

THE OBSERVER

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★★★★ in focus ★★★★★
ELECTION 2004



STORY BY MADDIE HANNA AND JOE HETTLER

The issues that concern young voters most have assumed a prominent role in the 2004 presidential election as both John Kerry and George W. Bush strive to secure the youth vote.

"Younger voters are particularly interested in what the future might hold," American Studies professor Robert Schmuhl said. "Whether the candidates have addressed these concerns in compelling ways is an open question. ... Historically, economic issues tend to assume dominant importance in a presidential campaign. This year is different, with the war in Iraq and the threat of terrorism vying for voter concern."

Media organizations such as Rock the Vote and Vote or Die emphasize the environment, gay rights, health care, education and terrorism as the most prominent issues facing voters under 30. For many Notre Dame students, national security is their top concern.

"I think that everybody in the country, including young voters, is concerned about security issues," said Nicola Bunick, co-president of Notre Dame's College Democrats.

Co-president of Notre Dame's College Republicans, Tom Rippinger, agrees.

"Younger voters should

be especially interested in the policy decisions that we're making right now," he said.

Particularly at Notre Dame, with its Center for Social Concerns and strong emphasis on Catholic social teaching, issues of social welfare also tend to become a priority. Kerry and Bush's respective stances on these social issues will determine for whom many young people vote, said Bunick.

"A lot of people are really involved in social justice — it strikes a chord with them," she said.

Even issues that don't directly seem to affect

young people, such as the status of Social Security, should be considered, said Tom Guglielmo, an American Studies assistant professor.

"You could make the case that Social Security is for older people, but there's the question that this will even be around," he said.

Like Guglielmo, Rippinger cited Social Security as a concern, noting that the Social Security trust fund might become bankrupt by 2018, according to information provided by the Institute for Policy Innovation.

"That's something that

will directly affect us if either party doesn't do something about it," Rippinger said.

Health care also concerns young voters, Rippinger said, in light of recent debates over creating a government-based health care system.

Other students are concerned with issues that deal with Catholic values.

"On Notre Dame's campus, there's always a lot of issues over abortion and stem cell debate. For some people, that can be a big factor," Bunick said.

While some students are impelled to become activists in such hotbed issues, others find it diffi-

cult to determine which candidate is most closely aligned with their own views.

"[For] younger voters, mostly occupied with college and work — it's hard to actually take the time to do the research and make an informed vote," Rippinger said.

But Guglielmo believes students must take time to educate themselves so they can make an informed decision on Nov. 2

"There are some really big issues on the table," he said.

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REP George W. Bush

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — George W. Bush loves to tell people about the time Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi compared him to Gary Cooper, hero of the Western movie "High Noon."

America's 43rd president cultivates the tough-guy image, offering himself as a blunt-spoken man of action. "I'm a gut player," he says.

Americans do want their presidents to be strong and decisive. But with President Bush, the qualities his supporters find appealing can also be kindling for the bonfires of his critics.

Steadfast becomes stubborn. Confident becomes cocky.

Bush is the resolute president who gripped a bullhorn at Ground Zero and called out to rescue workers straining to hear him: "I can hear you! The rest of the world hears you!"

Less attractive to some is the swaggering commander in chief who dared militants attacking U.S. forces in Iraq by taunting, "Bring 'em on."

"Those who love him say 'leader, decisive, passionate.' His detractors say 'angry, petulant,'" says Doug Wead, a family friend who worked with Bush on his father's 1988 presidential campaign. "But everybody agrees that there's something in his gut, something that's really driving him."

Whatever the motivation, that drive is now propelling Bush through what his wife sentimentally calls their last campaign. Bush himself, never one for reflection, shows no sense of nostalgia — rather a gritty determination to, as he puts it, bring everything to the field, leaving nothing in the locker room.

Four years after the Supreme Court sealed Bush's victory by delivering him Florida's electoral votes, friends and critics alike say he has been remarkably unchanged by his first term in office.

"I'm the kind of person who doesn't change," he says flatly.

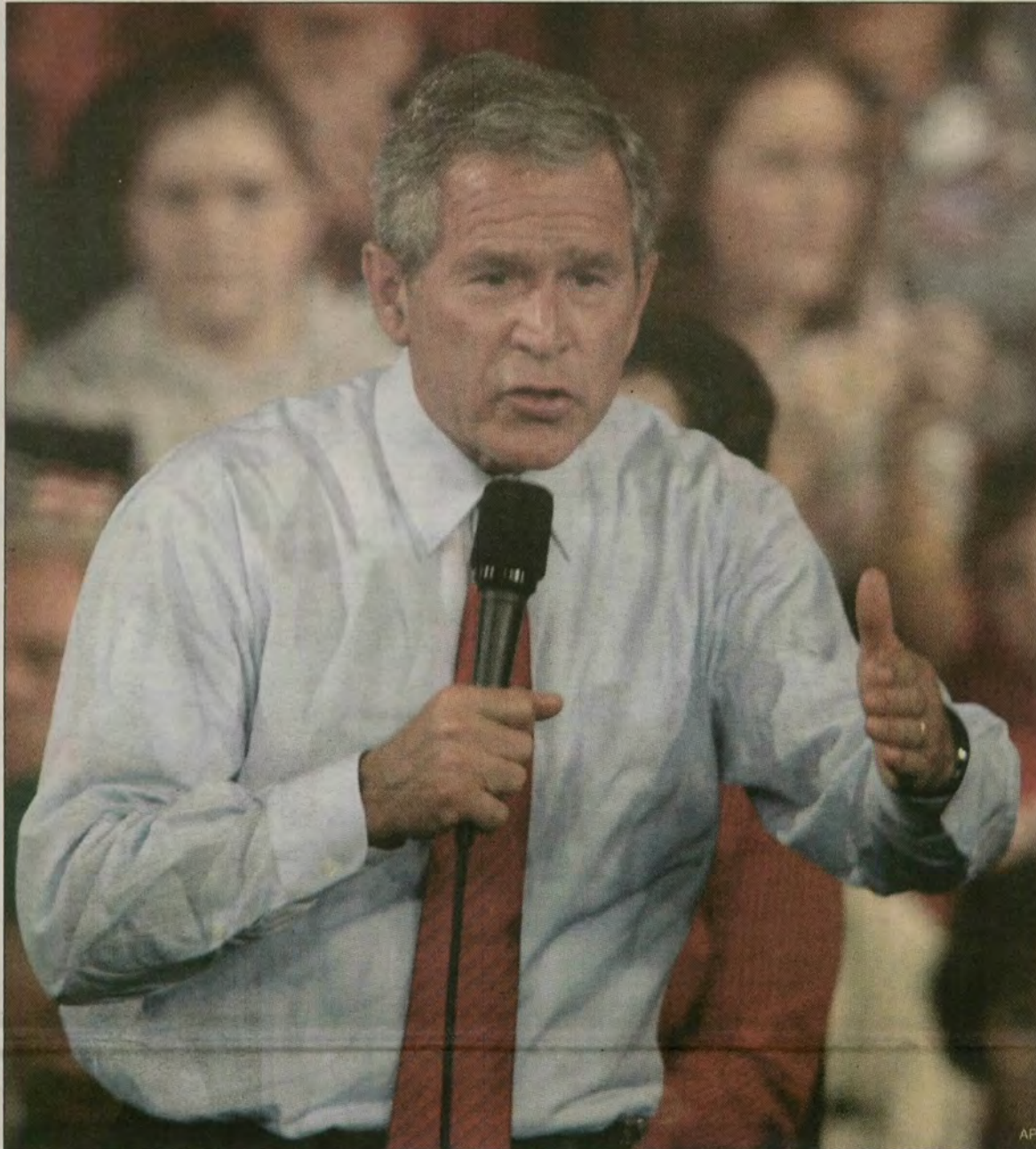
But Laura Bush says in an interview that the terror attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, and the nation's response to them have "added a solemnness and a seriousness" to her husband's personality. She hastens to add, though, that he still likes to laugh.

One lesson Bush has learned is that his hope to replicate the chummy bipartisanship he had with Texas Democrats when he was governor was but a dream. The partisan tone of Washington, where comity in private can quickly sour in public, is one of Bush's biggest disappointments, although Democrats point the finger of blame back at him.

Physical changes in Bush are easier to pinpoint.

"He's grayer for sure," says Laura. Adviser Karen Hughes says that in the lines on Bush's face are etched "some of the weight of the world."

