

**Nick
WILTGEN**

Of extreme importance

Valuable politics should not be compromised

Last week I caught a few minutes of Iowa's U.S. Senate debate between incumbent Democrat Sen. Tom Harkin and Republican challenger, Rep. Jim Ross Lightfoot.



Sen. Harkin, who is seeking his third term in the Senate, said something that many politicians have said before: "I'm mainstream, not extreme."

Of course, Sen. Harkin was implying that Rep. Lightfoot was the "extreme" candidate, with the further implication that being extreme is bad.

But is being "mainstream, not extreme" something to brag about?

Given the sorry track record that "mainstream" politicians have compiled during the past 30 years, the answer is a resounding no.

Countless political races have been characterized by candidates trying to label each other as "extremists" of one type or another, while trying to avoid being labeled "extremists" themselves. Indeed, "extremism" has become more of an insult than a description of anyone's actual views.

This leaves almost every politician scrambling to appear "mainstream," or more accurately, "moderate." The result has been a catastrophe as the rights of the people have taken a back seat to the maniacal fervor for "compromise" and

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“nonideological” policies.

If the Founding Fathers had only a “moderate” belief in individual liberty and representative government, would they have waged a war against England?

Of course not. They were not willing to compromise liberty; they had an ideological belief in certain inalienable human rights and demanded the recognition in full of those rights.

One of America's early thinkers, Thomas Paine, once said, “Moderation in temper is always a virtue; but moderation in principle is always a vice.”

Our American predecessors realized that extremism is not a synonym of evil, nor is it a synonym of goodness; it merely describes unwavering belief in an ideal or principle.

To truly defend any good cause, you must have an “extreme” belief in it — you must believe in it 100 percent. Put simply, the only way to compromise a good belief is by introducing evil into it.

We are currently at a point where practically every legislative decision our government makes is subject to

endless caveats, compromises and deal-cutting. Nearly every bill that makes it to the floor of the House or Senate or Unicameral is pages and pages long, full of little exemptions and exceptions and regulations and qualifications.

Whatever happened to fundamental principles as a guiding force in government? I have no idea, except to note that they're pretty much gone from the two major parties.

Today's politicians don't advocate the end of federal taxation; they compromise your right to keep what is yours in order to pay for all their government programs.

Today's politicians don't defend the First Amendment's guarantee to freedom of speech; they want to compromise it by banning flag-burning, or hate speech, or sexually explicit material, etc.

Today's politicians don't defend the First Amendment's guarantee to freedom of association; they compromise it with affirmative action programs that force employers to hire people they don't want to hire.

Today's politicians don't defend the Second Amendment's guarantee

of the right to bear arms; they want to compromise it by using the few thugs who use firearms recklessly to justify taking guns away from the vast majority who use them for legal, moral uses like self-defense.

Today's politicians don't defend the Fourth Amendment's guarantee to freedom from unwarranted search and seizure; they want to compromise it by allowing the police to search your person and property without a warrant and without any provocation whatsoever, just to sustain the hysterical war on drugs.

Today's politicians don't defend the Sixth Amendment's guarantee to a trial by jury in criminal cases; they have already compromised it with asset forfeiture laws that allow the government to seize your property before you've even been charged with a crime.

This is only a partial list. Nearly every politician claims to stand up for those rights and others; however, by compromising even the slightest issue, they continually render themselves hypocritical.

Our Constitutional freedoms will only be fully recognized when we elect officials who are unwavering — that is, extreme — in their defense of individual liberty, and who will not “moderate” our liberty with arbitrary restrictions.

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**Kasey
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On a sour note

Alma mater makes for inharmonious history

Here at UNL, everyone likes to talk tradition.

“This” is a tradition. “That” is a tradition ... it seems that at some point, every part of this campus is destined to be a tradition.



Yet do we ever fully stop to look at the traditions that die? Or the ones that spring up like weak flowers from a graveyard of “immortal” traditions?

Maybe we should.

This column is about two UNL traditions. One is nearly dead. The other has just entered the world.

And since births generally do precede deaths (except in the case of reincarnation), we'll take a look at the new tradition first.

The UNL alma mater.

Let me be frank — I like the alma mater as much as I like the parking police.

Yet there's one main difference between the UNL parking police and the alma mater — one involves students.

Care to take a guess which?

Parking police are students,

“*Let me be frank — I like the alma mater as much as I like the parking police.*”

whereas the alma mater was written, chosen and implemented as UNL's school song with virtually no student input.

It bothers me to know that this song (which no students had a say in) will be “our song,” whether we like it or not.

You see, the alma mater will be given a “trial run,” to quote Chancellor James Moeser, and the run will last a period of years.

So here's the end result — the alma mater is now a UNL tradition. If you didn't contribute to it, too bad.

If there was no vote on it, too bad. If you think the theme song of the “Dukes of Hazzard” has a better rhythm, well, too bad.

After all, you are just a UNL student and apparently your input doesn't mean too much.

On the other end of the spectrum, there is a different UNL tradition that is dying — possibly more quickly

than we realize.

Broyhill Fountain.

Now I have to admit, this is only my second year at UNL, but already I feel some connection to Broyhill.

It's a place to meet your friends, visit when you're on a date or gather for student events.

I recently had the opportunity to speak with the daughter of Broyhill Fountain's designer. She told me that her father had designed Broyhill specifically with the purpose of bringing students together.

That's just one part of the fountain that will be lost. But we all have memories of Broyhill — some crazy, some romantic, and some that we can't really throw into print.

Yet, in a matter of days, the Broyhill we know may be gone.

You see, once the cold weather sets in, Broyhill will have to be shut off. A cold front is predicted to hit us later this week.

Then, two months after Broyhill is

shut off, it will be torn down.

Personally, I'm not angry that Broyhill will be destroyed to make room for the Nebraska Union expansion.

The union board made every attempt to inform students about the situation and to gather their input on what will eventually replace Broyhill. Yet it still saddens me.

A few nights ago, I took my girlfriend to Broyhill to take a few pictures of her sitting on its edge.

Maybe it's overly sentimental, but it was my way of ensuring that I would not forget Broyhill.

It was also my last chance to enjoy the fountain with the girl I love. In the future, a lot of couples won't have that opportunity.

Let me just end by saying this: When we come back after the winter break, Broyhill Fountain won't be here.

There might just be a hole in the ground where it once stood. Broyhill will have become another dead UNL tradition, leaving a similar hole in each of our hearts and memories.

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