

The original documents are located in Box D67, folder “Commission on Presidential Debates, 1987-1997 (3)” of the Melvin Laird Papers at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

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How to Organize

DebateWatch '96

Hosting or participating in DebateWatch is easy. Below is a list of questions and answers on what to do to get the most out of the experience.

Q: Who can host DebateWatch '96?

A: Anyone or any group, formal or informal. The whole point of DebateWatch '96 is to get as many Americans as possible talking about the debates, the campaign, the candidates, and the issues that affect our lives.

Q: Where are DebateWatches taking place?

A: In all fifty states, U.S. territories, and among Americans living abroad. If you have friends or relatives in other parts of the country or the world, encourage them to take part.

Q: Who should be invited to participate?

A: Invite your neighbors, friends, co-workers, or family into your home. Organize a DebateWatch for members of an organization to which you belong in place of a regular meeting. Think about including people of all ages, including teens who might not be old enough to vote yet but are interested in current events. It takes no special expertise to talk about the issues so anyone you know would potentially enjoy participating.

Q: How many people should be invited to join?

A: Discussion works best if approximately 8-12 people participate. If you belong to an organization that wants to hold a DebateWatch in place of a meeting or as part of a parent-student-teacher activity in a school, and you have more than twelve members, then divide into two or more groups.

Q: Where should DebateWatch meet?

A: DebateWatch can meet in your living room, in a school, at a community center, in a public library, in a business, at a church or place of worship, in a union hall, at a restaurant or wherever you can watch a television and comfortably form a circle of chairs or meet around a table after the debate to discuss. With large groups, have a large screen television or several televisions to guarantee that everyone can see. If you are planning to divide a large gathering into multiple groups at one location, make sure that you have enough space so that groups have several feet between them.

Q: Do we need a group leader, and what qualifications should a leader have?

A: You should designate a facilitator to lead the group only to get things organized and keep discussion going. This packet includes suggestions for a group facilitator (See Facilitator's Guide and Suggested Questions). Select someone to lead the group who is comfortable giving directions and who won't dominate the discussion. If you want to hold a DebateWatch, but no one feels comfortable leading, consult the resource list included in the packet for suggestions of individuals in your area who are willing to be group leaders.

Q: How do we organize the evening?

A: Here is a checklist of tasks for organizing the evening.

- If possible, duplicate and distribute the "Viewer's Guide to Political Debates" prior to the evening of the debate.
- Have DebateWatch participants arrive at the viewing/discussion site about 30 minutes before the scheduled beginning of the debate.
- If participants want to participate in the research on DebateWatch '96 (see the question below on the research), have them complete the forms in the packet that are identified as pre-

debate surveys and then read the “Viewer’s Guide to Political Debates” if they weren’t sent out ahead of time (please duplicate the forms so that everyone has a copy).

- Don’t turn the television on until a few minutes before the debate begins, and don’t turn the volume on until the debate is actually ready to begin.
- Forms to make it easy to take notes are included in the packet. Make them available to those who want them.
- Arrange for seating so that everyone can see the television easily. Have some soft drinks, tea, and coffee and finger foods to help create a relaxed atmosphere. You might have each member of the group bring something such as ice, cups, napkins, food, etc.
- As soon as the debate ends, turn the television off. Take about ten minutes to stretch, etc. (but don’t use the time to discuss informally), and then have the leader gather everyone around a table or put chairs in a circle to discuss.
- The leader can follow the suggested set of questions. Talk until you run out of things to say. Most groups should be able to hold a discussion for about an hour.
- When you have said all that you want, complete the post-discussion forms for the research. Even if you don’t participate in the research, please complete and mail the facilitator’s form so that we can gauge the number of people who participated.
- If you had a successful evening, get together again for one of the other debates.

Q: Should we participate in the research — and who’s doing it anyway?

A: Participation in research is purely voluntary and is an individual decision. Some members may want to participate; others might not. The research is being conducted by members of the Speech Communication Association, a professional organization which promotes the study, criticism, research, teaching and practice of communication. Most SCA members participating in DebateWatch are university professors. The research is being coordinated by Dr. Diana Carlin at the University of Kansas who orga-

nized the 1992 focus group research. As was done with the 1992 research, a book about the 1996 results will be published (the 1992 report, *The 1992 Presidential Debates in Focus* is available from Praeger, Westport, CT). If you want your opinions to be part of the research, then participate. We would like to hear what you think about the project. Collect the forms and send them in the enclosed envelope or send them individually to the address listed on the forms. The facilitator’s response form doesn’t require an envelope.

Q: There is only one copy of everything in the packet, is it all right to make copies?

A: YES. Make as many as you need.

Q: There is a resource list in the packet, what is its purpose?

A: The resource list has several uses. First, it gives you sources for information on the candidates and the issues in case you want to follow up on what you heard in the debate or if you want to read information before the debates. Second, it has the names of individuals or groups who can supply you with a facilitator should you want one. Third, it has information on Internet discussion sites in case you want to participate in continued dialogue via the Net.

Q: Should we use the DebateNotes form to pick a winner?

A: No. They are designed to help you remember issues you want to discuss. We encourage you not to go into the debates trying to determine who won or lost as there is no single way to make such a decision. Use this experience to learn as much as you can. The real winners in debates are the voters who learn from them.

Q: What if I have additional questions?

A: Call the 800 number on this sheet or call the Speech Communication Association contact person nearest you who is listed in the Resource List.

A Viewer's Guide to Political Debates

Voters typically identify candidate debates as the source of the most influential information gained during a campaign. Because of their importance, the Commission on Presidential Debates and the Speech Communication Association prepared this information to assist you in getting the most from your debate viewing. This guide describes commonly used debate formats and questioning techniques and provides guidelines for getting the most from a debate.

The Structure of Debates

Debates use a variety of formats. Primary debates, featuring candidates from the same party, and local debates traditionally are more free-wheeling and incorporate a wide range of formats because of multiple candidates. In 1992, those two features characterized the general election presidential debates, which included a different format for each debate including a town hall meeting with citizen questioners.

Most debates impose time limits on answers to ensure that all candidates have equal opportunity to respond. Topics may focus on a wide range of issues or may be on a particular theme such as education or the economy. General election presidential debates usually divide the time between foreign and domestic topics.

Candidates may have an opening statement or a moderator may introduce each candidate and begin questioning immediately. In most debates candidates have a closing statement.

Questions guide the content of debates. There are three types of questions: initial; follow-up; and cross-examination. Initial questions get the debate started by asking candidates to explain or defend a position or compare it to an opponent's. Many initial questions are hypotheticals in the form of, "What would you do if?" Follow-up questions are directed at a candidate after an answer is given. Their purpose is to probe the original response by asking for elaboration or clarification. Some follow-up questions are on an unrelated topic. Follow-up questions may be asked immediately after an initial response is given or after all candidates have answered the initial question. Cross-examination questions are questions that one candidate addresses to another.

er. A separate time can be set aside for cross-examination questions or they may be included as follow-ups.

Questions may be posed to candidates from a variety of sources. Members of the media typically serve as questioners in presidential and state office debates. In primary and local debates, experts on the topic debated may serve as panelists. A single moderator or a panel of media representatives or subject experts are the most common questioners. Many debates, especially at the local level, allow for questions from the audience at some point in the debate. The Richmond town hall meeting in 1992 was the first general election presidential debate to involve citizen questioners.

How To Get the Most Out of a Debate

Focus your attention on a few key points. Know what it is you want in an office holder, then watch and listen to see which candidate best fits your ideal. The following suggestions will help you focus:

- **Set aside your partisan views.** Use the debates to learn as much as possible about all candidates and their positions.
- **Pay close attention to the candidates when they talk about how to solve problems.** Listen carefully for comparisons candidates make between or among their programs and their opponents'.

