

How To Get Into Student Government - Be Weird

"Is there life after student government?" asked the hanging from the neck of one University of Texas reveler as he snorted a quick hit of laughing gas and rejoiced in his party's smashing victory in the recent elections.

The winner, himself, clad in a stovepipe hat, tails and sneakers, stepped around a fellow party member dressed like an inflated pumpkin and outlined one of his aims for the upcoming year. "We're going to tell the students about the regents," declared U T student president-elect Jay Adkins. "These students will have to go out in the world and work for people like the regents. They need to know about them.

It was no ordinary victory party that night in Austin. But then, it was no ordinary student political party that was celebrating. The "arts and Sausages Party" is their name, anarchistic absurdity is their game. Their motto (among others) is "you can hang us on the wall or eat us for lunch but don't throw us away!" Most suprising of all they now hold the two top student positions at the 42,000 student school.

Some of the Arts and Sausages' campaign promises include: turning the university health center into a "clinic of social acceptability" which would provide euthanasia on demand and house a permanent hair removal facility as well as a sweat gland relocation section. The UT police would be disarmed under an Arts and Sausage administration, they said, and the school would be protected by groundskeepers armed with wolverines. They would rename the university "Fat City" to go along with the slogan "Money Talks" and pay toilets would be installed in the faculty and administration restrooms. "Their number twos will make us number one," quips Adkins.

As might be expected, the Arts and Sausage platform was not well received by everyone involved. Assailed by the student newspaper as well as their opponents for not taking things "seriously," Adkins and his vice-presidential partner Skip Slyfield responded by saying, "When our opponents say 'issue' we say 'Gesundheit'".

But yet the Arts and Sausage party did one thing few other student political groups are able to do—they got students to come out and vote. Sixteen percent of the UT student body cast ballots in this year's elections, three times the usual number for a similar large, state school, according to Frank Till, a National Student Association official in Washington who closely follows the student government game across the nation.

"Normally, it's really low—around five percent," says Till. "It's really hard to figure out why." Actually voter turnout at UT is normally higher than at other state schools, but the usual student response to the generally powerless student governments is boreson at best. At the University of Minnesota recently, it took the outlandish "Tupperware Party" to turn out even 2,223 voting students out of a student population of 46,000 for a primary contest. Last year, a University of Minnesota student sparked a bit of interest by running on the "Pail and Shovel" ticket. His main gripe was that there were too many gorillas on the Minneapolis campus, and they were always cutting into cafeteria lines and running amok on campus, ruining curbs. This year's "Tupperware Party" candidate promised to leave town if elected, like he did two years ago after a successful bid for office at the Univ-

ersity of Wisconsin at Milwaukee. "Student government has always been considered a joke around here," says the editor of the student paper, the Minnesota Daily.

On the other hand, Till says students a expensive, private schools turn out in droves for student government elections. "Even at the most apathetic campuses 35 percent will vote but usually at private schools it goes up to 70 or 80 percent," he explains.

Till feels many students tend to reflect the voting patterns of their parents, and if this is true, staying home on election day appears to be definitely in vogue.

The UT's Arts and Sausages duo recognized this dire situation. "This is an election

