

Editorial

Daily
Nebraskan

University of Nebraska-Lincoln

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Suit favors paper Court affirms DN's independence

The Daily Nebraskan is no stranger to litigation. In its most recent foray into the morass of legalese, well settled principles of First Amendment laws were affirmed in respect to a DN decision.

In the fall of 1984 and the spring of 1985 two homosexuals attempted to place advertisements in the paper requesting homosexual roommates. The first placement attempt specifically asked for a lesbian roommate. Other attempts simply were homosexual "self-descriptions." All ads were rejected by the DN as discriminatory in their own right. Even the more subtle ads expressing "self-description" were thought too obvious to obviate the message "only homosexuals need apply."

The Publications Board subsequently affirmed the decision — although their action ultimately muddled the legal issues.

There have been a number of cases involving school newspapers. The cases have invoked so much litigation because they involve attempts to exercise the power of the purse and significant freedom of the press issues. The issue looming in the cases is "does the governmental institution paying for the paper have a right to control the content of the paper?" While there is no question that a private publisher can control his own paper's editorial policy in the most dictatorial and whimsical manner, legal decisions have refused to extend similar control to the state vis-a-vis student newspapers.

Summarizing a number of cases, Federal Judge Warren Urbom

wrote: "Editorial freedom of expression has consistently prevailed where various forms of censorship were applied to student publications of state-supported universities. A university may not suspend an editor for publishing controversial articles; suppress objectionable material from publication; withdraw or reduce financial support because of the newspaper's offensive content; or regulate content to assure the compliance of printed materials with 'responsible freedom of the press.'" DN editorial decisions are as protected from government interference as are the decisions by private publishers. In fact, as Urbom pointed out in his decision, if the plaintiffs won the case the "inevitable result" of such a victory would be "the usurpation of editorial discretion." Thus Urbom affirmed long-held First Amendment guarantees against the plaintiff's attack.

Additionally, Urbom affirmed DN independence from the Publications Board. In very strong language he said, "The University, acting through the Publications Committee or otherwise, could not have directed the Daily Nebraskan not to publish the advertisement had it chosen to do so. Censorship of content impermissibly would exist if the University were to dictate what the Daily Nebraskan could or could not print."

All in all, Judge Urbom's decision was sensible and traditional, affirming the legitimacy of continuing independence in all areas of content.

Challenger investigation Caution should guide future missions

With last week's report by the special committee that investigated the Challenger explosion came a new message to an impatient society — space shouldn't be exciting.

The seven deaths in the Challenger accident told America that space travel is a dangerous business. To continue the Challenger program or any space missions for that matter, extreme caution should be exercised.

The days of the high-pressure, we-have-to-get-the-thing-off-the-ground mentality have passed. The primary concern from this point can be nothing more than that of the safety of the people taking part in the missions.

Political pressures and the fear of losing federal financial support should never come into play when a space mission is under question. Would the United States let President Reagan get in a plane that had a bad engine? No. The same answer should be given when a question arises in future shuttle missions.

