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**"Freedom of the Press belongs to those who own one."**

*A. J. Liebling of the New Yorker*

January 12, 2004



# Commentary

## **Please Spare Us the Primaries**

**I**

have avoided remarking on the Democrat primary for a very good reason...nothing said by the leading Democrat candidates has the half-life of a Brittany Spears marriage!

Howard Dean makes a statement, I try to analyze it, then he retracts it before I can type an analysis! John Kerry has more clarifications on his Iraq positions than a dozen columns could possibly track – he has no coherent answers. Lieberman, the only adult in the entire bunch, is so low in the polls that he can't be found, and Dick Gephardt, an apparently genial and honorable man, appears to have only the support of labor unions. John Edwards is a trial lawyer, and even Democrats who LOVE the money from trial lawyers recognize that any trial lawyer has an election popularity base that is all of 1%. (Other trial lawyers.)

The remainder of the Democrat candidates appear to love to be on stage. Remind yourself of the Republican primary candidates last election cycle, and the current group of Democrat candidates – then ask yourself if the Democrat Party attracts undergraduates from the Clown Academy. Republican candidates have character, Democrat candidates ARE characters!

Everyone, even Howard Dean in his pre-run comments, admits that Iowa is not a fair test...it represents only the left wing of the left-leaning political party. That plays directly into Howard

Dean's strategy – run to the left. I don't think that Dean is personally that far to the left. He certainly didn't govern that far to the left, but he is running far to the left because he knows that is what wins Iowa, and he needs an early win or two to get the early lead.

My best guess is that Dean's gaffs represent the vast difference between his personal philosophy and the far-left philosophy necessary to distance himself from party opponents, and thus win Iowa.

The latest Dean gaffe is his (correct) analysis several years ago that Iowa is a collection of special interests. So is the entire Democrat Party, but the Iowa Caucus just exposes that to sunlight. To a lesser extent, Republicans also represent special interests, just different ones. Ones more acceptable to me.

Fortunately for the Republicans, they don't have their warts exposed this election cycle...they can take the high road and "govern." That leaves the Democrats to form their familiar circular firing squad.

Republicans seem to think that this election is a slam dunk. Not so. Forty percent of the electorate are "yellow dog" Democrats, and they will vote for whatever nominee is presented. Howard Dean, the current most likely candidate, has been described as the Pat Buchanan of the Democrat Party – which is to say he is angry. The American people do not want to elect angry people. The electorate wants strong but personally engaging Presidents. The electorate wants to like their President...Richard Nixon to the contrary notwithstanding.

For the next few weeks, the Democrat Party will engage in vicious internecine warfare, after which they will contend that all the nasty things they said about the eventual candidate were covered by some special dispensation.

I'll be smart enough not to write about it. You should be equally smart not to read about it.

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*Eppur si muove*

Galileo



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