

# Daily Nebraskan

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## Common Cause attacks PACs

By Eric Peterson

Since the 1976 and 1978 elections, when the efforts of privately organized political action committees first became prominent, complaints have been heard that PACs are trying to buy elections and candidates.

October has been declared "People Against PACs" Month by Common Cause, a public interest lobbying group. The group has proposed that public financing for congressional candidates be established and contributions from PACs be limited.

Although Congress passed laws in 1975 to regulate private contributions to presidential campaigns and provide public financing for them, the new laws did not apply to Congress itself. Corporations, labor unions, trade associations and ideological groups have organized PACs to make contributions to congressional candidates. According to an Associated Press story, more than 3,400 PACs contributed \$86 million to House and Senate races last year.

Nancy Shoninger, regional coordinator for Common Cause, said her group's proposal, which has 120 co-sponsors in the House of Representatives, provides for public financing which would be originated in a tax credit. She said some people believe

the credit would raise money more effectively than the present \$1 checkoff for presidential campaigns.

Shoninger said links between voting records and PAC contributions can be correlated.

"It's striking that in the Clean Air Act... people who wanted to weaken standards on the appropriate committee all have received \$10,000 or more from PACs and those who wanted to maintain or strengthen the Clean Air Act received less than \$10,000," she said.

A law requiring itemized protection of used car customers also was defeated in Congress largely by people who received PAC money from the used car dealers' association, Shoninger said.

She said that the PAC's defense of their right to campaign freely through unlimited contribution may be seen in another way.

"Our question is whether it's really involving them

(PAC contributors) with the political process and not just involving their money," Shoninger said.

UNL political science professors Robert Sittig and Mike Steinman said the Common Cause proposal was worthy of discussion, though neither said he favored the specific proposal. Sittig said any such proposal would have to include the public financing in addition to limiting PAC involvement.

"Individuals are so laggard in their own obligations that the PAC's have sort of stepped into that vacuum," Sittig said.

Steinman said some senators and representatives receiving PAC contributions may already have supported the particular PACs side of the issue.

"You have to worry about whether PACs are in fact gaining more than access — whether they are gaining votes," he said.

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## Nebraskan 'can-do' aids recycling effort

By Kris Mullen

People of all ages and businesses of all sizes of Lincoln are collecting more aluminum cans for recycling this year than in the past, industry experts said.

Brad Becksfort, spokesman for the Aluminum Company of America recycling center in Des Moines, Iowa, said the majority of recycling business in Nebraska goes to ALCOA.

This year approximately 7,500,000 pounds of aluminum cans — one million pounds more than last year — will be shipped from Nebraska to ALCOA for recycling, Becksfort said.

Cans recycled this year represent about 15 percent increase over 1982, he said.

Statistics recently released by the Aluminum Association, Inc., show that a record 28.3 billion all-aluminum cans were recycled last year in the United States. The report said the record number means more than half of the aluminum cans shipped in the United States in 1983 were recycled.

Nebraska's increase in recycling tonnage is especially noteworthy, Becksfort said, because it has grown despite Safeway recycling centers departure.

Before the grocery store chain folded in Nebraska, a Safeway distribution center in Omaha bought cans through all of the chain's stores in the state. The cans then were shipped to ALCOA.

When the stores closed, many towns were left without a recycling collection center. But groups in those towns took over the recycling business, he said.

Most Nebraska towns with populations of more than 1,000 now have a recycling center, he said, so more people are recycling their cans.

Roger Downs, vice president of sales for Dennis

Paper Sales in Lincoln, said the company buys about 60,000 pounds of aluminum cans each month.

"That means about 1,500,000 cans," he said.

He said there are three main reasons for the increase in the amount of cans collected for recycling.

One reason for the increase, he said, is that more people are aware of the recycling process.

He said most collectors are individuals, some poor and some wealthy.

"For one guy, I think it's his income," he said. "But we get them up to guys in suits. Mostly they're someone who wants to make a little extra money."

Another reason for the increase is the price paid per pound of cans.

Downs said that when Dennis Paper Sales began buying cans 2 1/2 years ago, collectors were paid 30 cents for a pound of aluminum. The company now pays 40 cents for a pound.

The third reason for the increases is that most cans now are solid aluminum instead of aluminum bodies with steel tops and bottoms. More aluminum cans mean more can be recycled, he said.

"Without exception, almost everyone is making cans out of aluminum," Downs said.

Russell Miller, manager of Nebraska Recycling Center in Lincoln, refused to disclose the amount of aluminum cans the center buys from Nebraska collectors. But he said the amount is increasing each year.

