

Letters to the Editor:

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OPINION

SATURDAY

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The First Amendment

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press, or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

YESTERDAY'S NEWS

MOMENTS IN TIME
The History Channel

- On April 12, 1633, the inquisition of physicist and astronomer Galileo Galilei begins. Galileo was ordered to turn himself in for holding the belief that the Earth revolves around the Sun. At the trial, he was sentenced to three years in prison and ordered to recite once a week the Seven Penitential Psalms.

- On April 10, 1866, the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals is founded in New York City by philanthropist Henry Bergh, who pleaded on behalf of abused workhorses. By the time Bergh died in 1888, 37 states had passed anti-cruelty laws.

- On April 6, 1896, the Olympic Games are reborn in Athens 1,500 years after being banned by Roman Emperor Theodosius I. A crowd of 60,000 spectators welcomed athletes from 13 nations to the international competition.

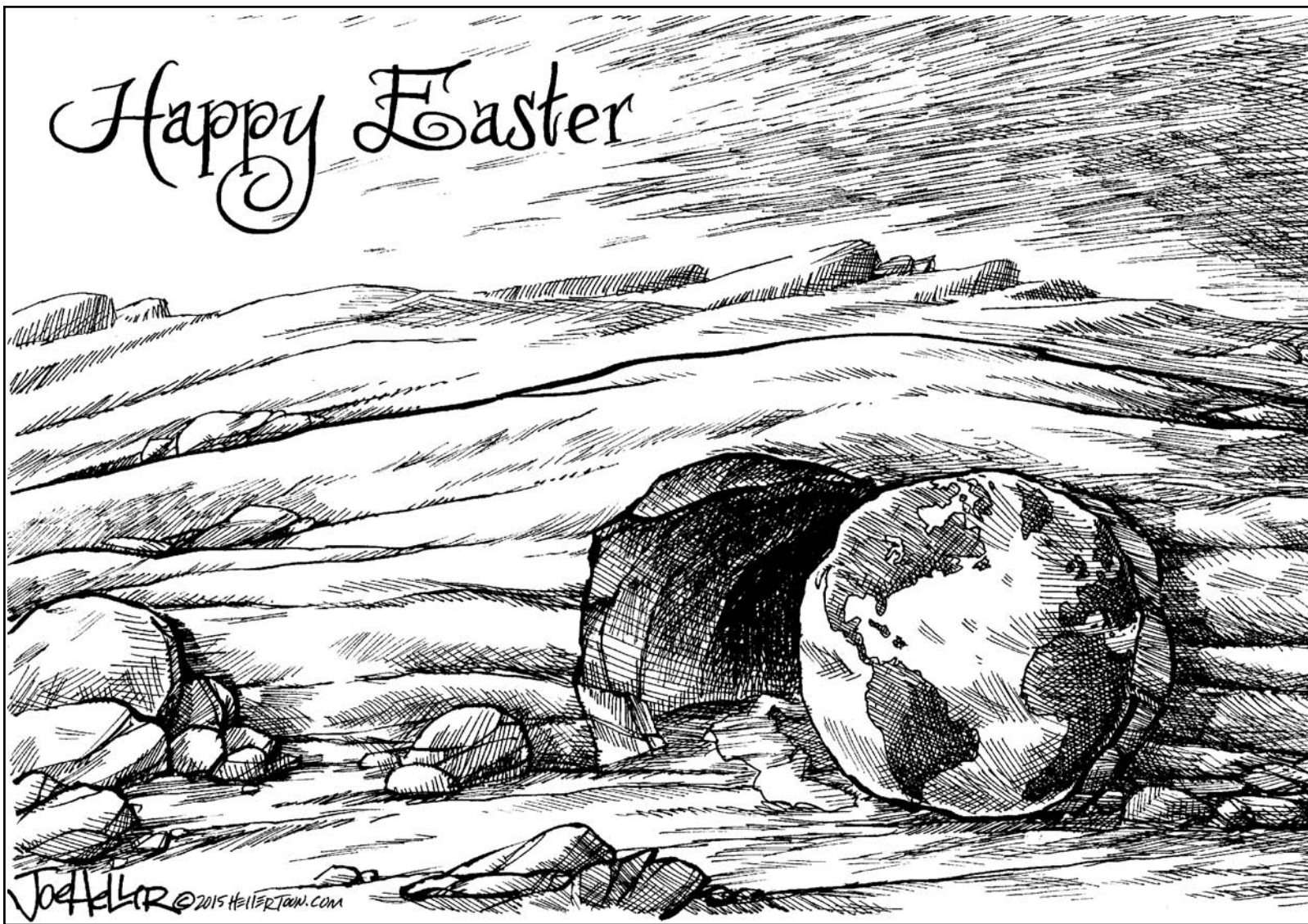
- On April 8, 1935, Congress votes to approve the Works Progress Administration, a central part of President Franklin Roosevelt's "New Deal," an expansion of the federal government as an instrument of employment opportunity and welfare. The WPA employed more than 8.5 million people on 1.4 million public projects before it was disbanded in 1943.

