



Aggressive Obama aims at McCain

Obama opts for a political entreaty beyond Democrats

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS - Barack Obama's rhetoric soared to the rim of a stadium a mile high Thursday night, but the central message and the impressive set were grounded in the realities of the coming slugfest with John McCain. Obama opted for an acceptance speech with a distinct political nature, mentioning McCain a dozen times. For a candidate who had long sold himself as being above traditional partisan politics, Obama was on the attack mode before millions of Americans who tuned in for the first time.

Obama obviously didn't want to repeat the mistakes of 2004 and John Kerry, who attempted to take the high road and was "Swift-boated" to a narrow defeat despite the increasingly unpopular Iraq War. "The record's clear: John McCain has voted with George Bush 90 percent



of the time," Obama said about 10 minutes into the speech. "Sen. McCain likes to talk about judgment, but really, what does it say about your judgment when you think George Bush has been right more than 90 percent of the time? I don't know about you, but I'm not ready to take a 10 percent chance on change."

Obama continued, "The truth is, on issue after

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Conventional Obama

By **MARK SCHOEFF JR.**

WASHINGTON - Sen. Barack Obama made history Thursday night by accepting the Democratic nomination for president. On the 45th anniversary of Dr. Martin Luther King's "I Have a Dream" speech, Obama became the first African American to have his name placed at the top of the ballot.



As expected in an Obama speech, there were moments of soaring rhetoric. It's no surprise that such a gifted orator would hit high points and deliver memorable lines. Most of them came at the end, with references to King's speech by the man who was fulfilling the dream



"Hillary contributed 18 million cracks in the glass ceiling. It turns out that the women of America aren't finished."

- Alaska Gov. Sarah Palin



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before our eyes.

For the most part, though, Obama became a conventional politician once he began talking. The amount of time he devoted to attacking Sen. John McCain, his Republican opponent, was remarkable.

In spite of the most favorable political climate imaginable for Democrats, their standard bearer felt compelled to concentrate his speech on McCain. Yes, Obama was demonstrating that he can punch back. But he acted as if he was on the ropes.

By the time Obama concluded, it was clear that McCain is framing the fight. One has to wonder how McCain, who is representing a divided party weighed down by an enormously unpopular president, can be the one dictating the terms of this race.

Obama will surely get a solid bounce out of his masterfully produced Invesco Field concert. But what may bring him back down to earth is that the message voters took away from the extravaganza is that McCain is the guy to beat.

Why would they think that? Because Obama seemed to make that very point. He gave much more credence to McCain's attacks by elevating them in the most important speech of his campaign. If Obama is that worried about McCain's digs, maybe voters will place high value on them as well--and believe that McCain has raised legitimate misgivings.

Obama didn't set himself apart as a once-in-generation (or lifetime) politician on Thursday night. He sank to the political norm, reciting a litany of gauzy, orthodox liberal goals and shopworn promises like parsing

the budget line-by-line to eliminate wasteful programs.

He sounded more like a first-term senator than he ever has during the campaign. McCain can't beat a phenomenon in a terrible Republican year like this one. But he definitely can compete with a junior senator who is to the left of a center-right-leaning country.

If the election is waged at ground level, rather than in a more ethereal realm, McCain will be in his element. He's the scrappy fighter who is



at his best grinding away in townhall meetings where issues are paramount.

In such an atmosphere, McCain actually has a chance of convincing voters he can win. Such a perception is his only hope for prevailing in November. As Bob Dole knows, if people never think you can win, you won't.

On Thursday night, Obama certainly indicated that he thinks McCain can win. In doing so, he allowed McCain to land punches without even entering the ring.

But we're still in the early rounds, and Obama has the capability of throwing a devastating haymaker by rising above the street fight. McCain had better put up his dukes next week in St. Paul. ❖

Schoeff reports for HPI from Washington.



McCain-Palin ticket a big GOP surprise

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS - John McCain took the biggest roll of the veepstakes dice today since Dan Quayle when he tabbed Alaska Gov. Sarah Palin as his vice presidential nominee.

The former mayor of Wasilla, she is the mother of five with one of her sons preparing for a tour of duty in Iraq. She is an NRA member and is a pro-life, giving birth recently to a child with Downs Syndrome. She is a maverick and a reformer who refers to her husband Todd as the "First Dude" who is a member of the United Steelworkers.

"I know it will demand the best I can give and I promise nothing less," Palin told a vigorous crowd in Dayton at mid-day today. She said she ran for mayor to "cut wasteful spending and taxes."

In his introduction, McCain said, "She is exactly what we need in Washington today. She's exactly who I need, who this country needs."

McCain noted that in the 2006 gubernatorial race, "She beat the long odds to win a tough election on the issues of reform and public integrity."

The selection comes as McCain celebrates his 72nd birthday. Should he win the election, he would be the oldest president to take office. At that age and after a bout with melanoma, his choice of vice president was seen as a crucial.

"You could knock me over with a feather," said longtime White House aide David Gergen on CNN. "John McCain loves bold gambles and this is the biggest gamble."

McCain unveiled Palin at a noontime rally in Dayton. At 44, Palin is younger than the 47-year-old Obama and, like McCain, she calls herself a maverick (Associated Press). The Obama campaign exulted in the Palin selection, saying it takes the "experience" argument "off the table." The Obama campaign also noted that she is under investigation for the firing of a former state police official who was divorcing the governor's sister.

But McCain forces believe that Palin - coming from as far off the DC Beltway as you can - will help the campaign move into the "change" turf that Obama has dominated to date. The McCain campaign notes that Palin has more "executive" experience than either Barack Obama or

Sen. Joe Biden.

Jill Hazelbaker, McCain's communications director, on on the CBS The Early Show, "John McCain is going to make the choice from his heart. He's going to choose someone who can be a partner in governing. He's going to choose someone who brings character and principle to the table and who shares his priorities. And I'm confident that he's going to make a great pick."

The choice gives the Republicans a Western ticket at a time when Democrats were taking aim at states like Colorado, New Mexico and Nevada - states that President George W. Bush commanded in his 2004 re-election bid. Palin's selection accentuates a geographical twist away from the South, which has supplied Lyndon Johnson, Jimmy Carter, the two President Bushes, Bill Clinton, Al Gore, and Lloyd Bentsen to the national tickets. Instead, the two major parties opted for the most unique diversity in U.S. history with the first African-American presidential nominee and now the first Republican female vice president nominee.