Bush himself joked before throwing out the opening pitch at a baseball game this spring that "my wing isn't what it used



to be."

But at age 58, he is in excellent physical condition. When his knees gave out this winter after years of running, Bush switched to riding a mountain bike.

"He attacks that thing," says Charlie Younger, a longtime friend from Texas. "His pop-off valve is exercise. He's serious about it."

The statistics from his latest physical: 6 feet tall, 194 pounds. Resting blood pressure: 110/62 (below 120/80 is healthy). Resting pulse: 45 beats per minute (60-100 is normal for adults, 40-60 for a well-trained athlete).

Ask the first lady for three words to describe her husband and "disciplined" is the first one out of her mouth. ("Funny" and "compassionate" come next.)

So regimented is Bush's lifestyle that one can almost predict his conduct months in advance.

If you want to know what the president will do on Election Day, odds are that he'll get up about 5:30 a.m., push the button on the coffee maker, scan the day's headlines (perhaps more carefully than usual), then study the daily devotional for Nov. 2 laid out in Oswald Chambers' "My Utmost for his Highest." The topic will be authority and independence; the scripture will be John 14:15: "If ye love Me, ye will keep My commandments." (Next year, he will switch back to reading the One Year Bible; he

reads it every other year.)

On a typical day, Bush heads to the Oval Office by about 7 a.m., toting the 50- to 70-page briefing book on the day's events that was his bedtime reading the night before. He will start his meetings by 8, and carve out time during the day to exercise — on the elliptical trainer, perhaps, if biking is not an option.

Meetings are short and to the point. They start on time — early if most of the players are there. Cabinet meetings begin with a prayer offered by one of the department heads. Suits and ties are required in the Oval Office.

Longtime friend Clay Johnson, who served as Bush's first personnel director in Washington and handled appointments for him in Austin, says personnel meetings in the two settings were "freakishly the same — whether it was the Fire Ant Advisory Board in Texas or the undersecretary of state for something gargantuan."

Psychologist and political scientist Stanley Renshon writes in an upcoming book, "In His Father's Shadow," that it's as if Bush went through a "midlife crisis in reverse." Rather than rejecting responsibility in middle age and buying a sports car, Bush gave up drinking at 40 and found religion and discipline.

Nothing has helped feed the caricature of Bush as dimwitted more than his own verbal stumbles — so plentiful that Bush himself joked to Hughes that

"maybe that woman was right," referring to author Gail Sheehy's theory that he might be dyslexic.

Bush can be almost defiantly inarticulate. Nuclear ever will be nuk-u-lar to him.

At a Celebration of Reading ceremony in 2001, the president rattled off a dozen of his own lusus to a delighted audience.

"The way I see it," Bush joked, "I am a boon to the English language. I've coined new words like 'misunderestimate' and 'Hispanically.' I've expanded the definition of words themselves, using 'vulcanize' when I meant 'polarize,' 'Grecians' when I meant 'Greeks,' 'inebriating' when I meant 'exhilarating.' And instead of 'barriers and tariffs,' I said 'terriers and barriffs.'"

Cousin John Ellis calls the malapropisms "a non-issue. He's very sharp and very shrewd."

But even some of Bush's defenders speak of a lack of intellectual heft.

Former speechwriter David Frum says in his book that while the president's virtues outweigh his faults, Bush is "often uncurious and as a result ill informed, more conventional in his thinking than a leader probably should be."

Treasury Secretary Paul O'Neill, who was fired by Bush, described the president as like a "blind man in a roomful of deaf people."

Yet everyone credits Bush with street smarts and an uncanny ability to read people.

"He's got this little shtick, you know," former President Clinton says. "Because he's not a conventional political intellectual, he set it up so he gets consistently underestimated."

Bush is one of the most outwardly religious presidents of modern times — a subtext of his presidency that became more pronounced in the aftermath of the Sept. 11 attacks, as he framed the fight against terror as a battle of good vs. evil.

"It would be very difficult to be the president without believing," he says.

Bush said earlier this year he wants to let God's light shine through him — but as a "secular politician." He says he draws strength from the Americans who are praying for him.

Steven Waldman, editor in chief of Beliefnet, a multifaith religious Web site, said Bush's religious convictions feed into his image as a steadfast president in a time of war. But, Waldman says, "clearly some people feel that we're seeing the negative underbelly of that trait, that his steadfastness has turned into stubbornness and unwillingness to face disappointing facts."

Wead, who worked with Bush to court evangelicals during the 1988 campaign, says the president's expressions of faith are both sincere and calculated: "I don't think George Bush knows which sometimes."

Laura Bush jokes that her husband has such a strong "Alpha male" personality that even her dog, Barney, pays more attention to him than to her.

But she also says he "has a heart of gold, which doesn't always come across." Aides mention private meetings that don't appear on the president's schedule in which he comforts the families of those serving in Iraq and Afghanistan or who have lost loved ones.

The president loves to keep tabs on what the rest of the Bush family is up to, although he is quick to dismiss the notion that he seeks much advice from his father, the ex-president.

Still, there are plenty of echoes of the first President Bush.

When the son prepared for war after the Sept. 11 attacks in 2001, he declared: "This act will not stand." The same words his father had used in 1990 after Iraq invaded Kuwait.

Bush's sister, Doro Bush Koch, says that when family members gather at the Bush compound in Kennebunkport, Maine, they sometimes congregate around the speakerphone in her parents' bedroom at 6 a.m. to call George W. at the White House.

"It's 99.9 percent family stuff," says Koch. "He likes to know what's going on in Maine, and who are the cousins who are there."

The president's idea of gardening might involve a chainsaw. But he also loves to work jigsaw puzzles, go for long walks and birdwatch — not exactly typical Alpha male activities.

"He's the one, when we were at camp, who spotted the scarlet tanager," says the first lady. "He has great 20-20 eyesight."

Name: George W. Bush

Birth date: July 6, 1946

Birthplace: New Haven, Conn.

Spouse: Laura (Welch) Bush

Children: Jenna and Barbara Bush

Residence: Midland, Texas

Education: BS Yale University, 1968

MBA Harvard University, 1975

Religion: Methodist

Previous occupations:

Businessman, Pro baseball team

owner, Texas governor

DEMOGRAPHIC John Kerry

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Vietnam, anti-war protests and politics were still years in the future. In 1963, John Kerry was a college kid looking for adventure on a summer abroad. Traveling on better wheels than most, there were Kerry and a buddy exploring Europe in a low-slung Austin Healey, racing against an Alfa Romeo on the twisting road to Nice, chasing a Porsche across Italy.

The gendarmes caught him in Monte Carlo: Kerry, so intent on retracing the course of the Grand Prix that he headed the wrong direction on a one-way street.

"John had to do those types of things," says his travel companion and longtime friend, Harvey Bundy.

Even the youthful hijinks of John Kerry had an extra element of intensity about them.

Now, at age 60, Kerry is pursuing the American presidency with the same doggedness and focus that are lifelong traits for a son of privilege who nonetheless had to fight for much of what he got. The impatient young man whose first two tries for Congress fizzled, who waited another 15 years for the right entree to Congress and two more decades for a good shot at the White House, is right where his stars seemed fixed from the beginning.

"He's always been the kind of guy who knew his place in history," says Daniel Barbiero, college roommate and friend since before that.

Kerry winces at any such hint of destiny.

Life, he says in an interview in his stocking feet aboard his campaign plane, too often offers a "twist of fate" to think in such terms.

"When you lose Robert Kennedy, you lose John Kennedy, you lose Martin Luther King, you lose your very closest friends, you lose both your parents ... you just know every day is every day. You take 'em as they come. And it's up to others later on to make judgments about how it all fits."

As a child, Kerry was always "the most politically attuned," says his younger brother, Cameron. "He was always the leader of the pack in the neighborhood among the cousins, the quarterback at touch football."

