

## letters to the editor

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We are writing in response to the guest opinion in the Thursday issue of the Daily Nebraskan. The lack of quality and sense of propriety shown by the Daily Nebraskan this semester is epitomized in Thursday's guest opinion.

Jack Anderson seems to feel that the world is pushing feminism on him. Men have it so hard these days with women in such positions of power. Obviously, we control the best paying jobs and use our vast amounts of money and influence to intimidate men constantly. You see it all the time on television and other media forms. Men are shown as incompetent and submissive while the image of the strong, independent woman prevails. According to Mr. Anderson, we can even cause male homosexuality. That revelation should certainly be enough to frighten us into silence. After all, what *would* we do without men?

Well, I guess if there were no men, we would not need to worry about equality. Or obnoxious guest opinions from boys whose egos have been hurt because we have caught them in the act of exploitation.

If it is "self evident that woman is man's equal in all ways" Mr. Anderson may do well to ask himself why "news stories on television, in magazines, newspapers, etc." represent men "directly or indirectly as evil gargoyles brandishing the whips and chains of the oppressor." This is the news. Men *are* oppressing women. The men who own and operate the television, radio stations, etc., have nothing to gain presenting these images; they simply have little else to put on the news programs. Men make the news through violence.

Mr. Anderson's lack of perception is excelled only by his pomposity. If achieving equality means that we can all be like Jack Anderson, we gladly chose inequality. The noble idea of "equality" is worth sacrificing if one must compromise oneself to his level to achieve it.

Kelly Flannigan  
Pre-vet/Life Sciences  
Cheryl Simmons  
Agricultural Education

## Revisions in insanity defense debated in committee hearing

Saying the bill represents an "hysterical blindness" on the part of the general public, opponents to a measure introduced Tuesday that would change provisions in the insanity defense said the bill was in response to public outrage over the recent 'not guilty by reason of insanity' verdict in the Erwin Charles Simants case.

Omaha Sen. Carol McBride Pirsch, sponsor of LB895, said she resented that accusation, adding she has been researching the issue since 1977. The Legislature's Judiciary Committee took no action on the bill.

Pirsch testified that her bill is to provide all individuals in court proceedings, and not just defendants, the rights "commanded for an orderly society as society grows around the laws."

LB895 would shift the burden of proving insanity beyond a reasonable doubt to the defense. That burden of proof now lies with the prosecution. The bill exempts first degree murder cases from these provisions unless lesser charges are also filed, but Pirsch said she would not object to an amendment including first degree murder charges.

"The insanity defense is used in one of five murder or manslaughter cases," Pirsch said, adding that 90 percent of those pleas are successful. "There is a question over the extent of mental impairment."

She said that when some experts testify that a person is sane while others say the opposite, there has to be doubt in the minds of jurors about the defendant's mental competency.

Generally, people believe that the more heinous the offense the more insane a person must be, she said.

"But what degree of insanity is enough to get away with murder?" she asked.

The bill would also require the defense to inform the prosecution between 30 and 60 days before the

trial if they intend to use the insanity defense, Pirsch said.

Another provision is that the prosecution would be entitled to the defense's information, just as the defense now receives prosecution information.

Thomas Hagel, representing the Nebraska Civil Liberties Union, said this right already exists. He also expressed concern that the bill would put all the control in the hands of the prosecutor, "loading the deck" against the defendant.

Hagel testified that he felt there were constitutional problems to the bill, but Pirsch said 26 states presently have similar legislation.

Lancaster County Public Defender Dennis Keefe said LB895 was "an assault on the integrity of the jury process."

Ronald Frank, a Douglas County Deputy Public Defender, also testified against the rationale of the bill.

"It makes no more rational sense to tamper with the insanity defense than it does to tamper with the alibi defense or any other," Frank said.

He said it bothered him that "one or two" cases could change the law in an illogical manner. He also refuted earlier testimony by Bob Wilmot of the Emmanuel Community Health Center in Omaha, who said he found it "appalling that individuals can be freed from responsibility for their acts."

Wilmot said many mentally ill people understand the consequences of their acts and accept that responsibility. He also said the term insanity was not an accepted medical or psychiatric term, but instead was an antiquated legal term.

Pirsch said after the hearing that even with the burden of proof shifting to the defense, juries will have trouble determining if a person is insane.

"I can see where the defense attorneys are upset," she said. "They don't want to lose their cases."

## Pre-trial motions heard

By Mary Jo Pitzl

Persson vs. Campus Crusade advances a Feb. 19 hearing before the ASUN Student Court, following a pre-trial hearing Tuesday evening in the Nebraska Union.

The first court case of the semester involves four campus Christian organizations charged with violating university policy for sponsoring Christian lecturer Josh McDowell's campus visit last month.

The court heard several pre-trial motions Tuesday night, among them a defendants' request to delay the hearing for two weeks from its originally scheduled date. Todd Ahlquist, second-year law student representing the defendants, argued more preparation time was needed "if justice is to be served."

Chief Justice Scott Cook, speaking for the court, denied the motion and ordered the defendants to file their responses to the petition's charges by Feb. 18.

In response to other motions presented by the defendants, the court:

—Allowed a clause alleging the four

organizations violated university residence hall policy to be stricken, on the grounds that the allegation was false.

—Ordered the plaintiffs to clarify their complaint that the groups violated campus mail policy.

—Ordered a modification of the clause stating that the four groups "willfully and knowingly" sponsored a "known religious evangelist" so that the clause would not imply the groups were aware of violating the university's religion policy when they invited McDowell to speak.

