

# editorial

## The learning hurt us, not Ford

After three weeks of expectation, one week of uncertainty and a whole day of speeches, President Gerald Ford made his appearance in Omaha Wednesday at the Nebraska-Iowa White House Conference on Domestic and Economic Affairs.

Complete with not-so-secretly placed secret service men, and what seemed to be practically the whole of the Omaha Police Dept. glorying in their confusion, the Omaha Hilton Hotel was turned into a forum where Ford came to "learn and listen."

And, indeed, the learning and the listening was there.

But not as we had hoped.

The audience, representatives of 17 Iowa and Nebraska organizations, listened to Ford and six of his close administrators sprinkle their speeches with adjectives such as soon, maybe, eminent and possibly.

It also listened to jokes about Secretary of Agriculture Earl Butz, Gov. J. James Exon and the Nebraska football team.

We, for our part, also listened and learned. Three reporters and two photographers awakened if not so bright, at least early, to get to Omaha on time.

In Omaha we listened to all of the speeches and attended all of the news conferences.

In Lincoln we listened to our colleagues complain that nothing new happened.

And from all of this listening we learned.

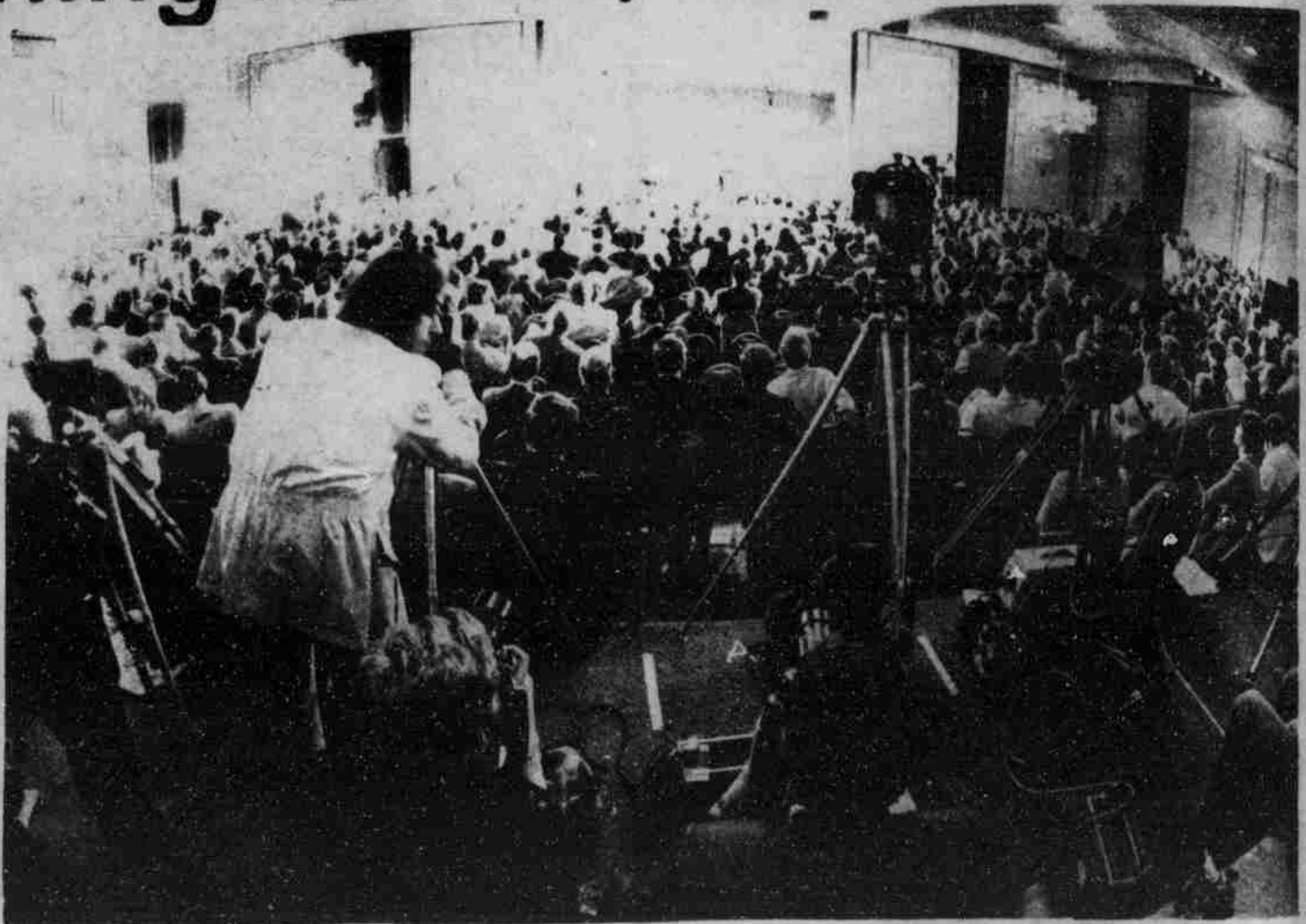
We learned just how the government public relations machine works: the people who set up the conference did just enough advance publicity to get us to give up a day of classes to go to Omaha. After all, the President does not come to Nebraska every day.

We learned that they probably would have been happy to see that we devoted a front-page story and our sacred double truck (centerfold, if you like) to cover the conference. They would have been, but probably they did not stay long enough to see it.

