

Partly Cloudy

High in low to mid 70s. Low in low to mid 60s. NW winds 10-15 mph. Map, data 2-A.

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Florida's Best Newspaper

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20 CENTS A COPY

Rally 'round the candidates; it's another election year

Not that I'm particularly slow, but it just dawned on me that this is an election year.

People of normal intelligence can usually remember that years divisible by two are general election years and years divisible by four are presidential election years, but long division never was my strong point, and I had to rely on a source that is as dependable, if not as accessible.

IT TOOK A chance meeting with **Miller Newton** and his biannual announcement that he is "definitely not running" for Congress this year.

(That announcement opened the 1972, 1974 and 1976 political seasons — two of which featured Newton candidacies.)

So, it's really here.

Reporters face elections years with mixed emotions.

We will:

- ✓ Get slapped on the back and hugged a lot.
- ✓ Be invited to the homes of people who can't remember our names in years that end with odd numbers.
- ✓ Be deluged with anonymous telephone calls informing us which candidates are hanging their signs in illegal locations or are using signs and literature that do not meet the requirements of election laws.

✓ Hear glowing public tributes to our political astuteness and downright cuteness (from candidates our papers endorse).

✓ Hear our patriotism, loyalty, intelligence, ancestry and sexual preferences called into doubt (by candidates our papers do not endorse).

I WILL SPEND a lot of time in restaurants and cocktail lounges turning down free food and drinks (with a sob in my throat and the prospect of immediate unemployment on my mind should I accept).

Those of us wise in the ways of Pasco politics will wear rain gear to rallies of candidates who promise "good, hard, clean" campaigning. Those of us who are not will get spattered with mud when the slinging starts.

Those of us who deal regularly with political news releases and cover campaign speeches have already stopped by the corner grocery for a bag of ice cream salt. (It comes in large grains, and you need at least one of those per paragraph.)

At least three civic organizations will sponsor "candidate nights" where candidates will be invited to debate the issues. New reporters will come armed with cameras, pencils and pads. Old hands will bring shovels.

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<http://news.google.com/newspapers?id=hnFQAAAAIBAJ&sjid=yVkDAAAAIBAJ&pg=2240,3412114&dq=miller-newton+election&hl=en>