

'Maverick John' pulls another surprise

It's not a household name. Well, it wasn't until last Friday. But it is now. Palin, as in Sarah Palin. Before Sen. John McCain named her his vice presidential pick, few people had ever heard of her, unless, of course, they were residents of Alaska, where she is in her second year as governor.

Her selection caught everybody by surprise. Reports indicate a stormy session was held by McCain's closest advisers over his insistence to name Sen. Joe Lieberman as his running mate. Lieberman is a Democrat-turned-Independent. Those same reports said it was nothing short of a knockdown, drag out and McCain was told such a selection would cause a massive exit of delegates from the convention.

McCain, in a effort to display unity at the convention, backed down and surprisingly named Gov. Sarah Palin as his running mate. More head scratching among party leaders.

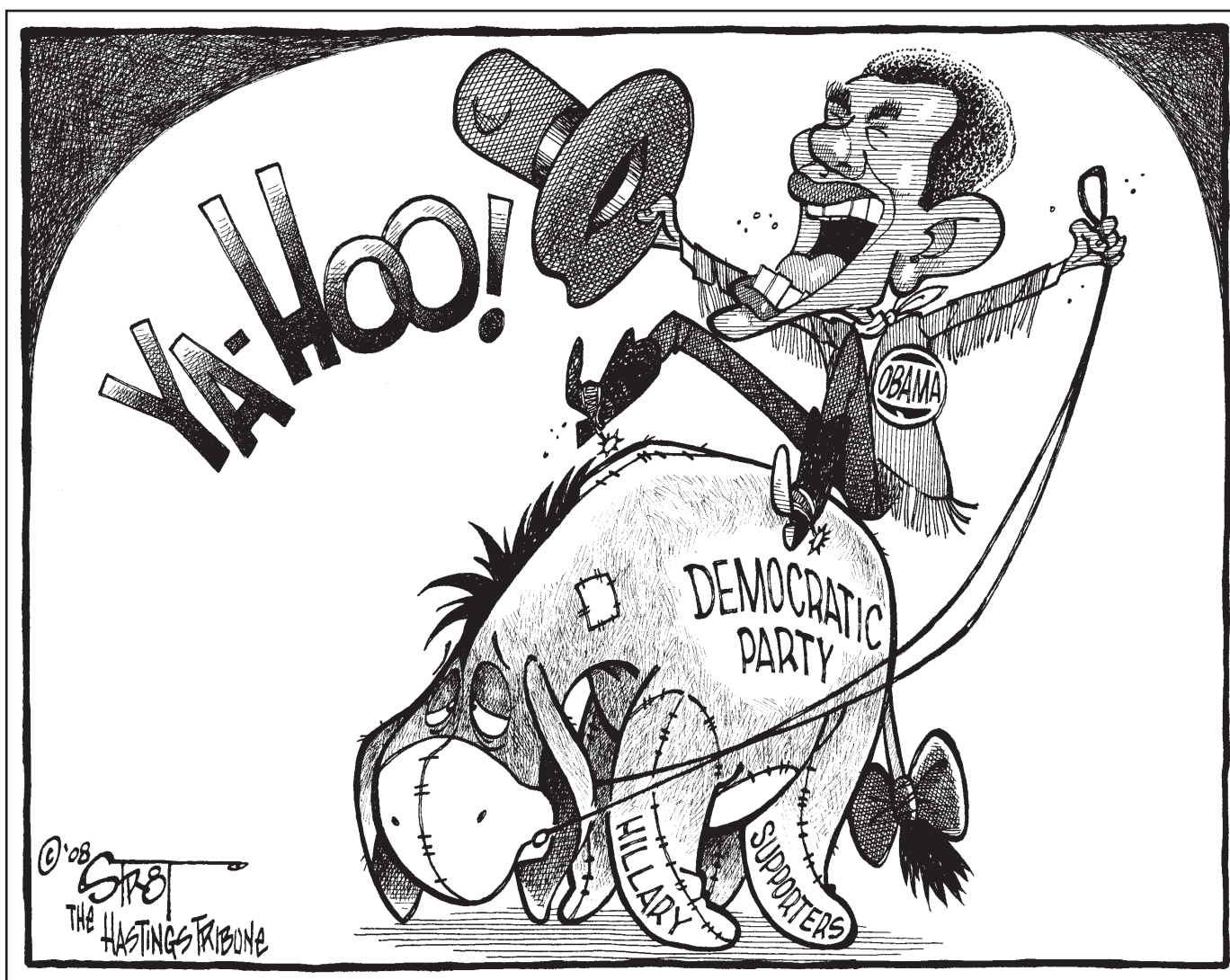
We aren't being critical of the senator's pick. He has to do what he thinks is in the best interests of his candidacy. Mrs. Palin just might be what the party needs to bring things to life. She's a fireball, tells it like she thinks it is and brings youth to the ticket.

