



Hiding public notices on websites a bad idea

A Kansas Senate committee planned hearings Tuesday on a bill which would allow cities, counties, school boards and other government units to "publish" their legal notices on government-run websites rather than in the newspaper.

This is a bad idea, and not just because it would hurt newspapers.

The bill was introduced by Sen. John Vratil, R-Leawood, who over the years has made himself a devoted enemy of the state's newspapers. His bill, however, would have effects far beyond his home in Johnson County.

Whatever his issues are back there, this bill would be a bad law. It would remove public notices from the one place where people see them and hide them away on government websites. And it could cost many small Kansas towns their papers, an economic blow to these communities which should not be ignored.

This definition of a public notice comes from the Public Notice Resource Center, a national nonprofit group.

"A public notice typically possesses four major characteristics:

1. "A public notice is published in a forum independent of the government, such as a local newspaper.
2. "A public notice is capable of being archived in a secure and publicly available format.
3. "A public notice is capable of being accessed by all segments of society.
4. "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."

Placement on a government-controlled website is not really publication. People would have to find the notice, where a newspaper takes it to the reader (and in rural markets, that usually is

every household in town). Not everyone has a computer or Internet service, and not everyone is sophisticated enough to find notices buried on some page of a big county website.

Independent verification is hardly possible with a government-run website, and these sites can suffer failures, be entered by hackers, be changed with little or no evidence left behind by anyone with an interest in doing so. Electronic archives are neither stable nor trustworthy.

In short, posting something on a website is little different from filing it down at the courthouse, except the books there last longer than a CD. A citizen still has to go digging for it. Publication means putting a notice out to the public.

Then, there is the economic problem. The income from public notices can be vital to smaller weekly papers. These publications serve their communities, but the towns have fewer businesses and resources each year, and it's hard for newspapers to hang on.

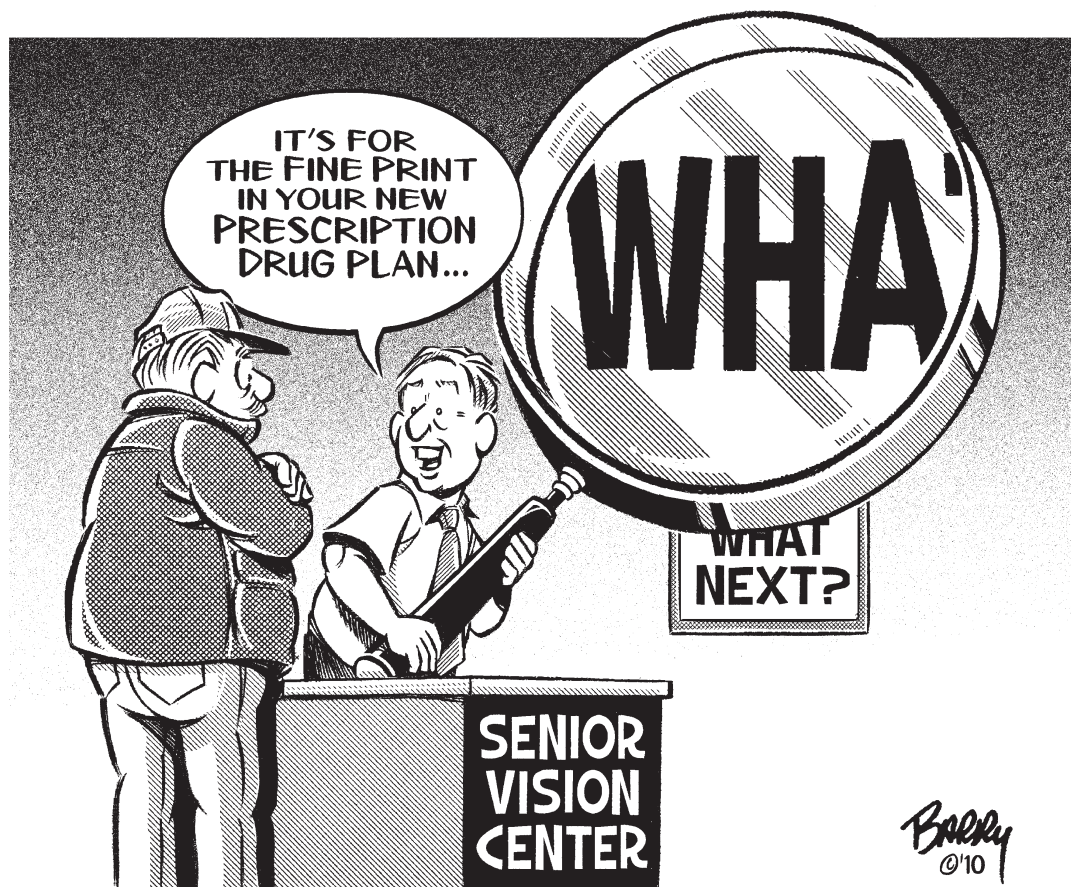
On the other side, Kansas cities, counties and governments spend only a tiny fraction of their budgets on legal notices. That, in our opinion, is spent in return for a valuable service and helps supports each community where a newspaper is published. Ask people in towns where the newspaper has gone away; most would see that as a real economic loss.

