

Excrement and ethics

The publication of a word heard every day by most college students in the United States has again raised the question of the appropriateness of student fees support for college newspapers.

The word is "bullshit." It was used in the caption of an editorial cartoon which ran earlier this month in the *Gateway*, the University of Nebraska-Omaha (UNO) student newspaper.

The cartoon in question, which was critical of UNO Chancellor Ronald Roskens, ran above a caption that contained the word "bullshit." The appearance of that one word in print has set off an uproar, at least within the confines of the chancellor's office, over the tastefulness of the cartoon and caption. Roskens, in a letter sent to both NU President D.B. Varner and the Board of Regents, said that he was not upset about the cartoon's criticism of him and his administration.

Rather, Chancellor Roskens wrote that the caption's language was "low grade" and "In exceedingly poor taste." Roskens' letter went a tad further than the issue of good or poor taste. "In addition to the subject of taste, it raises again the question of using student fee money to support the *Gateway*," Roskens wrote. This seems, if you'll pardon the expression, to be a bunch of B.S.

The editors of the *Gateway*, as well as the *Daily Nebraskan*, are required before their selection to agree to follow a general code of ethics which was contained in the Guidelines for the Student Press document recognized by the Board of Regents in 1972. The short preface to the code says the student press "is obliged to know its own audience, the academic community, and to interpret these guidelines based upon that knowledge." Point number 10 in the code of ethics states: "Ideas can be conveyed and news can be reported accurately and honestly without the use of pictures, words, or descriptions that a significant portion of the readership finds offensive."

The caption published by the *Gateway* appears not to have violated the letter of the

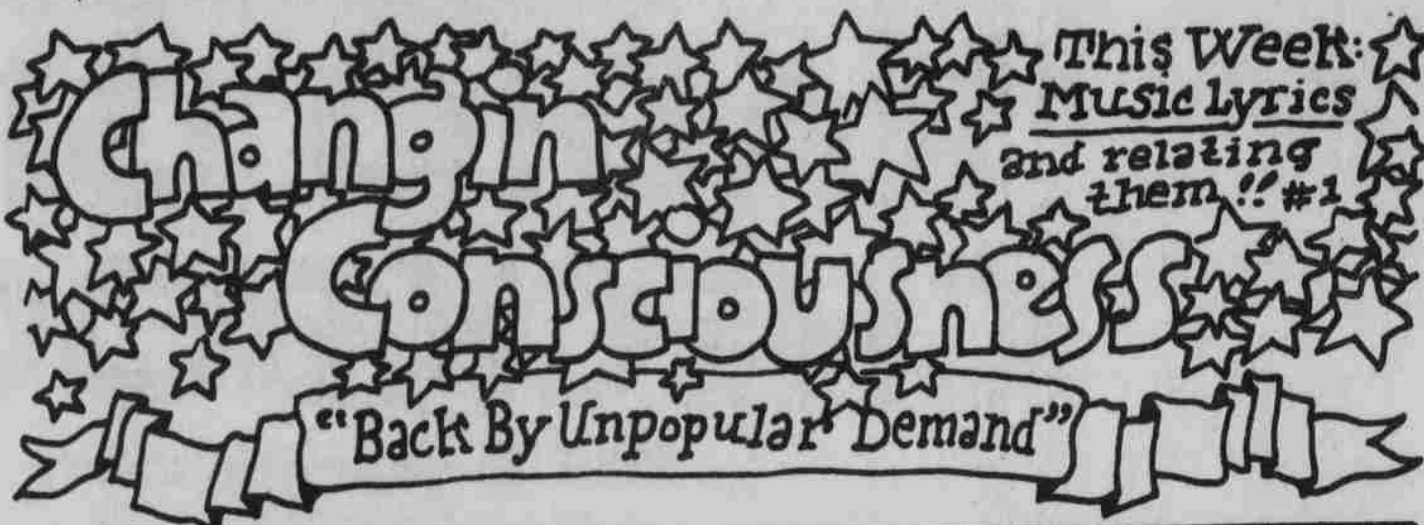
student press guidelines. It must be granted that the editor of the *Gateway* knows the paper's audience at least as well as does Chancellor Roskens. And, current usage being what it is, it is extremely doubtful that a "significant portion" of the *Gateway's* audience found the cartoon's caption to be offensive.

