

Sunday, September 14, 2008

Inside Politics Weekend

Palin-ography

For all its obsessive coverage, the press has successfully obfuscated the complete identity of Gov. Sarah Palin. But not to worry. Two biographies on the Alaska governor and potential vice president are ready from faith-based publishers.

Epicenter Press, a publisher in Kenmore, Wash., published a hardcover about Palin in April - "Sarah: How a Hockey Mom Turned Alaska's Political Establishment Upside Down," by , with an initial run of 50,000 copies. Another 250,000 are due with an exchange deal with Tyndale House, a Christian publisher, this week.

Zondervan - known for publishing innovative Bibles - also has a Palin biography, to go on sale Oct. 10. Written by Joe Hilley, "Sarah Palin: A New Kind of Leader" will explore Mrs. Palin's political career, her family life and her Christian faith.

"Regardless of your political persuasion, it is clear that Sarah Palin has quickly electrified the 2008 election and sparked a nationwide dialogue and debate," said Moe Girkins, Zondervan president.

For God's sake

Oh. Oh. The G-word. Heavens. There are those who remain politically correct to excruciating levels, banning a reference to "" in any public venue, from schools to civic celebrations.

To employ a popular phrase, .

References to the Big Man Upstairs are printed on our money, included in our most precious documents, our anthems, our pledges - and there was once a time when the phenomenon was simply not an issue.

But wait. Something has happened out West. Score one for the G-word.

A federal judge in California has ruled that school officials can't forbid a local math teacher from hanging banners in his classroom emblazoned with "One Nation Under God," "God Shed His Grace On Thee," and "All Men Are Created Equal, They Are Endowed By Their Creator."

The Poway Unified School District near San Diego had argued that the 7-foot wide banners in Brad Johnson's classroom at Westview High School were at odds with "the educational mission of the school" and could invite a lawsuit from students or other teachers.

In a 23-page decision, U.S. District Judge Roger Benitez dismissed the case, noting that - gee, somehow - the same school district allowed other teachers to determine what they displayed on their walls. The fare has included Tibetan prayer flags, Buddhist posters and Islamic messages.

"By squelching only Johnson's patriotic expression, the school district does a disservice to

the students of Westview High School and the federal and state constitutions do not permit such one-sided censorship," he wrote.

The banners were not advocating a certain religion, but rather citing "historic and patriotic themes that in themselves have acknowledged God's existence," the canny judge observed.

A lawyer for the school board said his clients are now mulling over an appeal or whether they can live with the decision; God had no immediate comment.

Biting comments

Yes, yes - why not put presidential candidates on cookies? This is America, after all.

Mrs. Beasley, the self-described Beverly Hills "baker to the stars," is offering the crystal-clear photo images of both Sen. John McCain and Sen. Barack Obama on hefty frosted cookies, all nice and shrink-wrapped in plastic just in case they are destined for the partisan lunch box. Or campaign headquarters. The cookies are six for \$21 or \$42 a dozen - they can be seen online (www.mrsbeasleys.com) and ordered at 800/710-7742.

Cupcakes bearing the faces of the esteemed candidates are also available.

Days of yore

Oh say, can you? This is the 194th anniversary of the "Star-Spangled Banner," the lyrics written by lawyer Francis Scott Key as a poem originally known as "Defense of Fort McHenry" after Key witnessed the British bombardment of Fort McHenry during the War of 1812.

The stanzas were first printed in a handbill and then in a Baltimore newspaper and were eventually sung to the tune of a popular drinking song entitled "To Anacreon in Heaven" - attributed to the British composer . To hear an audio version of the original song done in early American fashion, go to http://www.americanhistory.si.edu/ssb/6_thestory/6b_osay/fs6b.html.

"The Star Spangled Banner" became the official U.S. national anthem on March 3, 1931.

On this day in 1901, President William McKinley died of undetected gangrene, the result of gunshot wounds inflicted by an assassin two days earlier. His last words, witnesses said, were "nearer my God to thee." Vice President Theodore Roosevelt, at age 42, was immediately sworn into office.

Quotes of note

"You are all evil!" - Incoming Detroit City Council President , to a group of reporters.

"No one knows what war is like other than my family. Period." - Potential first daughter Meghan McCain, on NBC's "Today" show.

Lipstick Wars, Lipstick-gate, Swiftboat Lipstick, L'Affaire Lipstick, Bam's Lipstick Bungle, Lipstick Jungle, Lipstick Smear, Lipstick Furor, The Pig Under the Lipstick. - Assorted headlines for the most recent press obsession.

"Who would be shouting what right now if it were a different commonplace colloquialism? Supposing, say, John McCaingot up at a rally and, describing Barack Obama's liberal elitism, said, 'My friends, let's call a spade a spade ...' - Robert Schlesinger, deputy editor of U.S. News & World Report.

"Hillary Clinton is as qualified or more qualified than I am to be vice president of the United States of America. " - Sen. Joe Biden, during a Democratic rally in Nashua, N.H.
Contact Jennifer Harper at jharper@washingtontimes.com or 202/636-3085.