

While You Were Gone?

Photos by Bernstein

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Then the Big Day arrived. Secret Service agents met for a final briefing. The presidential platform, wooden not political, was finished, the required blue curtain backdrop was rushed in from the walls of Gov. Holshouser's office, and the suggestion to hang a Guilford College banner behind the President rejected.

At 11 a.m. those invited by Guilford College gathered for coffee and donuts. Entering Founders that morning was an experience in itself. Karen Rheeling greeted guests at the door and checked off names on her list under the careful scrutiny of several burly agents. The inside of the building was "redecorated". Most noticeable among the redecorations was the bulletin board next to the reception desk. Notices advertising "Roommate Wanted, Male or Female", and "Ride Needed to Fla. will share gasoline and dope expenses" were banished in favor of signs announcing poetry contests and off-campus seminars.

Press members laden with tons of electronic gadgetry filed into Sternberger Auditorium followed by an interesting assortment of approximately 70 members of the College community. No security checks were run on the guests but close visual inspections were done by the omnipresent Secret Service agents.

With the tactical units in position and the Presidential S.W.A.T. squad headquartered in the gym, helicopters brought the President of the



Chopper landing on football field

United States to Guilford College.

The President entered Sternberger and advanced to his podium. Mr. Ford is a stocky, rock-jawed man with a quick, friendly smile and pleasant, deep set blue eyes. But for the expensive suit he wore and the hefty agents nearby, he could have been anyone's ex-football player grandpa.

He opened with a mediocre joke about hoping to be as successful as UNC's Phil Ford, the kind of joke everyone laughs at only when told by a President. In a forceful yet not overbearing manner he answered questions, evaded questions, made points, rambled, and shifted his weight smoothly from leg to leg. He appeared to be well



Tactical squad posts lookout on dorm roof



Ford welcomes supporters at afternoon political gathering

informed on topics ranging from the Russian Army to the New River. The man gave a solid performance and left smiling.

Departing Guilford, he was driven out New Garden Road to the Guilford Courthouse Battleground where a crowd of about 7,000 waited patiently.

The President walked to the speaker's platform between rows of men dressed in the uniforms of the Colonial 1st Maryland Regiment. The muskets these men held had previously been checked out by security agents.

Mr. Ford delivered a speech lauding North Carolina and

singing the praises of the Tar Heels who, he said, stuck to their positions in the face of the British infantry. In reality, the Tar Heel militia fired once and fled in 1781. The British got a good look only at their backs and flying heels. The day was saved by the heroism of the 1st Maryland, but that would not win many votes in Greensboro, North Carolina.

The President returned to Guilford College for a political meeting and a snack prepared by his personal Philippino chef, then continued on by helicopter to Winston-Salem.

A good time was had by all.