

The Cunningham Courier

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

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 (620) 298-2659

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CHS Wildcats -- 2026 Sub-State Champions....



... and Their Fans



photos by Molly Morgan

Minutes From BOE January Special Meeting

The West Kingman County Board of Education special meeting was called to order at 5:35 p.m. on Wednesday, January 11, 2026, by Vice-President Bjorn Halderson.

Vice-President, Bjorn Halderson; Members, Jason Osner, Abby Bock, Nick Rogers, and Katie Hellman; Superintendent, Dr. Kelly Arnberger; Principal, Cody Dunlap; Clerk, Stacy Webster; and Guests, Grant Urban and Steve Miller.

Motion made by Abby Bock, seconded by Nick Rogers, to approve the agenda as presented. Motion carried 5-0.

Vice-President Bjorn Halderson welcomed the guests and turned the meeting over to B G Consultants.

Discussion of building size, bid process and time lines were discussed.

Board Member Travis Thimesch joined the meeting via phone call at 6:00 p.m.

Discussions resulted in a time line of having 90% architect drawings for review by March 23rd and 100% drawings ready by April 6th for the board to vote to send out for bids in a Design, Bid, Build format.

Board President Brent Miller arrived to the meeting at 6:25 p.m.

Motion made by Jason Osner, seconded by Abby Bock, to adjourn the meeting at 6:35 p.m. Motion carried 7-0.



Minutes From BOE February Meeting

The West Kingman County Board of Education meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. on Monday, February 11, 2026, in the school cafeteria by President Brent Miller.

President, Brent Miller; Vice-President, Bjorn Halderson, Members, Jason Osner, Abby Bock, Katie Hellman, and Nick Rogers; Superintendent, Kelly Arnberger; Principal, Cody Dunlap; Clerk, Stacy Webster and Guests, Sean Kostner, Rebecca Huelskamp, Justina Kostner, Ethan Kostner and Lance McGuire.

Motion made by Bjorn Halderson, seconded by Nick Rogers, to approve the agenda as presented. Motion carried 6-0.

President Miller welcomed the guests to the meeting.

Mr. Dunlap gave special recognition to senior Sean Kostner. His positive attitude and strong work ethic, encompassing multiple extra-curricular activities, makes him an exemplary leader that will be missed when he moves toward his future.

Guest Andy Kostner arrived to the meeting at 7:05 p.m.

Mr. Dunlap next recognized Mr. Ramirez, who joined via zoom at 7:02 p.m., for his willingness to step in to help when our students were in need. He provided transportation and encouragement when they went to a mentoring day in Pratt. Also joining via Zoom at that time was the coordinator of the mentoring day, Tanya Applegarth. She thanked Mr. Ramirez not only for recognizing the need for the students to attend but his recognition of the hard work it

continued on page 7

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 750 West D Avenue • Kingman, KS 67068



Meanderings

I continue on with Alan Bradley's Flavia de Luce mystery series. The more I read, the more I enjoy the characters and the plots.

happened next?" But the books make me wish I was a librarian again so I could share them with readers.

I went to the library on Saturday to checkout books four and five, and visited with our librarian, Debi. I told her Flavia isn't a typical kid, she runs around the countryside totally unsupervised, checking out thefts and murders.

were like 'sure, whatever.' My remark was "That is probably why kids like them so much."

Think about it: Nancy Drew, The Hardy Boys, Boxcar Children... Did they go to school even? Flavia de Luce does not attend any school.

This quote from the third book, "A Red Herring Without Mustard" made me laugh:

"Seen from the air, the male mind must look rather like the canals of Europe, with ideas being towed along well-worn towpaths by heavy-footed dray horses.

But the female mind, even in my limited experience, seems more of a vast and teeming swamp, but a swamp that knows in an instant whenever a stranger - even miles away - has so much as

dipped a single toe into her waters. People who talk about the phenomenon, most of whom know nothing whatsoever about it, call it "woman's intuition."

She's quite a girl, that Flavia de Luce.

I am currently on book four "I am Half-Sick of Shadows" and can't wait to see how it ends.

It begins: "Tendrils of raw fog floated up from the ice like agonized spirits departing their bodies." Now isn't that a pip of an opening?

And waiting on my nightstand is "Speaking

from Among the Bones". The opening sentence: "Blood dripped from the neck of the severed head and fell in a drizzle of red raindrops, clotting into a ruby pool upon the black and white tiles."

I do love well-told stories.

Always reading, and currently reading, "I am Half-Sick of Shadows" by Alan Bradley, Roberta

Tallgrass and Tumbleweeds by Gaille Pike

Dear Readers,

I was taught in kindergarten that March comes in like a lion and goes out like a lamb. That isn't what is happening around these parts lately.

Kansas is known to dish up. There will be outrageous window-rattling thunderstorms. There will be gale force winds and flooded creeks and rivers.

When the movie "Twister" came out a friend of mine said that it was the silliest darn movie he ever saw. Only

he didn't say "darn." Not because of the tornados, which were pretty cool, but because of the manner in which the citizens in the film REACTED to the tornados.

Maybe we should name tornados, just like they do with their cousins—the hurricanes. I think they merit such notoriety.

dredge up some more weather-related adages, and there are many.

There is another kindergarten staple: April Showers Bring May Flowers. But here's a few more lesser-known ones: Clear Moon, Frost Soon.

I don't know if any of the above are scientifically accurate but they're fun to say. And like most clichés there is usually a

little bit of truth in there somewhere. Perhaps the most truthful observation of all comes from Mark Twain, who said "Climate is what we expect. Weather is what we get."

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



Letters from Grandma

Kim Baldwin, McPherson County farmer and rancher

My family recently celebrated the life of my husband's grandmother. We were incredibly lucky to have Grandma Irene in our lives for so many years.

I don't know a lot of people who knew a great-grandparent, but our son and daughter are old enough to remember her. While she lived

three hours from us, she was very much aware of what we were all doing between our visits by keeping up with us on Facebook or through reading this column in her local paper.

She kept us up-to-date by writing letters that she'd put into cards and send to arrive just in time for birthdays and holidays.

Sometimes Grandma Irene would send a handwritten letter just because and include a news clipping or pages from her daily devotionals that

reminded her of us.

She had raised her family on a farm as well and knew what living in the country and raising crops and kids entailed.

A handful of years ago, she moved into an assisted living facility in her small town in Southeast Kansas.

She stayed busy with her sewing and piano playing and eating out with family on Sundays. She'd write about the

games she and the other residents would play and would mention on occasion that she'd outlived another one of her friends.

Regardless of the topic of her letters, we always knew she was staying active within her church and social circle. We also knew she was always praying for us and loved us immensely.

Her funeral was well attended for a woman who had outlived so many of her friends. Aside from family, the seats were filled with those who knew her from church or the community.

At one point during her funeral, those in at-

tendance were encouraged to share their memories of her. It took quite a while for the microphone to be passed around.

It was evident that Grandma Irene loved a lot of people. Whether it was memories of her helping with 4-H projects, sewing quilts or gifting dish scrubs, writing letters, serving in her church or keeping a stash of cinnamon flavored candy and oatmeal cream pies in the pantry for her grandkids, the shared memories truly celebrated her and the work she did.

This is the time of the year when I'd normally find a blue, yellow or pur-

ple envelope in our mailbox containing a card and personalized handwritten letter inside letting us know she was thinking of us as we prepared for all of the spring work required on the farm.

I'll miss those letters from Grandma Irene. They were simple, yet intentional, acts that let her loved ones know that she was thinking of them from afar.

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Terrific Tomatoes - Starting Seeds in Winter

"If you have a garden and a library you have everything you need."

Marcus Tullius Cicero

Just days ago, I sat at our kitchen table and planted tomato seeds, tucking their pale little bodies into potting-soil-filled red Solo cups.

For those of us "green

thumbers" who enjoy dipping our hands into the good earth and coaxing produce from the ground, winter is a special time. In years past, before we were all compelled to become "computer-head Freds" and do everything online, gardeners would pour over old-fashioned paper seed catalogs on winter nights, dreaming of spring and what they might grow.

It has been some time since I started my tomatoes at home. Normally,

as spring arrived, I would prowl the garden section of our local Home Depot looking for my tomatoes.

Thinking there might be a few intrepid gardeners within the ranks of my readers, a column on starting tomatoes seemed appropriate now. What follows is simply my elementary process and guidelines.

First, decide what you want to grow - choose your varieties. If you've had success in the past, you might want to stick to your favorites. If your tomato crop was less than you hoped, maybe try something new. Note - tomatoes can be divided into two categories, determinate and indeterminate.

I am trying some new varieties this year. Last year's tomato crop was less than expected. My large beefsteak tomatoes were not setting fruit before our blistering summer heat kicked in.

Tomato growing success starts when you first plant your seeds (start seeds 6-8 weeks indoors before your last frost date). I use 18-ounce red Solo cups (the kind you might use for beer pong in college - I never did that).

Fill each cup half full with potting soil. Poke two holes into the soil and tuck your seeds in place, two seeds per cup. Cover seed with 1/4 inch of soil and gently tamp down. Water soil for the first time from the top.

Next, place each red Solo cup in another plastic cup - use clear cups for this purpose. Using two cups allows you to water your tomatoes from the bottom (and clear cups let you see water level - bottom watering will promote root growth and is easier than carefully sprinkling every time you water).

After planting, place a small sandwich bag over each cup to help keep moisture inside as seeds germinate. Remove bags as soon as plants emerge. Seeds will germinate best at about 75 degrees Fahrenheit, so find a warm spot in your house for them (or use a heat mat).

