Rally to restore sanity

On Oct. 30, thousands of people flocked to join Jon Stewart and Stephan Colbert in their Rally to Restore Sanity and/or Fear. Although the exact number of rally attendees remains unknown, the crowd stretched from in front of the US Capitol to the Washington Monument and flowed across the streets on each side.

In order to accommodate those who came early, the giant screens set up across the national mall played recaps of previous "Daily Show" and "Colbert Report" episodes. For those who decided to make a late start, the metro lines were crowded to the point where conductors were forced to threaten passengers that they would unload the train if people did not clear the doorways.

Despite the large crowd, people were courteous and friendly toward each other. From the metro to the mall there was excited banter and very little pushing to get closer to the front of the rally.

"It was amazing how happy everyone was. I have a pic of random people I met on the metro. Though we were stuffed like sardines on the metro,  everyone was friendly. It was the most polite group of people I have ever met," Radford University senior Brian Hokana said.

As people walked from the metro stations they began to raise their rally signs. Since this rally did not have one main focus other than to restore sanity or fear, the signs covered many topics ranging from serious to silly. One fear-related sign made reference to *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* series and said, "Don't panic!" and "Carry a towel." More serious signs included people thanking President Barak Obama for the things he's supported and other political agenda signs.

"The best part was when we finally got there. A lot of signs were pretty funny, and I think most people got the point of the rally. I particulary liked the signs 'I masturbate to Christine O'Donnell' and '[Citation Needed]'," Murray State alumni Matthew Arseneault said.

The rally started with a bang with performers such as The Roots, who were soon joined by John Legend. The list of performers went on throughout the afternoon with music from Yusif Islam (formerly Cat Stevens), Ozzy Osbourne, The O'Jays, Sheryl Crow, Kid Rock, Tweedy with Mavis Staples and Tony Bennett.

Another pair of guests that made their mark on the rally were Adam Savage and Jamie Hyneman from the show "Mythbusters." Savage and Hyneman chose to do a few experiments with the rally. One experiment made the audience display certain emotions on command, another that tested how fast the audience could get a wave from one end to the other and the last tested the magnitude of the entire audience jumping at the same time. The rally members complied with enthusiasm as almost nobody was willing to miss out on being a part of a "Mythbusters" experiment.

Throughout the rally, Stewart and Colbert kept up constant bickering over whether it is better to be calm and down to earth or to panic about everything. All of their banter lead to issues that the media has touched on in the past. Stewart's push for sanity and Colbert's satirical support for mass-fear lead up to the moment that defined the rally: Stewart's final speech.

"This was not a rally to ridicule people of faith, or people of activism, or to look down our noses at the heartland, or passionate argument, or to suggest that times are not difficult or that we have nothing to fear. They are, and we do. But we live now in hard times, not end times," Stewart said.

As the speech went on, the crowd listened intently and cheered Stewart. His calm message of hope and endurance appeared to be accepted as a breath of fresh air by the entire group. By the time it was over, people left the mall acting uplifted and some left dancing to the last musical number.

If nothing else, Stewart's ending speech left everyone with one message, "If we amplify everything, we hear nothing."