

It's time to finish what we started

Casualties in the Iraq war passed 2,000 last month with a predictable amount of moaning and carping from the Democrats and the anti-war crowd.

Deaths of American servicemen, and women, are never pleasant, but you have to ask, to what end.

Most of those who made this sacrifice, and their friends who carry on, probably would tell you it was in a just and valuable cause. That's not what you will hear back home, however.

The Democrats sense blood in the water with the president's popularity at an all-time low just before the congressional elections. They want control of Congress back.

And they seem perfectly willing to abandon everything these servicemen fought and died for.

Here's what you'll hear from this bunch:

- The president lied to get us into the war. There were no weapons of mass destruction.
- It's all about oil. Only the oil companies profit.
- We are bogged down in a Vietnam-like morass. We'll never win.
- The Iraqis hate us.
- The war is helping the terrorists. It's their best recruiting tool.
- The administration has no exit strategy.
- Our troops are dying in vain. We must bring them home.
- The terrorists are winning.

Only, on the face of it, none of that is true.

In fact, the Bush strategy of invading Afghanistan and Iraq and rooting out two violent, oppressive regimes seems to be working. It's not about oil; it's about destabilizing the terrorists and putting them on the run.

There have been no terrorists attacks in the U.S. since the invasions. Al-Qaida, while still making noise, is in fact on the run, it's communications and command totally disrupted. We have picked off the leaders one by one, and eventually, we will catch up to all of them.

Outside Iraq, the Mideast is quieter than it's been in years. The Palestinians are having elections. Israel has withdrawn from some territory. Terrorism has subsided along the Jordan.

In Iraq, the people turned out to vote in two elections despite everything the terrorists could do to prevent them. The same happened in Afghanistan.

People were immensely proud of their democratic accomplishments, holding up their inked thumbs for the cameras.

Sure, the forces that backed Saddam Hussein are not happy. They are fighting us tooth and nail, and they have been far more effective than the administration expected. Still, there are signs that the U.S. and the Iraqi government are winning, not losing, this war.

The millions of Iraqis who welcomed U.S. troops as the liberated Baghdad still, for the most part, back the change we have brought. It is the Saddam forces and the terrorist who are killing people, and most of the victims are Iraqi.

No war is easy. In this one, the initial phase was far easier than many expected, as American troops rolled from the border to Baghdad in just days. The next phase has been harder than expected, but the alternative to finishing the effort is not pretty.

Death. Violence. A victory for the terrorists.

And, eventually, more terrorists attacks here.

After 2,000 combat deaths, we can't and shouldn't allow that to happen. It's time to buckle down and finish what we have started.

— Steve Haynes

WRITE:

The Norton Telegram encourages Letters to the Editor on any topic of public interest. Letters should be brief, clear and to the point. They must be signed and carry the address and phone number of the author.

We do not publish anonymous letters. We sign our opinions and expect readers to do likewise.

We do not publish form letters or letters about topics which do not pertain to our area. Thank-yous should be submitted to the Want Ad desk.

Letters will not be censored, but will be read and edited for form and style, clarity, length and legality. We will not publish attacks on private individuals or businesses which do not pertain to a public issue.

