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**Cleaning up at MHS**

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# APPEAL-DEMOCRAT

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Marysville-Yuba City, California

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## It's an emergency in Gridley



Photos by Ana Pimsler/Appeal-Democrat

The Ace Hardware in Gridley displays a sign supporting Biggs-Gridley Memorial Hospital on Wednesday.



John Turner, RN, right, changes the dressing on Arthur Hernandez's knee Wednesday at Biggs-Gridley Memorial Hospital.

### Last-ditch effort to save hospital

By **Ryan McCarthy**  
Appeal-Democrat

The sign at the Ace Hardware along Highway 99 in Gridley reads "Save Our Hospital" – and inside Sally Barker had \$5 tickets for a Honda generator in a raffle to help raise funds for the medical care facility.

Barker, 77, drove her husband a half-mile to Biggs-Gridley Memorial Hospital when he had a heart attack a decade ago.

"It would have been 18 miles to Yuba City or 30 miles to Chico," Barker, a member of the auxiliary for the Gridley Hospital, recalled of the benefit of the local hospital.

The drawing by the hospital auxiliary for the generator is just one of many fundraising efforts as the Butte County community of about 6,000 residents works to save the hospital that opened in 1949, employs more than 150 people full time and contributes a yearly payroll of \$8 million.

Fremont-Rideout Health Group won't financially support an acute care hospital in Gridley after 2008. Fremont-Rideout has said it's not financially viable to operate the hospital with an average of seven patients a day. Biggs-Gridley Memorial became affiliated with Fremont-Rideout in 2001.

To keep the medical care facility open, the Biggs-Gridley Memorial Hospital Foundation says \$250,000 and a line of credit for that same amount must be raised by Sept. 24. The funds and credit represent resources needed keep the hospital open and return it to local

control, said the hospital foundation.

Yes, that less-than-a-month away date to deliver cash and line up credit might seem like something out of a movie, agreed Ed Becker, chairman of the long-range planning committee for the foundation.

This is no Hollywood story, but Becker and others believe the real-life drama of dollars and health care will have a happy ending when the required funds are raised.

Becker, who's lived in Gridley for nearly 60 years, noted a ballot measure last year to assess dwellings \$70 to support the hospital's emergency room passed overwhelmingly.

"With that kind of support," Becker said, "the community will again support this."

Hospital employees signed up to donate

Turn to **BIGGS-GRIDLEY / A6**

## Critics file complaint against YC's Ramirez

### Mayor denies ethics charge

By **Robert LaHue**  
Appeal-Democrat

With protest ballots still being counted, members of a Hillcrest citizens group say they've filed an ethics complaint against Yuba City Mayor Rory Ramirez.

Ramirez denies he did anything wrong in sending a letter to Hillcrest Water System users earlier this month that included post-cards giving people the option to withdraw their protests.

Yuba City is proposing a \$19.80 monthly surcharge for 4,000 residents to pay for a storage tank and part of a 30-inch pipe connecting the Hillcrest region to the city's surface water plant.

The connection and surcharge is being proposed after Hillcrest well water showed arsenic levels higher than federal standards allowed during part of last year.

Critics say its a bid to pay for a pipe needed for development, and the city could connect the area more cheaply with less costly connections.

In the complaint to the Fair Political Practices Commission, members of Murky Waters, a citizens group opposing the surface connection and surcharge, said Ramirez violated state law by sending the letter in an "attempt to influence the vote on the Proposition 218 tax issue."

Ramirez sent a letter dated Aug. 8 to Hillcrest customers, saying canvassers going door-to-door in the neighborhood gathering protests were misrepresenting facts on the city's wishes to switch the area to surface water.

Murky Waters claimed the letter violated FPCC regulations governing mass mailings sent out with public funds.

The group also said a flier distributed by the city

Turn to **RAMIREZ/ A6**



**Rory Ramirez**  
Yuba City mayor

## Politics takes a snooze in Marysville

By **Nancy Pasternack**  
Appeal-Democrat

The budget has shrunk, revenue prospects are fuzzy at best, and city leaders say there's plenty at stake in Marysville in the coming years.

Mayor Bill Harris and City Council Members Jim Kitchen and Christina Billeci are up for re-election in November. All will have the luxury of running unopposed.

"I'm not going to be conceited enough to say everybody is happy with the way we're running the city," said Kitchen, 71, about his lack of competition for the council post. "I'd say it's probably more apathy than satisfaction."

Kitchen is concluding his third City Council term in 16 years.

He remembers a time when City Council meetings were lively, "and we had fairly intense races."

The political silence, he said, began to set in four years ago when Harris ran

Turn to **MARYSVILLE / A5**



**Jim Kitchen**  
Councilman



**Ben Wirtschfer**  
Councilman

## Obama makes history

By **Jesse J. Holland and Calvin Woodward**  
Associated Press

DENVER – When this campaign ends, after future presidents have come and gone, and when today's young people are grown old, history will remember Wednesday, Aug. 27, 2008, as the day a black man became the presidential nominee of a major party.

This is history with the ink still wet; transcendent, yet in your face now.

It's a history that belongs to the red states and the blue states and the United States, to borrow the phrase that made people first sit up and listen to Barack Obama only four

**MORE COVERAGE**

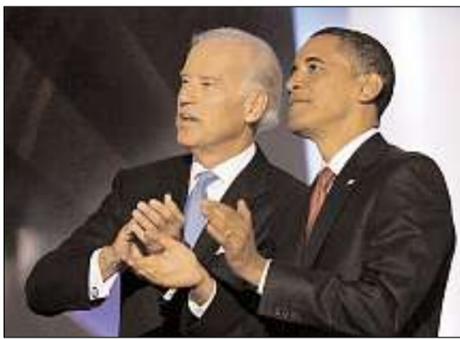
Former President Bill Clinton and vice presidential nominee Sen. Joe Biden fired up the Denver convention Wednesday night. / **Page A4**

years ago.

Americans who don't like him, who will never vote for him, own it, too.

The roll call of states Wednesday night at the Democratic convention means Denver

Turn to **HISTORY / A4**



Associated Press

Sen. Barack Obama, D-Ill., right, and running mate Sen. Joe Biden, D-Del., applaud on stage after Biden's speech at the Democratic National Convention in Denver on Wednesday.

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