

from our viewpoint...

Cold can't dampen kids' Easter spirit

Easter egg hunts are more fun outdoors, but the kids who came to the Goodland Activity Center on Saturday morning didn't care where the eggs were as long as they got a chance to gather them.

Two weeks ago there was a chance the Easter bunny wouldn't be around for a community egg hunt.

Thanks to the organizing efforts of Connie Grieve of the Goodland Lions, a group came together to help pull off a great event.

We're glad the Goodland Activity Center was willing to let the hunt be held on their floor, and to help make it as much fun as possible by adding some exercise mats, platforms and squares so it was not a completely flat area for the kids to scramble around in.

It took longer for the volunteers to spread out each age group's eggs than it did for the kids and a few helpers to pick them all up. Some of the bigger kids filled up one basket, dumped it into a sack and headed back for a refill. Nobody left the building without plenty of candy-filled eggs.

Our thanks to Laura Pope, new manager at Wal-Mart, for donating candy and helping with the super golden egg. Thanks go to Karen Duell from S&T Communications for her help, to Andi Nelson, executive director of the Goodland Area Chamber of Commerce, for her help and a great face-painting program that had kids lined up even after the eggs were all gone.

Thanks to the Goodland Lions and others who showed up to help stuff and spread out the eggs. Thanks to Schyler Goodwin for his help and enthusiasm to make sure this event happened. And thanks to Presto, Wal-Mart, Jacque's Hallmark, Goodwin Law and a private donor in the name of the Hope Thomas Alexander Foundation for the golden eggs.

A thanks to all the parents who brought kids to the egg hunt, and were patient while each set were being spread out.

The Goodland Star-News was pleased to have a part in sponsoring and promoting the hunt. Our thanks to our people who turned out to help hand out the tickets for the golden eggs.

The Easter Egg hunt is not a big event in the scheme of things, but it is one where the kids get to have fun. Maybe next year Mother Nature will let us have it outdoors. In case it doesn't work out that way, the gym floor at the activity center works pretty well.

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The citywide cleanup is set for Saturday from 9 a.m. to noon. If you want to volunteer, be at the Northwest Kansas Technical College Student Union at 8:30 a.m. Saturday.

If you have stuff to be picked up, have it on the curb by 9 a.m. Saturday morning.

The Sherman County Household Hazardous Waste pickup site will be holding its twice-yearly collection from 7 a.m. to 11 a.m. that day.

These are good ways to help clean up from the winter storms and get rid of any household products you have been storing for the past few months.

A special collection of electronic devices will be held from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday, April 21, at the transfer station northeast of town. The county is working with Guaranteed Recycling Xperts of Denver to recycle electronic devices including computers, monitors, toasters, televisions and microwaves.

Get with it. Do your part to clean up the town.

