

from our viewpoint...

We got him! Who will try him?

The world woke up Sunday to great news with the capture of Saddam Hussein by American troops. Celebrations in Baghdad and throughout the country are a good sign.

For President George Bush, it is a relief to have his enemy in custody. He can now consider what to do with him.

Sometimes it is tough to be so civilized. The mind boggles with possibilities of how to torture Saddam as he has done to thousands of his own people over the last few decades. But we must look at what the capture means for the future and the best way to bring this maniac to justice. His trial can be a civilized demonstration of what will happen to all such terrorists.

The verdict is already in. The only question now is how we get it on record for the world to see.

This is not the first time we have been in a position to put a leader on trial for war crimes. In this case, the best course is to step aside and allow the new Iraqi court to handle the trial and set the punishment. We should be sure he remains in custody behind bars, with American guards.

In the past month, we helped the new Iraqi government establish a special tribunal for handling war crimes by their former leaders, and now we have the top man to give them. I am sure there are a few of Saddam's minor minions who the court can use as training before they take on the big guy.

The real urge is to take Saddam and bring him to the United States, where he could be put in a cell at Super Max in Florence, Colo., next to Col. Manuel Noriega, the drug-dealing former dictator of Panama, and let him rot for the rest of his life.

One of the problems in determining how Saddam is tried and punished is that we do not want to make him a martyr to his terrorist supporters, who are sure to continue their violence. In fact, less than a day after his capture, another bomb exploded, killing as many as 20 people.

This is a milestone in the Iraqi war, but it is not the end, and we need to be prepared for more American deaths before we find a way to remove our forces from the front lines. Taking Saddam out of the picture will give the Iraqi people a real chance to take the next step forward in establishing a government.

We have attained half of our goals against the terrorists of the Middle Eastern area, but we are still hunting for the other leader who has slipped through our nets. Osama ben Laden remains. Our efforts to find him have been thwarted so far. To claim victory, we must find him and bring him to trial for his crimes against humanity.

It would not seem unreasonable to believe he is hiding out in Saudi Arabia — his homeland — and many there are not in any hurry to turn him in.

Maybe when the truth is known about the tip that led to Saddam, and someone comes forward to collect the \$25 million reward, it will become easier to find our other prime target.

Meantime, we will keep our fingers crossed that we do not lose too many more American lives before we extricate ourselves from Iraq. — *Tom Betz*

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Member: Kansas Press Association
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e-mail: star-news@nwkanssas.com

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nwkanssas.com

N.T. Betz, Director of Internet Services

(nbetz@nwkanssas.com)

Evan Barnum, Systems Admin. (support@nwkanssas.com)

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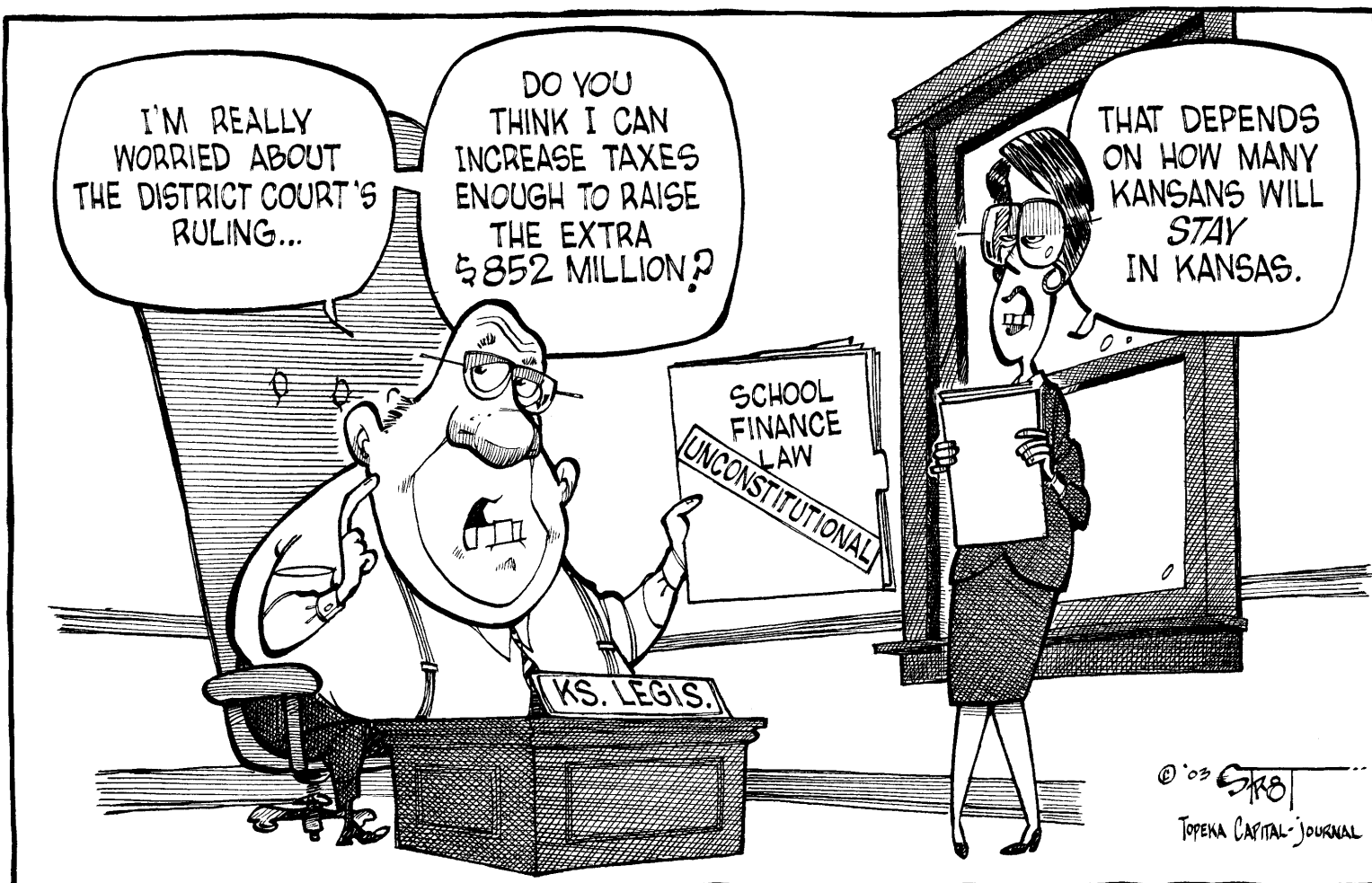
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Asa loves parties, paté



