

RANDOM THOUGHTS ON RANDOM SUBJECTS

Attention all die-hard Tech fans. My beloved grandson Zachary Earl Wansley has announced he will be attending Georgia Tech this fall. You heard correctly. G-E-O-R-G-I-A-T-E-C-H. His mother and father and both grandfathers are graduates of the University of Georgia, and Zack is going to Tech. Don't tell me God doesn't have a sense of humor. Zack is a 4.0 student, president of student government at Chapel Hill High School in Douglas County, captain of the track and cross-country teams and an all-around outstanding young man. He wants to be a civil engineer. A wise choice. A perusal of my mail indicates that a lot of engineers from Tech are not very civil. ...

If the Legislature passes House Bill 218 to override Georgia's open-records laws and allow economic developers to negotiate in secrecy with industrial prospects, I hope every toxic waste plant, garbage dump and hog-killing plant in America locates in the middle of downtown Garden City, Georgia. That's the hometown of Republican Rep. Ron Stephens, who is pushing this unnecessary piece of legislation. Stephens and his supporters say that Georgia is at a disadvantage competing for new industries because too much detail is made public about proposed deals. Yet, neither he nor anyone else can cite one example of any company that did not come to Georgia because of our open-records laws. ...

Stephens' misguided effort comes on the heels of the infamous Senate Bill 5, which proposes to withhold information from taxpayers in public-private partnership schemes until the deals are done. Keeping Georgia taxpayers in the dark about our business is not a good way to build up legislative seniority. A lot of loyal Republican supporters are asking me what has gotten into these folks. Democrats were swept out of office because voters thought them arrogant and insulated. Now we have two ill-advised attempts by Republican legislators to do state business behind closed doors. Legislators need to remember that they serve at our pleasure, not theirs. Just ask Tom Murphy. ...

Its demise has raised few eyebrows, but for those of us who grew up in the Bell System, the sale of AT&T to SBC is hard to believe. Not too long ago, this was the largest corporation in the world, giving the best telephone service in the world. Now, it has been absorbed by one of its former subsidiaries, known in the old days as Southwestern Bell. The once mighty AT&T never got its act together after the breakup of the Bell System in 1984. In the competitive marketplace, you adapt or you die. ...

My mentor, Jasper Dorsey, once told me that you will never lose friends by saying "thank-you." Recently, I received a thank-you note from Nichole Taylor, the new president of Duffey Communications in Atlanta, one of the nation's largest independent public relations firms. I had written a letter of recommendation for her twenty years ago upon her graduation from college that she believes is what got her started on her career path. I had forgotten the letter, but she had not. A classy thing for her to do. ...

You've got to hand it to the geniuses in the national Democratic Party. After getting their clocks cleaned in last year's election, Democrats have elected Howard "Yah Yah" Dean as party chairman, über-liberal Nancy Pelosi as minority leader in the U.S. House of Representatives and appointed Ted Kennedy their most visible spokesperson against the war. Great choices guaranteed to have Middle Americans returning to the party in droves. ...

Finally, the state of Georgia lost one of the finest newsmen ever with the passing of Jimmy Bridges. Jimmy was the first television anchor at WSB-TV in Atlanta when the station went on the air in the late 1940s. There has not been a better or more professional newscaster since. A man of great integrity, good humor and kind spirit, Jimmy Bridges was later news director at WSB Radio and then a top-flight salesman for the station. Most of all, he was a dear friend. I will miss him greatly. ...