

from our viewpoint...

Gloves come off; no knockout punch

The gloves may have come off for the second presidential candidate debate Tuesday, but neither side came close to a knockout punch.

The town hall format was supposed to benefit Republican candidate Sen. John McCain, but Democratic candidate Sen. Barack Obama appeared as comfortable with the open format that allowed the two men to move around and get close to the audience arranged in a semi-circle.

McCain took advantage of close audience at the end of the debate to touch one of the people who asked a question on the shoulder and shook his hand. The man was a retired U.S. Navy chief, and McCain thanked him for his service and said that as a young Navy lieutenant he had learned much of what he knew in the Navy from the chief's he had served with.

Tom Brokaw of NBC was the moderator, and tried to keep the discussion moving and to follow up the questions giving each candidate a chance to answer. At times Brokaw had to keep reminding both men of the time constraints and the lights around the floor to show when the person's time was up.

Questions asked both by people in the audience and from e-mails sent in covered mostly the economy, but there were questions about foreign policy and a couple of general questions about how each man would handle things if they were elected.

On the economy McCain said he had a new proposal to help the mortgage problem that if elected he would have his Treasury Secretary go out and buy all the bad mortgages and re-negotiate them with the homeowners at a lower rate so they could stay in their homes. He said he felt getting the housing market stabilized was a key to getting the country's economy moving ahead again.

Media and financial experts said after the debate that McCain's plan would add another \$300 billion to the already \$700 billion that Congress passed last week, and most polls indicated it was not something the public felt was a good idea.

McCain had promised before the debate he was taking the gloves off and would go after Obama on several areas. To those watching McCain did appear more aggressive in some of his attacks on Obama's record, but in nearly every situation Obama seemed to be able to blunt the attack.

Probably one of two memorable points of the debate were when McCain was talking about an energy bill on the floor of the Senate. It was "loaded down with goodies, billions for the oil companies, and it was sponsored by Bush and Cheney. You know who voted for it? You might never know. That one (pointing to Obama). You know who voted against it? Me."

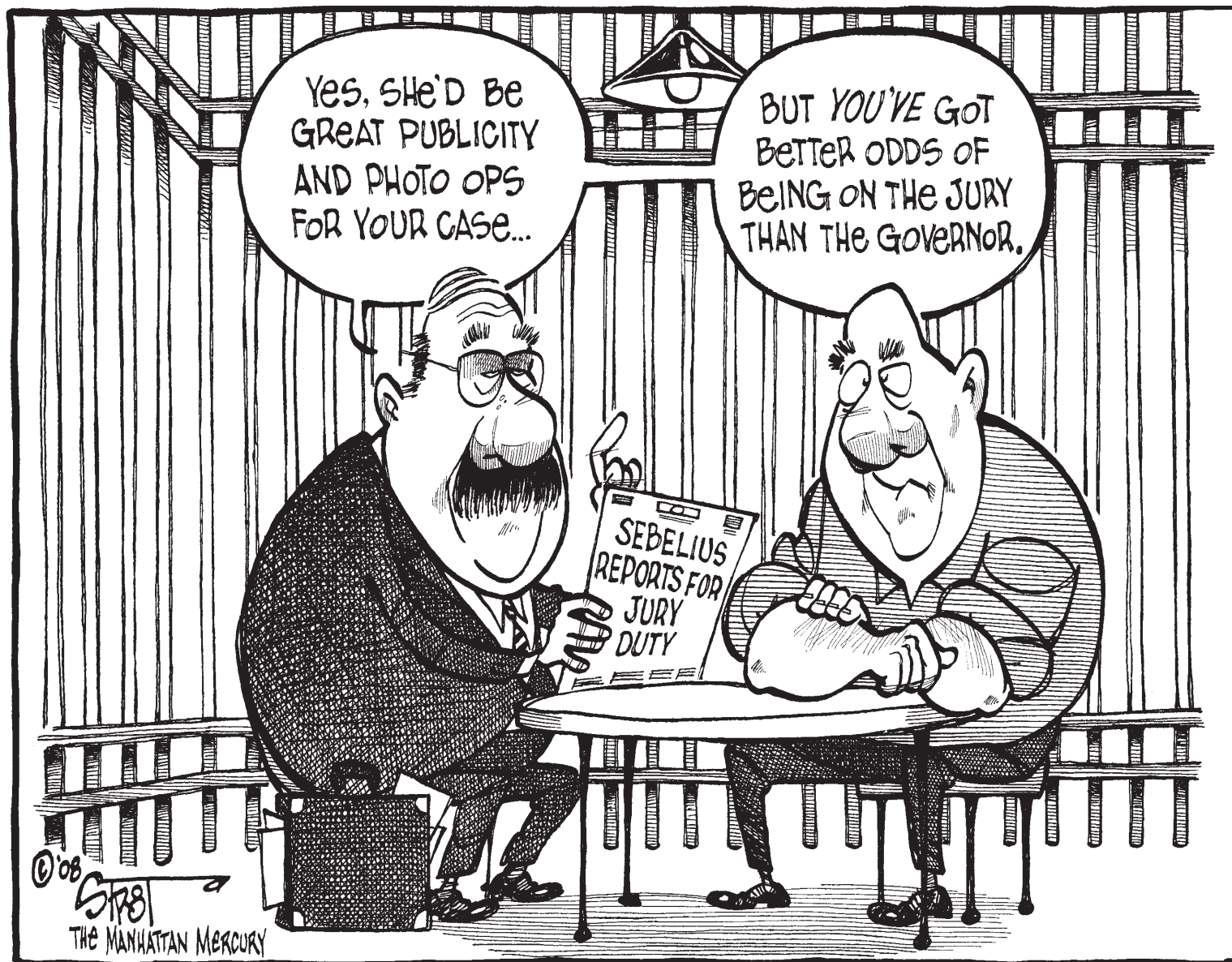
Talking about understanding his tax plan Obama said, "... I think it's important to understand, we're not going to solve Social Security and Medicare unless we understand the rest of our tax policies. And you know, Sen. McCain, I think the "Straight Talk Express" lost a wheel on that one.

