

# editorial

## Postal service: a puny express

When the old U.S. Post Office was transformed into the independent, nonprofit Postal Service five years ago, it got a new emblem, some U.S. Treasury money and a lot of publicity.

The new system was revolutionary, we were told. It would speed mail delivery, reduce the number of letters and parcels lost and, best of all, it would pay for itself.

The Postal Service has been in trouble ever since. It has raised postal rates twice in five years and has

proposed another hike—one that would send first class letter rates up to thirteen cents.

The agency's budget has risen steadily; operating in the black looks like a virtual impossibility for the service at this point.

And as the U.S. Postal Service spends increasingly more money, postal delivery in this country has deteriorated proportionately.

Airmail rates have become a joke. Special delivery has been known to take longer than first class in some parts of the country. Parcel post has become so costly, slow and damaging to packages that the private United Parcel Service is enjoying a booming business. Other private postal systems are being experimented with for letters.

Postal service officials have said inflation, employe raises and increased operating costs make the thirteen-cent stamp necessary. Does an inefficient operation cost more than an efficient one? Are employes being given raises for inadequate service?

The Lincoln post office has stopped delivering mail to UNL offices, saying the change was ordered by Postal Service supervisors. The move will save the Postal Service \$25,000 a year.

But it will cost UNL \$12,000 annually. Since the Postal Service is not a tax-supported institution and the university is, it's the taxpayers—who, by the way, are also stamp buyers—that take up the slack on this latest example of Postal Service corner-cutting.

\*\*\*

And while we're on the subject of efficiency, here's to local law enforcement folks for doing a tremendous job of nabbing alleged out-of-state marijuana pickers.

Four more of the supposed harvesters, all from the West Coast, were arrested last weekend, the Lincoln Star reports. Let's hear it for the police, sheriff's deputies and state patrolmen who are keeping Nebraska's Own out of the hands of these alien entrepreneurs—they'd only sell it back to the natives at inflated prices, anyway.

\*\*\*

Double takes: Recently we received a PR sheet from the Builders, welcoming all and sundry to the unveiling of the 1975-76 Builders Calendar. At the bottom of the sheet was the line, "Gentlemen of the press are invited."

We'd like to take this opportunity to raise the collective consciousness of the Builders. This semester our editor, advertising manager, production manager, business manager, two news editors, the layout editor and 18 or 26 reporters are women.

\*\*\*

Below is a letter to the editor that we hope students will read and act on.

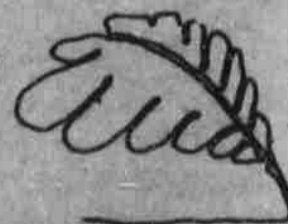
For every such plea for outside contact that the Daily Nebraskan receives from inmates, there may be 50 more men and women in the same situation.

As the writer of the letter implies, family and friends tend to forget imprisoned offenders after awhile. Long lack of outside contact can produce what the writer refers to as becoming institutionalized—losing the ability to function in the outside world.

Write to Harry Harrison. And while you're at it, ask him for the names of other inmates who see no visitors and get no letters. He'll be happy to oblige.

Rebecca Brite

## to the editor



Dear editor,

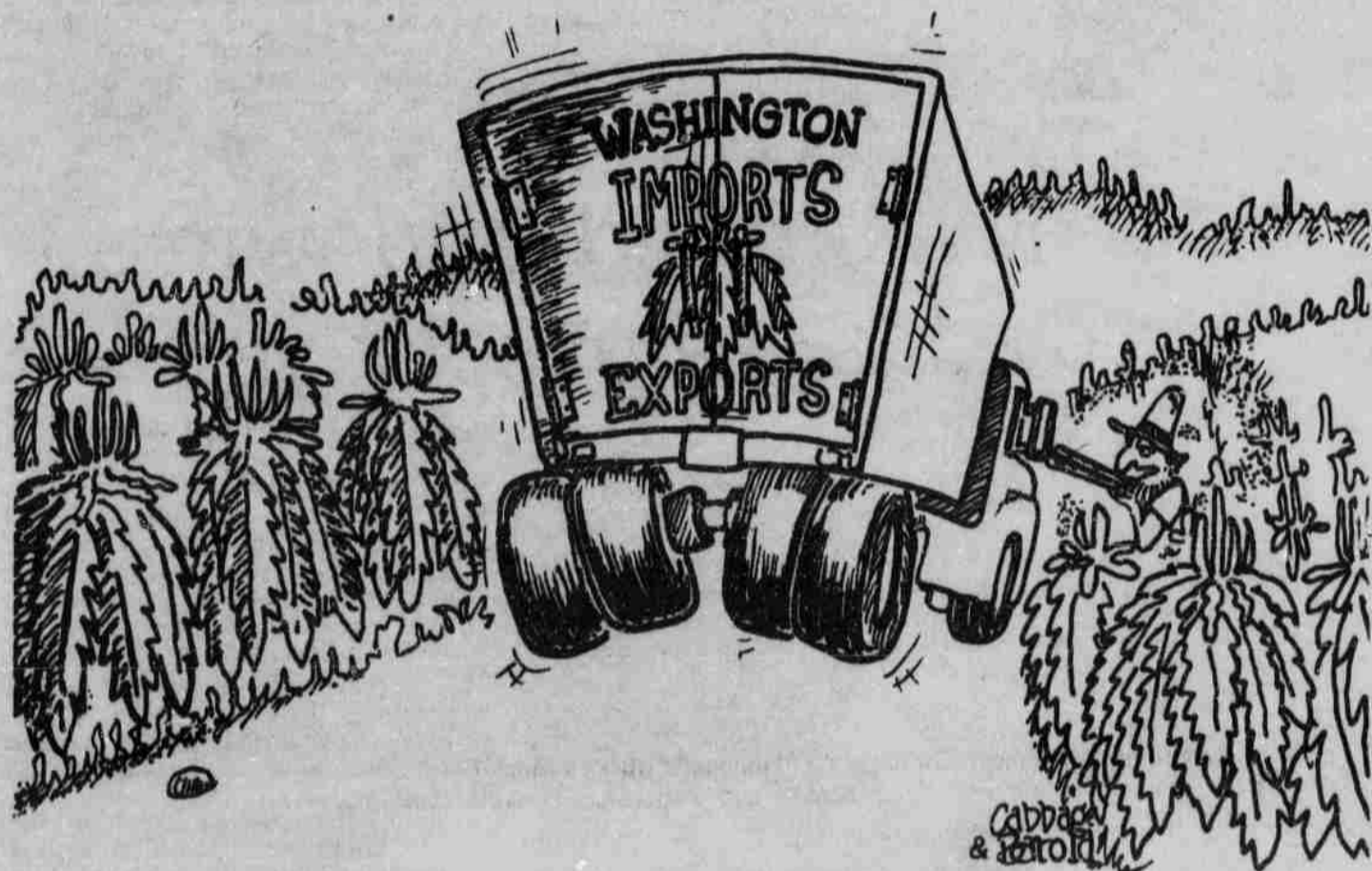
I am presently incarcerated in the Men's Reformatory Unit of the Nebraska Penal and Correctional Complex. I have been an inmate of this institution for such a long time that I am beginning to lose contact with the real world. Becoming institutionalized is something I fear very much.

