



California Dreamin’

BY BILL O'REILLY
Creators Syndicate

LOS ANGELES — It is Academy Awards weekend in the nation’s entertainment capital, and the 1 percenters are out in force. Wealth displays are running riot; robust consumption is the philosophical standard.

I am staying at the legendary Hotel Bel-Air, a place where a cheeseburger and fries costs more than \$30. Business is good. For most guests, money is no concern. They have it; they spend it. Life for the swells is sweet — or at least they want you to think it is.

President Obama has little use for these wealthy people, but strangely, many of them fervently love him for despising their circumstances. Unlike Bill Clinton, who couldn’t get enough West Coast “hospitality,” Obama takes their political donations and gets out of town faster than Wile E. Coyote. He knows show business is a shallow pit where almost everyone is disposable.

Above all, the president is a social justice man. And despite all the liberal celebrity blather, social justice is not exactly a top priority in the elegant salons of Beverly Hills, where hair treatments can run a thousand bucks. It must be hard for the president to cozy up to people who spend \$20,000 on a weekend vacation after his experience in the South Side of Chicago. True compassion for the underprivileged must extend further than celebrity fundraisers at Spago, and the president knows it.

It is certainly difficult for good, selfless people to defend the excesses of capitalism, and Obama has



Bill
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capitalized on the resentment. He has seized the greed to fund his dream of a level playing field by demanding the wealthy pay “their fair share.” The president is going to take as much money from the affluent as he can before he leaves office. He has turned the White House into Sherwood Forest — taxing the rich and redistributing the cash to the less well off.

But the unintended consequences of the money grab have escaped the president. The folks who drive the economy don’t trust him. Banks continue to sit on billions in cash that could be loaned to expand the economy. Many small-business owners are actually cutting back their payrolls because of the massive Obamacare regulations.

So instead of encouraging the private marketplace to create opportunities for Americans, Obama is actually strangling upward mobility. This defeats his purpose of economic justice, and the rising debt he is championing may, in the end, crush the

underclass.

All of this is far too complicated for many show-biz types to absorb. It is much easier to feel than to think. And they feel much better about their \$100,000 cars when they cheer for the social justice president.

But like Hollywood itself, America’s current fiscal situation is primarily smoke and mirrors. And believe me, there is no wizard behind the curtain.

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Leonard
PITTS

made it necessary. “The children of today’s Alabama are not racist and neither is their government,” wrote Alabama Attorney General Luther Strange last week.

It was rather like hearing a wife beater say he has seen the error of his ways and will no longer smack the missus around. Though you’re glad and all, you still hope the wife’s testimony will carry a little more weight in deciding whether the restraining order should be lifted.

But the court’s conservatives seemed eager to believe, peppering the law’s defenders with skeptical questions. Indeed, Justice Antonin Scalia branded the law a “racial entitlement.”

Sit with that a moment. A law protecting the voting rights of a historically disenfranchised minority is a “racial entitlement”? Equality is a government program?

Lord, have mercy. There is historical resonance here. In the 1870s, the South assured the federal government it could behave itself without oversight. The feds agreed to leave the region alone where race was concerned. The result: nearly a century of Jim Crow. Now here comes Shelby County, saying in effect: We’ve changed. Trust us.

It is an appeal that might have seemed persuasive back when I was young and naive, sitting on Cathy’s lap (or she on mine) and thinking race was over. But that was a long time ago.

Yes, the South has changed — largely because of the law Shelby County seeks to gut. Even so, attempts to dilute the black vote have hardly abated. We’ve just traded poll taxes and literacy tests for gerrymandering and Voter ID laws.

So we can ill afford to be as naive as a top court conservative at the prospect of softening federal protection of African-American voting rights. “Trust us,” says the South. And the whole weight of history demands a simple question in response.

Why?

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such an important cause on so many levels. The Yankton Women’s and Children’s Center would like to extend a warm thank you to all those who attended “Heart to Heart,” as well as to all that made the event possible. Among the major sponsors were: R.T. and M.C. Smith Insurance; Concrete Materials; Avera; Hillcrest Country Club; and Johnson, Miner, Marlow, Woodward & Huff, Prof. LLC. We would also like to extend a very warm thank you to all the individuals and businesses that so graciously donated items for our auction.

The impact of this community’s support and generosity will touch the lives of countless individuals and families for years to come. Thank you!

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OPINION | OTHER THOUGHTS

Livestreaming Decision Is Correct

ARGUS LEADER, Sioux Falls (Feb. 28): South Dakota lawmakers did the right thing when they approved a bill that prevents school districts from entering into exclusive contracts with news media companies who want to livestream high school games.

That means the Pierre School District can’t contract with one local radio station and leave other companies unable to air the games — which the district has done. It means all school districts — from Avon to Aberdeen and Sioux Falls to Spearfish — must allow media organizations equal access to their facilities.

The Sioux Falls district has prevented the *Argus Leader* from livestreaming high school games but, for a fee, allows the company to put student-produced video on our website.

Rep. Jim Bolin, R-Dist. 16, was absolutely correct when he said, “This is a bill about the First Amendment, the right of the media to have access to events paid for by taxpayers.” The bill was one of the few pieces of open government legislation that was approved this legislative session.

For lawmakers, we realize it was in some cases a difficult fight, and it took hard work to push the bill through to approval. However, the legislation easily prevailed in the Senate and, in the end, overwhelmingly passed 50-20 in the House Wednesday.

