

Daily Nebraskan University of Nebraska-Lincoln

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More contradictions Petersen is ignoring his responsibility

The wall around the ASUN country club is stronger than ever, and two senators say it has been laced with barbed wire.

No one gets in. No one gets out. Especially the press. Two senators from the Association of Students of the University of Nebraska accused newly elected president Jeff Petersen of placing a "gag order" on the senate members, telling them not to discuss a bill until after it has gone through committee.

One senator said Petersen gagged the senators in a "self-righteous, superior way." He said Petersen told the senators they weren't "team players" if they commented on a bill before it went through committee hearings.

"Petersen's the team," the senator said.

Another senator said Petersen's action was "unprofessional and an over-reaction to the situation."

"I think students need to be informed of things affecting all students," the senator said. "The committee process of students is a public process or (it) should be."

Petersen said Tuesday he didn't place any gag rule on the senators, but asked them to "use their best judgment" when commenting on a bill that's still in committee hearings.

"I wasn't trying to suppress anyone," Petersen said. "They have the right to express their opinion. I was just concerned that we give the legislative proc-

ess a fair run. Perhaps I was wrong in the first place to say that they should or shouldn't talk."

Bills that pass through ASUN are open to coverage by the media at any time, just like the Nebraska Legislature. The Lincoln and Omaha papers, as well as the Daily Nebraskan, compete with each other to get the legislative news to their readers first. That often means reporting on a bill from its introduction until it's signed by the governor.

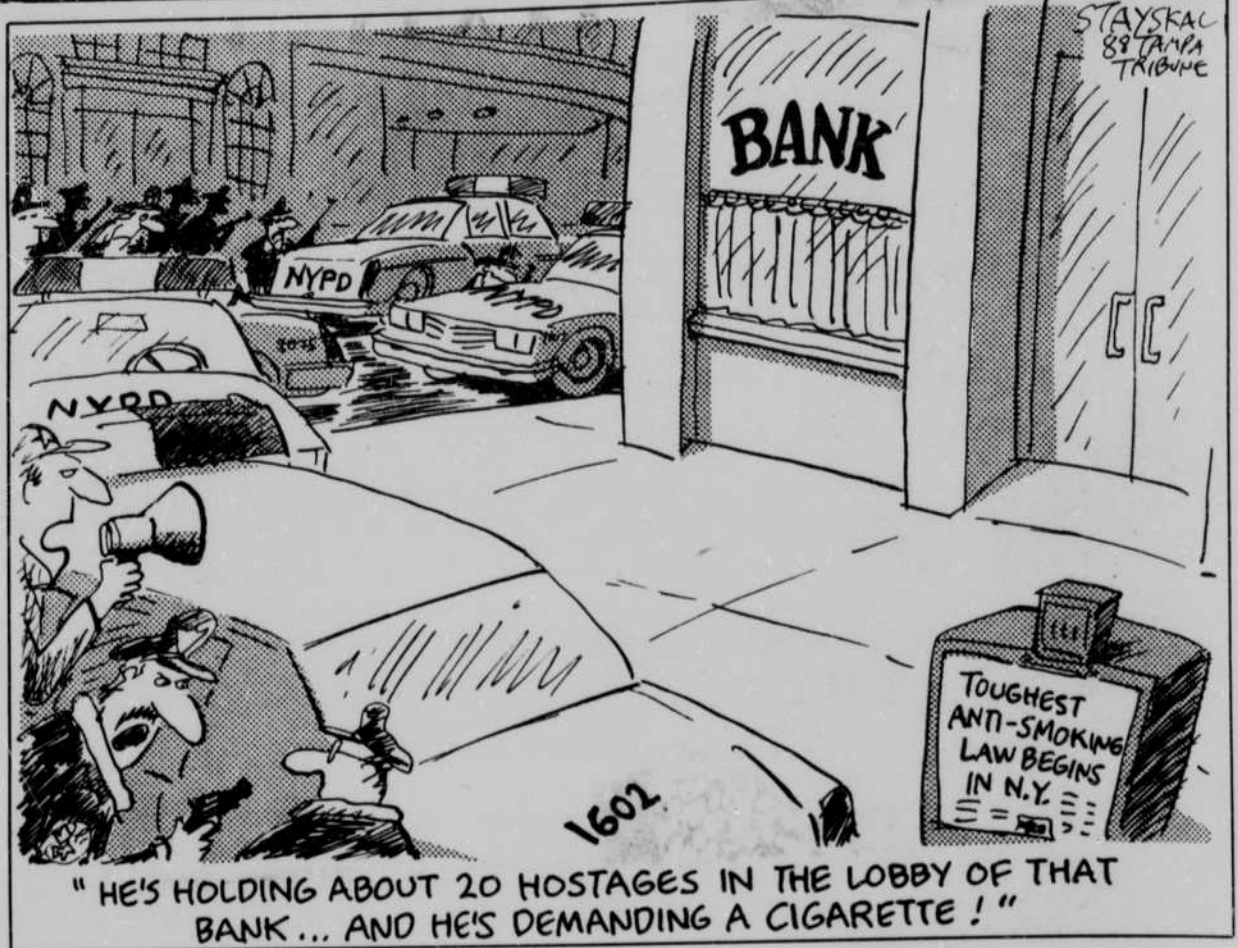
The same holds true with ASUN. The DN tries to publish stories on ASUN bills as quickly as possible. Many of the bills affect UNL students financially and can help or hinder the quality of the education they receive. Even the joke bills get a little ink now and then.

