

Editorial:

Changing Faces: The 2008 Presidential Election

By Jordan Martin

Editorial Division Editor

The current presidential election has proven quite revolutionary for the shape of American politics, particularly as it concerns the national election cycle. There have been several key shifts in the political landscape that suggest change is afoot.

First, the elections have begun earlier. This race unofficially began far in advance of standard procedure. Also, primaries have been held earlier than was accustomed, sometimes to the detriment of the states' representation.

This could be due to the change many feel is instrumental to the future of politics. After eight years of the current administration, there has come the opportunity for change. Candidates vying for office had the opportunity to make

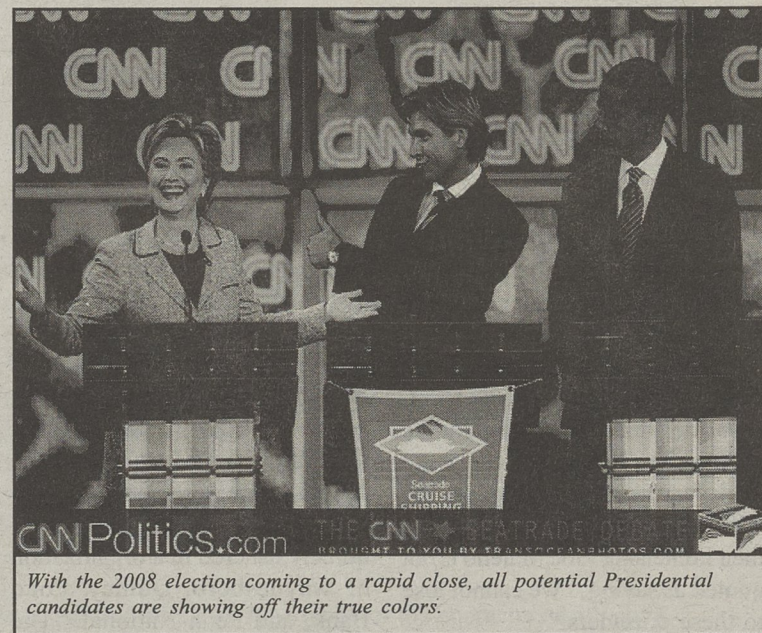
effective use of this widespread discontent by initiating their campaigns at an earlier date. Though this would seem to create a situation in which the voters lose interest because of constant media-barrage, the reverse has proven to be true. It seems that more people are tuning in, and more people are finding their political voices.

In coming elections, media coverage will only become more important. Candidates with insufficient attention will find that they will slip further into the background, and more quickly.

A protracted election would also result in candidates needing more money since they would be forced to campaign long before having access to public funds. Making the presidential campaign even more money-centric than it already is could have serious consequences. The say of the individual would decrease,

except in the context of individual donations. The office of the president, or at least the party nomination, would become available for purchase, veritable political simony.

Second, the parties have become more fragmented as candidates find themselves awash in a sea of early candidates. Within the Republican Party, the conservative factions supporting Mitt Romney found their hopes founded on feeble footing when John McCain rocketed into the lead and secured the nomination. Despite his success, McCain still has not garnered the trust of many conservative Republicans. On the Democratic side, the party is still largely divided over Hilary Clinton and Barack Obama, though historically the shoe-in nominee has been chosen by now. Though our nation has historically operated on a two-party system, these divisions point to



fragmentation more akin to European parliamentary politics.

Though the two-party system will undoubtedly remain in place for some time to come, within each party rancorous infighting will most likely increase in coming

elections as candidates from each faction are forced to canvass for enough broad-based support across the party to win the nomination. The result of this is a number of sub-parties within the larger two-party system.

Are the "Lights" Dimming on an NBC Drama?

By Levi Snyder

Staff Writer

By now, readers are aware that most of my entertainment time is spent watching movies. However, there are a few T.V. shows that manage to pull my attention away from the big screen. The chief among these shows is *Friday Night Lights*, an NBC drama that is just finishing out its second season. The show is based on a 2004 film, and it was my love for the movie that drew me to its small screen counterpart. *Friday Night Lights* chronicles the lives of several people in Dylan, Texas. Dylan is a town where football rules and the townsfolk are made up of players, fans, and coaches. To most, the show has been seen as nothing more than a sports movie that has been cut down to just an hour each week. Because of this, the show has struggled in the ratings during the two seasons that it has aired. What most people

don't know is that the show has very little to do with football.

Friday Night Lights is a gripping drama about small town life. The show focuses on several characters; the first being Eric Taylor (played brilliantly by *King Kong's* Kyle Chandler), the coach of the Dylan Panthers football team. Eric is a man with a lot on his plate. He is the coach of a state champion football team that is expected to repeat their previous victory. This puts immense pressure on Eric and affects his other role as a husband and father. Eric and his wife both work full time while trying to deal with their rebellious daughter, Julie, and their one year old, Gracie. The couple is not your ordinary sitcom family who solve every thing in a half hour. They deal with real problems and get into real arguments. Eric is a good husband and father, but his stubbornness does not make him very easy to live with. Tami Taylor is a dedicated mother who wants

to please every one, but often falls short. The two of them are a genuine on screen team. The rest of the cast is filled out by mostly players. First, there is Matt Sarreson, the star quarter back and ex boy friend of Julie Taylor. Matt is a shy kid who must balance school and football while trying to take care of his senile grandmother. Next is Tim Riggins the team's alcoholic wide receiver. Smash Williams, the cocky line backer, also catches a lot of screen time as he tries to score a division one football scholarship. Perhaps the most interesting of the players is Jason Street, a former Dylan quarter back who became a quadriplegic. Jason serves as one of the team's assistant coaches, but he wants more than anything to find a way to walk again.

This cast of characters presents real situations and problems in a very unapologetic manner. During the past two seasons the show has dealt with

issues like rape, underage drinking, steroid use, and divorce with a very blunt and genuine style. The show does not sugar coat these issues. It presents the problems that are out there and it does not pull any punches when doing so. The real reason that I am writing this article is to respond to the rumor that *Friday Night Lights* is in danger of being canceled. To me, this is not a surprise and I will tell you why; today's audiences don't want this kind of show. *Friday Night Lights* presents real issues and promotes real values in a way that is both funny and moving. But in today's society, this has no place on television. Unless some one is being killed or raped in every episode of your show, or the number of innuendos spoken outnumbers the clean jokes by a large margin, it isn't good television. Now I am not saying that shows like *C.S.I.* or *Two and a Half Men* aren't entertaining, but they have

lowered American T.V. goers' standards. Gratuitous violence and sex has become the norm. I'm not trying to sound preachy. I am all for free expression, but to me, it seems that most other shows are just presenting what they know will sell. *Friday Night Lights* is doing something different and it is doing it in a very compelling way. The show will most likely get the boot next season and I think that is truly a shame. Apparently after all of these years, straying away from what people are used to still scares them. For those of you who want to give something different a try, the show can be seen on NBC's website. Also, the first season can be found on DVD. So if you are in the mood to stray from the norm and experience a great show, give *Friday Night Lights* a chance.

