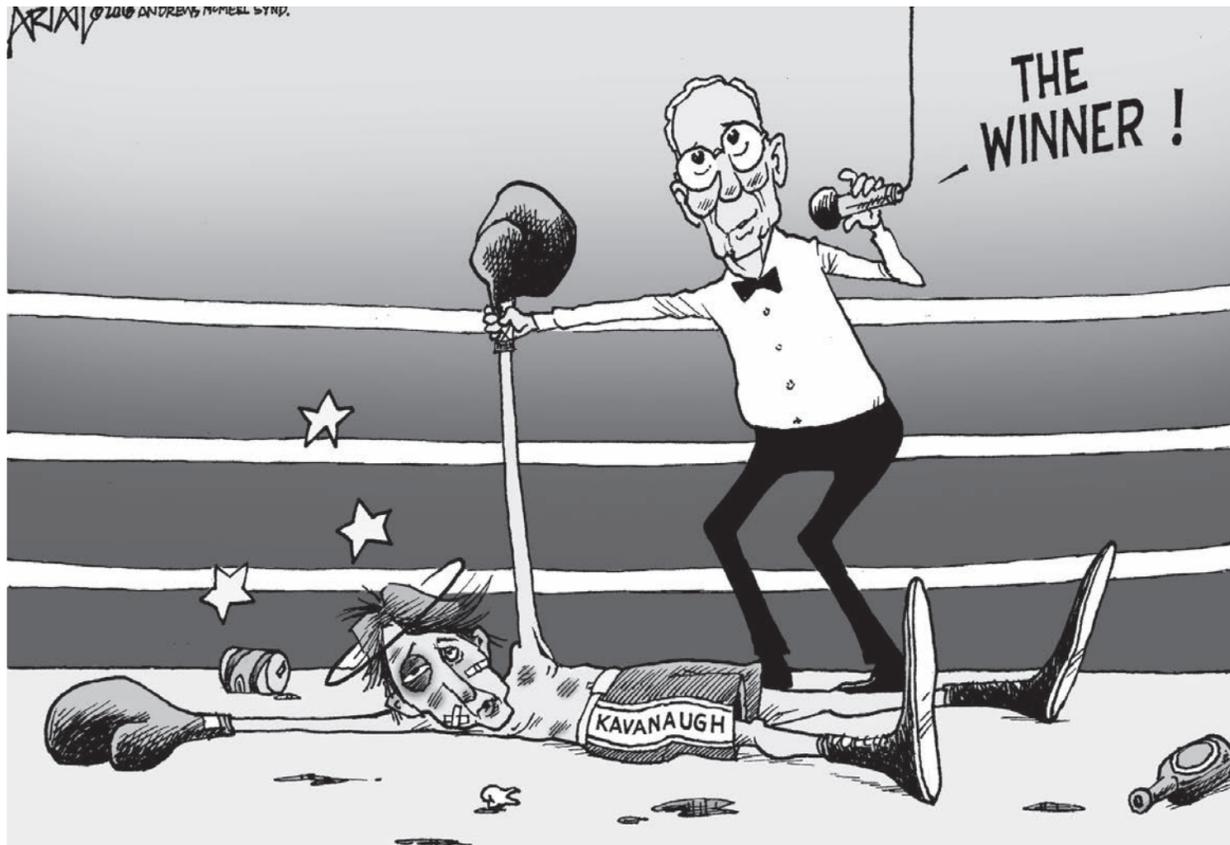


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Quest to see bears comes up empty

I went looking for bear this past weekend in the Smoky Mountains but the closest I came to it was a plush stuffed animal at a local gift shop.

"Go to Cade's Cove," people told me. "They're seeing bears up there all the time. You're sure to see one if you go."

From the tall tales some folks were spinning, you'd think bears were swinging from the trees like monkeys in a Tarzan movie up there. With that in mind, me and my buddies loaded up and headed over to Cade's Cove, our cellphones ready to snap pictures of the many bears we were sure we'd see.

At first things looked hopeful as several signs on the side of the road warned motorists not to approach animals such as bears or elk. These are signs for people who are too dumb to read signs.

"Get my picture petting the bear," have likely been the last words of some

rocket scientists who thought it'd be a good idea to stroke the fur of a six-foot black bear.

I actually drove with caution heading over the Cove, thinking maybe a bear would run out in front of us. However, as we got deeper into the sticks it became more and more obvious we weren't going to see a bear. Sure, we saw several wild turkeys, a few horses and a squirrel or two but bears weren't hanging around.

For those who haven't been to Cade's Cove let me tell you, it isn't close. It's 24 miles off the main highway and much of the drive is at 30 miles per hour or less. However, what it is, with or without bears, is very beautiful. You cruise up next to white water from a mountain

river with several falls and scenic vistas as the Smoky Mountains spire up all around, surrounding the Cove like a huge wall on all sides.

So, after about five hours of enjoying nature but not seeing any bears, we returned to the condo where we staying in Pigeon Forge and hit the pool. It was during that time of relaxation a security guard walked through and I just had to ask.

"We went to Cade's Cove and didn't see a single bear," I lamented to him, my statement getting a grin.

"I've been to Cade's Cove over 30 times and not once seen a bear," he confessed, nodding over our shoulder. "But that dumper right across the parking lot, I've seen several of them. One big enough to stand

on his back legs and reach over the top to pull out trash bags."

