

New executive committee, enlarged body proposed

By Mike Patten

ASUN's task force on student government has come up with a proposal to enlarge ASUN's elected body from 35 to 76 senators.

In addition, the task force proposal calls for a new executive committee of 10, rather than the current three-man executive committee.

Task force chairman Steve Pederson said the task force will have an open hearing Sunday in the Nebraska Union on its proposal. He said the task force also will hear any new proposals Sunday.

"We'd like to get as much input into this meeting as we can," Pederson said. Debate will be limited to 10 minutes a speaker, he added.

The task force proposal calls for 38 senators to be elected by living units and 38 senators to be elected by their colleges (similar to the current election procedures).

The proposal also calls for the elimination of the second vice president position. A president and a vice president would be elected by the student body at-large, with the president continuing to serve as student regent and preside over the senate.

Pederson said the task force decided the second vice

president position was not necessary.

"We just thought that there wasn't that much for him to do," he said. "It would just be creating a position that's a waste."

Currently, the second vice president coordinates committees while the first vice president presides over the senate meetings. The president is involved with university administration.

Pederson said the task force believes the president should preside over the senate too. This would then free the first vice president to coordinate committees and eliminate the need for a second vice president.

The vice president also would serve as the chairman of the committee on committees and preside in the absence of the president.

A new position, secretary-treasurer, would be created to coordinate ASUN's public relations. The secretary-treasurer would be hired by the president, with the senate's approval, and would not replace the current office secretary.

The proposal calls for eight standing committees which would include senators and voting faculty members. The eight committee chairmen and the president and vice president serve as the executive board.

daily nebraskan

friday, november 4, 1977 vol. 101 no. 36 lincoln, nebraska

Suicide ranks third on list of causes of death in young people ages 15-24

By Mary Jo Pitzl

quietly hung up the phone and buried her face in her hands. The tears were coming, slowly now, welling up behind the growing lump in her throat.

It hurt so much inside, like everything she had was being torn apart. Ever since she came to college, she had been haunted by a fear of not being accepted. All she needed was a call like that, she thought bitterly. Rejection, again.

No one to understand; even worse, no one to even care enough to try and understand. The tears had broken now and she sobbed silently, alone in her room.

The next morning, when Steve stopped by to pick up his notebook, Sue didn't answer the door. She couldn't. Sue had killed herself.

Third cause of death

As chilling as this portrait may seem, it could easily be true. Suicide is the third most common cause of death in young people between the ages of 15 and 24, according to Dr. John J. Schwab, a psychiatrist at the University of Louisville School of Medicine in Kentucky. Only traffic accidents and homicides rank higher than suicides in the national death rate for this age group, according to Schwab.

In Nebraska, 149 people committed suicide during 1976, according to statistics from the Nebraska Dept. of Health. Suicides constitute less than one percent of Nebraska deaths, ranking eleventh behind other causes such as heart disease, cancer, cerebral-vascular disease and accidents.

Thirty of those 149 deaths occurred in the 15 to 24 age group, the health department reported.

However, in 1976 suicide was the second leading cause of death for Lancaster County citizens between the ages of 15 and 29, according to the Nebraska Bureau of Vital Statistics.

At UNL, there have been about six suicides in the past five years, Campus Police Capt. Robert Edmunds said. Most of these have occurred off-campus, although he said there was one incident last year in a fraternity house.

Foreign students

Edmunds said at least one half of the UNL suicides involved foreign students. Causes of death include gunshot, hanging and carbon monoxide poisoning, he said.

These statistics, however, cannot reveal the whole picture. Many suicides are never recorded, largely because of the shame connected with the act, according to Kay Pinkley, statistical analyst for the Nebraska Dept. of Health.

"Anytime the family is sensitive about it, the doctor doesn't have to put down 'suicide' on the death certificate," Pinkley said. Many times doctors record the cause of death as "unknown" especially if they have any reason to doubt that the death was self-inflicted, she said.

The majority of Nebraska suicide victims die from a gunshot, according to Pinkley. She said health department records show hanging as the next most common form of suicide. Carbon monoxide poisoning, drug overdose, suffocation and self-lacerations also have been used in suicide cases.

State records do not show how many suicides occur among students, Pinkley said.

Serious problem

A check with several counseling and mental health

centers on campus and in Lincoln indicates that although suicide is a serious problem, it is not prevalent in Lincoln.

According to Robert Heins, director of the University Health Center's Mental Health Clinic, said Nebraska is a fairly stable, conservative state. This may be why Nebraska's suicide rate is low in comparison to national figures, he said.

Kathy Brzezinski-stein, psychological counselor at the UNL Counseling Center said "here in Nebraska, all the basic social institutions still are fairly intact.

"When people get burned out, there are people in the family you can turn to." She added that the social support offered by friends and the clergy also is strong in Nebraska.

More elusive than actual suicide records, however, are the number of attempts and contemplations. These figures are almost impossible to obtain, because counselors feel few cases are recorded.

Heins said the mental health clinic handles about 10 suicide attempt cases a year.

"They end up here after going to the emergency room," he said. Heins explained that these cases are the result of violent actions that need medical attention.

Many of these violent attempts would go unnoticed if it were not for a friend or family member, Heins said. It is rare that a person who has attempted suicide will seek medical aid on his own, he added.

Hyde is fighting to put the gas nozzle back into Lincoln consumers' hands

By Marjie Lundstrom

At first glance, gas station row in Lincoln may look typical of any city, but there is one thing missing—the self-service station.