— Tom Betz

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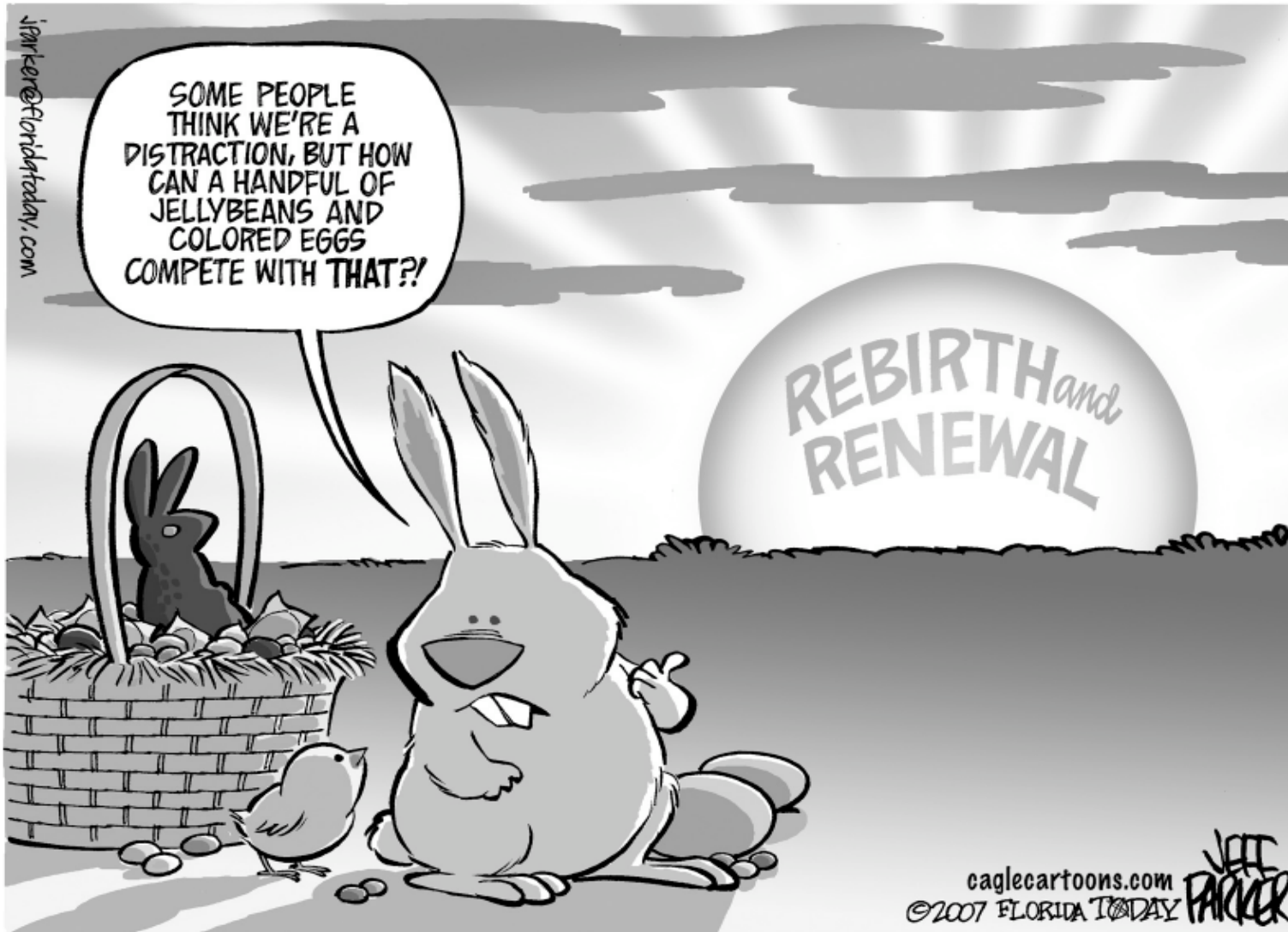
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Readings reveal the truth and joy of Easter

The traditional readings for Palm Sunday set the stage for the horrible truth — and the joy — of Easter.

Americans don't dress up for Easter anymore, but then we live in an informal age. People wear jeans and T shirts to church these days, and I suppose that's OK. I doubt that the dress code will count much on Judgment Day.

Whether it's the Easter bonnet of yesteryear or the hunt for colored eggs so popular today, though, I don't think we like to dwell on the reality of the Easter Gospel.

On the historical level, it's a story of incredible cruelty by men against other human beings. That was nothing unusual 2,000 years ago, of course. Life was cruel. We like to think we're more civilized today.

But if you've seen Mel Gibson's "Passion of the Christ," you have an idea of how cruel that day must have been. The cruelty is there in the Bible story, though the writers didn't dwell on it in detail.

The Gospels tell us enough to know that



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Jesus must have suffered terribly. The real story of Palm Sunday, when we commemorate his triumphal entrance into Jerusalem, is that Christ knew what lay ahead.

