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'Beauty' Queen
'American Beauty' and its cast reign supreme and carry home Oscar.
A&E, PAGE 10

Powerful Time
A UNL professor and one of his former students talk about Peace Corps experiences. NEWS, PAGE 7

inside the campaign

DN series to look closer at ASUN election

"Men willingly believe what they wish."
—Julius Caesar

"Every character has an arc."
—Christopher Moltisanti, "The Sopranos"

Hype always beats the real thing. And news never lasts. Even in politics. In the preceding months, there have been enough stories for any Daily Nebraskan reader to have noticed

there was an ASUN student election in our midst. There were candidates and issues, winners and losers. Money spent and time lost.

More than 80 percent turn blind eyes and deaf ears to this phenomenon. Or, if not to that extreme, to an extent that forces them not to vote on election day.

But the political bug, even at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, nestles itself firmly into the minds of a few students on campus, namely the

candidates and their closest supporters. Who these people are, and what motivates them, has captured the attention of the Daily Nebraskan.

To say this weeklong series is a behind-the-scenes look wouldn't be entirely accurate, because the two campaigns that we followed, Empower and Impact, along with their respective presidential candidates, Heath Mello and John Conley, were entirely open to all of our questions, along with the questions of any sup-

porters. So this series, which followed the parties from late January all the way through the final run-off elections, will try to be an awakening of sorts.

The 2000 elections hold a particular fascination because neither of the featured parties won the presidential election. It was won by a third party, a party consisting of student government outsiders by the name of A-Team, which joined the race late and picked up steam in its final weeks.

In Mello's campaign, his experience hurt

By Lindsay Young
Senior editor

Gosh, I hope I'm not a politician. The last thing I want to do in this campaign is shake hands and kiss babies. Because people have that stereotype ...
... Oh, oh yeah. Oh, oh yeah. Oh I know. I know it because people at times, I really think, because people think I'm cheesy at times, just because of what I am.

Whether they think that's cheesy or nice, maybe because it's not hard-core, or I'm not a asshole or something like that, that I'm cheesy. But yeah, I know, I knew that beforehand though, I honestly, though I knew before, before I ever ran that we, I, would be looked at as a politician ...

He faced it the entire race. Heath Mello, presidential candidate for the establishment party. He's not establishment, he said. He has new ideas. Different ideas. Ideas that will change the face of ASUN.

He wanted to get rid of the Student Impact Team and create a Freshman Council. He wanted to start an annual

universitywide festival to build community. He wanted to use the Web to improve advising and book buyback. He wanted to open communication between ASUN and the student body.

But the image of his party, Empower, was stained. It was nothing Mello or his running mates, Cecily Rometo and Mike Butterfield, did. It's who they are. And it's a label. Labels are hard to strip.

"I'm worried about that I'm going to be stereotyped as a stereotypical candidate for this position," Mello said at the start of his campaign.

"Because everyone I'm running against is not greek and not been involved with ASUN a whole lot. I think really that's my weakness."

The party had the structure of every other party in past elections. Three executive candidates — one being female — and a slate of senatorial and advisory board candidates.

And the party had an action name: Empower, similar to names like Commit, Vision and Focus in the past.

Two of the three executive candidates were greek.

Those characteristics are all many

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Heather Glenboski/DN
HEATH MELLO, presidential candidate for the Empower party, had a hard time trying to overcome the label of being a stereotypical ASUN candidate. Mello thought differently, but in the end, voters refused to overlook the party's image.

Conley's deliberate style marks campaign



Josh Wolfe/DN
JOHN CONLEY, Impact party presidential candidate, makes final campaigning attempts by handing out flyers to students on March 1, the day of the election. Conley was prompted by friends and supporters to run for ASUN.

By Samuel McKewon
Senior editor

He is, in the slightest way, a bit stoic in everything he does. The cadence of his words, his handwriting, the way he walks — John Conley's metronome marches to a more deliberate tick than yours.

He has short-cropped hair, and he often covers it with a green, paint-splattered hat. For recreation, he likes hiking, camping, the rugged outdoors. And he has what seems like an endless supply of those shirts with those small plaid patterns on them.

The everyman — this is John Conley. A throwback, so to speak. He embodies it well, believing staunchly in the idea of self-determination. That you make your own way, and once you've made it, you

invite others. But you do it in measured steps, without loose abandon.

You do it because you started working at 13, laying carpet in Gothenburg, and you haven't stopped since. More importantly, you do it because you've been through enough to know it isn't worth going through it again because of foolish mistakes.

So it is no surprise that Conley never hatched a plan to run for ASUN president last fall. That isn't to say he didn't think he was capable — Conley has a quiet confidence about him. But he launched no personal campaign, tested no waters, sought out no potential running mates.

Conley did not choose to be the Impact party presidential candidate. He was chosen

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Court: Former NU back liable

■ The state's high court said he was at fault when he was shot by an officer.

By Michelle Starr
Staff writer

The Nebraska Supreme Court ruled Friday that Scott Baldwin, former Cornhusker running back, was responsible for his injuries caused during a confrontation with Omaha Police in 1992.

Baldwin was shot by police during an altercation when they were trying to apprehend him. Baldwin was paralyzed from the chest down, and the bullet is still lodged in his spine.

He sued the City of Omaha, which employs police officers, for \$1 million for his injuries.

The high court confirmed a district court ruling that said because Baldwin, who was diagnosed with manic depression after a January 1992 incident, was not taking his medication, he was found primarily at fault.

According to court documents, Baldwin was planning to return to football in 1993, but he said the medication, lithium carbonate, interfered with his workouts. He said it caused dry mouth, dizziness, nausea and cramping in his arms and legs.

Baldwin was prescribed the medication after he was found innocent by reason of insanity in the Jan. 18, 1992, beating of Gina Simanek in Lincoln.

Baldwin, who was naked at the time, attacked Simanek, who was walking her dog. Baldwin did not know Simanek.

Omaha City Attorney Thomas Mumgaard said Baldwin knew he should have been taking his medication, and he knew he could be subject to psychotic episodes if he didn't take his medication.

"We're obviously pleased there was no liability imposed," Mumgaard said. "As unfortunate as it is, there was no justification for Baldwin's actions."

"The court said the officers had no choice but to shoot him." Baldwin's attorney, E. Terry Sibbernson, was not available for comment.

A call came in at 11:22 p.m. on Sept. 5, 1992, that there was a disturbance at Stage II Lounge in Omaha and that a mentally ill person was involved.

Officers Peggy Lynn Truckenbrod and Anna Doyle, who both had been instructed how to handle mentally ill people, responded to the call.

They were also informed about the assault in Lincoln and that it had taken three officers to subdue Baldwin.

According to documents, one of the provisions in Omaha Police Department policy authorizes offi-

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