



WILLIAMSPORT SUN-GAZETTE

Thursday, September 4, 2008

www.sungazette.com

207th Year, No. 248

50¢ Newsstand/39¢ Home Delivery

PALIN POWER



Reaction mixed by area residents over veep choice

By MIKE REUTHER
mreuther@sungazette.com

Area residents and politicians offered mixed reactions to Republican presidential candidate John McCain's selection of Alaska Gov. Sarah Palin as his running mate.

Glenn Thompson, a Republican candidate for the 5th District's seat in Congress, called it a good move by McCain.

"Gov. Palin is well-known as a strong advocate for the development of our domestic energy resources," he said. "Her voice is exactly what we need on a national stage to promote a strong energy policy that concentrates on making the United States energy-independent."

Thompson pointed to Palin's strong family values as well as her positions against abortion and on behalf of the Second Amendment.

"Gov. Palin and I also share a common bond as we are both proud parents of soldiers who served in Iraq and we understand the needs and objectives of our young men and women serving overseas," he said.

Readers tell us what they think

(See REACTION, Page A-5)

ASSOCIATED PRESS
Republican vice presidential candidate Sarah Palin pumps her fist during her speech at the Republican National Convention in St. Paul, Minn., Wednesday.

Palin mocks Obama; McCain claims nomination

By DAVID ESPO
AP Special Correspondent

ST. PAUL, Minn. — Alaska Gov. Sarah Palin claimed her historic spot on the Republican ticket Wednesday night, uncorking a smiling, slashing attack on Barack Obama and vowing to help presidential candidate John McCain bring real change to Washington. Scarcely known a week ago, she drew tumultuous cheers from the Republican National Convention.

"Victory in Iraq is finally in sight; he wants to forfeit," she said of Obama. "Al-Qaida terrorists still plot to inflict catastrophic harm on America; he's worried that someone won't read them their rights."

The 44-year-old Palin had top billing on the third night of the convention. The first woman vice presidential candidate in party history, she spoke to uncounted millions of viewers at home in her solo national debut.

To the delight of the delegates, McCain strolled unexpectedly onto the convention stage after the speech and

(See PALIN, Page A-5)

AP Analysis: McCain camp plays sexism card for Palin

By RON FOURNIER
Associated Press Writer

ST. PAUL, Minn. — John McCain's campaign could be panicking or politicizing with its claim that sexism lies beneath any questions about Sarah Palin's past.

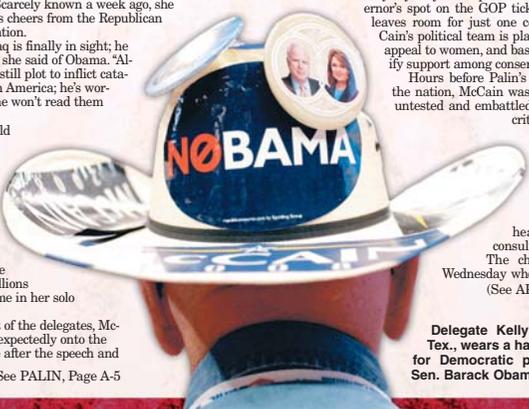
They say they're not panicked — that the Alaska governor's spot on the GOP ticket is secure — so that leaves room for just one conclusion for now: McCain's political team is playing the gender card to appeal to women, and bashing the media to solidify support among conservatives.

Hours before Palin's high-stakes address to the nation, McCain was trying to inoculate his untested and embattled running mate against criticism.

"This is part of a very clever strategy to lead the Democrats into a trap that will end up with them dumping on Gov. Palin and paying a heavy price," said GOP consultant Rich Galen.

The chorus began at dawn Wednesday when senior adviser Steve (See AP ANALYSIS, Page A-5)

ASSOCIATED PRESS
Delegate Kelly Williams of Plano, Tex., wears a hat showing his dislike for Democratic presidential nominee Sen. Barack Obama, D-Ill.



Kohl's saga could reach end tonight

Mayor: Firm sending new contract proposal to satisfy City Council

By R.A. WALKER
rwalker@sungazette.com

Tonight could be the beginning or the end for the downtown Kohl's department store project.

