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* Seasonal Star Show admission: FREE for Science Factory members and children under 3; Non-members: \$4.
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viewpoint BY JIM WEAVER

A Palin Presidency?

Political infighting could make it happen

Many people find it difficult to imagine Sarah Palin being elected president of the U.S. I believe she has a good chance. She may not be able to achieve the Republican nomination, but she does not need it. She may even be better off running as an independent. She is well known, has an aggressive base, and can make her own waves.



Running as an independent, and concentrating her campaign in a few choice states, she has only to garner enough electoral votes in a very close race to throw the election into the House. In the House the advantage is hers. The House is now and likely to remain after the 2012 general election a widely conservative bastion. A swinging, loud-talking candidate would be just its cup of tea. Palin is the very person to pull it off.

It may seem that an election in the House is a long shot (it has not happened since 1824) but in today's polarized electorate there are four distinct camps: liberals, mainstream conservatives, the Christian evangelicals and ardent Tea Partiers, none of them in their fervor willing to make compromises. That makes it much more difficult for one candidate to forge a coalition to gain a majority in the Electoral College.

President Obama lacks the enthusiasm he had in 2008, and with continuing high unemployment a virtual certainty, his health-care law a drag and the war in Afghanistan discouraging liberals, he will not run strongly – especially in the South.

Mitt Romney, the likely Republican candidate, is a Northerner, a Mormon and forced to defend his own Massachusetts health-care bill. He will meet a lukewarm reception in the South as well. With weak Democratic and Republican candidates the race will be neck-and-neck in the general election. That is Palin's opportunity to deprive either of a majority in the Electoral College. She needs only to carry a few states with pluralities to send the election into the House.

An election in the House is quite a different matter from an election in the Electoral College. Under the 12th Amendment to the Constitution, each state has but one vote. California with a 53-member House delegation has one vote, as does South Dakota with one member. Only the top three candidates in the Electoral College would be considered and one of them would have to be elected. The one and two House member states – with archly conservative delegations – would alone put her far ahead in the House vote, so far in front that Obama and Romney would appear to have little chance. Their House proponents are bunched in the few large coastal and rust belt states that have no more clout than Alaska, Montana and Wyoming. That would put enormous pressure on House members in the middle ranking states such as Nevada, Wisconsin, Missouri, Indiana, Kentucky, West Virginia and Palin's new home state, Arizona.

The political infighting would be fierce. The scramble for House members explosive. Twenty-six states would be needed. But the odds would favor Sarah Palin.

Jim Weaver of Eugene represented the Fourth Congressional District from 1975 to 1987 and is author of Two Kinds: The Genetic Origins of Conservatives and Liberals.

Dr. Schroeder is back!

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