

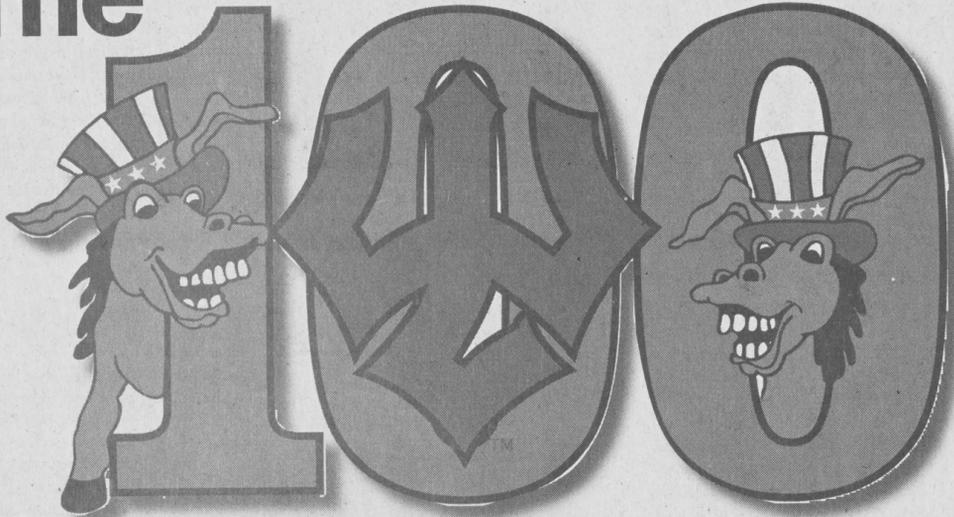
Mock Convention SPECIAL EDITION

WASHINGTON AND LEE UNIVERSITY

THE RING-TUM PHI.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 24, 2008 BY THE STUDENTS AND FOR THE STUDENTS SINCE 1897 VOLUME CXI, NUMBER 11

The



Democratic Mock Convention

After three years of preparation, countless hours of research and untold amounts of booze, it all comes down to this: Barack Obama vs. Hillary Clinton. In a year when students are celebrating the centennial convention, it seems appropriate that the gathering faces its most difficult decision in years. Before the convention gets down to the business of selecting the Democratic nominee, some of the biggest names in Democratic politics will take the stage to stump for their candidates. Va. Gov. Tim Kaine, who speaks first on Friday, was one of Obama's earliest supporters, while Geraldine Ferraro, the first woman to appear on a major party's ticket, is a strong supporter of Clinton. The most exciting part of the convention may come decades later, when Beau Biden, Harold Ford, Jr. or Patrick Rose run for President. That's one of the legacies of the convention's first 100 years: finding rising stars like Bill Clinton or Jimmy Carter and introducing them to America years before anyone else knows who they are. The other legacy is accuracy: W&L students have been right 18 out of 23 times and have only been wrong once since 1948. Will that legacy continue? Clinton or Obama hope it does.

Delegations log long hours behind scenes

State chairs, student leaders sacrifice time to research, fundraise and design

By Allison Chopin
STAFF WRITER

Mounting excitement surrounding the centennial anniversary of the Mock Convention have students anxiously awaiting the myriad events planned for them - the parties, distinguished speakers, parade and final outcome. However, not all have taken time to notice how hard their state delegations have worked in the past months.

Each state delegation has provided numerous opportunities for its members to participate.

The state chairs were selected over a year ago through a rigorous application process. Each chair has to oversee political research, help plan the parade float and get its delegation ready for the con-

vention.

When students joined delegations in September, some chose to take on other leadership positions.

The vice chair serves as an assistant to the other positions, and the treasurer manages finances, such as donations made to the delegation.

Some delegations may have a float chair in charge of supplies, designs and construction of the state's parade float.

Aside from these typical positions, the student who takes the job of research chair must conduct business that is particular to each state.

"The research chair is responsible for making contacts within the state to communicate with about the election and for preparing the various reports required of each

state," said senior Kate Chiasson, the chair for Wisconsin.

Both the research chair and state chair may be responsible for contacting state politicians if necessary.

"The majority of the delegates have been helping with making the float."

KATE CHIASSON,
Wisconsin state chair

"[In Wisconsin] the research chair is the most involved," Chiasson said.

All delegates were asked to be involved in the act of fundraising.

Each member provided the names and addresses of five contacts, such as friends and family, who might be interested in donating to the student's delegation.

The students who do not assume leadership roles can become involved in the areas of T-shirt and float design, among other things.

"Since we don't have a float chair, the majority of delegates have been helping with making the float," said Chiasson.

The time commitment may be small for average Mock Convention participants, but the delegations still require their contribution and commitment.

"Delegates can choose to be as involved or not involved as they wish, but they can expect to go to a meeting or two and help out when it is asked for," Chiasson said.

Inside this edition:



Are you fed up with the crazy political calendar that has lowans caucusing during a blizzard and W&L students freezing to death while they build floats? Or are you a fan of the drawn-out campaign and love the rounds of meetings, rallies and debates? Abel Delgado and Scott Centorino have it out over whether our political system needs to be changed.

OPINIONS / page 4



Couldn't make it to the last 96 years of Mock Convention?

Wondering what happened when Barkley died in 1956 or Bill Clinton spoke in 1988?

Our timeline has all the highlights.

