

Daily Nebraskan

Since 1901

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Filling in Fuerst should follow path of previous president

It's not very often that the little man wins big. But Joel Schafer has proven himself to be the exception during his stint as president in the ASUN office.

No one expected Schafer's party, the A-Team, to go anywhere in the 2000 election. Then, somehow, it made it into the runoff election. And then, somehow, it won.

We remember his party's now infamous and funny Daily Nebraskan advertisements, its sometimes unorganized campaign efforts and its platform, one that Schafer said would represent "normal students" on campus.

We remember the drama surrounding the runoff and his comment the night he finally won the election: "This is the greatest thing that's ever happened to me."

We're glad he's taken advantage of the opportunity.

Even though not all of the A-Team's campaign promises came true, it's undeniable that Schafer's tenure has deviated from the norm, and to us, that's the most important improvement.

It was hard to catch Schafer sitting in his office on any given day. He was simply never there.

If he was by some off chance there, he was busy talking to senators, students, professors, even people just wandering through the union.

His presidency marked the first time any ASUN President walked into the Daily Nebraskan offices unsolicited on a regular basis.

Schafer may have been there to talk of business, or about an upcoming event. Sometimes he was there for an interview, but often, it was just for a chat or one of his popular smoke breaks.

We suspect the Daily Nebraskan wasn't the only place Schafer made regular appearances. He's probably been the most successful liaison between ASUN and student groups in a long time - at least in the five years some members of this board have been UNL students.

His personality and openness created a trust between ASUN and student groups on campus.

And even though from the very start some doubted his abilities, he's been successful at representing "normal students" in the eyes of most "normal students," an admirable feat.

So, as the final 24 hours of Schafer's reign come to an end, we look toward the new administration, and we offer some advice: don't wait.

Our newly elected president, Nathan Fuerst, should not stall until the fall to begin working hard. He should start immediately.

Fuerst shouldn't waste time reapproving all the bills that end with Schafer's departure. Instead, ASUN should consider allowing all those bills it still approves of to roll over into the new administration rather than to start all over again. Fuerst and company can veto the ones they don't like.

There are bigger fish for ASUN to fry, and it makes no sense for all that time to be wasted in repetition.

The new administration should also work hard to maintain the connections that Schafer worked diligently to build with the aforementioned "normal student."

Schafer has established camaraderie with students all over campus, and if those connections come to a screeching halt, it's going to be mighty difficult to gain them back.

For the first time in many years, this board actually feels represented by its leaders in the ASUN office.

The former "little man," Joel Schafer, certainly has left some big shoes to fill.

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Sarah Baker, Jeff Bloom, Bradley Davis, Jake Glazeski, Matthew Hansen, Samuel McKewon, Kimberly Sweet

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SEVERAL UNL POLICE OFFICERS RECENTLY HELPED AT THE MATT TALBOT SOUP KITCHEN...



Neal Obermeyer/DN

Letters to the editor

Who Cares About The Scarlets?

It has come to my attention that the 2000-2001 NU Scarlet Dance Team placed second in national competition over Christmas break.

Unfortunately, congratulations are not in order because the Scarlets represent everything that is wrong with college sports. In wake of all the celebrations, I would like to reflect on the events that occurred with the dance team almost a year ago.

Take, for example, how the Scarlets were selected last March. About 60 girls tried out for the dance team, and almost 50 of them didn't make the squad. There were seven returning Scarlets from the 1999-2000 team who tried out, but veterans Abby Cox, Jacque Glynn, Kelly Krotz, and Misty Miller were all cut.

Glynn and Miller had both been on the squad for two years, and newcomers Cox and Krotz had one year of experience each. All are outstanding dancers, so what was it that made these girls lose their scholarships and told their services were no longer needed? Poor grades? None had struggled academically. Bad tryouts? As veteran members of the team, their abilities were well-known by the evaluators - lack of talent had nothing to do with their fate.

Behavior inconsistent with the expectations of an athlete? There are no criminal records with this group.

Actually, it was an external factor that got these girls cut. They asked questions and wanted to be treated fairly. These girls wanted to know why the dance team had to raise money for their sport while the University of Nebraska's athletic budget is one of the largest in the country.

