

The Cunningham Courier

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photo by Danny Gibbs

Minutes from the County Commission Meeting

Chairwoman Lyon called the Board of County Commissioners meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. January 5, 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
Online Visitors: AS; DH;
Staff: Mendy Frampton, Expo Center Director; Tiffany Aumiller, Benefits Administrator; LaDawn Stegman, Financial Officer; Charles Arensdorf, Public Works Director

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

MOTION: Commissioner Thimesch moved to approve Resolution 2026-R1, GAAP Waiver. Commissioner Young seconded the motion. The motion was approved with a 3-0 vote.

MOTION: Commissioner Thimesch moved to approve Resolution 2026-R2, A Resolution affirming the adoption of the internal revenue service standard business mileage rate of 72.5 cents per mile for 2026.. Commissioner Young

seconded the motion. The motion was approved with a 3-0 vote.

MOTION: Commissioner Young moved to approve Resolution 2026-R3, A RESOLUTION OF THE COUNTY OF KINGMAN, KANSAS DESIGNATING THE KINGMAN LEADER-COURIER AS THE OFFICIAL COUNTY NEWSPAPER FOR ORDINARY PUBLICATIONS. Commissioner Thimesch seconded the motion. The motion was approved with a 3-0 vote.

MOTION: Commissioner Young moved to have Julie Lyon as the Chairman of the Commission for 2026. Commissioner Thimesch seconded the motion. The motion was approved with a 3-0 vote.

MOTION: Commissioner Young moved to approve RESOLUTION 2026-R4, A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF KINGMAN COUNTY, KANSAS DESIGNATING AN OFFICIAL DEPOSITORY OF PUBLIC FUNDS PURSUANT TO K.S.A. 9-1401 Conway Bank in Norwich. Commissioner Thimesch seconded the motion. The motion was approved with a 3-0 vote.

MOTION: Commissioner Thimesch moved to approve RESOLUTION 2026-R5, A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF KINGMAN COUNTY, KANSAS DESIGNATING AN OFFICIAL DEPOSITORY OF PUBLIC FUNDS PURSUANT TO K.S.A. 9-1401 Citizens Bank of Kansas, Kingman. Commissioner Young seconded the motion. The motion was

approved with a 3-0 vote.

MOTION: Commissioner Young moved to approve RESOLUTION 2026-R6, A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF KINGMAN COUNTY, KANSAS DESIGNATING AN OFFICIAL DEPOSITORY OF PUBLIC FUNDS PURSUANT TO K.S.A. 9-1401 Peoples Bank and Trust. Chairwoman Lyon seconded the motion. The motion was approved with a 3-0 vote.

MOTION: Commissioner Young moved to approve RESOLUTION 2026-R7, A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF KINGMAN COUNTY, KANSAS DESIGNATING AN OFFICIAL DEPOSITORY OF PUBLIC FUNDS PURSUANT TO K.S.A. 9-1401 Peoples Bank. Chairwoman Lyon seconded the motion. The motion was approved with a 3-0 vote.

Mendy Frampton, Expo Center Director was in with an update for the Expo Center.

Dale Enyart was in to discuss what Commissioner Thimesch has said about the 46 % saving in taxes if a solar farm were to come into Kingman County.

Commissioner Thimesch discussed meetings that he has attended on wind farms and solar farms.

Tiffany Aumiller, Benefits Administrator was in to request an amendment to the payroll resolution for non-exempt employees as the Noxious Weed position wasn't updated.

MOTION: Commissioner Young moved to approve amended Addendum B to the non-exempt employees.

Commissioner Thimesch seconded the motion. The motion was approved with a 3-0 vote.

s. Aumiller discussed Policy 11 with the County Commissioners and that they needed to fix some wording in the policy.

MOTION: Commissioner Young moved to approve changes to Policy 11. Chairwoman Lyon seconded the motion. The motion was approved with a 3-0 vote.

Carol Noblit, County Clerk submitted December 29, 2025, Commission meeting minutes for approval.

MOTION: Commissioner Thimesch moved to approve December 29, 2025, Commission meeting minutes. Commissioner Young seconded the motion. The motion was approved with a 3-0 vote.

Charles Arensdorf, Public Works Director was in to discuss shoulder material for Old 54 Hot Mix project.

Mr. Arensdorf discussed a date for the 2026 Township Board Meeting March 9th or 16th and what date the Commissioners would prefer.

Commissioners let Mr. Arensdorf know that either date would work.

Mr. Arensdorf discussed having a possible bid letting dates for NE 10 St (Old 54) for Hot Mix Overlay of February 9th or February 16th.

Mr. Arensdorf left the meeting at 10:04 a.m.

MOTION: Commissioner Thimesch moved to adjourn the regular board meeting at 10:06 a.m. Commissioner Young seconded the motion. The motion was approved with a 3-0 vote.

Kollin Fischer Recognized by Kansas Pregame



Stalwart - a loyal, reliable, and hardworking supporter or participant in an organization or team.

Kansas Pregame is collaborating with coaches across the state to recognize the key team players flying under the radar of statewide media. Athletes who come to work every day for their team, but may not have the individual statistics to earn the accolades that go along with team success. We're calling them, Sunflower State Stalwarts.

Kollin Fischer, Cunningham Wildcats

There are players who stand out because of measurables, and others who stand out because their coaches never worry about them — Cunningham junior Kollin Fischer falls into the latter category.

"He is a quiet 'do your job' player," head coach Lance McGuire said. "He is not as big or as fast as some of his teammates or opponents and he often does things that are not technically sound, but he finds a way to get the job done."

Despite lacking prototypical size at 5-foot-7, 186 pounds, Fischer consistently made plays through effort and toughness, earning the trust of

both coaches and teammates.

On the season, Fischer had 44 tackles, two tackles for loss, one sack and three fumble recoveries, including a fumble return for a touchdown. His timely contributions helped Cunningham close the year 11-1 and secure the 2025 6-man state title with a 51-8 win over Weskan.

"No complaints. No excuses," McGuire said. "He either gets his job done or he will say 'I will get it done the next time'. He is loved by his teammates and is a fan favorite."

(Photo: Barb Shultz) Cunningham USD 332 #kansaspregame

Article from Kansas Pregame via USD 332 Facebook page.



2025
HX Guardian
of Excellence
Award

PressGaney

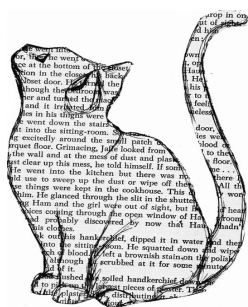
PATIENT EXPERIENCE AWARD WINNER

KHC has been honored with the 2025 HX Guardian of Excellence Award for Patient Experience, highlighting only the top 5% of healthcare organizations nationwide.

This award recognizes organizations that show an unwavering commitment to enhancing the experience of those they serve, as determined by key metrics from Press Ganey.

(Press Ganey is a leading healthcare consulting firm focused on data analytics.)

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Meanderings

One headline caught my eye this week. It appeared in the Kansas Press Association Newsletter: “NNA Celebrates Limits on Postage Increases”

The article went on

to say that the Postal Regulatory Commission came down hard on the USPS Board of Governors for its ‘aggressive price increases’ and the Commission has limited future rate increases to one a year.

The PRC has authority from Congress to set the levels of possible rate increases. After receiving numerous petitions from mailing organizations (including the National Newspaper Association) the Commission took action to slow the price

increases.

“The Commission’s order on Jan. 13 expressed its dismay that USPS had so aggressively ‘exhausted’ the limits of postage increase authority provided in 2022 after the PRC changed the boundaries previously set by inflation-based price caps in 2006.

The new order, however, did not trim the Postal Service’s ability to enact sizeable postage increases.”

That can only make everyone happy. Raising

rates twice in a year became a bit much whether you are mailing newspapers or letters. What a win for everyone.

**

I ventured down to Norwich this week and dropped off some Valentine cards at Ye Olde General Store. (Valentine’s is only 3 weeks away) Then on to Harper to set up a new card display in that community. My cards are now available at “Country Girl Bakery and Market.”