As soon as plants peak through the soil, they will need 6-8 hours minimum of sunlight daily. If you have a very sunny window, this may work. But it is usually better to use a shop light or grow light. LED lights work well for this, but numbers have to

be right for this to work on your tomatoes. Look for lights rated at 1500-3000 LUMENS (this is how bright light is) and 4500-6500 KELVIN (this is color temp which mimics daylight).

Once plants emerge and true leaves appear thin by choosing strongest specimen, clipping the weaker seedling at its base. You can water with liquid organic fertilizer every week to give your plants a good start.

Once plant grows over the top of your cup, fill remainder of cup with potting soil. Tomatoes will grow roots where the stem touches soil, so doing this will give your plants a larger root ball before planting.

Plant your tomatoes outside in the garden after your last frost date. Plant them deep and cover stem again for extra root growth. Be sure to stake plants or use tomato cages as needed. And get ready to enjoy your tomatoes! Happy gardening...

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Community Bulletin Board

Thursday, March 12 1:30 p.m. Early School Dismissal *** End of 3rd Quarter *** State Basketball Tournament	Saturday, March 28 FFA Banquet *** WKCEF Fundraiser
Friday, March 13 No School *** State Basketball Tournament *** Spring Break begins	Monday, March 30 4:00 p.m. JH Scholars Bowl at Norwich *** 5:00 p.m. Cheerleader Tryout Practice *** 6:30 p.m. Cheer Tryout Parent Meeting
Saturday, March 14 State Basketball Tournament	Tuesday, March 31 Cheerleader Tryout Practice
March 16- 22 Spring Break	Wednesday, April 1 Kindergarten Screening ***
Tuesday, March 17 Lions Club Meets	NHS Blood Drive *** Cheer leading Tryouts ***
Monday, March 23 Back to School *** FFA week begins	Shop Guild
Tuesday, March 24 6:00 p.m. Girls Night Out Book Club at CPL	Thursday, April 2 JH Track at Skyline (Green Sports Complex)
Wednesday, March 26 FFA Ag Tech and Mechanics	Friday, April 3 Good Friday *** No School
Friday March 27 JH Play	Sunday April 5 Easter

St. John Lutheran Church in Nashville, KS, is hosting a Ham Dinner on Sunday, March 22, from 11:30 AM - 1:30 PM. The menu includes ham, scalloped potatoes, green beans, corn, salads, and desserts. Free Will Offering.



K-STATE Research and Extension Kingman County Kingman County Fair Button Design Contest

The Kingman County Fair Association is proud to sponsor the Kingman County Fair button design contest this year. The contest is open to all ages. The winning design will be featured on the 2026 County Fair button and in fair publications. The theme this year is "Red, White, and MOO!" Entry forms can be picked up at the Extension Office and must be returned by March 31st. For more information, please contact the Extension Office at 620-532-5131.

Upcoming Auctions

Wed. March 18, 2026 – 1:00 PM
30113 NW 30th St., Pratt, KS
67124 – 3 ¼ Miles W of BTI
Seller: John & Jeanne Swindler: 620-388-3692

For more information and a complete list of auctions, visit our website at www.hammauction.com



107 NE State Road 61, Pratt, Kansas, 67124
620-672-6996

Hilltop Manor Pillowcase Dress Style Show



Sunday March 15, 2026
2:00 p.m.
Hilltop Manor
Cunningham, Kansas

At Cunningham Public Library

March is National Nutrition Month

Join Us March 17th

9:30 am
For a St Patrick's Day themed Nutrition Class
all ages welcome
led by Taylor Schultz



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
Friday: 10:00 - 6:00
Saturday: 10:00 - 2:00
Closed on Sundays
(620) 672-3041

DAYDRINKERS CAFE INC

Cunningham KS 67035



121 E. First Street
Cunningham, Kansas
Hours:
Monday - Friday 6:30 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Saturday 7:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.
Closed Thursday and Sunday
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Cozy's Pizza

115 N. Main
Cunningham, KS 67035
620-298-7000
Hours:
Tues., Wed., & Thurs.
- 11:00 to 7:30
Friday and Saturday - 11:00 to 8:00
Closed Sunday and Monday



Kingman Historic Theatre

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

March 13th, 14th, 15th

Hoppers

Rated PG
Showtimes
Friday and Saturday at 7:30pm
Sunday at 5:30pm.
Thank YOU for supporting YOUR Kingman Historic Theatre.

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Comfortably Dumb

by Bruce Quast



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*A Column
by
Dean Marple*

One Step

“Grandpa, why do tomatoes have yellow flowers and potatoes have white flowers?”

“Grandpa, if ladybugs are good, why doesn’t Grandma want them in the house?”

“Grandpa, morning glories are pretty. Why do we pull them out?”

“Grandpa.”

“Hmm,” was the only reply I got.

I was six and supposed to be in the garden hoeing weeds with Grandpa. Because they were easy to identify, I was supposed to attack the butter print weeds. Their soft velvety leaves were popping up as the potatoes came into bloom, but I was more interested in asking questions. Saving the Kennebec spuds from the butter print weeds was not my highest priority.

“Grandpa, why do you walk funny?”

“Oh, I don’t know. I s’pose it’s because I’m old.”

“But Grandma is older than you are, and she doesn’t walk funny.”

“Squirt,” he said (all the grandkids were squirt; he never tried to keep us straight). “You better not let Grandma

hear you say that. She’s younger than I am.”

By now I’d dropped my sawed-off hoe and was using a stick to thrash the butter print. I thought I was swinging like Mickey Mantle, though it didn’t occur to me that it might be easier to hit a standing weed than a major league fastball.

“So, some day Grandma will walk like you?”

“I don’t know, Squirt, we’ll just have to see. Now pick up that hoe and get going.”

Better at blabbing than hoeing, I started to plead my case. “But it’s hot, and I’m thirsty, and I itch, and I’m tired, and, and...”

Grandpa straightened, leaned on his hoe and said, “Just keep going, Squirt. Just put one foot in front of the other.”

“But, Grandpa...” I whined.

The look he shot me was enough to tell me to be quiet and hoe. While Grandma was a firebrand with a sharp tongue, Grandpa was a quiet man who led by example. He never complained and was not about to tell a six-year-old that he was in the early stages of progressive multiple sclerosis.

As time went by, I grew taller and my grandfather began using a cane to walk to the garden.

Once in the garden, he’d lean on a nearby shed and exchange his cane for a hoe to support him. His faded blue jeans and the shed’s weathered boards seemed to blend into one light-blue blur. I never really noticed how unsteady he was as the hoe came off the ground and struck any weed within reach. At nine-years-old, I was too busy goofing around.

“Look, hey, look at me. Here I go!” With a running start, I easily jumped over a row of radishes.

“Squirt, don’t walk on the radishes.”

“Aw, Grandpa, that wasn’t nothin’. Watch this!” Like Superman, I soared over a row of bush beans in a single leap. That I had landed squarely in the next row of beans escaped my attention but not his.

“Well, see here now.” (That passed for cursing in Grandpa’s vocabulary.) “You’re wrecking good beans. Get out of those beans!”

Full of myself and feeling particularly bold, I danced around him. “Nah, nah, you can’t catch me. I’m going to do it again!” And with that smart aleck remark, I took off, running straight for the pole beans and the trellis that supported them. Gathering all my strength, I leaped, I soared.

I crashed.

Flat on the ground, my feet tangled in the trellis, my mouth tasted dirt. I was still on the ground when I saw Grandpa’s hoe beside me and felt a hand grab my belt. The world looked a little different, my head dangling lower than my butt as he lifted me upright.

“Are you hurt?”

My mouth did hurt a little, but my pride hurt more. “No,” I mumbled. Silence.

A very long silence.

And then he put me down. “Well, I think you better hoist that trellis back up and get to work.”

That’s all he ever said as he returned to his own hoeing. He just kept putting one foot in front of the other.

By high school, I knew what multiple sclerosis was and why my grandfather used a three-sided walker to move about when strawberry picking time rolled around.

“Grandpa, just stay on the porch while I pick the strawberries, and I’ll bring them to you to wash.”

“Need a little help out there?”

I said, “No, I’m fine,” thinking that I’d have the picking done before he ever made it to the garden. Before long, I’d picked two boxes of plump strawberries and was working on my third

box when I heard a familiar voice.

“Hey, Squirt, you need to do it this way. The closer you get, the more berries you see.” Looking up, I saw Grandpa sitting on the ground at the edge of the berry patch, his walker parked beside him and a plastic bag hanging from its aluminum frame.

Sometimes he’d pick a berry and slowly bring his unsteady hand over the bag before depositing the berry. Sometimes he’d drop the berry twice before it reached the bag, his arm movement resembling a drunk awkwardly hailing a taxi. When he couldn’t reach any more berries, he’d brace his hands on the ground and scoot himself backward until he reached a new picking area. I could only imagine the amount of effort it was taking him just to pick a few strawberries.

After filling a few more boxes, I called out, “Hey, I’m tired and it’s hot. We have plenty of berries. Let’s go in.”

“Well, if we’re going in, I’ll need a little help. This bag is loaded down with berries.”

As I got up and walked toward him, I humored him. “Yeah, I’ll bet it’s about to burst from all those berries.” When I reached him, I saw two things: a satisfied grin on his face and maybe two handfuls of berries

in the white plastic bag. Standing behind him and putting my hands under his armpits, I pulled him upright until he could grasp the walker. I steadied my own tray full of berry boxes with one arm and his walker with the other as we slowly wobbled across the yard together.

“Grandpa, why’d you do that? You knew I could pick those berries.”

“Sure, I knew that, Squirt. But I have to keep going. Just keep putting one foot in front of the other.”