They wanted to know why they didn't get to travel to all the away football games or bowl games while the cheerleaders did. They wanted to know why they had to pay for parts of their dance costumes. Most importantly, they wanted to know why they didn't even have a coach, while some Division I schools have two.

Shame on those girls for wanting an explanation and shame on them for sticking up for what they believed in. Apparently those aren't good qualities for today's dancers.

Instead of solving the problem by treating the dance team with respect, NU took the easy way out by getting rid of the problem. They were told they were "poor representatives of the university."

For whatever reason, the dance team judges decided it was time to get rid of the thinkers and bring in the naive. Not to take anything away from the girls who did make it, but Nebraska was looking for girls they could push around and tell "this is how it's going to be."

They wanted girls who were happy to be there and not concerned about changing things. Let's not forget, it is much easier to get rid of the "problem" girls than it is to put up with their daily nagging about equality. If there is no place like Nebraska - a school that emphasizes athletics more than academics - then how can an injustice like this occur within the athletic department?

Brian Kent
senior

English, secondary education

A fond farewell to Neal-0

People know me; they recognize my smirk. I'm world famous in Lincoln.

I could hardly be more well-known after 15 years as a Daily Nebraskan columnist (that's a joke, kids, it's only been 10) than if I'd been catching footballs all that time instead - and they have rules against running onto the field.

So whenever people meet me on the street, they always want to know the same thing:

Who is Neal Obermeyer and why does he hate everyone?

But let me tell you, Neal is not the angry, muscular black man of Obermeyer's View. No.

Rather, Neal is the angry, lanky albino of the doomed basement where the DN is cranked out nightly by stinking, nervous undergraduates.

And he doesn't hate everyone, just minorities.

And hypocrisy, and "the parking meter people who drive around in those Geo Trackers, and just park in the middle of the road."

And Destiny's Child.

I know the bastard inside and out; I've been working with him, off and on, since the summer of 1999.

I gave Neal his first job down here, noodling his doodles, and I told him from the very beginning that it'd be the hardest job he'd ever love.

Like the Peace Corps - bringing civilization and enlightened mores to the stupid, backward savages.

I said, "It's about building the cartooning machine in your head. You've got to do it every day, five days a week." (This was before Megan Cody picked up his ever-increasing "slack.") And from his inarticulate gesticulations, I almost believed he understood.

How could I have been so mistaken?

I wanted him to be funny like "Dilbert." Instead, he was funny like Nazi Germany - only funny.

I know some people have been hurt by his snide and often heartless depictions of pretentious frats, talking plants, Jesus, Moses and all the soulless puppets in ASUN.

But I'll say this for him: He can sort of draw.

When I was a kid, impressed by the working methods of Rob, Buddy and Sally in reruns of the old "Dick Van Dyke Show," I thought all creative



Mark Baldrige

work was done by committee - a small, elite group.

Doing pushups, throwing darts, napping and giving each other a hard time, they brainstormed out the funniest scenarios and jump-tossed the wadded rejects in the waste paper basket.

To this day, I picture the writers of, oh, what do the kids watch, "That '70s Show?," saying to each other as they pick up the thread of an idea, "Yeah, yeah and then Red says, 'Cause you're a bitch!'" And they crack each other up.

Well, working with Neal has been almost exactly like that.

First as his editor, and then as that guy who seems to have trouble growing up and graduating, I have consistently been the backboard off which bounce the basketballs of his humor.

In fact, I can take partial credit for pretty much every single good cartoon the poor sap has pulled out of his warty behind in the last two-and-a-half years.

The good ones, mind you. And God knows they're far enough between.

Take today's cartoon: Squirrel Rain? What's that supposed to be? (Note to editor: Don't let him switch the cartoon on me.)

And let me assure you, it's no two-way street. I have never received the least tweaking from him on my work. No, with Neal it's always me, me, me.

But maybe that's because of the stance of tortured genius he insists upon, with his black turtle-necks and heavy eye makeup; narcissism is just part of the slick, industry package. The morbid sheen.

I don't know, but I'll tell you what I do know.

He's graduating.

Graduated.

He was done, or could have been, last semester, but he's trying to avoid the draft.

And after this semester, just 14 more cartoons, he'll call it quits, and we won't have Obermeyer to kick around anymore.

He'll be gone, back to Schuyler, or Wahoo or whatever stagnant backwater he came wading out of, into our lives.

