

GOP Kicks off Last Leg of Election with Convention

PHILLIP GOLLADAY AND CHRIS MCLAIN

The presidential race officially started with the Republican National Convention in New York from August 30 to September 2. The four-day convention came together to vote for a party platform and officially nominate a presidential candidate. However, since President George W. Bush wrapped up the nomination long ago and the platform had been in the works for the past four years, the convention was essentially a four-day promotion of George W. Bush and the Republican Party to the American public.

Day one was entitled "A Nation of Courage" and highlighted President Bush's response to the events of September 11 and his achievements in the area of national security. Former New York mayor Rudy Giuliani and Senator John McCain of Arizona were the primetime speakers on Monday night. Giuliani spoke about how President Bush brought the nation together after the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001. "President Bush has the courage of his convictions. In choosing a president, we really don't choose a Republican or

Democrat, a conservative or liberal. We choose a leader." Giuliani also talked about why he thought Senator John Kerry, Bush's challenger in the election, would not be a strong leader for the country. "President Bush is a leader who is willing to stick with difficult decisions even as public opinion shifts, while John Kerry's record in elected office suggests a man who changes his position often, even on important issues."

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Day two was entitled "A People of Compassion" and highlighted the emotional aspects of the party. California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger gave a glowing yet humorous tribute to America, the most notable line warning "economic pessimists" not to be "economic girlie men!" President Bush's daughters, Barbara and Jenna, introduced their father so he could introduce his wife, First Lady Laura Bush, to speak to the convention about President Bush as a person, and about

how his beliefs have guided how he leads the country.

The third day of the convention was entitled "A Land of Opportunity," and the two main speakers of the night, Vice President Dick Cheney and Democrat Senator Zell Miller from Georgia, used their speeches to point out Kerry's shortcomings if he were to be elected president. Both Cheney and Miller attacked Kerry's position on defense and national security

issues. Cheney, addressing the convention in his acceptance speech for the vice presidential candidacy, took a swing at Kerry's apparent waffling on many issues. "But Senator Kerry's liveliest disagreement is with himself. His

back-and-forth reflects a habit of indecision, and sends a message of confusion," the Vice President told the audience at Madison Square Garden and the nationwide television audience. "It makes the whole thing mutual America sees two John Kerrys." Senator Miller, who has been compared by some as a traitor to the Democratic Party for making a keynote speech at the Republican convention, hit back at some of his Democratic colleagues, saying

that "today's Democratic leaders see America as an occupier, not a liberator. And nothing makes this Marine madder than someone calling American troops occupiers rather than liberators." He also lashed out against Senator Kerry's voting record in his 20 years in the Senate. Miller outlined Kerry's opposition to such military projects as the B-1 and B-2 bombers, the F-14 and F-15 fighters, the Patriot air defense missile, and the

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Aegis missile frigate, just to name a few.

The climax of the convention was on Thursday night, when President Bush accepted his party's nomination for the presidency. In his acceptance speech, he outlined some of the successes of his term in office and several of his planned policies for the next four years. Bush made a joke about how he talks, saying that "people sometimes have to correct my English. I knew I had a problem when Arnold

Schwarzenegger started doing it." At the same time, however, Bush told the American people of his plans for the country if he is reelected. Many of his plans were in the economic sector, such as plans to increase home ownership by seven million families in the next ten years. Other plans from President Bush's first term, such as opening private accounts for Social Security and medical liability reform, were mentioned.

Many analysts felt that Bush's speech may have a positive effect for Bush, a view that has been reflected in Gallup polls in Ohio and Missouri, two key battleground states. Both polls show that Bush has a slightly higher lead in both states than before the convention. In Ohio, Bush led Kerry 52% to 44%, with a 4% margin of error, in a poll taken from September 4 to September 7, while the Missouri poll of September 3 to September 6 has Bush with a 55%-41% edge over Kerry, again with a 4% margin of error.

(Poll taken from <http://www.cnn.com/2004/ALPOLITICS/09/08/prez.states.poll/index.html>). However, only time will tell if the gains for Bush are permanent.

