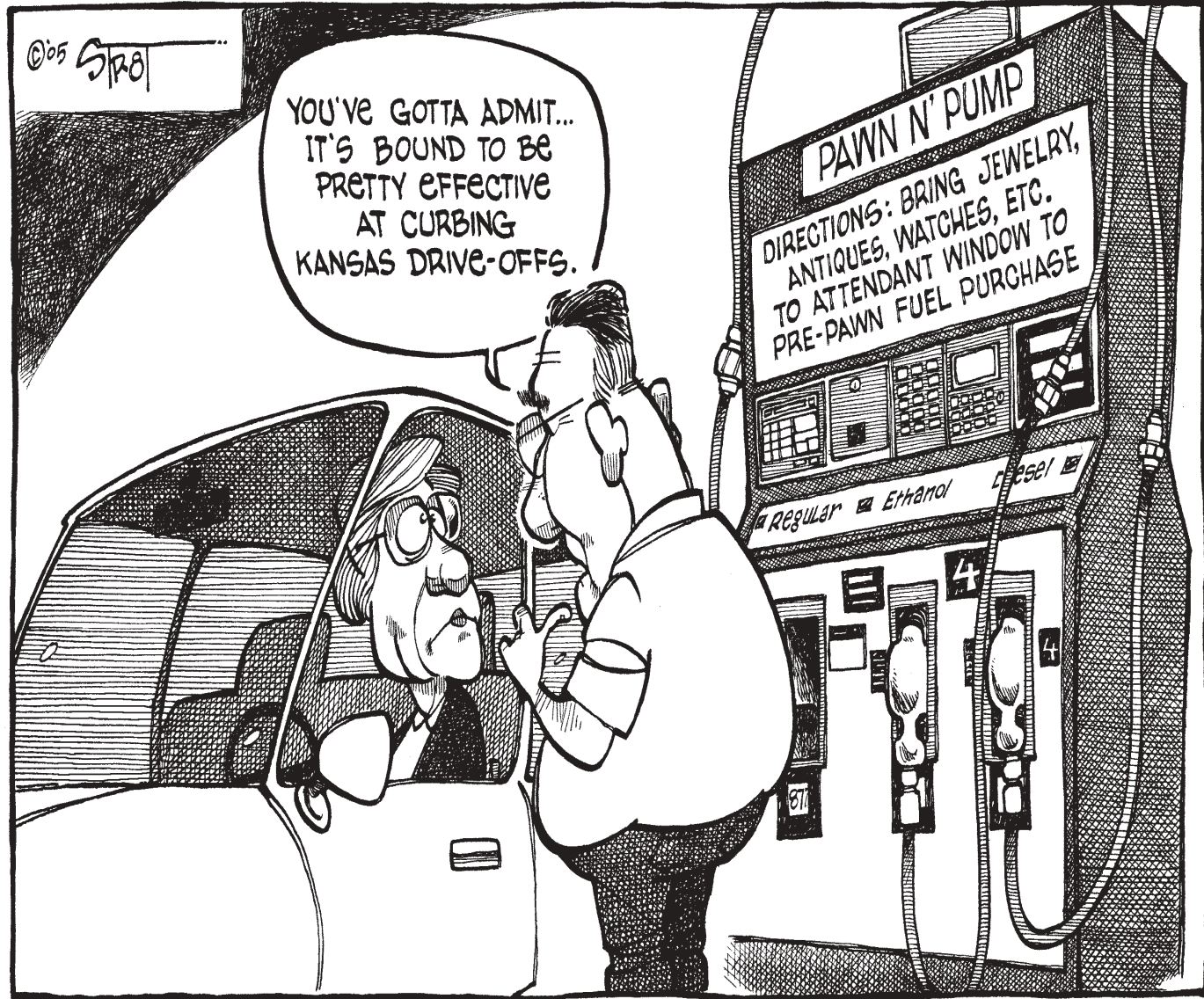


A war by any other name is still a war

Quick, when was the last time our country was at war? In the last half century, we've sent men (and increasingly, women) to fight and die in Korea, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Kuwait, Somalia, Bosnia, Afghanistan, Iraq and a few other places. But not since 1942 has Congress declared war on anyone. Maybe it's the modern trend of calling a spade anything but a spade. George Orwell protested about the time the Department of War became the Department of Defense. So, in Korea, for years, we claimed to have had a "conflict," not a war. No matter that 34,000 American boys died there. Or, that they fought, supposedly, for the U.N and not for the U.S.A. Or, that the North Koreans had attacked first. In Vietnam, our troops slipped in quietly as "advisors," and the contingent grew. We used to call that one a conflict, too. The 47,000 names on The Wall belie that. Sometimes, our troops have gone in as "peacekeepers," under international auspices as in Bosnia, or on their own. It's hard to say, was Somalia a war, or just a little "action" the president ought to have authority to take? The answer might depend on whether you are among those getting shot at. One reason we often have troops in harm's way, but seldom at war, may be the general reluctance of Washington to call anything by its right name. Congress is always going to "reform" something, but that could mean anything from abolishing the agency, as with Amtrak, to making it bigger and more bloated, as with the Postal Service. Sorting the "police actions" from the "peacekeeping" from the "wars" may not be easy, but in the larger sense, it shouldn't be that hard to know a war when we see one. In Vietnam, though, it sort of snuck up on us. And there we were. But when you plan to invade a country with whole divisions and corps, isn't that, by definition, a war? And if we're going to fight a war, shouldn't Congress have to declare one? Of course, it'd be harder to get a war powers resolution than something less. It would mean a real commitment by the country, Congress and the government, not just the troops in the field. And that might not be so bad. It's not the Washington way, but maybe it's time for some change. The next time we send divisions to fight, let it be under a declaration of war. War is hell, after all, and it's no good to pretend otherwise.

— Steve Haynes



Boys have a good time with big toys

My old computer keyboard died a couple of weeks ago. I asked my friend Ila if she had an old one I could borrow, just to make sure it was the keyboard and not the WebTV itself.

