

April, 2006

Potomac Watershed Cleanup - Do Your Part

I'll be out at Flat Branch - Eleanor C. Lawrence Park between 0900 and 1200 on 8 April wading through the fluids picking up what I can. Please feel free to join me. Let's keep our waterways and the Bay clean. To volunteer to join the group, call me.

Bands in Baltimore

Listening to 98 Rock Baltimore today, I heard of two bands that were playing in Baltimore tonight. One of the bands, Buckcherry, I have heard of before, but the other, Wolfmother, was new to me. I am checking them both out on my music service, Rhapsody, right now. They both sound good.

Mickey and Amelia, on the 98 Rock afternoon drive show, praised both bands to the extend that they called the producer to chew him out for scheduling both bands in Baltimore on the same night at different venues!

Wolfmother definitely sounds of Black Sabbath and Deep Purple whereas Buckcherry reminds me of the Black Crowes.

Who's Right About Whose Rights? Me?

I have to agree somewhat with James D. Ashley's letter to the editor in the Washington Post issued on April 17, 2006, under the heading "Hurdling the Language Barrier." Mr. Ashley seem a bit uptight though. Perhaps he should sit down with a few of his immigrant friends, coworkers, and neighbors...that would probably be almost all of them unless they are Native Americans...have a few drinks and mellow out. If communication is a problem, perhaps he can overcome it by drinking too much and "Hurling the Language Barrier."

To get back on topic, I would have to say that it seems just a bit contradictory to complain about being unjustly incarcerated and lost in the system when one has purportedly entered the country illegally and committed a crime. Additionally, it does seem that one should be able to be fairly fluent in a country's language after having lived there for six years. However, immigrants tend to cluster and hang together and, accordingly, can find ways to get by without really having to learn that much of the host country's language, especially "legalise." Having attended Korean language school for nearly two years full time and having lived in Korea for seven years, I can attest to the fact that hanging out with people of your own background and language can definitely hinder your ability to assimilate into a new country and culture.

Korean, however, is a very hard language, my third, to learn and has nothing in common with English as compared to Spanish and other romance languages. Other factors that might make it more difficult for immigrants, especially illegal immigrants to assimilate in the United States is that, and I try not to generalize, they are likely to be much less educated than many Americans. I believe that it has to be much harder for an individual with a fourth grade education and no English language training to adapt to and learn English and American ways. I do not mean to imply with that statement that that is the history of Ramiro Games about whom the letter was written.

Here is the bottom line nonetheless. We have a "Bill of Rights:"

Amendment VI

"In all criminal prosecutions, the accused shall enjoy the right to a speedy and public trial, by an impartial jury of the state and district wherein the crime shall have been committed, which district shall have been previously ascertained by law, and to be informed of the nature and cause of the accusation; to be confronted with the witnesses against him; to have compulsory process for obtaining witnesses in his favor, and to have the assistance of counsel for his defense."

I see no mention that the "accused" has to be a U.S., English speaking citizen. The Washington Post article dated April 10, 2006, "Without English, Inmate Was Trapped," which provoked Mr. Ashley's response clearly observes that Mr. Games' rights, citizen, immigrant, or illegal immigrant were violated. There are, of course, some unknowns here. Mr. Games was arrested in a raid on a house which was apparently used as a small scale cocaine distribution center. Games' charges were dropped to simple possession from possession with intent to distribute. It is entirely possible that Games kept quiet in jail not only because he was an illegal immigrant but

because he may have been more involved in the cocaine trade that he wished to have exposed.

No matter what, there was a failure in the justice system that is all too common all over our country. Our criminal laws are in flux, sentencing guidelines are imposed by the federal government, and there just isn't enough money to hire public defenders and maintain the court and prison system. In Ramiro Games' defense, I do not think that he wanted to make a big issue of this. He probably wants to stay under the radar horizon. Thanks or no thanks to the Washington Post for bringing this issue to the attention of the Prince George's County Public Defender's Office.

Boycott Yahoo...Bad Business Practices in China

I say there should be a boycott of Yahoo services. That sounds kind of funny "Yahoo services." It is like going to a redneck gas station and getting a "Rube Lube."

Anyhow, Yahoo has for the third time purportedly aided in putting a Chinese user in prison. Read the article on The Wall Street Journal Online if you subscribe or just search for references to using my favorite dirt engine, Google: "Group Says Yahoo Gave China Email." They turned over a draft email to the authorities. As a result, the user was jailed.

WTF? Who can justify doing business with a company that has this ethic? Jiang Lijun was put in prison in 2003 after being convicted of "subversive activities aimed at overthrowing the ruling Communist Party." This usually means the accused wrote an article critical of the government. More details are probably required but I still think that Yahoo needs a bit of attitude adjustment.

Yahoo wants the business so badly that they are compromising themselves by serving the interest of a documented human rights violator. I am glad I am not in that position because my stockholders would probably ditch me. I would still have my pride though...

I am not really sure what I can add to this. It is a visual. Words escape me.

Going Bi

focals that is. Saturday I was in the mall passing by Sterling Optical and the doctor was in. It's been five years since my last eye exam and at least a year since I realized that not only was I nearsighted but I was also farsighted. Too bad that farsighted didn't get me to the optometrist sooner. I can sit about two feet away from my computer and read the screen perfectly. Reading the newspaper and watching TV on Sunday's makes my eyes swim in my head, which makes me a bit nauseous.

Since my dad was in the optical business I know why the inability to see far is called nearsightedness and the inability to see near is called farsightedness but the concept is still weird. What is it if you are both near and farsighted...blind? Well I am not blind but definitely need some new corrective lenses. So I dropped big bucks which hopefully my insurance plan will compensate me for. I got a nice titanium frame with a progressive bifocal, anti-scratch, and glare. Hopefully I'll be able to see better.

I can't wait for the new glasses. My eyes will take so long to adjust I probably won't need to drink for awhile.....