

Editorial

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Apathetic higher-ups must hear students

Dave Regan, a University of Nebraska-Lincoln law student, opened a can of worms last week with his petition drive aimed at making improvements in the UNL Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid. Now if only someone would listen to him.

Long lines, bad communication and constantly busy phones have troubled students for a number of semesters. Regan started the petition because he and several other students were fed up with the problems.

His petition uncovered more than just problems in the financial aid office. It also showed the apathetic attitude that ASUN and the central administration have toward student concerns.

But Regan's plea for help fell on deaf ears when he presented the petition at an ASUN Senate meeting last week. Senators chose not to discuss the petition, adjourned and later reconvened.

Before the senate adjourned the second time, Sen. Pete Castellano complained that recent ASUN activities haven't been effective.

"I think ASUN has stopped being an effective voice for students," he said.

But the apathy extends from the ASUN office to the Administration Building. Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs James Griesen told the ASUN senators that the university was already "painfully aware" of the problems at the financial aid office.

"The last thing we need is an investigative committee to come in and take staff time they desperately need to help students," Griesen said.

But the administration needs to investigate the office. It should see the problems firsthand as opposed to reading a petition.

Also, if the administration already knew about the problems, then it should already have done something about them. Students sent several letters to the Daily Nebraskan last week that complained about problems in the financial aid office. The DN encourages them to send similar letters to the chancellor's office.

The lack of action by the administration has frustrated workers in the office. Larry Apel, assistant director of the office, said little has been done financially to help the office.

"I know there is all kinds of money being spent at the university, but not on us," Apel said.

"We've pushed for changes for years and years and years," he said, "and we've watched other people get improvements while we stay the way we are."

"I feel like we're the plague."

Since the ASUN meeting, Regan has introduced a new petition, saying that the original one lacked preciseness. Apel and William McFarland, director of the office, have unofficially endorsed the new petition.

McFarland also has revised an evaluation of the office he wrote last spring. The report includes a history of the office, a list of recent improvements and an assessment of the challenges the office still faces.

The Residence Hall Association has called a special session tonight to decide whether to support the petition. The DN urges the group to support the petition, McFarland's report, and letters and complaints by students.

But most of all, let yourselves be heard. It seems to be the only way to get anything done around here.

Black votes increase along with candidates

If people other than rich, white men ran for office, the United States probably would have a larger voter turnout.

A new Census Bureau study shows that more young blacks voted in the 1986 elections than whites in the same age group.

The voter turnout among young blacks increased along with the number of blacks seeking public office.

According to the Statistical Abstract of the United States, the number of blacks holding elected positions in the United States and state legislatures increased from 179 in 1970 to 410 in January 1986.

In the 1984 presidential campaign, whites ages 18 to 24 outvoted blacks 42 percent to 41 percent.

In the 1984 presidential campaign, considerable attention was drawn by the black community to Jesse Jackson's candidacy.

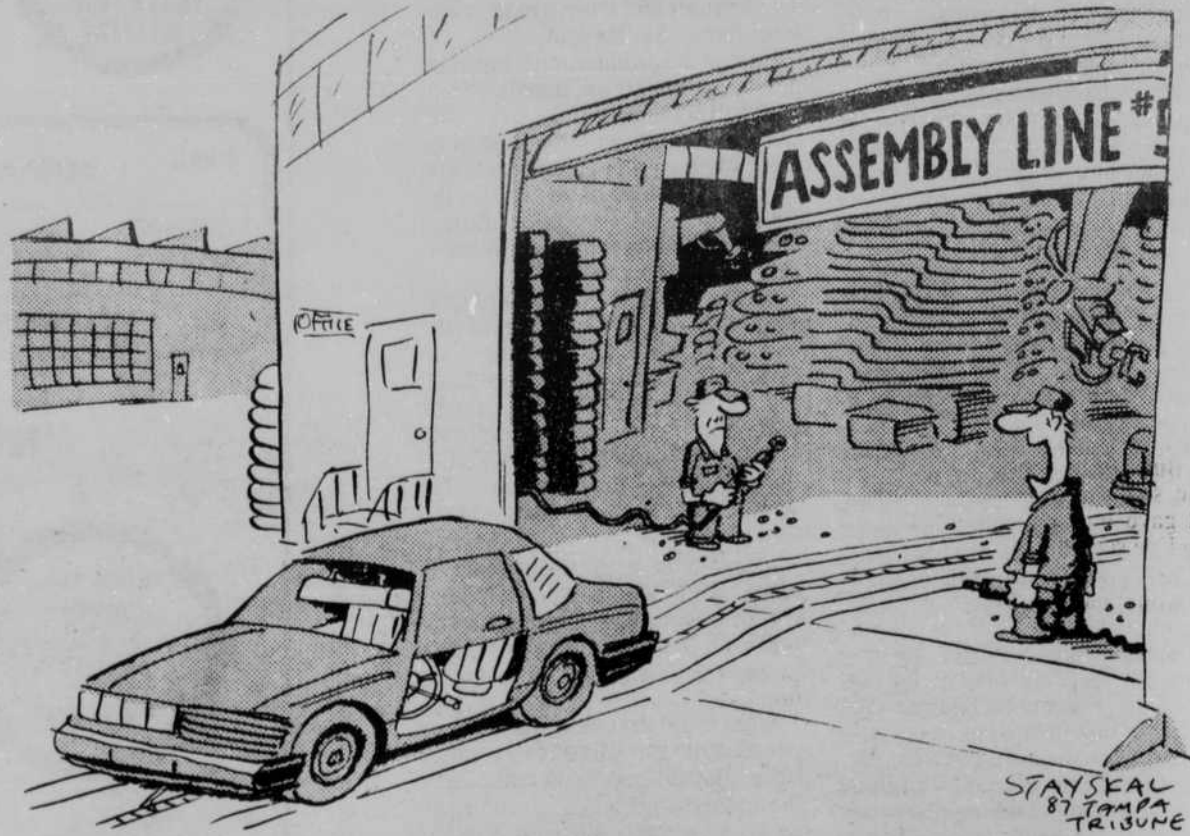
Black leaders had drives to register more blacks to vote. These drives helped return the Senate to Democratic control — ousting incumbents in Alabama, Georgia and North Carolina.

