

opinion/editorial

'Lid' disaster for education

Perhaps the most publicized issue on the November ballot is Proposition 302, the proposal to place a five percent limit on local government spending.

The leaders of the movement to approve the proposition have capitalized on a national anti-tax anti-government mood to launch their attack on the most efficient and in many ways most necessary units of government.

Their five percent limit is neither workable nor realistic.

The limit applies to all aspects of local government, including utilities, and does not even keep pace with inflation, leading to decreased service from local governmental units in charge of essential services such as street and sewer construction and maintenance and citizen protection.

The limit will make it virtually impossible for small, rural communities to make major purchases, such as new fire trucks, police equipment and other expensive machinery.

But most important, the limit will have a devastating impact on education.

The lid makes it impossible for school boards and administrators to continue to operate programs and services at the present level and leaves no opportunity for improvement.

The cuts necessary to comply with the limit eventually will damage educational quality in our public schools and place the responsibility for properly preparing students for higher education on the institutions of higher education themselves.

And in this day of tight budgets, the institutions of higher learning cannot afford this additional burden.

Proposition 302 is a bad idea. It is impractical and damages the schools and lessens citizen protection.

Its approval would be a sad day in Nebraska history for years to come.

Bottle bill

Proposition 301 will help keep Nebraska clean and free of litter.

Many people may not want to pay a five cent deposit on beer and pop containers. But individuals must realize they will pay to clean up the environment regardless of whether the bill passes.

The deposit will act as an incentive to return beverage containers.

Passage of the bottle bill also will conserve energy and raw materials.

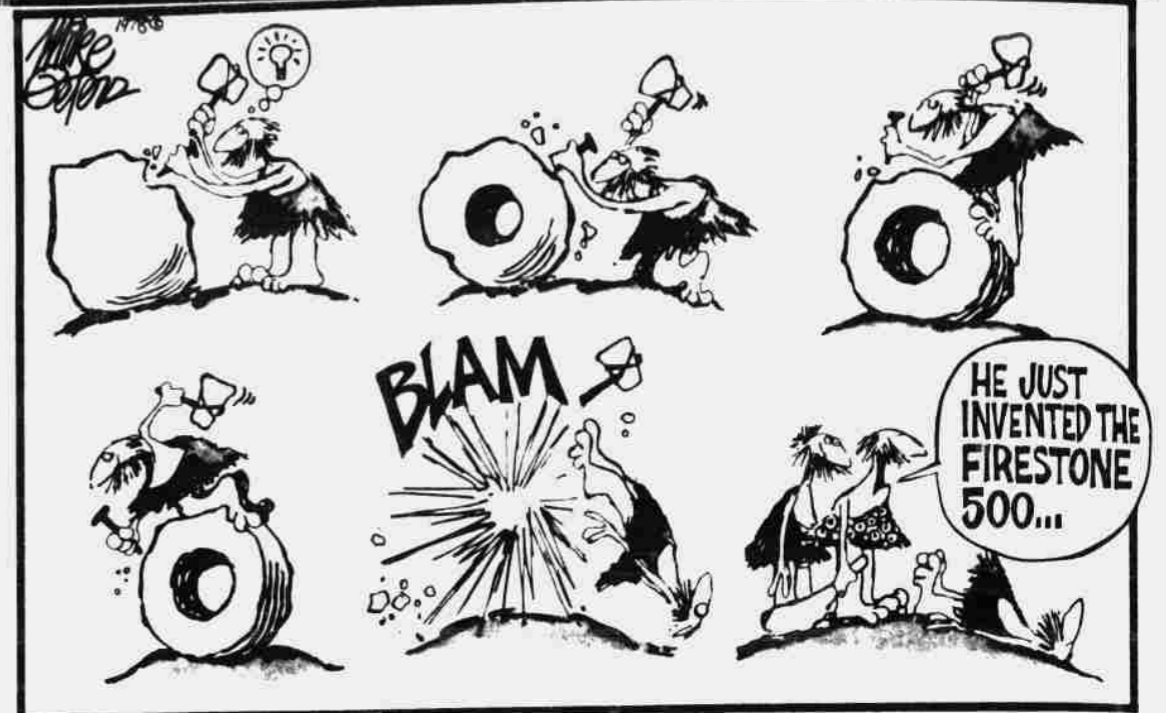
Opponents of the bill have poured huge sums of money into advertising campaigns.

