

# commentary

from other pens...

## Fast-rising Democrat tests his southern charm

By Will Lester  
Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — John Edwards of North Carolina has made a name for himself in Washington in just three years in the Senate — a finalist in Al Gore's hunt for a 2000 running mate, a leading proponent for a patient's bill of rights and a Democrat hailed as one of the party's fast-rising stars.

He auditioned before some of his party's most important activists — in New Hampshire, home of the nation's first presidential primary.

"People want to see a comfort level with the candidate," said New Hampshire Democratic chairwoman Kathleen Sullivan. "It's an opportunity to see if a person has all the intangible qualities it takes to make a good president — strength of character, basic intelligence, common sense, that amorphous charisma."

Edwards, 48, appeared at the homes of Democratic activists and a fund-raiser for Democrats. Asked if his journey was his way of testing the waters for a presidential run, Edwards says simply: "I have not made any decision about that."

If he decides to run, he would join an evolving field that could include: Gore, the former vice president and presidential nominee; House Democratic leader Dick Gephardt of Missouri; veteran Sen. John Kerry of Massachusetts; Senate Majority Leader Tom Daschle of South Dakota; Connecticut Sen. Joe Lieberman and a half-dozen others.

"His biggest plus is he's the new face in the Democratic Party," said Rob Tully, a veteran party activist in Iowa, where Edwards has already visited twice. "Democrats are always looking for an up-and-comer."

After just a year and a half in the Senate, he got a call from top Gore aide Warren Christopher, who told Edwards he was being considered along with a handful of others to be Gore's running mate.

"Christopher spoke in such a low voice, I thought 'Is that what he said?'" Edwards recalled during an interview. "I was too embarrassed to ask him to repeat it."

Edwards lost out to Lieberman, but others started noticing the lawyer who defeated incumbent Republican Sen. Lauch Faircloth in 1998.

By last summer, Edwards was being described as one of the Democratic Party's rising stars and one of its most talented politicians since Bill Clinton. He was even described as the "sexiest politician" in America by People magazine.

After Sept. 11, the Edwards media buzz quieted and he cut back his travels around the country to meet the Democratic establishment.

"In the period immediately after that, unless I already had an existing commitment, I went back to North Carolina," Edwards said. "I thought it was important to see what folks in North Carolina were feeling about what had happened, what they wanted to see me do about it."

Edwards' trips across North Carolina helped him develop his goals in Congress — co-sponsoring a bioterrorism bill that would provide federal resources and training to local agencies and helping to write an airport security bill.

Edwards will be up for re-election to the Senate in 2004, although the earlier presidential primary calendar could allow him to test his White House prospects before deciding on a Senate race.

The senator grew up the son of a textile mill employee, spending his teen-age years in Robbins, N.C., and working in the mills on breaks during college. He became a successful trial lawyer in Raleigh, successfully arguing personal injury cases against big companies.

"He has all the ingredients to be a national figure," said Republican Arizona Sen. John McCain, a friend. "He has good looks, intelligence, charisma and excellent debating talents that will serve him well, and not just on the floor of the Senate. ... So much of it is timing."

"The big question is throw weight," said political analyst Stuart Rothenberg. "He's still a very junior U.S. senator. I don't know if his looks, style and gift for gab will overcome that."



## Understanding arrogance

Maybe we Westerners really are as arrogant as the nonarrogant rest of the world tells us. After all, who would dare ask Islamic militants holding an abducted Wall Street Journal reporter for the man's swift release "so that he may return home safe to his wife and soon-to-be-born child"? Only someone with an exaggerated sense of what President Bush (Arrogant Westerner No. 1) might call "the dignity of every life," a phrase from his State of the Union address. The nerve. Or "da noive," as they say in New Jersey, where the Department of Education just revised the state's history curriculum recommendations to exclude such Founding Arrogants as George Washington, Thomas Jefferson and Benjamin Franklin.

In all seriousness, I wish the Journal editor hadn't made so very personal an appeal to Daniel Pearl's captors. This most tender revelation about the American prisoner (a wife! an unborn child!) can only have thrilled his tormentors, impervious as they are to claims of mercy or justice — or other precepts that were, once upon a time, naively thought of as coming under the heading of "common decency." It turns out that there is nothing common about them.

