

Mike Berman's

WASHINGTON POLITICAL WATCH

No. 75

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STATE OF THE NATION

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BUSH STANDING IS STATIC

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THE 2008 PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN:

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IT SEEMS LIKE AN ETERNITY, BUT IT HAS ONLY BEEN 6 MONTHS

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IS THERE AN INDEPENDENT CANDIDATE IN OUR FUTURE?

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2008 CONGRESSIONAL ELECTIONS

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THIS AND THAT

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RESTAURANTS

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SPECIAL NOTE: It was the plan to have this issue of the "Watch" available online. Because of a glitch, it will not be possible to do that until a later date. You will be notified when it can be accessed, but in the meantime, here is the printed version of the current edition.

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ABOUT THE COUNTRY

There has been little change in the last couple of months in Americans' pessimism about how things are going in this country.

Mid-July surveys by Gallup and Newsweek found dissatisfaction running 71% and 68% respectively, with 27% in both surveys saying they are satisfied.

Similarly, an AP-Ipsos survey in the 2nd week of July found 69% saying the country is on the wrong track, essentially the same number as found by the NBC/WSJ survey a month earlier that reported 68% saying we are on the wrong track.

And, in a special survey of 17-19 year olds taken by CBS/NYT in mid-June, 70% said the country is off on the wrong track, while 26% said it is going in the right direction.

87% of African-Americans are dissatisfied with the way things are going in the country. This compares with 68% of Hispanics and non-Hispanic whites who share that view. [Gallup 6/07]

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The unemployment rate in June was steady at 4.5%. [WP7/7/07]

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There seems to be a slight up-tick in Americans' attitudes toward the economy. However, they are less optimistic than they were in January of this year. Gallup combines data on how folks rate current economic conditions with whether they think the economy is getting better or worse:

	<u>Positive</u>	<u>Negative</u>	<u>Mixed</u>
July 2007	25%	49%	22%
June 2007	20	60	--
January 2007	34	38	--

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Here are the top priorities for the President and Congress that Americans identified in June. They are compared to the selection of priorities in April. Note the movement of immigration, probably driven in part by the immigration debate and the public responses during that debate. [Gallup April, June 2007]

	June	April
Situation in Iraq/war	63%	66%
Immigration	29	14
Healthcare issues	23	20
Economy in general	10	14
Fuel/oil prices etc	7	7
Education	6	4
Social Security	3	3
Poverty	3	-
Federal budget/deficit	3	3
Environment/pollution	3	5
Terrorism	3	4
National security	3	4

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While the immigration debate in Washington seems to have generated a lot of public interest - 60% are following it at least somewhat closely - it has not generated more interest than other news events tracked by Gallup over the last decade. There is also little difference in the attention being paid based on the political Party preference of the respondent.

25% of Americans say that dealing with the illegal immigrants already in the country should be the highest priority, while 20% say the priority should be cutting off the flow of new illegal immigrants. 53% say that both matters should be treated equally.

There is also a slight bias toward passing new laws (50%) over enforcing current laws more strictly (46%).

[Gallup June, July 2007]

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The number of Americans reporting that they had difficulty paying for healthcare costs over the last year has slightly more than doubled in the last 30 years.

32% report having trouble paying for healthcare in the last year, as compared to 15% in 1976. Hispanics (45%) and blacks (43%) report significantly more troubles in this area than whites (25%).

Workers' contributions toward family healthcare reached \$2,973 in 2006, an increase of 84% since 2000. [Gallup June, 2007; Kaiser Family Foundation]

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By 52% to 28%, Americans believe that global terrorism is a greater long-term threat than "the effects of climate change and global warming." [Fox News poll 6/6/07]

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41% are highly concerned about the issue of global warming. This is an increase of 15 points since 2003, but it simply brings concern back to where it was in 2000. But the level of concern has a political overtone. 85% of Democrats and leaners worry a "great deal" about global warming, but only 46% of Republicans and leaners share that sentiment. The number of people who feel they understand the issue of global warming very well or fairly well, has reached an all-time high of 76%. [Gallup 3/07 and earlier]

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Americans believe that protection of the environment (58%) is more important than increasing production of energy supplies (34%), and they are more likely to prefer conservation of current energy supplies (64%) than increasing production (26%). [Gallup 3/07] Whether their choices are realistic remains to be seen.

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65% of Democrats believe that restrictions on stem cell research using Federal funds should be eased. This is a sentiment that is shared by only 45% of Republicans. Independents fall in the middle, at 61%. [Gallup 6/07]

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Overall, 56% of us say that religion is very important in our lives. This includes 66% of Republicans, 57% of Democrats, and 48% of Independents. [Gallup - analysis of surveys over last 5 years]

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What is your view of the Bible? 47% of us believe it is the "inspired word of God." 31% of us believe it is the "actual word of God to be taken literally." (25 years ago, 38% held this view.) 19% believe the Bible is a group of "ancient fables, history and legends recorded by man."

The more formal education that a person acquires, the more likely he/she is to see the Bible as "inspired by God," and less likely to see it as "the word of God." [Gallup average of polls in May of 2005, 06 and 07]

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The other day, WW leaned from the 6 people under 30 working in the office, none of whom live together, that none of them have landline telephones in their apartments.

It turns out that

- * 25% of those in the U.S. between the ages of 18 and 24 do not have landlines.
- * 29% of 25-29 year olds are cellphone-only users.
- * Males are slightly more likely than females to only have cell-phones. [AP and CDC 2007]

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Not only are young people eschewing landlines, they are also shying away from newspapers. Only 9% of teenagers read a newspaper every day. This compares to a slightly larger percentage of 18-30 year olds (16%), and 35% of those over 30 years of age. [Shorenstein Center/J.F.K School of Government]

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Over the last 5 years, the number of us who say that the state of moral values in this country is "poor" has reached a high of 44%, with 82% of Americans thinking moral values are getting worse. [Gallup May 2007]

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The number of people who think doctor-assisted suicide is morally acceptable is the same today as it was in 2001. 49% find it acceptable, while 44% find it to be morally wrong.

However, 56% of Americans believe that a doctor should be allowed to help a patient commit suicide, if the patient requests it, and 71% believe that a doctor should be allowed to painlessly end the life of a person with an incurable disease, if the patient and his/her family request it. [Gallup May 2007]

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We are getting older. As of 2006, the median age of people living in the United States is 36.4 years, up from 35.3 years in 2000. The "oldest" state is Maine, with a median age of 41.3 years, and the "youngest" state is California at 34.4 years.

Between 2000 and 2006 the population of the United States grew by 6.4%. During that same period the number of Hispanics grew by 25.5%.

Nevada, with a growth in population of 25%, had the largest increase in the period. In second place was Arizona, with a growth rate of 20%. The States which lost the greatest percentage of their population were Louisiana, at a -4%, and North Dakota, which lost 1% of its population. [Census Bureau estimates]

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Americans now believe that significant fatness - obesity - is as harmful to a person's health as smoking. 83% view obesity as "very harmful" and 79% have the same view about smoking.