- **Decide to whom the candidate is appealing.** Listen closely to opening and closing statements to determine to whom the candidate is appealing. If a candidate does not answer a question directly, to what groups does it appear the candidate is appealing?
- **Identify the candidate's overriding theme in the debate.** If you can readily identify it, the candidate has done a good job of getting major points across. If you have difficulty, the candidate's message may not be well developed.
- **Identify the candidate's debate strategy.** Does the candidate speak directly to the issues, provide specifics, and present new policies or information? Or does the candidate debate "not to lose" by interpreting questions to suit the candidate's agenda?
- **Identify the images which candidates try to create for themselves.** Most candidates try to portray themselves as leaders and identify themselves with cherished American values while suggesting that their opponents lack these qualities. What in the responses supports their claims?
- **Be aware of the visual information communicated in televised debates.** Observe candidates' faces and mannerisms to help determine whether you like, trust, or believe a candidate.
- **Be aware of the technical limitations of televised debates.** Television works by showing action. To create action and minimize monotony, directors sometimes include "reaction shots" to show one candidate's response to an

opponent's statement. This can detract your attention from what is being said. It is wise to remember the role of action shots when watching.

- **Don't watch a debate to determine a winner or loser.** All candidates have goals for a debate; as a result, all could claim victory if winning is defined as achieving goals set by the campaigns or the media. The overriding question for you to concentrate on is who would make a better president, senator, governor, legislator, or county clerk.
- **Consider the questions asked by the panelists.** The essence of debate is clash. Did the panelists' questions facilitate clash? Observe and evaluate the questions by members of the panel and determine if they are genuinely adding to the content of the debates.

This guide was adapted from material prepared by the following Speech Communication Association members: Diana Carlin, University of Kansas; Robert Friedenberg, Miami University, Hamilton, OH; James Gaudino, Speech Communication Association; Susan Hellweg, San Diego State University; John Morello, Mary Washington College; Michael Pfau, University of Wisconsin.

About the Commission on Presidential

Debates: The non-partisan, non-profit Commission on Presidential Debates has sponsored all the general election presidential debates since 1988. For information about the Commission and the 1996 debates, contact Commission on Presidential Debates, 601 13th Street, NW, Suite 310 South, Washington, DC 20005 or call 202-872-1020.

About the Speech Communication

Association: The Speech Communication Association is the oldest and largest national organization promoting the study, criticism, research, teaching, and practice of the artistic, humanistic, and scientific principles of communication. Its headquarters is located at 5105 Backlick Road, Building E, Annandale, VA 22003.

For more information contact DebateWatch '96, P.O. Box _____, Lawrence, KS 66044 or call 1-800-____-_____.

Email: presdeb@falcon.cc.ukans.edu

The post office box will be active after January 1, 1996. In the interim, all correspondence should be addressed to:

Dr. Diana Carlin
 Communication Studies Department
 3090 Wescoe
 University of Kansas
 Lawrence, KS 66045-2177
 (913) 864-3633 (telephone)
 (913) 864-5203 (fax)

Use this form to take notes on topics you want to discuss later. In the box labeled "Topic," write a few words to summarize the topic (more than one question may be asked on a topic), and then write ideas you want to discuss on the topic. Use initials to indicate which candidate said something you want to comment about and a word or two to describe the content of what was said. Use abbreviations to simplify note taking. The following are examples of the type of abbreviations you might want to develop: CLR = clear position or response; NP = no policy position stated; NR = not responsive to the question; DEF = defended position against opponent's attack; NODEF = couldn't or didn't defend against attack from opponent or question from moderator; SW = switched position from previous campaign statements

Topic 1:

Topic 2:

Topic 3:

Topic 4:

Topic 5:

Topic 6:

Topic 7:

Topic 8:

Topic 9:

Topic 10:

Topic 11:

Topic 12:

Topic 13:

Topic 14:

Your role is to pose questions to the group, ensure that everyone has an opportunity to speak, and mediate disagreements if necessary. The attached questions are designed as suggestions only. Please feel free to add, delete, or revise as you see appropriate. You might also want to add some questions about local or state races as they apply to issues raised in the debate. You should also review the information contained in How to Organize DebateWatch '96.

Preliminary Steps

- Have group members in their seats 10-15 minutes prior to the beginning of the debate.
- Anyone wishing to participate in the research should complete the survey. Be sure to review the questionnaire and explain that some questions are to be answered after the debate and others after the discussion. Remind them that participation in the survey is voluntary. Explain that you will collect surveys after the discussion and will seal them in a return envelope. Assure them that responses are confidential.
- Do not turn the television on until a few minutes before the debate is to begin. Turn the volume on when the debate actually begins. It is important that participants not be influenced by the pre-debate discussions.
- Consider obtaining name tags to facilitate interactions and introductions between group members and the facilitator. Name tags may be especially helpful if you bring in an outside facilitator. Group discussion will flow much easier if individuals feel comfortable to speak with other group members and interact with the facilitator. A brief period of where group members introduce themselves and their interests can also be helpful to break down potential barriers to free interaction.

Post-Debate Procedures

- As soon as the last speech is completed, shut the television off and have research participants complete the second part of the survey.
- Take a 10-minute break for refreshments, etc. Advise group members not to discuss the debate until they return from the break.
- When everyone has re-assembled, thank them for participating. Explain that this is a discussion and that there are no right or wrong answers. They are there to share their reactions to the debates and to learn from one another.
- Begin with the first question on the list. Ask a new question when discussion is waning on the previous question.
- In the course of discussion, participants may answer a question that appears later on the list. Simply skip it when it appears on the list or ask if anyone has any additional thoughts.
- As discussion takes place, ask questions to seek clarification if you feel that the group might not be tracking what someone is saying. If you see that someone wants to say something but can't get a word in, call on that person.
- When you have completed the list of questions, and it is apparent that discussion is exhausted, give everyone an opportunity to make any last comments they have. Thank the group members. Inform them of the time and place for the next DebateWatch, if there is to be another for a later debate.
- Have research participants complete the final stage of the survey, collect surveys, place them in return envelope and seal.

Use the following questions for all debates:

- 1 What were your expectations of the debate? Were they met?
- 2 What did you learn about the candidates that you did not know prior to viewing the debate?
- 3 What did you learn about the issues that you did not know prior to viewing the debate?
- 4 Were there any issues of interest to you that were not discussed? (Probe to see if anyone in the group has read or heard anything about the issues.)
- 5 Were there any issues discussed that you considered irrelevant or unimportant? (If there is disagreement about what is important or relevant, probe to determine why differences in perception exist.)
- 6 Did the debate influence your attitudes about the issues? the candidates?
- 7 How do debates compare with other campaign information sources (e.g. news, ads, speeches, conventions, the Internet (on-line resources), call-in shows, etc.) in helping you learn about the candidates and the issues?
- 8 How would you rate the debate format in helping you learn more? (Probe the effectiveness of the questions to encourage original or direct responses and to encourage clash with other candidate's positions).
- 9 What changes would you like to see in future debates?
- 10 Will this debate influence the way you vote?

- 11 How will watching the debate affect the way you read, watch, or listen to news of the campaign? How will it affect the way you discuss the campaign at work, home, etc.?
- 12 How will participating in this discussion affect the way you read, watch, or listen to news of the campaign? How will it affect the way you discuss the campaign at work, home, etc.?

