

ASUN committee wants general run-off elections

By Chris Day and Mary Louise Knapp

The ASUN Special Topics Committee, acting on advice from the ASUN Electoral Commission, has recommended a new general run-off voting procedure for future student government elections.

Previously, ASUN officers were elected by the Hare balloting system. Controversy as to whether the system achieved a majority vote led to the switch. The NU Board of Regents requires that candidates be elected by a majority, but ASUN President Renee Wessels said she thought "the Hare system can derive a majority, yet there was some confusion as to whether the majority was mathematical."

"The Hare system is confusing to those not familiar with it," Wessels said.

The Hare system was introduced three years ago after the regents ruled that ASUN executives must be elected by a majority vote of the students. Plurality votes, in which candidates had to receive a majority plus one vote to win, previously had determined the election results.

Under the Hare system, voters listed their preference for candidates in order. For example, if four candidates were listed on the ballot, voters would list which candidate they prefer read first, second, third and fourth.

If no candidate received a majority after the first ballot count, the votes cast for the least-favored candidate would be redistributed among the other candidates.

Various suggestions

ASUN senators had various ideas as to what election system should be used. Arts and Sciences Sen. Rick Mockler suggested an integrated general run-off procedure that incorporated both the hare and the general run-off systems.

His procedure was approved by ASUN, but was rejected by Wessels. She said she wanted a simple system that the students could respect and understand. She said she felt that the preference part of the Hare, which distributes the losers' votes among the winners, made students uneasy.

The IGR system also would employ preference ballots.

If no majority was determined, ballots would not be redistributed. The ballots of the top two candidates would be analyzed in a computerized simulated run-off election. Ballots would be analyzed to establish each voter's preference, and the voter would be credited with one vote.

Mockler said that this system would prevent the need for two elections and prevent third-place candidates from winning.

Under the Hare system, there is a possibility that less-favored candidates would win, and students would think the system was undemocratic, he said.

Mockler said that because of the regents' ruling, all three ASUN executives must be elected by majority vote.

Wessels then introduced a government bill suggesting the general run-off procedure. She said the national chairperson of the United States Student Association, Doug Tutthill, put to rest her worries that the GR system would cause a low student turnout if there was a run-off election. With the GR system, no run-off will be used if a majority is determined in the general election, Wessels said.

A search is now underway for a new electoral commissioner, since Jeff Terp's term expired at the end of last semester.

Wessels said she is optimistic about the election because she feels that ASUN's credibility will rise, and the simpler new election system will be better understood by UNL students.

Elections are slated for March 4, and if necessary a run-off will be March 11.

Mockler said there may be a deadline for filing lawsuits in student court if election results are disputed as they were in 1980.

Wessels said, though, that the rules for the election have yet to be approved. She expects a uniform set of rules to be established, and said she thinks the election will help rebuild ASUN.

