

President's trip was a good call

Chalk one up for President Bush. He fooled a lot of people, in and out of Washington, with his so-called two-day Camp David Cabinet strategy meeting on Iraq. That meeting, much to the surprise of his cabinet, was a cover for a secret flight he was taking to Iraq to visit with that country's new prime minister and to visit with American troops.

About the only person at the Camp David gathering who knew what was going on was Vice President Dick Cheney. No one in the White House knew. Reporters weren't in the loop. All of those television networks that boast of having "sources" close to whatever is going on had to suck it up. They knew no more than did we people in Norton.

CNN's John King was tapped by President Bush to go along and he was sworn to secrecy. His lips were sealed, even from his family. He gave an interesting account of the experience when he got back to his job. Scary.

It was a bold adventure. The President of the United States flying into Baghdad just days after terrorist leader Abu Musab al-Zarqawi was fed a fatal military diet that included two 500-pound bombs for dessert. Had word of the president's trip leaked out, the consequences could have been tragic.

When you see footage now of his appearance with the Iraqi prime minister and talking to the troops, you see a different kind of President Bush. Leadership sticks out. He, too, put his life on the line by sending himself to Iraq, just as he has sent thousands of young Americans on the same journey.

Will the trip give him a bump in the polls? We doubt that even played a role in his decision to make an appearance before Iraq's first democratically elected governing body. Critics will beg to disagree. Instead of assessing the 11-hour journey as a demonstration of this country's support of the new Iraqi government, they will pick and chisel and hammer to find some reason why he shouldn't have gone.

We aren't always on the same page with the president. And we shouldn't be. Nothing would weaken this country more than giving the White House occupant infallibility status. We have always felt that criticism, and how one handles it, is one of the building blocks of leadership.

But there comes a time when we should take note, regardless of like or dislike, when our commander-in-chief steps forward as he did Tuesday.

Thumbs Up, Mr. President!

— Tom Dreiling

Thumbs Up to . . .

- ✓ **Ron Dreher**, on the well-deserved and earned state award. (e-mail)
- ✓ **Jackie Rutherford**, for 29 years of loyalty and dedication to the Andbe Home. Have fun in retirement! (e-mail)
- ✓ **Rev. Jack and Jane Kersenbrock**, on your 50th wedding anniversary. (telephone)
- ✓ **Jaclyn Krueger**, here's three cheers for the cheerleading scholarship. (email/friends)
- ✓ **Coni Park**, for providing the needed leadership for the Andbe Home. Great job! (email)
- ✓ **Jennings Prairie Heights Alumni Association**, for all you have done and will continue to do. Your efforts are appreciated. (regular mail)
- ✓ **Jordon**, you are a credit to your McEmployer.
- ✓ **Almena Organizers** of last weekend's *Antique Machinery, Threshing and Power Show*. You get an A+. (e-mail)
- ✓ **Robin**, thanks, "That Reminds Me of a Story..."

(Want to salute someone? Details can be found in today's "Good Evening Norton" column on this page.)

