

# Opinion



## Free Press Viewpoint

### City: information needs to be mailed

Hellooo!  
It's called "customer service."  
Just in case you've forgotten.  
We were reading with more than passing interest the city's announcement in a front page story in this newspaper Thursday, that come May 1 sewer charges on our city utility bills will triple in size.  
But that's not what this comment is all about.  
It's about something that appeared at the tail end of the story that, quite frankly, raised the blood pressure a notch.  
When utilities take measures that affect rates, for example the phone companies and those who supply energy needs, they generally explain their reasons in inserts in their monthly billings.  
But here in the Oasis, we are told in that page 1 story that the city is encouraging us to "stop by Colby City Hall, 585 N. Franklin, and pick up an informational sheet explaining why the changes are needed, background information and cost breakdowns. Photographs are also available showing the dangers of the current facility."  
Come down to the city hall and pick that stuff up?  
You're kidding!  
Aren't we, as a city, also a utility?  
Cannot we mail that stuff — stuff being our favorite word — to the city's customers?  
Why should WE have to go down THERE to pick up stuff that explains the reasons why we are going to be hit with such a large increase?  
If it's so important that we know the reasons for the changes, then why should we have to walk any further than our mailbox to find out what those reasons are?  
We are talking about a project that's going to cost millions of dollars. What will a mere mailout cost? Certainly it would be insignificant.  
And it wouldn't hurt the city one bit to employ a little bit of old-fashioned public relations, especially when its getting ready to step up to the plate to slam out a triple.  
We'll be watching our mailbox.  
*Tom (TD) Dreiling*  
*Free Press Publisher*

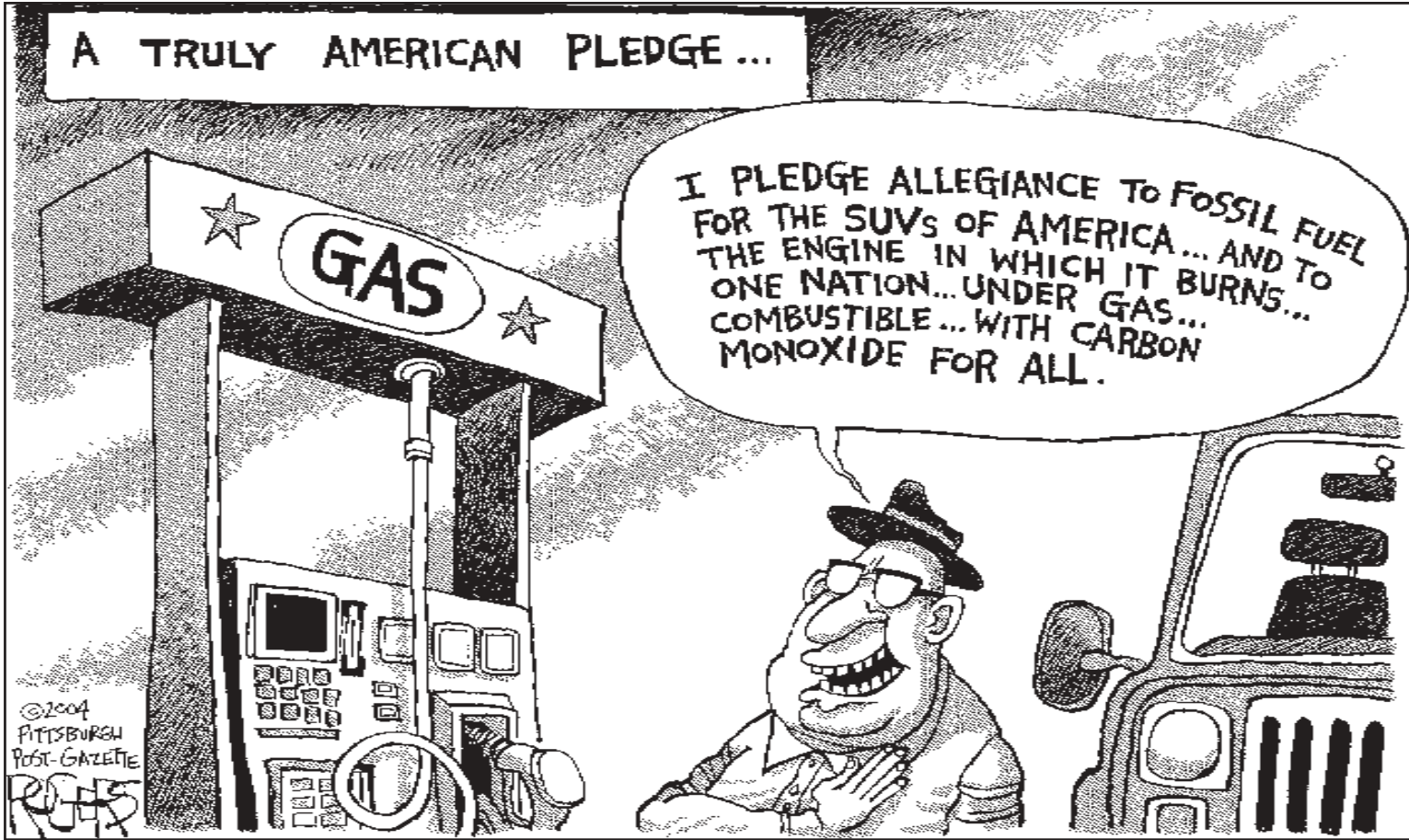
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## Condi Rice isn't the culprit