I visited with the own-

er, Bethany, for a bit. She’s been running the bakery/restaurant/coffee shop since 2003. She didn’t look old enough to have owned a business that long, but everyone seems young now that I’m old. Much like everyone seemed old when I was young.

Bethany just recently opened her business to small craft vendors. I am happy to be a part of her endeavor.

Also in the bakery were some other craft items, knitted head gear,

jewelry, jar-canned goods from Yoder, and 23 Dollies and Me had some doll clothes and shoes set up, I think there were some other things, but I didn’t write them down and now this old brain can’t think of what else was there.

Before I left, I bought a couple of kolaches. Cherry filled. Very good.

Always reading, and currently reading, “The Flimflam Affair” by Bill Pronzini, Roberta

Tallgrass and Tumbleweeds by Gaille Pike

Dear Readers,

Every now and then when I am pondering some of the great mysteries in life I stumble across something so seemingly inconsequential it begs further investigation. I’m talking about things we see every day and are so used to them we take for granted “why?” With this in mind I beg you to indulge me this unofficial exploration into something I bet you are

either wearing right now or someone close to you is wearing. And that is the T-Shirt.

It used to be T-Shirts were strictly conventional apparel to be worn exclusively by males beneath a better shirt with sleeves and a collar and buttons. Either that or in gym class. Now they are a preeminent part of our wardrobe. Not only do T-Shirts take up more space in our closets, but they’ve also become part of our identity. Who needs that awkward introductory chit-chat when most of what people need to know about you is emblazoned across

your chest?

Admit it, how many times have you been approached (or approached someone) due to the fact their shirt declared a common interest? They can tell others who you root for, who you vote for, what kind of pets you have, your favorite band, superhero or libation. Your T-Shirt, for better or worse, IS who you are. And they are so much a part of advertising you can get a lot of them for free.

But there’s so much more to the ascension of the once utilitarian Tee. Its immergence as a cultural bellwether harkens

back to the late 60s and early 70s. That’s when peace signs and “Keep on Truckin’” first appeared. Smiley Faces and Che Guevera. And of course, the American Flag, which was at first a matter of serious controversy over whether or not it was unpatriotic to adorn yourself with Ol’ Glory. Seems that has been sorted out.

And few garments can match the T-Shirt when it comes to after-usage and recyclability. Once that logo has faded we use them to dust, quilt, pet-bedding and checking the oil. But they have an afterlife that goes far

beyond such drudgery. That’s because there are hundreds of thousands of Tees that are manufactured but never worn. Think about this—for every major sporting competition (the Superbowl, World Series, Stanley Cup, World Cup, NBA Championship, Final Four, etc.) there are TWO SETS OF SHIRTS printed declaring the winner.

Those designed for the losing team don’t sell very well. But they do live on by clothing a huge part of the world. Every year 700,000 tons of used clothing is exported overseas. And a LOT of those are T-Shirts. You’ve seen

documentaries exploring some of the most secluded and undeveloped places in the world. And there, amid the darkest recesses of the Amazon, the Himalayas or the South Pacific you’ll find a native fisherman, farmer or tribal chieftain wearing a slightly threadbare celebration of AC/DC, Mello Yellow, Spiderman or the N.Y. Yankees. And some of them even have the distinction of being shot out of a cannon. How cool it that?!

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



The Dunning-Kruger Effect

“Two things are infinite: the universe and human stupidity; and I'm not so sure about the universe.”

Albert Einstein

Being the news junkie that I am, I found myself watching some of the Senate hearings last week, dumbfounded by the assortment of mut-tonheads in Congress. It reminded me of a concept that is worth writing about. It is called the

Dunning-Kruger Effect. There is a good story here.

On January 6, 1995, Clifton Earl Johnson and McArthur Wheeler robbed two banks at gunpoint in Pittsburg without attempting to disguise themselves. Instead, believing that it would make them invisible to security cameras, they had covered their faces in lemon juice. They thought so because lemon juice works as invisible ink on paper. Johnson was arrested days later, while Wheeler was apprehended three months later in April, after surveillance photos were broadcast on the local 11 o’clock news. At the time of his arrest, Wheeler incredulously kept saying to the police, “But I wore the juice, I wore

the juice!”

David Dunning, a professor of social psychology at Cornell University, discovered this story after an article about the case was published in the Pittsburg Post-Gazette. Enlisting the help of Justin Kruger, who was a graduate student at Cornell at the time, they organized a research project. They theorized that “If Wheeler was too stupid to be a bank robber, perhaps he was too stupid to know that he was too stupid to be a bank robber – that is, his stupidity protected him from an awareness of his own stupidity.”

To test their theory, Dunning and Kruger began research with college students. They gave them tests on logical reasoning, sense of humor, and

grammar. The results of the study were fascinating. They found that those who scored in the bottom 25% on these tests tended to overestimate their abilities and test scores. Most expected that they had scores above the 60th percentile. The over-performers, scoring in the top 25%, incorrectly assessed their results as well. They estimated scores in the 70-75th percentile range. Most of these students scored about the 87th percentile. The higher scoring group was competent enough to understand how they got a higher score. The lower performers were not. In the higher scoring group, the gap between perceived performance and actual performance was smaller. The lower

scoring group showed a much larger gap.

The Dunning Kruger Effect is also known as the Dunning- Kruger Curve, plotting confidence verses knowledge. It can be explained this way. When we learn a little bit about something new, we are often confident, thinking we know it all. If we stop learning here, we can have a false sense of mastery. When we continue learning, we realize that things are often more complex and difficult than we thought and sometimes lose motivation to continue. With increased knowledge, confidence decreases. Many stop here. If we keep learning, we can gain confidence along with greater ability. Confidence only really rises when you gain mas-

tery of a subject. But the truly wise person knows there is much they don’t know. They often exhibit humility, and while confident in their knowledge, they are more reserved in their delivery and are not afraid to consult others.

But people tend to trust and accept those who are sure of themselves. Simpletons often win the popular vote because they are supremely confident that they are right. And people trust certainty. This might explain why we have folks in Congress whose IQ requires they wear Velcro shoes (because knots and bows are too hard for them to tie).

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Life After Death and The Two-Headed Calf

Tomorrow when the farm boys find this freak of nature, they will wrap his body in newspaper and carry him to the museum.

But tonight he is alive and in the north field with his mother. It is a perfect summer evening: the moon rising over the orchard, the wind in the grass. And as he stares into the sky, there are twice as many stars as usual.

Laura Gilpin

It has been said that poetry is prayer. That may be true. It is an expression of the soul, something that matters. I memorized a poem this week - The Two-Headed Calf, by Laura Gilpin. It is a special poem, with deep personal meaning.

Laura Gilpin was a poet and a nurse and a beautiful human being. She loved words. In 1976 she won the Walt Whitman Award for her first book of poetry – The Hocus-Pocus of the Universe. Gilpin died young. In the summer of 2006, she was diagnosed with a form of incurable brain cancer – glioblastoma multiforme (GBM). Ironically, one of the symptoms of GBM is double vision. Like the calf in her famous poem, she could see twice as many stars as the rest of us. Gilpin died six months after being diagnosed, at the age of 56. She had just finished her second poetry collection – The Weight of a Soul.

The Two-Headed Calf is Gilpin’s most celebrated poem. It describes the short, sweet life of a newborn calf suffering from polycephaly, a rare genetic defect. Calves born with two heads, or more often two faces, are usually stillborn. In rare cases they live for a short time, surviving for only a few hours or a few days. Their lives are short and tragic.

The imagery in this poem is striking. The first stanza is cold and speaks of death, describing the calf as a “freak of nature” to be discarded and carried away to a museum for people to stare at.

The second stanza in contrast is warm, drawing the reader into the present where the precious newborn calf is alive “and in the north field with his mother,” gazing at the stars in the summer sky. The calf is unaware that he will no longer be alive in the morning.

Much can be gleaned from this short poem and these few words. It speaks to the precious beauty of life, however short, and living in the moment. It

reminds us that we don’t know what tomorrow will bring. Many, myself included, who find themselves different, can relate to this poem. We may not fit in or conform well to the world around us. We may look different or be different, just like the two-headed calf. In the end, we are reminded to love ourselves and others as we are, two heads and all. And we are reminded to appreciate the time given to us in life.