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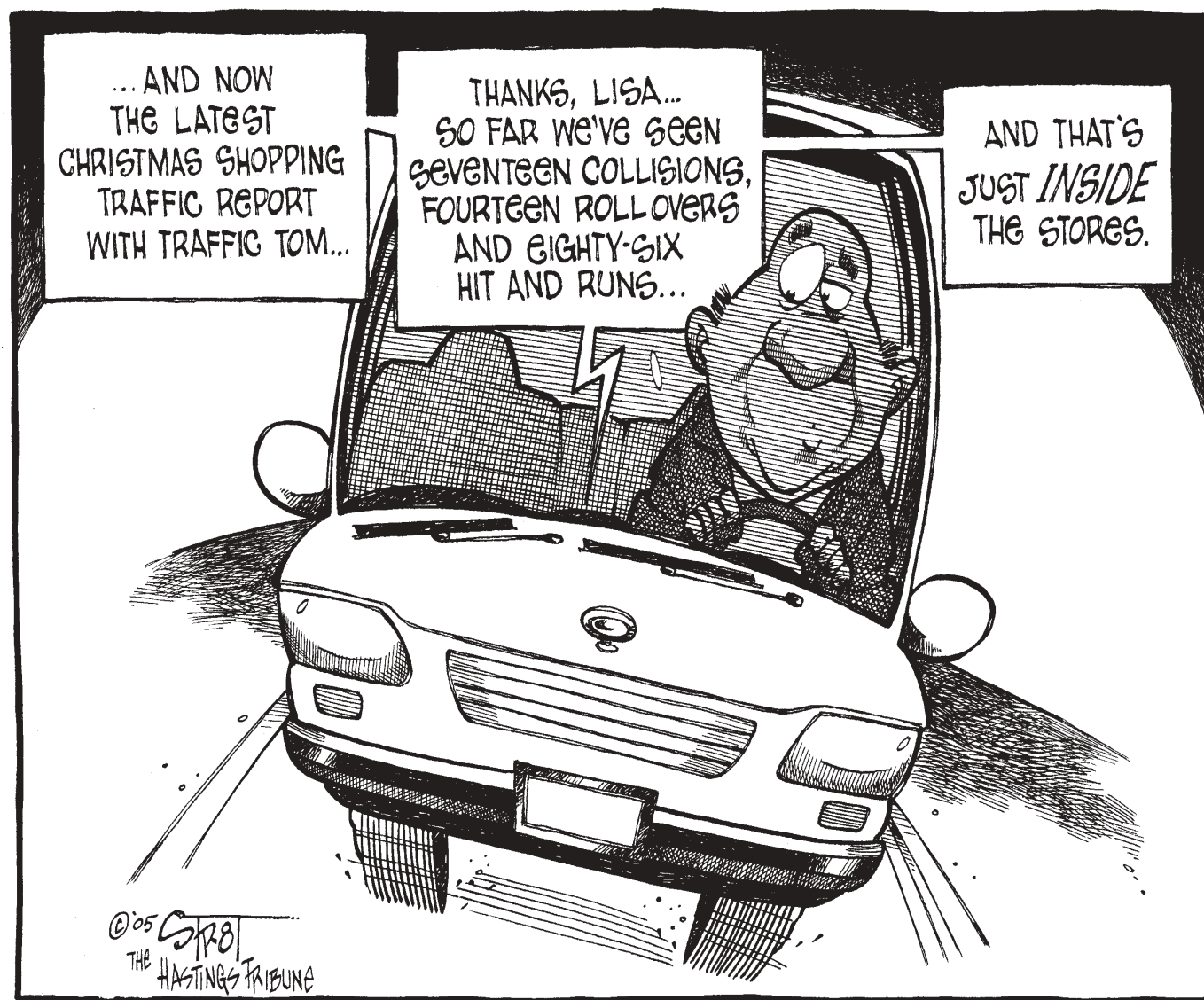
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Kids cook up a cake for snow-day treat

The epilogue to last week's installment reads: Our "stranded" family made it home. They left our home about 11 a.m. Tuesday morning and called late that afternoon from their home near Colorado Springs. Two days of being snowed-in during the blizzard was claustrophobic for the adults. But, it was fun for the kids.

The two oldest girls asked me if they could bake their mother a birthday cake. Seems she didn't get one on her real birthday, and they wanted to surprise her.

Kids in the kitchen never bothered me. So, I turned them loose.

Jim always keeps a few cake mixes and canned frosting on hand in case he wants to bake his own "snackin'" cake. We found a chocolate one because the girls said "chocolate was their mom's favorite." They picked out a can of coconut/pecan frosting because, according to them, coconut was another of her favorites. They asked if they could use some M&Ms to write her name on top because "she loves M&Ms." They also wanted to grate some almond bark to sprinkle on top (that chocolate thing again).

Out Back

Carolyn Plotts



After putting the beaters in the electric mixer and turning it on for them, one of the girls said to me, "Boy, our mom would NEVER let us do this kind of stuff."

I couldn't find birthday candles, so we substituted a votive candle and sang "Happy Birthday." Everyone had a piece of cake and declared it wonderful. That was one "chocolatey rich" cake. Glad no one had a chocolate allergy, or they would have needed a medic.

During our time indoors we watched videos, played cards and computer games. I didn't want to do it, but toward the end of the second night of being house bound I broke out the Boggle game.

I have to be honest, Boggle is my game. I am brutal. I take no prisoners nor make any concession for age. Although, I do

allow competitors under 12 to include two-letter words.

