

RECORD TYPE: PRESIDENTIAL (NOTES MAIL)

CREATOR: Winnie Stachelberg (Winnie Stachelberg <Winnie.Stachelberg@hrc.org> [UNKNOWN])

CREATION DATE/TIME:18-APR-2000 17:49:30.00

SUBJECT: FW: [lgbt-politics] Navy Boss: Don't Test Gay Issues

TO: dhattaway ("dhattaway@gorennet.com" <dhattaway@gorennet.com> [UNKNOWN])
READ:UNKNOWN

TO: Jeff Trammell ("Jeff Trammell (E-mail)" <jtrammel@hillandknowlton.com> [UNKNOWN])
READ:UNKNOWN

TO: Philip DuFour ("Philip DuFour (E-mail)" <philip_g_dufour@ovp.eop.gov> [ovp])
READ:UNKNOWN

TO: Elizabeth J. Potter (CN=Elizabeth J. Potter/OU=WHO/O=EOP [WHO])
READ:UNKNOWN

TEXT:
fyi...might spark a new round of questions.

-----Original Message-----

From: LGBT Activists List [mailto:doug.case@sdsu.edu]

Sent: Tuesday, April 18, 2000 1:31 PM

To: lgbt-politics@egroups.com; queerpolitics@abacus.oxy.edu

Subject: [lgbt-politics] Navy Boss: Don't Test Gay Issues

Associated Press, April 18, 2000

Navy Boss: Don't Test Gay Issues

ANNAPOLIS, Md. (AP) -- Secretary of the Navy Richard Danzig told an audience at the U.S. Naval Academy that the military should not be considered a testing ground for gay-rights issues.

Responding to a question about gays in military service, Danzig said

Monday night that American society "hasn't reached a consensus" on gay rights.

"In the end, the military itself shouldn't be a driver of that, but a follower of the consensus of society," he said.

"It is really much more an issue for society-at-large as it is for the military," he said. "The military isn't essentially a testing ground."

Defense Secretary William Cohen last month said he would create a special committee to investigate anti-gay speech and harassment after a Pentagon inspector general's survey found that the problems are commonplace in the American military.

The Clinton administration's "don't ask, don't tell" policy permits gays and lesbians to serve in the military as long as they keep their sexual orientation to themselves and commanders do not inquire about it.

The Pentagon was forced to take a closer look at how the gay policy is being implemented after the bludgeoning death last July of a gay Army private at Fort Campbell, Ky. His killer, a fellow private, was convicted and sentenced to life in prison.

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RECORD TYPE: PRESIDENTIAL (NOTES MAIL)

CREATOR: Hoag, Jamie ("Hoag, Jamie" <Jamie.Hoag@mail.house.gov> [UNKNOWN])

CREATION DATE/TIME:18-APR-2000 19:05:34.00

SUBJECT:

TO: Jared Powell (CN=Jared Powell/OU=WHO/O=EOP [WHO])

READ:UNKNOWN

TEXT:

Navy secretary says military not a testing ground for gay rights

Richard Danzig

April 18, 2000

Web posted at: 9:24 a.m. EDT (1324 GMT)

ANNAPOLIS, Maryland (AP) -- Secretary of the Navy Richard Danzig told an audience at the U.S. Naval Academy that the military should not be considered a testing ground for gay-rights issues.

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RECORD TYPE: PRESIDENTIAL (NOTES MAIL)

CREATOR: Fenceberry (Fenceberry@aol.com [UNKNOWN])

CREATION DATE/TIME:19-APR-2000 03:31:01.00

SUBJECT: Articles 4.18.00.6

TO: undisclosed-recipients ("undisclosed-recipients;"@eop.gov [UNKNOWN])

READ:UNKNOWN

Elizabeth J. Potter (CN=Elizabeth J. Potter/OU=WHO/O=EOP [WHO])

READ:UNKNOWN

TEXT:

1. JACKSON (MS) CLARION-LEDGER Letter: Adoption by gays is work of Satan

2. DETROIT FREE PRESS Several letters, including one from the

irrepressible

Gary Rimar

3. CBS NEWS Dan Rather's Notebook: Bush's Bind On Gays Is His Party's

Dilemma; Can The GOP Reach Out And Keep Its Base?

4. VANCOUVER (WA) COLUMBIAN Column: W.'s gay stand not a profile in

courage

Jackson Clarion-Ledger, April 18, 2000

Box 40, Jackson, MS, 39205

(Fax 601-961-7211) (E-Mail: letters@jackson.gannett.com)

Letter: Heterosexual bond dissimilar from gay

I am writing in response to several letters saying it was wrong for the legislature to pass the measure prohibiting gay adoptions.

What is wrong with a law that protects our children? We do have laws

or

court decisions that do not protect our children, such as Roe vs. Wade,

which

has made it legal according to man's law to kill millions of babies.

It was mentioned in an April 9 letter that there are good and bad gay relationships ("Gay adoption bill reflects ignorance"), implying that there are good and bad relationships in traditional couples as well. There is a big difference between the two.

A marriage bounded by the love of God allows a man and a women [sic] to become one in the eyes of God. A man and a women [sic] become one in spirit and body and are given the wonderful role of procreators as blessed by God. This role or gift that God has given us allows a man and women [sic again! Maybe this guy's an unconscious polygamist!] to bear children and to raise them as children of God.

God intended for all children to have a mother and a father, as His only Son, Jesus did.

We have to be careful that we do not use a wrong (failed marriage or not enough adoptions) to justify another wrong(gay adoption). Satan paints this picture rather well since he is the father of all lies.

? Charles Curcio, Madison

Detroit Free Press, April 18, 2000

321 W. Lafayette Blvd., Detroit, MI, 48231

(Fax 313-222-6774) (E-MAIL: editpg@freepress.com)

(<http://www.freep.com/>)

Letter: It's not right to judge gays

After reading Maggie Gallagher's thoughts on gay marriage and family values, and her family of five, I am inclined to think that people bringing large families into this world of hunger and overpopulation are a far greater threat to our world and its well-being than any gay or lesbian marriage will ever be ("It's OK to question gay marriage," April 7).

Gays, like all of us, will one day meet their maker and be judged. So I try not to prejudge them.

? Marvin T. Powell, Cedar Springs

Letter: Gay marriage doomed

In response to Maggie Gallagher's April 7 op-ed: What's that noise? A round of applause and cheers from the majority of people who still believe there is a bigger question and issue pertaining to the institution of marriage and do not want to become part of some grander social experiment doomed to failure from its inception.

? Douglas Tyrer, St. Clair Shores

Letter: Gays, find your own groups

Op-ed columnist Marianne Means has it all wrong ("Scout issue is one of intolerance," April 10).

The attempt to force the Boy Scouts to accept practicing homosexual scoutmasters is not a civil rights issue. It's about homosexual behavior, which is not immutable like race or gender.

Means seems eager for science to discover that homosexuals are born,
not
made. And if they are born that way, so what? There are plenty of Roman
Catholic priests, of both homosexual and heterosexual tendencies, who
remain
celibate. So again, the issue for the Boy Scouts is behavior. The gay
rights agenda is a stowaway on the civil rights ship and perhaps deserves
to
be marooned on a desert island.

If Means wants practicing homosexuals to be scoutmasters, let them form
their own troop. Just who the Boy Scouts screen out is none of her
business.

? John E. Taylor, Royal Oak

Letter: Preserve values

I really have to disagree with Marianne Means. Why is it that when we
really believe that something is wrong we are called intolerant? I feel
the
rights of people who find this lifestyle objectionable are being violated.

I believe that the Scouts should be able to have leaders who are
representative of the beliefs they have held for years.

? Judy Hart, Washington

Letter: No military experiment

In response to your April 3 editorial "Military Mistakes: 'Don't ask,
don't tell' doesn't work; be fair to gays," There is no place in the
military

for homosexuals. Most of the people who are pushing for gays in the military have never served in the military, especially in combat. I spent 31 years in the infantry, adjutant general and medical branches, with two years in Vietnam.

On the battlefield, there is no time to test blood for AIDS. How would you like to tell parents that their son contracted AIDS in battle?

If we permit gays to shower and sleep in the same area, then the next logical step is to make all military showers, barracks, etc., co-ed. I say that tongue-in-cheek since it is obviously immoral. How can you expect healthy, virile young men, many who are away from home for the first time, to eat and shower with a known gay?

Just as we disqualify people from the military for flat feet, overweight, heart problems and hearing problems, gays should be disqualified on medical grounds. That is if you believe the so-called experts who claim that homosexuality is caused by genetics. The military should not be used as an agency for social change. Why should the military be forced to do something that a majority of the general public thinks is wrong?

? Donald E. Alsbro, Retired, United States Army, Benton Harbor

Letter: Wrong targets

Bravo to your editorial on gays serving in the military. The problem is

group cohesion. The cause of the problem are the perpetrators ? bigots ?
rather than the gays.

The military should segregate those who can't work with people and take
orders ? gay or straight.

? Gary Rimar, Shelby Township

CBS News, April 18, 2000

<http://cbsnews.cbs.com/now/story/0,1597,185647-412,00.shtml>

Republicans' Birdcage

Bush's Bind On Gays Is His Party's Dilemma

Can The GOP Reach Out And Keep Its Base?

By CBS News Anchor Dan Rather

NEW YORK (CBS) ? There's a rhythm to a presidential election year.

After the full-tilt boogie of the primaries, this one's reached a more
relaxed tempo, with both campaigns working right now on positioning,
throwing
a few feints, and avoiding the sort of mistakes that would send them
stumbling rather than marching triumphantly into their respective summer
coronations.

George W. Bush's meeting last week with a small group of openly gay
Republicans was interesting because it seemed to incorporate all of these
elements.

It was about positioning, sure, part of the Texas governor's move to
the
center, and it may have been a feint of sorts, too. Maybe Team Bush hoped
that Gore, thinking himself in a genuine competition for gay votes, might

play one of his compulsive games of one-upsmanship.

And as Bush sought to avoid errors of omission and commission, it became pretty plain that his meeting had plenty to do with this year's Republican convention.

The moderate wing of the Republican Party still has bad dreams about Pat Buchanan's 1992 declaration of "cultural war" in the Houston convention hall.

Though any number of things brought George Bush senior down that year ? and though Pat Buchanan was not the only Republican to take a hard line on so-called "family values" in that year or those that followed ? the "harsh GOP convention of 1992" has found its place in the conventional wisdom of campaigning: how NOT to run a Republican nominating convention.

Republican determination to not repeat its off-putting (to the mainstream) air of meanness led to 1996's tepid and awkward Dole nominating convention, where Susan Molinari and Elizabeth Dole's speeches were used to soften the rhetoric if not the messages themselves.

This year, it seems, the Republicans continue to heed the lessons of '92 ? first and foremost in their choice of the presumptive nominee. Before the rightward lurches of the primary campaign, George W. Bush looked to rank-and-file voters the way he must have been seen by Republican strategists and king makers ? like the perfect offspring of that fragile marriage

between

moderate Republicans and the Christian right. Which, considering his lineage, he almost literally is.

What Bush's "compassionate conservatism" mostly amounts to, of course, is

a rhetorical bow to changing attitudes on issues such as education, the environment, and the role of government. Put another way, Bush is trying, with the right words and gestures, to hit the moving target of the American political center.

What's becoming plain, however, is just how hard this is for a conservative candidate to do, "compassionate" or not. With the battle lines

already so tightly drawn within his own party, George W. Bush must try to appease the middle while not seeming to call attention to the logical disconnect this causes with the "family values" thrust of the post-Reagan Republican platform.

Gays are not, of course, the only target of the Christian right's values

jihad. But the recent legislative and judicial struggles of the gay rights movement ? gays in the military, gay marriage, bias laws ? and even the mainstream emergence of gay culture (Ellen, et al) have put them repeatedly in the far-right's crosshairs on an issue-by-issue basis.

The compassionate conservative's stand on homosexuals seems to be this:

I'm OK, you're OK ? so long as you don't want to serve in my military, marry

my son, or get "special protection" from civil rights laws.

To those old enough to remember or with an ear for history, this will

all
ring familiar. And the conundrum the Republicans are facing now echoes the
one with which segregationists of both parties were confronted as the black
civil rights movement matured: once bigotry falls out of mainstream
fashion,
it's hard to talk the accepted talk without walking the walk. When the
prevailing political winds force a party to abandon prejudicial rhetoric,
how
can it continue to advocate prejudicial policy without wrapping itself in
the
cloak of hypocrisy?

That the outright slurs and the sly innuendo of even recent years past
are no longer acceptable public discourse is a measure of just how far we
have come as a society. Yes, the military service and marriage issues
center
around long, long-standing traditions that are by their very nature
resistant
to change. And yes, good people still disagree in good faith about legal
action that would open these institutions to gays.

But on the partisan level, the difference is this: the Democrats have
put themselves at the vanguard of the shift in mores that is opening
society
to openly gay men and women. Maybe not to the extent that certain gay
political leaders would like or demand, but the Democrats have staked out
the
cutting edge of the political center, at least, on these issues.

In contrast, the Republicans are being dragged along ? and for a

national
party that seeks to be the dominant one, that's not a comfortable position
to
be in.

Vancouver Columbian, April 18, 2000

P. O. Box 180, Vancouver, WA, 98666

(Fax 360-699-6033) (E-MAIL: editors@columbian.com)

W'S GAY STAND NOT A PROFILE IN COURAGE

MICHAEL ZUZEL, Columbian staff writer

George W. Bush is getting better and better. Don't believe it? Just
ask
him.

Last week the Texas governor and Republican presidential candidate
made a
big show of sitting down and talking privately to a dozen homosexual
members
of his own political party. Afterward he held the briefest of press
conferences just long enough to declare, "I enjoyed it," and that "I am a
better person for the meeting."

Gosh, what great news.

When most people say that something has "made me a better person,"
they're referring to a great shock or trauma in their lives the loss of a
job, a serious accident, the death of a family member that had the
unexpected
effect of expanding their horizons or strengthening their character.

Apparently Bush considers chatting amiably with some gays and lesbians to be just such a life-changing ordeal. How fortunate for him that the awful event lasted only an hour and that he didn't have to actually share a meal with those people or even welcome them into his home (the meeting was held at his Austin campaign headquarters). And how fortunate for the nation that Bush has managed to find the inner courage to carry on after being subjected to such torture.

Admittedly, this profile in courage was a little late in coming. Last November, Bush said he would "probably not" meet with the Log Cabin Republicans the GOP's tiny homosexual contingent because "all that does is create kind of a huge political, you know, nightmare for people." Last Thursday's meeting apparently represented only a mildly, you know, bad dream:

The 12 gay and lesbian party members in attendance were hand-picked by the Bush campaign and included none of the Log Cabin leadership.

Even so, Bush couldn't seem to keep his story straight. He said afterward that Log Cabin officials had been invited to the confab; Log Cabin officials said they had not.

That was hardly the biggest contradiction of the day, however. When asked whether he would be willing to appoint a gay person to his administration, Bush replied, "It's not a factor. The factor is: Can the person do the job, and do we share a philosophy?"

How compassionately conservative of him but not quite the same answer

Bush offered on a South Carolina Christian radio program two months ago, when he said that "an openly known homosexual is somebody who probably wouldn't share my philosophy" and thus would not be welcome in his administration.

