

daily nebraskan

Speaker favors going back to rural lifestyles

By Mike Sweeney

Rural Americans are the largest and most powerless minority in the country, according to a New Mexico author.

Stan Steiner, author of *The Vanishing White Man* and *The New Indians*, Friday said imposing urban thinking on rural areas has destroyed the balance between city and country. As a result, he said, rural Americans have allowed outsiders to control their lives.

But Steiner said he was hopeful the balance would be restored by the energy crisis and America's return to rural values and life styles.

Steiner was the keynote speaker at the third annual Prairie Project at the East Union, a conference concentrating on the challenges facing the Great Plains.

Rural America contains one-third of the country's people, but also has 40 percent of the nation's elderly and 50 percent of the poor, Steiner said.

"This means we are the poor, the forgotten, the elderly, and worst of all the powerless," he said.

Lack of power

The recent clash between farmers and Washington officials is evident of rural America's lack of power, Steiner said.

"Can you imagine . . . the Secretary of the Defense talking to soldiers the way the Secretary of Agriculture has cursed and insulted farmers?" he asked.

Steiner said the imbalance between city and country grows larger every year, and "it's as destructive to New York City as it is to Broken Bow."

Steiner said big city ideas do not fit in small towns, and pointed to his hometown of Santa Fe as evidence of the clash between urban and rural thinking.

He said the city used to have stop signs instead of street lights. There were few accidents, however, because people would intelligently wait their turns at intersections, he said.

Accidents increased

But when the city leaders decided to urbanize Santa Fe by putting up street lights, the number of accidents increased because people tried to jump the lights, Steiner said.

The U.S. Constitution also illustrates the clash of city and country, Steiner said.

The Constitution is an old-fashioned rural document, Steiner said, and "much to the consternation of courts since (it was written), it doesn't fit into the urban world."

He said the constitutional guarantee of free speech works in Santa Fe plaza, but disrupts traffic in New York.

Presidential efforts to restore the balance have failed, Steiner said. President Johnson asked Congress to restore some power to the country, but "that was like asking a coyote to be a midwife at calving time," he quipped.

However, there are indications the trend of city thinking to dominate the country is reversing itself, Steiner said.

New migration

He said the country is witnessing a new migration from city to country. But instead of using covered wagons, people are making the move in campers and recreational vehicles, he said.

"I believe the new immigrants will urbanize rural life, but at the same time they will be ruralized," Steiner said.

He said the rebirth of the countryside is reflected by his home state of New Mexico, which has one million people, two million cattle, and 21 million tourists every year.

Steiner explained the growing interest in rural America by quoting *Esquire* magazine.

"As the country grows more and more complex, people need simpler and simpler values," he said. "Some people are turning to God . . . but more and more are turning to the cowboy hat."

The energy crisis, which Steiner said he likes to call the urban crisis, will speed up the reconciliation of rural and urban people, he said.

People in the cities consume energy, Steiner said, and do not produce it. Instead, they get it from the countryside, he said.

When energy sources begin to dry up, city people will be forced to turn more and more to country practices such as recycling, which is "currently beyond their belief," Steiner said.

He said the ruralization of energy will help return decision making to a democratic and community-controlled base.

"Beneath the plastic uniformity, the democratic ways of thinking still exist," Steiner said. "They have not died . . . They have survived."

