

Bill's Blither

About Me

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devilishly handsome, screamingly funny, overly modest

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MONDAY, OCTOBER 10, 2005

10-10-2005

Today we attack the musical question "does Connecticut have a definitive sense of place, and do local blogs reflect that?". To end the suspense, my answer to the first half of that query is yes, and to the second half, maybe.

I have lived for extended lengths of time in 4 places in my life, and have found each to have unique and quantifiable aspects of geographical beauty, political and religious dynamic, and a difficult to define social ethos. Southern Illinois, also known as "Little Egypt" or Mark Twain country, was, in the late '40's and early '50's, an unabashedly racially segregated domain, committed to agriculture both culturally and conversationally. Fundamental religion permeated any "philosophical" discussion. At 12 years old I was asked seriously by a friend who had found out that I was Jewish "where were my horns?".

San Francisco in the '60's was everything you've read. Hallucinogenic drugs were considered a must at parties, anti-war politics and civil rights rallies, flower-power, beat-nik clothing, very liberal social values, tolerance of virtually anything. You can never find a time machine when you need one.

Germany in the late '60's was a culture shock. On one hand, there was the subliminal guilt of middle-class German's concerning Hitler (everybody fought on the Eastern Front, and only against Russians). There was a dichotomy in the German attitude toward me, a Jew but also an American Army officer. All buildings in small German Rhineland towns, like Worms where we lived, were by law narrowly limited in architectural design, making everything look uniform like a Grimm fairy tale. I think this constant visual bombardment affected social attitude, encouraging the herd instinct. Most of the economic concerns centered around the wine crop, as did most of the celebrations. Hard to believe those guys fought world wars.

With this as a backdrop, it is easy to find the definitive aspects in my

Connecticut surroundings. My later childhood was spent in a very small town "nestled in the foothills of the Berkshires" of the western sector of the state. I now live in the larger bedroom suburb of Cheshire. My love of our state's rural natural beauty fills me with a somewhat uncharacteristic simple chauvanism. For that reason, my favorite blog this week, far and away, was Connecticut Windows on the Natural World. It displays, rather sentimentally, beautiful areas and where to find them. I take day-long "excursions" with two of my grandchildren to many of the places mentioned. I have spent literally hundreds of hours on top of the Meriden cliffs pictured on the blog. You can see the Sound on a clear day, and from the other side of the ridge you can see all the way to Hartford. This bucolic splendor is, I believe, uniquely Connecticut.

Connecticut can also be politically and culturally defined, and it shows in some of the blogs we read. First of all, the state by and large leans politically left. This makes the conservative side peculiarly restrained and intellectualized, William Buckley, never Billy Graham. In fact, on "Connecticut Conservative" right-wing religious positions don't seem to exist, as they certainly would in a neo-con blog from the South or Midwest. Like rightists everywhere, however, he seems to concentrate on deconstructing (McE's word, better than bashing, I guess) leftists like Dodd and Lieberman but finds little to say in support of Shays and Johnson.

This brings me to "Orient Lodge". Aldon Hayes apparently feels so confident of the support of his liberal audience that he doesn't have to say anything more about a candidate than that he, or his wife the State Rep, "likes" him because he's a "great guy", a permeating phrase on the blog. I understand he may visit this week. Is he fair game, or do we have to be nice?

The speculation on "Ex-Donkey Blog" (quoting a conservative) that Harry Reid's backing of Harriet Miers is a Machiavellian attempt to set the Right against her is a fun thought, and I found that quotes like that made the blog interesting. However there is a certain restraint to the blog, and to all the blogs cited on "Connecticut Weblogs" that shows careful editing. Very "Connecticut". I also liked "Tchotchkes" speculation that Miers is either a red herring or a Trojan horse, possibly being appointed to be Borked. By the way, anant our discussion about Tushnet, Mary Bishop of Tchotchkes is not Jewish, yet names her blog a Yiddish idiom. My need to win arguments gets me in sooooo much trouble.

One last thought, I hated "Total Mind Blow". Not professionally done. No "message". Not much of a blog.

By the way, for the half-dozen of my so-called friends who have called to rag me about blogging at work, the time you're seeing at the end of my blogs is not accurate. It just means I don't know how to set the clock on my computer. Or set up a link, by the way, which I intend to discover this week.

posted by Papa Bill | [3:45 PM](#)

1 Comments:

marybishop said...

I'm interested to know how it is you can state with certainty that I am not Jewish?

[4:47 AM](#)

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