

Editorial

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An insane refusal Rationality demands pay hike

On our last day of regular publication, it's sadly fitting that we should again note how the Nebraska Legislature has failed the university and, hence, the entire state.

Yesterday the unicameral voted down a budget amendment that would have allocated several millions of dollars to raise professors' salaries. So what's new. So little is left to be said on the matter.

Over the years the DN has consistently argued for higher salaries, and yet salaries have continued to lag and dispirited professors have begun to leave in increasing numbers. The case for a raise is self-evident. After all is said and done, the reticence of the unicameral is simply beyond comprehension.

There is no argumentative point of contact with opposing senators: What could possibly motivate their contempt for higher education in Nebraska? Unfortunately, too often politicians do not reap what they sow; they won't pay as much as other Nebraskans for the death of public post-secondary education.

They are not advancing the public interest in their anti-education voting habits. And if they believe they are promoting Nebraska's interests, they are simply insane. The problem is that you can't reason with a crazy person. If he says the grass is not green, or that the sky is not blue, he won't, he can't listen to reason. One can only hope that the senators regain their senses and see how desperately wrong they are.

No need to regulate FCC crackdown a break with policy

The Reagan administration has consistently held itself out as pro-deregulation. Industry after industry has been the object of its laissez-faire philosophy. This philosophy has also been applied by the administration to the mass media — usually regulated on the basis that the public owns the limited number of airwaves. This expression in the mass media is evidenced by the administration's antipathy toward such regulations as the fairness doctrine.

But the administration is only so consistent, and deregulation is allowed to go only so far. To wit: the FCC recently issued warnings to several radio stations that broadcast highly offensive material, material that is racial and sexual in nature.

The king-of- raunchy radio is Howard Stern. (Readers may have seen him in one of his several

"Late Night with David Letterman" appearances.) While nobody holds that Stern is not offensive — that's why people listen to him — his offensiveness is not necessarily prohibitable. As one ACLU type has argued, Stern's broadcasts are "well within the bounds of (constitutionally) protected bad taste."

Certainly the FCC's action is counter to the laissez-faire push of the rest of the administration. The market can work here as well as in other areas. Stern seems to be quite correct that the solution to the problem for those who find his show questionable is to turn off the station.

If enough people do that then the marketplace will solve the problem in a way that is constitutionally forbidden to the government: The market will shut Stern down.



Editorial Policy

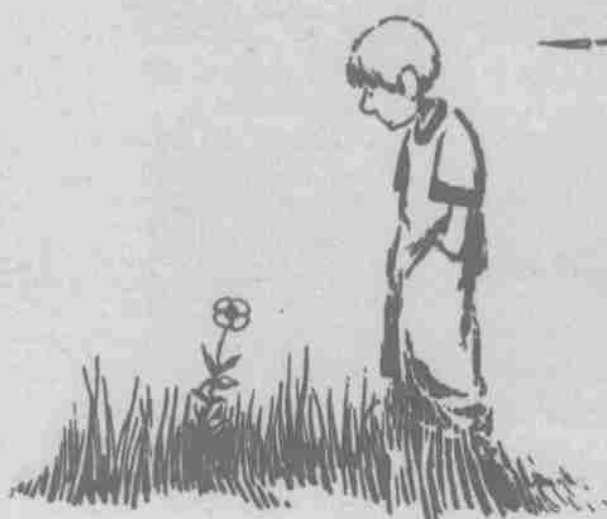
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SPRING



WHEN THE NATIONAL RIFLE ASSOCIATION MEETS TO CELEBRATE GUNS AND THE RIGHT OF MADMEN TO BEAR THEM.

Red, white & blue, blue, blue American malaise, pessimism not inspired only by Iran

Three veteran Washington Post reporters, beating the bushes around Knoxville, Tenn., in search of grassroots opinion, reported that they have come upon "strikingly negative feelings about the direction of the country and the performance of American leaders, including President Reagan." What's more, they say, Knoxville's "words of disappointment, cynicism and concern" are echoed right across the country in poll after poll: "Measures of pessimism, worry about the future and distrust of government are all on the rise."

Just why did David Broder, Haynes Johnson and Paul Taylor choose Knoxville for their doorbell-punching expedition? Their opening paragraph explains that "for generations, the people of Knox County have been characterized as conservative, patriotic and Republican." In other words, this apparently started out as a snipe hunt to see if Iran et al. had seriously damaged Ronald Reagan with his core constituency, but turned up evidence of a more general and more interesting malaise.

