

## Rent-free NUPIRG office under conservative fire

By Joe Starita

A campaign to oust the Nebraska University Public Interest Research Group from its rent-free office in the Nebraska Union is under way, according to the chairman of the Nebraska Young Americans for Freedom.

Terrell Cannon said Monday YAF will write 10,000 conservative Nebraskans, informing them that NUPIRG should pay for that office space.

He said NUPIRG is a political group and as such should not be supported by the university and must be forced to foot its own bill.

"It's just not fair to students who pay \$10.49 each semester in Union fees to support a group desperately looking for a free ride," Cannon said.

NUPIRG Director Don Macke said YAF's campaign is rooted in issues beyond the question of rent-free office space in the Nebraska Union.

"There is an extensive national YAF campaign against all public interest research groups," Macke said. "They de-

clared war on PIRGs because our findings on issues like nuclear energy and the death penalty disagree with their conservative philosophy."

Macke said NUPIRG does not take a stand along liberal-conservative lines, nor have they endorsed any candidate. Instead, he added, the organization seeks to go along issue by issue and reach conclusions based on evidence free of any pre-conceived political slant.

"But when those conclusions happen to coincide with liberal viewpoints," Macke noted, "YAF cries foul and sees us as the enemy, an enemy to be attacked and ridiculed at all costs."

An example of how YAF approaches the problem can be seen in their campaign against rent-free office space for NUPIRG at the Nebraska Union, Macke said.

The Union Board sets aside a limited amount of free space each semester for groups that are not self-supporting, Macke said.

"Anyone, including YAF, can apply for that space," he said. "It is then up to the board to decide which groups they feel

can put that space to best use.

"We were awarded the space because the board felt we could do a good job with it, and I think we have. The NUPIRG office is used extensively—up to 70 hours a week a lot of the time."

"If YAF wants NUPIRG out of the Union, Macke said, they should go to the Union Board and present a list of legitimate complaints.

"What they have done instead," he said, "is to try and discredit us with unethical tactics, with name-slurring, with newsletters branding us as leftists and communists. Cannon is using a back-stabbing smear campaign to attack our credibility."

Cannon said none of YAF's newsletters has used the word "communist" to refer to NUPIRG members.

"We have referred to them as liberals or leftists, which they definitely are," he said, "but we would never resort to communist or pinko-type name tags."

Cannon disagreed that NUPIRG is not a political organization, adding that any group "that admits to lobbying at the Uni-

camera has to be considered political."

"They describe themselves as an advocacy group, but if you are actively involved in lobbying, that's definitely political," he said.

"Students should not have to support a group whose views they disagree with and the university should definitely blow the whistle on giving political groups free Union space."

Cannon said NUPIRG should call themselves the "Young Naderites" because Ralph Nader defines public interest "then all these yahoos go along with it."

A basic philosophical difference over what constitutes public interest is at the heart of the dispute between NUPIRG and YAF, said Cannon.

"NUPIRG claims to speak for public interest," he said, "but that's the same as claiming to speak for God. What is the public interest? No one knows. It's very dangerous and egotistic to think that you do."

Cannon said an example of claiming to speak for public interest can be seen in NUPIRG's activity at UNL.

"Student government has no business getting involved in issues like nuclear energy and the death penalty at UNL because it does not represent the students' interest.

"Students here don't care about these issues and it's morally wrong for people left or right to raid the public till to finance their own beliefs."

Cannon said what is happening on local campuses can also be applied nationally.

Every country in the world knows nuclear energy is the wave of the future and have gone ahead with plans, he said, while the United States has lagged behind "because of the Naderites."

"The Naderites go in and investigate and come up with facts and figures that mislead the public," Cannon said.

"The statistics they've come up with for the dangers of converting to nuclear energy are warped and contrived and it is best not to pay any attention to them."

Cannon said he believes the university will pay close attention to NUPIRG because "alumni and businessmen in Nebraska will not support the university if NUPIRG flourishes.

"No businessman in this state will support a university that supports a group opposed to nuclear energy," said Cannon.

Cannon said the YAF newsletter campaign urges conservative Nebraskans to write members of the NU Board of Regents asking them not to support a political university system.

Macke said the current YAF newsletter is the fifth in which NUPIRG has been attacked, adding that such a campaign could threaten NUPIRG's future.

"Currently, we are applying for \$158,000 in grants," Macke said. "The grants are very competitive and if we are denied an award because of political pressure from YAF we will sue for damages.

"We can't function like ASUN or the Daily Nebraskan. If we talk to the grants people and they say part of the reason we were refused is because of YAF letters to them we would sue for defamation."

