

Special Issue

OBSERVER
SUPER TUESDAY
PRIMARY EDITION

VOTE

Table of Contents



OBSERVER ENDORSEMENTS.....2

HOW TO VOTE.....3

POLITICAL PAPER DOLLS.....4,10,16,20

ON THE ISSUES.....5

UNITY: BUT AT WHAT COST?.....11
by Jesse Myerson

AMERICA'S NEXT TOP PRESIDENT.....13
by Holly Rage

FROM IOWA, WITH HOGS AND KISSES.....14
by Mae Colburn

POLLING STATION ON CAMPUS?.....17
by Jonathan Becker

JOHN MCCAIN VS. RON PAUL.....18
by Jason Mastbaum

MATCHMAKER.....BACK PAGE
by Nick Ogonek and Becca Rom-Frank
illustrations by Mae Colburn

OBSERVER

editors: Mae Colburn, Rachel Meade, Grace Dwyer, Lizzie Munro, Justin Leigh, Becca Rom-Frank, Jason Mastbaum, Caroline Freidman, Ben Blumus, Homer Hill, Molly Trostel, Nick Ogonek

observer@bard.edu

guide to candidates. political paper dolls. endorsements. opinions. caucus story.

FROM THE EDITORS

THE OBSERVER ENDORSES BARACK OBAMA AND JOHN MCCAIN

There's not a lot of faith in democracy on Bard campus. Hardly surprising, considering our experiences with it. A president who's embroiled us in a bitter war that's destroyed our good name world-wide was elected--despite his lesser share of the popular vote--as a result of an outdated system originally meant to overrule the ignorant masses. Election seasons, this one no exception, have been characterized by smear campaigns, candidates who dodge issues, and polarizing rhetoric that skews the issues at hand. Yet emerging from this abyss of political agendas and doublespeak is a man whose mantra of change and hope is more than meaningless slogan. This candidate embodies these very ideals in his youthfulness, race, and straightforward honest rhetoric. Republicans, Independents and those who have never voted, never even registered are regaining their faith and looking at politics with a fresh face, thanks to Obama. Bard students should be too.

Although the two remaining democratic candidates have virtually identical plans for our country, the real change Obama brings is in terms of methodology and his distance from the institutionalized and polarizing politics that have so long dominated the White House. For years, extreme views on both sides of the political spectrum in Washington have prevented either party from fully realizing their goals. In his work in inner city Chicago, Obama has embraced a different kind of politics: one that works with those interests and parties that would oppose his agenda to reach a solution that won't be immediately shot down. He has repeatedly emphasized that the bonds linking one American to another are far stronger than those that divide us. We've seen the results of an administration that refuses to admit when it's wrong and sees everything in black and white. Obama's commitments to bipartisanship, genuine discussion, and negotiation are extraordinary break from the current administration.

Obama extends his policy of working with the opposition to his foreign policy. He's the only candidate willing to bring diplomacy to the forefront. While Clinton has said she would first have to send envoys to certain countries before engaging in negotiation, Obama has stated that he would meet with the leader of any foreign nation without precondition. And this is what America needs: to escape from the preemptive, dishonest, hostile policies of the past eight years and begin to gain back our good name internationally.

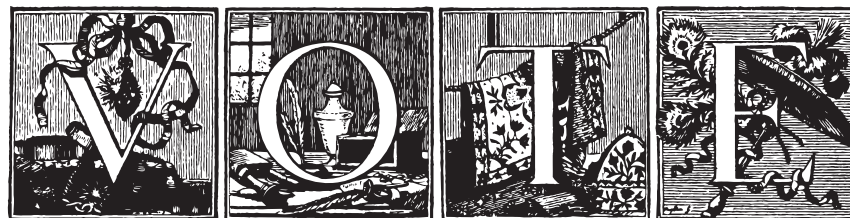
It has been noted that Obama's very name could be a public relations boon for the United States. With his Muslim, Hawaiiin, Indonesian, and Kenyan descent, he is an American in the truest sense of the world. Unlike Hilary Clinton, he is an unfamiliar face. Though many democrats may wax nostalgic for the Clinton years, another Clinton presidency after two Bush's and Bill Clinton makes the White House look more like the palace of England than the seat of a democratic government. In an election that's all about change, Obama is the clear winner.

Of course it's hard not to wish that some of his policies were more liberal, such as his anti gay-marriage stance and support for a wall along the Mexico border, two views shared by his opponent. And it's true that Obama doesn't have the experience that other presidential hopefuls might have. But what he lacks in bureaucratic suaveness, he makes up for in his creative ambition to think outside of the box when it comes to policy-making and governance. Furthermore, he is the only candidate that really has a pulse on the American contingency desirous of change -- not only in policy, but in the way politics operates, at home and abroad. For Bard students weary of politics as usual, that should be reason enough to regain our faith.

McCain brings a refreshing a level-headedness to Republican presidential politics. He is neither God, like Romney, nor does God give him instructions, like Huckabee, nor is he unviable like Ron Paul who proposes to deport all illegal immigrants. Unlike the fringe ideologies (Paul's decentralization of government or Huckabee's faith-based demagoguery), McCain offers solutions even a Democrat could work with; offering the possibility of cooperation between the two parties.

From a critical perspective of Republican policies in general, it is easy to disagree with McCain's policies. He advocates we 'stay the course' in Iraq but, to his credit, he recognizes the inherent moral dilemma in regards to the current administration's policies of torture. The editors feel that McCain's strengths can only be viewed in light of his competitors weaknesses. His immigration policy is nearly identical to the Democrats' stance while his views on abortion, abstinence education, the death penalty and drug sentencing comprise his bipartisan appeal. If you thought Ron Paul was an anarchist disguised as a republican or that Huckabee is secretly harboring sixties era social values check out their respective policies on immigration, AIDS, healthcare and numerous other key issues.

If McCain were elected president, we would probably see a slight improvement in domestic issues and maybe in terms of foreign policy. This is, however, a better outcome than the complete devolution of American values and the public joke America -- and Americans -- would become in the eyes of the international community under a president Paul, Romney, or Huckabee.