"So let's be clear about my tax plan and Sen. McCain's, because we're not going to be able to deal with entitlements unless we understand the revenues coming in. I want to provide a tax cut for 95 percent of Americans, 95 percent."

The third and final presidential debate will be at 7 p.m. on Wednesday at Hofstra University, Hempstead, N.Y., with Bob Schieffer of CBS News moderating.

Local races in many of the battleground states and the huge increase in registered voters will be something to watch as we get closer to this important point in the nation's political history.

— Tom Betz



Problems with the peace symbol

"What's the big deal with the peace symbol? Why don't you like it? I think they're cute." Our 13-year-old daughter said while we were shopping for back-to-school clothing and school supplies.

You can't miss it. More and more, they are appearing and popping up everywhere. We saw peace symbols covering every surface imaginable; earrings, necklaces, purses and many different styles of shirts at various stores including at-shirt of Hello Kitty sitting atop the huge retro symbol, plus more. But they are not just for girls. Guys' t-shirts, belts, backpacks, and posters for either sex abound throughout the shopping mall.

But don't think they are just on inexpensive items like bumper stickers. The resurrected peace sign is on Fendi bags, limited-edition VW cars and even high-end jewelry. Tiffany advertises a platinum peace sign pendant covered in 4.8 carats of round-cut diamonds worth \$4,500.

The peace sign provokes different feelings. To us, symbol represents the 1960s counter-culture of the hippies and anti-war protesters. To others, it has just the opposite effect. To them it symbolizes a utopian world of peace and unity.

Many trace the symbol's origin to a 1958 nuclear weapons protest march when British artist Gerald Holtom created a design for the CND (Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament). Holtom, a former WWII conscientious objector from London persuaded the group of which he was a member, the Direct Action Committee Against Nuclear War (DAC), that a visual image would help in conveying their message to "Ban the Bomb."

After considering a few different designs, Holtom settled on using the semaphore-the flag-signaling alphabet. The letter N, representing nuclear, has the signaler's arms pointing down at angle, super-imposed on the letter



floyd, mary brown

• commentary

D for disarmament. The semaphore letters are surrounded by a circle to symbolize Earth.

