

Winner of War on Terror unclear

It's far from clear who's winning the War on Terrorism, though the U.S. has not suffered greatly in the last few years, and the terrorists have taken a beating. Around the world, leaders of al Qaeda and its related groups have been killed by bombs and missiles, hunted down and arrested and run into hiding. While the Taliban has become aggressive in Afghanistan, it's nowhere near a victory.

Americans, however, and our news media in particular, tend to blow out of proportion every little skirmish in this war. Overall, we are not only winning the general fight, but our losses have been negligible.

Take the incident where a terrorist double agent who gained the trust of Jordanian and American intelligence officers detonated a bomb in a briefing room, killing eight CIA officers. The loss of eight officers is tragic, but in war, there are casualties.

While not insignificant to the individuals involved or their families, this incident, in the history of our battle, will be little remarked. It represents a series of mistakes in an individual operation, but not a failure of our intelligence system or a major defeat in the war.

Yet, news reports trumpet the bombing as if it was a major issue for the United States. You almost get the idea that some people want us to lose, or at least to play up our every setback.

In the same vein, the "underwear bomber" does not represent a massive failure of our air transport security system, though it does point out some weaknesses. If security had not been so good, one expert noted, the bomber might have carried a real bomb — one that worked. Instead, he was captured, alive but horribly wounded.

It's easy to say that the security apparatus should have spotted the bomber, who had been turned into our embassy in Nigeria as a possible terrorist by his father, but in truth, the system is not that good. It may not even be possible or desirable for the system to be that good.

The fact is, it works. Millions of people fly every day, and not one of them has been killed by a terrorist act in years. It could happen again, to be sure, but it seems less likely as time goes by. The terrorists are not winning and have mustered only feeble efforts against the U.S. since 2001.

In the meantime, they've been run out of their sanctuaries around the world and forced to exist in caves and inhospitable mountains. They are no longer the threat they once were.

That is not to say that we've won this struggle, but it may never be won. Terrorists can claim victory from a single act, but the civilized world needs to be safe all the time. Eternal vigilance may be the price of 21st century civilization.

Yes, we might as well be prepared for further indignities at the airport checking line, though gate screening isn't terribly effective. Lots of contraband gets through, many fly who perhaps shouldn't.

The greatest obstacle to a victory by the forces of reason may be our will to continue. The more we hear about bombings and death, the less we want to face the threat. Americans, in particular, do not relish long-term conflict, but this one will not go away soon.

Go away it will. All threats fade, all movements run their course. Even the dreaded communist monolith went away, leaving only a hollow shell to scare us in the end.

For now, though, we need to gain some perspective on what's happening, step back and realize that our side has not fared badly, though the battle is far from over.

And think about the consequences of ignoring this problem and letting the terrorist movement grow and fester.

— Steve Haynes

Changing our lives

The internet is changing our lives, one quick day at a time. We can no longer contact our family from a phone, we use face book and e-mail.

If you want to talk to a teenager, you have to send a text message. We can research the price of any product, from many distributors and order most all products without getting out of bed.

With the good however, comes the bad. Many people are getting infected from applications within Facebook; getting viruses e-mailed from family and friends, that had their accounts hi-jacked from an easy password and even received notification that their computer was infected with viruses and spy-ware, when the only infection was the message telling you that you are infected.

What can we do to stop all of this? It's the million dollar question. The one constant that remains: if it sounds too good to be true, it probably is.

Right now internet research is your best helper. If you see something that wants

Computer Corner Shawn Mortensen



to be installed on your system, type the name of the product in "Google.com" and see if it's safe.

If you get a pop up to install software that you do not want, do not close it, but reboot your computer.

Many times the close boxes are actually install buttons and will not close but run the programs. Nothing you can do will keep you safe from it all, unless you stay off the internet, but the Internet with its good and bad will be around for many years to come.

It's just one more thing in life we will have to adapt to.

