

editorial

No answers given in Roskens' nix of Fund B audit

Saturday is the big day for student fees at NU.

NU President Ronald Roskens has written and released his proposal on student fees. Although his word is not law, the NU Board of Regents will put heavy consideration into what Roskens has said.

Roskens accepted the University-wide Task Force on Student Fees' recommendation that money be allocated to three "broad-based" groups at UNL. These groups include ASUN, the Union Program Council and the Daily Nebraskan.

But, differing from the recommendation by the task force, Roskens nixed the audit of Fund B—the nebulous 95 percent of our \$66.50 per semester student fee money.

The breakdown of the other 5 percent is clear. We have no qualms about supporting the \$3.42. But when it comes to supporting the mysterious \$63.08, we find it difficult.

Exactly what areas get the \$26.92 granted to the University Health Center? Exactly what bonds, and their amounts, are paid through the

\$18 allocated for the bond debts each semester? What about the \$10.49 given to the Nebraska and East unions?

These are questions that could be answered with a comprehensive, critical audit.

Why President Roskens is hedging on the Fund B audit is a question. With the concern Roskens has shown for students, we think he would be supporting such a measure.

We would like to believe the university has nothing to hide. But, when such recommendations are

tossed away, we begin to wonder.

Perhaps we are perennial pessimists, but when no reasons are given for axing the Fund B audit, questions begin flying.

We agree with the stand on Fund A. We hope the students support it in full force Saturday.

But, we strongly believe Fund B needs an audit, which would be reported to the students.

When we spend that much money, it's nice to know where and to whom it goes.

guest opinion

Bottle bill debate uncorks

The opinion is of Jim Jenkins, a sophomore political science major from Broken Bow, Neb.

Environmentalists, farmers and other citizens' groups have been working off and on for 20 years to get some kind of "bottle bill" legislation passed.

For the past several years, such bills have been killed in legislative committee, but this year the Legislature's Agriculture and Environment Committee sent the bottle bill, LB818, to the floor for debate.

Round one of the debate probably will be early next week.

LB818 is a beverage container law similar to ones passed several years ago in Oregon and Vermont. The bill, if passed, would require a 5-cent deposit on all pop and beer cans and bottles.

The deposit would be returned to the consumer upon the return of the containers to the retailer.

The objective of the law is to clean up litter along our roads and parks.

Proponents also cite energy savings, which would result from the use of more returnable bottles and the increased number of cans recycled.

Less than 3 percent of all cans and bottles are being recycled in the United States.

In Oregon and Vermont, recycling of cans and bottles started to boom after enactment of bottle bills.

Bottle and can deposit legislation has been introduced in nearly every state, but only five states have passed such legislation.

This is a result of a strong coalition of retailers, labor and other beverage-related industries that vigorously have opposed the bills.

Professional lobbyists, public relations consultants, media blitzes and advertising campaigns have been used to kill the bills.

In Michigan, it was estimated that industry spent between \$2 million and \$3 million fighting container legislation.

Yet, in public opinion polls, the results show from 65 to 75 percent of the people favored beverage container legislation.

This was true in Vermont, Oregon, Colorado, Michigan and Nebraska.

In a poll published last October by the Lincoln Journal-Star, 71 percent of the people asked favored some type of law requiring a 5-cent deposit on beverage containers.

In Oregon, polls taken a year after the deposit law's enactment showed that support had grown to 90 percent favoring the bottle bill.

Unfortunately, the battle over container deposit legislation is an example of the power of money on public decision-making.

Opponents argue that beverage litter constitutes 20 percent of roadside litter. They arrive at this figure by counting every litter item in the ditch; thus, a gum wrapper counts the same as a beer bottle.

The 20 percent figure jumps to about

70 percent when the litter is calculated by volume.

The beverage litter problem is compound, because cans and bottles take thousands of years to decompose.

Anti-LB818 forces have stated that they would support a more comprehensive litter law. This sounds good and well, but one wonders where industry and labor were when Sen. Loran Schmit of Bellwood introduced a comprehensive litter bill last year.

And, if industry is interested in doing something about litter, why haven't they taken the initiative and had a bill introduced that they could support?

Assertions by LB818 opponents that the bottle bill has done little to clean up Oregon's roadsides are laughable.

Growing citizen support, and numerous studies done by government and university researchers, indicates the bottle bill's success.

According to a report done by the Midwest Research Institute for the Environmental Protection Agency, Oregon's beverage litter has decreased by 80 percent. Similar results have been reported in Vermont.

Admittedly, passage of LB818 will cause some job dislocation. But little good (or bad) legislation is passed that does not affect some people.

Unless we start taking a few major steps toward conserving natural resources, a lot of people are going to be out of jobs in the future.

The United States is 90 percent dependent on foreign countries for aluminum resources.

Most of these resources come from political hot spots such as Rhodesia and South Africa.

It is imperative that industry and the general public start conserving our aluminum instead of throwing it into the ditches.

The passage of LB818 would create an economic incentive not to litter.

It would save the taxpayers thousands of dollars in litter cleanup, and would require minimal government expense to implement.

Let's hope that our state senators pass LB818 and establish Nebraska as a responsible leader in conserving resources.

