



## Group gathering support to end your right to know

Across Kansas, groups that represent public officials are gathering support for a massive assault on your right to know.

The main focus this year will be a push to end or severely limit public notices, which for nearly a century and a half have been published in the state's independent newspapers.

Many cities and counties have adopted "platforms" for legislative action written in Topeka by the state League of Municipalities and the Kansas Association of Counties.

These two groups, financed by taxpayers' money, spend much of their time trying to find ways to keep the workings of government hidden from the taxpayers.

In a democracy, that just ain't right.

In the past, the municipal league and the counties have fought most attempts to strengthen open meetings and open records law. You'd think public officials would understand that the taxpayers need to know what government is up to.

Instead, these groups use your money to fight any attempt to open up government and end secrecy. Now, they've set their sights on public notices.

City, county, school and special district governments are required to publish many things, including budgets and financial reports that detail how tax money is spent. Tax-sale notices bring in far more money than any county spends on them. Other notices include ordinances, that have the force of law; zoning changes, which can affect hundreds or thousands of people; and election polling places and candidate lists.

All these are critical to our democracy. Without them, people would know far less about what government is up to.

In the name of saving money, these tax-funded groups want to end publication of notices in favor of posting most on the Internet, on a gov-

ernment-controlled website. That's not a good idea, for several reasons:

- Not as many people will have access to notices on the Internet as in a newspaper in their hometown.
- Notices on a government website would be difficult to verify and subject to control of government employees who are not independent. Links easily could get "lost."
- Costs saving would be illusory. It costs big money to build and run a government website.
- Taxpayers would have to go looking for notices, rather than having them delivered to their homes.

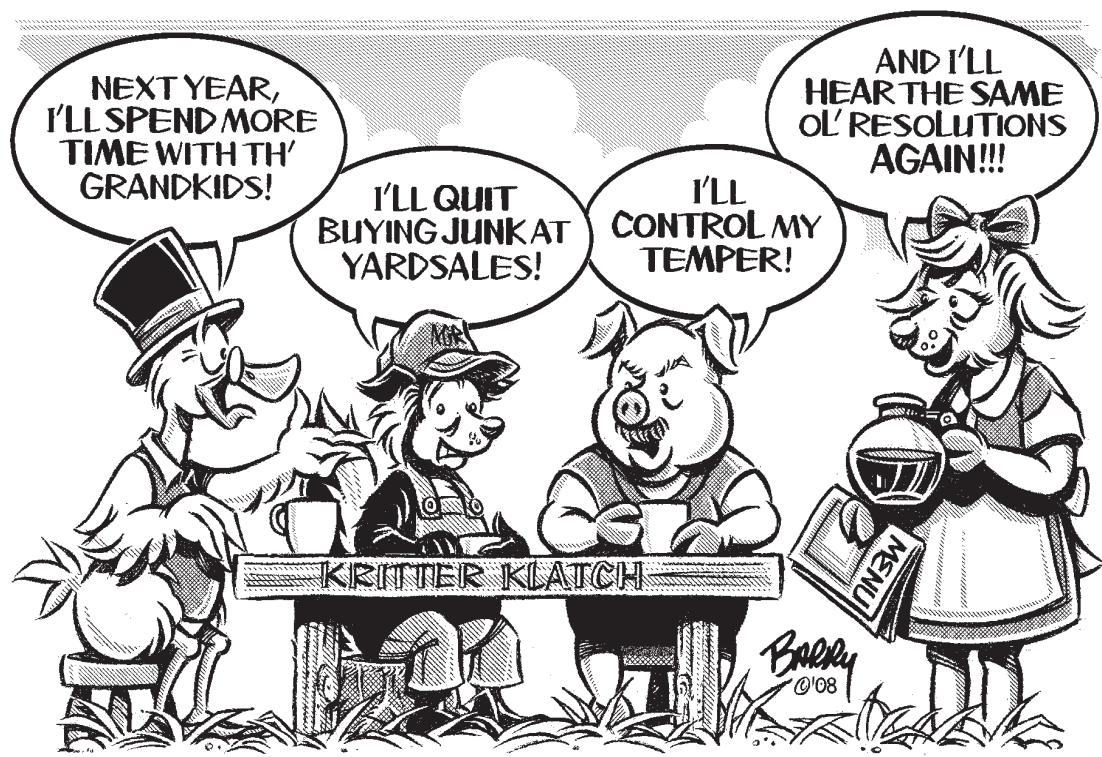
The agreed-on definition of public notice includes these elements;

- A public notice is published in a forum independent of the government, such as a local newspaper.
- A public notice can be archived in a secure and publicly available format.
- A public notice can be accessed by all segments of society.
- The public and the source of the notice must be able to verify that the notice was published, and its information disseminated to the public.

For nearly a century and a half, newspapers have been guardians of the public's right to know and sentinels of public notice. Independent newspapers can verify and archive public notices, making them available to everyone.

Why change? A better suggestion: Taxpayers would save more money if the Legislature banned lobbying by tax-supported groups, such as the municipal league and the county association. Why should they be able to spend your money to work against you?

Taxpayers who've had enough of this kind of nonsense should say so. — Steve Haynes



## News From the Past

### 90 years ago - 1918

Due to the fresh breakout of the flu, all public gatherings are closed and forbidden.

The old school building in District 21 will be sold at auction to the highest bidder.

Dr. Floyd Deal is home for Thanksgiving. He is finishing his medical courses at Omaha.

Dan Danielson and Frank Cook have arrived home. Both have been honorably discharged from the military.