A 'family values' philosophy

It's no surprise that Bush has found it necessary to play both sides of the fence or in this case, the closet door. The Republican Party, after all, has consistently opposed marriage by gays, adoption by gays, child custody for gays, job benefits for gay partners, protection for gays from employment discrimination and hate crimes penalties for anti-gay violence.

It's the party whose last presidential candidate, Bob Dole, not only refused to meet with the Log Cabin Republicans but returned their campaign donation.

It's the party whose "family values" philosophy welcomes the racist, anti-Catholic Bob Jones University; Patrick "Hitler was a genius" Buchanan, who blames gays for everything from AIDS to child abuse to violence in Hollywood movies; and Ralph Reed, Jerry Falwell, Gary Bauer and the rest of the fanatic religious right, who insist that their personal interpretation of the Bible ought to be made the law of the land. Bush reportedly checked with Christian conservative leaders before agreeing to meet with the GOP gays presumably to reassure them that he was up to the challenge and could resist being "recruited" into their "filthy sodomite lifestyle," as some on the pious right would put it. But Bush infuriated Bauer anyway by saying after the meeting that he might allow a

gay

person to speak at the Republican National Convention this summer.

"I think it would be bizarre," Bauer said, "... because once you go down

that road, why don't you pick a transvestite?"

Now there's a thought: a cross-dressing Republican (presuming one could

be located somewhere in the country) addressing GOP delegates on a relatively

safe subject (say, free trade) while wearing a tasteful yet sumptuous outfit

(blue dress, modest pearl necklace and black pumps, perhaps?).

The GOP could lay claim to the biggest tent in American politics. The convention would win its highest TV ratings in decades. And George W. Bush would surely be a better person a hugely better person for the experience. We'd know, because he'd tell us so.

? Michael Zuzel's column of personal opinion appears on the Other Opinions page each Tuesday. His e-mail address: mike.zuzel@columbian.com.

RECORD TYPE: PRESIDENTIAL (NOTES MAIL)

CREATOR: Elizabeth J. Potter (CN=Elizabeth J. Potter/OU=WHO/O=EOP [WHO])

CREATION DATE/TIME:19-APR-2000 13:35:17.00

SUBJECT: Norwegian Lunch

TO: Philip G Dufour (CN=Philip G Dufour/O=OVP@OVP [OVP])

READ:UNKNOWN

TEXT:

did you talk to kim ?

----- Forwarded by Elizabeth J. Potter/WHO/EOP on

04/19/2000 01:34 PM -----

Christine A. Stanek

04/19/2000 10:53:03 AM

Record Type: Record

To: Kim B. Widdess/WHO/EOP@EOP

cc: Elizabeth J. Potter/WHO/EOP@EOP

Subject: Norwegian Lunch

Were we able to invite this person to the lunch? We would be extremely grateful if there was any way to accomodate her.

----- Forwarded by Christine A. Stanek/WHO/EOP on

04/19/2000 10:52 AM -----

Christine A. Stanek

04/11/2000 05:53:53 PM

Record Type: Record

To: Kim B. Widdess/WHO/EOP@EOP

cc:

Subject: Norwegian Lunch

This is the person I spoke to you about. She will be in town the week of the Nordic Lunch due to the big Millenium March on the Mall that is being held on Saturday. Any consideration of an invitation would be greatly appreciate.

Cammermeyer, Dr. Margarethe

Diane Divellbess

4632 South Tompkins

Langley, Washington 98260

360-221-5882

The only Norwegian of note that I am aware of in the gay and lesbian community is Dr. Margarethe Cammermeyer. She is the woman who was portratyed by Glenn Close in the film Serving in Silence. She was named nurse of the year by the Veterans Administration, recieved a bronze star for service in Vietnam, and served as Chief Nurse for Washington State National Guard.

In 1989, while applying to the Army War College to become a General she revealed during her top secret security clearance that she was a lesbian. She was discharged, but later reinstated. This happened before the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy.

She is very supportive of the President and Vice President. She also ran for Congress in 1998 from Washington State.

RECORD TYPE: PRESIDENTIAL (NOTES MAIL)

CREATOR: Susan L. Hazard (CN=Susan L. Hazard/OU=WHO/O=EOP [WHO])

CREATION DATE/TIME:21-APR-2000 14:36:20.00

SUBJECT: New York Times Sunday Magazine: Al Gore Moves Beyond Meta

TO: Charles E. Olson (CN=Charles E. Olson/OU=WHO/O=EOP@EOP [WHO])
READ:UNKNOWN

TO: Donna K. Carroll (CN=Donna K. Carroll/OU=WHO/O=EOP@EOP [WHO])
READ:UNKNOWN

CC: Bridger E. McGaw (CN=Bridger E. McGaw/O=OVP@OVP [OVP])
READ:UNKNOWN

TEXT:
Be real nice when you prove them wrong. Thanks, Bridger

----- Forwarded by Susan L. Hazard/WHO/EOP on 04/21/2000

02:14 PM -----

Bridger E. McGaw@OVP

04/21/2000 01:50:51 PM

Record Type: Record

To: Susan L. Hazard/WHO/EOP@EOP, Key C. German/WHO/EOP@EOP

cc:

Subject: New York Times Sunday Magazine: Al Gore Moves Beyond Meta

WELL HE TOOK PHOTOS FOR THE NYT!

----- Forwarded by Bridger E. McGaw/OVP on 04/21/2000

01:52 PM -----

Brian A. Reich

04/21/2000 01:21:42 PM

Record Type: Record

To: Bridger E. McGaw/OVP@OVP

cc:

Subject: New York Times Sunday Magazine: Al Gore Moves Beyond Meta

Bingo!

----- Forwarded by Brian A. Reich/OVP on 04/21/2000 01:21

PM -----

Brian A. Reich

01/22/2000 09:53:48 PM

Record Type: Record

To: See the distribution list at the bottom of this message

cc:

Subject: New York Times Sunday Magazine: Al Gore Moves Beyond Meta

Can a politician be above politics? Do you have to be authentic to
be believed? Can all these political gimmicks actually be
working?

By JAMES BENNET Photographs by LARRY FINK

Related Articles

Campaigns: White House 2000 -- Al Gore (D)

Any organization reflects its leader, as Al Gore says, and for most of last

year his presidential campaign was the outward sign of an inward turmoil.

At the beginning of 1999, he was certain to stroll to the Democratic nomination.

Who would have predicted that, before the year was out, he would change campaign

managers and chiefs of staff, replace his pollsters and his admen, truck his headquarters

from Washington to Nashville and begin the year 2000 worried he would have less cash on hand after the New Hampshire primary than Bill Bradley, the challenger

he once dismissed? Though born and bred for higher office and schooled

by Bill Clinton for seven years in the getting and holding of the presidency,

Gore was unprepared to run for the job to a degree baffling to some of his

advisers. This past year -- particularly the past four months --
has provided
a bracing political education for a man who had no clue how much
he
needed it.

"It's sort of like the experience that most of us have in
getting older," the
vice president told me during a rare appearance in his West Wing
office, a
few days before Christmas. "You look back at a previous point in
your life
and find it difficult to believe how little you knew. I look
back now at the
beginning of the year, while the impeachment trial was about to
begin and
incoming rounds were landing on the White House roof every 30
seconds,
and I can't believe that I decided to put the campaign on K
Street." He
roared with laughter. "You know, hello?"

That Gore is still talking in detail about that education is
evidence that it
remains under way. The early, very public incompetence of his
campaign
created a political problem that he is still struggling to

solve; it lent weight

to Democrats' central concern about him, that he lacked the political

wherewithal to beat an impressive Republican candidate. To combat the

relentlessly negative reviews of his campaign, Gore has been forced to

make the quality of his campaigning central to his candidacy, to ballyhoo

the move of his headquarters to Nashville, for example, while Bradley kept

on talking about health care or child poverty and his advisers remained

silently behind their curtains. This has repeatedly returned Gore to the

same shaky ground -- his political ability -- while lending heft to a related

doubt about him: that he is a programmable man guided more by tactics

than beliefs. Gore's problem, in short, has been less alpha or beta than

meta.

It's a peculiar problem, for what Gore has been learning this past year is

how to be a politician -- which is, of course, the job description of a

candidate. Unfortunately for Gore, however, it is a dirty word.

But what is so wicked about a politician politicking? This year, candidates and reporters are condemning politics and praising "authenticity."

Antipolitics has been with us for some time now; authenticity is this campaign's variant, a kind of characterological shorthand for everything

politics allegedly is not -- honest, deep, real. But those who tout authenticity

are making an almost useless distinction, at least as far as campaigning

goes. If authenticity is what the people want (and, help me here, when was

it that they clamored for fakery?), then it is a political act to give it to them.

Was it "authentic" for Bradley as a senator to study Elvis Presley movies in

hopes of honing his communication skills? He was looking to change

himself to appeal to people, the essence of inauthenticity. On the other

hand, he was hoping to appeal to people in order to lead them, the essence

of good politics.

The phony divide between authenticity and politicking was captured by the tumult

earlier this month over John McCain's letters pressuring the F.C.C. to speed up a

decision important to a donor. Captain Campaign Reform suddenly looked like just

another politician. Yes, by all means take the excessive money out of politics; but

don't take the politics out, to paraphrase Clinton. In policing the bureaucracy on

behalf of his constituents, including donors, McCain was being who he is, an authentic politician. Put another way, he was doing his job.

Gore's chief problem is that deep down he suspects it is dishonorable to be

a politician, and this can make him a bad one. He reminds me a bit of some

second-generation auto dealers, the expensively educated sons of self-made men who balk at the tactics of the family business they know so

intimately. "He doesn't really like politics," one of Gore's closest aides told

me. "He holds it in disdain." But he is gradually coming to terms with his

outer politician. As with the move to Nashville, campaign gestures that

were entirely political -- gestures that Gore feared would be derided as

entirely political -- have had political effects that have reminded him what

is so great about politics: it connects candidates with voters.

This was illustrated by his challenge to Bradley that they forego political

advertising and hold plenty of debates instead. Pundits immediately

dismissed the proposal as a political gimmick. They were right that it was a

gimmick. They were wrong to dismiss it. Gore was led, by political

considerations, to suggest a reform that would have elevated the discussion

and released some of the money pressure. His offer left Bradley in the

position of defending 30-second commercials as a more effective means of

communication. Which is the more cynical -- or if you prefer, "political" --

position? Who cares?

As a politician, Gore is making progress. Man, message and

political

machine mesh more smoothly now than four months ago. The changes
in

each did not come at once, but they occurred over roughly the
same time

-- just before and after Gore shifted his headquarters to
Nashville in

October -- and they reinforced one another. A new team of loyal
advisers,

his own competitive nature and a rediscovery of his competence at
face-to-face politicking have probably given him enough
confidence and

focus to win the Democratic nomination, barring any egregious
blunders.

He has solidified his position in Iowa and strengthened it in
New York,

which may force Bradley to divert time and money from the West
and the

South to what had once looked like a sure state for him.

Yet doubts about politics are still getting in his way. Like
Clinton, Gore is

ruthless -- a quality operatives who know him cite with respect
-- and he

will do what he thinks it takes to win. But he is not as
consistently right

about what the "it" is, because, unlike Clinton, he does not

have much

respect for the muddle of personality and policy that is

presidential

campaigning. And that causes him, sometimes, to disrespect his audience,

to act as if it must be led by the nose, for who but the dim would take this

circus seriously? Hence his stagy offer of a handshake to Bradley when he

proposed shunning political ads, a contrived -- O.K., "inauthentic" --

gesture that undercut his words.

The focus on Gore's politicking might seem to overlook the question of how good a president, as opposed to a candidate, he would be -- to sell

short his policy expertise, for the Democratic or Republican field. But the questions are not

separable, as Gore himself acknowledges. "I think that the way a candidate for president

communicates with the voters is directly relevant to the way a president communicates with

the American people after the election," he told me.

Of course, it is about listening as well as talking. Gore learned this when

his father drifted out of touch with his constituents --

undermining his ability

to reconcile them to his antiwar position -- and lost his bid
for re-election to

the Senate in 1970. He seemed for most of last year to have
forgotten that.

But he has been learning again to pay attention, as he did when
he was in

Congress, to listen to voters and to answer their questions.
Before small

groups this fall and winter, Gore has displayed a mastery of
intricate

matters, a knack for explaining them and an agile sense of
humor. He has

also become a better debater, finally swallowing his aggravation
with

Clinton and expressing some pride in the work they did in what
Bradley

derided as a Washington "bunker." Gore's comeback to Bradley's
"bunker"

remark was canned, and his own advisers wished he had been
quick-witted enough to generate it when Bradley first attacked.

But at last

he managed to take credit for Clinton administration policies
without

embracing, or trashing, Clinton the man.

Gore has been relearning what it is to seek votes for himself,

and in this

quest he has been aided not by soul-searching but by pros who

never lose

sleep about whether some tactic is too political. One day this

fall,

mid-turnaround, Donna Brazile, Gore's campaign manager, sketched

a

triangle for me on a sheet of paper in her cubbyhole of an

office in

Nashville. Along one edge she wrote the words "proven leader"

and along

the next she wrote "principled fighter." By the third she wrote

"experience

that matters."

To make sure that the American people got the right message

about her

complicated boss, Brazile and other campaign staff members were

struggling at the time to fit their thoughts about him into that

shape, which

was designed by Carter Eskew, Gore's message guru and the most

influential man in his campaign. "Every conversation -- no

matter how it

starts off -- it's got to go into this box," Brazile explained.

"Whether it's

Social Security, health care, education -- O.K.?" Then, beside

the triangle,

she sketched a square. She attached the same labels to three of the sides,

and along the fourth she added the words "substantive differences with Bill

Bradley." This is not about geometry. It is entirely about politics.

Above the conference table, Michael Whouley, whip thin and balding,

was all gravelly voice and fiercely focused gaze, but beneath it he

was all motion. He perched on the edge of his seat, the balls of his

feet against the floor and his knees punching the air or wagging together

and apart. He rubbed his hands together, then systematically cracked each knuckle.

Arrayed before him, with varying degrees of wariness, were the top 15

staff members of Gore's campaign in Iowa. Around them, taped to the

walls of Gore's Des Moines headquarters, were sheets of white construction paper bearing the lyrical names of Iowa's counties

-- Wapello,

Dallas, Jasper -- with the percentage of Democratic delegates

that will

come from each, the number of voters committed to Gore and the
number

that he needs to win. Whouley was there to make sure that those
last two

numbers matched by Jan. 24, when Iowa's first-in-the-nation
caucuses are
to be held.

"Nothing -- less -- than -- that -- is -- acceptable," he said,
hands above the
table and pressed prayerfully together now, their heels rapping
it at each
word.

There is something of a class divide between American political
operatives. There are the high-flying media advisers who
expensively
conduct the war from the air and draw reporters' attention, and
then there

are the organizers in jeans and flannel shirts who fight it out
on the ground,
in every precinct. Whouley, a Bostonian whose thick Dorchester
accent

renders him an "organizuh," is, along with Donna Brazile, one of
the
Democrats' most experienced in the second category, which is the

reason

Gore turned to him when his campaign stumbled. Whouley, who is 40, took

charge of the campaign in New Hampshire and Iowa after Gore got a wake-up call from The Boston Globe. On Sept. 5, it published a survey

showing him and Bradley in a statistical tie in New Hampshire. Some Gore

advisers date the campaign's turnaround to that poll. Confident that Bush

and not Bradley was the problem, the campaign had not polled in New Hampshire since July.