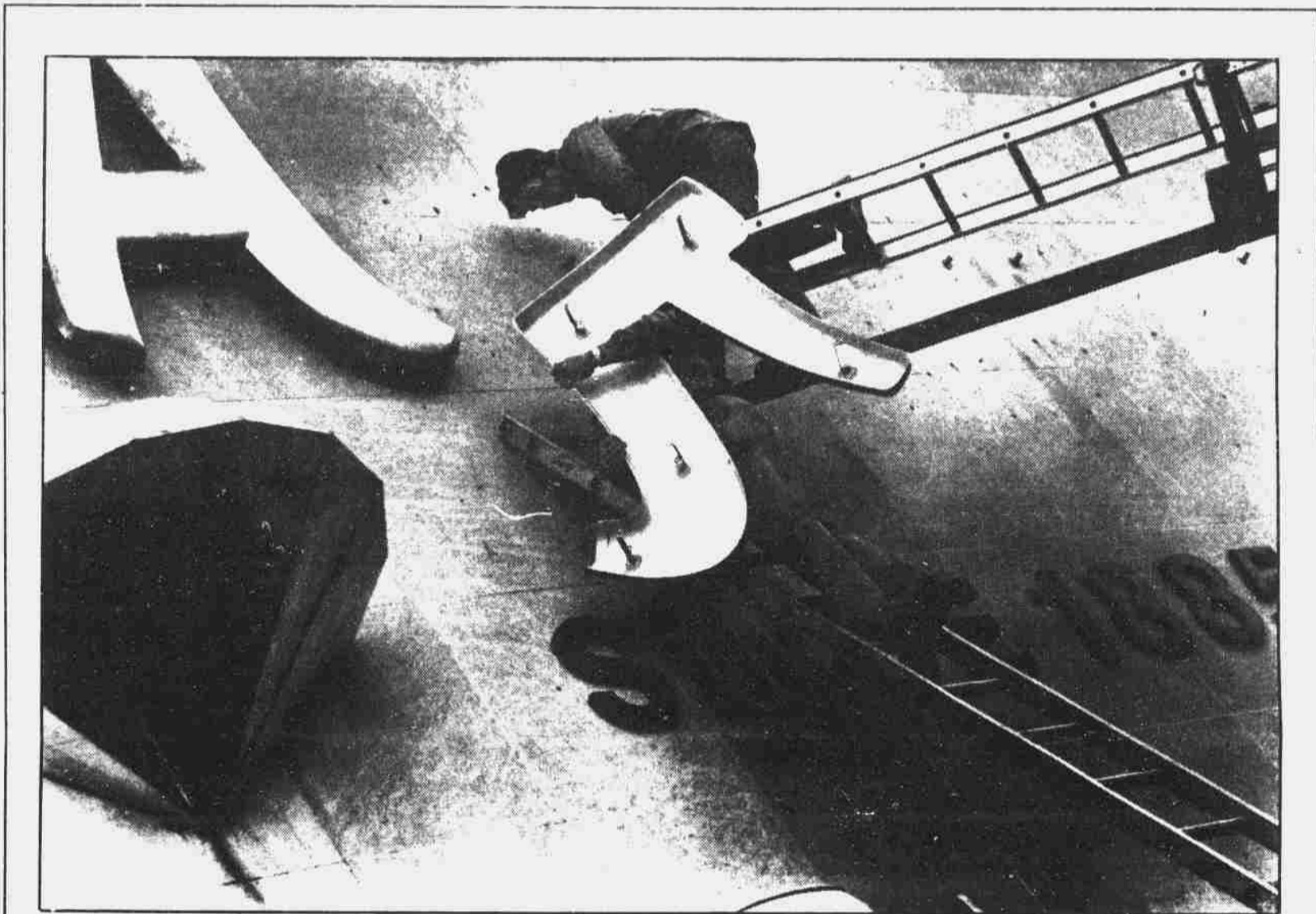


Photo by Jon Natvig

Workmen remove the large gold letters of the downtown Ardan store. Ardan is the second downtown business to leave for greener pastures in the last three months following Brandeis.

Union food manager pushes for efficient operation

By Ward Wright Triplett III

Ron Pushcar is a man, who by admission, thrives on a challenge. The 37-year-old Louisville, Ky., native who became the food service manager for the university unions last August, has made a career of

pulling faltering food services from the brink of disaster.

Having put UNO back on its feet in the past year, UNL is next in line.

"The 1979-80 financial reports here did not show a profit," he said. "When I heard the job was open, I applied for it, and

hopefully, I will be successful," he said.

A graduate of the Chicago Conservatory of Music, he originally set off on a career as a professional guitarist. He became part of the Ice Capades touring show and ended up in Las Vegas accompanying Johnny Mathis and Vicki Carr in the mid-60s.

But Pushcar eventually tired of the routine.

Since the Vietnam issue was at its height at the time, Pushcar joined the National Guard.

While there, he took up cooking, which brought him to Nebraska as executive chef at Creighton University.

"Since then, I've been moved around to different places wherever they were having trouble," Pushcar said.

Pushcar's changes at UNL's union include new menu items such as tacos at the Crib.

"Our operation needs to offer more food items that are the least costly to us, but still acceptable to the student," Pushcar said. "Right now, Mexican food is very popular, so that's what we want to start providing here."

Pushcar is still evaluating the current situation.

"You have to look at every aspect, from pricing to food cost and make an attempt to figure out an effective combination," he said. "We have to keep a watch on service also, to avoid things like overtime and overproduction."

Pushcar added ice cream to the deli menu and increased deli efficiency. He also wants to change the Crib's service style to a fast food operation that would reduce the number of stops a person has to make to get food there three to one.

"That takes a great deal of time and manpower, and we want the person to be able to walk up to a window, order something and have it there for them right away," he said.

The Harvest Room also may undergo some structural renovation.

"It's like a zig zag in there, everything is arranged so squiggly," he said. "I'd like to see it set up like a Bishop's. I go in there now, and I still get confused from time to time."