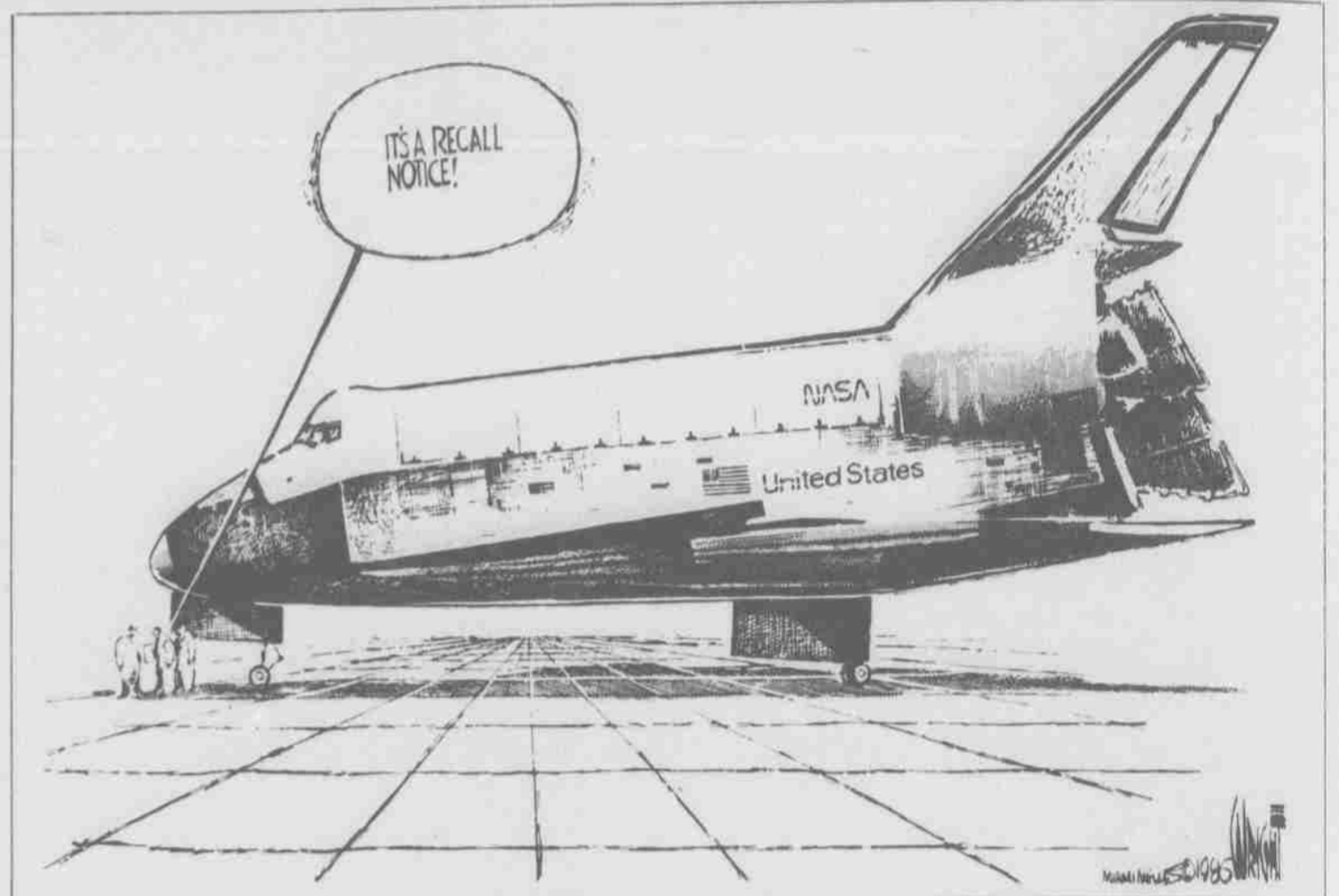
Not that Challenger should be grounded. The program is worthwhile and has been a credit to the United States. But, the morale that the space shuttle raised in

this country was destroyed by the January 28 accident.

The shuttle mission had become hum-drum for the people of this country but that will certainly no longer be the case. Now the shuttle will be under the close scrutiny of the United States, and other countries as well.

The thought of "good old American know how" has been challenged by the Challenger failure. Perhaps the country had deceived itself into a false sense of security when it came to technology. But, that false sense of security was rocked by the Challenger explosion.

Will the impatience of American society allow a slow down in space travel? Without the Challenger accident it likely would have not. But, hopefully, the loss of seven lives will convince this nation that the feeling that "the show must go on" is not always the best answer. If the shuttle program is to get off the ground again, it will have to do so with the full patience and support of the American public. A program that has done so much for American society deserves that courtesy.



Economic sanctions needed

U.S. should 'tighten screws' on white South African government

NBC News recently showed pictures of a pitched battle in South Africa between radical "comrades" and conservative vigilantes for control of Crossroads, a squalid slum near Capetown. Even aside from the violence, the film was shocking. After weeks of government denial that it was provoking the bloody fighting, American TV viewers could see the vigilantes being escorted into Crossroads by the police. Then the killing began.

The vigilantes were armed — many with machetes, some with pistols and a few with rifles. With such firepower, they carried the day. But the victory was a temporary one for sure. With the passage of time, and the spilling of even more blood, the future almost certainly belongs to the radicals. Maybe when they take power, the United States will finally stir itself from its torpor and invoke economic sanctions.

