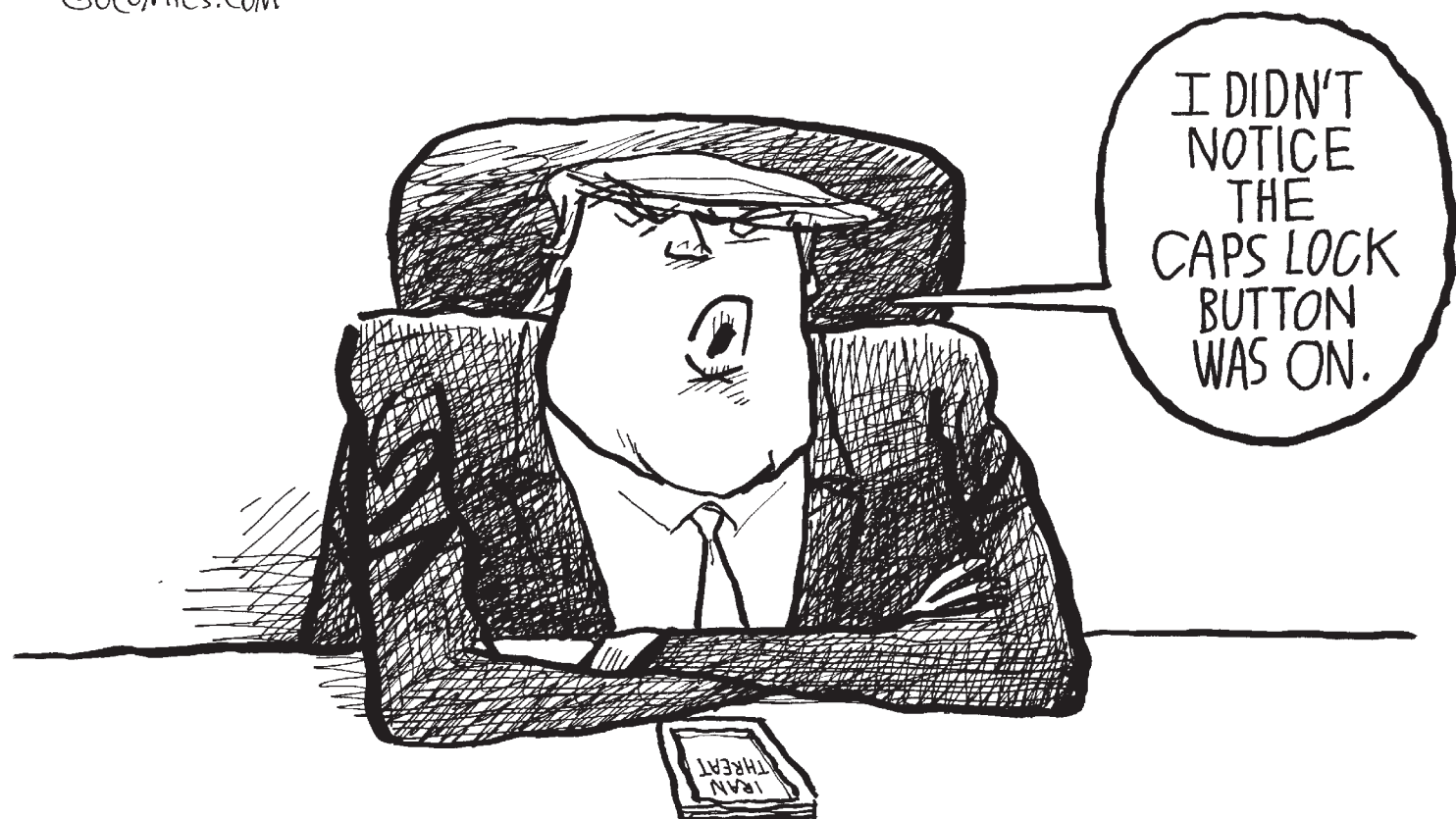


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Splashes and crashes at the fair

There's nothing like the smell of gas and exhaust accompanied by the ear-splitting roar of revving engines to get your blood pumping. Combine that with the possibility of having to dive to safety at any given moment and you have the demolition derby.

I attended the derby at the fair last week and walked away with more than I expected. Literally, I walked away covered in mud, like I had taken a mud bath. There was mud everywhere, my legs, shirt, hat, cameras and places I'm still trying to figure out how the mud got there. It took two good baths to get it all off and it wasn't even Saturday night.

Of course, it could have been a lot worse had I taken up the offer of the demolition derby's coordinator.

"Hey, do you mind if I stand here on the fence," I asked him as I was perched on the stairs to the scoring box.

"You can come down here if you want and run around with me," the man offered. "Just be ready to jump out of the way."

At first I thought he was kidding. He wasn't. Hey, y'all don't know me yet but those who do know I'm a risk taker. I'm the guy who will eat the ghost pepper and I sometimes drive 11 miles above the speed limit on the interstate. That's right, I'm a modern day Billy the Kid.

"That's okay," I cleared my throat. "I think I can get good shots from up here."

He smiled. "Uh huh," he replied, likely sizing me up as a big sissy. I'm not a big sissy, I just don't want to show up on YouTube being run over by a junked Chrysler.

Even though I opted to stay on the "safe side" of the fence, it soon became



THAT NEW GUY
by Duane Sherrill

evident it was to be an interactive show as I was splashed with mud as the vehicles sped around the arena, slamming into one another. And, let me point out, that mud moves at high velocity. One of my friends told me he got some mud slung in his eye a few years ago at the derby and had to be tended by ambulance personnel.

