

SINGLE: Potential to change a close race

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licated to make a broad statement about these women," said Ruth Mandel, director of the Eagleton Institute of Politics at Rutgers University in New Jersey. Because of their large numbers, she added, they have "the potential of changing the outcome of an election, particularly in a close race."

Jyoti Bammi, a 28-year-old single Chicagoan, is the sort of voter both campaigns would like to attract. Bammi, who didn't vote four years ago, insists this year will be different.

Bammi said she is interested in politics and has been following the presidential race. Although she is concerned about U.S. foreign policy, she has not yet decided whom to support in November.

"I am concerned about the integrity and truthfulness of the candidates," she said. "I would like to have more details on how they are going to maintain what they are promising in the long run."

Lena Zwarenstejn, a 25-year-old from Washington, D.C., feels similarly. But she has already made up her mind to vote for Kerry. She and her girlfriends, Zwarenstejn said, believe that their reproductive rights are in jeopardy under the Bush administration.

"There is no way I would vote for George Bush," Zwarenstejn said. "I've never seen my friends and even older women so upset with this administration before."

"Single women deeply desire changes," said Page Gardner, project co-director of Women's Voices, Women's Vote, a group devoted to motivating unmarried women to vote this year. "But they feel like politicians never walked in their shoes."

Gardner said one of the most striking findings in focus groups conducted in three demographically diverse states—Missouri, Florida and Washington—was the reaction single women had when they learned that there were so many of them. "A light bulb went off. They got that if they participat-



Photo for the Tribune by Brian Kersey

Undecided voter Jyoti Bammi, 28, says she doesn't "feel any connection" with either President Bush or John Kerry.

ed, they could literally change the course of the nation."

Making the connection

This was the logic that motivated Regina Owens, a divorced Seattle mother, to begin voting recently after a nearly 20-year hiatus. "I really felt like it didn't matter," said Owens, 43, who is an independent. "The corporate honchos, the policymakers . . . I just felt like, well, they go to lunch and talk among themselves and make deals."

When a canvasser from a citizens group came to her door in 2001 and asked Owens to get involved in an effort to stop cuts to food stamps, she said she suddenly understood the connection between voting and her life. "I had always wondered, what can I do to make a difference? I wasn't voting, so that wasn't helping."

Since then, she has become a volunteer with Washington Citizen Action, has personally registered 47 others and is looking forward to voting in her first presidential election in years.

Owens is by no means alone in her efforts. Both major political parties and even non-partisan groups are working to get more single women to the polls. A San Francisco-based non-partisan organization called "1000 Flowers" plans to distribute voter-oriented "beauty kits" at spas and beauty salons across the country. "We wanted to make it fun and playful," said Deborah Moore, a co-organizer

of the group. The kit will contain trendy postcards listing reasons why women should vote this year—"Do you want decent health care? A good education? The right to choose?" Moore said that women also will receive nail files with catchy slogans such as "Don't let this election be a nail biter" and "File your complaint."

Other groups are more partisan. Caryn Schenewerk, president and founder of Women-Against-Bush.org, said the idea of catering to young and single women voters was born over a brunch with her girlfriends, who were "bored with politics that does not appeal to young demographics."

Schenewerk, 26, and her friends have hosted several cocktail parties at trendy bars and beauty salons in Washington, D.C., aimed at getting women's attention. The group's latest invention—panties and boxers with R-rated slogans urging women to vote in November—has been a popular item in their online store, Schenewerk said. "It makes you giggle, but people see the substance behind the witty approach," Schenewerk said. "Once our panties catch their eye, we arm them with information on why they should vote."

Republicans also are trying to attract the female vote, saying they are expecting a close race in which every vote counts. In May, the Bush-Che- ney campaign launched its "W

stands for Women" project, seeking to remind women about the president's incentives to boost women's entrepreneurship, to ensure national security and to guarantee quality education with the No Child Left Behind Act, Scott Stanzel, a spokesman for the Bush campaign, said.

Meanwhile, First Lady Laura Bush is appearing in 30-second ads strategically placed on women-oriented Web sites such as Babytalk.com and Cookinglight.com that cater to the tech-savvy generation.

Appealing to all women

But while Republicans say they are aggressively seeking the women's vote, they, unlike Democrats, make few distinctions between young and old, single and married women.

"We don't try to target one group of women," said Ann Wagner, co-chairman of the Republican National Committee. "We are trying to appeal to all of them."

But the opportunity to capture female voters may be greater for Democrats because women in general are more likely to vote Democratic. In 2000, Democrat Al Gore received 54 percent of the female vote to 43 percent for Bush. Independent candidate Ralph Nader drew 2 percent.

Lisa Rickert, deputy national director of the Women for Kerry coalition, said her team is trying to reach single women by addressing issues of concern to them, and making them realize that their vote could make a difference. If elected, Kerry has promised to expand business and education opportunities for women, to protect women's reproductive rights and to ensure quality health care.

"Women can and will make the difference during this year's election," Rickert said.

But only if they choose to do so, political analysts emphasize.

Bammi, for example, said neither of the presidential candidates has won her over yet.

She received several fundraising letters from the two campaigns, she said, and they were "a big turn-off."

"I have not received enough information on . . . the differences between the two candidates to be able to make a decision," she said. "I don't feel any connection with them."

The Los Angeles Times, a Tribune newspaper, contributed to this report.

Kerry's stand on abortion not clear

By Matea Gold Tribune Newspapers

As the Democratic faithful assembled in Boston on Monday for what is being heralded as a historic show of party unity, abortion-rights advocates have been privately raising concerns with the John F. Kerry campaign that the candidate has been publicly distancing himself from their cause.

