

Iowa paper pulls endorsement surprise

The *Des Moines Register*, Iowa's leading newspaper, gave its caucus endorsement to two unexpected candidates: Sen. John McCain, Republican, and Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton, Democrat. This was somewhat of a surprise.

The 24/7 cable network blabber-mouths thought *The Register* would support former Democratic Sen. John Edwards (as it did in 2004) and former Arkansas Republican Gov. Mike Huckabee, or perhaps former Massachusetts Republican Gov. Mitt Romney.

Wrong!

The paper said, "McCain would enter the White House with deep knowledge of national-security and foreign-policy issues. He knows war, something we believe would make him reluctant to start one. He's also a fierce defender of civil liberties. As a survivor of torture, he has stood resolutely against it. He pledges to start rebuilding America's image abroad..."

It continued, "Readiness to lead sets her (Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton) apart from a constellation of possible stars in her party, particularly Barack Obama, who also demonstrates the potential to be a fine president. When Obama speaks before a crowd, he can be more inspirational than Clinton. Yet, with his relative inexperience, it's hard to feel as confident he could accomplish the daunting agenda that lies ahead."

It sounds almost like the newspaper's editorial board struggled with the Democratic endorsement.

Now we shall see if *The Register's* endorsements result in victories for both McCain and Clinton. McCain trails badly in the Iowa polls, while Clinton is in a virtual tie with Obama, with Edwards just a whisker behind. Huckabee has a healthy lead on the Republican side of the ledger.

The caucuses will be held Jan. 3.

And to think, Jan. 3 will be just the beginning of the presidential nomination campaign.

—Tom Dreiling

Your turn... Support Helps 'Bigs' cause

To the Editor,

Thank you for your donation to the 4th Annual Big Brothers Big Sisters Dance and Silent Auction. We appreciate your support.

This is our major fund raiser and your support helps us to continue making matches of Bigs and Littles and to also provide special programs, such as our after school drug prevention/education program.

Our program has made tremendous strides. In fact, last July we made our 100th match since the inception of Big Brothers Big Sisters of Norton County. Meeting the needs of at risk youth improves the life of not only the child but the life of our community as well.

Thank you again for your support.

Mary Kay Woodyard
Affiliate Director
Norton

Thumbs Up...

To... All clubs, organizations and individuals, who are helping make the Christmas season brighter for those in our midst in need.

To... **Richie Ray**, for your 43 years of service to the Kansas Department of Transportation. Enjoy retirement.

To... the Norton city crews, for cleaning all the snow out of the downtown gutters; the merchants are grateful!

To... the Saint Francis Society, for the grand Christmas party you put on for the area's senior citizens.

To... Everyone who will give blood during the Red Cross Drive at the Norton Junior High gym on Wednesday. The best gift possible.

(To submit a name or names for this biweekly salute, e-mail tomd@nwkansas.com, fax 877-3732, call 877-3361, mail to 215 S. Kansas Ave., Norton 67654, or drop by the office. Thanks for your continuing input. —td)

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Time for sweets, and more sweets

My kitchen has turned into a candy factory. So far, I've made about 17 dozen peanut butter balls, two dozen almond butter birdies, one batch of peanut brittle, dipped pretzels, six dozen spritz cookies and fudge. But, I'm just getting started.

There are still spicy sugared nuts, minted walnuts, more peanut brittle, caramel popcorn, more fudge and glass candy to make. I love to make candy and thank goodness, I love to give it away, too. (Jim would like me to keep a little more at home than I do.)

-ob-

Ever since Petey died, we think Sammy has been lonely. The two were such good playmates. So, when my friend, Sherry, said she knew of a cat that needed a good home, we decided to adopt her. Yes, it's a female, but she and Sammy have both been neutered so we are in no danger of starting a kitten factory.

Out Back Carolyn Plotts



We haven't met her, yet, but Sherry said she is black. Sherry also said she has a quirky trait of puffing out her neck hair when she feels threatened. Said she looks like a little owl. We'll just have to get to know her before we decide on a name. You know it's got to fit her personality. Sure hope she and Sammy get along.

