

Guantanamo Bay should raise indignation

The stories coming out of the U.S. detention camp at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, are not pretty. They ought to raise some indignation in this country, which has prided itself over the centuries in treating prisoners better than most.

Torture. "Extraordinary rendition." Flying prisoners around the world in secret. Turning them over to the allies who don't play by our rules — with a list of questions to be asked.

Is that how we think of America? Yes, we're facing a difficult, dedicated enemy, but no more difficult than many we've fought. Over the decades, we've made our rules of conduct tighter, not looser.

In America, we don't tolerate torture or abuse by the police. We say we don't tolerate it by our military. And we specifically ban it for our intelligence agencies.

So what makes it OK to break or even bend the rules?

The story of torture by U.S. operatives has come out piecemeal. First there was the abuse by Army prison guards, forcing prisoners to do embarrassing, sometimes sickening things for the amusement of the guards.

Soldiers were alleged to have set dogs on prisoners for sport. Others said it was all part of a sophisticated plan to break down their will, put in place by higher ups. A few enlisted men and a couple of officers paid the price, but no one could prove anything on the "higher ups."

Then came stories of the chain of prisons around the world where terrorists suspects could be held, questioned and maybe tortured in secret. Some were run by U.S. agents, some by allied intelligence agencies.

The U.S. acknowledged using some bor-

derline torture techniques, such as the infamous "waterboarding." Bush administration officials defended this practice, claiming it wasn't harmful — even if it made the victim feel like he was drowning.

Sure, there's been abuse and law-breaking in every American war, at least since the Indian wars. Probably since the Revolution.

If war is hell, as one general is said to have remarked, then men in hell may be expected to behave less than perfectly. That does not excuse mistreatment of prisoners, but still, it happens.

The American military always has prosecuted rule-breakers, trying some as criminals, disciplining others with reduction in rank or discharge. That happened in World War II and again in Vietnam.

Often, those involved and their superiors tried to cover up the crimes. Sometimes it worked, sometimes it didn't. Everyone knew it was wrong.

And today? Has anything changed?

The stories that come out of Gitmo and the other camps will get worse. A British resident released Monday cited chapter and verse of his travels. He told of torture in Morocco, where he claimed British MI5 agents and maybe the CIA fed questions to his captors — and got reports.

In the U.S., the Obama administration has no reason to step up and defend its predecessor. Predictably, the new team will have its turn, too.

Meantime, Americans need to consider what's happened and what's right. Have we changed our traditions? Do we now condone torture so long as it's "soft" done out of our sight? We hope not. — Steve Haynes



Leaders fight over state bills

Due to all the attention given to the most recent news on state income tax refunds and state payroll from our governor, I thought the following briefing issued last week from our Legislative leadership might be of interest to you:

SUBJECT: Facts regarding state finance council, certificates of indebtedness, state employee paychecks and state tax refunds.

A few facts about yesterday's actions surrounding the state Finance Council meeting, which was ultimately cancelled by the governor:

Before the meeting, Republican leaders met with the governor to let her know privately that they could not support signing an additional certificate of indebtedness — particularly of the size the governor was requesting.

Without assurance there would be a positive ending balance, they told her, it would be against state law to approve the certificate. The private meeting was an attempt to spare the governor the embarrassment of losing the vote in the public Finance Council meeting.

The governor abruptly cancelled the meeting, cutting off any hope of continued dialogue for the rest of the day to resolve the matter. She issued a statement condemning the Republican leadership for attempting to "blackmail" her into signing the recision, which was not yet even on her desk. The Senate minority leader fired off his own media state-



Letter from Topeka

By Sen. Ralph Ostmeyer
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ment referring to "blackmail" and "coercion".

The governor and the Democrats are the ones who immediately reverted to scare tactics by using their access to state agencies and the Kansas Organization of Public Employees to contact state employees and tell them they might not get paid this week. They also added the inflammatory information that payment of state tax refunds were being held up, implying that move was somehow tied to these events, when in reality the administration ordered suspension of tax-refund payments last week.

After reports of the governor's statement and the minority leader's comments, legislative leaders held their own news conference in the House Chamber and attempted to explain to the press corps the legal problems surrounding the certificate of indebtedness.

The Republican leadership never issued an ultimatum about the recision bill, nor did they refuse to attend the Finance Council meeting. They met with the governor

privately beforehand to warn her of the legal obstacles to approving certificates of indebtedness under these conditions.

The secretary of the Senate and her staff have done everything possible to expedite the proofing and editing process of the recision bill to get it to the governor as soon as possible.

The bill will be on the governor's desk by around 1 p.m. today for her consideration and possible action.

Right now, the only way for the state to get to a positive ending balance is to:

- sign SB23 with no or with only limited line-item vetoes or,
- do an allotment.

Once it is proven the state will have adequate funds, a certificate of indebtedness can be signed and all obligations to state employees, Medicaid and schools can be met.

(The governor did sign the bill with only a few line-item vetoes, and the certificate of indebtedness was issued, allowing the state to pay its bills on time.)

Communication fouls us up

"What we have heah — is a failure to communicate."

I love that line from the movie "Cool Hand Luke." The warden in a tough southern prison uttered that phrase, in the broadest southern accent, to the character played by Paul Newman.

