

from other pens...

## Long campaign getting boring

We have reached the point in this long and at times boring presidential campaign to the point of shoving the two Democrats aside and focusing attention on what others linked to their campaigns are saying. Pretty stupid.

We care not what others in the campaign say, but we do care what the two candidates themselves say. And frankly we see little difference between Sen. Barack Obama and Sen. Hillary Clinton. They agree on many of the issues and may differ a little on how to incorporate those plans.

Currently, the campaign insiders are kicking around names the young voters of today have never heard of. Ask someone in the twentysomething range, maybe even the thirtysomething range who Sen. Joe McCarthy was. "Huh?!" would probably be the response. And Sen. Phil Gramm? They wouldn't have the slightest idea. There are other old names being tossed around, and that's a problem.

All the while, the hotshots running the campaigns believe digging up old bones will have an impact on the race. It won't. It just goes to show how outdated so many of the people tied to the two campaigns really are.

We have taken healthcare, the economy, the war, guns, immigration, etc., out of the picture and are engaging in a war of worthless words.

All the while, Republican nominee (well, he won't be the nominee until convention time this summer in Minnesota), Sen. John McCain is going about his business while the Democrats are carving up the donkey. If this knock-down, drag-out continues it enhances McCain's chances of replacing the Bush furniture in the White to House with his. He will be the 800-lb. gorilla in the room. But caution, there are still some conservatives who haven't bought into the McCain program. So, from that standpoint he's still got a lot of convincing to do within his own party. It's far from being a bed of roses.

Politics, as we watch it unfold today, certainly brings embarrassment to the very people the politicians say they are working for.

This campaign can be characterized as a "dirtpaign."

— Tom Dreiling, *The Norton Telegram*

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## May the Easter Bunny live

Another tradition is making some people uneasy: the Easter Bunny.

Some folks, worried that the Easter Bunny correlates too closely with Christian traditions and is therefore offensive to non-Christians, are abandoning the little fellow.

According to the San Francisco Chronicle, the town of Walnut Creek renamed its Easter Bunny the "Spring Bunny." The Spring Bunny participates in the town's storied annual tradition, the Spring Egg Hunt.

Some malls across America are changing the Easter Bunny's name, too. According to WorldNetDaily.com, some store managers are calling their bunny "Baxter the Bunny," "Garden Bunny" or "Peter Rabbit."

Peter Rabbit was the name of choice for a Rhode Island school superintendent who, according to ABCnews.com, decided the Easter Bunny ought not visit his school district.

His decision made the ACLU happy. After all, as one ACLU fellow said, schools shouldn't be in the business of promoting Easter celebrations.

Which leads to some interesting questions: What is the Easter celebration, anyhow? What is the origin of the Easter Bunny?

Lawrence Cunningham, a University of Notre Dame theology professor, said in the San Francisco Chronicle that the Easter Bunny has little to do with religion.

"The bunny is a fertility symbol with no religious connection to Easter," he said. "The egg, which was popularized in Greece, Russia and Eastern Europe in connection with Easter, does not have a religious connection to Easter. By taking away the term 'Easter,' these symbols to



**tom purcell**

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some extent return to their pre-Christian roots as symbols of spring fertility."

In other words, somewhere along the line, the furry fellow got twisted up with the resurrection of Jesus. Somewhere along the line, he started wearing a vest and handing out eggs and candy. It took a bit of time — hundreds of years or more — for the Easter tradition I knew as a kid to evolve.

Forty days before Easter Sunday, on Ash Wednesday, we'd attend Mass. Lent was on, which meant we had to make a sacrifice of some kind. That meant one thing in our home: no Snyder's of Berlin potato chips until after Easter.

We'd take in the Stations of the Cross on Friday nights. We'd go to Confession before Easter Sunday ("Forgive me, Father, but I stopped at the convenience store three times for Snyder's of Berlin potato chips ..."). The night before Easter, my whole family would sit around the kitchen table dying hard-boiled eggs. Why hard-boiled eggs? Why dye them? We didn't ask. It was tradition.

Finally, Easter Sunday arrived. I was usually the first to rise. I'd rouse my sisters, so we could rush downstairs and search for our baskets. The Easter Bunny was big on hiding things. Eggs are still turning up on the White House's South Lawn from Easter Egg Rolls that date back to

the Truman administration.

