

Union Board attempts reconciliation with ASUN

By Mike Patten

The Nebraska Union Advisory Board took a step towards reconciliation with ASUN Tuesday night, but Union Director Allen Bennett may have erased that step.

Bennett told the Board that ASUN charges that students did not know about the proposed new signs in the Union were not true.

The Board was meeting for the first time since ASUN passed three resolutions calling for more student involvement in Union policy decisions.

"People tell me that the students didn't know about the signs," Bennett said. "My frank and honest comment is that that is a lot of b.s."

"The students that care about the university know about it (the signs)," he added.

Bennett urged the board to "develop a rapport" with ASUN, so that he could feel free to work on projects and not have to worry about being told to stop because the students did not have any input.

The Board unanimously approved two motions that would enhance cooperation with ASUN. The first motion calls for the Board president to attend ASUN's first meeting of every month to serve "as a liaison and advisor" to ASUN.

The second motion was to provide ASUN with a copy of the Board's minutes. The Board also passed a motion calling for a paid-secretary to take the Board's minutes.

Bennett said work on the Union sign project has been stopped. He presented the "incomplete project" to the Board and urged them to take it under advisement for a

few weeks.

"I told myself I wasn't going to try and sell this to you," Bennett said, "because you (the Board) bought it once. You just never got around to the final review."

He told the Board it could even table the project for all he cared. "I know my way around the building," he said. "I know where the men's room is."

"I don't have final approval on this," he added. "The Regents have to turn the key to spend the money."

Board President Mike Shanahan said the sign project does not need student approval anyway.

"It's a little ridiculous," Shanahan said. "Do we need to take a survey before replacing the carpets or painting the walls?"

Bennett agreed and said the sign project is a house management decision. "Signs to us are like doorknobs," he said. Bennett said the money for the signs will come from the Equipment Replacement Reserve Fund. When asked if the signs will mean an increase in student fees he replied, "No, absolutely not."

Bennett said the Union spends "\$500-\$1,000" a year replacing old signs anyway, and said the Board must ask itself, "at what point does a '56 Chevy become a '58 Chevy?"

"Sooner or later you have replaced the entire engine and then you have a '58 Chevy," he said.

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Snowless winter saves UNL money

Cold weather has driven heating costs up, but a dry winter in Lincoln is saving money for the city and UNL.

If there is no more snow this year, we'll be real happy," said Lloyd Bomberger, superintendent of the Roads Division of the Lincoln Public Works Dept.

"Lots of salt and sand are still on hand," he said, and the roads division "may come out in the black" financially this winter.

Jay Schluckebier, assistant to the director of university grounds, said, "If we don't have any more snow, we'll save 1,000 man hours."

The Grounds Dept. budgeted 4,677 hours for snow removal for City and East campuses, but have used 3,500 hours so far, he said.

However, the City Campus is running over its budget, he said, because the snow removal crews have only one loader and one four-wheel drive truck, compared to two of each last year.

If there is no more snow, Schluckebier said, the extra man hours will be channeled into inside building improvements and repairs such as sprinkler systems. There are 25 to 30 persons on university snow removal crews, mostly fulltime, he said.

However, snow removal is not the only expense in the winter, he said. "We are still cutting ice out of the gutters" from an earlier storm, he said.

"We don't have to hire outside contractors for a two-inch storm, but if the snow is over three or four inches deep, expenses go sky high."

