

Editorial

Fee increase could keep Homecoming alive

Here's a vote to increase student fees. Not much of an increase, but just a little to preserve a university tradition.

As fads and trends come and go, one tradition remains intact: Homecoming.

In preparation for Saturday's Nebraska-Oklahoma State football clash, this week has been tabbed Homecoming week.

As in past years, events such as a dance, a movie, a parade and pep rally are scheduled. All to create enthusiasm for the big game.

But this year something is missing: money.

The past four years, the Homecoming committee, which I have been a member of for two years, has secured a sponsor to help cover costs. Last year's sponsors were Diet Coke and Dr. Pepper. Pepsi and Sunkist also have been sponsors in previous years.

Despite the efforts of UNL administrators and students a sponsor was not found for Homecoming '84.

The budget had to be cut 35 percent and donations were solicited.

Although not well known, students pay four cents per semester to finance Homecoming festivities. The four cents, which amounts to \$1,600, is channeled to Homecoming activities through the University

Program Council budget. UPC along with the Daily Nebraskan and the Associate Students of the University of Nebraska, receive student fees under fund A.

Sara Boatman, director of the Campus Activities and Programs office and Homecoming Committee adviser, said she would like to increase that four cents to 28 cents.

The additional 24 cents, Boatman said, would give a \$12,000 budget for Homecoming. The money would allow UNL to have a Homecoming celebration in grand style, she said.

At most colleges, Homecoming is geared toward alumni and events are solely for

alums. But at UNL, Homecoming is more student-oriented, so students should foot the bill, she said.

Boatman said she will lobby the committee for Fees Allocation once Homecoming '84 is over to try to increase the money earmarked for Homecoming.

So for one shot at a video game or a half a can of Pepsi, students could help keep a university alive.

So when someone comes up and asks, "Hey brother could you spare a quarter for Homecoming?" think twice before saying no.

Kevin Warneke
Daily Nebraskan Staff Editor

Empty theater seats destroy nifty feeling

Audience members shush each other expectantly. The houselights dim once, twice, three times. A few stragglers — with flat tire, traffic or babysitter excuses — slip through the theater doors just before the ushers close them for good. That is until intermission.

The actors take stage one by one. As usual, a thrill of anticipation makes my ears twitch and my skin goose pimple. I'm set for another trip into the world of make-believe, as fresh and new an experience as a kiddie's first trip to the movies.

But one thing mars this nifty feeling:

Empty Seats.

Mona Koppelman

The American Repertory Theatre Company was in town this past week, performing two productions of a relatively modern Pirandello play and one night of classic Moliere one-acts. Something for everyone, right?

Evidently, wrong.

Sunday was a good night. About 80 percent of Kimball's 849 seats were filled. Monday night, the percentage dropped to 50 percent. And by Tuesday afternoon, marketing and promotion manager Amy Meilander was expecting about 50 percent for that night's production.

"I have no theory," Meilander said. "I was disappointed. Maybe two nights of the same production, maybe Homecoming, maybe lack of interest in these plays — it could be any or all of these factors."

Meilander said Kimball averages 90 percent seats sold over each year's 25 to 30 productions. But that figure can be deceiving, for a wide range of seats are sold: anywhere from complete sellouts with waiting lists to just 450 seats sold.

"That 90 percent is kind of a weird figure," she said. "We do have our bad nights like everybody else."

A better figure might be a *mean*: perhaps a 75 percent figure. And though sales are up this year according to Meilander, it's the first time in about four seasons.

Meilander said season tickets sales are usually split 65/35 between community sales and student sales. She said she's trying to even out that split.

"We try to make student ticket prices attractive," she said. "When I look out and see empty seats on this campus, I have to think we're not tapping our student resource."

She's right, and Kimball is doing the best they can to make the finest quality of art that can be brought to Nebraska available to students with bleak pocketbooks.

