

February, 2006

Same-sex Marriage

I was most pleased to read excerpts from Baltimore Circuit Court judge M. Brook Murdock's ruling on same-sex marriage. According to the Washington Post entry dated January 29, 2006, "Putting Maryland's Marriage Law on Trial," Judge Murdock believes that most state resolutions banning same-sex marriages have no basis in law. Most of these resolutions are gender based and, according to Judge Murdock, in violation of the Equal Rights Amendment.

While I will make no comment on the morality of homosexuality in general, I can't see the reasoning of most courts, state and federal, that find same-sex marriage is illegal. Where is the harm, really? The article itself speaks quite clearly to Judge Murdock's ruling and should be read to understand the legal underpinnings of her decision. I respect her for her decision and the Washington Post for publishing it unaltered albeit cleaned up of the legal verbiage that confuses the lay reader such as myself.

98 Rock's Toilet Bowl

This is a marvelous thing. 98 Rock in Baltimore, personified by Mickey and Amelia, who do the afternoon drive time show, is sponsoring the "Toilet Bowl," a football game in which the teams are comprised of residents of Essex and Dundalk fighting for the booby price (losers) of claiming the sewage treatment plant bordering the two towns.

Incredibly, Mickey and Amelia, have obtained the chance to fete the Bowl at Baltimore's M&T Bank Stadium where the Baltimore Ravens play. The cost is just eight dollars to park and nothing to get in the stadium to watch the game. I plan to attend with bells on and camera in hand. It is too bizarre to pass up.

Be there this Saturday, 4 February, 2006. Read more here.

There's Just Something about a Toilet Bowl

As mentioned previously, 98 Rock was having the first Annual "Toilet Bowl" at M&T Bank Stadium, home of the Baltimore Ravens, on 4 February, 2006. I planned to go and actually tried to call the Mickey and Amelia show on Friday night to tell them about the "Punch Bowl," an old toilet we had in Korea, plugged up with paraffin and broke out for the annual Christmas party.

We made an awesome punch with Soju and fruit juices and served it from the toilet bowl. In a fine Caddyshack tradition, we always put a couple of Baby Ruths in the punch for added color. Contrary to what the movie would have one believe, Baby Ruths don't float. I remember one year that we nearly had a full bowl, of punch, left when we had to vacate the club we held the party in. We moved the bowl out in to the entrance way and gathered round with straws to finish it off. It was an outrageous sight.

I thought a "Punch Bowl" would be a great addition to the Toilet Bowl however I was unable to get through on the phone. I emailed the story to them instead.

The day of the event promised to be overcast and rainy. It ended up being a bit rainier than we all expected. Game time was at noon so I got on the road about 1000 to get up there, check out the tailgating, and view the Toilet Bowl Parade. I wasn't 10 miles from home when it just seemed to be pouring. I went back and forth in my mind and ended up getting off the highway and heading back to the previous entrance to the highway to return home. Of course the rain then abated.

I was feet from the entrance west to the highway and points home, dry, and warm when I just said "WTF, I never do anything wacky" and kept going to the exit east and onward to Baltimore. The drive in reasonable conditions is only about an hour but the rain seemed to get worse again and follow me to B'more. It was coming down pretty well when I got parked in the stadium lot. Most of the vehicles had managed to get parked under an overpass and the occupants were hanging out drinking beer, before noon.

That might have been me years ago but I just got suited up in my rain gear and headed into the stadium. On the

way up, I was listening to 98 Rock when Mickey was out in the parking lot judging the Toilet Bowl Parade entrant. I unfortunately missed all that. I also missed getting a Toilet Bowl T-shirt but will probably get one online. Mickey announced that they were sold out as I was walking into the stadium.

The actual touch football game was nothing to crow about. Essex won 13 - 0 so Dundalk has to claim the sh*t-plant for one year. Essex had a classic cheer leading squad, the crowd was mostly blue collar Baltimore (redundant, redundant) and partially drunk at game time. Needless to say I wasn't chatting up the finer distinctions of different Merlots with my seat mates.

It was cool to see Mickey and Amelia and participate in such a farce, actually broadcasting live from the field. Jim Hunter, an Orioles announcer, was there also. I had front row seat on the 50-yard line and all I had to pay for was parking. I got some pictures and, rain notwithstanding, had an interesting time. I'd be able to tell the grandkids, had I any, that I went to the first ever 98 Rock Toilet Bowl.

98 Rock's Pictures

My Pictures

Cheapin' the 15 Item Line

I was behind a woman in the 15 item line at the local Safeway who was just the cheapest so and so I have ever come across. She bought something that rang up as \$2.29 and it was marked on the shelf as \$2.19 so she had to contest it. The time we spent waiting for someone to confirm the price and for the checker to revise it on the woman's bill was definitely not worth the time she spent getting some "Satisfaction." Then the gallon of milk she bought did not ring up to the price she expect so she had them void it. Finally, she had the f'ing balls to ask if the Safeway had a policy, like Giant (according to her), to give her the product for free if the listed price was not that of the price rung up.

I was ready to just slap this woman for her cheapness and for holding me up in the line. She definitely was not some kind of bum or street person who might have needed to haggle over every dime spent. You've got to pay to play and live so just get over it. Save money on the big ticket items like appliances, computers, furniture, houses, etc. The time spend haggling over nickels and dimes is just not worth it. Especially when I am standing behind you in line....

