

Nebraskan Editorials Progress Vs. Tradition

Spring is the poets' overly used thesaurus, the farmers' long awaited work season and the average person's font of creation. Spring can stimulate to action the dormant functions of nature and it can also stimulate to constructive action the individual.

But as the old saying goes, in a perverted form: "If it be Spring can Winter be far behind?" This may be applied to the campus and the individuals which move and live on it. Each Spring there develops within organizations a sense of improvement as evidenced in interviews which determine candidates for office or the officers themselves. A typical question in every interview is "Do you have any ideas for the improvement of this organization?" Those aspiring to candidacies anticipate this question and probably spend several hours before the interviews forming an answer which they think will satisfy the interviewers. The pity of this is that the ideas very seldom get beyond the room in which they were expressed and the organizational machinery reappears in the Fall identical or nearly so to its former self.

sential to the firm moulding of a society, but when one hinders the other by an excessive emphasis, an imbalance occurs which has, as evidenced in history, caused the decay and decline of once firmly established institutions.

New ideas, intertwined with logic and practicality should not be accepted eagerly in an interview and discouraged in practice. And those ideas expressed to impress others should not be abandoned for the less difficult established pattern the work of someone else.

Tolerance of new ideas is necessary by instructors so that students will continue to think in terms of progress and not stand and stolid dogmas of the past or of a person.

Moderation is necessary in tempering the progressive with the tradition and if exercised will prove the champion of the future—the future based on the new ideas of today. J. H. B.

Afterthoughts

Happy Birthday

The Union is likely to be overflowing with students Friday when it celebrates its 17th birthday.

In addition to the "Good Old Days" decorations and old-time activities, the slashed food prices in the Crib no doubt will attract multitudes. And the multitudes may wish the Crib were larger and the celebration were longer.

Pre-birthday congratulations to the Union. And orchids to you for your low prices and imaginative planning.

Organized Confusion

Recent developments in Southern Viet Nam are quite confusing to say the least.

The ingredients to political chaos include the private armies of two religious sects, an outlaw band headed by a gangster who became so powerful that he bought the police of Saigon, Communist agitation, a chief of state lounging on the Riviera, two divisions of French troops and a confused, but surprisingly victorious premier.

Over the weekend it seemed as though each new press release would state that Premier Diem was in, Bao Dai was out, or vice versa. Things are relatively peaceful now in Viet Nam with the government only having to contend with the religious sects, Communists and 750,000 refugees.

The Self-Governed Cooperation Needed In Student Affairs

By LOUIS SCHOEN

In May, 1952, in the wake of a large scale "panty raid" which cost its victims several hundred dollars in damaged or stolen property, a student assembly expressed its condemnation of such a barbaric goings-on and University officials expressed their confidence the discipline taken against the raid would prevent any such occurrences in the future.



There were promises then of co-ordinated police protection of the campus, in case of future uprisings. And the students pledged their co-operation in preventive measures.

In May, 1955, in the wake of a criminal riot which made the '52 affair look like child's play, students again expressed their condemnation of such barbaric goings-on. University officials promised future police protection of the campus, and expressed their confidence the discipline taken against leaders of the raid would prevent any such occurrences in the future. The students have pledged their co-operation in preventive measure (although denying the administration proper co-operation in disciplinary action).

Sounds rather like a soap serial doesn't it? Different story. Different leads. Same plot. As one of my favorite profs likes to say, history doesn't necessarily repeat itself but it frequently regurgitates. The regurgitation is usually more unpleasant than was the original stomach ache.

Just what measures are needed to prevent future riots?

The lack of effective co-operation from the student body to ensure proper disciplinary action against this year's rioters narrows the field of possible preventive action considerably.

Perhaps the University will, this time, ensure future police protection of the campus.

But negative measures are not sufficient. Something positive is needed to eliminate "panty raids" from the active consideration of minds.

An annual spring event—a real "tomwallager" under official Uni-

versity sanction—conceivably could help.

Establishment of the All Men's Advisory Board for "closer cooperation among men's groups" may provide part of the answer. At least it should unite men's organizations in efforts to avert future riots.

The Nebraskan editor suggested the riot was due partly to "disrespect for each other" by the administration and students, growing out of "mutual indifference" and "ignorance of each other's needs, wants and rights." I have noticed privately with dismay, previously this year, that Chancellor Hardin has not since his arrival here spoken to an all-University assembly. I have noted previously in this column what I felt was a general misunderstanding by students of University policy due to failure of the administration to clarify its position.