I'd spend the next hour devouring hollow chocolate bunnies. Then we'd eat a big breakfast, go to Mass and stand in the aisles because the stragglers who never went to Mass were always sitting in our regular seat. I'd spend the rest of the day trying to find where my sisters hid their hollow chocolate bunnies.

Who knows how or why the Easter tradition evolved this way. It's the blending of the customs of so many different people who made their way to America. Over time, the different customs melted together to form the American Easter tradition.

In fact, our current customs will continue to evolve to reflect the different influences that continue to blend within our energetic country. That's what customs and traditions do.

But wouldn't it be best that they evolve naturally and slowly and honestly, as they always have, rather than at the behest of a lawyer who threatens to sue because somebody may be offended by an Easter Bunny handing out candy on public property?

It's a sign of a great civilization that we worry so about offending anyone for any reason, but isn't it a sign of a weakening civilization when people are afraid to call things what they really are?

The bunny who hands out candy and eggs is the Easter Bunny, not the Spring Bunny. He's harmless, too, so long as you don't mind him hiding toxic, fatty chocolate things all over your house.

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## Can Hillary or Obama win?

By Floyd and Mary Beth Brown

Much of the current analysis of the presidential campaign battle is missing the point. All of the media attention is focused on the Hillary Clinton vs. Barack Obama heavyweight fight as if it will decide the election. But it seems observers in Washington, D.C. haven't yet sensed the undercurrent running in the country, which for the first time in four years has turned and is running the Republican's direction. The election map is changing. And with the changes, it will offer a totally new red/blue-state picture when the dust clears next November.

A brand new poll commissioned by the Republican National Campaign Fund shows that McCain can win California. The findings show, if Barack Obama is the nominee, he is in trouble on two issues in California. For Hillary Clinton, one issue in particular poses a problem for her in that state. First, the poll, which was written by Adam Geller of the National Research Inc., a Republican polling firm, shows that both Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton are stuck under the magic 50 percent mark against John McCain in California.

The poll concludes: "when voters learn of Obama's support of licenses to illegal aliens, they become far less likely to support him. They are also far less likely to support Obama when they learn of his support for more spending, to be funded by higher taxes." McCain puts California in play for Republicans for the first time since 1988, or 20 years.

Hillary, likewise, has a big problem in California. As a state with a large retired population, "when voters learn the details of Clinton's failed health care proposal — which she has tried to resurrect — they become far less likely to support her. These messages are especially effective among swing voters," Gellar's poll says.



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The incessant fighting amongst Democrats is beginning to take its toll: "Democrats are showing the signs of split due to the contentious primary between Clinton and Obama. McCain is benefiting, receiving a decent number of votes from Obama favorables versus Hillary, and from Hillary favorables versus Obama," the Gellar poll shows.

Hillary won the Democratic primary in California and in Texas relying heavily on Hispanic voters. These voters are much friendlier to McCain than Obama. McCain has traditionally done well with Hispanic voters in Arizona, his home state. Hillary Clinton's Texas victory has even been called by one political pundit the "triumph of the red necks and Hispanics over the inner city blacks that have come to dominate Democratic primaries."

In addition to California, New Jersey, Oregon, Washington and Connecticut look like blue states that could easily shift to the maverick westerner McCain.

Another undercurrent that is running against any Democratic candidate is the electorate's perception of Iraq. According to a survey by the nonpartisan Pew Research Center: "Public views of the military effort in Iraq have become more positive. The results suggest that, barring another reversal, Democrats' ability to use the war as a political weapon could be somewhat curtailed, particularly when the general election campaign begins."

McCain is unique in that he criticized President Bush's strategy when it wasn't working,

and he advocated the surge in troops. When President Bush adopted the McCain strategy of a surge, Iraq news turned more positive. These opinions track more closely with the views of a majority of Americans, and the Democrat contenders' position of immediate withdrawal is only popular with the hard left in their party.

Finally, Hillary Clinton's attacks on Obama's experience and foreign policy expertise are starting to take a toll. Even if Obama wins the nomination as his delegate lead suggests, Hillary Clinton's attacks will damage Obama for the general election and telegraph a similar strategy that will be adopted by McCain in the fall.

The longer this bloodletting continues in the Democratic Party, the less likely either Hillary Clinton or Barack Obama will go onto the White House as president.

Floyd and Mary Beth Brown are bestselling authors and speakers, and write a column distributed nationally. Learn more at [Floyd's blog at www.2minuteview.com](http://www.2minuteview.com).

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