

How long should the U.S. occupy hostile territory?

Ah, the war. We seem to have proven that the U.S. is no good at occupying hostile territory. Not to say that we told you so, but we predicted that four years ago.

No one doubted that American forces would enter Baghdad — or that we would conquer all of Iraq. The question was whether we could, should or would, hold it.

When we toppled the cruel government of Saddam Hussein, our troops were welcomed by millions of Iraqis. After four years of fighting, you wonder if they aren't even more anxious today to get the war over with than we are.

Meantime, our troops are tied down in a war of attrition in which we are far less willing to lose men and political capital than the enemy, who appear to be a distinct minority including many foreigners. It is a war we are winning by any measure except will.

We are simply too nice to occupy a place like this, where friend and foe look so much alike. We care about civilian casualties, and unlike many armies, ours prosecutes people who step over the line and abuse prisoners or civilians. That's good, but it makes it tough to fight the sort of ruthless opponent we face.

You have to be vicious to hold occupied territory. The Romans knew that. So did the Nazis. So did the Russians.

Americans are not that way, and more power to us.

But before you vote to cut and run, remember that no one in the Mideast — save for al-Qaida — wants us to just up and leave.

Everyone wants the war to be over, yes. No one wants us to just leave.

The result would be chaos, experts and Middle Eastern leaders say, a blood bath followed by "ethnic cleansing" on a large scale. Central Iraq would be left to a Taliban-style government, Kurds would take over in the north, Shiites in the south.

Oddly enough, that's pretty much what a U.S. Senate resolution last month calls for, a three-way division of Iraq. Iraqi leaders condemned the idea.

The fall of Iraq would allow Iran, a huge nation led by a terrorist, to turn all its resources to producing unrest in Afghanistan, leading sooner or later to victory for the Taliban in that mountainous nation. And a return to the cruel theocracy which saw women victimized and unbelievers persecuted until four years ago.

We may not have gotten into Iraq for the best of reasons, but do we want to walk away from a war we are winning by most any objective measure and leave people to that fate? What kind of country are we, really?

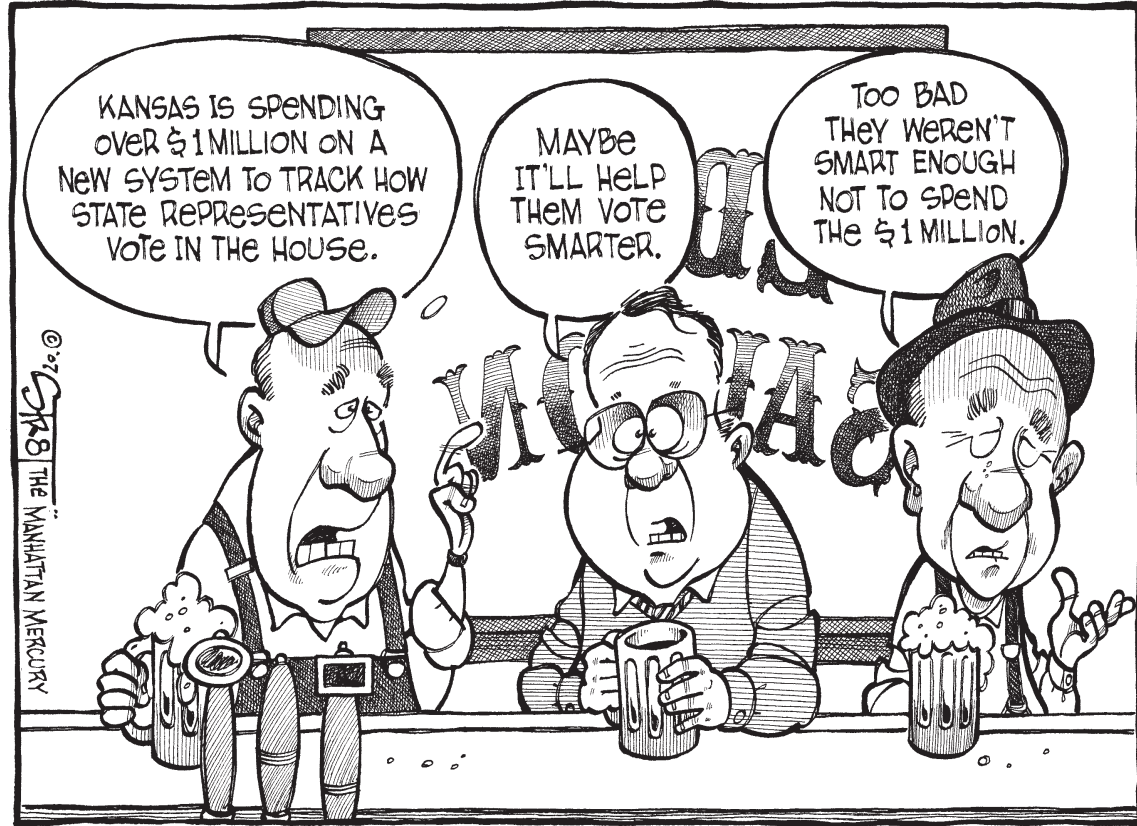
What do you think? It'd be good to hear from the average voter, from the anti-war liberals and from the veterans back from the lines.