Palin said she "signed major ethics reforms" and appointed both Republicans and Democrats. "I told Congress thanks but no thanks to that bridge to nowhere," Palin said. "If our state wanted that bridge, we'd build it ourselves." She added that she had "taken on the good old boys."

"The people of America expect us to seek public office and serve for the right reasons," Palin said. "And the right reason is to challenge the status quo and serve the common good."

"This is a moment where principle and independence matter beyond party lines," Palin said. "This is a moment that requires resolve, toughness and strength of heart in the American president." She said that McCain had shown the qualities "in the darkest of places in the service of his country. I'm going to make sure no one forgets that during this campaign. There is only one man who has fought for this during this campaign and it's John McCain."

"As the mother of one of those troops and as commander of the Alaska National Guard, that's the kind of man I want commanding our troops." Palin said.

And, Palin noted, her selection comes 88 years "almost to the day" that American women got the right to vote. She paid homage to Democrats Geraldine Ferraro and Hillary Clinton. "It was noted that Hillary contributed 18 million cracks in the glass ceiling. It turns out that the women of America aren't finished," she said. ❖





Obama, from page 1

issue that would make a difference in your lives -- on health care and education and the economy -- Sen. McCain has been anything but independent. He said that our economy has made 'great progress' under this president. He said that the fundamentals of the economy are strong. And when one of his chief advisers -- the man who wrote his economic plan -- was talking about the anxieties that Americans are feeling, he said that we were just suffering from a 'mental recession,' and that we've become, and I quote, 'a nation of whiners.'"

Obama talked of a Hoosier. "We're a better country than one where a man in Indiana has to pack up the equipment he's worked on for 20 years and watch it shipped off to China, and then chokes up as he explains how he felt like a failure when he went home to tell his family the news."

Obama challenged McCain to debate him on foreign policy, saying, "If John McCain wants to have a debate about who has the temperament, and judgment, to serve as the next commander in chief, that's a debate I'm ready to have. For while Sen. McCain was turning his sights to Iraq just days after 9/11, I stood up and opposed this war, knowing that it would distract us from the real threats that we face. When John McCain said we could just 'muddle through' in Afghanistan, I argued for more resources and more troops to finish the fight against the terrorists who actually attacked us on 9/11, and made clear that we must take out Osama bin Laden and his lieutenants if we have them in our sights. You know, John McCain likes to say that he'll follow bin Laden to the Gates of Hell -- but he won't even go to the cave where he lives.

Earthtones & Barack NASCAR

While most of the Democratic National Convention had been hued in blue, and shots from above had Obama walking atop a blue carpet in front of Greek Revival columns, the network camera angles had a red hued, earthtone monochromatic backdrop that lent to the heavy payload of the speech. While many expected Bruce Springsteen's "The Rising" to cap off the night, the campaign opted for modern country music, and then subdued strings as the Obama and Biden families waved to the crowd. This was Barack NASCAR. Clearly, with the Clintons' emphatic endorsements, the youthful Democratic base united with the party's traditional special interests now at arm's length, this was a campaign looking to connect to independent and

Republican voters.

Within these earthtones, Obama wanted to rub off the celebrity sheen of the campaign that allowed McCain to shave away his lead in the polls. Picking up the family biography that wife Michelle had articulated on Monday, Obama talked of his absent father, his wandering mother and his staunch grandparents who rolled with Patton's 3rd Army and built Flying Fortresses, saying, "Now, I don't know what kind of lives John McCain thinks that celebrities lead, but this has been mine. These are my heroes. Theirs are the stories that shaped my life. And it is on behalf of them that I intend to win this election and keep our promise alive as president of the United States."



Fleeting reference to King

Obama made only fleeting references to Dr. Martin Luther King, whose "I Have a Dream" speech took place on Aug. 28, 1963. "And it is that promise that 45 years ago today, brought Americans from every corner of this land to stand together on a mall in Washington, before Lincoln's Memorial, and hear a young preacher from Georgia speak of his dream," Obama said toward the end of his speech. "We cannot walk alone," the preacher cried. "And as we walk, we must make the pledge that we shall always march ahead. We cannot turn back."

It was here in the penultimate section of the speech that Obama wove the aggressive rhetoric into the setting and called upon King's legendary address in front of the Lincoln Memorial.

Instead, Obama initialized his speech with recognition of a nation on the wrong track, as many polls have revealed. "We meet at one of those defining moments -- a moment when our nation is at war, our economy is in turmoil, and the American promise has been threatened once more," Obama said. "Tonight, more Americans are out



of work and more are working harder for less. More of you have lost your homes and even more are watching your home values plummet. More of you have cars you can't afford to drive, credit card bills you can't afford to pay, and tuition that's beyond your reach. These challenges are not all of government's making. But the failure to respond is a direct result of a broken politics in Washington and the failed policies of George W. Bush. America, we are better than these last eight years. We are a better country than this."

Details & Energy

Many critics have targeted Obama for lack of detail. He responded to them by saying he will forge a tax cut for 95 percent of the people, end the capital gains tax, responsibly end the war in Iraq while issuing a 10-year challenge to break America's dependency on foreign oil.

"And for the sake of our economy, our security and the future of our planet, I will set a clear goal as president: In 10 years, we will finally end our dependence on oil from the Middle East. We will do this," Obama said while blaming inertia and McCain. "Washington's been talking about our oil addiction for the last 30 years, and by the way, John McCain's been there for 26 of them. And in that time, he's said no to higher fuel-efficiency standards for cars, no to investments in renewable energy, no to renewable fuels. And today, we import triple the amount of oil that we had on the day that Sen. McCain took office."

Specifically, Obama said, "As president, I will tap our natural gas reserves, invest in clean coal technology, and find ways to safely harness nuclear power. I'll help our auto companies retool, so that the fuel-efficient cars of the future are built right here in America. I'll make it easier for the American people to afford these new cars. And I'll invest \$150 billion over the next decade in affordable, renewable sources of energy -- wind power and solar power and the next generation of biofuels; an investment that will lead to new industries and 5 million new jobs that pay well and can't be outsourced."

