

Opinion



Other Viewpoints

Rivals fling attacks as race come to end

With two weeks to the election, both presidential candidates have stepped up their attacks, and we can expect the level to ratchet up again this week.

Both Republican Sen. John McCain and Democrat Sen. Barack Obama are accusing each other on a personal level.

Those who watched the final debate on Wednesday and support McCain probably were pleased with his feisty performance. Those supporting Obama probably felt his coolness was the winning factor.

Pundits and pollsters gave the third debate to Obama on similar points as the first two, and most agreed the debate did not really cover much new ground. The campaign remains close, but there are signs in some battleground states that Obama is leading. The next big question is if he will bring other new Democrats into the winning column.

Two things that came out of the debate were a celebrity, "Joe the Plumber," who has been facing news crews since he was mentioned about 20 times in the 90 minutes. McCain brought Joe up in the debate as a dig at Obama's tax plan, but Obama held his own and both used Joe to make points.

The real person is Samuel "Joe" Wurzelbacher, 34, who confronted Obama recently at a campaign stop near his home in Holland, Ohio. He questioned the Democrat about his tax plan, saying he thought it would raise his taxes as a worker who was looking to buy the business from the person he worked for.

Turns out Joe is not a licensed plumber and is not an independent voter, but registered as a Republican to vote in the primary. He apparently has another beef, with the state of Ohio, as he is about \$1,200 behind on his taxes.

After giving several impromptu press conferences this week at his home, Joe seemed to admit he may have been wrong about having higher taxes under the Obama plan. A host of experts said Joe's taxes probably would not go up under the Obama plan.

The second exchange was McCain's zinger to Obama, saying that he was not George Bush, and that if Obama wanted to run against George Bush, he should have run four years ago.

The other claim McCain pushed aside at the debate was the accusation Republicans are using that Obama has "palled around with terrorists." Some tried to tie Obama to Bill Ayers, a Chicago professor who was a leader in the Weather Underground, a radical group back in the 60s that demonstrated and threw incendiary bombs at public buildings. Ayers was never convicted of anything, however.

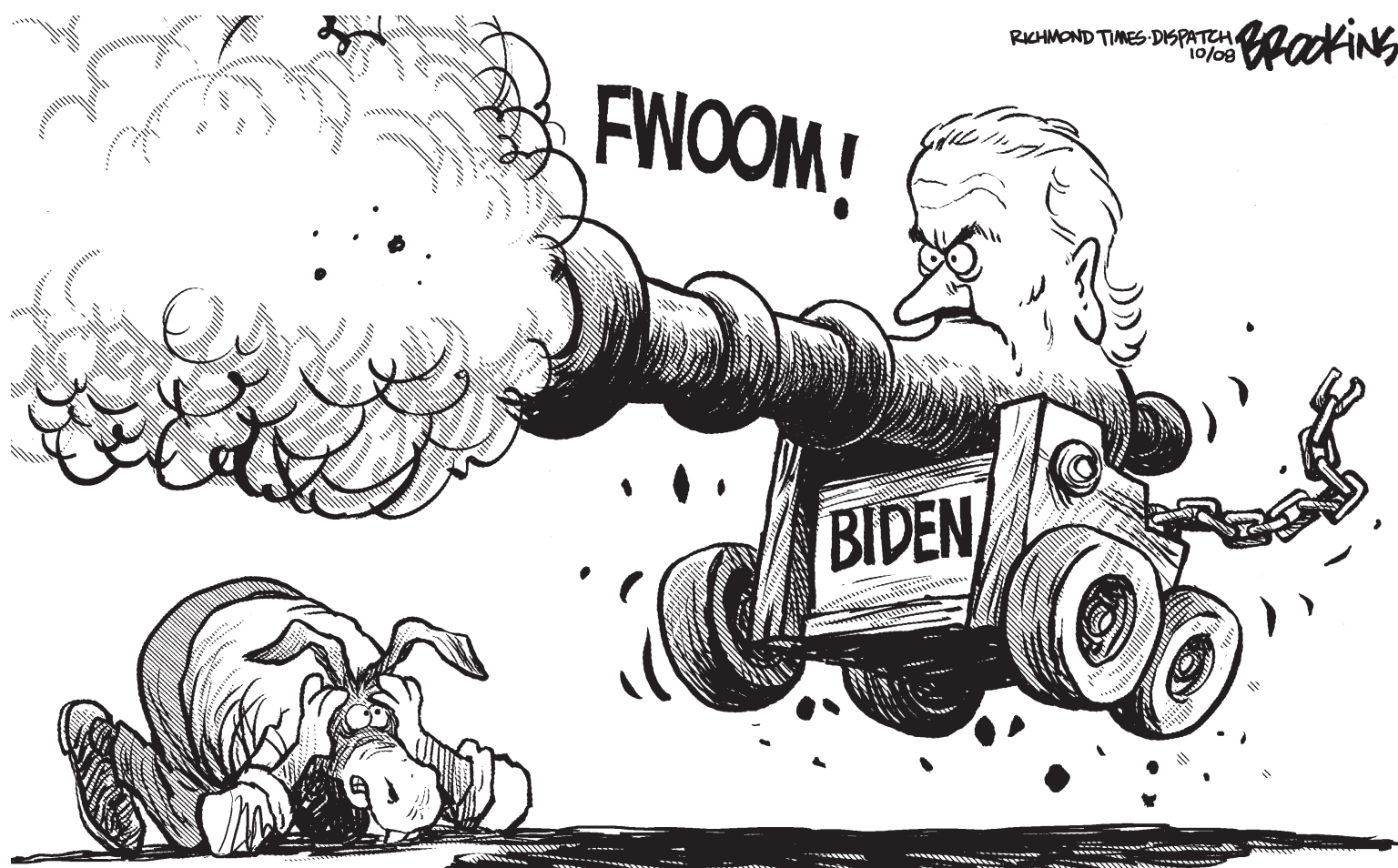
When Ayers was in college in the '60s, Obama was barely in grade school. The two, who happen to live in the same Chicago neighborhood, were members of a board trying to improve education in the city's schools.

