

Cooper Park ruins

Construction site contract shown invalid

Last spring, protesters — including several University of Nebraska-Lincoln students — planted themselves in the trees of Lincoln's Cooper Park to halt the unnecessary and illegal destruction of the park.

For all their work, the protesters were maligned by the community for being misguided hippies without a legitimate cause.

One of the arguments of the protesters and other concerned citizens was that the city had no legal right to flatten the park to build a recreational area for a neighboring school.

Turns out the protesters were right. A county district judge ruled Monday that a contract for the construction of an athletic field on the site was invalid.

Last year, that contract was upheld against a request for a temporary restraining order. At a hearing in March 1990 in Lancaster County District Court, Miles Johnston Jr., representing the South Salt Creek Community Organization, said the development should be stopped because the property was state-owned and there was no evidence that the state had transferred ownership to Lincoln. The organization filed a petition for the restraining order because the city contracted with the Lincoln School Board without owning the property.

Lancaster County District Court Judge Paul Merritt denied the petition last year, saying he didn't believe the group's "application was successful."

One year later, the trees are gone, the recreational area is built, and County District Judge Jeffrey Chevront ruled that Johnston and the Salt Creek organization were right all along — the city didn't own the land and had no right to turn it over to Lincoln Public Schools.

Oops.

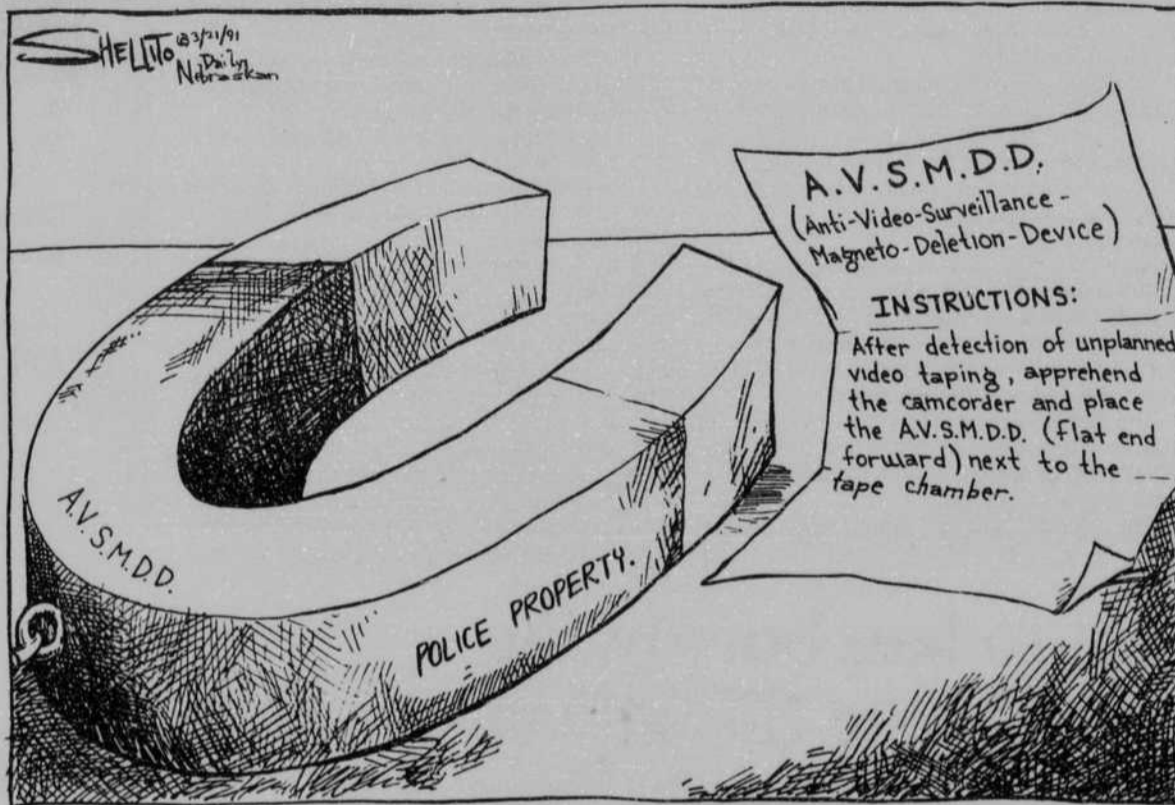
Merritt made a mistake in denying the temporary restraining order last year. Johnston knew something was wrong and pursued the issue for a year even after the damage was done.

For neighbors and friends of the now-plundered Cooper Park, this is one of those disturbingly hollow triumphs called "a moral victory."

On Wednesday, Johnston suggested that the protesters who were arrested and charged with trespassing last year be pardoned by Mayor Bill Harris.

Delayed justice would be better than no justice. Now, if those vindicated protesters only had a park to show for their persistence.

—B.N.



THE LATEST IN POLICE PROTECTION EQUIPMENT.

WALTER GHOLSON

UNITY to sing same old song

The UNITY party's platform read like a wish list of leftover compromises and unresolved issues, obviously written by an advertising major in dire need of an editor. The damn thing read like the political agenda for a new government of idealism and action.

My first inclination was to seek out the authors of the platform, meet the party members, congratulate them on their victory and talk to them about that mix-up in a birth date. The platform calls for a Martin Luther King Jr. holiday on Jan. 19. He was born Jan. 15.

I decided against talking to them, knowing how politicians can be right after a victory — just a little groggy from too many interviews, handshakes and telephone calls.

But I was interested in some of the platform planks because many of them are still hotly contested items from last year's agenda, including the age-old problem of equal representation on the Association of Students of the University of Nebraska.

