

Democratic candidates stick to scripts in debates

Many of the presidential hopefuls who debated took stabs at front-runner Dean

By Michael Tackett
Chicago Tribune (KRT)

JOHNSTON, Iowa — The Democratic presidential candidate who benefited most from the debate Sunday afternoon might well have been retired Gen. Wesley Clark.

He wasn't there.

Instead, he spent his time doing an interview on NBC's "Meet the Press" (with a much larger viewing audience), serving pancakes and holding small forums with potential voters in New Hampshire, a place where he hopes to have a surprisingly strong finish. It was perhaps time better spent.

Clark has opted out of the Iowa caucuses and opted out of the debate, broadcast nationally on CNN and Fox, as well. Sen. Joe Lieberman of Connecticut, who also decided to spurn Iowa, did participate, with the seemingly single-minded mission of trying to undercut and undermine former Vermont Gov. Howard Dean.

Each of the seven candidates in the debate (the Rev. Al Sharpton also did not attend) hewed to their nowrote scripts on policy positions, almost ensuring an ungainly, mutual drowning out.

Except when there was an opportunity to attack Dean. The volume of the attacks on Dean, of course, merely serves as a powerful measure of his strength on one level and the degree to which his success has frustrated most of his rivals, especially Lieberman.

Lieberman, who had a rhetorical burst of Iowa facts and figures even though he isn't competing here, did his best to get noticed. That was most obvious when, 76 minutes into the debate, he brandished a pen and asked Dean to release records that cover his tenure as the governor of Vermont that Dean has asked to be sealed. It was a reach for high drama - Lieberman's aides tried to stir interest by telegraphing the stunt before the debate - but it is not likely to have the desired effect.

While Dean's answer was a bit clumsy, he did note that releasing all records without some form of judicial review could result in devastating violations of personal privacy. He said that would be especially true for sensitive correspondence he received during the debate over civil unions in Vermont.

For Lieberman, the answer that

might be better remembered by Iowans anyway was the senator's explanation that the compressed campaign calendar meant he couldn't compete in Iowa. As if the other candidates didn't have the same issue.

Dean also was forced to respond to questions about his assertions that the United States was not necessarily safer after the arrest of Saddam Hussein; that Osama bin Laden, while deserving of the death penalty, also deserved the rule of law; and of his overall penchant for blurting out responses that he later is forced to clarify.

And Dean, despite all the heat on him, scored one light moment when he vowed to support the eventual Democratic nominee and asked for a show of hands whether his rivals would respond in kind. All did.

Debates can be a time to offer a

chance for separation, to break out and be seen in a new light. This, it seemed, was not one of those times.

That could be good news for Dean, with the caucuses two weeks away. It is a game of ball control at this point, especially if you believe that you are at or near the top.

The real scramble at this point is to be at or near the top with Dean. Rep. Richard Gephardt of Missouri, who is devoting nearly all of his attention to Iowa, was himself the object of some criticism as was Sen. John Kerry of Massachusetts, who has committed a surprisingly large amount of resources here.

As Dean put it, the real "front-runner in this campaign is George W. Bush."

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Report: Online music downloads decrease by half

Fifty percent fewer people are downloading digital music files than in the fall

By Chris Cobbs
The Orlando Sentinel (KRT)

ORLANDO, Fla. — The record industry's legal war against music pirates could hardly be more effective if the swashbuckling movie ship's captain Russell Crowe were at the helm, a new study shows.

Since early fall, the number of online

Americans engaged in swapping digital music files has declined by 50 percent, says a study released by the Pew Internet & American Life Project.

A nationwide telephone survey of 1,358 Web users suggests the number of music downloaders plummeted from 35 million to 18 million between late May and mid-December.

The dramatic plunge in swapping and sharing of songs was prompted by a spate of lawsuits and also by the growth of new, legal online music stores, said Mary Madden, co-author

of the new Pew report.

