

Editorial

**Daily
Nebraskan**

University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Mike Reilly, *Editor*, 472-1766
Jeanne Bourne, *Editorial Page Editor*
Jann Nyffeler, *Associate News Editor*
Scott Harrah, *Night News Editor*
Joan Rezac, *Copy Desk Chief*
Linda Hartmann, *Wire Editor*
Charles Lieurance, *Asst. A & E Editor*

Ethics questioned

Biden withdraws

Public outcry and damaging disclosures struck the second active Democratic candidate out of the presidential race Wednesday when U.S. Sen. Joseph Biden withdrew. He dropped out amid revelations that he committed plagiarism in law school and exaggerated his academic accomplishments.

Although many politicians borrow phrases and rhetoric from other politicians, philosophers and the Bible, Biden's unattributed usages and plagiarism led the public to question the veracity of his other actions.

Biden called this an "exaggerated shadow" of his mistakes. But just as Gary Hart's fall from "glory" didn't necessarily hinge on his infidelity, but rather on his lies to the public, Biden's plagiarism and extensive phrase borrowing is a matter of ethics rather than a "crime."

These questionable actions raised doubts about other quirks Biden may or may not have.

This situation brings to light, again, the hell presidential can-

didates must endure in hopes of winning their parties' nomination as well as the hell the media puts them through.

Some people wonder if nothing in candidates' pasts is untouchable. They wonder if a mistake made under the pressure of law school is still game for the media's scrutiny.

This is the way it should be. Just as the training for medical doctors is so rigorous, presidential candidates also must prove their worthiness. Those who emerge from this gantlet are qualified — they're the best candidates possible. They have been exposed to situations of intense pressure where fast thinking and common sense must prevail. If they are elected president without this experience, they might not be ready for what the presidency will bring them.

Biden has promised that he will pursue the presidency again.

How well he'll fare remains to be seen. But one thing's sure: He won't be able to hide what he has done.

NFL players' strike

Union, management urged to settle problems

Throughout his playing career with the Oakland (and later Los Angeles) Raiders, Gene Upshaw made great strides in football. But as executive director of the National Football League Players Association, he has called too many misdirected plays.

The NFL went on strike Monday night, citing several problems with the current free-agent system, retirement benefits, drug tests and roster limits.

The strike seems to center on the free-agency debate. The players want unrestricted free agency for members with more than four years in the NFL. The owners are willing to change their present free-agent system, but they are not in favor of players deciding whom they will play for.

If Upshaw really wants to improve football, he should remember what free agency did to professional baseball. Open free agency led to skyrocketing salaries in pro baseball.

And it's not like football players are poor. Denver Broncos quarterback John Elway just signed a six-year, \$12.7 million contract.

And Elway became a free agent of sorts a few years ago. He was drafted by the lowly Indianapolis (then Baltimore) Colts but refused to sign with them. He said he would only play on a winning team or he would play professional baseball. Colt owners gave in to his demands and he was traded to Denver.

In reality, as long as owners give in to players' demands, they can almost determine where they will play.

Another issue in which both sides disagree is drug testing. The players do not want random drug testing, but think testing should be done only if there is probable cause.

But unscheduled testing will solve the NFL's drug problem faster. Under a probable-cause test, management would need to justify its reasons for testing an athlete for drugs.

Management should give in to the union's demands involving retirement benefits and roster limits.

The union wants the NFL to contribute \$25 million to player pensions. An average career in football is less than three years. The players want and need a pension to fall back on in case their careers are cut short by injury.

The owners are saying they will contribute \$12.5 million to player pensions, but they should be willing to compromise on this position.

The players also have demanded that the NFL's active player roster be increased from 45 to 52. This would allow players a greater chance to make the NFL and possibly would add more years to players' careers.

If this strike is going to be settled soon, both sides must meet and compromise on their positions on certain issues. Both sides should remember what a prolonged strike did to the game in 1982, when players walked out for 57 days.

In order to avoid the problems caused by the 1982 strike, the union and management should settle their differences and keep playing football.

