

Editorial

Quality universities require sacrifices

A strong university system should be the goal of any state. Strong universities provide an overall base for jobs, qualified educated graduates, industry and in the long run, a stronger economy.

Weak universities provide worthless degrees, a hurting state economy, scare away qualified educators and businesses and leave themselves open to being called "football factory."

UNL is somewhere just above mediocrity, but it's slipping. Recruitment of new professors is difficult when they could be paid more and live in a better climate elsewhere.

We live in the dawning of a computer age, yet UNL computer science majors stand in line for time on outdated computers.

Our libraries need books and other materials. Almost every academic department has some budget complaint, many of them realistic.

The need for more funding is apparent. The state has to lean toward several possible tax solutions, as it becomes increasingly obvious that federal aid is not forthcoming. President Reagan has said the state must pick up where the federal government has left off.

Gov. Bob Kerrey, motivated by his decreasing federal commitment, especially to agriculture, has proposed a five-year \$250 million state program to develop and diversify the economic base of rural Nebraska, according to last reports.

To accomplish this, Kerrey wants to freeze the state budget at the current level of \$823 million, a \$41.6 million decrease in his original proposal of \$864.6 million.

Reports said Kerrey acknowledged that this continuation of the state budget of \$823 million would actually be a cut in spending because of inflation and the demands of welfare and education entitlement programs.

State Sen. Jerome Warner, chairman of the appropriations committee, was quoted in Monday's Daily Nebraskan as saying in response to this latest cut that "several million dollars of functions that have previously been funded by the state will not be funded, but it's too early to say which ones."

No one is sure where these further cuts will come from, but it is hoped that the university doesn't have to go through another Morrill (Elephant) Hall scare.

Most likely this latest budget reduction proposal would mean no chance of state employee wage increases, including college professors.

A university that asked for a 12.7 percent increase in funding and had that cut to 4 percent, cannot be expected to provide a quality education if the increase is cut even more.

Instead, under present proposals, state senators and Kerrey can look for a decrease in the quality of an already struggling university.

Unfortunately the best solution to the shrinking state revenue is to raise taxes.

Kerrey is looking at the possibility of taxing services that are not currently taxed. LB715 would repeal several state tax exemptions and increase state income by an estimated \$44 million annually.

And there is always the possibility of raising the state income tax.

No one likes to hear of tax increases, but the alternative of losing crucial state programs and institutions is far worse than the added burden of tax dollars for citizens.

We also would urge some more creative ways of strengthening the university budget, from both the NU Board of Regents and other sources.

A couple of years ago the University of West Virginia's football program made headlines by giving the struggling academic segment of the university some of its surplus.

Imagine that. It might have been creative, regents, to ask UNL Athletic Director Bob Devaney to consider giving the general fund some of the football surplus instead of building a new athletic training table/study area when the old one was at least functional.

An athletic program cannot meet the needs of the scholar/athlete if the athlete has no classes to attend.

Solutions to the university's problems exist, but they require sacrifice on the part of school administrators, Nebraska taxpayers and students.

However, the sacrifices should not be at the expense of university quality.



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THE ONLY THINGS THE STAR WARS DEFENSE SYSTEM WILL DEFINITELY KNOCK OUT...

...JOB CORPS, STUDENT AID, MEDICARE, ETC...

'Endorsement game' goes too far

All right. Enough is enough, and this is too much. It was bad enough when it was just Joe DiMaggio telling us about coffee makers and Jack Klugman spouting off about personal copiers. But now the "celebrity endorsement" game has gone too far. (Wrong! This is not another column denouncing Geraldine Ferraro's Pepsi commercial — though she certainly deserves all she gets!)



James Sennett

Just last week, two front page non-news stories showed what suckers we really are — how eager we are to believe something, as long as the right person says it.

I refer to the stories about Bernhard Goetz proposing the arming of private citizens and the Rev. Everett Sileven calling for no punishment for victimless crimes. I won't even insult your intelligence by pointing out the glaring "sour grapes" ploy at work in both comments. Rather, I would like to reflect on the dangerous road we have taken from Joe "Mr. Coffee" DiMaggio to Bernhard "Mr. Colt 45" Goetz. Perhaps we will arrest the trend before it gets any crazier.

Have you ever wondered why the makers

of "Mr. Coffee" called Joe to do their commercials instead of you? Was it because of his well-known and long-demonstrated expertise in the art of coffee making? Did it have anything at all to do with who knows what about coffee? Of course not. They chose Joe and not you because the coffee-drinking generation knows Joe DiMaggio and not you.

The logic is flawless: "Hey, this guy was a big hero with the New York Yankees in the 1950s, so naturally he should know all about coffee!" Sounds silly, right? But how many times every day do you fall for the same insane reasoning?

