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On The Road Again
by
Tom Holbrook

As you read this Judy and I along with two friends from Winifred Village, Desi & Lucy, are just getting up and getting geared up to face another day on fabulous Key West, the Southern most point of these United States. We came over here on Sunday from Miami's South Beach after an evening of frivolity and fun and having a great meal at the legendary Joe's Stone Crab restaurant and going by to gawk at Gianni Versace's mansion where the 50 year old clothier to the stars was murdered by Andrew Cunanan, on July 15th, 1997. Needless to say there were other things we saw going on at South Beach that can't be reported in this column.

Key West will be our home base for 5 days while we visit other areas of interest in the Keys and then we head up the Gulf coast for a brief stay at Bonita Springs... then its home again to our most favorite resort, The Villages. I will share some of our favorite spots we visited in future articles if you will allow me... I always like to hear the good and bad about potential travel spots so hopefully you do too? This time of year is a good time for traveling South Florida because of the beautiful weather. However, because of that same beautiful weather one has to deal with a great many other travelers as well. That's okay, because it gives me a greater opportunity to tell more people about my home town in Central Florida.

I've got to re-mention the two concerts that are must attend events at home. On March 1st and 8th, the Village Voices will be having their annual Spring Concert at Church On The Square, and on March 3rd the Heart of Florida Barbershop Chorus will do the same at Savannah Center. Voices will have their two concert shows separated by a week, and the Barbershoppers will have their two shows in one evening. I'm telling you these things now because both shows are selling tickets and the shows are nearly sold out even as we speak, so get down to the Villages Box Office and get your tickets while/or if you may. I guarantee two great, but tremendously different sounds from these groups and you don't want to miss them.

Allow me to cast a little trivia your way... we've all read about creativity many judges are applying to their sentencing criteria for the variety of villains that pass through their courts. Well, a judge in Willoughby, Ohio gave what I would call a unique but fitting sentence to two young men who were found guilty of splattering another man's vehicle with paintballs. The judge ordered the two men to jail for 60 days OR an optional sentence to forego the time in the clink if they chose it... shooting their own cars with paintballs and then cleaning up the mess. They chose the latter, obviously, and in addition had to spend 40 hours painting at a Habitat for Humanity home.

Judge Cicconetti has made a name for himself by giving these sentences that many consider unique if not bizarre. He said he got into more creative sentencing after a rash of speeding tickets being given in school zones and he wanted to give the offender a glimpse at the potential danger of his or her crime. The next speeder that appeared in front of him received a choice of sentencing: Have your driver's license suspended for 90 days or spend one day working as a crossing guard. The judge said those who chose the alternative sentence, even those with multiple speeding offenses previously, never appeared in his courtroom for speeding again.

Some other sentences handed down by Judge Cicconetti are:

- He ordered a man who kept hollering "pigs" at police officers had to stand on a street corner with a 350 pound pig with a sign that read, "This is not a police officer."
- The sentence for stealing porn from an adult bookstore: To sit outside the shop in a chair, with a blindfold on his face and holding a sign saying, "See No Evil."
- A group of elementary school students had a field trip canceled because some high school students vandalized their school buses. The punishment: The high school miscreants had to throw a picnic for the grade school kids.
- A nanny found guilty of hitting a little boy with a belt was given a folder containing articles concerning the consequences of child abuse. She was made to read them and then discuss them in the courtroom with the judge and the victim's mother. Afterward the victim's mother asked that the nanny not receive any jail time.
- A mother of five who had abandoned 35 kittens in the woods, leading to the deaths of 9 of them, was given the choice of 90 days in jail for domestic animal abandonment OR 14 days in jail plus 15 days under house arrest plus a \$3,200 donation to the Humane Society plus a \$500 donation to the park rangers who found the kittens and one night alone in the woods. She chose the latter.

Judge Cicconetti said he can only remember two people who, after his alternative punishments, re-offended. One who was arrested for running from the police agreed to train for a five mile race as his alternative sentence and a few month's later was arrested for grabbing a woman's purse and running away with it.

Hurray for Judge Michael Cicconetti... keep 'em guessing.

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