

Union bounces check fee

by Jane Owens

The proposed 25-cent check cashing fee which the Nebraska Union Board planned to institute effective July 1, will be reconsidered according to board president Mary Cannon.

Addressing the Council on Student Life (CSL) Thursday, Cannon termed the board's original plan to charge 25 cents on checks cashed at the Union "very rudimentary. We (board members) have got a lot of questions (concerning the check cashing fee) and are still in the process of refining our policy."

Cannon said the board was "working with some messed up figures" when it decided to assess the 25-cent charge. Further study will be necessary to determine if the proposed fee should be changed, she explained.

Board members agree that the Union should continue to offer a check-cashing service. However, a fee should be charged for the service, Cannon said.

"The Board now must decide how much the

service charge should be and minimum and maximum amounts for checks," she said.

"We feel that the Union has an obligation to handle check cashing," said Al Bennett, Nebraska Union director. "But we also need to consider the cost of offering this (check cashing) service in relation to the educational programs the Union offers." Bennett said that unless a service charge for check cashing is instituted, funds for Union programs, such as Talks and Topics, might be cut back.

"The cost (to the Union) of offering a check cashing service is a rip off on other services the Union offers," Harry Canon, CSL members and director of student development services. "Check cashing is a convenience for those who use it, and I see no reason why they (users) shouldn't pay a service charge."

The fee was instituted because of the First National Bank's decision to start charging a fee for cashing such a large volume of checks, Cannon said.

Bennett said, the Union cashed over \$1 million worth of checks last fiscal year. The bank would charge \$3,000 to \$5,000 annually to continue the service, he said.

Besides covering the bank costs for cashing checks, Bennett said the service charge would help pay the \$10,000 to \$14,000 spent annually in wages for union employees who operate the service and some other costs.

A portion of the revenue collected would be used to collect insufficient fund checks, he said. However, only \$400 in bad checks was received by the Union last fiscal year, resulting in an actual collection cost of about \$800 Bennett said.

The Union Board announced earlier this week that it was considering a \$50,000 investment over the next year in the Union check cashing operation. The cash on hand account used for check cashing purposes would be increased from \$7,000 to more than \$20,000, it said.

Board members plan to report back to CSL next Thursday, after further studying check cashing



photo by Gail Folda

Nebraska Union Director Al Bennett...if check cashing remains free of charge, other programs might suffer.

policies.

In other business, CSL charged its subcommittee on student organizations to study and report back in two weeks on policy regarding student activities held at facilities "governed in part by discriminatory practices."

The charge resulted from an inquiry which cited the ROTC Military Ball held at the Lincoln Elks Club. The club does not allow black members.

Regents meeting

Despite the regents' expressed intention to discuss a proposal to allow alcohol in campus living units, that proposal isn't scheduled for discussion at their meeting this Saturday morning at the University of Nebraska Medical Center's Eppley Science Hall in Omaha.

A proposal to allow alcohol in on campus University-approved student housing was tabled until April at the board's March meeting.

The regents could add the measure to their agenda after a Friday night meeting with the Intercampus Student Advisory Committee but reportedly plan to wait until May and discuss the proposal with other student policy decisions, including expanded visitation privileges and student fees.

Alice Cooper—selling his show and himself

by Jim Gray

The worst part of an Alice Cooper news conference is the waiting.

While sitting and anticipating Alice's arrival, it's natural to speculate about what's going to happen.

What will it be this time—feather boa or boa constrictor? Guillotine or garrote? *Killer or School's Out?*

But it's none of those. Instead it's Alice in his other role—the Warner Brothers PR man hyping his latest album, his next rock show and mostly himself.

Somehow appropriately, the conference is at the Holiday Inn, in the midst of tractor and truck dealerships and grain elevators. Next door at the Starlite Motel, McCook High School rates a "Welcome, McCook" on the marquee. At the Holiday Inn, Alice rates a "Welcome All Guests". Lincoln has not exactly been over taken with Alice hysteria.

The motel itself is the usual Holiday Inn—plastic and semiplush. ("It's the only place we can get in," Cooper says. "Richard Speck could get in at the Holiday Inn.")

The conference room is decorated in red-and-gold Early Glastly, with maple paneling. Even the setup is stereotyped—a table at the front, (white tablecloth), a bar at the back with a smiling rent-a-barmaid (HOLIDAY INN, BEV, her plastic tag reads).

And in between sit two rows of chairs inhabited by representatives of the local news media.

Enter Alice, fashionably late. Breathless from playing baseball (baseball?), wearing an almost-too-sedate black and white knit shirt and polka-dot pants. And white cowboy boots. Alice turns on the synthetic electricity and the devastating humor. The media people put down their scotch-and-waters and pick up their pencils.

The first volley of questions is fired. "Does the Humane Society get on your back?" "What do you think about busts at concerts?" "Do you plan to make a movie?"

Alice fields the questions in IBM-vice-president-style. "I don't really mistreat animals." "I suggest people don't smoke in front of police." "We plan to remake *Helzapopin'* and *The Maltese Falcon*."

He slips on one: "What happened in Chicago?", referring to a disastrous concert where overzealous fans were injured. But he redeems himself: "My job is to entertain. What the audience does is its business."

His act's selling. Alice slips in some clever, cute preprogrammed lines. Oh, it's not his old act—the venomous viper has died with its profit margin. The

new act is *Billion Dollar Babies*, and Alice now plays the rich rock star through his show and (surprise) latest LP.

And the PR man image fits right in. No more perversion offstage. Alice is, well, just a hell of a nice guy now. "Onstage it's all an act—Alice is really an OK guy, really he is, Florence."

Computer-programmed jokes. "No, I'm not Eddie Haskell." "The snake is well-fed—he gets my groupies when I'm done." "See this bruise? I got it by falling off the money we made last night." "My nose is so long that when I turn sideways people think I'm a zipper."

Fascinating personal insights:

- Alice drinks a case of beer a day;
- he likes baseball;
- He thinks his plane will crash during this tour;

"I'm on a Magic Christian tour," he says, "trying to get people to spend money decadently."

Enter, on cue, Flo and Eddie, Alice's supporting cast. They are loud and boisterous, cute and plump. And they are funny. Flo has a pink garden flamingo on his army helmet. Eddie looks like a chubby Fidel Castro. With Alice, they make a lot of jokes, do clever routines, get the ball rolling. Flo and Eddie used to be in the Turtles. It is funny, but a little shallow.

The media people run out of questions. Alice & Co. get bored and crush potato chips on the table. Then they quit, with a "See you later."

Alice gets up, politely signs autographs, leaves and the party ends. Left are a pile of empty glasses, dropped peanuts and forgotten notes—the remains of any of a hundred of business meetings held there before.



photo by Ted Kirk

Flo (left), Alice and Eddie...new conference comedy team.