

Un-bounty-ful

The Student Bar Assoc. Council, representing students of the University of Nebraska College of Law, is to be commended for taking a stand on LB 131.

The bill, introduced in the Unicameral by State Sen. Duke Snyder, would repeal the so-called Indian Bounty Act. The law students' resolution supports LB 131.

The Indian Bounty Act, outlined in Section 23-362 of the statutes of Nebraska, was passed in 1957. Its a bad law, although its intent was not malicious—it provides financial assistance to Nebraska counties with a large Indian population for law enforcement purposes. Accordingly, the state gives a county a stipend of 60 per cent or more if persons convicted under state criminal laws are Indians.

The law is unsatisfactory because it singles out an ethnic minority—Indians—and implies that most are indigent and many break the law. It also provides license for law enforcement officers of a given county to arrest and jail Indians at will for the purpose of meeting a quota. As the Student Bar's resolution reads, "this law is a strong incentive to apply the criminal laws of Nebraska more severely against Indians," thereby imposing unequal application of criminal laws against an ethnic minority.

There is nothing wrong with the principle that the state should give financial assistance to counties to help enforce Nebraska laws. But if most persons in a county are indigent, whatever their ethnic background, the law should not single out a portion of the population. If the law did not single out Indians, it's unlikely that it could be abused as much as reports indicate the Indian Bounty Act has.

Whatever the outcome of LB 131—and it by all means should be passed by the Legislature—the Student Bar Assoc. Council's action should serve as an example for other groups on this campus.

Mary Voboril



Open door policy must go out the window

Pity Marie Hansen. She's Complex Director of Harper Schramm-Smith (HSS). She's also blessed with a decidedly sticky conscience.

Pity Harper Hall. For at least four years its residents and staff have been told that a resident entertaining a guest of the opposite sex in his or her room must keep the door open, "providing a clear and unobstructed view of the room and its occupants". For at least four years, Harper residents, like those in nearly every other hall, have shut their doors because the rule simply won't work.

Leaving doors open means intolerable noise, means a resident's guests and what they have to say become common knowledge of the floor and imposes impossible enforcement problems. For four years now, student assistants (SAs) have been telling their floors that they had no intention of actually enforcing the rule. After all, how could they see behind closed doors?

That was nothing but a rationalization, and everyone knew it. Now Hansen has done something about it. First she called the Harper government together and announced she was cracking down on open-door policy violations. This the SAs ignored, just as they have ignored similar threats before.

A week later, last Monday, Hansen announced that since nothing had changed, she actually was going to deprive Harper of visitation rights for three days. Furthermore, she warned Smith and Schramm of similar sanctions, should they not step up. Silly violation, silly sanction.

Pity the regent. Having been told that the halls over the living atmosphere of the halls, she is stuck with the political consequences. Every time any issue is made to change the visitation policy, the halls get

of garbage like the open door rule, the regent gets flooded with abuse about the degenerating morals of college students, etc. from "people" who make up their fury what they lack in factual knowledge.

Yet let him appear on campus, and he's accosted by angry dormitory residents and parents who fancy themselves the campus version of the Warren Court (student self-determination and all that). Who can blame the regent for sticking his head in the sand or mouthing vapid platitudes like, "You've got to go through proper channels"?

mary cannon
cannon law

Pity me. There's supposed to be some kind of moral in this, and it's too easy to see several sides.

I, for one, am appalled by the way this thing got up. For that, I blame Marie Hansen. With very little fanfare, she made the original threat not to the residents but to their government, knowing full well that it would be ignored. Many residents, in fact, never even heard of it. She based her complaint on suspicion and innuendo. "Everybody knows," she said, "that the rule is not being obeyed." When, after a whole week, she detected no violation in behavior, she imposed the penalty. There was no hearing, no evidence, no defense.

Hansen and the three residence directors, without so much as a word from residents, acted as judge, jury, prosecutor and even Legislature. The whole hall will now be penalized because of individual actions, yet she refuses to follow the publicized policy and act against individual violators. She hasn't even said what could be done to prevent another penalty being imposed.

The University lately has gone to great lengths to see that certain standards of due process are observed in all its actions. Hansen has violated these standards. This she defends on the grounds that visitation is a privilege—like cookies given to a child—and therefore can be rescinded at the drop of a hat.

Although I sympathize with the ambiguous position not enforcing the open door policy leaves her in, her way out of the dilemma is no help at all.

For four years, students have been working to change a policy recognized by nearly everyone involved as impossible. The open door business stands as its most objectionable, least defensible part. Its moral significance is nil. We more usefully could have a ban on single rooms. Because in real life, the open door rule must be ignored. It contributes to general disregard for dormitory regulations, even the important ones. The rule has got to go.

Given the kind of consensus that exists about the open door policy, why is it still in effect? Given the fact that residents and staff have employed every available channel, only to be shot down by the regents, why does it stand?

The answer is politics, and misguided politics at that. No officeholder likes to buck the kind of hysteria that appears with the very mention of a closed door. Students, on the other hand, can't muster that kind of hysteria. As one woman put it at the Smith Hall government meeting Monday night, "I'm a student, living here for one year. Being a student is a full-time job. I simply haven't got the time or the energy to turn into a crusader for this thing."

She was right. The regents and the administration are responsible for the creation of a liveable atmosphere in the halls. Students have a part, but they will not be around five years hence. The regents will.

It was the regents who accepted responsibility for visitation when they could have left it out of the political arena as an administrative matter. Eventually, they must make some kind of real decision. The problem will continue to mar campus life, and worse, to pose a dangerous political problem for the regents.

Every time it recurs, it will have the same kind of dangerous quality, until it is finally solved. It seems that the regents had just as well get it over with.

