

# Sweet visit



AP/Charles Dharapak

President Bush greets patrons of Eiler Candy Shop Stephen Spring of Uhrichsville (L), Jean Avon and Debra Avon of New Philadelphia during an impromptu campaign stop in Dover on Saturday.

# Quick stop in Dover surprises many

By JESSICA ALAIMO  
T-R Staff Writer

They had been told he wasn't going to stop.

So when Mary Ann Farmer went to work Saturday morning, she did not expect that at 1 p.m. she would be selling six chocolate-covered caramels and six chocolate-covered marshmallows to the president of the United States, and a bag of caramel corn to Secret Service agents.

"We just had wanted to go out in the street and see him," said Farmer, who was working in the store with her daughter, Chrissy Farmer, and Lyn Gribble, a friend of the family.

On his trip down I-77 from Canton to Cambridge where he was giving speeches, President Bush took a detour at the Dover exit to visit Eiler Candy Shop on W. 3rd St.

Residents had read in the papers that he planned to drive through the community. As rain poured down, sporadically getting heavier and lighter, the crowd huddled under the overhangs of the shops on W. 3rd St.

Nadine Russell, Hannelore Ricer and Julie Wills, all of New



TR/Pat Burk

A crowd on W. 3rd St. at Dover wave as Bush's bus heads toward Tuscarawas Ave. to New Philadelphia and on to Cambridge.

Philadelphia, chose to stake out by Eiler's.

"We heard he likes small town candy shops," Ricer said, explaining that she hoped Bush would get off the bus.

Ricer's instincts were correct. Mary Ann Farmer, who owns Eiler's, said that around noon, Secret Service officials came into the shop and looked

around.

Shortly afterward, the service roped off the sidewalks around the shop and checked all the spectators by the shop with a metal wand and searched their bags and umbrellas.

Around 1 p.m., the crowd started clapping and cheering when State Highway Patrol

cruisers rolled down the street, leading the motorcade. Several buses pulled up, bearing the Bush/Cheney logo with the slogan "Heart and Soul/Moving America Forward."

"I see him. I see him," members in the crowd shouted as President Bush got off the

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second bus and made his way down the line of people, shaking hands and signing autographs.

One man questioned whether Bush's pen would work on his wet baseball cap. Another man boasted about how the president signed his \$5 bill.

Members of the press who were traveling with the motorcade crammed into the candy shop ahead of Bush.

Bush shook hands with a local police officer and walked into the store after the press.

Brent Gribble, whose mom, Lyn Gribble, works at the candy shop, videotaped the visit.

A replay of the tape showed Bush commenting to the press, "I'm glad I chose this one."

Farmer said she had wanted to give the candy to Bush for free, but the Secret Service told her he couldn't accept gifts, so she charged him \$1.50.

"The Secret Service warned us that he has to pay, so we kind of charged him half price," Farmer said.

After Bush left the shop, Farmer came out with the other employees and waved elatedly to the crowd. "It was the experience of a lifetime," Farmer said. "I shook his hand and got his autograph."

Eiler Candy Shop has been in Farmer's family for 68 years. Chrissy Farmer is the fourth generation to work there.

Lyn Gribble has worked at Eiler's since 1966. Gribble, who would not normally have worked Saturday because she is recovering from surgery, came in because she heard Bush was passing through. "I got to shake his hand, and he signed my get well card," she told customers.

Doug Wills, chairman of the Tuscarawas County Republican Party, said he was not sure why Bush chose to stop at Eiler's but added, "The president's people feel strongly about small business, and Eiler's has been around a long time."

After Bush's visit, customers who were dressed patriotically and still clutching their American flags, flooded the shop, buying sweets and taking photos of the place the president had just left. "We're having a rush on marshmallows," Mary Ann Farmer said, rushing to restock.

*Doug Wills, chairman of the Tuscarawas County Republican Party, said he was not sure why Bush chose to stop at Eiler's but added, "The president's people feel strongly about small business, and Eiler's has been around a long time."*

Talking excitedly on the phone amid the hustle and bustle of the customers while she reloaded the showcase with chocolate-covered caramels, Farmer told the person on the other end, "Chrissy got him chocolate-covered marshmallows, I got him caramels. It was so exciting."

Jeanne Zvaritch of Salem, who sat in the store with her one-year-old son Andrew, said she came to Dover Saturday because she was unable to get tickets to Bush's speeches in Canton and Cambridge.

Sitting in the shop, "It's neat to enjoy it with everybody," Zvaritch said. "It was the next best thing to being here when he was here."

Kelly Hall of Louisville, a 5th-grade teacher at Walker Elementary at Canton, bought six chocolate-covered caramels and six chocolate-covered marshmallows with her stepfather, Don Marshall of Dover.

"It's an honor, we bought the same candy he bought," Hall said. "I keep thinking that this is history. It's something kids will be reading in history books in a few years." Hall said she plans to save newspaper articles from the day's event for her classes, which will be talking about the election in November.

"I will tell them the whole story," Hall said.

*TR Staff Writer Stephanie Corbin contributed to this story.*



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