

# Editorial

## Education more equitable in U.S.

American students may be behind their Japanese counterparts in some ways, but we may not be as badly off as in other respects. Granted, the United States is lagging behind Japan in its technological pace. But as students, we should be thankful that our government provides a chance for nearly all willing and able students to attend high school and college.

In Japan, students are under a great deal more pressure if they aspire to attend a public university. An Associated Press article said 4 million people make a pilgrimage to the Dazaifu Tenman-gu Shrine near Fukuoka for "divine guidance" between January and March. This is the period before "exam hell," when those who hope to be accepted to high schools, colleges and universities take extensive standardized tests.

The Japanese shrine, dedicated to a ninth-century scholar, attracts people from as far as Tokyo, more than 500 miles away. Its worshippers buy amulets, good luck charms and wooden prayer plaques in the hope that it will give them the extra help they need.

Japanese students must take both a two-day unified test and a test given by each individual school before being accepted by a top public university. Unlike those in the United States, the public universities in Japan are far more prestigious than the private. Graduates can count on good jobs if they study at one of the 127 public universities.

These universities only have room for a fourth of the 350,000 applicants this year. Of these applicants, 100,000 were retaking the exams.

It's facts like these that should make us feel fortunate. The government sets minimum entrance requirements for its colleges and universities, but generally everyone is granted admission.

Taking an SAT or ACT exam is a far cry from Japan's high-pressure tests. Few people here are denied the chance to attend college, even though they might not be accepted at their first choice school. And no one in the United States is denied the chance of a high school edu-

cation. U.S. citizens often take these opportunities for granted, but the system is one we should take pride in and continue to support and develop.

While Japan should be praised for maintaining such a high degree of technological excellence, we should also consider that its educational system provides for only a minority of eager students. Seventy-five percent of those in universities are forced to attend private institutions which are more costly and of lower quality.

It appears that our country is a step ahead of Japan in its educational equity, and with our government's commitment to advancing the sciences, we should continue to be even more successful and competitive in all disciplines.



## Letters

### Humor a matter of individual taste

This is in response to the letter written by Carl Sjuln (Daily Nebraskan, Feb. 9). Obviously you read Bill Allen's column (Daily Nebraskan, Feb. 7). Carl: if you dislike it so, simply stop. There. Wasn't that easy?

Seriously, the viewpoint expressed in Mr. Sjuln's letter is quite common and disturbing at UNL. I will agree that many Daily Nebraskan columnists tend to espouse liberal views. This is neither good nor bad, it simply is. I feel that the Daily Nebraskan does a reasonable job of balancing its selection of syndicated columnists, however, and the most obvious reason for a dearth of student conservatives is that no qualified students who fit this mold have applied.

Whether or not Allen or any of the other humorists is funny is a matter of individual taste. However, it should

be noted that nobody is funny all of the time or to all readers. Furthermore, if any subject that anyone takes seriously was "protected" from satire, there would be no humor at all!

Finally, it is distressing to realize that (evidently) students at UNL wish to isolate themselves from any opinions which differ from their own. I came to college to learn and to grow; these goals are impossible to attain without exposure to new and different people and views. Even if you don't agree with someone, it is good to listen to him — nothing is accomplished by hiding behind labels such as "crazed radicals" or "light years to the left of liberal."

Kelly Downing  
senior, mechanized agriculture, soil science

## Surrogate mothering expanding but dangerous

Admittedly, the economy is in bad shape, but somehow I never expected to see a new breed of entrepreneurs arrive on the scene hanging out shingles that offer "Wombs for Rent."

Remember when the real estate moguls of the 1970s dealt in houses? It appears that their 1980s counterparts are dealing with uteri. While they aren't doing a land-



Ellen  
Goodman

office business quite yet, surrogate motherhood is an expanding market.

At the moment the star of the surrogates is Judy Stiver of Lansing, Mich., who was set up by a lawyer in her own cottage industry. According to Judy's testimony, surrogate motherhood, pregnancy and delivery were a little bit like taking in a boarder. She was promised \$10,000 to give womb and board to a fetus for nine months and then

deliver the baby to its reputed biological father, Alexander Malahoff of Queens, N.Y.