What is the solution for this "disrespect," "mutual indifference" and "ignorance"?

I would suggest establishment of a joint student-faculty-administration committee on University affairs, as a real sounding board for the needs, wants and rights of all three groups. It should have the broadest possible jurisdiction and influence. It should include the broadest possible cross-section of student interest. It should include students who are not and never have been engaged in student activities, as well as leaders in activities; students of average scholarship as well as honor students; students paying their way through school entirely with their own earnings as well as those being financed entirely by parents and mostly by scholarships.

Through regular discussions of problems affecting all phases of University life—of the needs, wants and rights of students, faculty and administration—I think such a committee could bring the interests of these three groups into closer proximity. By its suggestions, it could carefully direct the course of University affairs in a manner befitting an institution of higher learning. It will eventually make the University appear more as a source of higher knowledge and wisdom and less as a manufacturer of playboys and point-conscious activity people.

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THE GREAT CAP and GOWN CONTROVERSY

The cap and gown season is upon us, and with it comes the perennial question: which side of the cap should the tassel hang on?

This is an argument that arises every year to roll the academic world, and it is, alas, no closer to solution today than it was in 1604 when Fred Tassel invented the troublesome ornament.

Fred Tassel, incidentally, never made a penny from his invention. The sad fact is he never took out a patent on it. This tragic oversight becomes understandable, however, when one considers that patents were not invented till 1851 by Fred Patent, himself a pitiable figure. A compulsive handwasher, he died in his fourteenth year, leaving behind a wife and five spotless children.

But I digress. We were discussing which side of the cap the tassel should hang on.

For many years the universally accepted practice was to hang the tassel over the front of the cap. This practice was abandoned in 1942 when the entire graduating class of Northwestern University, blinded by tassels hanging in their eyes, made a wrong turn during commencement exercises and ended up at the Great Lakes Training Center where, all unwitting, they were inducted into the Navy for five year hitch.

There is one school of thought—large and growing daily larger—which holds that the tassel should be worn on the same side you carry your Philip Morris cigarettes. Thus a quick glance will show you where your Philip Morris are and save much time and fumbling.

This makes a good deal of sense because when one wants a Philip Morris, one wants one with a minimum of delay. One does not relish being kept, even for a second, from the clean, delicate flavor of Philip Morris, so artfully blended, so subtly concocted to please the keen and alert taste buds of young smokers. One chafes at any obstacle, however small, that is put in the way of enjoying this most edifying of cigarettes, so pleasing to the perceptive palate. Here, in king size or regular, at prices that do no violence to the slimmest of budgets, is a firm white cylinder of balm and pure, abiding content.

There is another group, small but vocal, that insists the tassel should hang over the back of the cap. The tassel, they say, is a symbol like the bullfighter's pigtail, signifying honor and courage.

They are wrong. Bullfighters wear pigtails for only one reason: to keep the backs of their necks warm. Do you have any idea what a draft a bull makes when he rushes past you? A plenty big one, you may be sure.

In fact, upper respiratory infections, contracted in the wake of passing bulls, are the largest single cause of bulling fatalities. I have this interesting statistic from the Bullfighters Mutual Life Insurance Company of Hartford, Connecticut, one of the few insurance companies in Hartford, Connecticut, which writes insurance exclusively for bullfighters. Incidentally, Hartford, the insurance capital of America, is a most interesting city and well worth a visit if you are ever in New England, as northeastern United States is, for some reason, called. Hartford can be reached by bus, train, plane, and the Humboldt Current. Try to make your visit in spring, when the actuaries are in bloom.

But I digress. We were talking about what side to wear the tassel on. An ingenious solution to this troubling problem was proposed a few years ago by Fred Sigafoos, perhaps better known as "The Quoit King of Delaware." An early forerunner of Mr. Sigafoos, Humboldt Sigafoos (who later invented the current which bears his name) was granted a monopoly by King George III on all quoits manufactured in Delaware. Somehow the royal appointment was never rescinded and from that day to this, every quoit made in Delaware has been a Sigafoos Quoit.

Well, sir, Fred Sigafoos once suggested that an equitable settlement to the great tassel controversy would be to starch the tassels so they stood upright and hung on no side of the cap at all. Mr. Sigafoos was, of course, only seeking to broaden his market, because after graduation, what can you do with an upright tassel but hurl quoits at it?