Use these additional questions for the second and third presidential debates:

- 13 What did you learn from this debate that you hadn't learned from previous debates?
- 14 Did the press coverage of the previous debate(s) in any way influence your attitudes about the candidates or the issues in this debate?
- 15 Did you detect any differences in the candidates' strategies from the previous debate(s)?
- 16 How would you compare this format to previous formats? (if the format differs)
- 17 Do you believe that participation in the debates should be connected with receiving federal campaign matching funds?
- 18 Who do you think should be allowed to participate in the debates?

Use these additional questions for the vice presidential debate:

- 19 What did you learn about the vice presidential candidates that you did not know prior to viewing the debate? (Ask about the presidential candidates as well)
- 20 Did the press coverage of the previous debate(s) influence your attitudes about the candidates or issues prior to watching this debate?
- 21 How would you compare this format (if it differs from other formats) to formats used in the first (and second) debates?
- 22 Do you think vice presidential debates are useful? What can be done to make them more useful?

Facilitator's Report

Thank you for participating in DebateWatch '96. You and the members of your group joined thousands of other Americans across the country in being active participants in the democratic process. To enable the organizers of DebateWatch '96 to prepare a summary of the project's impact, we would appreciate your completing the following set of questions. To return, simply fold along the lines on the back of the survey and place a stamp in the upper right hand corner. If you want a copy of the report, please put your name in the space for the return address.

City and state where DebateWatch was held _____

Type of facility (school, library, home, etc.) _____

Debate discussed: 1st Pres _____ 2nd Pres _____ 3rd Pres _____ Vice-Pres _____

Total Number of Participants _____

(Indicate the number of participants fitting into the following demographic groups:)

Female _____ Male _____ Age (estimate): 18-25 _____ 26-40 _____
41-55 _____ Over 55 _____

Race: Black-African Native Descent _____ Asian or Pacific Islander _____
Hispanic _____ White (not Hispanic) _____
American Indian or Alaskan Native _____

Did you organize the group? Yes _____ No _____

If "No," who did? _____

How or why were you selected to facilitate? _____

Please rate the materials in the packet on a 1-5 scale (**1** – not at all helpful; **2** – more unhelpful than helpful; **3** – somewhat helpful; **4** – helpful; **5** – very helpful)

How to Organize DebateWatch '96 **1 2 3 4 5**

Viewer's Guide **1 2 3 4 5**

DebateNotes **1 2 3 4 5**

Facilitator's Guide/Suggested Questions **1 2 3 4 5**

Participant Survey **1 2 3 4 5**

Resource list **1 2 3 4 5**

Fold along line

From: _____

Place
Stamp
Here

DebateWatch '96
c/o Dr. Diana Carlin
Communication Studies Department
3090 Wescoe
University of Kansas
Lawrence, KS 66045-2177

Fold along line

Complete this section before the debate begins

Please indicate the debate you are watching and discussing: 1st pres _____ 2nd pres _____ 3rd pres _____ vice-pres _____

1 How did you hear about DebateWatch '96?

- Television announcement
- Newspaper announcement
- Radio announcement
- Information in library
- Friend, co-worker, family
- School
- Other _____

2 Who invited you to participate?

- Friend
- Family member
- Co-worker
- Club or organization
- Church group
- Public announcement for volunteers
- Other _____

3 How many DebateWatch '96 groups have you attended, including this one?

- 1 2 3 4

4 What was the level of your exposure to campaign coverage during the past 6-8 months?

- regular—daily/weekly
- 3-4 times per month
- once per month or less
- began following regularly the past two months
- began following regularly the past month
- have followed irregularly up until the debates

5 Rank your top three sources of campaign information, with 1 being your most used source.

- nightly network news (ABC, CBS, CNN, NBC, PBS)
- C-SPAN
- Weekday or evening talk shows (Larry King Live, Rush Limbaugh, etc.)
- Sunday talk shows/special news shows (e.g. This Week, Face the Nation, Meet the Press, Washington Week in Review, Crossfire, etc.)
- National newspaper such as New York Times, Christian Science Monitor, Washington Post
- News magazines
- Direct mail from political party
- Direct mail from organizations
- Radio
- People with whom you associate
- Internet
- Local newspaper
- Direct mail from candidates

6 Before watching the debate, do you have a candidate preference?

- Yes No

7 Age (check one):

- under 18 18 – 25 26 – 40
 41 – 55 over 55

8 Male Female

9 Occupation (please specify): _____

10 Ethnic background (check most appropriate box):

- Black-African Native Descent
- Asian or Pacific Islander
- Hispanic
- White (not Hispanic)
- American Indian or Alaskan Native

11 Party affiliation (if unaffiliated, please indicate):

Please use the back to write any comments you have about the debate or DebateWatch.
Thank you for participating in the research phase of DebateWatch '96.

If before the debate you indicated YES to having a candidate preference, GO TO QUESTION **12-A** below. If before the debate you indicated NO to having a candidate preference, go to QUESTION **12-B** below.

12-A After watching the debate, are you:

- _____ still leaning toward your pre-debate preference
_____ now undecided
_____ now leaning toward another candidate

12-B After watching the debate are you:

- _____ still undecided
_____ now leaning toward a candidate

STOP HERE UNTIL AFTER THE DISCUSSION IS COMPLETED

13 After participating in the discussion, has your position on the candidates changed from what was indicated as your position after the debate?

YES _____ NO _____

If YES, have you:

- _____ gone from undecided to a candidate
_____ gone from a candidate to undecided
_____ changed from one candidate to another

14 Please evaluate the debate itself by responding to the statements below on the following scale:

1 – strongly disagree **2** – disagree; **3** – no opinion;
4 – agree; **5** – strongly agree.

- A** Helped me learn something new about one or more candidates **1 2 3 4 5**
B Helped me learn something new about one or more issues **1 2 3 4 5**
C Helped me clarify my understanding of a candidate's position on an issue or issues **1 2 3 4 5**
D Reinforced my attitudes about one or more candidates **1 2 3 4 5**
E Caused me to evaluate one or more candidates differently than prior to the debate **1 2 3 4 5**
F Helped me decide for whom to vote **1 2 3 4 5**
G Gave me ideas to discuss in the group **1 2 3 4 5**
H Made me more likely to vote **1 2 3 4 5**
I Increased my interest in following the remainder of the campaign more closely **1 2 3 4 5**

15 Please evaluate the post-debate discussion by responding to the statements below on the following scale:

1 – strongly disagree **2** – disagree; **3** – no opinion;
4 – agree; **5** – strongly agree.

- A** Learned something new about one or more candidates **1 2 3 4 5**
B Learned something new about one or more issues **1 2 3 4 5**
C Clarified my understanding of a candidate's position on an issue **1 2 3 4 5**
D Reinforced my attitudes about one or more candidates **1 2 3 4 5**
E Caused me to evaluate one or more candidates differently than prior to the debate **1 2 3 4 5**
F Helped me decide for whom to vote **1 2 3 4 5**
G Helped me understand why others view the candidates or issues differently than I do **1 2 3 4 5**
H Made me more likely to vote **1 2 3 4 5**
I Increased my interest in following the campaign more carefully **1 2 3 4 5**

The material included in this section of the DebateWatch '96 packet is intended to assist you in learning more about presidential debates, the candidates, election and voting policies and procedures, and issues. Materials are divided into the following sections:

- Political Debate Resources
- State Election Officials
- Organizations with information about candidates and issues*
- Internet sites for forums and home pages on issues and candidates**
- Individuals who can serve as facilitators or advisors for DebateWatch '96 group*

*Section is not prepared at time of printing.

**Section is partially completed

Political Debate Resources

The following publications are suggested by individuals who teach political communication and conduct research on political debates.