Petersen, a junior broadcasting major from Scottsbluff, refused to comment on questions asked by a DN reporter about last Sunday's meeting. The reporter asked about an amendment to ASUN's bylaws that would change the structure of the appointments board.

"It wouldn't be fair for me to comment while senators are debating it," he said. "My support for a bill comes when I sign it. They (senators) can comment any time they want."

Petersen apparently contradicts himself. As a student leader, it is part of his responsibility to be accessible to his constituency as well as making information available to them.

Petersen's campaign promised to improve communication between ASUN and the campus. Already the newly elected student leader seems to be renegeing on his platform.



Harrah mocks Rivera New color added to today's yellow journalism

Embellishment, lying, sensationalism, stupid questions and cat fights sure make interesting journalism — just ask "investigative reporter" and talk-show host Geraldo Rivera and syndicated columnist Suzy.

Rivera and Suzy brought new color to modern-day yellow journalism and mock muckraking the past two weeks, feeding America's hunger for media hyperbole.

First, another one of Rivera's laughable "in-depth" specials aired last week. But this time Rivera chose a topic more sensational than Al Capone's vault or teen-age Hollywood hookers: murder.

"Murder: Live From Death Row" set a precedent for overdone broadcasting. The show, a sorry mishmash of idiotic questions, grotesque close-ups of mangled, bloody bodies and incoherent ramblings of mass murderers, was the TV counterpart of the sleaziest detective magazines.

Rivera, known for his bad questions and subjective homilies about mankind, topped his own incompetence when he interviewed Charles Manson live on the show.

Rivera delivered such insightful Manson proclamations as: "He is still possessed by a Satanic spirit which is at once fascinating and repugnant."

After the camera zoomed in on Manson's usual frantic body movements and lunatic philosophies, Rivera looked at him with his trademark bleeding-heart somberness and said, "I think you are an evil person."

Gee, Geraldo, we never knew that. Rivera then asked the author of "Helter Skelter": "Is Manson nuts?"

Rivera proceeded to interview numerous convicted murderers and focused on the most sensational stories — like that of Judith Ann Neeley, who injected a 13-year-old girl with a lethal concoction of Drano and Liquid Plumber.

And he also interviewed a woman who murdered her baby, then stuck it in a plastic bag and dumped it in a forest. But, as always, Rivera didn't even try to be professional. Under the woman's name on the screen was the title: "Baby Killer."

