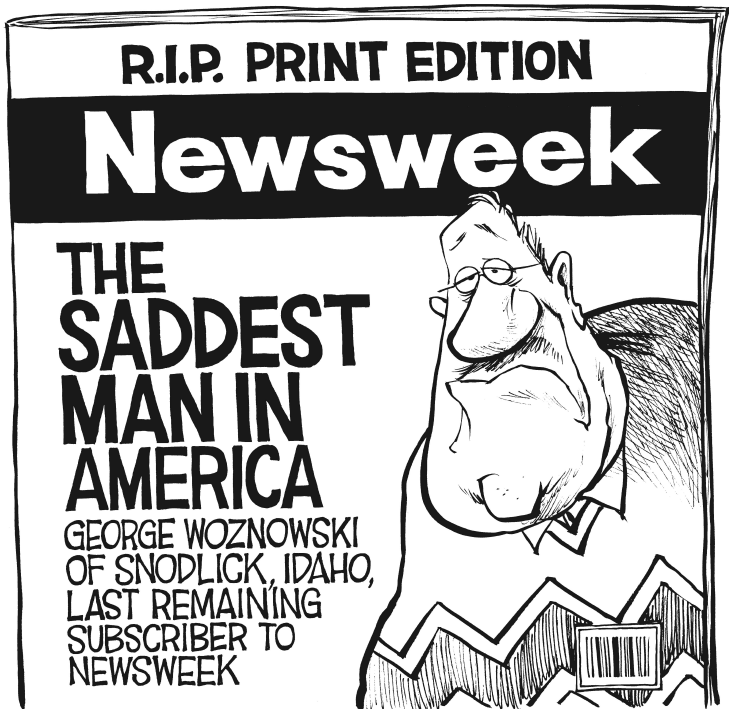


The Final
COVER....

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THE COLUMBIAN DISPATCH
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Missed Opportunities

BY BILL O'REILLY
Creators Syndicate

Here's the good news for Mitt Romney: In the first two debates, he established himself as President Barack Obama's equal on the events of the day. The governor is well versed on the issues and has shown a mastery of both foreign and domestic policy.

Here's the bad news: He has failed to pin down the president on his obvious policy shortcomings.

As someone who makes a nice living debating on television, I watch the president and the governor go after each other with a professional eye. And I can't understand why Romney doesn't close the deal. Three examples:

First, when Obama says his energy programs are helping the nation, all Romney has to do is keep it simple and ask: "Why then have gas prices more than doubled on your watch, Mr. President? That doesn't sound like good policy to me."

Second, the president continues to say he has created millions of jobs. But all Romney has to do is retort: "So what? The average income for working-class households in America is down almost \$5,000, Mr. President. Workers are getting hosed, and your policies are at fault."

Finally, number three, the Libya deal. This is crazy. There are just two vital questions, and Romney has not asked either one: Who pulled two American security teams out of Libya in August despite the concerns of slain Ambassador Christopher Stevens? Who ordered U.N. Ambassador Susan Rice and White House



Bill
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spokesperson Jay Carney to mislead the world about what happened?

If the president doesn't know, he looks incompetent. If he does know and won't say, he looks corrupt. If he does answer the questions, Romney wins just by asking.

The problem with many politicians when they debate is that they cram so much information into their heads in anticipation of spitting it out there that they don't actually listen to what their opponent is saying. In any debate, simple is best. State the facts clearly, and ask obvious questions about your opponent's weaknesses.

Romney has a big advantage over Obama in the debates because Obama has to defend a record that contains some massive screw-ups. Nobody really cares about Romney's record in Massachusetts, and he could easily pettifog any specific questioning of it.

But with the economy sluggish after almost four years, four dead Americans in Libya, and Iran still chugging along on the nuclear weapons highway, the president has a good deal of Ricky Ricardo 'splainin' to do. But the governor has not put him on the spot in a precise enough way.

Next Monday, Romney will have one final chance to pin the president against the rhetorical wall. The foreign policy debate opens up Libya big-time. If Romney wants to win, he'll keep it simple and demand some answers.

Veteran TV news anchor Bill O'Reilly is host of the Fox News show "The O'Reilly Factor" and author of the book "Pinheads and Patriots: Where You Stand in the Age of Obama."