Now, back to our non-news stories. Suppose I had called a press conference last week to announce that I had decided that all American citizens should carry fire arms. How much attention do you think I would have gotten? Even if I had had the affair catered by French bakers, I doubt if anyone would have shown up. Who cares what I think about gun control?

So why is Bernhard Goetz an authority? Is it because Goetz has spent years studying and teaching sociology or criminal psychology? Is it because he is an elected official whose convictions would sway the policies governing millions of lives? No. Bernhard Goetz is a coward who made headlines by doing what any coward could do — he pulled a gun in a crowded subway and started shooting. Instant celebrity.

Instant expertise. Instant page one.

Everett Sileven is not a coward. He is a man of conscience who chose to defy law rather than conviction. But that hardly makes him an expert on jurisprudence. Yet again he gets page one when neither you nor I would get the time of day.

Is it the fault of the ever-maligned news media? Partly. But then again, media is business too, and they don't waste their time with things no one cares about (French catering notwithstanding). No — you knew about these stories and so did I. We read them. The headlines about Goetz and Sileven caught our eyes. We propagate such non-news by being interested in the trivialities of celebrity. Our lives are so saturated with numbing convenience that we mistake contentless gossip for significant information.

The really sad part is we have not really even been duped by Joe DiMaggio types. It's more like Mrs. Olson or Morris the Cat. We never heard of these creatures before their creators told us they were experts. Now we are allowing Goetz, Sileven and countless other flash-in-the-pan, overnight successes shape our thoughts on issues they know no more about than we. I vote for wising up. I vote for asking, "Just who is this guy, anyway?" (You can start with me.) I vote for a public which gets its information from informed sources. All in favor, raise your croissant.

Goetz incident disgraces law and order

On Dec. 22, 1984, Bernhard Goetz made a choice. When he entered that now-notorious subway car, he did not go to the right where about 20 passengers were sitting, but to the left where four black youths were sitting alone.



Richard Cohen

When one of the youths asked him how he was doing, he said he was doing fine. When a bit later one of them asked him for \$5, he neither froze nor panicked, nor attempted to move away. Instead, he shot them all one by one, two in the back, and then methodically checked them for wounds. Finding one without blood, he said, "You don't look so bad, here's another." With that, Bernhard Goetz, hero to so many, shot Darryl Cabey, 18, once again, and got off the train.

That account of the shooting, including the quote, is Goetz's own. It's contained in a police report and was presented to a New York grand jury which, in a feat of legal alchemy, converted the lead of attempted murder into the gold of self-defense. It indicted Goetz only for illegally carrying a gun but not for using it without

justification.

The police report of the incident is now public and so, in a way, is the working of Goetz's mind. His ego has been so fertilized by his newspaper clippings that he thinks his one-way shootout was a beer-house putsch. He lectures on the collapse of civil authority, the need of citizens to pack a rod and, throwing caution to the wind, gives us a peek into a mind that were it a dump, would be eligible for federal cleanup funds: "I wish this never happened and I were just an innocuous gun-toting honkie on the street."

There you have it. The police report coupled with Goetz's characterization of himself in racial terms, suggests what some people long suspected: The shooting was racially motivated. It's possible Goetz went looking for young blacks because it was they who had once mugged him and because it was they he feared. If that's the case, then when it comes to fear, he has something in common with many urban Americans, both black and white.

Certainly politicians knew almost from the start that the Goetz case was about something very basic — fear of crime which is code for fear of young blacks. The pels ran scared, straight into the arms of the new hero — Bernie Goetz.

But the facts have soured this tale of heroic vigilantism and Goetz has emerged as the problem he was supposed to solve.

He is not the response to the breakdown of law and order; he is the breakdown of law and order. He's free like the muggers he's always mouthing off about, a symbol of the lawlessness he condemns. Like the stereotype of a Southern Klansman, he's convinced he had to take the law into his own hands. And once again it appears to some, particularly blacks, that justice has worked in the staged manner of a wrestling match in which popularity determines the outcome in advance.

There's good reason now to believe that self-defense had nothing to do with Goetz's shooting of four strangers on the train. Instead, there's reason to believe it was racism or, if you will, fear based on race.

Bernhard Goetz haunts New York like Jack the Ripper did London. He feeds on its fears and sickness. He's a stain and a disgrace — a symbol of the kind of justice New Yorkers once thought came only with grits and Spanish moss.

It's supposedly difficult to seek yet another grand-jury indictment and even harder for the governor to intervene with a special prosecutor. But the real issue is not Goetz's ultimate guilt or innocence, but public confidence in the criminal-justice system.

Somehow Goetz has to be tried. He made his choice. Now New York has to make its.

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