Guns, God & Gays

In the most fascinating section of the speech, Obama took on guns, God and gays in one paragraph, coming ever closer to touching the cultural rails. "We may

not agree on abortion, but surely we can agree on reducing the number of unwanted pregnancies in this country," Obama said in a section that echoed the stance of former Indiana congressman Tim Roemer, who seeks to eliminate 90 percent of abortions in a decade.

"The reality of gun ownership may be different for hunters in rural Ohio than they are for those plagued by gang-violence in Cleveland," Obama said of guns. "but don't tell me we can't uphold the Second Amendment while keeping AK-47s out of the hands of criminals. I know there are differences on same-sex marriage, but surely we can agree that our gay and lesbian brothers and sisters deserve to visit the person they love in the hospital and to live lives free of discrimination. You know, passions may fly on immigration, but I don't know anyone who benefits when a mother is separated from her infant child or an employer undercuts American wages by hiring illegal workers."

GOP reaction

The McCain campaign cried foul on several fronts, particularly when Obama questioned his commitment to tracking down Osama bin Laden.

Indiana Republican Party Chairman Murray Clark observed, "We recognize this for what it is: a well-delivered speech on an historic occasion. But Barack Obama didn't win my vote tonight, and based on the content of his speech, I think it's unlikely he won the hearts of many Hoosiers. However, for future generations, it is important to recognize that tonight was an important milestone in our nation's history."

This speech wasn't the smooth arc many of us who have heard Obama speak many times expected. On the Indiana campaign trail, he often transcended the blunt opposition of Hillary Clinton

and talked beyond the trenches. On Thursday night, Obama entered them. It was by far the most aggressive speech he has given. The delegates in the stadium were transfixed by the towering, sprawling setting, it was easy to see how the true believers and Hillary converts might have gotten swept up in the moment.

For the new viewer, this was a different Obama. He prowled against McCain and President Bush and took his gloves off. It created somewhat of a jarring contrast to his normal fare and it hints of the epic political battle that lies just around the corner and won't fully play out until Nov. 4.





Obama's message to Hoosiers

By JACK COLWELL

SOUTH BEND - Amid stirring rhetoric captivating a football stadium crowd of 80,000 Thursday night in a Colorado Rockies setting, Barack Obama asked Hoosiers back on the level ground of Indiana to vote for themselves.



No, he wasn't suggesting that they write in their own names on Nov. 4 ballots. And he wasn't speaking just to Hoosiers but rather to all in the TV audience across the nation, the audience that is more important than cheering partisans in Denver.

"This election has never been about me," Obama said. "It's about you."

This was an important theme as Obama sought in his nomination acceptance speech to keep Republicans from making him the issue and to get voters to focus instead on issues such as the economy, health care, breaking dependence on foreign oil and even on the conduct of the war on terror.

Obama promised that Democrats would do a better job on those issues, while contending that John McCain would follow the course of an unpopular Bush administration.

Polls show voters agree with Democratic approaches on most issues but that they also aren't sure Obama is ready to be president, especially in serving as commander in chief of the military forces.

Obama hit directly at that, saying: "If John McCain wants to have a debate about who has the temperament and judgment to serve as commander in chief, that's a debate I'm ready to have."

McCain has had success in ridiculing Obama as a celebrity who can draw a crowd, same as Paris Hilton or Britney Spears, but that Obama, same as those attention-getters, would not be a president with experience to make sound decisions in a crisis.

In his speech, Obama directed some tough talk at McCain, signaling that he will fight back against any Republican ridicule of the type that doomed the hapless John Kerry, the 2004 Democratic nominee.

His reference to the right "temperament" for a commander in chief was a clear reference to questions about McCain's temper or reported occasional loss thereof.

Obama's 45-minute speech covered issue after issue, offering a blueprint of what he means by change, even with mention of seeking accommodation on such divisive subjects as abortion, gun ownership, immigration and gay marriage.

On most of the major issues, Obama linked McCain to the policies of President George W. Bush and deplored the results of those Bush efforts at home and abroad.

If Obama was successful in getting folks around their TV sets in Indiana to look at the issues he cited and not to look at him as some kind of a risk, he could put the state in play in the presidential election. He wants them to vote for themselves, for the issues important to them. If voters do, in Indiana and elsewhere, after finding more agreement with Obama than with McCain, the Democratic nominee could well go on to be elected president. If they look more at him as the issue and don't like what they see, he won't win. ❖

Colwell has covered Indiana politics over five decades for the South Bend Tribune. He is a regular contributor to Howey Politics Indiana.





Bayh talks of his ‘surreal’ veepstakes

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS - We conducted this telephone interview with U.S. Sen. Evan Bayh late Tuesday afternoon from Denver at the Democratic National Convention.

HPI: Did you get the text message from the Obama campaign at 3 a.m.?

Bayh: I'm happy to report I was happily asleep at 3 a.m. because Barack and I had spoken Thursday afternoon. I was not awaiting in anticipation. I already knew what his decision was and I support it wholeheartedly.

HPI: How did the phone call with Sen. Obama go? Did you know it was coming or was it a call out of the blue?

Bayh: He couldn't have been nicer. I knew Barack but I didn't know him well before I went through the process. But I think we got to know each other well and developed respect and appreciation for each other that is genuine. Brian, he said a lot of things very complimentary; things you would imagine in a call like that. But I think he genuinely believed them. I knew that even though I was in the final three or two, it was a good chance, but it wasn't a 50/50 chance. So I was prepared for that. And he told me he needed me not only in the campaign but for the country. It will go in a new direction. I told him I would do whatever I could do to accomplish that. If I was the one who could help him the most, fine. If it was somebody else I would be fully supportive that. He also said, Brian, you made it to the final two or three. You've got great strengths and so it was a very good conversation and I think we're going to have a very good relationship going forward.

HPI: At what point this summer did it become apparent that you were on the short list?

