

City Action Needed

An incident on 14th Street yesterday again pointed out the need for some improvement to be made at that corner. It is not only a trauma for the students trying to cross the street, but also for the drivers.

Yesterday a girl was hit. Apparently no injury took place. Probably nothing would have been noted about the accident if it hadn't been for an alert photographer walking by at the moment.

But the danger still exists. Periodically students get hit and knocked down, but the case is immediately closed without an afterthought. In most cases they aren't even reported.

Again the Regent's action in recommending closing the street must be applauded. But now it is up to the city. They must turn the property over to the University and allow it to be closed if a solution is to be reached.

Thousands of students cross the street every day. A different street light would not be more effective. It would continue to be ignored.

The Daily Nebraskan urges the City Council to grant the Regent's request and make that street a safe place.

The street is not really necessary in cross-town traffic as it does not lead to anyplace that could not just as easily be reached by another route. And probably another route would be faster because of the snail's pace that must be maintained there.

A mall in front of the Administration Building would add beauty to the campus and set the building off with the prestige it deserves.

SUSAN SMITHBERGER

CAMPUS OPINION

Litter And Language

Dear Editor:

Some time ago there was a letter published telling of the shortage of waste containers on campus. Although this is definitely true, I wonder how many students would actually use them if they were available.

It is easy to criticize the University and its authorities, however the students need to be criticized here. In the lunch rooms downstairs in the Union, a person arriving after 12:00 noon, or even earlier, often cannot find a table free from sticky ice cream and all the refuse from the previous inconsiderate person's lunch.

It seems to be the general rule, of at least one regular group of card players, that anything tossed within a ten foot diameter of the waste baskets can be counted as in. We should not expect Union personnel to clean up after us since we are not paying for busboy service. Some consideration for others as well as pride in our University needs to be exhibited.

Another item of disregard shown toward others is in the language being employed in these rooms, largely by the card playing groups. There are still a few of us who manage to find a sufficient number of words in the English language without injecting profanity into every sentence, and we do not appreciate being subjected to a constant barrage of it while eating our lunches.

Respectfully yours
Kenneth Petersen

Are You Sic?

Dear Miss Smithberger:

Your display of erudition in fault-finding Mr. Flyant's letter tended to make me sic. (sic) Of the eleven examples of misspelled words you cited, you were right in seven cases and wrong in four.

I have no quarrel with your annoyance at college students who cannot spell—only please be sure YOU are right before you put the blast on a writer.

Do you feel a little sic? (sic)

GEORGE SPELVIN.
Editor's Note: Yes, Mr. Spelvin, I felt a little sick when I saw the finished product as it came out in the paper. In the original letter and in the copy sent down to the typesetters the words were all misspelled, but an alert typesetter noted the misspellings and corrected them as he set the type, thus making the spellings correct and the sic notation incorrect.

Hire Rieger

Dear Miss Smithberger: Perhaps the simplest solution to your entire newspaper problem would be to hire James Rieger or someone like him as he seems to have the entire problem

down to a science with a workable solution. But if you do not heed his suggestions . . . and you seem to have few workable ones of your own . . . there's always skywriting.

Current news doesn't seem to be one of the paper's strong points either. Could you possibly include announcements of pinings before they become engagements . . . this could save a lot of explaining and unnecessary and nasty criticism of the newspaper.

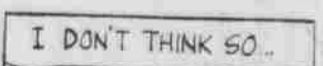
Linnea Johnson

Girl Hit

Dear Editor:

I thought that considering the regent's proposal that 14th street be blocked off that you would be interested to know that a girl was knocked down by a green and white '53 (approx) Chevy this morning at about 9:25. A couple of her girl friends helped her up and helped her as she headed back the direction in which she came. The driver of the car, an elderly gentleman (accompanied by his wife) checked to see if she was hurt and then drove on (leaving the scene of an accident??) I was on my way to class so I don't know any of the people involved. To the best of my knowledge it was not reported to the police.

D.S.



Passing Through

David F. Trask

One of the most intriguing developments of the semester is the appearance of three independent newspapers—all of them seeking publicity for various viewpoints which their publishers deem insufficiently expressed in normal student outlets. All the mimeographed papers are openly or covertly critical of "official" publications, especially the Daily Nebraskan, and two of them, the Barbarian and the Gadfly, are extremely harsh in their condemnation of various campus institutions, notably the Greek system.

