

# Editorial

## LB144 gives Sen. DeCamp a 'media-ache'

Well, here it comes again, another John DeCamp controversy. Like a bad night's sleep or a severe weather warning, it's just the kind of thing you expect to see every once in awhile if you live in Nebraska.

This time the question involves a conflict of interest regarding video slot machines, and whether senators who stand to gain from them financially should have the right to vote on legalizing them. How delightful. We'll just add a couple more songs to the "Pros and Cons of Legalized Gambling" album. We hope you're not tired of hearing it, because this record is broken.

On side one is a lively little tune recorded every day in Omaha and Lincoln. The Omaha World-Herald and the Lincoln Journal and Star are running all sorts of stories and editorials on DeCamp and Sen. Loran Schmit. Schmit is president and half-owner of International Game Technology, a video slot machine firm. DeCamp often acts as an attorney for Schmit, and both have pushed vigorously for video slots, including LB144, a bill which would make the devices legal in Nebraska. The two senators even flew south together a couple weeks ago to promote sales of the machines throughout the Virgin Islands.

And so a World-Herald editorial chides: "Senator DeCamp would have us believe that he can set aside his attorney-client-video slot machine relationship with Senator Schmit when the Nebraska Legislature considers a bill that could have a direct financial benefit for Schmit and Schmit's company. Anyone who believes that will also believe video slot machines aren't gambling devices and that the Tooth Fairy really does put money under children's pillows."

Good point. But like any good broken record, it must have two sides, and the one featuring John DeCamp stands out loud and clear, as usual.

"There's a potential conflict of interest for 49 senators on probably 700-and-some bills out there," DeCamp said Monday. "There's a potential conflict of interest, I suppose, for anybody on anything..."

DeCamp blamed the press for abusing its privileges and responsibilities when dealing with this matter.

"At this point, there is no bill on lotteries before the Legislature, number one," he said. "Number two, at this point I have never said what I'm going to do on the issue. . . . The only ones making an issue are the media. For obvious reasons, they're opposed to something. They're trying to create incredible pressure to try and stop me from doing something in advance 'cause they think I'm effective."

"It's hilarious watching how far the press will go to violate their own principles and principles of all equity, and it's kind of like watching a comic opera."

Another good point. But side two sounded an awful lot like side one.

DeCamp does have a conflict of interest. He should declare it before LB144 gets to the floor of the Legislature. It's true that other senators have conflicts of interest. But because DeCamp is a major shaker and mover in the Legislature, the media has keyed in on him.

It's also true that DeCamp has not said what he will do on LB144, if anything. Perhaps the media have jumped the gun—cried wolf before the wolf did anything. However, DeCamp's influence in the Legislature makes such a possible conflict of interest a much more attractive target.

Both DeCamp and the media are here to serve the public. DeCamp should declare conflict of interest if only to avoid the appearance of a conflict. The press should avoid making DeCamp a scapegoat. As DeCamp said, "There's a potential conflict of interest for 49 senators on probably 700-and-some bills out there..." If that's true, there's also a lot of reporting to be done out there.

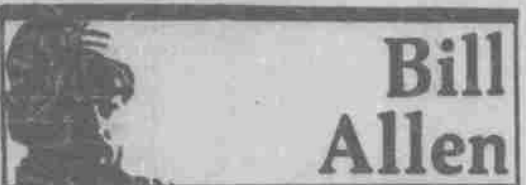
## NAME A VEGETABLE THAT GOES WITH RUSSIAN DRESSING?



## Media "humanizes" story Vultures turn artificial heart attention to Haydon

Once again we're faced with a situation in which the media's attempt to "humanize" a story has shown just how inhumane these vulturous news-hounds really are.

Monday, Murray Haydon became the third patient to receive the artificial heart transplant from Dr. William DeVries, the only surgeon the government has approved to perform the operation.



**Bill Allen**

His first patient, Barney Clark, lived 112 days.

The second patient, Bill Schroeder, is listed in satisfactory condition at Humans Hospital Audubon, where the surgeries were performed.

