

Outsider Thompson Looks Impressive In Florida Poll

BY JOHN TOSCANO

Things are going so well for prospective Republican presidential candidate Fred Thompson that he might never make a formal announcement that he's in the race.

The former U.S. Senator from Tennessee, who had been portraying a district attorney in the "Law and Order" television series, last week ran second to Rudy Giuliani in a Quinnipiac University poll.

That was a major improvement for the bald, stoop-shouldered actor who in April in the same poll, ran fourth with only 6 percent of the vote.

In the poll taken last week, Thompson trailed Giuliani by a 31 percent to 14 percent count, but passed United States Senator John McCain to take second place to front-runner Giuliani, the former New York City mayor.

Thompson bested McCain (Arizona) by four points (14 to 10 percent). Former Massachusetts Governor Mitt Romney trailed the field with 8 percent of the tallies.

Meanwhile, in the Quinnipiac survey, Giuliani

defeated the leading Democrat, Hillary Clinton, by a narrow margin, 47 to 42 percent.

But Clinton handily defeated all rival Democrats. She bested both Barack Obama and John Edwards by double digits.

Thompson and his strategists are apparently so encouraged by his Florida showing that he's considering entering the Iowa straw poll in August now that Giuliani and McCain have bowed out of it.

Both Giuliani and McCain cited the cost of competing in the straw poll, which the Giuliani camp placed at \$3 million. A Giuliani campaign official said the high cost of competing in early, major primaries, such as that in Florida on January 29 of next year and California, New York, and Texas a week later on February 5, was forcing Giuliani to make new assessments of the road map.

However, although skipping the Iowa straw poll, both Giuliani and McCain said they would still compete in the Iowa caucuses in January.

In a race in which there are questions about

Giuliani's positions on key conservative issues, and in which McCain has followed President George W. Bush too closely on the unpopular Iraq war, Thompson presents a workable alternative for the key conservative GOP vote.

Thompson has been well received at conservative meetings, drawing applause as he describes his conservative positions. However, his failure to get in the race has left him far behind in the campaign financing department. He has given no hard clues about when he will enter the race, if he ever does.

In other campaign news, Giuliani and Democrat John Edwards set up their own debate last week over a single issue; the Iraq war.

Giuliani, who has made the war one of his major issues, attacked the former U.S. Senator as a know-nothing on the conflict.

Responding through the press, Edwards lumped Giuliani in with President Bush, whose popularity has plunged as the conflict has degenerated into an unwinnable fight for the U.S.

Board 7 Debates Tree Preservation

BY RICHARD GENTILVISO

In 1913, the poet Joyce Kilmer wrote, "I think I shall never see/A poem lovely as a tree". The poem, "Trees", although frequently targeted by critics for its treacly sentimentality, has stood over time as anthem to the beauty and power of trees.

Community Board 7 struggled with both the sentiment and reality concerning trees in an increasingly urban environment when it debated a resolution calling on the city to protect all trees 25 years or older and/or 2 inches or more in diameter from indiscriminate cut-down or destruction on both public and private land.

Kim Ohanian, chair of the parks committee, said the resolution was needed to prevent the destruction of 80- to 100-year old trees. "We agree [with Mayor Michael Bloomberg] that New York City's environment depends on a greener New York," she said. "We are proposing regulations that recognize the importance of trees. It is in the best public interests to control the removal of trees."

However, the committee's motion to approve the resolution ran into difficulty during discussion and was tabled by a vote of 27 to 12 at the Board 7 May meeting, held in Flushing.

"We're describing new procedures that DEP [Department of Environmental Protection] and Parks [Department] have to comply with," said Board Member Bob LoPinto. "How's a developer ever going to clear a site?"

"Do you feel that this is infringing on people's individual rights?" asked Board Member Arnold Wagner.

Not far from where the board meets on Union Street, a homeowner at 146-15 Bayside Ave. recently came under attack for cutting down seven trees between 70 and 100 years old. The property, landmarked by the city on September 20, 2005, is known as the Ginsberg Mansion.

According to the Landmarks Preservation Commission, the mansion is a "rare 1920s" tudor revival style structure that was designed by architect John Oakman and constructed in 1924. Originally built for Charles and Florence Fitzgerald, the house was sold to Ethel and Morris Ginsberg in 1926. Ethel Ginsberg lived in the home until her death at age 101 in 2003.

The current owner, the Reverend Myung Ok Kim, told the *Daily News* on May 9 that he cut the trees because they were blocking sunlight, causing an accumulation of mildew on his roof and moisture that was rotting window sills and a cellar door.

Chuck Wade, a former member of Board 7 and current member of the Holly Civic Association and president of the Voelker-Orth Museum told the *Daily News* that included in the seven downed trees were two rare ironwoods and an "evergreen worthy of Rockefeller Center at Christmas".

A spokesperson for the Landmarks Preservation Commission told the *Daily News* that trees and other vegetation at landmarked sites are not usually regulated. However, the spokesperson also said that trees in Douglaston, a landmarked district in Queens, are regulated.

"We're concerned about old growth being wiped out, right and left," said Wade at the May 14 board meeting. "The city is promoting the planting of half a million new trees, but our old trees are a national treasure that we have to protect."

Kilmer, killed in 1918 during World War 1 at age 31, agreed. "Poems are made by fools like me But only God can make a tree."

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