

Finally, a presidential election voters can feel good about

This election cycle has become the most interesting political contest in recent years. In the beginning it was fun watching the debates of TV. After awhile they were putting me to sleep. The Republicans were particularly somnolent.

The Democrats took center stage by giving Senator Hillary Clinton the nod to compete in, essentially, a heretofore "all boys club". Senator Barack Obama, an African-American and Governor Bill Richardson, a Hispanic, added "color" to the game. It was nice to see a range of diversity in those well-choreographed debates.

After several weeks of non-stop debates, John McCain, a candidate that was left for dead by knowledgeable pundits, emerged as the presumptive Republican nominee for the Presidency. The success of the surge in Iraq brought McCain's campaign back to life. His stance on the war was changed from a liability to an asset. President Bush's "stay-the-course" policy wasn't so bad after all. Americans were starting to see progress in Iraq.

On the Democratic side however, things were little more chaotic. Senator Clinton and Senator Obama are currently neck and neck as they zip to the finish line. With former Senator John Edwards dropping out, the Democrats were assured of making political history. For the first time, ever, their candidate would not be a white male.

As I watch the Dems "duke-it-out" in our state, which has become a key battleground for both campaigns, I can't help but make comparisons to the early days of Affirmative Action. Due to the social unrest of the 60's and 70's a mandate was issued to remove the glass ceiling in the work place. Women and Blacks found a porous



Richard James

membrane above their heads instead. It was still tough to ascend into the ranks of power, but it was not as difficult as before. White women and Black men found themselves in direct competition for the highly coveted upper level management positions once dominated by White males.

Now we see that competition playing out again for the most powerful position on Earth, the Presidency of the United States. Many Democrats are wondering if the sniping, the backhanded insults and the negative personal attacks are hurting their party's chances to win in November. (Republican McCain must be smiling.)

I, for one, am enjoying every minute of it. I consider the current fight between Hillary and Barack as just a dress rehearsal for the major prize-fight against McCain in the Fall. I derive perverse pleasure from watching the two warring camps go at it. It's entertainment!

Other Pennsylvanians are enjoying the contest, too. The Obama-Clinton battle has certainly increased the ranks of the Democratic Party in Pennsylvania. Over 100,000 newly registered Democrats have bought tickets to the greatest primary election we've seen in a long time.

This election cycle has energized staid political observers and has reinvigorated the democratic process. Typical voter cynicism, as evidenced in low voter turnout in past years, has taken a backseat momentarily. This is an exciting time. And we

Pennsylvanians are privileged to have a front row seat on April 22nd.

Some experts say that if Clinton loses Pennsylvania, her goose is cooked. Polls indicate that her initial lead in the state is slowly eroding. Senator Bob Casey's endorsement of Sen. Obama may have had something to do with that. Or maybe Obama's emotionally moving speech in Philadelphia last month is starting to sink in. Whatever the case, I am sitting back and watching the action in awe.

Now, I am going to let you in on a little secret... I like Senator Barack Obama. I like him because he is a black man. His candidacy gives hope to millions of African-American children across the country. And Black kids desperately need Black positive role models.

But I also like Senator Hillary Clinton. (Shhh. Don't tell anybody.) She's got the moxie needed to run the White House. Can you imagine Clinton double-teaming with Nancy Pelosi, the Speaker of the House, to push through a comprehensive health care package?

Heck, I even like Senator McCain. His straightforward approach is a like a breath of fresh air. This man knows what loyalty means. I trust him.

So there you have it. I confess. I haven't felt this good about Presidential candidates since... well since the 1960 Nixon-Kennedy bout. (I was too young to vote for John Kennedy though.)

Don't forget to exercise your right to VOTE!

James is the Publisher of "An African-American Perspective" Newsletter that is published online at <http://rcjamesdesign.net/African-American/> He may be reached at rjames@rcjamesdesign.net
