

# Editorial

**Daily  
Nebraskan**  
University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Vicki Bugha, *Editor*, 472-1766  
Thom Gabrukiewicz, *Managing Editor*  
Ad Hudler, *Editorial Page Editor*  
James Rogers, *Editorial Page Editor*  
Chris Welsch, *Copy Desk Chief*

## Pass to play Good idea for education

The state of Texas is well into its third year of what some consider one of education's most controversial issues — a law called no pass-no play.

Two years ago, the Texas legislature discovered the state had a problem: The state's youth were not as smart compared with youth in other states. Before the no pass-no play rule began, Texas ranked 46th nationally in student achievement scores.

The idea works like this: Any student who fails a course in a six-week period can't participate in extracurricular activities in the following period. That includes everything from football to marching band and drama.

As expected, several Texans have protested the new rule, claiming it's not effective and that it even exacerbates some problems in the educational system. They include:

- An argument that the rule will increase the drop-out rate. Some say students who excel in one event will drop out of school if they're made ineligible. They say that one event keeps them in school in the first place.

- An article in the St. Petersburg (Fla.) Times indicates that the rule might sometimes discriminate. The article said 32 percent of blacks and 31 percent of Mexican Americans have had to quit their activities compared with 19 percent for whites.

## Controversy Speakers provoke thought

Exposure to current controversial opinions is an important aspect of university education. But compared to other universities, UNL speakers have been tame. This week, however, is a sterling exception.

Poet Margaret Randall spoke last night as the keynote speaker in this year's Women's Week. Randall is a U.S. born poet who renounced U.S. citizenship in 1966 and now is attempting to regain it. She has written about 40 books, but her works, often sympathetic to communism, have drawn the most attention in her attempt for citizenship.

The naturalization service has refused her residency request under the McCarran-Walter Act, which denies citizenship to foreigners who were or are Communists or support its doctrine. A federal court will hear her case this summer.

Journalist Geraldo Rivera, a former 20/20 reporter, is another controversial, thought-provoking speaker. Rivera's 20/20 contract

- Smaller schools also might claim the law is unfair because they often have just enough students to fill a team's roster. Some might have to drop a program altogether because they don't have enough people.

All these points provide good arguments, but they fail to recognize the importance of a good education. It's simple. If students can't pass, they shouldn't be able to play. The problems often lie elsewhere.

For example, minorities have long been affected by the education system. White teachers often seem to expect less of minorities. Thus they get less stimulation and have less interest in school. Whether these students get to compete in activities in secondary.

Should Nebraska ever adopt such a law, it needs to modify it in some ways. For example, it makes no sense to evaluate students according to their overall grade point average, rather than by just one grade. Few people excel in all courses. They should be given some leeway.

The country's education programs have experienced much change in the past five years, most of it effective.

While it seems too early to evaluate the effectiveness of no pass-no play, the law remains an important force in educational reform.

allegedly was not renewed because of the controversy surrounding a program decision. Rivera charged that a segment on actress Marilyn Monroe's death and alleged affairs with John F. and Robert Kennedy was not run because of ABC executive ties with the Kennedy family. Rivera will speak Wednesday at 7:30 p.m.

After the outcry against left-wing bias in the university-sponsored speakers' program about five years ago, the program seems to have avoided controversy. This was a result opposite from that intended and goes against the tenor of what the university stands for. People such as Dr. Ruth Westheimer, while controversial, are hardly the type of speakers who bring debate on important issues of the day.

We hope this week's speakers represent a trend away from safer, mainstream speakers. UPC should vigorously recruit important, thought-provoking speakers from the left and the right.