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Schedule

Friday

- 10:00-11:30 a.m. Parade through town
- 1:00 First session begins
- 1:35 Va. Gov. Tim Kaine
- 3:00 Del. Atty. Gen Beau Biden
- 3:20 Former Rep. Geraldine Ferraro
- 4:00 Former Rep. Charlie Wilson

Friday night

- 7:00 p.m. Second session
- 7:20 Former Sen. Max Cleland
- 7:50 Rev. Jesse Jackson
- 8:20 Platform report/debate
- 8:45 Texas Rep. Patrick Rose
- 9:05 Former Sen. Carol Moseley Braun
- 9:35 Richmond Mayor Douglas Wilder

Saturday

- 9:00 a.m. Session begins
- 9:20 U.S. Sen. Jim Webb
- 9:50 DLC Chairman Harold Ford
- 10:20 W.V. Gov. Joe Manchin
- 10:50 Roll call
- Presidential nomination
- Vice Presidential nomination



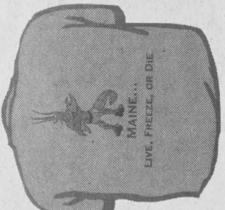
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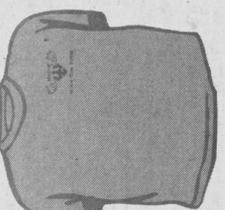
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The lineup

Guests to impart diverse perspectives on election

Joe Manchin Governor of West Virginia



Joe Manchin is the current governor of West Virginia. His impressive political career stemmed from a business-oriented education at West Virginia University and has also included positions in the West Virginia State Senate and the West Virginia State House of Delegates. Elected as governor in 2004, Manchin won both the primary and general election by large margins, and his election marked the first time that two persons of the same political party have followed one another in the gubernatorial office since 1964. Under Manchin's leadership, West Virginia has augmented its economic competition on a national scale. As governor, Manchin has worked to streamline the educational system, provide prescrip-

tion drug assistance to senior citizens and strengthen the support structure for veterans. His dedication to West Virginia, however, extends far beyond his current position. As a crucial member of the state legislature from 1982 to 1996, Manchin helped fix West Virginia's workers' compensation system. He also instituted insurance reforms, established the first comprehensive teacher pay package in more than 15 years, decreased the state's debt, strengthened ethics laws and reduced the food tax. As secretary of state from 2000 to 2004, Manchin pushed the SHARES program, which promoted democracy to all schoolchildren and registered 42,000 high school students to vote. This mobilization caused the 2004 general election to see the highest number of voters since 1972. Manchin's political involvement is also strong on the national level. He currently serves as chairman of the Southern States Energy Board, vice-chair and chair-elect for 2008 of the Democratic Governors Association and chair-elect of the Southern Governor's Association. Outside of the political world, Manchin has served as president of his local Marion County Rescue Squad. He is also an avid pilot, outdoorsman, hunter, fisherman and motorcyclist. He is married to the former Gayle Connelly, with whom he has three children.

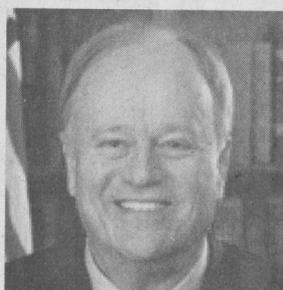
Patrick Rose Texas House of Representatives



Patrick Rose is a Texas Democrat currently serving as the youngest member of the Texas House of Representatives. He represents the Texas counties of Blanco, Hays and Caldwell. At age 28, he is currently in his third-term, chairs the House Committee on Human Services and is also a member of the Higher Education Committee. As Chair of Human Services, Rose is a leader on issues such as increasing the state's oversight of programs at the Health and Human

Services Commission, increasing enrollment in the Children's Health Insurance Program and strengthening reforms of Child Protective Services. During the 80th Legislature, Rose sponsored over 25 bills, passed legislation to promote Texas' manufacturing industry, to assist local economic development corporations and legislation creating the Cancer Prevention and Research Institute of Texas. This research institute will allow voters to approve \$3 billion in bonds to finance cancer research and prevention. Rose believes firmly that elected officials should focus on policy rather than politics. He believes that the issues facing Texas families today, such as out-of-control tax appraisals, high insurance rates, college affordability for middle class families and protecting jobs from outsourcing, need independent leadership. Rose is a graduate of Princeton University, where he earned his B.A., and the University of Texas, where he obtained his law degree. He now practices law with the Ratliff Law Firm in Austin, Texas.

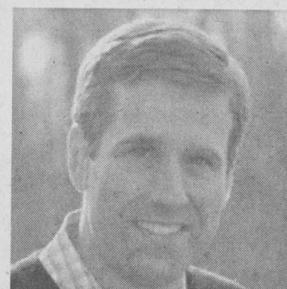
Max Cleland Decorated military veteran



A decorated military veteran who was born in Atlanta, Georgia, Max Cleland served in the U.S. Army during the Vietnam War and rose to the rank of Captain. During his tour

of duty he won the Silver Star and Bronze Star for courageous action in combat. In 1968, Cleland was getting out of a helicopter when he saw a grenade that he thought had fallen off his vest. The grenade exploded as Cleland bent over, severely damaging both legs and one of his arms. During emergency surgery, both legs and his right forearm had to be amputated. After returning home, Cleland served in the Georgia Senate and became a well known advocate for veterans. Jimmy Carter appointed Cleland to be Secretary of Veterans Affairs. Cleland held that post throughout Carter's term. From 1982 until 1996 Cleland served as Secretary of State of Georgia. After long-time Senator Sam Nunn retired in 1996, Cleland ran for the open seat and was elected. He lost his re-election bid in 2002 to Republican Saxby Chambliss.