With an impish grin, her husband Bob said, "Sure, we have an old one you can use. It's one we used for years. But most of the letters are worn off."

He was right. The only visible letters are Q, W, Z, X, P and part of C, Y and U. My typing skills are being put to the test. But, because of "Spellcheck," you'll never know how badly I did.

—ob—

Jim and I may have missed our calling. We should have been tour guides.

Two weeks ago, we had an outing planned with Jim's dad and three other friends, only to have the weather change our plans.

This week, however, saw our plan come together. It was windy, but temperatures were mild, and we were all up for a sight-seeing trip to locate windmills and observe an antique plowing exhibition.

The original plan had called for using Dad's mini-van to haul everyone, but upon his arrival we discovered it was the short-bodied version and did not have the third row of seats.

Luckily, the other couple in the entou-

Out Back Carolyn Plotts



rage also had a van. A quick call to them arranged the transportation. Now, we really were ready to roll.

About two hours later, we found the plowing exhibition already in full swing. About 40 antique tractor owners along with a wide collection of two, three and four bottom plows were stirring up quite a dust cloud. (See windy conditions mentioned above.) Those guys were having fun. And, it was a very impressive sight to see those tractors strung out in a single line, angled across the field, as each took their turn tilling the soil.

One of the ladies asked, "Now, what's the point of this?"

"The point," I said, "is a chance for these big boys to get out in the dirt and play with their toys."

After lunch, we headed to a town known for a windmill collection owned by an individual. Too late, we learned he had died and his family had sold his windmills. Sure enough, we found the former location of his windmill farm. All that remained were the foundations.

Undaunted, we headed for another private collector's farmstead we knew of. Same result. All gone.

Since we were in the neighborhood of

the geographical center of the Continental United States, we decided to head there.

I just want to say right here, there were no highway markers coming from the south. It was an honest mistake to miss the corner. We only drove a few more miles than needed.

It was getting later in the afternoon, but we were determined to see windmills. Jim said, "I know where we can find some windmills. Is everyone game?"

