 years later a Wichita woman named Lynette Woodard became the first female Harlem Globetrotter. This was just after serving as Captain of the U.S. Women's Basketball Team and winning gold in the 1984 Olympic Games. No slouch, that

Lynette.

As far as food goes we all know about Pizza Hut and White Castle being home grown favorites which have stood the test of time. But did you know that Cheesy Corn, Eskimo Pie and Icee started here to? I didn't. Just like I didn't know the automatic fire alarm, electric clippers and Teflon-coated cookware are Kansan. The list goes on and on and is so diverse it makes one's head spin—just like the blades on the helicopter invented by William Purvis and Charles Wilson of Goodland. Other aerial references

include Amelia Earhart's famous flight and if you like balloons, well, where do you think all that helium comes from? Yup, discovered right here in 1902...by accident.

And it is no accident that right now I have managed to squeeze out a column for you when I thought I had nothing to write about. Inspiration can come to us at any time. They're like bumper stickers, suddenly right in front of you. Oh, them bumper stickers? You can thank Kansas City for those.

Keep your eyes on the stars and your back to the wind.

Clipper/Courier

In my last posting I mentioned how I first read about my great uncle Frank doing the first soil conservation work in Kingman County in 1921. At the time I read this I was working as a volunteer at the Red Cloud Indian School in Pine Ridge South Dakota. It made me realize how the local newspaper had affected me and my family.

Once the Clipper and now the Courier has been a Godsend to this area for over 100 years. Even Kathy and my wed-

ding picture at the Holy Rosary Mission Church in 1972 was printed in the last issue that Bill Bradley printed before his death.

We at the Methodist Church of Cunningham wanted to build a Day Care here in Cunningham for our local parents, and Greensburg UMC was also building one as part of their rebuild. When Marlyn Mavity and I traveled to Greensburg following the 2007 tornado to visit the new daycare being built by the Greensburg Methodist Church, a local resident

gave me a copy of the book "Boom Town".

The "Boom Town" book was written on the premise that some rural towns prospered while others often nearby failed. The author pointed out several examples of small towns that prospered and the reasons that he thought made the difference. He gave several reasons why these grew and neighbors didn't. One of the reasons that he surmised the success of these towns was a home-owned newspaper.

I fear we will be losing that part of

Cunningham's success that will soon end. I want to applaud Roberta Kobbe's success in making the Cunningham Courier such a great small-town paper. I also need to compliment the earlier heroes that carried the paper before Roberta. The Bradley's, Steffen's, Jeff Dafforn and Mary Stackhouse's father Frank Smiley and others were the ones who published our local paper so Roberta could carry the paper to this point.

Roberta has announced that she is selling the paper. June has

been set as the date that she will either sell the paper or stop printing. I've heard that she has received an offer to buy the paper. The offer to buy isn't a local entity, and I feel it wouldn't have Cunningham's best interest at heart.

When the Hutchinson News and the Wichita Eagle Beacon were sold to large out-of-town interests the paper's quality waned. I could see this decline happening if an out-of-town owner ran our Courier.

So, if anyone reading this is interested in pub-

lishing our paper please consider buying it. Back to the Boom Town book. Three of the other essentials to creating a "Boom Town" were a locally owned Bank, a great school and a progressive mayor who was in office for a long time.

Cunningham has been fortunate to have these elements present also. So, if you have skills to produce a local rural paper or know someone who does please consider producing our paper.

-- Alan Albers--



Chivalry is Not Dead, It's Just Dormant

"Chivalry is one of the great civilizing forces, taming men and introducing social graces and nuance to what would otherwise be a brutish social world."

Heather MacDonald Chivalry, that testosterone-fueled masculine behavioral art form that has benefited womankind since we climbed out of the Dark Ages seems to have taken a hit in recent years. No longer confined to dragon slaying

and knightly combat, in modern America, the small and common male courtesies that men and boys often practiced in times past have to some degree fallen out of favor. What happened to us men? Opinions vary. As normal humans, with our selfish leather-like hearts, many of us men have just forgotten how to best behave towards women. To the men in my reading audience, I would say this. For the benefit of all the women you may meet (even those snarling third and fourth wave feminists who hate men), consider choosing chivalry. And be a better man. Here are the basics...

Holding Doors - When entering a building with a lady, hold the door open and allow her to enter first. This simple courtesy can and should

be exercised for anyone, especially the elderly.

Offer the Better Seat - Never stay seated yourself if a lady is standing. Offer your seat to her. If in a situation where you can offer her a better or more comfortable seat, always do so (example - in the shade out of the sun, or seat with better view). The only exception to this rule involves safety. If in a public place, like a restaurant, you should sit in a position where you can see and respond to any potential threat (example - back to wall with view of door so you can see any bad guys entering).

Tip Your Hat - This may be too old-school for many men, but when meeting or greeting a lady, tip your hat or cap (lift the brim slightly or remove altogether) as a sign of respect. This is especially important when meeting a woman for the first time. And, take your hat off indoors.

Carry Heavy Things - Be sure to carry heavy things for women whenever possible. This includes groceries, bags at the airport, small children, etc.

Walk on the Outside of the Sidewalk - Walking on the outside of the sidewalk, putting yourself between dangers in the

street (racing cars that might jump the curb) and the woman beside you has traditionally been a sign of chivalry. But there are exceptions to this rule. Place yourself between your lady and the most likely source of danger. If walking dangerous city streets at night, perils might lurk in dark doorways. The street side might be a safer place for her. Your job is to be like a sheepdog, her protector. Pay attention and keep yourself between her and any potential danger.

Upstairs and Downstairs - When walking upstairs (or riding an escalator) you walk behind her. When walking downstairs, you walk in front of her. In either case, if she falls, you can better break her fall and hopefully catch her. This is especially important if she is wearing high heels. You in your he-man work boots or sensible shoes will be in a better position to save her and stay on your feet.

Getting In and Out of Cars - When entering a car, open the door for her, wait till she is settled, and then close her door. When exiting a car, open her door and extend your hand to help her exit gracefully. Do this for all women you

are transporting. If your companion is elderly, you might also help with her seat belt.

Help with her Coat - If entering a building with any coat-wearing females, be sure to help them off with their coats when inside. When leaving, reverse this process and help them back into their coats.

Give up Coat if Cold - If the lady you are with is cold, offer your coat or jacket. You are tough and can stand the cold if needed.

Pull Out Her Chair - When being seated at a table, pull out her chair and help her in. This is a nice gesture that most women appreciate.

Ladies Order First - When ordering in a restaurant, make sure that the ladies at your table order first.

Standing at the Table - This is one practice that is more common in formal settings, and you might use with discretion. Consider the time and place. When being seated, it is good manners to remain standing until all the ladies are settled, with men sitting last. When a woman gets up to leave the table, and upon her return, men typically stand. In informal settings this is not usually practiced. And in a situ-

ation where other men are present and perhaps not able to pop up and down (example - elderly men) as the ladies flit back and forth to the bathroom, you might forgo this one.

No Phone When Socializing - This may not fall under the category of accepted chivalrous behavior, but it should be included. At the table, or in any social situation where you are conversing and interacting with other living humans, stay off your phone. Keep your phone silent and in your pocket. When you are on your phone, you are distracted and not fully present with those around you. Phone junkies are not chivalrous.

See Them Home Safely - Always consider the safety of the women you interact with. Whether you are out with your wife, girlfriend, your elderly aunt, or women you've just met, consider their safety. See them safely wherever they need to go. Walk them to their cars, or to their front doors. Wait until they are inside safely. If traveling apart, text or call to make sure they made it home safe. Our job as a man is to maintain a protector mindset. And chivalry is simply part of our job description...

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The Cunningham Courier (USPS 006-101) 320 Stadium Street, Cunningham, Kansas 67035 620-298-2659 © 2018 Periodicals Postage Paid at Cunningham, Kansas 67035 Postmaster: Send address changes to The Cunningham Courier 320 Stadium Street, Cunningham, KS 67035 Published Weekly Roberta L. Kobbe Editor & Publisher Subscription Rates: \$50.00 per year in Kansas \$55.00 per year out of state 320 Stadium Street, Cunningham, Kansas 67035 E-Mail: couriernews@yahoo.com

Community Bulletin Board

Thursday, February 26 6:30 p.m. Parent Meeting for Track Athletes *** 6:00 p.m. Girls' Night Out Book Club at Cozy's Pizza	Monday, March 9 6:00 p.m. First Impressions at Community Center *** HS HOPL Music at South Barber *** KAY family Game Night *** BOE Meeting
Saturday February 28 Boys Sub-State Basketball semifinals	Monday, March 2 Girls Sub-State Basketball Semifinals
Tuesday, March 3 Parent Teacher Conferences *** School Improvement Day *** Lions Club Meeting	Tuesday, March 10 State Basketball Tournament Wednesday, March 11 State Basketball Tournament *** 6:00 p.m. Shop Guild
Wednesday, March 4 FFA Horse Evaluation *** 6:00 p.m. Shop Guild	Thursday, March 12 1:30 p.m. Early School Dismissal *** End of 3rd Quarter *** State Basketball Tournament
Thursday, March 5 Parent Teacher Conferences	Friday, March 13 No School *** State Basketball Tournament ***
Friday, March 6 Boys Sub-State Finals	Spring Break begins
Saturday, March 7 Girls Sub-State Finals	Saturday, March 14 State Basketball Tournament



Thank you for Supporting The Courier

We ALWAYS need photos for the paper!!

