

Editorial

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Texas cuts University budget faces axe

The next time the question of cutting the UNL budget is raised in the Legislature, supporters of higher education in this state should be thankful that they don't live in Texas.

The University of Texas system is facing a possible 34 percent cut in funding from the state of Texas. Translated into dollars, the cut is \$270 million to the university system for 1986-87 and a \$55 million cut for the university itself.

Because of the recent glut in the worldwide oil market, the Texas economy has been hit hard, necessitating the cuts. The hardship in Texas must have a familiar ring to it for Nebraskans, who face a farm crisis and

the closing of several rural banks.

If the cuts are implemented in Texas, that university system will go from one of the best in the nation to one bordering on the mediocre. If Texans truly care about higher education they will find another place to cut the state budget and leave the university alone.

The situation in Texas is a good lesson for Nebraskans. The state should stay committed to higher education in the state and never even think about the type of cuts being proposed in Texas. On the other hand, maybe we also should consider that things aren't nearly as bad as they could be.

'88 election Media jumping the gun

Nightmares about presidential election campaigns becoming non-stop, year round pursuits are becoming true. Michigan recently began their election process culminating in electing delegates to nominating conventions in 1988: That's over two years away. In 1984 the election year seemed incredibly long because it was "kicked off" in the media by the Iowa caucus rather than the later New Hampshire primary.

Several potential candidates for the Republican nomination mounted somewhat substantial campaigns in Michigan. They included Vice President Bush, Rep. Jack Kemp and evangelist Pat Robertson.

Political pundits cannot resist making conclusions regarding the presidential race even this far in advance. They herald Bush as the big winner, Kemp and Robertson as the big losers.

In so doing the pundits ignore the lesson of the media created "victories" enjoyed by Walter Mondale in 1984. One can't help but recall the vision of CBS anchor Dan Rather predicting an easy Mondale nomination victory

after his showing in the Iowa caucus — and thus completely misanalyzing the grueling campaign that was to follow in the months to come.

Additionally, the media is already writing off Yale-educated evangelist Pat Robertson as unable to mount a successful campaign for the Republican presidential nomination.

These commentators also forget the lesson of Jesse Jackson's 1984 run for president: He wasn't necessarily running to win, but to coalesce a fragmented group of voters so that they would be better able to articulate their concerns.

Although Robertson cannot be expected to win the nomination, the evidence seems strong that he would be able to hone the evangelical voting block into a lasting voting contingent: One which could be ignored only at a candidate's risk.

All in all the Michigan election simply should be looked upon as only the first round in what will undoubtedly prove to be a long, long match.

Asbestos problem

UNL should identify buildings

In spite of official attempts to minimize the danger, it is concerning to discover that half of all UNL buildings have asbestos, a cancer causing substance, in them. More disturbing, however, is the inability — or unwillingness — of UNL officials to discover which buildings contain the asbestos and to communicate their findings to the university community.

