

Daily **Nebraskan**
Editorial Board
University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Amy Edwards, Editor, 472-1766
Bob Nelson, Editorial Page Editor
Ryan Steeves, Managing Editor
Eric Pfanner, Associate News Editor
Lisa Donovan, Associate News Editor
Brandon Loomis, Wire Editor
Jana Pedersen, Night News Editor

Education needed Orr fails to see real drug problems

In her annual State of the State address Monday, Gov. Kay Orr announced, among other things, some new "get tough" policies on drugs.

Unfortunately, most of her proposals will be difficult to enforce, and won't address the realities of the drug problems in Nebraska.

Particularly impractical is her proposal to suspend second-time drug offenders from state-supported colleges.

Orr's proposal is similar to a federal law installed last spring, under which college students are required to pledge that they will not use, possess, distribute or engage in the unlawful manufacturing of illegal drugs before receiving federal financial aid through a Pell Grant.

Under the federal law, students caught doing any of those things lose their financial aid.

Under Orr's proposal, students must acknowledge that they will face penalties if they are caught using drugs.

After a second offense, students would be suspended from school and required to take a second rehabilitation course before readmission.

In policy, that sounds nice and politically correct. It not only punishes drug abusers, it gives them the rehabilitation to keep from using again.

In practice, it stinks.

The chances of catching students using drugs is slim at best on campus. When you add off-campus students to that coverage, the proposal falls apart, and can't be applied equitably.

Who's going to police it?

If all drug convictions are reported to the financial aid and admissions office, then those convicted can be cut off and suspended.

But students will continue to use drugs if and when they want, with the same chances of getting caught as they have now.

The only difference will be a stiffer penalty.

And as most deterrent policies have shown, stiffer penalties after the fact don't stop many people from breaking the law.

If Orr really wants to crack down on drugs in Nebraska, she should sink money into education programs, not take away people's education because they use drugs.

After all, education, at any level, is an integral part of solving the drug problem. Orr doesn't seem to recognize what the real problems are.

As long as people use drugs, money can be made from their sale. And as long as money can be made, people will sell drugs, no matter what the penalties.

Educating people about drug abuse before they use or sell drugs would do more than taking away their education after they are caught.

— Amy Edwards
for the Daily Nebraskan



"IT WAS A GOVERNOR'S TOP AID WHO MADE THE MISTAKE..."



THAT'S NOT WHAT THE GOVERNOR PROPOSED!



AND THE GOVERNOR SMELLS LIKE A ROSE!



Calendar fills learning void

Auspicious word usage, however, won't affect Christmas break

For Christmas, I got one of those Webster's dictionary calendars that looks like a notepad. Each morning since the dawn of the 1990s, I have jumped from bed and dashed to my new calendar to unveil and memorize a shiny new vocabulary word.

Most people would use such a gift for kindling or drawer stuffing. Not me. I find my new vocabulary calendar to be most auspicious.

On Jan. 1, the word of the day was "auspicious," which was most auspicious because I have always wanted and needed to know exactly what "auspicious" meant so I could use the word in a column about Manuel Noriega.

Since "auspicious," however, the vocabulary words have become steadily more inauspicious. In fact, they've become ridiculously obscure.

On Jan. 6, my shiny new word was "killcrop," which, for you more illiterate folk, means "a child whose voracious appetite arouses suspicion that he or she is actually the offspring of fairies." I swear this is true.

If you can't remember the word "killcrop" or the fact that fairies -- contrary to public schooling -- are heavy eaters, the nice calendar people give you a sentence using your new word. For killcrop, the sentence reads, "After their first month of buying baby food, the Tylers were convinced that they were harboring a killcrop." Obviously, a child whose parents used words like "killcrop" would eat like a fairy, but that's not the point. My point is that I fear what the nice calendar people might teach me by, oh, let's say, June 16.