Libraries

Cunningham Public Library
Mon., Wed., Fri. 2:00 - 6:00 p.m.
Tues., Thurs., Sat. 9:00 - 11:30 a.m.
Closed for Holidays
298-3163



Zenda Public Library
Monday 8:30 a.m.- 12:30 p.m.
Thursday: 4:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.
Saturday: 8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
620-243-5791



Kingman Carnegie Library
Mon. & Tues. 10:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.
Wed. : 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.
Thurs. : 10:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.
Fri. : 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.
Sat. : 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.
620-532-3061



Pratt Public Library
Mon. - Thurs. 10:00 - 7:00
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Saturday: 10:00 - 2:00
Closed on Sundays
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American Legion Lorraine Post 98 Isabel

Annual Pancake & Sausage Supper. Saturday Feb 28th 4:00 to 7:00 PM. Pancakes, eggs, sausage, milk & juice. Free will donation. All are welcome.



Health Clinics

Kingman County Health Department will be doing its monthly outreach clinics in March on the following dates:
Cunningham- Wednesday, March 4th from 9:30am-12:00pm
Zenda- Wednesday, March 4th from 1:30pm- 4:00pm
Norwich- Thursday, March 5th from 1:30pm-4:00pm
We will be at the Kingman Senior Center on Wednesday, March 11th from 11:00am-12:00pm for free blood pressure checks.

*"You've read the books?"
"I've seen the movies."
Cath rolled her eyes so hard, it hurt. (Actually.) (Maybe because she was still on the edge of tears. On the edge, period.) "So you haven't read the books."
"I'm not really a book person."
"That might be the most idiotic thing you've ever said to me"
— Rainbow Rowell, Fangirl*

Kingman Historic Theatre

February 28
Jaelen Johnston & His Band
6:30 p.m.

Thank YOU for supporting YOUR Kingman Historic Theatre.

Kingman Historic Theatre

237 N. Main in Kingman
(620) 532-1253
http://www.kingmantheatre.org/

February 27 & March 1 I Can Only Imagine 2

Rated PG

Showtimes
Friday at 7:30pm
Sunday at 2:00 and 5:30pm.

Thank YOU for supporting YOUR Kingman Historic Theatre.

K-STATE
Research and Extension



Kingman County Extension Office Opens New Makers Space for the Public

The Kingman County Extension Office is excited to announce the opening of a new Makers Space for public use. This new resource is designed to give community members the opportunity to explore creativity, learn new skills, and work with modern technology.

Thanks to a generous gift from Public Service Company of Oklahoma (PSO), the Extension Office purchased a 3D printer for the Makers Space. In addition, grant funding helped fund the addition of a Glowforge laser cutter and a Cricut cutting machine to the new space.

These tools allow users to design and create a variety of projects, from personalized crafts and signs to prototypes and educational materials. The Maker Space is intended to be a hands-on learning environment for youth and adults alike.

Community members who are interested in learning how to use any of the machines are encouraged to schedule a time with Extension staff. To set up an appointment or learn more, call the office at 620-532-5131.

The Kingman County Extension Office hopes the Makers Space will inspire creativity and provide new learning opportunities for residents throughout the county.

Ensure Your Voice is Heard by Lawmakers

By Heidi Kolbeck-Urlacher, policy director, Center for Rural Affairs

Across the U.S., lawmakers are gathering in their state capitols and Washington, D.C. to begin another year of debating and passing legislation.

The democratic process is something America prides itself on and one that requires input to thrive. While the process for public contributions varies by state, one commonality exists—lawmakers need to hear directly from their constituents on issues that are important to them.

How can you make sure your voice is heard?

Whether you're interested in federal, state, or local policy, you can share your views with elected officials by writing, calling, or visiting them. Testifying in person is also a very effective way to share your views directly. Other options include writing a letter to the editor of your local newspaper or sharing information on social media.

However you choose to engage with your representatives, providing your authentic voice is important. Keep your message simple, civil, and focused. The representative or audience you address needs to know who you are, why the issue matters to you, and what action you want taken. In the case of legislation, this means urging the representative to vote yes or no on a specific proposal.

Commenting on an issue should also be timely. Try to speak to representatives or place your story in the media at a key moment, such as before a hearing or floor debate.

Whatever your reason for becoming an advocate for rural communities, the Center for Rural Affairs is here to help. Please visit cra.org/advocate for more information and resources.

State and national policies have a direct impact on how we live our daily lives. If you are passionate about an issue, we encourage you to step up and let your voice be heard.

Established in 1973, the Center for Rural Affairs is a private, nonprofit organization working to strengthen small businesses, family farms and ranches, and rural communities through action oriented programs addressing social, economic, and environmental issues.

Cards by Roberta Kobbe

Handmade Greeting Cards for sale. Shop for cards at Country Girl Bakery and Market in Harper, N'Cahoots in Pratt, Cleo's in Kingman, Ye Olde General Store in Norwich, and Treasures Three Fabrics in Pratt or contact me.



Will mail or deliver. Cards and stamps make nice gifts for shut-ins.

620-298-2659

185 Doors to Find Myself

By Vicki Garlock

The rule that almost broke me was the one that made everything.

When I signed on to attempt a Guinness World Record for visiting the most places of worship in a single month, I imagined logistics: maps, bus schedules, a six-foot chart of Chicago pinned to my wall. What I did not imagine was Guinness telling me, five weeks before I started, that at every single place, I'd need a real person to sign a verification form.

I thought: They just made this impossible.

What I didn't yet understand was that they'd made it into something far better than a record.

I should back up. I grew up in a small town south of Chicago, went to Lutheran grade school and Catholic high school — the kind of childhood where, as I tell people, even a complete idiot would know her Bible stories. But my sophomore year, a priest named Father Savella taught a course called World Religions, and something cracked open in me that never quite closed.

For years I sat with that curiosity. Then my daughter was born, my husband and I found a multi-faith community in Asheville, North Carolina, and eventually I spent twelve years writing a multi-faith Sunday school curriculum for kids. Somewhere in those years, I realized I needed to stop reading about other traditions and start showing up.

So I did. I visited mosques and temples and gurdwaras and synagogues. I learned when to take off my shoes, when to cover my head. I learned that across every tradition, people pass along their faith to the next generation the same way: you tell a story, you make a craft, you bring

kids into ritual and let them participate as they can.

Then, in June 2023, I read an article about a man in Delhi who'd set a Guinness record by visiting 76 places of worship in one month. I looked up at my husband and said, with more confidence than knowledge: "I think I could beat that."

By September, I was living out of two Airbnbs in Chicago, riding buses and L trains. I had 85 appointments carefully arranged. And then, on the fifth day, Guinness emailed: someone in India had already pushed the record to 111.

My initial reaction was to freak out. My Guinness judge emailed and said she hoped I'd keep going. What choice did I have? I was in Chicago for the month.

That Friday night, I lay awake thinking: This is not good enough. So Saturday morning, after my two scheduled stops, I got on the L and rode to a Seventh-day Adventist church I'd emailed twice and called once. No one had ever responded.

It turned out to be an art gallery during the week. On Saturdays, they set up coffee, arrange a sanctuary, and worship. I walked in with a half-formed spiel and a stack of verification forms. The man at the door said: "Oh my gosh, that is so cool! Of course we'll sign your form! And there's another Adventist church here and here — go there too, they'll be there this morning!"

So I went. At the next one, a Spanish-speaking congregation, a guy named Jori came downstairs and signed my form, then told me there was a second congregation on a lower floor. At the next church, I stayed for the service and then joined them for their potluck in the basement afterward. I ended up with six signatures instead of two.

And something shifted. I understood: if you show up where people are and meet them where they are, they will be interested, and they will be welcoming. For the next two weeks, I kept my appointments, but before and after and in between, I visited every place I hadn't heard back from. I just rang the bell.

That is how I ended up with 185.

I met administrative assistants, security guards, custodians. Building managers gave the best tours — they know every nook and cranny. I met a woman who told me she and her husband had moved from Wisconsin to Illinois so they could access IVF, sharing this deeply personal thing while showing me her place of worship. I met Nic at a Greek Orthodox church, who told me his whole immigrant story — how his family brought his grandparents to America so finally, after many years, they could all once again be in one place.

At the Buddhist Temple of Chicago, a recently retired Japanese minister showed me their sanctuary, then said, "Oh, but wait — you really have to see this." She led me to a large closet. Inside, among urns of ashes, sat an altar made by Japanese Americans in an internment camp during World War II, built from whatever materials they could find so they could maintain their practice. When the war ended and they were barred from returning to California, they moved to Chicago and brought that altar with them.

Back in the fellowship hall, a small, elderly woman overheard us talking. "I was in the internment camps," she said. "I was six." She told me about working in soap factories because no one else wanted to handle lye, about working in munitions factories while be-

ing told she wasn't trusted. Then another woman came up: "You were in the camps? I was too!" And they began talking to each other.

I don't know how a person like me would have had that experience without the Guinness attempt as an excuse to ring the bell at noon, waiting around until one o'clock when people finally arrived for the gathering of their social club.

