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Specific proposals should help move task force

It's an old story around here—inaction and resignations delay a process. Student government was faced with the problem at times last year as were several other organizations.

It is disappointing to see inaction also plague the task force studying student government. One of the reasons the task force exists is to eliminate such problems in student government.

Fortunately, it seems that the task force finally is moving. It has met on Sunday nights for several weeks now and interviewed past members of some student government bodies.

The moving task force seems to be ambitious. It has surveyed 16 schools about their student

governments. It has concluded that some student governments with more power draw more participation.

But, it points out, some other governments have about the same control as the ASUN Senate and executives, yet they get better participation. Now where?

The issues have been talked about. (The discussion prompted the creation of the task force.) And as ASUN President Greg Johnson notes, any task force recommendation must go through campus political channels. So why not open those channels now?

The best way to do it is to establish the frame-

work for discussion.

The task force needs to continue to seek student comment, but mostly it needs to promote talk.

To promote talk it needs some solid issues—that means specific proposals. Without necessarily making decisions, it could present a list of proposals considered—basically an agenda. Such a list might be considered the definitions for the debate.

Let's start discussion with some concrete proposals and let politics run their course. The sooner, the better.



letter
to the editor

In a recent article on former President Ford's visit to Lincoln and (the University of Nebraska at Omaha) UNO, I was quoted in such a way as to convey the impression that I was critical of Ford for not being a political philosopher.

My intentions was to make the opposite point: that we who teach the art and science of politics can learn a great deal of importance from those who practice it, especially at the level of the American Presidency.

On the whole, I thought the President's visit to our campus constituted a valuable learning experience, but I would agree that the format was such that we did not take full advantage of our opportunity.

Looking forward to the spring visit, the question is: how best to learn those things that Ford, because

of his vast political experience and considerable skill, can teach us?

In the case of the UNO format, we think it might be wise to get away from broad abstract topics ("The President and Congress") and attempt to direct his attention to specific subjects, such as the Mayaquez incident, electoral college reform, the Nixon pardon, and the War Powers Act.

By concentrating on such concrete issues we might gain valuable insights into the practice of presidential politics that could be of considerable theoretical significance.

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Carter takes safari in New York's concrete desert

New York—Jimmy Carter did not make a pit stop on Fox Street.

Two motorcycles swung onto the block first, then came a car filled with agents, then two more motorcycles, a car, another car, more motorcycles, more cars, sirens crying, red lights blinking—you've done something wrong, you've done something wrong—and then a brown limousine with flags on the front fenders and Carter in the back seat, looking out the windows and, you hoped, seeing something.

The motorcade rolled along the stone desert. Then it turned the corner and was gone. The captains and the kings had departed, and you were left in an empty lot in the middle of the 800 block on Fox Street. The view was of 10 gutted five-story apartment buildings, and the piles of rubble where a half-dozen other buildings had stood until scorched earth became an official policy in the South Bronx.

jimmy breslin



Life resumed on the street. Carlos Fontanez, who is 13, came out of a slum-gray building on the corner of Fox Street, walked over to a body-and-fender shop and began throwing a rubber ball against the wall. He caught it one-handed with a first baseman's glove. Frail brown arms came out of a yellow T-shirt. When he smiled, a mouth full of chipped teeth showed.

"Did you see President Carter?" he was asked.

He stopped throwing the ball and pointed to the top floor of his apartment house. "From the window," he said.

Your block

"What did you think of him coming to your block?" he was asked.

Out in the street, a man leaning under the hood of a suddenly looked up and saw the boy talking to a visitor. "It that your father?" Carlos was asked. We were about to go over and ease the suspicions of the adult.

"Nah, got no father," Carlos said. "You say Carter. Is Carter going to send people here to build houses?"

"Do you think he should?" Carlos was asked.

"That's what somebody say before, Carter going to send people here and build houses. They could build houses here that the rats, they won't come into the houses."

He started throwing the ball up against the wall again. "Where does he live, Jimmy Carter?" he asked.

"In Washington."

New York

Carlos stopped. "I thought he lived in New York." "In the White House in Washington," he was told.

"I thought that was in New York," he said.

It was about 10 a.m. "Don't you go to school?" Carlos was asked.

"P.S. 52."

"Why aren't you there?"

"I got to go to a doctor. I got working papers and the principal says I got to go get the doctor to sign them."

"You have to be 14 for working papers," he was told.

"Going to be 14 in May and I get a job then. The principal says I have to get the doctor to sign my papers. So I go there today."

"But why don't you wait until May for that?"

Now he concentrated on throwing the ball against the wall.

"Do you stay home from school a lot?" he was asked.

He smiled and nodded yes.

"Where were you born?"

Spelling lesson

"In P.R. We came over here on account of we had no house. I lived in P.R., in Carolina." He spelled it out, hesitantly, holding a finger up and thinking of each letter. At the letter "o" he faltered and then said, "i." Then he said, "No, no. That's 'l' and then 'i.'" He smiled proudly.

He looked up at his apartment and waved at his mother.

"Isn't she mad that you're not in school today?" he was asked.

"Sometimes she is mad at me. Today she's not so mad. Today she's mad at my brother."

He went back to his learning for the day: throwing the ball against a wall while his mother watched from the window.

At the corner, an immense woman in a red pants suit stood drinking a bottle of soda. In the other hand she held a long stick of brown gooey candy.

"I'm on a diet," she smiled. In the South Bronx, the worry is about getting shot, not getting fat.

Not much

"I wonder what he thought of it up here," she said. "I know what I think of it. Not very much."

In front of the next building, a woman named Nilda stood with a small boy who held a toy car. Nilda said his name was Gilbert and that he was 7. Gilbert was asked why he wasn't in school.

"Cause the teacher curses at the kids," he said. "When my regular teacher is sick, this other teacher comes in and curses at the kids."

"That's right," the mother said. "I told the principal

last year. When the sub teacher comes, she curses at all the little kids."

"What does the teacher say to you?" Gilbert was asked.

"She says, 'Get the ——— out of here,'" the little boy said.

Did you see?

The mother nodded. "You see, that's what she says." "Did you see the President?" the mother was asked.

"First when I heard all the sirens, I thought it was a big police raid. Then when I heard the helicopter over the street, I thought it was something else. I look out the window and here comes all the cars. So he was here. He comes once in a blue moon. I get up in the morning and live here every day. Tell him make the neighborhood better."

Some of the people on Fox Street live in buildings that have been rehabilitated by so much federal money it is a continuing political scandal. But the rest of the street, and the lives of those on it, has been formed by fire. Coming out of the emptiness of the next block on Fox Street, were two women in dungaree suits.

"So he should come here next and do something about this dump," one of them, Maria Morales, said. "I moved 10 times in five years. They either don't give you hot water or something like that. You got to move."

Then fire

"Then you got a fire. Fire on top of me. Fire underneath me. Believe me, the fire underneath me is the scariest. How you can't get through it. When that happens I go to the roof and jump from roof to roof. I once jumped roof to roof with my three children when they were only 1, 3 and 4. Now they're older. They're 9, 8 and 6."

"Did they see the President?" she was asked.

"No they didn't see any Carter," she said.

"That's too bad. Were they in school by the time he got here?"

"No, they were not in school. They were at my aunt's house."

She and her friend walked away, and Fox Street, a charred street once considered to be in the middle of a great city, was completely empty.

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