On June 16, the shiny new word is "phmegmastalgmite," which is a purely theoretical word for a purely theoretical whale-sized tumor that has never appeared on large mammals. The sentence reads, "After their first month of buying baby food, the Tylers were convinced that they were harboring a phmegmastalgmite."

A necessary tangent. How many of you think you could have avoided capture by U.S. invasion forces as did our friend Manuel Noriega?

Place yourself in his shoes. You're a drug pusher, you're a dictator and you've killed Americans. Now, all of a sudden, after killing another American, you begin to see dozens of U.S. troop transport aircraft flying into military bases within your country. Also, you see those same military

bases teaming with activity and you hear U.S. generals say that they're conducting "routine maneuvers."

"Routine," as you already know, means "invasion" in U.S. military jargon.

You, Manuel Noriega, begin to see these telltale invasion symptoms 48 hours before a surprise attack on your headquarters in Panama City by huge painted men who would like nothing more than to get gong-sized medals for barbecuing your most sensitive organs.

The question is: How far from Panama City could you be in 48 hours?

I'm guessing you'd get to somewhere near the Sea of Tranquility. At worst, you'd probably get to the Sonic Drive-in in Falls City, Nebraska.



Bob Nelson

Which is where, two days after the U.S. invasion of Panama, I was served two chicken sandwiches and an order of onion rings by a carhop who claimed his name was Manuel Smith.

"Hey, aren't you Manuel Noriega, the recently ousted Panamanian strong-man?" I asked.

"No, señor (cleverly pronounced like senior), I am Manuel Smith, the recently elected Sonic carhop," he said. "Would you like some delicious coke (sniffle) ... I mean, Pepsi ... with your straw?"

For me, the last straw came when this "Manuel Smith" said, "I noticed all this food is for you. Does your mother know she is harboring a killcrop?"

Sure, it sounds like one of those ridiculous Elvis or D.B. Coopers sightings, but as you know, Sonic Drive-ins are notorious for hiring deposed Panamanian generals who have no green cards or prior food-service experience. Also, my calendar says that "killcrop" is a favorite term of people who launder money for the drug cartels. Everything makes perfect sense.

And here's a real tangent: How many people came up to you on New Year's Eve and said, "See you next decade?" Did you think that was pretty clever?

Well, listen to this. In a few weeks less than 10 years, you can throw this

knee-slapper at your friends.

"See you next millennium!"

"See you next millennium!" is the rarest and funniest joke in all of human history. The joke also is proof that God has no sense of humor. I know this because Jesus, by the incredible timing of his birth and death exactly between B.C. and A.D., could never tell the "See you next millennium" joke.

Jesus, however, did have a sense of humor. That's why we have Easter.

No blasphemy intended. I'll rephrase all that.

That's one little side reason we have Easter. Also, God, in his omnipotence, could be directly funny at any time if He so desired.

Which of course brings me to my point. Christmas break, like every other long-term absence from school, can erase any progress a student has made in his or her field of study.

I am a journalist. As a journalist, I am supposed to be an expert at theming. To keep a reader's interest, a news story or column should have one idea that the writer constantly expands upon. In December, I was a competent enough writer to do just that. Christmas break has ruined me. I believe this column proves my point.

So, I propose that we abolish Christmas breaks so that students no longer spend weeks and weeks softening their brains with game shows, eggnog, sleep and bad jokes. Students could have Christmas and New Year's Day off. That's it. Even better, they could have just the mornings of those days off. They'd be brilliant. Everyone would be brilliant.

Sure, you say, Bob has just finished his very last Christmas break and never would be affected by such a rule. You say, "Bob has spent about 80 percent of his life enjoying Christmas breaks. Now the jerk is bitter. Execute him."

But you must understand that I care about those budding intellectuals who will take my place at this institution. I want them to have the things I never could have.

Yes, I believe my plan would be most auspicious for everyone, including killcrops.

Now, whether it will affect Romanians is a different story ...

Nelson is a senior news-editorial major and the Daily Nebraskan editorial page editor and columnist.

