

editorials

'Vital information' tells us nothing

"The full story . . . all the vital information . . . don't worry . . ."

That's what we keep hearing from the University Wide Task Force on Student Fees. Despite closed doors for the meetings, we're assured that the important information will be passed on.

Today, the Daily Nebraskan presents Chapter One of "All the Vital Information" (see page 1).

In it we learn that one member was absent from the meeting Tuesday. No big deal, but when we ask who was absent all we're told is that it's one of two faculty representatives from the NU Medical Center. No more, no name.

We're told also that the task force members started to discuss their personal viewpoints on student fees, voluntary fees and user fees. That's all we're told, not what those viewpoints are,

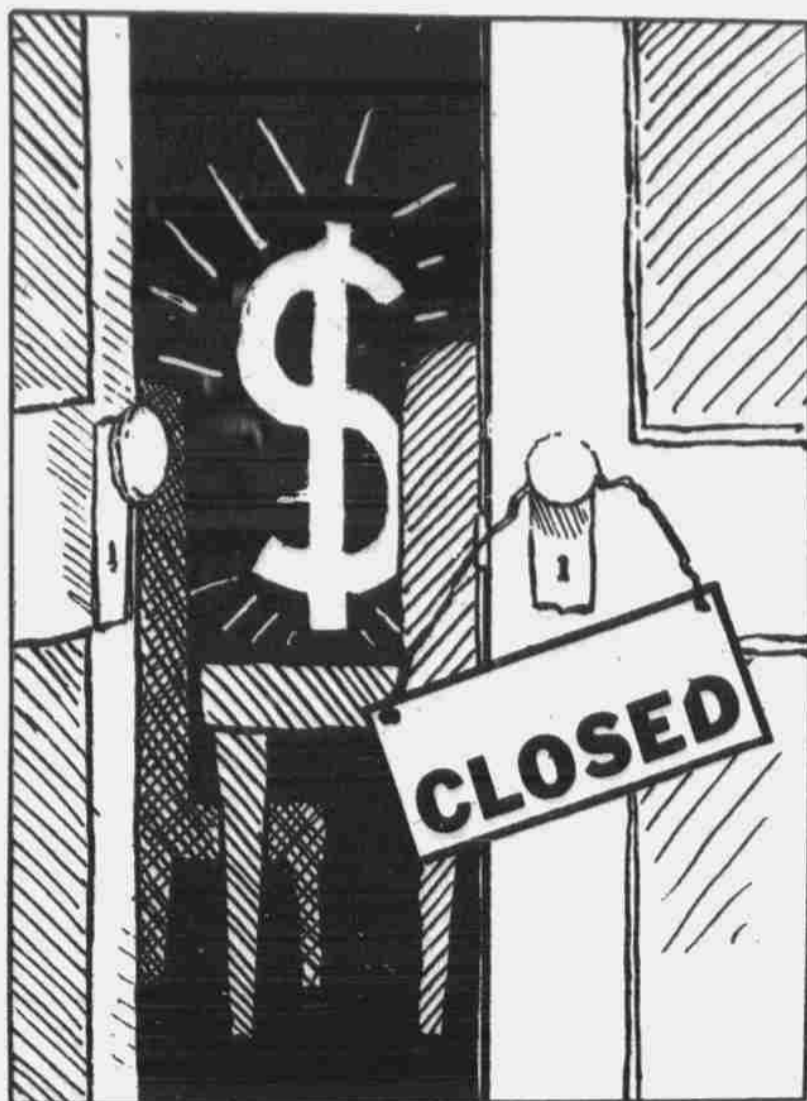
just that they were expressed.

We're told that tentative agreement was reached regarding the study format. We're not told what the format is, just that an agreement was reached.

It is ludicrous to believe that meeting minutes represent all the vital information. The question of student fees is too important to deliberate in the dark. As we pointed out the other day, the discussion of public policy in private is against the principles of Nebraska law.

Some of the information to be presented may not be pretty. Some administrators may not agree with what the NU Board of Regents favors. But, isn't it time to stand up for the right.

Today's example of "All the Vital Information" is proof enough for us. The meetings must be opened in the best interests of the university.



Carter gives HHH lift, hopes for lift with Congress

WASHINGTON—All's not well with the Carter Administration. The President is bewildered that Congress and the country aren't responding to what he regards as worthy ideas and programs. There is unnerving chatter that Jimmy Carter is a one-term president. Clearly he needs support and, like all Presidents before him, reaches for it.

That's one reason he let Sen. Hubert Humphrey know he would be happy to have Air Force One land in Minneapolis where Humphrey has been undergoing cruel chemotherapy treatments for his incurable cancer, a virtual prisoner of modern medicine.

The eminently decent gesture of having the world's most famous airplane land on Humphrey's beloved sod, and provide the plucky Happy Warrior a comfortable return to Washington, actually highlighted Carter's whirlwind transcontinental trip.

In years gone by, Truman and Nixon had called each other a fair number of names, and Truman intensely disliked Nixon. But in 1969, almost 85 years old, there was Truman shaking hands with Nixon and accepting the celebrated piano as a gift for the Truman library.

Nixon, in office only two months, needed Democratic support from a Democratic Congress. Truman, at that point, was held liked by good establishment congressional Democrats.

Truman demurred from Nixon's invitation to play the piano, but then Bess Truman asked Nixon, "Aren't you going to play something?" With that cue, Nixon sat down and played "The Missouri Waltz" (television cameras grinding), not realizing Truman once told interviewer David Susskind that "it's kind of obnoxious as a state song."

