

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

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From the porch

By Dwight Otwell

An out of this world vacation



We plan to vacation this year at my daughter Vana's home in Hampton, VA.

Since Vana won't charge us to reside with her for a week, it will be a relatively inexpensive vacation - probably well below \$500.

Compare that to 58-year-old Charles Simonyi's \$25 million vacation. Of course, my trip will be nine or 10 days. His out of this world vacation will be for a full 13 days.

Simonyi is due home Friday. He has a first class ticket as a space tourist. He is only the fifth paying customer of the Russians. He blasted off from earth in a Russian rocket on April 7 along with two cosmonauts for a two-day journey to the international space station.

At the space station, Simonyi will be conducting a number of experiments, including measuring radiation levels and studying biological organisms inside the lab.

Simonyi is a native of Hungary but emigrated to the United States in 1968 and worked at Microsoft Corp., helping to develop Word and Microsoft Excel before founding his own software company.

Will average U.S. citizens ever be able to vacation in space? If it happens, it will be many years (or centuries) in the future. It will be a long time before average rich people (multi-millionaires) can afford to relax in the stillness and quietness of space. Simonyi is a billionaire and that is the only income level that can presently afford such luxuries.

I like the idea of exotic trips. But I can only afford a little exotic - maybe to the extreme outer limits of Unaka - possibly an out-of-state tour of Turtletown, TN.

To make the Simonyi story even more bizarre is that recent jailbird and cooking television personality Martha Stewart was

in Kazakhstan, Russia to bid farewell to Simonyi. News reports stated that Stewart spent time on a camel before the launch of her billionaire friend into space.

I've been on a camel at a circus and I rode in a small stunt plane at the local airshow a couple of years ago. I prefer the camel. At least it doesn't do loops and travel at high speed upside down.

Simonyi treated his fellow space station crew to a gourmet meal chosen by Stewart. It included quail roasted in Madiran wine; duck breast confit with capers and shredded chicken parmentier. I would think that \$25 million would include all meals but I guess not. If I were a space tourist, I would have to bring peanut butter sandwiches.

It may be that a new invention will allow cheaper space travel and perhaps a moon colony or sub-divisions on Mars. At the rate people are moving into Cherokee County, perhaps some of them could be diverted to another planet.

Maybe one summer, instead of visiting Vana, Mike and my granddaughters in Hampton, I could visit them in their domed city on the Red Planet. Since they never charge me for room and board, perhaps I could afford such a vacation.

Letters to the Editor

It has been brought to the attention of the Clay County Board of Commissioners that some individuals (both private and commercial), who fail to secure , cover, and/or load their vehicles properly, contribute to the litter in Clay County and on the highways by failing to prevent their loads escaping from their vehicles.

This is set forth in NC General Statute 20-116(g) (1): "No vehicle shall be driven or moved on any highway unless the vehicle is constructed and loaded to prevent any of it's load from falling , blowing, sifting, leaking, or otherwise escaping therefrom, and the vehicle shall not contain any holes, cracks, or openings though which any of it's load may escape..."

This provision applies to trucks, trailers, or other vehicles licensed for more than 7,500 pounds gross vehicle weight or licensed for 7,500 pounds or less gross vehicle weight and loaded with rock, gravel, stone, or any other similar substances that could fall, blow, leak, shift, or drop. NCGS 20-116(g)(2) a. & b and NCGS 20-116(G)(3) a. & b. state that "a truck, trailer, or other vehicle ...shall not be driven or moved

on any highway unless...

a. The height of the load against all four walls does not extend above a horizontal line six inches below the top when loaded at the loading point.

b. The load is securely covered by tarpaulin or some other suitable covering..."

Fines for littering can be substantial(per NCGS 14-399), beginning at \$100 and many include community service. Please use common sense. If your load is subject to blowing or escaping from your vehicle secure it and cove it.

Thank you,
Herbert Cheeks

Those of us who help pick up trash in Clay County sincerely thank County Commissioner Herbert Cheeks for this memo he sent to transfer station users and garbage haulers.

