

Editorial

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Excel Scudder best for UNL

The most promising candidate in this year's ASUN race is Chris Scudder of the Excel Party.

Scudder's enthusiasm sets her apart from the rest. She has been involved in ASUN and knows the group's limitations. Yet she has fresh proposals, such as traveling the state to gain support for the university, providing late-night bus service to East Campus and publishing booklets of instructors' teaching evaluations for students.

Despite Scudder's strong points, her party has some weaknesses. Excel's first vice presidential candidate, Dan Hofmeister, has made some sexist and anti-gay statements at recent ASUN meetings. But we hope Scudder's influence will counter Hofmeister's backward attitudes.

Excel's second vice presidential candidate is stronger. A former president of Abel Hall, Tony Coe adds another dimension — a residence hall perspective — to Excel. Coe's track record is impressive. He was active in the Harper-Schramm-Smith training table controversy, questioning housing officials' decision to donate part of Smith Hall for a women's training table.

On balance, the Daily Nebraskan's endorsement goes to Excel.

The Party Party runs a close second. Party executives were the most realistic. During an interview with members of the DN editorial board, Party candidates often acknowledged that ASUN was powerless in most

situations.

The party's only goal — to legalize alcohol on campus — was realistic. But in times of tight budgets and course cancellations, students should be more concerned with the future of the university than with securing alcohol on campus.

Another problem with Party is that its first and second vice presidential candidates will be first-year law students next fall. Experience has shown that first-year law students have little, if any, time for extra-curricular activities.

Most of Party Party's senatorial candidates also are seniors, which probably explains the party's realistic attitude. But if elected, the seniors will have to resign after graduation.

Party Party's realistic tone is one that should continue in ASUN elections. The DN nearly endorsed the Party Party.

The third serious contender, Impact, reflected the current administration too closely. All three executives were white male Greeks, who tend to agree with administrators' points of view.

Impact candidates did not have as strong a grasp of issues when interviewed by the DN editorial board. They seemed to know little about the "Hail, Mary" cancellation or the lack of minority faculty on campus.

Although this year's ASUN campaign lacked the excitement and exposure of past races, students should take the time to vote.

The people's voice Petition percentage should be kept

State senators soon will discuss a resolution that would make it a little more difficult for Nebraskans to get an issue placed on the ballot. The proposal is ridiculous and defeats the purpose of a democratic check-and-balance philosophy.

Sponsored by state Sen. Lee Rupp of Monroe, LR 318 would change to 10 percent of the number of signatures needed to get an issue on the ballot. Currently, 7 percent of Nebraska's registered voters have to sign a petition.

Rupp says he introduced the bill to provoke legislative discussion about the petition process, which hasn't been debated for several years. The issue apparently gained Rupp's attention because of Nebraskans' recent perseverance in getting the school consolidation and mandatory seat-belt laws onto the November ballot.

Our state and federal governments are structured so citizens have final say over any legislation.

Voters elect legislators who in turn influence the judicial and executive branches.

Some politicians worry that voters wield too much power and

can place too many bills on the ballot.

"Maybe we're reaching the point where we'll have 150 to 200 issues on the ballot every year," Rupp said in an Omaha World-Herald article.

Even if voters did manage to get that many bills on the ballot, senators should consider the implications. If voters put 200 issues on the ballot, it would clearly indicate that senators aren't representing their constituents well. The referendum process is a built-in safeguard to ensure that senators don't overlook anything or misrepresent their constituents.

By introducing the bill, Rupp definitely has sparked some discussion about the petition process. That's good. Such processes need to be reviewed periodically to evaluate their effectiveness.

But let's hope senators are smart enough not to pass Rupp's bill. Doing so would be a step toward limiting the public's voice in government.

And if for some reason senators do pass LR 318, maybe Nebraska voters should band together, pool their signatures and put the bill up to its final test — public opinion.



Americans ignorant of Soviets Personal contacts can foster better understanding

Why do Americans insist they know so much about something they have no credible knowledge of?

The United States has a multitude of diverse newspapers, magazines and radio and television stations. Americans often boast that their media freely express opposing views in the press and on the air.

But the minute the Soviet Union is mentioned, the United States becomes a one-broadcasting station, newspaper or magazine country — identical to the image that various world media sketch of our country. Americans have developed an astonishingly stereotyped conception of the Soviet Union.

An English teacher who did a survey of American high school students once said, "Americans know about as much about the Soviet Union as they know about Mars," but while they realize that they know very little about Mars, they have no doubts about their "knowledge" of the Soviet Union.

