

Just why are we engaged in a war with Libya?

It would be easy just shrug, and ask how much harm another military adventure could do for a nation that often considers itself the world's policeman.

But perhaps we should be asking, just what does the United States hope to gain by interfering in Libya?

To protect innocent lives?

Perhaps, but as soon as we began bombing Colonel Gaddafi's forces, taking the pressure off the rebels, they began to advance on Tripoli. We did nothing to discourage them. So, are we on their side?

Maybe our goal is regime change, to get Mr. Gaddafi out, force him to leave the country.

We say that he needs to go. So do the European nations who back us.

Who would replace him?

We do not seem to be sure, though we're told the CIA has operatives "on the ground" in Libya to keep an eye on things.

Who will rule? Freedom-loving Libyans? The Muslim Brotherhood? Al Qaeda?

If the administration knows, they're not saying.

Seems from here that if the U.S. is spending (already, we're told) more than \$1 billion on this little military action, we should know where it's headed. That's small change compared to the national debt, but still a lot of money to most of us.

Should we be changing the government in Libya, even while urging former allies in Egypt, Yemen and other Arab countries to step

aside for change?

Because Muammar Muhammad al-Gaddafi is a bad man who kills and tortures his own people? Because his mercenary troops are killing them on the streets?

That kind of thing happens every day in Sudan, Somalia, the Congo, the Ivory Coast. We have not stepped in.

What changed? Do we have other, less noble goals? The State Department is not liable to admit them if we do.

Do we have a plan for North Africa, for the greater Muslim world, that served the interest of the U.S., of the peoples of the region, of world peace? If so, the administration ought to articulate it.

We cannot fight every fight. We should choose those that are important to us.

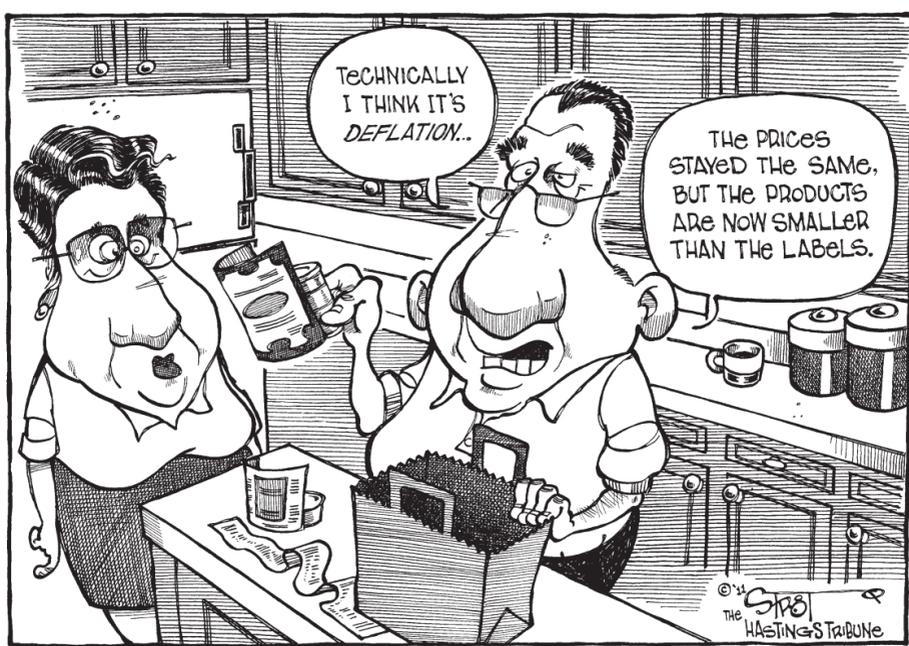
We are embroiled in two wars already. Our forces are stretched thin. The world's navies cannot stop unsophisticated Somalian pirates from seizing international shipping and killing innocent civilians.

American troops are stationed in hundreds of spots around the world already. Must we return to the shores of Tripoli?

We are, supposedly, turning the combat role over to our European friends. We are, supposedly, not going to war in Libya.

If that's the case, fine, but we think the American people still need to hear what our goals and objectives are and have a say in this adventure. So far, they have not.

— Steve Haynes



The world is on her walls



Open Season

By Cynthia Haynes
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Visiting Mom in Concordia is a like taking a trip around the world.

My mother lives in a single room at the Mount Joseph Nursing Home, but her walls are covered with photographs and post cards from all over.

