

Mike Berman's

WASHINGTON POLITICAL WATCH

No. 79

June 29, 2008

ABOUT AMERICA

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PRESIDENT BUSH - TREADING WATER

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2008 PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN

The Democratic primary ends

Obama vs McCain has begun

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2008 CONGRESSIONAL CAMPAIGNS Democratic prospects continue to improve

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WISDOM FROM SAUL TURTELTAUB

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THIS AND THAT StoreAdore

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RESTAURANTS

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STATE OF THE NATION

The country is headed in the wrong direction. So say Americans by 71%-16%.

By 69%-25%, Americans believe that their country is in a state of decline.
[NBC/WSJ 6/08]

80% are dissatisfied with the way things are going in the country, while 14% are satisfied. [Newsweek 6/08]

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For the second month in a row 86% of Americans believe the economy is getting worse, and that includes 83% of those making \$90,000 a year or more. [Gallup]

No surprise, college graduates are less pessimistic about the U.S. economy than Americans at large or those who are not college graduates. The spread is 14 percentage points between the graduates and non-graduates. [Gallup]

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Of the 3 branches of the Federal government, the only branch which has a job approval rating higher than its disapproval rating is the Supreme Court. However, even that body cannot muster majority approval. 48% approve while 38% disapprove. [Gallup 5/08]

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High gasoline and diesel prices have caused us to be more supportive - 57% - of drilling for oil in U.S. coastal and wilderness areas that are currently off limits. [Gallup 5/08]

The price of gasoline is having an effect on how people live. Here are the 5 top impacts that Americans report:

- 15% cannot afford cost of driving/commuting
- 11% limiting/cutting back on travel, vacations
- 11% have little or no disposable income/eating into budget
- 10% staying home more/not going out much or at all
- 10% driving less

[Gallup 6/08]

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Tax rebates do not seem to have affected how folks rate current economic conditions. 43% of those who have received their rebates and 43% of those who have not received rebates rate the economy as "poor". [Gallup 5/08]

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Confidence in U.S. banks has dropped to 32%. This is a drop of 17 percentage points from June 2006, and a drop of 28 percentage points from January 1980. [Gallup]

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Where do you stand when it comes to the creation of human beings? Overall, 44% believe God created humans as of about 10,000 years ago. 36% say that humans

developed over millions of years with God's guidance. 14% think that humans simply evolved without any form of divine intervention.

60% of Republicans, 40% of Independents and 38% of Democrats opt for the "created as is" theory. The more often a person attends church the more likely that he or she is to believe in this concept. [Gallup]

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Over the last 4 years, there has been no change in the number of folks who prefer a smaller government with fewer services (50%) and those who prefer a larger government with more services (45%). [WP/ABC 6/08]

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The Supreme Court has struck down the D.C. law limiting the ownership of handguns in the city. 73% of Americans believe that the U.S. Constitution guarantees the right of individual Americans to own guns. [Gallup 3/08]

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In a BBC World Service Poll, taken across 34 countries from 10/31/07-1/25/08, views of the United States which were getting increasingly negative over the last two years, have finally started to improve.

The number of folks saying that the U.S. has a negative influence in the world has fallen from 55% to 49%. The number saying it has a positive influence has risen from 28% to 32%.

Here are the current results of attitudes toward a number of countries. In 25 of the 34 countries there is a range of percentages saying that the country has a mainly positive influence.

Germany and Japan (each) 56%
European Union 52%
France and Great Britain (each) 50%
China 47%
Brazil 44%
India 42%
Russia 37%
United States 35%
North Korea 23%
Iran 20%
Israel 19%
Pakistan 18%

Conversely, the country seen as having the most negative influence is Iran (54%), followed by Israel (52%). Germany is the country that the least number (18%) see as having a negative influence. The U.S. is seen as having a negative influence by 48%.

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Religion remains important in American life. 56% of Americans believe that religion is very important. This is somewhat truer of women (63%) than of men (49%).