FEBRUARY 5TH IS SUPER TUESDAY

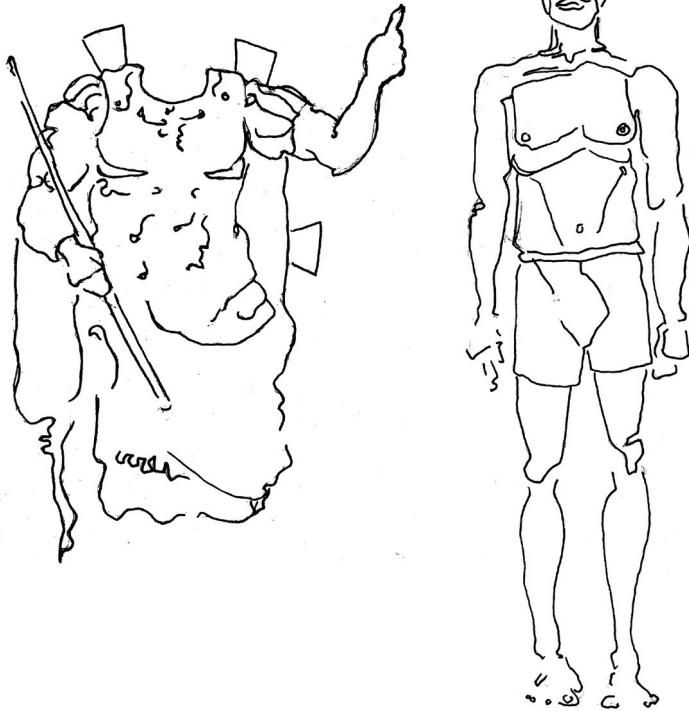
Shuttles will leave from the Kline Parking Lot to St. John's Episcopal Church every half hour from noon to 8:30 pm (polls are open noon to 9:00 pm)

A list of local voters eligible to vote in the primaries is posted outside Annandale House 107. You MUST be registered in the Democratic or Republican Party to vote. If you do not know (many Bard students have chosen No Party Affiliation) go to Annandale House 107 where a list is posted for Barrytown District.

Watch the primary results in the MPR, starting from six pm.

BARACK OBAMA

as Augustus



ON THE ISSUES

ABORTION

Hilary Clinton

Pro-choice. She has consistently supported a woman's right to abortion and helped get Plan B on the market, but also supports a ban on late term abortions, including partial birth, unless the woman's health or later ability to have children is at stake.

Barack Obama

Pro-choice. Supports legal and available abortions. Does not support a ban on partial life abortions; trusts women to make those decisions.

John McCain

Pro-life. Supports a repeal of Roe v. Wade. Would only support an abortion ban that included exceptions in the case of rape, incest, or the mother's life.

Mitt Romney

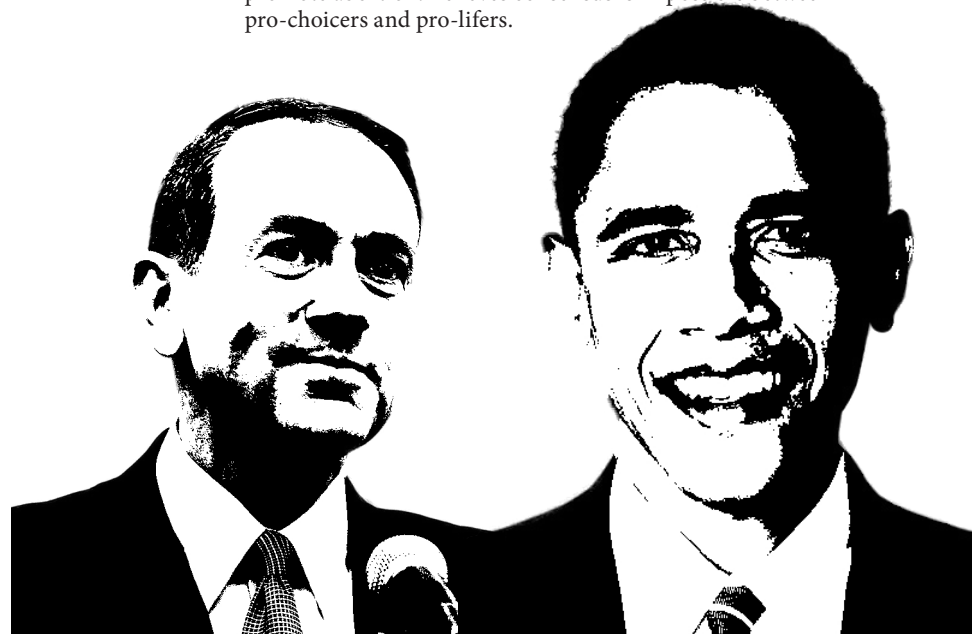
Pro-life, though he was pro-choice as Governor. Would happily sign a federal ban on all abortions, with an exception for rape, incest, or the life of the mother. He used to give money to Planned Parenthood.

Ron Paul

Believes that decisions on abortion should be made at the state level. Will not vote for any bill that uses tax-payer money to support abortion. However, he voted against bills penalizing criminals for harming a fetus while perpetrating a crime, and restricting teens' interstate access to abortions.

Mike Huckabee

Wants to outlaw all abortions, with no exception for cases of rape or health issues. No funding for organizations that promote abortion. Believes consensus is impossible between pro-choicers and pro-lifers.



