

# Opinion



## A Kansas Viewpoint

### There are rules to be followed

From The Topeka Capital-Journal

The principal of Morton High School in Hammond, Ind., sent 128 students home on the first day of class for wearing inappropriate clothing. That's more than 10 percent of the school's students.

Hurray for Theresa Mayerik.

She suspended the students for one day. Actually, giving them a warning on the first day and suspending them on the second day might have appeared a little more reasonable. But the point is the school has a dress code, and students should have known about it. The likely explanation is that they didn't expect it to be enforced.

The action sends a couple of important messages to the kids. One is that in the real world, there are rules that must be followed. There are laws established by governments, of course. But there also are rules from employers and organizations to which they will want to belong, such as churches and social groups.

The second message is that there is a concept known as appropriateness, which is more vague than rules, but still must be learned and obeyed if they are going to get along with the rest of society. Society frowns on certain slogans or images on T-shirts and on clothing so revealing as to be considered invitations to sexual advances.

... Other than missing a day of instruction that might be important on a future quiz, the suspension will have little long-term impact on a student's record, if the student uses the incident in a positive way. Mayerik said the infraction would be removed from the record in 12 weeks if the student has had no other in-school violations.

Topeka-area schools have rules, too. In some schools it won't be necessary to use the strong measure Mayerik used, but we can hope that school administrators are using whatever techniques are necessary to convey the messages Mayerik was sending to her students.

Comments to any opinions expressed on this page are encouraged. Mail them to the Colby Free Press, 155 W. 5th St., Colby, Kan., 67701. Or e-mail [jvannostrand@nwkansas.com](mailto:jvannostrand@nwkansas.com) or [pdecker@nwkansas.com](mailto:pdecker@nwkansas.com). Opinions do not necessarily reflect the *Free Press*.

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## One step closer, five years later

With the five year anniversary of Sept. 11 on Monday, I finally feel a little closer to the event.

Last weekend I watched the movie "World Trade Center." The film is excellent. I did not see any subliminal political messages (which I was expecting), nothing done purely to add to the entertainment value and it all came across very real.

But after walking out of the theater, I still have a hard time fully connecting to the day.

I might have been the last person in the news business to know about Sept. 11. That same day, I was home with my son Grant who was only a week old that day. I took vacation time after his birth.

Wife Jennifer and I had the TV and radio off that morning and we did not know what happened until it was nearly all done.

Jennifer was on the telephone with a consultation nurse late that morning from the hospital where we had Grant. The nurse's last comment was something to the effect of "it is a good day to stay at home."

Jennifer did not know what she meant so she asked. The nurse gave Jennifer the highlights, then after she hung up we turned on the television and got up to speed with the rest of the world.

I admit, while watching the footage over and over again, I did have sympathy for the thousands



### John Van Nostrand

#### • Line in the Dust

of people who died, their families, and wondered who was all behind it. I attended my church's prayer service that night.

But it still did not feel like enough.

Even after the first week of being a new parent, I was still rearranging my life to become a parent. I didn't know if I should feel guilty for not having enough compassion for what had happened in New York City, western Pennsylvania and at the Pentagon.

I was so wrapped up in nap times, diaper sizes, eating habits, my own sleep routines, trying to find out when Jennifer should take a break from the responsibilities and I do them, what to do when returning to work the next day and the other day-to-day routines at home. Because we were talking about all of that, and so much more, was why the television was off.

But then I realized I was not alone. Like we

probably all know now, there have been countless number of stories related to the impact of Sept. 11.

Probably the one that hit me most was the one I could have been apart of. Stories across the country were about how parents who had babies that day reacted. Grant's initial due date was after Sept. 4. (Expect some lengthy feature stories on Sept. 11 in the future when those kids have grown enough to be told by their parents what happened that day.)

Another moving story for me was of the person in Southern California that day needing to get to Florida for a funeral. The person was to fly with the body. The death occurred in California but the deceased had made it known to be buried in Florida. Since all flights were grounded for an indefinite amount of time, the person and the body waited in California for days. The person had no one to grieve with and telephone calls to others can only do so much.

Then I have wondered maybe I was supposed to have my first child during September 2001. Because maybe when all of the other kids born that day and month are old enough to be told by their parents what happened, they will pay it forward and strive that it never happens again.

John Van Nostrand is publisher of the Colby Free Press.

## Your turn

### County clerk unfairly represented

**Pat Schippers**  
**Logan County Clerk**

I am writing regarding a news article in your Aug. 31, 2006 paper titled "Logan County nears deadline for chemical use on prairie dogs."

Several times throughout the article it was indicated that the information given were direct quotes from me, County Clerk Pat Schippers, but in fact, information taken from the unapproved minutes of the Board of County Commissioners dated Aug. 22, 2006.

As I read the article, as did several of my co-workers, we all came to the same conclusion, that this article was unfairly written making it sound like I was personally making these statements and at one point, personally attacking a Logan County property owner.

I contacted Jan Ackerman immediately about inaccuracies in the article and she agreed to correct portions of the article that were inaccurate, however felt I was being too sensitive about some of it.

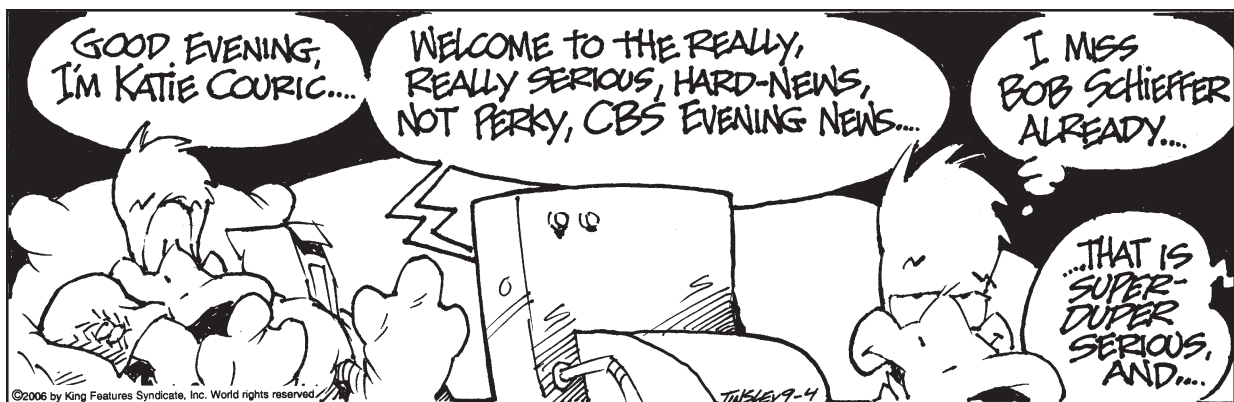
I explained to her that if I read it as a personal attack then how many other people reading the article would feel the same way.

Jan and I have worked together professionally for several years and she has always treated me fairly, however this article is an exception.

My job is to record the minutes in the County Commissioners meetings and in no way make any decisions on what actions the Board makes. Thank you.

#### About those letters . . .

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### Mallard Fillmore

• Bruce Tinsley

