

Opinion

Free Press Viewpoint



Cheering is over, will action follow?

President Bush delivered his finest State of the Union address Wednesday night and laid out a plan that is loaded with dynamite but will, in all probability, prevail.

Despite a few boos and hisses from the minority side of the aisle, President Bush had the ear of those who really count — the American people — and we have a hunch he will turn to the flock time and again to apply pressure on the Congress to pass proposals he feels are necessary to keep the ship of state on a safe course.

Needless to say, Social Security will be the hottest button of his second term. He sees the need for an overhaul and those getting benefits now and those about to get them, need not worry. President Bush said they won't be a part of any change or overhaul. Rest easy.

The Social Security fight could get bitter, even among some in his own party. After all every member of the House of Representatives will stand for re-election next year and you can bet your last buck they won't be in any mood to make waves. But the president will, in his travels from one end of the country to the other, remind voters they sent those people who occupy seats in the Senate and House to Washington to be leaders, to do what is best for those they represent, to bite the bullet if necessary.

The mood in the House chamber where the president delivered his speech was a mixed bag of reaction. There were times when the Democrats made silent but bold statements by simply refusing to stand and applaud the president. It was a unified minority party sending a signal that this term isn't going to be smooth sailing.

But those kinds of reaction are legend at State of the Union addresses. Had John Kerry won the presidency and delivered the address last night, you can be sure that the Republicans would have exhibited the same behavior the Democrats felt a need to exhibit.

That's politics. All in all, we gave the president high marks for delivery and content, a far cry from some of the grades we had given in the past.

Now we'll see if the applauding Republicans put their political lives on the line and pass some of the hottest, most controversial issues of the Bush presidency.

Hang on for the ride.
Tom (TD) Dreiling
Free Press Publisher

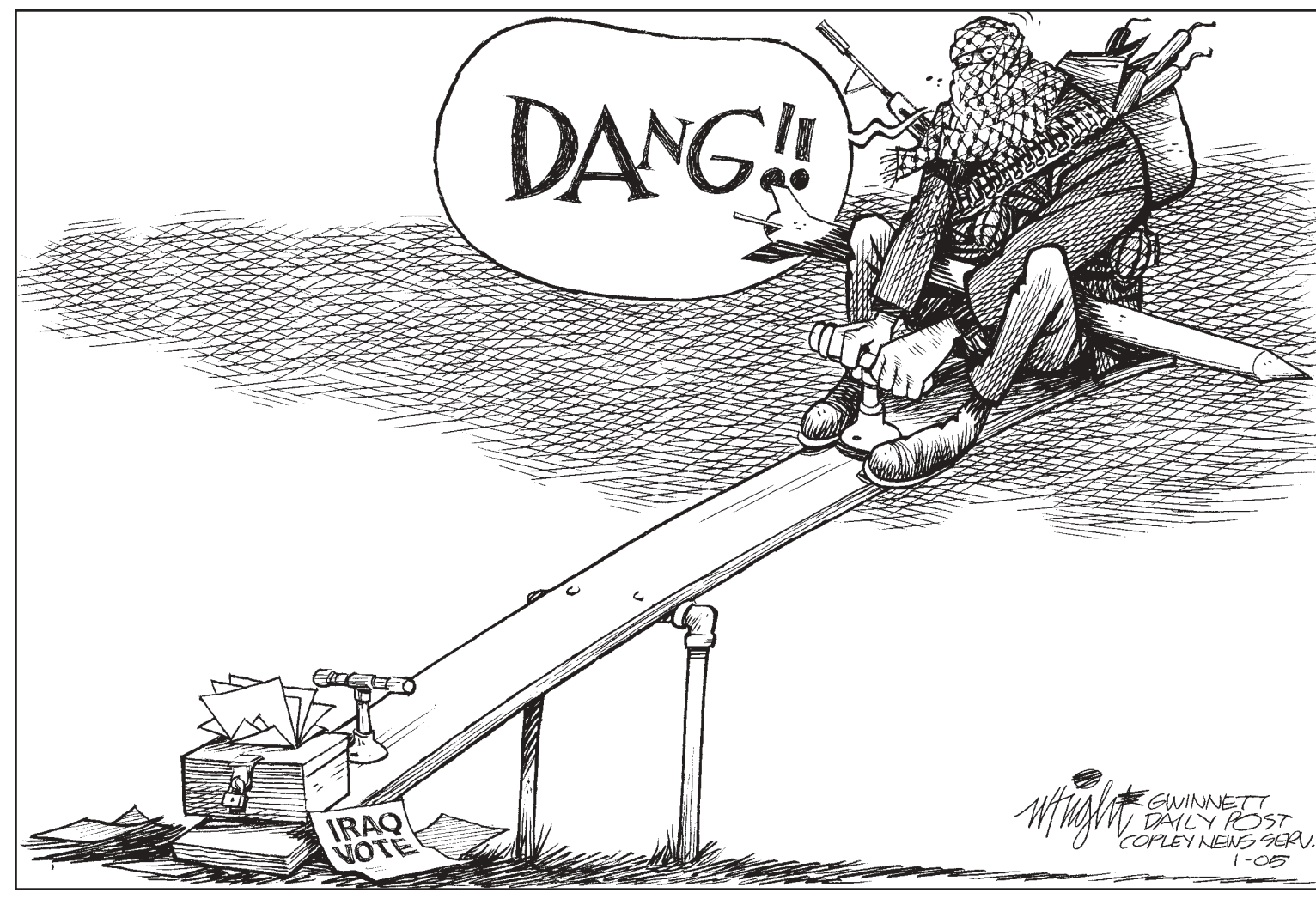
Comments to any opinions expressed on this page are encouraged. Mail them to the Colby Free Press, 155 W. 5th St., Colby, Kan., 67701. Or e-mail td@nwkansas.com.

