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A fresh VOICE

Party proposes new approach for ASUN

"Progress is a nice word. But change is its motivator and change has its enemies."

— Robert F. Kennedy

The VOICE Party, with its progressive platform, has earned the Daily Nebraskan's support for Wednesday's student government elections.

In outlining their candidacy for the executive offices of the Association of Students of the University of Nebraska, VOICE members stressed several changes that need to be made in UNL's student government.

And they're changes for the better.

Christopher Stream, VOICE's presidential hopeful and the backbone of the party, promised:

- to hold the line on tuition increases.
- to keep the Government Liaison Committee a concentrated UNL lobbying force, instead of joining other state institutions such as the University of Nebraska at Omaha, Peru State and Wayne State in the Nebraska Student Interest Coalition.

- to create a new appointments committee that will bring a broader mix of Greek, residence hall, off-campus and minority students to ASUN.

- to take a more aggressive approach in informing students about ASUN.

Stream has criticized ASUN and the Government Liaison Committee for jumping the gun on tuition increases this year. GLC, led by ACTION Party presidential hopeful Jeff Petersen, lobbied for a tuition raise this year to help increase UNL faculty salaries. The tuition increase would constitute one-third of the raise, with the Nebraska Legislature picking up the other two-thirds of the proposed \$10 million increase.

While Stream has said GLC should stand alone as UNL's lobbying force, ACTION supports joining NSIC. Petersen said joining the other colleges would give UNL more clout in the Legislature. However, UNL's needs are different from those at the state colleges and UNO, and they could get lost in the shuffle.

The change shouldn't stop with lobbying.

Stream also attacked ASUN's current appointments board, saying that it has ignored qualified independent and minority students in the government. He said the party would redesign the current appointments board to include Greek, residence hall, off-campus and minority leaders. VOICE'S candidate slate supports this.

Members of the ACTION Party, however, want to maintain the current process. Petersen intends to keep the appointments board the way it is, and his party offered no suggestions for improvements when interviewed by the Daily Nebraskan editorial board.

Apathy has plagued ASUN for several years. Many of the elected positions are vacant by second semester, leaving the appointments board to select its "cronies" to fill the spots.

Besides the new appointments board, Stream, first vice presidential candidate Andrew Wupper and second vice presidential candidate Steven Showalter have developed other programs to encourage more participation in ASUN.

If elected, they plan to distribute a "survival guide" for students at the beginning of the year. The booklet would include photos and names of senators and what openings there are on committees and other vacant positions. This would help eliminate the "back-room" politics and appointments that now take place in the UNL student government.

VOICE also said it would circulate newsletters and other information to keep off-campus students informed and would encourage ASUN senators to attend residence hall floor meetings to discuss issues.

This won't necessarily solve the problem. ASUN needs to be aggressive and take the first step in informing students. It needs to bring the information to the students, not make the students seek the information.

ACTION's platform had one idea that would increase communication with its constituency. If elected, it would arrange monthly meetings with college senators and their constituency. But once again, getting students to come to the monthly meetings would be difficult. It would be better for the senators to approach the students, perhaps by sitting in on club gatherings and departmental meetings.

When interviewed by the DN editorial board, VOICE members cited specific problems faced by certain groups of UNL students. For example, Stream said many off-campus students were concerned about the legislative proposal to cut the minimum wage for students.

ACTION candidates could not cite specific needs of groups at UNL when interviewed. Instead, ACTION stressed a broad platform similar to past ASUN campaigns.

