Nebraskan Editorials

Exam Week Problems

A week ago, a Nebraskan editorial reported erroneously the circumstances concerning a proposal within the Faculty Senate to cut the examination period to one week. It was incorrect on two counts: first, the extra time would be used for classes and would not mean that students and faculty could leave school earlier; and second, examinations would last for two and one half hours instead of only two.

The number of days which the University is in session—including the period set aside for examinations—is a prescribed number. It cannot be altered (except for a possible few days) without endangering accreditation or getting into trouble with the Veterans Administration. For this reason, the administration could not possibly let students out a week early.

The original proposal made by the examination committee of the Faculty-Senate called for three tests a day. Classes would end on a Friday, one special exam would be given on Saturday and six days of exams, three each day, would follow starting Monday. This allows for 19 test periods, the same that the University now has. All study time would be eliminated prior to tests, and classes (in the case of first semester) would resume immediately on the next Monday.

Since the length of each test period would be practically the same, there would be no change in the amount of material covered by instructors, nor the value placed upon tests.

The background to the proposal is clouded by the fact that Senate meetings are closed. The faculty appears to be split in half over the question. It does not seem to be a question of convenience on the part of faculty members, but rather a question of how each faculty member can best serve the interests of his students.

The split is caused by differences among the courses offered at the University. On the one hand are those courses which depend for the most part upon class performance—particularly labs. On the other hand are those courses which depend heavily upon final exams as a medium of learning.

For those who teach the former courses, final tests are not as important, and two weeks of exams cut into class time. Those who teach basically lecture courses consider these tests as essential in focalizing more important aspects of the course for the student. These teachers, therefore, also think more time then one week is necessary for preparation by the students.

The proposal would also mean that time set aside for grading tests would be greatly reduced, as would time for tying up loose ends—including preparing grade reports.

There exists the possibility of a compromise which would allow for a few days' breathing time before exams begin. Such a compromise was evidently suggested by the administration at the very beginning.

In the past, students have fought for as much extra study time as possible. Although the students are not being consulted in this case, they are being considered—on both sides. Most students, however, would find that the proposed exam schedule would work a real hardship on them, depending, of course, upon which type of course they were taking. Our plea to the Senate is that since a sacrifice must be made on one side or another, that that sacrifice be made on the side affecting the least number of students.

—K. N.

Once Upon A Pixie . . .

For the first time in the history of The Nebraskan, a rival newspaper has reared its ugly head on campus.

It was rather amusing on Ivy Day to find deposited in the living rooms all over campus copies of the Pixie News, especially since Saturday is not a publication day for The Nebraskan. From all reports, however, this upstart journalistic endeavor will only be published annually each Ivy Day, which relieved The Nebraskan staff, who were aware that the circulation department of the Pixie News threatened to outdo The Nebraskan.

In all seriousness, the publication which was circulated on Ivy Day shocked not a few persons on campus and left the majority of students rather chagrined. The editorial staff of the Pixie News evidentally did not nor do not realize to what extent the paper violated laws of libel, and if proof could be established as to the sponsorship of the publication, those staff members would find themselves liable to court action which might result in much more money than it took to print the Pixie News. Although an attempt was made to disguise names, the persons referred to and the implications in statements about them could probably be proved libelous in court. It would be wise if the editorial staff of the Pixie News kept close guard of membership roles, alumni's names, printing arrangements, etc. For the little attempt at humor backfired on several counts, and some students and faculty members are out for blood.

It is unfortunate that the Pixie Press was more childishly indignant and less logically constructive. Frankly, it resembled a small child crying over a broken toy and blaming its mother for not fixing it. The paper's attempt to criticize the Administration policies fell short of complete adolescent whimperings. To this editor, it was infuriating in that the sponsoring group failed to recognize the impact which evident basic opinions could have had on the students who read the paper. Instead of constructive and logical criticism, the sponsoring group fell into the traditional pitfall of dissatisfied University students—covering up any ambition to get things changed by sitting back and ridiculing the source of the trouble. Whether right or wrong, criticism can be justified if it is logically based and constructive.

As to the inserts on campus personalities, the Pixie News receives a horse laugh. Fishwives and tattle-tales have nothing on this type of childish behavior and some four and five-year-olds would never stoop to such incredible depths. To most of the comments came the wise rejecting remark, "It's his or their own business."

An attack on individuals and their shortcomings is one of the lowest forms of human behavior and can only be considered proof that there are some college students, supposedly adult, who are devoid of respect for privacy and human feelings.

All in all, however, the Pixie News was daring and risque rarity. However, the secrecy which shrouds its editorial source should be taken into account by those who may have been too easily impressed with what the paper had to say. Those expressed opinions under cover of anonymity should be regarded as suspicious and generally lacking in some essential phase of truth.

