



Marin's Democratic delegates are off to cast their votes into history

Delegating authority

DELEGATE HEADSHOTS BY Leah Brooks

BY Barbara Tannenbaum



The politics of past eras can often be boiled down to a word or phrase: smoke-filled backrooms, the Checkers speech, a Catholic candidate, freedom summer, sit-ins, riots and demonstrations, hush money, Watergate, Monica, Miami relatives. This year, the defining word has to be “delegates.”

Try googling “superdelegates,” “primaries and delegates,” “total delegates needed.” You’ll never get to the end of the page counts. As Rachel Binah, a Mendocino-based activist and member of the Democratic National Committee explained at a July campaign event for Barack Obama in Larkspur, “I’ve been a superdelegate for 16 years and nobody ever cared what I thought about anything. It was kind of shocking to be courted, and I was courted by *everyone*. I found myself invited to high schools, elementary schools and luncheons to explain the *rules* of the Democratic Party. This year, the process suddenly became interesting to everyone.”

Binah, by the way, was one of the five superdelegates originally pledged to Clinton who switched her endorsement to Obama in June, thus enabling him to become the presumptive nominee, announcing 2,118 pledged delegates on June 4.

It is these delegates—all 4,439 of them both super and ordinary from the entire country—plus thousands more elected officials, supporters, journalists and celebrities, who will be flying into Denver next week. For four days beginning Monday, Aug. 25, they will arrive every afternoon at the Pepsi Center at 4pm to attend committee meetings, listen to speeches, hear some rock music, debate and discuss and, by Thursday night, officially vote to make Sen. Barack Obama the Democratic Party nominee for president and the person he selects the vice presidential candidate. It will be a day marked by symbolism—exactly 45 years to the *day* that Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. gave his “I Have A Dream” speech on the Capitol Mall. (It is perhaps for this reason that Obama’s people decided to move Thursday night’s acceptance speech to the 75,000-seat INVESCO Field at Mile High football stadium.)

When network coverage kicks in at around 4pm, it will become obvious that California has the country’s largest



delegation with 503 people. Most delegates were elected during a 90-minute caucus held in union halls and school auditoriums on Sunday afternoon, April 13, in every congressional district in the state. These are California’s “district-level” delegates. A smaller number of delegates, nominated by either the Obama or Clinton campaigns, were elected in Sacramento on May 18 at a meeting attended by the entire California delegation and chaired by former state Senator Art Torres. These folks are the “at-large” delegates. Lastly, California has appointed Pledged Party Leaders and Elected Officials—the “PLEO delegates”—(all Democratic members of the U.S. House of Representatives, Senate, state party leaders and members of the DNC), a.k.a. “superdelegates.”

Marin and (most of) Sonoma counties together make up California’s 6th Congressional District. We’re sending a total of nine people (plus elected officials such as Congresswoman Lynn Woolsey), seven of whom campaigned in either the Clinton caucus at Reed Elementary School in Tiburon or the Obama caucus held at the Carpenter’s Union Hall in Santa Rosa.

Most readers will vividly remember the Super Tuesday, Feb. 5 California primary. While Clinton carried the state with 52 percent versus 42.4 percent for Obama, the Illinois senator carried both Marin and Sonoma counties, earning 89,312 votes to Clinton’s 69,878. More interesting is that both Marin and Sonoma counties had record-breaking turnout. No doubt the careful reader has noticed this article focuses on the Democrats rather than the Republican delegates. First, our two counties beat the entire state with the highest voter turnout ever: 75.70 percent of all registered voters (Marin) and 76.42 percent (Sonoma).

Next, those votes were overwhelmingly for the blue party. Given that not double but *triple* the number of Democrats (76,469 individuals) as opposed to Republicans showed up to vote in Marin, and more than double the number of Democrats (113,682 people), as opposed to Republicans, showed up to vote in Sonoma, this year has been, to quote François Truffaut in 1977’s *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*, “an event *sociologique*.”

That said, you will be forgiven if you have no recollection of the delegate caucus.

Who becomes a delegate—and how?

