

Economy needs. . .

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The campaign illustrates how powerful banks and insurance companies are today, Rogers said. A more realistic appraisal of these institutions is that they are money collection agencies, he said. As they collect more money, they gain more political power. They use this power when their interests conflict with the interests of poor and working people, Rogers said.

Rogers said the labor movement in the United States must reckon with gaining greater control over financial institutions. They must build their own banks and insurance companies — to bring democracy into the economy, he said.

Rogers' present project, Corporate Campaign, Inc., is supposed to help unions make existing financial institutions accountable for how they spend millions of dollars of union pension funds.

Corporate Campaign, Inc., wants to get involved in a wide range of issues, Rogers said. It is dedicated to getting justice out of institutions that have too much power, he said.

National student officer was born to organize

By Charles Flowerday

Janice Fine, 20, national chairperson for the United States Student Association, said she represents approximately 3.5 million students from all parts of the country.

In Lincoln for the Ninth Annual National State Student Association Conference at UNL this weekend, Fine said the USSA had gone through a decline in membership recently.

"But I think we're back on our way to influencing students," she said. "It's very difficult to recruit at 3,000 colleges. Our influence on Capitol Hill is substantial. We're recognized as a national voice of students."

Fine is currently on sabbatical from the State University of New York at Albany to allow her to work full-time in Washington, D.C., as an organizer and lobbyist for the USSA.

"I always felt the best education I could get was out of the classroom. Working on state and national levels (of government) I could see how decisions are made," she said.

The USSA is committed to ensuring that affordable and quality education continues to be a priority of state and national policy makers, Fine said at a press conference Saturday.

Part of her work is influencing policy decisions, she said. The other part is educating students. The USSA wants to communicate to students that major power imbalances exist, and that students must be made aware of the power relations and decisions that affect their lives, she said.

"I've always wanted to be an organizer," Fine explained, noting that activism runs in her family. Her father, now a community organizer in Chicago, was one of the founders of the Israeli air force in 1948. Her sister, Margi, is a national field organizer for a coalition for reproductive rights. Both of her parents were active in the peace movement during the Vietnam War, she said.

"I know the power of constant pressure on lawmakers," she said, referring to a recent effort on the part of 3,000 students and faculty to fight budget cuts in education. They were successful in their attempt to forestall "massive budget cuts," she explained.

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