

## Student group advocates publicly funded abortions

By Shelley Smith

The support of publicly funded abortions is an appropriate action for an association which represents students in the United States, according to the executive director of the United States Student Association (USSA).

Frank Viggiano, 25, the director of USSA since September and a former president of the National Students Association, told about 40 students Wednesday afternoon that even though no one knows how all U.S. students stand on abortion, elected representatives who serve as USSA delegates can present the views of the majority.

The National Student Association (NSA) and the National Student Lobby (NSL) merged to form the USSA in August.

### Delegates all over

It is composed of delegates from every state university and college in the United States, and each pays dues, according to ASUN president and UNL delegate to USSA, Ken Marienau.

According to Marienau, ASUN pays \$275 a year to the USSA from student fees and receives benefits such as speakers and monthly literature.

Viggiano claims that "students are more than just students" and stands on social issues involving students should be voiced.

He said he felt the student body president acts as a "fair representation of his constituents."

"That's why they're elected and used as delegates—to bring what they feel the students think," he said.

In the past three years, USSA supported abortion causes and the public funding of abortion, opposed capital punishment and supported rights for homosexuals.

### No stand

Marienau said that when he ran for ASUN president he never took a stand on these issues. He also said the ASUN senate had never taken a vote on these issues.

The platform, adopted by the USSA in 1978, supported legalized and public funded abortion, and supported ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment.

Viggiano said while the association felt that educational issues should "always take preference," at least 60 percent of the delegates at the national meeting voted to adopt the platform supporting these social issues.

Marienau said it was early in the morning when the

platform was discussed and people were worried about being able to adopt a platform at all.

### Quorum loss

"We were in jeopardy of losing a quorum so we voted to adopt the platform as is and then amend it," he said.

According to Marienau, a delegate then called for adjournment and the meeting was forced to end.

"I had a bunch of amendments to propose," he said.

"But after the adjournment USSA executives assured us there would be no lobbying on social issues," he said.

However, Viggiano said he never made the statement and some lobbying on abortion has been done.

"We do have one staff member working on the issue. She is paid by national abortion rights committee, but is a member of our staff," he said.

### Well read

He added there was a lot of discussion on abortion prior to passing the platform and said he felt the delegates were "well read" on the issue.

Viggiano said the USSA doesn't claim to represent all the students, "just to work for the consensus."

"Whatever they (USSA) vote, I have to go along with, no matter what my personal opinion is. It's the way a democratic system works," he said.

However, the by-laws of the USSA state that they "shall express the hopes, aspirations and commitment of all students in the United States of America."

Marienau argued that many of the stands on social issues passed in the last three years shouldn't have been.

### Controversial issues

"I feel the USSA has the right to consider them (social issues) but it's not necessary to take a stand on the more controversial issues," he said.

He did say he felt that as ASUN president he can legitimately take a stand on social issues because he is an elected representative.

"No one lives in a void. We can't be expected to contain ourselves within a shell. There are other issues which come into consideration. I did not take a stand on any issue that did not involve students," he said.

He added that even though the USSA does claim to represent students, "no one is naive enough to think that every student supports abortion."

### Draw conclusions

"Anyone can draw any kind of conclusion that he sees. A number of delegates wanted to see an educational platform passed and it was at the expense of supporting pro-abortion etc. It will not happen again," he said.