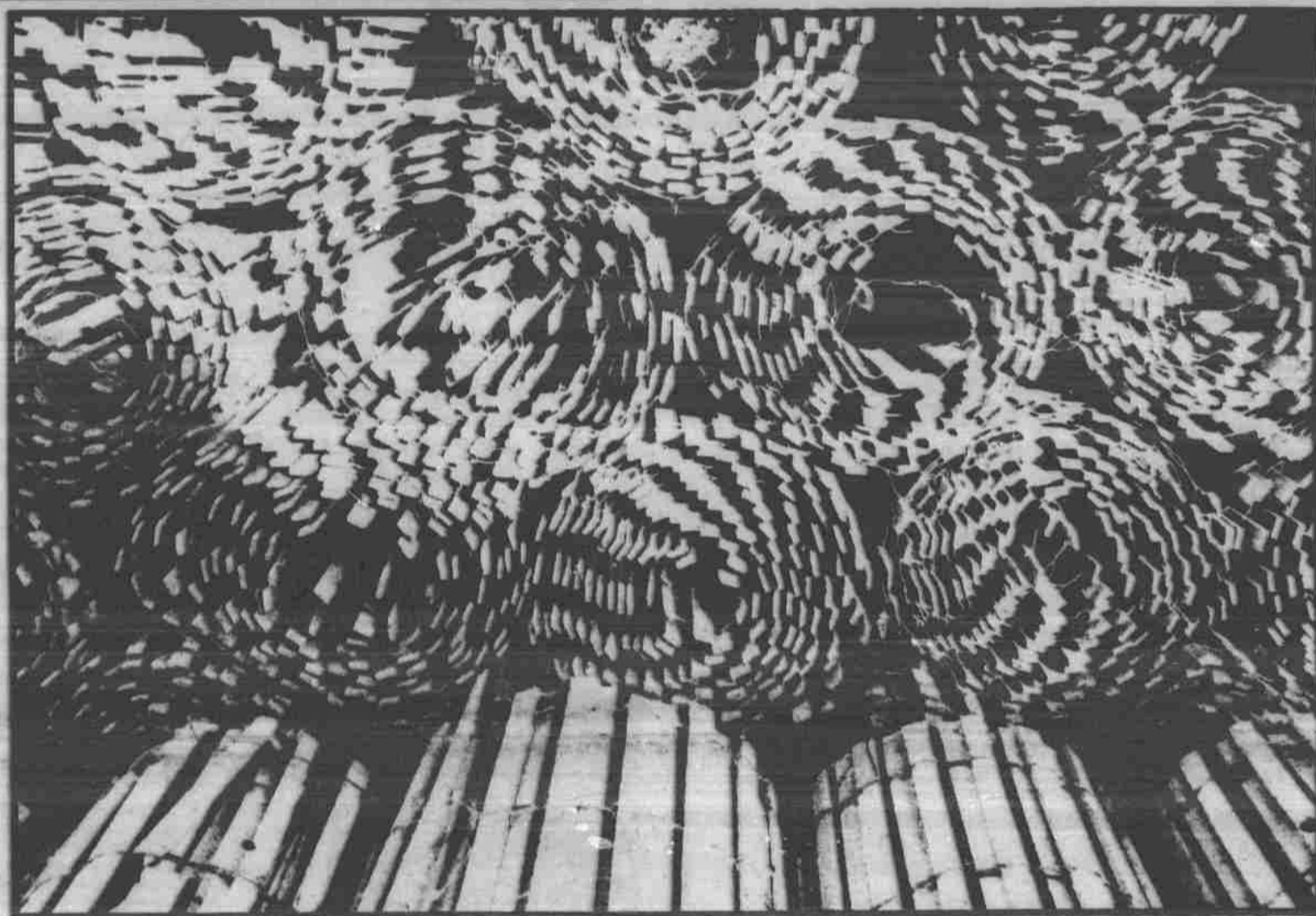


Photo by Kevin Higley

Rolls and rolls of snow fence have been lying around in the dirt this winter, instead of fighting off drifts of snow, of which there has been a small amount.

Political parties may be possible at State Capitol

By Paula Dittrock

There could be a few parties in the State Capitol if senators approve a bill now in the Nebraska Legislature's Constitutional Revision and Recreation Committee.

The parties would not be social gatherings, but political parties.

Omaha Sen. David Newell introduced LB105, proposing an amendment to strike "obsolete language" from the state Constitution which requires senators to be nonpartisan.

Two-thirds of the Legislature and a majority of general election voters would have to approve the bill before it could return to the Legislature for enactment, Newell said.

Even if LB105 is passed, the Legislature could remain nonpartisan if the senators wanted to retain that struc-

ture, said Newell, who added that the bill would allow, but not demand, the Legislature to become partisan.

The bill now awaits a decision concerning the Constitutional Revision and Recreation Committee's resolution to conduct an interim study on the bill.

He said no other state nor the federal Constitution has such a clause demanding nonpartisanship.

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"I don't think it ought to be in Nebraska's Constitution either," Newell said.

Proper way to go

He said he believes an amendment was "the proper way to go," but admitted he was unsure of the likelihood of the bill's passage.

Predicting that the committees will kill the bill, Newell promised he would attempt to bring LB105 out of committee and onto the legislative floor if this happens.

A total of 30 votes would allow the bill to be debated among the senators. Newell said he thought the bill

could draw the votes necessary to bring it out of committee.

Lincoln Sen. Wally Barnett agreed that senators will vote to bring a bill out of committee so that discussion can be heard, even though those senators might not favor the bill itself.

Newell, a registered Democrat, said committee members believe it is in "their own best interests" to continue on a nonpartisan basis.

Many senators "don't want a lot of people involved. They would rather be the kings themselves," he said.

A partisan basis would "increase the opportunities for direct popular input," he said. A partisan basis would make it easier "to affix responsibility on one party or the other."

Increase accountability

A partisan Legislature would increase accountability toward the public, and lessen the impact of special interest groups, he said.

Newell said, "Better legislation would come out of this (a partisan) body." He said the voters are the only ones who do not now know a senator's party and philosophy.

Hemingford Sen. Sam Cullan, who opposes the bill, said personal accountability is now high among senators. He said nonpartisanship maintains an independence which he called "essential to a unicameral."

Nebraska was rated first in accountability among state governments by the American Council of State Governments, Cullan said.

Describing his political affiliation as Independent, Cullan said that if he runs for reelection, he will be elected on his merits and personal record, instead of riding a party's bandwagon.

Cullan said he "strongly predicts the bill won't make it out of committee."

Omaha Sen. Tom Fitzgerald, a Democrat, said he receives more calls from Republicans than Democrats. He said the Legislature now works well and said he opposes LB105.

Both Cullan and Fitzgerald are members of the constitutional committee. The bill's introducer, Newell, is not.

Both major political parties have endorsed the bill. Spokesmen from both parties said their organizations give senators campaign advice and party volunteers work in senator's campaigns.

However, neither party gives senators financial support. Republican State Chairwoman Anne Batchelder of Omaha said the party hopes to give senators such support in the future, but added that the limited funds are first given party candidates.

Batchelder said partisan state senators would provide "a field of party candidates for higher offices."

She predicted that partisanship would not eliminate the influence of special interest groups, but added that such groups find "it easier to pressure an individual than they would find it to pressure a group."

Nebraska Democratic chairman Dick White called the Legislature "a powerblock outside the mainstream of politics" and said partisanship would bring state senators "into tune with the rest of the country and state."

He warned that the bill faces "an uphill battle to get through the Legislature."

White said a partisan Legislature would draw "not less attention, but less influence" from special interest groups and lobbyists.

Both White and Batchelder agreed that the parties' state platforms would be easier to implement with a partisan Legislature.

wednesday

- News: Back when women had a curfew on campus. . . . p. 6
- Entertainment: A relatively raucous round-up of recent recorded releases. . . . p. 7
- Sports: The recreation office announces intramural basketball ratings. . . . p. 10