

# Editorial

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## Sheldon work needed Lied benefits questionable

The Omaha World-Herald reported Sunday that the Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery is planning a 35,700-square-foot underground expansion at a cost of \$5.5 million from outside funds.

Sheldon will benefit greatly from the expansion — an architectural study showed the museum's exhibition space will nearly double and storage space will quadruple. But the much needed expansion had to wait until now because of the Lied Center for the Performing Arts.

Sheldon Director George Neubert said in the article that the expansion "had been on the back burner since the Lied became a top priority for the (University of Nebraska) Foundation." That's too bad. It seems as if projects such as Sheldon or a new campus recreation facility are being put on back burners until sufficient funds are raised for the arts center.

Neubert said he was anxious to move ahead and felt "very

responsible by stepping aside" to allow construction of the Lied Center. Neubert should not have to be responsible.

We have noted time and time again that more attention should be paid to facilities already here or those that will benefit the university community more directly. The expansion at Sheldon is just another example.

Also noteworthy . . . Sheldon has suffered from last year's budget reductions. Cuts from operating budgets have decreased the availability of films and exhibits at Sheldon.

The NU Foundation and the Nebraska Art Association will assist Sheldon in raising funds for expansion. It would be nice to see if these organizations could raise money for operating purposes as well. There's no sense in having a new and improved building if people will not have the opportunity to enjoy it fully.

## 'Quite simply, it's bad' Students have pour righting skills

Talk to any professor who regularly assigns essay questions on exams or papers in undergraduate classes and you'll hear reports of widespread writing inadequacies. Talk to students, and a large number will tell you that they hate essay questions and paper assignments.

Students all too often are not bringing to college writing skills sufficient to let them focus on the assignment itself. When students face writing assignments they often feel that the burden of expressing themselves in writing is almost as heavy, if not heavier, than the burden of the substantive portion of the assignment.

The National Assessment of Education Progress recently issued a report that outlines the reason so many college students can't write well — they aren't taught those skills in elementary school or high school. Archie Lapointe, director of the group that did the study, is direct about the product of the nation's schools: "Performance in writing in our schools is, quite simply,

bad."

Writing skills cannot be meaningfully separated from oral communication and thinking skills. The reasons that writing appears to be more burdensome than oral communication are: (1) writing takes more physical energy; (2) writing requires more attention to the technical details and the logic of the language; and (3) written communication, because it is more permanent than oral communication, exposes error in analysis more readily than does verbal communication. Consequently, people generally feel that they need to think out the substance of a written work more than a similar statement given orally.

At this point universities can do little to remedy the problem wholesale. Small steps can be taken by requiring students to engage in frequent composition for all classes. The adage "practice makes perfect" could perhaps be amended in this context to "practice at least makes tolerable."

