

California Dreamin'

Bill

O'REILLY

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 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

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

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

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.

Veteran TV news anchor Bill O'Reilly is host of the Fox News show "The O'Reilly Factor" and author of the book "Pinheads and Patriots: Where You Stand in the Age of Obama."



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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

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 Rep. Jim Bolin, R-Dist. 16, was absolutely correct when he said, "This is a bill

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

about the First Amendment, the right of the media to have access to events paid

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

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

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

— 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

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 in 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.

A Case Of 'Racial Entitlement'?

Leonard

BY LEONARD PITTS JR. Tribune Media Services

One day, many years ago, I was working in my college bookstore when this guy walks in wearing a Tshirt. "White Power," it said.

I was chatting with a friend, Cathy Duncan, and what happened next was as smooth as if we had rehearsed it. All at once, she's sitting on my lap or I'm sitting on hers – I can't remember which – and that white girl gives this black guy a peck on the lips. In a loud voice she asks, "So, what time should I expect you home for dinner, honey?"

Mr. White Power glares malice and retreats. Cathy and I fall over laughing.

Which tells you something about how those of us who came of age in the first postcivil rights generation tended to view racism; we saw it as something we could dissipate with a laugh, a tired old thing that had bedeviled our parents, yes, but which we were beyond. We thought racism was over.

I've spent much of my life since then being disabused of that naivete. Watching media empires built upon appeals to racial resentment, seeing the injustice system wield mass incarceration as a weapon against black men, bearing witness as the first African-American president produced his longform birth certificate, all helped me understand just how silly we were to believe bigotry was done.

So a chill crawled my spine last week as the Supreme Court heard arguments in a case that could result in gutting the Voting Rights Act. That landmark 1965 legislation gave the ballot to black voters who had previously been denied it by discriminatory laws, economic threats, violence and by registrars who challenged them with nonsense questions like, "How many bubbles are in a bar of soap?

One of the act's key provisions covers nine mostly Southern states and scores of municipalities with histories of such behavior. They must get federal approval before changing their voting procedures. The requirement may be stigmatizing; but it is hardly onerous.

Yet Shelby County, Ala., seeks the provision's repeal, pronouncing itself cured of the attitudes that

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.

Leonard Pitts is a columnist for the Miami Herald, 1 Herald Plaza, Miami, Fla., 33132. Readers may contact him via e-mail at lpitts@miamiherald.com.

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TODAY IN HISTORY

By The Associated Press

university has made recently.

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 quo-

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 inaugu-

rated 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, Nor-

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.

Ín 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,

In 1963, American poet William Carlos Williams, 79, died in Rutherford, N.J. In 1987, President Ronald Reagan ad-

dressed the nation on the Iran-Contra affair. acknowledging that his overtures to Iran had deteriorated" into an arms-for-hostages Ten years ago: The Army's oldest ar-

mored 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 neared 300,000. A bomb in a backpack killed 22 people at an airport terminal in the southern Philippines. Five years ago: Republican John Mc-Cain clinched his party's presidential nomination. Democrat Hillary Rodham Clinton won primary victories in Ohio, Texas and Rhode Island, while Barack Obama pre-vailed in Vermont. Green Bay Packers quarterback Brett Favre retired after 17 years, saying he was "tired." (Favre later made a comeback with the New York Jets, then the Minnesota Vikings, before retiring again.) Dungeons & Dragons co-creator Gary Gygax died in Lake Geneva, Wis., at age 69.

One year ago: President Barack Obama said he didn't want war but insisted he would attack Iran if that were the only option left to stop that nation from getting a nuclear weapon. Vladimir Putin scored a decisive victory in Russia's presidential election to return to the Kremlin and extend his hold on power for six more years. Nearly 300 people in the Republic of Congo were killed after a series of blasts at an arms depot in the capital Brazzaville.

Today's Birthdays: Actress Paula Prentiss is 75. Movie director Adrian Lyne is 72.

Singer Bobby Womack is 69. Rock musician Chris Squire (Yes) is 65. Singer Shakin Stevens is 65. Author James Ellroy is 65. Texas Gov. Rick Perry is 63. Singer Chris Rea is 62. Actor Ronn Moss is 61. Actress Kay Lenz is 60. Musician Emilio Estefan is 60. Movie director Scott Hicks is 60. Actress Catherine O'Hara is 59. Actor Mykelti Williamson is 56. Actress Patricia Heaton is 55. Actor Steven Weber is 52. Rock musician Jason Newsted is 50. Actress Stacy Edwards is 48. Rapper Grand Puba is 47. Rock musician Patrick Hannan (The Sundays) is 47 Rock singer Evan Dando (Lemonheads) is 46. Actress Patsy Kensit is 45. Gay rights activist Chaz Bono is 44. Actor Nick Stabile s 43. Rock musician Fergal Lawler (The Cranberries) is 42. Country singer Jason Sellers is 42. Jazz musician Jason Marsalis is 36. Actress Jessica Heap is 30. TV personality Whitney Port is 28. Actress Margo Harshman is 27. Actor Joshua Bowman is 25. Actress Andrea Bowen ("Desperate Housewives") is 23. Actress Jenna Boyd is 20.

Thought for Today: "It is almost impossible to state what one in fact believes, because it is almost impossible to hold a belief and to define it at the same time.' Carlos Williams (1883-1963).

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

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

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 The impact of this community's support and gen-

erosity will touch the lives of countless individuals and families for years to come. Thank you!

WRITE US

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