

Editorial

Blue proposal would alienate Husker fans

The ASUN Senate has asked Nebraskans to support the university's budget quest by wearing blue to this Saturday's football game against Iowa State.

In some ways, blue is appropriate. It represents students and faculty reaction to the potential budget cuts, tuition increases, course eliminations and low salaries.

But UNL is the home of the Big Red, not the Big Blue. If one thing can unify this state, it is Husker football and the color red.

Asking Big Red fans to wear blue breaks a tradition, and ASUN could have trouble finding supporters willing to forgo the ritual.

The traditional sea of red balloons in Memorial Stadium would be violated because student government representatives plan to distribute 2,000 blue balloons, as well as blue stickers that say "Save the State — Support the University."

Gerard Keating, ASUN president, defended the blue plan, saying that balloons, stickers and blue-clad students would stand out in the red multitudes and catch peoples' attention. They will wonder what the blue represents, and become more interested in the plight of the university, Keating said.

If it works, that is.

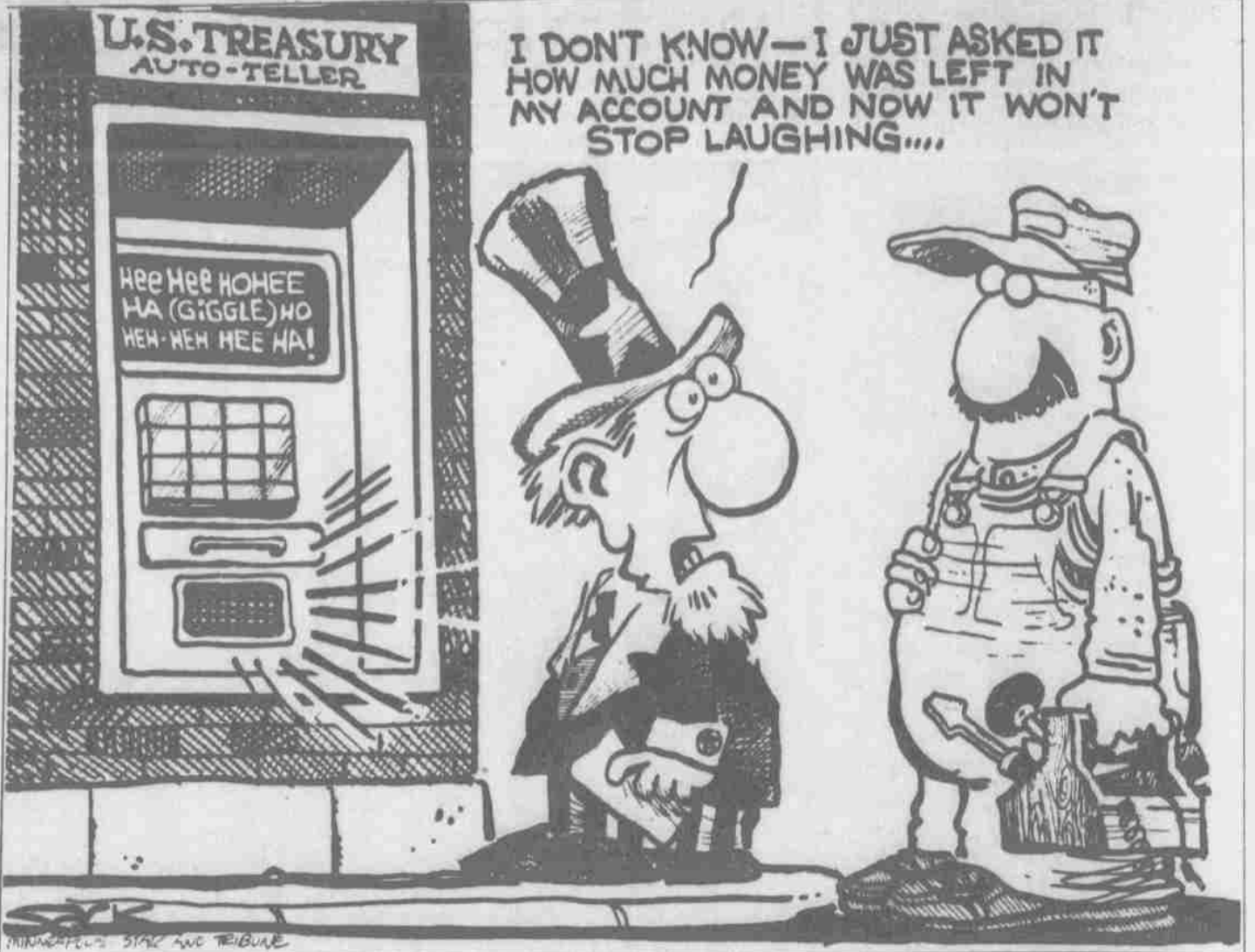
Using Husker football to publicize the NU budget battle is a smart move. Football is the most visible part of the campus, and 76,000 people already will be gathered to support one university program — athletics.

But asking fans to wear blue is questionable. Red-to-the-core Husker fans will be hard-pressed to turn blue, even for one game.

A more feasible option might have been to ask the 76,000 fans to show support for the university by signing petitions opposing the \$5 million NU budget cuts.