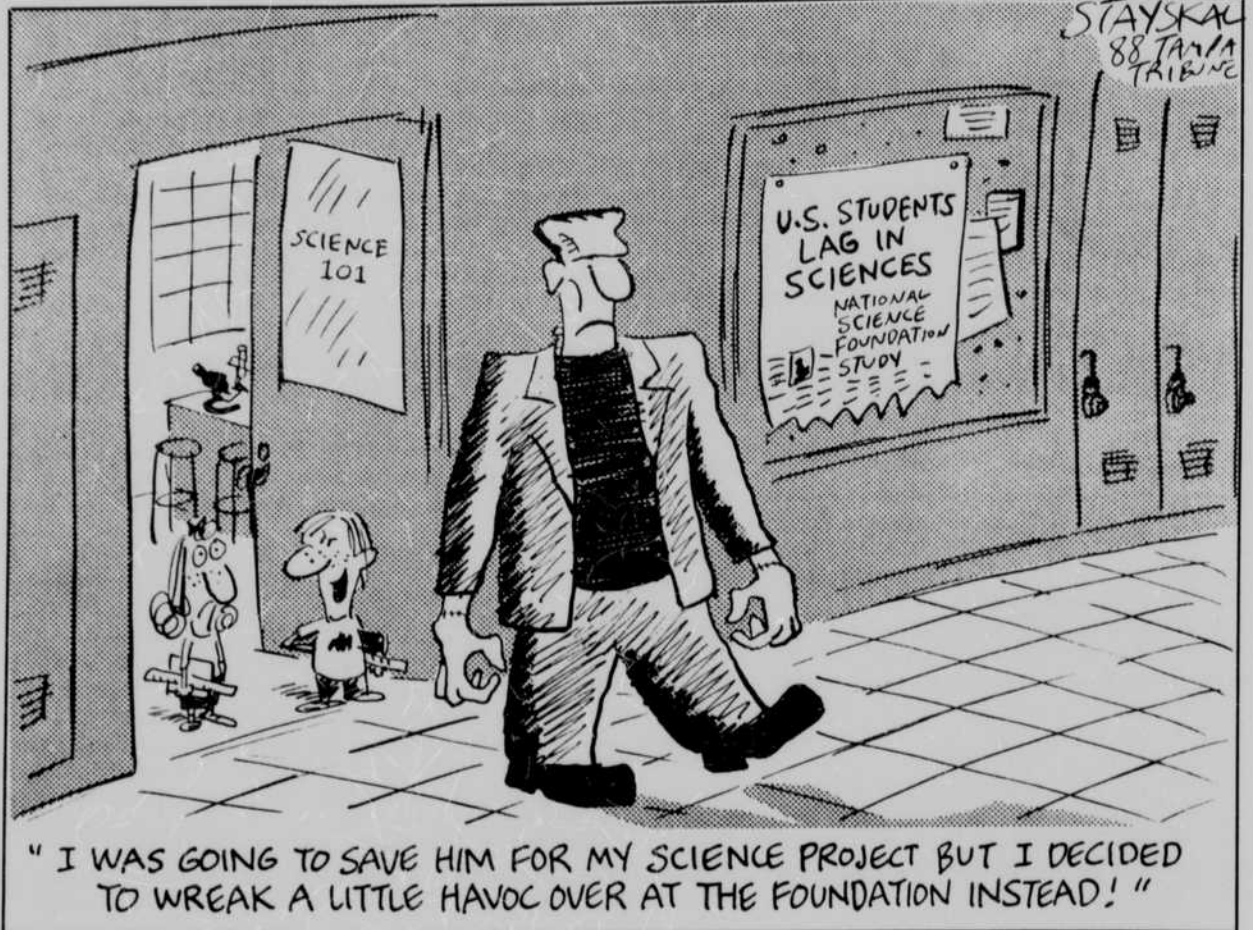
But ACTION shouldn't be written off entirely. The candidates have much more experience than VOICE candidates. Petersen served as GLC committee chairman this year, and first vice presidential candidate Nate Geisert has served as GLC vice chairman, a member of the University Judicial Board and a U.S. Congressional page.

Perhaps the brightest spot for ACTION was second vice presidential candidate Kim Beavers. She has served on the appointments board and GLC and is a former DN reporter. She appeared to have a stronger grasp of issues than her running mates and was the sharpest speaker of the three.

But the bulk of ACTION's platform is merely an extension of past ASUN office-holders. For example, its promise to establish an independent book-exchange program has been proposed in the past and never really took hold.

