

Editorial

**Daily
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University of Nebraska-Lincoln

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Dollars, no sense

Faculty pay stands in monument's shadow

It seems the priorities of the Nebraska Legislature are once again on the wrong track.

Recently the site was dedicated and the design chosen for a Veterans Memorial to be built near Lincoln.

Sen. James Pappas of North Platte was quoted Nov. 11 by The Lincoln Star as saying he thinks enough money can be raised through private donations to build the memorial. The goal for the fund drive is \$1 million.

"If we can raise large amounts of money for an indoor practice field or for a performing arts center, I think our goal is realistic," Pappas said.

The goal may be realistic, Sen. Pappas, but it happens to be for the wrong outcome. If we can raise large amounts of money for an indoor practice field and a performing arts center and the Veterans Memorial, why not for faculty salary increases or something that will help this state's sagging economy?

It appears the Legislature doesn't notice the problems this state is having and is overlooking an easy answer to some of these problems: Fix them with money.

The Legislature continues to

allocate money or raise money through private donations for unneeded items.

If we're going to be "realistic," let's be realistic about what this state really needs.

The argument is the same with the University of Nebraska-Lincoln's fund-raising for the Lied Center for Performing Arts and the indoor practice field. If the funds can be raised, raise them to remedy existing bad situations, not to create new ones.

Where are funds going to come from for the upkeep of these two buildings? The university is already having trouble keeping Morrill Hall open and paying its faculty worthy wages.

The responsibility to remedy these situations lies not only with the university and the Legislature. It lies with the citizens of this state, too. Enough Nebraskans were found who were willing to donate for these two buildings.

Because Nebraskans continue to gripe about the death of higher education in this state, why can't they donate money to save education?

All Nebraskans should take a hint from an old saying: "If you want something done right, you have to do it yourself."

Organ donors are hard to find

Marketing donor organs for transplants poses ethical questions

Technological advances have forced our society to confront some serious moral questions in the past several decades, and those relating to medicine are certainly among the toughest to answer. Abortion, of course, commands the headlines, but the subject of organ transplants — and the selling of human organs in particular — demands attention, too.

**Curt
Snodgrass**



Today we have the capability to transplant lungs, hearts, livers, the pancreas, corneas, bone marrow and even some brain tissues. Now that we are in our fourth decade of organ transplant technology, the magnitude of the question is much greater. The invention of cyclosporin, an anti-rejection drug, in 1980 and its approval for use in 1983 have provided the "key that unlocks the door to transplants," according to heart transplant specialist Dr. Thomas Starzyl. Although cyclosporin is not the only factor, transplant operations have increased dramatically since the mid-1970s.

In 1985, about 6,900 kidneys, 300 livers and 350 hearts were transplanted in patients in the United States. However, experts estimate the number of patients that would benefit from transplanting stands at 20,000 kidney patients, 8,500 liver patients and 15,000 heart patients. Of these, 6,000 to 8,000 need a transplant to sustain life. These waiting lines are matters of life and death, as most heart and liver patients can survive for only a few days or weeks without a transplant. In 1983, 40 liver patients died at the University of Pittsburgh School of

Medicine alone. To even qualify as a transplant "candidate," one must be on the "threshold of death" and unable to benefit by more medication or conventional surgery.

Quite clearly, the supply of viable organs is lacking, and to an individual in need of a new liver or pancreas the consequence of too lengthy a wait can be death.

Part of the problem lies in the inherently difficult process of obtaining human organs. Except for kidneys, nearly all organs suitable for transplanting come from accident victims who, though brain dead, have their bodies kept "alive" artificially. A human liver is viable after brain death for six to eight hours, and a heart for only four.

Additionally, organs must be "matched" according to tissue type and size, among other things. If a match is found, there is often little time to transport the organ to the recipient, who may be hundreds of miles away.

Asking a victim's family for his heart or kidneys is a very difficult ethical and moral matter, but that is the way things are. About 20,000 accident victims a year (less than 2 percent of all deaths in the United States) have suitable organs after brain death, but less than one-fourth become donors. Most transplant doctors say the problem is that physicians and hospital staff do not always make this difficult request. At least four states have passed laws requiring them to do so, and as of 1984, 21 states were considering similar measures. Congress passed the National Organ Procurement and Transplantation Act in 1984 to improve the information network involved with matching donors to patients.

Despite these efforts, there remains a serious shortage of human organs for transplant. One very controversial suggestion has been to begin allowing the sale of human kidneys on a central

market (it is possible to live on one kidney and donate the other). The one-year survival rate is 5 percent better for kidneys from live donors than for those from accident victims.

Sell a kidney for money? How much? Now, there's a good question. . . but for the right price, say \$5,000 or so, lots of folks would be more willing to go under the knife than to give a kidney away for nothing.

Some say this would be immoral, because it is wrong to ask for money to save another's life. But does this not occur already? People sell blood and blood plasma for money all the time, and blood saves lives. And, though not directly life-saving, pharmaceutical testing at places like Harris Labs leads to life-saving drugs.

If a market for the sale of human kidneys would entice more "donations" and help save lives, then it would seem the thing to do. But then an even tougher ethical question arises — who will buy the organ? Is it conceivable that the rich could buy the organs they need or take out "options" on the next available liver or heart? The poor would be unable to benefit in a world where they must compete to buy such expensive goods. In 1984, the average transplant operation cost \$57,000 to \$110,000 for a heart, \$22,000 to \$30,000 for a kidney and \$135,000 to \$238,000 for a liver. Guess who will benefit from such an arrangement?

