



PHOTO BY BILL FAVER

WE CAN ENJOY the blue skies as well as the blue flowers and birds like the Blue Grosbeak.

Autumn's 'Fragmentary Blue'

BY BILL FAVER

One of the good things about late fall and winter is the rich blue skies we find on days that are clear. Usually there are no white puffy clouds and the haze of summer has gone away. We are given a transparent view of deep blue and far away. So often we take such beautiful skies for granted, possibly because we have so many of them. Many of us seldom notice them as much as we do a flower or a bird or some other thing closer to us.



FAVER

Those kinds of days make me want to get outside and make the most of what nature has to offer us. Maybe take a stroll in the woods or along the beach. Or take the binoculars and camera and head

for a familiar birding spot. Or at the very least get in the car and go somewhere!

Those days also remind me of Robert Frost's poem "Fragmentary Blue":

*Why make so much of fragmentary blue
In here and there a bird, or butterfly,
Or flower, or wearing-stone, or open eye.
When Heaven presents in sheets the solid hue?*

I don't think he means for us to look less at the birds and butterflies and flowers and stones. I just think he is telling us to notice the blue skies above us more. Or maybe he is telling us to try to see the big picture as well as the smaller parts, so we won't be satisfied with something less than the whole.

Whatever the "message" of Frost's poem, we can count our own blessings that we live in a place where we can enjoy the "sheets of solid hue" and the "fragmentary blue" just about every day of the year.

MORE LETTERS

'Informed Common Sense' Says Quarry Inappropriate For Area

To the editor:
The Brunswick County Economic Development Commission's glowing, but ludicrous, cost/benefit analysis of the Martin-Marietta project would lead us to believe that we shall all soon bask in the economic glow of a quarry. And surely it must be true since Martin-Marietta supplied the commission with the pertinent numbers.

In a country where mistrust of government is ripe, the temptation to substitute supposedly impersonal economic calculations for personal, responsible decision-making and to rely on distant experts rather than size up the situation for oneself, can only be exceedingly strong.

One must not forget, however, that pure economics is a matter of logic, but applied economics is a matter of informed common sense. Informed common sense is not to allow a huge, open pit mine surrounded by salt marsh estuaries, between a nuclear plant and a munitions depot, and next to residential communities that depend on tourism real estate sales and home construction.

If our elected officials and appointed boards wish to bury their political futures at the bottom of a quarry, and try to take our quality of life with them, then sadly, that is their prerogative.

New Second Class?

To the editor:
Now, what about NAFTA and Congressman Charlie Rose?

According to the editorial page of the *Charlotte Observer* Nov. 22, "The Fayetteville Democrat was so hostile toward NAFTA that the *Charlotte Observer* (had) called him 'the delegation's NAFTA opponent.'"

The *Charlotte Observer* quoted Congressman Rose Nov. 16 as saying NAFTA "was negotiated by the corporate elite friends of George Bush with the corporate elite Mexican companies. It's about getting labor for \$1 an hour....At a time we should be worried about stimulating new jobs, we are giving jobs away."

"Then came the vote, and in the greatest transformation since Saul's en route to Damascus, Congressman Charlie Rose supported NAFTA without a word of explanation. We can't wait to hear his story." In my opinion, NAFTA will create a new democracy in Latin America by helping our Southern neighbors create a second class!

In Mexico, the ruling class re-

mains fully entrenched and richer than ever. Television coverage of NAFTA hearings never brought up land ownership in Mexico. Land deeds of trust do not exist in Mexico!

U.S. corporate companies do not own the land that their factories are built on. They are given a beneficiary deed by the Mexican government, but the Mexican government owns the land. I am a beneficiary deed holder at El Dorado Estates near San Felipe.

The Mexican poor will remain poor. The ruling class in Mexico will be in jeopardy as the working class accelerates its economic influence. Years down the way, NAFTA will be responsible for revolting second-class Mexicans—another Spanish-American war with all Latin American countries!

