

Opinion

Free Press Viewpoint

Bush & Co. pulled another surprise

It really shouldn't have come as a surprise, but it certainly fooled some of the biggest names in network news who, so often hint of having an inside track to what's going on wherever.

So, these giants of the industry — the anchors of the evening television newscasts and the stars of cable television news shows — packed their bags and made their way to Baghdad to record the much heralded turn-over of power from U.S. occupiers to the Iraqi interim government.

This was supposed to take place today. But it didn't.

You see, President Bush had another surprise up his sleeve: the Iraq Sovereignty Document was signed by Ambassador L. Paul Bremer and turned over to Iraqi Prime Minister Iyad Allawi in a secret ceremony Monday morning.

It wasn't a "fooled you" stunt aimed at the media. It was, however, designed to catch the insurgents off guard as there was no doubt they would have engaged in a blood bath of some kind had the ceremony taken place on the appointed date of June 30.

We are certain this was the plan all along: determine a date for the turn-over, heavily publicize that date, and continue to beat that date to death so nobody would forget it.

It was a stroke of brilliance — again. And it worked beautifully.

Networks aired more debates than one could count among those who questioned the wisdom of turning over the reigns of government to Iraq on June 30 ("too early, not realistic," they would shout) vs. those who were in support of the date ("Iraq is ready to assume that responsibility," they would counter). And on and on the debates would rage.

Bingo! There was no June 30. So the "breaking news" planned for that date broke on June 28.

How successful this turn over of limited power will be remains to be seen. It'll be a bumpy ride, no doubt. And we will still have our 130,000 military people on the ground.

Iraq will remain the #1 issue as Americans ponder a Bush White House lease extension or a John Kerry take over.

With the race at a dead heat, the result of the Nov. 2 election won't suddenly be a surprise. It will only offer satisfaction or disappointment — depending on what candidate you were backing.

Tom A. Dreiling
Publisher

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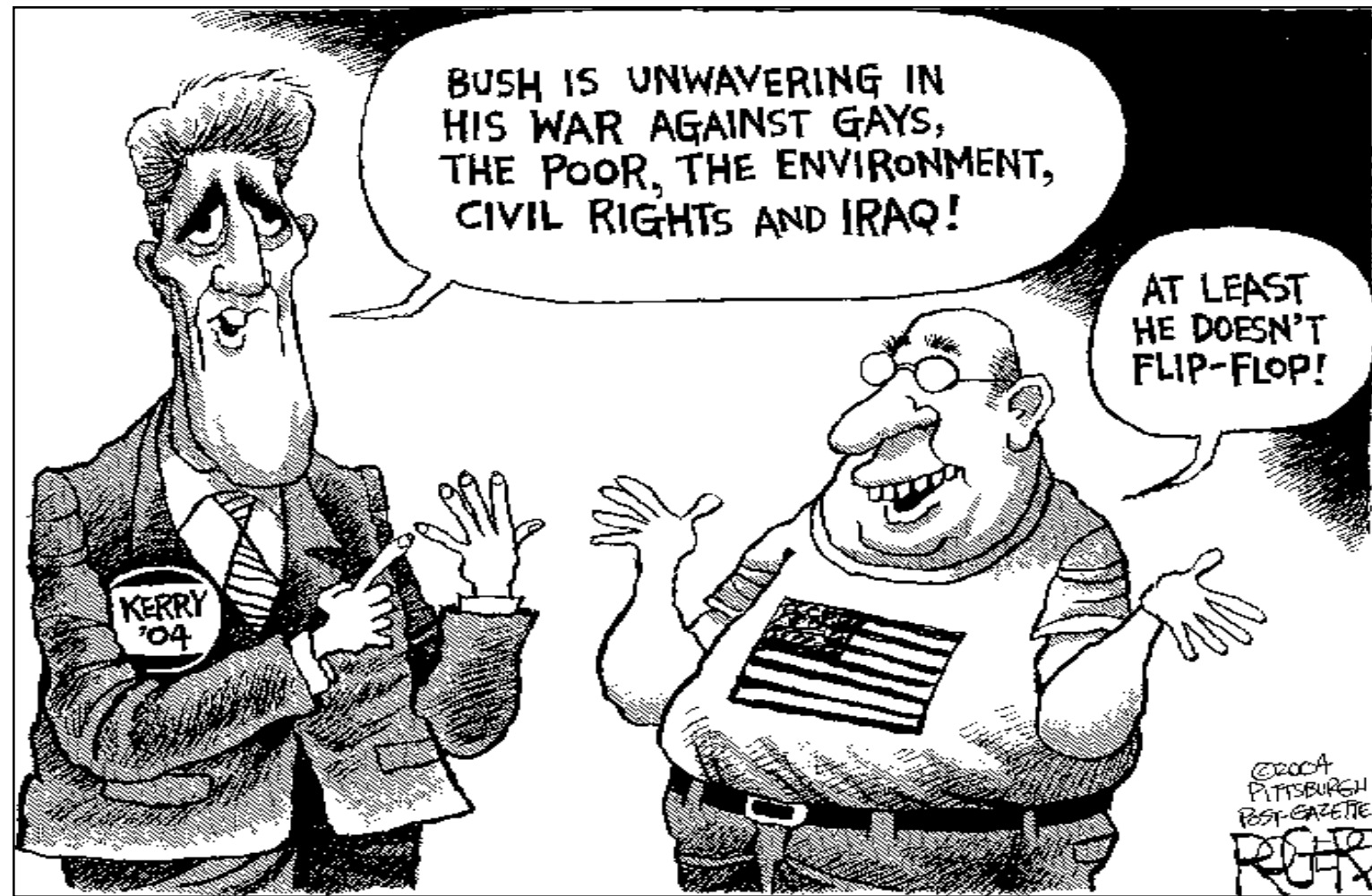
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Let's hear it for Tom Moorhous

