

Opinion

Your Views Count

- Letters

Time to leave Iraq

To the Colby Free Press:

I agree with Jane Fonda who appeared on the "Dave Letterman Show" (CBS). She says the Iraq war should stop now! The audience clapped loudly in agreement. The Iraq war is costing lives and taxpayer money; that is what the war is doing.

Knight Kiplinger in *The Kiplinger Letter* says under the heading of MIDEAST POLITICS:

"New delays in drafting an Iraqi constitution pose big risks for the nation's political future and for U.S. troops there. The committee working on a permanent constitution is far behind schedule and is sure to demand a six-month extension beyond the Aug. 15 deadline. That means Iraq won't be ready to form a new government before mid-2006. Insurgents will take advantage of the holdup, since it guarantees that Iraqi leaders won't be able to focus on improving internal security. The attacks will further erode public support for the political process."

In Washington, D.C., if Congress lets loose of that Iraq war then they can solve some budget problems like energy, transportation, education and they can even return the money borrowed from the Social Security Funds and alleviate that problem instead of acting as if it were creating its very own demise.

But most of all, in letting loose of that Iraq war ALL of our troop can return home without losing their lives or their limbs.

This war can end if enough voices are raised loud enough. What about this war bothers you? "Nothing," you say.

Then don't give me those crocodile tears! Tell it to the Marines!

Yours truly,

**Ms. Edna A. Hatcher
Colby
(Letter #49)**

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.

Where to write, call

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- U.S. Sen. Sam Brownback**, 303 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510. 202/224-6521
- U.S. Rep. Jerry Moran**, 2443 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515. 202/225-2715 or Fax 202/225-5124
- State Rep. Jim Morrison**, State Capitol Building, 303 SW 10th St. Rm. 171-W, Topeka 66612. 785/296-7676 e mail: jmorriso@ink.org web: www.ink.org/public/legislators/jmorriso
- State Sen. Ralph Ostmeyer**, State Capitol, 300 SW 10th St., Rm. 128-S., Topeka, Kan. 66612, 785/296-7399 ostmeyer@senate.state.ks.us

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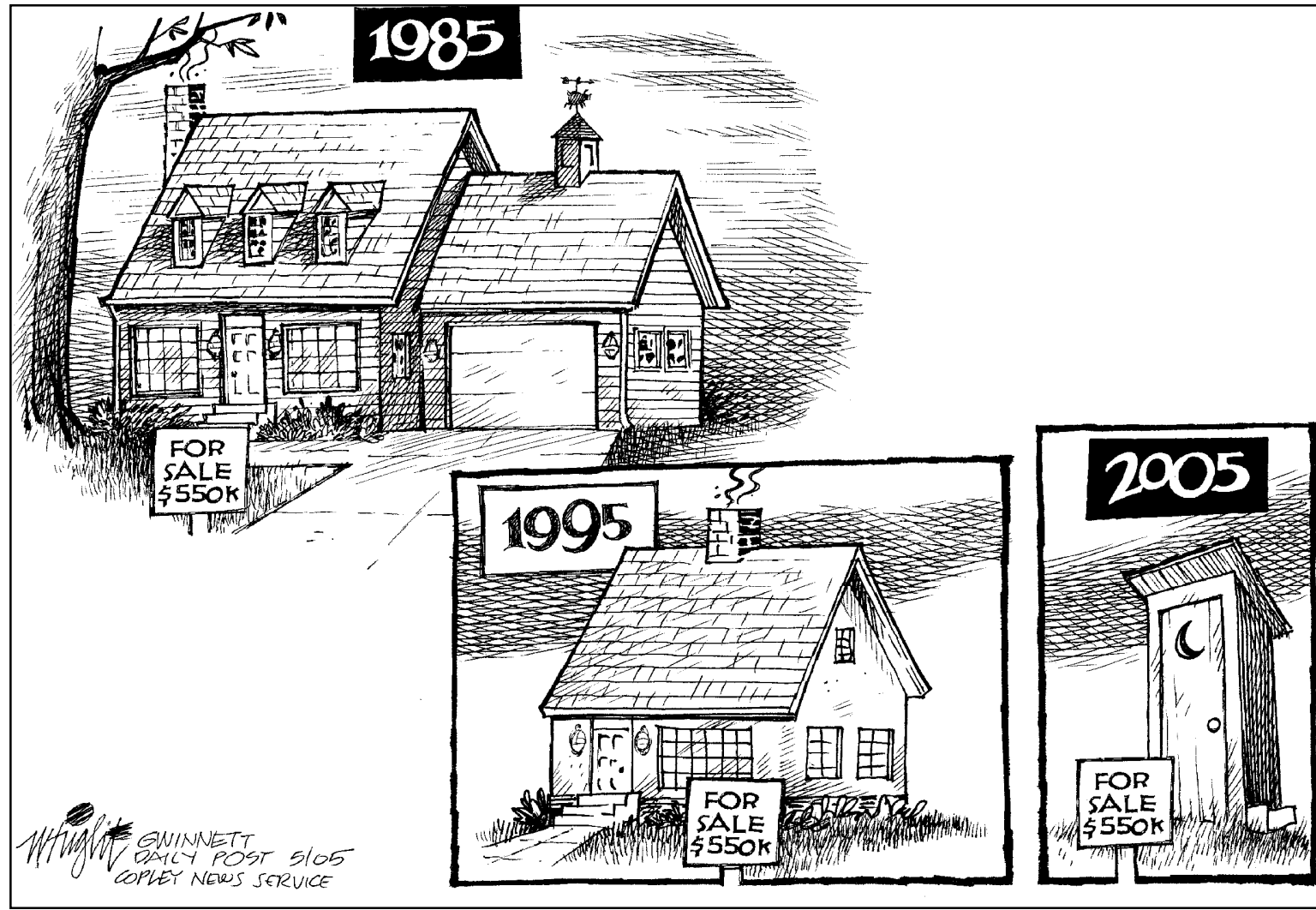
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Splashing in the rain



