

Editorial

NU Foundation solution to cuts

In 1977, the NU Foundation instituted the "Nebraska Campaign" which raised \$52 million for the NU system in about three years. Given the state's current difficulty in funding the university, the foundation should again apply its energies — this time to help NU survive.

Historically, the foundation's primary purpose has been to pay for the "quality of excellence" at the university, not to replace tax money not allocated by the state, said Edward Hirsch, executive vice president and secretary of the foundation, in a Daily Nebraskan article.

"The Legislature's responsibility is to provide an adequate university," Hirsch said. "We provide that extra excellence." Yet, there won't be an adequate university if \$5 million in budget cuts, eliminate programs and reductions in faculty positions and pay. Before the aspects of the university's "excellence" are supplemented, efforts must be made to maintain the programs essential to NU's basic operation. Things like faculty salaries and program retention need to be considered first.

To ensure the continued survival of NU, the foundation should change its basic mission and divert some of its fundraising activities toward the struggling areas of the university.

If the foundation used the slick public relations pamphlets it distributes to solicit money for projects such as the Lied Center for Performing Arts to publicize NU's plight, fundraisers for necessities would be successful. Once knowledgeable of the university's tight financial situation, the same Nebraskans and alumni who donate money for projects like the Lied and Wick centers will see that their gifts and money would be better used to maintain the university's basic quality.

A relatively small campaign to raise \$1 million to \$2 million for faculty raises, for example, would take only a fraction of the effort by the foundation in comparison with its \$25 million Lied campaign.

Recent government action has shown it does not think it can afford a strong university. NU has no choice but to look to other sources for funding to keep it competitive in the eyes of potential students and faculty members.

For 49 years, the NU Foundation has been raising millions of dollars for the NU system's programs of excellence. Now, when the rest of the university needs financial help more than ever, the NU Foundation emerges as the logical institution to throw it a rescue line.



Break a few rules, watch the reaction Make the elevator ride fun

My recent call for pet peeves was positively underwhelming. A letter poured in. I did have several personal conversations with otherwise intelligent people whose cages are rattled by the most innocuous things. One really struck a chord with me — the strange phenomenon of elevator behavior.

As a philosophy student, I spend a lot of time on the elevators in Oldfather Hall. These elevators are special. For one thing, they spend more time on the second floor than on all the other floors combined, which brings me to a fine point of elevator etiquette. If you've got only one floor to go, do those of us who have a class ten floors up a favor — take the blinkin' stairs.

Fifteen seconds of cardiovascular stimulation will not put you in the hospital. I never have understood people who will wait three minutes on an elevator to take them ten feet. But this is, after all, the same generation that gave us the electric can opener and cruise control.

Have you ever noticed the unspoken rules of elevator riding? Step to the rear, turn around, and look up. I promise you — I was in an elevator once in which the floor indicator lights were not over the door, but to the side. There were six people on that elevator; every one of them looked up over the door the entire time they were inside. Now that

is frightening.

I never look up at the floor indicator lights. It just seems the height of ridiculousness to spend all that time staring at lights going on, off, on, off. I look anywhere else — the floor, the doors, the passengers, the walls.

"But how," I hear you exclaim, "do you tell when you get to your floor?" A couple of tricks here. The floor numbers are usually painted on the sides of the doors when the elevator opens. If nothing else, the light on the button panel will go off when you get to your floor. See? Nothing to it, and you have avoided one more silly conformity. Besides, interesting things happen on an elevator, which most people miss because they are taking a course in remedial counting.



James Sennett

Then there is the unspoken unspoken law. No misprint. There seems to be a rule that no one can talk on elevators. Either that, or you can only talk to the person you got on with, making the other two in the car feel like yesterday's newspaper. Often I've wanted to start a group sing or therapy session or something (it's a long way to the tenth

floor), but for this one, I still haven't gotten up the nerve.

You can make an elevator ride more interesting without pulling out your mouth harp and beginning a chorus of "Red River Valley." Sometimes I'll get on a crowded elevator and not turn around. I just stand there, with my back to the door, staring at the people. It really unnerves them, and tends to make my day. Or just say "Hello" to people as they get on. Most will respond kindly, but you often get the type who cannot stand to have their elevator rituals disrupted.

Of course, there is always the "Elevator Boy" routine. Call off the floor numbers as the doors open, and make up contents. "Eighth floor — ladies' apparel, notions, and assorted non-descript attempts at meaningful educational experience." That one always gets the math majors upset.

Well, I hope you are more aware than you were when you picked up this paper. What with trivialities like hijackings, special legislative sessions, and the constant threat of total thermonuclear annihilation to fill our minds, it is easy to neglect the matters that make life the fulfilling and challenging chess game it can be. Happy floor-hopping!

Sennett is a UNL graduate student in philosophy and campus minister of the College-Career Christian Fellowship.

Reagan ignores plight of growing number of America's poor children

ABC News has aired a series on black poverty, particularly as it affects children. ABC more recently did one on poverty-stricken children of all races. Major U.S. newspapers have written story after story on the subject of childhood poverty, and Congress has weighed in with a hefty and troubling report of its own. The results are in: No one gives a damn.

Of course, "no one" is something of an exaggeration since clearly the news media, organizations such as the Children's Defense Fund and even a few members of Congress do care. But "no one" fits just fine if it refers to the Reagan administration, the majority of Congress and, of course, the American people. From them, childhood poverty elicits nothing but a yawn. Better to move the kids to Ethiopia. Then we'd hold a concert for them.

But if these kids live in St. Louis, the locale of a recent ABC report, then they are out of luck. Some of them don't even have a home — not a house, not an apartment, not even a welfare hotel. ABC found kids who have never lived in a place they could call their own. One little girl, age 4, spends her nights in shelters with her mother and her days in the public parks.

It's hard to say if that girl, or any of the homeless children seen on television, is typical of childhood poverty in general — probably not. What is certain is that an increasing number of kids are living in poverty and that a disproportionate number of them are black.

Being a black kid is becoming synonymous with being poor. As Congress has documented, these children are twice as likely as whites to die in their first year, three times as likely to be poor, four times as likely not to live with either parent and five times as likely to be on welfare. For black kids born to a single parent, the poverty rate is 85.2 percent.



Richard Cohen

For some time now, it has been apparent that an underclass, mostly black, has been developing in the United States. It is debilitated by pessimism. It is addicted to welfare. It lacks initiative and entrepreneurial

skills. It seeks emotional succor in children and then does not have the independent wherewithal to raise them. It is a spawning ground of criminality, a huge consumer of municipal services, and it is reciprocated by paying no taxes. Ignoring reality can be an expensive proposition.

But that, so far, is what we have managed to do. Some of the blame for that is yours, dear reader, but if blame is to be apportioned then yours is small. As for the media, for once it is blameless — and that ought to suggest something. Unlike the early 1960s, when Michael Harrington brought poverty to national attention with his book, "The Other America," the finger-pointing accusation — "Why didn't we know that?" — cannot be asked now of the news media. The answer is that we all know — or we should.

If there is a fundamental difference between the early 1960s and the early 1980s, it is the occupant of the White House. John F. Kennedy reacted to the Harrington book with shock and a call to action that soon became The War on Poverty. Ronald Reagan has reacted by going for the moral equivalent of a horseback ride.

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34 Nebraska Union
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