Generous gesture

Still, the Nixon gesture seemed generous at the time, and Carter's gesture to Humphrey, certainly no political friend in 1976, must be assumed to be as generous.

It must be remembered, without tears, that Carter was critical of Humphrey, and vice versa, in that odd spring of 1976. He was even more critical of Washington and establishment Democrats.

Also, Humphrey obviously arranged his return to Washington to accommodate the president. Early last week, Vice President Walter Mondale's office let

Humphrey's staff know that the president would like to give him that needed ride back to Washington.

At that time, Humphrey was slated to attend a dinner given in his honor by the Minnesota State Society in Washington on Oct. 20. Some 2,000 guests showed up for the tribute and were sorry to hear that Humphrey's treatments forced him to remain in Minnesota.

Minnesota stop

The next day, the White House announced that Carter would stop in Minnesota to pick up Humphrey on Oct. 23. Humphrey had opted for the plane ride over the dinner, very likely because it isn't easy to resist presidential invitations.

Although one administration spokesman said that Humphrey, because of his condition, required a private plane affording a place to lie down, Humphrey's own staffers say this isn't so, that Humphrey was moving around Minnesota nicely without any such bedding-down conveniences. Old H.H.H. certainly didn't sit down much on Air Force One Sunday. He was lively aboard and also when he entered and exited the plane.

Jimmy Carter can seize moments like this, make like a traditional politician and enhance his image. But he can also be an uncommunicative loner, especially to congressional powers who ultimately act contrary to his wishes. Carter's gesture to Humphrey demonstrates that he understands his own incongruities and the need to respond to them.

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nick thimmesch



That time-compressed journey, designed to bolster support from blacks, urban folk, people who make their living in agriculture, skeptical Jews and indifferent Californians, had mixed results until Carter landed for his Minnesota mission.

With the gallant Humphrey rasping out, "Never give up and never give in," tears came to eyes, and lumps to throats. Whatever Hubert's considerable achievements or lamentable shortcomings, he is an enormously likable man. "Goodbye, Grandpa," called out his grandchildren.

Old H.H.H.

Carter caught the moment. "Every elderly person in our nation, every poor person in our nation, every black person in our nation," he cried mightily, was in debt to old H.H.H. Indeed, there is truth to the statement.

In flying to Washington with Humphrey, Jimmy Carter rode with a liberal-Democratic legend and a man very popular with liberals and conservatives alike in the U.S. Senate—where Carter is having so much trouble. Hubert is being canonized before his time. It was on that heavily publicized plane ride that President Carter signed the bill naming the HEW headquarters building in honor of Hubert H. Humphrey.

Carter's predecessors in the White House made decent and presumably sincere gestures to beloved political figures, usually former presidents, to broaden their own popularity and support. Former President Dwight Eisenhower was sought out by Presidents Kennedy, Johnson and Nixon. Carter himself has gone to former President Ford for a boost on the Panama Canal Treaty.

Awkward gesture

One of the most obvious and awkward gestures of this sort was made on March 21, 1969, when President Nixon loaded the old Steinway piano, played in the White House by Harry S. Truman, into Air Force One, and took off for Truman's hometown, Independence, Mo.

Jimmy visits the farm folk at home; lowans enjoy (yawn) the experience

It takes six months to a year for us citizens to get to know our presidents. That's when they develop image problems.

So last week Jody Powell announced he would devote more time to working on President Carter's. And the very next day, Carter took off on a meandering trip around the country to make speeches and stay overnight in the homes of just plain folks—so they could get to know him.

arthur hoppe

innocent bystander

Probably the most exciting evening was that which Carter spent in the home of Webfield and Mildred McGill or Deerfield, Iowa.

The McGills naturally invited a flock of relatives over to meet him. During dinner, he regaled them with a detailed dissertation on his natural gas anti-deregulatory policies. Unfortunately, this so upset Uncle Jebediah's stomach that he had to be excused halfway through the pineapple upside-down cake.

Carter thoughtfully changed the subject to his massive

housing and community development bill. Mildred McGill said she sure would love to hear all about that, but she'd better get the dishes done. Her sister, Betty, insisted on helping. The two McGill children, David, 12, and Linda, 10, remembered their homework without being asked.

In the kitchen, Betty complained that wasn't really Billy Carter because he had a drop to drink nor had he said anything funny. Mildred explained it was Billy Carter's brother.

"Now don't ask me who Billy Carter's brother is," said Betty testily. "I hate trivia questions."

In the living room, Carter was explaining to Webfield McGill and the two remaining cousins that if the Federal Reserve Board would only hold the line on the prime interest rate, this would stimulate non-fiduciary economic expansion and enable his administration to lower the unemployment rate from 6.9 to 6.7 percent by fiscal 1979. After 45 minutes, he asked if there were any questions.

"Do you like to watch Monday Night Football?" asked Webfield, his hand on the television dial.

Carter said he would prefer to discuss how much he hoped to stem the exodus of the middle class to the suburbs through revitalized community action programs in the inner cities.

The two cousins said this reminded them that, as one put it, "tomorrow is a working day, doggone it," and they regretfully took their leave.

By now, however, the president was on a first name basis with Betty, Mildred and "you old sleepy-head, you," as he kept referring to Webfield, whose mouth was agape at Carter's exposition of how much he hoped everybody could be friends in the Middle East.

"Any questions?" asked Carter.

"Would you like a bedtime snack?" inquired Webfield, trying to wind the cat as he put the clock out.

The next day, the McGills told reporters they sure enjoyed getting to know their president better and to include them in the 59 percent of Americans who approved of the way he was handling his job, whatever it might be.

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