

from other pens...

Television news changing era, faces

Katie Couric is jumping networks to become anchor of CBS-TV's "Evening News." This will be the first time a major network has picked a lady to solo in one of the most powerful news chairs in the industry.

Does it really make a difference? Will Couric's presence draw every woman in America to her side to listen as she babbles about the day's news? Will men flock to the small screen to watch the former NBC-TV "Today" show's personality occupy long time anchor Dan Rather's seat?

At the outset, maybe. For the long term, probably not. Is CBS-TV gambling that Couric will attract the necessary viewers to restore it to its once #1 nightly news ranking? Probably. News, especially television news, has undergo a dramatic twist in the past several years with the advent of the 24/7 cable news outlets. They have drawn a significant number of viewers from NBC, CBS and ABC.

As a nation, we have become news junkies. We all have our favorites and in the cable world FOX is out front. CNN and MSNBC trail. The cable bunch has jumped out of the box to present its news. It's lively, indepth and they bring analysts onto the set to explain what's going on. And, too, electronically, you can pick up the news on the Internet, or from just about any other kind of electronic box floating around out there.

We don't know what CBS paid Couric to join its ranks. But it has to be in the many millions of dollars. Rumors are she was getting \$40 million to \$60 million annually from NBC. That's a tidy little weekly check, huh?! Couric leaves NBC May 30. She settles into the CBS anchor's chair Sept. 1.

The Dan Rather, Tom Brokaw and late Peter Jennings era is over. New times. New faces. New challenges.
— Tom Dreiling, Norton Telegram

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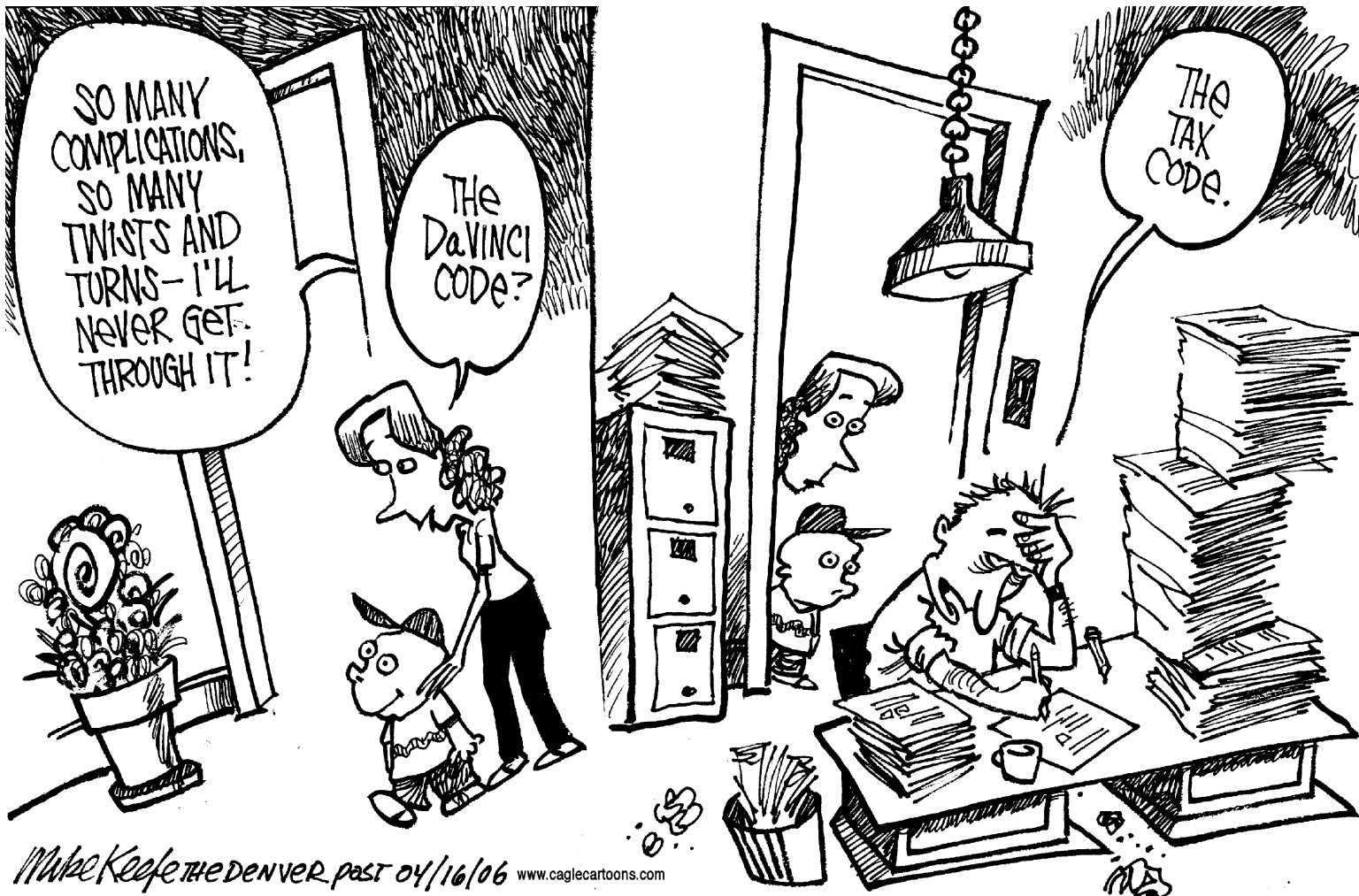
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Legislature on break, session far from over

We now have a break for about three weeks before returning for the so-called veto session.

