

# Editorial

## You are the bandleader during 'The Budget Waltz'

Welcome back for another encore of the same old song and dance.

You know the tune: The Budget Waltz. The dance goes like this:

President Reagan tells Congress that this is the year when they (they meaning the Congress) must begin to chop away at the federal budget. He then submits to the Congress a budget which, if passed without alteration, would mean another \$100 billion-plus deficit, all the while reiterating his desire to trim government spending.

Congress then counters with the demand that it is not their business, but Reagan's, to take the lead in cutting the budget. Congress then takes, say, \$39.95 out of the defense budget, and announces that the next move is Reagan's. Over loud protestations and a presidential veto, the budget passes without the \$39.95.

A budget cut, no matter how minor and no matter what program it affects, is the ultimate political hot potato. Everybody agrees with the general concept of reducing government spending with the long-term goal of decreasing the federal deficit.

But when the budget-cutting talk turns to specifics, suddenly everybody's department is the one that's far too important to receive the first cut. We conveniently contend that all of the money is going to a series of ill-defined "special interest groups." What we fail to do is take the next step and say those special interest groups are composed of individuals, including ourselves.

The easy thing for us to do is simply to point the finger of blame at those people we elect to office, to ascertain by their inability to trim the budget that they lack a force of will which we, by implication, possess.

The unfortunate reality of the matter is that, put in the same position as the people we elect to office, we would likely demonstrate that we are just as spineless, just as full of doubletalk and just as devoid of action, as they are. We would do what they are doing.

We all want budget cuts, but we all want our program, our new project, our federal matching funds, our slice of the pie, and any representative who doesn't give it to us is not going to get re-elected.

If politicians know how to do anything well, it's how to get elected. As long as the best way to get elected is to please everybody, and the easiest way to please everybody is to give money to their favorite projects, there's very little reason for a politician to take a slash-and-burn attitude toward the budget. It would be suicidal to do so.

This being an election year, you can bet your tuition money we will not see anything approaching a huge budget cut this year. While we gnash our teeth and moan about it, though, it might do us some good to remember that in the long run, as much as we like to deny it, the deficit is there because we put it there.

—Pat Clark



## Letters

### 'Others racist, too

Krishna Madan's column on racism (Daily Nebraskan, Jan. 27) exudes a racism of its own. He typifies all whites as racist and the worst racists in the world. Neither has much bearing in fact.

While it is true that many whites are racist, whites are hardly the only ones. An example is Vietnam and Korea, where all children born of mixed ancestry are doomed to a slavery-like existence or killed outright. In the United States today it is not common to be killed because of the way you look. It happens, but it is not officially condoned in our country, as it is there. I could name others such as Japan where everyone of Korean heritage (or any other group) is denied citizenship. If one were of Korean heritage, even though he were born in Japan he could never be a citizen. The list where extensive, deadly racism, other than white racism, exists is much too long to continue.

Also, Madan mentioned the fact that troubles exist between Moslems and Hindus. He attempted to show that their racism was not as bad because it had some grounds in history. All racism is bad regardless of the reasons. So why don't we stop pointing the finger and do something constructive about it?

Su Hubbard  
junior  
fine art

### Give citizens choice

In your editorial (Daily Nebraskan, Jan. 30) concerning the report of the Christian School Issue Panel, you expressed disapproval of "a shifting of educational responsibility from the state to the parents." But that is where the responsibility is to lie in the first place! Children belong to parents, not the state. Parents are responsible for their children's upbringing, their welfare, their education.

Requirements such as teacher certification constitute state involvement in the means of education. The state should concern itself with the attainment of education, not the means of education.

Let the state judge the result — let her citizens choose how.

George D. Kahnk  
senior  
ag engineering

### The art of business

Perhaps Jane Raglin, who holds non-business majors in such high esteem

(Daily Nebraskan, Jan. 31) and harbors nothing but pity for the "unidimensionally trained" business major, would prefer to be employed by a firm without an accounting department. If you recall, that is the source from whence springeth your daily bread. Try to imagine how long that same entity would survive without someone to establish budgets, issue and collect billings and maintain records; I envision a rather short-term operation of no benefit to anyone.