In the meantime, the United States reacts to Pretoria's violent behavior with the sort of hollow condemnation we reserve for Israeli spying. When it comes to economic sanctions, the administration continues to say they

would be counterproductive — crippling the South African economy and, thus, ensuring the ultimate victory of radicals. What has not occurred to U.S. policymakers — but what is readily apparent to South Africans — is that the lack of such sanctions sends a message. South Africa's blacks are looking

public meeting; you will be shouted down." America, he said, is considered Pretoria's pal: more interested in keeping South Africa a member in good standing of the anti-Soviet alliance than in championing the human rights of the black majority.

In a recent speech, Secretary of State George Shultz said that, when it comes to South Africa, a concern for human rights must take precedence. But Shultz's voice does not carry into the black townships of South Africa. There, the personification of the United States is Ronald Reagan, and his values are well known. In his foreign policy, what takes precedence is a containment of the perceived Soviet threat, and to that end he will sacrifice almost all else.

Reagan, for instance, supports UNITA guerrillas in Angola, even though their patron in black Africa is white-ruled South Africa. In Central America, he mortgages our long-term interests to bloody a pipsquawk of a regime in Nicaragua. And in the Philippines, he de-

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for an answer to that age-old question: Which side are you on? So far, our answer is we are on everyone's side.

You need only spend a few minutes with someone like the Rev. Allan Boesak, the anti-apartheid leader from Capetown, to see how damaging this kind of response is to long-term U.S. interests. Ask him, as I recently did, what the image of the United States is in black South Africa and you are told it "has never been as negative. You can not mention the United States at a

Republicans' Christian-dominated platform evokes political mudslinging

Even though it's only June, election controversy is already heating up.

Several weeks ago large numbers of conservative Christians added several planks to the Lancaster and Douglas County Republican party platforms at the biannual conventions. These planks included strong pro-life and anti-pornography language. Reactions to the apparently well-organized Christian effort have ranged from acceptance of the democratic result to those bordering on paranoia.

In the former category, several Republican leaders have expressed sentiments indicating that the "party regulars" have no good reason to complain about being aced out of some sought-for offices. These leaders point out that the "regulars" were simply out-hustled by the newcomers, and in politics, hustle is the name of the game.

In the absurdly paranoid category is the response of state Democratic Chairman Tom Monaghan. In reflecting the philosophy, "if you can't beat 'em, slander 'em," Monaghan raised the red herring of "extreme right-wing groups" taking control of the Republican party (as if he really cares about the health of the party anyway). He demanded that Republican gubernatorial candidate Kay Orr "disavow these narrow interest ideologies."

Monaghan's attack is actually cause for more concern than the recent Christian activity. On one hand, I don't think that anybody involved in the recent

Republican effort would disavow the term "conservative": But Monaghan liberally dosed his statement with the use of the phrase "extreme right wing" — a phrase which conjurs up images of Nazis and KKK members. Yet obviously a much broader spectrum of the American public embraces the platform planks added during the conventions as a result of the Christian activity.

Monaghan's rhetoric is at root harmful to the democratic process: Name-



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calling with highly emotional labels shifts the focus of public debate from the level of issues to the level of the character of the individuals involved. As a result, public debate becomes skewed while emotions cloud peoples' reason. Especially when dealing with such weighty issues, all individuals involved should make a concerted effort to keep the debate centered upon the issues. In this case Monaghan succumbed to the temptation of the political mudslinger.

Nonetheless, the above comments should not be taken to indicate that those Christians involved handled themselves in an optimal manner. While a few issues recently have raised the Christian political consciousness, political responsibility is not exhausted

when these few issues are addressed.

The American experience with Christian involvement in politics is one that is almost universally single-issue oriented. Even in the early years of the republic, religious political involvement was of a single issue nature: Abolition and prohibition serve as the most obvious examples of this tendency. The result of this tradition is that little lasting impact has been made by these groups on the American political scene after the limited goal was reached.

European Christian political movements have typically been much more integrative and holistic. The prime example undoubtedly is Dutch Prime Minister and theologian Abraham Kuyper who led the Calvinist-Catholic coalition in Holland in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. He was firmly evangelical while avoiding the narrowness of issue selection which has characterized American religious political involvement.

Other instances — both modern and more aged — exist where Christians brought forth entire world-views responsibly to address the entire gambit of issues before the public and contributed substantively and positively to the Western political tradition. American Christians need to take cues from these movements and the thinkers spawning them: In so doing they will better be able to engage in a profound, and true, Christian statecraft.

Rogers is a graduate student in law and economics.