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Dark Skies Make a Proper Backdrop for Gloomy, Turned-off Voters

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It was Election Day in Lafayette Park. About 50 anarchists, Communists, anti-nuclear power protesters, yippies, Native Americans, and two German tourists who were trying to find their guide, were standing in the rain, listening to a 43-year-old man called Wavy Gravy who wore a 10-gallon cowboy hat with small horns.

"Nobody deserves to be president," he proclaimed. "Nobody has solved inflation, nobody has brought the hostages home, and nobody bakes a better apple pie than Mom."

"Let's all vote for Nobody."

The crowd — girls with brightly colored painted daisies on their cheeks, a man dressed all in red with his face covered with green makeup and long-haired hippies in their late 40s — yelled, screamed and applauded.

A few blocks away, a lanky, raven-haired dancer had just stripped away her see-through blouse at Archibald's, a small K Street bar, when she suddenly stopped wiggling, glared at the six men sitting at the bar and exclaimed, "C'mon! You guys act like nobody's even here! Wake up!"

Around the corner, the owner of the Golden Eagle

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lounge, Gregory Maroulis, glanced at the two men quietly drinking at his bar and his yawning barmaid. "This is terrible. I've been in business 20 years and it's never been this bad. Nobody is coming in today.

"I figured we'd have a bunch of folks in here because of the election, but nobody is here. Nobody."

Nobody was at Manhattan Li- quors on K Street either, even though yesterday was the first day in memory that bars and liquor stores in the District could be open on election day. "They're voting today," the man behind the counter explained. "Tomorrow when they see who won — that's when everyone will really start the heavy drinking."

Yesterday may have been the day that Americans finally decided who they want as president. But if the

mood in D.C. bars and restaurants, on street corners and in parks is any reflection of what people were feeling, then the gloomy, overcast sky was a fitting backdrop.

The day did not really belong to Ronald Reagan, Jimmy Carter, John Anderson or anyone else running for the presidency. It belonged to nobody but the blahs.

"I've never seen anything like this," the 22-year-old Archibald dancer said. "I mean, when people don't even get excited about sex, I mean, really."

Leonard Lowenstein polled 147 of his customers during lunch at the Board Room, a restaurant-bar on Vermont Avenue NW, and put it like this:

"Everyone is laughing about it and joking about the election, but deep down they are disappointed and an-

gry, I think, yeah, angry because they don't really have a choice. The people here are frustrated. Why can't we come up with better candidates for the presidency?"

If the bars and shops were empty yesterday, the polling booths were full. Even though voters were dissatisfied about their choices, they were turning out to vote in high numbers.

Fairfax County officials said that an amazing 50 percent of the eligible voters had cast ballots by noon. They expected an eventual 80 to 85 percent voter turnout. In Prince George's County, about 25 to 30 percent had voted by noon. Officials there claimed that was a large turnout considering the morning-long rain. D.C. election officials reported that voting was moderately heavy, with about 20 percent of the Dis-