28% say that obesity has been a cause of serious health problems in their family. 74% are sympathetic to those who suffer from severe fatness, as compared to 58% who have that view toward smokers. By some margin, men (25%) tend to be less sympathetic than women (17%) toward those who struggle with obesity.

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17-29 year olds: How they think about various issues

NYT/CBS/MTV joined together for a special survey of 17-29 year olds in mid-June 2007. Here are some of their beliefs about the role of government:

- 62% think it is very important that government policies promote job training and job opportunities for younger workers
- 60% say it is very important for the government to have policies that provide insurance coverage to folks that do not have it.
- 37% believe that abortion should be generally available; 38% say available, but under strict limits; and 24% say it should not be permitted. This is almost identical to the positions taken by all adults.
- 55% think the healthcare system in the country requires fundamental changes
- 62% favor a government-administered, single-payer system

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PRESIDENT BUSH

President Bush can not buy a break. An initiative in which he invested a lot of capital, immigration legislation, may well now be off the table until 2009. His Administration, including many on his current or former White House staff, are being investigated by a variety of Congressional Committees. He is in the middle of a major confrontation with the Senate and House Judiciary Committees on certain claims of Executive privilege.

The last time President Bush had an approval rating of over 40% in a major public survey was 12/11/06, when the LATimes/Bloomberg poll had his approval at 40% and his disapproval at 56%. In the most recent LATimes/Bloomberg survey, taken in early June, his approval rating was 34%.

In 6 surveys taken between July 7th and July 18th, the President had an average approval rating of 32% and a disapproval rating of 63%. [Real Clear Politics]

Compared to the low points of other 2-term Presidents in the last 50 years, at this point in their Administrations, Bush continues to reside in the cellar.

	Approve	Disapprove
Bill Clinton	64%	31%
Dwight Eisenhower	61	26
Ronald Reagan	49	43
Lyndon Johnson	47	39
George H.W. Bush	31	63

In the 2nd week of June, the NBC/WSJ found that only 32% of Americans felt even somewhat favorable toward the President. More recently, in a mid-July Gallup survey, 37% gave the President a favorable nod.

There has been little or no improvement in the ratings of his job performance on specific issues, such as Iraq, immigration, the economy, and the campaign against terrorism.

64% of Americans believed that the President should not veto the stem cell research bill, but he did anyway. [Gallup 6/07]

To date, Bush has only issued 3 vetoes. This is far fewer than any modern President, but he still has 18 months to go.

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The Vice President

Vice President Cheney marches to his own drummer. He clearly takes positions and speaks out with absolutely no concern about how the media, most of the public, or even the Congress may react.

Could it have anything to do with the fact that he is the only Vice President, at least going back to 1952, who did not have the potential for or any expectation that he might run for President in his own right?

Only 30% approve of the job that Cheney is doing, and the same number have a favorable opinion of him. These are both low points for Cheney. At his high point, in early 2002, 68% approved of the job he was doing, and 67% felt favorably toward him. [Gallup 1/02, 7/07]

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THE 2008 PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN

The Field: And Then There Were...

19 Republicans, 17 Democrats, and 1 Green Party candidate have made some kind of noise or another about running for President in 2008. In addition, there is at least one potential Independent candidate, Michael Bloomberg, who, while he has not suggested he might run, his folks have made noises in that direction.

Among the Republicans (19)

- 10 filed campaign committees
 - 1 has since quit the race
- 4 got out of the game before starting
- 1 suggested she will start campaign in September
- 3 have said "wait and see"
- 1 has said nothing

Among the Democrats (17)

- 9 filed campaign committees
 - 1 has since quit the race
- 5 got out of the game before starting
- 3 have said "wait and see"

The potential Green Party candidate has said "wait and see." The most talked about possible Independent candidate is simply keeping open his option. So far he has made no Shermanesque statements.

For a complete list see Addendum 1.

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Days to Go

Ames Iowa Republican Straw Poll - 17
Iowa Caucuses - 172
New Hampshire Primary - 180
February 5, 2008 - 194
General Election Day - 468
Inauguration Day 2009 - 545

[NBC-First Read]

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Qualities we want in our Candidates

In the June NBC/WSJ survey, Republicans, or respondents who said they would vote in the Republican primary (as Republicans), and Democrats, or respondents who said they would vote in the Democratic primary (as Democrats), were asked which 1 or 2 of a list of qualities they want in the nominees for President.

The two groups had different priorities. Republicans put at the top of their list "Being knowledgeable and experienced enough to handle the Presidency." Democrats selected as their #1 "Bringing real change to the direction of the country."

The following are the priorities selected by the two groups. How do the scores for Americans generally match your own judgements?

Qualities which Americans want in the nominees for President (1)

Democrats and Republicans have different priorities for the qualities they want in the next nominee for President.

	Dem	GOP
Bringing real change to the direction of the country	<u>50</u>	24
Being knowledgeable and experienced enough to handle the presidency	39	<u>55</u>
Having a vision for the country's future	25	33
Sharing your positions on the issues	12	20
Being inspirational and an exciting choice for president	6	5
Having the best chance to win the presidency	5	7
Non/other (VOL)	2	X
Not sure	1	1

Each group of respondents was then asked to rate the 3 candidates of their Party who were leading in the national primary polls at that time, on a scale of 5 to 1, with 5 = Very Good and 1 = Very Poor. The results below combine the 5 and 4 responses for each candidate.

	Democrats 5+ 4	Clinton	Obama	Edwards
50	Change in direction	<u>61</u>	56	42
39	Knowledge and experience	<u>71</u>	30	50
25	Vision for future	<u>62</u>	58	52
12	Share positions on issues	<u>54</u>	49	43
6	Inspirational and exciting	50	<u>65</u>	38
5	Best chances to win	X	X	X

	Republicans 5 + 4	Giuliani	McCain	Romney (2)
55	Knowledge and experience	60	<u>62</u>	30
33	Vision for future	<u>56</u>	48	31
24	Change in direction	<u>38</u>	31	27
20	Share positions on issues	<u>36</u>	31	29
5	Inspirational and exciting	<u>51</u>	27	29
7	Best chances to win	X	X	X

(1) Respondents were asked to rate these priorities on a scale 5 to 1.

5= very good

1= very poor

Numbers for candidates = combination of 5 + 4

(2) Roughly 25% were not able to rate Romney

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86% of Americans are at least somewhat comfortable with the idea of an African-American President. 79% have the same view about a woman in that role, 74% would be comfortable with an Hispanic, 63% with a Mormon, and 81% with a person who is Jewish. [WP/ABC 7/07]

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The Primaries

Not much has changed in the Democratic field. Clinton, Obama and Edwards still lead the pack. 83% of Democrats, including leaners, are satisfied with the field.

But there has been substantial change in the Republican field. McCain has faded, and Fred Thompson, who has yet to declare his candidacy, is running 2nd in some surveys. 65%, including leaners, are satisfied with the field.

