

Daily
Nebraskan
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Don't sign petition

NOW we've heard it all. The Daily Nebraskan urges University of Nebraska-Lincoln students not to sign a petition circulating that could recall Jeff Petersen, president of the Association of Students of the University of Nebraska, and ASUN Senate Speaker Matt Gotschall.

Peter Barufkin, a freshman psychology major, and five "friends" have organized the recall effort. They need 6,027 signatures from full-time UNL students to recall Petersen and 343 signatures from full-time undergraduate students in the College of Agriculture to recall Gotschall, who represents that college.

The DN encourages students to be active in the legislative process, and that includes recall efforts. But in this case, Barufkin offers no solid reasons for the recall, particularly the one for Petersen.

He said the group wants to expel Petersen and Gotschall for not following the principles of democratic government. Barufkin said they "are not representing their constituents' interests."

Barufkin needs to take into consideration that Petersen developed the senator-constituent meetings. The plan failed miserably because the constituents rarely showed up at meetings. That's not Petersen's fault, it's the fault of the constituents'.

Petersen also has proposed structural changes within ASUN that would reduce the influence of staff members. He said the changes will increase the role of students in ASUN and reduce student fees.

Like all ASUN presidents, Petersen has been under fire concerning his relationship with his constituency.

On two occasions, he has had some problems communicating with students on campus. He remedied the problem the first time. The second time he couldn't.

Petersen's first communication problem came early in the semester, when ASUN was writing the minority recruitment bill for UNL. He wrote the first draft of the bill without requesting input from minority leaders on campus.

The result—a piece of legislation that was as flimsy as wet cardboard. Big mistake, Jeff.

But Petersen showed a lot of character by consulting several minority leaders and rewriting a solid bill.

The second communication problem couldn't be repaired. Petersen supported an apology letter to Gov. Kay Orr and UNL Chancellor Martin Massengale after the student body booed them at the halftime of the Nebraska-Oklahoma State Homecoming football game. The letter apologized on behalf of the entire student body.

Several students, as well as a few senators, criticized the apology letter because Petersen and others who supported it failed to consult students first. They should have.

By the time students complained, the damage had already been done. It was impossible for Petersen to retract the letter once it was sent.

Barufkin attacked Gotschall and Petersen for supporting the letter, saying they were "kissing up" to local politicians.

Granted, ASUN's upper-crust has been singing the tune of local politicians and UNL administrators for years. Petersen is no worse, or better, than any of his predecessors. But it's by no means a reason for recalling him.

Yes, Petersen has made his share of mistakes during his term. But he is a politician who has cast himself in the public limelight, and he is open to constant criticism.

Right after Petersen was elected last spring, some ASUN senators accused him of imposing a gag rule by not allowing them to speak to the press. He denied the allegations, adding that he only wanted the senators to be "team players" and not discuss legislation with the media until after it was passed.

Petersen's track record isn't that bad, considering he is working with one of the most apathetic ASUN senates in years.

Petersen and second vice president Kim Beavers have criticized the senate's apathy during their executive reports at weekly senate meetings.

Barufkin and his band of merry petitioners should follow through on their original plan of dissolving the entire ASUN senate. That's where the problem lies—not with the executives.

— Mike Reilly
for The Daily Nebraskan



Bird droppings make a statement

Life requires that you own a car, but you don't have to like it

Although I've never met Frederick J. Schwab, I must assume that he's big heat in his line of work.

His stationery says he is senior executive vice president of Porsche Cars North America, Inc.

I know this because he has sent me a personal invitation to drive one of his Porsche cars. And maybe buy one.

In a burst of enthusiasm, he wrote: "Imagine yourself behind the wheel of one of the most powerful and exciting automotive machines in the world—a new Porsche 928 S4."

I did as he suggested. I closed my eyes and imagined myself behind the wheel of a Porsche 928 S4.

The imaginary vision didn't do much for me. I could hear my wife saying, as she always does: "Do you mind not smoking in the car?"

Then I saw myself pulling onto the madness of the Kennedy Expressway, being wedged between a giant truck and a '69 Pontiac belching black fumes, and everybody slowing to five miles an hour to gape at a family of 12, who share 20 teeth, standing on the shoulder of the road pondering a flat tire on their pickup truck.

As fantasies go, it wasn't much fun, so I opened my eyes and went on with Vice President Schwab's letter.

"We've got one with your name on it, and I want to personally invite you to your local Porsche dealer for a complimentary test drive.

"Come and experience the incomparable handling, the smooth power, the pure excitement of driving this exceptional automobile. Sit behind the wheel and surround yourself with the sleek styling that made Porsche famous.

"However, one word of caution: After you drive a new Porsche 928 S4, you may be compelled to own one."

No, Mr. Schwab, you're mistaken. I will not be compelled to own one.

After receiving your invitation, I called a Porsche dealer and asked how much your 928 S4 doo-dad costs. He said between \$75,000 and \$80,000 depending what accessories I wanted in it.

I told him that for \$75,000 to \$80,000, the least I would expect to find in it would be a couple of gorgeous blonde Kraut dollies. The staff said those were not the kinds of accessories they dealt with. Well, if they did, Mr. Schwab wouldn't have to resort to sending letters to the likes of me.

In any case, he couldn't have picked a less likely prospect.

Mike
Royko



Not that I'm cheap, but I consider \$75,000 to \$80,000 a bit steep for a car—even one with "incomparable handling" and "smooth power."

How much incomparable handling and smooth power does one need to get around Chicago? The secrets of survival are to get out of the way of interstate trucks, remember that Friday is drunk-driving night on the expressways and never give the finger to someone with a tattoo on his arm who is driving a clunker that looks uninsurable.

And while I don't want to criticize Mr. Schwab's product, frankly I don't see where they get off charging \$80,000 for something that small.

If I was going to throw that kind of money around, I would want something long and flashy—an old-time, fat, bloated, Detroit gas guzzler. Then, with a big cigar clenched be-

tween my teeth and a pinky ring on my finger, I could pass for an alderman or a Mafia elder and get some respect.

But in a Porsche, people would justifiably assume that I was a Yuppie who trades pork bellies or soybean futures, since those are the sort of people who buy Porsches. Who needs that kind of humiliation?

As students of the auto industry tell us, once you pass a certain prudent, sensible limit in car buying, you are no longer just buying transportation.

You are making a statement.

My cars have always made a statement. They are covered with bird droppings, soot, grime, salt. The inside is littered with ashes, grimy coffee cups, old newspapers, crumpled candy wrappers and letters I forgot to drop at the corner mailbox.

The statements my cars make is: "Modern life requires that I own one of those things, but I didn't have to like it."

But if I bought one of Mr. Schwab's trinkets, I would be making an entirely different statement.

I would be telling the world: "Look, everybody, I have paid \$80,000 for a small car that is capable of going 150 miles an hour, although the speed limit is 55 where I do most of my driving. And if I leave it unattended on a city street for more than two minutes, the car thieves will have a tag team match over who gets to steal it. Therefore, the statement I am making with this car is: 'I am a real jerk.'"

Finally, Mr. Schwab, I have to tell you that I cannot buy your car because it is not made in this country. I don't buy cars made in Germany or Japan.

I'm not spiteful, and I believe in letting bygones be bygones. But I have a personal policy of waiting 100 years between wars before doing business.

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editorial POLICY

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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Editorial columns represent the opinion of the author.

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 to run, is left to the editor's discretion.

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

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.