



Edwards campaign on the 'rocky road'

by Rick Pearson

DES MOINES, Iowa—Is there a "rocky road" ahead for former Sen. John Edwards' presidential bid? Is he Phish Food for the other Democratic candidates? Will he melt under the glare of Iowa's Jan. 3 caucuses?

Not according to Ben Cohen, co-founder of Ben & Jerry's ice cream and a founder of Caucus for Priorities, a group claiming 10,000 Iowans who have pledged to support Edwards, the group's endorsed presidential candidate based on responses to questionnaires and interviews on which contender would do a better job of cutting defense spending and using more dollars for social causes.

Cohen acknowledged that some second-tier Democratic contenders actually scored higher than Edwards on the group's questionnaire, such as Sen. Joseph Biden of Delaware and New Mexico Gov. Bill Richardson. But, he said, another factor the group measured was the viability of the candidate to make it through the caucuses and onto the nomination.

Cohen's most recent arrival on the ice cream scene is TV comedic satirist Stephen Colbert's "Americone Dream," which mixes vanilla with fudge-covered waffle-cone pieces and a caramel swirl. It is, Cohen says with a smile, "a great product." The ice cream firm has named other favorites, such as Phish Food, after the band, and of course, Cherry Garcia, after the late Grateful Dead lead guitarist Jerry Garcia.

But what flavor would represent Edwards, whom Cohen hailed as the "strongest fighter out there for progressive values" and someone who "stands out from the whole pack in terms of his courage to speak out about what he actually believes in."

"I haven't figured that out," Cohen said after presenting the group's endorsement to the former North Carolina senator in a small, crowded airport hotel conference room that was hot enough to vaporize a snow cone.

"I just know it's not going to be one of those fluffy ice creams. It's going to be very solid," Cohen said. "Maybe, what, Captain Courageous Crunch?"