He went on to recount all the various sightings around the condo over the year, adding he knows not to approach them.

"I give them plenty of room," he said, noting that while having a gun, he is restricted from using it unless it's life or death. "I have the same rules using deadly force as I would with a human."

"You'd have to wait for the bear to shoot at you first?" I smarted off.

"More like start gnawing on my arm," he laughed.

So, there you go folks. Go to the Cove for scenic beauty and a nice drive. If you want to see a bear in the mountains, hang out near the dumpsters.

Contact Duane Sherrill at news@smithvillereview.com



THAT NEW GUY
 by Duane Sherrill

Homeland security

On October 8, 2001, President George W. Bush announced the creation of the Office of Homeland Security, which was approved by Congress November 25, 2001. Its missions include anti-terrorism, border security, immigration and customs, cyber security, and disaster prevention and management. It was established in response to the horrific 9-11 attack on America, and its proposed 2019 budget is \$47.5 billion.

We all know that no amount of money guarantees that our country will be completely secure and protected from future attacks. But there is a place where we will be eternally safe and free from enemy attack, and that place is the one Jesus told His followers in that He planned to prepare for them when He returned to His rightful place on the right hand of God in heaven.

Revelation 7 tells us that as residents of heaven we will be free from hunger and thirst because Jesus, the Lamb of God, will feed us. We will be free from the light and the heat of the sun, because God the Father and God the Son will provide light in heaven. We will be free from pain and sorrow, because God will wipe away all tears from our eyes. Revelation 21 also tells us that there will be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying, and neither shall there be any more pain.

Revelation 22 tells us that

in heaven there will be a pure river filled with the water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. It also says that in the midst of the street of it, and either side of the river, will be the tree of life, which will bear 12 different fruits every month, and the leaves of it will be for the healing of the nations. Also, there will be no more curses, no night, and no need of a candle nor the light of the sun.

In Hebrews 11, the apostle Paul tells us about great men and women of faith who believed in the promises of God. He pointed out that many of them died without receiving these promises, but they believed the promises would be fulfilled sometime in the future. He said they were persuaded of them, they embraced them, they considered themselves to be pilgrims and strangers on the earth, and they were all seeking a better country, one that was called heaven.

Only in heaven will we feel completely secure and safe, so we need to be sure that we are on the journey of faith that will lead us to heaven as our eternal home. We begin that journey by putting our faith in Jesus.

Larry R. Steffee is pastor of the Center Hill Brethren In Christ Church on Miller Road in Smithville. Everyone is welcome to attend. You may email lrsteffee@yahoo.com for information.



WORDS FROM ABOVE
 by Larry R. Steffee

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR TO THE POLICY

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Get away from nothing

Hi! We're Bob and Ellen Yeller, and this is Joe and Patty Screamer.

We love camping! We're here almost every weekend! This is our spot! Wait! Look who just pulled in -- the Drinkers! We didn't know if they were going to show up this weekend! Sometimes things happen to them and they're not able to make it but -- whoops! That nutty Donny Drinker, he just backed his camper into a tree. He'll be sorry about that tomorrow morning. He loves nature! Wouldn't hurt a fly, but after a few six packs, watch out! He's like a buzz saw in a forest!"

Donny Drinker comes over, beer in hand, to introduce himself. It's 9:30 in the morning. Sue and I were just going to park here while we spent the day hiking on the trails.

"Here come the Selfies," Donny says as a humongous camper pulls into the site. "Well, it's just Tom now. Too bad about Karen, but that picture she took as she fell off Super Dangerous Falls was really spectacular. A classic. It was in all the newspapers. She'd be so happy that somebody finally recognized her work. It's a wonder she had the presence of mind to take it."

"We all felt bad for Tom, but at least he's got the hundreds of thousands of photos of Karen eating dinner with friends and standing in front of shops to remember her by. And since no one can figure out to cancel her Facebook account, they're going to be in the cloud for thousands of years. Sometimes I wonder when she found the time to eat that food she was always photographing. People in the future

will be amazed at how many places one person could take a picture."

We could hear a television inside of the Yellers' camper. Is there really a signal out here in the middle of nowhere?"

"Hey, turn that down in there!" Bob Yeller screams at the top of his lungs. The phrase echoes throughout Peaceful Canyon.

"There's something about being in the middle of nature that just fills my soul!" he says, in his outdoor voice. "I don't know if it's the first sniff of pine needles, the smell of a campfire or the odor of a National Park toilet, but it just makes me love getting away from all the junk in the city! Am I right or am I right? Or maybe it's the sound of the helicopters rescuing us from the top of old Don't Climb Me Mountain. That's always refreshing, and the flight is so scenic!"

A blast of "Ride of the Valkyries" starts blaring from the middle of nowhere. It's Patty Screamer's cellphone.

Patty Screamer slams down her phone and says, "KIDS! WHY DID WE HAVE THEM? WHAT WAS I THINKING??" Apparently, that was the Screamer's teenage daughter, Chardonnay, on the phone. She was calling from the camper 20 feet away, wanting to know when they were going back home. After all, they'd been here for two hours already.

We were about a mile up the trail before we stopped hearing campground noises.

"How can you get away from it all if you bring it all with you?" Sue asked. I, for once, kept quiet.

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VILLAGE IDIOT
 by Jim Mullen