Beau Biden Attorney General of Delaware



Beau Biden is the son of long-time Delaware senator and recent presidential candidate Joe Biden. The 38-year-old was elected Attorney General

of Delaware in 2006. Before he ran for office, Biden went to the University of Pennsylvania and earned his law degree from Syracuse University. Between 1997 and 2002, he served as a federal prosecutor in the U.S. Attorney's Office in Philadelphia. Biden took his legal expertise abroad in 2001, serving as a legal advisor for the Department of Justice in post-war Kosovo. He worked in the capital, Pristina, to establish a training program for judges and prosecutors in the province. Biden left the Department of Justice in 2002 and entered private practice. Biden is also a member of the Delaware Army National Guard, serving in the Judge Advocate General's (JAG) Corps, the branch of the army that handles legal affairs.

Douglas Wilder First elected black governor of a U.S. state



When L. Douglas Wilder was elected Governor of Virginia in 1989, he became the first black governor of a U.S. state. Prior to becoming governor, Wilder served as lieutenant governor and was also the first black

to serve as a Virginia state senator since Reconstruction. His election as lieutenant governor made him the first black to hold statewide executive office in the South since before 1900. In 2004, Wilder was elected Mayor of Richmond, his hometown. In the first open election for mayor in sixty years (the city council had previously selected the mayor), Wilder received nearly 80 percent of the vote. In September 1991, less than two years after becoming governor, Wilder entered the presidential race. He dropped out of the race four months later. Wilder is a Korean War veteran and was awarded the Bronze Star for heroism in combat. Wilder, who graduated from Virginia Union University and then earned a law degree at Howard University, helped found the law firm Wilder, Gregory and Associates, one of the few minority-owned businesses in Virginia when the firm was started in 1959.

Jim Webb Senator from Virginia



Jim Webb, the freshman senator from Virginia, is the centennial convention's keynote speaker. Webb won a razor-thin victory in 2006, surviving a nasty campaign against Republican incumbent George Allen that saw both sides throw plenty of mud. Webb beat Allen by about 9,000 votes out of the more than two million cast. Webb's victory tilted the Senate into Democratic control. Though he was born in St. Joseph, Missouri, Webb is a descendant of Scots-Irish settlers who moved to the mountains of Southwest Virginia in the 18th century. Webb is

a 1968 graduate of the United States Naval Academy and served with the Marine Corps in Vietnam. He was awarded the Navy Cross, Silver Star, two Bronze Stars and two Purple Hearts. In 1987 he was appointed Secretary of the Navy, becoming the first Naval Academy graduate who served in the military to become Secretary of the Navy. Befitting his role as the man who gave the Democrats their majority, Webb has been given assignments on several prominent committees. He currently serves on the Foreign Relations, Armed Services, Veterans Affairs and Joint Economics Committees. In January 2007, less than three weeks after he was sworn in as a Senator, Webb was tasked with delivering the Democratic response to President George Bush's State of the Union address. Before his Senate career, Webb was a noted author. He has published eight books. Most of them are novels, but the latest book, published in 2004, is a non-fiction account of how people of Scots-Irish ancestry have shaped American history. He also wrote the script and was executive producer for the movie "Rules of Engagement."



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Carol Moseley Braun

Former Illinois Senator



The first and only African-American woman elected to the Senate, former Illinois Senator Carol Moseley Braun is most well known for her candidacy for the Democratic Party nomination in the 2004 presidential election. However, she dropped out of the race days before the Iowa caucus, deciding instead to support Howard Dean. The year she was elected to the

Senate, 1992, was known as the "Year of the Woman."

She gained political experience when serving as a prosecutor in the U.S. Attorney's office in 1973, working in housing, health and environment. She later won the Attorney General's Special Achievement Award.

The year after she left the U.S. Attorney's office, she won a seat in the Illinois House of Representatives, focusing on governmental reform, education and civil rights. She angrily ran for a seat in the Senate when the incumbent voted in 1991 to confirm Clarence Thomas for the Supreme Court. For her first six years in the senate, she was the only African-American. She has spoken out against the death penalty, against removing Saddam Hussein, for abortion rights and gun control and voted for gay marriage recognition.

Recently, Braun was in the public eye again when she resisted a mugger tried to steal her purse. She has also made headlines for her organic food line called Ambassador Organics.

Braun will speak in the convention late Friday night.

Tracking down the speakers

With some difficulty, W&L receives top-notch speakers for this year's Mock Convention.

By Queenie Wong
STAFF WRITER

For the last two years, the Speakers Committee has worked hard to bring prominent political leaders to this weekend's Mock Convention.

With twelve speakers booked, Speakers Chair Logan Gibson said that she's excited about the upcoming event.

"I don't think Mock Convention has ever had such a strong lineup," said Gibson.

This year's speakers include Virginia Governor Timothy M. Kaine, the Rev. Jesse Jackson, former Texas Rep. Charles Wilson, Chairman of the Democratic Leadership Council Harold Ford Jr., as well as other speakers the committee believes will become more politically influential in the future.

Although students were hoping that one of the three main contenders for the democratic nomination would make an appearance at the event, the South Carolina primary this Saturday made it unlikely that Hilary Clinton, Barack Obama or John Edwards would come.

