

Phillipe and Jorge's Cool, Cool World: Traffic Snarls, Political Fools and Art Makes Everything Better

Newport Nightmares

Ah, Newport. Sailing Capital of the World. City by the Sea. Rhode Island's #1 tourist attraction. And seemingly determined by state and local pols and planners to make a visit there as unpleasant as possible.

P&J refer to the ill-conceived need for a median strip on the Newport Bridge, an overreaction of the first order. The bridge has been reduced to one lane in both directions as of April 6, and the eastbound lanes' EZ Pass lane was closed, which has resulted, by the RI Turnpike and Bridge Authority's own calculations, to warrant an hour's delay in the morning and evening commutes. Some fun, eh kiddies? P&J have seen this backup firsthand, and have considered doing roadside gun stands at both ends of the bridge for those drivers who want to buy a Glock or Sig Sauer and simply put a bullet in their heads as they try to get to work before noon, or home before "Jeopardy" ends. (And if you want to see a real car bomb go off, if there are still lane restrictions on May 5, the day festivities for the Volvo ocean sailing race begin, which Newport officials have humped harder as an attraction than Disney does Orlando or Walter White did crystal meth, expect fireworks galore.)

RITBA officials claim all this work will be done by May 1. Why not? Who has ever heard of a major construction project in Little Rhody going over its projected deadline or costing more than anticipated? (Take a bow, former governor Ed "Gerber Baby" DiPrete, whose state contract to build the new Jamestown Bridge not only ran over time-wise and cost-wise, but didn't have a clause saying that the contractors would pay for lateness, and instead left the great unwashed of Vo Dilun on the hook for the massive cost overruns. Full gainer into that Dumpster, Gerb.) So keep bringing those Indonesian pee bottles with you folks, and don't expect to get across the Bay in less than 60 minutes.

Worse is all the construction roadwork being done on Broadway in Newport, which for many is the only way into town unless you know the back routes — and even some Newporters don't. The town planners did this to Washington Square businesses two years ago at the height of the tourism season. P&J pointed out that restaurant owners such as Biggie Korn at Yesterday's would have been acquitted of murder of town officials on grounds of justifiable homicide as people avoided the downtown eating establishments as if they were selling Ebola on a bun at food carts.

P&J suspect it is only fitting that the "Scenic Newport" exit off the Newport Bridge empties onto yet another one-lane road named Farewell St, which fittingly runs between two cemeteries. (Geddit?) Stack the empty coffins by the gates, folks, we're sure they will be quickly accommodated if all these construction woes continue.

Monster Raving Loonies

The race is on. US Senator Ted Cruz announced his bid to become the Republican Party's presidential candidate in 2016, and we can bet Herman Cain, Michele Bachmann and Donald Trump feel upstaged.

But it was nice to know Mitt Romney has tacitly acknowledged his insanity by offering to have an exhibition boxing match with former heavyweight champ Evander Holyfield. (“Just don’t muss up my hair, Evander.”)

Back in the 1960s, a titled and barking mad aspiring politician in England who called himself Screaming Lord Sutch, who put out unlistenable albums at his own expense and drove a Rolls Royce painted like the Union Jack, ran for office under his own Monster Raving Loony Party banner. Well, I am sure the Republicans can counter the emergent Tea Party with another allied wing called the GOP Monster Raving Loony Party, which Screaming Lord Sutch would appreciate to no end. And leading that parade will undoubtedly be Sen Cruz.

Cruz’s campaign may be the best thing that could happen to the Democratic Party and Queen Hillary. As he plays to an audience of evangelical “Christians,” like he did in his announcement at Jerry Falwell’s Liberty University – who’s for grape Kool-Aid, kids? – he is bound to bring out the worst in all of the GOP future contenders during future public appearances and debates. If other potential candidates like the desperate and dim Jeb Bush, Miami Marco Rubio or schoolboy manqué Scott Walker find out they need to grab the ultra-conservative votes to have a chance of winning, they may quickly find God in the worst of ways, all caught on videotape before they have to “walk back” their comments. And the conservative bloc will be important, as none of them are getting the black, Latino or even women’s votes.

“God’s blessing has been on America from the very beginning of this nation, and I believe God isn’t done with Americans,” Cruz said. Well, we are glad to know The Big Sir found time from his global work to specially bless us back in the 1700s. But given this country’s recent behavior, and God botherers like Dubya Bush and now Cruz invoking his name and their direct connection to Him without express written consent of the NFL, maybe we better hope God is done with Americans, or at least looks the other way rather than sending America swarms of locusts or rivers of blood and telling us to keep him out of the discussion.