Suggested Readings

- Bishop, G. F., Meadow, R. G., and Jackson-Beeck, M. (Eds.) (1980). *The presidential debates: Media, electoral, and policy perspectives*. New York: Praeger.
- Bitzer, L., and Rueter, T. (1980). *Carter vs. Ford: The counterfeit debates of 1976*. Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press.
- Carlin, D., and McKinney, M. S. (1994). *The 1992 presidential debates in focus*. Westport, CT: Praeger.
- Friedenberg, R. V. (Eds.) (1990). *Rhetorical studies of national political debates*. New York: Praeger.
- Hellweg, S. A., Pfau, M., and Brydon, S. R. (1992). *Televised presidential debates: Advocacy in contemporary America*. New York: Praeger.
- Jamieson, K. H., and Birdsell, D. S. (1988). *Presidential debates: The challenge of creating an informed electorate*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Kraus, S. (Ed.) (1977). *The great debates: Kennedy vs. Nixon, 1960*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.
- Kraus, S. (Ed.) (1979). *The great debates: Carter vs. Ford, 1976*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.
- Kraus, S. (Ed.) (1988). *Televised presidential debates and public policy*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence, Erlbaum Associates.
- Lanoué, D. J., and Schrott, P. R. (1991). *The joint press conference: The history, impact, and prospects of American presidential debates*. Westport, CT: Praeger.
- Lemert, J. B., et al. (1991). *News verdicts, the debates, and presidential campaigns*. New York: Praeger.
- Martel, M. (1983). *Political campaign debates: Images, strategies, and tactics*. New York: Longman.
- Minow, N. (1987). *For great debates*. New York: Priority Press Publications.
- Ranney, A. (Ed.) (1979). *The past and future of presidential debates*. Washington, DC: American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research.
- Swerdlow, J. L. (1984). *Beyond debate: A paper on televised presidential debates*. New York: Twentieth Century Fund.
- Swerdlow, J. L. (1988). *Presidential debates: 1988 and beyond*. Washington DC: Congressional Quarterly.

State Election Officials

The Secretary of State or the state election official can provide you with information about voter registration, polling places, and times. In many states the Secretary of State's office prepares a voter's guide about candidates. Contact the office in your state to learn if such a guide is available.

ALABAMA

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DELAWARE

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Internet Sites

The following is a very brief listing of Internet sites on the World Wide Web and Gopher servers. These initial locations should lead to many other links to sites about the political process, political groups and associations, and political discussion groups, etc.

The Electronic Democracy Forum
<http://edf.www.media.mit.edu/edfhome/html>

Thomas: Legislative Information on the Internet
<http://thomas.loc.gov/>

DemocracyNet
<http://www.ned.org>

The People's Network
<http://www.tpn.org/>

Vote Smart Web
<http://www.vote-smart.org/>

The "All Things Political" Homepage
<http://dolphin.gulf.net/political/html>

Yahoo
<http://www.yahoo.com/>

VoteLink
<http://www.votelink.com>

Political Participation Project
<http://www.ai.mit.edu/projects/ppp/home.html>

Institute of Government
<http://ioginfo.iog.unc.edu/>

Political Action Resources
<http://www.kimsoft.com/kimpo/html>

PoliticsUSA
<http://politicsUSA.com/>

Cornell Political Forum
<http://cpf.slife.cornell.edu/>

The Electronic Activist
<http://www.crocker.com/~ifas/activist/>

The Electronic Democracy Forum
<http://edf.www.media.mit.edu/>

Electronic Democracy Information Network
<http://garnet.berkeley.edu:3333/>

Executive Orders and Presidential Powers
<http://werple.mira.net.au/sumeria/politics/powers.html>

Global Democracy Network
[gopher://gopher.gdn.org/1](http://gopher.gdn.org/1)

Government, Law and Society (CMU)
<http://english-server.hss.cmu.edu/Govt.html>

Government, Political Science and Law (Rice)
[gopher://riceinfo.rice.edu/11/Subject/Government](http://riceinfo.rice.edu/11/Subject/Government)

Guides to Political Science Resources on the Internet (LoFC)
[gopher://marvel.loc.gov/11/global/socsci/politic/guides](http://marvel.loc.gov/11/global/socsci/politic/guides)

Guide to Politics
<http://www2.ncsu.edu/eos/users/s/snpatel/www/politics.html>

Historical Documents (UCSB)
gopher://ucsbuxa.ucsb.edu:3001/11/.stacks/.historical

Historical Documents (UMinn)
gopher://spinaltap.micro.umn.edu/11/Ebooks/By%20Title/Histdocs

Historical Texts Archives (NCSU)
gopher://vega.lib.ncsu.edu/11/library/disciplines/history/archives

Historical Text Archive (Mississippi State)
<http://www.msstate.edu/Archives/History/index.html>

Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs (UMinn)
gopher://gopher.hhh.umn.edu/1

Inaugural Addresses of the Presidents 1789-1989
gopher://wiretap.spies.com/00/Library/Classic/inaug.txt

Inaugural Address of President Clinton, 1993
gopher://spinaltap.micro.umn.edu/11/Ebooks/By%20Title/clinton

Institute of Public Policy Studies (U Michigan)
gopher://www.ipps.lsa.umich.edu/11/ipps

Interactive Democracy
<http://www.teleport.com/~pellgn/id.html>

Interactive Mass Media and Political Participation
<http://www.umich.edu/~jmjaffe/PoliCMC.html>

League of Conservation Voters
http://www.econet.apc.org/lcv/lcv_info.html

League of Women Voters
http://akebono.stanford.edu/yahoo/Economy/Organizations/Public_Interest_Groups/Women/League_of_Women_Voters/

League of Women Voters Voter Education Project
<http://www.oclc.org/VoteSmart/lww/lwvhome.htm>

National Civic League
<http://www.csn.net/ncl>

National Election Studies
<http://www.umich.edu:80/~nes>

National Opinion Registry
http://branch.com/nor/nor_home.html

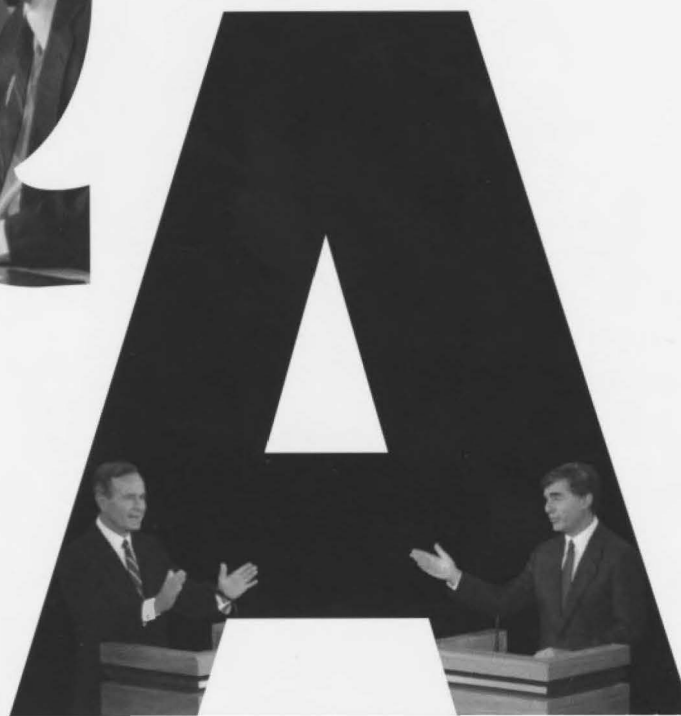
U.S. National Archives WWW
<http://www.nara.gov/>