Williamsport Parking Authority members, administration officials and City Council's finance committee struggled for two and a half hours Wednesday with issues related to project.

In the end, there were no recommendations by the committee for or against the four items on tonight's council agenda. Mayor Gabriel J. Campana claims those will break the project if not approved.

The meeting included moments of frustration for all sides and an admission by Pete Sides, the interim parking authority chairman, that communication about the project on occasion had been "very muddled."

The meeting adjourned with clear indications (See KOHLS, Page A-5)



CAMPANA

Bicyclist killed after hit by car in Tioga County

By CHERYL R. CLARKE
cclarke@sungazette.com

TIOGA — A Tioga County man is dead after he was struck by a car while riding his bicycle Tuesday evening in Tioga Township, state police said.

Thomas Kaufmann, 44, of Tioga, died after he was struck by a Volkswagen Beetle driven by Annamae Patterson, 67, of Tioga.

According to Tioga County deputy coroner Bobbie Gee, Kaufmann died instantly of blunt force trauma to the chest and neck about 7:50 p.m.

Kaufmann was riding north along Route 287 when Patterson, who was traveling south, attempted to turn left onto Old Keys Road, state police said. Kaufmann was thrown into the vehicle and then about 10 to 12 feet from his 26-inch Fuji Sport Series bicycle.

Gee said Kaufmann died instantly. He was wearing a bicycle helmet.

Patterson, who was wearing a seat belt, said she didn't see Kaufmann.

Police were assisted at the scene by Lawrenceville and Tioga fire department personnel and Tioga County District Attorney George Wheeler.

The accident is under investigation and is being reconstructed by a crash analysis reconstruction specialist.



Local ministry ready to shed light and power in Gustav's aftermath

By MARK MARONEY
mmaroney@sungazette.com

MORE COVERAGE:
Remnants of Gustav slow recovery attempts ▶ See A9

As he packed electrical equipment Wednesday that will be used to restore temporary power in Gulf Coast regions affected by Hurricane Gustav, Tom Garber of Montoursville was content knowing such efforts might shed light and hope for hundreds of people without power.

After working for 32 years with PPL, Garber volunteers

as president of International Technical Electric and Construction, also known as I-TEC, a non-profit ministry based at 23 Green Hollow Road north of Montoursville, that is prepared to send skilled-laborers and support staff to regions like it did three years ago after Hurri-

cane Katrina. On Wednesday, the group loaded donated generators, electrical cables, clothing and supplies onto tractor-trailers and waited on word from Evangelical Free Church Association and Love Thy Neighbor, two disaster-relief missions, when and where they will be needed.

"This is all I want to do," Garber said during a telephone interview from the (See LOCAL, Page A-5)



DOUG MINER/Sun-Gazette

Paul Kinley, left, and Kerry Grasser of I-TEC load electrical equipment on a truck Wednesday, and will be ready to head for the Gulf Coast as early as this morning.



Kohl's saga could reach end tonight at council meeting

(From Page A-1)
 tions committee members want something firmer than what's been put on the table by the administration. They want to guarantee that Kohl's chain will not back out of the project after the city invests what ultimately will be about \$3 million in up-front costs. That's the estimated amount to buy and demolish the Williamsport Area School District's downtown service center at West Third and William streets, financially help relocate the district's offices and personnel to the Penn Towers building, buy four smaller parcels needed for the department store site and create a construction-ready pad for Kohl's to purchase and build on.

According to the parking authority of Campagna, the city could regain most of its investment and will have a new source of real-estate tax

from a site now tax-exempt.

Council President J. Michael Wiley and Councilman Bill Hall were the only committee members voting on the Kohl's agenda items. Councilman Patrick Marty was present but has abstained for professional reasons from all Kohl's debates and votes.

The mayor asked that the four agenda items remain part of tonight's meeting and predicted a new contract proposal soon will arrive from Kohl's to satisfy council's concerns.

Campagna said it is possible that proposal will arrive within days and even by tonight to serve as a starting-point for further discussions between Kohl's and the city on a binding agreement.

