

Democrats are wrong: we're not losing this war

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 today, 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 terrorist attacks in the U.S. since the invasions. Al-Qaida, while still

making noise, is in fact on the run, its 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 Israel has withdrawn from some territory.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 they liberated Baghdad still, for the most part, back the change we have brought. It is the Saddam forces and the terrorists 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. Casualties were maybe 10 percent of what was expected. The next phase has been harder than anyone thought, but the alternative to finishing the effort is not pretty.

Death. Violence. A victory for the terrorists. And, eventually, more terrorist 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



Fall on ice hurts her dignity

That's what happens when you get in a hurry and wear the wrong kind of shoes.

Saturday night, Jim and I were hurrying to get to town for a dinner. This was a nice party and I didn't want to wear my snow boots. I put on a pair of loafers with slick soles. I was going out to start the car when I stepped on a slick spot. And, as my girls used to say when they were little, "I fall down, go boom."

BOOM, it was. My feet went out from under me, my knee went one way, my ankle went the other, and I landed square on my dignity.

Jim was still in the house and without any witnesses, it did no good to cry. I lay there, in the snow, for a minute saying, "Oh, ow-w-w. Oh, ow-w-w."

The snow cushioned my fall, or I would have been hurt worse than I was. Of course, if it hadn't been for the snow, I wouldn't have fallen in the first place. It's a Catch-22.

Bottom line (no pun intended), I wasn't really hurt, just my pride. Sunday I hobbled around and generally felt like I had been run over by a truck. I used my "condition" as an excuse to laze away the afternoon in my comfy recliner.

—ob—

Injured or not, though, Christmas is coming. And, I don't care if I'm politically incorrect by not saying "the Holidays" are coming. If you are offended by a Christian saying "Merry Christmas," then you better



Out Back

By Carolyn Sue Kelley-Plotts
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stop reading right now.

Tell you what. If you're an atheist, a Muslim, a Hindu, or whatever, I won't read your column, either. Deal?

For the rest of my readers, I'm making Christmas candy, making some Christmas presents and generally getting in the mood to celebrate Jesus' birthday. I don't really think Christ was born Dec. 25, but that is the day set aside to celebrate it, and it's OK with me.

Since it's the season, I'll share one of Jim's favorite Christmas candies. It's also the simplest thing I make, so you're gonna love it.

Club Cracker Candy

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Have ready 1/2 cup of sliced almonds. You may also use chopped or ground almonds, or pecans.

Line a cookie sheet or jelly-roll pan with foil. Arrange Club Crackers (not saltines) on the foil, covering the entire surface.

In a small pan, bring to boil 1/2 cup sugar and 1/2 cup butter (not margarine). Boil about 2 minutes.

Remove from heat, stir in 1 teaspoon vanilla. Pour over crackers. Sprinkle with the nuts. Bake for 10-12 minutes.

Let cool, break apart. Store in a tight container. Will keep for a long time.

Warning! They are addictive and you can't eat just one.

From the Bible

And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed.... And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, unto Judaea, unto the city of David; (because he was of the house and lineage of David;) To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child.

Luke 1, 4-5

Who do these voices belong to?

I was just finishing a conversation at the Associated Press meeting when the phone rang.

The voice at the other end launched into a lengthy account of some computer problem.

I had no idea who it was.

It was the kind of thing Evan talks about, but the deep and husky voice on the phone certainly wasn't Evan.

It kept talking, though, and finally I came to the only logical conclusion: It was someone with a deep, husky voice trying to impersonate Evan.

I was about to stop this impostor, call his hand and demand to know what he had done with Evan.

I wasn't the only one. Pat said the same guy called her. She finally asked who the heck it was.

And it turns out, it was Evan. Evan on tiny time capsules. Evan with a really bad cold.

It was four days before we could recognize him when he croaked. It wasn't so bad in person, because you could see the deep, husky voice was coming from someone who looked a lot like Evan. Over the phone, though...

Next, it happened to Cynthia.

When she talks, though she looks like my wife, she sounds just like... well, someone else.

And while I'm thinking that could



Along the Sappa

By Steve Haynes
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enhance our marriage, it's a little unnerving in the morning.

One day, when I was still half asleep, she called to me from the other room. I was lying there thinking, wondering how our son had come back from Lawrence already.

