

Opinion

Monday's Salute

Thumbs to...

✓ **Phil Finley** — for your continuing efforts to aid U.S. military veterans in need.

✓ **Colby Girls Scouts** — that's a lot of cookies!

✓ **Pride of the Prairie Orchestra** — for the cultural uplift you provide northwest Kansas.

✓ **Susan Schertz and Guy Gaskill, Winona** — on your trip to Brazil to visit with former exchange student Joao "Joe" Silveira and family.

✓ **Brewster Senior Class** — good luck with your Krispy Kreme Doughnut project.

✓ **Gary and Elfriede Cooper** — rich little grandson you got there!

✓ **Shane Stover** — the best to you during this time of recuperation.

✓ **Leilani Thomas** — for the productive year 2003 experienced by the Thomas County Convention and Visitors Bureau under your supervision.

✓ **Kelly Sloan, age 7** — for your generous donation to "Locks of Love."

(This weekly salute is compiled by TD, the newspaper's publisher. Comments, questions or submissions can be directed to him at td@nwkans.com, 785 462-3963, (fax) 785 462-7749, or mail to 155 W. 5th, Colby 67701.)

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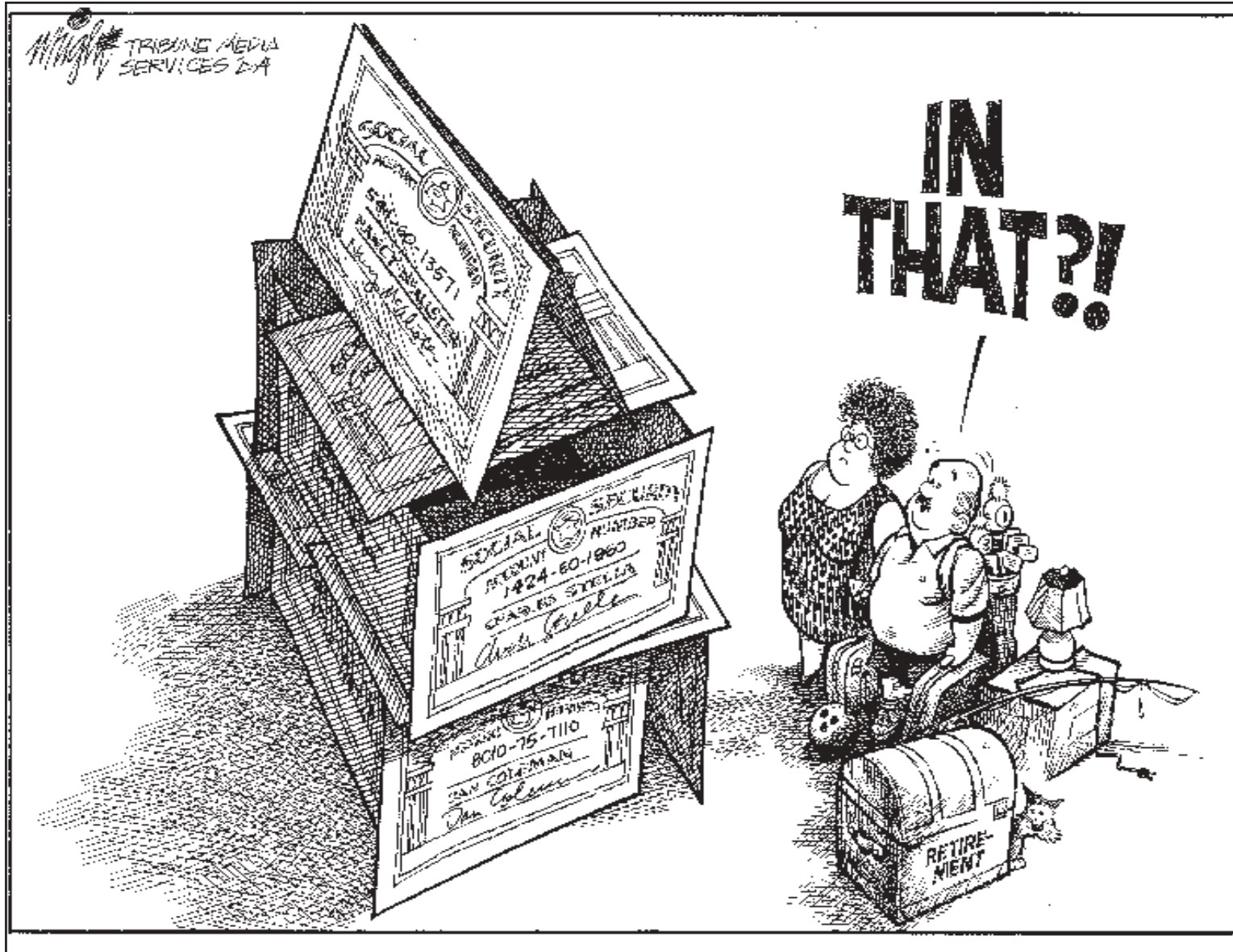
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Good-bye to television favorites