I found another one of Gilpin’s poems this week. It is less known, but equally beautiful and moving. It offers us deep truth about love and life and death. The poem is Life After Death, by Laura Gilpin.

These things I know:
How the living go on living
and how the dead go on living with them
so that in a forest
even a dead tree casts a shadow
and the leaves fall one by one
and the branches break in the wind
and the bark peels off slowly
and the trunk cracks
and the rain seeps in through the cracks
and the trunk falls to the ground
and the moss covers it
and in the spring the rabbits find it
and build their nest
inside the dead tree
so that nothing is wasted in nature
or in love.

Poetry can touch something deep inside, penetrating our hearts and stirring what we ourselves sometimes cannot see, things only God can understand. But I know this - nothing is wasted in love. Remembering you, my dear heart...

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Community Bulletin Board

Thursday, January 22

Kingman County
Spelling Bee

JH BB vs Skyline
at HOME

Boys 54 Classic BB
Tournament at Skyline

Friday, January 23

Girls 54 Classic BB
Tournament at HOME

Saturday,
January 24

Boys 54 Classic
at Skyline

Girls 54 Classic
at HOME

Wednesday, January 28

FFA Public Speaking

Book Club

Thursday, January 29

JH BB at Norwich

Friday, January 30

HS BB vs. Attica
at HOME

Homecoming

JRs Coyote
Calling Contest

Saturday January 31

Coyote Calling Contest

Homecoming Dance

Monday, February 2

AMA kick-off for K-5

JH BB vs. Burrton
at HOME

Tuesday, February 3

HS BB at Fairfield

Lions Club Meeting

Wednesday,
February 4

6:00 Shop Guild

Thursday, February 5

JH BB Tournament
at Attica

HS Regional Scholars
Bowl at Bucklin

Friday, February 6

2:30 p.m.

5th Grade Spelling Bee

HS BB vs South
Barber at HOME

Saturday February 7

JH BB Tournament
at Attica

Monday, February 9

JH BB Tournament at
Attica

BOE Meeting



Happy Birthday, Kay House!

Kay House celebrates her 85th birthday on Tuesday, January 27. The family invites you to participate in a card shower for Kay to help her celebrate this milestone in her life. If you like, please share a favorite memory or photo you have of your love and friendship with Kay with your card.

Birthday cards can be mailed to:
Kay House
615 S. Main St., Apt. 7
Whitewater KS 67154



Save the Date

for the WKCEF

Scholarship Fundraiser

TRIVIA NIGHT

???

Saturday, March 28

Watch for more info soon!

Winter Health Risks: What to Know and How to Stay Safe

As winter approaches, it's important to recognize the health risks that come with freezing temperatures and winter weather. While weather can vary across the state, preparing for a strong cold front is especially important for rural areas where access to health-care facilities and emergency services may be impeded.

One of the most common winter health concerns is respiratory illness, including coronavirus, influenza (flu), and respiratory syncytial virus (RSV). According to Johns Hopkins physician Michael Albert, every year 5% to 20% of Americans will catch the flu, and 60,000 to 160,000 older adults are hospitalized with RSV. This is in addition to COVID-19 variants which are contagious and tend to occur in waves. These illnesses often spike during the winter months for several reasons. According to the Mayo Clinic Minute, these illnesses often spike during winter months as people spend more time indoors, allowing viruses to spread more quickly. Cold, dry air also al-

lows respiratory droplets to stay airborne longer, while the cilia (hairlike projections in the upper respiratory tract that help clear out germs) do not function as well in dry, cold conditions.

Fortunately, there are several simple ways to reduce the risk of infection. Regular handwashing is one of the most important steps, especially after being in public spaces. Cleaning and sanitizing frequently touched surfaces such as doorknobs, countertops, and phones can also help limit spread. Staying up to date on recommended vaccinations each year provides added protection, particularly for older adults and those with chronic conditions. Covering coughs and sneezes, avoiding close contact when sick, and staying home when you have symptoms (such as cough, sore throat, or fever) can help protect family members, co-workers, and the broader community.

Cold-related illnesses are another important winter health concern. Hypothermia occurs when the body loses heat faster than it can produce it, and can happen during prolonged outdoor exposure, power outages, or when homes are not adequately heated. Warning signs include

uncontrollable shivering, confusion, slurred speech, and extreme fatigue. There's also frostbite which occurs when skin and underlying tissues freeze, most often affecting fingers, toes, ears, and nose. Early signs include numbness, tingling, and pale or waxy skin. To reduce risk of both illnesses, dress in layers, keep clothing dry, cover exposed skin, limit time outdoors during extreme cold, and check on neighbors, especially older adults, during severe weather.

Lastly, winter can impact mental health. Shorter days, reduced sunlight, and increased isolation, especially in rural areas, can contribute to low mood, anxiety, or symptoms of seasonal depression. Some easy ways to protect your mental health include staying connected with friends and family, maintaining daily routines, and spending time outdoors when weather allows. You can also reach out to local resources or healthcare providers if symptoms persist.

As a community, we all play a role in staying safe and healthy during the winter. Checking in on neighbors, preparing homes, and taking simple preventive steps can make a huge difference.

Midwestern winters can be challenging, but with awareness and preparation many winter related health risks can be reduced.

About the Author: Shelby Coons is a second-year medical student at the University of Kansas School of Medicine. She graduated from Field Kindley High School in Coffeyville, KS in 2020, and the University of Kansas in 2024. Growing up in a small town inspired her passion for serving rural and underserved communities. Outside of medicine, she enjoys running and working out. Shelby is passionate about using her medical training to care for and support the people of rural Kansas. The Rural Cancer Institute is a national non-profit dedicated to rural cancer advocacy, research and practice. Send questions and comments to program@ruralcancer.org



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Closed for Holidays
298-3163



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



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



Fort Hays State University
Announces Fall 2025 Graduates

HAYS, Kan. (January 9, 2026) - Fort Hays State University recognized approximately 981 graduates during its fall 2025 commencement ceremonies Friday and Saturday, Dec. 12-13, at Gross Memorial Coliseum in Hays.

Local students from the Cunningham area are
Cody Dunlap, Education Specialist,
Advanced Professional Studies
Cheryl Hensley, Bachelor of Business
Administration, Management

Kingman Historic Theatre

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

January 24

MegaStars of Country Music

Thank YOU for supporting YOUR
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Upcoming Auctions

Wednesday, January 28, 2026
- Pratt Co Land Auction - Hamm
Auction Center, 1:30 p.m.

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



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

K-State Ag Profitability
Conferences Aim to Help Farmers
Navigate Tough Economy

With Kansas farmers facing rising financial pressures, Kansas State University is hosting a series of Agricultural Profitability Conferences across the state, beginning in December and continuing through early February. The conferences, "Making 'Cents' of a Shifting Ag Economy," are organized by K-State's Department of Agricultural Economics, offering insights into economic trends, farm policy, land values, and strategies to maintain profitability during challenging times. A conference will be held in Kingman on February 4, 2026, at the Kingman Expo Center (121 S. Main St., Kingman), starting at 8:30 a.m. with refreshments and concluding at 2:30 p.m. To register, contact the Kingman County Extension Office at 620-532-5131 or gschnei@ksu.edu. For more information on speakers or the conference agenda, please visit agmanager.info/profitability.

Banana Cake and Total Pain: What London Taught Me About Being Human

By Saif Mohammed

One afternoon in Walthamstow, where I was staying with a friend, I stepped into a small local supermarket and greeted the shopkeeper. His name was Fawad. Within minutes, we were deep in conversation—he was from a country not too far from mine, one shaped by decades of conflict and resilience. Fawad spoke of home, of how much it had changed. He told me that crime had decreased so much that vendors could now leave carts unattended at night. “You’ll find them intact the next morning,” he said, with quiet pride.

But then he also spoke of the difficult changes—how young girls were no longer allowed to go to school, how daily life had narrowed under increasing restrictions. We spoke

openly, warmly, human to human.

Later, when I shared this encounter with some local friends, they gently warned me: “That’s not how things work here. The UK is a very private place. You can’t talk to strangers like that—it’s not appropriate.”

