

Daily
Nebraskan
University of Nebraska

Mike Reilly, Editor, 472-1766
Diana Johnson, Editorial Page Editor
Jen Deselms, Managing Editor
Curt Wagner, Associate News Editor
Scott Harrah, Night News Editor
Joan Rezac, Copy Desk Chief
Joel Carlson, Columnist

Confused regent

Moylan's action deemed 'inappropriate'

Maybe University of Nebraska Board of Regents member James Moylan was a little confused.

Last week a university-supported bill, which would have made counties in Nebraska responsible for covering medical costs for the poor, was voted down by the Legislature. Omaha Sen. Vard Johnson, who sponsored the bill, wasn't pleased with Moylan's performance.

"I'm not blaming Jim Moylan for the demise of the bill," Johnson said in a Omaha World-Herald article. "But it's simply not proper for a member of the Board of Regents to accept a piece of work that is contrary to the position held by the institution he serves. I think it was inappropriate."

The Daily Nebraskan agrees. The University of Nebraska supported and lobbied for the bill, saying it was needed to help the NU Medical Center deal with the issue of caring for the indigent.

Moylan, an Omaha attorney, worked the other side of the bill on behalf of the Douglas County Board, which pays him \$3,000 a month to lobby the Legislature. Moylan said lobbying didn't

seem inappropriate to him because he did not recall the Board of Regents taking a stand on the bill. He said he didn't know the medical center was interested in the bill until he noticed Bob Barte, executive assistant to the chancellor of the medical center, standing in the rotunda of the Capitol.

"Douglas County is a long-standing client of mine," Moylan said. "If I had known (the university) was lobbying, I would have felt uncomfortable. I don't want any conflict."

It's a tough shot to call. Although it might seem logical that a lobbyist would know who his opposition was, Moylan appears not to have been irresponsible, just uninformed.

But it is the duty of all members of the Board of Regents to be informed and concerned with legislative bills that could eventually affect the university. Perhaps a more effective means of communication and an awareness of individuals could help prevent further instances of conflicts of interest. Regents must decide where their responsibilities lie: with their elected positions or to the jobs that put money in their pockets.

Bills would hurt poor students, help rich

Two news articles in the Daily Nebraskan have raised serious economic issues for University of Nebraska-Lincoln students and the state of Nebraska. On Jan. 20, we read that state Sen. Jerry Chizek of Omaha was sponsoring LB860 to make possible tax-sheltered "Nebraska College Savings Plan Accounts." Such accounts would allow people to save money for their children's future education without paying taxes on the money saved or on the interest it earns, as long as the money is ultimately used to finance full-time education at an institution of higher learning in the state.

Letter

On Jan. 22, we read that state Sen. Howard Lamb of Anselmo was sponsoring LB1096, which would permit employers to lower the minimum wage for student-workers from \$3.35 per hour to \$2.85, ostensibly to make student-workers more competitive in the job market.

The net effect of these two bills is another step in the educational disenfranchisement of low-income students.

It's difficult to fault Chizek; his heart and his mind are both in the right places. Money spent on higher education should not be taxed. And families who have the wisdom and foresight to plan for their children's education should be rewarded. But I'm compelled to ask him the following questions.

Why is it that well-to-do families, those who have \$1,000 to \$2,000 a year of available income to invest in their child's future, should be entitled to a tax deduction for the money, and the interest it earns? Meanwhile, the low-income student, who may be

