

Legislation, tree protection stir emotions of readers

Lincoln resident praises support of tree activists

I wish to thank those who worked to save the trees in Cooper Park from destruction. Your activism and support was greatly appreciated. It is comforting to know there are still people with a social conscience willing to risk personal injury in order to take a stand.

Although the city of Lincoln was not stopped from carrying out this tragedy, we can let the elected officials responsible know that we will not tolerate continued destruction of our environment.

I urge everyone to actively work for the defeat, at the next election, of members of the City Council and the Lincoln Board of Education who did not oppose the project.

Patricia Worster
Lincoln

Legislation causes regent candidate to voice concern

The proposed legislation to radically alter the coordination and governance of higher education in Nebraska (LR239CA and LB1141) is progressing quickly through the legislative process. From my perspective as the former chairman of the Nebraska Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education and current candidate for the NU Board of Regents, I offer the following comments and suggestion in regard to this legislation.

The most important defect in the proposed legislation is the failure to link a consolidated budget with a consolidated appropriation for the senior institutions of higher education. The proposed legislation charges the new statewide Board of Regents with the responsibility to accumulate budget requests from the seven senior institutions and consolidate them into a single budget request to the Legislature. However, under the proposed legislation the Legislature would appropriate funds directly to each institution.

State Sen. Jerry Warner of Waverly says that the Legislature should not be the coordinating body for higher education (which it clearly has been up to the present time). If the Legislature appropriates individually to each institution under the new system, then the new Board of Regents will be an advisory board only, and the Legislature will continue to be the real coordinating body. The individual institutions will almost certainly "end run" the Board of Regents whenever their requests are denied, producing an annual appropriations dog-fight in the Legislature. To prevent this, and to give the new statewide Board of Regents the ability to shape the configuration of our higher education system, the Legislature should give a single consolidated appropriation back to the Board of Regents. The Board of Regents, in turn, should deal with any short-fall in appropriations relative to the original budget request.

Regardless of whatever reshuffling occurs in the coordination and governance of higher education in Nebraska, it is essential that the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and the University of Nebraska Medical Center remain together, under a single governing board and a single chief administrative officer. This makes sense because these two institutions are the only ones with a broad statewide role and mission, they are the only institutions with major research capability and responsibility, and they are the only doctoral-level institutions. Research and doctoral programs are increasingly interdisciplinary efforts, and the linkage between these two campuses would be a major benefit to both. The combined UNL-UNMC "comprehensive university" would also be an institution comparable to its regional peers (University of Kansas, University of Missouri, University of Oklahoma, etc.)

Another important reason for keeping these two campuses together as a single institution is the political importance of Nebraska's comprehensive research university having a truly statewide presence. If UNL and the Medical Center are separated and run by separate governing boards and separate chief administrative officers, the University of Nebraska, as we know it, would no longer have any presence in Omaha. The perception that there is any connection between Omaha and the "flagship campus" would fade even more than it already has.

Considering the foregoing comments, I propose at least two amendments to the currently proposed legislation. One would stipulate that the Legislature give a consolidated appropriation back to the Board of Regents in response to its consolidated budget request. The second amendment would combine the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and the University of Nebraska Medical Center as a single unit for governance and administration. I know there are others who share my concerns about the proposed legislation. I urge all interested citizens to speak out about this important issue, and to contact their state senators with their concerns.

Charles Wilson
Lincoln

Kendle fails to include statistics, misinterprets bill

I always thought that editorials represented a point of view on a given subject and were not intended to be objective reporting of the news. However, Dave Kendle's letter (DN, Feb. 28) concerning Bob Nelson's editorial (DN, Feb. 19) concerning LB642 (the seven-day handgun waiting period) seems to suggest that the facts were misrepresented. Kendle seems to be asserting that the facts, if stated correctly, would support his pro-gun point of view. I disagree.

While the scenario Kendle presented concerning the red tape involved in the purchase of a handgun as a gift is essentially correct, he has misstated the intent of LB642 and submits that "statistics" (which he failed to include) indicate that such laws invariably fail. LB642 accomplishes two goals. First, it provides a seven-day waiting period during which handgun purchasers may reflect upon their motivation for purchasing a handgun. Second, it requires registration of handguns so that transactions may be monitored by police officials. This greatly reduces the chances that criminals readily will obtain handguns.

Admittedly, determined individuals can still purchase "Saturday Night Specials" if they want to purchase a handgun badly enough, but at least they will be precluded from procuring handguns through legitimate purchases. Moreover, those individuals, who entertain the notion to kill in the heat of passion and who cannot or do not wish to purchase handguns on the street, may be prevented from doing so. The possibility that even one human life may be saved by passage of this legislation far outweighs any inconvenience to legitimate purchasers caused by a seven-day waiting period.