We learned that while local reporters lunched, the Washington press corp invaded the press room, taking over all desks, typewriters and phones, not to mention the President's Press Secretary Ron Neissen who only talks to Washington reporters.

While we were learning all of this, we also learned what we did not learn.

We did not learn when the President was entering the building. Supposedly he was going to



The administration, the extended bureaucracy and the press.

Photo by Ted Kirk

enter through a back door. So we waited.

Suddenly he was there. It was easy to tell. His voice came over a loud speaker in the press room from an undisclosed place.

We did learn that the President entered the building through the front door. Unfortunately, we learned this after lunch.

The final thing we learned was that listening to the President in Omaha was much like listening to him on television.

After all, the President did not enter until his scheduled 4:30 p.m. appearance. When he did, he spoke for 15 minutes and then answered only one question of each representative from the 17 host organizations. The rest of the audience sat and watched as though they were not really there to participate.

The White House had not come to the people.

The people were not invited. Only representatives of them were. And the bureaucracy was extended. At the scheduled 5:30 p.m. bewitching hour, the President said goodnight.

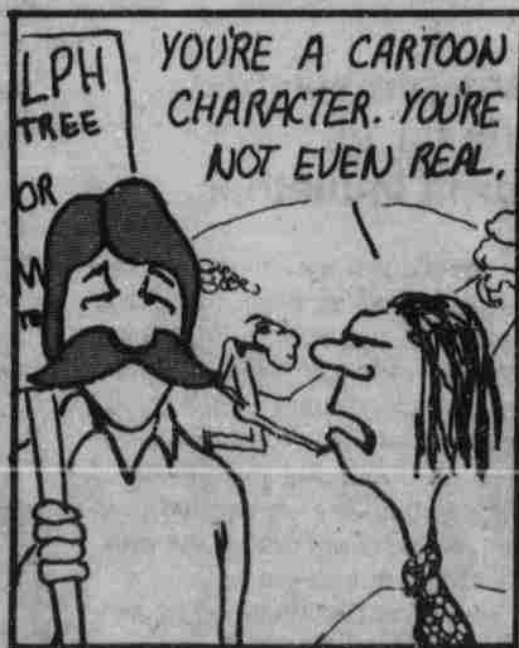
He walked off into the sunset—into some unknown room in the Hilton, to be seen again only by the White House people.

We turned off our sets, told those left in Lincoln that they did not miss much. Except a rerun which will be rerun again.

And Thursday we listened to each other. And for the first time that day, we learned something: that the White House p.r. had worked. Unfortunately, the learning was not at the conference. And unfortunately it was not before we had subjected our readers to our zealously.

The lesson hurt.

The Editors



### to the editor



Dear editor,  
It seems that Campus Police (or at least a member of the staff) has finally outdone itself.

Last Wednesday evening I went to my car parked in a spot in the Sheldon Gallery lot where it has been parked countless other evenings over the past three or four years, only to find a ticket, carrying a \$5 fine for "parking in unauthorized area."

Finding this sudden transformation a bit much, I decided to protest. After two visits to Campus Police and shuttling through a couple of people I was shown into the office of a young man whose exact power was not clear, only to be told again there was nothing he could do.

I tried to make the point that they were trying, without warning, to make people pay a \$5 fine for something that had been condoned the day before.

(Apparently it had been an illegal parking area all along but the rule had never been enforced. How I was supposed

to know that I don't know.)

The man appeared to be digging in his pockets and generally thrashing around in his chair. Then, still saying there was nothing he could do, he put my ticket and a stack of one dollar bills on his desk and told me to go and pay the ticket. Doing a fast burn I tossed the money back, took my ticket and stomped out.

As there were no other witnesses and it is his word against mine, I won't even attempt to imagine where the money came from or what he was trying to do, but from just about any view it was a pretty shoddy and questionable tactic.

If that is a normal practice of Campus Police, I'd strongly suggest a policy change. If he thought it up all by himself, someone over there had better have a serious talk with someone else.

M. E. Tune

### Police state

Dear editor,

I was amazed to find when I purchased my parking permit that the fine system was changed—not in the students' favor, of course.

Last year they used a graduated fine system which was a lot more fair, since your first violation was small. There also was not an exorbitant late payment fine placed on

top of the original fine as there is this year.

Increases in both fines and punishment procedures are totally absurd. Gale (we are on a first name basis) is trying to run this campus like a police state with his arbitrary bureaucratic rule changes.

I for one think students should be better represented in Campus Police policy changes, instead of being told what to do like mindless children.

Uncle Chunky

Editor's note: "Gale" is Gail Gade, Campus Police chief.

### Bowl of soup

Dear editor,

In the Sept. 24 Daily Nebraskan, p. 8, someone wrote an article on Latin American women in politics. In it were mentioned two women of bona fide Latin American countries, Brazil and Colombia, and one woman from a bowl of soup! My sympathies to this poor woman, who must by now be permanently stained dark red.

The correct spelling of "Chili" is C-h-i-l-i-e and is pronounced Chee-lay or anglized Chi-lee. The misspelling seemed humorous to me but I doubt if you could get a Chilean to see it that way.

Lloyd A. Peterson

Editor's note: Oops! Must have been a fly on the copy.