However, Harlow Hyde, a Lincoln independent candidate for First District Congress says he will fight the Lincoln City Council to put the nozzle back in gas consumers' hands.

In 1967, the city council voted to outlaw self-service gas stations in Lincoln by deleting a section of the Uniform Fire Code that would permit them.

This action was a "back door" way of prohibiting the stations, Hyde said, and he would like to see the issue placed on the ballot.

Self-service gas stations are not a fire hazard, he said, because if they were, they would not be permitted under the section of the Uniform Fire Code that the city council deleted.

Lincoln Fire Chief Dallas Johnson said he is neutral on the issue, but added that the "fire record of self-service stations is no better or no worse than regular gas stations."

Hyde said college students should be concerned with the issue.

"I think college students would be up-in-arms about this," Hyde said. "I don't think students can afford to spend any more money than is absolutely necessary for gasoline."

National surveys have shown that self-service gas stations are less expensive than other stations, he said. In addition, self-service stations would improve the city's overall economy, he said.

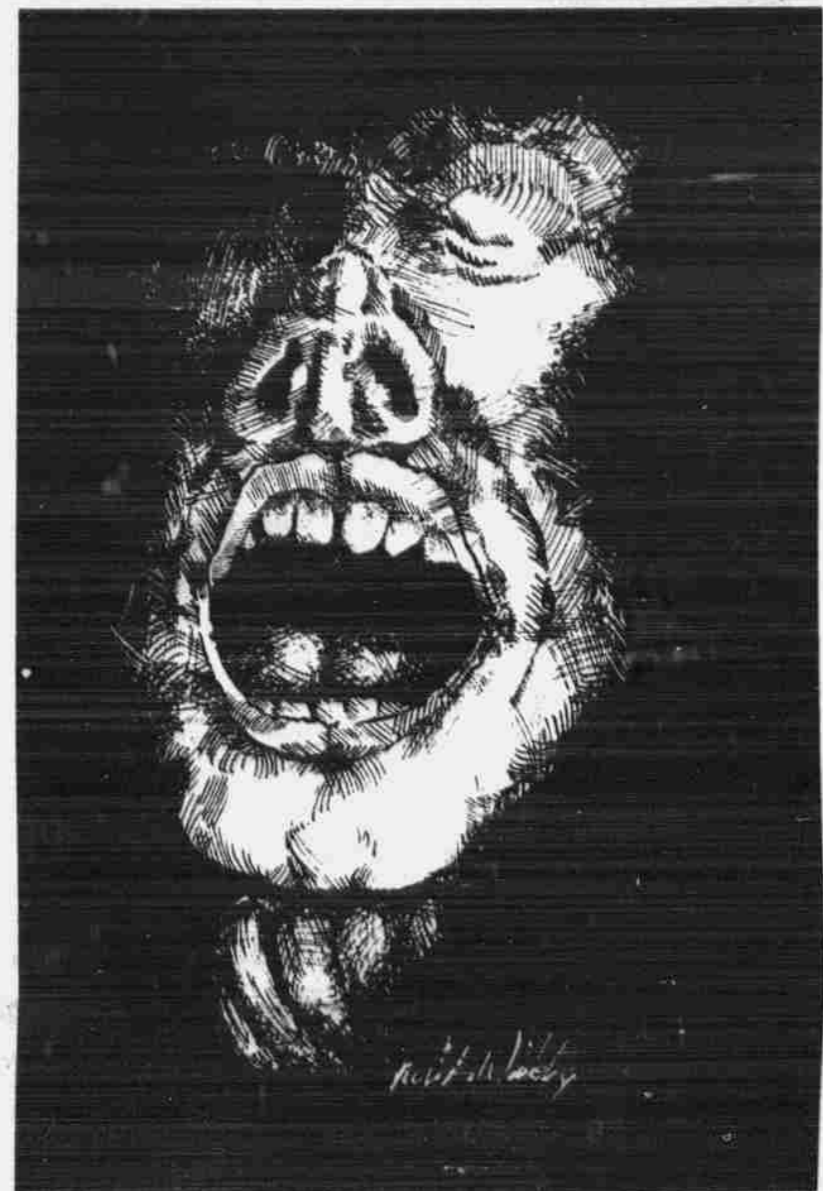
Consumers can make their own buying decisions, he said, and the government should not "intervene."

"I've got my own money, and I don't need any cotton-picking government telling me what I can and can't buy," he said. "There still are plenty of full-service stations one can use if he is so opposed to self-service stations."

Hyde said his interest in the issue is not related to his Congressional campaign.

Nevertheless, City Council Chairman Richard Baker said he believes the city council made the right decision, and that Hyde is "looking for any issue he can put his hands on."

"I'm not convinced that self-service stations are in the best interest of the city in safety points," Baker said. Baker said he recently stopped at a self-service station



in Abilene, Kan., and had a difficult time finding the attendant.

"That attendant had no way of knowing if I was smoking or if I even knew what I was doing," Baker said. "Gasoline is a very flammable liquid, and many people don't know how to operate the pumps. I still don't feel comfortable with them."

The city council has heard little opposition to the policy, Baker said.

"If there is such a demand for self-service, I'd like to know where the people are because we haven't seen them," he said.

But Baker and other city council members probably will hear more on the issue. Hyde said he already has written the mayor and other public officials, and plans to appear before the city council soon.



Photo by Mark Billingsley

Obsolete since 1967, the self-service sign is a rare sight in Lincoln. Congressional candidate Harlow Hyde says he will fight the ban on local self-service stations.

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