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Campus Circuits Right To Know Challenged Knowledge Necessary To Survive

From Columns

Mr. Harry A. Levinson, of Beverly Hills, California, has lately been involved in a row with the United States government. Because it is not Mr. Levinson's fight alone—because 165,000,000 other Americans are deeply involved along with him the matter at issue bears examination.

Mr. Levinson protested the Postmaster General's seizure of a volume of Aristophanes' Lysistrata which had been mailed to Mr. Levinson, a dealer in rare books, by the Hammersmith Bookshop in England. The Postmaster General told Mr. Levinson that the volume "contains numerous passages which are plainly obscene, lewd and lascivious in character and which are well calculated to deprave the morals of persons . . . and almost equally certain to arouse libidinous thoughts in the minds of the average, normal reader." After Mr. Levinson went to court to challenge the validity of the law under which the book had been seized, the Post Office Department finally gave it back. But it did so only after receiving "assurance . . . that the book in question is not for general distribution and is intended for delivery to a collector of rare books." In other words, a seasoned rare-book collector might be trusted with it—but not the "average, normal reader."

Lysistrata is certainly a frank-spoken play; whether its passages are "well-calculated" to deprave morals depends upon what was in Aristophanes' mind when he wrote it; whether it is "certain to arouse libidinous thoughts in the minds of the average, normal reader" depends upon one's assessment of the character of the average, normal reader.

But there is much more involved here than the merits or demerits of the Greek classic.

This is a time when censorship, in general, is enjoying a vigorous revival in this free land. More and more people are telling more and more other people that their tender little minds aren't able to weather the shock of exposure to this or that idea. The solicitude is not confined to the area of ordinary morality. This is a time when, in spite of the fragile quality of world "peace," the American people were for one year denied the vital knowledge that a hydrogen bomb had been exploded which was able to wipe out a whole state. This is a time when, in the face of the most cunning and complicated ideological threat ever raised against freedom, a teacher takes his professional life in his hands if he tries to acquaint his students with the nature of the Communist threat. This is a time when, in the face of an unprecedented need for this democratic people to be informed, the public was banned last year from 41 per cent of Congressional committee sessions where public business of the most critical importance was being transacted. It is a time when a copy of Marx's Das Kapital under a scholar's arm raises fearful suspicions of his loyalty; when the Soviet newspapers Pravda and Izvestia are banned from the mails; when a Midwestern lady can command a scattering of respectful applause by denouncing Robin Hood as a Communist tract.

Censorship is not new. What is new, and alarming, is its increasingly casual acceptance by a people with a venerable tradition of liberty.

Freedom came to the Western World, and to America, because some men dared to assume that ordinary people had in them the innate stuff to be noble in their own right—the ability to discern, to exercise that restraint and judgment which had until then been considered the exclusive endowments of their "betters."

One of these men, John Milton, declared 300 years ago that "our faith and knowledge thrives by exercise . . ." He wrote that if all judgments were left to the censors, "to be a common, steadfast dunce would be the only pleasant life."

This is no time for America to be breeding a community of common, steadfast dunces. The very format of a free nation, spreading the responsibility for stewardship among all the people, demands the steady, purposeful development of uncommon men with the grasp and the character to make sound decisions in the heat of crisis.

How shall we deal with the present crisis? Not by making a virtue of ignorance. Five hundred million Chinese followed 200,000,000 Russians into the Communist trap because they didn't know it was oiled. They went for bait labeled "security" and "land reform" and "progress" because they lacked the experience and perception to recognize the phonyness of the promises.

The character, the competence, the ruggedness demanded of our kind of uncommon man are not grown in a hothouse; the facts of life and politics aren't learned in A Child's Garden of Verses. They are developed only by practice in appraising—in sorting right from wrong.

There is far less peril in books—whether plain-spoken classics or claptrap comics—than in the American family's failure to inculcate youth with the sense to discriminate between quality and trash. There is less reason for concern over young people's exposure to Das Kapital than over the chance that they will grow up innocent of the fraud it preaches. There is less ground for worry about any American's contamination by Lysistrata than about his degradation by a clique of censors who believe themselves to be made of some special kind of clay. This is a poor time to tolerate tinkering with the people's right to know, when knowledge is a condition of survival.

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