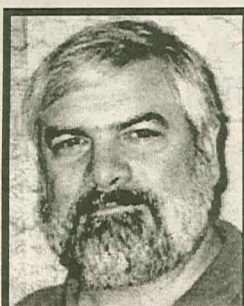


FROM THE
EDITOR'S DESK

MICHAEL A. SZYMANSKI

I was appalled to see Alabama State Senator Hank Erwin on a recent cable news network espousing his view that Hurricane Katrina was God's punishment for the "gambling, sin and wickedness" that New Orleans and the Mississippi Gulf Coast are "known for." Can anything be more ridiculous or pathetic? Of course he ignores or explains away the fact that the notorious French quarter was among the least damaged parts of the city and that churches were destroyed and innocent children and god-fearing families were subject to the catastrophe. Thankfully, the commentator Erwin was talking to gave him no credibility.

With a little web searching on the subject (try entering the search "katrina wrath of god" and you will be amazed!) I found that Katrina was being touted as God's punishment for such diverse things as abortion clinics, homosexuality, the U.S. invasion of Iraq and American support of the withdrawal of Jewish settlers from Gaza and the West Bank! Of course, none of this can be conclusively proven or refuted as between disagreeing zealots... each proponent has god (or allah or jaweh or whoever) on their side. To me, this demonstrates how important the concept of separation of church and state is. Hurricanes and other natural disasters will always be touted by some people as the wrath of god, but in the real world, we need to accept that they happen, they are going to happen and they must be met with action as well as prayers. God helps those who help themselves, and those who help others!

While I'm on the subject of religion (sort of), I think again of the Bush nomination of Harriet Miers for U.S. Supreme Court. The latest I have heard is the "criticism" that she is "born again," causing opponents to raise the fear that she will impose her religious views on America through the Supreme Court. This is reminiscent of the concern that John F. Kennedy's election to the presidency would pose a similar problem. The simple fact is that most politicians and judges have their private and diverse religious beliefs, and they understand that their public offices require a certain detachment and a respect for the beliefs or lack thereof of others. Harriet Miers can be asked, in the course of her confirmation hearings, to what extent her religious beliefs will influence her judicial decisions. If her answers are not satisfactory, she shouldn't be confirmed.

Turning to a much easier subject, I thank Dr. Thaddeus Radzilowski of the Piast institute for his very thoughtful letter (this page) on the value of the Polish Weekly newspaper. I know many of our readers feel likewise, and with such enthusiastic support we can and will strive for constant improvement and service to the community.

LETTER TO
THE EDITOR

To The Editor,

I am writing to congratulate the Tygodnik Polski on the occasion of the annual commemoration of the Polish press last week. There are few institutions in our community which have made as significant a contribution to the very existence of Polonia as has its press. This contribution too often goes unrecognized or underappreciated by the very people and institutions who are its main beneficiaries.

There is no community without a story and the Polish press has not only created our story as a community but has allowed us to preserve it. Each day, each year the pages of the Polish press chronicled and continues to chronicle chapter by chapter of the history of Polonia. It told us about ourselves and about the world outside of Polonia through a Polish prism. Most importantly, it kept us in touch with Poland. It is hard to imagine the great efforts Polish America mounted in support of Poland, Polish independence and most recently of NATO membership without the press. It also recorded and helped to create the meaning of the Polish American experience. I was struck in reading the Dziennik Polski, the predecessor of the Tygodnik Polski, how news of disturbances in Russian Poland during the 1905 Revolution were read side-by-side with full play-by-play accounts of the latest Detroit Tiger games in the summer of 1905. Reflected in those pages was a new community with a passionate commitment to its fatherland, but whose members were also deeply rooted in their identities as Detroiters with all of the local and particular loyalties that came with it.

On this occasion, I am writing on behalf of the Piast Institute with deep gratitude to send our best wishes for many more years of services to the Tygodnik. I enclose our check for \$100 and ask to be included in your list as a patron. We are all in your debt.

Thank you - Bóg zaplac.

Sincerely yours,
Thaddeus C. Radzilowski, Ph.D.
President, Piast Institute