However, being a daring person I am, I hung in there, joined on the fence by several teen-agers who were having a ball watching the carnage. There was one kid in particular who was whooping and hollering at the top of his lungs, shouting with every collision.

"Did you see that!?!!" he exclaimed to one of his friends just as one of the cars came by, spraying everyone with mud.

"That was ..."

He was cut off in mid-exclamation as a chunk of mud went flying into his open mouth. He hacked and coughed, finally clearing the hunk of fairgrounds from his esophagus.

"Would you like some dessert with your dinner?" I asked, being the wise guy, getting laughs from his buddies.

After getting my pictures, I headed back down the hill to the midway, passing several people who had been watching the pageants. Several slowed and looked at me, one woman stopping me.

"What happened to you?" she sized me up, spots of mud cover my clothes.

"Demolition derby," I replied. "If you don't get some on you, then you aren't close enough. Just make sure to keep your mouth shut."

Contact Duane Sherrill at
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Pi Approximation Day

July 22, which is written as 7/22, is considered to be "Pi Approximation Day", just like 3/14 is "Pi Day" because the value of "pi" begins with 3.14 and continues indefinitely. Inverting 7/22 and treating it as a fraction, we have another approximate value of "pi", namely 22/7. "Pi" is actually the ratio between the circumference and diameter of a circle, a ratio that never changes, regardless of the size of the circle.

Ancient people believed the earth was flat and also shaped like a circle, with a dome above it and a dome below it. The dome above served to separate the earth and its atmosphere from the waters above the dome. The dome below served to support the earth, allowing it to float on the waters beneath it. They never thought of the earth and its domes as being spherical or shaped like a ball, but now we know that it is spherical.

There is an interesting verse found in Isaiah 40:22 that says, "It is He who sits on the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants of it are like grasshoppers. He stretches out the heavens as a curtain, and spreads them out as a tent in which to dwell." Flying in an airplane and looking out the window certainly convinces us that the people on the earth below appear small like grasshoppers, just like Isaiah describes. The one Isaiah is describing sitting on the circle of the earth is none other than the God who creat-

ed the earth.

In verses 23 and 24, Isaiah says that God is in complete control of the rulers and judges of the earth. He is far superior to them and far mightier than them, and He can simply blow them away like a whirlwind blows away stubble in a field. In verse 25, Isaiah asks a question that suggests that there is no one like God or equal to Him. He concludes in verse 26 that God has created all things, including the stars in the skies, all because of His great strength and power. He created and designed the earth to operate in perfect unity and harmony.

Out of all the things that God created on the earth is His most prized creation, the human race. He created humanity in His own image and in His own likeness, and He intended for humans to have a personal and intimate relationship with Him. He seeks for humans to worship Him as Creator, as Lord, and as the Savior who rescued them from the power of sin which entered the world through the deception of the devil. We can approximate the value of "pi", but the value of the human soul is unfathomable.

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



WORDS FROM ABOVE
by Larry R. Steffee

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR POLICY

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Put me in coach!

Finals are over! It's finally that time again: time to pull out the biggest piece of luggage I have, roughly the size of a sofa, fill it up with all the things I can't live without for a week, add a few rolling bags and carry them all onto a plane. Then I can sit back and relax in my coach seat, in my bathing suit, muscle-T and flip-flops. After all, it's time to party.

Checking bags is for suckers. Those fools will have to go to the baggage claim, while I'll be strolling out the terminal door and finding my buddy Fred double-parked in the "Don't Dare to Park Here" zone. And boom -- we're off to Party Town.

There's plenty of room in the overhead bins for my giant suitcase, my huge backpack and a couple of my rolling bags. Everything else I just shove under the seat. Not MY seat; I need the leg room. I put it under the seat next to me. Some people complain, but I can't hear them because I'm already wearing giant, noise-blocking earphones.

The flight attendant told me I had to turn off my phone and computer, so I pretended to. Who's gonna know? And when are they going to start serving the drinks? Why do I have to wait until we hit cruising altitude? The four I had at the airport bar are starting to wear off.

I've only got a week to have fun, so why are they wasting my time? I'm trying to stream that movie that's such a big hit in the theaters. I downloaded it from Russia for free, but the

attendant keeps interrupting by talking about oxygen masks and emergency exits. What is wrong with these people? I'm trying to relax. Don't they know I took three credit hours last semester? At this pace I should graduate right on schedule in 2028, with a degree in Poli Sci. If the pressure doesn't get to me first.

Wait a minute, what? She says I can't vape on the plane. When did that happen? It's not smoking, lady, it's VAPING. Wow, old people! What's the matter with them?

Where is that drink? Don't they know how stressed-out I am? The woman next to me has a baby in her lap. That's what they should make you check, not luggage.

That old lady who wouldn't get out of my way at the airport lounge is still glaring at me. Hold a grudge much? Maybe she heard me on the phone with Fred. I told him I'd requested a wheelchair. Those guys always get on first. No, I don't need one, but how do I know that any of these clowns needs one? It's not like you have to bring a note from your doctor. Fred and I were laughing but I could tell she didn't think it was funny.

She finally showed up with the drink cart. Eight bucks for two beers? What a rip-off! And it's an hour flight! She may not even be back again for half an hour. It's like you have to wait until you're on the ground nowadays to get hammered.

I knew I should have driven.

Contact Jim Mullen at mul-len.jim@gmail.com.



VILLAGE IDIOT
by Jim Mullen