'New Astrology' a trend

People intimidated by future, afraid of inability to control it

The weather for FarmAid III last Saturday was absolutely perfect — hardly a cloud in the sky, temperatures in the 70s and nary a reason for complaint. The concert promoters and those who attended were quite relieved, and a good time was had by all.

There was very little cause for concern. If they had just checked with me, I could have let them know the Wednesday before that the weather would be wonderful. I knew then because I heard a long-range weather forecast predicting rain throughout the week and almost no hope of good weather on Saturday. That sealed it.

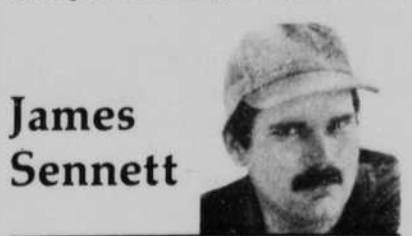
Don't get me wrong. I have great respect for the science of meteorology and particularly for its most visible practical application in weather prediction. However, there are limits beyond which the moniker "science" can no longer be legitimately applied.

I have near-full confidence in a weather report covering the next 24 hours. I have reservations but will nonetheless listen to reports covering the period 24 to 48 hours hence. Anything beyond 48 hours is pure conjecture at best, and pitiful fantasy at worst.

I cannot remember the last time I heard a long-range weather forecast that was anything like accurate. In fact, I have begun to count on the opposite. During this summer's heat wave, I worried all the time they were telling us that the spell could not last very much longer. It was only when they gave up in the first week of August and said the heat would probably be with us another two to three weeks that I took heart. Sure enough, within 72 hours we were enjoying rain showers and below-normal temperatures. The heat has not been back. I have cited only two examples.

This is not just a tirade against the foibles of weather forecasting. It is nothing so trite as that. Rather, I bring up the subject as just one example of a growing trend in American culture — a

trend I call the New Astrology. In this day of scientific sophistication, it is quite fashionable to ridicule and ignore the ancient claims of deterministic fates sealed by the movements of the heavenly bodies — and well we should reject them. However, the impetus is still with us that created credence for such practices despite repeated evi-



James Sennett

dence of their inefficacy.

In short, we human beings are intimidated and frightened by the future.

Since the beginning of civilization we have been used to dominating, controlling and manipulating our environment for our own purposes. We have long had control over the present. Since the historiographical revolution of the last century we have even gained some control over the past. But we have never been able to get a handle on control of the future. As long as this inability haunts us, we are painfully aware that we are not yet — and perhaps never will be — the masters of the universe we desire to be.

So we make up lies to convince ourselves that we are in control of the future. At least, we hope, we can reasonably anticipate what the future holds and can adequately prepare for it. Of course, to some extent this is true. The efficacy of inductive logic and the lessons of history alone provide us with good tools for the fabrication of our destinies. But the game goes well beyond these innocent common-sense artifacts. The same paranoid angst that drove our forebears to the darkened chambers of Madame Parode with her crystal ball and tarot cards drives us to the squeaky-clean pseudo-laboratories of the New Astrologers.

Soviet strategies suspect

INF Treaty called misguided

So the leader of the fight to ratify the INF Treaty will be Alan Cranston. If Sen. Cranston had been in charge of our defense policy over the last 20 years, we would have nothing much left to bargain with than maybe the Coast Guard. But he is the appropriate vehicle for Mr. Reagan's be-nighted treaty: the man who always trusts the Soviet Union, always distrusts the Pentagon and has waged war throughout his career against the military-industrial complex, not Gulag.

Meanwhile, the top congressional military man, Rep. Les Aspin, is not so sure about the INF Treaty. His point is that the nuclear sacrifices promised by the Soviet Union do not amount to very much because even if they proceed to destroy their SS-20s, all they need to do is to build up their supply of SS-25s — which they are free to do under the INF Treaty — and in due course they will match their conventional preponderance. Mr. Aspin does have a suggestion for this problem, that we observe strictly the terms of SALT II, which does forbid the development of a fresh weapons system. But of course, SALT II is already violated by the Soviet Union and the Soviet Union is not even theoretically obliged to bind itself to an unratified treaty.

