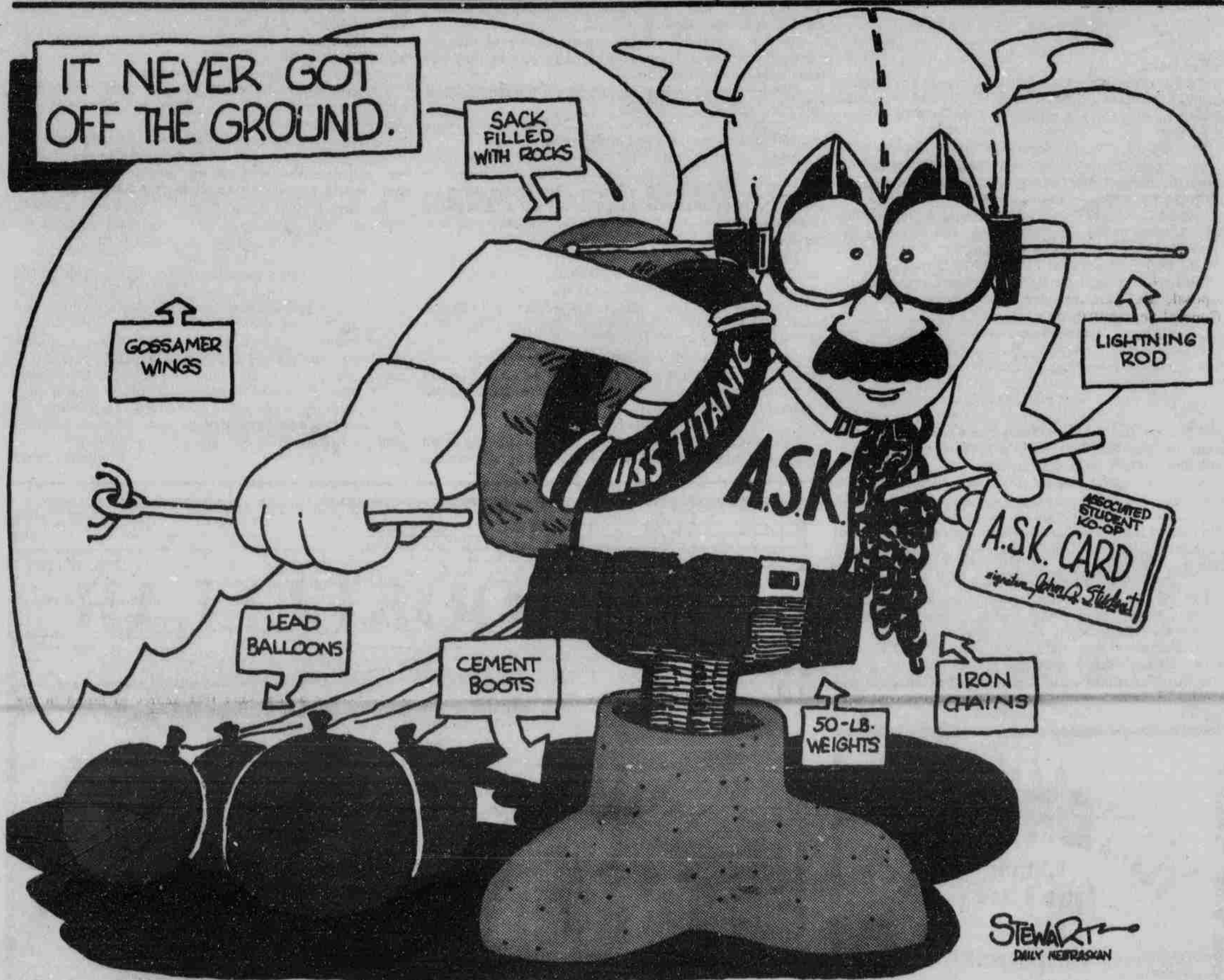


third dimension



ASUN Ko-op disbands; Is it the end?

By Ron Ruggless

"You could never get an everyday, run-of-the-mill purchase with the card," said ASUN President Jim Say.

That complication is the reason given by Say for the disbanding of the Associated Student Ko-op (ASK) for this school year and perhaps permanently.

ASUN has always had difficulty in finding a manager for the Ko-op each year as well as selling the Ko-op cards, Say said.

The card allowed discounts at places like pizza parlors, tire companies and skating centers, but not at grocery stores and other places students need to patronize, he said. "The card was aimed at the student living off campus," he said, "so these places just weren't practical."

Income for ASUN

ASK was established so ASUN would have a steady income of nonstudent fee money that couldn't be cut off by the regents, Say said.

ASK manager's duties were to organize students to sell the laminated plastic ASK card and handle the program's finances.

"Each year of the Ko-op, it has been more difficult to find a manager," Say said, "and this year there weren't any prospects."

He said the ASK program started in the fall of 1972, requiring much volunteer work.

Hard work needed

"The people working with ASK had to work a large amount of time for just a little money," he said.

ASK cards cost students \$2.50, Say said, and the persons selling the card received a small sales commission.

The Ko-op floundered from a lack of publicity last year, but started suffering its decline even before the dearth of publicity, he said.

Several businesses in the Ko-op last year said they would like to continue this year, but they hadn't been contacted.

Ten per cent discount

Joseph Grenfell, manager of the Runza Drive-in in the Glass Menagerie, said the 10 per cent discount his business offered through the Ko-op was used by about 20 people last year.

"One guy came in here every day," he said, "and I'm sure he got his \$2.50 worth."

Grenfell said his business displayed a card on the counter saying they honored the ASK card, but did not use other ASK advertising.

"You would think for \$2.50," Grenfell said, "that more students would have purchased the card. I'm sure they would find it useful."

Greenhouse honors card

Nancy Kramer, owner of the Kramer Greenhouse, said several people used the card at her business last year. "We didn't display any sign about our honoring the ASK card," she said, "but a fairly big population, such as the university, was reached by our participation in the program."

Only 189 students participated in the co-op last year, Say said, as compared with over 600 at the program's peak in 1973.

Businesses drop out

The number of businesses involved in the program also dropped considerably in the two years, he said.

Fifty businesses at one time participated in ASK.

Last year there were 35 businesses in the discount program. A check of these showed that six have gone out of business, leaving 29 places to participate if the program were to have continued this year.

A machine, which made the laminated ASK cards with a photo ID, will be sold or rented, possibly to another UNL department, Say said.

He said the machine might be used by the athletic department for tickets, in university housing for meal cards or perhaps with Academic Services for student identification cards.

New ID card possible

"There has been some talk of the university going to a different kind of student identification card," Say said, "so they (university personnel) may purchase the machine for that use."

"There is still nothing definite from any of these areas," he added.

The ASK board of directors must decide what to do with the student ko-op before any action can be taken with the machine of disbanding the entire program, he said.

At a meeting Sept. 14, Say said, two of the appointed directors were present and the decision was made not to continue ASK this year.

Directors not plentiful

"It's really hard to find directors," he said, "as they were appointed at the beginning of the program to help set it up, and weren't really needed after that."

As for the future of ASK, Say said ASUN probably will make the final decision to discontinue or continue the student discount program.

"It may be awhile, though," he said, "until we can find a use for the machine."