

Daily Nebraskan
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University of Nebraska-Lincoln

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Libraries in Catch-22

Storage, studying struggle for space

Academic Senate President James McShane accurately characterized the tight spot University of Nebraska-Lincoln libraries have fallen into. After a meeting of the NU Board of Regents, he described the libraries' space shortage as a "Catch-22." "At the same time we increase storage space, we diminish study space," he said. Room for both is running out. The problem is that material just keeps being added — 50,000 volumes a year, according to Kent Hendrickson, dean of university libraries. Add those volumes to the 1.5 million the libraries already have filed at Love Library, and you have a lot of books. Hendrickson said UNL's storage capacity in 10 research libraries is at 80 percent. In five years, he said, the libraries will be close to 90 percent full, meaning that they will be filled to capacity for all practical purposes.

As some smaller libraries fill faster than others, materials will have to be moved to larger libraries, such as Love and C.Y. Thompson on East Campus, Hendrickson said. That's an impractical arrangement for all parties. It costs library officials time and money to move volumes from one location to another. And students will be the big losers if materials for one field of research are located in several libraries. It would force them to traipse from one location to the next in search of related information, and perhaps, even to miss material vital to their research.

As storage space continues to increase, it will put more and more of a pinch on study space, which already is hard to come by at UNL libraries. Hendrickson said the libraries can seat only about 6 percent of the total student population. That falls way short of the 20 percent he said is the national standard. At UNL, students have a variety of other study locations to choose from, including the unions, restaurants and living units. Still, there's nothing like studying near the best source of reference materials — the libraries. But that space is being filled up by the continuing supply of volumes.

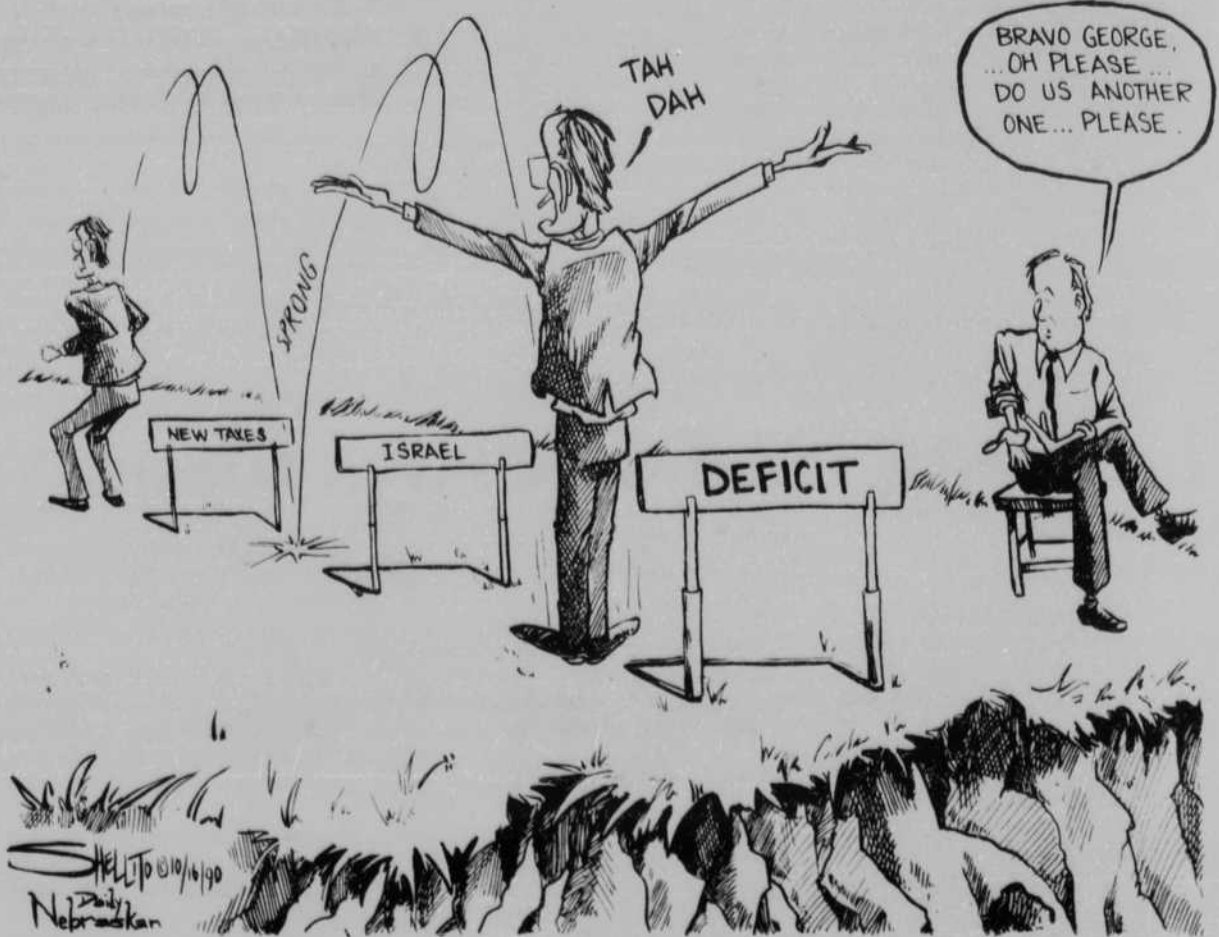
Storage and study space are equally necessary. Something has to give. A request for expansion of Love Library that would allow it to meet UNL's needs for the next 10 to 20 years has been submitted to the NU Board of Regents. Hendrickson said the \$19 million plan calls for a two-floor expansion of Love North, renovation of Love South and the addition of one floor and a partial filling in of the link in between.