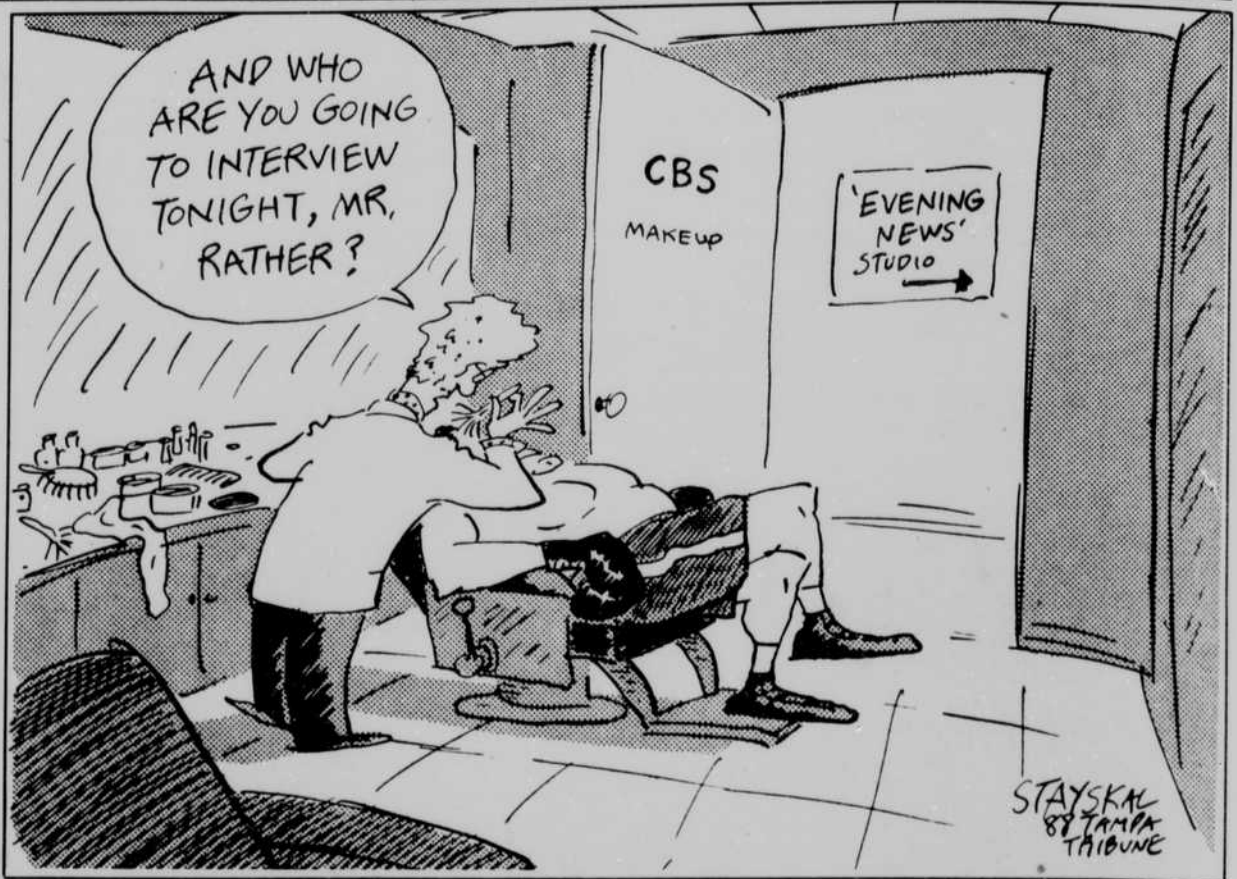
working until 2 a.m. for \$3.50 an hour to finance his or her education, isn't entitled to such a tax deduction for money spent on higher education? Agreed, the state income tax burden to support higher education is an onerous one. Is it any less onerous for the self-supporting student, whose income probably doesn't exceed \$6,000 per year, than for the well-to-do family, which may be earning \$30,000 or more?

Further, given that the state's share of the cost of operating a state university will not decrease with decreases in the state's tax base, who will make up the lost tax revenue? Will it not be, in part, that very low-income student who has to work to finance his or her education? Is that not a case of the poor paying to educate the rich? That is, what kind of a nation will we have if only the wealthy can afford education? Chizek's bill is well-intentioned, but in its present form it is socially discriminatory and grossly unfair.

When I add the effects of Chizek's bill to the effects of Lamb's bill, I find that mere discrimination has become blatant persecution. Not only will the wealthy student get a tax break that the poor student is denied, not only will the poor student pay income taxes to support the rich student's university, but that same poor, working student is now to be regarded as 15 percent less of a human being than someone else who does not seek an education.

Such a situation is not simply intolerable. It's un-American.

Ronald L. Webb
graduate
English



Somebody's out hunting me

If they don't get me, Plan 9 from National Account System will

I'm being hunted. Two harpies under assumed names — Mrs. White and Miss Peggy — are trying to squeeze lemon juice out of a lemon meringue pie. As any student of adages can tell you, it can't be done.

I have no money and I have no property.

When I tell Miss Linda and her cohorts at the National Collection Service that I have no money or property, they think I mean I have very little money or property. They think somewhere, in a drawer beneath clothes my parents bought me during the throes of my awkward adolescence, is an envelope with just enough money in it to pay up, salvage my credit rating and retain my personal economic dignity. In fact, there is no envelope squirreled away beneath the plaid flares.

