

Daily **Nebraskan**
University of Nebraska-Lincoln

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Chambers, pick one

Senator would be better off in Lincoln

Decisions. Decisions. If State Sen. Ernie Chambers is truly sincere about his candidacy for the U.S. Senate, then he should decide whether he wants that office or wants to run for re-election to the Nebraska Legislature.

It's a decision he should have made long before now. But instead, Chambers is playing a political "stall game" with the chief justice of the Nebraska Supreme Court — a delay that could cost him some votes.

Chambers, you see, is in an interesting position. He's listed both as a U.S. senatorial candidate with the New Alliance Party as well as running for re-election to the Nebraska Legislature. A ruling by Secretary of State Allen Beerman ordered that Chambers' dual candidacies violated state law.

Because of his hesitation to pick an office, the Daily Nebraskan questions how serious Chambers is taking his candidacy, both for the Legislature and the Senate.

On Monday, Nebraska Supreme Court Chief Justice William Hastings refused to extend the deadline for Chambers. Earlier, Hastings had ruled that Chambers must make his decision by Wednesday.

Good move, Bill.

Chambers asked for an extension of the deadline and a partial reconsideration of Hastings' one-judge opinion, which said Chambers can't run for both offices. Chambers has argued that he should be allowed dual candidacies, and that the deadline should be extended to late September because of the extraordinary circumstances of the case.

Last Friday, Chambers told The Associated Press that he might take legal action. Good grief, Ernie, it's time to abandon the stall game and get on with one candidacy.

The DN thinks Chambers would be wise to stay in the Legislature. He's running unopposed in North Omaha's 11th District, and he has proven himself a worthy state senator in the past.

Besides, Chambers had to overcome a cloud of controversy just to obtain the New Alliance candidacy. He won the seat in July after the party labored through weeks of confusion.

The State Board of Canvassers first said Chambers had won the party nomination in the May balloting, but later reversed it when a recount showed former Gov. Bob Kerrey won the nomination. Kerrey rejected the New Alliance seat to run on the Democratic ticket.

Nebraska needs Chambers in the Legislature. In this state, his outspoken style can only keep a conservative statehouse in check, and provide citizens with alternative arguments to legislative bills.

Chambers may be dwarfed in the U.S. Senate, the little fish in a big pond, as opposed to a big fish in the little pond. His somewhat radical style would be shirked off in Washington D.C. After all, how many U.S. senators sport cut-off sweatshirts and have barbells in their offices?

— Mike Reilly
for the Daily Nebraskan

Reader questions movie

Craig Heckman's column (DN, Sept. 9) suggests that "The Last Temptation of Christ" can play a positive role in helping Christians to question their religious faith because it "questions the traditional view."

I think Heckman is correct in claiming that traditional Christian claims about Jesus should be open to rational inquiry, but the suggestion that Hollywood movies might play a serious role in such inquiries is dubious at best. If, on the one hand, there is any factual evidence supporting

Martin Scorsese's portrayal of Jesus, then it is this factual evidence itself and not the film that is relevant.

On the other hand, if there is no factual evidence supporting the film's portrayal of Jesus, then it is merely an exercise in imagination, but not necessarily a harmless one. Thus, in either case, the film is of little or no use in critically evaluating claims about Jesus.

Dave Reiter
graduate student
philosophy

letter

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

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 will not be granted.

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

1988 OLYMPICS-SEOUL



Officer slaps a helping hand

Rude police officer convinces columnist to avoid getting involved

"The Police officer is your friend." Remember growing up hearing that phrase? Well, I had a heck of a yarn with my "buddy" from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Police Department the other night.

On my way home, I turned onto R Street and noticed a moped lying on the ground just in front of the Nebraska Union. Looking up from the wreck, dazed, was a man who obviously had just taken a mean spill. He had a companion riding on the back of his two-person moped.

By the time I drove up, he and his companion had stood up, a sign that they weren't too seriously hurt.

When I asked them what happened, they said a vehicle parked eastbound on R Street pulled out and made a U-turn right in front of them. He slammed on his brakes and, in the process, flipped his moped over. It was all he could do to avoid a collision. The avoidance wasn't without cost. In addition to being physically shaken up, both he, his companion and his moped suffered some damage.