The petitions then could be used to persuade state legislators that Nebraskans do value their university and want to support it.

Asking Husker fans to wear blue breaks a tradition. And right now the university needs to stress its traditions and its contributions to the state.



THAYER'S STYL AND TRIBUNE

Caveat emptor

The pros and cons of cynicism

I have often been accused of being a cynic (I hear those gasps of disbelief — thank you), and I must say that I wear the monicker with pride.

It has been said that a cynic is one who knows the price of everything and the value of nothing. I prefer a slightly modified metaphor. I believe that a cynic is one who is convinced that most things are not worth what they cost.



James Sennett

As I see it, there are at least three major characteristics of cynicism. Each of these is both useful and dangerous. I offer this overview as a service to anyone just waking up to the fact that it's not all silver platters and cotton candy clouds out there.

First, a cynic takes nothing at face value. She has been burned enough to realize that there is almost always a hidden agenda. Most motives are camouflaged. Consequently, there is little reason to believe the first thing you hear about any subject.

This brings a real danger of destroying trust, and life without trust is hideous. So, cynicism must be mixed with naivete — a surrender to the idea that you are always ready to be surprised by someone who is not well-attuned enough to the system to hide his

intentions. Cynicism must also be tempered with a willingness to be taken, for it is only if one will risk being used that any good will ever be accomplished.

Second, cynicism always questions the opinions of the masses. The life of the cynic is a lonely one. The minute an idea or practice becomes popular, the cynic must withdraw into transcendent analysis. The cynic is aware that the public has a horrid track record for committing itself to things of any lasting value.

This becomes a real problem when something which he has believed for years suddenly becomes vogue. He is immediately forced to re-examine his thinking and often ends up abandoning a former position, realizing that it was not as air-tight as he thought. If it appeals so easily, it has most likely been watered down or totally perverted.

But the danger here is that very worthy causes and ideals get lost in a basic mistrust of the *populi*. Again, a certain level of naivete is required, because every once in a while people come up with good ideas and worthwhile projects, in spite of themselves.

Finally, cynicism asks more questions than it offers answers. The cynic has discovered that the path to truth is paved with question marks and semicolons. There is always something more to be said. An answer that can be given over a cup of coffee is worth about as much as the coffee.

We live in an extremely complex world that requires extremely complex

attention. The cynic has admitted what many are afraid of — that most problems are dealt with rather than solved; most questions are discussed rather than answered, and most crises are weathered rather than overcome. The observations you bring are but the latest in a long dialogue that includes much from many who have agonized over the issues. You are not going to circumvent that process in a single moment of brilliant insight.

The danger here is despair. Who wants to live in a world of open-ended sentences? The danger is met at least two ways. First, with a reminder that we have solved many problems — though only through painfully slow and costly processes. For every AIDS, there is a polio. For every South Africa, there is a Birmingham.

But we also hedge on despair with a shift of focus that admits that questions are keys to growth. Maturity often comes from understanding the questions rather than hallucinating answers. Perhaps the most useful legacy we could leave our children is a world where questions are not ignored or trivialized, but faced for the dilemmas and opportunities which they are.

The art of cynicism is in keeping the questions in their proper place — as beasts of burden to be put to work, rather than as game animals to be hunted and slain.

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

Is this Ronald Reagan speaking? 'Summittalk' sounds almost liberal

Pardon my egotism, but somewhere in his recent interview with reporters for the British Broadcasting Corp., President Reagan must have thought of me. Knowing my penchant for criticizing him and considering of my need for column material, the Gipper decided to flub one for Cohen:



Richard Cohen

"I'm not linguist, but I have been told that in the Russian language there isn't even a word for freedom." Nice try, Mr. President, but it didn't work. Aside from not knowing your Russian (*svoboda* means freedom) there was nothing in that interview to criticize.

If you had not known the BBC was interviewing Reagan, you would be hard pressed to identify him as the object of all this journalistic attention. You would know he was a high government official, but his political party — not to mention his ideology — would hardly be obvious. From the language, it could even have been Sen. Edward Kennedy. In his waning presidency, Reagan seems to be slouching towards Hyannisport.

Here, is the man who once called the Soviet Union "the evil empire" now saying we — and they — must work together to "eliminate some of the paranoia." We have to "reduce the hostility, the suspicion that keeps our two countries . . . at odds with each other." After conceding that when it comes to political systems, East is East and West is West and probably never will the twain meet, the president added, "We can have a peaceful

competition. We have to live in the world together." There isn't "any reason why we can't coexist . . ." With that, neoconservatives and conservatives alike must have felt like plunging from a very high window.

A cynical person would say the president had lapsed into Summittalk, the strange language of conciliation that babbles from the lips of world leaders when Geneva's on their mind. Maybe. But it is the sort of language that Reagan could not have conceivably spoken three or more years ago. It not only does not describe the Soviet Union as the Darth Vader of nations, but makes the president sound suspiciously like the liberals and moderates he once disdained. After all, the right says only liberals hold out the promise of peaceful coexistence with the Soviet Union — mushy-minded reasoning that undermines U.S. resolve.

Please see COHEN on 5

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