

# Editorial

Daily  
Nebraskan

University of Nebraska-Lincoln

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## Quips and quotes Union budget should stand

The Committee for Fees Allocation's rejection of the Nebraska Union's 1987-88 budget appears to be a waste of time. CFA rejected the budget because the union's food service is projecting a loss for the sixth straight year.

In Wednesday's Daily Nebraskan, CFA subcommittee members Paul Reynolds and Dave Fiske said that by rejecting the budget they are telling the union that it must make positive steps to alleviate the food services deficit. CFA chairman Rob Mellion said the Union Board must rework the budget and resubmit it for approval. He said the budget will be nearly the same as the one rejected, but said he hopes the rejection will encourage Union Director Daryl Swanson to change the way the food service is run.

Why waste the time of CFA and Union Board by resubmitting a budget? It's common knowledge that the union is looking into a franchise, a probable money-maker, to replace Union Square. Union Square is not the

problem; it has broken even in the past. The Harvest Room is the major loser. The addition of the franchise would help reduce the total food-service deficit. It appears, then, that the union is making an effort to alleviate the shortfalls. The unions seem to be fighting budgetary red tape.

● Last semester the Daily Nebraskan noted students' problem with university and city parking meters. The situation seems to have worsened. Students complain that timing mechanisms are faulty, not giving as much time as they have paid for. Also, numerous meters are broken. The DN urges the UNL and Lincoln police to fix the broken meters.

● Wednesday the AIM party announced its candidacy for ASUN elections on March 11. The party is the first of several serious and joke parties to appear on the scene. The DN would like to encourage students to listen to the serious parties; they will bring to light issues important to this campus.

## Address lacks energy But the president looks healthy

The man who caused the textbooks to rewrite their sections on presidential power seems to have gone flat, legislatively speaking. Tuesday evening's State of the Union address contained little energy that can be translated into policy initiative.

While President Reagan again proved himself to be the Great Communicator — and dispelled concerns respecting his physical vigor — his speech mainly repeated concerns already discussed during the last six years. Reagan seemed almost resigned to the status of a lame duck for the last two years of his term.

Last fall's double punch of Iranamok and the Senate loss has quite obviously left the

administration groping to move off the stable equilibrium off dead center.

One subject touched upon by the president deserves some attention: He proposed to increase funding of basic research to help keep the American economy competitive in international markets. As with Gov. Kay Orr's emphasis on research, President Reagan's proposal deserves quick implementation. Not only will the benefits be direct in terms of the economy, but research funds aid universities (the institutions that do most of the basic research); it will thus ease some of the financial crunch being widely experienced and facilitate improvement in the quality of post-secondary institutions.

## Letter

### Nursing student shows support

I would like to address NU President Ronald Roskens' recommendation to the NU Board of Regents to cut the UNMC's College of Nursing-Lincoln Extension. As a student of that program I could testify to its value and quality. I could also quote statistics to show how needed the program is. Students in any program recommended for elimination would do this to fight to preserve what they consider valuable. I am no different. I will fight now as I did with my fellow students and faculty two years ago when our program was targeted for elimination.

Justifying the continued existence of the Lincoln nursing program with such comments as the shortage of professional nurses, offering a campus life for students, and serving atypical students in the Lincoln area seems to be repetitive. I therefore would like to address another aspect of this situation, the true purpose of the university.

Was not the University of Nebraska established to provide citizens of the

state with academic programs? With the current situation, one would not consider this to be so. The integrity of the university must be maintained to educate and train the state's future leaders in all academic areas. I consider every program at the university valuable, and none vulnerable to cuts, as long as they continue to serve the state's needs.

If the Lincoln nursing program is cut, it would be a great loss to the students and faculty, to the nursing profession in this state and to the citizens of this state.

For the students in other programs who are now saying, "I'm glad it wasn't my program," just remember there is always next year. As long as the university's budget continues to be cut, academic programs will continue to be targeted.