I never paid much attention to student government politics. Like a majority of UNL students, I did not vote, nor did I care who won. As far as I was concerned the senators were just a bunch of political science majors trying to pad their resumes.

During the summer of 1990, I had met a real-live member of ASUN. Yolanda Scott had just been elected second vice president; she was surprised and elated by her victory and expressed a sincere desire to work for her constituency.

She wanted to help change the image of student government. She had the energy to do it.

I remember her as one of the most idealistic, optimistic people I'd met all semester. Scott was confident, that her intelligence and fortitude would stand the test of time and that she could accomplish her goals with hard work.

She was so serious about her new position that even a cynic like me was forced to believe in her.

But sometime between that summer and last week, Scott transformed into a political being. She is no longer idealistic about how long it may take before needed changes can be instituted at UNL.

I asked her about UNITY's platform, which contained several issues Scott and her supporters had been fighting for all year. I tried to bait her by saying UNITY's position was the same kind of idealism she used to spout.

Scott said her experiences with ASUN made her aware of another level of struggle and left her less



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optimistic than she was last year. She said that although her tenure with ASUN gave her a chance to push for legislation geared toward changes students wanted, it was difficult getting those issues heard or believed by other executives.

She said it was as if they were afraid to share their decision-making power with people who were not like them. Scott said she seldom received support for the needs of her constituents. She no longer believes that people only need information in order for them to change their position on racial issues.

Scott said students should know they are being racist when they continue to play around with minority issues that need to be dealt with. "This stalling tactic has been going on for years," she said.

She showed me a copy of a UNL yearbook with a picture of several black students demonstrating for minority rights and black studies courses back in 1969.

It's the same old song, she said, just like the slow process of dismantling apartheid in South Africa.

Many students refuse to accept the truth that their behavior toward the needs of people unlike them is sexist, racist and backward. They do not want to face the reality that some of their values and standards are institu-

tionally racist.

Scott said that until students begin to deal with why they are so reluctant to accept a committee that represents cultures and concepts that are different from theirs, getting equality will continue to be an uphill battle.

Scott said she was not surprised by the low turnout for the elections but was more concerned about the lax attitude of minorities and women on campus when it came to lobbying for changes to ensure their safety.

She said she became used to being ignored when she mentioned unpleasant issues. After a few months she realized many of her colleagues were not going to do anything for anyone who did not fit their social/sexual/racial mind-set.

When the issue of a racial minority committee first came up, Scott said she was swamped with the usual crude phone calls. The campus rumor mill produced a steady stream of she-said-he-said propaganda.

But what hurt her the most, she said, was the response she got from professional staff people and some administration members. They either went out of their way to ignore her or tried to patronize her by saying, "all of us aren't like that."

Then there were the responses she got from the people she represented, who felt she didn't work hard enough. Getting it from both sides, she said, put her in a difficult position, especially in a struggle against such odds.

But even against such odds Scott accomplished much of what she set out to do. The only thing she's had to part with has been her effervescent idealism.

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Students have been told they can accomplish great things because Andy and company have proposed a united house determined to "aggressively work for the betterment of our campus."

The dress rehearsal is over and the play will start immediately after spring break.

This will be the 22nd production of the play "ASUN: All Things to All People." This year it is a Massey, Thurber, Vaughn production. It is supported by a cast of 2,381 student voters, playing to an audience of 19,930 full-time, apathetic bookworms and party dudes who watched ASUN on Channel 5, thought the show was boring and turned to another station.

Gholson is a senior news-editorial major and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

KSC should pay equal costs

I would like to applaud the Kearney State students that got together and spent their Spring Break protesting Gov. Nelson's educational budget cuts. It takes a lot to organize a productive protest, and it looks like they were really able to get it together.

However, the Kearney State students must realize that they are not the only students to "suffer" from the cuts. Nelson's budget will affect every state-supported college or university in Nebraska, UNL not excluded.

It seems each year tuition and housing go up at UNL (Not to mention so-called "student fees" and parking). I will admit that I do not have exact figures for what it costs a Kearney State student in tuition, housing and fees; but I do know that they do

not pay nearly as much as a UNL student does.

Now that Kearney State College is part of the university's system, I feel that the tuition and fees at Kearney State should be equal or comparable to UNL's. If Kearney wants the "benefits" of being a part of the university, then Kearney should have to pay for it like UNL and UNO do.

No, I am not picking on the Kearney State students; I have friends and family that go to KSC. I just feel Kearney should have to take the good with the bad while being a "university."

Amy Pappas
sophomore
undeclared

ASUN's 'help' struck down

Regarding "ASUN cops out" (DN, March 7).

Damn right the subcommittees are not "what the minorities wanted." The subcommittee on sexual orientation is one of the stupidest ideas ASUN's pulled out of its ass.

"One gay man, one lesbian, one bisexual, one heterosexual" — what in hell could those four people possibly do to help us?

We are Queer Nation. We are not a problem to be solved. Even if we were, ASUN wouldn't do us any good. Our little senators have consistently shown themselves incapable of getting anything done.

We don't want them to "address

our issues." We want nothing less than the dismemberment of the rigid, hierarchical, patriarchy-sucking university system. And Martin Massengale's head on a platter. When ASUN does that for us, then maybe we'll ask for a little subcommittee.

We are dynamic, intelligent dykes and faggots. We are the Tonga Girl Gang. We reject the "Killer Secret" and the idea that we need help.

Get out of our way.

Michele Dain
Lincoln

Donny Smith
graduate student
English