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## St. Mary's Students Speak Out

By Toby Wendtland

With just weeks to go before the historic presidential election on November fourth, the Lamorinda Weekly informally polled a group of Saint Mary's students to help gauge the overall political climate on campus. The students of Saint Mary's College come from as near as the Lamorinda area to all over the country and were asked to comment on and identify local, state and national issues that affected how they were voting in the upcoming election.

Addressing one of the most important issues in the upcoming election for the town of Moraga are the two open space initiatives, Measures J and K. While the majority of students polled are not registered to vote locally, they nevertheless had strong opinions about these initiatives and how they would affect Moraga.

Junior Scott Maurer believes that the open space regulations should be toned down to allow more development. He tells us, "I honestly think there should be more people here, not city big, but more identity comes with more people." He also added that with more development, "I'd be more apt to stay in northern California instead of heading back down to Los Angeles."

Other students, such as senior Doug Milliman, believe, "There has to be a balance between expansion and keeping a mindful watch on their impact on the community." Even though graduate student Skye Price is registered to vote elsewhere, she says, "To be a real global citizen I'd be interested in [MOSO], even though it's not where I live."

Because many of the students surveyed were registered to vote in other parts of California, many of them listed state and national issues as what mattered most to them in the election. While none of the students were familiar with all of California's twelve propositions on this year's ballot, many, like senior Nakita Thomas, were familiar with a few.

Thomas says that she will be voting for Proposition 2 (standards for confining farms animals) and against Proposition 8 (eliminates right of same sex couples to marry). Several students polled said they were still waiting to do research on the propositions or else they would decide in the voting booth. Graduate student Kevin O'Neill says that he will carefully review the propositions and how they affect California and the politics of the Bay area. He says, "I'd rather have no law than some bad law that we have to deal with down the road."

Another common concern among Saint Mary's students is the war in Iraq. Junior Brian Long points out that, "The president we elect will be a wartime president." Long is planning to vote for John McCain because, "McCain has the demeanor and the resilience to fight the agents and the spread of [terrorism]." Milliman, a former staff sergeant with the Air Force, is concerned with the negative spin put on the war by the media. He says of those who are watching the media coverage, "They don't see the impact and the benefits of the war for those in Iraq, the freedoms that women have there now." Graduate student Eric Ha, who was born in South Korea and became an American Citizen this September 11th, says, "It's not easy to finish the war at this point, there are still many political issues that exist in Iraq."

The worsening economy is another issue that has students concerned and Ha lists the economy as his greatest concern. He says that, "The most important issue for me is the economic problem because it affects everything in this country and it will affect my career in the future." Graduate student Erin McCabe voiced a



Brian Long



Doug Milliman



Eric Ha



Erin McCabe



Kevin O'Neill



Nakita Thomas



Scott Maurer

common opinion in that she's worried, "We're going to end up in a depression-like situation."

Students on the Saint Mary's campus were also divided as to who, McCain or Barack Obama, would be able to lead America out of the current economic crisis. Maurer, who supported the economic bailout plan, wants to see McCain implement a positive national savings rate and not, "reenact the policies of Roosevelt." Ha counters those who support McCain by saying, "The economic crisis we are facing now is the result of misleading and wrong decisions by George Bush over the last 8 years." Ha plans to vote for Obama because, "I agree with his idea of change."

The latest (10/7/08) SurveyUSA poll has Obama leading McCain by a margin of 55-39% in the state of California, but the conservative Saint Mary's campus is bucking the statewide trend and McCain and Obama appear to be running even on campus despite California being a traditionally Democratic state.



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