

College voters: Turned off by the '96 election?

The College Press Service

CHICAGO--Outside the clothing store Urban Outfitters, 20-year-old Dave Wachter, sporting a goatee and round, reflective sunglasses, discusses his voting philosophy.

"I'd rather select someone based on whatever their individual issues are," said Wachter, a junior at the school of the Art Institute of Chicago. "I just want someone who's thinking the way I think."

Wachter explains that he registered to vote while in high school, but did not choose a major political party. He plans to vote in the presidential elections this fall, but he's not sure for whom.

"I'm not really thrilled about any of the candidates," he said.

It's been a quarter of a century since 18-year-olds won the right to vote, and in the ensuing

years, the youth vote has remained largely unpredictable.

Political scientists say 18-to-24-year-olds are less likely than any other age groups to register with a party or show up in large numbers at the polls. In the 1992 presidential elections, only about half of that age group was registered to vote, and only 43 percent of that number actually voted.

In an age when more Americans say they no longer identify with a political party and profess a loss of faith in the electoral process, the youngest voters might be the most cynical of all.

In 1992, when Bill Clinton campaigned on college campuses and played rock music on his bus tour, a record number of young people--about 20 percent--turned up at the

polls to vote for him.

"The theme for '92 was 'change' [and] that energized a lot of young people," explained Mark Nevins, communications director for the College Democrats.

But national surveys show that many young voters have felt let down by the president. An MTV poll conducted in March showed that nearly 70 percent of young people are turned off to the 1996 presidential elections.

At a time when everything from information to hamburgers can be obtained almost instantaneously, the government may appear to move too slowly. When it came to weighty issues such as health care, the change "didn't come fast enough," Nevins said. "It's the point-and-click generation. Our generation expects it to change quickly."

In 1996, it remains to be

seen how many young people will show up at the polls. And the youth vote itself is up for grabs--by Clinton, Bob Dole or even a third-party candidate.

Wachter's friend and classmate, 21-year-old Wayne Snyder, registered to vote when he renewed his license. That's the result of the so-called motor voter law, a federal statute designed to boost the number of voters by providing registration forms in motor vehicle and other government offices.

Like Wachter, Snyder did not choose a party. "I just didn't want to be affiliated with anyone," he explained.

Although he might vote for Clinton because he "sounds the best of everybody," he'll change his mind "if somebody shows up that's worth listening to," he said.

That's not surprising to

Gwen Lipsky, senior vice president of research and planning at MTV. A recent MTV poll showed support among young people for a potential Reform Party candidate in key states: Michigan, New Jersey, and California.

"As we've seen throughout this election year, young people are still very actively weighing their votes," Lipsky said. "The current support for a Reform Party candidate in these three states shows that the youth vote is still very much up for grabs."

While MTV's Choose or Lose campaign features a national bus tour and promotional stops to register voters, convincing large numbers of young voters to turn out to the polls may prove a challenge. A recent poll by the cable music channel showed that about a quarter, or 26 percent, of young adults ages 17 to 29 said the mud-

slinging and bickering among the candidates was a major turn-off.

Eleven percent of those polled said they didn't trust the candidates; another 11 percent complained the candidates didn't address the issues. Eight percent of young voters said they disliked the candidates, while 4 percent said boredom was the reason they were tuning out the 1996 elections.

While young people may be unenthusiastic about the political process, they do agree on certain issues, according to the same March poll.

A majority of young people support having strong environmental protection laws, raising minimum wage and passing a balanced budget amendment. They were less in agreement. (See ELECTION, pg. 2)

Crime, deficit, moral character major concerns of MC voters

By Alexandra Nulle Dummer Staff Writer

Politics seem to be on everyone's mind as the 1996 presidential gets closer and closer.

According to recent interviews, students on campus do have opinions on the presidential election. It is said that most young people don't vote because they don't really know what it is they want from a candidate, or if they do vote, it is due to their parents' influence. Students questioned around campus recently overwhelmingly affirmed that they planned to vote in the coming election. However, several students expressed that they thought their vote didn't matter. It would be foolish to think that candidates would spend all their time and money traveling around to get votes if it really didn't matter.

