

The Westbrook Chatterbox

Happy April??

As I'm writing this, it is March 16th and we are on lockdown. This isn't anything new for us as a facility. We've done it the past several years when we've had the flu or the stomach bug. The difference this year is that we are actively trying to keep sickness out of our facility.

Covid-19 has been listed as a pandemic and we, as a nation and as a state, have declared it a state of emergency. Businesses are closing down and having workers work from home. Conferences, concerts, sporting events, and other large gatherings have been cancelled. We are urged to wash our hands and cover our mouths when we cough as if these are new things. Stores can't keep up with the demands for toilet paper, paper towels, disinfectant wipes and sanitizer. We are all being encouraged to stay home unless we need to be out and about.

My church never cancels for weather. Once about 15 years ago, we cancelled services because of a major ice storm. That's it. Once in the past 26 years that Pastor Bob has been our pastor. That is until yesterday. With the threat of covid-19, we did not physically meet at the church. Pastor Bob, Pastor Steve and Pastor Brett along with the worship band were at the church and we attended services online.

Now I'm almost 53 years old and I have never seen an event such as we are living through right now. You have been through world wars, depression and other economic crisis. I have not. We are definitely living in interesting times.

One thing I know is that we need to be sensible and not buy into mass hysteria. Living in fear only leads to discontent, chaos and paranoia. Use your common sense. Be calm and live accordingly. We might get sick but we might not.

The other thing I know is God is in control. Covid-19 did not catch God off guard or surprise Him. I don't know what each of you personally believe but I believe that God is all-knowing and all-powerful. He cares for us. He wants what's best for us. But ultimately He lets us have free will and make our own decisions. He also lets us experience the consequences of our choices. This does not mean that He doesn't care or that He is oblivious to our plights.

Easter is on April 12th. Easter is the foundation of our hope. Jesus came to earth, lived a sinless life as a man, died on a cross for our sins and rose again three days later. That is the Gospel. That is what I believe and that is what allows me peace in this time of great unrest. The Bible is full of words that encourage me, give me peace and allow me to sleep well at night.

Until Next Month –

Janelle

The Easter Story in 9 Bible Passages

Jesus' Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem

They brought the donkey and the colt and put on them their cloaks, and he sat on them. Most of the crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. And the crowds that went before him and that followed him were shouting...

Matthew 21:7-9

Judas Agrees to Betray Jesus

Then one of the twelve, whose name was Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests and said, "What will you give me if I deliver him over to you?" And they paid him thirty pieces of silver. And from that moment he sought an opportunity to betray him. Matthew 26:14-15

The Last Supper

He said, "Go into the city to a certain man and say to him, 'The Teacher says, My time is at hand. I will keep the Passover at your house with my disciples.'" Matthew 26:18

The Garden of Gethsemane

Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane, and saith unto the disciples, Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder. Matthew 26:36

And going a little farther he fell on his face and prayed, saying, "My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will." Matthew 26:39

Jesus Delivered to Pilate

When morning came, all the chief priests and the elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put him to death. And they bound him and led him away and delivered him over to Pilate the governor. Matthew 27:1-2

Jesus' Final Steps

When the chief priests and the officers saw him, they cried out, "Crucify him, crucify him!" ... John 19:6

And they spit on him and took the reed and struck him on the head. And when they had mocked him, they stripped him of the robe and put his own clothes on him and led him away to crucify him. Matthew 27:30-31

The Death of Jesus

And when the sixth hour had come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour. Mark 15:33

Then Jesus, calling out with a loud voice, said, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!" And having said this he breathed his last. Luke 23:46

Jesus Is Buried

When it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who also was a disciple of Jesus. He went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate ordered it to be given to him. And Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a clean linen shroud. Matthew 27:57-59

So they took the body of Jesus and bound it in linen cloths with the spices, as is the burial custom of the Jews. ⁴¹ Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb in which no one had yet been laid. John 19:40-41

The Resurrection

But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they went to the tomb, taking the spices they had prepared. And they found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they went in they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. While they were perplexed about this, behold, two men stood by them in dazzling apparel. And as they were frightened and bowed their faces to the ground, the men said to them, "Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen. Luke 24:1-6

(This is an old groaner.)

A man was blissfully driving along the highway, when he saw the Easter Bunny hopping across the middle of the road. He swerved to avoid hitting the Bunny, but unfortunately the rabbit jumped in front of his car and was hit. The basket of eggs went flying all over the place. Candy, too.

The driver, being a sensitive man as well as an animal lover, pulled over to the side of the road, and got out to see what had become of the Bunny carrying the basket. Much to his dismay, the colorful Bunny was dead.

