

## What's in a bill?

*Sponsors first should read legislation*

State Sen. Ron Withem angrily withdrew a higher education bill from consideration by the Nebraska Legislature on Friday. He tried to sound as if he had been duped into sponsoring the bill in the first place.

Withem balked at the bill because it included a provision to add a College of Fine and Performing Arts to the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

The problem with the bill is that the provision for the new college is buried on page 23 of a 30-page bill. In fact, there's no actual proposal to add the college — just a list stating: "Colleges and institutes of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln shall be as follows . . ."

The arts college is listed alphabetically among the 11 colleges. The bill contains no explanation of the purpose and role of the proposed college.

The rest of the bill's provisions deal mostly with the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources.

Granted, Withem should have noticed that the bill included the fine arts college proposal. He admitted that he doesn't always read bills word for word.

Richard Wood, NU vice president and general counsel, said there had been a lack of communication between the Legislature and the university. He said "it was very obvious" that the new college was included in the bill.

Perhaps it was obvious to Wood. Perhaps it should have been obvious to Withem and to others with experience decoding legislative terminology.

But the senator has a point. A major policy change such as the addition of a new college should not be relegated to the back pages of a "housekeeping" bill.

The proposal should be a bill in its own right, with the necessary public discussion on the issue.

When UNL administrators introduced the proposal in fall, they said the costs of the new college would be minimal.

Money is not the only issue, however. The proposal would move existing arts departments into the new college and affiliate it with other parts of the arts community such as the Lied Center for Performing Arts.

That's a policy change. It would have an impact on UNL students, faculty members and record-keeping officials. Even if they had had input into the original proposal, they, like Withem, should have been kept informed.

During a legislative session when higher education bills will be viewed under a magnifying glass, university officials won't gain anything by concealing their interests. And state senators won't be able to say, "My dog ate it," when asked for their homework.

—E.F.P.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Public isn't getting full picture

Iraq — no big deal, piece of cake. We will just go and wipe them out in no time, and Kuwaitis will live their lives peacefully. Anyway, who cares about Kuwaitis? The charm was gathering big bucks from them. That's what Mr. President thought. But too bad the dream never came true.

Iraq has proven to be an indestructible rock so far. A Scud problem is diverting the force of allied power severely. I don't understand why these officials exaggerate so much, plus give false statements.

When the war started, the media made it sound as though the attack by United States and allied forces wouldn't last more than 24 hours. But a week-and-a-half has passed, and now we are hearing that 15 or 16 planes have been gunned down. I am telling you that this is nothing, just wait and see what's going to happen, you know. The only main destruction that has been done on Iraq is on its naval power. Their mine-laying ships are destroyed and the same is the case with 24 mines at sea.

The other day, one of the Patriots (anti-missile missile) was fired by mistake, and it was told that it went in the sea somewhere. Who knows, it might have dropped in any residential area. But that can be covered by saying that the damage was caused by

Scud. I hope that American troops don't fire at themselves and civilians like they did in Panama.

The allied forces bombed an infant formula factory, but according to Gen. Powell, the United States had sufficient evidence to believe it was a biological warfare facility. They also had sufficient evidence when an oil refinery was destroyed, but that came out to be nothing. Then the U.S. officials say that they are not targeting the civilians.

What I am trying to say is that a real picture of war has not reached us so far, which is not good. And now the government is afraid that if it shows what is happening in there, the public is going to get mad.

"This won't be another Vietnam." That is what officials are saying. Thank God they agree that they were kicked out from there.

I just hope that the least number of human lives are taken in the Middle East. Always remember that you should never underestimate your opponent.

It would have been a lot easier if Rambo or Commando were sent into the gulf.

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## LETTER POLICY

Anonymous submissions will not be published. Letters should include the author's name, address, phone number, year in school and group af-

filiation, if any.

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



THE SPOIL OF WAR

JANA PEDERSEN

## Gulf war equal to slaughter

A few months ago, I listened to Washington Post columnist Colman McCarthy speak about the need to teach peace in American public schools.

