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Power is in the vote

Some say low turnout not representative

Four parties have announced their intention to run in the ASUN elections March 15. The Daily Nebraskan suggests the following for University of Nebraska-Lincoln students: Follow the campaign and vote.

To gain executive, legislative and lobbying power, the next round of ASUN members needs a large constituency backing them. In the past, people have challenged the Association of Students of the University of Nebraska's power because few students vote.

Last year, 2,726 UNL students -- only 13 percent of the student population -- voted.

During the past year, some groups have claimed that low turnouts are not representative of the entire student population. The Committee Offering Lesbian and Gay Events probably made the most notable claim.

COLAGE members said low turnouts at ASUN elections invalidated the results of a ballot question two years ago (only 15 percent of the students voted in 1987). The question asked if student fees should finance a gay/lesbian council. More than 85 percent of the voters said the council shouldn't receive student fees.

Some ASUN senators held that the results were valid and used them to oppose appropriating student fees to COLAGE.

A similar question will appear on this year's ballot. If students want to have a say on this and other issues, they should vote. With a large turnout, ASUN members can get a valid idea of what students think. ASUN can then vote accordingly and defend those votes as being representative.

Most elected officials claim they represent and have the support of their constituents, no matter how many voted. But low turnouts don't thwart most officials' authority.

It's a little different with ASUN. Unlike most governmental bodies, ASUN's power is limited. It acts more as a lobbying group than a legislative one.

Such a group needs a large backing to persuade those who make decisions affecting UNL. This is especially true when ASUN's Government Liaison Committee lobbies state senators.

Although GLC has had success lobbying senators, a non-cohesive and apathetic constituency hampers their efforts.

State Sen. David Landis of Lincoln has said students could form a powerful lobbying group. But because students don't get involved, senators can overlook them without fearing reprisal, he said.

Bryan Hill, GLC chairman, said more student votes would undoubtedly increase GLC's influence. But voting is just the first step. To lobby effectively, he said, GLC needs students to get involved through letter campaigns or calls to their state senator.

Student apathy hasn't devastated GLC. Its lobbying efforts helped persuade Gov. Kay Orr to request an appropriation for the Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid.

Hill said he thinks the low turnout at the polls hasn't diminished his authority to represent UNL students in the Legislature. But such turnouts do diminish the student regents' authority, he said.

This was evident earlier this year when student regents were trying to get an unofficial vote on the NU Board of Regents. Some regents questioned whether student leaders deserved the unofficial vote since few students vote in student body elections.

Although student regents won the vote, Regent Kermit Hansen of Elkhorn said the board may revoke it if less than 20 percent of NU students vote in the next student elections.

The unofficial vote is one of ASUN's most important achievements in past years. It would be a shame to lose it.

UNL Student Regent Jeff Petersen said the vote holds student regents more accountable. Student regents must study the issues and vote. Their votes are recorded and open for student and press scrutiny.

Not only is the unofficial vote a prod for lazy student regents, it's one step closer to an official vote. If student regents can show competence with the unofficial vote, they can make a legitimate claim to have an official vote.

Winning an official vote, however, would take massive student action. The first step students can take is showing up at the polls.

All students have an opinion. Some of them confronted ASUN this year with those opinions. Many criticized ASUN's actions, such as an apology letter to Orr. Other students disapproved of senators' words, such as general studies Sen. Steve Thomlison's claim that homosexuality is immoral.

Petersen, ASUN president, said students who complain and criticize should use the ultimate expression of their dissatisfaction. They should vote.

"If they don't vote," Petersen said, "then I don't think they can complain about student government, because it's their own fault."

Petersen is right. Students must take the time to pay attention to issues and vote in student elections.

-- Ryan Steeves
for the Daily Nebraskan



Green gives a hangover quiz

Questions are for those who have tipped the bottle too much

It's hard to write a column when you can't see the computer terminal screen.

You all know what I'm talking about: Hangovers. Drinking, having fun, blowing off steam from classes or whatever . . . it's all part of the college -- and high school -- experience.