The bulk of the money has come from industries outside the state to try to stop the bill's passage.

Opponents say the solution to the problem is a comprehensive litter plan which would put a litter tax on industries that produce litter, such as bottles, cans, paper and grocery products.

But consumers will pay for this tax, because prices for products will increase if this happens. Even consumers who do not litter will be taxed.

Vote yes on the bottle bill to have a choice in the matter, get your money back and keep litter out of Nebraska.



Present thoughts on time past while away the column task

Opinion by Kate Gaul

Time ('tim)—the measured or measurable period during which an action, process, or condition exists or continues; a continuum which lacks spatial dimensions and in which events succeed one another from past through present to future.—Webster's.

Having discovered that I have no time to write a coherent column this week, I naturally decided to fill space with its concept.

Time is something everyone wishes they had more of. Time is something which no one can halt and which the effects of, once they have occurred, are irreversible. Time is the cause of much frustration—Gaul.

The keeping of time began with the keeping of pets and plants—agriculture and animal husbandry and the increase in technology that these innovations foretold. I suppose it would be easy to blame the ancient Babylonians and Egyptians for the woes that time brought.

The study of time began sanely enough. Ancient Babylonian and Egyptian priests studied the movement of the stars and planets because their religions taught them that the gods, who carried the fiery orbs through the heavens, controlled human destiny. Astutely they noted that the moon reliably passed through a series of phases.

The Egyptian priests cleverly noted the movements of the Dog Star Sirius, the brightest star on the evening sky. When Sirius vanished from the evening sky and then reappeared later, briefly visible as it rose with the sun, the patient priests noted that its reappearance in the eastern sky corresponded with the annual Nile flood—an important time for Egyptians. The time that they observed to have elapsed was 365 days. The year was born about 4,242 BC.

Still killing time...

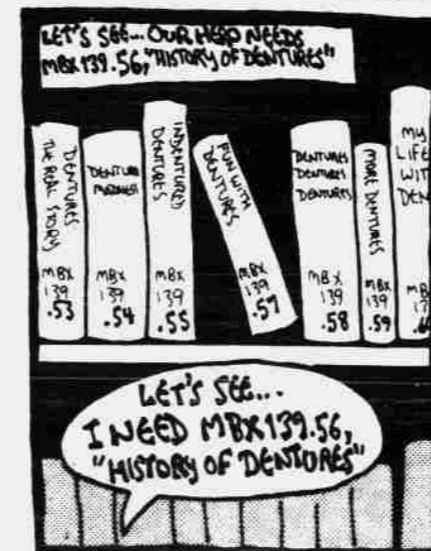
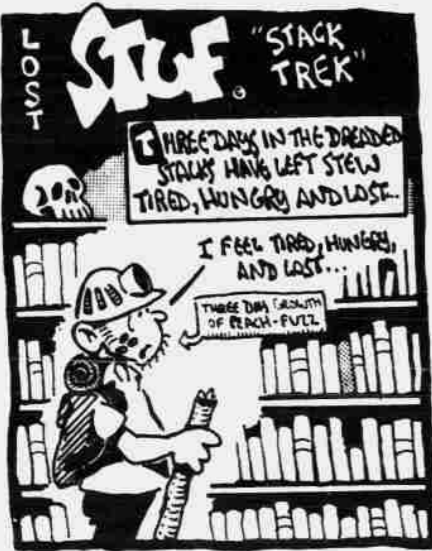
But time exists mainly as a mental concept. Time is a great teacher, a great healer, a great legalizer and a great leveler. Time is a commodity that can be saved or lost, it can be spent (time is money) or wasted. And, pleurably, we can beat it or kill it.

Time is elusive. We spend half our lives (probably the better half) trying to reverse its effects.

