

# EVERY DOLLAR

Washington's insiders must play

The life of a Washington lobbyist is occupied by a great many social obligations. Consider, for example, this invitation to the "Cantor Carnival," an event held last July for Virginia Congressman Eric Cantor by his political action committee, ERIC ("Every Republican Is Crucial") PAC. The carnival, like thousands of similar events each year, was a private affair, one that the average citizen would have no way of knowing took place, unless he or she was willing to pore over the campaign-finance records ERIC PAC filed with the Federal Election Commission. Even then, the carnival might appear only as a cluster of contributions on a particular date, thus shielding this fundamental aspect of our political process from the scrutiny of ordinary Americans. The invitation, then, connotes acceptance into a powerful and circumscribed elite. It means not only that you can attend but that you have already arrived.

Every Republican Is Crucial rented a 15,000-square-foot party space at Nationals Park, a major league baseball stadium, for this event. Cantor's guests and their families took batting practice, tossed balls at a dunking booth, hopped on the Moon Bounce, and played videogames at the Sony PlayStation "pavilion." Musical entertainment was provided by the band Blame It On Jane, which performed at the Republican National Convention and at one of President Obama's inaugural balls. Similar events last year catered to a wide variety of monied tastes. Hunting was popular: for pheasant with Republican representatives Stephanie Herseth Sandlin and Todd Tiahrt, dove with Representative Rob Wittman, and antelope with Representative Tom Pearce. There were ski outings to Vail and Sun Valley; sushi, lobster, and barbecue dinners; beer, bourbon, and coffee get-togethers; a chance to go "dancing with the congressional stars"; and, of course, plenty of golf.

Not surprisingly, opportunities like this aren't free. The "requested contribution" noted here is calibrated for the \$5,000-per-year legal limit on contributions to PACs by individuals or other PACs. Reasonable prices mean you can attend more parties. Besides, Cantor didn't need the money for his own campaigning: he out-raised his 2008 Democratic election opponent 53:1. Instead, the contributions from the carnival, and from other events last year benefiting him or ERIC PAC, allowed Cantor to increase his influence among his fellow Republicans. Every Republican Is Crucial gives away nearly half the money it raises. The plan seems to have worked. Last November, Cantor was elected minority whip, the Republican Party's second-ranking leadership position. Those who attended the carnival can take satisfaction in knowing that their dollars helped fund his rise.

**Activities Include:**

- Musical Entertainment by Blame it on Jane •
- Dunking Booth • Batting & Pitching Cages •
- Sony PlayStation Pavilion • Face Painting •
- Clowns • Moon Bounce • Build-A-Bear Workshop •
- Kid's Jungle Gym • Funnel Cakes •
- Hot Dogs • Cotton Candy • Plus Much More! •

**Requested Contribution:**

\$2,500 PAC Host (give and/or raise)

\$1,000 PAC Attendee

\$250 Individual Attendee

Please make checks payable to:  
ERIC PAC  
209 Pennsylvania Ave, SE  
Washington, DC 20003

For questions, please contact Hetaf Kraydi @  
202-549-1010 or [hetaf@ventumllc.com](mailto:hetaf@ventumllc.com)  
or Karrie Cohen at 202-454-5280 or  
[kcohen@ericpac.net](mailto:kcohen@ericpac.net)

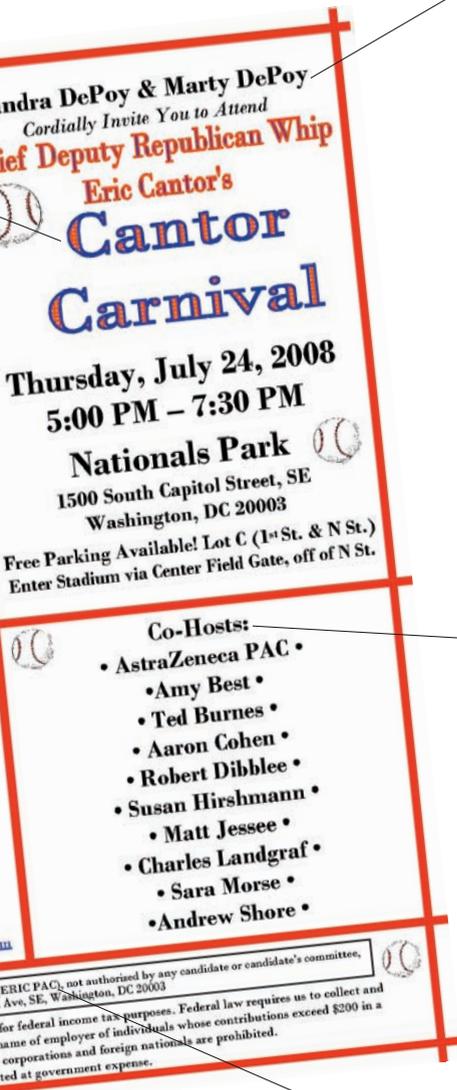
Please email your RSVP to [rsvp@aventumllc.com](mailto:rsvp@aventumllc.com)

Paid for and authorized by Every Republican Is Crucial  
209 Pennsylvania Ave, SE Washington, DC 20003

Contributions to ERIC PAC are not tax deductible  
report the name, mailing address, occupation, and  
calendar year. Contributions by  
Not printed

# ER IS CRUCIAL

ay to pay, by Nancy Watzman



To understand why all this money gets spent on events such as this one, one must know who the “hosts” are. Sandra and Marty DePoy are lobbyists, largely for real estate interests. Sandra works for the American Resort Development Association (ARDA), which represents the vacation ownership and resort industry; Marty’s employer, the Bockorny Group, also represents ARDA as well as the National Association of Real Estate Investment Trusts (NAREIT). The DePoy’s presence on the invitation signals to potential donors that the event is important for those working in this field. It also helps account for Cantor’s participation, given his history with legislation benefiting the real estate industry, including his cosponsorship of a bill to ease tax regulation of real estate investment trusts, which was enacted as part of a 2008 housing law.

Most of the carnival’s other “hosts” are also lobbyists, such as Amy Best, for the accounting firm PricewaterhouseCoopers; Ted Burnes, for the American College of Radiology; Sara Morse, for the American College of Surgeons Professional Association; Aaron Cohen, for medical-technology and pharmaceutical companies; and Andrew Shore, who counts the retail giant Target among his clients. In short, real estate wasn’t the only industry willing to buy access to Cantor, who, while receiving the largest portion of his financial contributions from the real estate sector, also sits on the House Ways and Means Committee, which gives him legislative jurisdiction over taxes, trade, Medicare and health care, and prescription drugs for seniors.

There is no way to determine exactly how much money Cantor raised at the carnival, but ERIC PAC’s campaign disclosures show that it collected \$119,000 that month—\$87,500 from other PACs (Freddie PAC gave the \$5,000 maximum, as did the National Venture Capital Association and the Real Estate Roundtable PAC), and another \$24,000 from individuals who gave more than \$200. Impressive numbers, to be sure, but more cash will be needed. The winners in the 2008 congressional elections spent an average of \$1.1 million each to land their seats (winners in the Senate spent \$6.5 million). This means that if for some reason you missed the carnival—your calendar was booked, the invite got lost in the mail—no need to worry: Cantor *will* be available. He’s always up for a chat at a D.C. Starbucks. The cost? \$2,500 per PAC. ■

Nancy Watzman is the director of the Sunlight Foundation’s Party Time project, which tracks information about congressional campaign fund-raising events.