But, as everyone who has ever been screaming drunk knows, it's hard to think in the midst of a skull-shattering hangover.

Few people learn their lesson easily. It takes a while to realize that hangovers aren't one-time experiences. So, for everyone who has ever tipped the bottle a little bit too much in one 24-hour period, this quiz is for you.

1.) I drink because:

- a) I want to be part of the "in" crowd.
- b) I like to get silly and make a total fool out of myself in front of my friends.
- c) I like pain, especially hangovers.
- d) I like to puke.

2.) A typical night of drinking for me includes:

- a) A few beers
- b) A few tequila shots
- c) A few cases of Falstaff or Blatz
- d) A few trips to the hospital

3.) When I drink, I:

- a) fall down.
- b) fall up.
- c) pee on the neighbors' hedges.
- d) pee on the neighbors.

4.) My favorite place to drink is:

- a) at Lincoln bars, with my friends.
- b) at Omaha bars, with weirdos.
- c) at home, with Jack Daniels and Johnny Walker.
- d) in jail, with other people like me.

5.) When I drink, I do my best to avoid:

- a) the police.
- b) those little men that torment me -- the ones nobody else can see.
- c) photographers.

- d) tape recorders.

6.) When I'm staggering, stinking drunk, my friends think I'm:

- a) funny but loveable.
- b) no different than I usually am.
- c) a total moron that should be taken into the alley and beaten bloody.
- d) a Daily Nebraskan senior editor.

7.) The "Beer Goggle Syndrome" is:

- a) something I've never experienced, thank God.
- b) something that shouldn't be talked about in mixed company.
- c) my friend.
- d) something that's single-handedly caused a lot of moral dilemmas.



8.) When I get home and I'm toasted, I do the following to prevent a hangover:

- a) Induce vomiting.
- b) Ask God to kill me, so I don't have to wake up.
- c) Take two aspirin and wash it down with a bottle of Kentucky bourbon.
- d) Stay awake for three days, hoping to avoid a hangover by staying drunk.

9.) When I wake up the next morning, the first thing I say is:

- a) "Oh, s--!"
- b) "Who are you?!"
- c) "God, it tastes like something crawled into my mouth and died."
- d) "How did my car get up there?"

10.) When I'm hung over, I walk like:

- a) I have a broom up my butt.
- b) someone who wants to make it to the bathroom, because I hate scrub-

- bing vomit off my carpet.
- c) gravity has been amplified in my bedroom.
- d) Walk? Are you kidding?

11.) When I'm hung over, the most prominent feeling I experience is:

- a) an unmistakable sensation in my throat, much like that of swallowing sandpaper.
- b) like a spear sticking into my left ear and out of my right one.
- c) regret.
- d) a sense of loss as I watch my 1988 Mustang GT float serenely in Holmes Lake.

12.) When I'm driving the porcelain bus (that's throwing up in the toilet, for all you non-drinkers), I think about:

- a) oatmeal.
- b) creamed corn.
- c) chipped beef casserole.
- d) my friends, and how I'm going to kill them for making me drink "just one more."

13.) What whips me back into shape from a nasty hangover is:

- a) driving the porcelain bus (see above).
- b) a snapshot of Oprah Winfrey.
- c) a quick glance at the girl/guy laying next to you, who you picked up at the party.
- d) realization that you're two hours late for work.

14.) When I go to work hung over, I generally:

- a) don't get a damn thing done all day.
- b) tell everyone in the office what a great time I had last night.
- c) sit around and moan with the rest of the people in the office who went to the same party.
- d) announce my presence by barfing on my boss' desk.

I didn't have the initiative to devise a grading system, but you know if you're a lush or not by now. Cheers!

Green is a news-editorial and criminal justice major, a Daily Nebraskan sports-writer, sports and editorial columnist and copy desk chief.

letter

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Letters will be selected for publication on the basis of clarity, originality, timeliness and space available. The Daily Nebraskan retains the right

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