

## McCain, Obama spar, but no clear knockout

When the two principal candidates for president took the stage Friday night in Mississippi, some people expected it to be a definitive show and produce a clear winner.

Just getting to the debate produced some pressure, with Sen. John McCain saying earlier he wanted the event delayed because of the country's financial crisis. He had vowed to suspend his campaign to return to Washington to work on a solution.

Sen. Barack Obama scored some points when he said he did not see a reason to delay the debate, as neither he nor McCain were central figures in the negotiations. In a jibe at McCain, he said as a president he would have to be able to handle more than one thing at a time.

Both men flew down to Mississippi on Friday, and put Oxford on the presidential history map with the first debate of this campaign.

Many had expected this to be McCain's debate from the start, as it was supposed to be on foreign policy, which is not considered Obama's forte. However, with the financial crisis on everyone's mind, moderator Jim Lehrer gave both men an opportunity to talk about what they would do as president if faced with such a situation.

The first 40 minutes were spent on the economy, with Obama making some points, but McCain kept hammering away at wasteful spending in Washington.

In the second half, which turned more to the foreign arena, McCain appeared to be more comfortable, but Obama was able to make some major points on Iraq and Afghanistan.

At the end, both men appeared with their wives and shook hands with many of the people who attended.

Neither scored any kind of major knockout, and as you would expect, both later claimed they'd won. McCain's staff put out a press

release saying he had won almost before the debate was over.

It was something of a setback for the Arizona senator, who has fallen off the pace and is back to trailing Obama in most of the national polls by 2 to 9 points.

This week, the two vice presidential candidates will face off in St. Louis, and a lot of people will be interested to see how well Alaska Gov. Sara Palin has been prepared for the meeting with Sen. Joe Biden. Palin's entry a month ago as McCain's partner gave the Republicans a big bounce coming out of the convention in St. Paul, but questions have apparently softened that effect.

Thursday's debate, starting at 7 p.m. at Washington University in St. Louis, will be moderated by Public Broadcasting's Gwen Ifill.

There will be two more debates between McCain and Obama before the election, and some experts think a lot of the undecided voters may wait until the last debate to decide who to support when they vote on Tuesday, Nov. 4. The second debate will be at 7 p.m. on Tuesday, Oct. 7, at Belmont University in Nashville, moderated by NBC's Tom Brokaw. The final event will be at 7 p.m. on Wednesday, Oct. 15, at Hofstra University in Hempstead, N.Y., moderated by CBS's Bob Schieffer.

Friday, many experts and many of the national polls give Obama the win. Being on top in the polls, the Illinois senator has to be careful not to give McCain a big opening, and being behind, McCain wants to be more aggressive and find a way to get Obama to give him that.

The debates are not really high drama, but as a part of the American political process, they are an interesting exercise to watch.

— Tom Betz,  
The Goodland Star-News



## Every day could be wash day

Here it is Monday again. And that means laundry.

Remember that childhood nursery rhyme? I don't know it all, but it went something like: "Monday, washday; Tuesday, green beans; Wednesday, soup." But, we always said, "Sooo-ooop."

Actually, every day could be wash day now. The convenience of automatic washing machines has seen to that. Sometimes I lament that we're wearing our clothes out washing them so much. I should just be thankful we have plenty of clothes to wear.

At the risk of sounding like an old lady, I remember what it was like when I was a kid and I got home from school. My mother would say, "Get out of your school clothes and put on your work clothes."

I don't think kids know the difference nowadays. The clothes they play in are as good as the clothes they wear to school. In fact, they are one in the same. True, not many kids (unless they're lucky enough to live on a farm) have chores these days.

But, when I was a kid — Oh, my. There's that old lady coming out again — there were cows to be milked, cream to be separated, calves to be fed and hogs to be slopped. Not to mention gathering a bushel of corn cobs from the hog's pen, getting a bucket of coal and gathering the eggs.

