

OPINION PAGES

Our VIEW

Politics is C.R.A.P.

Apathy could make ASUN vulnerable

In the spirit of Wednesday's ASUN elections, the Daily Nebraskan would like to shed light on a candidate with a radical platform — a hypothetical one — for a moment.

Let's say this candidate is running with only one goal in mind: to abolish student government. The party's called C.R.A.P. — the Committee to Retire Aspiring Politicians — and its candidates will abdicate their posts when elected. With the government money saved, the candidates would buy about 500 football season passes and give them away to students — a pretty popular plan.

It's only a fictional situation at UNL — one the Daily Nebraskan would never support. But C.R.A.P. was alive and well, minus the football ticket scheme, at one Big 12 school in 1996. It was born of student apathy and entirely popular until the candidate left school mid-election. (He had stolen Texas A&M's mascot.)

C.R.A.P. was definitely *crap*, but students liked the ticket because it touted a simple action plan. It reached students, although it didn't claim to represent anybody. After all, that's expected of elected officials. That's their job. So the ticket got away from run-of-the-mill rhetoric and talked to students on a very real and tactile level.

People in ASUN might scoff at the notion of such a joke ticket. In that case, they'd be a lot like the gubernatorial candidates in Minnesota who scoffed at Jesse Ventura before he won.

The ticket that wins elections at any level increasingly will be the ticket that can motivate apathetic voters. Consider that, tomorrow, probably 10 percent of students will vote. Why? Because the rest don't care. But what if a party arose and offered students a radical, popular reason to care? Disenfranchised students could decide to vote at the expense of the entire student government and all students.

Something's got to change before a C.R.A.P.-like contender arises and does some real damage to ASUN. Candidates need action-oriented platforms that are understood by most students and can motivate voters.

There's little doubt this year's Voice and Focus parties have action plans — some real solutions behind the "we'll represent you" rhetoric — but they aren't necessarily understood. One of the biggest issues in the election is an ASUN representation bill. Why would most students care if there are 35 or 40 seats? Maybe they *should* care, but do they? And, if it's a big-time issue, can't one party reach students and tell them why they should care?

At what point will we start holding parties responsible for low voter turnout? When will a candidate come up with a solid plan that gets students to vote? It's time for all ASUN candidates to tout down-to-earth action plans that can motivate students. Some have, and we'll touch on them tomorrow.

As for the rest, please — put some action in the rhetoric — before someone else shakes up the system irrevocably.

Siers' VIEW



DN LETTERS

Mincing words

In response to letters from Josh Moening/Rick Parsons and Gerry Harbison (DN 3/1), there is no circumstance in which the use of the term "feminazi" is anything other than horribly insulting to the victims of Nazi atrocities. It is NOT the general populace I hear using the term. The fact that it is common for those on the far right to continue to use it shows their shameful disregard of the plight of those murdered and tortured by the Nazis. It also highlights the far right's reckless encouragement of those on the fringe who choose to act out by murdering doctors, clinic workers and police officers. To cite Rush Limbaugh as a rational, legitimate source of anything is a bad joke.

Andrea Shahan
University of Nebraska Press

Prof power!

There are times in our college careers that we are fortunate enough to enroll in a class led by an instructor who brings the material alive, stimulates us to learn more and even leaves us anticipating the next class. The monotony of classes sometimes makes it seem that such professors are few and far between. Yet, by chance last year, I had such an opportunity when I enrolled in a biology class taught by Russ Benedict.

In my opinion, he is not only an exemplary biology professor, but an overall outstanding educator. It is obvious his top priority is educating students in a meaningful manner. He is able to convey his vast amount of knowledge in a way all of his students are able to understand, and then transfer to different contexts.

Furthermore, his enthusiasm in the classroom develops an interest in biology amongst his students. Large numbers of students work with him in the field, and become involved with his research. The establishment of such relationships greatly benefits his students.

