

**Kasey
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Boredom in the court

Civic irresponsibility: You snooze, you lose

"Ladies and gentlemen of the jury, Mr. Simpson is not guilty of anything!"

Zzzzzzz...

"My client is an innocent man in the eyes of justice and the law!"

Zzzzzzz...

"He is ... dangit, what's that sound?!!"

Zzzzzzz...

I'll tell you what that sound was:



opportunity being lost in America's court system.

It was during O.J. Simpson's civil trial, where a 19-year-old female "alternate" juror was dismissed after falling asleep.

She was a college student living the dream we all possess — skipping classes, staying in a private motel room, watching HBO and eating free meals for weeks.

Let me emphasize that last part again — **FOR WEEKS!**

Yet somehow, she (we'll go ahead and name her Peggy Sue), couldn't stay awake during DNA testimony and was dismissed shortly thereafter.

She blew it! No more HBO! No more breakfasts with unlimited scrambled eggs and sausage links! No more prancing around the hotel room naked singing "Erotica" without having your roommate walk in! It's all gone!

Now Peggy Sue will have to go back to Physical Geography, Calculus and all the other exciting classes she's missed the past few weeks.

"
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"

Peggy Sue's dismissal bothers me. First of all, she can't be identified by name. She's known only as "a 19-year-old college student."

So, our elders, like the old man picking up trash in a McDonald's commercial, probably said: "Darn kids! They're given responsibility in a major trial and look what happens!"

Yep, there are now a number of people out there who don't believe college students have the attention span necessary to take part in a major court proceeding.

Nonsense! We can do it! Give us another chance! **PUT ME ON THE JURY AND I'LL PROVE IT!** The sausage links, HBO and naked singing will be only a small part of my incentive — I want to do justice to the American court system. **OK, I NEED A SAVIOR BEFORE FINALS! PICK ME! HURRY! PICK ME!**

Anyway, another thing that bothers me about Peggy Sue's dismissal is that it says something about how lively the courts are.

We need to make the courts more entertaining so Americans will take a greater interest in the justice system.

Let's face it, this isn't the first time jurors have fallen asleep during a trial.

To prove it, here's an old joke and true story that I dug up from the archives of Reader's Digest:

A female secretary took her boss to court when he made an "indecent proposal" at the workplace. During the trial, she was asked exactly what this "sexually offensive" proposal was. Too embarrassed to say it aloud, the woman was given permission to write the proposal on a piece of paper.

The piece of paper was then passed to the defense attorney, prosecuting attorney, judge and finally to the jury. Each juror read the piece of paper and passed it onto the juror seated next to him or her.

A young female juror read the sheet of paper and was about to pass it onto the man seated next to her when she noticed he was asleep.

She woke him up with a slight nudge of her elbow and handed the piece of paper to him. The man looked at it, looked at her, smiled and put the piece of paper in his pocket

Now, getting back to my original

topic, the question "how" to make courts more entertaining inevitably arises

Hmmmmmm...

I think part of the problem with "court boredom" is that too often lawyers on the losing side give long-winded speeches and try to draw out the trial for days.

To compensate for this, each member of the jury should be given three chances to yell "Boredom!" It's fairly simple really: when an attorney begins to blabber about something of no importance, a juror may scream "Boredom!"

The attorney would then have to say something interesting or be forced to prance around the courtroom naked singing "Erotica."

WARNING: DO NOT ATTEMPT TO PICTURE JOHNNY COCHRAN NAKED! DO NOT ATTEMPT TO PICTURE JOHNNY COCHRAN NAKED!

Maybe you could even set up court like the old television show called the "Gong Show," where people who performed badly were "gonged" off the set.

Yes, imagine the possibilities. Gong O.J.! Gong Cochran! Gong! Gong! Gong!

The big question would be who you'd give the gong to

Hmmmmmm...

ME! GIVE IT TO ME! PLEASE! FINALS ARE GOING TO KILL ME! SAVE ME! HURRY!

Kerber is a sophomore news-editorial major and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.

**Jessica
KENNEDY**

Shining some light on ASUN

Time to get real about students' perceptions

An open letter to ASUN:
The students of UNL need to see more action from their student government, which many perceive as a bunch of do-nothings.



I challenge you to prove that perception wrong!

President Eric Marintzer, you and your senators know that UNL is fortunate to have

a student regent, a vote on the university budget committee and an excellent rapport with administrators.

But what you don't seem to understand is how generally apathetic students are to your cause.

Why is that?

Senators, you may feel that your committee meetings are accomplishing something. Your constituents, for the most part, don't see it that way.

The more time elected leaders spend behind closed doors or in committee, the further removed they become from the people they represent.

I believe that's what happened to ASUN.

ASUN appears to have numbed itself to the concerns of the majority of its governed.

Eric, this isn't necessarily your regime's fault. Unresponsive government has become an institutional reality — but that doesn't make it right.

I encourage you to warm up to the

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people who have given you the positions you cherish so much. Without them, you would accomplish nothing. Unfortunately, for this senate, it may be too late.

When I talked to you, Eric, you told me that "perception is reality." I agree with you on that. And if a significant number of your constituents are apathetic to your organization — or if they downright dislike ASUN — then reality can't be very bright for your organization.

A strong government must have the active participation of its governed. For this to happen, the government has to actively listen to the concerns of the people.

Active participation by the student body is something that ASUN seriously lacks. Just look at voter turnout. Less than 10 percent of the student population voted in ASUN's mock election.

I'll grant you this: Homecoming is very popular. In your own words, Eric, you proclaimed the Homecoming carnival and dance a "huge success," especially with campus police and administrators. And I'm sure there were a lot of people there.

But how many of them were off-campus, graduate or nontraditional students?

I'll bet you could increase participation at your events by programming to alternative target audiences, not just the one around you. It'll be tough, but it can be done.

One other thing ... try listening to the students. Yes, it's difficult to hear anything if they don't come to your meetings. So make an effort to reach out to them.

Make it a consistent habit to have a representative at all student meetings, instead of relying on the hit-or-miss method used now. Attend more than just the "big" or "vocal" groups' meetings.

I think the president's round table is a good idea, but I am concerned about the representation's lack of diversity. I'm sure most members of the senate could name at least one person who is president or vice-president of more than one campus organization.

Each time a president wears more than one "hat" to a round-table meeting — if that person even

attends — it decreases the number of opinions and voices represented.

"Meet Your Senator" days were a good idea too, but it takes a lot of initiative from students to actually meet their senators.

Instead, senators should be sent to club meetings in their respective colleges. And the by-law requirement that calls for senators to meet with their college's student advisory board at least once a month should be enforced.

Right now, this isn't happening. I've been on the journalism student advisory board for two years, and not once has our senator been to a meeting.

Why not make senators actually hold office hours in their colleges? Sure, Eric, they wouldn't be able to "help out with office stuff" or "study," which is what you told me they do now. But they would be closer to the people whose interests they're supposed to represent.

ASUN, you know you do a lot, but your constituents don't. Either they don't care about what you're doing or don't think you care about them.

Either way, it's a problem.

Please start listening to us. Start seeking our opinions on ASUN concerns.

Come out of your offices, come out of your meetings and listen to us on our turf.

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