- * 2% believe in God or a universal spirit
- * 74% believe in an afterlife
- * 74% believe there is a heaven
- * 59% say there is a hell
- * 79% believe in miracles
- * 68% believe in angels/demons
- * 63% say their holy book is the word of God
 - 93% of Jehovah's witnesses
 - 92% of Mormons
 - 86% of Muslims
 - 77% of Protestants
 - 62% of Catholics
 - 59% of Orthodox Christians
 - 37% of Jews
 - 37% of Hindus
 - 25% of Unaffiliated
 - 18% of Buddhists

[Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life]

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70% of Americans now believe that divorce is morally acceptable. This is the highest number Gallup has found, up from 58% in 2001. However, one of the primary reasons for which folks get divorced - infidelity - remains the behavior that most people find most morally wrong. 91% have this view. [Gallup 5/08]

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Democrats (76%) are more likely than Republicans (41%) to believe that the effects of global warming have already begun. [Gallup 5/08]

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"On the average day, 49% of Americans experience a lot of happiness and enjoyment without a lot of stress and worry, while 10% say they experience daily worry and stress that far outweighs their happiness and enjoyment." [Gallup 6/08]

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PRESIDENT BUSH

President Bush's job approval ratings remain less than modest. Here is the NBC/WSJ report card.

		<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>
In general	28%	66%	
Handling the economy	21	73	
Handling Iraq	33	64	

Bush's favorability, at 30% positive in the same survey, is the lowest score he has received during his tenure in the White House.

The LATimes/Bloomberg survey found Bush to have a 23% approval rating. Only Harry Truman, at 22% in February 1952, was lower. [6/08]

There is really nothing more to say.

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THE PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN

DEMOCRATIC PRIMARY

Act VII, which turned out to be the final act, opened on May 7th and finished on Saturday, June 7th. Hillary Clinton won 4 of the last 6 primaries held during the period, but it was not enough.

By the 3rd week of May, Barack Obama was able to claim that he had won a majority of the elected delegates. On the night of June 3rd, as the last primaries concluded, Obama was able to claim victory with a combination of elected and automatic delegates.

On June 7th, in a speech that was her best of the campaign, Clinton gave Obama her unqualified endorsement and called on her supporters to stand up for him. But of equal, if not greater, import, she talked about and to those American women, who in her candidacy, for the first time in a long time, if ever, found their champion and leader.

But between her June 3rd speech and her speech on the 7th, Clinton was subjected to a variety of criticisms from public figures (who should have known better) and others who believed that she should have conceded the race on Tuesday night.

Public officials, in particular, should have appreciated and understood Clinton's need for a little time. A person who runs for President is by definition a dreamer. When their quest for President comes to an end, that dream is quashed. And the closer the person comes to realizing that dream, the harder is the loss. They should be given a little time to deal with that loss.

Her delay had no adverse affect on Barack Obama's campaign. Even if she had waited a few days longer, it would not have affected his campaign. To his credit, Obama counseled everyone to just relax.

Here are the latest counts [Real Clear Politics].

Delegates - only tabulation that counts

		Obama	Clinton	Obama's net
Pledged Delegates	1766.5	1639.5	+127	
Super Delegates	463	257	+206	
Total	2229.5	1896.5	+162	
[2118 needed to win]				

Popular vote -

	Obama	Clinton	Net
Popular vote	17,535,458	17,493,836	O+41,822
With IA,NV,ME,WA	17,869,542	17,717,000	O+151,844

[If you include Clinton votes in Michigan, with or without giving Obama the uncommitted votes, Clinton comes out ahead in popular vote.]

Contests won - based on final delegate counts

Of Total	33	20	3 ties
Of Closed primaries	11	8	1 tie

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The Encore

August 28th, will be a historic night in this country. On that night an African-American will accept the nomination of a major political party, the Democratic Party.

It is also the 45th Anniversary of Martin Luther King's "I have a Dream" speech.

Between now and the convention there will be a certain amount of sturm and drang. How will Hillary be treated at the convention, which is now under the control of the Obama campaign? Will she have her name placed in nomination (it only requires the signature of 300 delegates)?

As many will recall, in 1980, the Kennedy forces made a run at a rules change that they thought might enable Kennedy to beat Carter. When the Carter forces handily won the relevant vote, Kennedy decided not to have his name placed in nomination. Nonetheless, Kennedy received 1150 votes on the first ballot.

In 1984, with Walter Mondale a clear winner (2191 votes) going into the convention, Gary Hart and Jesse Jackson each received votes on the first ballot, Hart received 1201 and Jackson 466.

