

# Pondering Politics

## Casting a ballot and sex: not totally different experiences

**TODD MUNSON is a senior broadcasting major and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.**

Talk about a full day – not only is it Taco Tuesday, it's also Election Day.

Whoa hoo! Cheap tacos and the chance to have my voice count. The only way today could get any better is if the Spice Girl formerly known as Ginger were dishing out the tacos.

Speaking of tacos, I woke up this morning with the notion that there is a strong analogy that can be made comparing voting to sex.

Blame it on morning wood, but here we go. First, both voting and sex should theoretically happen only with consenting adults 18 and up. And they're both equal-opportunity activities. Whether you're rich or poor, educated or not and, heck, even impotent these days, you can do both.

Like choosing your partner, you can vote for whomever you wish, even the candidate of your dreams.

They both involve some type of "polling device."

As with sex, voting can take anywhere from just a minute all the way up to an hour, depending on how good or indecisive you are. And they can both be done on your lunch break.

What goes on when the curtain is closed is your business and your business only.

However (guys, you'll like this,) unlike sex, the size doesn't matter. Whether you have a John Holmes model or a short and stubby one,

all No. 2 lead pencils get the same results.

Voting can be done solo or in a group. You know, like a caucus.

Voting is better than sex, because it's easier to do in public.

And you get a sticker that tells the public you voted today. You could wear a sticker that says you got laid today, but that would be kinda tacky.

Finally, both voting and sex just feel darn good, or that's what I hear about sex.

Lately, I've been to the polls more often than the proverbial promised land, and I don't care that I'm a voting trollop; my motto is vote early and vote often.

If you're a registered voter, please go vote today. I'm not a big advocate of peer pressure, but if you vote, you'll be one of the cool kids, and cool things happen when people vote, just ask my pimp, Matt Boyd.

Now that my persuasiveness has swayed you away from Jerry Springer and to the polls, I'll give you some helpful advice. For governor, it's gotta be Bill Hoppner. Mike Johanns brings too many Puritan values to the table to be an effective leader for 21st-century Nebraska. Vote NO on initiatives 413 and 414. Nebraska doesn't have many crackheads, but I think the few out there have meetings, and at those meetings they created 413 and 414. Vote NO. Say yes to Pat Knapp. Lisa from Amnesty International says she's okey dokey, so I'll trust her judgment with that one.

I'll be voting around 3, so if any of you ladies would care to join me ...

## Those who don't vote forfeit rights to complaining



**JOSH WIMMER is a senior news-editorial major and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.**

Now, I am a whiny little bitch.

Excuse me.

I mean, I am a Daily Nebraskan columnist.

Whatever. Point is, it is my lot in life to get up on my pulpit every week and moan about what's wrong with the world today. I'd do it for free, but they're willing to pay me, and I'm not going to complain.

In theory, I can whine about anything I want.

(In reality, I can whine about anything I want, too – so long as it wouldn't offend the administration too much or despoil the minds of my fellow students, who are pure as the driven snow, with my godless, immoral ways.)

I can do this because of the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

In short, the First Amendment forbids censorship of ideas by the government. What that means is, I can say I think gubernatorial candidate Mike Johanns is a scheming, intolerant freak of nature, and Johanns is really powerless to stop me.

What that means is, I can

whine about anything I want.

This power isn't limited to me, though. Everybody else in the United States can whine about anything they want, too. The First Amendment says so.

But about every two years, around this time, I start thinking maybe that's wrong.

No, I'm not pro-censorship. I don't think any idea should be censored.

And I don't mind whining, obviously.

I just mind certain people whining. And I remember that every other November.

To make an already long-story short: If you don't vote, I don't think you should be able to whine.

I'm sorry. I know there are problems with this country, this state, this town. I know there are things worth whining about.

But what makes this country, this state, this town different from other places all over the world is that we have the power to change things by voting.

If you exercise your right to vote and a problem doesn't change – by all means, continue to whine about it.

But, if you see a problem and don't bother to vote about it – don't you dare say a god-damn thing.

Inside your head, you're probably saying to me: "But my vote doesn't count."

Yeah? Imagine how many of you are thinking that right now. Hundreds, probably, if not thousands.

If all of you would exercise your right to vote, it would make a difference.

If the majority of the lazy people in this country would get off their asses for an hour or so once every two years and vote, things would be different today.

The Republicans would probably never have taken over Congress. The reason they did is that Republican citizens are like the Greeks during student government elections – they go out *en masse* and vote.

Anyway, whether your vote changes anything or not, the principle is:

If you're not trying to solve the problem, you have no right to complain about it. So don't.

And if you do take the time to vote today – you can be just like me.

A Daily Nebraskan columnist.

Excuse me.

I mean a whiny little

bitch.

## Nebraska polls expect lowest-ever voter numbers



**ADAM KLINKER is a sophomore English and history major and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.**

There was a time in the history of this nation when voting was not so much an abandoned civic duty as it was a cherished rite.

Being able to vote was a privilege, appropriated by the forefathers to white, male property owners.

It took almost a hundred years to extend suffrage to all men and almost another 70 years to extend it to all women.

Even then, voters had to pay a poll tax and, in an attempt to discourage African-Americans from voting, states instituted a literacy and civics test.