None of the three sheets seems likely to win prizes for literary merit, journalistic expertise, or proof-reading, but they ought not to be dismissed on such specious grounds. After all, it takes considerable initiative and labor to produce a paper of this sort. And further, if some articles seem to imply the existence of conspiracies aimed at the Student Council, surely a highly indefensible position, nevertheless the papers have clearly pointed out a number of patently obvious abuses which ought to be criticized severely.

These papers may conceivably represent the advance guard of a student movement at the University of Nebraska comparable to those which swept eastern campuses earlier in the decade, leading ultimately to the enormously influential and constructive contributions of students to the civil rights movement and the disarmament movement, and the present agitation on the west coast, notably at the University of California, where the issue is the civil liberties of students. The advocacy of Friends of SNCC by the Gadfly is certainly a surprising and heartening enterprise which merits praise from all enlightened quarters.

The important fact about

the papers is that some students are obviously fed up with the debilitating blandness of the student body, a condition for which the faculty and administration must accept some responsibility. A little noise is better than no noise at all, even if the noise is sometimes nothing to write home about. These papers are not afraid to step on toes, and since they have aimed at quite a few targets, they have apparently hit their mark in at least some cases.

It is easy to dismiss these papers as the work of irresponsible, but those who do so have not thought through the situation. Of course, the publishers of the unofficial sheets ought to be required to practice responsible journalism, but there is nothing inherently irresponsible or improper about a harsh attack on something, so long as libel and slander do not enter the paper. And let us not mistake caricature and satire for libel and slander.

An earlier column in this series noted the existence of considerable "social paranoia" among the student body, a tendency to assume that evil things conceivable are in fact very probable. It was attributed to growing lack of attentiveness on the part of the University to the real needs and aspirations of the students. These papers clearly reflect some of this paranoia, but its antidote is not to be found in ignoring or repressing those who manifest it, but rather in effective treatment of the situation which gives rise to it. Meanwhile, more power to the clandestine press! I hope it will flourish until the need for it has passed, an event which does not appear imminent. I do have one request to make of the publishers. Please—no more of that truly barbarous verse which has appeared. Why not publish some of the good student poetry which now lacks an outlet?

DAVID F. TRASK

What's Left?

By ALLEN GERLACH

The present huge U.S. military force, which Secretary McNamara has described as large enough to destroy all possible enemies many times over even after absorbing a first strike, plus the continuing Soviet-American detente, provides the U.S. with an opportunity to reduce military spending substantially without endangering military security. It also provides the U.S. with an opportunity to test the sincerity of a recent Soviet challenge to move toward sanity in the nuclear age.

In a policy speech to the General Assembly of the United Nations last week, Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko proposed that militarily powerful countries should cut their arms budgets by 10 to 15% and devote the money saved to assistance for developing countries. It is not enough just to react to Russian moves, but I hope the nation will at least do that much to the recent Soviet proposal.

It is interesting to note that Senator George McGovern made a similar proposal on the floor of the Senate in 1963. It is also interesting to note which nation was the first to take seriously the idea of challenging another country with such a proposal. The U.S.S.R. is to be commended for its stand, and the Johnson Administration should make every effort to come to a workable agreement with the Soviet's over the reduction of military expenditures, thereby limiting the possibility of a nuclear holocaust. Last New Year's day President Johnson called for an "unrelenting peace offensive in 1964." Now that offensive has been brought to him, with a few weeks left in that year.

The U.S. now has a stockpile of nuclear weapons in excess of any conceivable need. We already have 10,000 nuclear weapons in Europe which is enough to insure the demise of the Continent if war should come. More bombs and more "overkill" capacity will not make us any safer. The old myth that the greater our defense expenditures the greater our security must

give way to this new reality of the nuclear age.

Present levels of military spending and military foreign aid are distorting our economy, wasting our human resources, and restricting our leadership in the world. The current dilemma in Viet nam is a clear demonstration of the limitations of military power. I submit that America will exert a far greater impact for peace and freedom in Asia and elsewhere if we rely less on armaments and more on the economic, political, and moral sources of our strength.

The Johnson Administration should respond with the great interest and favor to the Soviet Union's latest proposal to move the world back step by step from the precipice of death, while at the same time using the money saved from the suicidal arms race to assist the developing nations in throwing off the yoke of poverty.