Where to write, call

- U.S. Sen. Pat Roberts**, 109 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510. 202/224-4774
- U.S. Sen. Sam Brownback**, 303 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510. 202/224-6521
- U.S. Rep. Jerry Moran**, 1519 Longworth House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515. 202/225-2715
- State Rep. Jim Morrison**, State Capitol Building Rm. 171-W, Topeka 66612. 785/296-7676 e mail: jmorriso@ink.org web:<http://www.ink.org/public/legislators/jmorrison>
- State Sen. Ralph Ostmeier**, State Capitol Building Rm. 449-N, Topeka 66612. 785/296-7399.

COLBY FREE PRESS
155 W. Fifth (USPS 120-920) (785) 462-3963
Colby, Kan. 67701
freepress@nwkansas.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@nwkansas.com
NEWS
Patty Decker - Editor
pdecker@nwkansas.com
Tisha Cox - General Assignment
tcoc@nwkansas.com
Jan Katz Ackerman, Area Reporter
ackermanjk@ruraltel.net
ADVERTISING
Crystal Rucker - Advertising Sales/Director
crystalr@nwkansas.com
Jasmine Stewart - Advertising Sales
jstewart@nwkansas.com
BUSINESS OFFICE
Lea Bandy - Circulation Manager
lea@nwkansas.com
Jeanette Applegate - Bookkeeping & Ad Building
japplegate@nwkansas.com
Evan Barnum - Systems Administrator
support@nwkansas.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 \$38, 8 months \$53, 12 months \$70. By mail with in Colby and the nine-county region of Thomas, Sheridan, Decatur, Rawlins, Cheyenne, Sherman, Wallace, Logan and Gove counties: 4 months \$50, 8 months \$62, 12 months \$78. Other Kansas counties and surrounding states: 4 months \$57, 8 months \$67, 12 months \$81. All other states, \$81, 12 months.

Nor'West Newspapers
Haynes Publishing Company



It's time to celebrate

I'm throwing myself a party to celebrate my life and since I turn 50-years-old in March, I thought I'd start early.

While it's not literally a 'party,' I am celebrating the past — having successfully raised two children to adulthood with very few cuts and bruises (to them or me) — and it's a celebration of the present....just that, the present.

But, more importantly, my party is a celebration of the future!

Over the past eight years as a resident of north-west Kansas, I've learned much about the lay of the land, the character of the people, and ever more important, I've learned much about myself.

One of the major things I've learned is when I suffer grief I need to take time to grieve.

My mother died almost 10 years ago, but I was the one in the family who did the busy work at the end of her life and never took time to grieve. Not until last summer did I put my 'house' in order in that area.

Another major thing I've learned is exactly the reason I've just changed jobs.

I learned the ladder I was climbing wasn't the one God wanted me on, so I switched ladders.

While I'll be doing exactly the same work I've done since moving to the Hi Plains, I'll have a smaller coverage area which will allow for a more in-depth look into what's going on in the



Jan Katz Ackerman

• From Where I stand

area. More importantly though, I've learned life is just too short to put off enjoying it to its maximum.

My mother used to tell me, "God promised you a rose garden. He just didn't say the roses would come without thorns."

She was correct.

While God has given me a full and blessed life (rose garden), He's allowed thorns to prick away at my soul long enough until He got my full attention (that's another story).

Anyway, as I approach my 50th birthday, I'm excited to share time and space with you, knowing full well you won't always agree with me (that's just part of the newspaper industry).

