

Community/Editorial



RAINER'S RAMBLINGS

By RAINER ARNOLD
Union Sentinel Publisher

A big thank you

First, a big THANK YOU for all the replies I received in the past few days about finding someone to fix my 1896 wall clock that I got from Germany about 10-11 years ago. I was pleasantly surprised when on Friday I got several e-mails with information about someone to fix my old clock.

Then, later on Friday as I was walking my German Shepherd puppy, I got a call from a gentleman who also knew of a person that fixed clocks. Later that day and Saturday I received several more calls for potential clock repair persons.

Well, I contacted several of the people suggested and found someone that is going to look at the clock and tell me whether or not he can make as good as new or not.

Needless to say, I am very anxious to get the clock to the repair shop as I want to hang it on the wall in my store. I think it is a showpiece. On a small scale that is.

So, again, let me thank you readers out there and just to let you know what this old clock really looks like since it has been immaculately restored by a friend of mine, Phil Kelly.

My 1896 wall clock from Germany.



BILL O'REILLY

Adieu to Rosie

Three weeks ago in this space, I wrapped up my column on Rosie O'Donnell by stating: "Launching personal attacks on Donald Trump is one thing. Accusing your country of trumping up 9/11 and committing war crimes is quite something else. Rosie O'Donnell has cast her fate to an ill wind. Nothing good will come of it."

That piece of prognostication was easy, and when Rosie announced her exit from ABC this week it was no surprise. As Ms. O'Donnell became increasingly unhinged on television and in public appearances, the Disney Company, which owns ABC, found itself in an impossible position. Disney has one of the most endearing images in corporate America, and one employee was ransacking that image. Anyone who knows anything about the corporate culture knew the iceberg collision was looming ever closer.

The ship really began listing after Ms. O'Donnell appeared at a chi-chi women's award luncheon and launched into an obscene tirade against Trump. Scores of corporate power brokers witnessed the embarrassing display, as did some teenaged girls who were receiving college scholarships from the "Women in Communications" group. Despite strenuous spinning by Rosie's handlers, Disney realized that not even Peter Pan could fix this one.

The amazing thing is that Ms. O'Donnell lasted so long. Never in the history of American television has one

performer alienated so many people. Rosie compared "radical" Christians to Muslim terrorists. Rosie announced that no American Catholic should be allowed to be a judge because of the Church's condemnation of abortion. Ms. O'Donnell accused President Bush of committing treason. The hits just kept on coming.

For those of us in the television industry, it was fascinating to watch. While Don Imus was figuratively burned at the stake, and Ann Coulter exiled from polite society for using a gay slur, Rosie kept rolling right along with Fortune 500 companies paying her way.

The low point for me came when Ms. O'Donnell was defending Alec Baldwin. She looked into the camera and said that she, too, cursed at her kids. Almost in a panic, Barbara Walters said, "but you hug them afterwards."

Rosie quickly said she did. The truly bizarre thing about the cursing statement was that some in the audience actually applauded when O'Donnell said it. I was stunned. I looked at the tape five times. What the deuce was going on?

Here's how I process all of this. Rosie O'Donnell is a far-left individual who has the sympathy of many who believe what she believes, including some in the mainstream press. Unlike Imus and Coulter, O'Donnell's anti-Bush, anti-conservative

tirades were useful to the radical left. If O'Donnell's opinions could become mainstream, then other radical bomb throwers could get away with a lot more on the tube.

Thus, while Fox News and a few newspapers covered Rosie O'Donnell's wild adventure, most of the other media ignored it. The same media that had feasted on Imus and Ann Coulter.

In the end, the everyday folks got Rosie, although I do believe she isn't sad about leaving ABC. Ms. O'Donnell is a woman who wants 100 percent affirmation; dissent is not tolerated in her life. Disney knew that Barbara Walters and the company, itself, were both taking a public opinion beating, and enough was enough. Rosie realized that Disney was no longer thrilled with her act and wanted out.

And so this columnist has reached oracle status, at least for this week. Say goodnight, Rosie.