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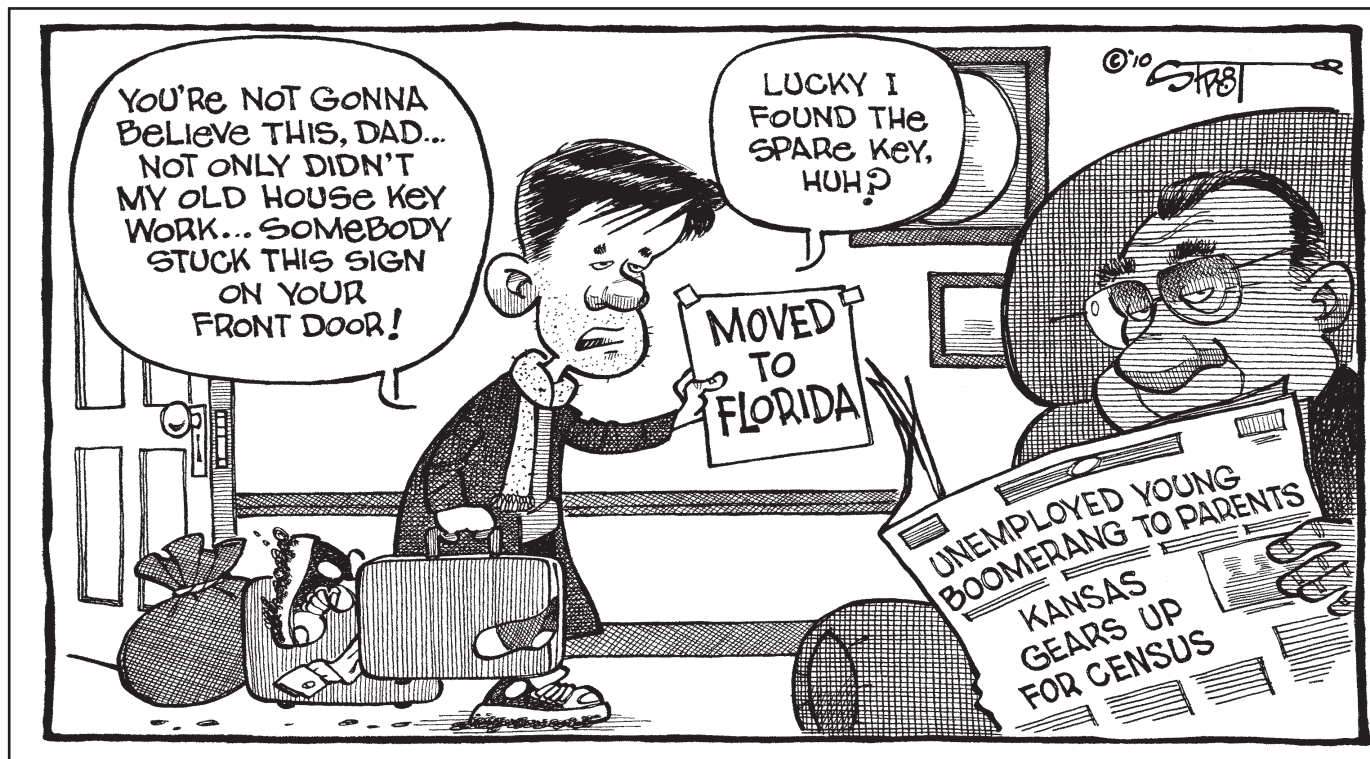
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Too much information

This may be TMI (too much information), but I'm still in my pajamas as I write this.

Granted, they are extremely cute pajamas (turquoise fleece with baby panda bears), but I have spent the last 30 hours flat on my back.

I got sick about 8 p.m. Saturday, and for awhile, I was afraid I was going to die. Then I was afraid I wasn't. I remember saying to son James, that I wondered if this was how chemo patients feel. If it's even close, I don't want to go there.

I stayed in Jim's recliner all Saturday night and all day Sunday. His recliner is a little "cushier" than mine, and he encouraged me to recuperate in it, an offer I gladly accepted.

Late Sunday night I felt well enough to run a load of clothes through the washer, fold some clothes from the dryer, load the dishwasher and clean up the wreck the men left in the kitchen. It really wasn't too bad.

I had made a huge pot of stew Friday, a big pan of cornbread and two apple pies

Out Back Carolyn Plotts



on Saturday while I was still feeling fine, so they ate pretty good whilst I was out of commission. I think they both ate pie for breakfast.

Monday has dawned bright and warm, and feeling the sunshine can't help but make a body feel better. I'm convinced I'll survive now and am going to progress from crackers and tea to something a little more substantial. But not apple pie.

— ob —

As everyone in this part of the country knows, it has not been merely cold the past week — it has been bitter cold. I have a thermometer outside my kitchen window, and I think the thing got stuck on "0."

We had some minus degree days and many when it never got over 10. At that point, a few degrees one way or the other don't make much difference. It's kind of hard to listen to talk of "global warming" on days like that.

The good part about this weather is that it has forced Jim to work inside. He put work on his shop "on hold" and got busy running duct work to the rest of the house. We now have heat in the dining room, one more heat duct in the kitchen (which really needed it) and pipe run to the other bedrooms upstairs.

