

Community / Opinion

QUINN MINUTE

Aunts, uncles, and cousins

BY RIX QUINN

My friend Mel just got back from an aunt’s funeral, where he met family members he did not know he had.

Personally, I’ve met more relatives at funerals than I have at weddings...but maybe it’s because weddings require an invitation.

Last month, my uncle told me that my third cousin had died. No, two cousins didn’t die before her. She was my third cousin because our great-grandmothers were sisters. Confusing, huh?

The word “removed” just means a different generation. So, my first cousin’s children would be my first cousins once removed.

I had not met the deceased, but her obituary photo looked just like my uncle...but without the beard.

I went to her memorial service so I could mingle with familiar relatives, plus meet new ones. As one of my buddies says, “You need to know cousins in several states, so you can travel cross-country for free.”

The deceased cousin was 97, and she had lived a busy life. She’d been married four times, each one an upgrade from her prior spouse.

At one time she’d also been a softball umpire. Maybe that’s why she married so much. When a husband disputed her decision, she just called him “out.”

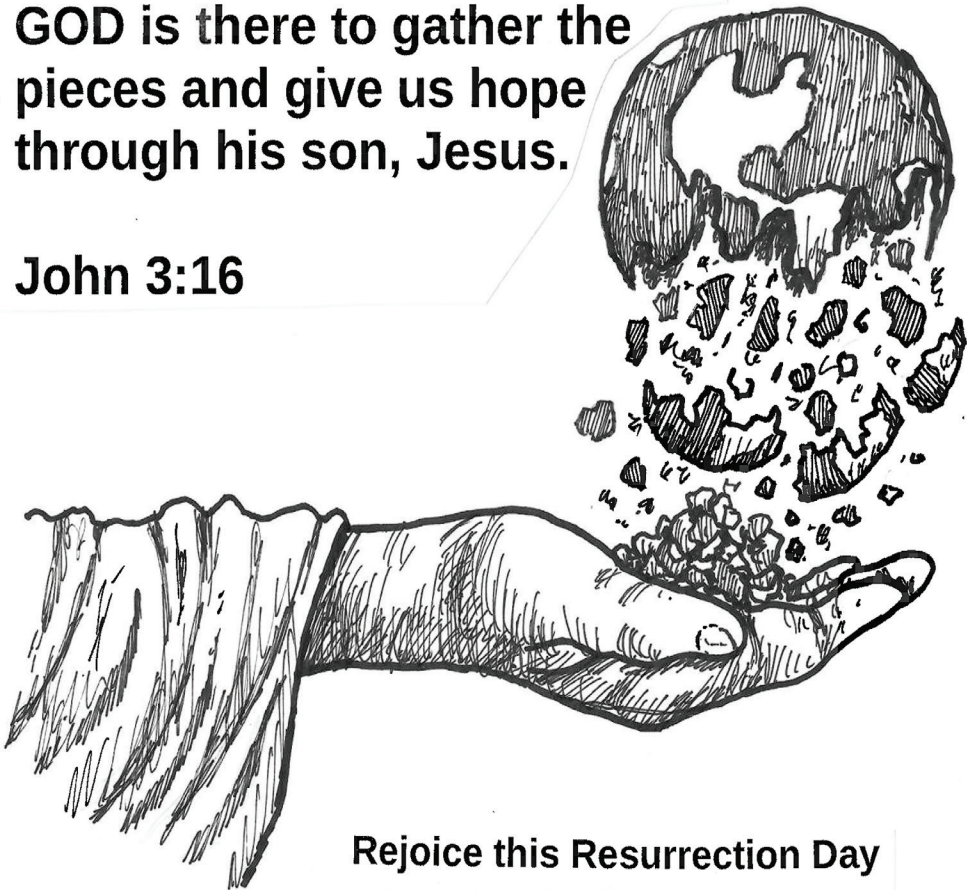
Since the funeral was at the grave site, attendees then walked to a nearby large tent for a reception. I’ve never seen so many familiar-looking folks whose names I didn’t know.

