

from our viewpoint...

# Awards honor good citizens, youth

The first few months of the year can be busy, with annual banquets and special award dinners honoring some of our best citizens.

Two of those were the Goodland Area Chamber of Commerce banquet last Saturday and the Conservation District meeting last Monday.

These events bring people together to review what has gone on over the past year, and present awards to deserving people.

The Chamber gave its Citizen of the Year award this year to Clarence Scheopner, who has been in Goodland for about 60 years, and has been involved in many community programs and the development of a regional disability group.

Scheopner is an example of the good people who live in Sherman County and Goodland who work to improve the lives of those around them.

At the Conservation District banquet, awards are presented to those who work to be good stewards of the land with windbreaks, wildlife habitat and conservation programs that reduce erosion and hold moisture.

The Sherman County Conservation District has been around for 64 years. Programs have changed and improved through cycles of wet years and droughts. It was in the drought years of the 1930s that the district was formed.

Attending the annual banquet is highlighted by seeing the awards presented to the boys and girls from third through eighth grade in the district's contests.

These young people work hard on posters, limericks, essays and computer projects based on the principals of conservation.

Almost every year, Sherman County has an award winner from the state conservation convention, and this year Shaley Miller received a third place on her poster. Dani Mangus and Cory Sampson got state honorable mention for their limericks.

The programs in the school are a way to educate young people about the need to be good stewards of the land, and remind the older people about the importance of continuing the conservation efforts.

It was wonderful to see the examples of the posters, limericks and essays as they covered the wall of the Veterans of Foreign Wars Hall.

For some, annual banquets may seem boring, but we enjoy going and seeing the wonderful work and getting to see the awards presented to such deserving people, both the younger ones and the adults. They are at two ends of the spectrum, show that our present and our future are in good hands.

Congratulations to all of the Conservation District winners, and to Scheopner as the Citizen of the Year. — Tom Betz

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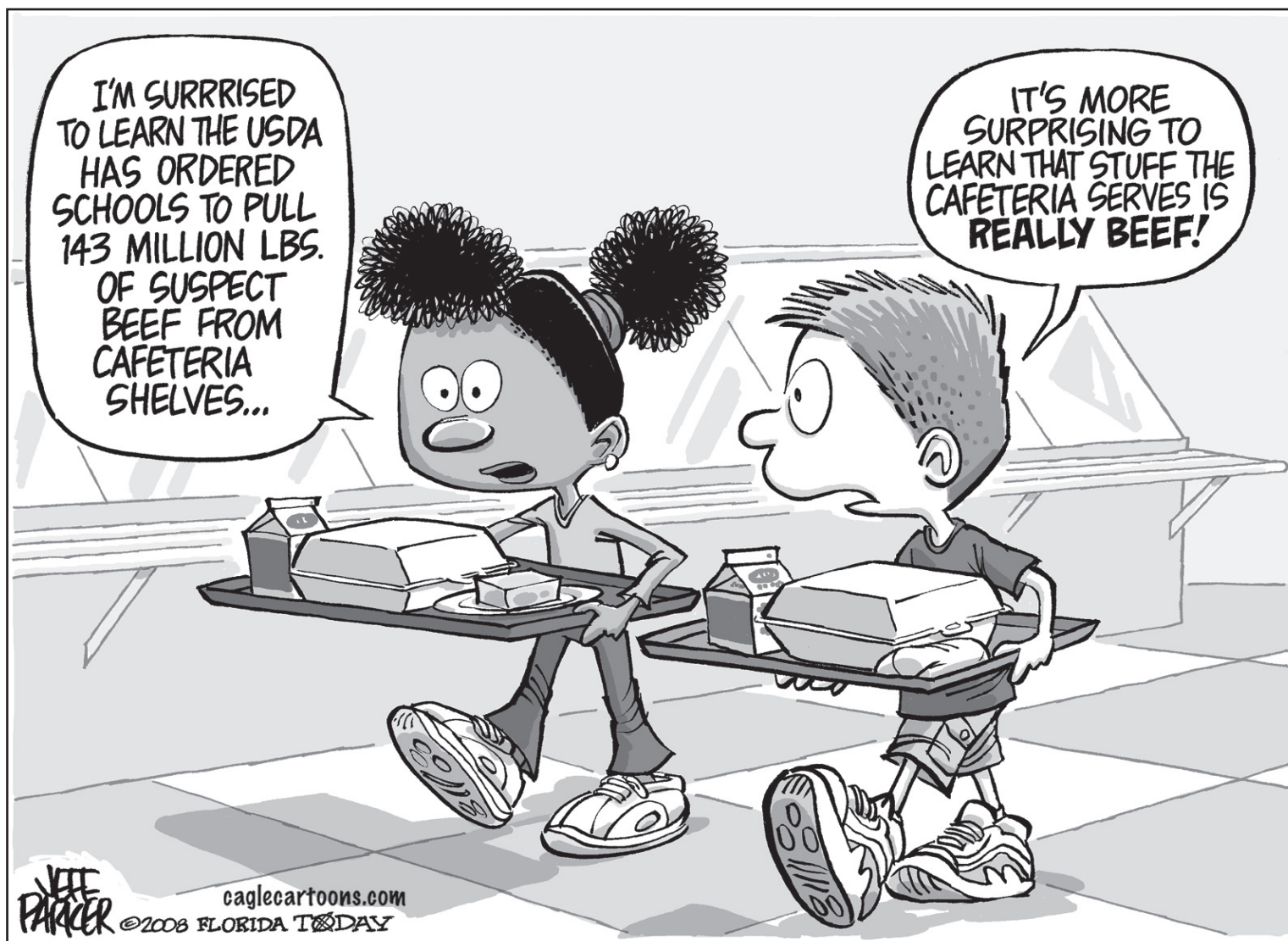
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# Super Bowl was better than commercials

At last, a Super Bowl that was better than the commercials.

