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FOOD FIGHT!

Nutritionally sensitive organizers are trying to make the Democratic National Convention in Denver "the greenest ever," but tongue-in-cheek national media attention has brought the red blush of embarrassment.

Among other things, guidelines for parties have been promulgated that ban all fried food, call for caterers and restaurants to use expensive organic food, color-coordinated edibles and locally grown products (not always easy in Colorado). Officials claim the guidelines "are not mandatory" but convention paperwork calls for "making every effort" to meet the healthy food goals.

Mandatory or not, Councilman Charlie Brown thinks "The host committee's food police are going too far; they've turned into food control zealots with

apparently little concern for cost. Local caterers have told me that these guidelines can increase costs by up to 50 percent."

"At some point it becomes reality time," Brown said. "We need to work together to keep convention costs down, but officials seem more concerned about the green on the table than the green in party coffers. I don't believe this is the fiscally responsible message the party wants to send to America."

The councilman said that the detailed, 28-page "Denver 2008 Convention Planning Committee Catering Vendor" Request for

Proposal says "preference will be given to Vendors that have a proven commitment to 'green' prac-



A sample of food banned by Democratic National Convention Committee guidelines.

tics and that consider and minimize the life-cycle environmental impacts of catering." It also says vendors should "make every effort," among other things, that every meal be nutritious and include "at least three of the following five colors: red, green, yellow, blue/purple and white. Garnishes are not included." (Might be wise for caterers to stock up on food coloring.)

"Everyone loves serving organic food and locally sourced products, but in my experience they can cost as much as 50 percent more, and someone has to pay the bill."

-Nick Agro, Owner, Whirled Peas Catering, Commerce City

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Not on the DNC Menu:

Fried Chicken...



Won Tons...



Fried Green Tomatoes...



French Fries...



Even Rocky Mountain Oysters...!



(Continued from page 1)

The document also specifies that “70 percent or more of ingredients by pre-cooked weight are certified organic and/or grown/raised in Colorado.”

Organic foods, while increasingly available, can be more expensive.

And, while agriculture is a vital part of Colorado’s economy, our semi-arid, high-altitude ecology means many crops simply aren’t grown here. Are the delegates supposed to feel guilty because the fruit was shipped from California?

Another controversial section, and one that has generated attention in outlets like *The News York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal* and *The Tonight Show*, forbids local caterers from serving anything fried. While Democrats like to talk about being inclusive, a menu without fried chicken, fried okra, fried fish or shrimp, fried green tomatoes or french fries will be seen unappealing to many, especially Southern delegates.

More than Southern favorites would be hit by the rule. The no-fry zone excludes “Boulder Canyon Totally Natural Kettle Cooked Potato Chips” (prepared, as detailed on the back of the bag, by being “cooked in a kettle of boiling oil and fried to a crisp”). There also will be no fried Rocky Mountain oysters (an alternative preparation, lightly sautéed, is not recommended), and no fried goat-cheese won tons with chipotle pepper caramel sauce, a delightful specialty created by well-known Denver caterer Three Tomatoes.

“Delegates are not coming to Colorado to nibble off a health-spa menu but to nominate Democratic candidates for president and vice president. Don’t insult them; they know that moderation in what you eat is

much more important than the ingredients or the cooking method. Shouldn’t a political party that promotes an inclusive, “big tent” philosophy also advocate for the “big table” and personal food choice?” Brown asked.

“As to multi-color food, one would think that the Democratic party would focus on only two colors: red and blue. They just don’t get it. You can’t turn red states blue, especially Southern states, without fried chicken.”

- Councilman Brown

The North Carolina-born councilman also speculated that the ban could be harmful to the Democratic Party’s image, especially in the South.

“The no fried food policy reveals a serious cuisine disconnect. For a political party that has a pathetic 30 percent winning record in the South for the last 10 presidential elections, the ban could hurt the party’s 50-state political strategy,” Brown said.

As to multi-colored food, Brown said, “One would think that the Democratic Party would focus only on two colors: red and blue. They just don’t get it. You can’t turn red states blue, especially Southern ones, without fried chicken.”

FOOD CONFESSIONS:

Potential First Lady Michelle Obama in a February 1, 2008 WebMD Q&A:

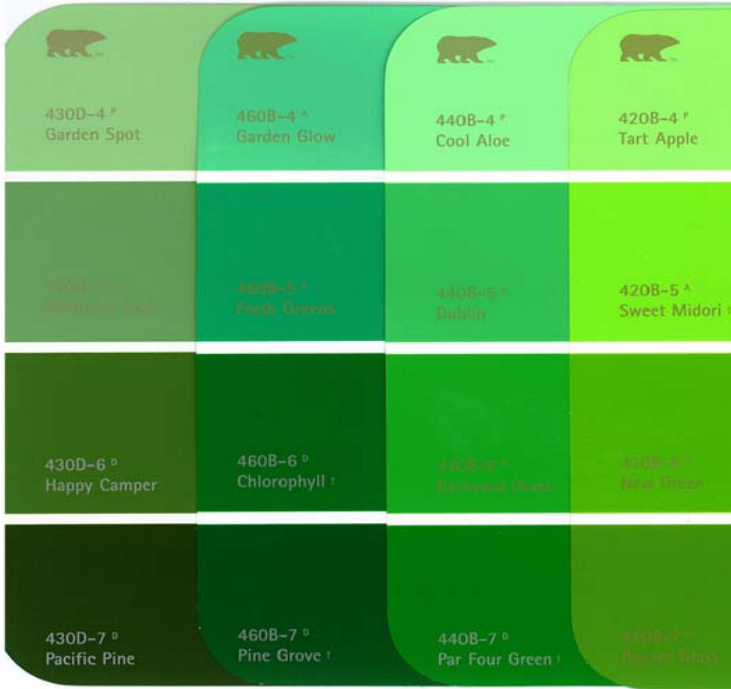
WebMD: *What is your favorite guilty pleasure food?*

Michelle Obama: *“French fries. Always.”*



What shade of “green” are you? Here’s some food for thought

Courtesy of Home Depot and Behr Paints



There is merit in the overall goals of hosting a “green” national political convention, but there are many different shades of green. The best shades reflect what many DNCC green demands lack: simplicity, feasibility, fiscal responsibility and common sense.



