

Editorial

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Tapped and sapped Another round of NU cuts

As legislative debate continues over NU's latest mid-year budget cut, it seems like a good time to remind senators of a compelling and oft-repeated argument for sparing the university.

The argument holds that an active partnership between NU on one side and Nebraska business and industry on the other is the most cost-effective way to revitalize and preserve the state's economy. But it takes two strong partners for a partnership to flourish, and NU's strength has been sapped in recent years. The inevitable result is a "vicious circle" in which NU and the state take turns restraining each other from rising from the economic dungeon.

Many officials pay lip service to the notion of a university-economy connection, but then go ahead and continue budget-cutting as if the argument had never been made. Apparently, the argument isn't glamorous enough to give state officials a vision beyond the immediate cut-the-budget-where-the-money-is reasoning. Those with the purse strings, however, wouldn't be wasting their money if they turned their eyes away from NU and looked for other areas to cut.

If Nebraska is to gain the revenues it needs to finance its government, it only makes sense for the state to do all it can to encourage business growth. Successful businesses, besides providing jobs and aiding the circu-

lation of money, also pay taxes. The need to raise taxes every time we feel the fiscal pinch could be done away with.

But those businesses and industries, in order to beat their competition and flourish, need a large body of information and advice. And who else is better situated to provide that information than a strong research university? The gathering of such information serves a twofold purpose: educating students who help with research work and providing businesses with economic and scientific intelligence. Two birds for one stone is a good deal anyway.

Without a strong research university, Nebraska business and industry might develop great innovations anyway. But it makes sense to provide the best possible climate for them to live and grow — and for new businesses to locate in the state. Yes, it takes money to maintain such a university, but such spending can be justified by the old adage that "you've got to spend money to make money."

Every time the budget is cut, NU is a little less able to give the state's economy a boost. Other states facing economic challenges resisted budget-cutting impulses, committed themselves to a strong university system and are now prosperous. With them in mind, it should be more attractive to bite the bullet and break the budget-cut pattern for NU.

Teen-age pregnancies Abstinence and protection necessary

Teen-age pregnancies are overwhelming young people and their ability to mature and enjoy the end of their youth. More than 10 percent of girls between ages 15 and 19 become pregnant every year in the United States. Teen-age pregnancies have gotten out of the control of everyone.

Ignorance and pressure seem to be the main reasons for the tidal wave of pregnancies. But ignorance and pressure have always existed. What is lacking today is a culture conducive to supporting abstinence or control decisions.

The growth cannot be attributed to one or two factors alone. For example, North Dakota has the lowest teen-age pregnancy rate in the nation and yet has no state-required sex curriculum and minors need parental permission to get birth-control devices. But simple casual lines from sex education and birth-control supply in other states cannot be drawn from North Dakota's experience.

After all, North Dakota enjoys a largely rural cultural climate not shared by most other states. The North Dakota coordinator overseeing unmarried parental services noted that a lot of reasons for the low statistic "has to do with the conservative culture" in North Dakota. That

state's experience is not particularly instructive for other states.

