

Daily
Nebraskan
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University of Nebraska-Lincoln

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Burning Old Glory Supreme Court should put off decision

President Bush made it clear in his 1988 campaign that he didn't like the American Civil Liberties Union. Since his election, he has made it clear that he doesn't like civil liberties.

Since last summer when the Supreme Court upheld the right to symbolic speech in the flag-desecration case of Texas vs. Johnson, Bush has basked in his wonderful patriotism and pushed for protection of the flag in any way he could. Although Bush's enthusiasm for a constitutional amendment has waned as public interest has decreased, he still won't let up.

On Tuesday, the Bush Administration asked the court to hurry up and hear two cases involving a new federal statute banning flag desecration. Federal judges in the District of Columbia and Seattle have declared the law unconstitutional.

It is interesting that Bush, who was in no hurry to even sign the law and let it become law without him, is now pushing to have it upheld.

The Justice Department asked to have the oral arguments moved up to April 25, before the term ends in July. The Supreme Court's information office said the justices will meet in a private conference today to consider moving the date. The Daily Nebraskan sure hopes they decide not to.

David Cole, a defense lawyer for both cases, said the administration's request was politically motivated. He said an expedited decision would make flag burning an issue in this year's House and Senate elections. He also said if the court invalidated the law in July, there almost certainly would be a proposal for a constitutional amendment.

Cole said the cases deal with a touchy constitutional issue and should not be subject to politics.

"It would get the most deliberate attention if the court decides to hear it in October and decides it later in the year, presumably after the election," the Associated Press quoted him as saying.

Not only should this constitutional issue not be subject to politics, it should not be subject to discussion. The Constitution was ratified more than 200 years ago. Its First Amendment guaranteed the right to free speech and to petition the government for a redress of grievances. There can be few expressions more effective at demonstrating grievances to the government than the burning of its precious cloth.

If burning a flag is not speech, what is it? Treason? Hardly. Treason is levying of war against the United States or giving aid and comfort to its enemies.

People don't burn flags to hurt their country, but to help it. They have ideas -- however misguided they may be -- about how this country could be improved. They know that their ideas will be ignored unless they employ a vehicle as shocking as flag burning to convey them. Ideas, right or wrong, are protected by the First Amendment.

-- Brandon Loomis
for the Daily Nebraskan



Hell created by campaigners

Another week of elections means more words, harassment

Cough! Cough! Cough!
"Have I awakened in hell?"
Cough! Cough!
"No, I'm just sick."
Wednesday, I woke up with a terrible cold. I felt miserable. I guess walking to class Tuesday in the rain, barefoot wasn't such a cool idea after all. So now, I would pay. And pay dearly during one day of "Campus Hell."

I'm not even going to dwell on my many personal problems before my visit to "Campus Hell." I'll just briefly mention them. I was sick, I was tired, I had no clean clothes, I had no money, I had no food, I had a cold sore, I couldn't find my car keys, and I was constipated.

These problems are nothing out of the ordinary for me; they happen every day. How do I survive? I go to campus. Walking about the people, feeling the activity, being part of learning makes me forget my problems, relieves my stress.

Yet, today would be different. Today was ELECTION DAY. A day when all of my personal problems would confront the campus problems head-on.

The University of Nebraska-Lincoln does have a few minor problems. It seems one is solved and another festers itself. Yet, that is what our Association of Students of the University of Nebraska elections are for. To elect competent, dedicated, headstrong, future leaders to determine and solve our campus problems.

As I walked to class, my personal problems dissipated as I pondered the great minds at work behind the grinding wheels of ASUN. This year's election result would be different, problems would be solved, and my life would be easier. I felt so optimistic. My constipation already was improving.

Perhaps the newly elected party would solve the insipid parking problem at UNL. Maybe VISION, TODAY or STAND, (V-T-S, for short), would see to it that every student got his or her own personal stall. How very beautiful.

Want to get bombed alone in your dorm room or fraternity? No prob-

lem. At this very moment V-T-S is probably working out a solution to provide alcoholic access to everyone. Hey, if the bigwigs at the Wick Alumni Center can get crooked so can the students.