GAY RIGHTS

- Hilary Clinton** Would repeal don't ask don't tell, supports adding sexuality to the hate crimes bill, supports adoption rights, and civil unions with full benefits. She does not support gay marriage, but believes the decision should be left to states. When asked whether it was appropriate for a young child to be shown pictures of gay couples in school, she said such decisions should be left to parents.
- Barack Obama** Supports civil unions with full benefits; believes that whether that's recognized as marriage should be left to individual churches. Unlike Clinton, he responded to the question regarding children's exposure to gay couples affirmatively, citing the importance of making them open to difference.
- John McCain** States should chose whether to allow same-sex marriage. Voted against constitutional ban on same-sex marriage. Supports don't ask don't tell. Has voted against prohibiting job discrimination and against adding orientation to hate crimes bill. He has been evasive on the subject of civil unions, neither willing to say he's for it or against it. He supports private legal contracts between same-sex individuals.
- Mitt Romney** Supports the Employment Non-Discrimination Act at a state level. Thinks "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" is a silly term, but an effective policy. Believes marriage should be between a man and a woman, and also opposes civil unions. However, he says he would support domestic partnerships which include hospital visitation and other benefits.
- Ron Paul** He believes we should protect all associations, and should not define marriage. He voted against the Defense of Marriage Act. Believes "Don't Ask, Dont Tell" is a decent policy. Voted to ban gay adoptions.
- Mike Huckabee** Signed a law outlawing gay marriage in AR. Opposes civil unions. Believes gay tolerance reflects a decline in societal standards. Against gay adoption. Believed everyone with AIDS should be quarantined.

HEALTHCARE

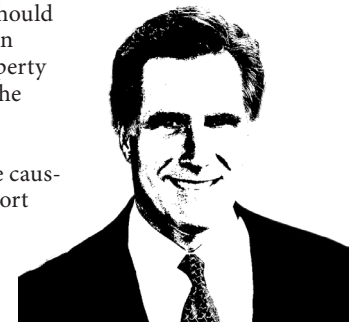
- Hilary Clinton** Would provide mandatory coverage to all Americans. People could keep their private insurance/employer-based coverage or purchase coverage from a federal system.
- Barack Obama** Ensures affordable health insurance by creating a national health plan. People could remain with a private/employer-based insurance. A National Health Insurance Exchange would regulate the private insurance market, improve the quality of health care, and drive down costs.
- John McCain** Supports tax credits to help the poor purchase insurance and hopes to reform medical malpractice measures. Wants more community health centers as well as increased health savings accounts, but seeks to lower healthcare costs by creating better access to generic drugs, including drugs imported from overseas.

HEALTHCARE, CONTINUED

- Mitt Romney** Feels that individual states should make their own plans. Romney does not support a national mandate for health insurance and says that Medicaid can be improved by making a block grant that would give states more control over how healthcare money is spent.
- Ron Paul** Believes that the market should determine healthcare costs. Opposes the use of HMOs in the insurance system, as well as the expansion of the powers of the FDA. Supported legislation that would allow Americans to use alternative medicine. Would make medical expenses tax deductible and let doctors collectively negotiate with insurance agencies.
- Mike Huckabee** Opposes a federal mandate, but believes that allowing state plans flexibility, limited reform, and private control of care will reduce costs and improve coverage.

ENVIRONMENT

- Hilary Clinton** Proposes to enact a Strategic Energy Fund that would roll back oil companies' tax cuts and use the savings to fund a wide variety of alternative energy sources. Would require companies to obtain twenty percent of their energy from renewable sources. Supports the cap and trade approach to reducing emissions.
- Barack Obama** Supports an 80% reduction of carbon emissions by 2050 through a cap-and-trade program, a \$150 billion ten-year investment in clean energy development and green jobs, and a reduction in dependence on foreign oil of 35% by 2030.
- John McCain** Co-sponsored the Climate Stewardship Act in 2003 with Joe Lieberman and continued, over the years, to support subsequent versions of the act. The plan proposes nuclear power and a plan to reduce carbon emissions to 1,504 million metric tons by the year 2049 through tradable carbon allowances.
- Mitt Romney** Supports a mandatory cap and trade system to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Although not entirely convinced that humans are largely responsible for global warming, he believes we should take steps to reduce emissions.
- Ron Paul** Does not think climate change is a major issue. Believes that states should legislate environmental protection and that the rights of private property are the best tools for preserving the environment.
- Mike Huckabee** Though skeptical that humans are causing global warming, he does support efforts towards energy independence that would also help cut emissions.



IMMIGRATION

- Hilary Clinton Supports a path to legalization for illegal immigrants, increased border control including a wall between the US and Mexico, is ambivalent on granting drivers licenses to illegal immigrants
- Barack Obama Supports a path to legalization, as well as tougher border security and a border wall. Supports granting driver's licenses to illegal immigrants.
- John McCain Like the democratic candidates, supports comprehensive immigration reform, (a path to legalization, including fines and learning English), however emphasizes that toughening border security and building a wall should come first. Would deport the two million illegal immigrants who have committed a crime.
- Mitt Romney Believes illegal immigrants should be sent home...eventually. "Unknowingly" employed illegal immigrants on his home renovation. Believes US should honor those who wait for citizenship, but does not believe employers should be held responsible.
- Ron Paul Wants to amend the Constitution to remove the right of citizenship for children of illegal immigrants born in the US. Does not want to offer amnesty, but thinks it would be too difficult to deport all the illegals. He voted yes to reporting illegal immigrants who receive hospital treatment.
- Mike Huckabee Would consider citizenship if illegals admitted guilt and paid a fine. Supported scholarships in AR for illegal immigrants. Wants to make legal immigration faster and let immigrants run for President. However, he recently signed a commitment to deport all illegal immigrants and bar them from citizenship.

SPENDING AND TAXES

- Hilary Clinton Supports letting President Bush's tax cuts expire in 2010 and plans to reduce the deficit by instituting a "pay as you go" system for government spending.
- Barack Obama Would repeal President Bush's tax cuts and proposes to give a \$500 tax credit for lower and middle-class workers, create a ten percent tax credit for all homeowners, and end income taxes for all senior citizens making less than \$50,000 a year.
- John McCain Opposes a tax increase and plans to keep Bush's tax cuts permanent. Supports requiring any tax increase to be supported by three-fifths of Congress rather than just a majority.
- Mitt Romney Would lower taxes and pledges to make President Bush's tax cuts permanent. Signed a pledge saying he will support no new taxes or increases in marginal tax rates.

TAXES AND SPENDING, CONTINUED

- Ron Paul Has stated that he will abolish the income tax in his first week in office and support all tax cuts. Would repeal the 16th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution (Congressional power to levy income taxes). Supports drastic cuts in government spending, including the elimination of Medicare, the IRS, the Department of Homeland Security, and more.
- Mike Huckabee Supports the "Fair Tax" proposal that would eliminate all federal taxes (income tax, estate tax, payroll tax, capital gains tax, etc.) and replace them with a national sales tax.