To run as a delegate, one had to register as a candidate with the California state Democratic Party by 5pm, April 2, 2008. Only registered Democrats could vote, although one could change his or her party affiliation that day. Each campaign selected a volunteer to run the caucus. Victoria Hogan, a Gulf war veteran, organized the Obama caucus in Santa Rosa. Amanda Coffey, a graduate student at UC Berkeley, organized the Clinton caucus. Locations were not finalized until the last week and only publicized by e-mails from either the state party organization or the campaign volunteers and candidates.

“I never did this before,” Hogan admits. “So I called this fellow who organized the Kerry caucus four years ago. He said, ‘Just find an elementary school or cafeteria somewhere. Maybe 75 people tops will show up. It didn’t turn out that way. Like everything else with Obama this year, you had to take what happened in the past and multiply it.’”

More than 551 people showed up at the Obama caucus in Santa Rosa. Hogan recalls that the Obama caucus had 52 candidates running for 3 delegate slots plus one more alternate. People could vote for as many as three candidates. She hired a CPA to facilitate the count.

“It was huge and exhausting,” she recalls. To her credit, she and a team of 10 volunteers e-mailed a customized flier with Obama’s photo asking people to participate in the caucus. When the doors opened at 2pm, there were lines out to the parking lot. People registered at a table, signing paperwork attesting that they were Democrats or registered at another table. At 3pm, each candidate gave a 30 second speech and concluded with a final round of voting.

Over in Tiburon, 220 people cast ballots at the Clinton caucus at Reed Elementary School. Most were there because the campaigners themselves had made phone calls and sent e-mails. People brought fliers, worked the lines shaking hands and had family members and even a few dogs in attendance. On the Clinton ballot were names of 24 candidates all running for one of three spots.

Party rules designated that a specific number of delegate slots at either caucus be awarded to two women or one man (or vice versa) earning the highest total votes. (Allocation systems resulting in racial diversity and gender equity > 14

Denver here they come!

Meet Marin's 2008 DNC delegates



Norman Solomon age 57

Author and media critic
District-level delegate pledged to Barack Obama

SOLOMON—executive director of the Institute for Public Accuracy, author of 12 books including the recent *Made Love, Got War* and *War Made Easy*, and widely published freelance journalist—was the top vote-getter with 202 votes at the April 13 caucus for Obama in Santa Rosa. He lives with his

wife, Cheryl Higgins, in Inverness Park, West Marin.

Why be a delegate?

We're facing crucial issues that provide a strong momentum for organizing. The election of Barack Obama is not the end of the process. When FDR first ran for the president, he was not a strong progressive candidate. You can say the same about Barack Obama. I think Obama has the potential to be one of the great presidents in U.S. history. He's open to the growing progressive movement, which he could gather strength from. I don't believe that history is fundamentally made from the top down. I believe that it's made from the bottom up. The caveat is, that we need someone in the White House who is open to what's best in American society. As opposed to someone who is attuned to the worst. An oilman.

Earlier in the year, you wrote columns criticizing the positions of all the candidates. What changed for you? Why did you want to become a pledged delegate?

Look, I don't believe the Church of Edwards or Clinton or Obama. I think that issues are crucial. And some people may not feel that way. They may feel, "I choose my candidate. I pledge my loyalty to that candidate." And they turn off their critical faculties. I think that would be self-defeating. We need to send out a clear message to people that you don't have to be in agreement with everything a candidate says to be strongly in support of that candidate.

What do you expect to focus on at the convention?

I'm working very hard to get a strong, truly universal healthcare plank into the Democratic Party platform. I've met with Rep. John Conyers, the Democratic congressman from Michigan, who sponsored HR 676, the single-payer healthcare bill. He was also a strong and early supporter of Barack Obama. We've drafted a statement advocating accessible healthcare for all. We're asking other delegates to sign it.

Can you impact the party platform even though you weren't appointed to serve on that committee?

Certainly! Delegates will have their voices heard both literally and figuratively. We'll push to be heard on universal health coverage. I'm going to do everything I can to push for guaranteed health-care for all, with a single standard of care. It's a human right.



< 13 Delegating authority were hard-fought rules for the party.) In both cases, it took longer to count the ballots than to actually cast the votes. The winners were announced at nearly 6pm, long after most people had gone home. The ballots were mailed to party officials in Sacramento who certified the results.