**cynthia
haynes**

• open season

Asa loves parties.

He loves the people, the food, the drink and especially the crumbs.

We were invited to a dinner party at the home of Dean and Sue Mills in Columbia, Mo.

Dean is the dean of the School of Journalism at the University of Missouri. We got our invitation to the party because the National Newspaper Association has its home on the MU campus and Steve is a director of the association.

The Millses live just outside of Columbia in a beautiful country home on the side of the hill with their two dogs.

We met the first dog — a big furry white sheep dog of some sort — on the walk up to the door.

He looked us over, decided we wouldn't harm his sheep, or anything else on the premises, and let us pass.

At the door, Sue took our coats and welcomed us. The house was aglow with lights and good smells and we could see pretzels and fancy hors d'oeuvres on the coffee table behind her. We could also see a large black dog help-

ing himself to the paté.

As she turned around to show us the house, Sue also spotted the culprit.

This is a hostess' worst nightmare, animals on the table or in the food.

She was cool, however. She shooed Asa off and cut off the section of paté that he had been sampling. Then she moved the food out of the way of his busy tongue and nose.

Denied the pleasure of paté — hey, it looked like dog food to me, too — Asa put nose to floor and spent the rest of the evening alternately putting his head under someone's hand to get a scratch and a pat, and his nose to the floor checking for crumbs.

I was reminded of the cat-and-bread incident.

Question is if underage sex is child abuse?



**steve
haynes**

• along the sappa

If your 15-year-old daughter is having sex with her boyfriend, is that child abuse?

Would you want it reported to the state?

The courts will have to decide whether Attorney General Phill Kline did the right thing when he declared under-age sex to be child abuse which must be reported by health and child-welfare professionals.

A federal judge heard arguments in Wichita the other day on the ruling, and promised to make a decision later in the year.

What a mess.

What Kline's office said, basically, is that it's against the law in Kansas to have sex with anyone under the age of 16. And because it's illegal, sex with an underage child is a form of child abuse.

Kline says that means that, under another Kansas law which requires professionals to report suspected child abuse, anyone who knows of underage sex is required to report it. The decision applies to any sex involving a child, even if both parties are underage and both consent to the behavior.

It's hard to know where to start.

It hardly seems like the state's business if a

couple of high school freshmen decide to have sex. It might worry their parents. The parents might well act.

But is it something you'd want reported to the Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services?

Most parents, I'd suspect, would rather *not* sit down with a caseworker and talk about their child's love life.

Health care workers seemed to be split, depending on how they look at the issue. Some testified that reporting would keep kids from seeking medical and professional advice that might save them from pregnancy, disease or worse.

Others said they already report underage sex as child abuse.

Welfare workers said they rarely investigate reports of sex between consenting underage

children, and there seems to be a lot of it, more than most parents would like to admit.

There seems to be no "right" answer here. From a technical standpoint, Kline probably is right. If it's illegal for a child to have sex, then inducing that child to violate the law most logically is a form of child abuse.

From a practical standpoint, though, it's silly to assume that teen-agers are not going to experiment with sex. Most parents have a hard enough time dealing with these things within a family, let alone with a welfare worker.

And if a child can't go home for help or advice, is it a good idea to tell health professionals they have to report that patient to the state when he or she comes looking for help?

Kline is a conservative Republican, but he comes from the branch of his party that abhors big-brother government only when they disagree with it. A major intrusion into the family such as this is OK, apparently, when it involves teen-age morals.

We'd like to think that our 15-year-olds are innocent, but experience shows us that is not always the case.

But do we really want the state sticking its nose that far into our kids' lives?

It's not a pretty mess Mr. Kline has stirred up here, that's for sure.

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garfield

