

Political Penguin

By Duane Plank

Minding my own business around 6:30 Friday night, sitting in the mansion, putting the finishing touches on one of my columns, when the phone rings. For some reason, I decided to answer the phone instead of letting the call ring through to voicemail. What, you thought that I would be out researching on a Friday night instead of diligently putting pencil to paper? Ye of little faith.

Anyway, on the other end of the line was a very nice lady, who explained to me how fortunate we in the Golden Bankrupt State were. She was soliciting cashola for the Republican Party and wanted to make sure that I knew that it was those pesky Democrats who were still out there trying to raise my taxes. Imagine that!

She rambled on for what seemed like 30 seconds or so, then asked if I was on board? I said sure, I am an amenable guy. Then she asked me if I was on board enough to fork over a minimum of \$100 bucks for the good old Republican Party. End of conversation.

Speaking of the party of Reagan, it was quite a shocker late last week when the lovely Sarah Pain, who was a virtual unknown politico in the 48 contiguous states at this time last year, abruptly announced that not only would she not seek a second term, but she would be stepping down from her exalted post as the Governor of Alaska.

The 40-somethingish Palin, who was added to John McCain's failed Republican Presidential ticket last summer right before the GOP's nominating convention, caught most of the pundits off guard when she chose to leave office at the end of the month.

Most of those who claim to be in-the-know seemed to opine that Palin's resignation would be a death knell to her future political ambitions. But most in-the-alleged-know are gushing and guessing, aren't they? Heck, Mr. Obama hasn't even been in office for six months, and the good folks on the political gabfests, with a ton of air space to fill, are already pontificating on who the Republican standard-bearer will be in 2012.

Palin, who emerged last summer as a fresh face on the political landscape with a very limited national resume, can now focus entirely on setting up a national campaign, without having to deal with those pesky day-to-day issues, like running the State of Alaska.

Course her detractors, and there seem to be many, will continue to lampoon her. Make fun of her kids. By the way, when did it become "politically correct" to take aim at a politician's children? Especially those under the age of 18. I get confused sometimes. Not sure which rules apply, and when.

So the lefties on *Saturday Night Live* or the *Letterman* show will probably continue to make fun of the self-styled hockey mom. Whatever. The Hollywood/Upper Manhattan elitist, antsy-fantasy crowd will do what they do, whatever they think is funny, whatever they deem as hip.

But do Ms. Palin and her advisors think that quitting the governorship really sets her up for a run at the Oval Office in 2012? Can't see how bowing out less than three years into her term as chief executive will be viewed as a plus down the road.

Respected GOP advisor Ken Khachigian doesn't see how Palin has helped herself. "She has to understand, when one resigns abruptly like that, people are going to be suspicious," said Mr. Khachigian. "If I were advising her, I would say 'You have to take the next step, and you better make it quick.'"

There is a heck of a lot of time before the majority of the voters pay any attention to who is running for the Presidency in 2012. Someone may, no, someone, a la Barack Obama, will emerge as the "hot" guy or gal down the road. And the talking heads will build up said guy or gal, and then spend every waking minute trying to find the dirt to tear said candidate down. Seems to be the American way.

Heck, we in the Great Bankrupt State will be selecting a governor next year, and according to L.A. Mayor Tony Villaraigosa, that guy won't be Tony V., dubbed by one publication as the "11-percent mayor," cuz that's all the time said periodical claims the Mayor spends on solving the cities many ills.

Villaraigosa, who was sworn in to begin his second term on July 1, probably figured that he didn't stand much of a chance in securing the Demo nomination. Or maybe he was telling the truth when he said, "I can't leave this city in the middle of a crisis. We have 12.5 percent unemployment, and 21,000 people have lost their homes."

Whatever the reason for Mayor V's recent change of heart, here is hoping that he spends his time diligently doing the people's business, working to solve the myriad challenges that plague el ciudad.

So who benefits from Tony V's decision? Well, San Francisco Sanctuary City Mayor Gavin Newsom was seen doing cartwheels in his office late last week.

Oh by the way, speaking of the business of Los Angeles, did you notice that the county sales tax has now jumped to 9.75 percent? Apparently, we the people voted for a proposal a while ago, Measure M, that is

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Nick Arquette and His Walk With Sally

By Karen Russo



Kids surround Mrs. California Sheryl Ellison.

Manhattan Beach resident Nick Arquette, 41, lost his mother, Sally, a hard-working single mom, to breast cancer when he was 16. Nick was in the eighth grade when she became unable to care for him and his older brother. The two boys were uprooted from home, school and friends in San Mateo where

they lived and where their mother had taught in a community college, and shuttled off to Idaho to live with their estranged father and his new family, flying home when possible to visit their mother. After her death, they lived with their grandmother.

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