

Opinion

Free Press Viewpoint

'Ricegate' is avoided, so let's get on with the show

Dr. Condoleezza Rice, President Bush's national security adviser, has two choices, in our opinion: 1) give sworn public testimony before the 9/11 Commission; 2) pack her bags, climb on her horse and ride into the sunset.

She's creating an unwanted 'gate' for President Bush — 'Ricegate.'

That's the way today's editorial started as it was being drafted Tuesday.

Since then, however, Dr. Rice has decided to testify under oath in public before the commission. We doubt, seriously, that the decision to send her before the panel was to her liking. She did talk to them in closed session a while back, but not under oath.

It is a safe bet that President Bush's arm was twisted firmly by impatient and angry Republicans to allow his national security adviser to start singing publicly to the 9/11 Commission — a nonpartisan body he, himself, appointed.

Her continued refusal to go before the commission in public — while hunting down every television camera she could find — was turning her into one of those "What's she trying to hide?" people.

Her know-it-all, arrogant, confrontational style, didn't win her many friends. In fact, some Republican members of the 9/11 Commission, were correct in saying that the White House was making a major election year error in keeping her away from testifying publicly and under oath.

The pressure was intense. Generally, sitting national security advisers do not testify before Congress. But the 9/11 Commission is not Congress. And this panel of distinguished Americans is dealing with something that has never before happened to this greatest of all countries: an attack on our own soil. They were commissioned to conduct hearings to determine how this tragedy, costing thousands of lives, was allowed to happen.

They need to hear from leading officials in both the Clinton and Bush administrations, including the likes of Dr. Rice. Now that she will be appearing publicly and under oath, she will have an opportunity to tell her side of the story as told last week by former antiterrorism adviser Richard Clarke, who served under four presidents.

Everyone knew that eventually Rice would have to appear, everyone, that is, except President Bush and Rice. Chalk one up for the victors in this latest White House struggle, struggles that weren't as commonplace when Karen Hughes was around. Mrs. Hughes, you will recall, had the president's ear at every turn in her capacity as his personal adviser before leaving a year ago to devote more time to her family in Texas. She was called back in to help with the Rice standoff.

Didn't take long after her arrival that the issue was settled.

Now, let's get on with the show.

Tom (TD) Dreiling
Free Press Publisher

COLBY FREE PRESS

155 W. Fifth (USPS 120-920) (785) 462-3963
Colby, Kan. 67701

freepress@nwkansan.com

State award-winning newspaper, General Excellence, Design & Layout Excellence, Column Writing, Editorial Writing, Sports Columns, News, Photography.

Official newspaper of Thomas County, Colby, Brewster and Rexford.

Tom (TD) Dreiling - Publisher
td@nwkansan.com

NEWS

Patty Decker - Editor
pdecker@nwkansan.com

Tisha Cox - General Assignment

ADVERTISING

Crystal Rucker - Advertising Representative
crystalr@nwkansan.com

Kathy Brooks - Advertising Representative
kbrooks@nwkansan.com

BUSINESS OFFICE

Lea Bandy - Circulation Manager
Jeanette Applegate - Bookkeeping & Ad Building

Evan Barnum - Systems Administrator
support@nwkansan.com

NOR'WEST PRESS

Jim Bowker - General Manager

Richard Westfahl, Lana Westfahl, Ron VanLoenen, Judy McKnight

THE COLBY FREE PRESS (USPS 120-920) is published every Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, except the day observed for Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day and New Year's Day, by Haynes Publishing Co., 155 W. Fifth, Colby, Kan., 67701.

PERIODICALS POSTAGE is paid at Colby, Kan. 67701, and at additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The Colby Free Press, 155 W. Fifth, Colby, Kan., 67701.

THE BUSINESS OFFICE at 155 W. Fifth is open from 8 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Monday to Friday, closed Saturday and Sunday.

MEMBER OF THE ASSOCIATED PRESS, which is exclusively entitled to the use for publication of all news credited to it or not otherwise herein. Member Kansas Press Association, Inland Press Association and National Newspaper Association.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES: In Colby by carrier: 4 months \$32, 8 months \$47, 12 months \$64. By mail with in Colby and the nine-county region of Thomas, Sheridan, Decatur, Rawlins, Cheyenne, Sherman, Wallace, Logan and Gove counties: 4 months \$44, 8 months \$56, 12 months \$72. Other Kansas counties and surrounding states: 4 months \$51, 8 months \$61, 12 months \$75. All other states, \$75, 12 months.

Nor'West Newspapers

Haynes Publishing Company



It just doesn't get any easier

He's back in Korea. Yes, son Lance — the Air Force career kid — lifted off from Dallas around 10 a.m. Tuesday aboard a KAL (Korean Air Lines) nonstop 14-hour flight to Seoul to finish his year's assignment. He is scheduled to return back to the States in mid-August.

He, his wife Tobie, and children Alyssa and Caleb, spent part of his nearly 30-day leave with his brother Todd (and Darci) and sister Denise (Darren and Samantha) in the Denver area, and here in Colby with me, his grandmother Sally Eberle and his aunt Judy (and Paul) Wintz. The rest of the time was spent at their home on Sheppard Air Force Base, Wichita Falls, Texas and at sites in and around that area.

Upon his return in August, they will move to Spokane, Wash., where he will be stationed at Fairchild AFB.

Needless to say the time went fast. Too fast. He called me around 9 p.m. Monday "just to chat" a little before his departure Tuesday morning. We talked more than usual. I sensed he wasn't in any hurry to end the conversation.