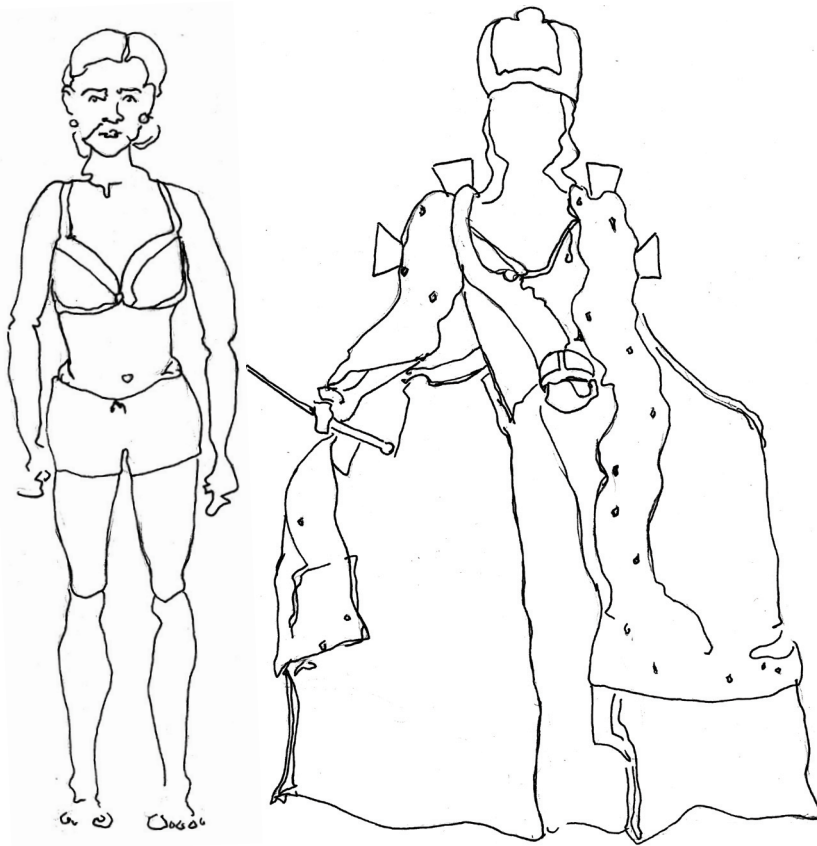
WAR IN IRAQ

- Hilary Clinton Pledges to end the war and withdraw nearly all American troops from Iraq.
- Barack Obama Vows to immediately end the war and withdraw troops from Iraq.
- John McCain Supports the war, but criticizes the Bush administration's efforts and argues that more troops should be sent to Iraq. Believes that "we are winning" in Iraq and compares a withdrawal to a surrender.
- Mitt Romney Supports the war in Iraq, but criticizes the Bush administration's handling of the war effort. Fears that troop withdrawal will only lead to regional conflict. Although he hopes to withdraw the troops, he wants to wait until the surge is successful and for there to be "security and stability" in Iraq.
- Ron Paul Opposes the war, arguing that it is illegal because Congress did not officially declare war. He opposed the surge and voted against war funding bills. Wants forces to withdraw and has introduced legislation that would, if passed, revoke Congress's authorization for war.
- Mike Huckabee Supports the war in Iraq. Said that the U.S. must "win this war and win it with honor." He opposes withdrawal.



HILLARY CLINTON

as Catherine the Great



unity: but at what cost?

By JESSE MYERSON

Let me give you a word of the philosophy of reform. The whole history of the progress of human liberty shows that all concessions yet made to her august claims, have been born of earnest struggle... If there is no struggle there is no progress. Those who profess to favor freedom and yet depreciate agitation, are men who want crops without plowing up the ground, they want rain without thunder and lightening. They want the ocean without the awful roar of its many waters....This struggle may be a moral one, or it may be a physical one, and it may be both moral and physical, but it must be a struggle. Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never did and it never will.

-Frederick Douglass, 1857

It is obvious that the Democratic Party primaries have been about who can most frequently employ the campaign season's Most Obnoxiously Used Word: "Change." The obvious question is: what kind of change do the candidates wish to bring? To the best of my abilities, I have surmised that Hillary Clinton mainly is interested in changing the president from George W. Bush to herself. Barack Obama wants to change the tone in Washington from partisanship to unity, which fails to address the real problem with the Bush Administration's policies over the last 7 years: not that the government has taken a side, but which side it has taken.

A great many people are living in misery and a small group of people benefit from that misery. One role of the president must be to defend the former group from the exploitation and cruelty of the latter. In order to do that, the president must eliminate the influence the latter wields over the decision-making process, and that is the change John Edwards was looking

to bring about before his decision Wednesday to end his campaign.

If you want to ensure health care for all people, you must absolutely remove from the equation the people who benefit from withholding health care. If you want to bring an end to war, you must absolutely remove from the equation the people who benefit from continuing war. If you want to ensure environmental conservation, you must absolutely remove from the equation the people who benefit from destroying the environment. These concepts are very simple. And Obama, if he gets them, does not let on. Edwards got them. And he let on. He was talking, in very specific and, to my mind, courageous terms, about a fundamental change of power in Washington: from the conventional forces of wealth to the heretofore repressed forces of the working class. I don't include Hillary in this analysis because it's clear as day that she's in the pocket of wealthy interests to just as great an extent as the current simian-in-chief.

After gilded ages like the one we've been going through and recessions like the one that's about to come crashing down on working people's heads, the historical trend indicates that societies turn towards populism. Nevertheless, the likely general election campaign looks to be between Sens. Clinton and McCain, both favorites of the corporate community (Clinton has received more campaign funding from the defense and health insurance and pharmaceutical industries than any candidate of either party), although recent polling trends indicate Obama could pull something triumphant off on Tsunami Tuesday (an insensitive term, if ever there was one).

