

Editorial

Birthday, Birthday

As the pages of this week’s publication fall into the hands of my readers, I will be turning a whopping 42 years young, and as my boys reminded me of my impending birthday, I was struck forcibly by the fact that I have been with this company for over 22 years, and reflected on just how differently I look at things now vs. at 20 years old.

Man, how the time flies!

I was diligently working at the *Ellis Review* under the direction of my first publisher, Bill Gasper, when I first began, hired to write feature stories and work a few office hours.

My first story was a feature on Mr. Be-fort mowing the St. Mary’s cemetery for all those years.

Then, I was thrown into the editor’s chair after a loss of staff members was experienced in the office, and although I knew very, very little about running a newspaper office, I learned on the fly and quickly cherished the position.

Shortly after taking the lead chair, I met and eventually grew to deeply appreciate and respect my second publisher, Jack Krier, who taught me nearly everything I know about weekly journalism and watched as I formed an insatiable passion for the industry and all of its inner workings.

My mentor passed away suddenly, and although the loss was deeply felt by myself, my staff and the company as a whole, I was blessed to fall under the guidance of my current publisher Frank Mercer, whose steady hand keeps me on the level as I continue to grow and love the Main Street Media company.

He and his lovely wife, Elaine, whose limitless patience and attention to detail is not to be rivaled, are absolutely amazing to work under, and I deeply appreciate their guidance and confidence.

I did not, however, picture myself when I was 20 in this chair at 42, doing the work I’m doing.

As so many young beginners do, my sights were set high and on the city, my goals were in an office in a daily high rise,

somewhere on the east coast.

I wanted combat journalism following 9/11 more than anything at that point, and truth be told, felt a little cheated when I landed the little chair in my hometown news office so long ago.

Has my perspective changed!

I’m sure at the time I did not think this is where my roots would grow, but here I am, and here my roots have seemed to firmly plant themselves.

Looking back now, I know that I am blessed in this job, and it is my pleasure and privilege to work for those of you who continue to make the rural dream a reality in this wonderful little community, each day.

Although I didn’t know it at 20, I understand now why card showers for your uncle’s 90th birthday are so special.

I get why those anniversary parties for a couple’s 50th are so precious and rare.

I see why the Rotary and Chamber minutes are so important to print.

I grieve with you when you bring in your loved one’s obituary notice.

The friendships, love and respect that have grown in my years with this company could never be justified with mere words.

I wouldn’t trade one minute of my time serving the public, writing for all of you, taking pictures at the fairs and festivals, catching games under the ball field lights, celebrating your families and growing the community.

There’s nothing more rewarding than bringing a smile to the faces of my readers, and although I have learned much so far, I look forward to the lessons yet to come.

Although I have always said my birthday is just another day, I receive the greatest gift each week, with your friendship and readership, and the blessing of continuing to do what I love.

I thank you all, each day, for those gifts, because they really do keep on giving, and I’m so grateful for you all. –  
*Nickole Byers*

Political Happenings

By Larry Lambert

The views expressed here are solely those of the author.



Annie and I are following Grandson Will's Cross Country efforts. Will is in the Nebraska Christian School huddle here.

Bernie Sanders thinks socialism is the future of the Democratic party.

One in Twenty deaths in Canada are from legal suicide as all the safeguards when it became legal have been striped away.

Our rights come from the creator is troubling to Democratic Senator Tim Kaine. Senator Kaine says our rights come from government.

A new Gallop poll shows 66% of Democrats view socialism positively and only 42% of Democrats view capitalism favorably.

Covid vaccines for children should be by choice not mandate.

There will be new guidelines on prayer in public schools. I wonder what they will say?

Cracker Barrel, to their credit, has stopped remodeling stores, has eliminated some cost cutting food tricks and removed DEI from it's web page.

A task force found numerous instances of anti christian bias under President Joe Biden.

“Charlie Kirk was a fierce defender of freedom and common sense who used his voice to advocate for American values. Hateful rhetoric has likely inspired this act of cowardly violence from a terrorist who lacks Charlie’s gift of using sound logic to score political points. Charlie was a patriot and devoted his life to the cause of open debate and the to the Lord he was accountable to and the country he loved. His assassination is yet another sign that our nation is unraveling. There are wicked forces at work that are seeking to destroy our country. Charlie Kirk was an extraordinary young man. He had spoken at around 850 college campuses. Charley Kirk was about to answer a question about transgender shooters. One in 3 students at elite campuses say violence is acceptable to stop a campus speaker. 72% say it's appropriate to "shout down" speakers on controversial topics (like abortion). the people who are to blame are the Leftists who've brainwashed young people into thinking that murder is an acceptable way to win an argument. One hundred sixty-six US colleges are suppressing free speech. The left is killing the right literally now. The left is using violence and fear to further their political agenda. Their goal is to silence the opposition. This is a divesting blow for the conservative movement. We should double our efforts to save this country. The culture of death needs to end. Faith in the Republican party in Washington is wimpy. I see the left like Jasmine Crockett said 80% of violent crime in America is committed by white supremacists which is grossly factually incorrect and that statement is entered into the congressional record. Where is GOP leadership calling this out. Our leadership in Congress won't even rebuke leftist in their own chamber when they have power. Charley Kirk was telling students don't be deceived. He is a martyr for our faith.