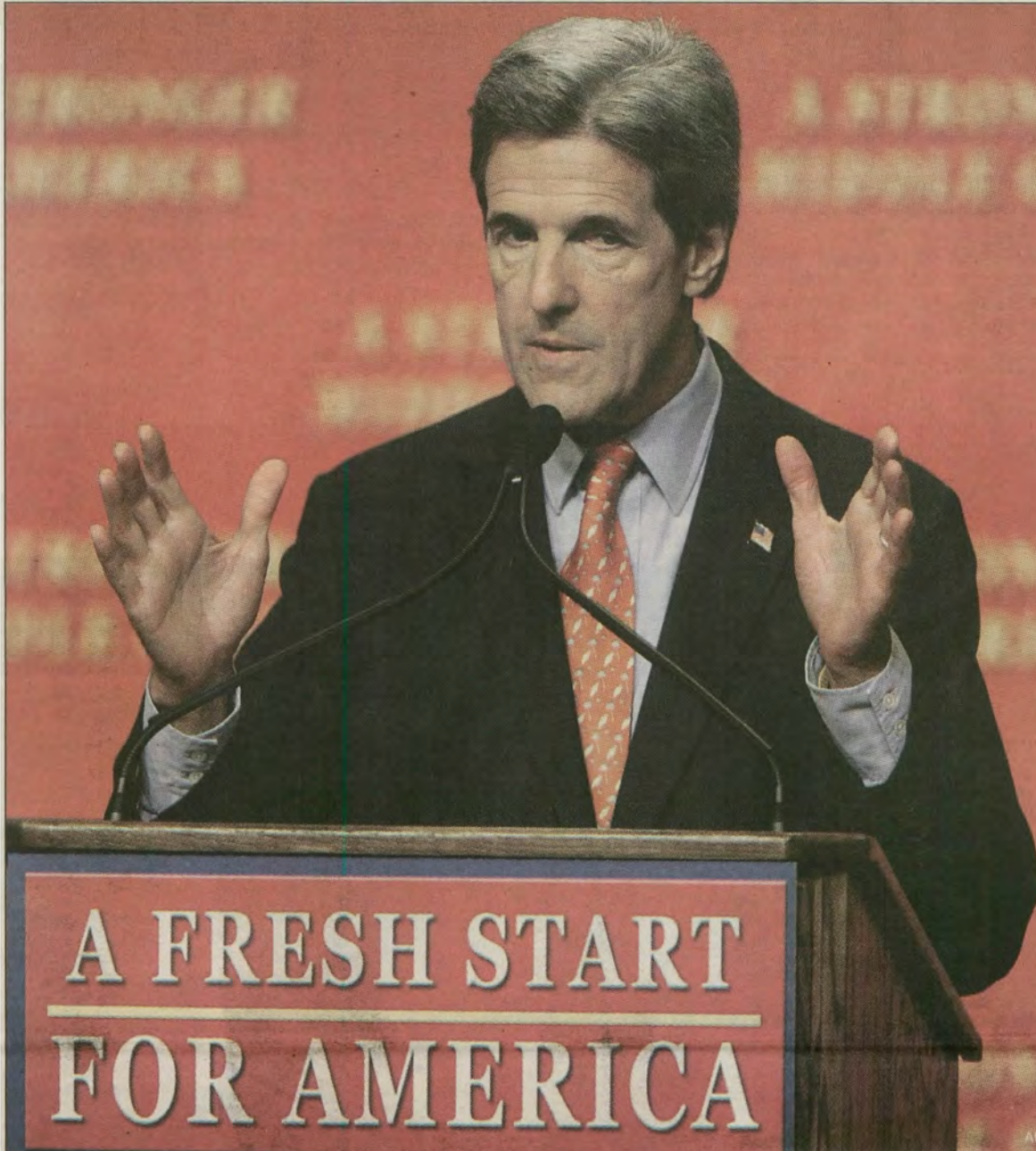
His drive and competitiveness, says Cameron, are "just hard-wired."

They are still there in adulthood, as Kerry windsurfs Naushon Island in a full-on Northeastern gale or silences a campaign heckler by declaring: "I never run away from anything, especially George Bush."

William Stanberry, Kerry's debate-team partner at Yale, says Kerry's interest in the presidency was clear even in college.

"I couldn't help admire the gall, in a way, of someone who had such a clearly stated long-term objective," he recalls. "To some extent it was impressive, and to some extent almost ridiculous."

Blakely Fetridge Bundy, the girlfriend, and later wife of Harvey Bundy, one of Kerry's college roommates, remembers his



pals presenting Kerry with a telegram and a red, white and blue cake that said "Yippee!" in May 1964 when he was elected president of the Yale Political Union, a college debating society.

She wrote in her journal at the time: "We decided that for all further successes — especially when he's elected president of the U.S. — that we'll send him a Yippee! cake."

Always a leader, always an achiever, Kerry, a four-term Massachusetts senator, nonetheless sketches a less scripted life plan for himself, one driven by a desire to serve more than an ambition to climb.

Early on, he says, thoughts of the presidency were only "a hazy possibility."

"I don't think you think of it in real terms," he says.

He decided to run, he says, because the Democrats "had no voice." The Republicans, he felt, were reducing national security issues to political slogans.

He wanted to offer people a "360-degree view of where America is today," as he wrote in his campaign book.

That panoramic perspective is trademark Kerry.

Where supporters see a refreshing openness and an ability to think through complex issues almost three-dimensionally, his critics find waffling and ambivalence.

"He has this good and bad characteristic to describe at length the things that he sees,"

says former Sen. Bob Kerrey, D-Neb., who served with Kerry in Congress. "Sometimes he can give you the impression that he's on two sides of an issue. He's not."

Ever was it so.

As a 27-year-old war protester who captured the attention of a nation, Kerry told a "60 Minutes" interviewer in 1971 that when he went to Vietnam, "I was gung-ho in a certain sense but had doubts in another sense."

He came home from war, he said, with "a tremendous amount of hope" but also "a certain depression."

Watching Kerry debate an issue can be "a little bit like at a tennis match, watching the ball going back and forth," says David Leiter, his former chief of staff. "He is curious. ... He's engaged and thoughtful. He always struggles to get it right."

The nuance that typifies Kerry's public statements is there as well in his life portrait, which is painted with blended colors and dappled brushstrokes rather than sharp lines.

He is the promising young man of Brahmin bloodlines who managed to attend an elite prep school only through the largesse of a generous aunt. He is the decorated war hero who evolved into a shaggy-haired protester. He is the politician who speaks of core principles yet is known for his cautious pragmatism. He is the candidate who can't seem to warm up to people yet whose

fun, let your hair down, relax, laugh, kick some jokes around, have a good time — talk about something other than this."

Kerry's daughter Alex, 30, says her father sometimes can get so focused that it "precludes having a lackadaisical moment." But she says he can be witty and silly, even goofy, in more relaxed settings.

His younger daughter, Vanessa, 27, offers four words to sum up her father: dedicated, curious, intelligent, playful.

"I like 'playful' above all," Kerry says, when offered his daughter's list.

Then, somewhat reluctantly, he comes up with his own quartet: romantic, passionate, idealistic, engaged.

Friends speak of small, frequent acts of generosity, and loyalty built up over decades.

Tracy Droz Tragos, whose father served with Kerry in Vietnam and was killed there, remembers how Kerry took time to make rubbings of her father's name from the Vietnam War Memorial to send to her grandparents in small-town Missouri.

"That relationship meant the world to my grandmother," says Tragos.

Kerry, whose service as captain of a Swift boat in Vietnam brought him three Purple Hearts and a Silver Star for heroism, still has a piece of shrapnel embedded in his leg. There is a scar, he says, but the wound doesn't bother him.

"It's just there," he says, "part of my internal machinery."

Kerry's service became a major campaign issue this year as several veterans who served on other boats appeared in biting TV ads questioning his record and criticizing his later anti-war comments. Veterans who served on Kerry's boat defended him and sometimes campaigned alongside him.

Vanessa Kerry says she remembers poking around her father's desk as a child and coming across a rocket that had been aimed at Kerry's boat when he jumped ashore to chase down and kill a young Viet Cong fighter.

"Those are the stories I grew up with," she says. "I think it has made my dad value every day. He's the first to say every day is extra."

Kerry went to war with doubts about Vietnam and came home with certainty that the war was wrong; he received early release from the Navy to run for Congress as an anti-war candidate. His candidacy fizzled because a more prominent anti-war figure was already in the race. But as a decorated veteran, Kerry quickly emerged as a spokesman against the war.

Bob Muller, president of the Vietnam Veterans of America Foundation and a friend who has known Kerry since their war-protester days, says Kerry was the one who "put a good face on us," who tamped down the movement's extremes and offered a more moderate face of dissent.

"John has always been able to do an override on the emotions," Muller said, "to be pragmatic and to be effective."

