

Commentary

Why
do we
celebrate
Easter?

This column was suppose to be about recent events in the Nacogdoches community, but I could not focus on anything but the story of the Resurrection of Jesus and why it is important to remember why we celebrate Easter.

Today is Easter and like Christmas, this celebration can become so commercialized that we forget the real reason why it is special. Allow me to share my understanding of why this holiday is so important.

Jesus was arrested because many people did not believe him or believe in him, and they wanted him crucified. There were many people who did not believe in Jesus and wanted him crucified. They beat Him on the head many times with a stick and then used a whip to beat his body before handing him over to the soldiers who made a crown for his head using thorny branches. They called out and mocked him saying, "Hail, King of the Jews."

The soldiers put a purple robe on him while they spat on him and made fun of him, while bowing on their knees and pretending to worship him. They took off the purple robe and took him out to be crucified. The soldiers forced a man called Simon to help Jesus carry the cross they made for him. The soldiers offered Jesus a drink made with wine and myrrh (bitter-tasting gum), but he refused it. The soldiers placed Jesus on the cross with a crucified robber on his left side and crucified robber on his right side. People walked by insulting and making fun of Jesus. The robbers beside him insulted him, also. They challenged him to save himself if he was really the son of God then they mocked "He save others but he can't save himself." See Matthew 27:2-44

When Jesus died on the cross at noon, the whole country became dark, and the darkness lasted for three hours. Some of the people standing near the cross heard Jesus cry out, as he was calling on his father to help him. One of them ran and got a sponge and filled it with vinegar and tied it to a stick and gave it to Jesus to drink. When Jesus died, the curtain in the temple was torn into two pieces — from the top to the bottom. The earth shook and the rocks broke apart. See Matthew 27:45-28:10.

One army officer, who observed all that was happening when Jesus died, said, "This man really was the son of God." That evening a rich man named Joseph, a follower and believer of Jesus asked the soldiers for His body. Joseph gently took Jesus' body and wrapped it

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JERI MILLS



Regents Academy students washing the SWAT vehicle at the Nacogdoches Police Department, as a part of the BIG Serve are Carleona Johnson, Ethan Milliken, Andria Sowell, Avery Griner and Jake Hill.

BIG Serve

Students, teachers, community members give back



Top: Knox Fairley, Connor Young, Zane Anderson painted benches at the soccer fields as their contribution to the BIG Serve. **Above:** Weeding and pulling ivy from the fence at the Chamber of Commerce were Regents Academy students Emery Johnson, Claire Cuipepper, Annaleigh Andrews and Madison Freeland.

All Regents Academy students skipped school on a recent Friday. So did their teachers.

Students, teachers, parents and board members spent the morning and early afternoon out and about Nacogdoches County picking up trash, painting parking pylons and benches, raking leaves, washing police cars, cleaning out animal cages, building wheelchair ramps and serving in various other capacities around the city — all in the spirit of giving back to the community for the school's second BIG Serve campaign.

"The 'BIG' in BIG Serve is an acronym for 'Blessed in Giving,' and our students and teachers do the serving," said headmaster David Bryant.

According to Bryant, the BIG Serve campaign provides a four-fold blessing to everyone involved: The Nacogdoches community reaps benefits from the students' labor around town; the students are blessed by their service to others; those who sponsor the students by contributing financially or with items necessary for building repair, painting or beautification projects are blessed by their generosity; and the school is blessed by the funds raised by the students and their families to "sponsor" their various projects.

Several local businesses contributed to this year's "BIG Serve" campaign, including Bright Coop, Laird Funeral Home, Regions Bank, Tipton Ford, Farm Bureau, and The Daily Sentinel, among others.

This year's projects included serving several Love INC clients and the chamber of commerce, again, along with the addition of a few more service sites including Habitat for Humanity, the animal shelter, the city police station and the senior center.

Fifth-graders started their morning washing cars at the police station and then continued their service at the animal shelter where they helped clean out cat cages and walked dogs.

"I think we had the best projects!" said fifth-grader Andria Sowell, wet from washing the S.W.A.T. van.

"This is a blast!" said Ethan Milliken as he tumbled to the ground with one of the excited dogs at the animal shelter. "I hope we get to do this again next year!"

More than 125 students, teachers and parents participated in this year's project wearing hats, gloves and student-designed T-shirts as they toted brooms, shovels, rakes, paint brushes and supplies around town — all in the name of "service."

Project coordinator Rick Bertke is proud of the students and their efforts. "This is a great way for our students to give back to their community. This fosters a spirit of responsibility, cooperation and goodwill — all part of the necessary other education our students learn outside the classroom."

For more about this year's BIG Serve campaign by visiting the school's website www.RegentsAcademy.com.

Downtown

Vacant building task force looking forward to property showcase

The City of Nacogdoches Main Street Program and the Nacogdoches Economic Development Corporation have announced the lineup for the Downtown Property Showcase scheduled from 4:30 until 7 p.m. Tuesday, April 26.

"We have several properties that are available for lease today, and they will be open for folks to tour," said Sarah O'Brien, manager of the downtown Main Street program. "We also have two successful downtown business owners who will be on hand in their beautifully restored buildings to answer any questions concerning the benefits of owning property and a small business downtown."

Properties available for tours include:

- 113 E. Main St., Jo Carlson and Bob Gruebel, owners.
- 123 E. Main St., Jo Carlson and Bob Gruebel, owners.
- 300 E. Main St., Jerry Alexander, leasing agent.
- 106 Church St., John Sloane, owner

Successful downtown businesses participating in the event include:

- 110 S. Pecan St., Gerry Larabee, Heart of Texas.
- 323 E. Main St., Teresa and David Darby, Glass Castles.

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Before and after pictures of 110 S. Pecan, which is now a successful retail business, "Heart of Texas."