The years went by. For me: college, jobs and a family of my own. For him: falls, broken bones and wheelchairs, until he passed away on a cold January day.

As I stood in the receiving line at the funeral home, I saw family and friends and acquaintances everywhere and wondered what he would have thought. He was never comfortable being the center of attention.

Seeing him in the casket, I noticed his suit and tie and again wondered what he would have thought about such fancy clothes. He was a blue jeans type of guy.

But when the six pallbearers approached the casket and started to lift, there was no doubt in my mind what he would say.

“Just put one foot in front of the other.”

God Will Provide



A young woman brought her fiance home to meet her parents. After dinner, her mother told her father to find out about the young man.

The father invited the fiance to his study for a

talk. ‘So what are your plans?’ the father asked the young man.

‘I am a biblical scholar,’ he replied.

‘A Biblical scholar. Hmmm,’ the father said. ‘Admirable, but what will you do to provide a nice house for my daughter to

live in?’

‘I will study,’ the young man replied, ‘and God will provide for us.’

‘And how will you buy her a beautiful engagement ring, such as she deserves?’ asked the father.

‘I will concentrate on my studies,’ the young man replied, ‘God will

provide for us.’

‘And children?’ asked the father. ‘How will you support children?’

‘Don’t worry, sir, God will provide,’ replied the fiance.

The conversation proceeded like this, and each time the father questioned, the young idealist

insisted that God would provide.

Later, the mother asked, ‘How did it go, Honey?’

The father answered, ‘He has no job and no plans, and he thinks I’m God!’

Giving Opportunities in our Community

4C Day Care Leave a donation with the Methodist Church.

West Kingman County Education Foundation

Use your Dillon’s Card! to donte contact Shawna Sterneker

Hands of Hope (contact any church)

Cunningham Alumni Scholarship Fund

(send checks to the West Kingman County Education Foundation)

Cunningham Community Center (leave donation at the bank)

Lions’ Club

Cunningham Museum (to donate contact Alan Albers or Mike McGovney)

Cunningham Public Library (to donate, contact Debi Dunlap)

Cunningham EMS (to donate, contact Monte Rose or Kathy Albers)

2 Peter 2:1 NIV But there were also false prophets among the people. Just as there will be false teachers among you.

quote submitted by Alan Albers

**Free Groceries
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2 to 5 p.m. on Tuesdays**

**Check the Blessing Box east of the Methodist Church.
Anyone can give or take from the Blessing Box at any time.**

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.



Church of Christ

Penalosa
Sunday 11:00 a.m.

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

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

1961

March 16, 1961 - The Better Homes and Gardens Club celebrated their 25th anniversary at a one o'clock luncheon in the home of Mrs. Rufus Leiter last Thursday afternoon. Assisting Mrs. Leiter were four hostesses, Mrs. Sherman Kincheloe, Mrs. Bill Boyd, Mrs. George McClellan, and Mrs. Lynn Spencer. Twenty-six members and guests were present.

President Mrs. Alva Hellar, lesson leader for the afternoon, reviewed the history of the club. There have been 54 members, and only one, Mrs. Elizabeth Stump, has passed away. Letters were read and pictures shown from the following members, Mrs. Bernice Poland, Mrs. Bonnie Patton, Mrs. Blanche Baber, Mrs. Bernice English, Mrs. Bobby Doty, Mrs. Ruby Hoagland, Mrs. Helen Scott, Mrs. Mary Ratlief, Mrs. Lois Shuler, Mrs. Bernice Edwards, Mrs. Alice Grindstaff, Mrs. Lulu Bretz, Mrs. Florence Revel, Mrs. Betty McCool, Mrs. Betty McCosh, Mrs. Velda Copenhaver, Mrs. Lorraine Warren, Mrs. Lorene Buntmeyer, Mrs. Elsie Witt, and Mrs. Edith Gillen.

Mrs. Hellar presented gifts of demi-tasse cups and saucers of all guests and potholders to all members.

Mrs. Francis Dafforn took pictures of the anniversary party for Club Betterment.

"Kansas Centennial" was the theme of the annual Mother and Daughter Banquet held in the Sacred Heart School Auditorium, Monday evening. One hundred and ten mothers attended the affair, sponsored each year by Community YWCA.

The tables were attractively decorated with loaves of bread holding the state flower, and wheat heads interspersed with lighted candles. Place mats of state maps marked each place, and guests were given favors of miniature loaves of bread and bags of wheat.

Community YWCA President Mrs. Bill Bradley welcomed the group, and responses in behalf of the mothers and daughters were given by Mrs. Ray Nickle and Miss Norma Greenlee. Corsages were presented to Mrs. Jessie Nossaman and Mrs. Joe Battles as the oldest and youngest mother.

Mrs. Sidney Dillinger gave the invocation, and Mrs. Dan Cusenbary presented the devotionals. Several musical selections were sung by the Sweet Adelines of Pratt, after which the high school dramatic class, under the direction of Norman Good, presented the one-act play, "No Greater Love."

The lovely turkey dinner was prepared and served by the Homemakers HDU.

1966

March 17, 1966 - One hundred and fifty mothers and daughters attended the annual Mother and Daughter Banquet in the Sacred Heart School Auditorium, Monday evening, sponsored by the Community YWCA.

The banquet theme, "Springtime in the Orient," was attractively carried out with Ming trees, lamps, fortune cookies, and a flowing fountain. The dining tables were centered with arrangements of flowers.

Following a turkey dinner prepared and served by the Sacred Heart Altar Society, Community YWCA President Mrs. Bob Long, presiding as toast mistress, gave the welcome, and the response was given by Ann Eck, President of the Kayette Club. Mrs. Ted Duell presented the devotions, using the topic "Scriptures of Motherhood," after which Nyla Christian of Penalosa, and Charles Ridge performed a song and dance routine to "Wouldn't It Be Lovely," and Marcia Kerr of Coats, gave a ventriloquist act.

Mrs. R. C. McNerlin had charge of the recognition of mothers ceremony, and presented corsages to Mrs. Cecil Sheldon, the eldest grandmother with the oldest granddaughter; Mrs. Harry DeArmond, the youngest mother with a daughter in high school and to Mrs. Long.

The program was concluded with a medley of songs by the Community YWCA Ensemble, accompanied by Mrs. Bill Bradley.

The Homemakers HDU met in the home of Mrs. Harol Baker last Wednesday afternoon, with Mrs. Floren Rose as co-hostess.

Ten members and guests answered roll call, with "My Favorite Irish Song," after which the lesson, "The Family Lives and the Family Grows." And President Mrs. Anna Steffen reported that the unit members collected \$181.00 for the Cunningham Heart Fund on Cunningham's Heart Sunday, February 27.

The Hostesses served delicious refreshments at the close of the meeting. The next meeting will be held at the home Mrs. Steffen, Wednesday afternoon, April 13.—Mrs. Irene Schnitker, Reporter.

1971

March 11, 1971 - Jim McCune reported Wednesday that he has re-opened his service station, McCune APCO, for business.

The station has been closed since a fire a month ago. Jim, who suffered facial burns in the fire, has completely recovered, and David Ellison of Preston, who suffered upper body, arm, and hand burns in the fire, is reported to be recovering very satisfactorily at the St. Francis Hospital in Wichita.

The Nashville-Zenda Thunderbirds made a deter-

mined bid to reach the State Class 1-A Basketball Tournament, but dropped a 43-38 decision to the Garden Plain Owls in the final of the regional tournament played at Skyline High School in Pratt last Friday night.

N-Z advanced to the finals by beating Coldwater, 54-50, in a first-round game, and Trinity of Hutchinson, 55-50, in the semi-finals.

The second-place trophy is the first ever won in regional basketball tournament competition by either Nashville High School or Zenda High School, however it is the fifth trophy collected by the Nashville-Zenda boys this year- they shared first place with Sharon in the Golden Plains League football race; they won the league basketball tournament; they won the league basketball race, and they won second place in the district basketball tournament at Cunningham.

The Nashville-Zenda girls can't be left out of the trophy-winning race- they collected the championship trophy in the Skyline Invitational Girls Basketball Tournament in January.

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

1976

March 11, 1976 - Glenn Harris of Olympia, Washington, and Lelland Harris of Rochelle, Illinois, were recently here to visit their mother, Daisy Harris, who was in the Kingman Community Hospital at the that time. Glenn and Lelland and their sisters, Eunice Cox and Mrs. Bill Pogue, Mr. Pogue and Lana Hoganall helped Daisy celebrate her birthday at the hospital.

Mrs. Johnna Freund and Jay of Hermitage, Tennessee, arrived Tuesday to visit Mrs. Freund's parents, Mr. and Mrs. Loren Cooley, and other relatives.

Mr. and Mrs. Eugene Kitson, Cunningham will observe their 40th wedding anniversary Sunday March 14.

Susanna Gillen and Eugene Kitson were married March 14, 1936 at Danville, Kansas and have spent 35 of their 40 years together in Cunningham.

They are the parents of five children: Mrs. Marvin Ricke (Beverly Sue), Trenton, Ohio; Betty Kitson, Cunningham, Don and Curtis, both of Pratt, ad Gregg of the home. The couple has six grandchildren.

Although they met for more than six hours Monday night, the seven members of the Board of Education of Unified School District 332 did not finish all of their work and will meet again on Friday. The meeting dealt with such diverse subjects as personnel, school closings, and the National School Board Association convention.

Fourth graders recently enjoyed an Encyclopedia Brown boy detective story in their reading text. Mrs. Almond has been reading short mysteries from the Encyclopedia Brown book, The Case of the Exploding Plumbing and other mysteries. Students are trying to solve the mysteries before the solutions are read.