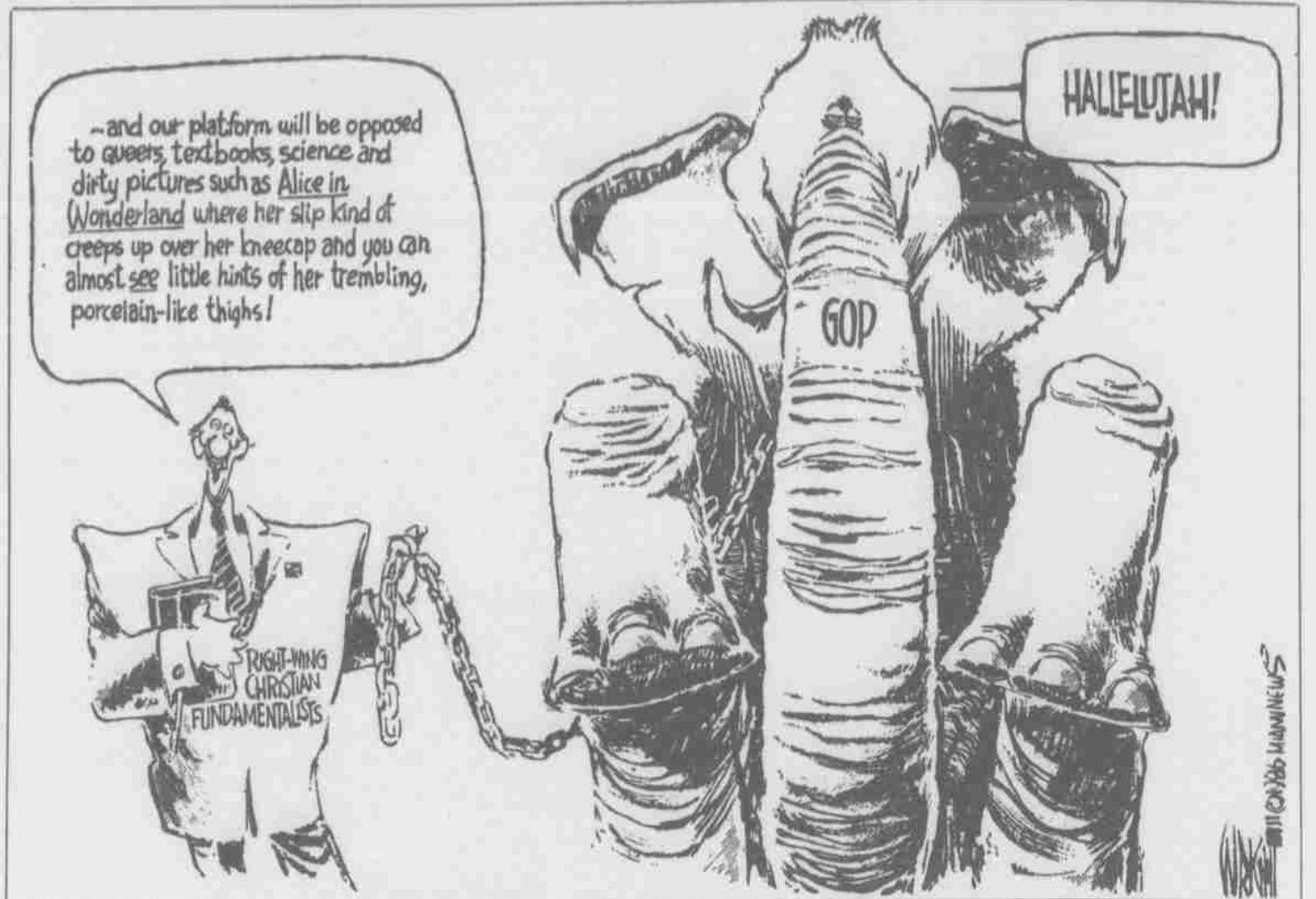
Director of UNL Information Bob Bruce told a Daily Nebraskan reporter that no record exists indicating which buildings contain the asbestos.

On even a superficial level this seems like a bureaucratic stonewalling technique: After all, how could you know that half of

UNL buildings have a substance in them if you also don't know which buildings you counted?

UNL students, faculty and staff have a right to know about potential health dangers resulting from their work environment. The UNL administration should release a list of the buildings — and if the list really doesn't exist, it should be quickly compiled so that it could be released.

Inaction on the topic not only risks injuring people uninformed about a potentially dangerous work situation, but also risks facing a lawsuit in the future because of their current unwillingness to disclose the health risks.



Kurtenbach still fighting

KZUM co-founder fields criticism to maintain open forum

Robert Kurtenbach, co-founder of KZUM public access radio and infamous '60s anachronism, is no longer on probation at that station. His outspoken criticism of KZUM's underwriting policies and his accusations of the misuse of the non-commercial airwaves for commercial purposes, has earned him on-the-air derision from his colleagues, threats of suspension from the station and phoned-in abuse from his listeners.

KZUM's public access format has always opened the staff up for phone slaggings from bored students, right-wing or left-wing malcontents and people enamored with the sound of their own execrable wit.

Kurtenbach, over the years, has fielded more than his share of this in the interests of free speech and free media. Anyone who avidly listens to Kurtenbach's programs on both KZUM and the local public access television channel, will vouch for the fact that he will treat even the most irritating juvenile caller as if the person has something important to say.

