

Publisher
Pason Gaddis
pgaddis@florida-weekly.com

Executive Editor
Jeffrey Cull
jcull@florida-weekly.com

Creative Director
Jim Dickerson
jdickerson@florida-weekly.com

Reporters & Columnists

Roger Williams
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Karen Feldman
Betsy Clayton
Carl-John X. Veraja
Michelle Start
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Bob Jones
Pete Skiba
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Carol Orr Hartman

Contributing Photographer
Jerry Smith

Proofreader
Joanne Anderson

Production
Alex Perez
Amanda Hartman
Kim Boone

Circulation Manager
Penny Kennedy
pkennedy@florida-weekly.com

Circulation
David Anderson
John Noe
Paul Neumann
Rod Irvin

Account Executives
Shelley Lund
slund@florida-weekly.com
Lyndsey Walsh
lwalsh@florida-weekly.com

Business Office Manager
Kelli Carico

Street Address:
Florida Weekly
4300 Ford Street, Suite 106
Fort Myers, Florida 33916
Phone 239.333.2135
Fax: 239.333.2140



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EDITORIAL

New York cowboy

BY RICH LOWRY

Rudy Giuliani's downfall in the Republican primary fight has been much predicted, but little in evidence. He recently got the endorsement of the Christian conservative leader Pat Robertson and has stubbornly stayed atop national polls all year long.

His success has spawned theories about the changing nature of the Republican Party, and how social conservatives have "grown up" in their willingness to accept a pro-choice candidate. The key to Rudy's appeal, though, isn't his heterodoxy, but how the sensibility of his candidacy is in the Republican mainstream running from Ronald Reagan through George W. Bush.

Rather than a break with Bush, Giuliani represents stylistic continuity. The cross-dressing, nonchurch-going, pro-choice New Yorker has more in common with the brush-clearing, evangelical, pro-life West Texan than any of the other Republican candidates. He's an urban cowboy, who tamed New York City with his no-nonsense commitment to law and order.

As a top GOP operative says: "Reagan has provided the stylistic model for Republican

leaders ever since he first ran: tough-talking, moral clarity, inspirational rather than tactical in rhetoric, someone who will stand up to dangerous foreign enemies. Bush fits in that model, and so does Rudy. This style and these attributes are as important, if not more important, than particular issue stands to many voters."

At this basic level, Giuliani tugs on Republican heartstrings. There is no substitute in politics for being liked, and Republicans simply like Rudy. Rather than the abrasive personality they were told to expect, voters have seen a candidate with the readiest toothy grin this side of Jimmy Carter or Teddy Roosevelt, and he's the only Republican who has consistently demonstrated a spontaneous sense of humor.

In the breadbasket of modern Republicanism, the South, Giuliani has been surprisingly strong. The South is as much a state of mind as a geographic location, and Giuliani, despite being an ethnic Northeasterner, exemplifies it. He taps into the South's anti-elitist, patriotic, pro-military attitudes more naturally than any candidate besides John McCain.

Giuliani is winning the leadership pri-

mary in the Republican race. An October Fox News poll asked whether Giuliani is a "strong and decisive leader"; 65 percent said "yes," 20 percent "no" — the highest rating of any of the tested national figures. By refusing to check the box on every conservative issue, Giuliani has reinforced the idea that he has exactly the attributes of strength and leadership that conservatives crave.

Giuliani still has major ideological — and personal — vulnerabilities. The question is whether the liberal aspects of his record as mayor, together with his spectacularly rocky personal life, will overwhelm his instinctual appeal to Republican voters. We won't know until we see how he fares under what probably will be a barrage of negative ads in the stretch-run of the nomination fight.

Giuliani's best selling point in the primaries is that — whatever his media coverage says — he's not something new under the sun. He's an archetype that Republican voters know and love — the gun-slinging sheriff, just with a different ZIP code. ■

— Rich Lowry is editor of the *National Review*.

LETTER to the EDITOR

Dwindling water supplies

Editor:

The same day on Nov. 15 that the South Florida Water Management District was threatening to limit water use to just one day a week because of dwindling water supplies, a bunch of bureaucrats were approving a new town at the former Babcock Ranch in Charlotte County.

The stringent water restrictions are necessary, we are told, because domestic use of water is fast exceeding the water supply, and it therefore is necessary that residents use less for such things as car washing, gardening, bathing and drinking.

Yet, our public officials appear to be speaking out of both sides of their mouths. They beseech us to use less water — at the same time the Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council is approving a whole new community of 18,000 homes that will

add horrifyingly to water demand. With the 18,000 additional homes will come 3 million square-feet of retail space, 500,000 square-feet of medical offices, 600 hotel rooms, 418 adult living units, 275 acres of parks, 54 holes of golf, and six new schools.

Let's put it into perspective:

- The average person in unincorporated Lee County use 120 gallons of finished water each day. This is potable water. The stuff used on golf courses and in irrigation, etc., is additional.

- At two people per household, this is 87,600 gallons of water per household per year.

- Multiply that annual use by the 18,000 new homes being created at Babcock and you see that the planning council has just added 1,576,800,000 gallons of potable water per year in residential use alone. Millions of

additional gallons will be needed for the retail stores, parks, golf courses, etc.

Now, think about it.

You are being told to cut your water use because there just isn't enough water. And the same people then turn around and approve adding a couple of billion gallons to the load.

Nowhere in the news reports was there any indication that members of the planning council even asked about the impact of this new community on the water supply. There's no indication that any of these bureaucrats even inquired as to where the additional water would come from.

I guess once-a-month watering is in our future. Or, maybe once a year.

Common sense appears to be as scarce as the water we drink. ■

Dan A. Martin
Fort Myers

MOMENTS IN TIME

◆ On Nov. 25, 1963, three days after his assassination in Dallas, 35th president of the United States John F. Kennedy is laid to rest with full military honors at Arlington National Cemetery in Virginia.

◆ On Nov. 26, 1862, Oxford mathematician Charles Lutwidge Dodgson sends a handwritten manuscript called Alice's Adventures Under Ground to 10-year-old Alice Liddell as a Christmas present. Dodgson self-published the story in 1865 under his nom de plume, Lewis Carroll.

◆ On Nov. 27, 1978, Dan White murders Mayor George Moscone and Supervisor Harvey Milk at City Hall in San Francisco, Calif. White pleaded a "diminished

capacity" defense, claiming that copious amounts of junk food caused him to suffer mental problems, giving rise to the phrase "Twinkie Defense."

◆ On Nov. 28, 1942, coffee joins the list of rationed items when the U.S. government asks its people to make a truly noble sacrifice. Rationing was used during World War II to guarantee a fair distribution of resources to all Americans and to give priority to military use for certain raw materials.

◆ On Nov. 29, 1991, a massive 115-vehicle collision caused by a dust storm in Coal- inga, Calif., kills 17 people. Many farmers had not planted their fields because of

severe drought, leaving long stretches of dusty soil near the highway.

◆ On Nov. 30, 1959, production begins on Alfred Hitchcock's classic thriller "Psycho," starring Anthony Perkins as murderous hotelier Norman Bates. The film is considered one of Hitchcock's most frightening, and the terrifying shower scene is still referenced today.

◆ On Dec. 1, 1934, jazz clarinet pioneer Benny Goodman debuts as a regular on radio variety show "Let's Dance." In 1935, the band gave a famous performance at the Palomar Theater in Los Angeles that drew an enormous audience and is frequently credited as the kickoff of the Swing Era. ■