6th District Democratic delegates '08

With 81 and 69 votes respectively, Wendy Baker and Pat Goss were selected as the two female Clinton delegates. With 69 votes, Derek Knell is Clinton's male delegate. With 202 votes, Norman Solomon was the top vote-getter at the Obama caucus, followed by Tom McInerney with 185 votes. Marlene Knox, with 133 votes, will be the district's female delegate for Obama. Greg Brockbank, with 127 votes, will be the alternate pledged to Obama. Paul Cohen was elected by the en-



Wendy Baker age 59

Government relations consultant; former mayor and councilwoman in Fairfax, 1986 to 1990
District-level delegate pledged to Clinton

BAKER, a Harvard graduate and former landscape architect, was a paid field organizer for the Clinton campaign, managing 31 precincts in Nevada during the

primary season. She lives in Fairfax with her husband, Rich Rushton. They have one daughter, 37, and two grandsons.

Why did you want to be a delegate?

First, I'm a very strong Hillary supporter. Her candidacy and stand on the issues resonated with my background. I was a single mother in the 1970s. I worked to create after-school centers and childcare. I fought against housing discrimination, landlords that wouldn't rent to single mothers. I ran into equal pay issues. As I said at the caucus, I believe that being elected as a delegate is part of the reward for working so hard for your candidate. I was dedicated to Hillary's campaign. I spent three months away from my husband and grandsons with only a short break to help her win the Nevada caucus. I made thousands of calls to get out the vote in Texas, Ohio and Pennsylvania.

What is your responsibility now as a Hillary delegate?

First, there's an ongoing responsibility to represent your candidate: her vision, her values and her platform. Next, it's important to stay informed. I want to know what the party is doing, what Obama's campaign is doing. Of course, Hillary suspended her campaign, although she's still working to pay off her debt. I do check her Web site to see if there's any events, any news. You see, there's a transition occurring for the people who supported Hillary. She's supporting Obama. But I feel as if I'm in a "wait-and-see" mode about what's going to happen in Denver.

Have you met the Obama delegates?

Yes. I attended the statewide meeting for delegates in Sacramento in May. And I went to the local Marin Democratic Central Committee meeting in San Rafael that brought people together. They had the big cardboard cutout of Obama up front. My heart jumped—it was a little too soon for me after the primaries. All of Hillary's delegates were going through a transition. But we all want to elect a Democratic president in the fall.

What is your responsibility at the convention?

The lack of information from the convention organizers or state party leaders has been frustrating. I'll be looking to follow Hillary's lead on procedure and issues. For example, I had hoped she would allow her name to be placed in nomination, for historic purposes. That's happened in the past. It gives the runner-up and their delegates a chance to honor them for their service and effort. But the latest e-mails I'm getting say that Hillary won't do that. Instead, she'll be speaking on Tuesday night.

What issues will you focus on going forward?

I've heard that an informal group is forming to examine sexism in the media. That's an important issue that emerged in this election.



tire California delegate to be an "at-large" delegate pledged to Obama. And finally, Assemblyman Jared Huffman was also appointed by the Obama campaign to attend as a Pledged Party Leader and serve on the Platform committee.

In Denver, our delegates are assigned to the Sheraton Hotel where they will attend breakfast meetings every morning at 8am, chaired by Senator Dianne Feinstein. They will line up to get their credentials and take a seat in the Pepsi Center by 4pm when the television coverage begins.

Maybe, as superdelegate Rachel Binah said, the convention itself will be, in essence, "a four-day infomercial, an opportunity to tell Americans what our values are, what our platform is, the outlines of our hearts' concerns." But one touching element after hearing the stories of the 6th District delegates was how many of them remember watching past conventions on televi-

sion with their parents. Or they remember volunteering for Truman, for Stevenson, for Kennedy, with their mothers.

One way or another, when you review the highlights of past conventions—including John F. Kennedy's 1960 acceptance speech outlining the New Frontier; the 1964 effort to seat the civil rights activists' Mississippi Democratic Freedom Party; the 1968 fight between antiwar protesters and Chicago Mayor Richard Daley; or Shirley Chisholm, the very first woman and African-American candidate for president speaking in 1972, followed by George McGovern's acceptance speech, which he didn't even start until 2:30am EST—there's a good chance the delegates will be both witness to and participants in another chapter of American history. *

Barbara Tannenbaum is a San Rafael-based writer and managing editor of 'Edutopia' magazine. Read her blog at barbaratannenbaum.com.



