

Daily Nebraskan
University of Nebraska-Lincoln

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Quibbles and bits

Elections are Greek popularity contests

ASUN presidential candidate Christopher Stream put the upcoming student government elections in proper perspective Saturday. Stream, a VOICE Party candidate, compared the elections to belonging to a country club.

"You have to be Greek, the right Greek and know the right people to be involved in ASUN," Stream said.

Stream, a member of Kappa Sigma fraternity, said it is "ridiculous and embarrassing" that no non-Greek parties are running for ASUN this year.

Stream's analysis of the elections is candid and honest. His opinion has been shared by many University of Nebraska-Lincoln students throughout the last few years. The ASUN campaigns have turned into nothing more than a popularity contest among the Greek houses. Non-Greek candidates are usually written off as "joke parties" and stand little chance of winning without support from an apathetic non-Greek student body.

It was all in the name of God. The Rev. Everett Sileven is at it again. An unsuccessful Republican candidate for Nebraska governor in 1986, Sileven told an anti-tax group Saturday in Louisville that not paying certain taxes could be justified if the taxes violate the laws of God.

Worse yet, Sileven said the "ungodly" taxes included health and welfare programs. He said he objects to paying taxes that redistribute wealth.

"We must not adopt the idea

that if we say no to the government we are un-American, unloyal or unfaithful," Sileven said in a Sunday Journal-Star article. "That is a lie. Before you say we must obey all the laws of the land, you first must determine if the laws are godly or ungodly."

Since when has helping others been ungodly? Welfare programs are designed to help the needy, and Sileven can't reasonably question those intentions.

The Rev. Keith Simmons, pastor of the Freedom Faith Church in Missoula, asked the group, "Should the government that has taken on the character of Sodom and Gomorrah be aligned with the church? The answer is no. (The government) only has in their possession what we give them voluntarily or what they take through oppression or plunder."

In this case, it's Sileven and Simmons who are assuming the Sodom and Gomorrah roles. To let the hungry go unfed and the sick go unaided is a sin in itself.

An article in National On-Campus Report said drug use — particularly of cocaine — among U.S. high school seniors, college students and young adults has declined for the first time in eight years. A study by the University of Michigan also reported that the United States still has one of the highest rates in the world. One in every six or seven high school seniors last year had tried cocaine, and one in 18 tried cocaine in the form of crack.



Caucuses prove to be useless

Present method of picking candidates is biased and futile

The American public is being inundated by events on television these days. If it is not the Winter Olympics every night, it is the primary and caucus results from the still all-too-young presidential campaign.

The Winter Olympics I can take. The campaign I can leave.

Selecting a new president is far too important to be left to such an asinine process. It is not a game. The winner here gets a much different prize than a gold medal.

The other night I discovered that the Iowa caucuses were not the first of the season — but rather the third. The public heard very little, if anything, about the Michigan and Hawaii caucuses. What makes Iowa, of all places, so much more important than Michigan and Hawaii? This doesn't say much for the candidates. Do they really want to spend all their winter months campaigning in icy Iowa, instead of the warm tropical climate of Hawaii with those lovely sunbathing on a tropical beach? Gary Hart would be right at home.

But no. The candidates all had to invade Iowa, with the press scurrying right behind them like a security blanket. Forget Hawaii in the winter.

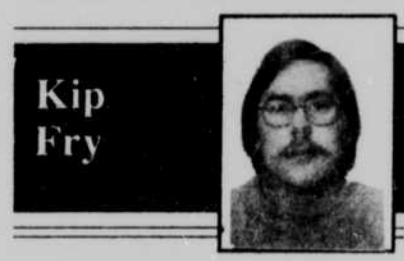
And then Iowa has a mighty strange and twisted way to select whom its delegates will support in their respective conventions. About two weeks ago Newsweek reported that Democrats in Iowa have to go through a number of steps just to select the delegates who select their party's presidential candidate.

After all the hoopla of the caucuses dies down, and the media moves on to New Hampshire and Super Tuesday down South, there are still 99 county conventions that select delegates to six congressional-district conventions. From this, 34 delegates will be chosen to go to the Democratic National Convention. And sometime later — who knows

when — 18 more will be chosen. It is only then that Iowans will really have their votes cast for whom they want to be president.

In other words, the Iowa caucuses that the whole country just endured really meant very little at all. They were just the first of many steps, but the last one that people outside the Hawkeye state will hear about.