At a meeting with Gore's supporters in New Hampshire, Whouley got an earful. Set off

by rope lines, Secret Service agents and lecterns, Gore was running the sort of imperial

campaign that repelled the state's cosseted voters. The headquarters in Washington and

the vice president's office did not listen to suggestions from the field. It took conference call

after conference call to schedule the most basic of events, and then even more

wrangling to vet the list of invitees and choose the backdrop.

In Iowa, the situation was less severe. Gore had done more retail

politicking there, in part because an aggressive campaign team on the ground had won some of its screaming matches with the vice-presidential staff. But Gore worried that the campaign might not be building the precinct-by-precinct organization needed to corral voters for the evening-long caucuses, which are to take place tomorrow. In each of the 2,142 precincts, the campaign needed a volunteer captain able to drag other supporters in.

Anticipating a Bradley push into Iowa, Gore's top aides feared that he could narrow the gap enough to outperform reporters' expectations, or even win. Whouley found that the campaign was not ready to beat him back. One exhausted staff member was carrying the burden of overseeing the caucuses in all 99 counties.

When he reported to the vice president, Whouley recommended that he begin holding town-hall meetings with undecided voters in New Hampshire. He also requested a reorganization of the Iowa

campaign

structure.

Iowa was divided into six regions, each overseen by a new regional

director. Now, in mid-December, Whouley had come to grill the directors

on their progress and to find out how much money they needed from headquarters; no new field office, he insisted, should cost more than \$100 a

month. Above all, he wanted to make sure they were aware of the stakes.

He told them that each held "Al Gore's political viability" in his hands.

If Gore stumbles in Iowa, his failure will surely be attributed to his personal

appeal or his advertising. In fact, his success or failure will turn on this

detail work invisible at the national level. It may be gritty politics, but it is

also the side of campaigning that engages hundreds of young people and

volunteers. Should the campaign rent 100 sport utility vehicles to drive

people to the caucuses in case it snows? ("Bradley's demographic is

suburban, and they drive Volvos," Whouley warned. "The new Volvos have four-wheel drive.") How many phone lines, at \$40 a pop, must a new

field office have to conduct 400 calls a night? Where should they send the

volunteers who would pour into Iowa right before the caucuses? Should

Gore himself place a call to a particular teetering county supervisor? What

should be done about the two organizers in eastern Iowa discovered eating

Cheerios during telephone time? "Can we fire these people?" inquired

Whouley, with sudden, icy fury. "Why does this region have so many [expletive] knuckleheads?"

|
Whouley's message in Des Moines reflected Brazile's top priorities

since Gore elevated her from political director to campaign manager: cutting spending and instilling some passion in the staff.

One of nine children from Kenner, La., Brazile likes to keep her expenses

low enough that she could survive, if she had to, working a double shift at

McDonald's. She believes paid consultants are somehow
antidemocratic.

She spends her vacations organizing for congressional
candidates. And so

she was deeply uncomfortable with the colorless, spiritless
campaign Gore

was running from K Street, Washington's Lobbyists' Row, where the
headquarters was spread across three floors. Bill Bradley had
more of a

cult than a campaign, she thought, while sometimes the Gore
operation felt
like a travel agency.

Those problems had bothered Gore for months. In early May, he
brought in

Coelho in hopes of disciplining his operation. That was a
gamble, since

Coelho, a Californian who had risen to majority whip largely on
the

strength of his prodigious fund-raising, had left Congress under
a cloud 10

years ago, and risked further marking Gore as the insiders'
candidate. Gore

and Coelho were friendly in the House, but they had never been
close. But

Gore realized that he needed someone toughened by bare-knuckle
Democratic politics, someone with "gray hair." In their private

conversations, Gore assured Coelho that if he ran a good campaign, the smudges of his past would take care of themselves.

Gore likes to run his offices on what one former aide described as a hub-and-spoke

model, with himself as the hub. In the early days of the campaign, Gore had several

competing power centers: his campaign headquarters, his consultants, his

vice-presidential office, and his kitchen cabinet, which includes his wife, Tipper; his

brother-in-law, Frank Hunger, and his daughter Karenn. Coelho, who is working without

salary, established a chain of command on a corporate model, with himself functioning as the

chief executive officer under the chairman, Gore.

In June, Gore had asked Coelho how much it would cost to move the campaign headquarters

from Washington to Nashville. Coelho looked into breaking the K Street lease, which was due

to last into 2001, but found there was no way to do it. Like other advisers Gore consulted,

Coelho worried that moving the headquarters would be derided by the press as a gimmick.

"Before he did it, it was easy to see all the negatives,"

Karennna Gore Schiff recalled.

By late September, though, Gore was desperate. His fund-raising was

lagging, and the quarterly financial report, due at the end of the month,

would show that Bradley had raised more than he in the previous three

months. He decided the campaign never would get off the ground if it

stayed in Washington. Gore opened his Nashville headquarters in a former

rehabilitation center beside some railroad tracks on Oct. 6. (He is still

paying \$60,000 a month for empty offices on K Street.)

The same day, he promoted Brazile, who began an examination of what

she called "Goreworld," the results of which revolted her.

Consultants were

getting paid as much as \$15,000 monthly; paid advisers were rendering

opinions on what kind of paper the headquarters should use.

Although fund-raising has been tougher than the campaign expected since

Bradley tapped into his potential donors in Silicon Valley and

elsewhere,

Gore is closing in on the amount he is allowed to spend in the primaries,

about \$33 million. But Bradley, who has raised almost as much, was able

to spend more this winter on advertising in Iowa and New Hampshire

because Gore wasted so much in the first nine months of the year. During

that period, Gore reported spending nearly two times as much on office

rent as Bradley, more than twice as much on office supplies and about 12

times as much on parking. Brazile starting chopping salaries, which were

both an enormous expense and a hallmark of the corporate culture she

wanted to kill. She then set her sights on perks.

Shortly after her promotion, Brazile was a little too frank about her vision

for Gore's support. In an interview with The Washington Post, she said

that the "four pillars" of the Democratic Party were women, blacks,

organized labor and ethnic minorities and that its "emerging constituencies"

were the disabled, environmentalists and gay men and lesbians.

This

unnerved the moderates over at the Democratic Leadership

Council, who

feared that eight years of Clintonian sidling to the middle

could vanish in a

panicked leftward lurch by Gore.

The incident inflamed concerns, at least outside the campaign,

about

Brazile. In 1988, she had been forced to resign from the Dukakis

campaign

after what her colleagues there considered a bizarre episode, in

which she

suggested that reporters check out rumors about Vice President

George

Bush's marital life. As far back as April, Brazile had privately

assured

Gore that she had learned from the experience and that she would

never

embarrass him. As campaign manager, she has been careful to say

that

Carter Eskew is in charge of the message, and she has been

intently

studying what he says. "See, they're teaching me to talk

message, which is

what I want to learn anyway," she told me. "I want to stop

talking about it

as African-Americans, women, labor, bladdy bladdy bladdy blah."

But she

slipped again earlier this month when she mocked black

Republicans for

being tokens of a party that cares little about minorities,

managing to offend

Colin Powell. Her statements once more yanked attention away

from her

candidate and centered it on his campaign.

Brazile's mistake was in talking about what she was doing,

rather than just

doing it. Regardless of the message she is learning, Brazile has

been

important in shoring up Gore's support among the Democrats'

traditional

constituencies. She is an expert at what she calls "smoke and

mirrors," that

is, making a candidate's support seem greater than it is. And

like any good

organizer -- like Whouley, who kept assuring the Des Moines

workers that

Shania Twain would do an event for Gore, though he had never

spoken to

her -- Brazile has a tendency to talk a little big to fire up

the troops.

Yet in each of three visits to the Nashville headquarters, I was struck by how few Gore bumper stickers I saw in the parking lot. Notwithstanding the enthusiasm of some longtime Tennessee volunteers and young staff members, I found little burning passion for Gore among his advisers. He is too familiar and too lacking in charisma, and too many of his aides have seen too many candidates. They say that he is no natural politician, for all his confidence in his own political acumen. But this is not to say his aides are not dedicated to electing him. While they may not marvel at his magnetism or vision, his advisers talk with deep respect of his decency, policy judgment and commitment to public service. If this is not the Clinton crusade of 1992, it is also not the Clinton advertising firm of 1996.

The move to Nashville, which could have been a disaster, has produced a leaner, more spirited team. Junior staff members go out for

beers with one

another at night, rather than with college pals in Washington.

Without other

familiar distractions, they come into the office on weekends and

go to

work. This group will build up a lot more passion if the race

becomes a

contest between Gore and Bush, rather than two centrist Democrats

whose dislike for each other has concealed how little difference

there is

between them politically.

Because this is a campaign that wears its underwear on the
outside,

the reorganization became, perforce, part of its message. For

months, Gore advisers believe, all voters had heard about the

vice

president was that his campaign was a mess. The man who had

staked his

reputation on "reinventing government" had pulled out a clean

sheet of

paper and created a bloated bureaucracy. So the campaign's

turnaround

had to become part of Gore's story, and the campaign encouraged

numerous articles about the new headquarters and profiles of

Brazile in a

bid also to lend some pizazz to Gore's image. For comparison's

sake, ask

yourself how many profiles of Bradley's campaign manager you have read.

Her name is Gina Glantz.

Despite that necessary distraction, Gore began this fall to bring his own

message into focus at last, with the help of primarily two men:

Carter

Eskew and Bill Bradley.

Top advisers to Gore, past and present, insist that they always knew that

Bradley would emerge as a serious challenger. Last spring, internal memos

raised the question whether the campaign should start publicly drawing

comparisons with him. But Gore's strategists concluded that to talk about

Bradley would be to elevate him. The guiding, poll-driven premise was that

if Gore drew within 10 points of Bush, the Bradley challenge would

disappear. And the campaign had set itself the laudable goal, laughable

now, of remaining positive throughout the primaries.

Casting Gore as the inevitable nominee had worked at first. It had helped persuade potential candidates who seemed far more dangerous, like Dick Gephardt, to stay off the stage. "But there's a difference between putting out a sense of inevitability and acting as if you're inevitable," one Gore adviser said. "The fundamental operating theory of the campaign in the early days was that Bill Bradley is only a nuisance; the real issue is George Bush. The primary is about setting ourselves up for the general election."

Gore ran as an incumbent, much the way he and Bill Clinton ran in 1996.

That style fit the strategy of the campaign, and it also fit the culture of the vice president's office, which was as accustomed to elaborately staged events cooked up by expensive advance-staff members as it was to the restrictions of the Secret Service and the easy life on Air Force Two. So, despite the pleas of his New Hampshire organization, Gore tended to give

high-profile speeches rather than chat in crammed living rooms.

These

days, Gore thinks back on that period, with a shudder, as when

he was

running as a vice president who wanted a promotion.

It was obvious to Gore and his staff that he was not reaching voters, particularly

outside of Iowa. Some of his advisers thought that the vice president had never

recovered his confidence as a speaker since he was swamped by the campaign-finance scandal two years ago. On the stump this summer, he seemed to

be groping, at times shouting out his speeches, and then at others delivering

them like an automaton.

In early July, at Gore's urging, Coelho brought in Eskew, a 45-year-old

consultant. The move revealed how anxious the campaign had already

become, because there were several reasons not to make it: Eskew had helped

to create ad campaigns for the tobacco companies, a role that would expose Gore to

charges of hypocrisy; he would intensify the view of the campaign as overstocked

with high-priced consultants; and he was not on speaking terms with another of Gore's

media advisers, Robert Squier, who left the campaign shortly thereafter.

Gore and Coelho believed Eskew's benefits outweighed his baggage. With

surprising unanimity, Eskew, a sapient fellow with the air of an assistant

English professor, is seen as perhaps the best Democratic adman in the

business. He has a reputation for creatively puncturing opponents' images;

one famously devastating Eskew campaign, on behalf of Joseph I. Lieberman of Connecticut, used cartoons to portray Lowell P. Weicker Jr.,

then a U.S. senator, as a lazy bear snoozing through important votes.

Eskew shares Gore's Ivy League credentials, an important consideration

for the vice president when it comes to advisers. He also has an ironic

detachment from the very politicking he engages in, which nicely suits the

vice president's sharper contempt for the business and for political

operatives as a class. Most important, Eskew has known Gore since the two men worked as reporters for The Nashville Tennessean in the early 70's, he has worked on almost all his campaigns and he is deeply loyal to Gore. He is one of very few men, Gore's associates say, whom the vice president talks to like an equal over a drink.

At times, Eskew can seem abstracted. "I really should pay more attention to these details," he mused almost to himself this fall when a reporter pointed out that in one advertisement Gore had his sleeves rolled up but his tie knotted against his throat. Joe Lockhart, the White House press secretary, says, "He's as good as anybody I've ever come across in understanding how to communicate with people, but often a conversation with him is quite disjointed."

Coelho, who regards Eskew as brilliant, put him in complete control of the message team, which includes Bob Shrum, the veteran Democratic

speechwriter and adman, and Bill Knapp, a wisecracking native New Yorker and partner of Squier's who helped elect Clinton in 1996.

Coelho's

idea was to get Gore to stop worrying so much about the details of his

campaign, like his schedule, and to spend his time honing his message with

Eskew. Now the two men talk several times daily, sometimes several

times hourly.

It has been widely reported that Karenna Gore Schiff and Naomi Wolf, the writer and Gore

consultant, had urged the vice president to distance himself from the president. This is

true. But it understates the sway that this theory already held, and holds, among his staff

members, including Eskew. It is campaign orthodoxy. This has led the campaign to play

down Gore's impressive work in the Clinton administration.

"It's not what matters so much in this election," Karenna Gore Schiff said of the last seven

years. "What matters is who the candidates are and what they're going to do, and my dad's

experience goes pretty far back. It goes back to 1976, not 1992."

Personally, Gore remains resentful of Clinton and angry at him for enmeshing him in his scandals, his associates say. But his efforts to distance himself are driven more by a political calculation that voters still see him as Clinton's yes man, rather than as a leader -- in fact, a "fighter" -- in his own right, and theirs.

At times, the personal and the political have been hard to separate. Gore moved up the announcement of his candidacy to mid-June in the belief that otherwise voters would continue to see him only as the vice president. But then he stepped on his own message by criticizing Clinton in an interview taped in advance. Similarly, he enraged many Clinton loyalists in October, in his first debate with Bradley, by seizing on a vague question about politics to criticize Clinton.

Once a week, usually on Tuesdays, Coelho still conducts a conference call with John D. Podesta, the chief of staff, and other White House aides. But

lower-level aides say they are no longer being pressed to consider Gore's campaign needs as they plan White House events. The White House these days is divided into two camps. "I'm like, 'You guys, how much do you expect us to take?'" one White House aide told me this fall, after the Gore team had requested that the vice president, rather than Clinton, handle a particular announcement. Gore had just slammed Clinton in his first debate with Bradley. "They're complaining that we want to be quoted in a story that has something to do with us," this aide fumed.

Clinton aides, accustomed to a politician able to knife an opponent and hug him in the same paragraph, regard Gore now with a kind of wounded condescension. They understand his need to establish his independence, but they roll their eyes over the clumsy way he does it, wondering why he does not make more of the administration's successes. The word one most often hears from them in summing up his political approach is "sledgehammer."

