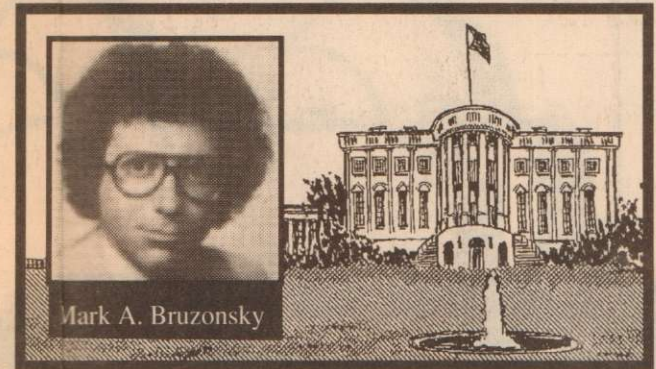


# PEROT MANIA

From



## Washington

JUST a year ago, while President Bush still glowed in his militaristic glory having decisively crushed a small Mid-east power, who would have thought the political situation today would be as it has turned out to be?

Who could have then thought that a funny-talking funny-looking business-tycoon from Texas would emerge as a kind of bigger-than-life Boris Yeltsin-type personality in American politics?

Who could have then thought that such a Rightwing billionaire would become a kind of cult leader for so many diverse Americans defecting from both major parties in desperate hopes of revitalising and salvaging their visions of what America should be?

Who could have imagined just a year ago that President George Bush would have sunk to such a tactically unheard of low level in public opinion polls; or that in such a vulnerable situation Bush's Democratic challenger would be having a hard time being taken seriously because of a challenge coming not even from a third party but rather from a self-proclaimed "independent"?

Even more startling ... who would have thought just a couple of months ago when Bill Clinton was himself viewed as something of a white knight ... that many of Hollywood's big stars would be seriously contemplating hopping aboard the Perot Express; or that the major media would begin discussing the serious possibility that the US won't know who its new president will be until January of 1993, rather than November of 1992?

For it will be January of next year when the House of Representatives, the newly elected House of Representatives by the way, will convene.

And if, as seems increasingly possible, none of the three major candidates manage to get a majority of the Electoral College Votes in the aftermath of the November election, it's the House on Capitol Hill that will be choosing America's next president.

This is a scenario that hasn't been contemplated in modern American history. True it did happen once before, long ago in the early 19th century when European empires ruled and the Pony Express delivered the mail.

Just imagine for a moment a

## AND LOOMING ... CONSTITUTIONAL CONUNDRUM ...

situation in which Perot garners a plurality of the Popular Vote yet neither Bush, Clinton nor Perot has sufficient Electoral Votes to be declared president. At the moment, according to many recent polls, such a possibility has suddenly become a very real one.

For those needing a bit of refresher on the more obscure procedures laid down by the US constitution, each state has a specific number of Electoral Votes based on its population, and whoever gets the highest vote in that state gets *all* of that state's Electoral Votes. This sets up a situation, of course, where it's quite possible for a candidate to get the largest number of Popular Votes from all around the country yet for the other candidate, in a two-person race, to get the majority of Electoral Votes depending on the state by state voting patterns.

In such a situation, the candidate that won the national

Popular Vote would *not* become president as the constitution awards the job to the candidate with the majority of the 538 Electoral Votes. This has happened before as well, but not in modern times with radio and TV instantaneously interacting with the populace.

In the kind of three-person race that is shaping up at this moment it's quite possible none of the candidates will get either a majority of the popular vote or of the Electoral Vote.

In such a situation the presidential race is thrown into the new House of Representatives, the vice presidential selection into the Senate.

Now just imagine the confusion and bitterness if a Democrat majority in the House decided to elect a Bill Clinton president even if one of the other candidates had actually got more Popular Votes?

Or imagine something else. Since the voting in the House of Representatives would *not*

be based upon the population of each state, but rather an equal vote for each state regardless of geographic or demographic size, it's theoretically possible for congressman representing a majority of 26 of the least populous states having just 16 percent of the people of the US to select the next American president.

Now that's the 12th Amendment to the US constitution for you!

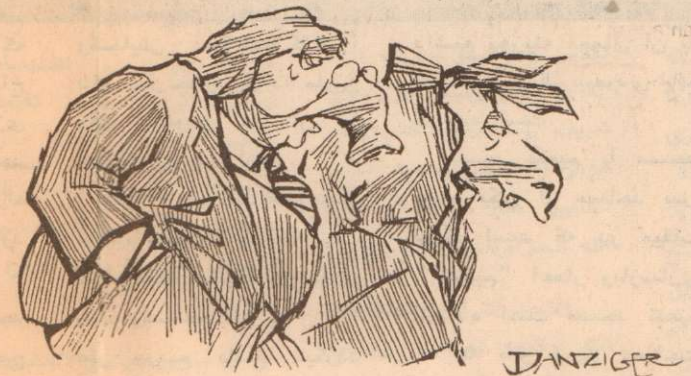
But what's going on right now in American politics is bigger than just the 1992 candidacy of Ross Perot and speculation about what might happen in 1993 on Capitol Hill if it comes to that.

America is witnessing some basic changes in how its democracy functions in a new age of Cable TV, C-Span, CNN, and a general breakdown in institutional authority.

More about all this Perotmania and political evolution in another column soon.



SO I SAID, "PARROT?  
I'M AN ELEPHANT.  
WHAT THE HECK DO I  
CARE ABOUT SOME  
PARROT?"



## Frailty finds strong voice

By Elizabeth Ross

THIS year women candidates across the United States are taking advantage of new political opportunities and more are running for public office than ever before, say women's advocacy groups and political observers.

Approximately 120 women candidates have declared or are seriously considering declaring candidacies for the House of Representatives this year while

recorder of deeds in Cook County, Illinois.

"Her victory sheds a new light on some of the Senate races," says Ms. Danowitz. "That victory has so turned the tables and changed the traditional benchmarks of how we judge the campaigns."

Three other key Senate races with women candidates which will be closely watched are in New York and California.

In New York, Democrat