But it's a two-way street, buckos. Personally, I was embarrassed to sit before a nationally known company — nay, internationally known — flanked by a half-dozen empty floor seats. I know it was a Sunday night. I suppose even Monday and Tuesday night productions may interfere with — say, homework, for example.

But there are 25,000 students and teachers on this campus. Surely some of you weren't doing homework, grading papers, etc. And there are 180,000 Lincoln residents, many able-bodied with extra cash. If a fine company like the American Repertory Theatre can't pull you away from your Monday night football (or homework), what can?

Certainly not the work of your peers. Pat Overton, theater manager at Howell Theatre in the Temple building, provided the following figures. They indicate the percentage sold of possible full-house ticket sale last season:

Key Exchange, 81 percent; Major Barbara, 55 percent; Jesse and the Bandit Queen, 68 percent; A Christmas Carol, 81 percent; Meg, 94 percent; Much Ado About Nothing, 75 percent; Beyond Therapy, 93 percent; and Summer and Smoke, 51 percent.

Overton said attendance averages about 75 percent of full house. The biggest house she has to fill is about 376 seats for main-stage productions in Howell Theatre. Studio theatre productions seat 150 to 200.

Overton said that choice of plays and outside events make a difference over the years, but until this season Howell felt a definite decrease in season ticket sales.

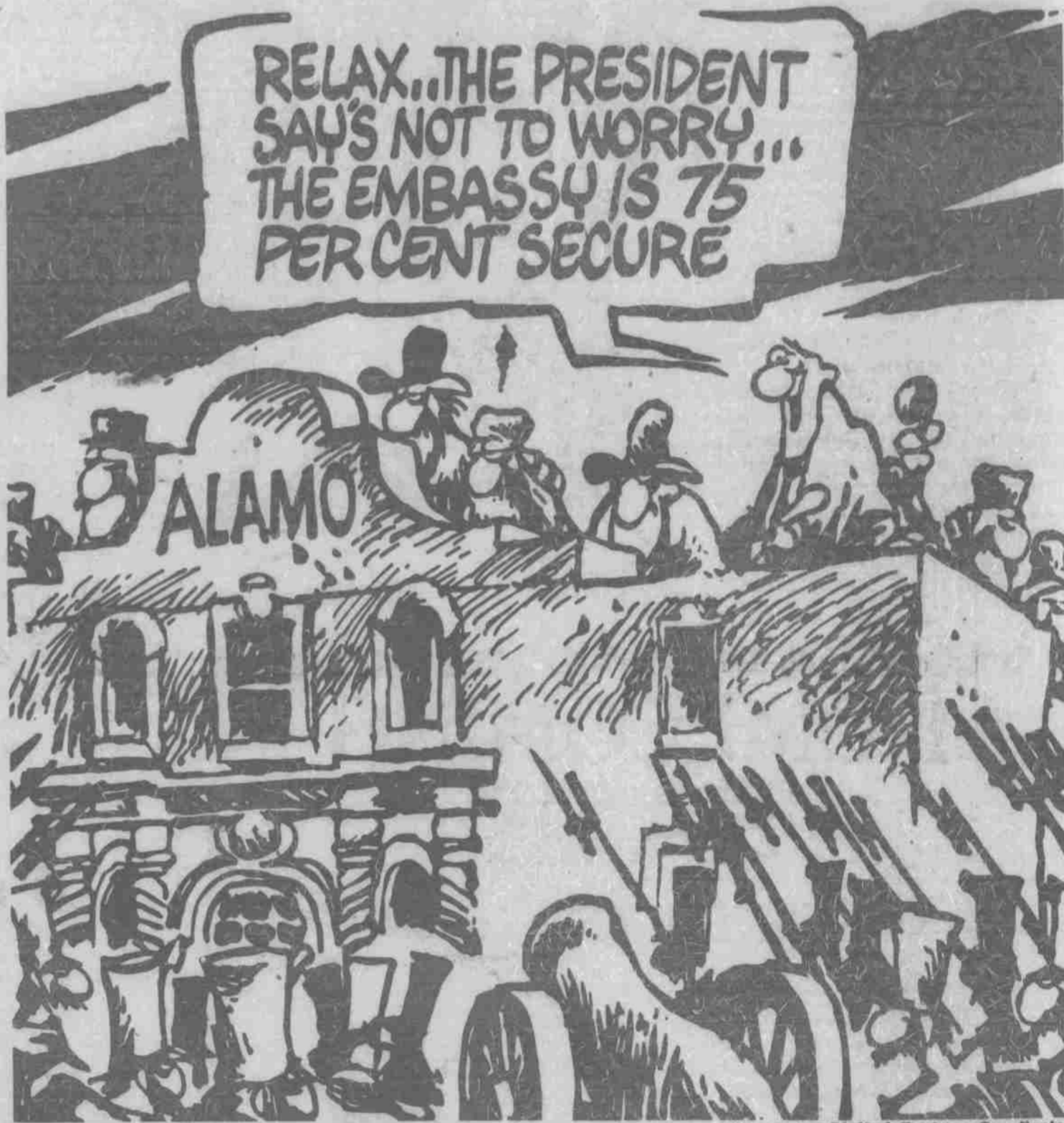
"We felt we were down on campus sales the past three years," Overton said. "But this year we are about 200 season tickets ahead of last year."

