

Social media stars get access at DNC

Northridge performer and L.A. drag queen are among influencers wooed by Democrats.

By Andrea Chang

Malynda Hale angled her iPhone toward her face and filmed a quick selfie video as she headed over to the first day of the Democratic National Convention.

“I’m already annoyed and it’s not even 8:30. Nobody knows anything and this is very confusing,” the 38-year-old influencer says in the clip, which she immediately uploaded to her 53,000 Instagram followers. “I’m gonna give you the real, unfiltered version of what it’s like to be at the DNC.”

Hale, a singer and actor from Northridge, is one of more than 200 social media influencers who received credentials — a first for the DNC — to attend the four-day convention. In granting digital content creators access to delegates, studio space and events, Kamala Harris’ campaign hopes they will use their vast online followings to promote the party’s message and galvanize young voters, who showed deep apathy about President Biden’s bid for reelection.

“They obviously view us as a direct line to this demographic, because a lot of them are bypassing traditional media to see what the influencers and the public figures and creators that they follow are saying about political events,” Hale said in an interview with The Times. “It’s a great idea to kind of use us as, like, a democratic liaison to certain generations.”

Since arriving in Chicago over the weekend, Hale has been unleashing a quick-fire barrage of Instagram stories, reels, grid photos and TikTok videos, capturing the glam and grind of being a

[See **Influencers**, A5]



MYUNG J. CHUN Los Angeles Times

READY TO CELEBRATE

Delegates on the final night of the Democratic convention in Chicago wear white as a tribute to the women’s suffrage movement as they await Vice President Kamala Harris’ acceptance speech as the party’s presidential nominee. Scan this code to read our coverage at latimes.com and in our eNewspaper, where subscribers get an exclusive “LATEXtra.”



With conventions over, battle to win over voters begins

CHICAGO — Vice President Kamala Harris has enjoyed a monthlong burst of energy and optimism among Democrats who believe she is the party’s best chance of defeating former President Trump in November. But once the balloons dropped after Harris claimed her party’s nomination on Thursday, the reality set in that there is much work to be done in coming weeks in what is still expected to be a razor-thin contest.

“On Friday, I’m going to give you leave to take a three-hour nap. Eat a damn vegetable. And then sign up for shifts to get people registered to vote, to knock on doors, to hold events, to pull people in and make a seat at the table for people who are so busy they’re not consuming the information like we are,” Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer told California delegates over breakfast. “We can do this. I’m more optimistic than ever. So lace up your Chucks, hit the doors, make room at the table, and let’s get it done.”

Harris’ candidacy has reenergized the 2024 race, but it’s a very close contest likely to be decided by a few states

By Seema Mehta

Polling shows that while Harris fares better than President Biden against Trump, it’s still an incredibly close race that will come down to a small number of voters in a handful of battleground states.

“She put Democrats back into the game to where it’s kind of a toss-up,” said John Anzalone, Biden’s lead pollster in 2020, at an event hosted by the University of Chicago Institute of Politics on Wednesday. “Step 2 is always the most difficult one.”

“We’ve seen it in every presidential campaign, and Step 2 usually happens post-conventions, post-Labor Day, when the bell rings,” he added. “That is like the battle for the slim universe of — you can call them anything you want: persuasion voters, swing voters, independent voters — and it’s pretty small. And that’s where each side [spends] a billion dollars.”

Harris has enjoyed a crush of positive news

[See **Election**, A5]

To gasps, Girardi takes the stand to deny stealing funds

By Brittney Mejia and Matt Hamilton

In a stunning move, the once-influential, now-disgraced former attorney Tom Girardi took the witness stand Thursday to testify in his own defense, flatly asserting that he never intentionally misled clients and that “every client got every penny that every client was supposed to get.”

It marked the first time Girardi, 85, has spoken publicly about the allegations of large-scale fraud at his now-closed law firm, Girardi Keese, and about charges that he misappropriated millions of dollars in settlement funds that belonged to his clients.

The law firm imploded in late 2020 amid evidence that he stole settlements from widows and orphans in an Indonesian plane crash, and

hundreds of former clients and vendors came forward saying they were collectively cheated out of hundreds of millions of dollars.

The scandal rocked the Los Angeles legal community, led to reforms in how lawyers are disciplined by the State Bar of California and triggered a corruption investigation inside that agency, exposing how Girardi sought to exert improper influence on regulators. It also became endless fodder on the reality TV show “Real Housewives of Beverly Hills,” where Girardi’s es-

[See **Girardi**, A7]

4 other lawyers being investigated

IRS agent testifying in the Girardi trial reveals a broader look into his law firm. **CALIFORNIA, B1**

Some late shots at the Clippers’ arena?

State bill would allow members of private suites to be served alcohol until 4 a.m.

By Mackenzie Mays

SACRAMENTO — California lawmakers have repeatedly tried and failed to extend the state’s last call laws to allow establishments to serve alcohol past 2 a.m., which they argue would be a boon for local economies.

The state Senate this week quietly approved a bill that could finally change



MICHAEL BLACKSHIRE Los Angeles Times

INTUIT DOME in Inglewood, the \$2-billion, 17,700-seat new home of the Clippers, opened this month.

that time prohibition, but only for a very select group: VIP suite holders at Inglewood’s new Intuit Dome arena.

The bill, which was approved with little debate on the Senate floor Tuesday and now heads to the Assembly, would allow alcohol to be served until 4 a.m. to dues-paying members of private suites inside Intuit Dome, the \$2-billion, 17,700-seat new home of the Clippers that celebrated its grand opening this month.

The futuristic, eye-catching indoor arena that also acts as a concert venue was

[See **Intuit Dome**, A7]

FDA approves COVID vaccines

Pfizer and Moderna are set to ship millions of updated doses. Novavax will provide its version a little later. **NATION, A10**

NWSL, players agree on contract

Collective bargaining agreement is among the most progressive in the history of U.S. women’s sports. **SPORTS, B10**

Disneyland ride to be updated

Depictions of Native Americans in Peter Pan’s Flight have been fraught with controversy. **BUSINESS, A6**

Weather

Some sun.
L.A. Basin: 83/61. **B6**

Printed with soy inks on partially recycled paper.

7 85944 00200 5

For the latest news, go to **latimes.com**.



Get breaking news, instantly.

Download the app for up-to-the-minute alerts.

