

# Editorial

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## Scholars wanted Program deserves praise

UNL's administration deserves a pat on the back.

Amidst all the bad news of budget cuts, faculty migration and film censorings, administrators have started building an extensive program to help curb one of UNL's problems — the brain drain. Their efforts should be commended.

UNL had a 13 percent decrease in merit scholars for 1985, compared with 1983-84 figures. That's a decrease from the 1983-84 number of 162.

UNL officials admit they haven't done much to attract merit scholars in the past. They haven't had to. Many simply decided to attend UNL.

But competition has grown and money and illustrious programs have lured some potential UNL merit scholars away. Administrators have taken the initiative to correct the problem.

Beginning this fall, UNL will sponsor an honors seminar for all merit scholars to help create an academic atmosphere several merit scholars feel they can't find at UNL.

In addition, UNL is starting to recruit aggressively. Instead of waiting for a mailing list of national merit scholar finalists, they now subscribe to a list of potential merit scholars, thus increasing the possibility of attracting some additional students. Lisa Schmidt, in charge of the merit scholar program, says she and her staff travel hundreds

of miles every year to Nebraska high schools to recruit. In addition, they visit Denver metropolitan area and eventually want to recruit in the St. Louis, Kansas City, Mo. and Wichita, Kan., areas.

UNL's efforts to attract intelligence shouldn't stop there. When the university recovers financially, administrators should funnel more funds to Schmidt's office. Promotional materials and travel expenses cost money. Some of those additional funds also could increase the \$750 base pay given to merit scholars to \$1,000.

Why spend money to attract merit scholars? First, one thing potential merit scholar students look for in a university is how many merit scholars it has. Thus, the more scholars the university has, the more it will attract. In addition, those fancy figures catch the attention of quality professors who otherwise might not look at Nebraska.

True, merit scholars aren't the only type of students who contribute to UNL. Several students have great leadership abilities but only average grades. We encourage UNL, in its merit scholar recruiting, to watch for these students, too, who can contribute just as much to the academic atmosphere.

It will take a lot of work to reverse Nebraska's brain drain. But UNL's administration has taken a step in the right direction.

## Kids can't write Comprehensive exams are needed

Recent studies show that writing skills of U.S. students between the ages of 13 and 17 have improved slightly, but they still have a long way to go.

Conducted by the Educational Testing Service in Princeton, N.J., the study found that only two of every 10 high school students could write a persuasive letter using valid arguments and reasoning skills.

Only one in three students could write an imaginative paper using relevant ideas, according to an article summarizing the study in the April 14 Christian Science Monitor.

Reading and writing skills are vital to students' academic success and advancement in the workplace. Citizens who cannot read or write also hinder democracy, because they lack the information needed to cast responsible votes.

Many educators have stepped up writing courses in high schools, but the change must be made earlier, during the influential grade school years.

In elementary schools, some slow learners are passed from

one grade to another, regardless of their grasp of the basics. This results in hundreds of high school and college students having severe learning deficiencies.

