

Opinion

Guest Viewpoint



Question: does she ...or does she not?

Does Gov. Kathleen Sebelius believe her government review team meetings should have been open, or doesn't she? Only Sebelius knows for sure.

Not long after she won a court battle stemming from her decision to close her review team meetings, Sebelius offered a real head-scratcher by saying she would support legislation to make such meetings open in the future.

Her pledge came after a judge reluctantly ruled that Sebelius' closed meetings were within the law, which differentiates between task forces formed by governors-elect and governors.

While the judge felt that he had no legal option but to rule in Sebelius' favor, he did note that the openness of the decision-making process should apply whether it involves a governor-elect or governor.

He's right. ...
Fourteen news organizations ... had challenged Sebelius' closed meetings, arguing that the Kansas Open Meetings Act applied to a governor-elect's task forces. The group appealed and will urge the Legislature to broaden the law to include governors-elect.

Asked if she would sign a bill, Sebelius said: "Sure."
"I'll share my views with them, but if they decide it's good policy to open everything up, it won't ever affect me again," Sebelius said. How convenient.

If Sebelius truly believed the closed meetings were in the state's best interest, why would she make such a pledge now? If she supports opening future review team meetings, she should have admitted her mistake and opened her meetings.

After all, actions speak louder than words. —*The Ottawa Herald*

Letter Drop

• Our Readers Sound Off

What gives with the gas prices?

To the Colby Free Press:
What is going on with the price of gas in the city of Colby?
Why are Colby gas prices so much higher than anywhere else in the state of Kansas?
We traveled to Wichita this past weekend and gas prices, along the Interstate, in Hays were 139.9 for regular. In Salina, along the Interstate, it was 134.9. In Wichita it was 131.9.
When gas prices in Colby are 149.9 it would seem to me that something isn't kosher with the Colby gas prices!

Joyce Dean
Colby
(Letter #7)

About those letters ...
The *Free Press* encourages and welcomes letters from readers. Letters should be typewritten, if at all possible, and should include a telephone number and an address. Most importantly, all letters must include a signature. Unsigned letters cannot be published. We reserve the right to edit for clarity and length.



The good Father is doing well

WORD reaching us today is that Fr. Galen Long, pastor of Sacred Heart Parish in Colby, underwent successful procedures at St. Joseph Hospital in Denver and that he is doing well. He is in the cardiac intensive care unit. Those wishing to send cards should address them to the Sacred Heart Rectory, 585 French, Colby, Kan. 67701 and they will get them to him. Fr. Long was airlifted to Denver earlier this week. He also received medical attention several months ago in Denver. Your prayers would be appreciated.



Tom Dreiling

• My Turn

ONE OF the television programs the other night said that 86 percent of Americans believe in God. If that's the case, why is there such a mess about having "In God We Trust" on our money, and having God in the pledge of Allegiance, and God in our schools? Should we not just tell the 14 percent to get lost?

Thanks to Joyce for sharing that one.

A MAN with a police record as long as the Jolly Green Giant's arm, breaks into a home in Brooklyn, N.Y. The homeowner grabs his gun and fires a couple of shots to protect his family. The criminal is wounded. The homeowner, not the worthless crook, is in trouble with the law and faces possible imprisonment. Why? Because the gun he used wasn't fully registered. He was in the process of doing the paperwork on the newly-purchased handgun. That makes him a criminal. Forget the fact that the wounded crook can probably now sue him. True story and the young man who was doing what any of us would do in the same circumstance, suddenly becomes the bad guy. What is wrong with our justice system? It must have gone south. I have always felt that when someone breaks into our homes, the rules go out the window. When you hear such things you begin to wonder at what moment in time sanity escaped out the door. I do think the district attorney, who thinks he has a case in this instance, is going to be fooled, and will probably look like a fool when it's all over. And he should.

