

ELECTIONS

March 12, 2012

This is Jill Duffy, with Community Comment

A funny man once said, "Folks who don't know why America is the Land of Promise should be here during an election campaign."

Last Friday was the final day for candidates to submit their filing papers for the upcoming June primary election which includes the Presidential Primaries, U.S. Senate, an open Congressional seat, State Assembly, 3 County Supervisorial seats, the Republican, Green, Democratic and Peace and Justice Central Committees and set the stage for the general election for November 2012.

And so, another political season begins.

Running for office is time-consuming, expensive, and requires a tremendous personal commitment. It requires learning the minutia of local issues, platform development and solutions, fundraising, door-to-door campaigning, and learning about media exposure – sometimes at a candidate's own expense.

We the voters often judge candidates by slogans, name recognition, and public image. But to perform our civic duty, we also must be informed. Look at the candidates' background, values, their experience and determine how prepared a candidate is for the job. We observe the candidates' campaigns for several reasons - the manner in which they manage their campaigns will give the voter an indication of how they

will fill the seat they are seeking; do they appear before different groups, even those groups that may disagree with the candidates' views on issues; and finally do they stand on their principles and records, and try to keep their campaigns focused on the issues?

To all these candidates - Thank You. For your willingness to place yourself, beliefs, and ideas before the public, and your candidacy ensures that voters have a choice. Campaigning and holding office demand tremendous personal sacrifices – more than many people can fully appreciate – for not only must candidates take care of their day-to-day business, but attend a plethora of meetings during the day and evenings, events, and requests to speak at special functions and ceremonies...and sometimes, calls from future constituent late into the night and early mornings.

The media plays an important role because reporters should be able to look past a candidate's image, and help present the candidates and issues in detail. More recently, use of social networking such as Facebook, blogs and push polls are being incorporated as ways to get information and influence the issues and candidates, and it also means candidates are increasingly accessible to the average voter.

For me, I will be looking for the candidate who will be able to put the campaign behind them and be able to work closely with a wide array of people in order to develop the common ground and compromises necessary for the greater good.

Dwight Eisenhower once said "People talk about the middle of the road as though it were unacceptable. Actually, all human problems, excepting morals, come into the gray areas. Things are not all black and white. There have to be compromises. The middle of the road is all of the usable surface. The extremes, right and left, are in the gutters. "

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