Indeed, the overwhelming evidence is to the contrary. Thus far, the only public negative reaction to the caption is that contained in Roskens' letter. And it can hardly be said that the chancellor is an

innocent bystander. Among the primary audience of the *Gateway*, the UNO student body, the allegedly distasteful language has caused hardly a ripple.

While the letter of the code of ethics has not been violated, perhaps the spirit of the guidelines have been. Various sources have intimated that the decision to publish the word "bullshit" in the caption was made out of a desire to test the application of the guidelines. Such a desire is a poor basis for editorial decisions.

Tom Lansworth



① Since Artists Today are idolized and praised (Music Artists, at least) so much, the conscious person must listen closely to "Heavy" music, especially LYRICS. For lesson 1 we use an early example of Interpreting lyrics WRONGLY.

SWISS



Dear editor:

The Black Masque Chapter of Mortar Board at UNL wishes to register its strong support for the Equal Rights Amendment which is currently being reconsidered by the Legislature. We, as Mortar Boards, feel that the ratification of this amendment by the State of Nebraska is a necessary step in assuring equal rights for women under the law. We feel it is of great importance that the state legislators stand by the commitment they previously made to women, thereby reaffirming equal rights for all human beings.

We urge students, faculty, staff, administrators and citizens to make their opinions known to their state senators by sending them personal letters. Such statements are vital at this point.

Nancy Anderson
for Black Masque Chapter
of Mortar Board

Humanization

Dear editor:

Regarding S.H. Brauer: when "Zeke" Brauer speaks out in favor of medieval policies he's called a crusader. When Steve Fowler fosters a cause that students are in favor of, he's labeled an agitator.

The best way to "humanize" is to set up situations that promote not just understanding, but tolerance for people of different life styles.

I would agree that "Zeke" Brauer is dehumanized, but not because of the Time-Out Conference on Human Sexuality.

Ann Perkinson

Highway safety

Dear editor:

I just had an opportunity to review

John Vihstadt's critique of our state's highway safety program (*Daily Nebraskan*, Feb. 8).

Vihstadt says that our highway safety program is "too little and too late" because Gov. Exon is not implementing the Tiemann administration's road building program. I don't know whether Vihstadt pretends to be a newsman or just happens to be writing "off the top of his head" in this particular article. In all sincerity, I would like to invite him to be in contact with Mr. Doyle, director of the Department of Roads, to discuss this administration's view of utilizing a bonded indebtedness approach to building our state's highways.

In my judgement, Vihstadt has been taken in by fabricationists who would have us believe that \$1.5 billion borrowing scheme is good highway safety and good business. In my view, these people are primarily concerned not with highway safety, but rather their early retirement, because it is precisely these same interests who stand to gain huge economic benefits by advancing this "Teapot Dome" approach. The fact is, the 1972 road building calendar year was the most progressive in our state's history—both in terms of miles of roads built and road building dollars spent. In addition, the interest incurred on the last "go in debt" approach was paid!

The highway safety legislation that was developed by the governor's Highway Safety Advisory Committee, which is comprised of every involved agency in state government, developed the rationale for the bills that Vihstadt praised but refused to give the governor credit for.

Finally, Vihstadt obviously is not cognizant of the Nebraska highway safety program and the many meaningful and dynamic things that are being undertaken, including a statewide community alcohol safety action

program, the organization and development of a state network of defensive driving courses and, for the first time, an overall coordination of agencies in state government that are involved in the matter of highway safety and more.

Bill Hoppner

Day care dollars

Dear editor:

The more anonymous letters to your department from students talk about their school dollar, the more it sounds like they should be enrolled in the University day care project instead of the University itself.

Another point: it's a well-known fact that only a small portion of a college education is paid for by tuition. Do you wailers realize that nearly every married student—as opposed to only a few unmarried students—pay Nebraska income tax. That means we're paying your way through college as much as you're paying for our child care.

Another point: if the birth control your girlfriend, or you, or your wife is using fails, it's your University child care next year.

Another point: many of us older married students could have been through school years ago if we had had a project just like this. I waited four years to come back for my senior year. I just couldn't get the money saved to pay tuition and child care before this. I'm 31 and didn't apply for loans through the University because I feel that you younger people need the help more than some of us. I'm beginning to think, though, that a whole heck of a lot of the cry-babies are not over at the day care center—but walking around campus, and talking about "my tuition dollar" when their daddy is still footing the bill.

Pat Moran



to the
editor