

Daily Nebraskan
Editorial Board
University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Deborah D. McAdams Editor, 472-1766
Matt Woody Features Editor
Martha Dunn Copy Desk Chief
Derek Samson Staff Reporter
Brian Sharp Staff Reporter

EDITORIAL

Bus fuss?

Students kept out of university loop

Many actions by officials of this university are probably more complicated than they seem to students who bankroll for those actions. The student media and the student government may be guilty of oversimplifying issues and polarizing students and administrators, but administrators are also guilty of being vague about their intentions.

The increase in parking fees and the subsequent pending contract with StarTran appears to be another classic case of big, bad officials manipulating poor, defenseless students.

Students will get whipped-up into an indignant frenzy, the media will have a cause, student politicians will get a white horse and university officials will continue to pursue their agendas knowing full well this crop of brats will soon graduate. Successive generations of students will continue to receive fragmented information about official actions and continue to react incognizant bravura.

Free, city-wide bus service for students is actually a very good idea. Plenty of students have days when they don't have enough money for bus fare, much less a parking permit, much less a car. More commuter students will probably ride the bus, relieving overcrowded parking lots.

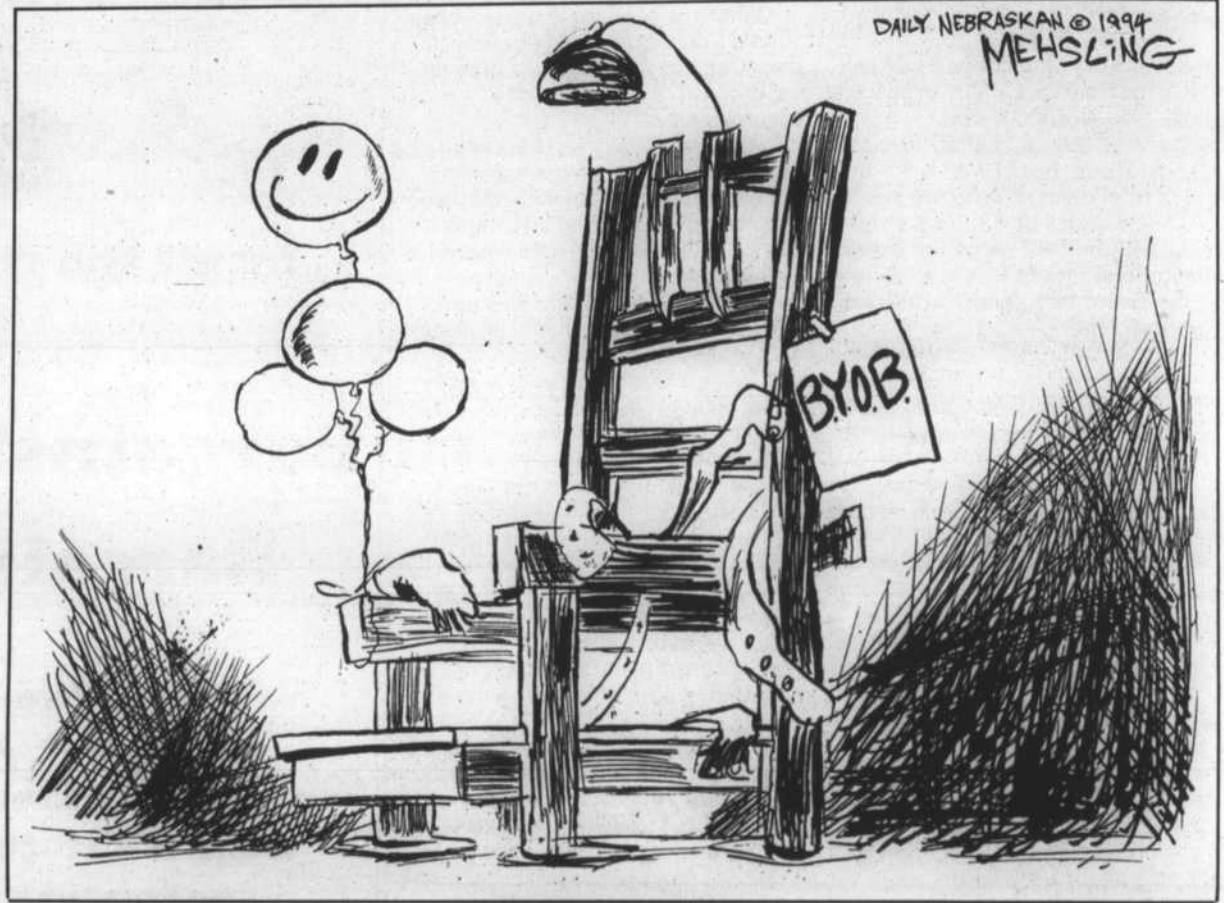
The unfortunate aspect of the bus service contract was the circuitousness of its provision. City-wide bus service and parking permit increases were "being considered" by officials in January. Increases proposed in February were to raise permit prices by about 25 percent. The added revenue was intended for parking-lot maintenance, free shuttle service between campuses and a parking garage. The permit prices approved in March—while students were taking mid-terms and dreaming of spring break—were nearly twice as much as previous rates.

