

Gallup: Pollsters reflect society

By Mary Jo Pitzl.

The man with his finger on the heartbeat of the nation, pollster George Gallup Jr., said America is in danger of creating an educated elite, quoting poll figures that report one-fifth of the population is functionally illiterate.

"It's better to let people know what's going on than to let them live in a vacuum," Gallup said. His national polls reflect the attitudes, concerns and opinions of America and are carried by newspapers across the country. The polls cover a spectrum of topics, many of them gleaned from daily headlines, Gallup said.

Gallup was in Nebraska for a speaking engagement at Wayne State College in Wayne Monday. He discussed his polls and their effects on the nation with about 50 students and faculty members. He also discussed techniques involved in compiling his polls.

Gallup Sr., 75, is the chairman of the Gallup Poll, known as the American Institute of Public Opinion. Gallup Jr. serves as president of the institute. Besides the national poll, which is run by the father-son team, the Gallup enterprise has established two independent agencies, Gallup said.

Gallup International conducts polls with affiliates in 30 other nations, and the Gallup organization conducts market research for a full range of clients.

Gallup said his polls touch on almost every area of American life.

"There are only two kinds of polls we don't do," he said, "private political research for politicians and ratings, such as the Nielsen ratings."

Gallup polls have interviewed close to one and a half million people since 1935, Gallup said. They "easily" have conducted about 1,000 national polls, he said.

Questions used on the polls come from a variety of sources. Daily headlines and news events provide many of

the questions, as well as ideas generated by Gallup and his family from their Princeton, N.J. home. Gallup said newspapers subscribing to his syndicated column can buy questions to be included in the poll.

"Question decision is very much in the way of an art, dealing with words," Gallup said. He said questions are carefully worded to avoid bias. Each question is tested in a pilot survey in 300 sample locations across the United States with about 25 participants each, Gallup said.

Selection of the regions where a poll will be taken is mostly a matter of probability, he explained. Through mathematical procedures, the seven U.S. regions defined by the Gallup staff are broken into specific blocks.

Interviewers cover their assigned blocks, usually on Saturdays at 9 a.m., because most people are sure to be found at home then, Gallup said. The second most common time for conducting interviews is around 4 p.m. weekdays.

The youngest man in the household older than 18 is the first person requested by pollsters during interviews, Gallup said. The youngest woman over 18 is asked for next. Gallup said interviewers follow a definite sequence of who to ask for when going from door to door.

Pollsters go to every fourth house within a block, skipping the corner house. The corner house "is usually the home of someone with slightly greater affluence," Gallup said.

Most pollsters are able to ask two questions within a minute. No formal training is given to Gallup interviewers. They are all "tried by fire," Gallup said, with their initial assignments done on a test basis.

Gallup polls are conducted every two to three weeks. Gallup drafts the articles that are written on the basis of the poll results. Gallup, a Princeton University graduate with a bachelors degree in religion, says he still does some of the polling himself.



Photo by Scott Svoboda

Syndicated pollster George Gallup Jr. spoke Monday night to students at Wayne State College in Wayne. His speech covered the effects of polling.

Old Police Review Board killed by compromise

By Larry Lutz

The Lincoln Police Review Board is dead, following a compromise by the City Council and Mayor Helen Boosalis at Monday's Council meeting. Although the board was not abolished, its name was changed and its procedure redefined.

The new board, to be called the Citizen's Police Advisory Board, will not hold public hearings during testimony on complaints against the Lincoln Police Dept. (LPS). The provision is part of the compromise proposal by Councilwoman Sue Bailey.

Her proposal followed one by Councilman Bob Sikyta to abolish the review board altogether. At the weekly closed meeting Monday morning, Boosalis said she would veto any move to abolish the board.

She said at the Council meeting that she thought there was still a need for a review board, and that the idea was still good even if the present structure did not work.

Critics of the old board, including Sikyta and Police Chief George Hansen, have said it repeats a function already performed by LPD. They said the department can

handle complaints against itself and an outside body is not needed.

Safety valve

However, Board members disagreed at the Council meeting, saying a citizens' board could serve as a safety valve. Board member Ted LaRose said he thought it would present internal problems if a policeman had to investigate a fellow officer.

Bailey agreed, saying she thought a citizens' board could be more objective and that citizens might be more willing to file complaints with the board than with police officers.

She said she patterned her proposal after the Human Rights Commission's procedures. Under the proposal, the advisory board will review written complaints from citizens against either individual officers or department policies. However, under the new advisory board, names of individuals would be revealed to the public.

Publicizing the testimony and individuals involved was Council Chairman Max Denney's primary criticism of the old board. He said he had supported the board in the beginning more than a year ago "and had worked long and

hard with John (Robinson, Council member) to get it proposed."

Denny disappointed

"However, I am greatly disappointed with it now," he said. "And if this one doesn't work, you can be assured I'll be back before the Council to speak against it."

Denney said he voted in favor of the compromise with some reservations, but added that he thought the new proposal might work and seemed to be the best move at the present time.

Councilman Richard Baker also said he was not really in favor of the new proposal and wanted to abolish the board. But after Boosalis said she would veto the move, he said he decided to vote in favor of the compromise with some reservations.