Tom McInerney age 44

*Labor and employment attorney
District-level delegate pledged to Obama*

AN EAST BAY/Moraga native and graduate of UC Berkeley and Santa Clara Law School, McInerney is a member of the San Anselmo Parks and Recreation Commission. He lives in San Anselmo with his

wife, Julie, and two children, ages 9 and 10.

Growing up, who were your heroes?

I was inspired by Bobby Kennedy. I read everything I could find. I was inspired by his life story, his ideals and his work on behalf of the downtrodden.

What is your role at the convention?

Our only role is to attend the convention and cast a vote on Wednesday night for our candidate! Technically, there's nothing for us to do until it's time to vote on Wednesday night.

How did you campaign at the caucus?

I got elected by organizing friends. I also asked a friend, Marlene Knox, if she would run on a slate with me. Otherwise, the goal was to ask everyone I could think of who was a Democrat if they would show up in Santa Rosa on April 13 and vote for me.

You say that being an Obama delegate was a special dream of yours. Why?

There's always something special about a convention. It's fun to be with like-minded people who share our outlook on public policy. Of course, the acceptance speech is always so powerful and inspirational. It was at the convention in Los Angeles 1960, that John F. Kennedy first laid out his ideas about the New Frontier. This convention has that possibility, too, to be a unique moment of history. I feel it will be unlike anything I've ever seen in my life. To hear such a compelling speaker with such charisma, I can't even describe it. Obama's ability to motivate people, to speak about larger, transformative ideas—it goes back to Bobby Kennedy.



Pat Goss age 64

*Executive coach, former professor of
communications and corporate executive
District-level delegate pledged to Clinton*

ORIGINALLY from Canada and a naturalized citizen, Pat Goss moved to Los Angeles with her family in 1960. She attended UCLA, earning a Ph.D. in political science and was a professor of communications

at UCLA and City College of New York. She lives in Tiburon with her husband, Dale Weibel. They have four grown children and two grandchildren.

How did you get involved with Hillary? Was it a generational calling?

Yes. I always felt that this was my time. I mean, it was Hillary's time, but for my generation of women—and I'm 64 years old—this is our time. I'm part of the first generation of educated women that entered the work force. We faced the whole struggle for equal pay for equal work, raising children, struggling to get emotional support from our husbands. My own experience being on the faculty of UCLA—I remember the secretary telling me, "Do you know you make half the money of all the men in this department?" There's a whole lifetime of fighting here.

When and where do you think the primary race turned for Obama?

The real problem was that she was the front runner. She was such a front runner that she didn't get to play underdog last fall. And that would have kicked a different set of people and a different set of circumstances into play. When she didn't win in Iowa, after pouring incredible amounts of money into it, that was it. She won in New Hampshire and that was great. But even when we got to Super Tuesday and she carried California, it didn't feel like she won. Obama figured out how to win the caucus states and it was a slam dunk. Hillary figured it out by late spring. But by then it was too late.

Did you feel the tide changing at home, too?

Yes. I knew something was wrong in Marin when I called this fundraiser I knew who lived in Tiburon. I asked for her contribution and she said, "Yeah, I'll go to this event and I'll give you some money. But I just want you to know that my husband has already raised \$1 million for Obama in Tiburon." This was like a year ago, April.

What are your responsibilities as a delegate?

I don't feel I have any responsibility until the convention. Now, that would be completely different if my candidate had won and was going to be nominated at the convention. But given the situation of dealing with this really intense primary, we've needed some time to become really enthusiastic about Obama. It's a process. It's just tough for all of us.

Was the primary tough for you personally or was it just tough to see what Hillary was going through?

Here's an example. I gave a little presentation at the Novato Democratic Club right before Super Tuesday. My husband came up with me. He was shocked at how personal the speakers for Obama got. How they attacked me. Well, not me personally, but as the articulator of the Hillary position. It didn't bother me. I was used to it. But my husband

couldn't believe it.

Did you feel the media was sexist?