I was taken aback. Was I wrong to engage in that kind of human exchange? Is openness now considered intrusive?

A Banana Cake and a Gentle Rebuttal

The very next morning, however, something beautiful happened. My friend’s British neighbour—a kind, white gentleman—knocked on the door with a warm banana cake his wife had just baked. Not only did he bring the cake, but he stayed for conversation. We talked about everything and nothing, and it felt natural. I thought: so maybe it’s not about “Britishness” or “Indianness.”

Maybe kindness has no national etiquette. Maybe compassion, like

conversation, only needs a crack of openness to flow.

Brighton: Two Floors, Two Burdens, No Words

Later in Brighton, I stayed with another friend—a volunteer mediator with the local council. That week, she had attended a conflict resolution meeting between two neighbours living in council flats—one upstairs, one downstairs.

Upstairs lived a woman caring full-time for her ailing, bedridden mother. Below lived a mother of an autistic child who often screamed and cried loudly. The noise disturbed the woman upstairs so much that police and social services had been called multiple times.

At the meeting, my friend said, “All I did was listen.” She let both women speak. She heard their exhaustion, their pain, their fears. “There were tears,” she told me, “but something shifted.” What struck me was this: these women lived mere

meters apart. Both were caregivers. Both overwhelmed. But they had never spoken to each other. Not once. Imagine if, instead of escalating the problem, they had shared a conversation. A cup of tea. A tear. A word of understanding.

Compassion Beyond Clinical Care

These moments made me reflect again on why I came to London in the first place. I had spoken at St. Christopher’s about “total pain”—a concept that embraces not only physical discomfort, but also the emotional, social, and spiritual layers of suffering.

In Kerala, we’ve adapted this model to be community-led and culturally sensitive. But what I realise now is that total pain isn’t confined to those who are dying. It’s everywhere.

In the woman exhausted from caregiving.

In the mother unable to silence her child’s distress.

In the man who is miles away from home,

carrying a quiet nostalgia for the country he left behind.

In those who want to speak but don’t know how, and in those who are afraid to listen.

The Risk of Losing Our Ears

We live in a world where individualism is often celebrated, and privacy—while deeply important—can sometimes become a barrier rather than a boundary.

Of course, solitude is not always a sorrow; for some, being alone is a choice, even a sanctuary. Loneliness, after all, is deeply personal—what feels isolating to one may feel restful to another.

But I worry that if compassion is only taught in clinical settings—or only associated with the end of life—we risk losing it where it’s needed most: in the ordinary rhythms of daily living.

If we don’t teach children how to listen, how to hold another’s feelings, how to sit with discomfort, we may raise a generation that knows how

to function, but not how to feel.

We are, at our core, social creatures—not just designed to survive, but to coexist. And coexistence requires more than presence. It demands that we notice each other’s pain.

A Closing Reflection

What started as a professional trip became, for me, a series of deeply personal lessons.

I came to London to speak about systems of care, about palliative models. But what I carry back is something simpler: a conversation with a shopkeeper, a slice of banana cake, the silence between two struggling neighbours.


These are not extraordinary moments. But perhaps compassion never is. It’s not about grand gestures. It’s about holding space—for stories, for sorrows, for each other.

That, too, is palliative care. And that, I believe, is the care the world most needs right now.

Awkward Wedding Colors

A little girl finally got to attend a wedding for the first time. While in the church, the girl asked her mother: “Why is the bride dressed in white?” The mother replied to the girl: “Because white is the color of happiness, and it’s the happiest day of her life today.”

After a little bit, the girl looks up at her mother and says: “But then why is the groom wearing black?”




Creation is Tiring, Too!

God is talking to one of his angels. He says, “Do you know what I have just done? I have just created 24 hours of alternating light and darkness on Earth. Isn’t that good?”

The angel says, “Yes, but what will you do now?”

God says, “I think I’ll call it a day.”




Sunday Fish Tale

A boy came late to Sunday School. Knowing he was usually very prompt, his teacher asked, “Johnny, is anything wrong?”

“No, ma’am, not really,” he said. “I was going to go fishing, but my dad told me that I needed to get on up and go to church.” The teacher was very impressed and asked Johnny if his father had explained why going to church was more important than fishing.

“Yes, ma’am, he did,” Johnny said. “My daddy said he didn’t have enough bait for both of us.”



Eccl. 14 NIV For God will bring judgement, including every hidden thing, whether it is good or bad.

quote submitted by Alan Albers

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

Peter, do you love Me?

It was the week after the resurrection, and disciples were still scattered about Jerusalem and the surrounding villages. John searched high and low for Peter and finally found him hanging out in the upper room. “Peter, Peter!” he said excitedly. “I have good news and bad news. Which would you rather hear first?”

“By all means, give me the good news. We’ve had enough bad news lately,” Peter said.

“The good news is Christ is risen,” John said.

“That’s great!” said Peter. “Now, what’s the bad news?”

John looked around anxiously and said, “Well, He’s steamed about last Friday.”

Cunningham Hands of Hope, Inc.

Who: A Not-for-Profit (501c3) organization providing assistance through donations and volunteers.

Who we serve: Residents within the USD #332 school district

What: Food

When: First Tuesday of the month
2:00–5:00 p.m.

Where: 117 N Main (Old School Board Office)

Why: To provide food assistance to those in need.

How: Attend weekly distribution. Adult of household must be present.

Do you need assistance outside distribution hours?

Please call 620-770-9507 for immediate food assistance needs This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

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 donate 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)



Catholic Churches

Sacred Heart, Cunningham Saturday 4:00 p.m.	St. John, Zenda Sunday 10:00 a.m.
St. Leo Sunday 8:30 p.m.	St. Peter Willowdale Saturday 5:30 p.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

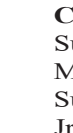
St. John, Nashville 620-246-5220 Sunday School & Bible Class 8:45 a.m. Worship Service 10 a.m.	Trinity, Medicine Lodge 620- 886-3397 Sunday School & Bible Class 8:45 a.m. Worship Service 10:00 a.m.
--	--

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



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

Publisher: Charles G. Barnes

Editor: Nancy Briggeman

Reporter: Marie Ann Mantooth

1976

JaJanuary 22, 1976 – The freshman class has a new student, Cathy Gebhardt, of Nashville who transferred from Nashville-Zenda High School.

The English Department, under the direction of Eva Cundiff, administered two standardized tests from the Bureau of Educational Measurements of Kansas State Teachers College at Emporia. The same test was given to all students in the English Depart and grades were determined by a scale furnished by the college, taking into consideration the numb or years the student has attended high school.

In the literature test, there were five students who rated “A” on this scale. They were Steve Freund, Bob Holcomb, Cheri Mantooth, Dean Smith, and Kevin Stillwell. These students are sophomores and the highest grade for the entire school was made by Bob Holcomb.

Roger Theis, also a sophomore, led the school with a score of 131 out of a possible 150 points in the grammar test. Other sophomores who placed high on this test (in the “A” division) were Bob Holcomb, Denise Hageman, Marlene Albers, Willie Schnittker, and Scott Fischer. In the freshman class Dale Panek and Ronda Simon had a score higher than the highest score given for freshmen in the scale. One senior, Pat Holcomb, placed high in the test.

Letter to the Editor: I think that I speak for the Cunningham Community when I say that we would like o welcome you as our new editor for the Cunningham Clipper. We fell quite up-to-date with a young woman editor and we wish for the best.

Also, we would like to say a word of praise and thanks for the former editor, Rex Zimmerman. We feel that Rex did a fantastic job in feeling the pulse of community life in his pictures – some of them almost classic – his editorials, and general news coverage. We know that he is a young man ‘on his way up’ and we feel privileged to know him.

Also, we would like to thank our reporter, Marie Mantooth, who works unceasingly and with great efficiency in gathering our local news.

We are indeed grateful to have a paper for our community and to have such fine, dedicated people in charge of it. -Rubie Cusenbary

First Grade: Todd Rohr, Dawn Alley, Vickie Becker, Donice Kitson, and Dana Murphy had perfect

attendance for the first semester. Andrea Graves and Mark Thimesch had perfect attendance for the third six weeks.