Lori Fritz

Fourth-year nursing student  
UNMC College of Nursing-Lincoln

## Modernity fails collective test Philosophy neglecting social bonds wallows in self-indulgence

Modernity is not a time, but a collection of ideas, ideas that may be adopted (wittingly or not) or argued with. Anthony Arblaster correctly observes that the "metaphysical (i.e., theory of reality) and the ontological (i.e., theory of being) core" of modernity is individualism. Thomas Fleming, editor of "Chronicles," summarized the fundamental propositions of modernity in a recent review of Arblaster's book: "the distinction between fact and value, the isolation of human beings from each other (privacy), the use of individual experience as a moral touchstone, faith in science, self-possession (the pervasive notion of ownership extended to one's person) and the sovereignty of desires and appetites."

The story of the modern era is the tale of alienation, despair and their bastard offspring, brutality. Contempt for the humane boundaries of the cultural congregation has foisted humanity into a social dilemma. A dilemma that, if resolved toward either prong, embraces death.

Writing in 1610, the poet John Donne understood the abject loneliness that the era of the idea of the man-god would foist upon its participants:

" 'Tis all in pieces, all coherence gone;

All just supply, and all Relation:  
Prince, Subject, Father, Sonne, all things forgot,

For every man alone thinks he hath got

To be a Phoenix, and that then can be

None of that kinde, of which he is, but hee."

The task of the man-god reached its popular exposition in J.S. Mill's "On Liberty." Mill's individualistic arguments are today blandly asserted as the most obvious of truths. (Though today even Mill's belief in truth itself is railed against as being "intolerant," ostensibly by those who seek only to extend his notions of tolerance.) "No constraint" is the slogan to which

modernity's "popular opinion" attends.

Yet the despised bonds of the congregation are the only bounds that give meaning to the goals of human life. In a seminal essay, University of Massachusetts philosopher Robert Wolff ironically observes that the will to self-destruction occurs precisely upon the consistent realization of two conditions that Mill would term parts of "liberty."

Jim  
Rogers



The first condition occurs with "the loosening of the constraints of traditional and group values." Suicide is the result, since "there is no intrinsic limit to the quantity of satisfaction which the self can seek, it finds itself drawn into an endless and frustrating pursuit of pleasure. The infinitude of the objective universe is unconstrained for the individual within social or subjective limits, and the self is simply dissipated in the vacuum which it strives to fill."

Anomism — or lawlessness — is the personal abyss which swallows the personality given such "freedom" from the warm, enfolding domain of the congregation. Consistent anomie is nihilism. Yet while always asserting the presuppositions of this nihilism, the modern era insanely denies the reality of the abyss. And so the human lemmings flock to the sea of nihilism, apparently not aware that they are cast adrift in an ocean of death.

The other condition is also a manifestation of "freedom" from congregational bonds — and the lively intimacy they entail. Wolff writes, "Freedom from the constricting bonds of an intimate social involvement brings with it a second form of psychic derangement,

called by (French sociologist Emile) Durkheim 'egoism,' which also leads in extreme cases to suicide. . . . The individual is launched upon an infinite expanse, condemned to seek a security which must always pass away in death and to project meaning into a meaningless void."

Freedom only makes sense within a congregational context — not an individualistic one. For example, University of Chicago philosopher Allan Bloom is correct in asserting, as he did in a speech broadcast on PBS several years ago, that the goal of free speech is obtained only when there is a truth that can be debated; i.e., only if absolutes exist is the nature of truth a subject of concern. If the foundation of our tolerance is that nothing is true, then there is no reason to speak. After all, if one person's "truth" is as valid as the one you hold, there's no reason to engage in any persuasive attempt. This nihilistic foundation of "free speech" results (by the consistent believer) only in an oppressively silent world.

The West has backed away from the destructive abyss of economic laissez faire (which it approached during the 19th century). The search for the preservation of personality in the economy continued today. (Though increasing statism of the West, although an understandable reaction to the extremity of the 19th century situation, is scarcely more humane than the system it replaced and is, at times, much worse.