Nebraskans won't have a chance to vote until May 16. It is as if someone has declared that those other states are more elite than Nebraska.



Kip Fry

All the states coming before Nebraska will have all the decision-making power in the country, while Nebraska won't. Who knows how many candidates will remain by the time the primaries roll into Nebraska. Those who have dropped out by then will have been forced out by Iowa, New Hampshire and the rest, but not by Nebraska. If, for example, I really wanted to vote for Bruce Babbitt, I wouldn't have a chance. I really don't have much of a voice.

Horror stories have even emerged from some caucuses. Four years ago, a friend of mine went to the Minnesota Democratic caucus. But the meeting went so far into the early morning hours that he had to leave before he had a chance to let his own preference be known.

Oh, to be in New Hampshire in February.

It is also about this time that the candidates start dropping out. Alexander Haig and Pete du Pont have already exited along with Babbitt after abysmal showings in Iowa and New Hampshire.

While these results are important, what is most likely the case is that they all ran out of money. This is an easy concept for college students to understand. The results and the money seem to go hand in hand. If they get more votes, they will get more money. If they get more money, they will get more votes.

This sounds all too much like the Gordon Gekko character played by Michael Douglas in the movie "Wall Street," who says, "This isn't a democracy, this is free enterprise."

But I'm just a poor student. If I were wealthy, or at least had a comfortable income, I could contribute some of my earnings to my favorite candidate. But I have enough trouble just paying my bills.

The fact is that even with this democratic process, most people have little choice in the matter. For the length of time it takes to select the next president and the incredible amounts of money that are pumped into it, this is a shame.

One thing that could be done is to shorten the whole process. Elections in Great Britain are quicker, with the new prime minister moving into 10 Downing St. only days after winning the election. Unfortunately, this would probably exclude people like Jimmy Carter from rising from the grass roots to the Oval Office and would create its own elitism of viable candidates. And that's not right either.

Presidents in America are not elected just on the first Tuesday of November. The process starts long before that. Despite this, we still do not have an adequate voice in that process.

The Olympics are on only two weeks and then all of the gold-medal winners are quickly forgotten. But presidents aren't forgotten.

Fry is a news-editorial graduate student and is editor of The Sower, the Daily Nebraskan's depth magazine.

Letters

Daily Nebraskan 'distorts' reader's letter

I am writing in regard to the Daily Nebraskan's distortion of Jon Dewsbury's letter (Feb. 16). I read Dewsbury's letter before it was submitted, and it made very good points. However, the DN chose to cut out all the main points and arguments. Thus, it destroyed a positive and intelligent argument that the DN staff did not want heard.

The argument of space limitations doesn't wash. Rodney A. Bell's letter, which provoked the letter in question, was twice as long as Dewsbury's. The episode is an example of the worst form of censorship. When "journalists" suppress any opinions that they do not like, it is worse than anything

a government could do, because they are betraying a trust and can't be held accountable. I challenge the DN to print Dewsbury's letter in its entirety if they still want to call themselves journalists, or merely left-wing propagandists.

Jon Swanson
freshman
news-editorial

Editor's note: Two lines were cut from Dewsbury's letter because they contained false information regarding the allocation of funds to a gay student organization. Three other lines were cut in paste-up to make the letter fit.

Pat Robertson is not a joke candidate

Is Pat Robertson a joke (Daily Nebraskan editorial, Feb. 16)? Hardly. He is a Yale Law School graduate, former Marine Corps officer, founder of a large family-entertainment cable TV network and a former minister.

Robertson has a brilliant mind. He also knows how to pray. Our two greatest presidents, George Washington and Abraham Lincoln, admitted they often relied upon prayer while

serving this nation.

Robertson doesn't deal with the issues? He is probably the most specific candidate in either party, including the issues the DN mentioned.

The DN should investigate beyond its prejudices before writing off an important candidate as a joke.

Gordon Anderson
Lincoln

DN should inform students of job openings

I would like to see more space in the Daily Nebraskan devoted to career information. My primary reason for attending college is to get a good job after graduating. I would like to be informed about employer visits to the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, career workshops and other important

career issues. I have seen relatively few articles devoted to this subject. I think a small column once a week addressing this topic would be enlightening.

Debra McGuire
sophomore
chemical engineering

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.

Readers also are 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.

Letters and guest opinions sent to the newspaper become property of the Daily Nebraskan and cannot be returned.

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

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