

# From the Editor

As long as I've been working for *Women & Guns*, which is getting to be a long time, I've been either writing or editing stories with "Year of the Women" in the headline. Sometimes it's about women in the shooting sports, such as Olympian Kim Rhode or handgun competitor Julie Golob (nee Goloski). Sometimes it's about advances women have made in the firearms industry—such as Sheila Link's story last issue about "SHOT Show Then and Now."

And sometimes, it's about politics. Back in November 1992, we ran a story on the NRA's first (but not last) woman president, Marion Hammer. In June 2004, NRA-ILA head Tanya Metaksa was on our cover, next to a headline "Washington's Other 'First Lady'."

In that story, a profile of Metaksa, I wrote:

"Last year was the year of the woman in politics. Or was it the year before..."

Move the calendar up 15 years or so, and I remember having a conversation with an earnest young documentarian who was doing a project on women gunowners. I first met her at a SHOT show, and she subsequently came to one of our Gun Rights Policy Conferences. Sarah Palin had just been named to the Republican presidential ticket, and the film maker wanted to know what I thought about a "woman like Palin."

I remember being somewhat bemused—Palin had not quite yet become a polarizing figure, but she was already subject to parody and tsk-tsking about her family, her clothes and whatnot. At the time, I thought Palin a fresh face, a refreshing pro-gunner in action and not just in name, and I told the film maker I was "old enough to

have voted for Geraldine Ferraro so I didn't quite see what all the fuss was about."

I was reminded of all that this morning, when I turned on the radio and opened the paper, hoping that a decision was rendered in the *McDonald* case before the Supreme Court (any minute now—just not before this issue goes to press, apparently).

The front page of the paper was a mix of local and national stories. One of the "below the fold" stories caught my eye—a wire service think piece by Liz Sidoti, for Associated Press. Sidoti's story started, "It's looking like a new 'year of the woman' in politics..." She recounted some of the recent primary victories by women, particularly Republican candidates, for governorships, senate seats and a host of other federal, state and local jobs this fall. Sidoti pegs the first political "year of the woman" as 1992, when a then-record number of women candidates ran for office—and a good number of them won. This year, quoting the Center for American Women and Politics at Rutgers, Sidoti said there were "23 female Senate candidates, 216 House contenders and 23 gubernatorial hopefuls. Another 26 were vying for lieutenant governor jobs, and 77 for other statewide offices."

While Sidoti's piece was, for the most part, a bit of a history lesson, followed by a recap of the primary election results so far this year, some commentators couldn't resist a sneer or two, because, for the most part, the women who have been winning high profile primary races are either Republicans (like Meg Whitman and Carly Fiorina in California) or so-called "moderate" Democrats, like incumbent Sen. Blanche Lincoln of Arkansas, who

won a tough primary fight and faces an even tougher general.

There was a little musing about Palin, who was vocal in her support of winning candidates like Whitman, Nikki Haley in South Carolina and Sharron Angle in Nevada. "Did Palin *really* wield power?" seemed to be the gist of the comments.

A number of other women commentators also started a meme about whether "feminists" were disappointed that the winning women were mainly from the GOP or center-right Democrats. Could "women" (by which I assumed they meant "women like me") *really* support other women if they didn't have the same views?

Well, duh! Of course you don't support candidates you don't agree with. But it was a bracing reminder—mostly to the pundit class—that all women are not the same. That the mythic "soccer moms" might have different views on any number of issues and that women are sometimes even pro-gun.

Reviewing the primary season this far—as well as the commentary—Wisconsin law professor and blogger Ann Althouse (althouse.blogspot.com) wrote:

"You know, it's fine with me if we just start treating women like people. We women are not a team. And this isn't a game. The failure of liberals to cheer about the female GOP candidates is an indication that they are strong candidates. That's good!"

It's also a good idea to keep in mind a remark of Sen. Barbara Mikulski (D-MD), quoted by Sidoti in her story:

"Calling 1992 the Year of the Woman makes it sound like the Year of the Caribou or the Year of the Asparagus. We're not a fad, a fancy, or a year."

  
Peggy Tartak  
Executive Editor