Writing paragraphs is now being studied in English Class. Students will be writing many paragraphs in coming weeks.

Doug Hageman has been ill this week.

Second graders who had perfect attendance for the past six weeks were: Tracy Raney, Ryan Ruckle, Joy Adamson, and Kathy Beat. The class certainly enjoyed the concert given by the Pratt Junior College Singers last Thursday at the school gym.

The pupils have made potato man posters, and pictures of boys and girls from shamrocks.

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

1981

March 12, 1981 - Joy Hasenyager and Robert Kampling were united in marriage, Feb. 14, in Coleman Baptist Church near Peculiar, Mo. at 2:30 p.m. Rev. Trueman Hight officiated the double ring ceremony.

Mr. and Mrs. Kampling are at home in Cunningham,

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

where he is employed by Raney's Truck Service, Inc.

Melvin Ormiston has been hired by the Board of Education of Unified School District No. 332 as Superintendent of Schools. He will begin work in the district July 1, 1981. Mr. Ormiston taught at St. Mary School, Garden City, from August 1968 to December 1969 and from August 1971 to July, 1977. He was also principal from June 1973 to July 1977. He has been principal of Ingalls High School Ingalls Kansas since August 1977.

Students of Cunningham High School will be privileged to enter the Academic Olympics, sponsored by Pratt Community College on Marcy 17. Students will compete with other students from area schools in a number of fields. Students can take as many as three tests. Tests will be known by 1:30 p.m. when there will be an awards assembly and medals, certificates, and trophies will be given.

1986

March 13, 1986 - Cunningham 4-H club met on March 3 at the Community Center.

Rob DeWeese demonstrated how to make a footstool as part of the program. A fruit combo was shown by Kathy Rosenbaum and she explained how it was made. For Show and Tell, Heidi Steffen displayed her growing rock garden.

Bob Witt, area recruiting officer for the U.S. Army, will give a talk about his duties and experiences as a recruiting officer at a joint meeting of the Carter-Luce American Legion Post and Auxiliary Monday, March 17, at 7:30 p.m. at the Community Center.

Cunningham High School Senior Kathy Beat has been selected to participate in the Mid-Kansas High School All-Star Basketball Classic, which will be held in the Sports Arena in Hutchinson on April 19, at 6:15 p.m.

Kathy has completed her high school career by averaging over 16 points per game and 8 rebounds as she helped to lead the Lady Wildcats to a 20-3 record this year.

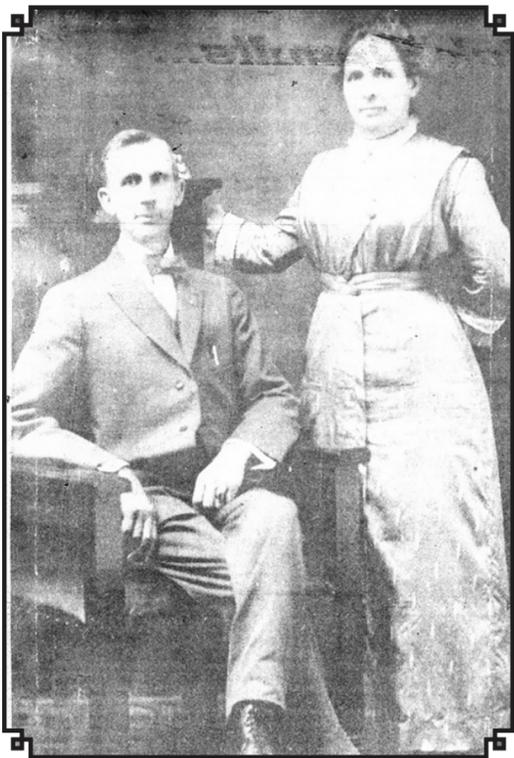
Reta Alley Thorne of Medicine Lodge autographed copies of her book entitled "Silver," at the party held in her honor at the Cunningham Public Library Wednesday afternoon, March 15.

The gracious former resident was most appreciative of friends, former teachers and children who dropped by for a chat and refreshments, which were served by members of the Library Board.

Connie Panek was honored with a miscellaneous layette shower Monday, March 3, at the Sacred Heart Hall.

Hostesses were Denise Osner and Cynthia Strohl.

Cake and ice cream was served to guests Alda Hodgkinson, Genevieve Singleton, Rose Spade, Blondie Panek, Bertha Hodgkinson, Rhona Hodgkinson, Roseanne Hageman, and girls, Sheri Hageman, Clara Mae Freund, Patty Freund, Lucille Vierthaler, Geneva Theis, Charlene Schaller, Janet Sterneker, Susan and Stephanie Sterneker, Marge Sterneker, Joyce Depenbusch, Carla Bortz, Coleen Kerschen, Mary Lou Osnter, Pearl Walker, Shorty Voss, Eilene Crick, the honoree Mrs. Panek and the hostesses.



The couple in the picture above are Prof. and Mrs. J. W. Wilson. Prof. Wilson was, as reported in earlier issues, the man who started the first 4 year high school in Cunningham. Mrs. Ruth W. Cooley who has been kind enough to laon the Clipper these photographs is the daughter of Prof. and Mrs. Wilson.

Local Democrats Attend Washington Days

Kathy and Alan Albers attended the Washington Days Conference in Topeka last weekend.

"Washington Days is the annual convention of the Kansas Democratic Party, bringing together party members, elected officials, and supporters to network, discuss policy, and prepare for

upcoming elections. The event features keynote speakers, caucus meetings, and workshops on legislative priorities, electoral strategies, and community engagement.

The event serves as a central hub for party organization, policy discussion, and electoral preparation. It allows

members to coordinate efforts across counties, engage with caucuses, and strengthen the party's presence statewide.

Attending Washington Days provides a chance to connect with Kansas Democrats, learn about legislative priorities, and participate in shaping the party's strategy for 2026.

" as per internet AI.

During the convention, special recognition was given to Melinda Lavon and Bill Heatherman, who shared the Organizing and Party Builder Award for their service and leadership in the Kansas Democratic Party. (Mr. Heatherman is a Kingman native

and the son of Loretta (Hageman) Heatherman, a native of Willowdale.)

The award recognized the two for their work in organizing three 2025 Democracy Fest events: Colby, Dodge City, and Hays. It also recognized their continued work helping to connect rural Democrats and support

rural county Democratic coalitions.

Mr. Heatherman, who currently lives in Manhattan, is also the Chair of the Food and Farm Caucus of Kansas Democrats. Information can be found at www.harvestblue.org/foodfarm



Alan Albers with former Kansas Governor John Carlin



Jeanna Repass, chair of the Kansas Democratic Party; Bill Heatherman; Melinda Lavon; and Lt. Governor David Tolan



Bill Heatherman

Kansas Silver Haired Legislature Releases Transportation Guide to Help Seniors Get to the Polls

Topeka, KS — March 9, 2026 — The Kansas Silver Haired Legislature (KSHL) has released a new, nonpartisan re-

source to help communities remove one of the most common barriers to senior voting: transportation.

The guide, Creating a Voting Transportation Program, provides step-by-step guidance for cities, counties, Area Agencies on Aging, and community organizations to develop local ride programs that help seniors get to the polls during early voting and

on Election Day.

Transportation challenges—especially in rural and underserved areas—can prevent older Kansans from participating fully in elections. The new toolkit outlines practical solutions that can be adapted to communities of any size.

"Transportation should never be the reason a senior cannot vote," said Leroy Burton, Speaker of

the Kansas Silver Haired Legislature. "This guide gives communities a simple roadmap to partner locally and remove that barrier."

KSHL identifies voting access as a 2026 priority, alongside senior transportation, property tax relief, and preservation of Medicaid and food assistance programs. The organization advocates for policies that ensure older Kansans can re-

main engaged, independent, and active in their communities.

The guide is free and designed to be implemented locally through partnerships among civic groups, faith communities, senior centers, transit providers, and local governments. A link to the guide is here: <https://www.kansas-shl.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/Voting-Transportation-Program-2026-2.pdf>

Why this matters locally: In communities across Kansas, limited transportation options—especially for seniors who no longer drive—can mean missed opportunities to vote. Programs like coordinated rides, volunteer driver networks, and partnerships with transit providers can dramatically increase turnout while strengthening community connections

Pratt County Commission Minutes of February 23

The Pratt County Commissioners met in regular session Monday, February 23, 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.

Economic Development Update – Heather Morgan

PAEDC Update

PAEDC met on Wednesday. The meeting focused on regrouping following the Chamber's appointment of a new director and several economic development initiatives. Heather reported progress on the development of a site selector document. The document is intended to serve as a comprehensive inventory and marketing tool for prospective businesses and site selectors. Heather also reported that the final touches are being completed on the Housing Incentive Grant Application. A breakfast meeting is being planned with local developers to gauge interest in potential

housing projects.

Southwest Kansas Mobility Expansion Study

Heather reported that she will attend a meeting on Friday regarding the Southwest Kansas Mobility Expansion Study. Discussions have also taken place with Senator Blew. Efforts are underway to have House Bill 2470 heard on the Senate side in the near future.

Appraiser Update

DJ McMurry, Pratt County Appraiser reported that valuation notices are prepared and scheduled to be mailed on Friday. Agriculture land decreased and residential and commercial property values increased, which is on trend for the state. The appraiser provided the update in advance of mailing notices to ensure Commissioners were informed. No action was taken

Public Comment – Jail Visitation Kiosk

Michael Florez addressed the Commission regarding issues with the portable visitation kiosk at the County Jail. Mr. Florez reported during a recent visit the kiosk was not functioning properly and wanted to make the Commission aware.

