

from our viewpoint...

First anniversary of Bush's War

Last week was the anniversary of the invasion of Iraq and the beginning of the “short war” to liberate that country and take down Saddam Hussein.

There were demonstrations around the country that day, with people protesting the continued military involvement, but there also was some show of support for our troops.

When the war began, there were predictions it would take just a matter of weeks to win. However, we were not able to make it a two-front war by going in through Turkey, and it took longer than the first predictions.

There was no doubt from the beginning the American and British forces would prevail. The question was whether they could destroy Saddam’s army and capture him and his top lieutenants.

We found many of the people pleased to see their liberators, similar to what was seen in the streets of Europe when the allies freed the countries from the fist of the German war machine.

Our losses in the actual war were minimal, and our use of advanced technology reduced the number of civilians killed in battle. These are good things, as we wanted to preserve the population rather than destroy it.

As expected, the first few weeks after the fighting was over, the population seemed to be happy we were there. However, it took longer than expected to locate and capture Saddam, and he was able to organize resistance which surfaced as random attacks on our troops and a string of suicide bombings.

The attacks have continued and more American troops have been killed in this phase of the campaign than in the major battles to take the country. Despite the capture of Saddam and many of his followers, the attacks continue.

Efforts to help the Iraqi people develop their new government have been slow, but it takes time to create a new nation out of the chaos of the many years of totalitarian rule. As it is said “Rome was not built in a day.” Progress is being made, but as the months march on, we face the role of being an occupying force rather than the liberators in the eyes of many Iraqis.

We are on the edge of a conundrum which is that we have accomplished the basic goals of the invasion — despite the lack of weapons of mass destruction — but the new government is not secure enough for us to extricate ourselves from the occupying role. So the attacks continue and the American deaths mount.

Whether the rational for the original invasion was correct or not, we are committed. Our support of our troops on the ground in Iraq is solid and unwavering.

We pray that as we enter the second year, it will prove to be the last, and we can bring our people home safely and leave the Iraqi people in good shape to handle their continued development as a new democracy. — *Tom Betz*

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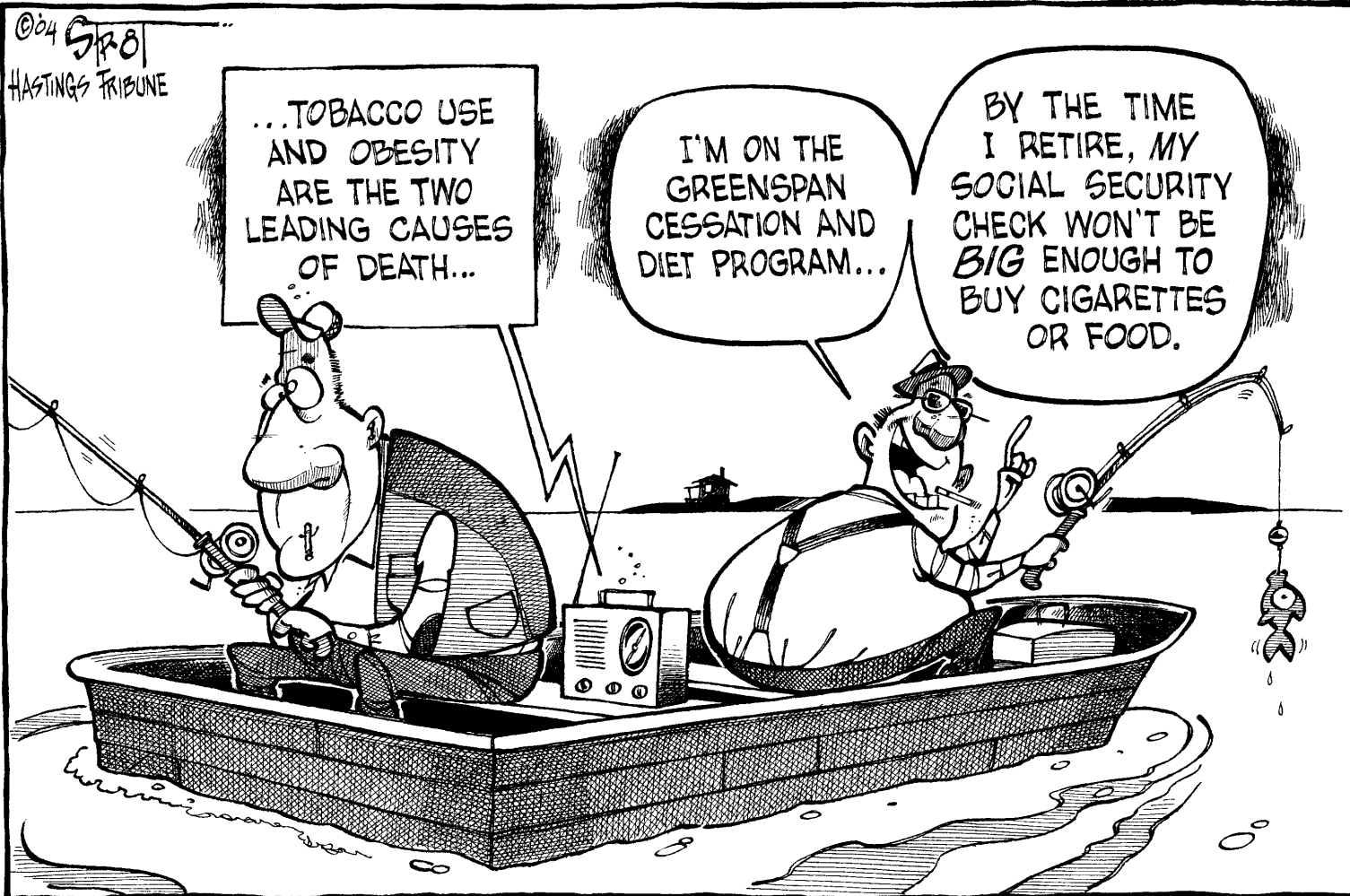
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It's springtime; Easter around the corner