**Tom Dreiling**  
● My Turn

**DID** you catch Dr. Condoleezza Rice's testimony before the 9/11 Commission yesterday? I watched all three hours of it on a replay last night on C-Span — thank goodness for C-Span. I came away unconvinced that everything was a big surprise. She did too much babbling and not enough talking — and there is a difference. But I should not have expected more. That's the way that giant Washington machine known as a bureaucracy operates. If you're in a corner, spin yourself out, and Dr. Rice is one of Washington's best spinners. And it serves her well.  
As I listened to her sworn testimony before the commission, the thought came to me that, "Hey, she went before this same group not too long ago but behind closed doors." So, it would follow that the questions they asked her yesterday she was already asked in the closed-door meeting, where she was not put under oath.  
But what the heck, Dr. Rice was saving her own hide. And I am not placing a lot of blame on her for what happened on Sept. 11, 2001 — eight months after she became national security adviser to President Bush. If I were to place blame on her, then it stands to reason I would also have to place blame on President Clinton's national security adviser, Sandy Berger. Some of the events leading up to the tragic loss of lives on 9/11 actually started — as we now look back and connect the dots — during the Clinton years.  
So maybe we need to refer to it as the "RiceBerger" fiasco.  
But pointing fingers isn't the way to find solutions to past tragic events. These hearings should be about getting this country's intelligence nerds all on the same page. This territorial attitude they have — CIA, FBI, etc. — serves no good purpose at all, the consequence being 9/11.  
It's called SHARING, and why that's so hard for that Washington crowd to understand escapes reason.  
And this so called non-partisan 9/11 Commission certainly sounds much less non-partisan than partisan. And the response from those occupying seats in the hearing room makes the

place sound more like a sports arena. Is all that clapping really necessary?  
Former antiterrorism chief Dick Clarke got off his chest what he wanted to get off his chest last week and yesterday it was Condi Rice's turn. There were other voices prior to their appearances and there will be more in the weeks to come.  
In the end the 911 Commission will come up with some kind of report. With a split commission — 5 Republicans and 5 Democrats — it'll be interesting to see how they chisel out a conclusion.  
911 happened, quite frankly because we were such a complacent bunch of people — people who thought we were immune to catastrophic intrusion by enemy forces.  
We learned a terrible lesson.  
Now, has that lesson taught us anything?  
  
(Grace Jones passed this along, from someone who passed it along to her, and it's making the rounds. I thought you'd enjoy reading it.)  
**THIS** thing about "The Ten Commandments" and the words "under God," has gotten me a little uptight. The law is the law. So, if the U.S. government determines that it is against the law for the words "under God" to be used in the Pledge of Allegiance, so be it.  
And if that same government decides that the "Ten Commandments" are not to be used in or on a national installation, so be it.  
And since they already have prohibited any prayer in the schools, of which they deem their authority, then so be it.

I say, *so be it*, because I would like to be a law-abiding U.S. citizen.  
I say, *so be it*, because I would like to think that smarter people than I are in positions to make good decisions, and I would like to think that those people have my best interest at heart.  
**So, you know what else I'd like?**  
I'd like my mail delivered on Christmas, Good Friday and Easter.  
I'd like the U.S. Supreme Court to be in session on Christmas, Good Friday and Easter as well as Sundays.  
I'd like the Senate and the House of representatives to not have to worry about getting home for the "Christmas Break."  
I'm thinking that a lot of my taxpayer dollars could be saved, if all government offices and services would work on Christmas, Good Friday and Easter. It shouldn't cost any overtime since those would be just any other days of the week to a government that is trying to be "politically correct."  
This would not effect any "non-governmental" business since everyone else still has the freedom of religion, so we could all still enjoy our holidays.  
So I guess if they continue to bow to the wishes of a few, and if this note gets out to the right people, maybe they would bow to the wishes of many.  
Well, now I've said my piece. I'll go relax and feel better that I've gotten it off my chest.  
So be it.  
—anonymous  
  
**EASTER** blessings to each of you.  
  
**HAVE** a good evening and a good weekend! Include, among your Easter Sunday plans, a visit to your house of worship.  
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## 'Information, please'