As you enter the room, you're met by photos of Taylor Morgan Blake, her one and only great-granddaughter.

My mother has pictures of Taylor before she was born — both from sonograms and from photos of a very pregnant mother Lindsay. She has pictures of Taylor eating, playing, walking, sleeping, upside down, crying and laughing — just about anything a baby can come up with between birth and age 1.

There are pictures of Taylor with her mother, father, grandmother, grandfather, aunts, uncles and one in a frame with Great-grandmother Emma.

And then there are the pictures of my father, my mother's father, her children and grandchildren, brother and sisters, nieces and nephews, friends and acquaintances and of course, my parents' wedding picture.

These take up about one-quarter of the covered wall space. My mother's baby blanket, made by her mother, takes up some space and the rest is post cards.

I travel a lot, and when I'm on the

road, I send a card home to Mom. My children and my sister have started doing the same, so now Mother has more cards than she knows what to do with, and her walls are a travel-and-tourism Mecca.

As I visited Mom the other day, I cataloged some of the postcards just to see where they were from and what they depicted.

There are people. Smiling down on her are Elvis, John Wayne, several baseball players, Ho Chi Minh, Roy Rogers and Trigger and George W. Bush. A mixed lot, to be sure.

A lot of state postcards. I found North Carolina, New Mexico, Wisconsin, Michigan, Kansas, Nebraska, Alabama, South Dakota, Georgia, Texas, Colorado, Delaware and Tennessee.

City cards offer skylines and vistas of Seattle, Kansas City, Omaha, Denver, Chattanooga, Atlanta, Washington, Santa Fe, Wisconsin Dells, Aiken, S.C., Savannah, Ga., Baton Rouge and Boston.

Places of interest show up Machi-

nac Island, Mich.; Mount Nebo, Ark.; Crazy Horse and Mount Rushmore, S.D.; Cumbres and Toltec Railroad, N.M. and Colo.; the destroyer USS Kidd, docked in Louisiana; battleship USS Alabama, docked in Mobile Bay, Ala.; the Chickamauga Civil War Battlefield in Tennessee; Coors Field in Denver; Hoover Dam; and the Tennessee Aquarium in Chattanooga.

And there are the foreign spots — Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Taiwan, Tunisia, Baja California, Hong Kong and Paris.

After Taylor, the most pictures are of animals, fish, birds and bugs.

My mother's wall is adorned with pictures of butterflies, deer, lizards, alligators, sharks, horses, cows, mountain lions, mice, ducks, toads, frogs, cats, dogs, beer, penguins, crows, moose, geckos, road runners, mosquitos, pheasants, a cobra and prairie dogs in four places.

My mother may not travel much anymore, but she can go lots of places by checking out her walls.

She's ready to dig spring

Spring is in the air — if not in my step.

Everywhere you look, trees are budding, daffodils are blooming and grass is greening. Spring is definitely here. And, as ready as I am to get out and dig in the dirt, I realize my moaning and groaning after yard work has taken some of the pleasure out of it.

Where did these aches and pains come from?

I never used to hurt like this after an afternoon of gardening. Now, I need a "break" after an hour. Instead of tackling the entire yard in one day, I break it down into sections. Small sections at that.

Refuse to make too many concessions to my advancing age — it's a privilege denied to many — however, I'm not going to push it. Gardening may be considered "work," but I still want to enjoy it.

—ob—

It's no secret that Jim and I have two anniversaries: one of the day we got married; the other, the day of our first date. It's memorable mostly because it was on April 1. Memorable, also because Jim sprang a phony engagement ring on me.



Out Back

By Carolyn Sue Kelley-Plotts
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This year was no exception. He made reservations at the restaurant that was "the scene of the crime." When we pulled into the parking lot and stopped in the same space we had parked in 17 years ago, I even uttered the same word that I spoke back then. "What?"

Keeping the re-enactment true, Jim said, "I know how you feel about commitment ... but there is something I need to talk to you about," as he reached for a ring box.

This time, I wasn't speechless as he produced an exceedingly large, genuine simulated diamond engagement ring. This time I said, "I've changed my mind about this commitment thing."

I think it's a pretty good deal. And, if it's all the same to you, I

think I'd like to try for another 17 years."

We laughed. I put on that "hoky" ring and we had a lovely meal. I've continued to wear the silly thing, getting as much mileage out of it as I can.

—ob—

Did you hear about the old cowboy who gave some advice to his grandson?