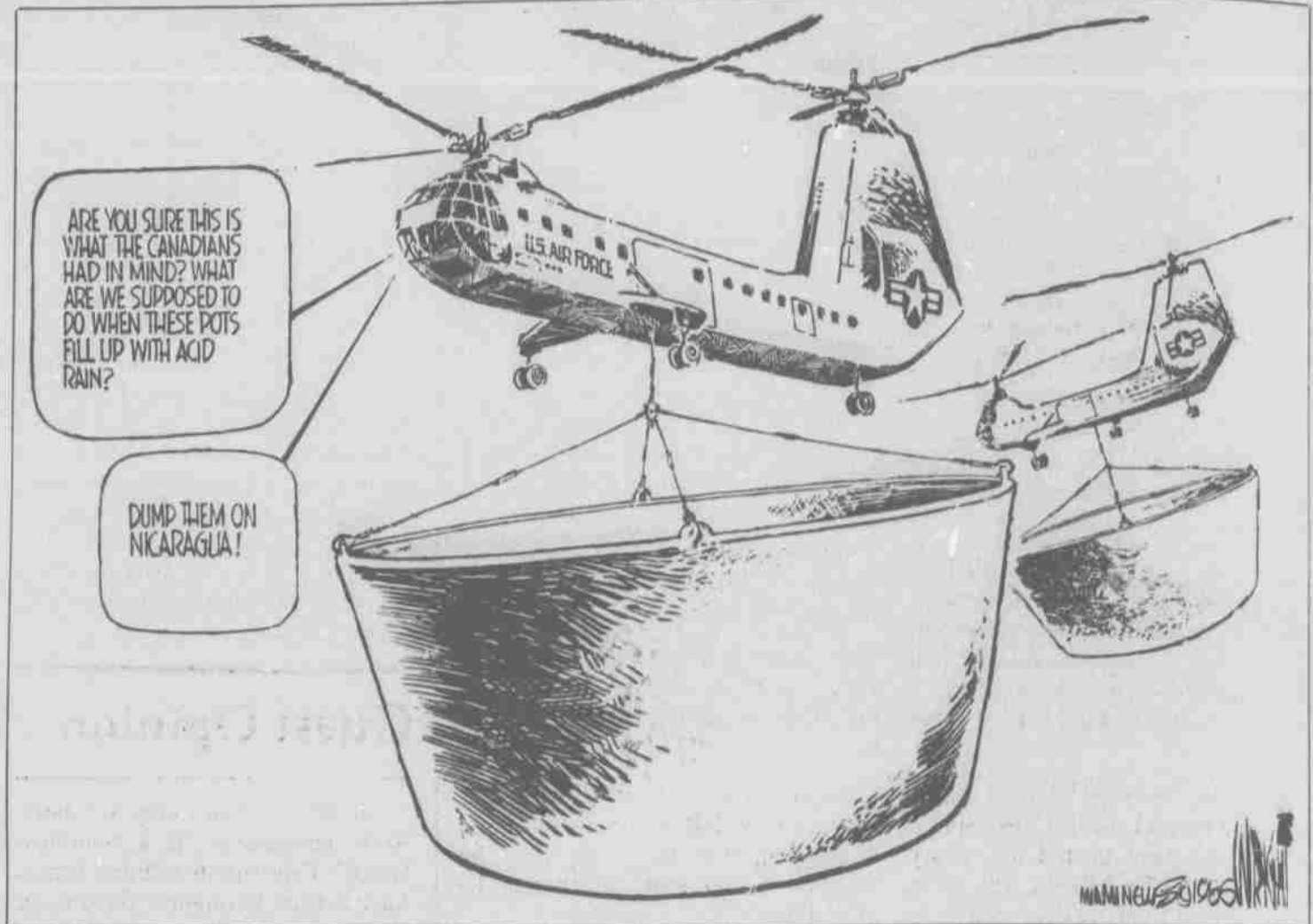
Much time and money is wasted on remedial high school and college courses to bring these students up to an acceptable level.

To avoid this problem, the U.S. Department of Education should require annual comprehensive exams before students advance to the next grade level.

Students who could not pass the exam would have to go to summer school or repeat their current grade level.

Some parents complain when their children are required to repeat a grade level, but the school officials should consider what is best for the children. They need to learn the basics, even if it takes an extra year.

As children spend more hours watching television, the need for emphasis on reading and writing becomes more important. Through elementary and high school testing, U.S. educators can make sure students have the necessary writing skills.



## U.S. misses point Palestine, not Libya, is at heart of terror problem

I have struggled over the past ten days between feeling good about the bombing of Libya and feeling bad about feeling good. I have concluded that I am correct in my ambivalence. The bombing was both justified and unjustified. Rather, let me say (as I hear Aristotle turning over in his grave) that the bombing was justified given a certain set of assumptions, but unjustified because those assumptions are wrong. But the assumptions that are correct are not those that most people opposing the bombing think are correct.

It is not simply that war itself is unjustified. The merits of pacifism aside, there does seem to be a very good case for just war. That is, the decision to go to war can be the conclusion of an argument that begins with undeniable premises and proceeds along lines of irrefutable deduction or very strong induction. There are times when, given the circumstances, it is rational to go to war. World War II certainly jumps to mind.

Nor is it that this attack was, as some columnists are so piously quick to point out, the big guy against the little guy. Size can be deceiving. Again, World War II pitted two of the largest nations in the world — both in land mass and population — against three little shrimp nations with little shrimp leaders. And it was all the big guys could do to keep from getting pushed into the sea. Besides, what rule says that a little guy can get away with murder, just because he's a little guy?