But the proposal didn't make it onto the regents' priority list for capital construction this year. Instead of the library request on the list of 13 priority recommendations to the Nebraska Legislature are construction, renovation, remodeling and equipment requests for all four branches of the University of Nebraska system. The price tag for those projects adds up to more than \$60 million.

Any project that improves the university's ability to give its students a quality education is important. But the dual role of libraries as reservoirs of information and as places to study that knowledge ought to ensure that they hang onto some priority status.

Especially when space is running out fast.

— Eric Pfanner
for the Daily Nebraskan



No one to blame for suicides

Looking for scapegoats doesn't find solutions to problems

Five years ago today, I lost a very good friend. Actually, he lost himself. Brad was someone who took pride in helping others. He always smiled at people he talked to, regardless of his mood, and had a kind word for anyone who needed it. He cared about others, sometimes more than himself. He earned Colorado All-State honors as a quarterback on his high school football team during his junior and senior years, keeping a 3.5 grade point average all the while.

Brad would go out of his way to help people. He once went 15 miles out of his way to take a stranded man whose car had broken down to the nearest gas station. He was involved in community and church projects designed to benefit his hometown.

He had a firm grasp on his future — what he wanted and how he would get it. Put simply, Brad would give someone his last dime if they needed it more than he did. He always paid close attention to little details — "They're the ones that count the most," he would say.

But there were a few little details in his own life that he was either too proud or too stupid to take care of. They were details he didn't even bother to discuss with his family and friends. Five years ago today, Brad committed suicide.

He neither left a note nor an explanation. All he left was heartbreak, anger and disenchantment, and a trail of unfulfilled dreams that paved a dead-end road of an unfinished life. Brad was the first of four friends I would lose to suicide within the next year. Remarkably, none of the four knew each other. Looking back, they didn't know much at all. If they did, they didn't apply it.

What is surprising, though, is that it just keeps happening, with seemingly no cure for the factors that cause

the problem. Organizations and support groups that deal with suicide aren't usually well-known, and funding for such groups is almost nonexistent.



Chuck Green

And everyone associated with suicide is always looking for someone else to blame.

Less than two months ago, the British heavy metal band Judas Priest was on trial for allegedly causing two Sparks, Nev., youths to commit suicide, because of its song lyrics.

The jury's verdict was "not guilty," citing the First Amendment as valid protection for song lyrics.

Now, in Macon, Ga., singer Ozzy Osbourne is facing similar charges for the suicide shootings of two teens who allegedly killed themselves after hearing subliminal messages on his song "Suicide Solution."

Osbourne is no stranger to such accusations. In 1986, a 19-year-old California man committed suicide after drinking heavily and listening to Osbourne's music. Two years later, the court dismissed the suit, also ruling that the music was protected by the First Amendment.

There is little doubt that Osbourne again should be absolved of the charges. There also is little doubt that these allegations will surface again and again, whenever someone commits suicide and there is a stereo in the room.

Suicide is a fact of life, just like alcoholism and drug abuse, poverty, bigotry and all the other problems that infest the planet. The big difference, though, is that suicide is the one thing few people take the time to try

to understand or solve. If they did, they'd realize that there is no clear-cut explanation.

Prevention tips and lists of telltale signs of depression follow almost every newspaper story about someone killing themselves. They're as useless as a one-legged bipod.

Trying to understand why someone would pay the ultimate price because of life's pressures will only render you helplessly overwhelmed with confusion. If there was a single explanation, each case would be dealt with in the same way, and "suicide" would become an obsolete word.

No one can constantly pester friends who are angry or depressed. If anything, such critical conversation would only add to the problem.

Often, things are gone before you have time to realize how important they really were. Most of those things will never come back. Time is one of them.

When those things are gone before we want them to be, we feel cheated, and look for a scapegoat — such as controversial song lyrics.

Face the sad fact: If those people committed suicide because of a song, they were well on their way to self-destruction. It would have happened sooner or later.

Suicide is an individual choice, albeit a stupid one. But even more stupid things can follow — like blaming song lyrics for a bad, irreversible choice.

Contrary to desirable opinion, tomorrow will not always come. For some people, that holds true sooner than later. But dwelling on it eventually kills everyone involved.

The only difference is in how long it takes.

Green is a news-editorial major, and is a Daily Nebraskan night news editor, sports-writer and columnist.

opinion READER

Simplistic answers appeal to those with limited minds

There's one thing you can be sure of besides death and taxes. It is that when complicated issues need solutions, some fool will come up with a simplistic solution, and lots of others who don't want to have to think, who want everything to be easy and will jump on it and support it.

So we have the 2 percent solution. And we have T.H.R.O. Inc. We don't want to exert ourselves, and we don't seem to have any faith in the system we've created, so let's just blow it up and start over. It has a certain appeal to limited minds. But it's strange to see such a no-mind approach defended

in a Daily Nebraskan column (DN, Oct. 12), where normally we place a value on a reasoned consideration of problems and the thoughtful search for rational and humane solutions.

We need to reject the simple-minded blatherings of tired and angry old men as the nonsense they are and get on with the business of genuine reform tempered with careful concern for the real issues and the people on whom they have an impact. To do otherwise is to voyage on a ship of fools.

Rosemary Bergstrom
nursing

letter POLICY

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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 sub-

mit 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.

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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