Additionally, of all the eighteen candidates that have at one point in this cycle pursued the presidency,

Clinton and McCain have been the most pro-war in their respective primaries, at a time when a full 70% of the country explicitly opposes the war. Obviously, this has not been a primary season about issues. Otherwise the national electoral outlook would be far more brilliant. In fact, of virtually all my friends, overwhelmingly fans of Barack "I'm-sure-corporate-greed-will-end-if-I-just-speak-with-CEOs-in-a-conciliatory-enough-tone" Obama, I can't think of a single one who can speak articulately for more than a minute about the positions their candidate of preference seeks to advance. And I've got smart friends.

So how did we get here? How did John Edwards, the most populist, most anti-war candidate, get largely shut out of electoral success? (I apologize to supporters of Dennis Kucinich and Mike Gravel, but I'm limiting my consideration to candidates with demonstrable organizational strength and fundraising prowess as well as national political viability and enthusiasm). Well, it certainly didn't help that, for the last two years, the mainstream media have cast this election as a two-person choice, blackballing Sen. Edwards at every turn—see, the corporate media do not stand to gain from Edwards' economic proposals, so out of the frame he goes—aside from the occasional late-night quip about the cost of his haircut.

Oh, that haircut. With one total non-story, the media were able successfully to ignore the fact that Edwards was the first candidate with a universal healthcare plan (and one that would lead to a single-payer system, to boot), the first candidate with a comprehensive plan for dealing with climate change and the only candidate to come up with a plan to combat poverty, the cornerstone of his candidacy. With one total non-story, the media were able to totally marginalize the most progressive, most policy-oriented, most studied candidate from the national debate. With one total non-story, the media were able to cast the Edwards

campaign as about electing a chic hair salon frequenter, not about electing a man of the people whose policies would really have done an awful lot of folks an awful lot of good.

See, it's been about personality. And I don't mean like the candidates' actual personalities. I mean Hillary Clinton as the strong, smart woman who battled the GOP over health care in the 1990's, stood by her philandering man, dusted off and ran successfully for a New York Senate seat and has the chance of being the first woman president. I mean Barack Obama as the articulate, inspiring candidate of change who bring a new face to Washington, who can unite people on both sides of the aisle to achieve progress on Capitol Hill, who, because of his ancestry and the ways and places he was raised, would bring a different American experience to the White House. And Edwards as the angry, radical, rich pretty-boy.

Personality: it's why the media love talking about the campaign as a boxing match. "The gloves are coming off!" "He hits her hard on the economy!" "That one was below the belt!" "She came out swinging in the debate!" "Is he down for the count?" "He's against the ropes!" Right, right, right, but aren't there people dying places? How are we going to save them? Isn't there an ecological disaster imminent? How are we going to prevent it? Aren't people unable to afford health care and college? How are we going to help them? Check out Google News and see if you can find one story from the last four months about Obama or Clinton's specific policy proposals for any one of those areas. Better yet, search your own memory. We all saw her cry; we all saw O'Reilly shove his staffer. But this should not be about them personally. It should be about their vision for the country.

What's a body to do? The best I can offer is the advice to vote for Obama and hope that he turns out to be a bigger fighter of a president than he has been as a senator, that his talk of compromise is campaign bunk, that

he'll implement policies that really do bring about the change he refers to in such annoyingly abstract ways. Or hope that his first-black-presidentialhood will set a precedent on which a far more progressive future presidential aspirant can capitalize.

Ultimately, I can find solace in knowing that I'm voting against the Clinton era of third-way Democrats, in bed with corporations, friendly to right-wing criminals, triangulating away progressive ideals for public relations success. That is a crew whose influence the Democratic Party absolutely must purge if ever it hopes to become the truly democratic party that history demands it be. And an Obama presidency, aside from symbolizing the advancement of the cause of racial justice, would symbolize the defeat of

that wing. Ah, symbolism.

It's a sorry state of affairs, my friends, when a lesser-of-two-evils is the credo even of a primary season. The sixty-year old in me looks back and says, "You ought to be more hopeful than this, Jesse; you weren't even around to see Dr. King and Bobby Kennedy assassinated." Nevertheless, I can't help but be nauseated by the thought of voting for symbols when poverty is not symbolic. War is not symbolic. Injustice and inequality are not symbolic.

I fantasize about a convention so utterly deadlocked that a sweeping demand comes to draft nominee Al Gore. I like my fantasies a lot more than I like the media.

america's next top president

BY HOLLY RAGE

Sure I don't "believe" in "America." That doesn't mean that I don't take the election period seriously and take note of it as phenomenon. It is not vital to me who wins so much as what went on in our country during the five or so months that were left behind in order to highlight what is perceived as the actual political events.

It is relevant, for example, that during the time the media was consumed with whether Obama "snubbed" Hillary by denying her a hand shake on the Senate floor the director of Abu Ghraib was fully acquitted. For those who feel that politics begins with who gets elected and ends with critical editorials: I feel that many of our country's faults can be blamed on the strange reluctance to acknowledge the political in systems, practice, and mind-frame. It is highly political that no television media recognized the Abu Ghraib case. It is equally political that no candidates were asked to take a public position on torture on the day of the acquittal—and that on the day the United States invaded Baghdad all

that was spoken of was Jessica Lynch's heroism (or is it heroinism?)

It is not my intention to say that the elections don't matter and that the results create merely an illusion of choice. I encourage you simply not to become complacent. This includes remaining skeptical of certain candidates' cults of personality (Ron Paul ring a bell?) or speeches that are carefully crafted by screening audiences for the word choice and message that will most cause arousal in young fresh minds such as the readers of this paper. Ultimately the audiences of elections become the screening audiences for future policies that further the nation's disillusionment.

For many centuries the United States' education/socialization curriculum has included variations on the themes of 'manifest destiny', 'white man's burden', 'interventionism', and other systems of ideological-military complexes. Many minds have had to be indoctrinated for the ride of insanity and immorality that has taken the U.S.A. to its final landing

place. For people not fully possessed by these ideologies there are other systems in place – systems like racial disenfranchisement, union busting, political assassinations, and other forms of censorship and intimidation.

