

ELLEN GOODMAN

With Clinton in charge, America would be energized



So this is how it ends. The campaign season doesn't wind down. It comes to a climax in one last great showy blaze, rather like the maple tree in the yard. Ross Perot, that can-do mechanic under the nation's hood, that amiable host of an educational television program on the national debt, roars off the final week as a victim of assorted and dubious dirty tricks. The man who talks straight can also talk ragtime.

The same prickly billionaire who prides himself on sticking to the issues pops this quiz onto his supporters at a rare public rally:

"If you are going into combat and you could take any of the three of us, who would you want on your side?"

"If you were taken hostage in a foreign country, which one of the candidates do you think would come in and get you?"

"Which one of the three candidates ... would you want your daughter to marry?"

This is how the Independent candidate sees his presidency: a composite of combat buddy, one-man rescue team and most suitable suitor. I am not one of the people who lets herself believe this campaign is over. Color me nervous, if you want, but

volatile is a muted description of the autumn voter mood.

Perot has been this campaign's Rosie Ruiz, the woman who thought she could "win" the Boston Marathon by taking a shortcut on a streetcar while her competitors were pounding the pavement. He went under in July and reappeared in October.

He has booked 120 minutes of network television for the next three days, right at the finish line. That's a lot of impact for a send-them-a-message candidacy.

For all the polls, nutty or not, it's still possible that a majority could vote for change and end up with the status quo. If enough people send a message, they'll get back an answer named George Bush.

What would the morning after a Bush victory feel like? Ever swallowed a sweat sock? The president would limp back into the Oval office on his attack-ad crutch, and settle in for a long slide.

The only conviction that truly stirs George Bush is the desire to win. As a politician, he has sacrificed one belief after another for that passion. An abortion-rights supporter, he turned pro-life. A man raised on tolerance, he approved Willie Horton. Voodoo economics became his economics. He sold out piece after piece until now he is as empty

as a bankrupt coffer.

As for Bill Clinton, I have not always cottoned to the man. When he bites his lower lip in sincerity, I win. Some of his answers are too carefully constructed by half again.

But I've come to respect his tenacity and intelligence. This is a guy who wants to grab you by the collar and talk until you see his point of view. This is a politician who will hang onto a plan by the ankles until he makes it happen. He genuinely wants to make government work.

The rap against Clinton is that he tries to be all things to all people. It's said the governor isn't a leader but a consensus committee. More interested in common ground than in breaking ground.

Well, I know a lot of people like that. Most of them women. Wives and mothers are often given the role of family peacemaker. We're the listeners, the interpreters, the compromisers. We're the mediators who are always trying to keep things together.

Clinton times those roles do indeed keep people from becoming independent take-charge decision-makers. It is possible to be too conscious of others. Too wary of conflict.

But searching out common ground in the middle of conflict is not a character flaw. It's a

strength. You can make compromises without being compromised.

As Clinton said in the third debate, "I think the American people are sick and tired of either-or solutions, people being pushed in the corner, polarized to extremes." Keeping people together enables them to act.

George Bush doesn't know what to do. Ross Perot would tell us what to do, take it or leave it. But Bill Clinton wants to convince us of what we can do, together.

What about the morning after a Clinton victory? We get a fresh start with our coffee. People, no longer sure that America believes in change, would be energized, shaken loose by action. We'd be offered a chance for something better than a long, slow, bloodletting.

So do not ask me which candidate I would pick to rescue a hostage or marry my daughter. She can choose for herself, thank you. Want to send a message? Try the phone, not the ballot box.

Ellen Goodman is a columnist for the Boston Globe.

DOONESBURY by Garry Trudeau



JEFF GREENFIELD

Before pulling lever, ask these questions

Ever since Ronald Reagan posed his clincher question in 1980 — "Are you better off than you were four years ago?" — candidates have been trying to cast elections as an answer to one or more key questions.

Gov. Bill Clinton wants us to ask who can really bring change. George Bush wants to ask who we can trust in a crisis.

Ross Perot has more intriguing questions: Who would you want to start a business with? Who would you trust with your family's future?

