

Rudy Gets Ready To Pounce

Former Mayor Rudy Giuliani, who's been traveling all over the country helping Republicans and lining up allies for a possible run for president in 2008, finally took the first definitive step toward that goal by setting up the Rudy Giuliani Presidential Exploratory Committee.



The action allows Giuliani, hero of 9/11 to both the city and the country, to raise funds for what could be the most climactic pairings of 2008: Giuliani against U.S. Senator John McCain of Arizona in the Republican Party primary and then probably U.S. Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton against the GOP primary winner in the Giuliani-McCain matchup.

McCain, who, like Giuliani, has been building support for a possible presidential run, said last

Sunday he might soon be setting up his own exploratory committee.

Clinton has not taken that step either, but without any declaration of her presidential intentions, she made the clearest statement possible on Election Day when she ran up near record results in her successful re-election bid. Following the successful foray, she was on the road again a few days later for a victory lap.

Giuliani, 62, has been seen by many as presidential timber since he became a hero to the nation on Sept. 11, 2001 as he rallied New Yorkers out of the smoke and ashes of the World Trade Center after the terrorist attacks.

Since that day, he has been welcomed enthusiastically by audiences on both sides of the political aisle, despite some serious policy differences with the conservative wing of the Republican Party.

His stances as pro-gay and abortion rights will be a hard sell, if any sell at all, with many GOP'ers. But this will be balanced by his tremendous popularity with the liberal wing.

Giuliani has been assiduously

wooing Republican party organizations and candidates all over the country, bringing out large crowds and garnering support. In addition, the icing he puts on the cake in the form of financial backing for these candidates cannot be ignored. His political action committee, Solutions America, has raised more than \$2 million in the past year, about half of which was doled out to candidates.

McCain, who many consider the frontrunner in the not-too-distant presidential contest, like Giuliani has also made the rounds of early primary states, making contributions here and there. He doesn't have the political baggage Giuliani carries around with him.

He has disagreed with President George W. Bush often enough to show his independence, especially on issues where his status as a prisoner of war in Vietnam resonates. But he's also shown his solid Republican credentials by standing with the president on many occasions.

Giuliani vs. Clinton, meanwhile, would be a contest worth watching. Their standout popularities, their ability to raise huge

amounts of money and their ability to give and take would make a meeting between them not only a down-to-the-wire brawl in the home state they share, but also anywhere else in the country.

Any confrontation, if it develops, would still be over a year away, but on the way to the starting gate, their give-and-take will dominate news coverage every step of the way.

OTHER CANDIDATES: In our excitement over this possible matchup, we've glossed over the supporting cast of hopefuls in either party who have expressed their intention of seeking the presidency.

The most prominent possibilities among the Republicans are New York's soon-to-be ex-Governor George Pataki and Massachusetts' outgoing Governor Mitt Romney.

Among Clinton's possible primary challengers are U.S. Senator John Kerry and his 2004 partner, vice presidential candidate John Edwards. More recently, freshman U.S. Senator Barack Obama has thrust himself into the picture. Another Dem longshot is another

governor, Tom Vilsack of Iowa.

ANOTHER GIULIANI IN WINGS: Andrew Giuliani was only 7 when he stole the scene at his dad's mayoral inauguration in 1994. Now 20 and a promising amateur golfer, the younger Giuliani was named Player of the Year by the Metropolitan Golf Association (MGA) which represents about 500 golf clubs in New York, New Jersey and Connecticut.

A sophomore at Duke University, Giuliani won the award for finishing in or near the top 10 in every MGA event he entered this year.

ELIOT READS OUR MINDS: As a follow-up to Governor-elect Eliot Spitzer's dazzling election achievement last week, we had planned to advise him in this space today not to let those impressive election stats go to his head because he would probably face a comeuppance when he got to Albany and had to deal with the powers-that-be in the legislature—Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver and Senate Majority Leader Joseph Bruno.

Lucky for me, I read this morning's *New York Post* and saw a story saying Spitzer had met with the Terrible Two and had put them on notice that if they stand in the way of his planned reforms after he gets sworn in, he will sic the public on them.

Spitzer told Silver and Bruno he was ready to work cooperatively with them, but declared, "The public will not tolerate stagnation...bickering" from the powerful legislative leaders.

Bottom line, said Spitzer, "I'm ready to rally the public [as] the public was rallied this past Tuesday [Election Day]."

This is encouraging. Last spring, Mayor Bloomberg started a campaign to unseat senate Republicans because of Bruno's foot-dragging on the schools funding court decision favoring New York City, but which Pataki had refused to sign off on. Bruno supported Pataki.

At a point where Bloomberg was beginning to be a serious threat, Bruno hustled to New York City, Bloomberg negotiated with the Majority Leader and the result was about \$11 billion in the budget when it was written.

That was an impressive lesson and we're sure Spitzer has the stomach for a tough fight and will use his status as lawman-turned-governor to move his program. This will be very interesting.

Padavan Celebrates Victory After Upbeat Campaign



State Senator Frank Padavan and campaign volunteers review results on election night at campaign headquarters.

State Senator Frank Padavan addresses the crowd of volunteers, supporters and family during the election night party.

television or radio commercials. I ran on my record and that was all I needed to prove to the people of this district that I earned the right to continue to represent them in Albany.

"This re-election would not have been possible without the many hundreds of volunteers who helped on the campaign during the proceeding months right through Tuesday. Their help ensured our victory and I continue to send them my most heartfelt thanks."

New York State Senator Frank Padavan (R-C, Bellerose) announced a resounding victory in the election for the Eleventh District Senate seat. Padavan, who has served the people of Queens for 34 years, was both excited and touched by the overwhelming response to his record of constituent service and hard work for his district and in Albany.

"I work hard as your state senator and it has always been my hope that I have served the people well. I think that the result of this election proves that the people of Queens are happy with the work I do for them. I'm excited to continue my record of dedicated service and results and look forward, with eagerness, to beginning the next legislative session," Padavan commented.

Padavan was re-elected to the seat with more than 60 percent of the votes going in his favor. "I think we've also proven that campaigns don't have to be negative to be won," he said. "My campaign didn't send out one piece of negative mail, tel-

