

Daily
Nebraskan

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Resolution needed

Homosexuals deserve military opportunities

The Association of Students of the University of Nebraska on Wednesday passed what is possibly the best resolution introduced in the senate this year.

Introduced by Engineering Sen. Paul Poulosky, the resolution protests the ban of gays and lesbians from U.S. military organizations and supports the inclusion of homosexuals in ROTC programs.

It's about time.

For far too long, the U.S. military has kept gay and lesbian students from opportunities offered through its programs. Military officials claim homosexuals in the U.S. Armed Forces are a security threat because they can be bribed.

People can be bribed only if they have something to hide, and homosexuals would have nothing to hide if the U.S. Armed Forces allowed them to reveal their sexual identity without facing some form of punishment.

Other claims of low morale are valid only to those who are too closed-minded to accept others' differences.

UNL's student government is not the only one that has recognized that fact. Resolutions at other universities range from those condemning the ROTC's discriminatory policies to those that will end ROTC classes if the programs aren't changed in two years.

Rochelle Slominski, a business administration senator, opposed the resolution, saying only the U.S. government should deal with the military's policy.

Bullshit.

ASUN's resolution doesn't alter the military's policy. It only encourages a necessary change. And if enough universities oppose that discrimination, the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Department of Defense may be forced to make that change.

Discrimination -- for any reason -- is inherently wrong.

ASUN should be congratulated for its move. Hopefully, Slominski and others who oppose that move will realize that it is up to the people who support the U.S. Armed Forces to force the government to respect the rights of everyone.

-- Amy Edwards
for the Daily Nebraskan

Election litter troubles student

Well, now that the ASUN elections are over, who gets to clean up the campus? Walking to class Thursday morning, I picked up a dozen various orange, yellow and white pieces of paper along with stickers carelessly crumpled up and scattered across campus. The messages on these balls of pulp read basically the same: "Vote ASUN." My sightings of this garbage were limited to campus only. Who knows how much of this "Vote ASUN" garbage has blown off campus and into other people's yards.

Did anyone handing these fliers

out ever think that most of them would be crumpled up and thrown away by people apathetic to ASUN and even more apathetic to the environment? Maybe some restraint should be taken on how many of these flyers are distributed. Litter is a high price to pay for a token student government. I'd like to see some of these newly elected persons out picking up some of the garbage leftover from their "glorious" victory.

Luke J. Barker
senior
electrical engineering

letter

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

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.

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

editorial

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

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.

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Daily Nebraskan



Everyone can learn from Haiti

Preserving a tree would save much more than a shady spot

Haiti is once again a roiling mess of blood and revolt, if it was ever anything else. General Prosper Avril has been booted from the old general's home like Namphy before him. Ertha Pascal-Trouillot, a Supreme Court justice, heads the provisional government. Our State Department touts the new leader as a positive force for democracy. But then, the State Department was optimistic about Avril, too.

Stabilizing their small corner of the Caribbean may be impossible no matter who runs the government. Haiti's problems are deep rooted -- hence the people's movement; "dechoukaj," to uproot a tree so it will never grow back. Dechoukaj is practiced to clear fields for planting. It became a slogan signifying the uprooting of the hated bully-boys Tontons Macoute, former dictator Papa Doc's terrorist gang who still exert influence on the island nation.

Haiti is the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere. Poverty is rampant. Food is scarce. The country once was one of the world's most productive nations. Now it imports most of its food.

In 1983, fear of swine flu led the Haitian government with the United States prompting to kill all native pigs. Pigs were a large source of peasant income and a staple food. The United States supplied Haiti with replacement swine; however, these were unlike the hearty, native breed that thrived on garbage and scrub. The American pigs needed pampering by comparison.

Governmental abuse in distribution and peasants' fears of a U.S. conspiracy to control the economy have made the replacement plan a fiasco. The peasants were left with even less than before and had virtually no recourse to recoup the income their swine had brought.

