

Rantings and Rove

Everyone — and I mean everyone — is buzzing about **Karl Rove** and his leaking of info to **Time's Matt Cooper**. Consensus is that the president will brush it off as a slip of the tongue, although Rove's detractors would like to see

him go — as in go to jail with **Judith Miller**. This, however, isn't likely to happen. The president surrounds himself with lightning rods and is able to handle the fallout. Looks to me like Rove's job at the White House is secure.

Rod's life: Some guys have all the luck ...

Seems there is more rolling than rolling going on in **Rod Stewart's** house. The soon-to-be-again dad, 60, is not letting his age get to him when it comes to kids. Stewart and now-fiancee **Penny Lancaster** are expecting their first — Rod's sixth — in December. Stewart's son, Sean, moans that being "Rod Stewart's son is a curse and a hindrance." Meanwhile, Rod's daughter, Kimberly, is now singing Penny's praises,

The Buzz



BY KAREN FELD

saying of her stepmom, "She brings out the best in my dad. All celebrity children are messed up. Our parents are out of town a lot and it makes us feel unwanted."

... And a more together family?

There may be hope on the horizon for this bump, D.C.-based photojournalist **Carrie Devorah**, camera in hand, noticed Stewart's fiancée, "the Penny," hiding in the sound boards when Rod appeared at the MCI Center last year. "There is an ethics in photojournalism, to offer the celeb privacy of moments they do not want recorded," Devorah said. "The Penny" looked at my lens and indicated she preferred not to be photographed which would clue the crowd on to her being there." But now this story can be revealed since at the Royal Ascot, held annually in June outside London, Devorah says it was another matter: Rod and "the Penny" were escorted from the grounds for inappropriate dress — and for Stewart having, it seemed, started his party long before the races began. Rod and Penny were escorted out of the Royal Enclosure, where top hat and tails are mandatory dress code.

A losing Vegas bet

More dish brewing on the **Kelly Perdew/Young Republican** flap I told you about yesterday. Seems that **Nathan Taylor**, 29, a Reno resident and state chairman of the Nevada YRs and chairman of the Young Republican National Convention in Las Vegas last weekend, sent Perdew a check in the amount of \$1,271.59 to cover Perdew's coach airline fare from Anchorage, Alaska — he was on a fishing trip in Kanai which he cut short — to Las Vegas via Denver (I have a copy of the check signed by Taylor and written on a YRNC 2005 Inc. account) to emcee the dinner at the Mandalay Bay Resort last Saturday evening. Although

there was never a written agreement for the appearance, it was set up through Perdew's Los Angeles publicist, **Brian McWilliams**, rather than through ICM, Perdew's agent.

Perdew, a vocal GOP supporter, even emceed an inaugural event after the **Bush twins** called him. A t



Other "Apprentice" player saves the day

that event **President Bush** thanked him on stage. Perdew also still has a contract with the Department of Defense, by the way. "Kelly is one of the nicest guys I've worked with," McWilliams told me.

End of story ... almost. Taylor, who says he was on a limited budget, reached another Republican, **Maria Borden**, on her cell phone in Virginia Beach on Friday afternoon after remembering that she was married to a Marine ("Supporting our Troops" was the convention theme). Coincidentally, Borden appeared on "The Apprentice" during the same season as Perdew. Within 24 hours, she paid her own expenses and came to Taylor's rescue in Las Vegas. Taylor did give her one bedroom in his two-bedroom suite. "Kelly wanted his own suite," Taylor said. "He wasn't willing to share."

A male diva?

But Taylor has a different story. He said that "Perdew is "such a male diva, wanting first-class air, limo and hotel suite," that he canceled him at the last minute, telling Perdew on the phone, "I'd rather deal with a United States senator than with you," and "There's no need for you to come to my dinner. Your services are no longer needed." Taylor relates that he told Perdew after demanding "that he be a man and call himself, not work through his PR agent."

And YR's Taylor?

McWilliams calls it "a misunderstanding" and "a mix-up of arrangements." "The day before [the dinner,] we got a call from Nathan, who was livid and abusive," McWilliams told me.

"Borden was witty and charming and posed for photos with **Sen. Sam Brownback**, R-Kan., and every YR who got an award," said Taylor, who is hoping to get his \$1,200 refunded from Perdew. "He works for a billionaire. I'd hate to tell **Donald Trump** that his employee can't refund \$1,200," said Taylor yesterday.

And now the back story: Taylor, a self-described restaurant server and former political consultant, has a controversial background himself. He was accused earlier this year in a criminal complaint filed with the Reno Police Department of embezzling \$25,000 in convention registration fees and using the money for personal use, a charge he denies. To quote Taylor, "That was a political conspiracy perpetuated against me. It was politics of personal destruction." Accusations have been dropped.



Tina Fineberg/AP

Kelly Perdew, right, gives the thumbs up with Donald Trump after the season finale of NBC's "The Apprentice" on Dec. 16 in New York.

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