



CREATE A KID'S STUDY SPACE

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RALLY PUTS METS BACK IN 1ST PLACE

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# The Star-Ledger

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TODAY'S FORECAST: More clouds than sun.

at 7 A.M. 64° at 2 P.M. 76° at 7 P.M. 75°

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# OBAMA'S HISTORIC MOMENT

## Senator set to accept Democrats' top prize, breaking color barrier



PAUL SANCYA/ASSOCIATED PRESS

Barack Obama makes his first appearance at the Democratic National Convention, joining running mate Joe Biden on stage at the end of Biden's speech last night.

BY DAVID ESPO  
ASSOCIATED PRESS

DENVER — Barack Obama strode triumphantly into history last night — the first African-American to win a major party presidential nomination, an honor he planned to formally accept tonight.

Thousands of Democrats transformed their convention hall into a joyful, shouting celebration on a momentous day in U.S. politics.

"I think the convention's gone pretty well so far. What do you think?" called out the Democrats' man of the hour in a surprise late-night visit to the Pepsi Center. The crowd thundered its approval, and he and running mate Joe Biden basked in the cheers.

Obama implored the delegates to help him "take back America" in the fall campaign against Republican Sen. John McCain of Arizona.

Earlier, former rival Hillary Clinton asked the convention to interrupt its roll call of the states and make its verdict unanimous "in the spirit of unity, with the goal of victory." And they did, with a roar.

Competing chants of "Obama" and "Yes we can" surged up from the convention floor as the outcome was announced.

Obama, the son of a black Kenyan father and a white American mother, is now one victory from becoming president of a nation where, just decades ago, many blacks were denied the vote.

But even as he won the nomination, there was open talk in the convention city that resistance to the idea of a black president remained a stumbling block.

"A lot of white workers ... and, quite frankly, a lot of union members believe he's the wrong race," AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Richard Trumka told a breakfast meeting of Michigan delegates.

Obama will face McCain, who will accept the Republican nomination next week in St. Paul, Minn.

The opinion polls show a close race ahead with McCain, a former Vietnam prisoner of war a few days shy of his 72nd birthday, and Obama was hoping Democrats would leave their convention united despite the hard feelings remaining from a bruising primary campaign that stretched over 18 months.

Former president Bill Clinton did his part last night, delivering a strong pitch for the man who defeated his wife for the nomination. "Everything I've learned in eight years as president and the work I've done since, in America and across the globe, has convinced me that Barack Obama is the man for this job," he said to loud cheers.

Michelle Obama, watching from her [See OBAMA, Page 11]

## For black N.J. delegates, a day of wonder

DENVER — This is the day a black man accepts the nomination to be president of the United States.

A day most African-American delegates here — maybe most African-Americans everywhere — believed they would never see.

"I never did. I never believed it would happen while I was alive," says Sandra Cunningham of Jersey City, a New Jersey delegate and a state senator. And a widow. "What I regret most of all is that my husband didn't live to see it."

Her husband, Glenn Cunningham, the mayor of Jersey City — the first black mayor of Jersey City — died suddenly four years ago. He was 60.

Yes, this has been politics as usual here: the hype, the back-slapping, the phoniness, the free food and booze from lobbyists, the sometimes robotic behavior of people on the floor, the programmed nature of a seemingly endless political TV commercial.



BOB BRAUN

And, yes, there is another candidate, and he has his virtues, not the least of which are the years he spent as a prisoner of war in Vietnam. He may win.

But for people who grew up black in America, this is more than just politics. This is personal. This is family. This is historic.

And this is the day. "This is a dream come true," says Donald Payne. "And, no, I didn't expect it. It's a beginning, yes, and maybe an end, too. The end of despair for a whole people."

Payne's a congressman. In his lifetime, Congress has been about as far as any black American could reasonably expect to travel in elected politics.

"Back in the 1950s, I was the first black member of the county Democratic committee" — a local party post — "and that was considered an extraordinary and controversial achievement."

This is not just the suddenly raised aspirations of people accustomed to the bottom rail of the fence, holding the short and [See BRAUN, Page 11]

## DEMOCRATIC CONVENTION

■ Supporters will gather in homes, churches and restaurants for Obama's historic acceptance speech. **PAGE 10**

■ N.J. congressman Rush Holt joins others cautioning racism is likely to play a role. **PAGE 10**

**Fran Wood:** The supposed Clinton-Obama rift seems more like drama manufactured for TV. **PAGE 25**

## Lowly Epsom salts shown to prevent cerebral palsy

### Pre-delivery magnesium sulfate infusion cuts incidence of disorder in half

BY ANGELA STEWART  
STAR-LEDGER STAFF

A common household substance may be the key to reducing the number of babies born each year with cerebral palsy, a study being published today has found.

Researchers at the University of North Carolina School of Medicine found that infusing pregnant women at

risk of premature birth with magnesium sulfate — commonly known as Epsom salts — just before they delivered cut their chances of having a baby with cerebral palsy in half.

The study's authors say the findings could translate into immediate application by doctors in clinical settings, where about 3 of every 1,000 babies end up being diagnosed with the disabling

muscle disorder by the time they turn 3.

"We've had absolutely no effective tools at cerebral palsy prevention to offer families with a premature baby," said John Thorp, the McAllister distinguished professor of obstetrics and gynecology at the Chapel Hill medical school. "This research in my mind represents a real breakthrough."

Based on the experiences of 2,200

women, the study is the largest so far in this country to examine the ability of magnesium sulfate to prevent the common birth defect. The research, appearing in today's New England Journal of Medicine, showed no significant benefit of Epsom salts, however, in reducing the rate of infant death in those patients.

The big advantage of magnesium sulfate, Thorp said, is that it's cheap and can be found in every maternity [See INFUSION, Page 9]

## IN OTHER NEWS

### New Orleans braces for another hurricane

On the eve of Hurricane Katrina's third anniversary, a nervous New Orleans waits as Gustav threatens everything the city has rebuilt. **Page 3.**

### Bush ups ante over top aides' testimony

The Bush administration is raising the stakes in a court fight that could change the balance of power between the White House and Congress. **Page 4.**

### Study: U.S. workers see a bleak future

A Rutgers study finds American workers are very concerned about jobs and feeling bleak about their economic future. **Page 49.**

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### Suspected Blood accused in killing

A man whose 2004 trials ended in hung juries is again accused of murder, and prosecutors are hoping that this time they can put Shareef "Sug" Thomas behind prison bars. **Page 31**

### Jersey girl stirring up celebs in Hollywood

Livingston's Chelsea Handler is a standup comedian, a best-selling author and host of her own gossipy late-night show. So why do so many teen girls want her to "go die in a whole"? **Page 61**



### Boston whips tumbling Yankees

New York's bullpen coughs up seven runs in the eighth, pushing the Yanks further back in the standings. They are now 11 behind in the AL East and seven back in the wild card race. **Page 53**

### PSE&G may shrink that rate increase

The 1.7 million New Jersey customers who rely on Public Service Electric & Gas may get some relief this fall. The utility has proposed reducing its planned hike by about a third. **Page 49**

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