EMS Update

Brian Atteberry, EMS Director, reported that WSU Tech has received a grant from the

Patterson Foundation to provide free classes to rural service agencies. Braian has been in communication with WSU Tech regarding hosting and Emergency Medical Responder (EMR) course locally. The classes would be provided at no cost to the students or the County. Brian noted that additional EMRs would help

prevent operational strain during high-demand periods. No formal action was taken at this time, as discussions with WSU Tech are ongoing. Brian also reported that the preventive maintenance contract for the department's ventilators is set to expire this year. Cost is \$655 per unit with a total of four ventilators. Brian will return with the contract for formal approval.

Executive Session – Attorney-Client

Motion to move to executive session under the Attorney-Client exception to the Kansas Open Meetings Act to discuss a contract for 5 minutes with Brian Atteberry at 2:15 p.m. made by Commissioner Shriver; motion carried 3-0.

Commissioners came out of executive session 2:20 p.m. with no action taken.

Public Comments - Road Regulations

Robin Patton ad-

ressed the Commission regarding enforcement of an existing road regulation on Northwest 30th Ave, originally adopted in the 1990's. Mr. Patton stated he was informed by members of the Sheriff's Department that the regulation lacks and enforceable penalty provision and they are not able issue citations or fines. Tyson Eisenhauer, County Counselor, explained the existing resolution does not contain a fine provision. The underlying statute authorized the Commission to bring a civil action for road damage caused by violations but it has been reported by the Road Director that the road in question isn't receiving any more damage than any other county road. There are also several practical enforcement challenges with creating new regulations as well. Mr. Patton also raised concerns regarding the Sheriff's Budget and salary adjustments for the deputies. It was explained they do receive cost of living adjustments, and those amounts have been added to their budget. Mr. Patton requested reconsideration and potential revision of the regulation and thanked the Commission for their consideration. The Commission thanked Mr. Patton for his comments.

Kelly Nienke ad-

ressed the Commission regarding safety concerns at the intersection of Southeast 30th Avenue and 30th Street. He reported frequent failure of motorist to stop at the posted stop sign, vehicles exceeding the posted 55 mph speed limit and requested consideration of converting the intersection to a four way stop to reduce speed and mitigate risk of a future accident. He also raised concerns regarding the intersection near the Wildlife and Parks area citing multiple sequential stop signs, confusion regarding traffic flow and trucks exceeding the posted 25 mph speed limit. Mr. Ninki suggested replacing certain stop signs with yield signs. Commissioners explained changes require a formal engineering traffic study. Commissioners stated the concerns would be considered and appreciated Mr. Nienke's input.

Consideration of Loyd Group, LLC Agreement

Motion to approve the agreement with Loyd Group, LLC for \$25,000 made by Commissioner Shriver; motion carried 3-0.

Road Crossing Application Consideration

Motion to approve the road crossing permit request for South

Central Telecom on NE 10th Street made by Commissioner Jones; motion carried 3-0.

Motion to approve the road crossing permit for Kansas Gas on Country Club Road and Lake Rd. made by Commissioner Jones; motion passed 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 road regulations and related statutes for 15 minutes at 3:08 p.m. made by Commissioner Shriver; motion carried 3-0.

Commissioners came out of executive session at 3:21 pm 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 15 minutes at 3:22 p.m. made by Commissioner Shriver; motion carried 3-0.

The Commissioners unanimously approved the minutes of February 17, 2026.

The Commissioners unanimously approved the voucher for February 23, 2026.

Meeting adjourned at 3:43 p.m.

Cunningham Schools Forensics Team Shines in 2026 Season

The 2026 Forensics season at Cunningham Schools has commenced with remarkable success. This year, four exceptionally talented students are representing the school in various forensic events.

Senior Sean Kostner,

junior Nora Huff, and freshmen Maelyn Jump and Raven Koester have participated in four tournaments so far. The first event took place at Medicine Lodge on February 5, 2026, with 20 schools attending this event. Maelyn Jump and Nora Huff excelled at this tournament, with Maelyn securing 4th place in Prose and qualifying for the State Festival, along with 3rd place in Poetry, earning a spot in the State

Championships. Nora Huff clinched 1st place in Serious Solo with "Personality Murder," also qualifying for the State Championships.

At the South Barber Tournament, three Cunningham students showcased their skills. Raven Koester achieved 6th place in both POI and Prose. Maelyn Jump earned 4th place in Poetry and 2nd in Prose, qualifying for the State Championships.

Nora Huff continued her stellar performance, and brought home the gold, taking 1st place in Serious Solo, Prose, and Poetry, all qualifying all three pieces for the State Championships.

On February 21, the team traveled to Pratt, with notable results: Maelyn Jump placed 8th in Poetry, Raven Koester secured 2nd place in POI, which qualified her for the State Championship in May, and Sean

Kostner achieved 3rd place in Oration and 2nd in Extemporaneous Speaking also qualifying him for the State Championship in both events.

Most recently, on March 7, Sean Kostner participated in the Kingman Tournament, where he continued his success with a 2nd place in Extemporaneous Speaking and 4th in Oration.

Cunningham Schools'

Forensics team is off to a strong start this season, showcasing their talents and dedication across multiple events.

Story and photos submitted by Carrie Vahsholtz



Nora Huff and Maelyn Jump



Sean Kostner



Maelyn Jump, Nora Huff, and Raven Koester

Minutes From BOE February Meeting

(con't from front page)

took to put the event on and personally thanking the workers at the event.

Guests via zoom; Mr. Ramirez and Mrs. Applegarth, and in person; Sean Kostner, Andy Kostner, Justina Kostner, and Ethan Kostner all left the meeting at 7:15 p.m.

Motion made by Bjorn Halderson, seconded by Nick Rogers, to approve the minutes of all of the January 2026 regular and special meetings. Motion carried 6-0.

Motion made by Abby Bock, seconded by Katie Hellman, to approve the payment of bills and the financial reports as presented. Motion carried 6-0.

Principal Dunlap began with Spring Enrollment informa-

tion, turning the meeting over to Lance McGuire. Mr. McGuire updated the board on the status of seniors enrolling in classes this spring for Graduation requirements and answered questions from the board. Principal Dunlap then continued his report discussing parent-teacher conferences, Professional Development days, Accreditation meetings and upcoming assessment days. Finally, Mr. Dunlap shared the results of the recent State Fire Marshall inspection.

Superintendent Arnerberger began his report sharing information about guest speakers scheduled for student assembly. Next, he updated on Legislative issues including the Northern Natural situation, Free/Reduced Lunch application audits, cell phones in schools ban, Mental Health Provider utilization, and the voucher bill.

He noted that the legislation has recognized a decline in enrollment state wide. Dr. Arnerberger continued with discussions of transportation issues, a renewed Baseball/softball coop question and a student record retention request.

Guest Sebastian Huelskamp arrived to the meeting at 8:05 p.m. during the Superintendent's report.

Member Abby Bock was not able to attend the latest meeting but Dr. Arnerberger stated that the co-op discussed Negotiations and position assignments due to budget considerations.

Strategic planning update: Dr. Arnerberger addressed the packets of information he shared privately with the board and stated that more information would be forthcoming at the March board meeting.

Dr. Arnerberger asked for a 5 min break from

8:22 to 8:27 p.m.

Guest Lance McGuire left the meeting at that time.

Motion made by Abby Bock, seconded by Bjorn Halderson to go into executive session with the board and administration at 8:30 p.m. to discuss contract negotiations under the exception for employer-employee negotiations under KOMA and return to the lunch room at 8:40 p.m. Motion carried 6-0.

President Miller declared the meeting in open session at 8:40 p.m.

Motion made by Abby Bock, seconded by Jason Osner to go into executive session with the board and administration at 8:40 p.m. to discuss contract negotiations under the exception for employer-employee negotiations under KOMA and return to the lunch room at 8:45 p.m. Motion carried 6-0.

President Miller de-

clared the meeting in open session at 8:45 p.m.

Motion made by Abby Bock, seconded by Katie Hellman, to go into executive session with Superintendent Arnerberger and Principal Dunlap at 8:45 p.m. to discuss personnel matters under the KOMA non-elected personnel exception and return to open session in the lunch room at 9:05 p.m. Motion carried 6-0.

President Miller declared the meeting in open session at 9:05 p.m.

Motion made by Abby Bock, seconded by Nick Rogers, to go into executive session with Superintendent Arnerberger and Principal Dunlap at 9:05 p.m. to discuss personnel matters under the KOMA non-elected personnel exception and return to open session in the lunch room at 9:15 p.m. Motion carried 6-0.

President Miller de-

clared the meeting in open session at 9:15 p.m.

Motion made by Abby Bock, seconded by Katie Hellman, to go into executive session with Superintendent Arnerberger and Principal Dunlap at 9:15 p.m. to discuss personnel matters under the KOMA non-elected personnel exception and return to open session in the lunch room at 9:25 p.m. Motion carried 6-0.

President Miller declared the meeting in open session at 9:25 p.m.

Dr. Arnerberger discussed calendar options for 2026-2027 that he had emailed to the board members. He asked that they be prepared to vote on one at the March meeting.

Motion made by Bjorn Halderson, seconded by Jason Osner, to adjourn the meeting at 9:37 p.m. Motion carried 6-0.

Managing Fertilizer Price Volatility Through Efficient Nutrient Management

Kansas wheat farmers are watching their input costs closely, with fertilizer being one of the biggest expenses. With global supply issues and changing demand affecting prices, this article looks at how farmers can manage risk by using careful nutrient management and Wheat Rx strategies.