People ask what enabled me to connect with communities so different from my own. I'm kind of just an old white lady — in some ways that worked to my advantage, because people looked at me on their security cameras and decided to open the door. But connection isn't one-way. I walk into places believing we are already connected — all humans on this planet, in this time, at this particular door. How did we both end up here? There is something miraculous about that.

Of course, I can put that out there, but then someone has to be ready and willing to receive it. And that was the real gift — how many people I met who were ready.

At the Downtown Islamic Center, Nadeem was skeptical at first. Over two dozen security cameras watched me approach. We sat and talked for forty-five minutes. By the time I left, he was telling me other places I should visit and offering introductions. We're friends now.

What I saw everywhere was resilience and creativity. Huge Polish Catholic churches, built a century ago for immigrants who've since moved on, now serving Hispanic congregations. A Buddhist temple inside a UU church. A Lutheran congregation from India holding services in Hindi and Urdu, renting space on Sunday nights to a white evangelical church. People figuring it out,

sharing what they have.

I went to over twenty worship services. Many were not in English. And I discovered something: when you don't have to worry about words — what they mean, or are trying to mean — you can let the experience wash over you. It takes the mind out of the picture. You hold it in your heart instead.

People always ask for my favorite place of worship. I can never answer that. There was no space I walked into and thought, I'm glad I don't worship here. Some were cathedrals with soaring ceilings. Some were tiny clapboard churches that smelled musty and served breakfast to the neighborhood. It didn't matter. The people who I met were all connected to their space. It was meaningful to them. And as a result, it became meaningful for me.

When someone asks what I learned, I keep coming back to one thing: when you meet people where they are, amazing things can happen.

I currently self-identify as an amateur mystic. My son says I have a better chance of getting another Guinness record than finishing my basement renovation. My daughter told me this was the trip I'd always wanted to take — the first one planned just for myself. They both know me well.

But here's what I'd

say to anyone. You don't need a world record as your reason. You can go to a website, find a holiday or a service, send an email, make a call. You can say, I'm here to learn. If this isn't a good time, I'll come back. And if you're feeling particularly brave, you can just show up.

It does require a certain bravery to cross a boundary — one set up by yourself, or by culture, or by history. But that is the only way barriers come down. And it requires less bravery than you might think, because on the other side of that door is a fellow human being. In my experience, they are almost always welcoming, almost always kind.

Ring the bell. See who answers.

Vicki Garlock is an educator, mother, curriculum specialist, consultant, and author of various children's books on world religions, including the ABC's of World Religions. She has served as a psychology professor at Warren Wilson College and as Minister of Education for Jubilee! Community. In September 2025, she visited 185 places of worship and was awarded the Guinness World Record for Most Places of Worship Visited in One Month. You can follow her other adventures on Instagram or Facebook @WorldReligions4Kids.



Vicki (right) when her Guinness World Records judge (left) confirmed she would be awarded the record for most places of worship visited in one month.



Check the Blessing Box east of the Methodist Church.

Anyone can give or take from the Blessing Box at any time.

Free Groceries at the Cunningham Methodist Church 2 to 5 p.m. on Tuesdays

1 Peter 3:13 NIV
Who is going to harm you if you are eager to do good? But even if you should suffer for what is right, you are Blessed.
quote submitted by Alan Albers

Catholic Churches

Sacred Heart, Cunningham
Sunday 10:00 a.m.

St. John, Zenda
Saturday 5:30 p.m.

St. Leo
Saturday 4:00 p.m.

St. Peter Willowdale
Sunday 8:30 a.m.

Father Daryl Befort 316-706-1627 620-246-5370

Lutheran Churches

First Sunday of the month service is at St. John; third Sunday of the month service is at Trinity

St. John, Nashville
620-246-5220

Trinity, Medicine Lodge
620-886-3397

Sunday School & Bible Class 8:45 a.m.
Worship Service 10 a.m.

Sunday School & Bible Class 8:45 a.m.
Worship Service 10:00 a.m.

Pastor vacancy until further notice.

First Christian Church

Cunningham
Sunday School 9:15 a.m.
Morning Worship 10:45 a.m.
Sunday Evening Worship 6:00 p.m.
Jr High Youth Group 4:00 p.m. Sunday
Sr High Youth Group 7:30 p.m. Sunday
Wednesday Prayer Service 7:00 p.m.
Pastor Mike McGovney 620-770-9507

United Methodist Church

Penalosa Worship 9:15 a.m.
Cunningham Worship 10:45 a.m.
Pastor Mathew Ndambuki Musyoki 620-298-2090

Zenda Methodist Church

Worship 9:00 a.m.
Sunday School: Children 8:30 a.m. Adults 10:00 a.m.

Pastor J L Nichols 620-243-6953

Church of Christ

Penalosa
Sunday 11:00 a.m.

YEARS AGO IN
The Cunningham Clipper
W. A. Bradley / William Bradley

1951

March 2, 1951 - The high school basketballers crowned a basketball queen and won their last scheduled game of the season here last Friday night. Norma Watkins was crowned queen, and Cunningham swamped Langdon by a 67-38 score in the game.

The High school basketballers successfully opened the defense of their Isabel Class B District Tournament Championship they won in 1950, with a 54-46 first-round victory over Sawyer, Wednesday night.

J. J. Amick, pioneer resident of this community, celebrated his 94th birthday last Sunday.

Mr. and Mrs. Harold Stark announce the birth of a son, Wednesday, February 28.

1961

March 2, 1961 - Mrs. Glenn Patton has been named 1961 Red Cross Fund Chairman for the Cunningham community.

Among the many things accomplished by the Red Cross, two are of great benefit to our local community. First, Red Cross funds make blood available to people of this community wherever it may be needed, not just in the Pratt or Kingman hospitals, and second, these Red Cross funds provide for swimming lessons at the Kingman Pool for children of this community.

Contributions to this worthwhile cause may be mailed to or left at Mrs. Patton's home or the Clipper Office, if you are not contacted personally by March 20.

1966

March 3, 1966 - The Cunningham 4-H Club members participated in the second of two Kingman County 4-H Club Days in Kingman last Saturday, and received very good ratings.

The members, their talent performance, and their ribbon award are listed as follows:

- Mary Cusenbary, public speaking, top blue.
 - Shirley Park, public speaking, blue.
 - Don Hellar, public speaking, red.
 - Bill McGovney, illustrated talk, white.
 - Bob McGovney, illustrated talk, white.
 - Susan DeWeese, illustrated talk, red.
 - Mike Schreck, project talk, white.
 - Tom Woodson, project talk, red.
 - Cynthia Mantooh, project talk, blue.
 - Kris Sheldon, project talk, top blue.
 - Gary Sterneker, project talk, blue.
 - Marvin Oller, project talk, red.
- Mary Cusenbary and Kris Sheldon, "top blue" ribbon winners, are eligible to participate in the 4-H Club Regional to be held in Pratt next week.

For the third straight year, the Cunningham Wildcats have made it to the Class B Regional Tournament.

By virtue of winning the Class B District Tournament here last Friday night with a 58-51 victory over Cheney in the finals game, the Wildcats qualified for participation in the Class B Regional Tournament at Argonia this week. Cunningham met Wayside in their first tournament action last night (Wednesday) at 7:00 o'clock. If the Wildcats win this game, they will meet the winner of the Conway Springs-Goddard game tonight (Thursday) at 7:00 o'clock.

In the top half of the regional tournament bracket, Udall and Anthony advanced to the semi-finals with wins over Cheney and Garden Plain.

The finals will be played tomorrow night (Friday), with the first-place winner going to the State Class B Tournament in Emporia next week.

1971

February 25, 1971 - Take the ingredients-10 to 15 inches of snow, and 35 to 40 mile-an-hour winds-mix well, and dump on the State of Kansas, and what do you get—a real winter blizzard, the likes of which Kansans haven't seen in over 30 years.

Never in a long while has such a severe winter snowstorm so completely isolated the entire state as the one which struck last Sunday morning. With a light snow falling late Saturday night, few people, except professional weathermen, expected the storm to intensify to a blizzard degree by Sunday morning. Snow fell all day Sunday and throughout the late evening, finally subsiding early Monday morning. Accumulated snow in this area was estimated at about 15 inches, but the high northwest winds quickly whipped the snow into drifts from four to seven feet high.

The Highway Patrol closed Highway 54 to travelers, Sunday morning, at about 7:00 o'clock. Pratt County's State Highway Department, aided by the Barber County crew, opened the road, Monday night, at 9:30 o'clock, but traffic was not permitted on the highway between Cunningham and Pratt until Tuesday morning about 10:00 o'clock. Kingman County's State Highway Department crew, starting from Kingman, finally "broke through" into Cunningham, Tuesday, at about 2:30 a.m. The main obstacle reported was a quarter-of-a-mile of seven-foot snowdrifts, one fourth mile east of the Penalosa Road, six miles east of Cunningham. Traffic was permitted on the highway between Cunningham and Kingman, Tuesday afternoon, although a portion of the road was one-way.

Needless to say, Cunninghamites were isolated in their homes all of Sunday and most of Monday. City Maintenance Man Don Decker began to move the grader through the snow-filled streets, Monday morning, and a "path" was cut through the snow on most of them by that evening. He was assisted by Bob Thimesch, who cleared the road area around the nursing home; Melvin Oller, who used his tractor and scoop around the business area and schools, and John Dupee, who was aboard Dresden Township's maintainer with attached snowplow. Numerous other men with smaller tractor-graders aided many people in town.