The Pixie News made a good eye-opener for breakfasting students on Ivy Day and a good lining for wastebaskets. Besides, that's where hot air should be kept, in a metal container.

—J. H. B.

Campus Circuits

Tocqueville Forecasts Danger Of Straight-Jacet For Truth

From The Daily Kansan
University of Kansas

"I know of no country in which there is so little independence of mind and real freedom of discussion as in America. The will of man is not shattered, but softened, bent and guided." So spoke Alexis de Tocqueville in 1830.

He pinpointed the danger which has been prevalent in our democracy for a much longer time than the more recent fright which the Wisconsin senator has implanted. That danger is the fear of being shunned by friends because of, not wrong or dangerous ideas, but of varying opinions which may sound tainted.

Even those who believe in your innocence," de Tocqueville added, "will abandon you, lest they should be shunned in their turn."

The fears have since continued to grow, and the patterns of thought are subsequently narrowing.

Sen. J. William Fulbright (D.-Ark.) has attributed a part of such thought censorship to the tightening of communication channels. In doing so he points to the increasing monopolistic trend of newspapers, radio and the motion picture industry.

His opinion is shared by many; too often, those who feel that they know teh truth and would like to say it fear that those who control the communication outlets would relay the opinions unfairly, or not at all. Recently, the danger has become not so closely related to the publication of ideas, as to their censorship after they have been communicated.

Because of this danger, it is generally true that few wish to speak openly. It is further evident that many who do speak alter their thoughts to those which they are certain will be sanctioned by society. A block to democracy?—yes, and yet a direct result.

It was the chairman of the Reece committee of the House of Representatives who said that the trustees of the tax-exempt foundations would be careful of promoting ideas which run contrary to those the public "wishes, approves and likes."

It was the United States military academies which banned student debate on the question of recognition of Red China.

And, it was the federal government that held loyalty investigation of employees, down to the last janitor. The ideas that challenged the traditional thought patterns were immediately suspect material—and all too frequently branded Communistic.

Auxiliary to the government's probes and checks is the American Legion, which carefully blackmarks all "unpatriotic" expressions.

Thought can never be completely controlled, but its development can be guided in many ways. Because of this educators have been among the first to be watched, criticized and controlled.

One of the most obvious control methods has been the book burnings. After the State departments direction to ban certain books, local protector assumed the task of censorship.

A proposed law in Ohio calls for pre-publication censorship of magazines. In Texas, textbooks cannot be purchased until the author has vowed he is not a Communist.

In view of the care which is being given to American thought, the most inviting alternative to being branded a subversive is to remain silent. A more effective straight-jacket for truth could not be asked.

The Nebraskan

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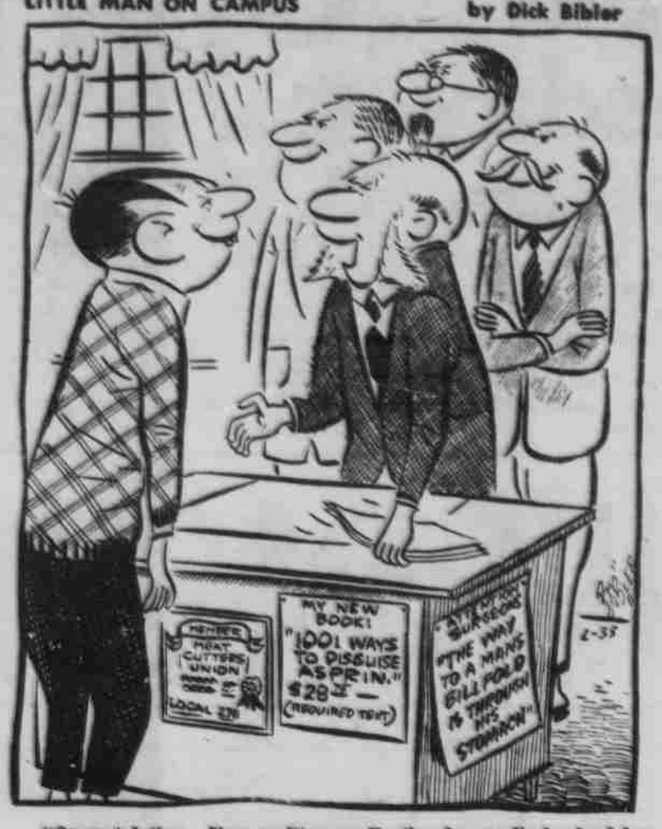
LITTLE MAN ON CAMPUS by Dick Bibler



"Congratulations—Your written application for medical school has been accepted—we couldn't read a word you wrote!"