Bayh: I was kind of an evolutionary thing. As Susan points out, I had no expectation of being considered because I was a strong supporter of Hillary Clinton. It starts

with public speculation by people who really don't know what's going on. And then he was kind enough to call me and said, "Look, we're going to cast a wide net." He said he would be honored if I would be willing to go through the process of being considered. "We're going to cast a wide net and look at a number of people. But there were only a handful that merit serious consideration and I think you're one of them." So I said that I would be honored to be considered then. My take on this, Brian, is that to get to the final two or three obviously you've got to have some pretty good things that recommend you or you don't get there. And obviously you can't have too many negative things otherwise you don't get there. I hope it reflected well on



Sen. Evan Bayh talks to the press at Concord HS in Elkhart earlier this month after campaigning with Barack Obama. (HPI Photo by Ryan Nees)



our state. When you get to that point it just becomes what the particular dynamics of the campaign happen to be. We had two or three really good people and it was a question of who happened to fit their needs at that particular time best. That's the way it is. Dick Lugar has been in this position and my father has been in this position. They performed great public service for our state. So I'm pretty philosophical about it.

HPI: At what point in the summer did you know you would be vetted?

Bayh: I can't remember the exact date but if Hillary dropped out in the first week of June or thereabouts, it



was probably sometime in July.

HPI: Did you have conversations with Sen. Clinton once it became clear you were being vetted?

Bayh: I did not talk to her about that whole process. That was confidential. Once it was known, I talked to her about it and she wished me well. She called me Saturday night after the announcement just to say what a strong candidate I would have been, but she likes Joe Biden. I did not talk to her in detail about the process. They were quite adamant that it be kept confidential so I didn't.

HPI: Let's talk about the two July events with Sen. Obama. How were you involved in the Purdue University forum? That obviously got us in the media going since you and Sam Nunn were there.

Bayh: They wanted to come to Indiana. And, by the way, all the talk about them not being serious in Indiana, well, that's not true. They're serious about it, even now. And that's good. So he came here to campaign, they wanted to focus on national security and Sam Nunn and I were strong voices on national security and so they asked if I would come and introduce him and participate on the panel. I didn't help plan it but I was more than happy to introduce him and participate.

HPI: And Elkhart?

Bayh: The Elkhart thing that everybody got all excited about it

was really just a campaign event, there and Portage. And on the bus between the two we spent a lot of good quality time but we did not discuss one word about the vice presidential situation. We talked about kids and we talked about sports. Which should tell you he's a pretty regular person.

HPI: Are you a Sox fan or a Cubs fan?

Bayh: I'm not from Chicago. I kind of root for the underdog. I know the owner of the White Sox, Jerry Reinsdorf, so I kind of have some allegiance that way. But since I'm a Democrat I kind of root for the underdog and hope the Cubbies get the curse off their backs. I can't remember ... Barack told me which one he is,

HPI: He's a Sox fan. South Sider.

Bayh: I love talking to Reggie Love because he's a former Duke basketball player so we talked a lot of sports too.

HPI: Walk me through this last crazy week. What was that like with all the speculation and the media on your

front porch?

Bayh: It was surreal at times, watching the front of your house on TV in real time and literally not being able to go out and get the morning newspaper or take your kids to camp without a pack of press coming around. And then the last day one of the networks literally had someone following me around in a car. But that's part of the thing, part of the situation. So we accepted all that. We were fine with it. The last couple of weeks were a bit of an emotional roller coaster. I knew we were under serious consideration, I knew it was a small group, I knew it was less than 50/50 but still a decent chance. So we were following the process just like everyone else.

HPI: Could you have snuck out the back door and gotten away from the press if you had to?

Bayh: Not the way our house is constructed ... well, I guess I could have scaled the fence and run through the neighbor's yard, but, I might have impaled myself.

HPI: What was it like to see Susan dragged through all of this, particularly when the Bloomberg story came out in the last week?

Bayh: He told me when he called me to inform me of the decision that his decision had nothing to do with me. It had to do with some of the things in the campaign they were trying to accomplish. He told me that that was not going to make the decision. I knew that first

hand, but look, I'm not going to characterize my conversations.

HPI: What's your view of the news media these days after going through this roller coaster?

Bayh: The news media does their job. It's an important job and I try not to second guess them. (Bayh runs into CBS anchor Katie Couric at this point in the interview and they chat for a couple of minutes). Sorry, Brian, that was Katie Couric. She had been predicting that it would be me and Mitt Romney, so she still has a chance to bat .500.

HPI: Obama did not run well against Hillary in Indiana's river corridor and you always have. Can he win there and will you help him?

Bayh: I told him I would do everything to help him out when it comes to campaigning in Indiana. I will take my direction from him. And the answer is yes. A couple of things: Southern Indiana is no different than the rest of our state in terms of middle class families struggling economi-





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cally with the high cost of health care and the high cost of gasoline. People know we have to have a better economic policy to create better paying jobs. They are tired of spending \$10 billion a month in Iraq when the Iraqis have a \$79 billion surplus. So, I think he can do well. It's going to take some campaigning but that's what a campaign is all about.

HPI: Will it be close in Indiana? Will we be seeing you in October?

Bayh: I am going to be home. I've got several weeks blocked off with three or four days a week home. If he's going to be there, I'll be with him. I will be home; I will be campaigning. I literally told him, Brian, if you decide I'm the one, I'll give you everything I've got, and if you decide on somebody else, I'll still give everything I've got. If they ask me to campaign with them or for them I'd be delighted to do that.

Bayh called back a few minutes later and made one final point:

Bayh: To amplify what I said a couple of times: what ultimately matters is not me. What matters is the people of country and Indiana. That's why I'm supporting Barack Obama. I was asked this morning by the Indiana delegation if I was disappointed. Well, I am disappointed, but it's not for the political reasons. I am disappointed in costs of health care. I'm disappointed with the war in Iraq, and the state of the economy. I'm really going to be disappointed if we don't do what we can to change that. Candidates are important, but people are the most important. Ultimately, politics is only a means to an end. Sometimes that gets lost in all the activity. ❖

HOWEY *Politics Indiana*

When Chris Cillizza of the *Washington Post* posed the question to readers across the nation - Who's the most influential political journalist in your state? - the answer in Indiana was this: Brian A. Howey of *Howey Politics Indiana*. Since 1994, *Howey Politics Indiana* has provided news, analysis and commentary from throughout Indiana and Washington D.C. Howey reaches the most influential insiders with his newsletters and the masses with his weekly newspaper column and www.howeypolitics.com.

Photo: Howey with Richard Lugar and Sam Nunn in Russia.



The Washington Post

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"The Best Indiana Political Reporter: *Howey Politics Indiana* editor Brian Howey."



