

Wandering & Wondering



John Maybury

SITeseer

- Very funny video about moving to Canada if McCain wins: slatev.com
- 25 ways to save energy in home & garden: consumerreports.org
- Election aids: PacificaRiptide.com (click Categories: online help with presidential candidates, the real John McCain, Palindrome)

NEGOTIATE

The Bush administration scorns talking to geopolitical enemies, notoriously referring to such diplomatic engagement as “appeasement.” But CentCom chief, General David Petraeus, encourages diplomacy. Citing his Iraq experience, Petraeus says, “You have to talk to enemies.” He says it is necessary to have a particular goal for discussion and to perform advance work to understand his counterpart’s motivations, according to the Washington Independent. A draft version of the new National

Intelligence Estimate concludes that Afghanistan is in a “downward spiral” and casts serious doubt on the ability of the Afghan government to stem the rise in the Taliban’s influence there. Petraeus encouraged diplomacy to tackle the violence. “Negotiations with some members of the Taliban could provide a way to reduce violence in sections of Afghanistan gripped by an intensifying insurgency,” Petraeus says, noting that Britain has helped reduce violence in Iraq through negotiations. “They’ve sat down with thugs throughout their history, including us in our early days.” (Source: progress.org)

SECRET WATERFALL

“Serenity and I collected litter from the ‘Secret Waterfall’ (Westline Outfall) site this week. The trash, which had to be hauled up a steep cliff with no trail, weighed in at more than 100 pounds. All of it washed into the creek with the rain on October 3 (and the creek had just been cleaned up October 1). It is likely that a similar amount of litter was swept into the ocean before it could be collected. This is a typical amount of trash following a rain throughout the rainy season. Any able-bodied individuals who would like to help out are welcome. Email me at ianbutler@netzero.net.”

DOUBLE STANDARD

What if things were switched around? Think about it. Would the country’s collective point of view be different? Could racism be the culprit? Ponder the following: What if the Obamas had paraded five children across the stage, including a 3-month-old infant and an unwed, pregnant teenage daughter? What if John McCain were a former president of the Harvard Law Review? What if Barack Obama had finished fifth from the bottom of his graduating class? What if Obama were the candidate who left his first wife after a severely disfiguring car accident, because she no longer measured up to his standards? What if Obama were the one who met his future second wife in a bar and had a long affair while he was still married? What if Michelle Obama were the wife who not only became addicted to painkillers but also acquired them illegally through her charitable organization? What if Cindy McCain had graduated from Harvard? What if Obama had been a member of the Keating Five (United States senators accused of corruption in 1989, igniting a major political scandal as part of the larger savings and loan crisis of the late 1980s and early 1990s)? What if McCain were a charismatic, eloquent speaker? What if Obama couldn’t read from a teleprompter? What if Obama were the one who had military experience including discipline problems and a record of

crashing seven planes?

What if Obama were known to display publicly, on many occasions, a serious anger management problem? What if Michelle Obama’s family had made its money from beer distribution? What if the Obamas had adopted a white child? You could easily add to this list. If these questions reflected reality, do you really believe the election numbers would be as close as they are? This is what racism does. It covers up, rationalizes, and minimizes positive qualities in one candidate and emphasizes negative qualities in another, when there is a color difference. (Internet sources)

JOAN BAEZ

“Five decades on from her first performance she remains a political phenomenon as well as a musical one—endorsing for the first time a presidential candidate, Barack Obama. She has, however, one thing in common with his opponent: both were in Hanoi in December 1972, John McCain as a prisoner of war, Baez on a visit to North Vietnam that reflected her absolute opposition to America’s war. Baez’s commitment to peace and justice has always been outstanding: campaigning for civil rights in the American south, in Israel and Palestine, for Czech dissidents under communism, for Amnesty International and against the invasion of Iraq (where she lived briefly as a child). She is one of only four performers who were at both

Woodstock in 1969 and Live Aid in 1985. Her new album, *Day After Tomorrow*, has returned her to the U.S. album charts; she has just toured Britain. The protest songs of the 1960s, she says, are needed again. Anyone who remembers listening to Baez the first time round—perhaps through a haze of student self-righteousness, joss-sticks and funny cigarettes—knows that, however naive the simplicities of the worldview that she has championed throughout her career, she and her voice will be for ever on the side of the forces of light.” (Guardian Weekly, October 10) [Note: Joan Baez and I both grew up in Redlands, Calif., in the Fifties and early Sixties, and through the years our two families have remained friends to this day.]

OBSESSION

The New York Times (National Edition), Wall Street Journal (National Edition), Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel, Philadelphia Inquirer, Charlotte Observer, Columbus Dispatch, Miami Herald, Des Moines Register, Denver Post, and some 70 other newspapers, have bundled a DVD called “Obsession” as an advertising supplement paid for by the Clarion Fund, a shadowy New York-based nonprofit organization. The film, which purports to be a documentary, calls radical Islam a menace comparable to Adolph Hitler and cuts back and forth between scenes of Nazi Germany and the Middle East for sensational effect. An

outraged reader in Raleigh-Durham, North Carolina, asked, “What’s next, KKK robes?” (media-alliance.org)

OBAMA/MCCAIN TAX PLAN

Senators Barack Obama and John McCain both say they’ll cut federal taxes if elected. According to taxpolicycenter.org, if your annual salary is less than \$112,000, you’d pay less in taxes under Obama’s plan; if your salary is higher, McCain would cut your taxes more. “While the aggregate tax cut is bigger for McCain, a larger number of voters get more money under Obama,” says Alan Viard, a tax policy expert at the conservative American Enterprise Institute. “Obama is choosing to emphasize tax cuts for the middle class, whereas McCain’s strategy is to keep rates lower at the top as a way to facilitate long-run growth.” For example, a person with an income of \$1 million could see his taxes increase under Obama by as much as \$94,000, whereas under McCain’s plan he could save about \$48,000. (parade.com, October 12)

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