Tom Dreiling

• My Turn

Boy, if that wasn't a welcomed rain over the holiday weekend. Wow!! The Northwest Research-Extension Center on the west side of town recorded 2.98 inches, which brought the May total to 3.78 inches. Nice. Very nice. Everything needed a good washing. The longtime average May rainfall for Colby dating back to 1893 is 2.86 inches, so we beat that figure. However, if you chop off some years and figure in the May rainfall from only 1970 on it would be an average of 4.08, which we would have fallen short of by only 0.30 of an inch. The wettest Colby May ever was in 1981 when 8.92 inches of rain soaked the big sponge.

I had occasion to be in two locations for high school graduation-related activities in the Denver area over the Memorial Holiday weekend. What a contrast. My niece, Kim Murray, was one of 585 graduates. Her high school — Grandview High — has 4,500 students. My nephew, Jack Uppenkamp, was one of 63 graduates. His high school — Clear Creek High — has an enrollment of a little over 300 students. Regardless of the size, there were similarities. Jack's high school gymnasium was packed. Kim's commencement was held at the Ritchie Center on the University of Denver campus to accommodate that crowd. Big or little, high school graduations always fill whatever site is utilized. It's a big day for the grads and their families. A new beginning. And for some of the students, it is the only graduation they will ever experience. Too, it is the last time everyone one of those seniors will ever be in the same place at the same time again.

When I got to thinking about the size of the high school Kim attended, I thought to myself that her school is bigger than many towns in my state of Kansas. Can you imagine having a student body the size of the community of Goodland? Or even us? It baffles the mind. Quite frankly I was happy to graduate from a high school about the size of nephew Jack's. I would have been lost in anything larger — I'm sure.

Lt. Col. Todd Lancaster, of the United States Air Force, was speaker at Jack's graduation. What a presenter he was! He had the audience spellbound for most of the nearly 45-minute talk. He did not stand behind a podium, he, instead, took the mike with him and addressed the gradu-

ates and the audience as he strolled from one end of the gym floor to the other. It was an interesting account of the ups and downs of his life...managing to stay with the message of knowing who you are before setting out on what you want to be. The officer, a graduate of the United States Air Force Academy with nearly 20 years of service, is a graduate of the same school nephew Jack was graduating from on Saturday — Clear Creek High School, a beautiful setting 7,000 feet up the mountains, adjacent to Interstate-70. (That 7,000 feet is my estimate.) It took us 45-50 minutes to reach the place from our location in Aurora. But it was worth the drive.

On the lighter side...

A conversation between two guys at work went like this:

My wife, who is blonde, came running up to me in the driveway the other day, just jumping for joy! I didn't know why she was jumping for joy but I thought, what the heck so I started jumping up and down along with her. When she said, "Honey, I have some really great news for you!" I said "Great. Tell me what you're so happy about." She stopped jumping and was breathing heavily from all the jumping up and down, when she told me that she was pregnant! I was ecstatic! We had been trying for a while, so I grabbed her and kissed her on the lips and told her, "That's great! I couldn't be happier!" Then, she said "Oh, honey. There's more." "I asked, "What do you mean 'more'?" She said, "Well, we are not having just one baby. We are going to have TWINS!" Amazed at how she could know so soon after getting pregnant, I asked her how she knew. She said, (you readers are going to love this!), "Well, that was the easy part. I went to Wal-Mart and bought the twin-pack home pregnancy test kit and both tests came out positive!"