McCain said Wednesday night he did not care about "an old washed-up terrorist" like Ayers.

For his part, Obama condemned Ayers' actions of 40 years ago, and said the former radical was not involved in his campaign and would not advise him as president.

With all the charges flying it's sure not dull.

Registration has closed in Kansas for the election and early voting will begin soon. Whatever your political bent, this is an election where you want to be sure to record your vote for the man of your choice. — Tom Betz



LOOSE CANNON

New faces would be welcome

The cant of the McCain-Palin political team seems to be "Joe the Plumber" and "Paling around with Terrorists."

Those themes are simply a monotonous cacophony that distracts the serious voters from evaluating details that explain real differences in the goals of the Republican or Democrat candidates.

Notice, I said "goals." Neither set of candidates can deliver on all their promises. For instance, it will be impossible to live within a balanced budget in four years. Increasing tax rebates and lowering taxes certainly has not balanced the budget in the past, so how do you think it will work in the next four years?

Some of our farmers are too young to have experienced the early '60s, or you're so old you've forgotten. Dropping all meaningful government loan support on wheat cut the price to around \$1.10 per bushel. You couldn't raise enough bushels to pay any dividends on the investment, let alone make a living.

For the government to cut \$500 billion income when it is already deficit spending to the tune of \$500 billion won't produce a balanced bottom line when the year ends.

Increasing aid to the low income, middle class, students, elderly, new businesses, and everyone else, will take more than four years to produce taxable income to pay the operating cost of our government infrastructure and meet the interest payments on our huge debt.

Neither team is going to be able to produce a miracle, on demand, to bail us out in four years. Neither do I think God is inclined to perform miracles to bail out irresponsible gov-



Ken Poland

Ken's World

ernment or unethical businesses.

Promises to spread the wealth are taken by McCain-Palin as proof that the Obama-Biden team is going to establish a socialistic national government that takes away all incentive for big business, small business or individual entrepreneurs.

Hmmm, we aren't spreading the wealth when we encumber the taxes of everyone to bail out Wall Street? We aren't spreading the wealth when we propose buying failed mortgage accounts from the present holders?

Where do you think the money is going to come from for the government to do this? It certainly will not come from those multinational conglomerates that pay no income tax and lavish obscene salaries and benefits on their chief executives and other top management. Neither is it going to come from those who, for whatever reason, don't make enough to pay taxes.

The Obama-Biden ticket can't lower taxes for 95 percent when 40 percent don't pay taxes. Well, neither will McCain-Palin's \$5,000 tax credit for health insurance help those who presently pay no taxes.