"The front-loaded primary season made it difficult for us to get top notch speakers, because so many speakers are stumping for the candidates," said Advisory Board Liaison Bill Larson.

Gibson also pointed out that the Virginia primary isn't until Feb. 12. The candidates don't have much of an incentive to come down to the university, she said. Timing was probably the most difficult obstacle the committee faced.

The Speakers Committee includes nine other students—Natalie Murphy, Richard Cleary, Taylor Lawch, Hunter Branstetter, Laura Secrest, Dylan Merrill, Chris Martin, Alex Utsey and Weston Jones. Gibson assigned each member about five speakers to research and the committee reported back on their progress weekly. Each member contributed about four to five hours per week, cultivating contacts and trying to book speakers for the event.

Gibson said the committee used about two-thirds of its budget, but would not specify the budget amount.

In 2004, the Mock Convention raised over \$450,000. General Chairman Richard Friedman said that this year's budget exceeded the amount of the last event. He, too, would not release any exact figures.

In previous Mock Conventions, the Speakers Committee had a knack for choosing speakers, who had promising futures in politics—Jimmy Carter in 1972 and Bill Clinton in 1988, just to name a few.

Gibson said that selecting speakers did involve a lot of insight into the speakers' futures, but that the committee also wanted to target Virginian leaders.

Gibson praised the committee's selection of U.S. Sen. Jim Webb as the keynote speaker.

"He's a very pivotal figure on the national scene right now and having him come to Lexington for this event is huge," she said.

Harold Ford Jr.

Former Tennessee U.S. Rep

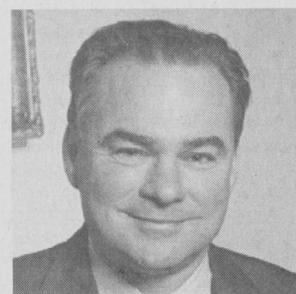


Former Tennessee U.S. Rep. Harold Ford Jr. was born in Memphis, TN and earned a degree in American

History from the University of Pennsylvania in 1992. That same year, he worked for the Senate Budget Committee and later became a staff assistant to the United States Department of Commerce. In 1996, he graduated from law school at the University of Michigan but failed the Tennessee bar exam. Ford was elected into the House of Representatives in 2002. In 2005, he ran for Senate but was defeated by Bob Coker by a slim margin. In 2007, he was elected as chairman of the Democratic Leadership Council. He is currently a visiting professor at Vanderbilt University, teaching public policy classes. He serves on the Pentagon's Transformation Advisory Group and as Vice Chairman of Merrill Lynch.

Tim Kaine

Virginia Governor



Virginia Gov. Tim Kaine, a native of St. Paul, Minnesota, grew up in Kansas and attended college at the Univer-

sity of Missouri at Columbia where he majored in economics. After college, he went to law school at Harvard. He graduated in 1983 and went on to practice law for 17 years in Richmond. He specialized in representing victims of housing discrimination. He taught legal ethics at University of Richmond Law School and was appointed to the city council in 1994. Later, he was elected mayor of Richmond by the city council. During his stint on city council, Kaine introduced a gun law that is credited with decreased the high murder rate in the city. Kaine was elected Lieutenant Governor of Virginia under Governor Mark Warner and served as President of Virginia's Senate. In 2005, Kaine defeated former Attorney General Jerry W. Kilgore and became Virginia's 70th governor.

Geraldine Ferraro

Texas House of Representatives



Former New York U.S. Rep. Geraldine Ferraro was born in Newburgh, NY and attended

Marymount Manhattan College. After graduation, she earned a law degree from Fordham University in 1960. She served as a teacher, a lawyer and a member of the Queens County District Attorney's Office. In 1978, she was elected into the United States Congress. In 1984, she became the first female to be a vice-presidential candidate on a national party ticket when Presidential candidate Walter Mondale chose her as his running mate. The pair was defeated by Ronald Reagan and George H.W. Bush. She now plays an active role in the campaign of Hilary Clinton.

Charles Wilson

Former Texas U.S. Rep



Former Texas U.S. Rep. Charles Wilson (yes, the same Charlie Wilson as the movie) has had an undeniable impact on international politics. If you've seen the movie, then you know he helped to win support for Afghanistan to fight the Soviet Union in the Cold War, which has been called the largest ever CIA covert operation. However, some have said this very action helped to arm al-Qaeda.

Also known as Good Time Charlie, he served Texas as a representative for more than 20 years, from 1973 to 1997, while employing only beautiful women called Charlie's Angels.

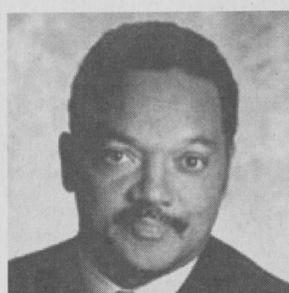
As a teenager first got into politics when, after his dog got into his neighbor's yard, his neighbor (who held office) put crushed glass in the dog's food, killing the dog. He personally drove people to the polls, telling each person when they left the car about the incident. His neighbor lost the election.

While still in the Navy, Wilson submitted his name for Texas state representative. After winning, he was recognized as a liberal, fighting for Medicaid, against the utilities, tax exemptions for the elderly, for abortion, minimum wage, and equal rights. Once he left Congress, Wilson worked as a lobbyist for Pakistan.

Never one to let life pass him by, he married a former ballerina in 1999. Now 74, Wilson received a heart transplant in September.