Gore and Clinton still talk by telephone two or three times a week. But when I asked Gore if he had ever consulted Clinton about the campaign, he immediately said no. "He's a skilled politician," Gore said, "and from time to time in our conversations he will offer some advice." There are two possibilities here: either Gore is fibbing, in which case he still feels obliged to exaggerate his personal distance from Clinton, or in fact the gap is quite significant, and despite the galaxy of advisers he has consulted, he chooses to overlook the Democrat who knows best how to run both as a challenger and as an incumbent.

For his part, Clinton misses Gore's advice, presidential aides say. Gore was able to use sarcasm to puncture Clinton's self-pitying or bombastic moods, and Clinton trusted him to tell the whole truth. "He looks at the rest of us," one Clinton aide said of his boss, "and he thinks: 'Is he telling me

everything? Are they manipulating me?"

Gore's advisers believe that the vice president had to separate himself from

Clinton because he is, in the campaign's formulation, "famous but unknown." The campaign found, for example, that most voters did not

know that Gore had ever been anything but a politician. Eskew went to

work with Gore sharpening his biography and weaving it into his standard

stump speech. They zeroed in on dramatic points in Gore's own life and also the lives of his parents.

Gore had spoken about all these matters, intermittently and sometimes

movingly, for years. Now he was joining them in a tight triad of parables

that would give a narrative edge to his standard stump speech and to the

populist theme that Eskew emphasized to define Gore's career: that he was

a fighter against special interests, as one senior Gore strategist put it,

"representing the people against them."

Throughout the summer, Gore lacked what has always been a crucial element in his political campaigns: something to run against.

Any politician

would suffer when compared with an abstract standard; any

campaign

lacks focus when it lacks an immediate objective. Gore in

particular is most

engaged when he is on the attack, a fact that puzzles and

saddens even

some of his most loyal associates. But for most of the summer

Bush

remained a phantom, his popularity surging while his specific

plans

remained unknown. Bradley was unmentionable. Then came the Boston

Globe poll.

On Sept. 25, during a speech to the Democratic National

Committee in

Washington, Gore unveiled a new approach, leaving the lectern

and its

vice-presidential seal to stroll before the crowd as he

described his

disillusionment over Vietnam. Four days later, in announcing the

move to

Nashville, he mentioned Bradley by name for the first time. And

less than

two weeks after that, when he and Bradley appeared together

before a

Democratic dinner in Iowa, Gore went on the attack, labeling

Bradley a

quitter for walking away from politics and the party when he

left the

Senate. "Stay and Fight" read the posters the Gore campaign

prepared for

the evening.

As reporters gradually caught on to the game, the Gore camp
confidently

dismissed as inside-the-Beltway nattering any suggestions that
their

candidate was too negative, though they kept an eye on their
internal polls.

Primary voters, they said, wanted to hear about differences. The
"Stay and

Fight" theme, they believed, bolstered the campaign's preferred
image of

Gore while playing to a gnawing doubt party loyalists held about
Bradley.

(The Gore camp had intended to repeat the performance at an
appearance

before party activists in Orlando in December, but suspended
their plans

when Bradley disclosed his heart trouble the day before.)

The struggle with Bradley, Gore's advisers believe, could permit Gore to erase doubts about his character and leadership ability, the usual burden of a vice president. "The real issue here is not a lot different from the wimp factor that dogged Bush," one senior Gore aide said. "We need this fight to position ourselves with voters and to show that we can fight. It gets us out from under this vice-presidential shadow."

As Gore went on offense, Bradley made some serious mistakes: he decided not to respond in hopes of seeming above the fray and he put out an ambitious but fuzzy health care plan, which Gore began whacking like a piñata. Gore's team was terrified that the plan might lend substance to

Bradley's claim to "big ideas." The goal of the attacks was to neutralize health care as the core of Bradley's positive message. But as Gore advisers realized they could attack the plan both from the left (as jeopardizing Medicaid) and from the right (as eating up the surplus), they

came to see the issue as a net positive for Gore.

Once the campaign moved to Nashville, Brazile began holding weekly staff meetings. On the first day in December, about 50 people, most in jeans and T-shirts and in their 20's, stopped their work in the "pit" -- the big, windowless room at the center of the headquarters -- and gathered to listen as she opened the meeting by asking what they had for Thanksgiving dinner. Then she turned it over to Eskew.

In turtleneck sweater, chinos and running shoes, Eskew provided an update on the campaign's message -- that is, on what was wrong with the other guy. He told the group that the campaign was making good progress in drawing a "health care contrast" with Bradley and was moving on to the economy. "The issue there again is Senator Bradley's health care plan," he said. "It spends the entire surplus, which puts a lot of pressure back on deficits, which in turn put a lot of pressure on interest rates,

et cetera. It's

an issue of I think great importance in New Hampshire,
certainly."

But he saw another opportunity, Eskew continued: Bradley had
left the

door open to cutting benefits or raising taxes to shore up
Social Security.

"Not a good idea in any event," he said, "particularly in a
Democratic

primary. So, I think once again he's sort of gotten dangerously
close to

what's known as the third rail in, certainly, Democratic
politics, if not

American politics."

Even as they envy Bradley his cultlike following, Gore's top
strategists are deeply contemptuous of him. They
think that he has gotten a free ride from the press, compared
with the beating that their boss has taken, and that his support
remains confined to elite Northeasterners. They believe
he is uncomfortable with issues critical to blue-collar
Democrats, like holding the line on Social Security's retirement
age, and they scorn Bradley's efforts to use his campaign to
highlight

issues like race that do not already preoccupy most voters. They
believe

most Democratic voters care about health care, education and the economy, and in each of those areas, Gore's polling shows that he has an advantage among Democrats.

This conclusion can yield a dismayingly reductive approach to the possibilities of modern presidential politics, one that exchanges the roles of

leader and led. "We used to say, in the late 80's, if you don't like the issues

terrain, change it," one Gore strategist said. "In the late 90's, you can't do it.

Voters don't have the patience and, frankly, they don't have the attention

span. You have to talk about them." If Bradley wants to talk about race, he

shrugged, "Fine."

saw the new Gore in early November, in Des Moines, and fittingly, the

subject that brought him out was the change in his campaign style.

Gore used a question about that tired subject to poke fun at political

posturing, showing a side of himself that reporters were accustomed to

seeing only off the record. At an impromptu news conference,

Cragg

Hines, the erudite Washington bureau chief of The Houston Chronicle,

asked Gore when he had the "Damascene" moment that led to his campaign conversion.

Gore did not hesitate. "It was an epiphany," he began at his most deadly

earnest, "that occurred in the midst of an interview with The Houston

Chronicle. The questions were so penetrating; they included words that I

didn't know. And when I looked them up, I thought, I gotta change my campaign."

By then, Gore was regularly holding town-hall meetings -- open meetings,

as he prefers to call them, from his days as a congressional candidate -- in

New Hampshire and Iowa. His answers could be overlong; his smile blinked off and on as needed, like high beams; and he had a tendency to

turn his head from the waist. He had a bit of the attitude of the schoolboy

with a hand perpetually raised, as he paraded his knowledge of airline

deregulation, Social Security financing or breakaway Soviet republics. But

in a transparently political gesture, he would stay for hours, until the last

question was asked. He wasn't fighting it. In fact, he was enjoying himself.

And it worked for him. Steve Hildebrand, Gore's Iowa campaign manager,

worried that the town halls burned up too much of the candidate's time, the

most precious resource as the caucuses approached. Why spend three

hours with 200 undecided voters when you could do an event with 450

people in 70 minutes? Then one night in December he drove to Iowa City

for a follow-up look at the undecided voters who had been at a town hall.

The "conversion" rate was incredible: 80 percent of the uncommitted

voters who heard him had switched to Gore.

Yet television audiences have not been as impressed, and this may be one

of the reasons why he continues to lag as many as 10 points behind George

W. Bush nationally. Somehow, for all his credentials and experience, Gore

comes off seeming like less than the sum of his parts. In debate, the vice

president has been reluctant to take risks; when he has, the result has been

damaging, as when he foolishly declared that in appointing Joint Chiefs of

Staff he would make support for gays in the military a litmus test. That

comment yielded yet another "hastily assembled press conference," as

reporters invariably call them, which is something of a Gore signature.

Often, Gore seems to be trying too hard. Discussing affirmative action in a

town-hall-style debate in Manchester in mid-December, Gore made a telling point, observing that the host had evidently failed to invite many

blacks. But then he went too far: "Are there any?" he asked, looking

around and starting to point. "There's one -- one in -- in back there."

Though he has grown more comfortable with each debate, Gore still tends

to fall back on catapulting jagged speech chunks through the

air. His

performances recall his 1996 debate with Jack Kemp, when in his answers

he repeatedly chanted a mantra ("Medicare, Medicaid, education and the environment") as though the television audience were being sleep-taught.

After that debate, my grandmother, a believer in Clinton and Gore, left a

pained message on my answering machine: "Does he think I am stupid?"

This year, "I want to fight for you" is proving to be the patronizing mantra.

Gore knows better. "These techniques inevitably encourage inauthenticity

in a politician's message," he wrote of the dangers of sound bites, polling

and "personality skills" in his 1992 best seller, "Earth in the Balance." "Why

present genuine ideas and true character if artificial ones are more

effective in the marketplace of power." When I read some of Gore's

words back to him, he told me that he was no longer so concerned about

political manipulation, because the audience has grown as

sophisticated as

the candidates and their consultants. "And what has resulted is
that only

one thing really works, and that is what's real," he said.

"There may be

people who are skilled enough and smart enough to use these
personality

tools to shape their image and affect and appear to be something
they're

not. I'm not one of them." Exactly so. But what is real still
needs politics to
be expressed.

Gore's attempts to reach TV audiences often reek of the
greasepaint he

rightly scorns. As he picks at Bradley, he looks political, and
that may hurt

his chances with the independents and moderates who,
paradoxically, are

the very people who are most likely to share his disdain for
politics. They

might be more impressed if he showed the side of himself that
privately

deflects operatives' suggestions with the arch question, "Isn't
that awfully

political?"

One test of Gore's character will be whether he tries to create his own "issues terrain" after all. Those who talk about authenticity are clearly right that voters demand a sense for what a candidate truly believes; political skills -- a feel for who the voters are and an ability to reach them -- result in unalloyed pandering if a politician does not use those skills to guide the country in the direction he believes it should go. At some point, Gore will start making the environment an issue, and the question will be whether he uses it just to flesh out his biography or to build public support for the aggressive policies he claims to favor. Gore was disappointed in himself after his failed 1988 bid for the presidency in part because of how he ran. His pollsters told him that voters did not care much about the environment, and he came to play it down. In this race, Gore has talked about the environment when asked, but he has not made it a priority. His strategists argue that it is not a point of distinction with Bradley. They

say that it will become a bigger issue in the general election campaign,
because Bush's environmental record is weak.

When I asked Gore if there was any issue that wasn't on voters' minds that

he intended to raise, he answered without a moment's pause:
global

warming. Then, rather disappointingly, he argued that in fact the issue is

already on voters' minds. "I think people now feel it in their own lives, and I

think they're worried about it, and they should be worried about it."

Bradley so far has bested Gore largely on style points. His ease in public,

his seeming candor and his apparent disregard for old-school maneuvering

have managed to make Gore seem simultaneously clumsy and slick.
Gore

may lack a common touch or patrician grace, yet he has learned, in

meeting with voters away from the television cameras, that he can make a

style of substance. In that setting, he communicates without contempt for

the process or the people who take it seriously, as they should.

He has to

learn to take that skill on the air. He will need it in the

downtime between

the primaries and the Democratic convention, should he get that

far. He

will need it in the general election; and he will need it to

govern. Before

Gore can hope to seem like less of a politician, he will have to

become

more of one.

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RECORD TYPE: PRESIDENTIAL (NOTES MAIL)

CREATOR: Donna K. Carroll (CN=Donna K. Carroll/OU=WHO/O=EOP [WHO])

CREATION DATE/TIME:21-APR-2000 15:33:53.00

SUBJECT: New York Times Sunday Magazine: Al Gore Moves Beyond Meta

TO: Bridger E. McGaw (CN=Bridger E. McGaw/O=OVP@OVP [OVP])

READ:UNKNOWN

TEXT:

YOU ARE WONDERFUL

----- Forwarded by Donna K. Carroll/WHO/EOP on 04/21/2000

03:33 PM -----

Susan L. Hazard

04/21/2000 02:36:20 PM

Record Type: Record

To: Donna K. Carroll/WHO/EOP@EOP, Charles E. Olson/WHO/EOP@EOP

cc: Bridger E. McGaw/OVP@OVP

Subject: New York Times Sunday Magazine: Al Gore Moves Beyond Meta

Be real nice when you prove them wrong. Thanks, Bridger

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Bridger E. McGaw@OVP

04/21/2000 01:50:51 PM

Record Type: Record

To: Susan L. Hazard/WHO/EOP@EOP, Key C. German/WHO/EOP@EOP

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Subject: New York Times Sunday Magazine: Al Gore Moves Beyond Meta

WELL HE TOOK PHOTOS FOR THE NYT!

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Brian A. Reich

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cc:

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Brian A. Reich

01/22/2000 09:53:48 PM

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To: See the distribution list at the bottom of this message

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Subject: New York Times Sunday Magazine: Al Gore Moves Beyond Meta

Can a politician be above politics? Do you have to be authentic to be believed? Can all these political gimmicks actually be working?

By JAMES BENNET Photographs by LARRY FINK

Related Articles

Campaigns: White House 2000 -- Al Gore (D)

Any organization reflects its leader, as Al Gore says, and for most of last

year his presidential campaign was the outward sign of an inward turmoil.

At the beginning of 1999, he was certain to stroll to the Democratic nomination.

Who would have predicted that, before the year was out, he would change campaign

managers and chiefs of staff, replace his pollsters and his

admen, truck his headquarters

from Washington to Nashville and begin the year 2000 worried

he would have less cash on hand after the New Hampshire primary
than Bill Bradley, the challenger

he once dismissed? Though born and bred for higher office and
schooled

by Bill Clinton for seven years in the getting and holding of the
presidency,

Gore was unprepared to run for the job to a degree baffling to
some of his

advisers. This past year -- particularly the past four months --
has provided

a bracing political education for a man who had no clue how much
he
needed it.

"It's sort of like the experience that most of us have in
getting older," the

vice president told me during a rare appearance in his West Wing
office, a

few days before Christmas. "You look back at a previous point in
your life

and find it difficult to believe how little you knew. I look
back now at the

beginning of the year, while the impeachment trial was about to
begin and

incoming rounds were landing on the White House roof every 30

seconds,

and I can't believe that I decided to put the campaign on K
Street." He

roared with laughter. "You know, hello?"

That Gore is still talking in detail about that education is
evidence that it

remains under way. The early, very public incompetence of his
campaign

created a political problem that he is still struggling to
solve; it lent weight

to Democrats' central concern about him, that he lacked the
political

wherewithal to beat an impressive Republican candidate. To
combat the

relentlessly negative reviews of his campaign, Gore has been
forced to

make the quality of his campaigning central to his candidacy, to
ballyhoo

the move of his headquarters to Nashville, for example, while
Bradley kept

on talking about health care or child poverty and his advisers
remained

silently behind their curtains. This has repeatedly returned
Gore to the

same shaky ground -- his political ability -- while lending heft
to a related

doubt about him: that he is a programmable man guided more by tactics than beliefs. Gore's problem, in short, has been less alpha or beta than meta.

