

October, 2004

Commuting

The commute from Fredneck to Sterling is killing me. I love the job but miss the 1.5 hours of my day that I am losing on the road. Yeah it is great to listen to KML in the morning and Mickie and Emilia in the evening on 98 Rock but I'd rather be home playing my own tunes and controlling my own life.

I had planned to do my home search in Leesburg and Sterling for a townhouse or condo but am now more inclined to look for a condo in Sterling. Being 15 minutes from work again would be sweet. Admittedly the lifestyle would be a change from funky Frederick...pubs, hiking, and good motorcycling will be farther away but not that bad. The diverse cultural opportunities as far as meeting people and eating out should make up for the other recreational inconveniences.

Pissin' Me Off

Something with my web hosting service, Hostway, or my freakin' cable internet service provider, Adelphia, is making it damn hard to post to my web site. One day I lost most of my start page. Then I could not FTP to the site from my web publishing software or from either my Windows or Linux FTP client. Then I see that one of my databases for my PIM has nothing in it. Now I can't post to my blog for some reason. I see the blog software is actually working but the SSL link to my start page is not updating. Biatches!

Tech support on either side has been useless. Hostway says they can't see any problem as does Adelphia. The second tier tech I talked to at Adelphia was not even familiar with FTP which, in Internet time, has been around forever!

Weird Business Names

En route work this week I saw a utility van for a plumbing business. The business name was "Peed Plumbing." There is an office across the street from mine. The title over its door is "Baron Wood." I am not sure if I would use such a name for a thriving, productive business!

Scofflaws

I am pissed. I got a parking ticket in Frederick outside of Brewers' Alley on 4 September. I gelled and did not think that I had to feed the meter on Saturdays. I was wrong. I prepared to pay my ticket and found that I could do it online at <http://www.parkingticketpayment.com/frederick/>.

I thought I had done so but of course have no record of the payment. Normally, I would make a PDF of the receipt screen rather than actually printing out a hard copy. Of course I do cannot find that. Nor can I find a record of the payment on my bank statement, online of course.

So I accept whatever parking ticket twilight zone I have found myself in and go to pay the ticket with the late charges, online of course, and get this: "A problem was encountered with your transaction. Please review the following error message, then click the "Continue" button to attempt the transaction again:

ERROR-YOU ARE A SCOFFLAW-PAY IN PERSON"

WTF? For more info see "scofflaw."

Here's the kicker for these public service working maggots. Their hours are 0800 to 1600...for you civilian pukes, that is 8:00 AM till 4:00 PM, weekdays. Who the hell works these kind of hours? Your public servants for which your tax dollars are, no pun intended, sorely taxed. I am sick of this. If these maggots actually make me take time off from work to pay this piddly ass fine, I will have words. Don't know what they'll be yet but they'll be words.

Putting the Fox in Charge of the Chicken Coop

According to a Washington Post article "Army Official Backs Ex-Abu Graib Officer," the

Army's intelligence chief has "great confidence" in the former prison commander. Lt. General Keith Alexander believes that Maj. General Barbara Fast is qualified to be in charge of the Army's intelligence school in Ft. Huachuca, AZ. MG Fast served as deputy commandant at Huachuca for one week prior to being assigned to Iraq where one of her responsibilities was overseeing intelligence operations at Abu Graib prison.

Now, pending a review of actions of senior officers in Iraq by the Army IG, MG Fast will command an intelligence center where personnel are taught interrogation techniques and proper procedures for handling prisoners. This to me is putting the fox in charge of the chicken coop. It has yet to be determined who was ultimately responsible for the prisoner abuses in Abu Graib that were most likely in violation of the Geneva Convention. It is unlikely that, even though there is some supporting evidence that top Army and DOD civilians condoned such treatment, anyone other than low-level troops will ever be taken to task for the tawdry events witnessed at Abu Graib.

I can only hope that MG Fast will learn from the mistakes that were made at Abu Graib. Senior Army and DOD officials, as well as the president, need to make it plainly clear to our troops that the Geneva Convention must be followed. Prisoners deserve certain considerations under the law. The U.S. shames itself by condoning, or overlooking, the behavior of our own troops and their superiors while chastising other governments for their human rights violations. In my view we have lost our right to judge.

Appointing the commander of Abu Graib who was responsible for the abuses viewed by billions worldwide to the ultimate position of responsibility for training our Army troops in interrogation techniques and prisoner treatment is a travesty that demeans the Army, the DOD, the president, and, most of all, me and my fellow citizens.