Name: John Kerry
Birth date: Dec. 11, 1943
Birthplace: Denver, Colo.
Spouse: Teresa Heinz Kerry

Children: Alexandra & Vanessa Kerry; John, Andre & Christopher Heinz
Residence: Boston, Mass.

Education: BA Yale University, 1966; JD Boston College, 1976
Religion: Catholic

Previous occupations: Mass. lieutenant governor, U.S. senator, attorney

"[Kerry] would be a sound steward, replacing a cowboy ethic with a welcome pragmatism, advancing American interests and values, seeking to reverse a careless course abroad, just as he would at home." — Akron Beacon Journal

"President Bush got some things wrong, but there is much he got right. We are faced with an unrelenting foe who strikes from the shadows and won't be deterred by diplomacy or international resolutions. Bush's resolve and commitment to stay the course are clear." — Austin American-Statesman

"On the signal issues of this campaign — the Iraq war and terrorism — Kerry is up to the challenge. ... He is best suited to heal our painful rifts now — not just with the community of nations but within this nation, rent by social, ideological, economic and religious diversions. These sap the strength of America. We are confident a Kerry presidency will restore both unity and strength." — Boston Globe

"Despite is. He has bles. Kerr the U.S. S tions abou Canton Re

"Kerry's most difficult challenge as president would be cleaning up after Bush in Iraq. Kerry at least has a shot at getting the rest of the world to help. ... Kerry can regain the good will and standing we had in the wake of 9/11 and rebuild the alliances that Bush discarded." — Lexington Herald Leader

"Despite the best efforts of the campaigns to do otherwise, what sets these men apart is not their qualifications to be president, but their positions on the issues. Bush and Kerry offer decidedly different visions for the country. It is on this basis that the candidates are best judged, and it is because we believe Kerry has, on the whole, the better plan for America that we endorse him for president of the United States." — Maine Sunday Telegram

"The debates have placed a spotlight on the skills and abilities of the two contenders, with the president getting the worst of it." — Miami Herald

"[Kerry] is a serious man with str skills. He is the one candidate who heal the deeply bitter divisions in the Newsday

"Kerry and his running mate, Sen. John Edwards, have said over and over that they have a plan for this, and a plan for that. Where are the plans? ... [Bush] doesn't flip-flop, and this is not the time to jump ship." — Las Cruces Sun News

"This is a presidency in deep trouble, made worse by the refusal to acknowledge the trouble. ... Unfortunately, Sen. John Kerry has not convinced us that he will be able to steer the nation out of the mess in Iraq and move forward appropriately in the war on terrorism." — Winston Salem Journal

"We do not view a vote for Mr. Kerry as a vote without risks. But the risks on the other side are well-known, and the strengths Mr. Kerry brings are considerable. He pledges both to fight in Iraq and to reach out to allies, to hunt down terrorists and to engage without-arrogance the Islamic world. These are the right goals, and we think Mr. Kerry is the better bet to achieve them." — Washington Post

"John Kerry is not a perfect candidate with a flawless record. But he is a man of obvious intelligence, compassion, patriotism and courage whose presidency would be guided by a clear understanding of what went wrong in the last four years and what needs to be done in the next four." — Kansas City Star

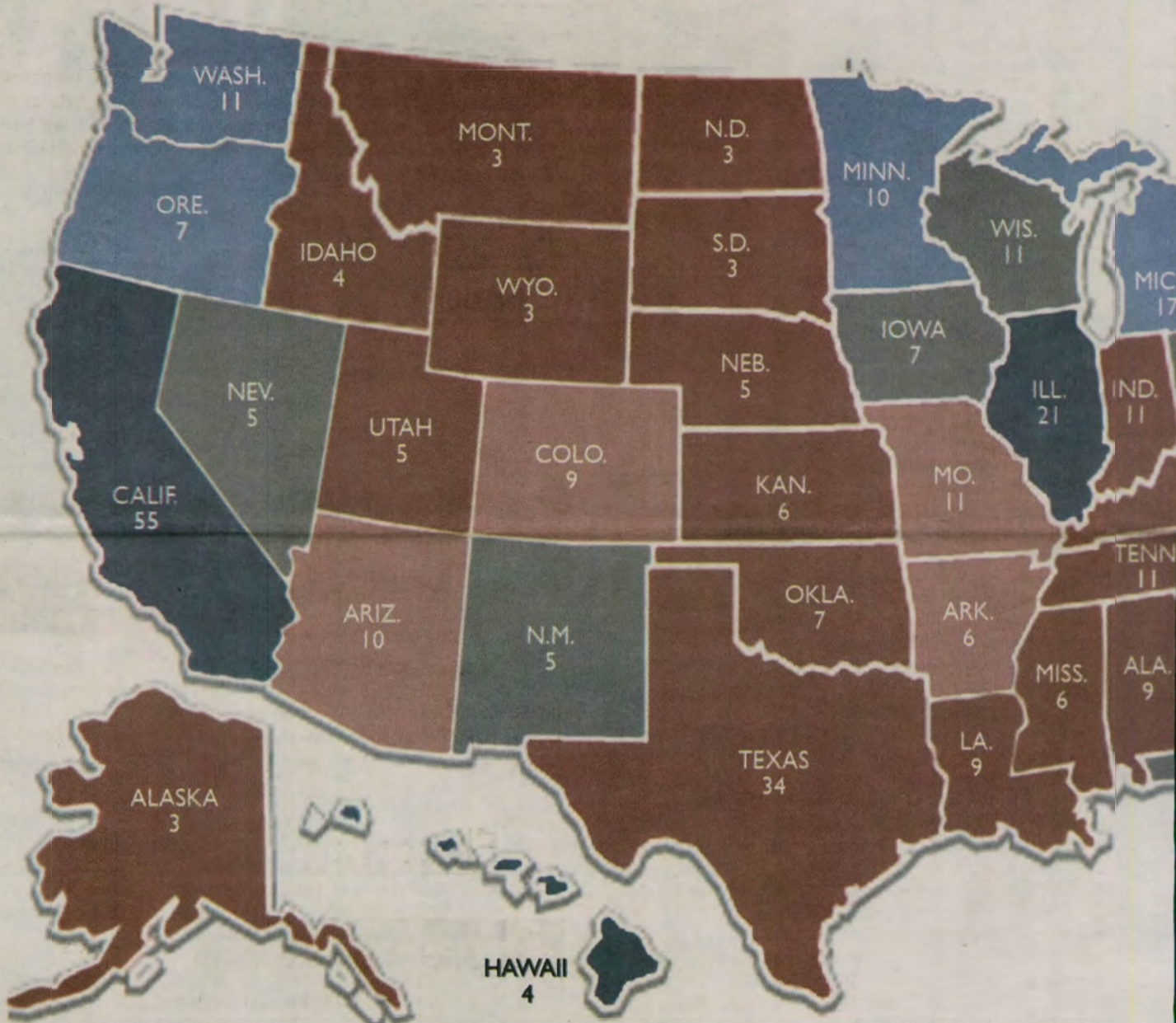
"We find ourselves deeply conflicted today about the presidential race, skeptical of the promises and positions of Sen. John Kerry and disappointed by the performance of President George W. Bush." — Tampa Tribune

"It is time for experience and resolve, which is why George Bush should be re-elected for a second term. Without a re-election facing him, the president can move to do those things he said he would do in his first presidential campaign." — Indianapolis Star

"Like many people, Bush finds it difficult to admit a mistake, particularly when under attack on all sides. However, history is replete with instances in which imperfect but confident national leaders proved preferable to cautious, indecisive ones." — Houston Chronicle

"Sen. John Kerry is the best hope for regaining America's promise, offering the country a fresh start internationally and a return of the presidency to an office of stature and respect." — Duluth News Tribune

"[We] will not lend its endorsement to a has made too many mistakes, nor to one wh erning philosophy we reject. This decision t will disappoint readers who expect [us] to Republican presidential candidate come hel ... We will never feel obliged to defend a p blunders and misjudgments have hurt the t we settle for an equally bad choice." — Detroit



Strongly for Bush
 Strongly for Kerry

Leaning for Bush
 Leaning for Kerry

SOURCE: Associated Press, New York Times

his mistakes, America knows who Bush led the country through immense trouble, burdened by all the votes that came in mate for 20 years, still leaves many questions about what kind of president he would be." —

