

Editorial

Early poll projections merit undue influence

In an election year, people become increasingly aware of opinion polls and projections. Everywhere voters turn (*Time*, *Newsweek*, Gallup, CBS news), someone is polling voter preferences.

The polls not only compare candidates to each other, they compare candidates to people who are not even running; they decide the most important issues; they decide how many black voters will turn out; and what effect a well-qualified woman for vice president would have on a Democratic presidential ticket.

These hypothetical polls are making news, not reporting it.

Network television coverage of the Iowa Democratic caucuses was criticized at a House hearing Monday for projecting caucus results before the candidate selection process had begun.

The rules for Iowa caucuses prohibit participants from expressing a preference among the field of Democratic presidential candidates until 8:30 p.m.

However, CBS projected results of the caucus at 8:12 p.m., NBC, 8:18 p.m., and ABC, 8:46 p.m., according to a chronology presented at the hearing.

Dave Nagle, chairman of the Iowa Democratic Party, said latecomers heard the projected results before coming to the polls, and wondered aloud why they were there. It seemed that the outcome already had been decided.

By reporting "projected results" before the process for selection had even begun, journalists may have had an effect on voter participation. When journalists declare the outcome of an election before it is over, or even weeks before, they discourage, not inform, voters.

Projected poll results also may sway some people, causing a snowball effect for the current leading candidate.

During the 1980 presidential campaign, President Reagan was declared the winner in television broadcasts while polls still were open in the West.

In the house hearing, CBS Vice President Ralph Goldberg defended the early projections, saying that journalists should report, not withhold information.

The role of journalists should be to report the news and inform people so they can make their own decisions. By reporting probable winners before an election is held or finished, journalists influence, not inform. Journalists must wait for news to happen before reporting it as a fact.

Vicki Ruhga

Unsigned editorials represent official policy of the spring 1984 *Daily Nebraskan*. They are written by this semester's editor in chief, Larry Sparks.

Other staff members will write editorials throughout the semester. They will carry the author's name after the final sentence.

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Sexist economy upholds inequity

Reaching for pay equity among jobs could even out the sexual discrimination so prevalent in the American economy. A bill has been introduced in the Legislature by 18 co-sponsors to study pay equity for state employees.

assure women a measure of justice.

The Nebraska pay equity bill would establish a commission to study sexual discrimination among jobs in state government, excluding the university system, according to Lynn Mongar of the Unicameral Information Office. The seven-member commission would consider "legitimate supply and demand," and recommend levels of parity for jobs which have similar responsibilities and require parallel skills.

The bill, sponsored primarily by Sen. Bernice Labedz of Omaha, has been given second-round approval. Sen. David Landis of Lincoln spoke on the legislative floor in support of the study: "If we wait for somebody else to tell us that it is wrong to pay women as a class far less for their labor...than we pay for men, then our consciences must be puny indeed."

A federal judge in Olympia, Wash., recently ordered the state government to stop downgrading "women's" jobs "forthwith": Washington has to give back pay to some 15,000 employees, unless a state appeal is upheld. Officials for the Washington Federation of State Employees, AFL-CIO, called it a triumph for working women. "It's what we've been wanting all along," said Mark Brown of the federation. "We just thought the state should pay for it now, instead of waiting 10 years."

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Eric Peterson

That women collectively earn 59 cents for every dollar men earn in this economy is a fact as familiar as it is disturbing. One of the main reasons for this is the economic and social depreciation of jobs women traditionally hold. Registered nurses earn salaries on the average of \$4,000 less per year than mail carriers. Sexism goes bone deep in this economy, and it's clear that "the jobs that women hold tend to be underpaid because they are held by women," writes Susan B. Garland of the Newhouse News Service.