AND hat's off to the U.S. District Judge in New York who dismissed a class-action lawsuit claiming that McDonald's food causes weight and

health problems. Duh! He said it's not the fault of the fast food place, but the fault of the indulger. He said it is not the place of the law to protect people from their own excesses. That lawsuit certainly fits into the category of frivolous. It's kind of like striking a match and placing it on your finger and then suing the manufacturer for making the match too hot. We're a silly bunch, always trying to see how we can fleece money out of somebody.

NORMAN and his girlfriend, Blondeybird, were listening to the radio one winter morning and heard the announcer say, "We are going to have 3 to 4 inches of snow today. You must park your car on the even numbered side of the street, so the snowplow can get through." Blondeybird rushes out and moves the car.

A week later while they are eating breakfast, the radio announcer says, "We are expecting 4 to 5 inches of snow today. You must park your car on the odd numbered side of the street, so the snowplow can get through." Blondeybird goes out and moves the car again.

The next week they are having breakfast again, when the radio announcer says, "We are expecting 10 to 12 inches of snow today. You must park.....," then suddenly the electric power goes out. Blondeybird says, "Honey, I don't know what to do." Norman says, "Why don't you just leave the car in the garage this time?"

HOW often do you see those commercials on the tube that ask, "Do you want to feel younger?" Think about that. What exactly does feeling younger feel like? And how about those wind chills. Yesterday morning the guy on the television said the wind chill (combination of tempera-

ture and wind) made the temperature feel like it was 10 degrees below zero. But yet that is not what the thermometer read, it showed the temperature to still be several degrees above zero. What they are telling us, then, is what you see is not what you feel. I'm waiting for them to put out wind chill thermometers so we can be told that the temperature is actually warmer than what we feel. Huh?

SEVENTY-TWO days and counting. "Counting to what?" you ask. Daylight Savings Time. On the first Sunday of April we will turn our clocks UP one hour. That time will be here before you know it. Ah, bring it on. And while the bringer-on'ers are at it, they might bring some badly needed moisture with them.

THE TWO American pilots undergoing a military hearing for firing on friendly foes in one of the world's troubled spots, certainly do not qualify for a courts martial. Four military personnel from Canada lost their lives. For that this country feels badly and had issued an apology early on. The pilots say they acted in self defense. And they probably did. Wartime situations put everybody in harm's way. They were performing their duty. To put them away for up to 64 years would be an injustice to the two veteran pilots, their families and this country.

HAPPY Birthday to...
Jan. 24 — David Wilson, Amy Jo Nelson, Bryce Dougherty

Jan. 25 — Keith Corbett

Jan. 26 — Joey Nickols, Gary Johnston, Gale Wade, Valerie Rene Melvin

Jan. 27 — Lavel Wessel, Bill Weishaar, Andrew Shubert, Shelly Huelmsman

Jan. 28 — Bryce A. Butts, Chelsi Pettit, Terry Turner

HAPPY Anniversary to...

Jan. 27 — Wayne & Kathleen Hedden

Congratulations!

HAVE a good evening and a good weekend!

Dreiling is publisher of the Free Press.

Would 'Pharaoh' be appropriate label?

My inclination is to think our 'Ship of State' is dangerously close to having an administration that is listing very heavily toward being labeled as Pharaoh. That word comes to us from ancient Egyptian history. The word initially meant 'house great' and then later was used to title the King or top leader. The modern similarity lies in reference to the 'White House' and 'President' being used interchangeably to refer to the President and his administrative team.

History reveals to us that almost without exception the Pharaohs of ancient Egypt, either the bureaucracies or the Kings, were extreme tyrants and used their subjects as collateral in satisfying their own selfish desires.

Anyone who questions or disagrees with the direction of our leadership is immediately labeled as pacifist, unpatriotic, and traitor to our flag, our military, and veterans. This is used to coerce and control the voices of society. Do the people or citizens of our nation belong to the government instead of the government belonging to the people? It would seem that way.

We are 'hell bent' for aggression toward an individual who happens to be perceived as a possible threat to our security. He may well be a rogue, tyrant, and evil individual, but are we the appointed judge, jury and executioners for the world? Is it really in our best interest as citizens to become the aggressors in a war of question-

Ken Poland

• Ken's World

able outcome? We may be the military victors but what of the costs of that victory? History will bear out the fact that there are never any real winners in a war.

