

commentary

from other pens...

Distancing president from Washington

By Lawrence L. Knutson

Associated Press Writer

CRAWFORD, Texas — For two centuries, the White House has been the great destination and golden prize of American politics.

But having scrambled to the top, many presidents can't seem to wait to tell people they have stumbled into a gilded prison, a sealed bubble, a distorted mirror, a corrupting place of gossip, rumor, backbiting, and, of all things, hardball politics.

"Like other presidents before and after me, I felt the need to get out of the White House and out of Washington in order to keep some sense of perspective," said one modern chief executive.

That may sound exactly like George W. Bush as he ambles around his 1,600-acre Texas ranch during his month long Texas vacation. But the words are actually those of Richard Nixon, who had more to say that also sounded just a little like Bush.

"I discovered how isolated from the reality of American life a president can feel in the White House," Nixon said.

Here's the current president on the same subject:

"To me, to be out on the land helps a president keep perspective. You know, I haven't been a president that long, but I can assure you, perspective is important."

"It's the real world," Bush said of his home on the range. "It's part of keeping one's perspective. Washington's a wonderful place, but it's not exactly the real world."

"My house is in Texas; I'm a Texan," the president said one recent day. "This is where I was raised; this is where I'm going to retire; this is where I'll pass away, in Texas ..."

"Get used to it, because this is where I'm coming," he told those questioning the amount of time he spends at home in Texas.

Some days Bush calls the White House grounds a "compound" and makes his four-year presidential term seem like a prison sentence.

"I will serve my time in Washington, and I will return back to Texas," he told an audience in Albuquerque, N.M., last week. "It's important never to forget where you came from."

The Texan president looked a bit crestfallen when he asked a group of second graders in an Albuquerque classroom just where his home was. "Washington D.C.," they replied in a shout.

"I'm from one state east of here," Bush prompted and asked again where he was from.

"Washington D.C.," they shouted anew, perhaps not an unreasonable response when dealing with a man who has the White House and the executive branch of the government in Washington at his disposal.

When pressed, Bush explains what he objects to most is the furious nature of Washington politics.

"In Washington, it's a lot more partisan; people there just like to dig in and fight," he said one morning.

That's not as harsh a criticism of Washington and the presidency as that once delivered by another Texan president, Lyndon B. Johnson.

Being president in a Washington crisis, Johnson once said, "is like a jackass standing alone in the middle of a field in a driving hailstorm. There's nothing he can do but stand there and take it."

Bill Clinton was one of the relatively few presidents to openly revel in the job, despite the bumpy ride he often had.

Many others often spoke as if they couldn't stand the place or the job. "There is the big white jail," Harry S. Truman once said, looking up from one of his frequent walks outside the cast iron fence.

"Being president is like riding a tiger," Truman once said. "A man has to keep riding or be swallowed."

But a little later on he had a further thought on being president, one with which Bush might come to agree.

"Just between you and me and the gatepost, I like it," Truman said.

EDITOR'S NOTE — Lawrence L. Knutson has covered the White House and Washington's history for more than 30 years.



STAHLER.
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A party pooper trade agreement for the new economy

It really is a crazy mixed up world we want the right not to have an unwanted pregnancy and the right to clone a human being.

Its kind-a-hard to forget about the Dow Jones crybabies. They sound like the big Chief in the White Teepee had embargoed their money to China. These said policy makers have made trade a three letter word.

It takes an export license from the State and the Commerce Department to export our farm surpluses, but they say you are as isolationists as Herbert Hoover if you don't help them pass another fast trick, ah, I mean fast track.

The licensing of farm exports might have been OK when the Soviet Union was buying up our farm surpluses, but this reporting of farm exports is a relic of the coldwar. Back then a tribal Indian with White Teepee ambitions tried to scare the American people by saying grain exports were the great American grain robbery.

What else can you say, grain exports bad, farm surpluses good? It really is hard to figure these free loader er, ah, traders. Both General Agreement



wayne gattshall

• wayne's world

on Trade and Tariffs and The North American Free Trade Agreement is as old as the cold war International Wheat Agreement from the 1950s. It took grain exports to the Soviet Union to dispatch that international bureaucracy to glory. It was just a license to cheat, and no one ever abided by it, anyway. It was likewise for the North American Free Trade Agreement. The ink was not dry on it before the Mexican peso did the mackarena. The same thing happened in Canada. The only difference was when it debauched its currency we didn't bail them out with money from the FDR Exchange Stabilization Fund. He had just went off the gold standard and it was needed to support our own currency. Well it's harder to find hen's teeth (no such thing)

than it is to find a farmer who supports another free trade agreement. Mr. President you better look at that election night map of the U.S. that voted for you.

If the Midwest farm belt was a nation it would be the fourth largest economy in the world. Its economy is somewhere between Germany and the United Kingdom. Its even bigger than China's economy. Wow, would it be number three, if we let farmers sell their grain over the Internet like those Wall Street Geeks export their money to China? Maybe not but it sure would be bigger!

