

The Daily Northwestern

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 12, 2001

Passing grade

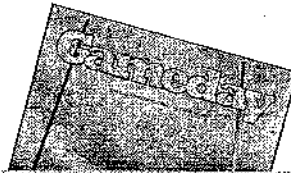
ETHS could add classes to core to meet state standards

PAGE 4

Going for gold

NU hopes to resurrect spread offense against Gophers squad

GAMEDAY

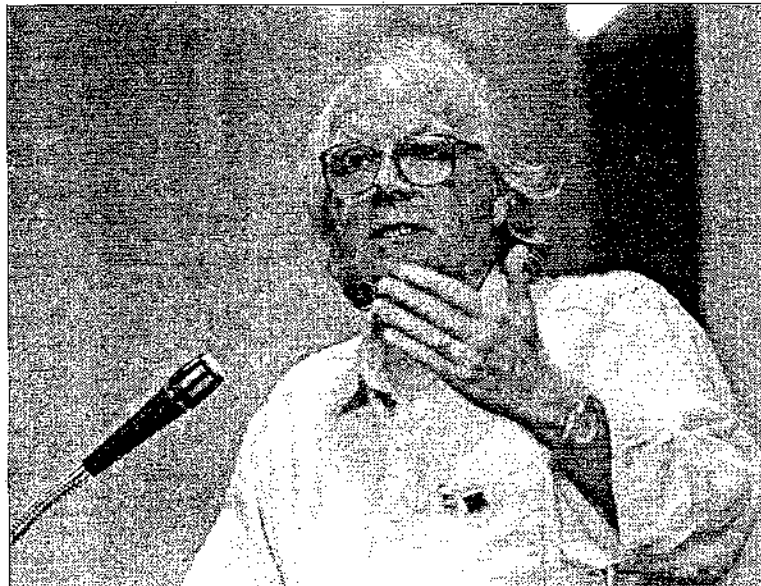


Self service

ASC prepares to ask Senate for \$20,900 for new server

PAGE 7

UNITING AGAINST TERRORISM



MEREDITH BUSE/ETHS DAILY NORTHWESTERN

Stephen Rohde, president of the ACLU's Southern California chapter, speaks to students at Harris Hall on Thursday night about the impact the Sept. 11 attacks have had on the nation's civil liberties.

ACLU official cautions against trading nation's liberty for safety

'Sept. 11 changed each of us, but it did not change the Constitution,' NU alum says

BY MATT ALDERSON
The Daily Northwestern

Stephen Rohde considers himself a patriot. He wears a small U.S. flag pinned to his shirt over the left breast pocket. Next to that he wears another pin — that of the American Civil Liberties Union.

"My patriotism is about diversity and equality," said Rohde, who is president of the ACLU's Southern California chapter.

Rohde, an NU alumnus, spoke to a group of about 50 students in Harris Hall on Thursday night as part of the day of educational events commemorating the one-month anniversary of the Sept. 11 attacks.

"September 11 changed each of us, but it did not change the Constitution and it did not change the Bill of Rights," Rohde said.

The United States now faces the challenge of reconciling the need for security with that of the need for civil liberties, he said, adding that the country has not handled that challenge well.

After the attacks ClearChannel

Communications, owner of approximately 1,170 radio stations across the nation, drew up a list of 150 songs that it advised its stations against playing, he said. The songs, which include John Lennon's "Imagine" and the Drifters' "On Broadway," were listed for their "questionable" lyrics.

This and other incidents, such as White House press secretary Ari Fleischer's statement cautioning Americans "to watch what they say," point to a growing threat to free speech in the United States within the past month, Rohde said. Criticism of President Bush, which was rampant in the days prior to Sept. 11, is now considered by the public to be disloyal and unpatriotic, he said.

"If we suppress disagreement, that's where the danger is," Rohde said.

The threats to free speech now threaten to push their way through legal doors as well, he said. Two new bills being pushed by the U.S. House and Senate argue for an expanded definition of terrorism and increased powers to federal intelligence, both of which Rohde argues could not have been passed into law prior to the attacks on the charge of being unconstitutional.

"The shock of September 11 does not make legislation constitutional

today that was not constitutional a month ago," he said. "I think it's unpatriotic for politicians to take advantage of a national crisis to pass legislation that could not be passed in calmer times."

Perhaps most frightening and particularly "corrosive" in the current movement to restrict free speech is voluntary self-censorship by the press, he said. After the attacks, The New York Times indefinitely withheld the results of an official recount of the ballots from the 2000 presidential election. And on Wednesday, the country's major television networks joined in a commitment not to broadcast unedited statements from suspected terrorist Osama bin Laden.

"We don't need to be treated like children and have information withheld from us," he said.

Censorship, racism, fear — Rohde urged students Thursday night to combat these unwelcome movements in the post-attack United States with their freedom of speech and their freedom to dissent.

He closed his speech to students with a quote from Benjamin Franklin:

"Those who would give up essential liberty to purchase a little temporary safety deserve neither liberty nor safety."