Vice President Dick Cheney told Larry King the other night in response to a question about Iraq, that we will remain in Iraq for as long as it takes, and not a day longer. I've heard that said so often and each time I ask myself, "If we are going to stay as long as it takes, and not a day longer, we must have an idea of when that day is. Otherwise, we might stay a day longer than we intended."

Speaking of the veep, his Mrs., Lynn, said Laura Bush would make a good president and she wouldn't mind a dynasty in the White House if it were the Bushes. The jury's out on that one.

So "Deep Throat" has come forth. I've forgotten all about him over the years since the resignation of President Richard M. Nixon. I don't know how you feel about it, but I rested well not knowing who he was and will continue sleeping well now that I know who he is. That'll certainly be fodder for the cable news talking heads for probably as long as it took for the revelation to surface — 30 years!

Ready for another lighter sider?

Deep in the back woods, a man's wife went into labor in the middle of the night, and the doctor was called out to assist in the delivery. Since there was no electricity, the doctor handed the father-to-be a lantern and said, "Here, you hold this high so I can see what I'm doing."

Soon, a baby boy was brought into the world. "Whoa there," said the doctor. "Don't be in a rush to put the lantern down...I think there's yet another one to come."

Sure enough, within minutes he had delivered a baby girl.

"No, no, don't be in a great hurry to be putting down that lantern. . . It seems there's yet another one in there!" cried the doctor.

The man scratched his head in bewilderment, and asked the doctor, "Do you think it's the light that's attractin' 'em?"

Have a good evening!

Tom Dreiling is publisher of the *Free Press*. His column appears Wednesdays and Fridays. E-mail td@nwkans.com.

They seem to know how to do it

Donald Kaul

• Guest Commentary

Seldom does a single event in Washington seem to summarize an entire era, but last month saw such an event. Congress passed the 2006 federal budget, which gave a huge tax cut to the rich, took away money from the program that funds health care for the poor and opened the way for oil drilling in the Alaskan wildlife refuge.

That, ladies and gentlemen, is an anti-New Deal trifecta: Soak the poor, enrich the rich and to heck with effete concepts like "wilderness" and "conservation."

My favorite quote of the day was supplied by none other than House Majority Leader Tom (Greasy Thumb) DeLay, who said: "This is the budget the American people voted for when they returned a Republican House, a Republican Senate and a Republican president to the White House."

Yes they did (although they may not have known it at the time).

And, as if Congress hadn't done enough mischief, the president followed by suggesting that the Social Security deficit can be ameliorated by cutting benefits.

At times like these I think of H.L. Mencken, who said: "Democracy is the theory that the common people know what they want, and deserve to get it good and hard."

That's where we're at now folks, getting it good and hard. I know what you're thinking. If the Republicans are such a malign party, inhospitable to the majority of the American people, how do they get elected?

I have a theory, several as a matter of fact:

1. Some people are Republicans by birth or

habit or conversion. They identify with the GOP and simply cannot bring themselves to vote for a Democrat, no matter what. (Comparable Democrats are called "Yellow Dog Democrats," because they'd vote for a yellow dog if he appeared on the Democratic ticket. Republicans like that might be termed "Bush Republicans.")

2. Some people are rich. They don't need a safety net; they're attached to a bungee cord. They think what's good for them is good for the country and they have their Mercedes to prove it.

3. Some people consider the wall between church and state an impediment to a moral society and see the Republican Party as the means to tear it down. These often are the same people who read the Bible mainly in order to memorize its prejudices.

4. Some people are dumb as dirt. We have raised successive generations of Americans who are accustomed to getting their information from television, where there is none. Thus they are easy prey to cynical campaign tactics that unfairly demonize opponents and mask true intentions (like lowering your Social Security). Both parties play this game, but the Republicans are

much, much better at it.

Add them all together and what do you get? A Republican House, a Republican Senate and a Republican in the White House.

That's my theory and I'm sticking to it.

One more word about Social Security, however. Despite his honeyed words, the president is not trying to save the program for future generations. His aim is to get rid of it and the Trojan horse he has chosen as a weapon is "private accounts."

Whether one will accumulate more or less retirement money in private accounts is a matter for legitimate argument but this much is clear: once people accept the notion that they're saving for their own retirement and no one else's, the concept of Social Security as a shared responsibility for the aged is doomed.

Because the next argument will be: What right has the government to force me to invest for my own retirement? If I want to invest in a flat-screen television instead, I should be able to. It's my money. That's an argument that will appeal to many young wage earners.

It won't happen this year or the next or the next decade, probably.

But the Republicans have been hacking away at this for the past 40 years or so. They're not going to stop any time soon.

Donald Kaul is a retired Washington columnist for the *Des Moines Register*. He has covered the nation's capital for 29 years, winning a number of coveted awards along the way. Email: donald.kaul2@verizon.net. This column is distributed by *MinutemanMedia.org*.