Though this may indicate a resurgence of interest in Lincoln theater, I refuse to get my hopes up. As Overton said, it simply depends on the year. I trust 75 percent averages.

Pity the possibility of a project like the Lied Center. If on an average we can't fill more than 75 percent of 350 seats in Howell and "90" percent of 840 seats at Kimball, how will Lincoln fill 2,500 seats or more in a new performing arts center?

"That's a lot of seats to fill," Overton said quietly.

She's right. That's a lot of seats to fill.



Mike Peters/United Features Syndicate

TV news tempts officials

Author says 'doomsday clock' forces U.S. foreign policy

Lloyd Cutler has been producing dark thoughts occasioned by his experience as (talk about gathering darkness) White House counsel during the last two years of the Carter administration. The thoughts



George Will

concern the impact of television news on foreign policy.

Writing in the journal Foreign Policy, Cutler argues that television forces the pace and injures the product of the policy process. Television reports about troubling events create, he says, "a political need" for prompt presidential responses.

Television accelerates public awareness of events, and presidents and advisers feel bound to make a response in time for the next evening-news broadcast,

lest they seem divided or indecisive. With most administration news announced from the White House lawn, television makes the president the embodiment of government, and "anyone who has worked recently in the White House has felt this recurring sense of a TV doomsday clock." But Cutler's examples are unconvincing.

In late August 1979, when ratification of the SALT II treaty was the principal issue, intelligence data indicated the presence of a Soviet combat brigade in Cuba. The data quickly leaked and became a big story on the otherwise newsless Labor Day weekend. Cutler writes: "Senators on both sides of the SALT II debate went on camera to demand removal of the brigade. To save the treaty, Carter also went on camera to announce that the continued presence of the brigade was 'not acceptable.'"

Cutler says that within a week the intelligence agencies decided they had just re-discovered a brigade that had been in Cuba for 17

years. But the furor delayed committee action on SALT II for 10 weeks. "If the news of the brigade had appeared only in print and not on TV, the Carter administration might have been able to delay its responses at least a few days to permit the intelligence agencies to re-examine their findings."

But hold on. Although television may have amplified the furor and thereby provoked Carter's statement, the statement changed nothing. There never were going to be 67 votes for SALT II; and even if the brigade had been new, the Soviet Union would have ignored Carter.

Cutler believes that if television had not so instantly and vividly covered the 1982 massacres in Palestinian refugee camps, public horror would have been less and President Reagan might not have announced, two days later, the re-introduction of Marines into Lebanon.

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