

Election

Voters turn out in high numbers despite predictions of indifference

Preliminary reports indicate that voter turnout in Tuesday's election was greater than expected.

South Carolina has a habit of ranking close to the bottom when it comes to voter turnout. Although about 2.7 million people are eligible to vote in this state, only half of them are registered voters. Only about half of those registered voters actually vote, which means 25 percent of those eligible are voting.

For the past 13 years, voter turnout in South Carolina's non-presidential elections has been less than 60 percent of eligible voters. Last month, it was predicted that voter turnout in South Carolina would fall below 50 percent of registered voters.

Reasons for low voter turnout, according to the Associated Press, include apathy, feelings of alienation about the voter's role in government and a sliding national economy, which preoccupies many voter's minds.

However, voters ignored the predictions and came out in unexpectedly heavy numbers on Tuesday. Some precincts' early reports indicated turnout between 57 and 65 percent.

The above-average numbers might be because of eligible voters' tendency to maintain the status quo unless provoked. The reasons cited for low voter turnout might actually be the reasons people voted.

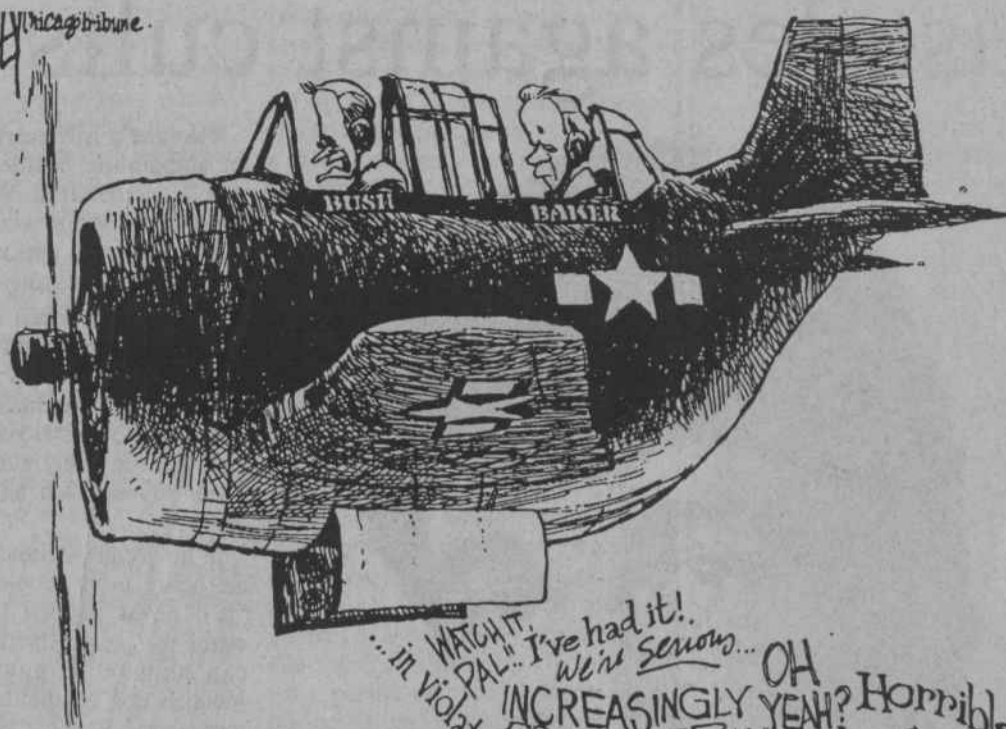
Apathy and indifference might have been pushed aside because the State House scandal incited in voters a get-the-rascals-out, anti-incumbency mood. The grim-looking economy might have inspired people to vote for representatives who will try harder to make a difference. Instead of feeling alienated, voters might now believe they must play an active role in deciding who will represent them, rather than leaving that decision to a small minority of voters.

Although the number of active voters could be much better, the voter turnout in Tuesday's election is an improvement over that of past elections. Perhaps voters have decided to take more control in choosing their representatives. Hopefully, this trend will continue.

