In Colonial Williamsburg, “TODAY” stirs excitement

With the election nearing, NBC’s "TODAY Show" highlighted Williamsburg as part of "TODAY Takes on the Battleground States" series. Over a four day period, the morning news program visited several swing states of the 2008 presidential election. In addition to delivering information about Virginia’s role in the election, the "TODAY Show" hosts Al Roker and Matt Lauer also interviewed crowd members, watched performances, and cited historical facts about Colonial Williamsburg to its viewers.

William and Mary students and Williamsburg residents lined Duke of Gloucester Street to show support for his or her candidate. Participants woke in the early morning to snag a prime location for spotting Al Roker and Matt Lauer. “I thought I was getting up really early, but by the time I got there I could barely see the cameras,” freshman Caroline Wood said. She, among others, had woken as early as 4:00 A.M to secure a position in the crowd. “Everyone was pushing and shoving to get to the front.”

The packed crowds did not scare many anxious "TODAY Show" fans away, however. Many strove to promote a certain candidate or political message. Signs such as “Kids for McCain” and “Moms for Obama” waved in front of the cameras. One giant banner nearing almost 12 feet long promoted Barack Obama. It took a lot of careful maneuvering to hold up.

Several disputes arose because of these signs, one which shocked freshman Kitty Dulin. One Williamsburg resident almost hit a William and Mary student in the face with his sign, which upset those around him. “It was totally crazy to see how everyone reacted. One older woman started loudly yelling at him,” Dulin said.

Despite this incident, most agreed the experience was enjoyable and unique. Whenever Matt Lauer or Al Roker appeared, the audience cheered. Students and residents alike chatted that they had grown up watching these "TODAY Show" hosts talking to the crowds of New York City, and having them so close to home was something never to be forgotten.

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