Confronted on "This Week with David Brinkley" with Mr. Aspin's reservations, secretary of State George Shultz couldn't find much more to say than that this was the first time in history that the Soviet Union has proposed an actual reduction in strategic weapons; and that it was really wonderful, the asymmetrical shape of the thing. We would remove about 350 nuclear warheads, they would remove about 1,500.

But, the interrogator persisted, what

if the Soviets should re-embark on a strategic buildup? There's no way we could ever persuade the pacifist forces in Europe to redeploy our Pershings, is there? Well, no, said the secretary. But how can you say we would be worse off, when we are talking about an asymmetrical reduction right now?

True, we are hardly disarming, if by "we" one means the nuclear resources of the Western world. The proposed reduction amounts to 4 percent of our total nuclear firepower, and — INF enthusiasts never tire of telling us —

William F. Buckley Jr.



there are presently 2,000 nuclear weapons in the European area. That's true. But to stress them is on the order of saying that we don't need more police to keep order in Harlem since, after all, we have the National Guard. It is the principal point of the treaty's opponents that there is a difference between an effective deterrent (theater nuclear weapons that stand directly in the path of an invading Soviet army) and abstract weapons, mostly situated in the Midwest, and in submarines primarily under the control of the United States. It is the conventional wisdom that the United States would be reluctant to begin a nuclear world war to stop Soviet tanks backing, say, a demand for West Berlin, or points west.

Gen. Bernard Rogers, who until a few

Long-range weather forecasting is just one, and a rather innocuous, example. More sinister soothsayers abound. Chief among these is the hideous practice of economic forecasting. Who can find two economic forecasters who agree? And who can find one who has made specific predictions for the future (beyond a few weeks or months) that come true with consistency that would suggest anything but an educated guess at best?

Yet we continue to listen, continue to believe, continue to deceive ourselves that we know what will happen. In fact, the whole "science" of futurology must at present be classified as a New Astrology. We read with relish these predated histories of our country and our world in the year 2000 and beyond. But a quick rereading of Alvin Toffler's 1970s smash hit "Future Shock" should convince us that he knew almost nothing more about the 1980s than any other aware person did.

We can only mention the abominable practice of the news media to tell us what will happen rather than what did happen and the perennially popular practice in religious circles of assuring us that the world will end on Tuesday. Of course, there is the opposite practice of the irreligious who assure us that the end is billions of years away if it comes at all. On every side we are convicted of our own inability to live in a world that is bigger than we are.

We are eschatological voyeurs. Without certainty, we would have to run to faith. The repugnance of so pedestrian an approach forces us to sacrifice our integrity on the altar of false security. We would rather feign dominance than admit subordination. The emperor is stark naked, but the ghastly consequences of such an admission far outweigh the price required to perpetuate the myth.

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

months ago was head of NATO, comments on the treaty with the clipped accents of a professional soldier: "We are left without a deterrent." Gen. Alexander Haig, also a former commander of NATO, and now a presidential candidate, will testify against the treaty. Question: How is it that without our Pershings Europe managed to survive for four or five years when the Soviets had the intermediate range monopoly with their SS-20s? Why should no Europe then be better off under INF than it was between the late '70s (when the SS-20s were deployed) and 1983 (when the countervailing Pershings began to be deployed)? Answer: a) It did not suit the Soviet timetable to assert itself in Europe during that period; and b) European willpower was stronger then, in favor of resistance, than it is now. In 1977, Helmut Schmidt, the chancellor of West Germany and head of the Social Democratic Party, was demanding countervailing strategic theater weapons from the United States. Today, his party has for all intents and purposes renounced nuclear deterrence. Anti-nuclear rhetoric of the administration resonates through the chanceries of Europe, and the people wonder, "Why is it that the United States is now given to proclaiming its distaste for the weapon that has served to guarantee the peace of Europe for a generation?"

The question is difficult to answer. It is one of many questions we will need to ponder when this misguided treaty is presented to the Senate for confirmation, and cheered on by the likes of Alan Cranston and the Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy and, I guess, the Quakers.