

PASADENA STAR-NEWS OPINION

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Show substance

Re "Putting an end to gutter talk,"
"Our View":

A great deal of this editorial is correct, and it would be beneficial for all if we engaged in debate rather than mud-slinging.

However, much of this campaign season has seen an uneven handling of the candidates, especially the two Democratic ones.

As a woman who has worked a good portion of my career in the "man's" world, I can't help but see how Sen. Clinton has been faced with the often trite but true adage of a woman who has to work twice as hard to get half the attention of a man.

People have even suggested that her spouse, former President Clinton, not actively campaign for her, yet the same request was not made of any of the other candidate's spouses and the silence of our so-called women leaders were deafening on this matter.

As for the concern about the characterization of the church Sen. Obama attends as being "anti-white" by his opponents, this is not surprising to this reader. Let's propose the following example: A presidential candidate attends an unabashedly "pro-white" or "pro-heterosexual" church. Would your newspaper be so quick to brand opponents who characterized this church as being perhaps racists or possibly homophobic as being somehow fear mongers? I think we all know the answer to that hypothetical.

I have read the church's stance as published on its Web site, and I have listened to speeches given by its reverend (who Obama has characterized as a mentor to him), and I think it is fair that we ask Obama to explain how he rationalizes these beliefs with his mantra of hope and change.

I for one would like to know how committed to change he can be when he's apparently in support of the Democratic National Committee's decision to punish the voters in the Michigan and Florida primaries by not seating their delegates at the convention, essentially denying the very people he says he wants to empower and speak for in favor of the power structure of the DNC?

Also, much has been written and said about Obama's charismatic speaking style and the huge crowds he draws. Without a doubt, he is an individual who has all the skills of a great orator and, in all likelihood, history will define him as one of this century's great motivational and charismatic speakers.

However, I have lived many, many years and in my lifetime, and I have seen many great charismatic speakers who could fill the street and stadiums with listeners and followers — some of these speakers have been good men and unfortunately some have been very bad men. That's why I believe it is important that Obama begin to show some substance. Everyone loves great "speechifying," but some of us prefer some steak with their sizzle.

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PASADENA

Putting an end to gutter talk

BARACK Obama is a committed liberal, political phenom and, from all appearances, a genuinely nice guy.

But have you heard about Barack Hussein Obama? You know, the Democrat with the Muslim name (even though he's a Christian), and the Muslim father (who abandoned his family when Barack was a toddler)? The politician who went to Kenya and put on an Islamic-looking turban (never mind that American politicians abroad often don native garb out of respect)?

If you haven't heard that Barack Obama is the Muslim Manchurian Candidate, don't worry, you will. This smear is rampant on the Internet and even surfaced earlier this week in a conservative talk show host's remarks at a John McCain rally in Ohio. Sen. McCain rebuked the radio talker and was, in turn, slammed by Rush Limbaugh for being a girlie man.

Good for McCain, who suffered a more sophisticated smear when The New York Times recently floated rumors of an extramarital affair. Politics are a full-contact sport, but the gutter is out of bounds. Candidates should condemn would-be surrogates who sling slime on the side.

ANOTHER VIEW

Not all questions about a candidate's character are off limits. For example, Obama has repeatedly distanced himself from the bigoted Louis Farrakhan, but the candidate's spiritual mentor, the Rev. Jeremiah Wright, is a big Farrakhan supporter. Wright is a figure of controversy because of his race-based theology, which supporters see as pro-black but critics see as anti-white. It's fair to ask Obama how he reconciles himself to his pastor's views.

What's unfair — and ugly — are the underhanded personal attacks and swirling, groundless innuendo. McCain set a good example this week by repudiating conservative bigmouths. Obama and Hillary Clinton should do the same when the mud comes from the left.

It's said that this fall's contest is going to be a "change election." Wouldn't it be grand change if, for once, the presidential candidates unambiguously took the high road?

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