"MAN, THAT RUSSIAN ECONOMY IS IN TROUBLE"



Walt Whitman



THIRTY SOUND BITES OVER BAGHDAD.

Twenty-something generation puzzling

Sitting around *The Gamecock* newsroom, I can talk to different people with different philosophies about life, relationships and just about any other subject imaginable. I have come to the conclusion that there are only two things we all share in common — we're all members of the twenty-something generation, and we're all confused about the future.

This is an epidemic of the twenty-something generation. We live in the shadows of the baby boomers and balk at their values and ideas. *Time* magazine (July 16, 1990) called us the baby bust generation. I think that is true not only because there are less of us, but also because our ideology is so ambiguous.

Time said we have trouble making decisions, have few heroes, few anthems and few styles that we can call our own. This is true, and it has a lot to do with the way we grew up.

One time it was a rarity to know people who had divorced parents. Today, it is a rarity to see people our age whose parents are still together. For that reason, I believe many of us are scared



JEFF WILSON

of real commitments and life-long relationships.

Thirty years ago, people in their early 20s were getting married and having children. I know few people my age who are even talking about marriage.

I think a lot of us are afraid of marriage because we are afraid of having children. We grew up in an era where "latch-key kids" and "quality time" became buzz phrases, and I don't think the quality time worked. But our parents had to work. We are the products of the television babysitter and computer games playmates. A survey in *Time* said that 45 percent of us

spent more time watching television than we did with our parents, only 43 percent spent more time with our parents.

I think the biggest difference between my generation and my parents' is career goals. Who really knows what they want to do with their lives anymore? I know I want to be in journalism, but what in journalism and where I want to live and work is still undecided.

And I'm not by myself in my confusion. The way the job market is working, we may be the first generation to be less well off than our parents.

Another change that has occurred with the twenty-something generation is activism. We want to be involved, but they are too many causes and too little time to do everything we want to do. Granted, there are some 20 year olds who are committed to causes such as the environment, but there isn't a national issue that has a significant number of us riled up.

Are we a lost generation? I hope not, but sometimes I really don't know.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

President not such a failure

To the editor:

I write this letter to help David Bowden regain some of his lost trust in our president. In the Nov. 2 issue of *The Gamecock*, he initiated a typical leftist smear against the President by giving us his interpretations of recent events to illustrate how he feels Bush has failed.

To begin with, Bowden insinuated that the president supported the massacre in Tiananmen Square. In the realm of international politics, the Chinese are a very important player on the world scene. At the time, the Cold War was still going on, and it would have been silly to isolate China under the circumstances. We can do more to help the Chinese people diplomatically than by cutting them off from the world and leaving them to suffer under their dictators.

Bowden then condemns Bush for doing nothing to support the revolutions in Eastern Europe. America, under Reagan and Bush, had been applying pressure to the Eastern Bloc for years. When communism finally started falling, that kind of support could have resulted in conflict with the Soviet Union. Besides, the Warsaw Pact was quite capable of falling apart by itself without any help from our quite capable president.

And now the real crux of the matter, the budget. I challenge any one of you to read your Constitution to find out who is responsible for government spending. No, never mind. I will tell you. The legislative branch is responsible for the budget. (That's Congress to you and me.) Unfortunately, that branch is controlled by the Democrats, and those are the real culprits behind higher taxes and runaway deficits.

The sad losers in this kind of thinking are the armed men and women in the deserts of Saudi Arabia. While leftist writers like Bowden are degrading the leader of our country, they sit only mere

miles away from the Iraqi army defending America's interest in the region. Bowden has mistaken the president's careful patience in this matter as indecision.

Now I promise you, Mr. Bowden, I am neither Republican nor am I writing this on any monogrammed stationery. I will, however, write Mr. Bush and ask him to send you a step-by-step guide in what he is planning so you will not feel the need to write these senseless editorials anymore.

Darrin Wilcox
English junior

AIDS writer misinformed

To the editor:

This letter is in response to Mr. Johnson's letter of Oct. 29 in which his thesis is that the United States, Canada, West Germany, the United Kingdom and the World Health Organization have formed a conspiracy of epic proportions to "attack and destroy the African civilization" by inventing the AIDS virus and disseminating it through that continent.