Wiley stressed that the lack of a recommendation should not be viewed as opposition to the issues

under review.

Hall was asked after the meeting if it was fair to suggest he and probably others on council will not vote for the Kohl's agenda items without something more firm from Kohl's.

"That's probably a fair statement," he replied.

Council President J. Marlyne Whaley observed the meeting from the audience and afterward would not predict what council will do tonight. She also continued to express concerns about the facts presented to date.

"The more I hear," she said, "the more it's a tangled web."

Her vote hinges, she added, on whether there is something new "from Kohl's that is acceptable."

The mayor continues to say time is running out and even suggested Wednesday that, if council doesn't

vote "yes" tonight, Kohl's will go to an alternative site outside the city.

Some of what was communicated to council Wednesday also was new to those doing the communicating.

The authority, for example, has a local attorney now communicating with Kohl's and reportedly is finding the corporation more flexible than previously believed.

The authority also is still offering to take over the project from the city but needs the city to buy the school district property first to allow the district to move out. It also needs the city to advance engineering funds to keep the project on Kohl's timetable but promises most of the money fronted by the city will be paid back when the authority buys the site.

In addition, there is a new wrinkle: a proposal by the authority for the city to front the sale of the school

district site and sell it to the authority whether Kohl's proceeds or not with a promise from the authority that it would seek another, still-to-be-found developer for the site.

At the meeting Wednesday was Sophia Daskalakis, owner of the Olive Tree, a Greek restaurant that is one of the parcels needed for the Kohl's project.

She closed her business two months ago after receiving a preliminary \$10,000 payment toward its purchase. As the future of the project dragged on, she decided to reopen, at least temporarily. But, she said business has not been good and her future is uncertain, despite early promises to her by city officials about the project.

Disappointed and worried, she said the situation sometimes feels like being "in the Twilight Zone."

Local ministry ready to shed light, power in Gustav's aftermath

(From Page A-1)
 mission site at a former lumber yard about two and a half miles north of Interstate 180 off Route 87.

"We're gearing up to be of assistance again," said Paul Kinley, the ministry's coordinator. "These agencies are approved by the Federal Emergency Management Agency and we're waiting for response from that area."

"Our purpose is broader than disaster relief," Kinley said. "What we do here is to make an eternal impact, something that will last beyond ourselves."

The volunteers are prepared to stay as long as needed, he said.

The group took 32 generators to disaster-relief agencies after Katrina, he said. "We're also available should the power go out in this region," he said.

The non-profit group exists to meet the technical needs of missionaries, hospitals and orphanages worldwide, Kinley said. It also actively supports local and international disaster relief.

All indications were I-TEC would see the green light to depart as early as today.

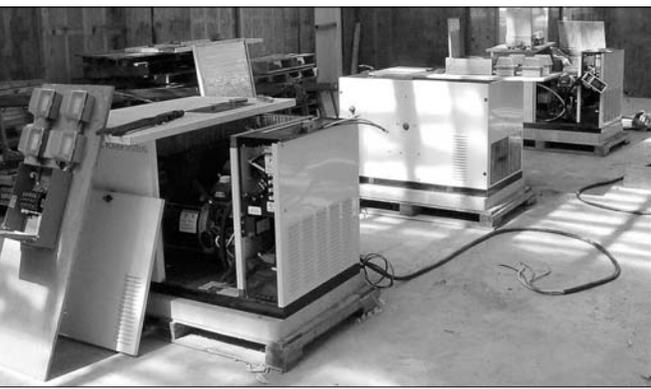
"An estimated 1.4 million people remain without power," Kinley said. "Our mission is to provide temporary power to churches in the disaster area in order that they may become the lighthouse in their affected areas."

Quoting from Proverbs 3:27 in the Bible, Kinley said: "Do not withhold good from those that deserve it when it is within your power to act."

"Our purpose is broader than disaster relief," Kinley said. "What we do here is to make an eternal impact, something that will last beyond ourselves."

The volunteers are prepared to stay as long as needed, he said.

The group took 32 generators to disaster-relief agencies after Katrina, he said. "We're also available should the power go out in this region," he said.



