

# ASUN

## Candidate's aspirations fade after elections

Like hope, political aspirations spring eternal. On March 6, this coming Wednesday to be exact, we will have another opportunity to elect a new student government. Somebody hold me back.

After almost five years here, I have absolutely no clue what our student government actually does. Well, I know that if you are the ASUN president, you get to go to the Huskers' bowl game. Aside from that, I'm at a loss.

I'm not against either of the two parties running. I like some of what each has to say. OFFICE's idea of a community cabinet to consider university issues and problems is excellent. It seems like a unifying idea that would help get many points of view across.

Some of ACTION's ideas are good as well. I doubt that anyone would be disappointed if they tried to take on Bill Byrne.

My big hope is that no matter which group gets elected, they will be more productive than Shawntell Hurtgen and last year's crop of political wanna-bes. Their idea of a productive debate is deciding where to go after a 29-minute meeting. Maybe this year's winners won't try to single-handedly destroy Barrymore's.

Both Eric Marintzer and Justin Firestone seem to be capable of doing the job. Both have good ideas and experience. Their parties seem to be set up adequately. Even the issues seem good this year.

And even through all of the even-handed compliments, I wonder, why I am supposed to care? Like any of this really matters.

Realistically, if Marintzer walks into Byrne's office and demands fair



**Jody Burke**

*"Don't stand out in front of the Union and hassle me. I just want lunch; you go decide the fate of the free world."*

seats for the students, he'll find himself out on his butt quicker than you can whistle the NU fight song. Firestone wants us to believe that his party will decrease overcrowding on campus. Aside from rounding up everybody whose name starts with the letter 'S' and transferring them to Iowa State, I doubt he'll be successful. In fact, I doubt any of their ideas will really fly, no matter who is elected.

As well, none or few of the people involved are doing it with altruistic fervor. Most are doing it, as some freely admit, to "pad their resumes." Fine by me, but I just don't want to contribute to the political fantasies of people who feel they are the next Spiro Agnew. Go join your organizations, and leave me out of it. Don't stand out in front

of the Union and hassle me. I just want lunch; you go decide the fate of the free world.

In years past, the students were treated to a show. Each party would rip on the other, defame each other's character and insult their opponents' mothers.

I definitely miss that. At times I think that the humor derived from the process is the only reason to continue this little game of "Elect Me!" The best campaign would be one where we send the candidates into a room and let them fight it out. Unfortunately, this year both parties have refrained from referring to the other groups' sisters and aunts as "egg-sucking freaks."

Take my word for it, a year from now, you won't be able to remember even one speck of the campaign goals, no matter who gets elected. Luckily, since it is ASUN, they don't have to follow through on them anyway.

My own personal solution to the problem of "which resume stuffer should I send to the Orange Bowl" has been simple. I enter my own candidates on the election form. In each of the past two years, I was one of the three actual voters. Each of us was pulled viciously into the Union and forced to vote.

Ultimately though, neither Spiderman nor Napoleon was elected. Regardless, I felt the wheels of democracy turn rustily by my hands — and I had a moment of clarity. In the end it doesn't matter. The football team runs the campus anyway.

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# Dole obstructs pack with his campaign

WASHINGTON — When Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole made it clear a year ago that he intended to seek the presidential nomination, a longtime leader of the Republican Party, a man of Dole's own generation, told me: "I wish he weren't doing that. His intentions are good, but he is going to cause us a huge problem."

The reason, he said, is that "Dole may not be strong enough to win both the nomination and election, but he is a big enough figure so that no one else in the party may be able to get around him."

The speculations of this Republican chieftain stuck in my mind, but never made it into print. Now a year has elapsed, and the spectacle in the Republican primaries is confirming that hunch. Dole does in fact present a huge obstacle to anyone else winning the nomination. And yet, the shakiness of his performance raises real doubts about his capacity to deliver the White House back into Republican hands.

To measure his impact on the race, you really have to go back a year when other Republicans were deciding whether to run. Many have blamed Sen. Phil Gramm of Texas, with all his talk about the millions it would cost to run in the 1996 primaries and his boasting of his own fund-raising prowess, for supposedly intimidating others from running.

But Dole was something else — the last political survivor of the fabled World War II generation, a man whose office gave him unlimited fund-raising ability, the "heir apparent" to the throne of Nixon, Reagan and Bush, and a figure that most of the other potential candidates genuinely liked and admired.

If the contest had been entirely within the next generation of Republicans, the office-holders between 40 and 60, I doubt that so many of the political stars of that generation — Jack Kemp, Dick Cheney, Bill Bennett, Dan Quayle, Newt Gingrich and a covey of governors — all would have decided to wait for another year. Running against each other would have looked like a fair fight. Running against Dole was another matter. He occupied so much territory — as the legislator-in-chief, the senior partner in the congressional leadership, the man who was always on the TV talk shows, speaking for the party as well as himself — that he crowded most of these other wanna-be's off the field.

