

Conflicts, peacekeepers; why don't we just say 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

Add tourguides to our resumé

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 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 discovered it was the short-bodied version and did not have the third row of seats.

Luckily, the other couple in the entourage 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.



Out Back

By Carolyn Sue Kelley-Plotts
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(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 Almena 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.



Mom makes Mother's Day feast

COLUMBIA, S.C. — For Mother's Day, I got to do something I love and don't often get to do — cook, and feed my children.

I enjoy trying new recipes and making the old standbys, but since I've been on a diet this last year, with just Steve and me at home I seldom get the chance to do more than warm up leftovers.

Sunday, however, we were in South Carolina visiting our youngest daughter, a graduate student at the university there.

When she was home for Christmas, I fixed everyone fried chicken, and when we were planning our trip to the South, she said she wanted me to make fried chicken so we all, including her new boyfriend, could go on a picnic.

What did I need?

Well, I said, it doesn't take much — chicken, flour, oil and a frying pan. At home I use an electric skillet, I told her, but any frying pan will do.

Oops. There was no frying pan. She didn't have one. Her boyfriend didn't have one. Even her sister, who is married and only lives an hour away in Augusta, Ga., didn't have one.

Brad, the boyfriend, must have really wanted that fried chicken. He went out and bought a new electric skillet.

The rest of the menu was potato salad, bread-and-butter sandwiches and carrot and celery strips.

We stopped by the store after



Open Season

By Cynthia Haynes
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church and picked up the chicken, potatoes, bread, celery and carrots. We were ready to cook.

The potatoes were small so I figured I'd boil them whole, because they say that is better for you. Since I usually figure on 20 to 30 minutes for potato chunk, I estimated an hour to boil the potatoes, then another 30 minutes to let them cool and put the potato salad together.

The chicken takes an hour, so I put the potatoes on while Brad screwed the legs in the new skillet and put the lid together.

I added oil and got my chicken pieces out and ready to go into the flour.

Then I checked the potatoes. Good grief. They were almost done. They'd been on for less than 20 minutes.

I quickly moved them off the heat and started frying chicken like my life depended on it.

I soon had the chicken ready, plus the potato salad and even mashed potatoes and gravy, as I found out that Brad doesn't like mayonnaise but loves mashed potatoes.

The rest of the crew buttered the bread and slapped the slices together for the sandwiches and packed up the picnic.

We were off.

In the park, I confessed to the too-quickly done potatoes and youngest daughter assured me that it took her a month to learn to cook at nearly sea level. She said after her cooking stuff arrived, she burned everything for a month.

What about before her stuff arrived, I asked. Oh, she said. It took most of a month for the moving van to get from Kansas to South Carolina and she slept on the floor in a sleeping bag and ate ramen noodles out of the cup.

Now, I know why I have this urge to feed my children.

From the Bible

The rich and poor meet together: the LORD is the maker of them all.

Proverbs 22:2

Service includes Scotts band

We were a little late for church Sunday, as usual.

Youngest daughter wanted to take us to "her" church, Trinity Episcopal Cathedral in Columbia, S.C., where she is a student at the university.

But we had to stop for breakfast, so time was short. And as we skidded into a parking space, the churchyard was full of ministers and choir members and acolytes, all vested in white.

Then there were the guys in kilts. A full Scottish pipe band. A couple dozen men carrying tartan flags of the various clans.

We looked at each other, and ducked in a side door as the band led the procession down the main aisle of the beautiful 1847 church. Brilliant stained-glass windows, lighted at night, depicted scenes from the Lord's life and times.

A glance at the service leaflet showed we had stumbled onto something called the "Kirkin' o the Tartans," a tradition among churches with a large Scottish following. In Columbia, it apparently alternates between Trinity and the First Presbyterian Church.

Daughter Lindsay said, yeah, she'd seen one in Lawrence.

At the end of the main service, the leader of the Scottish contingent his troop: "Reverend Sir, on behalf



Along the Sappa

By Steve Haynes
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of the Scots away from Scotland and all descended from that great land, we present these tartans before Almighty God and ask his blessing on these his servants."

Daughter noted that our tartan, the Lindsay, was not present.

"I could have worn my shawl," she said.

And I my tie.

The blessing was given, and the pipers marched out, playing loudly as only a pipe band can. We hung around to take pictures and listen to a few numbers outside, then split for the car.

On the way out, we wandered among the gravestones in the old church yard.

Church has taken way longer than we had planned, but as daughter said, "Any day that begins with 'Scotland the Brave' can't be bad.

And so we were charmed by Columbia.

It's not an old Southern city, because W.T. Sherman put most of it to the torch after he was finished

with Atlanta.

Its people are its charm. It's a college town, and the old mill district is now filled with bars, restaurants and a trendy grocery.

Everywhere we went, people spoke to us. No one failed to nod and speak a kind word. In the grocery, on the street, on the river walk along the old Columbia canal, everyone smiled. People were easy to talk with.

No where we've been, save maybe the High Plains, have we run into more nice people.

Or a better Scotts band.

What I still want to know is, how does he do it? The guy with the little drum and padded sticks? Every Scottish band has one.

While marching and keeping time, he beats the drum, twirls the sticks and beats again, never missing a step. Even, in the movies, while getting shot at.

Maybe next time, we'll get a chance to ask.

Photo Policy

The Oberlin Herald wants to emphasize photos of people doing things in the community. If you know of an event or news happening that we should attend, please call 475-2206.

Please be sure to allow a couple of days' notice so we can arrange to be there.

Space in the paper is limited and so is the time of our staff, so we may not be able to get to every event, but we will try.

Because space is so limited, we cannot run team or group photos, any pictures of people lined up or of people passing checks, certificates and the like. (We will always try to

make room for a story about any of these events, however.)

We do run wedding and engagement pictures and "mug" shots with stories and obituaries, when they are provided to us. Please remember that we need a clear, sharp picture. Dark or fuzzy prints will not work.

We cannot return photos unless you submit a self-addressed, stamped envelope with clear instructions for return. Other photos submitted may be picked up at our office within two weeks. After that, they will be disposed of.

Laser proofs of photos which have run in The Herald are available for 50 cents each, first come, first

served. Special-order laser prints of photos will be available at \$3 each for about two weeks after publication.

We can take passport photos if you provide a roll of color film. ASA 200, 12 exposure works fine. The charge is \$8.50 per person.



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