Even as those advocates, one of Kerry's most stalwart constituencies, trumpet his steadfast support for legal abortions and access to reproductive health care, they have been fretting that the Massachusetts senator has emphasized his personal opposition to abortion. As a Catholic, Kerry has long maintained that he is against abortion, while consistently backing the right to have one. Since he secured his party's nomination, Kerry has talked about his discomfiture with the procedure.

"I think his campaign has misjudged the degree to which women nationwide really know his record," said Kim Gandy, president of the National Organization for Women. "Many of us have . . . made it clear that we know that his history on this issue is very strong. But if he doesn't make sure that women everywhere understand it, he's taking a huge risk."

The anxiety comes as Kerry has moved to the right in his bid for swing voters and independents. During a trip through the Midwest this month, the senator said that he represents "conservative values."

Until now, the candidate has benefited from the fact that various factions of the Democratic Party have refrained from publicly criticizing him because of their fierce desire to defeat President Bush. In May, when Kerry suggested that he would be open to appointing abortion opponents as judges to lower courts, virtually all abortion-rights advocates were silent. Some of Kerry's supporters are frustrated with his language, and have registered their concerns with the candidate's top advisers.

"He certainly is not going to lose votes among women who know his record," Gandy said. "What is at risk, is the lost devotion. When an individual feels a

'Some people might not understand how strong he is on the issues.'

—Eleanor Smeal

candidate is really speaking to her or him, that person is much more likely to knock on doors, work phones and drag their friends to the polls."

She and others argue that abortion is a powerful issue not only for staunch Democrats, but for single women, a potentially powerful electoral bloc.

Eleanor Smeal, president of the Feminist Majority, said she's afraid that Kerry's recent rhetoric may be confusing those voters. "I get worried that some people might not understand how strong he is on the issues." After Kerry told an Iowa newspaper in early July that he believes life begins at conception, Gloria Feldt, president of Planned Parenthood Federation of America, said she fielded "steaming e-mails from people who were quite distressed."

Feldt said she is convinced that Kerry remains strongly pro-choice. But she said that he needs to tout his record more frequently—and that abortion-rights supporters need to keep prodding both the candidate and his advisers to do so.

Kerry spokeswoman Stephanie Cutter maintained that the senator enjoys broad support in the abortion-rights community, adding that he has made it clear he will keep his religious beliefs separate from his actions as a public official.

"He's obviously committed to protecting a woman's right to chose," she said. "Look at his track record."

Not all abortion-rights advocates have been rankled by Kerry's recent comments.

"I think it's a sign of strong leadership that John Kerry understands the difference between his personal, moral convictions and government policies," Elizabeth Cavendish, the interim president of NARAL Pro-Choice America, said.

Los Angeles Times staff writer Robert Schiff contributed to this report.

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Triathletes manage to juggle work, family and training time

By Alicia Chang Associated Press

ALBANY, N.Y.—Karen Lieb considers herself an "ironwoman," and it would be hard to argue with her.

The triathlete from Saranac Lake, N.Y., is raising three kids, teaching part-time and training for races, including the recent Lake Placid Ironman triathlon that combines swimming, cycling and running.

It's not an easy feat. But Lieb, a 45-year-old four-time Ironman competitor, has company. About a fourth of this year's 2,262 competitors were women. That's more than double the number of women who entered five years ago.

And for those who are mothers and working women, the triathlon is a particular juggling act.

During peak training, which can top 25 hours a week, Lieb saves the bulk of the workout for



AP photo by Jim McKnight

Karen Lieb, a triathlete from Saranac Lake, N.Y., does a short workout in Mirror Lake at Lake Placid, N.Y.

the weekend or days off when she can go on a long bike ride and squeeze in running and swimming.

That way, she gets to put her kids, ages 10, 12 and 16, on the school bus every morning and cook a quick homemade dinner when they get home.

But there's no time for relaxing or frivolity. No TV, no magazines. On days when she falls behind in her training, she moves on.

"It's not like a test that you can make up," she says. "If you miss it, it's over because everyday, there's something else you have to do."

The Ironman was born in 1978 when a group of young Navy SEALs stationed in Hawaii debated who was the fittest of all athletes—swimmers, cyclists or runners.

To test it, they decided to try all three simultaneously. Fifteen athletes competed and the winner was crowned the Ironman.

Today, Ironman competitions are held all over the world.

Lake Placid, site of the 1980 Winter Olympics in New York's Adirondacks Mountains, is the oldest Ironman event in the continental United States. It carries a \$100,000 pro purse and 100 qualifying spots to the Ironman World Championship in Hawaii on Oct. 16.

The course consists of a 2.4-mile swim in Mirror Lake, a 112-mile bike ride and a 26.2-mile

marathon finish, ending at the Olympic Speedskating Oval. Athletes have 17 hours to complete the event.

Heather Fuhr, a 36-year-old Canadian who now lives in San Diego, has won four of the past five years at Lake Placid among women in her age group. Unlike amateur triathletes, Fuhr competes for a living and has the luxury of time.

One of the pitfalls that athletes fall into is training excessively when the key is to be consistent, Fuhr said.

People should be realistic about time constraints and stick to a routine that works with their daily lives, she said.

"If they get in the right training, they can complete the event so that they enjoy it and not get divorced and lose their job for the sake of training," said Fuhr. When Karen Merrill of Kailua, Hawaii, competed in Lake Placid the past two years, she had to balance training with motherhood and her full-time personal trainer job.

Then living in Virginia, Merrill split up her training. She arose before dawn to run. After dinner, she went biking and swimming.

Sometimes she worked out with her two young children, buying a baby jogger and putting a third wheel on her bike so that her son and daughter could tag along.

"You definitely have to be a good multitasker," she said.

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