Say it with a Letter to the Editor

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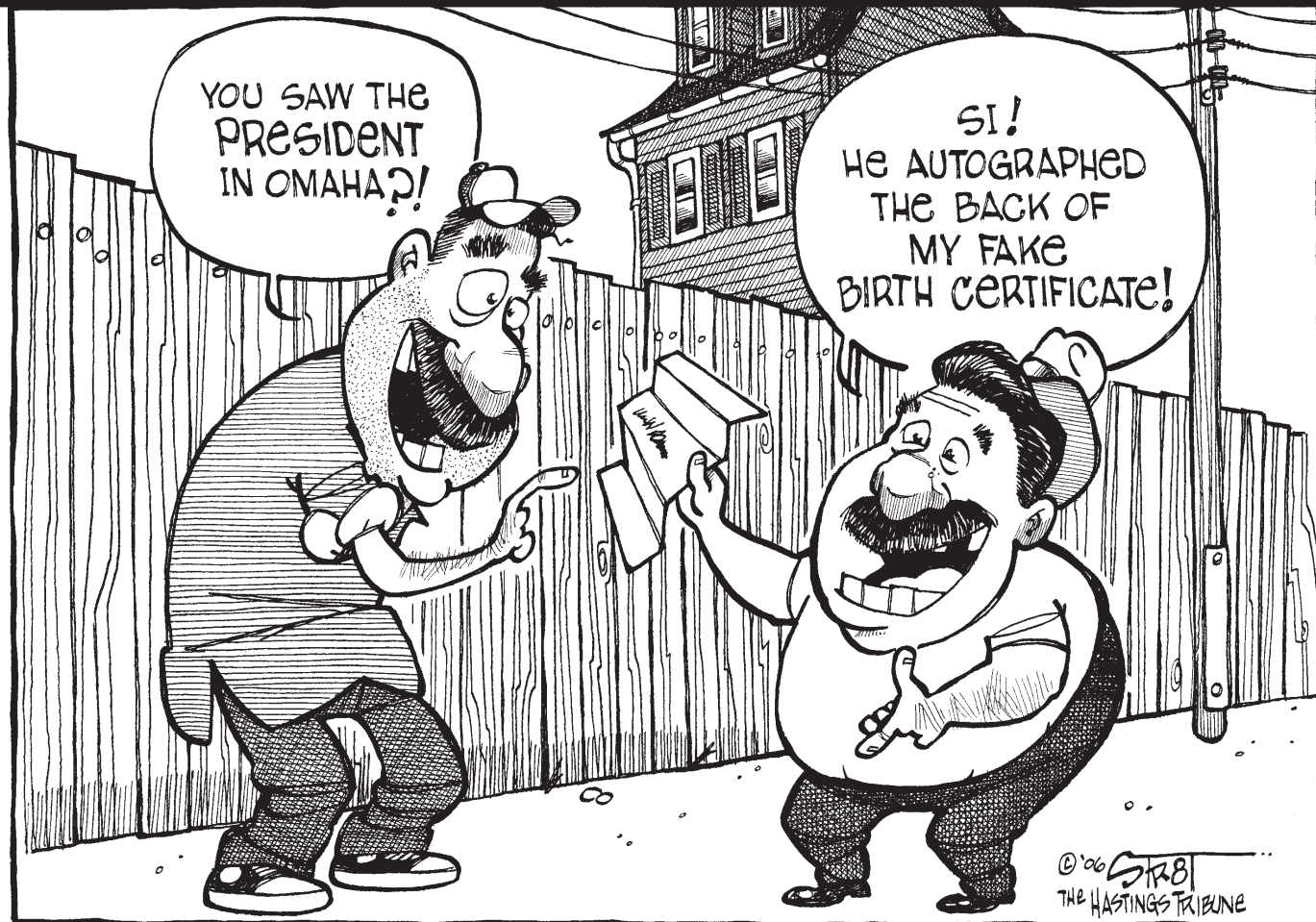
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Ann Coulter has the country's attention

Her name is Ann Coulter. Acclaimed, at times disclaimed, author. Commentator. A conservative's conservative. A pain in the side. Outspoken. Tall. Thin. Long blond hair. Big eyes. Mouth big enough to eat bananas through a Venetian blind. Fearless. The litany is endless.

But I like her. Ann is on so many television talk shows that sometimes I get mixed up as to who is the host and who is the guest. She's sharp. And once she starts in there's no stopping her.

But dear Ann has found herself in some disfavor due to a comment she made in her latest book, something to the effect that she has never seen five 9/11 widows enjoying their husbands' deaths as much as the New Jersey five. So, Ann has been taken to task brutally by the Democrats and a number of Republicans.

Ann says these people apparently haven't read her book because it explains why she feels the way she does about these women. She said they have used their status to turn into nothing more than Bush bashers.

I don't know if the comment is going to do anything to Ms. Coulter. You either like her or you don't. It's that simple. But some Republicans of note are very concerned. They are afraid such talk by Ann could end up damaging their hopes of retaining control of the U. S. Senate and the House of Representatives in the November election. I doubt that. Do you really think something Ann Coulter said in a book is going to change your mind on election day '06? All politics is local, they say, so Coultermania doesn't rank very

Good Evening Norton Tom Dreiling



high on the list. Relax, Ann. All the publicity is turning your latest effort into a gold mine.