In the 1960s and 1970s, 18-year-olds were being sent to Vietnam and had no way of voicing their opinions to the government. They, too, were granted the power of the ballot with the passage of the 26th Amendment in 1971.

Since 1972, when the U.S. Supreme Court struck down most states' complex voting requirements, every American of age is now qualified to vote.

Save a few residency conditions in some states that require voters to have lived in that state for a set period of time (usually 30 days), all Americans are openly embracing their chance to participate actively in the workings of their government.

No way.

Although American interest in elections has increased in recent years, (61.3 percent in the 1992 election, as compared to 57.4 percent in the 1988 election), most of that has been in presidential election years. In 1994's congressional election, just 38.8 percent of Americans voted.

Off-year elections, such as today's, just

don't generate much interest, but often-times they are the most immediately pertinent for voters.

For instance, in Nebraska this year, two major policy votes – Initiatives 413 and 414 – stand to drastically affect the government and state constitution.

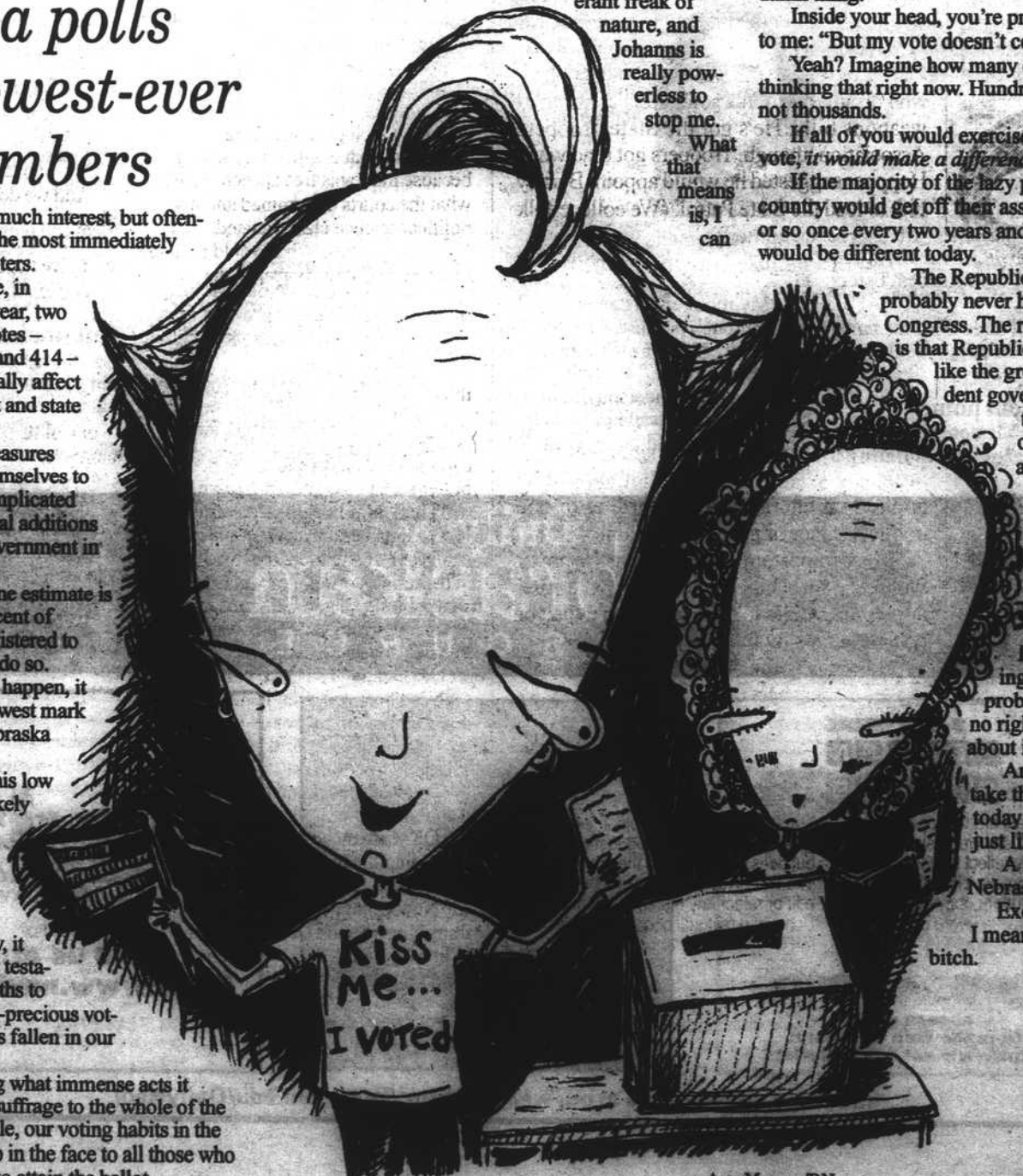
The two measures have shown themselves to be the most complicated and controversial additions to Nebraska government in recent years.

However, one estimate is that just 55 percent of Nebraskans registered to vote today will do so.

Should that happen, it would be the lowest mark in recorded Nebraska voting history.

Although this low point is most likely because of the increase of registered voters as a result of the motor-voter law, it remains a sorry testament to the depths to which our once-precious voting standard has fallen in our time.

Considering what immense acts it took to impart suffrage to the whole of the American people, our voting habits in the 1990s are a slap in the face to all those who fought so long to attain the ballot.



AMY MARTIN/DN