All throughout this time of political crusading into the global era there have been politicians claiming an end to unilateral action, unfair spending, human rights abuses, and even politics (can you believe it?) Not one potential candidate can run who will both stand for change and condemn the past of this country, a candidate who can say that they are a break, not from Bush and his crack-pushers, but from the abominable history of abusing power: militarism, racism, sexism, Zionism, multilateral imperialism, etc. This is what change would amount to in America. This would be a real change and a noble change. There is no apologizing for this nation's corruption and greed but there

is also no excuse for believing that capitalist elections have the power to change the world.

Finally there is an ultimate bind. How can one expect a candidate to be worthy of respect when he and she must also maintain our economy built on you know what (say it with me) exploitation of the politically and economically weak. Either we must come to allow a shift in our economy or we must shift our expectations in a leader. We cannot claim to stand for both human rights and a strong military/economy and then expect an honest leader who can speak for that expectation with grace and rehearsed charm. If one is confused about some of the leading candidates' positions on things it may be because the electorate is confused: wanting it all, contradictory and glorious, and paying their duckets to hear it articulated on the boob-tube by the world's next top president.

From Iowa with Hogs and Kisses

BY MAE COLBURN

*“See yonders fields of tasseled corn, Iowa in Iowa,
Where plenty fills her golden horn, Iowa in Iowa,
See how her wondrous prairies shine.
To yonder sunset's purpling line,
O! happy land, O! land of mine, Iowa, O! Iowa.”*

Our state song is something only kindergarteners can sing with any sincerity. The rest of us bite our lips and bow our heads. Only when the song is over do we relax and break into smiles and small talk. We like to talk about the weather, and about the Super Target that's being built out by our Super Wal-Mart, and about politics.

Last forth of July I saw Hillary speak outdoors at the Cattle Congress grounds. All my good neighbor Democrats were out, and my good neighbor Republicans too, armed with Pro-life posters at the entrance, assailing us hooligans with the piercing, prudent eyes of God's unborn children. It was at that point last summer, when the temperature was above 90 and the heat index clear over 100, when Iowa was just beginning to receive national attention. The haystacks and the John Deer tractor on stage, these were superfluities that wouldn't have been bothered with otherwise. But a man from Time magazine was there, somebody who looked like Mick Jagger, and a number of out-of-town press photographers – people balding with ponytails and leather shoes. Weird. It was too hot for that kind of behavior. Too hot, a skinny old man (an endangered species in my neck of the woods) had a heat stroke just as Hillary stepped on stage. I don't know how she did it in long sleeves, but she had us cheering, stamping, and waving our



Hillary waves and the crowd waves back. Fourth of July at the Cattle Congress grounds. Waterloo, Iowa.

until temperatures were below zero, late December. By that point, the phone would ring eight or nine times a night. My dad, who (unsurprisingly) starts dozing on the couch as soon as Antiques Roadshow begins, (7pm CST,) deals with these calls like he deals with his alarm clock: deep, guttural snore, sudden consciousness, then “Could somebody else get that?” then “Who is it?” My mom, well-versed, would tell him casually: Bill, Joe, Hillary, Barack, or one of the other automated regulars. Household names they were by this point. Sometimes it'd be my old ukulele teacher calling from down the street, our local precinct captain (and closet Obama zealot) looking for help in the way of volunteers or fresh baked cookies. (To be doled out strictly to Obama supporters. Hung on doorknobs. Shady? I don't know.) It was obvious in those last days leading up to caucus night that while the caucus process itself is overwhelmingly localized, the mechanics of campaigning were being preened for the national game. Rallies were shorter but sexier, and broadcast all over. Dreams of celebrity were in the air: You too, could be on national news. A girl I went to high school with weaseled herself a spot directly behind the podium at a January 2nd Obama event. Just so she'd be seen by all the cameras, blonde, blue eyed, looking skinny in horizontal stripes if you were watching. We all understand the power of notoriety. You have to lodge yourself on screen when you can because, well, you never know who might be watching.

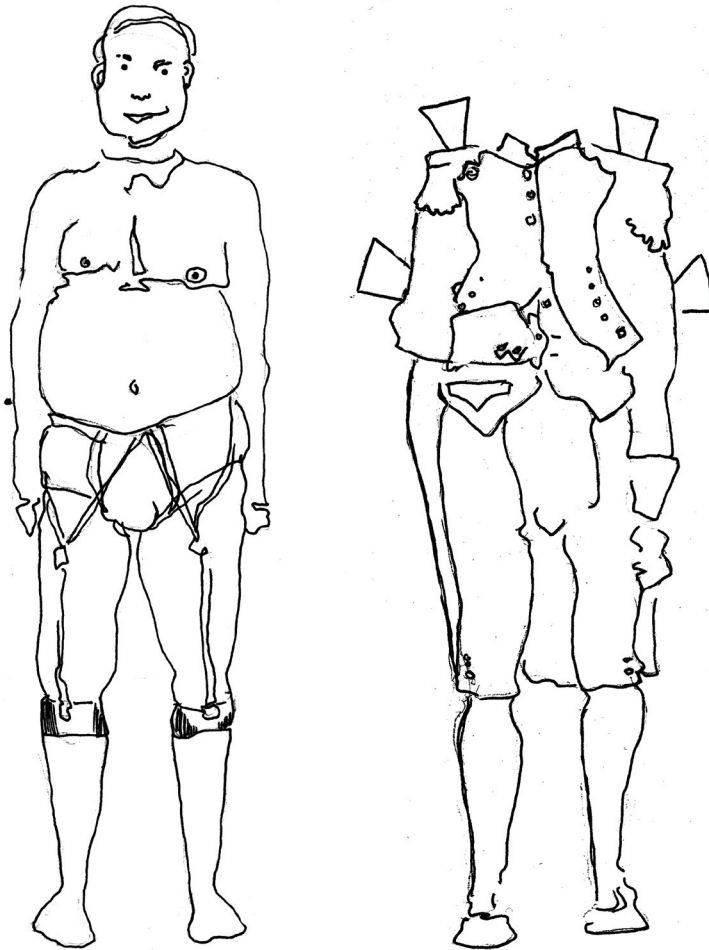
On caucus night, all the folks who aren't participating, that's who might have been watching, and shame on them, because we pulled out all the stops to galvanize involvement: free rides, child care, on-the-spot voter registration. And it worked, people came out of the woodwork, Independents and Republicans who'd crossed the border, Democrats who I though'd passed away years ago. Cookies aplenty for Obama supporters, and somebody had brought a 6-foot sub for Richardson fans – eventually picked over by Obama supporters sorry to see it go to waste. I took a seat in the Obama camp next to an old woman who claimed she'd been my preschool teacher at Montessori. Didactic once, always didactic, she leaned over as hissed into my ear “Do you know what the Antichrist is?” “Now is not the time to preach the gospel,” I wanted to snarl, but for some reason I simply said “no.” “God's greatest enemy,” she explained, “I heard some people at the mall today calling Obama the Antichrist.” She was worried that Obama, for all his good intentions, would be cut to pieces by the Soul Savers later on in the game. I told her not to worry, that from what I've seen, even God needs a political opponent.