Certainly. There were times this spring when I couldn't stand to watch Keith Olbermann or Chris Matthews. There were nights—I can't believe I'm saying this—when only Bill O'Reilly on Fox spoke about Hillary with respect or sympathy. I got one e-mail from a friend in my women's group who was upset over the way the media was going after Michelle Obama. I sympathize. I think Michelle Obama is a very interesting woman. But what did they expect? There's a naiveté in the Obama camp about this. They have no idea how tough the general election is going to be. Especially the Marin people who support him. Don't get me wrong—I believe the people running the Obama campaign are good Democrats. I hope they're all just as smart as they think they are.

Are you still excited about going to Denver?

I have mixed feelings. For the Hillary people, it won't really be over until the convention, until we hear her speak. I do want them to treat her with respect. I want her, not Bill or Al Gore and so on, to get the best time slot. Both Hillary and Obama were the ones who made history. It's their day. But it feels bittersweet. Will there be another serious female contender for the White House in my lifetime? I don't know. I think it'll take a while.



Marlene Knox age 66

*Retired, community activist
District-level delegate pledged to Obama*

KNOX—a former English teacher and MBA graduate of Golden Gate University who worked for 17 years as a mortgage broker—has been dubbed "the grassroots candidate" by her peers. She lives with her husband, Steve, in San Anselmo. Knox has two daughters, two

stepdaughters, four grandchildren and a fifth one on the way.

You're the exact demographic profile of a Hillary Clinton supporter. When did you decide Obama was your candidate?

I was born in Chicago. Like everyone, I saw his speech at the 2004 convention on TV. I had an epiphany. I called out to my husband, "Come right away! This man is going to be the president of the United States." So I've been following his career since he ran for the Senate. I researched him online. I went with my daughter and a friend to hear him speak at the Marin Civic Center in October 2006 when he was promoting his new book, *The Audacity of Hope*. I went up to him afterward so he could autograph the book. I looked in his eyes and said, "Please—in my lifetime." He smiled and said, "Well, I'm the flavor of the month."

When did you start volunteering?

I made sure I was online at 8am on the day he announced his candidacy in February 2007. I signed up on his Web site, I bought the buttons and the T-shirts. And they reached out to me right away. I started volunteering—they call it "tabling." I would sell the buttons and shirts at a table in the Red Hill and the Strawberry Shopping centers. I worked a booth for Obama at the Marin County Fair on the 4th of July in 2007. By the summer, the campaign invited me to a week-long "Obama camp" where you were supposed to learn how to organize.

My highest aspiration up to that point, by the way, was simply to answer phones in an office. I had worked on a phone bank for John Kerry. That's all I could imagine.

Was this in the fall of 2007?

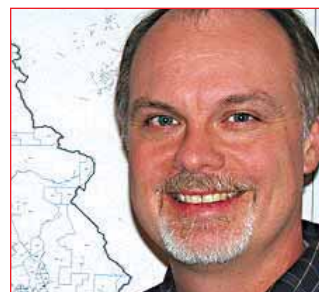
Yes. [Soon] he promoted me to "Precinct Specialist." It was my job to find precinct captains to register and get out the vote on Super Tuesday's primary in February 2008.

Why did you want to be a delegate?

I had always watched the conventions and thought, "How do those people get there? They must be big mucky-mucks." But as I began meeting such a wide variety of activists, I started asking people, "How do you become a delegate?" One person, Mimi Hubert, laid it all out: "You have to go to the state party Web site, you enroll online, you need to bring people to vote for you." It reminded me of high school.

What will it mean to you to actually go to Denver and participate?

It all goes back to my mother, Minnie Odelson. She introduced me to politics in 1948 when we walked to a house that supported Thomas Dewey [the Republican candidate] and she had me write on the sidewalk with chalk, "Truman for President!" Oh, how I remember her yelling back at the TV during the McCarthy hearings. No one denies that this convention is probably the most historic one we've seen in a long time. I'm in awe of this chance to participate. Going there as a delegate is both a continuation and a fulfillment of my mother's dreams. Her dream has become my dream. We will go to Denver together.