Rev. Jesse Jackson

Texas House of Representatives



Rev. Jesse Jackson, the outspoken activist of social justice, political activism, and civil rights, will speak Friday night for Mock Con. Jackson participated in the famous Selma to Montgomery marches in 1965 that were organized by Martin Luther King, Jr. Two decades later, Jackson tried to become the first

black president in 1984 and again in 1988 and is returning to one of the six states in which he won the Democratic primary.

He has travelled the world and met with American adversaries Hugo Chavez, Syrian President Bashar Assad, Fidel Castro and former Yugoslavian President Slobodan Milosevic. He's argued for the release of American prisoners abroad, peace in the Middle East, the end of apartheid and against the war in Iraq. He also served as U.S. special envoy to Kenya in 1997. In 2000 Bill Clinton gave Jackson the highest award possible for a civilian, the Presidential Medal of Freedom, for his political activism.

Jackson has thrown himself into numerous recent issues, including Terri Shiavo (the Florida woman with brain damage), the Duke lacrosse scandal and Michael Richard's (Kramer from Seinfeld) racist outburst.

Jackson has already publicly announced his support of Barack Obama, who has spoken on Jackson's radio show.

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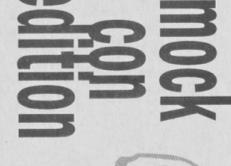
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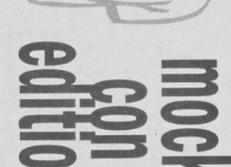
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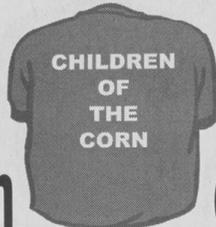
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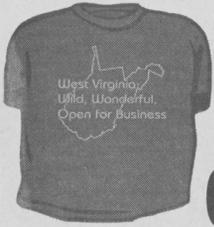


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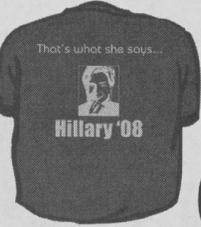


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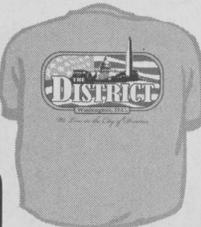




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CON Primary overhaul

Presidential candidates we can live with? Someday

By Abel Delgado
STAFF WRITER

Only in America does the toughest job have the most absurd hiring process.

The primary and caucus system used by political parties to pick their presidential candidates is outdated, unfair and utterly ridiculous. Americans are beginning to notice that in order to avoid another painfully early and dragged-out campaign season in four years, the rules of the game need to be re-written.

A start would be to turn the caucuses into actual primaries. To those of us who do not live in one of the 17 states that holds a caucus, voting in private seems like a natural right. Not so in the caucus system where you have to publicly state your preference and make an argument for your candidate to convince others. Nor do you have all day to vote like you do with regular primaries. Instead you have a set meeting time and place, and if you cannot be there then you obviously don't matter enough to have a say.

That means soldiers, on-duty police officers and firemen, the ill and anyone unfortunate enough not to be able to control their work schedule don't get a vote. Do these people not deserve the right to vote?

Then, debunk the myth that small states have a divine right to vote first and essentially decide each party's candidate. Regardless of how different they are from each other, Iowa and New Hampshire are not representative of the nation as a whole.

According to the Census Bureau, they contain less than 2 percent of the total U.S.

population. While the nation's population is over a quarter minority, minorities comprise less than 10 percent of Iowa and less than 5 percent of New Hampshire.

The number of voters in Iowa is so small that, by the end of caucus night, more Republicans voted via absentee ballot in Florida than took part in the caucuses in Iowa. Yet, if one candidate wins both states, he or she is essentially crowned the nominee. You can certainly lose the nomination if you lose in the first two states - just ask John Edwards and Rudy Giuliani in a couple of months.

The solution is to hold every primary on the same day, a "Super-Duper" Tuesday of sorts. If we hold our general election on the same date throughout the country, why not the primaries?

The last step to fixing the primary system would ensure that radical candidates on both sides do not have an unfair advantage. By appealing to party bases, those considered very liberal or very conservative usually have the advantage in primaries.

In many states you are only allowed to vote if

you are registered with a party. This could lead to someone without general support gaining a party nomination. Other states, though, allow independents to vote in one of the two party primaries. This ensures centrists a fair shot and helps the parties by giving them a more electable candidate in the election.

Registering with a party should be a sign of support, not the only way one gets to vote. Thus, every state should allow independents to vote in primaries.

While there has been massive talk about changing the primary system, the probability of change is very slim. The changes would have to be made on a

state-by-state basis. If a revision does take place, we might end up one day with two candidates for president the nation could live with.

Our mother ducks: Iowa and New Hampshire. When a group of ducklings crosses the street, a mother duck leads it to safety. We know that without that mother duck, all the ducklings would confusingly scatter in different directions with no guidance, no sense of judgment and no experience of safe-crossing. The same is true of our presidential primary system, specifically of the early, small states such as Iowa and New Hampshire.

While neither Iowa nor New Hampshire have the population or power to normally be considered mother ducks in politics, both states have a fine record and experience in showing other duckling states the right way to cross.

First off, let's dispel the theory that these two states have all the power. They do not. It is South Carolina, not Iowa or New Hampshire, that can say its Republican winner has gone on to win the GOP nomination every election since 1980. Bill Clinton didn't win in Iowa or New Hampshire but found his way to the White House.