As with economic laissez faire, so too today, the dehumanization of our cultural laissez faire invites responses. The conservative world view, as George Will aptly noted, has a warm spot in its heart for the notion of organic community. Personality and life are nurtured only given the recognition of the import of the cultural congregation.

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## Mental Rolodex of sexual partners breeds new social responsibility

This is how it comes into consciousness:

A statistic is printed in the daily paper. The number of heterosexually transmitted AIDS cases has increased by 200 percent in the past year.

A secret blood test is taken of women applying for marriage licenses in Alameda County, Calif. Out of 2,000 women, 0.5 percent of them have been exposed to the virus.

An NBC special features AIDS victims. Several of them are from "the general population."

A cover story is published in The Atlantic about heterosexuals and AIDS. The subtitle is: "the second stage of the epidemic."

One after the other, alarm bells go off in an ever-large portion of the public mind. Millions of "straight" Americans turn the mental Rolodex of their sexual partners — two or 200 — and wonder if one of them carried a virus into bed.

"When you go to bed with one man," says a single woman who is far from promiscuous, "you go to bed with his entire sexual history and the history of all his sexual partners." Says another, "I have worried about getting AIDS, but I suppose, incredible as it sounds, I could also worry about giving it."

The AIDS epidemic has entered the worry system, the 4-o'clock-in-the-morning concerns. If we do not worry for ourselves, it's for our friends, family, children. Many now routinely pour over scare stories and search for antidotes to anxiety in the progress reports from the medical world.

Nevertheless, it is remarkable how little actual behavior has changed. In The Atlantic Katie Leishman writes, "AIDS may provide the ultimate test of strategies for behavior modification." But she reports on partners of AIDS patients who go on having sex and

without condoms, on gay men who cut back but do not cut out unprotected sex, and on people who shield themselves with intuition: "I would intuit if someone had something as degenerative as the AIDS virus."

This sluggishness that Leishman describes so matter-of-factly, this difficulty in changing private behavior, is linked inexorably to the difficulty of changing public behavior. We have, as yet, no mass program for education or safety.

Last week, Surgeon General C. Everett Koop said how troubled he was by conservative attacks on his endorsement of AIDS education in the schools. Many in the religious right suspect that AIDS is a front for sneaking sex education into classrooms.

Ellen  
Goodman



On the other side, old-guard sexual libertarians like Gay Talese brush off the risk to heterosexuals. They suspect that the AIDS scare is a right-wing tool for jolting people back into Victorian morality.

The debate about condoms, that imperfect but important device for protection, seems equally rutted in old arguments. A major San Francisco TV station agreed last week to allow condom ads. But the network still refuses to air ads for products that might control disease because they also control birth.

Many continue to focus on sexual morality instead of the deadly amoral-

ity of a virus. We have not yet made a crucial shift in our priorities, putting health first.

In high schools, dispensing condoms remains controversial. In Las Vegas, when they talked of testing prostitutes, the chief of the vice squad protested: "We're just making it easier for these men." In cities where AIDS is passed from one intravenous-drug user to another and to the rest of the population, officials are still querulous about easy access to needles.

There are some who offer a one-word answer to this epidemic: no. Say no to unwed sex. Say no to prostitution. Say no to drugs. But is this to be our sole national-health program: "Say No or Die"? And how do we protect people from those who said "yes"?

To date, 30,000 Americans have been stricken by AIDS, 1,200 of them heterosexuals. We have no idea how many carry the virus. As — not *if* but *as* — AIDS spreads through the population, "no" will become a much more common answer to sex. Testing may become routine, and so will the demand for every kind of protection from education to condoms to clean syringes. But how many more will die before our behavior, public as well as private, is "modified"?

As the stories and statistics pile up, I wonder about our difficulty in treating AIDS as a medical menace. In this biological battle, we are peculiarly enough up against a virus that moves much faster, adapts more agilely and seems tragically more open to change than the human beings it threatens.

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