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Northeast loses in OT shocker, 1C

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MIDDLE GEORGIA'S NEWSPAPER

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Lewis shares stories at Tubman about struggle for civil rights

Superdelegate avoids talking politics at event

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Of the 10 people who spoke from the podium during the March on Washington, during which Martin Luther King Jr. gave his famous "I Have a Dream" speech, only one is alive today.

That's U.S. Rep. John Lewis, a civil rights icon who spoke in Macon on

Friday night at an exhibit of paintings depicting scenes from his life. A life that includes many of the seminal moments in the American civil rights movement. The March on Washington. The Freedom Ride. Bloody Sunday, when Lewis and other civil rights activists were beaten by state troopers armed with night sticks and whips as they marched across a bridge in Alabama.

"I had a concussion," Lewis told a

Please see LEWIS, 3A



GRANT BLANKENSHIP/THE TELEGRAPH

U.S. Rep. John Lewis, D-Ga., tells stories of his days as a young man in the civil rights movement Friday during the opening of an exhibit of artwork about that period by artist Benny Andrews at the Tubman African American Museum in downtown Macon.

LEWIS

Continued from 1A

crowd of more than 100 Friday. "I thought I was going to die. ... And I think these paintings are depicting the determination of a people."

Lewis, D-Ga., has gone from the forefront of the civil rights movement in the 1960s to the forefront of this year's history making Democratic presidential primary. A longtime friend of U.S. Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton, Lewis began the primary season squarely in her corner. And since he is one of Georgia's 15 Democratic superdelegates — meaning he holds an important vote for the nomination — his support meant more than a typical endorsement.

But last week, The New York Times ran a story saying Lewis would switch to U.S. Sen. Barack Obama, who could become the first black man nominated for the presidency by a major party. Lewis' staff quickly walked the story back, calling it "inaccurate," according to The Atlanta Journal-Constitution.

Lewis said Friday night that he plans an announcement on the issue "in a few days." And he offered another hint that, in the end, he may cast his support for Obama.

"I think the emphasis of the story (in The New York Times) was I plan to follow the lead of the district," Lewis told The Telegraph on Friday.

His congressional district, the 5th District in Atlanta, voted

IF YOU GO

A series of paintings and drawings by the late Benny Andrews, which depict scenes from the Civil Rights Movement and the life of activist turned U.S. Rep. John Lewis, is on display at the Tubman African American Museum through April 13.

overwhelmingly for Obama in the Feb. 5 Democratic primary. The Associated Press has reported.

Lewis is far from the only black Democrat — or Democrat of any race, for that matter — struggling with a long-held respect for Clinton and the force of history. For example, Herbert Dennard, who publishes Georgia Informer, a Macon-based newspaper aimed at a largely black audience, recently switched his allegiance.

A longtime supporter of the Clintons, Dennard said he didn't want to be "on the wrong side of history."

But Lewis' Macon visit was not about politics, and an aid traveling with him sought to shield the congressman of more than 20 years from political questions. Lewis spoke instead of the difficult days in civil rights history.

He was one of the Freedom Riders. He was with King in Washington, the youngest speaker on the stage in front of the Lincoln Monument at 23.

He was arrested at sit-ins to desegregate lunch counters. He was beaten by mobs.

"We were beaten," he said, "but we were the ones arrested. ... But I felt free."

Georgia's Democratic superdelegates

A list of Georgia's superdelegates, according to the Democratic Party of Georgia, along with the candidate they've declared their support for, if applicable:

- Former President Jimmy Carter.
- The state's six congressional Democrats: U.S. Rep. Sanford Bishop (Barack Obama), U.S. Rep. Hank Johnson (Obama), U.S. Rep. John Lewis, U.S. Rep. Jim Marshall, U.S. Rep. John Barrow and U.S. Rep. David Scott (Obama).
- The state party chair and vice-chair: Jane Kidd and Georgia Labor Commissioner Michael Thurmond (Hillary Rodham Clinton).
- The state's Democratic National Committee members: Carole Dabbs, Mary Long, Lonnie Plott and Richard Ray.

Two other super delegates will be named later.

Lewis initially said he would support Clinton but, recently, has indicated he may support Obama because his congressional district voted overwhelmingly for the senator from Illinois.

Marshall, who represents the Macon area, has "declined to endorse any of the candidates for president," according to his press secretary.

— Travis Fain