

Editorial

If you don't vote, don't complain

There's no excuse for not voting. When you turn 18 you get a chance to participate in our government. It's a privilege thousands have fought and died for. Low voter turnout is a sign of apathy and complacency.

People complain that they pay too much in taxes, or that the poor are starving, or that we need a nuclear freeze, or that we need more nuclear weapons. Then they say they are too busy to vote.

Nationally, less than 60 percent of eligible voters usually turn out for the

election. A lot of people think their votes don't count. They don't if people don't vote.

The direction this country takes for the next four years will be determined by this November's election. We will take either the conservative path — seek further expansion of the private sector and the defense budget and reduce government; or the liberal path — seek reductions in the huge federal deficit, seek reductions in the defense budget and try to find ways to keep Social Security and Medicare

alive.

It doesn't matter whether you're a Democrat or a Republican. If you don't vote, you don't have a right to complain about President Reagan, or, conceivably, President Mondale.

There also are many state and local issues and candidates to vote on. Those votes can and will affect your life somehow.

We are lucky to be Americans because, unlike many others, we have a voice in how we are ruled. Take the time to regis-

ter and vote for president, for the senate races, even for the country weed board.

You have until Oct. 26 to register. It only takes a minute. Go to the City-County Building, 555 S. 10th St. Go to the Election Commissioner's office anytime between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. on Tuesday and Thursday. It's open until 5:30 p.m. If you want to vote on local issues and your hometown isn't Lincoln, you need to register in your own county. If you register in Lincoln, you can only vote on Lancaster County issues.

'Adopt-a-rockfish' program protects endangered species

Every boy should have a pet, and mine is named Ralph. Or Amanda. I cannot be sure. I have never met the creature and, even if I had, I know nothing of the delicacy required to ascertain the sex of a striped bass.

Maryland, where a striped bass is called a rockfish and is the official state fish, has a program whereby for \$5 you can adopt



George Will

a bass. The proceeds help finance studies of the decline of one of America's most precious sport and commercial marine resources.

The striped bass has been called "the aquatic equivalent of the American bald eagle." It was the subject of the first conservation law in North America: In 1639, the Massachusetts Bay Colony forbade the use of these fish as fertilizer. In 1670, the first public school on this continent was financed in Plymouth Colony by profits from striped bass, herring and mackerel. Captain John Smith wrote of seeing the Chesapeake Bay so teeming with bass that a man could almost walk on their backs.

But today the bass population is on the verge of collapse — of spawning failure. In 1973, 14.7 million pounds of bass were harvested from Atlantic coast waters. In 1983, the catch was just 1.7 million pounds. The decline could become irreversible before scientific evidence even establishes the role of various causes, which may include overfishing but certainly and primarily include many forms of pollution.

At some point, economic forces become perverse: As bass have become scarce,

the price they fetch has soared, increasing the incentive to catch them. And even the small amount of good news is a scientific puzzle. Why is the bass population in the Hudson River expanding? One delightful explanation is that the river's limestone bed acts like Alka-Seltzer and counters the acidity of acid rain.

Of the 12 coastal states along the bass migration range from Maine to North Carolina, Maryland is immeasurably the most important. Ninety percent of the bass are spawned in the rivers running into the Chesapeake Bay, and 75 percent of the bass caught are taken in waters under Maryland jurisdiction. Thus it is no empty gesture that Maryland has made in banning the taking of bass, beginning next year and continuing until the decline is reversed.

The Chesapeake Bay has been called the nation's finest protein factory. But its productivity is now jeopardized by industrial pollution, chlorine from sewage treatment, runoffs of agricultural chemicals and acid rain. Maryland has grave responsibility of the bay, but this is a national asset and hence a national problem. The President acknowledged as much when, in this year's State of the Union address, he mentioned protecting the bay.

Another Great Communicator, the Palmist celebrated "the great and wide sea with its living things too many to number." But those things are not too many to become endangered. Overharvesting is responsible for today's sharp decline in lobster stocks. The decline is so serious that perhaps 90 percent of each year's generation of one-pound lobsters is being taken, many of them before they have reproduced even once.

