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Hats off! I'm so pleased to have a vehicle to be kept apprised of local, dynamic women and their businesses and the progress of all. Looking forward to receiving the Maiden Issue!

- Sally B

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A Woman's Irk is Never Done: Presidents And The Women Who Love Them

by *Kimberly Gadette*

"Georgie Porgie, pudding and pie,
Kissed the girls and made them cry..."

Listed in the order of "age before duty," what do Harriet Miers, Margaret Spellings and Karen Hughes have in common?

- a. They grew up in Texas, all graduating from universities in that state;
- b. They love their president with a fervor usually reserved for saints and Elvis;
- c. They have been nominated for jobs that they are not particularly well-suited to do;
- d. All of the above.

(I write for the smartest women in the Northwest—"d" is obviously the answer.)

One can't say that Mr. Bush isn't loyal to those who've made him their reason for living. But shouldn't the task of nominating the right people for the right job take more than pulling names out of Uncle Sam's top hat?

Especially since he has a whole lot of nominatin' to do. Per David Lewis of Princeton University, in a document entitled Policy Brief: Political Appointments and Federal Management Performance, "In 2004, the federal government employed about 3,200 presidential appointees ..." 3,200! With that big of a number, a president could get confused. (I'll bet he thought Cheney also hired a woman when he first heard the name "Libby.")

As one woman to another, you'd think that George Bush nominating women for jobs perched on the highest rungs of the political ladder is a wonderful thing. A telescoping, extension ladder so high that it breaks through the glass ceiling, and all that slop. But here's the problem: By appointing accomplished women to jobs that they are not qualified for, he hurts each candidate in particular, and all of us in general.

Case in point: Harriet Miers. Breaking through the good-ol'-boy barrister barricade in Dallas, she was the first female lawyer hired by the firm of Locke, Liddell & Sapp, eventually becoming its president. After the company's merger with another, she became a co-managing partner to a firm of over 400 lawyers. She was the first woman president of the Dallas Bar Association, and then the State Bar of Texas.

Yet after her formal inquisition by the senate, and her informal roasting by the press, she was reduced to a joke. Many jokes. Virtual choirs of anti-Miers.

Joshua Bolten, whom Miers succeeded as Deputy White House Chief of Staff, was asked about her. He came up with, "She is a very good bowler. For someone her size, she actually gets a lot of action out of the pins." Lawmakers and staff stated that during her first courtesy calls, she looked "more like a prom date next to the confident Senators." Republican senators found her notable mostly for "banal

chatter."

Once her household name-fame dissipates, even if she could shrink herself down to nothing more than a mere whisper in the President's ear, it won't matter. "Harriet Miers" now out-Borks Bork as a euphemism meaning "a disastrous choice for the Supreme Court, quickly dismissed." And all because Georgie Porgie nominated his friend.

"Harriet." Rhymes with "Iscariot." But in this case, the Judas was her boss.

Our current Secretary of Education, one of many alums from the Texas Bush campaign trail, is the aptly-named Margaret Spellings. She was Bush's political director for his gubernatorial campaign of 1994, then his senior advisor until 2000. Given George's success, one would assume her political savvy would be beyond reproach.

Yet within virtual seconds of her assuming office last January, she sent a bullet straight into the heart of PBS, pulling funding from an episode of an exemplary children's show, starring one earnest rabbit entitled "Postcards from Buster." If the woman were a more politically-sensitive animal (like Buster himself), she might have acted in a manner that united instead of further divided different viewpoints. Though she's committed to George's educational platform (now there's an oxymoron!), and one of the principal architects of No Child Left Behind, one assumes from all that program's detractors that NCLB won't be getting straight A's anytime soon. And neither will she. Smart woman ... but the wrong choice for this job.

Our third contestant, Karen Hughes, also hails from Texas. A brilliant PR woman, orchestrator of the '04 Republican National Convention and George's campaign manager, she was nominated and confirmed earlier this year as an ambassador, the Undersecretary of State for Public Diplomacy. Great. A woman who knows her way around the panhandle like nobody's business is now expected to chat it up with the Muslim community on the other side of the world in a neighborly, "just us folks" kinda way. On her first official visit to the Middle East, an Egyptian opposition leader asked her why the President cited the name "God" so frequently in his speeches. She stated that "one nation under God" is in the U.S. Constitution. The Egyptian then said, "well, never mind."

Karen Hughes, there is no mention of God in the U.S. Constitution. I could go on, but, like that Egyptian leader ... well, never mind.

Bush chose these women and they accepted. And now they have to contend with the harsh ridicule that sadly originated from their loyalty to this man. Even more than mere ridicule, it seems that female appointees are subject to a special stoning, almost a howling glee from their male critics. (But that's a whole other "irk.")

Go ahead and nominate your loyal women, George. But for God's sake, stop humiliating them in the process. They deserve better. They deserve jobs that answer to their talents.

These women think 24/7 about how best to serve you. Perhaps you might want to give them a little more thought before passing out jobs as if they were mints in a bowl by the door of an Italian restaurant.

And if this is too difficult a task, then appoint some accomplished woman to take care of it for you. You've got millions to choose from.