

# Political Penguin

By Duane Plank

So President Obama won the coveted Nobel Peace Prize last Friday. For something very noble that he did, I'm sure. Like appear on late-night TV. Didn't know that they were giving out the prized prize for stirring oratory, though. And tell me that I was dreaming when I thought that I saw the Prez on the plasma, chatting with comedian George Lopez about Lopez's upcoming TV gig? A commercial for a talk show. Tell me it ain't it so, Joe.

Out and about with the proletariat on Friday night, and there wasn't a one of them who could tell me why the man deserved the prize. Mr. Obama, 48, and on the job for just nine months, seemed equally stunned with the award. But I am sure he will keep the trophy, or the plaque, or whatever. Guess there is some monetary award that goes with the honor, too.

Said the Prez: "To be honest, I do not feel that I deserve to be in the company of so many of the transformative figures who have been honored by this prize." Agree with you, sir. By the way, someone pointed out, didn't the Cold War end on President President Reagan's watch? Pretty big deal in the world of peace on earth and all that. Don't think he was a Nobel winner, was he?

Anyway, the Nobel Committee gushed about Mr. Obama's "extraordinary efforts to strengthen international diplomacy and cooperation between peoples." Or talk about it a lot, with the use of a pulpit and a teleprompter.

Who is the Noble Committee and what is the award all about, you ask? According to semi-reliable sources, the prize is awarded to "the person who shall have done the most or the best work for fraternity between nations, for the abolition or reduction of standing armies, and for the holding and promotion of peace congresses." The self-promoting guy who decided to name the award after himself was one Alfred Nobel, purported to be a Swedish industrialist.

While I was perusing the newscasts mentioning the prize, heard the name bandied about of Greg Mortensen, who was also a contestant for the prize. Seems that Mr. Mortensen, to make a long story way short, is the son of a medic, some type of mountaineer, and a do-gooder who has made it his life's work to "build schools for girls in places where opium dealers and warlords try to kill people for trying." Places like the friendly confines of Afghanistan and Pakistan. Maybe that doesn't trump talking, incessantly, into the TV cameras, and maybe it does. I'm just saying...

Don't think that my girl Sarah Palin was up for the Peace Prize, although who knows what honors await the ex-Alaska governor. Missed reading about her exploits in the column recently, have ya? Me too.

Did you know that she is credited with writing a book, a book that recently went to number one on Amazon.com and Barnes & Noble.com? And isn't scheduled to be released until November?

Seems that having an opposition party in power in Washington is good for tome-writers on the other side of the political spectrum.

During the Clinton years, righties like Ann Coulter raked in the bucks excoriating the Clintonians and their West Wing shenanigans. And while the last President Bush roamed the halls of the White House, liberal-leaning authors like Al Franken and Michael Moore were able to make barrels of cash taking shots at the incumbent administration. Par for the course in Washington, or so it seems. The title for Palin's book: *Going Rogue*.

Did you see where fat-cat media mogul and political pundit Rush Limbaugh has made a play to buy my horrific St. Louis Rams, currently sporting an 0-5 record, and proud owners of the longest current losing streak in the NFL at 15 and counting? Seems that the tubby syndicated talker, heard locally on KFI 640, has partnered up with St. Louis Blues' owner David Checketts in an effort to buy the Lambs. And as soon as the news became public, some motor-mouths out there suggested that Limbaugh was an unfit owner, citing supposedly racist comments that he has blathered over the airwaves in his long career as a right wing apologist.

We shall see how this one plays out, but it was very interesting to see that pinhead Keith Olbermann chimed in from left field, supporting Limbaugh's right to make a bid for the worst team in pro football. Talk show host Olbermann, who apparently averages about a dozen viewers nightly, does have a substantial sports pedigree, so he has a bit of credibility when opining on the subject. Said the unfunny cable TV guy: "There are now going to be character tests for sports owners? My god, if Limbaugh wants to buy them, far be it from me to tell him that he is flushing his money down a rat hole." Flushing money, eh? Kinda what the guys who spend their ad dollars on Olbermann's TV show are doing, isn't it?

Sometimes stories get a quick play on the all-important media outlets, like the *PP*, and then get shot-canned. Anybody out there still reporting on the folks in New Orleans and that little storm thingee that happened a couple of years ago? How bout some follow-up, friends? You remember that, right? Katrina? The storm that left more than a few folks in a bad way? Seems like we all just move on to the next story, right?

Well, in an effort to do a little follow-up, and, admittedly, as little as possible, I will follow up on a story that I chimed in on the first week of the *PP*. Pirate story. Remember that, both of my readers?

Somalian pirates had done that pirate thing, hijacked a ship, acted like really tough guys, threatening to kill the ship's captain and were taunting the good old guys from the USA. Who sent out some really accurate guys with really nice guns--sharpshooters probably. Have to ask the *NASCAR Guy*, who I believe knows this stuff.