On a recent episode of Wheat's On Your Mind, Corey Rosenbusch, president and CEO of The Fertilizer Institute, outlined how fertilizer markets are shaped by geopolitics, energy supply and international demand. Nitrogen production depends heavily on natural gas, and when

Europe lost access to Russian gas, much of its nitrogen production shut down. Trade flows shifted, markets tightened and prices responded.

The United States is relatively strong in nitrogen production but still imports key products. Potash remains largely import-dependent, and phosphate markets are influenced by global suppliers and export decisions. Big buyers like India can affect global prices with just one purchase, and China's fertilizer policies can have wide effects.

Kansas wheat farmers can't control these global factors, but they can make decisions about how they manage their fields.

"There's no better time to be a good steward of your fertilizer," Rosenbusch said. "Now's the time to really tighten the belt and look at some of those good stewardship things, because

you can't control, as a grower in Kansas, what China's going to do, what Russia's going to do."

This focus on stewardship ties in with Wheat Rx, a partnership between Kansas Wheat and K-State Research and Extension. Wheat Rx is designed to help farmers grow high-quality winter wheat in Kansas in a cost-effective and sustainable way. The program highlights the importance of timing nutrients, setting realistic yield goals and making management decisions that fit Kansas conditions.

Research shows there is flexibility in when to apply nitrogen. Studies in the Wheat Rx series found that winter wheat can bounce back from early nitrogen shortages if nitrogen is available around the jointing stage. In some cases, applying nitrogen later led to better yields than applying it before planting.

This flexibility gives

farmers more choices when fertilizer prices are high. Rather than applying all the nitrogen at once, they can watch how the crop is doing, estimate yield potential and adjust their fertilizer use as needed. Tools like remote sensing and in-season checks can help make these decisions even better.

Wheat also helps make the whole farming system more efficient. According to Wheat Rx, wheat residue protects the soil, cuts down on water loss and keeps soil temperatures steadier. Standing stubble can catch snow and boost soil moisture for the next crop. These benefits help maintain nutrient efficiency over time.

"Winter wheat can handle early nitrogen deficiency and recover well," the Wheat Rx publication notes, underscoring the crop's management flexibility and resilience.

Kansas winter wheat harvested area has declined at an average rate of about 1.9 percent per year since 2005, according to data cited in the Wheat Rx series. Even so, research continues to document agronomic, ecological and economic benefits of including wheat in cropping systems.

Global fertilizer mar-

kets may keep changing due to world events, but decisions about efficiency are made locally. For Kansas wheat farmers planning their fertilizer programs this season, Wheat Rx provides research-based advice to help balance profit and sustainability. Learn more at kswheat.com/kansas-wheat-rx.



Kingman County Commission Minutes

Chairwoman Lyon called the Board of County Commissioners meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. March 2, 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; Shae Brooks, Kingman Fire Chief; Ira Hart; Catherine Rohrer, South Central Kansas Community Corrections

Online Visitors: Caller 01; Lucy; AS; DH
Staff: Amanda Stucky, Zoning Director; Mary Schwartz, Health Nurse; Charles Arensdorf, Public Works Director

Chairwoman Lyon asked if there were any additions to the agenda.

Commissioner Young let the Board know that a township officer may be in and would like some time with the Commission.

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.

Ira Hart read some changes that should be addressed for the proposed zoning solar regulations.

David Young was in to request a road vacancy in Rago.

Commissioners let Mr. Young know that there is a process and they will get in touch with him for the process.

Shae Brooks, Kingman Fire Chief discussed the fire.

Catherine Rohrer, South Central Kansas Community Corrections was in to update the Commissioners on the services provided. Ms. Rohrer discussed a Repath App that will help with monitoring and reporting.

Ms. Rohrer submitted the Adult Comprehensive plan and Juvenile Comprehensive plans for FY 2027 Grant applications for approval.

MOTION: Commissioner Young moved to approve the Comprehensive Plan FY 2027 for Adult Supervision. Commissioner Thimesch seconded the motion. The motion was approved with a 3-0 vote.

MOTION: Chairman Lyon moved to approve the FY 2027 Juvenile Grant application. Commissioner Thimesch seconded the motion. The motion was approved with a 3-0 vote.

9:02 a.m. Amanda Stucky, Zoning Director was in with the following building permits:

Riley Rosenhagen for a storage building in Section 3, Township 29, Range 05W.

William & Shoshana Nash for a new home in Section 11, Township 29, Range 06W.

Roy Vulgamore for a new home in Section 1, Township 30, Range 06W.

Paul Smith for a greenhouse in Section 33, Township 27, Range 08W.

Brandy Nulik for a small home, Garage, Carport in Section 11, Township 30, Range 08W.

Todd Wenzel for a storage in Section 9, Township 30, Range 06W.

Dylan Flickinger for a new home in Section 36, Township 27, Range 05W.

Nick Kostner for a garage in Section 12, Township

28, Range 06W.

MOTION: Commissioner Thimesch moved to end the Neighborhood Revitalization Program for Residential and Commercial for 10 years. Commissioner Young seconded the motion. The motion was approved with a 2-1 vote.

Commissioner Thimesch discussed some concerns he had from the town hall event held this past weekend.

Commissioner Young asked about culverts being placed for new properties.

Ms. Stucky let the Commissioners know that the next Planning/Zoning meeting will be March 23, 2026 and a Verizon Cell Tower will be discussed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: Commissioner Young go into Executive Session with Brandon Ritcha, County Counselor at 9:31 a.m. to discuss pending administrative proceedings pursuant to the exception under the Kansas Open Meetings Act for discussion of matters which would be deemed privileged under the attorney-client relationship, and they will return to open session in the board meeting room at 9:46 a.m. Commissioner Thimesch seconded the motion. The motion was approved with a 3-0 vote.

Commissioners returned to regular session at 9:46 a.m. with no action taken.

Tracy Barton, Shawn Tafta, Ford County Commissioner, Kansas Natural Resource Coalition were in to let the Commissioners know that the KNRC is a coalition of counties, led by Commissioners, who monitors and when appropriate intervenes to reduce the impact of the federal government's overreach on member counties and their citizens in the areas of human environment, natural resources, and land use.

Ms. Barton discussed the core services that KNRC provides are the following:

Land Use Policy Development
Federal Register Monitoring
Strategic Advocacy for Counties & Landowners
Training & quarterly newsletters or webinars

EXECUTIVE SESSION: Commissioner Thimesch moved to go into executive session at 10:05 a.m. with Brandon Ritcha, County Counselor to discuss an individual employee's evaluation pursuant to the exception under the Kansas Open Meetings, and they will return to open session in the Board meeting room at 10:15 a.m. Commissioner Young seconded the motion. The motion was approved with a 3-0 vote.

Commissioners returned to regular session at 10:15 a.m. with no action taken.

MOTION: Commissioner Thimesch moved to approve the minutes of the February 23, 2026, Commission meeting. Commissioner Young seconded the motion. The motion was approved with a 3-0 vote.

Commissioners discussed the information received from OSE Orazem & Scalora Engineering, P.A.

Commissioners would like to have a special meeting on March 16, 2026, with Department Heads about the Courthouse remodel at 1:00 p.m.

Mary Schwartz, Health Nurse was in with a department update for February for the County Commissioners.

Ms. Schwartz submitted three grant applications she is applying for that need a signature of approval from the County Commissioners.

MOTION: Chairwoman Lyon moved to approve Ms. Schwartz to apply for 2027 grants. Commissioner Thimesch seconded the motion. The motion was approved with a 3-0 vote.

Ms. Schwartz let the Commissioners know that she

attended a Public Health Leadership Series.

Ms. Schwartz discussed the Capital Expense Plan and that there is currently \$52,661.11. Ms. Schwartz discussed possible replacement of vaccine refrigerator, van and a server.

Ms. Schwartz submitted bids for painting at the Health Department.

MOTION: Commissioner Young moved to approve Sanchez painting not to exceed \$10,000.00 for the Health Department building to be paid with grant funds. Commissioner Thimesch seconded the motion. The motion was approved with a 3-0 vote.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: Commissioner Thimesch moved to go into executive session at 10:51 a.m. with Mary Schwartz, Health Nurse; LaDawn Stegman, Financial Officer and Brandon Ritcha, County Counselor to discuss an individual employee's evaluation pursuant to the exception under the Kansas Open Meetings Act, and they will return to open session in the Board meeting room at 10:56 a.m. Commissioner Young seconded the motion. The motion was approved with a 3-0 vote.

Commissioners returned to regular session at 10:56 a.m. with no action taken.

Chairwoman Lyon opened the meeting for public comment.

Weston Winter with Allen Township was in to ask how many acres are required to be developed and water systems rules.

Commissioners let Mr. Winter know that he could talk with Ms. Stucky in the Appraiser's office about the building rules.

Charles Arensdorf, Public Works Director was in with Asphalt quotes from the following:

ERGON	COASTAL	VANCE BROTHER
MC800 per gallon		
3.01	2.48	280
CMS-1		
2.86	2.64	265
CRS-1H		
2.31	2.37	245

Mr. Arensdorf let the Commissioners know that he would review the quotes and be back next week with a recommendation for the Commissioners.

Mr. Arensdorf submitted the following permit for approval:

Messenger Petroleum-Road Crossing-3" natural gas line-south side of Section 32, Township 30, Range 07 (Valley).

Mr. Arensdorf submitted the department financials for January 2026 for the Commissioners review.

Mr. Arensdorf reminded the County Commissioners of the Township Board Meeting to be held March 9, 2026, at 11:00 a.m. in the Public Works Building.

Mr. Arensdorf asked the Commissioners if they want to do any more Hot Mix overlay this year.

Commissioners received correspondence for a service agreement for engineering from OSE.