The Kansas Press Association estimates as many as 50 Kansas newspapers might be threatened by loss of their legal-notice income.

We hope the Senate will ask itself, is the little to be saved here important enough to justify this kind of damage?

The legislators should kill this bill. It's not now and not likely ever to be a good idea. Taxpayers and citizens deserve to see public notices out in the open, where they can be verified and trusted, and not be forced to go hunting for them.

— Steve Haynes



News From the Past

20 years ago - 1990

Bud Erskin, owner of Majestic Service, reported that the fourth annual free feed was successful with over 200 people being served. The Music Makers proved country music for entertainment during the meal.

Wrestling cheerleaders include Shelly Bier, Missy Hefner, Ronda Krien and Raquel Keller. Basketball cheerleaders include Jen Schlittenhardt, Mindy Porter, Lori McDuffee and Heidi DeGood.

Amber Dunn, sophomore at St. Francis Community High School, will be traveling to Brazil on Jan. 17, where she is participating in the Youth for Understanding program as an exchange student.

Rod's Locksmith Shop has opened. Rodney Ritchey recently graduated from the Foley-Belsaw Institute of Locksmithing located in Kansas City and has set up shop at 217 E. Whittier.

30 years ago - 1980

A fire early Tuesday morning destroyed the old Schorzman building in Haigler and damaged another building just to the north.

Joe Adamson, owner of The Western House, formerly Saintry's Cafe, celebrated the grand opening of the newly remodeled restaurant on Jan. 19. The Western House specializes in steaks for the evening meal but also serves breakfast and lunch during the day.

Twenty-two St. Francis High School students invested \$50,000 of imaginary money in the stock market at the beginning of the school year as

part of a study on the economy and understanding the financial investment system. The team that placed first wound up with \$99,513. Team members were Mark Keller, Gina Floyd, Virginia Crawford and Leslie Raile.

40 years ago - 1969

Representatives from the Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company were at the St. Francis Home and Auto Store Tuesday to make arrangements with Warren Cook in the change over from Firestone to Great Western Tire of St. Francis.

Mrs. E. L. Boardman and Miss Madeline Riddell received pins in recognition of 50 years of faithful service to the St. Francis Order of Eastern Star.

The junior class of the high school will be presenting "Lock, Stock and Lipstick." The main character is played by Lester Walker.

Four St. Francis boys, Jorn Keller, Gale Wiley, Pete Sherlock and Steve Little, attended the Northwest District FFA Speech contest in Russell.

Keller, who used the topic "Opportunities in Agribusiness" placed fifth.

Joanne Maring of Bird City has sewed and modeled her way in eight years to national honors in the 4-H Dress Revue program.

The State Soil Conservation Committee honored eight men who have served 20 years each as Soil Conservation 40 District Supervisors. Among them was Leon Trumbull of St. Francis.

Winter winds and fallen snow forced a slow-down of construction on the new por-

tion of U.S. Highway 36.

Dr. Tim Poling was elected president of the St. Francis Chamber of Commerce. He will head the organization in 1970. Mrs. Van Burrus was named vice president.

Robert Grace of St. Francis is a member of the United States Air Force Reserve Officer Training Corps at Kansas State University.

100 years ago - 1910

O.F. Talley has sold his city residence to W.B. Lockwood and will at once build a commodious seven room residence on his farm northeast of town.

Deroy Danielson went to Kansas City, Mo., Monday afternoon to attend the implement dealers convention and purchase machinery, implements and vehicles for the spring trade.

High school news: The freshman class takes up the study of physical geography instead of experimental physiology. They are also studying George Eliot's *Silas Marner*, as the first classic of this term's work.

Go to Aaxtell, Reynold and Harmans for hats, caps, gloves rubbers, arctics, Alaskans and work clothes.

The St. Francis Athletic Club is becoming quite a famous sporting institution. The greatest event in its history was pulled off last Friday night when William Harrington, of Sherman County entered the ring with our Marion Reed. Mr. Reed earned a victory.

All soldiers and soldiers' widows and families come to the basement of the Christian Church with your basket of good things to eat and have a good social time.

Casey's Comments

By Casey's McCormick



scmcormick@nwkans.com Since the classroom of life never lets out for a break, it's my turn for "Show and Tell."

One of the greatest accomplishments civilizations can make are recordings of their history.