—Granted a motion to change the petition so that all defendants named would be students.

—Granted a motion that witnesses be sequestered during the hearing, to "avoid collusive testimony".

—Granted a motion that the case be dismissed as a class-action suit. The court allowed the original petition to stand, but Persson and Lambrecht will represent only themselves instead of the UNL student body.

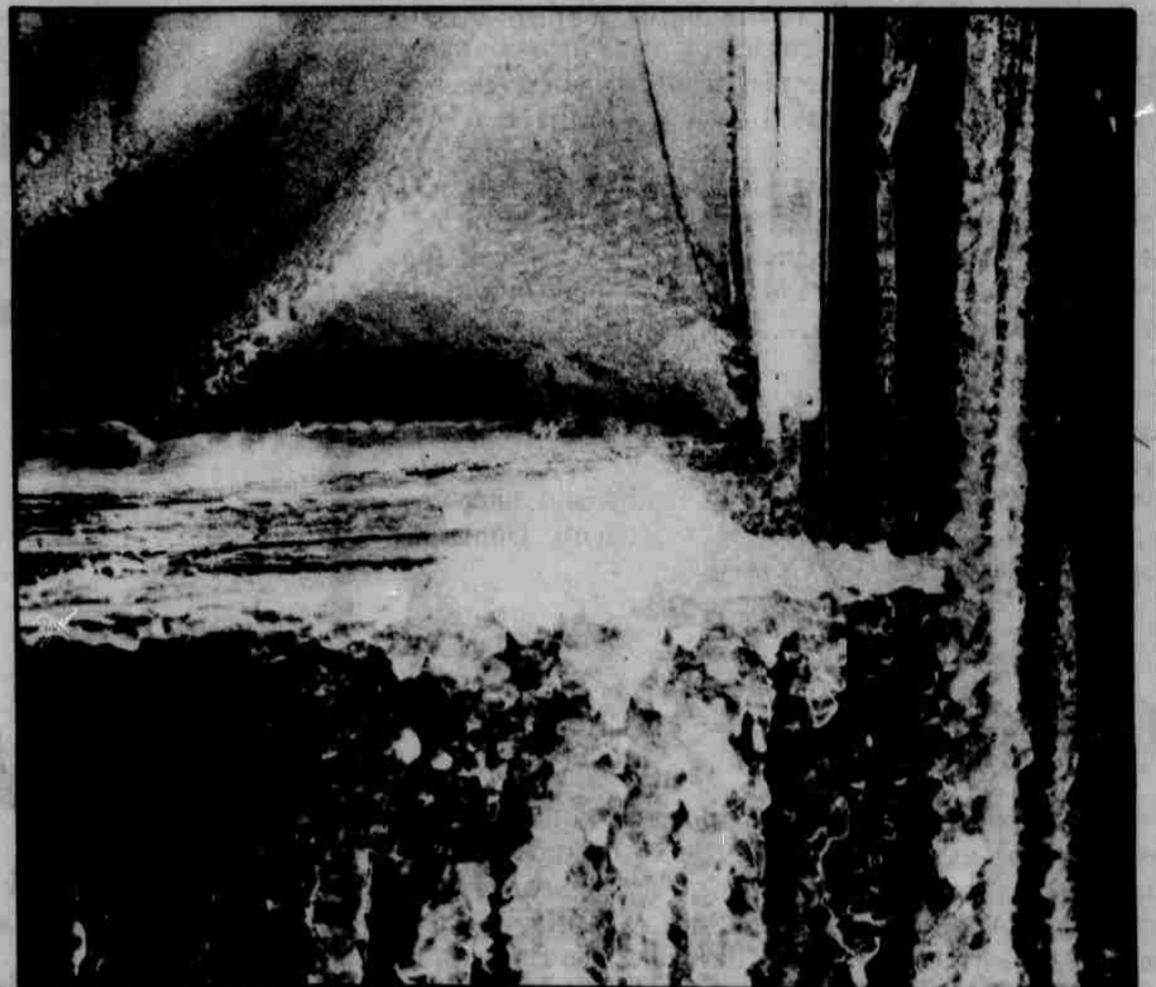
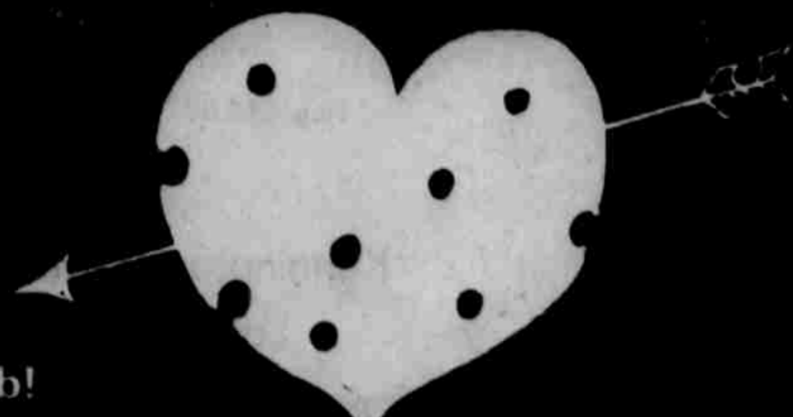


Photo by Tom Gessner

Changing temperatures and a little help from Jack Frost keep the windowsills laden with frost. This work of art seems to have been a long time in the making.

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