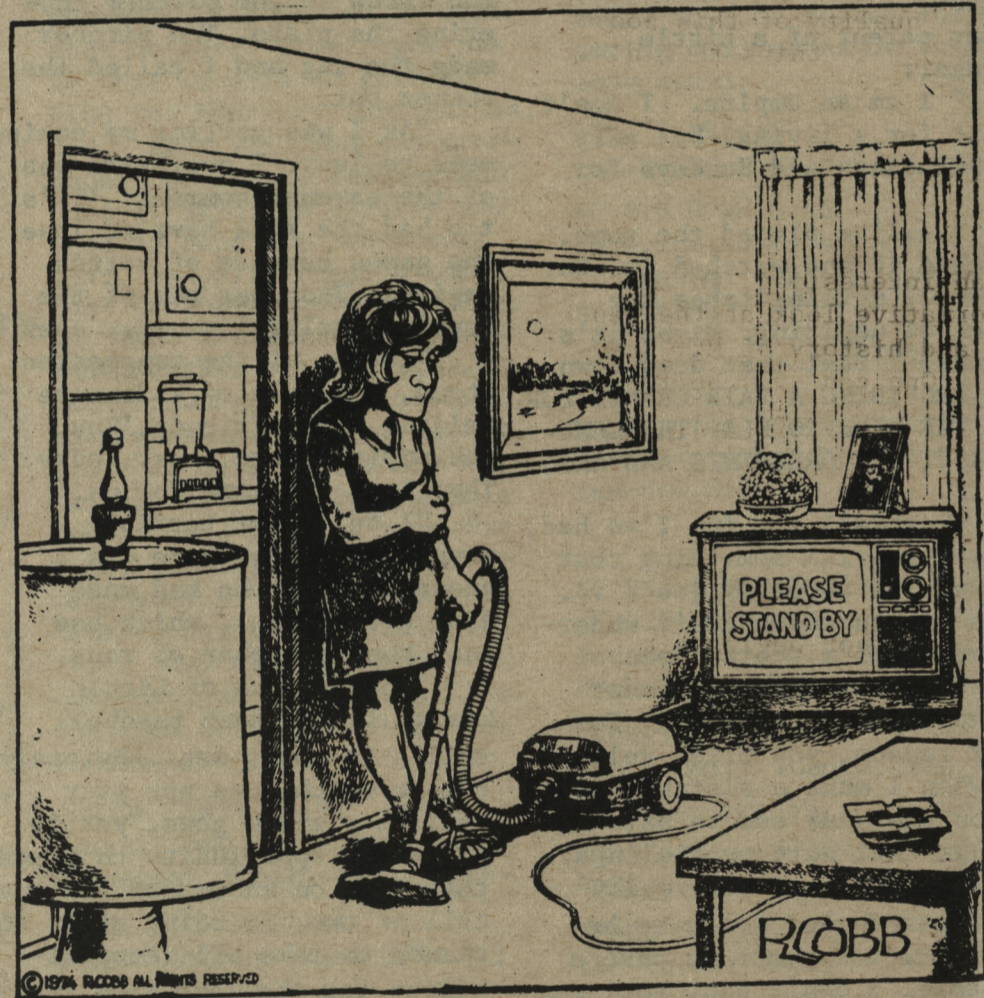
year, it's dangerous to have the mass of voters apathetic and bored about politics," says President-elect Adkins.

"All our plans are directed at getting excitement and energy in. We're going to drag student government wailing and screeching into the streets where students can deal with it," he explains.

"This is gonzo ploitics," Adkins continues. "We don't want to tell students what to do. Students are big enough to do what they please."

Says vice-president Slyfield, "1976 is the year to be funny and creative. We're going to enlist creative energy."

Says outgrowing president Carol Crabtree, "It's a new approach to student government."



It's How You Play Cont.

chose the pitching route and went on to win the game. When the game was over the kid followed me to my car. Fighting his hardest to keep back the tears, he apologized for his actions and thanked me for umpiring the game. He said he had learned a lesson that he would never forget.

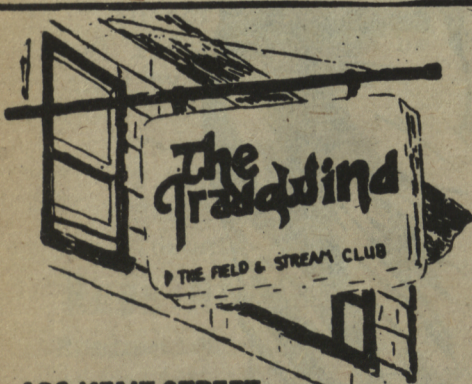
"I can't help but wonder . . . how many more fine young men are missing their chance to develop into outstanding ballplayers because their parents encourage them to spend time umpiring, rather than working harder to play the game as it should be played."

The following morning, Donald Jenson died of a brain concussion.

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