Portable electric generators are prepared for transport by International Technical Electric and Construction, also known as I-TEC, a non-profit ministry based at 23 Green Hollow Road north of Moutonsville.

DOUG MINER/Sun-Gazette

PPL also is assisting with the recovery.

About 143 PPL contractors were sent to the Gulf Coast to help contractors restore power, according to Teri MacBride, a PPL spokes-

woman. MacBride said that includes power line workers and tree trimmers from across the PPL service area.

"Our contractors went to the region to help get power lines and electrical systems

restored," she said. "That does not cut us short. We're happy to support our fellow utilities in their times of need as they supported us many times in the past."

Attempts to reach other

spokespeople for agencies that often send volunteers and staff to disaster zones, such as the American Red Cross and Salvation Army, were not successful Wednesday.

Palin power

(From Page A-1)
 hugged his running mate.

"Don't you think we made the right choice for vice president?" he said as his delegates roared their approval. It was an unspoken reference to the convention-week controversy that has greeted her, including the disclosure that her 17-year-old unmarried daughter was pregnant.

The packed convention hall exploded in cheers as McCain stood with Palin and her family — including mother-to-be Bristol and the father, 18-year-old Levi Johnston.

The audience also shouted in agreement as line after line delivered by the 44-year-old Alaska governor by the first woman ever named to a Republican national ticket.

She had top billing at the convention on a night delegates also lined up for a noisy roll call of the states to deliver their presidential nomination to McCain. At 72, the Arizona senator is the oldest first-time nominee in history, collecting his party's top prize after pursuing it for the better part of a decade.

Palin drew cheers from the moment she stepped onto the convention stage, hundreds of camera flashes reflecting off her glasses.

McCain, the first Republican with high command had any doubt about her ability at the convention podium, they needn't have. With her youthful experience as a sportscaster and time spent in the governor's



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Delegate Kendal Unruh of Castle Rock, Colo., shows her support for Republican vice presidential candidate, Alaska Gov. Sarah Palin, during the Republican National Convention in St. Paul, Minn., Wednesday.

office, her timing was flawless, her appeal to the crowd obvious.

"Our family has the same ups and downs as any other, the same challenges and the same joys," she said as the audience signaled its understanding.

In her solo debut on the national stage, she traced her career from the local PTA to the governor's office, casting herself as a maverick in the McCain mold, and seemed to delight in poking fun at her critics and her ticketmate's political rivals.

Since taking office as governor, she said she had taken on the oil in-

dustrial, brought the state budget into surplus and vetoed nearly one-half billion dollars in wasteful spending.

"I thought we could muddle through without the governor's personal chef — although I've got to admit that sometimes my kids sure miss her."

Not surprisingly, her best-received lines were barbs at Obama.

"I guess a small-town mayor is sort of like a 'community organizer,' except that you have actual responsibilities," she said, a reference to Obama's stint as a community organizer.

Reaction mixed from area residents over veep choice

(From Page A-1)
 Thompson said she is ready to lead, as evidenced by her serving as governor of Alaska.

He added she has been "independent of special interests throughout her political career."

Dr. Farouk George, 65, of Williamsport had a completely different take on Palin.

"This probably has been the most outrageous thing that the Republicans have done. Why would you have a governor of a far away state that is snow and ice and a refuge for wildlife? She is a friend of big oil," he said. "She has no executive, foreign policy experience."

Given McCain's age — he's 72 — George says it is simply a bad decision to have someone with so little experience as next in line for the chief executive position.

In summary, this represents how little the Republicans and McCain think of us. They think they can just throw us a bone. They have no respect for us. We have multiple problems and just to give us a girl who could be a president in a heartbeat. It's just terrible. I'm just really upset."

Lycoming County Democratic Chairwoman Jessie Bloom agreed that McCain could have made a better choice for vice president.

"First of all, she's no Hillary

(Clinton). But that's his pick and she really doesn't have any national experience at all," she said. "I know they say Obama doesn't have any experience but at least he was a U.S. senator and a state senator."

Crystal Sponenberg, 47, of Trout Run said she is fine with Palin.