Miller said the center pays 36 cents per pound of cans, and 38 cents for amounts more than 20 pounds. That translates to about 1 1/2 cents per can.

He said nine months ago the center paid collectors 20 cents a pound.

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### Nobility and the Arts

A Viennese princess awards a few pieces of silver to a strolling minstrel, whose sparkling tunes fill the brisk October air... The scene is not from a fairy tale, but from the streets of Lincoln. Josephine Polanka, born to an Austrian noble, regularly visits Chris Sayre, street musician extraordinaire.

Friday

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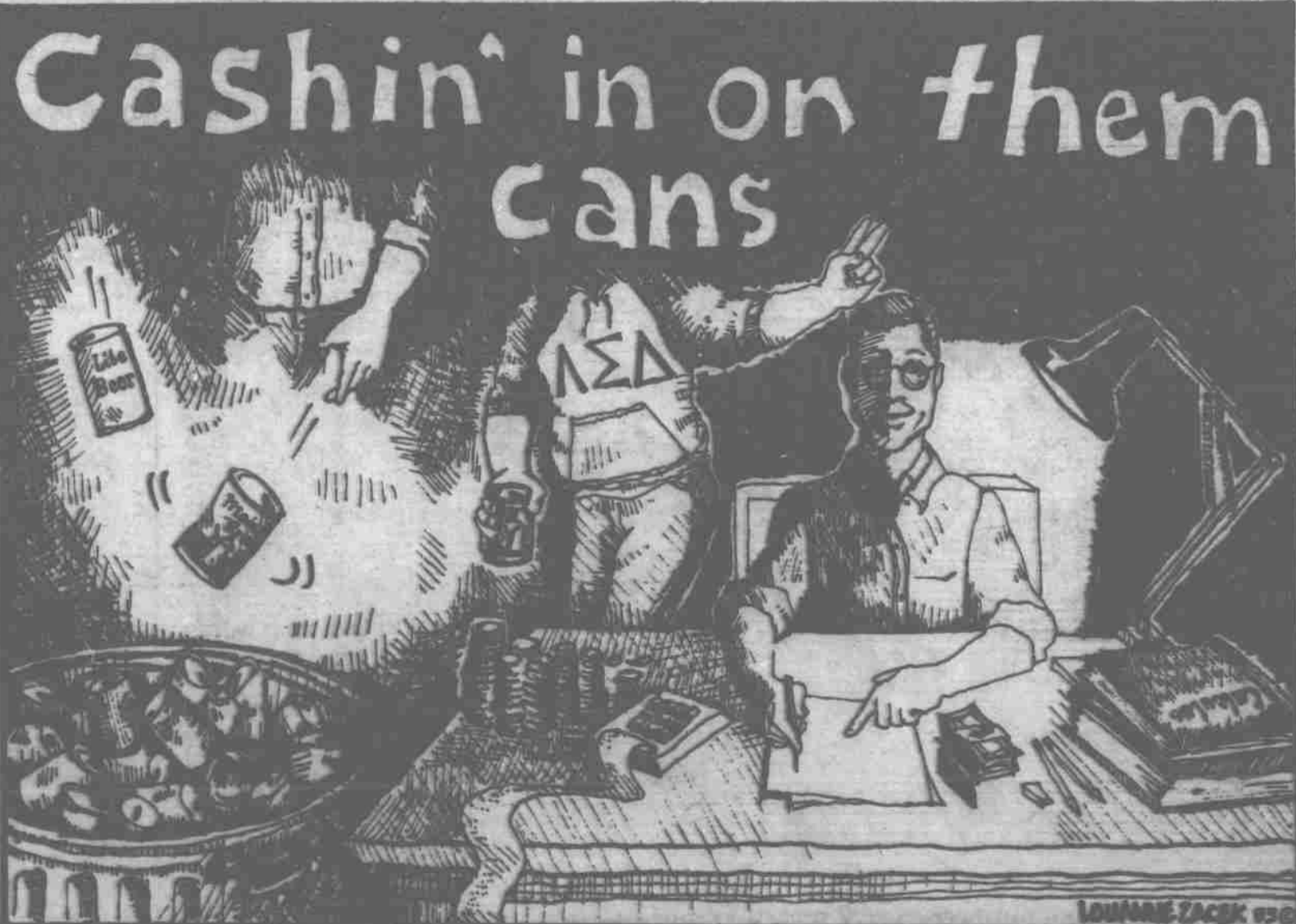


Illustration by Lou Anne Zacek