Everyone knew the New England Patriots, undefeated in the regular season and playoffs, should win.

Everyone knew the Patriots were the better team, maybe the best in football history. All the experts and oddsmakers agreed.

Everyone, apparently, except for the underdog New York Giants, who kept playing when New England took the lead and did what had to be done to win.

Quarterback Eli Manning showed brilliance, especially on the final drive, when he escaped a collapsing pocket, broke away from two tacklers and passed for a first and 10 deep in enemy country.

It was Manning, not the Patriots, who looked invincible that Sunday.

Well, like they say, that's why they play the game.

It was a refreshing change from the last few years, when the hoopla over the television commercials far surpassed the action on the field.

This year, the commercials were the disappointment, mostly uninspired and less than interesting. Maybe the advertising writers were on strike along with the Hollywood script writers.

Long-time favorites such as Pepsi and Budweiser failed to field anything memo-



**steve haynes**

• along the sappa

orable, though the dog helping the Clydesdale who didn't make the cut with his training was cute.

No single spot compared to the wacky humor of the Sierra Mist or Bud Light ads of the last couple of years. The "superpowers" ads were kinda dull.

Well, it's supposed to be about the game, right? Not the two weeks of extended interview and media hype?

Then there was New England coach Bill Belichick, proving himself once again to be about as poor a sport as can be found on the field today.

There was Belichick, making his way off the field with an escort of state troopers and security men while his assistants had to mount a final play that league officials insisted has to be run.

With one second left, everyone knew it didn't matter, but should the coach have been there?

Asked about it by Dave Letterman last week, quarterback Manning said, with a smile, "Maybe he was trying to beat traffic."

# Show us the shining city on the hill

Thanks to Mitt Romney, John McCain has all but wrapped up his party's presidential nomination.

So where does the Republican Party stand at this point in a crucial election year? Well, consider that none of the potential nominees of the party -- except maybe McCain to some extent -- has ever gone out and helped any Republican get elected to anything.

Now that he's suspended his campaign and is out of the race, if Mitt Romney still wants to be president of the United States some day let him call me up and I'll give him the road map he needs to follow to become the GOP nominee in another year.

As I wrote a couple of weeks ago, the three men have all been working from the top down and not from the bottom up. As a result, the voters -- the grass roots -- are all over the landscape, and the primary results showed there's no real consensus. They were with Huckabee, they were with Mitt Romney, they were with McCain, and some were with Ron Paul.

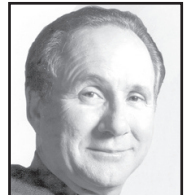
Mitt Romney didn't do anything to gain the trust of the base, while McCain -- who hasn't yet won the trust of the base -- is a familiar old face.

The bottom line here is that John McCain had better start giving better speeches and tell us what his vision is for America, and how he plans to get us there, and how he needs our help. If he needs any pointers how to do that -- how to electrify an audience -- he should watch a few of Barack Obama's speeches.

If I'm going to vote for someone solely on the basis of what they say when speaking to the voters, Hillary Clinton or Barack Obama will get my vote. At least they have a message and a direction. That direction may take me over a cliff, but at least they're telling me where they want to take me, where the Republicans haven't shown me a single road map.

You haven't heard McCain spell out the kind of future he wants to create, or give us any idea of how he means to get there. One of the main issues in this election year is the widespread belief among the voters that America is adrift in a sea of uncertainty and utterly without direction.

Yet none of the three Republican candidates



**michael reagan**

• making sense

gave any indication as to how they would steer the ship of state. Voters haven't heard a word from them about an issue at the top of their concerns.

All three have been so afraid of talking about George Bush that they seem to be afraid of talking about anything that really matters to the voters. All they spent their time talking about was "vote for me because I'm better than the others," and that doesn't win elections.

Elections are won by those who have plans and ideas, and have the ability to put those plans and ideas into words that not only explain the plans and ideas, but inspire the voters as well.

What wins elections is vision, telling the voters that there is that shining city on the hill my

It's hard to see why the National Football League puts up with a guy like this Belichick, who's been accused now of spying on opponents' practices at least three times -- and fined at least once.

Do sportsmanship, fair play and integrity add up to anything in pro sports these days?

If not, why do we care?

Guess that's a question the NFL owners ought to be answering.

Sportswriters already are arguing that New England was the better team and New York just got lucky. That may be, but for a year at least, Eli Manning can strut around Manhattan like he owns the place.

Next fall, the Patriots will have a chance to redeem themselves.

Between now and then, we hope the league looks at Mr. Belichick's antics again. Mere fines won't have much impact, not considering what coaches make these days.

America has little tolerance for cheaters or poor sports.

And you have to hope the advertising agencies, copy writers and advertisers come up with something better than the insipid ideas they put out this year.

Americans need something to talk about the day after the big game other than what happens on the field.

Most years, anyway.

dad Ronald Reagan spoke about, and explaining what America needs to do to get there.

The Republicans had no plans and no ideas. They were all over the place and as a result, so were the voters.

If John McCain wants to be president of the United States, let him show us his vision. Let him level with the voters by telling them what needs to be done to stop the drifting and how he plans to do it.

He should explain that he will not solve our problems by creating a lot of expensive new programs financed on the backs of the taxpayers, as Hillary and Barack want to do, but instead get the government's hands out of their pockets and set the economy and the people free from the deadly hand of Washington.

Let him show us the shining city on the hill, and tell us how he'll get us there.

Mike Reagan, the eldest son of the late President Ronald Reagan, is heard on talk radio stations nationally. E-mail comments to Reagan@caglecartoons.com.

