



Presidential guess

McCain or Obama? You win

With many people taking an interest in the US presidential election, there should be a flood of entries for two competitions to win a trip to the inauguration of either Barack Obama or John McCain in Washington DC.

The United States Studies Centre at the University of Sydney and *The Monthly* have joined forces to offer trips to the January 20 event, but a bit of work is required to enter either competition. For Pick the President (closes October 31), entrants have to get a grip on the US electoral system and predict both how many Electoral College votes and popular votes the winner will receive. If numbers aren't your thing, put together a one-minute video expressing your take on the US election for the Campaign Mash Up contest (closes October 27).

Both competition winners will score two return tickets to Washington DC, five nights' accommodation, \$1000 spending money, tickets to an inauguration ball and the guiding services of the United States Studies Centre's Todd St Vrain.

He is an old hand at these things, having been to four of the past five inaugurations. While Obama appears to have the edge over McCain at this stage, St Vrain still won't make a call on whose inauguration he'll be watching, saying "anything's possible". See uselectionwatch.org.au.



Blowing smoke ... US presidential hopefuls Barack Obama and John McCain; (below) clean air at Birdsville where one tour operator has banned smoking. Photo illustration: Michael Mucci. Photo: Paul Harris