Certainly, there's nothing common about Western and non-Western understandings of such terms pertaining to human conduct. This is a huge problem, as our worlds — one, generally if multiculturally Western, the other, purely and militantly Islamic — collide in the war on terrorism. Why, even the term "terrorism" remains subject to debate.

Not, of course, in the West, where terrorism is known to be the slaughter of civilians for political gain by such groups, as President Bush specified this week, as the anti-Israel suicide squads Islamic Jihad, Hamas and Hezbollah. The Islamic world



diana west

• commentary

will define terrorism as the slaughter of unarmed civilians — unless the unarmed civilians happen to be Israelis slaughtered by Islamic Jihad, Hamas and Hezbollah. Such carnage counts as "legitimate resistance." And terrorism? "Islam is against terrorism," Saudi Arabian Interior Minister Prince Nayef bin Abdul Aziz said recently. "Why is it not said that Israeli terrorism is the fiercest and most heinous terrorism being committed now?" To that end, interior ministers from 17 Arab countries gathered this week to call on the world to condemn "all kinds of terrorism, especially the state terrorism practiced by Israel," and to ask the United Nations to sponsor an international conference (Durban redux?) to make it official.

So much for a mutual understanding of terrorism, a cruel weapon of war against nations and peoples. How about something more basic — the concept of cruelty itself? Take the pitiful case of Sufiyatu Huseini, a Nigerian woman sentenced to death by stoning once her 10-month-old baby is weaned. Her crime? Adultery. Under sharia, or Islamic law, adultery is a crime second only to one other offense — and no, that one isn't murder (No. 3). The worst crime under Islamic law, which, as The New York Times Magazine explained, came to northern Nigeria because of "the loosening of federal control and the advent of democratic freedoms, is insulting Allah. (Stealing goats is also pretty bad, as several Nigerians who have had a

hand amputated can attest.)

The arrogant Westerner in me finds this barbaric, which is just the kind of "value judgment" that was struck down long ago by the deans of cultural relativism. Richard Dowden, a less arrogant Westerner working for The New York Times, was able to couch things more sensitively. He asked Mansur Ibrahim Sa'id, a Nigerian law school dean who attended the local constitutional convention (or whatever you call a sharia-drafting confab), "whether stipulations in the United Nations charter against cruel, degrading and inhuman treatment conflict with amputations and stonings." Sitting beneath a copy of the U.N. charter taped to the wall, Sa'id replied, "You have to decide what amounts to cruelty and take into account the religious background. What yardstick are you using? You have to know if the people who use this law see it as cruel and inhuman."

That's the correct answer — politically correct answer, anyway — for a value-free, nonjudgmental world. Are we there yet? Not quite. We still have a yardstick of our own, despite those who try to slide it from our grasp with a slippery relativism that teaches that no culture is better than another. (See New Jersey's new Founder-free curriculum.) Bush referred to it when speaking of the "non-negotiable demands of human dignity — the rule of law; limits of the power of the state; respect for women; private property; free speech; equal justice; and religious tolerance." The non-Western world hasn't evolved with these traditions — the deep, dark secret of multiculturalism — and it is incumbent upon us to teach and hang onto them, as they say, for dear life — not to mention liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

Diana West is a columnist and editorial writer for The Washington Times. She can be contacted via dwest@washingtontimes.com.

## Bush connects!



chris matthews

• commentary

partisan tone. Bush bragged how he and the Democrats forged the education bill.

"I was so proud of our work I even had nice things to say about my friend Ted Kennedy." He joked that the conservative folks back at his Crawford, Texas, coffee shop couldn't quite believe he had gotten so much cooperation out of the big, bad liberal from Massachusetts.

It's public displays like this that explain why two-thirds of the American people, and the even the majority of hardcore Democrats, believe that this young president has changed the tone in Washington for the better. It also explains why partisan shots by Tom Daschle and others have boomeranged.

This vital president knows that it's time for unity in face of a common threat.

"Evil is real, and it must be opposed," he said Tuesday. "Beyond all differences of race or creed, we are one country, mourning together and facing danger together."

And that danger is real and present. Bush presented himself before Congress and the country not as a self-involved Prom King, but as a guy with a job to do.

"The United States of America will not permit the world's most dangerous regimes to threaten us with the world's most destructive weapons."

WASHINGTON — You're talking long-distance, and the guy sounds like he's in the same room with you.

That's what it's like listening to President Bush these days. As he stood surrounded by all those politicians Tuesday night, he didn't look like one of them. He seemed and sounded like one of US. Talk about perfect pitch!

