

BIPARTISAN COUPLES FIND HAPPINESS

By Jeremy Jacobs

Despite the common conception of an increasingly polarized country, some Democrats and Republicans are finding happiness romantically.

This comes as no surprise to Keith Miller, a D.C.-based couples psychotherapist, who says all couples are "bipartisan" couples, regardless of their political party.

"Even couples that are both Democrats or both Republicans have to realize that they are two very different people that have issues they will have to get over," Miller says.

Miller claims that while politics "may be a lightning rod" for disagreement, "It really comes down to deeper issues." Miller contends that in order for couples to be successful, they must engage in a true dialogue, but not the dialogue politicians claim they are a part of.

"Dialogue is different from normal talking. Politicians say they like dialogue but they really don't. Dialogue is really more about listening than anything else," Miller said.

Southern Methodist University law students David Gail and Sara Frankfurt seem to be a bipartisan couple that understands Miller's philosophy, despite their devotion to opposing political parties. David was the deputy field director of Martin Frost's 2004 campaign that sought to unseat Republican Rep. Pete Sessions in Texas's 32nd district. He is currently fundraising for Sen. Barack Obama's (D-Ill.) presidential campaign.

In college, Sara interned at the White House before working for current White House Chief of Staff Josh Bolten and Deputy Chief of Staff Joel Kaplan for two years when they were director and deputy director, respectfully, of the White House budget office.

When Sara and David first met in Dallas, their political affiliations arose quickly. David had, coincidentally, recently contacted Bolten about speaking at Princeton, where they both attended college. Bolten had even given David a tour of the White House the following year.

Upon meeting David, Sara said she had

Sara "approaches issues and problems in a different way but always wants the best," David says.

worked for the budget director. David quickly deduced her political affiliation and "made it clear very quickly that she was wrong about everything," he said.

David described his work on the Frost campaign to Sara, explaining that he was essentially in charge of distributing lawn signs. Sara, not one to relent, "quickly told him my family had a Pete Sessions sign on their front lawn."

The two come from politically diverse families. Sara's parents "have voted Republican for as long as I can remember." But David argues that they share a socially liberal ideology and is convinced he will persuade Sara's mother to vote for the Democratic presidential candidate in '08, whether it is Obama or not.

David's family, on the other hand, is completely heterogeneous in ideology. David's father and younger brother are



COURTESY OF DAVID GAIL

David, left of center, and Sara, right of center

Republicans, while he and his mother are Democrats.

"Sara and my dad think very similarly politically," David said. "When I introduced Sara to my dad he was very excited about her political beliefs. He said, 'I knew you had good taste but I didn't know it was this good.'"

Sara knows she is in David's father's good graces. "His dad likes me more than him," she joked, and also noted that her parents love David.

With a couple as politically minded as David and Sara, political discussions and disputes frequently arise. "It's a common phenomenon," Sara noted. David, in particular, tends to digress into verbose diatribes on candidates and issues, as he did almost immediately after he picked up the phone for this interview. Sara has learned how to cope with David's garrulous partisanship.

"I try to tune him out when he gets like this," she quipped.

But the couple has come to accept and enjoy their differences, political and otherwise, much as Miller prescribes. While they have had some ground rules (for example, no one can talk during the Sunday shows), Sara and David have found they have more in common than their political parties would like them to believe.

"I think we have more similarities than differences. I think he is just left of center and I am just right. We agree on a lot of issues," Sara said.

Despite not liking the candidate, Sara also supports David's work on the Obama campaign — a recognition, Miller would contend, that she understands their deep-seated differences and has come to accept David for who he is.

"I'm very excited for him. He probably couldn't have a better experience than working on a presidential campaign. I don't particularly like the candidate, but I'm excited for him nevertheless," she said.

David has also come to appreciate how Sara embraces problems and issues differently than he does — Miller's key to a successful relationship.

"Republicans just have a different worldview," David said. "She approaches issues and problems in a different way but always wants the best. I enjoy seeing the way she approaches things."