

**THE RELIABLE SOURCE***By Amy Argetsinger and Roxanne Roberts***The White House Chief of Staff Shows His Plucky Side**

BY VICKI POMBO

Josh Bolten accompanies Randy Travis at Wednesday's dinner.

In an effort to liven up embassy dinners, **Rima al-Sabah**, wife of Kuwaiti Ambassador **Salem al-Sabah**, always throws in a surprise or two: a jazz singer, a concert pianist, sometimes a belly dancer. For Wednesday's Kuwait-America Foundation dinner, attended by **Laura Bush**, **Condi Rice**, **Karl Rove**, **Michael Chertoff**, Justice **Anthony Kennedy**, **Charlie Rose**, **Adrian Fenty**, members of Congress and corporate big shots (the event raised \$1.5 million for a pediatric hospital in Iraq), she flew in **Randy Travis**.

But that wasn't the real surprise. "Josh, come up here and play something," Travis told **Josh Bolten**, the president's chief of staff, who plays bass in the amateur group the Compassionates. Egged on by applause, Bolten strapped on a guitar and motioned for his girlfriend, **Dede McClure**, to sing backup for Travis's "Forever and Ever, Amen."

The first lady and secretary of state led a standing ovation. A mildly embarrassed Bolten said he had "no idea" he'd be tapped: "It's a good thing I didn't know, because I would have been too nervous to enjoy dinner."