

N&O is right about dogs and dining al fresco

I am just now recovering from a strange queasy feel in my brain. I actually agreed with an editorial about dogs in the News and Observer. But their logic was so forceful I had no choice.

It began when a state bureaucrat said it was fine if sidewalk—outdoor—diners could bring their dogs along as companions. Alas, a superior bureaucrat, probably with more graduate school degrees, overruled the ruling and ruled that pets would not be allowed.

Let's look at this. About 240 million Americans keep pets in their home. The list is long and if you are deep into diversity, take a look. We keep, raccoons, possums; dogs, cats, birds, squirrels, snakes, turtles, fish, worms, white and brown mice, rats and black bears.

The dogs and cats that make up the bulk of American pets have the run of the house. There is always the big hound dog that sleeps under the baby's crib, the puppy that hikes his leg on the dining room tables, the cocker spaniel that get caught stealing a pork chop off the dining room table, the cat that gets under the baby's nose and barfs hair balls on the living room carpet.

And that is just the stuff inside the house. Outdoors? Well, dogs bury bones out there. I wonder how many patients are crowding Triangle hospitals rolling in agony from some of the diseases our pets are spreading. So far as know, not many of the 240 million Americans have ever reported a case of Pet Fever. There is tularemia but there hasn't been a case of rabbit fever around here in many years. There is also rabies.

Not many pet owners take their dogs to outdoor restaurants, but if they want to I don't have a problems with it. Pets, it seems, are quite innocent and it is the much cherished and sacred wild life most bureaucrats try to save. You know, the flocks of wild geese that use Falls Lakes as a pit stop.

The N&O editorial suggested the question of pets at an outdoor restaurant should be settled by the pet owner and headwaiter on the sidewalk.

A civil servant bureaucrat who wants to invent rules for outdoor restaurants needs something else to do. How about inventing an alarm signal for a flock of pigeons that just had its supper on the Kroger parking lot and is about to unload it on his backyard grill?

R.L. Taylor is a regular contributor. He has been a newspaperman for more than 50 years, working as a reporter, editor and publisher.

Media Meditations

by R.L. Taylor



Easy does it in Afghanistan

By Julian Sereno

I've always taken the rise of Islamic radicalism personally. At the time of the Iranian revolution in 1979, there were about 50,000 Americans living in Iran. I traveled there in the early 1970s, during the glory days of the Shah. Teheran featured avenues named after U.S. presidents Kennedy and Eisenhower, pizza parlors and disco techs.

It didn't take much convincing on the part of Khomeini to demonize us. The Iranians saw us up close, and didn't seem to think much of us.

It gets worse. Khalid Sheikh Mohammad, mastermind of the 9/11 attacks, spent 10 years in the Tar Heel state, where he developed his psychopathic hatred of all things American. He first studied at Chowan College in northeastern North Carolina, then at N.C. A&T State University in Greensboro, where he learned the basic skills in structural engineering that enabled him to devise a way to destroy the Twin Towers.

An unfortunate conclusion is that familiarity breeds contempt. That is something to keep in mind as our country decides whether or not to pour thousands more troops into Afghanistan.

The paradoxical fact is that the more that Westerners, particularly soldiers, pour into Afghanistan, the more that Afghans, famously xenophobic, rise to fight against them.

One recent newspaper account of an ambush recounts how the women and children the troops were ostensibly there to protect were carrying water and ammo to Taliban fighters, firing on them from the high ground.

Pakistan, an "ally" to whom we give billions of dollars in aid, has a population that now largely loathes us. The Pakistani versions of Rush Limbaugh, Glen Beck, et.al., spread rumors of murderous Blackwater security guards running amok in Pakistan,



An engraving documenting the first Anglo-Afghan War, 1838-1842.

and of the U.S. Embassy becoming a base with 1,500 Marines from which assaults will be launched, a rumor our Ambassador has repeatedly denied. They posted the names and addresses of American residents in Pakistan on the Internet.

And don't forget Iraq, where the man who threw his shoes at President Bush has been released from jail to a hero's welcome.

The bad news is that lots of the people we are attempting to liberate hate us. The good news is that everybody there hates the Taliban and Al Qaeda much more, as soon as they have any power.

Al Qaeda was defeated in Iraq after they took control of Anbar Province and the Sunnis who lived there and who had previously fought us realized what blood thirsty goons they actually were, turned on them and became our allies.

In Pakistan, it was after the Taliban took control of the Swat Valley, and started beheading critics and beating adolescent girls, that popular sentiment turned against them. The Pakistani Army's fight against the Taliban has

been quite successful because of popular support. While Pakistanis may despise the United States, they hate the Taliban a whole lot more.

To know them is to hate them.

Which brings us back to the question of fighting the Taliban. We need to do that ruthlessly and relentlessly, particularly as long as they harbor Osama bin Laden and Aiman Al Zawahri, who must be captured or killed. Of course no one really knows where those two are, even though they are suspected to be in the Northwest Frontier Province of Pakistan. They also could be in Yemen, bin Laden's ancestral land, or across the Horn of Africa, in Sudan or Somalia, plotting. We should go after them and their ideological soul mates, wherever they may be.

But bringing democracy and prosperity to Afghanistan is another matter. Hamid Karzai, president for nearly eight years as Afghanistan became a narco-state with a corrupt, ineffective and powerless central government, just fixed the most recent national election to retain his office. Trying to grow a democracy in that barren soil is not worth the lives of the brave men and women in our armed forces. It won't make us any safer.

We can kill plenty of Taliban and Al Qaeda, but the only people who can really defeat them are Afghans and the Pakistanis, and they are most likely to do that after they've experienced Taliban rule.

By the way, in Iran, where reformers are braving beatings and torture protesting a rigged election, and where the U.S. has had no presence in 30 years, Americans have become quite popular, much more so than in Western Europe. Go figure.

Julian Sereno is editor and publisher of Chatham County Line. As a young man, he traveled by bus through parts western and south Asia, including Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan.

letter to the editor

It was very gratifying for me to hear that Mayor Randy Voller and the Pittsboro Town Board unanimously passed a motion to support the trial bus service from Pittsboro to Chapel Hill. The Chatham County Board of Commissioners had already passed a motion to support the bus service, but in order for this effort to succeed Pittsboro also had to support it. This type of collaboration between Chatham County, Chapel Hill Transit, and the Town of Pittsboro is an example of how cooperation can be leveraged to maximize opportunity.

Having traveled throughout the world over the past 50 years I have had the opportunity to see public transit systems in Europe, Russia, Japan and South America. I have always been impressed by the excellent public transportation in other parts of the world. Therefore, it was a pleasant surprise to hear that bus service will be available daily on a trial basis to Chapel Hill.

It is my understanding that the

Federal Transit Administration working with Chapel Hill Transit authorized approximately \$176,000 for an 18-month trial program for bus service to and from Chapel Hill as long as Chatham County and Pittsboro participated. Apparently the County and Town have funded a six-month pilot program. The pilot program should enable all parties to evaluate the efficacy of the program so that this pilot program becomes a permanent reality in due time. If the program becomes permanent, I hope that it will be expanded to include Raleigh and the airport.

I thank our elected officials in Pittsboro and Chatham County for their leadership and foresight in supporting this effort. It should be remembered that every gallon of gas and oil we save is a gallon that does NOT have to be imported.

L.A. Voller
Major, USAFR Retired

(The writer is Randy Voller's dad.)

ADVERTISE IN CHATHAM COUNTY LINE

Let US HELP you get the Word Out!

CONTACT
phone: 919.933-6492
fax 919.932-2602
chathamcoline@mindspring.com
www.chathamcountyline.org