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The Democratic Primaries

Just to add a little perspective or a topic for chatter around the water cooler...

Do you recall who was leading in the Democratic primary in 1999 about this time? Do you recall who was leading in the Democratic primary at this time in 2003?

WW asked at least 30 savvy, political junkies one or both of these questions over a several week period. (Pollsters were not included in the respondent group.)

One person answered the 1999 question correctly. 2 people answered the 2003 question correctly, one of whom worked for the person who was leading in the polls at that time.

Gallop National Surveys

	<u>Aug, 91</u>	<u>Oct, 91</u>	<u>Early Jan, 92</u>	<u>Late Jan, 92</u>	<u>Mid Feb, 92</u>
Clinton	11	6	17	42	41
Tsongas	7	4	6	9	31
Kerrey	X	8	11	10	6
Harkin	6	7	9	9	5
Brown	18	15	21	16	7
Wilder	8	9	9	X	X
Cuomo	30	33	X	X	X

Harkin won Iowa and Clinton finished second to Tsongas in New Hampshire

(Iowa caucuses were February 10, 1992, and the New Hampshire primary was February 18, 1992.)

	<u>June, 03</u>	<u>Sept, 03</u>	<u>Dec, 03</u>	<u>Jan, 04</u>	<u>Mid Feb, 04</u>
Lieberman	21	13	10	10	X
Kerry	16	12	7	11	65
Daschle	16	X	X	X	X
Edwards	7	5	7	9	19
Gephardt	14	16	14	9	X
Dean	5	14	25	24	8
Sharpton	3	2	3	2	X
Clark	7	10	17	20	X
Graham	4	4	X	X	X
Mosely Braun	3	5	5	3	X

* Kerry won Iowa and New Hampshire

(Iowa caucuses were January 19, 2004, and the New Hampshire primary was January 27, 2004.)

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Hillary Clinton continues to lead the Democratic primary field on a national basis.

In a WP/ABC survey concluded on 7/21, Clinton leads the field with 45% to Obama's 30% and Edwards' 12%.

In a 6-survey average of polls taken from July 9-18: Clinton 36.5, Obama 24.3, Gore 13.3, and Edwards 11.5. (Numerous surveys continue to include Gore, even though he has made no move to enter the race.)

In a July 6-8 survey, Gallup showed results with Gore in and Gore out. Clinton leads by 16 points in either scenario.

	<u>With Gore</u>	<u>Without Gore</u>
Clinton	37	42
Obama	21	26
Gore	16	--
Edwards	13	16
Biden	3	4
Richardson	2	4

In 10 Gallup surveys since February 9th, Clinton's average lead over Obama is 15.4 points, including one wacky survey in which she was only ahead by 1 point.

The Clinton story is also pretty good on a State-by-State basis, but not quite so strong as her national position.

The following are averages of 2 or more polls taken during the referenced periods. Clinton has the lead in 7 of the 8 States listed. It will be interesting to see whether the 4th of July swing by Hillary and the former President made a difference.

<u>State</u>	<u>Dates</u>	<u>Clinton</u>	<u>Obama</u>	<u>Edwards</u>	<u>Richardson</u>
Iowa	6/13-30	24.7	17.3	25.3	7.3
NH	6/27-7/17	33	23.5	9.8	8.3
SC	6/13-7/18	33.7	26.7	16.3	--
Nev	6/15-22	39.5	16.5	14.0	6.5
Fla	6/6-7/15	40	24	12.8	--
Calif	6/18-7/1	43	19.5	14.5	--
NJ	6/26-7/15	41.5	17.5	8.0	
Mich	5/4-7/8	35	25	15.0	

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The Republican Primaries

The Republican field has experienced some pretty dramatic changes in recent months.

John McCain's campaign has faltered badly and so has his standing among Republican voters. In December he had the support of 28% of Republicans in the Gallup survey, tied with Giuliani for the lead. Now he is at 16%.

Fred Thompson, who has yet to officially announce (not until September), is now clearly in 2nd place. Given how well he is doing without being an active candidate, some might argue he should stay out as long as possible.

Giuliani continues to lead the Republican field with 37%, followed by McCain (16%), Fred Thompson (15%), and Romney (8%).

In a 6-survey average of polls taken from July 9-18: Giuliani 25, Thompson 20, McCain 13.5, and Romney 10. As with Gore on the Democratic lists, some surveys include Newt Gingrich, even though he has said he will not make a decision until the Fall.

It is unlikely that Gingrich will become a candidate, especially since he has the highest unfavorable rating among Republicans of any of the top candidates, at 32%.

Giuliani's position in the various State races is not as strong as Clinton's.

The following are averages of 2 or more polls taken during the referenced periods. Giuliani has the lead in 4 of the 8 States listed, and is tied in the 5th. Romney leads in the other 3 States.

<u>State</u>	<u>Dates</u>	<u>Giuliani</u>	<u>Thompson</u>	<u>McCain</u>	<u>Romney</u>
Iowa	6/13-30	15.7	16.0	9.7	24.3
NH	6/27-7/17	18.8	12.8	16.5	28.5
SC	6/13-7/18	23.7	20.3	16.7	7.7
Nev	6/15-22	19.0	21.0	10.5	22.0
Fla	6/6-7/15	30.5	23.3	10.8	10.8
Calif	6/18-7/1	28.5	17.5	16.5	7.0
NJ	6/26-7/15	47.0	12.0	10.5	6.0
Mich	5/4-7/8	19.5	11.0	18.0	19.5

Republicans and Republican-leaning Independents who support Giuliani tend to be somewhat less conservative than the average Republican voters, especially on social issues. But even at that, they are pretty conservative. Yet 74% of this group say that Giuliani is an acceptable nominee for the Republican party. He stands above Thompson (59%), McCain (57%), Romney (53%). [Gallup July 2007]

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In 2 mid-July surveys Fred Thompson's favorables are stronger than his unfavorable, but more than half the folks interviewed had not heard of him or, if they had heard of him, don't know enough to have an opinion.

In the CBS/NYT survey of July 9-17, 17% view him favorably and 11% unfavorably. 52% had not heard of him and another 20% were undecided.

Gallup's July 12-15 survey found him to have favorables of 28%; unfavorables of 18%; 37% who had never heard of him; and 17% who had heard of him, but were not sure about rating him.

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The Money Primary

Barack Obama is the clear winner of the 2nd "election" of the money primary, which ended on June 30th. Obama raised more money in total, more money for the primary, had more net cash on hand, and had far more contributors than anyone else in either Party. The one area in which he failed to lead was in spending; he came in 2nd.

Obama raised \$32,907,000, of which \$31,200,000 can be used in the primaries. He had \$32,700,000 net cash available and has a total of 258,000 contributors. He spent \$16,700,000.

Clinton finished 2nd, having raised \$27,000,000, of which \$21,364,000 can be used in the primaries. She had \$29,600,000 net cash available and spent \$13,671,000 in the quarter. The total number of her contributors was not readily available.