It wasn't long before the design traveled to America where other movements ranging from the anti-Vietnam protests, the counter-culture of the '60s and '70s and the environmentalists used it.

American pacifist Ken Kolsbun wrote the book, "Peace: The Biography of a Symbol." He says, "The symbol really got going over here during the 1960s and '70s, when it became associated with anti-Vietnam protests." The anti-war protests and presence of the symbol grew in correlation to the fighting in Vietnam, Kolsbun said. "This, of course, led some people to condemn it as a communist sign."

However, if Holtom did some research, he would have found that the symbol had already been used — by the Nazi Germany 3rd Panzer Division, wearing them on their uniform from 1941 to 1945.

While some say it's 50 years old, others maintain it goes back to the time of Nero persecuting the early Christians, thereby calling it a Nero cross or Broken cross because Saint Peter was purportedly hung on a cross up-side down by Nero. Others point out that it resembles the ancient Nordic and Germanic pagan rune symbol for death. And then there are those folks who argue it can be found on some Nazi SS officer's graves.

"I remember coming home one day with a shirt with a huge peace symbol on it because I thought it looked cool," said one middle-aged Christian woman named Melanie. "My mom flipped and I couldn't understand why.

I had never heard of it representing anything negative. Upon learning of its origins, I couldn't with a good conscience wear it knowing it had represented hate toward my faith."

Everywhere you look now you will see the sign. The design is especially prevalent anywhere items for teenagers and young adults are sold.

To most young people, they think they are cute, in vogue and popular. But anyone of an older generation often associates the peace symbol with anti-war protesters. It brings back memories from our own youth of hippies with their promotion of the counterculture with its anti-Western and anti-Christian views, stoned, loitering and smelling of illegal drugs. In the 1960s, years before this generation of youth was ever born, hippies were sticking flowers in National Guard rifles and tripping-out at Woodstock. Images of anti-war protesters scorning and spitting on Vietnam veterans brings back negative visceral feelings about the peace symbol for us.

To celebrate the Big 5-0 for the peace sign, chic New York department store Barney's is throwing a Peace and Love holiday extravaganza this fall called "Have a Hippie Holiday." Barney's asked top designers top to create dresses inspired by the peace symbol. In addition, the store is featuring items it commissioned such as tie-dye Converse hi-top shoes and a pricey peace-sign key ring. Barney's British creative director, Simon Doonan, says "It's a symbol of the mainstreaming of counter-culture ideas, of things that were part of the alternative lifestyle — like environmentalism...it's that ultimately what the hippies would have wanted?"

Floyd and Mary Beth Brown are bestselling authors and speakers. Together they write a national weekly column. To comment on this column, e-mail browns@caglecartoons.com.

Whodunit?



michael reagan

• making sense

I listen to all this talk in the media about the failure of the bailout in the House last Monday — what happened? Where did it go wrong? Why didn't it pass? They're running around pointing fingers — saying it was the Democrats, it was the Republicans, it was the White House — and nobody has a clue of what really happened and who made it happen.

They should have asked my wife, Colleen. That night she put her finger on it, saying that she — and millions of angry Americans who were dead-set against bailing out the very people who caused this mess — were the ones who killed the measure.

Congress was deluged by a flood of phone calls and e-mails all warning that Americans were violently opposed to the bailout and would exact punishment at the polls next month from members who voted for it. The people spoke loud and clear, and their voices were heard on Capitol Hill.

As Colleen said to me, it just may be that we're smarter than those people in Washington and Wall Street who think we're a bunch of ninnyes who they can con whenever they feel like it. We get it and we understand it.

They forgot what Abraham Lincoln advised when he said, "You can fool all the people some of the time, and some of the people all the time, but you cannot fool all the people all of the time."

This was one of the times they tried to fool all of us. It didn't work. Back to the drawing boards.

We looked at it and we saw fear-mongering — attempts to panic us into believing that the

banks had no money to lend, and credit was dried up and loans were almost impossible to get — all being peddled from the White House, the Treasury and the Fed, and all the way down to the House and Senate, Wall Street and much of the media.

