

Oh, what fun it is tonight...

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There's not much more that can be written or said about the messy situation Senate leader Trent Lott has gotten himself into. By making some really stupid comments at the 100th birthday party of retiring Senator Strom Thurmond, he has jeopardized his career and the image of the Republican party. Of course, as a Democrat, I'm enjoying the whole spectacle.

First, I get tired of people being honored just because they've done a job for a long time. That's commendable, of course, but in Thurmond's case, he made the easy transition from a dirty young man to a very dirty old man who was notorious for groping and grabbing women and keeping male chauvinism and tacky behavior alive on Capitol Hill. Worse yet is his career - begun and continued for years on the platform of segregation and opposition to civil rights. The guy even fought against the GI Bill of Rights after World War II, designed to retrain, educate and employ veterans. What a piece of work this Thurmond is.

What we've finally figured out is that it makes no difference how prejudiced one might be. Discrimination, an action, on the basis of race or gender is another matter entirely and fortunately is now against the law.

Senator Lott keeps asking us to excuse his record of support of discrimination because of the atmosphere 40 years ago. He's about five years younger than I and I've got news for him. Many of us, including Southerners, knew then that racism and the squashing of civil rights were wrong. Not too hard to figure out, and anyone who claims to come from a Christian background and touts those philosophies is a fraud.

The fun part of this whole scenario is that Senator Lott has said if he isn't elected Senate leader he will resign from the Senate. Then the Democratic governor of Mississippi can appoint a Democrat replacement, creating an equal balance of party members in the United States

Senate once again. Fun, fun, fun.

Yup, this last week has been a hoot for us political junkies. Former Vice President Al Gore, who is probably the most qualified person to ever be a presidential candidate, carefully decided not to run for president in 2004. I, like many Democrats, am sad but relieved. I agree that a presidential battle between him and President Bush would be directed toward past issues and injuries and Gore may very well have lost. Another Democrat candidate will have a better chance and he knows it. Well, as other pundits have said, Gore may be much more effective and influential discussing governmental issues because he is not a candidate.

The resignation of former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger as head of the committee to investigate 9/11, after being appointed by the President less than a week

ago, also caused a sigh of relief heard clear across the country. That was probably one of the few bi-partisan sighs heard in a long time.

It would be nice if we could get a rest from politics for awhile, but the race for Illinois United States Senator is already gearing up and there will be announcements by candidates after the first of the year.

We might as well resign ourselves to the fact that the election cycle never stops. It will be interesting to watch what the Senate Republicans do in early January when they have the option of electing another leader.

In the meantime, happy holidays and may we all make the best of 2003.

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