I don't have anyone with whom I can correspond or visit on a regular basis, as time has almost destroyed the ties I once had with family and friends.

As a possible solution to my dilemma, I am writing to you thinking that maybe you will print my letter in your paper, and that one of the thousands of students on campus will take the time to write to me.

My address is:  
P.O. Box 8128-R  
Lincoln, Nebraska 68501

Harry B. Harrison



## Observer gives student tips for cracking bureacracy



By Michael Hilligoss

"Yossarian" met with me at the Brass Rail last Saturday and we discussed further the program and tactics of the Vine Street Irregulars, a small, loose-knit band of disenchant graduate students at UNL.

I had hoped to impress Yossarian with my deep interest in the aims of the VSI by telling him about a recent "unpleasantness" I had experienced with a university bureaucrat and the (I thought) militant manner in which I had confronted the situation.

To my surprise, he became agitated as I told the incident, observing that I was still very much an amateur and that my handling of the situation probably did much more to bolster my ego than to effect any permanent solution that would help others facing similar situations.

Yossarian surmised that one usually can't accomplish much in verbal exchanges with underlings and clerks.

"It does no good to call the attention of the underpaid student worker at the library circulation desk to the gross inappropriateness of the exhorbitant library fine with which you are faced," he said penuriously.

"You can raise the rafters about poorly taught courses, but it probably won't do much good if the rafters aren't ringing around a dean's head somewhere," he continued.

Yossarian explained that every "difficult situation" is unique and that the professional VSI member can respond expertly only with experience.

He added, however, that there are five fundamental tactics which anyone can learn, even undergraduates.

First, always ascertain at the outset whether or not the person you are talking to has the authority to correct the undesirable situation to which you have called his attention. If he doesn't, find out who his supervisor is and go see him.

Second, stand your ground once you locate the appropriate decision-making level and be prepared for such ploys as, "Yes, that's a good point but you must understand how difficult it is to change something like this in a system as complex as a large university."

Third, if the administrator persists in avoiding the immediacy or the importance of the issue, ask to see his supervisor.

Fourth, when confronted with the ploy, "Well, what's your alternative?" remember that you are not obligated to do the administrator's work for him since devising solutions to problems is what he gets paid for—hansomely.

Fifth, follow up everything in writing (in triplicate) and explain in your letter that you are serious and that you will take the issue higher if the problem is not satisfactorily resolved.

Explain also that (1) you have kept a carbon copy for future reference, (2) you expect a prompt response, and (3) you are sending the third copy to the Ombudsman (Burnett Hall, Room 110) for his files.

I told Yossarian he sounded more like a consumer advocate than a grad student rebel.

"Of course," he replied. "Remember that check you just wrote for tuition and fees? That's our money buying the university's red tape, inefficiency, and incompetence."

The Daily Nebraskan welcomes letters to the editor and guest opinions. Choices of material published will be based on timeliness and originality. Letters must be accompanied by the writer's name, but may be published under a pen name if requested. Guest opinions should be typed, triple-spaced, on nonerasable paper. They should be accompanied by the author's name, class standing and major, or occupation. All material submitted to these pages is subject to editing and condensation, and cannot be returned to the writer.