

Subject: Notes for democracy now

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Amy Goodman: Democracy Now

I voted for Kucinich because I happen to like him. Keeping him in the game helps us get the progressive message out. But it is also true that we soon need to support the candidate who can best unseat Mr. Bush, and I am open to the possibilities of whom that might be.

Americans, from what I have seen on the road, want a comic book

hero to lead us through these dangerous times. Kerry fits that bill (a war hero), and I think Dean fits the bill (he's clearly a fighter). Clark may fit the bill, at least on paper. The election of Arnold Schwarzenegger is a good example of how Americans are looking for a strong hero to lead them—even if the character is a fiction, as most political characters are anyway. Many people may not distinguish between real life and fantasy.

We ran into a male

African-American college student in Philadelphia who said, if he could really have his choice of candidates for president, it would be Schwarzenegger. "Yeah!" he said, "the Terminator!" As if that comic book hero is just the fellow to save us from the terrorist threat.

A fellow in a West Virginia Biscuit World said he might not support Bush again because of the Iraq mess, and that he was interested in Kerry. He said they are similar: both men of moral strength, plus Kerry is a vet, he

said.

For many people, the election is not about issues: it is about character. Of course the issue people will be more likely to vote. But the comic book hero factor is very large in a politically dumbed-down society fed by junk news.

The Stakes:

The global environment, the American economy, our capacity to care for our own people, and

our freedoms under our Constitution cannot easily endure another four years of the Bush junta. All the world knows this and is cheering on those who are working hard in the three parties to return America to a provider of good and sensible leadership in the world. We have been quite imperfect in that and had a long way to go even before Mr. Bush arrived. But we are as resolute in our intentions as any group of humans have ever been (including many Republicans I have met on my travels), and we will not rest

until we see an America we can be proud of—an America that is worth the sacrifices of its heros (not only its soldiers, but its MLKs and social workers and teachers and nurses and political reformers...)

Voter Registration:

Voter registration efforts often fall short because there is not the second arm twist to get people to actually vote on election day. We are trying to get around that by setting up working women as

registrars of their peers in their workplaces. They will be there for that second armtwisting. And we are working with

African-American pastors to remind their congregations that they have extraordinary power, if they will all register and vote. The pastors will be there on the Sunday before election day to twist again—first to register, second to vote.

We are making it easy to register online at GrannyD.com and at Working Women Vote.org. It is

the voter registration engine
provided by Working Assets.

Future:

I will return to St. Petersburg,
Florida on Monday^{Feb 5}. I will walk
across that city and then Tampa
next week to take over the jobs of
working women long enough for
them to register to vote. I am
doing it to inspire other retired
women to get a stack of
registration forms and visit the
stores and offices in their towns
and make sure the working

women have that personal invitation to be involved as voters.

After the Election:

Win or lose, we all have our work cut out for us after the November election. Even if a democrat is elected, we have our mountains, water, air, global environment to save, and it won't be easy. It wasn't easy under Clinton, you know.

We have to get big money out of our politics, and that isn't easy.

Even in places where the people have made a successful effort to reduce the influence of big money, like Arizona --with their Clean Elections act that provides advertising funds to candidates who swear off the use^{OF} money from other sources, --even there, there is much work to do. Big business interests are now attacking that good Arizona law, and we are having to mobilize an aggressive defense. If Arizonans are listening who want to help, I urge you to click on the scorpion on my web page, Granny D.com. We need

your help.

We also need help in Iowa, West Virginia, North Carolina, Florida, and many other states where clean elections reforms are in the works. North Carolina reformers call it Voter Owned Elections, which I think has a better ring than Public Financing of Elections.

We need to take the energy of the presidential campaigns and fold them into a new progressive society that can energize all three parties with sensible leadership.

We need to adopt a common definition of the “responsible community,” as it relates to our Bill of Rights liberties, our environment and our obligations to each other, and our relationship to the communities of the larger world, and we need to use the techniques being perfected by organizations like the Bill of Rights Defense Committee to move town councils and state legislatures into a new ethical framework. Ultimately, we need to take down the Wal-Marts and build up the Main Streets, tear

down the coal-fired electric plants

and set up the solar cells
~~and set up the solar cells~~ *plants*
and set up the solar cells. We need
to stop being the people who live
in the plantation house, benefitting
from the sweat of the world we
dominate by force. This struggle is
the struggle for the planet, and one
presidential election, win or lose,
is a small event in this struggle.