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**In Political Satire We Trust**  
**By: Amy Orndorff**

You have watched "Saturday Night Live" and you tune in to Comedy Central every night for "The Daily Show" and "The Colbert Report." But when it comes to satire, you haven't seen the real thing until you have been to the Capitol Steps. And with the election only four days away, why not consider one more comedic source before choosing your candidate?

The Capitol Steps theater troupe has been around since 1981, when Hill staffers were looking for a way to liven up their holiday office party. They decided to rewrite popular songs to make fun of politicians, and, much to the surprise of co-founder Elaina Newport, "nobody told us to stop." Soon the group was invited to parties and began making a name for itself because of its willingness to lampoon people on both sides of the aisle.

Years later the group, which has grown from seven performers to 25, puts on 700 shows annually across the country. Their regular gig is a 90-minute show Friday and Saturday nights at 7:30 at the 600-seat Ronald Reagan Building and International Trade Center Amphitheater.

The show is constantly changing to keep up with the latest headlines, but unlike "SNL" and "The Daily Show," the actors and actresses in this show *sing* their satire. The show features songs that would make Weird Al Yankovic proud.

Newport writes the show with Mark Eaton. They try to plan ahead, but with the unpredictable nature of politics, that can be difficult. During the 2000 election the group worked up two shows planned for after the election. When there was no clear winner, the group came up with a song about chads.

This summer, the group worked on songs about possible Republican vice presidential nominees. But the choice of Alaska Gov. Sarah Palin caught the troupe off guard.

"We had to Google her just like everyone else," Newport said.

Unlike "SNL" and "The Daily Show," the group tends to draw an older crowd. One reason might be its choice of songs. At a recent show, songs included show tunes ("Obama Mia") and music by the Beatles, John Denver and even "Monster Mash" -- renamed "Monster Cash" -- about the bailout.

The material, however, is fresh and bipartisan. As Newport says, "We make fun of everybody."