

Know your candidates

Voters should focus on more than campaign promises



Generations often bond by thinking about where they were during significant moments in history. Ask your parents where they were when they heard Kennedy was shot. Ask your grandparents where they were when we bombed Japan. Ask me where I was when I heard ASUN had decided to direct its Government Liaison Committee to lobby against a state legislative bill that would ban research on aborted fetal tissue at UNMC.

It was my mini-Hiroshima of the semester.

I was at a residence hall government meeting when the bomb was dropped. I was very much opposed to the decision. As I read angry letters in the newspaper in the days that followed, I found myself wondering,

"Who are these senators? Who gave them the right to speak for me? Who elected this supposedly light-years-left-of-liberal legislature?"

Oh yeah — that would be me. I voted for certain people because they promised to develop a community network through Students At Large, improve the Culture Center facilities and practice environmentally responsible campaigning. Now they found themselves forced to make a decision on an extremely controversial issue.

And I'm willing to bet that last spring during campaign time, no one thought to ask the candidates what they thought about research on aborted fetal tissue, or even what they thought about abortion, or maybe even if they considered themselves to be liberal or conservative. Just like parking your car without a permit for a week, this is bad, bad, bad.

The point of a representative government is to represent the students on campus. Essentially, you are supposed to vote for people who think like you. And while you and Impact candidate Amy Ellis may agree that it would be groovy to get the Dave Matthews Band to play Pershing,

your thoughts on whether UNL should ask Tom Green to come back for next year's Tailgate on the Turf may be totally different.

Our knowledge about the people we elect needs to go beyond campaign promises.

Because of the apathy of the general student population, it wouldn't be hard for a special interest group to take over ASUN. Take for example a group of extremist vegetarians. A few slick campaign promises about encouraging diversity and improving greek/non-greek relations and voila — no more meat in the cafeteria. No one thought to ask the candidates how they felt about killing cows.

This, of course, is an extreme and disturbing example. But seriously, ASUN could have been composed entirely of liberal, pro-choice, registered Democrats this year, and I wouldn't have noticed. Would you?

Regardless of whether you think there's anything wrong with liberal, pro-choice Democrats, this would not be a fair representation of our campus.

This is why we need to be informed on the values of the candidates.

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If ASUN is going to continue to represent the student body in decisions to support or not to support things like domestic partner benefits at UNL, then gee, I think it'd be nice to know what individual candidates think about homosexuality.

Instead of front-page stories on what neat guys the presidential candidates are, how about finding out their values? That is what I want to make my decision on this year.

Because although each of the parties have some good ideas about what they want to see changed around here, I doubt you'll ever see 100 people show up at an ASUN meeting because they're against improving the Culture Center.

We can't know what controversial issues ASUN will have to address in the next year. But we can go to the

debates and talk to our college candidates and ask them questions like "Do you consider yourself liberal or conservative? How do you feel about the way ASUN handled the aborted fetal tissue issue? How would you have voted?"

They're big kids. They shouldn't crumble at a few tough questions.

We tend not to get too involved in campus politics because we don't believe ASUN does anything very important anyway. But they do represent us to the outside world. And while ASUN's aborted fetal tissue decision may not go down in the history books like Hiroshima and JFK, we can still learn a lesson from it.

Don't be led blindly. Become an informed voter.

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A touchy subject

Visit to Lincoln club proves possible nudity ban is misguided



"The state's most talked about entertainment," reads the sign outside of Mataya's Babydolls on 56th Street and Cornhusker Highway.

The strip club, pardon me, gentleman's club, has been making news across the state with its recent battle with the Lincoln City Council. Last Tuesday the City Council voted unanimously to ban sexual contact in businesses and postponed a vote that would ban nudity in public places.

John Ways Jr., the operations manager of Babydolls, told the Daily Nebraskan (Feb. 23) that the touching between dancers and patrons at his business isn't sexual and that he doesn't think the ordinance will affect the way they do business.

"It's a show," Ways told the DN. "It's entertainment."

Someone needed to get to the bottom of this, and I was prepared to research this story for hours, or until I ran out of one-dollar bills, whichever came first.

I couldn't help but notice the stench of cigarette smoke and desperation when I walked into Babydolls. I also had to go through Bobo, the legendary bouncer who asked for identification and five dollars to get in. He made me aware of the many signs stating what patrons can and cannot do at the club.

There is also a petition I could sign stating displeasure with the City Council's actions.

I told him I wrote for the Daily Nebraskan, and I wanted to know if I could talk to the manager.

"Stay right there, you just stay right there," he said. Then he said something into a microphone clipped to his collar that I couldn't make out over Montell Jordan's blaring "This Is How We Do It."

I started to get a little concerned when he told me of his reputation in

Lincoln clubs and how I'd have to answer to him for whatever I wrote (in a joking, non-threatening manner — wink, wink).

Then three large men who work at the club came out and confronted me. They asked me if I had identification to prove I was actually a DN writer. I had none. They told me they were displeased with what the DN had written about their club. I said sorry. Then they told me to do what I had to do for the story, but to remember my responsibilities as a customer.

All right, I'll buy a \$5 lemonade and stare at breasts, I thought.

I tried to convince them I was on their side. Frankly I thought I would get special treatment (unlimited free juice, lap dances) because I was trying to tell their story. They had bigger problems to deal with though, because I turned around and one of Lincoln's finest was at the door.

That was the end of the interview, and I walked into the club satisfied I had been able to control my bladder during this ordeal.

As I took a seat it was impossible not to notice the tension in the air. The crowd looked like they were anticipating a raid from the FBI. The club had done such a good job of warning patrons not to get too touchy-feely with the dancers that everyone seemed scared to participate.

I think the nervous energy affected the dancer's performance. There was definitely a strong presence from club employees making sure everyone was keeping it legal.

Over the next hour or so, several more dancers performed on stage, and frankly I was disappointed. The crowd wasn't aroused, the dancers weren't doing anything too shocking and I was kind of bored.

Then the club DJ said the magic words, "Stay here, 'cause coming up we got four ladies on stage for the whipped cream and cherries show!"

The table I was at lit up, and the energy in the room increased. I knew things were going to take a turn for the better.

When Chantel, Princess Austin and Andrea took the stage there was a buzz in the room.

"Guys, break out the \$5 bills and see what'll happen to you!" yelled the

DJ. I was scared to find out for myself, so I watched.

Basically, guys could lick whip cream off various parts of the dancers' bodies, or have the dancers lick whip cream off them.

Sexual touching or entertainment?

To me it seemed more innocent than the City Council makes it out to be. Most of the guys who went up were being embarrassed by friends in the

crowd. To be honest, the licking of the whip cream seemed more mechanical than sexual.

After that I went back to talk to Bobo. This time he was extremely nice to me. He told me Babydolls is being unfairly targeted by the City Council.

If you are unhappy with what is happening to this business, call the Mayor's office and voice your displeasure or sign the petition at the club.

If the Lincoln City Council shuts this club

down, is it going to be as tough on businesses that send strippers to your house for private shows? Isn't there "sexual touching" going on there? Is this club any more shocking than things you can see inside Cinema X, right in the heart of downtown Lincoln?

If you don't think this is fair, let your local leaders know and remember the City Council plans on debating whether or not public nudity is legal in the near future.



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