There are several people on the left I hear from here in Smith County. Much of my column is news from the radio network American Family Radio. This is the most truthful source I can find. Some times when people don't agree with things written in the column they attack me however many people are complementary. Thanks! I do make mistakes. I have 3 dupuytren's contractures which makes it difficult to type. Dealing with them has cost over \$10,000 and for other health reasons so I'll have to retire someday.

The producer Price Index for August was weaker than expected.

Memphis May be the next city on the list to bring down crime.

Why was the August 22nd murder of a Ukraine refugee in Charlotte, N.C. by a black man, Carlos Brown Jr. ignored for days by the legacy media? Liberal Judge Teresa Stokes, a lesbian released Brown and it was the 14th time.

A new study finds Marijuana could lead to chromosomal defects in human egg cells and lead to issues such as infertility, miscarriages and even genetic defects in babies. THC is highly addictive, 10 to 30 times stronger than it was at one time.

In Kansas news: Governor Kelly has been getting away with not turning over SNAP data on 730,000 applicants to the Federal Government and the USDA and is breaking State and Federal law putting Kansas SNAP (Food Stamps) benefits at risk.

Deadline to register to vote or update voter information before the November 4th Municipal elections is October 14th.

"God alone provides meaning to life that-apart from him- is meaningless". Ecclesiastes 8:14 paraphrased.

Shop Local~ Shop Smith

Smith County Commissioners Meeting Minutes

The County Commissioners met in a regular session on September 2, 2025, in the County Commissioners’ room. Present were Commissioners Brady Peterson, Kurt Ifland and Jim Gwennap. Also present was Ashley Maxwell, Clerk, and Travis Story, Assistant Road Supervisor.

At 8:30 a.m. Gwennap called the meeting to order and opened with prayer.

A motion was made by Ifland and seconded Peterson to approve the 8/25/2025 regular minutes as amended. Motion carried unanimously.

A motion was made by Ifland and seconded by Peterson to approve the 9/02/2025 agenda as amended. Motion carried unanimously.

The commissioners and Story discussed the following:

1. The commissioners expressed their appreciation for Travis Story.
2. Ifland discussed F Rd, Hwy 9 to 230 Rd. Ifland stated the water is running down the roadway and this is a bus route that needs fixed.
3. Ifland discussed L Rd, South of Hwy 36 and the work that was completed last week.
4. Ifland discussed the need to blade the rock. The recent weather has been in our favor.
5. Peterson discussed U Rd between 10 Rd and 30 Rd.
6. Gwennap discussed V Rd between 140 Rd to 100 Rd.
7. Gwennap asked about the culverts on 50 Rd, East of Hwy 281. Gwennap asked about where the bridge crew is now. Story stated they are moving to EE Rd between 300 Rd and 310 Rd.
8. Gwennap discussed the bridge on AA Rd, North of 110 Rd. Gwennap stated the grader ditches must be made functional in the area

as well.

9. Gwennap discussed 50 Rd, East of Hwy 281. Gwennap stated there is a water hole in the middle of the roadway.
10. Gwennap asked about the Q Rd, South of Hwy 50 Rd project. Story stated it will start soon but won’t be completed until after milo harvest.
11. Gwennap discussed 20 Rd between K Rd and M Rd. Gwennap shared this area didn’t get properly bladed.
12. Gwennap discussed 40 Rd between O Rd and P Rd and O Rd between 40 Rd and 30 Rd.
13. Gwennap discussed the need for gravel on P Rd between 50 Rd and the state line.
14. Ifland asked about 1st St. in Gaylord. Ifland also discussed installation of the tube on the East side of town by the schoolhouse.
15. Story discussed an employee on medical leave. Story stated this change will result in only utilizing 1 part time mower.
16. Story shared he was approached about the valve grinder. Story stated it hasn’t been utilized for several years, and Story would like to sell it. Sealed bids will be accepted until September 29, 2025, at 9:00 a.m. Contact Story for more information.

Story left the meeting.

A motion was made by Ifland and seconded by Peterson to approve resolution 25-10 authorizing the preparation and submission of an application to the Kansas Housing Resources Corporation (KHRC) for the Kansas Housing Investor Tax Credit (HITC) and Moderate-Income Housing (MIH) Grant. Motion carried unanimously.

A motion was made by Peterson and seconded by Ifland to accept the resignation of Colbie Lewis, effective September 12, 2025. Motion carried unani-

mously.

Allen Lanus joined the meeting and discussed the following:

1. Lanus shared a summary of calls for the month of August.
2. Lanus stated he went to Hays last week to obtain materials for the grant he was awarded.
3. Lanus shared Brian continues to train and learn. He has full access training in two weeks.
4. Lanus stated Brett Decker will be working a couple night shifts while employees attend APCO training.

Casey Fraser joined the meeting.

Lanus left the meeting.

Fraser shared a quote for  
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