

EDITORIAL COMMENT

One more time

The controversy over the use of compulsory student fees to finance speakers and the publication of *The Daily Nebraskan* is with us again, this time in the courts.

Lancaster District Court Judge Herbert Ronin Tuesday denied a request by two University students for a temporary restraining order against this week's Time-Out Conference, which is supported by student fees. However, a hearing will be scheduled in the near future on a request by the two students for a temporary injunction against the use of student fees for future conferences and *The Daily Nebraskan*.

The students in their court petition argue that the expenditure of mandatory student fees "for political activities or the promulgation of political or other noneducational viewpoints" is an illegal use of the fees.

The use of student fees has been highly controversial since the May, 1970 student strike. Many conservatives were critical of the role the student government and *The Daily Nebraskan* played in the strike.

Student fees at the University are analogous to taxes in that the fees help support vital services that would be hard pressed to become self-supporting.

There are many problems that would result if student fees could no longer be used to sponsor certain types of speakers. It would be extremely difficult to distinguish between an "educational" speaker and a "political" speaker. In addition, restricting the use of student fees for speakers would not be in the best educational interests of students since it would limit both the quality and number of campus speakers.

In the case of *The Daily Nebraskan*, it has been argued that no student should be forced to subscribe to a newspaper, especially one that might express views the student might be opposed to. It is difficult to refute this argument.

However, until a feasible plan is developed and implemented to make *The Daily Nebraskan* financially independent, the newspaper will need student fees to continue publishing. Preliminary investigation on the feasibility of going independent has been started. More work on the subject will probably be done by a special committee on student publications, which was recently appointed by President D. B. Varner.

The question of the use of student fees has finally reached the courts. Hopefully, the courts will settle this drawn-out controversy that has divided the University community.

UNL health center

Although the largest chunk of student fees goes to the Student Health Center (\$21 per semester for every full-time student), there is no formally appointed group of students involved in the center's planning.

However, the ASUN Senate has asked the Council on Student Life to find a new governing structure which would formalize student input into the Center's program planning.

Structured student input is necessary since the center operates with student fees. Student involvement would also help insure that the center is responsive to student needs and concerns.

Noting that students have shown little interest in the governing of the Center in the past, Samuel Fuenning, the Center's medical director, said "we'd be delighted to have student involvement." However, any new governing structure of the center should be a comprehensive planning unit involving students as well as faculty, staff, and medical personnel.

The best way to provide adequate health service is to involve the consumer in the planning. A new governing structure for the center is long overdue and CSL should act quickly on the ASUN proposal.

Gary Seacrest

THE DAILY NEBRASKAN

Telephones: editor: 472-2588, news: 472-2589, advertising: 472-2590. Second class postage rates paid at Lincoln, Nebraska.

The Daily Nebraskan is a student publication, independent of the University of Nebraska's administration, faculty and student government.

Address: The Daily Nebraskan, 34 Nebraska Union, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, Nebraska 68508.



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Hit it again,
hit it again...

When *Daily Nebraskan* Editor Gary Seacrest mildly advocated the legalization of marijuana last week the response was not long in coming.

From TV editorials in Omaha to newspapers in Scottsbluff reaction to Seacrest's pro-drug stand has been quick and stinging.

This underlines the need in Nebraska for a better understanding of the drug culture. Material which is becoming common knowledge in much of the country is still heard only infrequently here.

Most of the drug "information" available here is scare oriented and incorporates very little logic.

For the most part, presentations available here are senseless and stupid, as well as useless.

Marijuana, the mildest drug of the new culture, is probably the most often attacked. The most common charge is that grass users usually go on to harder drugs.

No one will argue that heroin addiction is a good thing, but many will question the theory that grass leads on to harder stuff.

Unlike most drugs, marijuana does not build up a resistance in the body. Indeed, it takes less and less grass for the experienced user.

Most regular users say it takes only a very small amount for them to get stoned. This

has been verified by such anti-drug authorities as Dr. Sidney Cohen.

In an ETV interview Dr. Cohen said that though marijuana can be psychologically addictive there is no evidence that it leads to heroin use. Though most heroin users have probably used grass first they have probably also used milk, pabulum, or aspirin.

When pressed, most drug "authorities," pro or con, will say there is simply not enough information about marijuana to determine its effects. Actually, the only thing that is certain about grass is that a first offense in Nebraska can get you seven days.

Another argument is that if marijuana itself does not lead to harder drugs then the drug culture itself does.

However, the psychedelic community generally deplors the use of hard drugs. Heroin, cocaine and the like are regarded as degrading by those who consider the psychedelic experience as the ultimate in individuality.

The heroin addict is shunned by the drug culture as well as by mainstream society. If anything, the drug culture guides people away from hard drugs.

But there are dangers in the culture. LSD and methedrine, better known as "speed," are accepted parts of the culture.

These are dangerous drugs. Many people don't come back from LSD trips and speeding can burn out a body in a short time.

With all drugs there is a need for care in use. This is not always available to those who use drugs socially.

But the drug revolution cannot be turned back by unbacked statements and repressive laws. Prohibition didn't work and neither will drug repression.

Drug use should not be approached irrationally on the basis of "It's bad because it's bad." Youth are more turned off by this sort of argument than any other.

The drug scene should not be a source of hysteria among police, parents and concerned citizens. It should be approached thoughtfully and seriously.

Aldous Huxley saw society heading toward drug use early in the century. Now the drug scene is here and growing. It will not go away no matter how much repression and self-righteous preaching are applied.

But rational thought and research might produce facts to modify and accept the culture before it tears down the society which bred it.

After all, free choice of safe alternatives has always been the ideal, if not the practical, American way.