Dawn Alley brought devil’s claws for our insects. Three or four claw were fitted together and painted black. Spots of red felt were pasted on the black insects. The insects were taken home. Some of the insects are sitting on the television.

Heather Routh brought pine cones to school. We made interesting animals using pipe cleaners for legs and tails. Colored foil paper made good eyes.

The eighth grade class has been studying abut America. For American History, we have been studying about the war of 1812 and how the United States gains the respect of other nations. In Civics we have been studying about our constitutional rights and the court system. We ar also learning how the metric system works.

YEARS AGO IN

The Cunningham Clipper

Publisher: Charles G. Barnes

Editor:Vickie Lohmann

Reporter: Florine Kampling

1981

January 22, 1981 – Mrs. Diana Albers was today named Chairman of a Door-to-Door Campaign in Cunningham, by Mrs. Joe Shurtz, President of the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation.

She will be conducting the Door-to-Door campaign to raise funds which will support research and care for children affected cystic fibrosis.

Adv: Decorated Cakes and cookies made to order. Call Dixie.

Adv: Fresh Lard for sale

Adv: Good used coffee table

The Cunningham Saddle Club met on January 19 in the Methodist Church basement for the annual meeting and potluck supper.

Gary FitzSimmons, president opened the meeting at which 22 members and 5 guests were present. The activities of the past year were reviewed.

First in the line of business was a discussion on whether to continue with the club or disband. After some discussion, Burnard Simonson made a motion to continue for another year, seconded by Lynn Fitzsimmons.

Dallas Thornhill made a motion to retain all officers for another year. One of the bard directors moved and was replaced by David Thornhill.

Officers for the coming year are: president, Gary FitzSimmons; vice president, Lynn Fitzsimmons; secretary and treasurer, Glenda Thornhill; board of directors: Jack Crick, Al Joe Sterneker, Denise Haworth,

David Thornhill.

1986

January 23, 1986 – The local Brownies of the Girl Scouts will be canvassing the town and area taking orders for Girl Scout Cookies to be delivered at a later date. They will begin on the 24th and finish on February 3rd.

Anyone who has not been at home or has not been contacted may call Lou Miller at 298-4535 and she will have someone call on you or you may place your order at the time. SUPPORT YOUR LOCL TROOP!

Eilene Crick opened her home for Mystery dinner Jan. 13, for members of the local YWCA at 6:30 p.m.

Cabinet members, who were hostesses, met on Sunday at the Crick home and prepared most of the food in advance. A few last-minute touches make the YWCA ‘Café’ possible.

Each member chose three items from the menu and were served these foods, after being repeated again, the meal was served buffet style.

A water cooler was a suggestion as a community project for the club, to be installed at the Community Center. Helen Long was designated as the official YWCA Community Board member.

Any truth to the proverb, “Going to rain if a horse rolls over?” You bet there is, says National Wildlife magazine. Animals often get edgy long before a storm hits because they’re able to hear the low frequency sound waves given off by approaching storms.

- School Lunches - Monday
- Hot Diggity Dogs
- Curly Q’s
- Juggling trees
- Clowns treat
- Big top beverage
- Tuesday
- Grand champion chili
- Pick of the fair relishes
- Golden nugget
- Blue ribbon swirls
- Best of fair

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



The Spotlight is on CHS Basketball



Front Row: Adam Sterneker, Skyler Thimesch, Kane Reid, Carson Strohl , Gunner Glenn, Weston Rogers, Andrew Kerschen, Wesly Preisser
Middle Row: Blake Swope, Larry Heatherman, Brody Bock, Stephen Kerschen, Tyler Osner, Newt Heatherman, Caden Johnson,
Back row: Dylan Halderson, Andrew Schultz, Liam McGuire, Cole Hageman, Kendall Rogers, Logan Kinsler,
Not pictured: Sean Kostner, Manager; Coach Larry Eisenhower; Assistant Coach James Cook

Photo courtesy of USD 332

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Bill Thome
Lois Becker
Dane Huhman
Kathy & Alan Albers

Mary & Bob Stackhouse
Kathy & Doug Griffis
Molly Morgan & Family
Jeanette & Bob Kerschen
Helen & Chuck Holcomb
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Marla & Mike McGovney
Shawna & Tom Sterneker
Gwen and Mark Betzen
Judy and Scott DeWeese



Contact the Cunningham Public Library for more
information about these programs (620) 298-3163
email: cunninghamlibrary@yahoo.com

Sew on a Button

January 24th 10am
with Eileen Crick



Scrapbooking

January 26th 6pm
Bring 4-6 Christmas pictures



Led by Debbie Mills & Deana Bolen

HOUSEPLANT REHAB

Let Casey Renner help you with
your indoor plant needs.
January 31st 10 am at the library.



The Spotlight is on CHS Basketball



Front Row: Morgan Oldham, Katie Ogg, Emily Ogg, Kyra Morgan, Sage Thimesch, Grace Hageman, Gracie Smyth
Back row: Whitney Mead, Macy Neufeld, Keyonna Raney, Rylee Miller, Andy Young
Not pictured: HarLee Barber, manager; Coach Kayla Walters; Assistant Coach Mikaela Hartley

Photo courtesy of USD 332



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JH Wildcats Storm Past South Barber

The Wildcats visited the South Barber Tornadoes on Thursday, January 15th. The Cats were heavy favorites with South Barber winless and the Cats being one of the top teams. Cunningham did not disappoint! They hit on all cylinders early going up big in the first quarter. The boys mixed in some younger guys in the second with nearly the same result. The second half was a young guy show. With a running clock looming if the boys got over a 30 point lead, they kept the game in check against the South Barber varsity team. When the final buzzer sounded the Cats were up around 30 points.

The Wildcats were complimented by at least two South Barber patrons

for their class on the court. Our boys played the game with sportsmanship and showed the best of what basketball should be about. Apparently, other schools have not played with the same courtesy in mind. These kids are fun to watch and fun to be around, and they give us plenty to be proud of. Brody Halderson and Jax Thimesch led the team with 5 rebounds. Eleven Wildcats had at least one steal in a total team defense affair. Thirteen boys played and everyone had some shot attempts. Nine scored. The official book is not in the right hands yet, but here are the rest of the stats we have.



Wildcat Scorers

Landen Hageman	8
Landon Green	6
Wade Preisser	6
Grady Smyth	5
Jace Oldham	5
Jax Thimesch	5
Brody Henning	3
Brody Halderson	2
Cooper Neufeld	2

CHS Scholars Bowl Places 2nd in League



Seated: Jack Harden, Caleb Lohrke, Tyler Osner, Myles Thimesch, Katie Ogg
Standing: Sean Kostner, Coach Sebastian Huelskamp
Sean Kostner placed 1st in individual scoring.

Kingman County Sheriff's Report

Sunday, January 11						Miscellaneous	SE 150 St & S Hwy 14, Rago
Disturbance	200 Blk N Sunflower Dr, Kingman					Agency Assist / KMPD	500 Blk N Thompson St, Kingman
Traffic / Arrest	E B Ave & N Chariton St, Kingman					Diabled Vehicle	NE 40 Ave & E Hwy 54, Kingman
Disturbance	N Main St & W Smalley Ave, Spivey					Agency Assist / KM EMS / Medical	200 Blk W B Ave, Kingman
Traffic Complaint	300 N Main St, Spivey					Thursday, January 15	
Monday, January 12						Traffic Stops	3
Traffic Stops	2					Civil Paper Service	1
Agency Assist / KHP / Traffic Stop	9000 Blk E Hwy 54, Murdock					Miscellaneous	120 N Spruce St, Kingman
Miscellaneous	13000 Blk SE 60 ST, Norwich					Citizen Assist	2200 Blk N Spruce St, Kingman
Transport Civilian	400 Blk E Leiter Ave, Cunningham					Transport Inmate	120 N Spruce St, Kingman
Civil Stand By	4700 Blk SE 150 Ave, Cheney					Court / Inmates	130 N Spruce St, Kingman
Alarm	1900 W Sherris Ln, Kigman					Follow Up	400 Blk E B Ave, Kingman
Tuesday, January 13						Agency Assit / KHP	6000 Blk E Hwy 54, Kingman
Traffic Stops	6					Warrant Service / Inmate	120 N Spruce St, Kingman
Civil Paper Service	3					Agency Assist / KMPD / Trespassing	300 Blk W C Ave, Kingman
Abandoned Vehicle	9000 Blk E Hwy 54, Murdock					Unlock Vehicle	2700 Blk NE 150 Ave, Cheney
Follow Up	SW 10 St & SW 140 Ave, Kingman					Disturbance	300 Blk W C Ave, Kingman
Animal Complaint	3100 Blk E Hwy 43, Rago					Friday, January 16	
Accidental 911 Dial	7000 Blk E Hwy 54, Kingman					Traffic Stops	3
Accidental 911 Dial	3300 Blk SE 10 St, Kingman					Court / Inmate	130 N Spruce St, Kingman
Wednesday, January 14						Fraud	300 Blk N Ash St, Zenda
Traffic Stops	4					Accidental 911 Dial	100 Blk E 4th St, Cunningham
Civil Paper Service	3					Saturday, January 17	
Court / Security	130 N Spruce St, Kingman					Traffic Stops	9
						Non-Injury Accident	500 Blk S Robbins Rd, Norwich



