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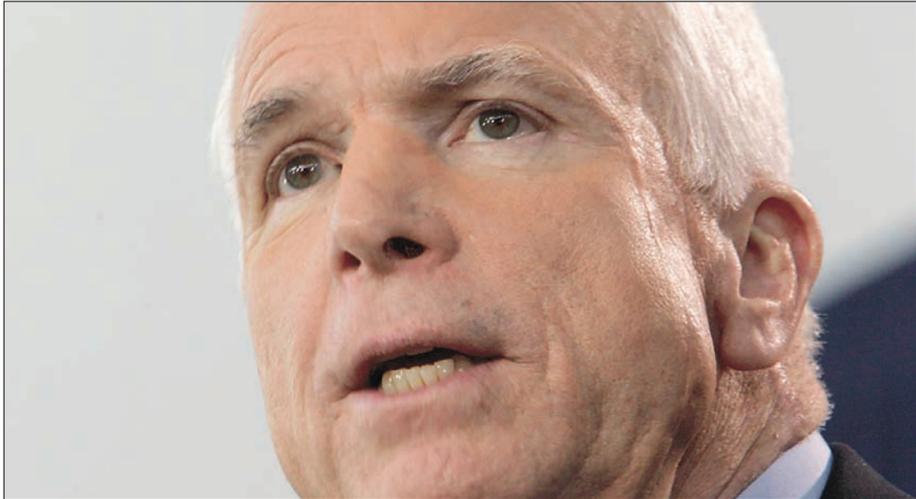
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AP PHOTO

Republican presidential candidate Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., delivers a speech during a campaign event at Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh in this file photo.

McCain winning back Republicans

Polls shows people warming up to McCain

By **ALAN FRAM** and **TREVOR TOMPSON**
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — Growing numbers of people like what they see in John McCain, vaulting him into a tie with the two Democratic presidential contenders just a few months after Republicans faced a steep disadvantage.

The Arizona senator has made a race of the White House contest by attracting disgruntled GOP voters, independents and even some moderate Democrats who shunned his party last fall, according to an

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Associated Press-Yahoo News poll released Thursday. About two-thirds of them have grown disenchanted with President Bush despite voting for him in 2004, including many GOP-leaning independents, while the remaining third usually support Democrats but like McCain anyway.

While McCain's image with voters has progressed since November, it is far from overwhelmingly strong. Yet he has done better than his two rivals: Opinions of Hillary Rodham Clinton have soured slightly since the

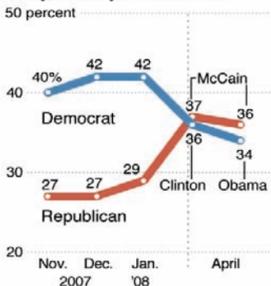
MCCAIN | A3

AP-YAHOO NEWS POLL

Switching sides

In November 2007, more people preferred a Democrat as president over a Republican by 13 percent. Now, John McCain is about tied with both Democratic rivals.

If the 2008 general election for president were being held today, would you vote for ...



AP

Obama says debate focused on 'gotcha' not policy issues



Obama

RALEIGH, N.C. — Democratic Sen. Barack Obama dismissively talked about his debate with Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton and the line of questioning from ABC News' moderators, arguing that it focused on political trivia at the expense of the problems facing average voters.

At a rally in the May 6 primary state of North Carolina, Obama drew roars of approval Thursday when he mocked aspects of the

presidential debate that had him on the defensive Wednesday night. He faced tough questions about his controversial pastor, his comments about bitter voters in small towns and his relationship with a 1960s radical.

Deadpanning, the Illinois senator said, "It does not get much more fun than these debates. They are inspiring events."

In criticism of his rival, he called the debate "the rollout of

the Republican campaign against me in November" and said it represented textbook Washington politics that Clinton was very comfortable playing.

"I'll be honest with you. We've now had 21," Obama said of the debates. "It's not as if we don't know how to do these things. I could deliver Senator Clinton's lines. I'm sure she could deliver mine."

—The Associated Press

Zero tolerance is the policy on weapons in school buildings

SECOND IN A SERIES
By **ANDREW POTTER**
TIMES-REPUBLICAN

The debate in Mason City over concealed weapons in public buildings has some cities taking a look at their policies regarding the issue.

As far as the open meetings held by the Marshalltown School Board there is no need to look at a policy — weapons are not allowed.

"Our weapons policy states that there is a zero tolerance on weapons in any school building," said Superintendent Dr. Harrison Cass. "We don't allow weapons on our premises for anything."

He noted the same rules apply to the district central offices where board meetings are held as are in place for all school buildings. He said weapons can be disrupting and present a hazard to those at the meeting.

Cass said if someone had a

weapon "we would ask them to leave."

Discussions during school board meetings hardly ever get heated and there is no security on staff during the meeting.

"Generally we have pretty respectful behavior," he said. "There's an expectation that everyone treats each other with respect."

Contact Andrew Potter at 641-753-6611 or apotter@timesrepublican.com



T-R PHOTO BY ANDREW POTTER

The Marshalltown School Board holds its regular meetings in the district offices at 317 Columbus Dr.

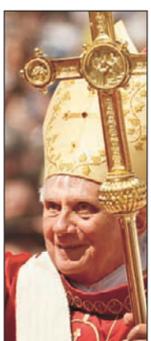
today's **CR** update

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CENTRAL IOWA SNAPSHOT

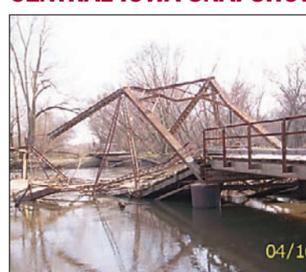


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