

Quid Est Veritas

Reagan vs. Roosevelt: A Voting Primer

By Patrick Weadon

In a few short days we will once again have the opportunity to cast our votes for the candidates of our choice. The autumn of 2006 finds our nation bitterly divided on a host of important issues - in many ways regrettable. In most cases, unity trumps divisiveness every time.

On the other hand, if Democracy is about anything it is about giving people choices. In late September, Bob Ehrlich and the mayor of Baltimore, Martin O'Malley, took questions at an AARP seminar. At one point Ehrlich pointed at the audience and stated, "You folks are kind of lucky, because we don't agree on anything." I agree. The fact is that sometimes polarization can be a good thing because it prompts us to come to terms with our true beliefs on a particular issue.

So, take a minute to review the following and decide if you believe, as Franklin Roosevelt did, that government is the solution or as Ronald Reagan did, that government is the problem.

If you share Bob Ehrlich's chief financial adviser Dick Hug's view that the way to keep college affordable is to double tuition at our state universities and colleges, then cast your vote for the party of Reagan.

(In October 2003 Hug told a *Washington Post* reporter he advocated increasing the price of tuition from about \$6,700 a year to around \$15,000. Hug also said he believed Ehrlich was open to the idea. "If he thought I was out in left field, he would have given me a call and said, 'Dick, cool it.'")

If, however, you believe the Governor and the Maryland General Assembly should do everything in their power to keep college tuition affordable, then cast your vote for the party of Roosevelt.

If you believe the companies that supply electricity to the state should be able to charge ratepayers whatever they wish



and that government should never interfere with the "free" market, cast your vote for the party of Reagan.

If, however, you believe people are more important than profits and companies like BG&E should be as concerned with keeping electric rates affordable as they are about making their stockholders rich, vote for the party of Roosevelt.

If you believe taxes are the price we pay for civilization and programs like Social Security, student loans and Medicare are vital to the survival of our nation's middle class, then cast your vote for the party of Roosevelt.

If you believe taxes are evil; poor people got that way because they are lazy, the business of America is business, and a rising tide lifts all boats (assuming you have one), then cast your vote for the party of Reagan.

If you believe a woman's right to choose in matters of reproduction is sacrosanct and morally troubling procedures such as partial birth abortion are regrettable but necessary, then cast your vote for the party of Roosevelt.

If however, you believe female victims of rape or incest should be forced by the state to carry their pregnancies to term and doctors who perform abortions should receive stiff prison sentences, vote for the party of Reagan.

If you believe Saddam Hussein was responsible for 9/11 and the invasion of Iraq is as crucial to the survival of the United States in 2006 as the invasion of Normandy was in 1944 (and the 300 billion we have expended so far has been well spent), then cast your vote for the party of Reagan.

If, however, you believe as do Colin Powell, George Bush

Senior, General William Odom, George Will, William F. Buckley and most of the General Officers "inside the ring" that Iraq will do for George Bush what Gallipoli did for Churchill, then cast your vote for the party of Roosevelt.

If you believe the world was created in seven, 24 hour days, that the theory of global warming is a communist plot and advancements in science, particularly those in the field of stem cell research, are the work of the devil, then cast your vote for the party of Reagan.

If, however, you believe, as most serious scientists do, that evolution is fact; that people who believe in intelligent design aren't very intelligent, and our children should be taught scientific principles in school rather than metaphysical fairy tales, then cast your vote for the party of Roosevelt.

A word of warning, no matter what side you come down on, it is instructive to remember that principles, no matter how much we claim to abide by them, can, under the right circumstances, prove to be fleeting. In short, no one ever has all the answers. In time, it is likely your karma will indeed run over your dogma.

In 1932 FDR ran on a platform of fiscal responsibility. By the end of his first term, however, he had embraced Keynesian economics and was doing everything within his power to increase spending.

Reagan presented himself as the heir to the legacy of Barry Goldwater. To Old Dutch, the very thought of taxes was *Malum in se*. Like our present commander in chief, Reagan never met a tax cut he didn't like and ran up deficits as far as the eye could see. But in the end, like his former idol (it is a fact that Reagan admired Roosevelt) he was forced to do a 180. By the time he left office he had indeed raised taxes.

Most importantly, no matter where you come down on the issues, please don't forget to vote. To not do so is irresponsible and an abandonment of your civic duty. No matter what your political philosophy, this is a critical time for our nation and the world. If you don't bother to vote, don't bother to complain.