The driver felt guilty and began to cry. A woman driving down the same highway saw the man crying on the side of the road and pulled over. She stepped out of her car and asked the man what was wrong.

"I feel terrible," he explained, "I accidentally hit the Easter Bunny and killed it. What should I do?"

The woman told the man not to worry. She knew exactly what to do. She went to her car trunk, and pulled out a spray can. She walked over to the limp, dead Bunny, and sprayed the entire contents of the can onto the little furry animal.

Miraculously the Easter Bunny came to back life, jumped up, picked up the spilled eggs and candy, waved its paw at the two humans and hopped on down the road. 50 yards away the Easter Bunny stopped, turned around, waved and hopped on down the road another 50 yards, turned, waved, hopped another 50 yards and waved again!!!!

The man was astonished. He said to the woman, "What in heaven's name is in your spray can?" The woman turned the can around so that the man could read the label. It said:

"Hair spray. Restores life to dead hair. Adds permanent wave."

A Sunday school teacher was asking her six-year-olds about the meaning of Easter. "Children," she said, "Do you know why we celebrate Easter?"

A little girl raised her hand.

"Yes Jenny," said the teacher.

Jenny said, "Is Easter when we put on costumes and go trick-or-treating?"

"No, Jenny. That's Halloween. Does any one else know?"

A little boy yelled, "It's when we set off fireworks!"

"No Jimmy, that's Independence Day. Anybody else?"

A shy little girl in the back said, "Easter is when Jesus died."

The teacher replied, "That's right, Shauna. And what happened to Jesus that makes Easter special?"

"Well, he died and got buried. And every Easter he comes out. And if he sees his shadow there's 6 more weeks of winter."

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Rate Us!

"The staff really make the whole organization at Westbrook They really excel with the socialization and activities and they took care of everyone. You can tell that it's more than just a job to them." Becky W

APRIL

JELLYBEAN PRAYER

RED
IS FOR THE BLOOD HE GAVE.

GREEN
IS FOR THE GRASS HE MADE.

YELLOW
IS FOR THE SUN SO BRIGHT.

ORANGE
IS FOR THE EDGE OF NIGHT.

BLACK
IS FOR THE SINS OF MAN.

WHITE
IS FOR THE HOLY LAMB.

PURPLE
IS FOR THE HOUR OF SORROW.

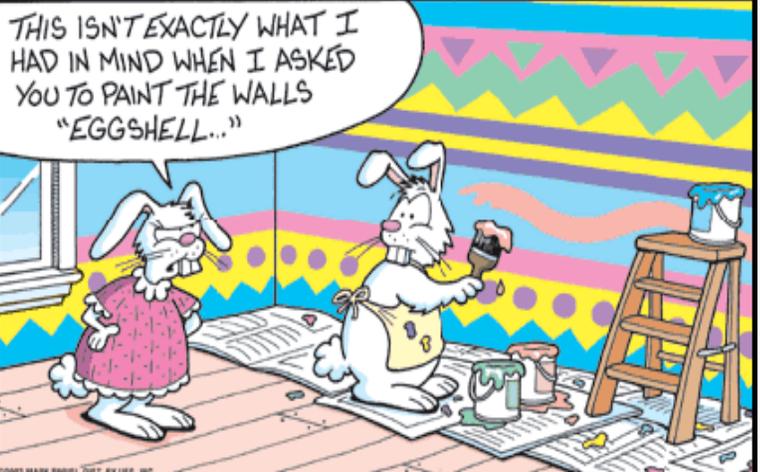
PINK
IS FOR OUR NEW TOMORROW.

March winds and April showers
Make way for sweet May flowers
And then comes June, a moon and you
March winds and April showers
Make way for the happy hours
And the May time, June time, love time
and you

off the mark

by Mark Parisi

www.offthemark.com



All I Need to Know About Life I Learned from the Easter Bunny

Don't put all of your eggs in one basket.
Walk softly and carry a big carrot.
Everyone needs a friend who is all ears.
There's no such thing as too much candy.
All work and no play can make you a basket case.
A cute little tail attracts a lot of attention.
Everyone is entitled to a bad hare day.
Let happy thoughts multiply like rabbits.
Some body parts should be floppy.
Keep your paws off other people's jellybeans.
The grass is always greener in someone else's basket.
An Easter bonnet can tame even the wildest hare.
To show your true colors you have to come out of your shell.
The best things in life are still sweet and gooey!



