

Editorial

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Ad a distortion Exon refuses to cave in to lobby

In a society where corporations carry a lot of clout in political decision-making, U.S. Sen. J.J. Exon's recent reaction to pressure from a pharmaceutical manufacturer has been a welcome exception.

An advertisement in the Omaha World-Herald urged senior citizens to "call Senator Exon today or get stuck with the bill tomorrow."

A similar ad ran in Lincoln's Journal and Star saying to "call Senator Kames." The ad went on to explain the prescription-drug amendment in the catastrophic health care bill now before the Senate. It said senior citizens in Nebraska will "be forced to pay for a program (they) may never get to use." And again, in three different places, the ad said constituents should "call today."

The ad, sponsored by the Pharmaceutical Manufacturers Association, aroused 500 people to call Exon's office. It also aroused Exon's ire, and he didn't keep it secret.

Exon said a few letters from concerned Nebraskans carry more weight than calls brought on by "the false scare tactics" of the drug industry.

Exon's response to the ad is right on target. The pharmaceutical organization's lobbying attempts misled the public with bold subtitles saying the amendment was "not voluntary," had a "high deductible" and would incur "sky-high costs." Those are strong and scary words to direct at people who have to watch where every dollar goes.

However, the organization forgot to mention that the amendment would encourage the use of less expensive generic drugs for patients covered under the bill. This means the drug manufacturers would be making less money from Medicare beneficiaries.

Greed is unattractive. However, corporate money grubbing gets even uglier when it's covered by a thin veil of concern for the very people the group wants to milk for extra money.

Exon wrote to concerned people — as he should — and said he would keep a close eye on the catastrophic health insurance bill. It's already passed the House of Representatives. Let's hope that when the bill comes before the Senate, the senators will vote in the best interests of their constituents and not bow to corporate pressure.

Orr needs to invest in ag school's future

Gov. Kay Orr had an important announcement at her Wednesday press conference. Unfortunately, it wasn't about her decision on what to do with the future of the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture at Curtis.

Orr carried a pair of baby booties to the conference and announced that she will become a grandmother next spring. In her other hand, she cradles the future of an educational institution.

She said she'll announce the fate of the agricultural college in about 10 days. The NU Board of Regents dropped the college last spring, and Orr vetoed a legislative bill that would have given the Curtis school enough money to keep it open for the next two years.

Orr needs to keep something in mind during the next 10 days — future generations. She needs to think of her unborn grandchild. If the state continues to cut educational alternatives like it has, what kind of options will that child have in 18 years?

Probably not much. Orr also should consider two of Nebraska's main resources — agriculture and its people. It's the state's obligation to keep its university's programs alive.

She needs to decide — and soon.

Gerald Huntwork, associate director of the Curtis school, said administrators and students need a decision from Orr as soon as possible.

"There's a tremendous amount of frustration out there," he said.

The problem with the delayed announcement is simple. The longer the fate of the school is up in the air, the less time administrators have to inform high school students interested in attending there.

Curtis' attendance dropped from nearly 300 students to 158 during the 1986-87 school year. Only 58 students currently attend the college.

Even with money from the state, the college won't turn around overnight. Attendance probably won't jump into the thousands within the next year.



"SHE THINKS I CHEATED ON THE CURRENT EVENTS TEST... SHE ASKED ME WHAT I KNEW AND WHEN DID I KNOW IT!"

Hotline tells Bakkers' 'truth' Mistreated should get chance to tell their side of the story

Jim and Tammy Faye Bakker have started a "what really happened" hotline. By dialing a 900 telephone number, you can hear a prerecorded message from the deposed duo revealing the truth about Jim's fall from grace and Jerry Falwell's demonic manipulation of these trusting souls.

The call will cost you 50 cents, but after seven months void of Tammy tears, it's worth it. Besides, the Bakkers get 25 cents from every phone call, and their legal expenses are mounting.

It struck me that this is an idea that could really catch on. The Bakkers are just one example among many this year who, according to their own accounts, have been sorely mistreated by friends, government, the press or the American public in general. Why not give them all a chance to tell their side of the story? If the phone company were on the ball, they'd get a brochure out about this right away. Here are some possible scenarios we can expect in the near future.