Giuliani was 3rd in this race, having raised \$17,470,000, of which \$13,760,000 can be spent on the primaries. He had \$14,600,000 net cash available and spent \$10,900,000 in the 2nd quarter.

Romney brought in \$14,000,000, all of which can be used in the primaries, to finish 4th. In addition, he lent his campaign an additional \$6,500,000. This results in his having \$12,000,000 in net cash available. He was the clear spending leader, having shelled out \$18,200,000 this quarter.

The 1st half year and the 2nd quarter in general has proved to be a disaster for McCain. He raised \$11,470,000, of which \$9,965,000 can be spent on the primaries. However, he spent \$12,200,000, and finished the quarter with net cash available of \$166,000 (this is not an error).

John Edwards is running behind in the fundraising chase, but he is also spending money more carefully than most of the others. He took in \$9,030,000, of which \$7,730,000 can be used in the primaries. He spent about \$6,400,000, leaving himself with net cash available of a very respectable \$12,000,000.

Of the remaining Democratic candidates, Dodd had about \$5,000,000 net cash available, Richards \$7,000,000, and Biden \$1,900,000. Biden will likely have the most difficulty raising additional money, and it is likely that his campaign will literally run out of gas by Thanksgiving. Dodd and Richardson will have sufficient funds to arrive at the caucus/primary season still standing.

Kucinich had just over \$200,000 net cash available at the end of the quarter. He can't go on for too long with that "war chest," but he will be able to afford to attend the debates as long as he is included.

Full details of fundraising to date can be found at Addendum 2. Candidates who have raised less than \$1,000,000 since the outset of the campaign are not included in the chart.

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The Maxed-Out Givers Derby

More than half of the total Presidential campaign primary funds raised by the 3 leading candidates in each Party comes from so-called "maxed-out givers." These are contributors who have contributed the legal maximum to the campaign - \$2,300. (Fred Thompson is not included because he has yet to file a committee with the Federal Election Commission.)

Here are the percentages, as calculated by the Washington Post from Federal Election Commission records.

Hillary Clinton	70%
Rudy Giuliani	67%
Mitt Romney	58%
Barack Obama	53%
John Edwards	51%
John McCain	50%

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Fred Thompson has been raising money and putting together a staff, but he does not intend to announce his candidacy or apparently to file a committee with the Federal Election Commission until September. Even before his announcement there has been a shakeup at the top of his campaign.

While there is some disagreement among campaign finance lawyers as to whether it is necessary, Thompson's "testing the waters committee" plans to file with the IRS on July 31st. This will cover income and expenses through June 30th. Since the bulk of his fundraising has come after July 1st, this report will not tell us much.

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The General Election

15 months to the general election, and while the general preference seems to favor whomever might be the Democratic candidate - 47% to 32% - the numbers in head-to-head races do not reflect it.
[CBS/NYT 7/07]

Fox News/Opinion Dynamics 7/17-18/7

<u>Republicans</u>		<u>Democrats</u>	
Giuliani	41%	Clinton	46%
Giuliani	41%	Obama	45%
McCain	42%	Clinton	45%
McCain	37%	Obama	47%
Thompson	38%	Clinton	47%
Thompson	32%	Obama	48%
Romney	35%	Clinton	50%

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A Gallup survey, 7/12-15/07, shows an equally tight race with the exception that the Obama/Thompson race stands out without Obama having an 11 point lead over Thompson.

<u>Democrats</u>		<u>Republicans</u>	
Giuliani	49%	Clinton	46%
Giuliani	49%	Obama	45%
Thompson	45%	Clinton	48%
Thompson	40%	Obama	51%

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The Marriage Gap

In the last 3 Presidential elections, married voters have given greater support to the Republican candidate, and unmarried voters have given greater support to the Democratic candidate.

In recent polls married voters have generally rated Republican candidates more favorably than unmarried voters. However, at least two of the leading Democratic candidates, Obama and Edwards, do better with married voters than has been typical for Democratic candidates.

The following are the favorable ratings of leading Democratic and Republican candidates.

	<u>All</u>	<u>Married</u>	<u>Unmarried</u>
Giuliani	59	64	53
Obama	53	53	53
Edwards	51	49	52
McCain	50	56	43
Clinton	48	42	56
Thompson	26	30	22
Romney	25	30	19

Among the subgroups of married men, married women, unmarried men, and unmarried women - married men are the most consistently positive about the Republican candidates, and unmarried women are the most positive about the Democrats. [Gallup April-June, 2007]

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17-29 year olds - How they look at the 2008 Presidential race

Here is how that group, all of whom will be eligible to vote in the 2008 Presidential election, see the race and the candidates.

- 58% are paying some or a lot of attention to the race (compares to 66% among all adults)
- 77% say that people of their generation will have a lot of influence in deciding the winner
- If the election were held at the time of the survey, 54% would probably vote for the Democratic candidate, 32% for the Republican. (Among all adults it is 49% to 33%)

- They were asked if there is any candidate running about whom they feel enthusiastic

- Obama 18%
- Clinton 17%
- Giuliani 4%
- Romney & Fred Thompson - 2% each
- Brownback, Edwards, McCain, Paul - 1% each

- * They were asked whether their opinion was favorable or unfavorable about a number of candidates

	<u>Favorable</u>	<u>Unfavorable</u>	<u>Not heard enough/Und</u>
Clinton	41%	43%	21%
Obama	41	19	39
Giuliani	32	19	49
Edwards	24	24	51
McCain	20	26	53
Romney	7	17	75
F.Thompson	10	8	82

- * 77% believe the best age for a President is 40s/50s
 - all adults - 61% - 50s/60s
- * 59% do not think people will vote for a Mormon for President
- * 66% say voters would support a candidate who is black
- * 59% say voters would support a candidate who is a woman
- * Of the 77% who say they plan to be registered for the 2008 election, 45% plan to participate in the Democratic primary, while 25% plan to engage in the Republican primary

* * * * *

A Bloomberg Candidacy?

Will he or won't he? That seems to be the multi-billion dollar question. Will Mike Bloomberg, successful businessman, philanthropist, and currently serving as 2nd term Mayor of New York City, decide to run for President as an Independent?

On one of his recent shows, George Stephanopoulos reported on a conversation with an aide to the New York Mayor. The aide said there is a 4-part test that Bloomberg will use next February, to decide whether to enter the race, after it is clear who the Democrats and Republicans will pick as their nominees.

- 1) 70% of Americans think the country is headed in the wrong direction
- 2) Both candidates have unfavorable ratings in the 40s
- 3) 60% of the country is open to a 3rd party
- 4) 20-25% Americans are open to Mike Bloomberg

Recently, Bloomberg, who had been a registered Democrat and became a registered Republican in order to run as a Republican for Mayor, changed his registration once again, and is now an Independent. There is some suggestion that the move was made because it is difficult to get on some State ballots as an Independent if you are registered as a member of a Party in another State.