I talked to several second cousins, third cousins, and even one old guy who looked like he’d wandered over because he smelled coffee.

After the event, I remembered what an old friend told me: “Any time an event serves food outdoors, you’ll see lots of aunts.”

In a world that is falling apart,
GOD is there to gather the
pieces and give us hope
through his son, Jesus.

John 3:16



Rejoice this Resurrection Day

Kid Reporter

THE PECK PERSPECTIVE (From the Capitol)

VIRGIL PECK

R-Kansas

During the final two days of the 2025 session, a few bills passed that are awaiting the governor’s signature. Depending on a person’s perspective, most fall into the noncontroversial category.

Expanding Kansas Promise Scholarship Program (SB 24): Beginning July 1, 2026, eligibility for the Kansas Promise Scholarship Program will be expanded to include the Wichita Technical Institute and the Heartland Welding Academy. Additionally, the maximum annual appropriation for the Program will increase from \$10 million to \$15 million. SB 24 passed the Senate 40–0 and the House 76–48. Although not yet signed by the Governor, a signature is expected.

Tax Exemption for Data Centers (SB 98): I saw SB 98 as not that beneficial to Kansas taxpayers and voted no. However, it passed with bipartisan support and bipartisan opposition; the Senate vote was 26–8 and in the House 85–37.

SB 98 provides a sales tax exemption for investments in a qualified data center. Exemptions include, purchases for the development, acquisition, construction, and operation of a qualified data center made by a qualified firm, including: land or site improvements; buildings; equipment; lease payments; engineering & design; labor services pertaining to the installation and maintenance of data center equipment; and purchases made by a contractor for the purposes of constructing or modifying a qualified data center for a qualified firm. The cost of electricity would be excluded from the exemption.

A qualified data center is defined as one or more buildings to house networked computer servers connected by a fiber transmission network for the purposes of centralizing data storage, management, and dissemination. It contains the computing infrastructure that IT systems require, such as routers, switches, firewalls, storage systems, servers, and application-delivery controllers.

During the construction phase of a data center, temporary jobs are created, but the number of permanent jobs is generally 10 to 25 people. The construction costs for a small data center is around \$10 million, while larger ones can exceed \$2 billion.

My opposition to SB 98 stems from the lack of electrical power currently available in Kansas and the security risk due to the large amount of sensitive information the computers will store. Data centers require an enormous amount of power/electricity (more than KS currently has available). SB 98 is on the Governor’s desk.

A New Government Agency (HB 2045): Passage of HB 2045 establishes the Office of Early Childhood (Office) for the purpose of creating transparency, safety, and efficiency with the oversight of funds, programs, and policies related to early childcare services in Kansas. The Office would be under the supervision of a director appointed by the Governor, subject to Senate confirmation, and serve at the pleasure of the Governor – who also sets the Director’s salary.

HB 2045 passed the Senate 30–10 and the House 99–23. As a small government legislator, I am not convinced creating another government agency is the right thing to do, so I voted no. I expect the Governor will sign HB 2045 into law.

Expanding Opportunities for Kansas Students (SB 114): Current law allows for non-public school and virtual students who meet the requirements of law to participate in activities that are regulated, supervised, promoted, and developed by the Kansas State High School Activities Association. Passage of SB 114 expands opportunities for these students by authorizing them to also participate in certain ancillary school district activities. SB 114 passed the Senate 32–8 (I voted yes), the House 84–38 and has received the Governor’s signature.

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This Kansas town knows prisons. It doesn’t want a for-profit company opening a ‘hell hole’ for ICE.

BY MAX MCCOY

Kansas Reflector

Leavenworth is a city of prisons.

The area is home to five separate facilities, including a federal penitentiary, a state prison, and the U.S. military’s only maximum security prison. The imposing federal pen once housed Machine Gun Kelly and Robert Stroud, the “Birdman of Alcatraz,” who did most of his research on birds in Kansas, not on the California prison island.

In popular culture the city’s name has become synonymous with incarceration, a legacy of pulp magazines and old gangster movies. Prisons are among the city’s major employers, and construction is underway for a new \$532 million federal prison to replace the existing 128-year-old facility by May 2026.

