

opinion/editorial

Political party emphasis wisely reduced by court

The U.S. Supreme Court's ruling last week weakening the political patronage system makes a lot of sense, considering the era of political party crossover voters seems to be prevalent during this presidential election year.

By a 6-3 vote, the Court stated that government employees cannot be fired solely because of their political party affiliation. This ruling, of course, does not pertain to government positions in which party affiliation is an appropriate requirement for job performance.

Justice John Paul Stevens wrote for the court that without proof that party affiliation would affect performance, a political firing would deny an individual his constitutional rights of freedom of association.

Throughout the presidential primaries conducted thus far, it is apparent that many voters have crossed and will continue to cross their party lines to support candidates they consider most qualified.

Gone are the days of Republicans solely and strictly in support of Republicans, and Democrats solely

and strictly for Democrats. Instead what is emerging is an increasing concern for campaign stands, specific issue stands, and candidate responsibility.

No longer is it sensible for government employers to hire employees strictly by party affiliation, or fire them because of it. Party affiliation means virtually nothing to many concerned and conscious voters.

Justice Lewis F. Powell Jr., in writing for the dissenters, said the ruling will "decrease the accountability and denigrate the rule of our national political parties." Yet, he contends that many people question the continuance and effectiveness of those political parties.

The Supreme Court's decision will force government officials to consider the person for the position, by his qualifications, rather than considering him for the position by his political preference.

The decision will allow voters to cross their party lines without concern that the crossover might work against them in the end.

Shelley Smith



Musical phone call lightens random dialer's lonely night

"... it's a God-awful small affair..."
—David Bowie

At last report Jason and Marie were still idylling in the wilds of eastern Nebraska, even though Jason's exploits had long since put him on romantic probation. I was entertaining myself playing hits of the big-band era on my touch-tone telephone, secure in the knowledge that the affair's newness would soon wear down and we'd all be on the circuit again playing favorites.

michael zangari

I lowered the lights and played a bluesy version of "Melancholy Baby" segued with "Sentimental Journey" and then made a half-bow to the geranium in the window. Not much of an audience, but the best I'd had in weeks.

Cat meandered in periodically to get more suntan oil and to borrow my sunglasses; otherwise things were quieter than they had been in months.

I picked up around the house and generally filled time as best I could, then it was back to the phone and another tune. I tried doing "Johnny B. Goode" as a tango, but failed to catch the esoteric nature of its structural tonality. Besides, after the

seventh note, the phone began to ring. I let it.

"Hello?"
A quiet and warm voice on the other end of the line.

"Hi. A... I'm sorry, I must have played the wrong number. "Johnny B. Goode" as a tango?"

"Well yes, as a matter of fact. How did you know?"

"It's my number, dummy."

"Oh."

"So why did you call?"

"Oh, I don't know, lonely I guess."

"Well I'm as here as I'm going to get. What do you need?"

I paused. "I think that last question just about fills the need. Nobody has asked me that in years."

"It certainly makes more sense than asking you what you want."

"Well, what I want and what I need have been cohabitating for years."

"Living in sin?"

"That, too."

"How do they get along?"

"They fight like cats and dogs."

A warm lush laugh filled the receiver, and it made me smile. First light of day.

"Thank you," I said.

"You're entirely welcome."

"I suppose I should let you go now."