"We are assuming the lawsuits by the Recording Industry Association of America have impacted the numbers of downloaders," she said. "We also realize there are probably more people who are still downloading than admit to it. Even so, there has been a huge decline."

A recent federal court ruling is expected by legal experts to make it tougher for the RIAA to find and prosecute illegal file sharers, raising the possibility of a reversal in the

recent data showing a decline among downloaders.

"There will be a number of people confused by all this, who won't want to deal with the potential legal hassle," Madden said.

"There are definitely others who've been scared away, but there will be younger Web users continuing to download files. They're the hardest to stop because it's so ingrained in their behavior."

As the number of illegal downloads has dipped, the number of Web users turning to legal, fee-based download

sites has increased, the study found.

In November, more than 3.2 million individuals visited Roxio's Napster 2.0 paid music site, while Apple's iTunes Music Store attracted 2.7 million visitors.

"I would attribute the downturn in illegal downloads in part to the presence and growth of the legal download services," said Washington, D.C., attorney Michael Graif of the firm Chadbourne and Parke.

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The book argues that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is more than an issue of land and water in Israel, contending that the conflict is also about symbols and beliefs held by both sides. The book also states that

rhetoric, ideology and myth have played roles in the development of the 100-year conflict.

"The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is usually treated as an issue of land and water," the Michigan State University Press Web site states. "While these elements are the core of the conflict, they are heavily influenced by the symbols used by both peoples to describe,

understand and persuade each other."

According to the press release, the book grew out of Frank's work with the Carlton Raymond and Wilberta Ripley Savage Endowment for International Relations and Peace Committee, which awarded him an \$80,000 grant to create a program on the conflict.

"The scholars we brought to campus

to examine this conflict and the subsequent interest and dialogue within the UO faculty were a precursor to the book," Frank said in the release.

The cover photos for the book were shot by University geography Professor Alec Murphy.

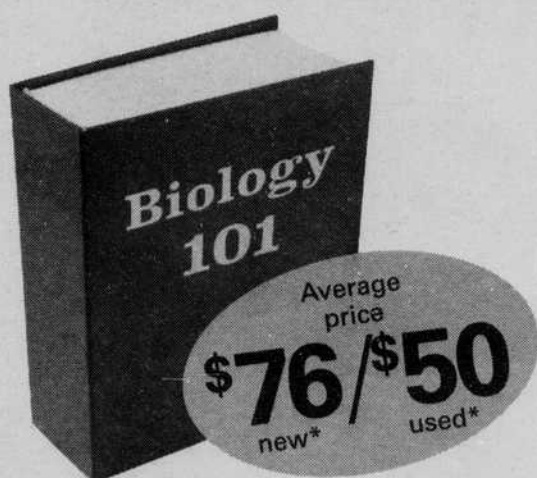
Frank is author of "Creative Speaking" and co-author of "Debating Values

and The Lincoln-Douglas Debate."

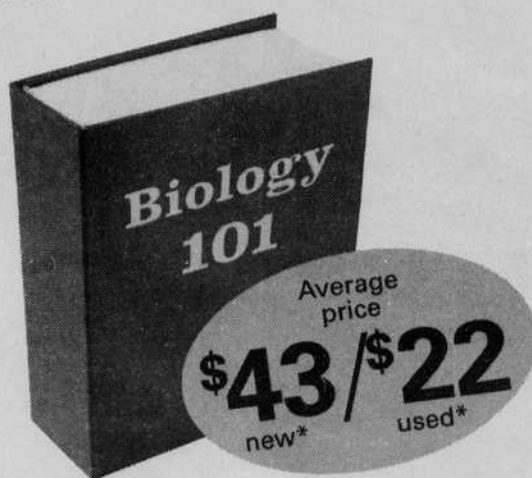
Frank is now working with geography Associate Professor Shaul Cohen to write a book comparing the conflicts in Northern Ireland and Israel.

Contact the people/culture/faith reporter at jaredpaben@dailyemerald.com.

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