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I grew up in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, near seemingly endless steel mills that lined the Ohio River. These mills poured fiery molten steel out of huge melting pots and afforded opportunity to many new immigrants experiencing American freedom for the first time. My elementary school was next to the UP (United Presbyterian) Church, and my first-grade teacher also taught Sunday school. We started the school day with a Psalm, and recited the Pledge of Allegiance with our hands over our hearts, and we believed in those words. We sang patriotic songs in class and waved flags and sparklers on the Fourth of July.

That feeling of freedom doesn't seem the same in our new environment of cameras and surveillance. Although the U.S. Supreme Court established that we have a constitutional right to privacy, the City of Davenport wants to photograph our travel and activity in the name of safety. Yet the only comprehensive federal study available through the Federal Highway Administration cited no conclusive evidence that camera enforcement reduced accidents. Likewise the City of Davenport cannot prove with any statistical reliability that these cameras make you safer.

So if the cameras don't improve safety, why is the city intent on bringing them back? The answer can only be money. And the motivation to bring in more money will make the system grow more intrusive and burdensome on us all, especially the "have-nots." Let's let our aldermen know we don't want this. We don't need a tax on our right to privacy.

David L. Botsko

Davenport

Palin Mocked Community Service

As a longtime Quad Cities community organizer, I take at offense at the remarks of Sarah Palin and the McCain camp about community organizers and the lack of job responsibilities or accomplishments of those who devote their lives to public service and making the community a better place for all.

Rather than focusing on how to change the failed Bush/McCain economic policies of the last eight years, Sarah Palin chose to use her speech at the Republican convention to launch cynical, negative attacks on Barack Obama's work as a community organizer. Senator Obama passed up a big paycheck to work in an economically disadvantaged part of Chicago where steel plants had closed down. Working with local churches, he set up a job re-training program that still exists 20 years later. Being paid little and working alongside laid-off employees is one reason Barack Obama understands what it means to face the challenges of making ends meet.

From the beginning of America's history, community organizers have made good on America's promise by organizing for change from the bottom up. Serving our country and our communities should be something both parties support wholeheartedly, but instead Governor Palin prefers to mock community service. Instead of talking about the issues that are so critical to our future, the McCain campaign resorts to personal attacks and name-calling. Please, tell us what you are going to do to help us with all the challenges that face our country and knock off the attacks on those who serve the community.

Cathy Bolkcom

Le Claire

Say No to Duopoly

The problem with the commentary is that it continues the fantasy that all we have to chose between are Democrats and Republicans. (See " Republicans: The Party That Should Have Known Better ," *River Cities' Reader* Issue 701, September 10-16, 2008.) Most states will have at least three independent and third-party candidates on the ballot this year. I personally believe that if you want to vote for what the Republicans used to stand for, the best vote this year is for Libertarian candidate Bob Barr. But we can only expect real change if people stop accepting that they have no choices. A vote for any third-party candidate this year is better than a vote for the Republicrats or not voting.

Whichever McSame wins, bad things are going to happen. Stand up, sheeple! Stop doing the same thing year after year and expecting the results to be different. (Einstein, you may recall, defined that as insanity.) Take a stand. Just say no to the duopoly.

June

From the *Reader* Web site