

# PRESIDENCY RESEARCH GROUP NEWSLETTER



Vol. VI, Number 2

Spring 1984

## PRG EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

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## Fall 1984 Issue of the PRG Newsletter

Deadline for submissions is December 1 with probable completion by December 21. All submissions are welcome: substantive research, teaching notes, research aids in form of sharing experiences useful to other researchers.

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Francis E. Rourke  
The Johns Hopkins University

In the Fall Mike Grossman, the Secretary-Treasurer of PRG, and I met with Tom Mann, the Executive Director of the APSA. The purpose of our meeting was to explore the advantages and disadvantages of PRG's becoming an official section within the association. This was a topic we had discussed at our 1983 meeting in Chicago. Tom Mann had hoped to be present for this discussion but had not been able to attend the meeting.

As outlined by Tom, the principal advantages we would derive from the new arrangement would include assistance from the association in collecting dues, maintaining membership lists, and publishing and distributing PRG materials. We would also gain some benefits in room assignments and scheduling times for the panels we convene at annual meetings.

At the time we met, six subfield groups within the association had changed their status from affiliated group (our current situation) to official section. (See pp. 737-738 of the Fall 1983 issue of PS for a list of these groups.) There is therefore, some danger that we might in the future be isolated in our status as an affiliated group.

We plan to discuss this subject at the PRG meeting at the coming convention in Washington. Tom Mann has promised to be there to answer any questions you may have. He is very much in favor of our becoming an official section. You might want to review beforehand the terms and conditions for our acquiring the status of an official section of the APSA, as spelled out on p. 739 of the Fall 1983 issue of PS. Among other things, we are required to have signatures

from 100 of our members as a pre-requisite for becoming an official section, if we decide to go that route.

We are planning to have the PRG Business Meeting on Thursday, August 30 at 5:00 p.m. and the Council Meeting that same evening at 6:30 p.m. These meetings will take place immediately following our first panel which Dom Bonafede will be chairing on "The Media Coverage of the 1984 Campaign."

APSA Panels/Presidency Research Group/1984

1. Media Coverage of the 1984 Campaign (Th. 5:30)

Dom Bonafede, NATIONAL JOURNAL, chair  
Other panelists to be announced.

2. New Directions in Presidential Scholarship (Sat. 3:30)

Michael Nelson, Vanderbilt University, chair  
Paul Light, Georgetown University  
Paul Quirk, Ohio State University  
Stephen Skowronek, University of California, Los Angeles  
Jeffrey Tulis, Princeton University

3. Presidential Transitions (Fri. 3:30)

James P. Pfiffner, California State University, Fullerton, chair  
Carl Brauer, Harvard University, "Historical Patterns in Presidential Transitions"  
James P. Pfiffner, "Presidential Transition: Taking Over the Government"  
Margaret Wyszomirski, Rutgers University, "Roosevelt and Reagan: Cabinet Recruitment and Performance"  
Frederick C. Mosher, University of Virginia, discussant

This panel will be co-listed with the "Executives and Legislatures" section of the regular program.

4. Presidential Libraries and Presidential Studies: Old and New Research Agendas (Fri. 8:45)

Larry Berman, University of California, Davis, chair  
John E. Wickman, Director, Dwight D. Eisenhower Library  
Dan H. Fenn, Jr., Director, John F. Kennedy Library  
Harry Middleton, Director, Lyndon B. Johnson Library

Don W. Wilson, Director, Gerald R. Ford, Library  
(An official of the National Archives and Records Service will also be present to discuss the status of the Nixon and Carter collections.)

This panel will be co-listed with the "Executives and Legislatures" section of the regular program.

5. Economic Policy Making in the White House (Th. 1:30)

Roger B. Porter, Director, Office of Policy Development, The White House,  
chair

Stuart Eizenstat, Director, Domestic Policy Staff (Carter)  
Charles Schultze, Chairman, Council of Economic Advisers (Carter)  
Herbert Stein, Chairman, Council of Economic Advisers (Nixon)

This panel will be co-listed with the "Executives and Legislatures" section of the regular program.