Easter
Sunday
April 12th

And so it has been an interesting March!! It's the 26th of March as I write this and this newsletter sees us in lockdown mode for thirty days. We are not having visitors and we are not going anywhere. We have no entertainment coming in to entertain us. We're now serving you meals at the table instead of you going thru the line. Since the postal service is not coming in the facility, we are now delivering it to you in your dining rooms. Wow! What a difference a month has made.

My husband, Jerome, is working from home. He's set up an office in the basement and he heads down there every morning, comes up for lunch and then heads back down for the afternoon. Chloe is home. She's not going to her friends' houses or shopping for fun. She's home. I come to work and I go home. This is our new normal.

But in the midst of all of this, there is a bright, silver lining. Technology!! Technology is what will keep us in touch with each other. Chloe gets on her PlayStation4 and connects with her friends to play games and chat. Jerome is doing virtual meetings. I'm meeting with my accountability partner via Zoom. Our church, as well as many others, is doing an online streaming service.

And here at Westbrook, well, we did our first ever Facebook Live yesterday afternoon. We had about 20-25 family members tune into our session. But the video is still on Facebook and we have had almost 500 views and close to 100 comments. Woo Hoo!

I was apprehensive about doing Facebook but I have to admit, it was a lot of fun. You all made it fun. One of my favorite comments was "I'd do water aerobics but we don't have any water". That makes me giggle every time I think about it. The families got to see you and you guys played it up for them. And yes, Frank is handsome, not pretty. I can't wait until we do our next one on Friday.

Technology is also going to allow us to have some outside entertainment via Zoom. Zoom is a virtual meeting app. I set up a meeting and invite people. They accept and magically we can see and talk to each other.

By the time you are reading this, hopefully we have had a concert by Dave Donaldson. He and I have been playing with Zoom and making adjustments to get the best sound and video quality we can with the equipment we have. If all went well on Saturday, this will open the door to others. Possible Tom Lay, Catherine Bohm, Andrea Davenport and maybe even our own beloved, Martha Armstrong.

We appreciate how you are coming out for the new ideas we're coming up with. You guys have been real troopers! We appreciate you going with the flow!!

Like I said at the beginning of this article, what a difference a month can make! And technology will be what helps us through with our sanity!!

The Empty Egg

Jeremy was born with a twisted body and a slow mind. At the age of 12, was still in second grade, seemingly unable to learn. His teacher, Doris Miller, often became exasperated with him. He would squirm in his seat, drool, and make grunting noises.

At other times, he spoke clearly and distinctly, as if a spot of light had penetrated the darkness of his brain. Most of the time, however, Jeremy irritated his teacher. One day she called his parents and asked them to come for a consultation. As the Forresters entered the empty classroom, Doris said to them, "Jeremy really belongs in a 'special' school. It isn't fair to him to be with younger children who don't have learning problems. Why, there is a five-year gap between his age and that of the other students."

Mrs. Forrester cried softly into a tissue, while her husband spoke. "Miss Miller," he said, "There is no school of that kind nearby. It would be a terrible shock for Jeremy if we had to take him out of this school. We know he really likes it here." Doris sat for a long time after they had left, staring at the snow outside the window. It's coldness seemed to seep into her soul. She wanted to sympathize with the Forresters. After all, their only child had a terminal illness. But it wasn't fair to keep him in her class. She had 18 other youngsters to teach, and Jeremy was a distraction.

Furthermore, he would never learn to read and write. Why waste any more time trying? As she pondered the situation, guilt washed over her. Here I am complaining when my problems are nothing compared to that poor family, she thought. Lord, please help me to be more patient with Jeremy. From that day on, she tried hard to ignore Jeremy's noises and his blank stares.

Then one day, he limped to her desk, dragging his bad leg behind him. "I love you, Miss Miller," he exclaimed, loud enough for the whole class to hear. The other students snickered, and Doris' face turned red. She stammered, "Wh-why that's very nice, Jeremy. N-now please take your seat."

Spring came, and the children talked excitedly about the coming of Easter. Doris told them the story of Jesus, and then to emphasize the idea of new life springing forth, she gave each of the children a large plastic egg. "Now," she said to them, "I want you to take this home and bring it back tomorrow with something inside that shows new life. Do you understand?"

"Yes, Miss Miller," the children responded enthusiastically, all except for Jeremy. He listened intently; his eyes never left her face. He did not even make his usual noises. Had he understood what she had said about Jesus' death and resurrection? Did he understand the assignment?

Perhaps she should call his parents and explain the project to them. That evening, Doris' kitchen sink stopped up. She called the landlord and waited an hour for him to come by and unclog it. After that, she still had to shop for groceries, iron a blouse, and prepare a vocabulary test for the next day. She completely forgot about phoning Jeremy's parents.

