

Daily Nebraskan

Since 1901

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Vote.com

Online system could increase ASUN election turnout

A point and a click. That's all it could take to cast a vote for the next student body president – or homecoming queen.

ASUN is going through the motions to bring online voting to UNL, and we support it wholeheartedly.

Everyone knows that student government elections – like their state and national counterparts – have been plagued by low turn outs.

Last year's turnout for the ASUN election was just over 14 percent – the highest in five years. The run-off election a week later drew a pathetic 9.7 percent of the student body to the polls.

Whether online voting would cause voter participation to skyrocket is questionable. Students already have a plethora of places to vote, including most residence halls, both unions and the Campus Recreation Center. Even the convenience store in the parking garage near Stadium Drive contains the plastic voting booths on election day.

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But giving students the option to vote from their dorm room, their laptop in the library or at the stand-up terminals in the Nebraska Union would make it easier to vote.

Students are probably more likely to vote while checking their e-mail on computers outside the union computer lab even though

they'd just have to walk a few feet away to reach the booths on election day.

Of course, the question immediately arises as to whether the election has the potential to be compromised by hackers or mechanical malfunctions.

But the ASUN Electoral Commission seems to be devising ways to protect an election from these threats by closely monitoring the Web site throughout the election and making sure the appropriate safeguards are in place.

ASUN is moving forward with online voting now that the Student Court has weighed in on how it should be carried out. The Court was split, three to three, about whether a constitutional amendment is necessary to implement the voting.

We think it would be in ASUN's best interest to propose a constitutional amendment and get the students' stamp of approval before moving forward.

A special election seems to be realistic. Or maybe students could vote on the amendment when they cast their ballots for homecoming queen and king in a few weeks. It would be great to see if online voting increases participation in this spring's election.

Of course, students wouldn't get the collectible white "I voted ASUN" sticker after voting.

But they'd get a convenient way to vote, which would draw more to the polls.

In the end, that's what matters.

Editorial Board

Sarah Baker, Bradley Davis, Josh Funk, Matthew Hansen, Samuel McKewon, Dane Stickney, Kimberly Sweet

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SCIENTISTS REPORT THAT THE OZONE HOLE OVER THE SOUTH POLE IS BIGGER THAN EVER



Neal Obermeyer/DN

Preachers, paper cuts and pickles

I opened the blinds and cursed at the sunlight. I hate sunlight in the morning. I started the coffee pot and opened the front door to get the Journal Star.



Emily Moran

I fumbled through the paper, looking at the pictures and reading the headlines. I spilled coffee on the counter and headed toward the couch.

"Couple sues over hot pickle" blared from the ninth page. This ought to be good, I thought. The column was short, seven paragraphs, but the point was clear. McDonald's is loaded. So sue them.

In the Journal Star on Sunday, Oct. 8, the Associated Press reported a woman who "claims she was permanently scarred after a hot pickle from a McDonald's hamburger fell on her chin."

I paused. I continued reading. The lawsuit claimed Veronica M. Martin of Knoxville, Tenn., "had second-degree burns and is permanently scarred."

I sipped cold coffee and wondered how a pickle leapt off a hamburger to stick to a chin. I tiptoed into the kitchen and opened the fridge to look for pickles.

I was going to test this pickle stunt. I found a cousin to the pickle, relish, and headed back toward the couch. I turned on the television to a church station.

I tried to flick relish chunks at the preacher's chin. I then heated the relish and repeated the exercise. But the chunks didn't stick.

I touched the relish and wondered how hot a pickle would have to be to cause second-degree burns. I decided to find out.

I called Ruth Albrecht, Program Director at the St. Elizabeth Regional Burn and Wound Center, four hours before this column was due. She was uncertain of the exact temperature to cause a "hot pickle" burn.

I touched the relish and wondered how hot a pickle would have to be to cause second-degree burns.

She said the degree of a burn is dependent on how long the body is in contact with the hot object and how hot the object is.

I then called McDonald's and learned three important factors:

1. Burgers are made when you order them.
2. Pickles are placed on top of the burger after the burger is cooked.
3. Pickles are never preheated.

Pickles are never preheated but "Couple sues over hot pickle." I was confused. But hooked.

The lawsuit reported that the hot pickle caused "physical and mental pain" to Mrs. Martin and she was seeking \$110,000.

I continued to read. The lawsuit reported her husband was seeking \$15,000 because he "had been deprived of the services and consortium of his wife."

What sort of services was he deprived of for \$15,000?

- Vacuuming, \$100.
- Dusting, \$100.
- Cooking, \$300.
- Screwing, \$14,500.

The point is stupid individuals sue for pathetic reasons. I am tired of reading about these idiots in the paper. I am tired of spilling coffee.

This is a civil case. Martin v. McDonald's. McDonald's is loaded. McDonald's is sued. Public figures are sued. I am a public figure. So sue me.

DN Reader v. Moran.
Plaintiff: I opened the DN to read the opinion page. I read a column written by Emily Moran. I turned the page and got a paper cut on my chin. I have suffered physical and mental pain. I request Moran's income at \$15 a column.

Defendant: I write columns.
Plaintiff: I hold Emily Moran responsible for the pain I have suffered. Moran is a tortfeasor. I cite negligence and malicious intent. Moran should have warnings at the end of her columns preventing paper cuts as the page is turned.

Defendant: No comment.
Plaintiff: I have permanent scarring on my chin. Moran is to blame.

Defendant: I have better things to do than listen to the plaintiff whine.
Editor's Note: Be careful when turning this page. Take care not to inflict a paper cut.

Letters to the editor

To the winners go the spoils

I am astounded by Lizz Bench's protest against ASUN in Wednesday's DN. I suppose that she has expressed an attitude common among many university students that ASUN does not specifically advocate or express their viewpoint.