*Among submissions this week was this one, which I'm sure you'll really enjoy. It is simply called, "Information, please." -td*  
  
(As shared by Rodney)  
When I was quite young, my father had one of the first telephones in our neighborhood. I remember the polished, old case fastened to the wall. The shiny receiver hung on the side of the box. I was too little to reach the telephone, but used to listen with fascination when my mother talked to it. Then I discovered that somewhere inside the wonderful device lived an amazing person. Her name was "Information Please" and there was nothing she did not know. Information Please could supply anyone's number and the correct time.  
My personal experience with the genie-in-a-bottle came one day while my mother was visiting a neighbor. Amusing myself at the tool bench in the basement, I whacked my finger with a hammer, the pain was terrible, but there seemed no point in crying because there was no one home to give sympathy. I walked around the house sucking my throbbing finger, finally arriving at the stairway. The telephone?! Quickly, I ran for the footstool in the parlor and dragged it to the landing. Climbing up, I unhooked the receiver in the parlor and held it to my ear.  
"Information, please" I said into the mouthpiece just above my head. A click or two and a small clear voice spoke into my ear. "Information."  
"I hurt my finger..." I wailed into the phone, the tears came readily enough now that I had an audience.  
"Isn't your mother home?" came the question.  
"Nobody's home but me," I blubbered.  
"Are you bleeding?" the voice asked.  
"No," I replied. "I hit my finger with the hammer and it hurts."  
"Can you open the icebox?" she asked.  
I said I could.  
"Then chip off a little bit of ice and hold it to your finger," said the voice.  
After that, I called "Information Please" for everything. I asked her for help with my geog-

**T D**  
● At Week's End  
  
raphy, and she told me where Philadelphia was. She helped me with my math. She told me my pet chipmunk that I had caught in the park just the day before, would eat fruit and nuts. Then, there was the time Petey, our pet canary, died. I called "Information Please," and told her the sad story. She listened, and then said things grown-ups say to soothe a child. But I was not consoled. I asked her, "Why is it that birds should sing so beautifully and bring joy to everyone, only to end up as a heap of feathers on the bottom of a cage?" She must have sensed my deep concern, for she said quietly, "Paul, always remember that there are other worlds to sing in." Somehow I felt better.  
Another day I was on the telephone. "Information," said the now familiar voice. "How do I spell fix?" I asked. All this took place in a small town in the Pacific northwest. When I was nine years old, we moved across the country to Boston. I missed my friend very much. "Information Please" belonged in that old wooden box back home and I somehow never thought of trying the shiny new phone that sat on the table in the hall. As I grew into my teens, the memories of those childhood conversations never really left me. Often, in moments of doubt and perplexity I would recall the serene sense of security I had then. I appreciated now how patient, understanding, and kind she was to have spent her time on a little boy.  
A few years later, on my way west to college, my plane put down in Seattle. I had about a half-hour or so between planes. I spent fifteen minutes or so on the phone with my sister, who lived there now. Then without thinking what I was doing, I dialed my hometown operator and said,

"Information please." Miraculously, I heard the small, clear voice I knew so well. "Information." I hadn't planned this, but I heard myself saying, "Could you please tell me how to spell fix?" There was a long pause. Then came the soft spoken answer, "I guess your finger must have healed by now." I laughed, "So it's really you," I said.  
"I wonder if you have any idea how much you meant to me during that time?"  
"I wonder," she said, "if you know how much your call meant to me. I never had any children and I used to look forward to your calls."  
I told her how often I had thought of her over the years and I asked if I could call her again when I came back to visit my sister. "Please do," she said, "just ask for Sally."  
Three months later I was back in Seattle. A different voice answered, "Information." I asked for Sally. "Are you a friend?" she said. "Yes, a very old friend." I answered. "I'm sorry to have to tell you this," she said, "but Sally had been working part-time the last few years because she was sick. She died five weeks ago."  
Before I could hang up she said, "Wait a minute, did you say your name was Paul?"  
"Yes," I answered.  
"Well, Sally left a message for you. She wrote it down in case you called. Let me read it to you." The note said, "Tell him there are other worlds to sing in. He'll know what I mean." I thanked her and hung up. I knew what Sally meant.  
Never underestimate the impression you may make on others. Whose life have you touched today? Why not pass this on? I did...Lifting you on eagle's wings.  
May you find the joy and peace you long for. Life is a journey — NOT a guided tour.  
I loved this story and just had to pass it on. I hope you enjoy it and get a blessing from it just as I did.  
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*Got something for "At Week's End?" E-mail me at td@nwkans.com. Or fax me at (785) 462-7749. Or give me a call at 462-3963. Or mail it to me at 155 W. 5th, Colby, Kan. 67701. Thanks in advance.*