

Boat might sink

State can't jump ship on its future

State Sen. Scott Moore of Seward was right Monday when he said the state and the University of Nebraska were in the same budgetary boat.

In trying to justify a meager state budget proposal for NU, Moore seemed to say that the university needs to follow while the state navigates shallow financial waters.

But for the future of Nebraska, the opposite is true. As the university goes, so goes the state. To bail out now on those who learn, teach and research would be a mistake.

Particularly disturbing are the questions in state government about NU research. Gov. Ben Nelson and the Appropriations Committee both have proposed ending the annual increases in the Nebraska Research Initiative, begun under former Gov. Kay Orr to stimulate scientific development.

One state senator, Dan Lynch of Omaha, questioned what benefits the University of Nebraska-Lincoln received from research funding that leads to spinoff companies, according to Michael Mulnix, director of UNL's Office of Public Relations.

The investment comes back in many ways. The university gains national exposure. The spinoff companies benefit from UNL's research facilities. Patents awarded as a result of publicly financed research are the property of the university. The university gains royalties from the affiliated companies. The companies provide business for the state and hire Nebraskans.

When all that happens, the state can take the credit. When there is no research, when there are no benefits, the state must accept the blame.

Lynch's questioning has not been an isolated incident this year. Suspicious senators have tried to create the appearance of a university conspiracy to further its own financial interest.

That's an irresponsible way to go about the budget process, even in a lean year when lawmakers are looking for excuses to cut corners.

The senators' approach has been aided by public distrust of the NU Board of Regents because of the controversy over the hiring of NU President Martin Massengale. While it shouldn't be forgotten, the presidential search debacle has no connection to the budget. It does not justify the ax.

On Monday, Regents Chairman Don Blank indicated a willingness to work with the Legislature. He said the board could review its budget request.

The Appropriations Committee needs to do the same thing. Among other things, the Legislature should restore the original increases for the Research Initiative and grant \$6 million for the George W. Beadle Center for Genetics and Biomaterials Research.

NU will not get its requested 13 percent increase this year. But to keep progress on course within the state, a happy medium must be found. Nebraska must not jump ship on its future.

— E.F.P.



BOB NELSON

Sex, pink flamingos to the rescue

Dear editor:

I used to think the letters to the editor were made up.

That is, until yesterday. I'm a student at a medium-sized midwestern university. I was walking through the third-floor stacks in the library looking for some light reading. At AZ120-178, I turned to the right and came upon fourteen beautiful women standing in the aisle. They were all holding Balzac.

I noticed they were all majorly stacked (38-24-36), so I decided to approach them. Before I could, they saw me. They turned and checked out my really tight-fitting Levi's 501s.

"Is that 'War and Peace' in your pocket," one of them asked, "or are you just glad to see us?"

"Ha," I said boastfully. "What I got here will make 'War and Peace' look like Dick and Jane."

I pulled the unabridged dictionary from my pocket and began searching for a word. I found the word I was looking for and showed it to one of the women.

"Ah," she said in an excited gasp. "Spot."

"Yes," I said. "Let's go find one."

And we did. Let's just say this, folks. I know now why they call it "Love" Library.

Bob Nelson
senior
journalism

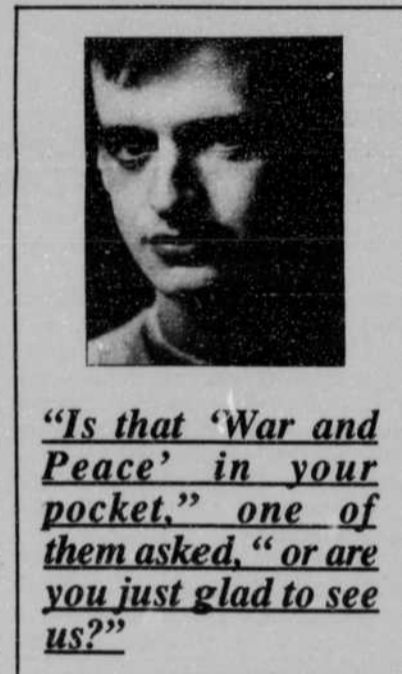
This is a sample letter to the editor that I presented to the editor in chief of the Daily Nebraskan, Eric Pfanner. I designed it from the "Forum" in Penthouse magazine. Similar letters would dominate our editorial pages if I had my way.

You see, I'm trying to revamp the Daily Nebraskan to attract more readers.

In 1967, three-fourths of American adults read a daily newspaper.

Only about half read one now.

Studies have shown that readers think newspapers are boring, time-consuming and irrelevant. They'd rather get their news from quick-fix



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sources such as radio or television.

