

Cultured classroom

Awareness should start in school

A bill that won first-round approval in the Legislature on Tuesday targets gaps in the education given by some Nebraska schools.

LB922, championed by Sen. Ernie Chambers of Omaha, would require Nebraska public schools to develop and implement multicultural education programs. Proponents of the bill say such programs would help curb racism by teaching kids early on to appreciate societies of other ethnic backgrounds.

An amendment to the bill, also given first-round approval, ensures that the bill wouldn't force additional hours of instruction on schools. The amendment requires the multicultural education to be incorporated into existing curriculum.

At a committee hearing on the bill, Chambers said many rural youths had testified on the absence of multicultural information in their schools.

"There are instances throughout Nebraska and this country where great insensitivity is shown to people of different ethnic and racial groups," Chambers said. "The purpose of this bill is to try to do in an educational setting what we all say that we want."

Under the plan, the State Board of Education would help schools develop programs and would monitor the schools to ensure participation.

Chambers said this provision would give the policy some teeth. It's not much power, but no one wants to see some kind of multicultural police cruising the halls, either.

While some perhaps overestimate the role of the schools in perpetuating racism, the best of educations would teach students about all different groups of people. Children's minds must be opened to ideas, customs and values not prevalent in their own society. Becoming knowledgeable about other cultures only can enrich our own.

LB922 is a step in the right direction without becoming an inflexible, state-mandated course of study. The bill would do little to combat racism in the short term, but because it concentrates on children, the most important segment of our population, the potential for long-term gain is enormous.

Only when the gaps in our present knowledge are filled can we expect a better future. That is the reasoning behind LB922, and it is admirable.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Minorities must stop blaming

My comments are in response to the feature article the Daily Nebraskan ran on Jimmi Smith ("Equal opportunity architect," DN, Feb. 10).

I was amazed and incensed by your (Smith's) comments. Why would you be so careless with your words? As a minority leader in a very influential position who works with minorities, surely you must realize the penetrating impact of your words. Your comments concerning white students were very inflammatory and will do nothing to foster greater understanding, greater acceptance or a greater harmony on this campus among and towards minorities. The attitudes you communicated only continue to perpetuate the conflicts and do nothing to calm the growing storm.

All who are minorities, myself included, need to ask ourselves why it is that some of us have been able to rise above the discrimination and restrictions placed upon us? Why is it that whole groups of minorities have actually flourished within the United

States? Human nature seeks to place blame for its own shortcomings instead of accepting individual responsibility for what we choose to do with our circumstances. As minorities, we are prone to look for an evil enemy to fight. We point fingers and look for scapegoats, thereby continuing to deny personal responsibility. Our attitude that the repression is increasing becomes more deeply ingrained, continuing the cycle of feeling helpless.

Recognizing that my attitude is my greatest opponent, I have made conscious choices to control its limitations on my success. I have chosen not to point my finger and look for a scapegoat. I have chosen not to focus on the discrimination that I know is very real. I have chosen instead to focus on the strengths and talents given to me, desiring to see them grow. Mr. Smith, I would challenge you to make the same conscious choices.

Stephanie Temples
senior
Russian

Language study needs changes

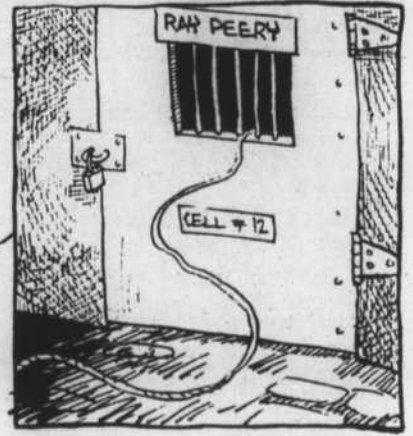
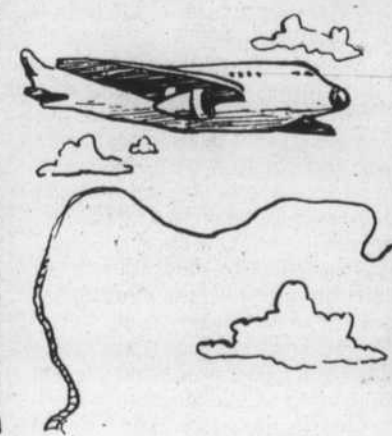
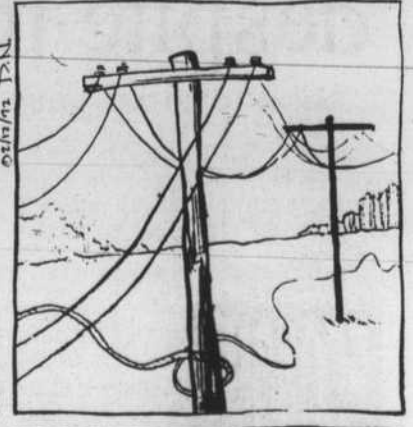
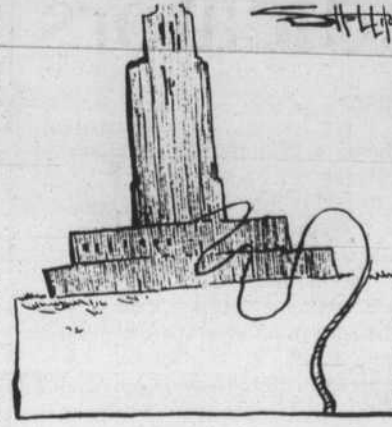
If the general population of the earth is slowly adopting English as a second language, then why is it that science majors at most universities are forced to take a foreign language as a requirement? To answer part of my own question, I admit that taking a foreign language could be productive if I choose to move to Japan or Germany after completing my six-year bachelor degree program here at UNL. Still, a four-year program will change into a five or six year nightmare because of foreign language requirements. Admittedly, I have no interest in learning a different language, and I believe that requiring students to take them is a travesty to

grade point averages. I believe that a science major should be allowed to waive his or her language requirement in order to be able to concentrate more on the major/minor courses instead of strange conjugates and verbs. We need desperately to change these requirements. What about having an option of taking a slew of humanities or social science courses?