Bob L. Johnson
Ocean Isle Beach

Clean-Up Questioned

To the editor
I have four questions concerning the authorization of Mr. Yeltzin (Brunswick County Manager Wyman Yelton) to clean up the property of (Bennie) Ludlum.

Would County Manager Yeltzin have authorized the clean-up if Mr. Ludlum had not been a prior county commissioner?

Would he have authorized the clean-up if he had had to pay for it out of his pocket?

Is it legal to use public funds to

clean up private property. If so, what law governs this sort of action?

Norman Horne
Shalotte

Where's The Card?

To the editor:
On Nov. 6 I mailed a birthday card with a check in it to Waynesville to my son from the post office in Seaside. I dropped it off myself. This is Nov. 22, and same has not arrived here in Waynesville.

I put an Elvis stamp on this letter, and I believe it was lifted by someone, probably before it was stamped, and never left Seaside. Who would want it if it was stamped?

I mailed other mail in Calabash, and it came in the usual time. Just how far is it from the mountains to seashore?

Emily M. Bradley
Waynesville

Write Us

We welcome your letters to the editor. Letters must include your address and telephone number. (This information is for verification purposes only; we will not publish your street/mailling address or phone number.) Letters must be typed or written legibly. Address letters to:

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On Deadly Diversions And Fatal Attractions

Judging from recent news accounts, some folks seem to be having a real love-hate relationship with death and dying these days.

For example, the city of San Francisco (home of the Grateful Dead) is looking for a way to clean up the image of its number-one tourist attraction, the Golden Gate Bridge, which also happens to be the most popular suicide spot in the Western world.

As of last week, 938 people had jumped to their deaths from the 220-foot-high span. That doesn't include the 422 "possibles" whose bodies were never found or the handful who survived the leap.

The first Golden Gate flier took the plunge three months after the bridge opened in 1937. And they have been flinging themselves off up at a rate of more than one per month ever since.

Why? One of the survivors called it "a romantic thing to do." Another described his unsuccessful attempt as "the only way to go."

For years, city officials have talked about ways of dissuading people from jumping off the bridge. Proposed solutions have ranged from the silly (signs that say "Think Before You Leap") to the serious (electric fences and safety nets).

But the obvious preventative—an 8-foot-high barricade along the entire span—has been repeatedly rejected because such a fence would cost too much and spoil the bridge's appearance.

Instead, Mayor Frank Jordan wants to install emergency telephone lines wired directly to suicide prevention counselors in hopes of convincing would-be jumpers to step back from the brink.

I've got a better idea. Why not connect the telephones to another bridge located in Poe, California, where the Butte County Sheriff's Department is trying to stop people from tying rubber bands to their legs and diving off the 185-foot Feather River Bridge.

For the past three years, entrepreneurs have been attaching rubber bands to the narrow railroad overpass and collecting \$50 apiece from idiots who want to use them to jump off the bridge. Authorities feel it is just a matter of time before one of

Eric
Carlson



them splatters on the rocks or gets squashed by a passing freight train.

As one deputy noted, "People who are crazy enough to throw themselves off a bridge are certainly crazy enough to stand there while a train is coming."

Personally, I don't see the problem here. The laws of evolution suggest that organisms that stupid should be filtered from the gene pool before they reproduce.

Unfortunately, some of them have already borne young and are foolish enough to bring their children out on the tracks "to watch daddy fly." So I guess the Poe folks of Butte County deserve credit for trying to protect the innocent.

In what has come to be called the "bungee wars," the district attorney and Union Pacific Railroad police are using sophisticated surveillance equipment, helicopters and significant manpower to ambush and arrest the jumpers.

I think a cheaper solution might be to install a row of wind-powered whirling helicopter blades with razor-sharp edges just below the bridge.

Or why not kill two birds with one phone? Just set up a bridge hotline between the Golden Gate and the Feather River. Bungee jumpers could talk the suicidally troubled into attaching a lifeline. And those about to embark on their final flight might convince a few bungee jumpers to try the real thing.

