

Daily Nebraskan University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Curt Wagner, Editor, 472-1766 Amy Edwards, Editorial Page Editor Jane Hirt, Managing Editor Lee Rood, Associate News Editor Diana Johnson, Wire Page Editor Chuck Green, Copy Desk Chief Lisa Donovan, Columnist

Complacency rules

ASUN makes big mistakes on big issues

As the ASUN Senate voted down two pieces of vital legislation Wednesday night, it became apparent that a wave of complacency and fear of university officials will govern the body next year.

First, the Association of Students of the University of Nebraska, led by Sen. Steve Thomlison, failed to bring to emergency status a resolution that urges the NU Board of Regents to add "sexual orientation" to the non-discriminatory section of the NU Charter. Then the body voted down a bill that would have appropriated funds to purchase and distribute condoms in the ASUN office.

Two important issues, two big mistakes.

During discussion on the resolution, some senators asked why "sexual orientation" wasn't already added by the regents, as if ASUN legislation should be governed by regent reasoning.

The senate then voted against emergency status so the resolution could be studied further by the Special Topics committee. But thinking realistically, the resolution probably will be voted down by the committee. The ever-righteous Thomlison chairs Special Topics.

As Thomlison has proven many times, he is against funding for a gay/lesbian group and diametrically opposed to the gay/lesbian movement.

Thomlison and others argued that the resolution is not worthy of emergency status. But gay men and lesbians are discriminated against daily, and this resolution would show that ASUN does not support any prejudice.

Thomlison also led senators into mirroring UNL officials on the condom issue. They echoed administrative concerns when they said distributing condoms would cause an image problem.

But in debate, Sen. Julie Jorgensen brought up 1989 ASUN election results that showed 69 percent of the students voting supported distribution of condoms in university buildings.

Thomlison said 69 percent of those students voting is not 100 percent, so the bill should not be passed. But earlier in the semester, when Thomlison quoted voter percentages from the 1986 ASUN elections, he said 85 percent of students voting were against funding a gay/lesbian group.

That percentage is not 100 percent either, yet Thomlison used it to urge that funding for the Committee Offering Lesbian and Gay Events be denied this year.

So, does Thomlison believe that ASUN should follow the majority's wishes, the minority's wishes or whatever he sees fit so the body can uphold his dated, backward personal agenda? Does he feel ASUN should do only what pleases administrators?

ASUN must work to be a champion of everyone's rights and a progressive government not afraid of change.

Senators must not fear what administrators think. They do not work for administrators, they work for the student body.

-- Curt Wagner for the Daily Nebraskan

Guy blasts DN for following rule

I am shocked to find that a newspaper, even if it is the Daily Nebraskan, failed to report the name of the football player involved in the domestic incident reported on the first page (DN, April 19). Everyone who is studying journalism or has anything to do with a newspaper would realize that the DN didn't write all the facts.

Besides the sloppy reporting issue, what about our beloved football players?

I'm not saying that the name was withheld because the man was a football player, but the possibility exists. If this were the case, then the DN is about as irresponsible as the player committing the crime. After all, why mention the victim's name without naming the alleged assaulter? Yes, you mention his address, but not his name?

I hope the DN is not in the business of protecting our athletes from public embarrassment because of an alleged

crime. They are people like everybody else. For example, the alleged rape at the Phi Gamma Delta house named the offender. If I, or any other "Joe Blow" were arrested, I would be willing to bet that it would appear in the DN.

Lloyd Guy sophomore broadcasting

Editor's Note: According to the DN Policy Handbook, revised Nov. 1983, the DN followed policy on this story. On page 11, under the heading "Identifying Persons Accused of a Crime," policy reads as follows: The DN will not print the name of any person accused of a crime until the person has been arrested, charged and arraigned. Also, the alleged rapist at the Phi Gamma Delta house was not named until he had appeared in court and was arraigned.



Press collides with government

Americans continually not informed about government actions

Reality: actuality; fact; truth. -- Webster's Dictionary.

Just what is real and what is fiction is not always the easiest thing to determine. This is particularly true when people are dealing with the federal government. Supposedly, having a free press eliminates this problem.