It's a peculiar problem, for what Gore has been learning this past year is how to be a politician -- which is, of course, the job description of a candidate. Unfortunately for Gore, however, it is a dirty word.

But what is so wicked about a politician politicking? This year, candidates and reporters are condemning politics and praising "authenticity."

Antipolitics has been with us for some time now; authenticity is this campaign's variant, a kind of characterological shorthand for everything politics allegedly is not -- honest, deep, real. But those who tout authenticity are making an almost useless distinction, at least as far as campaigning goes. If authenticity is what the people want (and, help me here, when was

it that they clamored for fakery?), then it is a political act to give it to them.

Was it "authentic" for Bradley as a senator to study Elvis Presley movies in hopes of honing his communication skills? He was looking to change himself to appeal to people, the essence of inauthenticity. On the other hand, he was hoping to appeal to people in order to lead them, the essence of good politics.

The phony divide between authenticity and politicking was captured by the tumult earlier this month over John McCain's letters pressuring the F.C.C. to speed up a decision important to a donor. Captain Campaign Reform suddenly looked like just another politician. Yes, by all means take the excessive money out of politics; but don't take the politics out, to paraphrase Clinton. In policing the bureaucracy on behalf of his constituents, including donors, McCain was being who he is, an authentic politician. Put another way, he was doing his job.

Gore's chief problem is that deep down he suspects it is

dishonorable to be

a politician, and this can make him a bad one. He reminds me a bit of some

second-generation auto dealers, the expensively educated sons of self-made men who balk at the tactics of the family business they know so

intimately. "He doesn't really like politics," one of Gore's closest aides told

me. "He holds it in disdain." But he is gradually coming to terms with his

outer politician. As with the move to Nashville, campaign gestures that

were entirely political -- gestures that Gore feared would be derided as

entirely political -- have had political effects that have reminded him what

is so great about politics: it connects candidates with voters.

This was illustrated by his challenge to Bradley that they forego political

advertising and hold plenty of debates instead. Pundits immediately

dismissed the proposal as a political gimmick. They were right that it was a

gimmick. They were wrong to dismiss it. Gore was led, by political

considerations, to suggest a reform that would have elevated the

discussion

and released some of the money pressure. His offer left Bradley
in the
position of defending 30-second commercials as a more effective
means of
communication. Which is the more cynical -- or if you prefer,
"political" --
position? Who cares?

As a politician, Gore is making progress. Man, message and
political
machine mesh more smoothly now than four months ago. The changes
in
each did not come at once, but they occurred over roughly the
same time
-- just before and after Gore shifted his headquarters to
Nashville in
October -- and they reinforced one another. A new team of loyal
advisers,
his own competitive nature and a rediscovery of his competence at
face-to-face politicking have probably given him enough
confidence and
focus to win the Democratic nomination, barring any egregious
blunders.
He has solidified his position in Iowa and strengthened it in
New York,
which may force Bradley to divert time and money from the West

and the

South to what had once looked like a sure state for him.

Yet doubts about politics are still getting in his way. Like Clinton, Gore is

ruthless -- a quality operatives who know him cite with respect -- and he

will do what he thinks it takes to win. But he is not as consistently right

about what the "it" is, because, unlike Clinton, he does not have much

respect for the muddle of personality and policy that is presidential

campaigning. And that causes him, sometimes, to disrespect his audience,

to act as if it must be led by the nose, for who but the dim would take this

circus seriously? Hence his stagy offer of a handshake to Bradley when he

proposed shunning political ads, a contrived -- O.K., "inauthentic" --

gesture that undercut his words.

The focus on Gore's politicking might seem to overlook the question of how good a president, as opposed to a candidate, he would be -- to sell

short his policy expertise, for the Democratic or Republican

field. But the questions are not

separable, as Gore himself acknowledges. "I think that the way
a candidate for president

communicates with the voters is directly relevant to the way a
president communicates with

the American people after the election," he told me.

Of course, it is about listening as well as talking. Gore
learned this when

his father drifted out of touch with his constituents --
undermining his ability

to reconcile them to his antiwar position -- and lost his bid
for re-election to

the Senate in 1970. He seemed for most of last year to have
forgotten that.

But he has been learning again to pay attention, as he did when
he was in

Congress, to listen to voters and to answer their questions.
Before small

groups this fall and winter, Gore has displayed a mastery of
intricate

matters, a knack for explaining them and an agile sense of
humor. He has

also become a better debater, finally swallowing his aggravation
with

Clinton and expressing some pride in the work they did in what
Bradley

derided as a Washington "bunker." Gore's comeback to Bradley's
"bunker"

remark was canned, and his own advisers wished he had been
quick-witted enough to generate it when Bradley first attacked.

But at last

he managed to take credit for Clinton administration policies
without
embracing, or trashing, Clinton the man.

Gore has been relearning what it is to seek votes for himself,
and in this

quest he has been aided not by soul-searching but by pros who
never lose

sleep about whether some tactic is too political. One day this
fall,

mid-turnaround, Donna Brazile, Gore's campaign manager, sketched
a

triangle for me on a sheet of paper in her cubbyhole of an
office in

Nashville. Along one edge she wrote the words "proven leader"
and along

the next she wrote "principled fighter." By the third she wrote
"experience
that matters."

To make sure that the American people got the right message
about her

complicated boss, Brazile and other campaign staff members were struggling at the time to fit their thoughts about him into that shape, which

was designed by Carter Eskew, Gore's message guru and the most influential man in his campaign. "Every conversation -- no matter how it

starts off -- it's got to go into this box," Brazile explained.

"Whether it's

Social Security, health care, education -- O.K.?" Then, beside the triangle,

she sketched a square. She attached the same labels to three of the sides,

and along the fourth she added the words "substantive differences with Bill

Bradley." This is not about geometry. It is entirely about politics.

Above the conference table, Michael Whouley, whip thin and balding,

was all gravelly voice and fiercely focused gaze, but beneath it he

was all motion. He perched on the edge of his seat, the balls of his

feet against the floor and his knees punching the air or wagglng together

and apart. He rubbed his hands together, then systematically cracked each

knuckle.

top 15
Arrayed before him, with varying degrees of wariness, were the
staff members of Gore's campaign in Iowa. Around them, taped to
the
walls of Gore's Des Moines headquarters, were sheets of white
construction paper bearing the lyrical names of Iowa's counties
-- Wapello,
Dallas, Jasper -- with the percentage of Democratic delegates
that will
come from each, the number of voters committed to Gore and the
number
that he needs to win. Whouley was there to make sure that those
last two
numbers matched by Jan. 24, when Iowa's first-in-the-nation
caucuses are
to be held.

"Nothing -- less -- than -- that -- is -- acceptable," he said,
hands above the
table and pressed prayerfully together now, their heels rapping
it at each
word.

There is something of a class divide between American political
operatives. There are the high-flying media advisers who

expensively

conduct the war from the air and draw reporters' attention, and

then there

are the organizers in jeans and flannel shirts who fight it out

on the ground,

in every precinct. Whouley, a Bostonian whose thick Dorchester

accent

renders him an "organizuh," is, along with Donna Brazile, one of

the

Democrats' most experienced in the second category, which is the

reason

Gore turned to him when his campaign stumbled. Whouley, who is

40, took

charge of the campaign in New Hampshire and Iowa after Gore got a

wake-up call from The Boston Globe. On Sept. 5, it published a

survey

showing him and Bradley in a statistical tie in New Hampshire.

Some Gore

advisers date the campaign's turnaround to that poll. Confident

that Bush

and not Bradley was the problem, the campaign had not polled in

New

Hampshire since July.

At a meeting with Gore's supporters in New Hampshire, Whouley

got an earful. Set off

by rope lines, Secret Service agents and lecterns, Gore was

running the sort of imperial

campaign that repelled the state's cosseted voters. The

headquarters in Washington and

the vice president's office did not listen to suggestions from

the field. It took conference call

after conference call to schedule the most basic of events, and

then even more

wrangling to vet the list of invitees and choose the backdrop.

In Iowa, the situation was less severe. Gore had done more retail

politicking there, in part because an aggressive campaign team

on the

ground had won some of its screaming matches with the

vice-presidential

staff. But Gore worried that the campaign might not be building

the

precinct-by-precinct organization needed to corral voters for the

evening-long caucuses, which are to take place tomorrow. In each

of the

2,142 precincts, the campaign needed a volunteer captain able to

drag

other supporters in.

Anticipating a Bradley push into Iowa, Gore's top aides feared

that he

could narrow the gap enough to outperform reporters'

expectations, or

even win. Whouley found that the campaign was not ready to beat him back. One exhausted staff member was carrying the burden of overseeing the caucuses in all 99 counties.

When he reported to the vice president, Whouley recommended that he begin holding town-hall meetings with undecided voters in New Hampshire. He also requested a reorganization of the Iowa campaign structure.

Iowa was divided into six regions, each overseen by a new regional director. Now, in mid-December, Whouley had come to grill the directors on their progress and to find out how much money they needed from headquarters; no new field office, he insisted, should cost more than \$100 a month. Above all, he wanted to make sure they were aware of the stakes.

He told them that each held "Al Gore's political viability" in his hands.

If Gore stumbles in Iowa, his failure will surely be attributed to his personal

appeal or his advertising. In fact, his success or failure will
turn on this
detail work invisible at the national level. It may be gritty
politics, but it is
also the side of campaigning that engages hundreds of young
people and
volunteers. Should the campaign rent 100 sport utility vehicles
to drive
people to the caucuses in case it snows? ("Bradley's demographic
is
suburban, and they drive Volvos," Whouley warned. "The new Volvos
have four-wheel drive.") How many phone lines, at \$40 a pop,
must a new
field office have to conduct 400 calls a night? Where should
they send the
volunteers who would pour into Iowa right before the caucuses?
Should
Gore himself place a call to a particular teetering county
supervisor? What
should be done about the two organizers in eastern Iowa
discovered eating
Cheerios during telephone time? "Can we fire these people?"
inquired
Whouley, with sudden, icy fury. "Why does this region have so
many
[expletive] knuckleheads?"

Whouley's message in Des Moines reflected Brazile's top priorities

since Gore elevated her from political director to campaign manager: cutting spending and instilling some passion in the staff.

One of nine children from Kenner, La., Brazile likes to keep her expenses

low enough that she could survive, if she had to, working a double shift at

McDonald's. She believes paid consultants are somehow antidemocratic.

She spends her vacations organizing for congressional candidates. And so

she was deeply uncomfortable with the colorless, spiritless campaign Gore

was running from K Street, Washington's Lobbyists' Row, where the headquarters was spread across three floors. Bill Bradley had more of a

cult than a campaign, she thought, while sometimes the Gore operation felt

like a travel agency.

Those problems had bothered Gore for months. In early May, he brought in

Coelho in hopes of disciplining his operation. That was a gamble, since

Coelho, a Californian who had risen to majority whip largely on the strength of his prodigious fund-raising, had left Congress under a cloud 10

years ago, and risked further marking Gore as the insiders' candidate. Gore

and Coelho were friendly in the House, but they had never been close. But

Gore realized that he needed someone toughened by bare-knuckle Democratic politics, someone with "gray hair." In their private conversations, Gore assured Coelho that if he ran a good campaign, the smudges of his past would take care of themselves.

Gore likes to run his offices on what one former aide described as a hub-and-spoke

model, with himself as the hub. In the early days of the campaign, Gore had several

competing power centers: his campaign headquarters, his consultants, his

vice-presidential office, and his kitchen cabinet, which includes his wife, Tipper; his

brother-in-law, Frank Hunger, and his daughter Karenna.

Coelho, who is working without

salary, established a chain of command on a corporate model, with himself functioning as the chief executive officer under the chairman, Gore.

In June, Gore had asked Coelho how much it would cost to move the campaign headquarters

from Washington to Nashville. Coelho looked into breaking the K Street lease, which was due

to last into 2001, but found there was no way to do it. Like other advisers Gore consulted,

Coelho worried that moving the headquarters would be derided by the press as a gimmick.

"Before he did it, it was easy to see all the negatives," Karenna Gore Schiff recalled.

By late September, though, Gore was desperate. His fund-raising was

lagging, and the quarterly financial report, due at the end of the month,

would show that Bradley had raised more than he in the previous three

months. He decided the campaign never would get off the ground if it

stayed in Washington. Gore opened his Nashville headquarters in a former

rehabilitation center beside some railroad tracks on Oct. 6. (He is still

paying \$60,000 a month for empty offices on K Street.)

The same day, he promoted Brazile, who began an examination of

what

she called "Goreworld," the results of which revolted her.

Consultants were

getting paid as much as \$15,000 monthly; paid advisers were

rendering

opinions on what kind of paper the headquarters should use.

Although fund-raising has been tougher than the campaign

expected since

Bradley tapped into his potential donors in Silicon Valley and

elsewhere,

Gore is closing in on the amount he is allowed to spend in the

primaries,

about \$33 million. But Bradley, who has raised almost as much,

was able

to spend more this winter on advertising in Iowa and New

Hampshire

because Gore wasted so much in the first nine months of the

year. During

that period, Gore reported spending nearly two times as much on

office

rent as Bradley, more than twice as much on office supplies and

about 12

times as much on parking. Brazil's starting chopping salaries,

which were

both an enormous expense and a hallmark of the corporate culture

she

wanted to kill. She then set her sights on perks.

Shortly after her promotion, Brazile was a little too frank about her vision

for Gore's support. In an interview with The Washington Post, she said

that the "four pillars" of the Democratic Party were women, blacks,

organized labor and ethnic minorities and that its "emerging constituencies"

were the disabled, environmentalists and gay men and lesbians.

This

unnerved the moderates over at the Democratic Leadership Council, who

feared that eight years of Clintonian sidling to the middle could vanish in a

panicked leftward lurch by Gore.

The incident inflamed concerns, at least outside the campaign, about

Brazile. In 1988, she had been forced to resign from the Dukakis campaign

after what her colleagues there considered a bizarre episode, in which she

suggested that reporters check out rumors about Vice President George

Bush's marital life. As far back as April, Brazile had privately

assured

Gore that she had learned from the experience and that she would

never

embarrass him. As campaign manager, she has been careful to say

that

Carter Eskew is in charge of the message, and she has been

intently

studying what he says. "See, they're teaching me to talk

message, which is

what I want to learn anyway," she told me. "I want to stop

talking about it

as African-Americans, women, labor, bladdy bladdy bladdy blah."

But she

slipped again earlier this month when she mocked black

Republicans for

being tokens of a party that cares little about minorities,

managing to offend

Colin Powell. Her statements once more yanked attention away

from her

candidate and centered it on his campaign.

Brazile's mistake was in talking about what she was doing,

rather than just

doing it. Regardless of the message she is learning, Brazile has

been

important in shoring up Gore's support among the Democrats'

traditional

constituencies. She is an expert at what she calls "smoke and mirrors," that

is, making a candidate's support seem greater than it is. And like any good

organizer -- like Whouley, who kept assuring the Des Moines workers that

Shania Twain would do an event for Gore, though he had never spoken to

her -- Brazile has a tendency to talk a little big to fire up the troops.

Yet in each of three visits to the Nashville headquarters, I was struck by

how few Gore bumper stickers I saw in the parking lot.

