

just news

The real story

When seclusion becomes isolation, the purpose of the Atlanta trip becomes clouded

BY HAROLD MOORE

If you watched the Democratic National Convention on television last week you probably noticed a lack of real news. As the hours of coverage by the networks droned on, and on, and on, and the collection of speeches grew, the purpose of the Atlanta convention became apparent. In 1988, political conventions are the perfect vehicle for the political parties to present themselves, to their own liking, in four-day, multimedia, multimillion-dollar television commercials.

Atlanta was ready for the convention. It was clean, safe and friendly. Money moved more mountains than credentials. But what about the Oregon delegation?

Vinings is a "secluded" northwest Atlanta suburb, located in Cobb County, where there is no mass transit. Vinings is so secluded that it did not appear on some of the maps furnished to conventioners by the Democratic National Committee. The Oregon delegation was located at the Wyndham Overlook Hotel, in Vinings, secluded from the rigors of Atlanta and secluded from the convention.

Not that the Wyndham isn't a lovely hotel — quite the opposite. Nestled in a community of grand homes and lovely landscapes, the Wyndham Overlook people were attentive to the needs and wishes of the Oregon visitors. But we were still so far from Atlanta that there was the distinct feeling that the convention was on another planet.

Returning from the Omni Thursday evening to change, and hoping to return to town for the Dukakis/Bentsen victory party, our DNC-

furnished bus and driver got lost. Lost. We were 12 miles from Vinings. I am told that this is not an isolated experience. When seclusion becomes isolation, the purpose of the Atlanta trip becomes clouded.

The decision by Ron Herndon, Oregon Jackson leader, and Gov. Goldschmidt to bypass the convention seemed to foretell the lack of substance we could expect in Atlanta. If Jesse Jackson really thought he was going to fight it out on the convention floor, wouldn't Herndon have wanted to be there? Was unity such a foregone conclusion that the governor wanted to stay clear of the Dukakis machine?

Oregon is a very special place. Politically, we take our independence seriously. Party lines have historically been passed over in the name of issues. And politicians in Oregon have learned to respect this maverick state of mind. Is this why Oregon Democrats were "secluded"? Were Oregon delegates being protected from "big-city" politics at the expense of being allowed fully to participate? And if they were being protected from something, who makes the decisions about what Oregon delegates are exposed to? Is it possible that the Democratic Party of Oregon is protecting itself from outside influence?

Being a part of the world's longest television commercial was an education at its best. The moods, modes and manipulations were world-class. The lessons learned will last a lifetime. But how about Oregon? Will the state that gave us Wayne Morse, Tom McCall and Edith Green ever be considered a grown-up political place where new ideas are encouraged, not stifled? •

New York halves AIDS estimates

The New York City Health Department cut in half its official estimate of the numbers of New York residents infected with the AIDS virus. The revised number, down from 400,000 to 200,000, eliminated 200,000 gay men and bisexuals from the previous official estimate, according to *The New York Times*. Estimates for intravenous drug users (100,000) and "all other" (50,000) remain the same.

AIDS activists and other medical experts say they fear damage from the new estimate, which may be used to downplay the government's role

in the fight against AIDS. The city has not, however, changed its projections on AIDS-related services for the next three years. Critics maintain that governments are not now meeting the needs of those already sick.

The revised estimate on the number of gay men in New York — 100,000 among a 7.2 million population, rather than the previously estimated 500,000-plus — was based on the Kinsey survey and by analyzing data from San Francisco, which according to the data cited has half the number of gay and bisexual men as New York.

— Jay Brown

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