No matter how you cut the cards, the presidential election was a statistical dead heat nationwide. So the ballot problems in Florida are but a microcosm of what has occurred in many other states. The real question becomes what can Americans expect from either candidate once he takes office. The Congress is split neatly down the middle, with only a few more Republicans than Democrats. What can either candidate hope to accomplish without the precious mandate the pundits so often refer to? The prevailing thought is that neither candidate will have any real power to get anything done for the next four years. This thinking reduces the presidency to “appearances only” status, which I think it is remarkably naive.

The American presidency is arguably the most powerful position in the world. To diminish its significance based on the fumblings of the electoral system in just a few states is to undermine our own global esteem. It infuriates me that the pundits are influencing public opinion to this narrow, even shallow, focus. Americans should take this situation deadly seriously, allow the constitutional process to work itself through, and accept the conclusion, whatever it is, in a way that continues to uphold the dignity and importance of the office, and that reflects this planet’s best efforts towards a true republic, where individual votes do actually matter.

Is The Davenport School Board Closing Schools For Profit?

The Davenport School Board (DSB) is at it again. They have dollar signs in their eyes. They are considering closing Johnson School, mere blocks away from the corner where HyVee proposed to locate a new store, but abandoned the site after sustained public outrage over condemning an elderly woman’s home, who did not want to sell. Interestingly, HyVee withdrew its request for rezoning of the chosen property on the same day that the DSB announced their intentions to close both Johnson and Grant Schools. Could it be that HyVee saw an opportunity to purchase the required acreage within the same targeted neighborhood that would only involve the consent of one seller—the Davenport School Board? Never mind the hundreds of families that will be dramatically affected if such a purchase should occur. And forget about the hundreds of kids who will be displaced, transferred to other schools outside their neighborhoods—all for a grocery store that will locate less than a mile from an existing grocery.

My advice, especially after watching the DSB behave with such deceit relative to the Sugar Bowl—watch your backs. Vigilantly scrutinize the budgets and financial data they offer to justify Johnson School’s closing. Investigate fully their means and methodology. Don’t be placated and don’t be lulled into a false sense of security. Demand all the relevant documentation—it is public information—and make sure you get it. Don’t assume you have it all just because you asked. Stay on it. Don’t let up for even a minute. Form a neighborhood team and assess individual strengths and apply them to this effort. Keep in touch with the media to let them know your findings. Involve your aldermen and mayor, and your state legislators because the DSB interprets the law to its advantage wherever possible, regardless of the public’s wishes. Therefore, it is important to keep your lawmakers informed. Write letters to the editor (we will accept and print them here at the Reader), and be sure and include your name, address and phone number (actual street addresses and phone numbers will not be published). These actions are your only hope if the DSB has made up their mind to close the schools.

The “Digital Divide” Threatens Our Economic Survival

In reference to this week’s article on cyber-voting (page five), the “digital divide” is a serious concern in this country. Last weekend, I heard a program on Chicago’s Talk Radio Station (WLS FM 89.9) with Tony Brown, an African-American conservative, who was discussing the significance of the digital divide to the future of America. Without equal access to information via computers, the Internet, and the myriad of cyber opportunities in education, business, and programs, the digital divide threatens the very economic livelihood of African-Americans and Hispanics in our culture. We cannot allow this divide to continue if we expect our country to progress into the next millennium. Access must be universal if we are to survive. To that end, I am suggesting that Microsoft’s Bill Gates, with his considerable resources, make the elimination of the digital divide his fiduciary mission to Americans. After all, America, if not the rest of the world, fully embraced Microsoft’s products and services and made Gates the success he is. What better way to give back to the society that economically supported him than use Microsoft’s technology and economical clout, as well as Gates’ own financial resources and political influence, to make sure that most, if not all, American kids have computers in their homes, schools and libraries? Gates’ wealth is obscene given the level of poverty that creates the lack of access to Microsoft’s very products and services within his native land. I am sure that the public sector, as well as the private, would support this mission and aid Gates’ effort to eliminate the digital divide. While I am not sure how Mr. Gates would accomplish such a noble endeavor, I am confident that he is the man for the job.