



MEDIA COVERAGE REPORT
August – September 2008
Democratic and Republican National Conventions

Presented By
Fleishman-Hillard

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TOTAL IMPRESSIONS: 71,778,806

Democratic National Convention:

- *Dow Jones Newswire*, “Housing Policy Debate Goes Beyond Foreclosures,” August 26, 2008; Online

**Also ran in*:*

- *CNNMoney.com*, “Fannie, Freddie Remain In Focus For Dems In Denver,” August 26, 2008; Online; ~8,000,000 visitors per month
- *SmartMoney*, “Fannie, Freddie Remain In Focus For Dems In Denver,” August 26, 2008; Online; 1,189,218 unique visitors per month:
(<http://www.smartmoney.com/news/ON/index.cfm?story=ON-20080826-000594-1753>)
- *Forbes.com*, “The Rental Society,” August 26, 2008; Online; ~7,000,000 visitors per month:
(http://www.forbes.com/businessinthebeltway/2008/08/26/dnc-housing-apartments-biz-beltway-cx_jz_0826dnc-housing.html)
- *Forbes.com*, “Forget Obama. I Just Saw Anne Hathaway.” August 27, 2008; Online; ~7,000,000 visitors per month:
(http://www.forbes.com/business/2008/08/27/dnc-creative-coalition-biz-beltway-cx_jz_0827dnc-hollywood.html)
- *The Washington Times*, “Celebrities out in force in Denver,” August 27, 2008; Online; 527,852 unique visitors per month; Print; 95,270 subscribers:

(<http://washingtontimes.com/news/2008/aug/27/celebrities-out-in-force-seeking-style-substance/>)

Note: The Web site displays a photo of Doug Culkin speaking with Susan Sarandon, who was vocal throughout the panel.

- *The Wall Street Journal*, “Democrats to Shift Focus From Clinton to Economy,” August 27, 2008; Online; 5,475,705 unique visitors per month: (<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB121977752738873629.html>)
- *Roll Call*, “Heard on the Hill: While They Were Sleeping,” August 27, 2008; Online; 23,960 unique visitors per month: (http://www.rollcall.com/issues/54_22/hoh/27652-1.html)
- *PerezHilton.com*, “New Lovin’,” September 2, 2008; Online; 1,607,233 unique visitors per month: (<http://perezhilton.com/2008-09-02-new-lovin>)
- *Fox & Friends*, “The Hollywood Contingency: Celebs Descend on Denver,” August 26, 2008; Broadcast; DMA not available: (<http://media.vmsnews.com/MR.pl?id=082708-895241-W001503873>)

Note: In the interview which ran during the 8:00-9:00 AM time slot, Tim Daly mentioned NAA’s panel discussion.

- *Air America Radio*, Interview with Robin Bronk, Director of Creative Coalition, August 20, 2008; Broadcast; ~2,000,000 listeners

Note: Robin Bronk discussed Creative Coalition’s events during an interview at 10:36 PM.

- *The National Ledger*, “Anne Hathaway and Josh Lucas: Heating Up?,” September 3, 2008; Online; 396,151 unique visitors per month: (http://www.nationalledger.com/artman/publish/article_272622488.shtml)
- *Life & Style Weekly*, “New Couple Alert! Anne Hathaway and Josh Lucas,” September 5, 2008; Print; 681,723 circulation

Total DNC Impressions: 33,997,112

Republican National Convention:

- *Boston Herald*, “Dorchester act has no Big Love for GOP scene,” September 3, 2008; Online; 991,272 unique visitors per month; Print; 185,832:
(http://www.bostonherald.com/track/inside_track/view.bg?articleid=1116645)
- *Forbes.com*, “Rebuilding The GOP Conventional Schedule,” September 2, 2008; Online; ~7,000,000 visitors per month:
(http://www.forbes.com/business/2008/09/02/gop-gustav-katrina-biz-wash-cx_jz_0902convention.html)
- *CNN.com*, “GOP to have its share of stars, too,” September 2, 2008; Online; 28,813,795 unique visitors per month:
(<http://www.cnn.com/2008/SHOWBIZ/08/29/entertainment.conventions/index.html>)
- *National Journal*, “Hollywood Uses Its Megaphone for K Street,” September 2, 2008; Online; 202,844 unique visitors per month:
(http://www.nationaljournal.com/conventions/co_20080902_3214.php)
- *The New York Observer* “Dennis Hastert Really Likes Green Architects,” September 2, 2008; Online; 442,304 unique visitors per month: (<http://www.observer.com/2008/real-estate/dennis-hastert-really-likes-green-architects>)
- *Reuters*, Republican Convention Daybook / Reuters Washington Daybook Report, September 2, 2008; Online
- *The Associated Press*, AP Republican Convention Daybook, September 2, 2008; Online
- *Roll Call*, “Heard on the Hill: Stars Out at GOP Confab, but Slightly Dimmer,” September 1, 2008; Online; 23,960 unique visitors per month: (http://www.rollcall.com/issues/54_24/hoh/27806-1.html)

- *Congressional Quarterly*, “The Convention: Back-to-Back Aches,” August 31, 2008; Online; 111,375 unique visitors per month; Print: 10,312 readers:
(<http://www.cqpolitics.com/wmspage.cfm?docID=news-000002942835>)

Total RNC Impressions: 37,781,694



Housing Policy Debate Goes Beyond Foreclosures

By Michael R. Crittenden

August 26, 2008

DENVER (Dow Jones)--Democratic housing policymakers past and present said Tuesday they remain worried about the finances of Fannie Mae (FNM) and Freddie Mac (FRE), but haven't received any indication that the Treasury Department plans to take steps to shore up the firms.

"I hope we don't have to exercise it, of course, but I think we're all concerned," Sen. Robert Casey Jr., D-Penn., said in an interview. "We just have to continue to monitor it...and I want to make sure we stay in touch with Treasury to find out as much as we can."

Casey, speaking at a housing symposium sponsored by the National Apartment Association at the Democratic National Convention in Denver, also praised Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson for orchestrating the government backstop for the firms.

"We just have to continue to monitor it and I think Secretary Paulson has worked hard on the policy," Casey said.

Casey's comments were echoed by other speakers at the housing symposium, including Rep. Baron Hill, D-Ind., and Henry Cisneros, who was Secretary of Housing and Urban Development during the Clinton administration.

"It's better for the country, better for the markets, better for the functioning of the housing system that we don't have that come to pass," Cisneros said in an interview. "I worry that we cannot see how all the cards are interconnected when something like that occurs and has repercussions for the global markets."

Wall Street investors and Washington policymakers have nervously watched the two firms for weeks amid concerns that they have limited access to capital and will continue to see their businesses deteriorate along with the broader housing market.

As a signal of the government's support for the two firms, which were created by Congress, policymakers included in the housing legislation passed last month new authority for the Treasury Department to invest in the two firms. Whether or not Paulson will need to take that step remains uncertain, and policymakers have kept mum about any conversations they have had with the Treasury. Casey, who sits on the Senate Banking Committee, said he hasn't spoken with Paulson in recent weeks, but that his staff may have been in touch with Treasury.