Everywhere we go a clock ticks away our moments; it is often somewhere on our body, reminding us that there is never enough of it in the good times, and always too much in the bad.

Have you ever (morbidly perhaps) thought that this moment of your life is unique and will never come again?

Time is precious. It gives continuity and joy but also brings sadness and death. Even the stars shift with time, and mountains move.



Federal careers alleged ruined by psychiatric tests

WASHINGTON—According to Washington folklore, presidents are but small dogs wagged by a giant bureaucratic tail. But to the surprise of the political pros, President Carter won his first battle with the bureaucracy. He pushed through unwanted civil service reforms.

This should help him get a handle on the bureaucracy. But our sources believe he would have done better by cleaning out the Civil Service Commission. He has a secret report in his files which tells of civil service violations. The report includes names and details.

jack anderson

The most disturbing practice we have discovered in the federal system was borrowed from the Soviets. We have investigated reports that government officials have tried to ruin the careers of stubborn subordinates by ordering them to take psychiatric fitness-for-duty examinations. The subordinates can be required to submit to psychological examinations. If they agree, the tests may be stacked against them. If they refuse, they can be fired.

We have written about this nasty practice in the past. Now, a House subcommittee, led by Rep. Gladys Spellman, D-Md., has documented the story. The

report has not been released, but we have had access to it. So far as we know, this will be the first official acknowledgement that the U.S. government has used the Soviet tactic of branding dissidents as mental cases.

The Spellman report alleges that involuntary psychiatric examinations have been misused to punish unpopular employees. This has happened, according to the report, on a significant number of occasions.

In 80 percent of these cases, the immediate supervisor decided which employees needed psychiatric examinations, even though the supervisors had no medical expertise.

The report also states that the employees have no right to examine the results of their own psychiatric examinations. The only defense they have is to submit written reports on their own behalf.

Finally, the report concludes that the psychiatrists are asked to do something they are not trained to do. They must determine whether an employee is capable of doing his job. Yet the psychiatrists know little about the job and have been trained only to diagnose illnesses. The employee, meanwhile, must prove his innocence or competence.

Our sources claim that the forced fitness-for-duty examinations cause more psychological damage than they prevent.

Watch on Waste: The armed forces and

public works agencies recently scraped the bottom of the barrel when they ran short of funds while President Carter battled with Congress until the last minute over how much they would get.

We received a number of protests from military employees who could not collect their salaries. Others had to pay their own travel expenses and wait to be reimbursed.

But at the Army Corps of Engineers, the top brass were as loose with the taxpayers' money as ever. Several of them spent a week at a Savannah, Ga., resort.

It was billed as a conference, and there were some productive work sessions. But they brought along their wives. And they stayed at the luxurious Savannah Inn, which offered golf, tennis and swimming between sessions.

They also used nearby riding tables and fishing boats. The festivities included a T-shirt night and a country-western buffet, complete with live music.

The brass hats had to pay \$28 a day out of their own pockets to cover their wives' expenses. But the women were flown to Savannah from all corners of the country, free of charge. In one instance, the Army had to send an extra plane to carry all the wives.

The taxpayers, of course, picked up the \$45,000 bill. Yet the Pentagon was supposed to be low on funds. The White House had just ordered a 20 percent cut in administrative travel, and the orders

specifically urged the elimination of staff retreats.

A corps spokesman insisted it was not improper to bring the wives on government planes. In the future, he said, the corps would comply with the president's order to reduce travel.

It's just hard to break old habits.

Watch on Waste, Part II. Government scholarships are supposed to be awarded to those who cannot afford an education. But on American Samoa, scholarships are granted to critics of the government to shut them up.

The money for the scholarships, of course, is put up by the American taxpayers.

The daughter of Samoa's House Speaker, for example, received a scholarship after a promised government job fell through. Presumably, this soothed the feelings of both the daughter and the Speaker.

A lawyer involved in litigation against the island's attorney general received another scholarship. A third grant went to the man who was supposed to become president of the Samoan Community College but was rejected by the Samoan governor. The scholarship was a consolation prize, which kept him mollified.

The three scholarships cost the taxpayers a total of \$150,000.

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