

Open meetings' records still misunderstood

Whatever the reason, there's still way too much misunderstanding of the state's Open Meetings and Open Records acts.

Far too many times, public officials are looking for ways to get around the laws, not ways to live the sort of public life the laws envision.

The acts declare it to be state policy that meetings and records should be open to the public. That's the spirit of these laws.

But it's misunderstood more often than not.

In several recent cases, officials have accused each other of "violating" the open meetings law by talking about something said in a closed session. The Open Meetings law says some sessions may be closed, but it never says that an official can't talk about what happens in closed session.

Both laws are permissive and biased toward openness. They list categories of topics or records which may be closed... but don't have to be. It's up to the people involved.

The Open Meetings Act, for instance, says that discussions may be closed when a public agency talks about non-elected personnel. It doesn't require that they be closed, and it's not illegal for a board to talk about an employee in public. Otherwise, they couldn't praise one.

Because the exception becomes the rule, though, meetings about certain things are always closed, whether it makes sense or not.

Often, it'd be in an employee's interest to have discussion about him or her open. It keeps

people honest and makes them back up whatever allegations they have. Employees have the right to demand an open meeting, but seldom do. It's the same principle that brings us to require open trials in court, but it's little observed in public life.

Some public officials are a lot more concerned about what they can keep secret rather than what they can do out in the open. They just don't get it. EVERYTHING they do is the public's business, because they work for us.

Open meetings, open discussions of public business, open records at the courthouse, they're our right, because we own the county, the city, the state. Public officials work for us.

And their business is our business.

And when they start to be unduly concerned about what we know and how we find out, then it's time for us to start worrying.

Because when the door closes at a meeting, often as not, what they're talking about is something we ought to know.

Not every time. There are legitimate exceptions to openness. But they are few and far between, a darned sight fewer than what we see.

It's something to remember that, as the laws say, public business ought to be open unless there is a compelling reason to have it otherwise. Saving officials from embarrassment or criticism is not reason enough, but sadly, that's the way it often is.

—Steve Haynes

Reader expresses loss and hurt

To the editor:

My heart goes out to the others in our area whom have suffered from the unthoughtfulness of someone who does not understand the hurt they have caused so many. My children and I had this same experience, recently. Any one who would remove (steal) any-

thing from a grave must be suffering terribly. Unfortunately, I don't believe that you are. YOU HAVE NO CONSCIENCE! The angel you "borrowed" from Randy's grave could not possibly

have meant to you what it did to us. My prayer is that you will find it in your heart to replace it back where you "found" it.

Karla Zwegardt

Genealogy Korner

Adoption leads to research of another family

By Marilyn Holzwarth

You never know when something new about families will simply pop up. One such item was a letter from Jim Almqvist who was seeking information about his John Elliott family in Bird City. Last year I copied what I had on file, and oops, I had a note that Nettie Elliott had been adopted. Since I had done some of this many years ago, I did

not have a notation letting me know where I had learned this.

Please let this be a lesson to people working with families, put down your sources at all times! His searching finally paid off when he located a newspaper from Wilcox, Neb., that had a letter written by Charles Witham telling about the death of his wife Nettie in 1899. Nettie was the adopted daughter of John Elliott, and the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Norman Hicks. Now Jim has another family to research. The puzzles go on and on when you do family history.

Would you like to volunteer some hours at the museum? It has been closed very often when no volunteer is there to keep it open. There are a few names of people to call if visitors would like to see it, but so often if it is not open we have lost the chance to share our history with others.

The Cheyenne County Historical Society will welcome new members, join then and give them some great new ideas! Please attend the next Society meeting, the second Tuesday. This month the meeting is at 5 p.m. Aug. 13. The members welcome you!



GOD SAYS

Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep.

Romans 12:15



News From the Past

5 years ago - 1997

The St. Francis schools will have three new teachers. Kim Krenning will be teaching the kindergarten class, Dixie Cave will be teaching seventh and eighth grade math, Algebra 1/2 and geometry and Rhonda Weiser will be the instructor for Applied Math, Algebra 1, Algebra 2, Senior Math and Freshman Computers.

Chris Bracelin and Lance Ihrig won the championship flight at the Riverside Rendezvous with a 116. They came in with a 58 both days.

Ted Zielke, Cheyenne County farmer, has been appointed by Governor Bill Graves to serve on the Kansas Corn Commission.

Returning volleyball letter winners reporting to practice include LeAnn Schielke, Christie Holzwarth, Rebecca Montoya, Michelle Young, Heather Sowers and Roxy Stuart. Two other letter winners, Erin Day (injury) and Kasey Jantz (transfer) will be unavailable.

Rodney Shay and Ryan Shay have graduated from WorldWide College of Auctioneering.

The Cheyenne County 4-H sale was one of the largest sales with \$31,150 paid in premiums.