Dorothy Ethridge
CCCRA Appearance Committee

If you have it to sell, the Sentinel can sell it for you! Call our Classified department to see how! 837-6397!

The O'Reilly Factor



Immigration Anarchy

By Bill O'Reilly

My friend Geraldo Rivera and I had quite the verbal shootout the other day over the needless deaths of Allison Kunhardt, 17, and Tessa Tranchant, 16, in Virginia. Twenty-two-year-old Alfredo Ramos, an illegal alien from Mexico, killed the girls when he slammed into their car while drunk.

Ramos had three previous alcohol-related convictions and an identity theft beef as well. Despite all the criminal activity, the feds had no idea Ramos was even in the country because Virginia Beach is a "Sanctuary City" and its police chief, Alfred Jacocks, had ordered his officers not to ask about immigration status when dealing with most criminals.

Judge Colon Whitehurst didn't care that Ramos was illegal, either. He released him with only a \$250 fine after Ramos pleaded guilty to a DUI, his fourth conviction. In some cities you pay that much if your car is towed. Oh, yeah, Judge Whitehurst also suspended Ramos' driver's license even though he didn't have one.

The result of this incredibly irresponsible behavior on the part of Judge Whitehurst and the Virginia Beach authorities is that Allison and Tessa are dead.

My argument is that coddling criminal illegal aliens is unconscionable. Geraldo disagreed, saying the story was about drunk driving, not illegal immigration. I parried with a simple

question: Is it OK with you that an illegal alien remains in the United States with four criminal convictions?

Geraldo did not answer that question.

There is no question in my mind that we now have anarchy regarding illegal immigration in this country. Our four most populous cities, New York, Los Angeles, Chicago and Houston, all have "Sanctuary" policies in place, as do scores of other places. Thus, criminal aliens can avoid detection by Homeland Security in many parts of the nation.

This, of course, is insane. Think about it, the open border and blanket amnesty crowd are actually promoting a society where not only do we have to deal with American criminals; we have to accept the criminal behavior of foreign nationals as well.

A sane immigration policy would deport any illegal immigrant who committed any crime while in the USA. I understand that most undocumented workers are good people, and I believe in a fair guest worker program. I would even allow millions of illegal aliens to stay in this country while authorities investigated their situations. Pathway to citizenship? Sure, if undocumented workers are productive and law

abiding, and prove that over a number of years. But there should be zero tolerance for criminal illegal aliens. They have to go.

However, some Americans oppose that. Writing in the Denver Post, TV critic Joanne Ostrow accused me of using the deaths of Allison and Tessa to "spew racist bile."

This is the tactic that has many politicians cowering. If you oppose immigration chaos, you are a racist.

I wonder what the families of the two Denver police officers shot last year by a scofflaw illegal alien think about Ostrow's analysis? One of those policemen, Donald Young, died from his wounds.

Finally, I respect that Geraldo Rivera wants to protect people who are basically defenseless. But anarchy leads to death. The nearly 500 illegal aliens who died trying to cross American deserts last year were not done any favors by the "compassionate" crowd that looks the other way on immigration chaos.

America needs strong leadership to protect Allison, Tessa, the Denver cops, and those poor people dying in the desert. And we are not getting it.

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.

We're Moo-ving... but only temporarily.

While the Hayesville Ingles is being renovated into a new super center to better serve our community, the United Community Bank office in the store will be closing on April 21st at 1:00 PM. But don't worry... beginning April 23rd you will find the same friendly staff and service at our main location at the By Pass (95 Highway 64 West). Also, our main office lobby and drive-thru hours will include Saturday banking:

LOBBY HOURS:	DRIVE-THRU HOURS:
Monday - Thursday 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM	Monday - Thursday 8:30 AM to 5:00 PM
Friday 9:00 AM to 6:00 PM	Friday 8:30 AM to 6:00 PM
Saturday (New Hours) 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM	Saturday (New Hours) 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM

We're excited about serving you in our main office and again in Ingles when the renovation is complete.

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