WE NEED to give a round of applause today to Tom Moorhous for his years of service to the Dr. Max Pickerill Lecture Series at Colby Community College. He is stepping down after serving as chair since 2000.

Citing increased work-related responsibilities outside of his full-time job as the Colby Community College history/philosophy instructor, college quiz bowl coach and campus Ski Club adviser, Tom has held the [voluntary] position (with many informal titles such as "Chairman" or "Coordinator").

Since taking the reigns of the lecture series committee in July, 2000, upon the retirement of the first chairman, the late Victor Oelke, Moorhous had worked to bring the following noted guest speakers (among many others) and activities to the Colby Community College campus:

- Former U.N. Ambassador Vernon Walters (under President Bush '41), October, 2000;
- Clinton Whitewater figure Susan McDougal, March, 2001;
- David and Julie Eisenhower, March, 2002;
- Kansas Gubernatorial Debate (one of only five statewide), October, 2002;
- Robert Francis Kennedy, Jr., March, 2004.

Moorhous said, "I wish to express my sincere thanks to my college president, Dr. Mikel Ary, for giving me the opportunity to accomplish these great feats. I wish to thank the (unnamed) donors for their financial support and staff members of Dr. Ary's President's Office, who were of vital help to me, handling the clerical, book-keeping and public information duties that kept the lecture series running smoothly these past four years."

Moorhous cited his decision to leave the lecture series being influenced by recently accepting the following additional responsibilities:

1. Joining the Colby Community College Endowment Foundation (for a second time), charged with the multiple tasks of raising and managing money for scholarships and campus enhancement.
2. Joining the State Executive Committee pro-



Tom Dreiling

• My Turn

viding governance and oversight on college quiz bowl competition and rules (statewide) for the many competing Kansas community colleges having quiz bowl as a college activity.

Tom concluded his e-mail by "extending best wishes to the many good people involved with the Dr. Max Pickerill Lecture Series."

-td-

BOY, here we are knocking on the door of July 4th. I can't imagine June's over. I can't even imagine June — that's how fast it went. I do hope things slow down a little so we can get in a bit of summer before the leaves begin to fall. Cool spells in summer seem to move time and all else much quicker, and the cool came on June 17 and has pretty much stayed since. Heat has a way of slowing the pace, so they say. A peek at the forecast foretells of much warmer temperatures — the mid- to upper-90s — so perhaps the pace will slow down. We'll see.

-td-

GRACE Jones sent me a note a few days ago wondering if I knew of anyone who might have video taped former President Ronald Reagan's funeral service at the National Cathedral in Washington, D. C., on the Friday morning before his remains were returned to California for burial. If you taped the service, please get in contact with Grace. Her e-mail is: hjones@st-tel.net. Thanks!