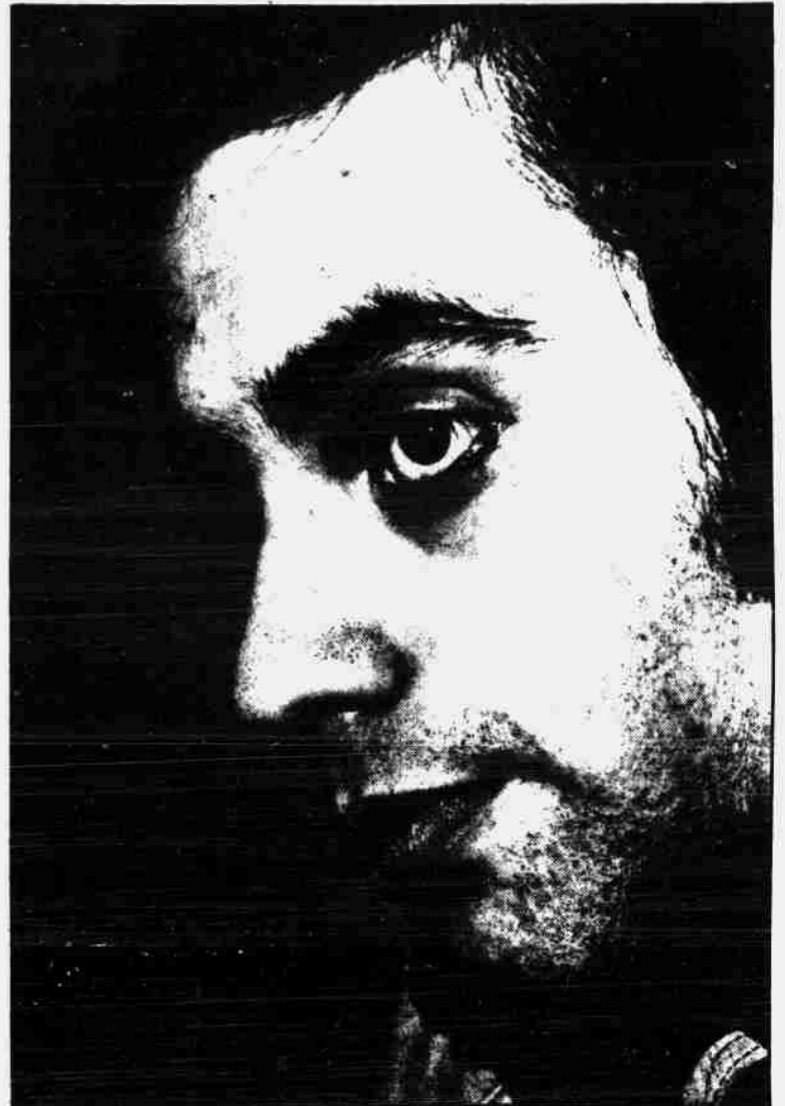


Photo by Bob Pearson

USSA Director Frank Viggiano

Also, Viggiano said, the USSA owes about \$19,000 in back taxes to the Internal Revenue Service. He said the debt was a carry over from 1975 when the National Student Association was on "President Nixon's bad list."

"We were on a program which enabled us to get tax deductible grants. We fought to keep that status and spend close to \$50,000 in legal fees, and lost. So we had additional taxes on income," he said.

### Debt reduced

He said the debt has been reduced since 1975 and they expect to pay the remainder within a short period of time.

In 1968, the NSA was also exposed as being partially funded by the Central Intelligence Agency. Viggiano explained that it wasn't a "secret dealing."

"When the revelation was made it was made internally by the NSA to Ramparts magazine. It was a good revelation in terms of getting the CIA out of the NSA," he said.



Photo by Bob Pearson

Is this the latest in graduate student projects? Graduate student Tim Kingsley and several other Selleck graduate students put the final touches on their latest endeavor, a snow dragon.

## Pioneer class to rough it

*Be prepared for a good deal of exposure to the sun, heat, cold, dust, and dirt. We will have very long days, sometimes meeting well into the evening. Sanitary conditions will be crude at best. . . There will be strange food and water. . . I suggest that you bring along something for sunburn and mosquitos, a good shade hat, rugged clothes, very tough shoes. . . and, if you want, something to sit on.*

It may sound like a recruitment ad for jungle mercenaries, but the paragraph above is actually an excerpt from a UNL course description. The course is not, as one might expect, "Introduction to Camping for the masochistic."

It isn't even in the physical education department. It's a summer workshop entitled, "The Plains Pioneer Experience" under the direction of Roger Welsch, Associate Professor of English and Anthropology.

### Plains authors discussed

The workshop will take place outdoors in Howard County in central Nebraska. The writings of Willa Cather, Wright Morris, Marie Sandoz, John G. Neihardt and other authors who depicted life on the prairie will be discussed.

"You can teach Cather and Sandoz indoors and outdoors," said Welsch. "I prefer outdoors. It's so difficult to talk about 'the red grass' or 'the sea of grasses' sitting in the basement of Andrews Hall. It's so much better sitting in the grass."

He pointed out that it's much easier to understand how the author felt when students are "in the context" as opposed to in the classroom. He has taught the course several times before and his goals for it have changed with his experience, he said.

Originally Welsch had hoped to simulate the life of the pioneers by staying on the grounds at the Stuhr Museum in Grand Island and imitating the pioneer lifestyle.

"But we've changed too much," he said. "We're not capable of the same life as the pioneers. . . We're not up to it physically or intellectually."

His new aim is "stimulation instead of simulation," he said. For example, describing the death of Crazy Horse while standing on the place where it actually occurred evokes a stronger reaction than simply reading the passage in a classroom, Welsch said.

Students will meet only for five days in June, but the classes will be daylong and grueling, he said. "It's hard for people who are 20th century products to spend eight

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