Both Iowa and New Hampshire have a long and storied tradition of independent, responsible citizenship above any influence of national media or outside influence.

Almost every Democrat and most Republicans would agree that, in hindsight, John McCain probably would have been the better Republican nominee in 2000. New Hampshire thought so, too. Despite superior organization and name recognition, two features that would dominate a national primary, New Hampshire's brand of door-to-door, retail politics allowed its voters to make a more informed decision.

As someone who has seen presidential candidates during this election in both Iowa and New Hampshire, I can say with certainty how superior voters' decision-making is given the chance to personally host a candidate in your home and have a chat.

That is what politics truly is. That is true democracy. It's up-close. It's real. Voters don't form opinions based on television commercials. That would simply empower those with money and leave lifeless those without the necessary funds to voice their message, antithetical to democratic principles.

The ultimate test of a candidate should not be how effectively he can saturate media markets with sappy images of himself. The true testament to a statesman is his ability to get out there, meet people, connect with regular Americans, make a direct impact on voter beliefs and step outside plush D.C. offices.

I want my leader to know me, to know my family, to be able say he's met me. In that spirit, this nation has gained its strength. I want to know that he's been to my town and seen the local problems.

The counterargument to this, of course, is that the candidate won't have time to meet every voter in the nation. So, in order to be fair, we should make it a national primary. That is simply selfish, irresponsible, and ignorant of history. It is the equivalent of a 4-year-old saying of a classmate, "Timmy has a toy car and I don't," and then yelling at the teacher about Timmy's toy car until the teacher takes it away.

This alternative is a Stalinist nightmare where you only elect people from a distance. No system will achieve perfection, and I am not claiming our current system has. Iowa and New Hampshire do not represent America as a whole, but only in that they think independently, unlike states which have no tradition of doing so.

How much does a New Hampshire voter have in common with a New Mexico voter? Probably not a great deal. But that New Mexico voter can still trust New Hampshire voters to make the right choice because of proximity to the candidates and unique perspective and ability to make judgment.

Candidates have been effectively judged by Iowans and New Hampshireers in the past because both groups understand the importance of their decision and take it seriously. Perhaps considering their shining track records, we should put more emphasis on the two states.

So, I salute you Iowa and New Hampshire. I recognize the work you've done for yourselves and for this nation. I wish you the best in thwarting threats from childish states jealous of your position. And, I hope that for many years to come, presidential candidates will still have to speak on the farms and in the Veterans of Foreign Wars halls all across your two states.

Your mother duck wisdom has yet to fail us.

PRO

Following the leaders of the nation

New Hampshire and Iowa have yet to lead us wrong

By Scott Centorino
STAFF WRITER

Our mother ducks: Iowa and New Hampshire.

When a group of ducklings crosses the street, a mother duck leads it to safety. We know that without that mother duck, all the ducklings would confusingly scatter in different directions with no guidance, no sense of judgment and no experience of safe-crossing. The same is true of our presidential primary system, specifically of the early, small states such as Iowa and New Hampshire.

While neither Iowa nor New Hampshire have the population or power to normally be considered mother ducks in politics, both states have a fine record and experience in showing other duckling states the right way to cross.

First off, let's dispel the theory that these two states have all the power. They do not. It is South Carolina, not Iowa or New Hampshire, that can say its Republican winner has gone on to win the GOP nomination every election since 1980. Bill Clinton didn't win in Iowa or New Hampshire but found his way to the White House.

Both Iowa and New Hampshire have a long and storied tradition of independent, responsible citizenship above any influence of national media or outside influence.

Almost every Democrat and most Republicans would agree that, in hindsight, John McCain probably would have been the better Republican nominee in 2000. New Hampshire thought so, too. Despite superior organization and name recognition, two features that would dominate a national primary, New Hampshire's brand of door-to-door, retail politics allowed its voters to make a more informed decision.

As someone who has seen presidential candidates during this election in both Iowa and New Hampshire, I can say with certainty how superior voters' decision-making is given the chance to personally host a candidate in your home and have a chat.

That is what politics truly is. That is true democracy. It's up-close. It's real. Voters don't form opinions based on television commercials. That would simply empower those with money and leave lifeless those without the necessary funds to voice their message, antithetical to democratic principles.

The ultimate test of a candidate should not be how effectively he can saturate media markets with sappy images of himself. The true testament to a statesman is his ability to get out there, meet people, connect with regular Americans, make a direct impact on voter beliefs and step outside plush D.C. offices.

I want my leader to know me, to know my family, to be able say he's met me. In that spirit, this nation has gained its strength. I want to know that he's been to my town and seen the local problems.

The counterargument to this, of course, is that the candidate won't have time to meet every voter in the nation. So, in order to be fair, we should make it a national primary. That is simply selfish, irresponsible, and ignorant of history. It is the equivalent of a 4-year-old saying of a classmate, "Timmy has a toy car and I don't," and then yelling at the teacher about Timmy's toy car until the teacher takes it away.

This alternative is a Stalinist nightmare where you only elect people from a distance. No system will achieve perfection, and I am not claiming our current system has. Iowa and New Hampshire do not represent America as a whole, but only in that they think independently, unlike states which have no tradition of doing so.