"When a president is seeking re-election, the contest is inevitably a referendum on his service. ... We think George W. Bush has made the wrong choices on too many matters important to our country." — Charlotte Observer

"We want leaders to stay the course only when the course is a good one. ... The question that Americans need to ask themselves, going into the voting booth a week from Tuesday, is this: Do you like the direction our nation is heading? If the answer is no, then your vote should be for Sen. John Kerry." — Chicago Sun-Times

"There is much the current president could have done differently over the last four years. ... But for his resoluteness on the defining challenge of our age — a resoluteness John Kerry has not been able to demonstrate — the Chicago Tribune urges the re-election of George W. Bush as president of the United States." — Chicago Tribune

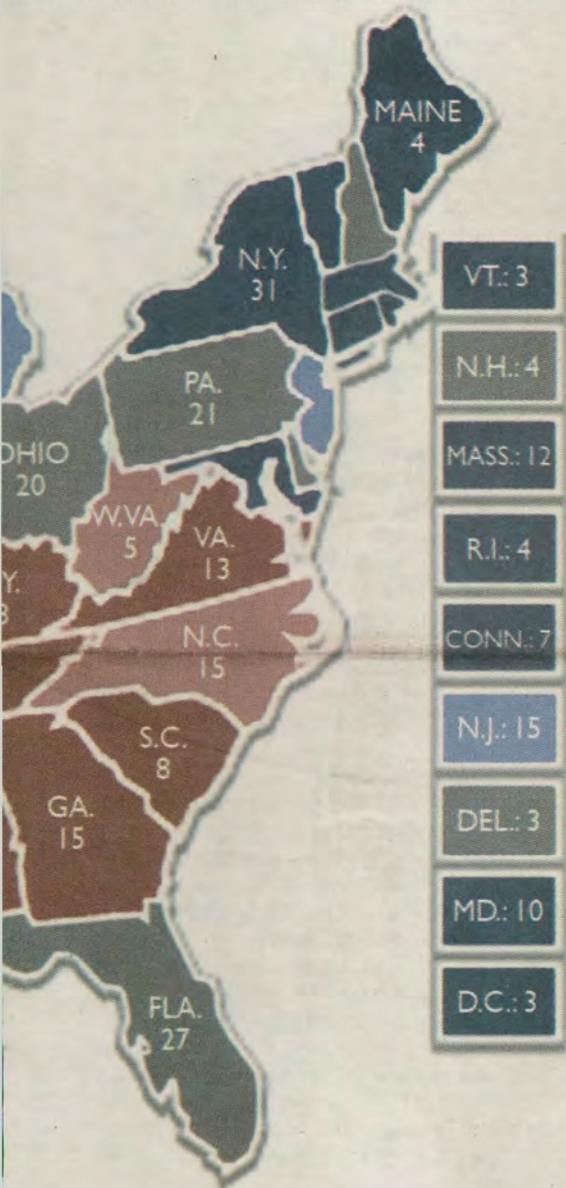
ing analytical can begin to nation."

"We have been impressed with Mr. Kerry's wide knowledge and clear thinking — something that became more apparent once he was reined in by that two-minute debate light. He is blessedly willing to re-evaluate decisions when conditions change. ... He strikes us, above all, as a man with a strong moral core." — New York Times

"This election is an opportunity to demonstrate to terrorists throughout the world that America is not tired of the fight. A vote for George W. Bush will keep on that fight and do so more forcefully and effectively than his opponent." — Omaha World Herald

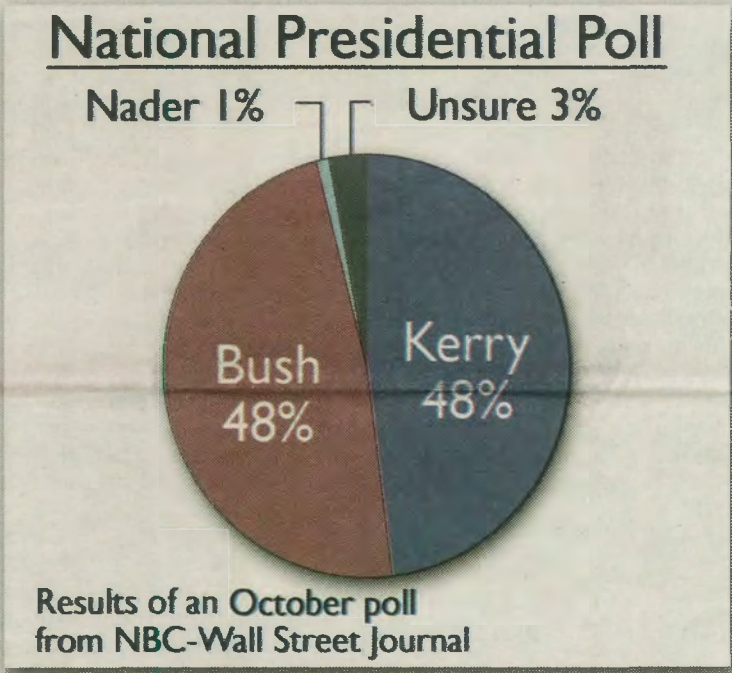
"John Kerry isn't perfect. He has things to learn. One thing Americans should have learned by now, though, is that the incumbent lacks the realism, judgment and ability to adjust to events that the United States needs in its commander in chief. In this perilous moment, the safer choice, the wiser choice, is John F. Kerry." — Philadelphia Inquirer

"In his first major execution of that policy, the war in Iraq, we believe Bush was led astray. It is deeply troubling that, having won the battle, we were unprepared to win the peace. ... We do not share the contempt for Bush and his decision that has energized his opposition. He is an honorable man who, without precedent to guide him, made a difficult decision to invade Iraq as one early step in a struggle with terrorists." — Cincinnati Post



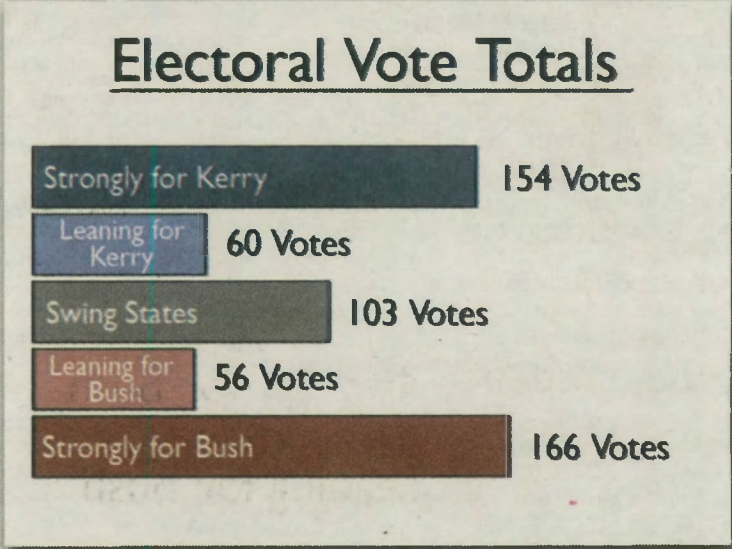
Breakdown of Electoral Votes

Presidential candidates George W. Bush and John Kerry will vie for the lion's share of the 538 possible national electoral votes on Nov. 2, needing a minimum of 270 votes to win the election. While Associated Press and New York Times polls indicate that nine "swing" states are especially contentious in the 2004 race and 20 states have been identified as battleground areas, where candidates continue their efforts to woo the voters to their respective tickets.