"From what I've been listening to on the TV, she sounds OK to me," she said. "It seems to me they plan to do what is best for the United States."

Sponenberg said she can relate to the most recent news of Palin's 17-year-old daughter becoming pregnant, having gone through a similar experience with her own family.

"It's good they got it (news) out now."

She said she felt McCain's idea was really angry.

She said she felt McCain's idea was really angry. She said she felt McCain's idea was really angry. She said she felt McCain's idea was really angry.

Catherine DeWald of Turbotville said if McCain is looking to bring Hillary Clinton voters to his side, it won't work.

"It was certainly different. It's been a different campaign so far, and it's going to be more interesting before it's over."

Jennifer Geary of Porter Township said Palin could either help McCain get elected or hurt his chances of getting elected.

AP Analysis: McCain camp plays sexism card for Palin

(From Page A-1)
 Schmidt released a statement declaring that the campaign would no longer answer questions about its background check of Palin, a little-known governor whose every blemish is being paraded before Americans.

"The vetting controversy," Schmidt said, acknowledging that McCain has trouble on his hands, "is a faux media scandal designed to destroy the first female Republican nominee for the vice president of the United States who has never been a part of the old boys' network that has come to dominate the news establishment of this country."

It was a two-fer. Schmidt both tried to rally undecided female voters behind McCain's historic pick and prodded conservative Republicans to do what they do every election cycle — blame the media.

And so, Schmidt suggested, the campaign won't explain why Palin

waited until last week to tell the McCain team that her unmarried 17-year-old daughter is five months pregnant.

Or why Palin didn't submit to a face-to-face interview with the head of McCain's search team until a few days before her announcement.

Or why she's accused of improperly ordering the firing of the former public safety commissioner.

Or why she supported the infamous "Bridge to Nowhere" and other pork-barrel projects before telling the nation on Saturday that she was against them.

"This nonsense," Schmidt said, "is over."

Not likely.

Palin is seeking the second most powerful job in the nation. The media views its job as scrutinizing her background, helping voters determine her readiness to serve and raising questions about the decision-making process of the man who

chose her — a man, John McCain, who tells voters he has the experience and judgment to serve as president.

The scrutiny will continue, as it always does, and the betting among leading Republicans is that Palin survives. None of the revelations so far rise to the level of disqualifying. And, while she has served less than a term as governor, Democratic Sen. Barack Obama is the living embodiment of the fact that this election is less about experience than it is about change. Voters want a fresh approach, if not a fresh face, in Washington.

Inside the Republican Party, Palin delivers for McCain on two counts.

First, he needs to peel away a fraction of the independent-minded female vote trending toward Obama. Seizing on the so-called vetting controversy, McCain's campaign made a shrewd appeal to women by casting Palin as a victim of familiar

circumstances.

"How do we balance our career, in her case a political career, with that of motherhood and continue to have a very fine family?" asked former U.S. Treasurer Rosario Marin, one of dozens of women dispatched to media outlets by the McCain campaign.

McCain's wife, Cindy, said she was insulted by suggestions that the demands of caring for five children makes Palin a poor choice. "These questions would not be asked if he were a man," she said.

Former New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani told his feminist talking points around to no fewer than five morning TV interviews.

"The scrutiny you are giving her is so darn unfair. It is really insulting," he told MSNBC's morning crew. "She is being asked questions like, can you, as a mother ... be vice president? Whoever asked a man?"

And so he went, from one TV camera to the next.

CBS: "Where are the feminists?"
 ABC: "Give the woman a chance ..."

Fox News: "I'm at the point of (being) really angry."

And that's the point. McCain wants conservative voters, many of whom were lukewarm toward his candidacy, whipped into high dudgeon in defense of Palin, angry at the media and the unnamed liberal elites who are denounced by most every convention speaker.

Unfortunately for Democrats, they can't protest too much over McCain's use of the gender card — not after the race between Obama and Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton stirred sex and racial tensions.

It was regrettable that Democrats backing a black man and white woman "say things that veer off into the personal," Clinton said at the time. "We ought to keep this on issues."

Not likely.