Why not write and let us know. Congress is waiting to hear from you.

There has to be a way to extract our troops from this place and leave some semblance of hope for the human beings we leave behind.

Who has the magic answer?

— Steve Haynes



Last buds of summer blooming

The days are warm — hot sometimes — and the nights are getting cool.

Fall is here but summer isn't leaving without a fight.

The summer flowers, like rose moss and petunias, are blooming their little heads off. They know that this is the last hurrah. By sometime next month, the frost will send them to sleep until midsummer 2008.

The squash is taking off in the garden and the tomatoes are producing better than they have all summer.

The zucchini we planted on the south side of the house have escaped the garden area and is trying to take over the side yard. Whenever Steve mows, I have to go ahead of him and hold up plants.

Our zucchini started out with lots of blossoms and not many veggies. Now, however, with cold weather around the corner, the zucchini is getting with the program and I'm getting more than I can use.

I've made zucchini bread and given two loaves to each of my three children. We've eaten a loaf. I took one to the office. Gave one to my sister-in-law and one to the hostess at a party. And still the zucchini cover the kitchen counter.

I'm now resorting to the old tried-and-true formula for getting rid of unwanted zucchini: I left several on



Open Season

By Cynthia Haynes
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the neighbor's doorstep and I'm checking for unlocked cars.

Getting rid of the tomatoes isn't a problem. There's always someone who wants tomatoes. We went out to dinner with some friends last week. The wife told our waitress that she was looking for tomatoes, as her plants had gotten diseased and weren't producing.

Later in the week, I visited my friend. Her kitchen counter was covered with tomatoes.

The waitress brought a bucket by the next day, she said. Then a neighbor down the street heard that she needed tomatoes and brought some by. Another friend donated more. Now she's serving her husband lettuce-and-tomato salads three times a day and trying to figure out what to do with the rest.

In midsummer, Steve planted some spaghetti squash along the edge of the garden near the dog pen.

His timing must have been great. The vines now cover the floor of the garden where the sweet corn grew. They have also taken over the fences between our yard and neighbors to the west and south and are climbing the top of the neighbor's shed.

The dog, who loves to pick and play with tomatoes, apparently isn't interested in squash — which is a good thing.

The squash plants have made the chain link wall of her pen a green wall with beautiful yellow flowers. So far, we've picked two head-sized squash off the dog pen — one on the outside and one from the inside — and one squash that was trying to imitate a watermelon.

Yep, it's fall, but summer is going out kicking and screaming.

The flowers are great, the gardens are going nuts and the Rockies have given us a great deal of fun.

I love this time of year.

Capturing these windy days

A few more days of wind like we've had, and everyone will want a wind turbine farm.

It's something Jim and I have always been interested in. He is convinced he knows how to build a turbine to produce enough energy to power our home.

I think it sounds like the smart thing to do. Wind is clean, quiet, sustainable and renewable. It ought to be good for something besides moving Kansas topsoil to Oklahoma or musing my hairdo.

Some cities and towns are considering using wind energy, but there seems to be a lot of controversy. I'm sure I don't understand all the political ramifications, but it seems to make sense. I think I read somewhere that it only takes a continuous breeze of 5 miles per hour to turn a turbine and produce energy.

The only problem I see is, what happens on days like we've had lately when the wind whips through at 50 mph? Can those turbines "gear down" or would there be a power surge that would blow out every light bulb between here and Denver? Too much wind might be more of a problem to developers than not enough.

If they ever do decide to put up a windmill "farm" in this part of the country, I know the perfect location — the farm where I grew up. It is on one of the highest hills in the county and there is definitely nothing — like a pesky tree — to obstruct the flow of wind.

-ob-

Our daughter Jennifer called this



Out Back

By Carolyn Sue Kelley-Plotts
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morning to tell us that her 1-year-old's vocabulary has expanded to include "abb-ul." Translation: "apple." Jennifer also said Ani was cutting more teeth and they have broken through. E-mailed pictures prove she is just as cute as we thought.

Ever since I learned how to put pictures on my screen saver at work, I can see pictures of my husband, kids and grandkids all day.

Well, not all day, but the one or two times a day my computer at the office might be idle. (That was written for the benefit of my editor, who might actually read what I write.)

