Sincere Idiot, Persistent Ass, Incompetent President

By Marty Kaplan

02/16/2007 02:05 pm ET | Updated May 25, 2011

“Please tell me what one word best describes your impression of George W. Bush. Tell me just the ONE best word that describes him.”

That question - asked periodically by the Pew Research Center for the People and the Press [pdf] - is always a polling goldmine. The newest results, just out, do not disappoint.

Incompetent comes in first, just as it topped the list in March 2006. But a year ago, Good held the number two spot; this time, it's Arrogant.

In February and May 2004, and February 2005, the top two were positive: Honest and Fair, or Honest and Good. But by July 2005, Incompetent had dislodged Good, and today, you have to go down to third and fourth place to find an upbeat adjective.

In previous polls, Christian always made the list, but this time, not one of the 740 respondents offered the word.

Idiot has gone up steadily through the years, while Ass has held its own.

Stubborn and Steadfast are neck and neck.

Dumb was not offered this year, but if you add the Ignorants and the Idiots to the Stupids and the Confuseds, you’re approaching ten times the Greats.

Unaccountably, Sucks, which made a strong showing two years ago, has fallen off the list.

Brave, Tough, Honorable, Consistent and Confident have vanished, but Trying is a new starter.

As many people answered Dishonest as said President, but that doesn’t count the people saying Liar.

I wonder whether Pew has considered going into the refrigerator magnet poetry business.

Follow Marty Kaplan on Twitter: www.twitter.com/martykaplan