Pay equity considerations would link jobs that require comparable skill, effort, responsibility and working conditions to each other, and require equal pay for them. Although these factors obviously are not easy to pin down, and the evaluation of just what a job is worth can only be a subjective judgment, some sort of pay equity plan is needed to

The honeymoon never ends for RALPH

New York City is the headquarters of some of the most powerful and wealthy corporations, organizations and associations in the world. But over on Long Island is the world headquarters of a little-known organization that just may appeal to more of us than any of the others.



Bob Greene

It is called RALPH — the Royal Association for the Longevity and Preservation of *The Honeymooners*.

RALPH — named for Ralph Kramden, the Jackie Gleason character in *The Honeymooners* TV show — is dedicated to honoring that show and assuring that there will never be a day when it is not seen on American television sets.

"There has never been a show like *The Honeymooners*," said Peter Crescenti, a co-founder of RALPH. "Anyone who watches television knows that nothing today can even come close to it."

The Honeymooners, of course, was the story of life in a Brooklyn apartment building that housed Ralph Kramden (Jackie Gleason), a bus driver who had the Madison Avenue route in Man-

hattan; his wife, Alice (Audrey Meadows); his upstairs neighbor, Ed Norton (Art Carney), who worked in New York's sewers; and Norton's wife, Trixie (Joyce Randolph).

"What Lennon and McCartney were to music, Gleason and Carney were to television," Crescenti said. "Television has never seen genius like the genius of those two men working together."

RALPH has members all over the United States, Crescenti said — and the comedy of *The Honeymooners* works as well for people who never saw it during its original run as it does for those of us who were around at the beginning. "We have members who are 5 years old," Crescenti said. "They love the show just as much as our oldest member who is 93."

The key to the success of *The Honeymooners*, Crescenti said, was that it was truer to life than most of the other comedies of its era.

"Yes, Ralph Kramden was always yelling at Alice," Crescenti said. "He never had very much money, and the apartment was tiny, and he was struggling to make a living. But I think more people identified with that — even if they identified with it secretly — than identified with *Father Knows Best*, where everyone always smiled at everyone else, and all the bills always got

paid on time.

"Ralph would get angry at Alice, and he would cock his fist and go, 'Bang! Zoom! Right to the moon!' You'd think that, in the '80s, people might be offended by that. But they're not."

A surprising thing about *The Honeymooners*, according to Crescenti, is that it existed as a self-contained half-hour show for only one season — the television season of 1955-56. Before that and after that, *Honeymooners* sketches were part of Gleason's one-hour variety show. But, he said, there were only 39 episodes of *The Honeymooners* and as amazing as it seems, those 39 episodes are the only ones that are seen in syndication on local stations year after year.

"It's true," he said. "And the feeling that we get when we see *The Honeymooners* is not nostalgic at all. It's been around for 25 years in syndication, and how can you get nostalgic about something that's never been gone?"

"When one of those 39 episodes comes on, the feeling we get is one of familiarity, of camaraderie. We know those shows inside out. We know every line, every facial expression — each of those shows is like an old pair of shoes. Do we ever get tired of seeing them? No. Do you ever get tired of seeing your best friend? Of course not. We look forward

to these shows with great expectancy."

Although each member of RALPH has his or her own favorite episode of *The Honeymooners*, Crescenti said that there is one show that virtually everyone remembers and loves.

"It's the one where Ralph and Ed buy 1,000 kitchen gadgets for 10 cents each, and decide to go on television and do a live commercial to sell them for a dollar," he said. "As soon as the camera goes on, Ralph loses his cool, and he blows the whole thing. For some reason, everyone remembers that show."

RALPH will hold a national convention on March 10 at the C.W. Post campus of Long Island University in Greenvale, Long Island. More than 2,300 members are expected to attend.

"We'll show old *Honeymooners* episodes from the Gleason variety show, skits that haven't been seen in years," Crescenti said. "We've invited people from the production staff of the show to tell us what it was like working on *The Honeymooners*."

Mostly, though, the convention will provide the chance for *Honeymooners* fans to say, collectively, to the old cast and crew:

"Baby, you're the greatest."