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SENATE REPORT

Senate passes groundbreaking legislation on final day

By STATE SEN. CHIP PEARSON

The General Assembly adjourned Sine Die last week, as the gavel came down to close the 2007 session. In previous columns, I have expressed to my constituents the goals of the Republican-led Senate. We have continuously stated that we are here to improve education in Georgia, promote smaller government at every level and ensure the well-being of our families. When you consider the passage of several key pieces of legislation this year, I think it is clear that we have achieved many of these goals.

Throughout the 2007 session, we looked at each piece of legislation that was introduced in both the Senate and House, and if we thought the legislation will make Georgia a better place to live, work and raise a family, it continued through the process – if not, we de-prioritized the measure. We focused on those kitchen table issues that the people across Georgia focus on everyday – education, healthcare, protecting Georgians from predators and money. In this week's column, I'd like to quickly review some of the major bills that passed during the '07 session. In some of my upcoming columns, we will examine the new policies much closer, and gauge how they will affect the lives of Georgia citizens, as Governor Perdue prepares to sign these bills into law.

Education

Charter System Act – An innovative approach to education, allowing entire school systems to become Charter Systems, removing them from various state mandates. (Senate Bill 39)

Special Needs Scholarship Program – Allows students with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) to obtain vouchers for public or private schools. (SB 10)

HOPE Chest Constitutional Amendment – Mandates that Georgia Lottery money is only spent on the HOPE Scholarship

and Pre-kindergarten programs. (Senate Resolution 125; on the ballot in November 2008)

Middle School Graduation Coaches to keep students in school – Funds counselors in Middle Schools to keep students on track for graduation. (2008 budget)

Career Academies Act of 2007 – Designed to increase graduation rates and potential job and educational opportunities for students. (SB 68)

Grade Integrity Act – Provides that classroom teachers will not be required, coerced, intimidated or disciplined in any manner by the local board of education, superintendent or any local school administrator to change the grade of a student. (SB 9)

Healthcare

PeachCare for Kids – Funded PeachCare at \$81 million and shifted additional Medicaid dollars to preserve healthcare access for the neediest children in Georgia. (2008 budget)

Saving the Cure Act – Promotes ethical adult stem cell research without harming embryos. (SB 148)

Establish a Trauma Care Commission – The Commission will develop a plan to ensure that every Georgian has access to trauma care as needed. Adequate trauma centers could save more than 150 lives per year in Georgia. (SB 60)

Protecting Georgians

False Identification Documents – Makes it a felony to manufacture and distribute false identification cards and other documents. (SB 100)

Defeated legislation to allow convicted sex offenders back on the street – A bill that could have reduced the sentence of numerous sex offenders currently in prison was defeated. (SB 37)

Tougher penalties for driving without a license – SB 15 makes a third offense of driving without a license in Georgia a felony. This does not apply to those forget a wallet or purse.

License plate requirements – Requires license plate applicants to have a valid driver's license or other government-issued identification card. (SB 38)

Economic Development

Supported Delta's efforts to remain a stand-alone carrier – Senate leaders signed and mailed a letter to U.S. Attorney

General Alberto Gonzales, urging him to carefully review U.S. Airways' hostile attempt to take over Delta Air Lines. Days later, U.S. Air withdrew their takeover bid. (SR 49)

Bio-fuel tax credit – Allows for sales tax credit on production facilities of alternative energy sources. (HB 186)

Cable Choice Act – Provides competition within the cable industry for the first time in Georgia. (HB 227)

Ethanol-85 – Provided grants to encourage retailers to provide alternative ethanol fuel to consumers. (SB 157)

This year, we swore in the first Republican lieutenant governor ever, Lt. Gov. Casey Cagle. He has brought with him a desire for a more bipartisan atmosphere than we've seen in recent years. He has encouraged debate, and we've changed the tone of the state Senate. I am encouraged by what the Senate has done this year, and I believe we have passed meaningful legislation that meets the needs of all Georgians – not just a few, but everyone who has chosen to make our state their home.

Please feel free to contact Sen. Chip Pearson at his office in Atlanta at 404.656.9221 or by email atchip@team51.org.



Chip Pearson