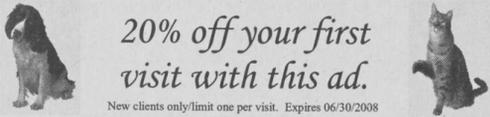
How much does a New Hampshire voter have in common with a New Mexico voter? Probably not a great deal. But that New Mexico voter can still trust New Hampshire voters to make the right choice because of proximity to the candidates and unique perspective and ability to make judgment.

Candidates have been effectively judged by Iowans and New Hampshireers in the past because both groups understand the importance of their decision and take it seriously. Perhaps considering their shining track records, we should put more emphasis on the two states.

So, I salute you Iowa and New Hampshire. I recognize the work you've done for yourselves and for this nation. I wish you the best in thwarting threats from childish states jealous of your position. And, I hope that for many years to come, presidential candidates will still have to speak on the farms and in the Veterans of Foreign Wars halls all across your two states.

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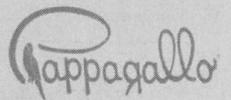
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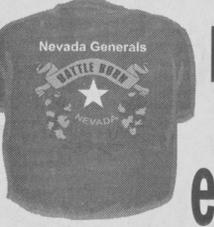
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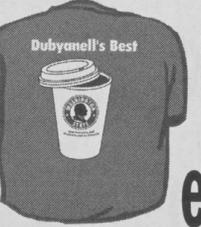
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Washington & Lee University
Mock Convention 2008

Special Edition

Enthusiastic state chairs speak up

West Virginia, Michigan, Alaska and Hawaii chairs share their excitement and nerves

By Andrew Connelly and Brett Holton
STAFF WRITERS

Students across campus have been bombarded with the news surrounding Mock Convention, but how many are familiar with the delegations? We sat down with several State Chairs to explore the personal side of Mock Convention.

Wesley O'Dell, the State Chair of West Virginia, is making sure that his delegation performs to its fullest capabilities.

"West Virginia is very serious about its research and prediction," said O'Dell. "Mock Con. is such an important facet of W&L life -- we definitely want to do what we can to continue its tradition of excellence."

But for O'Dell, the parties are just as important.

"The social events surrounding Mock Con are an integral part of the experience," he said. "We

already had a great Gala last fall and we look forward to enjoying the various delegation parties this week—particularly an event we and a few other small states have combined to host."

Neil Sheaffer is the State Chair of Michigan, a state that

"It's disappointing to be sure, but there's nothing we can do about it," he said. "[Our] delegation is all about finding ways to enjoy the convention, like by building a fun float, even though we will have no say in who the nominee will be."

the state's auto industry and the farmers who produce corn for ethanol.

Especially interesting is the approach taken by the smaller delegations representing America's more remote and often overlooked areas. For Robert Wilson, the Alaska State Chair, the reality of having few genuine Alaskans at W & L has a price.

"No one in our delegation is actually from Alaska, so we've all had to do some basic research on the political climate there. Only three [out of fifteen] of us have even been there."

Compounding this is the lack of interest shown in Alaska by the mainstream media.

"Research has been tough, as there have been no official polls taken in Alaska to gauge the status of the Democratic race."

This problem has also been noted by the Hawaii State Chair Grace Andrews.

"There is no polling data and a lot of major candidates don't care. This makes our decision a hard one. Local newspapers are often the only source of data and they are potentially biased."

This has been a hindrance, but hasn't stopped Andrews and her delegation from delving deeply into Hawaii's unique local political scene. Close contacts with local political participants like Michael McCartney, the Democratic Party Leader in the state, and Richard Boreka, a leading Hawaiian columnist, have helped Andrews and her team stay on top of their research. The unique nature of Hawaiian politics also helps to keep things interesting.

"Hawaii has an fascinating political environment, that doesn't follow many of the patterns in the rest of the US. There are lots of independents and the partisan atmosphere common

elsewhere is lacking somewhat."

As an example, she offers up the candidacy of Dennis Kucinich for the 2004 Democratic presidential nomination. Ignored by the media and not even on the ballot in many states he managed to come second behind John Kerry in Hawaii's primary with 31 percent of the votes.

As with the Alaska, the Hawaii delegation has few native members (one out of the twenty seven was born there and moved away at any early age), but Andrews maintains that the character of the islands is strong enough to bring the group together.

"We are an eclectic group, like the islands themselves. We all come from different backgrounds, geographically, socially and academically. We were brought together by Hawaii's exhilarating and mysterious nature."

Chiefs of Mock Con share their thoughts

State Chairs discuss some of the trials and tribulations of heading delegations

By Celeste Cruz-Carandang
STAFF WRITER

In all honesty, I am truly not stressed about Mock Convention. However, you must consider the fact that I am a freshman delegate. The extent of my participation in this inimitable event has been the purchase of a t-shirt and maybe contributing a few dollars for a commemorative shot glass. Despite my eleventh hour efforts, I do realize that copious amounts of work have gone into preparation for this week and weekend. The state chairs of mock convention have voluntarily conceded to assume a large part of the responsibility for the success of this affair.

Unbeknownst to many, the role of a state chair began last year. Since last winter term, Washington and Lee's student leaders have been applying for positions, mailing in their resumes and going through an interview process. Fortunately for those interested, the university's small community facilitated po-

sitions for all those who were interested. "Mock convention is great because it allows everyone to contribute their own special talents," said West Virginia State Chair Wes O'Dell. "The politics people, social people, press people and so many more can be a part of the making of history." Interestingly enough, all of these men and women consented to this procedure without a full understanding of what each step would entail. "To me, the interview was hilarious, because I go in and there's a line of people," recalls Puerto Rico State Chair Aisha Davis. "We're all thinking that we have no idea what's going on right now."

