

Women's Voice For A Better World

by Julia Carpenter

The women of Salem College face a far different world than their mothers and grandmothers found upon their graduation. They shared a world where the primary roles for women were as wife and mother. Their daughters and granddaughters were born into a society that needed women in the working force but still wanted women to maintain their domestic roles. And so, the tug-of-war began with women struggling against the ambiguous desires of society. Our culture wanted mom's apple pie served by Rosie the Riveter.

The 1980's saw women moving into the workforce in greater numbers and at higher levels of income and responsibilities. In addition, women increased their participation in the political arena. More and more women were seeking election to local, state, and national offices. The 1984 election introduced the first woman on a national party presidential ticket. The political candidates began to address the needs of women voters. And women voters began to demand greater accountability from their elected officials concerning issues of great importance to them. Many grassroots and national organizations have been founded and are run by women.

This decade also saw the election of Ronald Reagan. The Republican Party sought social reform through the private sector rather than using

the federal government. For the past eight years, the Reagan Administration and Congressional Republicans have sought the repeal of numerous 1960's Civil Rights legislation in lessen federal government's role in individual relationships. However, the Congresssional Democrats, with their emphasis on the active involvement of federal government in social reform, have opposed these actions. Women across the political spectrum have used the political philosophy of the major parties to gain the types of social reform desired. This is a political goal of women voters to mold governmental policies to address their needs.

The 1988 presidential election offers two distinct party platform addressing women's issues. The political philosophies of the Republican and Democratic guides the way the major parties deal with women's issues. George Bush and Dan Quayle propose addressing social reform through the private sector. They oppose ratification of an Equal Rights Admendment. The platform also lists tax breaks for childcare, and opposition to a women's right to a legal abortion except in certain circumstances.

Michael Dukakis and Lloyd Bentson propose social reform through federal governmental activism. They support the ratification of the Equal Rights Admendment. They also support public childcare programs, and support a women's right to a legal

abortion.

A political party's position on women's issues can be traced through their involvement in social reform. Whatever route followed by a political party, women voters must be aware of a party's support for the wide spectrum of women's issues so that their vote is cast in their favor. As politicians grow more aware of the power of women voters in molding future governmental policies, it will become easier to address the many social and economic problems facing women.

The 1990's hold many options for women. We have established ourselves as an important constituency in the election of any public official, but most of all, the

election of the President. Political Parties actively seek out our support- we must use the parties to gain laws favoring the better statues of women. Women voters have remained a dormant political factor for far too long. We must use the 1990's and the first decades of the 21st century to mold a new world of opportunity for our own daughters and granddaughters. It would be a victory if they could look back on their mothers and grandmothers and see the poorer status of their political freedom and social roles.

Please use the vote our foremothers fought to gain for us. It is our most important voice in molding a better world more supportive of women.

Political Editorial

by Paige Parker

Did you know that 3.5 million eighteen year olds will be eligible to vote in 1988, but fewer than 40% will actually register. Did you know that in 1980 barely 53% of the eligible voters turned out at the polls? Statistics about voter registration in the U.S. are phenomenal! In 1988, voter registration fell to 70% and over 60 million eligible Americans are not registered. The largest are 18-25 year olds. We as young adults need to register and we need to make a difference in America!

What is the cause for such apathy? At the age of eighteen we are given the opportunity to vote for the man or woman we feel will guide America best as her President. So often we take this for granted, while other countries fight to gain the right to elect their own officials. I have heard numerous excuses for not voting. Some people actually do not care while others feel their one vote will not matter. Often college students use the fact that school takes them away from the polls but that excuse does not work either, because we are given the opportunity to vote by absentee ballots! Many people say, "I just don't like either of the candidates." Maybe so, but there has to be a lesser of two evils. This is our future as well as future generations that we are deciding! If young people would go to the polls, then there is a possibility that "our" voice would be heard in Washington.

Registering to vote is a very simple task. Just visit your city hall or your library when you go home next. It takes a matter of minutes. October tenth was the last to day to register for the presidential race, but future elections need your vote as well! Please think about it- doesn't your vote count? When people abstain from voting, then they are allowing others to have more of an impact on the government than themselves. Think about how often non-registered voters complain about the government in the U.S. Do they really have a voice in American politics or do they give that up when they do not vote? Still people believe their vote does not matter, but one vote plus another plus another plus another can really add up.

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favor of the amendment, and republicans voted 165 to 33 in favor of the amendment. The amendment passed just in time for women to be eligible to vote in the 1920 presidential election.

Although no existing information gives a percentage of Salem students who voted in the 1920 election, it appears as though the opportunity to vote was exciting to students and alumni alike. In an article entitled "Let Us Give Thanks" which appeared in the December 1920 Alumnae Record, one Salemite expressed sincere gratitude toward those who worked for and won the vote for women. The author also expresses confidence that the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment would allow women the long-awaited right to actively participate in the politics of their country.

In an effort to chastize individuals who worked against the winning of the vote for women, the author of the Alumnae Record article writes "those misanthropists who foresaw all sorts of complications and exhaled all sorts of fear as to the results of 'women invading politics...' all are now enjoying the 'spectacle' of their

misanthropy a- crumble at their feet."

It would be difficult to suggest that Salem women were anything but thrilled about their new political opportunity!

Today, Salem students continue the tradition of political involvement through the revival of partisan organizations and through participation in debate rallies and other campaign activities. I hope that Salem students will continue to exercise the hard-won right to vote, as well.

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