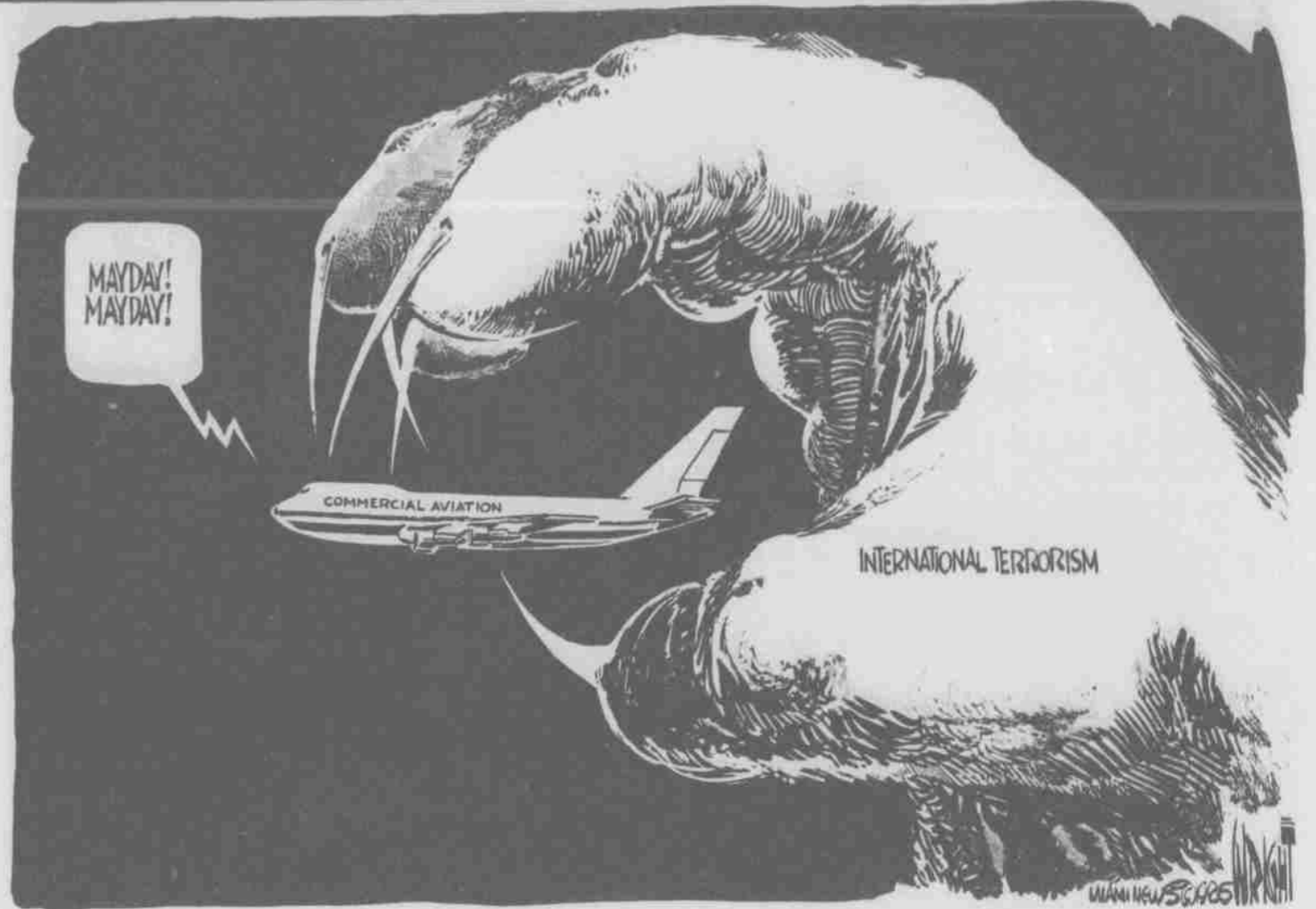
## Editorial Policy

Unsigned editorials represent official policy of the spring 1986 Daily Nebraskan. Policy is set by the Daily Nebraskan Editorial Board.

The Daily Nebraskan's publishers are the regents, who established the UNL Publications Board to super-

vised the daily production of the paper.

According to policy set by the regents, responsibility for the editorial content of the newspaper lies solely in the hands of its student editors.



## Women in the workforce need solutions, not more research

Sometimes I think that American women have been the subject of more research than the entire species of white rats. If every grant, every publisher's advance, every fellowship devoted to the problems of American women had been used to build day-care centers, they would stretch from coast to coast.

This spring there is yet another bumper crop of cover stories, articles and books about women trying to stretch their energy over children and jobs and coming up short. These pieces are the predictable offspring, if you will excuse the expression, of the baby-boom generation of mothers. In the words a friend used at her 40th birthday, they are "suffering from too much of a good thing."

The most heralded, or huckstered, of these tracts is "The Lesser Life" by Sylvia Ann Hewlett, who is currently making the circuit from Time Magazine to Donahue. Her premise is that, "Unless women get some relief from their domestic responsibilities, they will continue to fare badly in the labor force."

This is not, despite the cover blurb by Liv Ullmann, "shocking and eye-opening." One generation exchanged depression for stress. Now the stress generation is looking for help.

