

"SHE MAY SWITCH TO AN AMERICAN DESIGNER"

If she becomes First Lady.

I guess that's SugarMomma's idea of sacrificing for her country, swapping her \$3000 German suits for \$3000 American ones. Perhaps, as someone who doesn't wear \$3000 suits, I don't understand the point, but if it would be important for the First Lady of the United States to stick to American designers, don't you think the woman auditioning to be First Lady ought to do the same?

Anyway, I don't know why, but I find these examinations of Cindy McCain's wealth fascinating, in a train wreck kind of way. The country is heading into (at best) a deep recession and people are having trouble paying for food, yet this woman has—sometime in the last year—spent \$500,000 in one month on her Amex Card.

Their credit card bills peaked between January 2007 and May 2008, during which time Cindy McCain charged as much as \$500,000 in a single month on one American Express card and \$250,000 on another, while one of their two dependent children had an AmEx card with a monthly balance as large as \$50,000.

And in an era when millions of people are losing their homes, the McCains have raised the "budget" for servant salaries from the price of a modest home in many parts of the country to the price of a really nice home.

The McCains increased their budget for household employees from \$184,000 in 2006 to \$273,000 in 2007, according to John McCain's tax returns.

(For the record, "budget" is the Politico's term, not the McCain's. I rather suspect they don't use that word, much less the concept.)

And Cindy's solution to the problem of fighting with her kids to get into the Coronado condo is to simply buy a second one.

Cindy McCain, through another family corporation, spent about \$4.7 million in 2004 and 2008 on two condos in an exclusive building in Coronado, Calif., an affluent San Diego suburb noted for its high percentage of military retirees.

In her recent Vogue interview, conducted from the newer Coronado condo, McCain explained that her husband, a Navy veteran, initially wasn't keen on the idea of a pied-à-terre in Coronado.

"When I bought the first one, my husband, who is not a beach person, said, 'Oh, this is such a waste of money; the kids will never go,'" she told Vogue. "Then it got to the point where they used it so much I couldn't get in the place. So I bought another one."

Frankly, I've seen mothers do this with toys. Having a fight over the Legos? Buy some more. Kids fighting over the the last cookies? Buy some more. Only in the McCain family, that kind of conflict resolution extends to multi-million dollar condos.

Look, I don't begrudge Cindy McCain for being fabulously rich after inheriting the money Daddy made of shitty beer. And I realize that Theresa Heinz Kerry is even richer.

But we have a problem in this country when our elected politicians lead lives that are this drastically different from the lives average Americans lead. How can people who buy new condos like they're a piece of clothing

understand how dire the housing crisis is in
this country?