But Wait, There’s More

Only a week-plus after Cruz declared, self-ordained ophthalmologist Rand Paul threw his tousled toupee into the ring to the sustained applause of no one.

Little Randy urged voters to “take our country back,” when most people didn’t know it had been missing. Must have been smuggled out in a suitcase or shipped to Indiana Governor Mike Pence’s house, where he is hiding it from the eyes of all those faggots and dykes who want to disrupt Hoosier Heaven. (Note: After seeing the smarmy, lying phony Pence on TV, with his “boys regular” haircut promoting the “Freedom of Religion” act (honk!) his state passed, we can only conclude that Indiana is the only state where livestock animals are allowed to vote.)

In fact, our country has been taken by Randy Paul and his political pals in Washington, DC. They have corrupted the democratic process, they lie and steal at a rate that would make Vladimir Putin blush, and care nothing about the general public. So start taking it back from your buddies, Sen. Paul, a loathsome, lying and libertarian phony. Who has let these a-holes command even a minute of our attention? (And the media, who P&J will gladly buy a drink to wash the taste of the candidates’ nether units out of their mouths – see: Clinton, Bill.) Only 16 more months of this assault on your sense of decency to go. Whee! Buckle up, campers.

STOP THE PRESSES: As P&J go to print, we first learn via Scott MacKay's blog at Rhode Island Public Radio that former gov Linc Chafee is giving thoughts to a run to be the Democratic party's presidential candidate in 2016, having formed an exploratory committee. This is kind of like having a colonoscopy just for the fun of it, as far as we read Linc's chances. But if this is a sign of the future, P&J hope there is a space in the presidential candidate's parking lot (behind the DC K-Mart - not unlike K Street, but with employees with more ethics at the retailer) for the Dems' clown car right next to the one driven by Ted Cruz and Rand Paul. Keep the delusions coming.

Rhode Island Music Hall of Fame Inductions

The RIMHOF is only in its fourth year, but has grown in leaps and bounds to be what the *Providence Journal* has described as "Rhode Island's most fascinating museum" (*Providence Journal*, May 24, 2014). There are two events this year and they are right around the corner. First, on Mon, April 20 at Bovi's Tavern on Taunton Ave at 7pm, this year's jazz inductees, George Masso, Duke Belaire and Bob Petteruti will be honored on stage before the regular Monday night performance by the John Allmark Orchestra (John took over for honoree Duke Belaire whose big band held court on Monday nights for decades at Bovi's). The other induction ceremony and concert is on Sun, April 26 at the Hall in Pawtucket's Hope Artiste Village and next door at The Met. It's an all-day affair starting at 2pm.

At the Hall will be the unveiling of the exhibits on this year's inductees followed by the inductions and performances by many of the inductees themselves. At The Met will be a posthumous salute to Nelson Eddy, along with inductions of non-performer Richard "Paco" Zimmer, a legendary tour manager for major bands and the prime creator of one of Rhode Island's greatest nightclubs, the Center Stage in East Providence. George Wein, founder of the Newport Jazz and Fok Festivals, is also a member of the 2015 class. He unfortunately will not be able to make the ceremonies, but promises to be in RI in the summer where a presentation to him will be made.

As for the performers/musicians, this year we will induct classic '60s "garage bands" (garage bands with hit records), The Others, The Ascots and George "Georgie Porgie" Leonard. Brenda Bennett, who cut her teeth with the Tombstone Blues Band in the 1960s and continued as a member of Vanity 6 and Apollonia 6 (who worked with Prince) will be inducted in a new "sidemen" category as the Martyrs, i.e., bassist, Marty Ballou and drummer, Marty Richards, two of the busiest sidemen in the business who have worked with jazz, blues and rock acts from the Gary Burton to Joe Perry to John Hammond to Peter Wolf, Roomful of Blues and too many to mention here.

And finally, one of RI's most popular bands, The Schemers (who morphed into the Raindogs, who will also be honored) and the primary singer/songwriter with these bands, Mark Cutler, will be inducted. All of these bands and musicians will perform sets at the induction ceremony and, for those who care about RI music, this is a "must." (Disclosure: Jorge, aka Rudy Cheeks, is on the RIMHOF board of directors).

HMS Gaspee

Most Vo Dilanduhs have heard of the Gaspee and its importance in American history (the ship burned in Pawtuxet Cover by angry patriots years before the Boston Tea Party). But to get a fuller view of the whole story — its relation to the slave trade, for instance — see the 51-minute documentary film, *Aaron Briggs and the HMS Gaspee* by Andrew Stewart, a young Rhode Islander who spent years putting this whole thing together. It is now available through Amazon Instant Video and we highly recommend it.