Both Republican nominee Bob Dole and President Bill Clinton have major issues concerning them. Dole has promised a 15 percent tax cut if he is elected, to continue the war on drugs, to return to family values, and to increase in military spending, which is a huge plus in a town like Fayetteville. Clinton, however, is concerned with education and has proposed a tax credit for college tuition so anyone can go

to school, which directly affects us as college students. He also has emphasized making sure Social Security and Medicare will continue for future generations, stopping illegal immigrants, and reducing tobacco publicity. Obviously Clinton has some controversial issues on his side, but he seems to be winning in the national polls. Recently Clinton agreed to increase the minimum wage from \$4.25 to \$4.75 an hour starting Oct. 1 with a further hike to \$5.15 next summer, and has also recently signed the welfare reform act which allows individual states to determine how to get welfare recipients off welfare and into jobs.

What do MC students want to see from the next president? Honesty, a lower deficit, and tougher laws on crime seem to be of major concern.

What don't students like about each candidate? Dole has not explained to the people how he will achieve his tax cut and lower the deficit. As far as Clinton, many of you don't trust him because he hasn't kept his promises from the 1992 election and has used the coming elections to make himself look good. Also, the truth about the

Whitewater scandal has still not come out and his escape from the draft for Vietnam makes some wonder if he should be trusted to lead the country.

Fifty percent of students polled said they will vote for Dole and 30 percent for Clinton. Twenty percent said they are undecided because they don't like either candidate or haven't kept up with politics.

Methodist has two student organizations for those who are interested in political issues. The Young Democrats and Young Republicans clubs are both advised by Dr. Trevor Morris, assistant professor of political science. Morris said many people may lack interest in the election because the candidates are "using a lot of catch phrases, but not a lot of substance." He further added that many people do not see a great difference between the candidates except their personalities. He said, "Everything is about leadership and character, which is hard to find."

The Young Democrats and Young Republicans provide opportunities for students to get involved in the political process. Anyone interested in either club can contact Morris at 630-7078.

Fran pays unwelcome visit to Methodist



The recently dedicated Player building was spared by a few feet when this tree was toppled by winds from Hurricane Fran. Fran hit Fayetteville on Sept. 5 with hurricane force winds of approximately 85 miles per hour, leaving the college and most of the surrounding area without power for several days. Fran spared most of the structures at the college, and classes resumed on Sept. 9. See related photo essay on page 5. (Photo by Bill Billings)

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Involvement, independence emphasized at fall convocation

Staff Report

Speakers at the opening convocation Sept. 9 urged students to get involved and develop the passion to be a lifelong learner.

After a vocal performance of "God Help the Outcasts" by assistant registrar Lynley Asay, Student Government Association president Leon Clark called on all students to get involved in campus activities.

After introducing the SGA members, Clark said, "They're involved because they enjoy college, and they enjoy college because they're involved." He explained how the SGA communicates student concerns and proposals and said that President Elton Hendricks has never rejected a proposal from the SGA.

Clark also noted that the Student Life office was accepting volunteers to help area residents

Dr. Hendricks discussed the idea that a student is "not a vessel to be filled, but a fire to be lighted" in Methodist College's opening convocation message.

clean up the damage from Hurricane Fran. He concluded by asking students to "get involved, represent, volunteer, and give blood."

Dr. Hendricks focused his message on differentiating between instruction and education. Referring to the Latin origins of the two words, he described instruction as "filling in" and education as "leading out."

"Good instruction expands data bases," he said. "But education aims to teach students to ask questions."

Dr. Hendricks then described some of the most funda-

mental questions that students should ask themselves. "What is virtue? What is truth? What is the good life? Who am I? What am I to do with my life?" In considering these questions, he explained that answering them does not require more instruction, but requires education and the ability to think for oneself.

"Most problems of the world are not due to a shortage of information," he said. Citing issues such as genetic engineering, environmental pollution, and sex education in public schools, he explained that "contradictions and

complexities are the rule rather than the exception of human existence."

Dr. Hendricks indicated that he believes college students do have the maturity to address complex issues, and described the importance of learning to think for oneself. "Information is so often temporary," he said. "Education has to teach you to learn, grow, and develop."

He concluded his message by telling students, "I hope you learn how to learn and learn to love learning."