As a business major, I am growing weary of being referred to as single-minded, money-oriented and culturally deprived. For the record, of the 128 hours required for graduation from the College of Business Administration, one-third of those hours may be spent in non-business courses.

It is quite easy to condemn that of which one knows nothing. Business administration is a highly technical area which requires dedication and a creative mind open to change. The benefits that society as a whole receives from the business world (employment opportunities, support of the arts, a better standard of living, to mention a few) are too often overlooked and taken for granted.

Diane Landstrom  
junior  
accounting

### Abel Hall not a zoo

In response to the letter from Robert Kennedy and Daniel P.J. Loth (Daily Nebraskan, Jan. 27), I would like to express my feelings concerning Abel Hall. I have been a resident at Abel for four years and during that time I have found more than adequate facilities to study there. I have also been able to sleep in the building without the numerous disturbances Kennedy and Loth listed in their letter.

The behavior they noted was greatly exaggerated. Abel Hall is neither a zoo nor a Mary Moppet's 24-Hour Care Center. The student assistants are a carefully selected group of adults that superbly execute their counseling, leadership and administrative duties. Furthermore, every student assistant I have known there was, in fact, a vertebrate. It should also be noted that since Kennedy and Loth were asked not to return to Abel, incidents concerning vandalism to elevators and noise disturbances seem to have decreased.

Abel can be a pleasant and enjoyable place to live. It's what you make of it.

Diane Ceslesky  
senior  
advertising



## State should not chill religious freedom

Larry Sparks' editorial respecting Gov. Bob Kerrey's Christian School Issue Panel (Daily Nebraskan, Jan. 30) unjustly criticizes the panel's conclusion. The mistaken nature of Sparks' notions are best evidenced by focusing upon the two claims around which his critique revolves: namely, that "legal questions (respecting the constitutionality of current

teacher certification requirements) should be answered by the courts, not committees appointed by the governor"; and "the basis of the (panel's) whole proposal is a shifting of education responsibility from the state to parents."

The notion that courts are infallible interpreters of constitutional guarantees is an untenable and pernicious proposition. Reasonable individuals may disagree as to what the Constitution requires. However, given a disagreement between the courts and the Legislature, it is entirely appropriate for the Legislature to lawfully extend the limits of protected action. The belief that questions of constitutional actions are within the preserve of the courts and are, hence, closed to all but that priestly caste, abrogates the responsibility which all citizens share to ensure that basic human rights, such as religious freedom, are guaranteed in our society.

The panel's conclusion that religious freedom is being violated echoes the positions of the dissent by the chief justice of the Nebraska Supreme Court in Douglas vs. Faith Baptist Church, 207 Neb. 802, 818-827, and a compelling legal commentary written on the subject of 61 Neb. Law Review 74 (1982). The panel's analysis of the concerns involved is insightful and sensitive and its policy recommendation deserves approbation.

Sparks' belief that the panel's proposal shifts the "educational responsibility from the state to parents" causes one to wonder whether he in fact read the text of the panel's report. Indeed, the recommendation is that the focus of present state regulation be shifted from that of the churches' ministry (an unconstitutional regulation) to the parents (a constitutional regulation). The state is left in process.

It is sad that Sparks opposes the panel's recommendation because he has a distaste for the beliefs of "the people involved" in the dispute, for it reveals an all too common misunderstanding of the place of rights in our society. Indeed, examples abound to evidence the claim that our society considers rights to be of such great importance that we prefer to accept some increased statistical probability of harm over legal constructions of rights which are too narrow: We allow outright libel against politicians to avoid "chilling" the free press; we allow Nazis to march down our streets in the name of free speech; and we allow clearly guilty criminals to go free to avoid the loathsome possibility of unjustly punishing an innocent person.

Similarly, on the issue of state certification, we ought to fear the awesome power of the state to intrude upon our beliefs and therefore err, if any error is necessary, on the side of liberty rather than risk chilling religious freedom of sincere objectors.

Jim Rogers  
first year  
College of Law

### Guest Opinion

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