

2004 SPRING EDITOR'S NOTE



I turned 50 last January. Many friends and colleagues got together and gave me a wild birthday gift - this magazine. They thought it was time for the independent movement to be part of the political conversation in America.

Although the size of the independent voter bloc is huge - 35% of the electorate - its voice is small, diminished by the prejudice that independents are simply voters who can't make up their minds.

Nothing could be further from the truth. Independents have made up their minds about something *very* important. They're independent! In spite of the overwhelming dominance of the two parties, a plurality of Americans - with *very* diverse views - choose to align with neither. That disalignment says something rather profound about how inhibiting and anachronistic traditional partisan politics has become, circa 2004.

The *Neo-Independent* is part of a movement that is anti-corruption and pro-people, non-ideological but passionate about realizing America's greatness as a force for humanism, creativity and development.

With the country split 50/50 along partisan lines, the independent voter may well decide the upcoming presidential election. As the movement grows in influence it could decide a lot more, including that the American people - not the parties, or any other special interests - should determine the policies of our government.

This premier issue reports on how the independent movement is becoming a force to be reckoned with. "Unpopular Partnerships (Bloomberg's Dilemma)" is an account of an unfolding political drama in New York City, where an independent mayor and an independent movement are trying to upend partisan politics-as-usual. "How the Democrats Sabotaged an Independent Coalition to Defeat Bush" chronicles an important "backstory" of the 2004 presidential campaign that has implications for the choices independent voters will make in the race for the White House.

"Independents At the Gates" focuses on the novel legal controversies being generated by the increasingly visible corruption of the party system. "It Don't Mean a Thing If It Ain't Got That 'Swing'" and "The Emerging Independent Minority" provide additional insider accounts of how the Democratic Party has played (or misplayed) its relationship to independent voters. "Karp's Corner" allows us all to benefit from the "take no prisoners" essays of a leading critic of partisan gamesmanship, the late Walter Karp. Fred Newman's "A Note on Rorty" takes on the truth and consequences of philosopher Richard Rorty's concept of democracy.

The Neo-Independent would never have seen the light of day without the support of so many people. Gabrielle Kurlander and Christopher Street raised the seed money for my birthday gift. They did it after Fred Newman insisted it was time that the neo-cons had a little competition. Kim Svoboda and John Opdycke helped to get me focused. Lauren Ross, Phyllis Goldberg and Sarah Lyons kept me on track. Alison Josephs translated my ideas into the visual. My thanks to them and to the many hundreds of supporters and subscribers who waited patiently while I found my "voice."

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