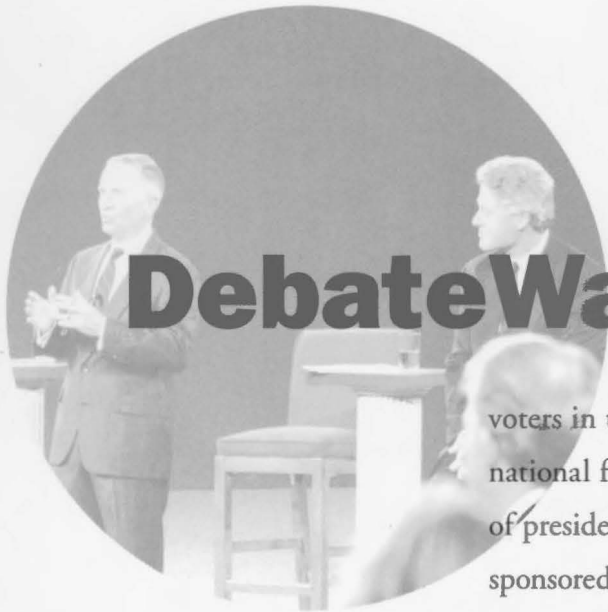
U.S. Presidential Libraries (NARA)
<http://gopher.nara.gov:70/1/inform/library/>

U.S. Presidential Records and Papers (Sunsite)
gopher://sunsite.unc.edu:9431/1

DebateWatch '96

a way to get American voters talking about the candidates and issues, not just listening.





DebateWatch '96

was recommended by voters in the 1992 presidential election who participated in national focus groups which measured the educational value of presidential debates. The focus group study, which was sponsored by The Commission on Presidential Debates, involved 625 voters in 17 cities throughout the United States who met after each of the debates to discuss what they had learned, what they still wanted to know about the candidates and the issues, and what they liked and didn't like about each of the formats used in 1992.

Focus group members, who represented a cross-section of voters, told The Commission that they preferred a **variety of formats**, that they wanted **more citizen involvement** such as the Town Hall format of the Richmond debate, and that they wanted **topics covered in more depth**.

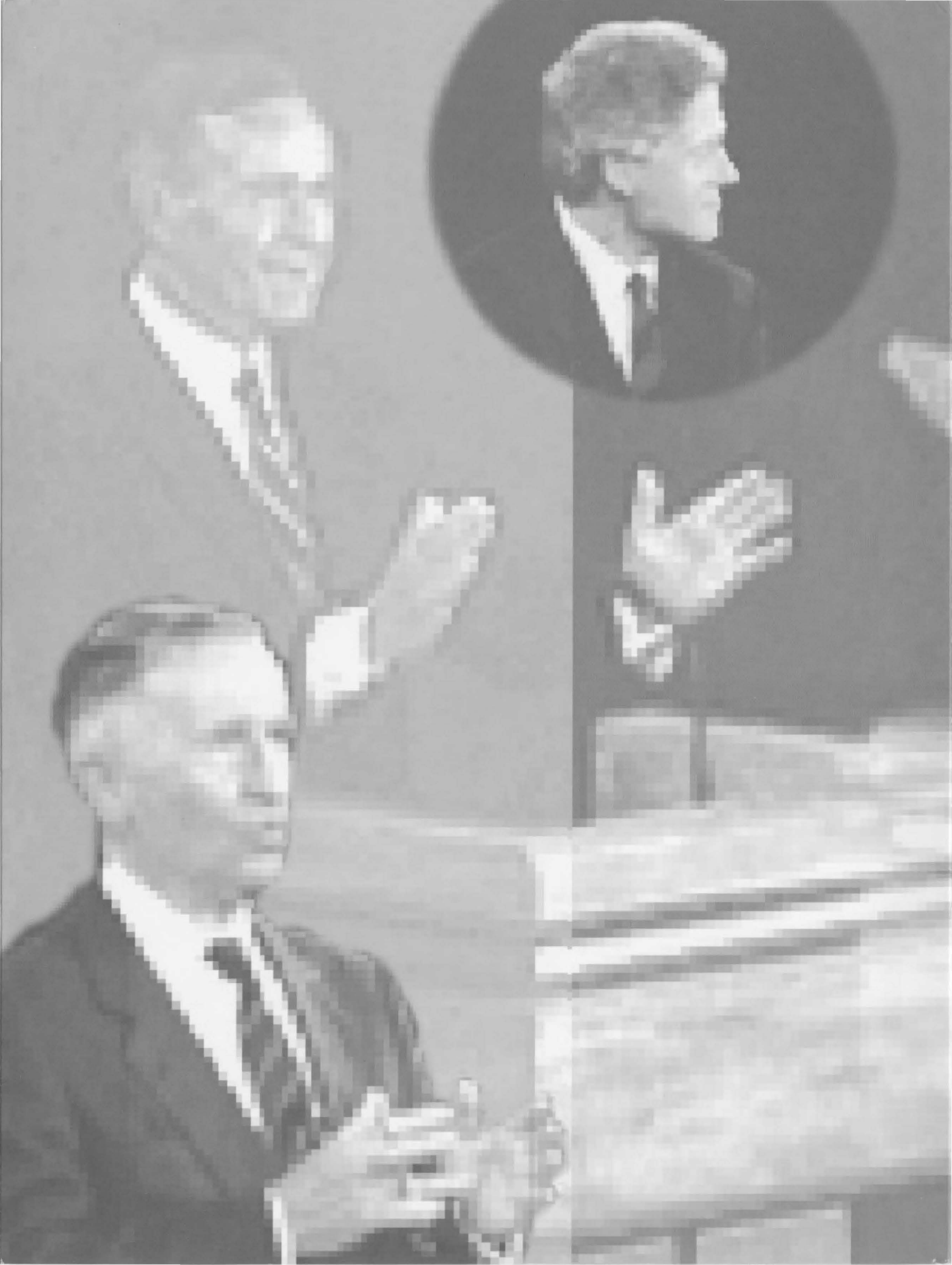
The participants also told us that they enjoyed talking about the debates and the candidates with people they previously had not known.

