

# Editorial



## Aspects of adding performing arts center need closer look

Plans to build a new performing arts center around the existing Temple Building should be delayed long enough for the faculty, students and administration to evaluate its impact on the university budget.

Officials Saturday announced a gift of \$10 million — the largest in NU history — to help build the center in a square block bounded by R, Q, 12th and 13th streets. The donation was made by the Lied Foundation Trust of Las Vegas, Nev., which was established by former Omaha car dealer Ernst Lied.

That donation must be matched by local funds, however, before the project can proceed. The NU Board of Regents gave the administration authority to seek \$7 million from the Legislature and the NU Foundation plans to raise the remaining \$3 million in private donations.

Make no mistake about it, the Lied Performing Arts Center, as it would be called, would be a big asset to the university, the city and the state. But the speed at which officials are trying to push the project through is appalling.

When the Board of Regents met Saturday, only Regent Robert Simmons of Scottsbluff questioned the necessity of the center. The state is allowing itself to be dictated to he said, by accepting a gift that must be matched locally. No one else seems to care where the state is going to come up with its \$7 million share or what projects may be put on hold to meet that amount.

More important, however, is the question of where funds will come from to operate the center once it is constructed. It likely would create some revenue of its own but certainly not enough to meet expenses. The rest apparently will have to come from the university's general budget, a budget which already is stretched about as thin as it will go.

Chancellor Martin Massengale called the Lied Center project a dream that "has moved one step closer to reality." But at a university where faculty salaries are among the lowest in the nation and where the administration is conducting a reallocation just to keep the institution operating at a respectable level, one hardly dares to dream of such things as a major performing arts center.

The university may find the funding to operate the center, but it should not be so hasty in its decision to begin construction. The students of UNL have dreams, too — dreams of decent salaries for all employees and of sufficient sections of each course. These should be met before UNL makes the commitment to operate another building.

*Unsigned editorials represent the official policy of the spring 1984 Daily Nebraskan. They are written by this semester's editor in chief, Larry Sparks.*

*Other staff members will write editorials throughout the semester. They will carry the author's name after the final sentence.*

## 'Star Wars' defense plans don't get to real problem of nuclear proliferation

If there is a favorite fantasy for those of us who share the four-o'clock-in-the-morning fears of nuclear war, I suppose it is the fantasy of some ultimate safety, some impenetrable self-defense. It must be the same fantasy that fueled the imagination of those who once built castles, moats, city walls, even the Great Wall of China.

It's been almost a year now since Reagan's "Star Wars" speech. He had a vision that day of a future which would begin a program of self-

Star Wars Project.

I am sure there is something pleasing to the military as well in the idea of a "Star Wars" peace. It suggests that we don't really have to negotiate with the Russians. It promises that we can become invulnerable without giving up a single advantage.

The high-tech peace wouldn't mean a nickel less for the Pentagon budget. A high-tech protection, after all, is so much more expensive than a low-tech conference. The arms race could go on without fear of resolution until we were utterly bankrupt.

There is something fundamentally perverse about pinning our hopes for the future on hardware. It prevents us from resolving conflicts, discourages us from thinking about the real reasons for this arms race.

Last month, Thomas Powers wrote in *The Atlantic Monthly* about his attempt to discover what the arms competition between the Soviet Union and the United States is finally, actually, about. Our political differences don't explain the risk of annihilation. There is no victory or conquest in nuclear war.

So he asked over a hundred people a deceptively simple question — "What is it about?" — and rarely received more than a blank stare from Americans or Soviets engaged in thinking about the arms race. "It was questions about hardware that interested them."

Powers finally came to the conclusion that "it" was about fear, fear of each other's power. "We fear each other. We wish each other ill," he wrote. "All the rest is detail."

Is there a technological solution to fear? Of course not. Even if we could make nuclear bombs bounce off our national chest, a wildly dubious proposition, our mutual ill will could take the form of chemical warfare or "conventional" warfare.

The notion that we will be safe — that we can forget about the Soviets, that we can have our war games and security at the same time — is a dangerous delusion. The reality is that we are stuck here on Earth with the most human of problems: how to save ourselves. Our only weapon is that familiar and flawed software called the human mind.

