

Daily
Nebraskan
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EDITORIAL

Change ASUN

Elections need more than media attention

This year's round of elections for the Association of Students of the University of Nebraska began Wednesday at a press conference in the Nebraska Union. The campaign began with the sound of VOICE presidential candidate Keith Benes challenging the other parties' candidates to a variety of debates at all levels.

His voice may as well have been silent. Wednesday's press conference was nothing more than a media event. It was empty of meaning and substance, which is exactly how many students feel about ASUN elections as a whole. But that needs to change. ASUN candidates face several important questions and issues every year. This year is no different with the university plagued by serious budget cuts, NU President Martin Massengale's resignation, the search for his replacement and the NU Board of Regents' annual antics. The candidates should have no choice but to address the issues.

Of course, they will mention the standard fare of ASUN issues — campus safety, clean campaigning and the dead horse called parking.

The serious candidates need to examine the problems and present solutions to the student body. Tomorrow's student leaders have to start discussing the issues today.

Just as importantly, the student body needs to start paying attention to the campaign. Like it or not, ASUN is an elected body. The fact that few students vote in the student elections does not take away from their authority as a representative body. It merely means they answer to fewer students.

Little mention has been made of the upcoming ASUN elections because little has been done. Despite the fact that new election rules allowed campaigning to begin when classes started in January, no one has stepped forward to offer their student leadership.

This university faces serious problems this year. It needs serious student leaders, not hollow challenges.

In limbo

Ban on homosexuals affects individuals

While the debate over allowing homosexuals in the military rages, real people feel the effects.

Frederick Seltzer Jr. of Seattle is in the Navy. He is also a homosexual.

That puts Seltzer on the cutting edge of social reform, but it might mean he will temporarily lose his paycheck, benefits and a place to sleep and eat.

Seltzer was recommended for a discharge by a military board in December because of his sexual orientation. Since then President Clinton has temporarily lifted the military's ban on homosexuals.

But Clinton agreed to have discharge proceedings continue for service members who have acknowledged they are gay. Final discharges would be suspended, however, until a decision is made on the ban.

That would leave Seltzer stuck between social reform and the reality of the military's policy. Until a decision is made on the ban, Seltzer and others like him will be in limbo — without pay or benefits.

When people discuss the issue of homosexuals in the military, they should keep in mind that they are discussing real people like Frederick Seltzer Jr. People who are in danger of losing their paychecks, their health care and their homes.

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.



TODD BURGER

Nebraska, don't get dumped on

The push to put a nuclear waste site in Boyd County has been hindered as of late. Now Kansas is worried that it might be stuck with being the host site.

Kansas Attorney General Bob Stephen is worried and contends that Nebraska should not be allowed to back out of its designated role as host state, lest the state of Kansas be stuck with the dubious honor of being designated the host for the waste.

To borrow a line from Alfred E. Neumann, "What, me worry?"

Nebraska officials have renewed concern that the Boyd County site is not environmentally suited to be a nuclear dump, as the site has wetlands that need protection.

Low-level nuclear waste tends to engender a constant, uncertain low-level paranoia, perhaps justified, perhaps not. Whatever the case, people should not allow their fears and concerns to be taken care of with the inducement of money.

To be wholeheartedly enthusiastic about being the waste doormat for four other states would be foolhardy. Marching headlong into constructing the dump while counterpart compacts aren't might result in a compliant Nebraska ending up with more waste than from their five-state compact. Nebraska, if it's not careful, might well become regarded as the perfect dump site for the nation.

The people of Boyd County have reason to be concerned. If the dump is approved by the Nebraska Legislature, what will happen in the future? Succeeding generations of Nebraskans will be left with the consequences.

Nebraska politicians should take it upon themselves to continue to resist the waste site in Nebraska. As long as they operate within legal means, there is nothing wrong with being



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unenthusiastic and unpleasant about accepting nuclear waste.

US Ecology is an odd name for a nuclear waste facilitator. Perhaps the company is trying to confuse us, for the name US Ecology implies that the company is patriotic and environmentally concerned. But in reality they are systematically sucking off all the energy ratepayers' and taxpayers' money that they can professionally manage while they help us dispose of waste.

Some East Coast academics proposed a few years ago that sparse areas of the plains states should be depopulated because of economic and social concerns. They argued that a concerted plan should be developed to let the land revert back to nature so that the buffalos and other wildlife may thrive. Frank and Deborah Popper of Rutgers University proposed this radical idea — the Buffalo Commons.

The Poppers must want us to think, "What the hell, if we can't make a respectable go of it, let's just remove ourselves to make room for the buf-

falo." If only Nebraskans were more receptive to this idea. We could be well on our way to setting aside large areas of our state as places where people could roam.

Since Easterners occasionally have a certain low-level contempt for Nebraska, regarding us a "flyover" state and a place suitable for a far-out plan like the Buffalo Commons, they might just figure, why not dump their pesky nuclear waste here, as long as we can be convinced not to make too big a fuss over it?

To them, there probably is not much to places like Boyd County, so why not add some nuclear waste to the mix to make the county more interesting and economically useful?

And as long as we are at it, a planned Buffalo Commons would eliminate the possibility of unruly nuclear waste protestors. No one would be left to complain except for a few park rangers. And I assume someone like Lowell Fisher, a prominent waste-site critic, wouldn't be offered such a job. He is just a little too vocal to be compliant.

Nebraskans' stubborn will to survive has stymied other people's high-minded plans for us. If only we weren't so difficult, Nebraska could be put to use in a most optimal way — if not for our good, for the nation's.

The trouble with waste is that it is so dangerous for so long. A proper dump is hard to construct and expensive. We would have to trust paid experts, who we hope have our best interests somewhere in mind.

Isn't it troubling to plan ahead and saddle future generations with a dangerous facility?

At the least, let's not make it easy. Compliance can be confused with gullibility.

Burger is a junior philosophy major and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Smoking

The ASUN resolution calling for the prohibition of smoking in campus buildings deserves support from everyone who is concerned with the general health of our student body.

Smokers expose non-smokers to passive smoke in two ways. First, by inhaling and exhaling tobacco smoke, the smoker emits mainstream smoke. While this alone is dangerous to non-smokers, more dangerous is sidestream smoke. Sidestream smoke is the smoke that goes directly into the air from burning tobacco.

It is time UNL adopts a smoking ban in campus buildings. Non-smok-

ers cannot prevent a smoker from poisoning his or her own body with tobacco smoke. We should not, however, allow smokers to endanger our health with their disgusting habit. If you want to light up, take it outside.

Brian S. Butler
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Thank you James Chase for your Jan. 29 letter to the editor. Although I am a smoker, I realize that secondhand smoke does have negative effects on non-smokers, and therefore I will not try to argue with the smoking ban.

However, I did appreciate Mr. Chase's mention of the fact that there are other bad habits besides smoking. In fact, I am negatively affected by other peoples' bad habits, such as bigotry, every day.

There are many times when I've sat in the union, or other campus buildings, minding my own business, and unwittingly witnessed bigoted conversations against minority groups. Shouldn't there be a non-bigoted section for me to sit in, so as not to be affected by secondhand bigotry?

Katherine G. Audi
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