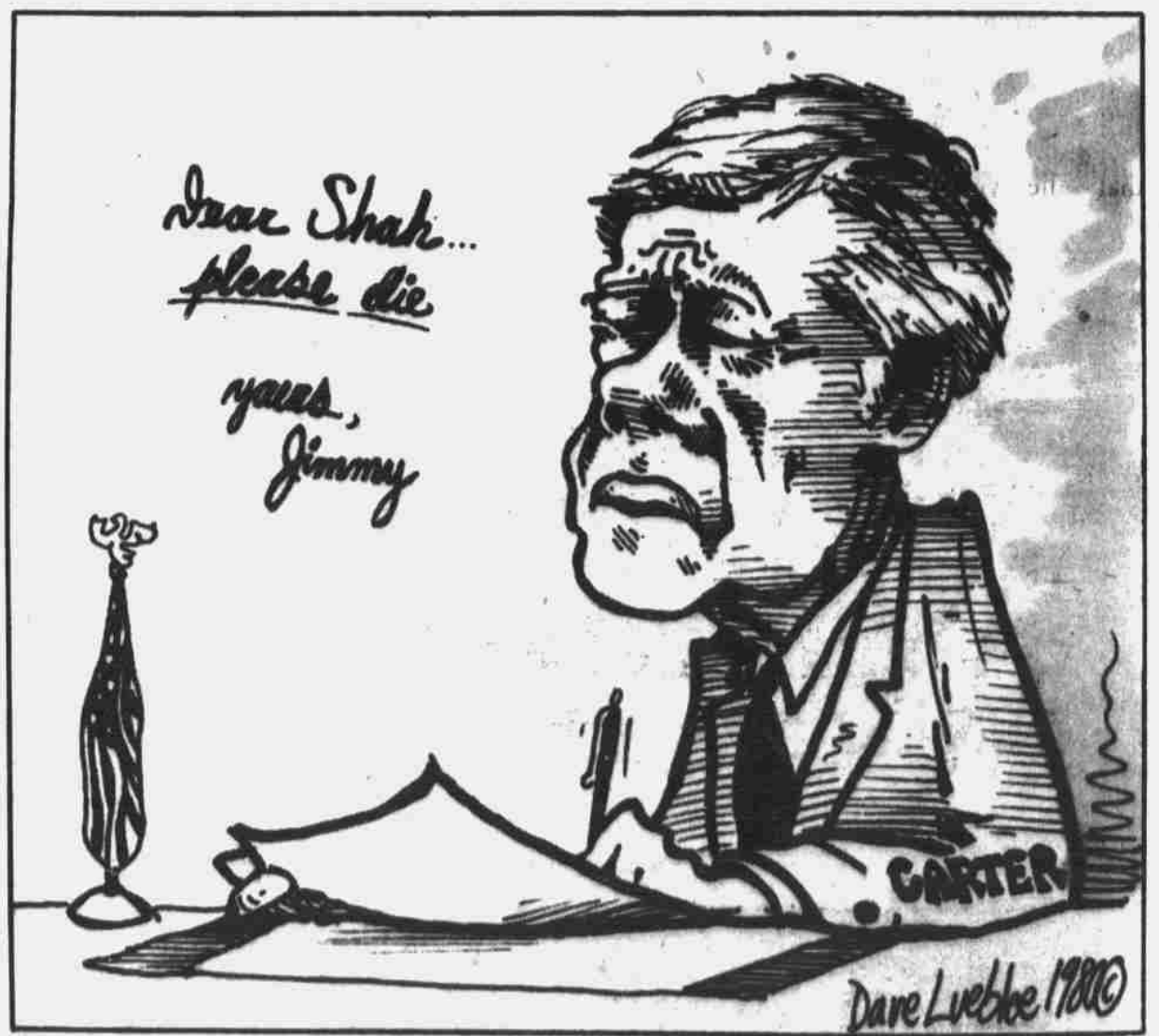
"Actually, you never held me."

"That's very true."

"I know."

"Good night."

"Good night."



ASUN is viewed as cause, not victim, of apathy

The fury over the ASUN election has subsided, but I hope concern over it has not, which is why I am persisting in keeping the issue up before the students. I deeply resent the attempts of some to make the student body the scapegoat for problems caused by certain individuals in student government.

guest opinion

I was in the Health Center when I read the editorial page of March 26. It was a good thing I was, for I nearly lost my cookies. Hopefully Mr. Yapp (and others) read Mr. Belt's letter to find a description of how "smoothly" the election was run. As for Mr. Strunk, he is correct that a small number of students monopolize student government posts, but we cannot blame it entirely on student apathy.

It is not that easy for a student to get involved in ASUN. Simply overcoming one's apathy and applying for a position doesn't do it. One must be prepared for the threats and hassles that come with it, as I and several acquaintances have found out. The elite already in power have certain ideas about who should be let in and where, and they become quite perturbed if you crawl in their

sandbox uninvited, and quite ferocious if you threaten to knock over their sandcastles. Anyone upsetting the status quo risks their wrath.

Let's take a closer look at these dedicated people striving for excellence despite the apathetic student body. They are the same ones who harassed me when I filed suit in Court to fight for students' rights, the same ones who socially ostracized me until I withdrew my case, the one who threatened blackmail unless I amended my petition, the ones who used the election reform issue as a front for their own personal goals. And our dedicated leader, who now claims they knew all along that reform was needed, has vowed to make election reform a top priority, yet they were one of those who opposed it and harassed me when the election results were hanging in the balance.

We also have our wonderful Student Court, which has all the confidence and initiative of a virgin couple on its wedding night; a court which forces the average non-law student to deal with its complex legalities, yet can't decide whether its own members are legally appointed or not. While the average student has to hassle with legalistic jargon and maneuvers, the Court itself relies on "tradition" and "expedience" rather than the "letter of the law" or Robert's Rules.

What a fool I was to think that since the student is bound by legalities, the Court would be also! It appears that student government follows whatever rules suit its purposes — making it difficult, if not impossible, to con-

front them successfully because the rules of the game constantly shift.

We are furthered honored with an incredible Electoral Commission which slaves away the hours, carefully disobeying its own rules, to pull off an election any comedy team would be proud of and then gets miffed because hardly anyone thanked them. Gee whiz, thanks guys... I needed the heartburn.

Yes, tell me about how it's all the student body's fault. Convince me that ASUN really wants to get anyone and everyone involved, that it wants to make things easier for the student in dealing with issues, that the majority of students are letting down a hardworking minority who hold government posts. Balderdash! It's the people in government who are letting the students down!

We also have an intelligent student body who sees ASUN for what it is — petty, insignificant, inconsistent, frustrating, and sadly laughable. Mr. Strunk was correct that there is student apathy, but does the apathy cause the problems for the minority in ASUN or do the minority's problems cause the apathy? Right now, I wouldn't blame a single student for being apathetic. ASUN, despite its staunch supporters, is not the highlight of the student majority's lives. There are a few things a bit more important, like exams, finances, and clipping your toenails.

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