When she stuck her head into the bedroom, though, it looked like Cynthia and not like Lacy, so I'm assuming she has the cold, too.

And what a cold. It seems to lower the average voice two octaves below even the ordinary winter cold.

Now, I think I am getting it.

I'm pretty sure I didn't get it from Evan. Cynthia will get the blame, well deserved.

I'm not sure who people will think I am when I call.

I may let them guess. Or maybe I'll be polite and tell them who I am.

Then again, maybe not. Depends on whether I think they will be mad at me.

If I have to suffer, why go easy on the rest of the world?

Besides, as low as my voice will be, I'll be able to call people and whine and complain, and no one will know who's calling or whom to blame.

I kind of like that.

And if I talk a lot about computers, they'll probably just think it's Evan.

Honor Roll

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Cats bring out early presents

Oldest daughter called to say that she's been traumatized by a mouse.

A mouse? Give me a break, child. When you were a kid, you used to catch mice to feed the family snake. You've never been afraid of anything that crept, crawled or scampered.

But after I heard her story, I realized that a few visits to a therapist might be a good Christmas present — that or a nice bull snake.

Daughter said she was sitting at her desk in the living room working when her backpack/computer case fell on her foot. As she bent to pick it up, she realized there was a mouse under it.

It was a sad looking mouse, she said. It was wet and terrified.

This was not a surprise, since Sabine, queen of the three cats, was crouching beside it. It looked like Sabine and the mouse had been there for some time while daughter was working.

As daughter tried to get up, the mouse ran across her foot and Sabine nailed her with a pawful of claws. She apparently doesn't like anyone getting between her and her prey.

Son-in-law Nik likes small furry things and refuses to kill mice, so he brought out the live trap they use for



Open Season

By Cynthia Haynes
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these occasions.

"That mouse ran right into the trap," Daughter said. "I think he was really tired and just happy to get away from the cat."

Nik took the mouse to the back of their wooded property and let it go while Daughter finished up her work.

This was all very interesting, I told Felicia, but I didn't think that should have traumatized her, that was just a good reason to get a tetanus shot.

True, she admitted, but there was more.

That night Louie, No. 3 cat, who sleeps with them, wouldn't settle down. He kept moving around. Then something ran across her face.

Daughter was still rattled by the mouse incident and made Nik turn on the light and check the bed.

There under her pillow was an-

other mouse. Louie apparently had been playing with it on the bed.

Now, Daughter is not afraid of mice, but having one run across your face in the middle of the night is enough to give anyone a start.

Nik got the live trap out again and again the mouse seemed more than willing to get a free ride to the county line.

It wasn't even the same mouse, Daughter assured me.

She said she realizes that cats bring their prey in to show off, but usually, it's just a dead mouse.

She wasn't sure if she preferred a live or a dead mouse in this case, she said. Rolling over in the middle of the night onto some dead thing didn't sound like it would be too much fun, either.

But what really bothers her is there's still Marcell, the No. 2 cat.

When will he be bringing her a gift?

Reader dissents on street clearing

To the Editor:

I see by the front page of the Dec. 7 paper that the city crews were thanked for a job well done in the recent blizzard. I would like to disagree when it comes to the street clearing.

Here it is many days after, and the streets are covered with more snow on top of the sheer ice that has not been removed from the previous storm. There is virtually no sand anywhere but one intersection, Penn and Hall, and that was early the morning of Dec. 8. If you don't have a pickup or other large conveyance you are in danger of high centering just driving down Commercial.

I and other family members have been to Norton and McCook and a few other towns that are relative in size to Oberlin, and these towns were out with sand trucks and graders to get their streets cleaned. They

Letter to the Editor

didn't wait until the storm was over. Why, even Norcatour has cleaner streets than we do.

Do we not have adequate crews or equipment to sand and clear streets during a storm? The policy I have heard Oberlin has is to wait until the last snowflake has fallen before doing anything. If that is true, and apparently it is from this storm and past winters, it is pretty pathetic.

On Tuesday morning after the storm, East Avenue had not been touched and I shoveled a third of the way into the street itself to be able to back out of my driveway. I do not appreciate having to shovel city streets. If it requires that someone work a little overtime to keep the

city functioning, then it should be done. Fortunately, the utility crews don't wait until everything is over to do their repairs.

Donna Warren
Oberlin

Write

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