You farmers are all a bunch of complainers, you can forget about \$5.00 wheat, that is ancient history. You better be glad we let you have a loan deficiency payment of \$2.50 a bushel.

OK you win, so why should farmers help, when they say free trade quicker than a Chinese agent gets out of jail. Even if you had your brains removed—the licensing of grain exports makes as much sense as some global warming numskull, chasing a cow around their wet lands to catch a cow's flatulent in a plastic bag.

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Pretexters are breaking the law

Dear Kansas Consumers:

In the past, I have addressed the issue of identity theft: what it is, how to protect yourself, and what to do if you are a victim. It is vitally important in this day and age to protect your personal identification and information, just as you would for your home, car, savings, and investments. To people known as "pretexters," personal information is an asset they can use or sell to steal your identity. Pretexting is against federal law, but the best way to protect yourself is to not fall prey to a pretexter in the first place.

Pretexters use a variety of tactics to get your personal information. They can pose as representatives of survey firms, Internet service providers, banks, and even government agencies to get the information they want from you. When pretexters have the information, it can then be used to contact your financial institution in order to gain access to your account. At that point, the pretexter may be able to acquire other personal information such as your Social Security number, bank and credit card account numbers, information in your credit report, and the existence and size of your savings and investment portfolios. Once this information is obtained, it is easy for the pretexter to steal your identity or sell the information to an identity thief.



carla j. stovall

• consumer corner

The Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act states that it is illegal for anyone to participate in any of the following practices:

- to use false, fictitious or fraudulent statements or documents in order to get customer information from a financial institution or directly from a customer of a financial institution;
- to use forged, counterfeit, lost or stolen documents in order to get customer information from a financial institution or directly from a customer of a financial institution; or
- to ask another person to get someone else's customer information using documents which are false, fictitious, fraudulent, forged, counterfeit, lost, or stolen.

While the law is there to protect you, it is wise to take an active role in protecting your own information. Never give out personal information over the phone, through the mail, or over the Internet unless you have initiated the contact.

Red Cross needs 400 donors a day to meet needs

To the Editor:

The American Red Cross Central Plains Blood Region, headquartered in Wichita, needs at least 400 donors each weekday to meet the needs of our hospital and other regional hospital patients. Blood cells are needed for patients receiving treatment for leukemia, cancer, or other blood diseases. Accident victims and people undergoing surgery also use blood.

On Wednesday, Aug. 29th, Goodland is hosting a Red Cross blood drive from noon to 6 p.m. at Our Lady of Perpetual Hope Catholic Church. Together we can save lives! Please make plans to be part of this lifesaving effort.

If you are in general good health, 17 years of age and weigh at least 110 pounds, I hope you will consider taking time out of your busy schedule to donate blood.

Your donation could help three patients. Sixty percent of the population is eligible to give blood, yet only 5 percent donate. If you have never donated blood, please give it a try.

Medical advancements are constantly increasing the need for blood. Come in to donate blood with a friend who is a first time donor or who hasn't given in the past 12 months, and both of you will receive a free T-shirt.

For more information on donating blood, how to volunteer, or to schedule an appointment, call Martha Gunderson at 899-5933.

Luella Richardson
Public Relations Chairman
Goodland



from our readers

• to the editor

To the Editor:
I am 20 years old and have lived in Goodland all of my life. I have always been a respectable young person in the community by being very involved in the school and now in the community.

I was raised with high expectations and was always taught to respect my elders and higher powers. Never in my life have I ever had a hard time being respectful to someone in this community until Aug. 13.

On that day, I was taking care of my car tags, which I had irresponsibly let expire over the weekend. As most people know, when you go to get your tags for a new car, you are required to have it inspected by the police department.

No big deal, right? Well, knowing that I was going to have to face up to the irresponsibility of allowing my 30-day tag to expire, I had prepared myself to receive a ticket, but there was no way that I could prepare myself for what took place.

When the officer arrived at my parked car, where I was standing, the first words he said to me were "get in here!" So I got into the car and continued through the routine of the inspection. Not one time throughout the entire inspection did he say a single nice thing to me.

I have never been disrespectful to an officer of the law, and even when he was being rude to me, I still spoke in a respectful manner to him.

This experience brings one question to mind: how can a police officer expect to be respected in this community if he is not in return respectful? I have been taught and strongly believe that respect is a two-way street and it was definitely one-sided in this situation.

I will continue to show my respect to all the officers in this town and every other town, but I would hope that the officer I had to deal with will take a moment and look at the way he treats the people.

With a respectable position in the community like a police officer, there are so many little eyes watching and dreaming to be like you some day.

I would have to say if a child would have been there to witness my experience, he/she would have left with an awful example of what an officer should be like.

I hope that the officer will take a moment to think of that child that might be watching and listening the next time he decides to be disrespectful to a member of this community.

As a last thought, I would like to say thank you to the chief of police for being so polite to me on the phone and acting like the respectable officer he is.

Sabrina L. Twombly
Goodland

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