My son-in-law thinks I invent words, but every crossword puzzle fan knows "orts" means leftovers. Jumble those letters and you also have "sort" and "rots."

The girls, their Uncle Nick and I played Boggle until we were all tired enough to go to sleep. And, even though they didn't win a game, I told them they would be the only kids in their class who knew that "roe" means "fish eggs."

—ob—

The blizzard thwarted Jim's plans for Christmas decorating. He had planned to start putting up lights last Sunday but now, a week later, he still hasn't been able to.

This morning he sorted some lights out, so it has begun. The annual ritual of illuminating anything that doesn't move.

We ran into a friend at the store yesterday. She was buying three-pronged splitters to plug in Christmas lights.

"I had these last year," she said. "There must be a 'plug-in fairy' that comes in and steals them."

Yeah, the same "fairy" that steals socks out of the dryer.

One kitty, two kitties, three kitties, more?

There are too many cats wandering around this home, and I wish I knew for sure whether it's four or five.

Youngest daughter brought her boyfriend home for Thanksgiving. Her boyfriend is allergic to cats.

The reason we have four cats to begin with is boyfriend. We knew the relationship was serious when youngest daughter dumped two of her cats on us earlier this year.

Steve thinks two cats is sufficient. I would like three. With our two and her two, we have four — more than either of us wanted.

With boyfriend's visit on the horizon, we had to make plans. He would bring his decongestants, but we needed to decontaminate the house.

We locked the cat door and sent the cats to the garage, which also has a cat door. Food, water, beds and the litter box went on the porch table, which is in storage for the winter.

The cats did not take this kindly. Every time the back door opened, a cat or two would make a dash for the kitchen. Most we caught, but there was a time or two we played ring-around-the-table. The cat would go one way and whoever was try-

Open Season

Cynthia Haynes



ing to catch it would go the other.

One busy morning, I spent 20 minutes trying to catch one that got all the way to the living room. She would go on one side of the sofa, I would counter. Then we'd both go to the other side. I didn't think there was going to be any way to catch her. Then she jumped up on the back to relax in her favorite place, and bang, she was out the door.

Daughter and boyfriend arrived on Monday and things went well until Wednesday night, when son arrived with his two cats.

Daughter and boyfriend planned to leave early Friday morning, but we had more than 24 hours to figure out what to do with Frank and Jules.

Since the weather was beautiful, my solution was to put food and water on the back porch for our cats and lock the garage cat door. That way we could keep

son's cats in the garage, boyfriend in the house and our cats outside for a day.

The only flaw in this plan is we did have to get our vehicles out of the garage. However, I didn't figure the cats would run out in that short time, and as far as I know, they didn't. They're pretty scardy. They just hid.

Once daughter and boyfriend headed home, we opened the cat doors and went to the garage to bring in son's cats. Frank was there, but Jules was nowhere to be found.

It isn't a big garage, but there are a lot of hiding places for a spooky cat. We looked, called and searched without avail, so I left food, water and litter in the garage.

Son left for Lawrence with half the cats he came with and we took off for Columbia, Mo., for a meeting.

Kimberly promised to feed the dog and take care of some things in the house. While inside, she swears she saw a gray-and-orange cat that she didn't recognize. Since she's on a first-name basis with our felines and daughters', we think maybe Jules is somewhere in this house.

We don't know how she could have gotten in unless she saw one of the others use the cat door and followed suit. We sure haven't seen her.

Still, I hope you can tell how many cats you have when you have too many?

LETTER TO THE EDITOR:

Everyone should be a part of the solution for balance with wildlife

To the Editor:

In reference to your editorial on the state's deer herd, you stated your position well and said it best.

We agree that a higher regard should be given to the deer population than to blatantly call for mass slaughter of the species.

To do less would be tantamount to what

once happened to herds of buffalo that roamed in good old Kansas where we now call home. For a host of reasons, many of them senseless, they were cut down by the millions, to near extinction. Game management was unheard of then. Now it is. And it should be noted that our state's protectors of wildlife are doing a good job as they strive for a healthy balance.

Your point is well taken, suggesting that we can live in harmony with these beautiful examples of our state's wildlife, when utmost care is taken and consideration is given.

You're right. We should all join in and be a part of the solution.

Randall Braden

Haynes