Certainly, the Bloomberg "team" has done the research necessary to know what it takes to get on the ballot as an Independent.

There are several things that will work for Bloomberg if he decides to enter the race.

He can self-fund without giving it a second thought. He has twice won election to the top office in an essentially Democratic-controlled city. He has proved in New York that he will move ahead with solutions to problems whether or not those solutions are politically popular at the outset. He brings top notch, if somewhat unconventional, folks into government. If he loses, he already knows what he wants to do next.

And finally, the positive rating of the Democratic Party is 32%, down from its most recent high of 50% in January 2000. And the positive rating of the Republican Party is at 28%, down from its recent December 2001 high of 57%.

* * * * *

A Pew Research Center study found that 65% of Americans had heard of Bloomberg, more at that time than could identify Romney, Biden, Fred Thompson, Richardson, Dodd, or a number of others. On the other hand, 99% could identify Clinton, 90% Giuliani, 89% McCain, 87% Edwards, and 85% Obama.

Of registered voters who had heard of each candidate only 9% said there was a good chance they would vote for Bloomberg (31% said there was a good or at least some chance they would vote for him).

- 28% good chance they would vote for Clinton
(53% good/some chance)
- 27% good chance they would vote for Obama
(60% good/some chance)
- 22% good chance they would vote for Giuliani
(55% good/some chance)
- 21% good chance they would vote for Fred Thompson
(47% good/some chance)
- 16% good chance they would vote for McCain
(53% good/some chance)
- 16% good chance they would vote for Edwards
(51% good/some chance)
- 14% good chance would vote for Romney
(40% good/some chance)

52% of Independents and Republicans and 63% of Democrats said there was no chance they would vote for Bloomberg. [6/1/07]

* * * * *

In another survey taken by the Washington Post/the Kaiser Foundation and Harvard (during the full month of May), 77% of Independents said they would seriously consider an Independent Presidential candidate, and a majority of that group said they would consider voting for Bloomberg.

* * * * *

In a 3-way race, the July 8th USAToday/Gallup survey showed Clinton leading with 43%, followed by Giuliani at 38%, and Bloomberg at 12%.

Two national, general election surveys were taken between 6/20-24/07 by CNN and Newsweek. Averaging those two surveys in a head-to-head race, Clinton leads Giuliani by 50%-46%. In a 3-way contest that includes Bloomberg, the result is Clinton 43.5%, Giuliani 37.5%, Bloomberg 14%.

In a Quinnipiac University poll taken in early July, Giuliani leads Clinton in a head-to-head contest 47%-44%. However, if Bloomberg enters the race, he takes 18% in a 3-way race, and Giuliani and Clinton are tied at 36%.

* * * * *

One added incentive is the fact that a majority of Americans (58%) think that the two main political Parties do such a poor job that a third major Party is needed. [USAToday/Gallup 7/07]

* * * * *

To take a look at the landscape for an Independent candidate WW did the following:

- * created, State by State, an average % for the Democratic and Republican Presidential candidates in 2000 and 2004
- * placed the 50 States and D.C. into 4 groupings
 - States won by either party by
 - 20 points or more - 135 electoral votes
 - includes New York's 31 electoral votes
 - 15-19 points - 51 electoral votes
 - 10-14 points - 139 electoral votes
 - 0-9 points - 213 electoral votes

Keep in mind that to win a State does not require a majority of the votes or even a near majority. Acquiring the electoral votes for a given state (other than Maine and Nebraska) only requires that a candidate get 1 more vote than any other candidate. A candidate getting 34% of the vote, wins if no other candidate reaches that number.

It seems all but impossible for an Independent candidate to win in a State that was won by the Democratic or Republican Presidential candidates by 20 points or more. [135 votes]

It seems very unlikely that an Independent candidate would come through in States that were won by one Democratic or Republican Presidential candidate or another by 15-19 points. [51 votes]

That leaves 352 electoral votes in States in which the Democratic or Republican Presidential candidates won by an average of 14% points or less. It is from this group of States that an Independent

candidate must find the 270 votes he/she needs to be elected. [Of that 352 votes, 139 votes are in States which were won by 10-14 points by one Party or the other.]

While it is the case that the minimum number of States required to win the election in the electoral college is 11 (California, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Michigan, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Texas), 3 of those States are probably off the table.

For details about each State and the 4 groupings see Addendum 3.

* * * * *

THE CONGRESS

In a June surveys, 53% of potential voters said they would vote for the Democratic candidate for Congress and 41% for the Republican candidate. Further, 48% indicated that it was time to elect a new person as opposed to 41% who would stick with the incumbent.[CNN/ORC 6/07;NBC/WSJ 6/07]

Earlier in July, Americans were asked their opinion of the two largest political parties. Republicans were rated favorably by 38% and unfavorably by 56%. Democrats on the other hand were rated favorably by 52% and unfavorably by 41%. [CBS/NYT 7/07] Both parties have roughly the same ratings as they did last October before the Democrats took over the House and Senate.

The job performance approval rating of the Congress and of each of the parties members of the Congress are nothing special.

	Approve	Disapprove
Congress	25%	61%
Republicans	34%	64%
Democrats	46%	51%

To provide some frame of reference here are the same ratings from early October, 2006.

	Approve	Disapprove
Congress	31%	65%
Republicans	35%	63%
Democrats	48%	50%

[WP/ABC 7/07;10/06]

* * * * *

U.S. House of Representatives

Currently the Democrats control the House with a 231 to 202 margin. There are currently 2 vacancies (2D) with special elections pending. These seats are not likely to change in terms of party.

There are so far 3 open Democratic seats come the 2008 election. All three are likely to remain in Democratic hands. There is 1 open Republican seat at the end of the term and it is likely to stay Republican.

There are a variety of potentially open seats with most of them currently being held by Republicans. However, many of those potentially open seats will not be open once decisions are made about which of the current House members are going to run for the Senate.

* * * * *

U.S. Senate

There has been little change in the Senate environment during the last couple of months.

Mary Landrieu (D-LA) appears to be in better shape.

There is still the possibility that Mike Huckabee (R) will drop his presidential bid and decide to take on Mark Prior (D-AR).

Everyone is waiting the return to the Senate of Tom Johnson (D-SD). The latest information is that he will return after the August recess.

In New Hampshire, folks continue to try and get Jeanne Shaheen to take on John Sununu (R-NH). So far she has repulsed all entreaties.

John Warner (R-VA) is expected to announce shortly after Labor Day whether he will be a candidate for re-election. If he chooses not to run this is a potential pickup for the Democrats.

And, it remains to be seen whether Pete Dominici (R-NM) may be vulnerable.