Exhausting The Insignificant

BY KATHLEEN PARKER
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WASHINGTON — Oh, to be 12 again, the better to enjoy the presidential debates.

Or rather, the better to appreciate the Twitterverse, where America's obsessive-compulsive, attention-deficit population holds the zeitgeist hostage with tweets and memes that infantilize political discourse and reduce the few remaining adults to impolitic fantasy.

In this, the first social-media presidential election, the debates have come to resemble reality shows during which virtual audiences cast ballots (and aspersions), hiccoughing their impulse-reactions to every word and movement into the intellectual vacuum we charitably call the body politic.

Two debates in, and the complex issues of our day have been reduced to a large yellow bird and binders full of women.

The problem isn't only with the debates themselves, but the simultaneous critique by the world's largest party — social media. Our million-way conversation is a convention of Snarks Anonymous. The cleverest commenter gets a free, if short, ride on the Fame Wheel, usually at the expense of Mitt Romney, who, let's stipulate, is not the likeliest presidential choice of the Twitter generation.

It doesn't help that Romney is so ... giving.

During the first debate, he delivered Big Bird, one of his targets for funding cuts along with public broadcasting. Such easy prey for President Obama, whose campaign launched a rejoinder sure to capture the tyke vote: Obama kills Osama bin Laden and Romney wants to kill Big Bird. The was a kind of setup that puts comedy writers out of work.

Next came the "binders full of women." Romney was answering (or avoiding) a question about the Lilly Ledbetter Act, which removed the statute of limitations for filing complaints about unequal pay, and switched to his record on hiring women. In the process of a search to fill Cabinet positions while governor of Massachusetts, he said he had "binders full of women."

Before the debate was over, the hashtag #binders-fullofwomen was ricocheting through the Twitterverse. By morning, "binders full of women" was the lead topic on talk shows and continues to be a multimedia punch line.

It would all be so very amusing if not for the subsequent media interrogatory. Was this emblematic of Romney's attitude toward women? Did Romney cause himself irreparable harm among women voters?



Kathleen
PARKER

I defer to Time's Mark Halperin, who doubtless spoke for many of us when he said on "Morning Joe": "The binder thing is what's wrong with our politics." Ridiculous, in other words.

In full disclosure, I should confess that I am a binder person. I have a binder for everything — family, finances, office, home, dog. I do not objectify these aspects of my life; I honor them with organizational zeal. So when Romney said that he had binders full of women, I thought, well of course.

As it turns out, at least some of his binders were provided by a women's organization that was lobbying the governor for more women in power positions. Good for them — and good for him. He did it, filling 10 of the top 20 positions in his administration with women.

By contrast, it seems fair to mention, women staffers in the Obama administration have reported feeling marginalized, according to Ron Suskind's book "Confidence Men." One even described the White House as a "hostile workplace."

But never mind.

The Obama campaign couldn't be more delighted with "Bindergate," which dovetails nicely with the narrative created by Obama's team that Romney is waging war on women. Not all women see things this way, the evidence of which is the movement of women voters toward Romney, especially after the first debate. For this reason, perhaps, the Obama campaign immediately bought a Twitter ad and issued this statement: "The President talked about women as breadwinners. Romney talked about them as resumes in 'binders.'"

Actually, he spoke of them as people he wanted to hire, but again, never mind.

Romney can be awkward. His word choices are sometimes odd. But the idea that this particular phrasing was so jarring to some women that they got digital vapors is nonsense. Twitter may keep us entertained, but it can also make us ninnies.

So much ado about nothing leads one to wonder what else might be going on. Perhaps Obama foreshadowed these events in his acceptance speech at the 2008 Democratic convention when he said: "If you don't have a record to run on, then you paint your opponent as someone people should run from. You make a big election about small things."

File that one in your binder full of politics.

Kathleen Parker's email address is kathleen-parker@washpost.com.

YOUR LETTERS

Dealing With Litter

Drew Konopasek, Yankton
YHS Student Body President

Kayle Sylvester, Yankton
YHS Student Body Vice President

Yankton High School acknowledges the fact that there is a trash problem on the campus (*Press & Dakotan*, Oct. 3). However, the students and administration have gone to great length to address this problem.