A substantial flag pole is being erected on the city square. It is of steel, 75-feet high and set in solid cement. On the top is a lamp which will burn all night. The city has ordered a beautiful flag.

Miss Vera Mace is now a full-time pharmacist, having successfully passed the examination given by the state board. Mace, a graduate of Cheyenne County High School, took a course in pharmacy at Wichita.

Those beautiful doll hats at Mrs. Paul's are surely pleasing the eyes of the little girls.

The Citizens State Bank has this week installed 100 more Safety Deposit boxes in their vault.

The area has had a winter storm but it is now reported that the mail is on the road from Goodland. The mail carrier has a sled with four horses and he also has an extra man as there are over 100 boxes of mail.

### 50 years ago - 1958

The city school enrollment shows a slight decline over the past years. The preliminary enrollment stands at 351.

Over 150 friends of Mr. Ray Clark gathered at the Veterans Hall in St. Francis Friday night to honor him upon his retirement after 39 years of service with the Southwestern Bell Telephone Company.

### 35 years ago - 1973

Ramon Dominque, A 14-year old exchange student, has arrived from Mexico City. He will be spending the first three months of his stay with the Jim Frewen family.

Construction on the much pursued swimming pool for Bird City will begin Sept. 10.

Sharon Boardman is taking over as a part-time news editor at the St. Francis Herald.

St. Francis cheerleaders won the Spirit Stick and the Spark Plug awards at cheerleading camp this summer. Varsity cheerleaders include Donita Zwegardt, Gay Henderson, Becky Bartlett, Carol Curry, Laura Lee Keller, Sarah Getty and Lisa Powell. B-team cheerleaders include Lisa Boll, Cindy Henderson, Kay Zwegardt, Penny Keller, Teresa Raile and Coleen Brunow.

The St. Francis school enrollment dropped 7 percent this fall. Counting kindergarten students as one half, the total enrollment in the grade school is 257.5, the junior high classes total 80 and the high school 192 making a total of 529.5.

The St. Francis Music Club is planning to present "Theatre 74" the first of the new year. The presentation will include a one-act play, "Happy Journey to Salina" by Thornton Wilder, a condensed production of Shakespeare's "The Taming of The Shrew" and concluding the program will be selections from Rodgers and Hammerstein's famous musical, "Oklahoma."

### 20 years ago - 1988

The Cheyenne County 4-H judging team represented the state of Kansas well at the National 4-H Livestock Judging Contest, taking second place with a score just

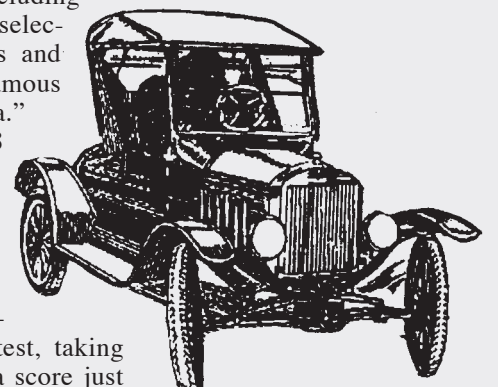
10 points less than the first place Ohio team. Members of the team were Matt Bandel, Robin Greenhagen, Troy Hilt and Chris Leibbrandt.

The Music Club's Parade of Homes includes those of Scott and Mindy Condray, Noble and Barbara Dorsch and Ethel Whitten.

St. Francis placed second with four individual champions at the wrestling tournament held in town on Saturday. Those earning championships were Mark Mills at 112 pounds, Tony Vandike at 119 pounds, Kyle Thomas at 152 pounds and Wade Krien at 171 pounds.

Another giant step has been taken toward opening of the Cheyenne Theatre. Through the efforts of concerned citizens, the building has been purchased to be used not only as a theatre but a place for movies, stage plays, musical groups and meetings.

The boys basketball team won second place at the Liberty League Tournament. Players include Jeff Neel, Nick Montoya, Peter O'Brien, Jared Douthit, Reese Shay, Dallas O'Brien, Tye Faulkender, Noel Schultz, Brian Bieker, Chad Gartner, Mike Zwegardt and Shawn Rogers.



## Casey's Comments

By Casey McCormick



With the fresh slate of a new year in front of us, it seems like a good time to look where we stand as a nation.

Much of what is seen in the media today paints a bleak picture of the U.S. Although new leadership is taking the reigns we are still expecting a rough ride.

The economy is in shambles. Many folks are concerned about paying their bills, holding their jobs and staying in their homes. And that's just on the home front.

For me, at times like this, it's helpful to know a bit about American history. Our great nation has had "ups" and "downs" before. Whether the storm our ship of

state is sailing through is caused by financial challenges, civil unrest or outside forces, we have made it to brighter days.

One of my favorite historical giants is Winston Churchill. It is said he is the only man to report, make and prophesies about history. Having a British father and American mother gave him a unique perspective of both nations.

In uncertain times it helps to remember his words that followed the Japanese bombing of 1941.

"Silly people might discount the force of the United States. Some said they were soft, others that they would never be united. They would fool around at a distance. They would never come to grips . . . But I had studied the American Civil War, fought out to the last desperate inch. American blood flowed in my veins . . . I went to bed, and slept the sleep of the saved and thankful."

That same spirit still exists in Americans. No doubt we will survive these troubled times as well.

## Honor Roll

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**GOD SAYS**  
**He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle, and herb for the service of man: that he may bring forth food out of the earth.**  
**Psalms 104:14**

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 www.sfccfamily.com  
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 Sunday School 9:15 a.m.  
 Worship Service 10:30 a.m.  
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 Wednesday Bible Study 7 p.m.

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