After a while Mrs. White and Miss Halibut just become funny and, with interest being charged usuriously, the amount of the bills I owe becomes mythological. Figures like \$1,500 and \$950 aren't real to me; they read like the secret name of God.

At first, Miss Suzy was content to send me a stream of colored notices. The pink note is for yuppies, and its appeal is to your credit rating, otherwise known as your sense of honor. The blue note assumes you're trying to be a yuppie but your life's goal has been confounded by forgetfulness. Its appeal is to your sense of duty. The white note assumes you don't give a damn what color your notes are. It — and the off-yellow, often wrinkled notes to follow — appeal to your sickness, whatever it is. Because if the pink note, the blue note and even the first of many white notes haven't been effective, then Colonel Mustard in

The Conservatory With The Lead Pipe has other methods.

Assuming, probably because of a "60 Minutes" segment I saw once, that 75 percent of the "doomed" (those to whom a note is just a piece of paper until it comes alive and starts chasing you through the streets) are mentally ill, National Account System or any of the other similar CIA cover organizations have a Plan 9.

Charles Lieurance



Plan 9 goes after the sicknesses of the poor: paranoia, laziness, family guilt, compulsive and pathological lying. The phone calls suddenly become unfunny, and the amount of money stated in those enlarging boxes in the corner of the notes no longer represent exotic myths.

I tried to keep in mind that there are no debtors prisons anymore. Friends would say:

"Charles, there aren't any debtors prisons anymore. What do you think this is, the Middle Ages..."

Well, there may be no debtors prisons, but there's still Plan 9.

"Maybe you could ask someone you love to loan you the money," says the harpy on duty.

There is a very short list in my mind of people I know and kind of like who might loan me 50 cents for a can of pop, and there is no list to be made of people I might love who wouldn't go numb and twitchy about the prospect of an insolvent writer owing them \$3,000.

Miss Scarlet doesn't bring up Plan 9, never mentions it by name, but it's easy to tell when she's resorted to it. Suddenly she's bringing up questions about what I'm going to do with the rest of my life and, at any given moment, she might ask if my underwear is clean.

And there's the incessant threat of legal action. But friends insist there are no debtors prisons. I see friends of mine dropping off the face of the earth in packs, sneaking through the country in search of a place where Plan 9 won't find them. When they leave, Miss Leona tries Plan 9 on their last remaining friends. So now there are at least 10 women with bubble-gum-card names calling from Visa, National Accounts, National Collection and American Express. All of them are in the Plan 9 stage, one moment talking like your mother and the next moment threatening to take everything away. No money, no property — well, they want old letters from friends, ancient drama awards, pages of unfinished novels. I get the sensation that they're calling my friends and that they're in my house at night, seeing if some of my clothes would fit their harpy kids.

Suddenly I'm in a Bette Davis movie and I hear music boxes in my head, playing little-kid songs. It's the universal symbol of insanity, little tinkling music boxes. I'm beginning to think living outside on the streets wouldn't be too bad. It would be cold, but I could just sit on a bench and listen to the music boxes and think about how there aren't any debtors prisons in America, while a hell-bound wind tried to shatter my face.

Lieurance is a senior English major and Daily Nebraskan arts and entertainment editor.

Letter Policy

The Daily Nebraskan welcomes brief letters to the editor from all readers and interested others.

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.

Editorial Policy

Unsigned editorials represent official policy of the spring 1988 Daily Nebraskan. Policy is set by the Daily Nebraskan Editorial Board. Its members are Mike Reilly, editor; Diana Johnson, editorial page editor; Joan Rezac, copy desk editor; Jen Deselms, managing editor; Curt Wag-

ner, associate news editor; Scott Harrah, night news editor and Joel Carlson, columnist.

Editorials do not necessarily reflect the views of the university, its employees, the students or the NU Board of Regents.

The Daily Nebraskan's publishers

are the regents, who established the UNL Publications Board to supervise the daily production of the paper.

According to policy set by the regents, responsibility for the editorial content of the newspaper lies solely in the hands of its student editors.

Submit material to the Daily Nebraskan, 34 Nebraska Union, 1400 R St., Lincoln, Neb. 68588-0448.