Hill said he had serious reservations about including the Fannie and Freddie backstop in the housing bill - "that was very distasteful for me" - but economists he spoke to warned of dire consequences if the two firms are allowed to fail.

"I asked several economists before we passed this bill ... whether or not if we did not bail them out, it would cause a recession," Hill said. "Not only did I get the answer that I didn't want to get, I got a worse answer...it would be the Great Depression."

Cisneros placed equal blame for the companies' predicament on their actions, and the actions of competitors and some policymakers who don't believe in the mission of the two government-sponsored enterprises.

"I know that there are some people, who for competitive reasons and others for ideological reasons, have wanted to see Fannie and Freddie fall, and I would say they are playing with fire," Cisneros said.

He had similar strong words for Fannie and Freddie.

"These firms have made mistakes, and I wish they hadn't structured themselves corporately with the compensation and some of the partisan activity they were engaged in; I don't think that was appropriate, but I don't think (letting them fail) solves the problem," Cisneros said.

At a separate event, U.S. Bancorp (USB) Chairman and Chief Executive Richard Davis told Dow Jones Newswires he'd like to see a "hybrid" solution that protects the original housing-focused mission of Fannie and Freddie but "doesn't put shareholders and consumers in the fray."

At the end of the second quarter, Minneapolis-based U.S. Bancorp had \$97 million in preferred stock in government-sponsored enterprises, an exposure less than one-fourth of its quarterly earnings. Davis said he's hopeful policymakers will craft a plan that combines private investment with government support, but stops short of full federal intervention.

"We're all worried about it, it's intertwined with the health of the economy," Davis said.

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The Rental Society

The National Apartment Association is in Denver with a message: Homeownership isn't for everyone. And that's not a bad thing.

By Joshua Zumbrun

August 26, 2008

DENVER--Plummeting home prices, soaring mortgage defaults, foreclosures everywhere, failing banks and mortgage lenders, and even Fannie, Freddie and-- as Forbes.com reported Tuesday morning--the Federal Housing Administration, are on the hook big time.

But is there a winner here?

How about the National Apartment Association. As homeownership rates fall, apartment rentals are soaring. Currently the U.S. has roughly 85 million renters in 35 million units. In 2007, the number of apartment units increased by 1.5 million, the largest annual increase since at least 1965, says the NAA.

In all the talk of the nation's housing crisis, however, apartment housing has been mostly left out of the equation.

That's what brought NAA President Douglas Culkin, Pennsylvania Sen. Bob Casey and former Department of Housing and Urban Development secretary Henry Cisneros, along with a crew of celebrities, **together in Denver to talk about apartment housing**--and how the country ever got into a situation where so many people took out mortgages that a sober assessment might have shown would be unaffordable.

Over-aggressive lenders and banks that failed to price risk are only part of the problem in the subprime boom and bust. The other part, says the NAA, is the government's "homeownership at any cost" policy, glibly summed up by President Bush's call for an "Ownership Society." It simply does not make sense for everybody to own their homes. Renting is not a bad situation for many, but it's been stigmatized. Owning a home--white picket fence, grass yard and all that--is part of the American dream.

"The American dream has become the American nightmare," says Douglas Culkin, president of the NAA.

The message for lawmakers?

"We need a balanced housing policy," says Culkin--a recognition from legislators that renters are part of the overall solution, that housing includes homeowners and renters.

Scaling back the tremendous incentives for homeownership, and maybe even adding a few incentives for renting, would, unsurprisingly, be nice for the NAA.

Many associations in the housing industry are scaling back at this year's conventions--faced with declining industry revenues and falling membership--or pulling out entirely, like Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, who announced they would not attend the conventions at all. For those who have been bailed out, laying low is the name of the game.

NAA is taking the opposite tack, hoping that events at both conventions with celebrity guests (today's included Susan Sarandon, Spike Lee, Josh Lucas and Anne Hathaway, to name a few) will help raise its profile--if not before this Congress, then before the next one.



Forget Obama. I Just Saw Anne Hathaway.

By Joshua Zumbrun

August 27, 2008

DENVER - What exactly is it that prompts 15,000 journalists with battered newsroom budgets, and politicians and lobbyists who can't even sit down for a meal to trek to Denver and St. Paul, Minn., for two weeks? The politicians? Sure. History in the making? Mmm, OK. Abundant finger food? Yes, two, please.

But let's be honest, part of the appeal is Hollywood. ("That's Spike Lee?" "That's will.i.am from Black Eyed Peas!" "Quentin Tarantino!")

For two weeks, working in political journalism, for trade associations, or in the bowels of the Democratic or Republican party apparatus is suddenly a genuinely cool profession.

In Pictures: Stars Shine In Denver

That's in large part due to the presence of the Creative Coalition, which bills itself as "the premier nonprofit, nonpartisan social and political advocacy organization of the entertainment industry."

It's not a lobby for celebrities. (Although the lobbies are here too. Kanye West is performing tonight at a Recording Industry Association of America-sponsored blowout. And if partygoers walk away more inclined to support the industry's battle against online file-sharing, so much the better.)

The goal of the Creative Coalition is to help stars lend their wattage to the important issues of our times--and in Denver and St. Paul they'll be busy illuminating at least 20 different events as official cosponsors.

Their schedule is a busy one, featuring events somewhat related to their day jobs--such as highlights from the Annette Bening-narrated documentary *14 Women* about female senators, or Pras Michel's (that's the non-Wyclef guy in the Fugees) documentary *Skid Row*, about homelessness. Others are farther afield.

The coalition's schedule includes promoting everything from Bank of America's (nyse: BAC - news - people) Environmental Initiative, to lending glitz to a Scrabble board of Washington acronyms such as the SEIU on EFCA. (That's the Service Employees International Union's perspective on the Employee Free Choice Act.)

At an event yesterday for the National Apartment Association, a group of celebs sat at a table upfront. Lawrence O'Donnell, the producer of the West Wing, moderated the event.

A highlight: He revealed to excited *West Wing* fans in the crowd that the Jimmy Smits character on *West Wing* was inspired by former Department of Housing & Urban Development Secretary Henry Cisneros, who subsequently gave a wonky speech on housing policy to a surprisingly attentive audience.

A star-struck congressman, Baron Hill from southern Indiana, told the celebs he was used to viewing them as authorities, but today the tables were turned and he had to be authoritative for them.

Susan Sarandon then took the microphone and grilled Cisneros and Pennsylvania Senator Bob Casey with a string of hard questions about the recent housing bill while excited observers from the apartment industry tried to identify everyone at the table.

"That's the guy from, you know, *Romy & Michele's High School Reunion*, the nerd who gets rich."

"The guy in the helicopter at the end?" (That would be Alan Cumming, who in addition to his star turn with Romy and Michele also won a Tony. But, hey, Broadway is an unfamiliar world to Washington.)

Many of the stars, however, hung out in a curtained-off area backstage, away from the prying eyes of the media, and unable to hear National Apartment Association President Doug Culkin's take on the critical importance of America adopting a balanced housing policy. We saw Anne Hathaway and Josh Lucas ("the guy from *Sweet Home Alabama!*") disappear into the back.

Maybe they were saving their energy before hopping on the shuttle to their next event (like an over-scheduled school field trip, they're bounced en masse from place to place) a forum on diabetes with pharmaceutical giant Eli Lilly (nyse: LLY - news - people). Or maybe they were just worn out from their morning reception honoring civil rights icons.

Perhaps the most likely explanation of all: prepping for Thursday's town hall discussion with the American Association of Nurse Anesthetists. Because if there's one thing Hollywood cares about, it's the critical nexus of nursing and anesthesiology.

Or they might just know that journalists favorably disposed toward Ms. Hathaway will be a bit more likely to show up and cover the event, even if she hangs out in the back. If such a journalist exists.

The Washington Times

Celebrities out in force in Denver

By Karen Goldberg Goff

August 27, 2008

Note: The Web site displays a photo of Doug Culkin speaking with Susan Sarandon, who was vocal throughout the panel.

DENVER | "Celebrity" has become a bit of a dirty word this election season, but that hasn't stopped a slew of Hollywood's elite from descending upon this city as if the Democratic National Convention had rolled out a red carpet.

Filmmaker Spike Lee is out and about, and so are actresses Ellen Burstyn and Anne Hathaway, as is singer Cyndi Lauper. "American Idol" contestant Chris Daughtry is here, and will also perform in Minneapolis next week for Republicans. Oprah Winfrey is rumored to be hosting the week's most coveted party. The Black Eyed Peas will play Wednesday, and, word has it, Bruce Springsteen will show up for Democratic nominee Sen. Barack Obama's acceptance speech at Invesco Field Thursday.

And while many are here just for the happy hours, glitzy receptions and photo-ops, actress Susan Sarandon was flexing her debating skills Tuesday at a luncheon conversation about America's housing.



Miss Sarandon pigeonholed former Clinton administration Housing Secretary Henry G. Cisneros; Sen. Bob Casey, Pennsylvania Democrat; and **Doug Caulkin, president of the National Apartment Association**, pressing them on why affordable housing is out of reach for many Americans, why rents in Manhattan are sky-high, and why Freddie Mac and Fannie Mae executives are still earning millions.

"It's pretty easy to identify the problems," she scolded the politicians. "The question is: What are you going to do?"

Mr. Caulkin was so impressed with the grilling, he asked Miss Sarandon if she wanted to become a spokeswoman for his organization.

Miss Sarandon, a longtime political activist, is the rare celebrity who brings her own brand of political savvy to celebrity events. These gatherings attract Hollywood star power, but often, it is all show and no substance.

"I think it is important for all citizens, not just celebrities, to participate in government and know the issues," Miss Sarandon said. "Just because you are a celebrity, you shouldn't become stupid overnight."

After enduring a month of Republican attack ads mocking Mr. Obama as "the biggest celebrity in the world" on a par with pop princesses Britney Spears and Paris Hilton, the candidate's strategists have taken pains to keep him from appearing alongside actual celebrities on the campaign trail or at the convention.

Todd Boyd, professor of critical studies at the University of Southern California's School of Cinematic Arts, said accusing someone of being a celebrity is somewhat unfair when "pop culture is one of the things we produce in abundance here in America."

"We may not produce cars and steel the way we used to," he said. "But pop culture is a big business and can really influence people. The McCain campaign is trying to make celebrity a bad thing, when really if you are out to get the popular vote, it makes sense that you have a certain amount of celebrity appeal."

Actor Richard Schiff, who played White House communications director Toby Ziegler on TV's "The West Wing," said he does not think Americans really look to celebrities for political information and endorsements. However, since famous names will help bring attention to causes and candidates, celebrities have an obligation to lend their voices - if it is a cause they believe in.

"It's the very least we can do," he said. "But when I see Hollywood people speaking on an issue they don't know that much about, I am embarrassed."

The star wattage will likely be dimmer at the Republican National Convention in St. Paul, Minn., next week, though actors Jon Voight, Robert Duvall, Jon Cryer, Craig T. Nelson, Gary Sinise and Kelsey Grammar are expected to attend. Sen. John McCain, the Republican nominee-in-waiting, also managed to draw 1,600 people Monday to a fundraiser at the Beverly Hilton.

Still, one need to look no further than the money numbers to see the balance of power in modern Hollywood. The Center for Responsive Politics, which tracks political donations,

said that employees in the television, film and music industries have contributed \$4.7 million to Mr. Obama, dwarfing the \$838,101 to Mr. McCain.

And that was before Miss Winfrey's fundraiser.

Mr. Schiff said he thinks Hollywood leans liberal because that is the way the country is going these days.

"What Hollywood does has always been a reflection of society," he said. "Ever since the 1970s, the country has been swinging to the right - losing the Southern Democrats, the rise of Bible Belt conservatives. I think we have swung as far to the right as we can."

Mr. Schiff pointed out that the entertainment world was once seen as a conservative stronghold. He said the Hollywood he remembers growing up in in the 1960s was the land of Bob Hope, Bing Crosby, Charlton Heston and Ronald Reagan.

Mr. Lee, the director, said Hollywood's history on film isn't as left-thinking as its modern stars.

"Look at how Hollywood has portrayed African-Americans, Native Americans and women over the years," he said. "To say Hollywood is a great liberal beacon is not true. Look at the most important films that started the industry - 'Birth of a Nation.' That's about racism and the KKK."

The Creative Coalition, a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization of members of the arts and entertainment community, will also be present in St. Paul next week, said TCC Co-President Tim Daly, a star of ABC's "Private Practice."

"We're nonpartisan," Mr. Daly said. "But I will say it is almost more important to go [to the Republican convention]. We're probably preaching to the choir here in Denver."

Hoping to crash a bit of the Hollywood party here, filmmakers screened a new movie Tuesday honoring the late Republican strategist Lee Atwater, an architect of former President George H.W. Bush's winning campaign strategy in 1988.

"Boogie Man: The Lee Atwater Story," was part of the Impact Film Festival at the Starz Film Center. There will also be a screening in St. Paul.

The documentary lets Mr. Atwater's friends, former colleagues and liberal commentators dissect his life and legacy. Mr. Atwater died of a brain tumor in 1991 at the age of 40.

Mr. Atwater proved a cut-up in front of the press corps and played the blues like few inside-the-Beltway types could. Director Stefan Forbes said he was amazed no other documentary filmmaker had sought to capture Mr. Atwater's political life on film before.

"He shaped the modern Republican Party," Mr. Forbes said. "Without Lee, there would be no Bush dynasty."

Democrats to Shift Focus From Clinton to Economy

By Henry J. Pulizzi

August 27, 2008

DENVER -- Tuesday is all about Hillary Clinton. But Democrats in Denver will try their hardest to turn the day's focus to the issue Americans say they're most concerned about: the wounded economy.

Sen. Clinton will deliver her hotly anticipated speech to the Democratic Convention in prime time Tuesday night. It will be another chance for the New York Senator to prod her disappointed backers to stand behind Barack Obama; the man who not only beat her in the Democratic primaries, but didn't offer her the chance to be vice president.

Lingering tension between the Obama and Clinton camps is the main subplot in Denver this week. A new CNN poll shows the presumptive Republican nominee, Arizona Sen. John McCain, has erased Sen. Obama's slim lead, a shift that may have been propelled, in part, by disillusioned Clinton fans.

Yet polls also suggest that voters trust Sen. Obama more than Sen. McCain to steer the economy clear of a recession and address soaring energy prices and the housing crisis. That's the message the Democrats will push on the convention floor Tuesday.

Sen. Clinton, Virginia Gov. Mark Warner, Kansas Gov. Kathleen Sebelius, Pennsylvania Gov. Ed Rendell and other lawmakers have speaking spots devoted to the economy.

Expect President George W. Bush to receive plenty of blame for the economic slowdown. The evening's speakers, echoing a theme repeated throughout the week in Denver, will charge that a White House occupied by Sen. McCain is a recipe for more of the same.

"Sen. McCain says the economy has done wonderfully under President Bush. Sen. McCain says that U.S. economy is fundamentally sound. I don't know who he's talking to," Laura Tyson, a former chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers in the Clinton administration, told delegates Monday. "This is an economic situation where the economy looks like it's expanded under President Bush, but middle-class families have fallen behind."

Working-class voters, however, are not convinced. Change to Win, a group of seven unions representing around six million workers, released a new poll showing that Sens. McCain and Obama are deadlocked with white, working-class voters. Michelle Obama's speech to the convention late Monday seemed designed to allay some of the concerns of those voters, with its focus on her blue-collar roots and the virtue of hard work.

"I come here as a daughter -- raised on the South Side of Chicago by a father who was a blue collar city worker, and a mother who stayed at home with my brother and me," she said.

Campaigning in Davenport, Iowa Monday, Barack Obama touched on another nagging economic issue -- the travails of mortgage giants Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac. Obama backed a potential government bailout, saying the firms cannot fail.

"As president, I don't think we can allow Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac to collapse," Sen. Obama said. "I'd like to be able to punish them for their bad decisions. But the problem is they're too (big) right now not to cause more damage."

The **housing market has been a major topic** for Democrats, who successfully enacted a massive foreclosure prevention bill and other housing measures before Congress adjourned for the August recess. It's the subject of numerous events in Denver, where interest groups, lobbyists and lawmakers are pushing their agendas.

On Monday, the National Association of Realtors and **Creative Coalition** highlighted the work of a Denver-based foreclosure prevention hotline that was put in place in 2005, but which has taken on greater responsibility as foreclosures have skyrocketed throughout Colorado.

"It's always been an important issue and even more so now," said Zach Urban, program manager and counselor for the hotline. "Housing is the cornerstone of our economy and it will continue to be a big part of the campaign and the elections."

Other housing-related forums are scheduled throughout the week, including events sponsored by the National Association of Home Builders and other financial services groups.

ROLL CALL



Heard on the Hill: While They Were Sleeping **By Emily Heil and Elizabeth Brotherton** **August 27, 2008**

While They Were Sleeping. Media critics (i.e., everyone) love to accuse the press of snoozing on the job, of nodding off while news happens under their noses. Although HOH is usually quick to defend her fellow scribes, this week the critics might be right.

In the early hours of Sunday morning, police arrested a man at Denver's Cherry Creek Hotel in a scene that could have been straight out of cop show "Law & Order." According to reports, the suspect, Shawn Robert Adolf — who faces drug and firearm charges and was

thought to be in on an alleged plot to assassinate Sen. Barack Obama (D-Ill.) — led police on a dramatic chase, jumping from a sixth-floor window and breaking his ankle in the fall before being arrested.

Sleeping peacefully just yards away, meanwhile, were some of the political press corps' biggest names. Reps from the Washington Post, NBC, CNN and other top-flight media outlets, including pundit Pat Buchanan, are staying in the hotel, HOH hears.

One of the snoozy scribes sheepishly admits to not hearing a thing. "I was totally unaware of the commotion when police kicked down the door of the suspect, who broke a window and jumped," one "veteran Washington journalist" tells HOH. "But in my defense, I was on an upper floor."

Barbs Over Drilling. A Tuesday morning news conference on energy issues with House Democratic leaders got a little more energized when about two dozen Republican protesters crashed the event.

The GOP interruption seemed to bring out the feisty side of Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.), who broke from her introductory comments when the protesters, gathered behind a bank of reporters and TV cameras, began shouting "Drill here! Drill now!"

"Right here? You want to drill right here?" Pelosi said. "Can we drill your brain?" Lest Pelosi leave the impression she actually wanted to do physical harm to the protesters, she quickly added, "Let's do some intellectual drilling right now."

But her rhetoric stayed hot. “What you see before you are the handmaidens of Big Oil,” she added. “The fact of the matter is that we are here because we see this energy issue as a national security and economic security issue for our country.”

House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer (D-Md.) didn’t miss a beat calling the protesters out, either. He followed Pelosi at the mikes, and opened by chastening, “Sophomoric chanting will not make us energy independent.”

Though several of the protesters carried McCain signs, they later took up a chant sure to rankle Democrats straining for unity as they prepare to hand their presidential nomination to Sen. Barack Obama (D-Ill.): “Hillary! Hillary!”

Heard-ing Celebs. HOH couldn’t possibly share all the celebrity sightings pouring in from all over Denver. We’re starting to suspect that the Hollywood-famous types in the Mile High City outnumber the Washington-famous ones. So we’ll just give our readers a few of our favorites:

- An HOH operative saw former “Apprentice” contestant Omarosa Manigault-Stallworth in true diva form, applying makeup on the convention floor during the opening night’s festivities.
- And an interesting couple were spotted drinking at Churchill’s cigar bar at the Brown Palace Hotel: Newsweek’s Jonathan Alter and actor Sean Penn. Penn’s in town for an event with fellow actor Val Kilmer and Green Party candidate Ralph Nader.
- A tipster reports that on Tuesday, former Bush White House aide Dan Bartlett jumped into an SUV parked in front of the Grand Hyatt that had an “Obama ’08” sticker on the back. Our Democratic spy wondered if the Republican had switched sides or was just trying to go incognito. “At least he’s supporting Big Oil by driving in a big truck,” the spy says.
- Maybe Bartlett and Rep. John Lewis got their cars mixed up: A tipster spotted the Georgia Democrat stepping out of a burgundy Ford Excursion on Larimer Street. The car bore a Colorado license plate with the anti-abortion motto “Respect Life.” Lewis, by the way, supports abortion rights.
- At the “Evolve America” party sponsored by Trojan Brand Condoms and Rolling Stone on Monday night, the celeb set arrived fashionably late — and looking like they’d been partying hard elsewhere first. Actress Susan Sarandon came with what appeared to be an alcoholic drink in hand, as did actor Alan Cumming, who also carried a “Michelle” sign from the convention floor.

‘West Wing’ Muses. Guessing which characters on the late, beloved series “The West Wing” were based on which real-life politicians was a popular parlor game during the show’s seven-year run. **And during a Tuesday session sponsored by the Creative Coalition and the National Apartment Association on housing issues,** “West Wing”

writer-producer Lawrence O'Donnell revealed for the first time one key character's inspiration.

He says he based the character of Matthew Santos — a charismatic young Hispanic Congressman who runs for president — on Henry Cisneros, who also was speaking at the event. Cisneros was the first Hispanic mayor of San Antonio and a former secretary of Department of Housing and Urban Development.

O'Donnell's revelation that Cisneros was the muse for Santos — memorably played by Jimmy Smits — was interesting, since another of the show's writers, Eli Attie, once told the Guardian newspaper that the Santos character also was based in part on someone very much on people's minds these days: Sen. Barack Obama (D-Ill.).

Casey V. Sarandon. Usually, it's Senators who get to do all the grilling at hearings. **But actress Susan Sarandon turned the tables on Sen. Bob Casey at the Creative Coalition/National Apartment Association's housing-policy session** (see previous item), raking the Pennsylvania Democrat over the coals for nearly 10 minutes on federal housing policy. For every answer Casey — who was a guest for the panel discussion of federal housing policy — gave her, Sarandon, clearly unsatisfied, came back with a follow-up. Casey tried to show that some progress has been made to address the housing crisis, but again, Sarandon was unsatisfied.

When the session's Q&A portion began, Sarandon raised her hand and was given the first question. But rather than just ask one question, she kept coming back at Casey with questions about affordable housing and what the government was doing about it.

And in a move certain to earn her the audience's sympathy, Sarandon lamented the fact that her longtime housekeeper whom she employs to help take care of her New York City home was being forced out of her Harlem apartment so that the building could be redeveloped for "yuppies." Sarandon also mentioned that her grown daughter, who lives in Manhattan, pays exorbitant rent.

Stars: They're just like us, really.

Condomania! The Democratic National Convention is shaping up to be a sexy affair — or, at the very least, one where there's no excuse not to practice safe sex.

The Planned Parenthood Action Fund has distributed loads of free condoms to convention-goers, including at their big bash held at the Samba Room on Monday night. In true political form, the condoms ask folks to "Protect Yourself From John McCain (In This Election)" and feature one of "10 things everyone should know about John McCain." HOH received condom No. 8, which reads: "Wants to nominate Supreme Court justices who are 'clones' of conservative Justices [Samuel] Alito and [John] Roberts."

Meanwhile, the folks at Trojan Brand Condoms also are in Denver, pushing officials to reshape the government's sexual education policy, spokesman Jim Daniels tells HOH. In a parking lot situated next to their "Evolve America" party on Monday night (co-hosted by Rolling Stone), the company set up an inflatable tent — shaped in a suspiciously sexual way — to educate folks about sexually transmitted diseases.

Comedian Bill Maher, who headlined the party, told reporters he has nothing but respect for the company.

"I never worked for them before," he said. "But they've certainly worked for me."



New lovin'
By Perez Hilton
September 2, 2008

Much better!

Looks like the lovely Anne Hathaway is moving on from that crook!

According to Life & Style, Anne was cozying up to actor Josh Lucas at the Democratic National Convention last week.

A spy caught the two at Denver's Earls restaurant:

"They definitely looked like a couple...they were really into each other, giggling and smiling and even holding hands at one point. You could almost taste their chemistry! She looked beautiful and happy. Josh put his arm around her for a bit before they left."

AND, the new lovebirds were supposedly 'connected at the hip' at another **DNC event hosted by the National Apartment Association. The mag says that at one point during an address by the association's president**, Anne and Josh disappeared together in the back.

Naughty, naughty!

It's so great that Anne's finding happiness again!



**The Hollywood Contingency: Celebs Descend on Denver
By Fox & Friends
August 26, 2008**

(<http://media.vmsnews.com/MR.pl?id=082708-895241-W001503873>)

Outline from VMS:

00:51:58 TZ; Tim Daly: An interview with Tim Daly. V; Private Practice clip courtesy of ABC. SI; Tim Daly, President of Creative Coalition, says about two years, the creative coalition in public funding for the arts, our group is bipartisan, there is so many and doing for National Apartment Association, remembering the lines is easy, you should stick with what you are going, Tyne Daly is fine, talks about the Hillary Clinton speech tonight.
00:55:27

Pulled quote from Tim Daly:

“Today I think we’re doing something for The National Apartment Association. It’s a group of people who are interested in talking about you know, housing and fair housing for people. That’s the only one I can remember...”



**Interview with Robin Bronk, Director of Creative Coalition
By Air America Radio
August 20, 2008**

Note: Robin Bronk discussed Creative Coalition's events during an interview at 10:36 PM.



Anne Hathaway and Josh Lucas: Heating Up?
By Jennifer Cox
September 3, 2008

Anne Hathaway, 25, and actor Josh Lucas, 37, seemed to have more in common than politics when the two dined at Earls restaurant during the Democratic National Convention in Denver on August 28. "They definitely looked like a couple," a witness tells Life & Style in an article set for publication in this week's magazine.

"They were really into each other, giggling and smiling and even holding hands at one point. You could almost taste their chemistry," the source continued.

The magazine reports that in June, Anne split with her longtime boyfriend, financier (and accused con man) Raffaello Follieri. But she seems to be getting over that relationship just fine. "She looked beautiful and happy," adds the witness at Earls. "Josh put his arm around her for a bit before they left."

Anne and Josh were also connected at the hip **on Aug. 26, when a slew of celebs turned out at a National Apartment Association event, where it was reported that at one point during an address by the association's president, Doug Culkin, Anne and Josh disappeared together in the back.**



New Couple Alert! Anne Hathaway and Josh Lucas

By Life & Style Writer

September 5, 2008

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In June, Anne split with her longtime boyfriend, financier (and accused con man) Raffaello Follieri. But she seems to be getting over that relationship just fine. “She looked beautiful and happy,” adds the witness at Earls. “Josh put his arm around her for a bit before they left.”

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Dorchester actor has no Big Love for GOP scene

By Gaylee Fee and Laura Raposa

September 3, 2008

ST. PAUL - Dorchester homey Lawrence O'Donnell, who plays a Mormon attorney on HBO's "Big Love," said Mitt Romney's faith wasn't his downfall in the 2008 presidential election.

"It was much more do to with his wealth and his flip-flopping, said O'Donnell," a former political operative for the late Sen. Daniel Patrick Moynihan and a writer/producer of "The West Wing." "Being a Mormon was way down the list.

"Romney is like Arnold Schwarzenegger," he continued. "Liberals who turned conservative to further their political careers."

Guess there's no Big Love lost between Larry and Mitt!

And since we were on the Mormon subject, Larry said it hasn't actually become clear to "Big Love" fans that his character, Lee Hatcher, is, as the polygamists say, living the principle.

"Actually, we shot a scene whereby my three wives walk in and I have to kiss them all," O'Donnell **told the Track yesterday after emceeing an event on housing hosted by The Creative Coalition and the National Apartment Association.** "So I did my first on-screen kiss ever and it was so awful that they cut it. I do hope the wives come back though."

O'Donnell also told us he spent some time on Minot Beach in Scituate this summer and was curious about the new Greenbush Line commuter train.

A true connoisseur of Boston politics, Larry was shocked, just shocked to learn that the train makes a stop at JFK/UMASS for the South Shore kids attending Boston College High School.

"No (bleep)," he said, laughing and shaking his head. "Ah, the Boston political machine at work."

Just showing the Eaglets some Big Love, Lar!

Spotlight on . . . Mitt?

And speaking of Romney, the former presidential candidate has been a tireless GOP soldier on the stump this week in Minnesota.

Mitt's checked out the State Fair, served breakfast at the Salvation Army in Minneapolis, appeared at fund-raisers for GOP candidates and has made the rounds of the delegation breakfasts.

At his stop yesterday at the packed breakfast for Massachusetts delegates at the Crowne Plaza Bloomington, Romney talked the GOP pep talk and ended the short visit with an anecdote about not letting the spotlight go to his head.

Romney said he and wife Ann were given primo seating at the Beijing Olympics at his favorite event, women's beach volleyball.

"Yes. I enjoy the sport, fellows," he laughed.

Romney, who ran the Salt Lake City Olympics in 2002, said he noticed that people were pointing at him and snapping photos.

"So I said to Ann, 'Look sharp, they're taking our picture,' and then I turned around and saw that behind me was Kobe Bryant. I don't think I'll forget my place again."



Rebuilding The GOP Convention Schedule

By Joshua Zumbrun

September 2, 2008

ST. PAUL, Minn. - Fears that Gustav could cause a Katrina-scale disaster in the Gulf led convention planners to two options--cancel events or rebrand them as hurricane benefits. As the storm mellows, it will start to look more like business as normal for Republicans here in St. Paul.

Expect full-throated political speeches Tuesday from Former Senator Fred Thompson and Sen. Joe Lieberman, who have each sought national office. (Thompson was an early dropout from the Republican presidential primaries; Lieberman was the Democrat's vice presidential candidate in 2000.) Both men are close to Sen. John McCain and will be able to personally testify to his biography and character.

Blending politics and hurricane news, President Bush will address the convention by video hookup. He's just back in Washington after touring emergency response centers in Texas on Monday.

In the Gulf (where the storm struck near a critical energy artery) some reconstruction may be needed to get things back on track. Same goes for the Republican National Convention.

In the Mississippi River Delta, the National Weather Service downgraded Hurricane Gustav to a tropical storm. Near the source of the Mississippi in Minnesota on Monday, the winds were still being felt, as a whirlwind of events at the Republican National Convention were canceled or rebranded in the storm's wake. Nobody wanted to be caught partying as the levees broke. Certainly not with 15,000 journalists in town.

The first night of the convention was originally slated to feature Bush, Vice President Dick Cheney, California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger and Lieberman, a Democratic defector who is sure to draw an attentive crowd, if just for the curiosity factor.

Instead, the convention was truncated. First Lady Laura Bush was the only headliner to take the stage. Her speech was a plea to help the Gulf States, and the only real hint it was a Republican political event was when she mentioned, to much applause, that the five Gulf Coast state governors--that's Rick Perry of Texas, Bobby Jindal of Louisiana, Haley Barbour of Mississippi, Bob Riley of Alabama and Charlie Crist of Florida--are all Republicans.

Cindy McCain joined her on stage, but the election two months away was unmentioned. Everyone was worried about the storm three years ago. It was the end of August 2005

when Katrina's storm surge overwhelmed the levees. Nobody wanted to be told, ironically, that they were doing a heck of a job fixing things this time.

The Democrats took a similar approach. Both parties have maintained opposition centers during their rival's convention. The Democratic National Committee's More of the Same Media Center, however, announced on Monday that it would be canceling a news conference. Barack Obama used his campaign's mailing list to encourage donations to the American Red Cross.

Some event planners canceled their festivities outright. But many more were not going to do that when they'd already paid the DJ. Instead, many events were recast.

The Distilled Spirits Council, the official organization of the liquor lobby, planned festive shindigs in Denver and Minneapolis hot spots. The band DeVotchKa, best known for scoring the movie *Little Miss Sunshine* entertained guests at the Beta Nightclub for the "Spirits of Denver" event; in Minneapolis the event unfolded at the swanky Solera club and restaurant. The whiskey-testing tables were much the same, as were the Cigar Aficionado lounges, but in Minneapolis the signs were changed to read "Spirits of the Gulf Coast" and right inside the door was a Red Cross table. A several gallon jar on the table, stuffed full of 20s, suggested the effort was not futile.

In Denver, the National Apartment Association was in town, with a crew of celebrities and lawmakers, talking up rental housing. **In St. Paul on Tuesday the event will feature many of the same celebs. But this time the NAA will also be talking up the role it played in Hurricane Katrina:** largely in the form of apartment space for relief workers and evacuees, a role it says it's ready to fulfill after Gustav too.

But as the storm mellows, it's back to business for the convention. In the Gulf (where the storm struck near a critical energy artery) some reconstruction may be needed to get things back on track. Same goes for the Republican National Convention.

Not holding back on Monday: street protesters. Violent clashes, hundreds of arrests, pepper spray and tear gas, and anti-war chants punctuated the otherwise sunny Monday afternoon in downtown St. Paul. Both law enforcement and demonstrators expect to be back in force on Tuesday.



GOP to have its share of stars, too

By CNN Writer

September 2, 2008

Now it's the Republicans' turn.

The Democrats turned out the star power for its convention in Denver, Colorado, right up to the final night, when the 80,000-strong crowd attending Sen. Barack Obama's closing speech at Invesco Field was serenaded by Sheryl Crow and Stevie Wonder, among others.

The Republican National Convention, which begins Monday in Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minnesota, may not have the same oomph, but it won't lack for well-known visitors.

After mixing and mingling in Denver with Democrats, the nonpartisan **Creative Coalition** is scheduled to join the festivities in the Twin Cities. **The organization is devoted to arts advocacy as well as issues such as health care and affordable housing.** Its spokespeople include Warren Beatty, Dana Delany, Tim Daly, Giancarlo Esposito and Matthew Modine.

The group is showing a film, "14 Women," about the 14 female senators of the 109th Congress.

Creative Coalition Executive Director Robin Bronk told The Hollywood Reporter that the organization was determined to present some steak with its celebrity sizzle. iReport.com: [Share your photos, videos from around the Republican Convention](#)

"We have a great track record of bringing substance with splash," she said.

The group is sponsoring a Charlie Daniels Band concert on Wednesday. The Black Eyed Peas played the group's Denver show. Retail chain Target is co-sponsor of both shows.

Also in Minneapolis: a show titled "The Songwriters Circle: The Songs We Love," which will feature performances by Brett James (who wrote "Jesus, Take the Wheel") and Greg Laswell ("What a Day"), according to RollingStone.com. The show is sponsored the The Recording Academy and its GRAMMY Foundation.

Among other celebrities expected to be present are the Beach Boys -- who will be headlining a concert of their own Monday -- Gretchen Wilson and Sammy Hagar. However, one of the GOP's biggest celebrity names, California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger, may not make the trip. Schwarzenegger has said that state business may keep him in Sacramento.

Not every event will be sanctioned by the convention, of course. The politically active band Rage Against the Machine, which played a free show in Denver, has scheduled a Minneapolis concert, though it's far from free: Tickets are \$60 for the show at the Target Center on Wednesday. Rage guitarist Tom Morello is also teaming with Steve Earle for a union rally on Labor Day.

There are also several arts-related events in a lower key. According to The New York Times, artists will be coming to Minneapolis-St. Paul to mount various forms of political theater, from creating ice sculptures to inviting the public to perform karaoke versions of convention speeches.

Though some of the exhibits will be politically pointed, organizers are careful to characterize them as nonpartisan -- and expect some unusual discourse.

"You expect people to respond by organizing a protest and throwing their fists in the air, and you also expect people to respond by flying 1,000 American flags," Sarah Peters of Minneapolis' Walker Art Center, which is taking part in that city's "UnConvention," told the Times. "And those are two legitimate ways to respond to politics, but there is a whole in-between area that doesn't get talked about."

Hollywood Used Its Megaphone for K Street

By Bara Vaida

September 2, 2008

Actor Richard Schiff (perhaps best known as the liberal Toby Ziegler on NBC's "The West Wing") isn't someone who you would normally expect to see at a Republican convention having lunch at a wonky event sponsored by the National Association of Realtors.

But there Schiff was on Monday in a private room at the downtown Minneapolis restaurant Palomino with other Hollywood actors such as Rachel Leigh Cook, Robert Davi, John Esposito, and Wendie Malick: He was munching on strawberry salad and chocolate cake, while listening to the Housing and Urban Development Department's chief of staff, David Horne, talk about the state of the housing industry.

"To help families, we have expanded FHA Secure," Horne, in the language of Washingtonspeak, said of an agency program that seeks to help homeowners struggling to pay their mortgages.

The actors applauded politely and continued eating. Later, the Hollywood group jumped into a set of black Cadillacs and headed to St. Paul to attend an afternoon reception hosted by Bank of America to discuss the bank's efforts to protect the environment.

Schiff and the other actors are part of the Creative Coalition, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit group of artists that keeps abreast of issues of the day to better inform the artistic community and the public. "We are just people who care about issues," said Schiff, who with his fellow artists conducted similar forums at the Democratic National Convention before coming to Minneapolis-St. Paul.

The coalition partnered with several K Street groups and corporations to put on lunches, receptions, and parties. In exchange for financial support from the interest groups, the coalition provided the organizations with name actors to give their events some panache and star power. The organizations hoped that the actors' presence would help them amplify their message as hundreds of other groups tried to make their mark on lawmakers, staff, delegates and media in Denver and the Twin Cities.

"We thought this would provide a spotlight on our issues," said one National Association of Realtors executive, who didn't want to be named for this story.

In addition to the Realtors' and the Bank of America events, the Creative Coalition partnered at both conventions with AARP; the American Association of Nurse Anesthetists; the American Nurses Association; the American Health Care Association;

the American Physical Therapy Association; the **National Apartment Association**; Eli Lilly; Astra Zeneca; Congressional Quarterly; and Target.

Each event featured a different public policy issue. At the Realtors' event, the focus was on programs aimed at helping people keep their homes during the mortgage crisis. Whether the Realtors' group got the attention with policy makers that it wanted was uncertain. Monday's lunch drew a reporter from People magazine and one from a Minnesota paper, but not a lawmaker was in sight and the tables in the room were only half full.

 **THE NEW YORK OBSERVER****Dennis Hastert Really Likes Green Architects****By Eliot Brown****September 2, 2008**

ST. PAUL—Earlier today, we saw former **U.S. House Speaker Dennis Hastert speak at a luncheon on housing issues put on by the celebrity/artist advocacy group Creative Coalition**, where the one-time wrestling coach sung the praises of green buildings and green architects.

Responding to an architect who asked him about his profession's role in creating affordable, sustainable communities, Mr. Hastert said, "the world of architecture is at the crux of this coalition."

"Architects," he said, "can use and develop housing stock, buildings ... that increase the efficiency of whatever energy used almost by 90 percent."

The Creative Coalition, which advocates for celebrities and artists and connects them with discussion of policy issues, held the luncheon today with the National Apartment Association, an advocacy group for rental housing.

So why have a hearing with a former conservative Republican leader and a celebrity group?

To help put the spotlight on apartment-dwellers, particularly as the "creative class" flocks into cities nationwide, often living in rental apartments, as opposed to private homes, **according to Douglas Culkin, the National Apartment Association's president.**

"There's 85 million people who live in apartments around the U.S., and unfortunately those folks don't come in to the equation when housing policy is legislated," **Mr. Culkin said.** "In order to have a successful housing market in the U.S., you need both an ownership market and a vibrant rental market."

Mr. Hastert was a bit greener than many of his Republican colleagues in the House, and took a job earlier this year as a consultant to a company that pushes low-energy light bulbs.



**Republican Convention Daybook / Reuters Washington Daybook
Report
By Timothy Ryan
September 2, 2008**

THE REUTERS DIARY FOR THE REPUBLICAN NATIONAL CONVENTION

Xcel Energy Center, St. Paul, Minnesota

Tuesday, September 2

The following is a list of the general news events

(pressers, protests and parties) happening in and around the Twin Cities on Tuesday):

TUESDAY AFTERNOON

12noon: **The National Apartment Association holds a "State of Housing Industry" luncheon.**

Location: History Center Capitol Concourse, 345 Kellogg Blvd West



The Associated Press Republican Convention Daybook
By AP Editor
September 2, 2008

AP REPUBLICAN CONVENTION DAYBOOK, Tuesday, Sept. 2

GENERAL

AFTERNOON

12 p.m. - 1:30 p.m. BALANCED HOUSING -- **Balanced housing policy issues luncheon, hosted by the Creative Coalition and National Apartment Association.**

Location: Minnesota History Center. 345 Kellogg Blvd. West, St. Paul.

Notes: Invite Only. Contact: Martin Matishak: martin@westinrinehart.com 202.466.1396 or 708.691.1480 Stacey Kerans: stacey.kerans@fleishman.com or 202.828.8859

ROLL CALL



Heard on the Hill: Stars Out at GOP Confab, but Slightly Dimmer By Emily Heil and Elizabeth Brotherton September 1, 2008

Plenty of important, powerful political organizations have descended on the Twin Cities for the Republican National Convention this week, but if last week's Democratic National Convention is any indication, one star-studded group will outshine them all.

The nonprofit political advocacy group the **Creative Coalition** held nearly as many events in Denver as there were delegation breakfasts.

Coalition members such as Susan Sarandon, Spike Lee and Anne Hathaway **tackled an eclectic list of issues, from honoring African-American leaders to hosting receptions on housing and health care.** In Minneapolis and St. Paul, the coalition will try to match that schedule, repeating many of the same events with, er, lesser-known stars such as Tim Daly, Kerry Washington and Richard Schiff.

The group is nonpartisan, although spokesman Morris Reid said the work of all those top-shelf celebs in Denver "reflected the tone and mood of the country." And even if the Twin Cities' celebrity contingent is a little lower-wattage than in Denver, Reid said the artists are on the same mission: getting schooled on politics while advocating for increased funding for the arts.

"They came here to be citizens first," he said. "They didn't come here to get a check ... These people are real Americans, and they are touched by the issues and problems that all Americans have."

And while Hollywood has a reputation for having liberal tendencies, Reid said the famous folks won't try to change anything up in the Twin Cities.

"They're not trying to talk at the Republicans; they're trying to listen," he said. "The process is the same."

Adieu, Denver. Oh, Denver, we hardly knew ye. The Democratic convention is over, but HOH brings you a wrap-up of the circus-like week:

Most Sought-After Ticket: The Google/Vanity Fair party. Even A-listers were grumbling about the tight guest list for the swanky and exclusive soiree, held Thursday night at the Exdo Event Center.

Runner-Up: Sen. Barack Obama's (D-Ill.) acceptance speech at Invesco Field at Mile High. Sure, the stadium seats more than 75,000 people, but most of those seats were reserved for "real people," leaving groups scrambling to provide passes for their VIPs who were clamoring to see the week's main event.

Worst "Do-You-Know-Who-I-Am?" Moment: When Monica Conyers, wife of House Judiciary Chairman John Conyers (D-Mich.), didn't like the way the staff at the Magnolia Hotel handled her complaints about the Conyers' accommodations, things didn't go well. Police wound up responding to an "incident" at the hotel on Tuesday stemming from the dispute, sources say.

Most Ubiquitous Member: Rep. Loretta Sanchez seemed to be everywhere this week. Our favorite moments with the California Democrat included a loopy interview in a video posted on TMZ.com and when she dissed Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) during a speech to a group of young women Monday, essentially calling Feinstein frumpy.

What We'll Miss About Denver: The friendly people. We big-city folk from uptight Washington, D.C., just aren't used to so much friendliness, from people offering lost-looking HOH directions on the street to folks making not-hitting-on-you small talk at bars.

Runner-Up: The weather. It might have gotten plenty warm in the Mile High City, but as so many people say, it's not the heat that gets to you, it's the humidity. We'll fondly remember those crisp Denver mornings when we're back in the sweltering swamp we call home.

What We Won't Miss: Hot dogs. They were the meal of choice for harried reporters, staffers and even delegates at the Pepsi Center — half-smokes, regular dogs and dogs served on sticks — and everyone was eating them.

Grooming Notes. HOH previously has reported on the grooming choices of two of Thursday's warm-up speakers for the big acceptance speech by Sen. Barack Obama (D-Ill.). And now we feel obligated to provide an update: New Mexico Gov. Bill Richardson appears to be sporting something of a "demi-mullet" hairdo, with slightly longer hair in the back (what's known in mullet parlance as the "party" side) than the front (the "business" side), in addition to the beard that HOH reported he began to grow after dropping out of the Democratic presidential primary race in January. The gov's new style looks something like the one Minnesota Gov. Tim Pawlenty gave up recently, perhaps in a bid to look vice presidential in the hopes of being selected to run with Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.).

And Virginia Gov. Tim Kaine, who also warmed up the crowd before Obama's address, appeared to be sporting a serious case of five o'clock shadow, our on-the-scene informant tells us. Some of Kaine's other facial hair — his wiggly eyebrows — have previously caused a sensation.

Lobbyists in Waiting ... and Waiting. Updating one's Facebook page from the conventions — changing the "status" line to denote one's whereabouts — is the new black. Take these lobbyists, who let their Facebook friends know all about that interminable wait in the blocks-long lines to hear the Thursday night speech by Sen. Barack Obama (D-Ill.) at Invesco Field: Lobbyist Steve Elmendorf of Elmendorf Strategies was "beginning hour two in the longest line ever and is surprised that there is nobody organizing the line." Todd Webster of Webster Strategies "is at Invesco waiting for history to be made."



The Conventions: Back-to-Back Aches

By Joseph J. Schatz

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Every four years, the Democratic and Republican conventions prompt the nation's political class to expend massive amounts of energy, resources and time. Two conventions back-to-back has proven even more draining.

The quirk of scheduling that saw the Republican National Convention in St. Paul begin just a few days after the Democratic National Convention in Denver this year has resulted in a whirlwind of long hours and logistical scrambling for lobbyists, interest groups, journalists — and a few politicians — who attend both conventions.

And Hurricane Gustav has further scrambled the GOP convention program in St. Paul, Minn., introducing a new element of uncertainty.

Irica Soloman, director of public affairs for the National Apartment Association, says it was “a big challenge” to put together different agendas for two completely different audiences two weeks in a row and deal with the follow-ups and logistical hiccups that inevitably ensue.

Soloman's group is pressing lawmakers to address the challenges of the apartment industry. “There's definitely a certain amount of pressure structuring two completely different events,” Soloman said just after arriving in Minneapolis from Denver on Sunday.

Media organizations have rented, put together and torn down large computer and phone set-ups in Denver and St. Paul.

It's been a non-stop news cycle for many weary political reporters, from Barack Obama's choice of Sen. Joseph R. Biden Jr. , D-Del., as his running mate on Aug. 23, to the convention last week, to the announcement of John McCain's vice presidential pick—Alaskan Gov. Sarah Palin —on Aug. 29, to the storm and the GOP convention this week.

To be fair, for those attending the myriad convention-related parties, some of the fatigue is self-induced. And the looming storm on the Gulf Coast is providing some perspective, reminding many convention participants that two weeks of political festivities is hardly a real challenge.

CNN's Anderson Cooper, for one, wasn't fazed.

“It’s not a challenge,” he said Thursday when he was still at Invesco Field in Denver. CNN’s organization is designed to handle many news events at once, Cooper said — and he was about to fly down to the Gulf Coast. “This is what CNN does.”