Jordan Wilson's experience was a little different. As the only freshman state chair, the ambitious student stands out. "Over the summer, I sent out emails to the directors of Mock Con. to see if I could help out...I found out that the position in Guam was open and my name got recommended and I got interviewed for it...I think that I'm living proof that if you're interested in some-

thing here, you can find some outlet for it."

The state chairs are responsible for managing their delegation. They are the lucky few who have the privilege of sending out the mass emails about meetings, t-shirts and float construction. According to Arizona State Chair Justin McKeen, "Most importantly, a state chair is in charge of directing delegates under his state and coming up with, hopefully, a correct prediction for how his state is going to vote." The delegations are responsible for determining their position by extrapolating from the research done by both the state chair and his or her research chair. "The biggest and most important one [responsibility]," in the opinion of Maine State Chair James Dick, "is researching: state polls, newspapers, blogs, talking to people within that state in order to understand what the people in that state are looking for."

However, a project this large entails complicated planning and logistics on the part of its leaders. Every state had its own share of

problems. "My delegation was pretty small, about sixteen people. So anytime that I needed something done, I needed everyone to be there. As opposed to larger delegations like Texas and Virginia, who can send out a mass email and get twenty volunteers," said Tennessee State

Chair, Rebecca LeMoine. Besides size, distance continually thwarted research and communication. "I had to send out emails that would cross the international dateline," remembers Jordan Wilson. While Jordan had to overcome international barriers, Aisha Davis had to triumph over the language barrier. "Even though I chose Puerto Rico, I

don't speak Spanish. So when I was on the phone I'd always be looking for someone who spoke English," Davis said. However, a lack of information was another obstacle that the state chairs had to battle. "[The] most particular obstacle," for James Dick, "is that Maine is not considered by

lobster costume for one of my fraternity brothers to wear on the Mock Convention float. I don't know what I'm going to do when Mock Con. is over."

Davis recalls the two hour long t-shirt planning meeting and a certain gift comes to McKeen's mind.

"One of my contacts in Tucson was a W&L alum. When he heard that I was a state chair for Mock Convention, he gave me a bottle of Jim Bean that was especially made for W&L's Mock Con. when he was a student." The state chairs are looking forward to rest, relaxation and the enjoying the events planned for the convention itself. Notable speakers, such as Jesse Jackson and Tim Kaine, will be contributing words to the ceremony. Still, others are ready to bask in the pleasure of smaller gifts. "I'm just happy that I won't have to send out mass emails anymore," admits LeMoine.

"A state chair is in charge of directing delegates under his state and coming up with, hopefully, a correct prediction for how his state is going to vote."

Justin McKeen, Arizona state chair

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the national media to be an important part of the nomination process, so there was a dearth of polls."

Despite all the difficulties, the state chairs still have interesting moments and a myriad of events to enjoy this weekend. When asked what his most unique experience was, James Dick immediately answered, "Buying a



1908

After a visit by populist William Jennings Bryan, students get together and hold a replica of the real Democratic Convention. The event gets off to an excellent start, but the debate over whether to nominate Bryan or Minnesota Gov. John A. Johnson soon turns ugly, as fights break out in the Kansas delegation and several other spots on the Convention floor. The 2008 convention, like the 1908 convention, will be held in Denver. At the 1908 affair, Bryan's victory gave W&L its first correct prediction.



1924

After a record-setting number of ballots, W&L students select John W. Davis, an undergraduate and law alumnus, who served as a Congressman from West Virginia, Solicitor General and Ambassador to Great Britain. At that summer's convention, Davis, who received only three percent of the delegates on the first ballot, was finally elected after 103 ballots, a record that will likely never be broken. Unfortunately, Davis gets massacred in the election by Republican Calvin Coolidge, who wins 54 percent of the vote while Davis earns less than 29 percent.



1956

Former Vice President Alben Barkley, who returned to the Senate after his term as Vice President ended, gives the keynote speech. In front of a cheering crowd, he declares, "For I would rather be a servant in the house of the Lord than to sit in the seats of the mighty." As the crowd cheers, Barkley collapses and dies almost instantly. At the urging of Barkley's widow, the convention eventually resumes and picks Adlai Stevenson.

1960

Former President Harry Truman helps dedicate a memorial to Barkley and then delivers the key-

Through the years

After 100 years, convention has seen its share of highs and lows

note address. Early voting puts Stevenson on top again, but the staff doesn't have enough adding machines to calculate the votes. While the convention waits, several delegations switch their votes to John F. Kennedy, sending him on his way to the White House.

1972

A fierce debate breaks out between supporters of George McGovern and Ted Kennedy. Kennedy wins the W&L nod, but McGovern gets the win at the real convention. After McGovern gets hammered by Nixon, some students wonder if the convention had a better feel for the national political climate than the Democratic Party did.

Jimmy Carter, then the obscure governor of Georgia, addresses the convention.

1988

Arkansas Gov. Bill Clinton, already a rising star in the Democratic Party, speaks at Mock Convention. But the real excitement comes that night at Zollman's Pavilion, when Clinton hops up on stage to jam out on a saxophone.

2004

Despite the noisy protests of a few Deaniacs, John Kerry cruises to victory. Democratic strategist James Carville, sometimes known as the Rajun Cajun, bashes the GOP in his keynote address.