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CONA PRESIDING OFFICERS SET TONE FOR CONFERENCE

STAFF REPORT

At the Conference on National Affairs, presiding officers primarily guide the conference and preside over debate, but they have two major opportunities to inspire delegates with speeches. Opening ceremony Sunday provides the first of those opportunities. The POs set the tone of the whole conference and gave some specific directives about conference procedures.

Daniel Hayworth, Texas, encouraged us to overcome and conquer. "There are undoubtedly times when each of us has a burning desire to bow our heads and give into our weariness; we want to give into our fears. My challenge to you is to rise anyway," he said. Hayworth related the story of Jake Alex, a corporal in the U.S army in 1918 faced with the choice to wait for someone else to rescue his platoon while under heavy enemy fire, or save them himself. Alex charged 30 yards with only a bayonet. The story of Alex inspired delegates to make bold choices.

As Missourian Kate Hannick took the podium, she described CONA as "one-of-a-kind experience." She stressed the power of the Blue Ridge Spirit, calling it "an attitude and atmosphere that only you, the delegates, can create by being vulnerable, by being caring, genuine and respectful, by lifting up others in a world that too often tears down." She urged us to use the Blue Ridge Spirit to touch the lives of the 80,000 we each encounter in our life.

Harrison Satcher of Florida talked about the importance of investing time in the people one meets. Although the present focus for many delegates is delivering a proposal, Satcher reminded everyone that "years from now ... you'll be thinking about the friends you made." Next, he respectfully acknowledged the media staff, the Conference Life



PARADING PLACARDS ★ DELEGATES SHOW STATE PRIDE DURING THE OPENING CEREMONY ROLL CALL.

PHOTO BY MICHELLE CHUNG, MA



OFFICIAL WELCOME ★ MORE THAN 600 DELEGATES COME TOGETHER TO KICK START THE CONFERENCE.

PHOTO BY JACK DENSMORE, TX

Committee, the resource room staff and the adult advisors before acknowledging all the delegates this year at the conference.

Gabrielle Donohoe of Massachusetts focused on how to react to people who you initially are unable to see eye to eye. Telling the crowd to appreciate the differences among us all, Donohoe explained that CONA allows delegates to understand that conflict is not inherently negative. "Your interactions with others would be incredibly dull if we all drew from the same experiences, ideals and beliefs," she said..

In order to achieve an environment where everyone can respect each other's differences, Donohoe expressed the importance of following The Mountain Manual. The manual holds answers to any questions delegates may have regarding the conference as a whole. Reviewing the manual and following the rules and procedures provided in it will allow for a successful week, despite the differences we all possess.

Ankita Satpathy of New Jersey reminded delegates of the importance proper decorum, professional behavior and organized debate holds especially during committee. All schedules and proposals are in the binder, and delegates should evaluate proposals on the basis of national/international importance, evidence of author research, feasibility, preparation and presentation, and originality. CONA is an opportunity to learn, and delegates should seize their unique chance to grow as people and debaters.

The culminating speaker, Oklahoma's Luke Davis offered the advice his advisor once gave him: "Plan your work, and work your plan." Hopefully, this advice will allow us to persevere through the struggles we face during this conference. Even after we leave the mountain, we can follow this motto and work our plan of being the leaders of our world.

Michelle Chung, Aijah Isaacs, Saskia Ghosh, Annie Booz, Peter Brothers, Colbie Symone and Leah O'Neill contributed to this story.

BUY OUR BRAND: SWAG STORE SELLS CONA GOODS & VINTAGE

MOLLY BRENNAN, WI ★ STAFF WRITER

Located in the Eureka Hall Lobby, the Swag Shop specializes in CONA merchandise. This year, the shop's CEO Mary Cate O'Brien joked that they "spared no expense," stocking Comfort Color T-shirts and Camelback water bottles with CONA logos. The \$15 T-shirts come in purple, red, green, mustard and granite. The red and granite shirts also come in an \$18 long-sleeved variety, and all shirts come in sizes from small to 2XL, while supplies last. Additionally, the Swag Shop is carrying TBT or "vintage" CONA shirts from previous conferences.

The shop carries three types of water bottles, two of which are Camelback and come in blue and gray (\$22), and a red water bottle with a screw-on cap (\$8). Stickers featuring the red, white, and blue CONA logo are \$3 each. The shop is currently running a promotion; any purchase of both a T-shirt and Camelback water bottle comes with a free sticker.

All proceeds from the store go to benefit the CONA scholarship fund, which assists prospective CONA delegates who are in financial need. The store

THOUGHTFUL WORSHIP SERVICE INSPIRES DELEGATES

AIJAH ISAACS, IN ★ STAFF WRITER

Several delegates gathered early Sunday morning after breakfast for the CONA worship service in the Heaton Hall Auditorium. After a short call to worship by Noah McNelley of the Alabama delegation, the service was on its way. Uplifting songs gave thanks for the love of God, while Quiwanaki Ramsey of Florida led the Lord's Prayer. Marcy Hannick of Missouri read Matthew 5:1-11, calling for personal reflection among each individual.

The message shared was that even though unfortunate or upsetting circumstances may happen, it is God's will and there is a purpose for everything and everyone. Julia Khan of the California delegation began by reminding us of the great author and Holocaust survivor Elie Wiesel. Despite all the negatives, he went on with his life. Zachary Pate of Texas reflected on Wiesel's

wise words by sharing about a friend he had lost. "There may be tragedy; there may be trials, but God is there for us. Pray to Him and let Him into your life and everything will be a little better." After sharing, Zachary challenged everyone to go out and appreciate the sunrise in the morning and reflect on all the good that has happened in our lives.

Patti O'Brien of Missouri then reiterated Zachary's message with Matthew 6:25-34. "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what will you eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is life not more than food, and the body more than clothes? Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in any barns, and yet your heavenly father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they?"

With the worship service, the delegates reminded us that you cannot spend your life worrying but to instead enjoy the beauty in everything.



FAITH ★ DELEGATES GATHER FOR SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICE.

PHOTO BY NNEMKA AGBAFE, NC



PHOTO SBY NNEMKA AGBAFE, NC

PRESIDING OFFICER OF THE DAY: DANIEL HAYWORTH

1. Daniel Hayworth is in the Corp of Cadets at Texas A&M, so when he graduates he's going to the Army as an officer.
2. He has climbed the top of Mt. Kilimanjaro on a mission trip and built a school.
3. He has five dogs. None of them were intentionally gained.
4. He has a passion for mission work and doing community service, especially working with veterans in the community.
5. His favorite teams are the Cowboys and the Colts. He bleeds blue for both teams.

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