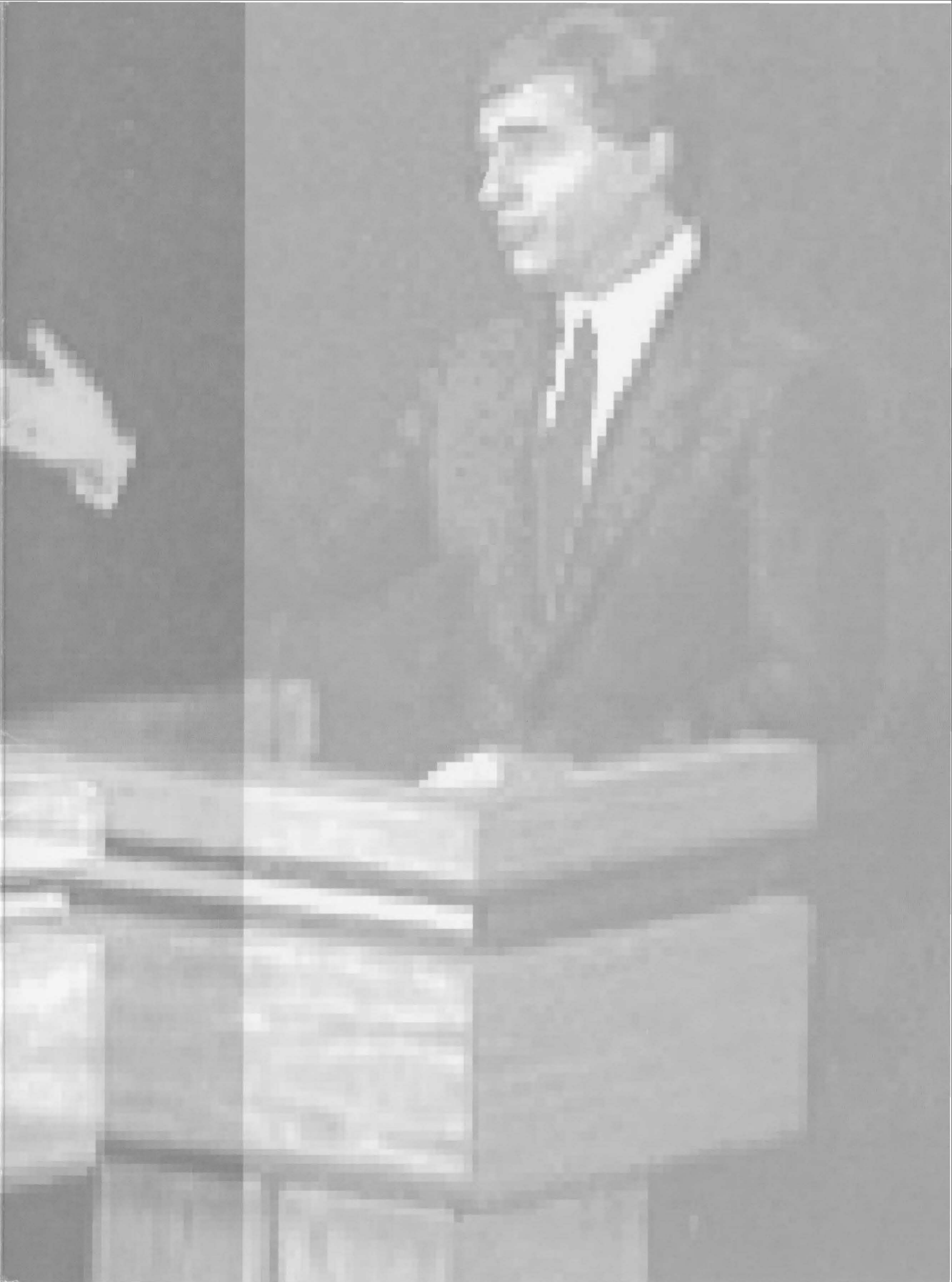
They found that they learned **as much from the discussions** as they did from the debates. And, most importantly, they found that they could **disagree and understand why they disagreed without becoming disagreeable**.

Those 625 citizens told us to find a way to encourage all Americans to do what they did—watch and listen to the debates and then talk with each other about what they had just seen and heard.

And that's how DebateWatch was born...

a grassroots example of **Democracy at work.**





Welcome to DebateWatch '96. All the materials
you need are contained in this packet, including:

How To Organize DebateWatch '96

A Viewer's Guide To Political Debates

DebateNotes

Facilitator's Guide & Suggested Questions

Facilitator's Report

Participant Survey

Resource List

If you are missing anything, or have a question,
suggestion, or comment, please call DebateWatch '96
offices at 202-872-1020. You may make as many
copies of the information in this packet as you need.
We want to hear your reactions to DebateWatch '96.



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Date: Monday, March 25, 1996
To: Melvin Laird
From: Janet Brown
Re: 3/28/96 ITT Luncheon

This memo is to confirm arrangements for the March 28 lunch. We are very grateful to you and Ambassador Strauss for being our honorees.

The ITT Corporation is hosting the luncheon which will begin at noon in the State Salon of the Carlton Hotel at 923 16th St., NW, Washington, D.C. After lunch, Paul Kirk and Frank Fahrenkopf will make a short presentation to you and Ambassador Strauss; they will also brief the attendees on our educational program, DebateWatch '96.

I have attached a guest list for the luncheon. If you need any additional information, please call me at (202) 872-1020. I look forward to seeing you Thursday.

Co-chairmen

Frank J. Fahrenkopf, Jr.
 Former Republican
 National Committee Chairman
 Paul G. Kirk, Jr.
 Former Democratic
 National Committee Chairman

Honorary Co-chairmen

Gerald R. Ford
 Jimmy Carter

Executive Director

Janet H. Brown

Directors

Senator John C. Danforth
 Antonia Hernandez
 Representative John R. Lewis
 Newton N. Minow

Key Orr


Caroline Kennedy Schlossberg
 Representative Barbara Vucanovich

Attendees, March 28 luncheon

Robert Strauss
Melvin Laird
Paul Kirk
Frank Fahrenkopf

Robert Asman, Commission on Presidential Debates
John Autry, JSA-I, Inc.
Linda Becker, Chrysler
Rory Benson, National Association of Broadcasters
Martina Bradford, AT&T
Michael Brewer, Dun & Bradstreet
Janet Brown, Commission on Presidential Debates
Kathy Bushkin, U.S. News & World Report
Patrick Butler, Washington Post
Wally Chalmers, Smith, Dawson & Andrews
Ben Ginsburgh, Patton, Boggs & Blow
Nicholas Glakas, ITT
Annie Groer, Washington Post
Elliott Hall, Ford Motor Co.
Kathy Harings, Philip Morris
Luddy Hayden, Chevron
Robert Healy, ARCO
Alex Hortis, Marjorie Kovler Fund
Jerry Lowrie, AT&T
Cece Cole McInturff, CBS
Daniel Manatt, Verner, Lipfert, Bernhard & McPherson
Howard Menaker, Bechtel
Robert Meyne, RJR Nabisco
Robert Neuman, Neuman & Co.
Tom O'Hara, Prudential
Elizabeth Smith, American Federation of Teachers
Shella Tate, Powell Tate
Anne Wexler, The Wexler Group
David White, Twentieth Century Fund
Margita White, Director, ITT Corp.
Nellie White, White Consulting

END


**COMMISSION ON
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FAX TRANSMITTAL FORM

DATE: March 25, 1996

TO: NAME: Secretary Laird

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FROM: NAME: Janet Brown

PHONE: 872-1020

Please contact (202)628-2075 if you do not receive the entire transmission

MESSAGE:

Co-chairmen

Frank J. Fahrenkopf, Jr.
Former Republican
National Committee Chairman
Paul O. Kirk, Jr.
Former Democratic
National Committee Chairman

Honorary Co-chairmen

Gerald R. Ford
Jimmy Carter

Executive Director

Janet H. Brown

Directors

Senator John C. Danforth
Antonia Hernandez
Representative John R. Lewis
Newton N. Minow

Staff

Kay Orr
Caroline Kennedy Schlossberg
Representative Barbara Vucanovich

Presidential Debate Luncheon honoring MRL and Bob Strauss on March 28th will be at the Sheraton Carlton Hotel at noon. Janet Brown is the Ex. Director of the Commission called to say that it is all set and will be sending more information over to us.

2/28/96



COMMISSION ON PRESIDENTIAL DEBATES 601 Thirteenth Street, N.W. • Suite 310 South • Washington, DC 20005 • (202) 872-1020

December 28, 1995

Honorable Melvin R. Laird
Senior Counselor
Reader's Digest
1730 Rhode Island Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20036

Dear Mel:

It has been ten years since you and Bob Strauss chaired the Commission on National Elections whose recommendation to establish a permanent debate sponsor was the reason that the Commission on Presidential Debates (CPD) was created. We are indebted to you and Bob for your foresight regarding the importance of debates. As I'm sure you know, the 1992 debates set several records, viewership being only one: 97 million people watched the third and final debate. More Americans based their votes on the debates than on any other single issue. As we plan for next year, we are mindful that the debates will play a larger role than ever in educating viewers and listeners about the candidates.

