

commentary

from our viewpoint...

Whiners are quiet as war plan works

Odd, isn't it, how quiet the naysayers have become, now that the Pentagon's war plan has worked.

We're almost beginning to miss Baghdad Bob.

Gone are the sniping correspondents and nitpicking retired generals. Just a couple of weeks ago, they were gleeful in their appraisal that the plan was broken, that the army was bogged down, that all certainly was lost.

Some of them, like those Newsweek correspondents who are dogmatically anti-war and anti-Bush, will find things to complain about this week, too. They will carp that someone should have thought of the looting, that someone should have planned for such an easy victory.

The retired generals and other armchair commanders mostly will melt into the woodwork, shaking their heads and praising Tommy Franks. Neither they nor anyone else will play the tapes of their words last month.

The war plan, meantime, will grind on. Now, the emphasis is on restoring order and civil government — and on finding Saddam Hussein and his ilk.

Already, one of his relatives is in American custody. Other henchmen will turn up in the next few weeks, and undoubtedly, some of them will get away.

Where Saddam can escape to is an open question. Maybe the French want him, but the Syrians have made it plain that he is unwelcome in their little Arab paradise. Same goes for Iran, and U.S-controlled Afghanistan is out.

No one has said whether the prosecution will seek the death penalty should he fall into American hands, but if not, maybe there is a desert island somewhere he could be dropped on. Something like the digs they found for Napoleon, only more so.

The Pentagon says it has a sample of his DNA, so if a body turns up somewhere, we can tell if it is him or just one of his doubles. There will be no question about his identity.

If anyone doubted the power of the American military, this war should have made a believer out of them. With barely more than two divisions on the ground, the Army and Marines sliced right through the best troops Iraq had, driving straight to the heart of Baghdad.

The display of firepower, air and ground, was matched only by the doctrine and tactics. The Pentagon has long theorized that one division of the modern American army is equal to a dozen of many others', and now we know they are right.

That puts the U.S. in a position of awesome power, the only truly worldwide force of this century. That presents great responsibility, and so far, the Bush administration has used its power well and wisely.

That power is accompanied by great risk, as we saw Sept. 11, 2001, because the pinnacle is an attractive place to aim.

We may be the first great power more interested in freedom and equality than in looting our opponents. Those who went before Mr. Bush's set a good precedent at the end of previous wars.



Where we go from here depends on how wisely we use our awesome power in the next few years. — *Steve Haynes*

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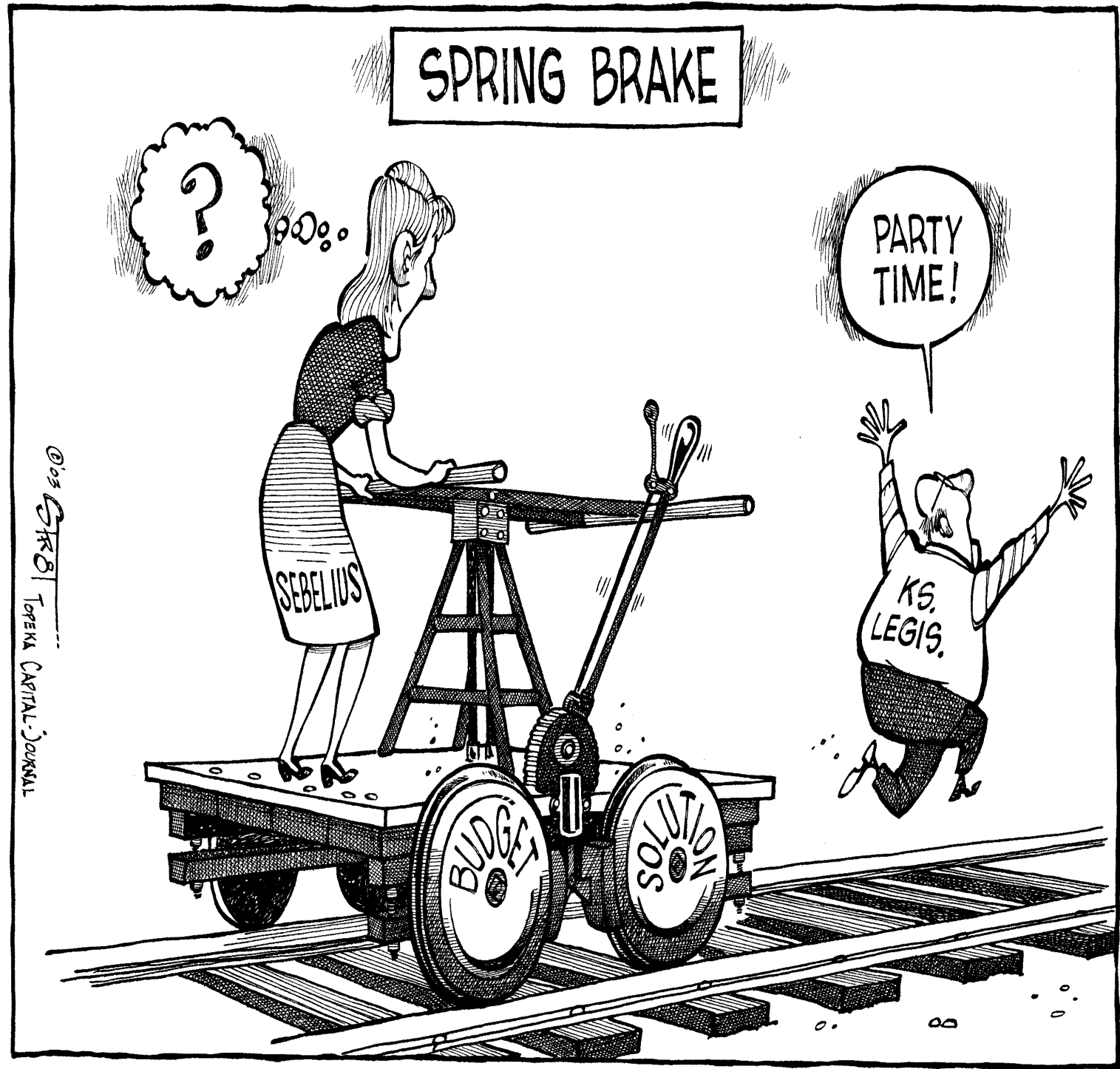
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The real meaning of Easter

I don't know about you, but I've been observing Holy Week.

