

Editorial

Your vote could decide winner of ASUN race

Once again, it's election day. The run-off election between Action and Reach is upon us.

For roughly the past six weeks, the university community has heard these parties present their platforms. Last Wednesday, the student body indicated that it was pretty well split when it came to casting a vote for either party.

So we face the issues again, knowing that this time, thankfully, the winner will be decided. No matter how much or little an ASUN candidate has to say, it is hard to come up with new and gripping issues with which to campaign for an extra week.

So give these prospective ASUN presidents a break if their ideas and arguments haven't been earth-shattering in the past seven days. Give them a break if all they've done is reiterate their stands and proposals. And give them a hand for all the time they've spent campaigning when their efforts and arguments often fall on deaf ears or are regarded as little more than rhetoric.

The winner will come out with a title, that, granted, will look nice on the job resume. But it can be a lot more than a title if the president accomplishes his or her goals.

Let's not be too critical of these candidates for believing they can make a difference. If they really were in this for personal gain or recognition, don't you think they would be channeling their efforts into a less thankless job, one that offers some financial gain? Undoubtedly all of these candidates could attain a more quantifiably rewarding job or position, but instead they chose to participate in student government because they value its potentials.

The candidates believe they can make a difference. And today, even more than a week ago, you can make a difference.

Vote.

All it takes is a one-vote margin to determine who, once and for all, will be the next ASUN president. If the original elec-



tion results are any indication of the student opinion, the run-off could be just as close. You might cast the ballot that could decide the race.

It was encouraging to see the 5 percent increase over last year's voter turnout, but when only 14 percent of the student body

comes to the polls, one could hardly say the response was overwhelming.

Just think, this time when you go to the polls (which are located in both unions, the residence hall food services, CBA, Burnett and the College of Law), you'll only have four ballots to cast. It won't take much time. It could make a difference.

It's time to shake 'psychic numbness' and face reality

Helen Caldicott describes it as "psychic numbness." Jonathan Schell sees it as symptomatic of a "psychotic nation." Others see it as plain old "denial of reality."

I am now going to skirt the fine line between telling people how to live and simple opinionated claptrap. When one sees a problem with society, and if it seems to



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hang as chains on our lives as thinking human beings, one cannot "speak low if you speak love," as Shakespeare recommends. Rather, one must speak loud when speaking of lives only partially lived, of people who refuse to see the world around them.

Dr. Helen Caldicott, president of Physicians for Social Responsibility, spoke in Lincoln this weekend. One of the points she made was that American society doesn't seem to want to know about the dangers of nuclear war hanging over our heads. She noted that in 1979 our nation's defense computers detected incoming missiles (one of many false calls). Due to a number of factors (she thinks the president was in the bathroom), we came within

minutes of unleashing our nuclear arsenal, guaranteeing annihilation for both the Soviets and ourselves. The British and Canadian newspapers carried this story front page center, but here in the "blissfully" ignorant United States, the New York Times only carried a one-inch blurb on the obituary page. Caldicott claims this is but one example of our "psychic numbness."

Ellen Goodman recently wrote about a series of interviews conducted with grade school children in the Boston area. These children were asked, for instance, what they wanted to be when they grew up. One would probably expect firemen, nurses and football players to dominate. Instead, there was a lot of concern by these children that they wouldn't even make it to be a "grown-up," because there would be a "nuclear war" before then. I note this because it stands parallel to our behavior here as university students. Our frantic drive to get degrees and jobs and gain financial security as fast as we can, is not our exhibiting hop for our future; rather, it reeks more of "getting mine while I can."

Now, I'm not predicting the apocalypse. I have a tremendous amount of hope for humanity, but only if we cease denying reality. Cruise missiles will be deployed within two years, and then we can literally have bombs hidden in our closets. Don't expect the United States and Soviet Union to trust each other after that. So we have

two years to get rid of cruise missiles, and this means we all have to, at the least, pay attention to that fact.