Post Obama Polls

Trendlines: Barack Obama's gain in support among registered voters from Monday to Wednesday of this week was in part the result of gains among conservative Democrats -- the group among whom the Democratic nominee had lost ground last week as he slipped to an overall tie with John McCain. Gallup has Obama leading McCain 48-42 percent in the latest daily tracking and he improved among conservative Democrats from 63 percent to 77 percent.

2008 Indiana Governor

Governor 2008: Republican: Gov. Mitch Daniels, Democrat: Jill Long Thompson. **1996 Results:** O'Bannon (D) 1,075,342, Goldsmith (R) 997,505, Dillon (L) 35,261. **2000 Results:** O'Bannon (D) 1,230,345, McIntosh (R) 906,492, Horning (L) 38,686.

2004 Results: Daniels (R) 1,302,912, Kernan (D) 1,113,900, Gividen (L) 31,644. **2008 Forecast:** If you're looking at trendlines, there is little good news for Democrat Jill Long Thompson. While she's up on TV, it's not a statewide buy.

It doesn't include South Bend and Fort Wayne markets. Thompson's backers point out that Northern Indiana is her home base, but Gov. Mitch Daniels' campaign manager Eric Holcomb observed, "She lost her last two elections in Northern Indiana."

Indiana Republicans took apart the last Thompson TV ad. In it, an Indianapolis testimonial says: "Property taxes are sky high and home foreclosures are way up." **FACT:** Gov. Daniels led the charge to cut property taxes and make the cuts permanent by placing them in the Constitution. Jill Long Thompson says the caps shouldn't be made permanent. On average, property taxes for homeowners statewide are decreasing by a third. A Cambridge City Testimonial says: "Layoffs are soaring and our wages are falling" **FACT:** Jobs are coming to Cambridge City and the rest of the state in record numbers. In July 2006, Dot Foods announced 250 jobs in Cambridge City. In August 2007, Really Cool Foods announced 1,000 jobs in the city. And a Carmel Testimonial says: High school dropout rates are up. SAT scores are down. **FACT:** In Carmel, SAT scores are up 19 points from last year, and their 94.2% graduation rate is one of the best in the state.

"It's clear that Jill Long Thompson is spending all of that out-of-state campaign cash on negative advertising," Indiana Republican Party Chairman Murray Clark



said. "While it's good to see other states' money spent in Indiana, the incorrect nature of the charges is disappointing and straight out of the Democratic Party playbook of all cynicism all the time."

There was a \$50,000 donation from EMILY'S List and another \$100,000 from the ISTA, but while Daniels is preparing to purchase hundreds of thousands of gross rating points between Sept. 7 and Nov. 4, the Thompson campaign's TV buys are actually scaling back.

She gets no tailwind from the veepstakes. A nomination for Sen. Evan Bayh would have given her access to Democratic Senatorial Committee money. That won't happen now. And the polls have her down in double digits at a time when a campaign hopes to get to Labor Day within single digits. A SurveyUSA poll last week had Daniels leading 52-38 percent.

There is evidence that the Democratic Party is still splintered. CSO Architects hosted an Aug. 15 fundraiser for Gov. Daniels. Jim Schellinger wasn't there, but his partners who contributed heavily to his losing campaign were. Daniels campaign sources tell HPI that the governor and Schellinger have had several friendly phone conversations. Another prominent Democrat, Alpha Blackburn, is having a fundraiser for Daniels. The Professional Firefighters Union of Indiana endorsed Daniels and donated \$5,000. The IAFF unanimously endorsed Barack Obama for president. It's worth noting that these fire union endorsements come as several cities such as Gary, South Bend, Kokomo and Muncie are poised to lay off firefighters as a result of the governor's tax reforms - HB1001.

And many observers are still scratching their heads at the Thompson-Oxley campaign's double-teaming most events this summer. Normally, the ticket splits up to hit twice as many areas, but Thompson and Dennie Oxley II have spent most of the summer campaigning together. They will split up for Labor Day parades this weekend.

Thompson is trying to feed off the fresh spate of plant closings around the state. She was in Richmond Wednesday commiserating with about 100 of the 275 Masterbrand Cabinets employees who showed up for work and found their jobs gone. "I came here today to listen to fellow Hoosiers and share with them my belief that Indiana can do better," said Long Thompson. "These workers and their families are victims of the Bush-Daniels economy. Several years ago my own mother lost her factory job when the plant where she worked closed its doors. Businesses are failing and people are hurting, yet we have a governor who refuses to acknowledge that there is even a problem. We need a new approach and we need new leadership to make that happen." Another session occurred up in Elkhart.

But as we've reported in the past, for every plant closing, the governor trots out a new business. In his current TV ad, Daniels acknowledges the job losses, but says that for every one lost, his administration is paving the way



for two new ones.

Thompson simply hasn't - to date - come close to pinning the blame on Daniels for the high gas prices that have greatly impacted the auto and RV industries.

Coming up: the release of the third Howey-Gauge Poll at 5 p.m. Thursday Sept. 4 at the Indianapolis Chamber's Annual Hobnob, which will include fresh statewide numbers in the gubernatorial and presidential races. **Horse Race Status:** Leans Daniels ❖

Congressional

4RD CD: Republican: U.S. Rep. Steve Buyer. Democrat: Nels Ackerson. **2008 Outlook:** A debate between the two candidates for Indiana's 4th congressional district Thursday night took several personal turns but also hit on a wide variety of topics. In his opening remarks, Buyer accused Ackerson of violating a rule set for the debate and said because of that there would be no more debates between the two (Lafayette Journal & Courier). Ackerson didn't respond to the claim until his closing remarks, when he said he had no idea what Buyer was referring to. "It's a mystery to me," he said. "I apologize if I made a mistake." Dave Wyeth, a member of the hosting Hendricks County Farm Bureau, said Buyer was referring to a news release Ackerson sent out Wednesday about the event. Wyeth said there was no written rule about not sending out releases, but said the event was intended for only Farm Bureau members and the leadership. Buyer said he bases his policy decisions on principles and values. He also defended his party allegiance after Ackerson criticized him for being "100 percent partisan." "I don't want to go to a Congress where it's clean, simple and easy," Buyer said after stating that the founding fathers intended there to be contention in the House of Representatives. Ackerson said if elected he would work on a bipartisan basis to tackle solutions to problems he sees in current education and energy policy. At the close

