

July, 2005

Can't Rant

I just don't have the time to rant. I am 98 percent certain I'll move down to Northern VA closer to work and am pretty well wrapped up trying to find a place without crippling rent. I am sure that the rent will nearly double but will save money on gas and wear and tear on my car. Plus I really want to have some of my life back even if I only cut the commute down by half. Around here 30 minutes to work is reasonable. So that project is keeping me busy.

I went to the Moody Blues concert at Wolftrap on Saturday night with Ed, Julie, and Matt. We had great lawn seats just back from the pavilion. The view was perfect and unobstructed. The lawn really is the way to go. It was amusing to watch this group next to us pull out course after course of their meal. We were a bit jealous because we had just brought some subs from Quizno's and forgot anything for munchies. To top it off, we forgot Julie's bottle of wine.

Over all the evening was great. It was, however, occasionally disturbed by a noxious odor from an unsodded area to the left of us. Not sure what happened but the smell reminded me of charred, rotting flesh. I am not sure why I know that but..... The up side to that was that was where the folks with the multicourse meal were sitting. I don't know how they managed it. I would have gagged on my brie!

Legit to Split

Had some issues with traveling to Canada to support my company's Toronto office for which I am responsible. Got those cleared up today so I am now legit to split for the Great White North! Hope to get up there to enjoy some of the end of the summer weather!

Supreme Court Term Limits

The speculation about whether or not Supreme Court Chief Justice Rehnquist would or would not step down has been waste of time and newsprint. Our government officials including the president have much more important things to do than waste time thinking about replacement for justices who may or may not retire.

I have not looked into this much but I like the idea of putting term and/or age limits on federal judgeship's. In what other position can you expect to have a job for life? How many borderline healthy hangers on do we have to endure before we come to grips with the fact that we need some progressive minds in all branches of the government to get us through our future. We should be focusing on world trade, health issues, and our environment for our descendants not bandying about insignificant items like abortion or euthanasia.

No offense to Mr. Rehnquist but lets move forward!

Multiple Two Faces

It is interesting that Reverend Kip Banks, in his letter to the editor addressed to the Washington Post on 25 July, "Church Problems, Church Answers," chastises John W. Fountain about his Washington Post Outlook section article dated 17 July, "No Place for Me; I Still Love God, but I've Lost Faith in the Black Church."

Reverend Banks assails Mr. Fountain's response to the unresponsiveness of black churches to black men. Yet Reverend Banks, noted to be the "pastor of East Washington Heights Baptist Church in Southeast Washington" writes from Mitchellville, reputed to be the most wealthy black community in the country.

I think that Reverend Banks only emphasizes the point made by Mr. Fountain when he summarizes Mr. Fountain's article: Mr. Fountain "...made the case that black men are in crisis and that instead of being concerned about this crisis, the church is focused on self-perpetuation and materialism." In an era when police officers are asked to reside in the communities and/or counties in which they serve, pastors of depressed communities are serving them from the lap of luxury?

Cellfish Drivers

I haven't been very blog-productive of late. I guess it because work is brutal and because I have lots on my mind with trips scheduled and a move to Centreville pending. There is so much to write about when I read the paper I just have a hard time putting something together. The commute is still terrible so time is limited. On the weekends I just want to chill. Hopefully that will all change after my move.

Not only is the commute terrible but it is boring. However, there is the occasional entertaining, if not frightening, moment. Today on the way home, I had just got onto 15N from the 15 bypass in Leesburg when I pulled up behind a woman who was chatting very animatedly on her cell phone, not unusual of course. She kept it up as we got through the next light and traffic began to speed up a bit. It's safe to say that speeding up a bit is truly "speeding up a bit." The woman in front of me obviously was not paying attention because she all of a sudden locked up her brakes and skidded off onto the shoulder to avoid plowing into the car in front of her. This probably happens a million times a day. I was curious whether she would sit by the side of the road for a minute but she just got right back up on that horse and rode on.

The funny thing was that she must have ditched the phone in the emergency maneuver because I saw her leaning forward and down for a second and then come back up with what I assumed was the phone and keep on talking. It's nice to know that almost rear-ending someone didn't phase her. I would have been shaking for 30 minutes and might have shat myself.

Ewe's Tail

I used the phrase "two shakes of a lamb's tail" yesterday when I was telling someone how quickly I would get back to them on a technical support problem. I have not used that phrase in years, if ever, but I remember my parents or grandparents using it. Does anyone else out there remember that one?

I wonder if the roots of this phrase are from the Middle East as in "Two sheiks of a lamb's tail?" Or perhaps it has Italian, Middle Eastern, and Beasty Boy roots as in, "Did ewes guys see those two sheiks ewes that lamb's tail?"

The System's Always on Break

In his letter to the editor, Don't Break a Pay System That Works, dated 26 July, 2005, Larry Drake, President of AFGE Local 12, which represents Labor Department employees in the Washington area, espouses that "Merit Pay" would pit government employees "against one another for raises and other rewards."

Of course it would...that is how a business should work to get the best from their employees. Why should government "business" be any different from "private" business. I want value for my tax dollars. I know very few people who have worked for the government, government contractors, or who have dealt with either who would not agree with me when I say that the current system of government employment rewards mediocrity.

I worked for the government. I know it did not pay to make waves or try things out of the ordinary. I am not saying that private business is that much different but it is much more likely to reward innovation and risk and accept failure than the civil service. Yet if you can sneak by for thirty years of government service in mediocrity, you will, under the current system, continue to get longevity pay increases, and likely get a fat government pension, even if you did nothing to increase overall productivity or reduce costs.

You can even be obnoxiously hard to work with and find it hard to get fired. Perhaps the unions have much to do with that but so do fair employment laws imposed upon the government, companies that do significant business with government, and publicly traded companies. I am not against EEO by any stretch of the imagination but it sure does make it hard to get rid of your slackers!

Hail of a Ride Home

Man, two days in row of blogging! What is my world coming to? Suffice to say that the fun rides home just never stop.

Today, just after leaving Leesburg on Rt. 15, it was obvious we were going to get hit with a vicious storm. Hell, it was obvious as soon as I hit Rt. 7 headed west that something was brewing near Leesburg. The wind was gusting fearsomely and then remained steady across the road at about 30 MPH. The rain was coming down in buckets. The idiot in front of me didn't even have lights on. I had to stay way back behind him because I couldn't

see him.

I had the "Moon Roof" open for better lightning viewing but that was a bit scary when they lit up right over the top of me. Then some things started smacking my car. The wind was blowing so hard that I thought gravel and twigs were blowing across the road but no. We had a wicked hail storm that lasted about 10 minutes! Then of course by the time I got halfway between the Potomac and Frederick, there was no evidence of any storm at all.

I did see something strange and that was a helicopter on the back of a tractor trailer headed east on Rt. 7. It was one of those small ones with the plexiglass bubble cabin and the steel girder like tail...the ones that look like dragonflies. I guess your chopper is in pretty bad shape what you have to transport it over the highway. It's probably good it missed that storm on 15...those crosswinds might have torqued that thing right off the trailer bed.