

# 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."

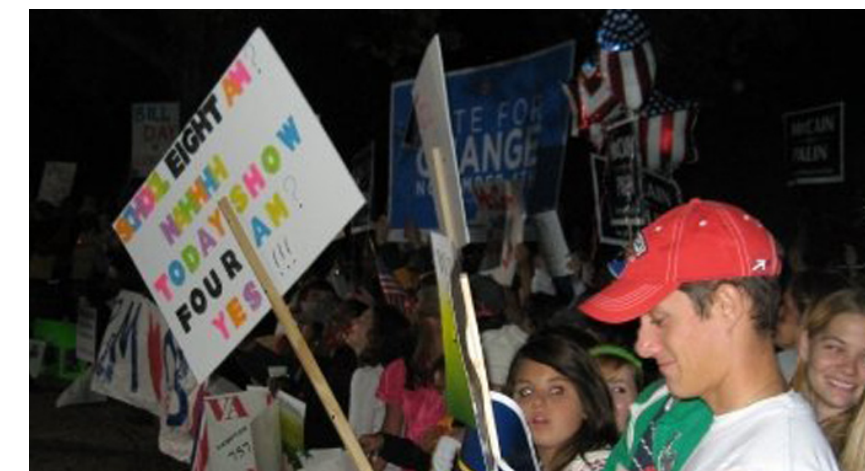
The packed crowds did not scare many anxious "TODAY Show" fans away, however.

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.

>Gianna Darbin



Despite the college students' propensity for sleeping in, a crowd forms in front of the Capitol Building in Colonial Williamsburg in the early morning hours. Some political groups on campus, such as the Young Democrats and College Republicans, arrived as early as 4:00 A.M. after a coffee stop at Wawa to secure a spot for the "TODAY Show."

Al Roker smiles at the crowds on Duke of Gloucester Street while donning the appropriate colonial apparel. "TODAY Show" host Matt Lauer also made an appearance after touring the historic village of Colonial Williamsburg and seeing sights such as the Governor's Palace.



Creative McCain/Palin and Obama signs pop out from the front lines of the audience. Many crowd members showed support for their candidate with colorful signs bearing candidates' names or election catchphrases and by singing chants while the cameras rolled.