YEARS AGO IN
The Cunningham Clipper
Publisher: Charles G. Barnes
Editor: Nancy Briggeman
Reporter: Marie Ann Mantooh

1976

February 26, 1976 — The Cunningham 4-H club held their regular meeting February 2 at the Bernie Albers residence in St. Leo.

The short business meeting was conducted by Vice President Michelle Albers. Joe Pelzl made announcements concerning County Days and gave some helpful hints. He also gave a report on the Council Meeting.

On the program Diana Albers gave a project talk for health and dental hygiene. Linda Sterneker gave a demonstration on cooking.

Refreshments were served by the Albers' following the adjournment of the meeting. Matt Oller, Reporter.

Donna Theis, a senior at Cunningham High School, was at Wichita State University last weekend to participate in the annual Distinguished Scholarship Competition.

More than 300 high school seniors from 96 Kansas high schools and from 11 states other than Kansas were on the WSU campus Saturday, Feb. 14, to compete for more than \$250,000 worth of four-year scholarships to awarded by WSU this spring to incoming freshmen.

The final results of the scholarship competition will be announced in about five weeks.

Cindy Mantooh, bride-elect of Kent Anthony, was honored with a bridal shower Saturday evening, February 21 in the Christian Church Undercroft. Mrs. Arlene Bradley welcomed the guests. Special guests present were Miss Mantooh's mother, Mrs. Marie Mantooh; her sister, Cheri, her grandmother, Mrs. Alma Nichols, Zenda, her finance's mother, Mrs. Norma Anthony, his sister and niece, Mrs. Linda Redding and Shelley, all of Medicine Lodge and his grandmothers, Mrs. Sadie Hadsall and Mrs. Audrey Anthony, both of Attica. Choraleers sang "Today" and "Love Makes the World Go Round" accompanied by Mrs. Arlene Bradley.

Mary Kampling and Cheri Mantooh assisted Miss Mantooh at the gift table. Mrs. Mary Jeulane Hageman fashioned the bow pillow in the bride's colors.

Refreshments of cake, nuts, mints, tea and coffee were served to approximately 45 guests from a beautifully decorated table featuring a turquoise and lilac flower centerpiece with matching turquoise candles. Hostesses were Miss Mantooh's 1972 classmates and their mothers.

Mr. and Mrs. Marvin L. Murphy, Cunningham, are the parents of a son, Aaron Kristin, born at 12:14 p.m., February 20, 1976 at the Pratt County Hospital. He weighed nine pounds and one ounce and has two sisters, Sherrina, 9 and Connie, 15.

Grandparents are Mr. and Mrs. C.M. Murphy, Isabel, and Loyd C. Badders, Pratt. Great grandfather is W. M. Oyler, Nevada, Mo.

Carly Don was the name chosen for the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Allan Pagenkopf, Isabel, born at 5:22 p.m. February 22, 1976 at the Pratt County Hospital. She weighed seven pounds and eight ounces.

Grandparents are Mr. and Mrs. Charles Stelzer, Coats, and Mr. and Mrs. Dean Pagenkopf, Nashville. Great grandparents are Mrs. Gladys Bergdall, Coats, Mrs. Julia Morrisse, Nashville, and Mr. and Mrs. Robert Pagenkopf, Wichita.

The Cunningham Grade girls collected their second in league play as they beat Sylvia 31 to 30. The game went into double-overtime and Donna Beat sank the winning free-throw for Cunningham.

Mary Hageman led Cunningham scoring with 12 points. Rhonda Ruckle had 10 points, Donna Beat had 3 points and Nancy Kerschen and Bonita Thornhill had 2 points. Paula FitzSimmons played a good game on defense but did not score.

The Cunningham Grade boys clinched the league title as they defeated the Sylvia Mustangs by the score of 48 to 29.

Leading scorer for Cunningham was Wade Ruckle with 12 points. He was followed by Scott Huhman with 8. Eric Meyers, Duane Panek, and Mahlon Stucky each got 6 points. Mike Beat got 4, Brian DeWeese, Mike DeWeese and Troy Rohr each got 2 points Terry Elliot, Mike McGovney and Scott Long all played good defense but did not score.

YEARS AGO IN
The Cunningham Clipper
Publisher: Charles G. Barnes
Editor: Florine Kampling

1981

February 26, 2981 — (and that, indeed, was the date on the masthead of the paper).

Members of the West Kingman County Teachers Association spent several enjoyable and interesting hours at St. Leo School on Valentine evening, Feb. 14.

The party started with social hour in the gymnasium. Arlene Bradley was in charge of the social hour. A covered dish dinner in the cafeteria followed.

After the dinner, Sister Mary Rose Engel, President of WKCTA, welcomed the guests, Barry Schartz, Co-president of WKCTA was congratulated for his outstanding work in the association. Barry has been nominated by the association as the master teacher for this school year. Then Evelyn Dunkleberger who is retiring at the completion of the school term received recognition for her twenty-three years of service in District 332.

The Wildcat Boys Varsity Team won their final regular season game from the Bucklin Red Aces by the score of 71-60 on Feb. 20. The Cats finished the regular season with a 16-2 record and 8-1 in the League.

Sherry Welch's seventh and eighth grade physical science classes from Cunningham visited the Northern Natural Gas facilities west and north of Cunningham as a cumulative project after studying a unit on "Petroleum and change in Matter." Norther Natural Gas Company is an underground storage facility. They store gas in the summer for use in the winter. Two main reasons they us underground is for space utilization and safety factors.

Another purpose of our visit was to find out how having a large company like this could help our community. We found out that they purchase material and employ local people. We received tax money for our school district from them. The employees take part in our community and spend money in our community.

Hilltop Manor: Lu Renner and Bobbie Moore took several residents for outings outside when the weather was so nice. The residents really enjoy this

Kevin Mitchell was here with a Puppet Show on Monday. We all enjoyed the program. The residents are still talking about it. We hope Kevin comes back again soon.

1986

February 27, 1986 — Reta Alley Thorne of Medicine Lodge, will be the honoree of an Autograph Party at the Cunningham public Library Wednesday, March 5, from 12:30 until 4:30 p.m. Mrs. Thorne will personally autograph each copy of her book titled "Silver," purchased at 46.13 per copy including state sales tax.

She is a former Cunningham resident having lived in this area all of her life until she moved to Medicine Lodge a few years ago and is the former Reta Hendricks, daughter of Dorothy Hendricks Allred and the late Wes Hendricks.

The public is invited.

Sue Huhman flew to England last Friday, Feb. 21, to be with her mother, Lillian Wilkinson who is critically ill. Sue's mother died Feb. 22. Sue will remain in England until after the funeral March 3, and until all business is taken care of.

A group of ladies gathered Tuesday Morning at the HiWay Café to celebrate the birthday of Delores Albers with a coffee. Present were Mrs. Albers, Sue Kitson, Josephine Albers, Lucy Rohling, Iva Dyche, Mildred Zrubek, Roselyn Thome, Diana Wegerer and son Doug, Mrs. Marie Sterneker, rose Pelzl, Alice Youngers, Pearl Walker, Bertha Zrubek, and Marie Hellar.

Benny and Teresa Orth and son Michael of Prairie Village and Steve and Carol Long were guests of Bob and Helen Long at their home last week.

Cub Scout Pack 759 held their Blue Gold Banquet Feb. 25, with a covered dish dinner. Thirteen members were present along with their families.

Museum Winter Hours
Saturday:
Morning 10:00 - 12:00
Afternoon 1:00 - 3:00
For guided tours call
Mike McGovney 620-770-9507
Joe Sterneker 620-243-2534
Alan Albers 620-243-2553

Applications Open for Kansas Wheat Scholarships Honoring Industry Leaders

High school seniors and current Kansas college students have until Friday, March 13, 2026, to apply for one of two \$1,000 scholarships from Kansas Wheat honoring industry leaders Herb Clutter and David Radenberg. The scholarships - each worth \$1,000 - continue a proud tradition of supporting the future of the Kansas wheat industry.

“Inspired by the enduring legacies of Herb Clutter and David Radenberg, Kansas Wheat is proud to help empower the next generation of the Kansas wheat industry,” said Justin Gilpin, CEO of Kansas Wheat. “Through these scholarships, we honor the passion of these industry leaders and help to provide opportuni-

ties for future leaders in agriculture.”

Herb Clutter Memorial Scholarship

Administered by the Kansas Association of Wheat Growers (KAWG), the Herb Clutter Memorial Scholarship will award one \$1,000 scholarship per year to a college or university-bound incoming freshman from Kansas pursuing a career in the field of agriculture. To be eligible for the scholarship, applicants must plan to be a full-time student at any two or four-year Kansas college or university.

Recipients will be selected based on academic achievement, leadership qualities and career objectives focused around the field of agriculture. The scholarship will be toward tuition for the student’s college or university education. The scholarship is non-renewable.

The Herb Clutter Memorial Scholarship was established in 2009 to honor Herb Clutter’s influential role in organiz-

ing leadership groups on behalf of Kansas wheat producers, and is supported by the generosity of the Herb Clutter family. Herbert W. Clutter was a farmer from Holcomb and the first president of the National Association of Wheat Growers, which was established in 1948. Clutter encouraged Kansas wheat farmers to organize as a strong, unified voice, which led to the formation of the Kansas Association of Wheat Growers in 1952. He encouraged research in education and industrial uses of wheat, improved variety development and methods to produce the best product at the lowest cost. Clutter’s efforts led to the formation of the Kansas Wheat Commission by the Kansas legislature in 1957.