These are all good questions. But if at this point in the campaign you are really, truly, honestly undecided, maybe you need to ask some different questions. Questions like these:

- Whose face and voice do you want in your living rooms, bedrooms and cars every day for the next four years?
- Who would you be most comfortable with as a bearer of bad news?
- Who makes you feel most secure as the guardian of our arsenal of nuclear weapons?
- Who would be most likely to be viscerally angered at a story about a 7-year-old boy shot to death in a public housing project in Chicago?
- Who would you most want to accompany on an auto trip across the United States?
- Who would you most trust to read the road map on that trip?
- Who would you entrust with an embarrassing secret about your past?
- Who would be most likely to go across Washington to a Cabinet department to find out why a federal program wasn't working?
- Who would be most likely to leave Washington and check out the specific neighborhood or town where that federal program was not performing?
- Whose family members are

Sorry, Bush, we want a divorce

Dear Editor: When Bush and Reagan were in the primaries in 1980 Bush called Reagan's economic plan "voodoo economics." Then a great tragedy occurred. George Bush sold his principles and his integrity to Ronald Reagan when offered the position of vice president. George Bush, the greatest waffler of them all, now has the nerve to call someone else a waffler.

Reagan's voodoo economics has helped to create the biggest budget deficit in the history of our country. That is very tragic.

Think of the presidency like a failed marriage. Tell George you're sorry you don't love him any more, wish him well and get a divorce.

John Coover
Madison

Kasten's office anti-constituent

Dear Editor: I just saw a TV ad for Sen. Kasten, and it made me very angry. He has not helped his constituents, at least not on a one-to-one basis.

My brother was an Army pilot who was in an airplane crash and is 100 percent disabled due to military service. He needed rehabilitation. My sister called Kasten's office and was told that they couldn't help. Their opinion was that veterans thought that they should just be given things.

I couldn't believe that a senator's office would respond to a constituent in that fashion, so I called and I got the same angry message that veterans thought that they should just be given things.

We got together a petition campaign. When Kasten's office received our petition, and we followed with a phone call, they then agreed to "listen" to us.

The comment at the time was that they were sorry. When we called first, they said, they thought we were one of the winning veterans.

Sandy Tordoff
Belleville

Gordon should address issues

Dear Editor: I read that 16th District Senate candidate, Eric Gordon, accused Sen. Chuck Chvala of "maybe" running for Congress in two years, and wants Chvala to sign a pledge stating he will serve his full Senate term. Chvala publicly stated he plans no run for Congress.

Let's get real here. Gordon should address the issues instead of stooping to this sort of trashy politics. Looks like there is nothing else for him to run on.

His tactics follow the lines of other conservative supervisors who are using the County Board as a springboard to higher office. They should finish their county terms first. If the voters knew of the candidate's intentions to run for another office as soon as the April election was over, would they have voted the same?

George Young Jr.
Monona

Voice of the People

WISCONSIN by Jack Pacheco ©'92

IN THE VILLAGE OF BAGLEY, GRANT COUNTY, IS BURIED A PENNSYLVANIA BOY NAMED CHARLIE ROSS. HE WAS KIDNAPPED AND WAS FOUND IN A BAGLEY BOAT-HOUSE, BARELY ALIVE. HE DIED BEFORE HE COULD BE RETURNED. THE MYSTERY IS UNSOLVED...
SOURCE: "GREAT RIVER ROAD"

Bush supports bad characters

Dear Editor: I am so outraged at the negative conduct of the half-truth, misleading campaign of President Bush that I need to talk about character, honesty and family values we have provided.

Since the 1980s the current administration has cozied up with known international murderers in the name of our national interest. Our relationships with Saddam Hussein, Manuel Noriega, Assad of Syria and other Central American puppets have been well documented.

A lesser known U.S. government issued thug is Ghulbudin Hekmatyar of Afghanistan. Now that I've introduced him, let's just call him Ghoul.

Ghoul received the bulk of U.S. arms during the Afghans' fight against the Russian-installed communist government.

Currently he sits in the mountains surrounding Kabul and murders his own people with weapons we have provided.

Why? The government that replaced the communists is not fundamentalist enough.