If the reports were correct, McCain wasn't waiting for Sen. Barack Obama to reveal his sidekick's name. In other words it wasn't McCain's plan to pick a woman in the first place to rein in the disgruntled backers of Sen. Hillary Clinton. He was set on Lieberman, but the arm twisters won out. Although Gov. Palin didn't seem to have frontrunner status, she jumped over the likes of Gov. Tim Pawlenty of Minnesota, former Gov. Mitt Romney, former Gov. Tim Ridge and former Gov. Mike Huckabee. One of those was the likely pick. So everyone — but McCain — thought.

McCain's selection of Palin further underscores his maverick role. Polls will soon foretell the mood of the voters as it relates to a McCain-Palin ticket.

But one thing is for sure: the remainder of this presidential campaign has now taken on an entirely new focus and brings with it a heightened interest.

— Tom Dreiling



Labor Day no holiday at our house

Because it's the Labor Day weekend, Jim thinks we have to work even harder. Saturday I made four batches of plum jam and he went to the lumber yard to pick up materials for another job.

This morning I went to the kitchen to pour a second cup of coffee and heard building noises from the front porch. It was barely light and he was nailing wainscoting to the walls of the screened-in porch.

Okay, so it actually has to have screening before it can be called a screened-in porch. But, the wainscoting brings it one step closer to screen installation.

Have you seen the television commercial for the building supply company that reminds a husband of all the jobs he promised to finish before the end of summer? The last line is, "Summer's

Out Back Carolyn Plotts



front door, Kara said she knelt down and asked Taylor if she could kiss her good-bye.

In horror, Taylor said, "Mom, I'm a fourth grader."

One thing Taylor has going for her is her ability to make friends easily. Kara said Taylor was already talking to a little girl she had met walking in the door. I never worry about Taylor — her personality will carry her through anything.

-ob-

I better get back to work. I hear a basket of tomatoes calling my name. Thought I would try something different this year.

I want to make tomato preserves. Mainly because we still have jars and jars of canned tomatoes left over from last year.

I see lots more chili on the menu this winter.

almost over."

Maybe Jim's feeling the pressure as summer starts to wind down.

-ob-

My daughter, Kara, called last Monday to tell me how her daughter, Taylor's, first day of school went. It was a new school for Taylor and she didn't know anyone. Kara has always taken the day off from her work to make the day special for Taylor.

She said she and her husband, Adam, drove Taylor to her new school. At the

How about lowering the drinking age?

Somewhere between the Olympics and the Democratic Convention, some college presidents caught the nation's attention for a nanosecond by asking Congress to consider lowering the drinking age to 18.

Terrible idea, MADD said! Many lives have been saved since the drinking age was raised. Maybe, but I also remember reading somewhere that fatal car accidents have declined because cars are safer and seat belt laws.

Terrible idea, the recovering alcoholic host of a talk show said. Very interesting, usually he thinks government should stop interfering in our lives.