The Most Magical Meeting in Agriculture

Jackie Mundt, Pratt County farmer and rancher

People traveling to Anaheim, Calif., are usually in search of a magical adventure at Disneyland. This past weekend it was one of the most magical places on earth for farm leaders as the site of the American Farm Bureau Convention.

It has been a few years since I last attended the event. As I walked through the convention halls, I was reminded why this event continues to matter — especially for the next generation of agriculture. The hallways were filled with energy, purpose and a strong sense of belonging for those committed to agriculture’s future.

Five of our local collegiate Farm Bureau members traveled with me to the conference.

These students weren’t just observing — they were learning about policy and technology, asking thoughtful questions, serving as volunteers for convention activities and networking with professionals twice their age.

It is always my hope that this first exposure to the scale of Farm Bureau and the breadth of opportunities within the agriculture industry ignites a passion to become leaders for the future. There’s something almost magical about watching young people realize they’re part of something bigger than themselves, connected by shared values and a common goal of advancing agriculture.

Another cornerstone of the American Farm Bureau Convention is the celebrating the leadership, skill and impact of the Young Farmers and Ranchers program (YF&R) across the country through three competitive events: Discussion Meet, Excellence in Agriculture and the Achievement Award. These events are more than contests; they’re

platforms that elevate new voices and showcase the work they do to make their farms or careers, the industry and their communities better.

Watching competitors share their ideas, business models, challenges and personal journeys is inspiring. Each participant brings a unique perspective shaped by geography, family history and personal experience, yet all share a common dedication to agriculture. The confidence and professionalism displayed throughout these competitions speak volumes about the strength of the next generation.

These young farmers and ranchers are balancing tradition with progress — honoring the past while embracing new technologies and ideas. Their willingness to step forward, compete and represent agriculture publicly is something worth celebrating. It’s a reminder that leadership in agriculture doesn’t happen by accident; it’s built through opportunity, encouragement and platforms like Farm Bureau.

On a more personal level, one of the highlights of attending the convention was reconnecting with friends from across the country. In agriculture, relationships matter. I have to plan extra travel time throughout the day because I can’t walk from one event to another without running into two to three people I know. From catching up with friends now working in different corners of the industry to meeting face-to-face with former mentors or peers from every era of my career, it is heartwarming and fulfilling to be with so many incredible friends.

Those relationships are what sustain this industry through challenges and change. Seeing familiar faces from across the country reinforced how interconnected agriculture truly is. Even though we may raise different commodities or work in different sectors, the foundation is the same — service, stewardship, and a commitment to rural America.

This meeting is magical not because it is right

next to Disneyland but because it’s a gathering place where agricultural leaders connect, ideas are exchanged, and the future of our industry is actively shaped.

Seeing students step into leadership, reconnecting with friends and colleagues, and celebrating young farmers and ranchers reaffirmed why events like this matter.

Agriculture’s story is being written every day, and after attending this convention, I’m confident the next chapters are in strong hands.

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© StatePoint Media

Statepoint Crossword

Theme: Super Bowl

CROSSWORD

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62						63			64			

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- ACROSS
1. Pakistani attire

5. Research location

8. Partridge's fruit tree

12. *Grid follower

13. * ____ Upshaw, multiple Super Bowl winner

14. Canada's national tree

15. Like Homer Simpson's head

16. Allege

17. Agenda entries

18. *Adding a rushing player

20. Aphrodite's lover

21. Not host

22. Tire meas.

23. Composure under strain

26. More distant

30. Thompson of "Some Kind of Wonderful"

31. Ubiquitous deciduous tree

34. Genealogical plant

35. Poetic feet

37. Dream time, acr.

38. The Romanovs, e.g.

39. Song for solo voice

40. Dishevel, as in hair

42. Clever humor

43. *SoFi ____, Super Bowl LXI venue

45. *Last year's Super Bowl winners

47. Web robot

48. Tesla Roadster with Starman location

50. a.k.a. podagra

52. *The only NFL team with perfect season

55. Plant-based laxative

56. Symphony member
- DOWN
57. "No ____ for you!"

59. No gains without them

60. Retired, abbr.

61. Field worker

62. Bohemian

63. Not Miss or Ms

64. Poker amount
57. "No ____ for you!"
59. No gains without them
60. Retired, abbr.
61. Field worker
62. Bohemian
63. Not Miss or Ms
64. Poker amount

38. Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young: " ____ Your Children"

40. Egyptian boy king, for short

41. Long jump

44. I to Greeks, pl.

46. Rob Marshall's 2005 movie

"Memoirs of a ____"

48. On the wagon

49. Land parcels

50. *Shoulder pads and cleats

51. "Put a lid ____!"

52. College dwelling

53. High part of day

54. Edible fat

55. Facial site

58. *Charlie Puth and Brandi Carlile, ____ game stars


1	9	7	2	6	2	9	8
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R	V	E	D		B	A	V	L		I	R	V

CONGRATULATIONS
to our School Spelling Bee
Winners!

Division A (Junior High)


Spelling Bee Winners



1st: Landen Hageman
2nd: Lucas Theis
3rd: Ty Schultz
4th: Mackley Glenn
5th: Casyn Miller

Division B (Elementary)

Spelling Bee Winners



1st: Hadlie Tyler
2nd: Jordan Koester
3rd: Jonathan Ogg
4th: Liam Henning
5th: Trey Albers

These students will advance to the Kingman County Spelling Bee on
Thursday, January 22nd at the Kingman Middle-High School Auditorium at
9:00 am! Spectators are welcome!

Photos courtesy of USD 332

Pratt County Commission Minutes for January 12

The Pratt County Commissioners met in regular session Monday, January 12, 2026, at 2:00 p.m. 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 Sawyer Gas Project

Heather reported she has spoken with the Kansas Corporation Commission, which agreed to issue an advance payment related to the Sawyer project. Heather’s assistance in administering the project was requested. Heather indicated she did not commit to formally administering the project but agreed to continue assisting with administrative paperwork. KGS is planning an in-person meeting and is in the process of scheduling it. County right of way issues may arise in connection with the new substations so she directed them to get in contact with Doug Freund, Pratt County Road and Bridge Supervisor.

Neighborhood Revitalization Meeting

Heather attended a neighborhood revitalization meeting on the previous Friday. She noted the topic continues to generate ongoing email correspondence and that the commission could discuss the topic later in the meeting.

Legislative Session Update

Heather advised the legislative session was beginning this week. A bill related

to the Neighborhood Revitalization is being proposed and she will monitor the progress of the bill.

American Legion Riders – Fourth of July Firework Donation Request

George Stevens requested a \$5,000 donation for the Fourth of July firework show. In order to take advantage of a vendor discount they are trying to order early. The typical annual contribution had previously been \$4,000 but that the amount was increased this year in recognition of the 250th anniversary of the United States, with the intent of providing a larger fireworks display.

Motion to Give the American Legion Riders \$5,000 for the Firework Show made by Commissioner Trinkle; seconded by Commissioner Shriver; motion passed 3-0.

