

D-i-v-o-r-c-e could be prevented by communication

The four little words "What did you say?" or the endearing phrase "I hear you" may become the magic language of marital harmony if divorces are to be prevented in the future.

The number of divorces in Nebraska increased by 27 per cent between 1972 and 1975, and lack of communication is the problem most listed by filing couples.

"Divorces seem to be becoming easier in every part of the world, especially in the Scandinavian countries," said Nicholas Babchuk, UNL sociology professor, who teaches a course about marriage and the family. The U.S. divorce rate increase was prefaced by increases in many other European and Scandinavian countries, according to Babchuk.

"We're pretty much near the peak in the divorce rate," Babchuk said. He said he thinks the divorce rate will stop rising as soon as Americans "get used to values and different modes of living" which have changed faster than the roles and living patterns of husbands and wives.

Women's roles change

Although Babchuk attributed the increasing number of divorces to sexual freedom, Americans' "special kind of mobility and freedom" and relaxed divorce laws, he cited the changing role of women as the main cause of the increase.

"The changing role of women in our society means that an ever-increasing number of them can fend for themselves and don't have to take the abuses that can often accompany marriage," said Babchuk. "It's much easier to live now without being married than it used to be."

Another result of changing sex roles is that "more people who are marrying aren't having children, or are only having one child," Babchuk said. Divorce is much easier for those couples than it is for large families, he said.

He said many problems can reflect a communication problem between husband and wife, but he thinks that communication has become "too much of a catch-all term" that is blamed for an infinity of other problems.

Happy?

"It's hard to know if people are happy or less happy than they used to be" with their marriages, he said.

Because Nebraskans "tend to be rural and the state is populated with older people," Babchuk said, he thinks the state's divorce rate probably was lower than the national average.

He mentioned California as an example of a state that has a disproportionate number of young people in its population, and one that would tend to have a higher divorce rate than Nebraska.

Babchuk said he doubted students were more likely to be divorced than other persons, but he said divorce is often a result of marrying at an early age, lack of

education or knowing prospective spouses for a short time. He also said people who get married at an early age are more likely than older couples to have in-law problems.

Couples wait for divorce

Young couples sometimes discover their marriages are a mistake during their first year together, but often fail to file or complete the divorce process until the third year of marriage, according to Babchuk.

Marriage contracts are being considered by some states as a solution which might help ease divorce rates, Babchuk said. In those contracts couples stipulate before the

wedding what they expect from marriage. Living situations, household obligations and property distribution can be included in the contracts.

Babchuk said marriage contracts could result in fewer "precipitous marriages."

While Babchuk was guarded in his estimate of the effects his course Marriage and the Family has on students who later marry, he did say he hopes his students are more realistic about marriage after taking the course.

He said some of his students who marry have told him his course was helpful, and he even has received invitations to weddings from some of his students.

Committee works for changes

By Barbara Lutz

The Government Liaison Committee (GLC) is the "most active and most successful" of ASUN's more than 15 committees and subcommittees, Scott Cook, GLC vice chairman for national affairs, said.

Cook said he bases his opinion on his experience as an ASUN senator and member of several committees.

Three areas of concentration for GLC are national issues, headed by Cook, state issues, headed by John Welch and Greg Johnson, and city and local issues headed by Kent Thompson.

Thompson said a city-related issue affecting students is a high downpayment required by Cengas before installation of gas service. GLC is negotiating with Cengas, Thompson said, to reduce the size of this deposit. Students living off-campus are faced with gas bills and rent as well as tuition, he said, often at the same time.

Renting changes wanted

GLC also is lobbying for changes in the landlord-tenant law, Thompson said. A proposal calls for a monetary fine against landlords if they don't return the initial deposit within a specified amount of time, he said.

A bus route circling East Campus and parts of northeast Lincoln also is a GLC brainchild, Thompson said. A survey will be taken of East Campus students to judge the feasibility of a route from 56th to 27th streets and Vine to Madison streets.

A big problem with many proposals is financing, Thompson said. The Lincoln Transportation System estimated the proposed route would cost \$36 for a minimum of two hours, he added.

Thompson said it would be necessary to charge 360

students 10 cents a piece, but each bus holds only 50 persons.

National issues became an active issue of GLC for the first time this year, Cook said. ASUN paid \$500 to become a member of the National Student Lobby.

Issues to be decided

With the arrival of more information about the lobby, Cook said, national issue for GLC will be formulated.

Cook said GLC has been sending letters of congratulations to winning candidates, such as Rep. Charles Thone, Rep. John Cavanaugh and Sen. Edward Zorinsky.

The work of GLC is either ASUN-directed, or self-initiated, Welch said, but the "overriding factor is student interest."

Thompson said the ASUN "senate body doesn't say much" and "I'm pretty much on my own what I do."

"I don't get as much feedback as I'd like," he said, "I could be reassured of what I'm doing."

However, Cook said there has been "a lot of ASUN feedback, the most we've ever had on GLC." He also said, "ASUN hasn't been active in directing us this year."

Thompson said members of GLC don't have a close rapport with city and state officials. "We only talk to them (to ask for) advice," he said.

City officials are "really open, but they won't stick their foot forward," Thompson said. "They don't want to change any programs."

An example, he said, is the "very unresponsive attitude" of City Traffic Engineer Bob Holsinger. Thompson said GLC has tried to get a light on 9th St. and to slow traffic on 17th St., but the city is not willing to do it.

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