But there’s one detention facility that Leavenworth city officials don’t want.

It’s the newly (and Orwellian) named Midwest Regional Reception Center, a for-profit prison that would hold ICE detainees gathered in massive raids now undertaken by the Trump administration. The center would be located in the former Leavenworth Detention Facility, in operation from 1992 to 2021, which a federal judge once called “an absolute hell hole.”

Owned and managed by CoreCivic, formerly the Corrections Corporation of America, the nation’s largest private prison firm, the Leavenworth Detention Facility was a nightmare of humanitarian and civil rights abuses where both guards and inmates feared for their lives, according to court documents. Operated under a contract with the U.S. Marshals Service, in 2017 the Office of Inspector General issued a 129-page audit that found chronic understaffing and misman-

agement.

Abuses continued even after the audit.

The American Civil Liberties Union and federal public defenders sent a letter to the White House documenting their concerns. Beatings and stabbings were rampant, suicides were prevalent, sexual assault reports were discouraged, and the company failed to report the death of an inmate for six days. Employees who were victims of crime were forbidden from being interviewed by police during work time, and CoreCivic staff refused to cooperate with city police on sexual assault allegations.

In 2019, a federal judge found that telephone conversations between detainees and their attorneys — conversations that should be confidential by law — were routinely recorded.

In 2021, a 39-year-old detainee, Scott W. Wilson, was beaten to death by another inmate who attacked him with a plastic food tray. The entire facility went on lockdown for weeks, with detainees kept in their cells except for showers every few days.

“The only way I could describe it, frankly, what’s going on at CoreCivic right now is it’s an absolute hell hole,” said U.S. District Judge Julie A. Robinson during a resentencing hearing four years ago. “The court is aware of it. The defense bar is aware of it. The prosecutors are aware of it. The United States Marshals are aware of it.”

The environment inside the facility was causing trauma to all involved.

“Guards have been almost killed,” she said. “Detainees are being traumatized with assaults and batteries, and not long ago a detainee was killed. So I’m well aware of the situation at CoreCivic and very troubled by it as well.”

After an executive or-

der by former President Joe Biden prohibited the Justice Department from contracting with private prisons, the Leavenworth Detention Facility officially closed on Jan. 1, 2022.

But the story doesn’t end there.

Anticipating an opportunity to profit from the mass deportations, on Feb. 21 of this year CoreCivic applied for a special use permit from the city of Leavenworth to open a detention center for Immigration and Customs Enforcement. The permit was necessary under city code because the facility had been closed for more than 24 months.

The application for “re-activation” of the detention center, which would operate as the “Midwest Regional Reception Center,” would allow approximately 1,000 detained noncitizens to be held on the 20-acre site.

“On average, detainees will be held for approximately 51 days as they are processed through the immigration system, including through removal hearings held at the facility,” CoreCivic said in document supporting the application.

“All detainees who are processed through the facility will be transported to the nearest major transportation hub (i.e., the Kansas City International Airport) or the ICE office in Kansas City.”

CoreCivic, headquartered in Brentwood, Tennessee, would operate the detention facility through an inter-agency agreement with the Department of Homeland Security and ICE. The city had scheduled an initial public hearing before the planning commission hearing on the permit for April 7.

But on March 13, CoreCivic withdrew the application for the special use permit. It said it didn’t need one. On March 25, the prison corporation asserted that the recently awarded contract with ICE “necessitates a swift contract activation of the Midwest Regional Reception Center to accommodate their pressing need for capacity in the region,” according to court documents. There was no time to go through a

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wordgenius

WORD OF THE DAY

Tourbillon

[TOOR-bil-yan]

Part of speech: noun
Origin: French, 15th century

1. Any part of a machine with a spiral movement.
2. A whirlwind.

Examples of Tourbillon in a sentence
“This antique watch has a tourbillon that prevents gravity from throwing off its timing.”

“Watches featuring tourbillon movements can easily cost more than \$10,000.”

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