Have some of the students here forgotten how a representative democracy works? The people of ASUN are representatives, elected from the student body by students. Those students voted for the current ASUN people, presumably, because they felt that those people's ideas and views most closely matched their own. I think that this is still true.

If you disagreed with them, you should have voted against them.

If you did vote against them, good for you, but you lost, and you'll just have to live with our representatives this year. That's how democracy works.

Dan Remppe
senior
computer science/German

What's the real truth?

What bothers me about this whole argument over homosexuality (Initiative 416, National

Coming Out Day and the like) is that the real issue is never really addressed – whether homosexuality is right or wrong.

Both sides of the issue appeal to rhetorical arguments with no logical backing. The same argument used to justify homosexuality can be (and is being) used to justify pedophilia and bestiality.

The issue that must be addressed is whether something is right or wrong, not whether it is offensive. And in addressing the question of right and wrong, one must consider the question of absolute truth. (Many people will deny such a thing as absolute truth without realizing that in doing so, they adopt relativism as absolute truth – a self-refuting concept.)

When will the real discussion begin? What is right? What is wrong? And most importantly, why is it right or wrong? In other words, what is truth? Unless issues of right and wrong are addressed, I don't want to hear anymore talk of "intolerance," for it is a commendable thing to be intolerant toward that which is wrong in light of absolute truth.

Brandon Levering
senior
accounting

Father figures, ice breakers

I had a father in the biological sense. My sister, too. Then, around my second birthday, and my sister's first, he was gone. DOA or AWOL, depends on which of Nadia's conflicting stories you choose to accept.

I have considered the litany of psychobabble that asserts how deep and drastically my existence has changed because of my daddy's disappearance. I have considered the litany of reactionary literature that asserts that in our mod, mod universe, a strong, sensible woman can raise her two daughters healthy and fine, smiling and shining to the world, fully combed and adjusted.

Holding back Nadia's hair from the chunks in the toilet, I have considered this. I feel as though daddy, whoever he might be, exited stage left from a precarious situation. There is a good part of me that hopes his departure was his own delivered death, a suicide that allowed him to leave us and the world simultaneously.

Under these circumstances, I can blame my mother for her sick, sick actions that drove him over the bulging edge. I imagine her choosing the Sara Lee double cherry cheesecake over my father. In a ironic twist, it is this very thought that sets my queasy stomach at ease.

Because I know it's the truth, my tum-tum only gets riled when I consider the opposite side, the genuine reality, which is that my daddy is dead or departed, having left me here, surrounded by stubby grape furniture and a fully stocked refrigerator. Failure to drive it from my head forces a physical exiting procedure not unlike Nadia's. Mine is a bulimia from the natural state of things.

The truth comes and comes and comes out of me and into the bowl in these liquidy mini-chunks. Nadia touches me on the back of the head and smiles.

The mentor has her protégé.

I coax Jayme to sit on the opposite side of the fleshy pear a week after my initial infatuation with Calgary, whose hair is in a singular ponytail today.

Jus who ya think yer life coulda been lik?
It'd be different, Calvin. I know that.
Jus who do ya think did it?
Did what?

This to ya.
I don't know. My dad.
Yo daddy had nuthin ta do wit it. Cus it was who dun it ta him befur he ever dun it ta you.
My mom then.
You call her yo mom to me.
She is my mom.
So you puttin on airs for da rest of them, the readin public of yours?
Whatever.

I don't think you see what dis is.



petaluma watson

Whatever. She said the degree. You know yer sister? What do you mean? Who's yer sister? What's her name?

"Hey," I say to her chin. This is about how far I come up on the Calgary facial line.

Calgary turns and responds with a small, upward head nod, then a side of me, teeth, just widened lips. On the other side, no Jayme is shoving a Dum-Dum in her mouth.

"So, uh, I saw you play," I say to her. I did, too. I didn't understand a thing about the game of volleyball (lips, tongue, lips), not a thing at all. But I watched Calgary, I watched her block this shot from another girl, then come together with her team on the court in this circle where they all slapped hands, smiling, grinning, winning. I felt like I needed to be in the midst of that.

Calgary smiles, lips only, putting her hand to her face. "Was I good?"

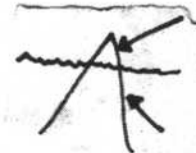
This is some kind of movie.
"Yes, yes." I'm stammering. "I mean, you were good. Really good. Great."

Calgary gives an upward nod. "Mmm." She brushes a hair back off her face. A wayward strand of hair drops into my own. Calgary leans forward in her desk, past me, looking at Jayme, who's got this blank stare out toward the classroom pear, dabbing her Dum-Dum in the air, conducting a fictional sucker symphony.

"Your friend?" Calgary says. I nod. Jayme doesn't look over.

"Could be somebody else," Calgary says.
"What?" I say, expecting some response about Jayme really being my enemy. But I remember that's me who believes that.

Calgary rustles her swish-swish pants a little to turn in her chair. She's got some typing paper, and she scrawls out a drawing:



"This is what you know about you," Calgary says, pointing to the top arrow. Then she points to the bottom. "This is what you don't."

"The iceberg," I say, unthinking.
"Thought I didn't know it, huh?" Calgary says, smiling, lips only. I wonder if she even has teeth. I wonder how she knows. She points to the bottom arrow again. "Jayme is down here."

I think of Nadia, of her speech on fate's hand, my ignorance, the Web. Calgary stops me. "It has nothing to do with that," she says. "Because I only know as much about me as you do about yourself, except I know some things about you that you don't know. Some stuff down here."

"What do you know?"

Calgary rustles her swish-swish pants again, turning back around. She isn't facing me anymore.
"That you're in for the strangest plot twist your life has ever seen."