"One ticket represents the mentality of 9/10, the other of 9/12. The choice is clear. On Nov. 2, re-elect George W. Bush." — Richmond Times-Dispatch

"A victory for Bush will signal to the world and terrorists that the United States is committed to victory in Iraq and Afghanistan. A Kerry victory will send an ambiguous signal that may raise doubts about American staying power." — Columbus Dispatch



"The Bush administration is more likely to remain resolute on the war in Iraq than would an administration headed by his opponent, Sen. John Kerry of Massachusetts. The vision of a free democratic Iraq to counter Islamic extremism and dictatorship is worth that resolve." — San Antonio Express News

"Four years ago, when the world was much simpler, George W. Bush sought the presidency claiming that he had a charge to keep. ... Mr. Bush has earned the right to hold firm to his charge for another term." — Dallas Morning News

needs a leader who sees the world as it is, how to rebuild international focuses on threats to homeland security, the government for the benefit of all, the virtue of his knowledge of world history, the story of national service and his values, John Kerry is that leader." —

"The Massachusetts senator possesses a prodigious intellect capable of grasping the complexities of the serious issues facing the nation and the world." — South Florida Sun-Sentinel

"John Kerry's record of waffling on issues large and small does not instill confidence that he would provide the steady leadership that these uncertain times demand. With George Bush, however, there never is any doubt about where he stands. That is why he merits another four years in the White House." — San Diego Union Tribune

candidate who offers a government silent and with the high water. ... Nor will

"It can be assumed that the next president, be it Bush or Kerry, will do everything in his power to make America safe from terrorism. ... But on the broad range of other issues, Kerry has more to offer. He is in touch with the middle class. He is better informed on health care and has sound ideas for creating jobs." — Des Moines Register

"On Sept. 11, 2001, this country accepted a great challenge — to inflict justice on terrorists who would attack us and to take every reasonable step to protect our homeland. The task has been pursued with dogged resolution, and we think President Bush is best suited to continue the fight." — Denver Post

"John Kerry is a credible, prepared, likely choice for a nation that should expect more sophistication, more skill, less failure and more focus on the problems of the American mainstream than George W. Bush has offered." — Dayton Daily News

Election might come down to who can get out the vote

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — With the televised debates behind them, President Bush and Sen. John Kerry have little opportunity to shape further the presidential race except by waging an intense effort in the home stretch aimed at getting out the vote.

Voters have a pretty good idea now what Bush and Kerry are all about. There isn't much room for either one to "define" his opponent or himself.

At this point, getting out the vote is equally — if not more — important than winning over the dwindling number of undecided voters, strategists in both parties agree.

With just two weeks to go to the election, polls showed Bush and Kerry in a dead heat — back where they were at the beginning of the summer before the party conventions.

"If anything, there's a little tail wind for Kerry coming out of the debates," said pollster Andrew Kohut, director of the Pew Research Center. "Just as there was a little tail wind for Bush in August. But when would you rather have a little tail wind, in August or in mid-October?"

Kohut said how successful each side is in getting out its vote "is one of the most important elements in the end game. I think there is a fair number of votes still up for grabs. And some people aren't going to get any real convictions until we get right up to Election Day."

Both the Democrats and the Republicans, along with well-financed activist groups on both the left and the right, have spent months pouring resources into registering voters after the near deadlock of the 2000 presidential race and polls showing an extremely tight race again this year.

There has been an avalanche of new voter registrations at election boards across the nation. Now, with most registration deadlines passed, political activists for both candidates are pounding the pavement to ensure voters get to polling places on Nov. 2.

Particular efforts are being directed at minorities, with a big effort on the fast-growing bloc of Hispanic voters.

Most indications are that voter turnout will be high, given the high viewership of the debates and polls showing a larger-than-usual number of voters saying they're following the campaign closely.

Turnout could mean the difference between victory and defeat in closely contested states.

Democrats are turning widespread concern about the war in Iraq and worry over the economy into voter recruitment lures. Meanwhile, Republicans are investing far more in get-out-the-vote drives than ever before, with an assist from religious and socially conservative advocacy groups.

Despite huge amounts spent by both sides on negative advertising, the three presidential and one vice presidential debates allowed Americans to see the candidates as they are, up close and unvarnished, supplanting campaign-generated caricatures.

"These debates have essentially undone what amounts to \$100 million in negative attacks," said Kerry senior strategist Mike Donilon.

Since the nation already had a pretty good measure of Bush, Kerry benefited the most from the debates that showed him more than holding his own with the president, polls suggest.

Marc Racicot, Bush's campaign chairman, said Americans now have before them "the central issue of the campaign: who are these two people, what will they bring to the office?"

Campaigning in a dwindling number of battleground states, both Bush and Kerry will try to energize their political base with red-meat attacks, even as they keep reaching out for undecided voters.

"There is a small number out there to fight for. Neither guy at this point has totally closed the sale," said Bruce Buchanan, a political science professor at the University of Texas.

Candidates target women voters



Women show their support for the Democratic and Republican candidates for president. Both John Kerry and George W. Bush have increased their efforts to woo women voters as Election Day draws near. Photos courtesy AP, www.georgewbush.com

By CLAIRE HEININGER
In Focus Writer

Armed with retooled stump speeches and flanked by polar opposite wives, President George W. Bush and Sen. John Kerry are increasingly targeting women voters as the 2004 presidential campaign hits crunch time.

Women cast 8 million more votes than men in the 2000 election, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. And because women compose a sizeable percentage of this year's remaining undecided voters — between 55 to 60 percent, according to polls conducted by the Associated Press, Reuters, the New York Times and CBS — both candidates are in hot pursuit of this critical demographic.

In the swing state of Wisconsin Friday, Kerry told a mostly female crowd that he understood women's struggles to balance family demands with the fight for equal status in the workplace. He promised that if he is elected, he will assist them with economic and educational initiatives. Campaigning the same day in Pennsylvania, another loss-up state, Bush countered that such issues pale in comparison to national security, as he courted women who believe that he is better equipped to protect American families from terrorist attacks.

The last-minute onslaught of attention to women's concerns may be an attempt to compensate for the Iraq war's domination of the initial months of the campaign, said Diana Hess, co-president of the League of Women Voters' South Bend branch.

The National Council of Women's Organizations identified such "women's issues" as health care, pay equity, family leave, social security and human rights as topics of particular interest to women in its "ABC's of Women's Issues" voter guide — many of which have only recently hit the headlines.

"Domestic issues were overshadowed by security up until

now," Hess said. "I think a lot of issues are just now being mentioned — and they're women's issues across the board."

Bush and Kerry might also be playing on these issues simply to seize a narrowing window of opportunity, Hess added.

"Part of it is the race is just so close that women voters are one group they might be able to capture, especially in the swing states," she said.

Christina Wolbrecht, a Notre Dame political science professor who specializes in women's voting behavior, said swaying undecided women to a particular side is only half the candidates' battle —

women must still be lured into the voting booth.

"The candidates have two goals: to convince people who don't know who they're voting for to vote for them, and to mobilize those who support them already to turn out," she said. "A lot of people who didn't turn out last time were women. [The candidates] are trying to give them a reason to turn out and vote on a rainy Tuesday when they have a million other things to do."

However, many women voters in the area haven't needed extra attention from the candidates to recognize voting's importance, Hess said. The League of Women Voters' South Bend branch registered between 100 and 150 new voters this year, she said, and agencies across St. Joseph County have reported huge registration turnout overall.

"We want to make sure women vote and are informed voters," Hess said.

But since women do not comprise a uniform voting bloc — diverging along single vs. married, working vs. stay-at-home, urban vs. rural and other lines — the candidates have tended to focus on groups of women who would benefit most from their parties' platforms. While Kerry has tried to paint himself as the more attractive candidate for single working women, as reflected in his Wisconsin speech, Bush has become pop-

ular with married women and the "security moms" who plan to cast their votes on safety and family values.

This gap between single and married voters — and this year, single and married women — is actually far more acute than the well-known "gender gap" between male and female voters, Wolbrecht said. Stable marriages often lead to a relatively conservative perspective, resulting in many married women voting for a Republican ticket, she said. And since dual-income married couples are better equipped to deal with sudden job loss than a single-income woman supporting herself, Democrats' inclusive economic policy becomes more attractive to those who aren't married, Wolbrecht said.

"Traditionally, working women vote Democratic and stay-at-home mothers vote Republican," she said. "Single women may feel the brunt of economics more harshly."

Despite these differences among women voters, recent election history indicates an overall gender gap still exists. Women have consistently favored the Democratic Party since the 1960's, after backing Republicans the 40 years before that, Wolbrecht said. This pattern held true in 2000, when 53 percent of women voted for the Democratic presidential candidate, Al Gore, and 45 percent chose the Republican, Bush. This year, Kerry leads Bush among likely women voters by 15 percent, according to a poll published Thursday by the Associated Press.

Since strides have been made on issues like abortion, wage equity, minimum wage, family leave, welfare, education and sexual harassment law during Democratic presidencies, women may trust the party's history of encouraging reform in these areas, Wolbrecht said.

"A hypothesis for why women have ... been more likely to be Democrats is they favor a party that provides more of a social safety net," she said. "I don't want to say either [party] has been perfect ... but the Democratic Party has a better record of fighting for [women]."

