

The blame could go all the way to the top

The horrific treatment of Iraqi prisoners of war by American military personnel goes beyond troubling. It's sick. And the photos showing smiling Americans as though these are acts proudly proclaimed leave little wiggle room when it comes to applying whatever punishment is handed out.

We only hope it isn't some non-commissioned officer that eventually becomes the scapegoat. This goes up much higher on the chain of command.

There is much finger pointing going on, especially among those with commissioned status. And the general in charge of the 16 prisons failed to make a compelling case when she allowed herself to be interviewed on television this week.

We guess if heads are to roll, they have to start with those wearing stars on their shoulders. After all those are the class of military people who come in for all the praise and glory when success is proclaimed. Now, with this utterly disgusting turn of events, they must share the burden, the shame.

Donald Rumsfeld, secretary of defense, appeared before a bunch of unhappy campers — senators and representatives — as this was being written. It won't be a cordial stage on which he will perform. A grilling of unheard magnitude is promised.

Should he resign? Democrats on Capitol Hill are generally in agreement that he should. Republicans on Capitol Hill are silent. This is an election year and the path to the White House is being riddled by several weighty issues. Prison torture is just the latest. Unfortunately, this ordeal will become a campaign issue, instead of a matter of justice being rendered in an unjust circumstance.

Perhaps this case won't be decided until Nov. 2, when the voters go to the polls. They will be the judge and the jury — and who would have ever guessed that mistreatment of war prisoners by American military people could be the deciding straw in the battle for the White House.

— Tom Dreiling

What a parent says can greatly impact a child

In our family we have a vivid reminder of how a parent's memories and a child's may differ. It wasn't until one of our sons was over 30 that in the course of a conversation he said to us,

"Do you remember when you sewed my pillow case shut to punish me?"

Jack and I looked at each other wondering why the other had used that particular discipline technique.

"No," we both replied.

Our son went on to describe the incident and then I remembered. He had been about 5, and gotten a hole in his pillow so I sewed a pillowcase over the pillow to extend its life. All of these years our son had thought we were "disciplining" him.

On the flip side, another son remembers his father taking him fishing "all the time".

The truth; twice on free days at Paradise Lake in Reno, Nev., I stayed home and prayed they wouldn't catch anything. It wasn't the healthiest looking of lakes.

Somewhere between these incidents rests the truth.

Parents have such powerful influences on their children. Our moods, looks and actions all communicate messages to our children, probably more profoundly than any words we speak.

Phase II

Mary Kay Woodyard



A friend can say something and it carries little weight, a parent says it and it is powerful. I'm not sure that power is ever eliminated, altered perhaps by aging, but not gone.

A woman recently shared a conversation she had with her aging mother who is suffering from Alzheimer's.

The mother confessed she didn't ever want to be a mother. The hurt was powerful, even when the care-giving roles have been traded, the power hasn't.

We talk of peer group influence and it is a fact, but the ultimate strength rests in a parent's word.

And as the pillow case incident shows, the word had better be clarified. We laugh about the pillowcase incident now, but in truth it is troubling.

It reflects how strongly our role as a parent impacts our children and how these actions and words are carried on.

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TOPEKA CAPITAL JOURNAL



The problems with taxes go on and on

Did you remember to pay your property taxes? I was considering some sort of civil disobedience rather than pay ours. It would be easier if I understood why we changed the date.

Since we are farmers I always liked the June 20 date. It was maybe possible that we would get some wheat to town before the deadline or, for sure, before they print your name in the delinquent tax list in the paper.

I can't think of any crops that are harvested around May 10 in Kansas.

I am wondering how many farmers had to go to the bank and borrow the money. I suppose that is helpful to the economy in a way. More interest for the banker.

I guess if we all just waited until June 20 it would be helpful to the state.

They would have a lot of extra money from interest on late payments. What I don't understand is how it is really helpful for the state to get the money 40 days earlier. To me it falls under the heading of "creative bookkeeping", the kind that got Enron in trouble.

Basically I think property taxes are unfair.

We pay taxes in three counties but only get to vote in one. The local and county governments and school districts in those other counties get to decide how to use our money and we have no recourse. And we pay a lot more, proportionally, than folks that make a lot more money but don't own

Back Home
Nancy Hagman



a lot of property.

Lots of people think sales taxes are a fair tax, but it has been proven that it is extremely unfair to those with low incomes.

A family with an income of \$20,000 has to spend all its money just to live and pays sales tax on every dollar. A family with an income of \$200,000 only has to spend a portion of its income on living expenses. They may choose to spend all of it, but they have the luxury of choice.

No one asked me but I think income taxes come the closest to being fair.