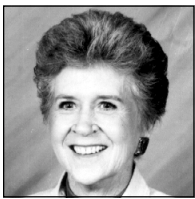
The week before and including Easter is the most important to Christians everywhere. I was asked in a church membership class a couple of weeks ago: "How did bunnies and eggs get to be symbols of Easter? What do they have to do with the death and resurrection of Christ?"

Good question!

Yes, I know they have to do with new birth and freshness and chicks breaking out of eggs, etc. A lesson in our women's group explained where all those customs originated, so there are some historical reasons for their incorporation into springtime celebrations.

But, for Christian, what do chicks and baskets and new hats really have to do with the resurrection of Christ?

I firmly believe that you can't fully celebrate Easter unless you walk the path of suffering



lorna g. t.

- commentary

with Christ before the resurrection. How can you know how truly miraculous the resurrection was (and is) unless you know the depths of degradation and inhumanity that preceded it?

Why would a very-human Jesus consent to such unbearable rejection and torture? How can humans begin to understand that kind of love?

And of course that's why Jesus did it. He loved us - you and me. He paid the price for every sin we've committed so that we could stand before God in a perfect state. Without his

sacrifice, we didn't stand any chance at all. Nothing we do or say by ourselves can make us good enough to be what God created us to be. Jesus had to do it for us.

So as you celebrate Easter, don't forget to tell your children the true story of Easter. Don't stop with colored eggs and new Easter clothes. Tell the family what these represent: newness, completeness, salvation. Say a prayer of thankfulness for and to a God who loves you with a love beyond human understanding. Then start your own new life by telling everyone you see how wonderful it feels to be forgiven. That's what Easter is REALLY all about. If the whole world could grasp the idea of God's unconditional, universal love, there wouldn't be any wars, would there?

Happy Easter! Why not celebrate by first going to church? God will recognize you — even if the preacher doesn't!

Spring on prairie the best time

There may be a better place to spend spring-time than on the prairie, but I haven't found it.

Spring is like magic here. Every day, something new pops out.

I spend the winter rushing from kitchen to car, hustling load after load of stuff that has to go somewhere to the back seat.

In the spring, I take three minutes to tour the yard, because you never know what you'll see.

Thursday, there were two new crocus blossoms and an iris budding out. Sunday, more crocus, and on the little aspen tree in the front yard, bright red-green leaves.

The daffodils haven't put on much of a show this year, but the tulips threaten to make up for them. I dug them up and spread them out a few years ago, and now they are everywhere.

A few years back, I lost all the phlox on one side of the front steps, and I've never been able to get it to fill back in. But when I looked under the tulip leaves this week, I found that two of the four plants I got last year had made it through the winter.

In the garden, the Indian Summer spinach we planted, and harvested, last fall has revived from its winter slumber. We'll have salad, with egg and bacon, this week.

The spirea, lilac and potentilla have sprouted leaves, and the Bradford pear tree out back and forsythia out front came out in blossom this weekend. You can smell the pear tree clear out in the street.



steve haynes

- along the sappa

Later, the blue flax and the big bearded iris will take over the show. We'll plant lettuce and spring spinach, cleaning the dog pen, mowing the lawn (just a trim, no bag) — oh, and don't forget, balance the checkbook. Cynthia had to leave, and that meant there was no chance to get any help.

Throw in a trip to McCook, and it was nearly sunset by the time the dog and I headed for the Sappa Valley.

With the orange sun hanging over the hills, we started walking, crossing the creek again and again. The first crossing is dry, the second is damp and the third has a good flow, so some of the springs must be running pretty good this year.

In fact, the creek is live to within a couple of miles west of town. Wet, and full of life.

First, you notice the frogs. Not hundreds of them yet, by the sound, but dozens anyway, all

croaking away at their mating call.

These little prairie frogs always amaze me — no more than an inch long, prolific as heck, and apparently able to burrow into the mud when the creek dries up and survive for years.

When it rains, they come out and breed. You'll find them all up and down the creeks, but also in barrow ditches and buffalo wallows up on top of the ridges — anywhere it'll hold water for a month or so.

A beaver had been working the banks of the creek, gnawing down sapling after sapling. How a beaver, or presumably, a pair of beaver, found their way up a dry creek to this little oasis is beyond me. The why is even more mysterious, but the evidence was clear they were there.

I guess you have to assume that a beaver knows something about his job.

A pair of doves got up out of the pasture and circled us, then returned to their spot. A cotton-tail jumped up and ran to the south, exciting the dog to no end.

As the dusk gathered, with no wind in a quiet sky, little freshets of cool air began to flow gently down the draws. You could feel the cool air moving like a river past you. The last light of the evening gleamed off the Co-op elevator.

I was hot, tired and needed a shower, but a day like that is its own reward.

garfield