Finally, we pulled into Alma and stopped on the grounds of the Sunflower Pioneer Power Association. They have a permanent display of dozens of types of windmills. And, with the wind blowing at gale force, they were in fine form.

Dad summed it up: "We could have saved ourselves a lot of driving if we'd just come here first."

So, I guess that means we shouldn't try for a second career as tour guides.

—ob—

In preparation for Mother's Day, members of the Sunday School classes at our church were asked to submit essays on, "Why I love my mom."

A judge began to read the first tribute, written by a little boy. She began, "I love my mom because she married my dad yesterday. She baked me cookies."

The congregation held its collective breath waiting for the rest.

"Oh, wait. Let me start over," the judge said.

"I love my mom because she married my dad. Yesterday she baked me cookies."

Whew! All for the lack of a period.

The death of a soldier hurts us all

Congressman Jerry Moran offered a statement on the death of Kansas Army National Guard Specialist Derrick Lutters, 24, of Goodland. Spec. Lutters died May 1 in Baghdad, Iraq from injuries sustained when the vehicle he was riding in was attacked by a suicide bomber. He was a member of Detachment 1, 170th Maintenance Company, based out of Goodland. He was assigned to the 891st Engineers Battalion, which mobilized last September.

"I offer my heartfelt sympathy to the

Capitol Views

Rep. Jerry Moran



Lutters family for the loss of Derrick," said Moran. Derrick was a citizen-soldier who courageously left his life at home to answer our country's call to duty. He ex-

emplifies what's great about Kansas: courage, dedication, and sacrifice for the good of others. Kansas and all Americans owe him great thanks for his service. This hero's death reminds us all to live a life worthy of his sacrifice. The Lutters family is in my family's thoughts and prayers."

Spec. Lutters is the third Kansas Guard soldier who has died while serving in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Staff Sergeant Clinton Wisdom, Atchison, and Specialist Don Clary, Troy, died Nov. 8, in a suicide bomb attack near Baghdad.

For more information, contact Congressman Moran at (202) 225-2715 or visit his web page at www.house.gov/moranks01/.

Note: Spec. Lutters was promoted to Sergeant by Maj. Gen Tod Bunting, the Kansas Adjutant General, after his death.

His funeral will be held at 11 a.m. Central Time on Thursday in Goodland at the Max Jones Fieldhouse on East 13th St. and Arcade. Visitation will be from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Mountain Time on Wednesday at Koons Funeral Home and a vigil and rosary will be held at 6 p.m. Mountain Time at the Catholic church in Goodland. Graveside services will be held at 4 p.m. Central Time on Thursday at the Ransom St. Aloysius Cemetery.

One woman's trash is another's treasure

Each spring my mother would talk about moving day. It was the time when farmers changed landlords and moved to another location, another residence.

I think she said it was around March 1. She told of moving from a favorite spot with what would now be called a "walk-out basement" to yet another "new" place.

They would move the chickens after they had settled in for the night in order to have the least amount of disturbance. I'm not sure if that was for the chickens or my folks.

People would trade curtains and pieces of furniture to accommodate their new home. Not a lot unlike the city and county-wide clean up taking place last week.

As I drove by the countless couches, old chairs, Christmas decorations and other treasures that were hauled out to the curb I thought of her many tales of moving days.

How excited she was to find curtains stored on a shelf in the "new" farm home or the dresser someone just couldn't pile on to the last load.

Certainly the phrase one man's trash is another's treasure rings true for more than just garage sales.

Phase II Mary Kay Woodyard



She often told of the house that she was unable to return to for the final cleaning. Those of you who knew my mother knew it was probably in better shape than most homes are now days.

She wanted to go back and clean the former residence but as the day wore on she knew she was not going to be able to and as she fretted about it an older farm wife said, "Oh, don't worry. Everyone knows it isn't a successful move unless the new tenant can say, 'That was the dirtiest house I've ever seen.'"

I don't know if it really comforted my mother, but we always loved hearing the story.

I guess the object of the lesson from my mother was, look forward to the future, but appreciate what you have; don't be too joyous in receiving nor too sorrowful in losing; and don't disturb the chickens.

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