

# opinion/editorial

## ASUN Krugerrand turnabout should be praised

ASUN not only restored its credibility with its recent reversal of the Krugerrand donation, but it did so with a flair of courage that has been needed for quite some time on the UNL campus.

With debate from last Wednesday including whether senators were willing to admit and correct their past mistake, the 18-5-1 outcome to accept the donation did more than just bring ridicule from isolated corners of campus. It swelled the pride of many that our student government is indeed representative of the UNL student body.

For too long, politicians have been under the mistaken impression that admission of error is suicidal. It doesn't quite ring true that an "honest" politician is a "stupid" politician.

If it does, then there's something wrong with the democratic system.

From the Watergate era should come an important lesson for all—concealment or justification of error is wrong.

ASUN elections are little more than a week away. With them will come a new representative body with new goals and situations with which to deal. But that is even more reason to praise our outgoing senate for dealing with its own mistake rather than let the 1980-81 senate inherit the APU-backed Krugerrand resolution.

Emotionalism is an animal that can affect even the most weathered of political forces. A quick glance at the many-faceted approach of Jimmy Carter toward the Iranian crisis should illustrate

that the president is only one man trying to act in the best interests of the nation.

It may be hard to act in the best interests of constituents. But what is even harder is to admit error and correct the situation to the satisfaction of those being served.

The present members of the Associated

Students of the University of Nebraska have recently accomplished this on a highly emotional issue.

It is our prediction that any ridicule from the student body will soon turn to praise.

Harry Allen Strunk



### letters to the editor

As the ASUN elections draw near, each concerned student at UNL is faced with a choice: a) re-electing existing policies and the existing level of effectiveness of the present ASUN; and b) voting for change both in ASUN and at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

We at Let Students Dominate have defined a student as one who pursues knowledge as an intrinsic good. Also, we believe that UNL exists only for the pursuit of knowledge. Working from these and nine other similar assumptions, LSD constructed a logical, rational and workable platform.

In the last three weeks we have campaigned vigorously to inform students as to our goals and beliefs. Naturally, there have been people offended by these ideas. Whenever a person or aggregate of persons makes a statement of consequence (i.e. verbalized belief dealing with a problem area), certain persons will be opposed to

these ideas.

Let Students Dominate has never hesitated to formulate an opinion based upon facts and reason dealing with problems at UNL. We did not begin this campaign to please everyone; rather we set out to improve the university. Wouldn't it be nice if all other parties had also?

Speaking of the other parties, LSD would like to commend La Raza Unida on its platform. We at LSD are in favor of all proposals except the abolition of ASUN made by La Raza Unida. This is due to the fact that we believe an ASUN-Faculty-Senate coalition would serve to govern UNL more effectively than the Board of Regents.

A most noticeable overlap of proposals exists between the La Raza Unida and the LSD platforms. We urge all students to carefully consider these two parties at the polls.

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## Abuses of press freedom need more than apology

By Liz Austin

Freedom of the press is a fundamental right of all American newspapers, including the Daily Nebraskan.

This time-honored right is founded in the U.S. Constitution and allows newspapers to print stories no matter how disturbing to the established authority.

### ombudsperson

With the First Amendment as its armor, newspapers protect the people's right to know.

The armor doesn't always hold strong, however. The courts, on numerous occasions, have slapped restraining orders on newspapers, attempting to prevent them from printing a certain story.

Opinions differ as to whether these restraints and punishments are justified. Most newspeople would agree they aren't.

But what if the press does abuse its freedom? The answers, of course, would have to take into consideration the extent of the abuse.

It obviously would not do to take away freedom of the press since it is a fundamental right of democracy.

Even if the press breaches this freedom, it still is the most effective watchdog.

But that doesn't answer what is to be done when this watchdog oversteps its boundaries and needs to be sent to the doghouse.

Remedies often are sought through the court system, which may be the best answer for major mistakes.

However for mistakes on a similar scale, the answer is not so easy. There may be no real answer but sometimes something more than an apology is needed.

## Graduate: Josh not necessarily the gospel truth

We have heard in recent days from various sources that Josh McDowell is both "scholarly" and "intellectual" in his presentation of certain kinds of "evidence that demands a verdict." But if Josh McDowell is a biblical scholar then by all accounts Adolf Hitler must be classified as a Talmudic one. For such a claim about the nature of McDowell's "scholarship" can be made only by a person who has not the slightest notion of what scholarship is and

### guest opinion

whose criterion of "evidence" is so low as to defy description.

If Josh McDowell's claim to scholarship rests on the "evidence" he presents in such publications as *Evidence That Demands a Verdict*, then let me be the first to deny him a pretense of being a scholar, for the evidence he presents therein will never stand up in any court where even a modicum of appreciation exists for real scientific methodology and historical research. All his evidence amounts to is the presentation of certain "facts" drawn from biblical writings which he supports with

such evidence as how many times the passage appears in the Bible and a list of writers who have commented on the particular passage. Now this kind of scissors-and-paste syncretism could pass for evidence and scholarship in the 11th century but not today. Very few people today would accept such scholastic verbiage as evidence. Hence, certain fallacies which the student of elementary logic learns to avoid after the first week of classes are used by McDowell to produce an opus of considerable size.

Even more dangerous for the authenticity of his evidence are McDowell's appeals to history and church history in particular. Any scholar who uses such an appeal has to realize from the outset that *all* history is an autopsy of sorts, and as with all autopsies it assumes the death of the subject under investigation. The history of Christianity clearly demonstrates that the pallor of death has been on its cheeks at least since 200 A.D. What scanty evidence McDowell presents shows an appalling ignorance of the results of historical and scientific research into the Bible. But the history of the church, "that hotchpotch of error and violence" as Goethe called it, is instructive even if not in the way McDowell imagines. We know that, to use a biblical metaphor, a "tree is known by its fruits." The bounti-

ful harvest this tree has produced in the last 2500 years is bitter indeed and characterized by lies, duplicities, and self-deceptions. For the history of the church is its story as a slave-owner, as a persecutor of

innocent victims—including pagans, Jews, and its own doctrinal heretics—, its defamations of women and sexuality, its obscurantism and obfuscation in matters of science and in general its blood-soaked record of misery and intolerance. Evidence can be drawn from the history of this faith but perhaps not the kinds of evidence Josh McDowell imagines. I really doubt that McDowell would be so willing to appeal to history for his evidence if he were aware, to use the Swiss church historian, Franz Overbeck's words, that "the history of the church is the best school of atheism possible." Theology's use of historical and scientific methodologies is ironic in another sense. Christianity and its theology have never evolved or contributed to the development of any of the natural and human sciences in terms of methods or scholarship. In this sense they have always appropriated the methodologies of these disciplines and acted as parasites at the rich banquet tables which others have set. This is not an insignificant point to those of us who have labored in behalf of real scholar-

ship. We know that not all is scholarly which uses the adjective just as all are not Christian who choose to use the name. The fate of such inquirers as Giordano Bruno, Michael Servetus, John of Oldenbarneveldt, the Albigensians and the victims of the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre all are historical proof that not only does theology have no need for evidence but actually works against the seekers after it. Theologians have always been the "Figaros of Christianity" and Josh McDowell is no different.

Those who determine the religious policy of this university will soon be called on to amend or abolish the charters of certain religious groups here on campus. What they must decide is whether the university is a kind of fairground where anyone can peddle any article he likes as long as a sufficient number of people are interested in it. At a university only scientific disciplines have a right to a place. This does not mean that religion as such should not be the object of scientific speculation and research. In sum, we must decide if the Constitution is worth the paper it is written on or whether the authors of the document in essence were only "joshing."

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