Indiana House Horse Race

Democrats
51

Republicans
49

Tossups

HD26 (Open) Polles vs. Truitt
HD63 (Open) Messmer vs. Burger

HD15 Lehe vs. Sutton
HD31 Harris vs. Pearson
HD52 (Open) Yarde vs. Papai
HD89 (Open) Swatts vs. Barnes
HD97 Elrod vs. Sullivan

Leans

HD5 Fry vs. Miller
HD17 Demobowski vs. MacKillop
HD 46 Tincher vs. Heaton
HD62 Blanton vs. Tarr

HD20 Dermody vs. Cooley
HD48 Neese vs. Hardy
HD35 Lutz vs. Mengelt
HD44 Thomas vs. Michael
HD4 Soliday vs. Chubb

Likely

HD36 Austin vs. Burrows
HD68 Bischoff vs. McMillin
HD69 Cheatham vs. Coates
HD37 Reske vs. Gaskill
HD70 Robertson vs. Hunt

HD38 Clements vs. Snow
HD92 Hinkle vs. DeKemper

Safe

Democrats: Lawson, Harris, C. Brown, Bauer, Niezgodski, Dvorak, Pelath, Stevenson, Reardon, Dobis, V. Smith, VanDenburgh, Bardon, Klinker, Herrell, Tyler, Grubb, Kersey, Pflum, Pierce, Welch, Battles, Goodin, Stemler, Cochran, Oxley, Stilwell, Avery, Van Haaften, Riecken (Open), GiaQuinta, Moses, DeLaney (Open), Pryor (Open), Bartlett, Porter, Crawford, Summers, Day.

Republicans: Borrer, Wolkins, Walorski, Ruppel, Friend, McClain, J. Thompson, Richardson, Turner, Davis, Torr, Steuerwald, T. Brown, Borders, Foley, Culver (Open), Leonard, Dodge, Cherry, Saunders, Knollman, Eberhart, Burton, M. Smith, Koch, Duncan, Crouch, Lehman (Open), Espich, Bell, Pond, Noe, Bosma, Murphy, Behning, Frizzell. ❖

of the debate, he criticized Buyer's poor attendance in congressional votes - a statement for which Buyer called on Ackerson to issue a direct apology to his wife. Buyer said a knee injury and a family member's terminal illness have caused him to be away from Washington at times, but defended those absences as "the right judgment call."

Ackerson said he wasn't referring just to Buyer's attendance in the past year but throughout his 16 years in office. Ackerson called health care reform one of the greatest issues facing many residents of the district, but said he doesn't want to go as far as universal health care yet because of concerns over the national debt. **Status:** LIKELY BUYER ❖



McCain finds the missing ingredient in Palin

By **DAVE KITCHELL**

LOGANSPORT - For those wondering how far John McCain was willing to search for an ideal running mate, the answer has become, "As far as he could go in the United States as possible."

When he introduced Alaska Gov. Sarah Palin as his choice for vice president Friday, McCain turned some tables on Barack Obama. He stole some momentum Obama left



on the table when Hillary Clinton missed the presidency and was overlooked in the Democratic vice-presidential derby. He found a female, pro-life candidate who is a mother of five. And he found a candidate who can claim, along with her husband, union membership.

In short, McCain found an ingredient that had been missing in his campaign - the female vote. In just a decade, we've gone from an election that was about soccer moms to one that includes a self-

proclaimed "hockey mom" for the first time.

Palin's fresh face on the ballot also balances out McCain's retirement age with a youthful 44 who has a newborn at home to go with four other children, one of whom will be deployed to Iraq.

The question many have to be asking on both sides of the aisle and in the media is "Could McCain have done better?" The answer, to cut to the chase, is "Not much better." He needed to seize the opportunity Obama left for him, though he left himself somewhat unguarded by choosing a virtual unknown with little experience. If McCain thinks Obama isn't ready to govern, what will voters think of Gov. Palin's ability since she's only been in the governor's office for two years? In fact, she's only been in the governor's office of one of the states with the smallest populaces for that long.

How will she do in a debate with Joe Biden? She'll do about as well as any No. 2 GOP choice could expect to do.

As I mentioned in a previous column, the perfect choice for McCain was former New Jersey Gov. Christie Todd Whitman. Whitman is probably the only candidate who could have delivered more for McCain because she had cabinet-level experience and might have turned New Jersey into a red state. But Palin brings an arguably better energy record to the ticket because of her support for

a natural gas pipeline in Alaska. Whitman was more of a household name, and Palin could be argued to be out of touch with what's happening in Washington which is about as far from Alaska as any point in the union. Some will say that's a good thing.

Nonetheless, McCain's choice reached out to younger voters in a way Obama already has. It may be too late to get some of them back in time for a November election, but it was a calculated move McCain had to make, even if he passed over many prominent Republicans to do it.

It has been 24 years since Walter Mondale trotted an unknown New York Congresswoman named Geraldine Ferraro as his choice to be a running mate. Ferraro lacked the stature of a Hillary Clinton, as well as the pizzazz that many women in politics have. Republicans have waited a long time for a GOP candidate, and given the varied and dedicated roles Republican women have played for many years in successful campaigns, it's about time the party elevated a woman to one of the top two slots on the ticket. Elizabeth Dole has been their best shot until now.

Palin is so new to the stage there are more questions about her than answers as we enter the week of the Republican National Convention. That's a good time to give her all the limelight she, McCain and the Republicans will need. Whether it's enough for the Republicans, McCain and voters won't be evidenced for another two months.

The challenge for the party now is to elevate Palin to the American people in a way that shows she can relate to typical American families, even if she isn't from the typical American state and doesn't have the typical American story.

For now, McCain has lived by the axiom that when it comes to choosing a running mate, there's no place like Nome. ❖

Dave Kitchell is a veteran columnist who resides in Logansport and teaches at Ball State Uni-

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Bruises for Bayh

By **RYAN NEES**

KOKOMO - One of the not-so-secret secrets of Vice Presidential vetting is that much of it is simple, old school patronage: for show, as a favor, to stoke egos. Come through with an early endorsement? Represent a key constituency? Hail from a critical swing state? It's not going to get you the Vice Presidency, but you might just earn a cosmetic spot on the shortlist.