14 Reasons Why Frank's a Loser

The Washington Post Magazine, published on Sundays, has a repeating topic generally referred to as "Adventures" which chronicles the life of a particular Washingtonian over the course of a number of weeks. If you go to Adventures, you will find the history of the last two "Adventurers." For some reason, the first "Adventurer" is not chronicled...she was a second or third generation Asian of Japanese or Korean descent if I remember correctly. She held on for only a few weeks and could not handle the scrutiny or publicity. Perhaps she felt exposed like that one congressional aid blogger whose name escapes me for the moment.

NTL, Freddy was interesting albeit hardly representative of America. He DJ'd at mostly local clubs and was a professional dog walker. No shit!

Frank, however, appears to be a professional loser, which I will document by citing something from every one of the weekly "Adventures of Frank" articles published by the Washington Post. I guess you have to be on the fringe or off the edge to qualify as an adventurer. God forbid you might actually have a normal job that impacts on people every day in such a benign fashion as helping them get their job done and helping their business to make a profit. Oh, I am such the capitalist. Roll over Marx and Engels.

Frank and his cousin are opening a restaurant together...with someone else's money.

Week One: "I'm just not responsible enough."

Week Two: He doesn't own a car. Maintenance, insurance, parking tickets -- it's all too much to handle, he says.

Week Three: Frank says he and Mike are close friends, though they don't always get along.

Week Four: According to Frank's mother, Joan Connell, who is investing: "Frank's a great cook. The menu is good, the price is right. How can it fail?"

Week Five: Frank drops into a chair inside the restaurant, cracks open a beer and says he's had enough cleaning for the day.

Week Six: It's noon, and Frank Connell is just waking up.

Week Seven: He didn't bother going back to Alexandria, where he's been living with his

mother. Instead, he slept on the carpet in the Red Bean's office.

Week Eight: Frank, who, at 43, has always blown with the wind, floating from town to town, from job to job. "I haven't had a job in a while, a real job." He worked on and off with the local stagehands union for more than 20 years. His last gig with the union was in 2001.

Week Nine: In the past, Frank, 43, has been driven by wanderlust. He would often quit a job just to travel.

Week Ten: Frank passes a display of one-gallon olive oil cans at \$7.99 each. "That's a pretty good deal," he says. It's not on the list, but he puts a can into the cart anyway. No such thing as too much olive oil, he says. Moments later he spots a bottle of French vanilla syrup. That's not on the list either. So what? It, too, goes in the cart.

Week Eleven: Later Frank reluctantly returns to the Red Bean, where Mike is standing behind the bar, looking haggard and annoyed. Frank says something about Julia Child's Kitchen, but Mike doesn't seem interested.

"I just cleaned up your mess," Mike says. He holds up the dull tool that he used to scrape wax where Frank accidentally had knocked over a lit candle. Frank mutters an excuse and walks back to the kitchen to brew a batch of iced tea.

Week Twelve: It's a few minutes before 10 p.m. The Red Bean will close soon for the evening, and Frank says that he's craving a fish taco. He heads up Mount Pleasant Street to his restaurant. The last customers are finishing dinner. Mike's face darkens when he sees Frank, whose mercurial ways have infuriated his more reliable cousin. Not long ago, on September 11, Frank didn't show up for work. The grim anniversary depressed him, he says, and he decided to stay home.

Now Mike greets his cousin curtly and lowers his voice, saying to Frank, "You know the rule . . . You can't be here in that condition." He means, he explains later, that Frank can't come into the restaurant after he's been out drinking.

Week Thirteen: Frank Connell and his cousin have hardly spoken since their fight two days ago. "Nobody talks to me that way. I'm going to fire him," Frank vows.

Week Fourteen: "I write checks, and I hope the money is there. Half the time it's not," says Frank, who has racked up more than \$300 in overdraft fees from Bank of America.

Can you say "Loser?" Does the Washington Post glorify this kind of lifestyle? You make the call. Read the paper.

Pounds of Paprika

According to the Washington Post, Paprika may be bad for you if you eat more than a pound a week. Apparently a moldy toxin, Aflatoxin, was found in the paprika produced by three, presumably, Hungarian companies. How the hell could you eat a pound of paprika a week? That would be more than two ounces of the powder a day! Color me red, even though Communism is gone.