- On April 9, 1959, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) introduces America's first astronauts: Scott Carpenter, L. Gordon Cooper Jr., John H. Glenn Jr., Virgil "Gus" Grissom, Walter Schirra Jr., Alan Shepard Jr. and Donald Slayton. The seven men were selected to take part in Project Mercury in 1961.

- On April 11, 1961, Bob Dylan plays his first major gig in New York City, opening for bluesman John Lee Hooker at Gerde's Folk City. Dylan was too young to obtain the necessary union card and cabaret license needed to appear on a regular bill at Gerde's. One of the club owners, Mike Porco, signed as Dylan's guardian.

- On April 7, 1970, the legendary actor John Wayne wins his first — and only — acting Academy Award, for his performance in "True Grit." Wayne appeared in some 150 movies over the course of his long and storied career.

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LETTERS

Insult to America

What a total insult to, first of all, our service men and women, but also to our nation to slap Bowe Bergdahl on the wrist and charge him with desertion and misbehaving. People died trying to rescue him. I have restrained from being critical of the Obama administration until this miscarriage of justice.

This action just solidifies everything that I have heard and resisted over the past six-plus years about the current administration.

Where are we going to find people to run our country that has not only the backbone to stand up to what is right, but to administrate on behalf of the people, just as our Constitution was written?

I'm a 77-year-old veteran and I am going to see how many of our citizens feel as I do. This sort of non-patriotic action from our government has to stop and the people that love it need to be heard.

Larry L. Barney
Florence

Hospital economics

The letter from Tom Payn ("Hidden Health Costs," March 25) calls attention to the inaccessibility to both patients and physicians of hospital charges prior to treatment. As a result, consumers of non-emergency procedures are unable to shop for services in a market where prices can and do vary significantly from hospital to hospital.

Hospital economics, whether for-profit or not-for-profit, are an oriental bazaar of fiscal illusions. At its core is the hospital's "chargemaster," a computer program of precise charges for everything from a day in the ICU to a single aspirin. Hospitals guard access to their chargemaster like Coca Cola guards the formula to its soda.

Third-party payers like Medicare and United Healthcare negotiate discounts from these charges, which, as Steven Brill demonstrates in "America's Bitter Pill," have literal-



ly no rational relationship to the hospital's costs in providing its services. Thus, a hospital will charge \$1.50 for a single ibuprofen, when you or I can buy 1,000 of them at Costco for \$10.49.

Those with little or no insurance needing serious medical care get charged the full chargemaster rate. As Mr. Payn indicates, having no bargaining power, they end up with empty pockets, often having to file for bankruptcy.

Mr. Payn points to two proposed bills in Oregon, SB 891 and SB 900, which could help those shopping for healthcare.

SB 891 would require healthcare facilities to timely respond to a consumer asking for charges billed for healthcare services.

SB 900 would require Oregon Health Authority to post on its website healthcare price data for inpatient and outpatient hospital services.

Unfortunately, SB 891 could be an administrative nightmare for hospitals, while the data called for in SB 900 would be historical and therefore of little use to those seeking current charges.

Requiring each hospital to publish its chargemaster would be more efficacious in reining in hospital pricing.

At the root of the problem of outrageous pricing is a legislative reform jerry-built on the third-party-payer based, fee-for-service methodologies of our healthcare system cou-

pled with non-governmental program access eligibility based on employment status — active, retired or dependent.

Obamacare, although it is a significant step in the right direction, does not directly address the problem. SB 891 and SB 900 may chip away at it, but a meaningful solution will come only with a single-payer system.

Arnold Buchman
Florence

Simple solution

The way to fix the illegal alien problem is not complex. Anyone caught hiring any illegal alien would be fined \$50,000 from the first offense on. Out of the \$50,000 fine, \$5,000 would be paid to the person who turned them in.

The illegals would turn themselves in and self-deport — \$5,000 richer.

Martin Cable
Dunes City

In awe

When and how did the adjective "awesome" become such a pervasive word in our spoken vocabulary to the point of ad nauseam? Whatever happened to adjectives like fantastic, wonderful, interesting, good, enjoy and nice? Seems like we are in a society that speaks without any thought, and one word covers for our inability to create a thought.

Awesome (adjective): Causing or inducing awe, an overwhelming feeling of reverence, admiration or fear.

Awe (noun): A strong feeling of fear, respect and wonder.

I have gone into stores on a Friday to purchase something and when I check out, instead of the clerk saying "have a nice weekend" or "enjoy your weekend," more than likely it will be "have an awesome weekend."

Not sure if I should be in fear or wonder of the coming weekend.

Win Jolley
Florence

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