Taking a shot at shots

One flu over the cuckoo's nest

I went down the other day to the U.S. Center for the Spread of Infectious Diseases to get my swine flu shot.

"I'd like to get my swine flu shot," I said to the government doctor.

He looked annoyed.

"You're too late," he said.

"I got held up in traffic," I said.

"The swine flu shot was the 1976 flu shot," he said.

"Right," I said. "I've got a clipping here that says the president wants every man, woman and child in America to get a swine fu shot before the epidemic hits. My president can count on me."

"That was President Ford."

"I don't care," I said, beginning to panic. "I want my swine flu shot before the epidemic hits!"

"I told you: you're too late."

"Good grief!" I cried. "You mean the epidemic has struck and I, all unprotected, am doomed to a lingering death from swine flu?"

arthur hoppe

"Look," he said testily, "there was no epidemic and only a few deaths were attributed to it."

"To the swine flu?"

"No, to the shots."

I pulled myself together.

"You mean you spent millions of dollars to scare the country half to death and perhaps kill off a bunch of citizens—all for nothing? Well, I certainly don't care for a swine flu shot, thank you."

"Good," he said with a sigh of relief. "What you want, you see, is a Russian flu shot."

"Russians are more dangerous than swine?"

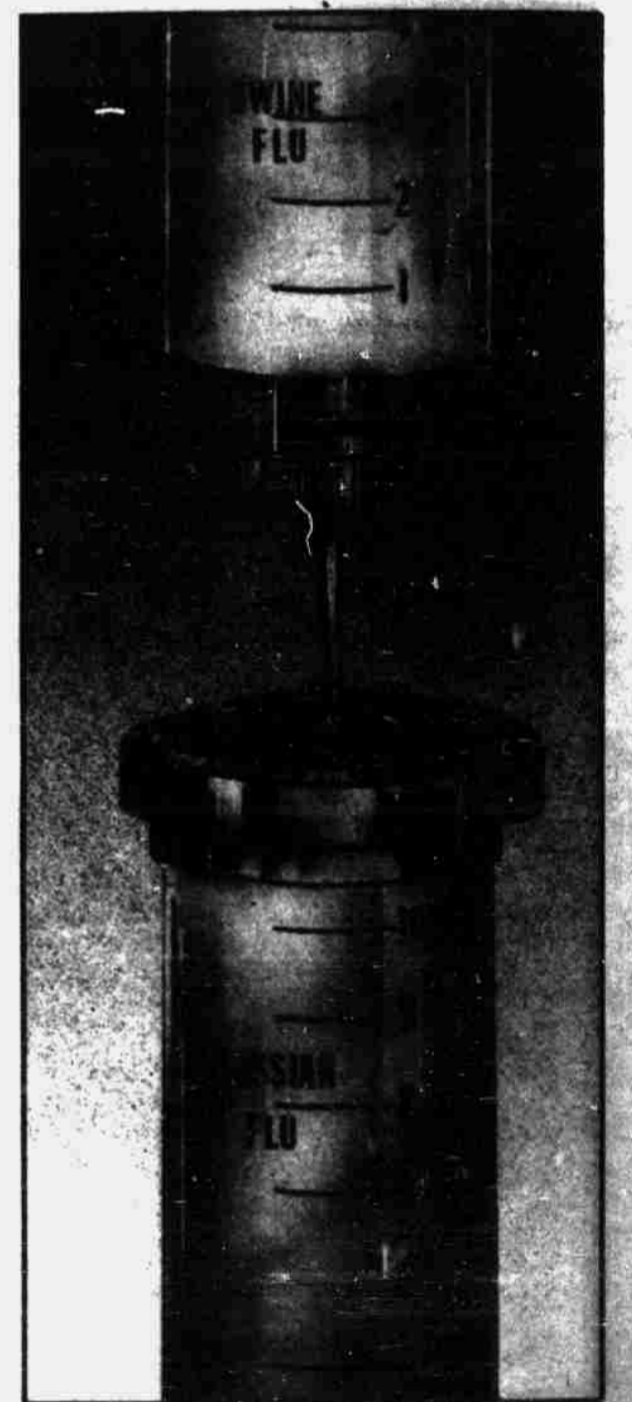
"Absolutely. A federal advisory panel says millions of Americans should get shots for this new Russian flu before the epidemic hits."

"Oh, no, you can't scare me again. You're crying wolf."

"Not so. No less a person than the panel's chairman, Dr. Ivan Bennett Jr., said, 'We are not crying wolf. We have a wolf.'"

"A Russian wolf?"

"Already several high school students in



Cheyenne, Wyo., have come down with this dread disease. You could be next."

I blanched.

"All right, Doc," I said rolling up my sleeve and closing my eyes. "You win. Pump me full of the vaccine that will save me from the Russian flu."

"We don't have any," he said. "It will take several months for us to make it and test it. And, after that, HEW wants a study prepared on the government's liability, and, after that..."

"Thanks a lot for the warning, Doc," I said, rolling down my sleeve.

"Not at all," he said. "Your government wants every citizen to be prepared to face the coming threat."

I prepared myself by going home and taking to my bed. It was just as I thought: I'm doomed.

If the flu does not get me, the government will.

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