Derek Knell age 49

*Print salesman, Strahm Communications
District-level delegate pledged to Clinton*

KNELL, the youngest of seven siblings, was born in Southern California, then relocated to Marin and attended San Rafael High School. He has long worked in the family business, a unionized printing company > 16

< 15 **Denver, here they come!** based in San Rafael. He was elected to a four-year-term on the board of the Novato Unified School District in 2005. He lives in Novato with his wife. He has two sons, ages 27 and 23.

In your flier at the Clinton delegate caucus, you strongly promoted your union affiliation. Why?

I have a strong belief in middle-class working Americans. That making solid wages available for the middle class and working class is what makes this country different. Twenty years ago, my mother and I unionized the small number of employees we had in our print shop. I wanted to walk the talk and support labor.

Why did you want to be a delegate?

I'm interested in federal leadership that's going to really help traditional working-class and middle-class families. We've gone too far with anti-labor laws, NAFTA. Those free-trade agreements aren't fair. They impact our ability to raise families.

Then why did you support Hillary? Her husband signed NAFTA.

I'm not naive—I know there's need for compromise and also to let politicians change their minds. I thought Hillary would be the strongest candidate for working people. She changed her position on NAFTA early in the primary.

How did you campaign as delegate?

You've got to promote what you stand for in writing. You have to explain why you want this job. I said I wanted to learn to be a better and stronger Democrat. Then you have to campaign. You have to get out there and talk to people in line, shake hands and convince them to support you. In my case, it worked out well. I didn't expect it.

Is there unity between the Clinton and Obama delegates?

Sure. Remember, we all met in Sacramento on May 18. We had our orientation. There are more Clinton delegates than Obama delegates. And we each went into our respective ballrooms, heard our leaders speak. Then the Marin people all got together. It was fun. Ultimately, we're going as Californians.



Greg Brockbank age 56

*San Rafael City Council member, former chairman of the Marin Democratic Central Committee
District-level Alternate pledged to Obama*

A RESIDENT OF San Rafael for 40 years, Brockbank has been involved in local and state Democratic politics for 22 years. He has served five times as trustee of the Marin Community College District, chairs a number of

nonprofit civic organizations and is president of the Social Justice Center of Marin.

How did you campaign in this year's caucus?

I've run four times before as a delegate, but I've never won. They say to win you have to join a slate, which I never did before. They say you have to bring all your friends, which I never did. In the past, I just showed up with my flier. This time, I joined a slate and I brought all my friends. It worked.

Why do you want to be a delegate?

I think everybody watches them on TV and thinks, "Gee, that'd be fun to be there!" But beyond that, I think I've been as involved in the Democratic Party, as an activist, as anybody. I'm stepping down as chairman of the Marin Democratic Central Committee, which is the local organization that fields volunteer activities, the phone banks, the precinct outreach and the voter turnout campaigns on Election Day for all Democratic campaigns in this county. As I'm turning over the reins to Paul Cohen [who was appointed as an "at-large" delegate for Marin], I thought it would be a good time to try to attend the national convention. A culmination, if you will, of my 22 years in local politics.

Who are your political heroes?

I can remember my parents' enthusiasm for Adlai Stevenson. They campaigned for him when I was 4 years old. Howard Dean is my personal hero. I heard him speak in Sacramento in spring 2003, when Dean was just a former, unknown governor from Vermont. He had joined the 2004 race for president and he was sharing a stage with the front runners, Sen. John Kerry and Rep. Dick Gephardt. But there wasn't much buzz about him. Well, Bush was just weeks away from invading Iraq and everyone in the audience was unhappy about it. Both Kerry and Gephardt made speeches justifying it and there were scattered boos in the audience. Well, the first thing out of Dean's mouth was, "And I want to know why some Democrats are supporting George Bush's unilateral invasion of Iraq!" Oh, the crowd went wild! Four thousand people in that auditorium. He won me over, too. That was a transformational moment in a transformational campaign five years ago. I believe that Barack Obama is another such transformational candidate.



Paul Cohen age 52

*Director of Government Relations for the Northern California Carpenters Regional Council
At-large Delegate pledged to Obama*

ON JULY 10, Cohen was elected to a two-year term

as the new chairman of the Marin Democratic Central Committee, taking over from Greg Brockbank. A Mill Valley native, he lives in San Rafael with his wife, Nancy, and two daughters, ages 18 and 16.