In a country that can't feed itself, propped up by U.S. aid of billions of dollars, importing most of its food and still unable to feed its people, an agriculture program aimed at attaining self-sufficiency would seem to be a reasonable proposal.

But it could be too late for Haiti to feed its people from its own land. Haiti is becoming a desert.

Charcoal has long been a primary source of fuel in Haiti. It is cheap and easily made. Hundreds of trees are chopped up and thrown in a pit. A slow fire is set. Earth is poured over the burning wood. With too little

oxygen to burn to ashes, the wood chars.

When peasants lost their pigs, they needed a new source of income. Trees became that income.

Certainly, it was exports that robbed Haiti of its mahogany groves. And many trees would have become charcoal without the swine disaster. But the need for food and cash (formerly provided by pigs) accelerated the deforestation.



Henry Battistoni

This peasant, charcoal economy left Haiti a virtual wasteland. In 1920, 60 percent of Haiti had heavy forest cover. Today, less than 5 percent is forested. That 5 percent is comprised of six tracts greater than 20 square miles.

Trees are wonderful, hard plants. They give shade, are famous for climatability and hold soil and moisture. Their disappearance coincides with the disappearance of Haiti's topsoil.

In tropical soils, 90 percent of the soil's total nutrients are found in the upper four inches of soil. Without trees to hold this soil, it quickly washes away. Rivers flow in torrents carrying soil to the sea. Unchecked by trees, rivers' effectiveness for irrigation is reduced. Haiti's topsoil is in the Caribbean. The land is left dry and infertile.

A November 1987 National Geographic article, "Haiti Against All Odds," displays a chilling aerial photograph. The photo shows a mountainous border between Haiti and the Dominican Republic, which shares the island of Hispaniola with Haiti. The Dominican land is densely forested, lush and green. The Haitian land's brown dirt and rocky outcroppings are bare except for a few frazzled trees on the slopes, standing lonely, easily countable in their rocky isolation.

The same article notes that all of Haiti's 30 watersheds have been deforested and that potable water is available to only 23 percent of the population.

Haiti's ecological nightmare is intriguing because the United States shares a horrible statistic with Haiti. Both countries have less than 5 percent of their native forestlands re-

maining.

In the U.S., timber on national forest tracts is sold by the Forest Service to the timber industry. The government, however, does not make a profit from selling this timber. The National Forest Service has an annual budget deficit of more than \$1 billion.

Because it is less expensive to cut old growth timber sold cheaply by the government, there is little incentive for private industry to grow and harvest forests specifically planned for timber production. The government has undercut the timber market making speculators slaver over the nation's public forests.

Two-thirds of the timber cut in the Northwest is exported as logs, chips or pulp. The timber industry is selling an irreplaceable natural resource belonging to all citizens -- our virgin forests -- overseas. Since the government subsidizes the timber industry through low-cost timber sales that produce a return which cannot cover replacement costs of trees, the nation is paying for this rape without exacting the cost of rehabilitation.

The timber industry is a necessary and viable part of the national economy. Trees must be harvested. Recycling can only dent our need for wood products. So why should we worry over the deforestation of our public old growth forests?

Old growth forests are balanced, self-sustaining ecosystems that provide water and clean air. They maintain topsoil and prevent runoff. Deforestation causes soil loss in the area of the cut and degradation of surrounding land.

Our old growth forests are the last strongholds of the forests that once covered all but the Great Plains and the Southwest. They are a record of millennia of natural interaction, a storehouse of the genetic composition of this land. They are a record of how life on this continent developed and sustained itself before man destroyed the balance. They are a scientific trove that gives to the nation without requiring maintenance.

Seventy-two percent of the nation's forestland is privately owned. These lands could easily support the timber industry if public timber sales did not undercut private investment.

Once the old growth forests are gone, they are gone forever. Haiti is finding that out now.

Battistoni is a senior English major and Daily Nebraskan columnist.