Again, the bombing was not unjustified simply because it destroyed civilian homes and killed children. It is one thing to pledge to aim only at military targets, and another thing entirely to suppose that only those targets will be hit. When nations go to war, innocent people die. We cannot

say, "OK, we'll have a war, but let's be neat about it." Either the move was justified or it was not, regardless of its extraneous results.

Finally, the injustice of the bombing does not rest in there having been readily available alternative action for dealing with terrorists. We tried that, remember? Our hard and fast European friends are too worried about their own backyards to be overly motivated by artificial loyalties to a nation three thousand miles from the action. And who can blame them?



James  
Sennett

But one thing is agreed — the wave of terrorist activity cannot go on. Are there more workable solutions? Well, Reagan gave the world plenty of chances and plenty of warnings, but apparently no one saw it to be the serious problem that he did.

But in the great debate over the bombing, no one has bothered to ask why the terrorist activities which prompted it are going on, and specifically why they are of late aimed at the United States. Here is where those mistaken assumptions I promised you come in.

Mideast terrorism is a direct result of the total inaction by the world community concerning the pleas of the Palestinians for a homeland. The United States is an ardent supporter of Israel. As such, we have blinded ourselves to the bullying tactics and incessant paranoia that is the framework of Israeli domestic policy. Israel is scared to death of the Palestinians, so we are

obligingly scared to death of them as well. The thinking is that a Palestinian homeland juxtaposed to Israel would certainly mean her downfall within a generation. And the Israelis cannot resist the Palestinian pressure without U.S. support. Consequently, the Arab world sees the U.S. as the single greatest block to a Palestinian homeland and a fit target for terrorist activity.

But the lesson of history is that Israel can take care of itself. No less than three times they have beaten back Arab assaults in a matter of days. We are dealing with some of the most cunning military minds of this century, who are operating with U.S. weapons — the most sophisticated in history. If there is one nation in all the world that does not need to be fearful of its neighbors, it is Israel. The Arabs can't beat them, even with a Palestinian front on the West Bank. Israel knows that, the Arabs know that, and we know that. So why are we all acting like it isn't true?

Perhaps it is time the United States took a lesson from France on how to be an international friend. Once the irrationality of your ally demands action from you that could lead to unnecessary destruction of the property and lives of your citizens, it is time to face up to reality. We have been hit by terrorists and subsequently risked all-out war against Libya because we are too scared to admit that the Palestinians have a legitimate gripe and Israel is dead wrong in its paranoia. I believe in sticking up for friends as much as the next guy. But when Israel's unreasonable fear means that bombs will fall and my friends and neighbors will die, I draw the line.

Sennett is a graduate student in philosophy and campus minister with College-Career Christian Fellowship.

## Unlikely tongue removal right solution to protecting citizens from jabber jaws

I wish I could predict that it's the beginning of a national trend, but it probably isn't. Nevertheless, we can still savor this one isolated incident.

It happened on a recent Saturday night in a movie theater in Chattanooga, Tenn.

Five teenagers were sitting together and loudly jabbering. That's what many young people do when they go to movies. They jabber.

I've never understood why people want to pay money to get into a movie house in order to jabber. There are so many other places to jabber. On street corners, in school yards, on back porches, in hamburger joints.

But some strange reason, thousands of people like to jabber in movie

theaters.

And that's one of the biggest reasons why hundreds of thousands of their victims have stopped going to the movies.



Mike  
Royko

Anyway, they were jabbering. And other members of the audience sitting nearby were making the usual responses, turning and glaring, saying "shhhh," sighing loudly, squirming in their seats.

But these gestures are seldom effective. Jabberers don't care if they disturb others. If anything, they enjoy it. It gives them a sense of power.

So, all a person can do is suffer through the jabber, move to a different part of the theater, or leave entirely.

That's unfair, but it's a result of a glaring defect in our legal system.

If the system were fair, a person would be fully within his rights to give a jabberer a warning. Then, if the warning was ignored, he could seize the jabberer by the throat and squeeze until the nuisance was unconscious or deceased.

A few well-publicized strangulations

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