-td-

Do you read bumper stickers? I think we all do. Some are serious in nature, others not. Here's a sampling:

- Driver Carries No Cash - HE'S MARRIED
- 4 Out Of 3 People Have Trouble With Fractions
- Everyone Has A Photographic Memory...Some Just Lack Film
- I Used To Have A Handle On Life...But It Broke Off
- Don't Let Your Mind Wander...It's Too Small And Fragile To Be Out By Itself
- Don't Like My Driving? Then Quit Watching Me
- If You Can Read This I Can Slam On My Brakes And Sue You
- Hang Up And Drive!
- Demand That Kennedys Fly...Not Drive
- CAUTION: I'm A Senior. Enough Said?

-td-

I have really appreciated your help in compiling each Friday's "Thumbs Up" column. I want it to be something in which the entire community can partake. And

more and more it is taking on that flavor. Email me at tomd@nwkansas.com, telephone (785) 877-6908, visit the office, send a note by regular mail to 215 S. Kansas Ave., Norton 67654 or a fax to (785) 877-3732 to get your salute in print on this page. People are surprised to see their name in the paper and are quick to tell me thanks. However, I am only the messenger, but I want you who send in names to know that your kind thought makes someone's day. It's OK to "Thumbs Up" your parents for their anniversary, or their birthdays, or grandma or grandpa's anniversary or birthday. Your name as provider is never used unless you tell me you want it used. "Thumbs Up" is probably the best read column in each Friday's issue. Come onboard, and if you already are — stay the course, and thanks!

-td-

Did you notice that President Bush's secret trip to Iraq didn't spring any leaks? So I guess there are some trustworthy folks still hanging around Washington.

-td-

One summer evening during a violent thunderstorm, a mother was tucking her young son into bed. She was about to turn off the light when he asked with a tremor in his voice, "Mommy, will you sleep with me tonight?"

The mother smiled and gave him a reassuring hug. "I can't dear," she said, "I have to sleep with daddy." A brief silence was broken by his shaky little voice, "The big sissy."

-td-

Have a good evening! If you haven't attended for a while, why not give church a try this weekend?

'A Lion in the House' is worth watching

From:
Hospice Services, Inc.
of Northwest Kansas

Look for this inspiring, harrowing and intimate series following five children as they fight against cancer with the help of their families, nurses and doctors over a span of six years. The movie is a special presentation premiering June 21-22.

FROM THE MAILBAG:

Letter could have been cut to a paragraph

To the Editor,
The three column letter by Robin Somers concerning political correctness was excellent, but could be reduced to one paragraph:

Political correctness is a situation whereby an infinitesimal, inconsequential minority dictates to the majority, and it's time for the majority to tell the infinitesimal, inconsequential minority to stuff it!

Thank you.

R.W. Yeager
Norton

comes; how many experimental treatments a child should face; why one parent can be a full-time caregiver to her child while another struggles to hold onto a job with medical benefits; and what constitutes the difference between "giving up" and "letting go."

A Lion In The House was initiated by Dr. Robert Arceci, then chief oncologist at Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center. He invited award-winning filmmakers Steven Bognar and Julia Reichert (whose daughter is a childhood cancer survivor) into the hospital and gave them total access to make an independent film. Five remarkable and courageous families opened their lives and homes to the filmmakers.

Over the course of the series, viewers will experience the same uncertainty faced by these families. Ultimately, each of the five journeys depicted offers lessons and challenges that demand a response. This harrowing and uplifting series chronicles how families respond to crisis, how relationships are put to the test, how courage is found in unlikely places and how humor and the energy of youth are powerful medicine.

This ground-breaking mini-series event, airing in June on the Emmy-award winning series *Independent Lens*, takes us face-to-face with challenging questions such as the effect of late diagnosis on out-

Share your thoughts as did the above reader.