At any rate, you did not wear your school clothes for chores or play. And I know we wore our clothes more than once before they were washed. My mother raised all us kids without the benefit of running water in the house.

So wash day was a big deal. It entailed pulling a hose from the pump in the middle of the farm yard through the gate, up the front porch through the kitchen door and into huge boilers Mom had on the stove. After the water was good and hot, she would have one of the boys —



### Out Back

By Carolyn Sue Kelley-Plotts  
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whichever one was closest — carry the boiler to the north porch where the double-tub Dexter washing machine was waiting.

The Tide and hot water would go in one side and warm rinse water in the other. There was a mounted wringer located in the middle of the tubs so you could wring the clothes from one tub to the other. Then there were the two cold rinse tubs with the proper amount of bluing added to the final rise to make the whites bright.

We always started with the whites, then the light colors, followed by the dark colors and finally ending with Dad's really dirty overalls. The policy was I got to keep any money I found in the overalls, which I think was Mom's clever way of getting me to clean out the pockets. You never knew what you might find in his pockets, and you always had to turn them wrong-side-out. His pockets could be full of alfalfa seed, dirt, nails, washers or bolts. Looking back, I think my mother occasionally "salted" the pockets with coins to insure my continued interest.

By the time the wash was done, that first water was pretty black. In fact, there would be a layer of mud on the bottom of the tub.

Wash day wasn't too bad in good weather, but in the dead of winter, it was grim. More than once we brought sheets in off the line stiff as a board. I always wondered if they would break if you hit them with a hammer.

My mom never complained about the hard work, but when she started

her job in town where there was a laundromat, the old Dexter was the first thing to go.

So perhaps, I shouldn't complain, either. Instead, I'll go push a couple of buttons and set down for that second cup of coffee while the machine does all the work.

—ob—

We sure had fun Saturday night at the annual Lyle Community Building Fund Benefit and Potluck. It was homegrown fun at its best.

Of course, the food was fantastic. The tables were practically groaning with the load.

After supper, there was entertainment. In addition to some great bluegrass music, we had a reading, some singers, a clarinet solo and a couple of girls who danced a jig.

We made some money to help operate the building for another year and had a good time doing it.

### From the Bible

And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.

I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.

Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.

Revelation 22:12-14

## Roses take a ride at airport

Steve ended his year as president of the National Newspaper Association on Saturday in fine fashion.

The convention in St. Paul was a success in terms of speakers, presentations and teaching sessions. Almost everyone seemed to have a good time and Steve shook so many hands he caught a cold.

I ended up with an overweight suitcase and six long-stemmed red roses.

After handing over the gavel to the new president, Steve got a plaque and a handshake. I got a half dozen American Beauties with greenery.

We had flown to St. Paul with two pieces of carry-on luggage and one checked bag each — the maximum allowed without paying an extra \$50 to the airline.

But we collected books, plaques, just plain stuff and of course, six long-stemmed American Beauty red roses.

At the Frontier counter, I noted that our big checked bags weighed 55 pounds, but since the girls at the desk were admiring my roses, I hoped they wouldn't notice.

The one doing our tickets didn't, but her friend finally did.

Steve and I sat on the floor and dug stuff out of the big bag to put in



### Open Season

By Cynthia Haynes  
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a the smaller checked piece. There wasn't much we could do about the weight of the suits and sports coats, but we gave 'er another try.

With a silent prayer for the sauce in the wrong suitcase, we picked up our carry-ons and the roses and headed down the concourse.

I had a long, white flower box for the roses, but I left the lid off as I walked along. The eyes of every woman who saw them would light up.

At the loading area, we walked on board without a murmur from anyone — two carry-ons each and that illegal box of roses.

We closed the box, and the flowers rode comfortably in the overhead bin on top of someone else's clothes.

At Denver, we deplaned and headed for the restrooms. I was left to watch the luggage while Steve went. I set the roses on a nearby

bench and pulled by purse from a carryon.

Then we were off down the concourse.

