

OPINION PAGES

Our VIEW

Politically naive

Children shouldn't be used to decide issue

Take a look at a dollar bill. You've done it before. Now do it again.

See the little "In God We Trust" insignia on there? That's federal money. And it has a religious phrase on it. That's definitely *not* a separation of church and state.

Do we care? Not really. But very soon, six court cases will be coming before the U.S. Supreme Court regarding the separation of church and state. And none of them have to do with the dollar bill.

The New York Times reported in its Sunday issue that of the six cases to be brought to the court in the next few weeks, five revolve around school-related issues. One deals with school-led prayer before football games. Another deals with whether or not private religious schools can share computer equipment with public schools.

These cases reveal a larger truth of the church and state issue: the issue at hand isn't the separation of church and state. Actually, it's the separation of church and school. And that isn't necessarily a good thing.

We take no official stand on these cases, but rather raise the question of whether or not our nation has chosen to focus on the right group of people in shaping the landscape of our politics, especially when we don't seem to care about separation of church and state once we become adults.

Certainly, school children, even those of high school age, have no real grasp of this concept or the abstract ramifications of such a separation. They don't even teach all the amendments of the Constitution until civics class, which comes in high school.

Is it right to fight the use of relatively unsophisticated school children as a political football?

The President of the United States takes an oath on the Bible. Why are there no cases before the courts contesting this? The adult world is where these matters should be settled - not a child's world, where the only people who care are adults.

How many children understand the notion of sharing equipment with private school children? How many care?

In the real world, sharing has nothing to do with religious designation.

We should not treat our children as a testing ground for these issues.

“*The President of the United States takes an oath on the Bible. Why are there no cases before the courts contesting this?*”

Obermeyer's VIEW

AT THE BUSTED DELTA TAU DELTA FRATERNITY PARTY...



*** THANKS TO THE MEN OF DELTA TAU DELTA FOR PROVIDING SUCH AN EASY TARGET, MAKING MY JOB MUCH EASIER. KEEP UP THE GOOD WORK! HOPE YOU MADE LOTS OF NEW FRIENDS. © NEAL 1999 DN

DN LETTERS

Where Credit is Due

In regards to the "Speed 101" article published in Monday's DN ...

This response is in no way meant to bash the UNL Motorsports team. Instead, it is to direct everybody's attention to a very worthwhile engineering project that has received no credit from the university.

This engineering project is better known as the Ethanol Vehicle Challenge (EVC).

The EVC is a 14-school competition that was started back in the fall of 1997.

The UNL EVC team consists of 20 to 30 engineering students as opposed to three on the Motorsports team and unlike them, we are not completely sponsored by the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

Outside of a small donation from the Mechanical Engineering Department, the UNL EVC team needed to find corporate and private sponsors willing to donate money or products in order to compete in this competition.

The competition, which is held each May (this coming May being the last year of the three-year competition), stages UNL and 13 other colleges and universities from across the U.S. and Canada against one another.

The goal of the competition is to take a stock General Motors vehicle

(in 1998 it was a Chevrolet Malibu and in 1999 a full-size Chevrolet Silverado pickup) and make it run on 85% ethanol and 15% gasoline (E85).

Ethanol is a fuel of the future and is very quickly becoming the front runner to replace gasoline.

Ethanol is produced from something that we have a lot of in this state, and that is corn.

In a six-month time frame, the student engineering teams must convert the vehicle to dedicated E85 use while maintaining good driveability, decreased engine emissions, improved fuel economy, enhanced cold-start characteristics and improved engine performance.

However, all of these conversions must be done in a production-feasible manner. At the 1999 competition, the UNL EVC team was awarded the "Best Overall Ethanol Conversion" and "Most Innovative Component" awards along with a second place finish in vehicle appearance.

Maybe some of you have seen either the rainbow colored Chevy Malibu or the color changing Chevrolet Silverado driving around campus and have wondered, "Wow, those are pretty cool vehicles! I wonder what they represent?"

Well, hopefully now you have an idea. They represent the hard work of more than 20 engineering students. Keep in mind that this project might

be classified as an "engineering" project, but it is open to everyone.

If you are interested or want to learn more about it, check our Web site at www.engr.unl.edu/~ethanol/ or pick up a copy of the November issue of Car & Driver magazine, and you will see an article about the UNL EVC Team's Chevy Silverado.

In addition, the Silverado has been displayed in New York, Michigan, Illinois, Indiana and at nearly every major fair and show in the state of Nebraska. This was not because the university told us to, it was because the student team was proud of what they did and wanted to reflect a positive image of the engineering program here at UNL - and that students can make a difference.

You see, the EVC Team is like the UNL Motorsports team in many ways in the sense that we too can change engine oil, perform routine maintenance and apply what we have learned in the classroom, but we do it without the support of the university.

As I stated before, this is an attempt to give credit where credit is overdue (for some three years now) and to show that this group of engineers is out to earn more than a paycheck or a grade in the classroom.

Clark Otte
team leader
UNL Ethanol Vehicle
Challenge Team

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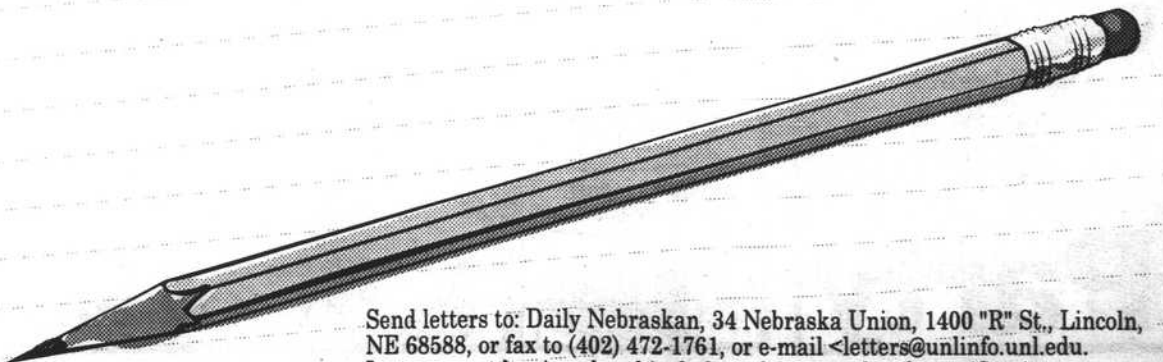
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