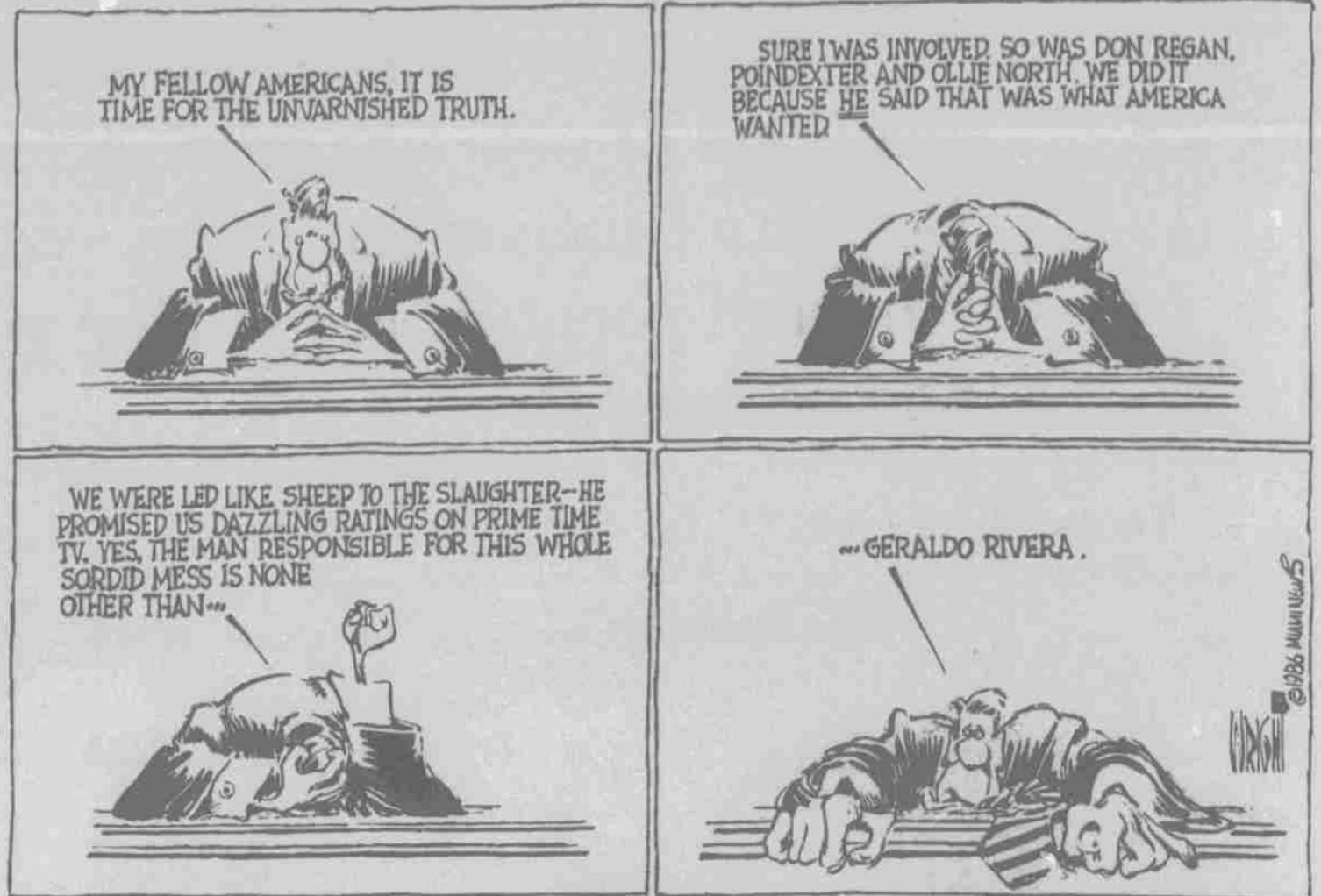
Since the horse is obviously out of the barn in other states, the question that comes after the demise of cultural attitudes must be faced: Given the high level of sexual activity and pregnancy, what can be done to at least reduce some of the tragedy of ignorant sexual activity?

Sex education is all too often a one-shot, hit-or-miss affair. Teen-agers should be aware of the potential consequences if they choose to engage in sex. They need to understand that they have a right to abstain from sexual involvement and that there are ways of preventing pregnancies if they do get involved.

Abstinence and protection are the two messages that can be effectively communicated only with a committed education program starting at the earliest ages.

The teen-age years are not the time to ignorantly enter into a relationship that could produce an unplanned child, or worse yet, saddle a young girl with the life-and-death decision of aborting the still younger human growing within her womb.

Prevention is by far the best alternative. We need to make the educational commitment to get the task done.



'Come and split a Fifth' Seat-belt haters, Jew-baiters head end-of-semester awards

Another semester has come and gone, and with it another 16 weeks or so of delightful meanderings through the issues and non-answers that make up the socio-politico-economic matrix we call home.

As has become my quaint but entrenched custom, I shall dedicate this, my "Dead Week" column, to the commemoration of those who have gone out of their way to make sure these past months have not been burdened down with significant or life-altering developments. Rather, they have contributed to the latest in a too-long line of events that, though apparently momentous and newsworthy at the time, have shown us once again what suckers we are for the trivial, the pedantic and that which is basically not worth anyone's time. It's time again for the semi-annual "There's One Born Every Minute" Awards. Here are this semester's winners.

The **Look Ma, No Brains Award** goes to the voters of Nebraska who cast one more ballot for American independence, in the face of a devastating onslaught of common sense, by doing away with the accursed LB496 — the dreaded seat-belt law. It's no matter that I and other pro-life activists can't get too many people in this supposedly conservative state excited about the fight against abortion. We don't even care about our own lives, let alone those of some unborn kids we've never even met.