What do labels mean? In a *Consumer Reports* story (3/24/08) “Is organic food worth higher costs?” The editors noted that “there are lots of labels that are misleading. For example the terms “free range” or “free roaming” chicken. “While it sounds as if the animal spent its life outdoors, the rules for these labels are weak. For example, if a chicken-coop door was open for five minutes a day, regardless of whether the chickens went outside, poultry could be considered free range.”



Environmental gobblydegook: Denver’s “greening” director was quoted in *The Denver Post* acknowledging that analyzing what actions are most green can be difficult. “Is it better to compost or to recycle? If you are using a cup for a beverage, is it better to be (plastic) and back in the materials stream, or compostable, biodegradable waste and go into the waste stream or compost?” I couldn’t have said it any better.



Food can be tricky for politicians: A good example of “cuisine disconnect” was provided by a presidential candidate, campaigning in the South, who ordered ham and eggs and one grit.



Unintended consequences: The Democratic “green team” wants these policies to have “legacy value.” But the food policies have backfired, opening the party to criticism that it’s elitist and out of touch with many Americans.

- Charlie Brown

Jay Leno on the DNC catering guidelines:

“Among the catering guidelines for the ‘green’ convention, this is true; there will be no fried foods at the democratic convention... NO FRIED FOODS! And today Al Gore announced he’s switching his support to John McCain. He said ‘That’s it! You’re a bunch of global warming fanatics!’

“You see that shows you the difference between the two parties. The democrats have nothing fried and the Republicans like everything covered in oil.” (The Tonight Show, Tuesday, July 8, 2008)

Our feathered friends in Washington Park

A Red-shafted Northern Flicker (*Colaptes auratus*) perches on a large willow tree by Grasmere Lake. This flicker and its mate established a nest in the willow and raised a trio of chicks in the month of June. Northern Flickers are abundant in Washington Park and can often be found drilling in the ground and trees for ants and other insects.



Northern Flicker – Western variety – Male
Washington Park, Denver, CO
Photograph © 2008 by Jay Wozny

(Photo by District 6 resident Jay Wozny.)

Cory Elementary student helps get sidewalk ramps

Residents can thank Leah Diamond, 11, of East Washington Park, for two new ramps built on corners in the Old South Gaylord shopping district. Campaigning to get the ramps built was part of a school project, and Leah enlisted the help of Councilman Charlie Brown last February, pointing out the need to improve safety for people using wheelchairs and strollers and those with problems seeing at night. Brown and Public Works teamed up on the project, which was completed June 15. Leah, at right, stands by her handiwork.



Washington Park Cares

Washington Park Cares (WPC) is a growing nonprofit organization founded by area residents that strive to “enhance the lives of people 55 and over in the greater Washington Park area of Denver.”

Inspired by a similar project called Beacon Hill Village located in Boston, MA, the goal of WPC is to provide helpful links for neighborhood seniors to “continue life on their own terms, with dignity and independence, in their own homes.”

WPC helps to relieve common living difficulties by providing services such as transportation, household chores, in-home assistance, adapting your home as well as cultural activities. With more than 60 new members in just the past month WPC offers the ability for neighbors to stay connected and maintain a positive, healthy lifestyle while remaining in their homes.

The organization also provides members the benefit of a “one-stop shopping” resource for a wide variety



Washington Park Cares Grand Opening Celebration at the Boat House in Washington Park on June 10, 2008.

of needs. Washington Park Cares can direct its members to reliable sources for solutions to common household issues including home repair, grocery shopping, cleaning, cooking, organizing, computer assistance, and transportation.

Membership is \$100 per year for singles and \$200 per household. For additional information visit www.WashingtonParkCares.net.

DIA dedicates “Mustang”

This 32-foot cast-fiberglass sculpture made its long-awaited debut at Denver International Airport on the windy and cold morning of February 11, 2008 and was recently dedicated on June 12.

Luis Jimenez is considered one of the most important sculptors in America. His characteristic style references the grandeur of the Mexican muralists, the energy of the Southwest, and the bright colors he experienced in his youth in his father’s sign-making company.

Mustang was to be Jimenez’ masterpiece. Tragically, the artist died while working on the sculpture.

Mustang was completed and installed posthumously, serving as a tribute to Luis Jimenez’ life and body of work. The bright blue, rearing horse with lighted red eyes welcomes visitors and passengers to DIA as they approach or leave Jeppesen Terminal on Peña Boulevard.

The greeting is not gentle, but dynamic, strong, and forceful. In this way, Mustang makes reference to the personality of the American mesteño (or mustang), the history of the West, and the majesty of this environment.

Mustang is visible only from Peña Boulevard. Please remember to use

care while driving past. There is no stopping on the roadway around the sculpture.