Where There's Smoke

Interview Reveals Personality Secrets

By JOHN GOURLAY
and
MIKE SHUGRUE

To clear up confusion in the minds of many readers we would like to say that interviewee Gene Spence is real. He is a human being despite what one may think when seeing him at the Cornhusker in his bermudas.


Shugrue

A very special treat today is a joint interview between Fred Daly, boy rotunda, and Roger Henkle, boy grass blade. Both are famous in campus journalistic circles.

The following questions were asked Henkle by Mr. Daly.

Where did you get your long, bony fingers?

"You mean my long, sensual fingers? All men with refined taste have them."

Do you feel that horn-rimmed glasses add to your appearance?

"It is part of the equipment of an English major to have horn-rimmed glasses, a sallow, hungry look and a thin volume at all times."

What kind of a scholar are you?

"Near genius."

It is true that you received six down hours for your efforts?

"Poppycock! It's a dirty lie. There must be some other Roger Henkle at this school."

Who do you admire most of all?

"Slow-eyed Gourlay, Boy Badger and Stodge."

Who is your favorite literary figure?

"Next to me, you mean?"

Yes.

"Jess Brownell and Bruce Brugmann."

How did you ever get in Kosmet Klub?

"First of all I was a Rathbone Rocket (Al Anderson live on Rathbone.) I am a Beta (Carl Mammel and Andy Smith are Betas) and I paid the Klub $26.50 (Art Raun has a new coat.)

What do you plan to do after you graduate?

"Certainly not work. At age 29 I will have accumulated my first 10 million; at age 31, my first Pulitzer prize; at age 47, my Nobel Prize for literature; at age 52, my Nobel Peace Prize; at age 64, Supreme Justice of the Supreme Court; at age 70, president of Innocents."

What makes your little brown eyes sparkle so?

"Money, child, money."

Mr. Henkle's questions and Frederick Trenk (Pudge) Daly, III's answers.

What makes you so fat, Daly?

"Quaffing the nut-brown ale."

What is your goal in University?


Gourlay

"I want to follow in Henkle's footsteps."

Who is your favorite faculty or administration personality?

Mr. Peterson, 9 o'clock (MWF); Lieut. Rezny, 10 o'clock (MWF); Mr. Stepanek, 11 o'clock (MWF); Mr. Camp, 1 o'clock (MWF); Mr. Zimmerman, (TThS.)"

What do you intend to make of yourself in later life, boy?

"I'm going to grow up to be a waif."

Is it true you are asleep all day?

"Hmm?"

What do you think of activities?

"As little as possible."

What do you enjoy doing most?

"Rephrasing Max Shulman."

Why aren't you writing a column for the Nebraskan anymore?

"I was threatened with being flayed alive with a clarinet reed."

Jest Jestin'

A Palm-Wine Toast To Fun-Loving Derek

By JESS BROWNELL

As you all must know by now, I am a big forceful person who is often seen about the campus, who has many irons in the fire, and who keeps his finger on the pulse of campus activity.

Well, I don't suppose I fooled anyone, but it was a nice try. Actually, what I have just written isn't true; I'm really the sort of fellow who likes to operate behind the scenes. I am usually to be found in my rooms, where, dressed in a tattersall vest and smoking a cigarette in a long holder, I remain curled in the prenatal position on the top shelf of my closet. You might think that it would be difficult to keep up with campus events from such a position, but my runners provide me with a constant flow of well filtered information.

Because last Saturday was Ivy Day, I sent many runners out into the bush to bring me reports of the day's occurences. Not all of them came back, and the few that did return were bathed in blood were well rewarded with several lumps of sugar and a subscription to Playboy. I was not entirely satisfied with the results of the day, but have only one question to throw on the growing heap. Did Chancellor Hardin really have enough activities to be an Innocent, or was his selection a political move? But enough of this; no use crying over spilt milk, I always say. We shall gird our loins, pull in our belts, stiffen our upper lips and be ready to put things straight next year.

However, there are important sphere of campus politics. These are things which happen to the individual who is caught in the trap the world has set for him. Let me tell you about a youngster I know, and what happened to him not so long ago.

He was a fine stalwart fellow, modest and unassuming, and handsome too. He was also very poor and was trying to work his way through school. He used to labor from early evening until early in morning at a near-by arms factory, where he put the Field Lock Adjusting Swivel on M1 rifles, a darned important job. As he was returning from work one morning, thinking of ways to increase his efficiencey, (mind you, that boy would have been famous someday) he fell in with a roving group of students who were singing bawdy songs and having a palm-wine drinking contest. My young friend was taken in by their false air of happiness and, unaware of the effect of palm-wine, drank far too much.