arms in the air to music in mere minutes – the old man, meanwhile was brought to a picnic table in the back, nursed back to life with free campaign water and a hot dog. She spoke well, we all agreed. I told everybody about my friends from Out East who wouldn't even give her an ounce of praise. Well, my fellow Iowans said, everybody's entitled to their own opinion.

I left Iowa just after the Fourth and didn't go back

JOHN MCCAIN

as Napoleon Bonaparte



polling station on campus?

By JONATHAN BECKER

The intersection of national and local politics continues in the town of Red Hook. In the next few months, the Red Hook Town Board must decide whether it will open up a polling station on Bard campus.

All of the pertinent facts suggest that this is warranted. The election district that contains Bard, District 5, is by far the largest in the Town of Red Hook. It has far more registered voters than any district is meant to have (even if one subtracts the students who have left the College but whose names have yet to be removed from the voter rolls). Nearly all of the people living in the district are Bard students, faculty and staff, and many do not have their own transportation. In short, the Annandale Campus makes a perfect geographic location for a voting district.

Why is there no voting district at Bard? Some local residents claim that the campus is unwelcoming to outsiders. However, this assertion is belied by the thousands of Town residents, young and old, who come to Bard to attend cultural events, use the gym, participate in sporting competitions and play in summer camps. Others argue that opening a polling station at Bard would end the long tradition of voting at St. John's Church in Barrytown and interfere with an important fundraiser which traditionally takes place at the Church on voting day. Even if one accepts such an argument as a legitimate basis for public policy, it is not a valid objection. Opening a polling station in Annandale does not mean closing Barrytown: Red Hook can add a district or reshape districts so that citizens who vote at

Town Hall vote in Barrytown instead (for many, Barrytown is actually closer).

The real reason why there is no polling station at Bard is because the Republican majority on the Town Board does not want Bard students to vote locally. Forcing students to vote in Barrytown, they believe, can create impediments that will dampen student voting, particularly in local elections.

This is the wrong attitude, and Bard students should fight for their right to a polling station on campus. There are a few important issues that people should keep in mind. Bard students unquestionably have the right to vote. Many forget that less than a decade ago, Dutchess County's Republican Elections Commissioner systematically denied the rights of Bard and Vassar students to vote. Students only won the right to vote when a Commission of the Dutchess County Legislature, under threat of litigation, reviewed the law and concluded unanimously that Bard and Vassar students have the right to vote where they live, work and study most of the year. (The change was also abetted by the removal of the Republican Elections Commissioner on an unrelated felony.)

Students should see this for what it is: an attempt to disenfranchise them. Local officials want to stop or minimize student voting, in spite of their knowledge that New York State law assures them the right to vote. What is important for students to understand is that these actions are part of a broader pattern that one can witness across the country in which party officials, (usually, but not exclusively,

Republicans) use bureaucratic means to dampen voter turnout. Whether it is voter ID requirements that discriminate against the poor and elderly or limits on polling stations in heavily populated (and minority dominated) urban areas, officials seek to win by means that are antithetical to democracy: dampening turnout of people who may oppose them.

While making students vote in Barrytown clearly is not as heinous as imposing rigid photo ID requirements on poor citizens, students understand the implications of this situation and actively resist efforts to deny them their rights or limit their participation in the democratic process.

Local Red Hook officials should change their attitude. Many local Republicans seem to believe that Bard students voted against them in the fall for no reason: they fail to see that denying students a polling station is a very good reason for students to vote for the other party. They should abide by the conclusion of the Dutchess

County Legislative Committee, which stated that ‘as a society, we should encourage every class of citizen to vote and remove every impediment to voting for every class of citizen.’

If they do not change their attitude, students should not stand for it. They can pressure local officials and use the most powerful weapon of all, the vote, to produce change. Some students will be going to the Town Board meeting on February 12 (at 7:30 pm) to ask that the Town Board commit to opening a polling station in time for the 2008 elections. They deserve the support of the entire Bard community.

One thing that this primary season has taught us, particularly the candidacy of Barack Obama, is that 18-24 year olds can be a political force. Many Bard students will be voting in their first presidential elections in the fall. Those in Annandale will also be voting in a Congressional race that will be pivotal for control of the House of Representatives. Hopefully, they will be doing so on campus.

john mccain vs. ron paul

By JASON MASTBAUM

John McCain? Really?

A lot of people, including my colleagues on the Observer, seem to have been seduced by John McCain. I can't begin to understand why. The most immediate glaring con of John McCain that comes to mind is the fact that he's just as big a warmonger as George W. Bush or Rudy Giuliani. There is a video of McCain, preserved for posterity on Youtube, declaring that he would be okay with the United States being in Iraq for the next one hundred years.