Pushcar has plans to open a pizza operation in the union, with both sit-down and carry-out services. But that is far into the future, and Pushcar said that when things get settled on a financial upswing, he won't stay much longer.

"There are two types of managers," he said, "the caretaker, who is satisfied with the way things are, and those who go out for a challenge. I think I would always need to go out after something. It's exciting that way."

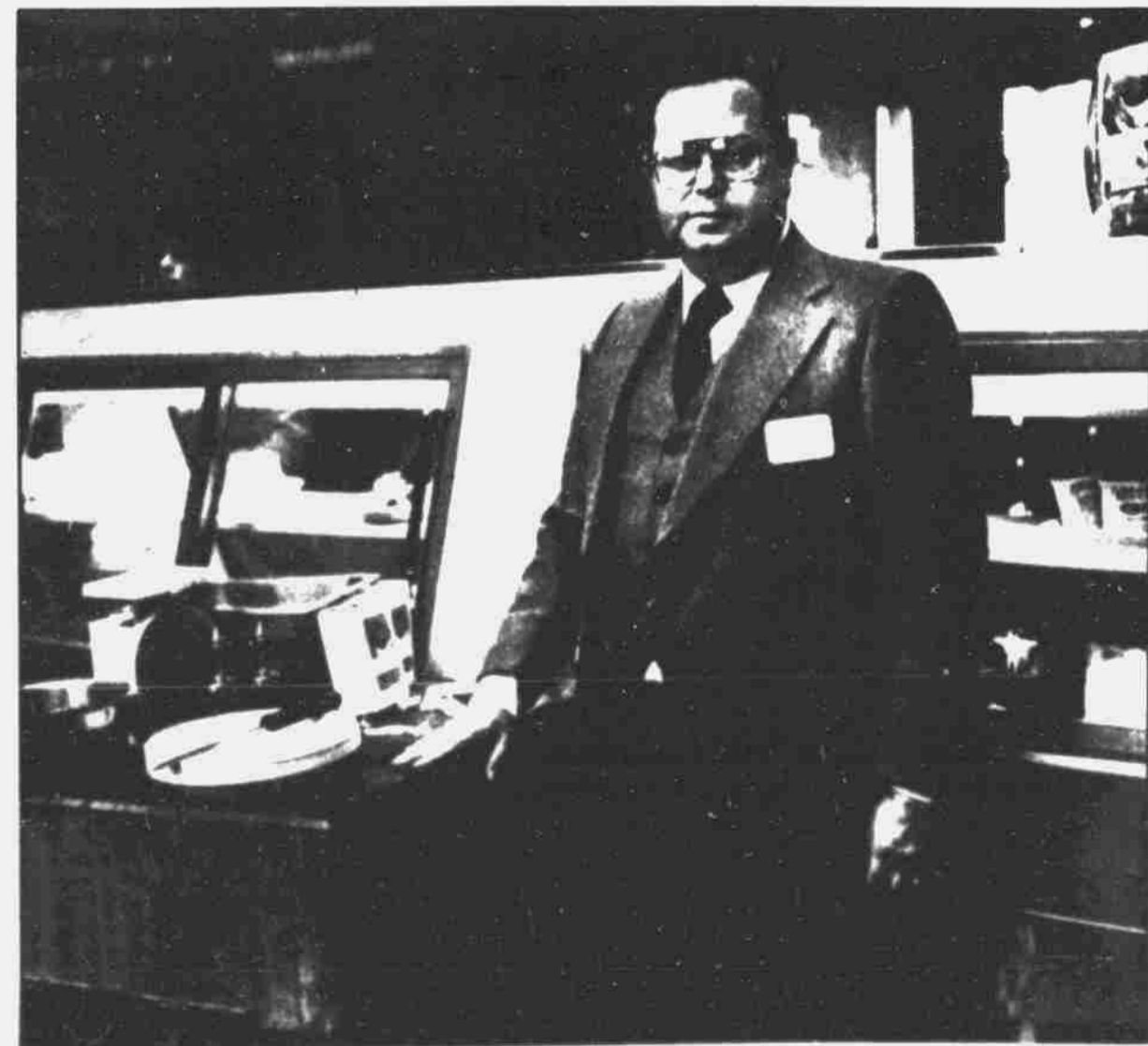


Photo by Mitch Hrdlicka

Ron Pushcar

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