

Party faithful weigh in on debate

GOP nominee center of attention

By Dan Abendschein
Staff Writer

PASADENA — Local debate watchers from each political party spent more time jeering the opponent of their candidate rather than cheering their own Thursday.

At a party-watching event with dozens of people at the Pasadena Area United Democratic Headquarters, viewers scoffed, laughed and even shook their heads in disbelief whenever Republican vice presidential candidate Sarah Palin spoke.

At a nearby Republican Club gathering of similar size, people booed Demo-

cratic vice presidential candidate Joe Biden, and several people muttered the word "idiot" repeatedly as he spoke.

The Democratic viewing party, on South Lake Avenue, even featured a "Palin bingo" game where people competed to be the first one to record Palin saying all the phrases listed on the card, including ones like "maverick," "pork barrel," and "working mom."

Beth Gertmenian, a local Democratic volunteer, said she had not liked Palin from the start because of her lack

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SARAH REINGEWIRTZ / STAFF
EXCITEMENT: Austin Fullmer of Glendale cheers on Sarah Palin at the Pasadena Republican Club during the televised vice presidential debate Tuesday. His brother, Blake, is right.



SARAH REINGEWIRTZ / STAFF
DRAWING GASPS: Newly retired teacher Judith Terzi of Pasadena reacts to a Sarah Palin comment while a crowd watches the televised vice presidential debate at the Democratic Party Headquarters in Pasadena on Tuesday.

REACTION Political groups watch debate

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of experience.

"It was just insulting for (Sen. John) McCain to pick her," said Gertmenian.

A few blocks away on Green Street, several Republicans finishing up the debate said they were pleased with Palin's performance.

Geneviève M. Clavreul, the one-time president of the Pasadena Woman's Republican

Club, said she thought recent poor performances by Palin in an interview with Katie Couric on CBS Evening News was a strategic move by the McCain campaign.

"I think she was pretending not to be good," said Clavreul. "That way she lowered expectations for the debate."

Those low expectations, reflected in the comments by some of the media, did not make Lonnee Hamilton, a volunteer coordinator for the Democratic group, believe Palin would do poorly.

"I didn't think she would make a fool of herself like some people did," said Hamilton, midway through the debate.

Still, said Hamilton, most of what Palin was saying seemed to her like typical Republican talking points.

"She hasn't said anything that surprised me so far," said Hamilton.

After the debate, Jennifer Soto, the headquarters manager for the Republican Club, said the energy Palin brought to the ticket had been important for local GOP members.

"We have more people coming in since her selection," said Soto. "And those that come in are a lot more excited than they were before."

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