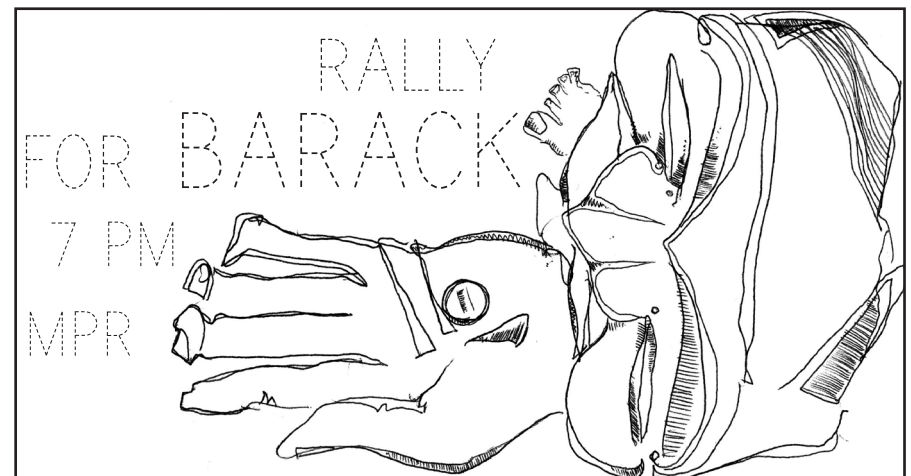
I was truly astounded that my colleagues, who as far as I know are all registered Democrats, did not at least see Ron Paul as the “least-bad” Republican. The fact that Ron Paul is anti-war is only one reason to be excited about his candidacy. Most people seem to know him as the “anti-war Republican,” but he's great on domestic issues, too. To name just a few ways that Ron Paul is very clearly better than John McCain:

- **PATRIOT ACT** Ron Paul was against the Patriot Act from the beginning. This is because Paul has always been concerned about civil liberties. John McCain, meanwhile, was one of the 98 Senators to rush the Patriot Act through Congress.
- **WAR ON DRUGS** Ron Paul, despite the fact that he thinks using drugs is not a good idea, is for the legalization of drugs and the end of the war on drugs. Speaking on the war on drugs, Paul has said: “We need

to repeal the whole war on drugs. It isn't working. We have already spent over \$400 billion since the early 1970s, and it is wasted money. Prohibition didn't work. Prohibition on drugs doesn't work. So we need to come to our senses.” John McCain, meanwhile, is another drug-war hawk.

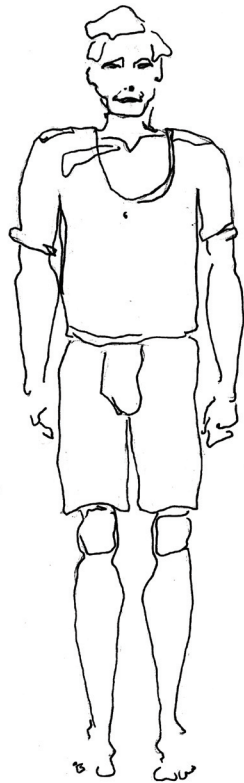
- **ECONOMICS** All of the candidates try to talk about economics, but out of the current candidates, only Ron Paul got into politics because of economics. Paul is the only one who talks about important issues such as monetary policy.
- **SOCIAL SECURITY** Paul on Social Security: “Imposing any tax on Social Security benefits is unfair and illogical. In Congress, I have introduced the Senior Citizens Tax Elimination Act (H.R. 191), which repeals ALL taxes on Social Security benefits, to eliminate political theft of our seniors' income and raise their standard of living.”
- **CONSISTENCY** John McCain is always touted as a “maverick” and a “principled man.” While it may be the case that he is not as much of an android as Hillary Clinton or Mitt Romney, he can't compete with Ron Paul when it comes to being principled. McCain has gone from calling people like Pat Robertson “agents of intolerance” in 2000 to giving the 2006 commencement address at Jerry Falwell's Liberty University. Compare this to Ron Paul: the only “flip-flop” that I know him to be guilty of is his stance on the death penalty. He used to be for it, and now he's against it; in his own words: “I believe [the death penalty] has been issued unjustly. If you're rich, you get away with it; if you're poor & you're from the inner city, you're more likely to be prosecuted & convicted....So I am now opposed to the federal death penalty.”

“Change” is a word that is getting tossed around a lot this election cycle, usually in a very empty manner, so I call Paul the “change” candidate with a bit of reluctance. But anyone who is serious about getting away from “politics as usual” owes it to themselves to go around the media blackout of Dr. Paul to find out more about him. One of the things that I like the most about Dr. Paul is that I know where he stands on the issues, I know why he holds his stances (because he writes about them), and if I happen to not know one of his stances, I know it's not that hard to find out.



MITT ROMNEY

as Charlemagne



Deciding who to vote for is a very hard thing to do. You've watched debates, read editorials, weighed pros and cons. A foolproof method for deciding who to vote for though, is discovering **WHICH PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE YOU ARE THE MOST LIKE** which we hope this quiz will help you with.

You've had a long day, caucusing, primarying, and inspiring your future subjects. What's the perfect meal to give you energy so you can start bright and early the next morning?

- A. Anything but Vietnamese
- B. BBQ'd Barack
- C. Fillet o' Hillary
- D. ~~Blood Pancakes~~

Dream Date?

- A. Going to an amusement park
- B. Debate with pizza
- C. Visiting the botanical gardens.
- D. Going to an expensive restaurant and impressing your date with your wealth and charm. Don't order too much food. You will feed later that night.

How would your friends describe you?

- A. Grizzled (Rambo-esque)
- B. the kindest-bravest-warmest-most-wonderful-human-being-I've-ever-known-in-my-life.
- C. Hopeful/exotic
- D. Scary

Dream Career:

- A. Astronaut
- B. Dog-breeder
- C. Greeting card writer
- D. Vampire

What was your childhood nickname?

- A. McNasty
- B. Pant suit
- C. The Occidental
- D. Willard

That scar on your knee you've had since childhood was most likely caused by?

- A. Tripping over scrap metal in the navy shipyard
- B. Scuffle over ThinMints (which you won)
- C. Grass rashes at the luau
- D. Bat bite

(Mostly As? You and John McCain are practically twins Bs? Clinton Cs? Obama Ds? Romney.

BY NICK OGONEK AND BECCA ROM-FRANK