Did you campaign to be a delegate?

No. I'm an at-large delegate, which is very different than the district-level delegates. The at-large delegates are a block of pledged voters whose numbers are decided by the number of statewide votes the candidates received. Clinton, who won California's primary, got 44 at-large delegates; Obama got 37. Because of my active involvement with the California State Democratic Party, the Obama campaign called me and encouraged me to apply for one of their slots. I was picked on May 18 in a meeting in Sacramento.

Why were the two delegate caucuses so different this presidential cycle?

First, the timing changed. The state moved up the primary. In the past, you had to sign up to run in the caucus before you knew who would win the primary. Plus, the primary took place in June and in 2000 and 2004 it seemed wrapped up by January, February. That's exactly why they moved the California primary up to February, Super Tuesday. They thought it would happen again. But this time we had two viable candidates all the way to the end. So it was much more exciting this year. Also, so many rules governing delegates changed after George McGovern ran in 1972. His people sought to change all that backroom maneuvering to an open primary system. Remember that in 1968, Hubert Humphrey won the nomination without running in a single primary.



Jared Huffman age 44

*California state assemblyman representing Marin and southern Sonoma counties
Appointed PLEO delegate pledged to Obama*

A NATIVE OF Independence, Missouri, Huffman is a graduate of UC Santa Barbara and Boston Law School and a former senior attorney for the Natural Resources Defense Council. He is a past president and board mem-

ber of the Marin Municipal Water District and was elected to the state Assembly in 2006. Huffman lives in San Rafael with his wife, Susan, and two children.

Why did you endorse Barack Obama so early in his campaign?

I'd already read Obama's books and had been inspired by the great things he had to say. But before I gave him my formal support, I wanted to take the measure of the man. I met him in Washington, D.C., in early 2007 with a delegation of California legislators. I decided to ask him some tough questions. In particular, I asked him about a case that was then pending before the U.S. Supreme Court, called Massachusetts versus the EPA, and how his administration would regulate carbon emissions under the federal Clean Air Act. He won my endorsement that day with a two-minute answer that completely crystallized the issues then pending before the Supreme Court. He demonstrated a great mastery of the issue and explained exactly how his administration would proceed depending on how the Supreme Court ruled.

What is your role at the convention?

I was appointed to serve on the national platform committee. Both the Clinton and Obama campaigns had a number of pledged delegates they could appoint to each of these committees, which include the credentials committee, the rules committee and the platform committee.

Do you expect the behind-the-scenes drama that's happened at past conventions?

No, not at all. You know, conventions like 1968 or 1972—those were dramatic. The 1968 convention especially was poised to have a huge platform fight for the heart and soul of the party. But that's not the kind of platform experience we're going to see in Denver. We're very clear on what Democrats stand for, across the board. It's a good time to be a Democrat. There's a lot of unity.

What do you want to see adopted by the platform committee?

First, I wanted to see a commitment to undoing all the environmental, civil liberty and social rollbacks that we've seen for the past eight years from the Bush administration. I'd like to see universal healthcare in the platform. I'd also like to see a strong response to the environmental issue of climate change in the platform. And I think it will be there.

Why are you impressed with Obama's eloquence?

Our expectation have been set so low after eight years of George W. Bush that we've almost come to believe that we can't have a president that is inspired and has substance. Because George Bush has neither. In fact, that's what we have in Barack Obama. And if you think about it, that's what our country has needed at critical times in the past. I would submit that it wasn't just the tremendous public works programs of Franklin Delano Roosevelt that lifted our country out of the Great Depression. It was also his fireside chats. His ability to restore our national confidence. It certainly wasn't just an executive order from John F. Kennedy that started the successful space program. It was also his ability to capture our national imagination and get an entire country to reach for the stars.

I'm 44 years old. I was born a few months after President Kennedy was assassinated. I've never known in my life what it's like to have a president that brings that sense of possibility and purpose and energy and excitement to the presidency that John F. Kennedy did. But I think, perhaps like many of you, because we've never known that, we've always wanted that. And I truly believe that in Barack Obama, we have a chance for the first time in my life, to have that kind of president. *