Apply for the Herb Clutter Memorial Scholarship by completing the scholarship application at kswheat.com/clutter. The application includes a 400-500 word essay discussing why

the applicant has chosen to pursue a career in agriculture. The selection committee will use this essay, along with the student’s application, in determining the scholarship winner.

David Radenberg Memorial Scholarship

The David Radenberg Memorial Scholarship will award one \$1,000 scholarship to a current undergraduate or graduate student from Kansas who is pursuing a career in the field of agriculture. Preference will be given to students pursuing a career related to the improvement of wheat, including but not limited to wheat genetics, wheat agronomics, wheat breeding, plant pathology, Extension and bioinformatics.

To be eligible for the scholarship, applicants must be enrolled as a full-time student at any two- or four-year college or university in Kansas. Incoming freshmen or transfers are not eligible.

David Radenberg was a lifelong wheat farmer

in Claffin, Kansas, where his family has farmed for more than 100 years. He represented central Kansas on the Kansas Wheat Commission from April 2011 to March 2020, including serving as chairman from August 2018 to May 2019. Radenberg was also a founding board member of the Kansas Wheat Commission Research Foundation.

During his tenure as a commissioner, he supported wheat research and international marketing efforts, including attending the 31st annual Latin American Millers Conference in Lima, Peru, in 2013. At the time, he expressed how he enjoyed sharing with millers, bakers and merchandisers about the research investments Kansas farmers are making to provide a better-quality product.

In 2013, Radenberg also visited multiple Pacific Rim countries to promote U.S. wheat. The contrast between third-world poverty he saw in

thriving modern cities left an impression on him and reinforced his support of wheat research to help feed a hungry world.

Apply for the David Radenberg Memorial Scholarship by completing the scholarship application at kswheat.com/radenberg. The application includes a 400-500 word essay discussing why the applicant has chosen to pursue a career in agriculture. The selection committee will use this essay, along with the student’s application and a statement of financial need, in determining the scholarship winner.

For both scholarships, the application and associated documents must be submitted to Kansas Wheat at 1990 Kimball Ave, Manhattan, KS 66502, by Friday, March 13, 2026. Learn more or download the scholarship applications at <https://kswheat.com/growers/outreach/>. More information is also available by contacting 785-539-0255 or kawg@kswheat.com.

Spotlight on Cassandra Basinger

By Rick McNary

Cassandra Basinger told herself she would never marry a farmer. Having grown up on a farm near Moundridge, she wanted a different path for her life so she attended Tabor College in Hillsboro to study accounting. By her junior year, she realized she missed the farm life and then she met Chad Basinger on a blind date.

“And the rest is history,” she laughs. “Chad was a few years older than me and already established as a farmer near Pretty Prairie. I’m so glad I changed my mind because now we have four children that who we share farm life with every day.”

Their children, Wyatt, Aubrey, Barrett and Kinley, range in age from 13-years-old to 5.

“What I loved about the farm I grew up on and now can teach our children is the work ethic, the love of being outside and the responsibility of having another living creature depend on you,” Cassandra says.

“Our kids love to get their hands in the dirt, raise bottle calves and learn about the cycle of life.”

The Basingers live in an unusual part of Kansas that attracts special attention because they are part of the Cheney Reservoir drainage, a five-county region whose water runoff supplies the city of Wichita and surrounding areas for drinking water.

Once the Kansas territory opened up in the late 1800s, people settled near rivers. However, as cities sprung up along the rivers, they were subjected to torrential flooding. As more cities became devastated, an appeal was made to congress for federal solutions, so they started building reservoirs along major rivers in the 1930s. All federal reservoirs in Kansas are managed by the Army Corps of Engineers — a federal agency that often leases portions of land to the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks for State Parks. Cheney Reservoir was completed in 1965 to help with flood control and supply drinking water.

A spokesperson for the Cheney Watershed District says, “The life expectancy for a reservoir



was initially 100 years, but in 1994 the City of Wichita began working with farmers to extend the life of the reservoir. Farmers and ranchers have implemented many sediment-reducing practices such as no-till, cover crops and planting cropland back to perennial vegetation with financial assistance from the City of Wichita. The result of the cooperative efforts between farmers and the city is that today Cheney reservoir is at only 7 percent siltation.”

“There is a lot of education, and promotion for cover crops and cost sharing for differing practices,” Cassandra says. “For example, we planted one of our fields in our no-till system into a cov-

er crop of Sudan, German millet, mungbeans, forage soybeans, sun hemp, sunflowers, rapeseed and buster radishes. It has grown so tall our cattle get lost in it. When we go to check them, we can hear them before we see them.”

The Basingers were some of the first farmers to use Shop Kansas Farms as a way to sell direct-to-consumers.

“We had been selling quarters, halves and wholes to family and friends, but we decided to build out our direct-to-consumer sales,” she says. “We began offering value-added products like beef jerky, beef sticks, summer sausage, bratwursts and beef hot dogs. We sell our beef sticks to

the local school at wholesale, then they mark it up for students to purchase. The kids love our beef sticks!”

They’ve also added the ability to sell individual cuts such as steaks, roasts, ground beef, minute steaks, short ribs and briskets. All of these can be purchased directly from their website, LocalKansasBeef.com

Another popular item is their holiday gift boxes, which include items from others like Bruce’s Bullseye Farms, Jason Wiebe Cheese, GG’s Honey and Knackies BBQ Sauce. They shipped out nearly 400 boxes last Christmas to people all over the U.S.

“One of the things we enjoy the most is work-

ing with our customers,” Cassandra says. “We were surprised at how excited people get when they discover we finish feeding our beef with milo we raise on our own farm.

“Everything we do regarding our beef has the consumer in mind. Nothing makes us happier than a happy customer who loves our product. While we love the life we live, the beef products we offer connect us to people in meaningful ways. We’re not just out here on the farm by ourselves. Instead, we have built a community of customers that have become our friends.”

A Column by Dorothy Rosby

Five Ways to Spend 43 days of Your Life

I’ve been on hold for 37 minutes. A less patient person would have hung up by now, but this is important. I wouldn’t have waited this long to order a pizza, not when I could have made one by now.

I’ve spent my time pacing and talking back to the recorded message. “If my call is so important, why don’t you pick up? What did you do? Go to lunch—in another state?”

I wonder how much

time I’ve spent on hold in my life. Days? Months? Years? I put my phone on speaker and lay it on my desk. Then I sit down at my computer and type the question into my search bar.

I’m obviously not the first to wonder because there are 585 million results. I’m not making that up. I hope I don’t have time to read them all.

Those I do read agree that the average person will spend 43 days of their life listening to elevator music and a recorded message thanking them for their patience. Incidentally, I think that’s also how you spend all eternity if you die and go to hell.

Several articles suggest there are more pro-

ductive ways to spend time on hold than arguing with recorded messages. Some of the following sanity-saving options won’t be available to you if you’re using a landline though. Unfortunately the only alternative for you may be to tear the phone out of the wall. But then you’ll lose your place in the queue.

1. March right into the company you’re calling while you’re on hold. It’s been done. A Canadian man laid his landline phone down and drove 15 minutes to the business he was holding for. When a customer service person asked him to wait, the man said, “You see that red, blinking light on the phone? That’s me holdin’ on from home.”

I’d do that myself if I didn’t need an airplane ticket.

2. Tweet a complaint using the hashtag #onholdwith. If you don’t have a X account, you should have time to sign up for one while you wait.

Your complaint may wind up on the website onholdwith.com which was created by a company that manufactures callback technology. That’s the wonderful invention that allows you to leave your number and be called back in the order your call was received. I take a moment to tell the recorded message about it. It thanks me for my patience.

Onholdwith.com features thousands of

complaints from people who’ve tweeted about their hold experiences. At first, reading that other people have spent multiple hours on hold made me feel better. Then I started to realize how bad this could get before it’s over.

3. Put your cellphone on speaker and start preparing lunch while you’re on hold. You may have time to eat, do the dishes and paint the house too.

4. Rehearse what you want to say when someone finally picks up. Oh wait. I misread that. Rehearse what you need to say, not what you want to say. It isn’t the customer service representative’s fault that their employer hasn’t invested in callback technology.

And if the business is short staffed, you don’t want them quitting because you said what you wanted to say—even if it was well rehearsed.

But do practice what you need to say. You called for a reason, and it would be a shame if you forget what that was by the time your call is answered.

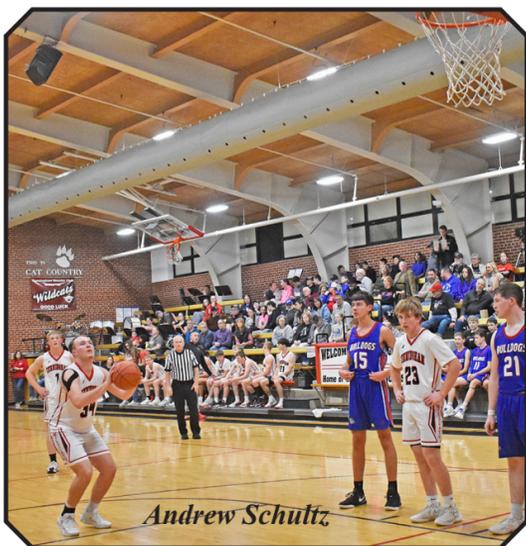
5. Keep quiet. Somewhere among the 585 million articles about being on hold, I read that when your call is being recorded for quality assurance purposes, it may be recorded from start to finish. Not only that, the representative may actually be able to hear what you’re saying while you’re on hold. Uh-oh.

