

November 18th, 2005
Baton Rouge, Louisiana

JINDAL-VITTER. ROUND ONE
BYE,BYE TALK RADIO AND TPC GOLF.

Was it the early stirrings of the coming 2007 Louisiana Governor's race and who the major Republican nominee was going to be? That's the feeling I got at the Greater New Orleans Pachyderm Club this past Tuesday evening. It was a Jindal crowd with even the Congressman's in-laws in the audience. And there was no doubt who their favorite would be to take on the wounded incumbent. Jindal had the audience hands down.

You knew the crowd was interested in a "wider view" of the state political scene when they invited a renegade Democrat like me to be their monthly speaker. The crowd included current Republican state party chairman Roger Villere and a host of local Republican elected officials. And the group focus was clear. Run a ticket from the top spot on down to numerous legislative races when 2007 comes around.

This group smells blood. Time Magazine's description of current Gov. Kathleen Blanco as one of the nation's worst governors was ballyhooed by all in attendance. The possibility of a Landrieu for Mayor Campaign, and political problems with several other Democratic statewide officials had the group talking about major changes in Baton Rouge for a number of statewide offices.

As one top Republican official in attendance surmised: "Landrieu running for Mayor of New Orleans could open up the Lt. Governor's spot for someone like Sen. David Cain or Sen. Jay Dardenne. We have an excellent chance of keeping the Secretary of State's post that has been held by a Republican for a number of years. (Former Secretary of State Fox McKeithen held the post for 17 years until his untimely death). Some other statewides are in real trouble, so it's a heck of an opportunity. Needless to say, we're excited."

The Pelican State Pachyderm Club of Louisiana is the third largest local Republican club in the U.S. "Pachyderm" means bull elephant, and this group was clearly looking for a major political fight. One member observed: "On the national scene, Republicans are tough as nails. No holds barred. But locally, we haven't been that aggressive. But that's all going to change." We'll see.

When Senator Vitter's name was mentioned, there were a few claps. Congressman Jindal's name brought an enthusiastic response. Now he is their local Congressman, and his in-laws were part of the group. But the overwhelming majority left no doubt of whom their choice is to run for Governor in two years.

“We see Bobby a lot, and he has been really active in working with the party and raising money for the party. We can’t say the same about Vitter,” said one active member who works closely with the state Republican organization.

So, at least for the Pachyderms, it’s Jindal hands down to lead the ticket on ‘07. Two years is a lifetime in politics. Just ask Gov. Blanco. But key Republicans feel Jindal is about as well positioned as he could want to be this far out from election day.

IS PGA TOURNEY ABANDONING TPC?

It was billed as the golf course of the future. The Zurich Golf Classic would be permanently located at the newly designed PGA course in Gretna, across the river from New Orleans. The course was designed by superstar golf course builders Tom Fazio and Pete Dye. It is owned by the Professional Golfers Association with long term financial guarantees from the state, right now running more than \$10 million a year.

So what’s the problem? It’s more than the fact that 40% of the turf was lost due to Hurricane Katrina. It will take several years for the grass to adequately come back. But that’s not the big problem. The players just don’t like the course. They think it’s too flat, too straight, and really not very interesting or challenging. As one tour player told local officials, “Most of the holes look alike. It’s often like playing the same hole over and over again.”

Temporarily, the tourney has been moved back to its old home at English Turn, also on the west bank across from New Orleans. But in the long-range, some significant modifications are going to be necessary to keep this major tournament in Louisiana.

TALK RADIO TAKES A HIT IN BATON ROUGE

Not a word about it in the local press. But conservative talk radio took a major hit this week when Baton Rouge station WIBR dropped its talk show format in favor of gospel music. No announcement was made as to why, but newly released Arbitron ratings showed the station’s right wing rhetoric dramatically dropping in listenership over the past six months.

Independent radio’s Moon Griffon, who has developed his own mini-statewide network by buying local air time in a number of markets, has lost a foothold in the state’s capital, and is now mainly heard north of Alexandria.

Talk radio has never been a heavy political medium in Louisiana compared to most southern states, because of the lack of larger stations. Even New Orleans WWL doesn't reach the numbers of listeners you can find in other southern markets where five or six stations cover the whole state.

The best way for political junkies to stay in touch? Simple. go to <http://www.politicsla.com>, or my site at <http://www.jimbrownla.com>. And for the best in sarcasm on the political scene, go to C.B. Forgotston's site at www.forgotston.com.

Democrats generally get the upper hand when it comes to humor and political jokes. The latest effort is "Google bombing." The demos have learned how to trick Google's algorithm for ranking search results by using the same phrase on many sites that link to the target site, pushing it to the top of Google's list for that phrase.

Want an example of Google bombing by the Democrats? Just go to Google and type in the phrase, "miserable failure." You will get a chuckle, even if you are a Republican.

Democrats are...the party that says government can make you richer, smarter, taller and get the chickweed out of your lawn. Republicans are the party that says government doesn't work, and then they get elected to prove it.

- P.J. O'Rourke

Generally, a Republican looks down when he walks; a Democrat up. Neither looks ahead.

- Roger Rosenblatt

Peace and Justice.

Jim Brown

Jim Brown's weekly column appears each Thursday here at Politicsla.com, and in a number of newspapers throughout the State of Louisiana. You can read Jim's Blog, and take his weekly poll, plus ready his columns going back to the fall of 2002 by going to his own website at <http://www.jimbrownla.com>.

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