That record bodes well for this year's Democratic candidate, she said. "We don't know Kerry would go into the White House and do all that," she said, "but he may be more likely to."

Because many women voters view the security issue as paramount, however, the gender gap may be narrowing, Wolbrecht said.

"Elections often come down to convincing people what is most important," she said, pointing to Bush's claims — echoed consistently in his speeches and the three presidential debates — that terrorism and homeland security trump all else, and that keeping families safe from attack is of utmost priority. That strategy reflects Bush's attempt to convince women that "my issues are your issues," Wolbrecht said.

While the president and Kerry have only recently stepped up the intensity of their appeals to women, their wives, First Lady Laura Bush and her counterpart, Teresa Heinz Kerry, have attracted the attention of female voters throughout the campaign.

Heinz Kerry has been controversial because of her heiress image, previous marriage to a Republican (now-deceased Pennsylvania Sen. H. John Heinz III) and string of inflammatory comments in the press, Wolbrecht said. Independent and aggressive, Heinz Kerry therefore stands in stark contrast to Laura Bush, Wolbrecht said.

"Laura Bush behaves more like a typical first lady, smiling when her husband speaks, favoring traditional 'First Lady causes' like education and women's health care," she said. "Teresa is less polished."

To appeal to women voters in their parties' respective bases, the Bush and Kerry campaigns have spun these distinctions to create negativity, Hess said. "Each First Lady could be painted in a role that would cause ire on either side. But ultimately the impact isn't as great as the candidates themselves."

"Part of it is the race is just so close that women voters are one group they might be able to capture, especially in the swing states."

Diana Hess
League of Women Voters
South Bend
co-president

"Traditionally, working women vote Democratic and stay-at-home mothers vote Republican."

Christina Wolbrecht
professor

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Third-party candidates hope to make impact

But it's unlikely any can play a significant role in determining presidency



Third-party candidates will likely make little impact on the 2004 presidential election on Nov. 2. From left to right, Michael Badnarik of the Libertarian Party, David Cobb of the Green Party, independent candidate Ralph Nader and Constitution Party candidate Michael Peroutka are all running for the presidency this year.

By JOE HETTLER
In Focus Writer

Ralph Nader didn't win the 2000 presidential election as the Green Party's candidate, but he still played a pivotal role in determining the victor.

Some political analysts believe Nader took votes away from Democratic candidate Al Gore, thereby helping Republican challenger George W. Bush win key electoral states and ultimately the presidency.

"Some of [the citizens] possibly would not have voted at all. Some of them would have voted for Bush," said Jack Colwell, a Notre Dame journalism professor who has covered politics for 40 years at the South Bend Tribune. "It appears that most of the Nader votes otherwise would have gone to Gore and the thought is that he probably played a spoiler role in the election. If he had not been on the ballot at all, Gore likely would have won."

But in the 2004 presidential election, third-party candidates likely won't have the same impact Ross Perot had in 1996 or Nader in 2000.

"There's certainly nobody like a Ross Perot when he ran as a third-party candidate and at one time actually was sec-

ond in the polls," Colwell said. "There was some thought he could really become president. There's nobody that has a chance to do that this time."

Besides the two major parties, several lesser-known third parties will have candidates on the ballot in many, if not all 50, states. The Green Party bypassed Nader and instead nominated David Cobb, the Libertarian Party chose Michael Badnarik and the Constitution Party selected Michael Peroutka. After losing the Green party's bid, Nader decided to run as an independent candidate, but will only be named on the ballot in 34 states, excluding Indiana.

While the third-party candidates garner support from thousands of people this year, they have struggled to gain national attention from the television and newspaper media. Besides Bush and Kerry, other candidates have

received little coverage across the country. Some may deem this unfair, but Colwell disagrees.

"You have to earn your coverage," he said. "If somebody was coming on strong like a Ross Perot or even a Nader ... it's almost unfair for the real candidates — the ones who have a real chance of winning — if the press devotes a lot of time to these candidates that have no chance."

The third parties offer Americans a candidate that is radically different than those candidates from the Republicans and Democrats. The Green Party's Cobb major issues include pulling all troops out of Iraq immediately, providing health care for all Americans and establishing rights for homosexuals. Badnarik and the Libertarians promise a plan for removing troops from Iraq, oppose the Patriot Act and wish to keep government small.

"There are all kinds of candidates running — some in only one state, some in more than that, and if you add all their votes, you could say they have a slight role. But, really, Nader is the only one at the end that you'd say played any role at all."

Jack Colwell
professor

Campaign finale draws far-out rhetoric, gaffes on both

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — As the presidential race winds down, the two camps are dialing up the rhetoric. That's led to some far-out statements, unscripted behavior and foot-in-mouth comments from both sides.

Generating homestretch shock waves were Vice President Dick Cheney's nuclear-bomb terror warnings for U.S. cities, Sen. John Kerry's efforts to blame President Bush for flu vaccine shortages and Teresa Heinz Kerry's suggestion that Laura Bush never had a "real job."

Heinz Kerry apologized, saying she "forgot" that the first lady worked for 10 years as a teacher and librarian.

The comment, which could hurt Kerry among undecided women voters who are stay-at-home moms, appeared to reflect the enormous pressures on both campaigns in a close race.

"Part of what's happening is the consequence of all the tensions and anxieties from the fact that neither candidate made a big move in the polls after the debates. We're left with the same dead heat we had at the start," said Wayne Fields, an expert in presidential rhetoric at Washington University in St. Louis.

Republicans are still seething at Kerry for mentioning Cheney's openly gay daughter in the final presidential debate. "I thought it was over the line," Bush said last week in an interview with The Associated Press.

Kerry has said he was just complimenting the Cheneys on their parenting.

And then there was the claim by Pat Robertson that God told him Iraq would be "messy," but that Bush assured the religious broadcaster in early 2003 there would be no U.S. casualties. Bush aides denied the president said any such thing.

With people concerned about the economy and Iraq, both candidates are turning to extreme politics to try to nudge the needle in their favor.

Kerry accuses Bush of pondering a revival of the military draft and planning a "January surprise" on Social Security. Bush labels the Massachusetts senator an unrepentant tax-and-spend "liberal" too wishy-washy to stand up to the terrorist threat.

Each suggests the other would lead the country toward despair, defeat, towering debt.

"Everybody's beginning to recognize the stakes of this election are huge, both campaigns are tired, and they appear to be letting it all hang out," said GOP consultant Scott Reed, who ran Bob Dole's 1996 presidential campaign.

Flu vaccine was not an issue in the debates. Since then, it has become a major one.

Kerry claimed — and the administration denied — that Bush aides got advance word of a supply disruption and did nothing about it. Kerry said the inability to get the vaccine to Americans was "a serious demonstration of the failure of leadership."

Democrats criticized Cheney and leading Republicans for getting their shots while those officials were urging healthy people to forgo inoculations to free up supplies. Cheney, who has a history of heart disease, did so at the advice of his doctor, aides said. Bush, Kerry and running mate John Edwards are skipping the shots.

Cheney has stepped up his attacks on Kerry's fitness to be commander in chief. Last week he called Kerry unsuited for dealing with the "ultimate threat" of terrorists who bombed U.S. cities with nuclear weapons.

"You've got to get your mind around that concept," Cheney told Ohio supporters, suggesting Kerry could not. Kerry accused the administration of failing to safeguard nuclear materials in Russia and elsewhere.

Cheney's earlier claim that a CIA report concluding that Saddam Hussein had no weapons of mass destruction actually reinforced the administration's case for going to war led Edwards to say Bush and Cheney were "completely out of touch with reality."

Had enough mudslinging?

If not, there always is independent candidate Ralph Nader. He says this year's election presents voters with a choice between "heart disease and cancer."

The close race also seems to be producing gaffes that reinforce negative stereotypes; for instance, Bush as language-challenged and Kerry as vain and aloof.

In a New Jersey speech on terrorism, Bush asserted: "We will finish the work we have started. We will stand up for terror, we will stand up for freedom."

The next day he joked to supporters in Florida: "In the last few years, the American people have gotten to know me. They know my blunt way of speaking. I get that from Mother. They know I sometimes mangle the English language. I get that from Dad."

Kerry went hunting for geese in Ohio — hoping for a photo op that would sway gun-owning voters. But when he bought a non-resident hunting license he seem stumped when asked by a clerk what hair color should be entered into the computer to describe the buyer.

