

ANNOUNCING THE FOURTH ANNUAL PFFT! AWARDS!

Welcome, ladies and gentlemen to the fourth annual Pfft! Awards! For those of you who may be newcomers to this space, the Pffts! were created in 2001 by your intrepid correspondent to honor those individuals and organizations who by word and deed have earned a well-placed Pfft! This is one award ceremony in which the audience is encouraged to participate. When you see a Pfft!, just put your tongue between your lips and blow. It will enhance your reading pleasure and make you feel like an integral part of the proceedings. Make sure you keep a napkin handy to wipe the dribble off your chin. There are a lot of Pffts! coming. It has been that kind of year. Now, the envelopes, please.

Our Pfft! for political integrity goes to the national Democratic Party for their recently published "Mobilization Manual" urging Democrats to claim voter intimidation at the polls on Election Day even if none exists. Party strategists call it a "pre-emptive strike." I call it dishonest. My mama would have called it tacky. That's even worse.

A Two-Faced Pfft! to Jimmy Carter, who has been strangely silent about his party encouraging such chicanery, especially after his finger-wagging at Florida officials for what he claims is a lack of integrity in their election process. When asked for his reaction, Carter aides sent word that he was too busy slogging around Lake Blackshear looking for killer rabbits and that he considered blatantly partisan political issues distasteful and beneath his dignity.

A Bonnie and Clyde Pfft! is awarded to Georgia state legislators Tyrone Brooks and Bob Holmes for their stated intention to introduce legislation allowing convicted felons to vote in Georgia. Rep. Brooks says, "You shouldn't ever lose your right to vote until you die and go to heaven." I hate to be the bearer of bad news, Tyrone, but most convicted felons aren't going to heaven. God has other plans for them.

A Pfft! and an abacus to the State Board of Regents for deft financial management. The Regents recently proposed a 10 percent mid-year tuition increase for Georgia students and then quickly rescinded the idea after getting severely beaten about the head and shoulders by Gov. Perdue and members of the Legislature. Remember, this same group of Regents bought Chancellor Tom Meredith a \$2 million mansion in Atlanta and gave Medical College of Georgia President Don Rahn a 50 percent pay raise in the midst of a state budget crisis. No wonder they need more money.

A Keep 'Em Barefoot and Pregnant Pfft! to the Baptists, who are in a dither over a Baptist church in Rome appointing a female pastor. Baptists believe that only men are qualified to be pastors. I hate to tell them that we Methodists have a bunch of outstanding female pastors who are so good they could get an 'amen' from a tree stump. Sorry about that, guys.

A Who Says Justice Is Blind? Pfft! to the judicial system for recent decisions involving two prominent Georgia athletes. Atlanta native Jamal Lewis, a Baltimore Ravens running back, admitted to being involved in a drug transaction. Federal Judge Orinda Evans sentenced Lewis to four months in jail AFTER the football season. Atlanta Braves shortstop Rafael Furcal violated the terms of his probation when he was arrested a second time for drunk driving. Cobb State Court Judge David Durden gave Furcal 28 days in the pokey AFTER the baseball playoffs. Does anyone believe that two raggedy homeless drudges would have received the same treatment for the same offenses?

We had planned to award The National Hockey League a frozen Pfft! simply because ice hockey is a dumb game that should go back to Canada and stay there, but the owners and players got mad at each other and canceled the season. Bless them one and all.

Ladies and gentlemen, that concludes the 4th Annual Pfft! Awards. Please join me in congratulating our winners. I think you will agree that they are more than deserving of all the Pffts! we can give them. ... And now, please feel free to wipe the dribble off your chin.