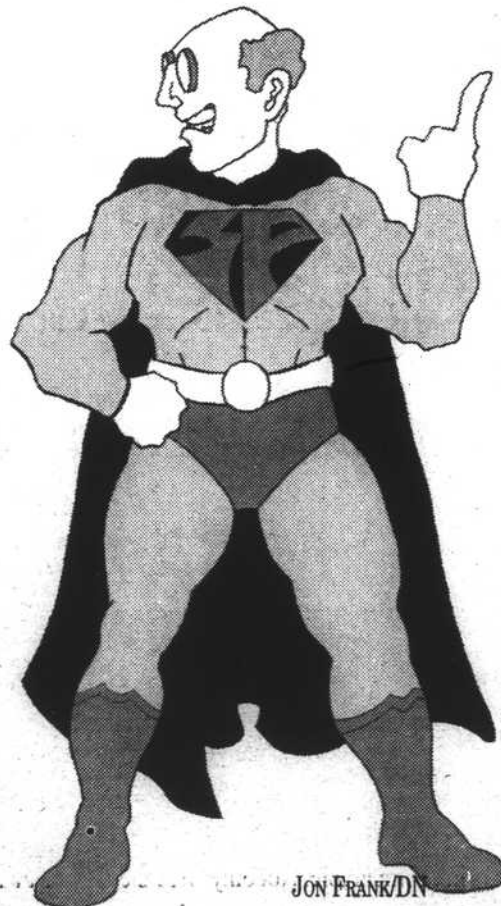
Such experiences reinforce what he teaches in class by providing practical applications to what they have learned. At the same time, he instills a broad biological base for students to utilize whether they are pursuing a career in biology, or will never again take a science course. The list of qualities

goes on, all contributing to the simple fact that Russ Benedict represents excellence in education.

Ironically, Russ is presently looking for a different job due to the fact that UNL has failed to offer him a permanent decision. I respectfully disagree with this decision, and along with others believe his departure will be a great loss for UNL.

Therefore, as students of UNL, we are expressing our support of his hiring through petition and a letter-writing campaign. I encourage any students who have worked with Russ, or those interested in maintaining quality professors (who focus on teaching), to join our efforts in hiring Russ Benedict as a professor at UNL. Students will be at both unions on March 2 and 3 with petitions, and the following individuals may be contacted by e-mail to express your support: Kyle Hoagland, SNR Advisory Board at KHOAGLAND@unlinfo.unl.edu, or Jack Morris, Director of Biological Sciences at JMORRIS1@unlinfo.unl.edu.

Angela Plugge
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Unfair, huh?

Mr. Fox does not do the Daily Nebraskan justice with his assertion that it was irresponsibly disseminating conservative propaganda (DN Letters, Feb. 25).

The DN, at least in my eyes, has an exceptional track record regarding its journalistic objectivity. The anti-choice insert was clearly a paid advertisement. Anyone with marginally good perception would have realized this. People's apathy toward the insert as propaganda was evident by the overwhelming piles of said insert scattered on the ground at various DN distribution boxes. The blatant disregard of litter laws shows people's contempt for such latent conservative forces.

Seriously though, the insert was not part of the editorial section. No staff writer was credited, no affiliation was made and no advocacy was implied by the inclusion of such an insert. Including ads for spring break vacations and alcohol doesn't imply the DN advocates or guarantees the legitimacy of such services or products.

Though it is true the DN receives part of its budget from student fees, it is not barred, legally or ethically, from selling insert space to anyone regardless of their view. As a state-funded periodical, it would be much more inappropriate for the DN to deny space to a paying party based on said party's politics.

I'm sure the DN would be more than happy to publish an insert sponsored in a similar manner by Planned Parenthood or some other pro-choice group. It is simply a matter of economics, not journalistic ethics.

Further, I think the DN has proven its objectivity by publishing your letter, a scornful criticism of their policies. In fact, the DN publishes many letters, conservative and otherwise. If there is a lack of liberal response, it is more likely a lack of individuals writing in rather than censorship.

Had the DN refused to present your viewpoint, then a case could be made for the DN's lack of "journalistic responsibility." One could make a much better case for the banality of the DN's content rather than the DN's lack of equal time and objectivity.

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