Apply some makeup, prim, polish - and deliver the contender to the nearest television studio. A little national prominence goes a long way.

For Senator Evan Bayh though, is it possible he's emerged not a beauty but rather bruised? How many times can a would-be shooting star be shot down?

How many times must Evan weep through Cher singing "This is a song, for the lonely, For the broken hearted, battle scarred," wistfully lip-syncing to a cruel world, "When your dreams won't come true, Can you hear this prayer?"

It evidently hadn't been heard before now.

Obama's choice of Joe Biden as his running mate makes today's news Bayh's third devastating veepstakes loss in a row: rejected by first by Gore, then by Kerry, now by Obama.

Perhaps Bayh would have an easier go of the news if he weren't so gosh darn doggedly earnest about bolting the Senate. In June he told Andrea Mitchell on MS-NBC that if offered the VP job, "The answer to that is 'Yes,'" a mark of enthusiasm rare for the jockeys used to declaring their interest by disavowing their interest.

He's joked on the same network that the buzz has been "good for [his] ego," but perhaps not. The potentiality of his candidacy was enough to throw Democratic Party liberals into a furor over Bayh's hawkish support of the war in Iraq, focusing on his honorary co-chairmanship of The Committee for the Liberation of Iraq, a "neo-con group that was formed to propagandize the country into war," as the website TalkingPointsMemo.com put it. A Facebook group with several thousand members cropped up to oppose Bayh. Hometown papers, including the Courier Press and NUVO, derided him as a "do-nothing Senator."

He's been criticized in the national square as "aggressively wrong," "boring," "stiff," "wimpy," "corpse-impersonating," "Kerryesque," "pathetic," "cowering," "whiney," "undistinguished," "a slap in the face," "a charisma drain," "conventional," "mediocre," and a "corporate lackey." And that list is considerably abridged.

Last Tuesday's Bloomberg article aired perhaps Bayh's dirtiest laundry, slamming a number of conflicts of interest stemming from his wife's many corporate board directorships. Bayh used his position in Congress to help secure tens of millions of federal dollars for WellPoint, on whose board Susan Bayh sits. She's on the board of bank which falls under the regulatory jurisdiction of the Senate Banking Committee of which he's a member. And she's on Emmis's board, the company that published a Bayh memoir that's had lackluster sales seemingly as a favor.

For the Senator who has made caution the overriding principle of his career, it's striking that such an ethical cloud would ever form at all. Last week HPI reported that Obama had assured Bayh that his wife's corporate work wouldn't be dispositive in what was his ultimate rejection. Perhaps. But at very least, Bayh's time in the spotlight drew national attention to the dirt beneath the Senator's fingernails - dirt that, if not for rampant Vice Presidential speculation, would likely have gone unnoticed or passively

cast aside by the media. By Washington's standards, Bayh remains pretty clean.

Yet lately you might not know it. All of this criticism has been mostly unique to Bayh; other contenders, including Joe Biden, Tim Kaine, Kathleen Sebelius, Wes Clark, and Bill Richardson faced comparatively little scorn. Without winning the veepstakes, and enduring such sustained disdain, Bayh's play in the 2008 presidential sandbox may have left him permanently handicapped.

Billed a "boring" and "safe" choice this year, he'll struggle to shirk the has-been label in subsequent veepstakes rounds, and his perennial losses as number two have surely undermined any ambitions he may hold for number one.

On his strut down this year's catwalk, Bayh's tripped and might not get back up. Instead, he's stuck in the Senate, where he doesn't want to be, singing a song for the lonely. ❖

Nees interned for Howey Politics Indiana. He is now a student at Yale.





Matt Tully, Indianapolis Star: Somehow, Democrats pulled off a four-day convention that was meticulously choreographed but also packed with moments that so electrified the crowds here, they actually seemed spontaneous. Theatrically speaking, the convention was a Broadway-like smash hit -- Barack and the Technicolor Democrats. For instance, it's hard to imagine anyone -- Democrat, Republican or Independent -- who wasn't moved by Sen. Ted Kennedy's slow walk to the convention podium Monday. Or anyone who didn't smile at the sight of Sen. Barack Obama's young daughters blowing him kisses when he appeared on a jumbo screen that same night. The girls' giddy reaction to their father was pure and unscripted. Presidential elections can be as much about personality as politics. ❖

Mark Bennett, Terre Haute Tribune-Star: Thousands of Wabash Valley residents could've qualified as Barack Obama's running mate. As he considered potential vice presidential candidates last week, Obama said, "I want somebody who's mad right now that people are losing their jobs, and is mad right now that people are seeing their incomes decline." Technically, that criteria should attract more folks than the line to ride the Son of Beast at King's Island. The Terre Haute Metropolitan Statistical Area — a title economists use to describe the city and surrounding communities — represents a snapshot of those two dilemmas. The jobless rate in Vigo County last month hit 6.9 percent, up from 5.2 percent one year ago. That's higher than the state rate of 6.1 percent, and the nation at 6.0. Meanwhile, the median household income in greater Terre Haute is \$36,659. Out of 359 metro areas in the United States, Terre Haute's median income ranks 37th from the bottom. Average paychecks here have grown just 9.8 percent since 2000, and that increase rates among the smallest in the country at No. 300, according to research by the Kiplinger Personal Finance magazine's "2008 Best Cities to Live, Work and Play." Son of a beast. "It's about high-end jobs, and there are not a lot of those in Terre Haute," said Robert Guell, an economics professor at Indiana State University. Faced with the reality of the numbers, it's tempting to compare our lot with those around us. Gazing over that fence could leave Hauteans both envious and relieved. A mere two-hour drive south on U.S. 41 will lead to Evansville, which was voted by Kiplinger.com readers the No. 1 American city in which to live, work and play, well ahead of runner-up Green Bay, Wis. That's not such a head-scratcher, based on the Kiplinger statistics, compiled by Kevin Stolarick, research director at the Martin Prosperity Institute in Toronto. Evansville has some advantages over cities, such as Terre Haute. Yes, the Evansville metro area population (350,172) is nearly twice as large as Terre Haute's (167,676). But Evansville also grew by 2 per-

cent from 2000 to 2006, while Terre Haute area population dwindled by 1.6 percent. ❖

Rich James, Post-Tribune: Hey, Rudy, I know you've got a problem over there in Gary. Heard you've got to eliminate, like, \$13 million in costs by the end of the year or the city goes belly-up. That's a tough nut to crack. The problem, Rudy, is this: You've got too many people on the city payroll. Way too many. You don't need 20 percent pay cuts. You need to cut 20 percent of the city workers. Just the other day, I heard you've got 1,300 people on the payroll. Talk about shock and awe. Man, that's one city worker for every 75 residents. My gosh, Rudy, it takes a column and a half in the telephone book to list all the city departments. And that's pretty fine print. Of the total employees, there are about 250 police officers and 280 firefighters. That leaves about 770 workers doing, well, I can't really imagine what.