All good things must end. "Friends" will be going off the air at the end of the season and so will "Frasier."

I've watched "Friends" from the beginning and I'll be a little sad when it's finally over. However, at least it's going out on top when it's still popular.

Over the years, several finales have stuck with me.

One of my all-time favorites was probably "Magnum, P.I." in 1989. That's one of the better endings I remember. It actually tied up loose ends and had some real closure for the characters and viewers. The questions about Magnum's past were answered and resolved.

He gave up being a P.I. and re-joined the Navy and ended up with a daughter. The other biggie about that was whether or not Higgins was really mystery novelist Robin Masters. I think he was but that's just my opinion.

Speaking of Magnum, it had a memorable couple of episodes the year before the series actually ended that featured the line "What's time to infinity and jelly donuts?" Those two, I think, were better than the actual finale but no less satisfying.

Another series that wormed its way in the American consciousness ended on Sunday, Feb. 22. HBO's "Sex and the City" had its "Big" finale. I didn't get to see it but got an Internet play-by-play from my younger sister who absolutely adored the show.

There were questions over whether or not Carrie, the main character, would end up alone, with her long-time beau known only as "Big" or in Paris with Russian artist Aleksandr.

Much rejoicing went up from the fans when the dust settled. Carrie ended up with Big in the end, whose name was finally revealed, which, by the



Tisha Cox

• Off The Beaten Path

way, was John.

Because of my sister's affection for this show, I am now familiar with Steve Madden shoes but I still can't recognize a Manolo if you showed me one. Her fashion sense has become quite cosmopolitan and it's even rubbed off a little on me.

Two years ago, I had to face down the end of one of my all-time favorites, "The X-Files."

Long before it ever ended, I smarted off how I thought it would end. During a particularly vicious discussion about the show with friends, I guessed it would end with Mulder gone and Scully looking for him.

I wasn't too far off, which to this day still gripes me to no end. (I wish it had ended like creator Chris Carter jokingly said it would — in the last few seconds of the show, Mulder and Scully would wake up together in the sack, take a look at each other and then a fade to black.)

After nine years of build-up, it was one of the most anti-climactic things I've ever seen. It ended with Mulder and Scully in a hotel room, talking. That was it. For that I waited seven years?

A mutual favorite was "The Young Riders." We both loved that one, which featured a young Josh Brolin and Stephen Baldwin. It's ending featured the beginning of the Civil War and how

it impacted the Pony Express and how terrible those times were.

With the upcoming finales, I have a couple of predictions as to how things will turn out.

I bet "Friends" will end with Ross and Rachel getting back together (yay, can't wait for that one), Chandler and Monica will get their long-awaited baby, Phoebe will live happily ever after and the character of Joey will be spun off into his own sitcom this fall.

As far as "Frasier" is concerned, I haven't seen enough of it lately to even make a guess.

Another just-announced cancellation will be "Angel," the spin-off from "Buffy the Vampire Slayer."

The show about the brooding vampire is in its sixth season which will be its last. Knowing Joss Whedon, the show's creator, it will probably go out with a bang. Or a bang and silence. Whedon's good with surprises so it's anyone guess how it will end.

I think it's interesting how these shows become embedded in the American psyche. They change the way we talk, dress and think. (If you want sweeping social change, write it into a TV show!)

They change attitudes and social norms for the better and sometimes not. Other times, they're just a really enjoyable way to spend an hour each week.