If the "statistics" Kendle mentioned in his letter do in fact support his position, why didn't he present them? The mere mention of statistics, without any empirical data on which to base assertions, means absolutely nothing. Also of importance is the organization compiling these statistics. If such data came from the NRA or from some other interested lobbying group, the credibility must be critically examined.

I read the DN editorial and recognize it as an editorial opinion and nothing more. Unfortunately, it appears that Kendle cannot make this distinction. His allegations are nothing more than the same old worn-out hyperbole that the gun lobby has been subjecting us to for years. As an advocate of gun control, I don't believe that handguns should be abolished,

but I do believe in reasonable controls that will at least minimize the possibility of dangerous weapons falling into the wrong hands. LB642 can accomplish this purpose.

Sam Bethune
1st year
law

Threats behind hidden identities of homosexuals

I write this letter in response to Kelvin Kreitman's justification of heterosexual discrimination in the military (DN, Feb. 28).

Kreitman's argument that lesbians and gay men are security risks and more susceptible to blackmail may be a valid argument. But rather than accepting that as fact and discriminating against a large body of capable people because of it, we need to look at why it may be true.

Why do lesbians and gay men hide their identity? Could it be because gay men and lesbians are denied housing and employment just because their sexual identity differs from that of heterosexuals? Could it be because institutions like this university espouse non-discriminatory policy but deny funding for gay and lesbian-identified events thereby promoting homophobia? Could it be because gay men and lesbians are harassed, raped, beaten and murdered with little retribution all across this "free" country of ours? Could it be that lesbians and gay men want and deserve the same opportunities as heterosexual men and women (including the right to defend their country) and the only way they can take advantage of those opportunities is by hiding themselves?

The answer to the problem of some perceived security risk by the military isn't to deny lesbians and gay men the right to serve as this institution and the people that run it advocate. The answer is to remove the threat of punishment by discharge and incarceration that face these men and women who want to avail themselves of the opportunity to be a part of the military, but who must do so at the risk of their careers and their freedom.

The argument that lesbians and gay men are security risks may be true... but the responsibility should be placed on the institutions (including the military) and the people that run them that force lesbians and gay men to hide who they are, not the men and women who are oppressed because of those institutions. The military creates that security risk by discriminating against non-heterosexuals that want to be a part of it. If the military (and our government) was a non-discrimination institution that actually followed the policies of freedom and equality that it so loudly defends, the "blackmail risk" would be gone.

Rose Klemen
senior
psychology

Reader believes democracy dead in fascist society

Is democracy dead? That thought has overwhelmed me this entire week as I've watched events happen at Cooper Park. I know a lot of people think this is "just a bunch of radicals" who are just reliving the 1960s all over. That is a bunch of garbage.

It's not like these protestors didn't try to go through legal channels. After a fruitless attempt of asking the Lincoln School Board to delay the project at Cooper Park, after asking the State of Nebraska to look into whether the city truly owned the park, after these channels were exhausted, these people took to the trees, trying to protect them.

As our resources grow thin on this planet, it is important that we protect

them and work with each other to carefully evaluate how we treat these resources. Until this week, I really wanted to believe that the political system we have would allow for these evaluations. It's appalling that Mayor Bill Harris wouldn't even come to the park to see the devastation there. Gov. Kay Orr was too busy celebrating Nebraska's birthday to even come forward and make a statement about the issue. I know now who NOT to vote for in the elections.

The real atrocity was the blatant disregard for life shown by the officers of the Lincoln Police Department. They stood by and watched as bulldozers rammed trees, including trees with living people in them. Even if the bulldozer operator of Cheever Construction DID have "the sun in his eyes," the police could have charged him with some form of negligence. I think that attempted murder would have been more like it.

This is all in order to help build a place for educating our young. Well, our lessons have been learned. Our political system is there to benefit the people that we have elected to office, and the Lincoln Police Department acts on the behalf of those who own property, not the citizens of Lincoln. Democracy is dead. Welcome to Fascist Nebraska.

James A. Zank
junior
arts and sciences

Disabled student proposes ramp for fire escape

I am Randy May, one of the disabled students attending UNL. The academic center for the disabled is located in room 132 of the Administration Building. In order to get up to the center we must use the freight elevator. Half of the time it is broken down, and we are stranded on the first floor. If a fire should ever break out, then we would be stranded with no way to escape, because if the elevator was not already broken down, it would be shut down immediately.

I propose building a ramp at one end of the Administration Building to the outside. I realize the cost of the ramp and an electrical door opener would be expensive, but it would be relatively inexpensive compared to the court costs after a fire.

Randy May
freshman
undeclared



TNT

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Special Prices on Margaritas- all day!

Thursday is Tex-Mex Fest.
Special Prices on Texas Nachos and Buffalo Wings!

201 N. 66th 464-8281

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11:00 am - 2 pm
Nebraska Union
City Campus



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empanadas...eggrolls...baklava...jewelry...baskets...carvings...curry...rugs...sweets...