Here are the 1st ballot results of several other recent Democratic conventions.

1976

Carter 2239
Udall 330
Tsongas 301

1988
 Dukakis 2877
 Jackson 1219

1992
 Clinton 3372
 Brown 596
 Tsongas 289

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At least on the surface, the healing has begun between Obama and Clinton. Several nights ago Clinton brought Obama to a meeting of her principal fundraisers. Obama made the right gesture in making his maximum personal contribution to help retire her debt.

In coming weeks Clinton will be on the road in support of Obama's candidacy, and she will have a prominent role at the convention whether or not she is the Vice Presidential nominee.

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It is unlikely that any candidate other than McCain will get a significant number of votes at the Republican convention.

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THE GENERAL ELECTION

The general election campaign has begun. At the rate that McCain and Obama and their teams are exchanging charges and countercharges, either they or the public are going to be very tired long before election day.

While WW does not believe that surveys this early in the game mean very much, here is the lay of the land in the race for President.

	<u>NBC/WSJ</u>		<u>WP/ABC</u>	<u>Gallup</u>	<u>Newsweek</u>	<u>LATimes/Bloom</u>
	<u>6/6-9</u>	<u>6/12-15</u>	<u>6/15-19</u>	<u>6/18/19</u>	<u>6/19-23</u>	
Obama	47		48	50	51	49
McCain	41		42	44	36	37
	<u>F&M</u>					
	<u>Coll Poll</u>		<u>Fox News</u>			
	<u>6/16-22</u>		<u>6/17-18</u>			
Obama	42		45			
McCain	36		41			

Five of these surveys are in the same ballpark, the other two show a stronger Obama lead.

In the F&M College Poll, voters who think

	<u>Obama</u>	<u>McCain</u>
the country is on the wrong track	49	29
personal finances are worse compared to last year	49	30

In looking for reasons to explain the difference in the polls, WW looked at the partisan nature of the samples used in three of the surveys. It did not provide an answer.

Newsweek and Washington Post/ABC tend to be pretty close in the number of Democrats and Republicans in their samples. The NBC/WSJ survey includes fewer identified Democrats and a greater number of Independents.

	<u>Newsweek</u>	<u>WP/ABC</u>	<u>NBC/WSJ</u>
Democrats	55	54	44
Republicans	36	38	34
Independents	5	7	16

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Looking back, the general elections in 2004, 2000 and 1996 had the following cast to them, as recorded by the Gallup Survey.

<u>2004</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>1996</u>
Bush 48%	Bush 50%	Bush 33%
Kerry 47%	Gore 38%	Perot 32%
		Clinton 27%

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50% say that it is more important for a candidate for President to represent "new direction and new ideas," as opposed to 43% who say that "strength and experience" is most important. [WP/ABC 6/08]

Here is a list of qualities and how the American public thinks about McCain and Obama in relation to them. % represents those who rated them 5 or 4 on a 5 point scale. 5 is very good. [NBC/WSJ 6/08]

The two men are rated about equally on being honest and straightforward. McCain has the advantage when it comes to experience, leadership qualities, and being commander-in-chief. Obama is tops in being easy-going and likeable, being inspirational, bringing change, and sharing their positions on issues.

	<u>McCain</u>	<u>Obama</u>
Knowledgeable and experienced enough to handle presidency	<u>64%</u>	30%
Having the strong leadership qualities needed to be President	<u>56%</u>	47%
Being honest and straightforward	<u>54%</u>	52%

Being a good commander-in-chief	<u>52%</u>	33%
Easy-going and likeable	39%	<u>69%</u>
Sharing your position on issues	28%	<u>39%</u>
Being inspirational and an exciting choice for President	22%	<u>61%</u>
Bringing real change to direction of the country	19%	<u>53%</u>

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The Electoral College

A variety of organizations have begun analyzing the Electoral College. After all the election is about electoral votes, not popular votes.

WW does not have the resources to do the complicated analysis that many organizations use. The WW approaches the contest as follows. [See attachment at end of newsletter.]

If Obama simply wins all of the States that have been won by the Democratic candidate in the last 4 Presidential elections (1992, 1996, 2000, and 2004) he will have 248 electoral votes.