In Boca Raton, Fla., the Boca Raton News, owned by Knight-Ridder Newspapers, has tried to solve this problem by becoming more appealing to its readers.

Now, along with tons of color and graphics, it has standing feature stories such as "Today's Hero" and "Critter Watch."

It has a pink flamingo on the top of each section front.

Of course, this new brand of reporting is not the way to save print journalism. If people want fluff, they'll watch "Entertainment Tonight."

But the Boca News, by trying to imitate television in print, gave me a great idea. What if we imitated the stuff that really makes television great?

That stuff — the savior of print — is sex and violence.

But my editor is a prude and something of an old-school journalist. When I made my presentation, Eric whined about facts and objectivity and "good taste" and all the other things that send Daily Nebraskan readers to the crossword puzzle.

I asked him, "Eric, what was the most popular DN issue you can re-

member?"

"Gosh, Bob," he said. "Probably the really neat issue last year in which we saturated readers with in-depth reporting, quality analysis and gripping photos of the march of victor and vanquished through the trying gauntlet we call Association of Students of the University of Nebraska elections."

"Wrong."

"The last joke issue?"

"Right."

I explained to Eric the journalistic merits of trumped-up photographs and lewd, baseless innuendoes concerning the alleged sexual and chemical improprieties of respected Nebraskans.

I presented him with another sample, this time a rewrite of the story "Lack of funds threatens museum's accreditation" that appeared on the front page of Tuesday's Daily Nebraskan.

The original first paragraph: "Morrill Hall is in danger of losing accreditation because the museum can't afford to hire enough employees to give its displays adequate attention, the museum's director said."

The improved version is titled, "Penniless bone-lover begs for bucks for bloodied Bambis." It goes like this:

"Morrill Hall — home of the skeletal remnants of many small, helpless and furry creatures that probably agonized through death by starvation or were shredded like cheese or Ollie North documents in a living food-chain hell of splattering blood, crunching bones and tearing flesh — is in grave danger because the glorified mausoleum is broke, probably because prior funding went toward million-dollar sadistic sodomy and crack orgies held in the planetarium to celebrate the birthday of Satan."

Eric said my presentation was nothing new. He called it porn and filthy tabloid journalism and said he'd rather put pink flamingos on page 1. I simply called it survival.

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

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Kuwaitis true losers of war

Every morning it seems I find myself turning on news of the war (or peace as we now call it).

Military spokespeople for the coalition countries run down their score sheets, gloating about how few people have died and how accurate coalition (really American) technology has proven over the last few weeks. The general populace hears about the atrocities committed by Iraqi forces in Kuwait. We hear about how Iraqi soldiers are starving, lice-infested men, fearful of our superior technology. And we speak with pride at how we (as moral, Godfearing, democratic, freedom-loving people, of course) have "crushed," "demoralized" and "decimated" this "madman" and his war machine.

Well, now as the war draws to a close, maybe we need to look at what we've gained. Yes, Kuwait is "free;" their legitimate government is back in power. We have won the right for Kuwait to be ruled by monarchy. (Funny how we oust monarchs/dictators from power one day and bring other monarchs/dictators to power on another.) Yes, Hussein's nuclear threat is gone. (Funny how our nuclear threat helped get rid of his). Yes, Iraq's war

machine — the republican guard, his technology, his arms — are all but destroyed or not combat functional. Now he will have to buy more from the U.S. or the Soviet Union. And yes, Iraq has no defense, no electricity, no water purification, no sewage treatment, no jobs, no money, no food. The people of Iraq and the people of Kuwait are the losers in this war. We made Hussein surrender; his people will starve and die from disease. The coalition has proven it has the biggest stick.

I find it nauseating that Americans cheer this war. Killing thousands and thousands of people for any reason — oil, nuclear capability; to rid the world of a "madman," to cover up for no energy policy, to spur an economic resurgence, to help the powers that be get reelected or just for the hell of it — isn't democratic, isn't right and isn't moral. When peace becomes unpatriotic and America becomes a synonym for bully, isn't it time to look seriously at the systems and policies that make it so?

Rose Kleman
senior
psychology

LETTER POLICY

The Daily Nebraskan welcomes brief letters to the editor from all readers. Letters will be selected for publication on the basis of clarity, originality, timeliness and space availability. The Daily Nebraskan

retains the right to edit letters.

Letters should be typewritten and less than 500 words.

Anonymous submissions will not be published. Letters should include the author's name, address, phone

number, year in school and group affiliation, if any.

Submit material to the Daily Nebraskan, 34 Nebraska Union, 1400 R St., Lincoln, Neb. 68588-0448.