What ASUN needs is change. It needs to have better contact with its constituency and more equal representation. It should focus its lobbying force on UNL needs, as opposed to joining forces with other colleges.

A vote for VOICE would accomplish these goals. A fresh approach is just what ASUN needs.



Robertson backs out of lawsuit

Spoilsport candidate says he lacks time to prepare defense

What a spoilsport Pat Robertson turned out to be. After filing a \$35 million lawsuit to defend his alleged honor, he's now trying to drop the whole thing.

Now we'll never know if he was the heroic, patriotic young Marine lieutenant he claims to have been. Or if he really asked his powerful daddy, a U.S. senator, to keep him away from the front lines of the Korean War.

The whole purpose of the lawsuit was to answer these questions and to punish Pete McCloskey, a former congressman and Marine, who said that Robertson was chicken back in 1951, when they were both on a Korea-bound troopship.

In fact, McCloskey says Robertson is still chicken for backing out of the lawsuit after McCloskey went to all the bother of preparing his defense.

McCloskey says his defense would include testimony from other Marines on the same troopship, who remember Robertson talking about how his daddy would make sure he got off in Japan.

Robertson did wave goodbye to his buddies in Japan. And he remained there for four months, while most of the others went on to fierce combat duty. Many died. Others, such as McCloskey, suffered terrible wounds.

McCloskey says his defense would also include evidence that when Robertson finally reached Korea, he was tucked safely behind the lines and his duties included being a liquor officer.

The accusation that he was a liquor officer seems to irk Robertson as much as being labeled chicken. He has vehemently denied ever being a liquor officer and says no such military position ever existed.

That surprises me. Of course liq-

uor officers existed. I even knew one. He used to fly to Japan and return with a planload of liquor. We considered him to be a most admirable, essential officer in the outfit. In any popularity poll, he scored far higher than, say, the mess officer, who gave us chipped beef on toast, or the chaplain, who gave us lectures on shunning lewd women. The liquor officer just gave us hootch.

And on Super Tuesday, as on any other voting day, there isn't much that a candidate can do besides show up at a polling place early to have his picture taken.

After that, it's just a matter of waiting for the polls to close and the vote to be counted. A candidate might just as well wait in a courtroom as anywhere else.

In fact, it isn't likely that Robertson would have to spend much time in court at all. In many trials, including libel cases, the plaintiff and defendants don't have to be there most of the time. The lawyers throw motions around, the judge rules on them, the witnesses testify, the jury listens. About the only time Robertson would have to be in court would be when he testified.

Even that appearance wouldn't significantly interrupt his campaign, since his testimony would bring him scads of publicity, which is what campaigning is all about.

So I don't understand why Robertson has chosen to miss the opportunity to defend, as he put it, his honor.

The trials would be a chance for him to describe his combat experience, since his official biographies have always said he was a "combat Marine."

And it would give him a chance to explain a happy letter that his late father sent to a friend, passing along the good news that a big general had told him that Pat would remain in Japan awhile for special training.

So it's disappointing that Robertson would decide to drop out just when the action was about to begin.

Of course, McCloskey would say that it wasn't the first time.

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



Mike Royko

So I don't understand why Robertson is so incensed at being called a liquor officer. While it may be true that an army travels on its stomach, there are pleasant moments when a good liquor officer makes it possible for it to fall flat on its back.

But to get back to Robertson's lawsuit and his last-minute decision to drop it.

He says he would have preferred to have a trial and prove that McCloskey was a liar, but he just doesn't have time because he's so busy running for president.

If he pursued the matter, Robertson says, he'd have to stop campaigning and begin preparing for the trial, which was scheduled to begin today, which is Super Tuesday, the big primary day down South.

And that could deprive the American people of an opportunity to make him our next commander-in-chief.

All that could be true, I suppose. But Robertson filed the lawsuit about a year and a half ago, so I would think his lawyers would have their case thoroughly prepared by now.

Letter Policy

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.

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