He told the boy that if he wanted to live a long life, he should put a teaspoon of gunpowder on his oatmeal every morning.

The grandson did as his grandfather instructed, and when he died at the age of 103 he left behind 14 children, 30 grandchildren, 63 great-grandchildren — and a 15-foot hole where the crematorium used to be.

Write

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to oberlinherald@nwkans.com.

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. Submit thank yous to the want ad desk.

From the Bible

Now, the feast of unleavened bread drew nigh, which is called the Passover. And the chief priests and scribes sought how they might kill him; for they feared the people.
Luke 22: 1-2

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Robin finds a feast on chair

The robin could have shared the bounty, I think. Maybe he didn't want to.

But I guess I'd better start at the beginning, Saturday when it was so nice out. We wanted to grill a steak and sit out on the back deck. We needed the cushions for the deck chairs and a couple of straight chairs to put our feet up on.

Cynthia went to get the cushions out of the basement. I went looking for the plastic patio chairs, stored in the garage for the winter.

I have to say, I'd been wondering what had happened to all the webworms that hatched in the bird seed Cynthia bought last fall. A lot of them went into the bird feeder along with the seed, but after a certain point in the winter, they just seemed to disappear.

When I got the patio chairs out, I understood. Of the eight chairs stored in a stack, the legs of seven were covered with worms webbed tight to the plastic, ready to pupate and graduate to adult form, I suppose.

There was no doubt these were the worms from the bird seed, white, squirming, with six legs at the front. I grabbed a couple of chairs and hosed them off for us, and forgot about the rest.

Next morning, Cynthia was up early. She'd unstacked all the chairs and set them out to clean. I looked out in the yard, and saw she had



Along the Sappa

By Steve Haynes
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help.

A lone robin was picking all the worms he could get off one chair. It was a feast, a banquet, and he was hard at it. I called Cynthia to the door and showed her.

"If he has any friends," she smiled brightly, "maybe we won't have too much cleaning to do."

We saw the robin a couple more times, but no friends. We surmised he was saving all the goodies for himself, though it was a big task for such a small bird.

Still, he was working away at it. By mid-afternoon, he was having to jump up and peck off worms much above his height.

Later, Cynthia went out with the hose and sprayed off the rest of the bugs. We stacked the chairs for storage until summer, when we'd need more than a couple on the deck.

Late that afternoon, Cynthia called me to the back door.

"Look," she said, pointing to a robin in the grass. "He's back. He was looking all around for the chairs. He can't figure out where

they went."

And sure enough, that robin looked puzzled.

We tried to tell him he'd need help to finish the job on time. We tried to warn him.

I felt a little guilty that we'd flushed the rest of his bounty, but he had his chance. We couldn't just leave those chairs out there all spring, could we?

That evening, Cynthia emptied one of the sacks of bug-infested bird seed she'd bought this winter. No bugs. Apparently they all hatched at the store.

And she'd bought two bags on sale, too. An Extension article said bugs in the seed were a good source of protein for wintering birds.

Apparently, though, you have to feed them before the big hatch. We could have harvested a bunch off the chairs, had washing them not been so much quicker.

Better luck next time, Mr. Robin. Bring your friends.

Protect children from abuse

To the Editor:

Strengthening families is critical to protect children from abuse and neglect.

Each family can build on protective factors that will help protect their children.

Research suggests that parents practice five protective factors to buffer kids against abuse and neglect:

- Nurturing and Attachment: Building a close bond helps parents better understand, respond to and communicate with their children.
- Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development: Parents learn what to look for at each age and how to help children reach their full potential.
- Parental Resilience: Recogniz-

Letter to the Editor

ing the signs of stress and enhancing problem-solving skills can help parents build a capacity to cope.

- Social Connections: Parents with a strong network of family, friends, and neighbors have better support when they need it.
- Concrete Supports for Parents: Caregivers with access to financial, housing and other resources and services that help meet basic needs can better attend to their role as parents.

April is the time for parents and the community to engage in these five protective factors to keep children safe.

The five factors can be practiced

for a lifetime, and they will be passed down to future generations.

Reach out to people around you and be a role model. Start using these factors with your family and in your community today.

As an outward sign of your support, I urge you to wear a blue ribbon or pinwheel — the symbol of child-abuse prevention efforts.

If you do not have one, call or write Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect, 140 W. Fourth, Colby, Kan., 67701, (785) 460-8177.

Paige Campbell,
Colby
program director