However, you can count on me for three things:

(1) I'll do everything humanly possible to provide you with correct information the first

time out of the shoot, and

(2) When I make a mistake (notice I said WHEN, not IF), I'll take ownership of it and correct it as quickly as possible, and

(3) I won't waver from where I stand on certain issues (that too is another story).

So, while this is only a glimpse into who I am and what I stand for, continued reading of "From Where I Stand" will allow you to get to know me better.

One word of caution though, my maternal grandfather used to say I was a 'bubble off of plumb,' so in advance, I'm releasing the owners and staff of this newspaper from any liability for what's said in this column.

So, come along and celebrate my future and I'm personally inviting you to my 'party.'

And, while we celebrate, let's remember this:

Yesterday is the past, tomorrow is the future, and today is the present so that's why it's called a gift!

Hope you enjoy my party and it starts right now!

Jan Katz Ackerman is a reporter for the Colby Free Press. Her column appears Thursdays. Email ackermanjk@ruraltel.net, or call (785) 675-2155. Today ushers in the first of Jan's columns.

Iraqi people took a big step

The Iraqi people took a big step Sunday by participating in the first democratic elections held in that country in more than 30 years, but it still isn't clear where that step will lead.

It might lead to a real rarity; a democratically elected government in an ethnically Arab, religiously Islamic state. Even Ted Kennedy had to acknowledge the success of the election, which must have been particularly galling in light of his pompous prognostication of doom and gloom the other day.

The election, however, might also be a step off the cliff to civil war. The national assembly elected Sunday must hammer out a consensus and a constitution, and then sell it to the Iraqi people before new elections can be held in November to pick a permanent government.

If they cannot, another assembly must be elected as the process starts again. Inability to do so could mean a civil war.

Some Iraqis apparently said they were voting so that the Americans would leave, which was interpreted among pundits as a failure of American policy. I'm not so sure.

Think what you want, but I call willingness to deal with their own problems and run their own country a good thing and only wish a few more had that view.

The beginnings of our own country were also fraught with dangers. There were rebellions and battles over the division of power between the states and the federal government which at times threatened to destroy the fledgling republic.



Jay Kelley

• Speaking MyMind

Some early radicals in both parties sought to instigate constitutional crises in order to have their own views become predominate. The fact that such crises could well have destroyed the country seemed to be lost on them.

In at least one case, known as the Whiskey Rebellion, the crisis was a very real and involved armed men on both sides. Armed rebels squared off against the militia sent to put down the rebellion.

Fortunately, the militia was commanded by men such as President Washington and Virginia governor "Light Horse" Harry Lee who were not only veterans of war, but had no desire to fight their own people if a peaceful settlement could be found.

Cooler heads continued to prevail, at least until 1861, but there have always been conflicts. That is the nature of a government where the rights of people are held to be more important than the rights of the state.

Abraham Lincoln called it "government of the people, by the people, for the people" and it is

the most difficult type of government to implement.

The Iraqis seemed willing to try on Sunday, but they are far from finished, in spite of demands by liberal hot-heads to give the insurgents a time table for taking over.

Senate minority leader Harry Reid even shied away from the Kennedy/Boxer bunch Monday, saying calls for a time table were a bad idea.

Maybe we can learn something unexpected from the Iraqi election. Contrast people in Baghdad dancing in the streets after risking their lives to vote and people in Ohio complaining their civil rights had been violated because they had to wait in line too long.

I still think removing Saddam was necessary. Besides the weapons, which everyone thought he had and which I still think are in Syria somewhere, he was a threat to the region which the west couldn't ignore.

It was easy for the French and Germans to belittle the danger while it was American troops in the Muslim Holy Land keeping Saddam in his box.

With him gone, we can leave lock, stock and barrel.

The Iraqi election might put us one step closer. I can't see how that is a bad thing.

Jay Kelley is a local minister and writer who speaks his mind from time to time. His e-mail is jkelly@nwkansas.com. He is a member of the Colby Free Press Writer's Club.

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. These are used for verification of the writer only. If, however, you want your address and telephone number to appear with your letter, please ask us to do so when you submit your letter, or include a note with your letter. Most importantly, all letters must include a signature. Unsigned letters cannot be published. We reserve the right to edit for clarity and length, and, likewise, reserve the right to reject letters deemed to be of no public interest or considered offensive or libelous. You can expect your letter to appear in print within 24-48 hours of receipt. Letters to the Free Press allow readers to become engaged in public debate on topics they deem important. Please consider sharing your thoughts with the family of Colby Free Press readers. Thank you.

Doonesbury

• Gary Trudeau