6. Predicting Presidential Performance (Sat. 1:30)

Darrell M. West, Brown University, chair  
James David Barber, Duke University, "Predicting Presidents: Five Keys to the Puzzle"  
Joseph Pika, University of Delaware, "Changing Players but not the Game: The Organizational Presidency"  
Byron Shafer, Russell Sage Foundation, "Presidential Selection and Presidential Performance"  
Steven A. Shull, University of New Orleans, discussant

Call for Papers

FOURTH ANNUAL PRESIDENTIAL CONFERENCE

JOHN F. KENNEDY: THE NEW FRONTIER

An Interdisciplinary Conference in Honor of John F. Kennedy, 35th President of the United States

March 28, 29, 30, 1985

Papers are not to exceed 20 minutes and must be submitted in duplicate. Deadline for completed papers is January 1, 1985. Selected papers will be published.

Conference Director: Paul F. Harper, Chairman, Department of Political Science

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## Presidential Elections: Party Divisiveness and Electoral Support

Danny M. Adkison  
Oklahoma State University

An old axiom of politics states that the party in power is never defeated; it splits into factions and defeats itself. Recent historical examples come to mind: Kennedy's persistence in seeking the Democratic nomination in 1980 certainly did not help President Carter's re-election efforts. His challenge seemed to bring out the darker side of Carter. Not only did Carter initially respond with the uncharacteristic "I'll whip his ass," he continued this "mean streak" approach against Ronald Reagan during the general election campaign. Another example of the axiom was Reagan's challenge to incumbent (though never elected to the presidency) Gerald Ford in 1976. That challenge was so powerful, the major newspapers quote different delegate counts for each candidate with the uncommitted delegates ostensibly holding the deciding votes. In a desperate attempt to secure delegates, Reagan broke precedent and names his vice presidential running mate before the convention convened. As it turned out, this strategy backfired and Ford, though fighting off this challenge, was unsuccessful in the general election. One of the best known historical examples of the axiom is Teddy Roosevelt's challenge to President Taft in 1912.

The odds are slim that divisiveness will affect the Republican Party in 1984. Though some hardcore conservatives persist in expressing their displeasure with Reagan, it is not widespread and its intensity has diminished during this election year. There has been no serious challenge to Reagan's nomination.

The Democratic Party cannot head for the November election with the same expectation of unity. Eight candidates have consistently been highlighted in

the mass media as contenders for the Democratic nomination. As the primary season began, there was a tendency for most of these candidates to focus their criticisms on the frontrunner, Walter Mondale. At the eight man debate which took place at Iowa, Jesse Jackson accused Mondale of making decisions as vice president in which he had a direct financial interest. Mondale denied the charge, but days later Senator Glenn accused Mondale of lying. Mondale has been consistently accused during the campaign, by friend and foe alike, of being too tied to special interest groups.

These examples of party divisiveness raise the question of their possible affects on the ensuing general election. Although the axiom stated at the beginning referred to the party in power, a corollary might be that the party out of power must unite if it is to have any chance of winning. Of course, once nominated, each party's candidate goes to great lengths to give the image of a party solidly united behind his candidacy. Thus, Ford embraced Reagan at the convention in 1976, and Carter got a handshake, though an unenthusiastic one, from Kennedy in 1980.

One way of testing the possible affects of such pre-nomination divisiveness on the ensuing election is to examine the roll call votes at the national convention and the share of popular votes in the general election. This was done for each major party from 1856 to 1980. This period covers the history of the Republican and Democratic parties.

Several facts stand out when examining these roll call votes for the presidential nomination. First, all incumbents seeking the nomination obtained it on the first ballot. This would seem to indicate a lack of divisiveness in the party in power. Second, there has not been a convention go beyond one