Safety at NCSSM: Code Orange

NICK COOK AND JEFF TANG

So how safe is our campus? Nick Cook and Jeff Tang were very interested in finding out. They designed a scheme to test this out. Here were their observations:

To begin with, Nick would walk into a very crowded public area with a laptop (donated by Jingjing Gao). Then he plays a beginner's game of Minesweeper, spending about a minute to two minutes at a particular spot. After walking away, Jeff comes back to the spot, looks around suspiciously, and then takes the laptop, stands still for a while, and then promptly leaves the spot. Then the two of us wait for a while and compare notes.

Day One: Happy Half

So Happy Half is one of the well-attended events here at SM. At ten o'clock, in the midst of the hubbub and socializing, Nick first sits in the gazebo next to the senior bench, staying for a total of one minute. Result: Jeff successfully "steals" the laptop. Before actually arriving at the gazebo, two seniors shout,

"Hey Jeff!" and then Jeff looks at them amusingly and quickly goes to take the laptop. Nevertheless, with all this panache, Jeff escapes unscathed. The second time, Nick goes to sit by the swings while two people are swinging and a group of approximately five individuals are conversing. Three or four of these individuals are facing Nick. After two minutes, Nick leaves, and Jeff sneaks

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to the swings from Hill and successfully "steals" the laptop again. This time, Jeff even manages to make eye contact with some of these people who had stared just minutes before at Nick. The third time, Nick heads to a large group people at the senior bench. He perches on the side of the senior bench underneath somebody's lap and just outside of a circle of fifteen or twenty people, two

of which are RLAs. Nick also tries to log back onto the laptop, but he doesn't know the password, so he just stands there trying to log on, again and again. After two minutes of this suspicious activity while others look along, Nick leaves, and Jeff walks to the senior bench, takes the laptop, waits for a while, makes eye contact with a few people in the group, and then leaves. Once again, Jeff succeeded in stealing the laptop.

One interesting thing to note is that a junior, Toan Tran-Phu, who was wandering about during Happy Half, ran into Nick as he was on his way to another crowded area. Toan remembered Nick as a Mac user and inquired about his acquisition of the Dell laptop. It didn't take many awkward responses on Nick's part before Toan began to suspect him of having stolen it. He was soon imploring Nick to return it and threatening to retrieve an RLA (which was ironic, as two RLAs had already failed to recognize Jeff's "malicious" activities). Toan was the only vigilant student we observed that night.

Day Two: Super Study

On the first day of Super Study, Jeff walks into rooms crowded with juniors and intermingles. Of course, laptops are not permitted, so Jeff pretends to go back to his room to get books. On cue, Nick arrives a minute later and steals the laptop. For the first trial, we go to the Hunt Classroom. The room is filled with people, and they look at Jeff with amusement (he

"You can't count on your fellow classmates as watchdogs."

was a few minutes late to Super Study). Then a girl looks at him and says, "laptops aren't permitted in Super Study." Acting disturbed, Jeff leaves, and a minute later, Nick walks in, promptly steals the laptop, acting very clumsily (he fumbles with the laptop and looks around suspiciously). People stare at him, but nobody murmurs a word. In the second trial, we go to a Hill classroom with no adult super-

visor. Jeff enters the classroom, opens the computer, and pretends that the laptop has lost its battery. After leaving, Nick enters the room. This time, many of the students watch him as he goes to his seat. After sneaking the laptop out of the room and seeing startled eyes, he hears whispers behind him. We decided that this might mean trouble, so we run quickly behind a wall and wait for action. Surprisingly, nobody contacts anybody, and we leave with the laptop once again.

So what is the lesson to be learned? Either, Jeff and Nick should start a professional career in stealing laptops, or the school's security issue is a major concern. Try not to leave your laptop unattended, for you must show common sense and pay attention to your surroundings. While there may not be people at this school steal laptops, if the occasion were to occur (and it did once last year), you can't count on your fellow classmates as watchdogs. Report suspicious behavior to authority, and remember that the Honor Code only works with an alert student populace.