NextEra

Cody Ackers and Robert Boyer with NextEra addressed the Commission regarding a recurring issue involving delivery drivers parking on roadways arriving at inappropriate hours near the project site. They have revised the dispatch plan and drivers will be directed to other areas and then be provided with the actual site address when appropriate preventing unauthorized roadside parking and off-hour arrivals. The Commissioners thanked them for providing the update and for their continued cooperation in resolving the roadway and parking concerns.

Health Department Contracts

Appointment of Local Health Officer

Motion to approve the contract with Dr. Aaron Zook for the Local Health Officer at \$300 per month made by Commissioner Shriver; seconded by Commissioner Trinkle; motion carried 3-0.

Appointment of Family Planning Provider

Motion to approve the contract with Dr. Hannah Vogt for the Family Planning Provider at \$68/hour made by Commissioner Shriver; seconded by Commissioner Trinkle; 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 with Darcie Van Der Vyver to discuss Salaries for 5 minutes at 2:15 p.m. made by Commissioner Shriver; seconded by Commissioner Trinkle. Motion carried 3-0.

Commissioners came out of executive session at 2:20 pm with no action taken.

Law Enforcement Equipment Notification – Armored Vehicle Acquisition

Max Barrett notified the Commissioners the Sheriff’s Office has received an armored vehicle through the LESO Program. Pursuant to federal orders, the acquisition of certain military-grade equipment is required to be disclosed publicly. This item was presented for informational and transparency purposes. The vehicle is a 2008 MMRAP. The departments only cost associated with the acquisition was shipping.

EMS Update

Brian Atteberry provided an operational update. EMS responded to approximately 1,367 calls, an increase from the prior year. The current medical bags will need replaced and he has been researching the best fit, final recommendations with quotes will be brought forward once a complete quote is obtained. Brian also discussed changes to the department’s continuing education platform.

EMS would like to utilize Prodigy at a cost saving of \$1,000 over the prior year vendor, Foamfrat, which was \$1,610 per year.

Motion to use Prodigy for continuing education for Pratt County EMS at \$1,610/year made by Commissioner Shriver; seconded by Commissioner Trinkle, motion carried 3-0.

Motion to move to executive session under the Non-Elected Personnel exception to the Kansas Open Meetings Act with Brian Atteberry to discuss a Work Comp claim for 5 minutes at 2:30 p.m. made by Commissioner Shriver; seconded by Commissioner Trinkle; motion carried 3-0.

Commissioners came out of executive session at 2:34 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 Neighborhood Revite with DJ McMurry for 30 minutes at 2:35 p.m. made by Commissioner Shriver; seconded by Commissioner Trinkle; motion carried 3-0.

Commissioners came out of executive session at 3:05 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 Neighborhood Revite with DJ McMurry for 20 minutes at 3:06 pm. Made by Commissioner Shriver; seconded by Commissioner Trinkle; motion carried 3-0.

Commissioners came out executive session at 3:26 pm with no action taken.

Motion to move to executive session under the Attorney-Client exception to the Kansas Open Meetings Act to discuss Neighborhood Revite

with DJ McMurry for 10 minutes at 3:27 p.m. made by Commissioner Shriver; seconded by Commissioner Trinkle; motion carried 3-0.

Commissioners came out of executive session at 3:35 pm with no action taken.

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 Pay for 5 minutes at 3:37 p.m. made by Commissioner Shriver; seconded by Commissioner Trinkle; motion carried 3-0.

Commissioners came out of executive session 3:42 pm with no action taken.

Clerk’s Personnel Request

Motion to approve a .50 salary adjustment for 1 year for Susan Pixler at 21.94/hr made by Commissioner Shriver; seconded by Commissioner Trinkle; motion carried 3-0.

Motion to approve a .50 salary adjustment for 1 year for Tricia Clark at \$19.04/hr made by Commissioner Shriver; seconded by Commissioner Trinkle; motion carried 3-0.

Courthouse Maintenance/ Cleaning Items Elevator Inspection & Repairs

Motion to approve TKE Elevator to replace/repair the door restrictors and pit safety at a cost of \$7,816.75 to be paid out of Courthouse funds made by Commissioner Shriver; seconded by Commissioner Trinkle; motion carried 3-0.

Prior recommendation involving a full piping system replacement, has been placed on hold due to other priorities, but commissioners requested InteGreen be contacted to address water leaks that require assessment so a practical smaller scale

solution could be looked at to address current leaks and assess the hot water heater.

Courthouse Cleaning

Motion to approve M&Maria Cleaning Service at 30/hr made by Commissioner Shriver; seconded by Commissioner Trinkle; 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 the Senior Center Organization and Community Center lease with Tara Pagenkopf for 20 minutes at 3:47 p.m. made by Commissioner Shriver; seconded by Commissioner Trinkle; motion carried 3-0.

Commissioners came out of executive session at 4:04 pm with no action taken .

Senior Services Grant Documentation Corrections

Grant forms that had already been signed and approved needed a State fiscal year correction from 2026 to 2027. Additional documentation was requested from the granting agency on the certifications and assurances also needed completed and resigned.

Appointment of Commission Chair

Motion to nominate Morgan Trinkle as Chairman of the County Commission for the current year made by Commissioner Shriver; seconded by Commissioner Jones; motion passed 3-0.

The Commission unanimously approved the minutes of the January 6th 2026 meeting.

The Commission unanimously approved the voucher for January 12, 2026.

Meeting adjourned at 4:34 p.m.



Alan Albers is shown here with Christy Davis at the Clayworks in Hutchinson Saturday. Christy is one of three Democratic candidates running for the US Senate seat currently held by Roger Marshall who is up for reelection this November.



Last week Alan Albers attended a street protest against ICE.



The prayer service for Renee Nicole Good last Sunday night.

KCHS Pets Ready for Adoption

Leo



Oh, my, it seems that even a Christmas scarf with Santa on it can't quite make Leo happy. He sooooo wants a home with people of his own.

Leo is a mix of Australian Red Heeler and Labrador Retriever, so he is a working dog. He has been at the shelter for over a year now, and that is hard to believe. He's a nice, nice dog. He is about 4 years old, weighs about 60 pounds and can be adopted for \$180.00.

He loves people, and the shelter has this to say about him: "Smart dog...lots going on in that little brain of his. He likes to stay active and enjoys being outside. And he loves treats! Leo is basically a working dog and will do best if he has a purpose. Like keeping intruders away or helping around the farm or yard. He's friendly, listens well and will learn to follow the commands of a confident adult. He can get along with other dogs once he knows them. But he will do fine as an only dog as well."


Felix

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This three-year-old handsome fellow is Felix the cat. He is a very sweet teenager-aged fella. He wants a lazy lap to lounge in and where he will feel loved and cared for. He's a newcomer to the shelter as he's only arrived on the 5th of this month.


“There may be times when we are powerless to prevent injustice, but there must never be a time when we fail to protest.”
— Elie Wiesel



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The Cunningham Burn Site is locked. A \$50.00 deposit is required to obtain a key at City Hall. Your deposit is cheerfully refunded when you return the key.

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Janet Sisco

Janet Kay Sisco, 80, passed away Thursday, January 15, 2026 at Park West Plaza in Wichita. She was born on May 29, 1945 in Lyons to B.C. and Eva (Dalton) Killingsworth. Janet married Richard Lynn Sisco on November 18, 1972 in Ulysses. He preceded her in death on September 3, 2016.



Janet graduated from Kingman High School in 1963. She worked as a police dispatcher in Ulysses until just after she was married and became a homemaker. She attended Reach Church after moving to Pratt in 2015. She enjoyed cooking, baking, sewing, embroidery, crocheting, reading the Bible and spending time with her grandchildren.

She is survived by her daughters, Amanda (David) Harbour of Pratt and Melinda Clark of Abbeyville; sister, Eva (Jerry) Bonham of Manter; grandchildren, Kendrick D. (Erica) Sisco, Reana Sisco, Kaylee (finance), Jaron Lane) Harbour, Karlee Harbour and Miranda Sisco; and great-granddaughters, Lakelynn and Indie Nall.