If our CIA had bothered to do their job and check this fanatic out prior to issuing weapons, they would have discovered that in his younger years he had a reputation for throwing acid into the faces of unveiled female students at Kabul University because they were violating "his" fundamentalist code.

So the next time the good citizens of our country hear another Bush/Quayle ad about how great their foreign policy is, they should think about their beautiful daughters' faces or daughters of friends and then think about them being blinded and disfigured. Did the Reagan-Bush-Quayle team export the honesty, character and family values we strive for each day?

Miles Benz
Madison

Baum brochure was misleading

Dear Editor: We are writing to clarify any misleading information left by a recent campaign brochure circulated by a candidate for the Assembly.

We strongly support the candidacy of Tammy Baldwin for the 78th District. Tammy has been an effective voice for progressive issues during her tenure on the Dane County Board and we are confident that she will continue her leadership as a member of the Legislature.

To our dismay, Mary Kay Baum included an old newspaper clipping that lists our names in a brochure for her candidacy for the 78th District Assembly seat. Our support for Mary Kay in a 1987 race for State Board should not in any way be construed as support now. The inclusion of this press article gives the impression that we are endorsing Mary Kay Baum. This is wrong.

We urge the voters of the 78th District to vote for Tammy Baldwin on Nov. 3. She has earned our support.

State Sen. Chuck Chvala, Lynn Gilchrist, Mary Lou Munts, Billy Feitlinger, Lynn Hansen and a daytime state Rep. Rebecca Young

Wright center has willing donor

Dear Editor: If you vote yes to the Frank Lloyd Wright convention center referendum then I, a non-property owner in this community, but one who wants to share in and contribute to the construction and maintenance of this great facility for Madison and environs, will happily give 1 percent of my total yearly income each year for the next 10 years to this project.

David M. Robb
Madison

How to reach us

To talk about editorials, columns, letters or book reviews, call:
Phil Hurlinger, 252-8436
Dan Albrecht, 252-8437
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Please sign letters to the editor and include your address and a daytime telephone number. Letters should not exceed 300 words and they may be edited for length and grammar. Send them to:
Voice of the People
The Capital Times
P.O. Box 8060
Madison, WI 53708

Hanson has proven record

Dear Editor: I am writing to urge my friends and former constituents to support Doris Hanson for state Assembly on Nov. 3. While serving the 48th Assembly District for eight years, I have gotten to know many of you personally and I know that you deserve the type of leadership Doris Hanson has to offer.

I served under Gov. Tony Earl and saw firsthand that Doris Hanson knows how to make government work. As head of the Department of Administration, Doris saved the state \$43 million by setting up a statewide telephone system. Doris also implemented pay equity and created a Minority Business Program. Doris Hanson is the only candidate with a proven record of accomplishment.

The representative for the 48th Assembly District will be facing some tough issues in the next biennium. Wisconsin is entering into an estimated \$200 million shortfall and we need a representative who will fight for our fair share of state aids as well as make difficult decisions on spending. Doris Hanson's experience as a member of the Department of Administration and her years in the private sector will enable her to come up with real solutions to these problems.

Sue Roban
Monona

Sierra Club is neutral on center

Dear Editor: Judging by the angry and wondering calls I've been receiving lately, there is great confusion about the Sierra Club's position regarding the Monona Terrace proposal.

This confusion has been created by the unauthorized use of the name by Terrace supporters.

Radio and print ads identifying a Terrace supporter who works for the club have mistakenly used her Sierra Club affiliation in the ads, despite her requests that they not do so. Thankfully, they have promised to pull the radio ads and say they plan to more print ads.

For the record, the Sierra Club has taken no position on the Monona Terrace proposal.

Like the community, there is substantial disagreement over the wisdom of the proposal among Sierra Club members. Thus, no endorsement or condemnation of the project is possible.

The staff person, Caryl Terrell, who also chairs a county planning panel and is a prominent member of the local League of Women Voters, supports the project as an individual.

Her identification with the club, which we are proud of, has caused confusion for many folks. While she often represents our views, this is one case in which she does not.

Carl A. Ziehl
Midwest regional staff director