Notwithstanding

the enthusiasm of some longtime Tennessee volunteers and young staff

members, I found little burning passion for Gore among his advisers. He is

too familiar and too lacking in charisma, and too many of his aides have

seen too many candidates. They say that he is no natural politician, for all

his confidence in his own political acumen. But this is not to say his aides

are not dedicated to electing him. While they may not marvel at his

magnetism or vision, his advisers talk with deep respect of his
decency,

policy judgment and commitment to public service. If this is not
the Clinton

crusade of 1992, it is also not the Clinton advertising firm of
1996.

The move to Nashville, which could have been a disaster, has
produced a

leaner, more spirited team. Junior staff members go out for
beers with one

another at night, rather than with college pals in Washington.

Without other

familiar distractions, they come into the office on weekends and
go to

work. This group will build up a lot more passion if the race
becomes a

contest between Gore and Bush, rather than two centrist Democrats
whose dislike for each other has concealed how little difference
there is
between them politically.

Because this is a campaign that wears its underwear on the
outside,

the reorganization became, perforce, part of its message. For
months, Gore advisers believe, all voters had heard about the
vice

president was that his campaign was a mess. The man who had staked his

reputation on "reinventing government" had pulled out a clean sheet of

paper and created a bloated bureaucracy. So the campaign's turnaround

had to become part of Gore's story, and the campaign encouraged numerous articles about the new headquarters and profiles of Brazile in a

bid also to lend some pizzazz to Gore's image. For comparison's sake, ask

yourself how many profiles of Bradley's campaign manager you have read.

Her name is Gina Glantz.

Despite that necessary distraction, Gore began this fall to bring his own

message into focus at last, with the help of primarily two men: Carter

Eskew and Bill Bradley.

Top advisers to Gore, past and present, insist that they always knew that

Bradley would emerge as a serious challenger. Last spring, internal memos

raised the question whether the campaign should start publicly drawing

comparisons with him. But Gore's strategists concluded that to talk about

Bradley would be to elevate him. The guiding, poll-driven premise was that

if Gore drew within 10 points of Bush, the Bradley challenge would

disappear. And the campaign had set itself the laudable goal, laughable now, of remaining positive throughout the primaries.

Casting Gore as the inevitable nominee had worked at first. It had helped

persuade potential candidates who seemed far more dangerous, like Dick

Gephardt, to stay off the stage. "But there's a difference between putting

out a sense of inevitability and acting as if you're inevitable," one Gore

adviser said. "The fundamental operating theory of the campaign in the

early days was that Bill Bradley is only a nuisance; the real issue is George

Bush. The primary is about setting ourselves up for the general election."

Gore ran as an incumbent, much the way he and Bill Clinton ran in 1996.

That style fit the strategy of the campaign, and it also fit the culture of the vice president's office, which was as accustomed to elaborately staged events cooked up by expensive advance-staff members as it was to the restrictions of the Secret Service and the easy life on Air Force Two. So, despite the pleas of his New Hampshire organization, Gore tended to give

high-profile speeches rather than chat in cramped living rooms. These days, Gore thinks back on that period, with a shudder, as when he was running as a vice president who wanted a promotion.

It was obvious to Gore and his staff that he was not reaching voters, particularly outside of Iowa. Some of his advisers thought that the vice president had never recovered his confidence as a speaker since he was swamped by the campaign-finance scandal two years ago. On the stump this summer, he seemed to be groping, at times shouting out his speeches, and then at others delivering them like an automaton.

In early July, at Gore's urging, Coelho brought in Eskew, a 45-year-old consultant. The move revealed how anxious the campaign had already become, because there were several reasons not to make it: Eskew had helped to create ad campaigns for the tobacco companies, a role that would expose Gore to charges of hypocrisy; he would intensify the view of the campaign as overstocked with high-priced consultants; and he was not on speaking terms with another of Gore's media advisers, Robert Squier, who left the campaign shortly thereafter.

Gore and Coelho believed Eskew's benefits outweighed his baggage. With surprising unanimity, Eskew, a sapient fellow with the air of an assistant English professor, is seen as perhaps the best Democratic adman in the business. He has a reputation for creatively puncturing opponents' images; one famously devastating Eskew campaign, on behalf of Joseph I. Lieberman of Connecticut, used cartoons to portray Lowell P. Weicker Jr., then a U.S. senator, as a lazy bear snoozing through important

votes.

Eskew shares Gore's Ivy League credentials, an important consideration

for the vice president when it comes to advisers. He also has an ironic

detachment from the very politicking he engages in, which nicely suits the

vice president's sharper contempt for the business and for political

operatives as a class. Most important, Eskew has known Gore since the

two men worked as reporters for The Nashville Tennessean in the early

70's, he has worked on almost all his campaigns and he is deeply loyal to

Gore. He is one of very few men, Gore's associates say, whom the vice

president talks to like an equal over a drink.

At times, Eskew can seem abstracted. "I really should pay more attention

to these details," he mused almost to himself this fall when a reporter

pointed out that in one advertisement Gore had his sleeves rolled up but his

tie knotted against his throat. Joe Lockhart, the White House

press

secretary, says, "He's as good as anybody I've ever come across

in

understanding how to communicate with people, but often a

conversation

with him is quite disjointed."

Coelho, who regards Eskew as brilliant, put him in complete

control of the

message team, which includes Bob Shrum, the veteran Democratic

speechwriter and adman, and Bill Knapp, a wisecracking native New

Yorker and partner of Squier's who helped elect Clinton in 1996.

Coelho's

idea was to get Gore to stop worrying so much about the details

of his

campaign, like his schedule, and to spend his time honing his

message with

Eskew. Now the two men talk several times daily, sometimes

several

times hourly.

It has been widely reported that Karenna Gore Schiff and Naomi

Wolf, the writer and Gore

consultant, had urged the vice president to distance himself

from the president. This is

true. But it understates the sway that this theory already held,

and holds, among his staff

members, including Eskew. It is campaign orthodoxy. This has led the campaign to play down Gore's impressive work in the Clinton administration.

"It's not what matters so much in this election," Karenna Gore Schiff said of the last seven years. "What matters is who the candidates are and what they're going to do, and my dad's experience goes pretty far back. It goes back to 1976, not 1992."

Personally, Gore remains resentful of Clinton and angry at him for enmeshing him in his scandals, his associates say. But his efforts to distance himself are driven more by a political calculation that voters still see him as Clinton's yes man, rather than as a leader -- in fact, a "fighter" -- in his own right, and theirs.

At times, the personal and the political have been hard to separate. Gore moved up the announcement of his candidacy to mid-June in the belief that otherwise voters would continue to see him only as the vice president. But then he stepped on his own message by criticizing Clinton in an interview

taped in advance. Similarly, he enraged many Clinton loyalists in October,

in his first debate with Bradley, by seizing on a vague question about politics to criticize Clinton.

Once a week, usually on Tuesdays, Coelho still conducts a conference call

with John D. Podesta, the chief of staff, and other White House aides. But

lower-level aides say they are no longer being pressed to consider Gore's

campaign needs as they plan White House events. The White House these

days is divided into two camps. "I'm like, 'You guys, how much do you

expect us to take?'" one White House aide told me this fall, after the Gore

team had requested that the vice president, rather than Clinton, handle a

particular announcement. Gore had just slammed Clinton in his first debate

with Bradley. "They're complaining that we want to be quoted in a story

that has something to do with us," this aide fumed.

Clinton aides, accustomed to a politician able to knife an

opponent and hug

him in the same paragraph, regard Gore now with a kind of wounded
condescension. They understand his need to establish his

independence,

but they roll their eyes over the clumsy way he does it,

wondering why he

does not make more of the administration's successes. The word

one most

often hears from them in summing up his political approach is
"sledgehammer."

Gore and Clinton still talk by telephone two or three times a
week. But

when I asked Gore if he had ever consulted Clinton about the
campaign, he

immediately said no. "He's a skilled politician," Gore said,
"and from time to

time in our conversations he will offer some advice." There are
two

possibilities here: either Gore is fibbing, in which case he
still feels obliged

to exaggerate his personal distance from Clinton, or in fact the
gap is quite

significant, and despite the galaxy of advisers he has
consulted, he chooses

to overlook the Democrat who knows best how to run both as a
challenger

and as an incumbent.

For his part, Clinton misses Gore's advice, presidential aides say. Gore was

able to use sarcasm to puncture Clinton's self-pitying or bombastic moods,

and Clinton trusted him to tell the whole truth. "He looks at the rest of us,"

one Clinton aide said of his boss, "and he thinks: 'Is he telling me

everything? Are they manipulating me?'"

Gore's advisers believe that the vice president had to separate himself from

Clinton because he is, in the campaign's formulation, "famous but unknown." The campaign found, for example, that most voters did not

know that Gore had ever been anything but a politician. Eskew went to

work with Gore sharpening his biography and weaving it into his standard

stump speech. They zeroed in on dramatic points in Gore's own life and

also the lives of his parents.

Gore had spoken about all these matters, intermittently and sometimes

movingly, for years. Now he was joining them in a tight triad of parables

that would give a narrative edge to his standard stump speech and to the

populist theme that Eskew emphasized to define Gore's career: that he was

a fighter against special interests, as one senior Gore strategist put it,

"representing the people against them."

Throughout the summer, Gore lacked what has always been a crucial element in his political campaigns: something to run against.

Any politician

would suffer when compared with an abstract standard; any campaign

lacks focus when it lacks an immediate objective. Gore in particular is most

engaged when he is on the attack, a fact that puzzles and saddens even

some of his most loyal associates. But for most of the summer

Bush

remained a phantom, his popularity surging while his specific plans

remained unknown. Bradley was unmentionable. Then came the Boston Globe poll.

On Sept. 25, during a speech to the Democratic National

Committee in

Washington, Gore unveiled a new approach, leaving the lectern
and its

vice-presidential seal to stroll before the crowd as he
described his

disillusionment over Vietnam. Four days later, in announcing the
move to

Nashville, he mentioned Bradley by name for the first time. And
less than

two weeks after that, when he and Bradley appeared together
before a

Democratic dinner in Iowa, Gore went on the attack, labeling
Bradley a

quitter for walking away from politics and the party when he
left the

Senate. "Stay and Fight" read the posters the Gore campaign
prepared for

the evening.

As reporters gradually caught on to the game, the Gore camp
confidently

dismissed as inside-the-Beltway nattering any suggestions that
their

candidate was too negative, though they kept an eye on their
internal polls.

Primary voters, they said, wanted to hear about differences. The
"Stay and

Fight" theme, they believed, bolstered the campaign's preferred image of

Gore while playing to a gnawing doubt party loyalists held about Bradley.

(The Gore camp had intended to repeat the performance at an appearance

before party activists in Orlando in December, but suspended their plans

when Bradley disclosed his heart trouble the day before.)

The struggle with Bradley, Gore's advisers believe, could permit Gore to

erase doubts about his character and leadership ability, the usual burden of

a vice president. "The real issue here is not a lot different from the wimp

factor that dogged Bush," one senior Gore aide said. "We need this fight to

position ourselves with voters and to show that we can fight. It gets us out

from under this vice-presidential shadow."

As Gore went on offense, Bradley made some serious mistakes: he decided not to respond in hopes of seeming above the fray and he put out

an ambitious but fuzzy health care plan, which Gore began whacking like a

data. Gore's team was terrified that the plan might lend substance to

Bradley's claim to "big ideas." The goal of the attacks was to neutralize

health care as the core of Bradley's positive message. But as Gore

advisers realized they could attack the plan both from the left (as

jeopardizing Medicaid) and from the right (as eating up the surplus), they

came to see the issue as a net positive for Gore.

Once the campaign moved to Nashville, Brazile began holding weekly staff

meetings. On the first day in December, about 50 people, most in jeans and

T-shirts and in their 20's, stopped their work in the "pit" -- the big,

windowless room at the center of the headquarters -- and gathered to

listen as she opened the meeting by asking what they had for Thanksgiving

dinner. Then she turned it over to Eskew.

In turtleneck sweater, chinos and running shoes, Eskew provided an update

on the campaign's message -- that is, on what was wrong with the

other

guy. He told the group that the campaign was making good progress in drawing a "health care contrast" with Bradley and was moving on to the economy. "The issue there again is Senator Bradley's health care plan," he

said. "It spends the entire surplus, which puts a lot of pressure back on deficits, which in turn put a lot of pressure on interest rates, et cetera. It's an issue of I think great importance in New Hampshire, certainly."

But he saw another opportunity, Eskew continued: Bradley had left the door open to cutting benefits or raising taxes to shore up Social Security.

"Not a good idea in any event," he said, "particularly in a Democratic primary. So, I think once again he's sort of gotten dangerously close to what's known as the third rail in, certainly, Democratic politics, if not American politics."

Even as they envy Bradley his cultlike following, Gore's top

strategists are deeply contemptuous of him. They think that he has gotten a free ride from the press, compared with the beating that their boss has taken, and that his support remains confined to elite Northeasterners. They believe he is uncomfortable with issues critical to blue-collar Democrats, like holding the line on Social Security's retirement age, and they scorn Bradley's efforts to use his campaign to highlight issues like race that do not already preoccupy most voters. They believe most Democratic voters care about health care, education and the economy, and in each of those areas, Gore's polling shows that he has an advantage among Democrats.

This conclusion can yield a disarmingly reductive approach to the possibilities of modern presidential politics, one that exchanges the roles of leader and led. "We used to say, in the late 80's, if you don't like the issues terrain, change it," one Gore strategist said. "In the late 90's, you can't do it. Voters don't have the patience and, frankly, they don't have the attention span. You have to talk about them." If Bradley wants to talk about race, he shrugged, "Fine."

saw the new Gore in early November, in Des Moines, and fittingly, the subject that brought him out was the change in his campaign style.

Gore used a question about that tired subject to poke fun at political

posturing, showing a side of himself that reporters were accustomed to

seeing only off the record. At an impromptu news conference, Cragg

Hines, the erudite Washington bureau chief of The Houston Chronicle,

asked Gore when he had the "Damascene" moment that led to his campaign conversion.

Gore did not hesitate. "It was an epiphany," he began at his most deadly

earnest, "that occurred in the midst of an interview with The Houston

Chronicle. The questions were so penetrating; they included words that I

didn't know. And when I looked them up, I thought, I gotta change my campaign."

By then, Gore was regularly holding town-hall meetings -- open

meetings,

as he prefers to call them, from his days as a congressional
candidate -- in

New Hampshire and Iowa. His answers could be overlong; his smile
blinked off and on as needed, like high beams; and he had a
tendency to

turn his head from the waist. He had a bit of the attitude of
the schoolboy

with a hand perpetually raised, as he paraded his knowledge of
airline

deregulation, Social Security financing or breakaway Soviet
republics. But

in a transparently political gesture, he would stay for hours,
until the last

question was asked. He wasn't fighting it. In fact, he was
enjoying himself.

And it worked for him. Steve Hildebrand, Gore's Iowa campaign
manager,

worried that the town halls burned up too much of the
candidate's time, the

most precious resource as the caucuses approached. Why spend
three

hours with 200 undecided voters when you could do an event with
450

people in 70 minutes? Then one night in December he drove to
Iowa City

for a follow-up look at the undecided voters who had been at a town hall.

The "conversion" rate was incredible: 80 percent of the uncommitted voters who heard him had switched to Gore.