## Editorial Policy

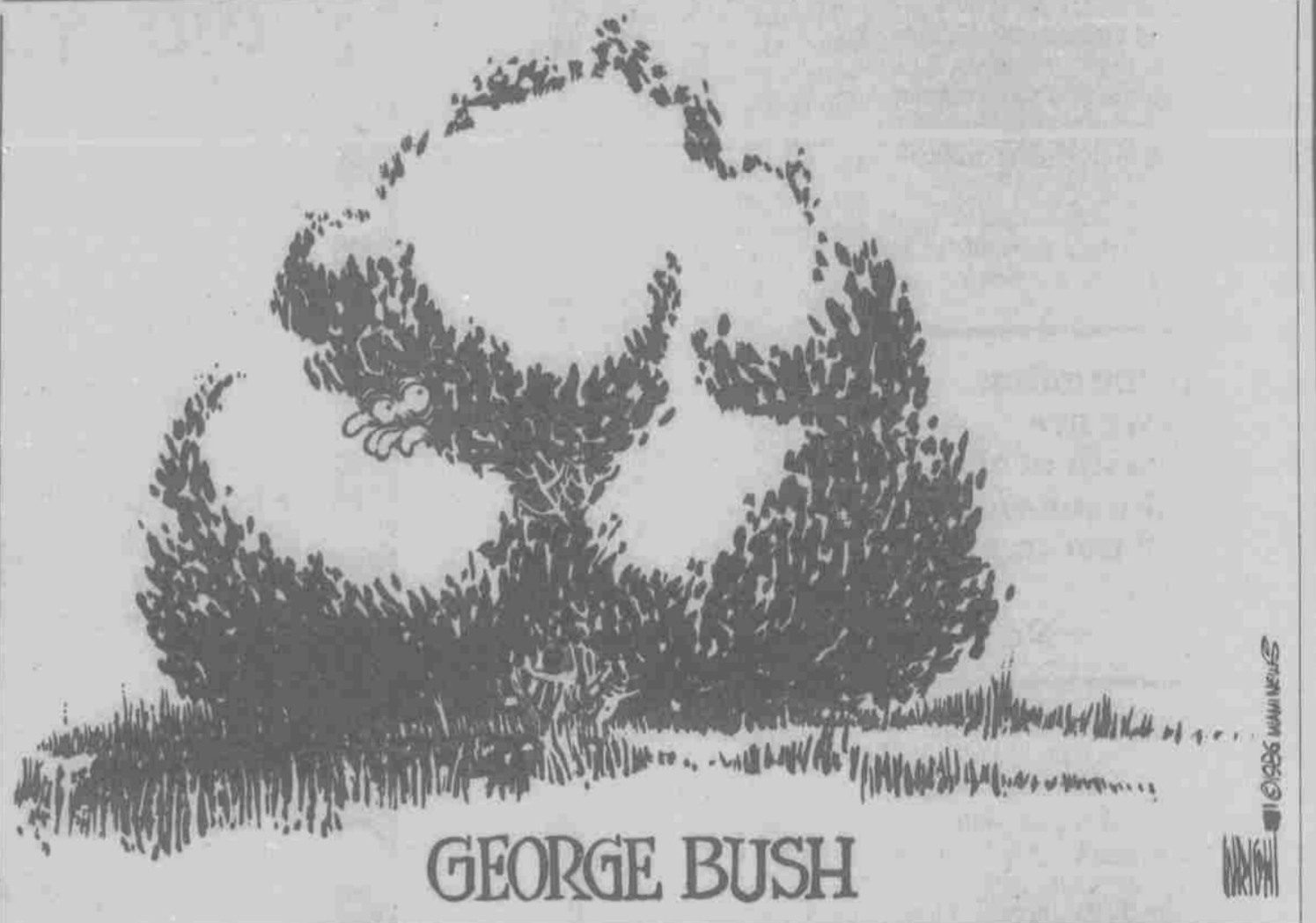
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## Protests not fashionable Students today prefer playing inside political game

I have less than two weeks left now before graduation, which means I'm about to embark on what Dr. Johnny Fever once called a "slow fade and segue to senility." You know how it is: Once college is over, there's not much left to do but get older (although I plan much more than that).

Since I'm an almost-alumnus, some might say, I probably could afford to forget about this university. But even if I wanted to forget, which I don't, I can't now — not with Dead Week and yet another midyear budget cut hitting us at the same time. So, with one eye on this latest NU crisis, I'd like to offer a piece of advice to those "who have ears to hear."

*Don't assume that student silence means students don't care.*

For one thing, students don't have time right now to make a lot of noise. Whoever planned this special session was a genius — it hits NU and the state and community colleges at their busiest time of the year. Students rushing to finish class projects and study for finals aren't going to rush to the State Capitol en masse to try to stop this cut.

But that practical excuse probably won't be enough to shake assumptions of student apathy. The truth is that many campuses are quieter these days. And the standard line is that students must therefore be indifferent to the world around them or the one under their noses. When you've seen ugly campus demonstrations like Kent State during your lifetime, it's easy to reach that conclusion.

Maybe it's apathy that explains why some state leaders think that, as one UNL student leader said he was told once, "students don't bring that much to the table." Some veterans of 1960s activism, according to a recent Omaha World-Herald story on the subject, blame the apathy on 1980s selfishness and conformity.