Using the same standard for McCain, but substituting States that have gone Republican in the last 4 Presidential elections, he has 135 votes.

Then WW gives to McCain those states which have been won by Republicans in 3 of the last 4 elections, including in 2000 and 2004. That gives him an additional 64 votes for a total of 199.

There are 3 States which have been won by the Democrat in 3 of the last 4 elections, but in none of those States did the Democrat win in 2000 and 2004.

So there are 91 electoral votes in play: the 3 States (16 electoral votes) in which Democrats have won 3 of the last 4; and the 75 electoral votes which have split 2 for 2 in the last 4 elections, but in each of those States the Republicans have won in the last 2 elections. This is the field from which Obama must find 25 electoral votes and McCain must find 71.

In the group of States with 64 electoral votes which WW has assigned to McCain, available polling shows McCain leading in 3, Obama leading in 1, and no public polls available in the 5th, which happens to be Arizona, so it is not unrealistic to give that to McCain. Thus McCain leads in 4 of 5, totaling 55 votes, with 9 votes slated for Obama's camp.

In the group of 75 electoral votes that have split 2/2 in the last 4 Presidential elections, there is no publicly available polling in 4 of 8 of these States. One State,

Nevada, is even. McCain leads in 2 states and Obama leads in one. So, McCain has 20 votes, Obama has 20 votes, and 35 votes are in the air.

In the group of 16 votes in which 3 of the last 4 elections have been won by the Democrat, 1 State is even, leaving its 4 votes in play. The other two, boasting 12 votes, are in the Obama column.

So, after all of the above guesstimating, the electoral votes are allocated by WW as follows:

Obama	289
McCain	210
TossUps	39

If you want to play the electoral vote game most of the news websites allow you to manipulate at will.

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The Financing Flap

There is a high level of dyspepsia among editorial writers, columnists and assorted groups because Obama has decided to forego Federal financing for his general election campaign.

Their angst is in defense of a broken "system". They are upset because earlier in the campaign Obama made statements that he would consider limiting his general election campaign financing to the Federal grant that would be delivered under that broken system.

There was no particular angst when Obama, Clinton and McCain eschewed the matching fund system in the primaries. After all each of them would have been allowed under the system to spend \$42 million between January 2007 - August 2008.

And there didn't seem to be much consternation when the McCain campaign appeared to game the system by using the fact that he was eligible for matching funds as collateral for establishing a loan or line of credit.

Rather than being upset with Obama, they should be pleased to learn that he is a candidate who learns. He learned enough during the primary campaign to realize that the Federal grant - \$84.1 million - is not enough to do the job that needs to be done. And oh, by the way, he has so turned on the American body politic that he does not have to limit himself in this way.

If Obama is to be criticized it is for the convoluted reasoning by which he and his campaign explained the decision. They talked about all the money that the McCain campaign and the Republican National Committee was getting from lobbyists and Pacs. They talked about all of the groups on the conservative side of the spectrum whose potential attacks his campaign might have to overcome.

According to FactCheck.Org, contributions from "lobbyists and PACS" make up less than 1.7% of the money that has been taken in by the McCain campaign, and less than 1.1% of the RNC's receipts.

As to all those groups on the right, they seem to be having a hard time getting going this year. Even assuming that they do, in 2004 the amounts of money spent by such groups on the liberal side of the equation were far more than those on the conservative side.

To be sure, Obama has asked those with a liberal bent to cease and desist. Move.org has responded by closing its Sec. 527 side, but the independent expenditures by its PAC will continue.

It would have been better if the campaign was up front about its reasoning.

There is a huge job to be done. Just awakening that 45+% of the potential electorate which does not play in elections will cost more than the Federal grant will ever permit.

And, by the way, the costs associated with campaigning have grown at a greater rate than the CPI, which is the basis for the growth in the amount available under the Federal grant. An example would be the cost of primetime TV commercials. Their cost has grown beyond the rate of the CPI.

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McCain intends to take the Federal grant, although he now has a perfectly good reason to opt out, should he choose to do so. The question for McCain is whether his fundraising machine can match Obama's.

Currently, his fundraising capability has been improving month-to-month, and he is engaged in a joint fundraising effort with the Republican National Committee.