Terrible idea, another commentator said. In fact the spokesperson in favor of the idea on his show was very hard pressed to give any good argument as to why the college presidents might be right.

They should have called me. I think it's a fine idea.

My grandma was a card carrying member of the WCTU (Women's Christian Temperance Union). We never had alcohol in our house. You could drink beer at 18 when I was young, I obeyed the law and I thought everyone else should. Now that the law says you should be 21, I still think the law should be obeyed. That doesn't mean it is a good law. BUT IT IS THE LAW!

One person who tried to defend the college presidents' position brought up the old "they can fight, vote and get married so why can't they drink" argument? The opposition trotted out a study that "proves" 18 year-old brains are not developed enough to make good decisions about alcohol.

18 year olds, with their immature little brains, are savvy enough to recognize we ought to be consistent in our arguments. If 18 year olds can't handle alcohol they probably can't make good decisions about voting, or joining the army, etc. If it is good to protect our children from drinking isn't it also good to protect them from being shot at!

Somewhere along the line of watching prevention programs that don't work, families struggle with addiction problems

Back Home Nancy Hagman



and friends in court with their children charged with MIP's (there but for the Grace of God go I), I have developed a feeling banning 18 year olds from drinking beer is not the answer.

I feel if kids knew they could go off to college and have a beer legally so many problems we have created with this silly law would just go away. Forbidden fruit got us kicked out of the Garden of Eden.

Apparently we haven't learned a thing!

My youngest was exposed to a wellness program from kindergarten on. It was very effective when she was young. To the point she could not go into the pool hall with her grandmother (the only place to eat in that town at the time) without practically hyperventilating. It wasn't just that she felt drinking was bad, she was terrified of it. I know some of her classmates had similar reactions. One classmate's mother told me she made a deal with her son. She would not have the occasional drink she sometimes had if he promised never to drink.

It is apparent many of those kids did not take the whole thing as seriously as they grew up! And I only know about the ones who were caught and got their names in the paper. I know my daughter drinks and I know the young man who made the deal with his mother drinks. Whew — neither of them has gotten their name in any paper I've seen. They are legal now.

But what was the point of that wellness program?

It made every family get-together with the hubby's family difficult. Unlike my WCTU foremother, his German family grew up making beer and wine, a glass of wine was a given at every holiday gathering.

I was not in the classroom so I do not

know how this temperance curriculum was presented. Each child takes things differently, but if someone wants to do a study on outcomes based education they might take a look at her class four years after high school graduation. If it worked, I'd hate to see what it would have been like if the curriculum hadn't been in place.

We waste money on prevention. We spend money enforcing a silly law. Then we give diversions making the law enforcement a waste and worse a joke.

18-21 year olds hide their use of alcohol. Instead of being in a bar where they should get cut off when they show signs of being inebriated, they are at someone's house, allowed to drive or left alone in a room if they pass out.

I also feel letting 18 year olds have beer might prevent the horrifying ritual of the 21st birthday. I don't think it would filter down to the 18 year birthday. I never knew anyone who felt obliged to have 18 beers on their 18th birthday but 21 shots at 21?

It's a given.

The hubby's family does not have as many big get-togethers as they once did. The extended family has gotten too large. There is less alcohol when they do. Some of the family members have had problems with alcohol. Some of my WCTU grandmother's family had problems with alcohol.

In my experience, the age you are exposed to alcohol, the circumstances under which you are and the attitudes of those you love and admire are not predictors of what your future issues with alcohol may be.

I volunteered to be a spokesman for lowering the drinking age, but as I reread this I'm not sure that is what I want at all. I've gone on forever and perhaps not expressed a single coherent thought.

Personally I could live with prohibition but we all know how well that worked. I don't want to put words into anyone's mouth but I think what the college presidents are saying is: "Let's have a discussion."

How could that be a bad thing?

Let's do our own poll!

Obama?
McCain?

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