

Editorial

Landfill would bury UNL students

Amidst all the political garbage that Lincoln residents will have to sort through on November's ballot will be a referendum for a new city landfill. It seems the 48th Street landfill Lincoln uses now will be full in a few years.

The Lincoln City Council approved the referendum Monday so that the Public Works Department can begin preparing and developing a new site as soon as possible.

The question is not whether we need landfill — a fancy word for dump. The garbage doesn't just get dumped there; it's buried. The question is how it should be funded.

The city council's proposal would fund the \$1.5 million project through the sale of general obligation bonds. The city pays the bondholder's interest by increasing residents' taxes. In this case, Lincoln's \$2.40 per \$100 property valuation base would increase.

Property taxes have been in the spotlight many times lately. Farmers want theirs lowered, and so does everybody else in Nebraska. Understandably so. A landowner with property valued at \$50,000 has to pay about \$1,200 in property taxes yearly at the current tax base.

But the option — a user-based fee — is potentially worse, at least for university

students.

Now, UNL and the state and federal government agencies in Lincoln do not support the landfill with property taxes. Because of their public status, they are exempt. But these institutions use the landfill most, said Steve Burdic executive director of the Small Farms Action Group. Burdic works on a recycling and compost pilot project at the landfill with the Citizens for Environmental Improvement.

If the city initiated a user-based gate fee to help fund its new landfill — which could happen if voters reject the referendum — the biggest users would get the biggest bills, UNL among them.

Think about how much trash comes out of UNL. The Daily Nebraskan staff alone throws away enough scrap to fill 15 trash cans a day. Currently, UNL doesn't have to pay to have it taken away. But who would pay for it if the city began using a gate fee? Probably the students, through increased tuition and fees.

UNL students have enough to pay for. Although property owners in Lincoln will have to take the brunt of it, UNL students who are eligible to vote on the referendum should support it and keep their own costs down.

Lauri Hopple
Daily Nebraskan Staff Editor

Pageant misguided; 'Miss America' does not exist

The greatest spectator sport in America is not football or baseball. It's watching pretty girls, and that won't change.

—Albert Marks Jr., Miss America Pageant chairman; Newsweek magazine, Sept. 17 issue.

"You can't have somebody with short legs and a big behind be Miss America..."



Liz Burden

—Marguerita Piazza, 1983 contest judge; Newsweek magazine, Sept. 17, issue.

On this, the eve of the 58th annual Miss America pageant, it is time to look at this American institution, and the attitudes it conveys and perpetuates. Of course, this year we cannot have a discussion of the pageant without commenting on the Vanessa Williams debacle.

If you recall, Williams' reign began as it ended — amid controversy. Albeit, this controversy was not because of something she could control (i.e. her actions), but something she could not (i.e. her skin color). The public reception of the first black Miss America was mixed.

Some members of the black community debated her black consciousness and the age-old schism concerning blacks and the beauty aesthetics of this society. Some whites were certain that Williams is black, and were forced to confront their feelings on having a black woman represent their "ideal American woman." After all, she didn't look like the "girl next door" to some of them. Some blacks argued that her crowning was a cosmetic step forward when the Reagan administration was pushing civil rights and affirmative action backward. Some whites argued that her crowning symbolized the "progress" that has been made in race relationships and

that blacks had finally arrived in "mainstream" America. Some blacks wondered whether Miss America was really something that a black woman should aspire to, given the position of most blacks in this society. Some women had the same question concerning all women.

THE PAGEANT touts itself as a "scholarship contest," saying it is the single largest source of scholarship money for women in the country. However, as the quotes preceding this article indicate, the monies are distributed according to criteria that have very little to do with academics. If we take Piazza's view, which must resemble that of contest participants and officials or she wouldn't be a judge, most American women would not stand a chance of becoming Miss America — their legs are too short and their behinds too big. Yet Miss America is supposed to be (according to pageant tenets) the embodiment of the feminine gender; she is supposed to be them. She is not. If she is that women should strive to be, then women should strive only for long legs and small behinds.

I am upset to find out that I am a player in the country's largest spectator sport, according to Marks. Yet I am not paid as much as the players in the second or third largest sport — namely football or baseball. If female-watching is America's greatest spectator sport, then no wonder the Equal Rights Amendment didn't pass.

After months of the public looking at Williams, in waltzes Bob Guccione. And the Penthouse Pictures parody began. Vanessa may have been wrong; Guccione was — excuse the English but it's to the point — "wronger" and the pageant was "wrongest."

Williams was wrong to expose herself to exploitation on the part of both the photographer who exploited her body, and a pageant which, at best, places paramount importance on legs and buttocks; a pageant which was designed with an ideal of beauty that is not indicative of

her race. (The pageant did not allow blacks for the first several years of its existence).

Guccione was "wronger" for submitting to the American ideal of capitalism at someone else's expense. And the pageant is "wrongest" for continuing to use an entity (all-American girls) that doesn't exist to parade bodies in swimsuits for capital gain, and then claim moral superiority.

And there is more controversy. Miss Ohio, who pleaded no contest to shoplifting charges two years ago, will be allowed to compete in this year's pageant.

WHILE NO contest admits neither guilt nor innocence, it results in a sentence being handed down. If I remember correctly, under current law, shoplifting is a crime, while a consenting adult posing for pictures of any type is not. I find Marks' justification for letting Miss Ohio compete, in light of other happenings this year, insufficient.

He said, "I, for one, refuse to go on a witch hunt when there are no witches."

Apparently Miss Ohio may have been legally wrong but morally correct in Marks' eyes, while Williams was within legal bounds but morally wrong. He doesn't seem worried about harm to the pageant's image in the case of Miss Ohio.

Guccione is also popping up again to plague the pageant, announcing that he not only has more pictures of Williams, but that he has pictures of one of this year's contestants.

Maybe all this controversy is trying to tell us that the pageant ideals are out of line with the reality of American women, although it may be in line with other American principles (i.e. capitalism and exploitation). Or maybe the pageant has never been in line with the reality of women, which the contestants have always realized but kept hidden; real women do make mistakes.

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