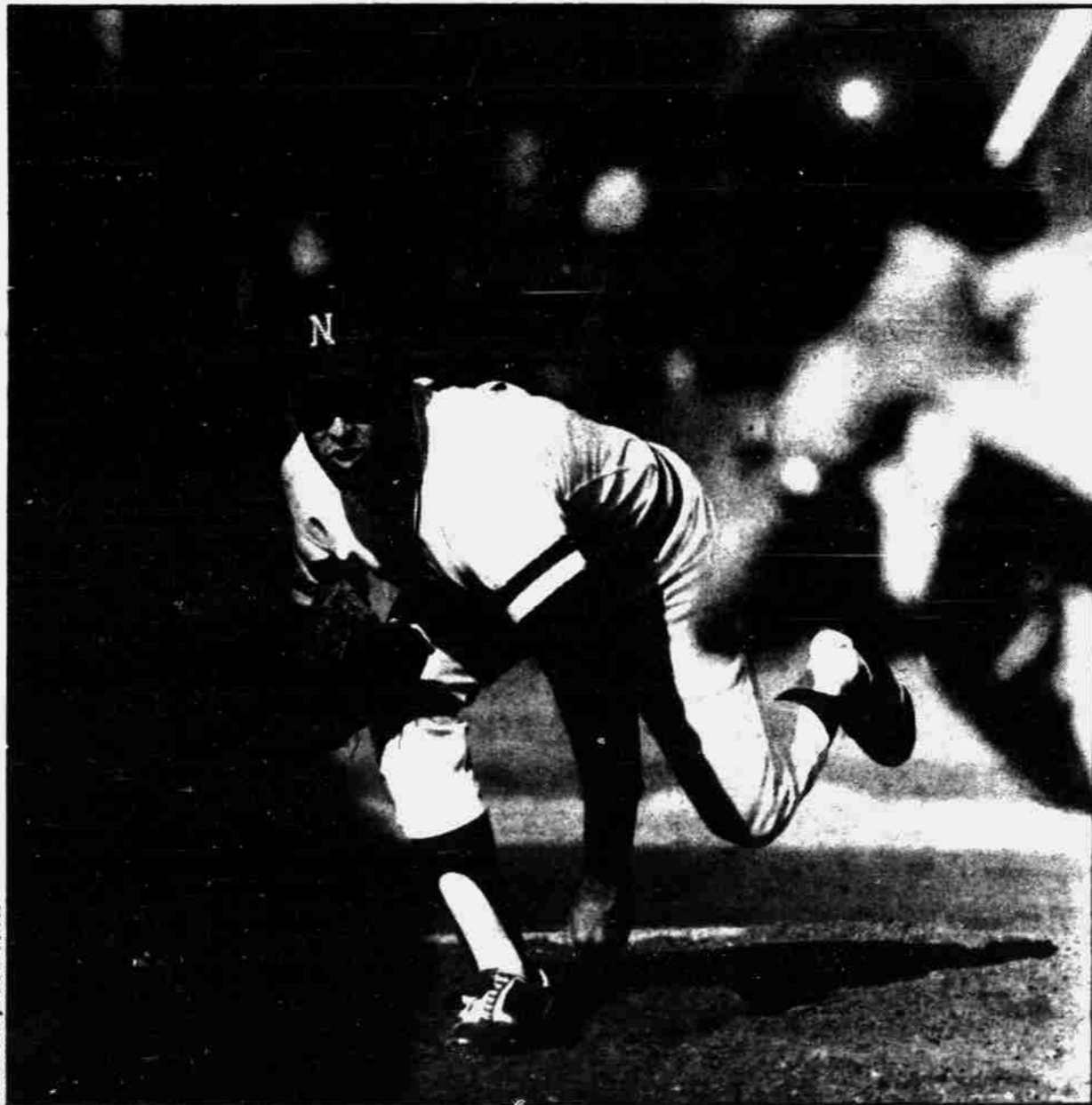


Photo by Ted Kirk

UNL pitcher Mark DiBenedetti started slow giving up only three hits, but walked 10 batters in the Husker's 7-4 victory over St. Cloud State College in the first game of a doubleheader Wednesday.

However, the Cornhusker bats started pounding out the hits in the second game as UNL earned a 9-4 victory over the Huskies. The Huskers jumped to a 7-1 lead in the first inning aided by a grand slam by centerfielder Dan Dixon.

The Huskers, now 12-10 on the season, will play a doubleheader today at the NU diamond against Buena Vista at 1:30 p.m.

## UPC considers backing major concerts

By Amy Lenzen

The Nebraska Union Program Council is researching the feasibility of using the council's entire budget as collateral for the production of major concerts.

The council Tuesday night decided not to support the proposal without research and instructed the concerts committee chairperson to investigate the legal and financial feasibility.

Concert chairperson Keith Wagner made the proposal one night after FAB allocated \$41,975 to the council for next year.

Sara Boatman, acting assistant director of the Nebraska Union, said the proposal will have to be approved by the Union Board, Union director. Fees Allocation Board, the vice chancellor of student affairs and the vice chancellor of business and finance.

She said Allen Bennett, Union director, indicated that approval, if given, would be at least one year away.

The committee has sponsored concerts

in the past (Fleetwood Mac and Crosby, Stills and Nash last semester), but Wagner said the concerts committee had an arrangement with the Sports Complex in which the committee rented the hall for the promoter and received 5 percent of gross ticket sales.

Wagner said his proposal is an attempt to "eliminate the promoter" so the committee can get the profits. He said with popular performers such as Linda Ronstadt or the Eagles the committee and council "could stand to make \$12,000 to \$20,000" per concert.

But in order to bring name performers, Wagner said, the concert committee would have to guarantee the talent about \$25,000 which would be deposited before the concert. An additional \$5,000 would be needed for promotion costs, \$7,000 for sound costs and \$3,000 for miscellaneous expenses.

One concert, therefore, would cost about \$40,000 of the \$41,975 budget. If the concert were successful the \$25,000

deposit would be credited to the percentage of ticket sales that the performers would take.

Wagner said he believes most concerts would average \$15,000 to \$16,000 in net profits.

In addition to profits, a successful series of concerts would lend to a self-sufficient programming committee which in turn could decrease or eliminate student fees for programming.

Students might be given a cost or time advantage when buying tickets, Wagner said.

However, one council member said the proposal makes the rest of the council "incredibly dependent on the concert committee" and a decrease in concert popularity would hurt the entire council.

If the council did become financially independent a decrease might make it difficult to regain university funding.

Another concern, Wagner said, is the possibility that the committee would be competing with local promoters.

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