Communication is the foundation of all relationships. And miscommunication can lead to horrible foul-ups.

Take recipes, for instance. The other day, my oldest daughter, Halley, called to get some tips on making stew. We had discussed the obvious, like browning the meat, adding vegetables and a thickening agent (I prefer barley. My friend Barbara touts the excellence of instant tapioca.) Anyway, I suggested Halley might want to add some Kitchen Bouquet for extra flavor.

"Oh, yes," I remembered. "And, don't forget to put in a bay leaf."

"Yuck," came Halley's reply. "Why would I want to put Bailey's in stew?"

"No, honey. Bay leaf, bay leaf. Not Bailey's."

Can you imagine the consequences of putting Bailey's Irish Creme into a meat stew instead of a bay leaf?

Here's another one. Barbara has led an interesting life and lived in many places. She used to have a beauty salon in the Colorado



Out Back

By Carolyn Sue Kelley-Plotts
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mountains and shared the story of a slightly ditzzy client who came into her shop one day.

During the course of their conversation the client asked, "So, where do you come from?"

Barbara answered, "I come from all over Colorado."

Then, she laughed and said, "I think that poor girl is still studying a map, looking for All Over, Colorado."

One more and then I'll stop.

When I lived in Texas, I worked in an office of mostly women. I think we had one token man. We were all taking our lunch together in the break room when the conversation turned to cooking. The featured subject of the day was soups.

I volunteered that I had recently found a delicious new recipe for gazpacho.

"The only trouble with it," I said, "is it makes so much, you have to mix it up in the bathtub."

One of the young women on staff said, in all sincerity, "Isn't it

really hard to get the bathtub clean enough?"

Honest. She did. I couldn't make this stuff up.

— ob —

One day last week, we were both working outside when I screamed, "Jim! Come here!"

Poor man. He thought I'd been shot or something.

"Look! The crocus are coming up!" I shouted.

After the blood came back to his brain, he said, "Don't do that again."

Sorry, dear. I'm just so excited to see signs of spring.

From the Bible

And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint.

Luke 18:1

Find me and I will pay up

The Girl Scouts are looking for me.

Yes, it's that time again. Girl Scout cookies have arrived and it's time to pay up and take those wonderful sugar- and fat-filled delicacies and try — just try — to not eat them all tonight.

Some years, the girls never find me, and I pine when the cookies get delivered and I never even get to taste a Thin Mint.

This year, however, they found me and found me and found me.

The first day of sales, a young-un caught me at the office. I bought three boxes of my favorites — Thin Mints, peanut butter something or other and a cookie with coconut, chocolate and caramel stripes.

On Saturday, the neighbor girls showed up. I bought a box from each of them. I think I got Thin Mints and peanut butter something or other. The next week, I was at a fund raiser for the senior center or museum or church or whatever, and there was a third scout with her cookie sheet.

I took a box of the chocolate and caramel stripes.

Since I'm never at home and rarely in the office, I knew it would



Open Season

By Cynthia Haynes
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be hard for the Scouts or, more likely their mothers, to find me. So I figured it up — \$3.50 per box times six boxes equals \$21. (I am a college graduate, so I can figger these things.)

So far, one box of cookies has shown up and I'm waiting for the others to descend on me.

I have plans. I'm sending three boxes to my bachelor son in Lawrence. He's young, healthy and has a job where he's fairly active. He can eat a lot more cookies than I can.

The next three boxes go to my sons-in-law in Augusta, Ga. They both work for Morris Digitalworks, so I'm sending the cookies to the office. They can split them and, if they're really smart, they won't tell their wives. At least, I'm hoping

they won't tell. If they do, I'm going to be in really big trouble with my daughters.

Daughter No. 1 will be unhappy with me because I'm sabotaging her husband's diet.

Daughter No. 2 will be unhappy with me because I'm sending the cookies to her husband and not to her.

Of course, she had the best chance of buying her own cookies since she works at a library and there have to be dozens of employees there with Scouts cookies to sell.

And, if my son gets open boxes of cookies, he's not liable to complain. After all, two-thirds of a box of cookies you didn't have to buy is a lot better than none — and also better than having to shell out \$3.50 a box.

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Author encourages acceptance

To the Editor:

It was my privilege to treasure the presentation given by Matthew Kelley on Tuesday, Feb. 10, at Colby High School.

The auditorium was packed and Matthew had the attention of everyone all during his 45-minute presentation. Young and old attended and enjoyed many a laugh.

Mr. Kelley is the author of several books the last 10 years and founder of the Matthew Kelley Foundation. This group helps young people discover their mission in life. Colby High School is fortunate to have him speak to its students. There were several of his books for sale at the presentation.

One of his philosophies is accepting ourselves to become all we are capable of becoming. He encourages us to be at peace with ourselves, who we are, and what we are doing, not tomorrow, but today — that is now. We are to move forward and go

Letter to the Editor

beyond other people's expectations of who we are and what we should be doing with our lives.

His presentation to me was like a

big dose of positive medicine.

Elsie Wolters
Oberlin

Honor Roll

Welcome and thanks to these recent subscribers of The Oberlin Herald:

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