

The DN: Not the rag you think it is

An open letter to Daily Nebraskan readers and non-readers after four semesters of frustration:

This is my last-gasp attempt. My last column.

After two years of fielding phone calls and letters, one thing is obvious: you truly do not read this newspaper. You read it with a negative mindset; that the DN was, is and always will be a rag.



Mona Koppelman

This column is directed at ye of little faith and patience who are always quick to throw the first stones. It is directed at those who dismiss the Daily Nebraskan as a left-wing, liberal rag full of misinformation, opinion, tripe and foolishness. It is directed at the woman (and others like her) in my 300-level English course who said she only reads the DN to "look for the typos."

Your charges are misinformed, and mostly unfounded. If you are open-minded and intelligent enough to learn why, read on.

If you possess no such flexibility, read on anyway. This column will add fuel to your unreasonable fire.

First, this newspaper has never been a "left-wing" publication. If you view it as liberal, you are mistaken. In this state, publications viewed as liberal would be considered barely moderate practically anywhere else. We wrote stories about homosexuals. So what? Compare that to headlines in The Daily, from the University of Washington, in Seattle.

"The Lord is a phallic symbol."
"Texan craves Mexican food, craps out."

Editorial Policy

Unsigned editorials represent official policy of the fall 1984 Daily Nebraskan. They are written by this semester's editor in chief, Chris Welsch.

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

Editorials do not necessarily reflect the views of the university, its employees, the students or the NU Board of Regents.

"Girls, Blacks bone harder."

That's liberal, folks.

Few of you note changes in editorial positions. You still accused last year's editor, Larry Sparks, of liberalism when the man supported Ronald Reagan, taxing the poor and intervention in Nicaragua. You simply don't read.

We've addressed important issues, covered meetings that affect every student, written series that provided information about job hunting, drug and alcohol abuse, the quality of education, where your student fees go, the aura of Bid Red football.

The status of homosexuals on campus and in Lincoln is an important issue, but it seems to be the only one we covered that evoked any reader response. Maybe we should become the Daily Enquirer. We'd certainly get your attention.

About student fees, I always hear the complaint that the paper feeds off student fees. Nothing could be farther from the truth.

We have a student advertising staff that sells enough ads to keep us from losing money. Your student fee money helps, but we don't need it that badly. Type A student fees, the type that we receive, are also refundable.

As for the DN stories containing mistakes, opinions, tripe and foolishness, consider this: When you took your freshman composition classes, your dedicated professors spent hours correcting your spelling, grammar, structure and punctuation. Your class turned in 15 five-page papers on Monday; your professor returned them Wednesday or Friday.

At the DN, 15 five-page papers equals half of the copy that goes into a typical 12-page newspaper. Our editors are expected to correct everything your composition professors corrected — but in three hours, not three days. And while your professors are professionals, our editors are not. They do the best they can under the worst conditions — between classes, work, homework and scant hours of sleep.

The freshman class comparison is an apt one: Most of our reporters are freshman and sophomores with little, if any, writing experience. The copy that appears in the newspaper — especially at the beginning of the year — is often completely rewritten.

Typos? Though we are the fifth-largest paper in this state and have a circulation of 17,500, we work with equipment that most small-town weeklies chucked a long time ago.

We still use typewriters, rather than

computers. We edit with the same pencils you used in kindergarten — the big fat red ones. Our photographers use their own equipment at their own risk. And yet, we try to compete with Omaha and Lincoln papers who have the resources to beat us on every story — and who can pay their reporters what they deserve.

We don't go into this business expecting thanks. But we do expect that people will read this paper for reasons other than counting typos.

We do not *try* to make mistakes. But because of deadlines and the inexperience of some reporters, mistakes will be made as they are made in every newspaper. We do not *try* to print useless information. If for no higher cause, we try to write articles that will make us look good when we enter the job market.

And whether you appreciate us or not, employers do. We get hired by the best.

DN reporters and editors who worked this year came back from internships like The Denver Post, The Wall Street Journal, The Miami Herald, The Pacific Stars and Stripes in Tokyo, The Des Moines Register, Mademoiselle magazine and a medical magazine — both based in New York City — The Wichita Eagle-Beacon, and the Omaha World-Herald.

UNL graduates who worked at the Daily Nebraskan are now working for those newspapers, as well as The Dallas Times-Herald, The Fort Worth Star-Telegram, The Raleigh, N.C., News and Observer, the Phoenix, Ariz., Republican, the West Palm Beach, Fla., Post, the New York Times, the Los Angeles Times, and Newsweek magazine.....

To name a few.

And that's just the journalism majors. Our non-journalism majors have gone on to have successful careers in hundreds of professions, from law and medicine to teaching.

But the fact is, we are not interested in merely turning out good clips for our resumes. We want to bring you the news. And we improve each year.