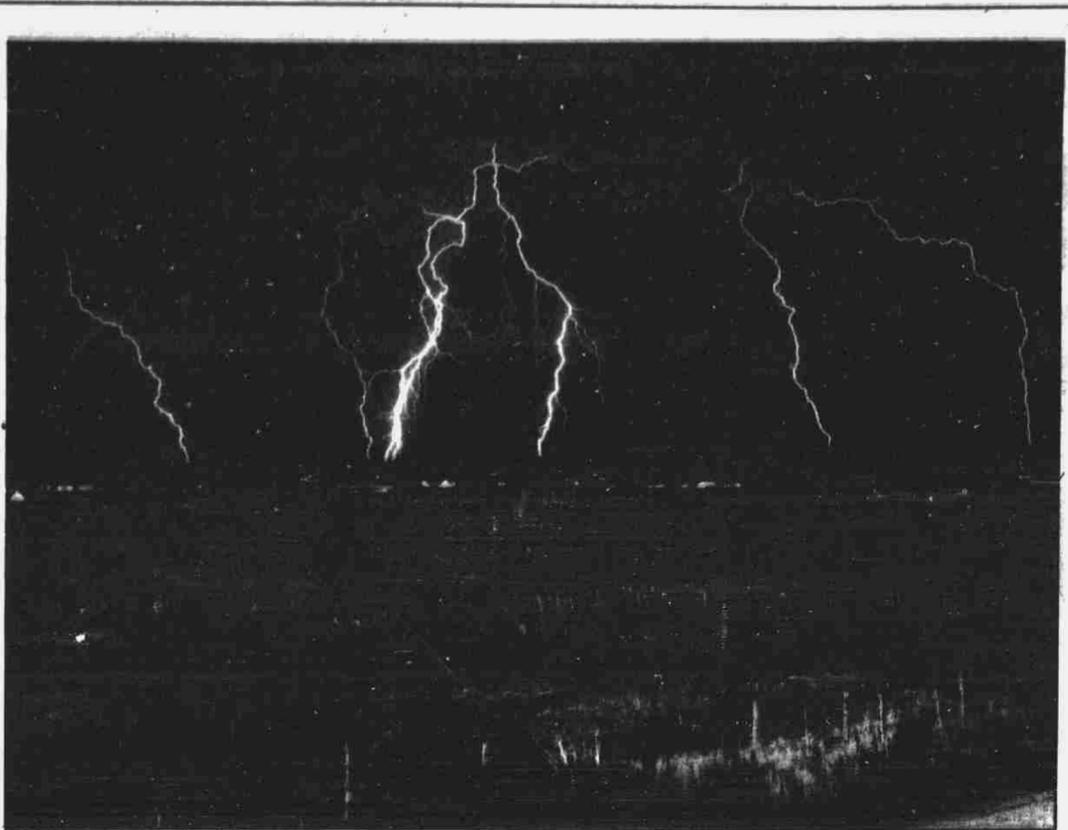


Photo by Mark Billingsley

Yesterday's warm temperature is an indication that spring is just around the corner and so are the electrical storms that follow, such as this high intensity storm on the Nebraska-Colorado border.

SAIL party aims for 'right track'

By Shelley Smith

Editor's note: This is the last story in a five-part series of candidates and parties running in the ASUN election. The candidates were interviewed in the order they will be placed on the ballot.

ASUN needs to get back on the right track, according to the Students Advocating Innovative Leadership party presidential candidate Scott Brittenham.

Brittenham, 20, a marketing major, said he thought ASUN has done "a general mediocre job" this year. "In some programs they have been effective. But in others, like student impact, they haven't," he said.

SAIL has been unofficially campaigning since November. The party is comprised of 22 senatorial candidates from residence halls, Greek houses and off campus living units, according to Brittenham.

To get ASUN "back on the track," Brittenham said the SAIL party proposes to concentrate on four specific problems on campus: alcohol, parking, educational quality and speakers.

Alcohol awareness

Brittenham said he would establish an alcohol awareness education program for students dealing with alcohol use and abuse.

He said students would show up for these programs be-

cause attendance would be "contingent on getting alcohol in the dorms."

Once the program is underway, Brittenham said he would approach the NU Board of Regents with a proposal to allow alcohol on campus through a "closed door" policy.

"This means once it is passed, it would be up to each living unit to decide if alcohol will be allowed in their rooms with the door closed," he explained.

He said he would also like to see alcohol served in the union on a selected room basis.

Parking problem

To solve the parking problem, Brittenham said he would change the metered parking lots to allow students to pay for the amount of time they will be in the lot.

"This will solve the problem in two areas," he said.

"It would eliminate tickets and allow more time for people to park," he explained.

He said he would also like to require that UNL police do not oversell area lots.

"I would like to pass it some way so that there are no more permits than places issued," the candidate said.

He admitted that students will still have problems with parking spaces, but said he felt his proposals were the "most equitable approaches."

Brittenham said he would also like to improve the teaching quality at UNL and emphasized the need for student input in teacher evaluations.

Teacher evaluations

He said he would encourage students to set up their own teacher evaluation forms and after compiled, publish them in the *Daily Nebraskan*.

"This way, if an instructor sees where he is rated publicly, the incentive to raise his teaching level would be increased and teachers who rated high would work to stay there," he said.

Brittenham said he would also like to realign the budget to solve overcrowding problems in the College's of Business Administration and Engineering and Technology.

He suggested re-allocating funds from other colleges as a possible solution. He also proposed raising the requirements to enter the colleges to cut down on enrollment.

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Photo by Mark Billingsley

SAIL presidential candidate Scott Brittenham.

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