

Wearing My Politics on My Chest

I have always been ready to express my opinions on virtually any topic to anyone willing to talk with me. Politics has been high on the list of discussion points, even with strangers. Until this election year, however, candidate pins went into my collection box rather than on my bosom.

After all, how could I possibly bring myself to the level of those who wear propaganda pins anymore than those who wear souvenir T shirts? Why would I want to detract from my carefully matched designer outfits, purchased at the world's finest outlets, discount stores and bargain basements?

This year pins have won out over my elitism and proclivity to Armani. Compelled by my strong commitment to the Kerry-Edwards team, I begin the day trying to find an appropriate pin. Appropriateness has two dimensions: color match to chosen outfit and political statement to mood. Fortunately, the choices seem almost endless.

My current favorite, if the color complements the pants suit of the day, is my pink pin that says 11/02/04: End of an Error. It expresses my hopes and prayers and in tone and statement is subtle and sophisticated. I get great satisfaction in watching people read, process, smile and then comment.

Second on the list of favorites is a white pin that reads in deep blue One Person One Vote, with an asterisk and in parentheses below in red (May not apply in some states). As a Florida voter, I know only too well what it means to worry about whether or not my ballot will count. Trying to decide between early voting (no line, but machine with no paper trail), absentee voting (paper but easy to lose, or not find until after deadline) or voting on Election Day (long lines, same machine, but many volunteer lawyer election monitors) puts me in the category of the undecided--on process, certainly not vote.

Somewhere lost was the first pin that I started wearing this spring as my dismay with the war in Iraq mounted, a blue background pin with white letters reading "Don't Blame Me, I Voted for Gore". I have replaced it with a blue pin that reads in white letters "BUSH'S WAR", or, on days when blue does not work with my outfit, a white pin with black

lettering that reads “War Starts with W”.

I don't know if fashion consultants have teamed with ad agencies to create the 2004 array of buttons, but I do know that I can find a message and medium for almost all ensembles and moods. My high net-worth friends, who are raising hundreds of thousands to elect Kerry-Edwards, even have a simple rhinestone Kerry 2004 pin that they received as a thank you from Teresa Heinz Kerry. They can go black tie and still communicate their political sentiments.

Maybe the message in this is that those of us who cannot raise big dollars still have an important role to play by wearing our boldly worded pins that can provoke conversations in grocery store lines and at soccer games. I am circulating as widely as I can each day through November 2nd with my views emblazoned on my chest.

Now I am beginning to worry about how I will ornament myself after the election. Hopefully it will not be with a pin that reads “Don't Blame Me; My Kerry Vote Wasn't Counted”.

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