

Political Happening *By Larry Lambert*

The views expressed here are solely those of the author.

Talks are continuing with Cuba. The strict oil embargo significantly weakens the economic situation and the Cuban Communist Government continues to fall apart. Now there isn't much electricity in Cuba.

Iran says the Strait of Hormuz will remain shut in an attempt to leverage global economic disruption.

The threat on U.S. terrorism may rise. I would expect to see some sort of new protest movement in Iran soon. Not sure when however. According to the poll by the New York Times 83% of Republicans still support or partially support Operation Epic Fury. Lately President Trump says Iran wants to make a deal. I'm skeptical. Iran can't be trusted to do

what they say.

Islam is using our country's freedom to spread Sharia Law. Iran has been threatening Israel for years. Israel has finally said "we are not taking it anymore". The war in Iran is America first. The younger generation is listening to some of the crazy stuff on the woke left.

Countries like China and

Qatar give billions of dollars in gifts to Colleges to influence higher education.

Many households overpaid the IRS in 2025 and because of changes in tax laws are getting that money back.

The divide in our country continues. Most Republicans want law and order with regard to our border. Many Democrats want as many people to come here as want to because borders are immoral. Some in the past viewed border control as racist. Trump derangement syndrome is real. I don't care for the manner in which he speaks sometimes but the left are following the message of hate. The liberal news media is in lockstep with the Democrat party.

The political left and the main stream media want the United States to lose this conflict in Iran because if the United States loses it is a liability and it hurts President Trump. All the Washington Democrats except one have Trump Derangement Syndrome. It seems as if the Washington Democrats want to disrupt the economy as much as they can because they know the number one issue in the election in November is the economy. It is the normal vs. the crazy. Whatever President Trump is for Washington Democrats are against.

This coming November there will be 36 Governorship's on the ballots.

Voice of America was, back in the day, designed to transmit into countries of dictatorships, especially communist dictatorships, it was of a cold war programming. Now under a succession of Democrat Presidents, a patriotic service to the country is not what they do any more. Now it sounds like NPR. The liberal media has been insistent as to how great the Voice of America is. A Federal District Judge, Royce Lamberth, ordered more than 1000 VOA employees back to work as a DOGE cut was ruled an overreach and Illegal.

CBS News says it is shutting down its radio news service. It went on the air in September of 1927. Remember Edward R. Murrow?

An Obama Judge has blocked an Arkansas Ten Commandments law. The Judge says the Ten Commandments are of no educational value to students and I say that is ridiculous!

After the Trump Administrations notifying California, Maine, Minnesota and New York of fraud probes, South Florida with over a billion dollars in false claims of state medicaid fraud for medical equipment claims is being cracked down on also.

Over the 12 years I was in elected office of the Smith County Republican Central Committee, election security was one of the most common questions and comments from our residents.

Only 12 states in our country do not require proof of identification in order to vote. In 38 states you have to show some form of ID.

Congress is scheduled for a two week break at the end of next week so they really need to figure something out about the partial Government shutdown. So far more than 350 TSA agents have quit during the shutdown.

When the Kansas House and Kansas Senate pass similar legislation they must become letter perfect if the legislation has a chance of becoming law. A Conference Committee is appointed if bills differ. The Conference Committee process may be one of the most consequential but least understood aspects of the legislative process. In Kansas, a typical conference committee is made up of two Republicans and one Democrat from each chamber. Conference committee membership depends on the subject matter.

Property taxes are without a doubt the most vexing problem facing the Kansas legislature. Everyone can agree they are out of control. The problem is that

property taxes are levied at the local level. In recent years the Kansas legislature has completely eliminated the small state portion of property taxes and increased the homestead exemption.

Reminder: It is an election year. Every State Representative is up for election. A number of legislators (Senators and Representatives) are running for statewide office.

You may have heard about the provision in the federal One Big Beautiful Bill that created Trump Accounts. Trump accounts are a federally supported savings vehicle for eligible children, including \$1000 in seed money for children born between January 1, 2025 and December 31, 2028. These tax advantaged investment accounts allow parents, relatives and others to contribute up to \$5,000 annually and these funds are automatically invested in American companies. Parents remain the custodian of the funds until the child turns 18. It's a great opportunity for children to begin saving for their future, learn about how the market works, and build a nest egg. But the program only works if you use it and that's where the Born to Invest Act by State Treasurer Steven Johnson comes in.

I officially filed for reelection to continue fighting for Kansas values in Congress.

Kansans deserve a strong conservative voice who will stand up to Washington overreach, defend our freedoms, secure the border, and put America First. The fight isn't over. There's more work to do to stop the radical policies coming out of Washington. I'm ready to keep fighting for Kansas.---Tracey Mann

Every Jew on earth right now is a descendant of Sarah, Rebecca, Rachael or Leah, who were Jewish women in the Bible.