Another story on the dead beat comes from Salt Lake City, Utah, where a guy named Claude "Corky" Nowell is offering a unique service for people whose vanity reaches beyond the grave. Now, thanks to his modern "mummification" process, those unable to walk like an Egyptian can at least be buried like one.

For a mere \$32,000, Corky will inject a chemical into your (prefer-

ably dead) skull and convert your brain into a lump of plastic. Then he will pickle your body for 60 days in a giant vat of preservative, wrap it in gauze and plastic wrap, dip it in fiberglass and weld it up in a bronze casket carved to look like you imagine you did in your better days.

Or so he claims. The article did not say whether Corky (who has renamed himself after the sun god Sumnum Bonum Amon Ra) has ever performed this service on a genuine dead person. But he has signed up 137 live ones.

Which by my calculations adds up to a cool \$4.3 million. Not a bad take from customers who won't be able to sue Mr. Ra for breach of contract after they wind up decomposing in some tar pit next to Jimmy Hoffa.

As a lifelong organ donor, I feel these people should consider a more generous use for their mortal remains. Why spend all that money on a stupid sarcophagus that's just going to clutter up somebody's attic until it gets sold at a yard sale?

Instead you could donate your body to Heidelberg University for research. Since 1975, those kooky Germans have been stuffing cadavers into Volkswagens, Audis and BMWs and crashing them into walls to see what happens.

The news account I read failed to indicate whether the Germans also use their "crash dummies" for humorous buckle-your-seatbelt commercials like we have in America. But I doubt it. In fact, the German people have raised loud protests over the practice of buffeting bodies in tumbling fender blenders.

"This is a completely normal matter for the researchers. But apparently some people don't like thinking about life and death," said a Heidelberg University spokesman. "I suspect this sensitivity has something to do with Germany's past."

But the Catholic Church is also upset. A statement from the Vatican called the experiments "repugnant to the conscience."

So while there will continue to be questions about the scientific value of these "crash corpses" in the study of vehicular motion. You can be sure they will continue to have an impact on the windshields of public opinion.

GUEST COLUMN

Church Belongs To All—And None

BY FRAN SALONE-PELLETIER

The letter written by Harry Quick, published Nov. 24, caused me great upset for many reasons.

All of us have had difficulties with church matters at one time or another. However, I felt it was inappropriate for such a parochial matter to be submitted to the public forum.

Additionally, the writer presumes the accuracy of his information regarding both the history of kneelers as necessary to proper worship and the desire of the majority of St. Brendan parishioners to have them in the planned church building.

Some education in the areas of church history and the evolution of liturgical practices would certainly help to modify one's vehement adherence to a single idea of what is right and good.

To build a church facility without kneelers is neither unheard of nor disgraceful. In fact, prayer said standing "was the most common

posture for prayer in antiquity and even to this day is regarded as the most solemn manner of praying known to the liturgy.... Prayer on the knees was introduced very late. Standing expresses the idea of attention, watchfulness, and respect and brings home an awareness of our dignity as children of the Resurrection." (*The Worship of the Church*, William O'Shea, S.S. D.D., p. 80)

The underlying anger apparent in the letter and the appeal to write to the Bishop are not matters easily diffused by information. No church group is perfect, nor are any of its individual members.

Change frequently causes pain, and personalities come into conflict. We lose sight of the fact that all of us are called to be compassionate. Most of all, we forget our need to be forgiving people.

We do have a scriptural "recipe" to follow whenever there are problems in or with our churches. It is the command to go first to our bro-

ther and speak with him. If that proves ineffective, we then bring one or two others from our ecclesial community to assist with communication.

Only when failure occurs there, as well, do we seek the judgment of authority. When we allow an argument over kneelers to become of paramount concern, have we not lost our sense of what it means to be people of God?

Lastly, in response to the question, "Does our church belong to him or us?" I would say that it belongs to all of us—and to none of us. The church belongs to God and is given to us as a means for us to grow closer to Him.

When any of us seeks to have personal desires or wants—or even needs—completely met, we miss the whole point of Christianity, the religion of the Suffering Servant of Yahweh.

The writer is a member of St. Brendan Parish.

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