CHS Undefeated League Champions - 3rd Consecutive Year



USD 332 courtesy photo

Wildcats vs. Pretty Prairie



Andrew Schultz



Newt Heatherman



Cole Hageman



Stephen Kerschen

photos by Molly Morgan

Lady Wildcats vs. Pretty Prairie



Emily Ogg



Gracie Smyth



Sage Thimesch



Rylee Miller

photos by Molly Morgan



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Kingman County Sheriff's Report

Sunday, February 15

Civil Paper Service 1
 Traffic Complaint 3000 Blk W Hwy 54, Kingman
 Oil Spill 14000 Blk SW 25 Ave, Spivey
 Trespassing 4100 Blk W Hwy 54, Kingman
 Miscellaneous 120 N Spruce St, Kingman
 Non-Injury Accident 13000 Blk E Hwy 2, Norwich

Monday, February 16

Civil Paper Service 1
 Miscellaneous 200 Blk S parkway St, Norwich
 Non-Injury Accident SE 40 St & SE 10 Ave, Kingman

Tuesday, February 17

Traffic Control 400 Blk E D Ave, Kingman
 Follow Up 400 Blk E Leiter Ave, Cunningham
 Follow Up 4700 Blk NE 130 Ave, Cheney
 Non-Injury Accident 1100 Blk W D Ave, Kingman
 Agency Assist/KMPD/Arrest 300 Blk W C Ave, Kingman
 Miscellaneous NE 20 St & N Hwy 14, Kingman
 Trespassing 4700 Blk NE 130 Ave, Cheney
 Trespassing NE 10 St & NE 170 Ave, Cheney
 Transport Inmate 120 N Spruce St, Kingman

Wednesday, February 18

Traffic Stops 1
 Suspicious Vehicle NW 10 St & NW 90 Ave, Kingman
 Miscellaneous 120 N Spruce St, Kingman
 Agency Assist / KHP / Arrest 15000 Blk E Hwy 54, Cheney
 Court / Inmates 130 N Spruce St, Kingman
 Miscellaneous 200 Blk W 2nd Ave, Norwich

Theft of Services
 Suspicious Vehicle
 Non-Injury Accident

Thursday, February 19

Civil Paper Process 1
 Traffic Complaint 15000 Blk E Hwy 54, Cheney
 Alarm 9800 NE 20 St, Murdock
 Court / Inmate 130 N Spruce St, Kingman
 Disturbance 16000 Blk SE 30 St, Cheney
 Agency Assist / KHP 14000 Blk W Hwy 54, Cunningham
 Disabled Vehicle 14000 Blk W Hwy 54, Cunningham
 Traffic Complaint 12000 Blk SE 20 St, Murdock
 Miscellaneous 16000 Blk SE 30 St, Cheney

Friday, February 20

Traffic Stops 3
 Civil Paper Service 1
 Fire/Grass SE 120 Ave & SE 160 St, Norwich
 Theft SE 40 Ave & E Hwy 42, Rago
 Miscellaneous 200 Blk N Pine St, Zenda
 Traffic Control 1200 Blk E Hwy 54, Kingman
 Miscellaneous 120 N Spruce St, Kingman

Saturday, February 21

Traffic Stops 2
 Miscellaneous 500 Blk N Main St, Kingman
 Suspicious Vehicle 16000 Blk E Hwy 54, Cheney
 Agency Assist/KHP 7000 Blk E Hwy 54, Kingman
 Suspicious Person 200 Blk S Main St, Norwich
 Disturbance 400 Blk E Leiter Ave, Cunningham
 Accidental 911 Dial E Hwy 54 & NE 70 Ave, Kingman



Counting Cows

Greg Doering, Kansas Farm Bureau

There's a routine to spring calving season based on numbers. Once tiny hooves start hitting the cold ground, a rhythm takes over until the last mama cow has delivered her baby. Each day is different, but they're all based on counting.

I can still picture being sandwiched in the middle of the bench seat between my grandparents as we made the rounds through pastures to check on the progress. My grandpa-

ther kept one hand on the steering wheel with a pair of binoculars ready in the other.

We would slowly roll through the field, stopping abruptly for my grandfather to take a closer look at a cow. He'd raise the binoculars and quickly read off the number on the ear tag as my grandmother dutifully recorded the information in a spiralbound notebook.

When a calf was spotted, we'd ease close enough that my grandfather could quickly get out, lasso it and tag it all while keeping an eye on the mama cow, especially if she was a first-time mother. They could get a little angsty during the ordeal.

We checked the herd

five or six times each day, starting with the morning feeding and ending well past dark if weather or other circumstances demanded. The vast majority of field checks happened without incident. All the cows were readily spotted along with the same number of calves from the previous count.

The adventures started when the numbers didn't match up. While most mothers were more than happy to show off their calf, occasionally there'd be one who had witnessed the roundup procedure and took it on herself to keep her progeny hidden. Thankfully, cows aren't masters at hide-and-seek.

While a mama might not show off her calf, she

didn't stray far from it so a hidden calf also meant the mother was away from the herd as well. In the main calving pasture, this usually meant the pair was hunkered down near the edge of a thin stand of trees. Spotting the mom didn't present much of a challenge, but it was incredibly easy to mistake a fallen limb for a black baldy if its white face was tucked away.

We didn't have to assist with many births, but it was always a tense time when pulling a calf was necessary, especially if there wasn't time to move the cow to a temporary pen. Even more rare was finding a lone-some calf rejected by its mother. I only remember a handful of calves that

were brought to the barn for bottle feeding, one of which didn't make it.

Other times calves were lost to coyotes, weather or birth defects, and a few cows succumbed to injuries sustained while giving birth. The losses were never

easy to take, but they were also strong reminders of why we counted.

Every cow. Every calf. Every time.

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News from Kansas Farm Bureau

"Thanks cows. I appreciate your tastiness."
 — Craig Ferguson

"Once you kill a cow, you gotta make a burger"
 — Lady Gaga

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5			2	7	8			
					9			
			9	1			6	
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	7						5	
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	6			7	8			
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Statepoint Crossword Theme: The Oscars

CROSSWORD

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13					14			15			
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57	58	59	60				61		62	63	
64				65	66		67			68	
69				70			71				
72				73			74				

ACROSS

- Traction aid
- Freddy's street
- Reach a high
- Italian bowling
- Entrepreneur Gary Vaynerchuk's alias, Gary ____
- Jolly good one
- Parallel grooves
- Many, many moons
- "Take it back!"
- "Song Sung Blue" Best Actress nominee
- *Movie with most 2026 Oscar nominations
- Make a seam
- Vampire's tooth
- Tai's partner
- South American monkey
- Naphthenic acid + palmitic acid
- Pilot's stunt
- Forbidden, to a baby
- Vampire of Greek mythology
- Italian wine region
- Not Astroturf
- Alpine lift
- Sports figures, e.g.
- Cantina pot
- Email folder
- Not vivid and bright
- Nessie's abode
- *Jamie Foxx won for his role in this 2004 biopic
- Eagle's nest
- Unreliable newspaper
- *2026 nominated film with Stone and Plemons
- *Chloé Zhao's nominee

DOWN

- Not NBC or ABC
- Reluctant
- Pantyhose hue
- DNA and RNA, e.g.
- Cups and saucers
- 20-20, e.g.
- *"One Battle After Another" Best Actor nominee
- High IQ society
- *#7's nominated co-star
- "Anything ____?"
- Wing-shaped
- K to Romans, pl.
- Like athlete's foot
- Behind on rent, e.g.
- Night spot
- At last
- Necklace fastener
- Popular garden perennial
- I to Greeks, pl.
- *2026 nominated Benicio del ____
- Benatar and Morita
- Fly in ____, or a reminder of the past
- Tarzan's swing rope
- *Fictional table tennis champ
- *Nominated "F1" star
- Nobel Peace Prize capital

- Sacrum, pl.
- Communicating with spirits event
- Hawaiian flower garland
- *Inspiration for #61 Across
- Pep gathering
- Lawn ornament
- Angler's hope
- ____-friendly
- Needlefish, pl.
- Brewer's kiln
- Color wheel elements
- Like fairytale stepmothers?
- Be a snitch
- Payment for an eye
- Hi-____ graphics

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Kingman County Commission Minutes

Chairwoman Lyon called the Board of County Commissioners meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. February 17, 2026, in the County Commissioners room at the Kingman County Courthouse. Present: Julie Lyon, Chairwoman; Jack Thimesch, Commissioner; Jeff Young, Commissioner; Carol Noblit, County Clerk Brandon Ritcha, County Counselor

Visitors: Dale Enyart; Bob Morris, Kingman Leader-Courier
Online Visitors: Caller 01; Lucy; DH; AK
Staff: LaDawn Stegman, Financial Officer; Sheriff Wood; Undersheriff Sowers; Jeremy Webb, Dispatcher
Chairwoman Lyon asked if there were any additions to the agenda.

