

## opinion/editorial

# ASUN's housing office condemnation: a mistake

The UNL Housing Office this week took "highly unusual" action against the residents of Heppner Three, ordering nearly all of them to move because of their highly unusual behavior.

Some residents of the floor were involved in causing about \$1,000 damage this semester.

The questions at this point are whether the vandalism merits moving the students — with only five weeks of classes left — and whether the housing office has taken steps to avoid arbitrary punitive measures against students not involved.

Residents of the floor do not deny that the damage occurred. They do, however, contend that several students not involved in the vandalism are being moved and that the housing office has denied any appeal of the action.

Technically, because students sign housing contracts, their rights are limited somewhat by landlord-tenant law.

Clearly, if students are being moved to other dorms arbitrarily, and those students have no avenue of appeal, the housing office decision would smack of injustice and total-

itarianism.

But this is not the case. Steps have been taken to ensure that students not involved in the damage will not suffer.

The UNL ombudsman is the final step in a three-step procedure open to Heppner Three residents who feel they have been mistreated.

First, the housing office gathered a list from students on the floor, naming students not involved in the vandalism. Lists also were made by the floor's student assistant, the residence director and the complex program director. From those lists, the housing office tried to determine who should move and who should stay.

If a student was told to move, but felt the order unjust, he was to go to the residence director. If the RD disagreed with the student, he was to go to the director of housing. If the student still was dissatisfied, the ombudsman, whose job exists for just such cases, could be brought into the individual case.

The establishment of this procedure clears the housing office of charges of totalitarianism. It also demonstrates that a sincere effort

was made to avoid injustice.

Still, it is possible that a student not involved could be moved.

The housing director apparently realizes that, but because of the seriousness of the repeated vandalism on the floor, was willing to take that risk.

We disagree, strongly, with ASUN's condemnation Wednesday of the housing office's decision. While ASUN has the responsibility of protecting students' rights, it, in this case, acted too quickly, apparently without seriously considering the difficult position of the housing office in a complex issue that needed to be addressed.

The students whose studies were disrupted by the vandalism also need to have their rights protected, and that was the intention of the decision to relocate Heppner Three students.

The housing office had to take action, and any action short of moving the students would have been meaningless and ineffective.

For the sake of innocent students on the floor and adjoining floors, the vandalism had to stop. Some students place a higher priority on studying than on throwing doors out

windows.

The housing office was more than tolerant. It issued several verbal and written warnings. An assistant housing officer held a meeting at Heppner, encouraging an end to the vandalism.

But some of the men of Heppner Three caused \$400 damage after that meeting. Now they complain that there is no appeal process — when there is — when in fact they could be facing criminal charges.

Heppner Three residents have complained that the floor is unclean and unsafe. An assistant state fire marshal toured the floor Wednesday, and found one violation, which the university will correct.

As far as cleanliness is concerned, it seems that residents of the floor have some responsibility to provide an atmosphere in which cleanliness is possible.

It also seems that the housing office acted in the most just and appropriate way it could. Hopefully, students will be responsible and respectful enough not to bring about the need for such a decision again.

Randy Essex

## Come on down! It's appropriations time

By Julie Bird

It's appropriation bill time at the Legislature. Crowd dispersal and prestige license plates take a back seat to the extremely complicated appropriation and revenue bills.

The atmosphere is suddenly very intense, and the rotunda is full of lobbyists extremely concerned about whether their organizations are going to get the money they had planned on. Senators frown and scribble and smoke even more than usual.

In the midst of the tension, it took an eight-year-old to remind me that things are only as serious as you make them.

### legislature

I saw the little fellow the other morning as I tried desperately to understand property tax relief, mill levies and a state aid to education formula. He was calmly looking at a pair of blue agate stones State Treasurer Frank Marsh had given him.

As he moved under the light to examine the stones, I asked him what he thought of all this hubbub in the chambers.

He replied that it was interesting, but not as "neat" as his blue agates. He then told me his name was Chad, that he was eight, and he had a half rupee and 20 centavos in his pocket.

Just then Lieutenant Gov. Roland Luedtke called for a vote and rang the customary bell to signal opening of the voting board. The bell got Chad's attention, and he looked up to see the green and crimson bulbs light up on the board.

"What is this?" he asked. "That bell and those lights make it seem like a game show!"

And how right he was. "Let's Make a Deal" was proceeding at breakneck speed, as senators tried to "Beat the Clock." After today there will be only eight working days left in the session.

At issue Wednesday morning was a proposal to take any money left over at the end of the fiscal year and increase aid to school districts. The limit on that money would be \$32 million, to which senators decided "The Price is Right."

The entire budget is a \$653,735,889 Pyramid," and lawmakers must play "The Percentage Game" to decide where it all goes.

Lincoln Sen. Dave Landis said he felt like he was spinning the "Wheel of Fortune."

"And here we go, and around and around, and we end up on . . . \$32 million!" All the while, however, some fiscal-minded legislators are yelling "Come on down!"

Somehow, through all that, we end up with a coherent state appropriations formula, and everyone breathes a sigh of relief and goes home.



## letters to the editor

How ironic was the fact that your editorial (Daily Nebraskan, March 26) concerning student leadership appeared directly above Brad Belt's guest opinion. Many of your points concerning student apathy showed a great deal of insight and in the past seven years that I have been a student at UNL, it was one of the best editorials I have read. However, this editorial did not go far enough in examining the reasons for student apathy at this university, but Brad Belt's guest opinion indirectly provided a glimpse at a reason for this apathy.

I agree with Mr. Belt's statement that the Student Court erred; however their error was that the injunction in question, should never have been issued. When a court is asked to enjoin an election, it should only take action if the complaining party states reasons that are tantamount to voter fraud. Otherwise, a court will be forced in the future with arguments that are beyond its jurisdiction.

For example, assume the Student Court enjoined the election because 500 voters were confused concerning the ballot system. What would happen next year if 50 voters were confused, another election? I am not defending the Hare System, just the fact that the candidates knew that it would be used and that if it was confusing, it was their duty to see that the voters who would vote for them would not make mistakes. I simply do not understand why ASUN candidates attempt to win in the Student Court what they could not win at the polls because in the

past five years, there have been four election challenges. Losing candidates obviously do not realize that when an election is challenged, the legitimacy of the elective process is questioned; and that repeated challenges will lead an outsider or non-voting student to discount the legitimacy of the government that these candidates represent, which results in continuing apathy.

It appears to me that the only allegation made that approaches voter fraud is the fact that the ballots that were used did not contain the correct number of write-in ballots. This omission was inexcusable and should not happen again. The only defense to this charge is that the persons most seriously injured, the write-in candidates, did not join in the complaint. I personally do not believe that a court should nullify an election when the injured candidates do not join in the petition. Thus, the Student Court erred when the injunction was issued, I just hope that, next year, the same mistakes are not repeated by the Court, the Electoral Commission, and most of all, by the candidates. The Board of Regents support of our student government is tenuous at best, therefore the ASUN's credibility should not be brought into question by frivolous lawsuits.

Finally, I would like to respond to Brad "Hit Below the Belt" Belt's vindictive attacks on Justices Cook, Young and Langland. These attacks do not deserve a direct response.

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