

# editorial

## Vote, then complain

Voting is a privilege and duty. Few people, however, take advantage of the opportunity to take part in their political system. Saturday, Oct. 2 is the last time people can register to vote in the upcoming election.

Some people feel voting in the congressional or local elections is a waste of time. This is not correct. Congress has a tremendous bearing on the workings of our government. If people are not satisfied with the way the legislation or administration of the government is working, they should vote for the candidate that can best do the job.

Nothing can change without the vote from the constituents. The burden for change is placed on the voters. Some people say that their vote will not count. This is ridiculous. Every vote can make a tremendous degree of change.

People complain about the government, the policies, or agencies but they did not even take a few minutes to vote in the last election.

Students who feel strongly about cuts in grants and scholarships should voice their displeasure. If these same senators and representatives remain in office nothing will change. The congressmen will continue to passively vote the way that Reagan wants them to vote.

Students should vote also because many issues that effect them are voted on everyday. The draft, legal drinking age, and abortion are all issues that greatly effect the lives of college students.

Many college students are more informed about politics and issues than the average American citizen.

The same sense of responsibility should be felt in the university student government elections. It was so discouraging to see how many people voted last year. Only a small percentage of eligible voters participated in the elections. How do the students expect to have any voice in the university administration without voting for another student who can represent them?

Some students feel that the student government of a university is just a club or a group of students who enjoy politics. This is far from the truth. The SGA can be a strong and powerful force in the workings of the university. It is virtually the only outlet for students to vent their ideas and problems. However, the SGA is only as strong as the support they receive from the student body. If the amount of voters is representative of the support for SGA then we all need to work harder. Students can make a difference in both their campus politics and national politics. The only way to do it, however, is to get out and VOTE!

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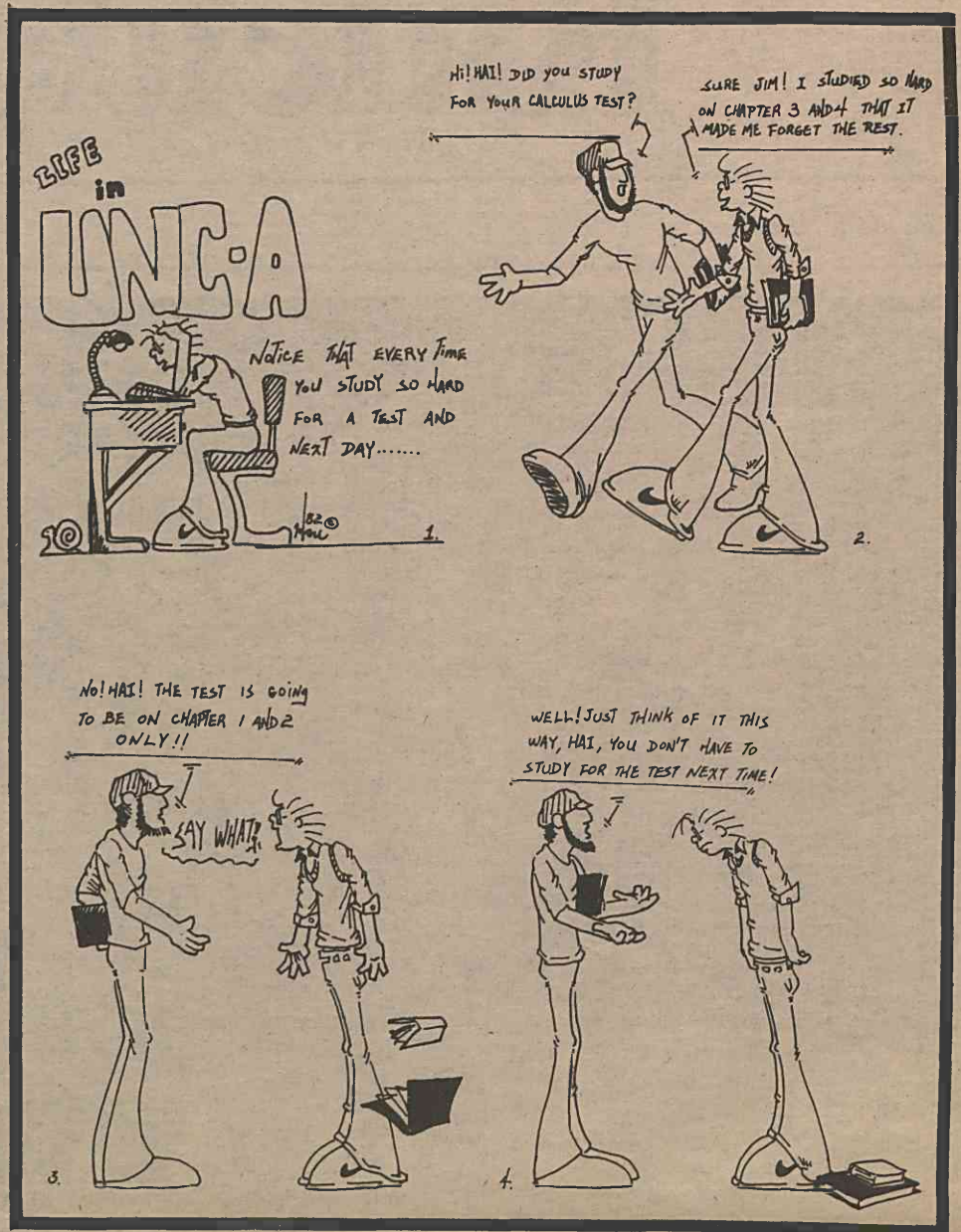
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# hardee

## Drinking and driving, are there solutions?

Raise the drinking age? Many college students would cringe at the thought, but others would welcome a reform in the legal drinking age. Thousands of people lose their lives in alcohol-related accidents each year. A reform in the drinking age might reduce the number of accidents.

One week night last winter, three college students, two young men and one woman, went bar-hopping. It was free beer night at a local bar. These students went to this bar primarily to drink. It was their favorite pastime, like millions of other college students.

When they had their fill they left the bar in two cars. The two young men, who had quite a lot to drink, submitted to the temptation to race. The curves on Merrimon Avenue were not anticipated. The small Honda hit a telephone pole and spun into the path of another car. The young man and woman had to be cut from the crushed car.

The accident resulted in the woman's death. She was only 19 years old. The man was 20. The mental anguish he faces is terrifying.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration [NHTSA]

reported that each year 8,000 people aged 16-24 are killed in alcohol-related accidents. Likewise, 40,000 are disfigured. A Health, Education, and Welfare study reported that 18 to 20-year-olds are one of the heaviest drinking age groups. Drunk driving accounts for half of all auto accidents according to the NHTSA.

These figures are startling, but society continues to promote and approve of drinking. Many drunk drivers who have killed someone are given light sentences or fines. They are soon back on the road, drinking and driving.

The problem is not alcohol. The problem is the lack of responsibility of the people when they drink. Twenty states have raised the drinking age from 18 to 21, and others are seriously considering it.

This action will not prevent all 18 to 20 year-olds from drinking, but the effort will be worthwhile if the number of accidents is reduced and the death rate of innocent victims decreased.

If people refuse to accept responsibility for their actions, restrictions must be enforced. There is also a need for reforms affecting all age groups. This is only a beginning.