Brandon Ritcha, County Counselor let the Commissioners know that Charles Arensdorf would not be in for his agenda time and he would like to discuss windfarm information with them during his scheduled time.

MOTION: Commissioner Thimesch moved to approve the agenda with the change. Commissioner Young seconded the motion. The motion was approved with a 3-0 vote.

LaDawn Stegman, Financial Officer was in to go over January Financials with the County Commissioners.

Commissioners discussed the walkthrough of the Armory and what could be done to have it work for County offices during the Courthouse future remodel.

Sheriff Brent Wood, Undersheriff Travis Sowers were in with Jeremy Webb to let the Commissioners know that Mr. Webb has accepted their offer for Kingman County Emergency Manager.

Mr. Sowers submitted bids received for 2 pickups and 2 SUVs(Explorers) from the following companies:

- JR Audio \$282,442.00
- Superior Emergency Response Vehicle \$263,565.76
- TCS Uphitting \$297,019.72

MOTION: Commissioner Thimesch moved to approve the purchase of vehicles from Superior Emergency Response Vehicle to not exceed the budgeted amount out of the Capital Equipment Fund. Commissioner Young seconded the motion. The motion was approved with a 3-0 vote.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: Commissioner Young moved to go into executive session at 9:26 a.m. with Sheriff Wood, Undersheriff Sowers and Brandon Ritcha, County Counselor to discuss employee's evaluation pursuant to the exception under the Kansas Open Meetings Act, and will return to open session in the Board meeting room at 9:31 a.m. Commissioner Thimesch seconded the motion. The motion was approved with a 3-0 vote.

Commissioners returned to regular session at 9:31 a.m. with no action taken.

MOTION: Commissioner new hire sheet and change of employee status sheet for Emergency Manager. Commissioner Young seconded the motion. The motion was approved with a 3-0 vote.

MOTION: Commissioner Young moved to approve a new hire for dispatch. Commissioner Thimesch seconded the motion. The motion was approved with a 3-0 vote.

Brandon Ritcha, County Counselor discussed windfarm FR3 would like to have HDR Engineering do the review of the decommissioning review that is required every 5 years. Also, Flat Ridge 4 and Flat Ridge 5 would like decommissioning review with a different Engineering Company from the current company who is Kirkham Michael Associates.

MOTION: Commissioner Thimesch moved to approve Mr. Ritcha to send letters to FR 4 & FR5 releasing the Road Plan bond in the Road Use Agreement. Commissioner Young seconded the motion. The motion was approved with a 3-0 vote.

Carol Noblit, County Clerk submitted the minutes for the February 9, 2026, Commission meeting for approval.

MOTION: Commissioner Young moved to approve the February 9, 2026, Commission meeting minutes. Commissioner Thimesch seconded the motion. The motion was approved with a 3-0 vote.

Commissioners discussed properties.

Commissioners signed one abatement.
MOTION: Commissioner Young moved to adjourn the regular board meeting at 10:17 a.m. Commissioner Thimesch seconded the motion. The motion was approved with a 3-0 vote.

Pratt County Commission Minutes for February 9

The Pratt County Commissioners met in regular session Monday, February 9, 2026 at 2:00 pm in the Commissioner Room, 1st floor of the Courthouse. The following members were present: Thomas W Jones III, Rick Shriver, Morgan Trinkle, Tyson Eisenhauer, County Counselor, Cescha Hoffman, County Clerk and Mark Graber, IT Director.

Noxious Weed Management Plan & Annual Progress Report

Jon Roach presented the 2026 Management Plan and Annual Noxious Weed Eradication Progress Report.

Motion to approve the 2026 Noxious Weed Management Plan and the Annual Noxious Weed Eradication Progress Report as required by KSA2-1316. Motion carried 3-0.

Executive Session – Non-Elected Personnel

Motion to move to executive session under the Non-Elected Personnel exception to the Kansas Open Meetings Act to discuss Policy Enforcement with Jon Roach for 10 minutes at 2:04 pm. Motion carried 3-0.

Commissioners came out of executive session at 2:10 p.m. with no action taken.

InteGreen Quote

Jared Cordes with InteGreen presented an updated quote for boiler room piping only and new circulation pumps. The existing pumps and pipes are leaking and aging. The commission asked for a week to review. No action was taken.

Executive Session – Attorney-Client

Motion to move to executive session under the Attorney-Client exception to the Kansas Open Meetings Act to dis-

cuss the Aetna Provider Contract with Lisa Snider for 10 minutes at 2:16 pm. Motion carried 3-0.

Commissioners came out of executive session at 2:23 p.m. with no action taken.

EMS Provider Agreement

Lisa Snider presented the commissioners with a provider agreement with Aetna to improve reimbursement rates.

Motion to grant Lisa Snider, on behalf of EMS, authority to electronically sign a provider agreement with Aetna Network Services made by Commissioner Shriver; motion carried 3-0.

Senior Service Personnel Request

Motion to approve an hourly wage increase for Teresa Chain from \$10.71 to \$11.21 and Rocky Pierce, Brian VanCampen, Cathy Neuberger from \$11.03 to \$12.03 made by Commissioner Shriver; motion carried 3-0.

Commissioners emphasized the need to ensure grant funding and

future budget request reflect the wage increases. Tara provided an update on the Senior Citizens lease agreement. She reported a meeting had recently occurred and revisions are being made to update the lease agreement. It will be presented to Tyson and the board before approval.

Emergency Preparedness Guides

BJ Hayes presented an updated Storm Spotter Guide and Emergency Preparedness Notification Guide.

Motion to approve and sign the Emergency Management Storm Spotter Operating Guide made by Commissioner Shriver; motion carried 3-0.

Authorization to Bid for Sewer Lagoon Project

Motion to approve Kirkham Michael to proceed with bidding the sewer lagoon project for the Public Safety Building made by Commissioner Shriver; motion carried 3-0.

Kansas Corn Commission Donation

Motion to approve a 25,000 to Kansas Corn Commission for the water impairment program made by Commissioner Trinkle; motion carried 3-0.

Courthouse Maintenance Updates

Cescha Hoffman requested repair of the tile and soap dispenser in the accessible restroom on first floor and tile repair by the east door into courthouse due to tile and wall deterioration. An outdated breaker box on 4th floor that continues to trip also needs updated. Commissioners agreed to have Terry Williamson take care of the tile and soap maintenance items and to call InteGreen for a quote on the new breaker box.

Tax Foreclosure Update

Tyson Eisenhauer provided an update on the upcoming tax foreclosure sale, scheduled for Wednesday at 10:00 am. There are eleven properties in the current case and one remaining property from a previous case. Fourteen properties were

redeemed, generating \$84,766.59 in recovered funds.

Law Enforcement Door Quote Consideration

Discussion was held regarding bathroom access for 911 dispatch staff once the Police Department vacates its current space. Three bids had been received for the work; however it was noted that the bids were not equivalent in scope. The board will revisit once they receive updated quotes.

Ground Maintenance Contract

Motion to approve the annual contract for fertilizer and spraying services with Younie Lawnsapes in the amount of \$8,415.50 made by Commissioner Shriver; motion carried 3-0.

Executive Session – Attorney-Client

Motion to move to executive session under the Attorney-Client exception to the Kansas Open Meetings Act to discuss PRMC Leases for 1 hour with Jack Galle,

Gary Barker and David Prella Eron at 2:58 p.m. made by Commissioner Shriver. Motion carried 3-0.

Commissioners came out of executive session at 3:58 p.m. with no action taken.

Executive Session – Attorney-Client

Motion to move to executive session under the Attorney-Client exception to the Kansas Open Meetings Act to discuss PRMC Leases for 30 minutes with Jack Galle, Gary Barker and David Prella Eron at 4:00 p.m. made by Commissioner Shriver; motion carried 3-0.

Commissioners came out of executive session at 4:30 p.m. with no action taken.

Commissioners unanimously approved the minutes of February 2, 2026.

Commissioners unanimously approved the vouchers for February 9, 2026.

Motion to adjourn at 4:36 p.m made by Commissioner Jones; motion carried 3-0.

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Midnight

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She was just recently brought to the shelter. She likes kids and adults. She's good with other dogs, but not with those bothersome kitties. She's a snuggler and a pup worth investing in. Her adoption fee is \$180.00



Bless this kitty's heart. Midnight is only 2 years old and has spent most of her life at the shelter. When she was brought in, she was pregnant and very thin, and then she lost all her babies. She is a beautiful cat, and the shelter has said she is very shy, but can be coaxed out of her shell if shown patience and given time. Her adoption fee is only \$40.00



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Public Notice

(Published in The Cunningham Courier, the official City of Cunningham newspaper on February 26, 2026)

ORDINANCE NO. 685
AN ORDINANCE AMENDING SECTION 1-209 OF THE CODE OF THE CITY OF CUNNINGHAM, KANSAS, CONCERNING COMPENSATION OF THE GOVERNING BODY

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE GOVERNING BODY OF THE CITY OF CUNNINGHAM, KANSAS:

Section 1: Section 1-209 of the Code of the City of Cunningham, Kansas, shall be amended to read as follows:

"1-209. **COMPENSATION.** Members of the governing body shall receive salaries for their service as follows:

Each Council member, other than the Mayor, shall receive a salary in the amount of \$250.00 per year, payable in December. The amount of compensation shall be prorated for a partial year of service.