Wrong. This week in class, during a talk about El Salvador and Latin America, a discussion of this sort began. The problem under discussion was that many (if not all) of the nations in Latin America are, or have been, human rights violators. I'm not referring to little things like poor living conditions. But there are some major violations of basic human rights going on: torture, rape, imprisonment without cause and wholesale murder, for example. Most of these countries receive varying amounts of economic and military aid from the United States. El Salvador, for instance, receives more than \$1.5 million -- per day.

Why does the United States government continue to supply these countries with aid, and more importantly, why does the American public not care or know about it? Our class discussion centered on the latter part of this question. Why isn't the American public informed? Two institutions are at fault here: the federal government and the media.

The federal government has great reason to keep the public ignorant. It would not look good for the people of this country to find out that they are giving money to questionable foreign governments. So the administration releases only the bare minimum of information. It often withholds the

pertinent information that could make a difference in public opinion. A common ploy of past administrations was to overshadow the unfavorable image with some more favorable image or action.

The best example of this took place in 1983. A few days after the killing of 243 American servicemen in Beirut, Lebanon, the Reagan administration make the decision to invade Grenada. Our victory over this powerful island overshadowed the tragedy of the deaths in Lebanon.



By withholding information or giving misleading or false information, the government puts the press in a difficult position. Sometimes there is a real reason for keeping information from the press, but most of the time, the reasons are for appearances sake. Take Watergate and the Iran-Contra scam. In both cases the press found out what the government was up to -- and reactions from the public were less than favorable.

But often the press is to blame for our ignorance of certain events. Look again at the Grenada invasion or the Beirut bombing. While the administration tried to overshadow the tragedy, it did not force the media to cover the two situations like it did. The press was not forced to put the bombing on page 12. Editors did it by choice, and in doing so, they contributed to the diluting of the Beirut tragedy.

And what about the human rights situation in Latin America? The government does not want the people to know that we support some foreign governments, and for the most part they don't. Look at the newspapers, television and periodicals like Time and Newsweek. You may be hard pressed to find any information about government aid in El Salvador. Who's fault is that?

It's everybody's fault. Yours, mine and the next guy's. As long as the people in Washington can get away with telling half-truths and outright lies they will. As long as the media continues to place certain important issues on the back burner, while sensationalizing others (Gerald Rivera, Phil Donahue and Oprah Winfrey to name a few), and as long as the American people don't care, the government will get away with it.

Why should we care? Who cares where our tax dollars go as long as they fight the red menace of communism? Such is American public opinion. It saddens me that people are more concerned about some mythical East-West confrontation than about the conditions human beings are placed in and forced to contend with. I don't mean to say that we should just capitulate to the Soviets right now, but we should place a little more emphasis on other factors, say human rights, for example.

I realize that it is usually not wise for a columnist to bite the hand that feeds him, but something needs to change. No longer can we let illusions cloud our vision for a peaceful world.

Heckman is a senior international relations major and a Daily Nebraskan editorial columnist.

Reader gives message to battlers of opinion

Often in the letter section of your editorial page, a continuing battle will take place. I have a message for the participants in these arm-chair shouting matches:

1. When you have a controversial idea, people will disagree with you. It's OK not to write back with a page-and-a-half retort; maybe people will be more inclined to agree with you then.

2. Try to be reasonable. It really gets sickening for us readers when

you simply call each other names.

3. Try to be rational. I would like to read argumentation, not a script for a screaming contest.

And finally, a demonstration, re: "War Pigs."

Mr. Vela, Mr. Weldon, I am young, but I have a right to speak. Mr. Vela, you started by saying that you weren't insulted. Please write in and tell me what compelled you to write the Daily Nebraskan. I suspect you were insulted, and in this case, rather than arguing (or trying to) about the

word "war," which is, at least for me, indisputable as the purpose for the U.S. Armed Forces, argue about the word "pig."

Now the word "pig" is highly subjective, and nearly impossible to argue, so I'll only give you my opinion. You are pigs.

Scot Dyer freshman classics/philosophy

P.S. Now that wasn't so bad, was it?