As always, Rivera was unable to hide his emotions and opinions. He asked one murderer: "Why shouldn't you be put to death for the DREADFUL crime you committed?"



During commercial breaks, an ad for Rivera's talk show was aired frequently. In the ad, he defends himself by saying: "Some of my critics claim my show is sensationalistic, but I think life is pretty sensational itself. Yeah, life is just like The Weekly World News."

A few days before Rivera interviewed Manson, syndicated gossip columnist Suzy took an egotistical acid trip to the Spahn Ranch school of Mansonesque delusion — with a few side trips to Norma Desmond in "Sunset Boulevard."

Let me explain. According to the Wall Street Journal and Newsday's James Revson, Suzy wrote a column about a party hosted by New York Times publisher Punch Sulzberger. But — shame, shame — Suzy dropped some names that never appeared at the party. Why, you ask? Because Suzy never attended the party and relied on an advance press release for her column.

A columnist war of the Louella Parsons/Hedda Hopper vein ensued. Revson, Suzy's male gossip rival,

lambasted the fibbing social chronicler in his Newsday column. Suzy retaliated with an even more caustic column. She actually compared her column to Mount Rushmore because, she said, it is "a class act loaded with prestige." She also declared herself a "star" and "the best and the brightest in my field."

Perhaps Suzy thinks life is pretty sensational, too.

Suddenly, "Suzy'scam" became the silliest trivial press-grabber since the Jimmy Swaggart scandal. "Suzy'scam" became more ludicrous when Suzy's editor stood behind the false account.

The scandals of the past year have turned the media into an unintentional soap opera. The TV news program has become much more than a forum for what's happening; we now feel our TV screens are theatrical prosceniums and news must be dramatic, if not sensational, to keep us interested. The media knows this and will do anything to make sure there's enough gore, sex, and titillation to keep us watching or reading.

That's why Suzy can stretch the truth, call herself a star-studded Mount Rushmore and get away with it. That's why Rivera can spew platitudes, interview "baby killers" and call himself a professional. They are merely filling the media hype gaps until the next Ollie North or Tammy Bakker arrives to be ridiculed by the public.

Although Suzy's and Rivera's antics are amusing, perhaps it's time the American media realized credibility shouldn't be sacrificed for amusement.

Surely there are other Mount Rushmores in the media who can tell us more than how bright and famous they are or what an evil person Manson is.

Harrah is a senior news-editorial major.

Letters

Radical thankful for veto of bill to reward play with money

"Players are providing a service for which they should be paid," Nebraska Sen. Ernie Chambers said (Daily Nebraskan, April 14.)

What?! Is someone out there trying to tell me that certain students here are playing football because they have to? I thought people came to this institute to achieve a degree in a special field. I thought sports were available as an extracurricular activity in which students voluntarily engaged on their spare time.

I understand that football is a viable profession and many players hold degrees in jobs they practice off season. Also I understand how appealing the glamour is to students,

that perchance they can reach fame and fortune by excelling in a sport.

No one participates in a sport because they have to. It is their freedom of will that motivates them. If they need money so bad, let them do work-study for minimum wage and help the college operate in the process.

My thanks to everyone who contributed in the veto of such a hideous attempt to reward playtime monetarily.

Yep, this really bugs me.

Anthony Motto radical at-large junior art education

UNL law professor loved DN joke issue

Well, I'll say it: I loved the April 1 joke issue! I think it was hilarious, and I saved two copies to share with friends from out of town. It will be a sad day for this state and this nation when 24,000 college students can survive an entire year without at least one day of irreverence and vulgarity. There is a high probability that

after graduation, you and your lives will become more boring with every passing year (just look around you). Have some fun while you still have it in you!

J.B. McCombs assistant professor of law

Letter Policy

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

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.

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tor and Joel Carlson, columnist. Editorials do not necessarily reflect the views of the university, its employees, the students or the NU Board of Regents.