

## Planting the seeds

There has been a lot of talk recently about the role of student government, not just at the University of Nebraska, but at universities all over the nation.

Currently the University of Nebraska student government is conducting a poll to find out what student sentiment is towards the creation of a student credit union.

The credit union would function primarily as a small loan office for students, where they could borrow money for their immediate needs at low interest rates.

Funding of the organization would be done by the students themselves. Most likely, students would become members of the credit union by purchasing memberships at \$5 or \$10. Then they would be eligible to take out small loans (e.g. \$50-\$100) at lowered interest rates.

At this time, it is not clear whether there is adequate student support for a student credit union to operate successfully. But considering the advantages, students should clearly be in favor.

First, a student credit union would be advantageous in the sense that it would make it easier for students to receive small loans. Presently, if a student runs short of money and needs \$50 or so, he has to apply for a loan through the Financial Aids Office. This is usually a lengthy procedure. On the other hand, borrowing through a credit union would be much simpler. After a student became a member of the credit union, he would be able to borrow money without going through all the red tape.

Also, this type of loaning system would be able to reduce the amount of small loans the Financial Aids Office has to work on, and it would free that department of the University to spend more time with the students who need the larger, more vital loans.

Phil Layne, a staff member of the Counseling Service believes that a student credit union, governed by a board of students, would offer more intangible benefits, like giving students the pragmatic experience of handling loans themselves. He also believes that if the governing board of the credit union were multi-racial it would also provide an opportunity for students to work together.

There is another important consideration which students should make — a credit union might be the place where students can begin doing something, rather than just talking.

The time has come to plant the seeds of "genuine" student participation in the operation of the University.

If students at the University can work together in establishing a credit union, not only will they be channeling their efforts through constructive and positive means, but they will be among the few universities in the nation where students have shown they can work together in the area of economics.

Your concern and support can be expressed in a number of ways. One way is to propose resolutions at residence hall government meetings saying you support the establishment of a credit union. If you are a Lincoln resident, you can write a letter to ASUN and to the Student Activities Club saying you support this program.

The important point is that you do something.

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## Free the San Jose Three!

by FRANK MANKIEWICZ and TOM BRADEN

(The scene is a deserted shopping center parking lot, just after dawn. A friendly bald man, looking remarkably like the secretary of defense, parks his car and walks up to a parking meter. He deposits a dime, and we see the meter begin to whirl. It is, in fact, a tape recorder. It begins to speak —)

"Good morning, Mr. Laird. The man you are looking at (click) is Richard Nixon, President of the United States of America. Mr. Nixon will lose the next election to a radical-liberal unless he can convince the followers of this man (click), George Wallace, that the Nixon Administration is hard and tough about Vietnam, even though withdrawing from the war.

"This man (click), Gen. Vo Nguyen Giap, is keeping hundreds of American airmen prisoner in North Vietnam, on the flimsy pretext that they bombed in his country. Your job, Mel, should you accept this assignment, is to rescue some of the fliers, convince the followers of Wallace that President Nixon is hard and tough and take world attention away from the fact that our country doesn't even take prisoners.

"As always, should you or your team fail in this assignment, the assistant secretaries will say it was a success, anyway. Good luck, Mel. This parking meter will self-destruct in five seconds."

It was indeed like Mission: Impossible — the technology was perfect, even down to the locks broken off the empty cells — but, as so often happens in real life, it failed. The question is: Why was it attempted at all?

In the opinion of one of the few Americans who has been involved in making this kind of decision, the effort represented "complete stupidity" if it was more than a political gesture. He assigned three reasons:

First, we are "badly penetrated," that is to say, the South Vietnamese, at every

level of government and the armed forces, are full of Viet Cong agents: 30,000, according to the CIA. It is virtually impossible to carry off a raid of this kind without their knowledge.

Second, our own intelligence in North Vietnam is "terrible." When Defense Secretary Laird told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, with heavy scorn, that we have no camera capable of taking pictures through a roof, he spoke more truly than he knew. Our knowledge of North Vietnam is limited to what our cameras see; whenever we get an agent in there, he is, in the language of the trade, quickly "rolled up."

Third, it was dangerous folly to think we could go into a real prison without some or all of the prisoners being killed. Since we were wrong about where the prisoners were, we must obviously have been wrong, also, about where the enemy was and what strength the enemy had. If there were indeed 200 to 300 U.S. prisoners at the camp, is there any reason to think it would not be defended, probably with machine guns or recoilless rifles?

As it was, one helicopter was lost. Secretary Laird spoke of a "purposeful crash-landing," but this is absurd talk. Helicopters, by their very nature, either crash or land, but not both. The best theory is that film of the crashed helicopter was due momentarily from North Vietnam's propaganda people, which is the only reason we have heard about the raid at all.

Why, then, was it attempted? There are only two possible explanations. Sen. J. W. Fulbright pointed to one when he said the problem "isn't with the machinery or the technology: it's the brains and judgment that are lacking."

But there's another reason, and it is expressed, if fancifully, at the beginning of this column: It is to make Mr. Nixon seem "tough" in Vietnam, thus protecting his right flank as he disengages. Whatever the political value, it is dangerous business.