

Received: from e3000b.state.ms.us
by governor.state.ms.us; Sun, 08 Sep 2002 19:06:50 -0500
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for <governor@governor.state.ms.us>; Sun, 8 Sep 2002 19:08:18 -0500 (CDT)
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by msiwsp01.ms.gov (AIX4.3/8.9.3/8.9.3) id TAA45226;
Sun, 8 Sep 2002 19:08:17 -0500
Date: Sun, 8 Sep 2002 19:08:17 -0500
Message-Id: <200209090008.TAA45226@msiwsp01.ms.gov>
To: governor@governor.state.ms.us
From: BIGBANDBOB@AOL.COM (ROBERT E BOWIE)
Subject: Comments to the Governor

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted by
ROBERT E BOWIE (BIGBANDBOB@AOL.COM) on Sunday, September 8, 2002 at 19:08:15

Issue: OUR NATIONAL ANTHEM

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Message:
FROM THE DESK OF ROBERT E. BOWIE, AN AMERICAN

TO: GOVERNOR RONNIE MUSGRAVE AND THE PEOPLE OF MISSISSIPPI

I sit here remembering the attack on New York one year ago today and the terrible loss of life that took place. But that incident has brought into focus, for me and I hope you, the importance of paying attention to what is going on in our country. I think it woke a lot of people up. It woke me up!

So, if you have a minute or two there are several matters that have come to light and I would like to discuss them with you. You may feel that compared to September 11th 2001, the following subjects may seem to be insignificant and trite. I, however, feel that they are symptoms of a society that needs the attention of decent people like yourself.

I don't like it but I suppose I can live with the fact that, a few supposedly well-educated, experienced, Supreme Court Justices, have decided, that being required, to stand and recite the Pledge of Allegiance in public schools is unconstitutional but it's o.k. to burn our Nation's flag. Those people certainly do not represent me.

And I don't go along for one minute with the fact that the Ninth District Court Of Appeals in California made another ridiculous decision, [that will undoubtedly be overturned as most of their decisions are], deeming the phrase, Under God, as stated in the Pledge Of Allegiance, to also be unconstitutional. Good Americans (?) making decisions as stated above, make me wonder what happened to the America in which I was reared.

And I can understand how some people that say they are good Americans might feel about

but not wanting to recognize that this country is, always has been, and will always be, a Nation Under God if, in fact, they have no God of their own. It has been one of the secrets of our success. I can even understand why every so often, some over zealous public school administrator or teacher will try to slip a religious agenda of their own into the public school system, regardless of the separation of church and state thing and that it seems to be happening more and more frequently. It seems as if somebody is always stirring the pot over some damn thing or another these days. So I thought I might as well give the pot a couple of stirs myself.

Another thing that really bothers me is the manner in which so called celebrities singing our National Anthem at public events. Football and baseball games in particular. As an example, there was an incident which took place several years ago that first brought my attention to this phenomena. That incident was the manner in which Rose Ann Barr, a TV personality, disgracefully screeched the Anthem at a San Diego Chargers game. I was outraged by her performance, as were others.

As an experienced and well-versed musician, I know the importance of the use of Ad Libitum, i.e., Adlib, an idiom used almost exclusively in the field of Jazz. However, you will never hear The Mormon Tabernacle Choir adding notes and unwritten inflections to any of the hymns they sing. They apparently feel that there are particular instances when tradition and respect should prevail.

With that in mind, there are two songs that I feel should be performed, played or sung, only as written. Those two songs are, of course, Our National Anthem and God Bless America. There should be no deviations. There should be no extra adlibbed notes added and definitely no unwanted, (in my opinion), vocal inflections, added to reflect whatever type of music that particular singer represents, such as gospel music.

Our National Anthem is not blues. It is not jazz and it is not country western .. and it is certainly not Gospel. It is not White. It is not Black. It does not specifically represent the Irish, Chinese, German, Japanese, Mexican, Jewish, Catholic or any other ethnic or religious group. It is The National Anthem of ALL of the people of The United States of America and should not reflect the interpretation and delivery of any one individual group.

I was listening to a New York Fireman sing the National Anthem on TV the other day. He sang every note as the song was written. He did not add any extra notes nor did he try to rewrite any part of the music with specific or his own interpretation. He had an exceptionally good voice and the manner in which the song was performed could bring tears to your eyes. So it can be done, and done with class.

I cringe every time I sit down to watch a football or baseball game. Inevitably, the featured singer will attempt to adlib their version of our National Anthem and in the opinion of almost everyone I have discussed this matter with, it almost always turns out badly, in most cases is extremely disrespectful and distasteful. I consider myself to be a patriotic American citizen, and felt proud to recite The Pledge of Allegiance and sing our National Anthem from the first day I was enrolled in grade school until present, a veteran that served three years in the service of his country, and a pretty fair musician that has played every type of music there is, including our National Anthem. And, I might emphasize, each time I did play it, I played it as it was written.

I really should not have to have my senses stepped on or my constitutional rights violated by listening to some so called celebrity or ethnic singer massacre Our National Anthem.

I was amazed and very pleased the other day when I learned of the decision made by The Pepsi Company that led to the firing of a rap (musician?) that was using vulgar language and indecent gestures in a Pepsi commercial. The power of your email caused the Pepsi company to understand that the general public has drawn the line between decency and trash in no uncertain terms. A lot of people are starting to object to the anything goes attitude that has prevailed in our country lately. I believe it may be the first of many moves meant to regain the rules of ordinary decency we all used to live with in this country.

I hope that you and others feel as I do. If you do, maybe you could help me. I would like to see a strong policy possibly initiated by your email and political influence that would ask any person being in the position of inviting a performer to sing our National Anthem, at any public affair, to remind that singer that he or she show respect due the National Anthem and sing it as it was written. The freedom of speech amendment of our Constitution was not intended to allow the desecration of our National song. Any reasonable person should realize that our freedom to speak, or sing in this case, must be tempered with a quota of discipline, respect and common sense.

Maybe we can get back to showing some class to the rest of the world by displaying some reverence, respect and discipline when performing our National Anthem. Regaining control of our country might just possibly start with something as simple as learning how to correctly sing our country s song. The National Anthem.

Can we count on you? If you agree with the premise of this letter please send it to everyone you know. Write a letter of your own and send it to your people. Send it the owners of pro football and baseball teams.

And thank you for taking the time to read my comments.

I am bigbandbob@aol.com
Robert E Bowie, Retired
September 11th, 2002 AD

Check it out:

Main Entry: an·them

Pronunciation: 'an(t)-th&m

Function: noun

Etymology: Middle English antem, from Old English antefn, from Late Latin antiphona, from Late Greek antiphOna, plural of antiphOnon, from Greek, neuter of antiphOnos responsive, from anti- + phOnE sound more at BAN

Date: before 12th century

1 a : a psalm or hymn sung antiphonally or responsively b : a sacred vocal composition with words usually from the Scriptures

2 : a song or hymn of praise or gladness

Submit: Submit
