

Editorial

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Joke parties Elections merit respect

Elections have long been a platform for humor.

Examples abound, from the perennial candidacy of once-serious presidential contender Harold Stassen to the humorous candidacy of carpenter Curt Donaldson in his 1982 run against 1st District Congressman Doug Bereuter.

In fact, Donaldson was so clever in his quixotic pursuit that after the campaign, the Lincoln Star made him a regularly featured humor columnist.

Humorous intrusions into the typically serious world of politics have a more cynical side — for example; remember former painter's nomination of the mythical Joe Smith as vice-presidential candidate at the 1956 Republican National Convention.

Candidates poking fun at candidates releases tension — for a brief time — during campaigns. But the emphasis is on brevity: An appropriate seriousness undergirds the democratic process, and that seriousness must be respected, no matter how "small" the office. When joke candidates and parties begin to meddle with the election process, something must be done to reduce the interference.

The presence of joke candidates and parties in all aspects of Nebraska electoral processes has become intrusive and tiresome. Campaigns are attracting joke candidates less intent on using humor as a legitimate commentary on politics. Instead, campaigns are attracting old

"class clowns" who use elections merely as self-serving, attention-getting devices.

The perennial joke candidates in Lincoln mayoral campaigns and senatorial campaigns of years past, as well as this year's gubernatorial campaign, support this point.

Closer to home, the "joke parties" in the upcoming ASUN election are entertaining but not helpful. With the exception of the World Wrestling Federation party, only trite inanity characterizes this campaign's "joke" candidates.

Although joke parties should not be prohibited from filing (that would be prior restraint), most debate sponsors are not obligated to waste everybody's time by including joke parties in the proceedings.

On a city and state level, a similar rule should be implemented: If candidates are admitted or clearly not serious about the office, they should not expect to participate in debates, and they should not be invited to participate.

Also, future Daily Nebraskan editors should not feel obligated to provide front-page coverage to all parties. Coverage only encourages media-hunters to announce and contributes to the problem of the increasing numbers of joke parties in recent years.

Even at UNL, the democratic process is too important an interest to any longer be slowed by unclever boorish joke candidates.

Hill 'resignation' Firing reveals double standard

Kelly Hill, Nebraska women's basketball coach, got a raw deal.

Hill resigned last week after the athletic department told her that her contract would not be renewed next season.

During her three years as coach at Nebraska, Hill compiled a 37-47 record. By itself, the record is not impressive, but Hill's coaching is.

Hill walked into a bad situation. During her first year at UNL, Hill was interim coach after Coleen Matsuhara resigned before the season began.

During the next two years, Hill worked to build her team. She was successful in recruiting — she lured Maurice Ivy, probably the best player in Nebraska, to UNL.

Generally, Hill's players liked her. One player, Stacy Imming, quit in January, but she was having an off year.

In addition, Hill appears to have a clean slate. She apparently never had illegal practices or recruiting violations.

Despite Hill's strengths, she had a bad year. The team was

plagued with injuries, the schedule was tough and, most importantly, the team had no seniors.

Right now, the women's program is not as strong as the men's. But unlike Hill, men's coach Moe Iba was given several years to build his program.

One must question why the men's coach was given a three-year contract, while the women's coach was on a year-to-year plan. In the last 11 years, UNL has had five women's basketball coaches.

Perhaps the different contracts reflect a sexist tradition or low level of confidence from the athletic department.

UNL athletic director Bob Devaney was out of town and unavailable for comment on the two contracts. Barb Hibner, acting women's athletic director, also refused to comment.

Hill at least should have been allowed to stay at Nebraska until her first recruiting class advanced to the senior level.

Hill planted the seeds for a good women's basketball program. She should have been allowed reap any benefits.



Reagan's hypocritical democracy Nicaraguan majority chooses Sandinistas, not Contras

I like the United States. I'm proud to live here. Flawed as it is, our government represents the best possible system — democracy.

It's the land of the free and the home of the brave and all that, but what I really like about it is the chance to vote. Having a day in government, no matter how small, is important. It bonds us all together.

That's why the "people power" revolution (I use the term revolution loosely) in the Philippines is so appealing. The same goes for the overthrow of Baby Doc Duvalier. The people have made themselves heard.

It's nice, and unusual, for America to be on the "right" side for a change.

As much as I love the good ol' U.S. of A., I've never said, "my country, right or wrong," especially since President Reagan came to power. I reserve the right to complain. Reagan either misunderstands or is misapplying one of the fundamental tenets of American values the right to choose — by vote or popular revolution — a government.

