

# Feeling guilty

by Matthew D. Cissne  
Co-editor

I am still trying to get over last week's gubernatorial election.

I don't understand how Tom Ridge could defeat Mark Singel. Unfortunately I was not surprised. A travesty was occurring before my eyes.

The polls showed that Ridge had a commanding lead and Singel seemed doomed after he was "Willie Hortonized" (not that I am comparing Singel to that dork Dukakis) by a Ridge ad.

Ridge was able to bend the truth so effectively that more people knew Singel as the man "who lets killers go free" than as Pennsylvania's lieutenant governor and the man who had served as acting governor while Bob Casey was sick.

I had never gotten so involved in an election campaign as I did with this one. I think I know more about Singel and Ridge than I do about Bill "my gut is growing faster than my approval rating" Clinton.

I bugged people about going out to vote and threw in a little pitch for Singel. On election day, I even drove a friend to the polls.

There is one part of the election that I ignored. I did not vote.

Granted, I am registered in New Jersey and there were no major races in the Garden State, but I am still embarrassed and feel guilty.

Voter turnout was pretty pathetic and once again voters 18-25 seemed to forget that there was an election.

It makes me kind of sick that we, the generation who is being groomed to lead this nation, continually neglect our right to vote. We ignore our right to make a stance and send a message to politicians that we care about where our country is going.

I can't stop thinking about what Dan Quayle said in his lecture here at Behrend, "Participate. We have to have to have good people in our political system to improve it, and if you don't participate, don't complain...You can make a difference and if it's not you, who is it going to be?"

It is a sad day when the majority of the population, myself included, can learn an important lesson from "Mr. Potato Head."

# Favorites for '96

by Jeffrey Hart  
Syndicated Columnist

The smart money in Washington has it that the 1996 Republican ticket will be former General Colin Powell and New Jersey Governor Christine Whitman.

Senate Minority Leader Bob Dole of Kansas is the leading Republican elected official. But if he were elected, he would be older than Reagan was when inaugurated in 1980.

Next on the Republican team is Jack Kemp. Kemp has become an old song. His fundamental insight--that cutting taxes and stimulating growth is the answer to our problem--is true, but only part of the truth. He does not seem to have any ideas on education, revers discrimination, criminal justice or immigration.

After the Clintons' wild Arkansas rodeo show, the smart money says that the American people would like a dose of stability and predictability. So, for that matter, would the important foreign governments and the world's financial markets.

Mr. Stability is Richard Cheney. His judgment is sound and he never raises his voice. In

Lynne Cheney, he has a wife who, unlike Hillary, really knows something. Her performance at the National Endowment for the Humanities was outstanding.

But Richard Cheney has had a heart bypass operation. You can get 10 squads of physicians to testify that his health is excellent, but five to ten percent of the voters won't believe it.

Phil Gramm may have the highest IQ on the Republican team, and he has the biggest war chest: \$3 million so far. But he is much too regional and also funny-looking.

Bill Bennett is a national force. As chairman of the Humanities Endowment he fought hard for all the good things. But he has never been elected for anything.

Former Delaware Governor Pete DuPont would be a great president. He is a man of intelligence and character. But you can't get him from here to there, and by "there" I mean the Oval Office. He should have run for the Senate seat of Joe "The Plagiarist" Biden. Even if he had lost that race he would have won politically.

Governor Pete Wilson of California seems poised to pull off a political Houdini and be re-

elected over the challenge of the popular and attractive Kathleen Brown. But so what? Governor Wilson will, if re-elected, show up at the Republican Convention with his large block of California delegates. But does Nevada care? Do Pennsylvania and New Jersey?

New Jersey is a swing state with heavy electoral clout, and Whitman is on a rip as governor. She is cutting taxes, cutting the state budget and actually firing people. New Jersey goes into the Republican column. Christine Whitman for vice president.

And so we come to the Big Enchilada. Let's say that no candidate comes to the Republican Convention with enough delegates to secure the nomination. Colin Powell indicated his availability.

At this moment he may be the most popular and respected individual in American politics.

The idea of a black general and a white female governor at the top of the Republican ticket is mesmerizing. On paper, at least, it looks like a 50-state electoral sweep.

The smart money is on Powell-Whitman.

