



the
brunswickan

University of New Brunswick
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A CANADIAN OFFICIAL STUDENT PUBLICATION

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The *Brunswickan*, in its 121st year, is Canada's oldest official student publication. The *Brunswickan's* offices are located in Room 35 of the University of New Brunswick's Student Union Building, P.O.Box 4400, College Hill, Fredericton, N.B., E3B 5A3.

The *Brunswickan* is printed with flair by Henley Printing, Ltd., Woodstock, N.B.

Subscriptions are \$20 per year. National and local advertising rates are available at (506) 453-4973. General phone 453-4983.

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Another November 4th goes by. Another American election. The complete disintegration of the Democrats last time around has caused a lot of folk to go into catatonic states. Now perhaps, they will begin to recover. Don't bet on it though.

On the surface of things, the Democrats have much to be thankful for. They now have control of both Houses of Congress - winning the Senate back from the 'bad guys' and strengthening the 'good guys' hold on the House of Representative. Mario Cuomo had a landslide in NY, thus giving the Democrats a strong candidate for 1988. Bob Kennedy's kid is sitting in Uncle John's old Senate seat.

With control of the Senate, the Democrats also get to chair committees of major importance - the places where things happen. In the long term, the most significant of these may be the judicial committee. There are few more long-term ways Reagan can screw up his country than by appointing some judge with a twisted sense of public morality to the Supreme Court. Sober - or just coherent - second thought on the Senate review committees just might keep the US from reverting to the days of segregation, prayer in school and other such social bastardizations.

On the other hand...

One reason the Democrats won so many seats this time around in the Senate is that about 2/3 of those up for grabs were held by Republicans. Next time around, the majority of seats contested will be held by the Democrats, and so odds are that more Democrats will have a harder time of it. Also, the Republicans won quite a few of the races for state governorships. This doesn't directly affect the national, and so international, state of affairs; still, it is significant.

The other thing is that while the Democrats now have a fair bit of power, they don't really have an agenda. There's plenty of different directions in the Democratic party right now. Basically, one group wants to maintain its traditional 'liberal' approach while another wants to become more 'centrist'. And 'centrist' in America means increasingly rightist these days. When both parties begin to support SDI and aid for the contras, the little choice American politics have had to offer becomes even harder to discern.

The Republicans are probably all right for the next two years. Reagan's administration has been around long enough to set in. There's plenty of support for it and, in a democracy of sorts, that's what counts, eh? Things might get a little bloody come primary time, but that will have to be seen a bit down the road.

The Democrats, though, have a real need for a strong candidate who is preferably of the traditional centre, not the new one. Perhaps Cuomo, perhaps Jackson - either would be fantastic as President, if only to bugger bigots around the world. Maybe one of the new Senate chairmen will get into the spotlight.

It's two years to the next presidential election, and in America, that can be plenty of time.

BARRY PARKINSON