Now, while American troops drop bombs Iraq and Kuwait, McCarthy's words come back to me, ringing in my ears:

"The mainline press writes nonsense. . . . Get the words right. Use 'slaughter' instead of 'war.'"

With minute-by-minute accounts of events in the Middle East pouring in on every television screen in America, I can't help but wonder if news anchors soon will use McCarthy's terminology.

I picture Tom Brokaw pushing his eyebrows together with even more sincerity, saying, "We now take you to the Saudi Arabian desert for more coverage of the slaughter in the Persian Gulf."

McCarthy also teaches peace studies classes at universities in Washington. He contends that our society would be much more peaceful if American elementary schools taught the works of peacemakers such as Martin Luther King, Jr. and Mahatma Gandhi instead of teaching about world wars.

To drive that point home, McCarthy quoted former U.S. Rep. Jeanette Rankin of Montana:

"You can no more win a war than win an earthquake."

Rankin was the lone senator to vote against declaring war on Japan after the bombing of Pearl Harbor, McCarthy said.

While home for the holidays, I tried McCarthy's theory on my brother. "Why not teach peace in elementary schools?"

He answered my question with one of his own: "How will that help in the Middle East?"

"It's too late to teach peace to solve the Persian Gulf crisis. That's like trying to put a Band-Aid on an open wound," I said, mimicking McCarthy's words.

My brother told me that answer was a cop-out.

He's probably right. It's pretty useless to talk about teaching peace in elementary schools when we're in the middle of a war right now.

That's a similar argument to the ones used against anti-war protesters. It's pretty useless to protest war when we're in the middle of one right now.



*I picture Tom Brokaw pushing his eyebrows together with even more sincerity, saying, "We now take you to the Saudi Arabian desert for more coverage of the slaughter in the Persian Gulf."*

To quote every newscast cliché: "We should all back the troops, pray everything comes out OK, take it one day at a time and just wait for our men and women to come home."

Only not all of the troops will be stepping off the homecoming planes; some will roll off them, in caskets, stretchers, wheelchairs, especially after the allied ground attack begins.

That makes the war seem like something to object to, something to call a slaughter.

And now that the war has opened up an ecological front with a multimillion-gallon oil spill, the war clearly is a slaughter to the Persian Gulf environment. Not to mention the people who will die on the other side of the front.

Yet with all that slaughtering going on, a recent Gallup Poll reported that about 85 percent of American adults support President Bush's actions in the Middle East.

A full 45 percent would support using nuclear force against Iraq if it would prevent American casualties.

To me that statistic has repulsive connotations of genocide, of slaugh-

ter. But those words aren't used during wartime. They're only assigned to wars after the shooting stops.

When peace activists use words like slaughter while the fighting is going on, society calls it anti-war propaganda. Some news sources even have suggested that anti-war protesters should no longer be covered because they represent a small segment of the population and hurt troop morale.

Meanwhile, Pentagon press conferences reduce the fighting to sterile, unobjectionable terminology.

We're no longer fighting Iraqis; now we're fighting The Enemy.

The acronym for prisoners of war conveniently has been changed from POW to EPW, enemy prisoner of war.

Wartime maneuvers are reduced to football terminology, and we're still winning the game.

We've even adopted the noble name of our parents' warriors, the Allied Forces.

Such press conferences have convinced 85 percent of Americans that our soldiers are giving their lives to restore self-government to a country wrecked by its violent neighbor.

But the truth is, Kuwait was a class-structured, sexist society, something tough to hold up against American democratic ideals.

Apparently, 85 percent of us don't think it's strange that American service women should risk their lives to restore a sexist society.

I doubt such a majority would ask black soldiers to risk their lives to liberate Kuwait if it was structured like South Africa.

But it's tough to change the majority's mind, so I guess I'll have to get used to the idea of war, though I never imagined it would happen in my lifetime.

Still, that's not a reason to stop protesting, or a reason to stop reporting about protesters. Without dissent, no matter how late in the football game it comes, it's easy to dismiss the fighting without considering the slaughter.

And that reminds me of something else McCarthy said:

"I don't have a conscience. A conscience has me."

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