

Political Penguin

By Duane Plank

So President Obama took some time off from his busy domestic schedule to fly to Copenhagen, Denmark to throw his support behind the now-failed effort to bring the 2016 Summer Olympics to his beloved Chicago. Apparently his oratory held little sway with the voters of the IOC, who voted to eliminate Chicago and Tokyo in the first round of balloting.

Maybe we should have sent the droll comedian David Letterman over there to harangue the IOC folks. Guess he was too busy last week to hop on a plane and head to Denmark, wherever that is. Near Canada, someone who I don't trust told me. Gotta get better with that geography thing. Put it on my to-do list, which is growing by leaps and bounds.

And is Denmark the country where you can legally smoke things that are illegal in the good old US of A? Or is that the Netherlands? Dang it, I owe you guys more than my paltry knowledge of the world's environs.

I do remember, somewhat, when the Summer Olympics were held in L.A. back in 1984. Never have hosted the Winter Olympics in L.A., just to clarify for all you nitpickers. Doom and gloom scenario was propagated by the nattering nabobs of negativism. The naysayers whined that the Games would cost the taxpayers a ton of cash. And that the streets would be in a virtual gridlock mode, with people unable to get to work, to get to the supermarket, to get to McDonalds. What a travesty that would have been.

But it seems that everything went okay 25 years ago, the Games finished financially in the black, and the traffic on the streets was pretty darn minimal. The good guys from the U.S. won most of the medals, which is really what it is all about, right? Competition and fellowship be damned--who is wining the medal count?

Course the Russians decided to boycott the Games in retaliation for President "Peanut" Carter guiding the Americans into a boycott of the 1980 festivities held in Russia.

We held an opening ceremony party at our palatial digs back in '84 and all went incredibly well. Multitudes of very pretty ladies showed up to view the lighting of the torch. Least that is what they said. Gotta say that I had no clue who most of the women were, but they must have been friends of friends. Anyway, the party was a hit, except for the stick-in-the mud manager of the property, who said that we may have been a tad bit too loud on that evening, and could we please limit the decibels at our future soirees?

Back to the present. The reality of the deal is that the words uttered by the President last week seemed to fall on deaf ears. Or more probably, ears belonging to folks who had already decided to select Rio de Janeiro, Brazil to host the games seven years down the road. Seems that everyone likes to party

in Brazil, which will become the first South American country to host the Olympics. And I thought that they had already staged the Games in Mexico? My bad.

"Stunning" was the word used by many of the pundits when the results of the first ballot were released. "An embarrassment to the President," was also a phrase bandied about by the pontificators. And how do you think the results reflected on the truly American mega-bucker, businesswoman Oprah Winfrey, Chicago's talker, who had also traveled to Copenhagen to push for the Games for her city?

Mr. Obama strode to the podium and lobbied the IOC folks for eight minutes, noting how Chicago "is a city that works. We know how to put on big events, and scores of spectators and visitors will tell you we do it well. If you choose us, we walk this path together." No dice, said the voting members of the IOC. The President spoke after his wife, Michelle, had addressed the gathering, touting the virtues of Chicago, mentioning her late father's battle with multiple sclerosis, and how the Olympic movement and participation in sports had helped in the battle against the disease.

Some folks out in the political world criticized the Prez for making the quick overseas trip. Said that he should have stayed stateside and spent more time doing it is whatever he does when he isn't appearing on TV. What is that, by the way? I know we elected a community organizer to the job, but who knew the guy would be such a prolific presence on the boob tube?

I disagree with those folks who say Mr. Obama should have just stayed home, that as a Chicago guy, he was only hopping on Air Force One because the Windy City was involved. Staging an Olympics in America

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Dear Carol



Dear Carol,

My in-laws have come to visit for an indefinite period of time. I love them but I'm finding it to be a bit of a strain. My husband goes off to work each day and I am left with the 89 and 91 year old. They are in pretty good health physically but she has early Alzheimer's and his balance is unsteady. I feel I can't go anywhere for more than an hour, I'm afraid one of them will fall, wander off or do something dangerous. My sisters-in-law live in the area but they never have the parents stay at their houses and rarely visit and give me a break. My husband is starting to talk about putting an addition on the house and having them live with us instead of going back to their own home in another state. They've been here for three weeks and I'm getting anxious. How can I stop feeling this way?

Stir Crazy

Dear Stir Crazy,

You have a right to your feelings. Your life has changed and has become more restrictive than it was in the past. Your husband needs to hear your concerns; he cannot know

your feelings unless you tell him. Please ask your sisters-in-law to visit more often and to have the parents visit them so you can take care of your own life. Your mother-in-law will require more and more attention as her condition progresses. Talk frankly with your family members about how this will be dealt with. This is a time for a frank assessment of your in-laws and some honest talk about their future care and living arrangements.

Dear Carol,

I have always wanted to act in a play. I think I would be good at it but I've never had the nerve to actually tell anyone, to take a drama class or try out. My school is going to put on a play soon and I want to try out but I am afraid. How can I get the scared part to go away and the part that wants to do this to be strong?

Scared to act

Dear Scared,

Your heart has been telling you for a long time that being part of a play would give you great joy. Your brain is telling you scary stories about what might happen if you try. Tell your brain to shut up. None of those scary "what might happen stories" are the truth; they are your creative imagination gone in the wrong direction. Make up a story about how you go to a class or a try out, your talent is recognized and you have a part in the play. Keep telling yourself that story as you go and join the class or try out. When we approach a new experience with confidence we are more likely to succeed. Let me know what happens and good luck.

Send questions to askcarolnow@gmail.com or mail to Herald Publications.

Carol is a Life Coach available for private consultation in person or on the phone. •

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