

from our viewpoint...

## Freedom Fest fun, a time to ponder

Over 140 years ago, our 16th President, Abraham Lincoln, spoke his immortal words at Gettysburg, Pa.

It was a time of war, our bloody Civil War, and Lincoln held firm to his cause to save the Union.

Today, as we approach the 229 anniversary of the founding of our nation, we are again involved in a war. This, time the war is not on our soil, but rather on the hot desert of a foreign land half a world away.

The deaths in Iraq and Afghanistan have been nowhere near as high as the number of soldiers who died at Gettysburg, but the death of Derrick Lutters, 24, in May, brought the war closer to us.

As Lincoln said in his speech "...that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion."

President George Bush is correct when he said last week that the escalating violence by suicide bombers in Iraq is testing our resolve. The war in Iraq is far from over, and more American troops and Iraqi people will die before our troops come home.

Recent suicide bombings have targeted both American soldiers and Iraqi security forces. Over the last month, more of the bombings were aimed at the new Iraqi police in an apparent effort to discourage and delay their training and deployment.

The suicide bombings appear to be more and more violent, and some experts believe Iraq is becoming a training ground for terrorists from surrounding countries.

Our military forces are the last to want to fight a war. They constantly train to defend our freedom. Once committed to war by our political leaders, the troops fight gallantly. We must continue to support those whom we have placed in harm's way.

But fighting against an idea is a losing cause, because ideas cannot be defeated. We call it terrorism, but those who are blowing themselves up see glory, a chance to defeat the infidels who are occupying sacred lands.

Hopefully the seeds of democracy will take hold in Iraq, and we can declare a victory and extricate ourselves and remove our troops from the front line.

Watching the daily reports of bombings, we get a sense of dejavu from 40 years ago when the daily body counts mounted from Vietnam. While that was a different war and a different time, there are lessons to be learned from that failed attempt to help a country find freedom.

Friday, President Bush welcomed the ambassador from Vietnam to the White House. Bush said he was glad to have the ambassador represent his country and hoped the relationship would be beneficial to both countries. Bush said the Vietnamese government would continue efforts to help locate Americans missing in action from that war.

The battle at Gettysburg on the first three days of July 142 years ago was a turning point in the Civil War. It left 51,000 dead from both sides. As we celebrate Independence Day and watch the fireworks in the sky Sunday, let's say a silent prayer for those who carry the torch of freedom for us in the many distant lands where American troops are on duty.

This is a great place to live, and it takes vigilance by the people to ensure that "this nation under God, ...shall not perish from the earth," as Lincoln said. — *Tom Betz*

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## She's crazy sometimes, but I love her

This is how crazy my wife is.

We were supposed to go to Colorado this weekend to open up the house.

Two weeks ago, we were just back from a trip to Washington. That weekend, she declared that we were too tired to drive nine hours to Colorado. It'd be too much trouble to pack, and we'd be on the road too long.

So, she said, "We can stay home this weekend. We'll lounge around and work in the yard, enjoy the car show. We never get to go to the car show."

I was too tired to argue, so we scrubbed the trip to Colorado, even though it is sort of an annual tradition.

I figured we have a week's vacation coming up. We can go to Colorado then. It'll be warmer.

Now, it's Sunday. I haven't been near the yard. The hammock is still in the garage. I need to mow the grass. And I have an editorial to write.

What happened, you ask?

Well, first she decided that she really needed to go see her mother, who lives in a nursing home in Concordia. She couldn't decide whether to go Thursday, before the paper in Norton, or Friday, after the paper.

When she stays up late and gets up early on paper day, I worry about her driving halfway across the state. We were supposed to go to dinner on Friday. That was part of the weekend plan. Steak, I thought.



## steve haynes

- along the sappa

She looked at me with that look.

"Well," I said, "you should go see your mother."

It's hard to argue that.

"So we could have dinner at that Mexican restaurant in Concordia. She likes that."

Later, she looked up. "Is there a game this weekend? Are the Rockies home?"

"Saturday, 6:05," I said. "Playing the Reds."

She looked at me with that look. I promised to call for tickets.

So we drove to Concordia on Friday. It rained most of the way out and back, but the Mexican food was great. Mom really does like to get out.

We got home at midnight. We were going to walk the dog, but it was raining. That made two nights in a row the walk was rained out, but then, who complains about rain?

Well, the Rockies. They had a rain delay for the second day in a row, but got the game in. They won, but it was 49 degrees at game time.

Saturday dawned bright and clear, giving

To the Editor:

I read with interest Sharon Corcoran's column in the June 17 *Goodland Star-News*. I'm pleased to know you feel that you are "part of the church that Jesus started."

However, I find it troubling your sect feels that only those who don't "participate in or encourage wars" are worthy of being considered disciples of Jesus.

I'm sure the thousands of men and women serving in faraway places, sweating in the sun and risking their lives so you could sit in complete safety and comfort while penning your thoughts would not appreciate your view.

Never mind the thousands of soldiers who gave their lives to end the horrors of World War II before they reached our own doorstep. Never mind the soldiers who gave their lives and the businessmen who gave their fortunes and/or lives to break away from a corrupt and ungodly King of England who was denying the colonists their God-given rights.

It appears to me that you, Sharon Corcoran, are truly the most blessed woman in the nation. Your beliefs prevent you from supporting or participating in an ugly, but nevertheless necessary part of life here on Earth — defense of life and property. You are so fortunate to have others who are willing to do this hard work for you while you sit in an air-conditioned office and take swipes at them. Only in America!

Yes, only in America do you have the freedoms to believe as you please, write as you please and live as you please. Only in America, a land so steeped in Christian principles that homage to these principles can be found written on the walls of the highest court in the land and on the money in your pocket.

Only in America could you benefit from the



## from our readers

- to the editor

true Christian principle of loving your neighbor as yourself without having to reciprocate the act. Christ taught that loving your neighbor comes only behind the first and greatest commandment to love your God with all your might, mind and strength. There has been a long procession of caskets and empty bank accounts that belonged to folks who loved you enough to protect you even though you don't have the common sense to protect yourself.

I suppose your feelings of ill extend to even the policeman walking the beat on Sunday morning to keep your congregation safe. He carries a gun to protect you from those who

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