Our first adjournment took place prior to April 1, on the 82nd day of a scheduled 90-day session. We reconvene at 10 a.m. on Wednesday, April 26.

A resolution extending legislative days to late May was passed by both chambers before first adjournment. That suggests a cantankerous close to this year's session. We have yet to complete an education plan after, which we must then reconcile all the state spending. Some rumor has the wrap-up lasting two or more weeks. The hold-up issue is, of course, school funding.

I supported funding increases for my district schools that was responsible, significant and for a three-year period. Total of increased spending without raising taxes was \$500 million.

What the House passed — I did not support — blew the lid off the budget, reduced money to my schools and created a situation where the



jim morrison

• capitol review

state would not have enough in ending balances to prudently cover costs. At least not if we have any hope of eliminating taxes on machinery and equipment, the "death tax" and sales taxes on motor vehicle rebates. A recent *Hutchinson News* poll found 71 percent of voters opposed to tax increases for schools while only 25 percent approved increases.

Rep. Mike O'Neal had this to say on House-passed finance bill, which I oppose:

"Kansas deserve a balanced approach in the allocation of tax-supported funding. Today, due to court intervention, spending is tilted almost totally in favor of K-12 public education, while higher education, programs for the frail, elderly, disabled and almost every other

beneficiary of state tax revenues go wanting."

This session was so consumed by school finance and related issues that health care issues — availability, accessibility and affordability — were placed on the back burner. I suspect that this election cycle will bring these to the forefront. Too many citizens are no longer able to get health care in a timely or affordable manner. Without your health, you die, so I consider that the most important issue to each of us. We must discuss the issue of health care in Kansas.

Since we do not return for about three weeks, I will generally be in the area. I have many scheduled meetings and have only a few days with no obligations or commitments.

I can be reached prior to April 24 by calling (785) 462-3264, e-mail me at jmorrison@ink.org, write Box 366 Colby, Kan. 67701. I continue to be engaged in discussions in Topeka during this "recess" period. (Thank God for technology!)

You can help prevent child abuse

To the Editor:

When you read or hear news reports about cases of child abuse and neglect, what is your reaction?

Disgust? Disbelief? Sadness?

Now here's the hard question. What do you do about it?

Child abuse is an ugly, terrible problem in our community and across our state. During fiscal year 2005 (July 2004-June 2005) there were 47,409 reports of child abuse and neglect in Kansas — over 3,000 more than in 2004. Right here in Sherman County, there were 167 reports of child abuse and neglect in 2005 compared to 130 in 2004. Child maltreatment is linked to a host of problems for children, including inadequate school performance, substance abuse and future perpetration of abuse and neglect.

It's important to know the scope of the problem and the effects on kids. But, what's even more essential is knowing what each of us can do to help prevent child abuse and neglect. Without that information, many of us resign to the notion that there really isn't anything that we can do. Nothing is further from the truth.

Here are some ideas: Support children and families. This is the simplest, yet hardest thing to do. But, it's the most effective. Offer to babysit for a frazzled neighbor. Donate used children's clothing, furniture and toys. Make an effort to get to know the kids and families on your block. Be a helping hand and a listening ear. Many times, families under stress simply need someone to talk to.

Address the issue. Let others know you are concerned about child abuse. Encourage schools and churches to offer classes and support groups for parents. Call or write your elected officials and let them know about the importance of programs and services that support healthy and safe children and families.

Educate yourself. Know where to go for help. For a listing of resources, call the Kan-



from our readers

• to the editor

sas Children's Service League's Parent Helpline at (800) 332-6378.

Don't be afraid to report. Recently in Kansas, a teenager intervened on behalf of a 3-year-old boy. If you suspect maltreatment of a child, don't wait, call. The child abuse hotline is (800) 922-5330. This is an anonymous call that could be an important step to protecting a child in need.

Get involved. Agencies that work with children and families always need help. Volunteer. Become a mentor, foster parent or even be-

come an adoptive parent. Support their work.

Wear a Blue Ribbon. April is Child Abuse Prevention month. The blue ribbon campaign raises awareness of the steps we can take to prevent child abuse.

Please wear your blue ribbon to support a standard that every child should grow up in a loving, safe, nurturing home. Preventing child abuse and neglect is everyone's responsibility. Please do your part during April and throughout the year.

For information on programs and how you can participate in the prevention of child abuse, please contact:

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garfield