Oh, he's a big man, there's no doubt. And his limo will glide the darkened streets of his hometown, his own reflection superimposed on the shoe-polished storefront windows repeating "Going Out of Business" like a litany of economic blight.

And he'll lean back in the Corinthian leather seat and chuckle obscenely, having grown nearly as senile as the town itself.

Tackling Torch Bearer Tryouts



Dan Learmen

The other night, I watched one of those Olympic torch bearer nomination commercials, a sappy over-dramatic one with Lance Armstrong and the people shoveling the snow to the tune of Chariots of Fire or the Rocky theme.

Whoever threw them together is truly a genius. I was inspired. My dome immediately began working on who I could nominate.

I thought of a brewing company that deserved the honor of carrying the torch into the 2004 games in Athens, Greece. After all, 80 percent of University of Nebraska-Lincoln students don't drink in Memorial Stadium and 74 percent of students have five or fewer drinks at a party.

Now what would cause me, a law-abiding student, to nominate the producer of something not endorsed by the majority of the student population?

The numbers sound lovely, and I bet they pull the blinders over the eyes of parents of incoming freshmen, but if 80 percent don't, than 20 percent do drink in Memorial Stadium. And the 80 percent: Do they drink at home first?

Twenty-six percent of party-goers chug down five or more beverages. The rest of the gang drinks responsibly, weighing in at five or fewer.

This made me think, maybe I should nominate UNL for keeping a dry campus as wet as a dog in a monsoon.

Of course, not all 20,000 students plus faculty could carry it. That would be one big torch (dodo chi).

There could be only one, but who would be bestowed with the duty and honor to carry the flame of peace and world unity?

There is our newly deemed chancellor Harvey Perlman. Unfortunately, I don't think a salary raise due to "loss of word in job title" is enough to constitute a nomination. Let's just give him some time and maybe he could hit up carrying the torch for the 2008 games - when he will simply be known as "Doctor X."

If Harvey is out, who is next in line? A vice chancellor? Do we even have one?

If we do, I don't know his or her name. What about members of ASUN. Of course, after a careful FDA investigation, it unfortunately turns out that four of five dentists, as well as four out of five UNL students, do not approve of ASUN. And just as your mommy told you when you blindfolded your little brother and told him the 40-gallon drum of marine varnish is a big pitcher of Kool-Aid - that is just not fair.

Next, my thoughts turned to the heart and soul of UNL - Husker football. Although they represent a small portion of the population, they represent courage, determination and heart. They stand for strength, success and perseverance.

Frank Solich is a former football player; he looks to be in good health and probably has the endurance to bear the burden of the burning brilliance of the flame. Maybe, just maybe, carrying the torch would light the fire of inspiration to win a national championship. This football thing might just be who I am looking for, but then I remember the insane cost for football tickets. Nomination? I might as well take all the money I have out of the bank and feed it to a monkey at the zoo.

Finding a shortage of leaders, I am going to start throwing out names.

There is the guy that wears the wooden shoes and has the Fruit Loop theme colored hair. Or the Santa Claus bum that sits in the Union. Speaking of Santa, I can't leave the Easter Bunny and Canada's Boxing Day mascot out.

Oo Oo, what about Shaft? He is the black private dick that is a sex machine to all the chicks. He is a cat that won't cop out and would risk his neck for a brother man. Plus, he is a complicated man and I hear this Shaft is one bad mother... I suppose (for the children's sake) I should watch my mouth. Then on the other hand, I'm only talking about Shaft. Can you dig it?

Then of course there is me. I'm short. I like long walks on the beach and drinking orange pop. Last year, I won my fourth consecutive international intergender Stratego championship, and I am currently cutting my first funk album, "Funky D" featuring the hit single, "Hey, I'm Funky D." But, I don't want to nominate myself, plus I couldn't carry the torch anyway - I am training for the World's Strongest Man contest.

So who gets my vote? Not Puffy Combs - he might try to shoot the torch at someone. Not Robert Downey Jr. - he would attempt to snort the torch through a straw.

My nomination starts with "Mr." and ends with "T". I figure the games and Mr. T have at least one thing in common - they both involve wearing lots of gold and that, by my book, is torch bearer material.

Please write us back

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