After taking a few minutes for the two to collect themselves, I suggested that we call the police. After all, that's the thing to do, right? If in doubt, call the police?

As I started walking to the phone, a police officer drove by.

Perfect timing, I thought, and flagged him down.

I briefly explained the situation and pointed him to the person driving the moped.

They talked for a few minutes. Listening from the sidelines, I could tell that the officer wasn't giving the guy a sympathetic ear.

"Driver error," the driver would later tell me. "Basically, he was saying, I crashed for no reason. It was my fault that I crashed."

Never mind the fact that a car pulled out right in front of him.

I felt the driver was getting screwed around by this officer. He was just in a wreck, still a little dazed

and probably not in the best state to ask questions as to why the officer was giving him the brief brush over.

I started asking questions for him. Halfway through my first question, the officer erupted.

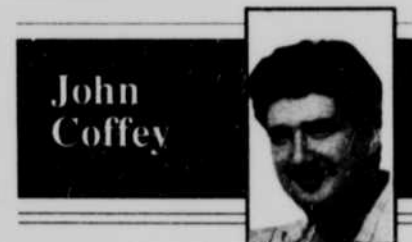
"Look, is this your vehicle?"

"No."

"Then stay out of this."

Wait a minute. I had a legitimate question. I was the first person on the scene of the accident. I didn't want to see this guy screwed around.

I got no more than an, "Excuse me, sir..." out of my mouth, when the officer said, "Unless this is your vehicle stay out of this or you'll be arrested."



John Coffey

Not being one who likes instant gag orders from power-hungry police, I tried one more time.

He told me that if I said one more word, I would be arrested for interfering with the duties of a police officer. This potentially meant jail time for only trying to help out.

I wasn't there as a journalist. I wasn't there to harass the police. I was an ordinary citizen who was drawn into an incident by being at the right place at the right time. But at this point, I was beginning to feel I was in the wrong place at the wrong time.

I was interested in things like justice and fairness. When it appeared that the officer was giving the moped driver the quick brush-off, I tried to ask a few questions.

When he started telling me to shut up or he would put the cuffs on me, I thought about things like the First Amendment and the right to free speech.

Heck, I didn't even want free speech, just the right to ask some

questions and make sure this guy wasn't getting screwed around by an officer of the state.

I can understand that police officers are prone to having a bad night. They're human. But this guy was a sergeant with the UNL Police Department. I'd like to expect a higher level of professionalism from an officer of his standing.

I was upset about the officer's lack of inquisitiveness at the scene. Although no one got a license plate number, the moped rider could give a pretty detailed description of the vehicle and the driver. The officer never asked for this information. I was never asked any questions, either.

But I was also disgusted that this officer thought he had to exercise such an extreme display of power.

I once heard a police officer say that 90 percent of all cops are good — it's the other 10 percent who make it bad for the rest of us. I believe that to be true. Most of my contact with police officers has been good, many exemplary.

But it's unfortunate that I had to be tainted with one in the upper echelon of the bad 10 percent.

Lt. Ken Cauble of the UNL Police Department said it's usual department procedure to not talk with people on the scene of an accident, unless they were involved. I'm still unclear as to whether I was involved or not. The police officer never took any time to clarify my involvement. Maybe he just knew.

Obviously, we would've been better off if I wouldn't have flagged this officer down. The result was the same, in effect, but a "wing of the state" told the cyclist to be a better driver and he threatened momentarily to strip me of my freedoms.

We're taught to avoid the "I didn't want to get involved" syndrome. But after this incident, maybe next time I should just not get involved.

Coffey is a senior political science major and a DN editorial columnist.

editorial

Signed staff editorials represent the official policy of the fall 1988 Daily Nebraskan. Policy is set by the Daily Nebraskan Editorial Board. Its members are Curt Wagner, editor; Mike Reilly, editorial page editor; Diana Johnson, managing editor; Lee Rood, associate news editor; Andy Pollock, columnist; Bob

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