

Editorial

Inner-party bickering costs Democrats votes

Sometime tonight the last vote for the 1984 Democratic presidential nominee will be cast in the California and New Jersey primaries.

Soon afterward, on July 16, the Democratic National Convention will meet in San Francisco to make the final choice of whom will grapple President Reagan for the presidency. The primary race has been unsettling for the Democrats. At times, the competition between candidates seems to have cheapened their public images and that of the party.

After a televised debate Sunday night between the Democratic candidates, it seems they are more concerned with discrediting each other rather than discrediting the Reagan administration. Given, they are running "against" each other for the nomination. But, as Democrats, they have many similar opinions. These do not need debate, except on the fine points which they ignored. What they need to debate are Reagan's and the Republican party's policies, which they did only a little.

But overall, the debate was dominated with triviality. Mondale picked on Hart, his feelings hurt, picked on Mondale. The Rev. Jesse Jackson made jokes and witty remarks about his rivals and himself.

Jackson amusingly told Hart: "If you stand in the middle of the road you get hit from both sides." He said of Reagan: "I'd rather have Roosevelt in a wheelchair than Reagan on a horse."

For the nomination, Mondale needs less than 284 of the 468 delegates left in Tuesday's primaries. Voters will cast ballots not only in New Jersey and California, but also in West Virginia, South

Dakota and New Mexico.

It would seem that Mondale has the nomination wrapped up, but Gary Hart could complicate things for him. True to his campaign's bickering form, Hart has filed a complaint with the Federal Election Commission. The complaint alleges possible violation of election laws.

During Tuesday's debate, Hart claim-

ed Mondale had received between \$500,000 and \$1 million from political action committees, which Mondale said he would repay. He has not. If Mondale is nominated, an FEC investigation resulting from Hart's complaint could further mar the Democratic party name and cause registered Democrats to vote otherwise in November.

Already, many Democrats have tired of the nonproductive bickering and name-calling between the candidates. In David Broder's Omaha World-Herald column Sunday, a Newark, N.J., woman expressed this attitude: "If the Democrats would only stop bickering and dumping garbage on each other, they might have a chance. I'm a Democrat, but I'll vote for Ronald Reagan."

The Democrats are losing votes before they even have a candidate. The Democrats need to get their act together.

Now that the primaries are nearing an end, perhaps the candidates and delegates can ease up on the inner-party squabbling. They need to concentrate on forming policies and choosing a candidate that can represent a cohesive Democratic stance, one that can challenge a smug but undercompetent Reagan who will not be easy to beat in November.

—Julie Jordan



'Temple of Doom': Violence beyond excess

I well remember my first adventure with Indy, Indiana Jones, that is, I am, I feel, on a first-name basis with him, we have been through so much together.

Our first adventure was three summers ago and I had a 7-year-old on my lap. I was ready to steady and comfort him during the assault of what I had been warned were jolting scenes in "Raiders of the Lost Ark," such as the early scene where gobs of

George Will

tarantulas fall on Indy's back. That scene, even though anticipated, was a turn-the-bones-to-jelly shocker, for Father. The 7-year-old sighed contentedly and said in the measured cadence of that season's sophistication: "Ex-cel-lent!"

Parents are pleased to believe, against all evidence, that their children's souls are sensitive flowers — orchids, not marigolds — and that, therefore, care must be taken lest the little creatures be traumatized by exposure to this or that cultural excess. Actually, they are more durable — perhaps "impervious" is a better word — than we think. But there are limits to what they should experience, and "Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom" oversteps those limits.

I have now had my second adventure with Indy, the archaeologist with the bull whip and the thirst

for excitement. "Raiders" is stimulating enough, thank you, with pits of vipers, villains diced by airplane propellers, faces melting and corpses perforated by arrows, like San Sebastian. But "The Temple of Doom" sets a standard for violent action at which subsequent movies will shoot, in vain, I hope.

A football game is about nine minutes of action and a couple of hours of standing around and sorting things out. This movie is about nine minutes of relative calm, and 109 minutes of violent action punctuated by intervals of mere repulsiveness.

I saw it with an exacting critic, a 12-year-old who was impatient for the snakes to slither on stage, the snake motif being strong in this genre. He was soon satisfied because the eating of live little snakes is part of a meal that includes beetles, eyeball soup and chilled monkey's brains served from staring skulls. That meal was comic relief from giant roaches and other creepy crawly things, and from children-flogging sadists who are led by a live-wire who with his bare hands plucks the hearts from the chests of victims.

The frolicsome movie proceeds without undue expenditure of nuance, which is fine, but suddenly it becomes ugly. There is salacious cruelty in the torture scene where a fellow is roasted alive. But then, that is sort of the way it is apt to be with your basic torture scene.

The flogging, roasting, and heart-plucking are not suitable for children. The movie concedes as much by warning that some scenes may be too "intense" for young children. The adjective "intense" is the sort of mushy word that committees settle on when they are groping for a way to circle the truth without barging into it.

The truth is that this movie as fare for children, is unsuitable, and as a cultural symptom is depressing. It is not just another example of the inexorable tendency toward excess, like half-time shows at Super Bowls. It is an example of the upward ratchet effect of shocking extremism in popular entertainment. This march toward the shocking is producing a generation that would yawn through the parting of the Red Sea. We who, when children, considered Hopalong Cassidy and Randolph Scott the last words in excitement now know better, but we doubt that our children are more fortunate.

The two persons responsible for "Temple of Doom," Steven Spielberg and George Lucas, are commercial geniuses. The noun is right but it is severely limited and devalued by the adjective, which also is right. Their obsession with juvenile obsessions (repulsive creatures and foods) may be evidence of their arrested development, which is their problem. But the sensory blitzkrieg they have produced to coin money is apt to stunt the imaginations of children, and that is our problem. This movie is perfectly made for perfectly passive children — for children raised on electronic images rather than on reading, which requires imaginative involvement.

Movies can engage the imagination but doing so requires art. And whatever else art involves, it involves proportionality and subtlety — the ability to approach the edge of excess without falling in. This movie leaps in exuberantly, and that is why there may not be a third Indy epic. What is left to happen to him? If the future takes such revenge for today's excess, well, ex-cel-lent.

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Letters

Column lacks facts

I read Liz Burden's column (Daily Nebraskan, June 1) with great amusement. It appears, then, that one more ignorant pseudo-liberal is about to pain us with her uneducated opinions for the rest of the summer. Yeech!

Burden says that the big bad Reagan administration is gleefully passing out the fried chicken and placing shackles on the legs of America's black youth in a deliberate attempt to introduce economic slavery and to keep as many people from attending college as they possibly can. Talk about bullcrinkle!

Burden makes assumptions and swaps opinion for facts in ways that are incorrect and improper. As a Democrat, I do not agree with many things Reagan has proposed. But I do not exaggerate the facts and I do not lie to

service or justify my needs or my ego. Burden's examples of "discrimination" and the scenarios she presents to defend her argument could happen. But they could happen if, and only if, the worst possible aspects of the program were realized.

The program, however, has too many good possibilities for Burden's examples to ever occur in the degree she proposes. Burden should get off her soapbox and examine all the aspects of the plan instead of getting all her information from the CBS Evening News and Newsweek magazine. The world would be far better off if we could dispose of the rigid ideological straitjackets people like Burden live in.

Sterling Miller
 Lincoln

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