I know there are a lot of problems with that also. But, at least you can understand it. It is honest, not a manipulation unlike what the governor and legislature has put in place for us.

I thought maybe the reason I don't understand this changing of the tax deadline was because I am from a rural area. When the governor was still in the legislature, I attended a statewide meeting about child care. Ms. Sebelius was a speaker for a break out session I sat in on.

During her remarks about the Social and Rehabilitative Services (SRS) reim-

bursement to low-income families for child care, she said, "If you are from a rural area you may not understand this," and went on to make a point.

She was right I didn't understand. I didn't understand why being from a rural area would impair my ability to understand.

It wouldn't have been so bad if she hadn't made a similar remark later. The second time I was offended.

Social and Rehabilitative Services rules for reimbursement of child care were the same everywhere in Kansas. So what applies in Topeka, applies in Norton County.

I think her point was she thought we didn't have any poor people out here. Surely she wasn't inferring that we are rubes, hicks or just plain dumb?

However, if that was her point, I concede she just may be right, because I sure don't get this tax thing.

For the record, I was talking to my sister (who lives in Wichita) and she doesn't get it either.

I suppose spending 15 years of her youth in Norton County was too great a handicap to overcome. You can take the girl out of the rural area but you can't take the rural area out of the girl.

By the way, in 40 days I am planning to start a new business, it is going to provide something you all need. The cost is only \$100 per person. To make my books balance I'd appreciate payment now.

Thanks a bunch.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR:

Woman feels anesthesia should have been mentioned

Dear Editors,

I thoroughly enjoyed the insert on Rural Health Care in last week's paper. My compliments for the many well-written articles about the challenges rural hospitals face in the current economy and the many services they are providing to stay viable.

I was especially interested because I have or have had clinical privileges at every hospital written about in your insert. I am a certified registered nurse anesthetist (CRNA), one of the 30,000 in the United States and one of several who provide anesthesia services in our area.

CRNAs are advanced practice nurses (APRN's) who specialize in anesthesia. We were the first specialists in anesthesia, beginning 120 years ago, but we have been called "the face behind the mask" and "the best kept secret in health care." And even in our rural area where we know our neighbors, I guess we still are. I was dismayed as I read about all the services and professionals listed by the hospitals that not one mentioned anesthesia.

Several hospitals mentioned obstetrics. CRNAs in the area provide pain relief for labor and delivery and are "on call" in case an emergency C-section must be done. Other hospitals mentioned the specialists that are coming to our rural hospitals and what a wonderful advantage that is for us. For those specialists that come and do painful procedures or perform surgery,

how could that have been arranged if anesthesia was not readily available to them? Emergency services were mentioned by several hospitals and I salute the often unsung heroes who take their time to be trained and serve to provide emergency care. However, often when the ambulance arrives at the hospital, one of the providers who is waiting there is a CRNA called in in case there is a need for our particular skills.

Sixty percent of the 30,000 CRNAs in America work in rural health care in exactly the situations I mentioned. They are an integral part of our rural hospitals staying viable. Since the insert didn't mention them, I will: Leon Nielson CRNA, Goodland and Colby; Rick Abbot CRNA, WaKeeney, but also Oakley and Norton; Brad Wertz CRNA of Quinter as well as

others including Citizens Medical Center in Colby; Gary Kliever CRNA, Fort Morgan, Colo., who also goes to Burlington, Colo., and St. Francis; Gary Bartel CRNA, Oberlin; and myself, CRNA for Cheyenne County Hospital, Rawlins County Health Center, Dundy County Hospital, and Kit Carson County Hospital with privileges at five others.

Between all of us, patients in our rural area have expert anesthesia care available for obstetrics, surgery, trauma, and pain management. Maybe now, your readers will recognize "the face behind the mask" and hopefully the "best kept secret in healthcare" isn't so secret anymore.

Sincerely,
Kim Zweygardt CRNA
Moonlight Anesthesia PA
St. Francis

WRITE:

The Norton Telegram encourages Letters to the Editor on any topic of public interest. Letters should be brief, clear and to the point. They must be signed and carry the address and phone number of the author.

We do not publish anonymous letters. We sign our opinions and expect readers to do likewise.

We do not publish form letters or letters about topics which do not pertain to our area. Thank-yous should be submitted to the Want Ad desk.

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Office hours:

8 a.m. - 5:30 p.m. Mon.-Fri.

Phone: (785) 877-3361

Fax: (785) 877-3732

E-mail: telegram@nwkansas.com

STAFF

Cynthia Haynes editor and publisher
Veronica Monier staff reporter
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Carolyn Plotts society editor
Kristen Brands reporter
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