USA Today...

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Prettying up the news has become popular in the last decade or so. "Happytalk" television news programs are still the norm, and recently Boy George appeared on a Sunday morning hard news show, in what is becoming called "non-news" news. My theory for these frillier and sillier formats is that people have become jaded with the bombardment of bad news and would rather see a bit of fluff than be bored with more inflation, Middle East wars, and even the usually popular bloody car wrecks.

USA Today is not a true "happy-talk" paper. It is obvious that a national daily publication must suffer from editing the glut of information they get every day. Dan Rather has the same problem trying to squeeze it all into a half-hour show. What happens is you get brief synopses of several stories, and little or no depth. A few notable exceptions are the McNeil-Lehrer Re-

port and USA Today's Opinion Page.

USA Today's full-color graphics and high-grade newsprint have had a direct impact on the nation's newspapers. You need only to look at the Omaha World-Herald's color weather maps and new emphasis on charts and graphics, or the Lincoln Journal's "new look." USA Today is also unmatched in its daily statistics listings, particularly in sports and stock market, no doubt largely due to its satellite technology.

USA Today is a perfect complement to a local paper such as the Journal. Neither can competently do each other's job, but together they can cover the scope of both national and local levels.

Making facts a little easier on the eyes is no sin in my book...er, paper.

Note: USA Today's price will soon go up to 35 cents, as soon as they change all those thousands of distribution boxes. Still a bargain.



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Non-smoking female wanted. Near East Campus, \$175/month, no utilities. 466-2229.

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