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Every vote counts

Students are an apathetic generation

These are some strange days we're living in. Reruns of old "Family Ties" episodes are on television six times a day, fraternity men are listening to reggae music and sorority women are buying tie-dyed shirts for \$20. Americans are becoming aware of human rights violations in South Africa and other countries and the reality of AIDS is finally sinking into the minds of the Midwest heterosexual population.

Hmmm . . . seems like the whole world has been turned on its head.

It's an election year and anything can happen. Anything.

And with the election less than three weeks away, news broadcasts and magazine and newspaper reports are keeping Americans informed on the progress of each candidate and issue.

They are telling us that polls indicate that candidate X is leading candidate Y in popularity. Experts give their informed opinion on why candidate X will win.

In the days of ancient Greece, if you wanted to know what fate the future held for you, you went to the Oracle of Delphi. The priests there would sniff vapors and consult Zeus. Sometimes they were right, sometimes they were wrong.

In this modern age, we have about the same amount of luck predicting the future.

I don't have anything against the press. Really. And I devour statistics almost in a compulsive way. They're wonderful to spout off when debating issues and they lend themselves well to supporting the point of the better arguer.

Anyway . . .

Of the 220 million U.S. citizens eligible to vote in the 1984 presidential election, only 146 million cast their ballots. Seventy-four million did not. In other words, roughly one-third of the eligible voters did not participate in the democratic process.

And the voter response in the 18 to 24 year-old category — which includes most of us college students — was the most pathetic of any other age group. Of the 29 million eligible voters, only 10 million showed up at the polls. Only about a third of the people in that group voted.

Our record speaks for itself: We are the most apathetic generation of all.

Many of the people in the apathetic category use the old excuse, "Voting is too much of a hassle," or, "My vote won't count."

That's a bunch of horse-hockey.

John F. Kennedy beat Richard Nixon in the 1960 presidential election by a margin so small that the difference averaged to be less than one vote per precinct across the nation.

As young people, we should be especially interested in who is elected to run our country and make important decisions about its future. That's because we have the most to lose. Many young people are comfortable now, and don't care about foreign and domestic policies.

But in the future, when our generation is expected to solve the problems caused by careless and short-sighted leadership, we may wish we had not been so lazy. The possibilities for our futures are being established today. It's not over yet. Think about it.

Besides, in addition to the election of public officials, there are many issues that will be resolved by voters on Nov. 8. In Nebraska, the radioactive waste disposal compact issue, a proposed amendment to the state constitution allowing Nebraskans to keep and bear arms, and other important issues will be on the ballot.

Voting is our right in this country — a right many people in other countries would die for. It is a civic responsibility which each and every one of us must carry if we want to maintain our democratic way of life.

But you probably know that already, if you read the opinions on the editorial page. That's great. Just remind

women of your friends and neighbors how important it is

to vote. In any case, they might be interested in the

BULL SHORTS

Today I want to address the issue of student apathy . . . but then, who cares, so never mind.



Fans scolded for bad behavior

Pollock leaves game when peers jeer Orr and Massengale

Rarely do I get upset to the point where I show it. And seldom do I get real mad about a call in a football game — a couple calls in the 1982 Nebraska-Penn State game did infuriate me, but I got over them. Never, though, have I left a football game because of a "bad call."

But that all changed at last Saturday's Nebraska-Oklahoma State Homecoming game. I didn't leave because of a referee's call, but because of a call made at halftime.

I left Saturday's game because of a call the fans made.

If you were fortunate enough to have been anywhere but Memorial Stadium, you missed the boos that followed the introductions of Gov. Kay Orr and University of Nebraska-Lincoln Chancellor Martin Massengale at the beginning of the Homecoming king and queen coronation ceremonies.

That was weak, Cornhusker fans. Real weak.

I don't claim to be a diehard Orr or Massengale fan, but I do respect them. There's a time and a place and a mode for criticism of public officials, and it isn't booing at a football game.

Sure, Orr has done good things, and she's done bad things. But lately she has been pretty darn good to the University of Nebraska. And sure, Massengale has done some good and some bad, but he cares about UNL as more than just a football team.

I asked a student who was sitting near me why he was booing.

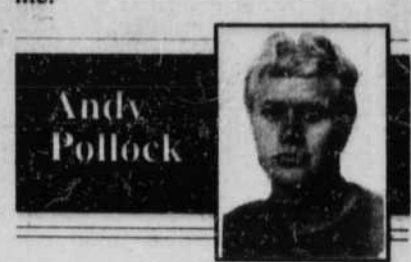
"Because Massengale's a dick," he answered.

"Oh, that's a rational reason. Why don't you tell me why you think he's a dick?"

"I have reasons."
"Really."

"Because he didn't give money to campus rec last year."

God help us and save us! Isn't that a terrible thing, the Office of Campus Recreation didn't get all the money it needed — "for lights at a soccer field, or something like that," the guy told me.



Andy Pollock

Regardless of his complaint, booing at a football game is a disrespectful, not to mention an ineffective means of voicing dissatisfaction. Every student has complaints, many of which are selfish and trivial, but why not try talking to the chancellor or to a vice chancellor. They're all accessible.

You can write them, call them, or express concerns in a letter to the Daily Nebraskan or to the Association of Students of the University of Nebraska.

At least Saturday wasn't a total loss. I was glad to see the Huskers' offense play well.

Before watching Nebraska stomp Oklahoma State into the turf, I and about eight other people listened to a lecture on political debating by Jack Kay, an associate professor of speech communications. We also joined Dennis Bormann, a speech communications professor, in a lecture on eloquence in public speaking.

The lectures were interesting and educational. I'm sure the other 24 lectures on various topics made by UNL professors Friday and Saturday also were interesting and educational.

But where were those enthusiastic Nebraska fans when the university offered more than entertainment?

One lecture on "dream houses," attracted an audience of about 50 people, said Dick Fleming, a professor of agricultural communications and co-chairperson of the subcommittee dealing with programs, exhibits and lectures for the Homecoming weekend. The average attendance at the lectures, however, was between five and 12 people.

Fleming said academic departments were asked to nominate faculty to speak this weekend. The response, mostly of volunteers, was tremendous, he said.

"We were not able to schedule all the faculty who volunteered to speak," he said.

UNL faculty members are willing to share their knowledge and thought, but Nebraskans are not willing to listen.

That's too bad.

Sure, this is the first time for the lecture series, but students, alumni and the general public were informed about it.

Why were turnouts for the faculty lectures low? It wasn't because people didn't know.

News releases were sent to all Nebraska newspapers, a full-page ad appeared in the Omaha World-Herald and the Daily Nebraskan and brochures were distributed to alumni and through Lincoln service organizations, said Viann Schroeder, director of publication services and chairperson of the UNL Homecoming committee's publicity committee.

Why was the attendance so low? It's a good question for everyone to ponder.

Pollock is a senior news-editorial major and a Daily Nebraskan editorial columnist.