Are you tired of the trains that block your passage, or inhibit your sleep? Have no fear; suggest to your leaders from V-T-S that they devise a



Kurt Krugerud

plan to build an underground system for the trains to travel beneath the campus. Out of sight, out of mind.

Do you think that we at the university are unfairly represented? No problem any longer. Lobby the leaders in V-T-S to overthrow the regents, burn effigies of them and vote in only students. Hey, they did it in Eastern Europe. Why not here?

Life could be so great from now on, yet, as I drew near the union for my ritual of coffee and newspapers, my optimistic outlook faded and my constipation got worse.

Same as the last year, same as all the previous years. The election fiasco.

One problem UNL seldom suffers through is litter.

Students seem concerned and try to throw their garbage within at least a 10-foot radius of the many trash cans. And, when they do miss, our university ground crew does an excellent job of finishing the business. Yet, this Wednesday was uncommonly polluted.

Just as Phil Gosch had predicted at one of the debates, this election day was full of color, VISION-Yellow, TODAY-Orange and STAND-Green. How very pretty. Especially the way their fliers littered the campus. A virtual blanket of fall colors.

If campaign garbage wasn't enough, how about noise pollution and/or harassment. You couldn't walk two

feet without someone thrusting some literature at you, sticking their fingers up your nose.

"Have you voted?"
"NO!"
"Please vote for VISION."
"Get lost."
"Here's our platform."
"Thanks, I needed a Kleenex."

I had come to campus with the intention of voting. Maybe this year would be different, and problems would be tackled. Besides, if I voted, I could get cheap beer. Yet, with all this hounding, I was about to change my mind.

"Do I have idiot printed on my forehead? Yes I'll vote! Just leave me alone!"

In the Crib, with all the campaign literature I picked off the floor, I carefully researched the three parties. Which one would be best for the job of making life for students so much easier? Here are my findings.

VISION first. Phil Gosch of VISION is too short. I'm short. Never trust a short person. Yet, I did think Shawn Burnham was pretty cute, but not enough for my vote.

How about TODAY? Too greek. They would win, and that would be excuse enough to print some more greek T-shirts. Sorry, no vote there.

How about STAND? I was not impressed with their political savvy at debates. However, they did have long hair. I have long hair. I voted for them, to no avail.

It's now Friday. I'm still sick, I'm still constipated, and the problems at UNL still exist. I knew all the problems wouldn't go away overnight, but I did think at least the elections would be over. One of the greek parties would be hungover, yet happy, typing up their new resumes. But no.

The elections will continue for another week. AAAHHHHH!!! More words, more litter, more promises and still, the problems of UNL will continue -- the parking, the railroad, etc.

And I'm sure I still will be constipated.

Krugerud is a senior secondary education major and Daily Nebraskan columnist.

opinion READER

Hiring by qualifications too simple

The front page of the March 6 issue of the Daily Nebraskan contained an article concerning the sentencing of Steve Ernst. Although I didn't feel the article was front page newsworthy, I considered it better journalism than last spring when he was all but hung by the press he received.

Because rape is such a tense issue, Mr. Ernst's case received incredible amounts of attention. The county attorney Michael Heavican is currently running for attorney general and saw this case as a basis for his strong stand against rape and harsh sentences for those convicted. Most people are probably satisfied with the fact that Mr. Ernst received four years probation, 500 hours community service work, 60 days in jail and restitution to the victim and her family. Let us not forget that Mr. Ernst was able to plea bargain down to a lesser charge making his charge a class four felony, second degree sexual assault which amounts to attempt.

To put this in perspective for you,

last week a man from midwest Nebraska was convicted of rape, his victim was under 18, he used a gun to force his sexual assault, and in the case there was medical evidence to support the facts (something not true in the Ernst case). This man was found guilty of first degree sexual assault, a class three felony, and sentenced to -- drum roll please -- one year probation and payment for counseling costs for the victim and himself.

In total sarcasm let me just say this: Isn't it nice to see that positions of power, like the county attorney's office and the attorney general, are political offices elected by a society in the throes of a battle over crime control and due process? God knows, hiring the most qualified man for the job, not influenced by political aspirations and goals but by the scales of justice and due process of the law, would probably just make too much sense.

Matthew M. Hansen
junior
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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

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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. Letters should be typewritten.

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