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## Cutting necessary Amputation beats bloodletting

Vertical program cuts are always difficult to make. When across-the-board cuts are made, each program must make incremental cuts approximately equal to the percentage of the total budget. Such an approach seems fair. On the other hand, when specific programs are singled out for massive curtailment, or outright elimination, the identified program can always say, through its spokespersons, "This isn't fair. Why should we bear the brunt while these other programs are left completely alone?"

On one level the critics are absolutely right; it's not fair. But the option to such unfairness isn't some "fair" and neutral policy. Rather, the option is the incremental mediocritization of the entire body of programs. On a much more fundamental level, this latter effect is the most unfair of all because it gradually saps the health of the entire system as a whole and risks the long-term ability to survive.

NU President Ronald Roskens has made some hard decisions — decisions forced upon him by a political environment beyond his control. His decisions repre-

sent decisions as good as can be made given the situation, and he should be supported in his decisions.

In spite of what the critics say, it's not as though Roskens is saying that these are the most expendable programs at NU. What he is saying is that a bundle of programs are liable to be cut; some programs in this bundle need to be severely cut or eliminated to save the health of the others. This posture is the only reasonable one given the lifeboat-type of decision-making model in which NU has been thrust.

Program cutting is never fun for decision makers. President Roskens undoubtedly wishes all programs could be saved — even expanded. But his main duty is to preserve the vitality of NU as an entire entity. And if a toe or a finger must be cut off to prevent disease in the entire body, much as we're attached to the toe, it's better that it goes.

Roskens should be supported for making hard decisions, decisions which will, in the long run, preserve the health of the institution as a whole.

## Costly fringe benefit McFarland's LB157 could backfire

Lincoln Sen. Jim McFarland has created quite a stir with his introduction of LB157, a bill that would require the NU Board of Regents to establish a program providing tuition-free attendance for children of professors, coaches and administrators who have been full-time university employees for at least five years.

Then, on Thursday, during a forum sponsored by the University Association for Administrative Development, McFarland announced that he would rewrite his bill to include children of university support staff, people in administrative, managerial and professional positions at NU.

McFarland may have gone too far out on a limb with his last announcement.

He introduced the bill because he said it would encourage top-quality professors and staff to stay with the university. He also said that it might attract top-quality professors to the university and encourage the children of university staff to get their education at Nebraska.

McFarland may be wise to start over and rewrite the bill to include only faculty and administrators, not coaches or university support staff.

His intentions are to maintain the quality of education at the university, and he has come up with a reasonable idea. With recent budget cuts and lack of salary increases, professors and

administrators are finding better-paying jobs at other institutions.

It's understandable that support-staff members would be upset if excluded and feel they should be treated equally. But how many institutions are going to bid away the director of Publications and Campus Postal Services?

Coaches also should not receive a break, bringing us back to the age-old question of whether academics are more important than athletics at NU. Do people enroll at the university to get an education or to get a \$7 ticket to a Husker football game?

Apparently, NU President Ronald Roskens feels the same way. He has targeted the athletic budget for \$940,000 in cuts.

Regent Kermit Hansen and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs Robert Furgason expressed concerns that the bill might be unfair to faculty members without children, funding would be lost and the bill should compensate for that loss.

Both concerns should be weighed by the legislators. The regents are forced to cut another \$1.5 million from a budget that shouldn't be cut. But by rewriting the bill to include only faculty and administrators, much money would be lost.

McFarland's bill is a step in the right direction. Retention of faculty is essential if the university is to maintain quality. It's not a pay incentive but a fringe benefit. And it may work.

# Editorial

## Columnist adapts, accuses

A historical note, 1987 declared year of radical, not rabbit

In the beginning there were no opinions, no possible excuses and, so, no accusations. Things have changed now, and the modern columnist must adapt. In these times the columnist I have devised the following test. If you've thought two or more of these statements:

- Our country's heading for war;
- Our surroundings are insane;
- I think I can discover what to do;
- The President has worms;

consider yourself radical.

If you've thought two or more of these statements:

- Objections will be taken after the vote;
- It's always been this way;
- Honduras is lovely in the spring;
- Twenty percent off items marked with the red dot; consider yourself conservative.

Good. Then I declare 1987 the year of the radical. Not that I expect an uprising. I do this mainly to take historical note, as in 1976, when we had little to celebrate, we took note of the founding of this country and had a good time anyway.

Now the radical is the original. It's a new approach to human time, but at any moment, it's mainly a critique. I was wondering what a radical critique might look like in 1987. Not the radical critique, but one among many, I'm sure.

Let's look at what we've come to call "the conservative." The conservative is a world phenomenon. It's also a historical phenomenon.

Definitions are usually words to distract and tangle our minds. What I mean when I write conservative is that the religious, military and economic practices of the American conservatives are all linked by a belief in *subhumans*.

Conservative goes beyond traditional. A conservative is someone who tries to retain his or her beliefs, morals and goals by forcing them upon others. The first choice, the most effective method available to those who have made the conservative decision, is force. The conservative is the militant tradition-

alist.

American conservatives have inherited their goals and beliefs from 18th-century England. This is true in so much as conservatives are largely descendants of, and still share, 18th-century England's social intolerance, cruel approach to crime, desire to expand and dictate, and with this, the necessary flag worship. Each of the above — intolerance, state cruelty, invasion and subjugation — requires the use of violent force. But in conservative America today, each exists with-

### Lee Basham



out question.