The next morning, 19 children came to school, laughing and talking as they placed their eggs in the large wicker basket on Miss Miller's desk.

After they completed their math lesson, it was time to open the eggs. In the first egg, Doris found a flower. "Oh yes, a flower is certainly a sign of new life," she said. "When plants peek through the ground, we know that spring is here." A small girl in the first row waved her arm.

"That's my egg, Miss Miller," she called out. The next egg contained a plastic butterfly, which looked very real. Doris held it up. "We all know that a caterpillar changes and grows into a beautiful butterfly. Yes, that's new life, too." Little Judy smiled proudly and said, "Miss Miller, that one is mine." Next, Doris found a rock with moss on it. She explained that moss, too, showed life. Billy spoke up from the back of the classroom, "Daddy helped me," he beamed. Then Doris opened the fourth egg.

She gasped. The egg was empty. Surely it must be Jeremy's she thought, and of course, he did not understand her instructions. If only she had not forgotten to phone his parents. Because she did not want to embarrass him, she quietly set the egg aside and reached for another. Suddenly, Jeremy spoke up. "Miss Miller, aren't you going to talk about my egg?" Flustered, Doris replied, "But Jeremy, your egg is empty." He looked into her eyes and said softly, "Yes, but Jesus' tomb was empty, too." Time stopped.

When she could speak again, Doris asked him, "Do you know why the tomb was empty?" "Oh, yes," Jeremy said, "Jesus was killed and put in there then his Father raised Him up." The recess bell rang. While the children excitedly ran out to the schoolyard, Doris cried. The cold inside her melted completely away.

Three months later, Jeremy died. Those who paid their respects at the mortuary were surprised to see 19 eggs on top of his casket, all of them empty.

How to bring more laughter into your life

Laughter is your birthright, a natural part of life that is innate and inborn. Infants begin smiling during the first weeks of life and laugh out loud within months of being born. Even if you did not grow up in a household where laughter was a common sound, you can learn to laugh at any stage of life.

Begin by setting aside special times to seek out humor and laughter, as you might with exercising, and build from there. Eventually, you'll want to incorporate humor and laughter into the fabric of your life, finding it naturally in everything.

Here are some ways to start:

Smile. Smiling is the beginning of laughter, and like laughter, it's contagious. When you look at someone or see something even mildly pleasing, practice smiling. Instead of looking down at your phone, look up and smile at people you pass in the street, the person serving you a morning coffee, or the co-workers you share an elevator with. Notice the effect on others.

Count your blessings. Literally make a list. The simple act of considering the positive aspects of your life will distance you from negative thoughts that block humor and laughter. When you're in a state of sadness, you have further to travel to reach humor and laughter.

When you hear laughter, move toward it. Sometimes humor and laughter are private, a shared joke among a small group, but usually not. More often, people are very happy to share something funny because it gives them an opportunity to laugh again and feed off the humor you find in it. When you hear laughter, seek it out and ask, "What's funny?"

Spend time with fun, playful people. These are people who laugh easily—both at themselves and at life's absurdities—and who routinely find the humor in everyday events. Their playful point of view and laughter are contagious. Even if you don't consider yourself a lighthearted, humorous person, you can still seek out people who like to laugh and make others laugh. Every comedian appreciates an audience.

Bring humor into conversations. Ask people, "What's the funniest thing that happened to you today? This week? In your life?"

Simulated laughter

So, what if you really can't "find the funny?" Believe it or not, it's possible to laugh without experiencing a funny event—and simulated laughter can be just as beneficial as the real thing. It can even make exercise more fun and productive. A Georgia State University study found that incorporating bouts of simulated laughter into an exercise program helped improve older adults' mental health as well as their aerobic endurance. Plus, hearing others laugh, even for no apparent reason, can often trigger genuine laughter.

To add simulated laughter into your own life, search for laugh yoga or laugh therapy groups. Or you can start simply by laughing at other people's jokes, even if you don't find them funny. Both you and the other person will feel good, it will draw you closer together, and who knows, it may even lead to some spontaneous laughter.

Creating opportunities to laugh

Watch a funny movie, TV show, or YouTube video

Invite friends or co-workers out to a comedy club

Share a good joke or a funny story

Check out your bookstore's humor section

Host game night with friends

Make time for fun activities (e.g. bowling, miniature golfing, karaoke)

Go to a "laughter yoga" class

Read the funny pages

Seek out funny people

Play with a pet

Do something silly

Goof around with children