

# Editorial

Daily Nebraskan  
University of Nebraska-Lincoln

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## Quips and quotes Debates, phasers not stunning

**A**SUN's second debate (if you can call them debates; it seemed more like a question and answer sessions) Tuesday evening allowed the candidates from all the parties, joke or serious, to showcase their party's platforms.

Although the Residence Hall Association, sponsors of the debate, provided different questions than Mortar Board did in the first debate, the answers sounded vaguely familiar. All the candidates, presidential and first and second vice-presidential, skipped around the questions and played up their platforms.

Their moves were not entirely intentional. RHA provided long and wordy questions and some consisted of more than one part. Anyone would have had difficulty understanding and answering some of the questions.

The candidates used more specifics and stayed away from the generalities that plagued the first debate. Some even followed up on questions asked in the last debate.

● In other ASUN election news, when the TREK party announced its candidacy, they proposed issuing Type II phasers

with stun and destroy capabilities to student security and UNL police officers. Although the proposal was probably meant as a joke, in some states residents might not think it's funny. South Carolina and New York issue stun guns to law-enforcement officers. Nebraska officials said the state will never use them. The thought of stun guns and the risks in using them, especially to the victims, is scary and not really very funny.

● Drug-test accuracy is being scrutinized. Recently, an employee of the Nebraska Public Power District tested positive for drugs. Apparently he ate too many poppy seeds in his diet. The example may make some employers think before basing decisions on test outcomes.

● The 1987 senior class chose to finance a North American Indian display for Morrill Hall. The Daily Nebraskan had recommended the seniors finance a Sheldon Art Gallery display. It received the fewest votes. The student recreation center finished second in the voting. All three choices provided students a worthwhile choice.

## Sex debate not yet begun

### Sexual issues need consideration within social fabric

*Take but a degree away, untune that string,  
And hark what discord follows!  
each thing meets  
In mere oppugnancy...  
everything includes itself in power  
Power into will, will into appetite,  
And appetite, an universal wolf  
So doubly seconded with will and power,  
Must make perforce an universal prey,  
And last eat up himself.  
— Ulysses in Shakespeare's "Troilus and Cressida"*

**S**ex merely as a physical concept is easily understood. Sex is not, and cannot be, understood in a social vacuum — the human experience of sex is rife with threads of social complexity and importance. Yet the broad sweep of the public talk on sex — for sex education to condom advertising on television — advocates and detractors of the respective issues are woefully reductionistic in their rhetoric.

Both sexual traditionalists and liberationists speak in black-and-white terms. The traditionalists absolutize their position ("this sex-education program will destroy the family") and so do the liberationists ("sex is a private matter between consenting adults and has no spillover into social or political spheres"). The necessary sophistication of marginal analysis is ignored and the debate quickly devolves into an exchange of stale polemics.

Yet of these two groups, the liberationists (led by an impressive array of social scientists) are the ones that

ought to know better. The bourgeois family, and the sexual context it requires for success and fosters, is not a phenomenon that can be recklessly toyed with long by well-meaning social scientists without ramifications. Yet this latter group, ostensibly committed to a "value-free perspective of social-scientific analysis," many times, does not seem to understand this.

reasonable defense of the bourgeois family."

They argue that only within the context of this family form (and the values and institutions which are implicit in this construct) are the sociological requirements for democratic capitalism. They observe "the family, and specifically the bourgeois family, is the necessary social context for the emergence of the autonomous individuals who are the empirical foundation of political democracy."

Here, then, we understand that the context of the messages regarding sex, the sex "talk-about," is important. Focusing merely on technique (the physical hows, whys and preventions) does not support this necessary social construct, but erodes it. In a 1929 essay Aldous Huxley observed that the "scientific" and "psychological" language of sex — those ideas about which so much education and policy agendas are formed — is inadequate "to create those internal restraints without which sexual impulse cannot be transformed into love."

While no one instance of erosion carves out a wide canyon, given enough time and force, gaps as wide and deep as the Grand Canyon will appear. But the social fabric isn't nature: Humans are left tragically ruined by gaping tears in the social community. The current debates about sex have for far too long ignored the ultimate implications of incessant, marginal erosions in the necessary social foundation of the bourgeois family. The real debate has yet to begin.

Rogers is an economics graduate and law student, and Daily Nebraskan editorial page editor.

Jim Rogers



Karen Smith recently wrote in the "Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences" that as "a focus of intellectual examinations, the family is an area of the social sciences in which policy formation and the ideal of objectivity frequently coexist in contradictory and ineffectual silence. Consequently, study of the family is often disjointed and non-productive...."

"Realization of the inherent relationship between the family and value judgments is a crucial step in advancing family study beyond an abecedarian level to a greater awareness of the complexity of this social phenomenon."