The best bet is that he will not risk competing with Obama on the money side during the general election. Between now and the Republican convention he will raise and spend as much as possible as primary expenditures. He will then push his fundraisers to turn to the RNC.

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Obama is making a big bet, that his fundraising machine will respond for the general election.

He is betting that his previous contributors, and others to be added, will continue to finance his "primary" campaign efforts and in addition will respond for the general.

According to Gallup, there has been a drop in enthusiasm about voting since Super Tuesday, from 63%, who were at the time more enthusiastic than usual, to 48%, who have that view at the present time. Among Democrats the drop has been from 79% to 61% and among Republicans from 44% to 35%.

Notably, in mid-July 2004 enthusiasm for the election was considerably higher than it is today. 60% were more enthusiastic than usual about the election. 68% of Democrats and 51% of Republicans fell into this category.

The \$64 question is whether this drop in enthusiasm will impact Obama's fundraising. Over the months of March, April and May, Obama's total contributions received has declined.

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Once Obama spends the first dollar from his general election account, which he may well do before the general election starts, he gives up the right to request Federal funds.

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Any unencumbered funds which the Obama campaign has left in its primary account at the start of the general election, August 29th, can be rolled over and used in the general election.

For example, if the campaign happens to have on hand at the end of the primary season, \$50,000,000 net of outstanding obligations, that money can be rolled over into its general election account.

This roll-over does not in any way affect the ability of a maxed-out Obama primary voter to max out to Obama's general election campaign. (The contribution is subject to the individual contributor's aggregate contribution limit.)

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Both campaigns can specifically direct approximately \$18,500,00 in spending by their respective national political parties. Other than that, Party spending cannot be coordinated with the Presidential campaigns.

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The Annenberg Public Policy Center has established an entity it calls "Factcheck.org." It is designed to comment on the "accuracy" and/or "validity" of claims in a variety of arenas, including the Presidential campaign. You can sign up to receive email alerts to its various commentaries by going to Factcheck.org.

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THE CONGRESS

The most recent NBC/WSJ and Washington Post/ABC surveys continue to show a strong preference for the election of a Democratic Congress.

	DEM	GOP	NET	
NBC/WSJ	52	33	19	6/6-9
WP/ABC	53	38	15	6/12-15

However, the job performance rating of the Congress, both Houses of which are controlled by the Democrats, continues to be in the basement.

The NBC/WSJ survey referenced above shows that 79% disapprove of the job Congress is doing, with a paltry 13% approving its work. This is the worst performance rating in the history of that poll.

Recent surveys by Fox News, Gallup, and AP-Ipsos found an average disapproval of 72% and an approval of 20%.

In yet another measurement of attitudes toward the Congress, Gallup finds that confidence in the Congress is the lowest it has found for any institution in the 35 years it has been testing confidence in various U.S. institutions.

Only 12% have a great deal or quite a lot of confidence in the Congress. As recently as May 2004, that number was 30%. Back in May 1973 it was 42%.

As a matter of comparison, in 2008 HMOs are rated at 13%, big business at 20%, the Presidency at 26%, and the military is at the top of the list with 71%.

[Military 71%, small business 60%, the police 58%, church or organized religion 48%, the medical system 35%, public schools 33%, U.S. Supreme Court 32%, banks 32%, Presidency 26%, TV news 24%, newspapers 24%, organized labor 20%, criminal justice system 20%, big business 20%, HMOs 13%, Congress 12%.]

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THE U.S. SENATE

Democrats 49

Republicans 49

Independents 2 (caucus Dem)

It appears that the low water mark for the Democrats in the coming Senate races is 53. Assuming the two Independents continue to caucus with the Democrats, Majority Leader Harry Reid, will have 55 votes for his re-election as leader.

The total number of Senate races this year has grown to 35 as a result of there being two Senate seats on the ballot in Mississippi and Wyoming this year. In Mississippi Roger Wicker was appointed to fill the seat vacated early by Senator Trent Lott. John Bassaro was appointed to the Wyoming seat vacated by the death of Senator Craig Thomas.

Among the 6 Toss Up races, Democrats are likely to capture Colorado, New Hampshire and New Mexico.

As of today, Minnesota is likely to stay in Republican hands. Al Franken, who recently secured the Democratic endorsement has had a series of missteps. These include failure to pay certain taxes in States other than Minnesota, and exposure of some of his comedy routines and statements from yesteryear.

