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EDITORIAL

## The search is over But pain caused by Harms' death is not

The search for Candice Harms is over. The ordeal is not — for her family or the community. Since Sept. 22, Harms' family and friends have suffered the agony and grief of not knowing what happened. They and the community have suffered the fear of it happening again.



Brian Shellito/DN

The search is over, but the pain is not. Right now, Candice Harms' family and friends deserve our thoughts or prayers as much as any time during the search.

The frustrating investigation into Harms' disappearance pulled together local, county, state and federal forces.

The chilling fear it brought pulled together the Lincoln community. More than 200 people gathered at a vigil to show their support for Harms.

An advertising company donated eight billboards to help the investigation. Church members donated time to help the search.

Campus organizations worked to distribute fliers, write letters and spread the word about the disappearance. Lincoln-Lancaster County Crime Stoppers offered its maximum reward for information to help solve the case.

Harms' death is a horrible, disgusting tragedy. Her parents' reaction to her death is admirable, almost saintly.

The community's response should be the same.

## Beware

Budget cuts could start digging deeper

Tried to call a professor lately? If you haven't, save the quarter and make the trip to their office. As a result of last year's budget cuts professors in several departments have had their phone privileges taken away to save money. Calls to some departments are now received at a central number, where messages are taken.

The move is part of an effort to save as much money as possible without cutting into funds spent on education. But it punishes everyone by setting up yet another roadblock between students and professors.

This year, the administration is looking for even more ways to cut costs.

Officials are examining newsletter production, mail-room costs and the prospect of combining some part-time positions. Another proposal is to change some year-round faculty appointments to nine-month positions.

Many of the proposals, still in the early stages of planning, will not affect students too severely. But there are only so many pennies that can be pinched before whole dollars get chopped.

UNL students need to pay attention during the upcoming budget cuts. If they don't raise their voices during the initial planning, their pleas may come too late.

Having trouble getting in touch with your professor may seem trivial. It may not seem like a major cost, especially when the university is facing massive budget cuts.

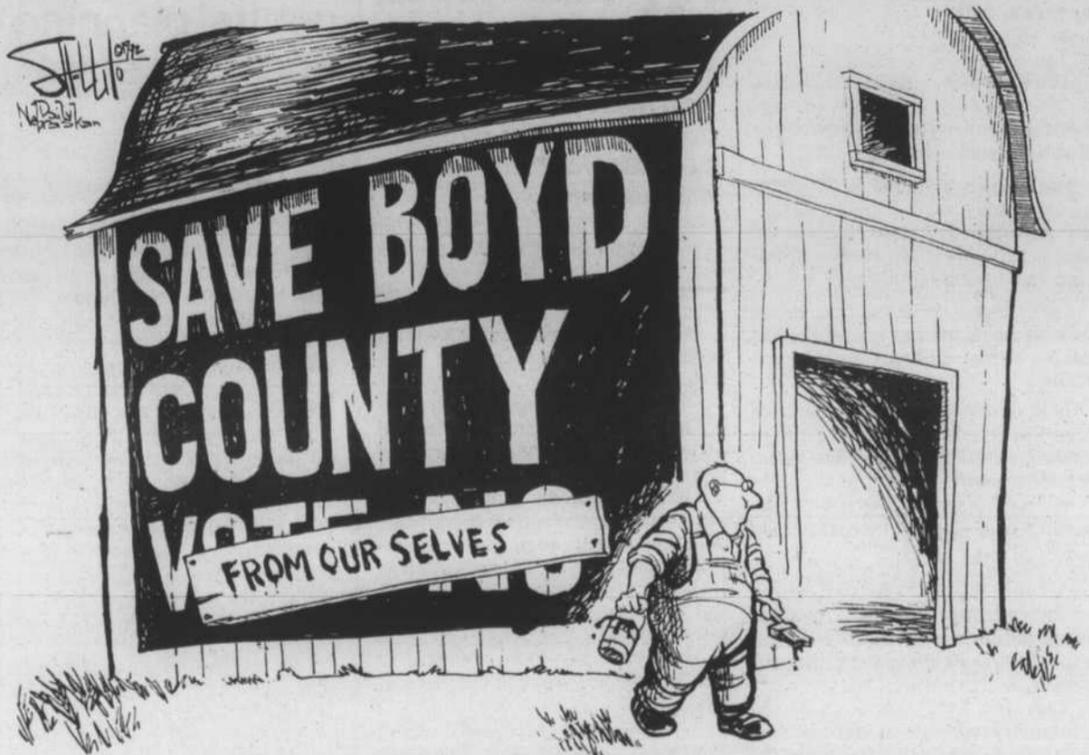
But look out. The next thing to go may be your major, your department or your college.

EDITORIAL POLICY

Staff editorials represent the official policy of the Fall 1992 Daily Nebraskan. Policy is set by the Daily Nebraskan Editorial Board. Editorials do not necessarily reflect the views of the university, its employees, the students or the NU Board of Regents. Editorial columns represent the opinion of the author. The regents publish the Daily Nebraskan. They establish the UNL Publications Board to supervise the daily production of the paper. According to policy set by the regents, responsibility for the editorial content of the newspaper lies solely in the hands of its students.

