

McCain's team scores points with surprise pick

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

Long holiday keeps her busy

Because it's the Labor Day weekend, Jim thinks we have to work even harder. Saturday, I made four batches of plum jam and he went to the lumber yard to pick up materials for another job.

This morning, I went to the kitchen to pour a second cup of coffee and heard building noises from the front porch. It was barely light and he was nailing wainscoting to the walls of the screened-in porch. OK, so it actually has to have screening before it can be called a screened-in porch. But the wainscoting brings it one step closer to screen installation.

Have you seen the television commercial for the building-supply company that reminds a husband of all the jobs he promised to finish before the end of summer? The last line is, "Summer's almost over". Maybe Jim's feeling the pressure.

—ob—

My daughter Kara called last Monday to tell me how her daughter Taylor's first day of school had gone. It was a new school for Taylor, and she didn't know anyone. Kara has always taken the day off from her work to make the first day special for Taylor. She said she and her husband Adam drove Taylor to her new school. At the front door, Kara said she knelt down and asked Taylor if she could kiss her good-bye.

In horror, Taylor replied, "Mom,



Out Back

By Carolyn Sue Kelley-Plotts
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I'm a fourth grader."

One thing Taylor has going for her is her ability to make friends easily. Kara said Taylor was already talking to a girl she had met walking in the door. I never worry about Taylor — her personality will carry her through anything.

—ob—

I better get back to work. I hear a basket of tomatoes calling my name. Thought I would try something different this year: I want to make tomato preserves, mainly because we still have jars and jars of canned tomatoes left over from last year.

I see lots more chili on the menu this winter.

From the Bible

And it came to pass, as Jesus sat at meat in the house, behold, many publicans and sinners came and sat down with him and his disciples.

And when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto his disciples, Why eateth your Master with publicans and sinners?

But when Jesus heard that, he said unto them, They that be whole need not a physician, but

they that are sick.

But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

Matthew 9:10-13



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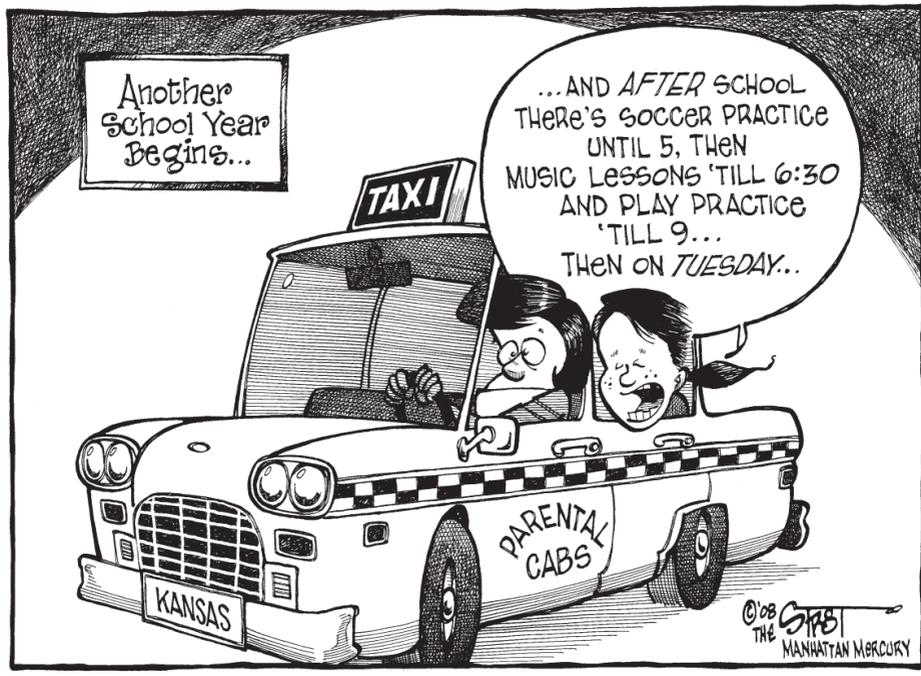
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'Egg Man' cracks them up

Steve and I really get cracked up about omelets

Sorry about that. However, several years ago we met "The Egg Man" at a Kansas Press Association convention. I'm sure the guy has a name, but no one ever uses it. He's just the "Egg Man."

He works for the American Egg Board, traveling around the country teaching people to make really quick omelets. In fact, if I remember correctly, he's some sort of national fast-omelet champion or something. Anyway, he shows people how to make an omelet in 40 seconds.

The secret is having a really hot nine-inch stick-proof skillet and all the ingredients chopped, stirred and ready to go.

For each omelet, you break two eggs and two tablespoons of water, plus salt and pepper, in a bowl and mix well. You heat one tablespoon of butter or oil in your skillet. You pour in your egg mixture and move it around until it is almost set. Then you put in your personal ingredients — meat, cheese, green onion, pepper, tomato, whatever — on one half of the omelet. Flip the other half over the ingredients. Cook for a few seconds and then flip to cook on the other side. Slide the perfect (sometimes) omelet onto a plate and do the next one the same way. It's fast food at home.

At our house, we usually split the duties. We put everything from silverware to jelly on the table before we start cooking. Then, I do the chopping and Steve prepares the eggs. While he cooks the omelets, I make the toast. It's a fast, cheap



Open Season

By Cynthia Haynes
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supper in about 15 minutes, including finding the green onions in the bottom of the hydrator and tossing out the bad ones.