He and James also finished tearing out the old lath and plaster in what will eventually be the library. That just leaves one room to go — our old closet which will become a much-needed office. Yea! I can hardly wait.

— ob —

Whew! I'm exhausted. This little bit of exertion really drained me. I think it's time to head to the recliner. Too bad there's no stew left. I could have milked this for one more day.

Some people are morning people

Some people are morning people or so I've heard! Those of us who are not morning people find it hard to believe since we've never been up early enough to meet one.

This winter ought to make everyone want to hibernate. I awoke recently and thought, "Oh, never mind!" I'm supposed to get a day off at my discretion each week, why not today?

I thrashed around in bed awhile until my conscience got the better of me, it was trash day! Who would carry it to the curb? Talk about essential personnel---that's me! Besides maybe I'll do something really fun later when I have a lot of days built up---like have surgery on my other knee!

The hubby informed me it was foggy. I didn't bother to look. I've quit checking on the weather since the morning I arose, looked at the digital thermometer and got very excited because it said 36! A more careful analysis revealed it was 3 point 6. Now I just assume it will be miserable, I can't handle disappointment!

I sat down to eat breakfast. The school bus was going by. It has a strobe light, which was barely a flicker. WOW---it is foggy!

Back Home Nancy Hagman



I was up, dressed and had my breakfast but I was rethinking going to work. The hubby had started my pickup to warm it up so I'd have to shut it off but there were many constructive things I could do at home. Out the door; sans coat. It was relative warm. Gingerly I took a step; it was not slippery.

Then I looked around: it was beautiful! Everything covered with hoarfrost. I touched a tree branch. The ice crumbled like a sugary confection. Even better as the fog cleared away, the sun caused every surface to glisten with a thousand points of light.

Where is my camera? It doesn't work so there is no point. It also requires film and who knew if we have any. It's time to join the 21st century, I suppose.

A couple of people have been urging

us to get the video camera feature for the new computer we are considering purchasing. In 1969 I remember seeing something like this at the Denver Stock Show. Someday you will be able to see the person you are talking to the exhibit promised! How cool!

And now you can. At Christmas we got to see and talk to a niece who couldn't come to our celebration. However as we waited for her to make an appearance, wondering what was taking so long, her sister said, "She's probably fixing her hair!"

Do we really want to have to fix our hair before we talk on the telephone?

Technology is an awesome thing but it will never top what God has already provided. How precious the memory of a January morning. So much easier to keep something on than a memory chip because you can call it up whenever you wish. And it can never be misplaced or lost in a drawer or box.

How close I came to missing something wonderful because I didn't want to get out of bed. Maybe those morning people are on to something!

RISE AND SHINE!

A walk down memory lane

A walk down memory lane brings forth a variety of emotions and two events this week have sparked many of those. Some changes help our community to prosper and some reflect the change in our lifestyle and the hardships incurred by these changes.

First was Steve Streck's letter announcing the closing of Hall's Clothing. According to accounts, it has been in business for over 60 years. I am 63 and can't remember a time when it wasn't the provider of many of my father's Stetsons and Pendleton jackets. Each owner of this landmark has been important to our community. Carrol Hall established the store and later sold to George Jones, then to Steve Streck. Each owner has been dedicated to serving the community.

Secondly was the sale of Moffet's Drug Store. The young man, Chase Rice, who has purchased the drug store is from

Phase II Mary Kay Woodyard



Smith Center and has embarked on the tradition of a local pharmacy. His roots in small town rural Kansas make him well aware of what tradition means to us.

When I was young there were three drug stores (my how the meaning of words has changed over the years). They took turns staying open until noon on Sundays so people could buy their Sunday paper i.e. The Denver Post, The Omaha World Herald, etc. Melvin Moffet and two generations of Vollertsens have served us well.

Many times I look at State Street and think, "Wouldn't it be fun to go back to the way things used to be?"

There is always comfort in the familiar, but unfortunately or perhaps fortunately, life is about change. Over the years we have seen businesses come and go; people move in and out and yet there is one thing which remains...the dedication of those who live here. Norton offers a volunteer movie theater, a home owned carnival, an incredible library, a free workout room to say nothing of top rated schools, a full range of medical services including a public health department, a renovated hospital and soon to be new medical clinic. All of this to benefit those who call this place home. Even with the changes Norton has on the horizon, we will move forward and adjust and continue to enjoy life and memories just like we have in the past.