"Salt and pepper," the graying candidate said. When told by the clerk that the system would only let him pick a simple color, Kerry settled for gray.

Where They Stand

Bush

Kerry

| | Bush | Kerry |
|---------------------------|--|--|
| ABORTION | Only in cases of rape or incest or when a woman's life is endangered. Signed bill to ban a procedure that opponents call partial-birth abortion. | Yes. Would nominate only Supreme Court justices who support abortion rights. Voted against partial-birth ban. |
| BUDGET | Record deficits in a time of war, terrorism and tax cuts. Deficit expected to surpass \$400 million this year; the government had a \$127 surplus three years earlier. Says deficits can be halved in five years but has not fully explained how. Bush proposes that Congress limit discretionary spending in programs outside defense and homeland security to a 0.5 percent increase next year. | Cut deficit by half, at least, in first term, but has not fully explained how he would do so in light of major proposals on health care, education, defense and more. Repeal of Bush tax cuts for wealthier Americans would cover some costs. |
| DEATH PENALTY | Supports. | Opposes "other than in cases of real international and domestic terrorism." |
| ECONOMY - TAXES | Wants \$3,000 re-employment accounts to help the unemployed with job-search expenses. Wants to make recently passed temporary tax cuts permanent, ease business regulations, pursue more free-trade deals, increase domestic energy production, limit class-action lawsuits and medical malpractice liability. Also, give tax breaks, regulatory relief and investment incentives to needy communities. | Keep Bush's tax cuts for middle- and low-income people but raise taxes on people earning over \$200,000. He promises taxpayers earning less than \$200,000: "I am not going to raise taxes." Would increase child-care tax credit by \$1,000. Spend on highways, school construction, pollution cleanup, energy projects and more to create 3 million jobs in 500 days. Provide \$50 billion over two years to states struggling with budget deficits. |
| EDUCATION | Championed a 2002 overhaul of elementary and secondary education that toughened standards for teachers, schools and student achievement. Budget proposal would increase spending on poor school districts, children with disabilities, Pell grants to help poor students attend college, and experimental private-school voucher programs. The plan would cut spending on vocational education, a family literacy program, arts in education, dropout prevention and more. Budget proposal, if passed, would mark 43 percent increase in federal spending on programs under the No Child Left Behind Act since Bush took office. | Establish community service plan for high school students that would qualify them for the equivalent of their states' four-year public college tuition if they perform two years of national service. Provide a tax credit for every year of college on the first \$4,000 paid in tuition. Credit would provide 100 percent of the first \$1,000 and 50 percent on the rest. Opposes private-school vouchers. Backed 2002 changes but says insufficient money was spent on them and too much emphasis is placed on tests for measuring student achievement. Wants to establish \$200 billion education trust fund to help pay for the 2002 school reforms and special education. |
| ENVIRONMENT | Change clean air laws to use a market-based approach to reduce pollution from power plants, including first national cap on mercury emissions. Cut spending next year on low-interest loans for local clean water projects. Increase federal support for development of hydrogen-fueled car. Open Alaska's Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to oil drilling. | Re-engage "in the development of an international climate change strategy to address global warming;" no explicit endorsement of Kyoto treaty. No drilling in Arctic refuge. Has supported tougher fuel economy standards for vehicles. Goal of 20 percent of electricity from renewable or alternative sources by 2020. Steer \$20 billion from oil and gas royalties to development of cleaner energy. Goal of independence from Middle East oil in 10 years. Tougher standards for companies operating on public lands. |
| GAY RIGHTS | Proposes constitutional amendment banning gay marriage. Has continued former President Clinton's policy allowing gays to serve in military if they are not open about their homosexuality. | Opposes gay marriage but also opposes constitutional amendment against it; supports right to civil unions. Would ban job discrimination against homosexuals, extend hate-crime protections to gays and let gays serve openly in the military. |
| HEALTH | Number of Americans without health insurance has risen in his presidency, reaching nearly 45 million in 2003, up from nearly 40 million in 2000. Achieved prescription drug benefit for older Americans that subsidizes costs for low-income patients and encourages private insurance companies to offer coverage for the elderly willing to opt out of traditional Medicare. Cost of drug benefit and other Medicare changes now estimated at \$534 billion over 10 years, up from \$395 billion when changes were debated. New tax-free medical savings accounts can be opened by people under 65 who meet certain conditions. Monthly Medicare premiums for doctor visits are rising a record \$11.60 next year, or 17 percent. Independent study finds family health insurance premiums in employer-sponsored plans up 11 percent, averaging \$9,950 annually for family of four. | Expand existing insurance system for federal employees to private citizens through tax credits and subsidies. Unemployed would get 75 percent tax credit to help pay for insurance. Tax credits for small businesses and their employees for health insurance. People aged 55 to 64 could buy into federal employees' health plan at affordable price. Government would help companies and insurers pay an employee's catastrophic medical costs if the firms would agree to hold down premiums. Federal support to expand access to state-administered health insurance for children. Overall costs estimated by outside analyst at \$895 billion over 10 years, to cover 27 million more people. |
| IRAQ WAR | Swift military victory followed by violent aftermath and halting efforts at stabilizing new government, with more than 1,000 U.S. military deaths. Won congressional approval of \$87 billion for continued military operations and aid in Iraq and Afghanistan. Defends decision to go to war despite later findings that Iraq had no weapons of mass destruction, the central rationale at the time, and that Saddam Hussein's ties to al-Qaida were tenuous at most. Says Saddam had the will to foment unrest, cooperate with terrorists and develop such weapons over time. | Supported congressional resolution letting Bush go to war but says he did so based on faulty U.S. intelligence and with the belief the president would build a true coalition and exhaust options short of war. Opposed \$87 billion package for Iraq and Afghanistan. Says he would try to begin U.S. troop withdrawal in six months and complete it in four years, by encouraging allies to commit more forces. |
| MILITARY | Says military commanders believe active-duty forces are adequate. "If they need more, I will make sure they get it." Is beginning an overhaul of overseas deployments, with 70,000 troops coming out of South Korea and Europe, many Cold-War era bases to be closed, and more troops to be stationed in U.S. with temporary assignments to growing network of no-frills "forward operating sites" in Asia, Africa, the Middle East and Eastern Europe. "We're not going to have a draft so long as I am the president." Iraq and war on terrorism have stretched both active-duty forces and reserves. | Boost active-duty forces worldwide by 40,000, double Army special forces capability, increase civil-affairs troops by half, boost military police and psychological-operations personnel. "I don't support a draft." |
| NUCLEAR | Using diplomacy to try to stop nuclear proliferation in the remaining "axis of evil" countries, North Korea and Iran. May offer Iran economic incentives to suspend its uranium enrichment activities; prepared to push for economic sanctions if Iran does not concede. Six-nation negotiations have produced little progress in persuading North Korea to end its nuclear program. | Supports one-on-one talks between U.S. and North Korea alongside the six-nation negotiations. Says U.S. and other nations should offer Iran nuclear fuel for peaceful purposes, then take back the spent fuel so it cannot be used to develop nuclear weapons. |
| RETIREMENT | Give younger workers the opportunity to put part of their payroll tax into retirement accounts, giving them a chance to make a higher return on that investment in return for less Social Security benefits. | Opposes partial privatization of Social Security. Would require companies switching to cheaper lump-sum pension plans to offer retirees the choice of staying with traditional company pension. |
| STEM CELL RESEARCH | Signed executive order in August 2001 limiting federal research money to embryonic stem-cell lines then in existence, to ensure government does not support future production of embryos for research purposes. No controls on private embryonic stem-cell research. | Would reverse Bush's restrictions and put money into the research, ensuring unspecified ethical standards are followed through "good will and good sense." Aides say Kerry would not support creation of embryos specifically for research, but would finance research letting scientists study leftover embryos created for infertility treatment. |
| TRADE | Supports liberalized trade and is pursuing a variety of bilateral trade deals as well as one for the Western Hemisphere. | Supported North American and world trade agreements and elevated trade status with China. Would place all such trade agreements under 120-day review to see if they are fair, taking unspecified "necessary steps" if they are not. Would require companies moving jobs to other countries to give the government and workers notice. Says all trade deals should have labor and environmental standards, but United States cannot insist in these deals that foreign standards rise to the level of America's. New tax credit for manufacturers that expand their U.S. work force, covering payroll taxes of new workers. |

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