

Today is a big day in Texas. It's election day - and with any luck, the picture of our impending national election in November will be a little clearer.

In the midst of all of this, and after discussions with many (because "talking politics" starts to feel like "talking Longhorns football"), I found myself wondering about the potentialities that are ahead of us. So before the events of today play themselves out completely, I thought I'd throw out a few thoughts in no certain order ...

Let's take a look at our contestants.

I've got to start off with a comment by the Clinton campaign this past week - about how Barack Obama doesn't have the "experience" necessary to be president (and, of course, following that up with "... and Hillary does").

If we go based on the numbers, exactly where did Hillary's years of experience get established? Yes, as First Lady ... and last I looked, that wasn't an elected position (though maybe it should be - wouldn't THAT be fun!). She's been the Senator from New York since 1/3/01. The numbers would show us that Obama has been involved in the political arena since 1/8/97, first as a member of the Illinois State Senate (13th district), then as the Senator of Illinois since 1/4/05.

Those are the numbers ... read them however you like.

You can't drive or walk or run anywhere in town without seeing those little lawn signs. You know the ones I mean?

McCain.

Huckabee (do those signs exist anymore?)

Obama.

Hillary.

Hold on ... since when is the world on a first name basis with Hillary? And do we want to be? Is there any coincidence that the "Clinton" part has been nonchalantly left off?

I'd love to ask the British (or the French) what they think of all of this. It could be a fun discussion - and we might even be able to document the first time in history that the French and English have agreed on anything.

Strike that thought - my optimism got the better of me.

Speaking of optimism - ok, I have to admit, after writing my article of how to select a president, I started to listen to what was really being said by the candidates. Maybe it's not about the syllables in the name ... but maybe it IS about the value of the syllables when they talk. Give credit to the oratory skills of Senator Obama - love him or leave him, but the man can speak with fire and brimstone and passion. It's been a while since the world has seen anything similar.

He's also been very strong with the 18 to 29 age group. There are times when I think that's fabulous - that the country is eventually going to be in their hands - and times I am terrified - that the country will eventually be in their hands. Just make sure I get someone nice to take care of me in the nursing home, ok sonny?

The battle of the Democratic contenders will probably go into the wee hours of tonight. Let's just hope that they don't create so much turmoil winning the nomination that they give the Republicans a head start on the election. Oh wait, has that ever happened to the Democrats before?

Written by Allan Besselink  
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"And now for something completely different" ... as Monty Python used to say.

A guy like Mike Huckabee - well, I thought it was cool that he plays bass guitar. Extra points in my book. He's 53 ... so he's young enough to at least understand what's going on in the country for the people that are leading it forward. But then - it all made sense as to why it just didn't sit right with me. Why? The "ordained as a Southern Baptist minister" part of the job resume might have something to do with it. I've nothing against any religion ... as a matter of fact, I am a true believer in diversity in all it's many forms. But religion and politics just don't mix - actually, I think that history bears that out (and as was once said by someone far more notable than I, "those who do not learn history are doomed to repeat it"). It's a personal thing - not a public policy statement for a country. It's been at the root of plenty of issues in the past 20 or more years.

It looks like the Republican party will have sorted that issue out tonight though.

(sidenote: speaking of religion, can anyone tell me why the media were in a frenzy over the possibility that Senator Obama was/is of the Islamic faith? The beauty of this country - the right to practice whatever religion you so desire ... to speak freely and openly ... has this been forgotten?)

Now I am left with Senator John McCain. He's a war veteran, which demands a great deal of respect and admiration. He's served the country proudly, and to that I offer my deepest appreciation. I am always reminded of the importance of "defending democracy". Well now ... he's got this little problem with balancing "moving ahead as the next Republican candidate for President" and "do I really want the support of the outgoing President"! I would bet that's keeping him up late at nights.

But there's one thing that really stands out about McCain that REALLY concerns me. Again, this isn't about having a prejudice one way or the other. He'd be 72 years old when he takes the oath of office. That would make him the oldest President of the United States - ever. Am I the only one concerned about that?

He appeals to those in the over 60 demographic - which, admittedly, makes a lot of decisions in this country. But he's 30 years removed from me ... and so many Americans, their problems, their reality. The realities of a person in their 70s, leading the world's most powerful nation

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forward in difficult and changing times ... this concerns me. It's not about beliefs or anything like that at all. It's about the simple reality of a person who grew up in a world that was completely and utterly different from the world we live in now. This is a world that really isn't happy about our foreign relations anymore (do we HAVE foreign relations anymore?). It's just different now.

I can see it now ... the moral majority will be knocking down my door shortly ... as will the veterans ... the AARP ...

And nowhere in here did I talk about the issues - of the war in Iraq, health care, immigration, or the economy. Maybe it comes down to finding the person who can simply lead us forward proudly, respectful of the world around us, and rally the people of this great country to effectively influence our world. To make our country a better place for those living here - and to make the world a better place for all of us on the planet.

Or maybe that's just too simple.