

Hamstrung & bones

This wretched time of year has spawned a fever that is edging its way into the nooks and crannies of smoke-filled rooms, wherein gather knots of persons who fancy themselves potential student leaders.

In other words, ASUN Senate elections are approaching. With the polls scheduled to open for business in a little more than a month, prospective candidates are skitting around campus, smiling mysterious smiles, enticing friends and associates to join a grand old party—perhaps neglecting to tell them there is a fee involved—and jockeying for free publicity in campus publications. Some party leaders ominously hint their ranks have been infiltrated by insidious spies.

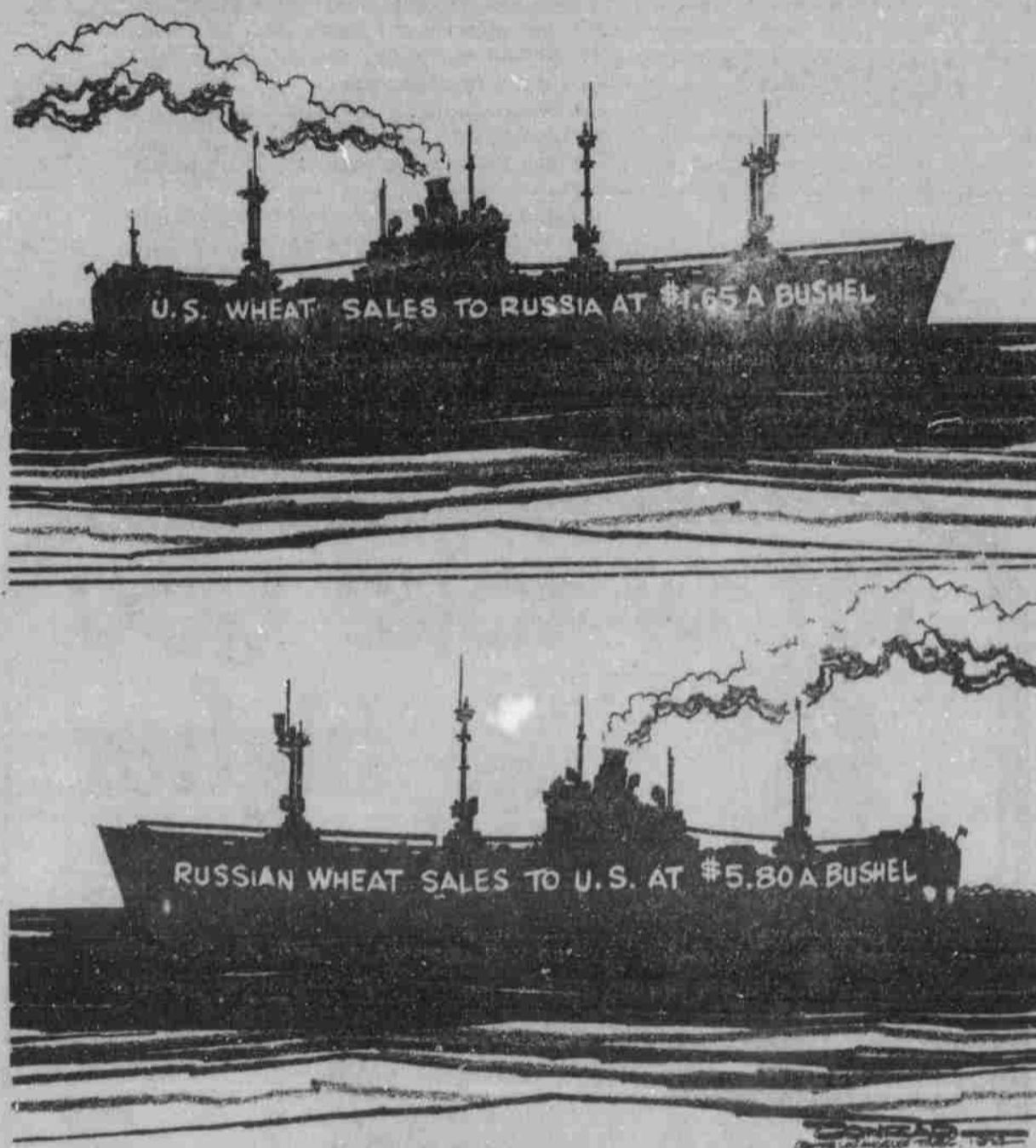
And so the lid of the 1973-74 ASUN Senate has all but been nailed shut. That senate unfortunately was hamstrung by too many ego-tripping candidates who somehow managed to get elected. The win itself was euphoric for many; senate was something else. Too often the interest ended along with the election.

This year's so-called student government was a noninfluential clot of nonleaders who represented some but governed none. The representation itself was dubious—with slightly more than 12 per cent of the student body voting, the senate counted in its membership not a single black, Indian, Chicano, foreign student or married student.

