

PALIN: Changing dynamics in presidential race

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These programs not only have the potential to bankrupt the country (along with Social Security) with a \$39 trillion unfunded liability, but they've led to the continual disintegration of the African-American family with more and more children born out of wedlock because government has ineffectively replaced the father.

Obama seeks to expand this socialistic renaissance. Universal preschool, universal health care, college entitlements and a \$150 billion "investment" on the farce that is biofuels were all outlined as a part of Obama's aforementioned change.

Massive increases in government spending and the gouging tax increases on capital that will precede them (although paradoxically he claims that 95 percent of working families will receive a tax cut under his economic plan) are at the center of his platform. Not bipartisan ideas. Not a shift from past Democratic ideals. Not even a concerted overhaul of wasteful earmarks. But unabashed and unrestrained liberalism.

He even had the audacity to accuse President Bush of personally robbing hard-working families of the American dream, as if the president has some sort of perverse vendetta against the middle class.

Political pundits hailed the speech as brilliant.

The mainstream media (most notably NBC and MSNBC, or networks nobody watches) received his canonization with unrestrained jubilation. Most in Washington saw what was supposed to become the messianic rise of Barack Obama and the inevitable downfall of the McCain campaign.

However, they weren't counting on one thing: Sarah Palin.

Sarah Palin's introduction into the presidential race as McCain's vice presidential pick has completely changed the dynamic of the battle for the White House.

Energizing the conservative base and having the potential to attract

many disgruntled former Hillary supporters (including undecided independent women voters) to the ticket, the decision to make Palin McCain's running mate induced widespread panic throughout the Obama camp.

Immediately, the left wing press pounced on the Alaskan Governor. They questioned her capacity to be a good mother because she has five children. They branded her as unqualified and incapable to lead, yet they inexplicably have not questioned the former community organizer's readiness. They even despicably threw her 17-year-old impregnated teenage daughter into the mix as a way to bring down Palin.

Despite the drive-by media's concerted effort to destroy Palin, informed voters knew better.

Rivaling Obama's rockstar presence on stage, Palin brought the house down at the RNC in St. Paul, Minn., and her sarcastic wit and antiestablishment persona drew 37 million viewers. Using her record of reform and taking on the status quo of political hierarchy, Palin accomplished in less than a week what took Obama 18 months to foster.

She set the stage for an emotion churning autobiographical plea of "country first" by the war hero John McCain, and in doing so narrowed the bridge between McCain and Obama in the national public opinion polls (the latest CBS poll has the two virtually tied at 42 percent of registered voters apiece).

Palin's presence has done something John McCain could never do: rally both conservatives and independents behind a single cause. By injecting enthusiasm behind the McCain campaign, the election has shifted in the minds of the voters.

Instead of voting against Obama, McCain supporters will now be voting for something.

McCain has successfully taken the focus off of Obama and placed it upon himself. This is utterly significant and it will prove to be ultimately game changing.

McCain now has a chance. The question is: Can the McCain/Palin ticket keep up the magic until November?

'PENN STRANGE'

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off that non-driver and made my transition into traffic at a reasonable speed while screaming obscenities.

Later, I realized that the driver could not receive all the blame because many onramps in "Penn Strange" are nowhere near long enough to give adequate time for acceleration without having a very fast car. So be careful on these roads and get to know your onramps.

Sticking with the roads, some of you may have noticed that vehicles on the side of the road always have a shirt or bag hanging out of the driver's window and wondered, what the is the deal with that?

Well I don't know about you, but the first thing I think of when I see a car along the side of the road is "Ooh, free car" or "Hmm, they must have felt like walking."

So here in good ole "Penn

Strange," they developed a system where the shirt acts as a symbol expressing to people, cops generally, that the car is there because it is broken down and to please not tow it.

A very big attraction in central Pennsylvania, aside from Hershey Park, is dirt track racing. If you've never been, it is worth going simply for the culture shock. It's a whole other breed out there. Just make sure you bring your goggles and some crappy clothes because you will get dirty and you may even catch a fight.

One other thing I must mention for those who are of legal drinking age, is the fact that you cannot buy beer in a gas station here. I know, I know. It is absurd. You can't even buy your beer and liquor at the same place!

Here in "Penn Strange," there is a lot of extra planning that goes into throwing a party, since in many states, you can get your liquor, beer and groceries all at the supermarket. Now we are

forced to drive all over town and make at least three different stops to get a hold of these same items. It is madness.

Take my advice and always keep your liquor cabinets stocked and at least a case of beer in the fridge because you never know when a party may erupt. Do not be caught unprepared.

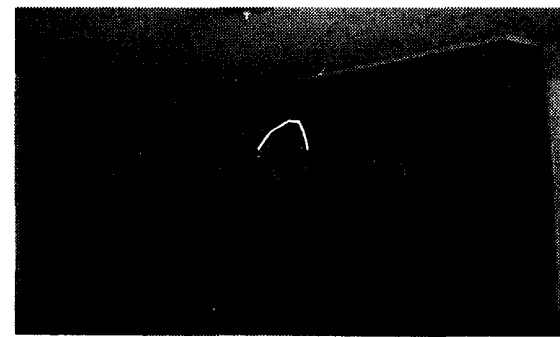
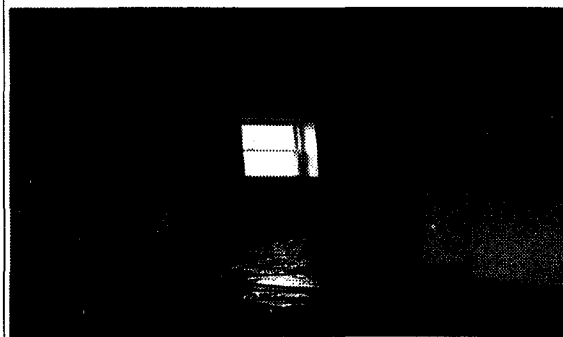
Yes, Pennsylvania is a strange state - I mean, a strange commonwealth - but it is also very beautiful and there is an abundance of gorgeous state parks. Whether you are a hardcore outdoorsmen or you just like to get out and see nature occasionally, you will not be disappointed with what "Penn Strange" has to offer. I encourage you all to get out and explore "Penn Strange." Just grab a beautiful girl - or guy, whatever your preference - a picnic basket, head out to a park and enjoy a beautiful summer or fall day.

Welcome to "Penn Strange."

Have something to say?

Send an opinion piece or Letter to the Editor to captimes@psu.edu.

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