The CPD would like to honor you and Bob as our founders at an event on February 8, 1996 here in Washington. The ITT Corporation has generously agreed to host a luncheon to which potential contributors to our voter education program, "DebateWatch '96," will be invited. We would like to salute you and Bob that day for your critical role in our accomplishments. No tickets will be sold to this event; invitees will simply be asked to come in order to honor you and to hear about DebateWatch '96. (A DebateWatch packet and related press release are enclosed for your review.)

We hope you will agree to our request. It would be a great way to kick off a new debate year and would give us the opportunity to thank you for your central contribution to voter education.

With best wishes for 1996,

Paul G. Kirk, Jr.
Co-chairman

Frank J. Fahrenkopf, Jr.
Co-chairman

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*trying for
lunch on
March 28
OK
Noon*

*Feb. 8-105 -
then to Plus. for RD Bd.
on Feb. 9th
Bob Strauss -
887-4190*

*1/3/96
Nancy -
could we
give some
other dates
they would
like to do this
- Kelly -
Strauss*

October 31, 1995

Contact: Janet Brown (202)872-1020

Embargoed for release until 11:30 a.m. EST

COMMISSION ON PRESIDENTIAL DEBATES
RECOMMENDS FOUR DEBATES, SINGLE MODERATOR, SCHEDULE,
VARIED FORMATS FOR 1996

The co-chairmen of the nonpartisan Commission on Presidential Debates (CPD), which sponsored all the presidential debates in 1988 and 1992, today announced the CPD board of directors' recommendations for 1996. Paul G. Kirk, Jr. and Frank J. Fahrenkopf, Jr. stated that the recommendations were based on lessons learned from the 1992 debates which drew the largest television audience for any political event in history, culminating in 97 million viewers for the third and final presidential debate. Exit poll data for both 1988 and 1992 showed that more voters based their balloting decisions on the debates than on any other single issue.

The CPD board of directors made the following recommendations for the 1996 general election debates:

- o Three presidential debates and one vice presidential debate will be held in 1996.

- o The four debates, each ninety minutes in length, will take place on four consecutive Wednesdays: September 25, October 2, October 9, and October 16, 1996 with October 9 being the vice presidential debate.

- o Each debate will be moderated by a single individual.

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- o Three different formats will be utilized: during one presidential debate, the candidates will stand behind the traditional podiums; during a second, citizens will question the candidates in a town meeting format; and during a third, the candidates and moderator will be seated. The vice presidential debate will also be held with the candidates and moderator seated.

- o Each debate will cover both foreign and domestic policy topics.

Kirk and Fahrenkopf said that the recommendations reflected substantial study by the CPD. "In 1992, we sponsored the first focus groups ever convened to measure the effectiveness of various debate formats. Focus group participants expressed clear preference for the single moderator and a variety of formats. They also stated their strong support for the citizen involvement which occurred during the Richmond town hall meeting. We listened to their suggestions and are now acting on them."

The CPD also announced sites which have asked to host the 1996 debates. They are:

Furman University, Greenville, SC

George Washington University, Washington, D.C.

Hartford/Trinity College, Hartford, CT

Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI

St. Petersburg/Tampa/University of South Florida, FL

University of Maryland, College Park, MD

University of Oklahoma, Norman, OK

University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA

University of San Diego, San Diego, CA

Washington University, St. Louis, MO

"We are very pleased with the quality of the proposals submitted by these sites, and by the community interest they reflect," the co-chairmen said.

Kirk and Fahrenkopf also issued the candidate selection criteria which will be used to determine the participants in the 1996 debates. A copy of the criteria is attached.

Finally, the co-chairmen announced plans for "DebateWatch '96," the CPD's nationwide voter education project. "The 1992 focus group participants told us they had learned much more from the debates by watching and discussing them with people they did not know and with whom they did not necessarily agree. They urged that more citizens be given a similar opportunity in 1996. DebateWatch '96 will bring people together in schools, libraries, and civic auditoriums in all fifty states to watch and talk about the candidates and their views."

Kirk and Fahrenkopf introduced the DebateWatch '96 packet which includes all the materials necessary to host a DebateWatch. It will be available in hard copy and on the CPD's home page on the Internet. The CPD is working in partnership with the Internet Multicasting Service to create a home page which will feature not only information regarding 1996 but also historic data, research and transcripts on past debates.

DebateWatch'96 will be run by CPD advisory board member Dr. Diana Carlin of the University of Kansas. "We owe Dr. Carlin great thanks for developing and organizing the focus groups and resulting research, including editorship of The 1992 Presidential Debates in Focus (Westport, CT: Praeger)," Kirk and Fahrenkopf said. Carlin will direct DebateWatch '96 from the University campus in Lawrence, KS.

Fundraising for DebateWatch is underway with a \$1 million goal. Kirk and Fahrenkopf noted that early support for the production of the debates has already been received from the Dun & Bradstreet Corporation, the Philip Morris Companies, the Marjorie Kovler Fund, and the Sara Lee Corporation.

The CPD plans to work with its voter education partners to promote DebateWatch. They include The American Library Association, Close Up

Foundation, League of Women Voters, National Association of Broadcasters, National Association of Secondary School Principals, National Association of Secretaries of State, National Cable Television Association, National Federation of State High School Associations, National Forensic League, National School Boards Association, Newspaper Association of America, and Speech Communication Association.

Established in 1987, the nonpartisan CPD is a non-profit corporation based in Washington, D.C. For more information, please contact the CPD at the telephone number listed above or consult the CPD home page at:

<http://park.org/fair/Events/Debates>

**COMMISSION ON PRESIDENTIAL
DEBATES' CANDIDATE SELECTION CRITERIA
FOR 1996 GENERAL ELECTION DEBATE PARTICIPATION**

A. INTRODUCTION

The mission of the Commission on Presidential Debates ("the Commission") is to ensure, for the benefit of the American electorate, that general election debates are held every four years between the leading candidates for the offices of President and Vice President of the United States. The Commission sponsored a series of such debates in 1988 and again in 1992, and has begun the planning, preparation, and organization of a series of nonpartisan debates among leading candidates for the Presidency and Vice Presidency in the 1996 general election.

The goal of the Commission's debates is to afford the members of the voting public an opportunity to sharpen their views of those candidates from among whom the next President or Vice President will be selected. In light of the large number of declared candidates in any given presidential election, the Commission has determined that its voter education goal is best achieved by limiting debate participation to the next President and his or her principal rival(s).

A Democratic or Republican nominee has been elected to the Presidency for more than a century. Such historical prominence and sustained voter interest warrants the extension of an invitation to the respective nominees of the two major parties to participate in the Commission's 1996 debates.

In order to further the educational purposes of its debates, the Commission has developed nonpartisan criteria upon which it will base its decisions regarding selection of nonmajor party candidates to participate in its 1996 debates. The purpose of the criteria is to identify nonmajor party candidates, if any, who have a realistic (*i.e.*, more than theoretical) chance of being elected the next President of the United States and who properly are considered to be among the principal rivals for the Presidency. The realistic chance of being elected need not be overwhelming, but it must be more than theoretical.

The criteria contemplate no quantitative threshold that triggers automatic inclusion in a Commission-sponsored debate. Rather, the Commission will employ a multifaceted analysis of potential electoral success, including a review of (1) evidence of national organization, (2) signs of national newsworthiness and competitiveness, and (3) indicators of national enthusiasm or concern, to determine whether a candidate has a sufficient chance of election to warrant inclusion in one or more of its debates.

Judgments regarding a candidate's election prospects will be made by the Commission on a case-by-case basis. However, the same multiple criteria will be applied to each nonmajor party candidate. Initial determinations with respect to candidate selection will be made after the major party conventions and approximately contemporaneously with the commencement of the general election campaign. The number of debates to which a qualifying nonmajor party candidate will be invited will be determined on a flexible basis as the general election campaign proceeds.