The result was that the challengers who actually entered the race were mainly light-weights, men who, whatever their abilities, brought little in the way of national recognition or well-known accomplishments with them. It is hard to imagine, for example, that had Kemp (the first choice of 1992 delegates for 1996) or Bennett (the author-hero of cultural conservatives) or Quayle (the former vice president



**David Broder**

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and rehabilitated champion of the "Murphy Brown" battle) entered the race, that Patrick J. Buchanan could have emerged in the way that he has as spokesman for the populist conservatives in the party and the winner of the New Hampshire primary.

Absent Dole, it is hard to believe that the entire moderate conservative wing of the party would have been represented only by Steve Forbes, the man with the flat tax and slash-and-burn commercials, and former Tennessee Gov. Lamar Alexander, a man who conceals his creditable government record in a vain attempt to present himself as an "outsider." If Forbes still had decided to run, it is doubtful his campaign would have been as negative as it has been. The only rationale for his TV assault tactics was that Dole had to be cut down to size to give anyone else a chance.

With the field he actually faces, the resources of money and political support his Senate position helped him obtain, Dole ought to be able to sustain his favorite's role and collect scores of delegates in the two dozen contests now popping up on the political calendar.

But for any Republican watching Dole campaign on the same day and within a few miles of President Clinton in Iowa and New Hampshire, it was hard to avoid the sinking sensation that your guy is badly overmatched.

Anything is still possible in our politics. Seeing what has happened already, only a fool would try to guess the remainder of the 1996 script. But so far, that Republican chieftain's warning looks ever more serious.

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# Soul food

## Vegetarians' path leads to health, peace

What many midwesterners eat is SAD.

That is, "meat-based eating — centered on the dead animal — with few vegetables," and little day-to-day deviation from this plan. This is known as the Standard American Diet. Sounds delectable, doesn't it?

If you could have anything under the sun to eat for your next meal, in what would you partake?

May seem a silly question to some. But I take it quite seriously.

Every time hunger hits, this question is confronted. And for the past several years as I've catered to my every culinary whim, the answer has not been meat.

I'd feel odd calling myself a vegan, or strict, vegetarian, because I can't say that from this point forward, I will not eat animal flesh (meat, poultry, fish and seafood) or animal products (eggs, dairy and honey).

I probably could be called a lacto-ovo-vegetarian who eats no fish, flesh or fowl but does consume dairy products and eggs.

My only conviction for eating as I do is that I try to respect my body and its needs. So I give it what it craves, when it yearns for it and in the quantities that satisfy it.

If tomorrow, a voice from inside screamed "Big Mac," I'd nosedive into the SAD regimen, gathering my loose change and heading for the golden arches.

There are many respectable reasons not to eat meat. Many ethical reasons are based in a spiritual belief that most world religions share. Namely, to respect a larger force of creation, to do unto others as we'd have them do unto us.

Henry David Thoreau said that humans would gradually stop eating animals, "as surely as the common tribes have left off eating each other when they came in contact with the more civilized."

Meat-eaters can expect to eat as



**Kelly Johnson**

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many as 900 animals during their lifetime.

Hindus view the killing of any animal as a violation of Ahimsa, thus the sacred cow. The Hindu code of sarva-bhuta-hita, devotion to the good of all creatures, says people should see the life of all creatures regardless of their bodies.

Buddhist belief is centered on love and compassion. And so violence toward animals is a measure of the regard people have for human life.

Judaism also has a tradition of consideration and kind treatment of animals, and many Christians follow Jesus' example and pay consideration to all creatures, great and small.

So, in the name of religion, many people devote their entire culinary persuasion to vegetarianism. But there are still other reasons including economic, health and environmental.

Dr. Patricia Johnston heralds vegetarianism as "providing a diet that is nutritionally adequate, protective against chronic diseases and deficiencies and sufficient to supply the world's increasing population whilst also being ecologically responsible."

Any of these could justify eating a vegetarian diet. Further, more people apparently are finding due cause to give up meat.

Customs are changing with time, as Thoreau said they would. In Britain, the vegetarian diet had 100,000 adherents in 1945. It has more than 3 million today.

Stephen Conner of the British Vegetarian Society said, "Unprecedented in both speed and scale, vegetarianism has transformed the way we look at food, and the way we look at ourselves."

Leo Tolstoy said that by our very natures, human aversion to all killing is strong. But greed overrides that instinct. Thereby, people disregard that which is most natural to them.

And Thoreau said, "The faintest assured objection which one healthy man feels will at length prevail over the arguments and customs of mankind."

The traditions in this agricultural Mecca prompt many of us to eat meat. For whatever reason, my nature has spoken through a faint objection to meat. And by eating only that which I crave, I've fallen toward vegetarianism.

Next time you find yourself staring blankly into the cupboard, about to indulge in another can of Spam, ask yourself: Are you hungry for what you're about to eat? Does it nourish your soul as well as your body? Are you hearing the voice and message of your appetite?

You might be surprised where the answers will lead.

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