

Political campaigns ignore real issues

By GRANT LONG

Another year has come and is about to go, but we must ask ourselves what is particularly special about this one. Was it the the Olympics, which were held in Atlanta this year, or was it because a hurricane almost hit camp Wesleyan?

I personally think that it was neither. This year stands out from most others because this is a presidential campaign year. That makes probably the only time in a four-year span where the American public comes its closest to being politically active.

Last month both parties held their political conventions; the Elephants (Republicans) held theirs in San Diego, and the Donkeys (Democrats) were in the windy city of Chicago. To those who do not actively keep their heads in the political arena, I'm going to tell you what you missed.

Opinion

Nothing! That's right; you didn't miss a damn thing.

First of all, unless you were born on Mars or are just a complete moron, everyone knew that Bob Dole and Bill Clinton were going to get the nominations of their political parties. Secondly, most people know that conventions are just for meeting other delegates and bashing members of the other party.

The last time a political convention actually decided who the party was going to nominate for president, was way back in 1952, when Adlai Stevenson beat Este Keffauver. These days the political conventions have all the excitement of a Hollywood awards show instead of political spirit.

Speaking as someone who watched both political conventions, I will give you the highlights from both. I only watched the first two days of the Republican national convention, because that is all I could stand to see without wanting to vomit.

The highlight of the convention was Colin Powell's speech. In his speech Powell was energetic and his speech helped bring the crowd to a frenzied response. Although most of the delegates did not agree with his views on abortion and affirmative action, they did enjoy his speech.

The people who were disappointed with the convention the most were the three major networks, who all expected tension among the delegates, but were surprised when there was none. Other than that, the meeting of the millionaires' club was successful. The reason why I call it the meeting of the millionaires'



club is because a good portion of the delegates there are millionaires or are extremely well off.

In 1968, riots and civil unrest marred the Democratic national convention and this is the first time since then the Democrats decided to have a convention there. But much has changed since 1968, except the fact that the Cubs and White Sox still haven't reached the World Series or, for that matter, won their league title. Now Richard Daley's son is mayor and he did not want to see a repeat of the 1968, fiasco that his father got into.

The highlight of this convention was Bill Clinton's speech. Unlike Bob Dole, Clinton's speech was worth listening to because it wasn't boring and dry like Dole's acceptance speech.

I also have to hand it to the Democrats, they had more stars there than the Republicans. Christopher Reeve gave a stirring speech, and who could forget Carl Lewis, Mohammed Ali, Kevin

Costner, and Lawrence Fishburn? With Superman, Othello, Elliot Ness, and a nine-time gold medalist there, how could the Republicans compete?

My fault, I'm sorry: Arnold Schwarzenegger was probably at the Republican national convention. They did have the Terminator there, and you know he is going to be back.

In an age where glamour and glitz are more important than substance and originality, it saddens the heart to see that politics has followed suit.

Whatever happened to real issues? While people are dying, starving, homeless, and unemployed, politicians continue to use their power to dress up for the camera instead of solving the real issues that affect the American populous today.

If you really want to impress people, don't pose for a camera and talk about change, get up and make that change.

To quote Nike, "Just do it."

Expand our cultural horizons

By JAMES BELL

While reading a small local newspaper from Roanoke Rapids, (the "Daily Herald,") I came upon a letter written by Elkton C. Richardson. In that letter he posed an interesting and difficult question. He asks why there is a specific month of the year for African-American studies and not a month for the study of other American cultures?

Richardson specifically cited the lack of Native American curriculum in today's schools and universities. According to the 1990 census, Native American students make up over seven percent of the student body in North Carolina. However, these students are denied education information about their ethnic background. Richardson says it is shameful that this happens in American schools.

No one would argue that the African-American population is the largest minority group in the United States and that Black History does indeed deserve recognition and attention. It would be a mistake to even suggest that schools drop their Black History programs. However, this is America, the great melting pot. I believe it would make more sense to institute programs that allow students to learn about all the different and unique cultures that can be found in our country, rather than simply one.

Such change should be made in every level of education in American schools. At the elementary level Black History Month is a major part of the curriculum although almost no time is set aside for the children to study other cultures. In the high school level Afro-American classes are offered, but rarely is there a class that gives emphasis to another specific ethnic origin.

Steps to make a more rounded and more politically correct course of study can easily be made at the college level as well. When I looked at the North Carolina Wesleyan College catalogue I noticed that there are three Black History courses: HIS 225, Modern Africa; HIS 314, Afro-American Studies; and HIS 414, Topics in African History. After I turned the page, I saw that there are also courses concentrating on Latin American studies, European studies, Middle East studies, Far East studies, as well as Russian and Modern American studies.

After I finished reading the catalogue I realized that North Carolina Wesleyan College has already established a broad group of classes that allows the student to choose what he or she would like to study. This should serve as a model for other schools to follow and hopefully duplicate.

All students of American schools deserve an education that does not discriminate against any ethnicity or culture. If a school

does not have the resources to offer a group of different courses, then that school should offer one course that covers many different groups and racial backgrounds.

In a world where racial lines are being drawn every day, the future would benefit if we learned about each other's racial, cultural, and ethnic pasts. It is said that we as people hate what we fear, and fear what we do not understand. Therefore, by learning about others and ourselves we can eliminate the hate.

