

Editorial

People are such boobs — idiot vote must go

The question is at once annoyingly simple and agonizingly complex, and some would say a little silly: Why are people such boobs?

In their own ways, Albert Einstein, Voltaire and the Beatles have asked essentially the same question. Einstein: "Against every miraculous human endeavor there are a million mediocre minds."

Voltaire: "Common sense is not so common."

Even the Beatles sung about "the fool on the hill."

For centuries, men have puzzled over the role of the boob. After all, with so many around, they must have a function. They do. In recent years it has become painfully apparent that the role of the boob in American society is to elect the next president.

It has also become increasingly apparent that to be elected, a candidate must possess the nebulous ability to win a large group of voters who, let's face it, haven't the slightest idea what the issues are and frankly couldn't care less. In other words, a successful presidential candidate must be able to get "the idiot vote."

Oh, now just hold on, it's not my intention to offend the sensibilities of the conscientious voters, all 50 of you. It is my intention to point out an alarming and dangerous trend in America.

What, exactly, is the idiot vote? It's a large and growing segment of the voting public. It cuts across economic, social and political lines; it knows no party, no ideology, no credo; it is not bound by race or sex and it can't be measured by any poll.

President Reagan swept into office because of the idiot vote. Jimmy Carter got it in 1976 and John Kennedy got it in 1960. It's also the main reason why Walter Mondale can't relax at the Democratic National Convention despite currently having enough delegates to claim the nomination on the first vote.

Gary Hart has idiot vote appeal, Mondale does not. That's not to say that Hart and his supporters are idiots. Far from it. But Hart, Reagan, Carter and Kennedy all possess(ed) qualities that allow(ed) them to attract votes from people who don't really know them or what they stand (stood) for. Hart is young and rugged, Reagan is a charmer and Kennedy was a little of both. Carter had an infectious smile.



Idiot voters vote on personality, on the way a candidate says something rather than what he says. They vote on the hair he has on the top of his head rather than the brains he has inside of it. You could call them casual voters, you could call them indifferent voters. You know what I call them.

Not surprisingly, the idiot vote has been molded by the idiot box. Television has proven once again that the quick visual fix is more important than a true understanding, that style wins over substance. Today, a candidate's ability to handle himself in a commercial is more important than his ability to handle himself in a crisis.

With the influence of television leading the way, a strange and dangerous metamorphosis has turned

Americans from the bourgeoisie into the booboisie. That is, at least in our voting skills, we are progressing backward at record speed: We are evolving into a nation of apathetic boobs while our very democracy hangs in the balance.

In each election enough knowledgeable people vote to make it a horse race. But it is the large block of idiot votes that picks the winner. In a tense nuclear age, we can no longer afford the luxury of an idiot vote. Think about it, then vote.

Still, most of the idiots won't get the message. Why are people such boobs? Ultimately, Oscar Wilde, the English playwright, may have come up with the best answer: "I sometimes think that God, in creating man, overestimated his ability."

Jim Fussell

Lack of interest threatens continuance of black studies

For people who bother to watch the news and who have, from time to time, heard about a black studies controversy at UNO, the issue is not as shocking as the media and those involved have made it out to be. Even as the NU Board of Regents prepare to render a "final decision" on the matter this weekend, there are some behind the scenes factors.

Matthew Stelly

Like most black studies departments around the country, UNO's also was born out of the tumult and turmoil of the student revolts of the 1960s. From that point on, black studies became a part of the UNO curriculum, offering courses ranging from black history to the black experience in the social sciences.

However, unlike most new curricula, black studies never really got the chance to develop itself to its fullest potential. From the late '70s on, the regents continually pressured the department to become defunct, using as their rationale the fact that "we have budgetary problems." This meant that whenever there was some kind of financial crisis, and whenever courses were to be cut, black studies would be the first on the chopping board. Until recently, these attacks were at the very least bi-annual and it finally got to the point where something had to be done.

Julien Lafontant, chairman of the department for the last seven years, suggested that the department become a "program." If such a change was made, there would not be the continual pressure to slice classes or faculty. Further, those faculty members now teaching would be re-assigned to their traditional departments and when proposed cuts came, black studies would be safely nestled in tradi-

tional departments.

This was an excellent idea for several reasons. Such a move would let black studies live much longer at UNO than if it remained as a department. And, by becoming a program, black studies could work out its enrollment problems and build for a new future. After all, one of the primary justifications for cutting the department was that not enough students had enrolled in it.

This was a sound argument, but the basis of it was very discriminatory. First of all, black studies courses are not required. Therefore, there is no mandate for students to enroll in such courses. Secondly, counselors do not suggest black studies courses to students who are more interested in computers and business than in culture and black people.

At a regents meeting earlier this year, the National Association for Advancement of Colored People had threatened to write letters to prospective UNL athletes telling them to boycott the NU system if black studies were not left alone at NU. Fearful and somewhat spineless, the regents duped black leadership into thinking that they would leave the department alone. However, at that meeting, Chancellor Del Weber's last words were "...for now."

It was at this time that I approached community leadership and implored them not to trust the regents. It was at this time that I tried to explain Lafontant's idea, and offered up more than 10 pages of counter-suggestions to go along with the proposed program idea.

Now the board will meet again to "decide the issue," although the issues were supposedly decided earlier this year. The athletes have now been recruited, the leadership quieted, and now, once again, it's business as usual.

The regents will vote on this issue Saturday. If things don't work out, it is safe to say that this time around, black people will have only themselves to blame.

New Culture Center a top-priority need

As the university heads into a new summer session and gears up for summer activities, some not-so-new issues still need to be re-examined.

the student of color will once again be lost in a sea of white faces. And the Culture Center, which once served as a positive symbol of interaction between blacks, Native Americans and Chicano students, and the university as a whole, is being left to fall down without a prospective replacement.

Liz Burden

At this time in 1982, a task force was formed to study the relocation of the Culture Center and it presented its recommendations to the administration. This task force recommended that the center, currently at 18th and Y streets, be moved to the Terrace Hall Annex. This proposal was rejected. As we near the two-year anniversary of the recommendation, simple observation would tell us that no progress has been made.

Upon deeper observation of the situation, it seems that what is at issue is not only a building. The culture center issue, together with other issues that have arisen during the years within the university system, signals a lack of concern for some segments of the student population.

Departments that are sensitive to the needs of students of color, and in which students are considered more than a face and a number, are being replaced with larger departments whose focus is so broad that

The building was designated as a Culture Center in the 1970s at the request of black, Native American and Chicano students. These students made tangible for the majority population an ideal which the building and the continuing struggle for a new one signify: We are not white students, and do not wish to be considered so; we have a cultural heritage which is unique: we are forced to deal with the majority culture everyday. However, since we spend time — and more importantly, money — on this campus, we also want a representation of ourselves.

The administration's action to date in effect say that they refuse to recognize that anyone non-white exists.