On the same day hospital spokesman Dr. Allen Lansing said of Schroeder, "his emotional state . . . could be a threat to his life, there's no question about it," another news report said that after Haydon's operation, surgeons "expressed hope the 58-year-old retired autoworker would become the first recipient to make a full recovery."

I hope family members, or someone who really cares, kept the papers away from Schroeder Monday.

I'm sure the man expected media

attention when he accepted the heart as a last chance, but to have yourself written off by the national media just because someone else had a more successful transplant seems a bit disheartening.

I realize that Schroeder is nothing more than a medical experiment to many of the media and surgeons, but he is still a man.

Cruel comparisons began right after Haydon's more successful transplant.

From UPI, "Murray P. Haydon made 'excellent' progress Monday but doctors expressed increased concern about the condition of Schroeder."

"Because of lack of excessive bleeding, doctors were able to give Haydon . . . blood thinner . . ."

But, "Schroeder's post-operative bleeding had delayed the use of blood thinners."

From AP, Lansing "said there was less feeling of 'controlled excitement' in the operating room than during the last operation when William Schroeder received his heart . . ."

I get the impression that the media is trying to stage some kind of comparison build-up until the operations are common or at least no longer "news."

This is okay when you're talking about the high jump in a track and field event, but I don't like this careless flinging about of people's very existence as if it's some kind of game.

Where will it end?

"Joe Q. Public became the 100th artificial heart recipient today and is expected

to be out of bed in three days, unlike Brad Public, who stayed in bed four days after his operation. Come on, Brad, what's the problem?"

The problem is that Schroeder, Clark and Haydon were sick men who needed medical help. Thank God, or whoever you thank for these things, that medical technology is advancing every day and can give these people hope that wouldn't have been available a few years, maybe even weeks, ago.

However, the media has stepped in and said, "Hey, bud, we're going to make you famous. Get the wife and kids in here. We might as well get a shot of you all together . . . alive . . . while we can."

This stuff sells papers, but shouldn't win any humanitarian awards.

I say "shouldn't" because I half-way expect the journalist who wrote "DeVries and his assistants listened to classical lute music as they sewed in the . . ." to win some kind of creative newshawk award.

In the meantime, it's the Murray P. Haydon show, starring Dr. William DeVries.

That is, until Schroeder dies — then he'll rate a few days of coverage. Then another transplant will be performed and Haydon will take a backseat to another personal profile and this will go on until the media finds something else to "humanize."

I just hope the medical researchers don't lose incentive once the media attention swings its mighty head the other way.

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### Student questions article's reasoning

I found Jim Rogers' article supporting the death penalty most interesting. But if I were him, I'd stick to proven emotional appeals, and stay away from philosophical or rational justifications; they will only trip him up.

For instance, I wouldn't try to defend capital punishment by saying that executions reinforce the value of human life. Some conscientious bleeding heart is likely to point out that he's being absurd — that he's actually saying that killing a human being can make us appreciate the value of human life more.

I know Rogers is sincere, but he must

see that such an argument seems illogical. Really, I have to advise him to stay away from philosophy and morality in defending the death penalty. Just appeal to people's baser instincts, their fear and desire for revenge. Then you won't have to justify yourself.

Sandra Schank  
graduate student  
English

### Student refutes letter about Kinko's prices

This letter is in response to Kinko's manager Clarice Lipe, who gave an extremely distorted view of Kinko's business (Daily Nebraskan, Feb. 12).

First she said students as well as

faculty realize that options exist. I for one refute that. I was required to buy a "text" from Kinko's for my Psychology 373 class, and no other copy center in town had a copy of the text. I don't consider that as having a choice. The book cost a whopping \$22.08, and it wasn't even hard-bound. I would hate to see what they would charge for a real book.

The cost brings me to another statement by Lipe that people go to Kinko's for low prices. I don't consider \$22.08 for an oversized packet inexpensive, especially when one considers the resale value at an alarming \$0.00.

Dave Poage  
senior  
life science

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