You need some folks to pick up the garbage and fill in the potholes and oversee city swimming pools, some of which aren't even open. Some of those departments listed in the phone book make you wonder. For instance, the Commission of the Status of Women? Far as I know, they are still female. Then there is the Communications and Electronics Department, which kind of sounds like Radio Shack. And then there's the Housing Conservation and Human Relations Department. Why do we want to conserve housing? There also are three separate departments that sound like they do pretty much the same thing -- Planning and Community Development Department, Planning and Economic Development and the Department of Redevelopment. ❖

Leslie Stedman Weidenbener, Louisville Courier-Journal: You could almost hear the collective sigh of Indiana Democrats just before midnight Friday when news organizations confirmed that Indiana Sen. Evan Bayh was not Barack Obama's choice for a running mate. It was a big disappointment. It's not just that Hoosier Democrats thought Bayh -- with his 10 years in the Senate and two terms as governor -- could make a good running mate and vice president. They also believed Bayh would have been a big help to other Democratic candidates, particularly their gubernatorial nominee, Jill Long Thompson. Former Indiana Democratic Chairman Robin Winston said yesterday that Bayh's name on the ticket is "invaluable." Winston was the party's political director in 1988, when Bayh first ran for governor. Bayh's strong run that year helped give Democrats the majority in the Indiana House, Winston said. "Scores of candidates running for less visible offices statewide owe their initial elections to Evan Bayh," he said. ❖





180 Obama parties across Indiana

TERRE HAUTE - "I've been all around the world and I've never seen anything like this," Darrell Shouse remarked

(Terre Haute Tribune-Star).

Standing in the parking lot at Fifth Street and Wabash Ave-

nue Thursday night, with a crowd that swelled from 80 at 9:30 p.m. to more than 150 by 10:20 p.m., the Terre Haute native and others watched Illinois Sen. Barack Obama accept the Democratic nomination as its candidate for the American presidency. Hoosiers gathered at more than 180 convention watch parties across Indiana to watch the week-long Democratic National Convention wrap up with Obama's acceptance speech Thursday night.



Richard impressed with Obama speech

FORT WAYNE - Barack Obama was eloquent and inspiring, former Fort Wayne Mayor Graham Richard said Thursday, but most of all he "got beyond the politics of the past" in his acceptance speech to be the Democratic presidential nominee (Fort Wayne Journal Gazette). Richard, attending his first Democratic National Convention, was expecting a powerful performance by the candidate he has backed for months even as Hillary Rodham Clinton led in Indiana polls and won the state's primary. He said he got it. "I hoped he would close what some saw as a gap between rhetoric and reality," Richard said, adding that Obama did. City Councilwoman Karen Goldner, like Richard a convention first-timer, agreed that Obama's speech was potent and inspiring. "Wow," she said a few minutes

after the speech and the fireworks ended. "It was a powerful experience," Goldner said. "It's so overwhelming to have your better self appealed to. And that's what his speech and his campaign does."

Brown, Rogers buoyed by Obama speech

DENVER - Northwest Indiana Democrats looked toward Barack Obama's Thursday night convention speech with a sense they were about to take part in a touchstone moment in American history (Byrne, Post-Tribune). "It's difficult to put into words," said state Sen. Earline Rogers of Gary. "I look at tonight as the culmination of so much work by all the African-Americans who have been involved in public service over the years." State Rep. Charlie Brown of Gary said he struggles to wrap his head around Obama's meteoric ascent to this point. "A few years ago, he was just an Illinois state senator, and now this," Brown said. "It's been 'Who is this young man?' It's hard to escape the impression that this is part of some larger plan." Rogers worried Obama would not be able to live up to the hype surrounding his Invesco Field speech in front of more than 70,000 people. "He has set the bar so high, and we are so familiar with his speeches, that it will be difficult to top what he has done already," she said. "When you're an A-plus student and you get an A, it can be a disappointment." But state Rep. Mara Candelaria Reardon of Munster said Obama could do no wrong. "Maybe I've just drunk the Kool-Aid, but I love everything he has to say," she said. Delegates did complain about the logistics of getting to the outdoor football stadium where Obama would officially accept the nomination and give his keynote address. Buses started transporting delegates to the site early in the afternoon for a speech not scheduled to begin until after 8 p.m. in Denver. "That's a lot of hours

sitting in the sun," Brown said.

Gary celebrates

GARY - Supporters of Sen. Barack Obama chatted excitedly while they waited for the doors to open at the Genesis Center at 7 p.m. Thursday in Gary (Post-Tribune). They weren't getting a personal appearance by the Democratic presidential nominee, but many felt that they were getting something better: a chance to watch the first black accept a major party nomination for president. They weren't getting a personal appearance by the Democratic presidential nominee, but many felt that they were getting something better: a chance to watch the first black accept a major party nomination for president. Gary resident Angela Jones said she wanted to savor the experience. "This is a moment in history," she said. "I'm here because I want to be able to share this with my grandchildren whenever my kids decide to have children."

180 Obama parties across Indiana

DENVER - Indiana Sen. Evan Bayh joked about politics and football as he made his first appearance on "The Daily Show with Jon Stewart." The Democrat said presidential nominee Barack Obama is "the real deal" and told an incredulous Stewart that Indiana really could be in play for the Democrats in the November election. Bayh got boos from the Comedy Central audience in Denver when he mentioned the Indianapolis Colts. Bayh is not done appearing on comedy shows. His office says Bayh will make a brief appearance Friday on HBO's "Real Time" and on ABC's "Jimmy Kimmel Live."



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