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Ask Your Bartender

by Michael Sean Winters

Distinctly Catholic

In my profile of the VA-5 race a few weeks ago, I mentioned that I stopped by a restaurant at "the corner," the collection of shops and restaurants located next to the campus of the University of Virginia. Donnie was the bartender and he expressed the sentiment that no one was really paying attention to the election.

Bartenders, like barbers and hair dressers, spend a fair amount of time making chit-chat with customers and they are the first people I talk to when I try to get a sense of what is going on in a town.

Yesterday, on the way back from Lynchburg, I stopped for lunch at a restaurant on the pedestrian mall in downtown Charlottesville. A few blocks away, the Secret Service was looking over the site where President Obama will be headlining a rally for Cong. Tom Perriello tonight. The bartender, Kyle, offered me a menu and asked what I wanted to drink. Then, without prompting, he said, "You know, the President is coming tomorrow."

This is good news for Perriello who needs a strong turnout among UVA students and Charlottesville liberals. Kyle said he would be voting for Perriello.

The bad news? Later in the meal, Kyle asked me when the election was.

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