MOTION: Commissioner Thimesch moved to approve the purchase of a server for the County Courthouse 22985.00 out of the Capital Equipment Fund. Commissioner Young seconded the motion. The motion was approved with a 3-0 vote.

Commissioners signed abatements and escaped taxes.

MOTION: Commissioner Thimesch moved to adjourn the regular board meeting at 11:43 a.m. Commissioner Young seconded the motion. The motion was approved with a 3-0 vote.

Pratt County Commission Minutes for March 2

continued on page 9
District Court.

Motion to adopt the findings, factors, and recommendation of the Planning Board for Case No SU- 2026-1 and approve Resolution No 03-02-26 authorizing the special use permit made by Commissioner Shriver; motion carried 3-0.

Health Department Building Use Request & Affiliation Agreement

Darcie Van Der Vyver, Pratt County Health Department requested permission to use the Public Safety Building for a Pratt County Community Baby Shower event. This will be a community outreach and educational even focused on supporting expecting families, families with infants and caregivers. The event will include education and resources related to safe sleep practices, car seat safety, breastfeeding support, maternal mental health and social service resources. Participating

partners are expected to include KanCare, DCF, Horizons Mental Health, and additional community health partners. Through a grant the Health Department will distribute pack and plays and infant sleep items. The event is proposed for April 30, 2026 and is intended to become an annual outreach initiative. Commissioners expressed support. Darice also presented an affiliation agreement with Rockhurst University to allow a nursing student gain internship/shadowing experience. County Counselor, Tyson Eisenhauer reviewed the agreement and negotiated revisions. Darcie reminded the Commissioners of an upcoming webinar series offered by KDHE geared toward County Commissioners.

Motion to approve the affiliation agreement between Rockhurst University and the Pratt County Health Department for one student to complete 80 hours of shadowing made by Commissioner Shriver; motion carried 3-0.

NextEra Energy Project Update

Cody Akers and Sam

Nisbett with NextEra Energy reported that activity related to the project has been relatively quiet in recent weeks and indicated there are no specific issues to report at this time. Commissioners confirmed they have not received any complaints or reports. Cody reported the documentation for the battery storage application is still being finalized. March 10 is the target date for submission.

Community Correction Budget and Program Update

Catherine Rohrer provided an update regarding Community Corrections funding, program operations and the FY2027 Comprehensive Plans for Adult and Juvenile Services. The projected FY2027 levels are \$535,862.06 for Adult Community Corrections and \$312,517.57 for Juvenile Services.

Motion to approve both the FY2027 Juvenile Services and the FY 2027 Adult Community Corrections Comprehensive Plans made by Commissioner Shriver; motion carried 3-0.

Discussion of Agenda Changes

The Commissioners discussed potential updates to the agenda format, focusing on department updates and public comment periods. It was proposed to include a designate time at the end of the scheduled agenda for department updates. Commissioners encouraged departments to submit items for next week's agenda when possible, maintaining structured timing. It was also proposed to place a designated time for public comment. Commissioners noted a time limit of three minutes per speaker which can be extended if needed and emphasized the importance of encouraging individuals with complex issues to schedule a future agenda slot. Commissioners approved the proposed changes for trial implementation.

Digital Directory Proposal

A proposal was submitted by County Clerk, Cescha Hoffman to replace the existing courthouse directory with a modern digital display (tv-based) to provide clear guidance to visitors regarding office locations, services provided, upcoming events and

job openings with QR codes that would link to online applications. It would also be used to display real time updates for events such as tax deadlines, voter information and County meetings. The initial cost should be under \$1,000. Commissioners expressed support for modernization, increased accessibility and public engagement. Courthouse Budget will cover the cost. Commissioners agreed to proceed with the implementation of the digital director as presented.

Road Department Personnel Request

Motion to hire Brent Schmidt, Road Department for \$17/hour 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 Conversations with outside council for PRMC leases for 10 minutes at 2:58 p.m. made by Commissioner Shriver; motion carried 3-0.

Commissioners came

out of executive session at 3:09 p.m. with no action taken

Motion to move to executive session under the Attorney-Client exception to the Kansas Open Meetings Act to discuss Conversations with outside council for PRMC leases for 10 minutes at 3:10 p.m. made by Commissioner Shriver; motion carried 3-0.

Commissioners came out of executive session at 3:20 pm with no action taken.

Authorization for Testimony

Motion to authorize Tyson Eisenhauer to testify on behalf of Pratt County regarding House Bill 2470 in the Senate on Thursday made by Commissioner Shriver; motion carried 3-0.

Commissioners unanimously approved the minutes of February 23, 2026.

Commissioners unanimously approved the vouchers for March 2, 2026.

Commissioners adjourned the meeting at 3:29 p.m.



The Healing Power of Pets

"A dog is the only thing on Earth that loves you more than you love yourself."
Josh Billings

We all have our preferences when it comes to pets. I prefer dogs. Maybe you are a cat, fish, or reptile person. Whatever the case, recent research has proven what we already know – pets are good for you.

Half of the households in the U.S. have a pet of some kind. Whether you have an affectionate dog, a purring cat, or a fish watching you from his watery home every morning as you stumble out of bed to make coffee, the company of a pet is comforting. Pets support our well-being. For many they offer a vital mental and physical coping mechanism.

Pets can provide

us with distinct physical benefits. Dogs especially make great exercise companions (this is less of an option with cats and fish). A dog will give you a reason to exercise. For dog owners, walking becomes pretty much mandatory. An interesting systematic review of research was published recently in Circulation: Cardiovascular Quality and Outcomes (this is a journal put out by the American Heart Association). It highlighted the fact that dog ownership is associated with better cardiovascular health. The review examined a truckload of studies published between 1950-2019 examining data from approximately four million humans. Many of these studies revealed that dog ownership was linked to improved cholesterol levels, decreased blood pressure, and lower stress response in the sympathetic nervous system. A summary of all the data showed that dog ownership was associated with a 31 percent reduced risk of cardiovascular death. It is believed that the primary reason for this increased longevity stems from the necessary exercise required of dog owners. A squirmy little dog at your feet, ready to go outside and walk your shoes off, will help you live longer.

On a personal note, Mac, our lively little Jack Russell Terrier has prompted me to walk him twice a day. Some days now we hit four miles. I feel better for it and know that walking is good for both of us.

Besides promoting physical well-being, pets can provide a plethora of mental and psychological benefits. These include reduced stress and enhanced mood. Pet ownership stimulates the reduction of cortisol, the primary stress hormone. Animals seriously have the capacity to enhance our mood and mental well-being. And this is

good news also for the fish and cat people. I am not much of a cat person, but I will acknowledge that cats make pretty good pets. Their sanctimonious and independent nature make them require less maintenance. They tolerate your absence well but will hang around and offer some degree of comfort when you are home. Fish I think are indifferent, but they are fun to look at, so that's good for something. Lizards and small rodents might fall into this category as well.

But when it comes to mental health, dogs particularly provide the pure connection and affection which promotes the release of dopamine and serotonin, the neurotransmitters synonymous with relaxation. I

always feel more relaxed with little Mac curled up at my feet, or asleep on my desk as I write.

I recently had reason to stop by the designated veterans' apartments here in town. While there I met an elderly gentleman who was a former Navy SEAL. He glided into the room in his electric wheelchair with his dog Frieda by his side. Frieda's attention and affection for her person was obvious. This grizzled veteran told me that his beloved dog had literally saved his life. She gave him a reason to live. The bond between the two was evident beyond words.

Pets, and I would again say dogs in particular, can encourage positive social interactions as well. Dogs natu-

rally create opportunities for social connections. Walking your dog can lead to casual conversations with neighbors and other dog owners. Many folks take their charges to the local dog park. It's easy to meet people this way. Dogs provide a social lubricant. You are more approachable with a dog. Dogs also can help foster emotional security, encouraging people to interact in informal settings.

All pets are good for us in every way. They make our lives better by loving us, overlooking our faults, and wanting nothing more than food, water, and our attention. They are blessings beyond words. Love your pet today...

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KCHS Pets Ready for Adoption

Bailey

Sponsored by Kathy and Alan Albers



Look at this sweet, blue-eyed lady! She so wants to be a member of a family!

Bailey is a mixed breed, most likely Australian shepherd and lab. She isn't a big dog, currently weighing around 35 pounds, but she is full-grown at just over 4 years old.

She enjoys time with other dogs and people. She is not yet housetrained, but dogs are easily trainable for that 'skill.'

Her adoption fee is \$180.00

Sadie

Sponsored by Baker Accounting



And another lovely lady. Sadie is about 2 years old and has been at the shelter since January 5. She, too, wants to be a family member. But an inside family member; she's been declawed. Her adoption fee is \$40.00. Forty dollars beautiful girl like this. That's a steal.

From the KCHS website: "Sadie is like two cats in one....Sadie #1 is sweet and affectionate and loves to be petted. Sadie #2 is the opposite.... she's independent and feisty and when she says "no" she means "no". Both are great cats so long as you listen to her body language and respect her personal boundaries. Don't worry, she'll have you trained in no time!"