25 years ago - 1977

A crowd estimated at more than 8,500 people attended the Tri-State Antique Engine and Thresher Show.

Jeanine Weaver was crowned as Rodeo Queen at the Cheyenne County Fair Rodeo.

Alice Danielson has donated funds to purchase paint and pay for the labor of repainting the band shell in the park. Grass is scheduled to be planted this fall.

Kelly Morris was the grand

champion and senior division champion of the Best Groomed Boy contest Charlene Murphy was the senior division champion of the Best Groomed Girl contest.

History repeated itself Tuesday morning in Bird City as the 50th anniversary of the Charles A. Lindbergh flight was reenacted by a replica of the famous "Spirit of St. Louis" circled over the city, just as Lindbergh had done 50 years ago. Again the Bird City resident has spelled the worlds "Welcome." The tour is designed to follow the original Lindbergh flight across the country as he had done in covering nearly every state in 82 stops in three and one-half months.

40 years ago - 1962

Grandstand activities for the Fair include Style Revue prior to the Tournament of Thrills (Don Chadwick Nationally Famous Daredevil Drivers) on Thursday night; R.C.A. rodeo on Friday night and Saturday afternoon and Flying High Revue (top stars who have been featured on national television shows providing outstanding entertainment).

Karen DeGood was one of a select group of junior leaders who acted as counselors for the State Health Conference at Rock Springs Ranch, State 4-H Leadership Training Center.

The Cheyenne Sunflowers 4-H Club went on their yearly tour recently. They made stops at the Virgil Hatch farm, the Burkhalters, the Woody Connett farm, the Moores, Ronnie Brunswig, Emmor Graves, Bill and Joe Bash and finished at the Hurb Graves residence, where the family held a watermelon feeds after looking at the projects of Mickey and Donna.

The Grand Champion, a shorthorn, at the Cheyenne County Fair was raised and shown by Steve Sherlock. The calf was purchased by Majestic

Service for \$61.00 per cwt.

45 years ago - 1957

Vern Nolan and son Harold this week publicly announce a transition in the automobile sales field in St. Francis, Nolan Motor Co., having sold the business and franchise for Ford Sales to M.A. and W.E. Touslee, brothers, formerly of Stockton.

A violent windstorm, apparently confined to a small area which would indicate a possible twister, struck the Don Holliman farm northeast of St. Francis. The wind was accompanied by some hail and 1.60 inches of precipitation was received at the Holliman place.

Cheyenne County farmers produced more than three million bushels of what in 1957, according to Kansas Crop Report. The report shows that Cheyenne County ranked second in the state in the number of bushels of wheat produced in 1957.

A completely electronic device for measuring the temperature of stored grain has been installed in the St. Francis Mercantile Equity.

Reverend Floyd N. Griffin assumed his position as pastor of the St. Francis Pilgrim Holiness church this week.



CHURCH DIRECTORY

Wesleyan Church
Hwy 36 • 734-2727
Pastor Scott Baker
Sunday School 9:45 a.m.
Worship 11:00 a.m.
Sunday Bible Study 7 p.m.

Church of Christ
332-2380, Pars. 332-3424
502 W. Spencer
Norman Morrow - Minister
Bible Class 9 a.m.
Morning Worship 10 a.m.
Wed. Bible Study 7 p.m.

Grace Assembly of God
332-2925, Pars. 332-2899
208 E. 2nd
Rev. Rob Meyer
Sunday School 9:30 a.m.
Worship 10:30
Sunday Eve. Service 6 p.m.

Salem Lutheran Church
332-3002
Pastor Chris Farmer
Morning Worship 10:30 a.m.
No Sunday School during summer

Peace Lutheran Church
202 N. College
332-2928 Pars. 332-2308
Pastor David Rossbach
Sunday School 9:30 a.m.
Worship 10:30 a.m.

First Christian Church
332-2956 • 118 E. Webster
Pastor Joe Briseno
Sunday School 9:15 a.m.
Church Service 10:30 a.m.
Wed. night Bible Study 7 p.m.

Seventh-Day Adventist Church
332-2888 • 3rd & Adams
Pastor Arlin Cochran
Sabbath School 9:30
Morning Worship 10:45

St. Francis of Assisi
Catholic Church
625 S. River • 332-2680
Fr. Beryl Gibson
Sunday Mass 10:30 a.m.
Weekday Mass 8 a.m.
Confessions Sat. 4-4:30

United Methodist
Church Office 332-2292,
Church 332-2254,
Pars. 332-3170
512 S. Scott
Pastor Dennis Livingston
Early Bird Service 8:30 a.m.
Sunday School 9:30 a.m.
Worship 10:30 a.m.

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

Clough Valley Baptist Church
Pastor Al Davis D. Min.
12 m. west, 6 m. north of SF
332-2506
Sunday School 9:00 a.m. CT
Worship 10:00 a.m. CT

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