

EDITORIAL

with Hartley Coles

Easter is about Resurrection

When Christians around the world crowd into churches this week and especially next Sunday they are not celebrating the arrival of the Easter Bunny, cute fellow that he is, nor the rites of spring. They are celebrating the central belief of Christianity—that Jesus Christ died on a cross and rose from the dead.

Belief in the Resurrection has been a stumbling block for many people who seek the truth, not just in this skeptical age, but through the centuries. Often the secular press will give lots of publicity to those who deny the physical resurrection of Jesus. They usually pay scant heed to those who marshal their evidence to defend it.

Belief in the actual resurrection was certainly essential to the early Christians, those who knew Christ. It was certainly essential to Paul, "apostle to the Gentiles." He wrote: "If there is no resurrection from the dead then even Christ did not rise; and if Christ did not rise, then our preaching is in vain, and your faith also in vain." He believed so strongly in the Christian faith he was beheaded by the Romans in Rome.

Contrast that with the vapid claims from people who never lived or experienced the times of the early Christians.

So hundreds of millions of people around the globe will recall the sorrow of Good Friday before they celebrate the feast of Easter on Sunday, the day the scriptures tell us Jesus rose from the dead and appeared to his disciples. The empty tomb, the vacant cross have become symbols of a faith that has exerted a tremendous influence on events over the last 20 centuries.

But it has never been easy. There have been betrayals from the time of Judas Iscariot, a man Jesus Himself picked. Remember some of the very people who welcomed Christ on his triumphal ride into Jerusalem on the first Palm Sunday were among those who cried for his death on the cross a few days later. On Friday we recall the events of Good Friday before we can celebrate the triumph of Easter.

The meaning of Easter, an Anglo-Saxon derivative of the Teutonic "Eastre," an ancient German goddess of light, really has changed since the early days when it celebrated the rites of spring. Early Christians knew Easter as "Paschal time," derived from the Hebrew Passover. Obviously the German goddess has nothing to do with the Christian celebration which changes from year to year.

Easter in the western tradition, always falls on the first Sunday after the first full moon after the 21st of March. Orthodox Christians and those who follow the Julian calendar celebrate Easter two weeks later.

A controversy about the right time to celebrate Easter was recorded by Eusebius, a Christian writer in the year 190 A.D. Diversity already existed among Christians some 70 years before he wrote. Some followed the Jewish date of Passover but Pope St. Victor and the bishops of the Church wanted the feast on Sunday, the day Christ rose from the dead. It's the reason, incidentally, why we still keep Sunday as a holiday (holy day).

Although the ancient pagan symbols of eggs, symbolizing the germination of new life, hot cross buns which represent the fruits of the earth, as well as a Disneyesque Easter Bunny, permeate the holy day for children, the resurrection of Jesus is the paramount reason for the celebration of Easter.

It is the most important feast in the Christian calendar. Without it and the faith in its reality, the Church could not exist. Or as Saul of Tarsus says faith would be in vain.

Happy Easter.



FEELS LIKE A MILLION: Heritage Acton members accepted the Trillium Foundation grant of \$75,000 last Thursday. Left to right, Richard Bennett, Kathy Sanford, Ted Tyler, Peg Lahn and Bill Sanford.

Science Matters

— by David Suzuki



The dark side of Spring

Spring is a time of rejuvenation and rebirth, but it also has a darker side - it's the start of pesticide season in Canada.

Every spring, people across the country purchase vast quantities of toxic chemicals and spray them on lawns and gardens to remove undesired insects and weeds like pesky dandelions. Often, it is an unquestioned ritual that may continue throughout the summer and fall. In Canada alone, sales of insecticides, herbicides and fungicides top \$1 billion annually.

The federal regulations that govern these chemicals are now under review because they are in desperate need of an overhaul. Nearly a third of the ingredients in common Canadian pesticides were approved before 1960, when little was known about their long-term effects and standards were less strict. Further, the regulations are based on exposures for average-sized adult males and fail to take into account the greater vulnerability of children and women.

Children in particular absorb larger quantities of pesticides for their size. A study last fall by the Ontario College of Family Physicians found that pesticides posed an "undeniable" risk to Canadian children, particularly to children living near farms that use pesticides, Inuit children and those living in housing that is sprayed with insecticides to control cockroaches

and other pests.

Around the world, use of these chemicals has increased 33 fold since 1942! Studies in Switzerland have found that European rainwater is often laced with toxic levels of common pesticides and herbicides like 2-4-D, often well above guidelines set for drinking water. In Canada, an apple may be sprayed with up to 16 different chemicals before it reaches the consumer. According to government statistics, pesticide residues on Canadian food have doubled since 1994.

