

No joke

Taxes shouldn't pay for official's play

John Sununu. The Renaissance man. White House chief of staff. Golfer. Skier. Republican go-getter.

The problem is that the taxpayer is supposed to pay for only one of his habits — his job as chief of staff.

Supposedly, Sununu has been using Air Force planes for pleasure and for political business.

An Air Force passenger jet costs \$4,000 to operate for one hour. Sununu has used the jet 77 times since 1989. Assuming round trips, that's a minimum of \$500,000 in taxpayer money.

One of his ski trips on the government allegedly cost \$30,000.

The whole issue is funny to Sununu. At a White House dinner Saturday, he made this quip:

"What's the difference between Sununu and the Iraqi air force?" He asked. "Sununu had 30 more flights."

That's awfully flip considering the allegations.

Using government planes for business or pleasure is fine as long as the user reimburses the government for the time.

Sununu supposedly chipped in \$1,100 for the \$30,000 ski trip. The Republican Party has reimbursed the government with equal frugality. But Sununu allegedly took other vacations for which he didn't reimburse the government.

And Sununu seems to think that he should only pay what others pay for a round-trip ticket. It's not his fault he's a high official who needs a handy and secure plane.

The White House says Sununu needs to have a plane ready in case of an emergency, both to return to Washington as quickly as possible and to ensure secure communications.

But secure communications wouldn't cost \$30,000 if Sununu would stay around Washington or New Hampshire, his home state. And it hardly seems right that while thousands are homeless, Sununu should ski on taxpayer money.

That's the old populist argument against excessive government spending. And it should be just as legitimate in Sununu's case.

It's looking like President Bush will sharply revise the policy on White House staff travel in light of the public relations debacle Sununu's travel has caused. That's fine, but the policy is already clear on the issue of reimbursement.

So Bush is making it an issue of policy, when in fact, Sununu's case is an issue of theft of taxpayer money.

Sununu's exploits should be fully investigated. If he is found liable, he won't be guilty of screwing up, but of screwing the taxpayer. That's no joke, either.

—B.N.

Hanna might regret decision

I couldn't resist the opportunity to respond to the article by Jim Hanna (is he really finally graduating?) in which he explains why he is not going to participate in graduation ceremonies.

I graduated from UNL in 1973, when being anti-establishment was "in." My friends and I discussed skipping the ceremony for many of the same reasons Hanna gave. I asked my folks (who paid for my college expenses) if they minded my bypassing the pomp and circumstance. They simply told me it was my decision.

After the deadline to order the cap and gown had passed, I discovered my friends had decided to be traditionalists after all. And to this day, my mother, whom I thought didn't

care that much about the ceremony (just the degree), doesn't miss an opportunity to lament about how my decision broke her heart, especially since I was the only one of the five children to graduate from college. While I counter with "You had the chance to clearly convey that in 1973" (it would have made a difference), I still feel a bit guilty for depriving her of the simple but meaningful (to her, not me) pleasure.

So, Jim Hanna, you may find yourself regretting this decision 20 years down the road — for whatever reason.

Pam Murray
program coordinator
Agricultural Marketing Center

Open eyes to violence

Sexual abuse is a violent crime and should be addressed by all students, staff, faculty and administrators on this campus. A Take Back The Night march and rally was held last Friday night to conclude Violence Against Women Awareness Week. This march, held across the nation, protests all violence against women, including domestic abuse, incest and rape.

We are members of the Violence Against Women Awareness Project (VAWAP) and are also affiliated with the greek system. We are frustrated with the ignorance and lack of cooperation across campus on this issue of violence. Men and women in the greek system watched us march from a distance and seemed confused

and agitated with our actions. If these people think that this form of violence only touches people associated with women's issues, they are wrong.

This ignorance must stop. It is time to open your eyes to the realities that exist. Violence against women is a fact. There is no place for controversy on this issue. Both men and women must stop judging, start validating and work together to address violence against women on our campus. Act now.

Priscilla Perry
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LISA DONOVAN

History repeats, like it or not

It would be truly offensive to suggest that those who were appalled, shocked and disappointed by Monday's Daily Nebraskan joke issue should maybe take a shot of tequila or have sex.

So I won't even ask you to entertain the idea.

What I would like to share in this, the final column of my college career, is that the Half-Asskin is an important part of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln's history.

As sure as the busts of Roscoe Pound and Mari Sandoz sit in the Nebraska State Capitol as a reminder of our state's great roots, so too will the Half-Asskin live forever in the annals of our university's history.

I just completed a Nebraska history correspondence course. Although I learned a great deal about the Sod Frontier and land and water laws, I also learned some philosophy.

During the course of the semester, I found a lot of news clippings that related to our university and even one about a joke section of a UNL yearbook in 1912.

An appalled, shocked, no doubt disappointed Samuel Avery, the chancellor at the time, wrote a letter to the students who purchased the Cornhusker.

"This is the greatest internal crisis that has come to the university in many years. Will the students rise to the occasion and help remove this blot on the good name of the institution by repudiating a book, one portion of which is filled with suggestions of drunkenness and immodesty?"

As we are herded in and out of Nebraska's largest university, it is important to know that the trivialities we deal with today were also dealt with by our forefathers.

Obviously, the more things change, the more they stay the same, an idea otherwise known as, "it's funny how history repeats itself."

Such things as the establishment of the greek system in the late 1880s caused quite a stir, according to the student publication The Hesperian.

"This 'upper strata' of college



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society is entirely self-constituted and rests on the false basis of wealth or social polish . . ." The Hesperian wrote.

Before the history class, I thought that frowning upon the greek system was all a part of the 1960s peace/equality movement. As a member of the greek system, and despite having made some great friends in it, I still realize that this social living unit needs to be updated from the late 19th century. But I had no idea a similar debate also went on back then.

The irony of this university's history doesn't end with the controversial joke publications or the establishment and maintenance of a greek system, traditions that seem to be handed down from one generation to the next.

I also found that this year's university budget woes and the constant argument with the Nebraska Legisla-

ture to finance the university began with the establishment of the state university, according to news clippings from the time.

The big legislative debate here at the turn of the century was whether or not lawmakers should appropriate funds to build residence halls.

"The fact is that dormitories, notwithstanding the systems of espionage that are usually connected with them, are far more productive of mischief and disorder than the system of scattering the students among the homes of residents in the town in which schools are located," according to the State Journal.

I saw newspaper reports, too, that today's student government voting apathy is nothing new. It was matched by apathetic students who never went to class and caused concern over a big burst of cheating around the turn of the century.

Well, now we're heading toward the turn of another century. I've been in school five years, one year longer than the term of a U.S. president, and wasn't able to effect much change at all.

This place is a revolving door of genius and inherent stupidity.

Publications will continue to complain about sexist, racist and elitist practices of the greek system, just as sure as some members will cry foul that yellow journalism is picking on them.

There will be joke issues that anger anal-retentive students who grow up to become UNL administrators, state legislators or ministers.

And in another 100 years, a Nebraska history student will sit down in his or her house, pull a history text out of a book bag and set it on the table next to the year 2091's issue.

You know, the one that was the most appalling, shocking and disappointing thing that has happened to the university since the late 20th century.

Donovan is a senior news-editorial major, a Daily Nebraskan columnist and senior reporter.

LETTER POLICY

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