Surprisingly, the race in Mississippi appears to be dead even. The Democratic candidate will be helped by what is likely to be the largest turnout of African-Americans in the State's history.

The other even race is Alaska. A variety of scandals have tarnished long-serving incumbent Ted Stevens (R), and Mark Begich the Democratic Mayor of Anchorage, is doing well.

So, the potential for the Democrats today is 57 seats, just 3 seats short of a theoretically filibuster proof majority.

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Here is how the 35 Senate elections (12 Democratic incumbents, 23 Republican incumbents) look to me at this time (underlining reflects retirement). (D=Dem incumbent in office, R=GOP incumbent in office, I=Ind. incumbent in office)

<u>Safe</u> <u>Democratic(11)</u>	<u>Leaning</u> <u>Democratic(2)</u>	<u>Toss-Up(6)</u>	<u>Leaning</u> <u>Republican(4)</u>	<u>Safe</u> <u>Republican(10)</u>
Arkansas	Louisiana	Alaska	Maine	Alabama
Delaware	South Dakota	<u>Colorado</u>	<u>Nebraska</u>	Georgia
Illinois		Minnesota	North Carolina	Idaho
Iowa		Mississippi(B)	Oregon	Kansas
Massachusetts		New Hampshire		Kentucky
Michigan		<u>New Mexico</u>		Oklahoma
Montana				South Carolina
New Jersey				Tennessee
Rhode Island				Texas
<u>Virginia</u>				Wyoming(A)
West Virginia				Wyoming(B)

		<u>Democrats</u>	<u>Republicans</u>	<u>Ind</u>
Seats not up in 2008	37	26	2	
Safe in 2008	11	12	0	
Leaning in 2008	2	4	0	
Total	50	42	2	
Toss-ups		6 (6R) (Leaning 3D,1R,2Tossups)		

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THE U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Democrats 236
Republicans 199

Generally speaking, the question does not seem to be whether the Democrats will pick up House seats in the 2008, but how many seats will be added to their current majority.

For the sake of argument, assume that the Democrats go into election day having as a base all of the solid, likely and leaning Democratic seats (they will probably lose a few), a total of 238 seats.

That leaves the current 26 Toss Up seats.

Of the 7 Toss Up seats that are currently held by Democrats, all of them have Republican PVIs* averaging +8.0.

Of the 19 Toss Up seats currently held by Republicans, 7 have PVIs of D+2.7. The remaining 12 seats have PVIs of +3.8.

Boiled down, of the 26 Toss Up seats 19 of them have Republican PVIs.

WW's best guess at the moment - 8 to 17 Democratic pickups.

	<u>6/19/08</u>
Solid Dem	203
Likely Dem	14
Lean Dem	14
Total Dem	238
TossUp	26
D	7
R	19
Lean GOP	8
Likely GOP	18
Solid GOP	152
Total GOP	197

[* The Partisan Voting Index is a feature of the Cook Political Report. Using the 2000 and 2004 Presidential race it ranks each Congressional District by how well it performs in terms of the national performance for each Party's Presidential candidate. For example, a PVI of R+2 means the District performed 2 points better than Republican Presidential performance nationally.]

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WISDOM FROM SAUL TURTELTAUB

Is this George Bush's second term or was he left back for failing the first term?

I don't understand how I can lie awake for three hours in the middle of the night trying to sleep in a large king-sized bed in a quiet room, and then sit in a straightback, uncomfortable barber's chair in a noisy barber shop, with the barber buzzing around my head with an electric razor, using his scissors hither and yon, and falling sound asleep.

How would you like to be touring the Antarctic and come face to face with the polar bear you saved?

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THIS AND THAT

About polling: WW has passed this reminder to its readers before, but it is worth doing again. As the campaign season escalates there will be hundreds of polls. Many of them are sponsored by substantial organizations with high standards, like NBC/WSJ, WP/ABC, CBS/NYT, Newsweek, LATimes Bloomberg, Cook/RT, etc. And then there are surveys taken on the cheap by a variety of entities whose goal, as much as anything, is to get their name in the news cycle.

Then there are surveys of all adults, registered voters, and, closer to the election, likely voters. Be mindful of the group that is being surveyed.