First of all, the administration has stressed to the seniors the importance of throwing the styrofoam trays in the garbage can and not on the ground, prior to the letter to the Editor. The high school has also teamed up with Keep Yankton Beautiful and qualified for a \$5,000 grant to address the trash issue. In addition, the freshman football team recently picked up garbage in the parking lot as a community service project. Another

thing people need to understand when addressing this issue is that this is not a reflection of the entire student body. It is not necessary to punish all of the students, by taking away their open campus, for a small number of students being irresponsible.

Furthermore, there are many events that take place on the campus not sponsored to the high school. For example, during the fall and winter months the summit center parking lot overflows forcing cars to park in the high school parking lot, which can potentially create waste on the ground.

Overall, the high school has addressed these trash problems and further actions will be taken to fix the problem. We thank you for your concern, but the Yankton High School administration and student body are a responsible group of people who are tackling this issue on their own.

THE PRESS DAKOTAN

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OPINION | OTHER THOUGHTS

More Work Ahead On Openness Issue

RAPID CITY JOURNAL (Oct. 17): A state task force created to find ways to make South Dakota government more open concluded its recent work with some recommendations that will be forwarded to the governor and attorney general.

Any recommendations from the 33-member panel of representatives of news organizations, state officials, law enforcement officials, prosecutors and local government officials that makes government more open to the public are welcome. Among those recommendations are proposals to make more government documents available to the public and make public police mug shots of accused criminals.

We are disappointed that the panel could not agree on requiring government boards and commissions to record closed meetings. Under the proposal, the recordings of closed meetings would have been sealed unless someone complained that the meeting was closed illegally. A judge would then review the record to determine if the meeting met the requirements of state law. Under state law, meetings of state and local boards and commissions must be open to the public and can be closed to the public only for specific reasons.

Minutes of meetings are kept for public meetings but are not kept during closed sessions. We believe the requirement for recording closed meetings and sealing them for possible later review would have kept the discussions during closed-door sessions from straying into matters that should be discussed before the public.

We are pleased that Gov. Dennis Daugaard and Attorney General Marty Jackley created the Open Government Task Force and hope that this is not the last time the task force meets. There is still more work that needs to be done to make South Dakota government open to the people.

POLITICAL LETTERS

■ All political/letters to the editor to the **PRESS & DAKOTAN** that fall under the "paid" advertising policy will be charged \$25 for up to 200 words, plus 15 cents per additional words above 200. As with all political advertising these must be paid in advance.

■ Deadline for these ads will be the same as all other display advertising deadlines which is determined by the day it is requested to run.

■ No paid advertising (including these) will be allowed to run on the opinion page.

■ Emailing these political letters to the editor is strongly encouraged to insure accuracy and speed.

■ Since these ads are not from an actual candidate or campaign they do not need to follow the same disclaimer policy, HOWEVER, they do need to be signed (and verified) and the ads need to be marked as, **PAID ADVERTISEMENT**.

THE VIEWS PAGE

The **PRESS & DAKOTAN** Views page provides a forum for open discussion of issues and interests affecting our readers. Initialed editorials represent the opinion of the writer, but not necessarily that of the **PRESS & DAKOTAN**. Bylined columns represent the view of the author. We welcome letters to the editor on current topics. Questions regarding the Views page should be directed to Kelly Hertz at views@yankton.net.

TODAY IN HISTORY

By The Associated Press
Today is Monday, Oct. 22, the 296th day of 2012. There are 70 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History: On Oct. 22, 1962, President John F. Kennedy delivered a nationally broadcast address in which he publicly revealed the presence of Soviet-built missile bases under construction in Cuba and announced a quarantine of all offensive military equipment being shipped to the Communist island nation. Kennedy also called upon Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev to "eliminate this clandestine, reckless and provocative threat to world peace."

On this date: In 1746, Princeton University was first chartered as the College of New Jersey.

In 1797, French balloonist Andre-Jacques Garnerin made the first parachute descent, landing safely from a height of about 3,000 feet over Paris.

In 1836, Sam Houston was inaugurated as the first constitutionally elected president of the Republic of Texas.

In 1883, the original Metropolitan Opera House in New York held its grand opening with a performance of Gounod's "Faust."

In 1928, Republican presidential nominee Herbert Hoover spoke of the "American system of rugged individualism" in a speech at New York's Madison Square Garden.

