

A look at the 2008 presidential candidates

by Joseph Chilton
Managing Editor

If you go on USA Today.com, there is a quiz available that asks eleven questions, and based on your answers will tell you which of the candidates for next November's Presidential elections supposedly represent your principles the most.

I received the quiz in an e-mail from a friend this week, along with a note that said "I got Kucinich, who would have thought?"

When I got this note my first thought was that I had not previously considered my friend a complete nutjob. I mean, Kucinich is the only of this year's candidates who claims to have seen a UFO.

Then I took the quiz and it reported that Kucinich was my ideal candidate too.

Then I sent the quiz to my dad. After he took it, he called me asking, "Who the hell is Mike Gravel?"

Apparently that's who my dad should vote for. I told him I didn't know who Gravel was either but that according to the quiz, Gravel should be my second choice for president.

Throughout the week I proceeded to send the quiz to other friends. The quiz told them that they should vote for Chris Dodd, Joe Biden, and several other candidates who have roughly the same chance of being elected this fall as I do. Not a single person that I sent the quiz to reported back to me that they had been told that their views line up most with the views of any of the frontrunners for the Oval Office.

I've been intrigued by this phenomenon all week, and have spent my week trying to figure it out. I've watched more presidential hopefuls speak on C-SPAN this week than is probably good for a person's sanity, and have come up with an explanation.

The candidates who are the frontrunners never talk about any real issues.

The quiz asks specific questions soliciting thoughts on a number of topics ranging from the Iraq War to same-sex marriage, topics that are glossed over by most of the candidates but never really addressed.

I listened to veiled personal attacks on other candidates mixed with numerous calls for "change" in the speeches I listened to, but heard very little on how this change was to be brought about.

The only people who gave any propositions for change are the same candidates who will likely run out of money and drop out of the election after Super Tuesday.

The candidates who have the money and support to make a serious run for the White House mostly tiptoe around all the actual issues that matter most

to people because producing a platform that has any substance to it is too alienating of a prospect for the candidates' public relations campaigns. Apparently feeling strongly about anything other than the insufficiencies of your opponents is a personality trait that is seriously damaging to electability.

And experts wonder why apathy is so common and voter turnout for Presidential elections hovers around 60 percent. The harsh answer is that there is paucity of candidates who stand up for issues strongly enough to get people to the polls.

If you want to take the quiz, it can be found at <http://www.usatoday.com/news/politics/election2008/candidate-match-game.htm>.

But be warned, you probably won't get a response featuring any candidates you've ever heard of.

Winter weather hits Brevard

by Rhea Frederick
Copy Editor

The first good snow of the season began to fall while I was sitting in my dorm room, trying to recover from the month-long break. I was unpacking my suitcase when my friend came running down the hall, exclaiming that it was snowing outside. I didn't believe her, but I ran to my window in excitement. The way the lights on campus shone through the snow, made it hard to see the flakes falling from the sky. I was still in doubt about the unexpected wintery weather until another one of my friends came running down the hall covered in snow and exclaiming it was indeed,

snowing outside.

Seeing her covered in white sprinkles, I shoved my feet into my Timberlands and ran outside to find myself also being seduced by snowy mountain flakes.

One of the first things that I wondered about before coming to school here was whether or not it snowed often. During the first week of my residence, I asked students and locals about the winter weather, and they all had the same response: "It gets really cold, but it doesn't snow as much as you would expect, being so close to the mountains." So, expecting not to see much white on the ground while I was here, I was surprised when I stepped

outside to see a shimmering, frost covered atmosphere.

I hadn't seen snow like that for at least 4 years! Coming from Nashville, I've seen snow, but it rarely sticks, and when it does stick, it's only half of an inch to an inch.

Like a child, I ran out of Beam Hall collecting snow in my hands and on my tongue. Everyone was excited as I was to see the snow, and we started mini snowball fights and enjoyed the pleasant surprise.

The Russians stood around, happy to see the snow and also happy to see the excitement in our faces. The fact that when it snows in Russia, it can get up to 4 feet deep, didn't even cross my

mind. And while we were hoping and praying for classes to be canceled because of 4 inches of snow, we didn't even think about how Russian University students never get a break, even for 4 feet of the white stuff. My roommate informed me that University classes would be canceled due to freezing temperatures of -30°C, before classes would be canceled due to snow, ever.

My school district in Nashville closed schools before snow even began to fall. Conversely, classes are never canceled for snow in Russia!

Now, back to my point, I would love to see more snow in Pisgah, so keep on snow dancin' y'all!