Time and again, He tried to tell his friends what lay ahead for "the Son of Man." As often happened, most of them refused to see the truth of his predictions. But Jesus knew what awaited him.

He went into town anyway, surely knowing the adulation would only anger the Jewish leaders all the more. Tempted though he must have been, he had no intention of avoiding his fate.

Though the tradition of the church teaches the sin of Judas the betrayer and of the leaders of Jewish and Roman society, I think we ought

to look at them as simply part of God's will.

Without a betrayer, without someone to demand the execution, there'd have been no crucifixion. And no resurrection.

It's the resurrection that's the real message of Easter, after all. In one step, the Creator made it possible for anyone to accept his gift of redemption, the "perfect offering for our sins."

I don't propose to go into the fine points of theology here, the validity of any doctrine or the beliefs of any other religion, just my own understanding.

And that is that if you accept all that's written about that week so many years ago, you can accept Christ's sacrifice for you and be redeemed of your sins.

Of sins, we all have more than enough to deserve whatever our fate may be. God's grace, expressed in the Easter story, is quite a gift, really. Better than candy and colored eggs.

It's worth hearing year after year, never boring, never dull, dressed in jeans or finery.

The department of just us

For those of you who enjoyed the devastation that the Bush administration unloaded on America through the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the K Street Project, you're going to love the Extreme Makeover going on over at your new Department of Justice, where justice stems from the eye of The Decider.

You might think that dragging around an approval rating lower than that of a flatulent weasel crashing a preschool prophylactic pageant, President Bush would be handicapped in accumulating another stash of clueless roommates, obscure toadies and party hacks to fill important government posts, but you, my friend, would have another thing coming. Even in his position as the lamest of ducks, the Prez remains steadfast in his two-term mission to replace experienced professionals with the wretched excesses of party flackery, or more precisely — a reflection of him.

The story so far: say you're a good Republican afflicted with a problem U.S. Attorney who has not demonstrated proper exuberance whilst prosecuting Democrats near election time, or one who refuses to apologize for stepping on a few big contributor toes, well don't you worry your pretty little head, because a single call to the Attorney Weasel, Alberto Gonzalez, and you got yourself a slack-jawed partisan lackey waiting to fill the offending prosecutor's shoes. With Kleenex.

Eight U.S. attorneys have been fired without explanation despite positive internal performance reviews. And most have been or are on track to be replaced with candidates whose major qualifications is knowing the correct response to the Republican Party's "Jump!" command is to inquire "How high?" Head Toady Karl Rove undoubtedly has a basement assembly line stamping out a series of clones learning his sinister brand of myopic kowtow-



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ing, as we speak.

Apparently the fact that these guys have less experience with the law than your average IHOP early-bird shift manager is a good thing. Can't teach an old dog new suck ups. Many potential replacements must have gained valuable experience from being called as character witnesses for the defense in Scooter Libby's recent trial.

Some of those fired (I'm sorry... let go, or rather, victims of partisan duty management) were warned not to talk to the press or risk retaliation, such as the further trashing of their reputation. Who knows what diabolical measures these fiendish minds might conceive? Possible links to Joseph Biden? Or having Robert Novak disclose connections to such

anti-American movements as law school?

In the old days, before the threat of terrorism loomed over everything in this country like a rain gutter over an ant farm during monsoon season, the administration needed Senate approval for appointing new U.S. attorneys. They snuck a provision into the Patriot Act allowing the attorney general to appoint new federal prosecutors at his discretion.

"Checks and balances? We don't need no stinking checks and balances."

You'd think if anybody, the Department of Justice would be immune from politics. You know... justice — moral integrity. Rightness. I'm thinking someone became fixated on the left-hand part of that word.

Totally forgot about the people's justice. By, for and of the people. But these are the new days. When even an Easter egg hunt can be politicized. And the Department of Justice can become the Department of Just Us. And that "us" don't include you or me.

Will Durst is a political comedian who has performed around the world. E-mail Will at durst@caglecartoons.com.



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