-ob-

We did not get to go to Texas last week like we wanted. The ice and snow storm altered our plans. It would have been suicide to try it — but that doesn't mean I was happy about it. We might be crazy,

but, we're not stupid.

I pouted for a couple of days, thinking about what we would have been doing if we were with the kids. But, I got over it and realized we were needed here, too.

I guess it's that old "if life hands you lemons, make lemonade" scenario. There was a good reason we didn't go.

-ob-

For all our good intentions about decorating for Christmas, we sure haven't accomplished much. I brag about how Jim puts lights on anything that will stand still, but somehow the storm kind of took the "want-to" out of him.

And, as for decorating inside, I haven't felt compelled to do anything in that department. Lord knows it's not for lack of "stuff." I have more Christmas decor than most department stores.

Who knows, maybe all I'll get done for Christmas is cook. Oh well, Jim thinks that's okay.

Just nothing like Christmas shopping

I promised myself I won't but I always end up overdoing Christmas! The girls need things anyway, so why not wrap those things up and put them under the tree? Soon the packages are piled so high we have to move furniture out of the living room. (Okay I'm exaggerating but you know what I mean!)

Then there are the things they want or need months earlier. I get the check book out and say "okay," but this will be your Christmas present!" By Christmas I forget or I'd feel bad if for instance, Kate had nothing under the tree. You see, she was here the day the pillow shams were delivered (back in July). Plus she picked them out and was not going to be surprised so I just handed them over. Although I now realize there was a chance she might have been surprised if she is half as forgetful as her momma.

Back in September we were in the mall and Elizabeth told me about a green corduroy blazer she liked at The Gap. Later I went into Gap, bought Tricia a sweater for her birthday, and decided the jacket would make a nice Christmas present for Elizabeth. When I got the credit card bill I was surprised how much I had spent at The Gap. I remembered buying the sweater and finally decided I must have bought Patricia some trousers also, I do remember she tried some on.

Fast forward to December: on a whim I decide to clean my closet. Stuck back

Back Home Nancy Hagman



on a shelf is a Gap bag. Puzzled I open it and discover a green corduroy blazer. It took me awhile to figure out what it was for. That only solves part of the mystery though; I still don't remember if Tricia got trousers! If so there were some real bargains in Gap that day!

I buy most of my presents from catalogs. With only a week until the 25th, I haven't been "Christmas" shopping yet. I may go, but my list includes things like canned air, shoulder pads, lining fabric, a halogen light bulb and brown shoes for me (just because I need some!)

Then there is the big bottle of liquid laundry detergent (Tide or Gain) with a spigot! No, I'm not stocking my pantry. It's on Tricia's list. I believe hard times build character but her Christmas list borders on sad! (An ice scraper and new tires for her car were also on there!)

Handy woman, Kate, refurbished an old oak table this summer. It got to be a community affair: her Daddy, Josh the carpenter and John our local antique restoration expert all had a hand in it. It

is lovely but now she needs chairs! All fall I was on the lookout and eventually found some on clearance! As I thought about how perfect they would be I realized even on clearance she couldn't really afford them.

Then I thought about giving them to her for Christmas but I had already given her the pillow shams and gotten her some other stuff, besides you can't wrap chairs for under the tree.

I looked at my old lyre back chairs (purchased used for \$10 a piece about 30 years ago) and asked myself, "Does Kate really need new chairs?" No, she just needs chairs. So who really needs new chairs? "C'est Moi, C'est Moi, Tis I!"

They look great! Kate is taking the old chairs (two at a time — cuz that is all she can wedge into her car). When she loaded the first ones, she said, "These are really in bad shape!" I don't know what to say except; "You like projects, refinish them!"

As far as I am concerned, things are working out pretty well. Too bad that blazer isn't my size; I'd keep that too! What's that you say, "It's better to give than receive?" Okay I agree, bring on your lists, kids! I love you!

Remember the gift God gave us that first Christmas? I believe He wants us to be as generous as possible with each other also. It is a season of excesses, not guilt. Enjoy!

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