The reporters rightly contrast the present mood of the American people with the one that characterized them in 1984 when (according to the Republican commercials) it was "morning again in America" and Ronald Reagan was the embodiment of all the grand old virtues. Today, they report, there has been "a clear shift" toward gloom, doubt and disillusion.

It certainly isn't hard to see why, and it has remarkably little to do with the current Iran controversy. Such attitudes were inspired during the 1970s, of course, by America's bogout in the Vietnam War, Nixon's squalid administration and the near-total collapse of American will under Jimmy Carter at the time of the Iran hostage crisis. But these were all history by the time Ronald Reagan was elected president, and it is far more recent events that have blackened America's mood all over again.

William
A.
Rusher



There is, for example, nothing terribly new about corruption in politics, but recent revelations of its gargantuan scope in New York City (to take just one glaring example) give future politicians an imposing target to shoot at. The Democratic leader of the Bronx has been convicted of fraud; the former borough president of the Bronx is under indictment; the man who held both comparable jobs in the borough of Queens committed suicide to avoid a similar fate; half a dozen other high city officials have been convicted or indicted or have resigned under fire.

And the story in other cities and states right across the country is much the same.

But the politicians haven't been having all the fun. Wall Street is reeling under the impact of revelations that prominent figures such as Ivan Boesky were robbing ordinary investors blind with the help of inside information. The sports world has been given a black eye by revelations of drug use among some of its most admired personalities. As for the U.S. Marines, several of them are under arrest for giving the Russians guided tours of the secret corners of at least one of our embassies abroad in return for the favors of KGB floozies. Turn to religion for consolation and you run into Rev. Jim Bakker sneaking out of a motel room after a roll in the hay with a church secretary. Is it any wonder that Knoxville is blue?

On the other hand, it is fair to note that many of these cases of wrongdoing came to our attention only because the Reagan administration brought them to light. It has stood, and still stands, for far higher standards of behavior.

Naturally, Reagan's enemies fondly hope that revelations yet to come in the Iran investigation may tarnish him irreparably. As to that, Knoxville is suspending judgment until all the facts are in; but it hasn't happened yet. Like Cyrano, Ronald Reagan still has his white plume.

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Rusher is the publisher of the National Review.

Banjo strummer sings the song of a country surrounded by hell

Mostly Dave Hardy writes songs about dead chickens. The string band he plays with, Poultrygeist, sings about those ghosts on WOW sometimes and at the Zoo bar.

He wrote just one protest song before, a ditty called "Don't Sign Away the Family Farm," which he performed in Omaha's Central Park as a petition drive for the recall of Initiative 300.

He picked up his banjo in protest again. This time for peace? No. This time for a country about the size of Tennessee. A country surrounded by hell.

"We're sending the Guard to Honduras"

They say it's for practice, not war And maybe we'll teach Nicaragua To keep off McCounaughy's shore

Imagine that a group of guerillas is holed up in Grand Island's Conestoga Mall. Shoppers, men, women and children, are getting hit by stray bullets in the insanity. Nobody knows what the issues are. But gun sales are featured at every store. U.S. military advisers are headquartered at the Stuhr Museum.

Now imagine Interstate 80 without

the sculptures and rest areas. Then put some kids with donkeys on the shoulders. At the Platte River, women are washing their clothes on rocks and drinking the river water when they're thirsty.



Lise
Olsen

Honduras is less than 100 miles from Nicaragua — about the distance from Lincoln to Grand Island. Closer are the death squads and terror of El Salvador. Nebraskans from places like David City are there nailing boards, fixing kids' teeth and drinking Lowenbraus. They complain about the dryness and the dust that seems everywhere. But they're tanned, and most seem to be enjoying themselves away from home. It's like a vacation.

Kids are hungry in Honduras. They surround American tourists and beg. The country has about five or six paved roads, none near the size of I-80. No shopping malls anywhere. Catholic churches everywhere. A lot of faith but little hope.

Downtown in Tegucigalpa a pair of 10-year-olds yelled at Nebraskan journalists, including 10/11 photographer, Molly Miller, trying to send some of the story back home.

"Baseros!" they yelled. Bastards.

The fighting isn't here. People don't seem afraid to say what they want to American journalists. But "they all look like refugees," Miller, a 1986 graduate, remembers.

Kids about five years older than the ones downtown guarded her hotel. The 15-year-olds, dressed in khakis, fatigues and boots, carried automatic machine guns. Their fingers never left the triggers.

So if Bereuter asks for your support, Just say no!

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