Yet television audiences have not been as impressed, and this may be one of the reasons why he continues to lag as many as 10 points behind George

W. Bush nationally. Somehow, for all his credentials and experience, Gore

comes off seeming like less than the sum of his parts. In debate, the vice

president has been reluctant to take risks; when he has, the result has been

damaging, as when he foolishly declared that in appointing Joint Chiefs of

Staff he would make support for gays in the military a litmus test. That

comment yielded yet another "hastily assembled press conference," as

reporters invariably call them, which is something of a Gore signature.

Often, Gore seems to be trying too hard. Discussing affirmative action in a

town-hall-style debate in Manchester in mid-December, Gore made a

telling point, observing that the host had evidently failed to
invite many
blacks. But then he went too far: "Are there any?" he asked,
looking
around and starting to point. "There's one -- one in -- in back
there."

Though he has grown more comfortable with each debate, Gore
still tends
to fall back on catapulting jagged speech chunks through the
air. His
performances recall his 1996 debate with Jack Kemp, when in his
answers
he repeatedly chanted a mantra ("Medicare, Medicaid, education
and the
environment") as though the television audience were being
sleep-taught.

After that debate, my grandmother, a believer in Clinton and
Gore, left a
pained message on my answering machine: "Does he think I am
stupid?"

This year, "I want to fight for you" is proving to be the
patronizing mantra.

Gore knows better. "These techniques inevitably encourage
inauthenticity
in a politician's message," he wrote of the dangers of sound

bites, polling

and "personality skills" in his 1992 best seller, "Earth in the Balance." "Why

present genuine ideas and true character if artificial ones are more

effective in the marketplace of power." When I read some of Gore's

words back to him, he told me that he was no longer so concerned about

political manipulation, because the audience has grown as sophisticated as

the candidates and their consultants. "And what has resulted is that only

one thing really works, and that is what's real," he said.

"There may be

people who are skilled enough and smart enough to use these personality

tools to shape their image and affect and appear to be something they're

not. I'm not one of them." Exactly so. But what is real still needs politics to be expressed.

Gore's attempts to reach TV audiences often reek of the greasepaint he

rightly scorns. As he picks at Bradley, he looks political, and that may hurt

his chances with the independents and moderates who,
paradoxically, are
the very people who are most likely to share his disdain for
politics. They
might be more impressed if he showed the side of himself that
privately
deflects operatives' suggestions with the arch question, "Isn't
that awfully
political?"

One test of Gore's character will be whether he tries to create
his
own "issues terrain" after all. Those who talk about
authenticity are
clearly right that voters demand a sense for what a candidate
truly
believes; political skills -- a feel for who the voters are and
an ability to
reach them -- result in unalloyed pandering if a politician does
not use those
skills to guide the country in the direction he believes it
should go. At some
point, Gore will start making the environment an issue, and the
question will
be whether he uses it just to flesh out his biography or to
build public
support for the aggressive policies he claims to favor. Gore was

disappointed in himself after his failed 1988 bid for the
presidency in part

because of how he ran. His pollsters told him that voters did
not care much

about the environment, and he came to play it down. In this
race, Gore has

talked about the environment when asked, but he has not made it
a priority.

His strategists argue that it is not a point of distinction with
Bradley. They

say that it will become a bigger issue in the general election
campaign,

because Bush's environmental record is weak.

When I asked Gore if there was any issue that wasn't on voters'
minds that

he intended to raise, he answered without a moment's pause:
global

warming. Then, rather disappointingly, he argued that in fact
the issue is

already on voters' minds. "I think people now feel it in their
own lives, and I

think they're worried about it, and they should be worried about
it."

Bradley so far has bested Gore largely on style points. His ease
in public,

his seeming candor and his apparent disregard for old-school
maneuvering

have managed to make Gore seem simultaneously clumsy and slick.

Gore

may lack a common touch or patrician grace, yet he has learned,
in

meeting with voters away from the television cameras, that he
can make a

style of substance. In that setting, he communicates without
contempt for

the process or the people who take it seriously, as they should.

He has to

learn to take that skill on the air. He will need it in the
downtime between

the primaries and the Democratic convention, should he get that
far. He

will need it in the general election; and he will need it to
govern. Before

Gore can hope to seem like less of a politician, he will have to
become

more of one.

Message Sent

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RECORD TYPE: PRESIDENTIAL (NOTES MAIL)

CREATOR: LGBT Activists List (LGBT Activists List <doug.case@sdsu.edu> [UNKNOWN])

CREATION DATE/TIME:21-APR-2000 21:04:58.00

SUBJECT: [lgbt-politics] A chat with Steve May

TO: lgbt-politics (lgbt-politics@egroups.com [UNKNOWN])

READ:UNKNOWN

TO: queerpolitics (queerpolitics@abacus.oxy.edu [UNKNOWN])

READ:UNKNOWN

Sean P. Maloney (CN=Sean P. Maloney/OU=WHO/O=EOP [WHO])

READ:UNKNOWN

TEXT:

Bay Area Reporter

April 20, 2000

<http://www.ebar.com>

A chat with Steve May

by Bob Roehr

Steve May is probably the best-known gay Republican office holder in America. In little more than a year, attacks by right-wing colleagues in the Arizona Legislature and the Army's attempts to drum him out of the reserves under "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" have brought attention to the 28-year-old that he did not seek. But he has stood up to the pressure in the "tell it like it is" political tradition of fellow Arizonians Barry Goldwater and John McCain.

May was a supporter of McCain's now-suspended presidential bid. He was not among those invited to the meeting last Thursday with Texas Governor George

W. Bush, the presumptive Republican presidential nominee. May speaks his mind in these excerpts from a recent conversation:

"This is the 21st century, it is too late to simply recognize that gay Republicans exist, it is not enough. We are not invisible, we do exist, we are real live human beings, that is not the point. The point is, what is George Bush's message to us? How does he feel about the issues that we care about? It is not enough for him to sit down and have coffee with people who happen to be gay.

"I've seen this over and over again in my short political life. When I go to some special interest group dinner, they think that I'm their best friend because I go and eat dinner with them. I could vote against them all year long and all that they remember is their stupid dinner.

"And we do the same thing in the gay community. People come to our annual dinner and we think they are our friends. And they screw us when it comes down to a vote.

"It is too late to wink at us in private and say that some of your best friends are gay. Like Bush, 'Oh, I've got gay people on my staff,' and you are not going to give them White House jobs.

"Would Bush hire [Washington, D.C. City Councilman David] Catania and Dan Stewart [mayor of Plattsburgh, New York] for a White House position? He has invited them to come down to his house in Austin, but he has said before that he wouldn't hire them [because they are gay].

"I met with McCain and it came down to, is the candidate educable? Can he be educated? Are we bringing a message or are we just giving him a photo op?

"I don't know what these guys [meeting with Bush] are doing. They are not part of the official Log Cabin organization. I certainly would not go to a meeting on general gay issues without Rich Tafel present. He would have to be part of it.

" ? I tell you, the Bush gays are not happy with me. They think that we should just be quiet.

"But we have got to expect more of our candidates now. To think that people can just meet with us, that is enough, we are way beyond that."

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CREATOR: LGBT Activists List (LGBT Activists List <doug.case@sdsu.edu> [UNKNOWN])

CREATION DATE/TIME:21-APR-2000 20:45:25.00

SUBJECT: [lgbt-politics] Attention centers on Bush meeting with gay Republicans

TO: lgbt-politics (lgbt-politics@egroups.com [UNKNOWN])

READ:UNKNOWN

TO: queerpolitics (queerpolitics@abacus.oxy.edu [UNKNOWN])

READ:UNKNOWN

Sean P. Maloney (CN=Sean P. Maloney/OU=WHO/O=EOP [WHO])

READ:UNKNOWN

TEXT:

Washington Blade

April 21, 2000

<http://www.washblade.com>

Attention centers on Bush meeting

Was it a move to middle, breakthrough, or just for show?

by Lou Chibbaro Jr.

Most political pundits called it the classic move to the political center following a heated presidential primary campaign. Gay Republicans called it an historic breakthrough for Gays in Republican presidential politics. Not surprisingly, some Gay Democratic activists called it a display of form over substance.

These were just some of the reactions this week to Republican presidential candidate George W. Bush's April 13 meeting with a dozen Gay Republican supporters invited by his campaign. He met with them for nearly 90 minutes

at his campaign headquarters in Austin, Texas.

"I welcome Gay Americans into my campaign," Bush said at a press conference after the meeting. "I want Republicans, conservative Republicans, to understand we judge people based upon their heart and soul. That's what the campaign is about," Bush said.

To the delight of his Gay Republican supporters, Bush also sought to clarify what he called a misinterpretation of his earlier statement that he would not "knowingly" hire a Gay person to a high-level job in his administration.

"It's not a factor," Bush said, when asked by the press about his position on hiring Gays. "What's important is, can the person do the job and do we share a philosophy?" Bush told the press conference.

In response to reporters' questions, Bush said the Gay Republicans did not persuade him to change his mind on his longstanding opposition to Gay civil rights legislation, Gay adoptions, Gay marriage, and Gays in the military, among other issues. Those attending the meeting said he declined to say whether he would retain or repeal separate executive orders President Clinton issued that bar anti-Gay discrimination in the federal workforce and in the process for approving government security clearances.

But the Gay Republicans who attended the meeting said the fact that Bush chose to meet with them and publicly welcomed them into his campaign would have a profound effect on the relations between Gays and the Republican

Party. And while they acknowledged that Bush did not make any commitments on policy issues, they characterized Bush's statements to the post-meeting press conference as a signal to party leaders that the party should no longer treat Gay Republicans as pariahs.

"These are people from our neighborhoods, people with whom all of us went to school," Bush said, at the press conference. "I appreciate them sharing their stories with me. I'm mindful that we're all God's children."

"He said very emphatically that he wants our support," said openly Gay D.C. Councilmember David Catania (R-At-Large), who was part of the group that met with Bush.

Catania said Bush told the meeting participants he was "intrigued" by their suggestion that the party agree to allow an openly Gay person speak at the Republican National Convention in August. Catania said Bush also "reacted favorably" when members of the Gay Republican delegation urged him to discourage the displaying of anti-Gay placards at the convention. Gay civil rights opponents have displayed such placards in the last two Republican presidential conventions.

"He is not everything I want him to be on our issues," said Catania, whom the Washington Bush campaign picked earlier this year to be a Bush delegate at the convention. "But I saw real progress. He said he left the meeting a better person for it."

D.C. Gay Republican activist Carl Schmid, who also attended the meeting,

said Bush's position on hiring Gay people was among the topics discussed in the meeting, which was closed to the press. According to Schmid, Bush told the meeting he never meant to give the impression he would not hire a Gay person, only that he would not seek to discover someone's sexual orientation, which, Schmid said, Bush considers a "private matter."

Shortly after the Gay meeting with Bush ended, Democratic National Committee National Chair Joe Andrew released a statement calling Bush's decision to meet with Gay Republicans "nothing more than a desperate feint to the center."

"The fact is that Bush is beholden to the religious right," Andrew said.

"Gays and Lesbians know that Bush will refuse to enact any policy that directly impacts their lives."

Officials with the National Stonewall Democratic Federation, which represents Gay Democrats, were not as critical as Andrew, although they expressed strong doubt that Bush would change his mind on specific policy issues.

"The fact that Bush is meeting with Gays is an important first step," said Michael Perez, co-chair of the Stonewall group's board of directors. "But we can't help note that this effort seems somewhat laggard when compared to the vast support that exists within the Democratic Party to fully include Gays within the life of the nation."

Among the strongest critics of the meeting was Gay conservative activist

Jonathan Rauch, who is among the founders of a Gay conservative publication called the Independent Gay Forum. In a column in the New York Times on April 17, Rauch noted that Bush made friendly overtures toward Gays more than a year ago, then distanced himself from Gay Republicans while seeking votes in the early primaries. While returning to a much more friendly posture following his meeting last week with Gay Republicans, Rauch said, Bush still made it clear he opposes adoption rights for Gays as well as bills that would protect Gays from job discrimination and hate crimes.

"His every move seems based on political calculation rather than personal belief," Rauch wrote in his column. "From the very beginning, his often-maladroit maneuvering on Gay issues has looked more like triangulation than principle."

Schmid took strong exception to this assessment, saying he believes Bush has been sincere in stating all along that he has always welcomed Gays into the party and into his campaign. Schmid said he and others who attended the meeting believe Bush has not had the opportunity to closely examine many of the issues of concern to Gays and that, as a result of the meeting, Bush and his campaign staff are likely to give greater consideration to many of these issues. Schmid said he delivered to the Bush campaign a "three-inch-thick" briefing paper on Gay issues.

"He showed a comfort level much greater than what we expected," Schmid said.

Concerning the significance of the meeting, Schmid said, "It was more than

just a meeting about issues. It legitimizes Gays as acceptable human beings and as being part of the Republican Party. The far right doesn't accept Gays as full human beings. Bush has."

The Gay Republicans who attended the meeting, in addition to Catania and Schmid, were openly Gay former U.S. Rep. Steve Gunderson (R-Wis.) and the openly Gay mayor of Plattsburgh, N.Y., Dan Stewart. Also attending were: Charles Francis, an openly Gay public relations official from D.C. and Bush family friend, who is credited with arranging the meeting; Scott Huch and Rebecca Maestri, officials with the Log Cabin Club of Northern Virginia; David Greer, president of the Log Cabin Club of Philadelphia; Scott Everett and Jim McFarland, officials with a Log Cabin chapter in Wisconsin; Brian Bennett of Los Angeles; and Don Capoccia of New York City.

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CREATOR: LGBT Activists List (LGBT Activists List <doug.case@sdsu.edu> [UNKNOWN])

CREATION DATE/TIME:21-APR-2000 20:52:55.00

SUBJECT: [lgbt-politics] Bush meeting with gay GOP: Stagecraft or statesmanship?

TO: lgbt-politics (lgbt-politics@egroups.com [UNKNOWN])

READ:UNKNOWN

TO: queerpolitics (queerpolitics@abacus.oxy.edu [UNKNOWN])

READ:UNKNOWN

Sean P. Maloney (CN=Sean P. Maloney/OU=WHO/O=EOP [WHO])

READ:UNKNOWN

TEXT:

Bay Windows

<http://www.baywindows.com>

April 20 - April 26, 2000

Bush meeting with gay GOP: Stagecraft or statesmanship?

by Peter Cassels

Bay Windows staff

George W. changes no positions as a result

Reaction within the national gay movement to Texas Gov. George W. Bush's

April 13 meeting with a group of community supporters - the first ever by a

presumptive Republican presidential nominee - ran the spectrum from

enthusiastic through cautiously optimistic to pessimistic. The radical

Right greeted the session with open hostility.

Bay Windows interviewed a host of national leaders in the days after the

meeting, including several attendees who provided an insider glimpse of

what transpired.

Charles Francis, a gay public relations consultant who two years ago came out to Bush, a personal friend, chose the 11 participants and largely set up the meeting, which he also attended. The brother of James Francis, Jr., chair of the Texas Department of Public Safety, he and his family have known the Bushes for many years. Both families have vacation homes on the same Texas lake and shared Thanksgiving dinner last November.