He knows that the "beautiful people" are out, and, instead, servicemembers are in. Rather than big shots, he packed the First Lady's gallery with flight attendants, teachers and military wives. No famous faces. Just heroes and the widows of heroes.

In telling their heart-rending stories, Bush didn't let his voice catch like Reagan did. He didn't say he felt the pain of those people up in the balcony the way Clinton fancied.

Just the opposite! Instead of leading the nation in self-pity, he told us to buck up and give two years of our lives to the country with something called the Freedom Corps. He reminded us what a "privilege" it is for leaders like him to fight freedom's battle and how America stands "firm for the non-negotiable demands of human dignity." Again and again Tuesday night, he underlined what an "opportunity" history has granted us.

You know, the way Jack Kennedy once did.

Bush also knows the power of simple honesty. The first sentence out of his mouth Tuesday night was a confession that the economy's in a "recession." He admitted his policies would cause new federal deficits and, though he couldn't quite say "Enron," that we've got problem with corporate sleaze.

The State of the Union also struck the right bi-

## where to write

U.S. Sen. Pat Roberts, 302 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington D.C. 20510. (202) 224-4774

U.S. Sen. Sam Brownback, 303 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington D.C. 20510. (202) 224-6521

U.S. Rep. Jerry Moran, 1217 Longworth House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510. (202) 225-2715

State Rep. Jim Morrison, State Capitol Building Rm. 174-W, Topeka, KS 66612. (785) 296-7676

State Sen. Stan Clark, State Capitol Building Rm. 128-S, Topeka, KS 66612. (785) 296-7399

Kansas Attorney General Carla J. Stovall, 301 S.W. 10th, Lower Level, Topeka, KS 66612-1597 (785) 296-3751 Fax (785) 291-3699 TTY: (785) 291-3767

## The Goodland Daily News

(USPS No. 222-460. ISSN 0893-0562)  
Member: Kansas Press Association  
The Associated Press  
Inland Press Association Colorado Press Association  
National Newspaper Association  
e-mail: [daily@nwkans.com](mailto:daily@nwkans.com)

Steve Haynes, President  
Tom Betz, Editor/Editorial Page  
Rachel Miscall, Managing Editor  
Pat Schiefen, Copy Editor  
Doug Stephens, Sports Editor  
Sharon Corcoran, Society Editor Skilar Boland, Reporter  
Eric Yonkey, Bill Wagoner, Advertising Sales  
James Schiefen, Adv. Production Sheila Smith, Office Manager

**Nor'west Press**  
Jim Bowker, General Manager  
Richard Westfahl Ron VanLoenen Judy McKnight  
Betty Morris Lana Westfahl Helen Dilts

[nwkans.com](http://nwkans.com)  
N.T. Betz, Director of Internet Services (nbetz@nwkans.com)  
Evan Barnum, Systems Admin. (support@nwkans.com)

Published daily except Saturday and Sunday and the day observed for New Year's Day, Memorial Day, Fourth of July, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day and Christmas Day, at 1205 Main St., Goodland, Kan. 67735.  
Periodicals postage paid at Goodland, Kan. 67735; entered at the Goodland, Kan., Post Office under the Act of Congress of March 8, 1878.  
POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The Goodland Daily News, 1205 Main St., Goodland, Kan. 67735.  
TELEPHONE: (785) 899-2338. Editorial e-mail: [daily@nwkans.com](mailto:daily@nwkans.com). Advertising questions can be sent to: [gdnadv@nwkans.com](mailto:gdnadv@nwkans.com)  
The Goodland Daily News assumes no liability for mistakes or omissions in advertising or failure to publish beyond the actual cost of the ad.  
SUBSCRIPTIONS: In Sherman County and adjacent counties: three months, \$22; six months, \$38; 12 months, \$72. By mail in Kansas, Colorado: three months, \$28; six months, \$50; 12 months, \$95. (All tax included.) Out of area, weekly mailing of five issues: three months, \$25; six months, \$40; 12 months, \$75.

Incorporating:  
**The Sherman County Herald**  
Founded by Thomas McCants  
1935-1989  
**THE SHERMAN COUNTY STAR**  
Founded by Eric and Roxie Yonkey  
1994-2001

**Nor'West Newspapers**  
Haynes Publishing Company

## berry's world