Mr. Johnson is mistaken in more ways than one.

Genetically speaking, his "concrete biological law" that it is not possible for HIV (the virus that causes AIDS) to be transferred from a monkey to a human suggests that he does not understand the nature of viruses. They are separate entities that live in various hosts, animal, human or otherwise. Viruses are parasites whose life-cycle depends upon being transferred from one host to another. Various host species are affected differently by the same viruses: AIDS is no more than a bad cold for green monkeys but it kills humans. Viruses can jump host species. HIV could most plausibly have done so via a monkey biting a human or a human eating a monkey.

If this goes against Mr. Johnson's "research," then he should consider rabies, a viral disease spread by infected animal bites

with little acknowledgement of mammalian species boundaries.

He then tells us of the scientist, Dr. Theodore A. Strecker, whose documentary evidence claims that HIV was created at Fort Detrick, Maryland by combining hepatitis B and smallpox. There is no copy of "The Strecker Memorandum" in the Cooper Library. In fact, there is no mention of the good doctor in *The Science Citation Index* whatsoever. Work was done on hepatitis and smallpox at Ft. Detrick, but at the time of this research, the 1970s, virology was in its infancy. Even today, it is questionable whether such viral juggling is feasible. These three viruses are so completely different that it is analogous to combining apples with oranges to make people. Additionally, according to a research virologist at the USC School of Medicine who worked at Ft. Detrick (name withheld by request), anyone can investigate the work done there. The books are open, and there is no evidence to support Mr. Johnson's irresponsible proclamations.

Finally, if HIV was made from smallpox and hepatitis, portions of their genetic codes would be found within the manufactured genome. They are not.

HIV has been around much longer than most people realize. While AIDS only reached epidemic proportions in the 1980s, blood samples from the 1960s contains AIDS antibodies, and there is recent evidence that an English sailor died from AIDS-related illness in 1959. But it could be far older yet. A prototype of the complex gene sequence coding for HIV has been isolated in both humans and chimpanzees, suggesting that an early form of the virus invaded and was incorporated into the genome of an ancestral primate before humans and chimpanzees diverged. (*Nucleic Acids Res.* 17: 6481-6854, Sept. 1989).

Mr. Johnson then posits the World Health Organization's smallpox immunization program as the agent of infection of HIV in Africa. He claims, "It is now certain that who introduced the vac-

cines that contaminated east and central Africa, (sic) with the AIDS virus." By selectively citing a *London Times* front page article (May 11, 1987), he conveniently ignores statements that the vaccine may have merely awakened the " unsuspected, dormant-human immunodeficiency virus," about the origin of which "Central African States were implicated."

Also, the *Times* article only offers the hypothesis that the vaccination program catalyzed AIDS from its historic state as a "minor endemic illness of the Third World into the current pandemic." This is worlds away from treating this possibility as an proven fact. What is stated with confidence is that "the 13-year (smallpox) eradication program ended in 1980, with the saving of two million lives a year and 15 million infections."

Mr. Johnson finally claims that the U.S. government infected the male population of the Tuskegee Institute with syphilis. As Dr. Blander pointed out (letter, Oct. 31), the experiments carried out were on previously infected men whose symptoms had gone into remission. Anyone who wishes to learn more should consult *Sexually Transmitted Diseases*, K. Holmes and coeditors, 1990 McGraw-Hill.

It is arrogant and false to pretend to know all there is about the origin and spread of AIDS. It is a complex disease that is constantly evolving and whose origins appear to go into pre-history. According to Bosko Postic, a M.D. and professor at the Division of Infectious Diseases at USC's School of Medicine, Dr. Robert Gallo, the discoverer of HIV in this country, at the 28th annual meeting of the Infectious Diseases Society of America (Oct. 25-26) stated that the origin of HIV is not known. AIDS is perhaps one of the most serious threats to human civilization today, and attempting to find a racial scapegoat only sows confusion and fear, deflecting attention and energy from the real issue: understanding and curing AIDS.

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