"(Students) are so well domesticated," one source in that story said, "they've been told it's not nice to carry placards . . . it's not nice to make

waves." Another said, "As people become more me-oriented, they forget about the world around them. They don't care as much."

And what of today's "hot" issues? One source complained in the article that, at his school, "there is no concern about divestment (from South Africa), no concern about homosexual activi-



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ties, no racial anything here. On a scale of one to 10, consciousness here is a one."

Apparently, students care only if they're burning books and occupying buildings regarding the right "issues." Talk about conformity.

Such people aren't looking in the right places for signs of 1980s activism. For one thing, massive student demonstrations never really caught on in this part of the country — but that's not to say they don't happen.

It was just a year ago that more than a few so-called apathetics set up shop at Broyhill Fountain for a rather loud protest against apartheid. While I was covering the Legislature's Appropriations Committee hearing on the 1985 midyear budget cuts, I seem to recall a few hundred students were making noise on the Capitol steps. And what of all the blue balloons at Memorial Stadium?

Further, student issues here aren't limited to the liberal agenda. Although Lincoln may be further to the left than the rest of Nebraska, it doesn't appear that liberal when compared to Cal-Berkeley or the Ivy League. We'll share some issues with the rest of the country — apartheid being one of them — but

when more students are on the center or right, you're going to have other issues.

There's one place where 1980s activists on both sides may be found that 1960s veterans overlooked. That's inside the "Establishment" — the very thing many of the earlier activists worked against. Instead of camping outside the halls of power and yelling and screaming, students today often can be found inside those halls playing the political game. They can argue as well as their predecessors; they just do it in more traditional ways.

Here's a couple of examples of what I mean. During the recent governor's campaign, students turned out to work for Helen Boosalis or Kay Orr in about equal numbers — a few hundred in both cases. Remember the student leader I mentioned before whose power was ridiculed? He was at Orr's victory party enjoying the spoils of success.

Those who pooh-poo student activity today are underestimating their own legacy. Young conservatives and liberals alike grew up in the shadow of the previous generation's protests. They know it's all right to get involved. Every generation has its apathetic crowd, but more young people care deeply about "the issues" than you might think. But the issues are different and cover a wider spectrum — and we often prefer working on the inside.

This special session isn't likely to feature an avalanche of angry students battering down the Capitol door over the latest budget cuts. More likely, senators will find smartly dressed students coming up to them in the Capitol rotunda to plead their case quietly. Those students are just as dedicated to their "issue" as the anti-Vietnam protesters were to theirs — and these students represent thousands of others who aren't indifferent to their schools' future. We're young, we're still out there — and we still care.

Von Kampen is a senior news-editorial and music major and is DN editorial page assistant.

## Video shopping a new phenomenon

The time is 10 p.m. and the television announcer, speaking in the excited decibels of a carnival emcee, urges me: "Stay tuned, we have some kind of a show coming up tonight!" I pause in my remote control travels through the cable options.

What kind of show precisely is coming up on my set? Who are the television stars of the evening? I watch the talent as it passes before me. First a calculator, then a coffee maker, a clock, a gold chain. Strutting their stuff. Each demanding that I grab my credit card, dial the toll-free number and buy quickly before time is up.

On the next channel, a different

announcer oozes his enthusiasm into the air, compelling me: "Look at that face!" The camera pans lovingly down a Santa Claus cap to the nose of a stuffed



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Goodman

teddy bear and lingers there for a moment before exposing the bargain prize tag.

Soon it is 11:30, and I have fincussed

the evening news. I have missed the latest Cabinet member's performance at the national microphone. I have instead been hooked into the viewing stands of the video sales parade. The hits keep coming: diamond earrings and leather luggage, fluted champagne glasses and answering machines.

"What you are going to see, there are no adequate words to describe!" "We are going to cut the price right to the basement!" "Yes, the phones are starting to ring!"

By the time I accidentally discover video shopping, it is more than six

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