We knew that was untrue because our daughter, Ashley, had just qualified and easily obtained a mortgage on a \$360,000 townhouse from a small local bank. The bank had foreclosed on the house and was stuck with a defaulted mortgage of \$560,000. Ashley, who is 25 and a schoolteacher, got the townhouse for \$200,000 under what the bank held in bad paper.

Home sales in California in August were up 56 percent over August a year ago. Why? Because now is a good time to get in. There are all kinds of bargains available. Now there are possibilities of making a profit on investments. The market was up Tuesday. Why? Because it was a good time to get in. Maybe America just got it right.

Monday the market went down 6.7 percent, and it was panic time. Back in 1987, when my dad was president, the market dropped 22.6 percent — a 508-point drop in one day — it was the largest single drop in the history of the market.

Did President Reagan panic? Were there calls for bailouts? No. Instead, my dad simply said hold the course — what goes down must in fact go up. He made sure that there was no panic. By remaining calm and steady he kept the nation and the market calm, and what happened? Since 1987, the market has been up as high as almost 12,000 points. Now it's down to a little over 10,000. In 1987, the market dropped all the way down to about 1786 points. And we didn't panic.

What's going on now in Washington is a panic-driven attempt to cope with a temporary problem. We seem to have forgotten the old adage about the foolishness of acting in haste leading to repenting in leisure.

Mike Reagan, the elder son of the late President Ronald Reagan, is heard on talk radio stations nationally. E-mail comments to Reagan@caglecartoons.com.

Letter Policy

The Goodland Star-News encourages and welcomes letters from readers. Letters should be typewritten, and must include a telephone number and a signature. Unsigned letters will not be published. Form letters will be rejected, as will letters deemed to be of no public interest or considered offensive. We reserve the right to edit letters for length and good taste. We encourage letters, with address and phone numbers, by e-mail to: <star-news@nw-kansas.com>.

The Goodland Star-News

(USPS No. 222-460. ISSN 0893-0562)

Member: Kansas Press Association

Inland Press Association Colorado Press Association

National Newspaper Association

e-mail: star-news@nwkansas.com

Steve Haynes, President

Tom Betz, Editor

Pat Schiefen, Society Editor

Sharon Corcoran, Reporter

Jordie Mann, Jessica Corbin, Advertising Depr.

Sheila Smith, Office Manager



Nor'west Press

Jim Bowker, General Manager

Richard Westfahl, Betty Morris, James Jackson

Lana Westfahl, James Ornelas, Tasha Shores

Barbara Ornelas, Elizabeth Brock, Judy McKnight



nwkansas.com

N.T. Betz, Director of Internet Services

(ntbetz@nwkansas.com)

Evan Barnum, Systems Admin.(support@nwkansas.com)

Published every Tuesday and Friday except the days observed for New Year's Day, July 4th and Christmas Day, at 1205 Main Ave., Goodland, Kan. 67735.

Periodicals postage paid at Goodland, Kan. 67735; entered at the Goodland, Kan., Post Office under the Act of Congress of March 8, 1878.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The Goodland Star-News, 1205 Main Ave., Goodland, Kan. 67735.

TELEPHONE: (785) 899-2338. Editorial e-mail: star-news@nwkansas.com. Advertising questions can be sent to: goodlandads@nwkansas.com.

The Goodland Star-News assumes no liability for mistakes or omissions in advertising or failure to publish beyond the actual cost of the ad.

SUBSCRIPTIONS: In Sherman County and adjacent counties: three months, \$29; six months, \$46; 12 months, \$81. Out of area, weekly mailing of two issues: three months, \$39; six months, \$54; 12 months, \$89 (All tax included). Mailed individually each day: (call for a price).

Incorporating:

The Goodland Daily News

1932-2003

The Sherman County Herald

Founded by Thomas McCants

1935-1989

THE SHERMAN COUNTY STAR

Founded by Eric and

Roxie Yonkey

1994-2001

Nor'West Newspapers

Haynes Publishing Company