It would be simplistic to look at this victory for the public as just a news organization fight. Indeed, it is about the right of the citizens who pay taxes so that schools can operate to have equal access to events at their schools. That includes the news media, which is guaranteed that right under the First Amendment.

Technology has changed and enlarged the number of ways that media companies can cover the news to include online, social media and the more traditional print and broadcast format. News companies, large and small, have started broadcasting live the high school games on the Internet, allowing people who are unable to attend the games to watch their child, grandchild or favorite team on their computer.

We think that is good, that more people are able to see a school event. We also don’t believe it takes away anything from the event itself but enhances the chance for people to connect with their district, even if it is just a game or other event.

That’s important to a healthy government and an informed electorate. When it comes to the First Amendment, it’s bigger than a ballgame.

‘Big Bang’ Worth The Risk

LINCOLN JOURNAL STAR (Feb. 25): The agricultural sector of the economy has been soaring for several years. Now the ag boom is hitting the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

The announcement that the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources plans to fill 36 tenured or tenure-track position was indeed a “big bang,” as Vice Chancellor Ronnie Green put it. The new positions amount to a 10 percent increase in the size of the faculty.

“Some would say it’s risky to be taking on this much at once,” Green said. “But I’d say it’s a calculated, strategic move that’s going to pay off big in the long run.”

Green has a lot of evidence to back him up.

— Farm income has been at record levels, and experts predict that will continue as the world’s population grows exponentially, with a corresponding increase in the demand for food. The U.S. Department of Agriculture this week projected that net farm income would set another record in 2013.

— Enrollment by students in agricultural majors at UNL has jumped by about 65 percent in the past eight years.

— Agriculture students are faring better in the job market than students in other fields, the *Wall Street Journal* reported this month. In the previous century, many ag students headed back to the family farm after graduation. These days, they often go to work for global corporations, get paid well and travel the world.

— Adding to the interest in agriculture is the growing organic food industry and rising interest in environmentally friendly agricultural practices.

Eight years of enrollment growth, research funding and public and private partnerships will help pay for the new positions, Green said. Money initially also will be redirected from equipment and infrastructure.

The boost in the size of the faculty ties in with other strategic moves the university has made recently.

Creation of the Water for Food Institute with a \$50 million donation from Robert Daugherty, founder of Valmont, put UNL on the map in the global effort to find ways to combat hunger through the use of sustainable methods for increasing agricultural productivity. The institute recently hired four new faculty members and plans to hire two more.

Green used a phrase gamblers use when he said it was “time to double down on our investment in these areas around food, fuel and water.”

Considering the cards on the table, however, the decision to make a bold move to expand the size of the faculty is a risk worth taking.

TODAY IN HISTORY

By The Associated Press

Today is Monday, March 4, the 63rd day of 2013. There are 302 days left in the year.

Today’s Highlight in History: On March 4, 1913, Woodrow Wilson was inaugurated as the 28th president of the United States, succeeding President William Howard Taft.

On this date: In 1789, the Constitution of the United States went into effect as the first Federal Congress met in New York. (The lawmakers then adjourned for lack of a quorum.)

In 1791, Vermont became the 14th state.

In 1813, President James Madison was inaugurated for a second term of office.

In 1861, Abraham Lincoln was inaugurated as the 16th president of the United States. The U.S. Government Printing Office began operation. The Confederate States of America adopted as its flag the original version of the Stars and Bars.

In 1863, the Idaho Territory was created.

In 1888, legendary college football coach Knute Rockne was born in Voss, Norway.

In 1913, just before leaving office, President William Howard Taft signed legislation replacing the Department of Commerce and Labor with separate Departments of Commerce and Labor. The “Buffalo nickel” officially went into circulation.

In 1933, Franklin D. Roosevelt took office as America’s 32nd president.

In 1943, “Mrs. Miniver” won six Academy Awards, including best picture and best actress for Greer Garson (whose 5 1/2-minute acceptance speech became the butt of industry jokes). James Cagney won best actor for “Yankee Doodle Dandy.”

In 1952, Ronald Reagan and Nancy Davis were married in San Fernando Valley, Calif.

In 1963, American poet William Carlos Williams, 79, died in Rutherford, N.J.

In 1987, President Ronald Reagan addressed the nation on the Iran-Contra affair, acknowledging that his overtures to Iran had “deteriorated” into an arms-for-hostages deal.

Ten years ago: The Army’s oldest armored division, “Old Ironsides,” got orders to head for the Persian Gulf as the total of U.S. land, sea and air forces arrayed against Iraq or preparing to go near 300,000. A bomb in a backpack killed 22 people at an



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YOUR LETTERS

‘Heart To Heart’

Desiree Warren-Johnson, Yankton

Executive Director, Yankton Women’s/Children’s Center

The support The Yankton Women’s and Children’s Center received at “Heart to Heart” with the Yankton Women’s/Children’s Center was monumental. We had a fabulous turnout as many community members attended, demonstrating their endless support. More than \$25,000 was raised to provide support services to those who are struggling with Family Violence in the Community of Yankton.

The community of Yankton should truly be proud that so many people have come together to support

WRITE US

Letters, Yankton Press & Dakotan, 319 Walnut, Yankton, SD 57078

FROM THE BIBLE

They glorified the God of Israel. Matthew 15:31. Portals of Prayer, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis