

Complaint against Dennis McDonald & Montana Democratic Party

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POLITICAL PRACTICES

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Commissioner of Political Practices
1205 Eight Avenue
P.O. Box 202401
Helena, MT 59620-2401

Commissioner Dennis Unsworth:

This Complaint is brought by Will Deschamps, Chairman of the Montana Republican Party, P.O. Box 395, Helena, MT 59624. Phone # 406-442-6469

This Complaint is brought against both the (1) political committee, the Montana Democratic Party, PO Box 1330, Helena, MT 59624, and (2) the chairman of the Montana Democratic Party at the time of the events denoted in this complaint, Dennis McDonald, PO Box 206, Melville, MT 59055.

Statement of Facts

1. Steve Bullock for Attorney General (hereafter SBAG) is a candidate committee formed under the laws of Montana.
2. The Montana Democratic Party (hereafter MDP) is a political party committee formed under, and subject to, the laws of Montana.
3. Dennis McDonald (hereafter McDonald) was the chairman of the MDP at the time of the events outlined in this complaint.
4. The maximum allowable aggregate contribution from political party committees to a candidate for Attorney General in 2008 was \$8,150 per election. See, MCA 13-37-216(3)(b), (4), and (5) for limitations on contributions to candidates.
5. On 9/5/2008, SBAG reached the maximum allowable aggregate contribution for the 2008 General Election from political committees. According to the SBAG campaign report filed 9/10/2008 and which is on file with the Montana Commissioner of Political Practices, SBAG received a cash contribution of \$3,750 from the MDP on 9/4/2008; SBAG received a second cash contribution from the MDP of \$3,962.08 on 9/5/2008; and SBAG received an in-kind contribution from the MDP worth \$437.92 on 9/5/2008 -- a total contribution amount of \$8,150.
6. Anthony Jackson was identified in media reports as the campaign manager for SBAG.
 - a. A *NewWest.net* article dated August 28, 2008 profiled Mr. Jackson. The article included this excerpt: "Jackson, who grew up in Billings, manages the campaign for Steve Bullock, candidate for attorney general in Montana." See, Exhibit 1, attached hereto and incorporated herein.
 - b. A *Billings Gazette* article, dated January 3, 2009, also identified Mr. Jackson as the SBAG campaign manager. The article reads "Anthony Jackson, a Billings native who helped run Bullock's 2008 election, will be the agency's liaison to the Legislature." See, Exhibit 2, attached hereto and incorporated herein.
 - c. A *Missoula Independent* article, dated August 28, 2008 also identified Mr. Jackson as "Bullock's campaign manager." See, Exhibit 3, attached hereto and incorporated herein.

- d. A post from the Missoula-based internet blog website "4&20 Blackbirds", identified Mr. Jackson as "a fine young man from Billings – 26 – who is currently working on Steve Bullock's race for Attorney General." See, Exhibit 4, which is attached hereto and incorporated herein.
7. According to SBAG campaign reports, which are on file with the Montana Commissioner of Political Practices, between August 4, 2008 and December 30, 2008 Mr. Jackson received nine reimbursement payments from SBAG totaling \$982.61. Mr. Jackson was not paid a salary from SBAG. See Chart 1 immediately below for a summary of these payments.

Purpose	Amount	Date	Report
Reimbursement – supplies	\$215.95	8/4/2008	10-Sep-08
Reimbursement – postage	\$16.09	8/21/2008	10-Sep-08
Reimbursement – supplies	\$209.95	9/8/2008	20-Oct-08
Reimbursement – supplies	\$20.28	10/8/2008	20-Oct-08
Reimbursement - yard signs	\$140.01	10/8/2008	20-Oct-08
Reimbursement - yard signs	\$88.07	10/31/2008	24-Nov-08
Reimbursement fuel	\$120.00	11/3/2008	24-Nov-08
Reimbursement fuel	\$154.90	11/9/2008	24-Nov-08
Reimbursement – supplies	\$17.36	12/30/2008	10-Mar-09
Total Reimbursement to Mr. Jackson	\$982.61	-----	-----

Chart 1. Payments made from SBAG to Anthony Jackson

8. According to MDP campaign reports, Mr. Jackson was on the payroll of MDP from August 5, 2008 to November 18, 2008. Payments made from MDP to Mr. Jackson, including expense reimbursement payments, totaled \$10,596.35. See Chart 2 immediately below for a summary of these payments.

Purpose	Amount	Date	Report
Payroll	\$1,229.90	8/5/2008	23-Oct-08
Payroll	\$1,229.60	8/26/2008	23-Oct-08
Payroll	\$1,226.60	9/12/2008	23-Oct-08
Payroll	\$1,233.50	9/20/2008	23-Oct-08
Payroll	\$1,229.90	10/3/2008	23-Oct-08
Payroll	\$1,229.90	10/16/2008	23-Oct-08
Mileage Reimbursement	\$542.15	11/1/2008	24-Nov-08
Payroll	\$1,229.90	11/3/2008	24-Nov-08
Expense Reimbursement	\$215.00	11/13/2008	24-Nov-08
Payroll	\$1,229.90	11/18/2008	24-Nov-08
Total Payroll/Reimbursement payments received by Mr. Jackson	\$10,596.35	-----	-----

Chart 2. Payments made from MDP to Anthony Jackson.

9. Kevin Downs was also identified in media reports and on SBAG campaign material as working for SBAG.

a. A Helena Independent Record article dated November 5, 2008 identified Mr. Downs as "Bullock campaign manager." See, Exhibit 5, which is attached hereto and incorporated herein.

b. A SBAG invitation for an August 25, 2008 fundraising event instructed potential donors to "RSVP to Kevin Downs at Kevin@stevebullock.com." *SEE, EXHIBIT "6"*

10. According to SBAG campaign reports, which are on file with the Montana Commissioner of Political Practices, between April 24, 2008 and March 2, 2009 Mr. Downs received eighteen reimbursement payments from SBAG totaling \$2,022.21. In addition, Mr. Downs received two payments that appear to be related to salary amounting to \$1,500.00, making the total amount \$3522.21. Note that the latter payment is dated 6/20/2008, prior to any payments made from MDP. See Chart 3 immediately below for a summary of these payments.

Purpose	Amount	Date	Report
Campaign Work	\$500.00	4/24/2008	22-May-08
Payment for campaign help	\$1,000.00	6/20/2008	10-Sep-08
Reimbursement – postage	\$22.25	8/6/2008	10-Sep-08
Reimbursement for fundraiser	\$5.68	8/6/2008	10-Sep-08
Reimbursement – supplies	\$49.98	8/14/2008	10-Sep-08
Reimbursement for email service	\$6.30	8/14/2008	10-Sep-08
Reimbursement for fundraiser	\$6.34	8/14/2008	10-Sep-08
Reimbursement for fundraiser	\$16.97	9/5/2008	10-Sep-08
Reimbursement for travel	\$92.91	9/5/2008	10-Sep-08
Reimbursement fuel	\$12.02	9/5/2008	10-Sep-08
Reimbursement – supplies	\$7.96	9/5/2008	10-Sep-08
Reimbursement – postage	\$4.80	10/8/2008	20-Oct-08
Reimbursement – fuel	\$219.60	10/8/2008	20-Oct-08
Reimbursement for fundraiser	\$198.15	10/8/2008	20-Oct-08
Reimbursement – supplies	\$25.00	10/8/2008	20-Oct-08
Reimbursement event entry	\$50.00	11/10/2008	24-Nov-08
Reimbursement beverage	\$55.46	11/10/2008	24-Nov-08
Reimbursement for fundraiser	\$8.98	11/10/2008	24-Nov-08
Reimbursement – supplies	\$62.92	11/10/2008	24-Nov-08
Reimbursement – postage	\$2.70	11/19/2008	24-Nov-08
Reimbursement – fuel	\$45.00	11/19/2008	24-Nov-08
Reimbursement – supplies	\$2.75	11/19/2008	24-Nov-08
Reimbursement food	\$595.00	3/2/2009	10-Mar-09
Reimbursement – supplies	\$34.95	3/2/2009	10-Mar-09
Reimbursement beverage	\$210.00	3/2/2009	10-Mar-09
Reimbursement fuel	\$35.07	3/2/2009	10-Mar-09
Reimbursement inauguration	\$165.47	3/2/2009	10-Mar-09

Reimbursement Internet Access	\$75.00	3/2/2009	10-Mar-09
Reimbursement postage	\$10.95	3/2/2009	10-Mar-09
Total monetary payments to Kevin Downs	\$(3522.21)	-----	-----

Chart 3. Payments made from SBAG to Kevin Downs

11. According to MDP campaign reports, which are on file with the Montana Commissioner of Political Practices, Mr. Downs was on the payroll of MDP from July 16, 2008 to November 18, 2008. Payments made from MDP to Mr. Downs totaled \$7,004.41. See Chart 4 for a summary of these payments.

Purpose	Amount	Date	Report
Payroll	\$470.41	7/16/2008	23-Oct-08
Payroll	\$816.75	8/5/2008	23-Oct-08
Payroll	\$816.75	8/20/2008	23-Oct-08
Payroll	\$816.75	9/5/2008	23-Oct-08
Payroll	\$816.75	9/20/2008	23-Oct-08
Payroll	\$816.75	10/3/2008	23-Oct-08
Payroll	\$816.75	10/16/2008	23-Oct-08
Payroll	\$816.75	11/3/2008	24-Nov-08
Payroll	\$816.75	11/18/2008	24-Nov-08
Total Received by Mr. Downs	\$7,004.41	-----	-----

Chart 4. Payments made from MDP to Kevin Downs.

12. MDP likely also paid an undetermined amount of payroll taxes and health insurance premiums for Mr. Jackson and Mr. Downs as employees.
13. ARM 44-10-323 defines an "in-kind" expenditure as "the furnishing of services, property, or rights without charge or at a charge which is less than fair market value to a person, candidate, or political committee for the purpose of supporting or opposing any person, candidate, ballot issue, or political committee..."

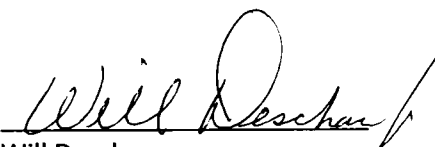
Request for Judgment

Based on the facts and law set forth above, it is my belief that a violation or violations of Montana's campaign finance and practices laws has occurred. Consequently, I request your judgment and opinion on the following points:

1. As proven by the attached exhibits, Mr. Jackson and Mr. Downs were identified as being campaign staff for SBAG and both individuals received multiple expense reimbursement payments from SBAG as would be expected for a campaign staffer. However, at the same time as Mr. Jackson and Mr. Downs were identified in media reports as being campaign staffers for SBAG, evidence shows that both Jackson and Downs were working for Dennis McDonald and the MDP, were on the payroll of MDP, and were working for and being paid by McDonald and the MDP to help elect Steve Bullock as Montana's Attorney General.
2. Campaign staff provide a wide variety of services to a candidate. The services provided by Jackson and Downs to SBAG while Jackson and Downs were working for, and on the payroll of,

the MDP should be considered an in-kind expenditure from the MDP to SBAG. See, ARM 44-10-323.

3. Because MDP "maxed out" their allowable contributions under MCA 13-37-216 to SBAG in the form of reported cash contributions and in-kind contributions as outlined in Number 5 in the Statement of Facts, the additional in-kind expenditure made by MDP, under the direction of its Chairman McDonald, in the form of salaries and potential payroll costs and health insurance premiums violate the limitations on contributions found in MCA 13-37-216 that a candidate for statewide office may receive. See, MCA 13-37-216(5). Thus, the MDP violated MCA 13-37-216.
4. Because MDP, under the direction of its Chairman McDonald, failed to both report and timely file an accurate report of these additional in-kind expenditures of services in the form of salaries and potential payroll costs and health insurance premiums, MDP has violated MCA 13-37-225 and 13-37-226, which require a timely and accurate report of all contributions and expenditures, including in-kind contributions and expenditures. See, ,
5. For violations of MCA 13-37-216 and MCA 13-37-225, a cause of action is created as directed by MCA 13-37-128., which allows the Commissioner to bring a civil action for an amount up to \$500 or three times the amount of the unlawful contributions or expenditures. The identified amount of unreported in-kind contributions from MDP to SBAG is \$17,600.76, which would result in a fine of \$52,802.28 pursuant to MCA 13-37-128. However, the amount of unreported contributions may be more if payroll expenses, health insurance premiums, or any other administrative costs directly related to the employment of Messrs. Jackson and Downs are determined and considered. See, 44.10.536(1).


Will Deschamps

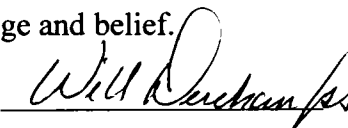
VERIFICATION BY OATH OR AFFIRMATION

STATE OF MONTANA)

: ss.

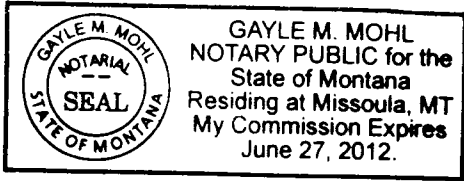
County of Missoula)

I, Will Deschamps, being duly sworn, state that the information in this Complaint is complete, true, and correct, to the best of my knowledge and belief.


Signature of Complainant

On this 23rd day of October, 2009, before me, Notary Public for the State of Montana personally appeared WILL DESCHAMPS, known to me to be the person whose name is subscribed to the within instrument, and acknowledged to me that he executed the same.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed my official seal the day and year hereinabove first written.



(seal)

Gayle M. Mohl

Printed name: _____

Notary Public for the State of Montana

Residing at _____, Montana

My Commission expires: _____

New West.Net

The Voice of the Rocky Mountains

Montana's Lone Black Delegate Says Obama Can Win Montana

By Robert Struckman, 8-28-08

America remains the land of opportunity, said Montana's lone African-American delegate, 26-year-old Anthony Jackson of Helena moments before Sen. Barack Obama accepted the Democratic nomination for president at Investco Field in Denver.

Craning his neck to see the packed stadium far above his seat on the floor near the stage, Jackson said, "This place is incredible. This is unreal."

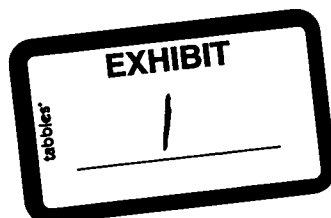
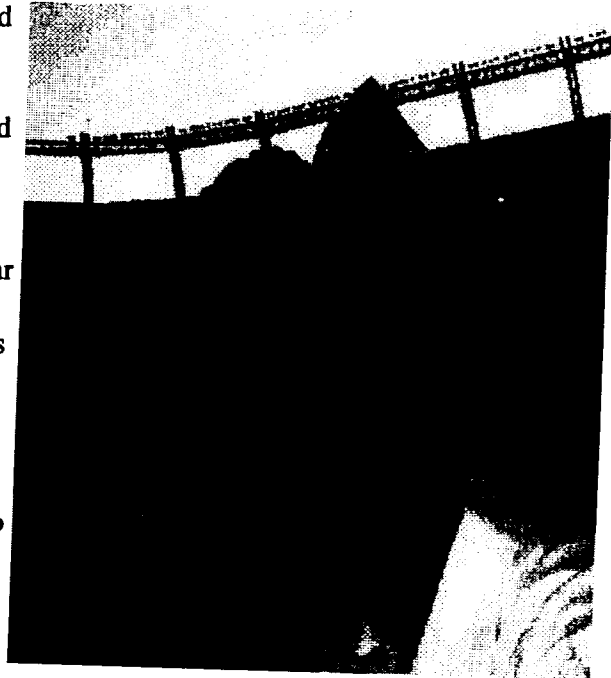
It's been a groundbreaking week for Jackson, one in which he has thought a lot about Obama's candidacy, as well as what it's like to be a black candidate from a predominantly white state like Montana.

"Our family has been in Montana forever, five generations on my mother's side. It's one of the most open-minded places. We judge a person by who you are as a person," Jackson said. He gestured to the other delegates from Montana.

"This delegation speaks volumes about Montana," he said. With him stood Native Americans and whites, men and women. "If you're decent, and you treat people with respect, you'll get the same back, nine times out of 10, and that's true of most places. It's true there's not a lot of African-Americans, black people, in Montana, but people judge you as a person, not only if you're black, but if you're different in one way or another."

There's a reason this has never happened in any other western country, Jackson said, referring to the nomination going to a black man. "This could happen only in America. You don't have to be a Kennedy, a Bush or a Clinton. Some people say he shoots too high, shoots too far. Look at what he's already accomplished. We are good people. We are the land of opportunity."

"You take a step back and say, 'Look at this.' I think it has to excite you as an American. If he can get out who he is, get his story out, he can win Montana," Jackson said.



Jackson, who grew up in Billings, manages the campaign for Steve Bullock, Democratic candidate for attorney general in Montana.

About Obama's attention to the state, Jackson said, "It's big. We're going to have a president who's paying attention to us. Usually, we're taken for granted. He actually cares about Montana's three electoral votes. I don't know if morale booster is the right word. He has 50-plus staff on the ground, a ton of offices. That's a message that's going to resonate."

[End of article]

Comment By Jedediah Redman, 8-29-08

When you want such an analysis you should always ask a 26 year old expert.

Comment By jdj, 8-29-08

Thanks for this article on Anthony. When people ask why we, as citizen of Montana, should invest in higher education here is your answer. Anthony graduated from MSU in political science after helping his mother raise his younger siblings in Billings. He was universally well-liked by faculty and students alike. This year he is taking time off from law school to work on political issues. Anthony will do good things and even though he may not return to Montana after law school, he is going to be a Montanan that goes on to show what our education system and Montana values can accomplish.

Comment By Craig Moore, 8-29-08

I think Obama just lost Montana and the rest of the West with that very small minded and arrogant dismissive rhetoric attacking Sarah Palin over her small town roots.

See: http://www.politico.com/blogs/jonathanmartin/0808/Obama_camp_belittles_Palin_pick.html

>>>>>>>>>>
August 29, 2008
Categories: Veep

Obama camp, Dems belittle Palin pick

Barack Obama's campaign is blasting John McCain for putting "the former mayor of a town of 9,000 with zero foreign policy experience a heartbeat away from the presidency."

The scathing description of Sarah Palin, from Obama spokesman Bill Burton, comes as Democrats scramble to gather a response to a selection that nobody in the political world expected.

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No mention that she is a sitting governor.

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Story available at <http://billingsgazette.net/articles/2009/01/03/news/state/35-holdovers.txt>

Published on Saturday, January 03, 2009.

Last modified on 1/3/2009 at 12:40 am

Holdovers prominent in AG staff

By The Gazette State Bureau

HELENA - Incoming Democratic Attorney General Steve Bullock announced Friday the new staff he has hired - and old hands he is keeping - to run the Department of Justice.

Larry Fasbender will stay on as Bullock's chief of staff and deputy director. Fasbender, who will earn \$94,321 a year, started working at the agency under Attorney General Joe Mazurek, also a Democrat. He worked under both terms of outgoing Democratic Attorney General Mike McGrath and also served as McGrath's chief of staff.

Chris Tweeten will stay on as the agency's top civil lawyer, making \$91,723.

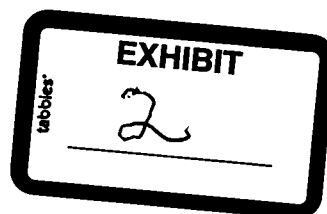
Col. Mike Tooley will head the state Montana State Highway Patrol, replacing Col. Paul Grimstad. Tooley, who started his career with the patrol as a trooper in 1984, will earn \$87,588 a year. Tooley is a Helena native with a bachelor's degree in public-safety administration from Grand Canyon University.

Mike Batista will stay on as administrator of the agency's Division of Criminal Investigation. Batista will earn \$87,888 a year. Robert "Skip" Culver will stay on as head of Justice's Centralized Services Division, also earning \$87,888.

Rick Ask, chief of operations for the Gambling Control Division, will step in temporarily as acting administrator for the division. Ask, who will make \$80,000 a year, has a master's degree in public administration from the University of Montana. The division regulates gambling machines in Montana. Ask replaces Gene Huntington, who is retiring.

Brenda Nordlund, an attorney with the department's Motor Vehicle Division, will also assume reins of the agency temporarily. Nordlund will earn \$80,000 a year running the division. She has worked for the Justice Department for 16 years.

Kevin O'Brien, a former aide to Democratic Sen. Jon Tester, will serve as Bullock's communications officer. O'Brien, who has a degree in political science and history from Illinois State University, will earn \$54,000 a year. He comes to Bullock from the Montana Democratic Party, where he served as communications director and spokesman during the



2008 elections.

Anthony Jackson, a Billings native who helped run Bullock's 2008 election, will be the agency's liaison to the Legislature. Jackson will make \$48,500 and holds a political-science degree from Montana State University in Bozeman.

Kevin Downs, a Helena native and Carroll College graduate, will work as Bullock's program officer. Downs will earn \$48,500 and has worked the last five years with humanitarian organizations in Northern Ireland and Honduras.

Sandy Jacke, a Deer Lodge native, will work as Bullock's executive assistant. A paralegal, Jacke will earn \$35,000 a year.

Bullock defeated Republican candidate Tim Fox in a bruising battle to fill the seat vacated by McGrath, who was forbidden by term limits from seeking a third term as attorney general.

Bullock, along with all other statewide elected officials, will be sworn in Monday morning at a Capitol ceremony.

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Political advice

Behind the scenes with Montana's DNC delegation

By: Jay Stevens
Posted: 08/28/2008

Trips to the Democratic National Convention (DNC) are rare for most of us, but, still, the possibility exists that some of you reading this will someday attend one. For you, I offer a few helpful tidbits that I learned accompanying Montana's state delegation to this year's convention.

Advice: When riding on a bus for 16 hours, be sure your toothbrush is not packed under the bus with your luggage.

This seems pretty self-evident, doesn't it? But the details tend to get lost when you're on a trip to your first national convention. A small group of Montana journalists and delegates decided to hitch a ride on a bus full of young activists from Oregon. Only we had to meet it in Twin Falls, Idaho. And then the bus was three hours late. And we were so glad to see the bus pull up at midnight, and for our vigil in IHOP to come to an end, and for all the aforementioned activists to pour out of the bus and hand out stickers and buttons, that my bag was stowed away underneath the bus without a second thought.

Montana's other delegates were less adventurous. Most arrived by plane. When we all arrived at our designated Denver hotel, Montana flag flying in the lobby, there they all were, including Missoula legislators Carol Williams, Michele Reinhart and Diane Sands, with teeth shining and clean clothes. Unlike some who, say, just rolled off a bus and were perfumed with a fitful night of half-sleep.

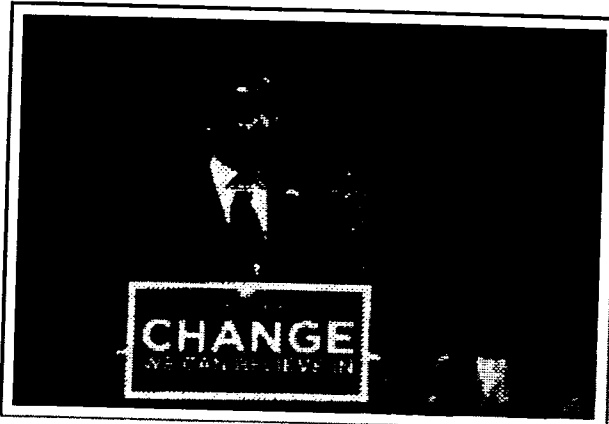
Advice: Bring your business cards.

One of the first things you realize about a convention is that it's less about politics and more about networking. Someone will mention, for instance, the importance of alternative energy, and there are universal nods but little debate. When I met Seattle-based freelance journalist Dave Neiwert, he said he wanted to discuss Montana issues and then asked for my business card—as in, we'd talk later. An awkward silence followed. "I'll have to e-mail you," I said. I now have a card from almost every member of the Montana delegation, one from the governor's brother, Walter Schweitzer (he's working with Monica Lindeen's campaign) and cards from enough bloggers to fill my suitcase.

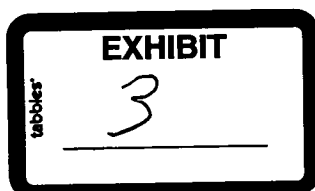
Advice: Throw away your calendars.

For some reason, Montana is the center of the political universe this year. It's where the Democratic primary was decided, spurring the Clintons and Obamas to crisscross the state. Gov. Brian Schweitzer's name kept circulating as a potential vice presidential candidate. The pundits now say the West is a valuable battleground for this presidential race. Polls show McCain and Obama virtually deadlocked, and the Democratic nominee is pouring money into the state with offices and ads.

So maybe that's why there was such palpable excitement at our delegates' breakfast Monday morning. A television crew was filming and reporters knee-walked by the tables, interviewing anyone they could find. Sen. Max Baucus sat at my table and had granola and fruit for breakfast and even blushed when we clapped for him. That's not something that happens every day.



The fact that Barack Obama declared Montana a battleground state in the upcoming election invigorated the state's delegates at the recent Democratic National Convention in Denver.
Photo by Chad Harder



Advice: Always carry an extra clean shirt.

The DNC is filled with perks and services for convention-goers. Take, for example, the system of free bike stations scattered throughout downtown Denver. You show ID and they give you a bike to ride, and you give it back when you're done.

So when I was in a rush to make a fundraiser for Steve Bullock, the Dems' state attorney general candidate, I had two choices: cab it or ride a bike. Being a Missoulian (and on a tight budget) the latter seemed a no-brainer. Two miles and several high-altitude hill climbs later, I arrived at the fundraiser—swarming with cocktail dresses and casual suit jackets—sweat-soaked and with helmet-head. It's worth noting that Montana delegates, overall, look like they're more ready for a backyard barbecue while representatives from other states are wearing \$3,000 three-piece suits. Even so, I was embarrassingly disheveled for the Bullock event.

Luckily, Bullock's campaign manager, Anthony Jackson, recognized me and let me in. I met and chatted with a number of Bullock supporters, passed Gov. Schweitzer (wearing a bolo tie) and talked shop with party staffers, like Missoula's Jim Fleischman, who's running Baucus' re-election campaign. (Max has got a shot at his race, opined Fleischman.) As Baucus and Schweitzer gave short speeches and urged the crowd to support their guy, we ate Chinese dumplings, vegetarian sushi and chocolate-chip cookies, and I wondered how exactly I was going to get back to the hotel, the convention center or the next mixer.

Advice: Sleep is overrated.

The best stuff happens off the schedule and late at night. You like to party? There's a "Rock the Vote" concert with acts like Fall Out Boy, N*E*R*D and Jakob Dylan. You like to chat? Just hang out in the lobby and compare notes with delegate for Obama and Lewis & Clark County Commissioner Ed Tinsely, who's blogging for the Billings Gazette.

And don't sleep in, either. The delegation has breakfast at 7 a.m. sharp, and you don't want to miss it if you want to eat with Baucus or hobnob with former U.S. Congressman Pat Williams. The latter relayed a story Tuesday morning of how he watched a line of protesters dressed like Grim Reapers march imposingly toward the convention center, only to stop when a traffic light turned red.

"They wouldn't have stopped in Chicago," he quipped, referring to the riots that occurred during the 1968 Chicago convention.

Advice: Don't forget why you came.

In a moving set of speeches and ceremony on Monday night, an ailing and weakened Sen. Edward Kennedy passed the torch of leadership to Obama. The speeches emphasized social justice and public service and, above all, family, as Michelle Obama finished the night with a stirring speech about her life's experience and how they fit into her husband's purpose for running for president. For Democrats, caught between nostalgia for past liberal icons—the Kennedys—and hope for their current icon—Obama—the messages inspire.

I sat with Missoula legislator Michele Reinhart in the early hours of Tuesday morning in our hotel lobby, and tears streaked down her cheeks as she remembered that night's events. The speeches and sentiments and shared experience of the Democratic delegates reaffirmed her dedication to public service. "It's good to be reminded of the big picture," she said, "so we can take it home with us."

4&20 blackbirds

A journal of Montana politics and culture

Tuesday: On the Bus With the Montana Delegation

August 26, 2008 in 2007 Montana Legislature, 2008 Democratic Convention, 2008 Election, Healthcare, Immigration, JP Pommichowski, Julie French, Michele Reinhart

by *jhwygirl*

Each morning, we can all get downtown via free shuttle buses being provided by the city for all delegates and press and people in limbo, like me. I still haven't written about yesterday's ride - but I thought I might write about today's.

I mentioned this morning, the delegates are getting pretty comfortable. Some of them are sharing rooms - and it all has the air of a college reunion. Not all are legislatures, so they don't all work together all the time, but it is clear that they know and like each other quite well.

And No - they aren't *really* wearing "regular old t-shirts" - I know I said that earlier - but I certainly don't want ya'all getting the impression they're down here on vacation. This stuff really is hard work. There's important stuff to do for the next 2 1/2 months...and you can tell they mean business.

I didn't get out of here until about 11 a.m. this morning - which put me on a shuttle with JP Pommichowski, Michele Reinhart, Julie French and Anthony Jackson.

Anthony is a fine young man from Billings - 26 - who is currently working on Steve Bullock's race for Attorney General.

Michele is our local HD-97 state house representative - who is running for re-election, BTW. I find her to be very much keyed into understanding the how and why behind things. Hell, I almost feel like she's interviewing me at times. It's all good, and I don't mean that to sound bad - it isn't. She's my representative, and she's very interested in my perspective of things. How could an active voter not like that?

Julie French is really a firecracker. You get the sense, from the get-go, that this is a woman that does not take "no" for an answer. That people - men and women - kinda sit there and nod in agreement when she speaks, and that when she tells you that 'this is the way this is going to be,' then, that *is* the way it is going to be.

I won't tell you who told me, but I hear they call her Grandma. I assure you, it has nothing to do with her age.

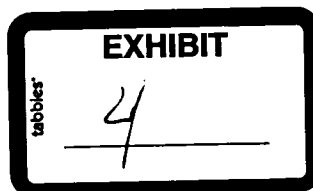
Julie defined what a good legislator is - and she was clear to say that it didn't matter if it was a city council person, or a state legislator or someone in the federal level. A good legislator is a good listener. "They have to *listen* to people. They have to *want* to listen to people," she said. Julie then cited Jon Tester as an excellent example of someone who exemplifies a good legislator.

We segued to Hillary and Obama. Julie was wearing both an Obama pro-military sticker and her Hillary pin. Michele was an Obama girl from the get-go. The topic came up of the media focusing (or over-emphasizing) the Hillary supporters who say that they will not vote for Obama.

"I can't understand how people can vote a single issue," she said. "There is simply too much at stake to do that." She went on, saying that a legislator has to address the needs of everyone that they represent - not just those that elect them.

I couldn't agree more. We would all benefit from moving away from being parties of extremes.

Julie, BTW, represents the Scobey area, HD-36. Scobey is up there in the NE corner of the state, right along the border.



She spoke to the importance of healthcare - not only in the pure sense of providing healthcare to the community, but the importance of the jobs that it brings to the community. She cited the role that healthcare provides for jobs in Scobey. The healthcare industry, she said, is the largest employer.

In Scobey, immigration issues play an important role, too, in both healthcare and veterinary care - something that is very important, *very necessary*, and often overlooked in small rural communities. Scobey relies on Canadians to provide healthcare - they have to come down from across the border - and without them, Scobey and its citizens would be at a loss.


The current difficulties brought on by Homeland Security rules have placed hardships on places like Scobey. Green cards are being delayed - sometimes for years - and when it comes to healthcare - or large animal veterinary care - these types of things should not be occurring, and our government should be doing something to help solve these issues.

Public land issues are important to both Julie and Michele - I do recall Michele having sponsored and ushered through last years legislative session a bill that would allow the state to take over weed control on grazing leases when the lease holders weren't responsible. Her bill allowed the state to do it and then collect back the costs - and Julie pointed out that her county is something like 25% state lands.

We'll have to work on getting Julie French a website.


Or maybe a blog. I like what she has to say. You would to.

4 Replies

1.  James
[August 27, 2008 at 12:33 pm](#)


Just a quick note to the author. I would think that if you were going to be writing a blog on a site that everyone can see and being from the state the the town that Julie French is from that you would at least spell the name of the town right. I am not from Montana and I know how to spell it...it is ScobEy not Scoby....how about doing a little research before hand if you are not sure.

[Reply](#)

2.  Richard Nelson
[August 27, 2008 at 12:54 pm](#)

Couple things I would like to add. First of all, thanks to the person who corrected the spelling of Scobey. :-) One always likes to see his home town spelled correctly no matter how small it is. Second, although I am a Republican, I am awfully proud of my Big Sister Julie. :-) Thanks for sharing your thoughts with us. I may disagree with her on most issues but I could never say anything against her desire and drive to help my home state.

[Reply](#)

3.  jhwygirl
[August 28, 2008 at 1:10 pm](#)

Yeah, James. I'm an idiot.

Richard - Thanks for the comment. I found Julie very passionate and straight-talking. She's a no-hold-barred gal, and I'm now a huge fan.

[Reply](#)

Fox concedes Montana AG's race to Bullock

By *MATTHEW BROWN* Associated Press Writer

BILLINGS, Mont. (AP) _ Republican attorney general candidate Tim Fox conceded to Democratic opponent Steve Bullock early Wednesday, Fox's campaign manager said.

With votes still outstanding from 11 percent of precincts at the time, Bullock was leading 52 percent to Fox's 48 percent. That represented an 18,700-vote margin that Fox campaign manager Chuck Denowh said was insurmountable.

Bullock campaign manager Kevin Downs confirmed the Democrat received a congratulatory call from Fox at about 1 a.m. MST Wednesday. Bullock could not immediately be reached for comment.

The winner replaces two-term Attorney General Mike McGrath, who was barred by term limits from re-election and who Tuesday was elected chief justice of the Montana Supreme Court.

Unofficial returns later Wednesday morning with 98 percent of precincts counted showed Bullock retaining his winning margin of 52 percent to 48 percent. The tally had Bullock with 227,540 votes and Fox with 206,753.

Both candidates and their parties spent a record amount of cash in the campaign — one of the most fiercely contested races in Montana this year.

Democrat Bullock, 42, is a former assistant attorney general with a solo law practice. He ran unsuccessfully for attorney general in 2000.

Republican Fox, 53, is a former state Department of Environmental Quality attorney who now works at a private law firm. This was his first bid for office.

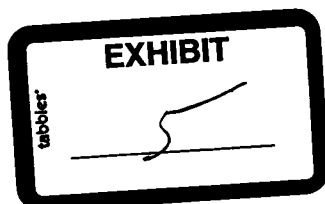
The last days leading up to the election brought a flurry of negative ads, largely funded by the state Republican and Democratic parties. Democrats tried to portray Fox as inexperienced and with a spotty work record, while Republicans depicted Bullock as not taking a tough enough stance on sex offenders.

The ads featured prominently in voter Mindy Naylor's support for Fox. Naylor, 32, a florist from Billings, credited the Republican with helping force state officials to post missing photos onto a sex offender database.

"I was attracted by what he (Fox) said about sex predators. How can I, as a parent, protect my children if there's no pictures on the Web site?" Naylor said.

But another Billings voter, 56-year-old Sherry Sperle, said the Republican ads had driven her away from Fox because they were so negative.

"I picked Bullock," said Sperle, a Republican who works as a financial counselor at a local hospital. "I don't believe he doesn't care about sex offenders. He's got three kids — of course he does."



On the campaign trail, Bullock pledged to fight prescription drug abuse, protect fishing access and more aggressively prosecute scams against the elderly and sex crimes against children.

Bullock questioned his opponent's qualifications and said his own four-year stint as a lawyer in the attorney general's office made him better suited for the job.

Fox said he would focus on shielding gun rights and cracking down on sexual offenders. He also promised to open up more public land to energy development through the attorney general's seat on the state Land Board.

Montana's attorney general earns \$89,600 a year.

STEVE

BULLOCK

DEMOCRAT ATTORNEY GENERAL

**Senator Max Baucus * Senator Jon
Tester * Governor Brian
Schweitzer *
Maryland Attorney General Doug
Gansler**

cordially invite you to spend an evening with
Democratic candidate for
Montana's Attorney General
Steve Bullock

Date: Monday, August 25th

Location: St. Lukes Lofts, 1860 Washington Street, Suite 614

Time: 4:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.

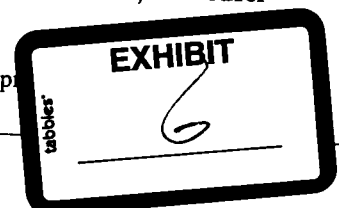
Suggested contribution is \$310 per individual.
(Maximum contribution is \$620 for an individual and \$1240 for a couple.)

Contributions may be made online at www.stevebullock.com/contribute or by check addressed to:

Paid for by Friends of Steve Bullock-Post Office Box 1330, Helena, MT 59624 – Joe Mazurek, Treasurer -
Democrat

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**Friends of Steve Bullock
Post Office Box 1330
Helena, Montana 59624**

Please R.S.V.P to Kevin Downs at kevin@stevebullock.com or 406.461.1264

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