

2008 presidential primaries spark widely varying opinions

"If their mouths are moving they're lying." (C.B.I teacher Deron Shinkle)

By: Trish Richter

Our nation's span of history throughout the past eight years has left us in a tumult, teetering on a decision concerning the war in Iraq and scrambling to salvage our economy and environment. The 2008 election will serve as a truly crucial junction for the fate of America, as well as that of the world.

At this point, the campaign trail remains fresh with the primaries still six months away, but considering the head start that most candidates have taken, opinions are already formulating.

Although the nation has yet to complete the primaries, a few names have projected themselves significantly. Hillary Clinton has kept herself within the public's eye, even after her 8 year term as a politically active First Lady, contributing efforts in public services and maintaining herself as an influence as senator. Within a random survey held at NRHS, the general consensus held a low opinion of Hilary.

With her experience being an obvious advantage, Hillary has presented herself to some, such as New Richmond resident Bob Lamb, as the most qualified and able of the candidates.

"She has worked within two branches of the government, the White House and the Senate, and she has learned her craft from the master of politics. All of the candidates say similar things, but she is the only one with the knowledge and power to implement them. Not only does she have vast knowledge and power at her disposal, but also a vast network; friends of Bill. Bill comes with Hillary to the White House," he said.

On the other hand, retirement planning specialist James Pollitt believes that Clinton has a slim chance of being elected due to a lack of sincerity.

"Hillary is trying to act like a moderate and after eight years in the limelight of being extremely liberal, it's not very believable," he said.

Others, such as senior Lyndsey Armbruster from the random survey, view Clinton as a poor choice because of the assumption of inferiority of mental and emotional strength attributed to being a woman.

"Our country is in a time of war and a woman would not be strong enough to hold her own," she said.

Despite her experience, some think that Hillary's gender will prove to be an obstacle for her at the voting booths. New Richmond resident

Mark Richter said that her difficulties will arise in handling of foreign affairs.

"I think it will be a major hurdle for an American woman president to be recognized fully by foreign nations who do not view a woman as being equal to a man," he said.

Graduate student Bethany Richter disagreed. She stated that it is a very high possibility that a woman could be elected president of the United States.

"Within merely the 20th century, at least 46 countries have elected a female national leader. This isn't including previous ages which have had woman leaders, such as England with Elizabeth the First or Russia with Catherine the Great," she said.

Rapidly gravitating with familiarity, Barack Obama has entered the presidential campaign under a less common slogan. A lack of experience in a political office has left Republicans and Democrats alike perceiving Obama as a bit too green for the job.

Obama's campaign is being run off of a sense of hope and unflinching charisma, according to Lamb.

"He's a brilliant young man. He'll be president some day, but not today. He has too little experience, although he seems sincere, thoughtful, and honest," he said.

Junior Brodi McCormick, from our survey, said that Obama is the candidate that she holds strong feelings about.

"He seems like a nice person and seems like he would care for our country. Obama seems like a guy who would put the important issues first, rather than the small ones," she said.

On the other hand, a lack of experience and tenure in Washington has the possibility of being a deterrent for Obama, according to Pollitt.

"He's an outsider and with the way Washington works, you have to make friends to get things accomplished. It's a negative system and I think it might be a positive thing to have someone in the White House without connections, maybe it's what we need, but I don't see it happening," he said.

In the survey, senior Laurel Graham agreed that Obama's greenness could present itself as a problem.

"I think that Obama is too young and doesn't have enough experience, although I like his opinions on most subjects," she said.

History teacher Gail Weldon said that she would love to see a Black President in her lifetime.

"It could be a profoundly healing experience for our nation: a powerful statement that America has, at last, repudiated the mindless hatred, prejudice, and fear that have made our history a 400-year-old nightmare of racial oppression. Barack Obama could be The One," she said.

If the Democrats aim to secure a position in the White House, they need to elect Obama in the primaries, according to English teacher Nicole Parker.

"The Republicans are more likely to vote for Obama than Hillary. Hillary is far too liberal to attract many Republicans," she said.