One exception to Smith's claim is "The War Over the Family: Capturing the Middle Ground" by sociologists Brigitte Berger and Peter L. Berger. In this work, Berger and Berger describe the "contemporary ideological battleground" over the family and develop "a

## Editorial Policy

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chief. Editorials do not necessarily reflect the views of the university, its employees, the students or the NU Board of Regents. The Daily Nebraskan's publishers are the regents, who established the UNL Publications Board to supervise the daily production of the paper.



## Public mobilizes but not for learning

At this point in the debate, it seems to me that the defense advanced by proponents of the student recreation center/indoor practice field has boiled down to two points: first, that the proposed facility is sorely needed, and secondly, that its financing will not be detrimental to the cause of academics at UNL. Both are basically true. Both, however, miss the point.

What bothers me and, I suspect, most opponents of the rec center is that in recent weeks, the university and the people of the state have shown themselves capable of mobilizing immense support for athletic and recreation programs while remaining reluctant to mobilize a similar level of support for academic ones.

Where, I wonder, was the crowd of students at the budget hearings last winter when the Legislature was taking a chain saw to the university budget? (And what happened to ASUN's program of "quiet advocacy" as a strategy of lobbying for student interests?) Where are the bold initiatives of private industry in publicly championing Nebraska academics — not that Chancellor Martin Massengale or President Ronald Roskens would be entirely comfortable with their mugs on the back of a milk carton alongside the missing children. And where is the support of the public at large for academics — a public that feels no qualms about sending Tom Osborne and Bob Devaney its spare \$10 or \$20 but acts as if the blood is being sucked from its veins when faced with a potential tax increase to support higher education.

The rec center/practice field is not an evil idea, and its benefits cannot be denied. But in it crystallizes the misplaced priorities of the state in regards to education. I had optimistically assumed that the leadership of this state's biggest university — from the governor on down to ASUN — would realize that a time of budget shortfalls and cutbacks is a horrendously inappropriate time to engage in a \$14.9 million bout of capital construction for

what is basically a luxury, regardless of the means of financing. It seems I was wrong.

Brian Svoboda  
junior  
political science

brats serving in it became a real possibility.

Rodney Black  
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## Article presented spoiled attitude

I find the position in the Daily Nebraskan editorial on the proposed conscription program very difficult to support on the grounds presented in that article (Feb. 25). The blatant, spoiled, middle-class, white attitude presented in the article was very disturbing. The negative connotations associated with what was deemed "civic responsibility" were quite appalling.

The article presented the idea of a one-year service in a selective-service program as comparable to a term in a concentration camp. This in itself is not disturbing but to include in the same article a reference to the military as a successful means of facilitating the poor and minorities into the middle class is at least, very uncomfortable.

This article said to me, "Let's make sure the benefits I receive from the system continue. Just do not ask me for my contribution. Let the poor and minorities improve themselves by doing the things that are just beneath me. I mean, a whole year? Come on, that could put me behind schedule on my quest for a brand new BMW and a condo in the sun."

I think a selective-service obligation with no loopholes for the privileged would do more to expose different people to different conditions of life in the United States than inconvenience those above the rest of us. The selective service may also be conducive to preventing war. In that possibility, enough of the privileged class would enter into the military. With so many possible combat situations, perhaps a legislator would be slower in committing U.S. lives to a foreign land.

I think the idea of a national conscription program became "unjust, unwise and unnecessary" when the possibility of some lily-white, spoiled

## DN editorializes in rec headline

I was appalled to pick up the Daily Nebraskan and read the following headline: "Rec center supported at hearing but silent majority stays at home" (March 3). As a news-editorial journalism major, my instructors have tried to teach me many things and have succeeded in teaching me at least one: Make headlines factual.

Nowhere in the article does the DN prove that the "silent majority" is the majority at all. The last three surveys on ASUN ballots show an overwhelming support for the much-needed recreation center. Of course, you may argue that only 13 percent of the student population votes at ASUN elections. The trite saying "Apathy is the downfall of democracy" immediately comes to mind. If the so-called "silent majority" were really interested in this issue, they could have cast their ballots in opposition of the project.

In addition, how does the DN know that this "majority" was really at home. Maybe they were spending time doing other things while the 350 proponents of the rec center, obviously the ones who care, were at the hearing. In the future, I suggest the DN get its facts straight before writing headlines and keep its editorializing to the editorial pages, not front-page headlines.

Steve Mossman  
senior  
news-editorial

## Letter Policy

The Daily Nebraskan welcomes brief letters to the editor from all readers and interested others.

Letters will be selected for publication on the basis of clarity, originality, timeliness and space available. The Daily Nebraskan retains the right to edit all material submitted.