-td-

THE blonde calls her boyfriend and says, "Please come over here and help me. I have a killer jigsaw puzzle, and I can't figure out how to get it started." Her boyfriend asks, "What is it supposed to be when it's finished?" The

blonde says, "According to the picture on the box, it's a tiger."

Her boyfriend decides to go over and help with the puzzle. She lets him in and shows him where she has the puzzle spread all over the table. He studies the pieces for a moment, then looks at the box, then turns to her and says, "First of all, no matter what we do, we're not going to be able to assemble these pieces into anything resembling a tiger."

He takes her hand and says, "Second, I want you to relax. Let's have a nice cup of tea, and then...." he sighed, "...let's put all these Frosted Flakes back in the box."

-td-

I WAS watching Larry King interview Ron Reagan the other evening for King's full hour on CNN's "Larry King Live." Ron, who is now 46, was less than kind to President Bush, which surprised me because I've lost track of the youngster and wasn't aware of his politics or anything else. He flat said he wouldn't cast a vote for President Bush on Nov. 2, he felt we should never have gotten involved in a war in Iraq and said he will push, much like his mother Nancy is, to get a change of heart for the hot-button stem cell issue. He also thought his mother will probably become more vocal on that issue as the campaign moves into the fall months. Ron Reagan, in remarks at his father's funeral, pointed out that his Dad never wore his religious beliefs on his sleeve to gain political favor as some politicians do. That was in direct reference to President Bush. He said he never gave much thought to the possibility that comment would offend some people, until, he said, "his phone started ringing." It was difficult to see this, the son of one of this country's most popular presidents, parked in a camp not bearing the GOP logo. Live and learn, huh?

-td-

HAVE a good evening!

Tom Dreiling is publisher of the Free Press. His column appears Wednesdays and Fridays.

Please, no rubbernecking

One of the firehouses in which I worked years ago had a poster hanging on a wall that went something like this:

"It might be hard to get 15 people to a 7 p.m. meeting to improve a community, but it's easy to get most of that community out at 3 a.m. to watch part of it burn down."

That little sign came to memory the other day listening to some of the firefighters talk about the difficulty in getting past cars to shuttle water to a recent rural structure fire. It seems vehicles were lined up along the mile lines, making passage difficult for the tankers.

For those who don't know a lot about firefighting, rural fires are fought by shuttling water. That means tanker trucks go out to a fire scene; drop off their water into an open tank set up near a fire engine, then return to town for another load of water.

The fire engine pumps water out of the tank to fight the fire. Obviously, the faster the tankers can make the trip to town and back, the more water is available. It takes so many gallons of water per minute to put out a given volume of fire and putting less than the required amount on a fire means the fire can consume as much of whatever it is burning as it wants until it dies down to the point where the water is effective.

Those tanker trucks must be large vehicles and



Jay Kelley

• Speaking MyMind

anyone who has met or driven a large vehicle, such as a wheat truck, on our county roads knows the difficulties in such a meeting. Both vehicles must slow down as they move closer to the side of the road to pass each other safely.

In a fire situation, where speed is of the essence, meeting another vehicle adds precious seconds to the time it takes to make the round trip to the water source and back to the fire, creating a hazard for the firefighters in the tanker, the people in the car and even the firefighters at the fire, who are depending on that water not only to put the fire out, but to protect other property not yet burning and themselves.

Add the dangers of an inattentive driver more focused on seeing what there is to see than safely navigating their vehicle and you have a perilous situation indeed.

It is human nature to want to know what is

going on around us, and the temptation to go find out affects all of us. It may be especially tempting in a small community where everyone knows everyone and the odds of having a friend affected by some tragedy are greater.

We should not, however, give in to that temptation. Emergency services people are trained to handle such things and should be allowed to do so unencumbered by the need to protect those who have put themselves in harm's way out of simply curiosity. Remember, in an emergency, everyone is a potential victim, even the rescuers. The need to provide traffic control to protect what I call voluntary victims removes badly needed people from their primary task of controlling the incident to which they were called.

I know of no emergency services force, at least in this area, that has a pool of extra personnel. In fact, most are operating short staffed, either from budget realities or lack of volunteers.

If you really want to know what is going on, volunteer. Then, when you are in the middle of the action, you will have the training and ability to do something valuable about the problem.

If not, stay home.

Jay Kelley is a local minister and writer who speaks his mind from time to time. His e-mail is jkelley@nwkansans.com.

Doonesbury

• Gary Trudeau