# Dave gets down and dirty

by Dave Barry  
Syndicated Columnist

Here in the newspaper industry (official motto: "For Official Motto, Please Turn To Section F, Page 37") we are seriously worried. Newspaper readership is declining like crazy. In fact, there's a good chance that nobody is reading this column. I could write a pornographic sex scene here and nobody would notice.

"Oh Dirk," moaned Camille as she writhed nakedly on the bed. "Yes yes yes YES YES YES YES YESSSSSSSSSS!"

"Wait up!" shouted Dirk. "I'm still in the bathroom!"

It was not always this way. There was a time in America when everyone read newspapers. Big cities had spunky lads standing on every street corner shouting "EXTRA!" because they wanted to irritate people and boomboxes had not been invented yet.

But the point is that in those days most people read newspapers whereas today most people do not. What caused this change?

One big factor of course is that people are a lot stupider than they used to be, although we here in the newspaper industry would never say so in print.

Certainly another factor is that many people now get their news

from television. This is unfortunate. I do not mean to be the slightest bit critical of TV news people who do a superb job considering that they operate under severe time constraints and have the intellectual depth of hamsters. But TV news can only present the "bare bones" of a story; it takes a newspaper, with its capability to present vast amounts of information, to render the story truly boring.

But if we want to identify the "root cause" of the decline in newspaper readership, I believe we have to point the finger of blame at the foolish decision by many newspapers to stop running the comic strip "Henry." Remember Henry? The bald boy who looks like Dwight Eisenhower? I believe that readers liked the "Henry" strip because in times of change and uncertainty it always had the same plot:

PANEL ONE: Henry is walking along the street. He is wearing shorts even if it is winter.

PANEL TWO: Suddenly Henry spies an object. You can tell he's spying it because a dotted line is going from his eyeball to the object. Often the object is a pie cooling on a windowsill. (Pies are always cooling on windowsills on the planet where Henry lives.)

PANEL THREE: Things get really wacky as Henry eats the

pie. PANEL FOUR: The woman who baked the pie comes to the window and discovers that - prepare to roll on the floor - the pie is gone. The woman is surprised. You can tell because exclamation points are shooting out of her head.

This timeless humor has been delighting readers for thousands



of years ("Henry" strips have been found on prehistoric cave walls), but for some reason awhile back most newspapers stopped running the strip and readership has been in the toilet ever since. I don't think it's a coincidence.

Whatever the cause, the readership decline is producing major underarm dampness here in the newspaper industry. We're especially concerned about

the fact that we're losing young readers - the so-called "Generation X" which gets its name from the fact that it followed the so-called "Generation W." We're desperate to attract these readers. Go to any newspaper today and you'll see herds of editors pacing around, mooring nervously, trying to think up ways to make newspapers more relevant to today's youth culture. This is pretty funny if you know anything about newspaper editors, the vast majority of whom are middle-aged Dockers-wearing white guys who cannot recognize any song recorded after "Yellow Submarine."

But they're trying. If you read your newspaper carefully you'll notice that you're seeing fewer stories with uninviting, incomprehensible, newspaper-ese headlines like PANEL NIXES TRADE PACT and more punchy, "with-it" headlines designed to appeal to today's young people like PANEL NIXES TRADE PACT, DUDE.

I applaud this effort and as a middle-aged Dockers-wearing white guy I want to do my part by making my column more "hep" and appealing to young people. So I'm going to conclude by presenting the views of some students of Daniel Kennedy's English class at Clearfield (Pa.) Area High School. I recently wrote a

column in which I said that some young people today have unattractive haircuts and don't know who Davy Crockett was. Mr. Kennedy's class read this column and wrote me letters in response; here are some unretouched excerpts, which I am not making up:

- "Maybe one of these days you should look in the mirror, Dave. Dave, you need a new hairstyle, man! You have a puffcut, Dave."

- "Without hair I think every guy in the world would just die of imbarment. I know I would but I am a girl."

- "You say that I don't no anything about Davy Crockett. Well I no that he fought at the Alamo. He also played in several movies."

Let me just say that we in the newspaper industry totally agree

with you young people on these points and any other points you wish to make and if you will please please PLEASE start reading the newspaper we'll be your best friend, OK? OK? Young people? Hello?

You're not even reading this you little twerps.

"Oh Dirk," moaned Camille, "I am overcome by desire at the sight of your ... your ... What do you call those?"

"Dockers," said Dirk.