

# When is the right time to tell children about a divorce?

*Dear Plain Sense: I am in the process of divorce and wondering how this might affect my children. What do I tell them?*

*How do I explain what is going on?*

While the adults involved in ending a relationship might be devastated as well as relieved, the children who are involved will probably be feeling, in the least, confused, worried and even frightened. Divorce can be misinterpreted by



## High Plains Mental Health

### • Plain Sense

A community service from the High Plains Mental Health Center

children unless parents provide some explanation.

Children often believe they have caused the conflict between their

parents and feel that the divorce is their fault. Parents do not have to explain all the personal problems that have brought an end to the mar-

riage, but they do need to reassure their children that they are not to blame.

Children most often worry that they will have to move to a new house, leave their best friends, or attend a different school. Thus it is important that parents talk to their children about pending changes, as well as allowing them to ask questions.

Very young children will react more so to the obvious changes,

such as a parent's continuing absence or a move to another location. Older children who have a more mature concept of the issues will have reactions related to their personal sense of loyalty and fairness.

Parents should be alert to signs of distress in their children.

Young children tend to react with behavior changes such as angry outbursts, being uncooperative or withdrawing. Older children will experience more of the sense of loss

and feelings of sadness; their schoolwork may suffer or they too may exhibit some behavior changes.

When things settle down and life is back to a sense of normalcy, such behaviors should diminish.

If problems continue and especially when parents become concerned about their children, it may be necessary to seek professional help. Counseling and therapy for families and couples dealing with divorce can be very beneficial.

*Editor's note: The preceding article was contributed by Karen D. Beery, consultation and education department. The High Plains Mental Health Center in Hays also wants people to be aware that all views expressed in this column are those of the individual writer and should not be considered a replacement for seeking professional help. Questions can be mailed to: Plain Sense, Consultation and Education Department, 208 E. 7th St., Hays, Kan. 67601.*

# Judge refuses to move Wittig case outside of Kansas City

TOPEKA (AP) — A federal judge has refused to move a criminal trial for David Wittig outside Kansas, declaring that the former Westar Energy Inc. chief executive and a co-defendant will have their

case heard in Kansas City, Kan.

Wittig, of Topeka, and Douglas T. Lake, of New Canaan, Conn., the company's former executive vice president, each face 40 counts, with prosecutors alleging they tried to

loot Westar, the state's largest electric utility, before leaving the company near the end of 2002.

The charges include conspiracy, wire fraud, money laundering and making false statements to government agencies.

They pleaded not guilty to all charges and argued that they could not receive a fair trial in Kansas because of negative publicity, par-

ticularly about Wittig, the company under his management, and other legal problems he faced.

Their attorneys had suggested moving the trial to Denver.

"We're obviously disappointed in the decision, but we intend to go to trial wherever it is," Edward Little, a New York attorney representing Lake said in a telephone interview Wednesday.

# Attorney general issues funds to pregnancy group

OTTAWA (AP) — Taking direct aim at Gov. Kathleen Sebelius, Attorney General Phill Kline has provided funds to four women's health care clinics that do not provide or advocate abortions.

Last month, Sebelius vetoed a provision in the budget that would have provided \$300,000 for grants to such nonprofit clinics.

Kline issued checks to four clinics Wednesday and described Sebelius' veto as "disappointing." He also noted that the budget for the governor's office has increased to \$14.5 million for fiscal 2005, which begins Thursday, from less than \$2.2 million in fiscal 2002. The figure counts all funding sources and reflects consolidation of several grant programs from other state agencies in Sebelius' office.

"It rings hollow that the state doesn't have \$300,000 to help these women," Kline said.

Speaking with reporters later, Sebelius noted the changes in how grant programs are administered and said of Kline, "He continues to use, I think, some phony budget numbers."

The checks, worth \$60,456.80, are funded by all of the state's share of a \$7.7 million antitrust settlement with Salton Inc., makers of the George Foreman Grill. Kansas was one of 47 states receiving funds, which were to be used for nutrition education programs.

Sebelius said Kline has the legal authority to make such grants, given that his office oversees charitable trusts. However, she said the programs he is funding involve "a limited constituency and very stringent rules."

Kline issued checks worth \$15,114.20 each to the LifeCare Center in Ottawa, Advice and Aid in Shawnee, Grace Center in Kansas City, Kan., and Gabriel House in Topeka. The four agencies serve about 6,500 women each year.

In selecting the four agencies — all with anti-abortion policies tied to Christian denominations — Kline said he asked his staff to look for agencies serving the greatest numbers with the greatest financial need.

The groups offer counseling, medical referrals for women and limited health care services.

"They generally are faith-based. I don't think you can find one that

**"This is consistent with my belief to support women who choose life and carrying their pregnancy to full term."**

Phill Kline,  
Kansas  
Attorney General

is not," Kline said. "This is consistent with my belief to support women who choose life and carrying their pregnancy to full term."

In a message to legislators last month, Sebelius said such programs already have other sources of funding and that other health care programs are forced to compete for limited state dollars.

The House overrode Sebelius' veto, but an override attempt fell short in the Senate.

Some legislators attributed Sebelius' veto to abortion politics. The provision prohibited any money going to any group providing or referring women for abortions or even "educating in favor of abortion."

Sebelius, a Democrat, is a strong supporter of abortion rights. Kline, a Republican, is a strong opponent of abortion.

But Sebelius said abortion was not an issue in her decision.

"I made a judgment about the best use of state dollars for health care needs of Kansans," she said. "I don't think it has anything to do with any other issue than how we get the greatest service for the dollars we spend."

In 2001, Gov. Bill Graves vetoed a similar provision, but he and legislators later worked out an agreement to restore the funds to the budget.

Sebelius also vetoed increased funding for upgrades at the Kansas Bureau of Investigation's lab in Great Bend and additional staff for Kline to prosecute white-collar crime. Kline said he would search for funds for those operations this year.

# High Plains Lions thank college for contribution

The High Plains Lions met at the Prairie Rose room for dinner and their regular meeting June 28. In the absence of President Lacey Moore, Lion Sheryl Brenn conducted the meeting. Lion Sheryl led the group in the flag salute, Lion Elmer Lawver gave the prayer and after singing "America" and the Lions song a business meeting was conducted.

A thank you letter was received from the Colby Community College Endowment Association for the contribution made to the scholarship fund in the name of Lion Matt Hamill.

A second letter was circulated from the Thomas County Fair Board requesting the club to participate in the fair parade.

Lion Melda Moore asked about purchasing a band uniform. Lion Roger Hale asked about donating to the Picking on the Plains upcoming event.


The club voted to contact the other three Thomas County Lions clubs to see if they were interested in having a county Lions float in the fair parade.

Lion Melda is going to investi-

## Club

gate the price of a band uniform and will report at the next meeting.

The club voted to continue the same support to the Picking on the Plains event as they have in the past.



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The clipping shows a front page of the Colby Free Press from Friday, June 4, 2004, for 50¢. The main headline is "Wall of dirt" with a photo of a massive dirt cloud. Other headlines include "receives top award" and "Friends, family, colleagues say 'good-bye' to Clark". A quote from Stan Clark is featured: "Stan was more concerned for our welfare than his own."

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