For the group to have any sort of power, major restructuring is crucial. Probably the only group that would have any clout with the UNL administration and state government would be an organization representing the faculty, administration and staff (such as secretaries and custodians) as well as students.

Keeping the current state of the senate in mind, it seems that this year's elections again promise to be much ado about nothing.

Mary Voboril



How to succeed in business without really trying.

Board not designed to respond to people

guest opinion

Editor's note—Doug Voegler, is a freshman at the College of Law.

By Doug Voegler

Much attention recently has focused on the student regent bill. In my opinion, this bill in any form is a poor and superficial approach to making the Board of Regents more responsive to the people, faculty or students.

During recent years, the regents have taken much heat from all sides. The conservatives have given them hell over issues such as the World in Revolution, the Human Sexuality conferences, abortion and liberalized dormitory visitation. At the same time, students have been irritated by the regents' stand on coed visitation, alcohol on campus, academic freedom (the right to select speakers), etc. The faculty has been concerned about University priorities and tenure.

In my mind, there is a direct and simple solution to this matter. Basic to the whole problem is that people do not feel that the Board of Regents is representative nor that it is following the people's wishes. Whether you be an irate taxpayer or a frustrated student, I think this is true.

The reason for these feelings developing is that the structure of the Board of Regents is not really designed to be very responsive to the people. Regents are unpaid. It takes much time and money to be a regent. It is a luxury to be one. There are presently eight regents. As a result, each regent

represents about 200,000 persons in his district. It is well recognized that the larger the general grouping, the less important become the individual component parts in relation to the whole. The voices of the state's minorities—whether blacks in Omaha, Mexican-Americans in western Nebraska, native Americans centered in western and northeastern Nebraska, the student population centered around the Lincoln campus or the poor—are diluted and made less valuable by the size of these districts.

Another factor is the length of terms of the regents. Each term lasts six years. If an issue comes up which upsets people it probably will be forgotten, by the time election comes around. Therefore there is no real need to meet it head on, but merely a need to put it off and let things die down. For a good deal of time after his election, each regent has a pretty free hand. He knows this and acts accordingly. There is no need to be truly responsive until election time approaches.

I would propose a constitutional amendment which would: 1) enlarge the membership of the Board of Regents to 15 members. This would reduce the district sizes and the number of people each regent represents, bringing him closer to the people; 2) provide a salary for board members. I suggest \$7,500 per year. This would enable people not independently wealthy to run for these positions; 3) reduce the terms of office to four years. This would make the regents more responsive.

Bookstore stipend—robbing Pete to pay Paul?

Some time ago, there was only one bookstore of any note serving UNL students. Or maybe students were serving it. Suffice it to say that its prices were high enough to prompt the Legislature to require the University to open a bookstore of its own. The idea was to break the monopoly the other bookstore held, thus lowering prices.

So was born the University Bookstore. It is required by law to sell textbooks at list price or below, and to neither lose much money or to make a profit. It wasn't provided with much capital. It just had to operate—somehow. Considering everything, that was a big order.

In response to complaints about its prices and the fact that it doesn't pay rent on its space in the Nebraska Union, the bookstore has always pointed out that competition in the book business is cutthroat, and that other bookstores here had a substantial advantage because they were part of a chain of stores.

It isn't hard to prove that the University Bookstore is hard pressed—it has lost money about as often as it has made it. But there is hope that things will improve.

Many students have suggested that the bookstore stop giving discounts to faculty members, but that

suggestion has met evasive grins. It has always seemed the practice was too well entrenched to be changed.

Now, however, there is a proposal, with the apparent approval of the bookstore, to discontinue faculty discounts and, instead of lowering prices, to give the several thousand dollars saved to the Office of Financial Aids for scholarships. It's kind of like

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robbing Peter to pay Paul.

One thing can't be argued with. The University lost about \$750,000 last year in federal scholarship money.

That left about 1,800 students in the lurch, probably hurt University enrollment and sent Financial Aids people scrambling for money. The

bookstore money, small as it is, is at least better than nothing. But it means that, like it or not, students are buying scholarships instead of lower priced books.

The \$5,000 involved now is scarcely enough to quibble about, but the future may be different. John Stafford, the manager of the University Bookstore, indicated Tuesday that in as little as three years the bookstore will be in a position to stop building its investment in inventory, leaving some money free for the bookstore to work with.

The obvious next step, it seems, would be to lower prices. But I have to wonder whether the surplus might not be spent for scholarships instead. I don't think that was the original purpose of the bookstore.

There's another thing that bothers me. If the University Bookstore stops giving discounts, the consensus is that the other bookstores will, too.

After all, who really wants to sell books at close to cost when they can get away with making a profit? I think we can assume that other stores' profits won't go for scholarships. Why should the University make a \$15,000 gift to the Nebraska Bookstore? Granted that the idea is a new one, granted that the Financial Aids Office needs help, and granted that it might work out better than expected, but the proposal still is a bit fishy.