Many of these chemicals are linked to cancers such as Non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, which has increased by 73 per cent in the US since 1973. A 1987 study published in the US Journal of the National Cancer Institute reported that children whose parents commonly used pesticides in their homes and gardens were seven times more likely to get leukemia!

Some of the more potent of these chemicals also "bioaccumulate" up the food chain and end up in toxic amounts in marine mammals. And pesticides are thought to play a role in a rash of frog deaths and deformities seen around the globe in recent years.

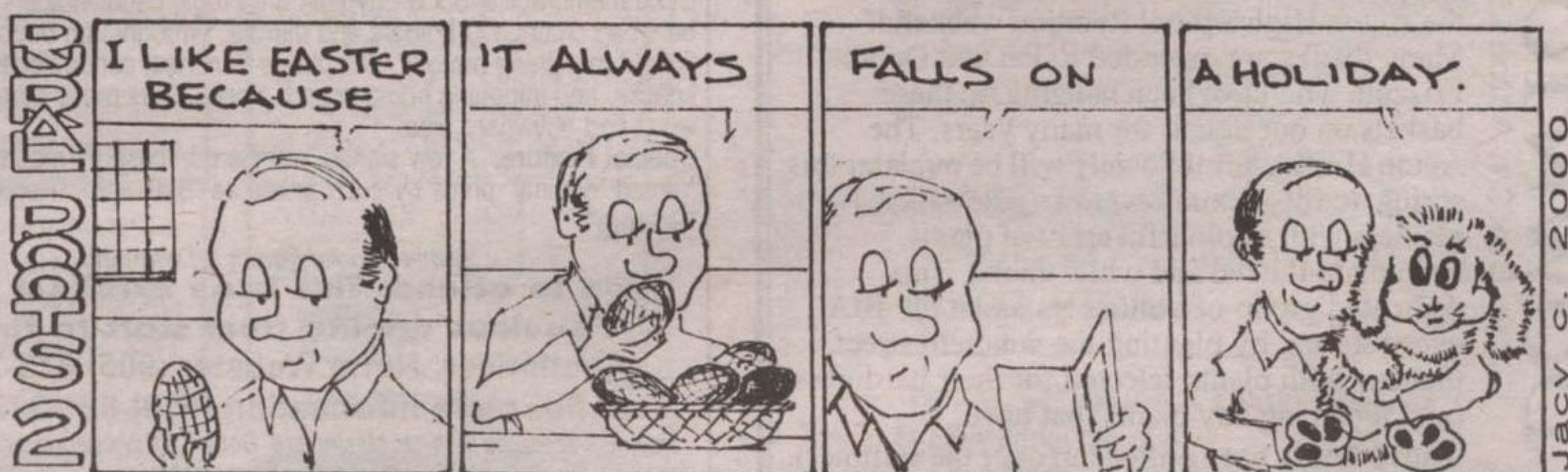
In addition to the environmental and health effects resulting from the over-use of pesticides, they cause significant global economic costs to society. These are estimated to be at least \$100 billion annually according

to an article in the journal Nature.

Some food crops have been genetically modified to have insect resistance built-in and have been touted as effective alternatives to using pesticides. But the fact that these crops can also kill other non-pest organisms has caused concern among ecologists, and there's a good chance insects will develop resistance to them as they have to pesticides. In some cases, crops with built-in herbicide resistance have resulted in an increase in the use of these chemicals.

If you are concerned about pesticides, you can reduce your exposure by buying organic produce and by not using them on your lawn or in your garden. Instead, you can plant low-maintenance native shrubs and flowers, and reduce the size of your lawn. Lawns are vast monoculture crops that require tremendous amount of water and chemical inputs to stay green and weed-free.

To find out more about common pesticides and herbicides, visit www.scorecard.org, a site administered by the US-based Environmental Defense Fund. Enter the name of virtually any herbicide or pesticide and the site will rank its toxicity and provide a list of potential side-effects. Considering the unnecessary added risk many of these chemicals pose to us and our ecosystems, a few dandelions on the lawn may not be so bad.



THE NEW Tanner

59 Willow Street North
Acton, Ontario
L7J 1Z8

(519) 853-0051 Fax: 853-0052

Publisher

Ted Tyler

Editorial

Hartley Coles

Frances Niblock Mike O'Leary Ellen Piehl
Maggie Petrushevsky Angela Tyler

Advertising and Circulation

Marie Shadbolt

Composing

Karen Coleman Penny Zurbrigg

Distributed to every home
in Acton and area as well as
adjoining communities.

ADVERTISING POLICY

Every effort will be made to see advertising copy, neatly presented, is correctly printed. The publisher assumes no financial responsibility for typographical errors or omissions in advertising, but will gladly reprint without charge that part of an advertisement in which an error may occur provided a claim is made within five days of publication.