©1984 The Scripps Club Newspaper Company/Washington Post Writers Group



Ellen Goodman

He led us to believe that he would create a protective guardian to fly out there in space to shoot enemy missiles out of the sky.

At the time, I found some videotape humor in the idea, but also some comfort. Why not spend some money on defense, instead of offense, for a change?

But I'm not comforted anymore. For am I convinced that this fantasy, which has become defense policy, is so harmless. It seems to me now that the whole "Star Wars" project maintains the truly central fantasy about war: that it is the business of technicians, a question of the right hardware.

Harold Brown, Jimmy Carter's secretary of defense, once said, "Our technology is what will save us." Recently, the *New York Times* ran a long story about the young "Star Wars" technicians at the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory who believe they'll be our saviors.

"We're working on weapons of life," said one of these young men who is convinced that he is in this research to end nuclear war. "Why not find technical solutions to a technical problem?"

I understand the psychology behind his question. Scientists generally have more faith in technology than in bureaucracy to solve world problems. Physics is purer than politics. Science promises the concrete answers that elude the students of human and foreign relations. It engages scientists in seductively interesting intellectual pursuits: the Manhattan Project, the

## 'Instruments of peace' excuse for violence

"Yes, this is Secretary Weinberger. What can I do for you?"

"Oh, boy, am I glad to finally get through to you, Mr. Secretary. My name's Al Hackerman and I'm calling from this phone booth in Beirut."

"And how are things in Beirut, Mr. Hackerman?"



Arthur Hoppe

"Not so hot, Mr. Secretary. See, me and my wife, Margie — we're from Secaucus, N.J. — we were on this 16-day Fun 'n Sun Tour of the Middle East and Margie says, 'Let's opt for the Beirut stopover.' What's that, Margie? Well, who cares whose fault it was?"

"I'm sure you made a wise choice, Mr. Hackerman. Beirut is lovely this time of year."

"Yeah. It's a little noisy at night, though. You see, there's this battleship outside our window. It makes Margie nervous."

"You just tell Mrs. Hackerman there's no cause for alarm. If there's one thing your government stands for, it's protecting American citizens in foreign

climes."

"Sure. And we're grateful. But when Margie sees this battleship firing one-ton shells right over our heads . . ."

"Don't forget, Mr. Hackerman, the president himself sent 1,600 Marines to Beirut to protect Americans like you. And he's just as sorry as you are that it didn't work out."

"That was a shame. Anyway, now that the Marines are gone, we'd kind of like to come home."

"If you'll go over to our embassy and ask someone . . ."

"They all left yesterday. In fact, Mr. Secretary, the wife and me are the last two Americans left in Beirut."

"Well, we've sent the whole Sixth Fleet out there to protect you. What more can you wish?"

"We wish you wouldn't go to all that trouble, Mr. Secretary."

"Nonsense. It's our duty to defend at all costs, Mr. Hackerman, your inalienable right to be wherever you want to be."

"Yes, sir. We want to be home. It's not that we don't appreciate all you're doing for us, but next Thursday's my paddle tennis play-offs. And Margie's worried the kid next door is forgetting to do the watering and her coreopsis bed has had it."

"Her only regret, Mr. Hackerman, should be that

she has but one coreopsis bed to give for her country. Look, I'm going to be frank with you: You can't leave now."

"We can't?"

"Don't you see? When the president pulled the Marines out, he stepped up the bombing and shelling of Moslem rebels in order to protect American lives in Beirut. If you and Mrs. Hackerman pack up and leave, he's going to look pretty darned foolish with no American lives to protect, isn't he?"

"Gosh, I hadn't thought of that. What's that, Margie? Oh, Margie says thanks very much for all the trouble, but we're really not worth fighting a war over."

"You're not instruments of war, Mr. Hackerman; you're instruments of peace. The president's entire Mideast peace plan now hinges on bombing and shelling the Moslem rebels into submission. And he can't do it without you."

"Well, when you look at it that way . . ."

"Then you and Mrs. Hackerman will hang in there, doing your patriotic duty to help the president achieve a lasting peace in that strife-torn corner of the world?"

"Just a minute, Mr. Secretary. What do you think, Margie? Oh, Margie says okay. But you got to get us a room not facing the ocean."