However, it's not the ending that's important. The point is the journey, how you get there. Any good writer can tell you it's not the end or the beginning that makes the story. It's what happens in between that matters most.

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Let's talk about wind power

Serving on a legislative committee is very similar to taking a college research class. Each requires reading to inform yourself on the subject matter; listening to and asking questions of someone who is an expert in the field to increase your understanding; with the goal of being able to apply this knowledge and understanding in a wise manner.

The goal as a student is to not only become proficient in your chosen field of specialization where you take your skills to make a living but also to become an active participant in the community and society where you live. The goal as a legislator is to be able to take the knowledge and understanding you have gained to make wise decisions and influence others on the public policy questions before the legislature.

Harnessing the wind to generate electricity has the potential to help meet the increasing energy needs of our nation and to provide additional income to the landowners in western Kansas. It has its limits because the wind blows with the most velocity in March and the calmest month is August. Generally the velocity is highest in the early morning and lowest in late afternoon. None of these traits match the time when the demand is highest which is meeting the air-condition and refrigeration load in our homes and businesses. There are a number of incentives available to encourage wind development. The United States Congress in the Energy bill contains a provision that reauthorizes a 1.7 cent per kilowatt hour subsidy for wind energy generation. The State of Kansas offers property tax abatements on the equipment used to generate electricity from wind. Some states, but not Kansas, require utilities to have at least a specific percentage of their electricity generated with renewable wind resources. While the fuel source is free, the capital cost of the generator is out of the reach of most Kansans. The generators currently being installed are \$1.5 to \$2 million each and adequate electric transmission lines have to be available nearby.



Stan Clark

• Under the Dome

The next alternative that many are considering is to lease their ground to a wind energy developer. One of the challenges for the landowner is negotiating a fair lease. What terms and conditions are standard in the industry? Over the years standards have been developed, in the oil and gas industry leases have been filed with the Register of Deeds and there has developed a common body of knowledge and standard practices. With wind energy the industry is in its infancy and you need legal advice before signing any lease. I claim no expertise in this area but as chairman of the Senate Utilities Committee I have spent considerable time researching this topic. The leases that are offered to individuals contain clauses that prohibit the landowner from disclosing the contents to any third party and are to remain confidential. I have copies of two leases and while I cannot disclose their source, they are very one-sided. Two plays are offered as an excuse by the power companies to refuse to negotiate or deviate from their contract; either they say their financier/lender will not allow any changes, or they say they are offering everyone the same terms and treating everyone equally. If that is the case then why not file the entire lease at the Register of Deeds just like an oil and gas lease?

The Senate this week passed legislation to accomplish this goal. The goal is not only to make public the terms and conditions so that I know that I am being treated like my neighbor, but that future owners, title examiners and lenders know exactly what agreements have been

entered into and for what length of time. I am aware of land that is for sale where the owner has entered into a wind lease agreement and wishes to reserve the "wind rights" as long as the lease is in effect. For years mineral rights have many times been separated from the surface rights but separating the wind rights is a new concept for me. How would this reservation impact your decision on whether to buy this property? What is your liability if a wheat field catches on fire and warps the generator rotor? What if someone is hunting on the property and a stray bullet damages the generator? In both leases I have read the farmer is liable and must reimburse the wind generator owner. Most of the wind leases are from 25-35 years in length with options for renewal beyond that period. Companies change hands, land is passed from generation to generation or sold and if the full lease is not recorded there is no way of knowing what the restrictions might be, and what the benefits exist. This hinders everyone in providing a valid estimate of the value of the property and simply increase the costs of title work, appraisals and title insurance. Simply filing the lease provides the necessary information for an intelligent and knowledgeable decision.

Our long-term goal is to increase the level of knowledge to where a standard legal form will be accepted by parties entering wind lease agreements that provide equitable terms and conditions that everyone accepts in common usage. When that point arrives, hopefully, many in western Kansas will be able to enjoy some of the profits in providing electricity to fuel our nations growing energy needs.

Please feel free to contact me on this or any issue. I can be reached by writing to Sen. Stan Clark, State Capitol-Room 449-N, Topeka, KS 66612; by calling 1-800-432-3924 or 785-296-7399; by FAX at 801-457-9064; or by e-mail at <mailto:sclark@ink.org> sclark@ink.org. Clark represents the 40th Senatorial District.