

from our viewpoint...

Dems could face deadlock in Denver

Pundits across the country keep saying the Democratic race between Sen. Barack Obama (D-Illinois) and Sen. Hillary Clinton (D-New York) should end before the national convention in Denver in August.

Some say Clinton cannot gather enough elected delegates to win the nomination and that it would be wrong for the super delegates — mostly Democratic elected officials and party leaders — to choose between the candidates.

Clinton won the Pennsylvania primary on Tuesday by 10 percent, though, and gained both in the number of delegates pledged to her and in the total popular vote for all primaries this year. She remains behind Obama in both delegates and popular vote, but she points out that she has won all the big electoral states while Obama has won a lot of smaller states with fewer electoral votes.

The race turned immediately to the next states, North Carolina and Indiana, where Obama hopes to maintain his lead in delegates and maybe get Clinton to pull in two weeks.

Every time the pundits count Clinton out or say she can't keep going without a big win, she has pulled one out. She keeps saying she is going all the way to the convention.

Democratic conventions were wild affairs years ago, and the most deadlocked convention was held in New York's Madison Square Garden in 1924, when it took 16 days and 103 ballots to nominate John W. Davis, a favorite son from West Virginia. In November, Davis got creamed by Calvin Coolidge.

"Back in my day, Democrats had real conventions with real nomination fights that went on for dozens of ballots," wrote Peter Carlson, a writer for *The Washington Post*. "It took 46 ballots to nominate Woodrow Wilson in 1912, and 44 ballots to nominate James Cox in 1920. It took four ballots to nominate Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1932 — and he was FDR, for crying out loud!"

"These young whippersnappers don't know doodley about a deadlocked convention. Most of them weren't even born the last time a convention fight went beyond the first ballot, which was in 1952."

(Democrats took three ballots to nominate Adlai Stevenson, who was trounced by Dwight Eisenhower.)

The 1956 national convention again nominated former Illinois Gov. Stevenson. The delegates had a "free vote" for the vice presidential nomination in which the winner, Sen. Estes Kefauver of Tennessee, defeated Sen. John F. Kennedy of Massachusetts. The vice-presidential vote, which required three ballots, was one of the last multi-ballot contests held at any major U.S. party convention.

The primaries have taken over the nomination process for both parties, and the conventions are tame events choreographed to get the maximum prime-time television coverage.

Obama and Clinton have nearly four months and more state primaries up to the early part of June before the process has run its course. It's possible some of the upcoming primaries might give Obama a lock, but the pundits may be correct that neither candidate will have the magic 2,025 votes to tie up a majority of the convention. (That does not include the 313 delegates from Michigan and Florida, which could create a credential fight to live up to the opening of the convention.)

The convention in Denver will be worth watching for its historic nomination of either a woman or a black man to lead the Democrats in November.

It would be more historic if the delegates have to vote more than once to decide which one wins. The excitement of that possibility has the pundits scratching their heads big time. — *Tom Betz*



Lincoln capitol cited tribute to innovation

Lincoln Today, the hotel magazine for Nebraska's capital city, cites the state's Capitol building and site as "a tribute to architectural innovation."

The nation's only skyscraper state capitol features a 400-foot tower topped by a golden dome and the required statue, a man sowing seeds.

His basket of seeds looks an awfully lot like a football to me, however, and I'm not the only one. The lady at the information booth says she has to tell school children all the time, "It's not a football."

But then, this is Nebraska. The capitol doesn't look very governmental to me. In fact, it reminds me more of the fancy hotel in the first "Ghost Busters" movie, very art deco, very uncapitol looking.

It's covered in tiles, murals, bas relief, carvings, you name it and they decorate it.

The tower is kinda cool; you can take the elevator up to the 14th floor and look out over the city. However, it was raining and the doors to the viewing areas were locked the day we were there. We ended up making ourselves



cynthia haynes

• open season

dizzy staring up at murals on the ceilings.

Downstairs we examined the Nebraska Senate chamber.

As some of us remember from our high-school government classes, Nebraska has a unicameral system. That means it has only one house (or in this case, Senate). However, across the hall there is a similar room, where the Senate met until the state's House of Representatives was abolished in 1949.

That must have been fun: Think of telling all our representatives that they can just go home, we don't need them anymore.

Lincoln is a busy city. It has the capitol, the state penitentiary and the university.

While it rained Thursday and Friday, Saturday dawned bright and red as 83,000 Huskers fans headed downtown for the annual spring

game.