* * * * *

THE U.S. SENATE

Democrats	49
Republicans	49
Independents	2(caucus Dem)

Here is how the 33 Senate elections (12 Democratic incumbents, 21 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)

Safe <u>Democratic(7)</u>	Leaning <u>Democratic(5)</u>	<u>Toss-Up(1)</u>	Leaning <u>Republican(5)</u>	Safe <u>Republican(15)</u>
Delaware	Arkansas	<u>Colorado</u>	Maine	Alabama
Illinois	Iowa		Minnesota	Alaska
Massachusetts	Louisiana		New Hampshire	Georgia
Michigan	Montana		North Carolina	Idaho
New Jersey	South Dakota		Oklahoma	Kansas
Rhode Island				Kentucky
West Virginia				Mississippi
				Nebraska
				New Mexico
				Oregon
				South Carolina
				Tennessee
				Texas
				Virginia
				Wyoming

	<u>Democrats</u>	<u>Republicans</u>	<u>Ind</u>
Seats not up in 2006	37	28	2
Safe in 2006	7	15	0
Leaning in 2006	5	5	0
Total	49	48	2
Toss-ups	1 (1R)		

* * * * *

WISDOM FROM SAUL TURTELTAUB

Old is when you can't remember your wife's married name. Really old is when you can't remember where you parked your car and you're still in it.

* * * * *

THIS AND THAT

"Agreement on politics" is least important on a list of 9 items associated with successful marriages. Only 12% think it is important.

Topping the list is "faithfulness," which 93% say is important. Moving up on the list, with the largest jump since 1990, is "sharing household chores," which now ranks 3rd, with 62% listing it. It has jumped 15 points since 1990. [Pew Research Center]

* * * * *

A large majority of Americans think that people spend too much money on their weddings. And most of them don't know the half of it. When asked how much the average American wedding costs, the mean answer was \$13,609. In fact, the average wedding costs \$27,490.

And how much should you be spending on a wedding gift for a friend or relative? The average of the responses was \$110, with men tending to be about 1.6 times more generous than women. [Gallup 5/07; "Wedding Report," an industry publication]

* * * * *

One Hundred Years Ago

- Most women washed their hair only once a month, and used borax or egg yolks for shampoo.
- The five leading causes of death in the U.S. were
 - Pneumonia and influenza
 - Tuberculosis
 - Diarrhea
 - Heart disease
 - Stroke
- The average U.S. worker made between \$200 and \$400 per year. A competent accountant could expect to earn \$2,000 per year; a dentist \$2,500 per year; a veterinarian between \$1,500 and \$4,000 per year; and a mechanical engineer about \$5,000 per year.
- Marijuana, heroin, and morphine were all available, over the counter, at the local corner drugstore!
- Crossword puzzles, canned beer, and iced tea hadn't been invented yet.
- Only 6% of all Americans had graduated from high school.

Mike

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ADDENDUM 1

CANDIDATES FOR PRESIDENT

<u>Name</u>	<u>Talks About Running</u>	<u>Set up Explore Committee</u>	<u>Announces Presidential Bid</u>	<u>Out of the game</u>
<u>Republican</u>				
Brownback	X	12/4/06	12/20/07	
Cox	X			
Gingrich	X	(wait and see)		
Giuliani	X	11/20/06		
Hagel	X	(wait and see)		
Huckabee	X	1/27/07	1/28/07	
Hunter	X	1/12/01	1/25/07	
McCain	X	11/15/06	11/15/06	
Pataki	X	(wait and see)		
Paul	X	1/11/07	3/12/07	
Tancredo	X	1/16/07	4/2/07	
Romney	X	1/3/07	1/3/07	
Thompson, F	[Announcement expected in Sept]			
Thompson, T	X	12/15/06	4/4/07	
		* * * * *	* * * *	
Allen	X	----	----	No start
Frist	X	----	----	11/29/07
Gilmore	X	1/9/07	1/9/07	7/14/07
Keating	X	----	----	1/18/07
Santorum	X	----	----	No start
<u>Independent</u>				
Bloomberg	X			
<u>Green Party</u>				
Nader	X			
<u>Democrat</u>				
Biden	X	----	1/7/07	
Clark	X	(wait and see)		
Clinton	X	1/20/07	1/22/07	
Dodd	X	----	1/10/07	
Edwards	X		1/3/07	
Gore	X	(wait and see)		
Gravel	X	----	4/4/06	
Kucinich	X	----	12/29/06	
Obama	X	1/16/07	2/10/07	
Richardson	X	1/22/07	1/22/07	
Sharpton	X	(wait and see)		
		* * * * *	* * * *	
Daschle	X	----	----	No start
Bayh	X	12/3/06	----	12/16/06
Feingold	X	----	----	11/12/06
Kerry	X			1/24/07
Vilsack	X	----	11/9/06	2/23/07
Warner	X	----	----	10/12/06

ADDENDUM 2

Primary 2007-2008

Candidate	Contributions received 2nd Quarter 2007	Total Contributions to Date	Net Cash Available (3)	Total Spent (4)
DEMOCRATIC				
Clinton	27,018,000	63,100,000 (2)	29,600,000 (5)	20,314,000
Obama	32,907,000	58,610,000	32,731,000 (5)	23,446,000
Edwards	9,030,000	23,059,000	12,044,000 (5)	9,681,000
Dodd	3,255,000	12,037,000 (2)	4,978,000	5,688,000
Richardson	7,016,000	13,263,000	6,916,000	6,238,000
Biden	2,357,000	6,367,000 (2)	1,868,000	3,677,000
Kucinich	757,000	1,117,000	213,000	902,000
REPUBLICAN				
Romney	14,061,000	43,894,000 (2)	12,027,000	31,890,000
Giuliani	17,470,000 (1)	35,498,000 (2)	14,626,000 (5)	17,060,000
McCain	11,265,000 (1)	25,997,000 (2)	166,000 (5)	23,605,000
Brownback	1,420,000	3,311,000	460,000	2,802,000
Tancredo	1,466,000	2,807,000	598,000	2,095,000
Huckabee	764,000	1,308,000	406,000	873,583

(5) General Election Contributions - Deducted to arrive at net cash

Clinton-	\$12,600,000	Richardson-	\$153,000
Obama-	\$2,610,000	Biden-	\$904,000
Edwards-	\$1,300,000	McCain-	\$1,300,000
Dodd-	\$1,400,000	Giuliani-	\$3,700,000

(4) Total spent= operation expenditures + operation debt (Romney loan to comapign not treated as debt for this purpose)

(3) Net Cash= cash on hand - debts owed by committee - general election contributions that are escrowed (based on newspaper reports)

(2) Includes- transfers from previous Senate or House committes and loans

Clinton-	\$10,000,000	Biden-	\$1,900,000
Dodd-	\$4,739,000	Brownback-	\$575,000
Giuliani-	\$1,950,000	Tancredo-	\$70,000
McCain-	\$1,050,000		