Psalms 31:7 But I am trusting you, O Lord, saying, 'You are my God!'

Editorial

250th Challenge

In any business with as much history as the news business has, traditions and quirks often characterize local paper offices, and customers grow to expect certain atmospheres when they visit their hometown newsrooms. It's always mind-blowing to me how these little quirks in news offices (the oldest business in many of our towns) reflect so perfectly the personalities of our communities. Personalities that have grown from well over 100 years of covering generations of families and newcomers alike. Many of us are approaching or have recently celebrated our 150th birthdays, but many forget how important your little hubs of information are!

At the *World* office in WaKeeney, for example, a well-loved and decades-old tradition was the candy bowl on the front counter. This was not just any candy bowl. While many candy bowls are sat out in many local businesses, this candy bowl was different. Filled only with kisses, they are specifically for customers who had business with the editor, and were directed to catch a kiss on the way out with each and every visit. Not just for kids, and customers consistently comment on the gesture and appreciate a little bit of sweetness during their adult day.

Some may not understand the significance of this candy bowl, it's just a candy bowl, right? Wrong. There are not many weekly newspaper offices that end up with so many people still coming in each week when the paper prints to get it 'hot off the press', so to speak. Nearly all of them reach into that little candy bowl, as they have done for years.

When our country was thrown for the biggest loop in most of our lifetimes, the pandemic shut down the country and contact with others, closed up the doors of the *World*, and unfortunately emptied the *World's* candy bowl. It was a big hole, felt by staff and customer alike!

Tucked away in a drawer, the little candy bowl sat empty for almost exactly two years, just waiting for the drawer to open again. A little spring cleaning in the office opened the drawer I had kept it in, and I snatched the bowl up right away and held onto it. I was struck with the symbolism of that little empty glass bowl, and what it represented at that moment, and covered in dust, ink and papercuts, so much community life, in that little bowl.

Our rural communities are kind of like that little glass bowl at the *World* office. We were all so full of life and business at one time in our communities, growing our families here, and building lives with friends and other loved ones. Then, we were all emptied and tucked away as population migration, online shopping and the subsequent higher taxes gutted our communities.

Businesses closed, streets under disrepair, services cut, the cascading effect has been swift and severe. No matter what cuts we make, what changes we implement, what investments we give to our businesses, many local owners feel overwhelmed and deathly underpatronized. Our way of life has been tucked away, right down to our candy bowls.

As the light begins to shine on issues in our cities, schools, counties, states and the nation that we wouldn't have otherwise seen, it feels as though we are all desirous of dusting off ourselves and our candy bowls and filling both up again for our families, friends, customers and communities. Getting our lives back.

We are longing for each other I believe, for fellowship, for gathering, for sharing again. For giving business to people we know and can talk to. We desire safe transactions, honest dealings, and products and services we can trust. I can feel it when I talk with, work with or engage with the communities we serve at the newspaper.

I know the picture can be bleak. So many people gone, so many businesses lost, so many buildings empty. So it's a challenge! We're Americans! Rural Americans, at that, who are some of the most reliable, resilient and hearty people in this nation! We are giving up our way of life because the hill is too large?!? I can't believe it. I won't. I feel it inside of my own heart when I walk the streets of my hometown. You cannot tell me I am the only person who feels that way!

So here's my challenge for you, and

it's easy, because what better time to make an impact in your towns than our nation's 250th year?

The traditions, routines, consistency and so much more has been tucked away for far too long. So much has been damaged, lost and forgotten, and we must not allow that to perpetuate any longer.

I challenge you all to do one special project in your towns to make this amazing milestone for our beautiful nation. Join with your neighbors, throw a block party. If you're a non profit group, have a dance, have fireworks for Independence Day, set a monument, hold artwork competitions and coloring contests for the youngsters, BBQ competitions and alumni baseball games, anything that celebrates not only our American Spirit, but also your spirit for the lifestyle we've built here.

Especially in rural America, we must pull up our bootstraps and get back to work. We cannot wait on anyone to come and save us. We MUST get back to building our communities, and strengthening and supporting our local business districts. Get back to focusing on what's important, what's right in front of us all...get back to America. We have not lost ourselves, we have just been on hold, tucked away in a drawer, and it's time to change that trend! Remembering where we've come from is an important part of that, and celebrating our community's history and legacy alongside that of our amazing nation just makes sense right now!

The practicing of traditions is not just vital to the survival of our cultures and communities, but to our American way of life. Traditions are also the surest way for businesses and communities to build and reinforce trust and consistency with customers and residents. That is what has built our nation, not big cities, big pockets and big business. It is the individual relationship, personal service, and integrity that has built this country. That's what keeps it all alive and growing. The sweetness that comes from community and relationship building in our wonderful communities is better than any piece of candy I could ever put in that candy bowl.

