

## **POLITICAL ANALYST EXTRAORDINAIRE RELEASES PREDICTIONS ON GEORGIA PRIMARIES**

Being a modest and much-beloved columnist sure isn't as easy as I make it look. The pressure is excruciating, particularly these days. With Georgia's party primaries only weeks away, thousands of you are eagerly awaiting my world-famous political predictions before you step into the voting booth July 18.

My recognition as a political analyst extraordinaire began Feb. 5, 2001, when I wrote the following: "Roy Barnes will easily win a second term." Not long after that — Nov. 24, 2001, to be precise — I contracted some sinister tropical disease that totally erased my memory. When I regained consciousness, I discovered that Sonny Perdue had won the election. Heck, I knew all the time that Perdue was going to win. I was just funnin'. Political analysts extraordinaire fun a lot.

Now, Sonny is running for re-election. His primary opponent is Ray McBerry, the state flaggers' candidate. McBerry has let it be known that he won't say the Pledge of Allegiance. He told Marietta Daily Journal editorial page editor Joe Kirby that he "would not pledge allegiance to any icon or symbol except the Lord." I assume that also includes the Georgia state flag — current or past — which makes me wonder why he is running in the first place. Besides having no sense of humor, flaggers are weird.

I predict Perdue will quickly dispatch McBerry back to the oblivion whence he cometh and will face either Lt. Gov. Mark Taylor or Secretary of State Cathy Cox in the November general election.

The Taylor-Cox race is a toss-up. Gays are mad at both candidates because of their reluctance to get involved in overturning a state law that says girls should marry boys and vice versa. Gays say if Cox and Taylor don't change their stance they won't vote at all unless Ray McBerry can be persuaded to put a float in the Gay Pride parade. McBerry say floats are like icons and to count him out.

Blacks will probably split their vote between the two Democrats. Taylor is supported by our Ambassador to Outer Space Cynthia McKinney, which means he is assured of many votes in Georgia's 4th Congressional District as well as from the planet Neptune. Cox has had several rapper-types endorse her, which should guarantee her the vote of all the kids who play their car radios at ear-splitting levels with the windows down and their caps on backward.

I predict that neither Taylor nor Cox will win the primary and that they will run against Sonny Perdue in November as a team. If they win the general election, Taylor has agreed to govern on odd days and Cox the even days. Both will take Sundays off because state government seems to work better when nobody is around to screw it up. For the who-cares job of lieutenant governor, Ralph Reed thinks he will win in the Republican primary because a lot of business types in Georgia are supporting him. However, his main rival, state Sen. Casey Cagle of Gainesville, just might win because he has the support of Sheriff Butch Conway of Gwinnett County. I love Butch Conway. If they ever make a movie about the sheriff I couldn't imagine anybody but Clint Eastwood in the role. For example, when an inmate whined publicly about his dental problems, the sheriff promptly put him in a cell with a dentist accused of murder. The man has style. I'd much rather have Butch Conway on my side than a bunch of self-interested business types.

There are a lot of folks running for lieutenant governor in the Democratic primary, although nobody knows exactly who or why. The same goes for all the commissioners and secretaries of whatever, legislators and members of Congress. You really don't need to remember the names. All you have to remember is that every one of them will promise to cut our taxes if we put them in office, which they have no intention of doing.

It would suit me fine if they would promise not to give us all the government that we pay for. Alas, that is one prediction I'm not willing to make.