



## McCain campaign gives surprise announcement

The McCain campaign pulled off a tactical coup, making the surprise announcement of a woman running mate for the Arizona senator just in time to boot the Democrats off of Page 1 on Friday.

It remains to be seen how well they can take advantage, but you had to admire the tactical skill of the McCain planners.

There was Barack Obama, basking in the glow of his well-oiled convention when, bam, Sen. McCain had the spotlight. Every newspaper, every newscast, every website turned instantly to the Republican choice.

And what a surprise. Gov. Sarah Palin of Alaska, a young (44), conservative, reform-minded woman who nearly everyone had never heard of. John McCain had, though.

Some thought he might be trying to snare the disgruntled Hillary vote, but that's not likely to fall his way in any great numbers. Clinton supporters are mostly orthodox liberal Democrats, and they're not going to vote for any Republican.

The best the McCain camp can hope for is for the Hillary diehards to stay home this fall, and they might just do that in droves. With their candidate gone, and the Republicans set to produce, quite possibly, our first woman president, what's there to live for?

That vote might be offset by the fact that African Americans may turn out in big numbers to vote for Sen. Obama this fall, but still, the Clinton votes are votes the Democrats will need, no matter how powerful the Obama ticket is.

Did we say Obama ticket? The selection of Sen. Joseph Biden hardly stirred any interest out here.

The Delaware Democrat at least looks sort

of presidential, but in vice-presidential terms, about all he adds to the ticket is experience and racial balance. He's an older white guy with years and years in the Senate. He's big on foreign policy, if not on executive experience.

It's Gov. Palin who has the executive experience, in fact, as a mayor and governor. True, she ran a small town and a small-population state, but it's more executive time than anyone else on either side.

So who is this mysterious woman from the far north?

She has family, an impressive political resume — she beat an incumbent and a former governor to take her present post — and a commanding presence that seems to work in her favor. She once was a beauty queen, winning a local contest, and she's tough.

Detractors have tried to pull her into a scandal surrounding her sister's divorce from a state trooper, but it remains to be seen whether that will stick. Our guess is it won't hurt her with women at all.

Sen. Biden, however, has some serious baggage. He made a habit over the years to copy the work of others, stealing speeches and reportedly getting in trouble in law school for lifting five pages of a law-journal article for one paper. That's hardly the new standard Sen. Obama says he wants to set.

We'll see how this all shakes out, but this week, the points go to the McCain camp. Sen. Obama was the first candidate in years not to get a "bounce" in the polls from his party's convention.

With a hurricane bearing down on the Republican show, Sen. McCain might not get much either. We'll see. — Steve Haynes

## Writer feels new gym is needed

Letter to the editor,

I am writing this letter as a member of the St. Francis community and a father of five kids that do or will attend St. Francis Schools.

First of all it is my humble opinion that we need a new gym. There are a lot of things wrong with the gym at the grade school. Number 1 is that the floor is too small and the size of the floor makes it a very different game. The wall sits right on the out of bounds line. I have officiated in this gym over the years quite a few times and it is very difficult to do. There is no room to get away from the action so that you can actually see what is going on. The facts that it is hard to officiate and the floor is so much smaller make it a much rougher game. Our high school teams have to practice in this facility every other day. Our varsity squads never play in this gym but they are expected to practice in it, also it is very difficult to practice with 20 players in this gym. It is

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### Letter to the Editor

next to impossible to practice on the half court and get a true sense of what has to be done because the floor is not wide enough to allow a three point shot from the corner if you wear a large shoe size. The floor is 7'6" narrower than the one in the high school. If a coach wants and needs to work on the press or press breaker it is impossible to get the right feel of how much ground needs to be covered because of the small court. The grade school court is 11'6" shorter than the one in the high school. Number 2 is that the floor in this gym is in very bad condition. There has been water on it more than once that has warped and shrunk the boards. A person can slip a quarter in the cracks at the north end. It would be possible to put in a new floor in this gym, however my argument is, would that be in the best interest to our students considering the fact that the size of the gym is the main problem.

Secondly, as a member of this community for the past 16 years I have seen the decrease in the number of students in our schools first hand. I have grown to love this

community and the great benefit we have received by living here and I do not think that we should sit by quietly and continue to let it waste away. The average age of the people in this community has increased greatly over the years and the school system has suffered because of it. I believe it is important to attract families to this community and one way to do that is to improve the schools. People have told me that the increase in drilling for gas and oil in the county has the potential to attract people and businesses to the town, but if we do not offer people a good school and a progressive attitude then we could lose out on this opportunity. I believe that building a new gym that is needed would go a long way in showing families thinking about moving to St. Francis that we do not plan on wasting away, that we will not sit by idly and allow our town to shrink without a fight. We plan on a bright future in St. Francis and we invite you to come share it with us.