Hewlett has been there, but her book wobbles intellectually: a ping of truth here, a disappointing thud there. At best she rehashes much that has already been said about the basic economic plight of women. Divorce, an unbending workplace, inadequate day care, wild insensitivity to pregnancy... round up the usual suspects.

The hook is that after recycling much of the feminist analysis and most

of its agenda, she turns around and names feminism as a chief culprit. Up go the television lights, out come the pens.

Many of the recent books and articles include this sort of ritual whack at the women's movement either for "creating" the Superwoman myth or for "forcing" women to turn in the baby carriage for the briefcase. Hewlett charges that the feminist emphasis on equal rights with men caused them to neglect or deny the very family supports needed by women.



Ellen Goodman

The argument about the best route to change — through equal or special treatment — has been around for a century, and it's a meaty one. The argument that feminists are "anti-family" has been around since the late '60s when radicals were giving karate lessons in lofts in lower Manhattan and talking about the cyberization of child-bearing. But in life, as opposed to lofts, there have been feminists behind every parental-leave bill, every child-care bill, every flexible-work plan.

Hewlett looks abroad for her role models, convinced that woman have it better in Europe. Sweden, I'll buy. But Italy, Britain, Greece? It's news to them.

It is easy and sexy to focus on an intra-gender battle, first between traditionalists and feminists, now between feminists and post-feminists. The cul-

prit is not feminism, not even what Hewlett describes as the cult of motherhood, but the cult of rampant individualism. In America we still regard each worker as disconnected, each child as private property and child-raising as an issue for each family to resolve on its own.

If you read an edge of impatience in my words, it's because I have been a working mother now for more than 17 years. In all those years, almost a generation, the need for a more responsive workplace and for social supports, has been crystal clear. Progress has been a whole lot muddier.

Many of us calculated, or hoped, that when women formed a critical mass in the work force, things would finally change. We now have this mega-generation. Many are trying to have it all by doing it all themselves. Others are struggling to keep their heads above water. Still others are burning out. The problem isn't the women's movement but the lack of movement. The next few years will determine whether this generation produces massive change or massive disappointment.

I admit to a vested interest in this. Right behind the baby boom is my daughter's generation, young women growing up with assumptions. They assume their lives will include work and family. They assume that the workplace will adjust. They don't need the problems researched; they need them solved. One child-care center is worth a thousand studies.

©1986, The Boston Globe Newspaper Company/Washington Post Writers Group  
Goodman is a Pulitzer Prize-winning columnist for the Boston Globe.

## Letters

Brief letters are preferred, and longer letters may be edited. Writer's address and phone number are needed for verification.

### Rogers' theism misinterpreted, law student says

Steven Haack's letter to the editor (Daily Nebraskan, April 11), regarding the separation of church and state warrants a response. I think the letter misrepresented the tenor of Jim Rogers' column because it seems to be based on a misperception of theists' objections to current First Amendment analysis.

I did not interpret Rogers' column as a call for the abolition of separation between church and state, nor do most theists wish for such a result. Rather the theists' concern is that the First Amendment not be used to actively discriminate against religion.

Placed in its historical context, the Constitution probably intended the separation requirement to operate as little more than protection against Congress declaring a national religion.

The current Supreme Court, however, has interpreted the provision to prohibit a local school board from deciding to allow a moment of silent meditation. Theists suggest such decisions stretch the separation principles too far.

On a different note, I found it ironic that Haack would question the extent of Rogers' conceptual development in the same paragraph in which Haack makes the first of several conceptual errors.

First, Haack suggests that bestowing a blessing on a Christian society can only come at the expense of those not so blessed. The suggestion is false. If I give a gift to A, I do not harm B because I do not also give B a gift.

Second, Haack suggests that pretending to know the mind of God, as

did Michael Ryan at the Rulo farm, is an act of faith. No Christian doctrine that I am aware of indicates that man can know the mind of God in the manner Ryan believed he did.

Third, maintenance of a strict separation between church and state will not inhibit people from engaging in acts of religious fanaticism as Haack's argument seems to presume.

My purpose in pointing out the conceptual infirmities in Haack's letter is to foster the growth of intellectual humility where I perceive none. Haack's flippant dismissal of Christian theology as "hocus pocus" reveals a belief in his own omniscience — a belief he properly condemns when it is helped by theists.

L.M. Zavadil  
law