The Nebraska Press Association had offered us and everyone else attending its convention tickets to the game for \$10 each. The press association manager said that he had only a few takers until the last week, then all the tickets went within a couple of days. The spring game became the thing to do in Nebraska, and fans poured into Lincoln from all over the state.

By Saturday morning, scalpers were asking \$150 a ticket and the town was a sea of red. Steve was sad he hadn't taken the tickets, since he figured he could have made about \$280 on the deal.

The game was billed as the red team against the white, with two assistant coaches choosing players in turn, like we did in junior high.

Personally, I felt sorry for the white team. It looked like everyone there was cheering for the reds. I didn't see anyone wearing white.

We waited until the stadium was full and got out of town while the getting was good.

Nebraska had a tough year in football last year, and I didn't want to be around in case they lost this game.

Biting at the leash: A struggle for freedom

My six-month-old dog Franny loves going outside. Rain or snow it doesn't matter she begs to go out. When she has the opportunity to explore and run free she is happy as can be. But, whenever I put her on a leash to go outside she isn't quite so happy.

One of two things happens. Either she tugs as hard as she can, trying to bite off the leash or she sits and stares up at me with a look saying, how can you do this to me? The thing is I can't really blame her; I love my freedom too.

We often get caught up in patriotism especially around Independence Day and Memorial Day. Sometimes we even refer loosely or in passing to the elusive terms of freedom and liberty. But we should all take pause, no matter what time of year, and consider what freedom and liberty means to us, and why we care about it.

Most of us know something about the founding of the country. The Founding Fathers came from England, some under persecution for religious practices, others looking for a better life; all looking to start a country where they retained freedom and liberty under the law.

The laws of the land look considerably different than they did 200 years ago. We have volume upon volumes of codes and regulations. Each level of government has grown



sara machintosh

• flint hills center

larger over the years.

Sadly, the truth is that we give up freedoms nearly every day. Each time a law is passed, whether at the municipal, state, or federal level, we lose a little bit — and sometimes a lot — of freedom. That's not to say that every law is bad, there are a few that actually preserve freedoms and some that are necessary to maintain a safe and secure community. But those are the exceptions, not the rule.

Most of us are lucky. We lead such comfortable lives that we rarely worry about how laws affect us. When there is plenty to eat, comfortable housing, and American Idol, who has time to worry about what happens in Topeka, or in Washington?

The problem with this is we are relinquishing our responsibility. In a representative democracy, we, the people, are supposed to hold our government accountable. We should be vigilant about observing what is taking place. For, once we lose a freedom, it is next to impossible

to get it back. Government grows, that's its nature. Laws grow more and more complex. And often, government lacks transparency. So, it's up to the people to make sure that what is taking place is in our best interest.

When determining what laws we agree with and which we do not, we should all consider the consequences not just to us but also to others in our communities and country. Every time a freedom is taken away from someone else, it chips away at the barriers protecting our own rights. And, if we aren't all vigilant about protecting everyone's rights, there may not be anyone left to speak up for you when the law personally affects your rights. So it's up to each of us to pay attention to what is happening and respond when we are unhappy with the outcomes.

Unfortunately for Franny, she will just have to put up with being on a leash. And perhaps in any society we are all on a leash. The question is, how short are we willing to let that leash become?

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Witness and skepticism

In accord with the church liturgical calendar, the Easter Season is still in place.

After the resurrection, the Apostle Peter delivered a sermon to a large gathering. He reminded them of the many miracles performed by Jesus Christ seen by them while they were in His presence.

He went on to say that this same Jesus who was executed on the cross was now alive and seen and heard by a number of people. Later witnesses shared a meal and visited with Him.

A skeptic takes the position of doubt on matters that are generally accepted by most. A religious skeptic doubts the veracity of Christian doctrine.

Skepticism and its questioning, doubting view of events that go beyond reason and the natural laws, is a valid position in a world of unexplained mysterious events. The skeptic view serves as a reminder to be careful about accepting every wind or doctrine that comes before us.



from our readers

• to the editor

However, the eye witness recorded events of the encounter with the Living Lord Christ not only by the Apostles but many others five hundred on one occasion, is powerful proof of the living Lord. In strong words The apostle said, "We are witnesses that the Lord is risen!"

The further truth that Christ is indeed alive is confirmed in the lives of millions down through the centuries up till today by His presence with them bringing joy, peace, strength and power for daily living.

Easter confronts us with the validity of the witnesses or skepticism.

Earl Martell
Retired Lutheran minister
Goodland

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