Sincerely,  
Tim Lambert  
St. Francis

**GOD SAYS**  
**My son, forget not my law;**  
**but let thine heart keep my**  
**commandments: For length of**  
**days, and long life, and peace,**  
**shall they add to thee.**  
Proverbs 3:1, 2

## The Saint Francis Herald

(USPS 475-960)  
A Century of Service to Cheyenne County

P.O. Box 1050, St. Francis, Kan. 67756-1050

Published each Thursday by Haynes Publishing Co., 310 W. Washington, St. Francis, Kan. 67756-1050. Entered as periodicals matter at the post office at St. Francis, Kan. 67756-1050, and at additional offices.

Official newspaper of Cheyenne County. Member of the Kansas Press Association, National Newspaper Association, Colorado Press Association and Inland Press Association.

Subscriptions: One year \$33 (tax included) in Cheyenne and adjacent counties; \$38 (tax included) elsewhere in Kansas; \$42 elsewhere in the U.S. Foreign subscriptions, \$25 extra per year (except APO/FPO). POSTMASTER: Send change of address to Box 1050, St. Francis, Kan. 67756-1050

**Nor'West Newspapers**

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(785) 332-3162 Fax - (785) 332-3001  
E-mail - sf.herald@nwkansan.com

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WHEN BUMPER-CROP GARDENERS SHARE THEIR GOOD FORTUNE...

## Hangin' With Marge

By Margaret Bucholtz



### Labor Day

by Margaret Bucholtz  
margeb@cityofstfrancis.net

Labor Day weekend was very different than any I had ever had. Usually Kurt and I work all weekend trying to catch up on things. This year it was still the same for Kurt, but I had the best one ever!

I drove my jeep and pulled the trailer with the mower and he took the camper and our dog.

Everything went well. By noon on Saturday I had the mowing done. Kurt however had enough field work to last all the vacation. I enjoyed my time alone and had so many projects that I never got

bored.

Monday evening we packed up to come home. I got in the jeep and started out. The wind was blowing at my back, the music on the radio blasting and in the wind you couldn't tell my singing was out of tune — life was good.

When I got to Wheeler and turned west it was a whole different story. The wind was now blowing from the side. I had to stiffen my muscles in my neck to keep my head upright. All of a sudden singing was out of the question. I couldn't even breathe.

The wind was blowing my left nostril shut, and I almost think that

my somewhat larger than average nose was blowing sideways.

That wasn't the only problem, the skin from my left cheek was sliding up and the skin on my forehead was sliding down, which made my left eye covered with loose skin. I was glad my right eye seemed to be doing OK.

I am sure if I could have seen a little better my whole face was distorted, but all I wanted was a good breath of air.

I think I better get the top back on my jeep before I have stretched my skin anymore.

## Casey's Comments

By Casey McCormick



General George A. Forsyth kept busy around these parts.

He was a decorated, Union officer during the Civil War. In 1868, after hostile Indian dog soldiers raided white settlements in Kansas, killing and kidnapping people, Forsyth was ordered by his commanding officer and friend, General Phil Sheridan, to go after the renegades.

After gathering 50 experienced scouts and Lieutenant Fredrick Beecher they left Fort Hays, and later Fort Wallace, and set out to the northwest. The Indian trail led them along a branch of the Republican River known as the Arikaree. The goal of the group, to discover hostile Indians, was achieved when they were ambushed along the river.

Forsyth and his men managed to escape to a sand island and fought off several charges by the large band of Indians, led by the warrior Roman Nose. During the

battle Roman Nose and Lt. Beecher both died, bringing the death toll to 32 Indians and five whites. After nine days the wounded Forsyth and his party were relieved by soldiers from Fort Wallace, after two scouts we able to sneak out at night and walk over 200 miles for help.

Four years later, 1872, Forsyth returned to the area when he and friends Sheridan and General George Armstrong Custer brought Grand Duke Alexis of Russia to a staged buffalo hunt near Hayes Center, Neb. Also with the group was the famed, frontiersman Buffalo Bill Cody.

The son of Czar Alexander II was able to make a buffalo kill and was treated to entertainment by 100 Native American Sioux Indians who performed a war dance each night for the Grand Duke.

General Forsyth would be pleased to know that both events are still celebrated today.

Beecher Island Days will be

held on Sept. 13 and 14 and the Grand Duke Alexis Rendezvous, held near Hayes Center, Neb., is scheduled from Sept. 26 to 28.

For more information on Beecher Island, see the ad in this week's Saint Francis Herald. Watch for an upcoming story on the Rendezvous or call Doris Vlasin, 308-286-3463, or Jan Singleton at 308-286-3676.

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