Represented were Bush supporters, including members of local chapters of the Log Cabin Republicans (LCR), from California, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia, Wisconsin and Washington, D.C. Arriving at 8:15 a.m. they spent four hours at Bush campaign headquarters in Austin, Tex., meeting first with chief strategist Karl Rove and communications director Karen Hughes, as well as with several members of the campaign's policy staff.

They discussed opinion polling and mainstream campaign issues such as education, defense, health and Social Security before taking up gay-related matters. Bush joined the group at 10:15 a.m. and stayed for an hour and 20 minutes. They discussed a range of issues, including workplace discrimination, AIDS/HIV funding, domestic partnership, adoption, gays in the military, security clearances, and immigration.

Each shared personal stories with Bush. Former Wisconsin Congressman Steve Gunderson, now manager of a consulting firm's Washington office and a Human Rights Campaign (HRC) board member, described his 17-year relationship with his partner, Rob Morris, mentioning that both come from strong, religious,

Republican families.

Carl Schmid, a Washington consultant, alternate Bush convention delegate and HRC board member, told Bush about his lesbian sister and her partner, who adopted three African-American boys with disadvantaged backgrounds. He discussed how they are providing the love, discipline, and emotional and financial support they didn't get before. Bush restated his belief that gays should not adopt, but, according to Gunderson, writing in Newsweek's April 24 issue, added: "Now you're telling me of a very loving, caring relationship. I really appreciate hearing that."

According to Gunderson and Schmid, Bush admitted that, growing up in conservative Midland, Tex., he had not been as open to elements of America's diverse culture. He told them he had a narrow set of friends and a firm set of traditions, but expressed surprise that people saw him as intolerant. "What have I said that sent that signal?" he asked repeatedly. The group mentioned his reported statement that he would not hire openly gay or lesbian people in his administration. "I never said that," he replied, and assured them he would hire qualified gays who shared his political views. Bush acknowledged differences in stances on public policy, but insisted he is not anti-gay and shares the community's concerns about discrimination.

Some confusion exists, Schmid reported, on the definition of conservative. "There's a difference between being conservative on social and economic issues and things have gotten blurred," he said during an interview. Bush, he added, mentioned several times that he's open-minded on homosexuality

and "cares about people."

He used as an example his concern about AIDS, mentioning his continued support of the Ryan White Care Act, signed by his father, and increasing the National Institutes of Health budget by 15 percent.

While he did not change his publicly stated position against federal legislation that would expand hate crimes to include sexual orientation, he apparently left some wiggle room on opposing the Employment Non-discrimination Act (ENDA). According to Schmid, Bush told the group, "I don't think I'll come out in support of that today." Schmid interpreted the remark that he could change his mind after further education on the issue.

The group discussed the upcoming Republican National Convention in Philadelphia. Bush told them that he wishes to continue the precedent of having a person with AIDS speak - this would be the third convention with such a speaker if it occurs -and believes someone who's openly gay should as well, not necessarily on a gay issue. Speculation thus far points to Arizona Congressman Jim Kolbe. The governor also said he is against convention demonstrations that include signs attacking gays.

Meeting attendees aren't optimistic about including any pro-gay planks in the party platform. Schmid said he'd be pleased if the platform committee eliminates anti-gay policies included in the 1996 version, such as statements that the GOP is against all discrimination but not in favor of granting special rights for "sexual preference," and gays should not serve in the military. "It would be nice if, when convention speakers talk about

America, they mention gays and lesbians," Schmid said.

He left a two-inch-thick briefing book with the Bush staff that, among other items, discussed the platform, non-discrimination in the private and public workplace, non-traditional families and domestic-partnership benefits. The book contained a list of all U.S. businesses that have implemented non-discrimination policies and DP benefits

Schmid said the group was surprised by the meeting's atmosphere. "I didn't know what to expect and it was much better than I ever envisioned," he reported. "I thought people would not be as friendly. We were welcomed with open arms, like [members] of the family."

Gunderson echoed his statement in an interview: "I think the reality is that the governor's attitude was much more open and sincere than I had anticipated going into the meeting. I was very pleased by that. Obviously, the governor has not had sufficient exposure to the issues of our community, but there's the opportunity for increased dialogue and communications."

"It was a great lesson in Gay 101 for the governor," Mayor Dan Stewart of Plattsburgh, N.Y., told Bay Windows. He believes the meeting was called because "we were faced with what is an ongoing battle between the Log Cabin Republicans and the Bush campaign which had started to cause big problems across the country. The campaign realized they had to reach out somehow and, at the same time, not alienate conservatives.

"The problem is, we don't know what his stances are as far as issues.

Understandably, being the governor of Texas he has not had to deal with gay issues the way he would need to as president. The campaign needed to find out how we feel about Bush, how we can be helpful to him in his campaign and moderate the tone in what we perceived as an anti-gay campaign."

The breach between the LCR national leadership and the campaign was brought up during the meeting. "There seems to be a disconnect between the membership and the national office," Schmid observed. "Lots of the local clubs are supportive of Governor Bush and I receive lots of e-mails, too. I think there have been historical problems with the national office in developing good relations. These are high-profile and delicate relationships that need to be handled well. I don't think the national office has done that. They tend to pick their fights in the press, which made Bush very mad and he talked about that."

Asked for comment, LCR National Executive Director Rich Tafel said April 18: "It's pretty hard to air complaints with the campaign when for weeks over the issue of whether he would or would not have gay people in administration, they didn't get back to us. We've always maintained our integrity, and feel if we have to be critical of the candidate we will." He noted that the LCR criticized former GOP presidential candidate John McCain for supporting Proposition 22, the California referendum that banned same-gender marriage. "Some believe the best strategy is not to criticize but to applaud and we feel it's more important to maintain your integrity."

On April 14, Tafel said he was encouraged by the meeting. "We know that the

purpose was to build a bridge, begin the healing process, and lay down some communication channels between our organization and the campaign. I think that's all, but I'm pleased particularly by the governor's public reaction to the meeting. His statement [during a news conference after the session] that he feels he's a better person for the meeting was a gracious comment."

Mayor Stewart reported that Bush is not supporting hate-crimes legislation for any group because he feels it should be applied across the board. "I don't think one crime must be punished more than another, but we need to have a separate law so people understand that people can't go around beating up gays" he added.

The biggest stumbling block may be the issue of same-gender marriage, the mayor observed. "He is opposed to gay marriage and some of us believe that civil unions, such as what they're doing in Vermont right now, are the future of recognition, although I don't think Bush would be in favor of that. Why? I don't know. I think the traditional-values side of the Bush campaign would be very opposed to gay marriage and while I can't speak for them, I wouldn't expect they would be very supportive of civil unions."

Governing a city in close proximity to Vermont and Canada, Stewart is very knowledgeable about gay issues in both places. "I've alienated myself from a lot people in Vermont by saying I favor civil unions and not marriage. I told activists, 'Be prepared for the backlash. The rest of the [states in] the country [are] going to implement more anti-gay marriage [legislation], but civil unions are much more difficult to reject. They are changing 67 laws in Canada this year because they affect gay couples."

The mayor said he has a problem using the word marriage. "If you look at marriage for what it is, with a 52-percent divorce rate, I don't know if we want to be a part of that. Gays are blamed for the social problems anyway and we would add to that by giving conservatives the opportunity to blame us for additional break-ups.

"People who have been married for 50 or 60 years must be puzzled by these younger people. I know it's not an institution that we want to be involved in, but we should have the same legal rights. Our relationships are no less than theirs, until one brings a religious aspect to it."

Schmid said there's no doubt that conservatives will put "an incredible amount of pressure on Bush not to change his positions. It makes him look so foolish. I think Bush wants to win and you don't win with just the right wing. He truly wants to broaden his appeal."

The radical Right wasted no time in criticizing the meeting. Former GOP presidential candidate Gary Bauer told the Associated Press April 13 that he didn't approve of having a gay Republican speak at the convention: "I think it would be bizarre to pick somebody to speak at the convention based on their sexual preference, because once you go down that road, why don't you pick a transvestite?"

Pat Buchanan, who left the GOP to run as a Reform Party presidential candidate, also weighed in. On Fox News Sunday April 16, he said: "Republicans believe - or used to believe - the idea of preserving the

family is critical, and any assault upon the family was really one of the reasons why this country is in such profound trouble. Mr. Bush is saying that this point of view [homosexuality] is thoroughly acceptable."

The HRC was cautious on assessing the Austin gathering. "I think it is a good first step and if it ends after one meeting then it is going to be a huge disappointment," Winnie Stachelberg, political director, told Bay Windows. "If it rises from there - that we'll wait and see. It's clear that Gore is far better on this issue. He doesn't need to sit down with gays to understand the issues. I'm encouraged that it happened. Its importance will be if the Bush campaign makes some clarifications on his positions."

The Gay and Lesbian Victory Fund, which works to elect gays and lesbians to public office, took a neutral position. "I think the meeting demonstrates the importance of having exemplary openly gay and lesbian public servants advocating for fairness and creating a dialogue within both political parties," Sloan Wiesen, communications director, said in a statement to Bay Windows. He pointed out that the Victory Fund supported Bush meeting attendees David Catania, a Washington, D.C., city councilor, and Stewart.

Reaction from Democrats interviewed was mixed.

"They seem to have brought him up to about 1978," Massachusetts Congressman Barney Frank said of Bush. "Maybe he'll make it into the 21st century eventually. I'm glad he met with gay people, but his refusal to change his stance on gay issues is unfortunate."

"The good thing is that he felt enough political pressure from gay people so he had to give in. What it says is that there's enough feeling in the country that gay bashing is a bad idea, so in that sense I welcome the meeting."

Noting that Bush as governor has not appointed any gays, Frank quipped, "I guess there are really no able or public-spirited gay people in Texas."

Quoting Francois duc de La Rochefoucauld, a 17th century French writer who said, "Hypocrisy is homage paid by vice to virtue," Frank explained that "in this situation, homophobia is the vice and tolerance the virtue. I think Bush is being hypocritical here, but the fact that he needs to be says something. The news here is not that Bush is supportive, but that he was-forced by political sentiment to be better than he really is."

New Hampshire native Michael Colby, executive director of the National Stonewall Democratic Federation, was more caustic. He asked Bay Windows, "Why is this so very newsworthy? If we compare Bush with Al Gore in terms of what they've done with the gay and lesbian community, Gore continues to meet with gay groups all the time and it doesn't get any media coverage at all."

Colby also contended that the meeting did not comprise a significant or representative group of people. "I saw no one on the list from New England, Illinois, Texas or Florida. We're talking about some pretty large areas where there are significant concentrations of gays? He sat down with a group of supporters and had tea!

"He feels like he's a better person from having met with them but at the same time he continues the same old rhetoric of double-talk - the Texan two-step."-----

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CREATOR: TASwann (TASwann@aol.com [UNKNOWN])

CREATION DATE/TIME:22-APR-2000 17:44:36.00

SUBJECT: Rep. Barney Frank's Historic Breakthrough

TO: TASwann (TASwann@aol.com [UNKNOWN])

READ:UNKNOWN

Ann F. Lewis (CN=Ann F. Lewis/OU=WHO/O=EOP [WHO])

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TEXT:

REP. BARNEY FRANK RECEIVES PRAISE ON TWO GAY

RADIO NETWORKS

THIS WEEKEND

Please Post on LGBT and AIDS Internet List Serves

By Tom Swann - President

Palm Springs Gay Veterans

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TASwann@aol.com

Memorial Wreath Laying Ceremony

To Remember the Holocaust and 55th Anniversary of the Liberation of NAZI

Concentration Camps and

Victory in World War II

Also To Honor All Veterans

Who Served Our Country

Historic Congressional Cemetery

1801 E Street SE

Washington DC 20003

Saturday April 29, 2000

1:00 P.M.

(Seattle, WA) - Tom Swann, America's Proud Gay Veteran announced this weekend

the exciting historic news that the United States military has agreed to provide an honor guard and bugler for taps at the April 29 ceremony at Historic Congressional Cemetery.

Jim Darby, national secretary of the Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Veterans of America (GLBVA) said, "This is the first time ever that the active duty military has agreed to participate in a ceremony sponsored by gay veterans."

There have been military honor guards at funerals for gay veterans like late

SGT Leonard Matlovich but not at a memorial ceremony where much of the focus will be the issue of gays in the military.

Swann made his remarks on two national gay radio networks. The Grethe Cammermeyer Show which is heard in the United States, Canada, Alaska and Hawaii and Fred's Circle on Triangle Broadcasting. Swann gave the credit to

Mr. Peter Kovar, Chief of Staff for Rep. Barney Frank. Swann said it was

Mr.

Kovar who "did all of the hard work to make this historic opportunity become reality."

Ed Clayton, national GLBVA President joined Swann on the Grethe Cammermeyer show and gave information about the March on Sunday April 30. Swann praised

Ed Clayton and all of the national GLBVA officers for their perseverance.

He also reiterated thanks that Ed Clayton and the GLBVA national officers had accepted invitations to speak at the cemetery event.

The 12 x 16 foot stage will be located directly behind the chapel overlooking the hillside where FBI founding director J. Edgar Hoover and late SGT Leonard

P. Matlovich are buried. On stage will be Swann, Margarethe Cammermeyer and Miriam Ben-Shalom who WON discrimination suits against the Pentagon. Also leaders of the Alexander Hamilton American Legion Post 448 that according to

the New York Times, "won an important civil rights victory" in a case vs. the

California Department of the American Legion. The suit settlement is confidential.

On stage will be a rare display of national unity with Servicemembers'

Legal

Defense Network, GLBVA, Human Rights Campaign, Metropolitan Community

Church,

California Alliance for Pride and Equality, Stonewall Democratic

Federation,

Shalom International, Department of Veterans Affairs and the United States

Military. At press time the Log Cabin Republicans had not released

information about their invitation to participate in the non-political

solemn

memorial wreath laying ceremony.

Tom Swann also said,

"This is not a traditional funeral service for a veteran. This is a

memorial

ceremony with wreaths and speeches from a diverse group of civil rights

leaders from across America. We have Ed Clayton from Alabama, Grethe

Cammermeyer from Seattle, Morris Kight from Los Angeles, Chris Lenz from

Palm

Springs, Jim Darby from Chicago, Jim Donovan from Illinois, Dr. Frank

Kameny

from Washington D.C., Tony Benfield from San Francisco, Rev. Robert Griffin

from Maryland, Wendy Cohen from Virginia, Miriam Ben-Shalom from Milwaukee,

Eric Astacaan from Sacramento, Steve Valkenburg from Anaheim and Bob Kunst

from Florida. This is a national event and we have over a dozen memorial

wreaths already scheduled from the florist."

The Grethe Cammermeyer Show is part of the GAYBC radio network. The show began in October 1999. The web address is WWW.GAYBC.com Listeners can connect on the web page to hear the show or join the chat room. The toll free phone number in the continental United States, Alaska, Hawaii and Canada is 1-877-429-2269. Colonel Cammermeyer changed her normal Saturday broadcast schedule in order to speak at this ceremony.

Grethe will do a LIVE broadcast from the MMOW on Saturday April 29 from 11:00 A.M. to 1:00 P.M. EDT (8-10 PDT) and then drive to the cemetery for her speech. At the cemetery she will do taped interviews for her show.

The memorial wreaths on a tripod stand cost \$75 with free delivery to the cemetery. You can place your orders by calling Joan Talley at Avenue Florist at (202) 546-8830.

Thanks for reading and sharing with others.