I am speaking, of course, of Reagan's quest to overthrow the Sandinista regime in Nicaragua. The quest is hypocrisy on a grand scale.

The Sandinistas came to power on a wave of popular support after the overthrow of Anastasio Somoza, a despot if ever there was one. And a man whom the United States supported.

The Sandinistas have their problems. They have brutally repressed the Miskito Indians, and they are not tolerant of free press, something I value highly. But they have popular support

and possibly for up to six weeks. "Mr. Keating was very charming, but we agreed to disagree. I gave him two reasons why we wouldn't do this. One, the cost could be as high, for six weeks, as half a million dollars.

Whether you like the form of government or not, the people of Nicaragua chose it, and the government has done much to improve its people's condition. Wealth has been redistributed, and the literacy rate has increased incredibly.

It's not fair, or democratic, to support a small minority, the Contras, against a popular government. I hope Congress will see that unfairness and refuse Reagan's request for \$100 million in aid to the Contras.

By trying to force our form of government on Nicaragua, Reagan violates the democratic principles he espouses. And he is only making the situation worse.

I abhor communism, but if I were a dirt farmer in the mountains of Central America, if I grew up under a brutally repressive dictatorship, the Sandinistas would be very appealing. If, then, the United States supported the Contras, who seek to depose the government that many of my friends died for,

it would only harden my resolve to fight.

To an extent, Reagan's concerns are justified. Nicaragua would pose a threat if it were to export revolution to the surrounding countries.

Nicaragua, however, is a small threat to us. One we can contain without force.

Our best protection is to ensure the stability of the surrounding countries by making sure their "democracies" work. If, like in Somoza's Nicaragua, we support a democracy in name and a tyranny in reality, we can only expect another anti-U.S. revolution. We must use our formidable influence to ensure free elections, uncorrupt government, fundamental rights and strong social programs.

Perhaps Reagan is beginning to see that. He is, after all, sending Philip Habib to Central America in search of a diplomatic answer. I wouldn't be surprised if Nicaragua would make adjustments in its domestic and foreign policy if it could be assured that the United States would not seek to force a minority government on an unwilling majority. Perhaps it would make trade-offs. But if Nicaragua were to export revolution, or lose support of its people, then we could aid a new revolution.

For most Nicaraguan people now, their government, as flawed as it is, represents the best possible system. That's something we can all understand.

Welsch is a senior English and journalism major and a Daily Nebraskan copy desk chief.



Chris Welsch

Marcos doesn't need extra guards if 3 former presidents don't

I'm not fond of too many politicians, but I think I could learn to like Frank Fasi, the mayor of Honolulu. Last week Mayor Fasi found himself being pressured by Larry Speakes, the White House spokesman, to provide police protection for retired Filipino tyrant Ferdinand Marcos.

When told that Fasi wasn't enthusiastic about assigning local cops to guard Marcos, Speakes rather pompously said, "We expect all security elements, federal, state and local, to discharge their duties in a responsible fashion."

So we called Fasi to see how he was going to discharge his duty, as Speakes put it, to the rich new resident of his city.

Fasi didn't sound at all awed by Speakes.

"Two days ago," the mayor said, "I got a call from Mr. Frank Keating of the Treasury Department. He wanted back-up service (by the Honolulu police) for the Secret Service for at least 30 days

and possibly for up to six weeks. "Mr. Keating was very charming, but we agreed to disagree. I gave him two reasons why we wouldn't do this. One, the cost could be as high, for six weeks, as half a million dollars.



Mike Royko

"More importantly, this would take the police officers off more important duties — protecting the people, for just one man. We aren't going to do that. I told them to contact off-duty police officers and hire them, if that's what they want.

"I also pointed out that Mr. Ford and Mr. Nixon are frequent visitors. And they do well enough with their own Secret Service protection. I also pointed out that the deposed president of

Korea, Syngman Rhee, lived four doors from me, and I don't remember ever seeing any police officers around his house.

"If the federal government wants to give Marcos more protection, let them pay for it. I have a hard enough time with the budget I have. When you think of the federal government and how it has cut back with monies for municipalities, we've got to mind the pennies, never mind the dollars.

"Mr. Speakes says he expects the local government and local officials to accommodate them? I say, fine, we'll cooperate. But if it's going to cost us money, buddy, you come up with the dough."

When the super-rich Marcos sent one of his flunkies to see Fasi about getting police protection, Fasi told him the same thing.

"I told them to hire off-duty police officers, if that's what they want."