It soon became apparent that he was unable to take care of himself and needed assistance to get home. Showing their true colors, his friends left him to shift for himself. He wandered into my room hours later, his face smeared with ashes and his exterior generally showing the effect of his horrible experience. I leaped up and hurried to the door.

"T'is a foine time to comin' home, Paddy," I said. "I suppose ye've been out tippilin' with those no-good friends of yours." But of course it wasn't Paddy at all, it was fun-loving Derek, home at last.

Givin' 'Em Ell

Exams As Learning Device Endangered

By ELLIE ELLIOTT

This afternoon a proposal is to appear before the Faculty Senate; this proposal directly concerns every student who is involved in the examination system of this University.

The proposal is, briefly, this: to shorten the period of final examinations to one week, and to add from three to six days of classes. Each examination will take two-and-a-half hours, and there will be three examinations scheduled each day. A day's schedule, therefore, would run something like this: examinations from 8:30-1 a.m.; 12-2:30 p.m. and 3-5:30 p.m. Thus, a student who had three examinations scheduled for one day would have an hour off for lunch, a half-hour between his second and third examinations, and seven-and-a-hald hours of exams in one day.

There are many arguments for and against the wisdom of this system of examinations. At the end of each semester, instructors and students would have the benefit of three or more extra days of class instruction. Students would not have to waste time going home, resting in between the frantic rush of semesters, or studying excessively for their exams. Provided they survived the first semester's examination ordeal, and the second, they would have their usual summer vacation in which to recuperate.


Elliott

This accelerated system of exams has many drawbacks, some of them quite serious. In the first place, an examination is supposed to be a teaching and learning device. In the fields of literature, philosophy, and the social sciences, for instance, a great deal of emphasis is placed upon lectures, reading, and contemplation. Such courses offer no laboratory period for the practical application of theories and information, because they are not fields in which one can do such things. The examination period is the laboratory. Therefore, the examination is an integral and irreplaceable part of the normal academic course. In an exam, the student must have the necessary time to organize his information in the light of the questions asked, and to present it precisely, concisely and literately.

Another aspect of such a crammed exam program influences the first aspect considerably. The physical and mental strain under which the student would be taking his exams would be detrimental to his health, his preparation, his performance on the exam, and, quite possibly, his whole attitude toward the exam as a learning device.

A third aspect that must be considered concerns the reading and grading of exams. Since the exams are learning devices, they must be read with a maximum of attention and care if the student is to benefit from them, and if justice is to be done to his efforts. Most of our classes are huge . . . from twenty students on up into the hundreds. The normal teaching load of an instructor is roughly four classes a week, or twelve hours of contact with his students. The pressure exerted on the instructor of even a "normal" class would be such that he would find it impossible to give and grade four sets of thorough, comprehensive exams in one week. And if he is forced to fall back on the good old true-false, multiple choice objectives of the Stone Age, he might as well not give the exam at all.

Hortence 'n Gertrude

Dull Summer Seen In TV Programs

By MARY SHELLEDY
and
JANET GORDON

"Entertainment on TV this spring and summer is going to be depressingly dull, Hortence."

"How come? We've got Ed Sullivan, still. And the country couldn't function without Ed Murrow."

"But we have no party conventions, no committee hearings. Fran Costello's dainty hands don't writhe on our screens this summer. Comic relief from Puerto Rican delegates is lacking. McCarthy and Cohn aren't playing mixed doubles on the major channels."

"Interference on the sets in store windows that I watched were a nuisance. Can't we be satisfied with neon-trimmed commerciality?

"What I want is a repeat performance of last spring's hearings. Better yet, a full-scale investigation of colleges and universities. It wouldn't have to have a purpose. An investigation is better if it has none."

"But it should have a title, if it doesn't have a purpose."

"Very well—The Committee to Abolish Comic Relief on Campuses."

"Doc Elliott better hide out."

"The investigators must be cast carefully. For a chairman, we need a practicing hypocrite. The chairman should also be familiar with the plots of Gilbert and Sullivan."

"What'll happen when the committee gets to Nebraska?"

"We have more comic-opera plots than any other campus. The chairman will only have to read the plan to limit activity-participation. That should be a starter. Then he can observe the local efforts to outlaw water fights and milling around.

"If The Committee to Abolish Comic Relief wants a thorough job, it must investigate Dean-Dousing episodes. Wastebaskets have had to be made with sieve bottoms, you know."

"But Gertrude, how will the investigation unearth the necessary buffoons?"

"The State Legislature might come in for a probe."

"With luck, the televised hearings of our committee might last all summer, with a cast like that. What will the committee do with its findings?"

"They'll double-tax laughing observers. Obviously, if college students are exposed to comic idiocy long enough, they might learn to laugh at investigating committees and party conventions."