These are the questions that science and medicine have put to us, and we have side-stepped them all so far. We deny that a price can be put on human life, but one certainly exists, and it is very high. Only time will tell if we are able to come to grips with this dilemma or morality and ethics. But until we do, the lines of patients waiting for organs necessary to sustain their lives will grow and force us to think harder about the morality of a human organ market.

Snodgrass is a senior economics major.

Quibbles & bits

Enter UNL roaches in big bug race

- An obstetrician sewed up the problem of his wife's infidelity, but he's now paying a multimillion-dollar lawsuit because of it. It seems the "good doctor" sewed his wife's vagina closed because he suspected her of having an affair.

- The Palm Beach Atlantic College will have its fifth annual Great American Bug Race next Wednesday. If the University of Nebraska-Lincoln entered some of the roaches who live in Harper/Schramm/Smith's food service, the university could gain national acclaim. Just think, the prize money could be used for an exterminator.

- A worthwhile philanthropy

project is going on this weekend. Operation Clean Stream is sponsored by the Clean Community System and the Veterans of Foreign Wars. Any interested parties should contact the VFW auxiliary.

- A University of Illinois coed calendar that features nude women hasn't sold well and has drawn protests from Grassroots Group of Second Class Citizens. The publisher said the Illinois students were paid \$200 for posing topless or \$300 for posing nude. In a Daily Illini article, Miss October, who wished to remain unidentified, said, "\$100 for each boob isn't that bad. It was \$200 in two hours."

Liberal plot against Ginsburg

Should a man's career be judged by a moment of youthful folly?

My conservative friend Grump gave me his most menacing scowl as I took the next bar stool.

"Not one word about it," he said. "I warn you, I'm capable of violence."

"What in the world do you mean?"

"You know exactly what I'm talking about, you low-life pinko. I know what your intentions are. You hope to provoke me."

**Mike
Royko**



Honest, I thought we might talk about Sunday's football games.

"Nonsense. It's obvious that you want to gloat about the defeat of Douglas Ginsburg."

"See? I knew you would try to provoke me. You are taking the words right out of my mouth. But you are insincere."

Not at all. I mean what I say. A few puffs of marijuana in years past shouldn't have disqualified him. Just about everyone from his generation tried it. If we applied the pot-smoking standard to all Americans younger than 45, few could practice law or medicine, hold public office, write columns or preach from the pulpit. For that frisky, unwashed generation, it was the illegal substance of choice.

"Exactly. But if that is true, which it is, why was Ginsburg deprived of the opportunity of being judged on the basis of his intellect and his grasp of the Constitution? Why did you liberal

jackals drag him down for having engaged in a leisure-time activity that was common among his peers?"

The answer to that is simple, Grump. It wasn't the liberals who did it. You conservatives, being so admirably faithful to your rigid, conformist views — you did him in.

"Us? What are you talking about? The true conservatives, such as Ed Meese, got him nominated because he's a true conservative, not a wishy-washy imitation. And as our great conservative president said, he is a true advocate of law and order."

Ah, but it was the liberals who defended the impulsiveness of inhaling a bit of brain-addling smoke. Remember, Joe Biden, the liberal senator, was one of the first to speak in Ginsburg's behalf. And Biden even used his own words in saying the pot issue was irrelevant.

"Hah! Naturally Biden would say that. He's just a shallow youth. He probably smoked the foul weed at one time or another himself. And he's always cuddling up to the youth vote."

That may be so. But consider that some members of the ACLU, not a favorite conservative organization, also defended Ginsburg. So did many other liberal politicians and organizations.

"Naturally. They were just trying to make Ginsburg look bad by giving him their support."

You mean it was a liberal plot?

"Of course. I could see it developing. The moment the marijuana business came out, all the liberals leaped to his defense. They knew that would make him look bad to the conservatives."

Ah, very devious of them. By de-

fending him, they were trying to destroy him?"

"Sure, the liberal plot was obvious to everyone with any brains."

But it was the conservatives who pulled the rug out from under his nomination, who pressured him to withdraw.

"Well, why couldn't the press have kept its mouth shut about it?"

Because if they hadn't revealed it, the conservatives wouldn't have known that they were unwittingly nominating someone for the Supreme Court who used to smoke pot.

"Who cares if he did? It was a trivial matter."

Right, that's what Joe Biden said. "Biden is an idiot."

But if Biden is an idiot, why did the conservatives pressure Ginsburg to withdraw?

"Because we're against people smoking pot. Don't you listen to anything Nancy says? Our motto is: 'Say no.'"

In that case, you should be pleased that his pot-smoking was exposed, since what he did was illegal and wrong.

"Don't be silly. As we agreed earlier, it was no big deal because almost everybody was doing it in those days."

Did you?

"Of course not. I never smoked that kind of trash in my life. It is illegal and immoral. What kind of liberal weakling do you think I am?"

I apologize. Would you like another martini?

"Yes. And make it a double, with two olives. I'm getting hungry."

Royko is a Pulitzer Prize-winning columnist for the Chicago Tribune.

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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.

Readers are also welcome to submit material as guest opinions. Whether material should run as a letter or guest opinion, or not run, is left to the editor's discretion.

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Anonymous submissions will not be considered for publication. Letters should include the author's name, year in school, major and group affiliation, if any. Requests to withhold names from publication will not be granted.

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