

The Sentinel OPINION

LETTERS WELCOME

The Smoky Mountain Sentinel welcomes letters to the editor. Letters should be typed or neatly handwritten and no longer than 400 to 500 words. Letters must be signed and must include a telephone number for verification. Letters that cannot be confirmed with the writer cannot be printed.

Mail to: Smoky Mountain Sentinel, PO Box 870, Hayesville, NC 28904 or email to sentinel@dnet.net

FRANK BRADLEY, *Publisher/Managing Editor*

PAT MCCOLLUM
Customer Service

PAT MCCOLLUM
Production

DEBBIE WALKER
Circulation

Writer and Photographer
CARLA G. OWENS
News Writer

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From the porch

By Dwight Otwell

Did she leave for a right fielder?



Maybe the killdeer simply haven't arrived from their winter vacations yet. But recently I was covering baseball and softball games between Murphy and Hiwassee Dam High Schools. I walk between the baseball and softball fields to get photographs of the games, being played simultaneously.

I was at the baseball field beside Hiwassee Dam High School when I heard the familiar piping sound of a killdeer. The bird soared low over the field several times.

Later, I heard the cry again and spotted a killdeer in right field. I wondered if it was Dove. I assumed that the bird wasn't a member of the team, because there was a right fielder about 25 feet from the killdeer.

The killdeer strolled nonchalantly around in right field and didn't seem to mind the closeness of the Hiwassee Dam fielder. The killdeer didn't even seem to be nervous about the team's nickname, the Eagles. In fact, I wondered if Dove had a romantic crush on the right fielder.

Maybe the bird only wanted a platonic relationship, but I feel that whoever draws the interest of a killdeer is fortunate.

I am not going to be jealous over the killdeer's interest in the right fielder. It may not be Dove. It could be one of her offsprings. Anyway, I'll keep my eyes peeled for that two-timing killdeer to appear in our back parking lot.

work, the killdeer on the nest will get within arms' reach and pretend to be hurt. Of course, their acting always worked with us. Every time, we were lured away from the eggs.

The killdeer have about four chicks, who can move around and feed themselves shortly after birth.

Last year, the killdeer built their nest in the bushes next to the Murphy Medical Center Urgent Care Center in back of our building.

I loved to hear the killdeer greet me with their shrill cry when I walked out the back door. The official name for killdeer is "Charadrius Vociferou". The dictionary defines vociferous as shouting noisily, clamorous. That is an apt description. The killdeer sure don't try to hide. Sometimes, when I took a short stroll, a killdeer would walk along with me, keeping a safe 20 feet away.

The killdeer were interesting and it was fun to see the little ones, about a month after birth, fly away into their own killdeer adventures, leaving their parents empty nesters.

The killdeer haven't shown up yet. I feel abandoned.

I suspect that at least one killdeer, probably the one we named Dove, left us for a right fielder. I suppose I should explain.

For the past several years, each spring a killdeer family, birds with long legs, black bands around their upper chests and a distinctive piping call, has taken up residence in the Sentinel's back lot.

We have kept careful eyes on these birds, as they make nests on the ground. The first year I became aware of them, they made a nest in the gravel against the building. Davie and Dove sat on their eggs in the heat of day and during rainstorms.

The birds take turns sitting on the eggs. If we walk close to the nest, the killdeer not on the nest will try to lure us off. He will stay a short distance ahead of us and pretend to be injured by dragging himself along on the ground. Sometimes, he sits and drags his wings like they are broken. If this doesn't



Letters To The Editor

Clay County recruitment story.

I saw a short clip on tv Sunday that mentioned the WPA program from the Great Depression days. I was struck by the way all those men were working so hard with just shovels and picks to build roads. It was almost as though they "wanted" to work! There used to be an attitude of joy in the sense of accomplishment of a task. I thought about how we usually treat this subject these days. We seem to seek a job where the least "work" is required, and when we do get a job, actively pursue as little work as possible.

I know that we have an image of the "Good ole' Days" as better somehow, and comment often about how people today don't "volunteer" like they used to. But I maintain that there remain a sizeable number of people who like to do things (WORK), but just don't have a system to find things to do.

Almost everyone is willing to volunteer instantly in an emergency setting. They are willing to do whatever they can to help. Very few people will pass by an automobile accident and not consider stopping to help, even if all they can

do is notify emergency services by cell phone. When you hear a crash outside the house, you always go to help. I'd like you to consider getting some training to actually be able to help, and possibly obtain communications equipment to tell you when something has happened near you. Excellently positioned to provide this opportunity are local volunteer fire departments. The "WORK" is a combination of emergency and non-emergency tasks, either tactical fireground, or traditional office work to manage the resources to prepare to perform emergency operations.

My own personal commitment is to make life a little bit longer, and hopefully a little bit better, for people who have bad things happen to them. If you'd like to have a part in making our community a better place to be, find out how to join your local fire department. Stop by the fire station and leave a note, or stop an individual carrying a radio and ask, or if those efforts fail, contact the Brasstown FD at brasstownfd@hotmail.com or Brasstown Chief, JD Robinson at home 828-837-0655 for a referral to your local department.

If you have it to sell, the Sentinel can sell it for you! Call our Classified department to see how!

837-6397!

Dixie Divas



It's a Big Deal for Southern Women but Maybe not for Men

By Rhonda Rich

It just goes to show how big Easter is to the women of the South.

Our group of Dixie Divas, which has about 25 members, voted a couple of years ago to choose a meeting date and stick with it. No changes allowed. That was the firm mandate. So we selected the first Saturday of every other month. Since that time, nothing has been big enough or important enough to change the date. Then along comes Easter.