I don't know about you, but where I live, it's spring!

Life is shooting forth from the cold ground and buds are sprouting on seemingly dead branches.

The forsythia is in bloom. Daffodils and tulips have persevered and are spreading their colors joyously.

I'm always amazed — and grateful.

I so look forward to the end of winter.

I suppose that's part of getting older. I never noticed the restrictions of winter when I was young. Now I enjoy putting away all the woolens, especially heavy coats, leaving the house with just a light sweater and not being hit with a blast from Old Man Winter.

Before we know it, Easter will be celebrated. Children will go on egg hunts without being told the bigger story chicks and bunnies have come to replace. Families will buy new clothes without realizing the tradition is connected to putting on new life after the example of Jesus Christ.

It doesn't help to be “preachy.” People will



**lorna
gt**

• commentary

celebrate spring and Easter much as they have in the past.

I merely want to remind you it is more than new clothes and Easter eggs.

It's the most wonderful story that's ever been told. So wonderful, people find it hard to believe.

Jesus Christ lived, suffered, died and conquered death to show us the power of love.

Yet we continue to wage war — with our neighbors, families and other nations. We are afraid to be loving; someone might gain some control over us. So we give up control to fear itself.

A big fat robin is sitting on barren limbs outside my window. He isn't afraid. He's doing what God created him to do, without fear of tomorrow.

Storm spotting class shows cooperation

Last Wednesday I went to the National Guard armory for the basic storm spotting class and was surprised by the number of people of all ages who were also there, about 30.

There we were introduced to David Floyd warning coordination meteorologist with the Goodland weather office, Tim Renner of the Sherman County Communication and Emergency Management office and Larry Boyd, a hydro-meteorological technician in Goodland. Curtis Duncan, of KLOE, KKC and KWGB Radio, was there as president of the Sherman County Red Cross.

Duncan's participation in the class, for me, was a demonstration of cooperation among emergency organizations which increased the sense of importance for having these classes.

Floyd served as the primary instructor, giving us an overview of the storm-spotter program and its importance, a summary of safety precautions to use, reporting procedures and what to look for. Floyd's method of instruction was excellent. He was able to cover everything in plain language, keeping the technical jargon to a minimum, and his use of training aids went a long way in helping me understand the points he was making.

The use of slides, diagrams, charts, computer graphics and actual film footage all helped in



**greg
stover**

• as i see it

explaining how severe weather is formed, how its classified and the casualties and damage it can cause.

The most important fact to me, and something I didn't know, was when Floyd told us that weather radar cannot spot actual tornadoes, only the weather patterns that they usually form in. He said people on the ground have to identify and report tornadoes. This made me realize just how vital storm spotters are. And, if that wasn't enough, Floyd told us that some tornadoes can form up before any kind of warning pattern appears seen on radar.

I've been in Kansas for five years, most of the time at Fort Hays State University. While I was in Hays, the warning siren went off only two or three times for severe weather, mostly for thunderstorms. However, there was one time where the threat of a tornado was real and

the storm system passed right over the campus.

Many people, myself included, rather than moving immediately to shelter, went outside to see what was going on. I have never seen a tornado and wanted to be able to say that I had, but dumb luck prevailed. Although we saw a lot of circular motion overhead, nothing came of it.

Was that an idiotic move on my part? Absolutely, especially since I should of learned my lesson when I lived in Emporia. One night, I was wakened about 2 a.m. by the warning sirens. I opened my door to see what was going on to find the large tree in front of the apartment building on the ground in three pieces.

I turned on the Weather Channel and learned that a tornado had been spotted about seven miles west of the city heading east going about 35 miles per hour. So I got dressed, grabbed the few valuables I had and headed for the basement where I met up with some of my neighbors and sat out the storm.

If my experience gets through to just one person, this column was well worth it. Be safe! Take a few seconds to find the safe spots wherever you are in case of emergency. If a storm threatens, don't hesitate. Get to that spot and stay there until it's over.

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