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**Politics As Usual**  
by  
**Tom Holbrook**

**Only four more days in January, 2007.... Unbelievable!!! As they say, time flies when you're having a good time. I want to throw a lot of stuff at you today... some political but mostly not. I get so tired of writing on political things but can't stay away from it when I see all the shenanigans our politicians pull. I honestly do try to keep the column varied and diversified but sometimes it's just impossible to write about anything other than political stuff.**

**Allow me to cast a little trivia your way... we've all read about the creativity many judges are applying to their sentencing criteria for the variety of villains passing through their courts. One judge said it gets downright boring when trying to determine a proper sentence for a specific crime and when the U.S. Supreme court struck down mandatory sentencing he thought he might as well go outside the box to find innovative ways to get the message across to criminals coming before his bench.**

**A man in Texas who slapped his wife was ordered to attend yoga classes and in Michigan a woman who claimed to be a Hurricane Katrina victim to get free rent was ordered to clean houses by the Judge. 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 inspired him to give offenders a glimpse of 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 litter... uh, I mean 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 months' later was arrested for grabbing a woman's purse and running away with it. Keep up the good work Judge!

A few months back a vote was taken in the United States Senate affirming that the Official Language of America should be English. A slam dunk right... I mean what should it be, Swahili? English has been the official unofficial language of this country since its birth over 200 years ago. So why would they even need to vote on it? Maybe because there are so many who want to take our language away as well as our religion and they have convinced a very compliant Congress that speaking English and telling a candidate for citizenship to this country that he or she must learn our language (English) to qualify for citizenship is very offensive and against their civil rights... HUH?

Of course our wise legislators would vote it right in.. I mean... they would wouldn't they? Well, let's look at all who voted against English as our official language:

Akaka (D-HI), Bayh (D-IN), Biden (D-DE), Bingaman (D-NM), Boxer (D-CA), Cantwell (D-WA), Clinton (D-NY), Dayton (D-MN), Dodd (D-CT), Domenici (R-NM), Durbin (D-IL), Feingold (D-WI), Feinstein (D-CA), Harkin (D-IA), Inouye (D-HI), Jeffords (I-VT), Kennedy (D-MA), Kerry (D-MA), Kohl (D-WI), Lautenberg (D-NJ), Leahy (D-VT), Levin (D-MI), Lieberman (D-CT), Menendez (D-NJ), Mikulski (D-MD), Murray (D-WA), Obama (D-IL), Reed (D-RI), Reid (D-NV), Salazar (D-CO), Sarbanes (D-MD), Schumer (D-NY), Stabenow (D-MI), and Wyden (D-OR.) 38 United States Senators saw fit, for whatever reason they can think of... I can't think of any valid one... voted against having English made the Official Language of the United States of America. Possibly you should write them and ask them why?