Even so, when my friend Pat gave me a recipe off the Internet for a Ziploc omelet, I was intrigued. Steve was out of town and I decided to try the recipe, which touts itself as a great way to fix breakfast for a party or family get-together.

Have each person write their name with a permanent marker on a quart-size Ziploc freezer bag.

Crack two large or extra-large eggs into the bag and shake to combine. Add your pre-chopped goodies and salt and pepper. Shake each bag, press to remove the air and zip 'em up.

Cook in a large pot of boiling water for exactly 13 minutes. It says you can cook up to six to eight in a single large pot.

Open the bags and the omelets will roll out ready to eat.

Thirteen minutes is forever when you're on your lunch hour, though, and waiting for the darn thing to cook. I made my toast, started another load of laundry, put the wet clothes in the dryer and folded the dry ones, fed the dog, watered the cats, picked the dead leaves off the

house plants and checked my watch 10 times.

At the end of 13 minutes, my omelet was still a little runny. I think I didn't get quite all the air out of my bag, so I resealed it, weighted it down with a heavy spoon and cooked it another minute.

The result was everything the recipe claimed. It was a beautiful omelet and rolled right out of the bag.

I thought it was a little tough, but that may have been the extra cooking, and I missed the nice browned edges Steve's masterpieces get. However, it was tasty and if you don't have Steve around to do the cooking or need to make more than one or two in a short time, it works well.

For those who don't care for the eggs smushed up in omelets, the Egg Board web site offers more than a hundred recipes for everything from homemade mayonnaise to orange-spice pickled eggs. Just go to www.aeb.org to learn how to turn hen fruit into anything from a main dish to a dessert.

Now, I wonder if there's a National Bread Board to tell me how to do other things beside turn my slightly stale slices into toast.

Wild berries small but tasty

Few delicacies bring greater bliss than wild berries, but few things are harder to find, more difficult to gather — or smaller.

Years of breeding have made the domestic strawberry a huge, luscious lump of tasty flesh, an inch or more across.

To find a wild strawberry, you nearly need a magnifying glass. If you happen to stumble across a field of them on the right day, you might fill a cup. Maybe. But you'd have to spend hours on your knees, sorting through the leaves they hide under.

The reward is great when you find some, but gathering enough to do anything with is more than difficult. The berries, an eighth to a quarter inch across, are seldom plentiful.

I don't recommend anyone plan on making wild strawberry preserves, let's put it that way. Life is too short.

Wild raspberries can be the same. They're small, too, usually less than half the size of a backyard raspberry. They can have a more intense flavor, and they grow on bushes (called canes, technically) that sprout up into the air.

Both are usually found along alpine streams, by mountain trails, in meadows and on rocky slopes far way. The distance makes them doubly rare and infinitely more desirable.

Then there are gooseberries, again half the size of the domestic produce, but dark and intense when ripe. These are protected by the same sharp barbs that any self-respecting gooseberry bush bristles with.

Remember also that the competi-



Along the Sappa

By Steve Haynes
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tion for these goodies is, along with wandering tourists and the old lady down the street, bears. Big as they are, bears are omnivores that spend much of their time digging for grubs and gobbling berries.

Then there is my dog, Annie, who has developed a taste for raspberries, stripping them right off the canes with her tongue. You'd think the stickers would hurt, but it doesn't seem to faze her.

Dry years such as the mountains have seen recently produce small, tough, not-so-tasty berries. But in much of Colorado, this has been a wet year. And while we were on vacation last week, between bouts of work and fishing, we met friends from Oberlin and went berry picking.

The strawberries were mostly gone. Gooseberries were few and hard to find. Chokecherries, well, some people make jelly with them, but frankly, small and sour and nasty as they are, I say leave them for the bears.

I don't know what prompted Cynthia to bring containers, but she did. Usually, we just eat a few berries and go on. But the raspberries in one canyon were so ripe and luscious and juicy, we just started picking.

They grow right along the road,

and even the depredations of jam-makers from town could not thin this source much. We picked for more than an hour, returning home with nearly two quarts of tiny, delicious berries.

We ate berries, we put them over ice cream, we put them on cereal and poured cream on them. We sugared them, we ate them raw, we had them with milk. We got rid of a quart that way, and sent our guest off with more.

The next day, we picked another quart for a friend to make a pie with. Annie and I ate our fill as well.

And still the berries are growing, tempting us, tempting the bears. Other canyons had only a normal crop, so who knows what happened in this patch. Likely, there'll never be another berry year like this again, not in our lifetimes.

But for one glorious week, we were in the berries, fingers stained red, bellies satiated, tongues tantalized. It was bliss, I tell you. Berry bliss.



Visitor's letter was priceless

To the Editor:

My comments for the article titled: "Dallas visitor enjoys small-town atmosphere" in the Aug. 20 issue of *The Oberlin Herald*:

Taming the local golf course — \$15

Going to the local drug store for a

Letter to the Editor

hand-made Orangeade — \$1.50

The look on Brad's face after entering (and hitting his head) on the

wrong car — PRICELESS!

Vicki (Shirley) Waldron Bangor, Pa.