Janet is preceded in death by her parents; husband, Richard Sisco; brothers, Roy Killingsworth, B.C. Killingsworth, Jr., Donald Killingsworth and Richard Killingsworth; and sisters, Louise Owens and Lou Lyman.

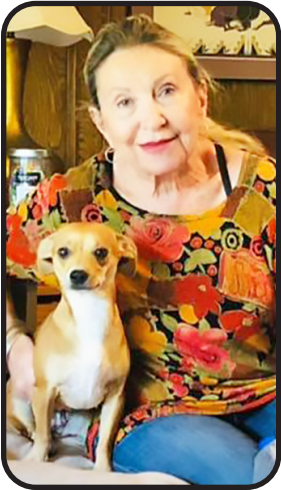
Funeral service was held Tuesday, January 20, 2026 at Reach Church, Pratt with Pastor JD Washington presiding. Burial followed at Greenlawn Cemetery, Pratt.

Memorials may be made to Silver Maple Camp.

Karen Fairchild

Karen Sue Fairchild, longtime, well-loved resident of Denton, Texas, passed away after a brief illness on January 19, 2026

Karen was born on June 9, 1942, in Kingman, Kansas, to Dean Fairchild and Margaret (DeWeese) Fairchild. After graduating from Kingman High, she went on to earn her Nursing degree.



She began what would become a distinguished and successful career of over 45 years in Nursing. Most of that would be as Operating Room Supervisor at Westgate Hospital and later at Dr Stuart Lipton's surgery center. To say she was born to be a Nurse would be an understatement. Smart, Hardworking, and always compassionate would all describe her.

Most of all, Karen was fun in any situation. Almost never met a stranger and was as dependable as a friend/loved one as they come. She loved gardening, finding a good bargain, socializing, and always dressed to impress.

In retirement, she became a volunteer for the local hospital auxiliary, biggest dog lover of all time, and running buddy of her beloved neighbor, Warren Kinsler

She is predeceased by her daughter, Shelly Delaine Smith, Parents Dean & Margaret (DeWeese) Fairchild, and brother James Curtis Fairchild. She is survived by her son, Samuel Dean (Laura) Smith, of Highland Village, TX. Two grandchildren, Mac Smith, of College Station, TX, and Madalyn Blanton, of Double Oak, TX, Two wild great children (Ireland and Oliver) as well as countless Texas friends and family in her beloved hometown and final resting place of Hoosier Cemetery in Kingman, KS.

In lieu of flowers, donations made to the Kingman Healthcare Center Foundation would be deeply appreciated. Please send to KHCF, 750 West D Avenue, Kingman, KS 67068

Tentatively visitation will be at Livingston Funeral Home in Kingman on Fri, 01/23, from 4:30 PM to 6:00 PM. Funeral Service will be Saturday, 01/24, at 10:30 AM. Luncheon to be held immediately afterwards at Livingston Family Center.

Karla Mead

Karla Fern Mead, 64, passed away Friday, January 16, 2026 at Wheatlands Nursing Home in Kingman. She was born on January 15, 1962 in Hutchinson to Donald LeRoy and Mary Fern (Stauffer) Woods. Karla married Danny Leroy Mead on November 20, 1983 at First United Methodist Church in Pratt. They were married for 42 years.



Karla graduated from Nickerson High School in 1980. She worked at the doctor office completing medical records in Pratt and served at The Corner Cafe in Riverside, Missouri. She was a member of All Saints Episcopal Church. She was a Boy Scout Leader and member of BPOE Elks Lodge 1451. She was an avid sports fan. She enjoyed playing volleyball, softball, and for Charitable teams. She loved watching the Kansas City Chiefs and Kansas City Royals. Her favorite activities were spending time and watching her grandchildren.

She is survived by her husband, Danny Mead of Pratt; children, Kyle (Brittany) Mead of Pratt, Elizabeth (Daniel Z.) Mead of San Francisco, California and Michael Mead of Pratt; brothers, Kelvin Woods of Claremore, Oklahoma, Curtis (Vickie) Woods of Hutchinson; sisters, Cyndi (Dave) Wixson of Bella Vista, Arkansas and Cathy Becerra of Lenexa; and grandchildren, Jessalyn Mead, Gehrig Goss, Davis Mead, Gunner Mead, Milo Zanartu and Letty Mead.

Karla is preceded in death by her parents.

Cremation has taken place. A memorial service will be held at 2:00 p.m., Saturday, January 31, 2026 at Larrison Mortuary, 300 Country Club Road, Pratt with Reverend Karen Lemon presiding.

Memorials may be made to Alzheimer Association. Online condolences may be made at www.larrison-mortuary.com.

Jerry Baird

Jerry D. Baird, 77, passed away January 16, 2026 at Pratt Health and Rehab. He was born on October 22, 1948 in Hunter, Kansas to Harold and Alice (Meitler) Baird. Jerry married Linda (Wolf) Baird October 12, 1968. They were married for 53 years. She preceded him in death on March 26, 2022.



Jerry graduated from Russell High School in 1967. He started as a supervisor and consultant for Halliburton Services in 1968 and worked for them for 20 plus years. He then moved on to consulting for Plaster & Wald and then transferred to ConocoPhillips where he retired. He enjoyed hunting, fishing, playing cards, going to the casino to play penny slots and going on vacation with his family.

He is survived by children, Lisa (Donnie) Goertzen, Terry (Tammy) Baird, and Michael Baird all of Pratt; brother in-law, Roger Legleiter; 10 grandchildren and 28 great-grandchildren.

Jerry is preceded in death by his parents; wife, Linda Baird; brothers, Larry Baird, Mark Baird; sister, Tracy Legleiter.

Visitation will be Thursday, January 22, 2026 from 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. at Larrison Mortuary, 300 Country Club Road, Pratt. Funeral service will be held at 10:30 a.m., Friday, January 23, 2026 at Larrison Mortuary with Pastor Tom Walters presiding. Family requests comfortable and casual dress. Burial will follow at Greenlawn Cemetery, Pratt.

Memorials may be made to Interim Hospice. Online condolences may be made at www.larrison-mortuary.com

John Boyle

Rev. John Edward Boyle, 93, of Lindsborg, KS, peacefully passed away on Thursday, January 15, 2026, at Pleasant View Home, Inman.



John was born on November 14, 1932, in Vivian, South Dakota, the son of Everett Francis and Pauline (DuVall) Boyle. He graduated from Wessington Springs (South Dakota) High School in 1952, and from 1952 to 1954, attended Wessington Springs College, later graduating from Greenville College (Illinois) in 1957. He then graduated with a Divinity degree from Asbury Theological Seminary.

On July 21, 1956, John was united in marriage to Bonnie Josephine Young in Glenville, Minnesota. This union was blessed with three sons, Joseph, Jay, and Jack. John and Bonnie were married for 64 years prior to Bonnie's passing on April 12, 2021.

Rev. John Boyle served as a Methodist pastor for 45 years, retiring in 1997. He pastored several United Methodist churches in the state from 1982 until he retired. He was a member of the McPherson Free Methodist Church. While living in Lindsborg, he was a member of Trinity United Methodist Church. He enjoyed singing in the church choirs.

He is survived by sons, Jay Boyle (Marta) and Jack Boyle (Jean); daughter-in-law, Susan Boyle; a sister, Hazel Styles; two grandchildren, Dustin Boyle (Liz) and Johnathan Boyle; three great-grandchildren, Clara Boyle, Walker Boyle, and Keltly Boyle; and many extended relatives and friends.

John was preceded in death by his parents; wife; son, Joseph Edward Boyle; and brothers, William "Bill", Robert, Harold, and Howard Boyle.

A visitation will be held from 5:00 PM until 7:00 PM, Friday, January 23, 2026, at Stockham Family Funeral Home, McPherson. A memorial service will be held at 10:30 AM, Saturday, January 24, 2026, at Trinity United Methodist Church, Lindsborg, with Rev. Catherine Fitzgerald officiating. The final resting place will be in Glenville, Minnesota at a later date.

Memorial donations may be given to Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, Central Christian College of Kansas, or Samaritan's Purse in care of Stockham Family Funeral Home, 205 North Chestnut, McPherson, KS 67460.

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