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## Local childhood friends to reunite at Democratic convention



ED ICOVÉ/SPECIAL TO SUN NEWS

Ellen Ratner, center, bureau chief for the Talk Radio News Service, returned to Cleveland seven years ago to celebrate her 50th birthday with Ed and Mary Icové. Ratner and Ed Icové, childhood friends in Shaker Heights, will cover the Democratic National Convention next week in Denver for the TRNS.

By Ed Wittenberg  
ewittenberg@sunnews.com

South Euclid Councilman Ed Icové called it “serendipitous.”

Icové was en route to the 1996 Democratic National Convention in Chicago as a delegate when he noticed a woman, wearing a press badge, sitting across the aisle from him on the plane.

They started chatting and soon realized they knew each other. She was Ellen Ratner,

bureau chief and White House correspondent for the Talk Radio News Service, who was on her way to cover the convention.

“We were (each other’s) first boyfriend and girlfriend, from fourth through sixth grade, at Onaway Elementary School in Shaker Heights,” Icové said. “We gave each other big hugs.”

Thanks to that chance meeting, Icové is headed for this year’s Democratic Convention Monday through Aug. 28 in Denver — but this time,

as a correspondent for the Talk Radio News Service.

Icové, his wife, Mary, and Ratner spent time together at the 1996 convention and had “a wonderful time together,” he said.

“We renewed our friendship and have kept in touch ever since,” Icové said.

Ratner said her friendship with Icové dates back to third grade. She said she had been thinking about him for months prior to their chance encounter on the plane.

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# FRIENDS

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"I was going to look him up on the Internet," she said in a phone interview. "Then he's sitting next to me on a plane. We've been buddies ever since."

## 'A historic event'

At next week's convention, Icové will do interviews for TRNS and will also act as host for some radio stations across the country, Ratner said.

"We drop into syndicated and local radio stations across the nation," she said.

Ratner said TRNS is heard on more than 300 stations nationwide, but she was not sure which Ohio stations would pick up the TRNS broadcasts from the convention.

Icové said his interviews will primarily focus on the Ohio delegation, "because of the importance of the state of Ohio" in the November election. Mary Icové will also assist with interviews, he said.

"I'm extremely excited about this year's convention," Icové said. "Not only is it a historic event, but I'll get to spend some quality time with Ellen, and it's an opportunity to talk to various Democratic officials."

Ratner, also a news analyst on the Fox News Channel, has covered the Democratic and Republican national conventions for each presidential race since 1996.

"This will be my fourth (set of conventions), and they're exhausting," she said. "But if you're a political junkie at all, you can't miss this one."

"With no incumbent running, it's wide open. Our country is at a very exciting time."

## Focus on Ohio

The outcome of this elec-

tion in Ohio is very important to her as well as the nation, Ratner said.

"You can take the girl out of Ohio, but you can never take Ohio out of the girl," she said. "I may not be a legal resident (of Ohio), but I am an Ohio resident in my heart."

TRNS has offices in Washington and New York, and Ratner divides her time between those cities.

At the convention, the Democratic Party will officially choose Sen. Barack Obama, D-Illinois, to run against Sen. John McCain, R-Arizona, for president this fall.

Ratner predicts a hard-fought battle between Obama and McCain.

"I think Obama will pull out Ohio," she said. "But he has got to talk to people who are living on the edge in Ohio or who have lost their jobs. He's got to get people out of the house to vote on Election Day."

Icové said Obama has a vi-

sion for the future that is comparable to that which former President John F. Kennedy had in the early 1960s.

"He also has the same leadership qualities as JFK," he said.

## Talented class

Ratner is a member of Cleveland's famed Ratner family. Her brother, Bruce, and first cousins Albert and Charles are all executives with Forest City Enterprises.

Although she grew up in Shaker Heights, Ratner did not graduate from Shaker Heights High School, as she moved to Tennessee while in high school.

But she proudly noted that her class — the SHHS class of 1969 — includes Icové, Ohio Lt. Gov. Lee Fisher and U.S. District Judge Dan Polster.

"I don't think it's any accident that the four of us came out of the same school system, the same year," she said. "We couldn't have received a finer education."

"Politics, civics and civil

responsibility were ingrained in every one of us. We were brainwashed in a great way.

"People say public education doesn't work. But if it's done right, it works. We're examples of it."

Icové, an attorney who specializes in public interest law, leaves for Denver Saturday and will return Aug. 29. He said the upcoming convention will be "an educational seminar for people involved in politics and government."

"The best way to learn is to listen to others (about) what they've been through."

"So this will be a great opportunity for me, by talking and listening to other people, to become a better person and get ideas that can help South Euclid and our region."

Icové has served on South Euclid council since 1990.

Ratner and Icové will send daily blogs with updates on the convention for Sun News. Look for them on [cleveland.com](http://cleveland.com).