Special English Sessions For Engineers Endorsed

By Ernest G. Hoffman

Some time ago, an Engineering professor came to class with the graded exams, but before he handed them back, he wrote on the blackboard a list of words. In one column he wrote misspellings and errors in usage, and in the other column the corrections; then he returned the papers without comment, letting that list speak for itself. Another Engineering professor added a bonus question to an exam in which he asked which letter ends third person singular verbs. Finally, the following is from an Engineering laboratory instruction sheet: "Poor spelling is inexcusable when reports are written outside of class. Each mis-spelled word is worth one point".

It would be embarrassing to have to quote some of those mistakes listed on the blackboard or to admit the percentage that didn't know the answer to that bonus question. I quote these examples only to point out, if it needs pointing out, that Engineering students are poor masters of their own language. Although this is hardly a profound observation, it does lead to the question whether the Engineering student should continue to remain indifferent to this weakness in his education.

I believe he should not. The broadening role of the Engineer in our society is demanding more than just technical competence. Whether we like it or not, Engineers will become more and more involved in policy making decisions and consequently there will be an increasing need for the Engineer to be able to express and communicate ideas effectively. Now, this may seem like a purely vocational reason why Engineers should be concerned about language and I suppose it is; but beyond that, it is to everybody's interest to have the men who may be running things as broadly educated as possible.

At present, the Engineering student is among the most highly trained graduates and yet he is also among the least articulate. There is nothing inherent in the Engineering mind (if there is such a thing) to account for this. The purpose of this article then is to try to understand why this is so and to suggest a way to improve the situation.

To find the reason for the Engineers' poor use of language, I believe we must look at his training program. The most obvious fact is that the Engineering curriculum, from the Freshman to the Senior year,

contains practically no courses where the student has to submit his writing to critical analysis. In theory, this shouldn't matter because everyone is already supposed to be able to write good basic English when he comes to the University, but in fact, this is an idealistic assumption. It would seem that the Engineer should get some experience in writing in his Social Science and Humanities requirements, but all these courses, and this includes the six hours of English Composition, are on the introductory level in which the exams are mostly of the multiple choice and short answer type. Now, there is a good reason why this is so. No department could give regular essay exams or assignments to the truly vast numbers of students that crowd into these courses. The present ratio of students to teachers would make the reading and grading of essays an impossible task. But unfortunately, it is the Engineering student who is handicapped most by this lack of writing at the introductory level. All this doesn't make too much difference to non-engineers because when they reach their more advanced courses the exams are more often than not essay, and students are required to write term papers (I am a Senior and I have never had to write a term paper in my entire college career).

As the examples at the beginning of this article show, Engineering instructors are trying to do something by at least reminding the student that even though he is an Engineering major he should pay some attention to writing respectable English. But, of course, the Engineering professor's job is to teach Engineering and not English, so if something is to be done it will have to be done outside the Engineering departments. Obviously, any practical scheme would have to include all Engineering students, be worked out within the present budget limitations and without disturbing the basic Engineering curriculum. As a student, it is naturally impossible for me to be aware of all the problems, but I would like to offer at least one suggestion.

Suppose the English Department replaced some of

their sections of Freshman English with special sections for Engineers. Now, this is not unprecedented; the English Department recognizes that foreigners have special needs and they have created special sections for them, so why not do the same for Engineers. These Engineering sections could meet only once a week in order to lighten the load on the instructors and enable them to give one essay assignment a week. Also, since out of every 100 Freshman Engineers only about 40 graduate as Engineers, it would be wasteful to have these courses in the Freshman year. To avoid this problem, the fulfillment of this requirement could be deferred until the Sophomore or Junior year; at these levels nearly all of those still in Engineering stay in Engineering.

It is true that these special sections would have a different course content with the emphasis shifted from learning facts about language to actually practicing it. This is not meant as an implied criticism of the content of the present Freshman English Program, it merely means that some compromises would have to be made to retain the present basic Engineering curriculum and still give all Engineers the writing experience of which they have been deprived. My fellow Engineers might object that really we are not much worse than non-engineers; indeed, this may be so, but ultimately this is irrelevant. The important point is not how we compare with anybody else but that we should be better than we are. Even though two courses of essay writing would not transform us into literary masters, they would nevertheless make us write better and most probably broaden the range of our thinking.

About Letters

The DAILY NEBRASKAN invites readers to use it for expression of opinion on current topics regardless of viewpoint. Letters must be signed, contain a verifiable address, and be free of libelous material. Pen names may be included, but lessen the chance of publication. Lengthy letters may be edited or omitted.



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