The NASA Negligence Hotline. The number is 1-900-765-4321. By dialing this number you can hear detailed descriptions of just exactly what has gone wrong with the last 400 or so NASA missions, as well as convincing evidence that none of it was their fault. From solid rocket boosters to chewing gum stuck to the control panels, everything can be blamed on the contractors. The message ends with a projected date for the next shuttle launch. This feature is revised daily.

The Biden-My-Time Withdrawal Line: 1-900-IMA-FAKE. Hear Joe

Biden tell all about the moral struggles he went through while trying to decide ... no, wait. That was Winston Churchill. Rather, the Delaware senator conveys his mixed emotions as he considered the options involved in ... no, that was Andrew Young. Oh, yeah. The former presidential candidate will express his deep disappointment at not being able to ... sorry, that was Mickey Mouse. Well, dial the number and see what you think. Or, better yet, dial 1-900-DUK-AKIS and see what they think.

James Sennett



475-FRAT (local number). Hear the latest news concerning the fate of the little-sister program, laugh at the week's most obscene Bill Allen jokes (including some authored by Allen himself) and learn 15 irrefutable reasons why cup throwing never really hurt anybody. Sponsored by the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Anachronisms.

1-800-CON-IRAN. This is a free call, but don't ask where the money came from. Oliver North and John Poindexter appear on alternate days, but they never say anything. Every 30 seconds a dub-over voice informs you that you are witnessing the enacting of the great American right guaranteed under the Fifth Amendment. The silence is broken only by the unmistakable noise of a paper shredder running

in the background. 1-HUB-BAH-UBBA. You have to pay full toll for this one, but believe me, it is worth it. Jessica Hahn explicates the ethical intricacies involved in born-again-just. In a new variation on the ends-justifying-means ploy, the Hallelujah Hussie reveals more than you ever wanted to know. Every message ends with the stirring words, "I am not a bimbo." Former evangelical idol Larry Flynt offers an occasional guest opinion.

1-900-PRO-BORK. They'll have to hurry to get this one in. The message is presented by none other than President Reagan himself. (They couldn't get anyone else to do it.) The Chief executive offers a long list of reasons why his nominee still has a chance and should be appointed to the nation's highest court. He then concludes with a few choice pieces of advice. Chief among these are: "A military haircut is far more effective than a New England beard" and "Never trust a Southern Democrat."

CEN-SORD (another local number). This one is sponsored by the local bookstores and others interested in freedom of sleaze. Excerpts from "When The Sky Began to Roar" are read in a husky female voice while John Philip Sousa tunes are played in the background. I was planning to print transcripts of some of the messages, but most of the text of this wholesome, uplifting contribution is unfit to appear on the pages of a newspaper. Boy, do I feel stuffed.

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

Letter

Student says homeless need shelter and food

I'm writing in response to your article on the homeless (Daily Nebraskan, Sept. 28). I'm in favor of places supporting the homeless, such as the People's City Mission in Lincoln.

Limited finances, personal crisis, mental disturbances and alcohol or drug dependency are the reasons that more than 200,000 people lie homeless in the streets. They invade downtown areas of cities large and small, causing mixed emotions among the other citizens. People are angry, frustrated or even frightened, yet they also want to help these people.

Homelessness, an increasing problem, can be solved with the help of the community, not just the government.

However, the lack of funds for community programs is frustrating. Many shelters are either too small like Lincoln's or too large and impersonal like those in New York City and Washington, D.C. Both funds and support are desperately needed to help the homeless. They aren't "bums" or "bags ladies;" they're human beings. In fact, college graduates represent between 1 and 3 percent of the homeless population; so let's stop this disease from spreading before we become the victims. Help the homeless.

Mary Pitts
freshman
finance

With the recent controversy about AIDS, the DN has planned another open forum in conjunction with its Sower supplement. On Tuesday, Oct. 13, the DN will run letters from readers responding to the following questions:

- Should children with AIDS be allowed to attend public schools?
- Should health-care professionals undergo mandatory testing for AIDS? If they test positive, what consequences should they face? Should the test results be made public?

Please center your letter on only one of the questions. Drop off letters at the DN front desk, Nebraska Union 34. Show identification to secretary when you leave the letter. Deadline is Friday, Oct. 9, at noon.

Editorial Policy

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