

Thursday, April 29th, 2004
Baton Rouge, Louisiana

NEEDLES BETWEEN THE EYES AFFECT LOUISIANA POLITICS

What do Sen. John Kerry, former Congressman John Cooksey, and a number of Louisiana Congressmen and state legislators have in common? They have stuck needles containing Botulinum toxin right between the eyes. Do what you say? Stick what where? Simple. It's the new Louisiana political rage. **BOTOX!!!**

If you saw the Democratic presidential hopeful on *Meet the Press* with Tim Russett several weeks ago, it was obvious to any observer that the 61 year old forehead looked as smooth as silk. No doubt about his taking a needle.

And have you looked closely at two Louisiana congressmen recently? A slick and polished skin tone that makes their forehead almost glow. And how many legislators can you name in Baton Rouge that have the same look? Count six? I say eight!

So whose the daddy of all these new marble brows? He's the former Monroe congressman who has been creating the velvet look for almost two years now. And he's making soooo much money unwrinkling politicos that he's about decided to hang up his own political ambitions and just keep raking in the cash.

The trendy wrinkle-reducing muscle relaxant has become a major part of John Cooksey's Ophthalmology practice. He advertises that he is "a Certified **Botox** Cosmetic physician" and describes the treatment as "a highly effective, non-surgical procedure that can reduce or eliminate wrinkles, including forehead lines, frown lines between the eyebrows and crow's feet around the eyes....Dr. Cooksey will have you looking younger in no time."

The good Doc has even used it on himself. Last year, he had his nurse inject him in the forehead. "It's very safe," he reports.

So from this point on when you are visiting with your congressman or state legislator, don't pass up the chance to observe well and ask the question: "Is he or isn't he?"

As for the former Congressman, look for him to pass on a comeback attempt against present Congressman Rodney Alexander. There are too many bristling controversies with rough and tumble pitfalls, choppy waters, and hard-edged choices to make in the political world. I say he will take the smooth and even road with few bumps .

Go for the big bucks Doc. And hey.....you can take credit for bringing a better tone to Louisiana politics. At least on the forehead.

SCHOOLS PEDDLING JUNK FOOD TO KIDS IN LOUISIANA? WHO CARES!

It was a sad sight in Baton Rouge last week at the Senate Education Committee meeting. New Orleans Senator Paulette Irons was proposing a procedure that would simply give force to laws already on the books that limit soft drinks and sugar snacks sold in public schools. Education officials came out of the wood work in opposition.. It was all about money. The health of our kids took second place.

Louisiana has a major obesity problem. Forty percent of our kids are overweight, and Louisiana is listed in the top six states for health-related costs do to obesity-related diseases. Diabetes, tooth decay, weakening bones, and heart disease are all problems related to obesity.

There is even a federal law on the books that limits soft drinks and sugar snacks during morning hours and lunch hour. But state Board of Education officials acknowledge that most schools ignore the current requirements.

At the Senate hearing last week, the opposition was out in force. The Soft Drink Association strongly protested. Should we be surprised? But so did school officials.

A representative of the Calcasieu Parish School Board said limiting junk food would keep dollars from being available to support school athletic programs. Yet a 1994 Harvard study of bone fractures in teenage athletes found a strong association between cola beverage consumption and bone fractures in 14 year old students. Kids who drank cola were about five times more likely to suffer bone fractures than those who didn't consume soft drinks. So is this any way to help the athletic program?

Bottom line? We have a system in Louisiana that gives our schools a significant financial interest in selling more junk food and colas. The biggest cost by far is the health risk to our students while school officials turn the other way. Sad but true.

SCALIA DIGS HIS HOLE DEEPER

I questioned before the propriety of Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia's Louisiana duck hunting trip with Vice President Cheney as he is about to rule on Cheney's actions in a lawsuit before the Court. Any judge will tell you that Scalia's accepting free rides on Air Force Two for himself and two relatives presented a direct conflict of interest. His protest that "we didn't share the same duck blind" came across as a lame excuse.

Now we discover that he felt his commercial flight back home was just too expensive (currently around \$698), because he of course had to buy a one-way ticket. After all, he

was only going one way. Not so for the big guy. We now learn that he bought a cheaper, round-trip ticket (costing \$218), with no intention of using the return portion. And he wrote a memo explaining his actions: “We purchased (because they were the least expensive)round-trip tickets that cost precisely what we would have paid if we had gone both down (to Louisiana) and back on commercial flights.”

The Justice may think his ticket purchases were legal. But the airlines consider this fraud. A definite breach of contract. The guy who is supposed to interpret the rules seems to be guilty of breaking the rules. And he wasn't very bright about what he did. By doing some comparison shopping, he could have legally bought a discounted one-way ticket on Southwest Airlines at the same time for \$109.

So if you try this sham and get caught, just use Scalia's actions as your excuse. Or do what most of us do....just check around for the best legal deal available.

MOVIE REVIEW

Denzel Washington's new movie, *Man on Fire*, is getting panned by the critics. But I loved it. And it's the top grossing movie in the country this week, so a few other folks must like it too.

I had read the A.J. Quinnell novel of the same name. Kidnappings have become a business in Mexico City where the story takes place, making bodyguards a necessity for wealthier families. Denzel (I'm a big fan and have seen all his movies so I guess I can call him by his first name), an ex-C IA operative /assassin who has become an alcoholic, is hired to protect the daughter of a prominent family. She gets kidnapped anyway, and it's time for revenge.

The plot has good character development and ends up as almost two movies. The first half is the wonderfully emotional relationship between the bodyguard and the couple's little girl. He becomes her mentor, and there is first rate chemistry between the two.

After the kidnapping, revenge and violence take over. And it's not straightforward. Our hero rages and riles, he cries and bleeds. The film can, and I think will, move you with great acting as much as with tense action.

Forget the critics. If you like emotion, action, don't mind the violence, and want to see the bad guys get stomped out, I recommend this flick.

I guess the Iraqis didn't get the memo that the war is over."

---- U.S. Army Sgt. James Amyett

Never go to a doctor whose office plants have died.

--- Erma Bombeck

Peace and justice.

Jim Brown