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— Arthur Schopenhauer, *The Basis of Morality*

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Public Notice

First published in The Cunningham Courier on March 12, 2026 (3t)
IN THE THIRTIETH JUDICIAL DISTRICT
DISTRICT COURT, KINGMAN COUNTY, KANSAS
CLAY TERHUNE, Plaintiff, vs. 2008 KZ DURANGO TRAILER, VIN #4EZFD332987027406, MARK J. TERHUNE,
THE HEIRS AND SUCCESSORS OF MARK J. TERHUNE, ANY OTHER INTERESTED PERSONS, and KANSAS DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE, Defendants.
(Petition Pursuant to K.S.A. Chapter 60)
Case No. KM-2026-CV-000002
NOTICE OF SUIT
STATE OF KANSAS TO:
Any and all other persons who are or may be concerned:

You are hereby notified that a Petition has been filed in the District Court of Kingman County, Kansas, by Clay Terhune praying for title to be quieted and given to the Plaintiff regarding a **2008 KZ DURANGO TRAILER, VIN #4EZFD332987027406.**
You are hereby required to plead to said petition on or before June 3, 2026 at 11:00 a.m., in said court, at the Kingman County Courthouse, Kingman, Kansas. Should you fail therein, judgment and decree will be entered in due course on said petition.
Clay Terhune, Petitioner
Matthew W. Ricke
Attorney at Law, LLC
349 N. Main, PO Box 113
Kingman, KS 67068
(620) 532-3103
Attorney for Plaintiff


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Bob Kerschen

Robert (Bob) Louis Kerschen, 90, of Cunningham, Kansas, went home to be with his Lord on March 8, 2026. He was a cherished husband, father, grandfather, great-grandfather, brother, father-in-law, uncle, and friend whose querying presence, genuine concern and steady faith will be deeply missed by all who knew him.



Bob was born at home in Goddard, Kansas, to Nicholas and Johanna (Geiger) Kerschen on October 23, 1935. He married his high school sweetheart, **Jeanette Charvat**, on September 1, 1956, at St. Anthony Catholic Church in Garden Plain, Kansas. Together they built a loving family rooted in faith and hard work.

Bob's life reflected his belief in using his hands, heart, and mind to serve others—whether laying a strong foundation as a brick mason or working the soil as a farmer. He found joy in building things from the ground up—both in his work and in the lives of those around him.

A devoted husband and father, Bob never shied away from his responsibilities as a provider and caregiver. When he wasn't working, he was with family—and when time allowed, he was a faithful friend. He loved sharing the value of hard work, simple pleasures, and time spent with loved ones. Purposeful in all he did, Bob was always looking for ways to improve things. Family, however, always came first. Whether it was a baptism, first communion, wedding, birthday, newborn visit, ballgame, or school concert, he somehow found time to be there.

Bob approached life with simplicity and humility. Nothing fancy or over-the-top—just honest effort and a “get it done” spirit. He was a joy to be around and provided plenty of good-natured laughter. His family fondly remembers his “Bobisms”: *“I wanna go home.” “Did you do any good today?” “Givin’ ya the good life.” “Don’t BS your life away.”* and an all-time favorite *“Hey, Jeanette, let’s go to bed so these people can go home.”*

He loved classic country music—Hank Williams, Johnny Cash, Porter Wagoner, Patsy Cline, Tanya Tucker to name a few—and would often sing along, entertaining everyone around him. But the song he sang most often was *“I Wanna Go Home”* by Bobby Bare—a tune that now carries deeper meaning for those who loved him.

Well, Bob, here you are — just like the Apostle Paul, *“You have fought the good fight, you have finished the race, you have kept the faith.”* You are finally home. May our Lord welcome you with open arms. And when we finish our race, we hope to join you there.

Bob is survived by his beloved wife, Jeanette (Charvat) Kerschen, his sisters Corene Whilhite of Eufaula, Oklahoma, and Verna (Ken) Papotta of Simi Valley, California. He was preceded in death by his brothers Eugene (Gene) Kerschen and James “Jim” Kerschen.

He leaves behind his children: Allen (Darla) of Cheney, Kansas; Greg (Colleen) of Cunningham, Kansas; Nancy (Greg) Burger of Fort Worth, Texas; Rebecca (Rob) Ayala-Flores of Kansas City, Missouri; and Kristie (James) Carney of Prairie Village, Kansas. Bob was blessed with 17 grandchildren and 37 great-grandchildren, whose lives are his proudest legacy.

Services:

The Rosary will be held at 6:00 p.m. on Friday, March 13, at Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Cunningham. The Funeral Mass will be celebrated at 10:00 a.m. on Saturday, March 14, also at Sacred Heart, followed by a luncheon at the Sacred Heart Church hall.

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Mike Romme

Michael Gene “Mike” Romme, 59, passed away on March 4, 2026, in Kingman, Kansas, surrounded by the family he loved so deeply. Born on November 8, 1966, in Junction City, Mike was the son of Donald Michael and Drusilla Brantley Romme.



Although life took him many places, Mike's heart was firmly rooted in Kingman, where he built not only a successful career but a full, generous, and joy-filled life. As Vice President of Vendor Relations for Stanion Wholesale Electric Company, he was respected for his integrity, steady leadership, and the way he treated colleagues like lifelong friends.

Mike lived a life anchored in faith and service. He was an active member of St. Patrick Catholic Church and the Knights of Columbus, and he proudly served on the board of The South Central Community Foundation. He also dedicated time volunteering with the Kansas Special Olympics, where he brought encouragement, compassion, and positivity to every athlete he met. His college years with the Beta Theta Pi Fraternity gave him friendships and memories he cherished throughout his life.

Mike was also a passionate sports fan. He proudly cheered for his beloved Kansas State Wildcats, and he was an unwavering supporter of Kingman athletics. You could always find him on the front row of Kingman Eagle football, basketball and baseball games, cheering, encouraging the players, and supporting the community he loved so much. Mike had a special gift for guiding and inspiring young people. He loved coaching youth football and poured his heart into helping kids learn the game, gain confidence, and feel supported.

On April 24, 2004, Mike married the love of his life, Danielle Freund in Bel Aire, Kansas. Together they created a home filled with laughter, devotion, and unwavering support. His greatest joy came from being a father—he was immensely proud of his daughter, Nicole, and his son, Donald.

He is survived by his wife, Danielle; his daughter, Nicole; his son, Donald; his mother, Drusilla; his brother, Dan Housholder (Tonya); his sister, Dawn Spainhour; and his uncle, Wayne Brantley (Jen). He is preceded in death by his father, Donald Michael Romme.

Mike will be remembered most for his big heart, his firm handshake, and his ability to make people feel valued. Whether coaching on the field, volunteering, exploring a National Park, or cheering from the front row at a local game, Mike lived a life that lifted others.

A parish rosary will be held at 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, March 10, 2026, at St. Patrick Catholic Church in Kingman. Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated at 10:30 a.m. on Wednesday, March 11, followed by burial at Walnut Hill Cemetery in Kingman, Kansas.

In honor of Mike's devotion to family and faith, memorials may be made to the St. Patrick Church Building Fund or South Central Community Foundation in memory of Mike. Donations may be sent to Livingston Funeral Home, 1830 N. Main, Kingman KS 67068.

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Opal Neelly

Opal Irene Neelly, age 103, passed away peacefully with her daughters by her side on March 1, 2026 in her own bed at Homestead Assisted Living in Louisburg, Kansas. She was born on May 4, 1922, at home near Anadarko, Oklahoma, to Lonnety and Isaac C. Clark. She was the fifth daughter in a family of ten children.



In 1940, at the age of 17, Opal married L.A. Decker. They had two children, William Edward and Lonnetta Lynn. Tragically, Opal was widowed in 1951 at the age of 29.

After her loss, Opal moved with her children to Wichita, Kansas, where she worked at the Boeing Aircraft Company. She worked on the first B-29 as a riveter. It was at Boeing that she met Oric C. Neelly of Hopewell, Kansas. They married in 1956 and had two daughters, Brenda Elizabeth and Rebecca Kay. The Neellys lived in Wichita until 1970, when they purchased the family farm in Pratt County, Kansas. Opal was the quintessential farm wife. She canned and preserved hundreds of jars from the large garden and orchard each year and was an exceptional cook, always delighted to host large family gatherings featuring farm-to-table meals served promptly at noon and often ending with her famous homemade pies for dessert. A talented seamstress, she made her own clothing as well as garments for her daughters and granddaughters. During World War II, she contributed to the war effort by sewing pup tents for the U.S. Army.

Opal was deeply involved in her community. She was a member of EHU and the Byers Methodist Church Mothers Club, served as a 4-H leader, supported Skyline Schools, and drove a school bus in the late 1970s.

Opal and Oric shared nearly 58 years of marriage until his passing in 2014. Opal then moved to an independent senior apartment in Olathe, Kansas to be near her daughters and granddaughters. At age 100 she moved to Homestead Assisted Living facility in Louisburg, Kansas.

She was preceded in death by her parents; her husbands; her son William Edward Decker and daughter Lonnetta Decker Madden; and all of her siblings: Blanche Talent, Pearl Kemp, Roxy Williams, Helen Main, Calvin Clark, Herbert Clark, Orene Johnson, JoAnn Poynter, and Isaac “Ike” Clark.

Opal is survived by her two daughters, Brenda Elizabeth Black (David) and Rebecca Kay Neelly (Kim Hutson); her four grandchildren: Jessica Kinzler (Eric), Danielle Berger (Matthew), Nicholas Madden, and Libby Neelly (Tim Reynolds); and her four great-grandchildren: Jackson Kinzler (9), Jameson Berger (9), Barrett Berger (6), and Avery Kinzler (6). Her daughter-in-law, Gail Suzanne Decker, also survives.

Above all, Opal lived a life of service. She was a caretaker by nature—always giving, always serving others.

Opal Irene Neelly will be remembered for her strength and determination, devotion to family, generous heart, and the countless ways she cared for those around her.

Funeral service will be held at 11:00 a.m., Saturday, March 14, 2026 at Larrison Mortuary, Pratt. Food and Fellowship will follow the service. A private family interment will be held at Iuka Cemetery, Iuka.

Memorials may be made to Pratt Public Library or B-29 Museum.

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 Contact our office with questions! 620-672-7435