The conservative asks us to consider:

- The usefulness of the poor, and now, the starving, to motivate the young and punish the lazy;
- The wonderful simplicity of imprisoning thousands of men and women indefinitely, and the burnt offerings of electro-convulsive execution;
- The military management of "our free hemisphere";
- The universal *patriotic pitch*.

Conservatives consider these desirable and correct in America.

I disagree. When the lesson of poverty comes to your doorstep, the conservative calls it trespassing. Execution is cruel, indeed, but the limbo of the death-row wait makes complete hypocrisy of any concern for good. In our hemisphere, self-determination means U.S. domination. It's the patriotic pitch, through the above, that allows the poor, the convicted and the Latin to become subhuman in the conservative mind.

The patriotic pitch is a curious belief. What is most annoying about this approach is the cheapness of it. The pitch goes, "Look, this is our land,

our people and our place in history. We're doing this for (fill in the blank with the name of your country); it could not be wrong."

Conservatives in each country have their own convincing reasons why their country is the one with the moral privilege. In this country the dogma of a nation under God and the Preamble are favorites.

Any objective student of constitutional history realizes there has rarely been a moment in history when the Constitution, then as interpreted, has been worth dying for. But behind the cultivated attitudes of the daily pledge, there is a simple me. Do it for yourself. Greed and self-interest become selfless patriotism when two or more conservatives are gathered in America's name.

The facts are an uncomfortable argument for cultural relativism, and their origin is thoroughly conservative. Conservatives, of course, despise any moral relativism. There is, they say, the Bible and the Preamble. But I'm afraid that for worldwide conservatism, cultural relativism must apply.

With this patriotic pitch, the conservative creates subhumans to be killed in the name of a higher way. In America, the American way. This class of subhumans is called "the enemy."

But remember, conservatism is a world phenomenon. There are many conservative regimes: the Communist party of the Soviet Union is one. In South America, Argentina is particularly notorious. The Persians have recovered the religious conservative spirit recently. Though they all differ in degree and official rationales, each of these countries embodies a conservative approach to life and society. The belief that the character of these countries is not evidence of the character of American conservatism can only rest on the patriotic pitch.

In my next column I'll finish these accusations and discuss the accuser. Until then, the conservative world is in your hands.

Basham is a senior political science major.

## Cool, rational logic should prevail in surrogate-mother controversies

The contract that Mary Beth Whitehead signed declared that she would not "form or attempt to form a parent-child relationship with any child... she may give birth to." She is about the 500th woman to sign such a contract. She is only the fifth to break it. She is now the first to go to trial.

Whitehead is a surrogate mother. As these cases go, the Whitehead case, now being heard in a New Jersey courtroom, was routine until the twist at the end. William and Elizabeth Stern cannot bear children because she has multiple sclerosis and thus risks permanent injury from pregnancy. In order to have a child that is at least half biologically theirs, the husband artificially inseminates an outsider, Whitehead. Whitehead bears the child for a fee (\$10,000) and promises to renounce, at birth, parental rights and give the baby for adoption to the Sterns.

Except that, at birth, she changes her mind. She refuses the money and wants the baby. So do the Sterns.

"The biological revolution has gotten way ahead of the law," explains Whitehead's attorney. Not so. The technology involved here is hardly exotic. It is mere artificial insemination, a technique first successfully demonstrated in 1790. What's new is not the technology, but the morality.

Female surrogacy — "collaborative reproduction" is the euphemism — offers two services: ovum donation and womb rental. Much has been made of the first. The fear is that separating natural from adoptive parents will destroy family structure. But if the worry is that natural parents are not rearing their children, why the sudden

concern with the few dozen surrogate-mother cases a year, when fewer than half of all American children make it to age 18 with both biological parents in the house? When millions of families of unrelated or half-related children are living together? And when sperm donation (the reverse kind of artificial insemination where the husband is infertile and the wife conceives an outsider's child) is routine?

### Charles Krauthammer



The real concern — what distinguishes female surrogacy from ordinary sperm donation — is womb rental. A market economy allows for all kinds of commercialization. But contracts that involve the buying and selling of human beings are not permitted. A contract to sell one's kidney would be ruled invalid, even if made between consenting adults. Why? Because such instrumental use of a person's body degrades both the person and the idea of personhood.

And yet one cannot deny the sympathy one feels for the infertile couple. They desperately want a child. Each year their odds of adopting a baby are about 40-1 against them.

How to balance the joy a child brings to an infertile couple against the indignity visited upon the hired incubator? No one knows. Not a single law has been passed in any American

jurisdiction on surrogate motherhood, even though the practice has been around for a decade.

In the last big baby-custody case, well-covered in Kings I, the judge called for a sword and suggested splitting the child in two. A summary judgment followed. (He awarded the child to the one mother who said: "Don't do it.") American jurisprudence is more deliberate. My guess is that sympathy for the infertile couple will prevail. Consenting adults will be allowed to do as they wish.

It would not be a bad outcome. It is hard not to prefer the reality of a child to the abstraction of "parenthood." Moreover, if banned, surrogacy would surely go underground. Still, the legalization of such contracts should be accompanied by some trepidation and at least one proviso. It is perverse to hold a woman to a promise not "to form or attempt to form a parent-child relationship with any child... she may give birth to." Might as well enjoy a salmon from swimming upstream.

In February, 1986, the Kentucky Supreme Court ruled that a surrogacy contract does not violate the state law prohibiting baby selling. But the court gave the mother five days after birth to change her mind. True, such a compromise increases the anxiety of the other party to the contract. But it makes the contract itself decidedly less tawdry. The Kentucky solution may not be Solomonic, but it is as close as we are likely to get.

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