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Guest editorial: Informed voters an antidote to cynicism

BY AMY FLEMING • SEPTEMBER 26, 2008

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Why should we be political people? The comedian Jon Stewart puts it this way, "I know we were supposed to bequeath to the next generation a world better than the one we were handed ... so sorry."



A national election brings a sense of urgency. No other time is it more important to be truth seekers than during this time. Leaders in a democracy are a reflection of what we as individuals have chosen and are willing to tolerate.

When it comes to politics, there are two important questions we have to ask ourselves "Are we willing to learn and are we willing to change?" Information is power. One of my social justice lessons learned is that sometimes it is more important to know the questions than the answers.

I see in this race the media not focusing on the important questions. Who needs to know about lipstick on pigs when our economy is failing, we are in two wars, our education system is a

disgrace, and poverty is rampant?

Power is the ability to achieve purpose. The power of truth is the power to liberate people. However, when learning about issues, another lesson learned is in knowing who is giving you the information. What is their bottom line? Where do their interests lie? When you know that, you can better understand their position and their opinion.

Elections should not be won by raising shadow issues based on fear, rejection, hostility to change, and narrow-mindedness. We deserve to see what we are getting, without disguise. I once heard that it is not love that makes the world go round; it is fear. Never is that more prevalent than during election season.

For those with Internet access, there are innumerable sites to find information. But intelligent people realize it is also the Internet where misinformation and disinformation can be spread faster than a spam second. Just as important is the fact that we cannot and must not be one-issue people.

No one candidate will fill all our needs and profess all our issues to our satisfaction. We have to go with the one who may be closest and then educate and agitate them.

Many have become cynical in the face of what we see, read and hear today. Cynicism comes from despair. The antidote is not optimism but action, and from action hope is born.

Here are suggestions on where to get information you need:

*www.factcheck.org -- Sponsored by the Annenberg Public Policy Center of the University of Pennsylvania, it was developed to hold politicians accountable.

*www.commoncause.com -- Sponsored by Common Cause, it will lead you to watchdog groups in your area.





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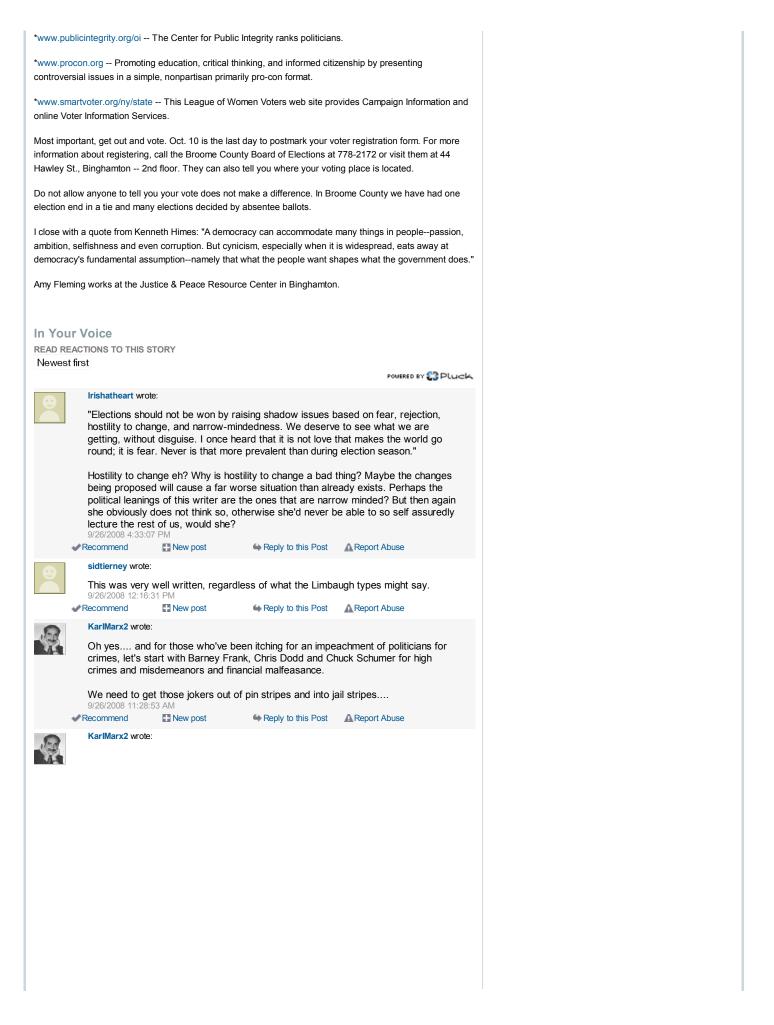
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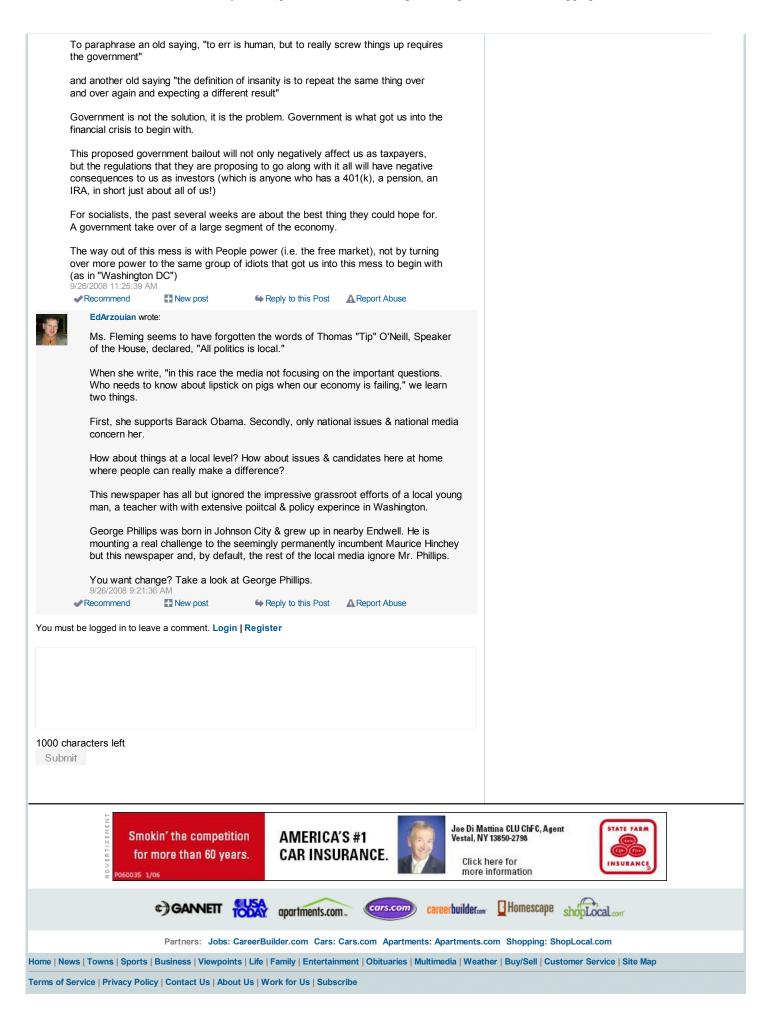
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