Because we can learn a great deal from where we have been, a nation connected to our country's past can tell us something. Across the seas, the British Museum and

BBC are teaming to tell a story. *The History of the World in 100 Objects* takes us on an incredible journey through time.

The oldest object in the collection is the Olduvai stone tool. Believed to be 1.8 million-years-old, it's thought to have been used to chop bones, plants and wood.

Honor Roll

New and renewed Herald subscriptions: Marty La Russo, Westminster, Colo.; Connie Weems, Goodland; Mark Rieb, Watertown, S.D.; Jack Rieb, St. Francis; Helen Brown, St. Francis; Otto Bandel, St. Francis; Keith Zweygardt, St. Francis; Don Love, St. Francis; Stan Krien, St. Francis; Lonnie Willis, Bird City; Roger Kamla, Longview, Texas; Howard Clark, St. Francis; Rob and Carla Schiltz, St. Francis; Bartlett and Co. Grain, St. Francis; Larry Carmichael, St. Francis; Tom Roelfs, St. Francis; Alice Raile, Oxford, Neb.; Jim Wiseman, Fremont, Neb.

At the other end of the spectrum are items such as an iPhone, T-shirt and body armor.

One piece that caught my eye is the Balaklava Bugle. The battered, brass horn was blown by the orderly trumpeter to Lord Cardigan, commander of the British 17th Lancers. It was sounded on Oct. 25, 1854, as the cavalry troops rode to their demise during the Crimean War.

What might have been a footnote, this action was immortalized by England's poet laureate, Alfred Lord Tennyson in his *'The Charge of the Light Brigade.'*

Each object has its own story to tell and has something to say about mankind. All can be seen at www.bbc.co.uk/ahistoryoftheworld/. That is all except item number 100. It won't be displayed until autumn of 2010.

Thus endeth the lesson, class is dismissed.

Corrections

The Saint Francis Herald will correct or clarify any mistake or misunderstanding in a news story. Please call our office at 332-3162 to report errors. We believe that news stories should be fair and factual, and appreciate your calling to our attention any failure to live up to this standard.

GOD SAYS
Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.
I John 4:10

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332-2380, Pars. 332-3424
502 W. Spencer
Norman Morrow - Minister
Bible Class 11 a.m.
Morning Worship 10 a.m.
Wed. Bible Study 7 p.m.

St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church
625 S. River • 332-2680
Fr. Roger Meitl
Sunday Mass 11:00 a.m.
Weekday Mass 8 a.m.
Confessions Sat. 4-4:30

First Baptist Church
2nd & Scott • 332-3921
J.W. Glidewell, Pastor
Sunday School 9:30 a.m.
Worship 10:30 a.m.
Sunday Evening Service 6:30 p.m.,
Wed. AWANA Club 6:30 - 8:00 p.m.

United Methodist Church Office 332-2292,
Church 332-2254,
512 S. Scott
Pastor Morita Truman
Early Bird Service 8:30 a.m.
Sunday School 9:30 a.m.
Worship 10:30 a.m.

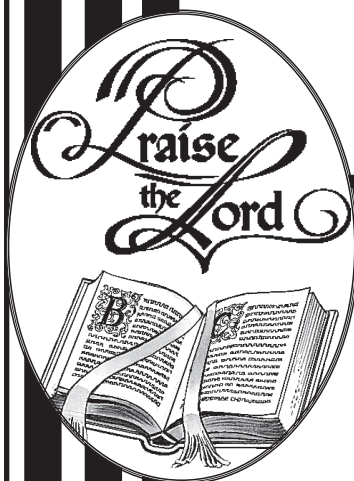
Salem Lutheran Church
332-3002
Pastor Chris Farmer
Sunday School 10 a.m.
Morning Worship 11 a.m.
Communion 3rd Sunday

St. Francis Community Church
332-3150
204 N. Quincy Street
www.sfccfamily.com
Pastor: David Butler
Sunday School 9:15 a.m.
Worship Service 10:30 a.m.
Potluck & Communion -
Every 2nd Sunday
Wednesday Bible Study 7 p.m.

Seventh-Day Adventist Church
785-890-5718 • 3rd & Adams
Pastor Jerry Nowack
Sabbath School 9:30
Morning Worship 10:45

Solid Rock Baptist Church
412 S. Denison
Welcomes You!
Pastor Allen Coon
Sunday School 9:30 a.m.
Worship 10:30
Prayer Meeting, Wed 7:30 p.m.

Peace Lutheran Church, AFLC
202 N. College
Pastor Ken Hart
332-2928 Pars. 332-2312
Sunday School 9:30 a.m.
Worship 10:30 a.m.
Sunday Eve. Bible Study 7 p.m.
Communion 1st Sunday of the month



St. Francis Equity

St. Francis Herald