Last year William Warner, who won a Pulitzer Prize for his book "Beautiful Swimmers: Watermen, Crabs and the Ches-



FIRST IT WAS MEESE... NOW DONOVAN... GOOD LORD, GEORGE, WHO'S NEXT?...

apeake Bay," published a splendid, instructive book, "Distant Water." It tells how "factory trawlers" — giant fishing boats — almost destroyed commercial fishing in the North Atlantic, and how timely government limits enabled the sea to come alive again.

Regarding striped bass, the federal government has been reluctant to intrude into coastal fishing regulation, traditionally a matter of states' rights. But bass are careless about crossing state jurisdictions, as is pollution. So as this column is being written, Congress appears about to pass legislation that would impose a moratorium on striped-bass fishing in any coastal state that does not comply with whatever plan is developed by the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission.

This is utterly inadequate. The stakes are great and the threatened asset is a

national asset, so Maryland's moratorium should be national policy.

Maryland's action to protect an endangered species injures another great American species — the watermen, those fiercely independent and admirable men who for centuries have done the hard work of pulling protein from the productive waters. What we have here is a test of national stewardship. It is profoundly unjust for Maryland's watermen or other citizens to pay the price of conserving a national asset.

If the watermen's loss is to be temporary, national action must be timely, and should be generous toward a breed of men who did not create the problem they are bearing the burden of solving.

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Student calls for 'taking it easy'

Dear Fellow Students:

Come on buds, why does everybody seem so down on everything? My proposal is to quit making fun of "fat chicks" and start laying back and have fun by taking it easy. A lot of us don't really know how good we have it here in Lincoln as students, which is too bad! Let's quit complaining and start partying!

P.S. Would one of the Daily Nebraskan staff please interview one of those "suspicious persons contacted by officers" in the police report column? I think it would make a great story.

Ira M. Shapiro
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Offensive remarks anger student

Last Friday I had the pleasure of participating in the Homecoming parade by riding on the float entered by the International House. I enjoyed the ride and I must say that the enthusiasm of the crowd was the biggest

thrill of the event. But, as happens in so many cases, the great crowd had a few rotten apples in it.

International House (or I-House) is an organization for U.S. students who want to get to know foreign students and to help foreign students adjust to our lifestyle. I-House consists of two floors in the Neihardt Residence Hall on the UNL campus, but one need not live there to be a member. I represent the non-resident members (affectionately called outhousers) in I-House's governing council.

For the parade we had a truck pulling a flatbed trailer on which members of I-House rode, some dressed in their native attire. The crowd, as I said, was very friendly and the most enjoyable part of the parade, with a few exceptions. Some people along the route were shouting remarks about foreign students, and foreigners in general, as our float passed by them. "We don't want you" and "Go back to your home country" are examples of these comments. I also noticed many gestures, such as slanting of eyes, which were made to insult or make fun of foreigners.

I lived for six months in Colombia and have visited Spain and Morocco, but at no time did I receive this type of treatment. Why is it then that people from other

countries receive this treatment here? People like this give America, not to mention Nebraska, a bad name. People like this give Americans the stereotype of being racist and unfriendly bigots. I ask the people who make these remarks and gestures, is this the image we want of ourselves? What is the rationale for doing what you did? Are you unable to accept something different than what you're used to? Why do you feel that it is wrong for these people (yes, they are people) to be here? Aren't you proud that they chose to come to our country and our university to get an education? Where is your human dignity?

I'm sick and tired of the United States being considered a country full of Archie Bunkers. I am also sick and tired of seeing foreigners in this country being treated so poorly. These people are human beings, with two ears, a nose, a mouth, and feelings — feelings which can be hurt. I love this country of ours, and I'm proud to be an American, but it makes me very angry when our own citizens stoop so low to try to hurt the feelings of those unlike us.

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Letters