

Wedekind defends ASUN resolution

One might expect a response from ASUN to the criticism expressed in a guest opinion in the Daily Nebraskan on Sept. 10. However, after rereading the guest opinion, I decided that perhaps a clarification would be more appropriate and an adequate response.

The clarification I am speaking of is one of what ASUN is (and I believe should be) concerned with at this time. I believe this can be done by reiterating statements consistent with those that I made throughout my campaign: ASUN should strive to impact areas that affect UNL students as students.

I believe the ASUN Senate's priorities this year can be broken down into three major categories which, in

Guest Opinion

no particular order, are: 1) the quality of education at UNL; 2) the cost of education at UNL; and 3) the ability of students to pay for their education.

ASUN has been and is dealing with issues in all three of these areas and I commend the student senators for their work thus far. But because the criticism was centered on the third area, specifically federal financial aid, I'll address that area alone.

At a recent ASUN Senate meeting, a resolution was passed expressing senate support for "efforts underway" to override President Reagan's veto of the recent supplementary spending bill.

The bill included \$140 million of Pell Grant money and \$77 billion for the Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant program. It thus could have affected up to 1 million Pell Grant recipients and as many as 128,000 students from the SEOG program if the veto had been sustained or the bill revised in those areas.

This made the bill a concern not only to individuals receiving financial aid and to those who believe all citizens should have access to higher education, but it also made it a concern to both private and public institutions of higher education, including this university.

Potential cuts in federal financial aid have been an issue for more than half a year and are not only a concern for philosophical reasons, but also from an institutional viewpoint - the potential for reduced enrollment could obviously affect the institution in a number of ways.

With this possibility, ASUN began to approach the problem early last spring. Our efforts involved students, faculty, administrators and the NU Board of Regents. We contacted Congress members to offer information and visited their Washington and local offices.

We invited Congress members, state senators and other elected representatives to the campus for open forums or small group discussions, invited staff members of the offices of the aforementioned people to the campus, participated in a forum in Omaha with other Nebraska institutions of higher education and testified at legislative hearings on financial aid.

Partners . . .

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Maybe it's especially hard for women, raised to put relationships above games. As accomplished a victor as Pam Shriver had to say, "I have mixed emotions. I'm thrilled for myself, but I'm sad for Martina."

Politics are much more subtle than racket sports, but no less intense. In the Senate, Packwood and Helms are disagreeing about something more fundamental than who has the stronger serve. They disagree about human values.

There are times when it may seem inappropriate for senators to disagree so politely about such heated subjects. Most of us at one time or another have wondered whether coolness was really a lack of caring. Most of us have questioned people who are able to separate their emotions from their behavior.

Looking again at my mental photograph of the opposing senators walking the floor together, I also wonder: Is this sane or phony? Are they behaving as gentlemen or old boys, civilized or clubby? Or just pragmatic?

By now, I vote for pragmatism. Packwood and Helms, Navratilova and Shriver, after all, have something in common. They travel in the same circuit. They are opponents one day and partners another. There is more than the usual reason to keep the competition focused on making points rather than enemies. More than the usual reason to take it impersonally.

Eventually, I think most of us have to learn this skill. In my own profession, people who wildly and publicly disagree with each other's point of view in print ask about each other's children in private.

Even in that most personal arena, family, we may vote for different people and still break bread together. Most of us struggle to make our differences reconcilable.

This lesson does have its emotional costs. It takes self-control to drain our confrontations of their personal venom. It also takes some understanding and some perspective to live with differences, even competition, without feeling personal conflict. I guess it takes a pro.

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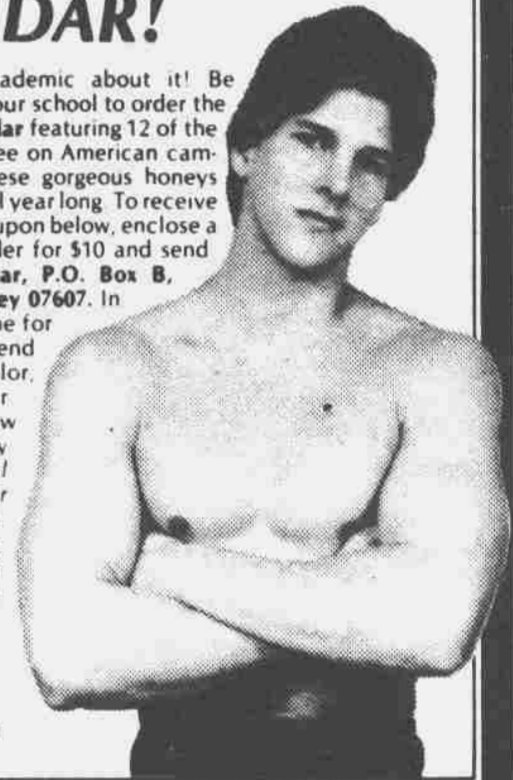
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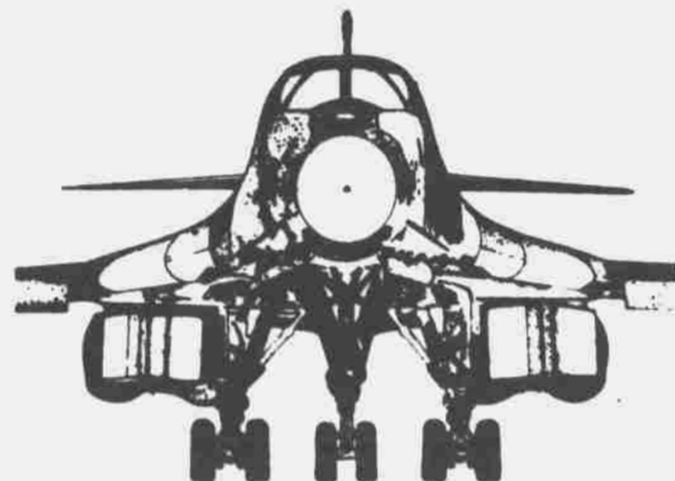
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