When asked why she decided to take this moonlighting job, Judy explained that she and her husband wanted some money to take a vacation and maybe fix up the house a bit . . . that sort of thing.

But that was just the beginning, or the conception, of this tale. The baby was born last month with microcephaly, a head smaller than normal, which usually means he will be retarded. Suddenly, this most wanted child was a pariah. Baby Doe was put in a foster home. The Stivers claimed he wasn't theirs. Malahoff claimed he wasn't his.

Pretty soon there were blood tests and law suits all around and a climactic scene on a Phil Donahue Show that looked like a parody of a Phil Donahue Show. Live and in color from Chicago — Whose baby is Baby Doe? Will the real father stand up please? — we learned the results of the blood test. Hang onto your seats: Malahoff was not the father, Judy's husband Ray Stiver was.

By any standards, this was a thriller with more identity crises than H.M.S. Pinafore. The fate of the baby was re-

solved right there on camera as the Stivers promised to bring him up just as if he were one of their own. So much for their vacation.

I don't know a soul who can't sympathize with the feelings and desires of an infertile couple. Over the past several years we have grown used to reading about dramatic help for couples. By now artificial insemination seems routine and in vitro fertilizations have been eased off the front page. We applaud their births as happy endings.

We have been, I think, numbed into regarding motherhood-for-hire as just another option. There are now at least eight and perhaps as many as 20 surrogate parenting services in the country. Anywhere from 40 to 100 children have been born by surrogate mothers paid between \$5,000 and \$15,000 in states where payment is legal. At least one entrepreneur aims to become "the Coca-Cola of the surrogate-parenting industry."

The tale out of Michigan was a jarring reminder that surrogate mothering is something qualitatively different, with hazards that we are just beginning to imagine.

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## 'Grim seriousness' surrounds dressing for success

Are happiness or wisdom, truth or beauty to be found in a dull blue suit? For John T. Molloy, author of "Dress for Success," this question just doesn't apply.

"Blue, gray and dull are the people who run America," he told a large crowd last



Eric  
Peterson

week at a speech sponsored by the College of Business Administration's B-Week.

"If you don't listen to me, you've had it," he said. What was more interesting in the press clippings about his speech was the

pushiness, the tone of a hectoring Babbitt. He not only defends the wearing of pin-stripe prison uniforms, but preaches it as a moral duty. And many of the crowd who listened to him drank in his evangelism of insolence, and laughed at his jokes at the poor.

Molloy labels himself as a researcher — with the implication that he doesn't make the rules, but only writes them down. It's just the way the business world is. "You always want to stay upper middle class. . . . If you don't look like a winner, you'll probably never be one." Clothes, he said, have "a socio-economic value that attaches to a person," and anyone who ignores them is like a sheep ready for slaughter.

If you wear a striped shirt with a patterned tie, Molloy said, "people will walk on you."

Actually, the timid ones, the sheep, are those who will only venture to buy a light-colored suit after two full years in a firm, as Molloy recommends.

What is surprising in all this is the grim seriousness of it all, the kind of insistent, protective gesture with which those who dress for success will tug at their tweed coat. According to Molloy's research, eight out of 10 men hate wearing what they wear: "they do it because they have to."

For Molloy's readers, clothes aren't something you want to find comfortable or beautiful, or perhaps something you want to say about yourself individually — they are something to keep the job interviewer from crossing your name off the list.

Loud plaids label you as an unemployed plumber, string ties as a cowboy, and bow

ties as one of those egghead professors of whom Joe McCarthy had such distrust.

There are no unemployed plumbers or cowboys or professors in Molloy's world; his is the world of the stab-in-the-back and late hours at the office, hidden alcoholism and heart attacks at 45. David Bowie sings about it in a song called "Fashion" —

*It's big and it's bland  
Full of tension and fear . . .  
Fashion — turn to the left  
Fashion — turn to the right  
We are the goon squad  
And we're coming to town  
Beep beep beep beep*

In all fairness to Molloy, clothes can make a difference. When Bella Abzug got tired of being mistaken for a secretary at lawyers' conventions, she started wearing those big, wonderful floppy hats.