Sikyta, the only Council member to vote against the proposal, maintained that the board was not needed. He said he thought Lincoln had a fine police department and that Hansen's review procedures were adequate.

Bailey disagreed, saying that after one meeting, she didn't think the review board had been tested adequately. She said the revisions might make it more effective, and that the name change might help its image.

Cornhusker Marching Band not going to Bluebonnet Bowl

The Cornhusker Marching Band will not attend the Astro-Bluebonnet Bowl in Houston on Dec. 31, according to UNL Chancellor Roy Young.

"The university does not have the estimated \$40,000 to send the band to the bowl game. We must stay within our allowance for the bowl appearance and no other funds are available," Young said.

Officials of the bowl had said they were "anxious to have the Cornhusker Marching Band participate during pre-game and half-time festivities," Young said.

Dick Fleming, assistant to the chancellor, said the information that the band would have to depend on a fund-raising drive was released last Thursday. On the basis of the lack of response to that news release, Fleming said, it was decided a fund-raising drive would not be held.

"Like Dr. Fought said earlier this week, this is a question of general interest and support," Fleming said.

"I have been very impressed with the performance of our band this fall and wish it were possible for the band to go to the bowl game. These young people are fine representatives of the university," Young said.

Robert Fought, director of the band, said that "there is expected disappointment from the band members and myself. It's too bad, I think we deserve to go."

Fought said that now that the decision for this year had been made, it is time to start trying to plan for the future to avoid being left without funds again.

"I think the issue is settled for this year, and now the new challenge is to see if we can get something going for next year," Fought said.

However, Fought was to have held a news conference this morning at Westbrook Music Building. It was learned late Tuesday that he may announce an effort by the band to go to Houston at that time.

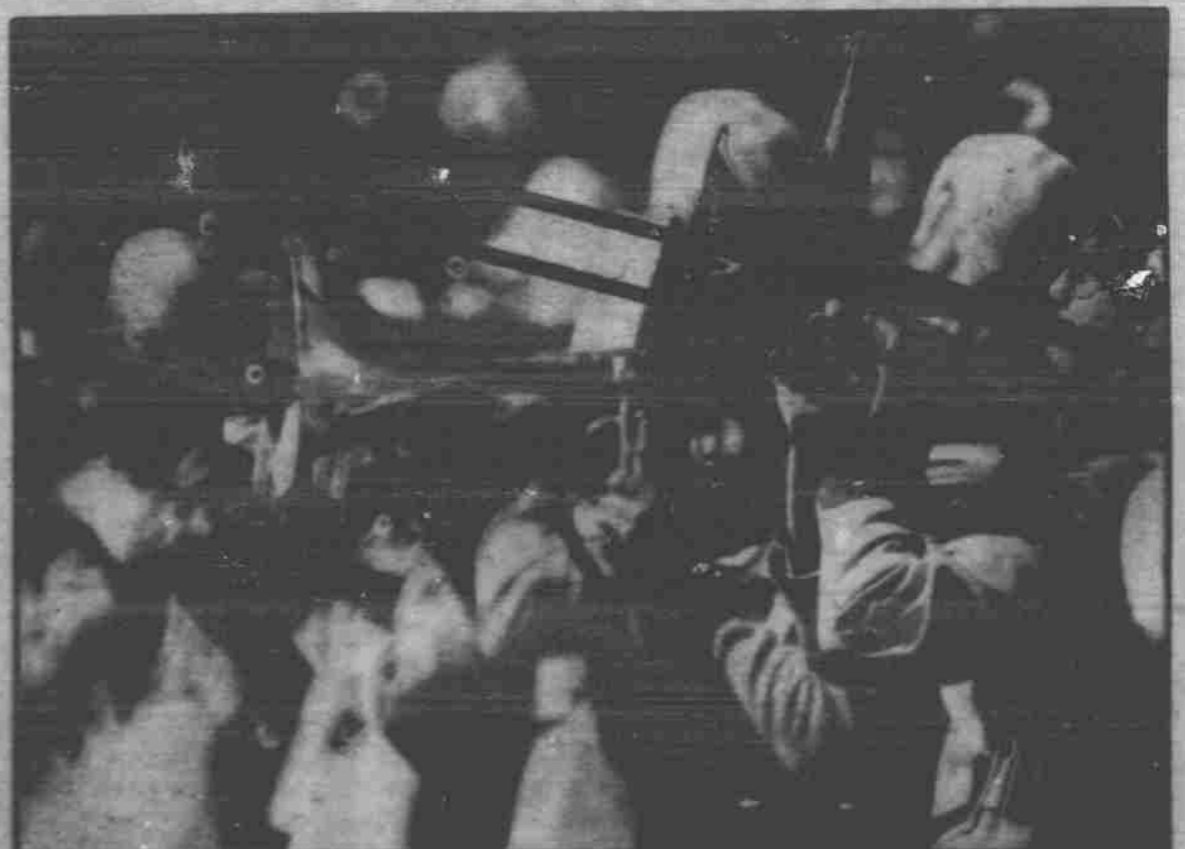


Photo by Kevin Higley

The Cornhusker Marching Band, some of which is shown here against a blurred background of NU football fans, will not make the trip to Houston for the Astro-Bluebonnet Bowl game. Many of the fans will.