Before our meeting in February, my godmother, who begins planning for Easter the day after New Year's, asked, "What are you going to do about the April meeting since it's the day before Easter?" I blinked. I was hosting the event and though I don't plan for months for Easter, I knew the date of Easter. "Easter is the second Sunday. Our meeting is the first Saturday." "Right," she nodded. "And the first Saturday is the day before the second Sunday. There's five Sundays in April." Great. Now, we had a dilemma. But, honestly, I didn't think it would be that big of a deal. We'd stick with the Diva date that is written in our bylaws.

Wrong. Turns out that the day before Easter is as big to our ladies as the Big E itself. "We have an Easter Egg Hunt for the kids," one said. "I'll be cooking for Easter lunch," another offered. "We're helping do breakfast following Sunrise Service so I have to work at the church to get ready," someone else said. "I just can't make it," most said. "Too much to do." And that's how it came about that our much hallowed by-laws were temporarily suspended and our regular first-

Saturday-of-every-other-month was moved to the last Saturday of March.

Because Easter for Southern women is a big deal.

Why is it so huge in the South? The easy answer is that we're the Bible Belt and that's that. Anything pertaining to the good Lord is critical to us. But there's more to it than that. Southern women love traditions and celebrations, especially those that revolve around home and family. If there's an opportunity to cook a delicious meal and bring the family together, we're there before you can whistle Dixie. Then, there's the clothes. The new dresses, shoes, purses and hats. Hanes Hosiery, based in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, knows the importance of their product for women and their new spring clothes. So, they put Hanes on sale for Easter.

The children aren't to be forgotten for they are as joyous at Easter as at Christmas. We have several young ones in our family now so it is an undeniable treat to see them toting pastel-colored Easter baskets bigger than they are and admire the small boys in short pants and knee socks and the little girls in white tights and black patent shoes. And we Southern women love children dressed in their Sunday best, especially when they have a smudge of chocolate egg across their chubby cheeks. We always have an Easter parade at my sister's house and even Dixie Dew dresses in her best and parades across the veranda and down the steps, prancing happily as my brother-in-law films and adds his sometimes funny, sometimes unnecessary commentary.

Yes, for Southern women, Easter is a weekend-long celebration. Now, on the other hand, men don't see it as we do. The Masters, golf's most prestigious tournament, is hosted in Augusta, Georgia every second weekend in April. Easter or not. Unlike the Divas, it doesn't matter if that weekend falls on Easter. That is, of course, because men are running Augusta National. But, if a Southern woman were in charge, she'd move the date. She'd know that Easter's bigger.

I think the ratings - at least in the South - are higher.

The O'Reilly Factor



The Rosie Factor

By Bill O'Reilly

With "Investors Business Daily" crowning Rosie O'Donnell with the nickname "Tokyo Rosie" for bad-mouthing America, critical mass has been reached for the acerbic comedian. She has crossed the entertainment Rubicon into the dark land of bitter performers who have allowed personal demons to become their public messengers.

The list of these individuals includes Morton Downey Jr., Michael Richards, and, way back when, Lenny Bruce. Americans will tolerate a lot from eccentric showbiz types, but hate-filled diatribes are almost always rejected, and careers are put at risk if the entertainers continue to spew bile.

A few weeks ago, the Rosie-Trump show was good theatre, and many Americans enjoyed the uncharitable joust. But it was nasty, personal and crude, not descriptions on which to build a resume. However, both Ms. O'Donnell and Mr. Trump did receive major publicity, and while egos were bruised, there was no permanent damage.

But make no mistake, Ms. O'Donnell's snarling demeanor made a lasting impression on many people, a harsh impression.

Now her image may be damaged beyond repair.

The problem is that Rosie O'Donnell is accusing her own country of heinous things. She has embraced the insane theory that 9/11 was an "inside job." She has apparently bought into the notion that elements inside the USA killed Americans on that terrible day. This kind of garbage is peddled on the Internet by America haters, and has been debunked step by step by Popular Mechanics magazine, which has actually published a book on the subject.

Ms. O'Donnell then took up Iran's cause. After the 15 British service people were kidnapped by the Iranians, Rosie told her audience on ABC that the British government had set up the situation in conjunction with the USA. The intent, according to the comedian, was to start a war with Iran. This crackpot analysis is anything but funny.

Armed with propaganda and dangerous with passion, Rosie O'Donnell has turned a morning coffee klatch TV program into Al Jazeera West. Where once "The View" dealt with menopause and shopping tips, the program now routinely assassinate the characters of anyone Ms. O'Donnell finds objectionable. The forum is mean-spirited, foolish and demeaning.

But it is the America-bashing that has done Ms. O'Donnell in. She will tell you it

is the Bush administration she loathes, but that distinction is often lost on an audience barraged with her hostile, radical-left rhetoric. It is hard to believe, for example, that a Jewish person in the world is comfortable with O'Donnell's sympathy for Iran.

The Disney Corporation, which owns ABC, has an enormous problem on its hands. If it fires O'Donnell, the left will attack the company on free speech grounds. If Disney allows the morning madness to continue, conservative and traditional Americans may well hold the company and its advertisers responsible.

After the Trump brouhaha, ratings for "The View" declined drastically, although they are still up year to year. But now with the 9/11 conspiracy and sympathy for Iran in play, it may be just a matter of time before the bottom drops out of the program.

Launching personal attacks on Donald Trump is one thing. Accusing your country of trumping up 9/11, and committing war crimes is quite something else. Rosie O'Donnell has cast her fate to an ill wind. Nothing good will come of this.

Veteran TV news anchor Bill O'Reilly is host of the Fox News show "The O'Reilly Factor" and author of the book "Culture Warrior." To find out more about Bill O'Reilly, and read features by other Creators Syndicate writers and cartoonists, visit the Creators Syndicate web page at www.creators.com. This column originates on the Web site www.billoreilly.com.