The guys from America with the guns took three well-placed shots and wasted three of the scallywag dirtbags. Anyway, the remaining criminal who wasn't picked off, who was probably cowering on the bottom of the boat when his comrades took the bullets, is still shuffling around our justice system, I believe. Where is Abduwali Abdukhadir Muse now? Let you know down the road... •

# Dear Carol



**Dear Carol,**  
*My next door neighbors are building an extension onto their house. It includes a deck that is going to allow them to look right into my back yard. I'm going to lose all of the privacy that I've enjoyed all of these years and the building is going to shade my yard so I'm afraid my plants are going to die. It is too late to ask them not to do that but I am outraged that the city allows this sort of thing to happen. We used to be the kind of neighbors who looked after each other's property but now I don't think I'll ever speak to them again. They are so inconsiderate!*

**Private Peter**  
**Dear Peter,**  
The loss of privacy in your back yard will be slight compared to the loss of a friendly neighbor. Please reconsider your feelings about the new addition to the house next door and the family who lives there. The property is theirs; the city would not allow it to be built if the plans did not conform to

city standards. You can change your home to meet your needs and wishes as can any other property owner without asking permission from the neighbors. Please do not take this as a personal attack; the family is acting to satisfy their own desires, not to make you uncomfortable. Accepting change is a sign of good mental health that supports good physical health as well.

**Dear Carol,**  
*My husband was laid off from his job almost five months ago, he can't find a new job that pays much more than the unemployment he is collecting. I am a stay-at-home Mom with our 4-year-old and 18 month old children. We are living very simply and would be ok if we didn't have to pay for medical insurance through COBRA; it costs us \$600 each month but I know we need to keep all of us insured. My husband says I should get a temporary or part-time job. It would help keep us afloat, he could watch the kids, but I don't want to leave them. I love being at home with my babies. Do you have any suggestions?*

**Hannah**  
**Dear Hannah,**  
I suggest you get a part-time or temporary job. Your husband can watch the children while he looks for a job or until he is called back to his old job. There are times we need to put our desires aside for the good of our families. Working now will help keep you out of debt so you will have a brighter future and your husband will be able to form close relationships with the children that will last a lifetime.  
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. •


# A Perfect Morning

By Karen King Russo

Fall is in the air. As I am writing this now, the wind is blowing like crazy. Though the ocean is like a live drama before my eyes bristling with white caps, our few meager plants on the walk street patio are taking a beating, no doubt having to be replaced. On the few occasions that our garden looks pretty, it's because I've just replanted.  
But just a few days ago, Thursday, I believe, was one of those perfect mornings, or perfect to me. Hot, dry and still. If I had to set off for work, a guy in coat and tie or a gal in suit, stockings and pumps, I am sure I would have had a different view of it. But as it was, I actually had a few hours just to myself before leaving for Glendale where it would be 105 degrees. I had agreed to help my husband once again, four days for me, eight for him, with the onerous task of clearing out his mother's condo following her death of a few weeks ago. If you have been through that, you know what I am saying.  
Normally I would have gone to an exercise class, if not compelled to do chores or attend some meeting or other. But that would be inside. This morning seemed far too special to sacrifice by being inside. I seized the moment.

Grabbing a beach chair and a book, I headed for the shore. Before plunking myself down, I took off my shoes, walked down the beach, actually treading in the water up to my knees, for about a half hour and a half hour back, all in the company of friendly sandpipers and flocks of waverlings.  
Back at my chair, I would normally have become engrossed in my novel, but this

morning I was mesmerized by the challenging waves crashing about 100 or so feet out, and then the smooth flatness of the water as it dribbled forward. An onslaught of seagulls that had been missing during the summer were squawking about. Pelicans were skimming along the surface of the water or diving with needle-nose precision for a fish. Only about four guys were out there on surfboards, three in wetsuits, one brave soul not. And as far as I could see, in either direction, not a soul was sitting there as I was. I am always amazed that here we are in LA County, 10 million people, and most of the time, we have the beach to ourselves. Downtown Manhattan Beach can be a madhouse on summer weekends, and The Strand draws throngs of visitors. But here on a perfect September Thursday morning, I had the beach to myself. Not in Laguna, not Santa Barbara, or Carmel, but right here. I thought, "This is perfection."  
There was only one hitch. I wished I had worn a bathing suit so I could go in for a quick swim. Instead I was wearing shorts and a t-shirt. The water was still warm, this year the warmest that I can remember. After much contemplation, I yielded to temptation. What the heck. I could walk back to my house without having to parade through town. So I just jumped into the surf, clothes and all, giggling every minute.  
Later in the day when scouring cupboards at my late mother in-law's condo and sorting, tossing, and hauling clothes to the women's shelter in downtown LA, rather than grouching, I could look back on my perfect morning.  
Karen Russo can be reached at kkrusso@aol.com •



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