

THE WAY WE ELECT PRESIDENTS

INTERVIEWS BY MICHAEL McCUSKER

"No man should be expected or permitted to wield the power of the Presidency without the clearest of titles to it. Whatever arguments may exist for the grand doctrine that all power must be first of all legitimate apply twice as severely to the power that is lodged in the American Presidency."

~CLINTON ROSSITER

A man recently walked into an Astoria bar wearing a Ralph Nader T-shirt. "You won't raise any hackles in this place," a friend said. "It's filled with Republicans, who will probably shake your hand for the help getting Bush elected. If you really want to make a statement go to a liberal bar. They'll probably kill you."

In reality the 2000 Presidential election might very well have been decided by the 100,000,000 who did not vote rather than the photo finish by the equal amount who did vote — despite the draw-offs of 3rd party votes and the more than usual corruption that plagued the election.

At any rate these interviews were conducted because many local folk not interviewed for the last issue of the NCTE wanted to know why they weren't asked the questions:

Do you think the extraordinary election of 2000 was legitimate and fair?

What do you think might be the consequences of the election?

As long as folks want to answer we will ask.

LEE MILLER:

(He is a progressive activist on sabbatical)

I fear the Bush Presidency is going to be a disaster for women's reproduction rights and I'm sure *Roe vs Wade* will be challenged by this administration.

I think we will discover a renewed spirit of militant adventurism. If we follow the pattern, there will be an executive deployment of troops, only consulting Congress later. An uncritical mass media will go along with the White House, and the violence will be sanitized and reformed for public digestion. Reporters will be forbidden from the battlefield.

There will be massive corporate welfare. There will be no national health care program. Wealth will stay on top. And of course the drug war will continue, a prolonged domestic Vietnam War.

The military wants to get into outer space to dominate the planet, our *Pax Romana*.

JUDITH GRIFFIS

(She is a poet.)

I think it was such an egregious example of hubris.

I don't know whether to laugh or cry — so I think I'll take a Buddhist very long view and laugh.

The Internet is filled with connections between the Bush family and I.G. Farbin, the Nazi manufacturer of gas used in the death camps of World War 2, among other chemical uses, parent company of today's pharmaceutical industry.

No classical civilization has ever been market driven. They have all had free trade but they never had price tags all over everything.



HODIN

'I do solemnly swear...'

GENNA HALL

(She is 14, in the 9th grade at Neah-Kah-Nie High School. She is tall in size and intellect, rich with humor.)

I think that the decision to make George Bush President was the greater of two evils.

I would rather have seen Al Gore in office — but only because I lean toward democratic views. I can't even imagine what is to come for our country the next four years.

JAMES HALL

(He is Genna's father, a woodworker and finish carpenter living on a Choy Lee sloop in Astoria's West Boat Basin.)

The election process pretty well clued me in on what are close calls — about how shaky that process is and how untested and left up to interpretation: make up the definitions as you go along. The election went in all directions: Was it up to the feds, the states, the counties? It was an exercise in putting a working definition to a law. I think we should review the procedures of close calls.

The decision to go with Bush, as I surmise talking to people, appears to be a biased or favored deal.

JOHN NELSON

(He spent 49 years in the U.S. Merchant Marine, which includes 14 years as an instructor at the Tongue Point Job Corps Center Sea School.)

For the first time in U.S. history we have had a coup. I just came back from Europe. I was over there when the election dispute was going on. People there told me "You've finally had a coup in your country."

When the President's brother is governor and one of his campaign managers counts the votes — it's a coup.

The saddest part was when the American people lost in the Supreme Court, which politicized the Court.

The tax cuts alone will probably do what Reagan did — send the country into a recession. It's a total folly based on fuzzy math.

I think Bush is a one-term President like his dad and the other father and son Presidents, the Adamses.

DAVID POLLARD

(He is a retired teacher and avid conservationist.)

I remain distressed about the electoral process and I am concerned about what happened in Florida. I hope the National Legislature will find a way to correct voting irregularities.

The vote may have been taken away in Florida, and that is exclusive to my feelings as to whether George Bush is qualified or disqualified to be President of the United States.

I am a devout believe in 'one man, one vote'. I am disturbed about the Supreme Court's decision. We must do everything possible to preclude that from ever happening again.

JIM HENSEN

(He is former bandleader of Astoria High School.)

I think the 2000 election is probably the greatest tragedy in American history. I think George Bush is the dumbest S.O.B. to ever appear on the scene.

The man has no awareness of the world we live in. I think he is microcephalic.

It was a fraudulent election. I think the damage that will be done will be long term. The magnitude of this folly is beyond calculation. If we keep doing things like this, and putting idiots like Bush in office, democracy can't exist.

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