-ob-

We are getting ready for our 17th mission trip to Mexico. It is so exciting. Besides ourselves, there are nine adults, one teen and three children going on this trip.

We come from a wide range of backgrounds. There is a postal employee, a farmer's wife, a carpenter, a cabinet maker, a stay-at-home mom, a highway patrolman and a retiree.

The one thing we have in common: we want to help someone less fortunate than ourselves.

Four of us have been on mission trips before. We know something the others don't: The experience will change their lives forever. It did ours.

You don't necessarily have to leave the country to go on a "mission trip." You may not have to go any farther than the nursing home in your town or the youth center to find your mission field. Maybe your mission is to help single moms learn how to make simple, nutritious meals and live on a budget; maybe your elderly neighbor needs help with lawn care; maybe kids in your neighborhood need a safe place to stay after school or need help with their homework.

The list is endless. Look around.

If everyone did just one little thing, it would add up to something really big.

From the Bible

But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.

Hebrews 10:39

Rooting for Rockies from afar

I supposed you could hear me yelling from here, which happens to be Augusta, Ga., this week.

No, it's way too soon for the Masters. That's in the spring, when the azaleas bloom. We're here for our daughter's wedding.

I'm talking about those Rockies, who came from last place to tie for a wildcard berth in the National League playoffs.

What a finish. What a summer. Wow!

By the time you read this, you'll know who won and so will I. The Rocks' season will be history or they'll be playing the Phillies in the so-called Division series.

Cynthia and I bought some tickets, but we most likely won't be at the park.

The second Denver home game (if there is one) wouldn't be until Sunday, the day after the wedding and the day we fly back to Colorado. We have to work on Monday.

Maybe we can sell them. Maybe we'll get a refund, if the game isn't played.

I scored the tickets on line last week, when nobody believed the Rockies would make it. You could buy all the really good seats you wanted (up to 16, at least) for a mere \$75 each.

This week, they're already selling tickets to the next round, the League Championship series. And already,



Along the Sappa

By Steve Haynes
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there's nothing left but singles. What a change.

It probably was silly to buy tickets sight unseen and day unknown, but it's been a dozen years since the then-young Rockies got this far. We're among the long-suffering fans, though not in any league with Chicago Cubs backers.

We started out as Royals fans when we lived in Kansas City. It took them eight years to make the playoffs, if I remember right, and they were miserable, losing quickly to the Yankees both times they were in contention in the late '70s.

We sat through miserable weather, north wind and poor play (George Brett was so nervous he couldn't even stop a grounder, it seemed) those years. By the time the Royals won it all in '85, we were watching on the television in Colorado.

Then came the Rockies. They filled Coors Field for game after game, breaking into the playoffs in 1995. Since then, their record and

the crowds have shrunk — until this year.

After a July slump, the season seemed to be about over, the Rocks in fifth (last) place in the National League West — though most of the time, their record would have been good enough for first place in the NL Central Division.

Then they caught fire, closing with an 11-game win streak before losing one, and winning 13 out of 14 at the end. The team pulled together, despite having many starters hurt at one time or another and at least two starting pitchers gone for most of the season.

If left fielder Matt Holliday doesn't win Most Valuable Player after taking the league batting title, leading in hits and being second in runs batted in, then we've been robbed. Same goes for Troy Tulowitzki at short; he deserves to be Rookie of the Year.

Ah, the long-overdue, sweet smell of success.

Take me out to the ball game!

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Reader feels Iraq is Bush fiasco

To the Editor:

All of you politicians who refuse to represent the majority of the people: Your time is coming when you can ask the big corporations and lobbyists what to do now that you are out of office.

I don't see many of you returning to office after the elections. I don't see many candidates running for president not being backed by corporate and lobbyists' money.

It is time for We the People to stand up and let it be known that we understand where your big money is coming from and we will not vote for you.

It is time to leave Iraq, as their government is just a Bush puppet and they are not concerned about their country as long as the U.S. supports them. We should bring home the National Guard and reserve units first. We need them to guard our

southern and northern borders, as well as cleaning up our national forests and parks of all the drug trade. Our current administration and Congress don't seem to want to deal with this problem. Why?

I hear the word revolution used quite often. This means to me that our government has failed to come forth and deal with serious problems that are affecting our country and are getting worse by the day.

A third party (perhaps Independent) needs good and honest people to come forward and run for office. We need you desperately. I can't tell the difference between our current two parties. It seems as though Greed and Power are their main ob-

jectives.

Another major concern is the North American Union, joining Mexico, Canada and the U.S., which would be just one more Bush fiasco. This is not widely known. It is just another greed problem.

You can make a difference: call or write our politicians.

Jack D. Roberts
Longmont, Colo.