I read the sign at the end — No reentry and just as I stepped over the line of no return, it hit me.

I didn't have my roses. They were still on the bench on the other side of the airport.

The security man was sympathetic but firm. No meant no.

However, Jim Campbell, a Frontier customer service scout, came to my rescue. He offered to go see if the flowers were still where I had left them.

In about 15 minutes, he was back with a smile and a box of long-stemmed red American Beauties.

He wouldn't take a tip, saying it was against the rules.

The roses, barbecue sauce and I all got home safely, thanks to my friends at the airport.

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## Your money is safe, sound

### Letter to the Editor

To the Editor:

Headlines can be misleading, and in a time of financial crisis, that can make matters worse.

Pick up a paper, or listen to the quick bursts of news on television or radio, and what you get are, "a banking crisis" and "market turmoil." That's only intensified on the rare occasion that a bank fails.

Let's set the record straight: The nation's banking industry — traditional federally insured, federally regulated depository institutions like your local commercial bank — is safe and sound. Your money in a commercial bank is covered by Federal Deposit Insurance Corp. insurance. That means your money in a federally insured bank is protected to at least \$100,000, with additional coverage available for money held in joint ownership or payable-on-death contracts. Up to \$250,000 insurance is available for a retirement account.

The FDIC which guarantees your accounts has more than \$45 billion in assets to protect depositors like you and me. In addition, banks in Kansas had historic levels of capital at the end of June. Bank capital, required by regulation, totals over \$5 billion, up from past years. Capital, which represents personal ownership investment, is a bank's buffer or first line defense against losses.

The challenge we face is that words matter. When one word is used to mean several things, it creates confusion. For example, we know what a bank is — or at least we think we do. Sometimes a business that wants to add status to its name will call itself a bank, even though it is not an insured depository institution.

Bear Stearns, Lehman Brothers and Merrill Lynch are not commercial banks but rather investment

banks whose deposits are not insured. The word bank has also been applied to mortgage firms. They are not banks either, because their function, purpose and regulation differ from federally insured depository institutions.

You may have read recently that a private insurance company which had a product to insure deposits in excess of FDIC coverage got out of that market. This was a business decision made by one insurance company. It apparently was based on something other than the condition of the banking industry in Kansas, as other companies still offer this product.

Having a safe and sound banking system to rely on shows the importance of the role banks play in our communities and in our nation's economy.

They are the source of stability and of growth, regardless of their asset size, charter type or business plan. And the vast majority of banks today have more capital than the law requires.

Recent events also underscore the fact that there are two ways financial institutions can fail. They can fail due to capital insolvency or because they become liquidity insolvent. What we are experiencing now is a lack of capital for big investment banks. Capital remains strong for commercial banks like those in our towns.

The liquidity crisis comes from a crisis of confidence. In the 1930s, before federal deposit insurance, banks failed because of a crisis of confidence that led to liquidity insolvency. That can also happen

to an investment bank such as Bear Stearns. When there is a crisis of confidence, lending lines are pulled, liquidity evaporates and insolvency is inevitable.

We all know that our financial system is being tested. But we should remember that the system is showing its resiliency.

The Federal Reserve Board has acted to help restore liquidity by assuring everyone that they are responding to the problems in a measured way. The Fed opened up its lending facility, known as the discount window, to Wall Street firms and is working to restore liquidity to the markets.

Meanwhile, those headlines and news reports that keep repeating the word "crisis" overlook the fact that the subprime lending debacle was caused by unregulated mortgage brokers and Wall Street institutions themselves, not by regulated, insured banks.

Federally regulated banks are examined to ensure they employ underwriting practices to limit losses and to promote safe and sound operations.

Our banking system is strong. This time will pass, as have all the others, and the result will be a stronger financial system with fewer unregulated players and a reminder that liquidity and capital are both important to solvency.

Franklin D. Roosevelt's observation half a century ago is still relevant: "The only thing we have to fear is fear itself."

Gary J. Walters  
president, The Bank  
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