Loans guaranteed by candidate

Romney- \$8,850,000

(1) Includes contributions received before 1/1/07

Giuliani- \$1,307,000- rasied in 2006

McCain- \$660,000- raised in 2006

ADDENDUM 3

The Electoral College and States in Play

Presidential Election 2000-2004 Average Margin

State	Electoral Votes	Average		Republicans	Democrats
		Bush	Gore/Kerry		
AL	9	59%	39%	+20	
AK	3	60%	32%	+28	
AZ	10	53%	45%	+8	
AR	6	53%	45%	+8	
CA	55	43%	54%		+11
CO	9	51%	45%	+6	
CT	7	41%	55%		+14
DE	3	44%	54%		+10
DC	3	9%	87%		+78
FL	27	51%	48%	+3	
GA	15	57%	42%	+15	
HI	4	41%	55%		+14
ID	4	68%	29%	+39	
IL	21	44%	55%		+11
IN	11	58%	40%	+18	
IA	7	49%	49%		
KS	6	60%	37%	+23	
KY	8	58%	40%	+18	
LA	9	55%	44%	+11	
ME	4	44%	51%		+7
MD	10	42%	56%		+14
MA	12	35%	61%		+26
MI	17	47%	51%		+4
MN	10	47%	50%		+3
MS	6	59%	41%	+18	
MO	11	52%	47%	+5	
MT	3	59%	36%	+23	
NE	5	64%	33%	+31	
NV	5	50%	47%	+3	
NH	4	49%	49%		
NJ	15	43%	55%		+12
NM	5	49%	49%		
NY	31	38%	59%		+21
NC	15	56%	43%	+13	
ND	3	62%	34%	+28	
OH	20	50%	47%	+3	
OK	7	63%	36%	+27	
OR	7	47%	49%		+2
PA	21	47%	51%		+4
RI	4	35%	60%		+25
SC	8	58%	41%	+17	
SD	3	60%	38%	+22	
TN	11	54%	45%	+9	
TX	34	60%	38%	+22	
UT	5	70%	26%	+44	
VT	3	40%	55%		+15
VA	13	53%	45%	+8	
WA	11	45%	51%		+6
WV	5	54%	45%	+9	
WI	10	49%	49%		
WY	3	69%	29%	+40	

Voting Margin of 20 Points or More

State	Electoral Votes	Average Bush	Average Gore/Kerry	Republicans	Democrats
AL	9	59%	39%	+20	
AK	3	60%	32%	+28	
ID	4	68%	29%	+39	
KS	6	60%	37%	+23	
MT	3	59%	36%	+23	
NE	5	64%	33%	+31	
ND	3	62%	34%	+28	
OK	7	63%	36%	+27	
SD	3	60%	38%	+22	
TX	34	60%	38%	+22	
UT	5	70%	26%	+44	
WY	3	69%	29%	+40	
TOTAL:	85				

State	Electoral Votes	Average Bush	Average Gore/Kerry	Republicans	Democrats
DC	3	9%	87%		+78
MA	12	35%	61%		+26
RI	4	35%	60%		+25
NY	31	38%	59%		+21
TOTAL:	50				

Voting Margin of 15-19 Points

State	Electoral Votes	Average Bush	Average Gore/Kerry	Republicans	Democrats
GA	15	57%	42%	+15	
IN	11	58%	40%	+18	
KY	8	58%	40%	+18	
MS	6	59%	41%	+18	
SC	8	58%	41%	+17	
TOTAL:	48				

State	Electoral Votes	Average Bush	Average Gore/Kerry	Republicans	Democrats
VT	3	40%	55%		+15
TOTAL:	3				

Voting Margin of 10-14 Points

State	Electoral Votes	Average Bush	Average Gore/Kerry	Republicans	Democrats
LA	9	55%	44%	+11	
NC	15	56%	43%	+13	
TOTAL:	24				

State	Electoral Votes	Average Bush	Average Gore/Kerry	Republicans	Democrats
CA	55	43%	54%		+11
CT	7	41%	55%		+14
DE	3	44%	54%		+10
HI	4	41%	55%		+14
IL	21	44%	55%		+11
MD	10	42%	56%		+14
NJ	15	43%	55%		+12
TOTAL:	115				

Voting Margin of 0-9 Points

State	Electoral Votes	Average Bush	Average Gore/Kerry	Republicans	Democrats
AZ	10	53%	45%	+8	
AR	6	53%	45%	+8	
CO	9	51%	45%	+6	
FL	27	51%	48%	+3	
MO	11	52%	47%	+5	
NV	5	50%	47%	+3	
OH	20	50%	47%	+3	
TN	11	54%	45%	+9	
VA	13	53%	45%	+8	
WV	5	54%	45%	+9	
TOTAL:	117				

State	Electoral Votes	Average Bush	Average Gore/Kerry	Republicans	Democrats
ME	4	44%	51%		+7
MI	17	47%	51%		+4
MN	10	47%	50%		+3
OR	7	47%	49%		+2
PA	21	47%	51%		+4
WA	11	45%	51%		+6
NV	5	51%	47%	+3	
OH	20	51%	47%	+3	
PA	21	47%	51%		+4
TN	11	51%	45%	+9	
VA	13	51%	45%	+8	
WV	5	51%	45%	+9	
TOTAL:	70				

State	Electoral Votes	Average Bush	Average Gore/Kerry	Republicans	Democrats
IA	7	49%	49%		
NH	4	49%	49%		
WI	10	49%	49%		
NM	5	49%	49%		
TOTAL:	26				

No. 75

July 27, 2007

RESTAURANTS

Rock Creek

4917 Elm Street
Bethesda, MD 20824
301-907-7625
rockcreekrestaurant.com

The owners of Rock Creek describe their offering as "conscious cuisine."

There were 7 of us in your editor's first visit to this restaurant: Mike M, Sherry, Heidi, Sarabeth, Sam, Carol, and me.

The main dining room seats about 75 people at tables ranging from 2s to 7s. There is also a separate room near the front of the restaurant that houses a free-standing bar and several small tables.

One thing sets this restaurant aside from every other restaurant reviewed in WW over the years. On the individual menus distributed at the restaurant, and on the website, there are nutrition facts for each of the dishes served at the restaurant. More about that a little later.

1st course: Carol - Yellow Tomato Gazpacho; Heidi - Curried Lobster Bisque with fresh fava beans, coconut milk, cilantro; Sherry and Mike M - Baby Spinach Salad with strawberries, Maytag blue cheese, sweet onion vinaigrette; Sam and Mike - Mediterranean Sample Plate with tabouleh, garlic eggplant puree, cucumber salad, grape leaves, olives, flat bread. Sarabeth did not have a 1st course.

Entree: Sherry - Grilled Kurobuta Pork Tenderloin with eggplant ratatouille, wilted arugula, Chanterelle Madeira sauce; Mike M and Heidi - Pan Seared Diver Scallops with aromatic

quinoa, english peas, Pernod, citrus-lobster sauce; Sam - Grilled All-Natural Chicken Breast with lemon-pepper spaetzle, baby french beans, carrots, chicken jus; Mike - Jumbo Lump Crabcakes with celeriac-apple slaw, lemon-caper aioli; Carol and Sarabeth - 5oz Grilled Filet Mignon with roasted sunchoke, jumbo asparagus, thyme jus; (another nice feature of the menu is that the filet comes in 5oz and 8oz sizes).