Those sounding the alarm about Obama's

paling around with a terrorist and anti-American groups, and his supposed unpatriotic attitudes, seem to not know that McCain sat on the board of the company that hired the '60s terrorist and Obama to work. And that seems to be, the only business dealing Obama had with the man.

They forget that Palin's husband was a member of the political activist party and group that favored Alaska seceding from the U.S. They seem to have forgotten that Cindy McCain was directly involved with the savings and loan scandal. They seem to have forgotten that John McCain was involved in the program that used tax money to bail out the whole mess.

I agree with Colin Powell and Warren Buffet. We don't need a continuation of the failed policies of the Bush-Cheney administration. In spite of his opposition in debate, McCain has fallen into line and backed Bush on every major issue.

It is kind of hard to justify blaming Obama for government failures and still argue that he hasn't been around long enough to gain experience and know the ropes. McCain has been around for 25 years and made his share of wrong decisions.

Perhaps we do need a new generation in the White House. A few new faces, Democrat or Republican, may not hurt the legislative branch either.

Ken Poland describes himself as a semiretired farmer living north of Gem, a Christian, affiliated with American Baptist Churches, and a radical believer in separation of church and state. Contact him at rwinc@cheerful.com.

Write-in believes in service

To the Editor:

Serving the public as sheriff is not always an easy task, and personal happiness is often placed secondary to fulfilling the duties of the office. The demands of public safety affect family and personal time, but I have a strong belief in service to my community and have found satisfaction in a life of service.

Fame and fortune are highly held values by some, but I value humility and service in accordance with my faith and character.

My goal as sheriff is and has always been to serve and protect Thomas County to the best of my ability, utilizing my administrative, patrol and jail experience, as well as my leadership skills. I, and my staff, strive to provide friendly service of superior quality in fulfilling the many duties associated with the office. I have a competent and trustworthy workforce and operate the office in a fiscally responsible manner.

I ask you to examine my service record as your sheriff. I have performed my duties in a fair, impartial and responsible manner and have a good working relationship with the judiciary, other law enforcement agencies and the public.

Budgetary restraints affect the services and programs provided by the office. Many of the goals for my second term are merely building on the successes that we have seen these past four years.

Reallocation of patrol assets from Interstate 70 to other areas within the county has already begun. My Criminal Justice Coordinating Committee is being expanded to a Community

Letter Drop

Our Readers Sound Off

Action Group. Our intern program is being expanded to a Law Enforcement Explorer Post.

Programs for senior citizen and youth groups that address personal and residential safety, drug abuse awareness and traffic safety have been a part of my responsibilities. The budget must be considered in all of these, plus the other areas of patrol and jail operations.

Since the Office of the sheriff is service-oriented, it must be, and has been, responsive to the needs of the citizens we serve. I am always available to address any concerns you have and welcome constructive criticism that will enhance our ability to serve and protect. I have pride in myself, my profession and my office, and ask you to evaluate the performance of the office by the service delivered.

I am asking for your vote for my re-election as sheriff, and because my name doesn't appear on the General Election ballot, I am asking for you to write in my name on the Write-In blank and darken the oval next to it.

I want to thank the Colby Community College criminal justice students for hosting a sheriff's candidate forum to be held in the Frahm Theatre of the Cultural Arts Center at 7

p.m. Monday. Please plan to attend!

Mike Baughn, Brewster Thomas County Sheriff

Candidates human

To the Editor

I want to say that I concerned about the direction our campaign for sheriff of Thomas County has taken. We certainly do not need mud slinging in our county races. This is a position of "peace keeper," and look what seems to be happening. I for one am proud that we have an opportunity to choose an elected sheriff from two qualified and skilled candidates.

No ones faults and mistakes need to be spot lighted. In this race, there are two human beings and both have faults, both have made mistakes. The only way a person could not make mistakes would mean they had never done anything. Surely this is not what you are trying to tell us.

Mike Baughn is human and he has made mistakes. It does indeed concern me that some persons have taken his honest admission of mistakes and turned this into ammunition against him. My mother always told me that only the ones without faults and sins would live in a glass house. I am 70 plus and I have never seen anyone living in a glass house. Have you?

I am pleased with the job Mike Baughn has done in his first term. Let's let him use all this experience in a second term as Thomas County sheriff.

Fawna J. Haremza-McFee, Colby

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