A lot of small talk — bowling (his favorite), his restored pickup (a hobby), weather comparisons (here vs. Korea), his birthday (March 31), "gosh Dad, I'll be 34," etc. — and then heavier topics, Tobie and the kids.

There were several hesitations, which I chalked up to hard swallowing — a condition brought on by attempts to disguise emotions, emotions, I frankly confess, on both ends of the line.

I remember how tough it was to help him, as a wet-behind-the-ears freshman, unload his stuff at his first college dormitory at Fort Hays State University. I remember how tough it was to put him on the plane to fly to San Antonio, Texas when he opted out of college to begin a career in the Air Force. I remember how tough it was to say good-bye to him and see him and his wife, Tobie, off to begin their new life together as an Air Force family. I remember how tough it was to see him board the plane in early August 2003 to fly to South Korea.

And then again how tough it was Monday night to finally have to say, "good-night, good-bye, have a safe journey...I love you."

You raise them, you encourage them, you teach them. And when the time comes you help them depart the nest, confident they will always remember that you are the wind beneath their wings.

No, it doesn't get any easier.

DON'T forget that you can buy your *Taste of*



Tom Dreiling

• My Turn

Home COOKING SCHOOL tickets right here at the *Free Press*. The price is \$7 in advance, or \$8 at the door. The cooking school will be held April 13 in Max Jones Fieldhouse at Goodland. You'll want to attend.

The doors will open at 4 p.m. (MDT), that's 5 p.m. (CDT) and the cooking gets underway at 6 p.m. (Mountain), 7 p.m. (Central).

IMUST have missed something somewhere, but "Good Morning America," the ABC-TV morning show, excitedly informed us the past few days that they were featuring Janet Jackson on Wednesday (today).

Wasn't she the gal that was under attack a short while ago for baring her breast for millions of viewers during half-time of the Super Bowl?

Shame on "Good Morning, America!"

And Janet's attire on David Letterman's Show on Monday was absolutely an in-your-face response to the criticism surrounding her bare breast incident. What she wore was, well, it was sinful, worse then the Super Bowl exposure.

Don't buy her latest CD in protest of her behavior.

And brother Michael is in Washington, D.C. to receive some humanitarian award, while a grand jury is sitting in California hearing testimony in a child molestation filing involving him.

What in the world gives?

I guess we all were just overreacting to situations as they apply to Janet and Michael.

KAKE-TV was boasting on one of its commercials the other evening that, "You saw it first on KAKE-TV!" What do they mean? If I never watch KAKE, there is no way I have of knowing if they are first at anything. And if I am watching them, how do I know what the others stations in Wichita are showing? These ongoing television claims are just plain silly. And who really cares?

WHY?...

Why do people constantly return to the refriger-

erator with the hopes that something new to eat will have materialized?

On electric toasters, why do they engrave the message 'one slice'? How many pieces of bread do they think people are really going try to stuff in that slot?

Why do people keep running over a string a dozen times with their vacuum cleaner, then reach down, pick it up, examine it, then put it back down to give their vacuum one more chance?

Why is it that no plastic garbage bag will open from the end you first try?

How do those dead bugs get into closed light fixtures?

Considering all the lint you get in your dryer, if you kept drying your clothes would they eventually just disappear?

In winter, why do we try to keep the house as warm as it was in summer when we complained about the heat?

How come we never hear any father-in-law jokes?

LONG ago when men cursed and beat the ground with sticks, it was called witchcraft. Today, it's called golf.

TWO women met for the first time since graduating from high school. One asked the other, "You were always so organized in school. Did you manage to live a well planned life?"

"Yes," said her friend. "My first marriage was to a millionaire; my second marriage was to an actor; my third marriage was to a preacher; and now I'm married to an undertaker."

Her friend, with a puzzled look on her face, asked, "What do those marriages have to do with a well planned life?"

The woman began to laugh and sing, "One for the money, two for the show, three to get ready, and four to go."

THE Bush-Kerry campaign is really getting down and dirty. I'm surprised they aren't being sponsored by Tide or Ivory.

GOD is not on our side. It's up to us to be on His side.

HAVE a good evening!

Dreiling is publisher of the *Free Press*. His column appears Wednesdays and Fridays. E-mail td@nwkansan.com, fax (785) 462-7749, or call 462-3963.

E-mail postage not too far away

Jim Hightower

• Guest Commentary

from each of our e-mails?

No, no, say the minions of Microsoft and Yahoo — this is something we want to do to help YOU; it's for your own good!

They're cloaking this sneaky stamp tax with a claim that they just want to stop those dastardly spammers who fill our e-mail boxes with electronic junk mail hawking all sorts of products and services. "There is not enough friction in sending e-mail," says a Yahoo operative, and the

plan is to apply friction at a penny a pop. Of course, while couching this as a noble public service, the corporations would be creating an endless new revenue stream running right into their pockets.

Company executives say that you and I shouldn't fear this e-stamp, because, initially, they'd only require the big bulk users of e-mail to pay this corporate assessment of postage — not us. Pardon my skepticism, but Microsoft and Yahoo are not altruistic entities, and their long records of profiteering suggests that once they get the technology in place, they'll milk us consumers for all they can get.

Jim Hightower is the best-selling author of "Thieves In High Places: They've Stolen Our Country And It's Time To Take It Back," now on sale now from Viking Press. www.jimhightower.com <http://www.jimhightower.com>.