A face already recognizable from the 2004 election, John Edwards is another candidate under the Democratic Party. Bob Lamb defines Edwards as a queer duck, in that he crosses party lines.

"Everything he says I agree with, although his statement sometimes ring hollow, so I flip-flop on whether or not to buy his sincerity. As far as his electability is concerned, I don't think he is attractive enough to be elected," he said.

In contrast, B. Richter said that she views Edwards as rather charming and a talented public speaker.

"Everyone is going to be so caught up in the fact that Hillary is a woman and Obama's black-Islamic background that Edwards could very likely sneak up on them in the polls."

Criticized for his tax raising record as Gov. of Massachusetts and his flip-flopping tendencies, Mitt Romney is one of the top candidates for the Republican Party. He has been recognized for his leadership and accomplishments as a public servant and private enterprise.

Junior Matt Kelley from the survey said that although there are many capable candidates, Romney has his support.

"I think that he was a great Governor and will be able to capture a lot of support from both Republicans and Democrats," he said.

Lamb, however, referred to Romney as a political hack.

"He has changed his opinion on virtually every issue in order to gain votes. I cannot vote for a man who has no convictions," he said.

Fred Thompson is familiar to America though his role as Arthur Branch in Law and Order and his former role as a senator of Tennessee.

Very few respondents in the random survey mentioned Thompson. One of the few that did, senior Michael Neal, said that held a decent opinion of him.

"Most of

all the democrats I don't like, for example Barack and Hilary. But I do like Giuliani and Fred Thompson," he said.

Some have compared him to Ronald Reagan, for example, Lamb.

"He's an actor. We've filled our quota of those once already," he said.

Former Mayor of New York City, Rudy Giuliani gained popularity around 1997 for dropping NYC's crime rate by 57% and murder rate by 68%. Giuliani only gained recognition more so following 9/11. The general public has caused him grief concerning his "soap opera-ish" personal life.

Some, such as Pollitt, view Giuliani's reaction to 9/11 as effective.

"He handled the crisis swiftly and efficiently. Giuliani undertook the bombings in an intelligent manner," he said.

Giuliani's hindrance will be surrounding his position concerning abortion, according to teacher Deron Shinkle.

"What's going to kill Giuliani is the fact that he's Pro-Choice. Most Republicans are dead set on certain moral issues and they're not going to overlook his standpoint," he said.

Others, however, believe that Giuliani has done little to be considered qualified for presidency, such as Lamb.

"He was mayor of NYC, not a successful one at that, and became popular after his city got bombed. He did no more than any other mayor would have done, he was merely politically

in the r i g h t place at the right time," he said.

The major aspect of J o h n McCain t h a t seems to attract people is his contrast to M i t t Romney, in that he remains consistent in his standpoints. L a m b shared his opinion on McCain.

"I admire and respect a man who sticks by his convictions, although I disagree with some of these

convictions, especially those concerning the war," he said

John McCain is another candidate that didn't receive much recognition from the survey respondents.

Political apathy has become a concern to some, such as senior McLane Nagy.

"I'm able to vote in this election and it worries me to hear kids in the same position become apathetic and choose not to vote because they think that the world is already too messed up to save. We can't just sit and let apathy keep us from expressing our right to say who we support to run the executive branch of our government," she said.

Choral director Doug Heflin believes that as long as there continues to be a wide diversion in popular belief, the actual power that the president has is diminished.

"It will take a significant, unifying event to bring America back to a point where we can almost unanimously elect a leader. The next election isn't all that important. The election of the Senate is more significant because it's a fairer representation of where America stands," he said.

Such a vibrant hodge-podge of candidates should make for an interesting election. Hopefully our country can reach an intelligent consensus, considering the currently fluctuating state of our world. As of now, it's too soon to tell.

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Republican Candidates

- Sam Brownback
- Rudy Giuliani
- Mike Huckabee
- Duncan Hunter
- John McCain
- Ron Paul
- Mitt Romney
- Fred Thompson
- Tom Tanerodo



Democratic Candidates

- Hillary Clinton
- Barack Obama
- John Edwards
- Bill Richardson
- Joe Biden
- Chris Dodd
- Mike Gravel
- Dennis Kucinich

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