Although some Soviets may laugh at this remark, the results of some opinion polls make one wary and even frightened. The New York Times, for example, recently found that 44 percent of Americans do not know that the Soviet Union fought in World War II, and 28 percent believe that the Soviet Union was an ally of Hitler's Germany.

Most Americans have little interest in what is happening abroad. The few exceptions are those events that most directly effect the United States, such as the Vietnam war. This phenomenon can be partly explained by geographical, as well as historical factors. For a long time, U.S. foreign policy was isolationist, and encouraged people to be concerned only about events directly affecting their country.



Patrick
Meister

It is difficult today for Radio Moscow or the Pravda to influence ordinary Americans. Broadcasts from Moscow come to the United States only by short wave radio, which cannot be received by most U.S. radio stations. To listen to Moscow, one must spend extra money and make an extra effort. The U.S. mass media is the primary culprit in creating ignorance because they have convinced their audience that they are the most truthful and comprehensive sources for learning world affairs. Additionally, U.S. mass media have developed a hyper-paranoia equating all types of

censorship with blatant lies.

Concerted ideological indoctrination has infected the American consciousness with a dangerous virus: the constant expectation of a nuclear attack from the East. One gets the impression that many have never heard about Soviet peace initiatives. Instead they have been persuaded that Russians are hostile.

But every cloud has a silver lining. The deliberately planted sense of fear prods more Americans into an active struggle for disarmament and prevention of a nuclear war. This leads to familiarity with Soviet policies and proposals. This is a slow process, but a growing number of Americans are beginning to realize that the United States, not the Soviet Union, is blocking the normalization of relations.

Contacts between our peoples have enormous value because nothing can dispel misconceptions as well as personal experience. The summit meeting in Geneva played an important role. I hope that Americans received truly objective and honest information that will help them gain a deeper understanding of the Soviet Union's real intentions. I also think President Reagan could have gained more than merely the realization that Gorbachev is human.

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Birth control experiment continues as does conflict over teens and sex

The pickets are gone now. So are the television cameras. At the sprawling Jean Baptiste Point DuSable High School in Chicago, the loudspeaker announces meetings of the pep squad and the senior lunch committee. And in Room 156, the medical clinic is open for sports checkups, eye exams, bumps, bruises and birth control.

Back in September a newspaper here ran a headline about this clinic: "Pill Goes to School." The furor brought more attention to the black inner-city high school than it had received since opening day in 1935.

Judy Steinhagen wasn't surprised. To this day, the pragmatic principal of DuSable, a school with a 58 percent dropout rate, admits, "People who left high school 30 or 40 years ago and don't have teen-agers were shocked. I will be the first to say that the schools probably shouldn't be in this (birth control). But kids today are sexually active. It's a Band-Aid situation."

This particular Band-Aid is trying to salve the injury that comes to children when they bear children. It is something that happens commonly in this neighborhood. The South-Side high

school that graduated the mayor of Chicago now draws from what is arguably the poorest urban neighborhood in the United States.

Here, in 1983, 436 babies were born to women between 10 and 19 years old, 300 of them to women of high-school age. Most of them joined the ranks of welfare. In 1985 alone, American families like these, families that started



Ellen
Goodman

when the mother was a teen-ager, cost taxpayers \$16.6 billion.

It is these numbers and these cost figures that have pushed the issue of teen-age pregnancy into the headlines and encouraged experiments like the one at DuSable. Today there are only 40 high-school clinics that give birth control counseling. Only nine in the country actually dispense condoms and pills.

Nevertheless, the opening of this clinic hit a sensitive nerve. Americans

still argue about the best form of protection for their young. Many of us think there is an inherent conflict between encouraging teen-agers to say no to sex and making it safer when they say yes.

Even Dr. Doris McCulley, clinic director and a 1965 graduate of DuSable, says: "There's not 'a' solution. There's a significant role in teaching moral ethics. But right now we need to stop the hemorrhaging." The tourniquet, as they see it and apply it, is birth control, easily available, free and confidential.

"We see everything from asthma to early labor," says the forthright nurse-practitioner Louis McCurry, who wishes the public and press would care as much about teen-age health as teen-age sex. "In the first two months, 10 to 15 percent of the kids we screened couldn't see well enough to read. We had six cases of diabetes, a lot of hypertension."

They won't do an official count until the first year is over in June, but anecdotal evidence suggests that there is now one pregnancy for every six last year.

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