B. 1996 NONPARTISAN SELECTION CRITERIA

The Commission's nonpartisan criteria for selecting nonmajor party candidates to participate in its 1996 general election presidential debates include:

1. EVIDENCE OF NATIONAL ORGANIZATION

The Commission's first criterion considers evidence of national organization. This criterion encompasses objective considerations pertaining to the eligibility requirements of Article II, Section 1 of the Constitution and the operation of the electoral college. This criterion also encompasses more subjective indicators of a national campaign with a more than theoretical prospect of electoral success. The factors to be considered include:

a. Satisfaction of the eligibility requirements of Article II, Section 1 of the Constitution of the United States.

b. Placement on the ballot in enough states to have a mathematical chance of obtaining an electoral college majority.

c. Organization in a majority of congressional districts in those states.

d. Eligibility for matching funds from the Federal Election Commission or other demonstration of the ability to fund a national campaign, and endorsements by federal and state officeholders.

2. SIGNS OF NATIONAL NEWSWORTHINESS AND COMPETITIVENESS

The Commission's second criterion endeavors to assess the national newsworthiness and competitiveness of a candidate's campaign. The factors to be considered focus both on the news coverage afforded the candidacy over time and the opinions of electoral experts, media and non-media, regarding the

newsworthiness and competitiveness of the candidacy at the time the Commission makes its invitation decisions. The factors to be considered include:

- a. The professional opinions of the Washington bureau chiefs of major newspapers, news magazines, and broadcast networks.
- b. The opinions of a comparable group of professional campaign managers and pollsters not then employed by the candidates under consideration.
- c. The opinions of representative political scientists specializing in electoral politics at major universities and research centers.
- d. Column inches on newspaper front pages and exposure on network telecasts in comparison with the major party candidates.
- e. Published views of prominent political commentators.

3. INDICATORS OF NATIONAL PUBLIC ENTHUSIASM OR CONCERN

The Commission's third criterion considers objective evidence of national public enthusiasm or concern. The factors considered in connection with this criterion are intended to assess public support for a candidate, which bears directly on the candidate's prospects for electoral success. The factors to be considered include:

- a. The findings of significant public opinion polls conducted by national polling and news organizations.
- b. Reported attendance at meetings and rallies across the country (locations as well as numbers) in comparison with the two major party candidates.

Adopted: September 19, 1995


COMMISSION ON
PRESIDENTIAL DEBATES

1200 New Hampshire Avenue, N.W. • Suite 445 • Washington, D. C. 20036 • (202) 872-1020 • Fax (202) 783-5923

In Florida
on 10/20-21/97
Will regret
Be regretful 10/9/97

October 6, 1997

Melvin Laird
Reader's Digest
1730 Rhode Island Avenue
Washington, DC 20036

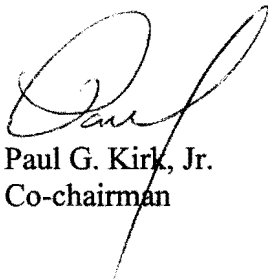
Dear Mel:


The Commission on Presidential Debates (CPD) will hold a symposium on Monday and Tuesday, October 20-21 to review the 1996 debates and start planning for the year 2000. The symposium will be held on the campus of George Washington University; the program is enclosed. We hope you will be able to attend and participate actively in the discussions.

This symposium is the third in a series that we have hosted following each general election since 1988. The proceedings of the prior two forums were central to the recommendations the CPD made for subsequent debates. We believe this will be the case again this year. It is our intention to issue recommendations quite early for the debates in the year 2000. With that objective, we hope that the conversation on October 20-21 is candid and productive.

The symposium is open for coverage. You are welcome to come for all or part of the program. Please respond to the CPD's office by Friday, October 17; the telephone number is (202)872-1020.

With our thanks and best regards,


Paul G. Kirk, Jr.
Co-chairman


Frank J. Fahrenkopf, Jr.
Co-Chairman

Co-chairmen
Frank J. Fahrenkopf, Jr.
Paul G. Kirk, Jr.

Honorary Co-chairmen
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Jimmy Carter
Ronald Reagan

Directors
Senator Paul Coverdell
John C. Danforth
Representative Jennifer Dunn
Antonia Hernandez
Caroline Kennedy

Representative John R. Lewis
Newton N. Minow
Kay Orr
Dorothy Ridings

Executive Director
Janet H. Brown

**Commission on Presidential Debates Symposium
Planning for the Year 2000: A Review of the 1996 Debates
October 20-21, 1997**

Marvin Center Theater
First Floor Lobby
George Washington University
800 21st Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C.

Monday, October 20, 1997

2:30-4:30 p.m. Opening of Symposium

Paul G. Kirk, Jr. and Frank J. Fahrenkopf, Jr.
Co-chairmen, Commission on Presidential Debates

Stephen Joel Trachtenberg
President, George Washington University

Panel discussion: Reversing the trend in the youth vote

Moderator: Cokie Roberts, Correspondent, ABC News

Dr. Diana Carlin, University of Kansas; National Coordinator, DebateWatch '96
Stephen Joel Trachtenberg, President, George Washington University
Representative from America Online
Representative from MTV

4:30-5:30 p.m. Reception

University Club
Marvin Center, Third Floor

**7:30-9:00 p.m. Sound bites and spot news versus in-depth continuing coverage: the role of
journalists in covering presidential campaigns**

Moderator: Stephen Roberts, Shapiro Professor of Media and Public Affairs,
George Washington University

Walter Mears, Vice President and Columnist, Associated Press
Bob Fuss, Congressional/White House Correspondent, NBC/Mutual Radio News

Tuesday, October 21, 1997

10:00-11:30 a.m. **How does the public learn about presidential candidates? Advertisements, conventions, free air time, news coverage and commentary, and debates.**

Moderator: Michael Barone, Senior Staff Editor, Reader's Digest

John Siegenthaler, Founder, First Amendment Center
Frank Sesno, Senior Vice President and Washington Bureau Chief, CNN
Geneva Overholser, Ombudsman, Washington Post; former editor,
Des Moines Register
Frank Newport, Editor-in-Chief, The Gallup Poll

12:00-1:15 p.m. **Lunch**

Overview of legal considerations affecting the candidate selection process

Lewis K. Loss, Esq., partner, Ross, Dixon & Masback, L.L.P.;
General Counsel to the Commission on Presidential Debates

1:30-3:00 p.m. **The role of debates in the general election**

Moderator: Gwen Ifill, Network Correspondent, NBC News

Professor Richard Neustadt, Harvard University;
Chairman, Commission on Presidential Debates Advisory Committee
on Candidate Selection
Ross Clayton Mulford, Esq., partner, Hughes & Luce, L.L.P.;
Outside General Counsel to Perot '92 and Perot '96

3:00-4:30 p.m. **Direct candidate exchange: how to improve debate format**

Moderator: Tom Oliphant, Columnist, Boston Globe

Ann Compton, ABC News; panelist, 1988 and 1992 presidential debates
Hal Bruno, ABC News; panelist, 1976 Vice Presidential Debate;
moderator, 1992 Vice Presidential Debate
Michael D. McCurry, Assistant to the President and White House Press Secretary
John Buckley, Senior Vice President of Communications, Fannie Mae

Paid parking is available on the following three lots at George Washington University:

21st and H Streets (Marvin Center)

22nd and I Streets

21st and I Streets

Metro Accessible: Orange or Blue Line to Foggy Bottom/GWU (23rd and I Streets)

George Washington University Relations Telephone Number: (202) 994-6460

Commission on Presidential Debates

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