If getting our man results in a total holocaust of the Middle East and the loss of lives in our own military, so be it. That holocaust and loss of our own is just unavoidable collateral damage! For what?

Some of the world nations and even our own historians accuse our nation of having been aggressors in the past. Quite frankly, I think there is some evidence to support this. Our claimed motives haven't always been what the historical economic and social evidence might substantiate. Sometimes, however, we have had no choice but to defend ourselves. But now, it would seem to me, we are openly declaring our intention of unquestionable aggression in defiance of world opinion, the U.N., and the lack of

factual hard evidence.
Very few of the world's deadliest snakes will aggressively attack a man unless they feel threatened or perceive man to be invading their territory.

All you need to do is toss a rock or stick in their direction, though, and they will go on the offensive immediately. To them, however, it is the defensive.

Are we tossing rocks and sticks at a snake in the middle East? Yes, that snake might bite someone outside his own country, but if we continue to threaten and pitch rocks at him, it is almost inevitable that he will coil and strike in self defense. That snake is quite effectively playing his hand with the hopes that the disunity among the nations of the U.N. will tilt the playing field in his favor.

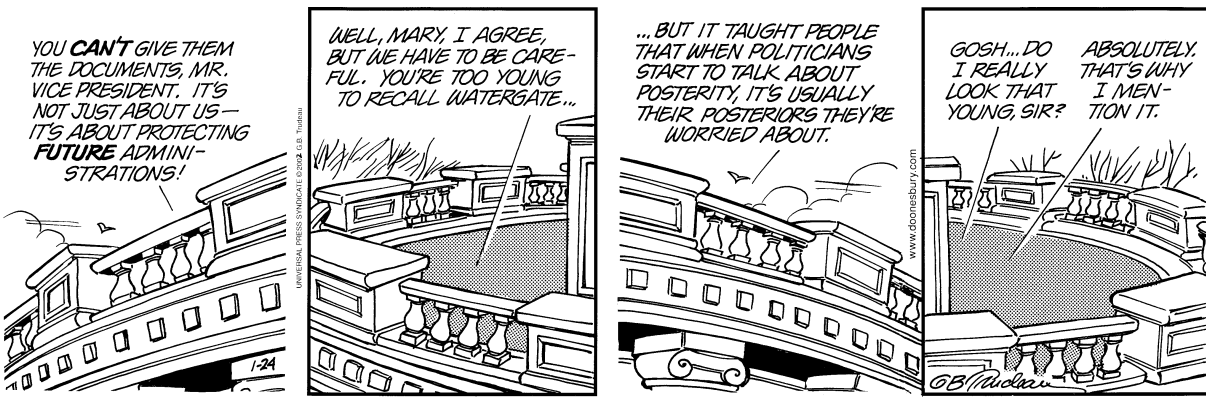
The U.S. is playing the very same game, in hopes our superior military and economic power will collapse the opposition.

Mankind in general is the disenfranchised subject of such tyrannical powers of both contestants in this struggle.

Ken Poland of Gem frequently contributes to this page. His commentary generally attracts a wide readership. As with all writers, the views expressed are theirs and not necessarily those of the Free Press.

Doonesbury

• Gary Trudeau



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Tom (TD) Dreiling - Publisher
td@nwkansas.com
NEWS
Patty Decker - Editor
pdecker@nwkansas.com
Darrel Pattillo, Sports Editor
colbysports@nwkansas.com
Michelle L. Hawkins, family and religion
mhawkins@nwkansas.com
ADVERTISING
Crystal Rucker - Advertising Representative
crystal@nwkansas.com
Flo Rodriguez - Ad Composition, Legals
BUSINESS OFFICE
Lea Bandy - Circulation Manager
Pattie Stevens - Office Manager, Want Ads
Evan Barnum - Systems Administrator
support@nwkansas.com
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Jim Bowker - General Manager
Richard Westfahl, Lana Westfahl, Ron VanLoenen, Judy McKnight
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