Now, there are doubts that one person can make a difference. What can just one person do? Well, there were doubts that one small candy bowl could affect change, but I will tell you that when the word got around town that week, that I had put the candy bowl back out, I've never sold more newspapers over our counter.

There is much work to be done, in our offices and businesses, in our communities, in our world. It can seem daunting, all that work, largely left undone. But think, just for a second, about the drop of water and the ripple it creates. And then think about the same ripple if we DO NOT do something to save our communities. Think about losing more businesses, more people. It'll never be too big of a task if we all remember that drops add up, and can add up quickly. You are not alone in your passion for your community, for your hometowns. But we can no longer sit back and wait for something or someone to save us. We have to be the drop. We have to dust off that candy bowl and fill it back up again. Build our communities positively, be sweet as we do so, and our communities will start to feel alive again. Full of business, people, and a great way of life. So, I'm challenging you all this year, dust off that candy bowl and fill it to the top.

I'm encouraging my customers, advertisers and readers to work together or work alone, but create an impact in your communities this year. I'm taking that first step at rebuilding what has been lost. The work is up to us, and the ability is within us all to help America back up on its feet. Want to help but don't know where to go? Come on in, there are many projects here where you can roll up your sleeves, and get to work on something important. This effort will take every one of us as regular residents of our communities. It's time you get involved. It's time you made your mark! Let's celebrate our nation's 250th with a rural effort that our communities will be talking about for years to come! I challenge you all!

— Nickole Byers



From the Blue Side

By Kelli Schmidt & Lori Bortz

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Leave it to two Democratic gals to turn casual chats into community conversations. We are not here to argue; we are here to nudge, laugh, listen, and maybe raise an eyebrow along the way. Much conversation was had at our Saturday March 21st Meeting. We were happy to host Colin McRoberts running for First District (The Big First) The biggest district in Kansas. Colin believes in real solutions for real problems for Kansans, including supporting agriculture and biofuels like E15, strengthening small towns, creating stable trade relationships so farming is profitable without relying on bailouts, looking at how tariffs are impacting farmers, protecting rural hospitals and numerous other issues. One of his priorities would be to restore USAID, not only to save millions of lives around the world, but allow Kansas farmers to feed the world again and make money doing it! We encourage you to visit www.colinforkansas.com to see all of his platforms. We are so appreciative that Colin came to Smith Center from Lawrence, Kansas to speak to his rural voters! We are also thankful for all who attended!!

The next Smith County Democrat meeting will be held back on the regular schedule of the third Monday, April 20th at 5:00. We will be hosting Lauren Reinhold, candidate for First Congressional Dis-

trict. Lauren is from Lawrence, Kansas as well and is committed to ensuring government functions well for the people of Kansas. Lauren planned to continue a long career in federal government administration, unfortunately, her plans changed when DOGE cut SSA programs. We will also be hosting a Candidate for Governor, Marty Tully. We invite everyone to come and hear what these candidates have to say!

State News: Kelly signed House Bill 2299 which requires students to store personal electronic devices in "in-accessible" locations during school hours and also prohibits students from accessing their digital devices until after the final school bell. Other states have taken this action as well after research has concluded that students on devices have a damaging affect on their ability to concentrate and learn.

Last week, House Speaker Dan Hawkins abruptly adjourned the House without completing General Orders. He did so after learning that a supermajority of legislators were planning to take action on SB 284 and SB 360, bills that would make prescription medication more affordable for Kansans. He adjourned early to avoid debate and substantive reform. Speaker Hawkins is prioritizing insurance companies over bringing down medication costs for Kansans and over the well

being of Kansans. This suppresses the will of the chamber to avoid passing productive legislation, whereas he consistently makes time for harmful lawmaking bills. Why does he flee from an opportunity to help Kansans—especially when Kansans elect officials to prioritize issues like affordability!

In the national news - It's estimated that US oil companies could gain a windfall of \$60B this year if crude prices maintain the levels they have hit since the start of Trump's war on Iran. Remember that Big Oil spent nearly \$100M to get Trump elected in 2024. That investment is paying off quite well for them.

As the war enters its 4th week, President Trump on Friday slammed NATO allies as "cowards" for not sending troops to help open the Strait of Hormuz, a critical waterway for the global oil trade that remains effectively closed amid Iran's continued retaliation for Israel's attack on the South Pars natural gas field. But our Allies are not interested in fighting Trump's War as they were not even briefed before bombs started flying.

This week we have seen the Director of National Counter-terrorism, Joe Kent, resign over Trump's Iran War, stating in his resignation letter "Iran posed no imminent threat to our nation, and it is clear that we started this war due to pressure from Israel..." In

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