In 1986, 25 percent of blacks ages 18 to 24 voted, as opposed to 22 percent of whites.

The black vote is becoming a bigger force in the political arena.

This is also evident in some southern senators' decisions not to nominate Robert H. Bork for Supreme Court justice. They realize that the blacks elected them, and now to truly represent their constituency they must vote against Bork.

If more people with different ethnic backgrounds follow Jackson's lead into the presidential race, then voter apathy among those groups will decline. In the meantime, we can only hope they will continue to overcome their apathy.



"I'LL NEVER VOTE FOR BUSH ... IMAGINE HIM SAYING WE COULD USE A LITTLE MORE MECHANICAL KNOW-HOW HERE IN DETROIT!"

Conception misconceptions

Teen pregnancies are offspring of ignorance, warped values

An article in the Sunday Omaha World-Herald told the story of a 12-year-old girl from Omaha who gave birth this fall to a 2-pound, 6-ounce baby.

Although her mother had told her about contraceptives, the 12-year-old still maintained, "The first time you have sex I didn't think you could get pregnant."

This 12-year-old mother had sex with an apparently demanding 16-year-old boy, whom she had never met before, at her girlfriend's home.

The girl's mother gave birth to her when she was 16. This makes her a grandmother at 28. That is personally shocking because I have grave doubts about even marriage by that age.

Many Nebraskans think teen-age sex is a problem primarily in the inner cities, but statistics show the problem is very close to home. In 1986, 313 babies were born in Nebraska to mothers 16 years old and younger. Ten percent of those babies were born to mothers 14 years old and younger.

Even more alarming are the misconceptions and distorted views that many children have about sex and contraceptives.

Jan Kennedy of Planned Parenthood of Omaha-Council Bluffs said some youngsters have tried the following as birth-control devices:

- Soda pop as a douche.
- Jumping jacks after intercourse.
- Aluminum foil, plastic wrap, peanut butter and refrigerated biscuits.

Don't ask me about the last one. I

pondered that one, too.

Many believe television is to blame. Kennedy said studies indicate that there are "an average of more than two implied acts of sexual intercourse for every hour of prime-time TV."

Television shows and movies tend to equate love and the bedroom. Many of the plots follow the routine where two people meet and their immediate attraction leads to passionate sex. Then they break up for a while only to get back together and live happily ever after.

There really is no other way to portray sex. The whole setting would be ruined if J.R. Ewing stopped short in a successful seduction only to pull out a Trojan and say, "It's hard enough controlling Ewing Oil with Bobby and Cliff Barnes, let alone bringing any more Ewings into the world."

But the problem runs much deeper than television shows. Broken homes and one-parent families have trouble offering children good role models. Two-career households are not any better settings because both parents have limited time to spend with their

children.

Schools should provide sex education, but they are not the sole solution. Sex cannot be taught like math or history. Sex education includes much more than explaining contraceptives. Children need to understand the emotional dimension of the physical act. Such discussions need to be undertaken by parents or other support groups that can help children on an on-going basis.

Churches also could play a role in helping children understand that there are more ways to express love than having sex. Many church officials tend to be more concerned with campaigning against nuclear war than focusing on this world problem that exists right in their own congregations.

Solutions are not easy, but public discussion of the issue must be increased or children will continue to have children.

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However, on the other side of the age spectrum, the 28-year-old grandmother probably feels much more awkward explaining to store clerks why this baby's mother is still in the sixth grade.

What a generation we live in.

Carlson is a third-year law student.

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