The **Silence is Advantageous Award** for nostalgic non-compliance goes to Vice Adm. John Poindexter and Lt. Col. Oliver North for their joint effort to evade justice and cooperation by hiding behind that most intriguing of all constitutional rights, the right not to have to tell people when you are

guilty as sin. As John commented to Oliver just before the spit hit the spam, "Come on over tonight and we'll split a Fifth."

The **"Kissing Your Sister Ain't All That Bad" Award** for gridiron cowardice beyond the call of good sportsmanship goes to Oklahoma football coach Barry Switzer, who was wil-

James Sennett



ling to settle for a tie in the classic confrontation with Nebraska. The kick for 17-17 was especially insulting in the presence of our own heroic Tom Osborne, who on Jan. 2, 1984 forfeited a sure national championship because he believes that no team should back its way into such honors. Of course, the Sooners won anyway, but that doesn't change the fact that Barry was willing to settle for the tie. You may be Miami-bound, Barry, but the love and loyalty of those who care about true competition will be cheering in the Superdome for the class act of the Big Eight.

The **Schickgruber Citation** for Hiltering below the belt goes to retired Columbus businessman William Curry, who caused a real ruckus with his proclamation that the Holocaust never occurred. Of course, he may be on to something. I'd really like to see what this guy can do with some of the other dark moments in history. Maybe we could get rid of the slavery of blacks in the Old South, the Spanish Inquisition

and even Pearl Harbor (after all, this knife has to cut both ways). This could be fun. I wonder how our Japanese friends would feel about a "Hiroshima Hoax" movement. Why go to all the trouble to learn history, when we can just make it up as we go along?

Like most semesters, this one has many worthy candidates. This one was so special, however, that I have felt compelled to introduce an **honorable-mention section**. Those who are truly deserving — but for whom more column inches than they deserve have already been wasted — include Phi Kappa Psi fraternity for their rolling drunk tank, NU women's gymnastics coach Rick Walton for exemplary insensitivity, ASUN Sen. Tim Howard as "Trasher of the Year" and the NCAA for reputation rape in the first degree.

I purposely left out perennial winner John DeCamp — though his shenanigans this week at the Statehouse made it very difficult — because I figure he got the greatest award possible last month when his own constituents told him where and when to get off. And we must reserve some space for the stories that will make up next semester's winners, so I will just put a stop to it here.

Always remember, my friends, that there is never any reason to be burdened with genuine issues of truth, beauty and good when we are daily supplied with insanity like that above. If we do this right, we won't have to address a single significant issue for our entire lives. Whether we will have to afterwards is, of course, still a matter of some debate.

Sennett is campus minister with College-Career Christian Fellowship and a graduate student in philosophy.

Time to face the facts, writer says; anti-teen sex battle a waste of time

The latest outrage of American life: the pill goes to school.

There are now 72 "comprehensive health clinics" in or near the nation's public high schools. Very comprehensive. More than a quarter dispense and more than half prescribe birth-control devices. When the New York City Board of Education found out that two of its clinics were in the dispensing business, it ordered them to cease and desist.

Secretary of Education William Bennett has waxed eloquent on the subject. He is surely right that birth control in the schools legitimates sexual activity and represents an "abdication of moral authority." Clinics are not only an admission by adults that they cannot control teen-age sexuality, but also tacit consent, despite the "just say no" rhetoric.

Unfortunately, there are two prob-

lems: not just sex, but pregnancy. As in all social policy, there is a choice to be made. Is it worth risking the implicit message that sex is OK in order to decrease pregnancies? (Clinic opponents sometimes argue that birth-

Charles Krauthammer



control dispensaries do not decrease the number of pregnancies, a claim that defies both intuition and the evidence.)

Bennett is right about the nature of the message. But he vastly overestimates its practical effect. Kids do not

learn their morals at school. (Which is why the vogue for in-school drug education will prove an expensive failure.) They learn at home. Or they used to. Now they learn from the culture, most notably from the mass media. Your four-eyed biology teacher and your pigeon-toed principal say "don't." The Pointer Sisters say "do." To whom are you going to listen?

My authority for the image of the grotesque teacher and moronic principal is "Porky's," the wildly popular teen sex flick that has spawned imitators and sequels. My authority for the fact that teen-age sex-control is an anachronism is Madonna. "Pappa don't preach," she sings. "I'm gonna keep my baby." The innocent in the song is months — nine months, to be precise — beyond the question of sex. Her

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