The Mayor shall receive a salary in the amount of \$500.00

per year, payable in December. The amount of compensation shall be prorated for a partial year of service.

Council members who served from May 2025 to December 2025 shall receive a prorated salary based upon \$175.00 per year and payable in December, 2025. The new salary in section (a) shall commence in January, 2026.

The Mayor who served from May 2025 to December 2025 shall receive a prorated salary based upon \$250.00 per year and payable in December, 2025. The new salary in section (b) shall commence in January, 2026."

Section 2: This ordinance shall take effect and be in full force from and after its publication in the official city paper.

Passed by the Governing Body of the City of Cunningham, Kansas, this 23rd day of February, 2026.

Governing Body of the City of Cunningham

ATTEST:
/s/ Aaron Murphy, Mayor
/s/ Molly Morgan, City Clerk

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305 North Cedar, Kingman, Kan.
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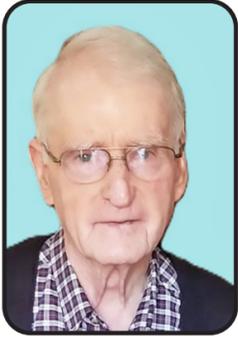
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Leon Barton

Leon Farrell Barton, age 90, of Johnson, Kansas, died February 15, 2026, at his home in Johnson. He was born on January 24, 1936, in Hutchinson, Kansas, the son of Lawrence and Gladys (Lambert) Barton.



Leon grew up in Kingman, Kansas, where he attended school until the tenth grade. He later graduated from Pretty Prairie High School. An accomplished athlete, Leon earned a track scholarship to Hutchinson Community College, where he competed in the high hurdles. Leon worked for Boeing in Wichita, Kansas. On June 7, 1957, Leon married the love of his life, Janice Gibson, in Kingman. Together they built a beautiful life. In 1959, they moved to Johnson, where they established their home and became active members of the community. He began a 20-year career at Seyb-Tucker Lumber & Implement Co, where he was known for his reliability and dedication. After his retirement, he worked for the City of Johnson for another 15 years at the power plant. Leon and Janice were devoted members of Johnson United Methodist Church, where they faithfully served by cleaning, mowing and doing maintenance for 17 years. They also spent countless hours photographing and documenting cemeteries for find a grave.

He is survived by his children, Kathy Nelson of Payson, Arizona, Gary Barton and wife Sandy of Johnson, Kansas, Shannon Molitor and husband Kirk of Spearville, Kansas, and Greg Barton and wife Jamie of Derby, Kansas; siblings, Sylvia Sterling of Hutchinson, Kansas, Barbara Wright of Aurora, Colorado, Glennis Wallace of Kingman, Kansas, Jim Barton and Dale Barton, both of Derby, Kansas; nine grandchildren, and 17 great-grandchildren.

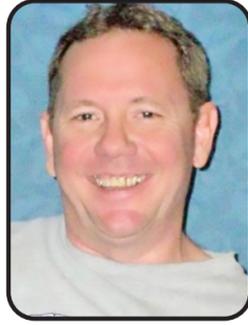
Leon is preceded in death by his parents and his wife, Janice.

Graveside Service was Saturday, February 21, 2026, at Walnut Hill Cemetery in Kingman, Kansas with Pastor Brad Kirk officiating. Memorial contributions may be given to the Johnson United Methodist Church in care of Garnand Funeral Home, PO Box 715, Johnson, KS 67855. Condolences may be posted at www.garnandfuneralhomes.com.

Dale Cheatum

Dale L. Cheatum, 61, died February 22, 2026, in Wichita.

He was born February 14, 1965, in Wichita, the son of Daniel and Anita (West) Cheatum. A long-time Kingman resident, Dale worked at Farrar Corporation in Norwich and was a talented bass player who performed with many local bands over the years.



Music was a lifelong passion for Dale. He loved rock and roll and was happiest with a guitar in his hands, sharing his talent with others. He brought energy and laughter wherever he went and was often the life of the party. Dale believed in living life to the fullest and made sure those around him were smiling.

Above all, he loved his children and family deeply and was proud of them. His memory will live on through the music he played and the many lives he touched.

Dale is survived by his son, Daniel; daughter, Deanna; mother, Anita; and sister, Paula. He was preceded in death by his son, Donny; and his father, Dan.

Services will be 2:00 p.m., Thursday, February 26, 2026, at Livingston Funeral Home, Kingman. The family will receive friends from 12:00 p.m until service time on Thursday.

Memorials may be made to the Dale Cheatum Memorial Fund and placed in care of Livingston Funeral Home, 1830 N. Main, Kingman, KS 67068.



Max Dye

Max D. Dye, 73, died Feb. 22, 2026.

He was born Sept. 25, 1952, at Kingman, Kansas the son of Don and Shirley Schindler Dye. A lifetime resident of the Kingman community, he was owner and President of the Don Dye Company.



Max was a veteran of the U.S. Navy.

Survivors include his children, Max, Laura and Holly; his brother Tom; and 2 grandchildren.

Funeral services will be 2:00 p.m., Friday, Feb. 27, 2026 at the Livingston Funeral Home, Kingman. The family will receive friends from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m., Thursday, Feb. 26, 2026 at the funeral home. Burial will be in the Walnut Hill Cemetery, Kingman.



Mike Dutton

Michael Wesley "Mike" Dutton, 73, of Kingman, Kansas, passed away on February 23, 2026, in Tulsa, Oklahoma after complications following a severe allergic reaction.



Mike was born on June 6, 1952, in Kingman County, Kansas, to Gene and Jane Dutton. A proud graduate of Kansas State University in Agricultural Technology Management, he liked to remind people that he earned that degree without a calculator—a point of pride that fit perfectly with his combination of intelligence and old-school grit.

He spent his life working across eastern Colorado as what he jokingly (and accurately) called an "agricultural transportation engineer." Whether it was farming, custom harvest runs from Oklahoma to Montana running Gleaner combines, or hauling in his Kenworth, Mike's world revolved around the land and the people who worked it. His ingenuity—equal parts energy efficiency and pure redneck creativity—was legendary. If something needed fixing, improving, or redesigning, Mike could do it with baling twine, duct tape, determination, and a grin. His daughters recall multiple occasions where he could diagnose and fix anything broken just by listening to it over the phone.

To those who knew him well, Mike was also "Mighty Mike," a man whose humor was as big as his stories. One of his favorite stories was a recount of riding out the Limon tornado as a member of the Riverdale's walk-in Cooler Crew on his birthday in 1990. One of his most cherished trophies was a Christmas tree decorated with Diet Dr Pepper cans as ornaments—saved for years because Kelsey had been "a smart alec," and he thought the whole thing was too good to toss. In fact, Mike considered a lot of things too good to toss; however, he always knew where his treasures were located. He loved Diet Dr Pepper almost as much as he loved telling of the time he traded a pig straight across for a minivan—an event he considered a perfectly reasonable transaction.

Mike was preceded in death by his parents, Gene and Jane Dutton. He was also preceded in death by his lifelong trucking buddies - Roy Marsh, Don Grokett and Delmar Cerbo.

He is survived by his children: Jennifer (Mitchel) Huttinga of Sheridan, MT; Sara Dutton of Limon, CO; and Kelsey (Mark) Meeks of Durant, OK; and by Penny Wilkins, his beloved friend and companion, and their dogs Suzie and Sally of Kingman, KS. He leaves behind his grandchildren—Mason (19), Karter (6), Kennedy (3) Meeks, and Bennett (1) Huttinga—as well as many beloved grand-dogs. Mike is also survived by his brothers, Ed (Eudon) Dutton of Kingman, KS, and Steve (Mary) Dutton of Lenexa, KS, along with many nieces and nephews.

Though he answered to Mike, Mighty Mike, Dad, and Grandpa Mike he will be remembered above all for his quiet faith and the joy he found in spending time with the family and friends who meant so much to him. His presence, humor, and generosity will be deeply missed.

A memorial service will be held at Walks Camp Park - 63549 County Road 27, Limon, CO - on Thursday, February 26, 2026, at 3:00 pm with Mike's good friend Wayne Ewing officiating. Following the service, all are welcome to join the family at Southside, Mike's favorite restaurant. Cheesesticks will be provided, and the full menu will be available. A Kingman, Kansas celebration of life and graveside service for Gene and Mike will be held at a later date.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to Walks Camp Park, where Mike served on the board of directors until his passing. Contributions may be sent to Walks Camp Park, C/O Teresa O'Dwyer, 59495 State Road 71, Limon, CO 80828.



Thank you

Our family would like to extend our deepest gratitude to our church family and our entire community for the incredible generosity shown at the recent spaghetti dinner benefit held in support of Brian's medical care.

The outpouring of love, prayers, and support has been truly overwhelming. Every act of kindness has made a meaningful difference in our lives during this challenging time. We are blessed to be surrounded by such a compassionate and faithful community.

Thank you for standing with us, for lifting Brian up in prayer, and for showing such extraordinary generosity. We are deeply grateful.
-Brian, Samantha & Jens Houtwed-

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- 15 oz green beans
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- 16 oz peanut butter
- 20 oz jelly *
- 6 oz mac & cheese
- 5 oz instant potatoes
- 16 oz dry pasta
- 24oz pasta sauce *
- 16 oz canned pasta
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- 5 oz tuna fish
- * no glass, please

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