LETTER POLICY

The Daily Nebraskan welcomes brief letters to the editor from all readers and interested others. Letters will be selected for publication on the basis of clarity, originality, timeliness and space available. The Daily Nebraskan retains the right to edit or reject all material submitted. Readers also are welcome to submit material as guest opinions. The editor decides whether material should run as a guest opinion. Letters and guest opinions sent to the newspaper become the property of the Daily Nebraskan and cannot be returned. Anonymous submissions will not be published. Letters should include the author's name, year in school, major and group affiliation, if any. Requests to withhold names will not be granted. Submit material to the Daily Nebraskan, 34 Nebraska Union, 1400 R St., Lincoln, Neb. 68588-0448.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### 'Super-majority'

I am writing to express my indignation at the university's decision to eliminate graduation invocations and benedictions. This decision cloaked in rights-based rhetoric runs roughshod over the foundations of representative democracy and highlights the tyranny of so-called enlightened university administrators.

The facts speak for themselves. Graduation invocations and benedictions have long been traditional at the University of Nebraska. Then, on a whim, the University Commencement Committee suddenly decides that invocations and benedictions might be offensive to a few students and for that reason to eliminate them.

To the administrators, it did not matter that a super-majority of students wanted to retain these traditions or that the student senate showed heated opposition to the change. It did not matter that no student had ever complained that invocations and benedictions were offensive. All that mattered was imposing a decidedly anti-religious agenda.

University officials can be sure that this controversy is anything but dead. ASUN did an admirable job in at least making the committee admit their decision did not rest on Lee vs. Wiseman, a recent U.S. Supreme Court prayer case.

It was the epitome of cowardice for the committee to attempt to use a misreading of Wiseman to justify their capricious decision.

I applaud the student senate for their efforts in support of majority interests. Often, we forget majority rights are the foundation of democracy and the common good.

Ron Schmidt  
Lincoln

### 'Gratitude'

How ironic! In the same semester that an entire class of students was saved from a gunman through divine intervention, God doesn't even get recognized at UNL graduation ceremonies!

Where is our sense of gratitude?

Steven P. Hotovy  
UNL alumnus

### Prayer

The commencement committee indeed made the right decision in its denial of prayers at UNL graduation ceremonies.

However, I am not entirely certain

“**What about students with no religious background? Are these persons not entitled to the same equal concern and representation? Exactly who is Andrew Loudon, ASUN speaker of the senate, to assume that some people will not be offended by graduation ceremony prayers?**”

this decision was made for the right reasons. As the article ("Committee votes down prayer resolution," DN, Dec. 4) indicates, "The prayers have been removed from graduation ceremonies by the committee last month amid concerns of insensitivity for students' diverse religious backgrounds."

What about students with no religious background? Are these persons not entitled to the same equal concern and representation? Exactly who is Andrew Loudon, ASUN speaker of the senate, to assume that some people will not be offended by graduation ceremony prayers?

James McShane, a UNL English professor, is on the right track when he maintains that the committee "will be sensitive to the spirit of (the U.S. Supreme Court's) decision, namely that persons in our pluralistic culture ought not to have thrust upon them religious observances foreign to their traditions," but he backs off too soon.

People's traditions can be religious or otherwise, and unlike McShane, I contend the issue at hand is not the form of prayer to be given at graduation, but prayer itself. Are Loudon's efforts to ensure the deliverance of prayer at graduation not an arbitrary, unsolicited "thrust(ing) upon of religious observances, veiled under the guise of cultural and educational experience?"

Having said all this, let me say that I do sympathize with what you're doing, Loudon. I too would enjoy the inclusion of prayer in the ceremony when I graduate next year, but the fact is that it is just not a sensible and representative action to take.

The legalities involved with this issue are not unclear, and it is a crying shame that it takes organizations such as the American Civil Liberties Union to keep people honest in this country. The Rev. Norman Leach isn't wrong when he said, "Separation of church and state does not mean elimination

of religion," but it does when it's on state ground.

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### Death penalty

As many patriotic citizens have been expressing lately in the Daily Nebraskan, the United States is a great country. However, the United States distinguishes itself in an unfavorable light, that of being one of the last industrialized countries in the world that still uses the death penalty.

Numerous people feel strongly that the death penalty is an effective means of deterring individuals from committing murders. However, most murders occur in moments of passion or under the influence of drugs.

As reasonable as the deterrent argument is, it can't be applied to such cases because actions are taken without normal reasoning capabilities.

Therefore, the death penalty has no deterrent effect in these cases.

No matter how you feel about the deterrent effect of capital punishment, one fact is certain. After the punishment has been dealt, it cannot be retracted.

That is if new information were to be discovered that cleared an individual, it would be impossible to connect the miscarriage of justice. Tragically, this theory has been proven true more than once in the history of the United States.

Another question that arises about the death penalty is: Why use it when there is another proven effective means of punishment? Life imprisonment without a chance of parole allows individuals the most basic right of all, the right to continue living.

The prejudice against minorities and the poor who more often receive the death penalty is wrong. These groups lack the funds to afford a lawyer of higher quality who is better able to protect them from receiving capital punishment. If the death penalty has to be imposed, should not it be imposed in an impartial means that ignores class or race?

I hope all people will stop and consider the severe consequences that will accompany the use of the death penalty and the other possible punishments that could be used instead.

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