In closing, a more preferable core option is needed, and just not in the College of Arts and Sciences, but in all of the colleges.

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sophomore
astronomy and physics

WELL ISN'T THAT CUTE. SOME LITTLE KID HAS GOT THE GOVERNOR'S EAR...



KIRK ROSENBAUM

Life infiltrates boring race

For a while I was worried the 1992 election season was going to be a humorless, colorless exercise in expensive futility.

Nobody has been able to solve the expensive futility aspect of it for a few decades, but Gov. Bill Clinton has guaranteed it won't be humorless, and the folks at MTV are trying to bring it a bit of color.

Slick Willie Clinton has marketed himself as the most electable candidate in the Democratic field, and he probably was right. He was raking in endorsements and money like autumn leaves while crushing the rest of the pack like a political monster truck.

Clinton might still be the lead dog, but his campaign seems to be unraveling right before the finish line in New Hampshire. New allegations surface weekly that suggest Clinton's character is barely good enough to make him president of a bowling league.

He condemned the scurrilous midnight pay raise while approving a 70 percent increase in his own salary. Now it appears that he was too busy registering in cheap motels to register for the draft.

That Clinton avoided a war he didn't believe in shouldn't be held against him. Besides, 92 percent of the men his age didn't serve in Vietnam either. Eventually he drew a high lottery number that kept him out of the draft anyway. So why should his pulling of a few strings be held against him?

Among his reported reasons for avoiding the draft is that he was too intelligent to have his talents wasted in Vietnam. Maybe he has a point. Why should a Rhodes scholar get involved in a war when poor blacks and undereducated whites can go in his place?

Clinton has offered a lame assortment of excuses that paint him as a man eager to enlist held back by circumstances beyond his control. At the heart of all this garbage is a man who, like Dan Quayle, thought he was too good to go to Vietnam.

Slick Willie may be an adulterous, hypocritical draft dodger, but most of our finest presidents have had at least one of these qualities. Clinton is a fine salesman and probably will hang on in New Hampshire. He has raised



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nearly \$4 million to this point, easily outdistancing his rivals.

According to figures supplied by Tom Bodett, this would be enough money for 160,000 nights at the Motel Six, with some change left over to run the vibrating bed and rent a few movies. Then again, Clinton's probably too good for the Motel Six.

It has been said that Clinton has been preparing for this campaign for the past 10 years. Even that may have been 35 years too late. These days, future candidates must begin acting presidential at conception, lest the delivery room nurses remember them as soft and whiny.

Let this be a lesson to everybody who may be considering a run for office in the future. Planning on spending your student loan money on a week of binge drinking in Padre next month? Someone will remember your drunken, disgusting behavior about a month before your election. Then he or she will show up on PrimeTime Live to recall the entire ugly story in gruesome detail.

... Then he cannonballed off the hotel balcony and into the swimming pool wearing nothing but an empty Schaefer Beer 12-pack on his head. Sam... it was horrible. He harassed and fondled every girl on the beach. Then he started offering money for drugs and women, saying he may as

well spend it since he was going to default on it anyway. We finally had to lock the monster in a closet."

After a scene like that, your own mother probably would vote for someone else.

Americans enjoy watching a messy spectacle but they won't vote for one, at least not yet. The media has yet to figure out a way to make candidates who make fools of themselves look attractive and smart.

This is why I have decided to get all my campaign news from MTV.

After infiltrating every other aspect of our culture, MTV now is covering politics. It can pack a meaningful story on all the candidates in two minutes and have time left over for R.E.M. to tell you why voting is so important. It is political information for the '90s — no visual image lasts longer than five seconds and all the "reporting" is done over a soundtrack of Public Enemy.

According to Jerry Brown, if just the people who watched MTV went to the polls, "they could change the country." He's probably right. MTV could generate 10 million new voters. Of course, the candidate would have to be Michael Jackson.

The truth is that MTV has a vested interest in voter apathy. It rather would have people age 18 to 24 out at the malls on Election Day buying the products they see advertised between videos.

George Bush would prefer this also. The Bombs and Jesus crowd looks forward to going to the polls and rarely misses an election. The last thing these people need is a massive rush of MTV youth exercising its rights and trying to put some crummy liberal into "heavy rotation."

They probably won't need to worry about something like that happening this year, however. There are two ways to get people to vote — buy them or inspire them.

Inspiration seems to be out of the question. Maybe we should go back to the days of Andrew Jackson when politicians offered kegs of whiskey at the polling place. Of course, in the '90s it would have to be something else — maybe Bugle Boy jeans or Hammer cassettes.

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LETTER POLICY

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