In 1934, bank robber Charles "Pretty Boy" Floyd was shot to death by federal agents at a farm in East Liverpool, Ohio.

In 1953, the Franco-Lao Treaty of Amity and Association effectively made Laos an independent member of the French Union.

In 1962, the hit comedy album "The First Family," starring comedian-impressionist Vaughn Meader as President John F. Kennedy, was recorded before a studio audience in New York City.

In 1968, Apollo 7 returned safely from Earth orbit, splashing down in the Atlantic Ocean.

In 1979, the U.S. government allowed the deposed Shah of Iran to travel to New York for medical treatment — a decision that precipitated the Iran hostage crisis. French conductor and music teacher Nadia Boulanger died in Paris.

In 1981, the Professional Air Traffic Controllers Organization was decertified by the federal government for its strike the previous August.

In 1986, President Ronald Reagan signed into law sweeping tax-overhaul legislation.

Ten years ago: Bus driver Conrad Johnson was shot to death in Aspen Hill, Md., in the final attack carried out by the "Beltway Snipers." Former CIA Director Richard Helms died in Washington, D.C. at age 89. The Anaheim Angels defeated the San Francisco Giants 10-4 to take a 2-games-to-1 edge in the World Series.

Five years ago: A federal judge in Dallas declared a mistrial for former leaders of the Texas-based Holy Land Foundation, a Muslim charity accused of funding terrorism. (The charity and five of its former leaders were convicted in a retrial the following year of funneling money to the Palestinian militant group Hamas.) China's Communist Party gave President Hu Jintao a second five-year term. Marie Osmond briefly fainted onstage during ABC's live broadcast of "Dancing With the Stars" after performing a samba with partner Jonathan Roberts.

One year ago: The Obama administration pulled U.S. Ambassador Robert Ford from Syria amid what were termed "credible threats against his personal safety." The heir to the Saudi throne, Crown Prince Sultan bin Abdel Aziz Al Saud, died in New York. (He was succeeded as crown prince by his half-brother, Prince Nayef bin Abdul-Aziz, who died in June 2012; Defense Minister Prince Salman bin Abdul-Aziz was then named the new heir to the throne.) Louisiana Gov. Bobby Jindal easily coasted to a second term in a landslide election. In the World Series, the St. Louis Cardinals romped past the Texas Rangers 16-7 for a 2-1 edge. Veteran CBS News correspondent Robert C. Pierpoint died in Santa Barbara, Calif., at age 86.

Today's Birthdays: Actress Joan Fontaine is 95. Nobel Prize-winning author Doris Lessing is 93. Black Panthers co-founder Bobby Seale is 76. Actor Christopher Lloyd is 74. Actor Derek Jacobi is 74. Actor Tony Roberts is 73. Actress Annette Funicello is 70. Movie director Jan de Bont is 69. Actress Catherine Deneuve is 69. Rock musician Leslie West (Mountain) is 67. Former Mississippi Gov. Haley Barbour is 65. Actor Jeff Goldblum is 60. Movie director Bill Condon is 57. Actor Luis Guzman is 55. Actor-writer-producer Todd Graff is 53. Rock musician Cris Kirkwood is 52. Actor-comedian Bob Odenkirk is 50. Olympic gold medal figure skater Brian Boitano is 49. Christian singer TobyMac is 48. Singer-songwriter John Wesley Harding is 47. Actress Valeria Golino is 46. Comedian Carlos Mencia is 45. Country singer Shelby Lynne is 44. Reggae rapper Shaggy is 44. Movie director Spike Jonze is 43. Rapper Tracey Lee is 42. Actress Saffron Burrows is 40. MLB player Ichiro Suzuki is 39. Actor Jesse Tyler Ferguson is 37. Actor Michael Fishman is 31. Talk show host Michael Essany is 30. Rock musician Rickard Goransson (Carolina Liar) is 29. Rock musician Zac Hanson (Hanson) is 27. Actor Jonathan Lipnicki is 22. Actress Sofia Vassilieva is 20.

Thought for Today: "Life is easier to take than you'd think: all that is necessary is to accept the impossible, do without the indispensable and bear the intolerable." — Kathleen Norris, American author (1880-1960).

FROM THE BIBLE

As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good. Genesis 50:20. Portals of Prayer, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis

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