Motor Vehicle Department Visits: Hell, Just a Pain in the Ass, or Getting Back My Virginiaity

It seems to me that going to the Motor Vehicle Department or what ever you might call it in your particular state.... I'm talking about one of the 50 states, not your state of frustration or anger that results from the visit....has gotten easier. For the sake of simplicity, I will hereby refer to this entity as we refer to it in Virginia, the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV). Years ago the visits did seem terrible but of late, in Frederick, MD at least, they really seemed to have their poop together. Additionally, since in many cases you can renew your tags online or by mail, unless you have a new vehicle or move, you hardly have to set foot in the DMV.

Having recently, according to my standards, moved back to Virginia, I had to get a Virginia driver's license and title and register my car and motorcycle. Oh how I dreaded this. It seemed to me that the best way to handle it was to take a couple of hours off from work and head over to the Sterling branch of the DMV which is reasonably close to work. Everyone was telling me their horror stories of going over there and suggesting I go to the one in Leesburg. Even my sister and brother-in-law recommended this.

I couldn't see the point of adding an 16 to 20 mile drive to the whole ordeal so I decided to try Sterling. A little research and a phone call led me to believe that if I got my forms filled out in advance and had all the ID and proof of citizenship and residency, I would be fine. I heard it was best to go in the middle of the month and week so I headed out today at 10:00 AM to do the dirty deed. I waited no more than 10 minutes before my number came up. The individual who served me was as pleasant and polite as one could ask for.

I was in and out of the DMV in about 90 minutes which is in my estimation certainly reasonable considering what I had to have done. I would have been done 10 minutes faster if they had not failed to note the motorcycle classification on my MD license and added it to my Virginia license. The individual who did most of the paperwork even chided himself for missing this since he titled and registered my motorcycle.

Oddly, when they put my personal information in the computer, my last known address showed up as my sister's old place in Annandale. Not sure why that was but I must have used that as an address when I last renewed my VA license. Anyhow, after nearly 11 years on paper and 22 physically, I've got my Virginiaty back.

Slave Labor

Brutal work day today. First of all I woke up at 0200 and couldn't fall asleep. I tossed and turned for an hour and then read till about 0500. I then got up and read the paper till six after which I did the S to the third power thing and headed into work. Work was 11 hours non-stop, balls to the wall phone calls and fixing things...no lunch...no breaks.

I had one application server go down three times cold. Powered right off. No idea why. Figured it must have been the power supply. Swapped that out, brought the server back up. Seemed okay. As soon as I walked in the door of my apartment I got an alert that thing had crashed again. Must be overheating...have to check the CPU fan tomorrow.

My backup server crashed twice. Since we had gotten a industry standard Adaptec SCSI card in to replace the POS Acard that was in there, I figured it was a good time to swap. I noticed that the card has a different connector than it should have. NTL, I had a cable that I thought could handle it.

Well perhaps the cable could handle it but the technology was different, LVD SE vice SCSI SE. I had already swapped out and brought the server back up. The card was recognized and drivers installed fine but the tape unit was not recognized. So I had to pull that server out of the rack and crack it open again to put the old card back in. It only took me about three reboots to get that recognized...sarcastically speaking. No alerts that the server has crashed yet so maybe I'll get lucky.

To top it off, I had an outside salesperson in who needed work on a laptop. I've got no problem with that...I was notified in advance. Jared brought me the laptop on which I had only a few service items to take care of but it was 1730 before I was done with it.

I am not sure what it is but the week before you plan to take a few days off, is always brutal.

Ski Glee

So I am winding up the A-Team ski weekend at 7 Springs, albeit a day later. I am listening to live Santana from the Fillmore West New Year's Eve, 1969, available for now for free at Wolfgang's Vault, a web site published by a guy who basically bought the legacy of Bill Graham, the awesome producer of so many up and coming acts from the real days of Rock and Roll.

The guy got the rights to a massive collection of previously unpublished songs and videos and has a team of people remixing them digitally for publication on the web. Right now he is releasing a loop of about 60 or 70 songs a week which sound pretty good. Not only has he the rights to the songs but he has a huge collection of memorabilia available on the web site from the day. They are still apparently cataloging everying and pushing it out for sale as it becomes available.

Back to the whole skiing thing. We had a pretty excellent time on the slopes during which the conditions varied greatly. They went from not bad at all on Friday afternoon to white out conditions on Saturday morning. As the day went on, it warmed up so much that we were pushing man-made slush down the slope.

Sunday we were were worried about icing conditions manifested by more man-made snow on top of the icing and accordingly took it pretty slowly. I was up for a relaxing day so I just took it easy and stayed off most of the blacks that I had been running the previous days.

Monday morning was good because it stayed cold and they were still able to make snow the previous night. My sister and brother-in-law, Julie and Ed, decided to lay low and head back to Centreville early which was ok since we had taken two cars, Ryan and I hung for the morning skiing. He and I hit mainly blacks with a couple of blues along the way. Ryan really impressed me with what he had learned and how he handled the blacks.

I was, after two years going up to the Springs, happy to finally have been able to run with Kergy (sp?), Buddy, Dan and a few of the other to see how my skills compared. I think that we were all compatible. We smoked the

blacks at speed which is all I can ask for. It was a great time!