Some of you noticed improvements. You wrote letters with compliments like:

"Good paper today! ... I made sure others here read that (State Fair) feature — a great mood piece ... Keep it up?"

"I applaud your story on the Apollo capsule. The reporter's active eyes uncovered one of this campus' deserving and meritorious livewires ... many people use their eyes only to avoid knocking into things. My hat is off ..."

"Just a line to congratulate your publication ... on the quality of the reporting. I have been misquoted so often over the

years in local publications, that it is truly a pleasure to read an article by a reporter who gets her facts straight. I'm afraid the only criticism that I could offer is for my own syntax."

"We were pleased with the fine job ... in accurately reporting the facts of the story."

"These last few weeks, I've been noticing that I've been actually reading the Daily Nebraskan rather than just mechanically turning the pages and quickly dropping it into the round file. I perceive a real improvement in the quality of the newspaper ... It becomes more and more difficult these days to call it disparagingly 'The Rag.'"

Why don't we print these letters on our opinion page? Because the writers requested that we should not. I venture to guess they were apprehensive about the reactions of their peers — students and faculty — who do so love to call the DN disparagingly "The Rag."

Those who quickly drop it in the round file.

Well, before you drop this in the round file, just consider one last thing: the Daily Nebraskan tries to promote a learning atmosphere. And any teacher will tell you that it helps to respond positively to a student's work, as much as it does to respond negatively.

Daily Nebraskan

EDITOR	Chris Welsch, 472-1766
GENERAL MANAGER	Daniel Shattil
PRODUCTION MANAGER	Kitty Policky
ADVERTISING MANAGER	Tom Byrne
ASSISTANT	
ADVERTISING MANAGER	Kelly Mangan
CIRCULATION MANAGER	Steve Meyer
NEWS EDITOR	Michelle Thuman
ASSOCIATE NEWS EDITORS	Kevin Warner
	Kenna Soderberg
	Brad Kuhn
	Stacie Thomas
	Vicki Ruhge
	Ward W. Triplett III
COPY DESK SUPERVISOR	
SPORTS EDITOR	Christopher Burbach
ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT	Lauri Hoppie
EDITOR	Julie Jordan
NIGHT NEWS EDITORS	Jodi Nygren
	Lauri Hoppie
	Teri Sperry
WIRE EDITORS	
ART DIRECTOR	Lou Ann-Zacet
PHOTO CHIEF	Joel Barlow
ASSISTANT PHOTO CHIEF	David Creamer
PUBLICATIONS BOARD	
CHAIRPERSONS	Nick Foley, 476-0275
	Angela Niefeld, 476-0601
	Don Walton, 472-7301
PROFESSIONAL ADVISER	

The Daily Nebraskan (USPS 144-060) is published by the UNL Publications Board Monday through Friday in the fall and spring semesters and Tuesdays and Fridays in the summer sessions, except during vacations.

Readers are encouraged to submit story ideas and comments to the Daily Nebraskan by phoning 472-2668 between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. The public also has access to the Publications Board. For information, call Nick Foley, 476-0275 or Angela Niefeld, 476-0601.

Postmaster: Send address changes to the Daily Nebraskan, 34 Nebraska Union, 1400 R St., Lincoln, Neb. 68588-0448. Second class postage paid at Lincoln, NE 68510.

ALL MATERIAL COPYRIGHT 1984 DAILY NEBRASKAN

WANTED: PEOPLE ON THE WAY UP!

If you're in Advertising or Marketing and can sell, have we got a job for you. The Daily Nebraskan is looking for a select few to work on our Spring advertising sales staff.

The job of Advertising Representative isn't easy. You can expect to work around 25-35 hours per week. You must be organized and responsible as well as being goal oriented.

Pay is on a commission only basis. Some reps have made as much as \$1000 in a month.

If you want a challenge, drop by room 34 in the Nebraska Union and ask for an application.

APPLICATION DEADLINE IS FRIDAY, DECEMBER 14th AT 4 P.M.

Daily Nebraskan

UNL does not discriminate in its academic, admissions or employment programs and abides by all federal regulations pertaining to same.

The Daily Nebraskan Needs Your Help



We're looking for a few good people to help us put out our high-quality newspaper. As one of our staffers put it, the DN isn't just an adventure ... it's a job. And that's where you come in!

The Daily Nebraskan needs staffers for the spring semester. Reporting positions are open in all departments: news, editorial, sports, arts and entertainment. We also need photographers, copy editors and artists. Applications are available in room 34 of the Nebraska Union, and will be accepted beginning Dec. 10th through the 14th. Please sign up for an interview when you pick up your application.

You don't need to have a background in journalism to work at the DN. Many staff members aren't journalism majors. We hire on the basis of talent and enthusiasm, not age. Have questions? Call Chris Welsch, editor in chief, at 472-1766. He'll be glad to help you.