The protests began in April and officials didn't understand why students were suddenly upset about the change. Additional money would be going strictly to parking and transportation improvements, they said. Smoke filled the air as one group of officials said parking fees wouldn't partially pay for a parking garage while another group said \$2 million in parking fees would help fund the garage.

Now that most students are gone for the summer, their parking fees are being turned into bus fare.

It may be easier for officials to carry out long-range plans by keeping students marginally informed, and students get an interesting demonstration of business ethics.

Fee increases often pay for benefits not enjoyed by students who make the original investment and move on. Students might be more inclined to make such an investment if it didn't sneak up behind them.



A. NEIL SPEARS

Executions aren't celebrations

The capital punishment debate has picked up added steam in recent years as the number of executions rise throughout the United States. Far more interesting than the debates however, are the often dark and disturbing responses to the executions. Carrying out a death sentence has always drawn a crowd, from the days of the Reign of Terror to the hangings of the Old West. However, when this morbid curiosity of death is combined with modern commercialism, an unsettling glorification of the criminal is sometimes the result. Take for example the execution of John Wayne Gacy, who killed thirty-three young males, mostly teenagers, in Chicago during the 1970's. Gacy was executed by lethal injection last month. Family members of the victims were not allowed to witness the execution, but a large throng of people gathered outside of the prison where the midnight execution took place. Some of those present protested the use of the death penalty, but many cheered in a party atmosphere as the midnight hour approached. Vendors sold T-shirts and partiers toasted in celebration of Gacy's impending death. Some of these same people no doubt called Gacy's 900-line where he professed his innocence to the murders. All told, it was a revolting end to the life of a revolting human being.

Such celebrations appear to be more common at execution sites around the United States. Even low-key Nebraska, which has't executed an inmate since the Eisenhower administration, may soon participate in this festive atmosphere as convicted murderer Harold Otey waits for another execution date. It appears unlikely that Otey, who came within hours of having his death sentence carried out two years



The tail-gate party attitude toward the death penalty may have been created in part by the execution of one of America's most notorious criminals, Ted Bundy.

ago, will win another delay.

Meanwhile, as Otey ponders his fate, Roger Bjorkland is to be sentenced later this month for his part in the murder of UNL student Candice Harms, and there is a strong possibility that he too will be sentenced to die. The Harms case triggered an emotional response from those living in or around Lincoln, especially on the university campus. If Bjorkland is sentenced to death, celebration will be sure to follow.

But should there be any celebrations at all? It would seem to make more sense to follow the example of Stan and Pat Harms, Candice's parents, who have dealt with their very public tragedy with a sincere grace and dignity that followers of the case can't help but admire. While they may not be opposed to Bjorkland receiving the death sentence, they prefer to focus on their daughter and the joy she brought into their lives, not on the man who killed her.

The tail-gate party attitude toward the death penalty may have been created in part by the execution of one of America's most notorious criminals, Ted Bundy. Bundy killed at least thirty young women across the United States until he was apprehended in Florida in 1978. He flaunted his crimes, showing no remorse for his actions.

As a result, his January, 1989, execution date was met with unbridled anticipation. Radio stations played "On Top of Old Sparky," and cookouts, termed "Bundy-cues" began popping up in several parts of the nation. As his 7 a.m. execution neared, crowds set off firecrackers outside of the prison, and chants of "Burn, Bundy, Burn" echoed outside the walls. In granting Ted Bundy this attention, his greatest wish was fulfilled. Sadly, his victims were largely forgotten.

It appears certain that soon Harold Otey will be executed by the state of Nebraska. It seems equally certain that under the aggressive policies of the current Attorney General, more executions will soon follow. Will Nebraskans, who cheer an overmatched football opponent for its effort, also cheer the deaths of the inmates on Death Row? Or will they give the executed criminal a more fitting response, a quiet memory of the victims of his murderous spree? Time will provide the answer. But one thing is certain, if the day comes when Roger Bjorkland will take his turn in the electric chair, the family of Candice Harms will not stand in line to buy a T-shirt of the occasion.

A. Neil Spears is a Junior Psychology/English major and a Daily Nebraskan columnist

Daily Nebraskan

FAX NUMBER 472-1761

The Daily Nebraskan (USPS 144-080) is published by the UNL Publications Board, Nebraska Union 34, 1400 R St., Lincoln, NE, Monday through Friday during the academic year, weekly during summer sessions.

Readers are encouraged to submit story ideas and comments to the Daily Nebraskan by phoning 472-1763 between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. The public also has access to the Publications Board. For information, contact Doug Fiedler, 472-2588.

Subscription price is \$50 for one year. Postmaster: Send address changes to the Daily Nebraskan, Nebraska Union 34, 1400 R St., Lincoln, NE 68588-0448. Second-class postage paid at Lincoln, NE.

ALL MATERIAL COPYRIGHT 1994 DAILY NEBRASKAN