All of which is to say, consider the source before you rely in any substantial way on surveys that come to your attention.

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40% of Americans have gotten campaign news and information from the internet so far during the election season. Only 31% could say that at this time in 2004. 6% go online for this purpose daily, while 19% go on at least once a week. [Pew Research Center 2008]

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Reilly's Rules (John Reilly that is)

Rule # 1 - In a campaign, if you ever receive a "contribution" in an envelope which consists of four \$100 bills, you can be certain that the person giving you the envelope has "nicked" either \$100 or \$600, because nobody in political history ever gave anybody \$400.

Rule # 2 - In every campaign you will ever be in, there will always be somebody on Your Side that you wish devoutly was on the Other Side.

Rule # 3 - You can fool some of the people all of the time, and those are the ones on who you have to concentrate.

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It appears that in their Federal political giving, "Bermans" favor Democrats by a substantial margin. According to Fundrace08.Huffingtonpost.com, as of May 31, 2008, persons with the last name of "Berman" contributed to Democrats over Republicans at a ratio of \$2 to \$1 during this 2007-08 cycle.

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Nothing cures insomnia like the realization that it's time to get up.

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A family went to one of those restaurants where the walls are plastered with movie memorabilia. The woman of the family went to see the hostess about reserving a table. When she returned she found her 11-year-old-daughter staring at a poster of Superman standing in a phone booth. She looked puzzled.

She asked her husband, "Doesn't she know who Superman is." "Worse," he replied, "she doesn't know what a phone booth is."

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[Editor's note: One thing about having your own newsletter is that you can include just about anything that suits your fancy. In the interest of full disclosure, WW is a stockholder in the company described below.

For gentlemen readers I will explain at the end of the following why this site should be of interest to you.]

(LOGO if we can make it small enough)

StoreAdore

WW recommends that you sign up for StoreAdore (www.storeadore.com), a personalized, web-based guide to the best boutique shopping around the country and online. Best described as a Zagat guide for shopping, StoreAdore features 2500+ profiles of boutiques and specialty stores in NYC, DC, Boston, LA, Chicago, Philadelphia, the Hamptons, San Francisco, and online.

You can search the site according to your desired criteria (neighborhood, product type, etc.) to find stores in the city where you live, where you travel, and online; download or make customized shopping maps; score exclusive discounts at dozens of top boutiques; and even write your own store reviews. And, just by signing up, you'll receive a \$25 gift certificate and membership to Gilt, an invite-only, sample sale site.

StoreAdore was founded by Meredith Barnett and Cristina Miller, DC natives and best friends since childhood. It has recently been featured on The Today Show, Fox & Friends, and Oprah; and in the New York Times and in Washingtonian magazines.

StoreAdore could use your support - so please check out the site and register.

Now for gentlemen who are reading this newsletter. As you may have guessed most of the products offered in the boutiques and websites featured at StoreAdore are intended for women.

However, if you are seeking to buy a gift for a lady, it will be doubly appreciated when the lady realizes that you have gone out of your way to shop for her at one of these boutiques or websites.

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RESTAURANTS

Kemble Park Tavern
5125 MacArthur Blvd, N.W.
Washington DC
202-966-515
Fax 966-2077
contact@Kembleparktavern.com

The Kemble Park Tavern, is located in the same space as the now-gone Starlight Cafe. There the similarity ends. The ambiance, the seating, and the food are totally different. Frankly, not better or worse, but different.

I have eaten at Kemble Park three times. First, with Rita and Bob; then with Rita, Bob and Hilary; and finally with Sherry and Mike.

There are two entrances to the restaurant, both on MacArthur Boulevard, and both requiring going up a set of stairs. There is a patio that seats about 20 people at tables of four that I am sure is quite pleasant in the Spring and Fall, but that I think should be avoided in a typical Washington summer.

Once inside, there is an area at the front of the restaurant that has a series of high tables and chairs that seats from 2 - 6 people. There is also a full bar with large, armed, high chairs.

The main dining room has two sections. The first is divided into three types of seating areas that run the length of the room.

To the left is a long banquette that runs the length of the room and appeared quite comfortable. The tables which front the banquette have comfortable chairs. The tables can be used as deuces, quads or even longer combinations.

