

There were some interesting developments, politically, yesterday, though you might have missed it if you watched the evening news. First, though, some local announcements... A reminder of sorts - Russ Feingold's annual Summer Picnic/Bar-B-Que in Grant Park in South Milwaukee is this Sunday, the 13th. We are proud to be sponsors this year, and hope you can attend. You'll have a chance to meet the Senator, and other supporters, and have a nice meal. We have always enjoyed ourselves at this event.

Things are picking up pace in the Donovan Riley for State Senate campaign, in which B and I are both actively involved.

Donovan has garnered endorsements from unions, such as Wis. Federation of Nurses & Healthcare Professionals and SEIU State Council, as well as groups like Planned Parenthood and NARAL Pro-Choice Wisconsin. Polling data looks good and Jeff Plale (the opponent) looks a little shaken. Every day brings more volunteers to the campaign.

We would welcome your support, too. Please visit the campaign website at <http://www.rileyforstatesenate.org> and make a donation, sign-up for a yard sign, get involved, or just remember to vote Donovan Riley for the 7th Senate District in the September 12th Democratic Primary.

Rep. Bob Ney dropped out of the race for Ohio's 18th Congressional seat. He has been badly tainted by his association with Jack Abramoff, and the Justice Department has made clear that an indictment is only a matter of time:

<http://www.cleveland.com/open/plaindealer/index.ssf?/base/news/1155026433105190.xml&coll=2>

Ney's likely replacement is Republican State Senator Joy Padgett, who is perhaps best known for using a photo of her State Senate race opponent, Terry Anderson, posed with a Hezbollah fighter, to paint him as soft on terrorism. Anderson, you may recall, was held hostage by Hezbollah for seven years (1985-1992).

Ohio state law requires a primary, so Padgett is not a sure thing. The Democratic candidate will be Zach Space, a Lawyer from Dover.

Former Rep. Tom DeLay will be on the ballot in his Sugarland, TX Congressional race. Though, like Ney, DeLay has been tarnished by ethics violations and chummy relations with seedy lobbyists, his efforts to remove himself from the ballot after winning his March primary have failed. Surprisingly, his last attempt - an emergency appeal to the US Supreme Court - was turned back by none other than Justice Antonin Scalia, previously known to have enjoyed interfering in elections (ref. Bush v. Gore, 2000).

<http://www.dfw.com/mld/dfw/news/state/15223781.htm>

DeLay's opponent will be former Rep. Nick Lampson who has kept up a vigorous fund raising pace, and currently has \$2.1 million on hand.

The voters of Connecticut will finally have the opportunity today to put the rest of us out of our collective misery and settle the Lieberman/Lamont question once and for all. Godspeed, say I. Of course, Joe and his Faux-Mentum (in the words of ABC News' The Note) could decide to run as an independent, should he lose, and we would have to suffer through three more months of the national media wringing its hands over the greater meaning of a single Senate race.

I am so sick and tired of hearing about how this race represents a national referendum on the Iraq war. If we needed one, wouldn't the incessant polls showing public support at 30% be enough? Does a single Washington reporter really think that any voter in Connecticut is going to be standing in their polling place today and thinking, "How will my vote effect the national conversation?" I don't think so. These voters will either "Stay the course" or "Cut and run"

without a thought to how this will play in Peoria - they care how it plays in their lives.

Jeez!

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Regarding the Connecticut race, and Lieberman's fading support from the Democratic party apparatus, Cynthia McKinney's campaign manager made this analogy:

It's like when you have a room full of roaches: You go in, turn the light on and they scatter.

When people think you're weak, they defect. Only the true at heart stick around.

Okay, fair enough. But, this is politics — what else would you expect?

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Speaking of incumbent Senators in tough races, Republican Sen. Conrad Burns, he who took more money from Jack Abramoff's clients than anyone else, is not looking so good up against Democratic challenger Jon Tester. In an interesting early television commercial, Burns had a man

claiming to be Tester's barber talking about how Tester's very conservative looking flattop haircut masked his truly liberal heart. Problem was that the man who is actually Tester's barber was all too happy to talk to the press and tell them that he didn't think that was true. Then, in an attempt at Good-only-knows-what, Burns lit into a group of Virginia firefighters whom he came across at the Billings airport:

Burns, one of the most vulnerable incumbents in the fall elections, confronted members of a firefighting team at the Billings airport on July 23 and told them they had done a "piss-poor job," according to an official state report and the U.S. Forest Service.

The Hotshot crew had traveled 2,000 miles from Staunton, Va., to help dig fire lines for about a week around a 143-square-mile wildfire east of Billings.

<http://abcnews.go.com/Politics/wireStory?id=2268493>

Needless to say, this has driven the Firefighters Union even harder up against the Tester candidacy, along with many other working folk.