Students recently campaigning for student government railed about student "apathy." It's as if we disassociate ourselves from everything in order to make our lives somehow easier and more ordered. Our only concern is about "getting a job" and learning those things which will help further our "careers." The reality is that we have an interconnected world, with the fate of all individuals integrally tied together. To describe our behavior, "selfish" is an old term, but a good term. A finance class of mine is a feast for the eyes in this regard; almost almost all are future financiers already thinking of employment in percentage points rather than numbers of people unemployed.

I distribute leaflets on campus occasionally, as do many people. We all have certain bits of information to offer, and we certainly are not out to disturb people's serene equanimity. All we desire is an extended forefinger and thumb, a brief glance, and maybe a thought or two. But so many students pass by with their heads down, hands in their pockets, sometimes saying things like "save a tree," or "it's none of my business." Oh, yes it is, and the day we all wake up to that fact, we can fully tackle all the disturbing problems in society. Ignorance is the bane of a civil society. Ignorance fosters "psychic numbness." An ignorant student should be a contradiction in terms.

Through a bitten tongue: Women in medical draft

Before you read any further, do the following facial exercise. Stick your tongue out a bit and press on it lightly with your top and bottom teeth. This will enable you to quickly bite you tongue when you are tempted to blurt out: "I told you so!"

Now for the news.

For the past many years, anti-ERA forces have gone about warning America that if we passed this constitutional amendment our daughters would be eligible for



Ellen Goodman

the draft. Any woman who wanted equal rights, they said darkly, was asking for war.

Well, Greetings from Uncle Sam. Months after the defeat of the ERA, the Department of Defense has a proposal that will make women eligible for the draft for the first time in American history.

Bite.

The proposal, which barely has been noticed, is part of the plan to begin registering medical people again. Not medical men — medical people.

To put it plainly, the DOD would like to amend the old "Doctor's Draft" codes by, and I quote, "striking out 'males' and inserting in place thereof 'persons.'"

Among the "persons" are female doctors, nurses, physical therapists, pharmacists, podiatrists, veterinarians, and "any other ancillary or technical" health-care worker between the ages of 18 and a half and 46.

How did this happen, you ask, without the ERA? Excuse me for a moment while I take another nip of my tongue.

There never was any guarantee that women wouldn't be drafted. The recent Supreme Court decision gave constitutional approval to an all-male draft. But it didn't outlaw a coed draft. They left the whole business up to Congress.

The armed services, meanwhile, have been what might generously be called ambivalent towards women in their ranks. There are those like retired Gen. William Westmoreland, who feels "no man with gumption wants a woman to fight his battles." There are also those like Brig. Gen. Cecil Neely, who says that his men "think the women are pretty; they like to have them around."

Since the defeat of the ERA, the Pentagon has hacked away at the rights of those women who actually want to be part of the military. They ended coed basic training, reduced the number of female volunteers they'll accept, and made 23 more jobs off-limits.

They will add no more than 1,000 women a year in the next five years. These women will no longer be allowed to become carpenters, masons, electricians or engineers because, we are told, those jobs are "combat-related."

At the same time, they are now asking for the right to draft women who don't want to be part of the military. Lt. Col. Tom Schumann, the department director for health manpower, says frankly, "To us, it's just a need. When you consider that many of the health-care occupations are composed primarily of females, you're not going to get the numbers you need if you can't go after the females."

When asked whether there wasn't some contradiction in this policy in lieu of anti-ERA arguments, Schumann chuckled in the friendliest way.

Several other folks at DOD made a special distinction. Nurses, they said, were not in combat roles. They should tell this to the Army and Navy nurses of other wars, especially 100 nurses who were prisoners of war for three years during World War II, or the female veterans of Vietnam.

If all goes according to plan, the medical draft will be submitted to the Office of Management and Budget at the end of April and then submitted to the Congress as part of the defense legislative package.

It would be ironic if the Reagan administration — hostile to the E and the R and the A — was the first to get a law passed that forced women to register for the draft. Who was it who said that women would get equal responsibilities before they got equal rights?

Not me. And I've got the teeth marks on my tongue to prove it.