Running down the middle of the room are a series of deuces, each with very high, extremely comfortable chairs, set lengthwise.

And finally on the right hand wall there is a series of 4-person booths.

At the far end of the restaurant is a separate room, with glass walls separating it from the main dining room. It holds four 4-person tables.

Overall, the restaurant seats 100 people for dinner, plus the patio when it is in use.

The dinner menu includes appetizers, sandwiches, salads, entrees, and sides.

During these meals my companions and I have enjoyed Gazpacho soup, Matzo Ball Soup, Caesar Salad, Short Rib Sliders, Tomato, Onion, Wedge Salad and Mixed Greens, the Grilled Burger, the Pulled Chicken sandwich, the Marinated Seafood Salad, Bay Rockfish, the Baked Potato, Bok Choy, Hand Cut Fries, and Seasonal Vegetables.

The menu provides an opportunity to select a single dish or a combination of dishes that allows you to meet your appetite of the moment. For example, on one evening I had the Tomato, Wedge Salad, a Baked Potato, Bok Choy, and Seasonal Vegetables.

Only Sherry and Mike were burger eaters among this group, but they claim the burgers are excellent, with or without a bun. Particular note was made of the burgers having a proper firm outside with a red and tender inside.

If your inclination is for a double espresso after dinner, you might want to bring your own cup. When I requested a double espresso at the end of my second dinner the waiter explained that they did not have a cup that would hold a double espresso. I suggested that he bring me two single cups of espresso, which he did. I must admit that I began to pour the espresso from one cup to the other to see whether it would hold a double. He was right, the individual cups are not big enough. I wonder what they would do if, as I have sometimes done, I ordered a quad?

The service left nothing to be desired.

Unisex restrooms are the standard. I happen to have used the same restroom all three times, the alternate restroom always being busy.

The restroom I used is quite small. Immediately upon entry, to your left, is a dark wood hamper next to a round, white ceramic wash basin in a white marble top, set on a dark wood cabinet. The wall opposite the washbasin holds a large oval mirror.

Directly ahead is a small, completely enclosed, commode room with a black wooden door. The commode is a standard white ceramic model.

The walls are completely covered with a green background floral pattern and the floor is covered with mid-sized, multi-colored, brownish tiles.

The restroom seems to be well maintained.

There is valet parking in the evening.

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Town Hall Delicatessen

60 Valley Street
South Orange, NJ
973-762-0707

[Note: After seeing the review of Noah's Ark in the last issue, the following was submitted by Jim Gerstenzang. It appears without edit.]

Your item on the NY deli brought this story to mind: For decades, the best deli I encountered was in South Orange, N.J. (I grew up next door in Maplewood.)

The Town Hall Delicatessen was owned by a German-American family. The Grandmother worked the cash register, the sons and grandsons (one grandson was a class mate of mine) worked behind the counter. There were open pickle barrels. Fresh Breads. The fragrance was marvelous.

I was crushed to discover about two years ago that it had closed; I'd made a detour off the Garden State Parkway enroute from Boston to DC for a sandwich. I found out that the Joost family had sold the store/restaurant. The good news: A new owner was reopening the deli nearby, with the original menu and recipes.

I returned last week. I wasn't disappointed. The sandwich for which Town Hall was famous was back on the menu. That would be Sloppy Joe. This is not the "Sloppy Joe" of ground meat and gravy or chili or whatever goo that the name brings to mind elsewhere.

It is this:

Three pieces of thinly sliced NY Jewish Rye bread. The loaf is sliced horizontally, rather than vertically, creating--when the rounded edges are squared off--a rectangular sheet of rye. It makes a sandwich that is easily sufficient for two servings. The filling is any choice of meats--the original, tongue, was not for my palate. With Genie Wetstein and Jon Kantor, we ordered two sandwiches; roast beef on one, turkey on another. But what makes the sandwich special is the whole combination: the meat, the Swiss cheese, the cole slaw, the Russian dressing, and the thinly sliced bread. Somehow, the combination and the proportions make for a sandwich I have never been able to match (or make) elsewhere. [Sloppy Joes need to be ordered in advance.]

As Michelin would say, it is worth the detour. It's still the best deli sandwich I've had.

Jim

Mike

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