

Easter Egg Roll  
South Lawn  
4/24/00

PHOTOCOPY  
PRESERVATION

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

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REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT AND FIRST LADY  
AT THE ANNUAL WHITE HOUSE EASTER EGG ROLL

The South Lawn

10:27 A.M. EDT

MRS. CLINTON: Good morning. Welcome to the White House. Did you know this is the 122nd Annual White House Easter Egg Roll? And it's the first Easter Egg Roll of the 21st century. And we're so happy you're here, because this is the last time -- this is our eighth and last time that the President and I will be able to welcome you. So we really wanted to make this Easter Egg Roll very special for us and for all of you. And I hope that you've all seen the map of the White House Easter Egg Roll. Don't miss anything that's on here.

And we have Socks and Buddy in the little book, which I hope you'll all get. And don't forget, we have a Prescription For Reading that goes with it, and then the program, which has a wonderful, wonderful poster, as well.

You know, this year we've decided to make books and reading an important part of the festivities again. And we're lucky to be joined by so many special guest readers. We have members of the President's Cabinet. We have J.K. Rowling -- do any of you know who she is? (Applause.) We have a very special set of guests, like Julie Andrews and Robert DeNiro and Deborah Norville and Christopher Paul Curtis.

And we have, from the band 'NSync, Lance Bass and Justin Timberlake. (Applause.) Now, they and so many other special guests will be reading from their favorite books on stages all across the South Lawn.

I want to thank all the performers, the entertainers, the volunteers, the corporate sponsors, everyone who's made this such a special event for the President and for me and for so many children over the last eight years. And I especially want to thank Mary Engelbreit for her talents in designing this year's poster program and Easter eggs, which you will find and which you will receive.

So now it's my great pleasure to introduce the President of the United States. (Applause.)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much and good morning. I'm so glad to see such a wonderful crowd all over the South Lawn, all the way back to the back. I want to also say, as Hillary did, that even though this is our last White House Easter Egg Roll, and we will miss it very much, we have enjoyed it.

Today Medlinda Bates, the Director of our Visitors Office, who's done so much on this over the years, told me that Hillary and I are the only First Couple ever to do this all eight years we were here, and I think it's because we had more fun than the children did here. (Applause.)

I just want to thank those of you who have had anything to do with this Easter Egg Roll. I want to thank especially the 500 volunteers. And I'd like to say that this is the first time we've ever broadcast the Easter Egg Roll in cyberspace, so there will be more children in classrooms and homes and libraries across America watching this Easter Egg Roll today than have attended it in the previous 122 years of the White House Easter Egg Roll, thanks to the Internet, and we are delighted that that is so, as well. (Applause.)

I want to just reemphasize one thing that Hillary said. This year's activities feature reading. And they feature the theory that it is fun. It's a part of our Prescription for Learning Initiative that the First Lady launched three years ago, with the help of Scholastic Books. They bring together health care professionals, librarians and others to show children how important and fun reading can be.

So I hope you enjoy that, along with the storytelling booths, the egg decorating. There are even some costume characters around here, appearing as some of our greatest presidents. I hope you recognize them.

Finally, let me say it's time to blow the whistle to start another Easter Egg Roll. And before I do, I want to thank our Master of Ceremonies, Bernie Fairbanks, and ask him to come up here. He's right behind me. (Applause.)

And I want you to know something about this man. As nearly as I can figure, he's been here for almost half of the Easter Egg Rolls. He has joined me every year, but he's been attending the Easter Egg Roll since Franklin Roosevelt was the President of the United States. (Applause.)

So before I start this, Bernie, I want to give you a special Easter Egg Roll 2000 whistle with your name on it, for Hillary and me, thanks for the eight years we shared with you. And now that you're, once again, going to have seniority over us, I want you to think of us when you blow this whistle. (Applause.)

Thank you. So we're going to do this together, right? I want you to do it with me. Now, where are they -- are they ready over there? Wave your hand if you're ready. All right. On your mark, get set -- (the whistle is blown.)

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10:33 A.M. EDT