Kurtenbach has the clearest idea of what KZUM should be. He was instrumental in its inception. He was heroic in his sacrifice, personal and financial, and he clings irreversibly to his convictions about the essence of a free media. That Kurtenbach is headstrong,

obstinate and occasionally mired in left-wing cliches and an abysmally anachronistic rhetoric that is all the mirth of his detractors, is obvious. His faults are always more glaring than his concern, compassion and conviction. It doesn't help that Kurtenbach is frequently self-deprecating and can indulge himself with talk of his martyrdom at the hands of conservatives, midwestern rubes and media philistines that consistently berate him.



Charles Lieurance

All this aside, Kurtenbach should know what KZUM is about. To him it is about an open forum. It doesn't have to do with commercials. It does not embrace contradictions as glaring as banking commercials during a reggae music broadcast. It is not a training ground for mainstream disc jockeys or talk show hosts. It is not an advertising forum for local businesses with records to sell.

Kurtenbach is aware that there will always be a fight at the station between

the urge to commercialize and the urge to remain free. Ideas in conflict is what Kurtenbach is about. It is why he sits in front of a phone on TV and at the station during his broadcasts. The fact that many callers are narrow-minded jackasses is our fault, not his.

Kurtenbach does not wish for KZUM to bow and scrape to him over his criticisms. He merely wishes to be able to express these criticisms. If he can sit through hours of insult while he attempts to discuss issues such as intervention in Nicaragua, Reagan economics and the twilight of valuable social programs we, the listeners and the board of directors at KZUM, should be able to sit through a little hand-slapping from one of their most important assets.

To allow the sophomore DJs of some KZUM shows to characterize him as a boring old hippie, is ungrateful and repellent considering they would have no forum for their biting wit were it not for Kurtenbach.

But Kurtenbach founded KZUM to let them speak. Now that he's off probation and allowed the freedom he deserves, I hope his voice does not tremble slightly at controversy. To force a man who has found a way to provide Lincoln with a true alternative to mainstream capitalist media to cower would be a tremendous waste.

Ruling enforces affirmative action ignoring subcontractor's incompetence

I wonder what Judge Roger Kiley's reaction might be if he was placed in the following imaginary situation.

He goes to a dentist's office to have his teeth cleaned. After the judge is in a chair, a dentist comes in and sticks a Novocain needle into his gums.

"What are you doing?" the judge would be expected to say.

"I'm going to pull a tooth," says the imaginary dentist.

"But there's nothing wrong with my tooth," says the judge.

"Well, I'm kind of new at this trade," says the dentist. "So how about if I pull a tooth just for the experience?"

The judge would surely be out of the chair and out the door as fast as his feet could carry him.

Or let's say that the judge takes his car into a garage to have the oil changed.

While he's waiting, he notices that the mechanic is running a sanding machine across a fender.

"What are you doing?" asks the judge.

"I'm going to repaint the car."

"But it doesn't need repainting. I just want an oil change."

"Well, I've never repainted a car, and I could use the experience."

As he sped away, the judge would

probably be thinking that the world is going mad.

Well, he'd be right. The world does seem to be going mad, and the judge is one of the people contributing to our deranged condition.

He did it with a recent court decision that has even some of the more liberal thinkers among us scratching their heads.



Mike Royko

The judge heard a case involving a dispute between a general contractor doing work at Chicago's O'Hare International Airport and a minority subcontractor.

The subcontracting firm was supposed to be doing some concrete work, but apparently it had problems. Such as not knowing what it was doing.

According to evidence heard by Judge Kiley, the firm did inferior work. To boot, it was late in getting even the inferior work completed.

Also, the subcontractor didn't pay

bills owed to suppliers.

About all that could be said in the subcontractor's behalf is that when they did get some concrete in place, none of the workers left their footprints in it.

Deciding that enough is enough, the general contractor finally fired the subcontractor.

But the subcontractor filed a lawsuit saying it got a bad deal because the city requires that its general contractors give a certain amount of work to minority contractors.

It's true that Chicago has an affirmative action policy. Minority firms must get a piece of the action.

But there is nothing in the policy that says that a minority firm should be allowed to do sloppy work, do it slowly, and not pay its bills.

Even Mayor Harold Washington's press secretary says that would be a pretty goofy policy.

But that is the way Judge Kiley sees affirmative action.

He ruled that the general contractor was wrong in firing the incompetent subcontractor for being incompetent. And he said the incompetents had to be put back on the job.

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