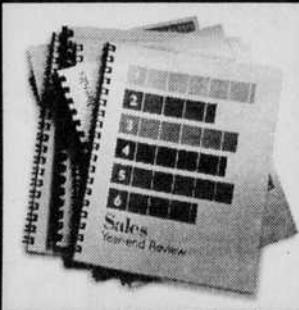


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MATHEW STIFFLER/Emerald

Vice-President Al Gore shakes hands with admirers after his speech at Mac Court on Tuesday.

Gore: VP's speech aimed at students

Continued from Page 1

a community college. This would effectively make those two years free, he said.

The second option is a \$10,000 tax exemption per student. Under this plan, people would not have to pay any taxes on higher education, Gore said.

Gore was also in Eugene to rally for other Democratic candidates in Oregon. Governor John Kitzhaber, U.S. Senate candidate Tom Bruggere, U.S. House candidate Darlene Hooley and U.S. Rep. Peter DeFazio joined Gore on stage.

"Oregon has a chance to help our nation make the right choice," Gore said. "It depends on electing Democrats."

Oregon's ideas and innovations in politics have inspired national politics, Gore said. Bruggere's business, Mentor Graphics, has been singled out as one of the most

family-friendly companies in America, he said.

But if Gore's messages were political, the atmosphere was all MTV. A secret service agent danced to "Whoop, There It Is." Rubberneck, an alternative rock band, warmed up the audience before the candidates took the stage.

And Gore, often considered a "stiff," was animated and joking.

"Your enthusiasm really means one of two things," he told the crowd. "Either you're skipping class, or you know of my reputation as a dancer."

Gore then repeated his performance of the Macarena: standing stiffly with his hands at his sides for a few seconds.

But Gore became serious, stressing that the Nov. 5 election was critical and student votes would be important.

"The great state of Oregon will

put the Democrats over the top," he said. "This great university is going to lead the way."

Gore ended his speech by describing two different scenarios: What would happen the morning after a Republican presidential victory, and what would happen after a Democratic victory.

"You could wake up on the morning of Nov. 6 and have a terrible headache," he said. "You look out the window and see dark, stormy skies. ... You peel back the front page and it says, 'Dole wins.'"

"[Or] you could wake up just feeling great ... fresh-cut flowers on the table by your bed, their pleasant aroma mingling with the scent of fresh-brewed coffee ... your favorite tune on the radio — The Macarena."

"You pick up that paper and it says, 'Clinton/Gore wins!'"

Theft: Democrats claim no responsibility

Continued from Page 1

court. Volunteers said some people had probably taken the wrong backpacks by accident. They said they will advertise the lost backpacks sometime in the near future, but could not be reached for further comment.

The confusion first began when students began entering Mac Court about 8:30 a.m. and were told to check their backpacks before entering the arena. Volunteers handed out numbers to students and put matching numbers in or on their backpacks. The students were told their belongings would be watched during Gore's speech.

As Mac Court continued to fill up, the checking became more erratic and at times stopped completely, said people who came 20 minutes or more later. After Gore spoke, students said they went to retrieve their backpacks and found them strewn haphazardly around the halls with no supervision.

Karen Patterson, a psychology, Spanish and general science major, was among the students unable to find her backpack, wallet, keys or calculator after the speech. She said she would file a theft report with the Eugene police department.

"I can't believe they have everything so well organized except when it comes to students," she said. "Al Gore went so smoothly, he had breakfast, he got

here and everything was great, and then we come here and our bags are just thrown on the floor like we don't matter."

She was referred to Andrew Rivera, a member of the advance staff of the Gore campaign, who reportedly responded, "I'm not taking responsibility." He told her nothing could be done except to file a police report.

"We had nothing to do with it," said police Sgt. David Poppe. The Office of Public Safety tried to discourage the idea of checking bags to anyone who would listen, he said.

Star Halmberg, a University employee, said she heard fire department officials were previously concerned about backpacks being stored in the hallways. During the event, people were seen going through the bags, she said.

By mid-afternoon on Tuesday, police had received six reports of theft. This number could increase if people discover missing items from their backpacks.

The only other security concern at the speech was a conversation between Rivera and two environmental activists who held up a sign in the middle of the speech, blocking others' view. No enforcement action was taken for either incident, Poppe said.