Dessert: Carol - Raspberries with Honey Yogurt; Sherry and Heidi - Rock Creek Chocolate Cake with Light Whipped Cream; Sam - Apple Strudel & Caramel Sauce with Vanilla Frozen Yogurt; Mike - Broiled Pineapple with Saffron Sauce and Vanilla Frozen Yogurt.

Now for the nutrition counts for each person in our party.

Mike M - 677 Calories/39% fat; Sherry - 658 calories/51% fat; Heidi - 923 calories/37% fat; Sarabeth - 428 calories/36% fat; Sam - 1160 calories/29% fat; Carol - 715 calories/42% fat; Mike B - 990 calories/38% fat.

The service was excellent and the various courses came in a timely fashion even though the restaurant was nearly full.

There is a 3-course tasting menu several nights a week, but you can order individual items from that menu.

The men's room is simple, clean and functional. As you enter there is a white ceramic washbasin on the right. Next is a white ceramic urinal, separated from the washbasin by a partial brown metal, wall-hanging divider. Next in line is a very large commode area, fully accessible and

separated from the rest of the room by a partial brown metal wall and door, open at top and bottom. There is also a column of small metal lockers within the commode area.

The floor is covered with medium-sized white tiles. There are smaller tan tiles covering the walls from the floor to a height of 3.5 feet. The rest of the walls and the ceiling are painted brown.

Heidi reports that the women's room is very nice.

There is valet parking (but not during July and August). Reservations are recommended.

The owners of this restaurant are opening a second restaurant on the theater level of The Mazza Gallerie on upper Wisconsin Avenue. It is scheduled to open around July 15th.

* * * * *

BLT Steak

1625 I Street NW

Washington, D.C.

202-689-8999

bltsteak.com [washington]

My first visit to BLT was dinner with Carol, Virginia and Tom. My second visit was for lunch with Maya.

BLT is part of a group of restaurants that began in New York. In some ways it is another steak house, but in many ways it is different.

As you enter there is a large bar straight ahead and to the left. The "L" of the bar closest to front door is a raw bar. The bar seats about a dozen folks on high back stools.

The restaurant seats 130 people at capacity. The floors are wood and the table coverings are place mats. There is a banquette that runs about the length of and parallel to the bar, just to the right of the entry way. There are seats on both sides of the banquette. There is

also an L-shaped banquette on the bar side of the restaurant.

* Small starters are provided to the table, including warm, chopped liver in a small casserole with toast rounds; various finely sliced meats; pickled vegetables; humongous popovers

* Appetizers - Carol - tuna tartare / avocado / soy-lime dressing comes in a square tower; Virginia - beef steak tomatoes, grilled onion vinaigrette; Tom - field greens/mustard dressing; Mike - roasted beets/fresh goat cheese.

* Main courses - Tom and Virginia split a sirloin for two; Carol - soft shell crabs; Mike - black sea bass.

* Sides for the table - french fries, onion rings, creamy spinach.

* Dessert: Mike - Demike lemon sorbet; Virginia - chocolate tort.

The service was excellent. As the evening wore on (we arrived at 7:00 pm) it got quite noisy, like so many large restaurants.

Subsequently, I went to BLT for lunch with Maya.

Maya had tuna, followed by peanut butter chocolate mousse with banana ice cream. I started with a Caesar salad. There was plenty of crisp lettuce and about the right amount of dressing, without added cheese, of course. That was followed by appetizer- sized portions of a shrimp cocktail and a crab meat cocktail. I also had a side of spinach and 1 scoop of pistachio ice cream. It had a nice creamy texture without that frozen quality.

The men's room is new and fresh like the restaurant. The decor is black and white. To the right, as you come through the heavy, dark wood door, are 3 prints at eye level. To the left is a black marble counter top with 2 white ceramic sinks. Over the sinks there is a large black framed mirror. Continuing on the left are 2 wall-hanging urinals, with partial black shiny dividers between them.

Directly ahead as you enter is a completely enclosed, accessible commode area. What makes this particular area unique is that it also has a washbasin and mirror.

The floor is covered in large black tiles. The wall behind the urinals and in the commode area is covered by medium sized white tiles, to about 4 feet tall. The rest of the walls are painted a not-too-shiny white. The ceiling is covered with large, absorbent material white tiles.

Reservations are generally necessary.

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Sarabeth's Kitchen (East)

At the Hotel Wales
1295 Madison Avenue
New York, NYC 10128

Guest review by Carol Berman

I went to New York for the day with a few girls, stayed at the Hotel Wales, and felt that WW readers should share the experience. The rooms in the hotel are very small, but it's comfortable, quiet, located near good shops, restaurants, and museums (at 92nd and Madison), and perhaps best of all, houses Sarabeth's.

Sarabeth's has branches at the Whitney Museum and on the West Side, and also is known for wonderful jams that are sold around the country (in DC, a good place to buy them is Rodman's).

I was joined at lunch by Anne, Sharon, Jo Anne, Nancy, and Lou. Lunch selections were typical fare for ladies who lunch (chopped seasonal vegetables with field greens, bleu cheese, and sherry vinaigrette; roasted chicken salad with walnuts, and chives; grilled tuna nicoise with baby greens, grilled red onions, baby carrots, haricot vert, and roasted shallot vinaigrette). Iced tea is served in a generous pitcher and is lightly flavored with mango.

There is a daily market soup, and the plates arriving at nearby tables also looked very appealing: chicken pot pie, one great burger,

jumbo lump crabcake sandwich (served with a mound of matchstick fries, salad of red beets, watercress, apples, and pears), and some great looking desserts.

We lingered for two hours without the threat of being displaced, and thought the atmosphere was entirely pleasant.

On the following morning, I had "staggered" breakfast with Anne, Rita, and Lou. Sarabeth's is famous for its extraordinary breakfasts, which include "Four Flowers Juice" (a blend of orange, pineapple, bananas, and pomegranate juice), a variety of cereals, eggs, omelettes, muffins, and croissants. Anne had "Popeye" eggs with spinach, while Rita and I ordered from the "three bears porridge" selections. Lou was along for the conversation, having picked up an early continental breakfast from the hotel's second floor lobby.

There is a small dining area upstairs, and a combination of booths and tables at street level. The two unisex bathrooms are a few steps up from the restaurant, at the lobby level of the hotel. Both bathrooms have a sign "for single occupancy." One is a small bathroom with an ordinary commode and sink. The other could accommodate at least six people, and, in addition to the commode and sink, is cheerily decorated with red floral wallpaper, a very large carved-wood framed mirror that probably once resided over a fireplace in a ballroom, and an antique sewing machine table that holds a stack of high-quality paper towels.

Sarabeth's offers breakfast (8-5:30 M-F), afternoon tea (3:30-5:30 M-F), dinner (5:30-10:30 M-Sat and 5:30-9:30 on Sunday), and brunch (8-4 on Sundays).

Mike

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